



2022 Socioeconomic Research of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site

Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)



The Vanderbilt Mansion.
NPS

2022 Socioeconomic Research of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site: Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)

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Abstract

A strong mandate and need for socioeconomic monitoring are expressed in the NPS strategic goals for science, in statements by the NPS leadership, and the report of the Second Century Commission. This mandate resulted in a pilot socioeconomic monitoring study in 2015/2016 at a sample of park units across the U.S.; the current study uses outcomes from the first stage of the pilot program and progresses into a second stage of the pilot process at 24 NPS units across the United States.

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site (Vanderbilt Mansion) was selected as one of these units. This report informs core issues of visitor use management and develops a deeper, contemporary understanding of who visits Vanderbilt Mansion and what they do during their visit. It uses a two-phased survey methodology to capture a representative sample of visitor information, characteristics, and behavior: (1) an on-site intercept survey conducted via tablet, and (2) a follow up (mail-back and/or online survey) for full trip details. The results are organized by these two phases and are intended to assist park managers in understanding current utilization and perception of park resources, operations and potential issues, as well as to facilitate communication and decision-making processes within the park and between the park and its local partners and stakeholders.

The revised version of this report corrects previous errors identified in Figures 8 and 15 and includes minor editorial, formatting, and accessibility updates. No substantive changes have been made to the findings or conclusions presented in the original 2022 report.

Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) has both a strong mandate and need for socioeconomic research. This is expressed in the NPS strategic goals for science, in statements by the NPS leadership, in the report of the Second Century Commission, and through the Department of the Interior priorities for 2018–2022. Additionally, a recent U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report identified the needs to better understand and monitor customer experience dimensions where results more directly link to investments made. The need for socioeconomic research and monitoring also was identified in an external review of the NPS Social Science Program and supported in the 2008 Interior Appropriations Bill Joint Explanatory Statement.

This mandate resulted in a pilot socioeconomic monitoring study in 2015/2016 at a sample of park units across the U.S., previously described as “Phase One.” The current study uses outcomes from the 2015/2016 pilot program and progresses into “Phase Two” of the pilot process at 24 NPS units across the United States. Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site (Vanderbilt Mansion) was selected as one of these units. Phase Two seeks to further explore visitor demographics and characteristics, applying recommendations from the 2015/2016 Phase One pilot program and validating instrument and method refinements. It is part of the program designed to collect data from in-park visitors at a broad agency level in order to best represent information needs regarding visitors across the National Park System. Data collected during the 2022 Phase Two sampling period¹ are intended to inform individual park managers of key information about their visitors and allow for analysis of data at the agency level for future implementation.

The purpose of this study is to inform core issues of visitor use management, management solutions, and to develop a current and deeper understanding of who visits Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, what they do during their visit, and their spending profile. The results of the study are intended to assist Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site managers in understanding current utilization and perceptions of park resources, operations, and issues that may exist due to increasing visitation, and facilitating communication and decision processes within the park and between the park and its local partners and stakeholders.

The study was conducted by a large-scale research team from Otak, Inc., RRC Associates, Inc., and the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana.

¹ It is important to note that during the 2022 Phase Two sampling period, some aspects of the visitor profiles (e.g., perceptions and behavior) may have been impacted, to varying degrees, by the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Hudson River at Bard Rock, Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site.
NPS

Methods

The study used a two-phased survey methodology to capture a representative sample of visitor information, characteristics, and behavior:

1. An on-site intercept survey conducted via tablet, and
2. A follow-up (mail-back and/or online) survey for full trip details.

This comprehensive two-phase approach provides the necessary information to make on-the-ground decisions using immediate feedback from the intercept survey while also capturing key in-depth information on visitor spending profiles and trip characteristics for long-term planning. Additionally, the tablet survey was kept brief to ensure the visitor's experience was not altered. The methods also permit a larger sample to be collected on key questions of interest.

Study Area

The Vanderbilt Mansion local area map is shown in Figure 1. The local area around Vanderbilt Mansion consists of Dutchess, Columbia, and Ulster counties in New York. Within Vanderbilt Mansion, the study area was comprised of four locations. Table 1 shows more details about sampling locations. The locations and volumes of surveyor effort were determined based on historic visitor volumes and distribution across the park's main areas.

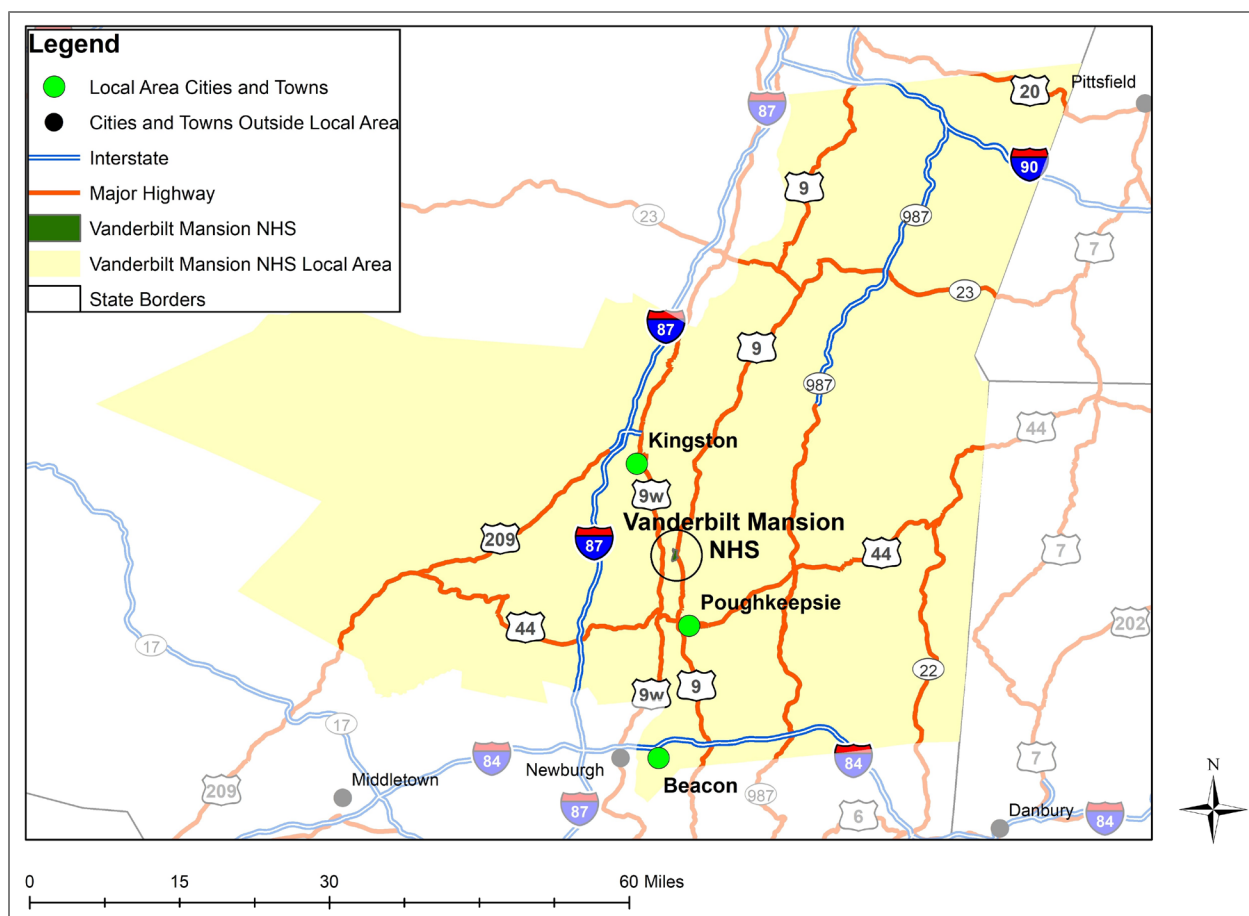


Figure 1. Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site local area map.

NPS

Table 1. Information about sampling locations in Vanderbilt Mansion.

Intercept Site	Completed Intercept Surveys	
	Number of Surveys	Percent of Surveys
Visitor Center	270	29.0%
Parking Lot	195	21.0%
Bard Rock	227	24.4%
Formal Gardens	238	25.6%

Sampling Period and Procedure

Intercept Survey

The on-site intercept survey was developed to collect rapid visitor information via tablet-based responses, which were then analyzed and provided for park managers within several weeks of conclusion of data collection. This effort allowed for immediate management action if needed.

The intercept sampling was conducted during the period of August 13th to 22nd, 2022. A sample of visitors was intercepted while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion across the designated locations listed in Table 1, above. All respondents were visitors on foot at these locations.

Surveyors approached potential respondents at the site to introduce the purpose of the study and ask them to participate in a short 5–7-minute survey about their experience in Vanderbilt Mansion (NPS 2022). If the visitor was eligible (at least 18 years of age, not a Vanderbilt Mansion employee, and had not previously taken the survey) and agreed to participate in the study, the surveyor verbally administered the survey questions and recorded the responses on a handheld tablet device. If the visitor did not agree, surveyors asked if they would be willing to answer three non-response bias questions (see Non-Response Bias Analysis section). Upon complete or partial refusal, the surveyor would thank the visitor for their time, log the non-response, and approach the next visitor group.

At the end of the intercept survey, visitors were invited to participate in a follow-up survey by mail-back or online response. Those who agreed to participate were given an envelope containing a printed copy of the follow-up survey and a hyperlink and instructions for accessing it online. As part of the intercept protocol, surveyors logged a unique identifier (four-digit code) from the envelope into the tablet for future connection to the follow-up survey.

Therefore, four potential outcomes were possible when intercepting visitors (see Table 2):

1. Complete refusal, refusing to answer any questions, including non-response bias questions;
2. Partial refusal, answering non-response questions but nothing further;
3. Complete intercept, but refuse to take follow-up;
4. Complete intercept and take follow-up.

Table 2. Response outcomes—Vanderbilt Mansion intercept Survey.

Outcome	Total
Eligible visitors contacted	1,083
Complete refusals	40
Partial refusals (non-response questions completed)	113
Intercept surveys completed	930
Follow-up surveys distributed	807
Intercept response rate	85.9%

During the sampling period, four surveyors were stationed simultaneously at different sampling sites. Start times varied day-to-day and by location to capture a diverse sample of visitors across Vanderbilt Mansion. Each surveyor worked nine 7-hour days (six hours data collection and one-hour lunch break). Each surveyor had one day off during the 10-day sampling window.

Mail-Back/Online Survey

The follow-up mail-back/online survey was distributed to participating respondents who completed the intercept survey and then agreed to take a follow-up survey after completing their trip to Vanderbilt Mansion. This method extended data collection and asked participants to complete the survey after their visit either through a postage-paid envelope provided to them or online via a provided survey link. The follow-up survey covers visitor trip spending details, travel patterns, and perceptions of their recent visit (NPS 2022). Both the intercept survey and the follow-up survey were tagged with a unique identifier (four-digit code) for each respondent so their on-site tablet responses could be paired with their follow-up responses. Joining the two datasets provides a more complete picture of connecting in-park experiences and post-visit perceptions.

At the end of the intercept survey, respondents were asked for their physical mailing address or email address. This allowed for a reminder postcard or email to be sent to all contacts about a week following the end of each data collection period. This postcard or email thanked them for their original participation and encouraged them to complete the follow-up if they had not already done so.

Three weeks after postcard mailing, a second contact (with the same unique IDs) was delivered to all outstanding addresses/emails, noting that the individual's completed questionnaire had yet to be received. The mailed survey packets included replacement surveys and postage-paid, self-addressed return envelopes. A final contact was mailed/emailed to all remaining non-respondents four weeks after sending the second contact (i.e., first full replacement survey). Table 3 shows the response rate for the follow-up mail-back/online survey.

Table 3. Response rate—Vanderbilt Mansion follow-up mail-back/online survey.

Outcome	Total
Follow-up surveys distributed	807
Valid follow-up surveys completed	263
Response rate	32.6%

Non-Response Bias Analysis

To account for potential biases between respondents and non-respondents, three questions were asked of eligible visitors contacted who did not wish to participate in the on-site intercept survey. These three questions can then be compared to both those who completed the intercept survey only and those who completed both the intercept and follow-up surveys. With an intercept survey response rate of 85.9%, concern over *intercept* non-response is muted. Tables 4 through 6 below show results of bias testing between intercept-only and full survey respondents.

Table 4. Non-response bias question: “Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Vanderbilt Mansion?” Note: p-value = 0.05.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	144	54.8%	317	47.5%
No	119	45.2%	350	52.5%

Table 5. Non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?” Note: p-value = 0.30.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	261	99.2%	656	98.4%
No	2	0.8%	11	1.6%

Table 6. Non-response bias question: “On this trip away from home, have you [and your personal group] stayed, or will you stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in Vanderbilt Mansion and/or within the local area?” Note: p-value = 0.22.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	82	31.2%	236	35.4%
No	181	68.8%	431	64.6%

A chi-square test for homogeneity was performed for each of the three questions to evaluate differences between the groups. Using a p-value of 0.05, the distribution of responses among full survey respondents and intercept-only respondents differed significantly for one question: 1) Permanent/seasonal residency. Therefore, permanent/seasonal residents and day visitors are more heavily represented in the full responses as desired.

Results

Intercept Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 930 visitor intercept surveys conducted in Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site from August 13th to 22nd, 2022. All results are presented in this report, regardless of sample size, which varies by question. Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$. Categories on some questions may not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option. To preserve the data for additional analyses, outliers for open-ended numeric questions (e.g., nights spent, days in local area, etc.) have not been removed. Given these outliers, medians are shown instead of means throughout the report, in order to better represent the central tendency.

Questions 1–2: Visitor Residency

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they were permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Vanderbilt Mansion. If they did not reside permanently or seasonally in the local area, they were asked if they currently live in the U.S., and if so, for their ZIP code. Figure 2 depicts responses to this group of questions.

