



Broadway Corridor

Report 2

Individuals With Disabilities Focus Group Report



laramedia.com

503-210-5427

2156 NE Broadway St.,
Portland, OR 97232

11/6/18

New Song
Community Church



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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the key findings of the focus group discussion conducted with 13 participants who have a disability and/or are caretakers of family members with a disability. The discussions revealed a consensus of their main challenges such as barriers to opportunities to obtaining financial security and on the lack of access and safety. Even with advanced technology, downtown Portland lacks safe spaces for them to move, study, and work. Downtown buildings, streets, and transportation don't offer security or make them feel safe.

It's important to understand that it is not their disability that prevents them from actively participating in society but rather that the urban development doesn't take into consideration their specific needs. People with disabilities remain largely excluded from downtown Portland, and their input is critical to guide and inspire the Broadway Corridor Project to design a more safe and inclusive space for all.

Introduction

The 34-acre Broadway Corridor Project, which encompasses the downtown Portland U.S. Postal Service property, is a people-centered development project that will permanently change Portland's downtown landscape. Through the project, Prosper Portland and Portland Housing Bureau seek to promote social equity and to authentically engage the community early in the process, ultimately maximizing the project's community benefits.

Historically, urban development projects have long excluded disengaged and underserved communities. Prosper Portland acknowledges that its past includes measures that have negatively impacted low-income residents and people of color through gentrification, displacement, and other policies. Recognizing that development brings change, project leaders are focused on ensuring that this change benefits all Portlanders, especially those communities that haven't benefited from previous development projects. To maximize Broadway Corridor community benefits, it is vital for the project owners to understand the experiences, needs, and challenges of the various communities that will be impacted by the project.

Prosper Portland contracted with Lara Media Services to support public engagement activities for the Broadway Corridor Project with a focus on involvement efforts with disengaged Portland residents who don't traditionally participate in public meetings and who don't feel they benefit from large-scale development projects. As part of this scope, Lara Media Services conducted three focus groups, two roundtable sessions, and surveys at three locations with various target audiences:

- Focus Group with Low-Income Residents in the Broadway Corridor Study Area, 8/7/2018
- Focus Group with Individuals with Disabilities, 11/6/18

- Roundtable Discussion with Communities of Color, 12/1/18
- Focus Group with Construction Workers, 12/3/18
- Roundtable with Business Owners, Displaced Residents, and Faith Leaders, 12/13/18
- Pop-Up Surveys:
 - Union Station, 11/30/18
 - Rose Quarter MAX Station, 12/4/18
 - Hollywood Library, 12/6/18

Purpose

Focus groups, roundtables, and pop-up surveys have been used to hear from community members who are often underrepresented in traditional public engagement forums and/or who provide a perspective we are missing. These perspectives improve the project and move it toward more equitable outcomes.

Focus groups and roundtables typically presented similar questions to participants, with some variation depending on the project status. Findings will inform the public benefit priorities, development plan, and interim activation strategies for the Broadway Corridor.

The purpose of the roundtable meeting with Individuals with Disabilities was to:

1. to create deep and intentional awareness of the Broadway Corridor project throughout Portland, particularly for traditionally disengaged residents; and
2. to authentically engage with these communities so they feel empowered to actively participate and express their opinions, thus maximizing the project's community benefits.

Methodology

Broadway Corridor Focus Group For Individuals With Disabilities

Date: November 6, 2018

Time: 6 to 8 PM

Location: New Song Community Church
220 NE Russell St, Portland, OR 97212

A focus group was the selected research method. A facilitated discussion used a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the motivations, challenges and equity issues of this specific group, obtain data and build a connection that will kindle their participation in the project process.

Lara Media Services recruited participants, focusing on those who either have disabilities themselves or are parents/caretakers of individuals with disabilities. The focus group lasted approximately two hours and produced a combination of quantitative and qualitative data through a survey and discussion. Victoria Lara, a bicultural and bilingual community leader, moderated the focus group. A total of 13 participants took part in the focus group, and the transcription of an audio recording of the session captured comments.

Participant Demographics

*For a full demographic report please see the appendix

	Most Common Groups	Percentage
Ethnicity	White or European	43%
	African American	29%
Gender	Female	77%
	Male	23%
Age	55-64	39%
	45-54	23%
Household Annual Income Before Taxes	Less than \$10,000	46%
	\$10,000 to \$19,999	23%
Disability	Cognitive difficulty	30%
	Hearing, Self-care difficulty, Independent living difficulty, Other	13%

Word Cloud Analysis

An analysis of the roundtable discussion recording and transcription produced a word cloud with the most frequently spoken words that reflected the participants' challenges, needs, and motivations.



