



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To:	General Purposes Committee	Date:	June 30, 2025
From:	Katie Ferland Director, Business Services	File:	08-4150-03-01/2025- Vol 01
Re:	Richmond Tourism Master Plan: Public Engagement Feedback		

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled, "Richmond Tourism Master Plan: Public Engagement Feedback," dated June 30, 2025, from the Director, Business Services, be received for information.

Katie Ferland
Director, Business Services
(604-247-4923)

Att. 1

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

The City, Tourism Richmond, and the Richmond Hotel Association (RHA) committed to jointly developing a Tourism Master Plan in the City's 5-Year Strategic Tourism Plan (2022-2027), which was endorsed by Council and approved by the Government of British Columbia through the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) application process.

On July 8, 2024, in advance of the next MRDT application cycle (2027-2032), Council was presented with an approach to the development of a Tourism Master Plan and adopted the following resolution:

That the approach to developing a Richmond Tourism Master Plan, including the guiding principles, as outlined in the staff report titled, "Development of a Richmond Tourism Master Plan," dated June 10, 2024, from the Director, Business Services, be endorsed.

Following Council's endorsement, the project commenced, led by Tourism Richmond in partnership with the City and in collaboration with other key tourism partners. In Spring 2025, extensive consultation was undertaken to gather insights and feedback from the public, industry, and community partners on what they view as Richmond's key tourism strengths, challenges and opportunities. The purpose of this report is to share the findings from the public consultation.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

Proactive stakeholder and civic engagement to foster understanding and involvement and advance Richmond's interests.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #2 Strategic and Sustainable Community Growth:

Strategic and sustainable growth that supports long-term community needs and a well-planned and prosperous city.

2.5 Work collaboratively and proactively to attract and retain businesses to support a diversified economic base.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

Vibrant, resilient and active communities supported by a wide variety of opportunities to get involved, build relationships and access resources.

Analysis

Background

The development of a new long-term strategy, the Tourism Master Plan, was identified as a priority by the tourism partners to ensure Richmond's approach to tourism considers both the current context and future challenges and opportunities. It is anticipated that the Tourism Master Plan will develop a shared vision for tourism in Richmond and a comprehensive framework of key goals that align tourism, economic development, and the community in Richmond.

Four Guiding Principles were approved by Council to guide the Tourism Master Plan development process and were incorporated into the recent public consultation:

- **Create a shared vision.** Extensive community and industry consultation will enable a greater understanding of multiple perspectives to ensure a shared vision.
- **Grow sustainably.** Utilizing the lens of social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability will help enable long-term opportunities for residents and communities.
- **Positively impact the community.** Future growth of the sector will be dependent on approaches and actions that positively impact the community.
- **Guide future investments.** The Tourism Master Plan will help provide direction for future public and private investments related to tourism in Richmond including the upcoming MRDT renewal application (2027-2032).

Public, Industry and Partner Engagement

To inform the development of the Tourism Master Plan, an extensive public engagement process involved over 750 participants, including Richmond residents, visitors, and partners, from March to May 2025.

Feedback was welcomed through multiple channels, including an online survey, "Shaping Tourism's Future in Richmond," which received 412 responses, and interviews, 40 of which were conducted with key leaders and partners in the tourism industry. Twelve focus groups gathered insights from 101 participants in multiple tourism sub-sectors, including accommodations, food and beverage, attractions, festivals and events, air and ground transportation, and sports tourism, among others. The City's Economic Advisory Committee, Youth Advisory Committee, and Intercultural Advisory Committee were also consulted for their input.

Additionally, four pop-up events in key Richmond locations engaged both residents and visitors, enhancing community involvement. These were held at Fisherman's Wharf in Steveston, Aberdeen Centre, Richmond Centre, and Lansdowne Centre. Communication about the engagement process was supported through a dedicated webpage and an information bulletin to promote widespread awareness.

Overview of Engagement Findings

Community feedback gathered through interviews, focus groups, pop-up events, and online surveys highlighted a number of key topics for consideration in the development of the Tourism Master Plan. These include areas that were viewed as current strengths of the community's tourism sector as well as suggestions for further exploration and development.

In the feedback received, Richmond's multicultural identity was seen as a unique asset, and support was expressed for the further integration of multiple cultures into Richmond's tourism offerings. Respondents also felt that the city's culinary scene, especially its rich Asian cuisine, was a major strength, and there was interest in raising awareness of the city's diverse culinary offerings.

Respondents cited Richmond's strategic location as home to YVR as a convenient base for exploring the region, with opportunities to capitalize on flight layover traffic identified. Nature and outdoor activities, such as agri-tourism and birdwatching, were noted as key advantages, as was the historic charm and value of Steveston Village. Those engaged pointed to the sports hosting market in Richmond as an area for potential growth.

Participants also mentioned that creating new experiences, attractions, and events was an area of interest, with nature-focused activities, arts and culture offerings, and collaboration with Indigenous partners on cultural tourism experiences all noted as potential opportunities. There was also interest in developing a vibrant nightlife and growing the City's signature events.

Relative to other locations in the Metro Vancouver region, especially Vancouver, respondents emphasized Richmond's relatively affordable accommodations and distinctive attractions as competitive advantages that could be further leveraged, especially for business travel and conference markets. Interest was expressed in the potential for future infrastructure investments, including a multi-use event/ conference centre, as well as increased public transit options to key attractions and enhanced bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Throughout the engagement, respondents emphasized a focus on sustainable and regenerative tourism practices as key to ensuring environmentally and socially responsible growth.

Next Steps

Following public engagement, the next step is the development of a draft Tourism Master Plan, which will include a vision and key goals for the long-term development of the tourism sector in Richmond. The approved Guiding Principles have informed the work done to date and will form the basis for the development of the draft Tourism Master Plan. It will also incorporate input received during the public engagement as well as research and analysis of the city's tourism sector and broader competitive landscape.

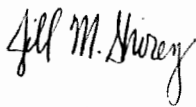
The draft Tourism Master Plan will be brought to Council for consideration in Fall 2025, after which it is anticipated that there would be additional public consultation prior to a final version being brought forward.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The feedback from the public consultation on the Tourism Master Plan, as outlined in the What We Heard Report, is a key foundational input toward the development of a shared community vision for tourism in Richmond. The next step in the process, a draft Tourism Master Plan, will be brought to Council for consideration in Fall 2025.



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Att. 1: What We Heard Report

Richmond Tourism Master Plan

What We Heard Report

June 19, 2025



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1 Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and thank the First Peoples of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ language group on whose traditional and unceded territory we work and live.

We extend appreciation and recognize we are working to invite people onto this land as visitors, and that we need to hold that stewardship with care and responsibility.

2 Introduction

2.1 Project Description and Timeline

The Richmond Tourism Master Plan will provide a long-term vision for developing and managing tourism in Richmond. The plan will outline goals, strategies, and steps to enhance the visitor experience, support economic growth, and ensure sustainable tourism. Covering a 10+ year period, it will address product development, infrastructure, marketing, and community collaboration. It is intended to serve as a unifying framework for the tourism industry, local businesses, government, and residents towards common objectives.

The project started in early January 2025 and is anticipated to be completed by the Winter 2025-2026.

2.2 Guiding Principles

Four guiding principles were identified to guide the Tourism Master Plan development process and were incorporated into the engagement phase through our questions and by sharing with survey, interview, and workshop participants prior to engagement.

- Create a shared vision;
- Grow sustainably;
- Positively impact the community; and
- Guide future investments.

2.3 What Does “What We Heard” Mean?

This report is a summary of feedback from all respondents during the engagement process. Observations and perceptions from those engaged were provided with the perspective of personal and/or work experience. Comments represent a consensus of opinion with themes and observations often recurring at numerous venues. Individual comments in some cases were highlighted in quotes to underscore a point, but that perspective in all cases represents a collective opinion, not one individual's point of view.

The themes and outcomes of the engagement process will help to provide a foundation for the eventual development of a vision for tourism in Richmond and will guide the conceptual development and testing of tourism initiatives.

3 Our Engagement with the Community

3.1 Engagement Plan

The engagement strategy was designed to actively involve and inform industry, partners, and residents throughout the development of the Tourism Master Plan. Our approach to engaging with those who live and work within Richmond focused on three core objectives:

- **Facilitate Communication:** Establish clear and open lines of communication with industry and the community.
- **Gather Input:** Collect valuable feedback and insights to shape the Tourism Master Plan.
- **Build Support:** Foster a sense of ownership and support for the Tourism Master Plan.

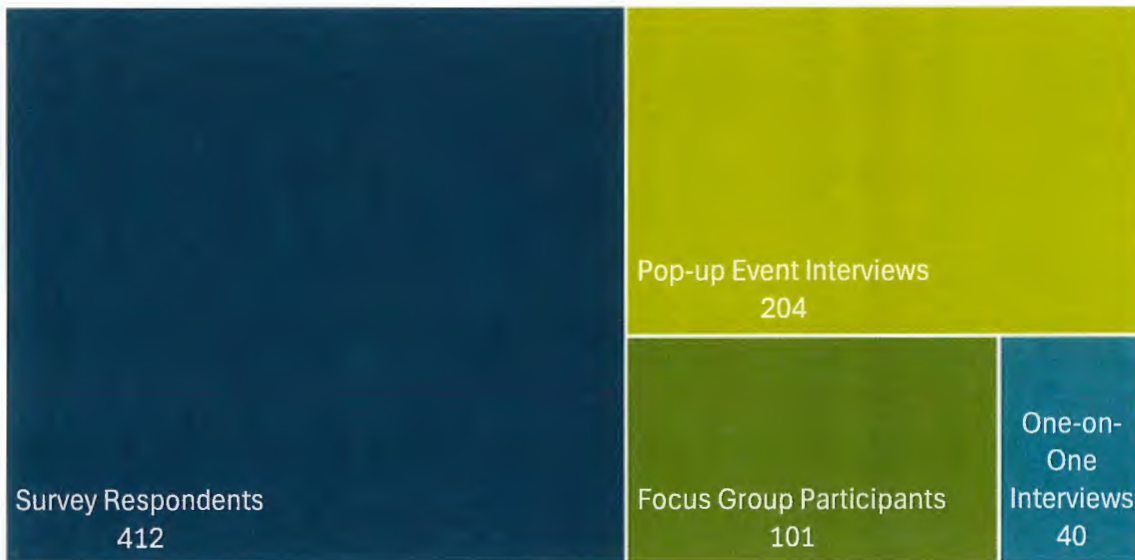
To promote the development of the Tourism Master Plan as well as encourage participation in the engagement phase of the project, a joint information bulletin was developed by the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, and the Richmond Hotel Association (see Appendix 7.2).

To directly engage with the community, we deployed four different methods that allow for different forms of receiving feedback from the community.

- **Shaping Tourism’s Future in Richmond Survey:** The survey was developed to gather quantitative data from residents and industry on their perceptions of tourism in the city. The survey was distributed on March 13th and closed on May 16th.
- **1:1 Interviews:** We organized 40+ one-on-one in-depth interviews with key leaders within the tourism industry and partners to engage in detailed discussions about specific aspects of the Tourism Master Plan.
- **Focus Groups:** We organized twelve focus group workshops with a variety of participant groups to engage in detailed discussions about specific aspects of the Tourism Master Plan.
- **Pop-up Events:** We developed four pop-up interactive sessions in various locations to engage with the community. The goal was to reach a diverse audience, gather feedback, and raise awareness about the project.

3.2 Engagement Profile

In total, we engaged with more than 750 residents and partners across Richmond, complemented by over 1,200 visits to the Richmond Tourism Master Plan website. During our outreach, individuals representing 47 organizations were engaged through interviews and focus groups. A list of those organizations is included in Appendix 7.6.



In addition to direct engagement activities, we launched a dedicated webpage to inform the public about the Tourism Master Plan and its development process. This webpage attracted 1,213 total pageviews, demonstrating significant community interest in the project. Visitors spent an average of over 35 seconds engaging with the content, and 65% of the traffic was generated through organic searches, indicating that a majority of users found the page by actively seeking information about the Tourism Master Plan.

Tourism Richmond also utilized targeted email campaigns to encourage participation and keep the community informed. On April 14, 2025, the campaign titled “Your Voice Matters—Win a Richmond Getaway” achieved an open rate of 56.2% and received 155 clicks. A subsequent campaign on May 8, 2025, “Final Call: Share Your Voice, Win a Staycation,” maintained strong engagement with a 52.9% open rate and 112 clicks. These results demonstrate ongoing interest and involvement from the community throughout the engagement period.

3.2.1 Survey Responses and Demographics

An online survey, “***Shaping Tourism's Future in Richmond***”, was undertaken from March 13 to May 16, 2025. There was a total of 412 respondents, with 222 surveys being fully completed and an additional 190 surveys partially completed. While some questions were not answered by Richmond locals in the partially completed surveys received, these surveys still contained usable and useful content and feedback in specific areas of the survey. Therefore, responses within these partially completed surveys were incorporated into the analysis and the overall findings while having a negligible impact on the overall survey results.

Residents of Richmond comprised 92% of all respondents. Most (67%) had lived in Richmond for more than fifteen years and were in an occupation unrelated to tourism (63%). Non-residents comprised only 5% of all respondents. The remainder (3%) preferred not to say where they resided.

All age groups were well represented with 12% aged 18-34 and 22% aged 65 years or older. Ethnic representation was almost equally split between the Asian (41%) and Caucasian (44%) communities. Latino/Hispanic participation was 1%, 2% were from First Nations and 4% were from other ethnic communities (8% chose not to say).

43% of respondents worked or studied in Richmond, 24% did not, and 26% were retired. The remainder (7%) preferred not to say.

Survey results are reported based upon the entire sample, with segments (e.g. age, ethnicity, tenure, etc.) being identified only when responses were substantively different than the population at large. Seniors were aged 65 years or older, while the young segment consisted of respondents between the ages of 18 to 34. Respondents directly or indirectly involved in tourism were identified as the “tourism” segment versus those respondents who were not involved in the sector. Detailed charts are provided as an appendix to this report.

3.2.2 Pop-Up Events Demographics

The Steveston community pop-up was held on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at Fisherman's Wharf area between 10:30am and 2:00pm. During this time, 43 conversations took place with a variety of parties, spanning a few interviews with individuals and the majority being held with numerous groups of between two to 14 people. In total, 150 people were engaged, with 97 (65%) visitors to Richmond and 53 (35%) Richmond residents. Among the non-resident visitors interviewed, the vast majority were residents of other neighbouring Metro Vancouver municipalities, with the next largest non-resident group originating from other parts of British Columbia (Victoria, Kelowna, Vernon, Penticton, Prince George). There were a few non-resident visitors interviewed in Steveston who were from Alberta (Calgary), Ontario (Milton), California, Ohio, the UK, Switzerland and China. Among all non-resident visitors engaged, most stated that they were primarily visiting friends and/or family located in the Lower Mainland and were either with them in Steveston that day or had received their recommendation to travel independently to Steveston.

Three community pop-up events were located at shopping malls, including Saturday, April 5, 2025, at Aberdeen Centre between 11:00am and 2:00pm, Saturday, April 26, 2025, at Richmond Centre between 9:30am and 2:00pm, and on May 3, 2025, at Lansdowne Centre between 11:00am and 2:00pm. There were 40 parties interviewed over this timeframe, totalling 54 individuals. In terms of residency, 41 (76%) were Richmond residents while 13 (24%) were non-residents. Of the non-residents, there was one visitor from Washington State, two from Victoria, BC, and all other visitors from other municipalities within Metro Vancouver.

4 What We Heard

4.1 Online Survey Results

Overall, 97% of the respondents felt that tourism is a very important part of Richmond's current economy and expected to be as important by 2035.

When asked about the number of visitors to Richmond in the summer and the winter, 37% and 69% respectively felt that there were too few visitors. Only 6% felt that there were too many visitors in the summer, and 2% felt there were too many visitors in the winter.

The types of tourism that respondents would like to see more of included food and culinary, cultural experiences, festivals, and sporting events. Food and culinary, culture, and festivals were strongly endorsed by all respondents. Younger respondents and those directly/indirectly employed in tourism saw strong potential in sporting events. The tourism community also saw potential in conference tourism and, to a lesser degree, business tourism.

Seniors generally were more passionate advocates of Richmond than young people. For example, when asked "This is a Vibrant Community – There is Always Lots to See and Do," seniors responded affirmatively with 73% agreeing, versus 48% of the younger demographic. That said, the younger cohort saw future potential with sports tourism, food/culinary, festivals, and culture, which would add to the depth of experiences and appeal of the destination.

Feedback from open-ended questions highlighted Richmond's significant strengths, primarily centred around its culinary diversity, the charm and historical appeal of Steveston Village, and its strategic location with proximity to the airport and other transportation hubs. Respondents also identified numerous opportunities for sustainable growth, including enhancing cultural events, improving transportation and accessibility, developing new attractions, and leveraging its unique multicultural identity.

However, significant challenges were also raised, particularly concerning traffic congestion and parking, the desire for improved public transit, managing growth and development, and addressing issues related to homelessness.

The feedback also underscores the importance of Richmond continuing to work on broadening its appeal. There is a clear desire to diversify the city's offerings to better reflect and celebrate its rich multicultural mosaic and natural beauty. Investing in events, improving accessibility, and developing new attractions will be key to attracting a wider range of visitors and encouraging longer stays, ultimately benefiting both tourists and the local community.

4.1.1 Main Themes and Key Ideas from Online Survey

4.1.1.1 Strengths of Richmond as a Tourist Destination:

- **Culinary Diversity:** This is overwhelmingly cited as a major draw. Respondents consistently praise the variety and authenticity of the dining options, particularly highlighting Asian cuisine, but also mentioning other international influences.
- **Steveston Village:** This historic fishing village is consistently named as the most loved and popular attraction in Richmond. Its charm, heritage, waterfront activities, and seafood are highly valued.
- **Strategic Location and Accessibility:** Proximity to Vancouver International Airport (YVR), BC Ferries, and the US border is seen as a significant advantage, making Richmond a convenient gateway. Public transit access, particularly the Canada Line, is also appreciated.
- **Nature and Outdoor Activities:** Richmond's dykes, parks (Garry Point Park, Terra Nova), and the Fraser River estuary are valued for walking, biking, and scenic views.
- **Diversity and Multiculturalism:** The city's diverse population and cultures are seen as a positive aspect, particularly in contributing to the food scene.
- **Safety and Cleanliness:** Many respondents perceive Richmond as a safe and clean city, which contributes to its appeal.

4.1.1.2 Opportunities for Growth in Richmond Tourism (Next 5-10 Years):

- **Enhance and Diversify Events and Festivals:** There is a strong call for more and varied events, particularly free, outdoor, and culturally diverse festivals that go beyond the current offerings (e.g., Richmond Night Market, Salmon Festival).
- **Improve Transportation and Accessibility:** Respondents perceive this as a major area for improvement, highlighting the importance of public transit and the desire for better public transit connections, especially to Steveston, and more accessible wayfinding for visitors.
- **Develop New Attractions and Infrastructure:** Suggestions include building a large arena/performing arts venue, creating more waterfront activation outside of Steveston, developing more family-friendly play areas, and investing in sports facilities.
- **Leverage and Promote Cultural Diversity More Broadly:** While recognized as a strength, respondents feel that the promotion of cultural diversity should be as inclusive and expansive as possible.
- **Enhance the Steveston Experience:** While Steveston is already a well-loved destination, survey participants highlighted opportunities to further improve the area. Community suggestions included supporting local businesses by diversifying retail and dining options. Additionally, there was interest in creating a more vibrant

boardwalk with expanded outdoor dining and gathering spaces. Importantly, participants emphasized the need to ensure that Steveston's unique and authentic character and its working harbour are preserved for all.

- **Target Specific Visitor Segments and Create Niche Tourism:** Suggestions include eco-tourism, sports tourism, culinary tours, and promoting Richmond as a healthy lifestyle destination.

4.1.1.3 *Challenges to Sustainable Tourism Growth:*

- **Traffic Congestion and Parking:** This is the most frequently mentioned challenge, particularly in popular areas like Steveston and during events.
- **Public Transit Limitations:** Existing transit is seen as somewhat lacking, especially to areas outside the central corridor, making it difficult for visitors without cars to get around. A perception of potential cuts to transportation was raised as concern.
- **Growth, Development, and Densification:** Concerns were raised about the rapid pace of residential development, its impact on infrastructure (roads, transit), and the potential loss of green space and the city's character.
- **Safety and Homelessness:** While generally perceived as safe, concerns about rising crime rates, drug use, and homelessness in certain areas were mentioned as potential deterrents to tourism.
- **Cost and Affordability:** Although several see the cost of hotels and activities in Richmond as an opportunity compared to downtown Vancouver, others mentioned it as a challenge compared to locations outside Vancouver.
- **Identity and Branding:** Some respondents mentioned the importance of Richmond's branding to showcase its broader appeal and multiculturalism.
- **Lack of a Central "Heart":** Some respondents noted that Richmond does not have a defined city centre like other municipalities, with Steveston often serving as a focus.
- **Language Barriers:** While cultural diversity is seen as a strength, the potential for language barriers and a lack of interpretation were raised as a concern.

