

Community Attitudes Toward The Anacostia River
Summary Report of Survey Data

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I. Introduction

This document organizes and summarizes the survey responses of 296 congregants associated with three churches in Washington, D.C. Findings were provided by members of Covenant Baptist Pantry, East Washington Heights Baptist and Our Lady of Perpetual Help and pertain to their actions, opinions and wishes in connection to the Anacostia River.

Data presentation begins with pie charts that break down the percentage of responses to each question by congregation. These are followed by tables that present the findings associated with each of the three congregations together. Quantitative data also appear in Excel documents that are included in an appendix.

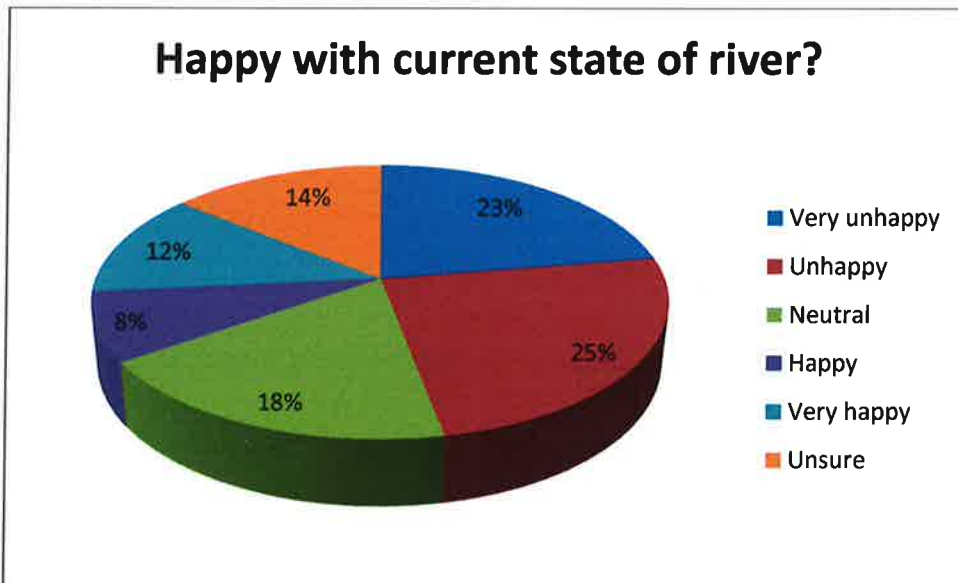
Section three discusses the implications of these numerical data. Analyses extend from the posing of the following questions:

1. How happy are you with the current state of the Anacostia River?
2. Is living near the Anacostia River appealing to you?
3. How significant is the Anacostia River to your family?
4. How important is the Anacostia River to your community?
5. Who do you feel is concerned about the Anacostia River? (this questions asks respondents to circle all that apply from the options – residents, federal government, environmentalists, business owners and/or DC officials)
6. Is the Anacostia River a good place to spend time with family and friends?
7. Is the rehabilitation and preservation of the Anacostia River important to you?
8. Are you or a family member engaged in activities related to the recovery of the Anacostia River?
9. Would you be more or less likely to use the Anacostia River if it were cleaner and greener?
10. Would you be more or less likely to use the Anacostia River if it had new places to eat?
11. Would you be more or less likely to use the Anacostia River if it had new exercise paths and sports facilities?

II. Questions, Charts, and Tables

Covenant Baptist Pantry (CBP)

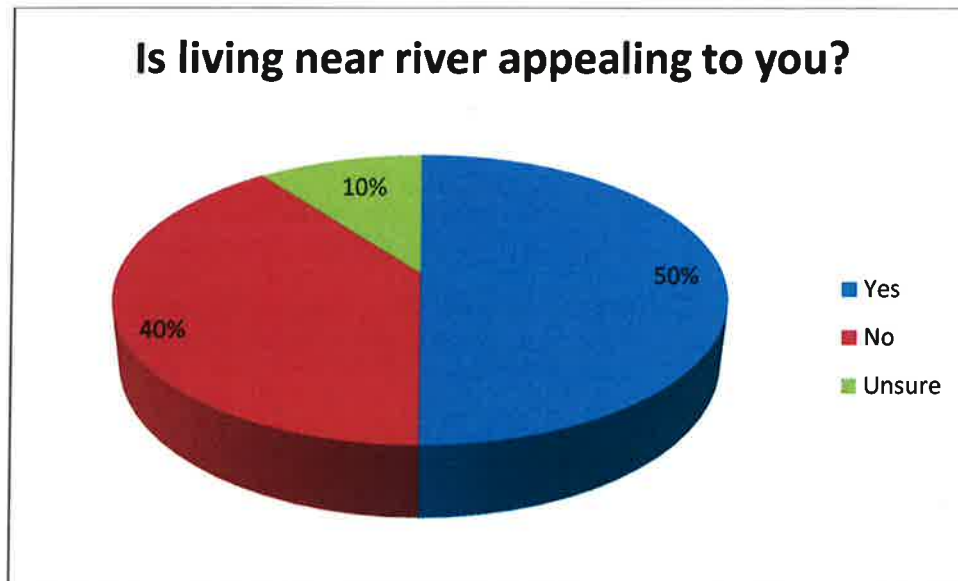
	Happy with current state of river?
Very unhappy	11
Unhappy	12
Neutral	9
Happy	4
Very happy	6
Unsure	7



1.

Is living
near river
appealing
to you?

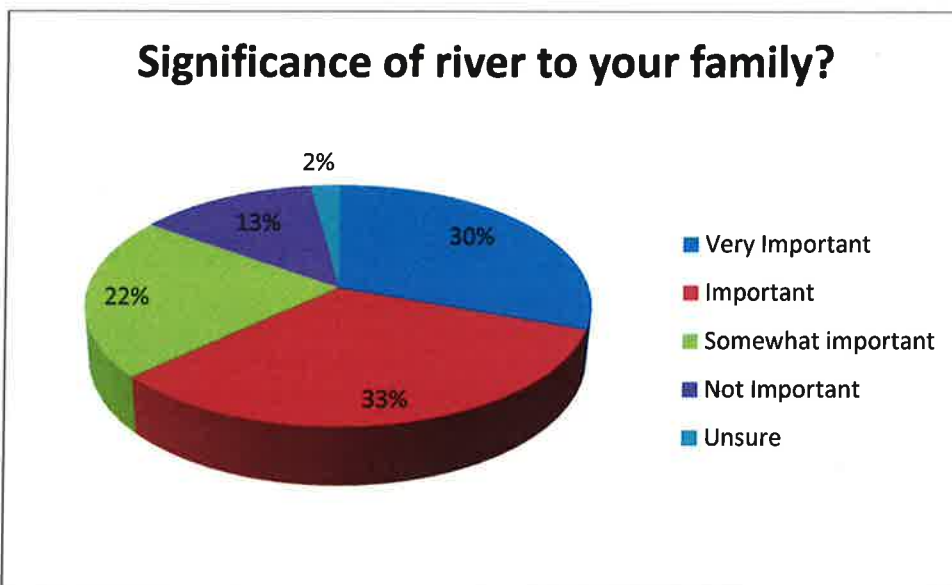
Yes	24
No	19
Unsure	5



2.

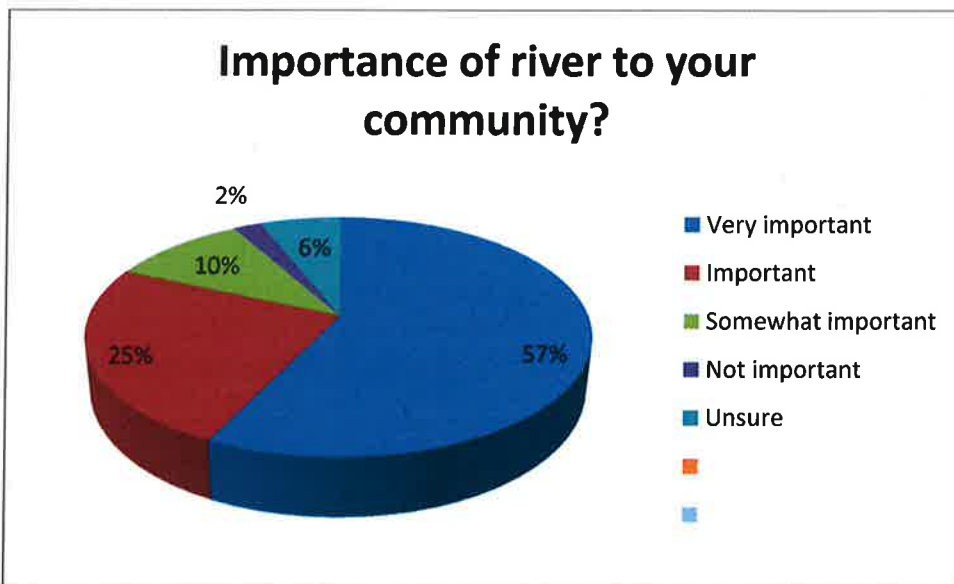
Significance
of river to
your
family?

