



Grand Army Plaza Public Realm Study

Summary of November Workshop and Survey



Background & Overview

Prospect Heights Study Public Realm Study Overview

Background

As part of the 2023 budget, the city allocated \$1.8M to conduct a Capital Project Scope Development (**CPSD**) study for:

- Grand Army Plaza
- Vanderbilt Avenue
- Underhill Avenue

DOT is partnering with the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and local stakeholders to conduct this study over the next few years

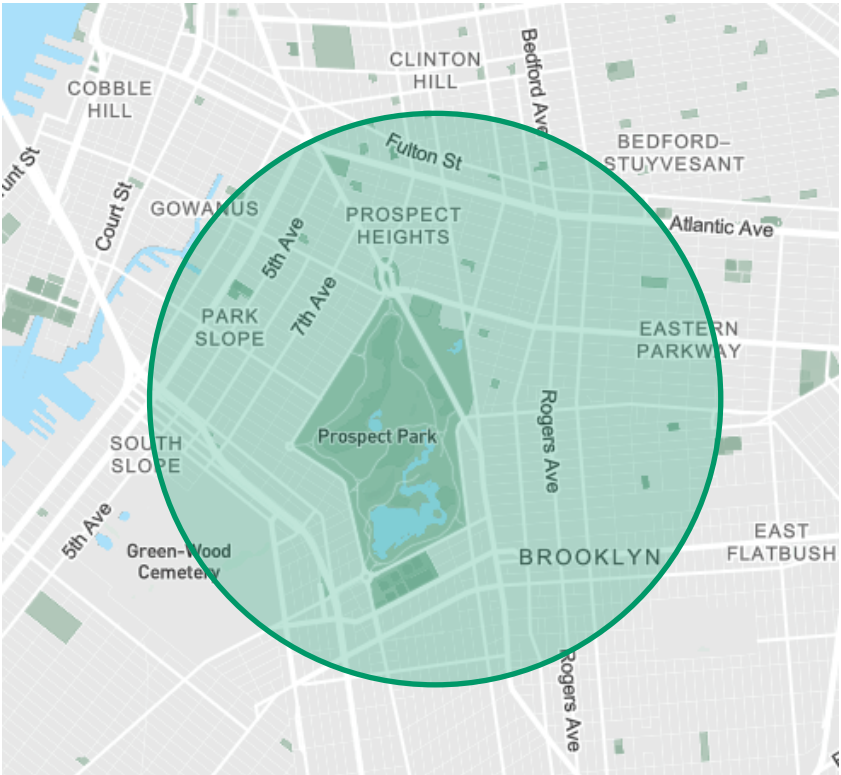
DOT and DDC Public Outreach Strategy:

- Presentations to city agencies, local organizations and community boards, as well as elected officials
- Initial idea gathering workshops, workshops of initial designs, and final presentation of study findings
- Initial Grand Army Plaza Workshop held on Nov 16th
- Initial Grand Army Plaza Survey open November 8th through November 30th

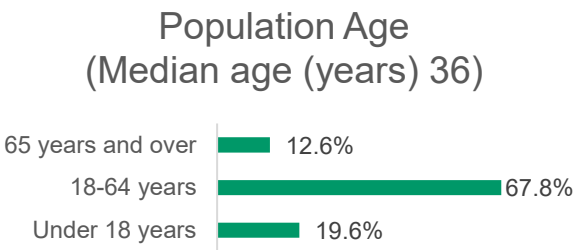


Community Background – Prospect Park Surrounding Communities (2014-2018 ACS)

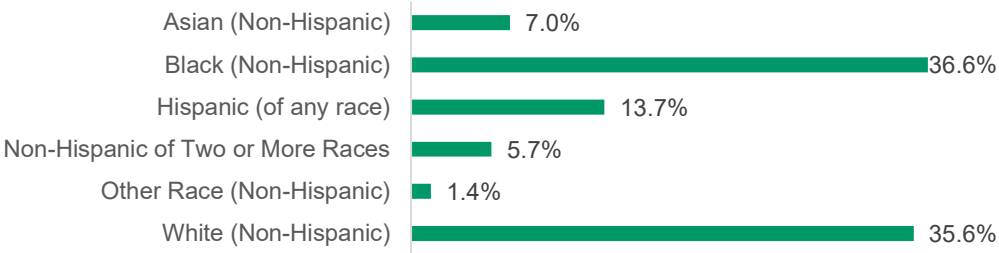
Grand Army Plaza draws people from and influences a large portion of Brooklyn



Demographics

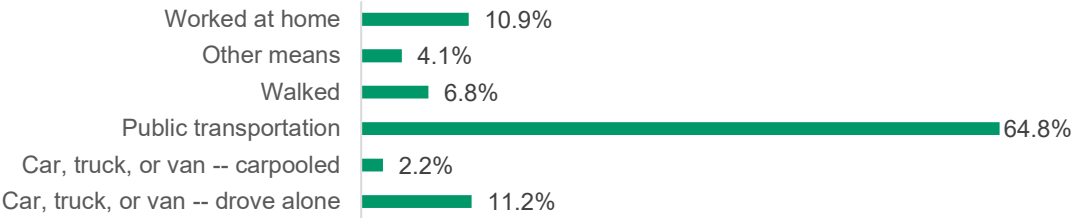


Race & Hispanic Origin

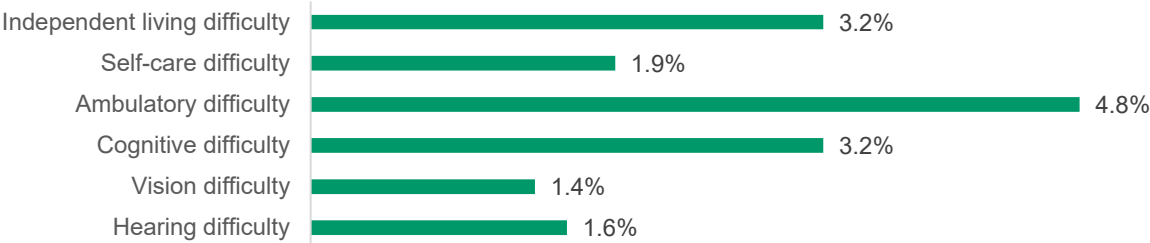


Quick Facts & Indicators*

Commute to Work (Mean Travel Time: 42 Minutes)



Population with a Disability (8.1% of total population)

