

# Dream City

A youth vision for Nashville's spaces and places

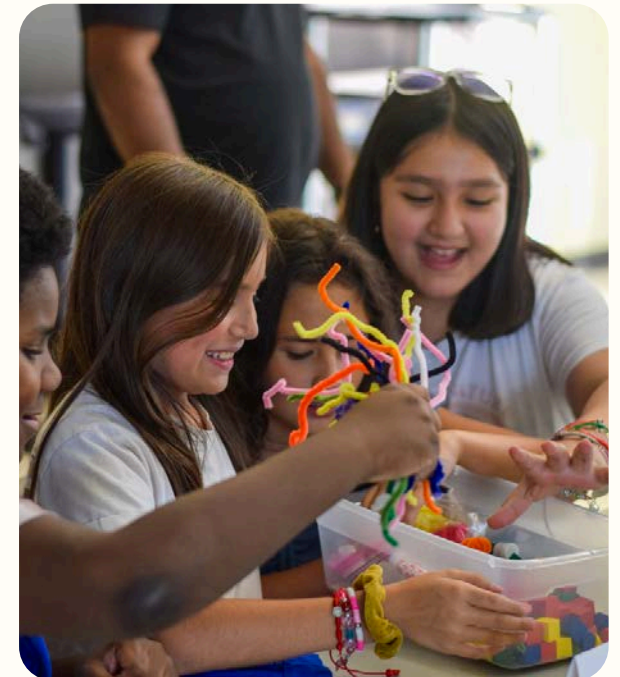
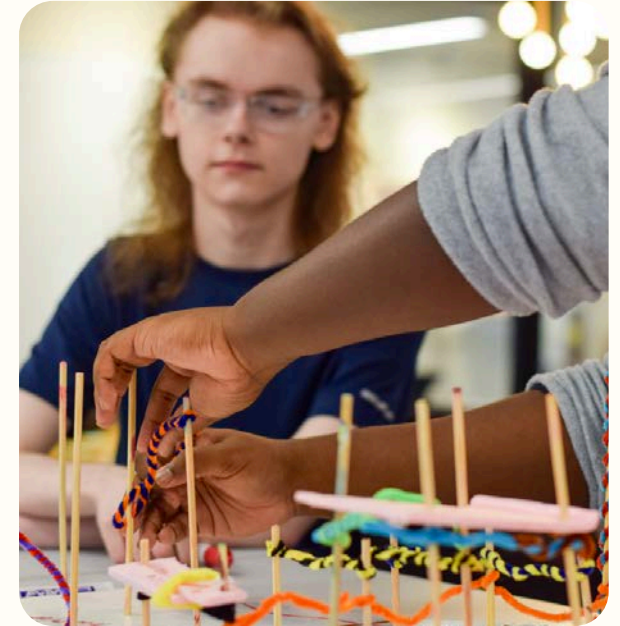
Data Report



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## Imagine Nashville

Imagine Nashville is a collaborative effort to help the city identify and elevate shared values and priorities that will carry it forward into the midcentury and beyond. The effort is purposefully inclusive by design and will involve all who have a shared interest in preserving what we love about our city while simultaneously dreaming about the future. Central to this effort are youth, who are the future of our city.



*Dream City Design*



*Nashville Youth Design Team*

## Data Collection Methods

To capture youth perspectives, the Civic Design Center’s Nashville Youth Design Team created and facilitated the Dream City workshop and survey. The workshop is designed to capture the input of young people in an engaging and educational way. It is a youth-developed and youth-led research project that sheds light on the importance of youth-centered urban planning to improve the overall well-being of young people 18 and under.

During the workshop, participants design and build a fictional “Dream City” that represents their ideal community. Youth participants are encouraged to dream big and to be imaginative. Flying cars? Chocolate rivers? Anything is possible in a Dream City.

After the participants share their Dream City designs with the group, they are invited to take a survey where they provide input about the current state of Nashville and what they would like to see in the future. Many of the concepts they are asked to think about during the Dream City workshop reappear in the survey, which provides participants with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences before sharing their opinions.

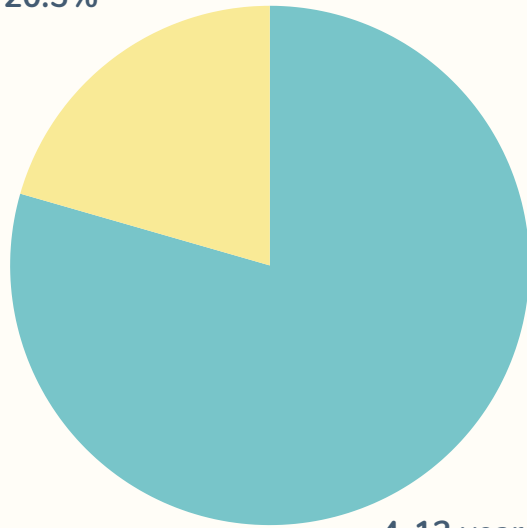
# Phase I

During Phase I, the Dream City workshop was facilitated in a variety of settings including summer school programs, summer camps, and the Adventure Science Center. During this phase, participant's designs were documented through photographs and audio recordings of design presentations. After completing the workshop, participants took an open-ended survey that was designed to capture themes that would be further explored in Phase II.

The research findings from Phase I include overarching themes from the workshop designs and priority statements written by the Nashville Youth Design Team that summarize the priorities they observed in the workshop designs and survey data.

## Age

13-18 years old  
20.5%

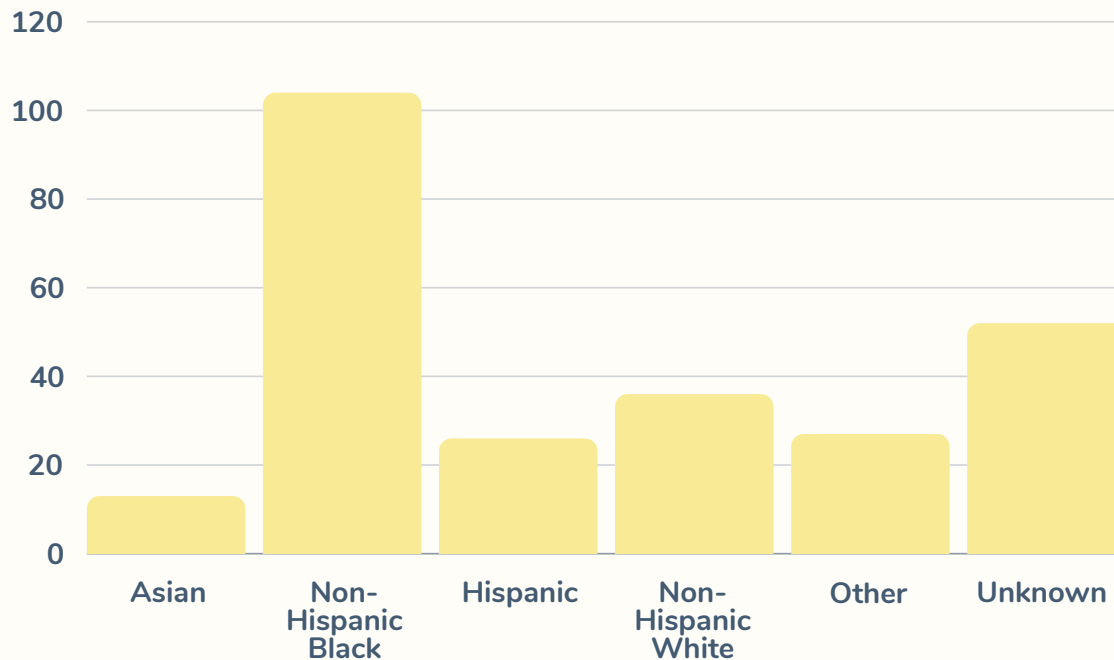


4-12 years old  
79.5%

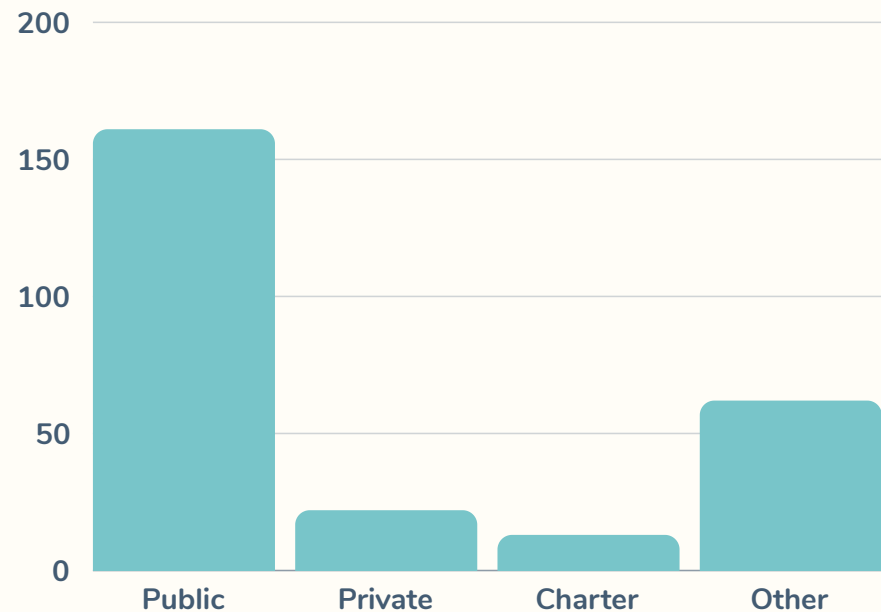
# 258

## WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

## Race & Ethnicity



## School Type



## Designs included spaces for...



### Socializing

- Malls and pools
- Open spaces in nature
- Creative places to hang out
- Places to work out
- Places that are helpful both socially and mentally



### Healing

- Both mental and physical healing areas (hospital, gym, park, church, spa, etc.)
- Water areas (pools, oceans, rivers, etc.)
- Green spaces (parks, greenways, forests, trees, etc.)
- Communal (community spaces like parks) as well as areas you can be alone (libraries)
- Healing facilities (hospitals, spas, wellness centers, etc.)



### Living

- Creative housing
- Communal housing
- Safe
- Big homes with more space



### Getting Around

- Fun and colorful transportation
- Good for the environment
- Quick and efficient
- Inclusive



### Learning

- Choosing what to learn
- Learning in nature
- Learning in different ways
- Learning about different cultures
- Museums



### Getting Healthy Food

- Food trucks, especially ice cream
- Growing food (Neighborhood Gardens, and an abundance of food growing all over)
- Community operated sources (Farmers markets, locally sourced food, and restaurants)
- Creative Food sources (Chocolate waterfall, Robots that retrieve food, edible trees, etc.)



