



HISTORIC WESTSIDE MUSEUM DISCOVERY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MISSION

The goal of this project is to conduct research on the types, use, and desires for a museum that authentically represents and includes Las Vegas, Nevada’s Historic Westside community. This information will provide clarification of the community’s language, values, self-esteem, economic power and sense of justice. Implementing these variables as forms of currency into policy, infrastructure, and programs developed for and by the community will strengthen the sustainability of the museum by increasing the value of the appeal to all audiences.

The goal of this work is to assess the sentiments, desires, and capacity to plan for a museum in the Westside community. The intent of the museum was initially ideated in the HUNDRED Plan¹ with specific mention to a local initiative, the Westside African American History and Culture Museum. The City of Las Vegas seeks to include and potentially expand the efforts to articulate, preserve, and celebrate the past, present and future of the Black/African American journey in Las Vegas and across the state of Nevada.

Our team was tasked to a) identify the community’s key stakeholders, b) conduct two community meetings that address information about museums, and c) conduct an area-wide survey to confirm desires, capacity, and preferences.

The City of Las Vegas’ mission for this work was three-pronged. It was to a) respond with rapid action to the community’s call for more inclusive and authentic representation in addressing the work moving forward, b) identify a baseline of sentiments, desires, and capacity for a museum focused on the African American narrative in Las Vegas, and c) to provide a safe space to invite all stakeholders important to this work to “be in the room” in a consistent way that allows time and space to unify voices.

¹ <https://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/Government/Initiatives/Hundred-Plan>



VISION

The vision for this work seeks to create a world class museum that authentically represents the Black/African American people that migrated to Nevada, Las Vegas and the Historic Westside from historical, artistic, and entrepreneurial perspectives. This Museum will attract a new base of visitors and the 40M+ people who already visit Las Vegas through interactive and immersive experiences and stories that reflect the courage, resilience, and ingenuity of the African American community across the state and their impact on the country and the world.

VALUES

This assessment is rooted in a method that views communities as asset-rich, and identifies shared language and values prior to investigation of qualitative and quantitative data. The values of the City of Las Vegas and the community they serve (the Historic Westside) for the HUNDRED Plan are:

- Synergy in leadership
- Community-led planning
- Civic-led investment
- Partnerships

GOALS

- Test the feasibility and interest of the Historic Westside community to anchor an African American Museum
- Conduct preliminary interviews to identify a baseline of support
- Secure ambassadors to promote + invite people that care about the Historic Westside community to attend the community meeting
- Have 50 or more people attend community meetings 1 and 2
- Receive responses from 80 respondents to the public survey (4,000 residents in the focus area)

PROCESS

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

When people can clearly articulate their values, they can better quantify their value. The FordMomentum! team pollinates communications strategies that include community development and restoration, environmentalism, public health, behavioral economics, transportation and leadership. FM! assesses community values based on a five-pillar methodology, Standard of LOVE (STOLO): Literacy, Values, Self-Esteem, Economic Power, and Justice. These pillars provide direction for communicators to create dynamic opportunities for individual and community reflection, connection, and sustainable growth.



Service to others isn't about you; it's about others. STOLO helps us to give people what they want. How do you or they know what they want? Topics like safe, affordable housing, seamless transportation, equitable access to healthcare, education, and jobs are sensitive to communities that have undergone trauma. The first step is to tell them who we are so they can decide if they trust us enough to tell us about their innermost concerns, needs, and dreams. Interpersonal conversations with community stakeholders offered a respectful and safe opportunity for dialogue about the assessment's mission, vision and goals.

The communications strategy maximized efficiency and built trust because we were able to provide clear expectations that reflected the community's core values. FM! conducted 25 interviews with both City of Las Vegas staff (8) and residents (17) to extrapolate the language and values data.

PRODUCTS

The qualitative data informed what images, colloquial words, and activities we used to build communications assets intended to attract and engage participants to join a community meeting and take the survey. The communications assets produced were a community tailored presentation intended to learn about museum types, analyze community assets, and consider how to expand on the existing cultural assets in the community. The presentation tethered to a survey that captured the quantitative data from the community.