4.1.1.4 *Additional Considerations:*

- **Importance of Local Resident Quality of Life:** Respondents emphasized that the quality of life for residents is crucial for creating a welcoming environment for tourists.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Several comments from industry highlighted the importance of continued collaboration between the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, businesses, and other organizations to achieve tourism goals.
- **Focus on Sustainability:** Several comments specifically mentioned the importance of sustainable tourism practices and environmental preservation.

- **Marketing and Promotion:** Several respondents commented on the importance of marketing and promotion of Richmond's attractions and events, including leveraging social media and working with content creators.
- **Importance of Waterfront Development Beyond Steveston:** Several respondents expressed interest in seeing more life and activity along other waterfront areas in Richmond.

4.2 1:1 Interview Summary

From March to May 2025, a total of 40 one-to-one interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders and partners from within the City of Richmond, the local tourism community, and at the Metro Vancouver, Provincial, and Federal level. Interviews were conducted online or in-person. Each interview was approximately 45 minutes.

A copy of the interview guide is appended to this report.

Key themes emerging from the discussions include Richmond's identity and assets, such as its Asian culture and cuisine, Steveston, and proximity to YVR, along with the desire for better connectivity and accessibility within the city.

Interviewees highlighted opportunities and challenges related to sustainable tourism growth, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and resident engagement in developing new attractions and improving infrastructure. The potential for sports tourism, agritourism, and embracing Indigenous culture and the natural environment were also frequently mentioned as areas for future focus.

Several interconnected themes emerged from the interviews, highlighting both the strengths and challenges of tourism in Richmond and suggesting potential directions for future development. These include:

4.2.1 Richmond's Identity and Assets

Interviewees acknowledged Richmond's unique blend of characteristics, particularly its proximity to YVR, its diverse Asian culture and culinary scene, its maritime history (especially Steveston), and its natural environment (e.g. river, dykes, parks). Feedback emphasized the importance of ensuring this identity (or characteristics) is communicated to both visitors and residents. Several interviewees note that Richmond has "a lot of untapped potential".

Specific topics of focus are summarized below. Quotes from respondents have been used for emphasis.

- **Proximity to YVR:** Repeatedly highlighted by interviewees as a primary asset and gateway for visitors.
- **Diverse Asian Culture and Culinary Scene:** Seen as a major draw by most, particularly the authentic and diverse Asian cuisine in the Golden Village and Richmond Night Market. However, there's a desire to show that Richmond is "a lot more than that".
- **Steveston Village:** Recognized as a charming historic fishing village and a significant attraction, often described as the "jewel of Richmond". Interviewees mentioned that opportunities exist to increase promotion and create more things to do in Steveston year-round, while preserving its unique charm.
- **Natural Environment:** The river and estuary are considered "signature features that define Richmond as a dramatic place and a unique experience". Several interviewees felt that opportunities exist for water-based activities like kayaking and boat tours. The waterfront trails, dyke system and parks are also seen as assets, though opportunities for better activation and accessibility exist. Birding is also mentioned as a potential niche attraction.

4.2.2 Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism

When asked "If Richmond were to become a more sustainable tourism destination, how would we know? What would success look like?", several respondents commented that tourism growth should benefit residents and the environment, not just the economy. Interviewees mentioned this involves measuring success through economic indicators, resident sentiment, and environmental impact, and actively seeking ways to integrate tourism development with community well-being.

Specific topics of focus that were mentioned by participants included the following. Quotes from respondents have been used for emphasis.

- **Measuring Success:** Interviewees noted that success should be measured by "moving forward" with "the right economic indicators," ensuring tourism growth does not put a strain on local citizens and the environment.
- **Resident Sentiment:** Interviewees noted that success includes a community that is "proud to host visitors" and where residents "better understand the value of tourism".
- **Less can be More:** Focusing on higher value tourism rather than just volume is suggested to minimize impacts.

- **Regenerative Tourism:** Interviewees mentioned that the regenerative tourism approach to tourism being adopted and actively worked on by Tourism Richmond and the City of Richmond is working well. With a focus on environmental sustainability, community involvement, economic benefits, and cultural preservation, it is seen to create a positive impact on the destination as well as the community.

4.2.3 Connectivity and Accessibility

Interviewees highlighted that while the proximity to YVR and the Canada Line are significant assets, there are challenges with internal transportation within Richmond, particularly connecting different areas and making them more walkable and bikeable. Improving transit and developing bike rental systems are seen as crucial enhancements.

Specific topics of focus included the following:

- **Internal Transit Challenges:** Some interviewees mentioned the efficiency of the Canada Line and the desire for it to extend to Steveston, although they noted that didn't seem a realistic investment. More investment in public transit is seen as important, and the current system is seen as "good, but not great".
- **Walkability and Bikeability:** Feedback included comments such as "develop more walking paths" and a recognized opportunity for bike rentals.
- **Dispersal Strategy:** Some interviewees commented it would be beneficial to have a dispersion strategy to better connect the places in Richmond through transportation options as a means to sustainably grow the region

4.2.4 Capital Investment and Development

Interview feedback included suggestions on strategic investment to enhance attractions, improve infrastructure, and create a more compelling destination. This includes developing key areas like the city centre and Steveston.

Specific topics of focus included the following:

- **Need for More Attractions:** Several interviewees emphasize that "more attractions" and "more things for visitors and residents to see and do" would help with tourism growth.
- **Strategic Investment Areas:** Suggested areas for investment include the city centre to create a "sense of place" and improve aesthetics. An "events/conference centre" is also suggested to support year-round tourism.

- **Aligning the Tourism Master Plan with Other Developments:** It was mentioned that new developments related to tourism/hospitality and the Tourism Master Plan should be aligned.

4.2.5 Collaboration and Alignment

The interviewees commented on the importance of continued and enhanced collaboration between the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, First Nations, businesses, and other stakeholders and partners, to create a cohesive tourism strategy and visitor experience.

Specific topics of focus included the following:

- **Breaking Down Silos:** Some interviewees mentioned a recognized challenge of different tourism sectors (e.g., food, sport, nature, heritage) operating in "fragmented siloes" rather than working "complementary with each other".
- **Inviting First Nations to the Table:** Feedback from the interviews stressed the importance of First Nations being invited to the table to discuss and plan for tourism in Richmond. The necessity of ensuring the First Nations story being woven into the tourism narrative was also raised.
- **Coordination in Key Areas:** It was felt by interviewees that better coordination between all partners involved in the tourism industry is needed in areas of high visitation (e.g. Steveston) would be beneficial.
- **Cross-Promotion:** Collaboration amongst tourism businesses and attractions for marketing and itinerary development is seen as beneficial to create and compelling new things for visitors to do in Richmond.

4.2.6 Resident Engagement and Appreciation

Some interviews felt that residents may not fully appreciate the value of tourism and that it was important to find ways to ensure tourism benefits the local community and minimizes negative impacts like parking issues.

Specific topics of focus included the following:

- **Lack of Appreciation:** Some interviewees believe residents do not fully appreciate the importance of tourism. Communicating the benefits of tourism to residents, such as "beautification of the city, investment in the city/city facilities" is important.
- **Addressing Resident Concerns:** Interviewees mentioned a need for "more parking facilities etc. so that they are not compromised going about their daily lives".

- **Involving Residents:** Interviewees mentioned that residents need to "have a say in how the community develops" and how they welcome visitors is key to sustainable tourism.

4.2.7 Other Insights and Suggestions

- **Sports Tourism:** Seen as an opportunity by the interviewees, with existing facilities like the Richmond Olympic Oval, but also a potential challenge if resident access to venues is impacted.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Feedback from many interviewees highlighted the importance of cultural preservation for growing tourism. Steveston has "heritage protection".
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Opportunities:** Some interviewees commented on the use of AI and that the potential for AI in tourism should be closely monitored.
- **Security and Safety:** Several interviewees raised security and safety issues for Richmond's tourism economy. This included security and safety for residents and visitors, homelessness and drug use, and workplace safety.
- **Spirituality and "Highway to Heaven":** The number of diverse religious institutions along No 5. Road is seen as a unique facet of Richmond.
- **Agritourism:** Interviewees mentioned various opportunities, potentially tying into the "authentic culture" of Richmond.
- **Richmond Night Market:** Several interviewees mentioned this as a significant engine for drawing visitors, particularly from the United States. The desire for a permanent site was expressed.
- **Policy:** Interviewees emphasized the importance of applying a tourism perspective when creating or amending policies—particularly those related to zoning, nightlife, event development, hours of operation, streetscape aesthetics, and commercial development. They also highlighted the importance of aligning policies in ways that actively support accommodation development.
- **Funding Mechanisms:** Several interviewees noted the importance of mechanisms like the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT), Destination Marketing Fund (DMF), and potentially exploring other ways to raise funds.

4.3 Focus Group Workshops Summary

From April to May of 2025, twelve focus group workshops were conducted with over 100 stakeholders and community leaders in attendance both online and in-person.

A central theme across all focus groups was the importance of Richmond becoming a destination, to stand on its own distinct from Vancouver.

4.3.1 Major Attractions

Another major theme from the focus groups is a perceived lack of major attractions that can draw visitors into Richmond and keep them engaged to stay longer in the city. Several suggestions emerged that leverages both the historical and agricultural offerings that make Richmond a unique destination within the Lower Mainland, while also looking to develop new, innovative attractions and experiences. Specific topics that were discussed include:

- **Current Major Attractions:** While Steveston and the Richmond Night Market are recognized as current "major" attractions, they come with perceived challenges. Steveston, for example, faces limited bus parking, making it a logistical challenge for some tour companies. The Richmond Night Market is seasonal, and concerns were raised about costs, parking, and line-ups.
- **Attraction Development:** There is a sentiment from focus groups that attractions in Richmond have not evolved significantly in the past 20 years, with the major attractions largely remaining the same. Feedback mentioned how this lack of attraction development makes it challenging for Richmond to become a must-visit destination.

4.3.2 Accommodation

A third major theme that emerged is to address the accommodation capacity for the current and future visitors coming to Richmond. While accommodation options are currently perceived as affordable compared to Vancouver, as well as convenient for those who are travelling through YVR, the focus group participants mentioned that increased hotel capacity across multiple price points could support new events, groups (especially sports teams), and overall tourism growth. Other feedback included the importance of more affordable and barrier free rooms, enhanced blend of event space, and improved nightlife. Specific topics that were discussed include:

- **Lack of Sufficient Capacity:** Participants consistently highlighted the opportunity for increased hotel capacity in Richmond. This lack of capacity impacts the ability to host more events, especially larger sport groups and tournaments. Visitor demand

is seen as outpacing the available space, with the possibility of further intensification over time.

- **High Hotel Rates:** Some participants mentioned they believe Richmond hotel rates are higher compared to competing cities, particularly for sport hosting groups.

4.3.3 *Transportation and Accessibility*

The fourth major theme is around improving transportation and accessibility options within Richmond. Focus group feedback mentioned that navigating Richmond presents challenges for both visitors and residents. Issues raised include clarifying transit payment zones, managing traffic congestion and lack of major road redesigns, as well as insufficient parking, especially in popular areas like Steveston and around the Richmond Olympic Oval. Improving connectivity between key areas like the airport, Steveston, and the city centre was a core theme to address the challenges. Specific topics that were discussed include:

- **General Connectivity and Navigational Challenges:** Getting around Richmond is seen as a challenge due to being surrounded by water and bridges. There is a perceived lack of transportation or connections between various places and activities. Some focus group participants felt increasing awareness of the different modes of getting around would be beneficial. Feedback included the importance of the city being walkable with greenways. Traffic around popular destinations are also seen as a significant challenge.
- **Significant Parking Deficiencies:** Parking was mentioned as a widespread challenge in Richmond including in such important areas as the Richmond Olympic Oval, Richmond Night Market, and Steveston. Parking for staff in Steveston is a challenge, with monthly parking being removed or becoming expensive.
- **Difficult Access to Steveston:** Getting to and from Steveston is noted as a challenge. Focus group participants noted Steveston can become congested during main events due to only having two main roads/streets accessing it, leading to gridlock. There is a perception of no or limited bus parking in Steveston, making it a logistical challenge for tour companies that discourages them from promoting it. The participants feel that international visitors could benefit from improved guidance on how to get to Steveston using multi-modal options that include using the Canada Line and bus system.
- **Access to other Key Areas:** Focus group participants mentioned a few other concerns: Access to places like the SilverCity area is difficult unless you drive, east Richmond faces bus frequency issues, and better access to parks and fields for sports would be helpful.

4.3.4 Sports Hosting

A consistent theme that was mentioned throughout the major themes above was the desire for an updated and evolved dedicated sports hosting strategy for Richmond. While sport hosting is seen as an already a significant economic contributor to the city, it is perceived that Richmond is losing ground to other cities and is not maximizing its potential in this area. Specific topics that were discussed include:

- **Lack of Competitive Facilities:** Focus group participants identified a major challenge is the absence of a new medium-sized stadium, specifically noted for larger sports, festivals, and events. Comments from participants mentioned that Richmond should create more court space for sports like volleyball and basketball, and more space and seating for martial arts. They mention that the city currently struggles to host larger events due to this lack of appropriate medium-sized amenities. While the Richmond Olympic Oval is a valuable asset, some participants now view it primarily as a community resource.
- **Losing Events to Competitors:** Participants in the Sports Hosting workshop mentioned that Richmond is losing sport events and groups to other cities. Competitors like Burnaby, Surrey, and Kamloops are seen by participants as leading in this space. They mention that cities like Kamloops have invested in specific infrastructure, such as an indoor track, to attract championship tournaments while other destinations like Ottawa and Winnipeg are offering incentives to attract events.
- **Transportation and Accessibility Gaps:** Some focus group feedback mentioned some sport teams require shuttles from hotels to facilitate movement around the city. There is also a desire from focus group participants for better access to parks and fields for sports, and parking limitations some facilities pose a challenge. Barrier-free transportation options were also mentioned as important for accessible events.
- **Balancing Growth with Resident Needs:** Comments were raised around the rising demand for sports hosting and the pressure it is putting on facilities, occasionally leaving residents with limited space for regular user groups.
- **Partnerships and Funding:** There is a desire for more effective sport hosting collaboration and partnerships. Participants mentioned that finding new funding sources is a key competitive factor, and attracting larger events often relies on support, potentially from the province.

4.4 Pop-Up Events Summary

4.4.1 Steveston Community Engagement Pop-Up

Richmond residents and non-resident visitors provided similar feedback on why they had travelled to Steveston, and the type of experience they were having that day. Generally, all were attracted to the authentic and heritage aspects of the fishing village setting. Many relayed that the combination of water access via the boardwalk and dyke system, the fishing fleet, the fresh fish and seafood for sale from the boats, the fish and chips on offer with other casual and relaxed dining experiences, and the quaint village stores created a unique coastal ambience and experience. Others remarked that the smaller, more intimate scale of Steveston, the serenity found, and the relatively less crowded streets was a significant draw, providing a retreat or escape from larger-scale natural or urban attractions that would typically be crowded.

A number of groups interviewed were multi-generational families and friends who were all enjoying the universal appeal of Steveston. Notably, many interviewed saw Steveston not only as a premier Richmond attraction but a premier Metro Vancouver attraction that was on par with the likes of Stanley Park, Granville Island, Grouse Mountain and Capilano Suspension Bridge. Some locals sought more animation and vibrancy in Steveston in the form of live music, a farmers' market, food trucks, festivals and events, and pedestrian-only zones. Some locals were saddened that the Grand Prix of Art at Steveston event was cancelled for 2025 and were confused why this was the case.

Beyond Steveston village area, residents and visitors alike also mentioned Garry Point Park, Terra Nova Park, Richmond Night Market and the cycling experiences as other core attractions of Richmond. The bicycle network in particular was viewed as a major asset, increasing the accessibility and connectivity of Richmond's experiences and attractions. Yet, these were all generally rated as enjoyable secondary experiences supporting the primary attraction of Steveston.

Areas noted for improvement specifically in Steveston centred on improvements to parking capacity and the desire to manage high vehicle traffic volumes at peak times. In terms of Richmond more broadly, regularly high levels of road traffic congestion and lack of public transit options were broadly seen as areas detracting from a generally positive experience throughout the municipality.

4.4.2 Engagement Pop-Ups at Richmond Malls

At both the Richmond Centre and Lansdowne Centre pop-up events, residents and visitors shared consistent perspectives on what makes Richmond an appealing destination. Steveston emerged as the city's main attraction, with its broad appeal cutting across

diverse groups. Participants highlighted Steveston's unique blend of heritage value, vibrant shopping, scenic dyke walking and cycling routes, and the opportunity to purchase fresh fish and seafood directly from the fishing fleet. The charm of Steveston was complemented by Richmond's natural assets, with many attendees noting the allure of seasonal events such as the cherry blossom bloom and the accessibility of rural and park settings throughout the city.

A recurring suggestion at both events was to expand recreational opportunities, particularly through the addition of bike rental facilities at parks like Terra Nova Park. Attendees felt that a larger bike rental network would not only enhance park visits but also improve connectivity between major attractions, such as linking Terra Nova Park and Steveston. The desire for more festivals, events, and further development of Richmond's reputation as a culinary destination was especially strong among younger residents, who often described the city as too sedate and in need of more vibrant experiences.

Participants at Lansdowne Centre echoed these sentiments and placed particular emphasis on the importance of protecting Richmond's heritage - both in Steveston and in the preservation of traditional Asian culture - as well as safeguarding the city's natural landscapes. The Asian food scene was widely recognized as a major draw, though some noted that other Metro Vancouver cities (Vancouver, Burnaby and Coquitlam) are increasingly competitive in this regard. Across both venues, a common concern was the desire to address transportation and connectivity challenges. Regular road congestion, limited public transit, and a lack of barrier-free accessibility were frequently cited as obstacles to fully enjoying all that Richmond has to offer.

Overall, the feedback from all pop-up events underscored a strong community desire to enhance Richmond's attractions, improve accessibility, and animate the city with more diverse experiences, while also preserving the unique cultural and natural assets that define Richmond's identity.

5 Synthesis of Community Feedback

Based on our community engagement efforts - including one-on-one interviews, focus groups, pop-up events, and an online survey - the following topics emerged as important considerations for the development of the Tourism Master Plan.

5.1 Culinary Destination

Richmond's diverse, high-quality, and authentic food scene, particularly its Asian cuisine, is consistently highlighted as a major strength and differentiator. There is also a desire to increase awareness of the variety of cuisines available, such as highlighting specialized world-level cuisine and unique culinary opportunities.

5.2 Cultural Mosaic

The city's multicultural identity, especially its strong Asian influence, is a unique asset that sets it apart. Those engaged identified an opportunity to better integrate and showcase other cultures, including First Nations, which is currently underrepresented in tourism offerings.

5.3 Gateway to British Columbia and Metro Vancouver

Richmond's strategic location adjacent to YVR was frequently highlighted as a natural entry point and a convenient base for exploring the wider region. Leveraging layover traffic from YVR was identified as a specific opportunity.

5.4 Nature, Outdoors, and Agri-Tourism

The extensive dyke system, trails, parks, waterfront areas, and agricultural lands offer significant appeal. Participants discussed potential in agritourism, such as farm-to-table experiences and showcasing rural landscapes. Birdwatching was also mentioned as a specific niche.

5.5 Sports Hosting

There is notable interest in further developing the sports hosting market within Richmond as there are versatile spaces that could be leveraged to provide further benefits to visitors and residents.

5.6 Value Proposition

Differentiation from Vancouver was a popular topic. Richmond offers more affordable accommodation, dining options, and unique attractions. Discussions were had around how this competitiveness could be leveraged, particularly for markets like business travel and conferences.

5.7 Infrastructure and Capital Investment

Suggestions for opportunities requiring capital investment include a multi-use event/conference centre, enhancing sports venues and facilities, developing or improving hotels, especially high-end or unique options, revitalizing and activating waterfront areas with amenities and recreational access, and investing in place-making efforts in areas like Central Richmond and Alexandra Road to create vibrant hubs. Improving existing parks and public spaces was also noted.

5.8 Transportation and Connectivity

Addressing perceived transportation challenges was identified as an important opportunity for development. Suggestions included improving public transit access to key attractions like Steveston and the Oval, developing shuttle services connecting YVR, hotels, and attractions, enhancing bike and pedestrian infrastructure and developing rental/sharing systems, exploring water taxi or ferry services along the river, and enhancing signage.

5.9 Diversifying Experiences & Product

Creating new experiences, attractions, and events was a common topic. This included developing more structured agritourism experiences, integrating authentic Indigenous cultural tourism experiences in collaboration with First Nations, expanding eco-tourism and nature-based activities, growing arts and culture offerings, developing a vibrant nightlife, growing signature events, leveraging the potential for business events, and sport tourism.

5.10 Collaboration and Community Integration

Strengthening meaningful relationships with First Nation communities and supporting their tourism efforts was mentioned throughout engagement as being important. Further developing partnerships between the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, the Richmond Hotel Association, YVR, TransLink, and other Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in the Lower Mainland was also highlighted.

5.11 Sustainability and Regenerative Tourism Focus

It was mentioned through engagement that Richmond as a destination could continue to incorporate sustainable and regenerative practices into tourism development. This includes promoting low-emissions transportation options, protecting natural ecosystems, and ensuring tourism is a force for good for residents and the environment.

6 Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

Based on the engagement and feedback to date, the following is a summary of the identified strengths, challenges, and opportunities that were heard relating to enhancing Richmond's capacity as a tourism destination.

