
Mud Island Land Use Study: Phase I Survey Results

*Riverfront Development Corporation
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I. Introduction

A visual preference assessment, this survey primarily sought to discover the public's opinion on various design options, as well as appropriate usages (or activities) for Mud Island River Park (MIRP). Additionally, it collected perceptions on the current state of MIRP.

II. Respondents

748 respondents completed some portion of this public survey. The completion rate was 90.9% with 680 respondents continuing through the entire survey.

- Over half the respondents were between 18 – 40 years of age and more than 30% between 41 – 60 years of age.
- The vast majority live in Memphis (nearly 70%). Respondents living in Memphis primarily live in Midtown (38.1%) and Downtown (32.5%). North Memphis and South Memphis had few respondents with only 2.4% and 1.7% respectively.
- The vast majority of respondents identified as Caucasians (86.7%), with 7.3% reporting as African-American.
- Many respondents (35.7%) were married with children, but the next largest category is single with no children (31.4%).
- The majority have visited MIRP within the year (14% within the month and 46.7% within the last year). Only 6.2% have never been to MIRP.
- More than 30% of respondents who have been to MIRP visit several times a year.

III. Respondents Views About MIRP Today

- The majority agree that MIRP is:
 - Safe (75%)
 - Clean (69.8%)
 - Easy to find your way around (64.2%)
 - Affordable (65.8%)
- Nearly the majority of respondents (47.6%) think that there aren't enough events or interesting things to do at MIRP.
- Nearly the majority of respondents (47.1%) express the need for better quantity and quality of food.
- In the visual preference portion, many respondents indicate that they dislike the MIRP marina area (34.9%).

- In the open ended comments, it is frequently mentioned that there is a need to update and beautify the existing architecture.
- In the open ended comment fields, the MIRP River Walk Replica and the Amphitheatre are specified by many as areas to preserve and enhance.

IV. Major Themes for Future Use

- More than half of all respondents favor these specific types of activities on waterfronts:
 - Live musical performances (64.9%)
 - Restaurants (54.1%)
 - Waterside cafes (66.6%)
 - River promenades (68.5%)
 - Picnic areas (54.9%)
- Increased access to the river is desired by many respondents, as shown in open comment fields. Specifically, many mentioned increasing public boating access, boat rides, and walkways close to the river.
- Increased access to MIRP itself is desired by many as shown in the open ended comment field responses. Specifically, many mentioned boat ferries, bridges, connections from other downtown parks, and better signage.
- As indicated in open ended comments, a skate park is favored by many respondents.
- Many respondents indicate strong interest in a lively park with a large number of varied activities so that lots of people are frequently using MIRP. This is evident in the visual preference responses and in open-ended comments.
- A large number of respondents chose commercial development such as restaurants and cafes among the list of possible waterfront elements, while others expressed in the open ended fields that heavy development is not desirable. Some specifically mentioned that natural views should not be obstructed and that natural areas should be preserved. Perhaps the definition of commercial development was unclear.
- Respondents were asked to indicate their preferred improvements to MIRP by choosing one photo within a set of four of other waterfronts. Preferences expressed within each set of photos reinforce the themes found in other survey responses.
 - Respondents tended to favor water's edge treatments with lots of greenery and trees.
 - However, when presented with a choice between photos with lots of people in them, rather than those without, respondents overwhelmingly chose photos with lots of people – **even over choices with more greenery.**
 - When considering the various types of waterfront recreation, restaurants, nightlife, and a bustling street scene appear to have the greatest appeal (43%), while another large group (31%) chose walking in green space close to the river.

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- When presented with photos showing four approaches to architectural development, including dense urban development in the background and a boat marina, the vast majority (43%) chose historical stone architecture, formal landscaping and lots of greenery. However, a good number (25%) preferred a scene showing people in active physical activity even though skyscrapers were in the background.
- Respondents were nearly evenly split in their preference between an open air market, an open air restaurant, and a splash park for children – indicating a broad range of interest in different types of open air activities.
- In open ended, non guided comments, many respondents indicated that the general atmosphere of MIRP should be family-friendly and safe. Many expressed specific interest in:
 - An active street scene including street vendors (food and goods), street performers, musical performances, and an open air market.
 - Bicycle and walking/running paths.
 - Major attractions such as an aquarium, amusement park, and splash/water park.

V. Survey Question Responses

1. Think of all the waterfronts you have visited. What one is your favorite?

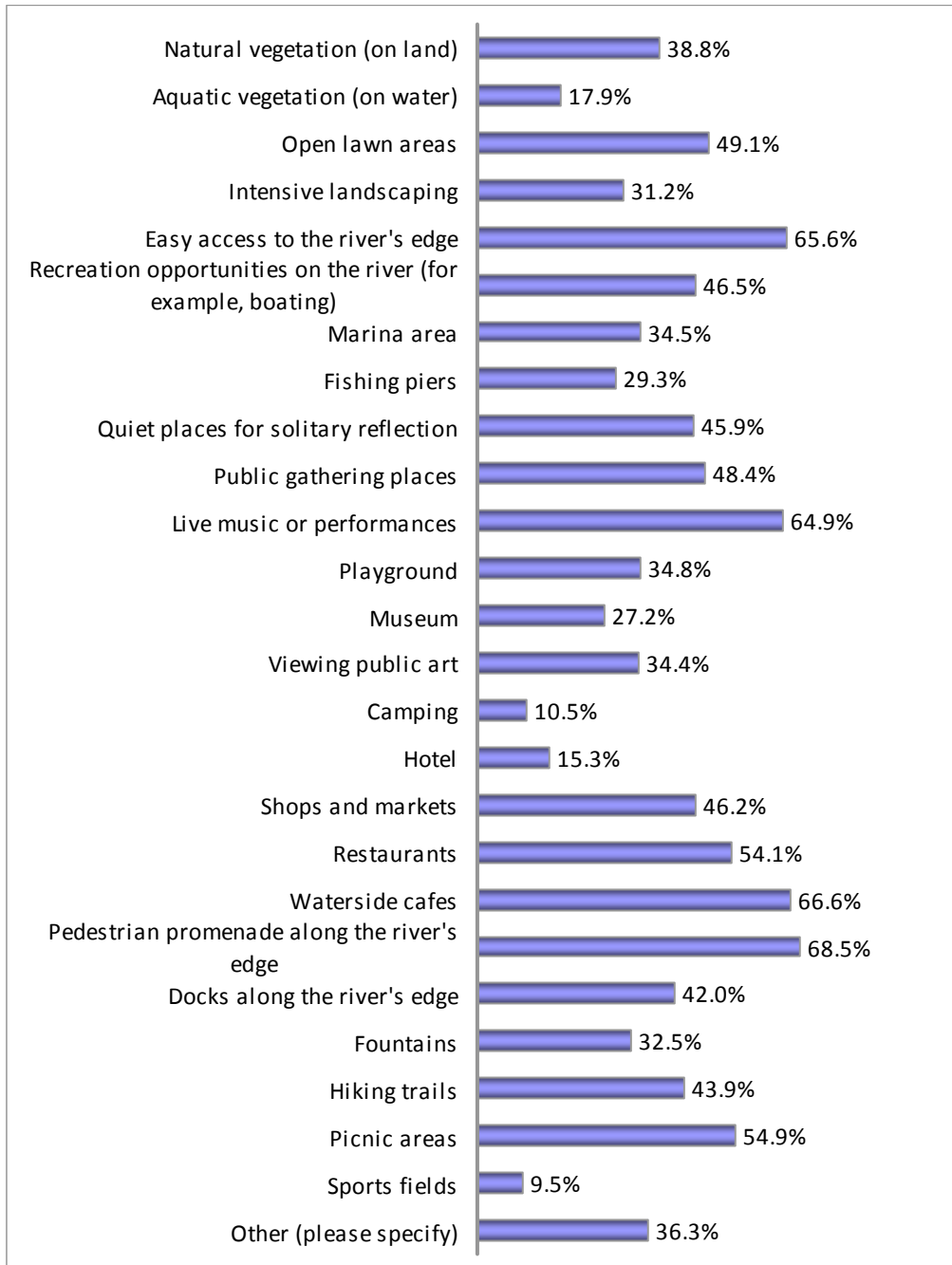
Respondents named 151 different waterfronts as their favorite, located on 2 continents. Most frequently mentioned were Memphis (60), Chicago (52), San Francisco (48), Baltimore (44), San Antonio (33), and Chattanooga (24).