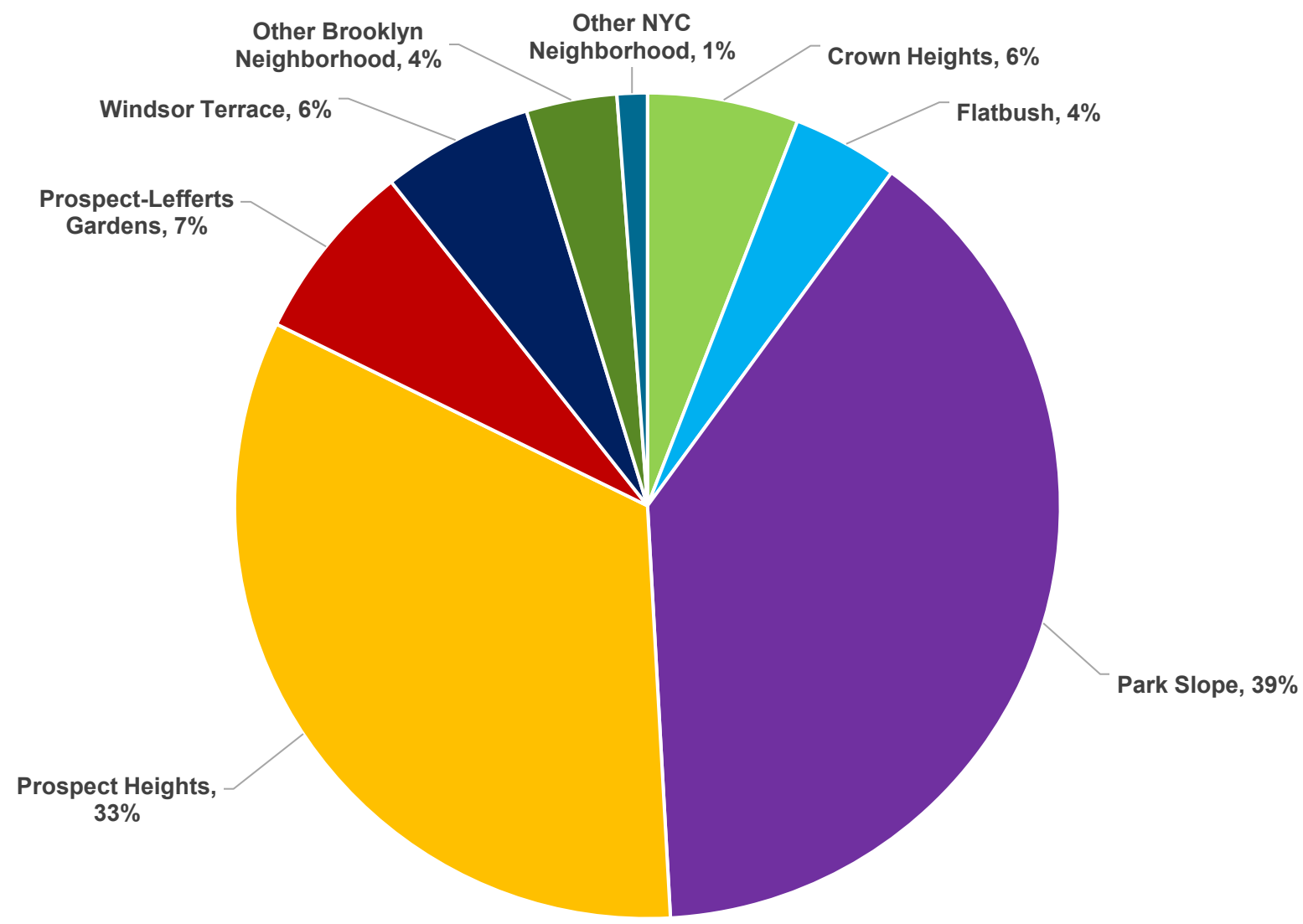


Workshop Summary

Workshop Participation

Where Did Participants Come From?

Approximately **270** members of the public attended the open workshop (remaining attendees were DOT staff). Most attendees (**72%**) were predominately residents who live in Park Slope or Prospect Heights.

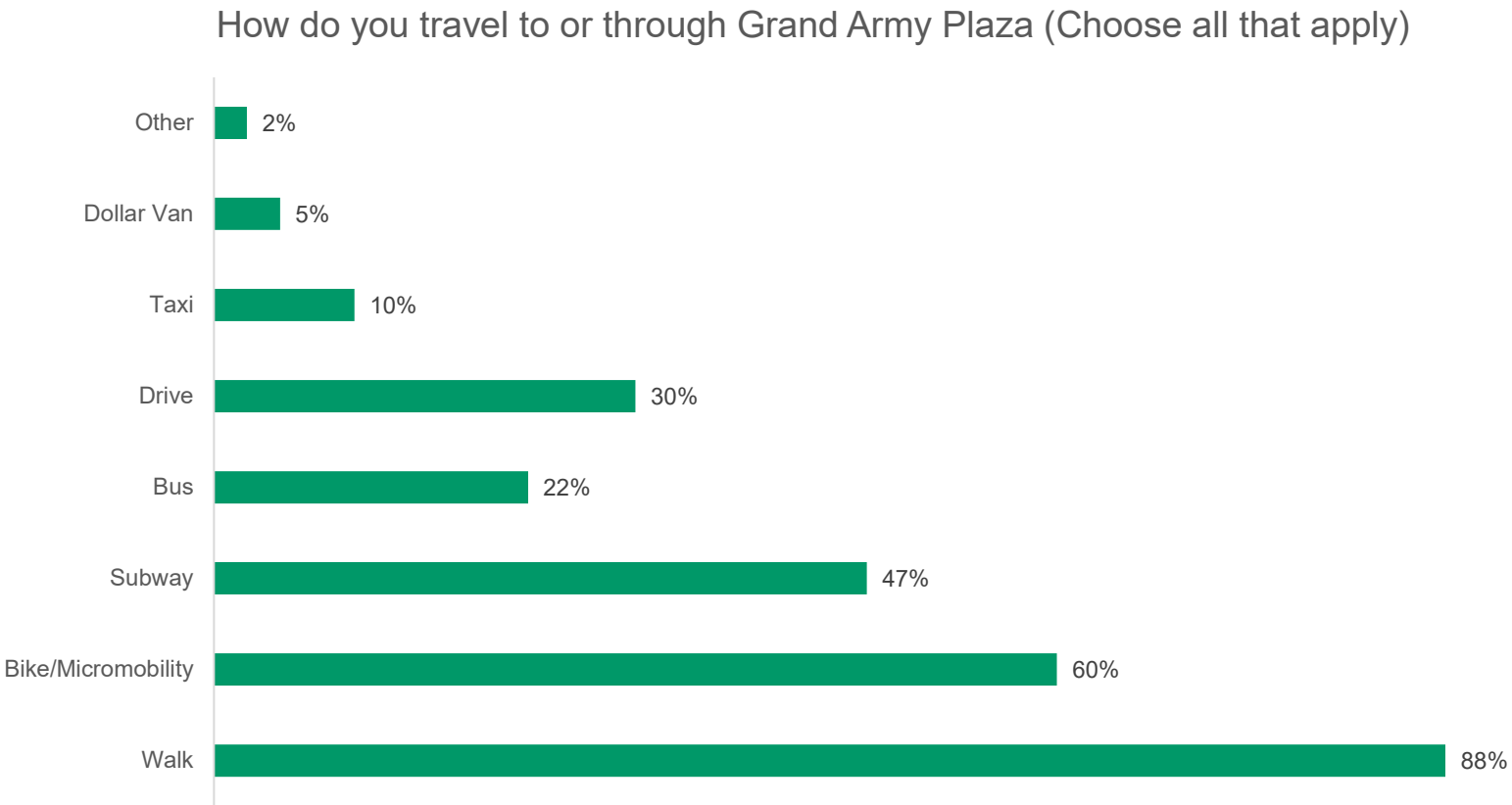


Workshop Participation

How do people travel through the Plaza?

