

SUBMITTED FOR FINAL REVIEW

A VISION FOR

EASTLAND

A CATALYST FOR GROWTH

**ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY
AUGUST 22, 2019**

SEQUEL & D. WILSON AGENCY

PRESENTED TO CROSLAND SOUTHEAST and CITY OF CHARLOTTE

SEQUEL 
D. Wilson Agency

BETTER POSITIONED

Through intentional efforts to engage a wide mix of east side residents, the Eastland Redevelopment effort is now poised to move to the next phase of development more informed, with a greater level of engagement, stronger connections, and an increased level of trust and openness to new possibilities for the site.

The Engagement Team has lead a strategic and concerted effort to ensure the voice of the eastside community could be heard and reflected in development plans for the former Eastland Mall site. As a result, initial concerns about trust have decreased significantly.

More than ten (10) channels were used to engage and/ or collect feedback. The demographic mix of residents engaged through feedback channels is reflective of the demographics represented in the community. This is especially important given the rich cultural diversity in east Charlotte.

The analysis of all engagement efforts, communications and social media activity highlighted certain themes that surfaced consistently. These represent a collective voice of the community that should be reflected in final plans. The following pages are a summary of engagement efforts and learnings that should be carried forward.

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

The strategy for public engagement was designed to ensure every effort was given to provide opportunities to give feedback to any resident who desired to do so.

It was important that the feedback received reflected the demographic makeup of the area. Preferences for how people like to engage can differ among demographic and socioeconomic groups. Careful thought and planning was committed to align feedback channels with the preferred methods of the various groups represented in the community.

To reduce potential barriers, and ensure all residents had an opportunity to participate:

- Ten (10) engagement channels were leveraged for outreach and feedback.
- All group engagement sessions were held in the east Charlotte community (only one exception).
- Childcare was available for all group engagement sessions.
- Bilingual translation was available for all group engagement sessions.



SEVERAL ENGAGEMENT CHANNELS USED FOR COMPREHENSIVE OUTREACH

- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Public Survey
- Email Communications
- Public Forum
- Social Media Promotion
- Next Door
- Media and Social Media Influencers
- Community Partners
- In-Person Feedback/ Listening

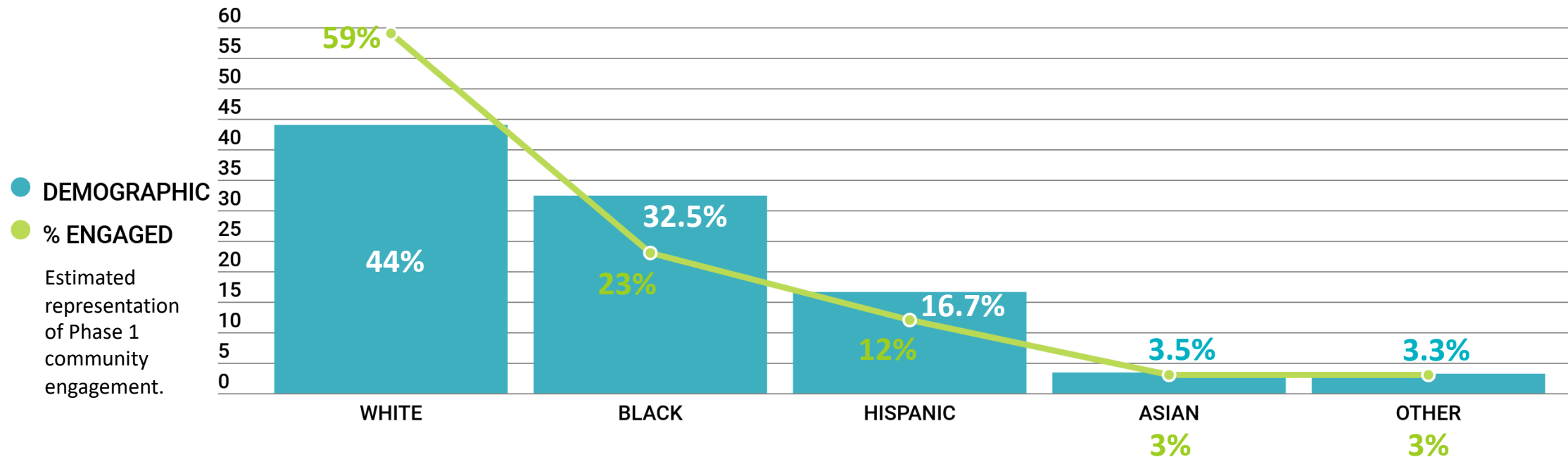
EASTSIDE DEMOGRAPHICS & ENGAGEMENT

East Charlotte celebrates its unique position as the most culturally diverse part of Charlotte. Diverse perspectives in the feedback received is critical to success. Our goal is to ensure the demographic makeup of those engaged in the community outreach process closely aligns with the demographics of the community. The chart is snapshot of our progress through Phase 1.

Population by demographics within a 5-mile radius of Eastland Mall*

White – 44%
Black – 32.5%
Hispanic – 16.7%

Asian – 3.5%
Other – 3.3%

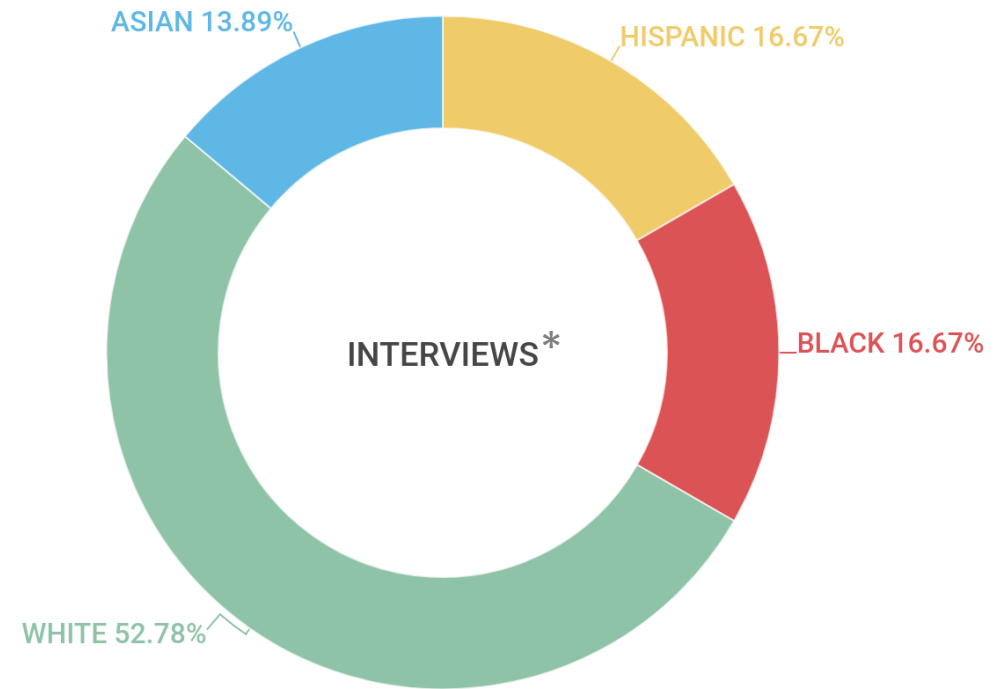
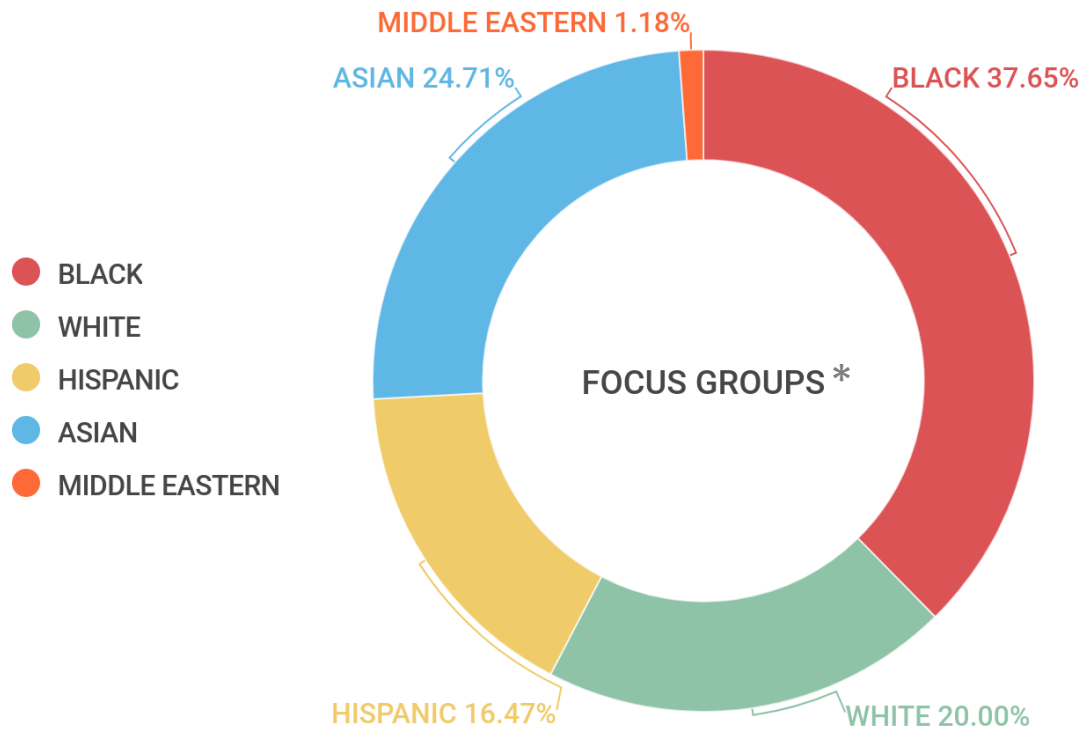


SMALLER SETTINGS MORE INCLUSIVE

East Charlotte population by demographics
- collected from CoStar.