2. What single element most stands out in making that waterfront special?

- Respondents cited a very wide range of attributes that made various waterfronts special to them.
- In general, people enjoyed a waterfront that was vibrant with lots of people engaged in a variety of activities.
- Many respondents indicated that no one particular thing made the environment special – rather, a combination of elements created an overall atmosphere that delivered a special experience.
- Attributes mentioned most often include:
 - A vibrant street scene, including eclectic retail, open-air restaurants and markets
 - Natural attributes, such as the beauty of the water, landscaping, open green spaces, and sunsets
 - Access to the water – the ability to get right to the water’s edge, get onto or into the water, and activities right at the water’s edge
 - Walking and recreational trails
- Other frequently mentioned attributes included:
 - Skatepark
 - Live activities and programming
 - A sense of history and local character
 - Family-focused activities
- A number of respondents noted unique landmarks or elements found only at that particular location (e.g. The St. Louis Arch, The San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge, Chicago’s Lake Michigan, Map of the World on the ground in Detroit, Memphis cobblestones, etc)
- A number of respondents were struck by a sense of connectivity between the waterfront area and the nearby city.
- Though infrequently, some respondents mentioned the proximity of residential development and neighborhoods as a special element.

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3. When you think about spending time along a waterfront, what are the things you would most like to see and experience? Select all that apply.



N = 727

“Other” responses are widely varied. Items mentioned frequently are:

- Skate park
- Boat tours and boat rides to the Park

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- Increased access to the water
- Splash park
- Dog friendly spaces/dog park/off-leash location
- Bicycle access/pathways
- Amusement park rides
- Safety
- Family friendly
- Aquarium
- Benches
- No obstruction of view/heavy development

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4. Of the below places on Mud Island River Park today, which place do you like most?



A



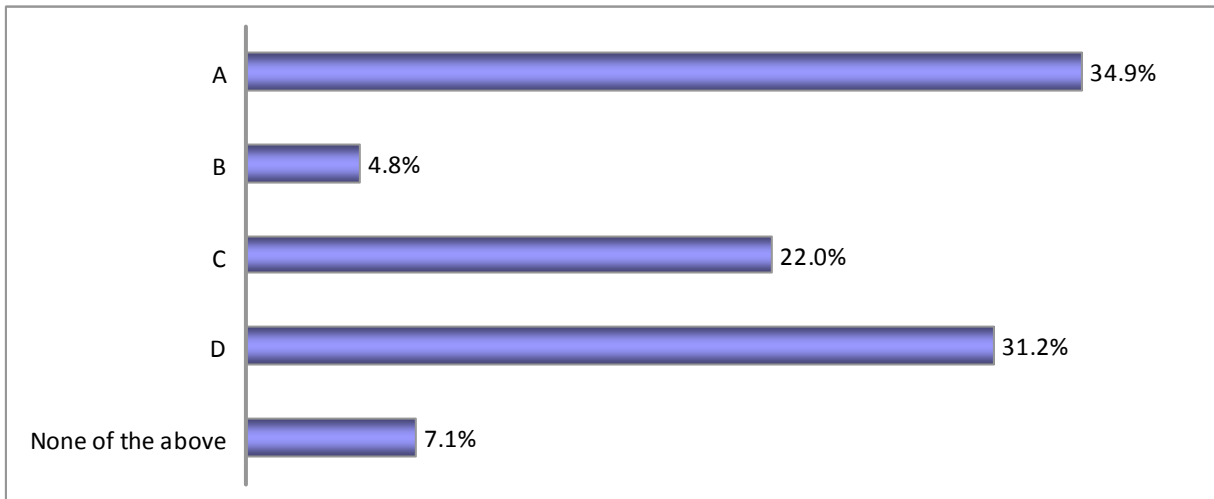
B



C



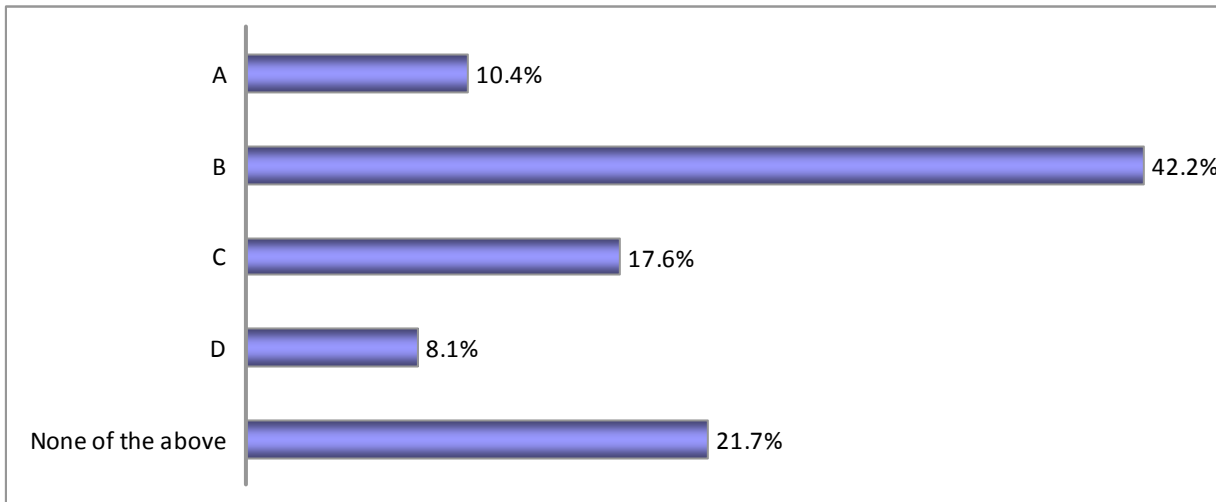
D



N = 722

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5. Which of these (above) places do you like least?