We found an opportunity to extend the value of the museum assessment work by developing a communications campaign that could be used throughout the entire HUNDRED Plan initiative. The campaign centers the community's values and the people who carry them authentically. It also provides a bridge to rebuild trust between the city and the community co-endorsing shared values. The campaign's values are as follows:

- Creating safe, trusted opportunities to have dialogue & discover independence in truth; wherever it leads us.
- Elevating the value (worth) and impact of the community's desire and right to free assembly.
- Evidence-based solutions informed by community-led values of worth, equity, access, and well-being.
- Amplify the voice of the culture bearers in the community while also inviting more folks to join in cultural preservation.
- Understanding and acknowledging the historical causes for social, economic, and environmental inequities we are working to solve today.
- Practicing new ways to discover and cultivate *more options for the arts and culture scene in Westside*, without eliminating or devaluing existing assets.
- Exploiting current access and control of tools and resources to attract and retain necessary investments to accomplish the overall goal of an anchor museum in the Historic Westside.



RESULTS

QUALITATIVE

The interviews with stakeholders provided elements that informed language, values, creative asset development for promotion and the survey. The group of interviewed people reviewed in this assessment were referred by residents, business owners and the City of Las Vegas. All initial interviews conducted by FordMomentum! were executed with intent to query the interviewee about their perspectives.

A set of standard questions was developed to establish a baseline of consistency, trust, and data. Leading, encouraging, or influencing the interviewee regarding anything outside of the intended scope of organized questions is considered unethical and is prohibited. Thus, all persons interviewed are anonymous and were not asked their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or the status of their physical ability. On multiple occasions, if an explanatory comment was made about a standard survey question, an additional relevant question was asked for potential exploration of an anecdotally larger issue (often related to the HUNDRED Plan).

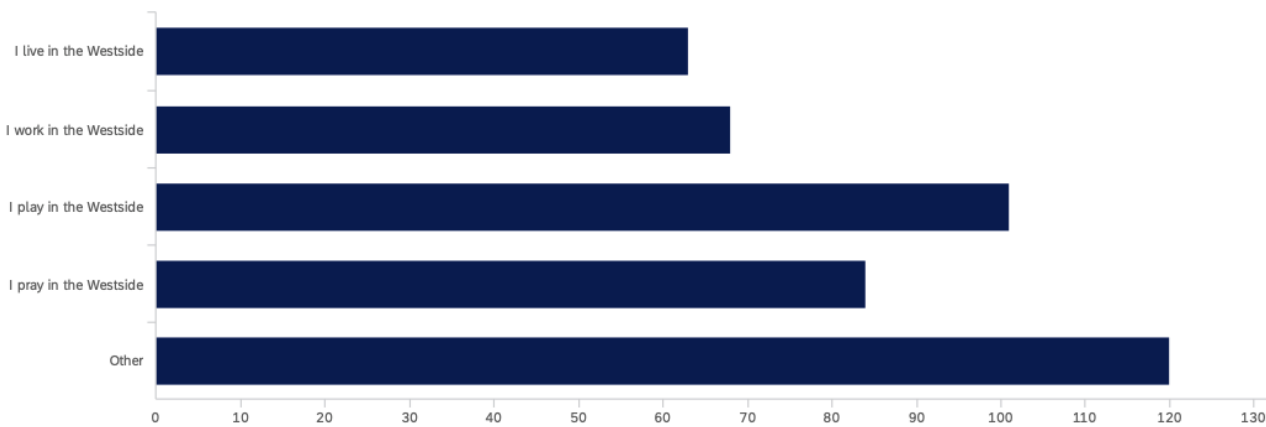


QUANTITATIVE

The survey was intended to validate the understanding, language, context and desires of a museum for Las Vegas (Westside) residents. The focus area is the Historic Westside community's 4,000 residents and 20,000+ visitors and employees. The numerical goal was to capture a minimum of 80 survey respondents; 248 completed the survey in full from August 24, 2021 and September 17, 2021.

Qualtrics is a nationally recognized and trusted research software that supports automated analytics and visualization in a simple way. The 12 question survey was hosted in English, but had the option to be translated into other languages, including Spanish.

