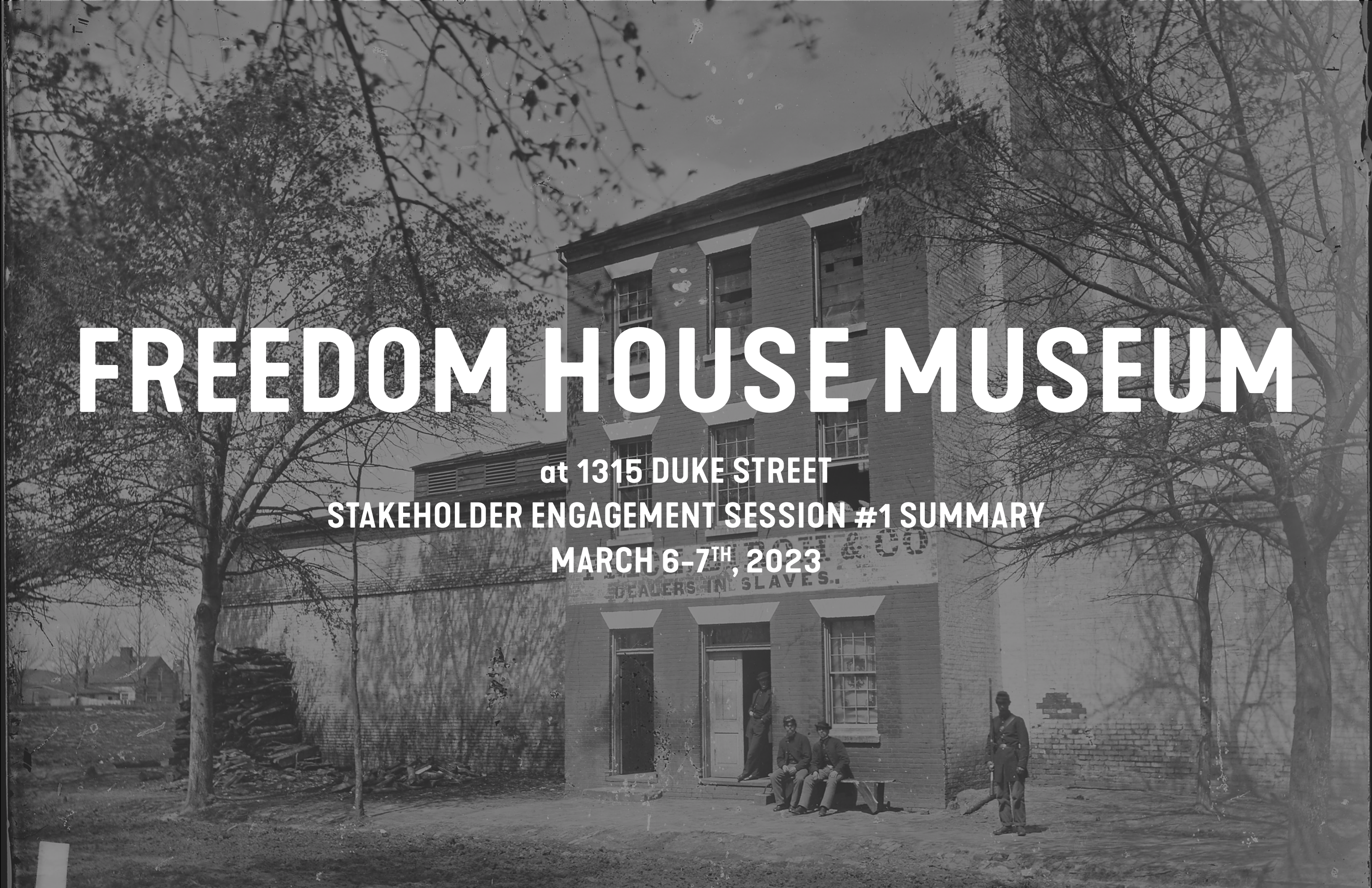


# FREEDOM HOUSE MUSEUM

at 1315 DUKE STREET  
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSION #1 SUMMARY  
MARCH 6-7<sup>TH</sup>, 2023



# ENGAGEMENT GOALS

## ● INCLUDE

Diverse perspectives will help the Museum and Design Team deliver the message that **“This is the community’s museum. Let’s make it a reflection of you and your community!”**

## ● LISTEN + LEARN

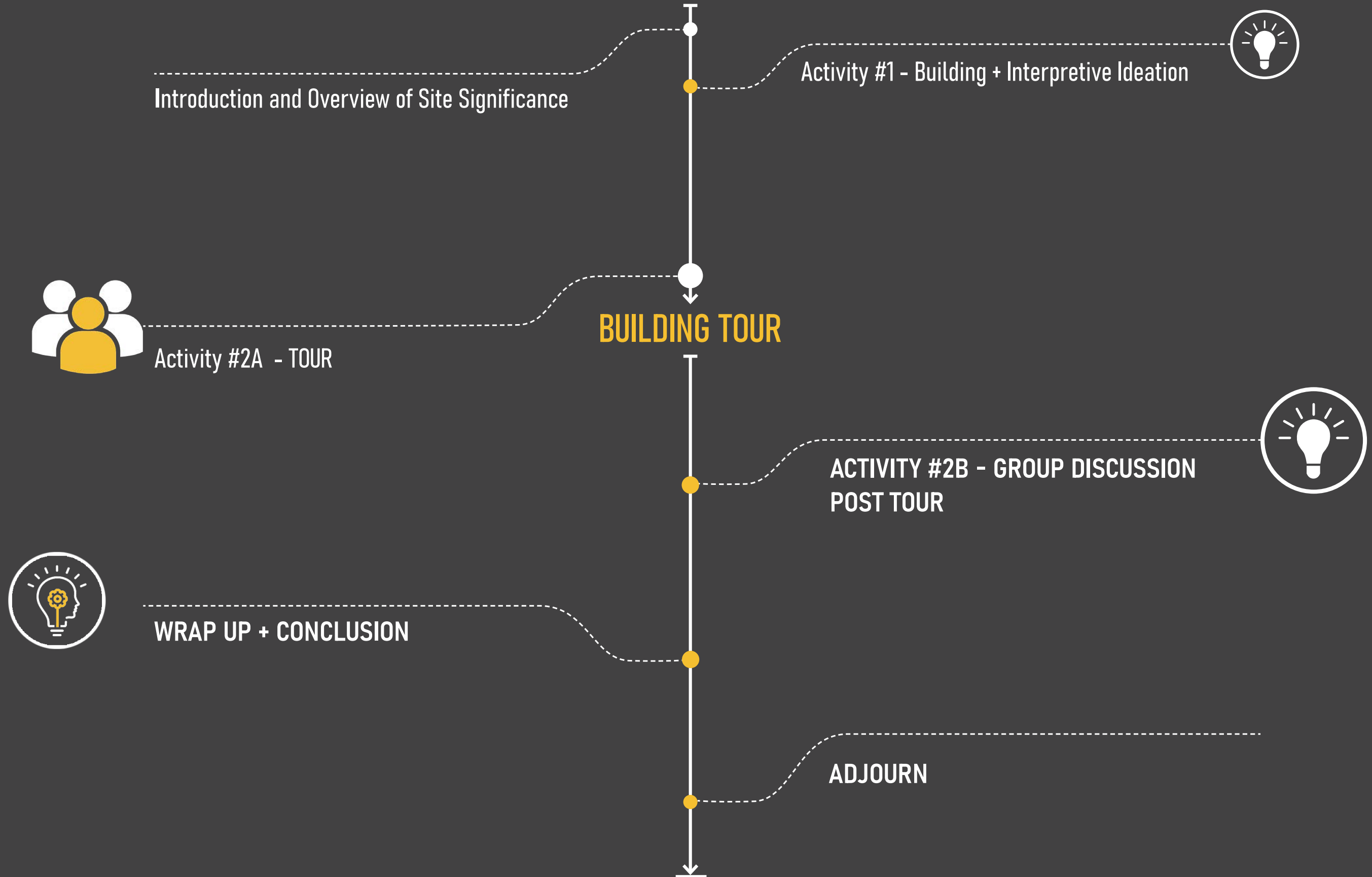
Hear the community and ensure the community feels heard; Different perspectives will give us much needed insight.

- (1) Public Circulation – Intuitive Journey, Chronology, Significant Nodes
- (2) Adjacencies
- (3) Story Telling/Community Conversations
- (4) History-focused Exhibits
- (5) Lecture and Presentation
- (6) Reflection/Pause Spaces
- (7) Genealogical Research

## ● INCORPORATE

Freedom House Museum at 1315 Duke Street and Design Team will prioritize audience feedback

# SESSION AGENDA



# ACTIVITY #1

## BUILDING + INTERPRETIVE IDEATION

Activity #1 consisted of an open discussion on the existing building and interpretive ideation. This activity was designed to get the participants thinking, energized, and to create passion concerning the design and subject matter. The subject matter focused on Freedom House at 1315 Duke Street, the international slave trade, domestic slave trade, community, programming, etc. Professionals from SmithGroup and Proun introduced a series of questions within a presentation. Participants were asked to document their responses on sticky notes, which were then placed on board for documentation. Participants were also asked to elaborate their responses verbally to further drive the conversation. This enabled the design team to gain insight on what people desired for the building and the site. This also served as a warm-up, encouraging participants to express their preference when describing how different spaces or programmatic features made them feel.

# QUESTIONS - WHAT STORIES NEED TO BE TOLD?

## HIDDEN HISTORY

What stories haven't been told? What stories have been buried?

## SIGNIFICANCE

What is unique and special about this site and project?

## EDUCATE

What would you like to learn?

# KEY RESPONSES

"Alexandria's relationship with slavery." 03.06.2023

"A regional/national site of great importance" 03.06.2023

"The people enslaved here - where they came from and ended up? ... who sold them and why?" 03.06.2023

"The voice of those who were enslaved and what their narrative is" 03.06.2023

"It highlights a pivot toward domestic slave trade after international trade was deemed illegal" 03.06.2023

"How the site has affected the descendants of Alexandria and the U.S...the relationship of the site to other sites in the U.S...Relationship of the site to local descendants" 03.06.2023

"The experiences of African Americans who traveled through this space and tracing their experiences/movements elsewhere" 03.06.2023

"Stories about individual families if possible" 03.06.2023

"Hidden History - How did the place come to be? Lend?...How big of a player in the slave trade was this?...What happened to the owners?" 03.06.2023

"The discussion on human impact on economics and local/world economy" 03.07.2023

"This is an opportunity to physically interpret what has previously been largely oral and often disputed history" 03.07.2023

"...Come to the need to research and commemorate those enslaved/trafficked through here" 03.07.2023

"The domestic slave trade in general...the local domestic slave trade...the illegal international slave trade post 1808...the African Retentions in U.S. and impact on Black Culture" 03.07.2023

## QUESTIONS - WHAT STORIES NEED TO BE TOLD?

### SIGNIFICANCE

What is unique and special about this site and project?

