



**Town of Woodstock
Public Participation Summary
May 23, 2024**

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Introduction

What is the Public Participation Summary?

The Public Participation Summary reflects the work conducted in the early stages of the Comprehensive Planning process to engage the Woodstock community. Engaging the community is an important part of determining what the Town's collective vision is for the future, as well as what current needs should be addressed. The activities and events thus far have included: *The Public Survey, Planning Commission Kick Off, Light Up Woodstock Tabling, Community Focus Group, Woodstock Staff Focus Group, Economic Development Authority Meeting, and Other Interviews and Meetings.* The results of these meetings are summarized in this document and will be utilized alongside the Existing Conditions Report to draft the Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies that make up the core of the Comprehensive Plan. With both quantitative data and the qualitative responses gathered, Woodstock's plan for the future will be fully reflective of where the Town is and where it wants to go!



The results of each of these events are summarized herein. However, this summary does not represent all of, or the end of the community engagement process. The Comprehensive Plan is advertised on the Town's social media channels and website. The Woodstock community's input and attendance is requested on every document and event that will be released or scheduled in the near future.

Public Survey Results

How was the Public Survey Conducted?

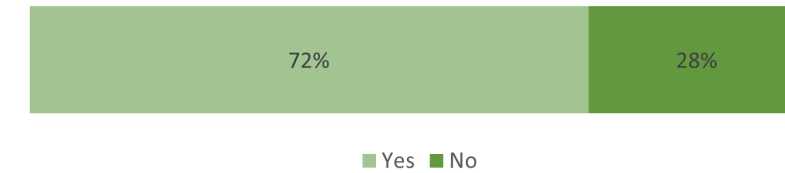
This survey was hosted on Woodstock's Polco community engagement account. It was open to anyone interested in providing public feedback to the Town, whether they live, work, or own a business. The survey was launched on November 1, 2023 and remained open until March 31, 2024.

During the survey's five month period, 141 residents and neighbors submitted survey responses.

Surveys such as these help elected and appointed officials, the Town's staff, and the public to understand their community goals and make informed decisions for future growth, infrastructure, and other needs. The responses from this survey will be used by the Town of Woodstock to inform and develop the Comprehensive Plan, accounting for the needs and desires of residents, neighbors, and visitors alike.

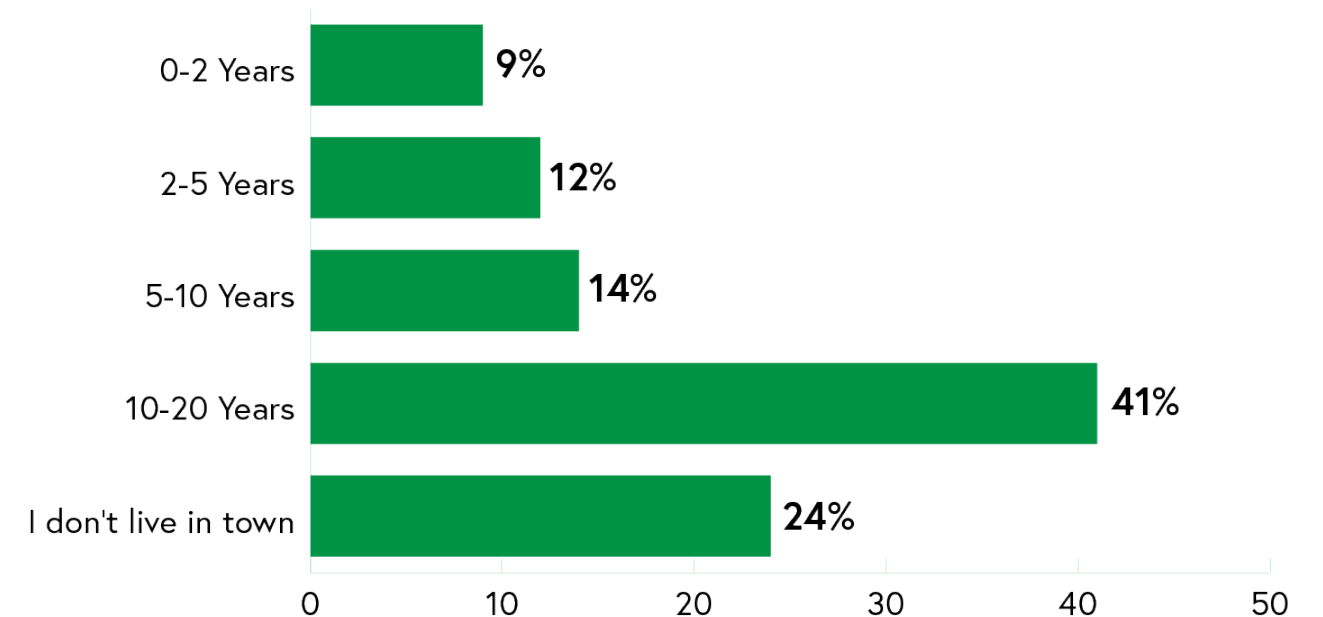


Question 1: Do you live or own property/a business in the Town of Woodstock?



Of the survey's 141 responses, 102 respondents indicated that they live or own property/a business in the Town of Woodstock, accounting for 72% of all responses. Thirty-nine respondents or 28% of all respondents did not live or own property/a business in the Town of Woodstock.

Question 2: If you live here, how long have you lived in the Town?



A majority of respondents have lived in Woodstock for between 10 to 20 years, accounting for 41% of all respondents. Thirty four respondents do not live in Woodstock, accounting for 24% of all survey responses. 14% of respondents moved to Woodstock in the past 5-10 years, while 17% or 17 respondents moved to the town in the past 2 to 5 years. Twelve respondents indicated that they made Woodstock their home in the past two years.

Question 3: What are Woodstock's strengths?



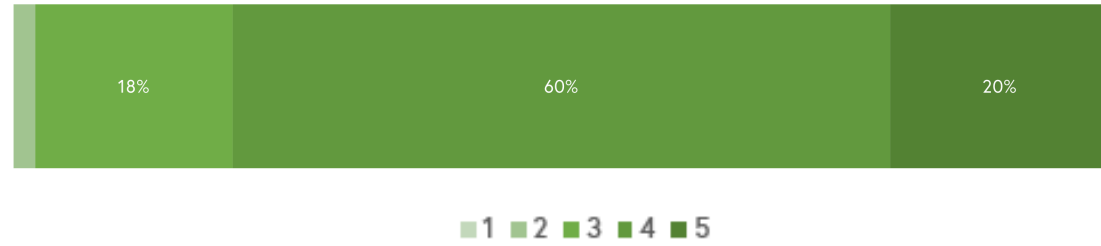
Respondents used the words community, small-town, beautiful, and friendly the most. Some responses stated that the town is welcoming, clean and well-kept, and full of lively small businesses and public spaces. One respondent noted, "I always notice something different every time I'm walking around in town."

Question 4: What are the challenges of living or working in Woodstock?



Every town has its challenges. Survey respondents noted that restaurants, good-paying-jobs, shopping, and entertainment options were Woodstock's biggest challenges. Respondents referred to the difficulty of finding employment opportunities with reasonable salaries to accommodate increasing cost-of-living. Respondents commented that there were not enough housing units that are affordable within walking distance to local jobs or the downtown area. Sidewalks, pedestrian infrastructure, and being able to walk around Woodstock was on many respondents minds.