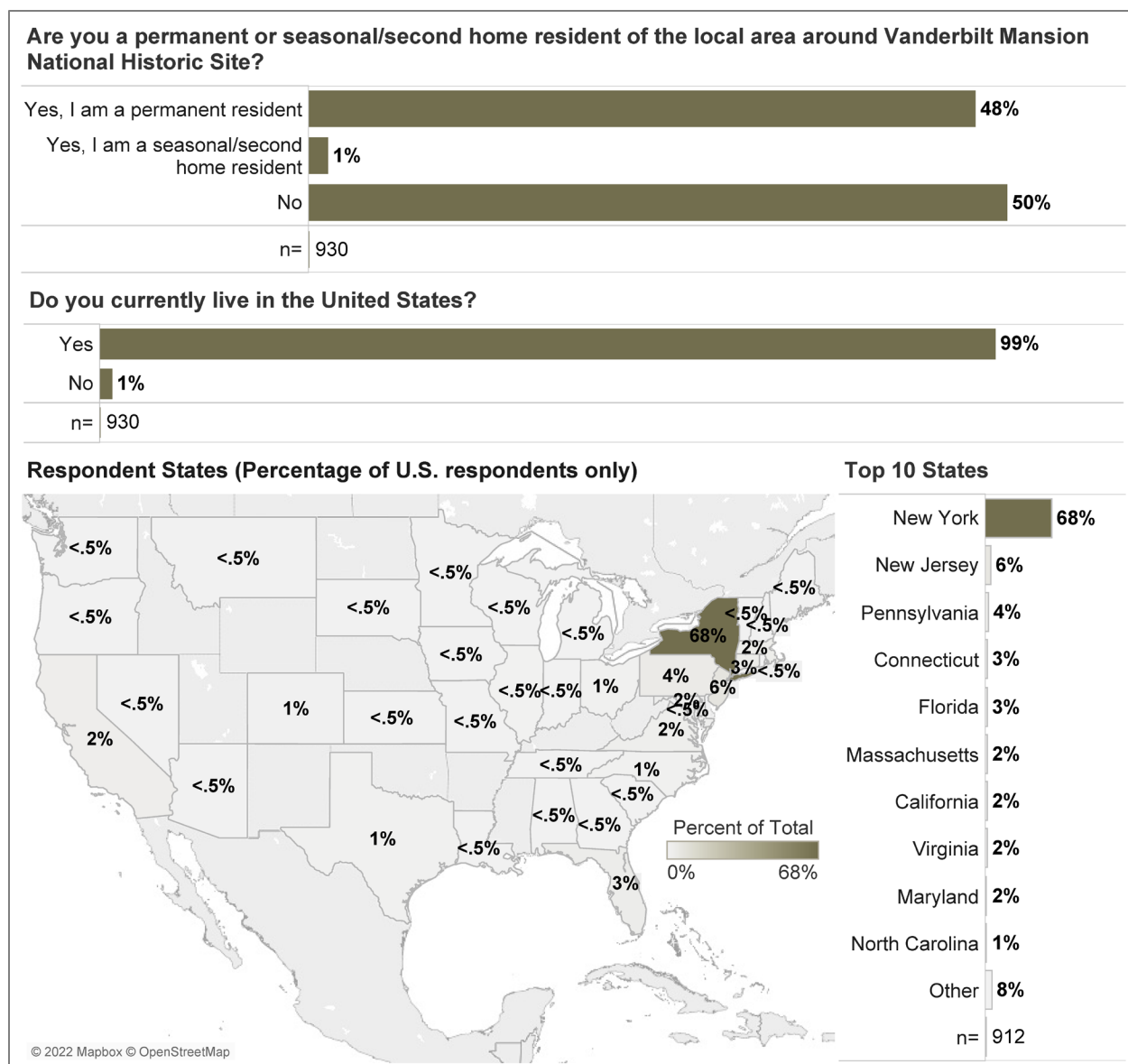


Figure 2. Visitor local residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors to Vanderbilt Mansion.
NPS

- Nearly half of respondents (a combined 49%) stated that they were either permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Vanderbilt Mansion.
- There was a large geographic concentration of visitors from New York (where Vanderbilt Mansion is located).
- Among the 99% of respondents currently residing in the U.S., 68% reside in New York, followed by New Jersey (6%).

Question 3: Trip Purpose

If respondents indicated that they were not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area, they were asked about the overall purpose for their trip away from home (Figure 3).

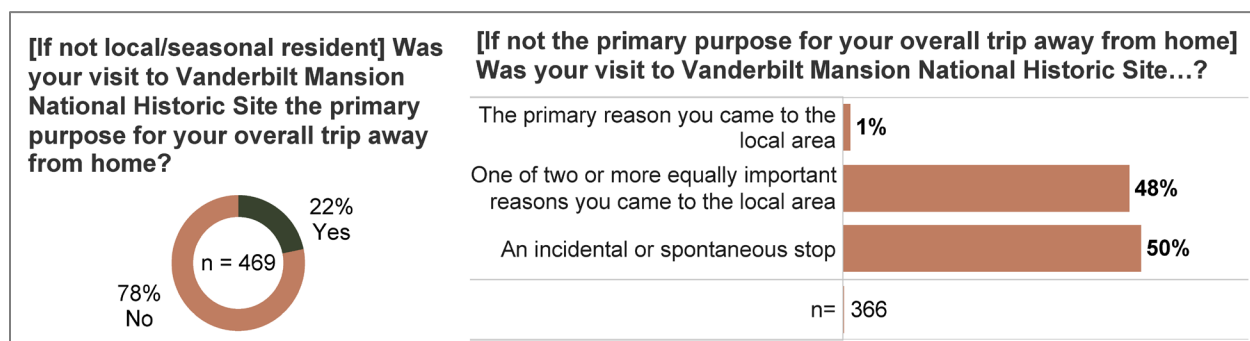


Figure 3. Role of Vanderbilt Mansion in overall trip purpose.

NPS

- For about three-quarters of non-local respondents (78%), visiting Vanderbilt Mansion was not the primary purpose for their overall trip away from home.
- Among those respondents for whom Vanderbilt Mansion was not their primary trip purpose, 50% stated that their visit to Vanderbilt Mansion was an incidental or spontaneous stop, while another 48% indicated that it was one of two or more equally important reasons they came to the local area.

Question 4: Length of Stay

If respondents indicated that they were not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Vanderbilt Mansion, they were asked how many days they planned to spend within that local area, including days spent in the park. All respondents, regardless of residency, were asked whether they would be staying overnight away from their permanent residence within the local area. Responses to both of these questions are depicted in Figure 4.

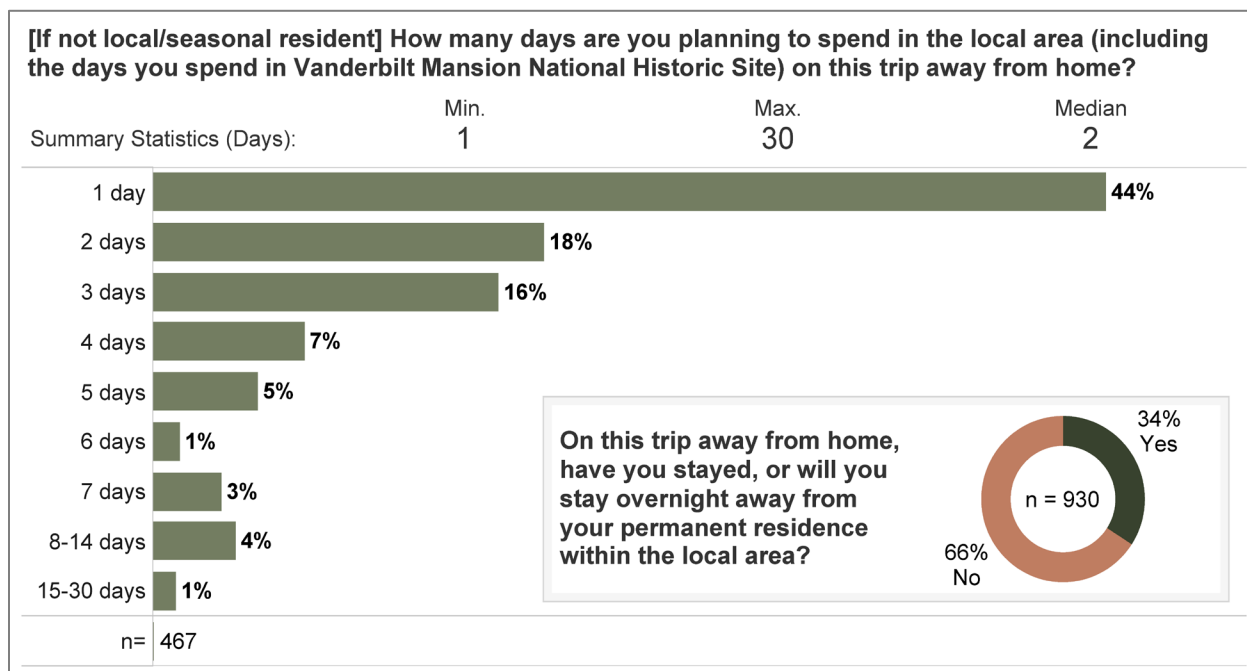


Figure 4. Time spent in the local area around Vanderbilt Mansion.

NPS

- A plurality of non-local respondents (44%) spent one day in the local area, while 18% spent 2 days and 16% spent 3 days. The median length of stay was 2 days.
- Additionally, about one-third of all respondents (34%; including permanent/seasonal residents) had stayed or planned to stay overnight away from their permanent residence in the local area.

Questions 5–6: Overnight Visitors

If respondents indicated that they stayed overnight in the local area, they were asked about the type(s) of accommodation they used or planned to use while there (Figure 5).

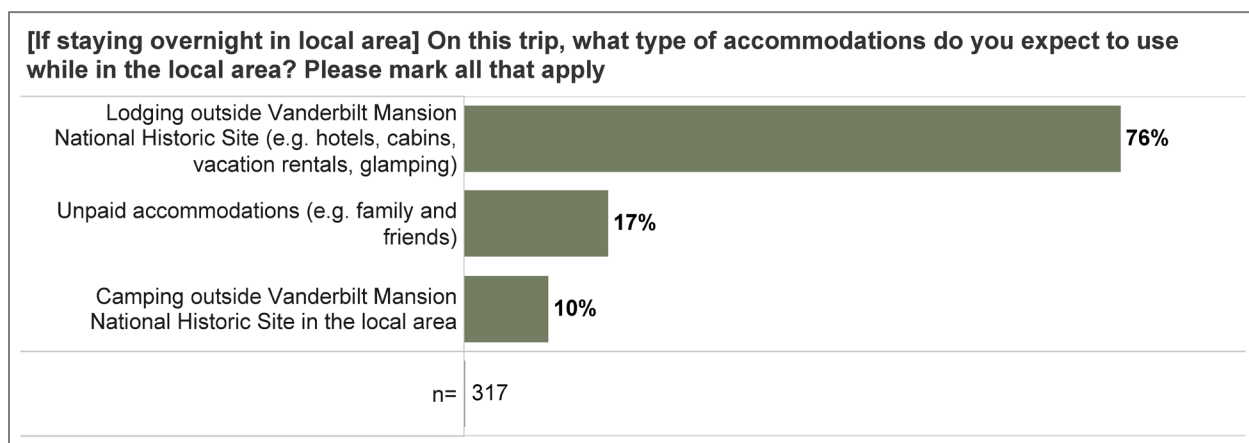


Figure 5. Accommodation types used in the local area around Vanderbilt Mansion.

NPS

- About three-quarters of overnight respondents (76%) stayed in lodging in the local area.
- This was followed in prevalence by unpaid accommodations (17%), and camping in the local area (10%).

Respondents were then asked to indicate the number of nights they spent or would spend in each accommodation type (Figure 6).

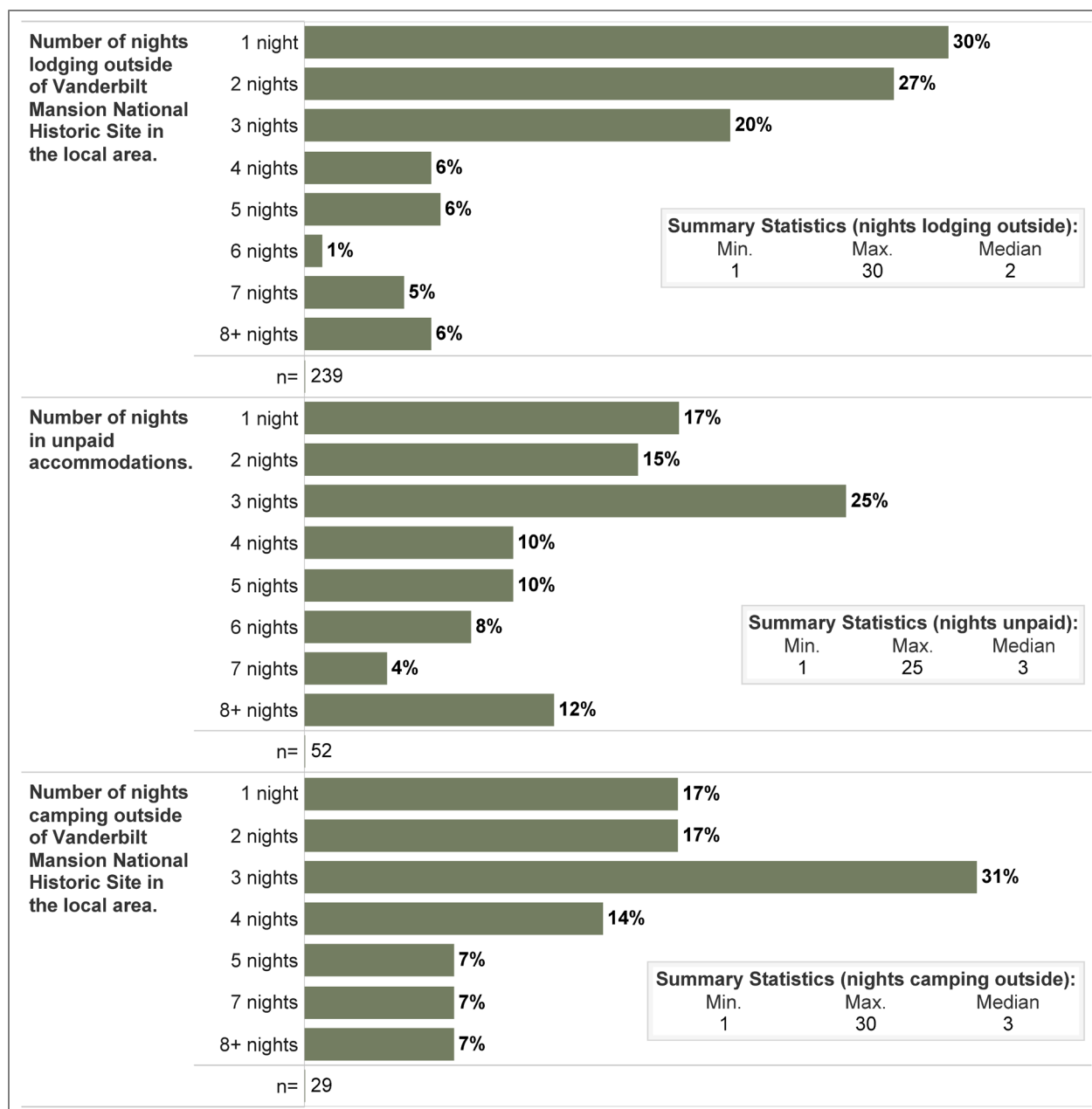


Figure 6. Number of nights spent in the local area around Vanderbilt Mansion, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 8](#).

