

Upstate Alliance of REALTORS®

Fort Wayne, Indiana Smart Growth July and August 2021

American Strategies designed and administered this multi-modal survey conducted by professional interviewers and via Qualtrics. The survey reached 475 adults (400 weighted) adults, age 21-35, who indicated they reside in Allen County, Indiana. The survey was conducted from July 26-August 4, 2021.

Seventy percent of respondents were reached on wireless phones, one percent on VOIP phones, five percent on landlines, twenty-three percent via SMS and one percent via email. Quotas were assigned to reflect the demographic distribution of adults, age 21-35, who reside in Allen County, Indiana, and the data were weighted to ensure an accurate reflection of the population. The sample was drawn from a third-party vendor file. The overall margin of error is +/- 4.9%. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies. Percentage totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.



Executive Summary

Most young adults are pleased with life in the Fort Wayne area. The quality of life in Fort Wayne is widely considered as good (55 percent) or excellent, although enthusiasm is limited with just a quarter describing quality of life as “excellent.” Those who are most “established” - i.e., those who are married, own their own homes, and have higher levels of education - rate their quality of life the highest.

Young locals say that more parks and recreational opportunities would do most to improve quality of life, with downtown amenities right behind. When asked to rate a list amenities on a 5-point scale, where 5 would do the most to improve quality of life in the Fort Wayne area, more parks and recreational opportunities (3.9 mean score) emerges as the top pick. More arts opportunities downtown, like theaters and museums (3.6 mean score), having more things to do in downtown Fort Wayne at night (3.6 mean score) and having a wider variety of shops and restaurants (3.6 mean score) are only slightly less important to improving young locals’ quality of life.

Four-in-ten Allen County residents aged 35 and under visit downtown weekly. Just over a quarter (27 percent) say they go downtown a few times a week, while another 16 percent go about once a week. About one-fifth (22 percent) head downtown a few times a month, with another 15 percent saying they go downtown about once a month. The remaining fifth only go downtown a few times a year (16 percent) or never (4 percent).

- *Non-homeowners, those who are not married and men - especially men under age 28 - and those without a college degree, head downtown most frequently.*



Executive Summary

Parks, food, and bars are best things about downtown. When asked to say what they like most about downtown in their own words, young residents talk mostly about outdoor activities, restaurants, and bars. One third cite things like parks, bike paths, festivals, and water parks. Another third talk about restaurants, bars, and food.

Traffic, streets, and parking are biggest drawbacks about downtown. When asked what they like least about downtown, young residents talk about traffic, narrow streets and parking difficulties. Many also cite the lack of nightlife and general lack of things to do.

Trips to restaurants and work are most common reasons for going downtown, with visits to parks, bars, and events close behind. A quarter of young Allen County residents head downtown to eat at a restaurant weekly or more (9 percent a few times a week, 17 percent about once a week), while about a fifth head downtown at least weekly for work (16 percent a few times a week, 6 percent about once a week). About four-in-ten head downtown at least once a month to go a park, to visit a bar, brewery or club, or to attend an event like a festival or farmer's market.

Executive Summary

More convenient parking would get more people downtown, as would more entertainment options, more family-friendly destinations, and a wider variety of restaurants. Over half (58 percent) of young adults say they would go downtown much more often if more convenient parking were available. Nearly nine-in-ten say more entertainment options would result in more trips downtown (44 percent much more often, 42 percent a little more often). Family-friendly destinations and activities (44 percent much more often, 32 percent a little more often) and a wider variety of restaurants (41 percent much more often, 37 percent a little more often) would also drive more traffic downtown.

While most young people feel safe in downtown Fort Wayne, most only “somewhat” agree that they feel safe at night. Residents mostly agree that they feel safe downtown, although there are differences in intensity depending on the time of day: 38 percent “strongly” agree that they feel safe downtown, but only 25 percent “strongly” agree that they feel safe downtown at night. Overall, 77 percent strongly or somewhat agree that they feel safe downtown, while 72 percent strongly or somewhat agree that they felt safe downtown at night.

Many would consider living downtown, while affordability is a mixed bag. Four-in-ten (42 percent) agree that they would consider living downtown (18 percent strongly agree), but 57 percent would not consider it. There is a split when it comes to affordability: half (48 percent) agree that they could afford to live there if they wanted to, but the other half doubt that they could afford to live downtown.



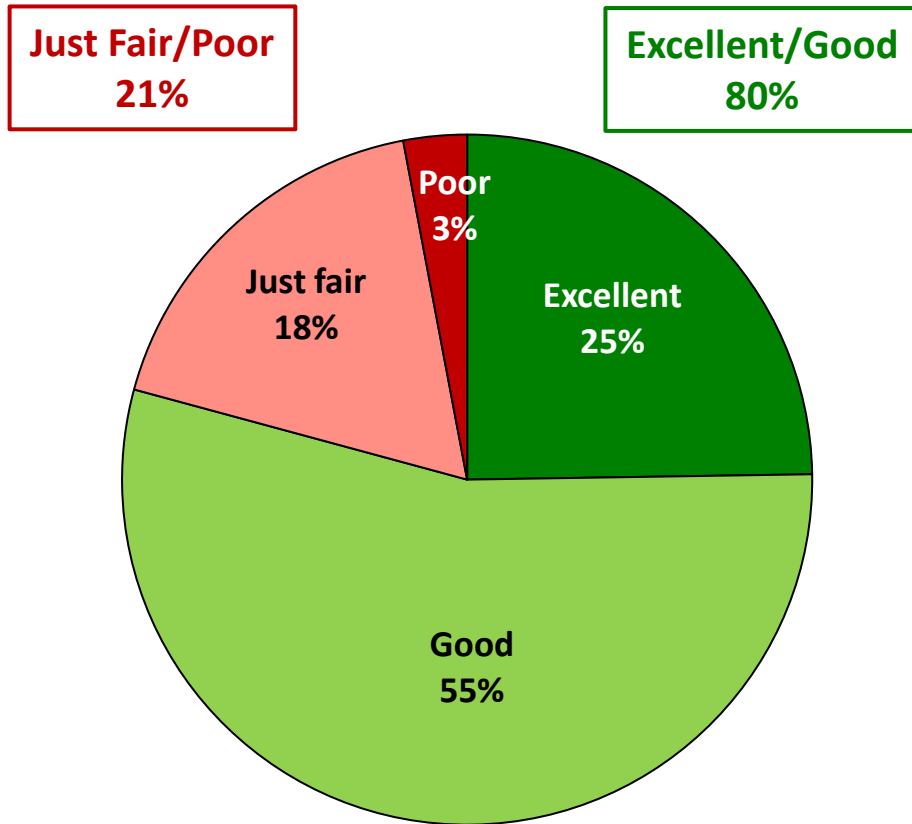
Quality of Life



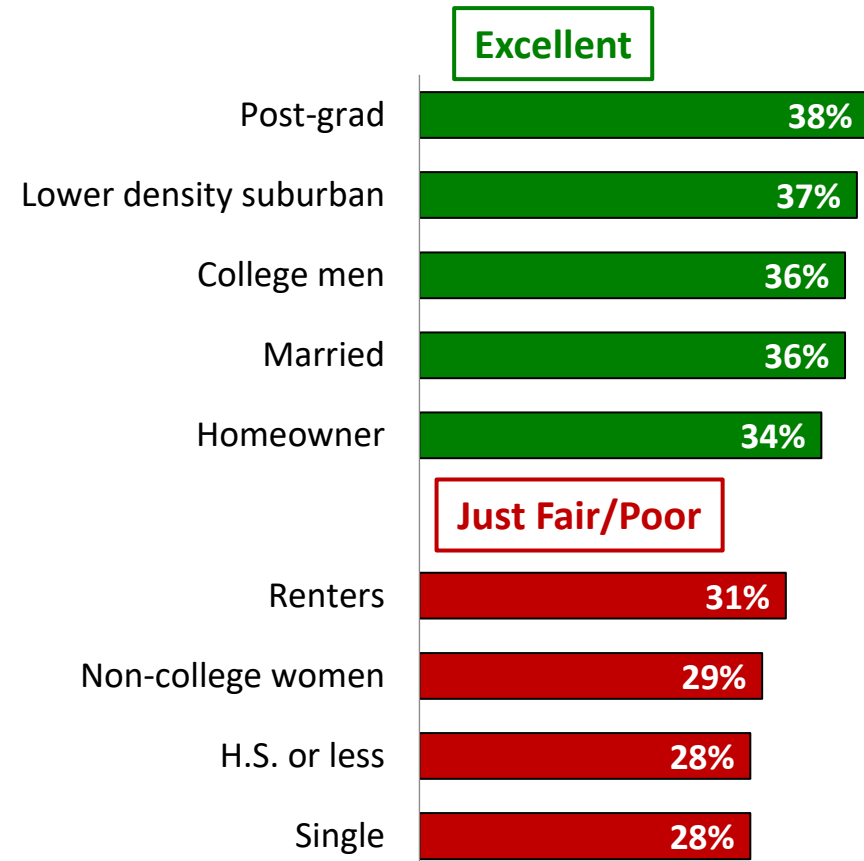
Eight-in-Ten Young Adults View Quality of Life in Fort Wayne Area as Excellent or Good

Post-graduate degree holders most likely to say life is excellent; renters most pessimistic

Quality of Life

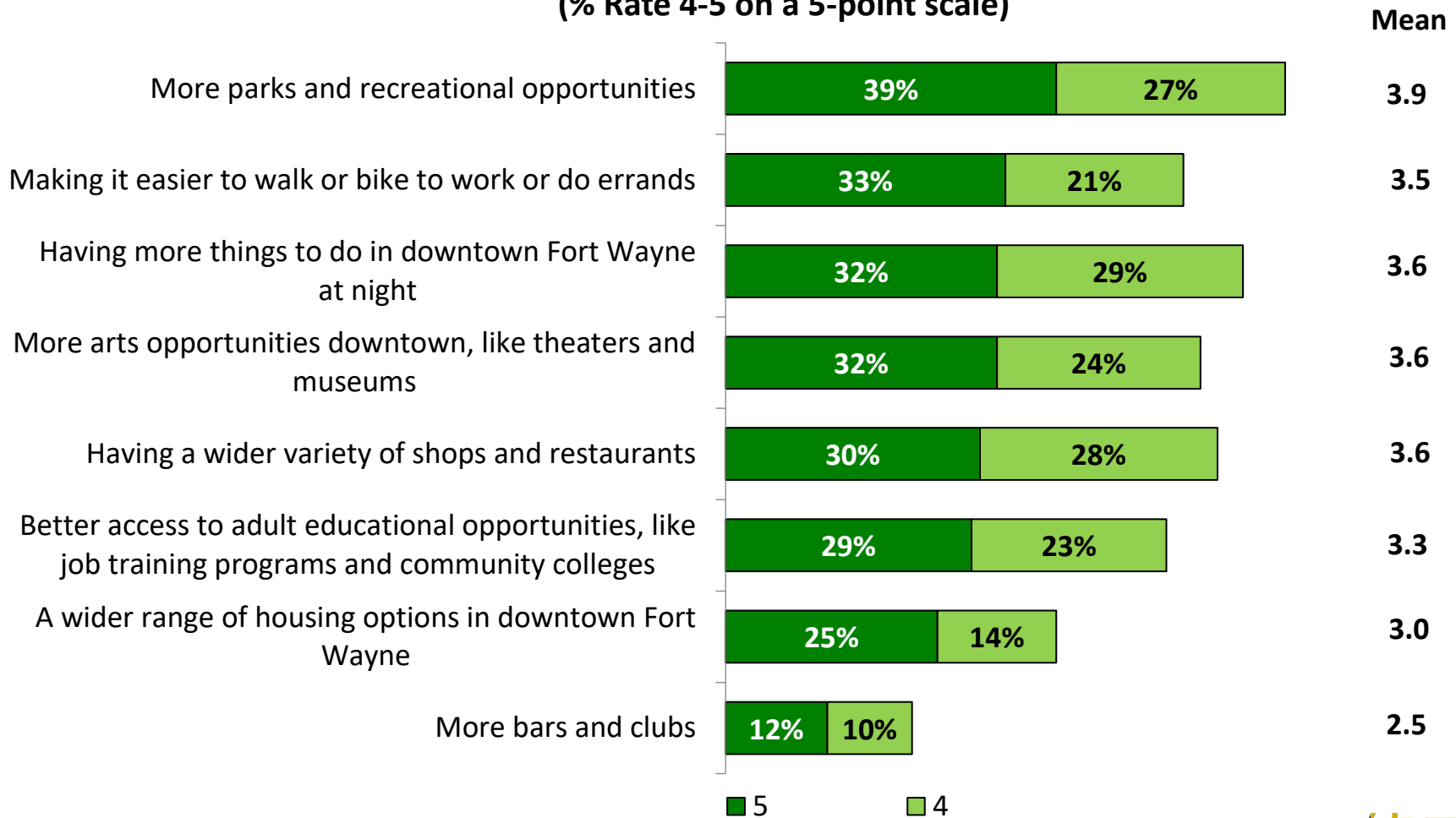


Key Demographic Groups



More Parks Tops List of Things That Would Improve Quality of Life With Variety of Other Options Close Behind

Things That Would Improve Quality of Life in Fort Wayne
(% Rate 4-5 on a 5-point scale)



Q.4 Now I am going to read you a list of things that people say would improve the quality of life in the Fort Wayne area. Please rate each item on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means that it would do very little to improve your quality of life, and 5 means it would do a lot to improve your quality of life. You can use any number from 1 to 5, the higher the number, the more it would improve your quality of life.