Q1: Select all that apply to you in the Westside community:

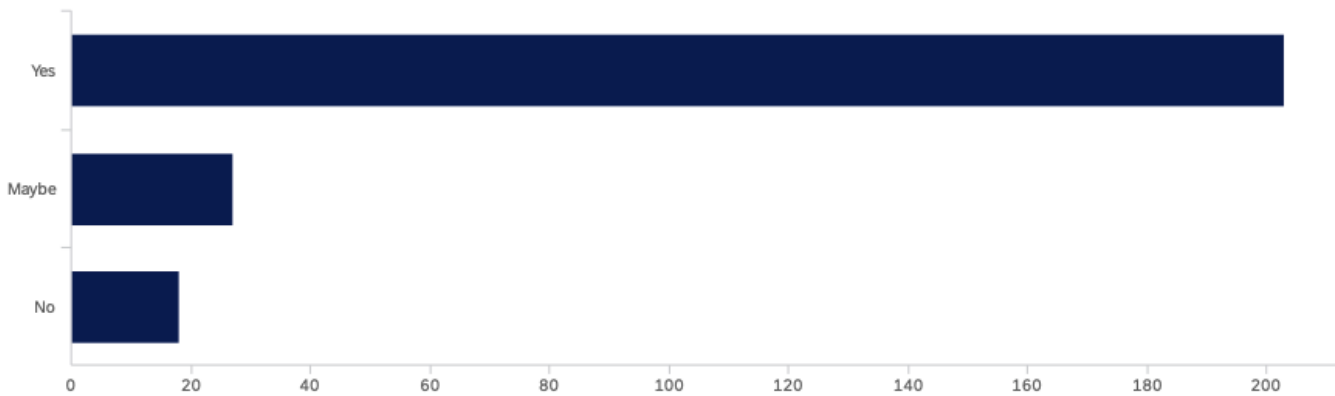


We wanted to gain insight into the relationship between the respondent and the Westside community. The respondents reported:

- 14% live in the Westside
- 15% work in the Westside
- 23% play in the Westside
- 19% pray in the Westside



Q2: Are you familiar with the rich history of the Black/African American community in the historic Westside?



The focus of the work is to identify the feasibility of a Black/African American museum in the Westside. Thus, it was important to confirm whether or not respondents were familiar with the ethnic importance of the history, geography, and assets of the community.

Respondents reported that they were mostly familiar with the Historic Westside (81%).

We asked them what they valued most about the Historic Westside community in a follow up question. A more generic question about historic neighborhoods was presented to those who were not familiar with the Westside's history.

Q3: What do you value most about the Historic Westside neighborhood?

This question was asked if the respondent answered "yes" to the previous question, "Are you familiar with the rich history of the Black/African American community in the historic Westside?"

The responses were categorized into 4 core themes:

Economic access (21)

Infrastructure (59)

Geography (46)

Human resources/assets (145)

Noteworthy comments related to each theme are below:



- **Geography:** Its rich history adds depth to the Las Vegas story. So many Black pioneers in Las Vegas, and in the country more broadly, were a part of the Westside.
- **Economic Access:** The Historic Westside neighborhood is more valuable than you could ever imagine. Not only is it financial security for people like myself (providing a place for work), but also a stable place for parents and a learning space for Black and brown youngsters.
- **Human resources/assets:** It's rich history and resilience in spite of oppression and racism. That this community is the genesis of the success of so many. That its story is indicative of the strength of Black people and our struggle for freedom, recognition and "place" in this country.
- **Infrastructure:** I value having recreation and cultural centers in a neighborhood that values/represents and understands the importance of my African American voice.

Q4: What do you value most about historic neighborhoods you've lived in or visited?

This question was asked if the respondent answered "no" to the previous question, "Are you familiar with the rich history of the Black/African American community in the historic Westside?"