During the workshop introduction, participants were asked to identify how they travel to, or through Grand Army Plaza. Participants were able to select all that apply.

Most participants walked, bike, or used public transit.



Workshop Participation

General thoughts on the existing conditions at Grand Army Plaza

In general, participants noted that the improvements made over the past decade have made Grand Army Plaza better. Most participants noted that there were still things that could be improved. Some participants thought the current conditions were fine.

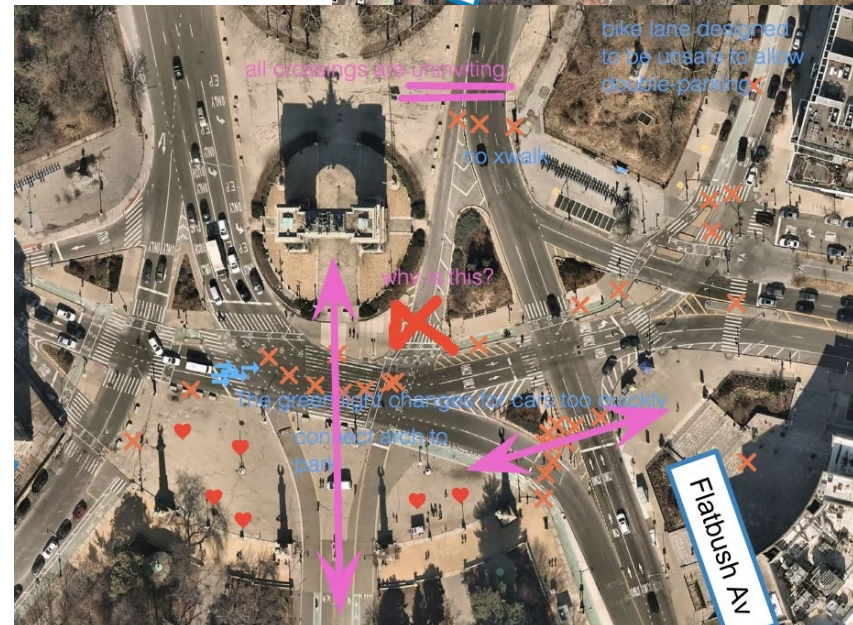
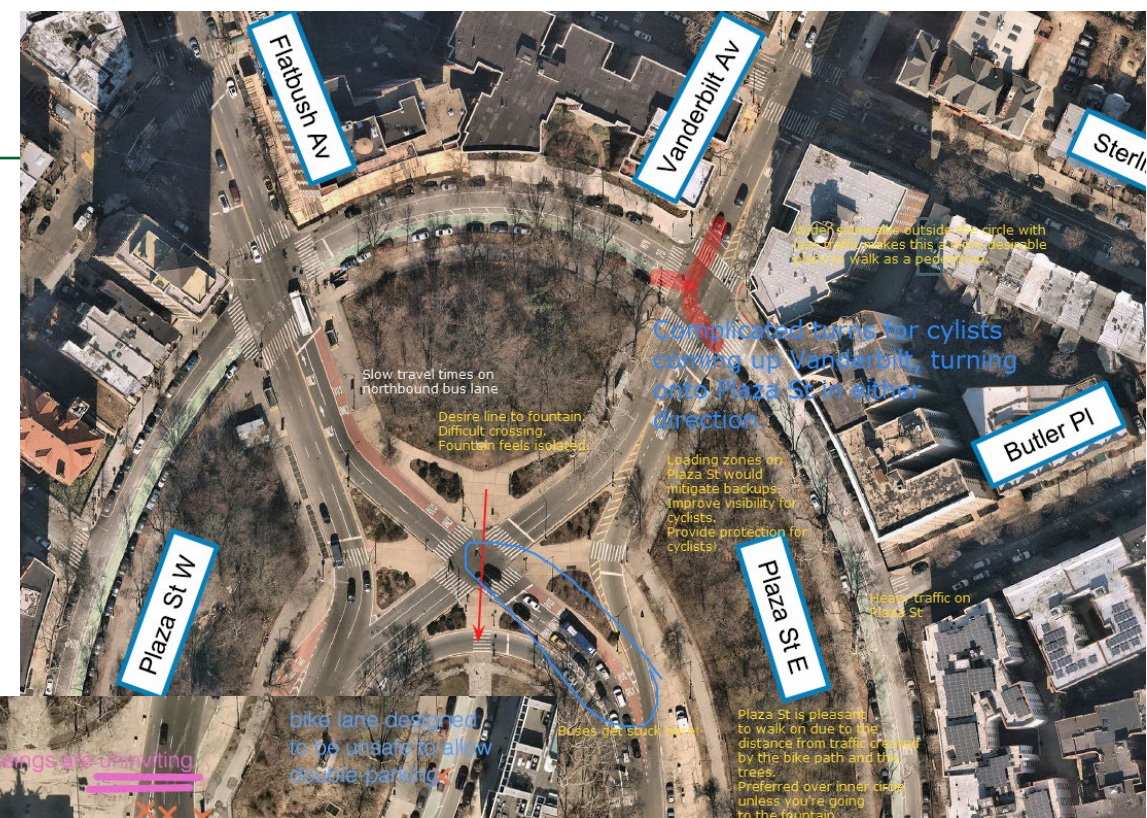
Difficult and complex crossings was one of the most noted issues identified.

Congestion on Union St was repeatedly mentioned.

“Past changes have made things much better, but more is needed”

“The complexity of the existing plaza make it uncomfortable to navigate on foot”

“The pedestrian experience is frustrating”



Workshop Participation

General thoughts on the CPSD Study Goals

Participants noted high level issues that should be considered as part of the study, including:

- Broader view of effects to surrounding communities
- Study of park space in addition to roadway space
- Comprehensive outreach strategy to stakeholders

“Any substantial traffic closures/reroutes should study impacts to adjacent neighborhoods”