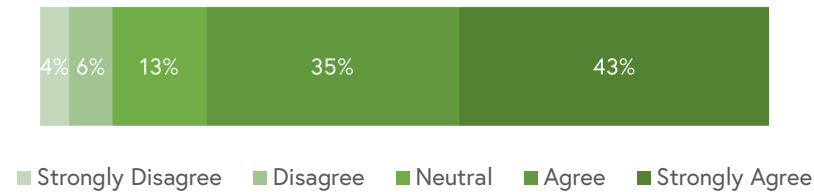
Question 5: On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), rate the quality of life in the Town.



85 respondents, or 60% of all survey respondents rated the quality of life within Woodstock as a four out of five. 20% of all respondents rated the quality of life at a five of five, whereas 20% of respondents rated the quality of life at a three or lower. No respondents stated that the town had the lowest value rating for quality of life.

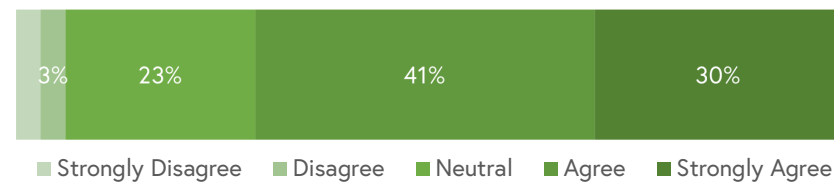
Question 6: How do you feel about the following statements?

I can see myself living in Woodstock in the future



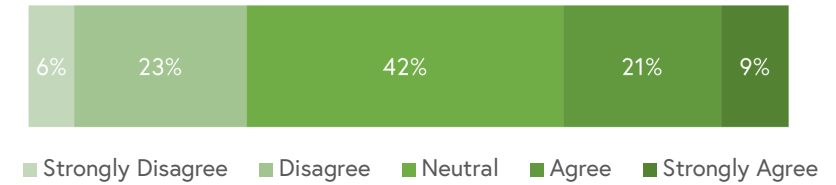
Nearly half of respondents strongly agreed that they could see themselves living in Woodstock. Another 35% of respondents agreed that they could see themselves living in the town. 10% of respondents indicated that they did not see themselves living in Woodstock.

I feel like I am part of the community



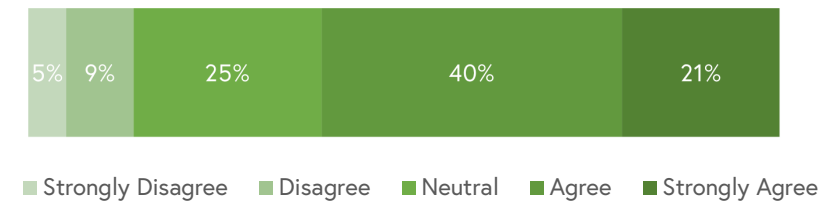
41% of respondents agreed that they felt like they are part of the community. 30% strongly agreed that they were part of the community, whereas 23% felt neutral.

I can find a good paying job in Woodstock



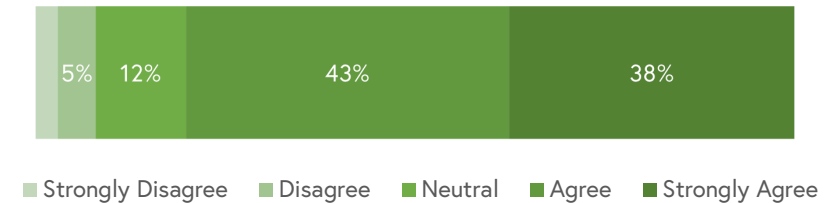
42% percent of respondents had a neutral response to finding good paying jobs in Woodstock, representing the plurality of responses to this statement. Respondents were generally evenly split with the statement, indicating whether they could or could not find a good paying job in the town.

I can afford to live in Woodstock



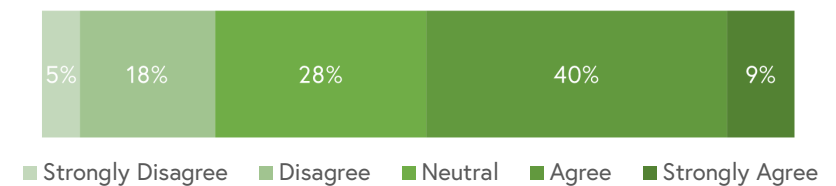
40% of respondents stated that they could afford to live in Woodstock. 25% of respondents were neutral toward the statement, with 21% of respondents strongly agreeing with the statement.

I feel safe walking or biking in town



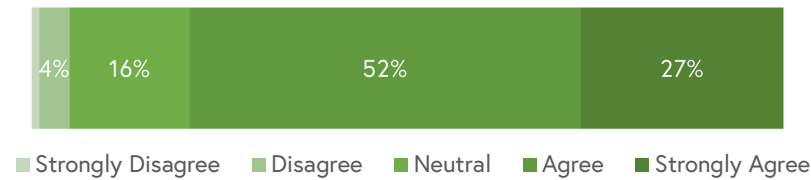
The majority of respondents suggested that they feel safe walking or biking around in town, with 43% of respondents agreeing with the statement. Another 38% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

There are lots of fun things to do in town



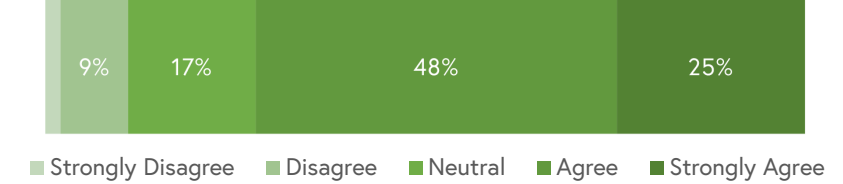
40% percent of respondents agreed that there are lots of fun things to do in Woodstock, however, 28% of respondents were neutral towards the statement. 18% of respondents disagreed with the statement that there were fun things to do in Woodstock.

Our parks are well-equipped and accessible



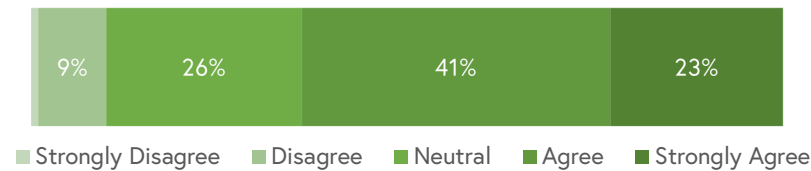
The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Woodstock's parks are well-equipped and accessible for residents and visitors.

County services are provided efficiently and effectively



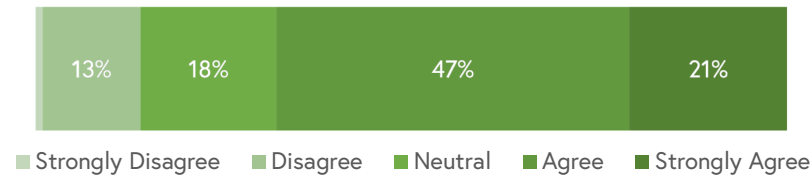
Most respondents agreed that County services are provided efficiently and effectively, with an additional 25% of respondents strongly agreeing with the statement.