White – 44%
Black – 32.5%
Hispanic – 16.7%

Asian – 3.5%
Other – 3.3%



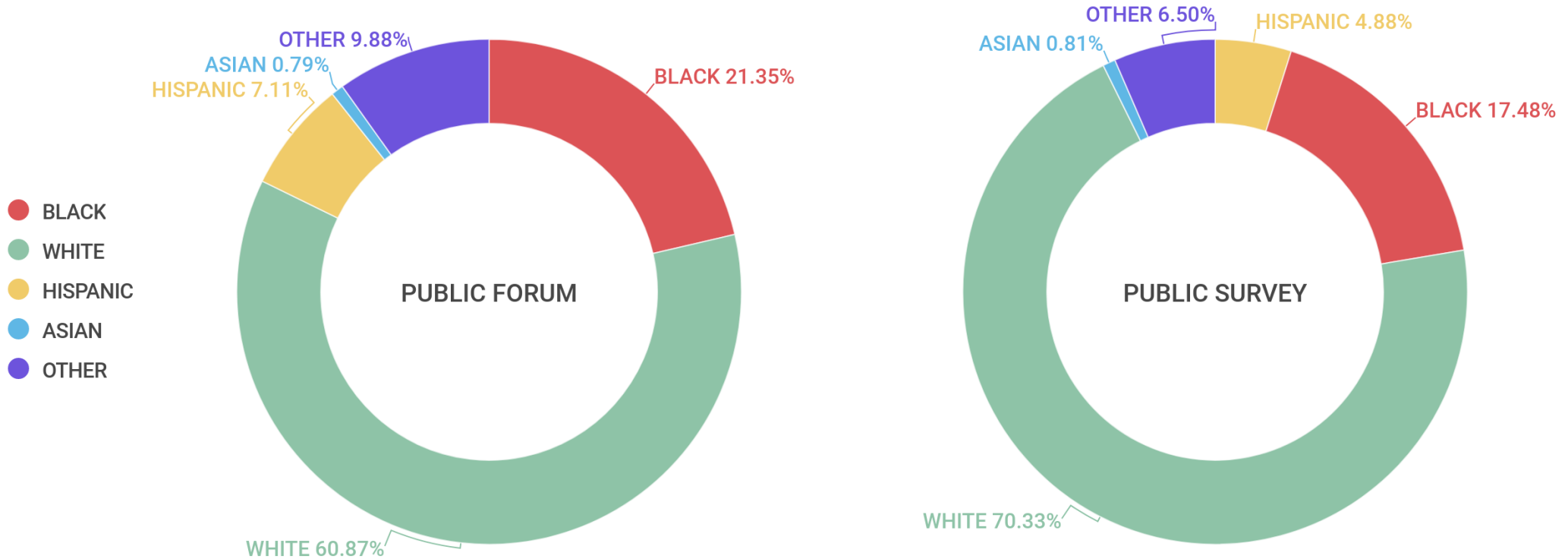
**Self-reported via participation surveys. Data prior to 5/6 estimated.*

MULTIPLE OPEN FORUMS PROVIDED

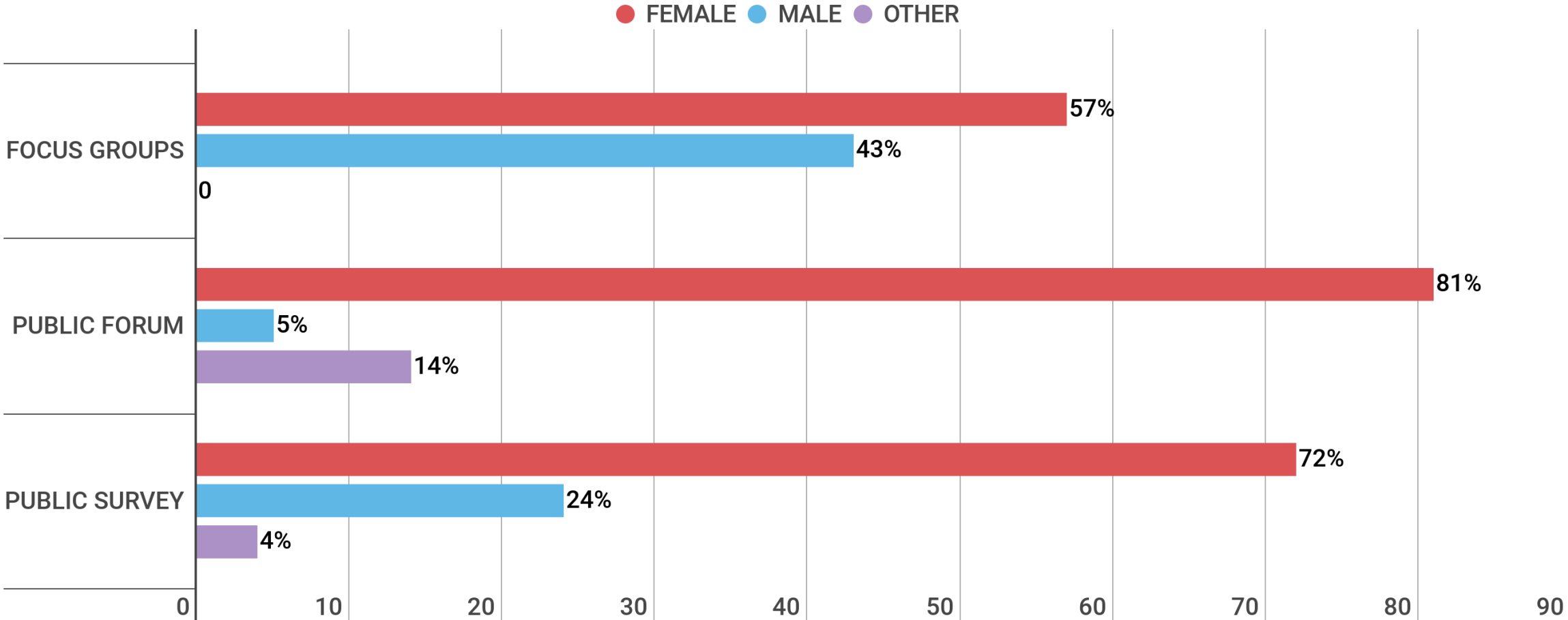
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ENGAGEMENT BY GENDER*



**Self-reported via participation surveys. Data prior to 5/6 estimated.*

*We conservatively estimate that
more than 700 unique residents have been engaged thus far in the process.
The following is a snapshot of the volume of key touchpoints.*

KEY ENGAGEMENT TOUCH POINTS

523 EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS
20 mailing lists

28 EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

250 PUBLIC SURVEY
RESPONDENTS

40+ INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

127 FOCUS GROUP
PARTICIPANTS

10 FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

190 PUBLIC FORUM
ATTENDANCE

100 IN-MARKET PROMOTION
AT BUSINESSES
Grassroots efforts with local businesses

157 COMMUNITY MEETING
ATTENDEES

4 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION MEETINGS

DIVERSE ENGAGEMENT WAS INTENTIONAL



VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

INTENTIONAL ENGAGEMENT. INVALUABLE FEEDBACK.

The following is a summary of feedback received from all engagement channels used during the first phase of this initiative, through July 31, 2019.

GENERATED THE MOST PASSION

1. Excitement For Something New
2. Activities and Entertainment for All
3. Quality
4. Honoring Eastside History
5. Accessibility
6. Age Appropriate Activities
7. Preserving Cultural Identity
8. Affordable Housing
 - Concerns about displacement
 - Strong voices for and against
 - Misnomers about terminology
9. Economic Opportunities

RECURRING THEMES

- ❑ PROGRAM
- ❑ ACTIVATION
- ❑ CHARACTER
- ❑ SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT and INVESTMENT

PROGRAM

- Activities for Families
- Retail and Shopping
- International Cuisine
- Housing
- Parking
- Sports Facilities

ACTIVATION

- Programming
- Cultural Identity and History
- Green Spaces and Trails
- Senior Citizens
- Affordable Housing

CHARACTER

- Quality
- Safety
- Family Friendly
- Walkability
- Vibrancy and Design

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT and INVESTMENT

- Local Business Development
- Gentrification/ Displacement
- Investment in the Community
- Economic Mobility

PROGRAM

RECREATIONAL SPACES FOR FAMILIES and CHILDREN

Ensuring recreational opportunities exist that can benefit families

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concerns about the general lack of recreational activities currently in the area. Suggested additions included an aquarium, indoor basketball, outdoor soccer, volleyball, rollerblading, and a skating rink. A lot of support for sporting fields and amateur sports.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“...several hotels, transportation hub (space for a parking deck to be built later), a lot of Soccer fields- one a professional club could hold a World Series (I don't know soccer terms!), restaurants, GROCERY, Amphitheater, and Most important, a space for all of Charlotte to host 5k, 10k running and biking events (regardless of the weather)”

“I want to have a place to go again, to shop, eat, socialize, get exercise, and co-work. I would love for there to be a POOL and a community theater - NOT a movie theater, but a place for plays, improv shows, singer/songwriter nights, etc. where local groups could rehearse and perform”

“Greenway extension and pedestrian /bike/scooter lanes into uptown Charlotte! This Eastland site could be a great park facility like Freedom Park. Adjunct or on-site facilities that support entrepreneurship & diverse & collaborative meeting & retail spaces. The residential properties around these types of enhancements are in-turn enhanced and more attractive to home-buyers”

RETAIL and SHOPPING

Ensuring there are quality retail establishments that address a variety of shopping needs.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concerns that current retail options are limited and that plans address needs for the current community, as well as the needs of future residents.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“Retail, not a little store but a place like Marshalls , where I can buy clothing, housewares etc. There is nothing except Ross, but it is not near Albemarle road, etc. We are the poorer part of town, and I personally am fed up with being treated that way.”

