



# Collaborative Planning: Bringing Community Initiatives to Life

Room 106



CONNECT **351**





# Where the Sidewalk is Our Stage: Activating Downtowns Through Busking Festivals

Carli Scolforo  
Managing Director,  
Community Busk Inc



# What is Busking?



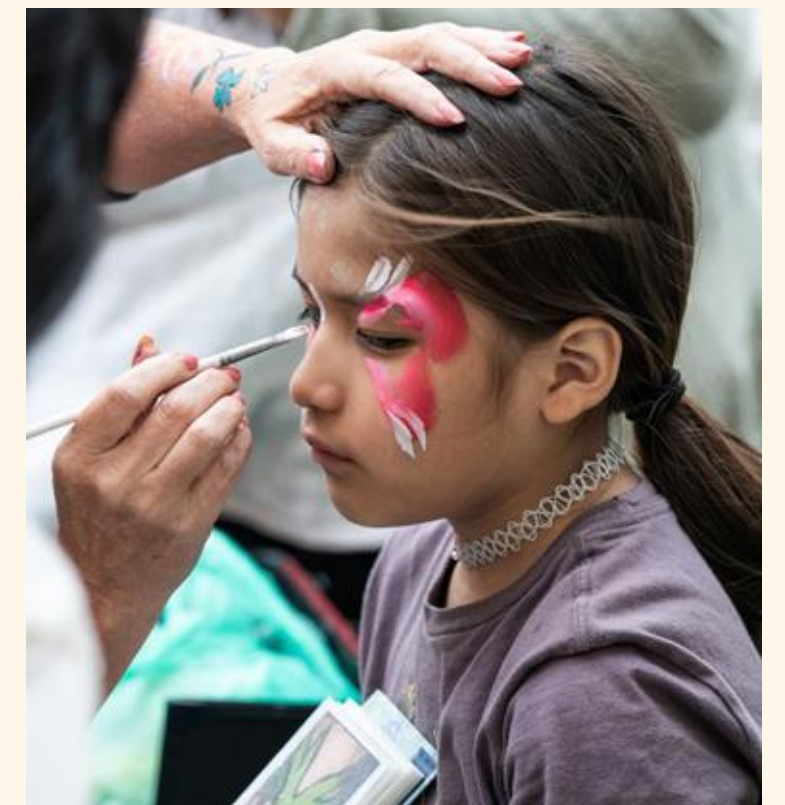


# What is Busking?





# What is Busking?





# Berkshire Busk! — Our Flagship Project

**2021:** First 10-weekend festival in downtown

Great Barrington

- Different performers each weekend
- Casual, social atmosphere
- Road closures creating community spaces





# Berkshire Busk! — Our Flagship Project

**2021:** First 10-weekend festival in downtown

Great Barrington

## Goals:

- Create a joyous, free-to-attend gathering space
- Provide local artists with opportunities to perform
- Support economic development by driving foot traffic downtown



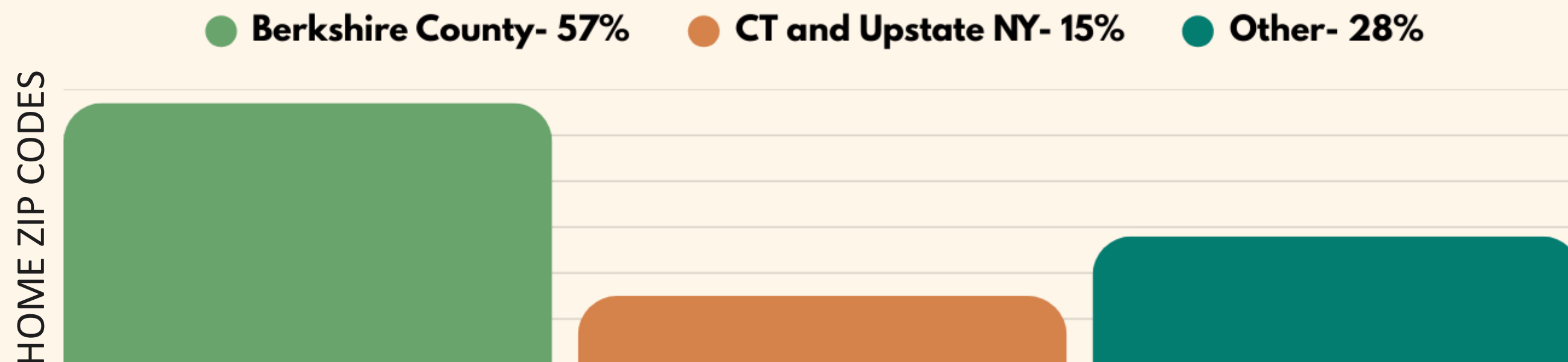
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# Berkshire Busk! — Results\*