## KEY RESPONSES

Physical layout from period of significance showing scale of complex.

How the business operated, and how it “modernized” the domestic slave trade.

Who was held and sold here, and what life was like for them.

## QUESTIONS - WHAT STORIES NEED TO BE TOLD?

### SIGNIFICANCE

What is unique and special about this site and project?

Alexandria's role in the domestic slave trade...

## KEY RESPONSES

**A hub for the domestic slave trade. (Were there other slave trading businesses here? How did Old Town benefit from the slave trade? What was the community's reaction?)**

**Note that Duke Street led both to the water and inland, enabling easy access to water or overland travel.**

**Connect to other sites in the city, and in the shadow of the nation's capital.**

# QUESTIONS - WHAT STORIES NEED TO BE TOLD?

## SIGNIFICANCE

What is unique and special about this site and project?

Slave trade was big business, locally and nationally...

## KEY RESPONSES

The domestic slave trade: why did it exist and how did it change the dynamics of slavery in America following the 1808 ban on the importation of slaves. Virginia's particular role

Scale and economic impact. (Connect to rise of capitalism?)

A look at the forced movement of people South ("Black Trail of Tears").

Enslavement was a condition imposed by the white power structure.

Connect to other sites around the country.



# QUESTIONS - ON IDENTITY AND FOCUS

## IDENTITY

Who is the story about?

## IDENTITY

Whose voice should narrate the story?

## FOCUS

How contemporary should the focus of the story be?

# KEY RESPONSES

**"A sacred space that evokes powerful emotions"**  
03.06.2023

**"Who were the key players?"**  
03.07.2023

**"Unique – one of the largest in network of enslaved selling locations?"**  
03.06.2023

**"Only surviving slave trade building in US – not just another museum"**  
03.06.2023

**"Stories of the young children, children of all ages, and stories of the global majority"**  
03.06.2023

**"The awareness should not be put on the Black community as a whole. Enslavement was a condition imposed by the White Power Structure. White supremacy needs to be addressed"**  
03.06.2023

**"Stories that amplified the lived experienced of AA descendants of the enslaved"**  
03.07.2023

**"Power of place – how the site has evolved over time."**  
03.07.2023

**"Hidden History – How did the place come to be? Lend?...How big of a player in the slave trade was this?...What happened to the owners?"**  
03.06.2023

# QUESTIONS - WHAT STORIES NEED TO BE TOLD?

## IDENTITY

Who is the story about?

Personal stories, families, who was affected...

# KEY RESPONSES

Specific stories of enslaved individuals trafficked through the site. (Who were they? Where were they from and where did they go? How much is known about individuals?)

Descendant stories: a look at what documents, archaeological research, and other evidence remain? Include family history research by descendant of someone enslaved here?

What about local free Blacks? Impact of business on their lives.

Impact on families (this space separated families).

Database of person's enslaved here?

# QUESTIONS - WHAT STORIES NEED TO BE TOLD?

## IDENTITY

Who is the story about?

Aftermath...

# KEY RESPONSES

Civil War use of building

Transition from slavery to freedom.  
What happened to people after emancipation? Family reunification efforts?

Freedom House

## QUESTIONS - WHAT STORIES NEED TO BE TOLD?

### IDENTITY

Who is the story  
about?

Legacy...

## KEY RESPONSES

Ripple effect of slavery and racism

Tension between wanting to  
remember and wanting to forget

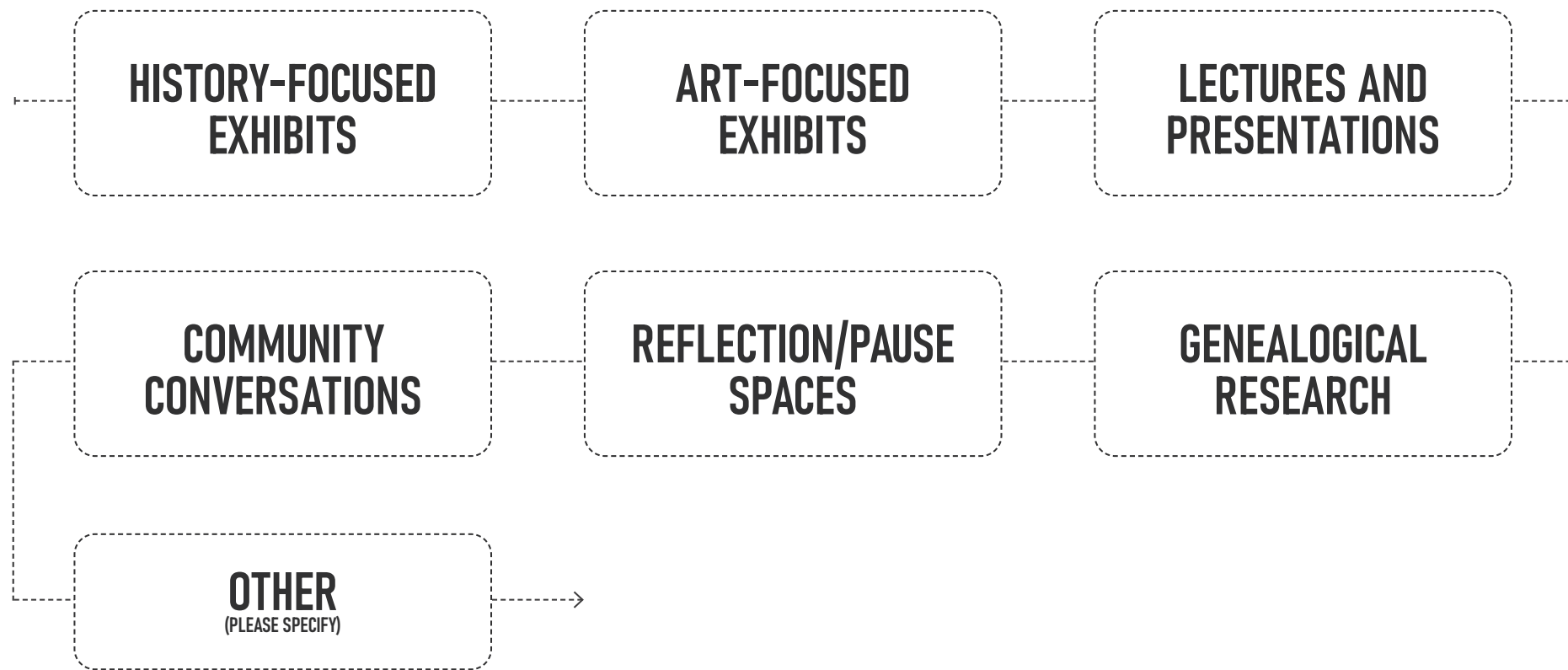
Economic injustice

What does reconciliation look like?

What do honest conversations look  
like?

What is the lasting impact on  
Alexandria? The Nation?

# QUESTIONS - WHAT ARE THE STOP 3 THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN IN THIS MUSEUM? (potential programmatic opportunities)



## KEY RESPONSES

**“Community conversations, engagement with young people to develop and test programs”**  
03.06.2023

**“Civic engagement”**  
03.07.2023

**“Interactive Website”**  
03.07.2023

**“Community conversations, reflection/pause spaces, genealogical research, live performances”**  
03.06.2023

**“Use of technology and multimedia to expand story telling”**  
03.07.2023

**“Blend of exhibits and interactive programming – also a place that promotes dialogue”**  
03.06.2023

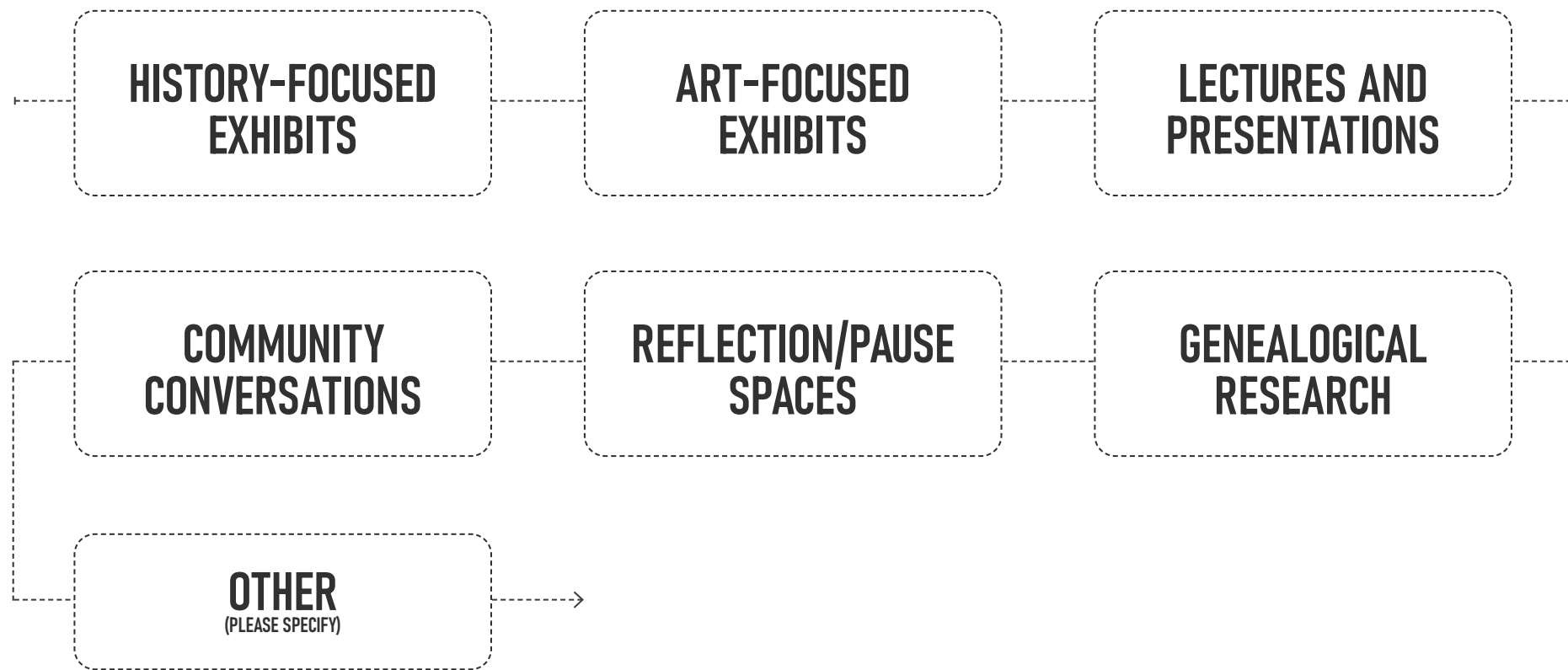
**“Lectures & presentations that examine and implicate the role/function specifically Freedom House”**  
03.07.2023