N = 714

6. Of the below places on Mud Island River Park today, which place do you like most?



A



B

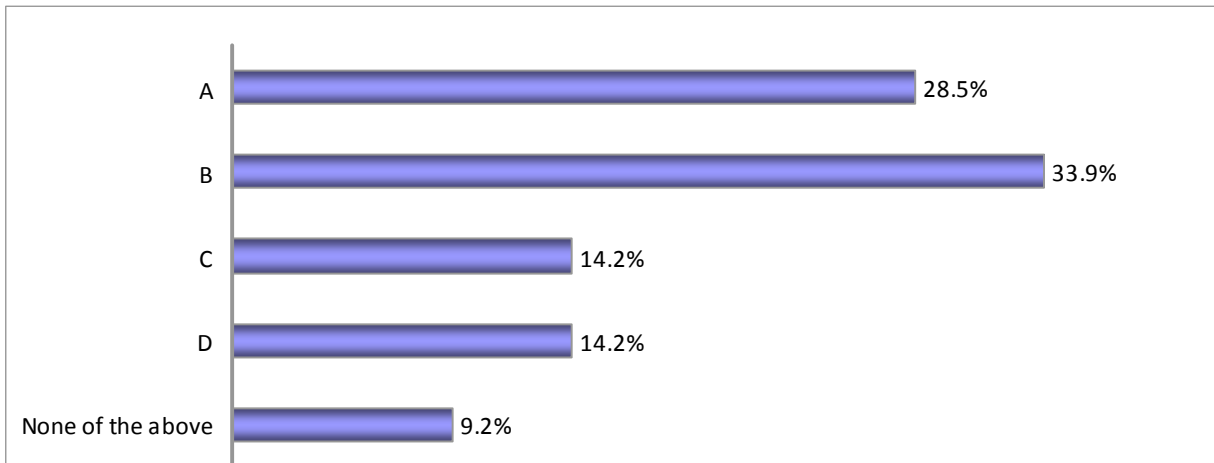


C



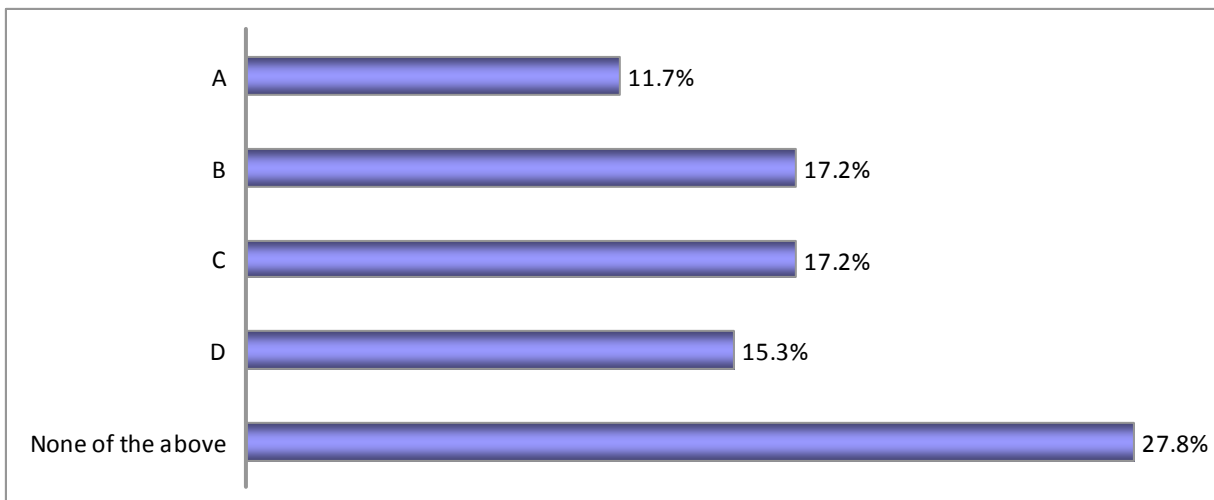
D

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N = 710

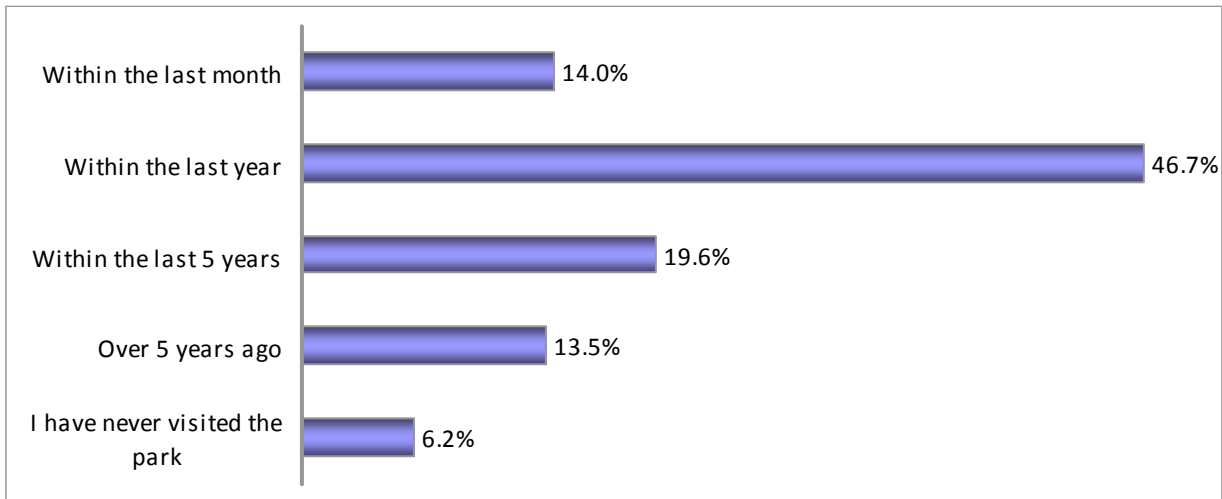
7. Of the above places on Mud Island River Park today, which place do you like least?