Our local event and activity programming makes me feel a part of the community



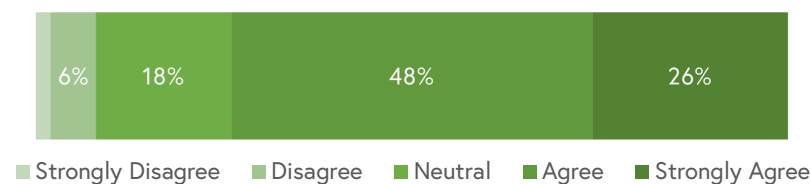
Forty-one percent of respondents agreed that the local event and activity programming made them feel more at home in Woodstock. 26% of respondents were neutral towards the statement and 23% of respondents strongly agreed that local event and activity programming made them feel like a part of the community.

Traffic is managed safely and effectively



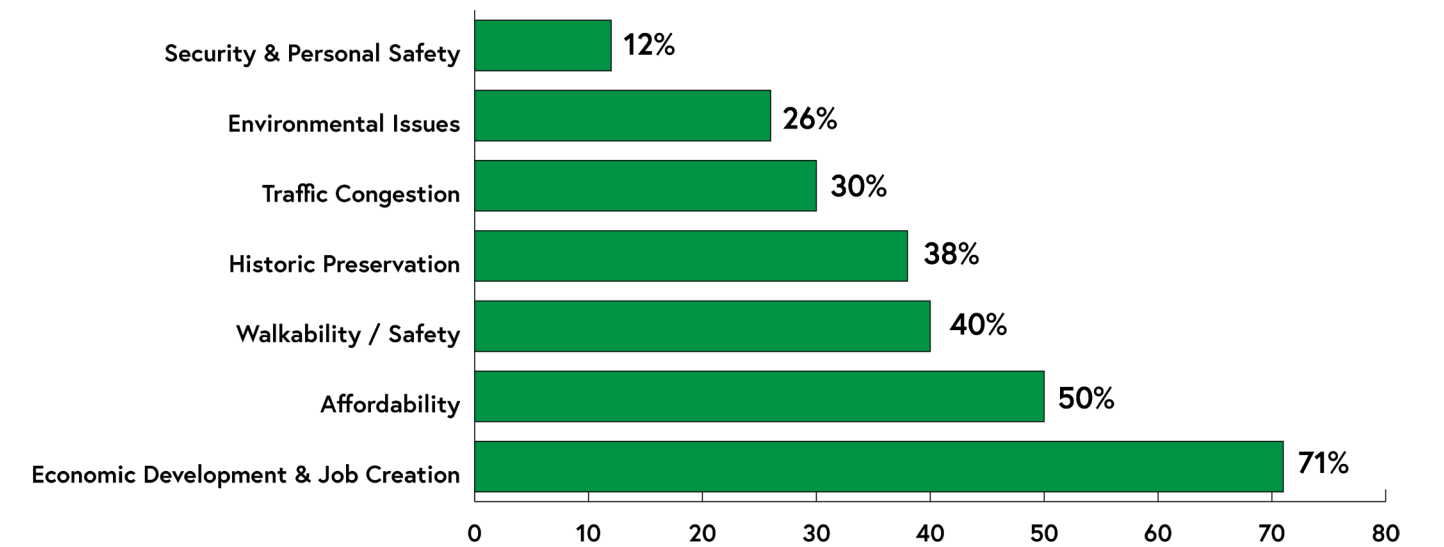
Most of respondents agreed that traffic is managed safely and efficiently for the town of Woodstock. Another 21% of respondents strongly agreed, whereas, 18% of respondents were neutral towards the statement.

Local government services are provided efficiently and effectively



An abundance of respondents agreed that Town services are provided efficiently and effectively, with an additional 26% of respondents strongly agreeing with the statement.

Question 7: What do you think are the most important issues facing Woodstock? (Check all that apply)



71% percent of respondents expressed that Economic Development & Job Creation were the most important issues facing Woodstock. Following closely behind was affordability, with 50% of respondents indicating that the affordability of Woodstock was an important issue. Walkability and safety was another important issue for residents, with 40% of respondents indicating that this was an important concern for them. Additionally, historic preservation was another key issue, with 38% of respondents checking this as being an important issue facing Woodstock.

Question 8: What are three words that describe Woodstock?
(Example. "Friendly. Beautiful. Scenic.")



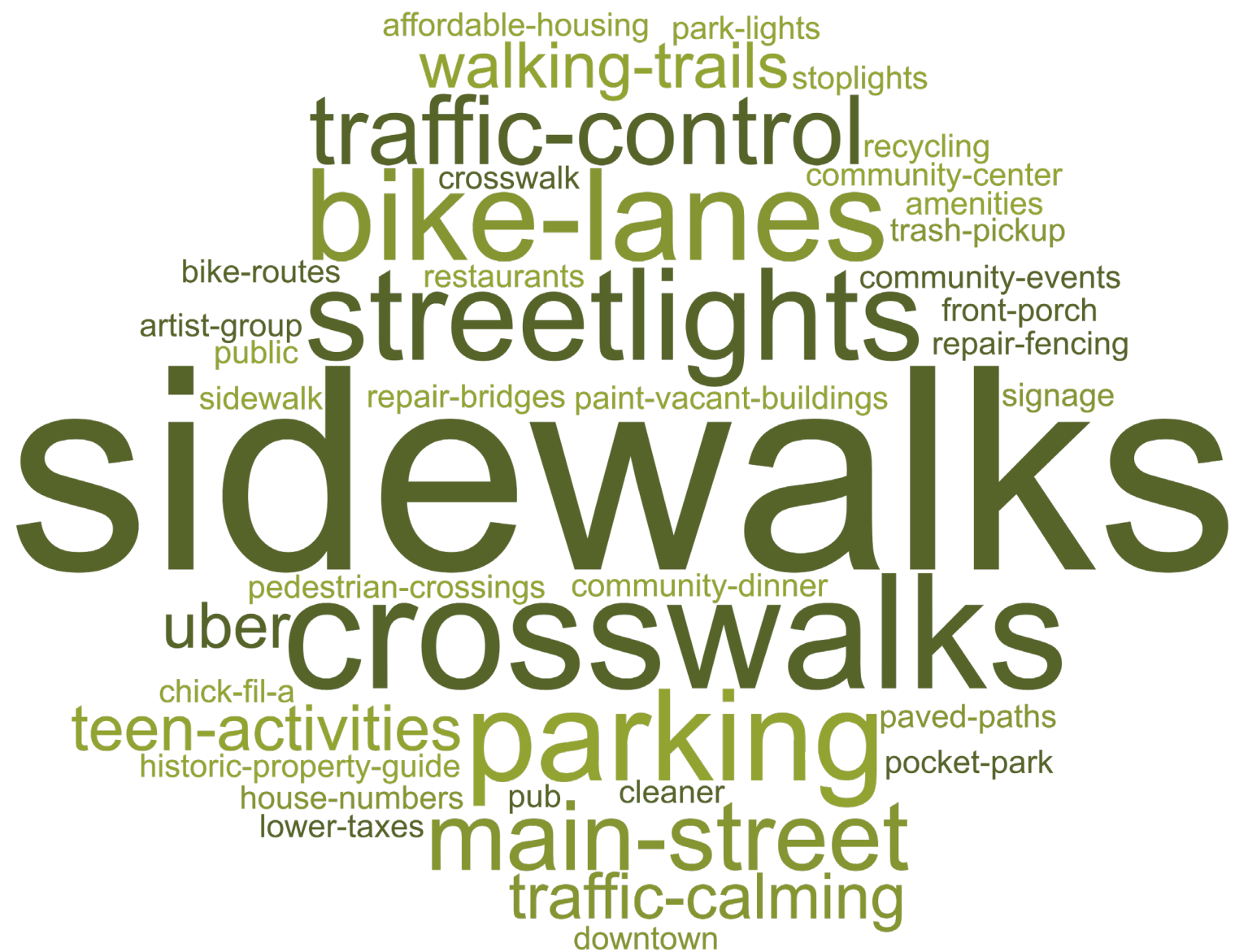
When asked which three words describe Woodstock, the words most mentioned were "scenic," "friendly," and "beautiful." While true, this might have been partially influenced by being the example for this question. The next three most mentioned words were **small**, **historic**, **clean**. Other words that were mentioned often include: charming, welcoming, quaint, and quiet.

