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Greater Holland Area Arts and Culture Survey, 2005

Community Research Institute-Johnson Center

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Greater Holland Area Arts and Culture Survey

Findings



Prepared for the

Holland Cultural Planning Committee

January 2005

Community Research Institute®

Supporting Community Improvement Through Research and Data Sharing



DOROTHY A. JOHNSON CENTER FOR PHILANTHROPY AND NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

Executive Summary



Under the Cool Cities Initiative, economic growth and development at the city and regional level will be greatly influenced by knowledge workers and urban pioneers aged somewhere between 24 – 35 years. But how does a city attract and retain this subpopulation?

In 2004, the Holland Cultural Planning Committee sought to begin answering this question by commissioning the Community Research Institute at Grand Valley State University to ask a group called the Holland Young Professionals about their current use of arts and culture services and respective needs.

True to their organization's name, the respondent group was highly 'professional' with 92% of the survey sample having completed a bachelor's or postgraduate degree and 'young' with 85% aged between 24 – 35 years. In addition, 96% of the respondents lived in the greater Holland area at the time of this survey; making the input from this concentrated group of knowledge workers pertinent to the focus of this study.

While some of the respondents had always lived in the greater Holland area, others primarily came as a result of a job and/or family members. The most popular reasons for *staying* in the area were work and family. Reasons like community values, outdoor recreation, arts & culture and the climate also played a role in retaining them. Approximately 66% felt the current arts and cultural offerings positively affected the desirability of living in the area and 75% saw them as having a positive impact on the area's economic viability. Almost half (46%) felt the greater Holland area was comparatively better than other places and an additional 6% rated the area as much better.

Every respondent attended an arts and cultural event at least once during the past year and almost half (46%) attended on a monthly basis. Approximately 54% agreed and 12% strongly agreed that the location of the arts and cultural events in the greater Holland area were convenient and easily accessible.

Over the past year surveyed respondents favored the *visual* arts as evidenced by 91% of them having attended a movie theater; followed by the library (85%) and an art gallery (81%). In terms of the *performing* arts, approximately 78% attended a music concert over this past year. Approximately 35% of the respondents disagreed when asked if there was diversity in terms of ethnic representation of the arts and cultural offerings currently available in the greater Holland area while 31% agreed and 29% were neutral.

Over the past year, a large majority (94%) of surveyed respondents showed some

pre-meditation in going to an arts and cultural event; from two days to one month prior to the date of the activity.

Outside of money spent on arts and music purchases, almost half (46%) of the respondents spent \$100 or more in total on arts events over the past twelve months. When asked if arts and cultural activities in the greater Holland area were affordable, 64% of the respondents agreed (4% of which strongly agreed).

Findings from this survey showed that a majority (65%) attended arts activities in small groups of two to four people.

The Internet was the most popular 'first step' when seeking information on upcoming arts and cultural activities in the community for 35% of the survey respondents; followed by newspaper advertisements (30%) and word-of-mouth referral from friends and co-workers (21%). Almost half (48%) of the survey respondents felt the *media* could provide more information about arts and cultural activities.

Approximately 47% of the survey respondents agreed that the greater Holland area offered a wide variety of arts and cultural activities.

These findings can therefore serve as a starting point for dialogue with key stakeholders regarding the types of arts and cultural offerings to provide when trying to attract and retain this subpopulation. In addition, they can be used to strategically target such offerings to this important group of people.

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CRI



The Community Research Institute (CRI) at Grand Valley State University, a partnership between the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership and the Grand Rapids Community Foundation serves West Michigan nonprofit and philanthropic communities. CRI's mission is to assist nonprofit organizations in acquiring information and technical skills necessary to understand the evolving needs of the community; plan programs, solve problems, and measure outcomes.

CRI engages in applied research and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) projects and is a share-house for community data. The CRI web site provides a comprehensive overview of community indicators at www.cridata.org.

Questions about this arts and culture survey may be directed to Janet Winter at 1.616.331.7586 or winterja@gvsu.edu.

Contributing research team: Janet Winter MPA
Mary McDonald Ph.D.
Ruth Terry BA
Chepkoech Kilel B.Ed.

CRI citation: Any reports referencing this project or specific findings of this survey should cite the Community Research Institute at the Johnson Center - Grand Valley State University.

Introduction

In the past few years, select cities and regions throughout the nation have been working to create 'cool cities' as a way to spur economic growth and opportunity. For example, in 2003, and in the grip of a down-turned economy, Governor Granholm of Michigan developed the 'Cool Cities Initiative' (CCI) – a strategy to “revitalize communities, build community spirit, and most importantly retain knowledge workers who were departing Michigan in alarming numbers.”¹ Aged somewhere between 24 – 35 years, these knowledge workers and urban pioneers are seen as a driving force for economic development and growth. But how does a city attract and retain this subpopulation? To address this strategy, cities were invited to form “Local Cool Cities Advisory Groups” (LCCAGs).

One such group, the Holland Cultural Planning Committee, sought to begin answering this question by asking those aged 24- 35 years about their current use of arts and culture services and respective needs. The Holland Cultural Planning Committee is a sub-committee task force convened through the LCCAG and comprised of individuals representing the City Planning and Downtown Development Offices as well as various local arts and culture businesses.

Purpose of the Survey

In October 2004, the Holland Cultural Planning Committee commissioned the Community Research Institute (CRI) at the Johnson Center – Grand Valley State University to survey members of the Holland Young Professionals (HYPSTER) Group. The survey was designed to provide the sub-committee with an understanding of the HYPSTER's perceived use of arts and culture services and needs. With an estimated pool of 200 possible respondents, survey findings would therefore assist the committee in determining what types of arts and culture offerings might best attract those 'knowledge workers' aged 24 – 35 years.

¹ Office of the Governor. Michigan Cool Cities Initial Report. December, 2003. Overview. Greater Holland Area Arts & Culture Survey Findings 2005
CRI at the Johnson Center - GVSU

Methodology

Accessing the Target Population:

The survey was administered in two different formats. The first was via internet access. The survey was individually sent to all Holland Young Professional (HYPSTER) Group members via their group facilitator. CRI provided the facilitator with a written explanation of the survey and the internet link. The facilitator then forwarded this explanation and link to all Holland Young Professional Group members via their email addresses and on the HYPSTER website. Respondents were given the option to forward the link to other respondents to increase overall population sample size and representation. The survey was posted for eight weeks, beginning mid October and ending mid December, 2004. In addition to the internet, the survey was also offered by CRI in hard copy format at the November Holland Young Professionals meeting. Only members who had not taken the survey on-line were encouraged to complete a hard copy.

Target Population Selection:

All Holland Young Professional group members were invited to participate in this survey. The facilitator estimated the size of its group at about 200 (N=200) people; with the potential for additional responses through HYPSTER referral.

Data Gathering Tool:

The survey instrument consisted of approximately 31 multiple choice and text open-end questions. A portion of the multiple choice questions were either agreement or rated scale questions. Demographic questions on gender, age, and education were included. Respondents were not asked to identify themselves.

Data was analyzed using SPSS and excel format.

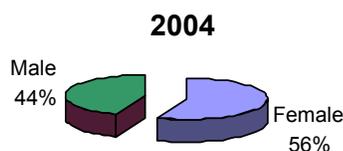
Findings: The Respondents

In total, forty-nine (49) surveys were completed. Since the on-line survey had the capacity to be forwarded to non-members of the Holland Young Professionals Group and CRI purposively did not track respondent identity, calculating the survey response rate (total number of actual responses/total number of possible responses) would have been inaccurate in determining a HYPSTER response rate.