N = 70

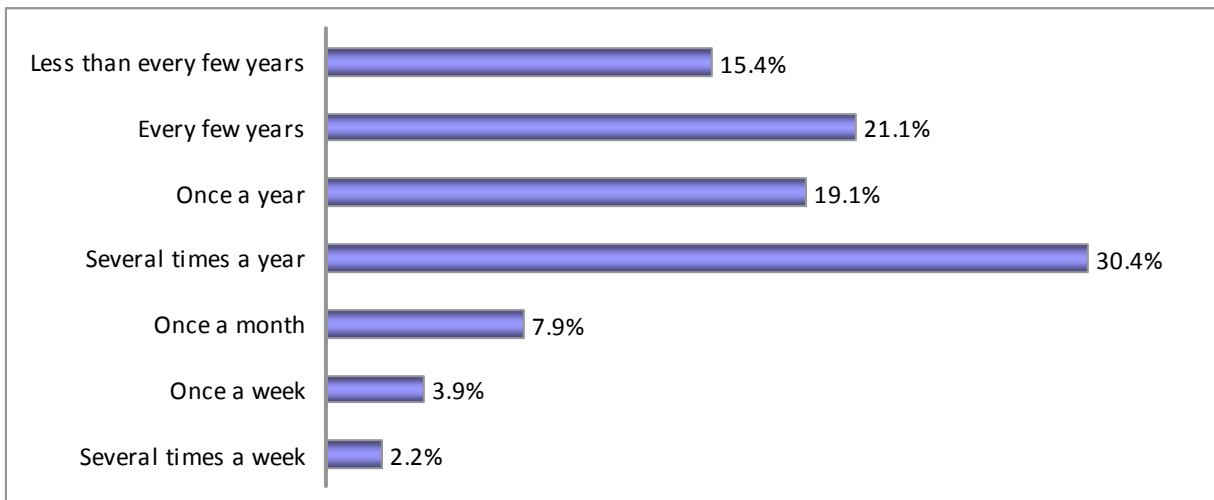
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8. When was the last time you visited Mud Island River Park?



N = 724

9. On average how frequently do you visit the Mud Island River Park (Note: Answered only if the respondent had visited in the past)?



N = 674

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10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following descriptions of Mud Island River Park?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	N =
The park is safe	27.3%	47.7%	15.1%	4.1%	0.8%	5%	656
The park is clean	19.3%	50.5%	17.3%	7.9%	0.8%	4.3%	658
There are lots of interesting things to see	8%	30.7%	24.5%	25.1%	9.9%	1.8%	654
There are plenty of interesting things to do	4.9%	22%	23.8%	33.7%	13.9%	1.7%	655
People of all ages have things to do there	8.4%	32.4%	20.3%	26.1%	10.2%	2.4%	654
It is easy to get to	11.4%	34%	19.8%	22.6%	10.8%	1.4%	656
It is easy to find your way around the park	14.1%	54.1%	18.8%	8.6%	1.2%	3.2%	654
It is affordable	19.7%	46.1%	20.8%	5.2%	1.5%	6.7%	655
There is good access to the Mississippi River	11%	34.5%	21.7%	19.2%	8.4%	5.2%	655

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following descriptions of Mud Island River Park?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	N =
There is beautiful landscaping	9.5%	34.5%	27.6%	21.2%	3.5%	3.6%	631
There are enough comfortable places to sit	6.9%	34.3%	25.4%	23.1%	2.4%	7.9%	635
There are enough shady spots	6.8%	33.7%	21.8%	27.4%	1.9%	8.4%	632
There are enough picnic spots	5.1%	24.8%	29.4%	26.5%	1.7%	12.5%	633
Lots of interesting programs and events happen there	3.3%	13.6%	22.3%	40.7%	12.8%	7.1%	631
There are enough places to get food	2.1%	7.1%	16.9%	41.5%	22.5%	10%	632
The food there is good quality	1.4%	6.3%	27.9%	28.2%	18.9%	17.3%	631
The food there is good value	1.3%	6.1%	32.4%	24.8%	17.9%	17.6%	626
The museum is really interesting	11.8%	35.4%	23.1%	11.8%	5.2%	12.6%	633

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12. Which of these public spaces/water's edge treatments would be most desirable for Mud Island?



A



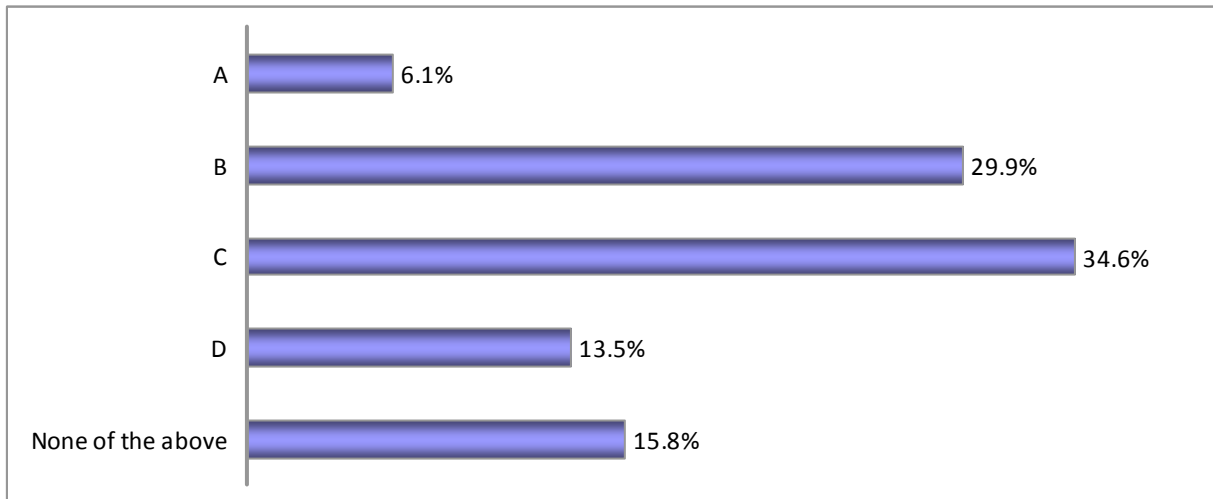
B



C



D



N = 688

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13. Which of these public spaces/water's edge treatments would be most desirable for Mud Island?