The responses were categorized into 4 core themes:

Economic access (2)

Infrastructure (9)

Geography (11)

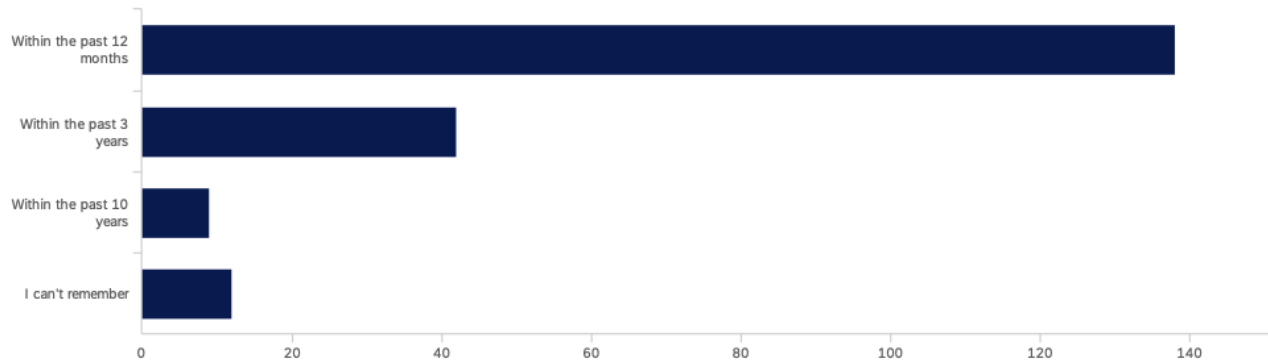
Human resources/assets (26)

Noteworthy comments related to each theme are below:

- **Geography:** The physical and social reminders of the history and culture of the area and those who settled &/or developed the area...Museums and Visitor Centers offer us all opportunities to explore how we are the same, and how we differ from others. They help us to discover ways to understand our world and history in context with our present lives and perspectives. They can encourage us to continue to be socially connected, as well as helping us to want to be active in the futures that we can be a part of building.
- **Economic Access:** The preservation of historical significance. Growth and businesses that showcase the modern-ness of the community.
- **Human resources/assets:** The culture that surrounds the neighborhoods as well as learning about the stories of the people who lived there.
- **Infrastructure:** Buildings that have survived (and photos).



Q5: When was the last time you visited a museum, gallery, or other cultural space?



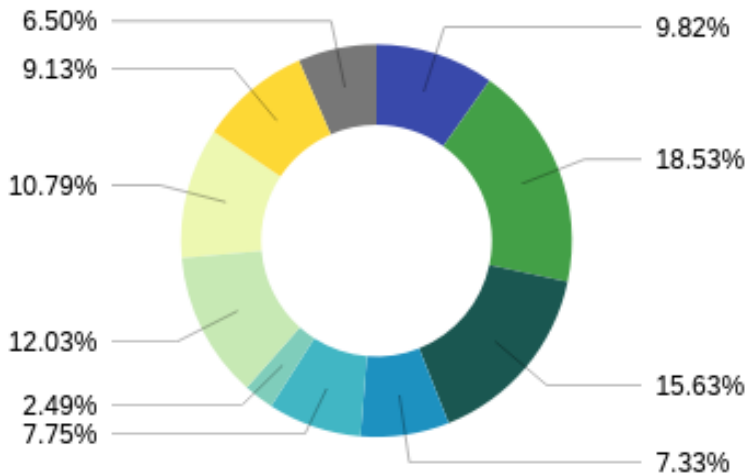
The appetite for museum exploration and participation was strong. More than half of the respondents visited a museum, gallery or cultural space within the past 12 months; a noteworthy percentage considering the restrictions imposed during COVID19. This might offer insight into how museums edited access and content to be more inclusive during the pandemic. Another consideration is how respondents edited their habits, explorations and spending during COVID19.

- Nearly 69% of respondents have visited a museum, gallery, or cultural space within the past 12 months.
- 21% of respondents attended one of the locations within the past 3 years.
- Nearly 10% of the respondents haven't attended a museum, gallery or cultural space in 10 years or more.



Q6: Have you visited any of the museums below?

