



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza

Working Group #4
November 8, 2017

AGENDA

- 6:30 – 7:00 pm Presentation: Findings from Community Engagement
- 7:00 – 7:45 pm Break Out Discussions
- 7:45 – 8:05 pm Report Back
- 8:05 – 8:45 pm Group Discussion

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Three Working Group Meetings
- Two Pop-Up Workshops on site
- Survey: 219 responses
- Community Meeting #1: 40 participants
- On-Site Placemaking Workshop: 18 participants
- Activity Mapping
- Call for Ideas: 35 responses

WORKING GROUP GOALS

- Flexible and adaptable – across seasons, different times of day, month, and year
- Welcoming and safe for all users
- A community gathering space
- Navigable – maintaining the space as a busy and thoroughfare
- Dynamic and engaging

WHAT WE HEARD

THEMES that are important to consider

1. History
2. Local Character
3. Out of Town News and Print Media
4. Transportation
5. Pedestrian Experience
6. Maintenance

OPPORTUNITIES for the future

1. Visitors' Services and Tourism
2. Programming and Activities
3. Amenities

1. HISTORY

- Iconic landmark of Harvard Square
- More than half of survey comments respondents mention importance of history
- Restore Kiosk in sensitive way
- Use Kiosk to display history of the area and Cambridge
- Historic meeting point for social and public gatherings



The Harvard Square Kiosk circa 1970

THEMES

2. LOCAL CHARACTER

- Preserve what makes it a special place: diversity of people; informal and spontaneous activities
- Preserve small businesses
- Concern about rising commercialization and chain stores
- Ensure memorable and unique experience



3. OUT OF TOWN NEWS

- 20% of millennials surveyed say they shop at Out of Town News
- 44% of seniors say they shop there
- 3 out of 4 public meeting groups listed importance of keeping print media in some form
- Many interested in new types of knowledge exchange at the Kiosk
- The challenge: maintain the function of knowledge exchange and access while looking to the future

4. TRANSPORTATION

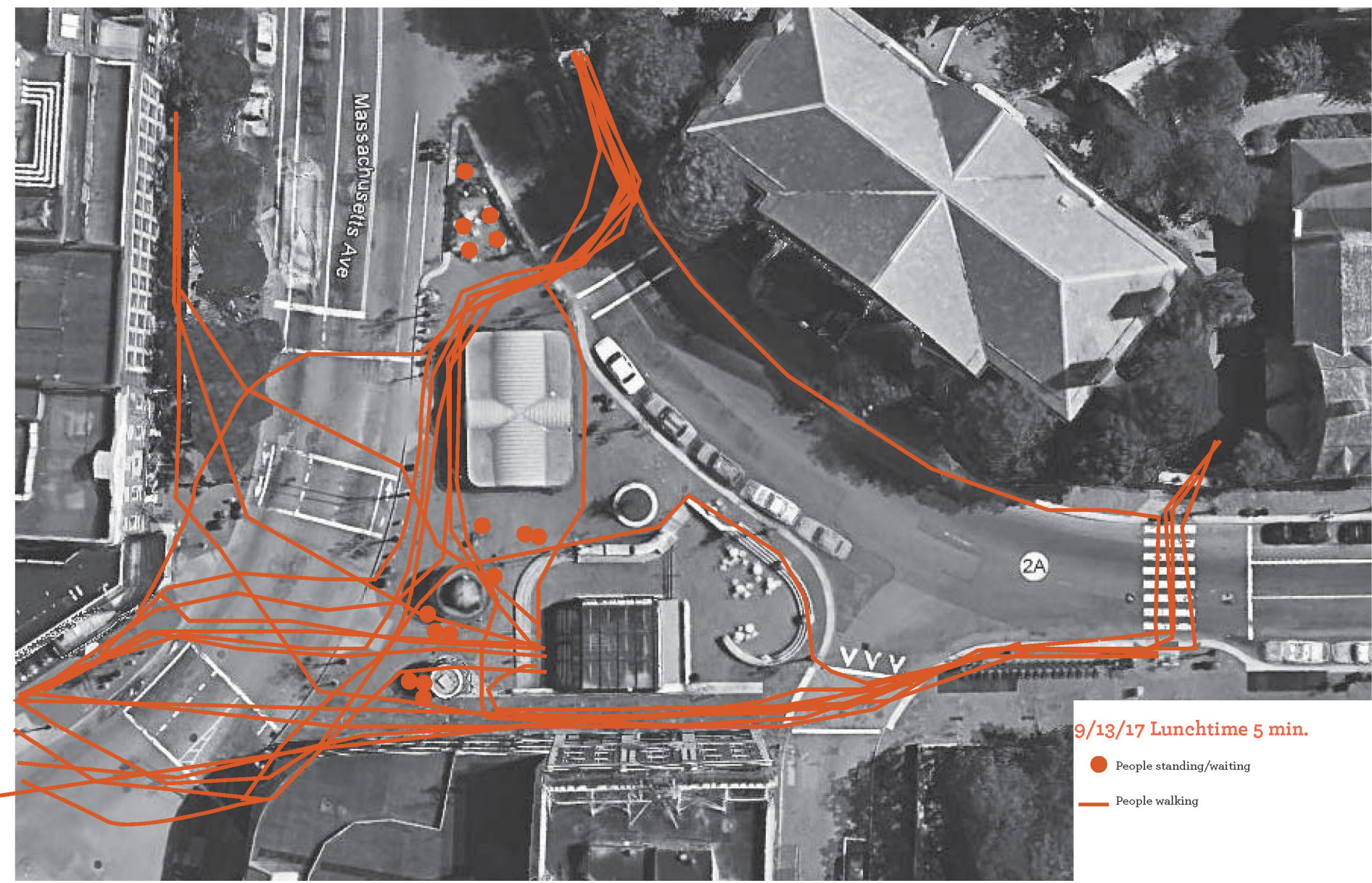
- A key function of the plaza is as an entrance to MBTA: 90% of survey respondents use the T station and over 65% pass through at least 2-3 times per week
- The plaza is a crossroads for pedestrian traffic
- Many suggest a redesign for MBTA head house to open views and enhance experience
- Busy intersection with noise and traffic



5. PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

- Dual purpose: busy pedestrian thoroughfare, but also stopping point
- Ensure ADA accessibility
- Difficult for all pedestrians to negotiate various levels, slopes and uneven pavement
- Safety at street crossings could be improved





9/13/17 Lunchtime 5 min.

- People standing/waiting
- People walking

6. MAINTENANCE

- Cleanliness and upkeep of plaza were frequently mentioned topics
- Survey respondents used the words “dirty,” “messy,” and “shabby” to describe plaza and Kiosk
- Many complained about condition of paving



1. VISITORS' SERVICES AND TOURISM

- Need to provide clear and robust visitor information at the plaza or Kiosk
- Balance needs of visitors with those of locals
- Need for clear signage, wayfinding, and maps that create strong connection between plaza and Harvard Square area destinations



8. PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES

- Top three survey responses: **music and performances, art exhibits, and community gatherings**
- **Chess playing, watching buskers and performers** attract people to the plaza
- Public meeting participants: a flexible space that allows for **both programmed and spontaneous activities** while maintaining function as a busy thoroughfare



9. AMENITIES

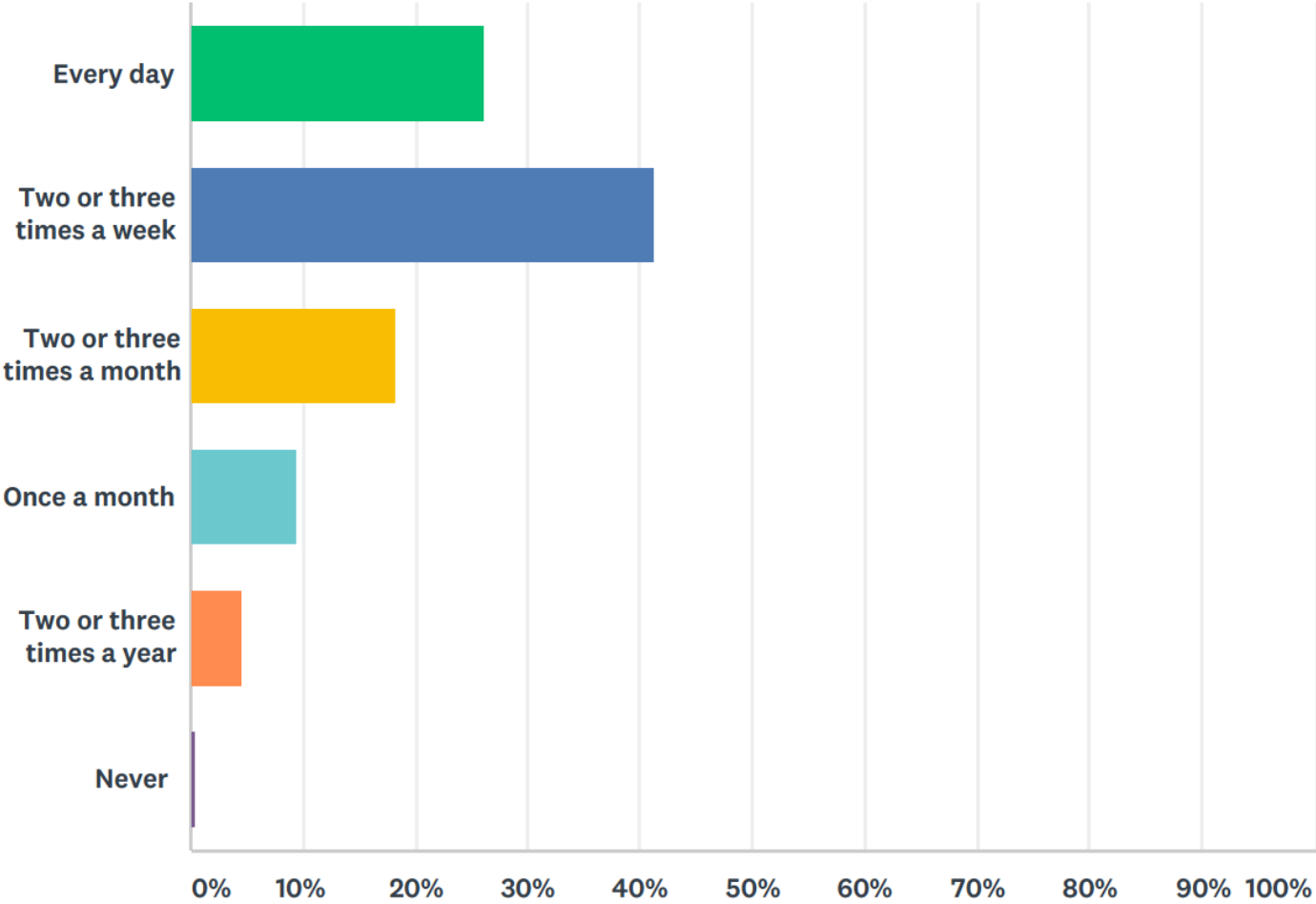
- More comfortable and varied seating was frequently mentioned
- More greenery and landscaping
- **“Inviting,” “welcoming,”** and **“comfortable”** were words survey respondents frequently used about a future plaza
- Expanding the plaza to provide more seating was mentioned by public meeting participants



