



## Cape Vision 2040 Quick Poll #2 Summary

Big thanks to the 100+ individuals who took the time to share their thoughts and ideas on the future of Cape Girardeau via Quick Poll #2 on the [project website](#), and the hundreds more who participated via the [City's Facebook page](#).

Key themes that emerged from the poll (in no particular order) include:

- More event spaces, festivals, concerts and restaurants along the Riverfront
- Focus on attracting businesses and high-paying jobs
- Revitalization of older neighborhoods such as South Cape and Red Star
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Redevelopment and beautification of Midtown and key community gateways
- More family-oriented activities, both indoor and outdoor, with a greater focus on outdoor

Folks from a wide variety of ages participated in this poll, similar to the diverse group at the recent 'Cape to the Future' workshop:

- 21% of respondents were ages 25-34, 21% were ages 55-64, 20% were ages 35-44, and 20% were ages 65-74
- Nearly 90% of respondents live in Cape, and about 60% shop, play, and/or work in Cape

Continue reading for a more detailed summary of Quick Poll #2.

---

## Strengthening the Local Economy

The first poll question asked, *"How can Cape Girardeau best strengthen the local economy?"*, and respondents were encouraged to select up to 2 answers. With over half (52%) of the votes, the majority of folks chose **attracting businesses and high-paying jobs**. Runner-up ideas were keeping taxes low (13%), expanding efforts to promote entrepreneurship (12%), enhancing regional transportation access (10%), and improving tourism promotion (8%).

Those who responded "other" in the Quick Poll and commented on Facebook expressed their desire for **higher-paying jobs with better benefits and a more flexible work environment**. Residents offered ideas such as bringing more technology, engineering, and design jobs to Cape, instead of focusing on service industry jobs such as retail and restaurants. Others discussed recruiting more jobs with flexible work schedules, childcare, and the option to work from home.

Many respondents also commented on the need to **support Cape’s existing small businesses**. They envisioned training for small businesses, lower rent on commercial real estate downtown, lowering taxes, and improving the city’s infrastructure.

Another topic that emerged was a **stronger police presence throughout Cape**, with a focus on Downtown and South Cape.

Respondents also had thoughts on **incentivizing redevelopment, expanding tourism, and improving public schools**:

- “Implement flexible and creative redevelopment regulations.”
- “Continue to position Cape as a regional economic hub through tourism, the hospitals, and SEMO.”
- “Improve and reimagine public school education.”

### Enhancing Local Tourism

The second poll question asked, *“How can Cape Girardeau best enhance local tourism?”*, and respondents were encouraged to select up to 2 answers. With over half (58%) of the votes cast for riverfront event spaces and restaurants, riverboat activities, and a multi-use park along the river, the majority of respondents felt very strongly about focusing on **Cape’s key connection to the Mississippi River**. Runner-up ideas included **cross-marketing with existing events and local attractions** (19%), “other” (described below, 10%), more downtown hotels (5%), innovative lighting and public art at key community gateways (5%), and historic tours (3%).

Folks envisioned event spaces along the riverfront, elevated restaurants with a view of the river, and more festivals like Riverfest. Comments focused on **more cultural events and event spaces**:

- “Encourage music, art, and culinary events. More culture!”
- “Have specialty festivals such as a BBQ competition and storytellers.”
- “Bring more culture and arts downtown through visiting artists and workshops.”
- “Need more park space along the river and public spaces that promote creative thinking.”

Respondents offered ideas for **cross-marketing and building on Cape’s existing assets**:

- “Bigger and more frequent events at local spaces like the Show Me Center.”
- “Work with local hotels on golf packages for our local courses and planning tournaments.”
- “Make cross-marketing a key City priority.”

The 10% who responded “other” in the Quick Poll and commented on Facebook relayed **getting businesses into vacant storefronts, more baseball events, and improving areas beyond downtown such as key community gateways and corridors**:

- “Implement policies to get businesses into vacant downtown storefronts.”
- “Encourage development of downtown areas that are vacant.”
- “Bring a minor league baseball team to town.”
- “Host more youth baseball tournaments.”
- “Revision Midtown and West Cape because they are the entry points to town and are currently bleak and unwelcoming.”

## Cape's Top Priorities

The third poll question asked, “*What should be Cape Girardeau’s highest priorities?*”, and respondents were encouraged to select up to 2 answers. Respondents focused on **revitalizing older neighborhoods** (18%) and **expanding infrastructure and sustainability** (17%). Other well-liked ideas included **expanding public safety resources** (11%) and **supporting new and existing businesses** (11%). The remaining ideas included enhancing recreational opportunities (8%); expanding community resources, programs, and support services (7%); increasing shopping, dining, and entertainment choices (7%); prioritizing equity, inclusivity, and community cohesion (6%); working towards affordable, quality housing for all (6%); “other” (described below, 5%); and implementing city beautification and placemaking (4%).

**Residents discussed revitalizing neighborhoods with better lighting, more sidewalks, repairing or demolishing vacant buildings, beautification projects, and more neighborhood parks.** Comments included:

- “Engage service groups and neighborhood committees along with grants for implementation.”
- “Work with landlords to improve rental properties.”
- “Focus on ALL areas of Cape, and help residents stay in their homes.”