**“Link to other African American History Site”**  
03.07.2023

**“Research, learning, and training”**  
03.07.2023

**“Outreach to children”**  
03.07.2023

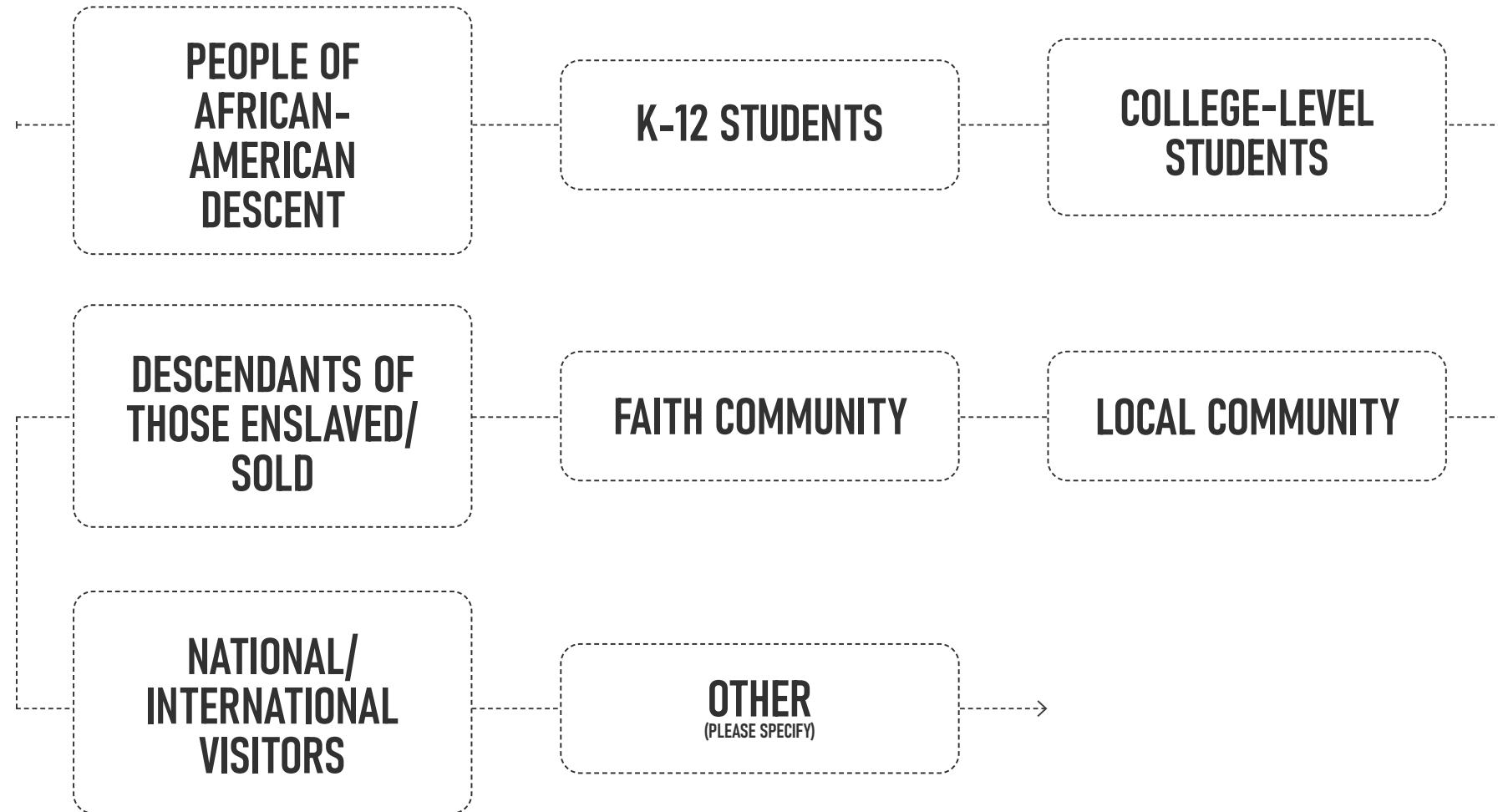
# QUESTIONS - WHAT ARE THE STOP 3 THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN IN THIS MUSEUM? (potential programmatic opportunities) CONTINUED...



## KEY RESPONSES

Interpretive exhibits	Bookstore
Talks and lectures	* Use basement level for interpretation?
Visiting school group or tour group	* Use side entryway?
Exhibit for younger audiences	* Use parking lot in back?
Conversation	* What level of staff and budget support will exist for programming? For changing exhibits?
Reflection	
Live performances, storytelling, spoken word, etc.	Does anything we're talking about for this site overlap with interpretation at the Alexandria Black History Museum?
Genealogical research	
Immersive media/mini-theater	
Changing exhibits/art installations	

# QUESTIONS - WHO ARE THE KEY AUDIENCES?



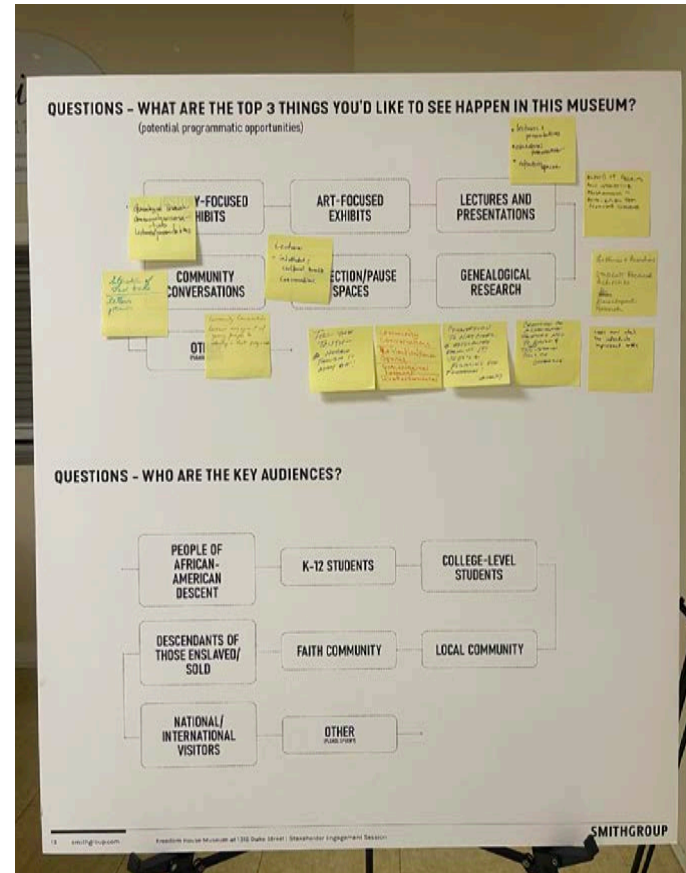
# KEY RESPONSES

How is this interpreted for younger visitors, and what ages/grades of younger people should drive the level/tone of interpretation?

# ACTIVITY #1 - SESSION DOCUMENTATION



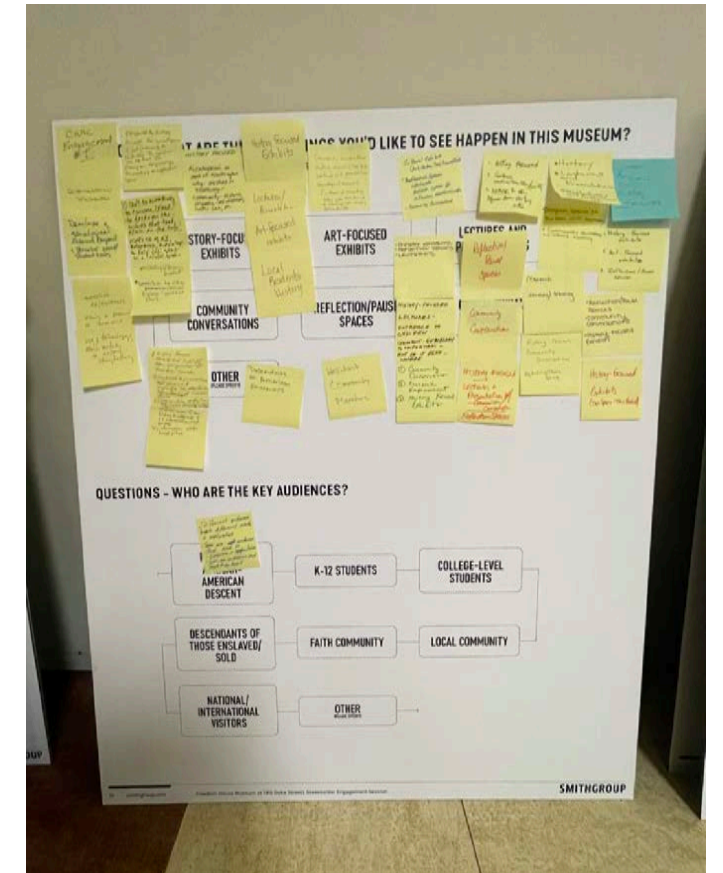
ACTIVITY #1 - BOARD 1  
03.06.2023



ACTIVITY #1 - BOARD 2  
03.06.2023



ACTIVITY #1 - BOARD 1  
03.07.2023



ACTIVITY #1 - BOARD 2  
03.07.2023



# SESSION EXPERIENCE



# ACTIVITY #1B

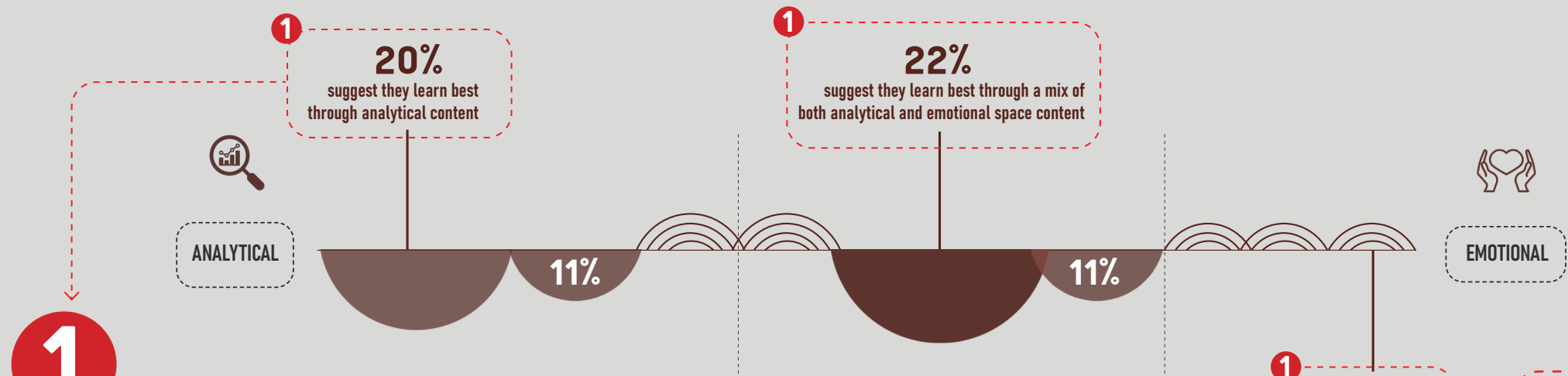
## MOOD BOARD EXERCISE

Activity #1B consisted of a mood board exercise where participants were asked to vote on qualitative aspects of the museum through the use of slides. The sliders consisted of an single option on the far left and right, and the middle was considered a suggestion for a combination of both. This activity followed the building and interpretive ideation exercise which was designed to get the participants thinking and prepare them for this activity. Professionals from SmithGroup and Proun introduced a series of sliders casted on boards for participants to place a dot on each slider to cast their vote. Participants were also asked to elaborate on their vote by documenting a response on a sticky note and placing it in the comment section under the slider. Some participants placed their comments on their individual dots. This enabled the design team to gain insight on what people desired for the building's qualitative aspects and express their preference when describing how different spaces or programmatic features made them feel.