6.1.1 Strengths

- **Cultural Diversity:** Richmond is described as a rich cultural mosaic and one of Canada's most diverse cities, reflected in its food, culture, and events.
- **Culinary Scene:** The culinary scene is consistently mentioned as a top strength, and one of Richmond's strongest differentiators.
- **Location and Accessibility:** Proximity to YVR is a significant benefit, making it accessible for tourists, a gateway for travellers, and ideal for quick-turn meetings.
- **Natural Environment & Outdoor Spaces:** Richmond offers a combination city life and nature, with natural beauty along the waterfront through easily accessed parks and trails.
- **Existing Attractions and Assets:** Key attractions mentioned include Steveston, the Richmond Olympic Oval, the Richmond Night Market, the McArthur Glen Designer Outlet, CF Richmond Centre, Lansdowne Centre and Aberdeen Centre. River Rock Casino Resort, Lavenderland, Cranberry Farms, Lulu Island Winery and other agritourism opportunities are also mentioned.
- **Hotel Capacity and Value:** Richmond has a significant number of hotel rooms, and the number and variety of hotels are a huge selling point, including their proximity to YVR.
- **Community Aspects:** Richmond has a vibrant, diverse community. There are a good sense of community pride and the people in Richmond are friendly, and there is a sense of safety.

6.1.2 Challenges

- **Transportation and Access:** Transportation is perceived as a significant challenge, particularly road traffic and congestion. Attractions are dispersed throughout Richmond (not always in proximity), and it can be difficult to get to some places by public transit.

- **Awareness and Brand Perception:** Several respondents felt that Richmond faces the challenge of establishing itself as a stand-alone destination, distinct from Vancouver. While people recognize the name, they often struggle to define what the city offers.
- **Lack of a "Key Attraction" and Scattered Experiences:** Respondents felt that compared to other municipalities, Richmond seems to lack a "key attraction" that defines its brand. Main attractions are scattered, with a lack of a defined sense of place for Richmond. Steveston, a major asset, is described as seasonal and missing year-round activation.
- **Infrastructure and Development Issues:** Respondents commented on a lack of quality conference space and limited large-scale convention infrastructure. There is an opportunity for more accommodations suited for sports teams and higher-end hotels for boutique and business event markets. The pace of getting approvals for business development was also mentioned.
- **Balancing Growth with Community Livability:** Ensuring that increased visitation supports or enhances the quality of life for residents is important.
- **Workforce and Operational Challenges:** Workforce shortages were cited as a concern for the tourism sector. Affordable housing for employees is desired. Language and other barriers exist, particularly for food and culinary experiences, with some restaurants operating cash-only or having limited hours.
- **Relationship Challenges:** Strengthening relationships with First Nations is essential. Enhancing connections with the Chinese community is also important, with language and cultural differences requiring thoughtful attention. The Richmond business community perceives potential benefit from a more collaborative relationship with YVR.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Concerns:** Growth cannot put a strain on the environment. Protecting sensitive ecosystems is important as outdoor tourism and recreation grows. Climate change and sea-level rise were also highlighted as concerns.
- **Crime and Safety:** Enhancing community safety is a priority, with a focus on reducing crime, gang activities, theft, and break-ins. Additionally, addressing concerns related to homelessness, including tents in public spaces and problematic properties linked to drug activity, was seen as an important step toward fostering a safer and more secure environment.

6.1.3 Opportunities

- **Leveraging YVR and Layovers:** Engagement highlighted that being close to YVR positions Richmond well to welcome travellers.
- **Enhancing and Promoting Existing Assets:** It was felt by those engaged that Richmond holds significant untapped potential, with opportunities to invest in and/or revitalize heritage sites, dykes, trails and natural areas. Natural areas present valuable prospects for sustainability and regenerative tourism development and promotion. The waterfront offers room for further activation.
- **Developing New Attractions and Experiences:** There is a perception that there is land available for development, presenting an opportunity to create motivating reasons to travel to Richmond such as attractions.
- **Focusing on Culinary Tourism:** Building on Richmond's reputation as a top culinary destination has been identified through engagement as a key opportunity.
- **Expanding Events and Festivals:** Expanding signature and community festivals and events was mentioned frequently as presenting a valuable opportunity for the city.
- **Growing Sport Tourism:** Sports and family-related tourism was identified as an opportunity, with many citing that Richmond is well-positioned for regional, national and international sports events.
- **Improving Transportation and Connectivity:** Improving ease of navigation is an opportunity that would address the concerns from many respondents throughout the engagement process.
- **Developing Sustainable/Regenerative Tourism:** Feedback suggested that Richmond can become a truly sustainable community by centering its story and future approach on the First Nation communities and their connection to the river and land, embracing green technology, clean technology, and regenerative tourism approaches.
- **Enhancing Business Meetings and Convention Tourism:** Richmond's proximity to YVR is felt to make it an ideal location for small-to-mid-sized conferences and business meetings.
- **Storytelling and Identity:** Cultural and natural heritage in Richmond are opportunities for meaningful storytelling, with engagement feedback citing many stories and unique aspects of Richmond to highlight.

- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Strengthening collaboration and partnerships in the tourism sector in Richmond and throughout the Lower Mainland was mentioned by some as being essential.
- **Attracting Investment and Improving Policies:** It was identified that there is an opportunity to influence capital investment, and the Tourism Master Plan is seen as a step in the right direction for guiding investment and development.

7 Appendices

7.1 Engagement Plan

The engagement plan below was submitted to the City of Richmond on February 12th, ahead of the public and interest-holder engagement period that officially launched on March 11, 2025. It was used as the basis for the consultants to gather input from community members, stakeholders, and industry partners.

7.1.1 Introduction

In addition to completing the destination assessment encompassing trends, competition, opportunities, and impacts, a substantial focus from March 13 to May 02, 2025 will involve community, industry, and partners outreach to gather their visions and desired outcomes for our city's tourism industry.

This engagement strategy is designed to actively involve and inform industry, partners, and residents throughout the development of the tourism master plan.

7.1.2 Objectives

- Facilitate Communication: Establish clear and open lines of communication with industry and the community.
- Gather Input: Collect valuable feedback and insights to shape the tourism master plan.
- Build Support: Foster a sense of ownership and support for the tourism master plan.

7.1.3 Participants

The following organizations will be approached to participate through one or more of the engagement methods discussed in the next section.

- Local, regional, and national tourism authorities, planning departments, and transportation agencies.
 - Richmond Economic Advisory Committee
 - Richmond Chamber of Commerce
 - Richmond Youth Advisory Committee
 - Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee
 - Transportation – TransLink, BC Ferries, Taxi, uber
 - Aviation Industry - YVR, BC Aviation Council
 - Tourism Richmond – Board of Directors and staff
 - Industry Associations - Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC), Richmond Hotel Association (RHA), Richmond Hotel Destination Association (RDHA), go2HR, BC Hotel Association

- Destination Canada
- Destination BC, including Vancouver, Coast & Mountains (VCM) tourism region
- Destination Vancouver
- Hotels, tour operators, travel agencies, and other tourism-related businesses and not-for-profits.
 - Hoteliers & Richmond Conference Centre
 - Tour Operators / Meeting Planners (based in Richmond)
 - Tour Operators / Meeting Planners (externally based)
 - Richmond Olympic Oval
 - Richmond Sport Hosting
 - Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC)
 - Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)
 - Steveston Merchants Association
 - Steveston Harbour Authority
 - Attractions: Gulf of Georgia Cannery; Britannia Shipyard; Vancouver Whale Watching
 - MacArthur-Glen Designer Outlet
 - Richmond Night Market
- Local residents, cultural organizations, and indigenous communities.
 - Musqueam Nation
 - Indigenous Tourism Association of BC (ITBC)
 - Steveston 2020 Group
 - Steveston Historical Society
 - Richmond Sports Council
 - Local residents
 - Chinese Cultural Associations

7.1.4 Engagement Methods and Timeline

7.1.4.1 Promotion Plan

- An information release is being issued that will promote the development of the first ever Tourism Master Plan for Richmond. This information release includes a link to a webpage that is on Tourism Richmond's website which will contain elements such as "What is a Tourism Master Plan", "Why is a Tourism Master Plan needed for Richmond", "What is the Plan for Development of the Plan", and "Ways to Engage". There will be a link in the webpage that directs the readers to a survey asking respondents questions regarding the future of tourism in Richmond. As the project progresses, updated information will be made available on the webpage to ensure the public is informed about next steps in development.

- Utilize online platforms such as social media, websites, and other communication channels such as Let's Talk Richmond and Tourism Richmond's database to reach a wide audience. These platforms will include a link to the webpage as noted in the point above.

7.1.4.2 *Surveys and Questionnaires*

- Develop and distribute surveys to gather quantitative data from the residents and from industry on their perceptions of tourism in the city and invite them to help shape the future of tourism in Richmond
- The survey will be distributed in March immediately following the issue of the information release. Information about the survey will be shared with the public through social media, and through Tourism Richmond / City of Richmond website intercepts. We will also include information about completing the survey in the invitations to the participants of the 1:1 interviews, focus groups, and pop-ups.
- Survey would close on April 30th to allow time for analysis.

7.1.4.3 *1 on 1 Interviews*

- Organize in depth interviews with key leaders within the tourism industry and partners to engage in detailed discussions about specific aspects of the tourism master plan.
- These 1:1 Interviews will be scheduled for between 30-45 minutes depending on the depth and breadth of questions the consulting team would want to cover with the individual.
- Key interviewee groups include: the Tourism Master Plan Steering Committee; key staff from Tourism Richmond, Tourism Richmond's Board of Directors; leaders from tourism associations and DMOs such as Destination Vancouver, ITBC, and TIABC; key staff members from the City of Richmond as determined by the Steering Committee representatives from the City; and tourism industry partners such as Vancouver Airport Authority, attractions (Vancouver Whale Watch, Richmond Night Market), hotels (Hilton, Fairmont, etc.), and restaurants (Flying Beaver, The Fish Man, The Story Café, etc.).
- The 1:1 Interviews will start in March and continue till the beginning of May.

7.1.4.4 *Focus Groups*

- Organize focus group workshops with a variety of participant groups to engage in detailed discussions about specific aspects of the tourism master plan.
- These workshops will be scheduled to last 90 minutes and will be interactive through open discussion as well as through facilitation software like Mentimeter. While the focus group sessions will primarily be in-person, the consultants will also accommodate those who are unable to attend through a virtual/hybrid session.

- The consulting team will start the organization of the focus groups following the issue of the information release. The groups will take place in April.
- The participant groups that we have identified along with a date for the session (based on availability of participants) are:
 - **Accommodations** such as hotels (Hilton, Marriott, Fairmont, etc.)
 - **Food and Beverage** including restaurants (Flying Beaver, etc.), and breweries and vineyards (Lulu Island Vineyard, Britannia, Fuggles Beer, etc.);
 - **Steveston Tourism Advisory Group**; representatives from a variety of partners and businesses that are directly involved in the tourism industry;
 - **Attractions, Festivals, & Events** including Richmond Night Market, Vancouver Whale Watching, and Britannia Shipyards;
 - **Air and Ground Transportation** including Vancouver Airport Authority, Harbour Air, Helijet, Richmond Taxi, and Uber/Lyft;
 - **Sports Tourism** including the Richmond Sports Council; Richmond Oval, private sports clubs, Quilchena Golf and Country Club, Richmond Ice Centre, and UBC boathouse;
 - **Tourism Industry Young Professionals** including an invitation to the Youth Advisory Committee; and
 - **Tourism Richmond Board of Directors and Other City of Richmond Committees.** The consulting team will meet with the Tourism Richmond Board of Directors and several City of Richmond Committees to present and receive input.

7.1.4.5 *Pop-Up Engagement*

- Similar to the pop-up events for the City's engagement on Community Wayfinding, temporary, interactive sessions will be set up in various locations to engage with the community with visual and hard copy cues about the tourism and the master plan project. The goal is to reach a diverse audience, gather feedback, and raise awareness about the project in a fun and accessible way.
- We will have multi-lingual project team members facilitate the pop-up events to ensure participants in various languages (Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi) are able to communicate freely without barriers.
- Details about the pop-ups including 3 locations and times will be included in the initial press release along with any follow-up communication that serves as a reminder for input.
 - Saturday, April 5th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Lansdowne Centre Food Court
 - Saturday, April 12th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Aberdeen Centre near the fountain
 - Saturday, April 19th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Fisherman's Wharf in Steveston

7.2 City of Richmond Information Bulletin

To highlight the engagement process designed for the Richmond Tourism Master Plan, and to solicit participation, a joint information bulletin was released to residents by the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond and the Richmond Hotel Association. A copy of this text is provided below.

March 13, 2025

The public is invited to share their thoughts on the future of tourism in Richmond, starting today and until April 30. Community input will help shape the city's first long-term Tourism Master Plan, designed to enhance Richmond as a visitor destination and to create a positive impact. This initiative is led by the City of Richmond and Tourism Richmond in collaboration with the Richmond Hotel Association.

“Tourism, sports, and business events play a crucial role in shaping Richmond into a dynamic, thriving community,” said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. “The Tourism Master Plan will be guided by a long-term, shared vision for the future of tourism, shaped by community input and designed to benefit both residents and visitors to Richmond for years to come.”

The Tourism Master Plan will be developed through extensive engagement with Richmond residents, businesses, and tourism operators. It will also include an assessment of the city’s destination assets and opportunities and an identification of key priorities to create a strong tourism sector for the next decade and beyond.

“We are delighted to be developing a shared roadmap with our partners at the City of Richmond to ensure our city continues to flourish as a place to visit,” said Nancy Small, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Richmond. “Successful visitor destinations plan ahead with the close involvement of their local community, since desirable places to live are also appealing places to visit.”

There are in-person and online opportunities for the public to participate in March and April 2025:

In-person pop-up events

Drop by one of the following pop-up events to learn more about the project and share your input:

- Saturday, April 5 from 11am to 2pm, at Lansdowne Centre Food Court
- Saturday, April 12 from 11am to 2pm, at Aberdeen Centre near the fountain

- Saturday, April 19 from 11am to 2pm, at Fisherman's Wharf in Steveston
- Mandarin, Cantonese and Punjabi interpreters will be at these pop-up events to assist with translation of questions and comments.

Online

Visit the [Richmond Tourism Survey](#) to learn more, ask questions, and provide your feedback through a survey.

- The survey will be open until 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 30, 2025.

The Richmond Tourism Master Plan is anticipated to be completed in Winter 2025-2026.

For more information, visit [Richmond Tourism Master Plan](#) or email RichmondTMP@tourismrichmond.com.

7.3 Survey Instrument

7.3.1 Introduction to Survey Respondents

The City of Richmond and Tourism Richmond, in collaboration with the Richmond Hotel Association, are undertaking a long-term Tourism Master Plan to enhance Richmond as a visitor destination and to create a positive impact in the community. We would like to understand your perceptions of tourism in the city and invite you to help shape the future of tourism in Richmond.

Tourism includes those who come to Richmond for just the day and those who stay overnight. It includes people travelling for: business, conferences, sports events, festivals, foodies, cultural experiences, visiting friends and relatives, and all other visitors who live somewhere else but choose to visit Richmond.

The Tourism Master Plan will be developed in alignment with the following guiding principles:

- **Create a shared vision.** The Plan will reflect a shared vision to guide activities to enhance Richmond as a tourist destination.
- **Grow sustainably.** The Plan will grow the visitor economy sustainably over the long-term for the greatest breadth of residents and communities possible.
- **Positively impact the community.** The Plan will be guided by a focus on approaches and actions that positively impact the broader Richmond community.
- **Guide future investments.** The Plan will help provide direction for future public and private investments related to tourism in Richmond over the longer term.

The information from this survey will be used to provide key learnings to input into plan direction and development. Your contribution is important and gratefully appreciated. If you wish to be engaged at a later stage throughout this process, we ask for your permission at the end of the survey to contact you later. Should you have any questions, please contact the project team at richmondtmp@tourismrichmond.com.

7.3.2 Survey Questions

1. **As an economic contributor, I think tourism's current importance to the local economy is...**
 1 – Low Importance 10 – High Importance
2. **In 2035, I envision that tourism's role in the local economy will be more important or less important than it is today.**
 1 – Less Important 10 – More Important

3. In the future, I would like to see the following types of tourism to increase, stay the same, or decrease?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease |
| b. Conferences | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease |
| c. Sports events | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease |
| d. Festivals | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease |
| e. Foodies | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease |
| f. Cultural experiences | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease |
| g. Academia | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease |
| h. Visiting friends and relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease |

4. As it relates to the number of visitors in the Summer months (June, July, August), I think Richmond currently has...

- ☐ Too Many Visitors ☐ Too Few Visitors ☐ Just the right level of visitors
☐ Not sure

5. As it relates to the number of visitors in the Winter months (December, January, February), I think Richmond currently has...

- ☐ Too Many Visitors ☐ Too Few Visitors ☐ Just the right level of visitors
☐ Not sure

6. Here are a few statements about attending events or activities in Richmond.

Please rate each one on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 10 (Strongly Agree).

- The attractions, events, and things to do in Richmond are an important part of making my community a vibrant place to live
- My community offers experiences that I want to tell others about
- This is a vibrant community – there is always lots to see and do
- Events and activities are also popular with visitors to Richmond
- I want to see and attend events around my community, but I usually only hear about them after they have happened

7. What is your perception about how Richmond ranks against other communities within Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley in these categories?

Please rate each one on a scale of 1 (Weaker) to 10 (Stronger).

- Places to experience (attractions, events, activities, arts & culture)
- Places to eat/drink (dining, restaurants, vineyards, breweries, etc.)
- Places to stay (accommodation, hotels, bed & breakfasts, etc.)
- Places to play (sports fields, recreation facilities, etc.)
- Places to meet (conference and meeting spaces, co-working offices, etc.)
- Ways to get around (accessibility and transportation)

8. How likely are you to recommend Richmond to family, friends, and colleagues as a place to visit?

0 – Not at all Likely

10 – Most Likely

- (For those who selected 9 or 10) **What do you love most about Richmond that makes it a great place to visit?**

- (For those who selected 7 or 8) **What could Richmond do to make it even more appealing destination for you and others?**

- (For those who selected 0 to 6) **What specific improvements would you like to see in Richmond to make it a more enjoyable place to visit?**

9. Here are a few statements about how tourism can benefit Richmond in the future.

For each statement, please indicate how much you agree or disagree on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 10 (Strongly Agree).

Tourism will enhance Richmond as a city...

- ... with vibrant, resilient and active communities
- ... to meet new people and learn about other places and cultures
- ... with long-term, sustainable economic growth
- ... which celebrates local arts and culture
- ... with a high quality of life for residents
- ... to not only visit, but to live, work, and do business
- ... with strong pride amongst residents and businesses
- ... to participate and attend sporting activities

10. What opportunities do you feel that Richmond should be considering over the next 5-10 years to sustainably grow the tourism economy for the benefit of as many people as possible?

11. What challenges do you feel that Richmond should be addressing over the next 5-10 years to sustainably grow the tourism economy for the benefit of as many people as possible?

12. Do you have any additional comments or considerations that you would like to share?

13. Would you like to be contacted in the future as work proceeds on the tourism master plan? (Your email contact information will be held in confidence)

☐ Yes ☐ No

7.3.3 Optional Demographic Information

I have lived in Richmond for ...

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11 – 15 years
- ☐ More than 15 years
- ☐ Live outside of Richmond
- ☐ Prefer not to say

My postal code is _____

I currently work or study in Richmond

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Age Range

- ☐ 18-34
- ☐ 35 – 49
- ☐ 50 – 64
- ☐ 65+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Race/Ethnicity

- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Indigenous/First Nations
- ☐ African
- ☐ Latino or Hispanic
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Other/Unknown
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Is your occupation related to the region's tourism economy?

- ☐ Directly
- ☐ Indirectly
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

If "Directly", please specify...

- ☐ Accommodation
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Food & Beverage
- ☐ Visitor Attraction/Experience
- ☐ Other _____

7.4 Interview Guide

7.4.1 Interview Core Questions

1. What attracts visitors and groups to Richmond for tourism? What are the greatest tourism assets and experiences in the city?
2. What are the primary strengths of tourism in Richmond?
3. What are Richmond's greatest opportunities to sustainably grow the tourism economy for the benefit of as many people as possible?
4. In the same context, what challenges need to be managed to sustainably grow the tourism economy for the benefit of as many people as possible?
5. If Richmond were to become a more sustainable tourism destination, how would we know? What would success look like?
6. Is there anything that we have not discussed that we need to pay attention to during this study?
7. May we contact you again for additional follow up as the study progresses?
 - a. Yes (confirm email address) No

7.4.2 Optional Questions (Time Permitting)

8. What catches people by surprise when they stay in Richmond? What are the "Aha!" moments? Maybe those hidden opportunities that only the locals know about?
9. What opportunities/challenges are there by key sectors: *business, conferences, sports events, festivals, food and culinary, cultural experiences, visiting friends and relatives*.
10. If we have an opportunity to influence capital investment, where should it be focused to enhance Richmond's appeal?
11. Any thoughts or observations on policies that need to be enacted or amended to realize Richmond's destination potential? (e.g. Policies could be around zoning, nightlife, event development, hours of operation, streetscape aesthetics, commercial development, etc.)
12. How important is tourism as an economic sector to Richmond? Do residents appreciate its importance?
13. Strengthening the visitor economy and increasing the quality of life for our residents shouldn't be mutually exclusive. What are the issues of particular interest to residents?
14. How does the tourism industry contribute to the quality of life of residents in Richmond? How can that relationship be strengthened?

