

Somerville ^{by} DESIGN

Davis Square

“What is important to me” Survey Results

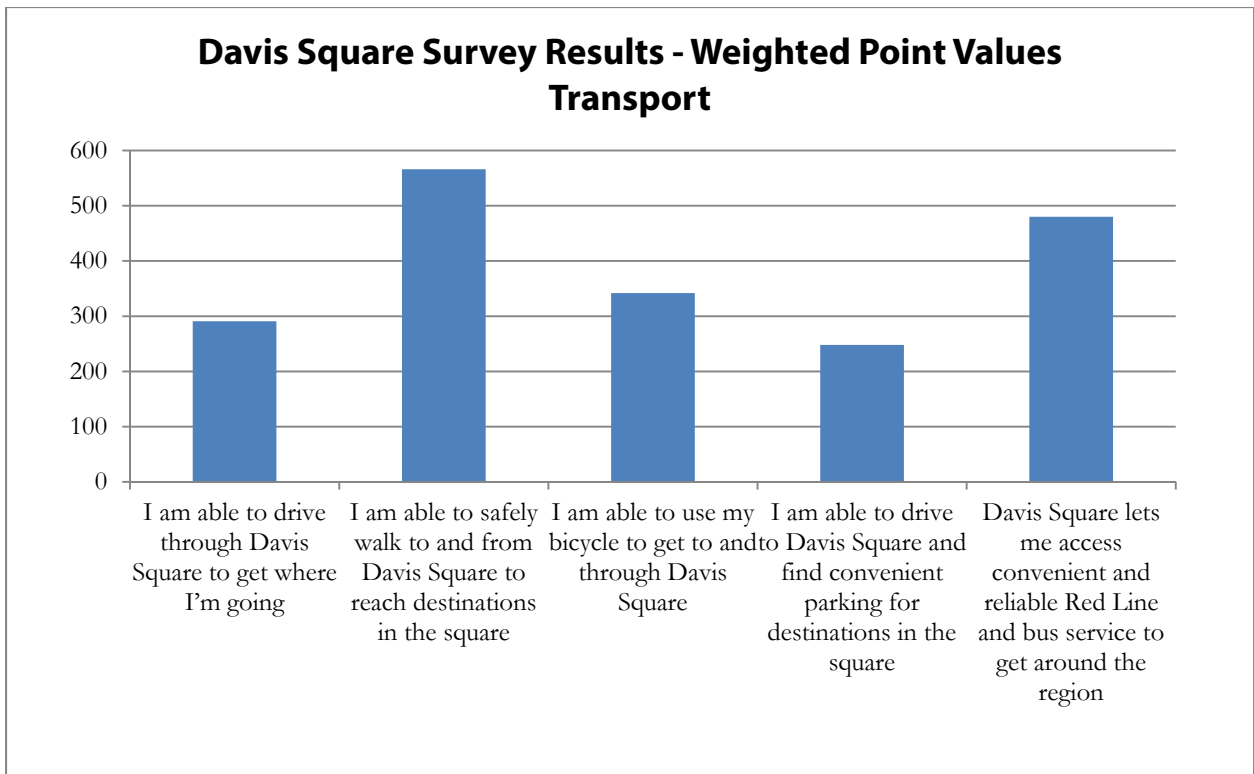
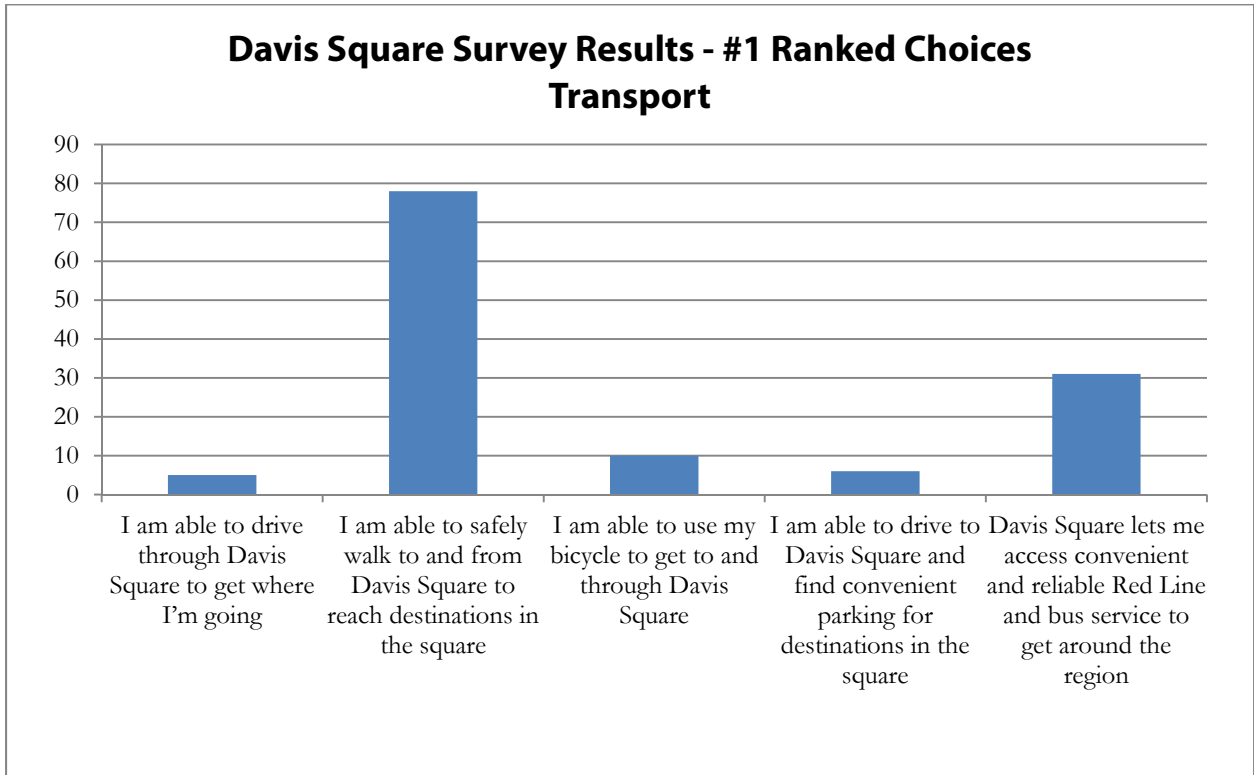
The “What is important to me” survey was used at the Somerville by Design: Davis Square Crowdsourcing meeting on May 21, 2013. About 57 people filled out the survey at that meeting, and an additional 74 filled the survey out electronically in the following weeks, for a total of 131 responses. The data in this report reflects responses received through June 11, 2013.