While the actual number of participants was much less than anticipated, of them approximately **85% fell between the ages of 24 – 35 years**; while 8% were aged below 24 years and 6% were between 36 – 44 years. Likewise, **96% of the respondent population lived in the greater Holland area at the time of this survey**. In keeping with the sub-committees' focus to primarily understand the arts & cultural utilization and needs of those aged 24 – 35 years living locally, the findings of this survey offer critical insight in beginning dialogue with other key stakeholders in attracting and keeping community members who will drive economic growth and development.

**Exhibit 1:
Respondent Population by Gender**

Other demographic findings showed the respondent population was 44% male and 56% female (Exhibit 1).



N= 48

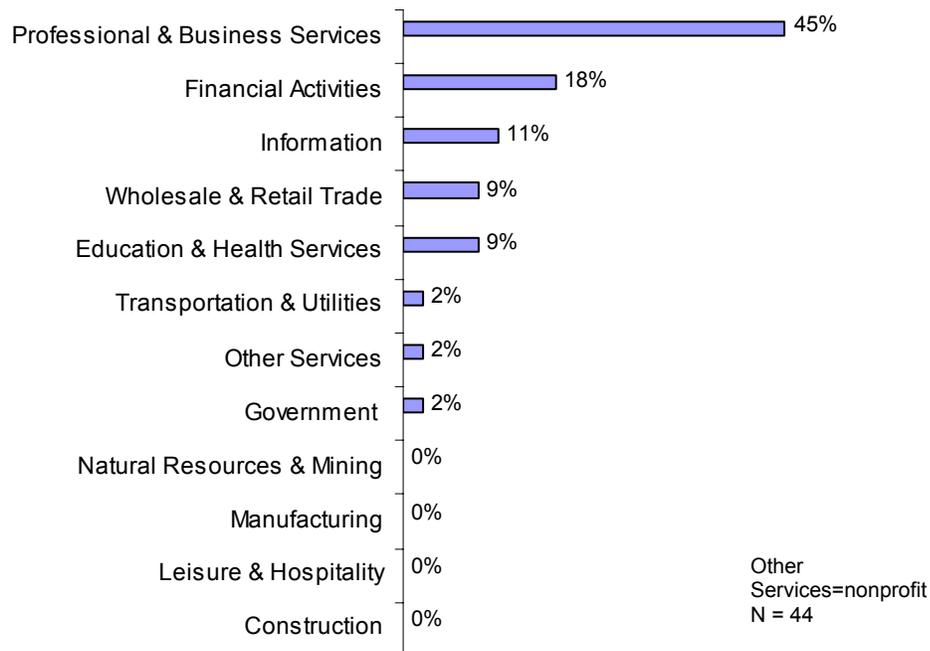
Research indicates a direct correlation between educational attainment and participation in the arts.² In 2002, 85% of Michigan residents had at least a high school education and 24% had a bachelor's degree or higher.³ **Approximately 92% of the respondents in this survey had completed a bachelor's or postgraduate degree.** (For demographic charts see Appendix I) In fact, almost half (45%) of the respondents were involved in professional and business services, which is not surprising based on the population targeted by this survey.⁴ Financial activities, which included accounting and banking, were the second most frequent job choice given by survey respondents at 18%. Natural resources and mining, manufacturing, hospitality, and construction sectors were not represented (Exhibit 2).

² National Endowment for the Arts. (July, 2003). 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts. Retrieved January 12, 2005. p. 6 at www.nea.gov/pub/notes/81-pdf.

³ Mizell, Lee. *Geography and Public Participation in the Arts: Ten States*. Prepared for the National Endowment for the Arts, 2004, updated 2005, pg 31.

⁴ Industry categories developed by the North American Industry Classification System.

Exhibit 2 – Current Occupation by Industry

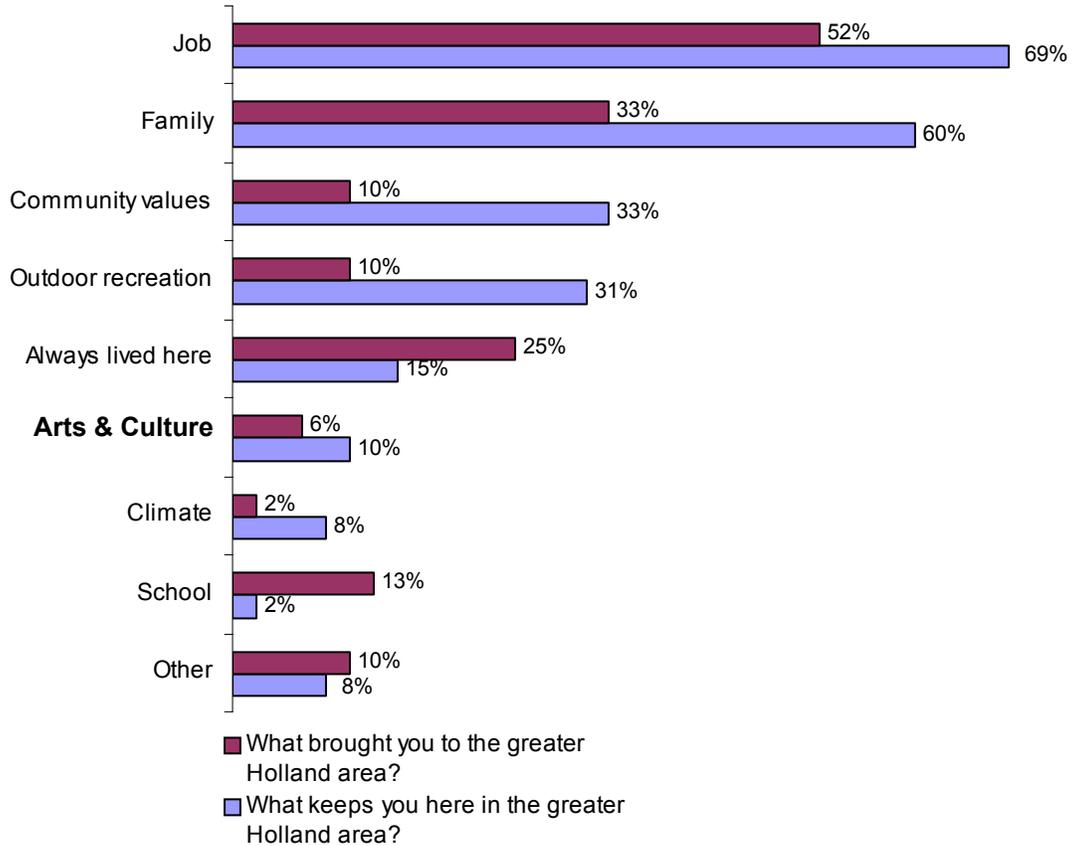


While some of the respondents have always lived in the greater Holland area, others primarily came as a result of a job and/or family members. Ten percent of those surveyed gave reasons other than what was listed in the questionnaire. These reasons included affordability, less traffic, the downtown area, friends, and significant others. Only 6% reported arts and culture as a reason for coming to live in the greater Holland area (Exhibit 3).

Work and family remained the most popular reasons for staying in the area. In addition, reasons like community values, outdoor recreation, arts & culture and the climate played a more prominent role in retaining them. **Approximately 66% felt the current arts and cultural offerings positively affected the desirability of living in the area and 75% saw them as having a positive impact on the area's economic viability.** Of note, one respondent was planning to leave the area as a result of the job.