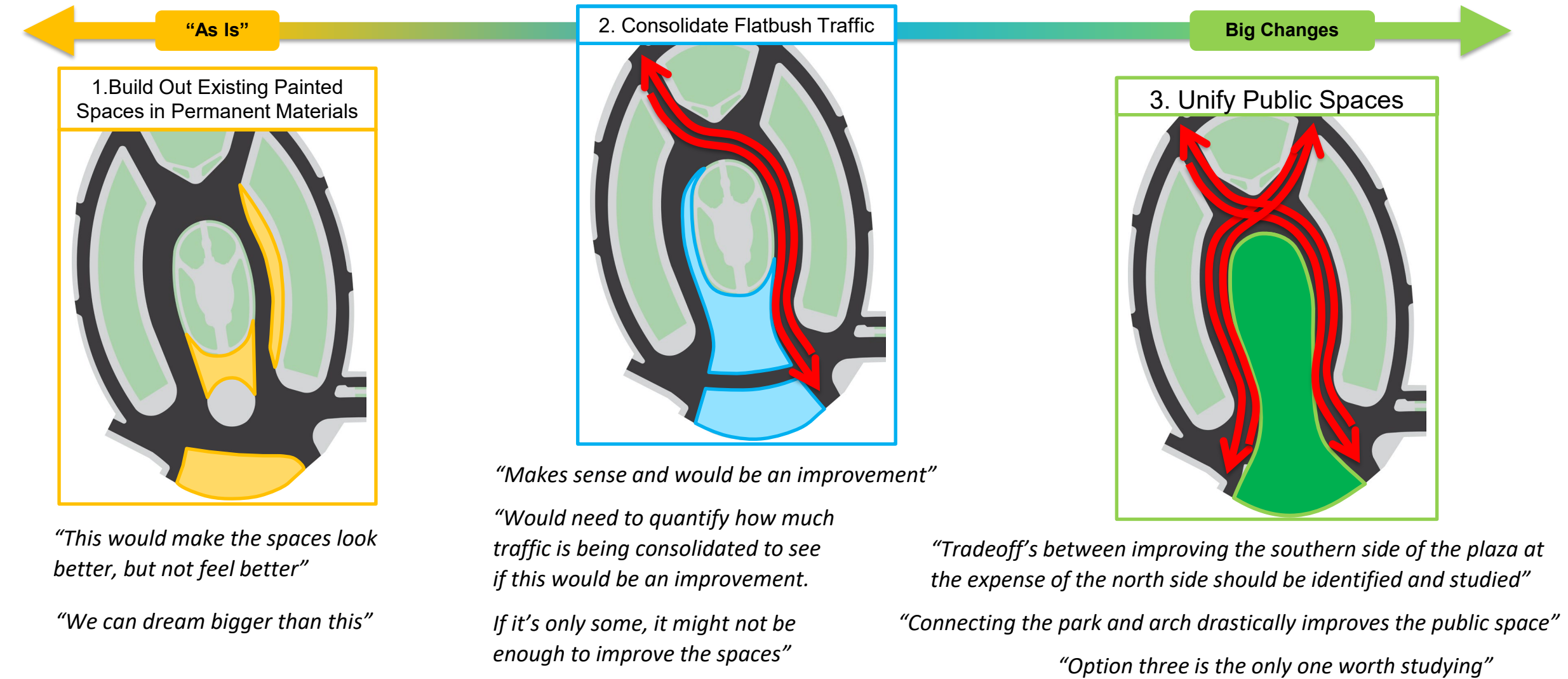
“Human scale should be considered, the scale of the space is too big to understand and plan ahead”

“Would additional public space be disruptive to surrounding residents?”

“The study should be comprehensive, and include the berms and parkland”

Workshop Participation

General thoughts on the “Range of Ideas” presented for discussion

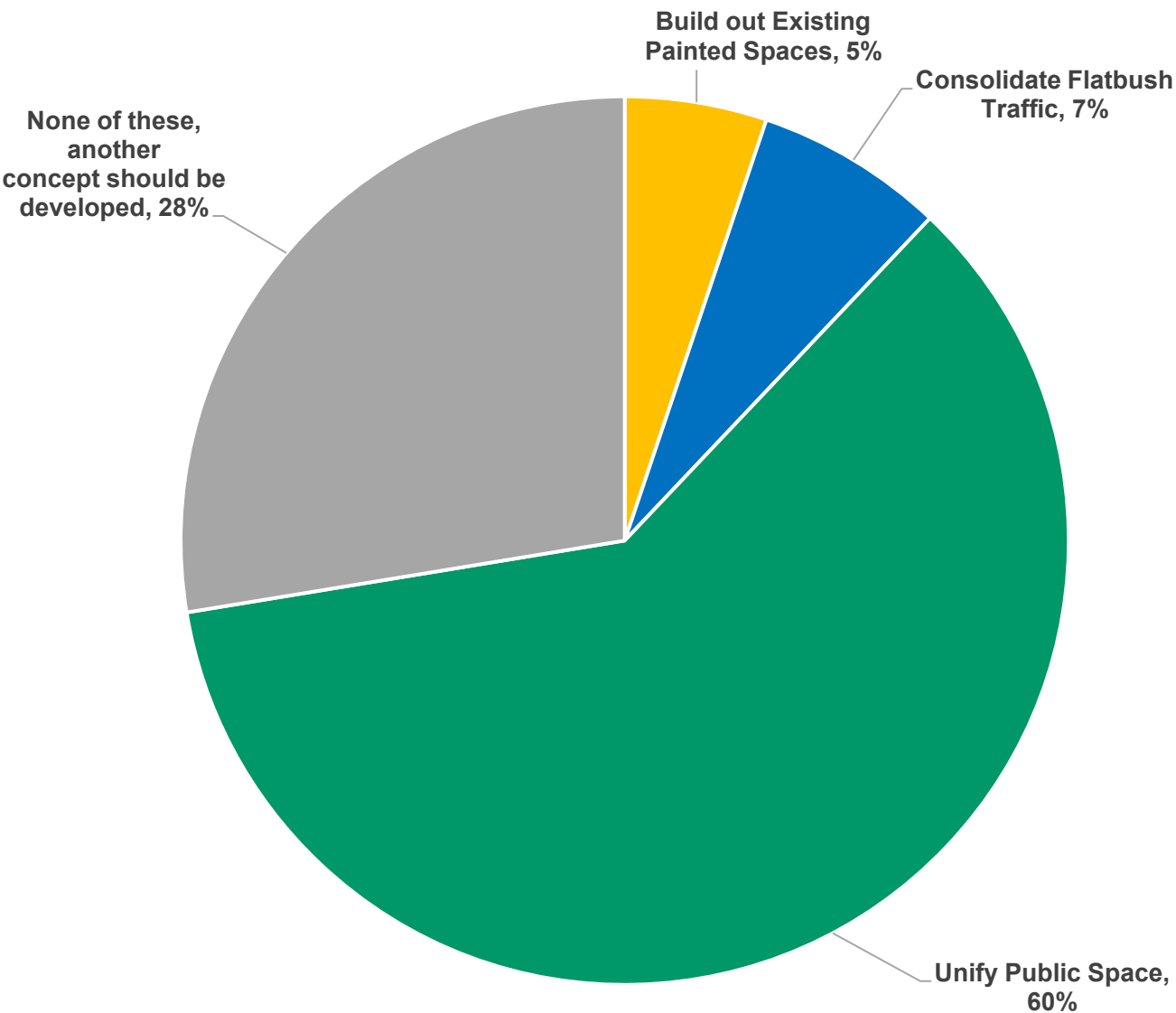


Workshop Participation

“Range of Ideas” Poll

At the end of the workshop, participants were asked to pick one “Idea” that best fit with their vision of Grand Army Plaza.

Most participants **(60%)** preferred option 3. A notable percent of participant think another concept should be developed.