Respondents were given several statements about each of six topics: transport, shopping, home improvements, development, public space, and public finance. The survey asked respondents to rank the items in each category by order of importance.

Results for each category are reported in two ways. First is a graph showing the number of people who ranked each statement as the most important. The second method assigns a point value to each response, with the most points for a #1 ranking (5 points in a category with 5 items, for example), and fewer points assigned to responses assigning lower rankings, with only one point assigned to the lowest-ranked response in each category. These points are then summed across all respondents.

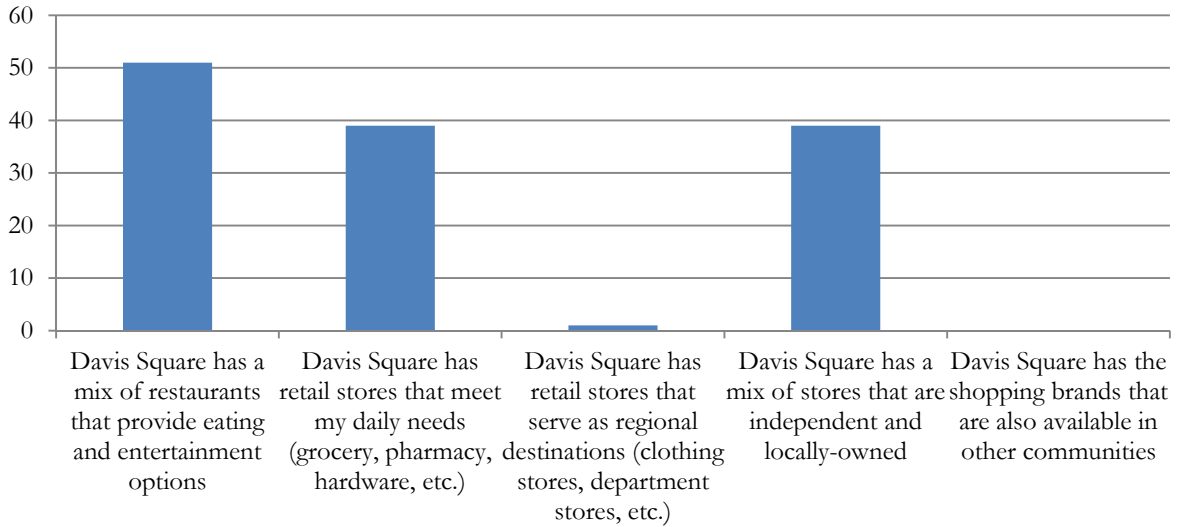
For each category, the graph of the top-ranked responses gives a clear picture of the issues that are most important to the survey respondents. The weighted point value graph provides a better sense of the relative importance of each item, and also reveals those items that many people rank highly but few people rank number one. Availability of housing for seniors, the ability to bike to and through Davis Square, and space for public art are examples of such issues, where the weighted point totals shows the issue to be significantly more important than it would appear when considering only the top-ranked results.