In fact, for those respondents who had lived elsewhere, **almost half (46%) felt the greater Holland area was comparatively better than other places and an additional 6% rated the area as much better.** Conversely, 25% felt the greater Holland area was worse in comparison to other places.

Exhibit 3 – Reasons for Coming and Remaining in Greater Holland Area



N=48

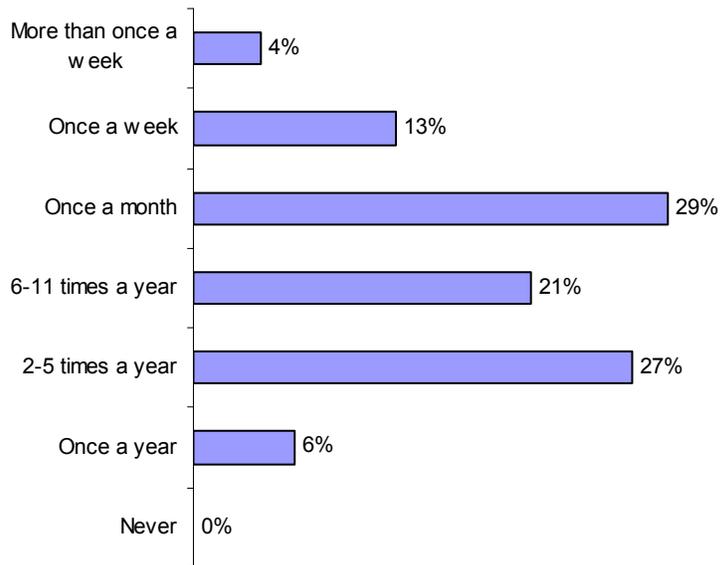
Other 10% refers to affordability, less traffic, the downtown area, friends, and significant others.

Other 8% refers to friends, "mostly functional downtown core."

Findings: Arts Attendance

The Holland Cultural Planning Committee wanted to know how frequently survey respondents were attending arts and cultural events and if so, which venues. While **every respondent attended an arts and cultural event at least once during the past year almost half (46%) attended on a monthly basis** (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4 – Attendance Frequency at Arts and Cultural Events in the Past Year

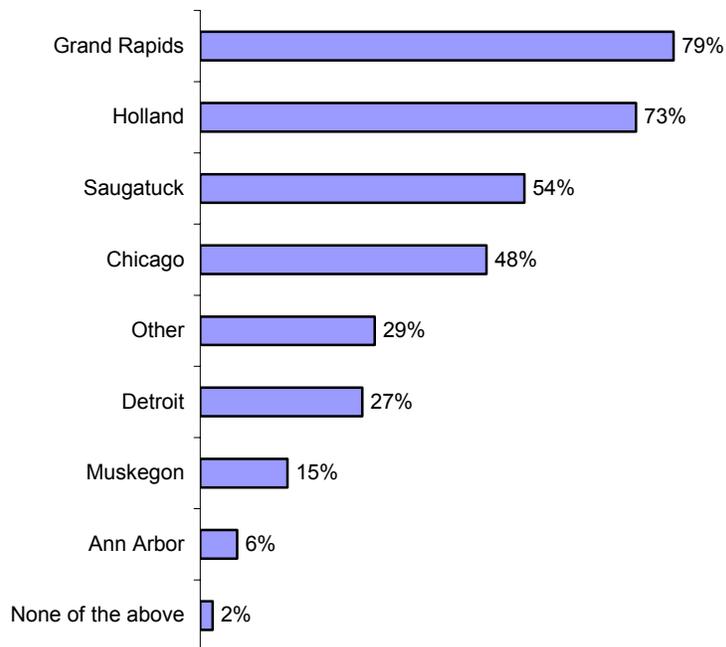


N=49

Approximately 54% agreed and 12% strongly agreed that the location of the arts and cultural events in the greater Holland area were convenient and easily accessible. In terms of ambiance and adequate facility space; 38% had no opinion, 31% agreed, 25% disagreed, and 6% were undecided.

When asked ‘where’ these respondents traveled to when attending arts & cultural events over the past year, 79% noted Grand Rapids and 73% Holland. Other arts & cultural destinations for these arts-goers included Saugatuck (54%), Chicago (48%), and Detroit (27%) (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5 – Where did you travel to attend these arts & cultural activities in the last 12 months?



N=48

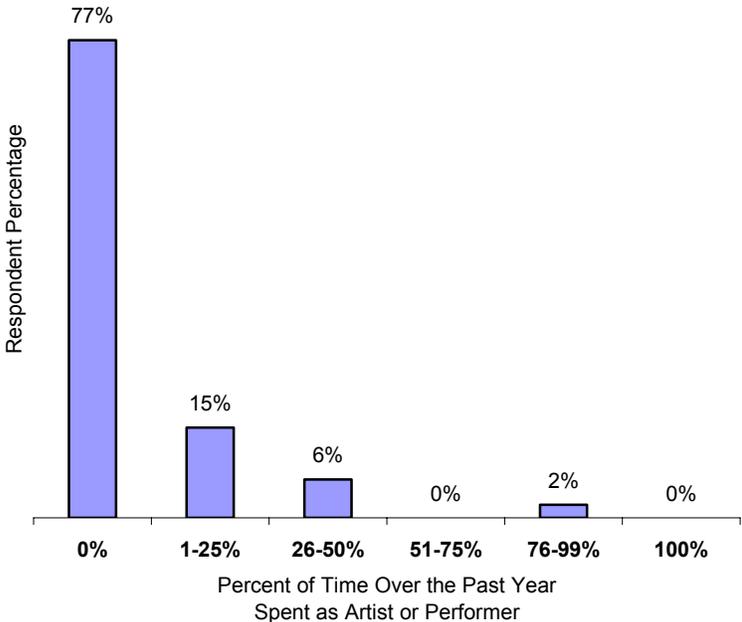
Other refers to the following cities: New York, Cincinnati, Kalamazoo, Las Vegas, Philadelphia, Memphis, Charlevoix, South Bend, Corning, Washington D.C., Cleveland, Traverse City, Santa Fe, and Seattle.

When asked their perceptions on whether there was sufficient attendance to support arts and culture activities in the greater Holland area more people said *yes* (33%) than *no* (23%), one third offered no opinion, and 10% were undecided. But when asked if they thought many different socio-economic groups attended these arts and cultural activities; 39% disagreed, 35% had no opinion, 20% agreed, and 4% were undecided.