### Being Creative

- Job opportunities where they can be creative
- Spaces in nature
- Creativity in housing and transportation design



### Getting Energy Out

- Water features
- Sports and fitness
- Parks
- Communal

Themes across multiple categories included **nature**, **communal spaces**, **water features**, and **fun**.

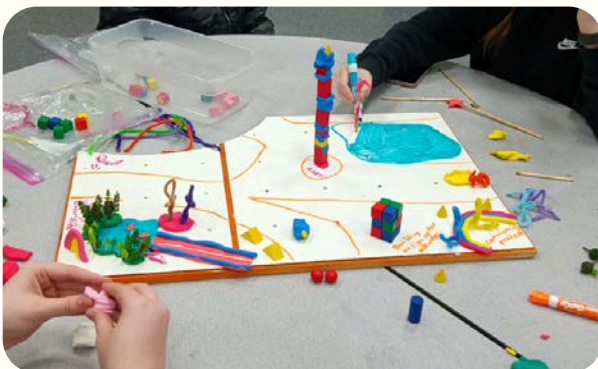
## Nature



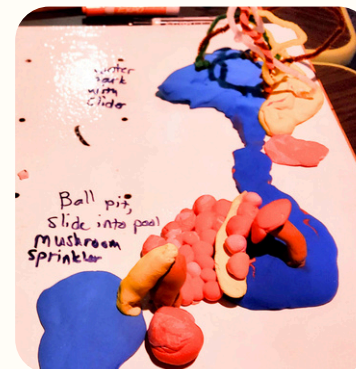
## Communal Spaces



## Water Features



## Fun



After analyzing the data from the designs and Phase I surveys, the Nashville Youth Design Team wrote the following priority statements:

## #1 Youth-Centered and Fun Places

A priority for young people living in Nashville is having access to safe, local, entertaining and welcoming spaces. They want more youth-gearred spaces that take into account what they value and are accommodating to them specifically. They want spaces that help them build relationships and meet new people.

## #3 Affordability

Accessibility and Affordability are two words that don't go together in Nashville, and the youth of Nashville want to create a Nashville that is both accessible and affordable for the next generation.

## #2 Safety

Young people in Nashville want to feel safe. When they go out for activities they don't want to worry about their own safety being compromised. Having a sense of safety will encourage youth to be more active in the community rather than feeling constant fear.

## #4 Transportation

Young people in Nashville want simple, local, safe, and close transportation to move around the city and to common areas. Youth want better access to resources and fun spaces.

## #5 Closeness and Proximity to Places

Youth value places to have fun that are important to them, and transportation support to places further out. Transportation is a struggle for all and this includes youth as well.

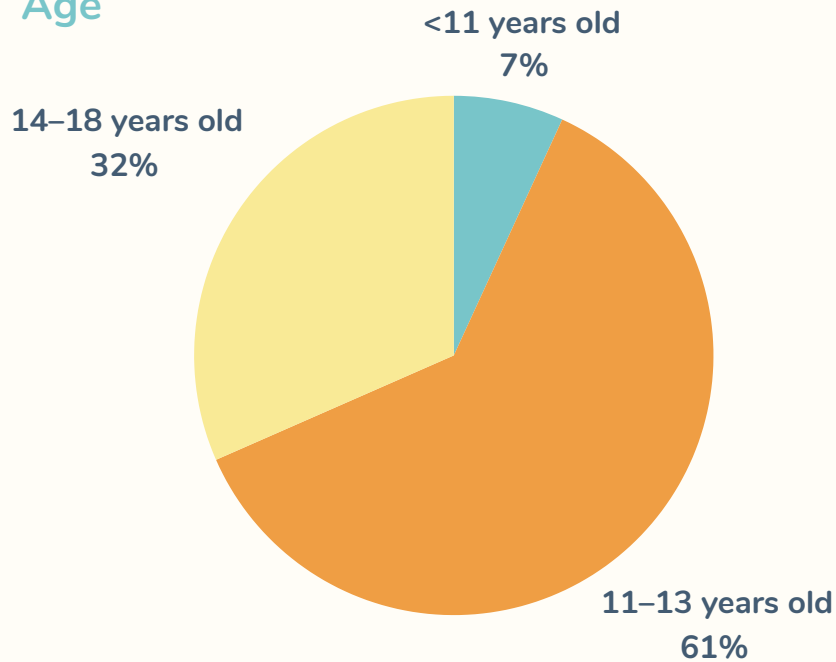




# Phase II

For the Dream City Workshop Phase II, the workshop was adjusted to help participants think through big ideas that they would later see in the survey. The survey was adapted to a closed-ended format and explored the themes that emerged in the Phase I results.

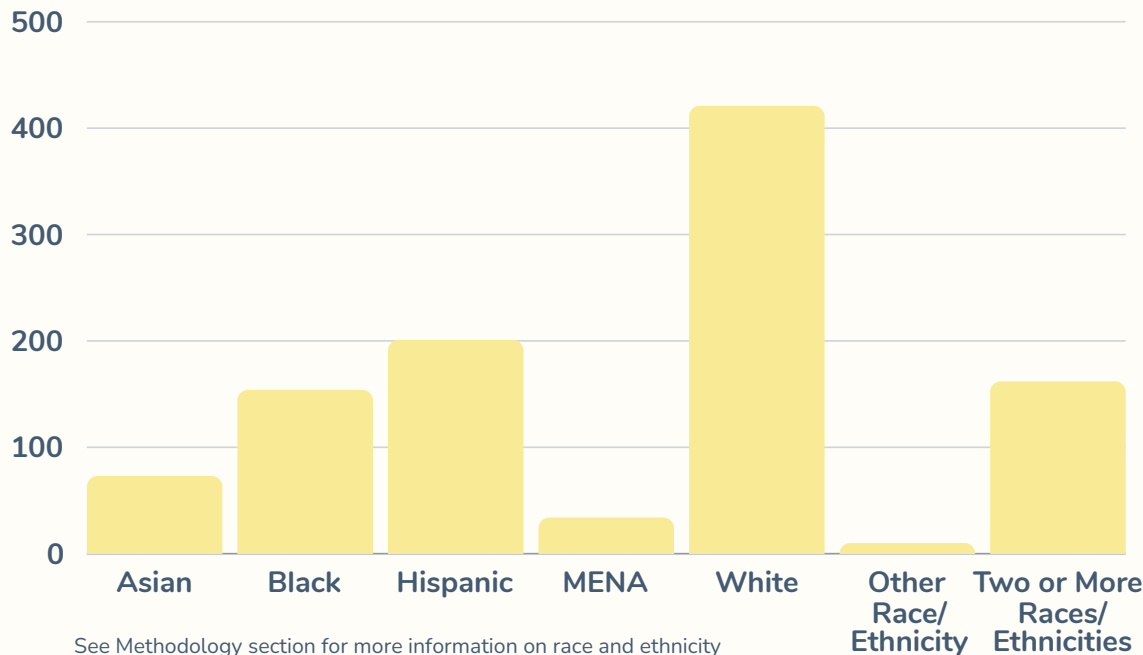
## Age



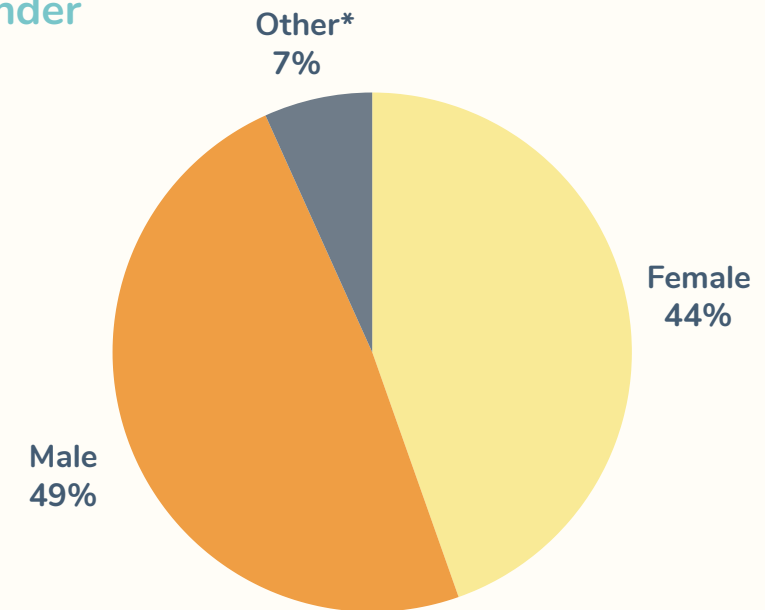
# 1,181

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS

## Race & Ethnicity



## Gender

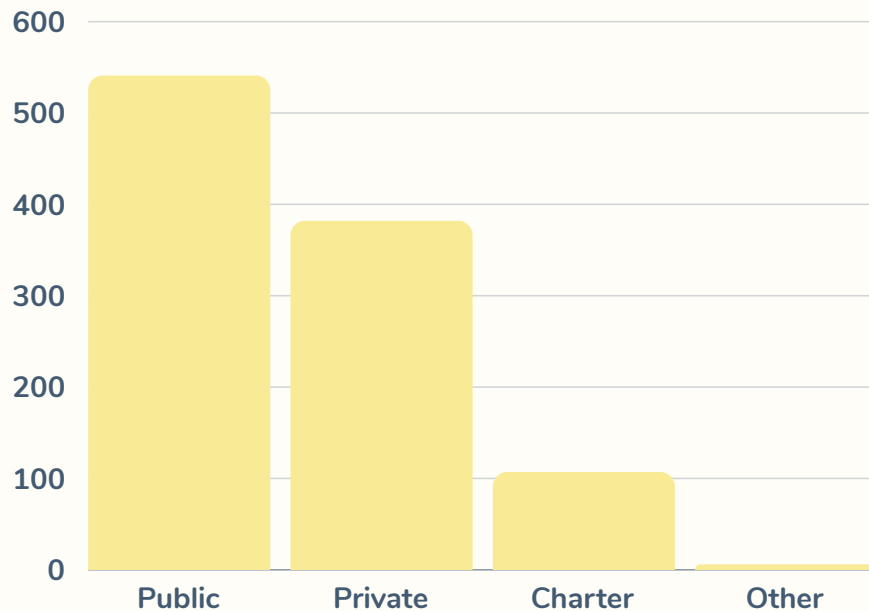


Due to low representation in the study sample, "Other" represents "Nonbinary," "Prefer not to answer," & "Prefer to self describe."