A



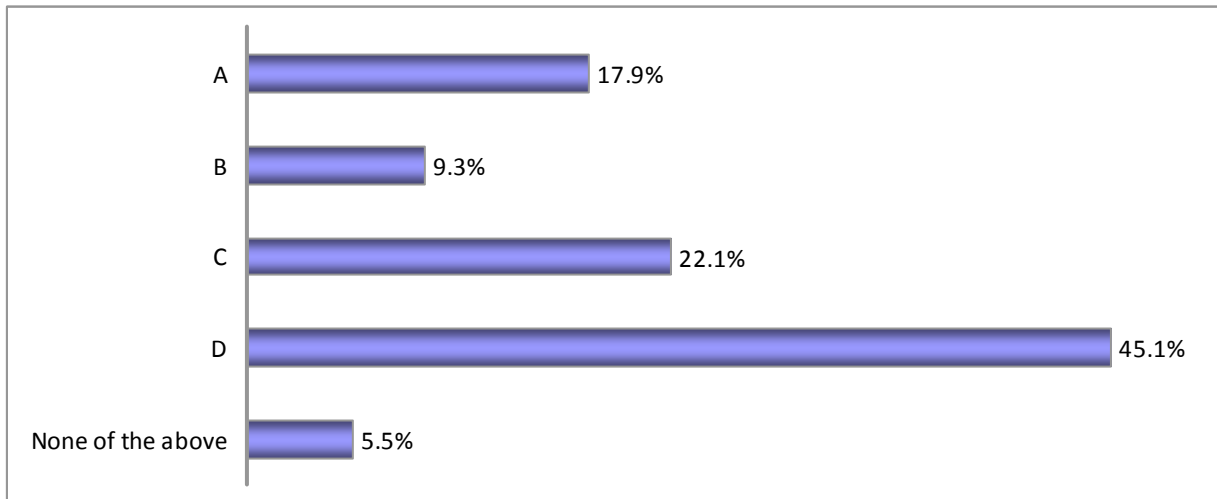
B



C



D



N = 687

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14. Which of these public spaces/water's edge treatments would be most desirable for Mud Island?



A



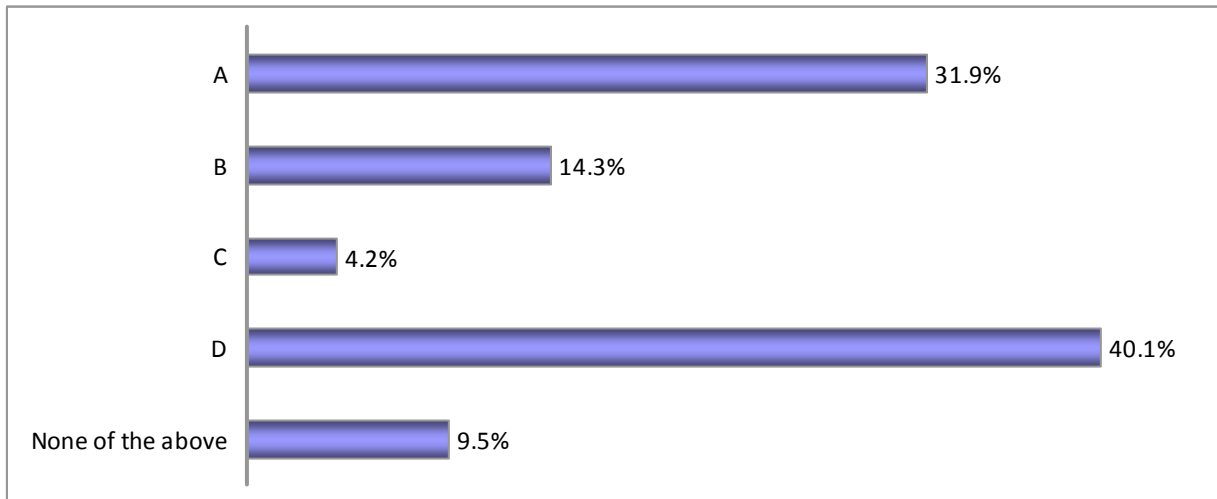
B



C



D



N = 686

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15. Which of these public spaces/water's edge treatments would be most desirable for Mud Island?



A



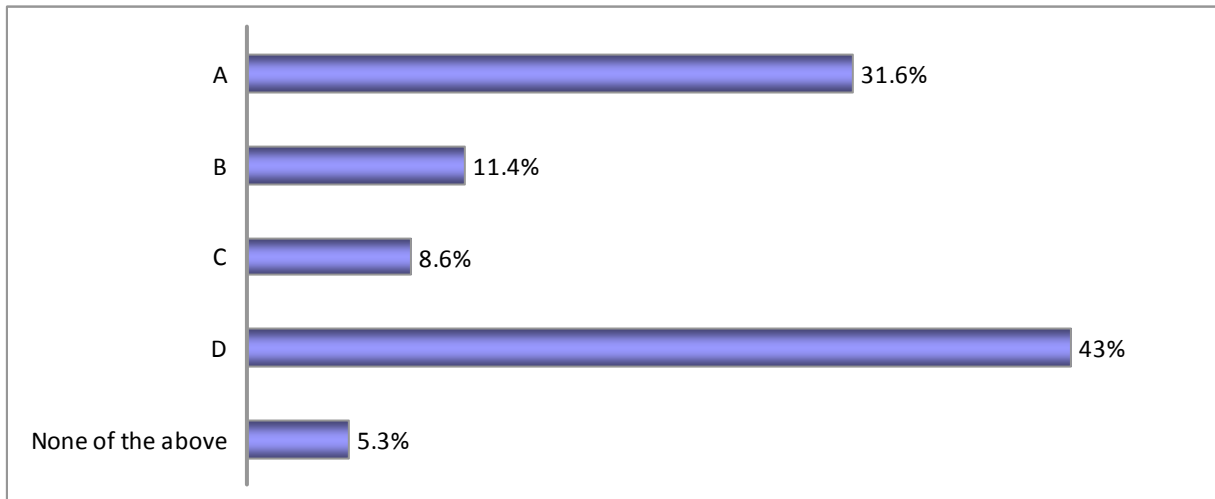
B



C



D



N = 683

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16. Which of these public spaces/water's edge treatments would be most desirable for Mud Island?



A



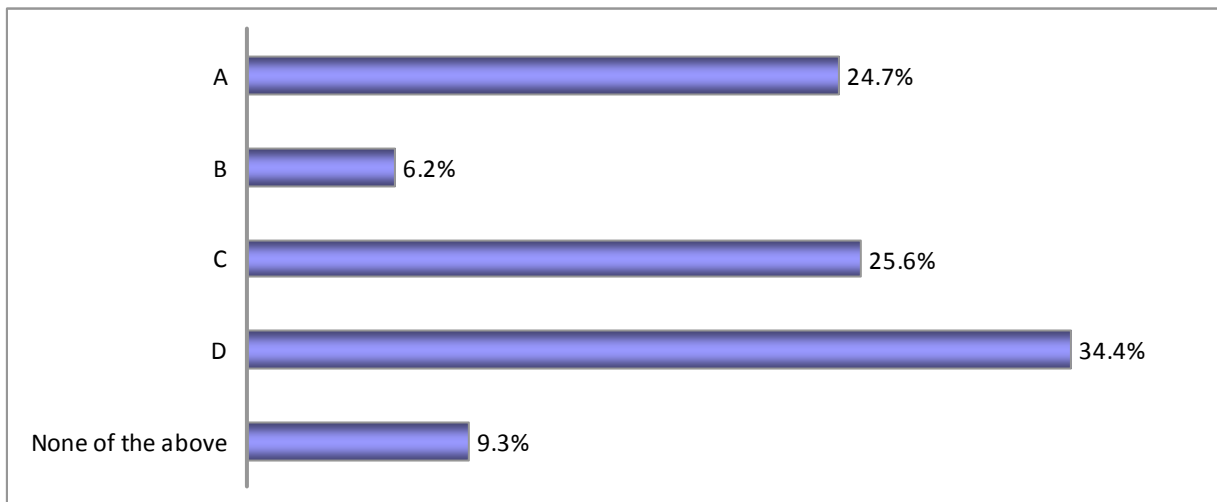
B



C



D



N = 681

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17. Which of these public spaces/water's edge treatments would be most desirable for Mud Island?