Findings: Participation

For this sample population of largely business and financial professionals, very few exhibited or performed with regularity at any arts and cultural events over the past year. In fact, less than 25% contributed to the events in this manner (Exhibit 6). In 2002, according to the NEA Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, approximately 44% of the respondents had “performed or created” in at least one of the study’s examined art forms over the past 12 months.⁵

Exhibit 6 – Participation as an Artist or Performer in Arts and Cultural Activities Over the Past 12 Months



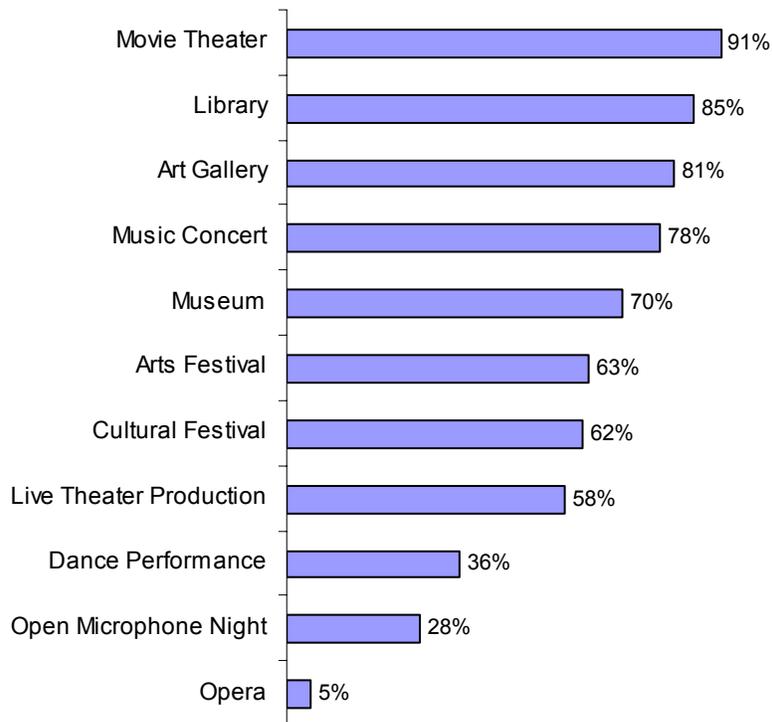
N = 48

⁵ National Endowment for the Arts, op. cit., p. 31.
Greater Holland Area Arts & Culture Survey Findings 2005
CRI at the Johnson Center - GVSU

Findings: Venues

Over the past year surveyed respondents favored the *visual* arts as evidenced by 91% of them having attended a movie theater; followed by the library (85%) and an art gallery (81%) (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7– Attendance or Participation in Arts & Culture Activities

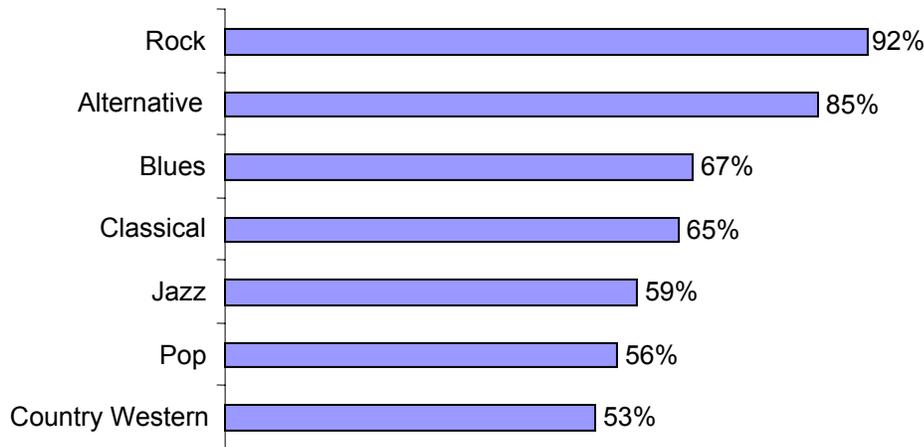


N = 48

Only 5% of the respondents went to an opera in the last year; making it the least attended arts & cultural activity listed on this survey.

In terms of the *performing* arts, **approximately 78% attended a music concert over this past year.** Of those concert goers, 92% went to at least one rock concert, followed by an alternative music concert (85%). Country western music drew the lowest response at 53% (Exhibit 8).

**Exhibit 8 - Types of Concerts Attended Over the Past Year
2004**



N = 48

In addition to the arts and culture venues listed on the previous page, nine respondents indicated having attended other types of arts and cultural activities over the past year including *art auctions, Christian rock concerts, drum circles, symphony concerts, bluegrass and folk art festivals, county fairs, design exhibitions, poetry jams, as well as food and wine events.*

Though **47% of the survey respondents agreed that the greater Holland area offered a wide variety of arts and cultural activities**, some suggested increasing or offering other arts and cultural activities not currently thought to be available, such as:

- More cultural diversity events.
- More “Latin stations.”
- More public art.
- More classical and opera concerts.
- More ethnically diverse restaurants.
- More appealing musical venues.
- Design focused events – furniture, boats, etc.
- Bluegrass Festivals.
- Ballroom Dancing lessons.

Some of these suggestions may speak to the **35% who disagreed when asked if there was diversity in terms of ethnic representation of the arts and cultural offerings currently available in the greater Holland area.** However, 31% of the respondent population thought this diversity existed; 29% were neutral and 4% were undecided. In terms of the arts and cultural activities having an appeal to the different ethnic groups living in the area, 46% were neutral; which could indicate a degree of apathy or disconnectedness on the subject. Approximately 27% agreed the offerings had appeal to ethnicities, 23% disagreed, and 4% were undecided.

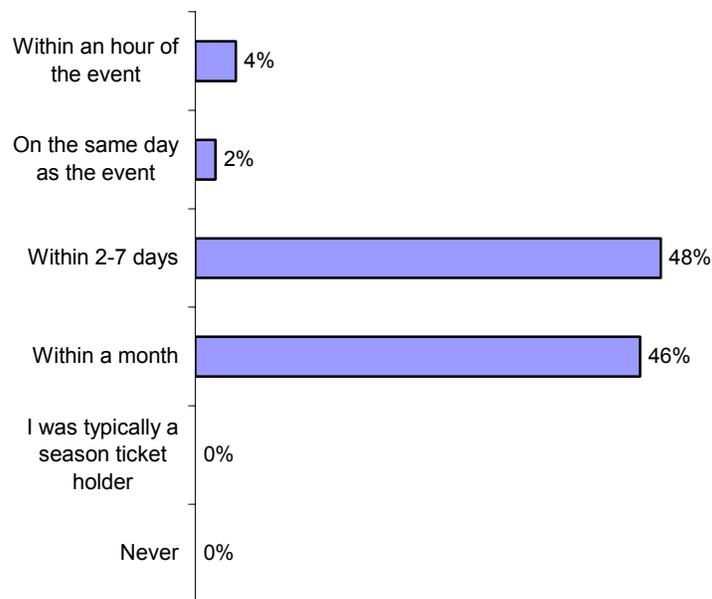
Research indicates that adults aged 45 to 54 years of age attend arts events more frequently than any other age group for most arts activities. However, jazz concerts, plays, dance performances, and literature typically attract adults aged 18 to 24.⁶

⁶ National Endowment for the Arts. (January. 1999). *Demographic Characteristics of Arts Attendance*. Retrieved January 17, 2005 from page 4 at www.arts.gov/pub/Notes/71.pdf.

Findings: Planning

Over the past year, a large majority (94%) of surveyed respondents showed some pre-meditation in going to an arts and cultural event; from two days to one month prior to the date of the activity. Six percent were more impulsive arts goers – making plans the same day and sometimes even the same hour of the event they attended. None of the respondents held season tickets (Exhibit 9).

Exhibit 9 – How Far in Advance Did You Make Plans to Attend An Arts and Cultural Activity?