Very Important	14
Important	15
Somewhat important	10
Not Important	6
Unsure	1



3.

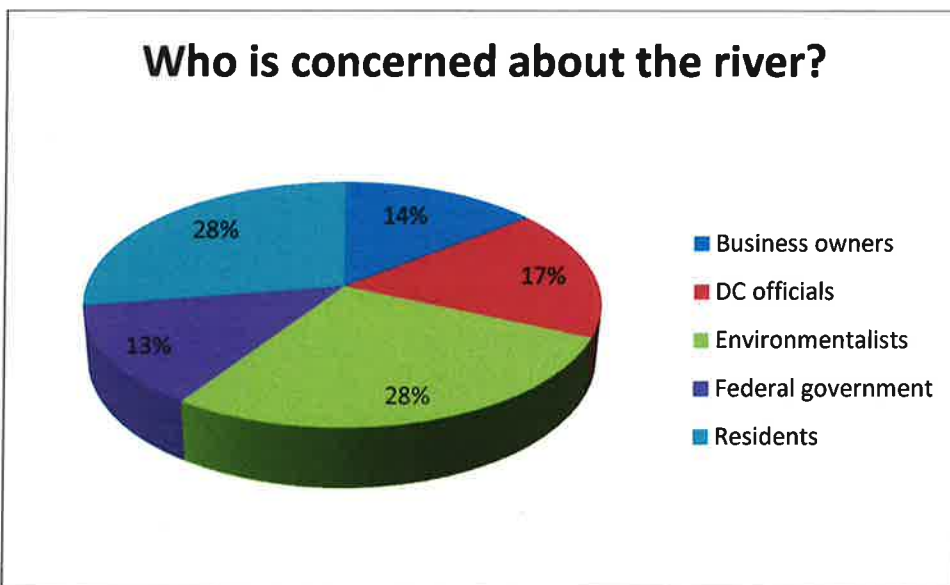
	Importance of river to your community?
Very important	28
Important	12
Somewhat important	5
Not important	1
Unsure	3



4.

Who is concerned about the river?

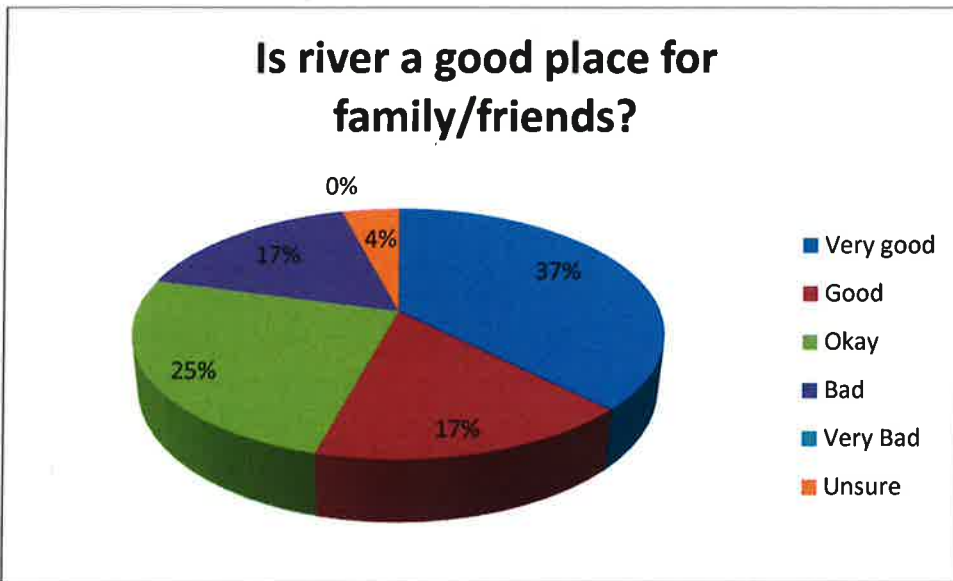
Business owners	14
DC officials	17
Environmentalists	27
Federal government	13
Local residents	27



5.

Is river a good place for family/friends?

Very good	18
Good	8
Okay	12
Bad	8
Very Bad	0
Unsure	2

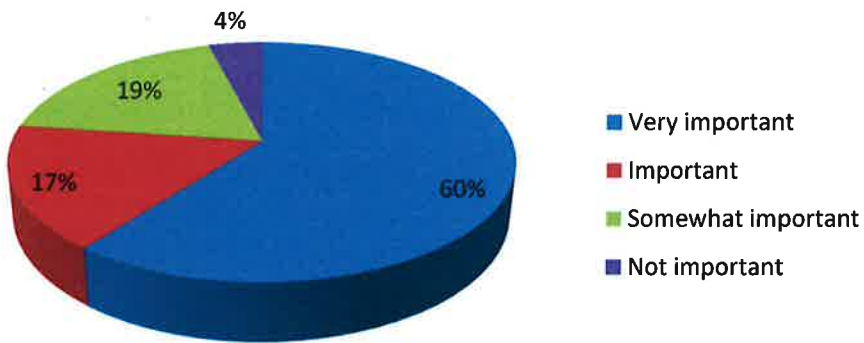


6.

Is river rehabilitation and preservation important to you?

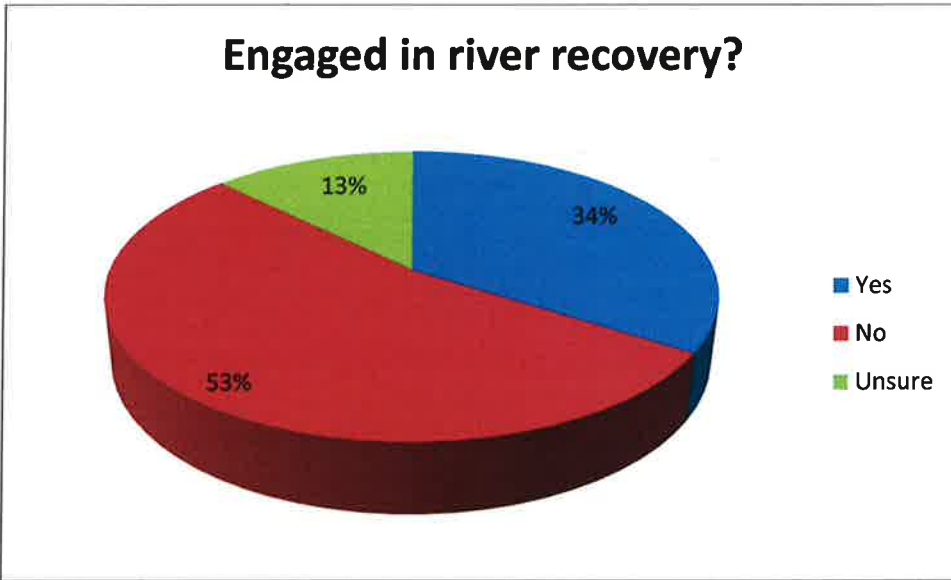
Very important	29
Important	8
Somewhat important	9
Not important	2

Is river rehabilitation and preservation important to you?



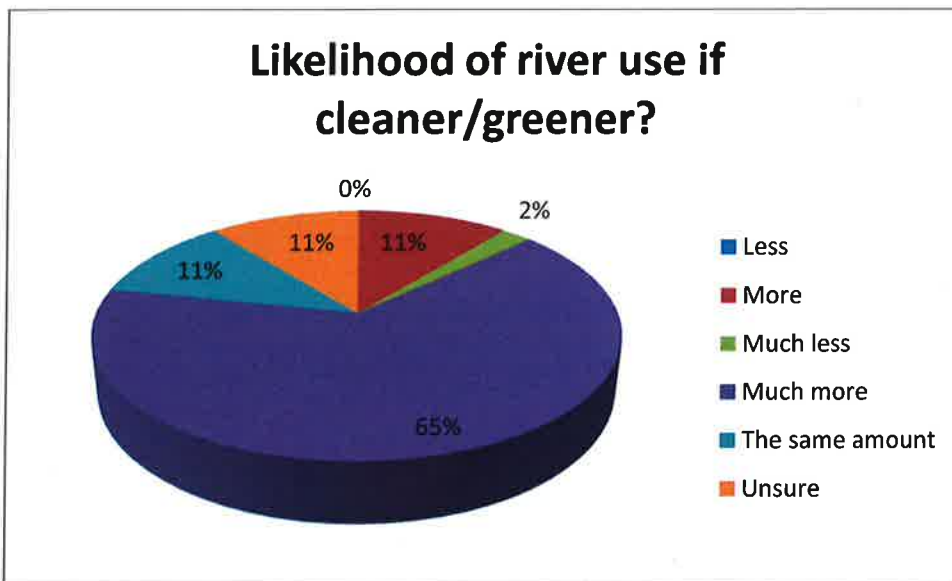
7.