Main Findings

The roundtable participants reflected and shared their opinions regarding the Broadway Corridor. Lara Media Services recorded, transcribed and analyzed participant input on the Broadway Corridor Project using the following categories: Building Massing/Connectivity/ Parcel Configuration/Street Plan, Commercial Affordability, Community Center/Open Space/Parks, Housing, Tenants, and Workforce. These categories best address the more vital aspects of the project and help summarize participant input to more fully understand their attitude toward the Broadway Corridor Project proposed by Prosper Portland.

The conversation comments revealed that the participants feel isolated and trapped; all of them live below federal poverty level. Participants expressed that they need basic housing opportunities and appropriate, accessible health care. Their thoughtful opinions reflected both their hopes for and lack of trust in a project such as the Broadway Corridor.

Building Massing/Connectivity/Parcel Configuration/Street Plan

The participants expressed that their main concern regarding the layout of the project was access to transportation and feeling safe when moving from one place to another. Many of the participants commented that they felt it was important that frequent public transportation be a vital part of the layout and with more frequency. One participant addressed environmental concerns of Superfund sites and contamination.

“What superfund site is it near? There is waste near the river, this building is near one of the biggest toxic locations that haven’t been addressed yet. Who’s building it, who’s funding it? This will have to be voted on won’t it? To control that much land. How many McDonalds and Starbucks will be

allowed to put their marketing in there to fund these projects? So, when this comes, and they put a huge Nike right in the middle, I don't agree with this."

"One of the biggest issues for this will be parking. Or is there gonna be, will there be light rail? Because where this is there will be the train station. If they can use that it might help the fuel problem in the air."

"If they had a couple buses on site to go to weekly grocery shopping and things like that."

"Maybe later service because people who work in the night find it hard to commute, it would be more encouraging to them."

"I agree with more accessible time because some people work night, having security on all public transportation because it's so sketchy. I have a hard time sending my daughter because she was followed once but she has to."

"24-hour TriMet, buses, max. Everything."

Community Center/Open Space/Parks

Many of the participants spoke of parks and open places as their favorite locations in Portland and of nature being an important element of their favorite places. A total of seven participants mentioned parks/open spaces as being their favorite places in Portland, showing their inclination to having nature be an element of the Broadway Corridor Project.

"Rivers, I like nature like the babbling brooks. It's all very calm and peaceful, it's a calming effect."

"Aside from home my favorite place would be the parks, it has ducks and little animals you can feed. I like seeing the animals in their natural habitat. It's calming, it's interaction."

"Sauvie Island for bird watching, but it's hard to get there. The drive is a long way, you have to pay for parking or get a yearly pass."

"The rose garden, I like looking down on the city of Portland and then Mount Hood is right behind."

"Riverfront park or the Willamette river. I used to have sight, so I remember some of what it looks like. I like to listen especially after a long day of school. I like doing homework there, it's calm. I really enjoy places that are a little more calm."

"Rosa Parks, because it's close. With all the flowers, I like smelling the fresh air."

"A human resource center would be very good, child care, and adult-care. Some type of social interaction or get together once a month."

"A community and diversity center where they teach you gardening or about other cultures, child rearing, etiquette. There's so many things they can teach you about self-respect and self-esteem."

"I would like to have a learning facility where we could learn other languages or have social activities."

"Also, it takes a village to raise a child so teaching them how to raise a child, being there for that person. If the mother is not around you step in, involve the whole community."

"I think a community center to help people who lack information and resources or have activities"

that would allow the community to interact and connect with one another.”

“A gathering place.”

“It needs to be integrated as much as with the community as itself. It can’t be just staff. That’s the only way you’re gonna get everybody’s input and have them be involved.”

Commercial Affordability

During the conversation, participants addressed the issue of affordability and how difficult it is to find opportunities to support their families, to live close to resources, and to access professional care. Throughout the focus group there were recurring themes of access to affordability in the participants’ comments. Participants mentioned that they prefer this project to support local and small business that have a personal touch instead of big corporations that are only focused on economic gain.



“Make it a local statement with a human touch instead of commercialism, especially if you’re getting more into a community feeling.”

“Definitely selling me on it more, giving me more information such as who is Prosper Portland and what they do. Because I don’t want to be there to live among people with their super rich apartments, I don’t want to be shoved in as a second thought. I want to see a local coffee shop instead of a Starbucks. Their costs are gonna be pushed down to me.”