Topic 1: Transport

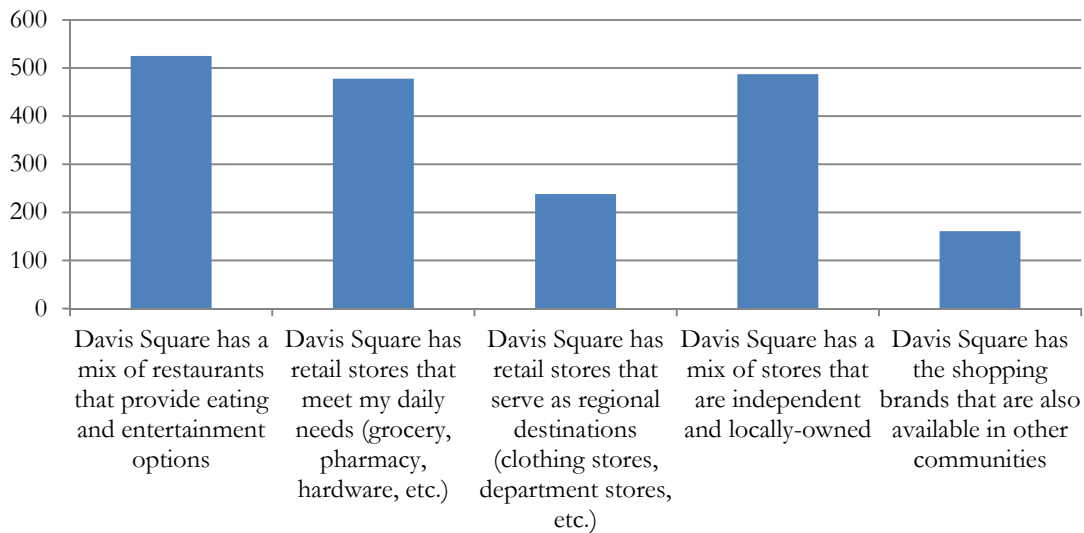


Topic 2: Shopping

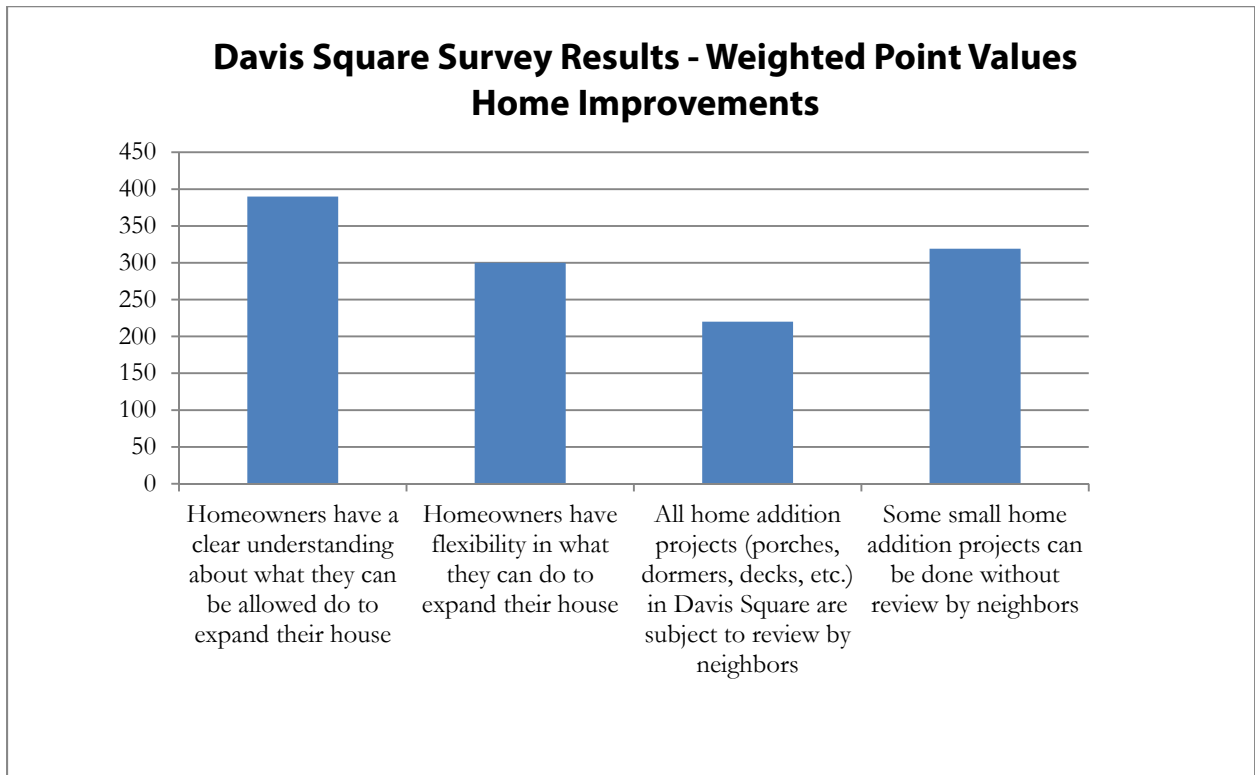
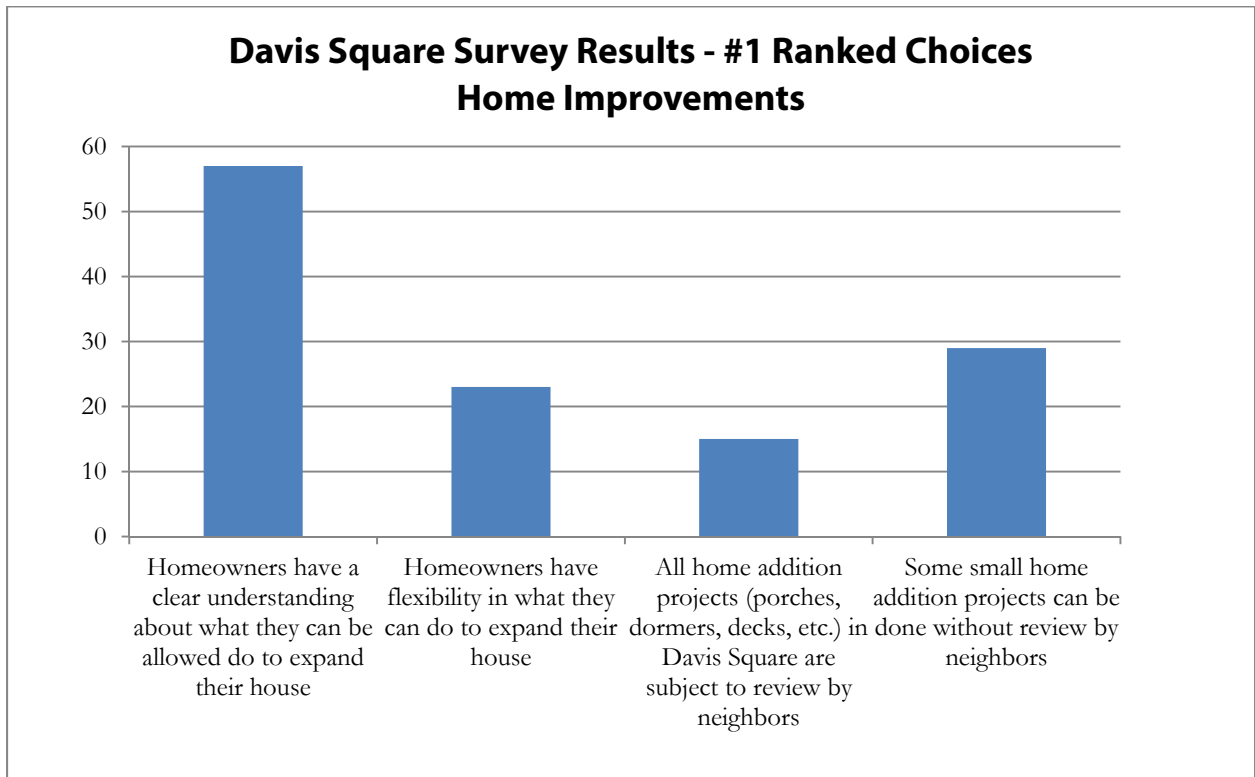
Davis Square Survey Results - #1 Ranked Choices Shopping