7.5 Focus Group Guide

7.5.1 General Questions

1. What motivates people to visit and stay overnight in Richmond?
2. What role does the tourism sector play in Richmond? How might that change in the future?
3. Imagine it is 2035, what does an ideal future for the tourism industry look like?
4. What themes and aspirations could be considered for a destination vision to achieve that ideal future?
5. What key initiatives would you want to see achieved by 2035?
6. How does tourism industry growth balance with the quality of life for residents?

7.5.2 Accommodations

1. What new trends or guest expectations do you see emerging globally that needs to be addressed in this Tourism Master Plan?
2. What new types of accommodations, amenities, or guest experiences should Richmond develop to remain competitive and meet the evolving needs of the current and future visitors?

7.5.3 Attractions, Festivals, & Events

1. What type of signature experience could be created within Richmond that set it apart from other destinations in Metro Vancouver?
2. How can Richmond's current attractions and events be better coordinated or promoted to create a more cohesive and year-round visitor experience?

7.5.4 Air and Ground Transportation

1. What improvements in transportation infrastructure or services would most enhance the visitor experience and support sustainable tourism growth in Richmond?

7.5.5 Food & Beverage

1. How can Richmond's food and beverage sector further leverage its diversity and local food assets to become a signature draw/demand generator for visitors?

7.5.6 Meeting Planners / Tour Operators

1. What are the main barriers or opportunities for attracting more conferences, group tours, or business events to Richmond, and how can they be addressed?

7.5.7 Sports Tourism

1. What facilities, partnerships, or event types would best position Richmond as a leading destination for sports tourism by 2035?
2. What does the current competitive landscape look like when trying to attract sporting events?

7.5.8 Tourism in Steveston

1. How can Steveston balance its unique heritage and local character with increasing visitor numbers to ensure both economic vitality and community well-being?

7.6 List of Organizations

During our outreach, individuals representing 47 organizations were engaged through interviews and focus groups. A list of those organizations is included below.

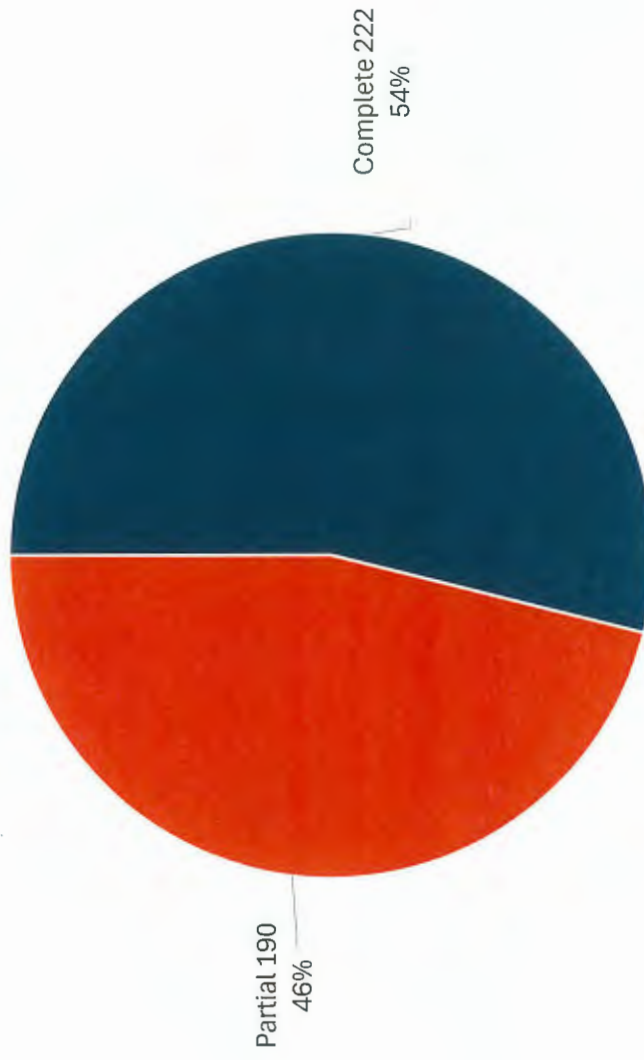
- Anar
- Avolta
- BDA, LLC
- Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site
- CAL Travel & Tours
- City of Richmond
- Destination BC
- Destination Canada
- Destination Vancouver
- Executive Hotels
- go2HR (Accessibility, Human Resources, Worksafe, Frontline Training, etc.)
- Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site
- Hilton Vancouver Hotel
- Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC)
- Jade Seafood Restaurant
- Landsea Tours & Adventures
- Larco Hospitality
- LuLu Island Winery Ltd
- McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Vancouver Airport
- Megarealm VR
- Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
- Optimas Management Group
- Pajo's Fish & Chips
- Peterson Group
- Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport
- Richmond Hotel Association
- Richmond Hotel Destination Association
- Richmond Night Market (Firework Productions Ltd)
- Richmond Olympic Oval
- Richmond Sports Council
- Richmond Sport Hosting
- River Rock Resort Hotel
- Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel
- Steveston Merchants Association
- Steveston Museum and Post Office
- Steveston Seabreeze Adventures Inc.
- Steveston Seafood House
- The Sharing Farm
- The World of Kidtropolis
- Tourism Industry Association of BC
- Tourism Richmond
- TransLink
- Vancouver Airport Authority
- Vancouver Airport Marriott Hotel
- Vancouver Whale Watch
- Versante Hotel
- Westin Wall Centre Vancouver Airport

7.7 Online Survey – Detailed Results

There was a total of 412 respondents, with 222 surveys being fully completed and an additional 190 surveys partially completed. The average number of respondents per question was 245, with a high of 277 responses and a low of 211. There was higher abandonment in the last part of the survey which delved into demographics. Overall, the rate of response for a survey of this nature was excellent.

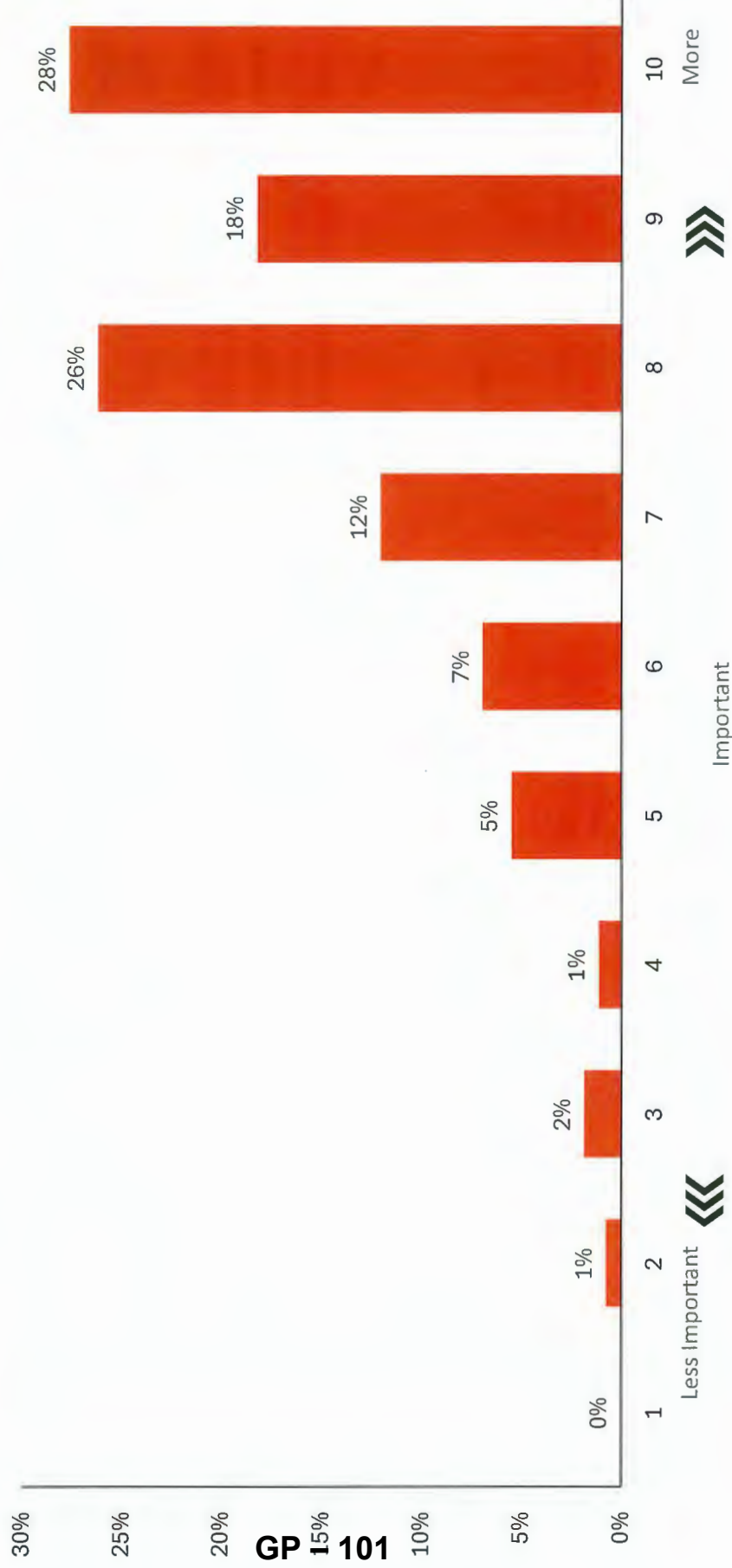
Survey results are reported based upon the entire sample, with segments (e.g. age, ethnicity, tenure, etc.) being identified only when responses were substantively different than the population at large. Seniors were aged 65 years or older, while the young segment consisted of respondents between the ages of 18 to 34. Respondents directly or indirectly involved in tourism were identified as the “tourism” segment versus those respondents who were not involved in the sector. Detailed charts are provided below.

Completion Rate

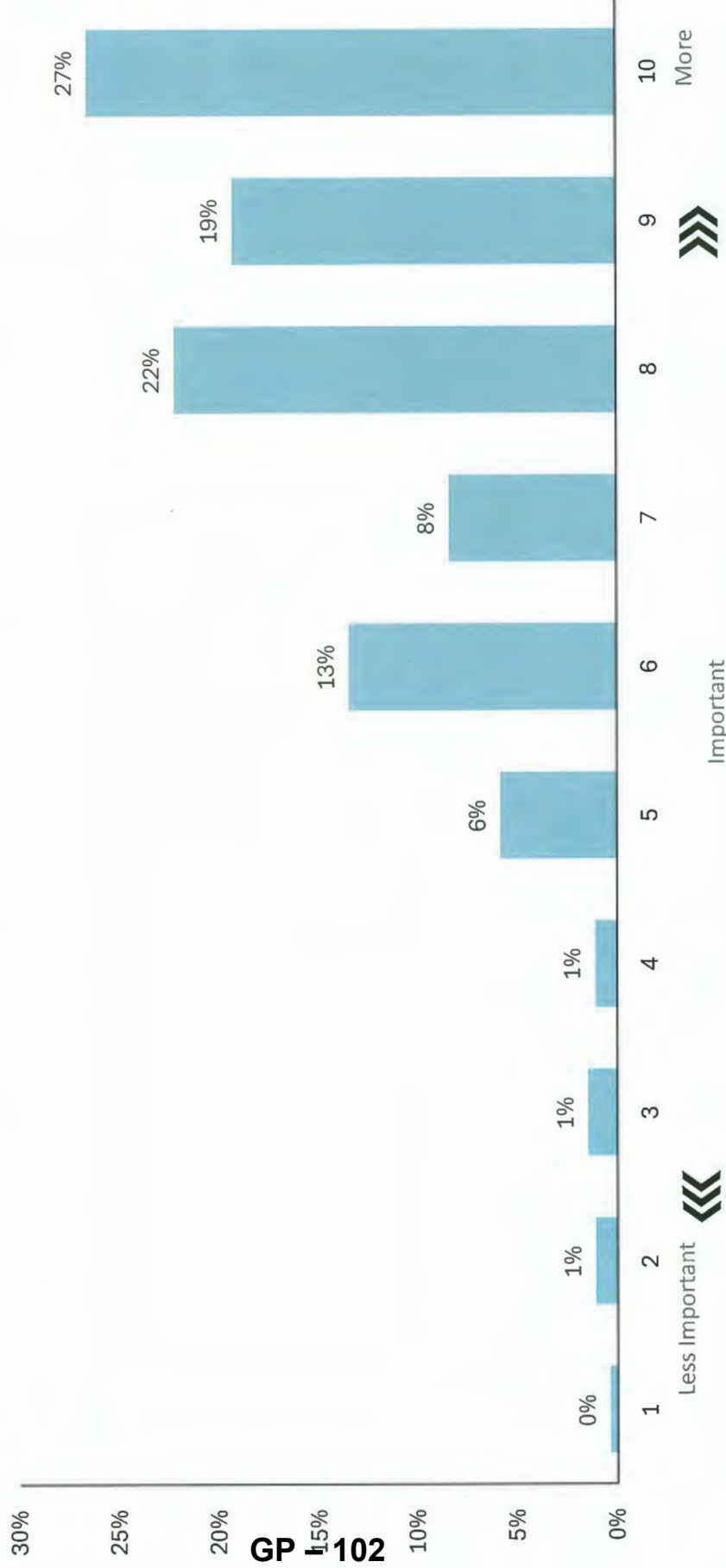


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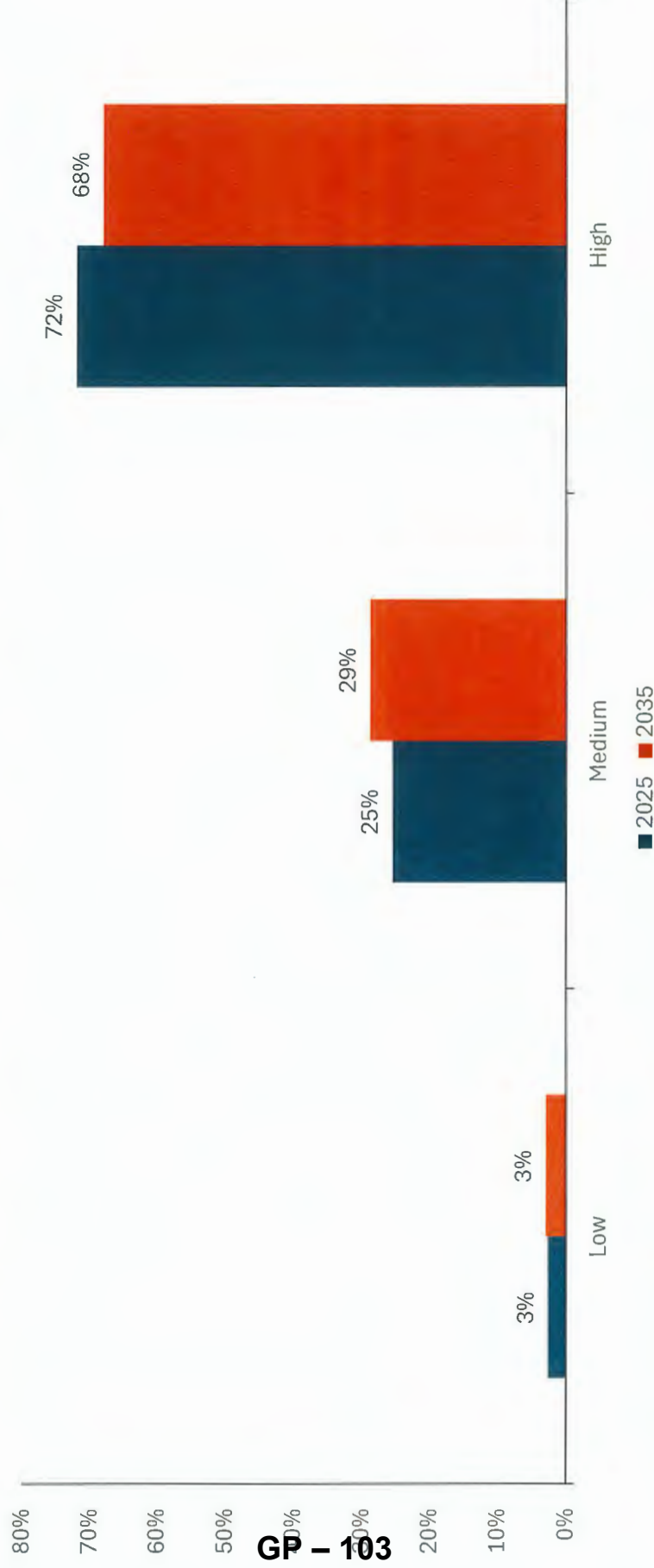
Tourism's Current Importance to the Local Economy is...



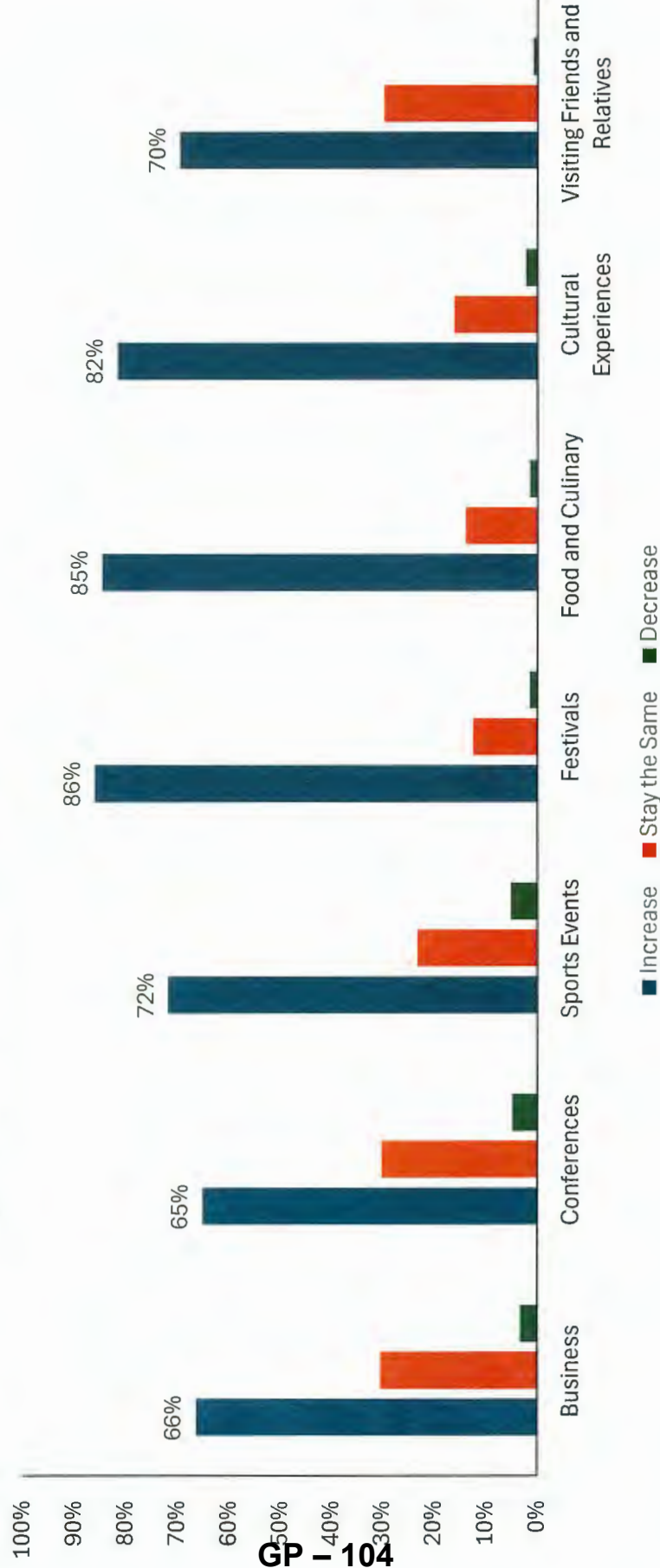
Tourism's Role in the Future Economy will be More Important or Less Important Than it is Today...