“The east side is dying and it needs true revitalization. Affordable housing, as well as access to entertainment and quality shopping..”

“Bring high-end, quality restaurants and shopping to the project. We already have enough stores, restaurants, grocers for the budget shopper. The retail, restaurants, and grocers need to be unique, in that only a few to none exist in the area or in Charlotte already.”

INTERNATIONAL CUISINE

East Charlotte is known for its international cuisine – there is an opportunity to make this site a destination for cuisine and a hallmark for the project.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concern that the international cuisine the area currently enjoys will be negatively impacted by development. Suggested the need to develop comprehensive opportunities for restaurants from different cultures and the desire to create an international district.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“Because of my past with the ‘taste of the world,’ I have a strong feeling towards authentic international foods.”

“I think the food court idea to house different cuisines is a great idea. I think the 7th street public market is a great model (also love that it includes other businesses like the wine and cheese shops). Another place I’ve been with that same concept is Liberty Station in San Diego. It also housed a brewery (Stone) in beer garden on the same property.”

QUALITY HOUSING

Addressing issues with equal access to quality housing across the economic spectrum in Charlotte. Ensuring quality housing to enhance and revive the area.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Some residents want quality housing that is affordable. Others want quality housing at the price points suggested. All residents want high quality products.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“What about the residents who exist now in the area? Will they see [new development] as beautiful? Or will they feel as though they are being pushed out of the area?”

“Quantity and quality housing. We need a significant number of housing units and must make the most of available space to do so. That doesn't have to mean low-quality apts.”

Build “something that will likely last beyond 10 years.”

SPORTS FACILITY

Strong support for sports fields, recreational facilities and sporting events; as both a boost for economic mobility and a destination places for residents as well.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concerns with future development, and ensuring there will be a variety of sports venues in the future.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“A place for business to thrive, a world class sports rehab facility”

“Have fields that can be converted to different sports during different seasons. Lacrosse and ultimate frisbee would be nice.”

“Smaller game spaces in a park like setting. The athletic field space should be used for park space. We need that in the city. The soccer concept takes up too much valuable park space with fountains and an amphitheater. That will serve the community much better.”

ACTIVATION

PROGRAMS

Ensuring there are safe spaces for programming, both inside and outside for everyone, especially the youth, to engage.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Desires for a Gathering Place - an active community area with green space, public spaces, programming (like the arts), and an opportunity to highlight some of the best cultural cuisines that represent the east side and good food in general.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“Theater, Art and Music”

“Shopping and Entertainment for mature adults (i.e., rooftop bars, live music). Add some charm to the area that will give people a reason to want to live and play here. Look at the location, this is prime real estate - minutes from center city.”

“YMCA like the Morrison one in south charlotte. Move Simmons to that site and make it a community hub/center. Teens. Youth. Churches. Community groups-all can meet over there and make it accessible over the hidden scary area it’s in right now. It can be a mix if everything.”

CELEBRATE DIVERSITY, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

Ensuring the Eastside and its unique history, neighborhood pride, and special culture are maintained as the area evolves into its next version.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concerns about the area's unique history, neighborhood pride, and special culture's ability to grow and thrive. Looking to affirm that new development will be inclusive of many different cultures; showcasing the unique cultural diversity of the area as a feature and reason to visit.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

[My] "vision to transform [the Eastland Mall area] through a United Nations approach that brings it all together."

"I've said it before; we should leverage the cultural/international diversity we already have by turning the space into an international cultural center that features foods, shopping and entertainment. Imagine a mini "Epcot"; a little village with a town center for entertainment. Sure, it would have to be heavily supported financially, but would become a tourist draw and eventually be self-sustaining."

GREEN SPACES

Addressing the need for outdoor spaces that provide access to nature.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concerns about the current lack of greenway connections, bike lanes, and access to light rail.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“It depends on what you call redevelopment. Too much concrete, too many condos and apartments go up overnight. It would be nice to see a park.”

Would like to see “multi-use green spaces plus water features.”

“I am concerned with the parking. We want a family type of green space.”

SENIOR CITIZENS

Seniors being able to afford increase property taxes on a fixed income in addition to general quality of life enhancements as they relate specifically to the aged and aging population in the area.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Ensuring access to maintain affordable property taxes, as well as access affordable housing and health care. Concerns about the need to strike a balance of new development without displacement. Tax increases for seniors and others and the risk of losing homes as a result is a prominent concern. Overall a desire to ensure that the new site is accommodating for seniors to enjoy as well.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“I am concerned about being able to stay in my home. Am I going to be able to afford what you are doing?”

“I feel that it should be mirrored like the Renaissance West Community. It has apartments, Senior apartments, a school, a daycare. I would do those things but add a few townhomes a park, and a pool. I like the idea of a child could go to school and when they get out of school they could go and stay with the grandparents in the senior apartment until the parent(s) comes home from work.”

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Residents almost equally for and against mixed-income housing.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Some concerned about very low cost housing and the perceived impact on the neighborhood. Others desire to have affordable housing so people with lower incomes can afford to live on the property. Overall desire to address the needs of residents of all ages. Desire to strike a balance of new development without displacement. There is a common misunderstanding about affordable housing.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“We need housing close to the city at all price points and we need denser development on that plot of land to bring economic growth and prosperity to everyone living on the east side as well as new property owners. Growth is already happening and will not stop. I am in residential real estate and that area is already super hot for 1st time home buyers.”

“I am not convinced that housing in this area is a good idea. I absolutely am against the idea of apartments or low income housing. We already have that. What this community needs is a place for relaxation, entertainment, a grocery store, and community activities.”

PARKING

Ensuring there is adequate parking for current and future residential and retail establishments in the area.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concerns about a lack of parking when completed. Suggestions to consider density by “going high and tighter,” and consider building parking decks and the use of parallel parking.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“I see too much surface parking - people going to be walking forever.”

“Please keep the word “walkability” in mind while developing while also providing parking garages for those to visit, park, and walk around and spend time in the neighborhood.”

“...parking is my concerned-limited green space. We are an older generation on this side of town.”

CHARACTER

FAMILY-FRIENDLY and SAFE

Ensuring a safe environment for families to enjoy and thrive. Increasing the likelihood of residents staying in the area for conveniences and entertainment.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concerns about the general lack of family-friendly spaces. Suggested neighborhood pods inclusive of grocery, dining and recreation. The desire is to live, work, and play in a safe space.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“...We were attractive to the Eastside many years ago because it was a safe friendly family environment and had all that we needed. [We] didn't have to go to the other sides for groceries stores, entertainment it was just minutes away from our neighborhood”

WALKABILITY

Ensuring there is adequate, safe access to retail and residential without the need for a vehicle as well as walking trails onsite.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In addition to several discussions about trails, there were several questions and recommendations about accessibility from other communities via sidewalks and connectors.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“Is there an interest in a walking track?”

Would like to see “walking trails, a track to walk on.”

“Please keep the word “walkability” in mind while developing while also providing parking garages for those to visit, park, and walk around and spend time in the neighborhood.”

VIBRANCY & DESIGN

Ensuring the area reclaims its former vitality and the uniqueness of the area is emulated in the design that reflects the pride and character of the east side.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Desire for the design to reflect the character and uniqueness of the eastside. Concerns that there is a general lack of destinations in East Charlotte. Suggested fewer franchises, and more local small businesses. Looking for a “no cookie-cutter” destination; something that is transformative for the area of Eastland.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“We want to showcase the greatness of East Charlotte. How are you going to use to showcase the environmental goals with sustainability? I want it to be transformational to showcase this.”

“I support development of the area. I just don’t want to see the generic development model of Charlotte, Starbucks, condos and craft breweries. Charlotte can do better and be more original about its choice of development. What happens years later when we have another empty retail space that didn’t succeed. Let’s build more multi-use space, more community gardens, alternative recreational areas, things that actually bring communities together, rather than places for people to spend money on useless retail items and craft beer.”

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT and INVESTMENT

LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Opportunities for local businesses to relocate or launch at the new site.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concern about affordability for small businesses and the feasibility of businesses in the area being able to afford rent.

Desires for a smart balance between retail and “community space” for residents to enjoy.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“There needs to be a stronger effort from leasing agents to allow opportunities for local businesses instead of the first option going to franchises.”

“Greenway extension and pedestrian/ bike/scooter lanes into uptown Charlotte! This Eastland site could be a great park facility like Freedom Park. Adjunct or on-site facilities that support entrepreneurship & diverse & collaborative meeting & retail spaces. The residential properties around these types of enhancements are in-turn enhanced and more attractive to home-buyers.”

GENTRIFICATION & DISPLACEMENT

Ensuring those who currently reside in the Eastland community still have a place in the community that connects to future generations and benefits families.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concerns about new housing on the site resulting in gentrification and leading to displacement. Seeking methods and assurance that people will be able to keep their homes.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“...I worry that if redevelopment is mishandled it will cause displacement of the current population. We need to ask for **WHOM** are we redeveloping the site. If the answer is for outsiders with money, that is the wrong answer. Let's keep price points low with whatever is built there. Also I would like for the Open Air Market and the skate park to be included in the plan.

“I am afraid of the redevelopment essentially becoming just another instance of gentrification, which has happened in most of the other areas in Charlotte that were formerly home to communities of people of color and lower incomes.”