# HOW DATA WAS COLLECTED...

## EXHIBIT SPACE

During my museum visit, I learn through:



**1** First the data was analyzed across a slider (1-10), then dots were counted within the indicated lines. Results from the far left, middle, and far right were documented as a percentage.

**2** The sliders were divided into three (3) sections. This allowed the data in “Section 1” and “Section 3” to be geared toward the “left” or “right” choices provided, and “Section 2” for those who selected both or a mix of the choices provided. From there the votes were counted in each section and averaged out across the total of votes. The Section with the most votes represented the majority, and was documented as a percentage.

### KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS: STATISTICS

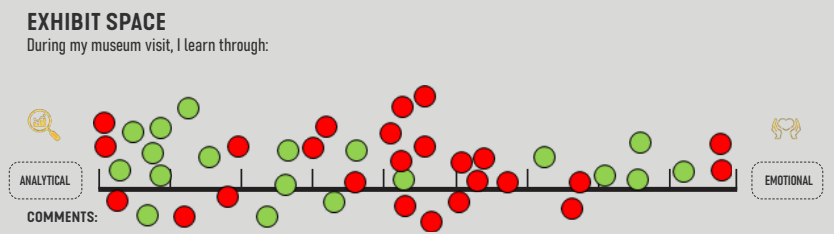
<b>2</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>4</b> Total Votes: <b>46</b>
		Analytical: <b>17</b>
		Both: <b>20</b>
		Emotional: <b>9</b>

The majority of the participants suggest they learn best through a mix of both analytical and emotional content.

**3** “Listed directly to site, ideas of Freedom House tour guides as to what they have heard/learned from the public.”  
03.06.2023

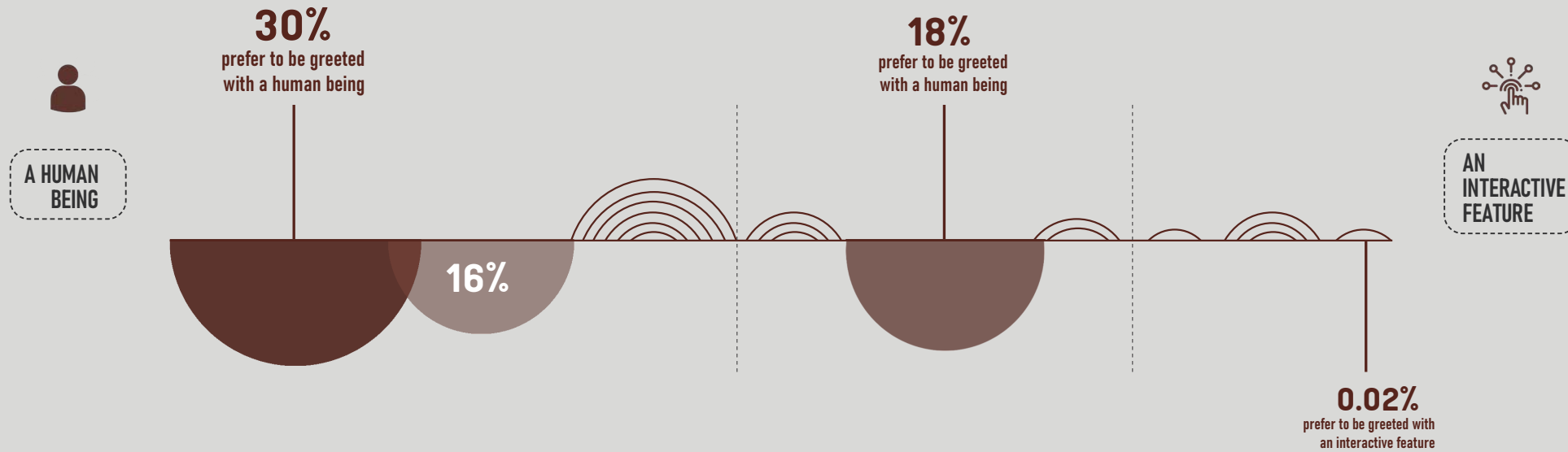
**3** If available, a quote/comment from participants were documented to support the average overall chose.

**4** The total votes were counted per each individual slider in order to collect their respective percentages.



## PUBLIC SPACE : ENTRY EXPERIENCE

As soon as I enter a new space, my level of comfort increases when I am greeted with:



### KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

**60%**

The majority of the participants suggest they prefer to have a human-being experience.

### STATISTICS

Total Votes: **45**

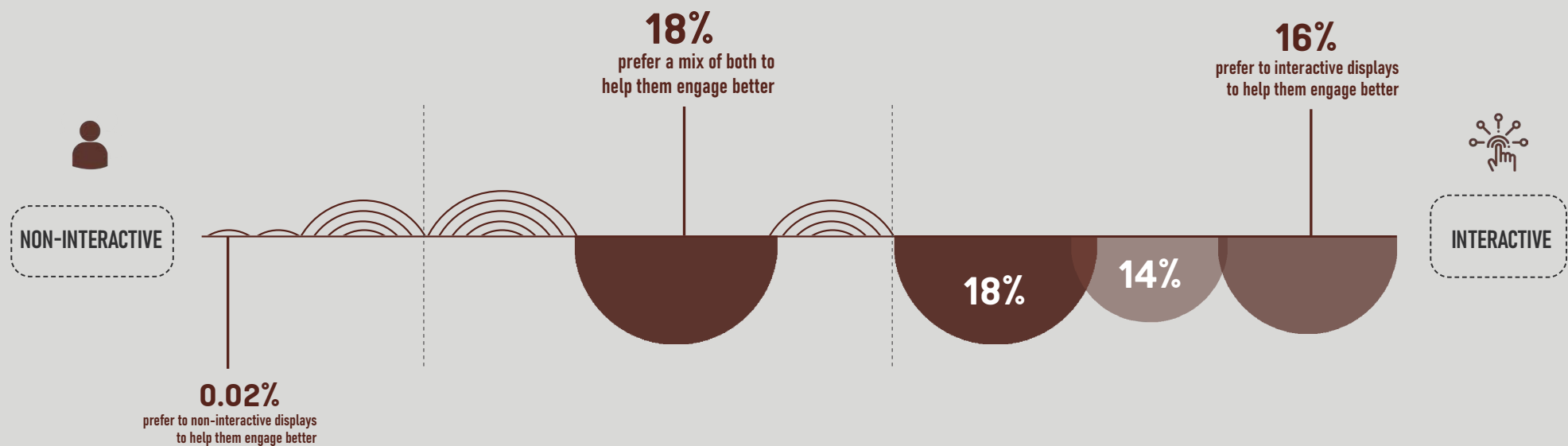
Human Being: **27**

Both: **13**

Interactive Feature: **5**

## EXHIBIT SPACE

The type of the displays impacts my comfort and helps me engage better.



### KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

**49%**

The majority of the participants suggest interactive displays would help impact their comfort and engagement.

### STATISTICS

Total Votes: **45**

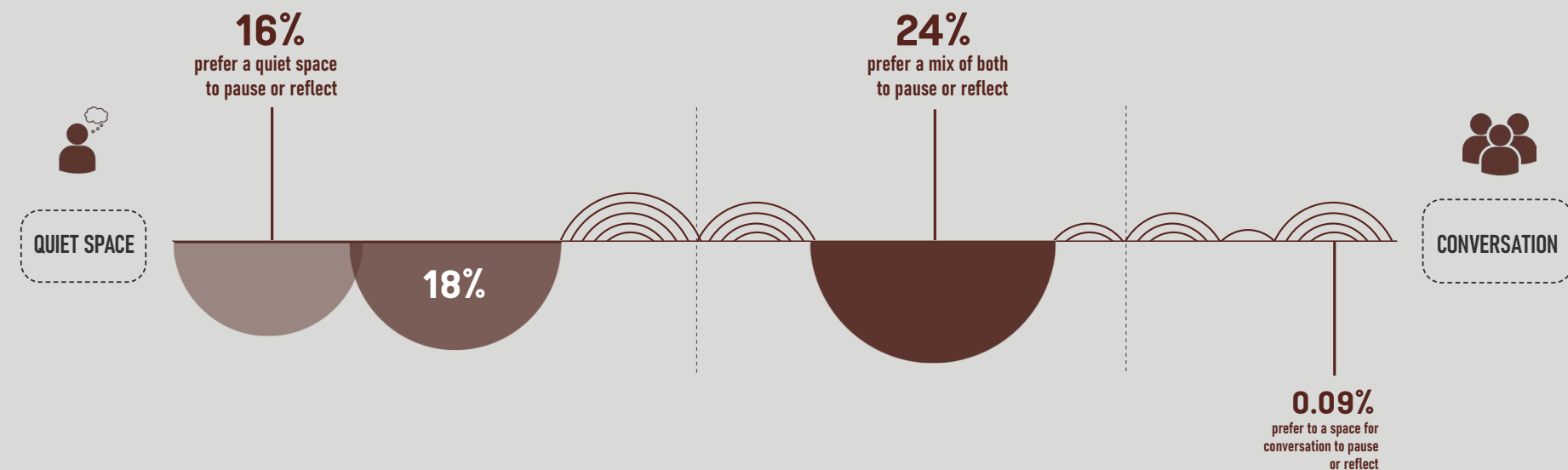
Non-Interactive: **6**

Both: **17**

Interactive: **22**

## PAUSE OR REFLECTIVE SPACE

During my museum journey I need to pause or reflect in different ways:



### KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

44%

The majority of the participants suggest they prefer a quiet space to pause or reflect. However, another 38% of participants suggest they prefer a mix of a quiet space and a space for conversation.