SURVEY

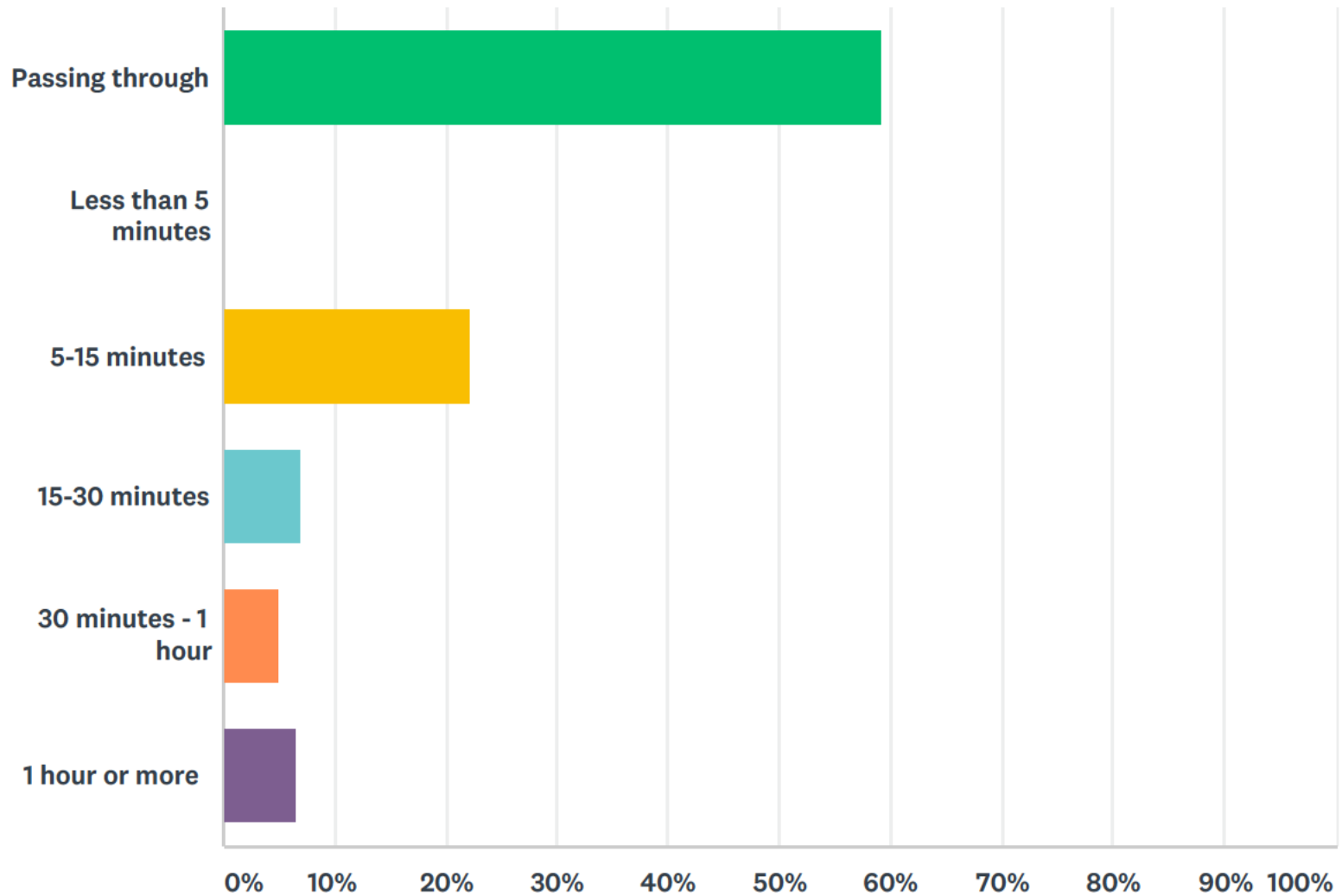
Q1 On average, how often do you go to or pass through the Harvard Square Plaza? (Please select the closest answer)