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Addressing issues with lack of economic improvement opportunities in Charlotte.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Concerns about the impact on the quality of life for the residents. Desires to ensure the pending change will impact minorities and support programs that offer empowerment and employment. Suggested the need for programs for youth, and an overall development where everyone is included. Also suggested the need for space for non-profits to meet.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

“There needs to be space for nonprofits to meet and space for our children [to ensure they] are career-ready and prepared for the real world.”

“I strongly support the redeveloping of the old Eastland Mall site. I thank all of Charlotte Mecklenburg County Eastsiders residents deserve the quality of life as others in this city. We are looking for a positive change. The demographics of this area are not only multi-ethnic, but also consist of old and young, economic diversity as well.

GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT

AD HOC PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

Although not a direct inquiry, the following comments surfaced frequently in public survey results.

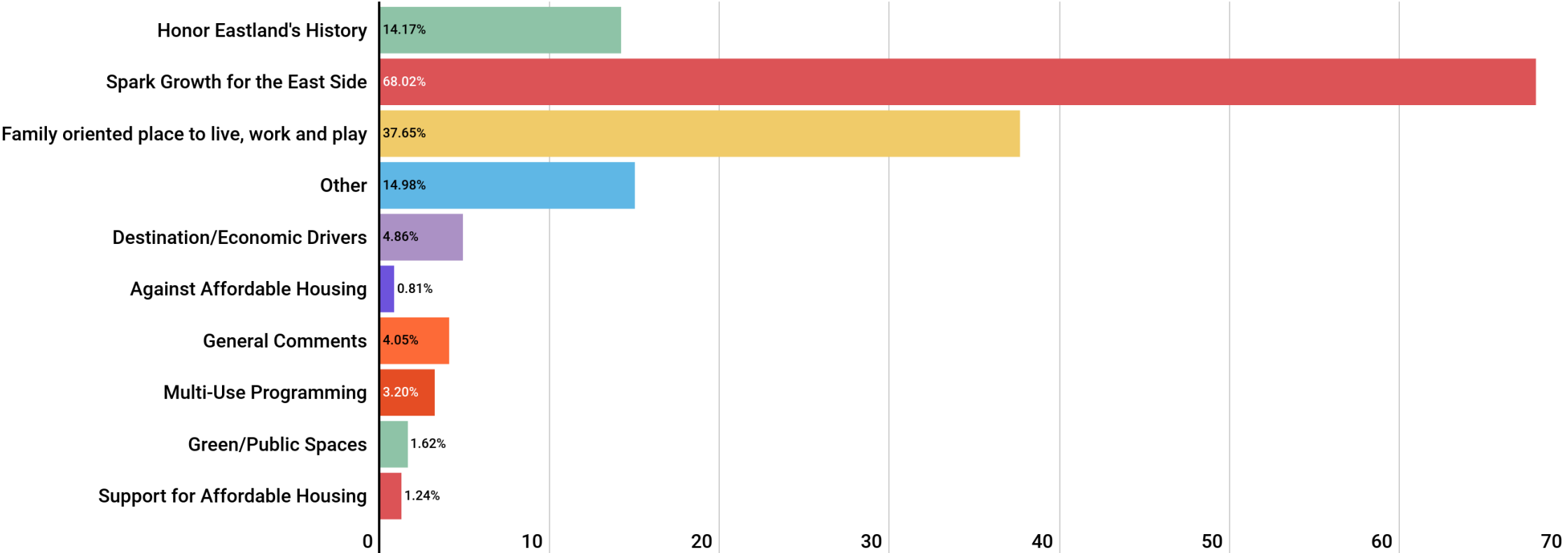
“IT IS BECOMING ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT CITY COUNCIL IS GOING TO *MANDATE* LOW INCOME HOUSING IN ADDITION TO THE FIVE HUNDRED ALLEGED ‘UPSCALE’ HOMES AND CREATE A PARKING LOT OUT OF THE STREETS SURROUNDING EASTLAND. WHOSE COMMUNITY IS IT, ANYWAY????”

“The East side is vibrant and diverse but our growth is lagging far behind the rest of the city partly because of a lack of investment by the city and the opportunity for good jobs in the area.”

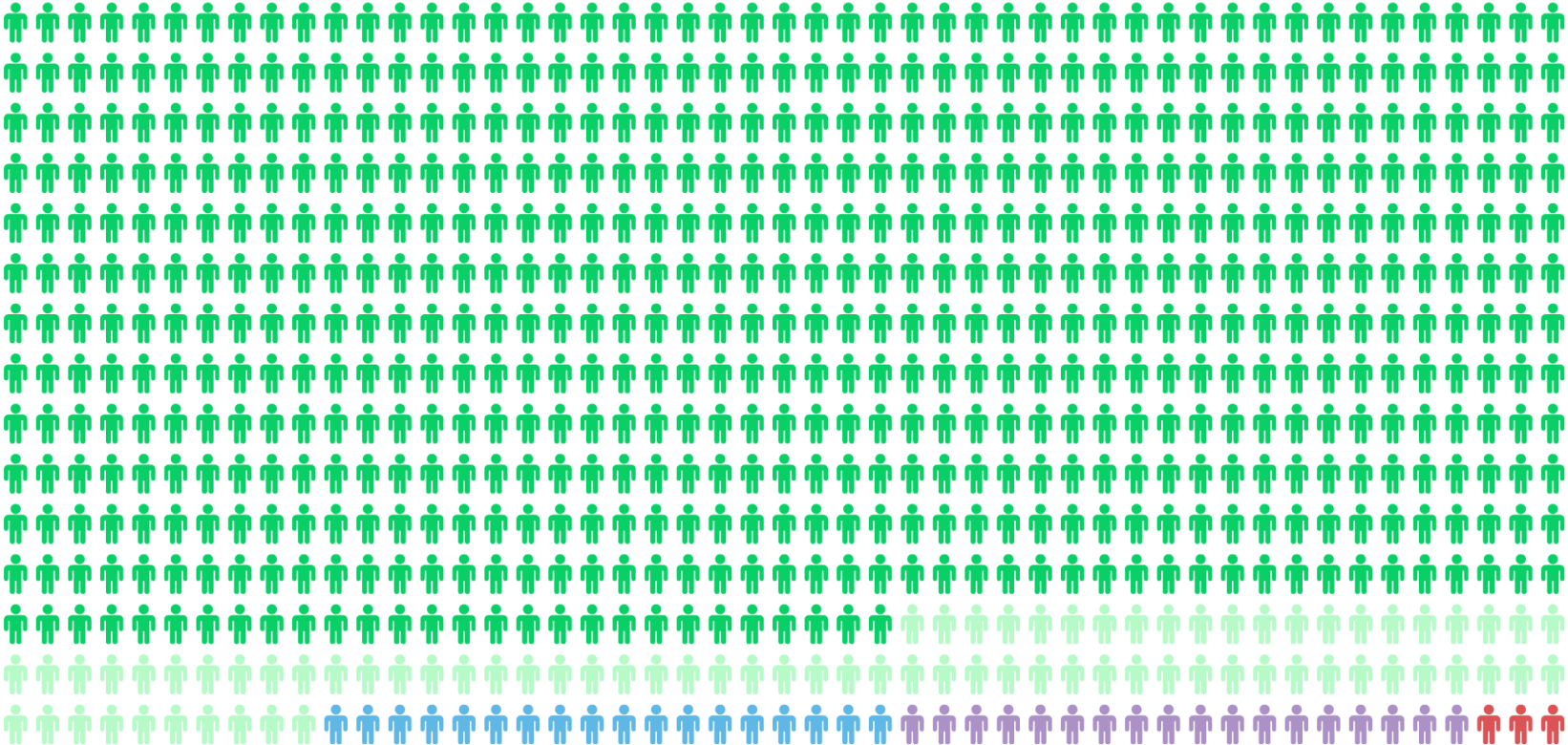
“It was once a very thriving area for a long time middle class citizens to call home. Then with city shifting focus to other areas of the city and county the east side begin to lose retail, grocery, the better schools and business resulting in exodus of the strong stable households to more thriving areas of the city and also EXODUS TO SURROUNDING counties and outside of the city. East side cannot rebound because our elected officials to (*sp*) not promote things that would help revive the area.”

PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

What are your aspirations for the new Eastland destination?



How much do you support or oppose redeveloping the former Eastland Mall site?