	Engaged in river recovery?
Yes	16
No	25
Unsure	6



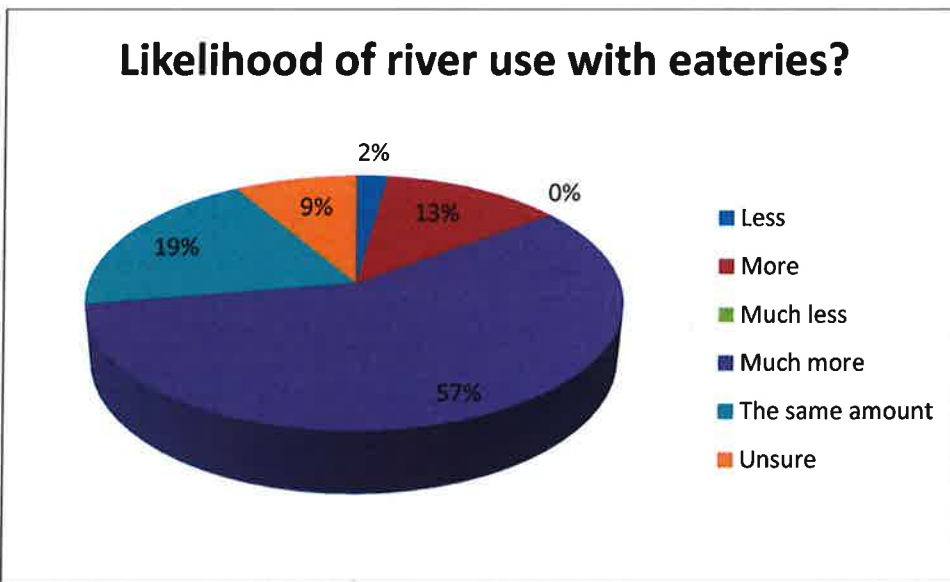
8.

Likelihood of river use if cleaner/greener?	
Less	0
More	5
Much less	1
Much more	30
The same amount	5
Unsure	5



9.

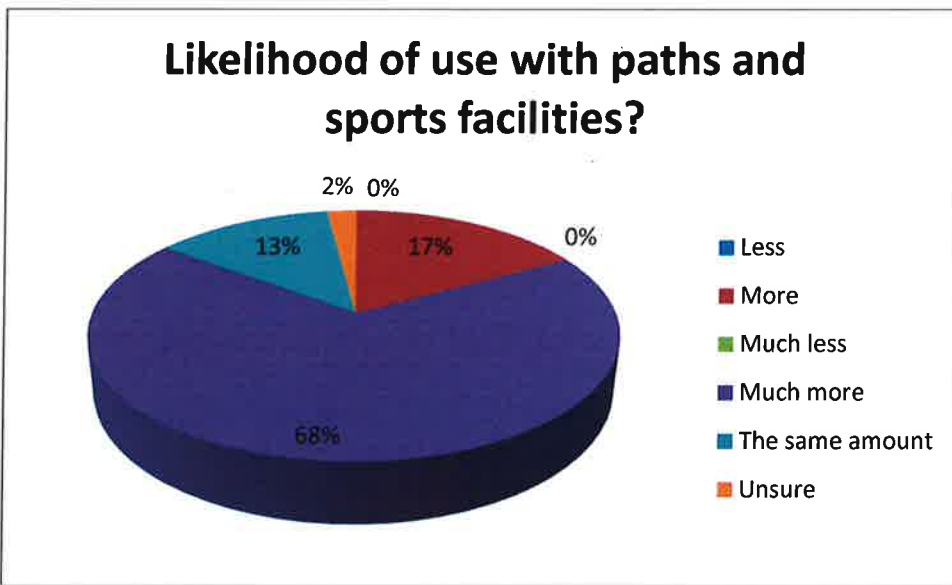
	Likelihood of river use with eateries?
Less	1
More	6
Much less	0
Much more	27
The same amount	9
Unsure	4



10.

Likelihood of use with paths and sports facilities?

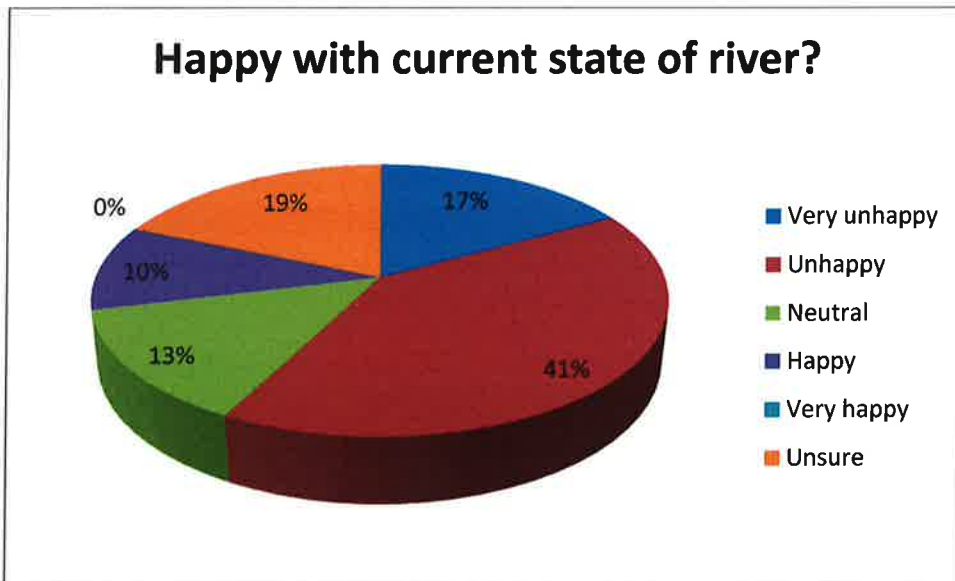
Less	0
More	8
Much less	0
Much more	32
The same amount	6
Unsure	1



11.

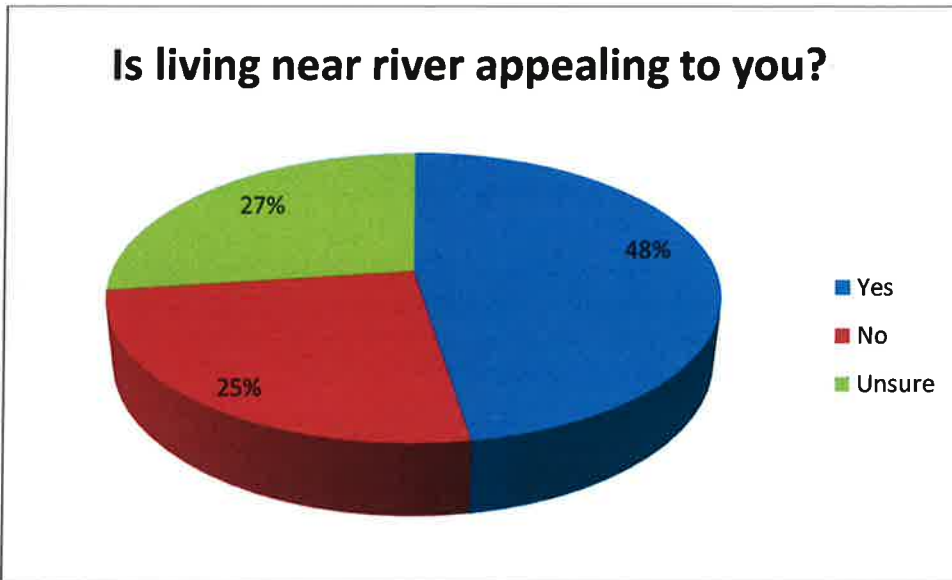
East Washington Heights Baptist (EWHB)

	Happy with current state of river?
Very unhappy	10
Unhappy	24
Neutral	8
Happy	6
Very happy	0
Unsure	11



1.

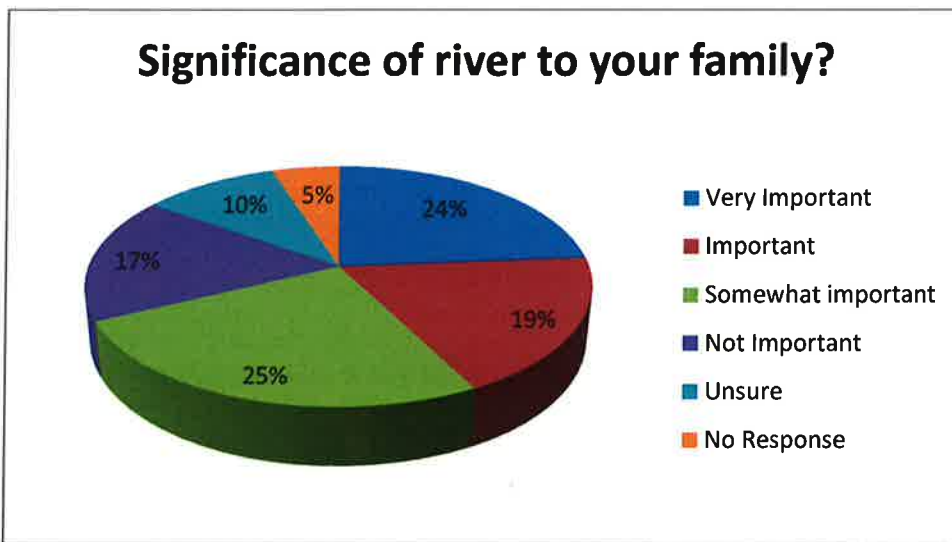
	Is living near river appealing to you?
Yes	28
No	15
Unsure	16



2.