## *1. Create a joyous, free-to-attend gathering space*

Of an estimated **25,000** visits during festival hours:

- **81%** consider themselves local residents (year round or seasonal)
- **50%** of attendees come in couples
- **30%** of adults bring children



\*Results based on 300 in-person surveys, developed with advice from the Research Institute at Siena University



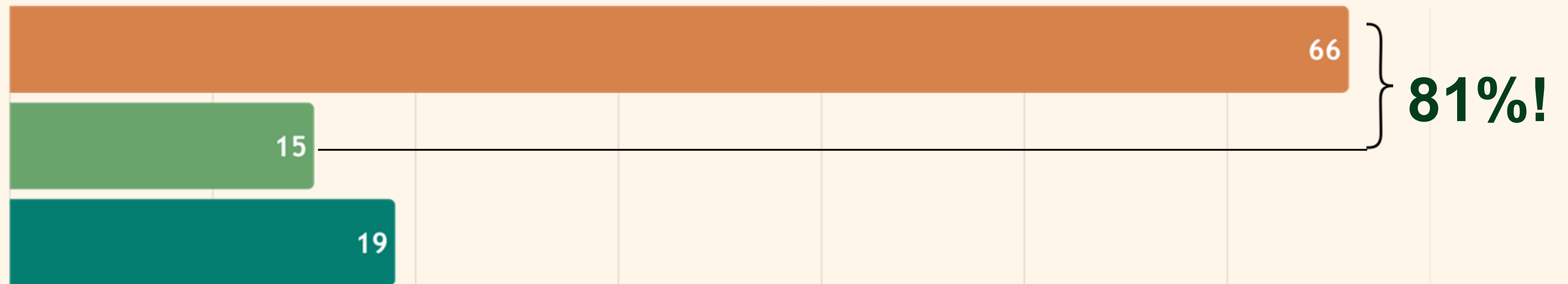
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# Berkshire Busk! — Results

## *1. Create a joyous, free-to-attend gathering space*

"Was Berkshire Busk! the main reason for your visit to Great Barrington tonight?"

- Yes, I came specifically for the festival- 66%
- The festival was one of several reasons- 15%
- Already in town for other reasons- 19%





# Berkshire Busk! — Results

*2. Provide local artists with opportunities to perform*  
100 unique performing groups with ~300 individual artists.



62% Live within 1 hour  
of Great Barrington



22% Live within 2 hours  
of Gt. Barrington



15% Live More than  
2 hours Away



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# Berkshire Busk! — Results

*2. Provide local artists with opportunities to perform*

**100%** of our buskers say they're interested in performing again next year!



**“Thank you. You are doing something great, and we hope that you can get this model to work in other places!”**

**“Thank you for your hard work in putting such a great community event together. Every town in America, big and small, should have one!”**