Workshop Participation

General thoughts on the workshop structure, outreach, and materials

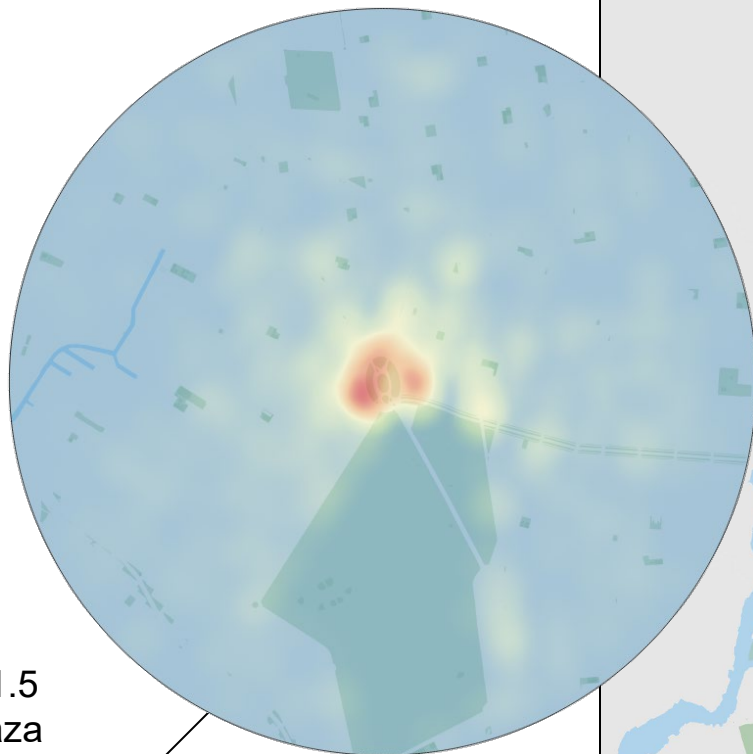
- As Grand Army Plaza influences such a large portion of Brooklyn, more focused outreach to smaller communities was suggested
- Expand identified stakeholder list to include more organizations and interested parties borough wide
- Work with local Community Boards and Elected's to ensure notice of future engagement sessions is shared
- Improve graphical representation of the “Big Ideas” to provide more information and clarity, and allow for more detailed feedback

November 2022 Survey Results

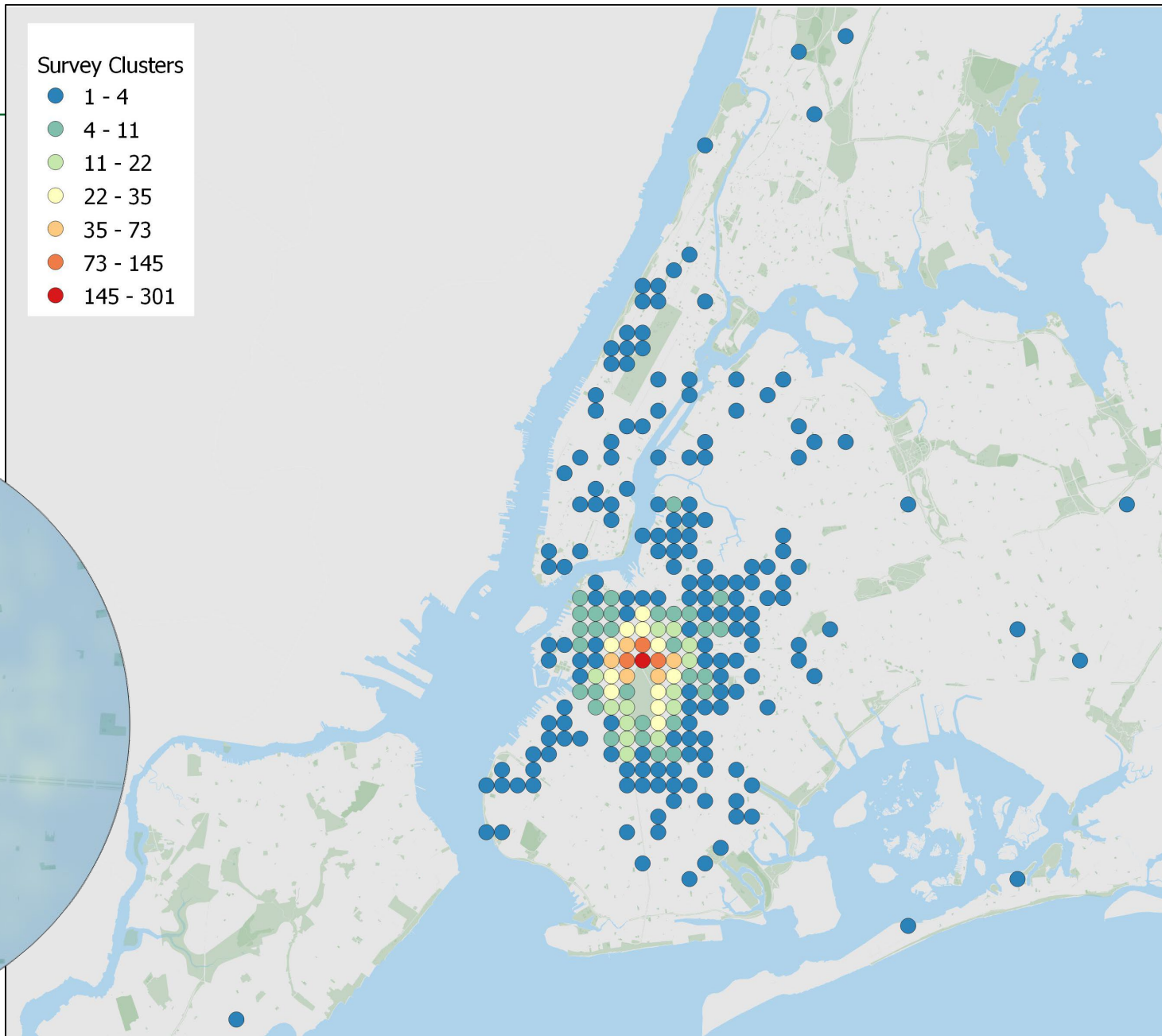
Survey Participation

Where Did Participants Come From?

A total of **2,077** people participated in the Grand Army Plaza Public Realm survey. Most respondents (**over 91%**) who participated in this survey were residents of Brooklyn. Responses were also gathered from the other four boroughs.