- Clark County Museum, Henderson, NV
- DISCOVERY Children's Museum
- Las Vegas Natural History Museum
- Left of Center Gallery
- Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art at UNLV
- Metropolitan Gallery of Las Vegas
- The Mob Museum: National Museum of Organized Crime & Law Enforcement
- Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas
- Walker African-American Museum & Research Center
- Other



Local Museum visitorship amongst the respondents varies. The top 3 attended were:

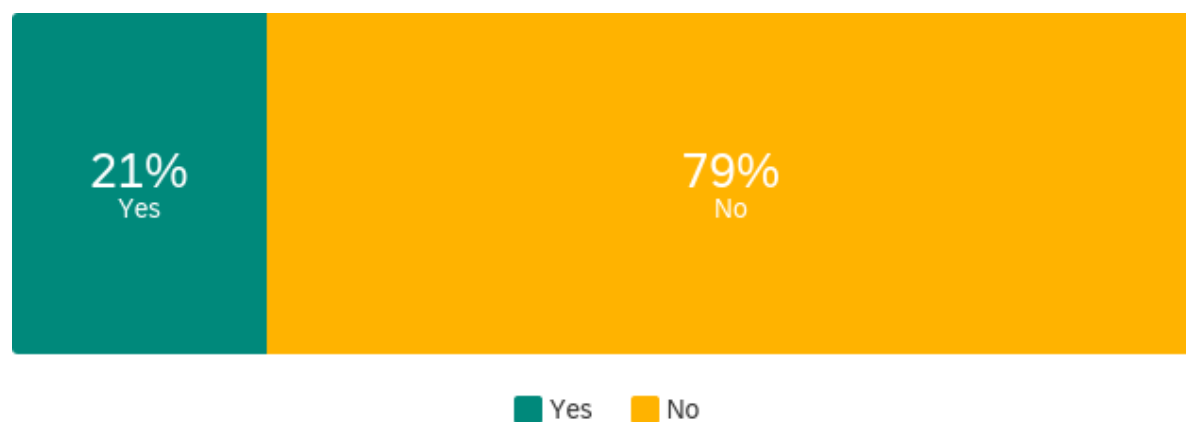
- 18% DISCOVERY Children's Museum
- 15% Las Vegas Natural History Museum
- 12% The Mob Museum: National Museum of Organized Crime & Law Enforcement



Other noteworthy locations the respondents listed are:

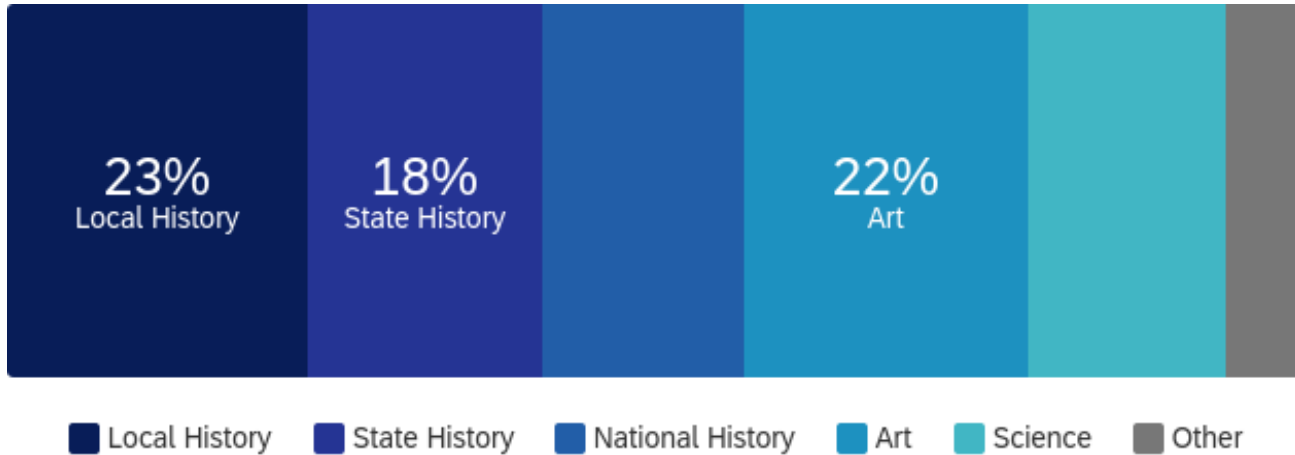
- The Neon Museum
- Mrs. Helen Toland's Home (Museum)
- The Harrison House
- The Atomic Museum
- The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAC/Smithsonian)
- Old Mormon Fort State Historic Park
- Boulder City/Hoover Dam Museum
- Lost City Museum
- Western Folklife Center
- Searchlight History Museum
- Tonopah Historic Mining Park
- Goldwell Open Air Museum
- Virgin Valley Heritage Museum
- Atomic Testing Museum
- Nevada Northern Railway Museum
- Hispanic Museum of Nevada
- Burlesque Hall of Fame

Q7: Do you have a membership to a museum?