Housing

Regarding housing, participants expressed the sentiment that existing housing systems do not meet the needs of people with disabilities and that few affordable options support the types of households they require. Participants mentioned that they live, study and work from home, so their housing is where they receive the care they need every day. Participants expressed that they would like to have reasonable accommodation that gives them access to safe spaces where they could move, flourish, and socialize, and aren't segregated from the rest of the community.



Participants leaned toward the idea of public and affordable housing, especially housing that could accommodate their specific needs. Such housing should have enough space to include a living space for parents/caretakers who otherwise must travel to be able to care for their family member/client. Participants expressed that they found it difficult to find housing that would accommodate families/multi-generational families in the same space. They also talked about having the opportunity to own property instead of transitioning from one place to another without being able to consider what the rest of the family needs.

“Enough gas money to be able to travel and help her, she needs someone to check on her a lot. Housing is so far apart, so if we could have better living conditions that would help a lot.”

“Housing for low-income families, they should care about the size of the families such as multi-generational families, enough space for the whole family to live there.”

“I really like the idea of low-income housing. As far as structure wise, safety and transportation is

very important and especially for people who have disabilities. Having some resources, or medical centers, so people will have more access to it and will feel safe if they live there.”

“If there’s going to be public housing, it should be run by property management companies, like Evolve, more local companies not large. Because some of these property managements are getting out of control and it’s time to get some accountability.”

While participants were interested in the idea of public housing, concerns about the homeless problem in Portland and to security created hesitation/reluctance towards the project and funding the project for some.

“The homeless affects the situation, it affects businesses. Yeah I’m on my guard, there’s always so many strange people and things going on. It used [to] be that you could easily walk around.”

“Why can’t they use this money to build a home, to take some of the homeless people off the street, more than a shelter but a home? If I ever won the lottery I would build something nice for the homeless. I’m seeing tents by the freeway, you see them everywhere. For two years I was homeless, so I sympathize, and I understand them. It’s not fun being out there in the wind and the rain. It’s very hurtful, America is supposed to be so great, but we don’t take care of those at home.”

Tenants

Participants expressed that they believe that people with disabilities and their caretakers should have access to opportunities that enable them to achieve all that they’re capable of. They saw the need to provide all tenants not just with housing but with the resources they need to thrive, to help them to become more active members of their communities. The most popular concept among

the participants was the idea for a community center as an anchor of the project. They mentioned that they envisioned the Broadway Corridor Project as a pivotal area where they would be able to enrich their lives, socialize, participate in recreational and educational activities to learn new skills and trades, get information for resources, and receive support for all ages.

“It would need to have beneficial and productive resources; whatever type of family or situation someone is in they can get help from the right people. A universal place that offers all resources so that people only have to go to one place.”

“Having parks or places for families, because downtown doesn’t have any places for kids to go. A leisure area. Access to TriMet, and affordable housing.”

Workforce

When asked what their most important need was at the moment, more than a third of the participants mentioned access to employment. Despite significant improvements in access to education, participants expressed that they still face barriers to the opportunities they need to succeed in the workforce and to access good jobs.

“Finances, I was involved in an accident a year ago and so I haven’t worked since then. I’m a grandmother and a mother so it’s hard to take care of my family and then the bills.”

“I want to add little bit on that as far as employment, especially people with disabilities, because there’s stereotypes that we’re not as capable. We may do things a little bit differently but we’re still



able to do it.”

When asked who would be willing to work downtown, more than half of participants expressed reluctance or disinterest due to their experience of not feeling safe in moving in downtown spaces (buildings, parks, streets) and the challenge of parking.

“If we had a place to park without parking.”

“Due to the experience I have with my job, working in Portland is very difficult because we have to pay for parking and then there’s only 2- or 3-hour parking which is very difficult for me because I work 8 hours and I have to keep moving the cars. So, parking is very complicated. And for 8 hours it costs \$14 to park.”

Conclusion & Recommendations

This was a successful exercise since it reached the two main goals of the engagement plan:

1. to create deep and intentional awareness of the Broadway Corridor Project throughout Portland, particularly among those who are traditionally disengaged residents; and,
2. to authentically and successfully engage target audiences so they feel empowered to share input and express their opinion and thus maximize the project's community benefits.

Individuals with disabilities experience great inequalities and are more likely to experience poverty and other forms of social exclusion. They are also less likely to be employed or have access to an education; they face additional challenges in accessing essential services, such as health care, education or affordable housing.