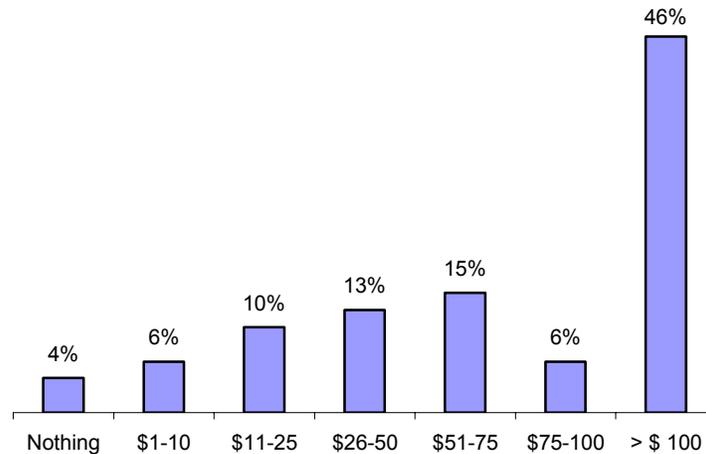


N=49

Outside of money spent on arts and music purchases, **almost half (46%) of the respondents spent \$100 or more in total on arts events over the past twelve months.** Likewise, one third spent between \$26 - \$100 during this time period; while 4% didn't spend any money (Exhibit 10). When asked if arts and cultural activities in the greater Holland area were affordable 64% of the respondents agreed (4% of which strongly agreed).

However, there was greater neutrality from this population regarding the existence of sufficient funding to support local arts activities. While 36% offered no opinion on this subject, 25% felt there was sufficient funding, 25% disagreed and 13% were undecided.

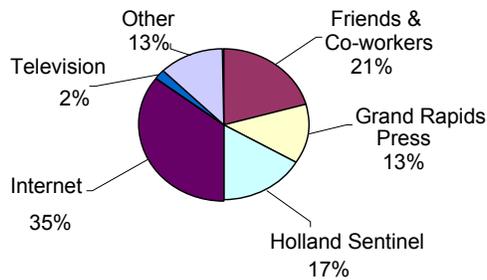
**Exhibit 10 – Total Dollars Spent Attending or Participating
in Arts and Cultural Activities over the Past Year
2004**



Findings show that **a majority (65%) attended arts activities in small groups of two to four people**; followed by 23% of the respondents who went with only one other person. Approximately 6% went alone; 4% went in groups of more than eight, and 2% sought the company of five to eight people when attending arts and cultural activities. These smaller sized crowds could be more conducive to spontaneous or short-term planning.

The Internet was the most popular ‘first step’ when seeking information on upcoming arts and cultural activities in the community for 35% of the survey respondents; followed by newspaper advertisements (30%) and word-of-mouth referral from friends and co-workers (21%). Only 2% of these young professionals would first turn on the television to find information on upcoming arts and cultural events. Radio and direct mailing were accessed the least as an information source in this regard (Exhibit 11). Other responses included email notification, music review and poster/billboard advertisements. These findings favored use of readily accessible forms of information on upcoming arts and cultural activities, and would especially be conducive to spontaneous planners.

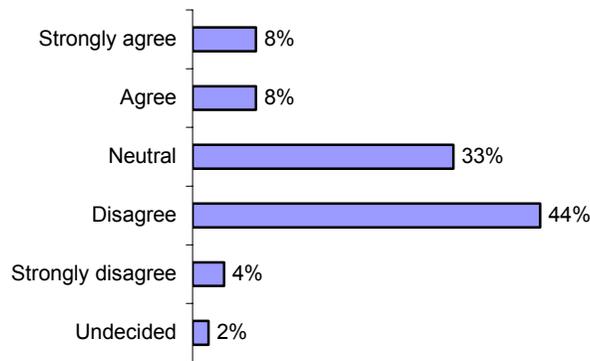
Exhibit 11: Where Respondents First Go to Find out about Arts & Cultural Activities 2004



N=48

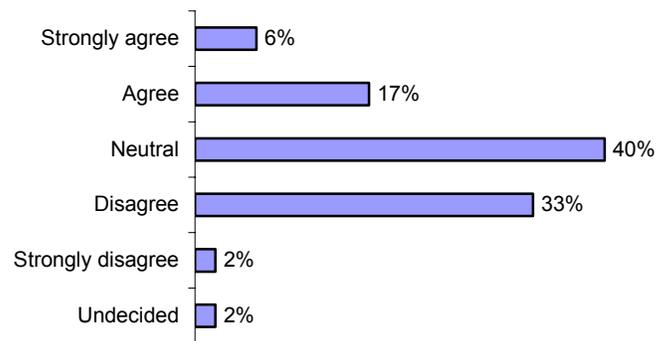
Almost half (48%) of the survey respondents felt the *media* could provide more information about arts and cultural activities while a smaller percentage (16%) felt the information from these sources was sufficient (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12 - The Media (print, radio, TV, internet, local cable) Provide Sufficient Information about Arts and Cultural Activities in the Greater Holland Area



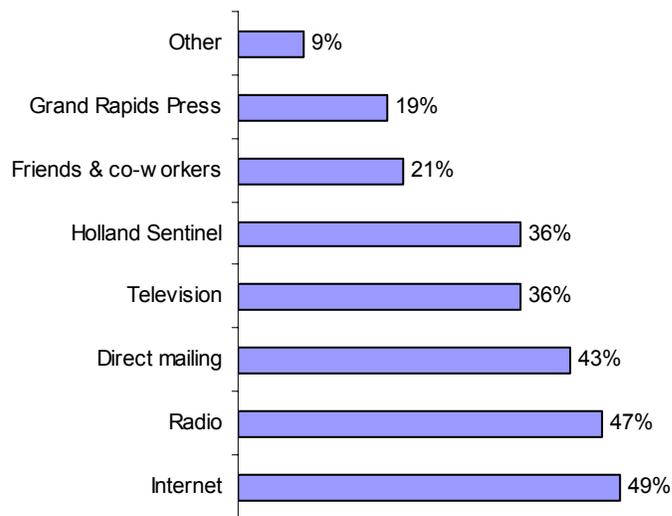
Approximately 23% of the respondents felt the *arts and cultural organizations* were providing sufficient information and promotion on their activities. Yet, approximately one third (35%) of the respondents felt these organizations could provide more information and promotion on their activities (Exhibit 13).

Exhibit 13 - Arts and Cultural Organizations in the Community Provide Sufficient Promotion and Information for their Activities



In fact, respondents encouraged Holland arts and cultural organizations to use myriad approaches in providing information and promotion on upcoming events; especially the internet, radio, direct mailing, television, and local paper (Exhibit 14). Interestingly, this surveyed population did not rely on radio and direct mailings as a first step in finding out about upcoming events but encouraged its use when informing or promoting arts activities.

Exhibit 14 - Other Sources that Greater Holland Area Arts and Cultural Organizations Should Use to Best Provide Information and Promote their Upcoming Events



N = 47

Other primarily refers to a monthly periodical for Holland/Saugatuck, events website, free events papers.

Conclusion

As the Holland Cultural Planning Committee seeks ways to spur economic growth and opportunity in their city, input from the ‘knowledge workers’ as defined through the Cool Cities Initiative is essential to their strategic planning. To answer the question of what attracts and retains this sub-population of individuals aged 24 – 35 years, the Community Research Institute was commissioned to survey the Holland Young Professionals on their arts and cultural utilization and needs. Of many things, they were interested in knowing the role the arts play in attracting and retaining these ‘knowledge workers.’

True to their organization’s name, the respondent group was highly ‘professional’ with 92% of the survey sample having completed a bachelor’s or postgraduate degree and ‘young’ with 85% aged between 24 – 35 years. In addition, 96% of the respondents lived in the greater Holland area at the time of this survey; making the input from this concentrated group of knowledge workers pertinent to the focus of this study.