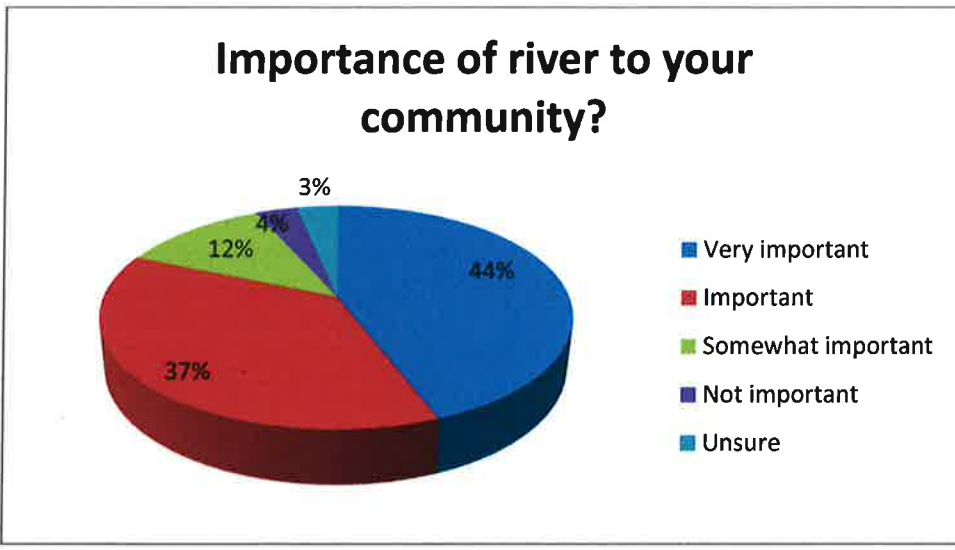
Significance
of river to
your
family?

Very Important	14
Important	11
Somewhat important	15
Not Important	10
Unsure	6
No Response	3



3.

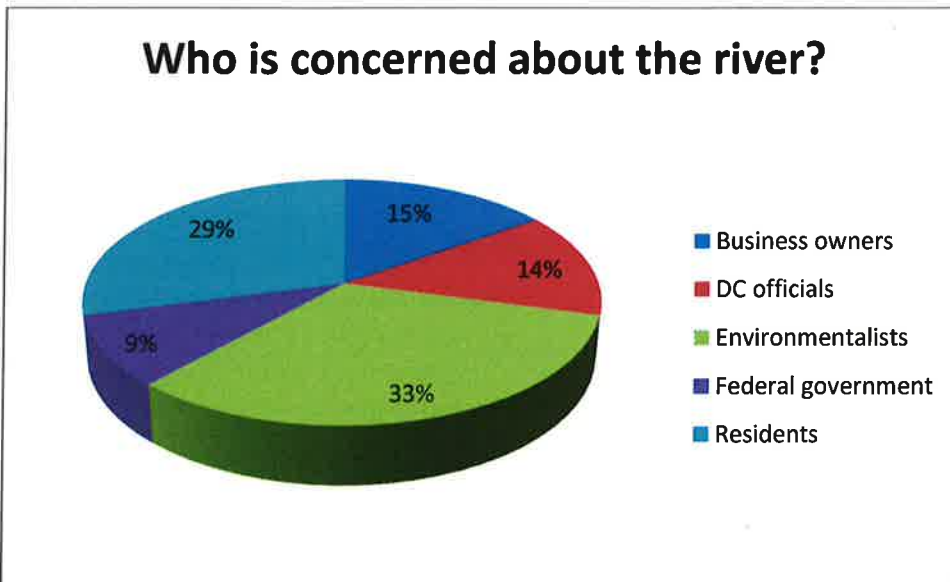
	Importance of river to your community?
Very important	26
Important	22
Somewhat important	7
Not important	2
Unsure	2



4.

Who is concerned about the river?

Business owners	23
DC officials	21
Environmentalists	49
Federal government	14
Local residents	44

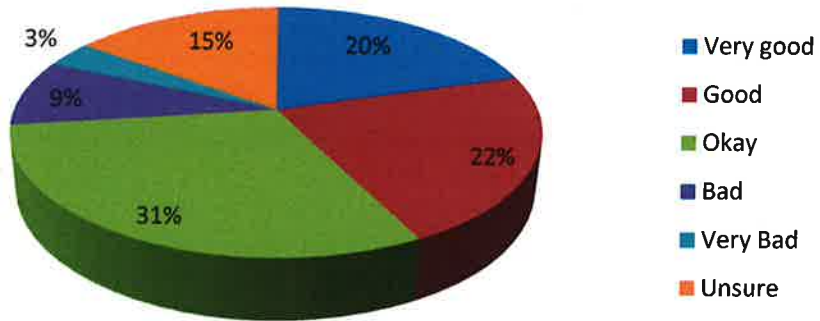


5.

Is river a good place for family/friends?

Very good	12
Good	13
Okay	18
Bad	5
Very Bad	2
Unsure	9

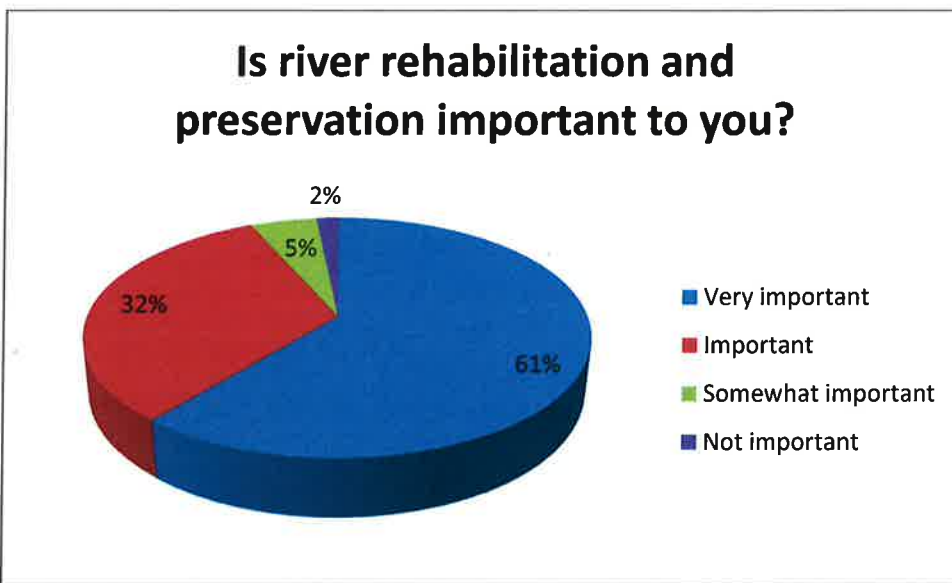
Is river a good place for family/friends?



6,

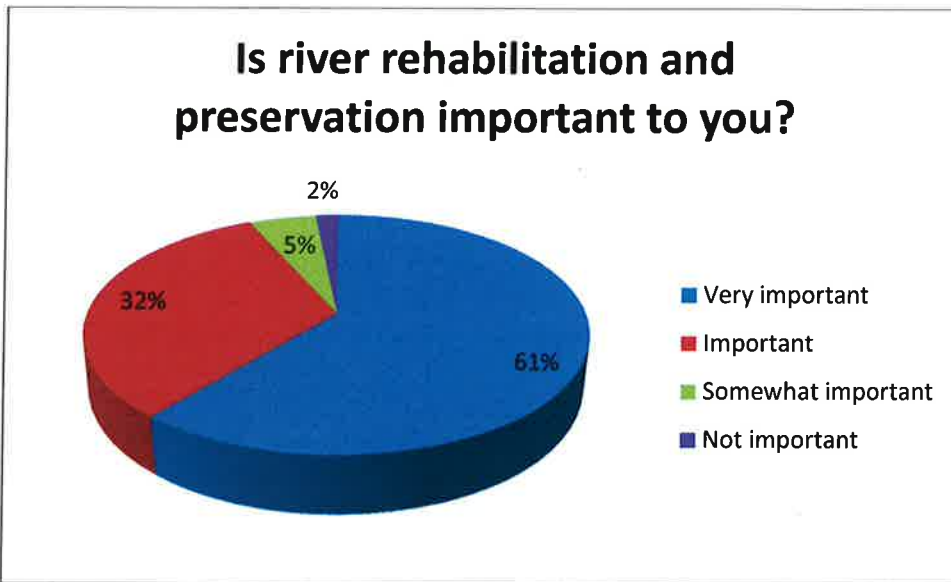
Is river rehabilitation and preservation important to you?