Q8: I am interested in these content areas at museums:



The respondents were relatively mixed in their content desires.

- 23% - Local history
- 22% - Art
- 18% - State history
- 15% - National History
- 15% - Science

Other topics respondents listed included:

- Black history
- Culture & anthropology focused on African Americans, indigenous people, women and Hispanics across the valley
- Oral history
- Natural or environmental history
- Manuscript collections
- Urbanism and planning
- Interactive educational opportunities of all ages.
- Restaurant, multimedia presentations, theater and outdoor amphitheater



Q9: I would like to see more _____ at museums:

The respondents provided clear direction on their desire for a museum that offers an authentic perspective of Black/African American history through interactive displays, art, entertainment, and collaborations with other organizations.

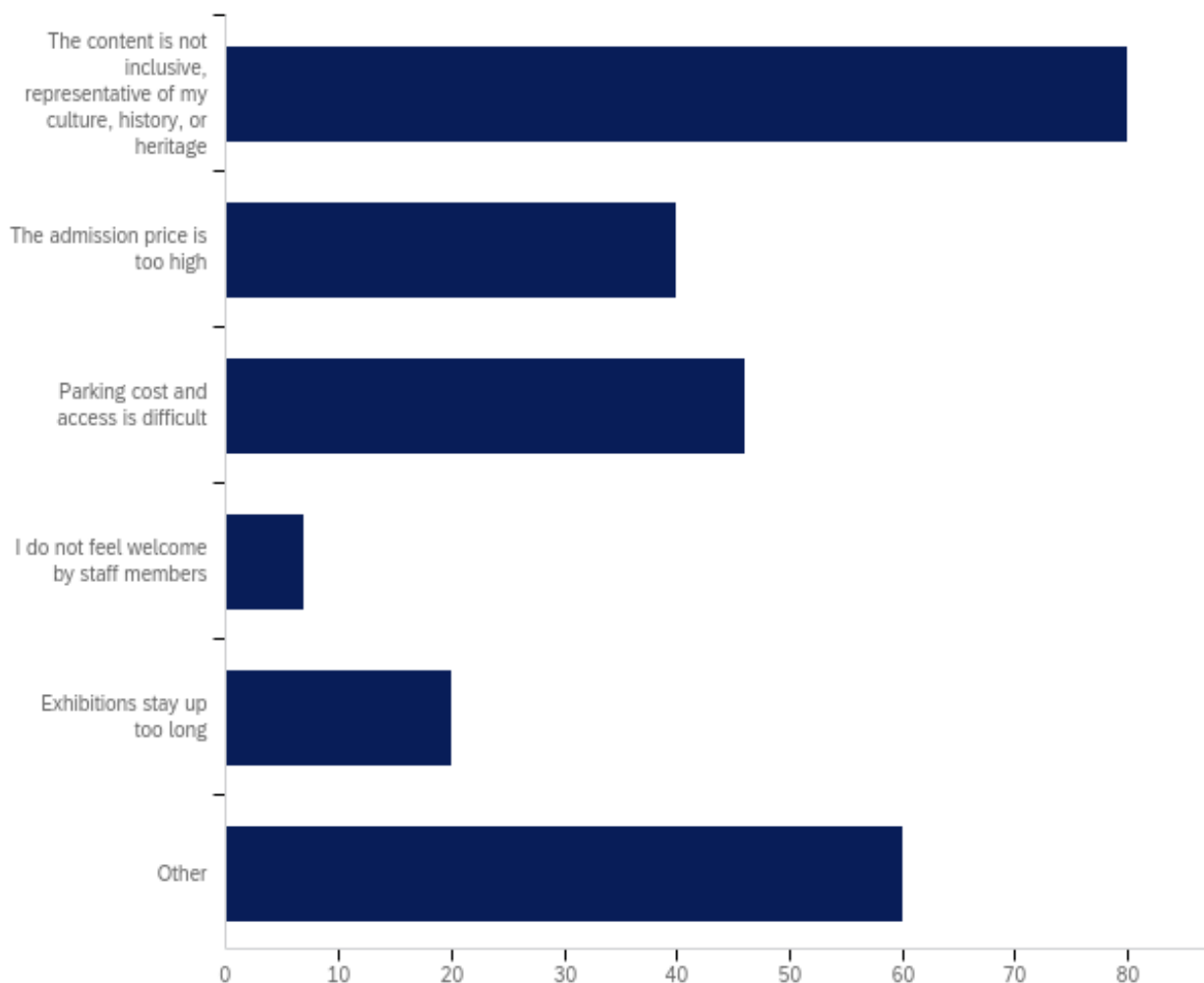
- **History:** More of my culture, history, and journey. How African-American History has impacted State History, US History, and the Global Story. How African-American Culture & History impacts our State, Country, and Global Community, looking towards the future in all areas of world thought, community, fashion, spirituality, cuisine, sports, academia, arts, and innovation.
- **Interactive displays:** Culturally Historic and technology museums based on displaying both the past and the future aspirations and inspirations of Black people.
- **Interactive displays:** Interactive features that one can bring their backgrounds, experiences, or questions about what they are experiencing, to the experience. - A video &/or audio recording feature that visitors can use to record their impressions, perspectives, or comments about what was good or not good about their experience there. - More information about how to continue to enrich your experiences from your visit, after you leave the site (i.e.: information about other museums, cultural centers, libraries, etc. that can be explored, either in-person or online, to continue the social and educational experiences -- particularly other local & regional opportunities that might be lesser known or newly developed).
- **Art:** I really want to see more people that look like me. I would love to see more pottery and abstract art. I would also like to see art that reflects the times. Artists like Faith Ringgold reflect what is going on politically in our communities.
- **Entertainment:** Showings of local people in various career areas; such as backstage professionals, to include wardrobe and technicians who worked on the Las Vegas Strip.
- **Entertainment:** Interviews, great tour guides, and more pictures and items. I would like to see a lot of events too.
- **Collaborations:** Emphasis and easy public access for people to learn about the particular history the museum showcases. Not everyone is able to access databases either due to lack of knowledge or technical abilities.
- **Collaborations:** Young people and tours; information to be given as learning materials.