NPS

- Among the 76% of overnight respondents who lodged outside of Vanderbilt Mansion in the local area (per Figure 5), the median length of stay was 2 nights. Over half (57%) lodged 2 nights or fewer in the local area this trip; 77% spent 3 nights or fewer.
- Among the 17% of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations in the local area (per Figure 5), the median length of stay was 3 nights.

- Among the 10% of overnight respondents who camped outside of Vanderbilt Mansion (per Figure 5), the median length of stay was 3 nights. Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$.

Questions 7–9: Party Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate how many adults (18 or older) and children (under 18) were in their personal group during their visit to Vanderbilt Mansion (Figure 7). A personal group was defined as the visitor and companions with whom they visited the park, such as a spouse, family, and/or friends, but visitors were informed not to account for the larger group with whom they may have traveled, such as a school, church, scout, or tour group.

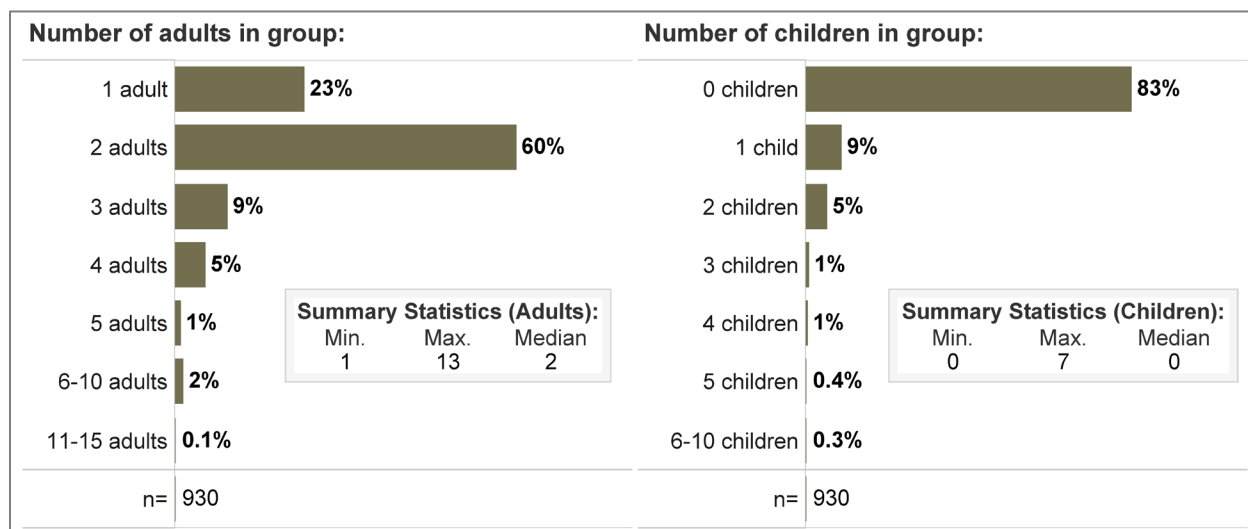


Figure 7. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 9](#).

NPS

- The median number of adults per group was 2. Most groups (60%) included 2 adults.
- Most groups (83%) did not include any children.

Respondents were then asked to provide the age of each member of their group (Figure 8).

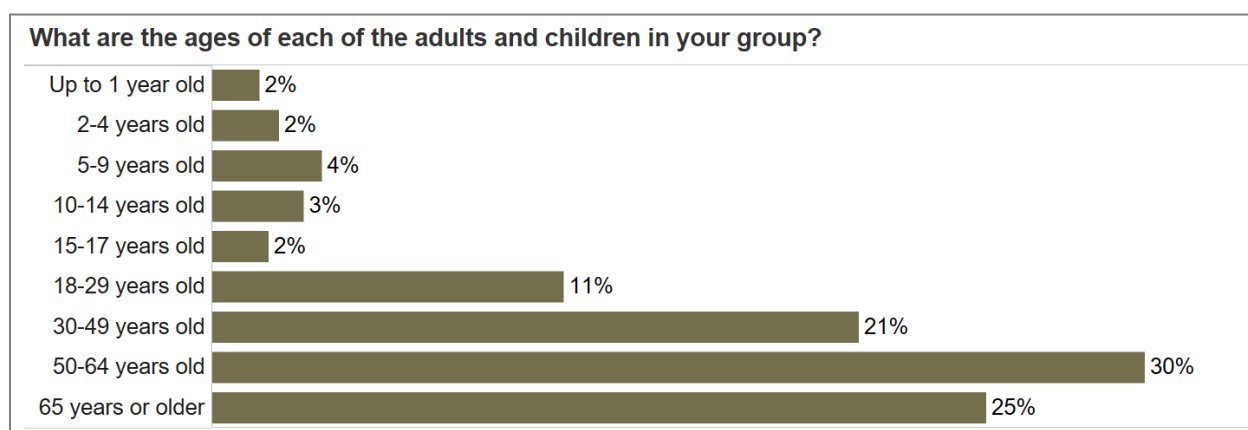


Figure 8. Age distribution of all members of respondent's personal group while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion.

NPS

- The most common age of the adults and children in a personal group was 50 to 64 years old (30%), followed by 65 years or older (25%), and 30–49 years old (21%).
- Children (i.e., visitors under 18 years old) accounted for a combined total of just 13% of group members.

Questions 11–14: Park Use Characteristics

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they planned to visit Vanderbilt Mansion for more than one day, and then a series of follow-up questions about the length of time they might spend in the park (Figure 9 and Table 7).

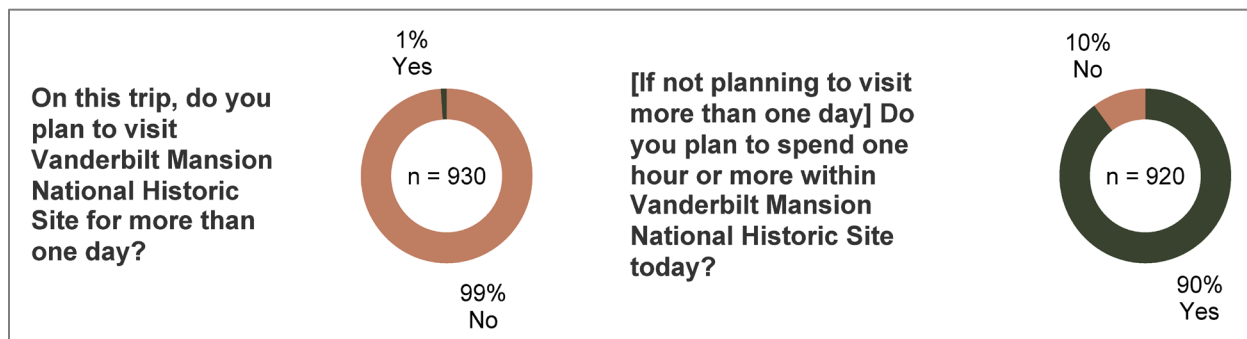


Figure 9. Duration of the respondent's trip to Vanderbilt Mansion.
NPS

Table 7. Amount of time spent within Vanderbilt Mansion.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not planning to spend one hour or more] How many minutes do you plan to spend within Vanderbilt Mansion today?	93	10	59	30
[If planning to spend less than a day, but one hour or more] How many hours do you plan to spend within Vanderbilt Mansion today?	825	1	14	2
[If planning to visit at least one day] How many days do you plan to spend within Vanderbilt Mansion on this trip?	10	1	5	2
[If planning to visit at least one day] On how many different days do you expect to enter the park?	10	1	5	2

- While visiting Vanderbilt Mansion, most visitors (99%) did not plan to spend more than one day in the park.
- Among the 99% of visitors who did not spend more than a day in Vanderbilt Mansion, most (90%) planned to spend one hour or more in the park. The median length of time spent in the park among this group was 2 hours.
- The remaining 1% of visitors planned to visit for more than one day; among those visitors, the median length of stay was 2 days.
- Those respondents who spent at least one day in the park were also asked on how many different days they expected to enter the park; the median answer was 2 days.

Next, respondents were asked to indicate the most recent entrance they used to enter Vanderbilt Mansion (Figure 10).

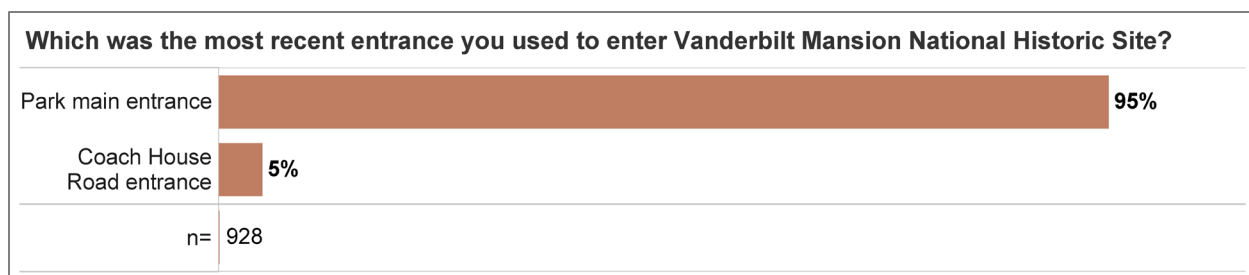


Figure 10. Most recent entrance used to enter Vanderbilt Mansion.

NPS

- The main park entrance was the most commonly used entrance to Vanderbilt Mansion (95%).
- The Coach House Road entrance was used by the remaining 5% of visitors.

Respondents were also presented with a list of locations within Vanderbilt Mansion and asked to indicate if they had been to or planned to visit them that day (Figure 11).

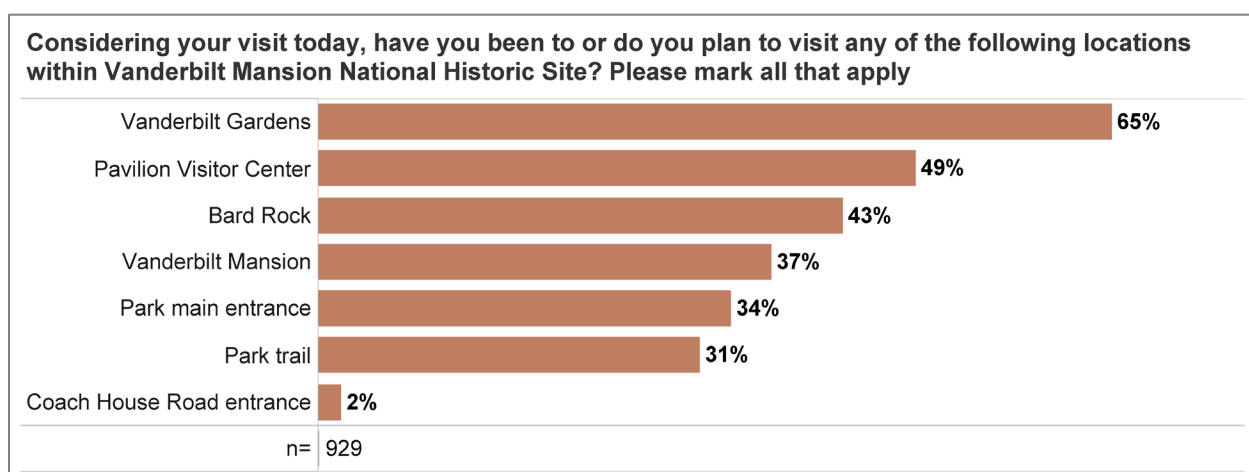


Figure 11. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to Vanderbilt Mansion.

NPS

- The most commonly visited location in Vanderbilt Mansion was Vanderbilt Gardens (65% of respondents had either been there or planned to visit it on their trip), followed by the Pavilion Visitor Center (49%) and Bard Rock (43%).
- The Coach House Road entrance was the least-visited location from the list provided, with only 2% of respondents reporting having visited or planning to visit.

Question 15: Transportation

Visitors were asked about the form of transportation they used to enter Vanderbilt Mansion on the day they were surveyed (Figure 12).

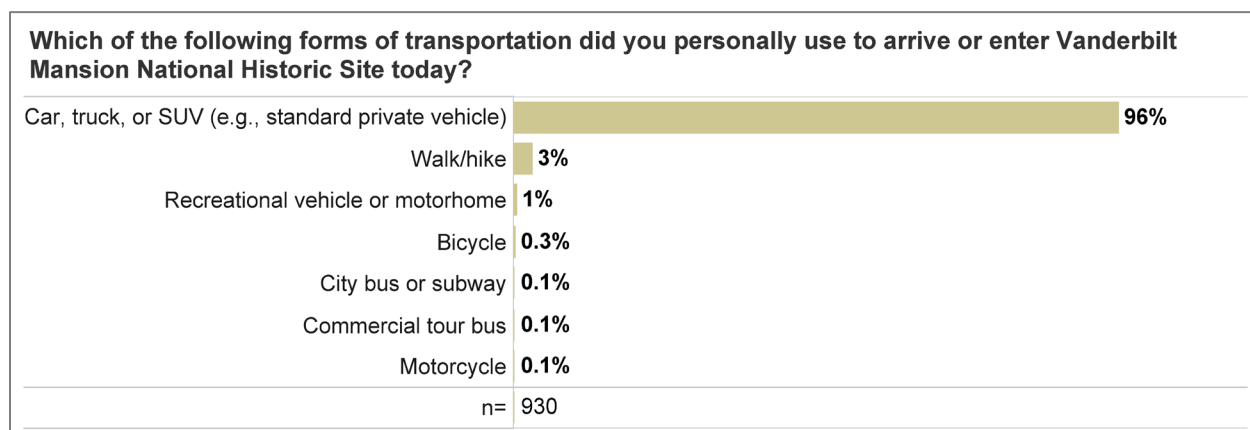


Figure 12. Form of transportation used to enter Vanderbilt Mansion on the day of the survey.