Answered: 214 Skipped: 5



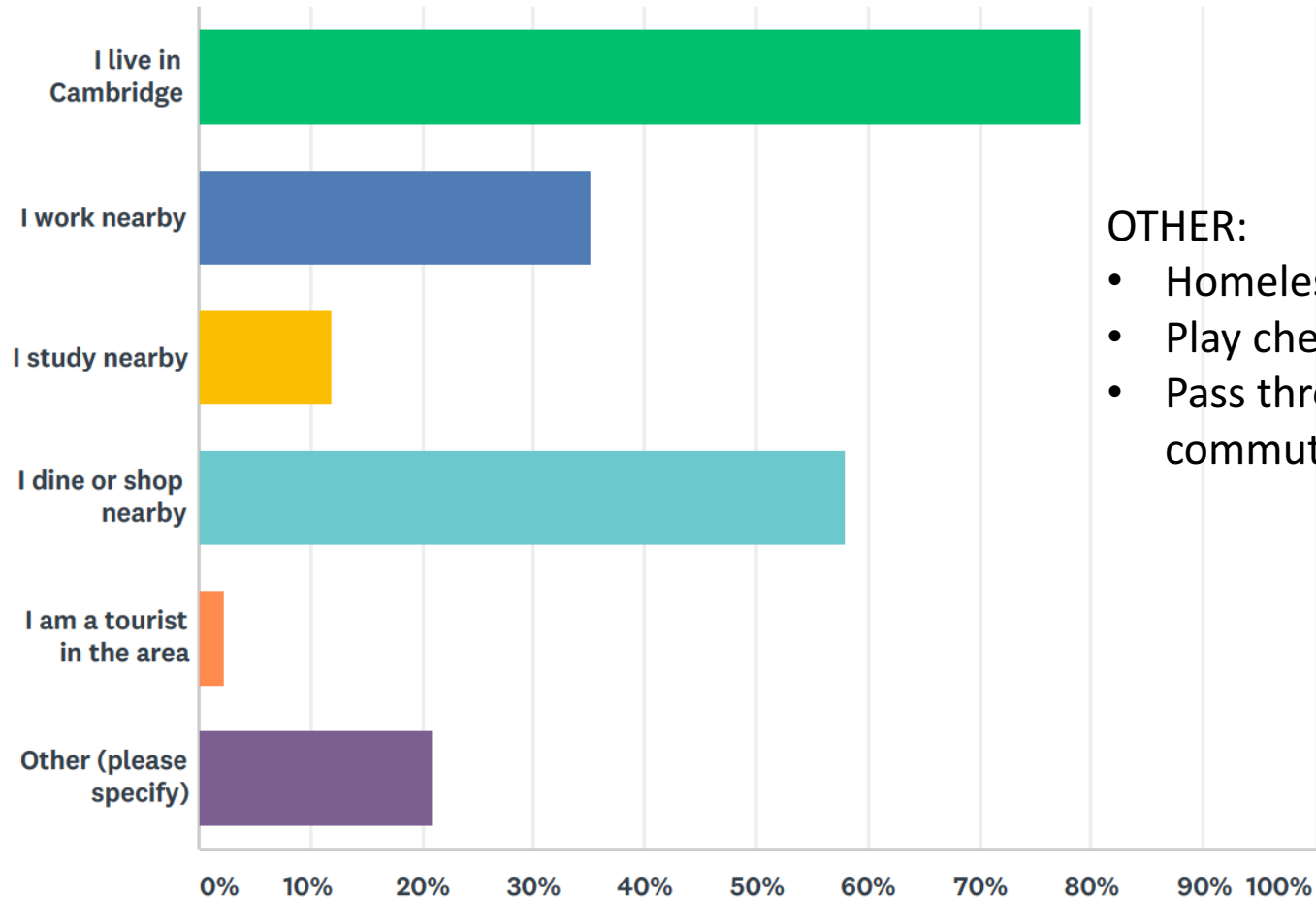
Q2 How long do you usually spend in the Plaza?