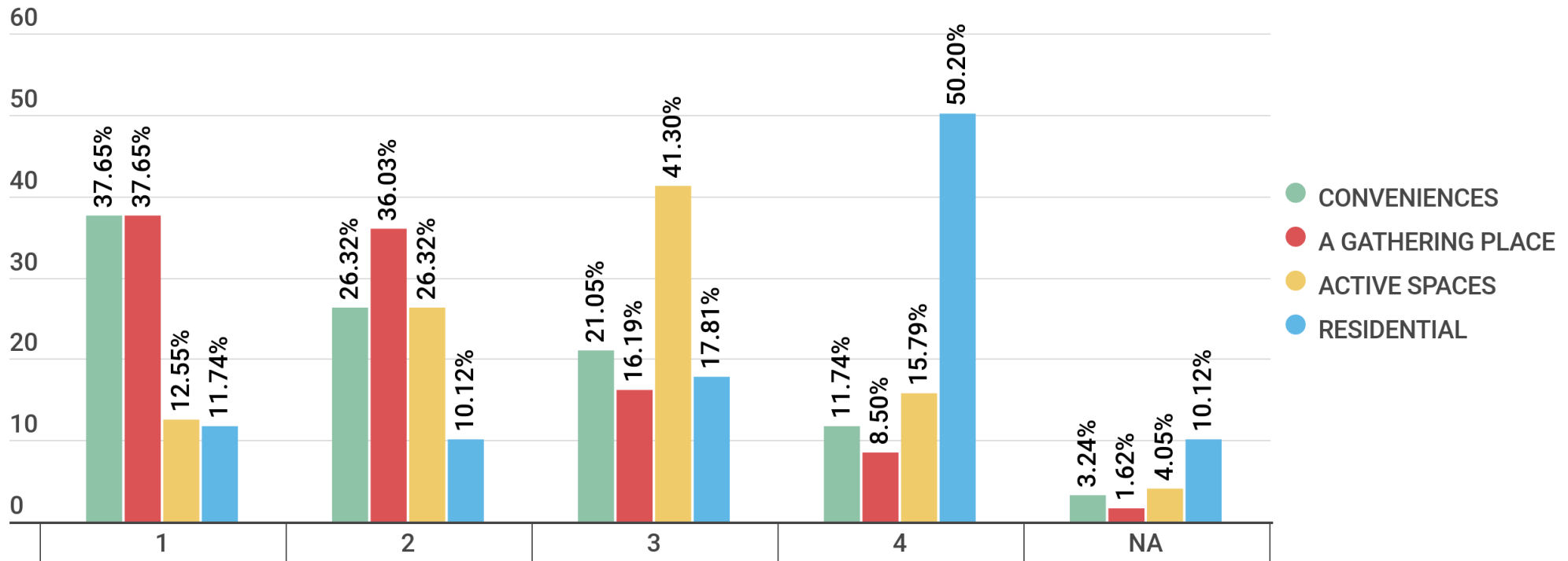
- Strongly support: 83.81%
- Somewhat support: 10.93%
- Neither support or oppose: 2.43%
- Somewhat oppose: 2.43%
- Strongly oppose: 0.40%

Why do you feel this way?

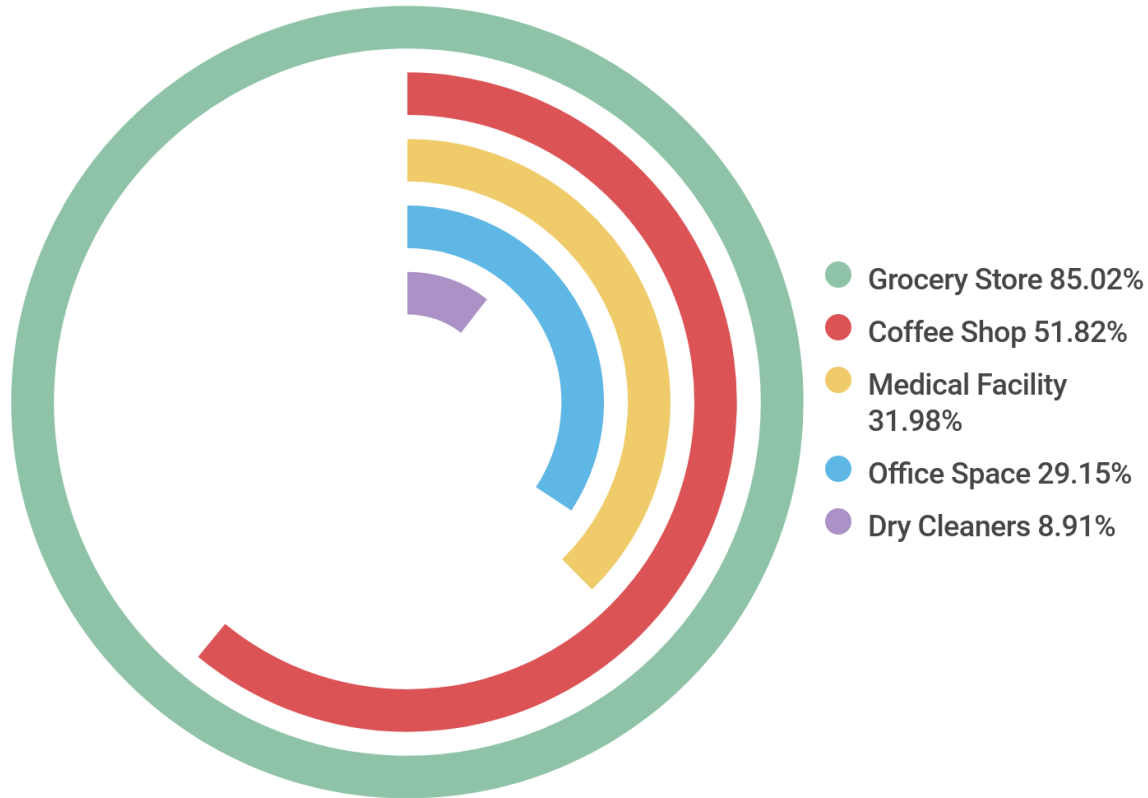


Most of the feedback we've heard so far has centered around four themes. Which do you think will be most important to the long-term success of the area?

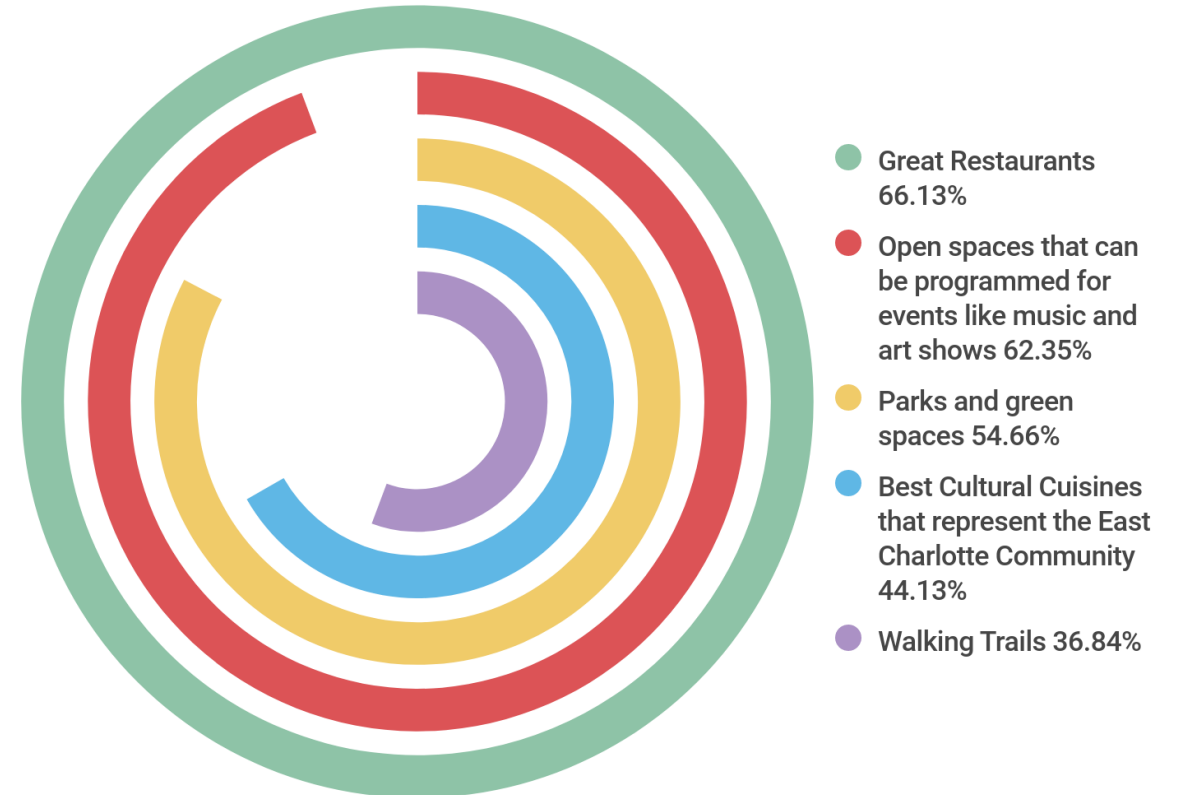
On a scale of 1 to 4, please rank in order of importance (using 1 as most important).