Quality of Life Improvement Options Vary by Age and Gender

Things to Improve Quality of Life Means by Age and Gender	Total	Age 21 – 25	Age 26 - 30	Age 31 - 35	Men	Women
More parks and recreational opportunities	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.7	4.1
More arts opportunities downtown, like theaters and museums	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.8
Having more things to do in downtown Fort Wayne at night	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.5	3.8
Having a wider variety of shops and restaurants	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.4	3.5	3.7
Making it easier to walk or bike to work or do errands	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.6
Better access to adult educational opportunities , like job training programs and community colleges	3.3	3.6	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.5
A wider range of housing options in downtown Fort Wayne	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.8	2.9	3.1
More bars and clubs	2.5	2.8	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.6

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Little Variation in Top Drivers of Higher Quality of Life

Things to Improve Quality of Life Means by Race, Kids in Home and Homeownership	Total	White	People Of Color	Has Kids	No Kids	Homeowner	Non-Homeowner
More parks and recreational opportunities	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9
More arts opportunities downtown, like theaters and museums	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.4	3.8
Having more things to do in downtown Fort Wayne at night	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.8
Having a wider variety of shops and restaurants	3.6	3.6	4.0	3.4	3.8	3.5	3.8
Making it easier to walk or bike to work or do errands	3.5	3.4	3.8	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.6
Better access to adult educational opportunities , like job training programs and community colleges	3.3	3.2	3.9	3.2	3.4	2.9	3.7
A wider range of housing options in downtown Fort Wayne	3.0	2.9	3.2	2.7	3.2	2.6	3.4
More bars and clubs	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.3	2.6	2.3	2.6

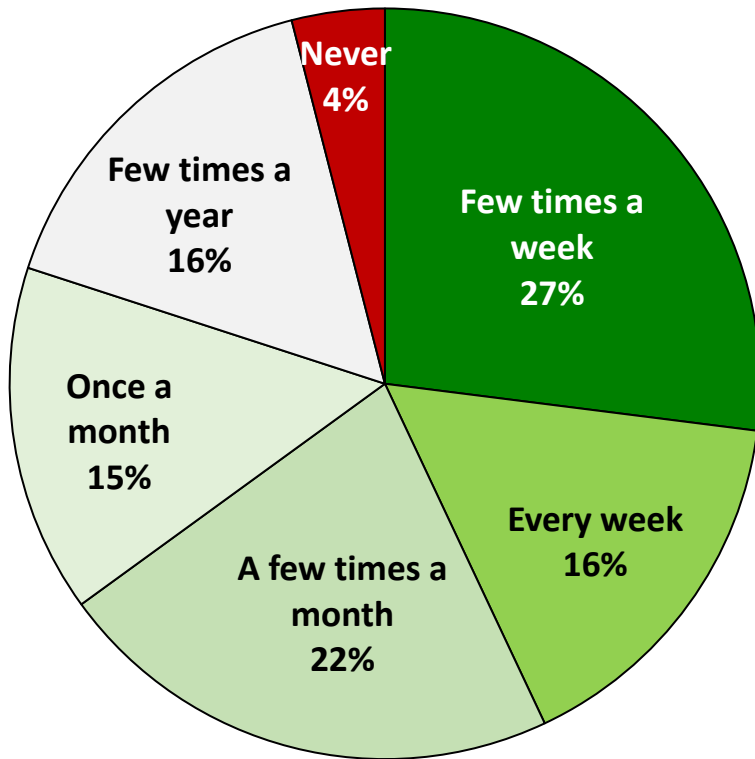
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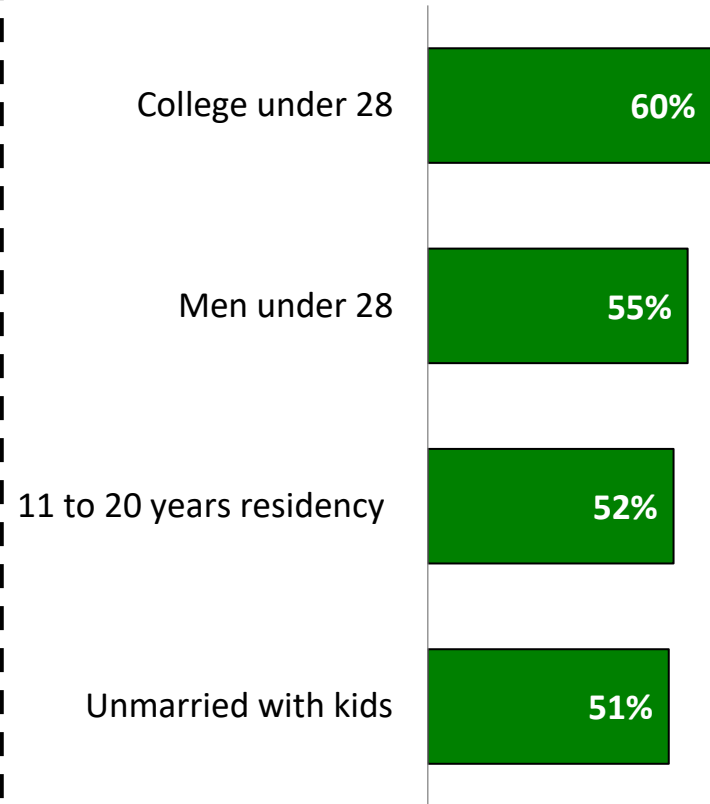
Visits Downtown

Most Residents Visit Downtown at Least Once a Month, Younger, College Educated Most Likely to Visit

Downtown Visit Frequency



Few Times a Week/Every week: Total 43%

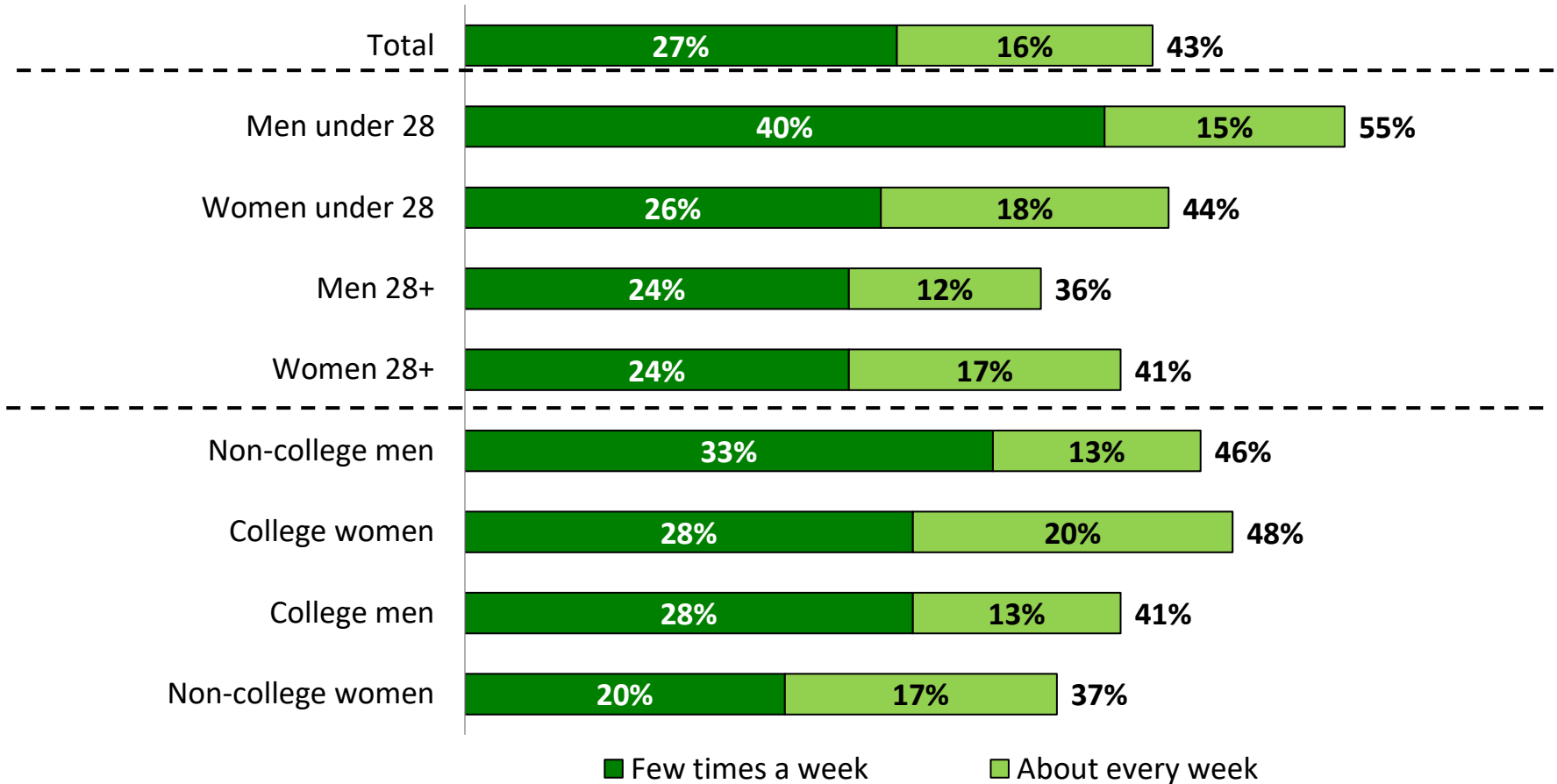


Q.5 Next, I would like to ask you some questions about the downtown area of Fort Wayne. How often do you go to the downtown area for business, shopping, or recreation? Would you say you go downtown a few times a week, about every week, a few times a month, about once a month, a few times a year, or do you never go downtown?



Younger and Non-College Men Visit Downtown The Most Frequently, Along With College Women

**Downtown Visit Frequency
By Gender/Age, and Gender/Education**

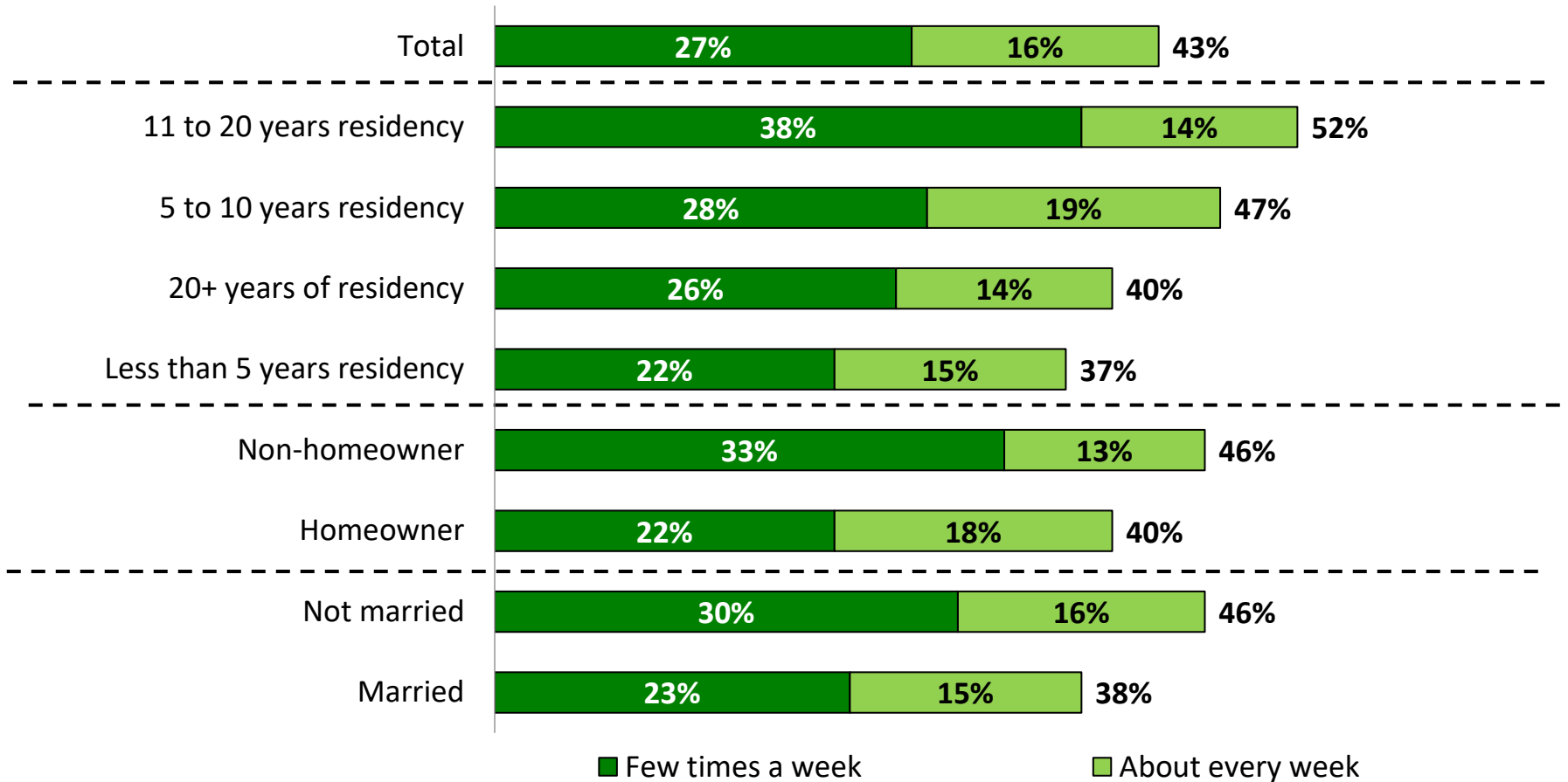


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New Arrivals, Homeowners, and Married Young Adults Less Frequent Visitors to Downtown