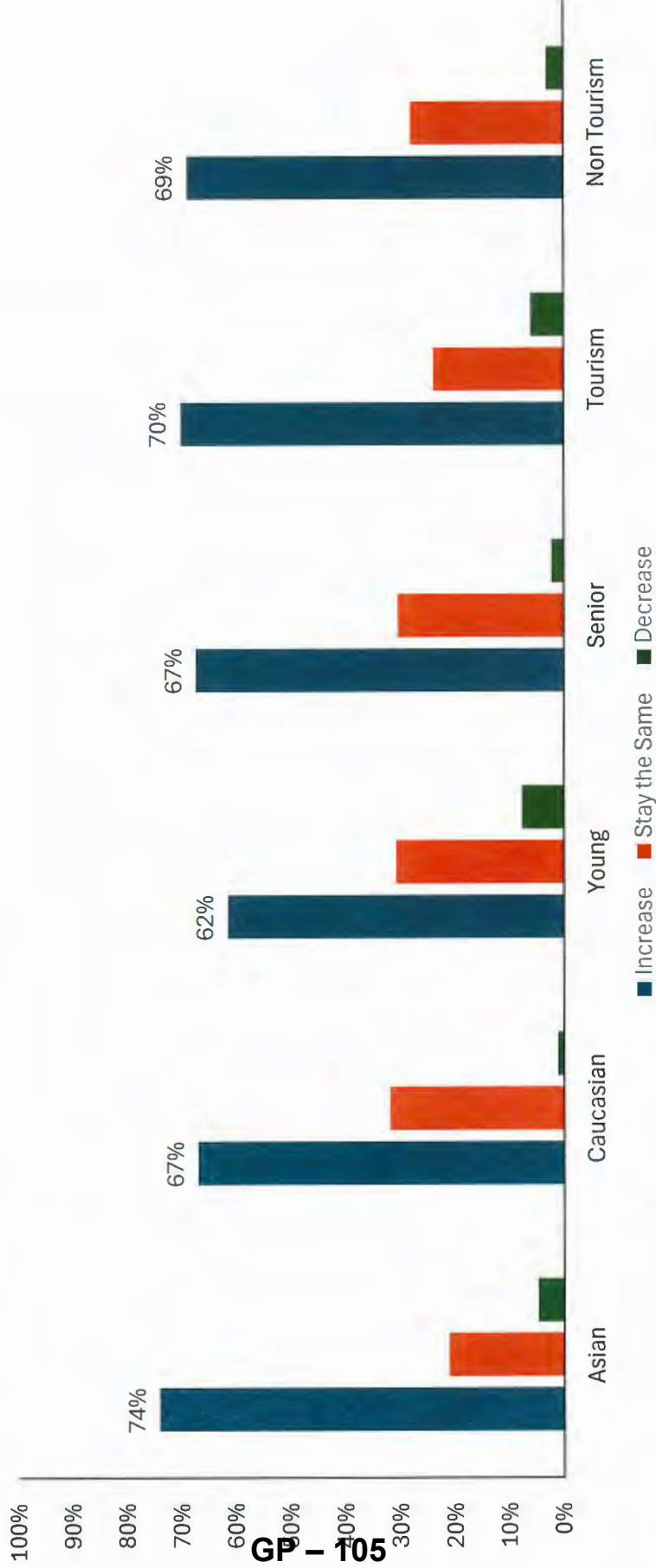
Tourism's Importance to Richmond's Economy



I Would Like to See the Following Types of Tourism Increase, Stay the Same, or Decrease

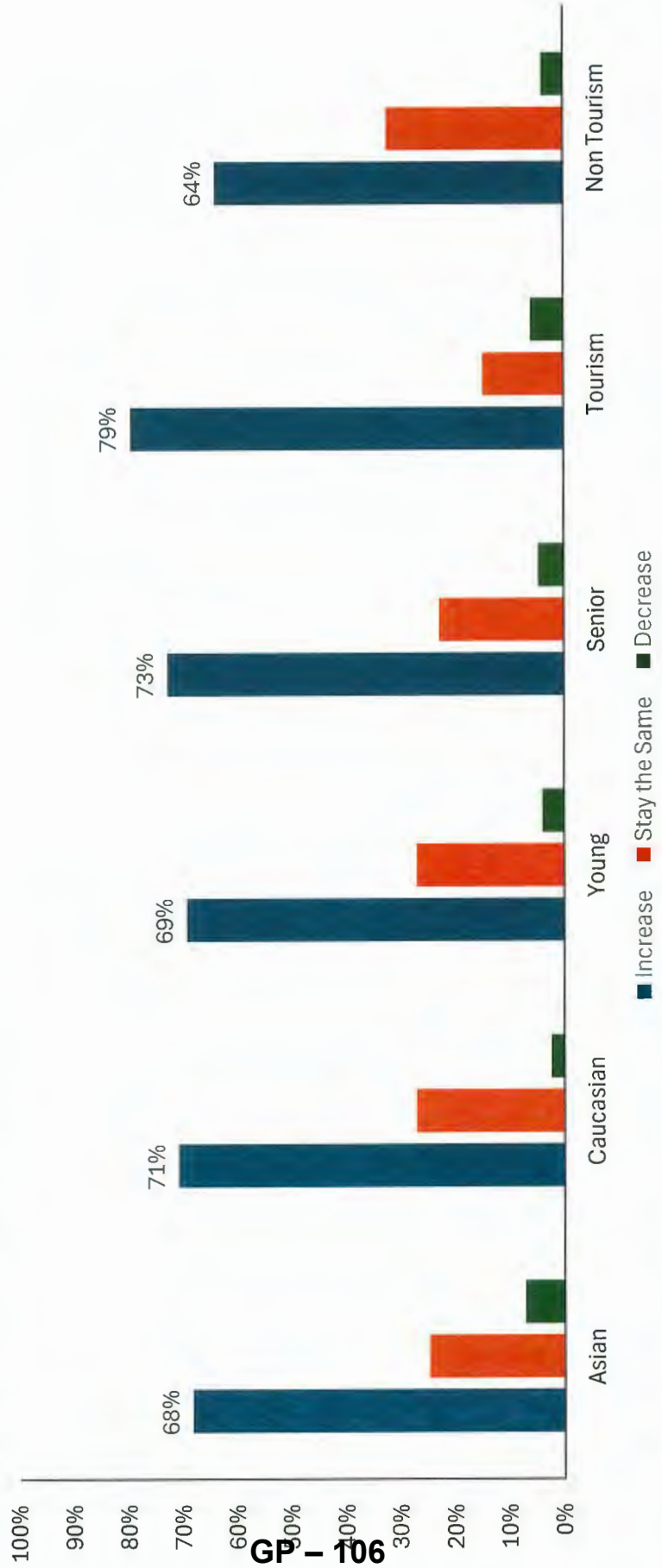


I Would Like to See Business Tourism Increase, Stay the Same, or Decrease

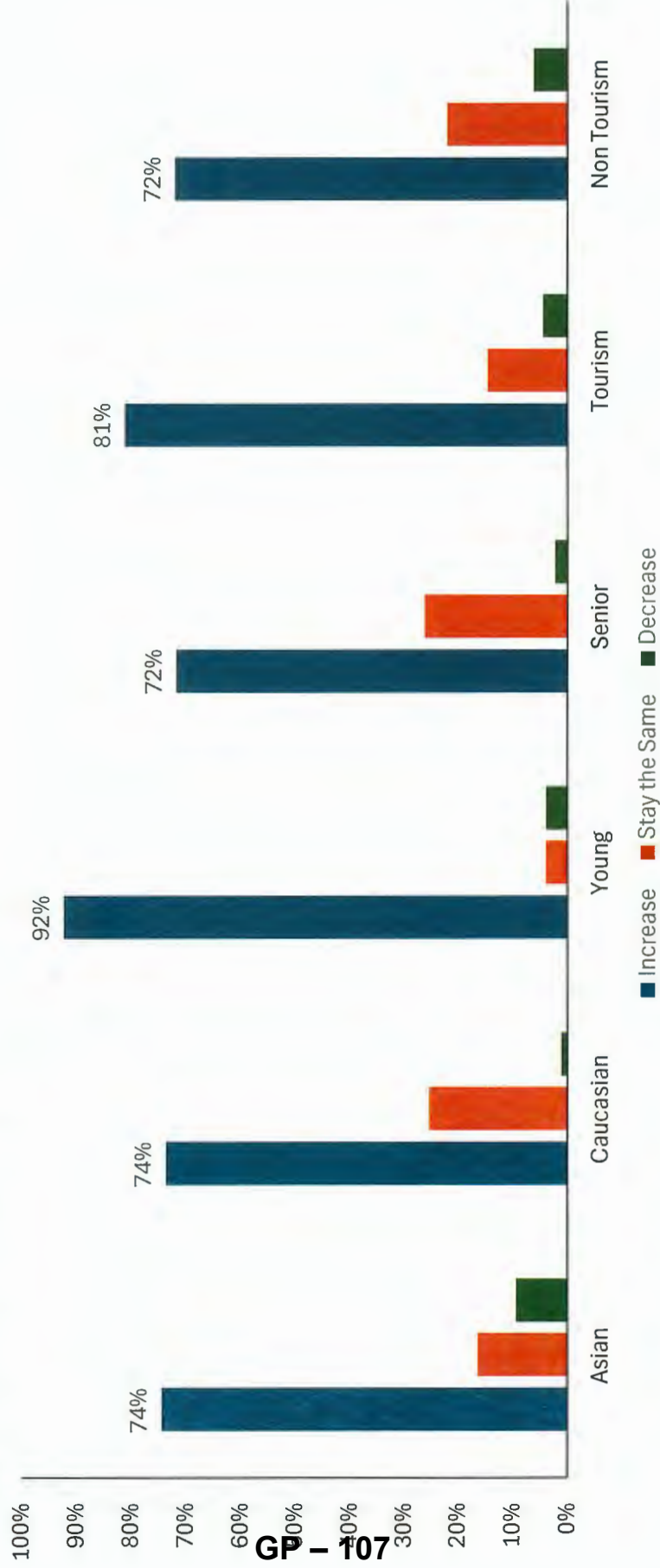


GP - 105

I Would Like to See Conference Tourism Increase, Stay the Same, or Decrease

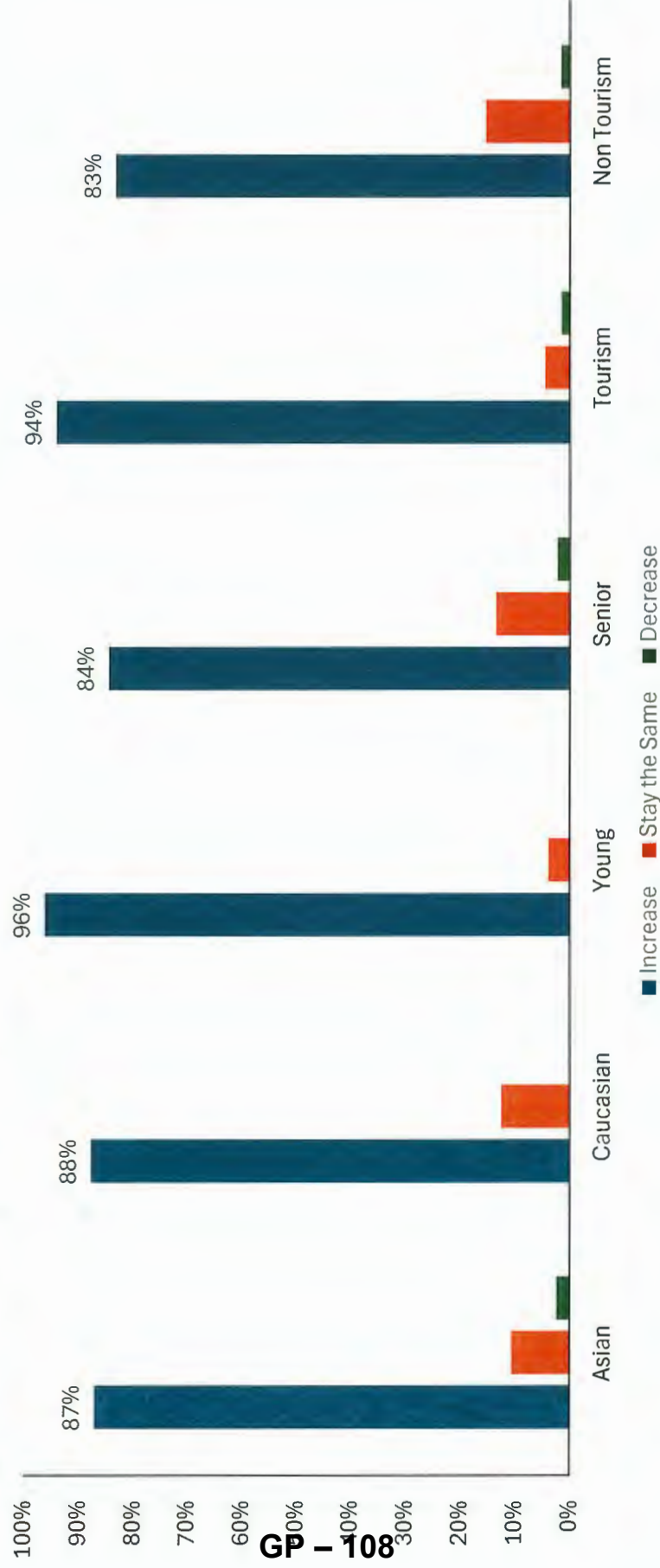


I Would Like to See Sports Tourism Increase, Stay the Same, or Decrease



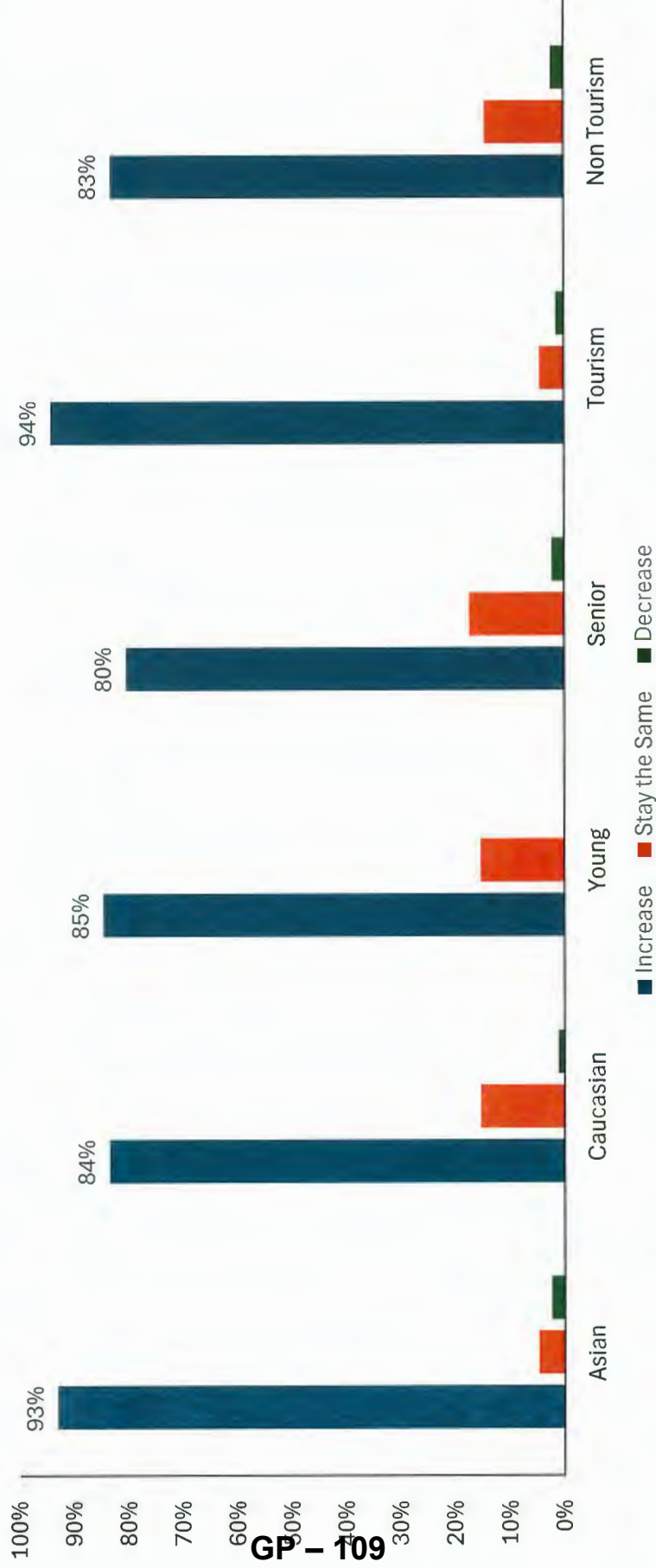
GP - 107

I Would Like to See *Festival* Tourism Increase, Stay the Same, or Decrease

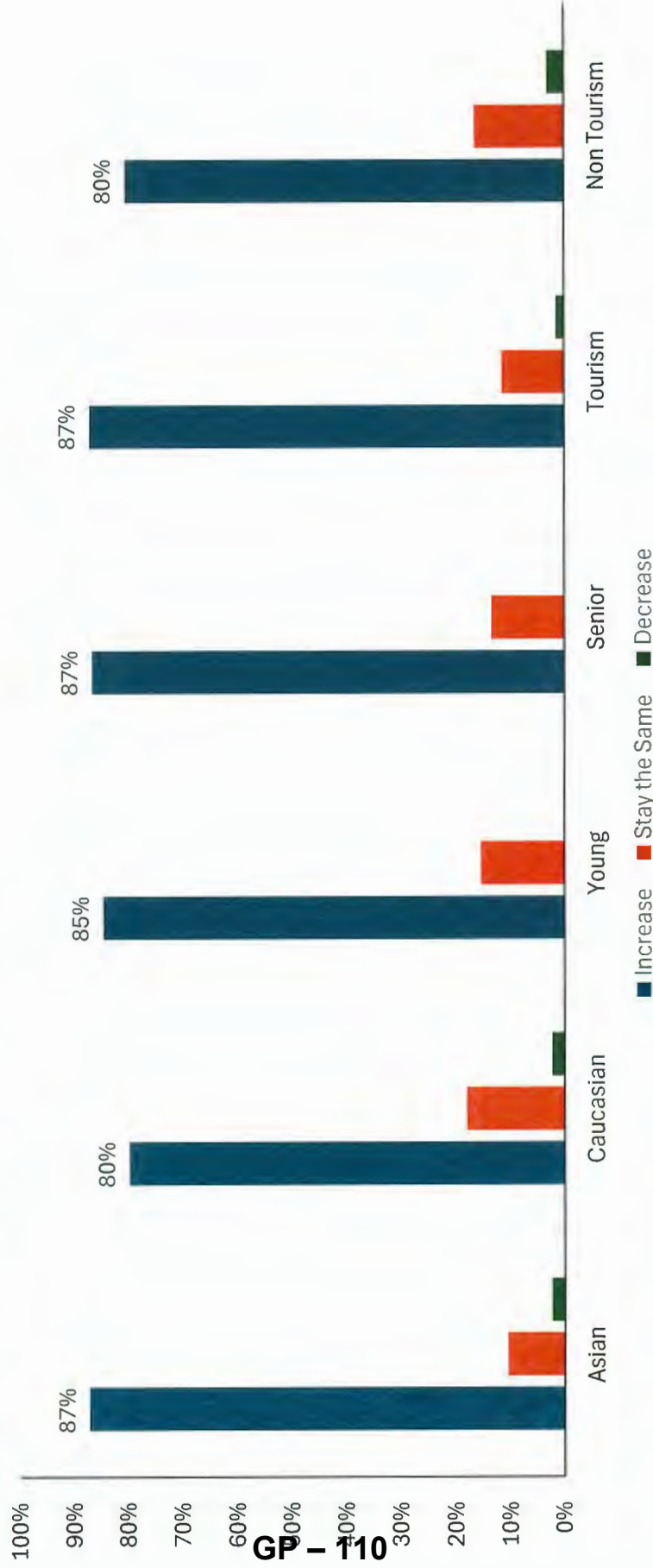


GP - 108

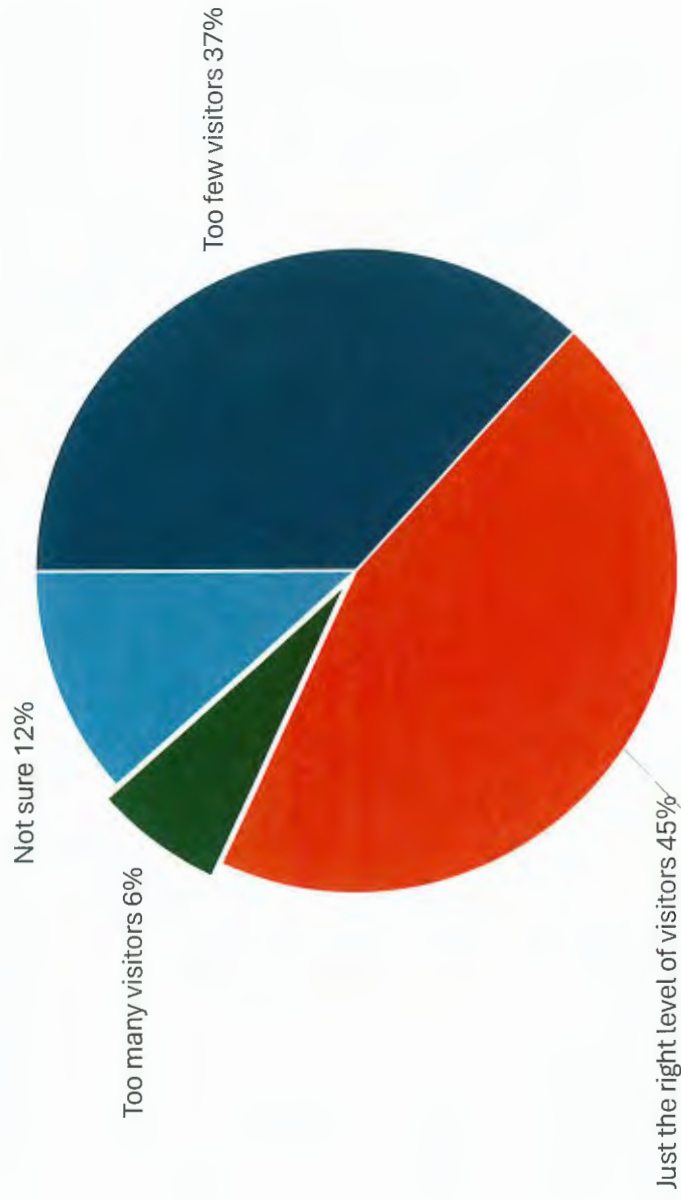
I Would Like to See Food/Culinary Tourism Increase, Stay the Same, or Decrease