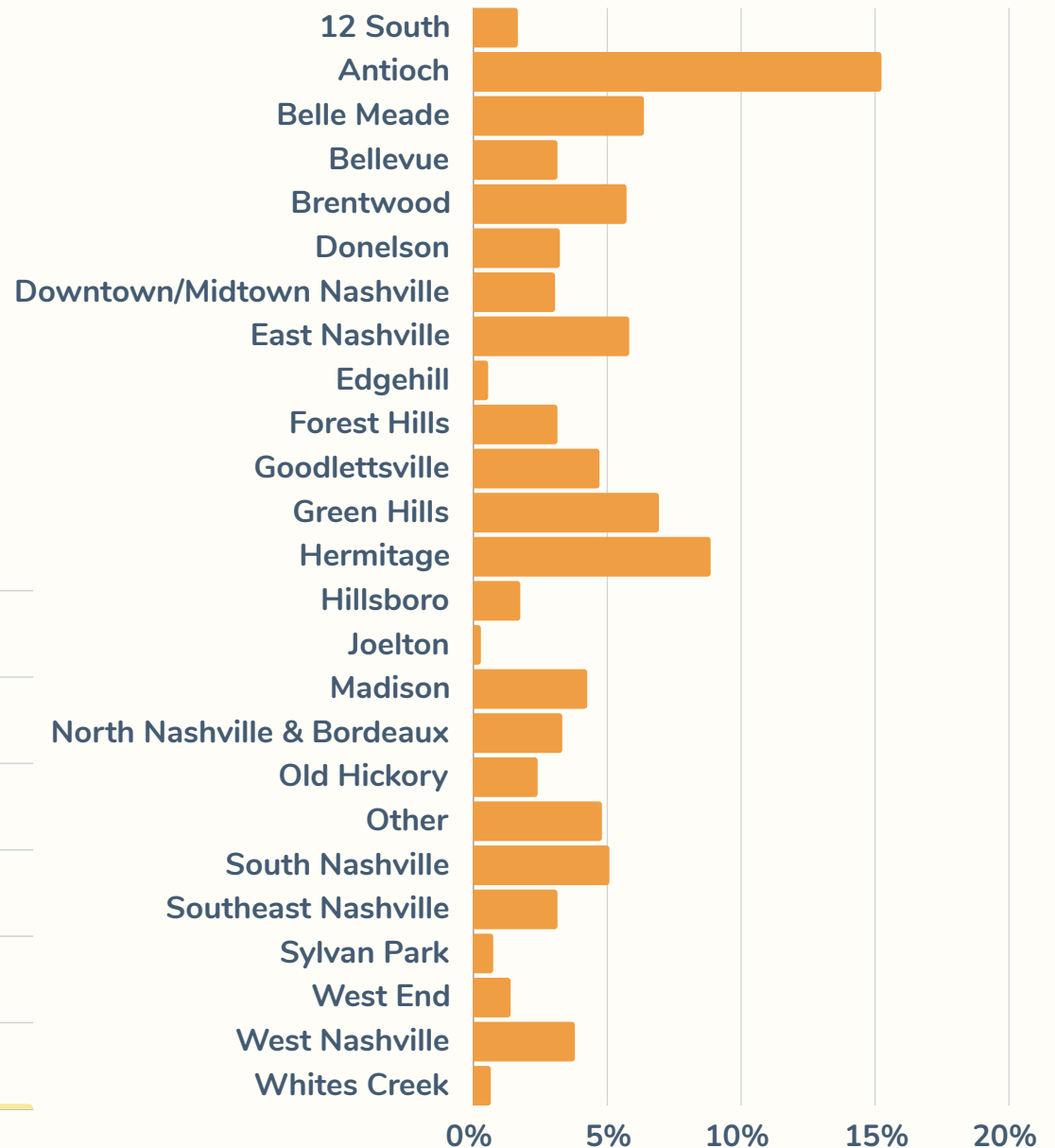
# 10.32

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS  
YOUTH PARTICIPANTS HAVE  
LIVED IN NASHVILLE

## Type of School Participants' Attend

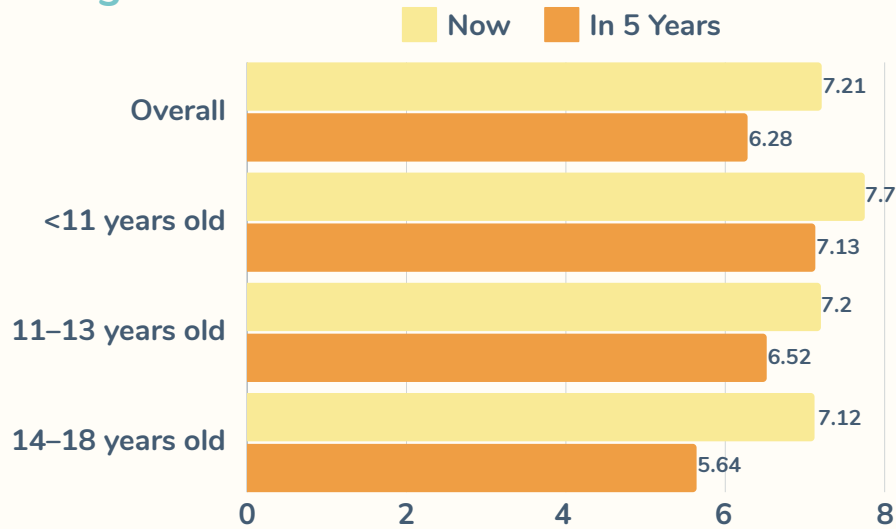


## Nashville Neighborhoods

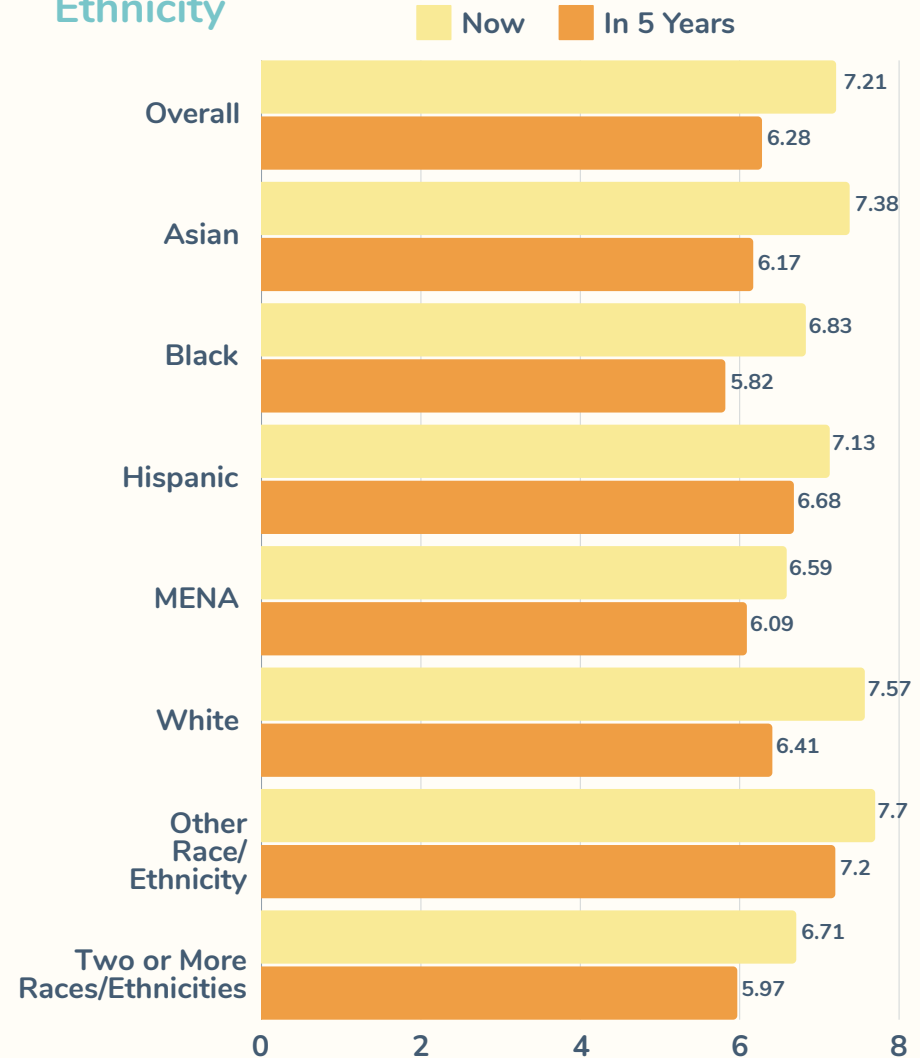


On a scale of 1-10 how much do you like living in Nashville \_\_\_\_?

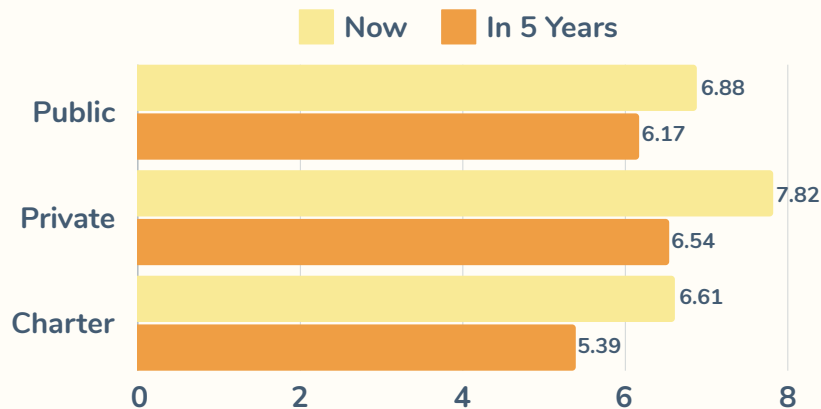
## Age



## Race & Ethnicity



## Type of School Participant Attends



# 60%

OF YOUTH “AGREE” OR “STRONGLY AGREE” THAT THEY FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG IN NASHVILLE

“Nashville is a special community because it is diverse and I see people who are very similar to me... I am able to speak freely and to be comfortable in my own skin.”