**Downtown Visit Frequency
By Homeownership, Residency, Marital Status**



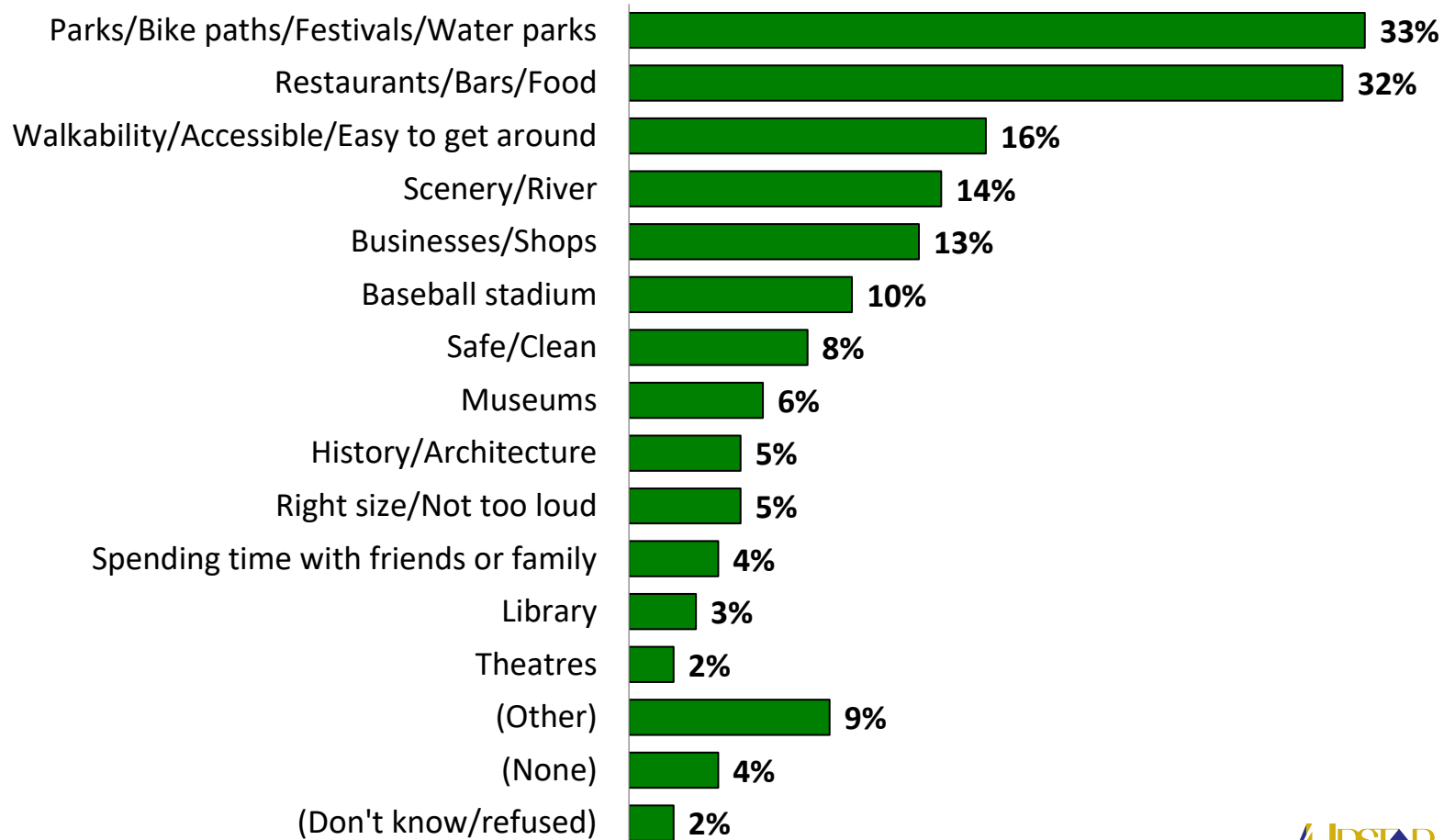
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Outdoor Recreation and Restaurants Most Popular Aspects of Downtown Fort Wayne

Like Most about Downtown Fort Wayne- Volunteered Responses

N=369 respondents

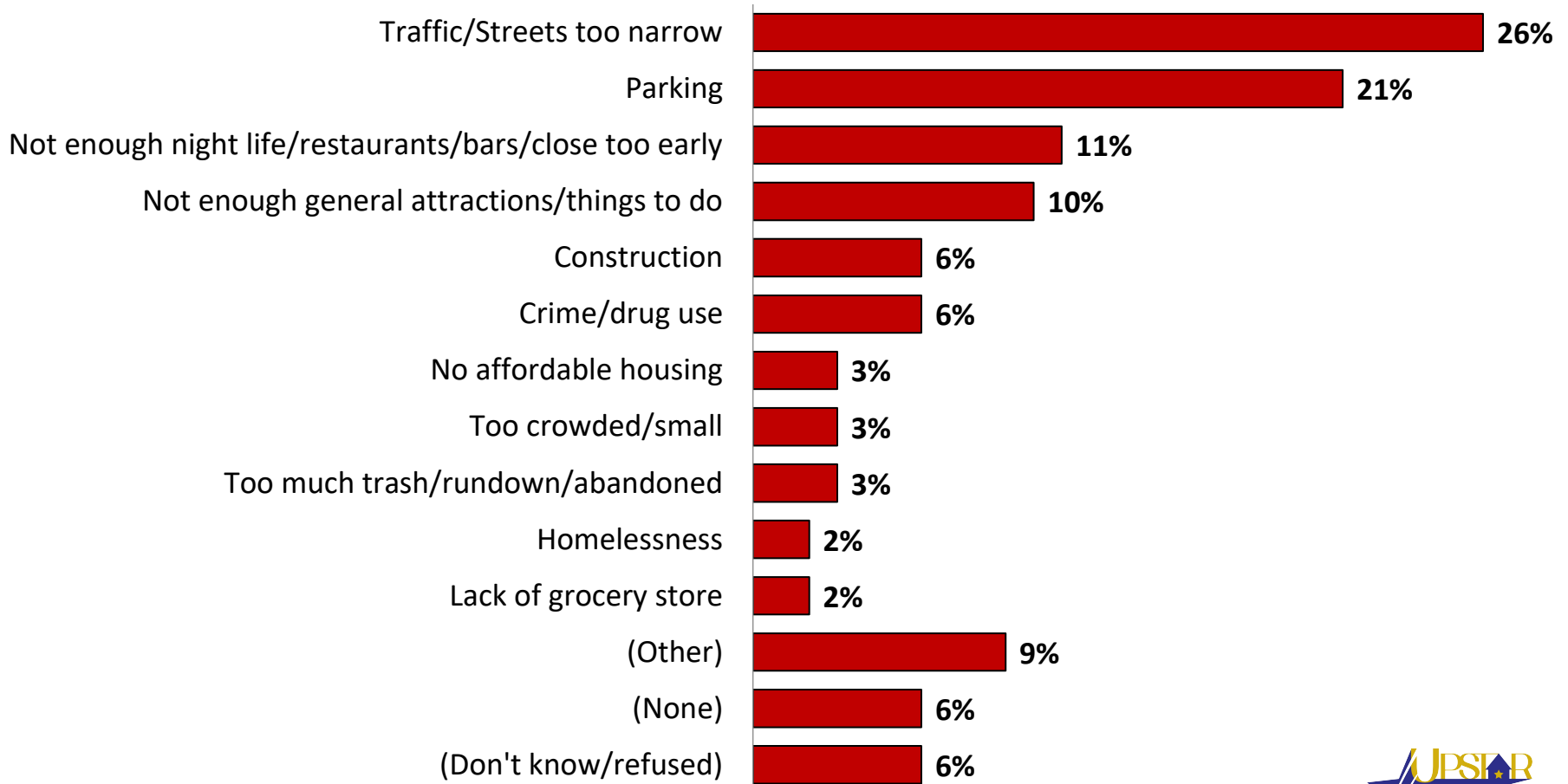


Traffic and Parking Least Liked Aspects of Downtown

Lack of nightlife and other attractions also unpopular

Like Least about Downtown Fort Wayne- Volunteered Responses

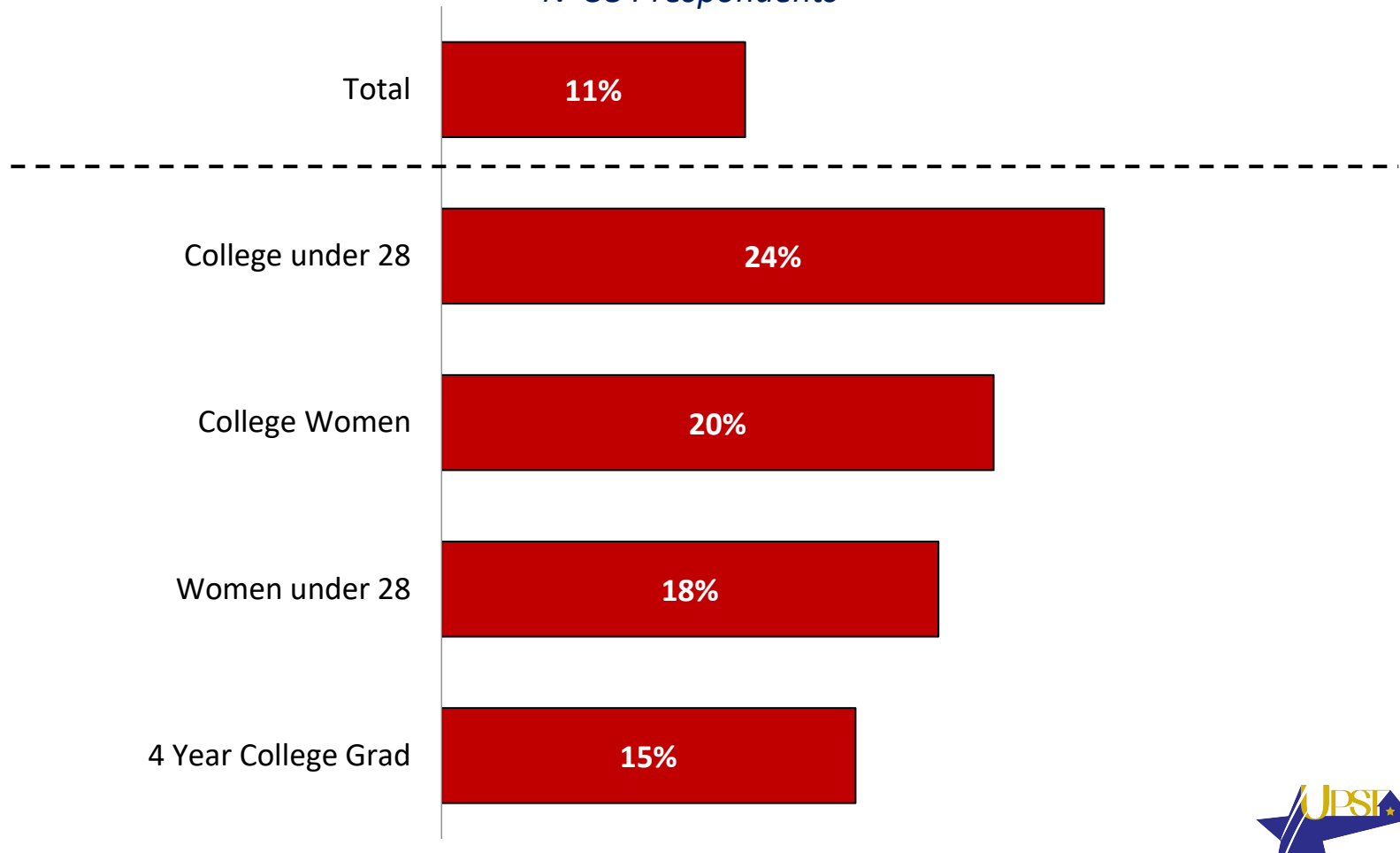
N=384 respondents



College Educated and Young Women Most Likely To Say That Fort Wayne Lacks Nightlife Options