NPS

- The vast majority of respondents (96%) reported that they used their car, truck, or SUV to enter Vanderbilt Mansion on the day of the survey.
- This was followed distantly by visitors who walked or hiked into the site (3%), and those who used an RV or motorhome (1%).

If respondents entered the park using a multi-passenger private vehicle (i.e., car, truck or SUV; recreational vehicle or motorhome; or motorcycle), they were asked to indicate how many people were traveling in or on that vehicle (Figure 13).

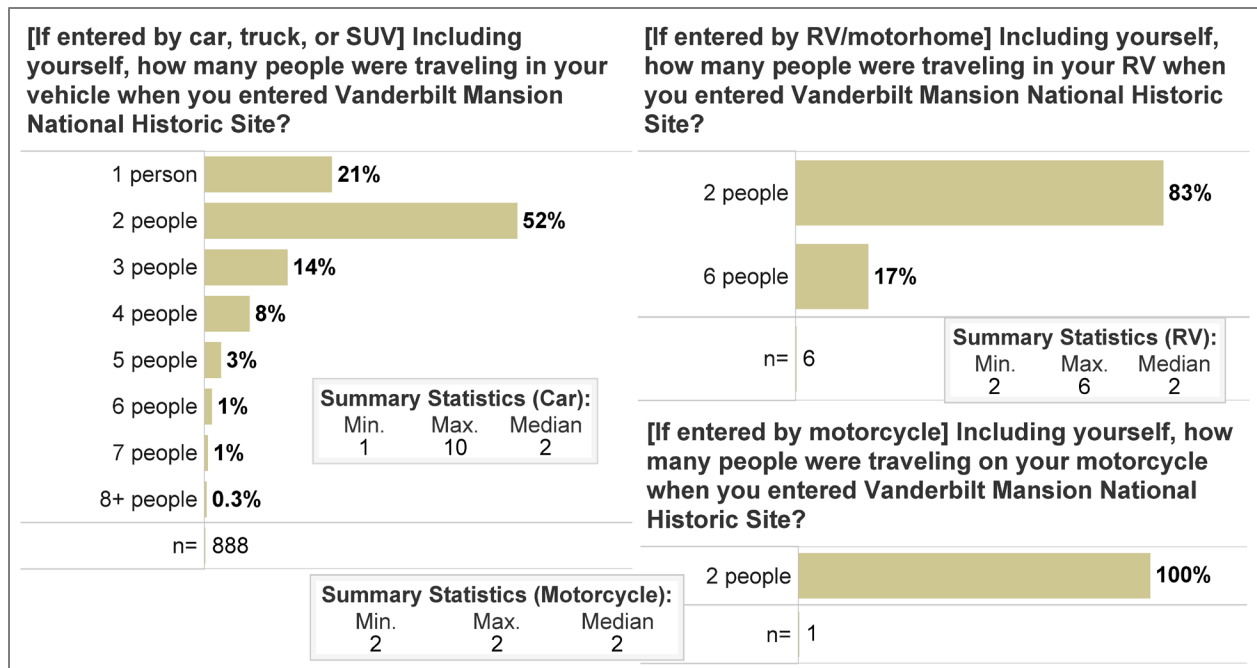


Figure 13. Number of people in or on respondent's vehicle when entering Vanderbilt Mansion. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 10](#).

NPS

- More than half of respondents traveling by car reported two people (52%). The next most common group size was 1 person (21%), followed by 3 people (14%).
- Most respondents entering Vanderbilt Mansion by RV/motorhome reported traveling in a group of 2 people (83%), followed by 6 people (17%). Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$.
- The only motorcyclists (100%) entered with 2 people. Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$.

Question 17: Previous Visits to Vanderbilt Mansion

Respondents were asked if they were first time visitors to Vanderbilt Mansion. Repeat visitors were then asked how many visits they have made to Vanderbilt Mansion in the last 12 months and the last five years (Figure 14).

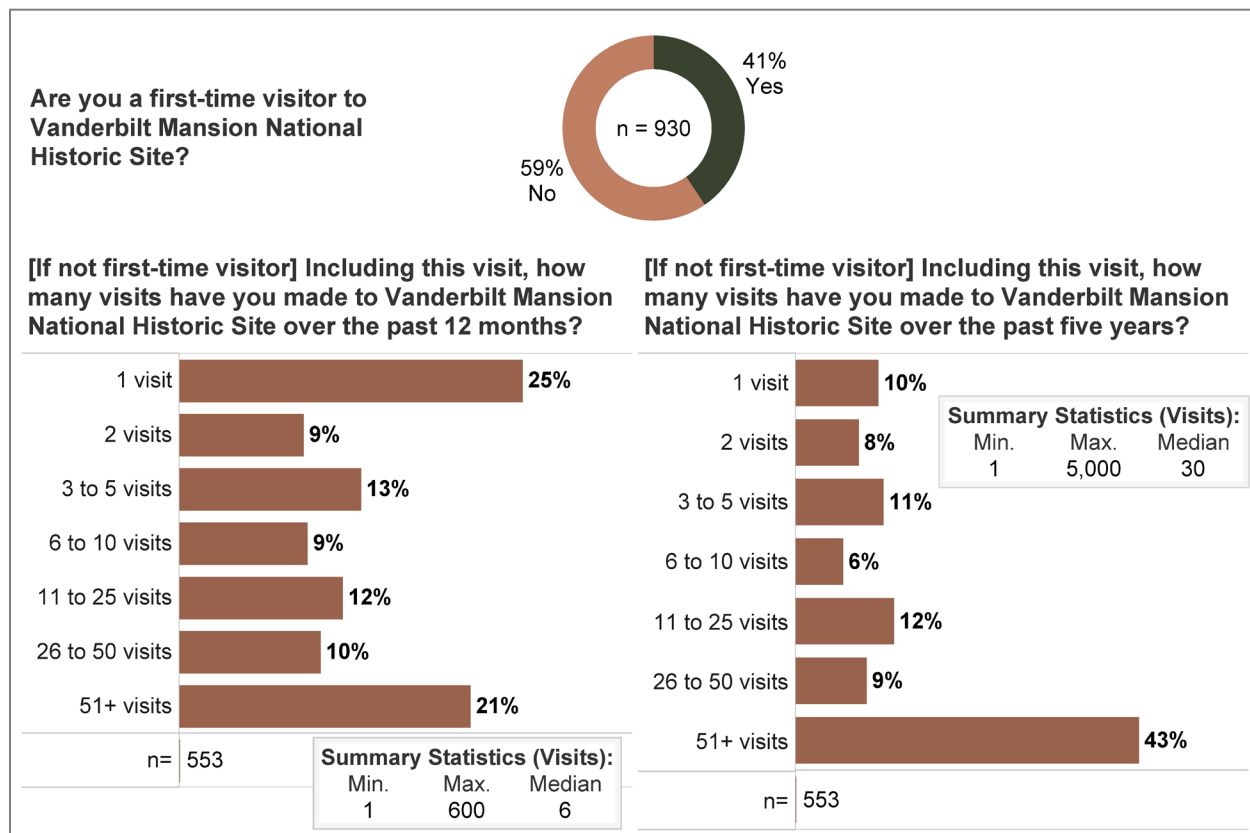


Figure 14. Previous visits to Vanderbilt Mansion. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 11](#).

NPS

- A majority of respondents (59%) were repeat visitors to Vanderbilt Mansion.
- Among the 59% of respondents who were repeat visitors, one-quarter (25%) were on their first visit in the past 12 months (i.e., had last visited more than a year ago).
- Most repeat visitors (90%) had visited at least one prior time in the past five years.
- The median number of visits made in the past five years was 30, including the current trip; 64% of repeat visitors had made more than 10 visits in the past five years.

Question 18: Previous Visits to Other NPS Units

Finally, respondents were asked how many visits they made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months (Figure 15).

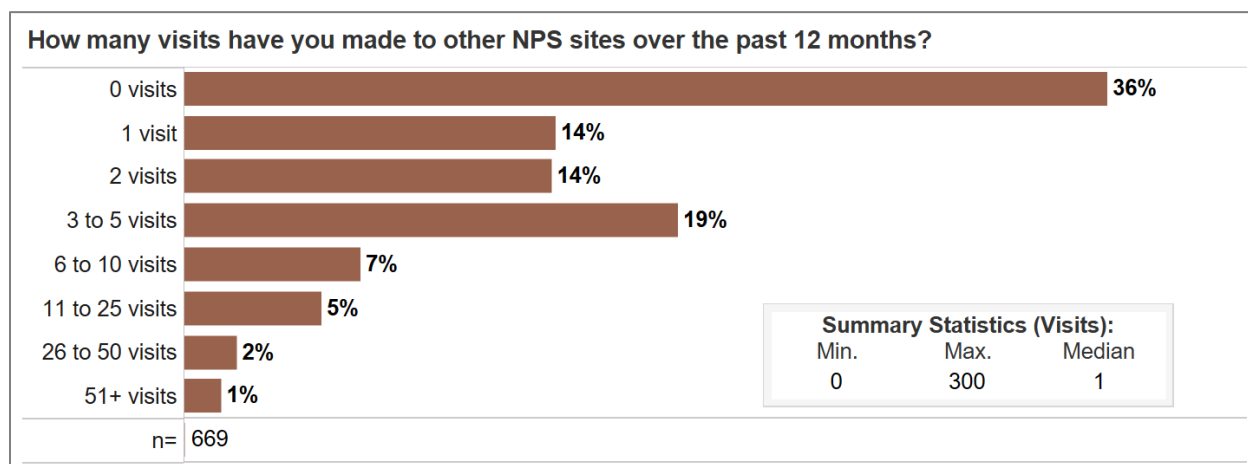


Figure 15. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 12](#).

NPS

- A majority of respondents (62%) had made at least one visit to other NPS site(s) in the past year.
- The median number of visits made to other NPS site(s) in the past 12 months was 1, though a combined 34% had made 3 or more visits in the past year.

Follow-Up Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 263 follow-up visitor surveys received by mail-back or online following fieldwork conducted in Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site in summer of 2022. Again, caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$, and categories on some questions may not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option.

Questions 1–2: Information About Vanderbilt Mansion

First, respondents were asked what sources they used to obtain information about Vanderbilt Mansion prior to their trip, and whether they had the information they needed on their trip (Figure 16).

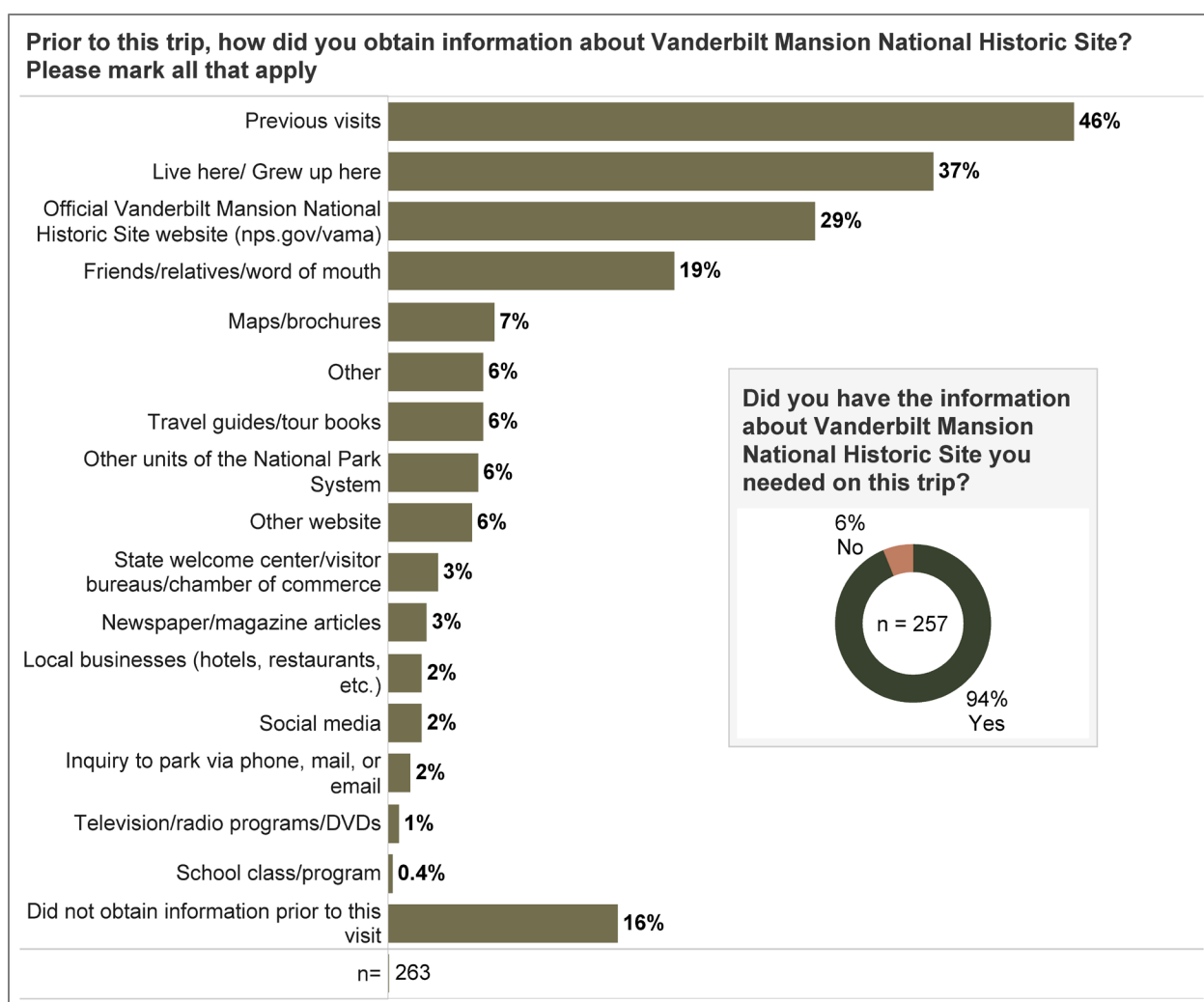


Figure 16. Sources used to obtain information about Vanderbilt Mansion prior to the trip.