Dream City Participant  
Southeast Nashville

“There could be more areas for the youth to make people feel like they belong.”

Dream City Participant  
Brentwood

# 10%

OF YOUTH “DISAGREE” OR “STRONGLY DISAGREE” THAT THEY FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG IN NASHVILLE

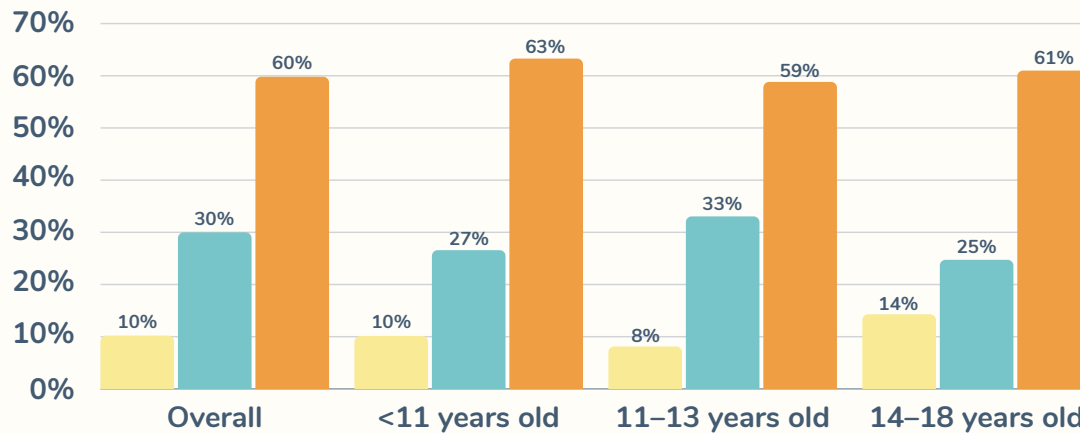
# Sense of Belonging in Nashville



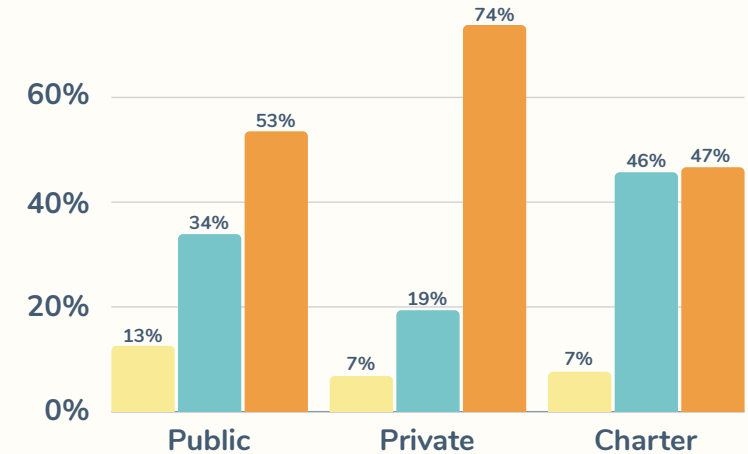
“I feel like I belong in Nashville.”



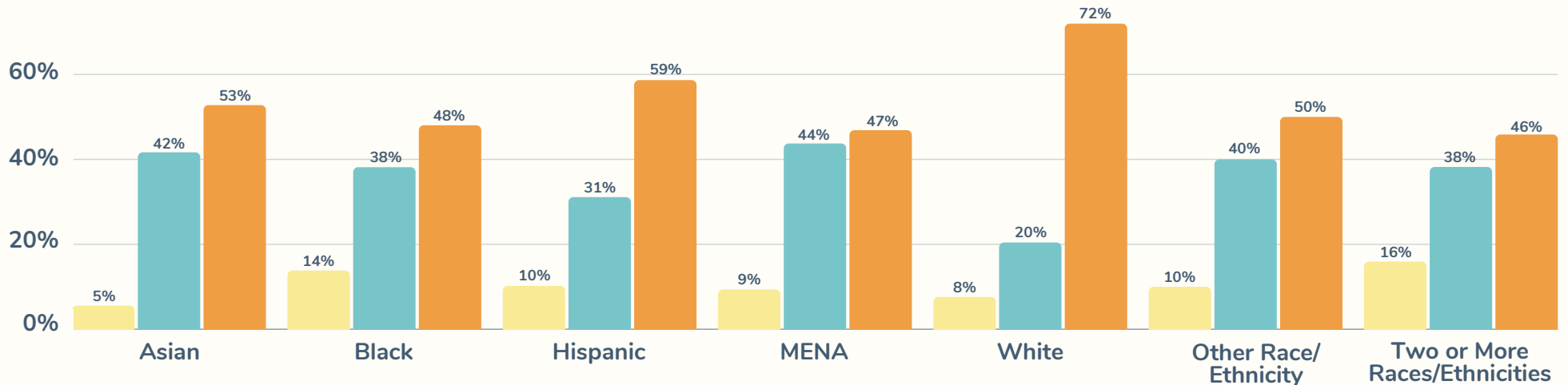
## Age



## Type of School Participant Attends



## Race & Ethnicity



Growth can be good and bad. Nashville is growing faster than many cities in the U.S. Do you think in the next 5 years that the growth of Nashville will make things better or worse?

**43%**

OF YOUTH BELIEVE THE GROWTH OF NASHVILLE WILL MAKE THINGS WORSE.

“Too many people are inhabiting Nashville, particularly those from places like California. As a person who has lived here all my life, I feel strongly against ‘Nashvegas’ and turning Nashville into a city of a culture opposite its own.”

Dream City Survey Participant  
Green Hills

“Since it's a growing city, there are many things to do in Nashville and many resources within the city.”

Dream City Participant  
Southeast Nashville

“There is too much building around the city and not enough green areas.”

Dream City Participant  
Brentwood

**36%**

OF YOUTH BELIEVE THE GROWTH OF NASHVILLE WILL MAKE THINGS BETTER.

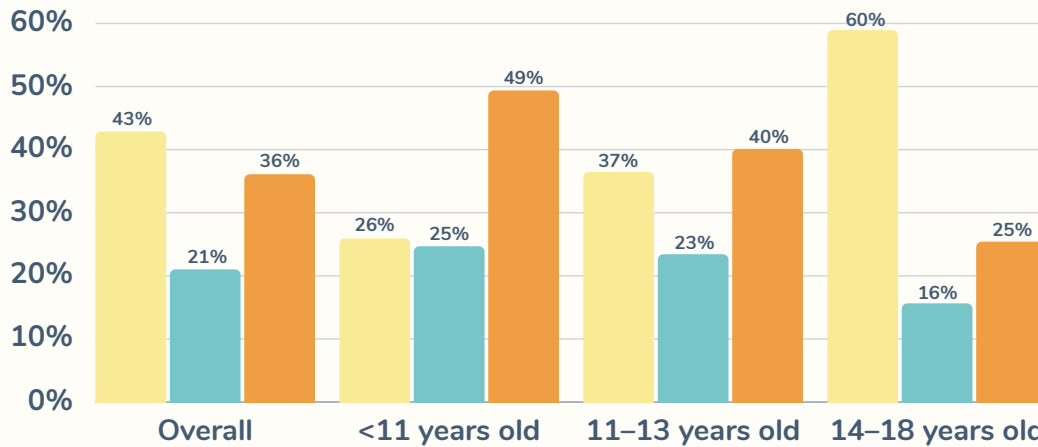
# Growth of Nashville



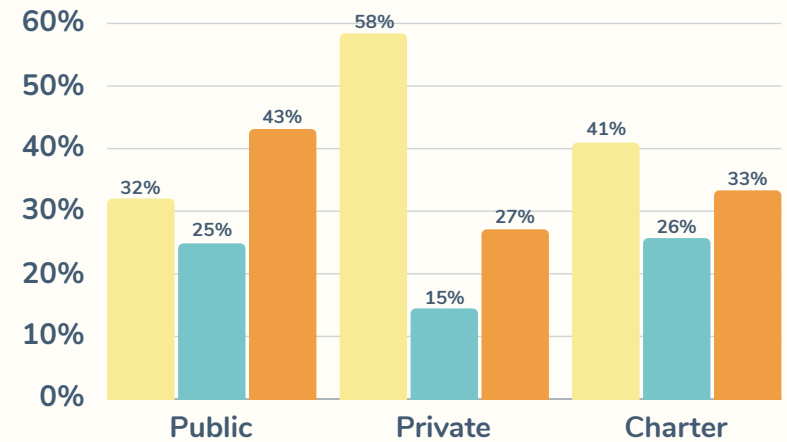
Growth can be good and bad. Nashville is growing faster than many cities in the U.S. Do you think in the next 5 years that the growth of Nashville will make things better or worse?