### STATISTICS

Total Votes: **45**

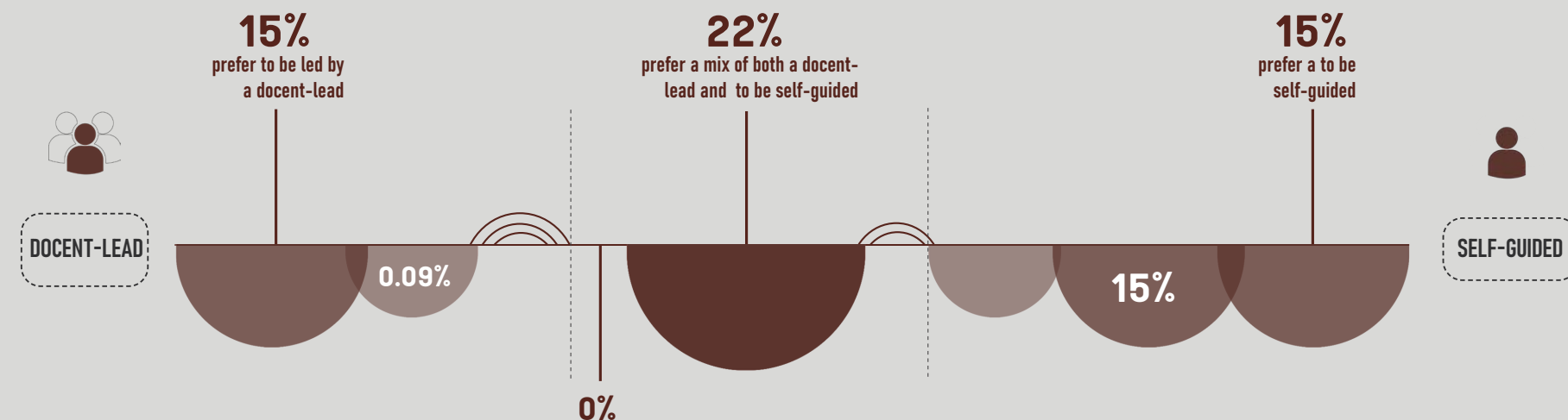
Quiet Space: **20**

Both: **17**

Conversation: **8**

## PUBLIC SPACE: EXPLORATION BY

As soon as I enter a new space, my level of comfort increases when I am greeted with:



### KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

41%

The majority of the participants suggest they prefer to have a self-guided experience.

### STATISTICS

Total Votes: **44**

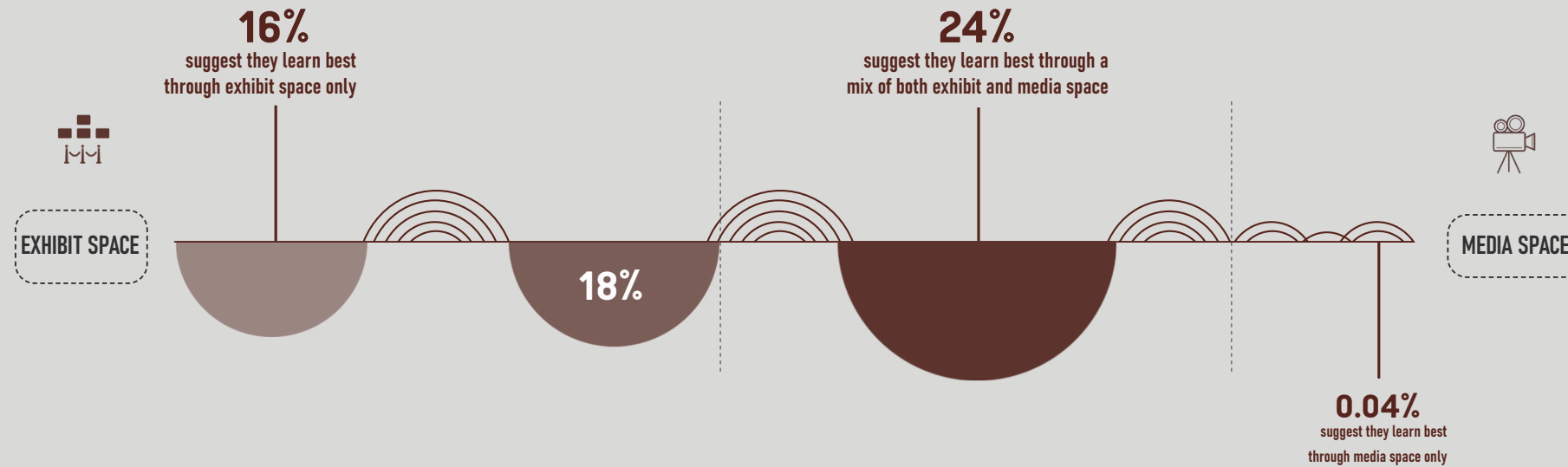
Docent-Lead: **14**

Both: **12**

Self-Guided: **18**

## EXHIBIT SPACE

During my museum visit, I learn through:



## KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

# 47%

The majority of the participants suggest they learn best through a mix of both exhibit and media space.

“Permanent display with a basic history of building and space for temporary ones”  
03.06.2023

## STATISTICS

Total Votes: **45**

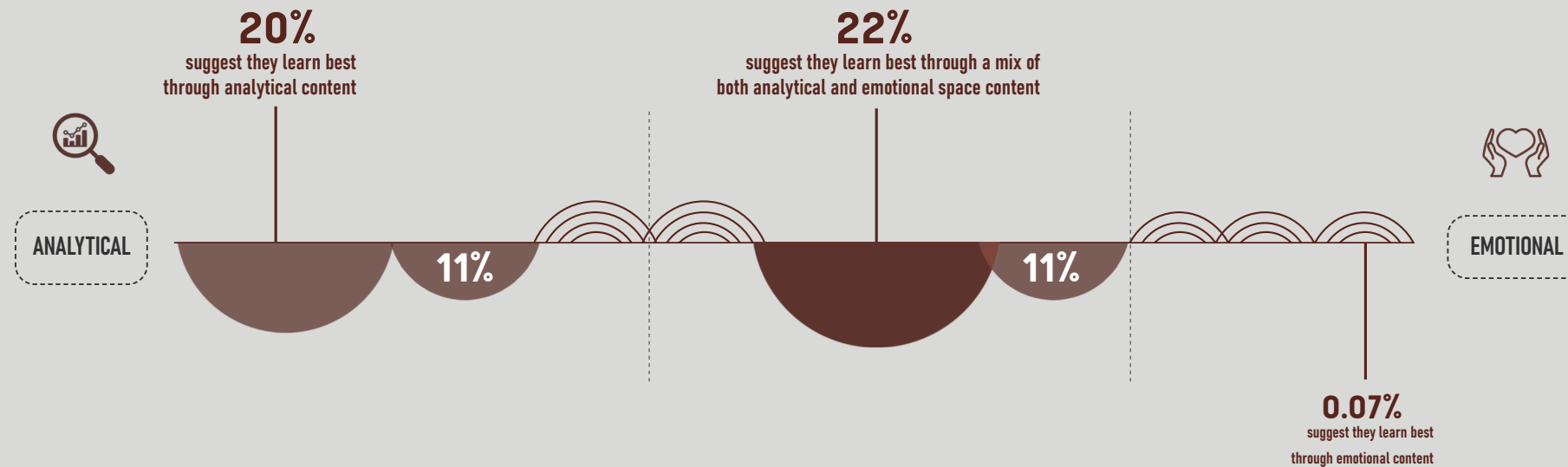
Exhibit Space: **19**

Both: **21**

Media Space: **5**

## EXHIBIT SPACE

During my museum visit, I learn through:



## KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

# 43%

The majority of the participants suggest they learn best through a mix of both analytical and emotional content.

“Listed directly to site, ideas of Freedom House tour guides as to what they have heard/learned from the public.”  
03.06.2023

## STATISTICS

Total Votes: **46**

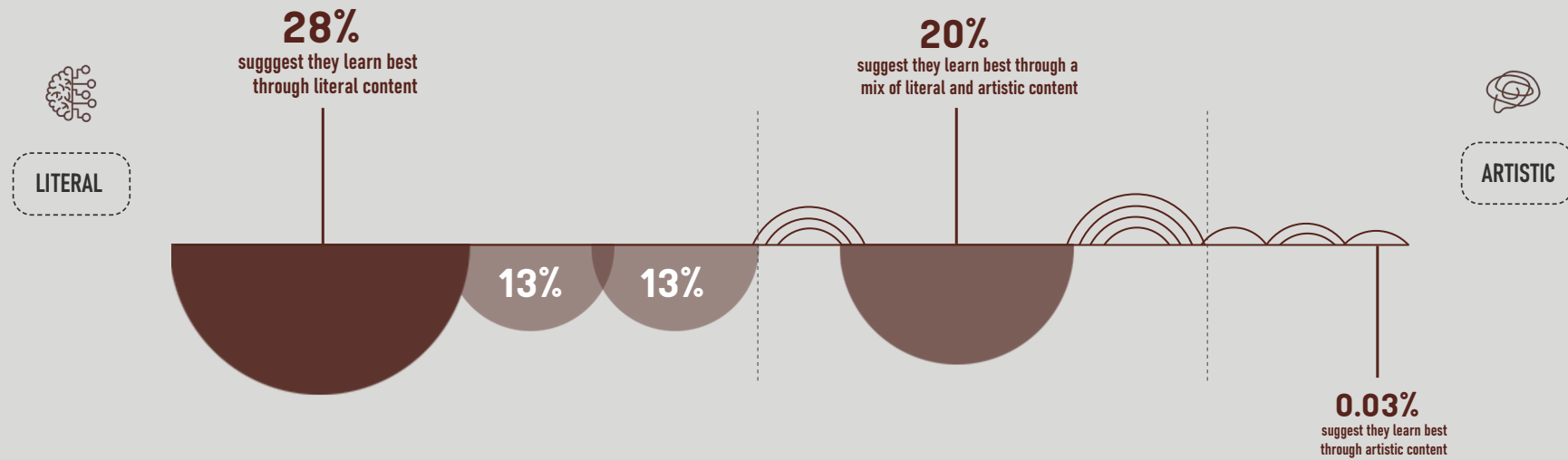
Analytical: **17**

Both: **20**

Emotional: **9**

## EXHIBIT SPACE

During my museum visit, I learn through



## KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

# 53%

The majority of the participants suggest they learn best through literal content.