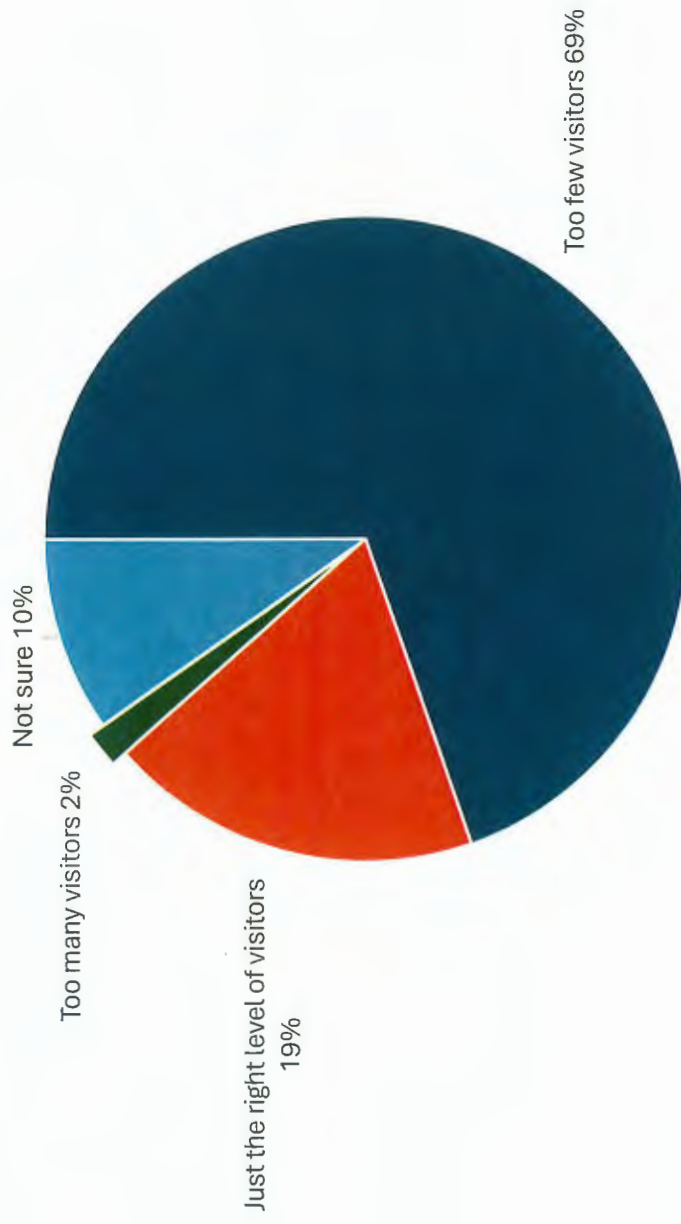
I Would Like to See Cultural Tourism Increase, Stay the Same, or Decrease



Number of Visitors in the Summer?

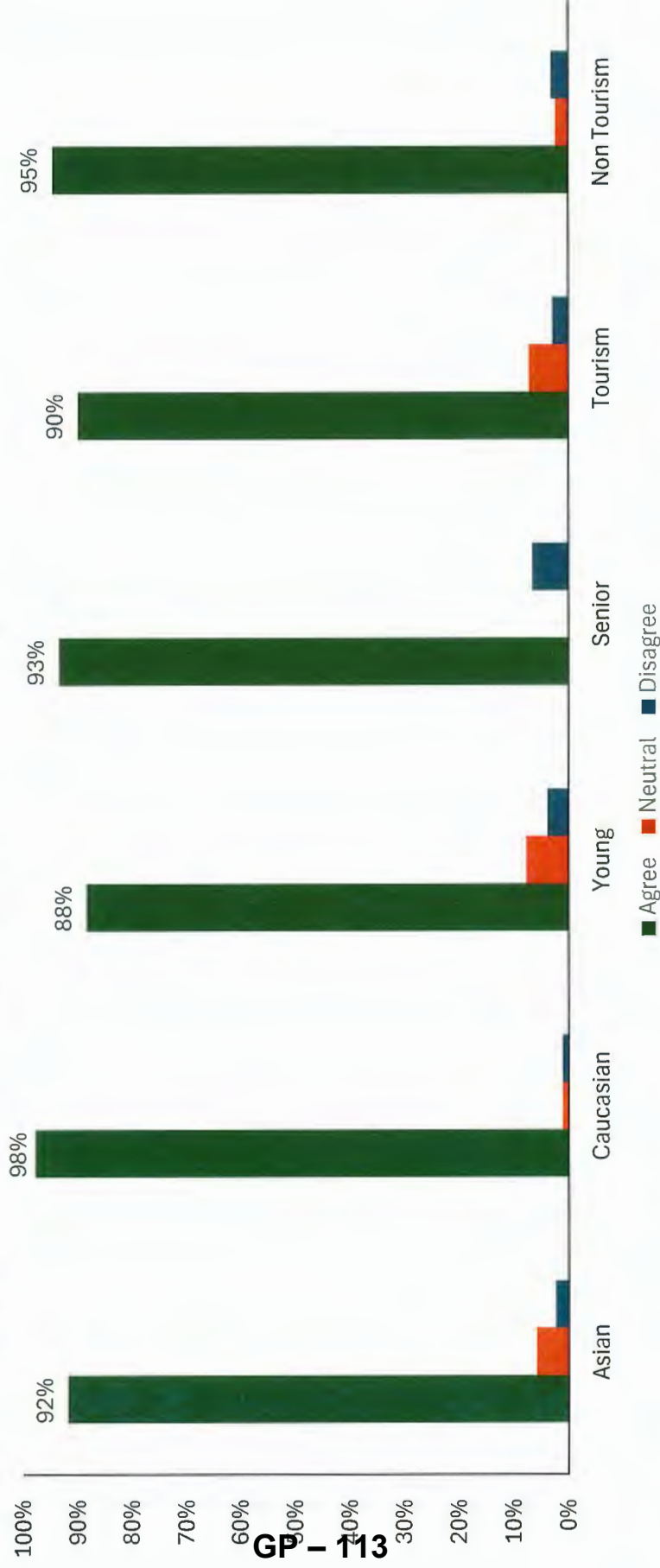


Number of Visitors in the Winter?

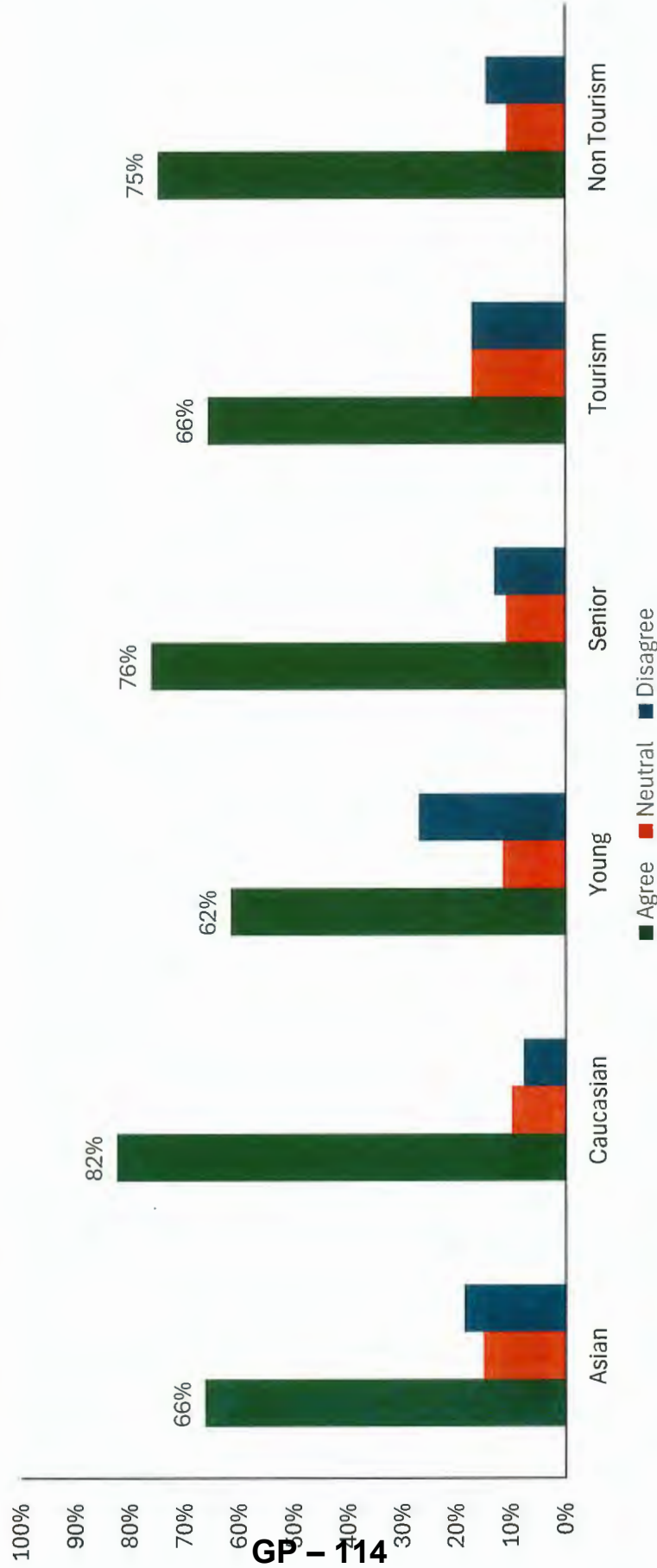


GP – 112

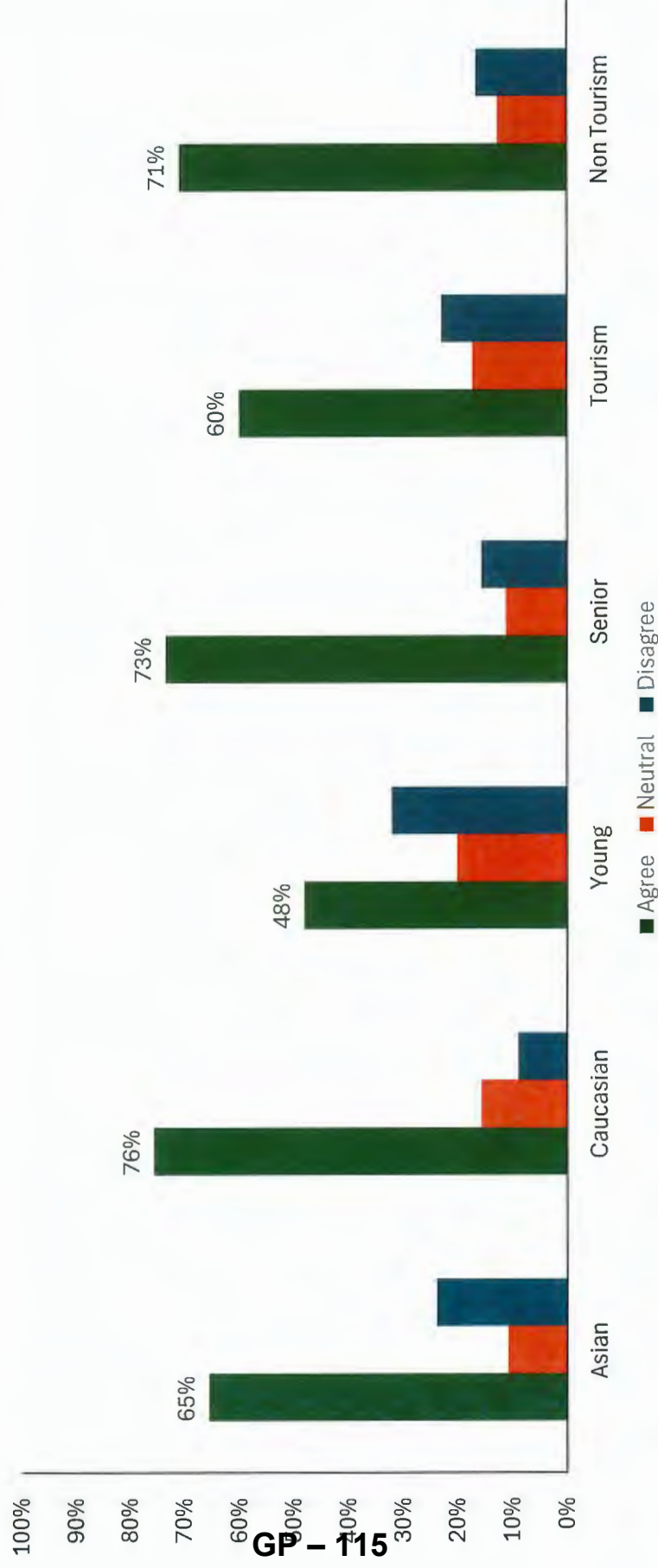
Attractions, Events, and Things to Do in Richmond are an Important Part of Making My Community a Vibrant Place to Live



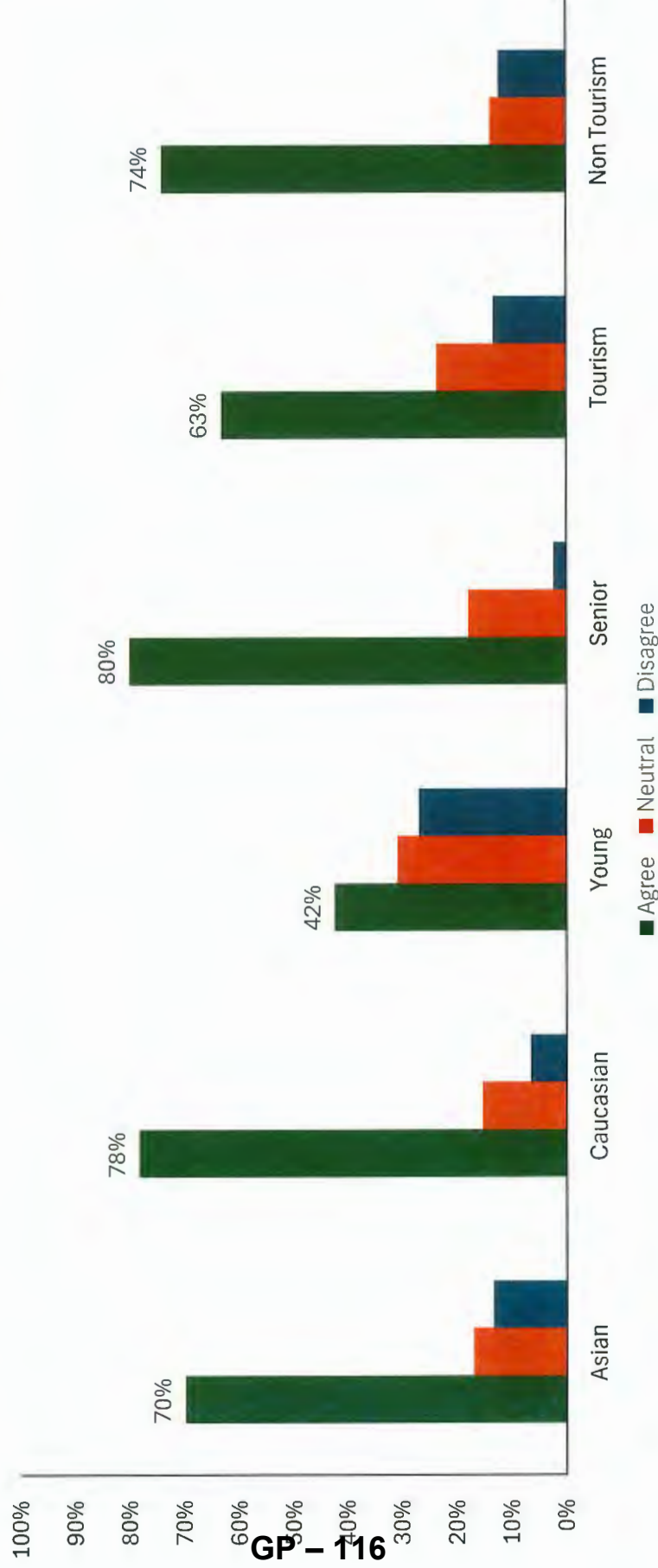
My Community Offers Experiences That I Want to Tell Others About



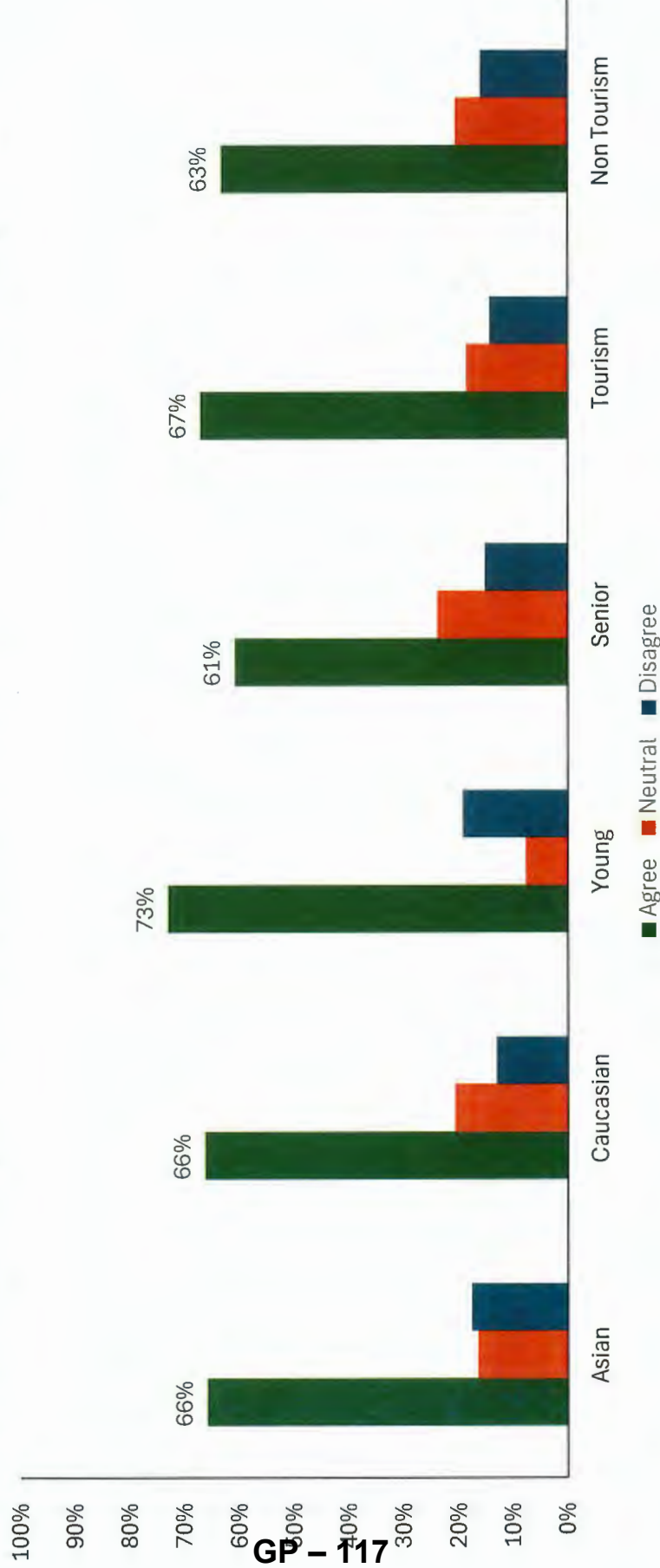
This is a Vibrant Community – There is Always Lots to See and Do