Very important	36
Important	19
Somewhat important	3
Not important	1



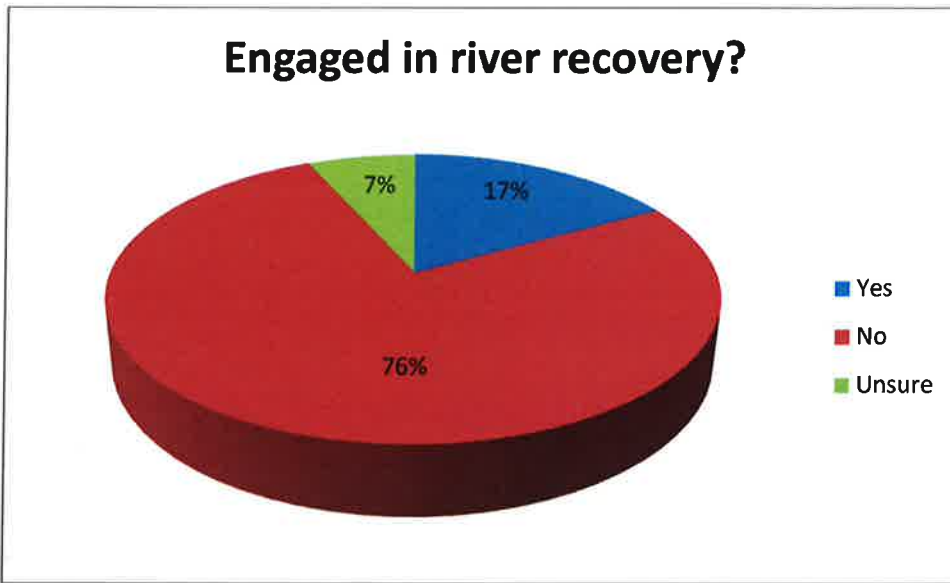
7.

	Engaged in river recovery?
Yes	10
No	45
Unsure	4



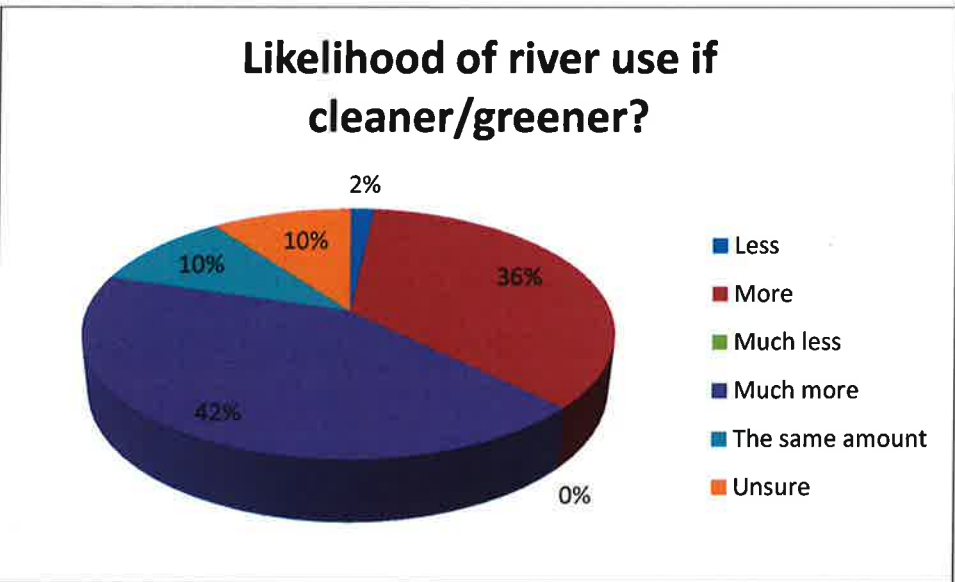
8.

	Engaged in river recovery?
Yes	10
No	45
Unsure	4



9.

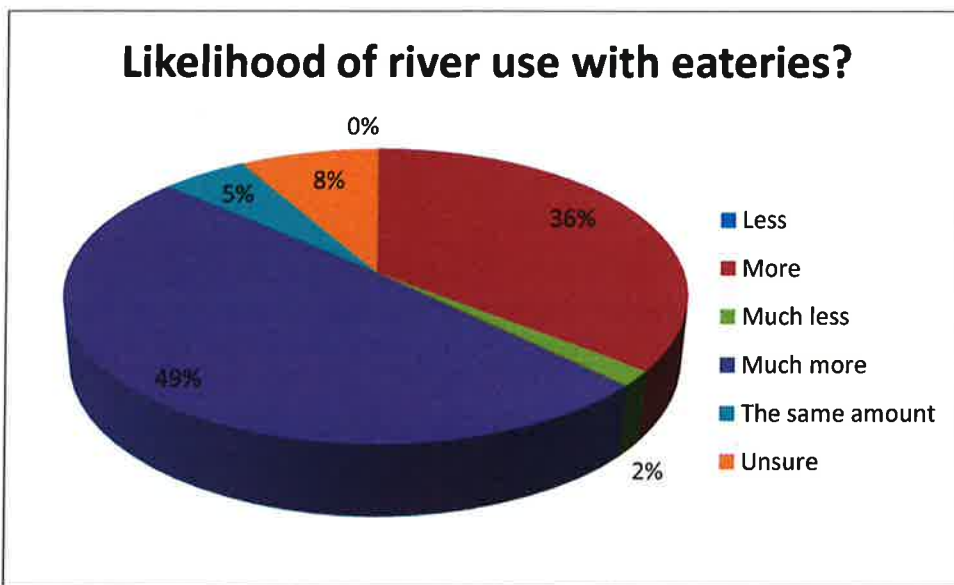
Likelihood of river use if cleaner/greener?	
Less	1
More	21
Much less	0
Much more	25
The same amount	6
Unsure	6



10.

Likelihood
of river use
with
eateries?

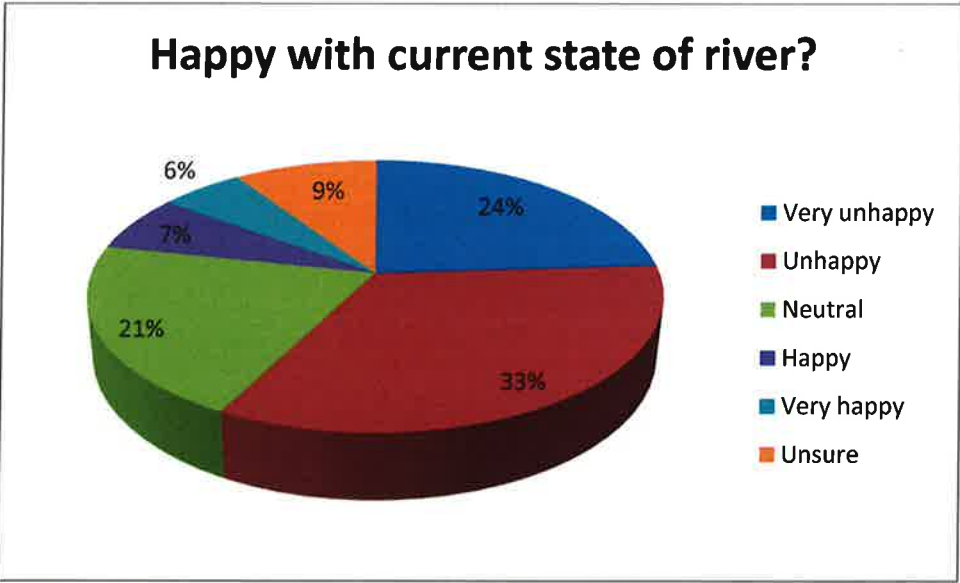
Less	0
More	21
Much less	1
Much more	29
The same amount	3
Unsure	5



11.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH)

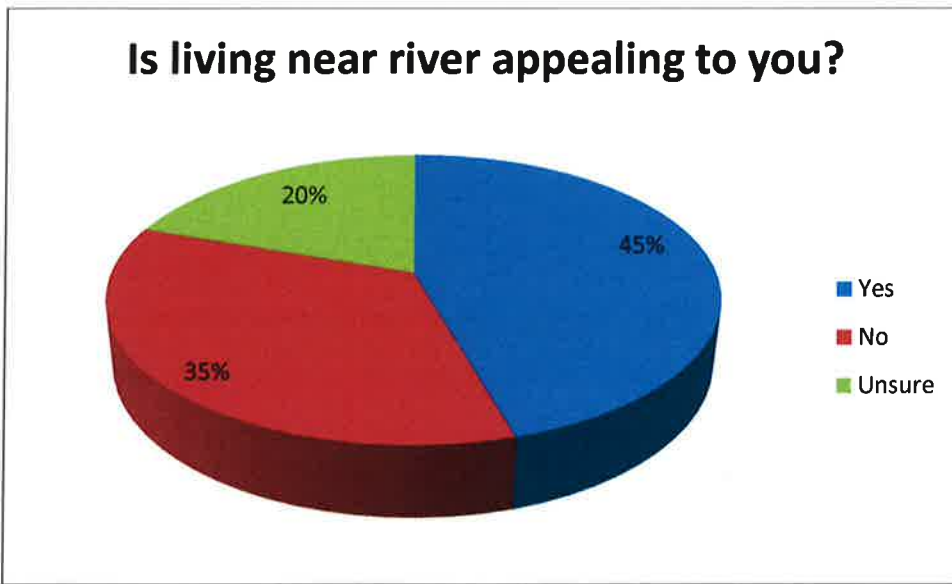
	Happy with current state of river?
Very unhappy	43
Unhappy	60
Neutral	37
Happy	12
Very happy	10
Unsure	17



1.