Not Enough Night Life/Restaurants/Bars/Close Too Early Top Groups

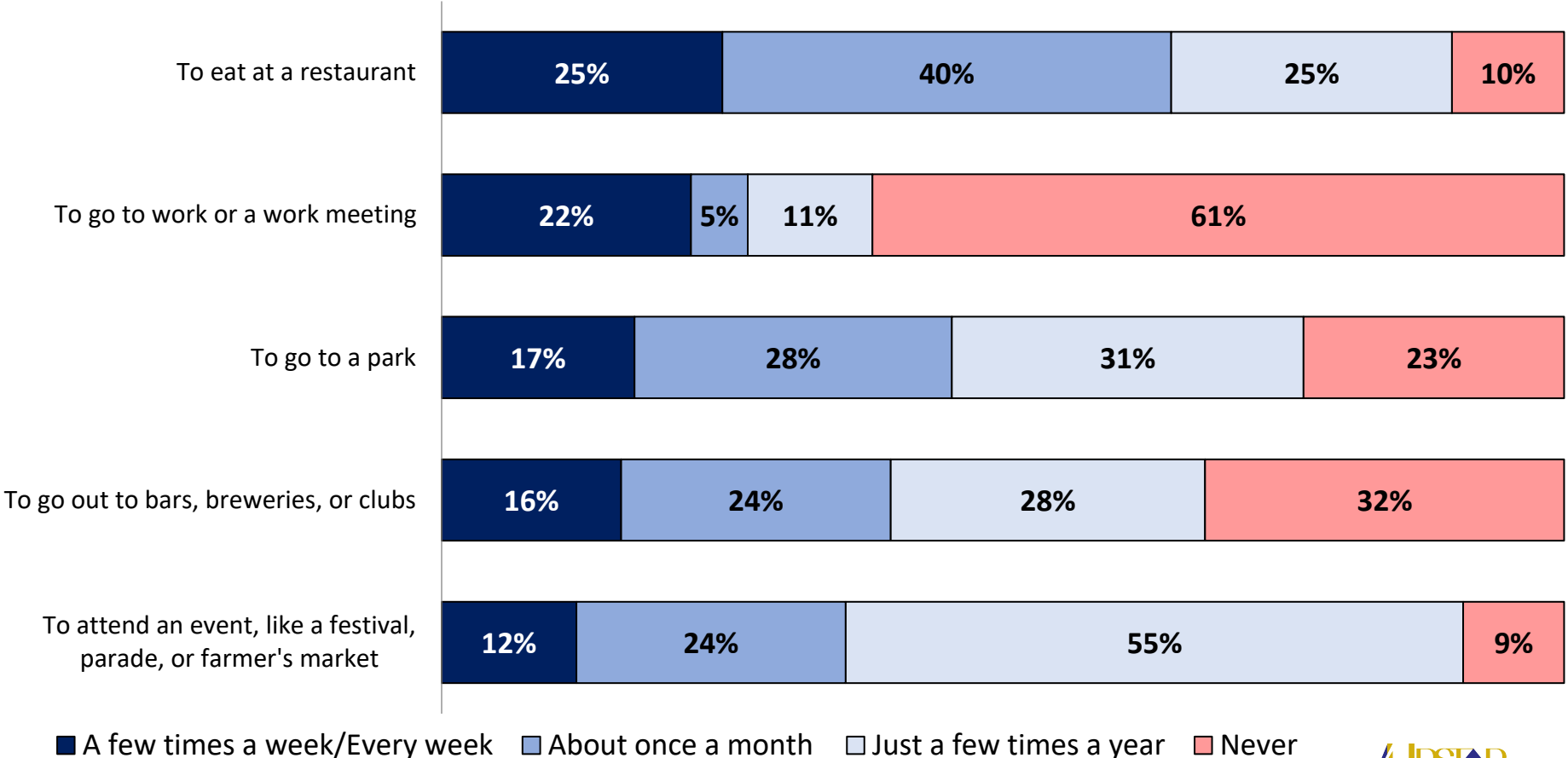
N=384 respondents



Trips to Restaurants are Most Frequent Reason to Go Downtown, While Nine-in-Ten Go For Events

Frequency of Trips Downtown for Specific Activities

N=384 respondents

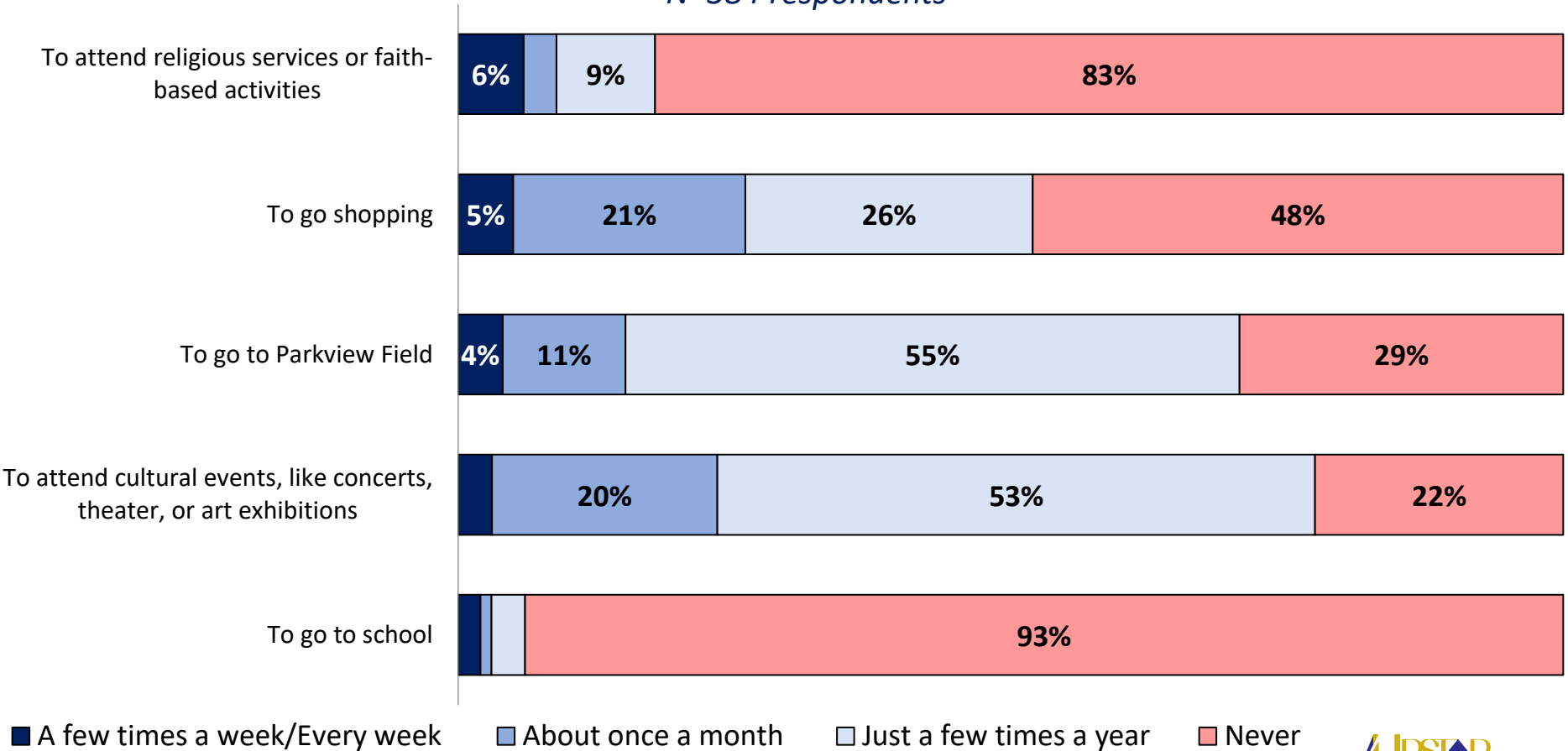


Q.9 (IF NOT NEVER IN Q.5) Now I am going to read to you a list of reasons why people go downtown. For each one, please tell me if this is a reason why you go downtown, or if you never go downtown for this reason. (READ REASON, RANDOMIZE)

Trips Downtown for Shopping, Work, School and Religious Activities are Limited

Frequency of Trips Downtown for Specific Activities

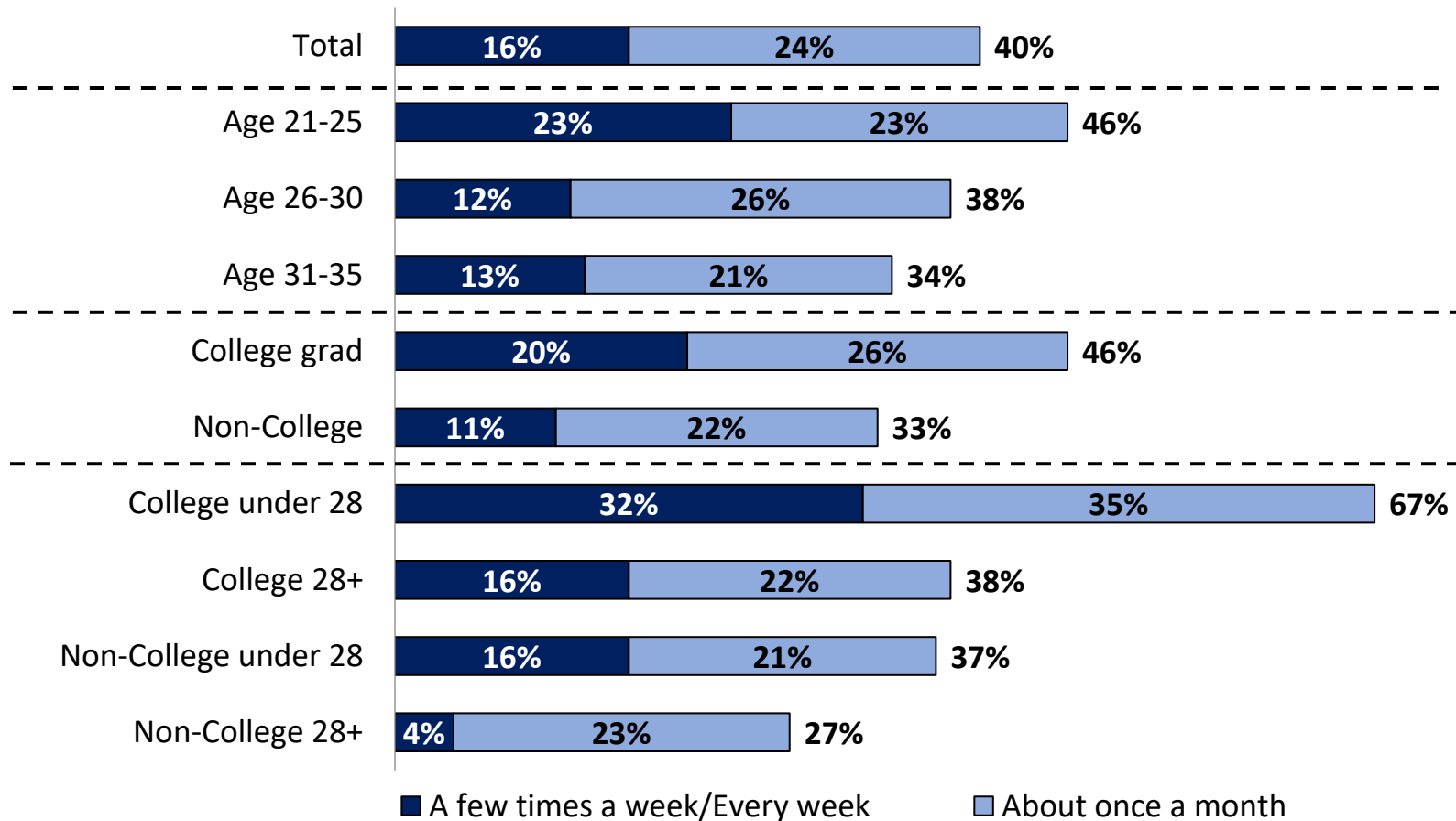
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Q.9 (IF NOT NEVER IN Q.5) Now I am going to read to you a list of reasons why people go downtown. For each one, please tell me if this is a reason why you go downtown, or if you never go downtown for this reason. (READ REASON, RANDOMIZE)

Younger College Graduates Head to Downtown Bars and Clubs Most Frequently

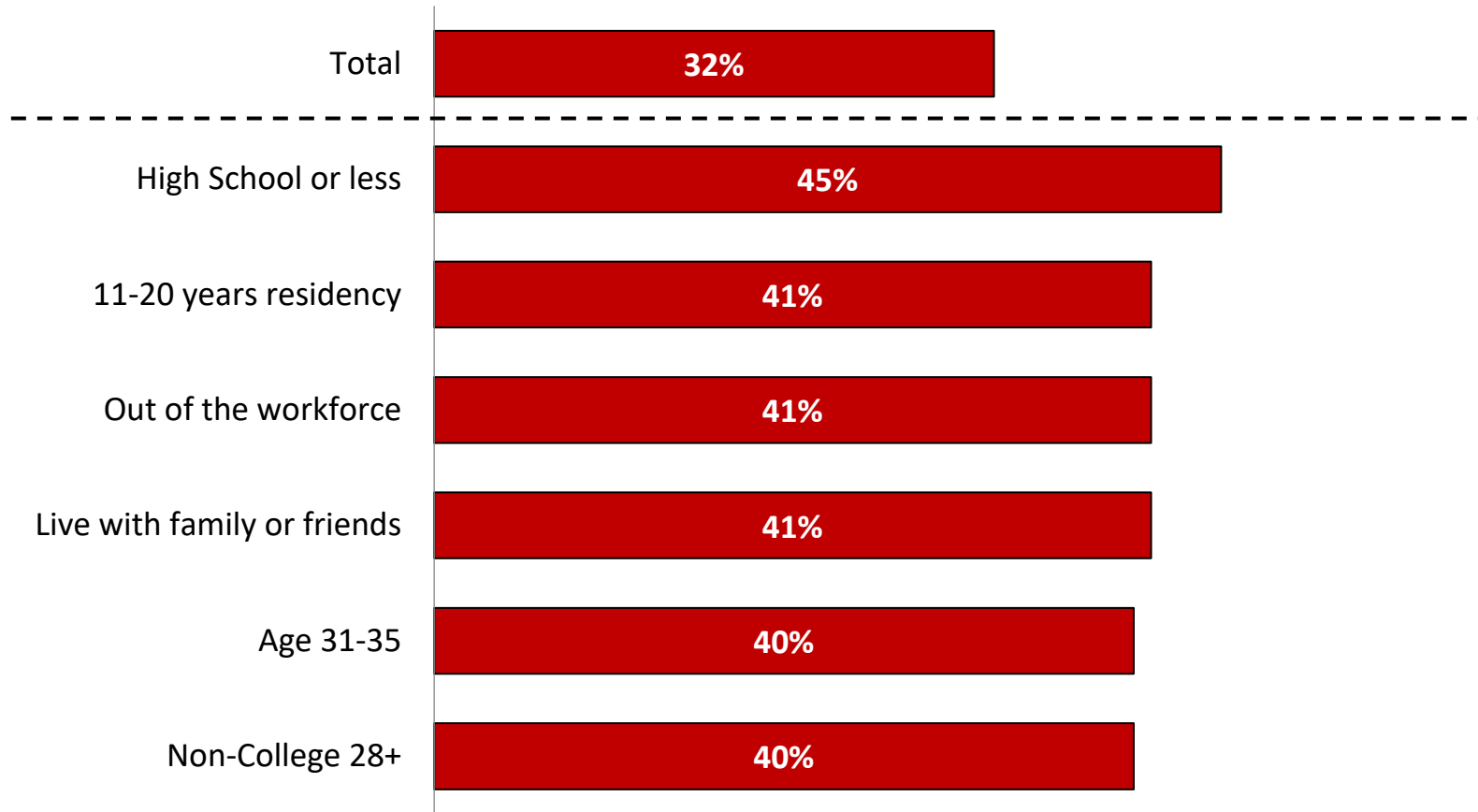
Frequency of Trips Downtown for Bars or Clubs
By Age, Education, and Age/Education