Question 9: What do you feel that the Town of Woodstock is missing, or had more of?



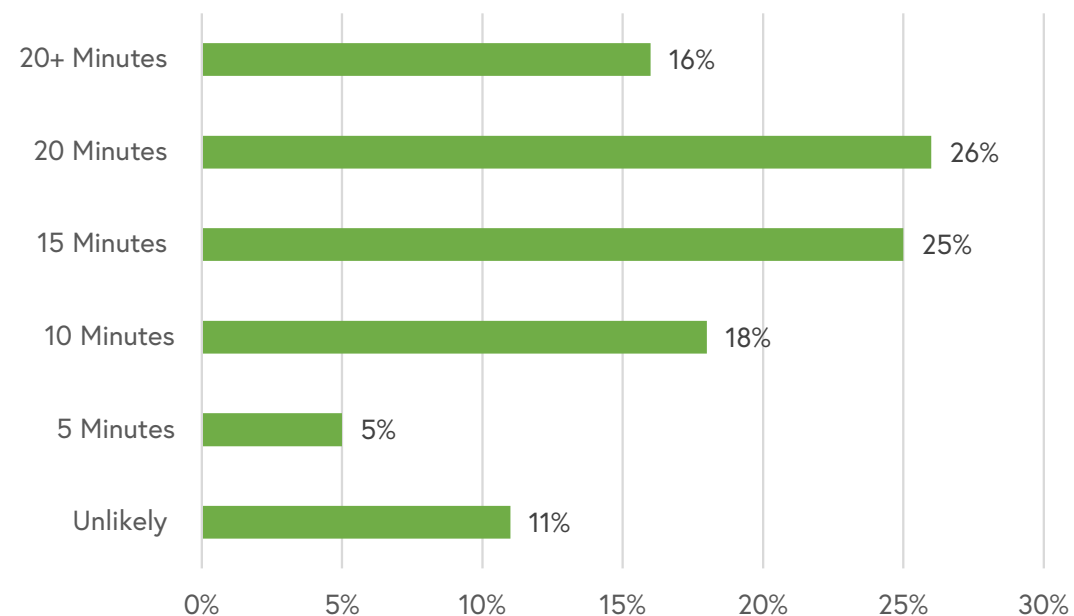
When asked what Woodstock was missing, respondents stated that the Town needed more restaurants, sidewalks, walking trails, shopping, and bike amenities. Respondents want more active uses and activities in their downtown to walk or ride their bikes to, including splash-pads, home stores, and public music events in the park. One respondent stated they wanted a "dedicated outdoor workout space and community activities incorporating music and events." This sentiment was reciprocated for many other respondents, as the desire for activity and events bringing community members together is widespread.

Question 10: If there was one small, quick, or low-cost improvement you would make in the Town to make life easier, what would it be?



To make life easier in Woodstock, many respondents stated that they want sidewalks, crosswalks, bike-lanes, parking, and streetlights. Survey respondents had many specific and inventive recommendations to make life easier such as painting vacant building windows with fun, active pictures or adding sidewalks and crosswalks near schools. Respondents also had unique placemaking ideas such as installing guides to historical properties in town, and signage to direct visitors to amenities on Main Street.

Question 11: If you are able, what is the longest distance you would feel comfortable walking in Town instead of driving to your daily needs?



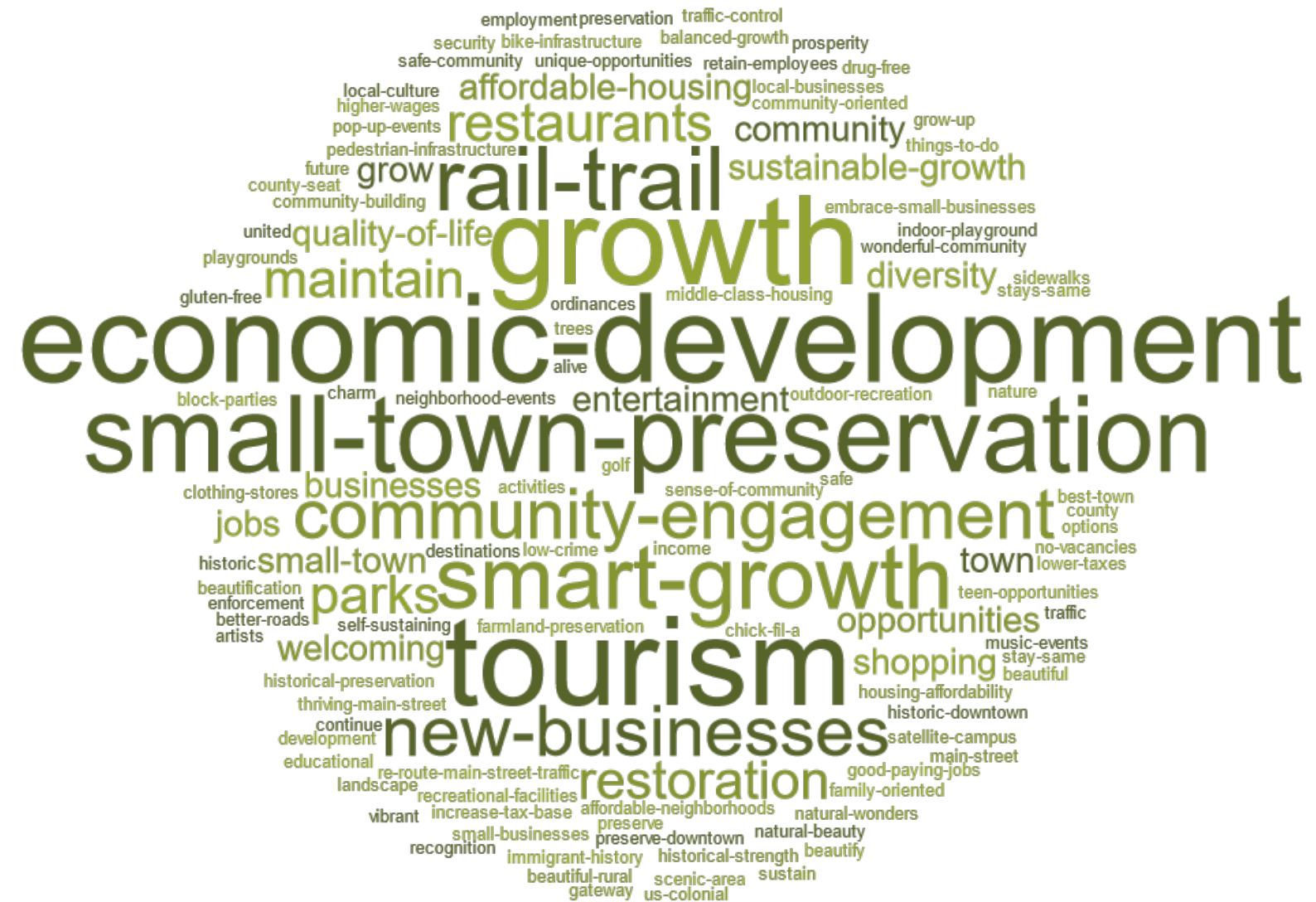
26% of respondents attested that they would be comfortable and willing to walk twenty minutes to reach daily destinations instead of driving. Following closely behind, 25% of respondents indicated that they would be comfortable walking fifteen minutes to destinations for daily needs. Another 18% of respondents would walk ten minutes to destinations within Woodstock for daily needs. 16% of respondents stated that they would be willing to walk more than twenty minutes to destinations for daily needs.