Davis Square Survey Results - Weighted Point Values Shopping

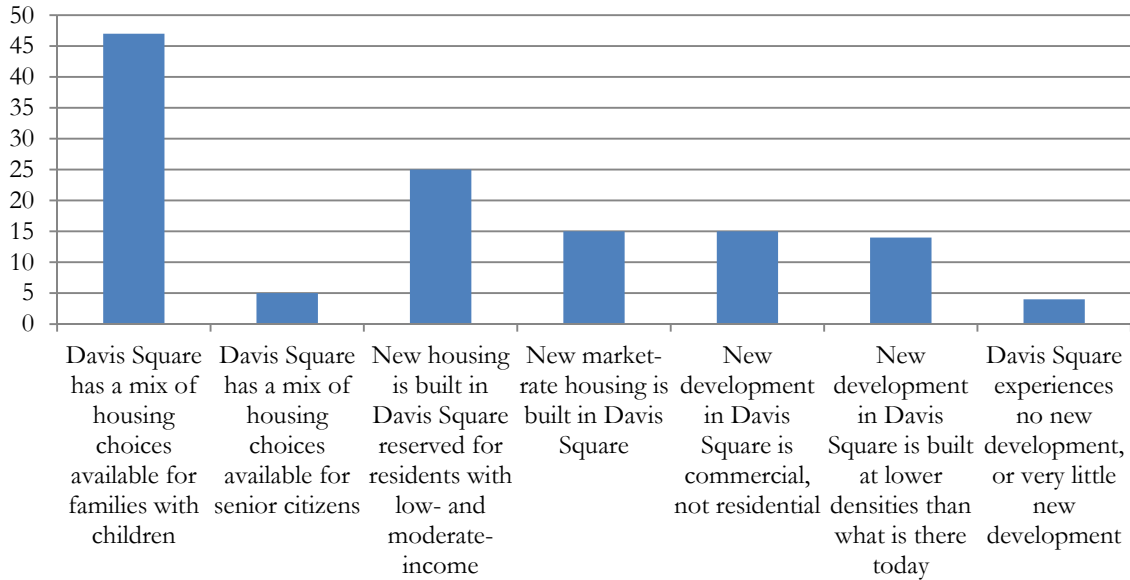


Topic 3: Home Improvements

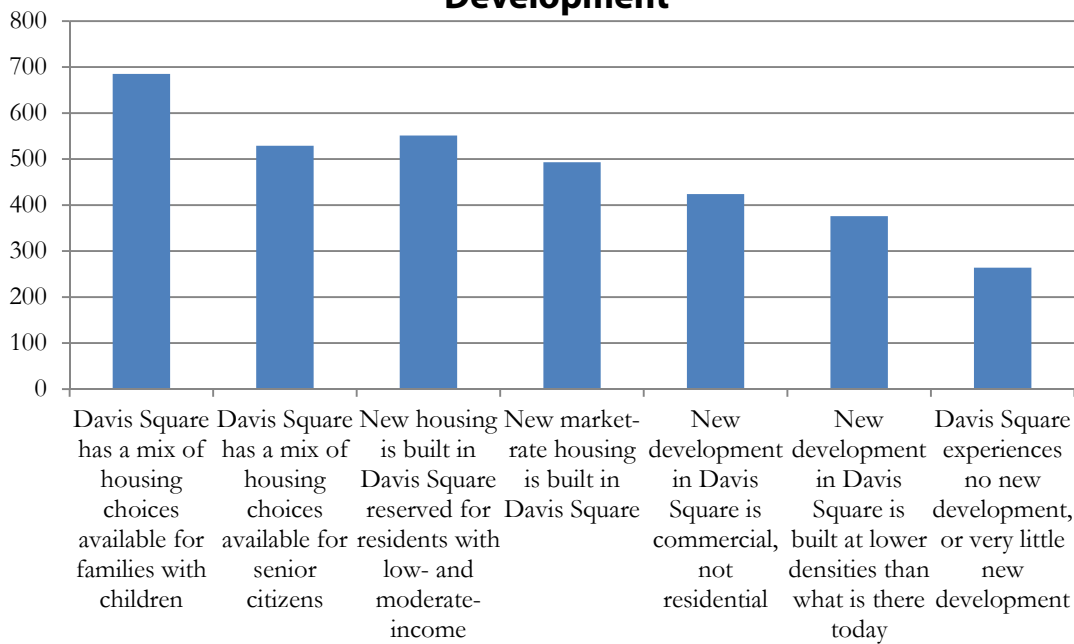