Folks also offered **specific ideas for infrastructure improvements:**

- “Fix roads, lighting, and city buildings.”
- “Infrastructure repairs and expansion must continue for growth.”
- “Kingshighway needs sidewalks!”
- “Add more streetlights on side streets.”

Those who responded “other” in the Quick Poll expressed a desire to:

- “Address the visual appeal along the West Cape entry corridors.”
- “Create more after-school activities.”
- “Find solutions for the homeless.”
- “Lower taxes.”
- “Improve public education.”

## Dining and Entertainment Options

The fourth poll question asked, “*What dining/entertainment options would you like to see more of in Cape Girardeau?*”, and respondents were encouraged to select up to 3 answers. The top options were **outdoor family-oriented activities** (18%) and **concerts/shows** (16%). Other well-liked options were **unique gathering places** (13%) and **indoor family-oriented activities** (12%). The remaining options included tours (11%), theater and performing arts (10%), family style dining (9%), museums (5%), fine dining (4%), and “other” (described through the comments below, 2%).

Two key topics that emerged in the Quick Poll and comments on Facebook were **more outdoor seating** and **a focus on local restaurants and markets instead of chain establishments.**

For **food and restaurants**, folks commented on creating a market hub downtown with local food shops (butcher, bakery, etc.), adding a tapas restaurant, and more brew pubs, cafes, and local ethnic restaurants.

Residents had several thoughts on both **outdoor and indoor family-oriented activities** such as a YMCA, fresh water aquarium, neighborhood activities, and splash pads/water fountains.

There was also a clear desire for more **entertainment and cultural options** as folks suggested a music venue, outdoor music festivals, a community theater, comedy club, and downtown flea markets.

### Recreational Amenities

The fifth poll question asked, *“Which recreational amenity would you like to see more of in Cape Girardeau?”*, and respondents were allowed to select one answer. Just like the findings in Question 2, respondents’ top choice was **riverfront activities and events** (37%). Runner-up amenities were **bicycle and pedestrian improvements** (21%) and **park upgrades** (15%). The remaining options were splash pads/water playground (13%), “other” (described in the comments below, 11%), and parks within walking distance of homes (4%).

Bicycle and pedestrian improvements generated the most comments, with respondents calling out the need for **more sidewalks**. Key comments included:

- “Sidewalks to start. We have people walking on the shoulder of Kingshighway daily. Jackson has sidewalks on both sides of their main road, and we don’t? Let’s get on with it.”
- “This really needs to be addressed before someone gets killed.”
- “I know the city has a trail and some bike lanes, but I don't feel safe biking from my house (near Independence/West End) to a lot of places in Cape. Crossing major roads is problematic.”
- “Some of our roads that are supposed to be bicycle friendly are too narrow and dangerous for the cyclists and vehicles.”

Another key topic that emerged was having more **outdoor festivals** like Riverfest and the City of Roses. Folks also discussed implementing **recycling for businesses** and **organizing a city-wide clean up**.

Other recreational amenity ideas included:

- “A new indoor pool complex.”
- “Activities in the parks such as ice skating, concerts, outdoor movies, and tai chi.”
- “Block parties.”
- “More community gardens and engagement/programming for them.”

### Key Areas for Improvement and Revitalization

The sixth poll question asked, *“If you had to select only one of the following areas to be improved/revitalized, which one would it be?”*, and the seventh poll question encouraged respondents to briefly explain their reasoning for the area they selected. Respondents relayed a mixed variety of areas and reasonings. **Midtown/Corridors** (30%), and **South Cape** (30%) received the most votes. The remaining votes focused on **Downtown** (14%), “other” (described in the comments below, 7%), West Park Mall area (6%), community gateways (5%), the SEMO area (4%), Red Star (3%), and the northwest area (2%). Residents provided over 90 comments via the Quick Poll and hundreds more via Facebook. **Overall, approximately 50% of the place-based comments were for South Cape.** Some key comments for the most discussed community areas are provided below.

**Midtown/Corridors:**

- “Downtown gets a lot of attention, but actually getting there? We need to make these avenues shine as much as the destination does.”
- “High traveled area that looks like it is aging quickly.”
- “It is a cross roads of traffic and persons coming in and out of the city. Currently it looks neglected!”

**South Cape:**

- “I believe that our community is best served by increasing the standard of living in our worst neighborhood.”
- “Revitalization would ideally deter crime and give young people living in that area some hope.”
- “The City needs to help with code enforcement, condemnation, and education for property owners to improve the appearance of property in Southeast Cape.”

**Downtown:**

- “If we wish to revitalize the downtown area, we must focus on better use of the Mississippi River, a stellar opportunity for any water-located community and linking the river resource to revitalization and growth of residential housing in the downtown area.”
- “Downtown revitalization is central to attracting more visitors to Cape. More restaurants, hotels, businesses, etc. will enhance our city and enable it to better highlight the river and all the area has to offer.”
- “We do not currently have the feel of a college town with shops within walking distance to the university.”

---

**Thank you again to everyone who has participated in the Quick Polls! Your insights and priorities are invaluable, and will serve as the baseline and guiding force of the Comprehensive Plan.**