Question 13: What concerns you about the future of the Town?



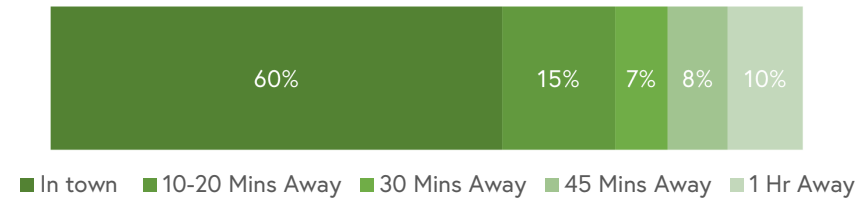
Survey respondents had a diverse range of concerns for the future of their town. The most recurring concerns were preserving the small town character, traffic, loss of small businesses, cost-of-living, growing too quickly, and housing. Some notable responses included, "I worry about the town losing its 'small-town' feel or losing local businesses," and "The people coming up don't have enough housing to choose from." Many respondents also mentioned resiliency and preserving natural beauty: "[I am concerned about] climate change and ensuring that the Shenandoah River can meet the water needs of the region," and "[My biggest concern is] managing water resources and community safety for a growing population."

Question 14: What is your hope for the future of Woodstock?



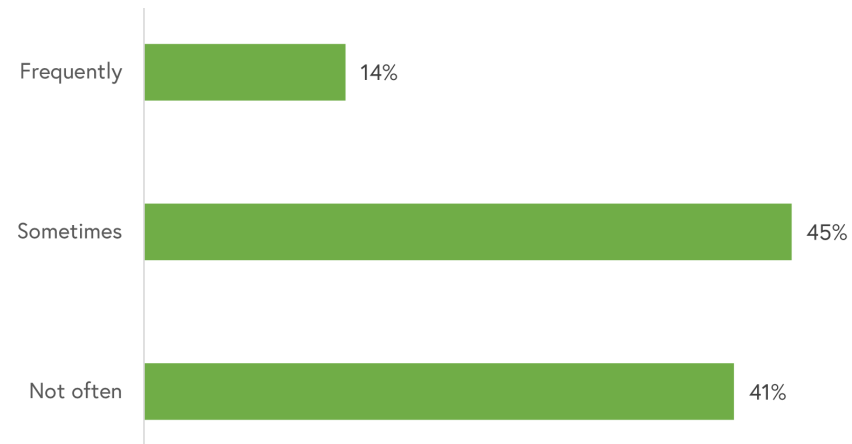
Respondents stated that they want Woodstock to remain the small town that they know and love. However, many respondents also would like some form of economic development for the town to continue its prosperity while also growing its population with new friendly neighbors. Some examples of this include: "I hope Woodstock will welcome new residents and the changes they bring," and "Grow to meet the needs of the people while also maintain its small-town vibes," and "I hope we can continue to embrace small businesses and community building opportunities." Respondents have immense pride in Woodstock and have high hopes for the future, while also remembering its history. Many responses also expressed excitement at the potential Rail-Trail project while also applauding the Town's parks and offering recommendations for more events downtown and at parks around Woodstock. Overall, most respondents want the town to grow and flourish as not only a tourist destination but as a small-town that supports and welcomes new residents.

Question 15: If you are employed, where do you work?



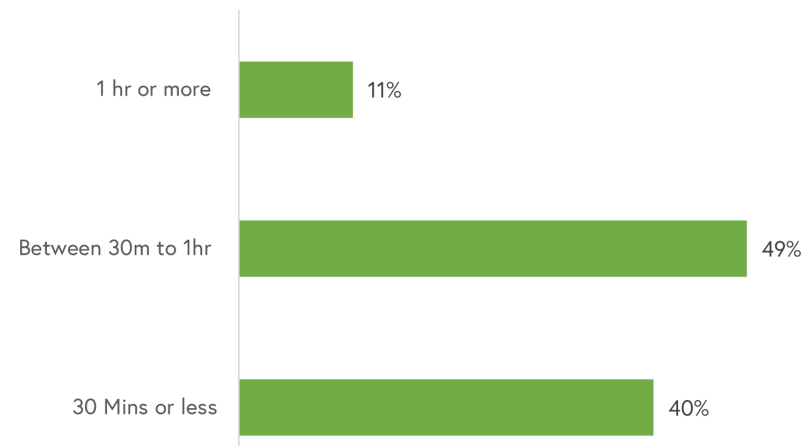
60% of respondents stated that they work in town, work remotely, or are retired. 15% of respondents work between ten and twenty minutes away, while 10% of respondents work at jobs that are over an hour away.

Question 16: How often do you visit Woodstock's parks?