For these respondents, the most popular reasons for coming to live in the greater Holland area were job and family. But in addition to job and family, reasons like arts and culture, community values, outdoor recreation and climate played a role in keeping them there. The belief that a community’s arts and culture draws and retains individuals was further reinforced as two-third’s of the survey group felt the current arts and cultural offerings positively affected the desirability of living in the area and 75% saw the arts as having a positive impact on the area’s economic viability.

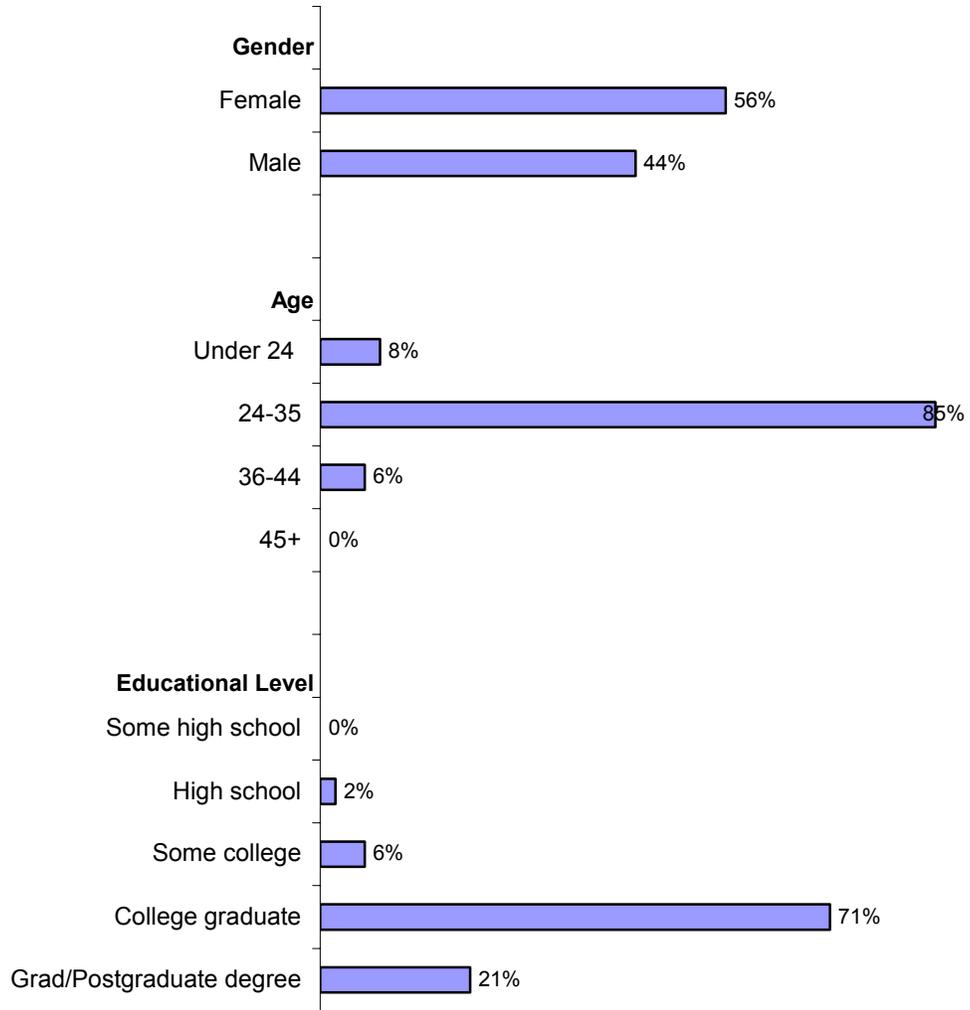
This respondent group was an active audience in terms of attendance rather than actual participation as artists or performers. All of the respondents had attended at least one arts and cultural activity over the past year and almost half (46%) had attended on a monthly basis. Likewise, almost half of these arts-goers agreed that the greater Holland area offered a wide variety of arts and cultural activities. Still, there were suggestions for increasing and/or expanding venues.

Over the past year the respondents favored the *visual* arts. In general, the largest percentages tended to first go to the Internet to find out about arts events, spent a total of \$100 or more over the past year on them, attended with two to four people and traveled within 50 miles of the greater Holland area for such stimulation.

These insights provide greater understanding of the arts and culture utilization and needs for this group of ‘knowledge workers’ and offers a foundation for strategic decision making aimed at attracting and retaining this most important group of people.