Q.9C (IF NOT NEVER IN Q.5) Now I am going to read to you a list of reasons why people go downtown. For each one, please tell me if this is a reason why you go downtown, or if you never go downtown for this reason. *To go out to bars, breweries, or clubs.*

Less Educated, Older and Longer-Term Residents Are Less Likely to Go Downtown For Bars, Breweries or Clubs

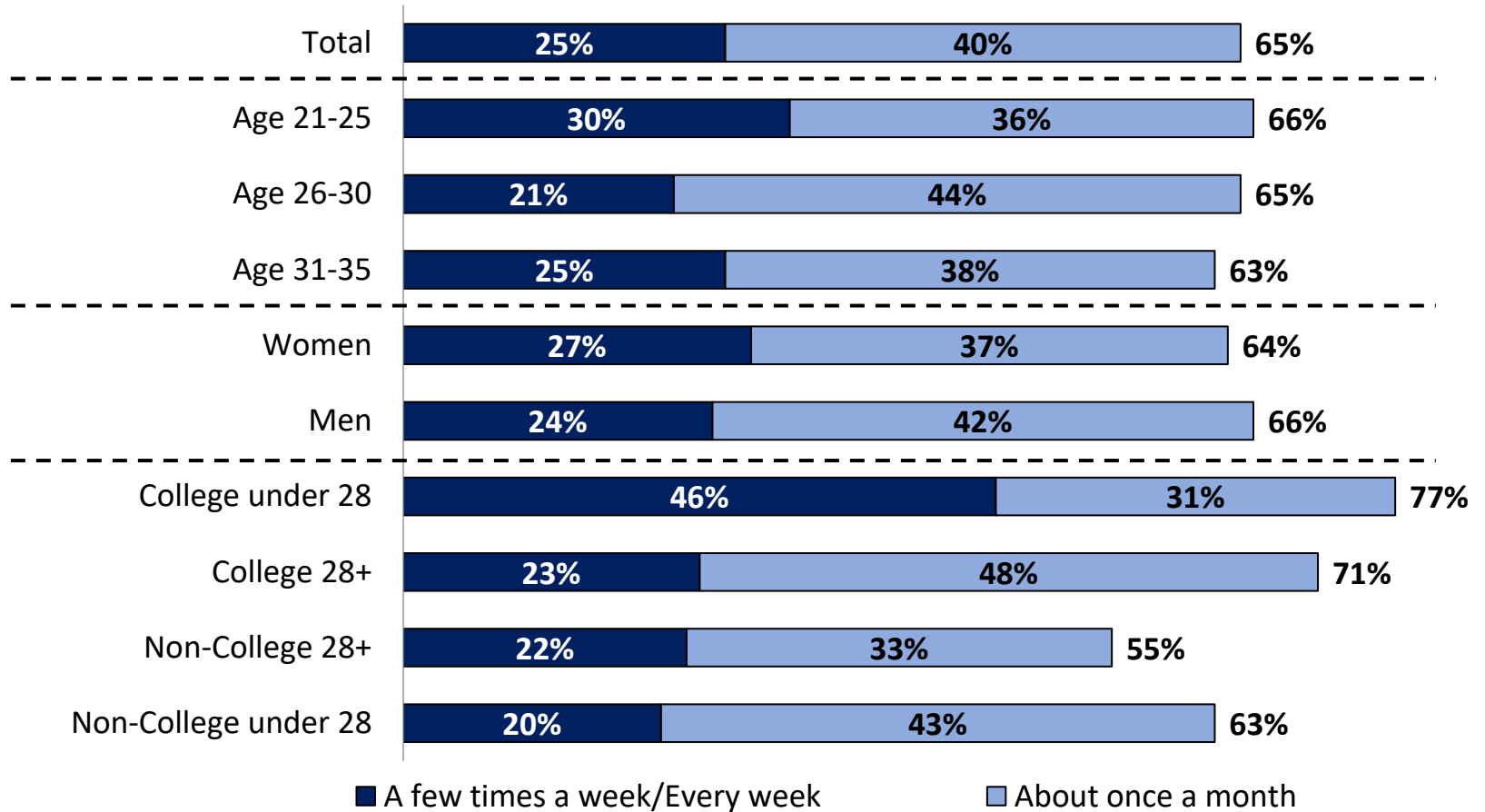
Never Go Downtown For Bars or Clubs Top Groups



Q.9C (IF NOT NEVER IN Q.5) Now I am going to read to you a list of reasons why people go downtown. For each one, please tell me if this is a reason why you go downtown, or if you never go downtown for this reason. *To go out to bars, breweries, or clubs.*

Younger College Graduates Are Most Frequent Downtown Diners

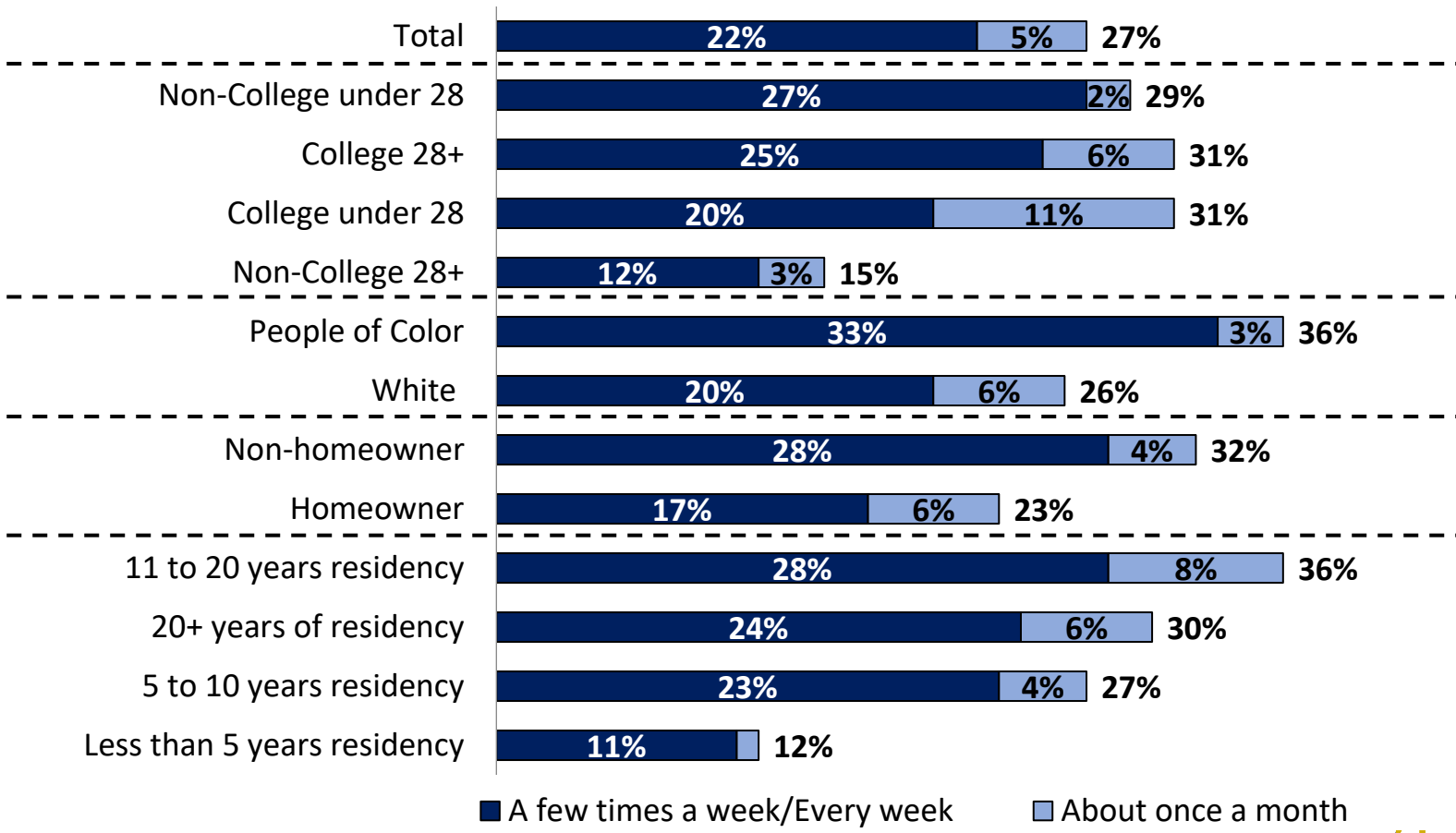
Frequency of Trips Downtown To Eat At Restaurants
By Age, Gender/Age, and Age/Education



Q.9D (IF NOT NEVER IN Q.5) Now I am going to read to you a list of reasons why people go downtown. For each one, please tell me if this is a reason why you go downtown, or if you never go downtown for this reason. *To eat at a restaurant.*

People of Color, Those Who Do Not Own Their Homes and Long-Time Residents More Likely to Head Downtown for Work

Frequency of Trips Downtown For Work
By Age/Education, Race, Homeownership, and Residency



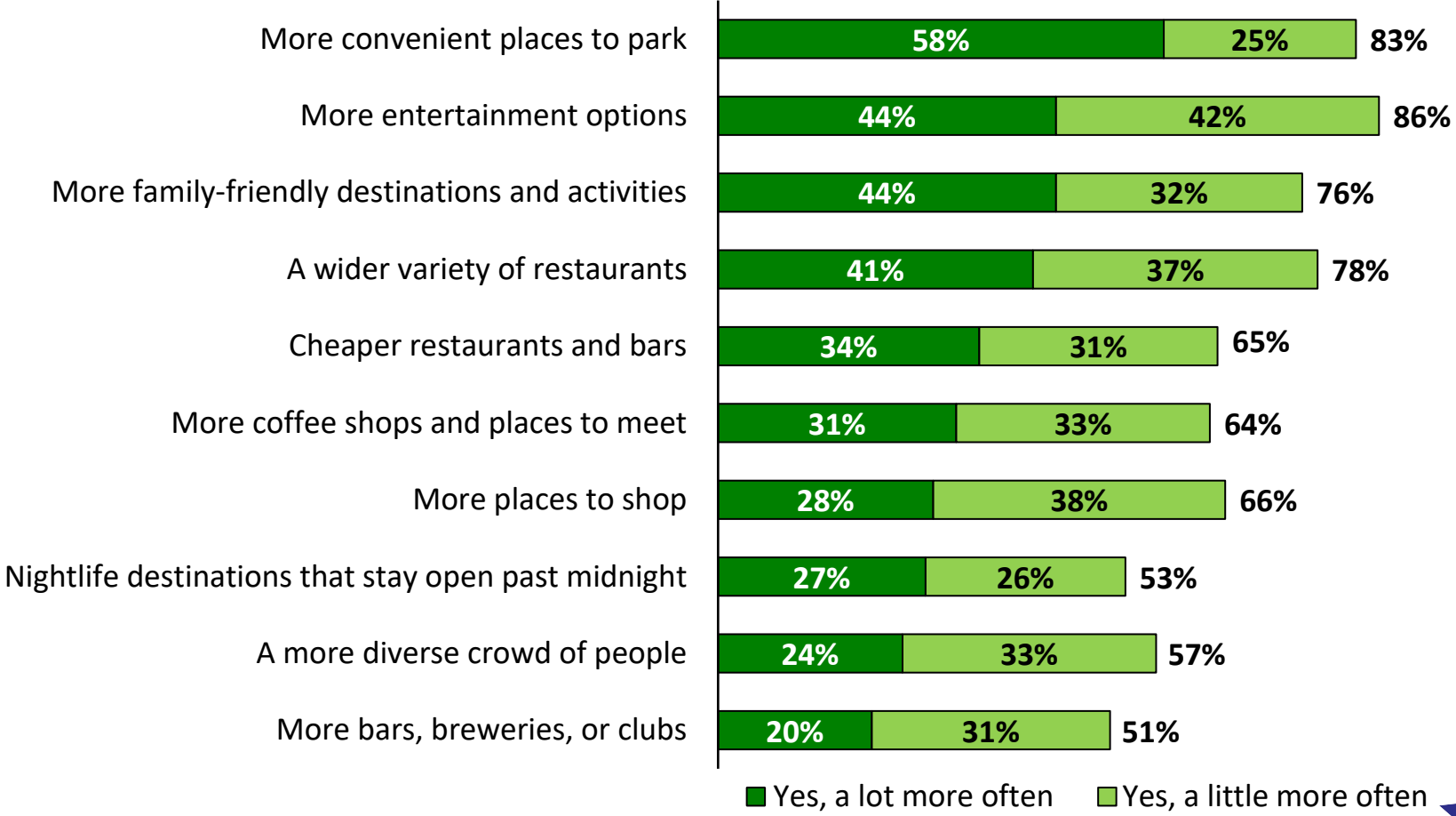
Q.9A (IF NOT NEVER IN Q.5) Now I am going to read to you a list of reasons why people go downtown. For each one, please tell me if this is a reason why you go downtown, or if you never go downtown for this reason. *To go to work or a work meeting.*