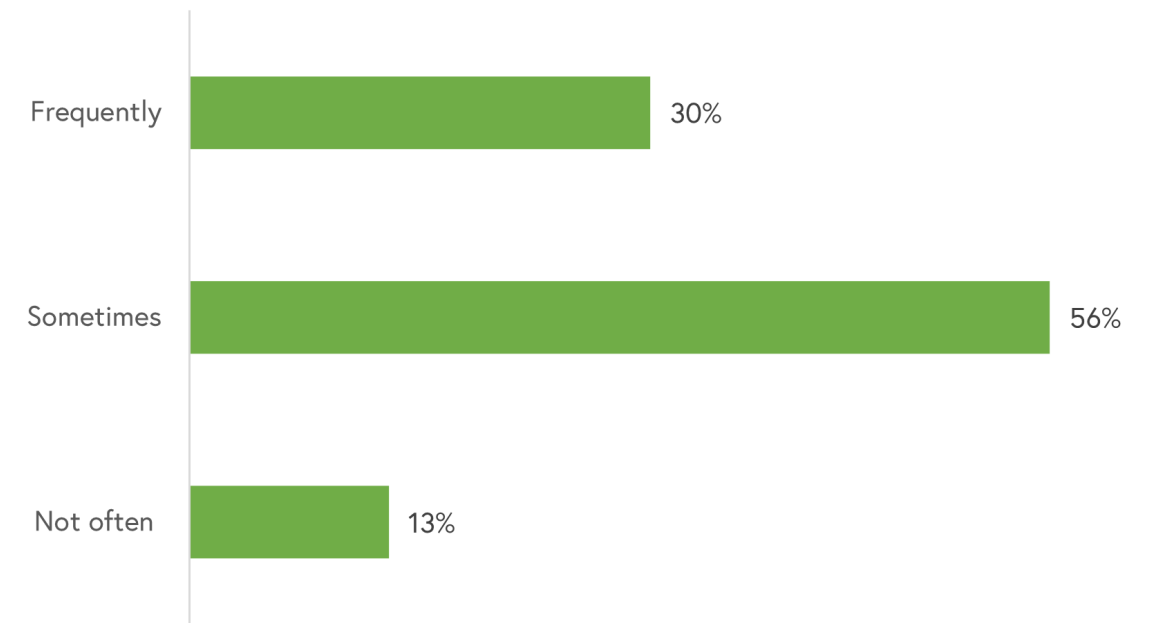
45% of respondents visit Woodstock's parks once or twice a week, while 41% of respondents visit the town's parks once a month or never. 14% of respondents visit Woodstock's parks almost every day.

Question 17: How long do you stay at the parks?



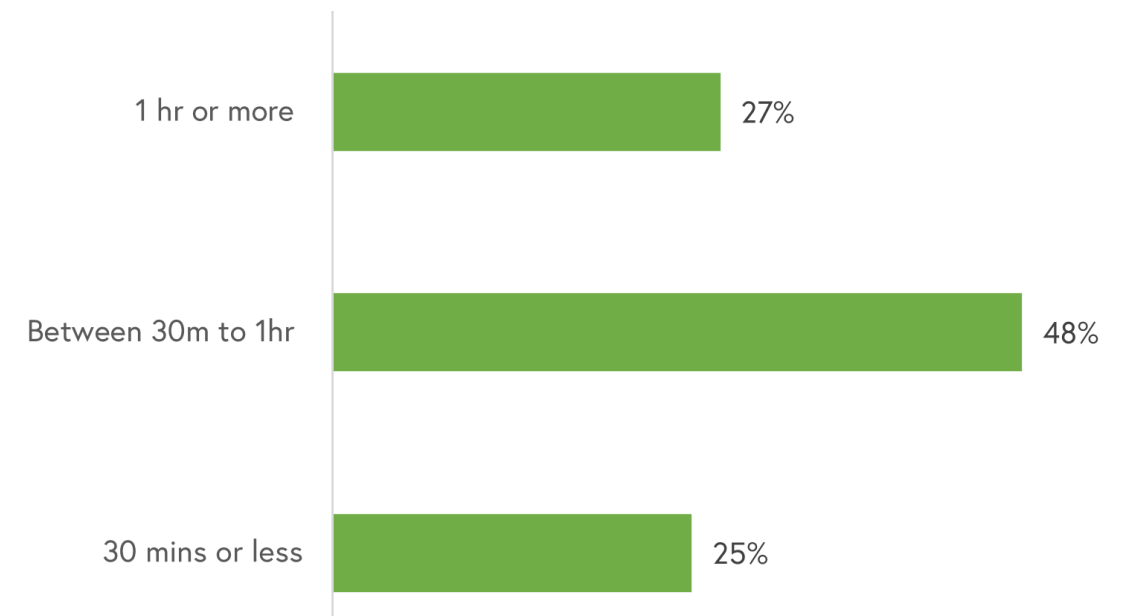
49% of respondents spend about an hour at parks in Woodstock, whereas 40% of respondents spend thirty minutes or less at town parks. 11% of respondents stated that they spend over an hour at Woodstock parks.

Question 18: How often do you visit downtown?



A majority of respondents stated that they visit downtown a few times a week, while 30% of respondents visit downtown almost every day. 13% of respondents don't visit downtown often, only once a month or less.

Question 19: How long do you stay in downtown?

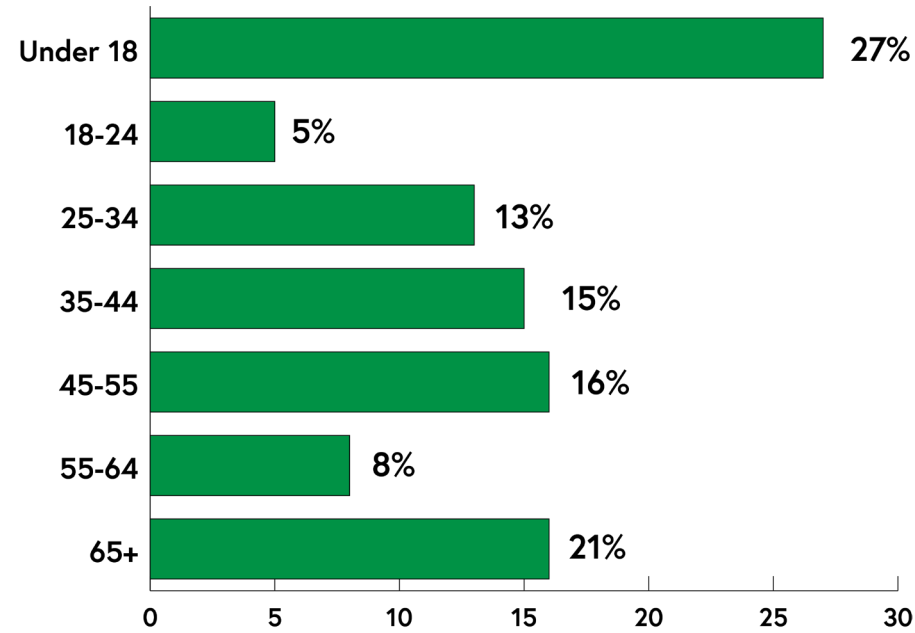


Most respondents indicated that they spend at least an hour downtown whenever they visit. 27% of respondents stated that they spend over an hour on their trips downtown, while 25% of respondents said they spend less than thirty minutes downtown.