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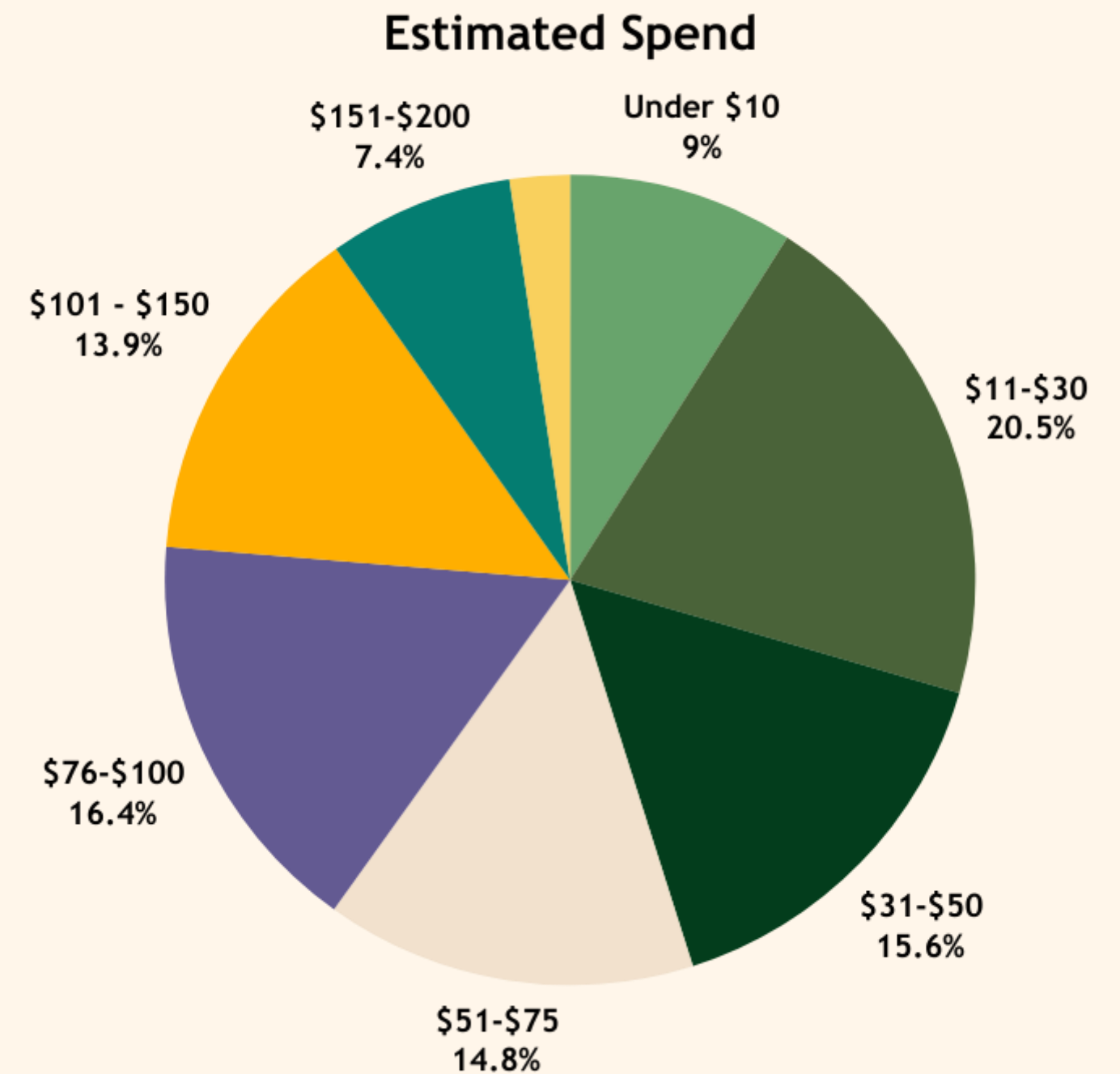
# Berkshire Busk! — Results

## *3. Support economic development by driving foot traffic downtown*

**77%** of attendees plan to spend money:

- **51%** Plan to eat
- **5%** Plan to shop
- **21%** Plan to eat and shop

Attendees spend a weighted average of **\$71** per visit.





# Berkshire Busk! — Results

*3. Support economic development by driving foot traffic downtown*

Based on:

- 25,000 visits
- 81% came for the festival
- \$71 as an average spend

We believe Berkshire Busk! can lay claim to about \$1 million of incremental spending!