Appendix I

Demographics

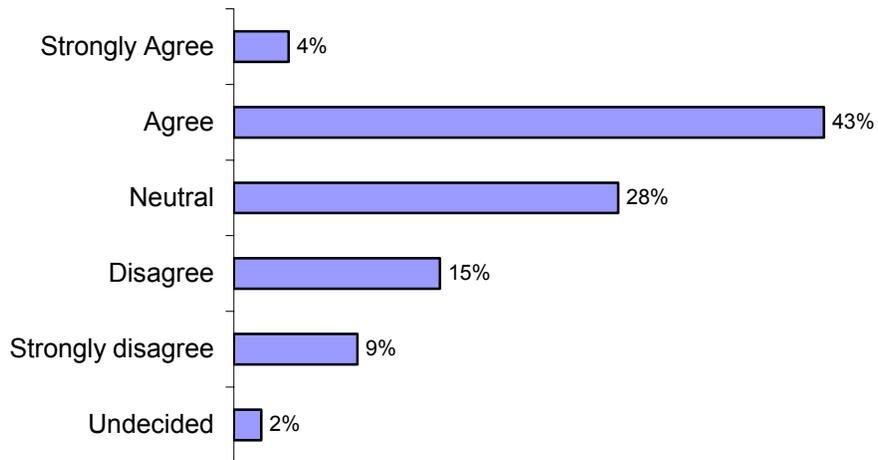


**Holland Area Arts & Culture Survey
Demographics of the Survey Population
2004**

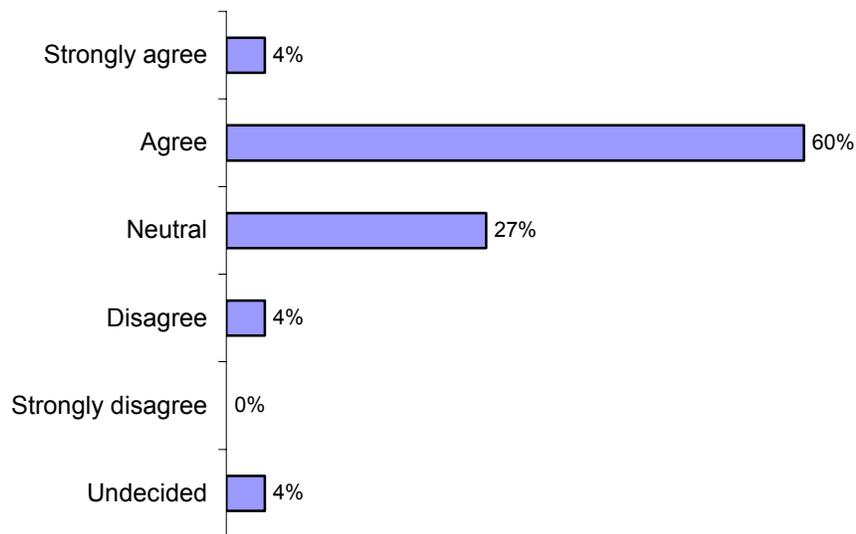
Appendix II

Respondent Perceptions

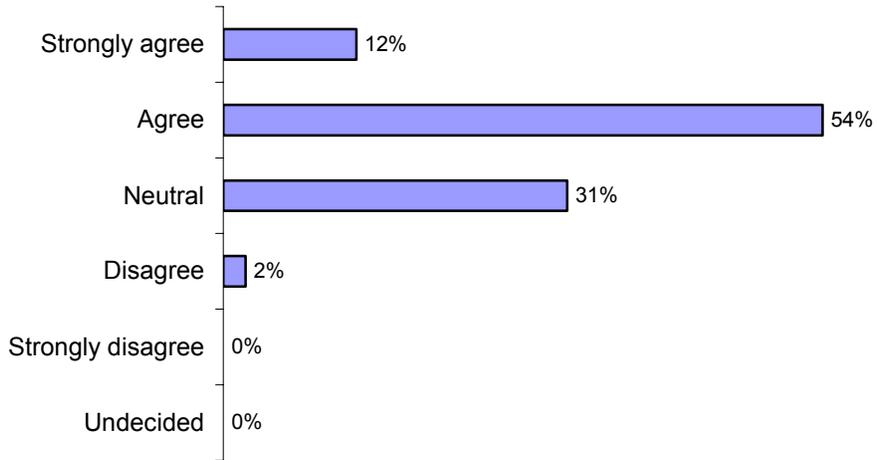
Q9. A wide variety of arts and cultural activities are available in the greater Holland area.



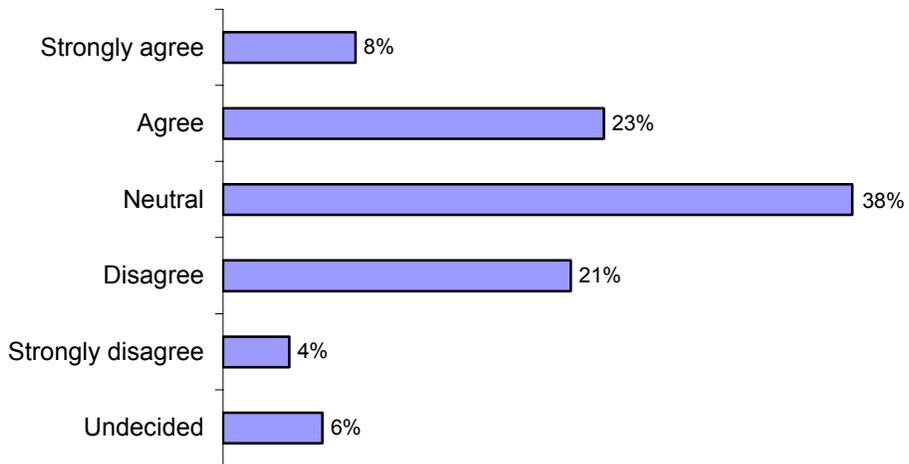
Q10. Arts and cultural activities in the greater Holland area are affordable.



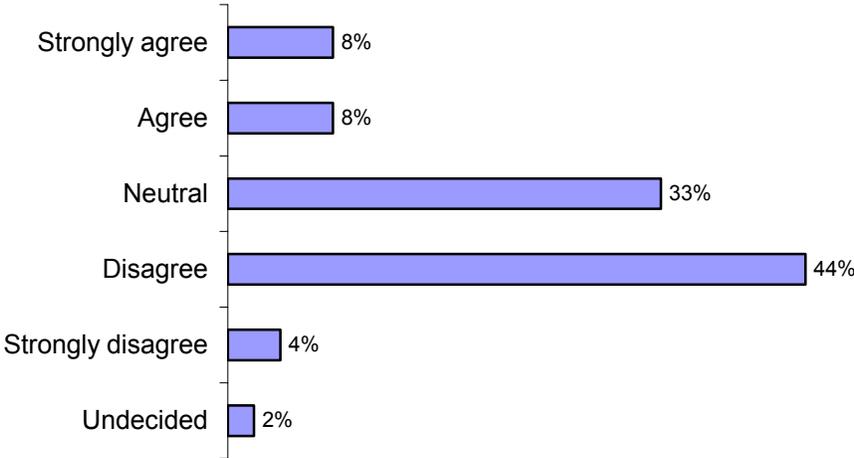
Q11. The location of arts and cultural events in the greater Holland area are convenient and easily accessible.



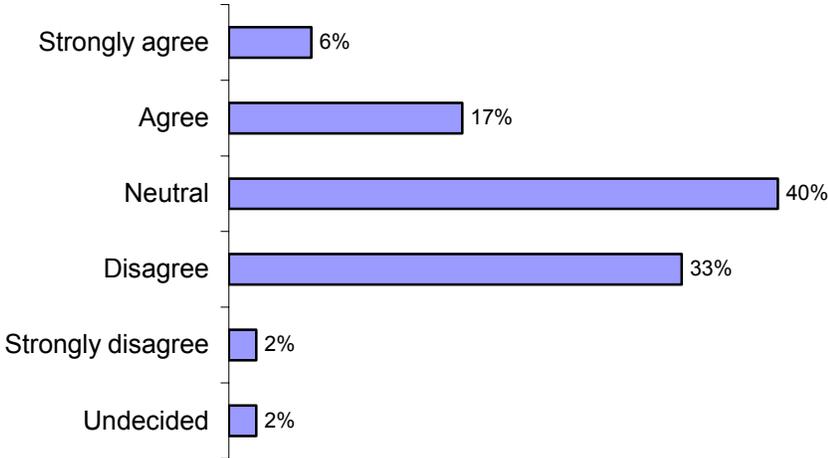
Q12. Arts and cultural facilities in the greater Holland area have adequate space and ambiance.



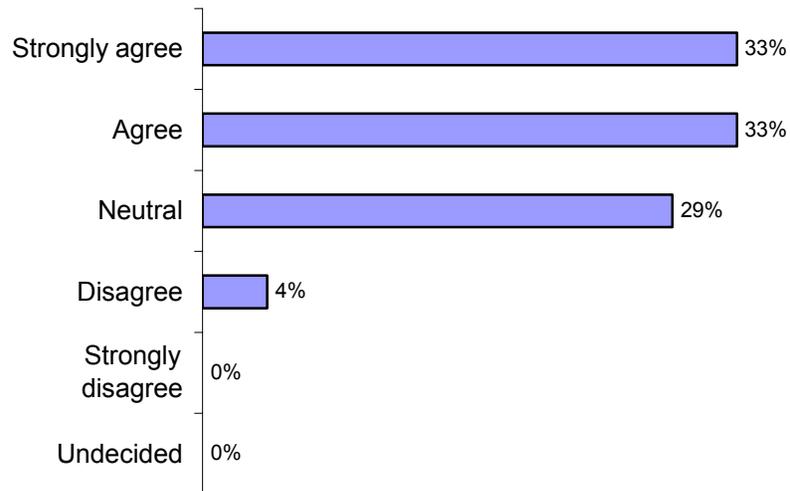
Q13. The media (print, radio, TV, Internet, local cable) provide sufficient information about arts and cultural activities in the greater Holland area.