A



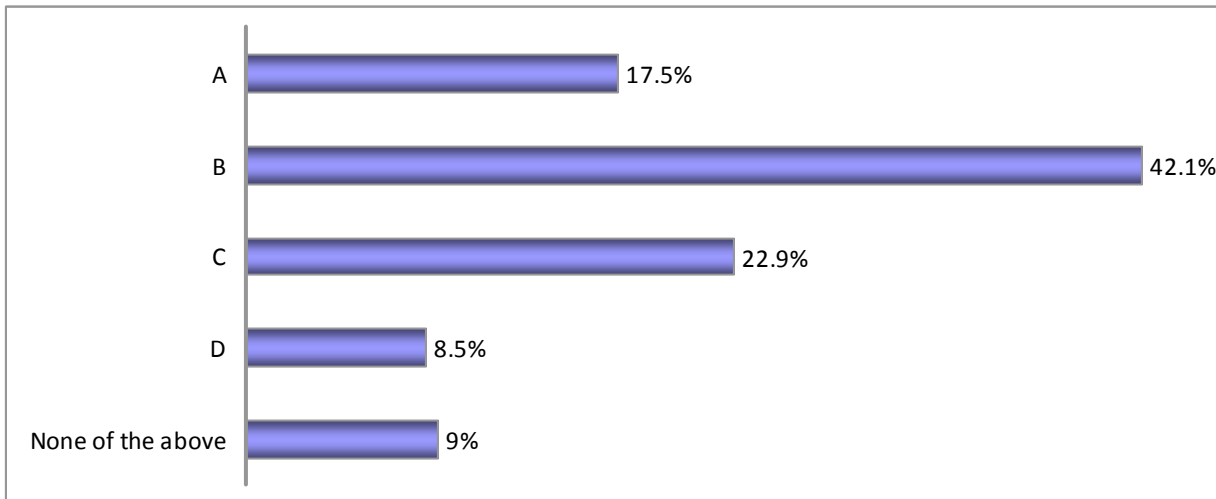
B



C



D



N = 681

Mud Island Land Use Study: Phase I Survey Results

18. Which of these public spaces/water's edge treatments would be most desirable for Mud Island?



A



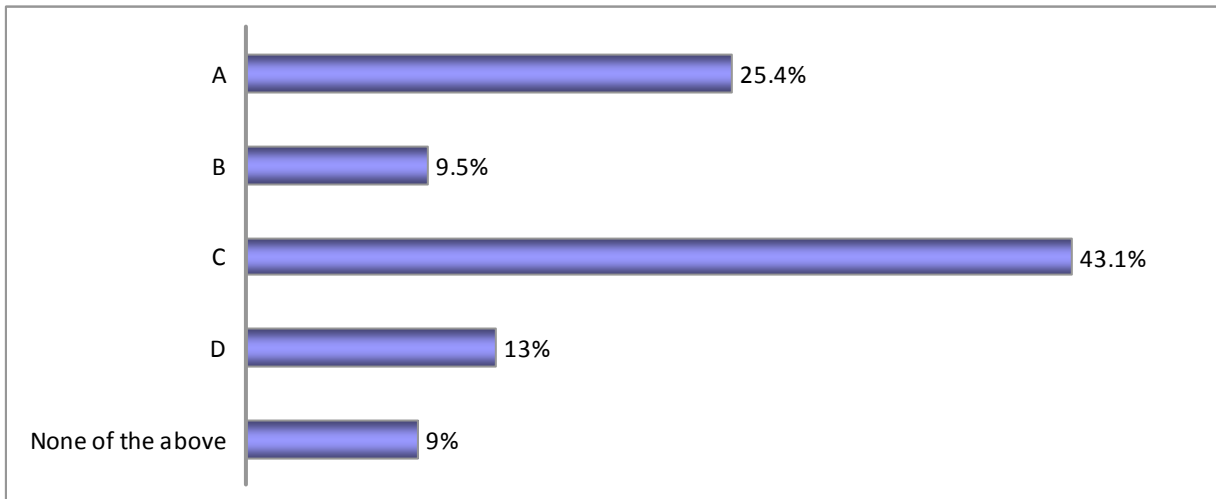
B



C



D



N = 677

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19. Which of these activities would be most desirable for Mud Island?