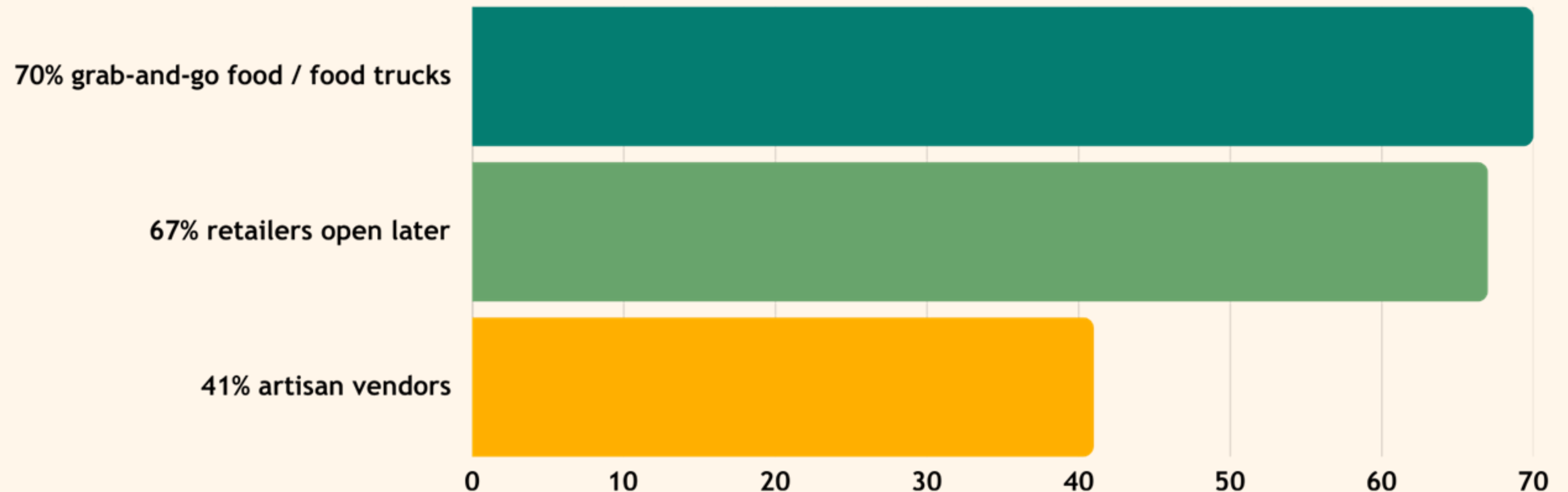


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# Berkshire Busk! — Results

## *3. Support economic development by driving foot traffic downtown*

**"What would you like to see more of at Berkshire Busk?\*"**



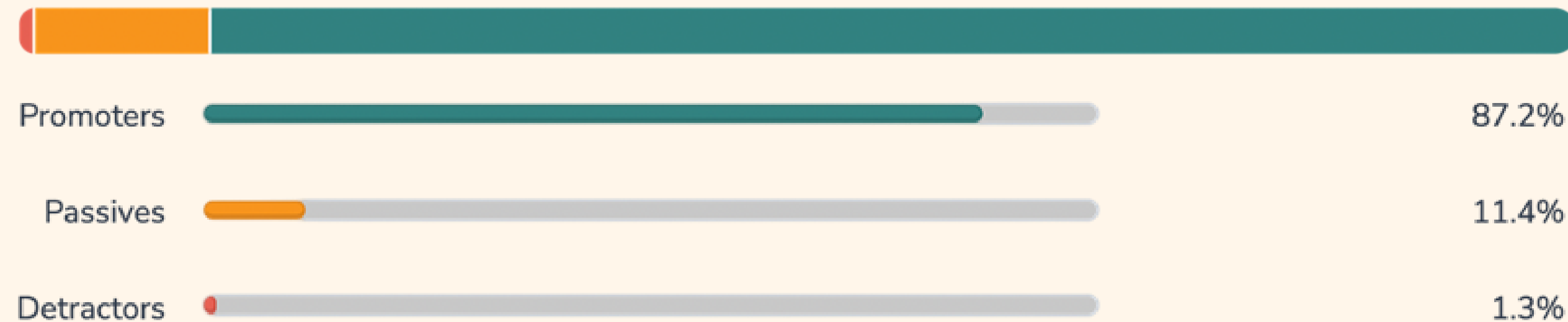
**Attendees want more opportunities to spend money at local businesses.**

\*Survey takers could select multiple options, leading to total scores >100%



# Berkshire Busk! — Results

“On a scale of 1-10 how likely are you to recommend Berkshire Busk! to a friend or visitor?”



Berkshire Busk’s Net Promoter Score score is **85.9%**.

**94%** reported that the festival had a “very positive” impact on their perception of Great Barrington!





# A low-cost placemaking initiative

- No major construction necessary
- No empty, underutilized outdoor amphitheaters
- Minimal equipment to purchase - esp. with donated/loaned signage





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# The Spontaneity of Street Performance

*Unexpected Delights = Making Memories*

- Transforms spaces & attitudes
- No \$ barrier to entry
- Turns a group of strangers into an audience sharing an experience





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# The Key Ingredients to a Busker Festival

## 1. Busker-Friendly Space


*(Collaborators might include: Police, Fire, DPW, Sanitation, Green Committees, Town Manager, Select Board, etc)*

## 2. Team & Talent

*(Collaborators might include: Student orgs, Cultural District, Historic Commission, cultural orgs, etc.)*

## 3. Promotion

*(Collaborators might include: Local publications, photographers, videographers, other local venues, etc.)*





SUBSCRIBE - \$2.50 / WEEK



Adam Riddle, from Party Palooga entertains and creates balloon figures for people Saturday on Lisbon Street during the Lewiston Live Festival 2025. (Russ Dillingham/Staff Photographer)

## Lewiston Live Festival fills the street

The first ever busking festival sponsored by the city shuts down Lisbon Street Saturday.