Is living near river appealing to you?

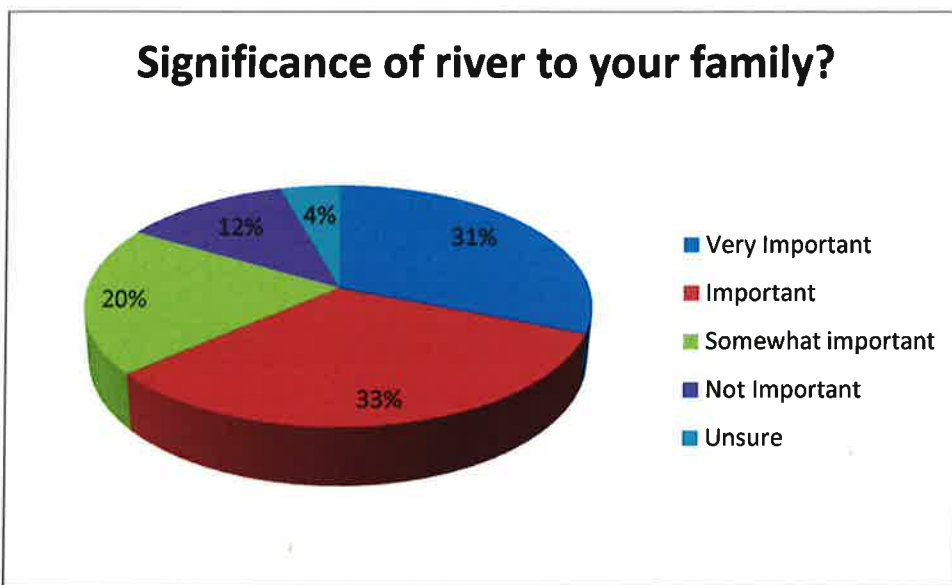
Yes	81
No	62
Unsure	35



2.

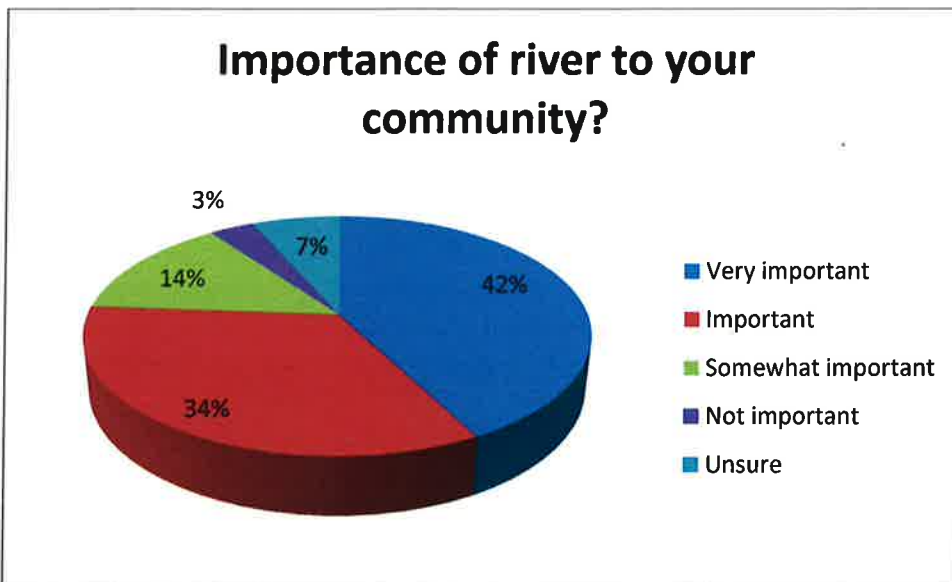
Significance
of river to
your
family?

Very Important	56
Important	59
Somewhat important	36
Not Important	22
Unsure	8



3.

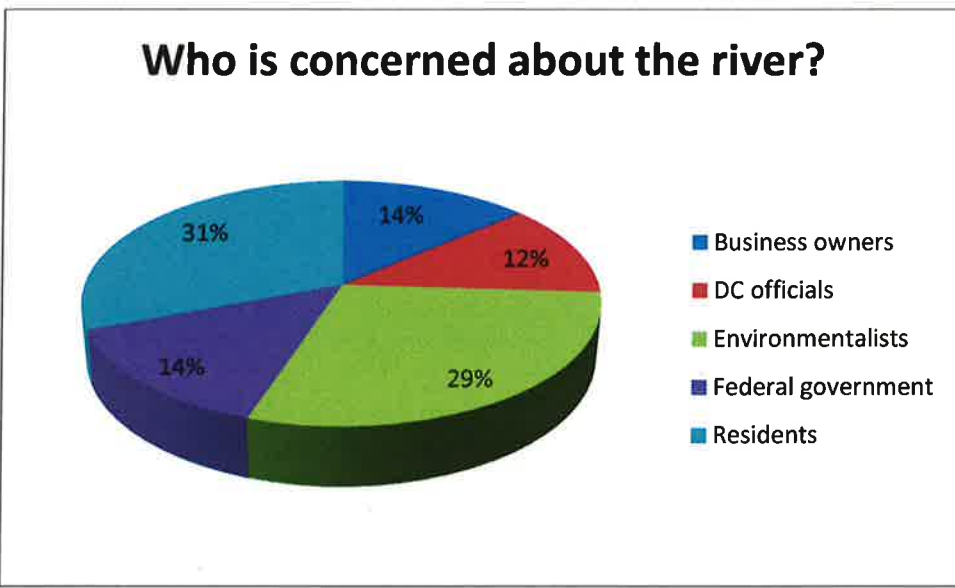
	Importance of river to your community?
Very important	76
Important	61
Somewhat important	25
Not important	6
Unsure	12



4.

Who is concerned about the river?

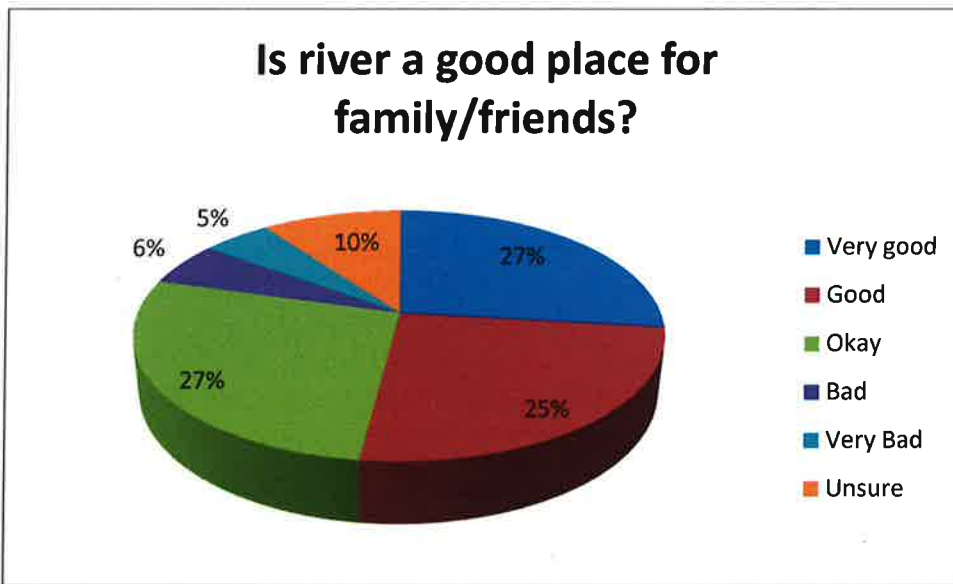
Business owners	56
DC officials	51
Environmentalists	120
Federal government	58
Local residents	127



5.

Is river a good place for family/friends?