Topic 4: Development

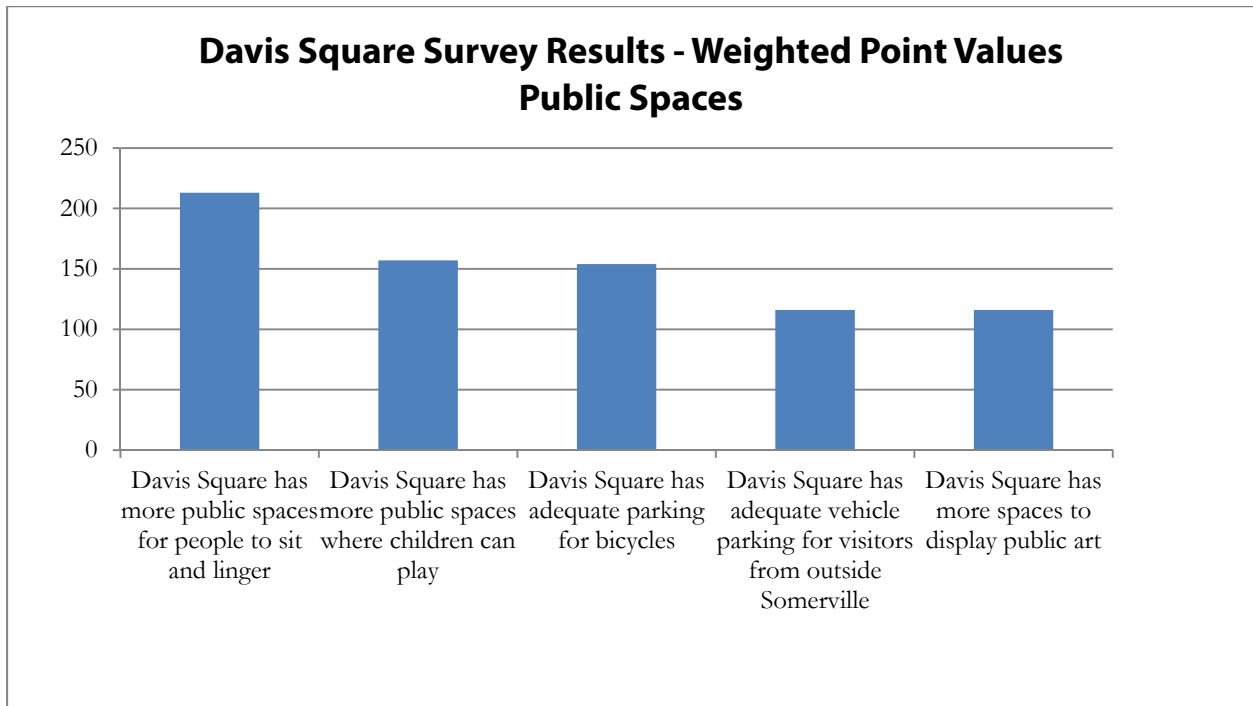
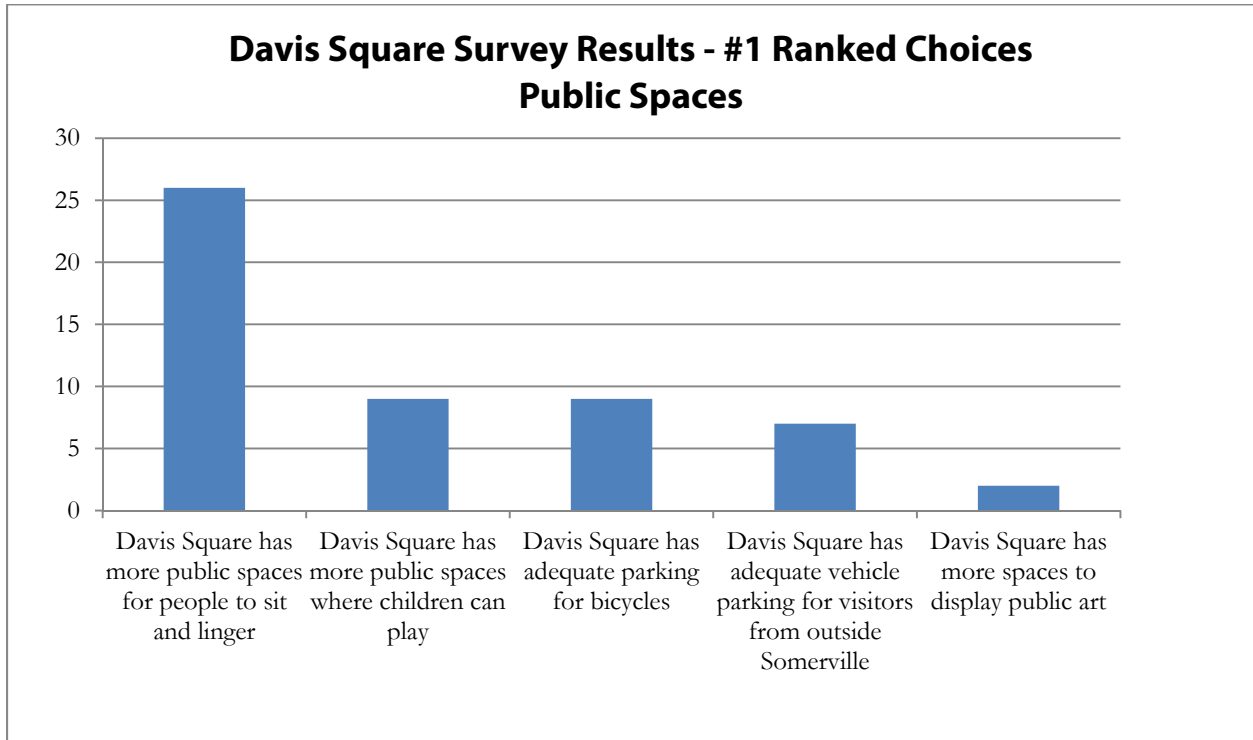
Davis Square Survey Results - #1 Ranked Choices Development