## STATISTICS

Total Votes: **40**

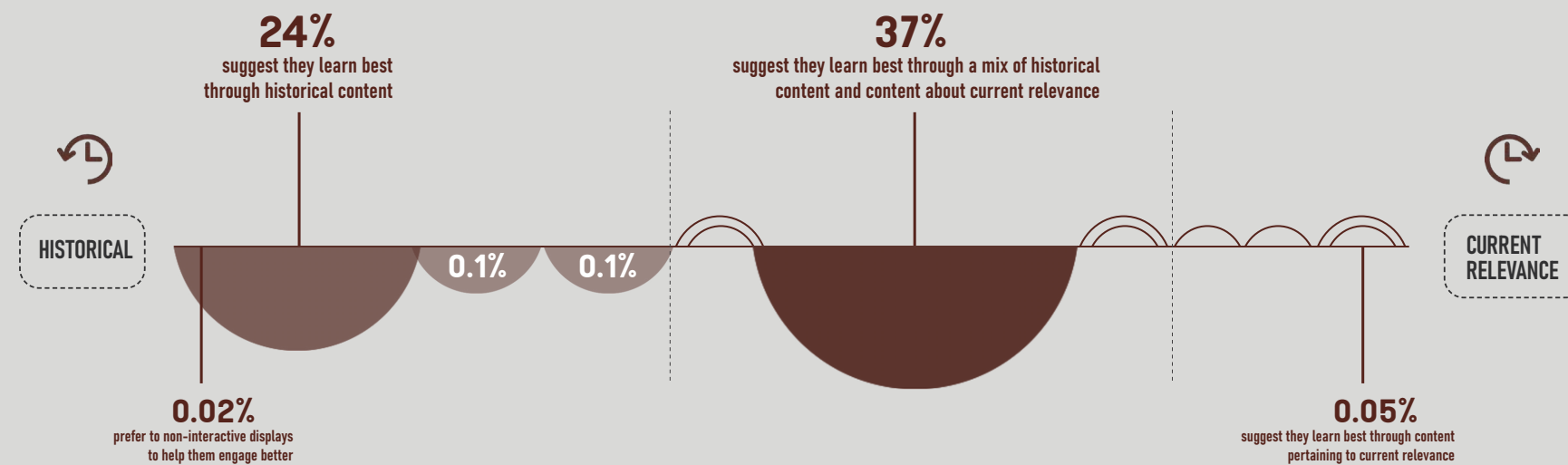
Literal: **21**

Both: **15**

Artistic: **4**

## PRIMARY PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

During my museum visit, I learn through:



## KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

# 48%

The majority of the participants suggest they learn best through a mix of historical content and content about current relevance. However, the another 43% suggest they learn best through historical content only.

HISTORY-FOCUSED EXHIBITS

## STATISTICS

Total Votes: **42**

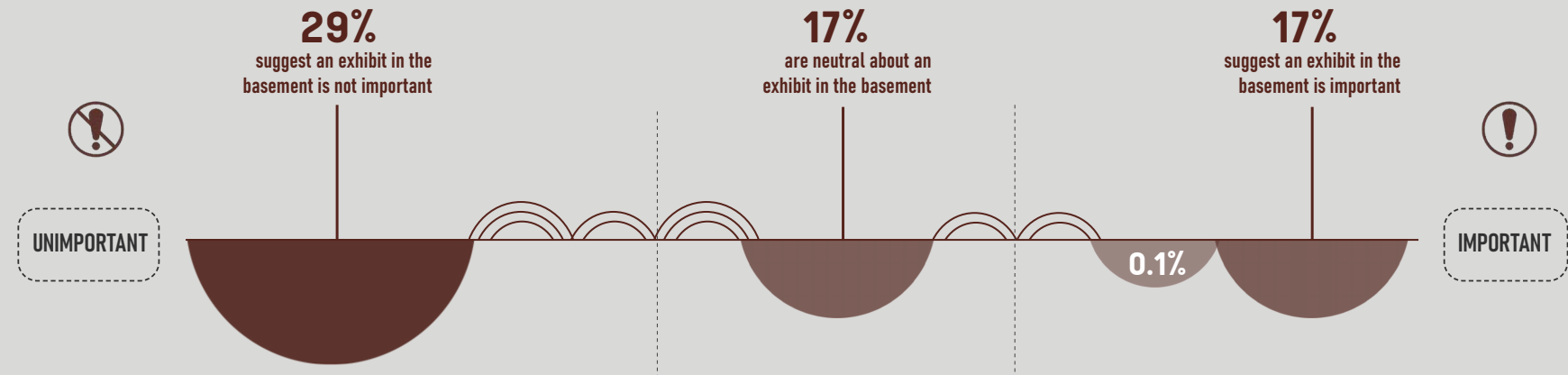
Historical: **18**

Both: **20**

Current Relevance: **4**

## EXHIBIT SPACE: BASEMENT

Knowing the physical challenges of making the basement code and ADA compliant, how important is having an exhibit in the basement space?



### KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

40%

The majority of the participants suggest an exhibit in the basement is not important. However, the other 31% suggest it is important.

“It depends on the spatial needs.”  
03.07.2023

\*This data was taken prior to participants viewing the basement. Upon the conclusion, participants felt an exhibit in the basement was important.

### STATISTICS

Total Votes: 42

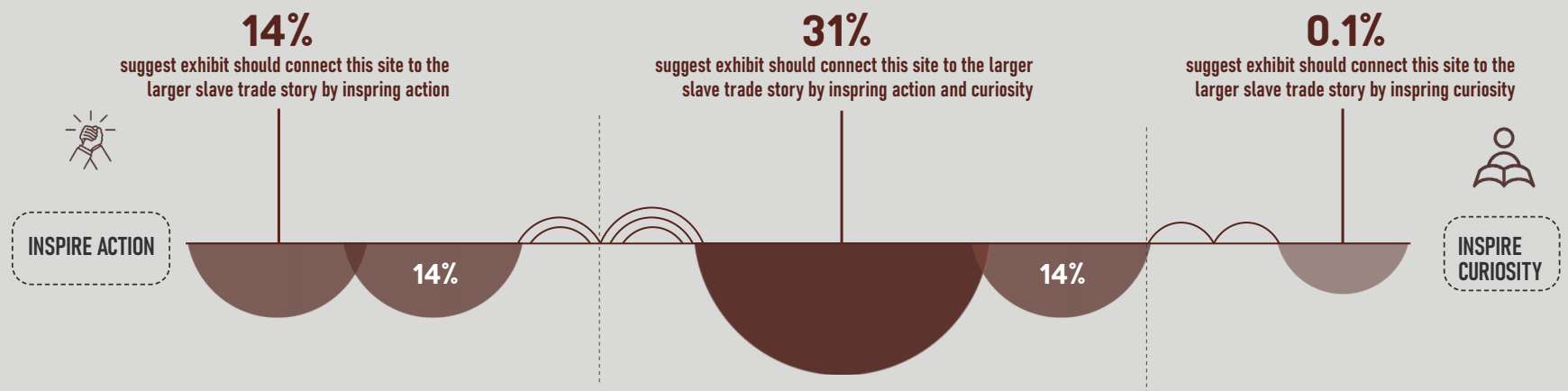
Unimportant: 17

Both: 12

Important: 13

## EXHIBIT SPACE

I'd like the exhibits to connect this site to the larger slave trade story.



### KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

53%

The majority of the participants suggest exhibits should connect this site to the larger slave trade by inspiring both action and curiosity.

“We need both.”  
03.06.2023

### STATISTICS

Total Votes: 43

Inspire Action: 14

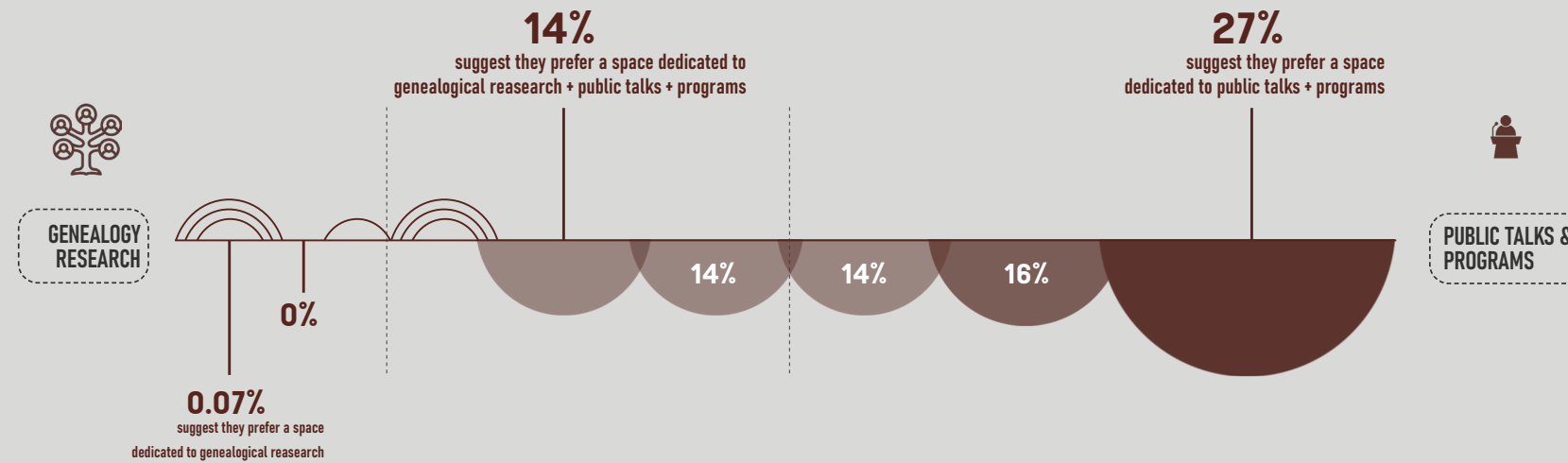
Both: 23

Inspire Curiosity: 6



## EXHIBIT SPACE

I would prefer to have space dedicated to:



### KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

57%

The majority of the participants suggest they prefer a space dedicated to public talks and programs.