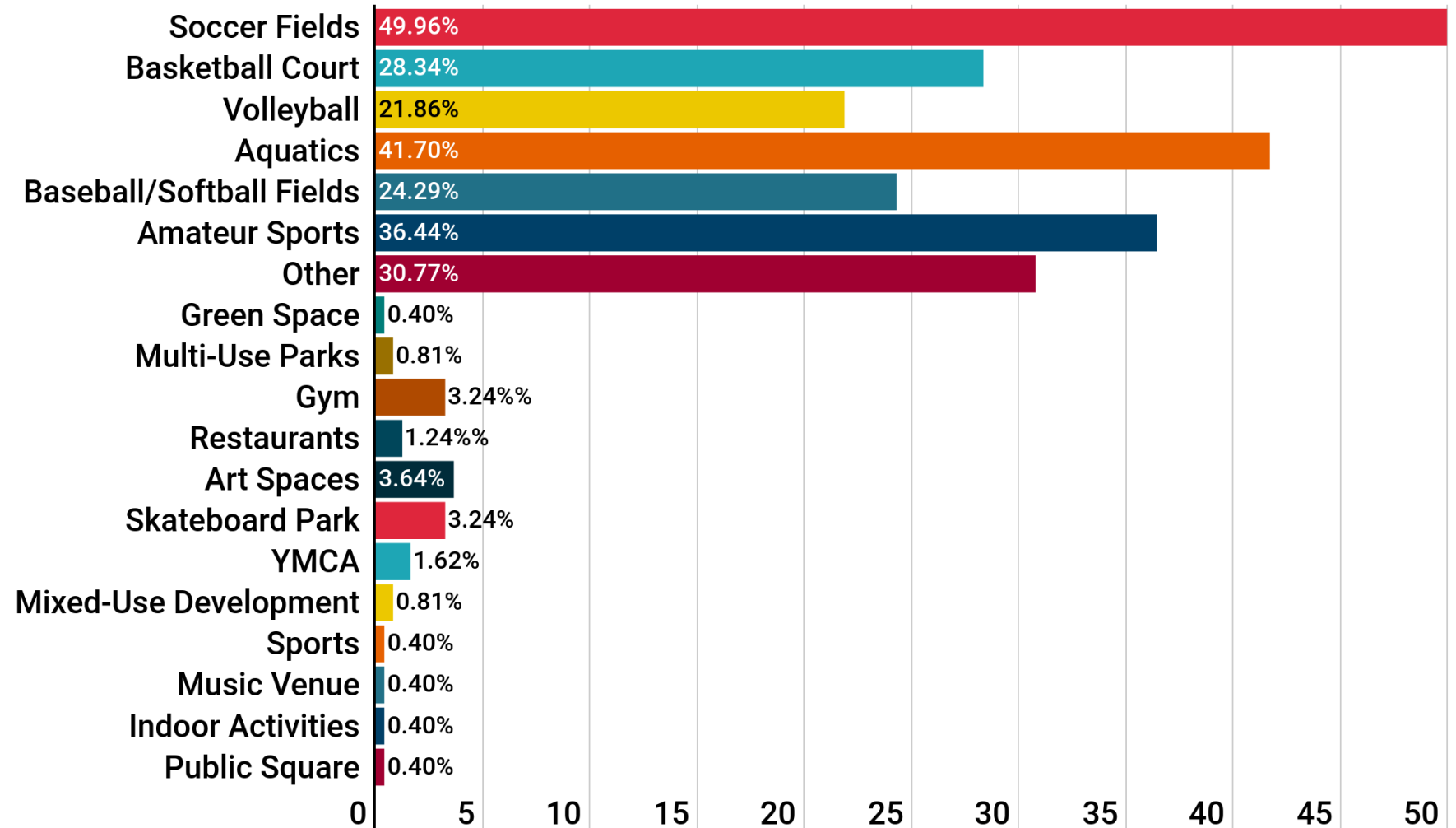
Which daily conveniences do you think are most needed on the site?



Which features would you desire most in a space to gather with family, friends, and the community?

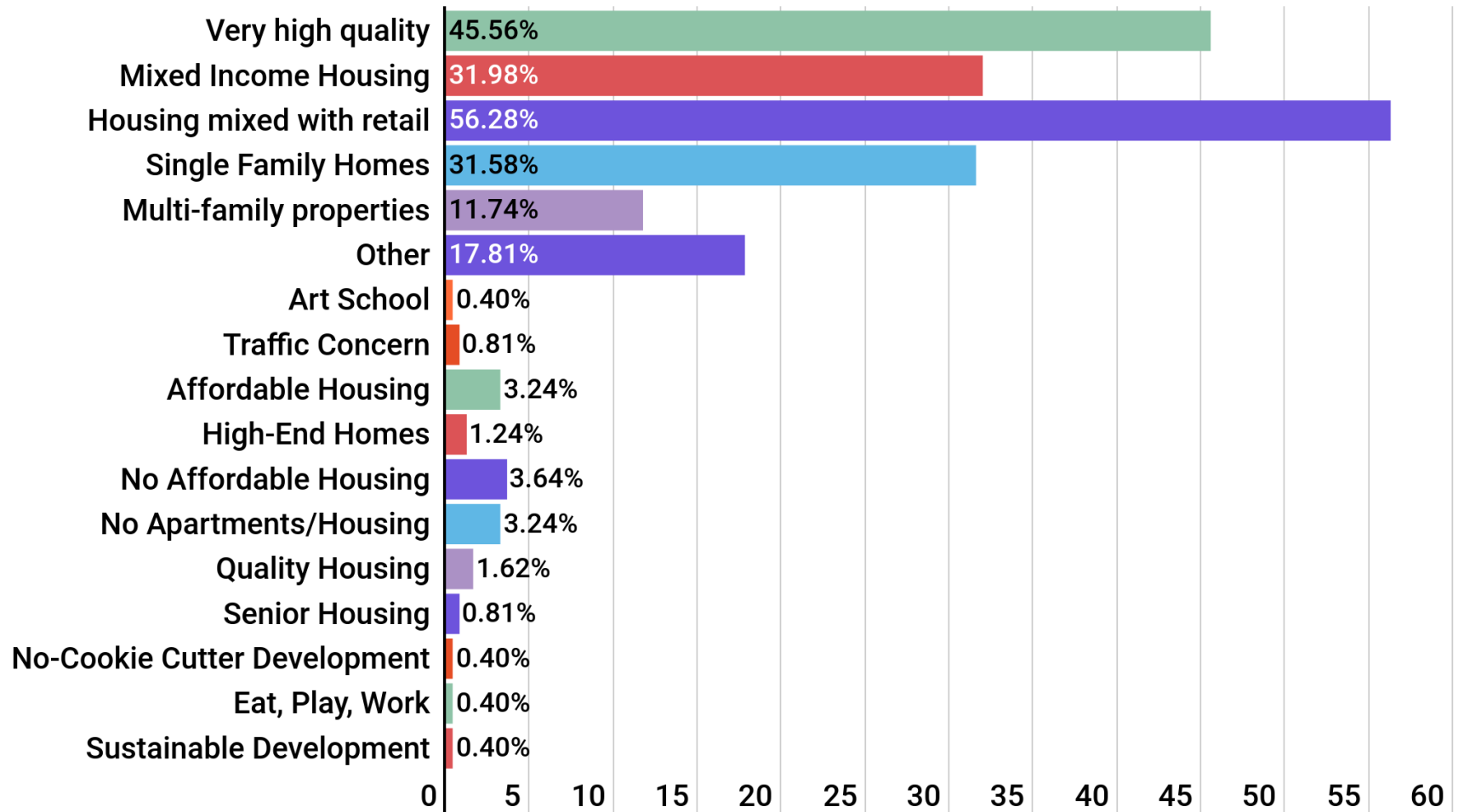


What should we include in the "Active" spaces planned?

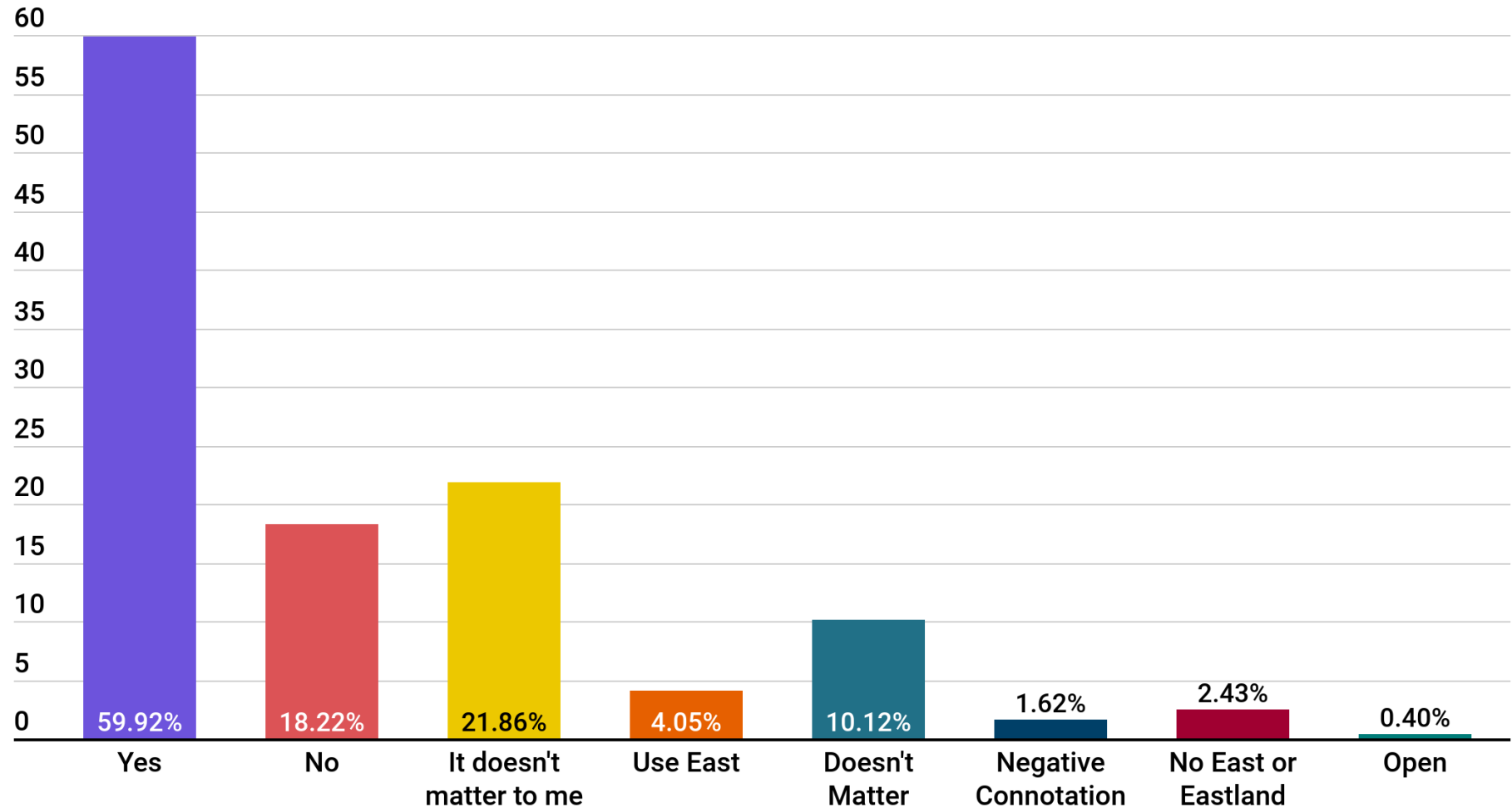


What is most important to you for housing planned on the site?