Answered: 216 Skipped: 3



Q3 What is your connection to the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza? (Please select all that apply)

Answered: 219 Skipped: 0

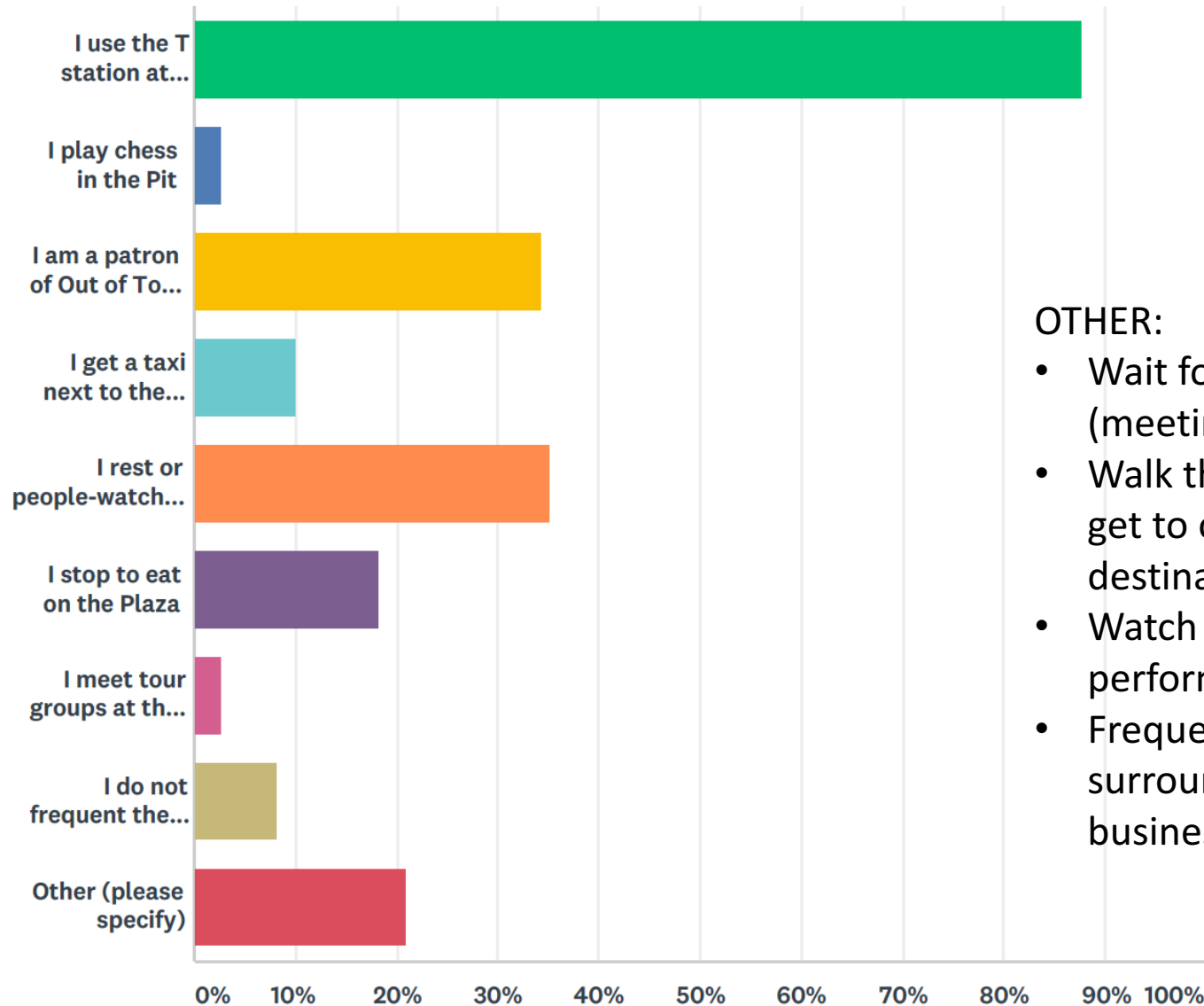


OTHER:

- Homeless
- Play chess here
- Pass through on commute

Q4 What do you typically do at the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza? (Please select all that apply)

Answered: 219 Skipped: 0



OTHER:

- Wait for friends (meeting point)
- Walk through to get to other destination
- Watch street performers
- Frequent surrounding businesses

WHAT THREE WORDS WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE THE EXISTING KIOSK AND PLAZA?