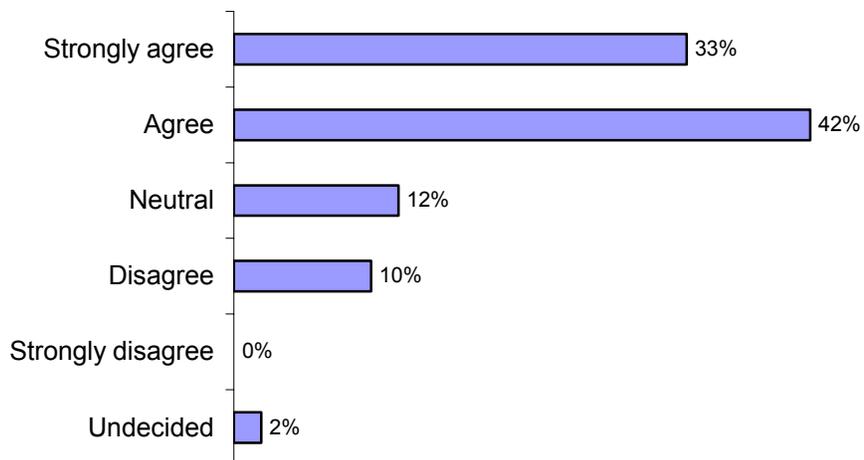
Q14. Arts and cultural organizations in the community provide sufficient promotion and information for their activities.



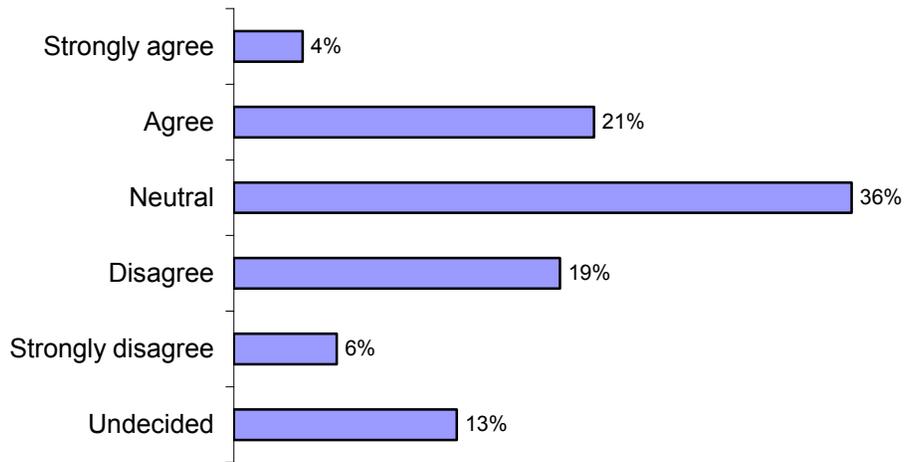
Q15. The arts and cultural offerings available in the greater Holland area positively affect the desirability to live in the area.



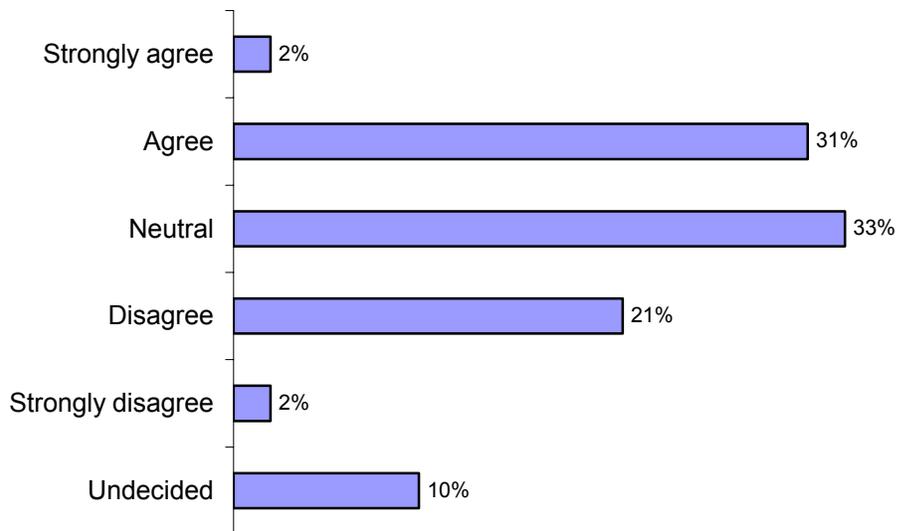
Q16. The arts and cultural offerings available in the greater Holland area have a positive impact on its economic viability.



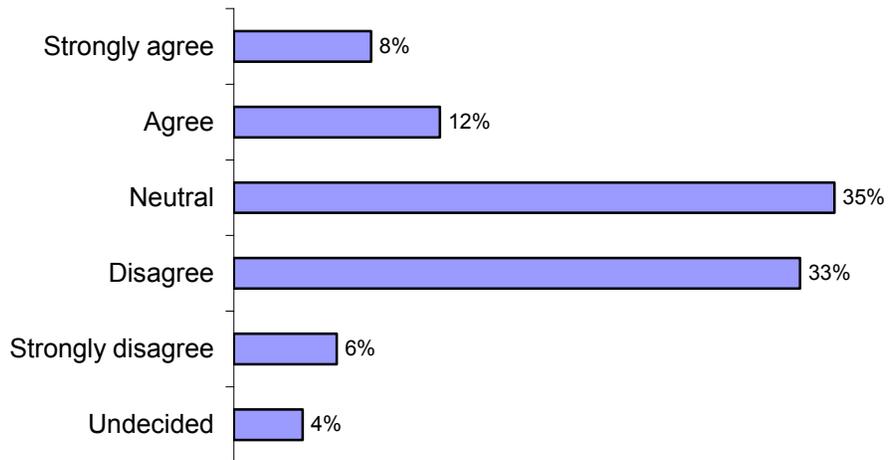
Q17. There is sufficient funding to support arts and culture activities in the greater Holland area.



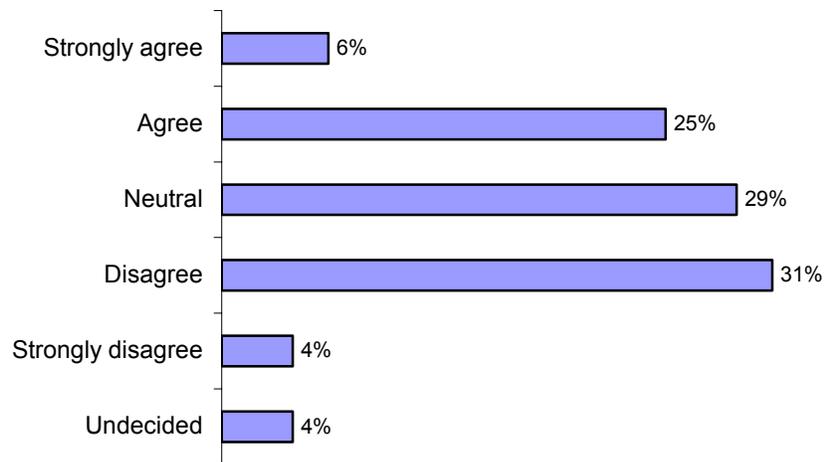
Q18. There is sufficient attendance to support arts and culture activities in the greater Holland area.



Q19. Many different socio-economic groups attend arts and cultural activities in the greater Holland area.



Q20. There is diversity in terms of ethnic representation of the arts and cultural offerings currently available in the greater Holland area.



Q21. The arts and cultural activities in the greater Holland area appeal to the different ethnic groups living there.