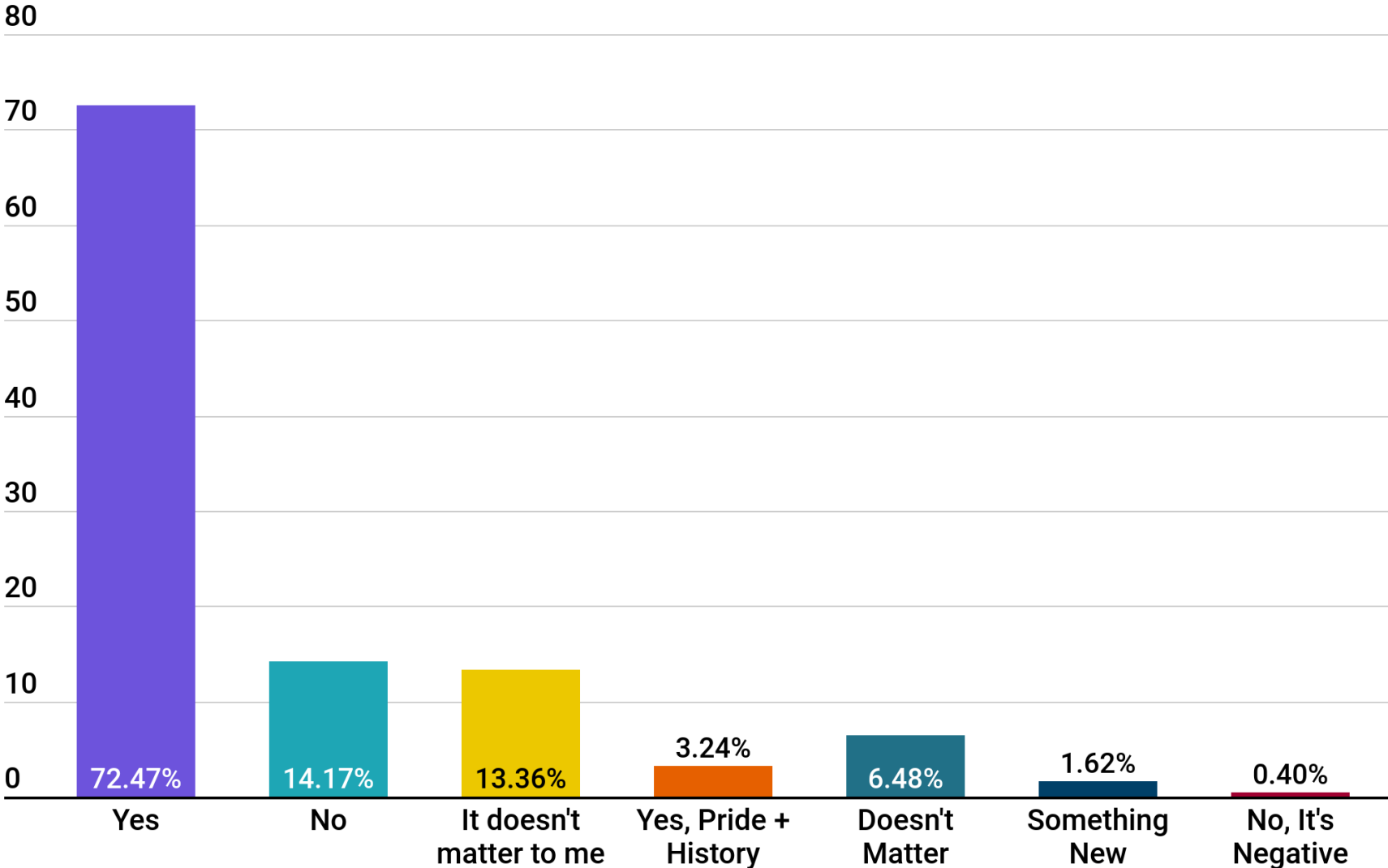
(Choose all that apply)



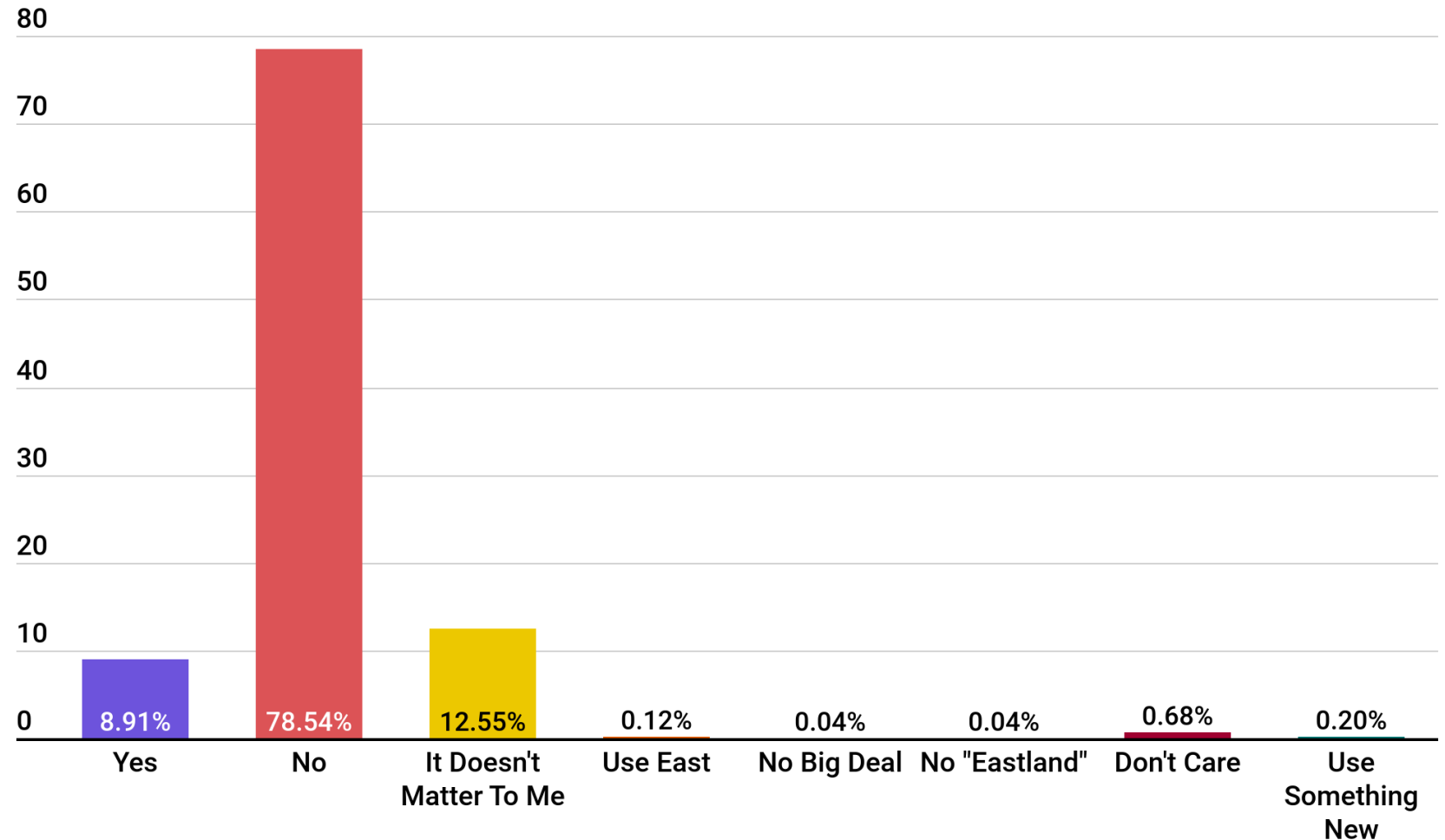
Should we keep "Eastland" in the new name?



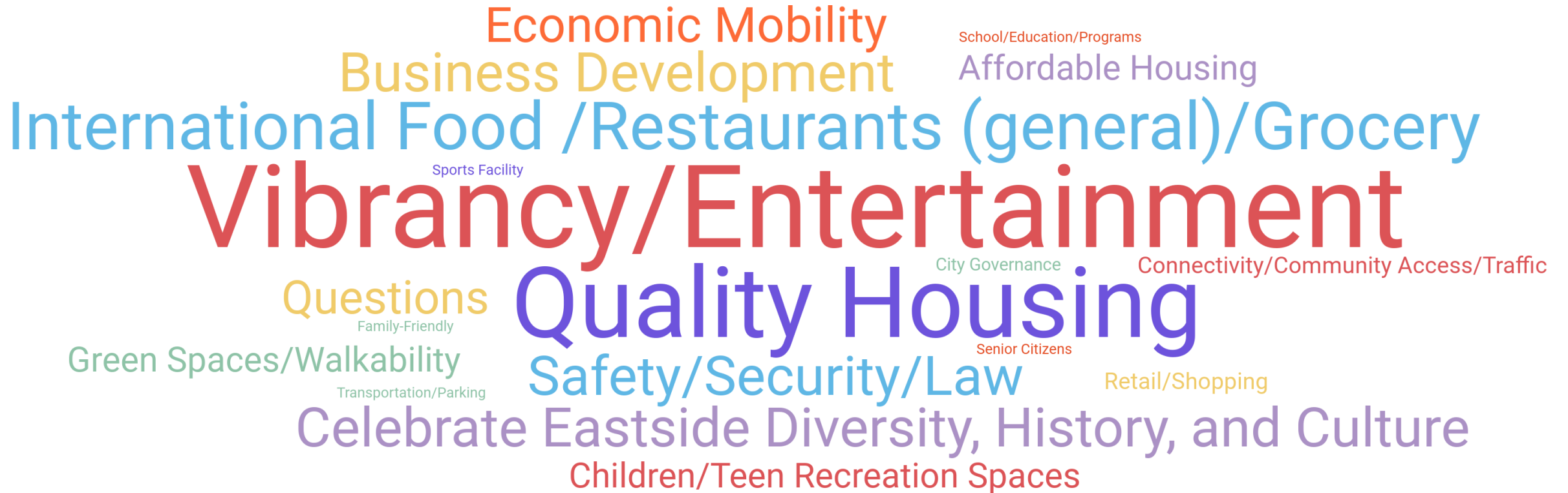
Should we use "East" in the new name?