Demographic Information

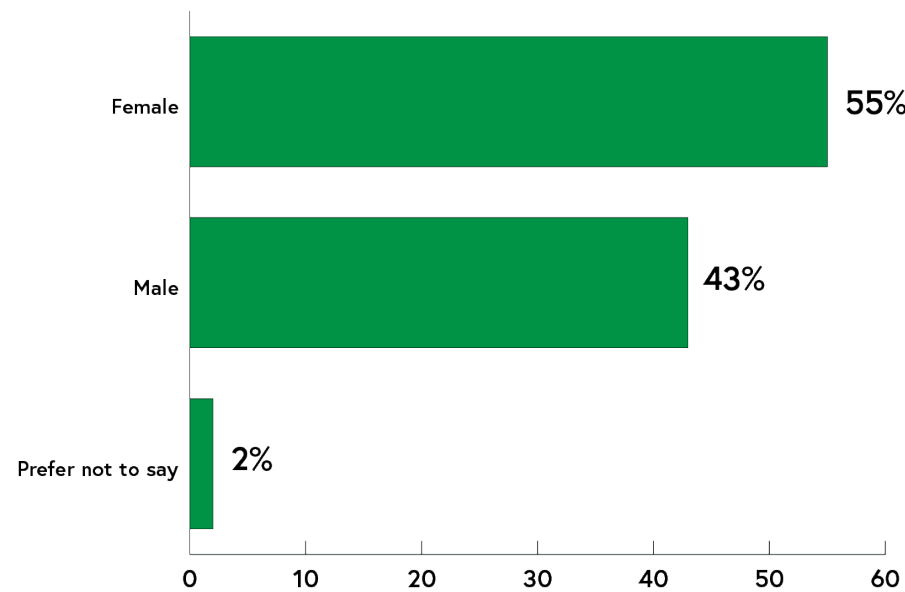
What is your age group?

Survey respondents represent a diverse set of age groups, which helps illustrate the different and complex needs required by residents of all ages. Local students were engaged as part of a government class and some submitted paper copies of the survey, showing their higher representation here..



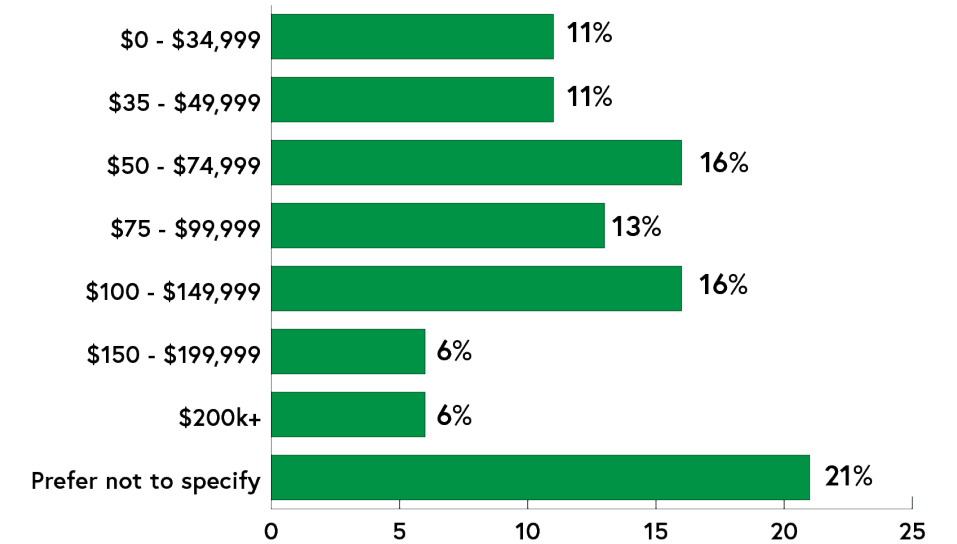
What gender do you identify as?

A majority of respondents were women, representing fifty-five percent of all respondents, nearly ten percent more than male respondents.



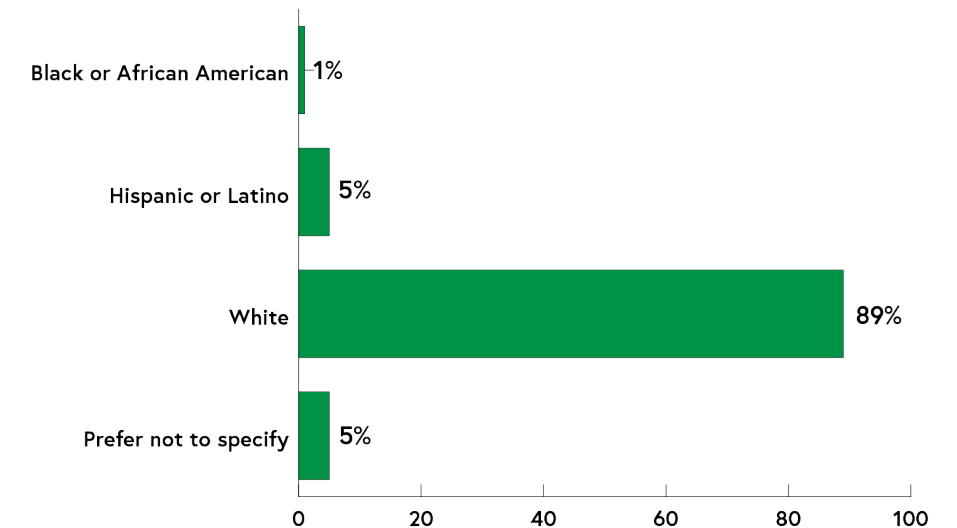
What is your income group?

Most respondents fell within the middle to upper middle class income group. However, there was some representation from lower and higher income groups, presenting a good range of perspectives when planning for diverse income groups.



What race do you identify as?

Nearly all respondents identified as White, representing eighty-nine percent of all respondents. This survey does not capture the best sample of Woodstock's true racial and ethnic demographics, and future surveys are needed to get a more representative sample.



Survey Conclusion

Most survey respondents know and love the Town of Woodstock. Whether they have lived there for ten years or more, work or play in the Town, or are newcomers to the community, the social charm and natural beauty of Woodstock captivates respondents and instills pride. Responses overwhelmingly wish to maintain the qualities that make Woodstock a pleasant place to live, while also expressing a desire to grow the Town in a sustainable manner and continue to prosper. Many respondents expressed praise and admiration toward the Town's leadership and services, including coordination with Shenandoah County services as well.

However, there's always room for improvement. Most respondents want to safely walk or ride bikes and be active in their town through improved sidewalks and bike routes. Many responses want more restaurants, shopping, and events or activities downtown to allow them to spend their money locally and support local entrepreneurs. Respondents love their public spaces and they'd love to see more improvements such as an indoor pool, more fitness options, and outdoor events for teens and kids.

While the future isn't certain, respondents have immense hope for the future of Woodstock. They believe the Town can, and should, grow and welcome new residents while building its economic foundation through new small businesses in various industries.

Planning Commission Kick-Off Results

The Comprehensive Planning process kicked off on October 23rd with the Town's Planning Commission, who are tasked by Virginia's State Code to initiate the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission was briefed on the process for the coming year and the to-be-launched survey. The Planning team heard directly from the Commission what their impression of the Town's needs, issues, and hopes for the future were. The discussion was lively and yielded some key insights.

There was a perception that Woodstock's challenges were in employment opportunities. Particularly, jobs for people of all ages that allowed them to age in community and remain a member of Woodstock. There are nursing homes in Town, but not the kind that simply provide continuing care and allow the residents to have independent lives. However, even at those nursing homes, the issue of staffing was mentioned. It was felt that the Town was becoming a bedroom community, where people work and enjoy some place else and simply sleep in Woodstock. Tourism was acknowledged as a growing industry and big opportunity, but one that fluctuates greatly with the season.