Davis Square Survey Results - Weighted Point Values Development



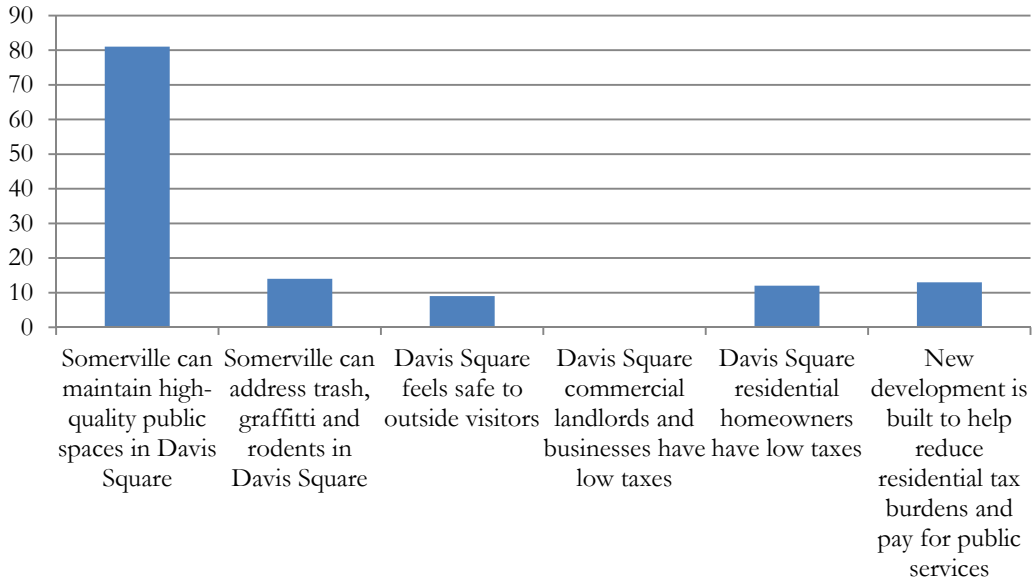
Topic 5: Public Spaces



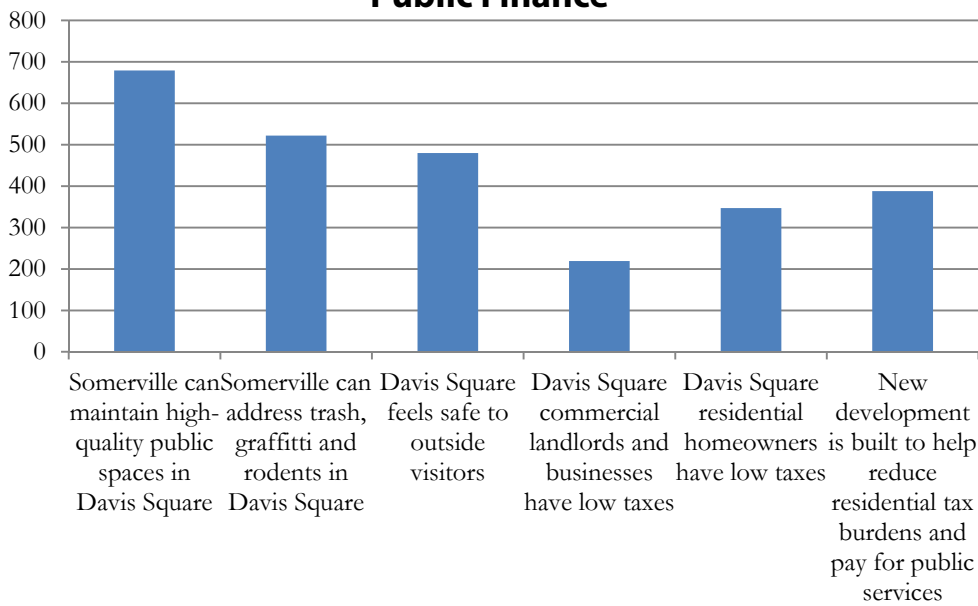
Note: The Public Spaces section was inadvertently left off the online survey. Results reflect in-person responses from the crowdsourcing meeting only.

Topic 6: Public Finance

**Davis Square Survey Results - #1 Ranked Choices
Public Finance**



**Davis Square Survey Results - Weighted Point Values
Public Finance**



What are three things you like about Davis Square?

(Answers to open-ended questions from online survey only. In-person surveys had a similar mix of responses.)