This group consisted primarily of individuals who rarely visited downtown, due to lack of transportation access. This lack of visitation was also due to safety concerns, personal safety, and safety in public locations, buildings, etc. Only two participants said they visited downtown frequently because they are either commuting to school or work; six participants said they went downtown once or twice a week. Five participants said they never went downtown if they could avoid it. For this group it was important that they felt supported and that they could easily access resources that they needed to participate further in the process. It was important that they felt like they were being heard and not just listened to.

This group needs to see actions being taken and see people being held accountable. Action and accountability are key factors for this group to feel included. The Broadway Corridor Project should go beyond just adding wheelchair ramps. People with disabilities have the right to true equality.

They demonstrate resilience and vibrancy because despite the many obstacles they encounter in their daily lives they are working, learning, and fighting to create a better life for themselves, their loved ones, and their communities. This is the only minority group that anyone can join (and will) at any time due to an accident, illness, or aging.

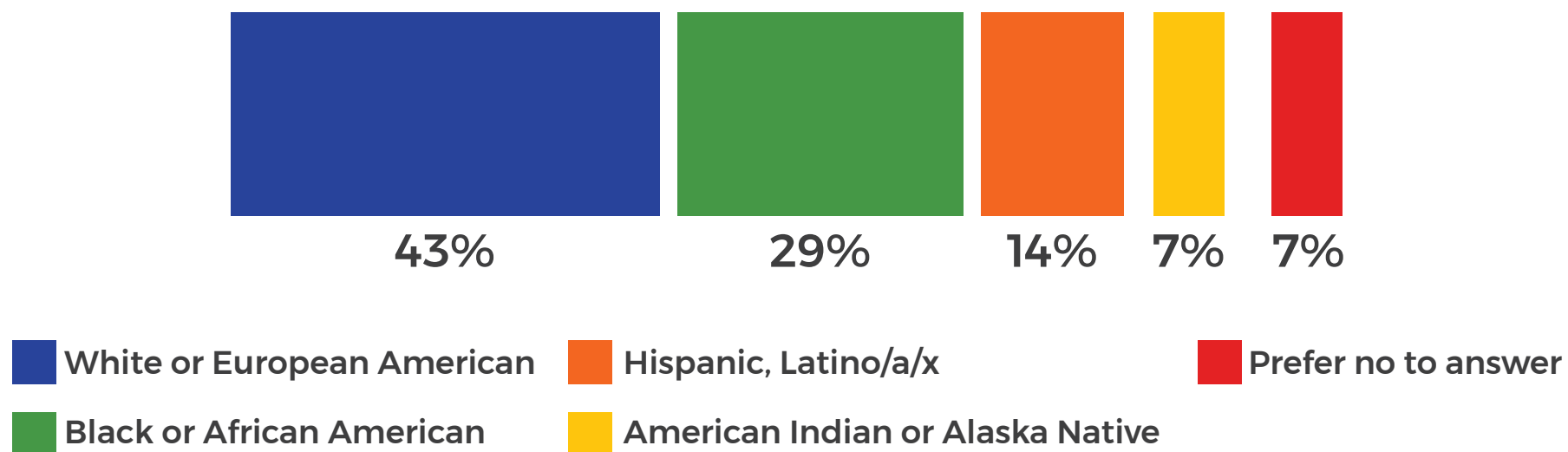
Our recommendations to continue engaging with these groups and establish trust are:

- Convince with testimonials – People like to hear other people’s opinions as it reaffirms their own. If you can show that individuals are happy with your project and enjoying the benefits, it’s a sign that it’s worthy of trust.
- We encourage the project owners of the Broadway Corridor to examine their own attitudes toward people with disabilities and plan to include a process that partners with, listens, and learn from people with disabilities for this project.
- Make sure universal design is implemented in the Broadway Corridor Project to make the project accessible and easier to navigate with a range of interfaces, having communication and transportation choices for all, where all the spaces enhance accessibility, offer a safe connectivity between the building blocks, and key precinct facilities and amenities.
- Develop a statement in the Broadway Corridor’s strategic plan that clearly defines and identifies people with disabilities as equal and valuable members of the Broadway Corridor Project and engagement process.
- Establish and enforce a specific percentage of people with disabilities for the project’s workforce and engagement process.
- Communicate, inform, and educate stakeholders on how vital it is to hire and give opportunities to people with disabilities as inclusion must extend to all.
- Commit to working with disability groups that can identify the lack of access and other key issues in the design of the Broadway Corridor Project.