RESPONSES FROM SURVEY AND COMMUNITY MEETING



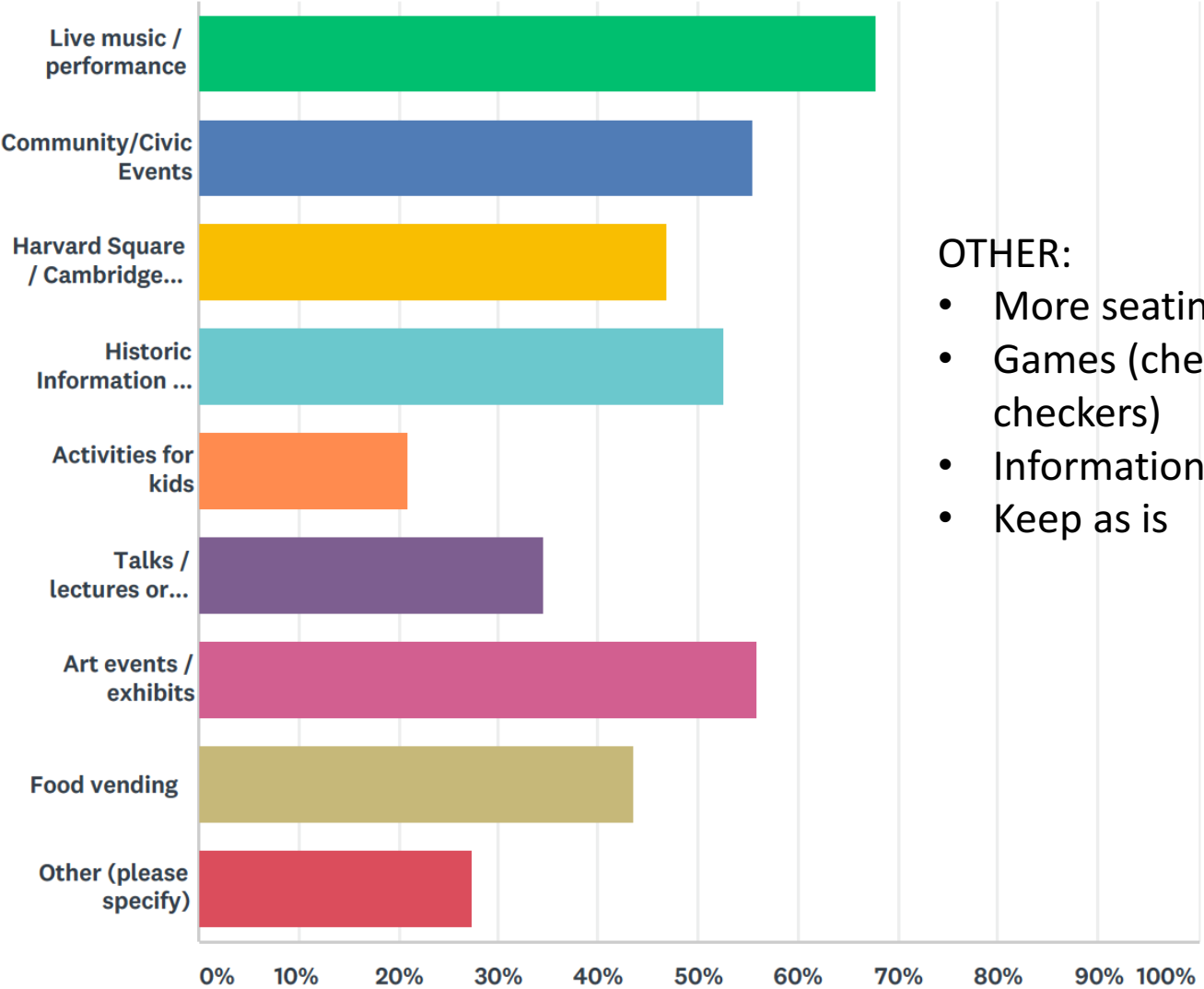
WHAT THREE WORDS WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE YOUR VISION FOR THE KIOSK AND PLAZA IN THE FUTURE?

RESPONSES FROM SURVEY AND COMMUNITY MEETING



Q7 What uses, activities or events in the Kiosk and/or Plaza would draw you and your family/friends to the these spaces more often? (Select the 5 most important to you)