Other topics respondents addressed were:

- Talk backs
- Culturally inclusive narratives that address indigenous/Native American and Hispanic history and art
- STEM inclusion and collaboration with other museums in the valley.



Q10: What keeps you from visiting certain museums?



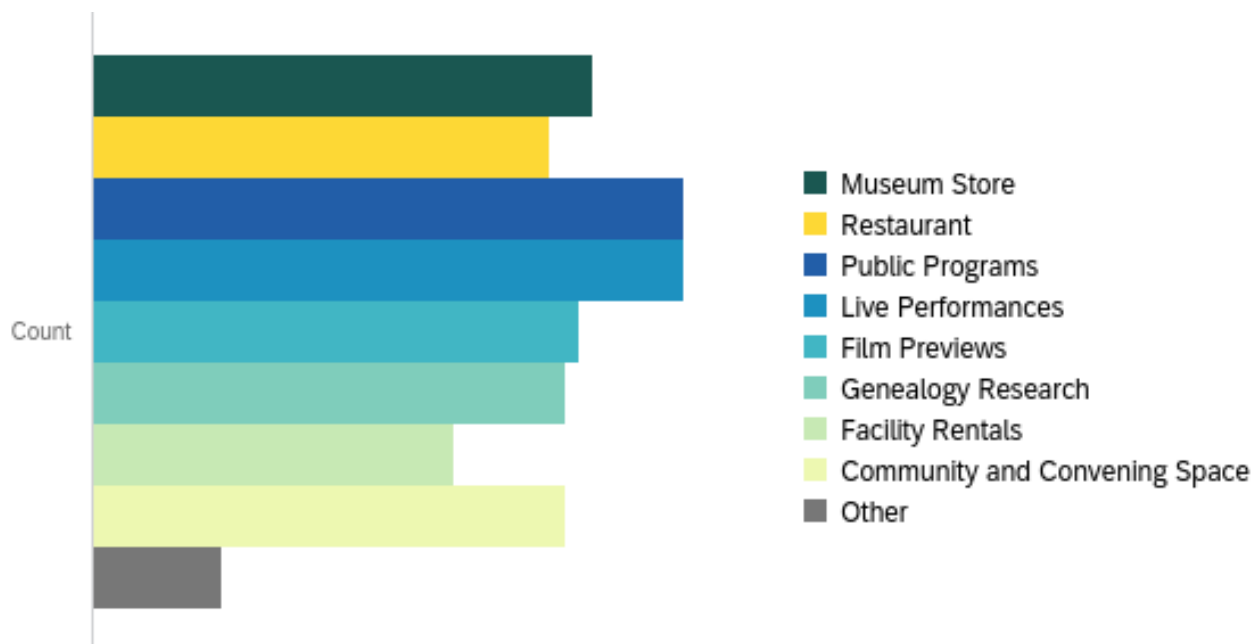
The respondents rated reasons they don't visit museums as follows:

- 32% - Content is not inclusive, representative of my culture, history, or heritage
- 24% - Other (see notes below for further detail)
- 18% - Parking cost and access is difficult
- 16% - The admission price is too high
- 8% - Exhibitions stay up too long
- 3% - I do not feel welcome by staff members



- **OTHER: 24% of respondents listed additional barriers:**
 - COVID19
 - Inaccessible hours of operation
 - Lack of awareness and inconsistent communication
 - The space doesn't feel warm or welcoming

Q11: What kind of activities and services would you like to see at the Historic Westside museum?



The respondent's desires for activities and services are in direct contrast to what they expressed they did not want (Q10).

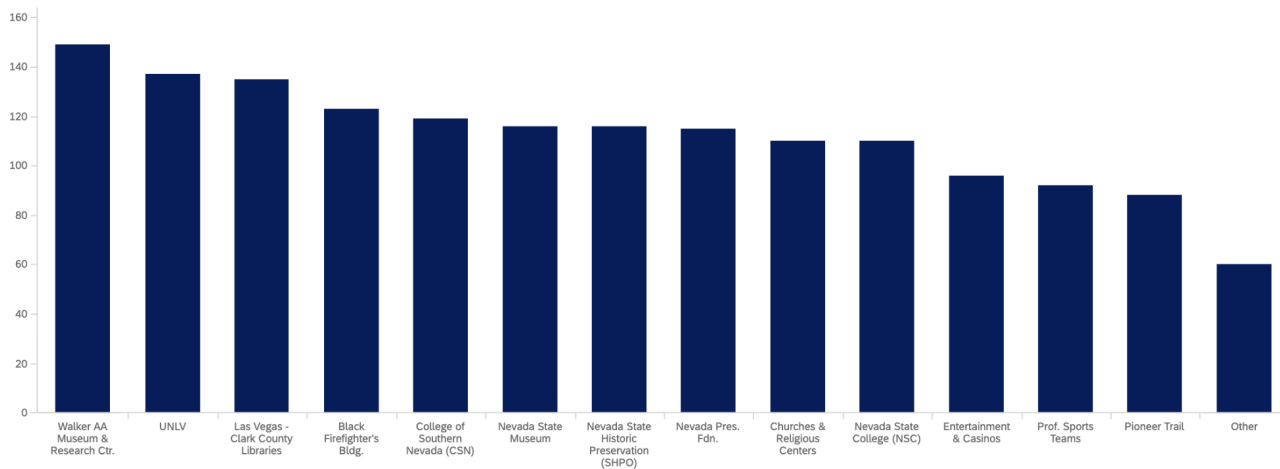
- 14% Live performances
- 14% Public programs
- 12% Museum store (for locally sourced merchandise)
- 11% Film previews
- 11% Genealogy research
- 11% Community and convening space
- 11% Restaurant



Other noteworthy desires include:

- A worship area for all religions
- Art and academic curriculum along with some of the exhibits

Q12: It is important for museums to have partnerships and collaborations with other cultural and historic institutions. Potential partners with this Museum:



Respondents value partnerships with other organizations equitably.

- 10% - Walker AA Museum and Research Center
- 9% - UNLV
- 9% - Clark County Libraries
- 7% - Black Firefighters Bldg., College of Southern Nevada, Nevada State Museum, Nevada Preservation Foundation, Churches and religious centers, and Nevada State College