Downtown Amenities



Convenient Parking Important, but More Entertainment and Dining Options Best Motivators for Increased Visitation

Things That Would Make You Go Downtown More Often



Q.10 (RESUME ALL) Next, I am going to read to you a list of things that some people say would get them to go downtown more often. For each one, please tell me if that would get you personally to go downtown more often. (RANDOMIZE)

Convenient Parking Important, but More Entertainment and Dining Options Best Motivators for Increased Visitation

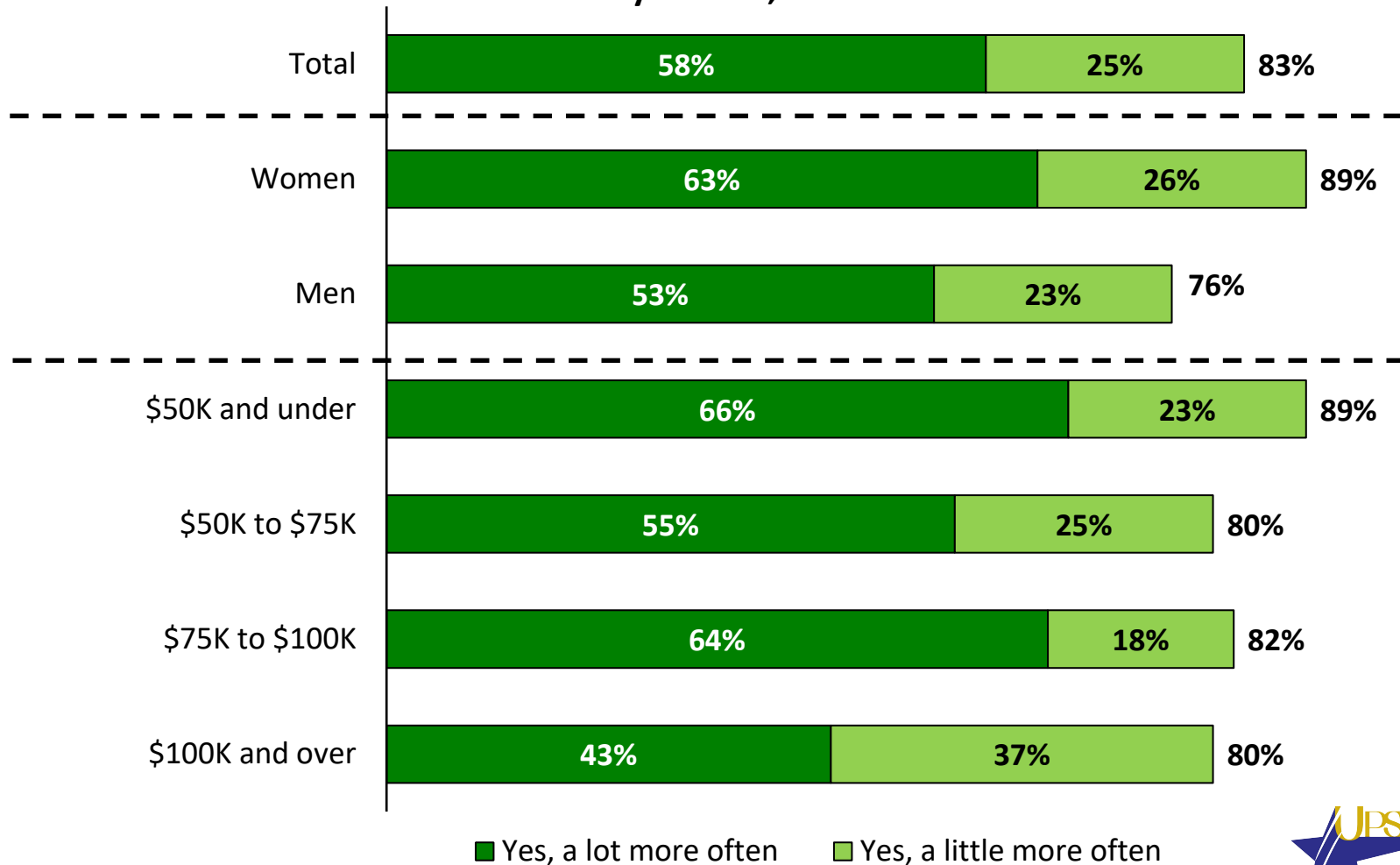
Would Visit Downtown Much More by Gender/Age	Total	Men 21-27	Women 21-27	Men 28+	Women 28+	White	People of Color	Kids in Home	No Kids in Home
More convenient places to park	58	57	68	49	58	57	62	57	59
More entertainment options	44	43	49	39	42	42	50	41	45
More family-friendly destinations and activities	44	34	46	39	58	41	56	69	29
A wider variety of restaurants	41	50	44	36	35	36	57	40	41
Cheaper restaurants and bars	34	35	46	28	29	34	38	31	36
More coffee shops and places to meet	31	31	37	19	38	29	38	28	32
More places to shop	28	30	35	22	28	26	39	29	28
Nightlife destinations that stay open past midnight	27	23	36	22	23	23	43	20	31
A more diverse crowd of people	24	18	31	13	31	19	42	23	24
More bars, breweries, or clubs	20	17	29	20	16	19	26	16	23



Q.10 (RESUME ALL) Next, I am going to read to you a list of things that some people say would get them to go downtown more often. For each one, please tell me if that would get you personally to go downtown more often. (RANDOMIZE)

Women and Lower Income Residents More Likely To Go Downtown If Better Places to Park

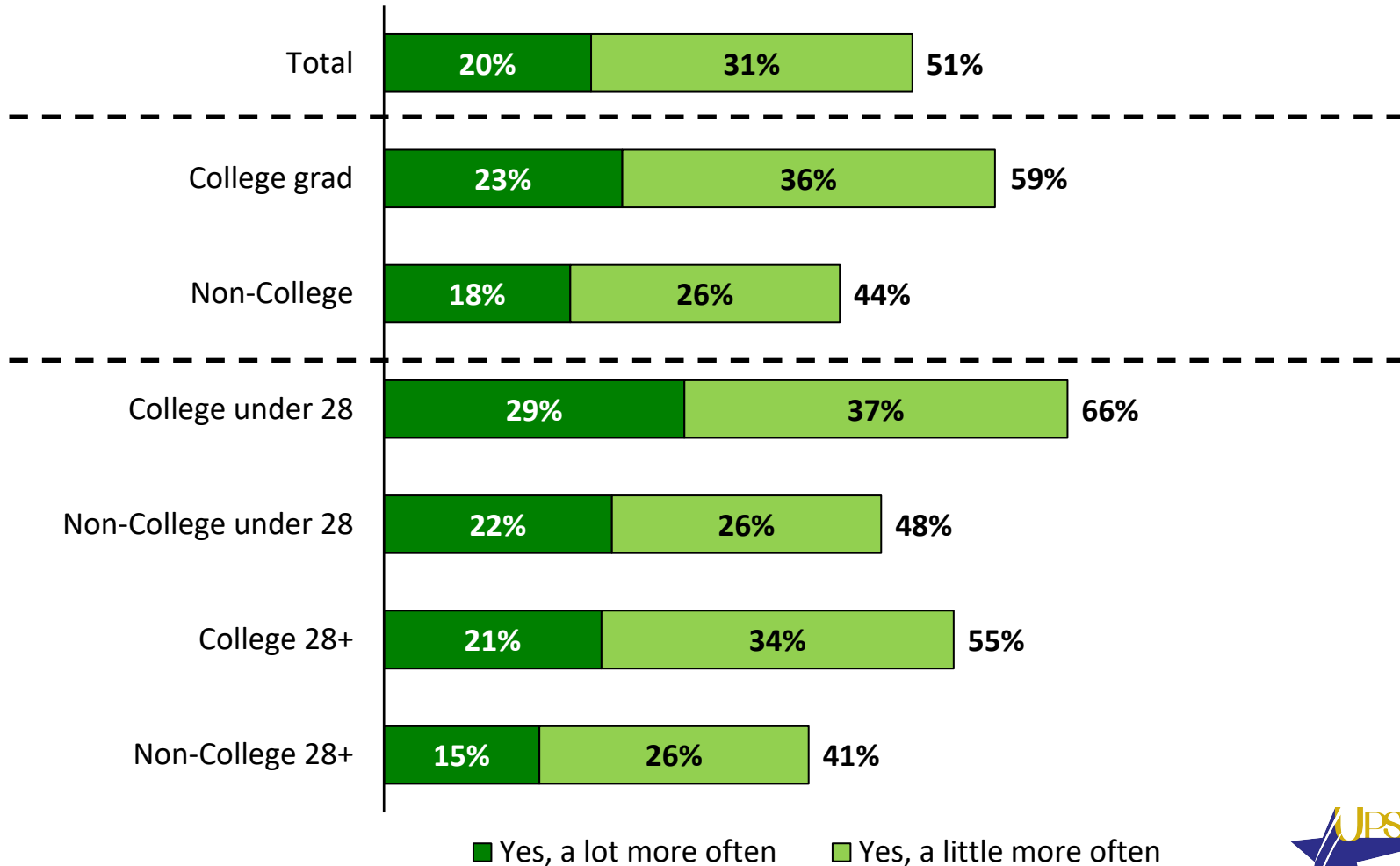
Would Go Downtown If More Convenient Places to Park
By Gender, Income



Q.10E (RESUME ALL) Next, I am going to read to you a list of things that some people say would get them to go downtown more often. For each one, please tell me if that would get you personally to go downtown more often. (RANDOMIZE) *More convenient places to park.*

College Educated Residents More Likely to Visit Downtown If More Bars, Breweries or Clubs

Would Go Downtown If More Bars, Breweries or Clubs
By Education, Age/Education

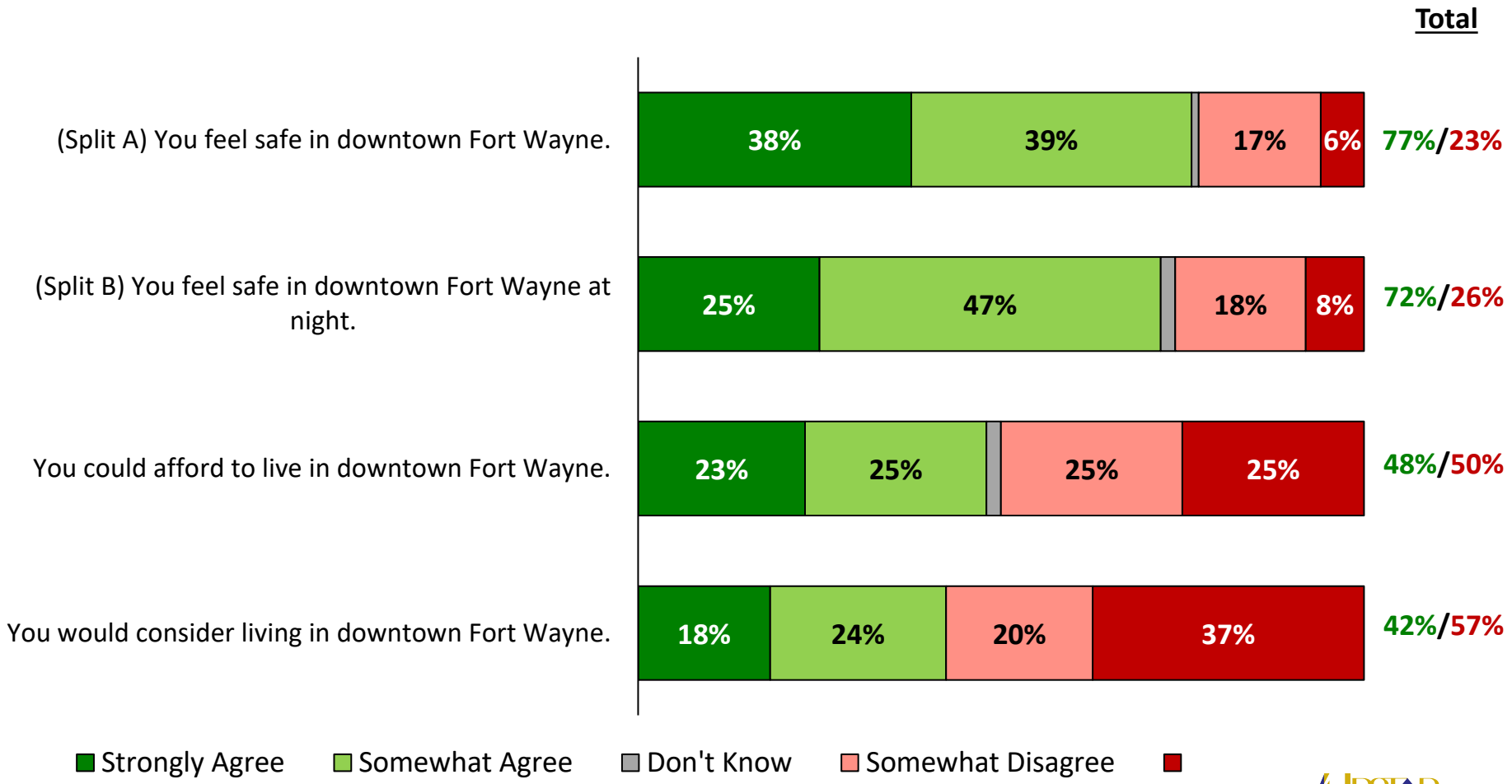


Q.10A (RESUME ALL) Next, I am going to read to you a list of things that some people say would get them to go downtown more often. For each one, please tell me if that would get you personally to go downtown more often. (RANDOMIZE) *More bars, breweries, or clubs*