Approximately **73%** of respondents live within 1.5 miles of Grand Army Plaza



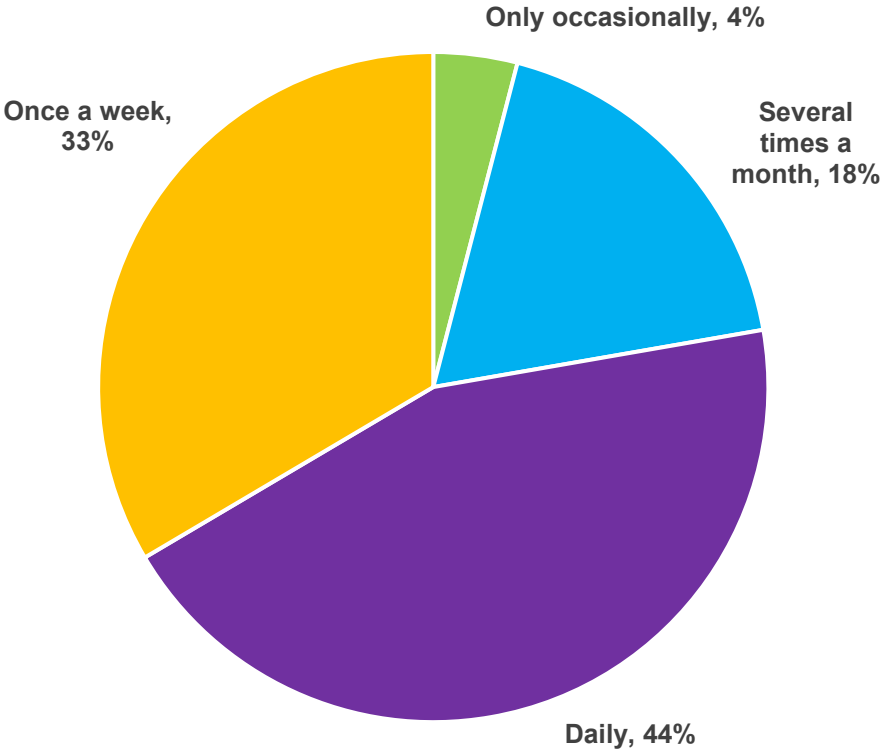
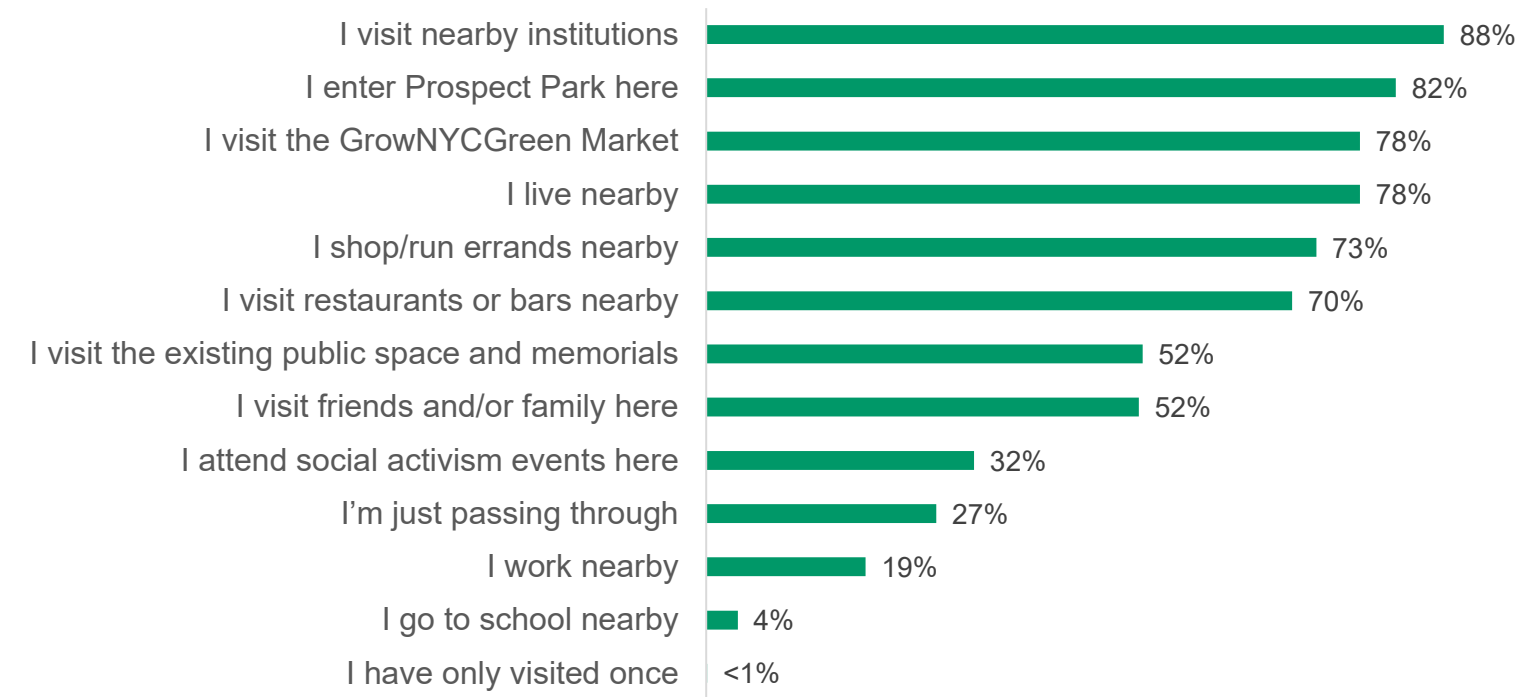
Survey Participation

What are respondents' relationship to Grand Army Plaza?

A majority of respondents visit the nearby institutions, Prospect Park, or GrowNYC Greenmarket. Many respondents live nearby.

Most respondents (**77%**), are daily or weekly users of Grand Army Plaza.

Relationship to Grand Army Plaza Public Realm (Select all that apply)