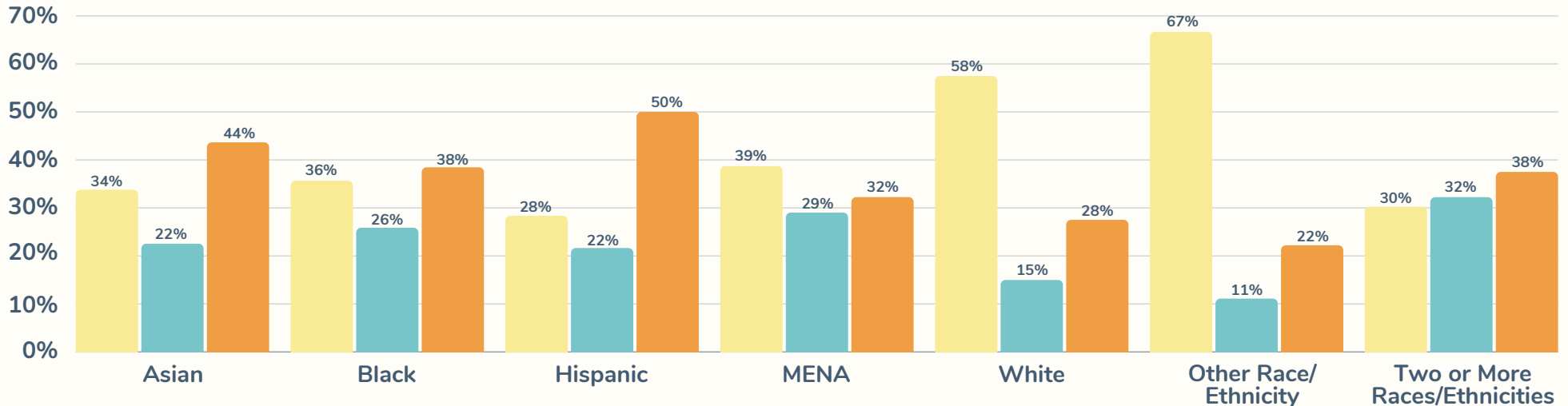
## Age



## Type of School Participant Attends



## Race & Ethnicity



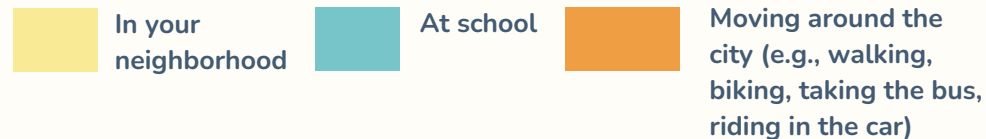


# Youth Safety in Nashville

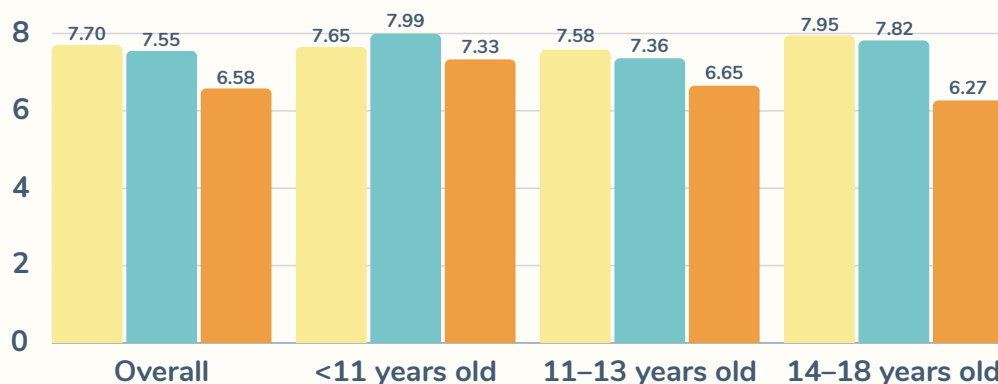


## Average Sense of Safety Scores

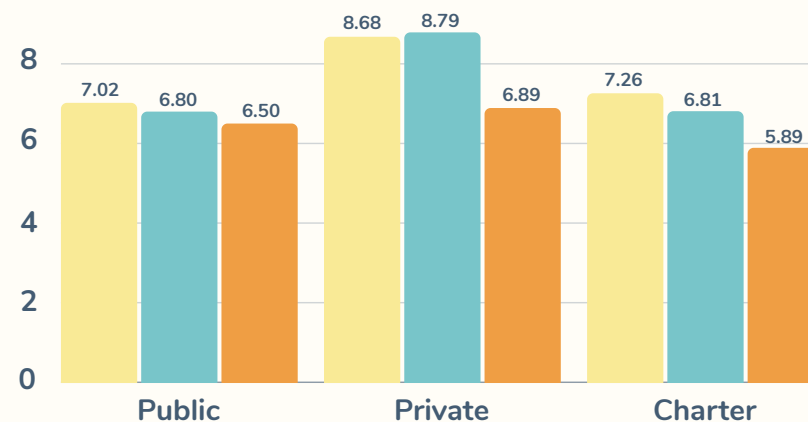
On a scale of 1–10 how safe do you feel...



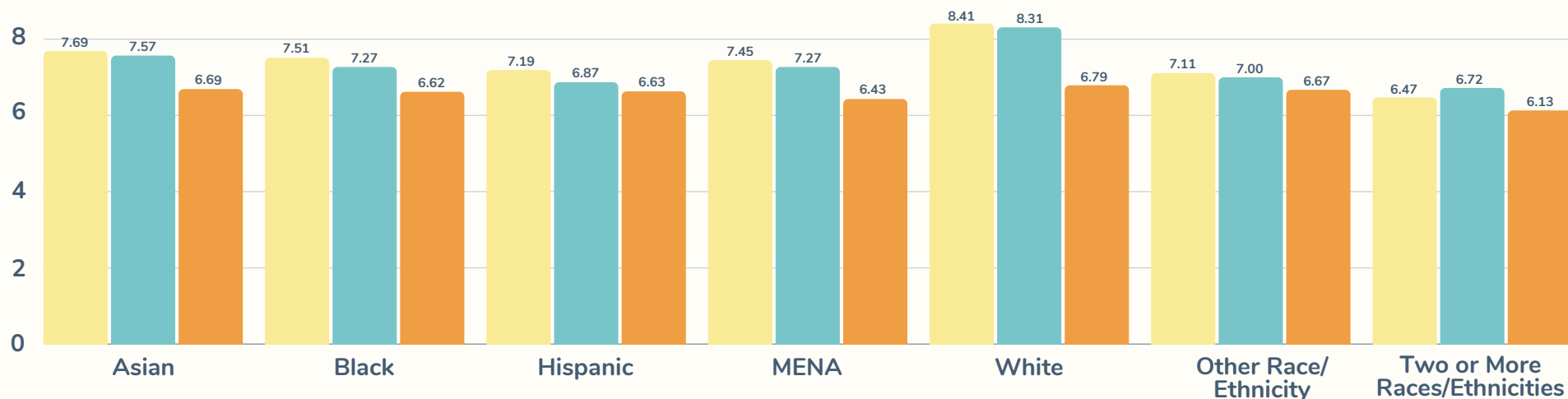
### Age



### Type of School Participant Attends



### Race & Ethnicity



## Safety in Our Neighborhoods

*When asked how to make Nashville safer, young people said...*

“Make a lot of more parks and make systems to make people safe.”

Dream City Participant  
Madison

“More connections with neighbors.”

Dream City Participant  
Antioch

“More light post and community awareness.”

Dream City Participant  
Donelson

“The crime rate ↑, the shootings have made youth fear.”

Dream City Participant  
Green Hills

“Violence...makes people not feel safe.”

Dream City Participant  
Antioch

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

7.70

OVERALL AVERAGE

## Safety at School

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL AT SCHOOL?

**7.55**  
OVERALL AVERAGE

“I rate it at 6 because of what happened at that Catholic school [The Covenant School].”

Dream City Participant  
East Nashville

When asked how to make Nashville safer, young people also shared:

“...Stop gun violence, and [add] school security”  
Dream City Participant  
Antioch

“I think more laws against guns, and fighting for student safety as well.”  
Dream City Participant  
Southeast Nashville



## Safety Moving Around the City

“I spend so much time worrying about my safety that I can't enjoy riding my bike.”

Dream City Participant

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL MOVING AROUND THE CITY, MEANING WALKING, BIKING, TAKING THE BUS, OR RIDING IN A CAR?

6.36

OVERALL AVERAGE

*When asked how to make Nashville safer, proposed solutions relating to moving around the city included:*

“Better roads, better driver's ed, better bike lanes, and better sidewalks.”

“Fixing the roads and people being on the lookout more.”

“Having more sidewalks.”

Youth were asked what they like about living in Nashville. They were given a list of 15 items and asked to select their top 3 favorite things about Nashville. The following list represents the overall ranking among all survey participants.

## THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE

1. Good restaurants, shopping, & entertainment
2. Good education
3. Creative, lots of music and art
4. Access to fun activities
5. Diversity of people and cultures
6. Having good parks & open spaces
7. Safe neighborhoods & low crime
8. High quality healthcare & hospitals
9. Lots of jobs
10. Having a strong sense of community
11. Welcoming city
12. Supportive people
13. Taking care of the homeless
14. Good and affordable housing options
15. Good public transportation & no traffic congestion

“What I think is special about Nashville is the food and how nice the people are and the great places to eat and shop.”

Dream City Participant  
East Nashville



# What Youth Like About Nashville



“Good food...makes you strong,  
connects me to my family”

Dream City Participant  
Madison



“The most important thing to me is  
having lots of shopping and  
entertainment places.”

Dream City Participant  
East Nashville



# What Youth Like About Nashville



Likes	<11 Years Old	11-13 Years Old	14-18 Years Old
Welcoming city			
Having a strong sense of community			
Lots of jobs			
Good education	4th	2nd	2nd
Having good parks and green spaces			4th
Safe neighborhoods/low crime	3rd		
Good restaurants, shopping, and entertainment	2nd	1st	1st
Good and affordable housing options			
Diversity of people and cultures		5th	
High quality healthcare and hospitals			
Good public transportation and no traffic congestion			
Taking care of the homeless			
Creative, lots of music and art	5th	3rd	3rd
Access to fun activities	1st	4th	5th
People are collaborative and supportive			

## Age

### Legend

- Top 5 Likes
- Middle 5 Likes
- Bottom 5 Likes

# What Youth Like About Nashville



## Race & Ethnicity

Likes	Asian	Black	Hispanic	MENA	White	Other Race/ Ethnicity	Two or More Races/ Ethnicities
Welcoming city							
Having a strong sense of community							
Lots of jobs		5th					5th
Good education	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	4th
Having good parks and green spaces			3rd			4th	
Safe neighborhoods/low crime				5th	5th		
Good restaurants, shopping, and entertainment	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st
Good and affordable housing options							
Diversity of people and cultures	4th		4th	3rd		3rd	3rd
High quality healthcare and hospitals							
Good public transportation and no traffic congestion							
Taking care of the homeless							
Creative, lots of music and art	3rd	3rd	5th		3rd	5th	2nd
Access to fun activities	5th	4th		4th	4th		
People are collaborative and supportive							

### Legend



Top 5  
Likes



Middle 5  
Likes



Bottom 5  
Likes



# What Youth Like About Nashville



## Type of School Participant Attends

### Legend

- Top 5 Likes
- Middle 5 Likes
- Bottom 5 Likes

Likes	Public	Private	Charter
Welcoming city			
Having a strong sense of community			
Lots of jobs			
Good education	3rd	2nd	3rd
Having good parks and green spaces			
Safe neighborhoods/low crime		5th	
Good restaurants, shopping, and entertainment	1st	1st	1st
Good and affordable housing options			
Diversity of people and cultures	4th		4th
High quality healthcare and hospitals			
Good public transportation and no traffic congestion			
Taking care of the homeless			
Creative, lots of music and art	2nd	4th	2nd
Access to fun activities	5th	3rd	5th
People are collaborative and supportive			

Youth were also asked what they dislike about living in Nashville. They were given a list of 12 items and asked to select their 3 least favorite things about Nashville. The following list represents the overall ranking among all survey participants.

## THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE DISLIKE

1. Traffic, it's hard to get around
2. Expensive to live in Nashville
3. Homelessness
4. Expensive housing
5. More crime/neighborhoods are less safe
6. Too many people/not enough space
7. Not easy to walk around (lack or issues with sidewalks, crosswalks, trails)
8. No activities to participate in in your neighborhood
9. Bad Schools/Teaching
10. Lack of opportunities for youth/things for them to do
11. Unsatisfied with state government and how they impact Nashville
12. Lack of public transportation
13. Not enough jobs

“The traffic is not that good in Nashville and there are many delays everyday due to accidents, slowdowns, etc.”

Dream City Survey Participant  
Old Hickory



“There is not enough housing and if there is it is extremely expensive.”

Dream City Survey Participant

“Lack of public transportation, we need something like subways or electric trains to give people more transportation options (less traffic) and it would be better for the environment. We could also start taxing for people who use gasoline-fueled cars like in London to encourage electric cars. This would create a better environment and less sound pollution.”

Dream City Survey Participant  
Brentwood



“It takes me hours to get to school or to parks. [Traffic] wastes my time and gas. It has become inefficient to transport to school twice a day.”

Dream City Participant  
Antioch

“Caro para vivir en Nashville, las cosas cueslan mucho.”

Dream City Survey Participant  
Antioch

“When I live a mile away from school on the way home, it can take around 20 minutes to get home. This is crazy to me because the traffic is so bad when it takes me just seven minutes to ride my bike home.”

Dream City Survey Participant  
Belle Meade

# What Youth Dislike About Nashville



Dislikes	<11 Years Old	11-13 Years Old	14-18 Years Old
Expensive to live in Nashville	5th	3rd	2nd
Expensive housing	4th	4th	3rd
Bad schools/teaching			
Traffic, it's hard to get around	2nd	1st	1st
Lack of public transportation			
More crime/neighborhoods are less safe	3rd	5th	
Homelessness	1st	2nd	4th
Not enough jobs			
Too many people/not enough space			5th
Unsatisfied with state government and how they impact Nashville			
Lack of opportunities for youth/things for them to do			
No activities to participate in your neighborhood			
Not easy to walk around (lack of or issues with sidewalks, crosswalks, trails)			

Age

### Legend

- Top 5 Dislikes
- Middle 5 Dislikes
- Bottom 5 Dislikes

## Race & Ethnicity

Dislikes	Asian	Black	Hispanic	MENA	White	Other Race/Ethnicity	Two or More Races/Ethnicities
Expensive to live in Nashville	4th	3rd	3rd	5th	2nd	2nd	2nd
Expensive housing	5th	2nd	2nd	3rd		4th	3rd
Bad schools/teaching						5th	
Traffic, it's hard to get around	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st
Lack of public transportation							
More crime/neighborhoods are less safe	2nd	5th	5th	2nd		3rd	5th
Homelessness	3rd	4th	4th	4th	3rd		4th
Not enough jobs							
Too many people/not enough space					4th		
Unsatisfied with state government and how they impact Nashville							
Lack of opportunities for youth/things for them to do							
No activities to participate in your neighborhood							
Not easy to walk around (lack of or issues with sidewalks, crosswalks, trails)					2nd		

**Legend**

- Top 5 Dislikes
- Middle 5 Dislikes
- Bottom 5 Dislikes

“Homelessness because some people are in the cold without a home.”  
 Dream City Survey Participant

# What Youth Dislike About Nashville



Dislikes	Public	Private	Charter
Expensive to live in Nashville	2nd	3rd	3rd
Expensive housing	3rd		2nd
Bad schools/teaching			
Traffic, it's hard to get around	1st	1st	1st
Lack of public transportation			
More crime/neighborhoods are less safe	4th		5th
Homelessness	5th	2nd	4th
Not enough jobs			
Too many people/not enough space		4th	
Unsatisfied with state government and how they impact Nashville			
Lack of opportunities for youth/things for them to do			
No activities to participate in your neighborhood			
Not easy to walk around (lack of or issues with sidewalks, crosswalks, trails)		5th	

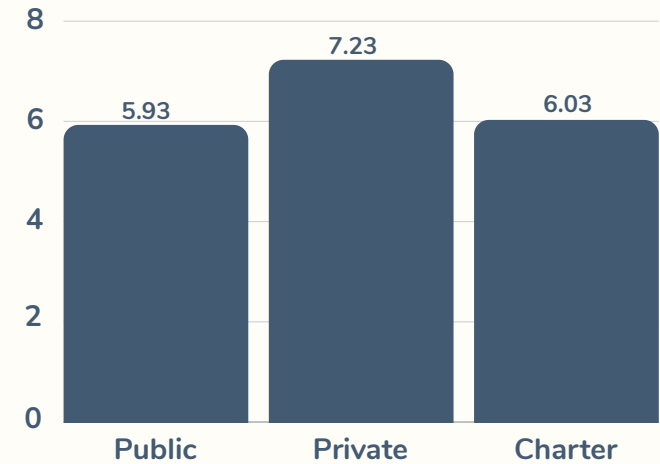
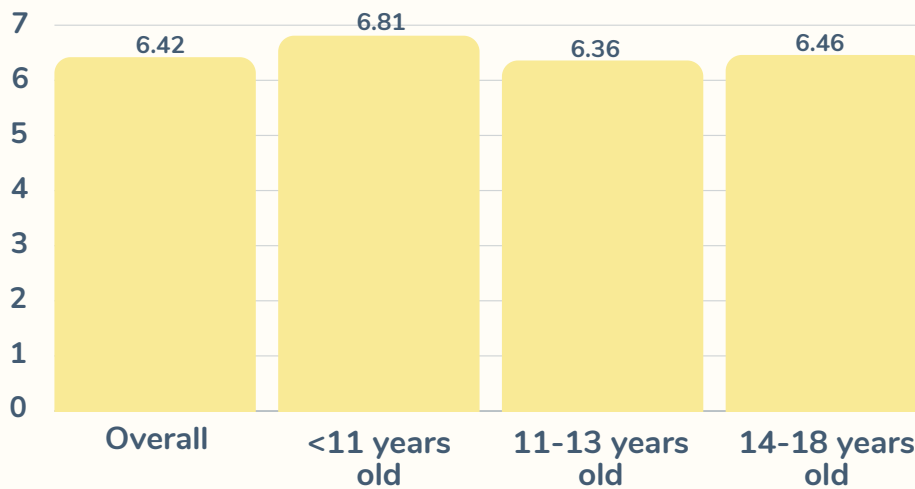
Type of School Participant Attends

**Legend**

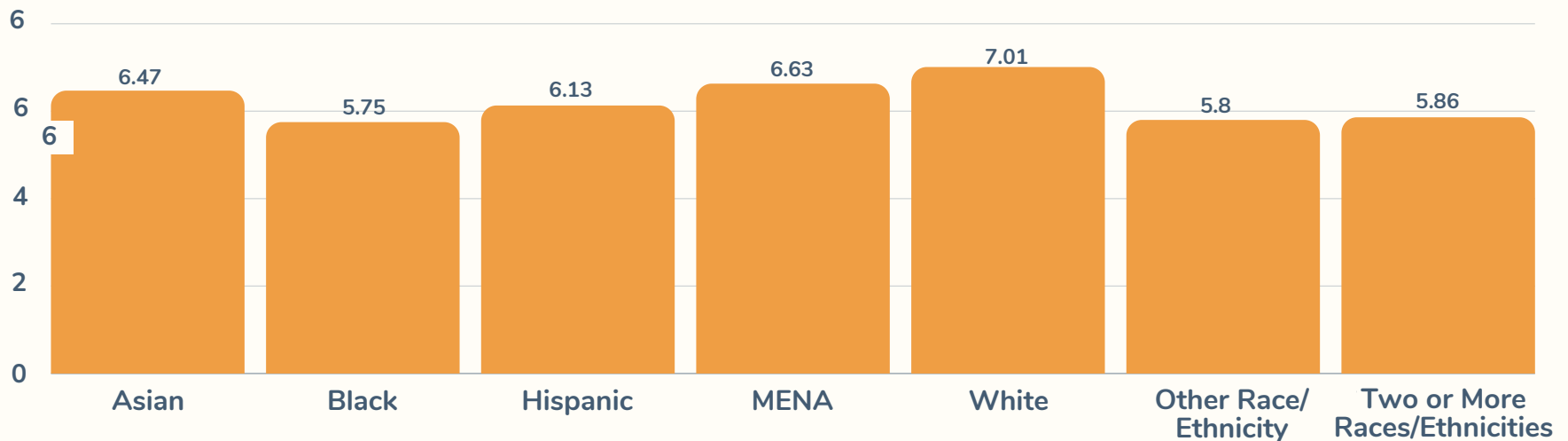
- Top 5 Dislikes
- Middle 5 Dislikes
- Bottom 5 Dislikes

On a scale of 1-10 how does your neighborhood reflect your idea of an ideal community? 1 meaning it doesn't reflect your ideal community at all and 10 meaning it reflects your ideal community perfectly.

## Age



## Race & Ethnicity



Youth were asked what they believe are the ingredients to an ideal neighborhood. Participants were provided with a list of 25 ingredients and asked to select 5 “absolutely essential”, 5 “essential” and 5 “very important” ingredients to their ideal neighborhood.

These categories show their options:

## SAFETY

- Fire stations
- Police stations
- Sidewalks with good lighting on both sides of the street

## PARKS AND REC/LEISURE

- Senior centers
- Community centers-- fun and safe places for activities
- Sports fields
- Parks and green spaces
- Things to do for fun and places to eat
- Downtown Nashville

## SHOPPING

- Shopping malls
- Small retail businesses
- Grocery stores

## COST AND LIVELIHOOD

- Affordable housing
- Where I work

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Easy to get to the highways
- Easy to bike and walk
- Able to get to and use public transportation, like the bus
- Easy to get to the airport



## EDUCATION

- Schools
- Colleges
- Libraries

## HEALTH

- Doctors/dentist offices
- Hospitals

## FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- Churches, synagogues, or other places of worship



## Overall Results

### ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL

- Hospitals
- Schools
- Affordable housing
- Grocery stores
- Fire stations

### ESSENTIAL

- Police stations
- Doctors & dentists
- Parks & green spaces
- Things to do for fun and places to eat
- Churches, synagogues, or other places of worship

### VERY IMPORTANT

- Colleges
- Sidewalks with good lighting
- Easy to bike and walk
- Sports fields
- Libraries



“My brother has been in the hospital for six months. I’m so grateful for high quality healthcare.”