Living Downtown

Most Feel Safe Downtown, Although Intensity Drops at Night

Split on affordability; four-in-ten would consider living downtown

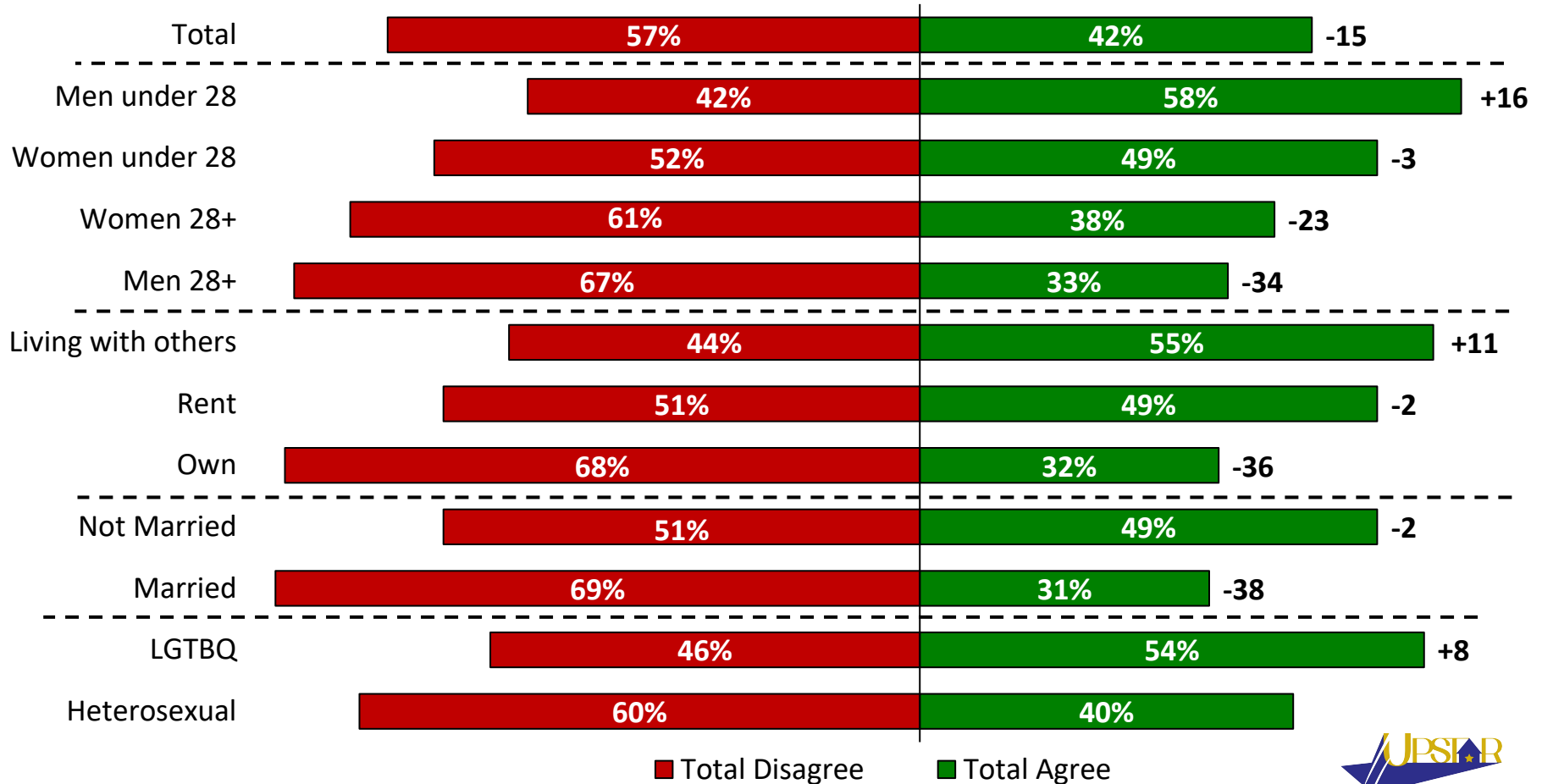


Q.11 Now I am going to read you some statements about downtown Fort Wayne. After I read each one, please tell me whether you (ROTATE) agree or disagree with each statement. The first/next statement is... (READ STATEMENT - RANDOMIZE).



Youngest Men, LGBTQ, Those Living with Family or Friends Most Likely to Consider Living in Downtown Fort Wayne

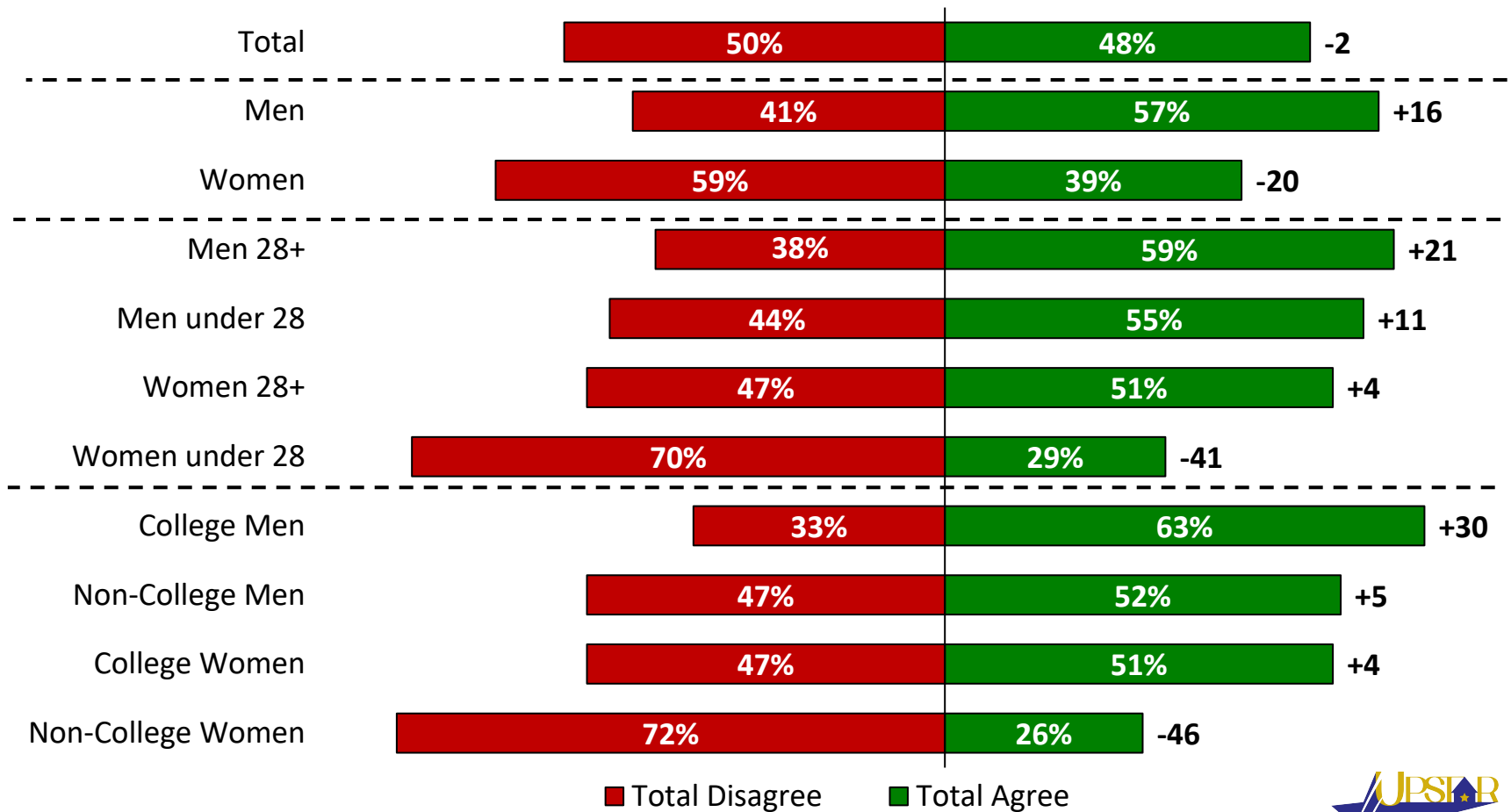
Consider Living in Downtown Fort Wayne by Gender/Age, Homeownership, Marriage Status, and Sexual Orientation



Q.11D Now I am going to read you some statements about downtown Fort Wayne. After I read each one, please tell me whether you (ROTATE) agree or disagree with each statement. The first/next statement is...*You would consider living in downtown Fort Wayne.*

Men, Especially Those with a College Degree and Age 28+ are Most Able to Afford Living Downtown

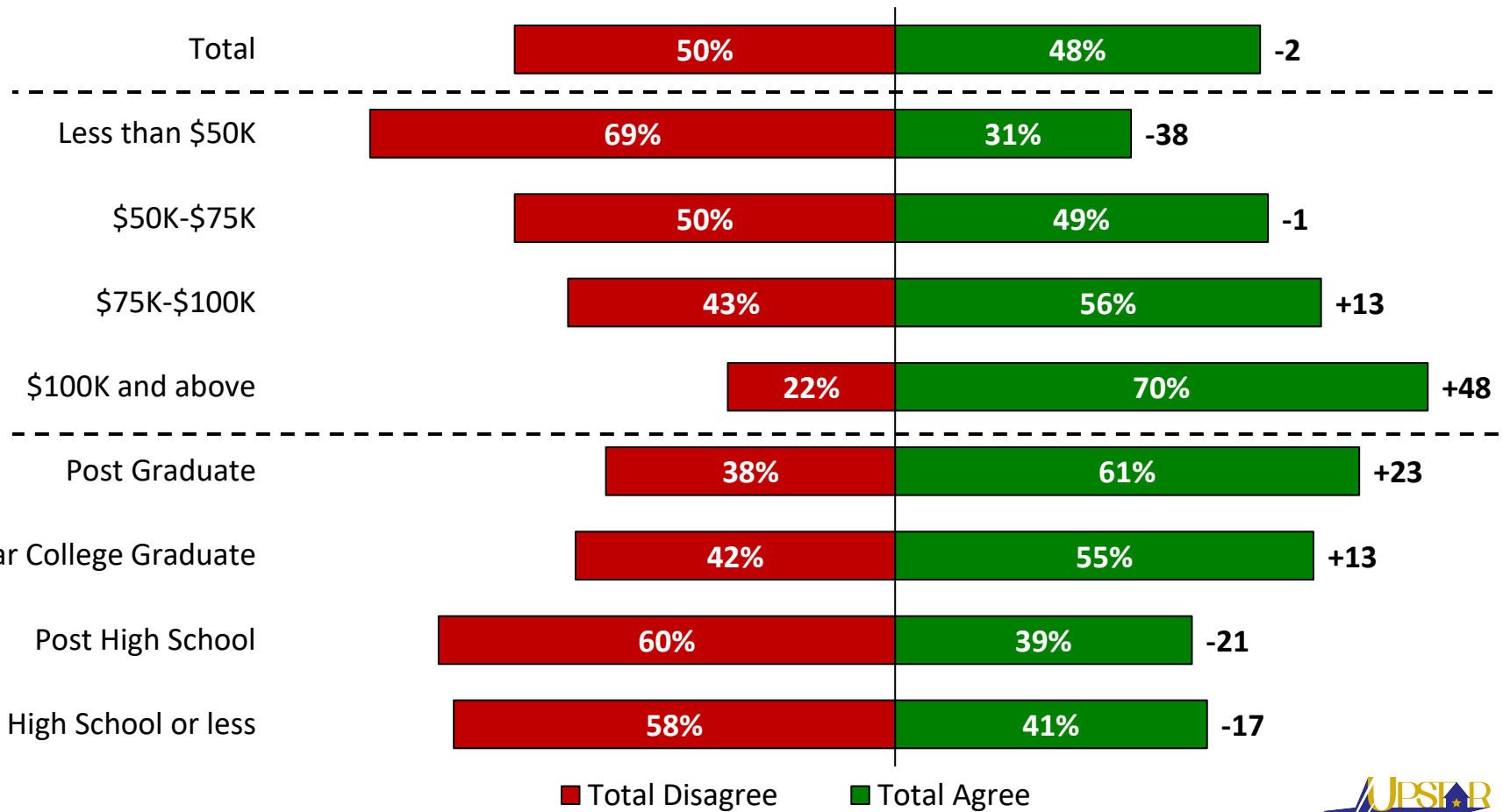
Could Afford Living in Downtown Fort Wayne by Gender, Age/Gender, Education, and Gender/Education