A



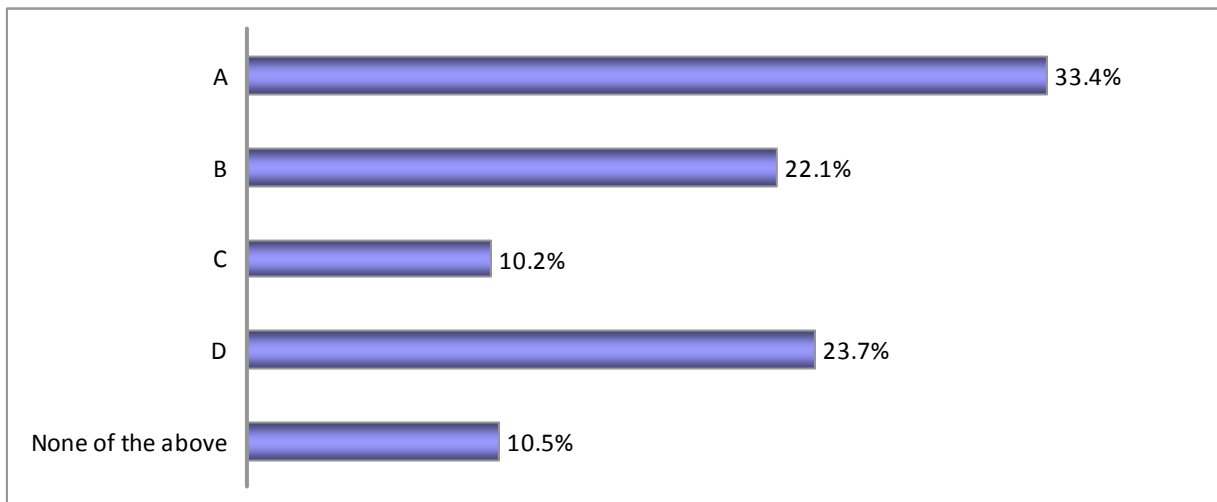
B



C



D



N = 683

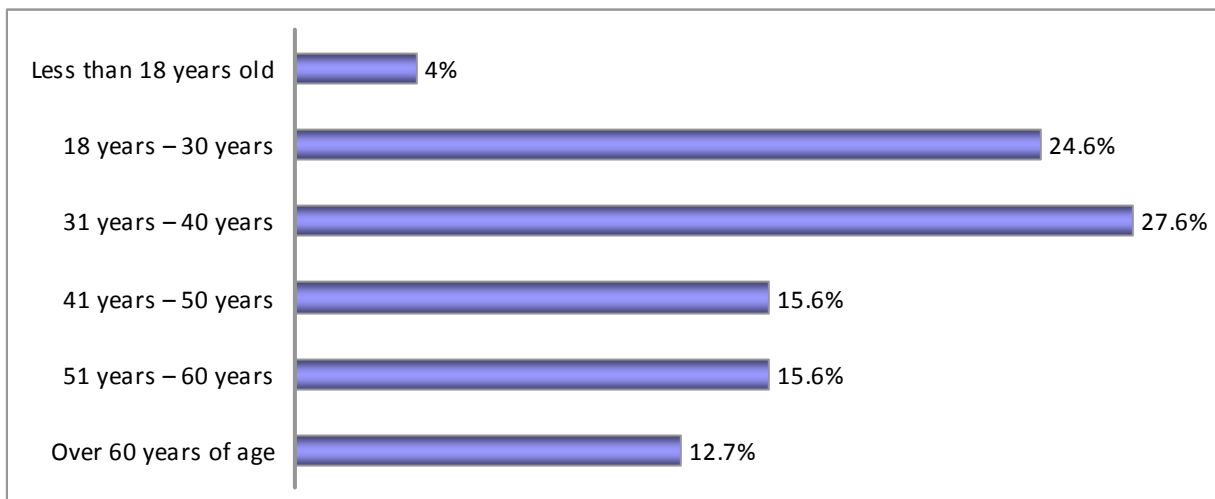
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20. Do you have any suggestions to improve Mud Island River Park? (N = 641)

Responses were widely varied. However, the following were frequently mentioned:

- Skate park
- Active street life including street vendors (food and goods), street performers, musical performances, open air market
- Increase use of the amphitheater
- Wide variety of outdoor activities
- Extend Greenbelt Park to MIRP
- Better promotion
- Family entertainment
- Shopping
- Restaurants
- Emphasize local vendors (food and shopping)
- Ease the access in all ways (parking, walking, biking, boating)
- Public boat access
- Use natural assets
- Better maintenance and update buildings
- More shade, less concrete
- Renovate the museum
- Affordable activities and food
- Keep the River Replica
- Keep the amount of physical development low
- Keep vagrants out
- Playground/spray park

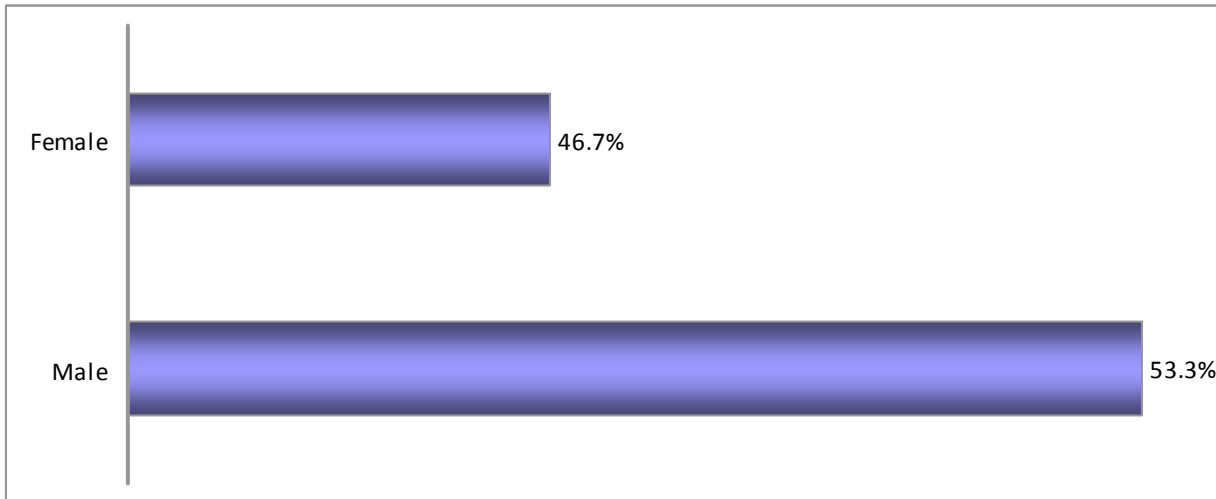
21. Please tell us your age.



N = 675

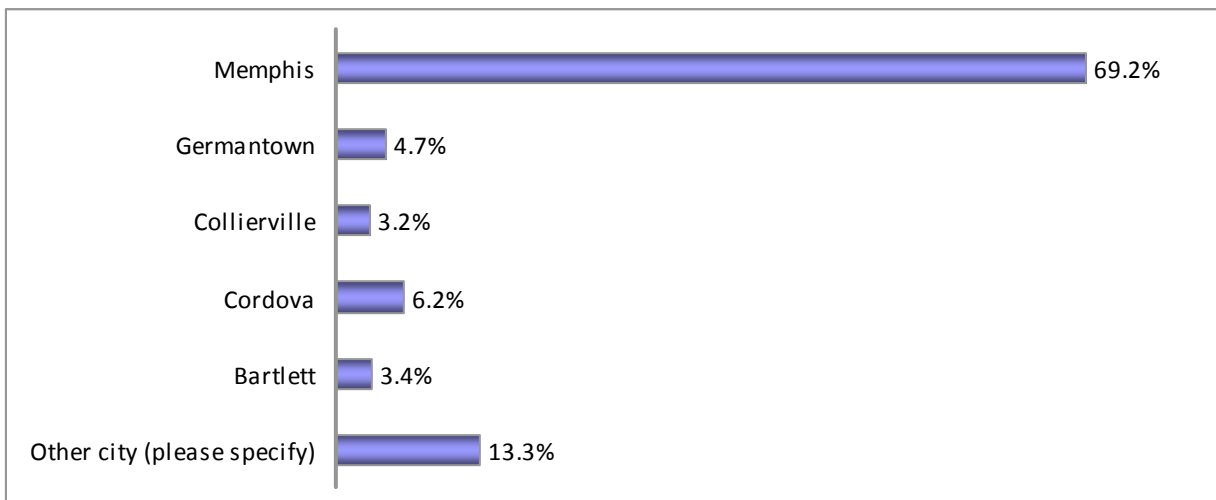
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22. Please tell us your gender.