Businesses

Restaurants and bars (x27)
Somerville Theater (x13)
Independently-owned/Locally-owned businesses (x10)
Diverse eating, shopping and entertainment options (x6)
Shopping options (x6)
Entertainment & nightlife (x4)
There is a mix of residential, business and entertainment/dining (x2)
Entertainment options (x2)
Johnny D's (x2)
Small businesses
Good mix of local business & chains
Mix of long term business and newer ones
Functional businesses
Live music venues
I like that there is not a big hotel.
Goodwill
Tufts
D Squared
Diesel
Library branch

Transportation and Accessibility

Access to public transportation (x21)
Walkability (x8)
Bike path (x7)
Transportation options (x4)
Convenience (x3)
Easy to get to (right on the redline and it's an easy starting point for biking or driving to other places)
The central feel of it
I like the visible/raised crosswalks for pedestrians
Brick walkways
I like being a homeowner who can most often park on my street near the Square. I don't like that so many other people can and it's harder to find resident parking.
Off-street parking
Bike parking

Public Space, Arts, and Events

Public spaces (x8)
The festivals and outdoor events (x8)
Parks (x4)
Farmer's market (x3)

The places to eat and congregate (x3)
Places to sit outside with occasional entertainment (x2)
Street musicians
Fun atmosphere especially at night--street performers, people enjoying themselves outside
Live music outside during summer
Lively pedestrian oriented public gathering place
Gathering space
Vibrant scene, space for people to spend time in and outdoors
Art-themed public activities
City support for public cultural events (Honk, etc.)
Davis Square Plaza
The statues and public artwork

Atmosphere and Culture

The community (x5)
The diverse mix of people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds (x5)
Safe (x2)
Cleanliness (x2)
The art scene (x2)
It feels like a neighborhood, though this is changing
Vibrant village feel
Neighborhood feel
Unique Qualities - not like anywhere else
Quirky, unique atmosphere
Creativity
Funky houses, people, and stores
Unique, fun, artsy vibe
Culture / Energy
Running into people I know
It's lively
It's unpretentious
The character of the people who go there
Not overly commercial, has charm and character
Things I need are there
Feels friendly

What are three things you would like in Davis Square?

Mix of Uses – Restaurants

Fewer restaurants and bars (x2)
Cap/limit on food/bar vs. other types of retail
Continued expansion of bars and restaurants
New restaurants options that do not necessarily cater to college kids
Smaller more unique restaurants - not large bars

More interesting restaurants
No more Fro Yo. Who let three Fro Yo open within 100 yards of each other! hello....
Truly gluten/wheat free eating options (no cross contamination risk)
Restaurants without TV blasting
More restaurants serving locally grown food
Another coffee shop
A fancy restaurant
A beer garden

Mix of Uses – Other Food Stores

Food stores/Grocery Store (x13)
Trader Joe's (x5)
Fish market (x4)
Produce market/Year-round farmer's market (x2)
Tedeschi
Bakery
Butcher
Natural foods store

Mix of Uses - Housing

More housing (x3)
More affordable housing for lower middle and middle income singles, not just families or rich people OR the very poor
More family-friendly housing
More residential units close to the T

Mix of Uses – Other Businesses

Hotel (x8)
Bookstore (x6)
Hardware store (x5)
More independent businesses (x4)
More stores (x3)
More diverse retail (x2)
More basic retail services (grocery, hardware, etc.)
Reclaiming more down space on highland and elm that's kinda empty or with stores i'd never go in that have been there for ages
More stores and restaurants on highland ave side of square
More small-scale retail, restaurants
Taller buildings
More businesses geared toward children and families
Clothing stores
An herbal apothecary
Staples or other office supply store
Businesses allowed to stay open 24hrs a day
Fewer chain/franchise businesses
Don't need two chain drug stores
No more nail or hair salons

Better library hours

Develop something on the huge parking lots behind CVS & Somerville Theater

Transportation – Bicycles

More/better bike lanes (x4)

Community path or bike lane through the Square (x2)

Dedicated (separated) bike lanes

Better bike parking

A clear connection to the bike path

Extended Community Path access across the spine of the city

Transportation – Pedestrian

Easier pedestrian crossings (more priority on signals, don't have to push buttons) (x5)

Fix bricks and walkways

Remove as much road as possible to create more pedestrian space

Less space and priority given to motor traffic

Permanently close the square to private cars to promote a walking community.

Higher visibility crosswalks

More crosswalks on Elm Street

Alley connection between Elm and Highland

Sidewalks that are easier/safer for grocery carts, strollers, etc. (current bricks popping out are dangerous)

Easier walking

Transportation - Automobile

Improved traffic situation/less traffic congestion (x5)

More parking (x4)

Parking garage

Fewer parking lots/no more parking

Make center area a rotary

To be able to drive through at higher speed

To be able to find parking

To not have to fear the parking nazis when I find parking

Fewer parking meter attendants; tickets are given for RIDICULOUS things

Car routes that don't go through the center

Parking lines on residential streets to mark where you can fit two cars between curb cuts

More parking away from residential spaces, to cut down on nighttime noise

More parking for non-residents

Zoned resident parking, to cut down on commuters taking up all the on-street parking

Slower speed zone

Safer drivers

Transportation – General/Other

Better traffic patterns for cars, bikes and people (x2)

Safe biking and walking (x2)

Car2Go

Better waiting area for the bus on Elm Street

New roads and sidewalks!
“Naked” intersection, plaza
Better street layout and scaping (ie, trees)
Streetcars connecting it to the rest of Somerville

Public Space and Arts

More outside dining and tables (x4)
More public and green space (x3)
Community center (x2)
Better playgrounds (x2)
A park to use that feels safe & comfortable.
A park
Renovated open spaces
Dog park
Cleaner with attractive plants and flowers
More Arts programming
Even more street artists and musicians
More art
Brick sidewalks and more plants
Places I can run into people without spending money frivolously, like a supermarket or a park as nice as the one on Albion st.
More modern lighting and street furniture (benches, lower light posts)
More street-life, outside dining, closed streets, more European
Civic space

Other

More police on foot, especially in the evening
Somewhere for homeless people to go
Less begging near CVS
Less drunks and people making a mess
Public wifi
More charm
Trash cleaned up--the litter is a disgrace
Cleaner barrels in summer, the smell is gross
Cleaner
Cleaner and rodent free
A home there (I'm on the other end of town)