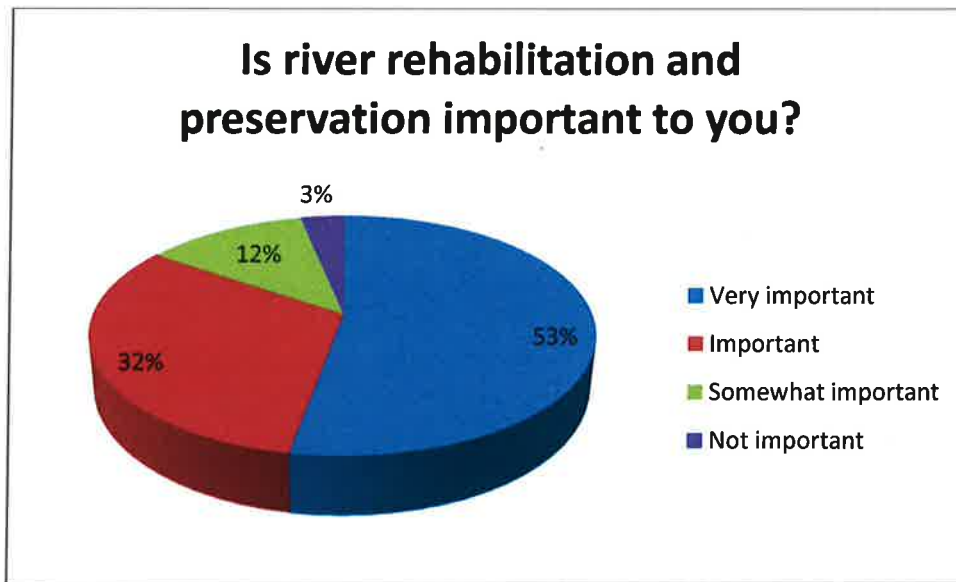
Very good	48
Good	45
Okay	49
Bad	10
Very Bad	9
Unsure	18



6.

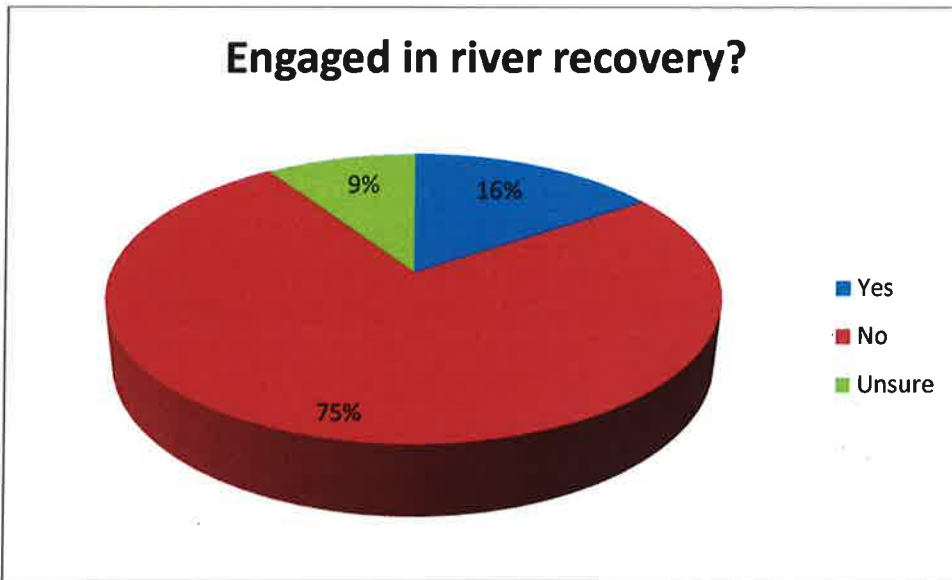
Is river rehabilitation and preservation important to you?

Very important	95
Important	57
Somewhat important	22
Not important	6



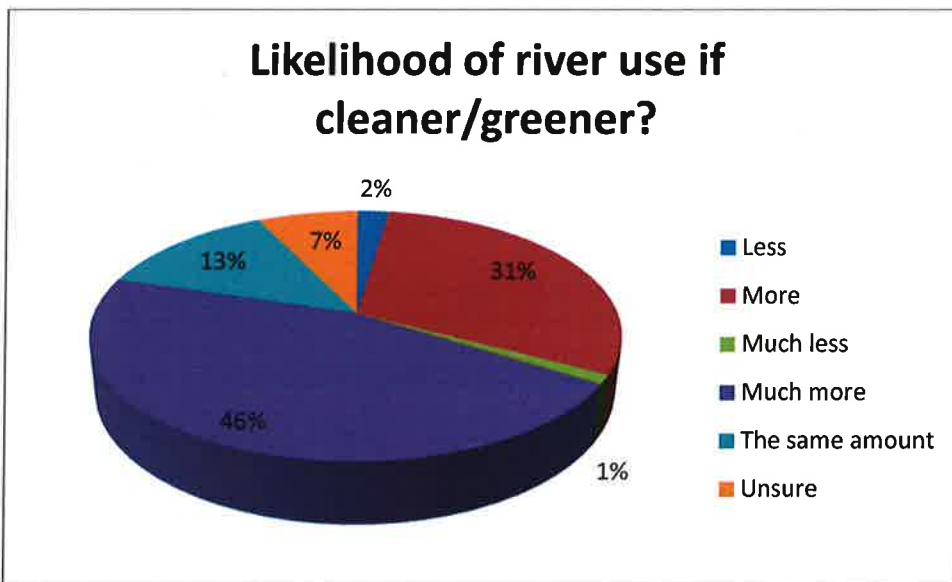
7.

	Engaged in river recovery?
Yes	28
No	134
Unsure	17



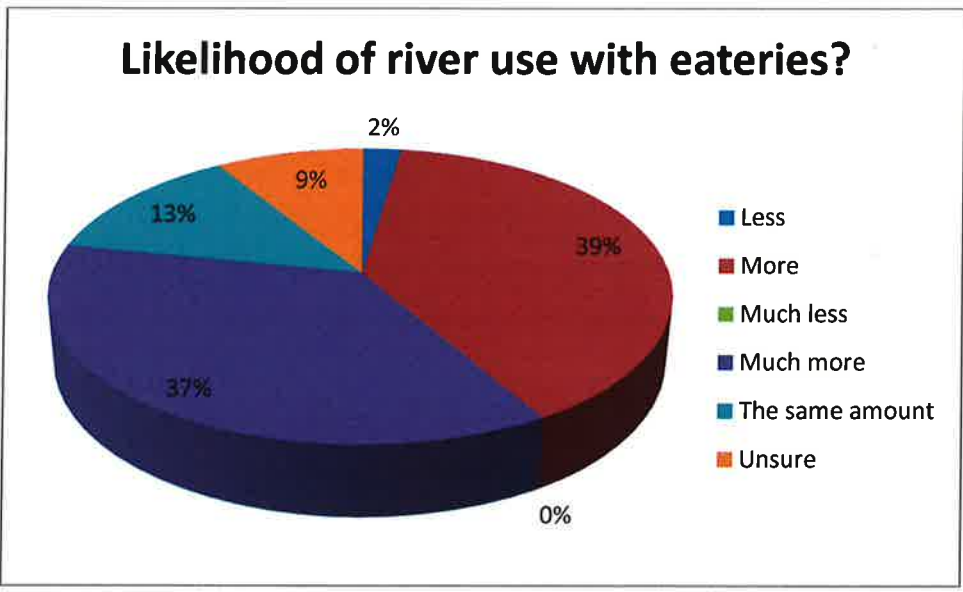
8.

	Likelihood of river use if cleaner/greener?
Less	4
More	54
Much less	2
Much more	81
The same amount	23
Unsure	13



9.

	Likelihood of river use with eateries?
Less	4
More	70
Much less	0
Much more	65
The same amount	23
Unsure	16

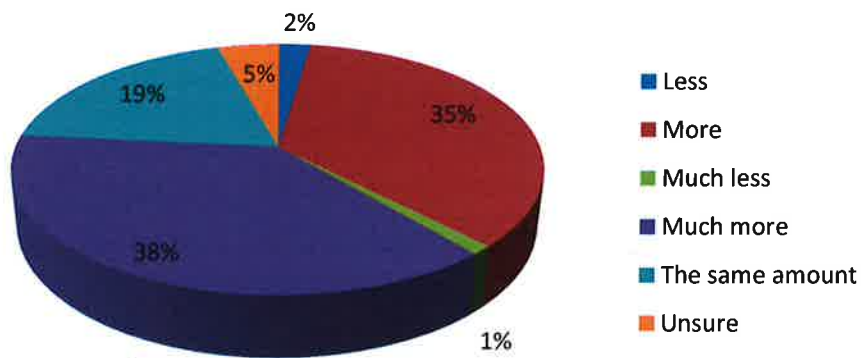


10.

Likelihood
of use
with
paths and
sports
facilities?

Less	4
More	63
Much less	2
Much more	67
The same amount	34
Unsure	8

Likelihood of use with paths and sports facilities?



11.