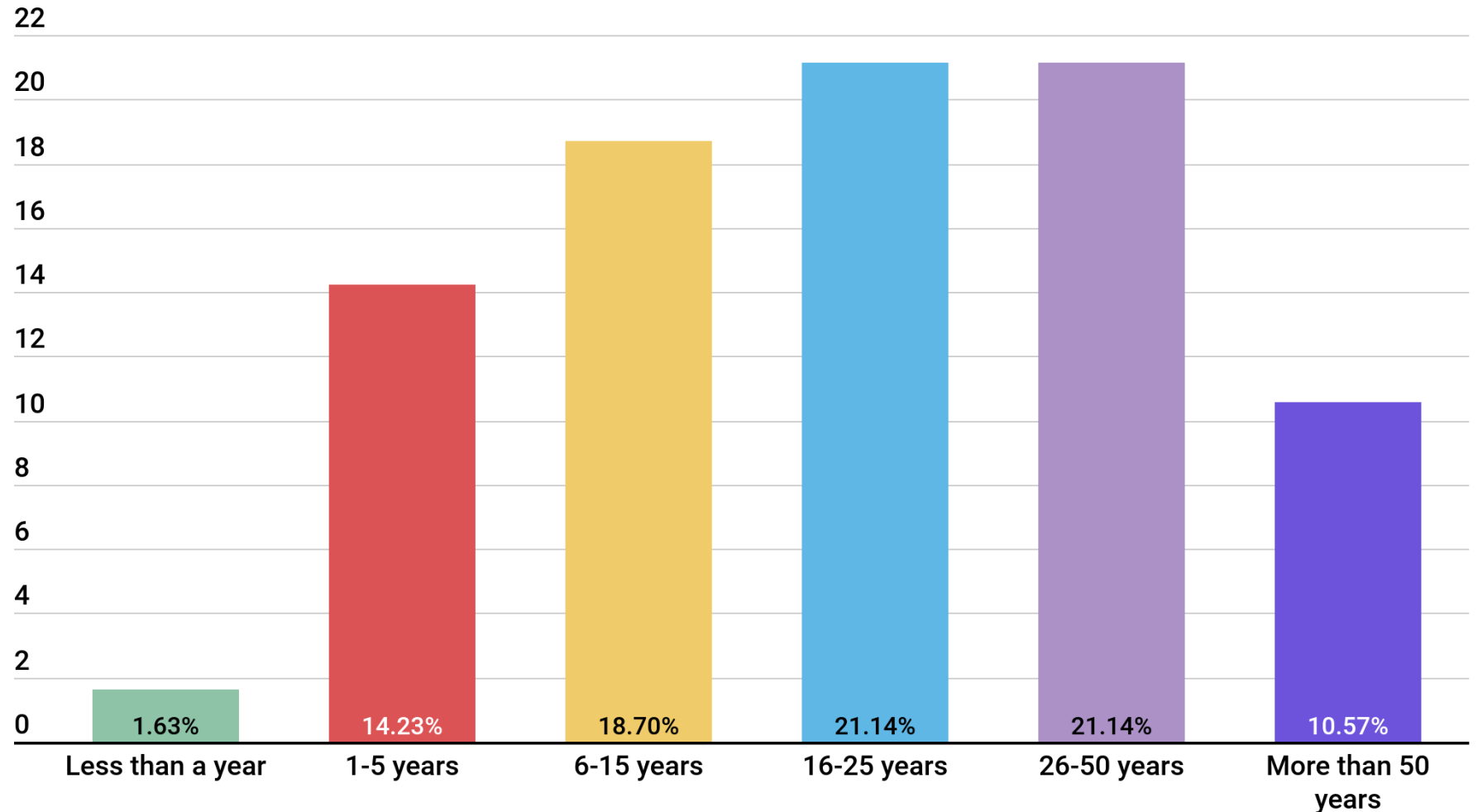
Should we intentionally avoid using "Eastland" or "East" in the new name?



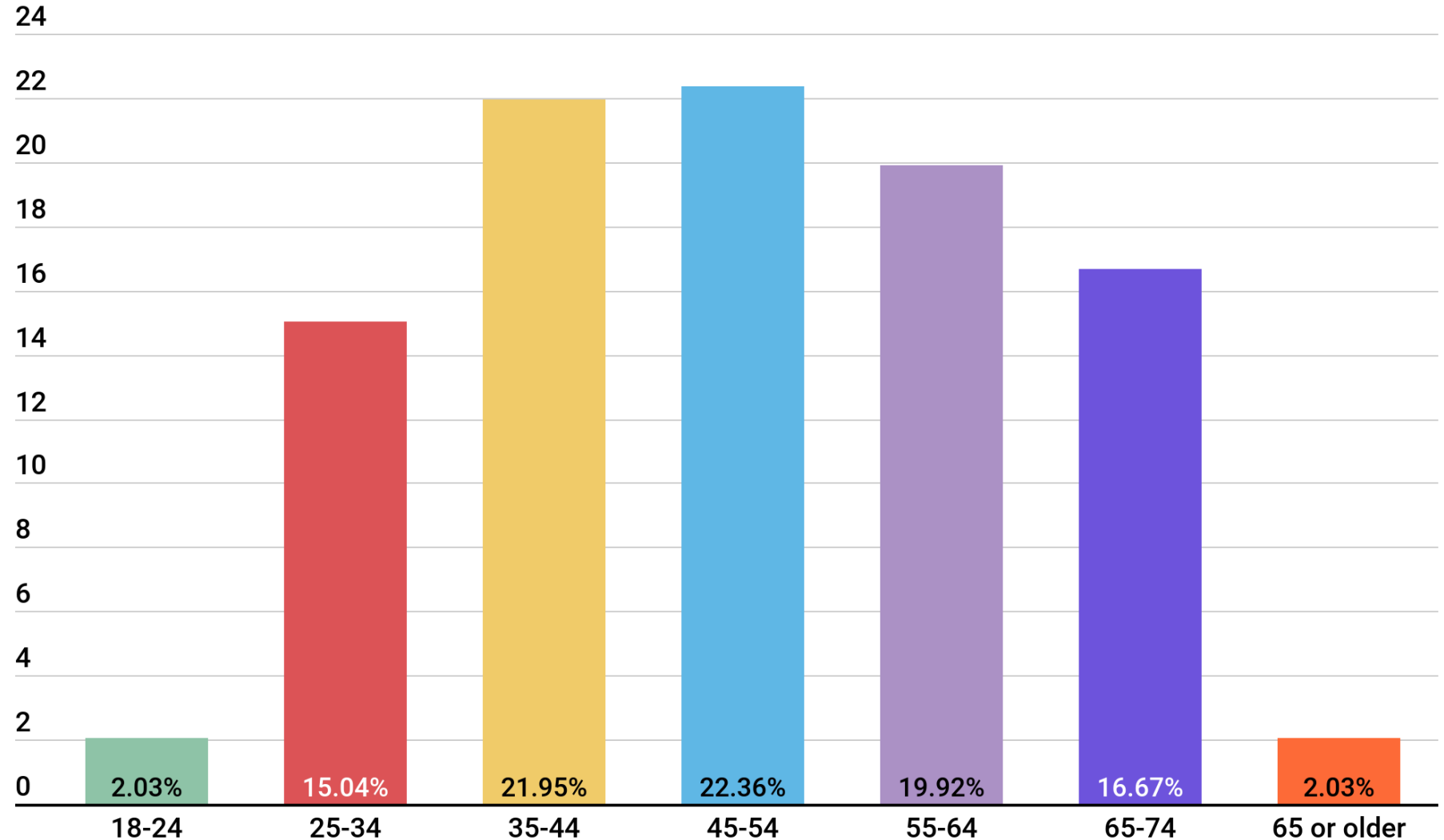
What else do you want us to know?



How long have you lived in Charlotte?



What is your age?



WHAT'S NEXT

The objective was to engage with the community collaboratively and gather feedback. We engaged a wide range of stakeholder groups, addressed questions and concerns from the community, shared the developer's vision for the site based on preliminary feedback, and established a healthy relationship with the community.

Overall we believe that the approach – research and one-on-one interviews, followed by focus group meetings, building to a digital presence, an open public forum and online public survey has been effective in accomplishing the objective.

The community engagement process provided clarity to the developer around the overall vision, and specific feedback to be incorporated into future designs, programs and activations.

Crosland Southeast is now broadly supported by the community and recognized as a forthright and honest developer that has the capability to deliver on the concept developed in conjunction with the city and community. At this point the community is generally supportive of the conceptual plan that has been shared with them.

We are confident that this community engagement effort has been intentional and broad, reaching across a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The process has resulted in a better concept for the site that can be a positive economic driver for the Eastside.

WE BELIEVE IT IS TIME TO MOVE ON TO THE NEXT PHASE OF WORK:

1. Distribute public survey results
2. Focus on the development program
3. Shift emphasis to digital channels
4. Put in place a “maintenance” program for community engagement
5. Carefully execute and monitor social media

THANK YOU