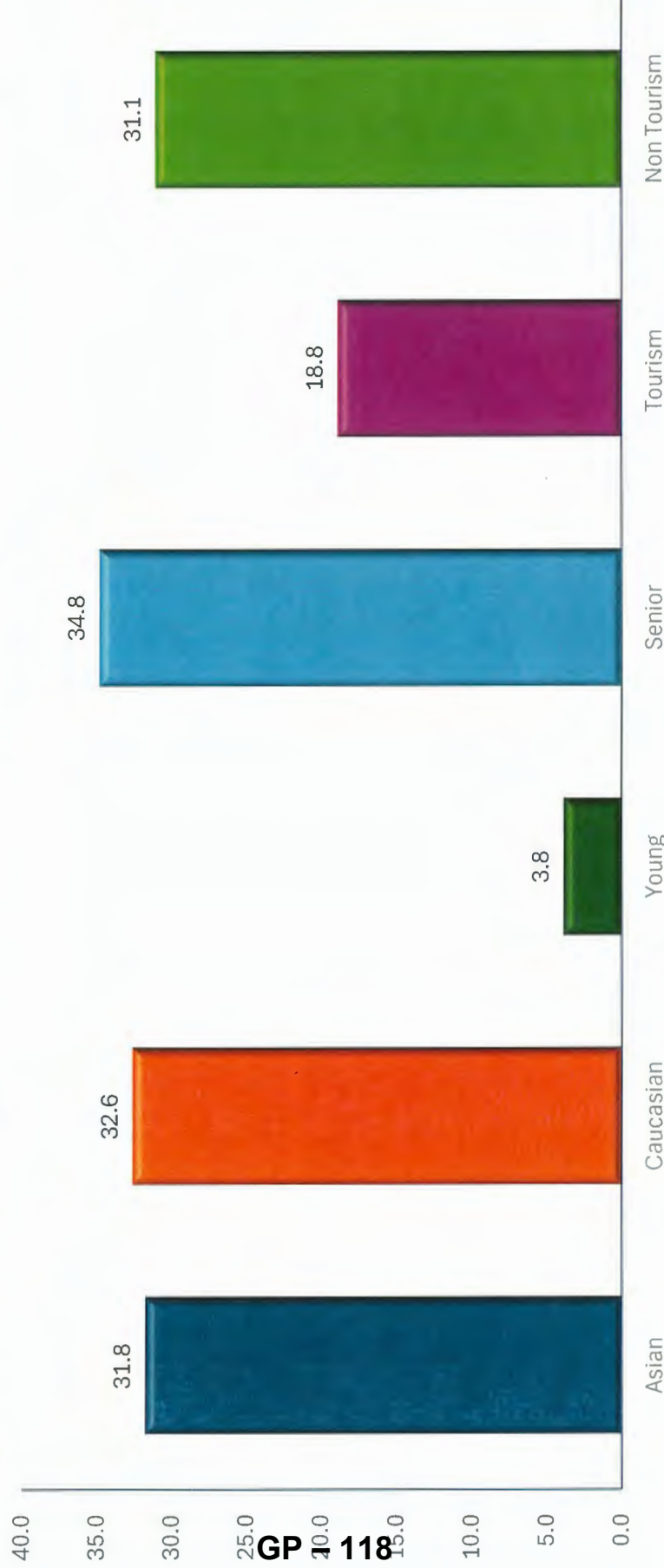
Events and Activities are Popular with Visitors to Richmond



I Want to See and Attend Events Around My Community, but I Usually Only Hear About Them After They Have Happened

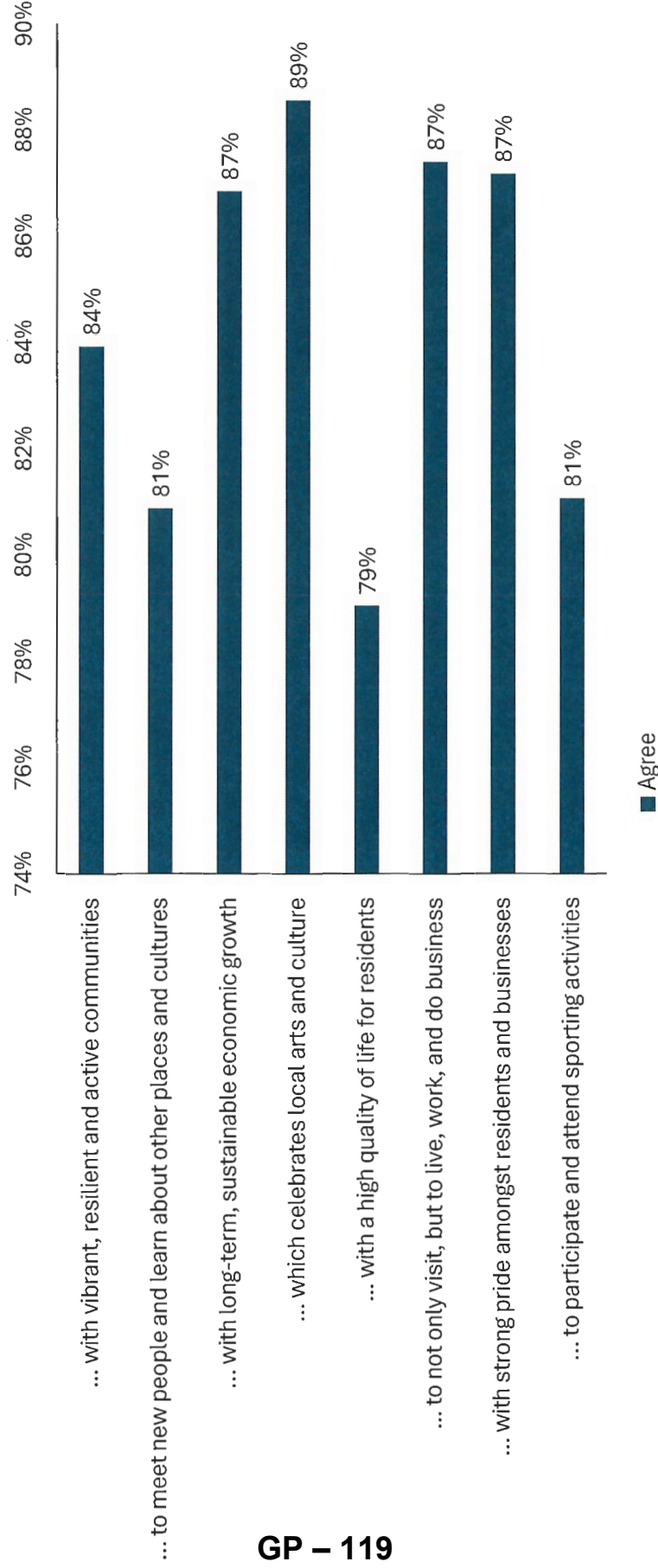


How Likely are You to Recommend Richmond to Family, Friends, and Colleagues as a Place to Visit? (Net Promoter Score)



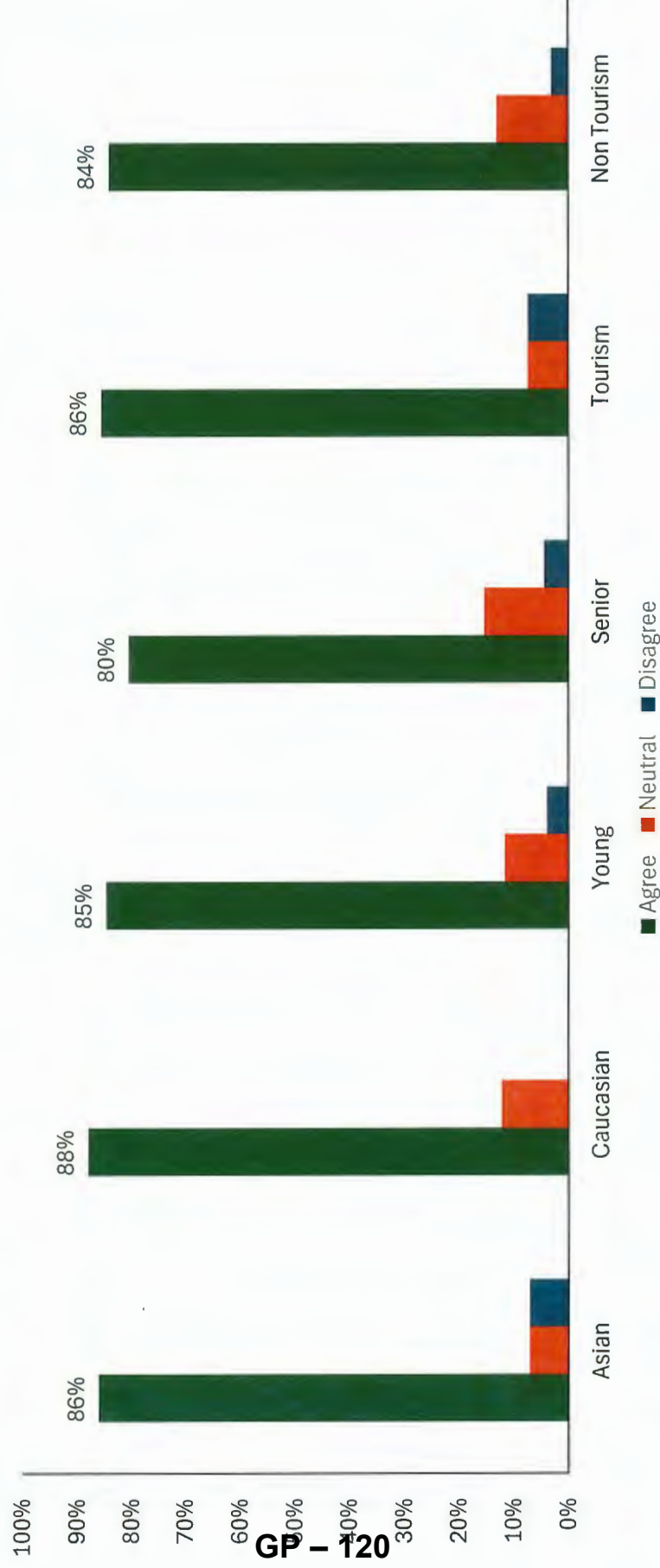
Net Promoter Score is a measure used to gauge customer loyalty, satisfaction, and enthusiasm with a destination, calculated by asking respondents one question: "On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend Richmond to family, friends, and colleagues as a place to visit?"

Tourism Will Enhance Richmond as a City...

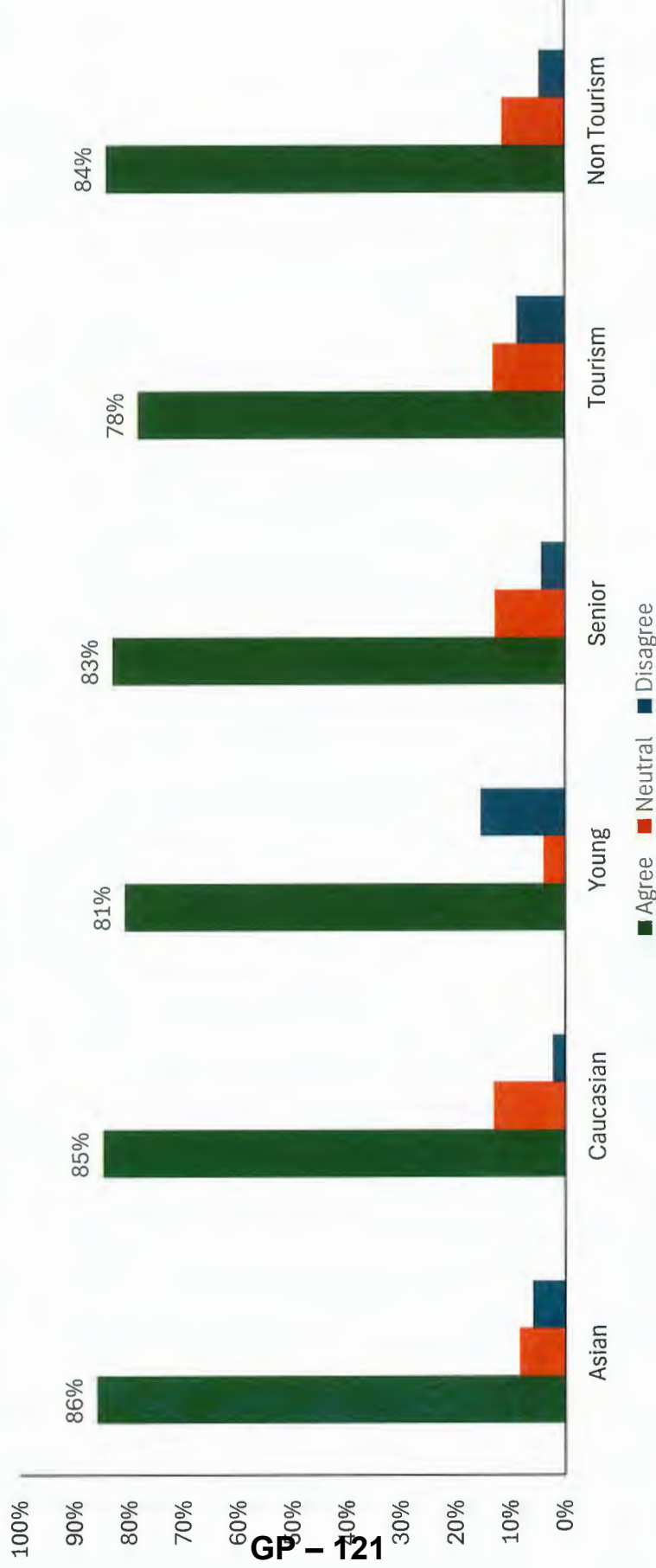


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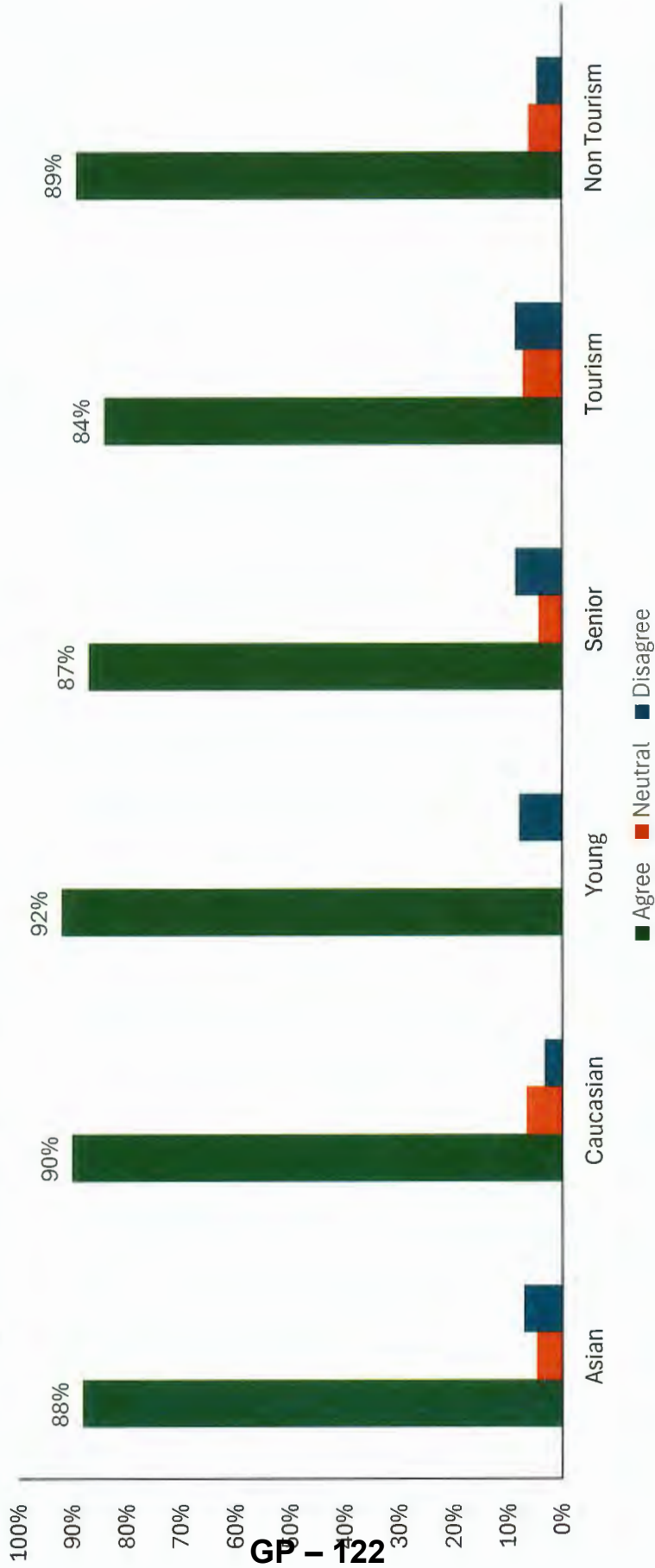
Tourism Will Enhance Richmond as a City... With Vibrant, Resilient and Active Communities



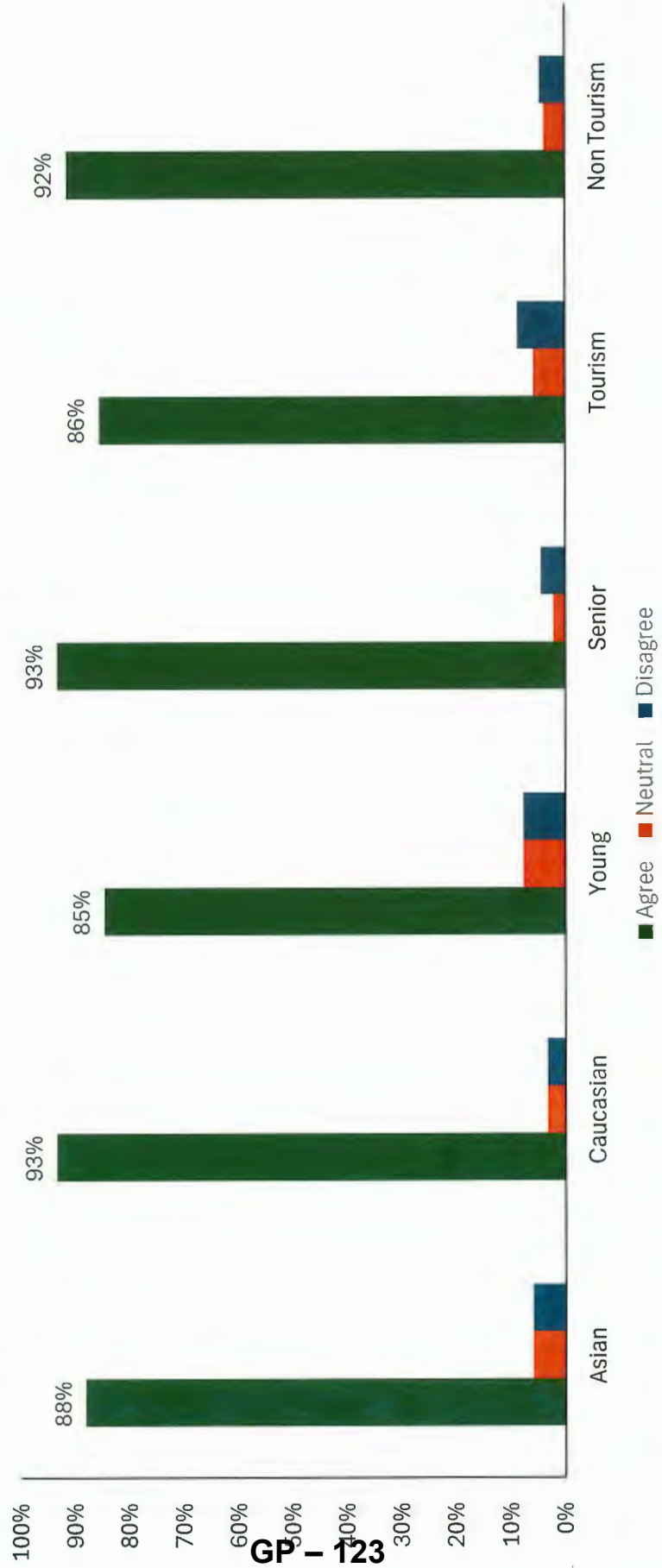
Tourism Will Enhance Richmond as a City... To Meet New People and Learn About Other Places and Cultures



Tourism Will Enhance Richmond as a City... With Long-term, Sustainable Economic Growth

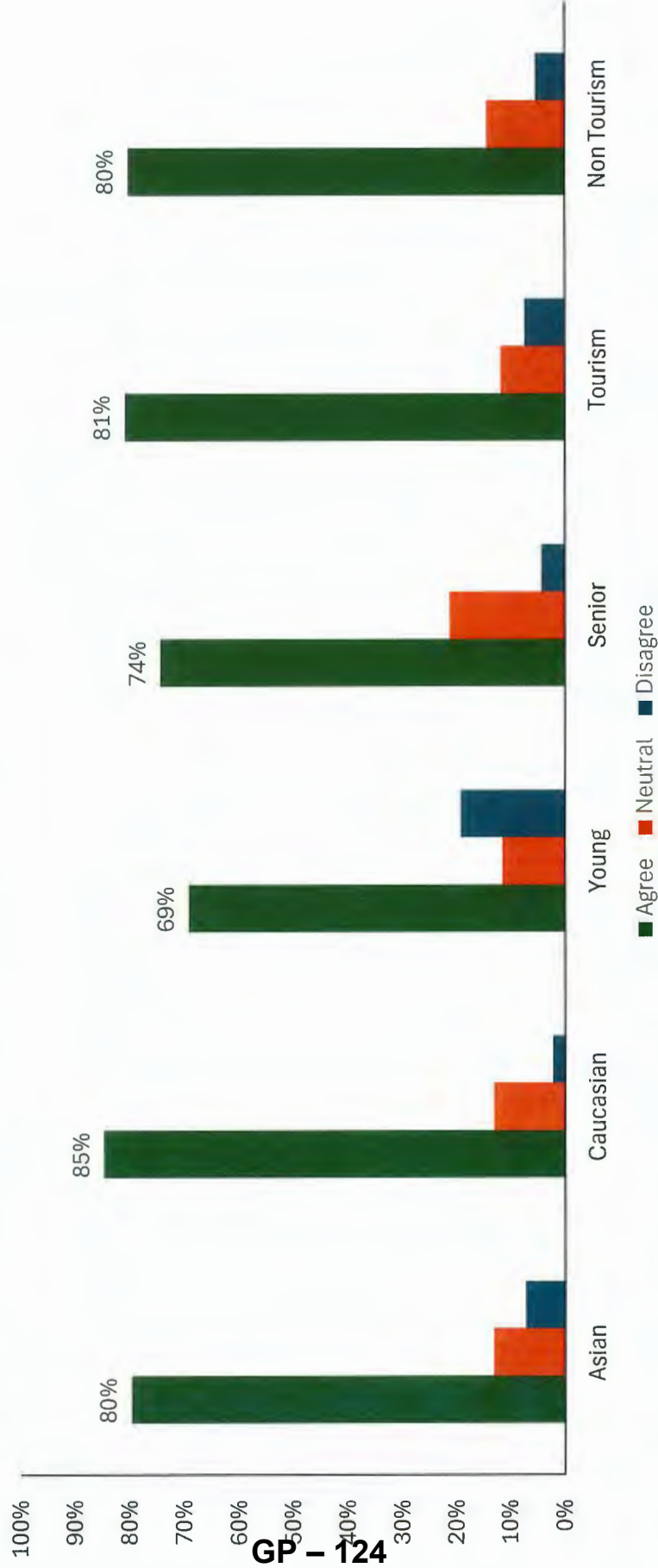


Tourism Will Enhance Richmond as a City... Which Celebrates Local Arts and Culture