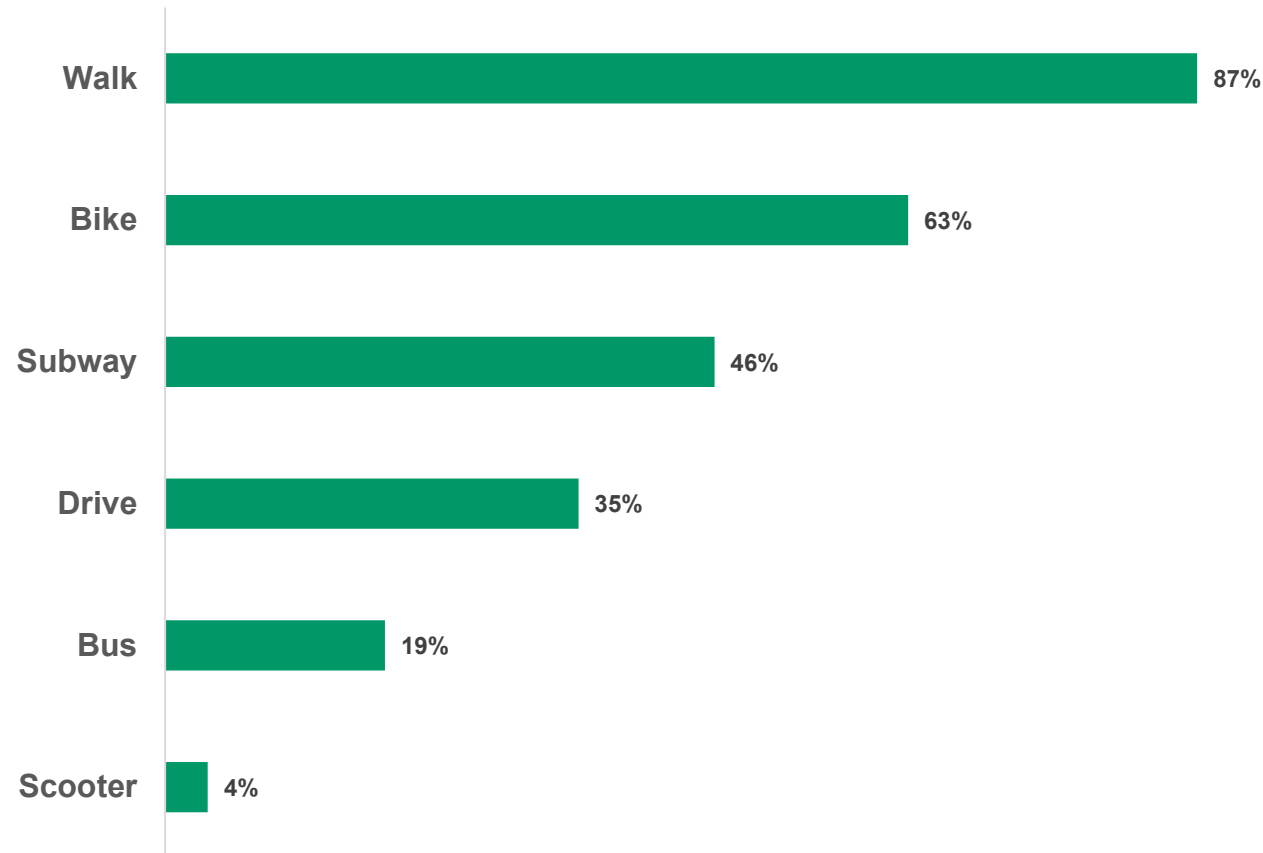
Survey Participation

How do respondents' get to Grand Army Plaza?

A majority of respondents (**87%**) walk to Grand Army Plaza. Most bicycle (**63%**) or take transit (**55%**).

Survey results closely resemble results of workshop poll for the same question.

Please indicate how you travel to and from Grand Army Plaza. Select all that apply.



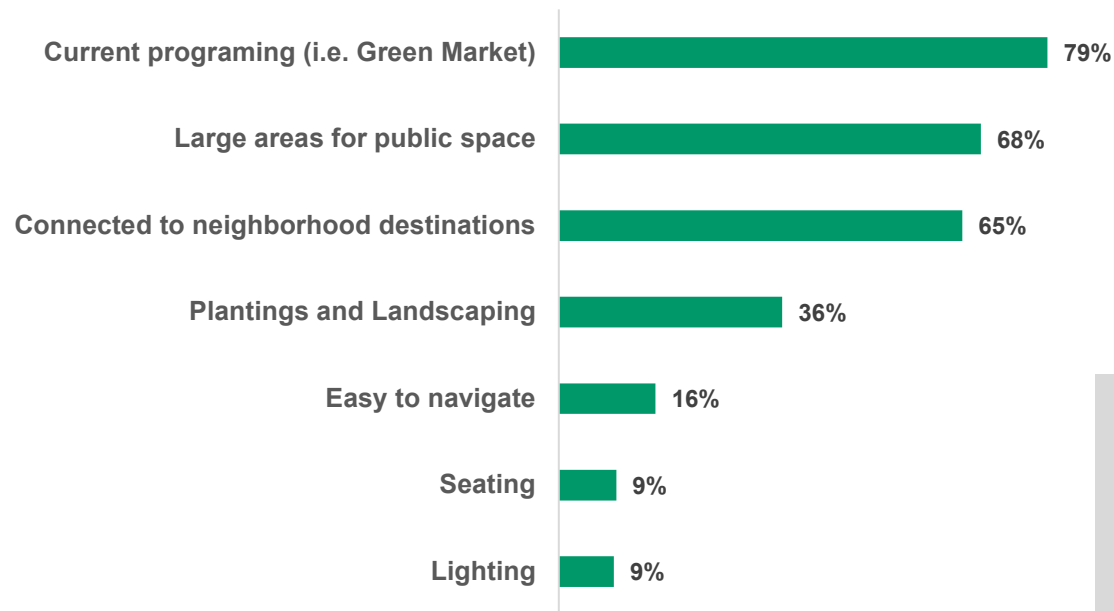
Survey Participation

What do people like about the current conditions of Grand Army Plaza?

A majority of respondents (**79%**) like the current programming in the plaza.

A variety of other items were included in the open-ended responses.

What are the best things about Grand Army Plaza currently? Select all that apply.



“Great location to observe neighborhood changes and people watch“

“Historic charm and beauty.”

“The arch!”

“A palace for the people, especially when combined with the Central Library and Brooklyn Museum. A fulfillment of the belief that the people deserve it all. A great place to meet your friends before heading into the park. A great place to people watch. A Central Brooklyn crossroads. One of Brooklyn's most iconic places. A gathering place for protest and political dissent.”

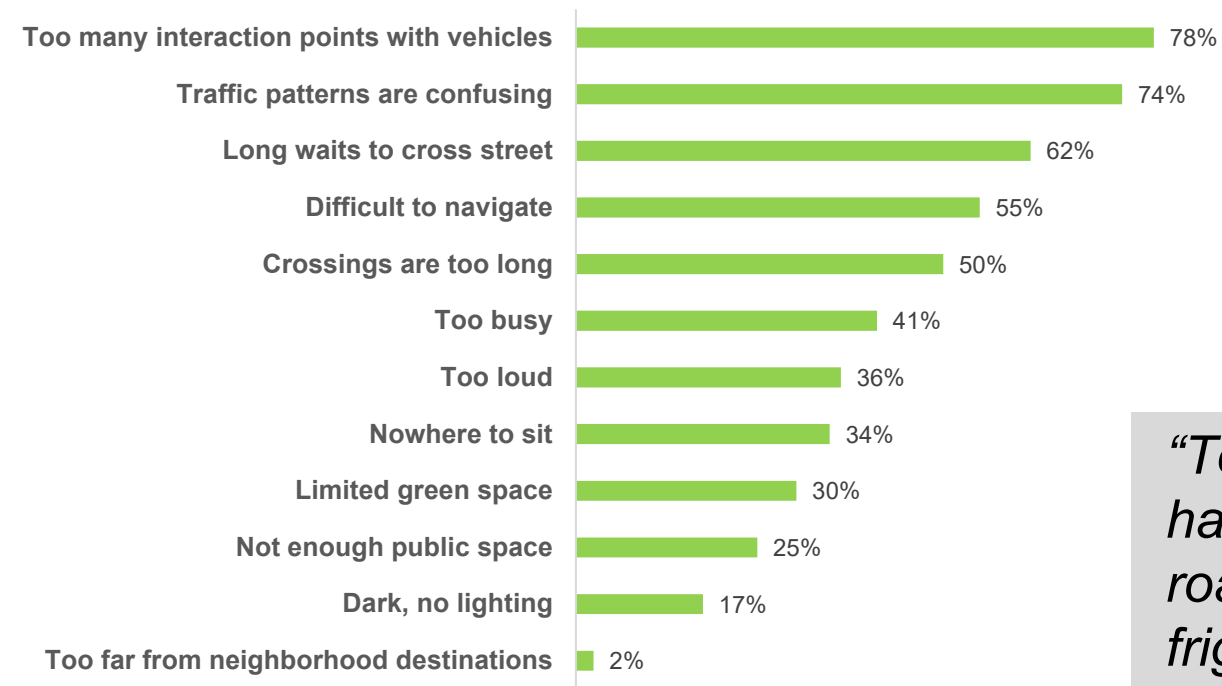
Survey Participation

What do people NOT like about the current conditions of Grand Army Plaza?