Other comments

- There are too many restaurants and bars. When the bars let out there are many young drunk people on the street and driving. This is so dangerous The bars over serve. Davis Square has become known as the place to get drunk. Also the traffic at night is intolerable. Cars backed up Day St , Collage Ave. Just about anywhere. Also we need more small independent stores and grocers... We who are a little older also want to enjoy the square

- We don't need any more frozen yogurt establishments. One (iYo) is sufficient!
- Thank you for making this survey available!
- I think we should encourage the development of the surface parking lots in the square.
- As a long time resident, my family would love to have a local hotel for our visitors to stay in (and dine and shop locally with us)
- The west branch library needs to be considered as a resource for future development - totally under utilized space (there aren't even books on the bottom shelves and the selection is poor and the librarians not engaging.) In addition, more trees, green spaces wherever possible. All major commercial development should be required to have some public space with trees or greenery of some sort - roof gardens or courtyards, etc.
- I like the range of shops and services - regularly using Dave's Pasta, Harvard Medical, the drugstore, Goodwill, etc. I do think a small urban hotel would be good here - for 20 years, we've been challenged for a near-by (walkable) place for guests to stay. That said, I avoid driving anywhere close to DS because of congestion, I'm not a big car person anyway and love having Hubway in the City!
- Davis needs to be more pedestrian friendly--the atmosphere could be even better if we made it a pedestrian mall much like Downtown Crossing. Even if residents are unwilling to go that far, I would still like to see more pedestrian space/space for people to hang out like the area in front of JP Licks/Tedeschi
- I love Davis Square. I've lived in 2 room studios I can barely afford for almost 25 years just to stay here. It is getting wealthier and crowding out people like me who love it and contribute our sense of community and the artiness and culture that made it such a beloved neighborhood in the first place. Please don't let it all be bought up by rich people and wealthy housing investors. We need more housing for those slowly falling out of the middle class but still in it. We will pay you back by preserving Davis Square from becoming a boring, homogenized suburb.
- Davis Sq. is on the cusp of becoming an "Allston": limited (18-25) demographic appeal, overburdened with traffic, colonized by chain franchises.
- Love the City's support of arts and event that bring vitality and pride. Love that everything I need is steps from my door, including connections to the larger world. Love that I can age in place in a wildly diverse community.
- DPW does a phenomenal job of keeping the streets, parks and paths clean.
- All major streets should be two-way streets like they were pre-1980. It will slow traffic naturally but increase options for all travelers.
- Build more housing, density is good
- Extend bike path to Boston No chain stores New York style deli with amazing bagels
Coffee shop on College Ave
- improvements need to be done to sidewalks to widen them for better pedestrian and stroller safety and comfort. Thanks for asking!
- Recently the city permitted the most hideous new building at the edge of Davis, by the Rosebud. How on earth could something that awful get built in 2012?? Please pay attention to aesthetics when approving construction; these buildings are here for a long time, and now we have an unnecessary new blight on the landscape.
- please bring a nice grocery store :)

- I think that it will be difficult to use the "Somerville by Design" approach to Davis Square. That approach has apparently worked well with more blighted neighborhoods, but Davis Square already is pretty much what its residents want -- little change is necessary. The city and some business interests probably want to make major changes to increase revenue from the square, but residents already have what they want.
- There is a lot of focus on Davis Square the Commercial District and less on Davis Square the Residential Neighborhood - residents need support from the city regarding nighttime noise and all-the-time parking issues. The city seems to believe that all visitors use the T, but difficulty parking on neighborhood streets tell a different story.
- Improve the sidewalks! I hate those bricks that are slippery when wet -- they also get uneven over time, which causes people to trip and makes things awful for people with wheelchairs and strollers. Enforce the sidewalk snow shoveling harshly -- don't let people get away with shoveling an 12-inch wide strip! Basically make it so ALL pedestrians can get around the square year-round. Also, I'm a fan of high density and mixed use development -- the population is growing and you have to put them somewhere, and it's great having all the stuff they need nearby so people don't have to drive elsewhere. I'm tired of people complaining they don't want taller buildings -- it's better than sprawling out for miles with everyone in single family homes and driving everywhere.
- I don't know how people afford to live in Somerville with children, unless they inherit a house or don't mind living in a 2 bedroom condo. As a parent with little disposable income, I basically avoid Davis Square, because there's nothing there for us to do, even though we live here. We go to water parks in other parts of the city, or in close-by cities and shop at Market Basket.
- these surveys are smart and useful. thank you
- what can be done to discourage vagrants, mentally disturbed, or intoxicated individuals from causing disruptions and scaring people in the square?
- I love that Davis Sq offers enough restaurants/bars that I can have a "night out" without leaving Somerville. I really do NOT want Davis Sq to end up like Harvard Sq - littered with Gaps and other chains...I think we should focus on cultivating locally owned independent businesses - whether they're clothing boutiques, restaurants, or whatever. Also, parking is a problem on weekend evenings...it's tricky to meet out-of-town friends because they always have trouble finding non-permit parking...so often, we have to meet up other places (not Davis Sq). If we want Davis Sq to be resident AND outsider-friendly, we need to make it easier for people to visit. A lot of my friends come from the 'burbs to hang out, so taking the T just isn't feasible.
- The current traffic lights work for nobody - traffic throughput is low, pedestrians have to wait senselessly or jaywalk. Development should be vertical - there are too many low buildings where space is a premium. If a lot becomes available (Rite Aid?, VFW?) it should have parking, shops, offices, residential stacked vertically to a height of 5 or 6 levels. Open parking lots are crazy in this area.