3 hours ago





# Thank you!

Learn more:



Take our survey:



CONTACT: [CARLI@COMMUNITYBUSK.ORG](mailto:CARLI@COMMUNITYBUSK.ORG)



# MELROSE FARMERS' MARKET

A local food hub and  
vibrant gathering space



- Non-profit established in 1994
- Weekly, June through October
- Monthly, November through April
- 25+ vendors featuring produce, small batch foods and crafts
- 800+ visitors each week

Steph Zabel, Executive Director



# Farmers' Market Impact

- Local economy and small businesses
- Healthy eating and food security
- Community life and social connection





# Economic & Local Food Impact

- Supports local agriculture
- Launches small businesses
- Creates food security through SNAP + HIP benefits





# Community & Social Impact

- Low barrier, accessible gathering place
- People can shop, gather, listen to music and learn
- Multi-generational & family friendly
- Consistency strengthens local relationships





# Starting a Market

- Define the mission
- Start small and grow intentionally
- Create support through funding and volunteers
- Coordinate vendors and market policies
- Build key partnerships





# Key Partnerships

- Mayor's Office — connection to local departments and resources / emergency support
- Police — public safety
- Parks Department — permitting and site maintenance
- Health Department — food permitting for vendors
- Chamber of Commerce — local business collaboration
- Local non-profits — aligned missions





# Resources

- Mass Farmers' Market
- Farmers' Market Coalition
- Farmers' Market University
- Neighboring farmers' markets



**FARMERS MARKET**  
**UNIVERSITY**





# MELROSE FARMERS' MARKET

Farmers' markets invigorate municipalities, strengthen local economies and create stronger, healthier, more vibrant communities.



[www.melrosefarmersmarket.org](http://www.melrosefarmersmarket.org)