Dream City Survey Participant

West End

# Ingredients for an Ideal Neighborhood



Ingredient	<11 Years Old	11-13 Years Old	14-18 Years Old
Fire stations	Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Hospitals	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Affordable housing	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Grocery stores	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Easy to get to the highways	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Doctors/dentist offices	Absolutely Essential	Essential	Essential
Sports fields	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Schools	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Sidewalks with good lighting	Very Important	Very Important	Essential
Parks and green spaces	Essential	Very Important	Essential
Libraries	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Easy to bike and walk	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Able to get to and use public transportation	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Where I work	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Colleges	Essential	Essential	Very Important
Things to do for fun and places to eat	Very Important	Essential	Essential
Small retail businesses	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Churches, synagogues, or other places of worship	Essential	Essential	Very Important
Community centers— fun and safe places for activities	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Easy to get to the airport	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Senior centers	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Shopping malls	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Downtown Nashville	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Police stations	Essential	Essential	Essential
Safe Places for Teens	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important

## Most Important Ingredients to an Ideal Neighborhood by Age

### Legend

- Absolutely Essential
- Essential
- Very Important

“The good affordable housing is the most important because of the lack of housing there is/will be in the future.”  
 Dream City Survey Participant  
 Madison

## Most Important Ingredients to an Ideal Neighborhood by Race & Ethnicity

Ingredient	Asian	Black	Hispanic	MENA	White	Other Race/ Ethnicity	Two or More Races/ Ethnicities
Fire stations	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Hospitals	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Affordable housing	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Grocery stores	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Easy to get to the highways	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Doctors/dentist offices	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Sports fields	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Schools	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Sidewalks with good lighting	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Parks and green spaces	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Absolutely Essential	Essential
Libraries	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Easy to bike and walk	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Able to get to and use public transportation	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Absolutely Essential	Essential
Where I work	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Colleges	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Absolutely Essential	Essential
Things to do for fun and places to eat	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Small retail businesses	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Churches, synagogues, or other places of worship	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Essential	Essential
Community centers— fun and safe places for activities	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Absolutely Essential	Essential
Easy to get to the airport	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Senior centers	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Absolutely Essential	Essential
Shopping malls	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Downtown Nashville	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Police stations	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Safe Places for Teens	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential

### Legend

Absolutely Essential

Essential

Very Important

# Ingredients for an Ideal Neighborhood



Ingredient	Public	Private	Charter
Fire stations	Absolutely Essential	Essential	Absolutely Essential
Hospitals	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Affordable housing	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Grocery stores	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Easy to get to the highways	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Doctors/dentist offices	Essential	Essential	Essential
Sports fields	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Schools	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential	Absolutely Essential
Sidewalks with good lighting	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Parks and green spaces	Essential	Essential	Very Important
Libraries	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Easy to bike and walk	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Able to get to and use public transportation	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Where I work	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Colleges	Essential	Very Important	Essential
Things to do for fun and places to eat	Very Important	Essential	Essential
Small retail businesses	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Churches, synagogues, or other places of worship	Essential	Essential	Essential
Community centers— fun and safe places for activities	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Easy to get to the airport	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Senior centers	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Shopping malls	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Downtown Nashville	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important
Police stations	Essential	Absolutely Essential	Essential
Safe Places for Teens	Very Important	Very Important	Very Important

## Most Important Ingredients to an Ideal Neighborhood by Type of School Participant Attends

**Legend**

- Absolutely Essential
- Essential
- Very Important

“I think good education is really important since there are many great schools in Nashville and with a good education you can accomplish anything.”

Dream City Survey Participant  
Antioch

Youth were asked to think BIG about Nashville's future. They were presented with five ideas to describe hopes and dreams of what Nashville could be.



**Learning:** There are plenty of opportunities for young people to get a great education and develop their interests both in and out of school.



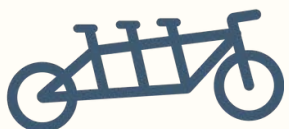
**Music & Arts:** There is a great creative energy in the city with art and music everywhere. There are a lot of spaces for young people to be creative.



**Strong Neighborhoods:** Each neighborhood has a unique identity that makes it special and different from others. Each neighborhood has plenty of jobs, housing, and resources so people can live, work, and play in the same neighborhood.



**Inclusiveness:** There is a lot of diversity, and everyone is treated equally, is supported, and feels like they belong.

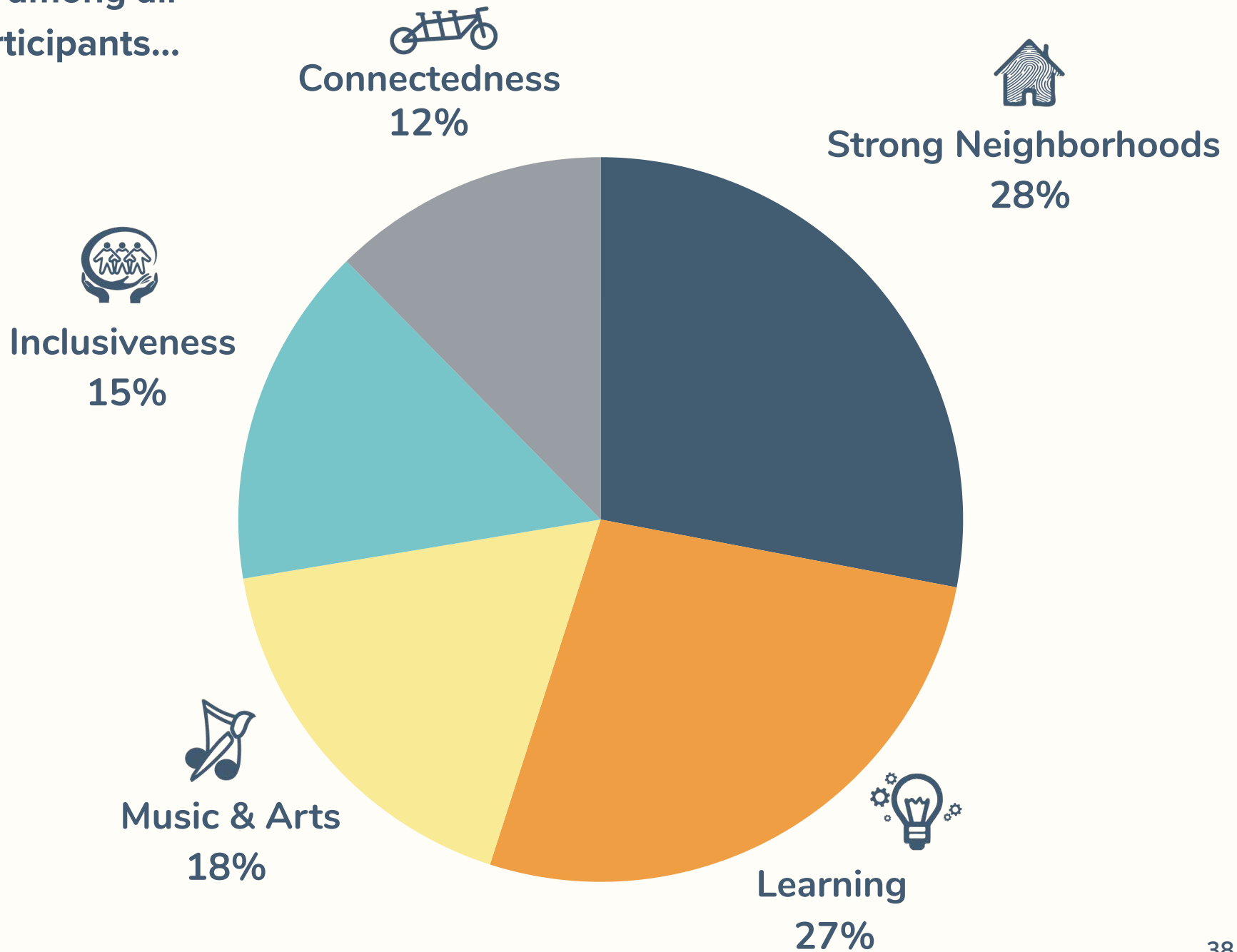


**Connectedness:** Everyone, including young people, can quickly get where they need to be. Getting from one place to the next is enjoyable, and people have options other than a car.

# Big Ideas about Nashville's Future



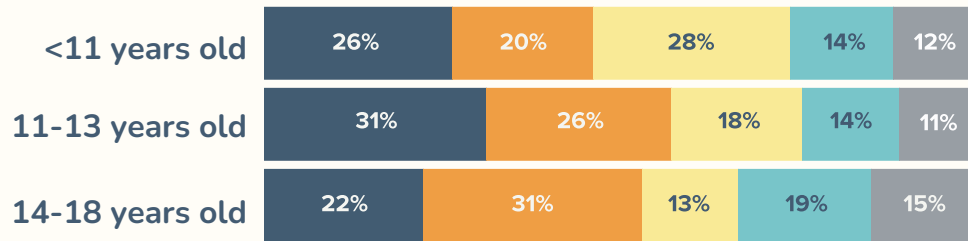
Big ideas among all youth participants...