“We need both.”  
03.06.2023  
“Neither ... these are better elsewhere.”  
03.07.2023

### STATISTICS

Total Votes: **44**

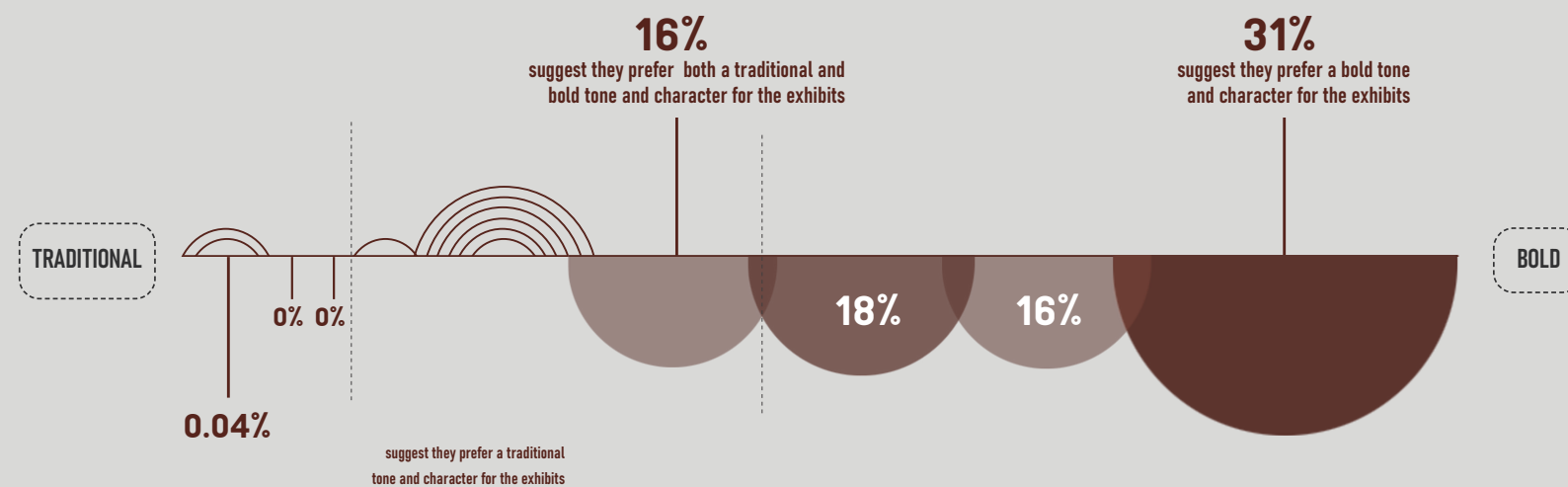
Genealogy Research: **4**

Both: **15**

Public Talks & Programs: **25**

## EXHIBIT SPACE

How would you describe the desired tone and character of the exhibits?



### KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

64%

The majority of the participants suggest they prefer a bold tone and character for the exhibits.

“On Traditional vs. Bold...  
“-people that have an interest in the history  
-descendants audience needs to be collaborated with”

### STATISTICS

Total Votes: **45**

Traditional: **2**

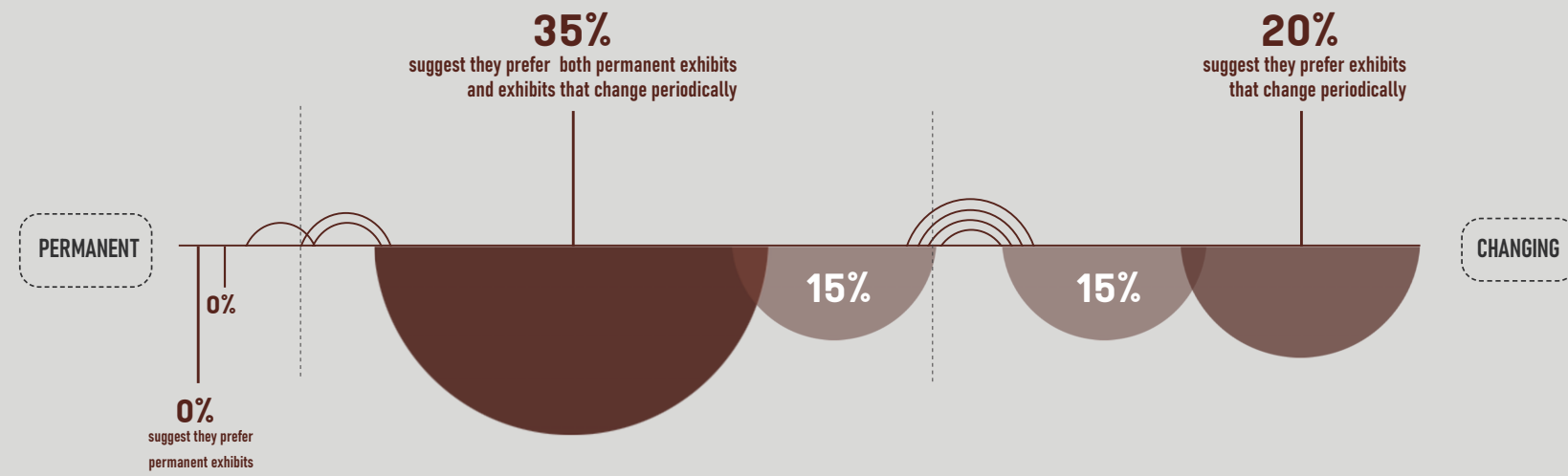
Both: **14**

Bold: **29**

03.07.2023

## EXHIBIT SPACE

How would you describe the desired tone and character of the exhibits?



## KEY COMMENTS + CONCERNS:

# 51%

The majority of the participants suggest they prefer both permanent exhibits and exhibits that change periodically. However, another 47% suggests they prefer exhibits that change periodically only.