The most selected item (78%) that respondents do not like about Grand Army Plaza is the interaction points with vehicles.

A variety of comments were included in the open-ended responses.

What are the worst things about Grand Army Plaza currently? Select all that apply.



“It's a mess”

“Feels very disconnected from surroundings due to the traffic and sheer size of the streets... intimidating to navigate”

“Long waits to drive through the circle”

it is a traffic circle that doesn't flow because of all the confusing, restricted lane barriers and the improper placement of traffic lights.

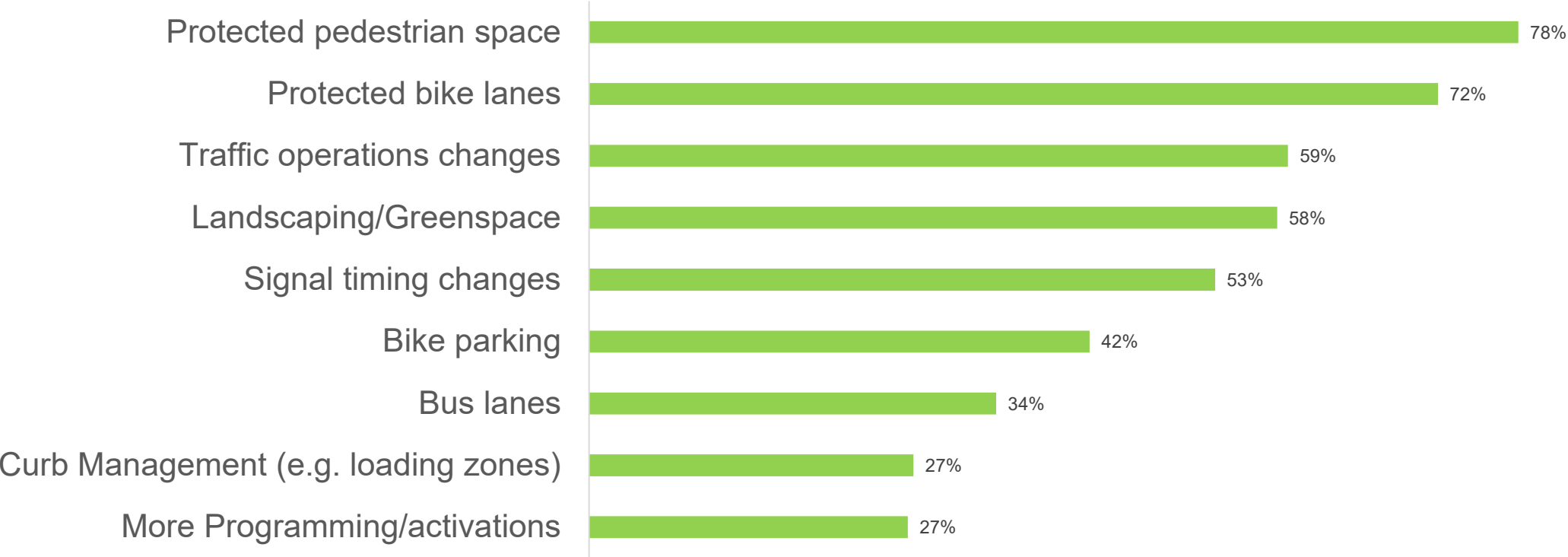
“To cross the many streets to access the park you have to wait on tiny islands in the middle of racing roaring dangerous traffic. This is especially frightening with a small child.”

Survey Participation

What do people want to see in Grand Army Plaza?

The most selected item (**78%**) that respondents want to see implemented in Grand Army plaza is additional protected pedestrian space.

Which specific public realm amenities or traffic calming elements would you like to see implemented in the Grand Army Plaza study area? Select all that apply.



Open Response

Are there additional ideas that you would like to see implemented in the project study area that would address traffic safety concerns for all road users?

Common Written Comments in Support of Larger Scale Changes (445 comments)

- » Make it Car Free (215+ mentions)
- *"I think Grand Army Plaza should be car-free, and be an extension of Prospect Park"*
- » Bury the Roadways or Build Pedestrian Overpasses (40+ mentions).
- *"Create a way for pedestrians to easily cross roadway w/out contact w/cars: bridges, underpasses, etc."*
- » Improve Pedestrian Connections and the Public Space (90+ mentions)
- *"As a pedestrian, the plaza should connect to the park and feel seamless between the plaza and the neighborhoods."*

Common Written Comments in Support of Some Changes (441 comments)

- » Make improvements while maintaining vehicular access (30+ mentions)
- *"I think the traffic patterns and signal timings should be reworked but I don't believe making it completely car free is just for the surrounding neighborhoods and connection points."*
- » Improve Ped and Bike Connections (90+ mentions)
- *"Please make it easier to get to the park or cross Grand Army Plaza"*
- » Simplify Operations, Signal Timing, and Calm Traffic (120+ mentions)
- *"I bike through Grand Army Plaza multiple times a week, and the traffic pattern is so confusing."*

Common Written Comments in Support of No Changes (60 Comments)

- » It's fine as is (40 mentions)
- *"Leave it as is. It's fine."*
- » Maintain vehicular access (2 mentions)
- *"Please leave it alone. Making it pedestrian-only would severely impact too many commuters and area residents that drive or depend on disability vans and buses. Pedestrians already have sidewalks and the entire park."*

Out of 1,270 responses

Open Response

Are there additional ideas that you would like to see implemented in the project study area that would address traffic safety concerns for all road users?

Other Common Written Comments (299 comments)

- » Maintain Vehicular Access (70+ mentions)
 - *Comments written that simply state vehicular access should be maintained, but don't mention if any changes should be made*
- » Increase Enforcement (60+ mentions).
 - *Many comments calling for increased enforcement, either of vehicles speeding or running red lights, illegal motorized vehicles in bike lanes, or pedestrians crossing against the signal*
- » Calls for a comprehensive study (20 mentions)
 - *"I am concerned about doing something that creates open space for predominantly white communities while pushing traffic and more pollution into black and brown communities. Open spaces and street closing aren't equitable in NYC."*
 - *"I want to make sure that neighbors who live south of the plaza and depend on this artery are considered in this decision. Many who depend on cars because public transportation is not reliable/available."*

Out of 1,270 responses

Next Steps

- NYC DOT will continue working with DDC and local stakeholders at outreach events in 2023
- Outreach events will seek input from communities that are not directly adjacent to Grand Army Plaza
- NYC DOT will undertake study to reduce congestion on Union St (repeatedly mentioned both in virtual workshops and survey)
- NYC DOT will continue to review for additional short-term improvements within the plaza

Out of 1,270 responses

Thank You!

Questions?



NYCDOT



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