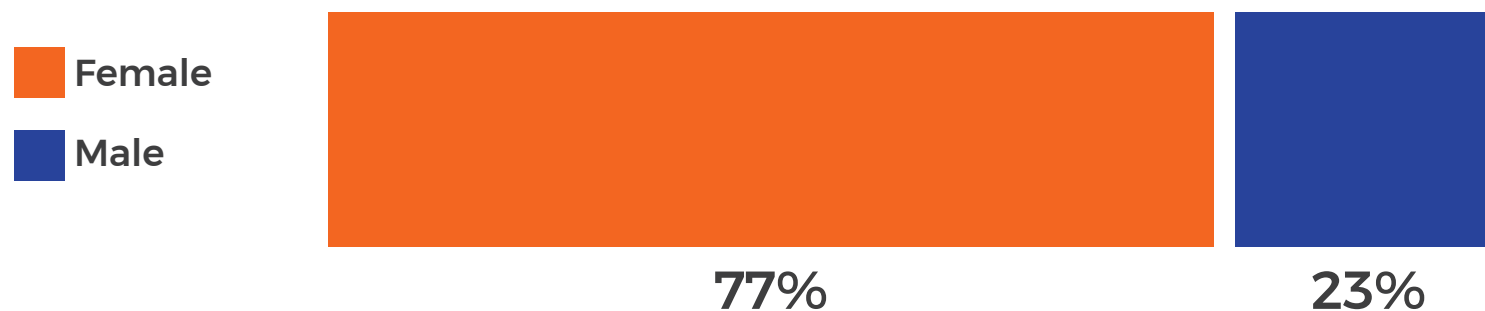
- See people with disabilities as resources for implementing and creating a truly inclusive process and space.
- Integrate into the Broadway Corridor Project an approach to house people with disabilities as well as their needs on design and space.
- Consider creating unique financial opportunities for families that are interested in ownership of the Broadway Corridor and educate and prepare them to be ready for the opportunity.
- Conduct further research on:
 - What are the best ways to provide a sustainable process of resources for people with disabilities.
 - What kind of jobs could be available for them.
 - Which buildings are in the Broadway Corridor's proposed area or aren't safe for them and in turn what makes them feel safe as well as what specifics are not welcoming or safe for them.
 - Define what safety means for people with disabilities.
 - The gap between the unemployment rate of people with disabilities and people without disabilities in all sectors, and ways to tackle this problem within the Broadway Corridor Project.
 - Benefits for businesses to hire people with disabilities.

Appendix

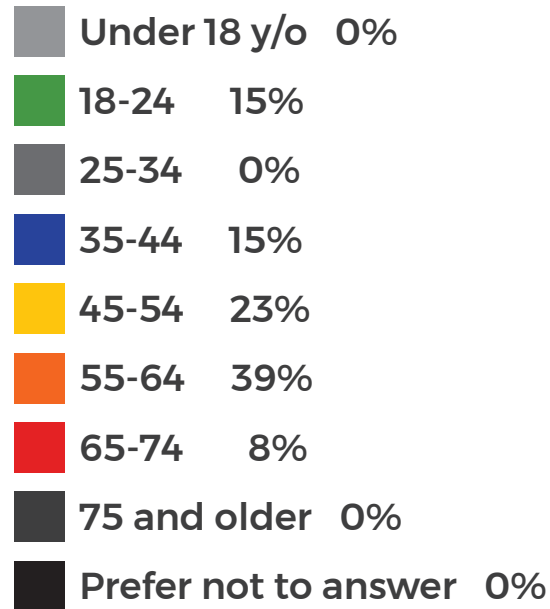
1. When asked to identify your racial or ethnic identity, how do you identify?