Q.11A Now I am going to read you some statements about downtown Fort Wayne. After I read each one, please tell me whether you (ROTATE) agree or disagree with each statement. The first/next statement is... *You could afford to live in downtown Fort Wayne.*

High Income Earners, Homeowners, and New Residents Say they Could Afford to Live Downtown

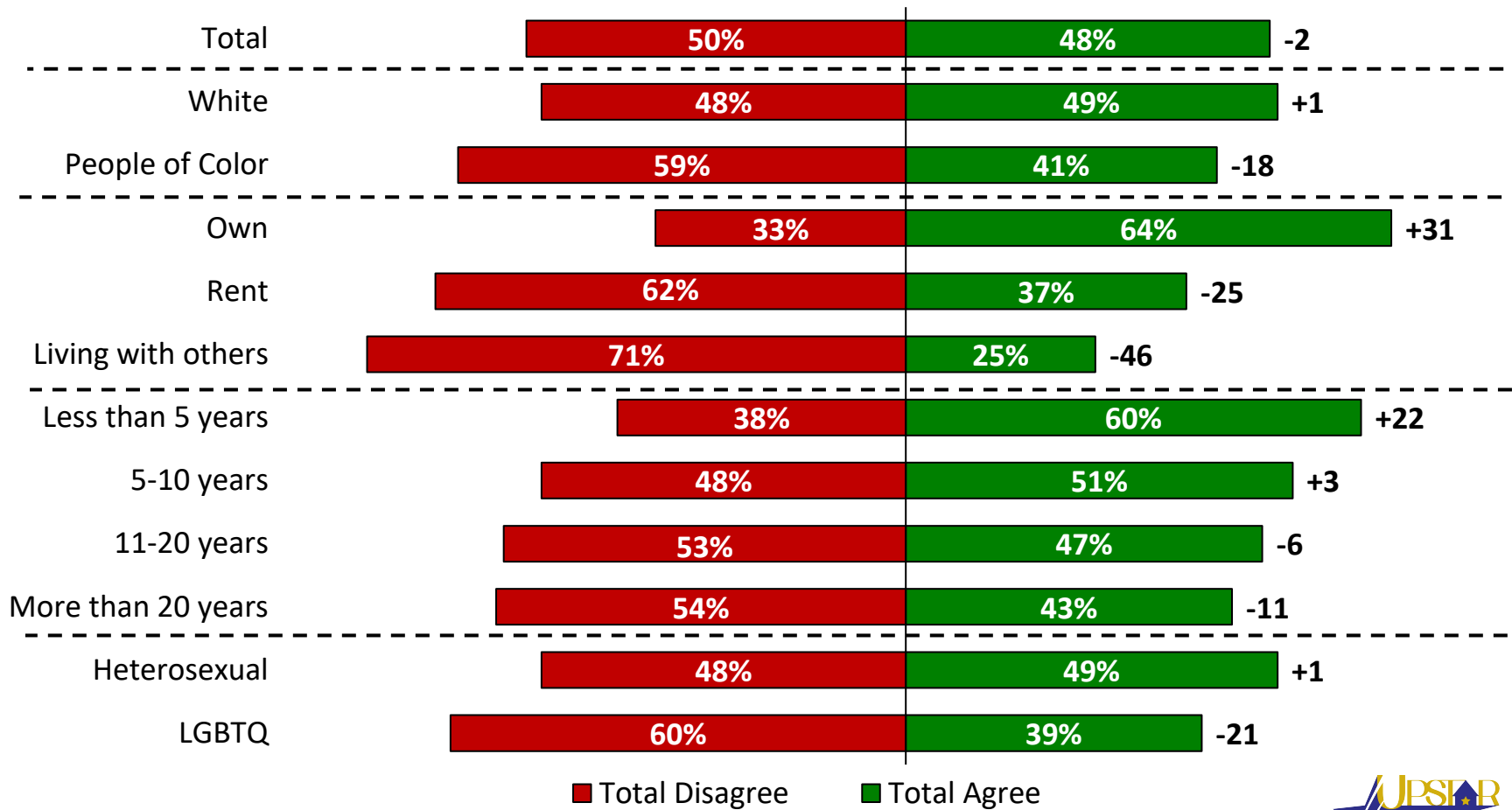
Could Afford Living in Downtown Fort Wayne by Income and Education



Q.11A Now I am going to read you some statements about downtown Fort Wayne. After I read each one, please tell me whether you (ROTATE) agree or disagree with each statement. The first/next statement is...You could afford to live in downtown Fort Wayne.

High Income Earners, Homeowners, and New Residents Say they Could Afford to Live Downtown

Could Afford Living in Downtown Fort Wayne by Race, Homeownership, Residential Tenure, Sexual Orientation, and Income

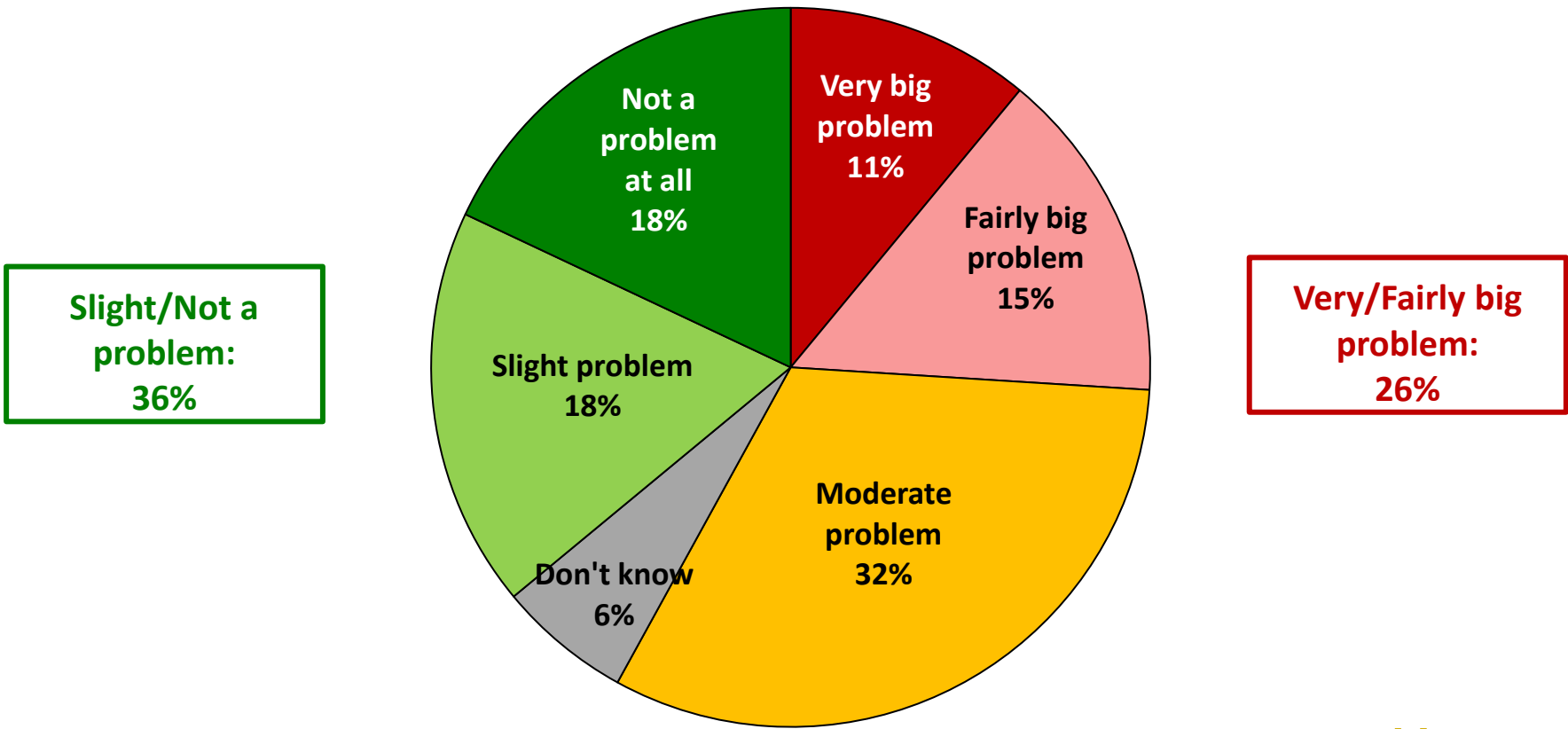


Q.11A Now I am going to read you some statements about downtown Fort Wayne. After I read each one, please tell me whether you (ROTATE) agree or disagree with each statement. The first/next statement is...You could afford to live in downtown Fort Wayne.

Most Agree that Downtown Housing Availability is a Problem

One-quarter Categorize as a "Big" Problem

Housing Availability in Downtown Fort Wayne

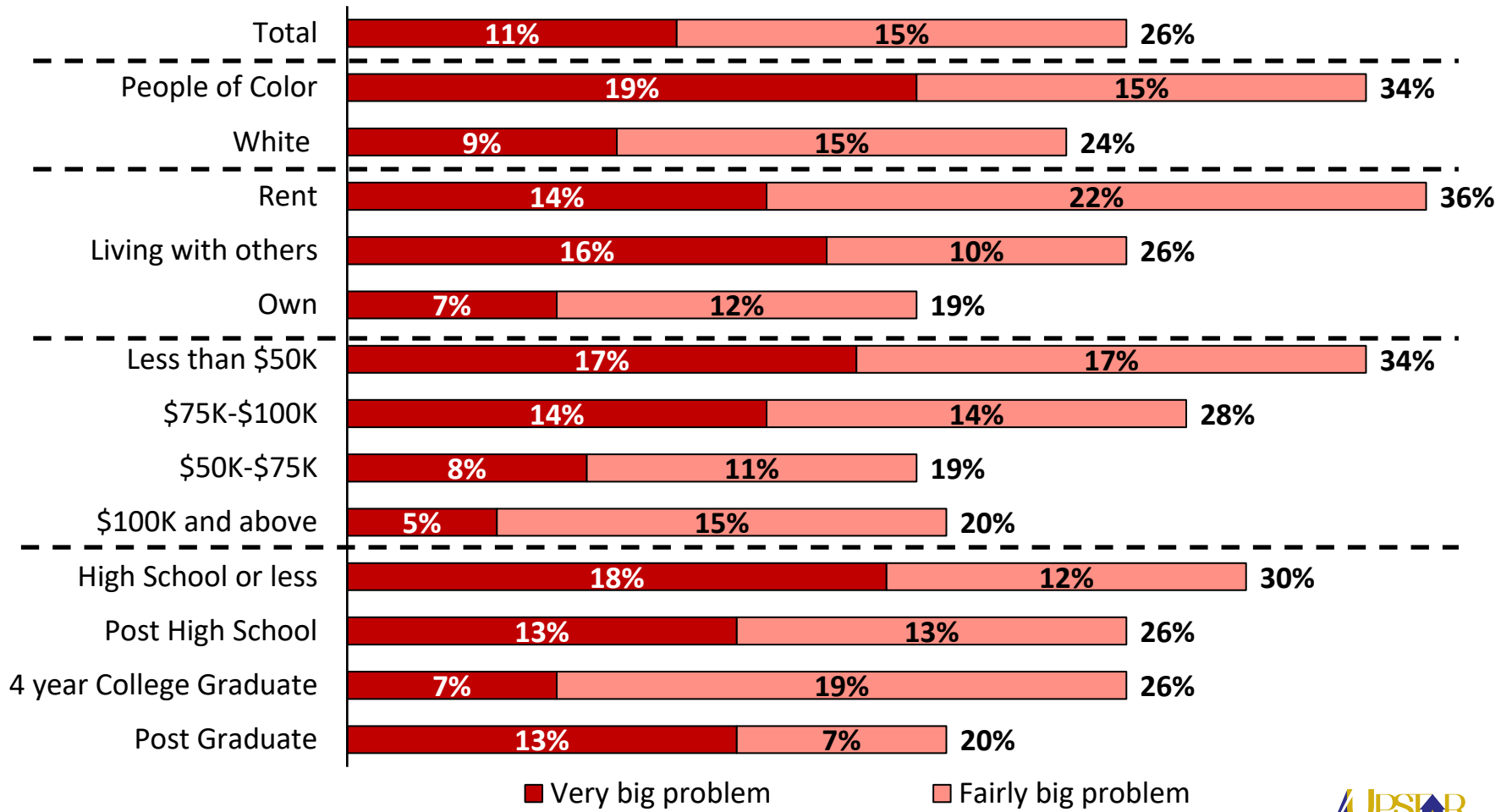


Q.12 To the best of your knowledge, how much of a problem is the availability of housing in the downtown area of Fort Wayne, that is to say, the number of homes, condominiums, or apartments that are available to buy or rent? Is housing availability (ROTATE FIRST TO LAST AND LAST TO FIRST) a very big problem, a fairly big problem, a moderate problem, a slight problem, or not a problem at all in downtown Fort Wayne?



Renters, People of Color and Lower Income Residents More Likely to See Availability as a “Big” Problem

Housing Availability by Race, Homeownership, Income, and Education



Q.12 To the best of your knowledge, how much of a problem is the availability of housing in the downtown area of Fort Wayne, that is to say, the number of homes, condominiums, or apartments that are available to buy or rent?



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