N = 666

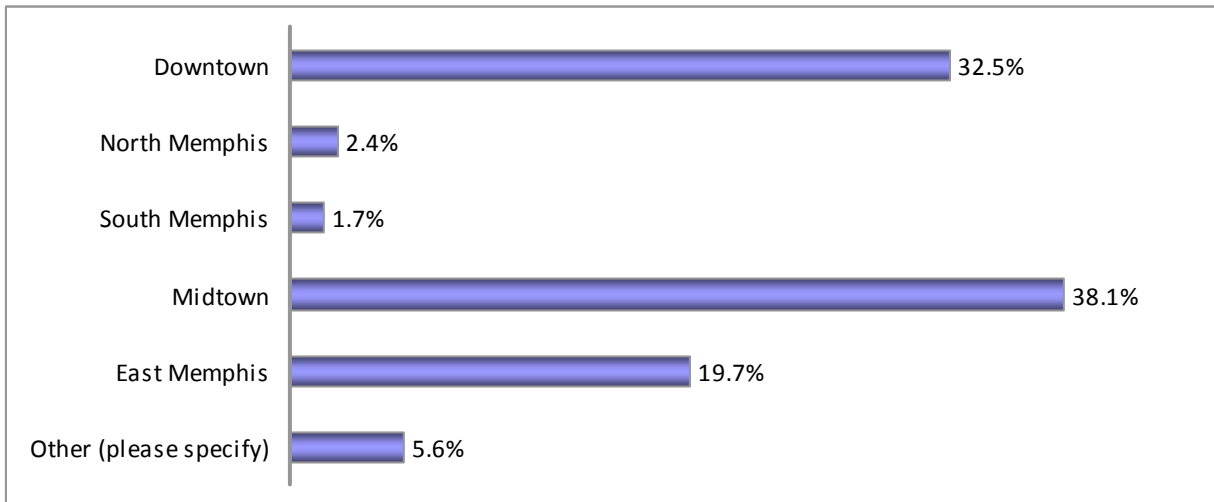
23. Where do you live?



N = 679

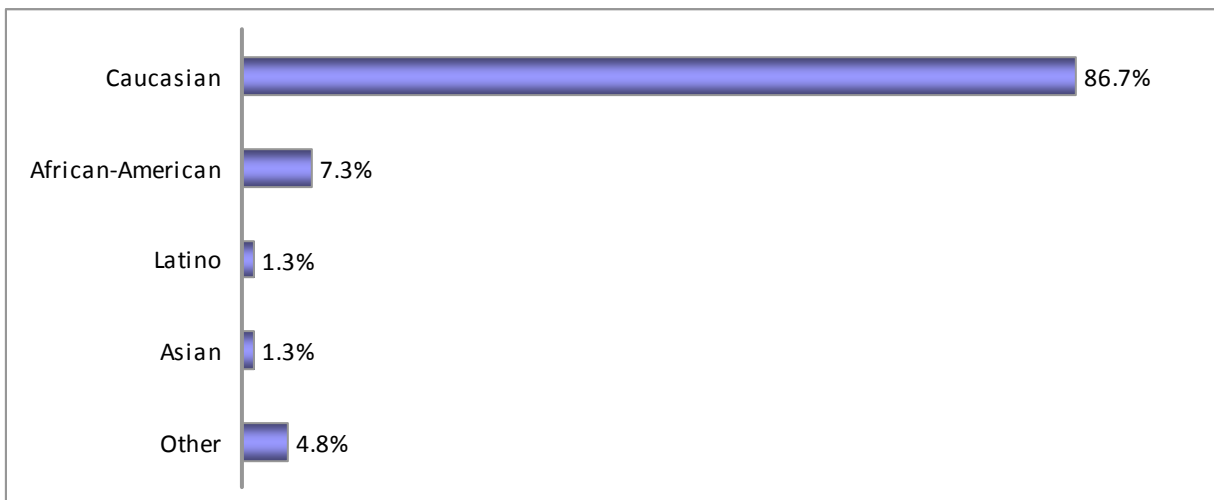
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24. What area of Memphis do you live in?



N = 467

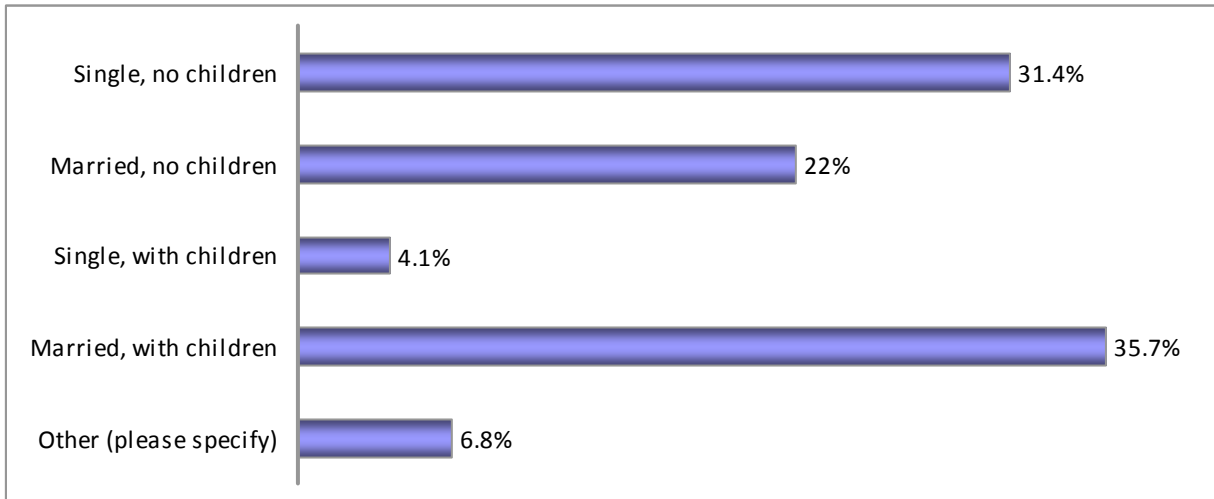
25. How would you describe your ethnicity? Please check all that apply.



N = 667

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26. How would you describe your household status?



N = 676

Other responses:

- Married, with grown child and grandchildren
- Married, grown children
- Single, grown children
- Child, living with parents
- Divorced, empty-nester
- Living with significant other
- Living with significant other, with child
- None of your business