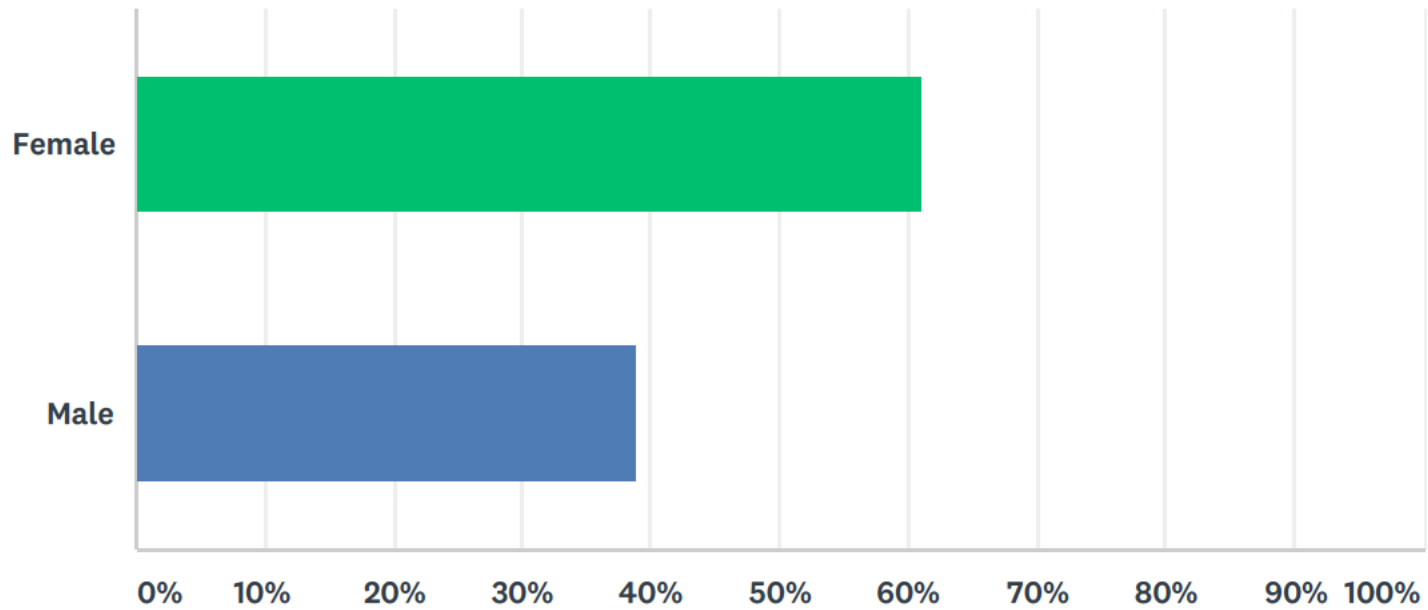
Answered: 211 Skipped: 8



- OTHER:
- More seating
 - Games (chess and checkers)
 - Information center
 - Keep as is

Q10 What is your gender?

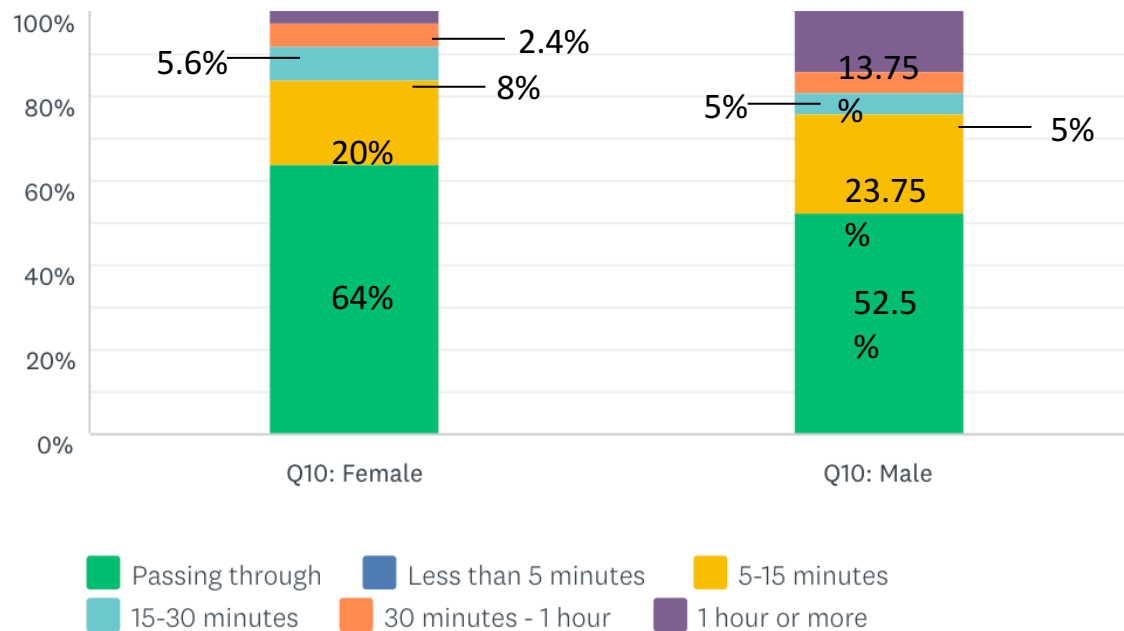
Answered: 206 Skipped: 13



SPACE USAGE BY GENDER

How long do you usually spend in the Plaza?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 1