NPS

- The most used resource was previous visits, with 46% of respondents reportedly using it. The second most common source was live here/grew up here (37%), followed by the official Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site website (29%), and friends/relatives/word of mouth (19%).
- In a follow-up question, 94% of respondents said that they had the information about Vanderbilt Mansion that they needed on their trip, while 6% indicated that there was information that they needed but did not have.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who did not have the information they needed on this trip were asked to elaborate. These comments are provided as an accompanying document for review.

Question 3: Transportation

While in the intercept survey, respondents indicated a mode of transportation they used to enter the park on the day of the intercept, the follow-up survey asked respondents to select all forms of transportation they personally used to travel from their home to Vanderbilt Mansion on their trip (Figure 17).

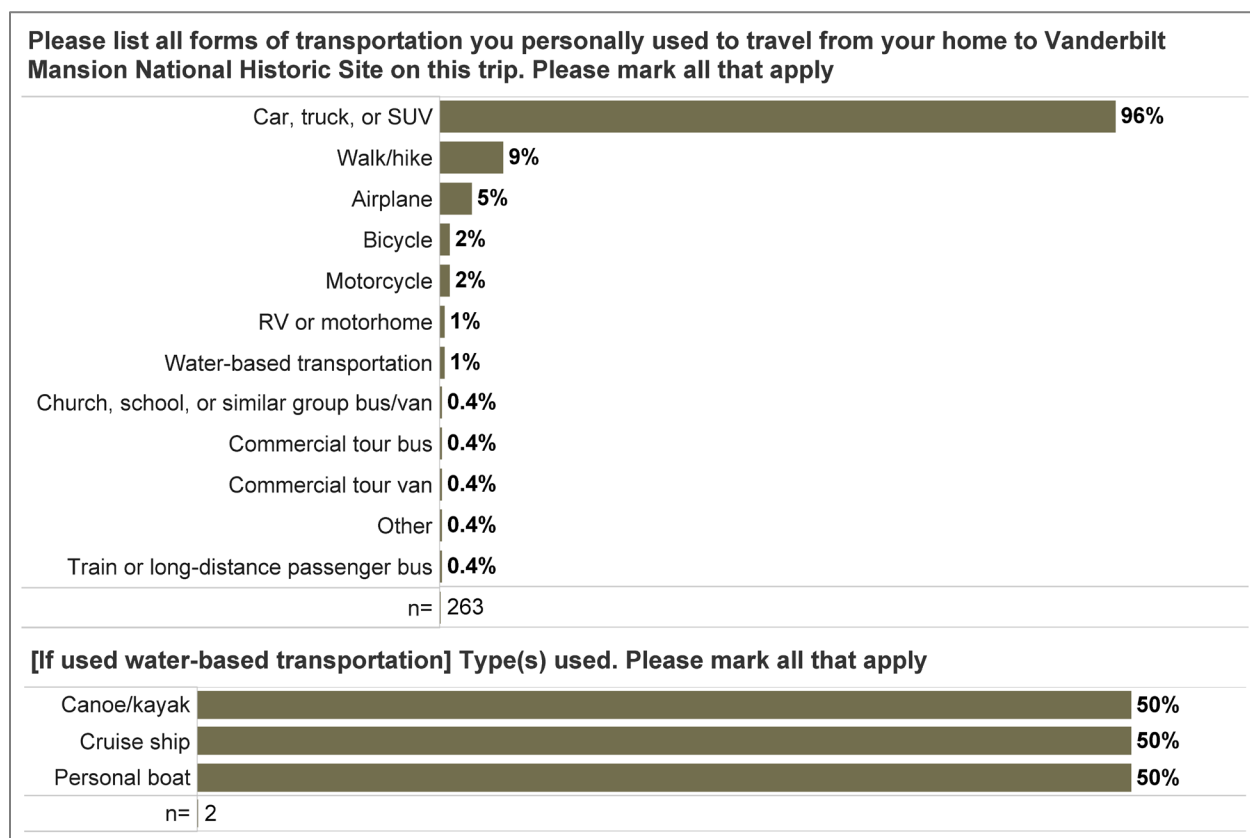


Figure 17. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to Vanderbilt Mansion on the recent trip.
NPS

- Nearly all respondents (96%) used a personal vehicle, such as a car, truck, or SUV, at some point during their trip from home to Vanderbilt Mansion.
- The second most common mode of travel was walk/hike (9%), followed by airplane (5%).

Question 4: Travel Party Composition

Respondents were asked what type of group they were with during their visit to Vanderbilt Mansion on the day of the survey (Figure 18).

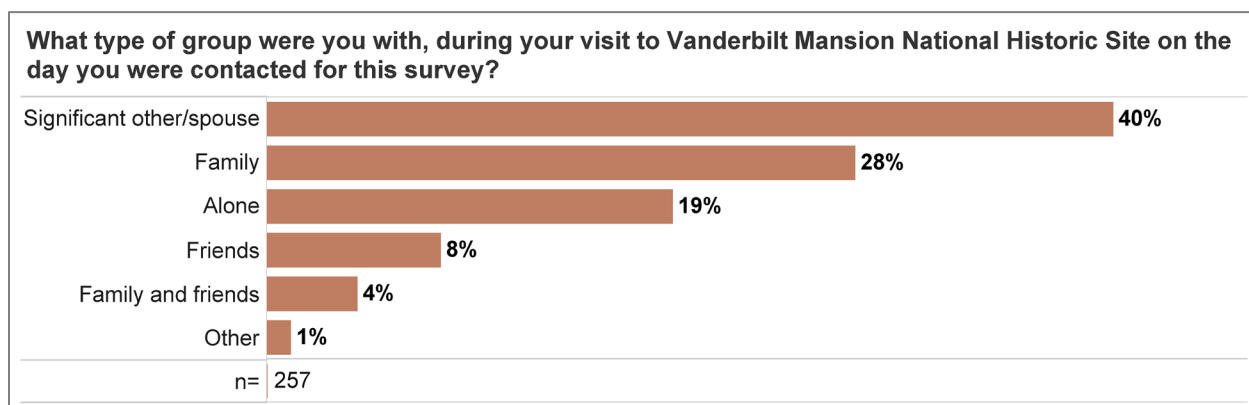


Figure 18. Travel party composition during Vanderbilt Mansion visit.

NPS

- A plurality of respondents (40%) visited Vanderbilt Mansion with their significant other or spouse on the day of the survey.
- More than a quarter of respondents (28%) explored Vanderbilt Mansion with their family, and another 19% visited the park alone.

Question 10: Entrance Fees

Respondents were asked to indicate which type of entrance fees applied to them personally on their most recent trip to Vanderbilt Mansion (Figure 19).

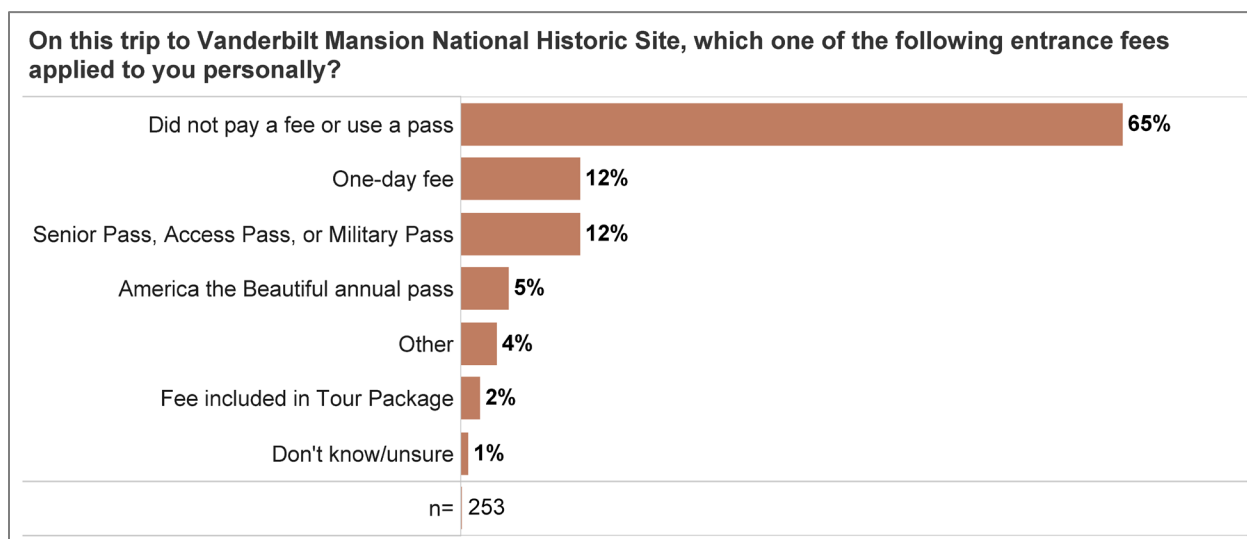


Figure 19. Entrance fees to enter Vanderbilt Mansion on the most recent trip.

NPS

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) reported not paying a fee or using a pass to enter Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site.
- In contrast, only 5% of respondents reported using an America the Beautiful annual pass, and another 12% entered using a Senior Pass, Access Pass, or Military Pass, while 12% of respondents entered using a Vanderbilt Mansion-specific pass or fee (i.e., annual pass, 7-day, or single-day entrance fee).

Questions 12–14: Trip Characteristics

Respondents were asked if they visited other National Park Service sites on their trip away from home (Figure 20).

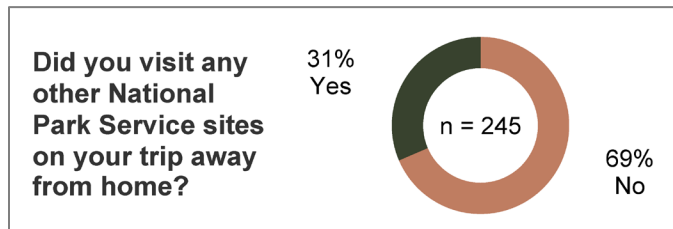


Figure 20. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.

NPS

- About one-third (31%) of all respondents had visited other NPS sites on their trip, while 69% identified Vanderbilt Mansion as the only NPS site they visited while away from home.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who had visited other NPS sites on their trip were asked to list which one(s). These comments are provided in an accompanying document.

Survey respondents were then asked to identify all activities that they participated in while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion, and which of those was their primary activity (Figure 21).

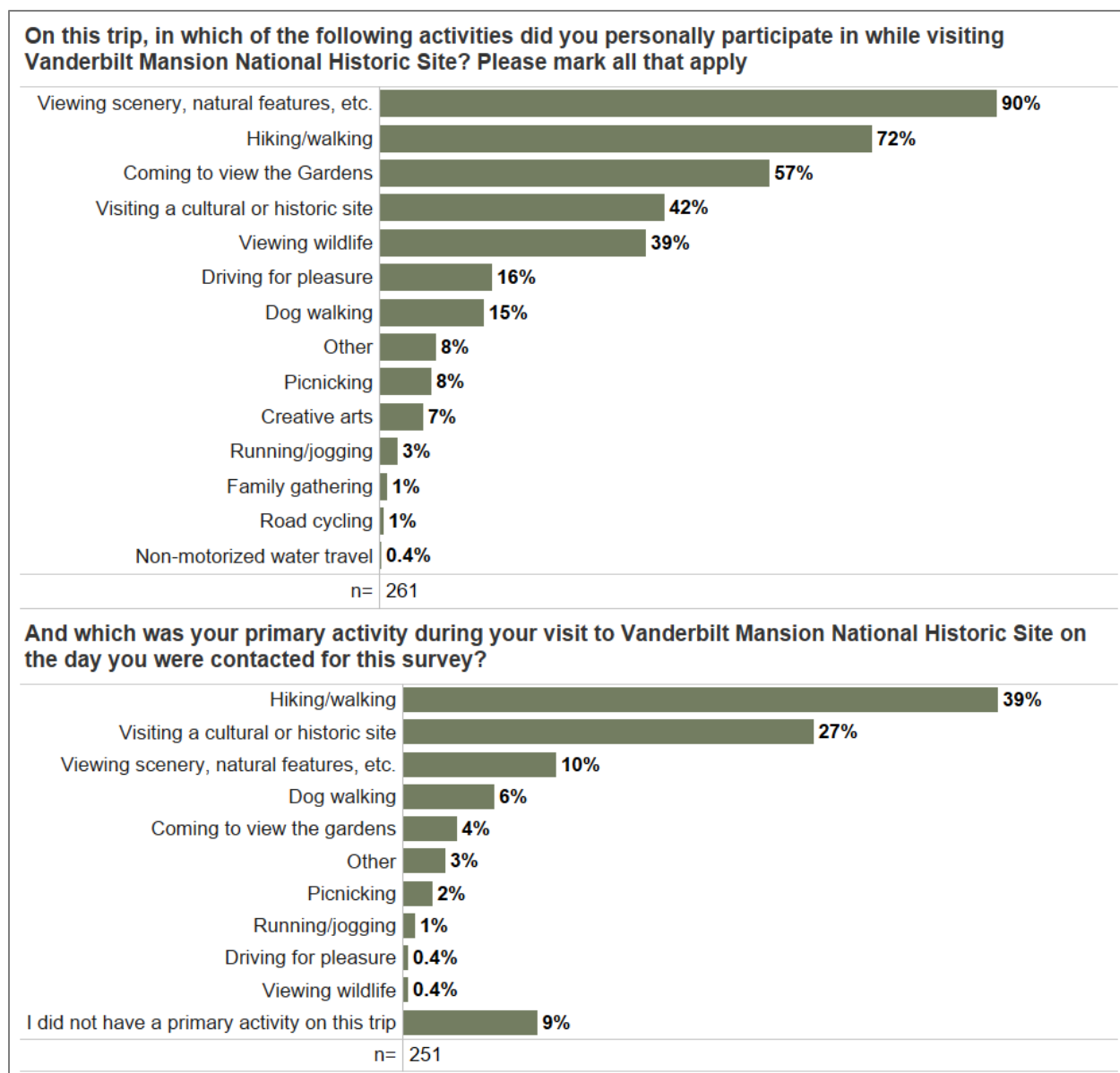


Figure 21. Participation in activities at Vanderbilt Mansion.