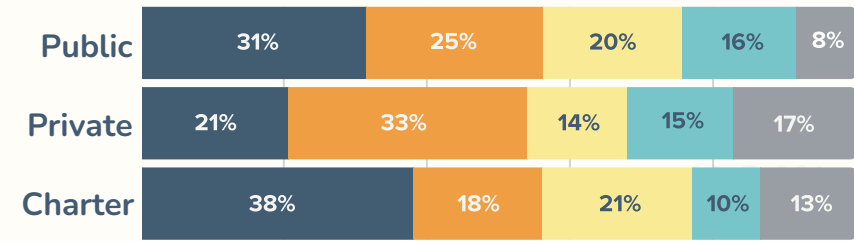
# Big Ideas about Nashville's Future



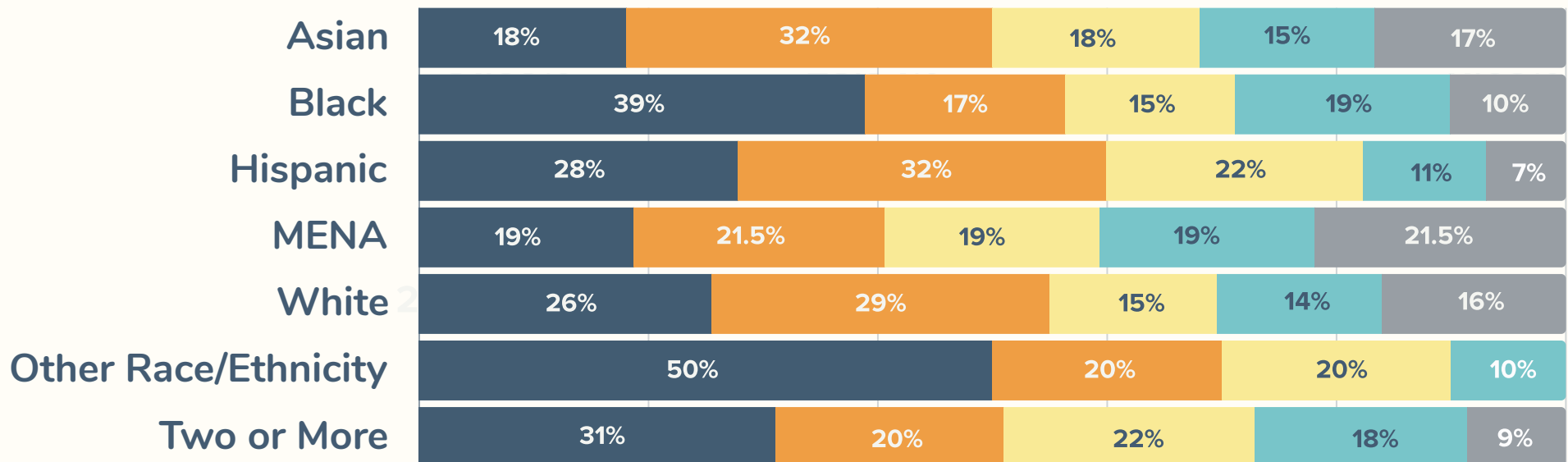
## Age



## Type of School Participant Attends



## Race & Ethnicity



This report represents insights and reflections from **over 1,000 young people across Nashville** (ages 7–18). Data includes what participants like and dislike about their city/in their spaces and places, their sense of safety and belonging, their vision of an ideal neighborhood, and big ideas...**their dreams for the future of Nashville**. We discuss some important takeaways from the data below. These findings represent the opinions and viewpoints of survey participants and may not be representative of the larger youth population.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Sense of Belonging:** Overall, 60% of youth surveyed "Agree or Strongly Agree" that they belong in Nashville. However, the data vary widely when you compare across racial and ethnic identities as well as type of school setting. 72% of White youth surveyed "Agree or Strongly Agree" that they feel like they belong in Nashville, whereas 47% of Middle Eastern or North African youth surveyed, 48% of Black youth surveyed, and 46% of youth surveyed identifying as Two or More Races/Ethnicities "Agree or Strongly Agree" that they belong in Nashville. Youth surveyed who attend private schools were more likely to state that they "Agree or Strongly Agree" that they feel like they belong in Nashville (74%) compared to youth surveyed who attend public schools (53%) and youth surveyed who attend charter schools (47%).

**Growth of Nashville:** 43% of youth surveyed who attend public schools and 50% of Hispanic youth surveyed felt that growth would make Nashville "a little better or a lot better" in the next 5 years whereas survey participants who were older (14-18 years old), White, or attend private schools most often shared that they think growth will make Nashville "a little worse or a lot worse."

**Safety:** Compared to how safe they feel at school (average = 7.55) and in their neighborhood (average = 7.70), young people surveyed feel the least safe moving around the city (walking, biking, taking the bus, riding in the car; average = 6.62). White survey participants felt safer at school, in their neighborhood, and while moving around the city than participants from all other racial and ethnic identities. Survey participants attending private school felt safer at school, in their neighborhood, and while moving around the city than survey participants attending public or charter schools.

**Things Young People Like About Nashville:** Good restaurants, shopping and entertainment, and good education were among the top three things survey participants like about living in Nashville among all age groups and types of schools participants attend. They were also among the top three things survey participants like about living in Nashville for participants who identify as Asian, Black, Hispanic, MENA, white and other race or ethnicity.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Things Young People Dislike About Nashville:** Traffic was overwhelmingly the most frustrating part of living in Nashville among youth survey participants, regardless of age, race and ethnicity, or type of school participant attends. Other common frustrations among Nashville youth participants include expensive to live in Nashville, homelessness, expensive housing, and crime/neighborhoods are less safe.

**Ideal Neighborhood:** Survey participants <11 years old, white, or attending private school reported the highest averages on a scale of 1 to 10 of how much their current neighborhood reflects their ideal neighborhood– 1 is neighborhood does not reflect ideal community at all and 10 is neighborhood reflects ideal community perfectly. Survey participants identifying as Black, other race or ethnicity, and two or more races/ethnicities, as well as participants who attend public school reported the lowest averages on that same scale.

**Ingredients to an Ideal Neighborhood:** The majority of youth surveyed (all ages, all types of school attend, and Asian, Black, Hispanic, white, and two or more races/ethnicities) believe that hospitals, affordable housing, grocery stores, and schools are all “absolutely essential” ingredients to an ideal neighborhood. Fire stations were also commonly identified by survey participants as an “absolutely essential” ingredient for an ideal neighborhood.

**Big Ideas about Nashville’s Future:** While “Strong Neighborhood” was selected by survey participants across all age groups as the Big Idea that describes their hopes and dreams for Nashville’s future, it was especially important for survey participants between 11 and 13 years old (31%). Older participants (14–18 years old) prioritized the Big Idea of “Learning.” 39% of Black survey participants chose the vision of “Strong Neighborhoods” as their Big Idea for Nashville’s future, which is higher than any other group. “Learning” was also an important focus for the future of Nashville, especially for Asian, Hispanic, and White survey participants.

The section below describes the methodology used for the Dream City Workshop Phase II survey.

## Dream City Workshop Phase II Survey Development

The Dream City Workshop Phase II survey was adapted from the Imagine Nashville adult survey developed by Heart + Mind Strategies. During the summer of 2023, the Nashville Youth Design Team (NYDT) adapted the adult survey questions to make them more accessible to young people. Revisions to the adult survey included cutting down the number of questions included in the survey and simplifying the language of the survey. After the survey questions were revised, they were programmed into a REDCap survey hosted at Vanderbilt University. REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture) is a secure, web-based software platform designed to support data capture for research studies, providing 1) an intuitive interface for validated data capture; 2) audit trails for tracking data manipulation and export procedures; 3) automated export procedures for seamless data downloads to common statistical analysis packages; and 4) procedures for data integration and interoperability with external sources (Harris et al., 2009). The survey was piloted by eight NYDT members before it went live in August 2023. The Dream City workshop and survey were made available in English and Spanish. For other language supports, the Dream City staff worked directly with site facilitators to ensure accessibility for their students. Additional site-specific supports included either written or verbal translation into Arabic, Swahili, and Turkish.

## Survey Dissemination

The survey was disseminated between August 2023 and March 2024 to young people between the ages of five and 18 years old who live in Davidson County, TN. The online survey was open to the public and was available online through REDCap. Paper surveys were distributed to Dream City Workshop participants following the design portion of the workshop.

***(See the section below for the process used when workshops were conducted in Metro Nashville Public Schools)***

## Dream City in Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)

Prior to conducting workshops and disseminating surveys in MNPS classrooms, the project was approved by The University of the South's IRB and MNPS's Research Review Committee. Signed parental consent and youth participant assent were required prior to youth survey participation. Youth participants who did not sign and return both the parental consent and youth participant assent were given an alternative assignment, which is not included in this analysis. All youth were eligible to participate in the workshop regardless of parental consent.

## Data Cleaning

Following data collection, survey submissions that did not complete at least 3 out of the six sections were removed from the study sample. The data was then exported from REDCap as a CSV and cleaned using Microsoft Excel. All submissions by individuals who were over 18 years old were removed from the study sample (n=17).

**Age:** The “Age” variable was recoded for consistency due to the open-ended nature of the question (18 vs. eighteen). A new variable, “Age Category,” was created based on the age groups: <11 years old, 11-13 years old, and 14-18 years old.

**Race & Ethnicity:** Dream City survey participants shared that the race and ethnicity categories presented in the survey did not accurately represent the racial identities and experiences of all young people. For example, some participants who chose “Hispanic” for their ethnicity noted that they did not feel represented by the racial category of White. Therefore, when cleaning the data we chose to combine race and ethnicity into one variable, allowing students to indicate race or ethnicity or both. If a participant selected a race value but not an ethnicity value, their answers were coded as the race value. If a participant selected an ethnicity value, but not a race value, answers were coded as the ethnicity value. If a participant selected both a race and ethnicity value, they were coded as “Two or More Races/Ethnicities.” ***For example, 86 participants identified as MENA, however, 52 of those participants also selected another race and/or ethnicity, moving those participants from the MENA group to the “Two or More Races/Ethnicities” group.***

## How Many Years Have You Lived in Nashville?

The “Years Spent in Nashville” variable was recoded for consistency due to the open-ended nature of the question (11 vs. eleven).

## Data Analysis

Pivot tables in Microsoft Excel were used to conduct basic descriptive statistics (averages, counts, percentages) on the data. No survey weights were used.

## Data Limitations

- The data presented in this report does not reflect a representative sample of young people in Nashville but rather represents the ideas and opinions of the young people who participated in the Dream City Workshop and survey or opted to take the survey on their own time.
- Dream City survey participants shared that the race and ethnicity categories presented in the survey did not accurately represent the racial identities and experiences of all young people. For example, some participants who chose “MENA” for their ethnicity noted that they did not feel represented by the racial category of White. Therefore, when conducting data analysis we decided to combine race and ethnicity into one variable, allowing students to indicate race or ethnicity, or both.
- We did not choose to include questions related to socioeconomic status in the survey, as we have found in previous research that many young people do not know how to answer this question. The same is true for participant’s zip code. As a result, we asked participants to identify their neighborhoods from a pre-populated list. Even when providing this list, we found that many participants struggled to identify where they lived in Nashville.
- When the Dream City workshop was facilitated in MNPS schools, a parent/guardian consent form was required for participants to take the survey. As a result, many MNPS students who participated in the workshop did not complete the survey.