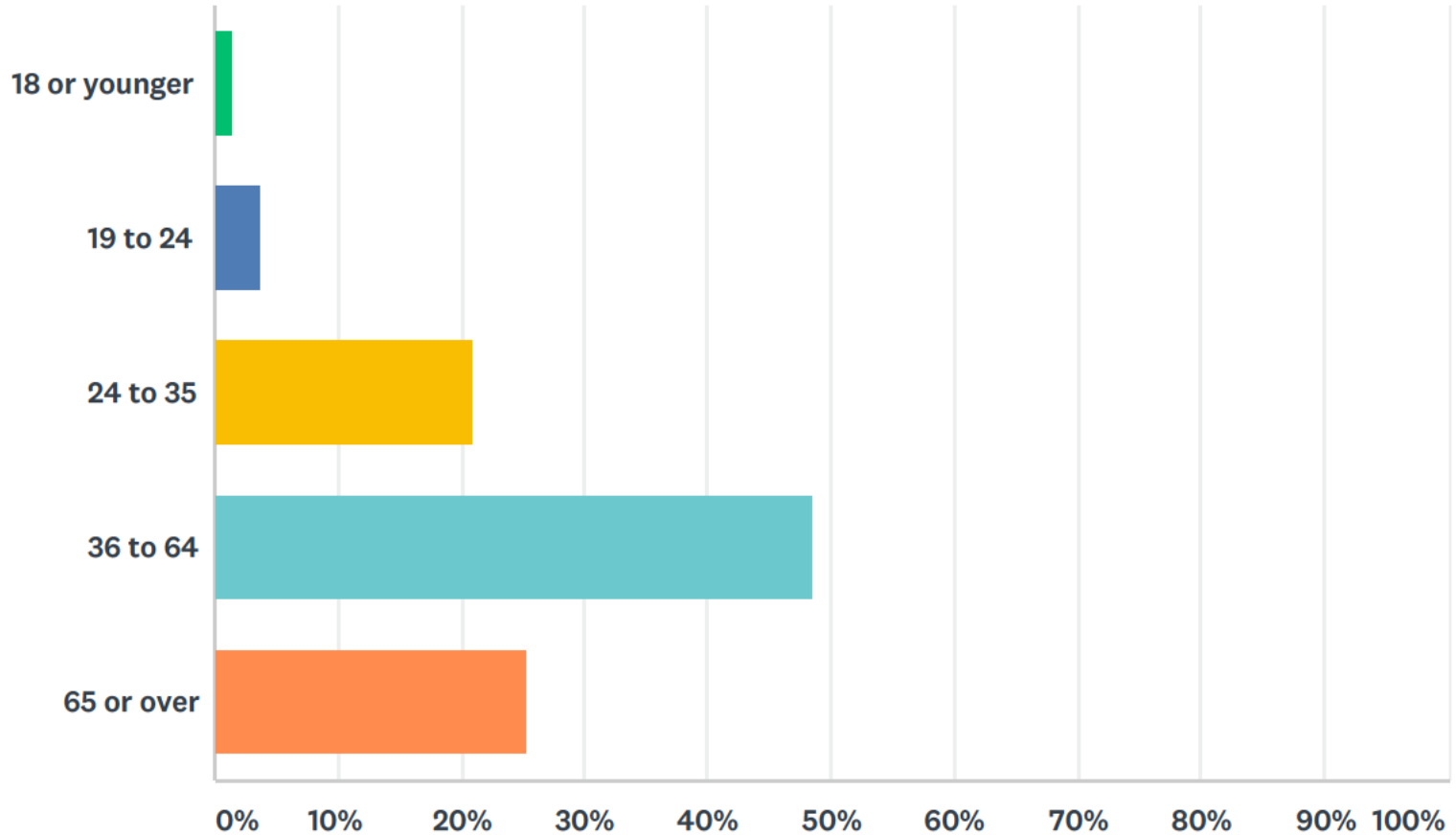


Based on behavior mapping observations:

Predominantly men linger in the space, especially at night and early morning (both weekdays and weekends)

Q11 What is your age?

Answered: 210 Skipped: 9



YOUR THOUGHTS?

CALL FOR IDEAS REVIEW

1. Break into three groups
2. Each person reviews 2-3 Idea Submissions:
WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE PROPOSAL?
and
WHAT CONCERNS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT THE PROPOSAL?
3. Write your “likes” (warm colors) and “dislikes” (cool colors) for each proposal on sticky notes:

YOUR THOUGHTS? (CONT.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who does this proposal serve?
2. When does this proposal generate the most activity?
3. How will this proposal activate the Kiosk?
4. How will this proposal activate the Plaza?

LARGER GROUP DISCUSSION

What are your takeaways from this exercise?