NPS

- Almost all visitors reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (90%), while a majority of visitors reported hiking/walking (72%), and coming to view the Gardens (57%).
- Picnicking, creative arts, running/jogging, and family gatherings were all uncommon activities (each reported by fewer than 10% of respondents).
- More than one-third of respondents (39%) reported hiking/walking as their primary activity, followed by visiting a cultural or historic site (27%).

Questions 15–16: Reasons to Visit

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of various reasons to visit Vanderbilt Mansion on their trip, then asked which of those was the most important reason for them to visit Vanderbilt Mansion (Figure 22).

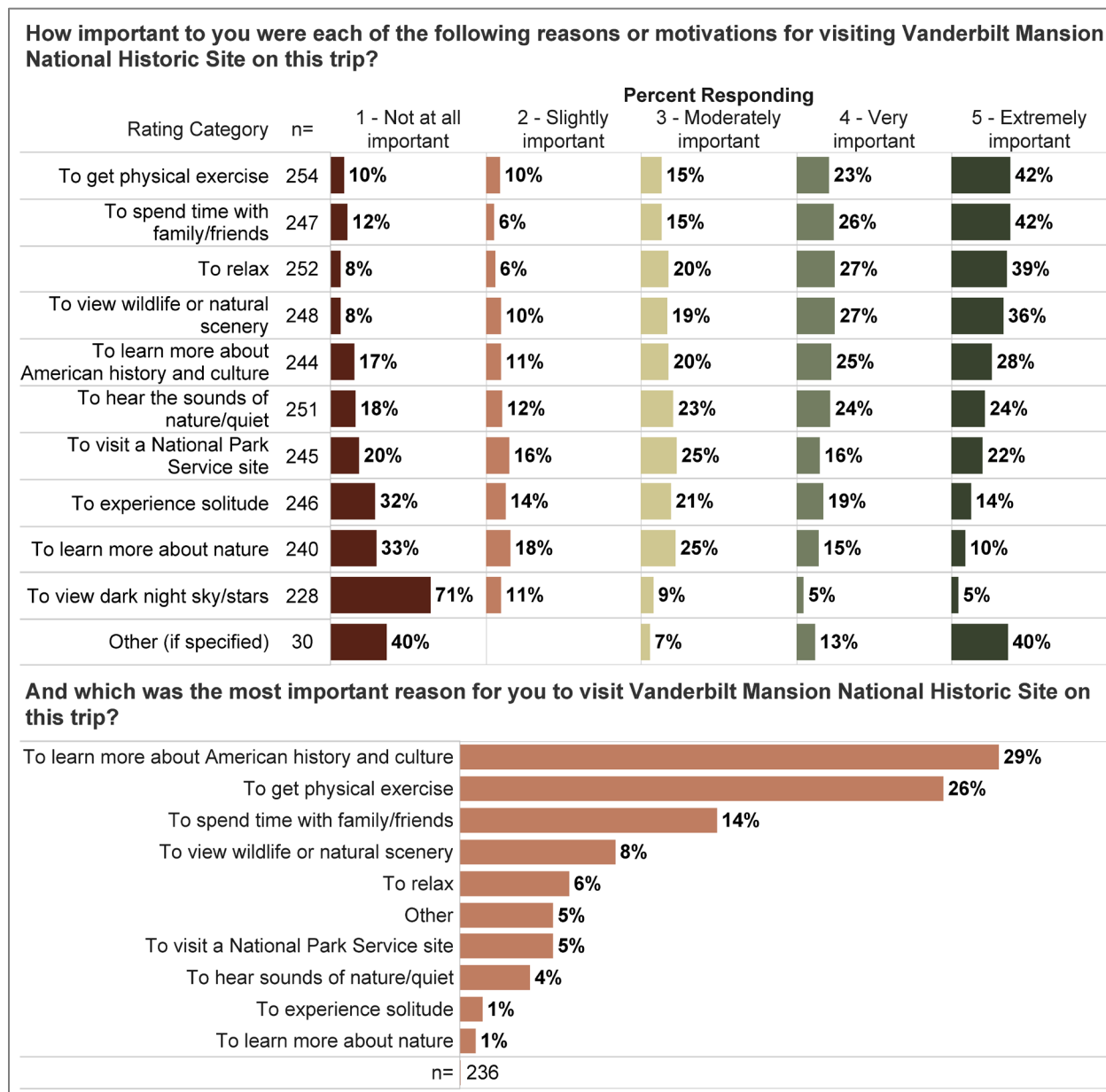


Figure 22. Reasons or motivations to visit Vanderbilt Mansion. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 13](#).

NPS

- A plurality of visitors chose to get physical exercise (42%) and to spend time with family and friends (42%) as extremely important reasons for their trip to Vanderbilt Mansion.

- Other important reasons were to relax and to view wildlife or natural scenery (39% and 36% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- The least important reasons were to view dark sky/stars and to learn more about nature (only 5% and 10% of respondents, respectively, reported them as extremely important, and 71% and 33% of respondents, respectively, rated them as not at all important).
- The most common response about the most important reason was to learn more about American history and culture (29%), followed by to get physical exercise (26%), and to spend time with friends and family (14%).

Questions 17–19: Programs, Services, and Learning

Respondents were asked to identify all programs and services that they personally participated in while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion during their trip (Figure 23).

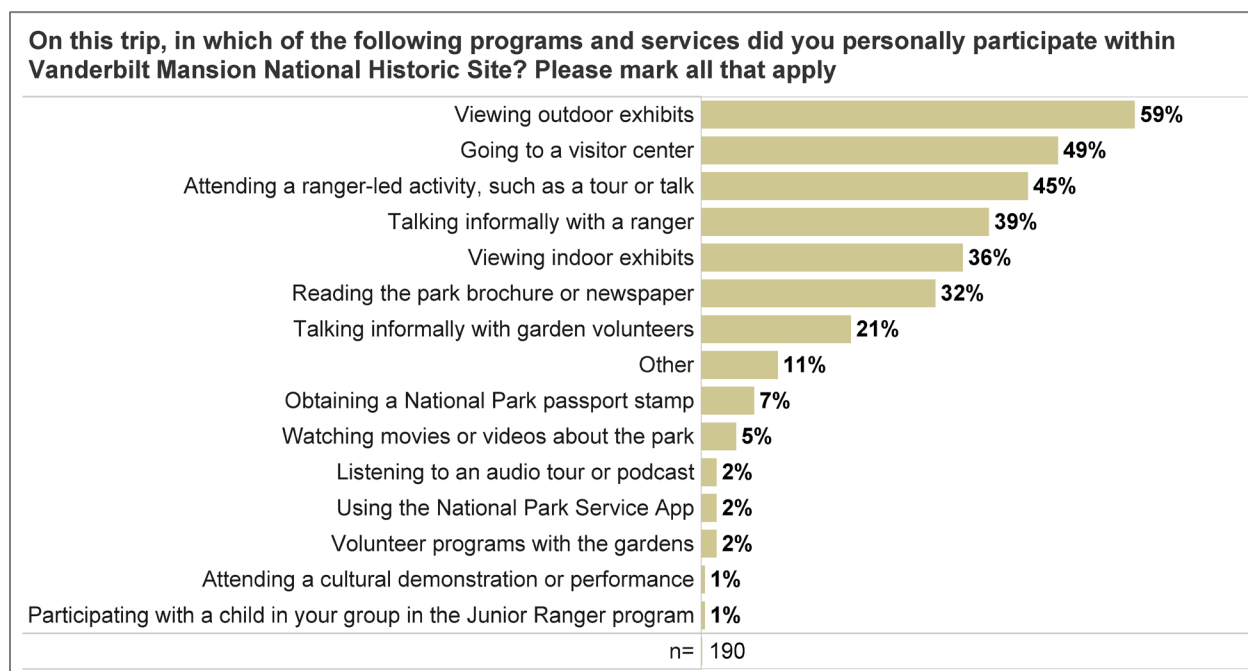


Figure 23. Programs participated in while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion.

NPS

- The two most-used programs were viewing outdoor exhibits and going to a visitor center, with 59% and 49% of respondents reporting participating in each of them respectively.
- Several other programs were engaged in by more than one-third of respondents: attending a ranger-led activity, such as a tour or talk (45%), talking informally with a ranger (39%), and viewing indoor exhibits (36%).

Two follow-up questions asked if respondents learned anything from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture, and what specific subjects they would like to learn about in the future (Figure 24).

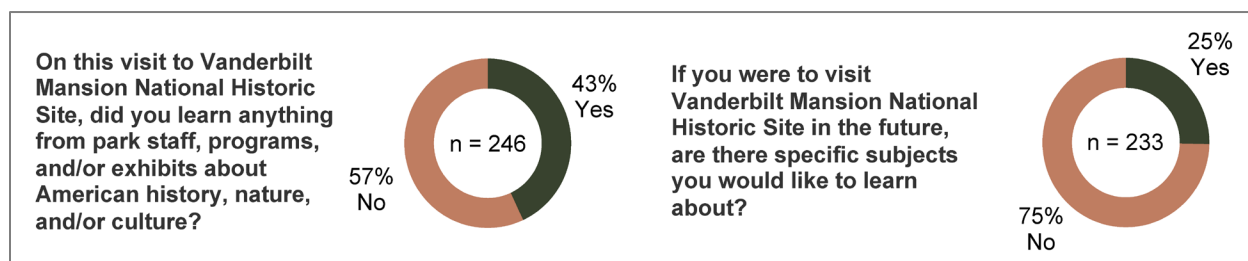


Figure 24. Learning.

NPS

- A majority of respondents (57%) reported that they had not learned anything from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture.
- A quarter of respondents (25%) reported that if they were to visit Vanderbilt Mansion in the future, there are specific subjects they would like to learn about.
- Respondents who said yes to either of these two questions were asked to elaborate. These comments are provided as an accompanying document for review.

Questions 20–21: Use of Devices

Two survey questions were focused on the use of electronic devices, their importance, and the quality of service provided. First, respondents were asked which personal electronic devices they used while in Vanderbilt Mansion (Figure 25).

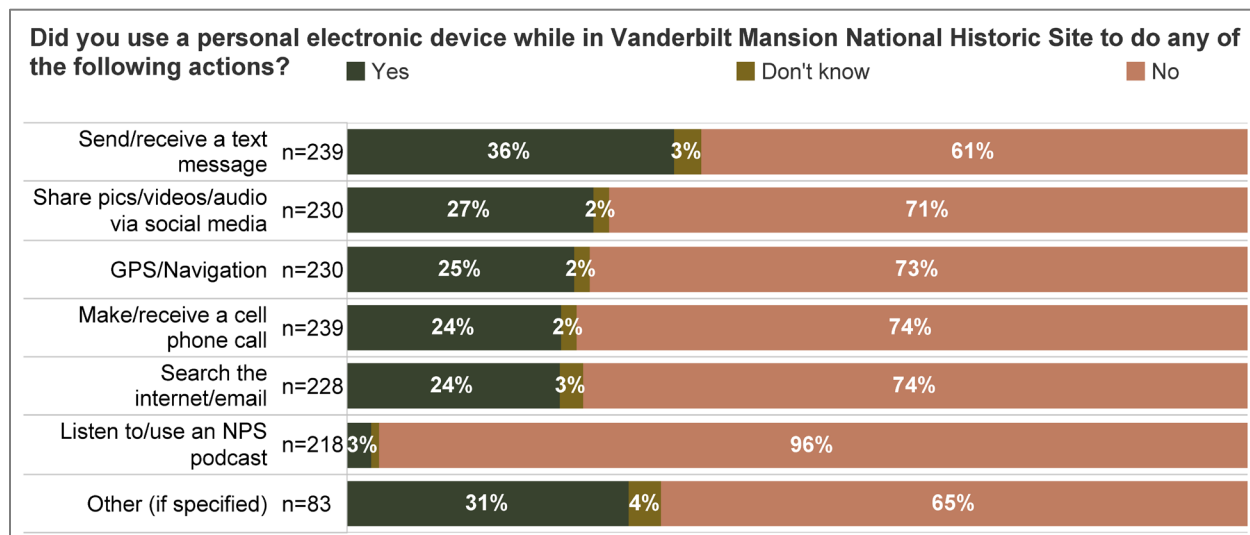


Figure 25. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 14](#).

NPS

- Over one-third of respondents (36%) reported sending or receiving a text message, and more than a quarter of respondents (27%) reported sharing pictures, video, or audio via social media.
- Conversely, only 3% of respondents listened to or used an NPS podcast.

Then, respondents were asked to rate both the importance of each of these electronic device uses (Figure 26), and the quality of their service (Figure 27).

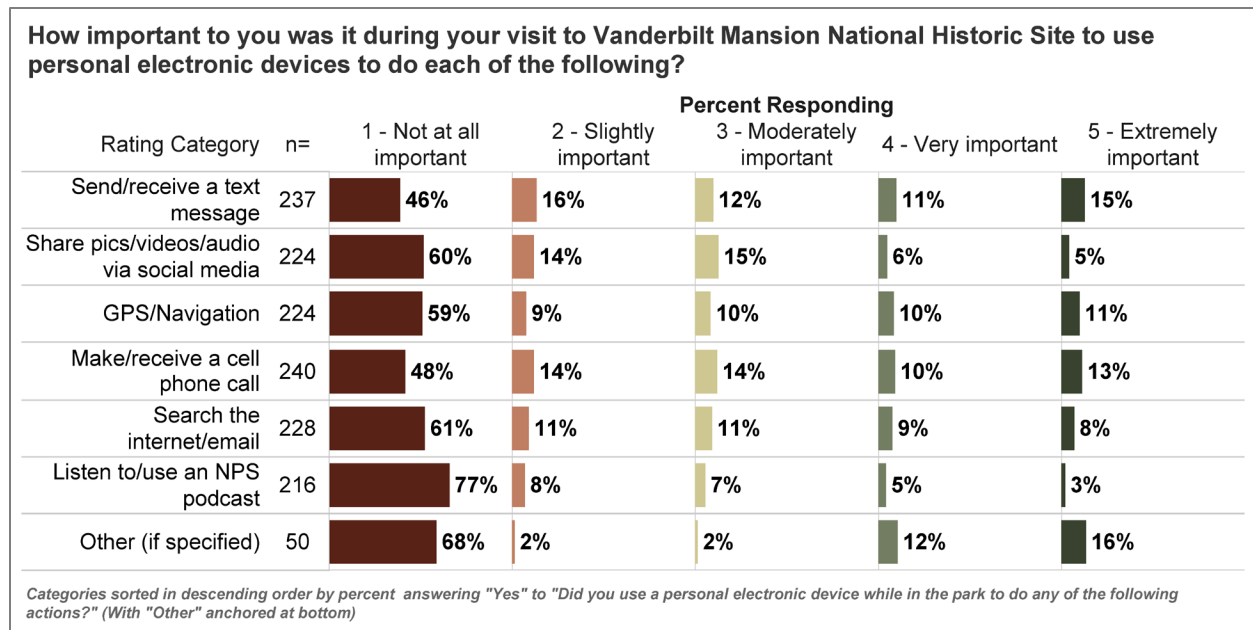


Figure 26. The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 15](#).