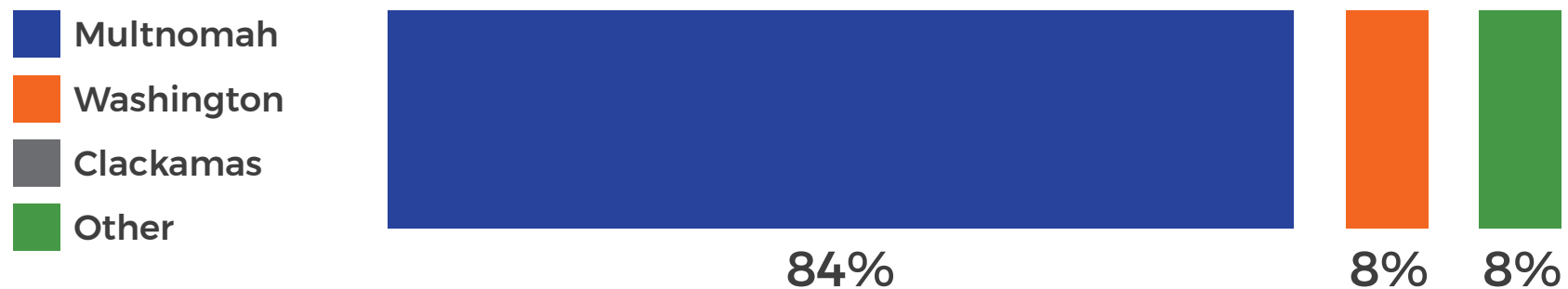
2. How do you describe your gender?



3. Which of the following ranges includes your age?



4. What county do you live?



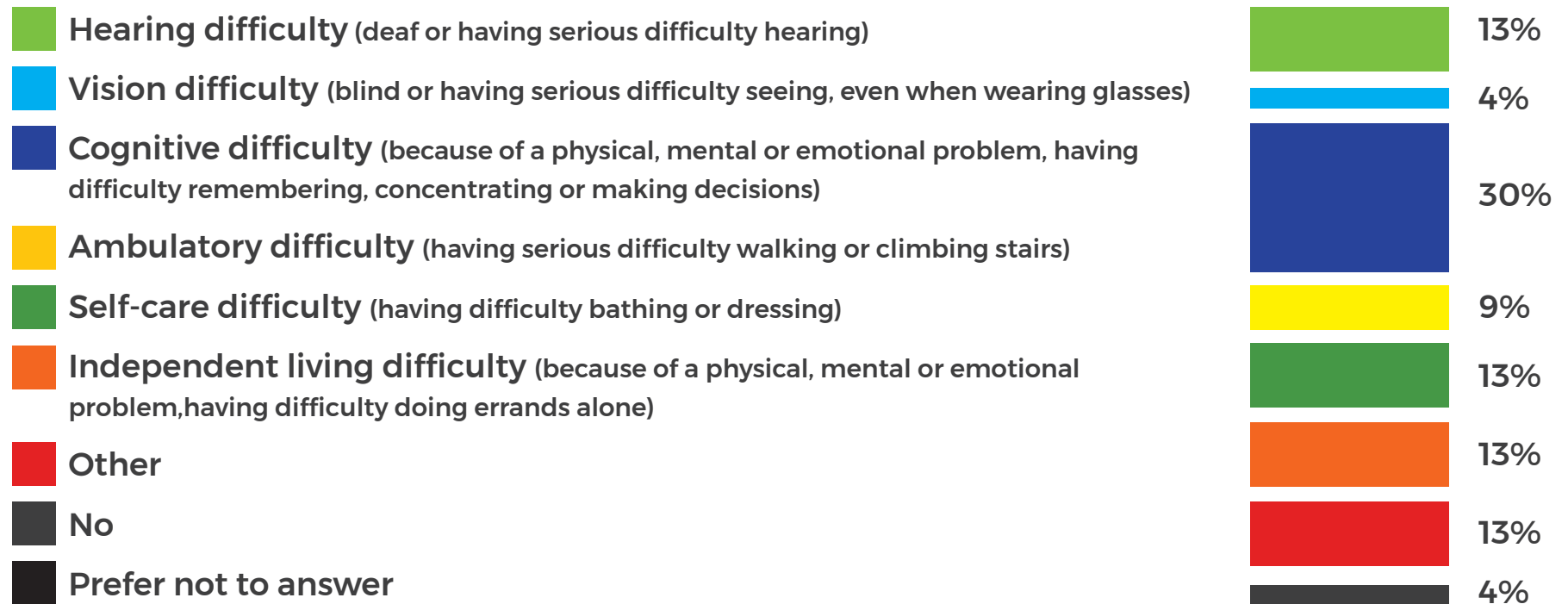
5. What is your zip code?

Zip Code	Percentage
97227	22%
97233	14%
97230	8%
97078	8%
97305	8%
97211	8%
97266	8%
97203	8%
97236	8%
97202	8%

6. Which best represents your household annual income before taxes?

Income	Percentage
Less than \$10,000	46%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	23%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	8%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	15%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0%
\$150,000 or more	0%
Don't know/ Prefer not to answer	8%

7. Do you live with a disability?



8. Are you interested in participating in future research projects (focus groups, surveys)?