# Falmouth Road Race

Collaborative Planning: Bringing Community  
Initiatives to Life

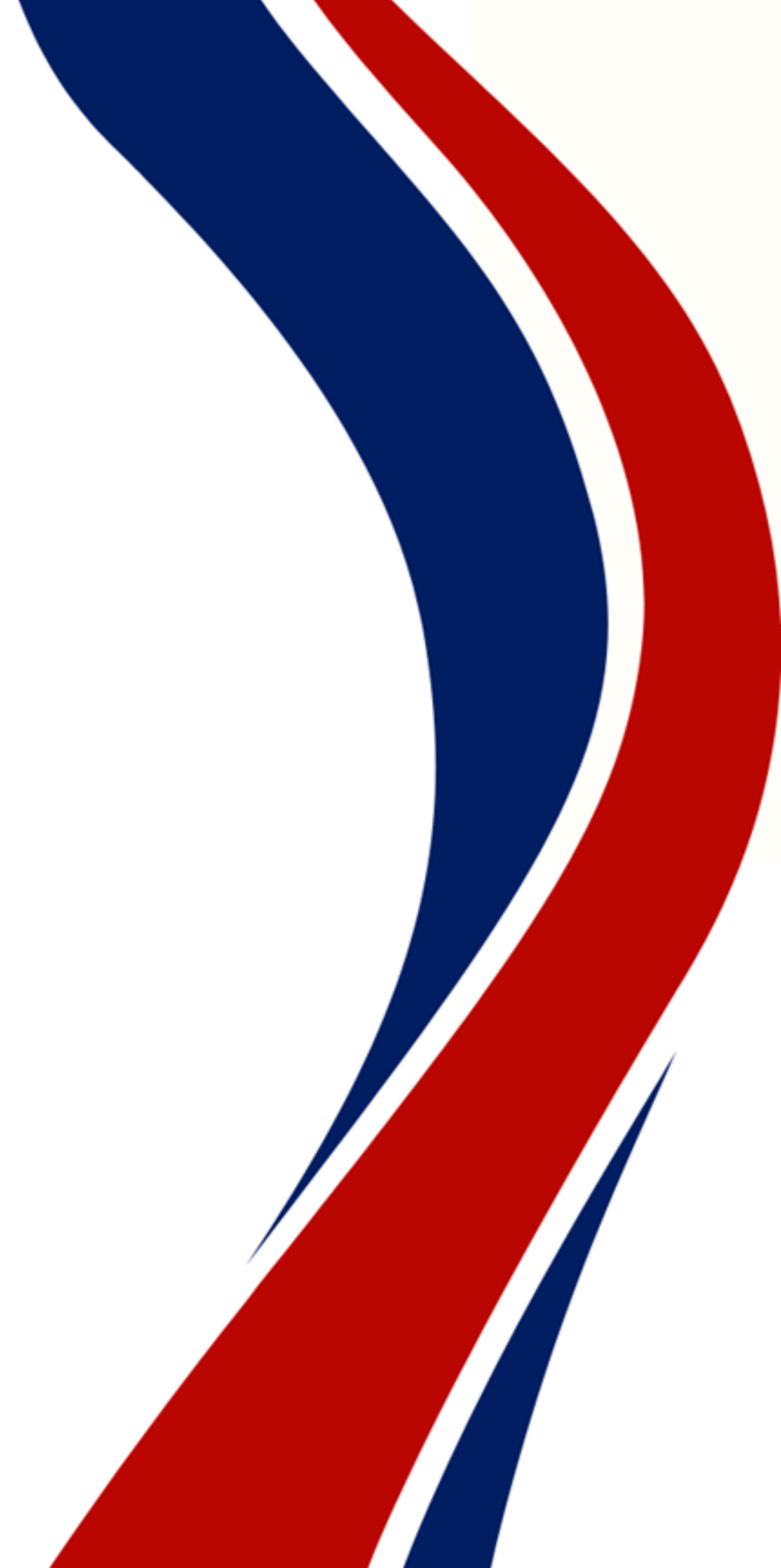


## A Community Event That Grew Over Time

What began as a small local road race has evolved into a multi-day, nationally recognized event that significantly impacts public safety operations, transportation, and community life across the Town of Falmouth.

### Falmouth Road Race - Community Context

- Founded in 1973 | 2026 marks the 54th running
- 11,400 participants | Runners, wheelchair athletes, duos, and a world-class elite field
- Historic accessibility leader | Recognized as the first wheelchair road race event in the U.S.
- A multi-day community presence | Events span Thursday through Sunday
- Health & Fitness Expo | 45,000+ attendees engaging with the town
- Friday Track Festival | Youth, elite, and pro races | ~5,000 spectators
- SBLI Kids Run | 1,000 local and regional children participate
- Sunday Race Day | 7-mile course through neighborhoods with 80,000–100,000 spectators
- Annual sell-out | A major driver of tourism and local economic activity





## **Municipal Reality: Why Collaboration Matters**

What began as a small local road race has evolved into a multi-day, nationally recognized event that significantly impacts public safety operations, transportation, and community life across the Town of Falmouth.

### **Community & Municipal Considerations**

- Multi-agency coordination required | Police, Fire/EMS, hospitals, Sheriff's Department, Coast Guard
- Public safety enables permission to continue | Safe execution builds confidence year over year
- Population fluctuations matter | Falmouth grows from 33,000 to 100,000+ seasonally
- Timing is critical | Events often occur when municipal resources are already strained
- Road closures affect daily life | Residents, businesses, and visitors feel impacts directly
- Mandatory staffing days add pressure | Local staffing supplemented by mutual aid and flaggers
- Community patience is finite | Disruption must be managed, explained, and justified
- Collaboration reduces friction | Early coordination prevents last-minute conflict





## Transferable Success Factors for Any Community

Sustained community support is earned through consistent engagement, transparency, and a willingness to adapt, regardless of event size or budget.

### Practices That Translate to Any Municipality

- Engage all affected stakeholders | Even indirect impacts deserve attention
- Work with community associations | Create trusted two-way communication channels
- Listen to local businesses | Adjust timing, access, and operations when possible
- Be flexible and creative | Partner with existing institutions and schedules
- Give back visibly and consistently | Support what matters to your community
- Invest where interests align | Small, mutual wins build long-term goodwill
- Seek feedback and act on it | Adaptation signals respect, not weakness
- Respect community limits | Not every event fits every town or every season
- Monitor public sentiment | Informal feedback often surfaces first online
- Think year-round | Events succeed when relationships don't disappear post-event



**Start small, plan together, listen continuously, and grow responsibly because the true measure of success is whether your community invites you back next year.**



**Thank you**

**Mike Faulkner**

Public Safety Liaison

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