NPS

- The most important device uses were sending or receiving a text message and making or receiving a cell phone call (15% and 13% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- Listening to and using an NPS podcast was rated as extremely important only by 3% of respondents, and not at all important by 77% of respondents.

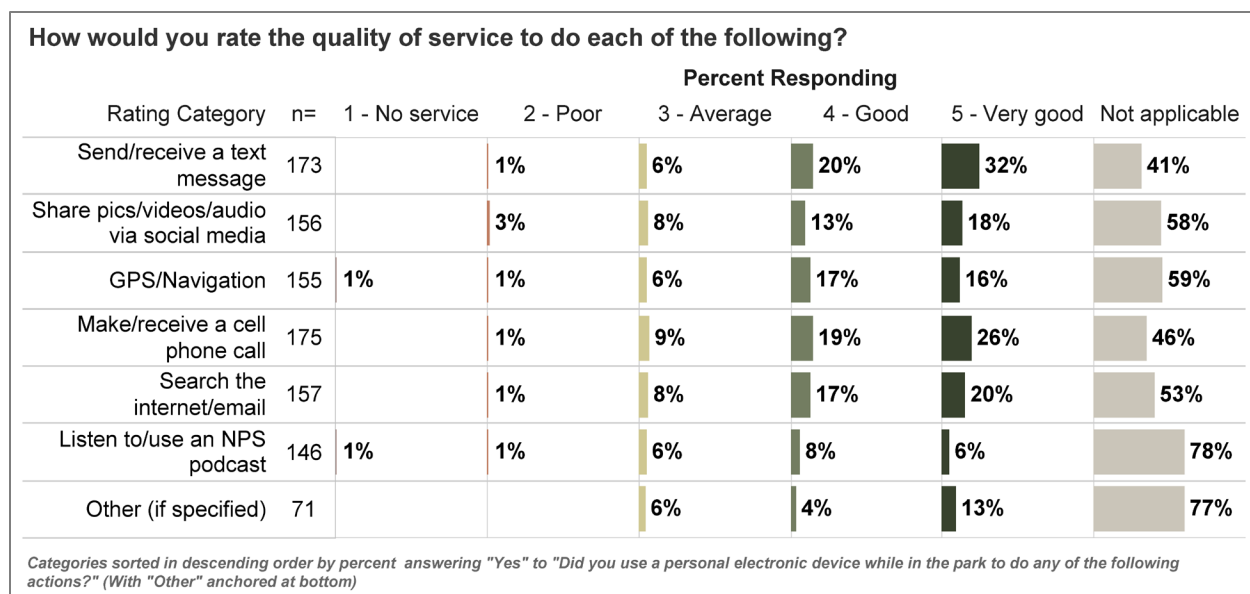


Figure 27. Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 16](#).

NPS

- Sending and receiving a text message and making or receiving a cell phone call were rated as very good or good by 52% and 45% of respondents, respectively. No respondents reported that they had no service for these.
- Only a small percentage of respondents (1%) reported that they had no service to listen to or use an NPS podcast, or for GPS/Navigation.

Question 22: Physical Difficulties

Respondents were asked if anyone in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to Vanderbilt Mansion. If such a condition was identified, respondents were asked to specify the type of difficulty (Figure 28).

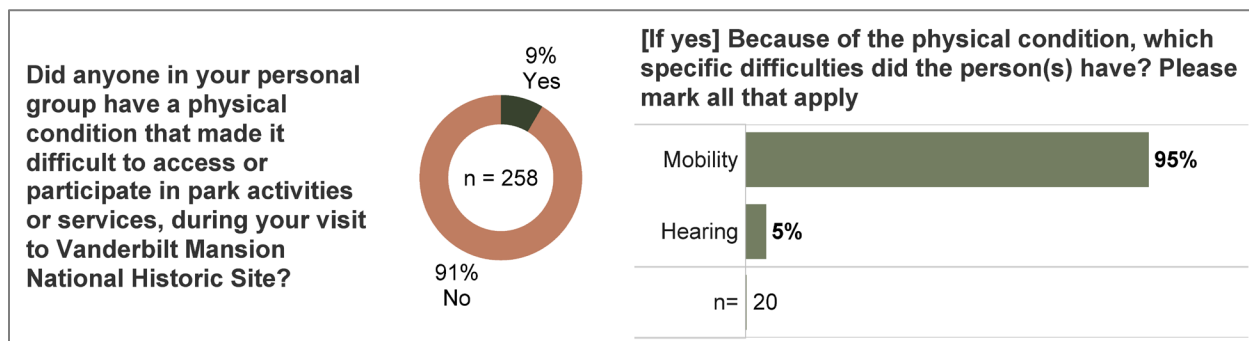


Figure 28. Physical difficulties while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (91%) reported that nobody in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to Vanderbilt Mansion.
- Among the 9% of visitors who identified at least one difficulty, 95% reported mobility issues in their group, with the remaining 5% reporting hearing difficulties.

Questions 25–28: Visitor Experience

Respondents were asked if their visit to Vanderbilt Mansion met their expectations (Figure 29).

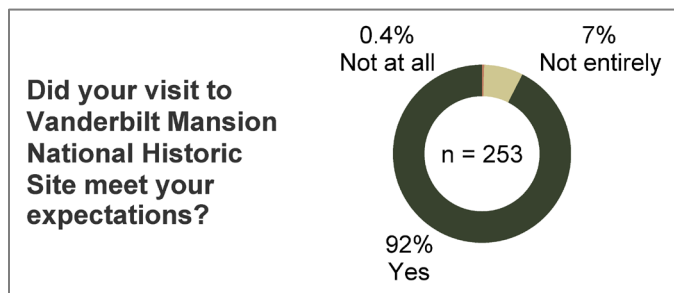


Figure 29. Meeting Vanderbilt Mansion expectations.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (92%) reported that their visit to Vanderbilt Mansion met their expectations, while 7% of respondents said it did not meet their expectations entirely, and 0.4% of respondents indicated that it did not meet their expectations at all.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, respondents who indicated that Vanderbilt Mansion did not meet their expectations were asked to elaborate. These comments are provided as an accompanying document for review.

Respondents were then given several statements about Vanderbilt Mansion and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each given statement (Figure 30).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?							
Rating Category	n=	Percent Responding					Don't know / not sure
		1 - Strongly Disagree	2 - Somewhat Disagree	3 - Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 - Somewhat Agree	5 - Strongly Agree	
Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site is a safe place to visit	260	1%	2%	1%	4%	91%	2%
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site	256	4%	2%	9%	7%	61%	18%
Historical and cultural features in Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site are well maintained/preserved	258	1%	4%	7%	21%	60%	7%
Natural resources in Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site are in pristine condition	257	3%	7%	11%	28%	47%	4%
Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	257	14%	14%	16%	9%	4%	43%
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site	258	45%	19%	17%	4%	3%	11%
The entrance fee for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site is too high	255	49%	7%	15%	2%	2%	25%
Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site is too crowded	258	50%	24%	21%	3%	1%	1%

Figure 30. Rating Vanderbilt Mansion experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 17](#).

NPS

- From all the statements listed, “Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site is a safe place to visit” received the most consensus with a combined 95% of respondents saying they either strongly or somewhat agree with it. That was followed by “historical and cultural features at Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site are well maintained/preserved” and “natural resources in Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site are in pristine condition” (81% and 75% of respondents, respectively, strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements).
- Conversely, “Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site is too crowded” and “the entrance fee for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site is too high” received the least support, with 4% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreeing with these statements, and half or nearly half of respondents strongly disagreeing with each of them.

Next, respondents were asked to rate the quality of park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Vanderbilt Mansion (Figure 31).

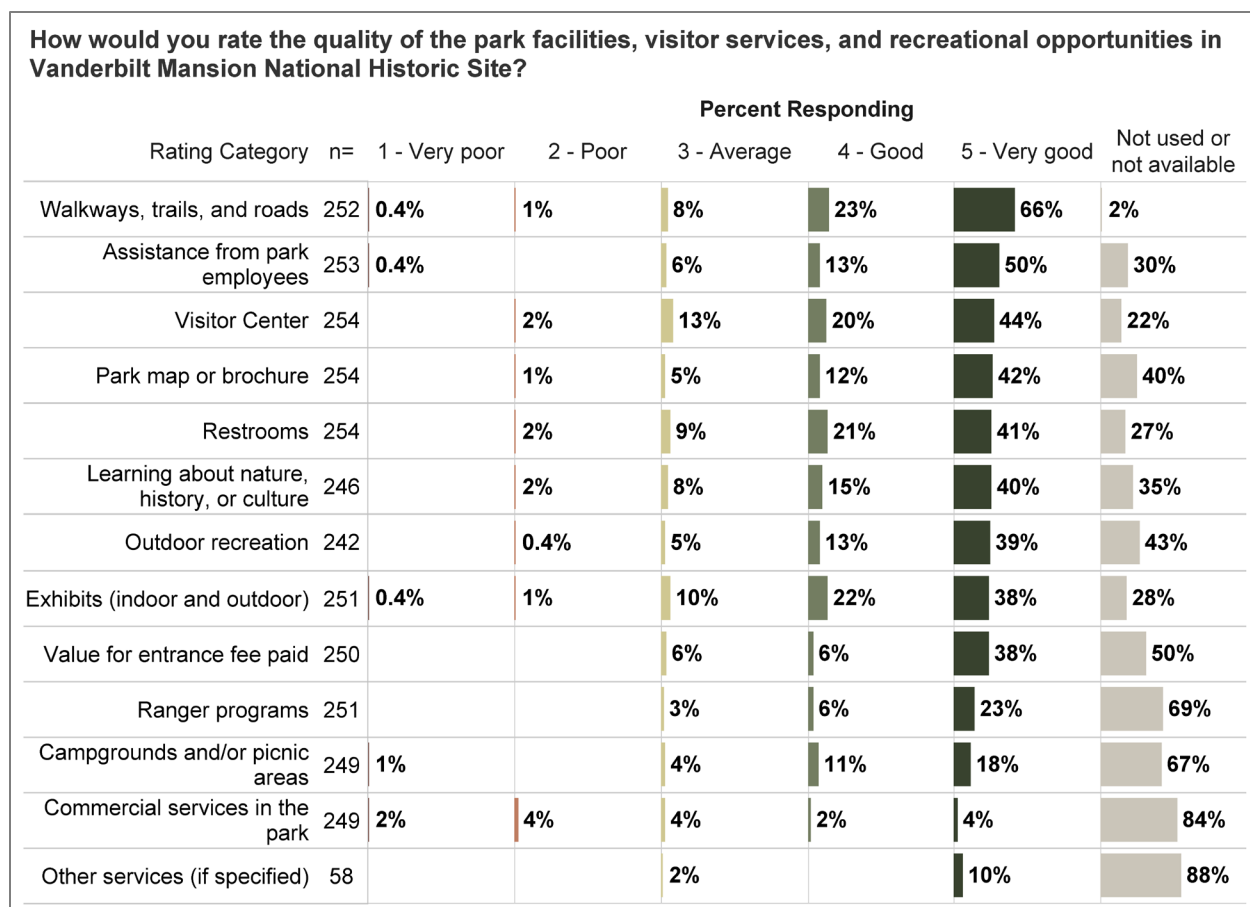


Figure 31. Rating the quality of Vanderbilt Mansion facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 18](#).

NPS

- Half or more of visitors (ranging from 50% to 66%) rated walkways, trails, and roads, and assistance from park employees as very good.
- Conversely, fewer than half of visitors rated the Visitor Center, the park map or brochure, restrooms, learning about nature, history or culture, outdoor recreation, exhibits (indoor and outdoor), value for entrance fee paid, ranger programs, campgrounds and/or picnic areas, and commercial services in the park as very good. For several of these ratings categories, visitors were most likely to say that they were either not available or they did not use them.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreation opportunities (Figure 32).

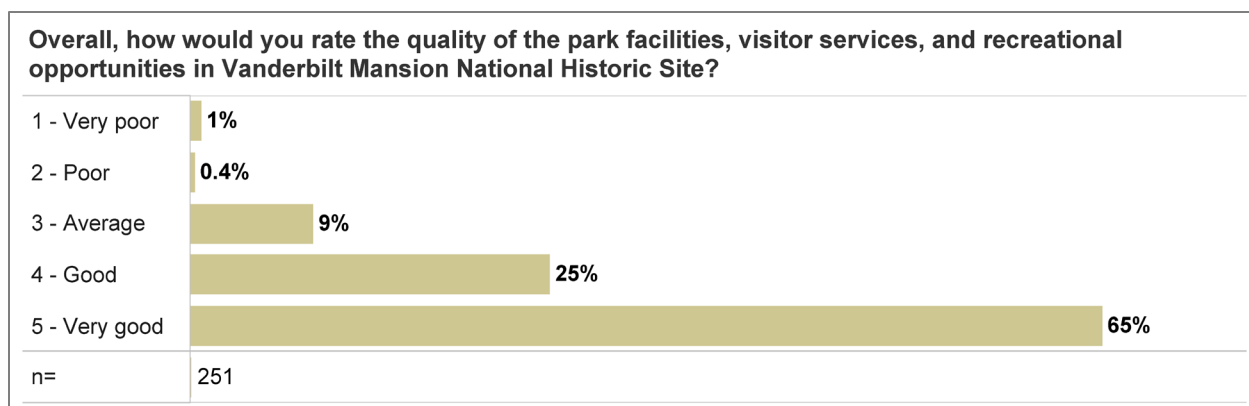


Figure 32. Rating overall quality of Vanderbilt Mansion facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

NPS

- In general, nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) rated the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Vanderbilt Mansion as very good, and another 25% rated them as good.
- Just about 1 in 10 visitors rated the overall quality as average or below.