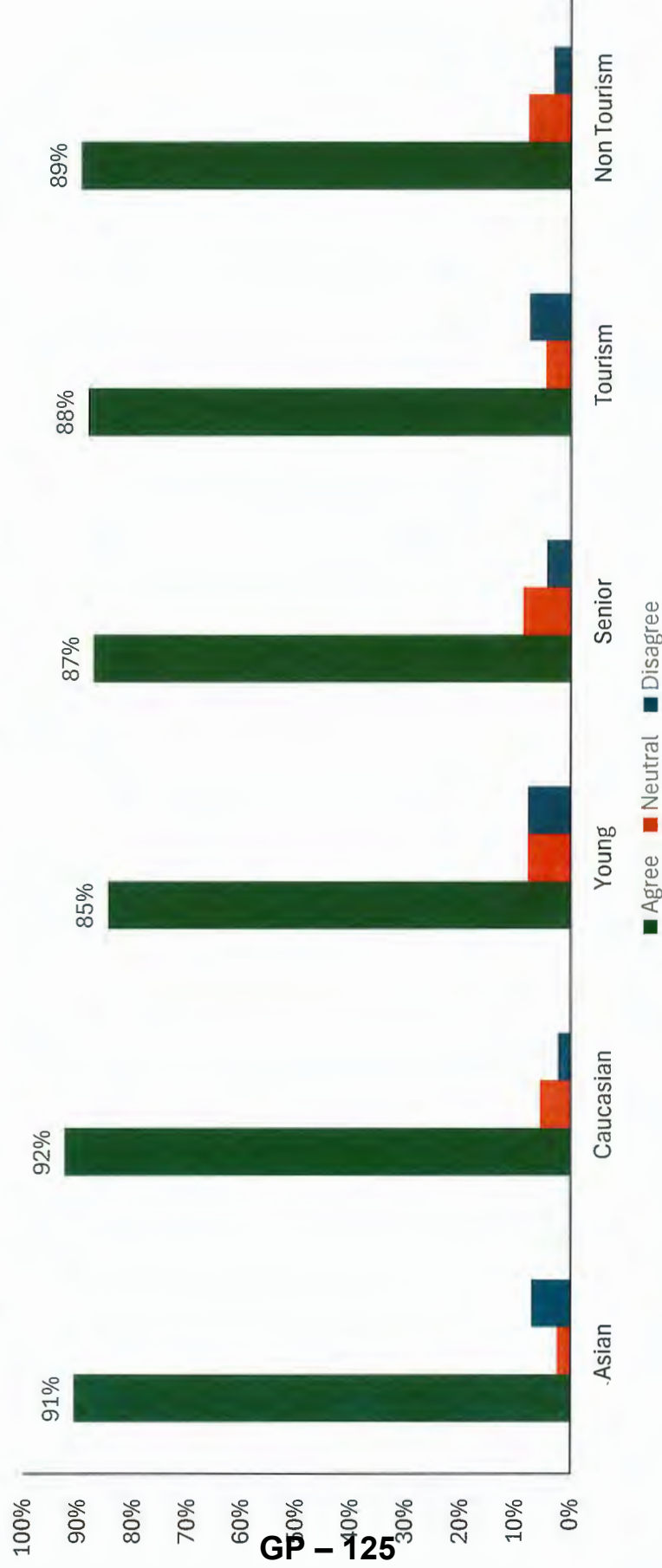


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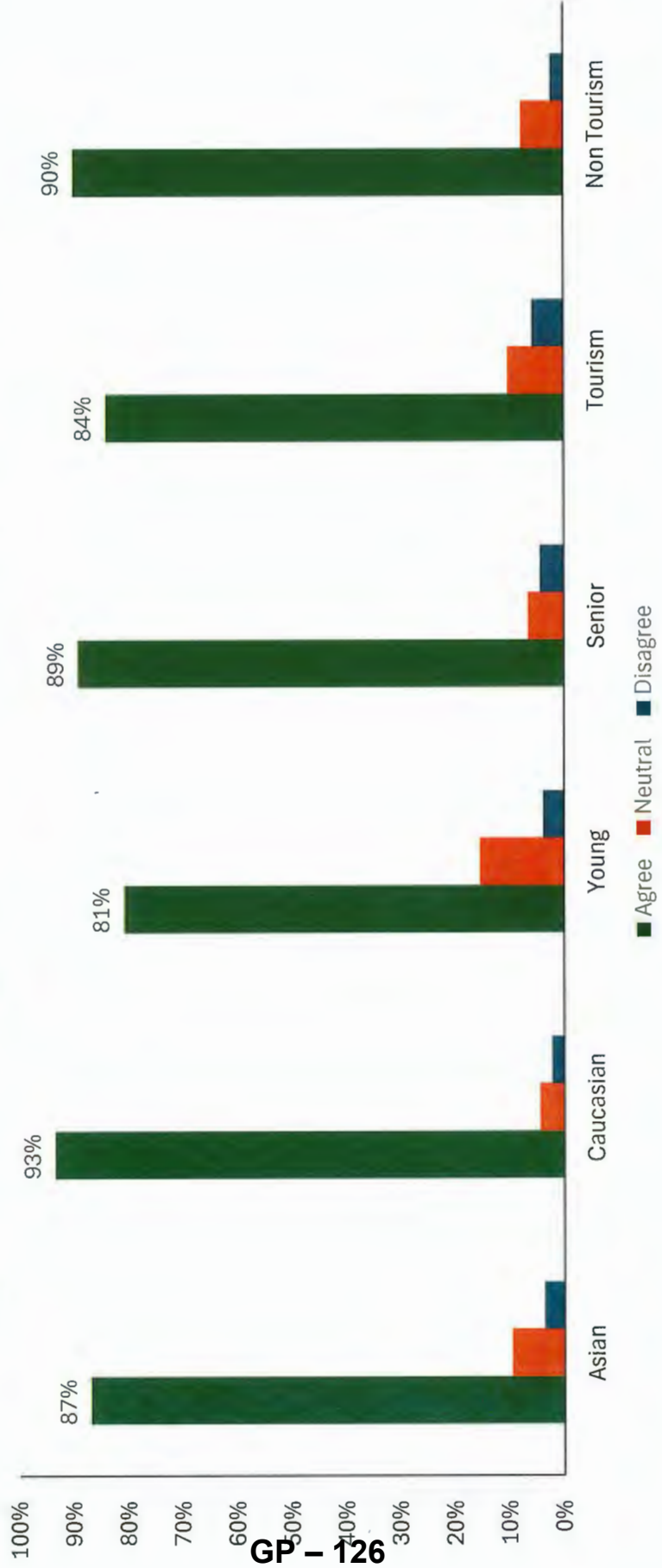
Tourism Will Enhance Richmond as a City... With a High Quality of Life for Residents



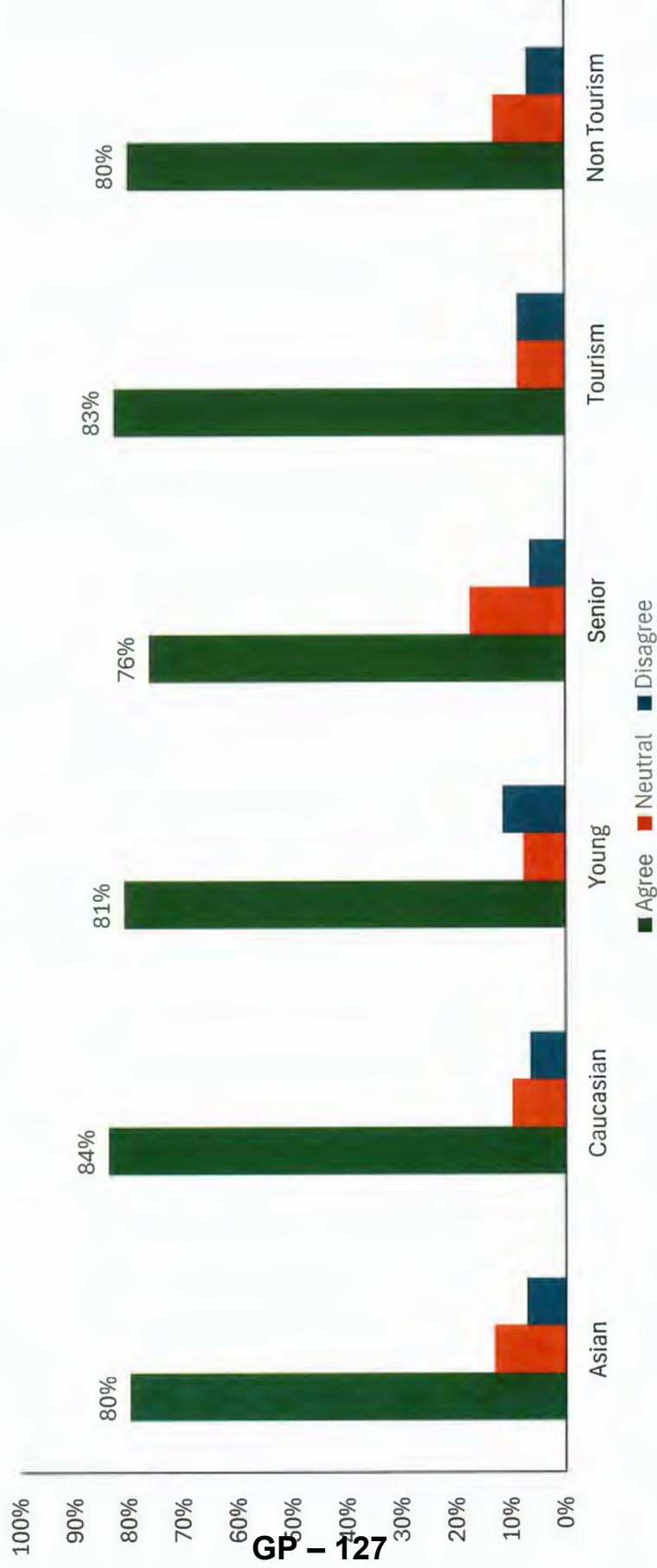
Tourism Will Enhance Richmond as a City... To Not Only Visit, but to Live, Work, and Do Business



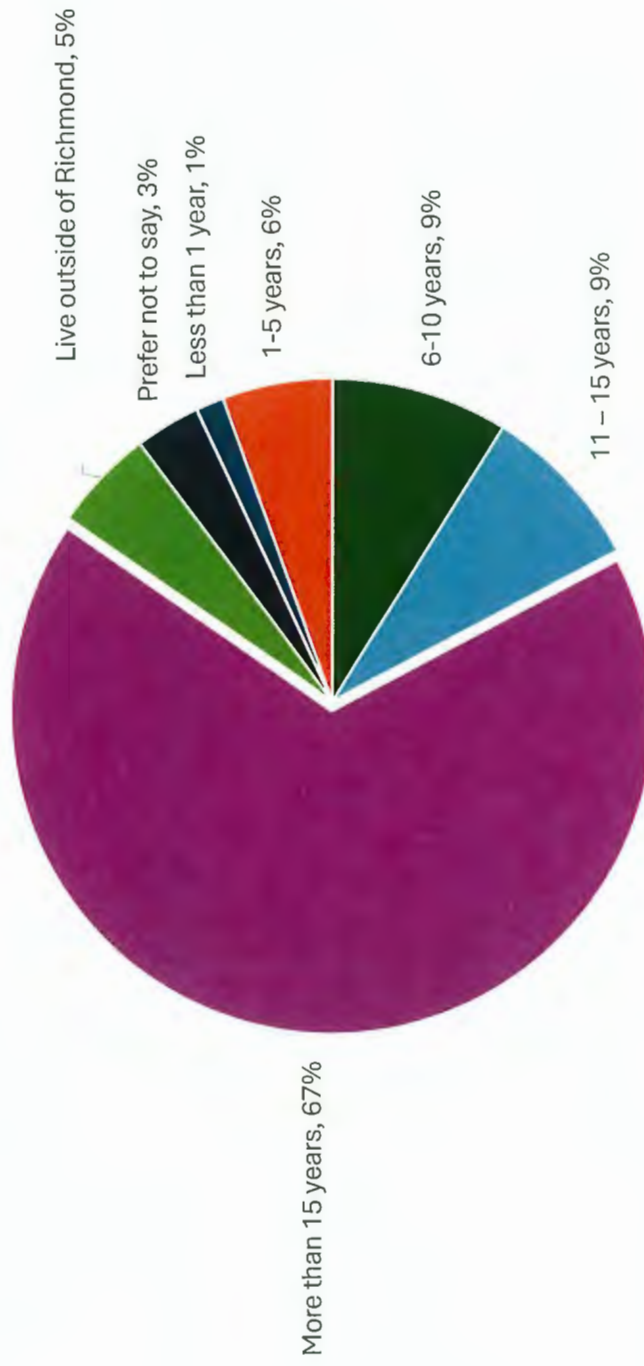
Tourism Will Enhance Richmond as a City... With Strong Pride Amongst Residents and Businesses



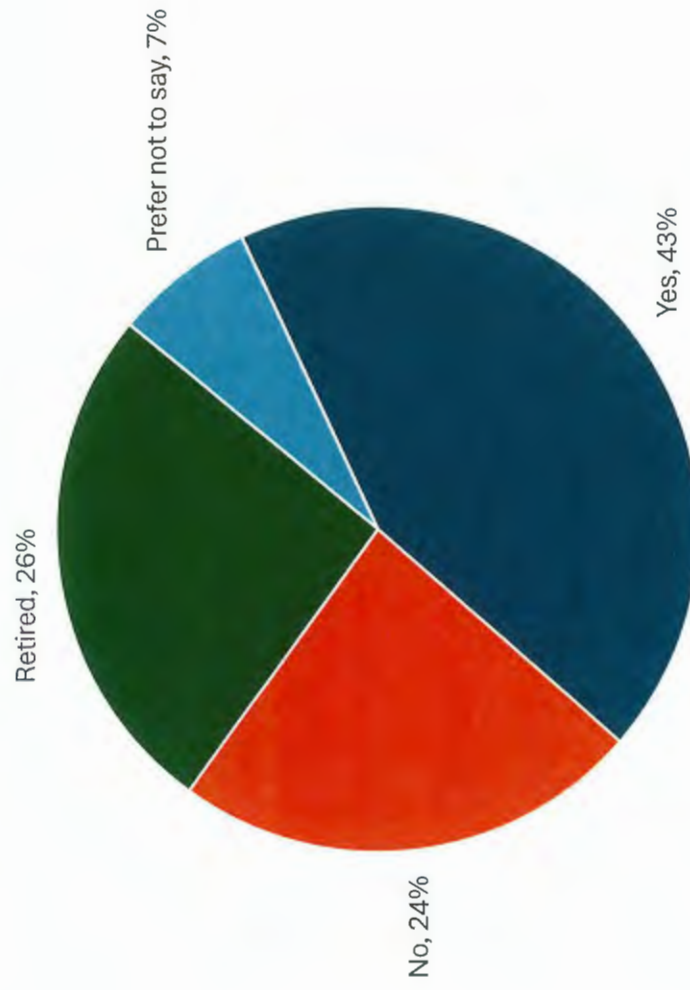
Tourism Will Enhance Richmond as a City... To Participate and Attend Sporting Activities



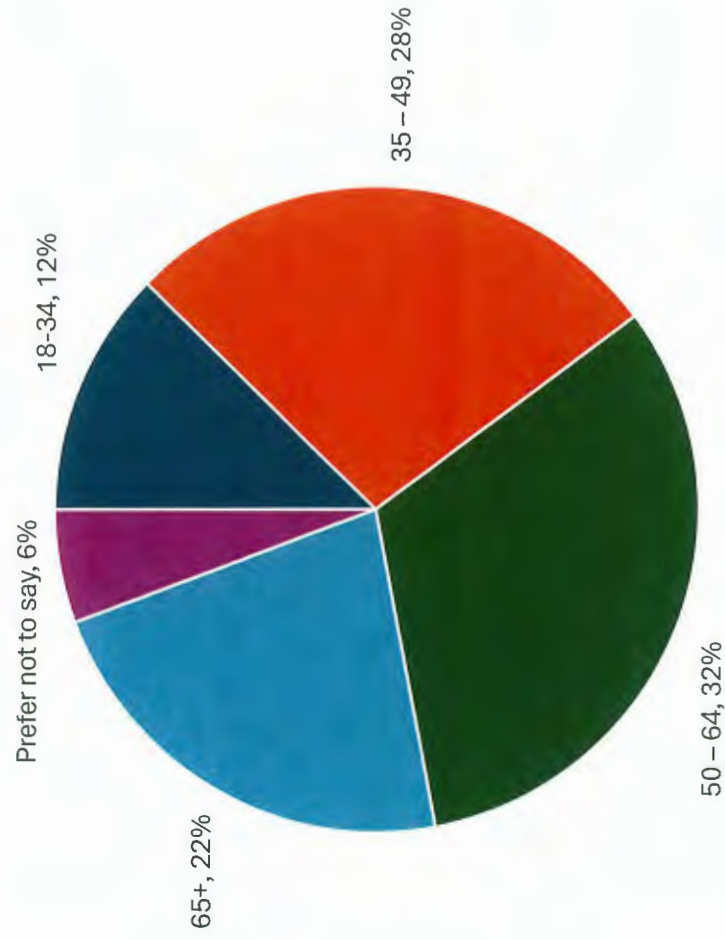
I Have Lived in Richmond For...



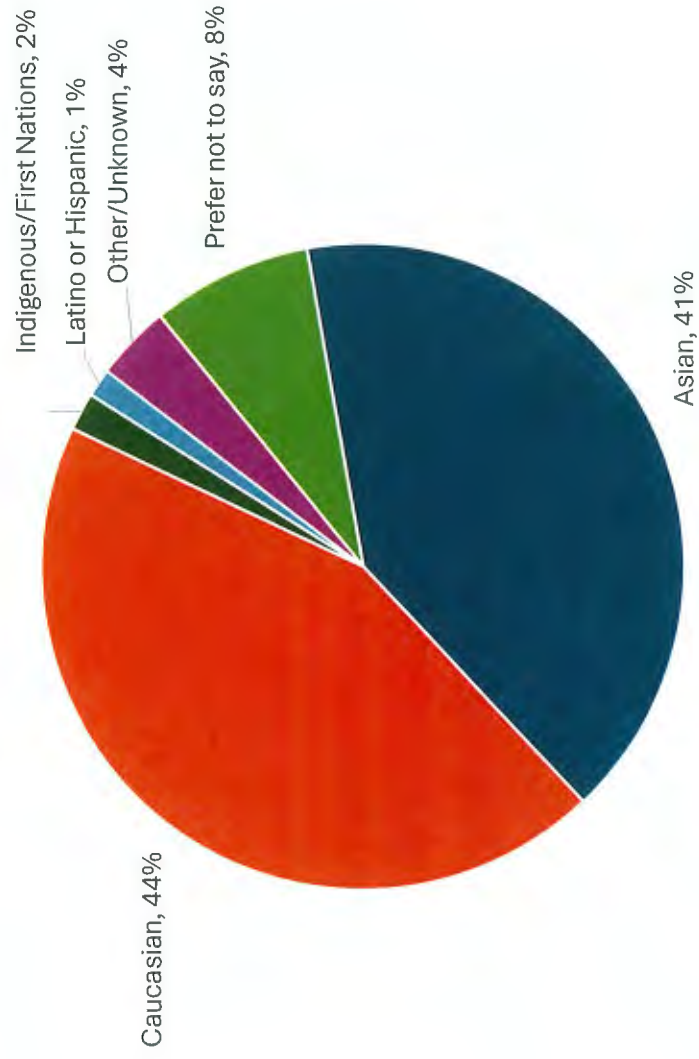
I Currently Work or Study in Richmond



Age Range



Ethnicity



Is Your Occupation Related to the Region's Tourism Economy?