The numbers below are presented in percentages. The results of these particular tables, respectively, combine the following six pairs of answers: 1) much less and less, 2) very unhappy and unhappy, 3) very happy and happy, 4) very bad and bad, 5) much more and more, and 6) very important and important into the singular corresponding responses 1) less, 2) not happy, 3) happy, 4) bad, 5) more, and 6) important.

1. How happy are you with the current state of the Anacostia River?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
Happy	20	10	13
Not happy	48	58	57
Neutral	18	13	21

2. Is living near the Anacostia River appealing to you?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
Yes	50	48	45
No	40	25	35
Unsure	10	27	20

3. How significant is the Anacostia River to your family?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
Important	63	43	64
Somewhat imp	22	25	20
Not important	13	17	4

4. How important is the Anacostia River to your community?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
Important	82	81	76
Somewhat imp	10	12	14
Not important	2	4	3

5. Who do you feel is concerned about the Anacostia River?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
Business owners	14	15	14
DC officials	17	14	12
Environmentalists	28	33	29
Federal government	13	9	14
Residents	28	29	31

6. Is the Anacostia River a good place to spend time with family and friends?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
Good	54	42	52
Bad	17	12	11
Okay	25	31	27

7. Is the rehabilitation and preservation of the Anacostia River important to you?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
Important	77	93	85
Somewhat imp	19	5	12
Not important	4	2	3

8. Are you or a family member engaged in activities related to the recovery of the Anacostia River?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
Yes	34	17	16
No	53	76	75
Unsure	13	7	9

9. Would you be more or less likely to use the Anacostia River if it were cleaner and greener?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
More	76	78	77
Same	11	10	13
Less	13	2	3
Unsure	11	10	7

10. Would you be more or less likely to use the Anacostia River if it had new places to eat?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
More	70	85	76
Same	19	5	13
Less	2	0	2
Unsure	9	8	9

11. Would you be more or less likely to use the Anacostia River if it had new exercise paths and sports facilities?

	<u>CBP</u>	<u>EWHB</u>	<u>OLPH</u>
More	85	85	73
Same	13	13	19
Less	0	0	2
Unsure	2	2	5

III. Qualitative Analysis

Statistics have implications and for each question patterns emerged in the answers that shed light on the thoughts and experiences of project participants. The patterns noted reflect the ways in which these congregations are different and similar in relation to the Anacostia River.

This survey indicates that the majority of respondents are unhappy with the current state of the river. The answer to this first question also reflected a degree of ambivalence about river conditions. Further investigation is required to better understand the particular concerns and motivations respondents have. For example, in response to this same question, 10%-20% said they were happy with the status quo. Additional exploration may reveal the context and deeper meaning behind these conflicting answers.

Most respondents say they find living near the Anacostia River both individually appealing and significant for their families. Forty percent of individuals associated with the Covenant Baptist Pantry (CBP) answered no to the appeal of being close proximity to the river. One quarter of persons associated with the East Washington Heights Baptists church (EWHB) said living near the river was unappealing. This number for Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) in response to question two was 35%.

Most of the congregants questioned reported that the river was important to their communities. Between 76% and 82% checked important or very important in response to question four. Environmentalists and local residents received the highest numbers in response to question five which asked what category of person is most concerned about river conditions. This pattern repeated itself with each of the three congregations. CBP and EWHB found the federal government to be the least concerned entity while members of OLPH chose DC officials for this answer.

The findings associated with question five may indicate that representatives for local and national government do not have the trust of residents. These answers may also imply that respondents see promise in the prospect of residents and environmentalists working together. Perhaps this is an area in which the investment of resources could yield valuable results. Supplementary data can aid in clarifying these additional questions.

Regarding question six, respondents see the Anacostia River as a good place to spend time with friends and family. A few went so far as to express a longing for past periods when they enjoyed the waterfront in this way. Respondents associated with the CBP circled good 54% of the time, followed by OLPH at 52% and EWHB at 42%.

Unequivocal responses were given to question seven which asked whether or not the rehabilitation and preservation of the river was important. Ninety-three percent of EWHB respondents answered this was important or very important, followed by 85% of OLPH and 77% of persons associated with CBP. Regarding question eight, the majority of respondents said they are not involved with activities oriented around river recovery. CBP members had the highest number of persons involved – 34%. These data suggest there are local residents poised to assist whose energies are yet to be tapped. Further research may help researchers develop approaches to incorporating more residents into preservation efforts.

The final three questions of the survey concern the likely use of the Anacostia River after three types of improvements. The answers received indicate that the majority of respondents would welcome a cleaner river, as well as the availability of restaurants and opportunities to use paths and sports facilities. Eighty-five percent of respondents associated with EWHB would be more likely to patronize eateries. Both CBP and EWHB had that same number - 85% - when asked if they would be likely to use the river if amenities promoting physical activity were available. However, specific information remains unknown. Researchers do not know, for example, what particular types of facilities for eating and exercising respondents would most want to patronize and utilize.

IV. Paths Toward Further Understanding

This project is one key step toward understanding community members' attitudes and behaviors in relation to the Anacostia River. The collection of qualitative data can make an important contribution to this process. Moreover, being anchored by clear-cut project goals can help researchers formulate additional data-gathering strategies. For example, findings can be used to encourage community-based development, inform policy makers of local conditions, or help forge alliances among varied segments of the local populace.

To understand more about the views and experiences of local residents, contextualization is needed and this can be achieved in a handful of ways. Context can be enhanced by knowing more about the members of these three congregations from which the quantitative data have been collected. For example, specific social variables such as age, gender, place of origin, and/or occupation can help researchers uncover patterns connected to the needs and opinions of different types of people. These details can also help policymakers orient their strategies around a broad set of populations.

It is also important for respondents to have a firm grasp on the meaning of the questions they are asked. Thirteen percent of respondents associated with CBP said they were less likely to use the river if it was cleaner. Such answers beg further questions about the extent to which individuals understand these queries or the implications of the questions asked of them.

There are also instances where respondents may have multiple answers in mind but are limited to only providing one. Question one, which assess happiness with the current state of the river, provides an example of this problem. Respondents may be happy with some aspects of the river and unhappy with others but they do not have an opportunity to elaborate on their answers.

Additional queries can be designed as a way to follow up on survey questions. For example question two asking if living near the river is appealing could be further explored by finding out what factors contribute to an appreciation of the Anacostia. Relatedly, researchers could benefit from knowing why the river is significant for households and why some feel the river is important to their community. These challenges can be overcome with the use of qualitative research strategies.

Although such approaches are more costly to implement and labor intensive, qualitative methods for gathering information such as oral history collection, participant-observation, and face-to-face, open-ended interviews can lead researchers to data that are nuanced and beneficial.

V. Respondent Comments

Below are the opinions of seventeen respondents who wrote comments on their survey sheets.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

1. #19

This respondent's answers reveal this individual is an older, long term resident. This person lamented the removal of trees, saying "50 years ago we had picnics by the river regularly. Once the trees were cut down it is not an attractive place to take our families." This person also made the following points:

- Environmentalists and officials did not speak up about tree removal
- It is not the local residents playing soccer in the park
- She/he prefers homemade over commercial food for park outings
- Small playground and lack of shade prohibitive to park use
- Fishing and canoeing activities should be restored

Wrote "plant trees and shrubs" at the bottom of survey sheet

2. #41

This respondent said there is a lot of potential in living by the river. Commented that local residents, in addition to soccer teams from Va. Need access to park and said, "I love to drive through the park and look at the river for meditation and to watch the birds."

3. #74

Alongside answer for question one which asked, "How happy are you with the current state of the river?" this respondent wrote "11th St Bridge project"

4. #83

This respondent indicated that publicity for the events taking place on the river are not displayed at the Giant and other places where local residents go on a daily basis.

5. #142

Written on bottom of page:

We also should be more concerned about what is going into the sewers that lead to the river. Put more grates around the sewers so that grass and other clippings don't go in the sewer.

6. #154

This self-identified native Anacostian said it used to be a pleasure to live by the river and great to spend time with family members there. Also this individual said their doctor recommends exercise.

7. #159

Does not want to see the area commercialized

Covenant Baptist Pantry

8. #5

Wrote at the bottom of page "being born a Washingtonian 39 years ago, the Anacostia River was a place to look upon and be proud. Now it looks unclean and unsafe

9. #9

Mr. C. Weekly signed at the bottom of the page

10. #15

Not a good place to spend time with family and friends any more
Used to be significant to the family

11. #17

Commented "it stinks" next to question - is living near the river appealing to you

12. #18

Someone in their family has plans to get involved in recovery actions

13. #19

Listed name but I couldn't decipher it; initials PH

14. #26

Emphasized question #6 spending family time "at the park"

Also listed an extra yes for them being more likely to use the park if it were cleaner

15. #31

Commented "needs to have more facilities and more room for eating likes more tables"

16. #48

Commented "don't use facilities because there is no parking in DC and when it is it is expensive unlike in Maryland where you can go et and play and the parking is free and accessible"

East Washington Heights Baptist

17. #16

River used to be good place to spend time with family and friends