Questions 31–39: Background/Demographics

In the final section of the follow-up survey, respondents were asked various questions about their personal and household demographics. Figure 33 depicts descriptive statistics for respondent gender, age, and education.

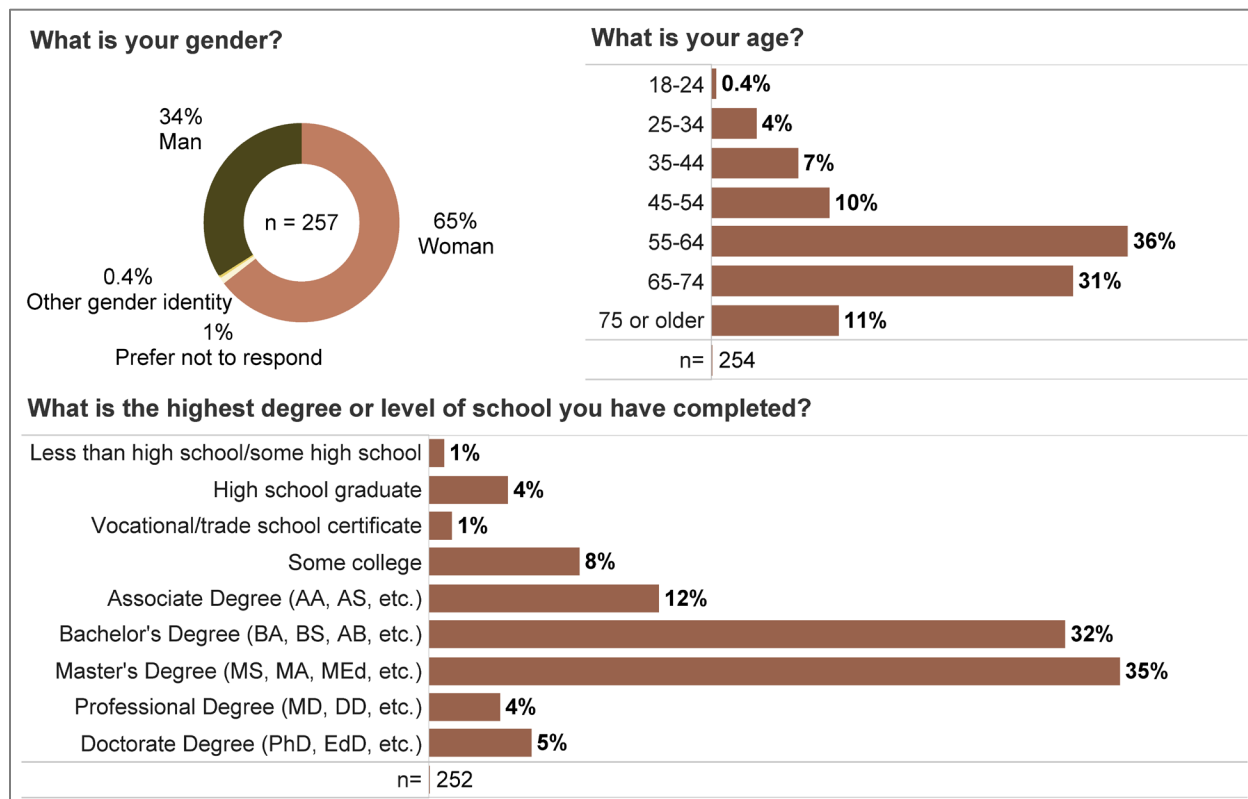


Figure 33. Respondent demographics: gender, age, and level of education.

NPS

- Follow-up survey respondents were more likely to be women than men (65% vs. 34%). Another 0.4% had another gender identity, while 1% preferred not to disclose their gender identity.
- The most common age categories were 55 to 64 (36%), and 65 to 74 (31%). The least represented age group was 18–24 (only 0.4% of the participants surveyed).
- Most survey respondents were highly educated, with a combined 88% having some college degree, and a plurality (35%) holding a master's degree.

Respondents were also asked to identify their race(s) and if they were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (Figure 34).

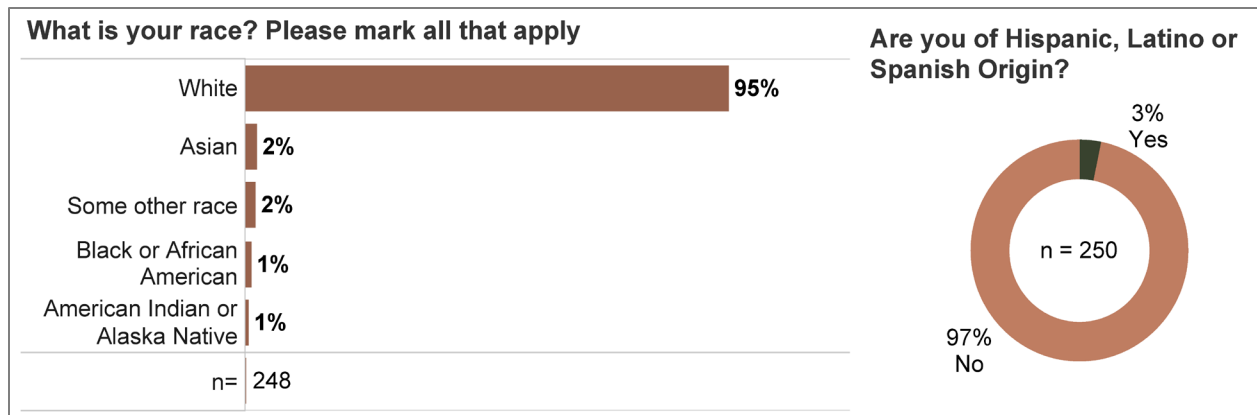


Figure 34. Respondent demographics: race and ethnicity.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (95%) were White, while 2% were Asian or some other race.
- Most respondents (97%) were not of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin.

At a household level, respondents were asked to report annual income and number of contributors, as well as how many people (adults and children) live in their household (Figure 35).

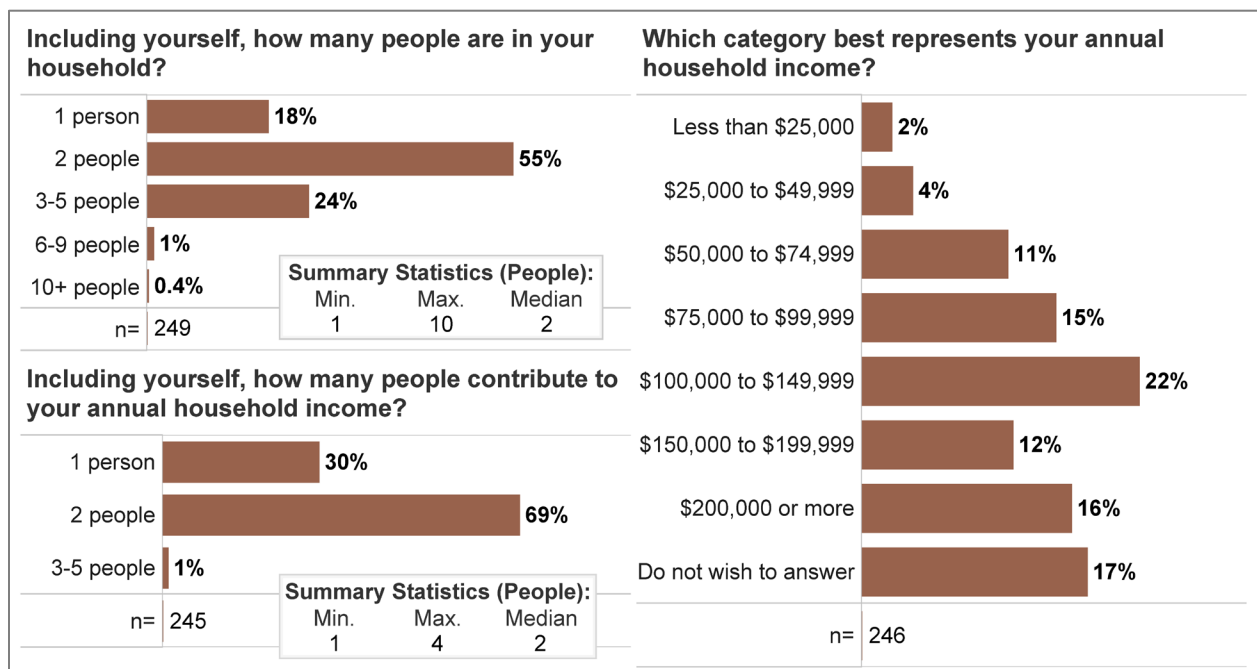


Figure 35. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 19](#).

NPS

- A majority of respondents (55%) had 2 people in their household, followed by 3 to 5 people (another 24%).

- In addition to being highly educated, Vanderbilt Mansion visitors are also relatively affluent. Nearly a quarter of respondents (22%) reported that their annual household income was between \$100,000 and \$149,999, and another 16% earned \$200,000 or more.
- Most respondents (69%) came from a dual-income household.

Finally, respondents were asked about their language preference (Figure 36).

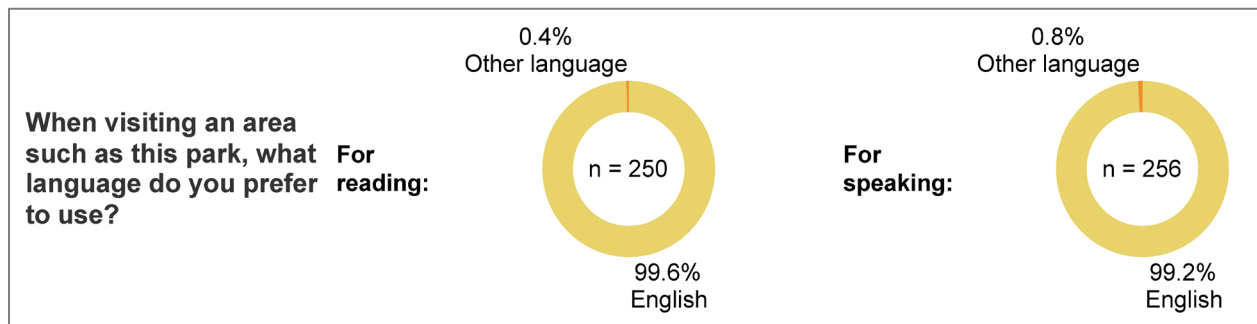


Figure 36. Respondent's language preference.

NPS

- While 3% of respondents were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin, the overwhelming majority of respondents (99.6%) preferred to use English for reading and 99.2% preferred English for speaking when visiting an area such as Vanderbilt Mansion.

Literature Cited

National Park Service (NPS). 2022. 2022 Socioeconomic Monitoring of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site: Visitor Intercept and Post-Trip Surveys.
<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2318681>

Appendix A: Accessible Tables

This appendix contains accessible tables with data from figures found in the body of the report (Tables 8–19). Table captions include hyperlinks to the corresponding figures.

Table 8. Data from [Figure 6](#). Number of nights spent in the local area around Vanderbilt Mansion, by accommodation type.

Accommodation Type	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Camping outside Vanderbilt Mansion	29	1	30	3
Lodging outside Vanderbilt Mansion	239	1	30	2
Unpaid accommodations	52	1	25	3

Table 9. Data from [Figure 7](#). Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion.

Group Composition	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Adults	930	1	13	2
Children	930	0	7	0

Table 10. Data from [Figure 13](#). Number of people in respondent's vehicle when entering Vanderbilt Mansion.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If entered by car, truck, or SUV] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your vehicle when you entered Vanderbilt Mansion?	888	1	10	2
[If entered by RV/motorhome] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your RV when you entered Vanderbilt Mansion?	6	2	6	2
[If entered by motorcycle] Including yourself, how many people were traveling on your motorcycle when you entered Vanderbilt Mansion?	1	2	2	2

Table 11. Data from [Figure 14](#). Previous visits to Vanderbilt Mansion.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Vanderbilt Mansion over the past 12 months?	553	1	600	6
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Vanderbilt Mansion over the past five years?	553	1	5000	30

Table 12. Data from [Figure 15](#). Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
How many visits have you made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months?	669	0	300	1

Table 13. Data from [Figure 22](#). Reasons or motivations to visit Vanderbilt Mansion.

Rating Category	n
To visit a National Park Service site	245
To experience solitude	246
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	251
To learn more about nature	240
To learn more about American history and culture	244
To spend time with family/friends	247
To get physical exercise	254
To view wildlife or natural scenery	248
To relax	252
To view dark night sky/stars	228
Other (if specified)	30

Table 14. Data from [Figure 25](#). Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	239
Send/receive a text message	239
Search the internet/email	228
GPS/Navigation	230
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	230
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	218
Other (if specified)	83

Table 15. Data from [Figure 26](#). The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	240
Send/receive a text message	237
Search the internet/email	228
GPS/Navigation	224
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	224
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	216
Other (if specified)	50

Table 16. Data from [Figure 27](#). Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting Vanderbilt Mansion.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	175
Send/receive a text message	173
Search the internet/email	157
GPS/Navigation	155
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	156
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	146
Other (if specified)	71

Table 17. Data from [Figure 30](#). Rating Vanderbilt Mansion experience.

Rating Category	n
Vanderbilt Mansion is a safe place to visit	260
Vanderbilt Mansion is too crowded	258
Natural resources in Vanderbilt Mansion are in pristine condition	257
The entrance fee for Vanderbilt Mansion is too high	255
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at Vanderbilt Mansion	256
Vanderbilt Mansion is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	257
Historical and cultural features in Vanderbilt Mansion are well maintained/preserved	258
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at Vanderbilt Mansion	258

Table 18. Data from [Figure 31](#). Rating the quality of Vanderbilt Mansion facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

Rating Category	n
Visitor Center	254
Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)	251
Restrooms	254
Walkways, trails, and roads	252
Campgrounds and/or picnic areas	249
Assistance from park employees	253
Park map or brochure	254
Ranger programs	251
Value for entrance fee paid	250
Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rental, etc.)	249
Other services (if specified)	58
Learning about nature, history, or culture	246
Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)	242

Table 19. Data from [Figure 35](#). Household demographics: annual household income and household size.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Including yourself, how many people are in your household?	249	1	10	2
Including yourself, how many people contribute to your annual household income?	245	1	4	2

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

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