## STATISTICS

Total Votes: **47**

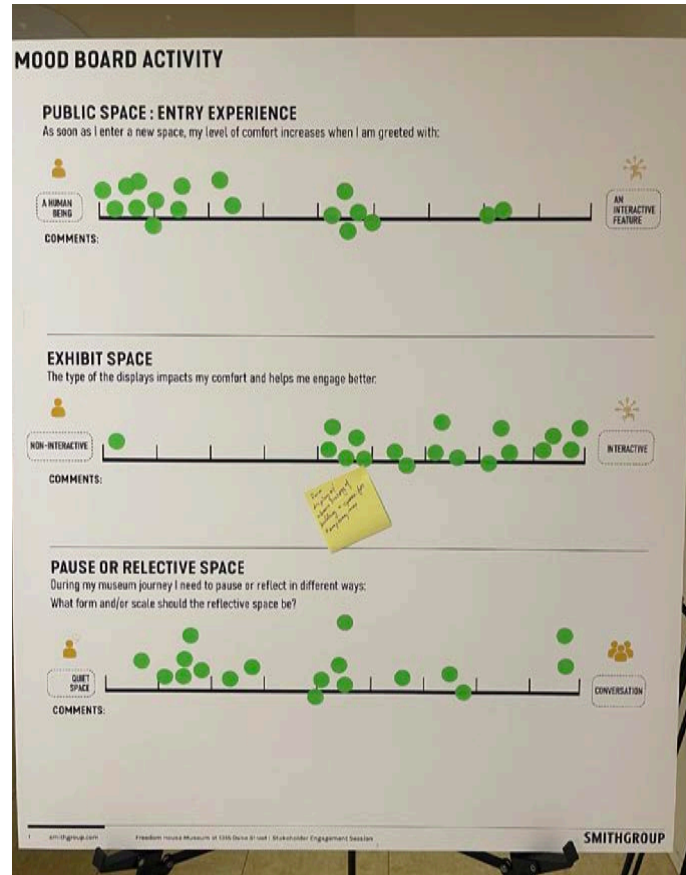
Permanent Exhibits: **1**

Both: **24**

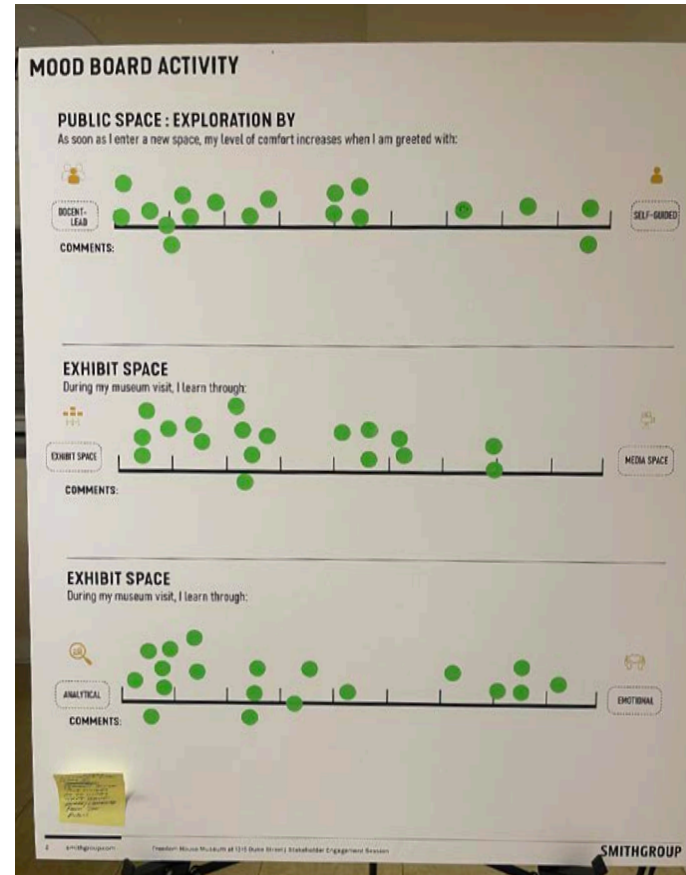
Changing Exhibits: **22**



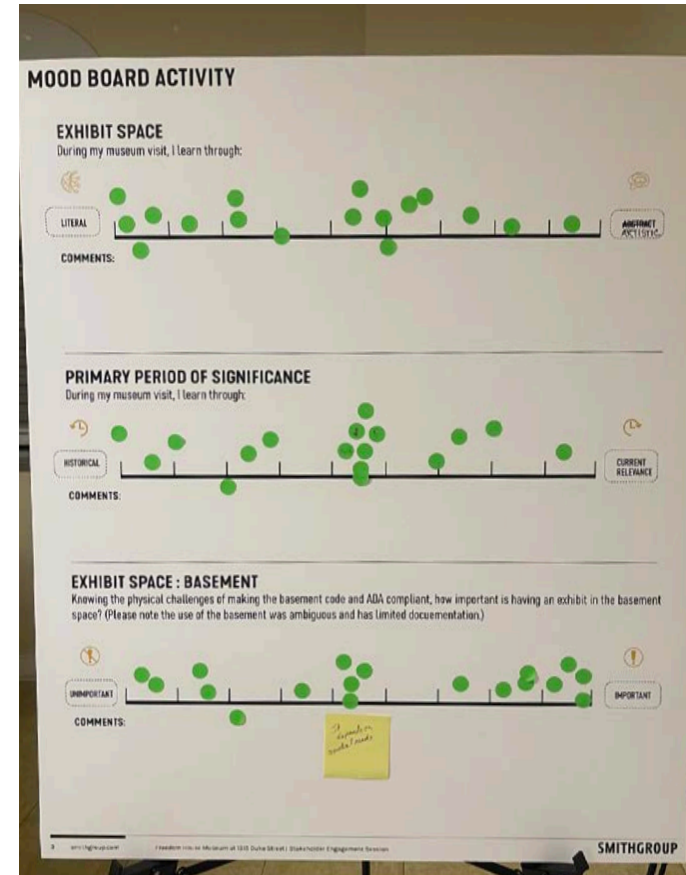
# ACTIVITY #1B - SESSION DOCUMENTATION



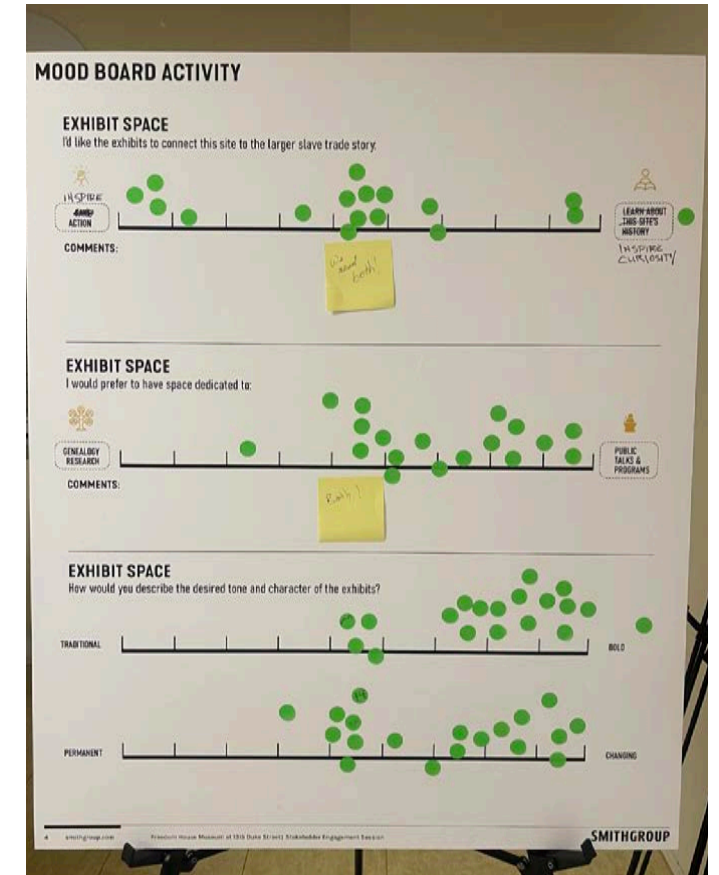
ACTIVITY #1B - MOOD BOARD 1  
03.06.2023



ACTIVITY #1B - MOOD BOARD 2  
03.06.2023

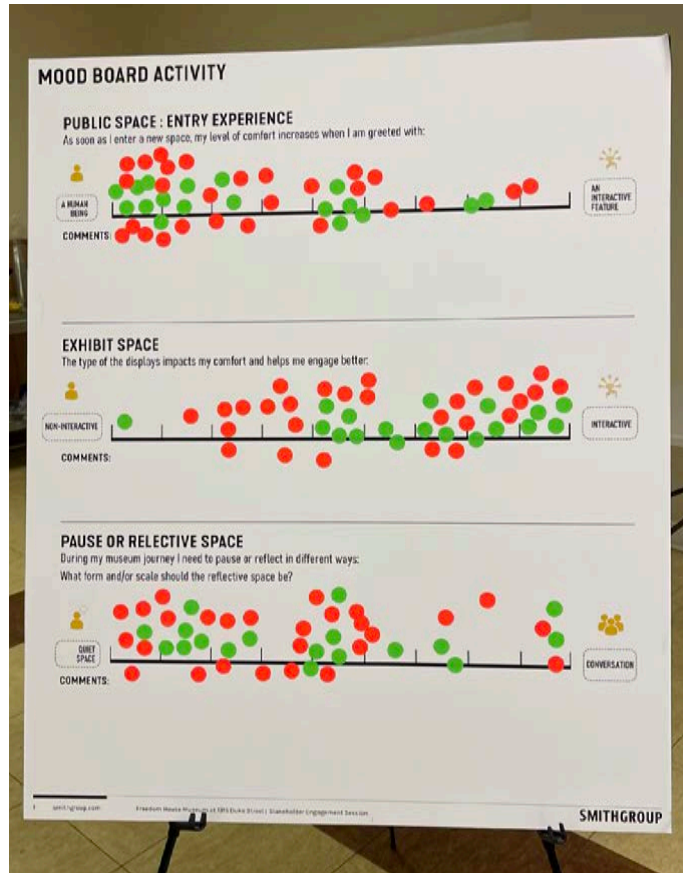


ACTIVITY #1B - MOOD BOARD 3  
03.06.2023

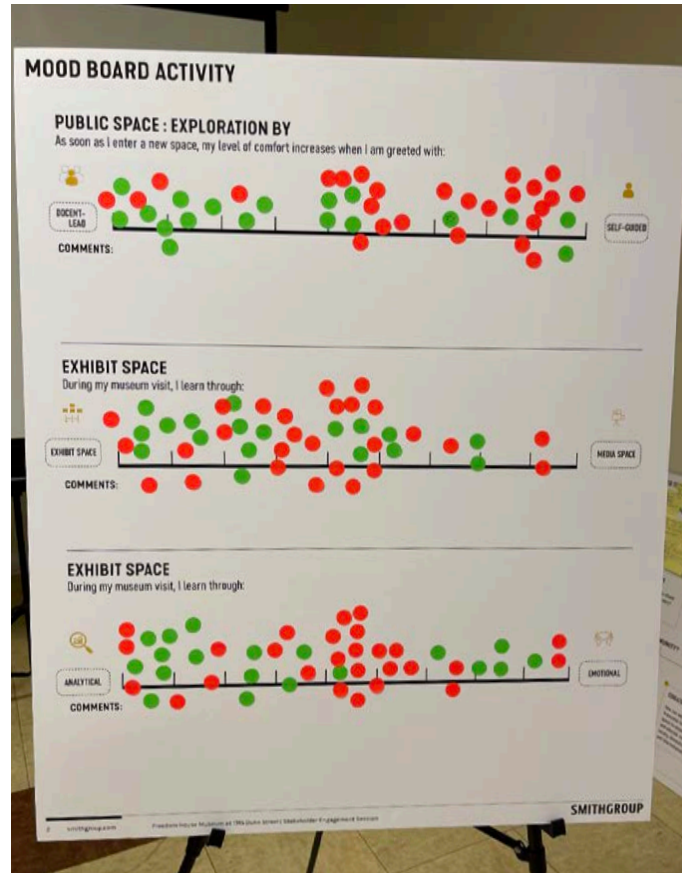


ACTIVITY #1B - BOARD 4  
03.06.2023

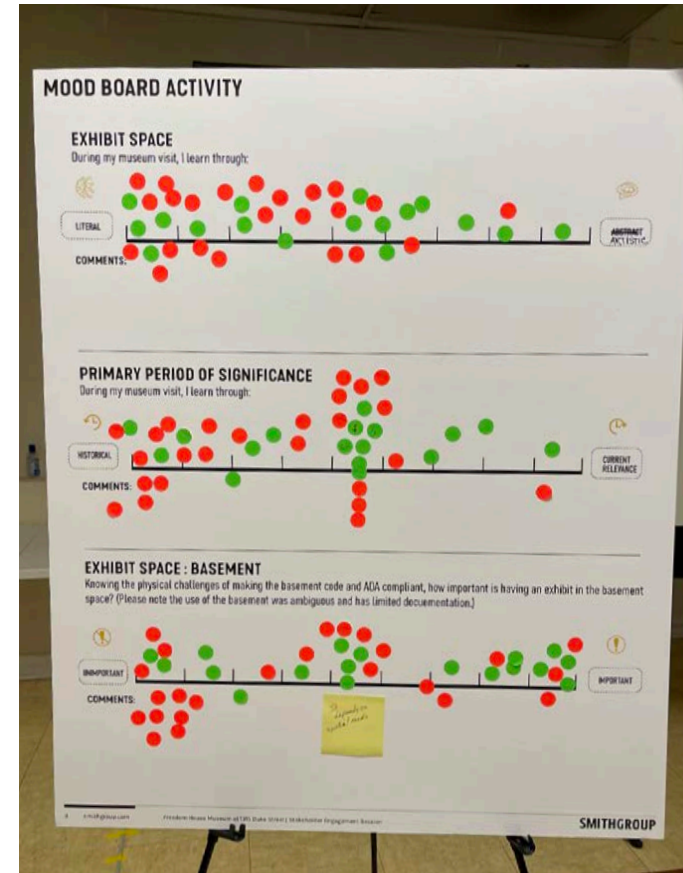
# ACTIVITY #1B - SESSION DOCUMENTATION



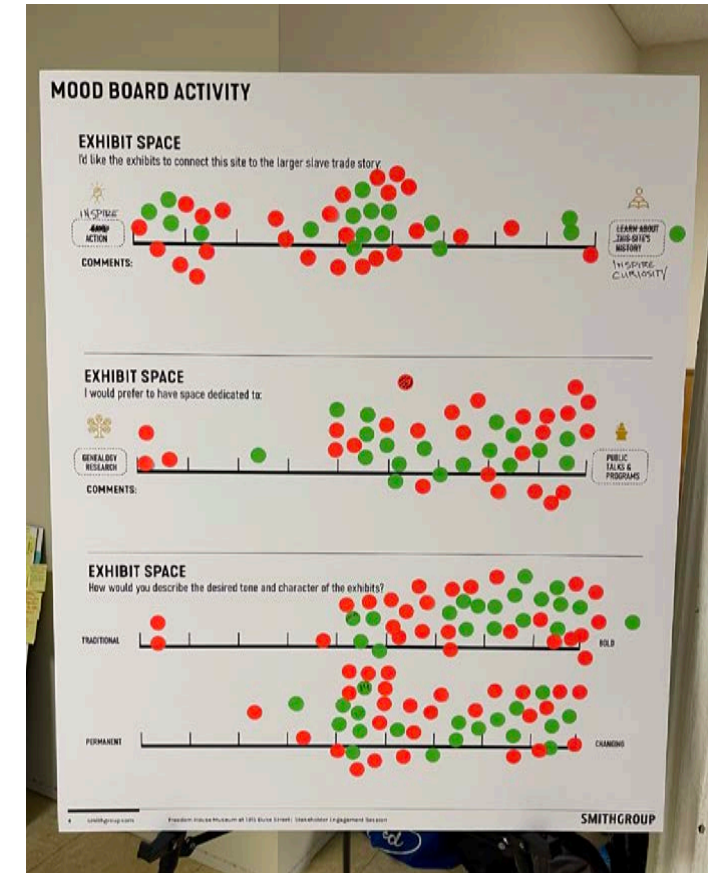
ACTIVITY #1B - MOOD BOARD 1  
03.06.2023



ACTIVITY #1B - MOOD BOARD 2  
03.06.2023



ACTIVITY #1B - MOOD BOARD 3  
03.06.2023



ACTIVITY #1B - BOARD 4  
03.06.2023