Housing was another challenge identified by the Planning Commission, there are a lot of single family detached and duplexes in the Town, but other types, such as apartments, are missing. The Public School system is also getting more crowded and there are issues with teacher retention, although the school programs and education quality are excellent. It is valued to have the schools be located within the Town. There is also an active trade school that produces skilled workers. However, to retain graduating students, new workers, or teachers, housing availability is an important need.

The Town's available services are high quality, but the Commission noted that indoor activities are needed. Elder members of the community were noted as going to Lowe's or Walmart in order to "get their steps in." Places for exercise and socializing, particularly in the winter time are desirable.

To further develop the economy, it was felt that Woodstock could compete for non-hazardous or polluting industries, such as IT or other office-based work that would look for a place, such as Woodstock, for a high quality of life for its workers. However, it was noted that there are many small family farms in the area that should be retained as active working farms.

Overall, there was acknowledgment that Woodstock is a caring community with many families having deep ties to the area and everyone getting along with one another even when they disagree. People hope that their children will stick around and stay, while also wanting people to feel welcome to join them. Locals are very active in charity, faith communities, or helping in schools, and other projects. The socialability of the community is highly valued, and there is concern that new growth could erode the character and create traffic congestion or other challenges. The Planning process will need to navigate how to address the needs and aspirations for the future while navigating issues that are in conflict with one another. For example, if new graduates or teachers are looking for housing, it might be perceived as growth that is not desired in Town. The Comprehensive Plan will seek to provide recommendations and policies for the highest benefit of all members of the community.

Light Up Woodstock Tabling Results

In order to announce the Comprehensive Plan update's start, members of the Planning team attended the "Light Up Woodstock" event and observed the festivities, including the parade and local student groups singing. Community members could stop by the Woodstock table in the historic courthouse square and leave comments or discuss any concerns or questions. Most importantly, bookmarks were distributed with the QR code and website directing community members to where all future documents, events, and other information would be uploaded regarding the Plan.

Interestingly, discussion with the public yielded insights that appear to be opposite from one another. Many people stopped by the table and said they absolutely love the Town and hope that it never changes. However, equally as many stopped by and said they feel that the Town needs more opportunities, such as new restaurants or retail businesses, or new housing. Respondents were asked to state whether they were Woodstock residents, while most were, many others lived within the other communities in the Shenandoah Valley.

It was evident that needs and aspirations for the future exist, while concerns about the form that growth takes were also present.



Woodstock Staff Focus Group Results

Woodstock's staff were asked to participate in a focus groups held on January 16th and 26th, 2024. Members from the Woodstock Police Department, Department of Finance, Department of Public Works, and the Planning Department totalling about 40 people over the two sessions were asked questions about their vision for the future and for thoughts on issues and opportunities. Interestingly, nearly all of the Town's participating staff lives in and is a long time member of the community or grew up in Town. Some of the questions and summaries of the following discussion are found below.

"What is your vision for Woodstock?"

It was expressed that there should be more opportunities spread throughout the Town, particularly noting the growth being experienced along Reservoir Road is not also found towards the Shenandoah County government buildings. More shopping, grocery, restaurant or entertainment options found in places like Harrisonburg or Winchester, would be desirable to prevent having to drive out of the community to enjoy them. Staff members felt that division in the community around housing was preventing new projects from being developed, which causes affordability issues, and that it would be nice to be more like Middleburg, Virginia, where "people are out walking the streets all the time."

What are some opportunities for Woodstock?

Staff members mentioned better information about events occurring in Town and coordination across the Valley's many communities so that events do not conflict with one another. Night vendors, restaurants being open later, or other nightlife opportunities were seen as ways to bring life to downtown. The Rails to trails project or a new Visitors Center were seen as potential attractions, overall there was a desire to attract and capture more visitors from the interstate, rather than seeing them patronize businesses along Reservoir Road without ever coming to the downtown.

What strengths does Woodstock have?

The staff agreed that the quality of the community was high, there are regional attractions, opportunities to connect with one another, active upgrades to local parks that make them more attractive and fun, and that local businesses, such as the brewhouse, are great places to meet. Bringing this success to further enhance downtown was desired.

What are some barriers to your vision for Woodstock?

The staff noted that there should be more to do for people at all stages of life, more things for young people, families, and older community members. There was not much discussion of barriers, just a hope that the community could collaborate to improve.

What services does Woodstock lack?

Staff members mentioned that there are no regular 24/7 restaurants other than Sheetz. For those working long hours or at night, this is an area of improvement. There is also a lack of places to purchase new clothes or shoes, and with the local brewhouse closing at 8:00 p.m. on most days, it was noted there is "nothing to do most week nights."

"Are there other communities you think are doing things well that you'd like Woodstock to be more like?"

Staff members said they enjoyed New Market's Main Street. Middleburg was also noted for its nice atmosphere and many little interesting storefronts. Historic downtown Abingdon was also identified for its many restaurants and pleasant shops. Waynesboro was commended for its work in revitalizing areas of its community, bringing in new restaurants and stores, connected with bicycle and pedestrian paths.

"If you could pick a major project for the Town to achieve in the next 5-10 years what would that be?"

As the discussion was held with a lot of members of the Department of Public Works, many different infrastructure projects came up to improve the Town's water and sewer systems and local roadways.

What are some words that describe Woodstock?

"Relaxed," "Quaint," "Stalled in growth," "Too small to be big, but too big to be small," "Stuck and stubborn - everyone wants change, but when change comes everyone fights it!" "Small, but good," "Home."

Community Focus Group Results

Summit Design and Engineering partnered with the Town of Woodstock to host a Comprehensive Plan Focus Group on February 20, 2024. The focus group was attended by 14 local participants representing many interests, including local businesses and hotels, small and large businesses,



hospitality, housing and transportation organizations, the hospital, and the Town. The focus group lasted two hours and addressed mainly the following issues: housing affordability and availability; mobility concerns; small business growth; tourism; and density and development downtown.

Housing

The first issue raised was the issue of diversity of housing types, housing affordability, and housing availability in Woodstock. Due to Woodstock's proximity to Northern Virginia, a realtor said houses are selling for much higher than residents can afford to people moving in from out of town. In the rental market, many rentals have waiting lists of 5-10 people and there are no empty rentals in town, which is also driving rental prices up. Some rentals have been turned into short-term rentals for tourism, which further hurts the long-term rental market in town. The issues with rentals seem especially difficult for the hospital workers and teachers, who often cannot find or afford local rental

options. Due to these issues of housing affordability and availability, a participant who works for the Continuum of Care (CoC) said that homelessness has risen 12% in the past year, with many of those folks being in their 20s and 30s and unable to keep up with the rise in their rent. Woodstock has a very limited number of affordable units and some of those have issues with building conditions due to their age.

An issue that has exacerbated the local housing crisis is the lack of housing development. According to a participant, the cost of development, including the cost of building and the cost of planning and development, has been way up since the pandemic. In addition, to get government approvals, the timeline has been drawn out to subdivisions approved in over two years where it previously took one year. These issues have stagnated housing development in Woodstock since 2020. Since there has been no additional housing built in the past four years, the shift from single family dwellings from long-term to short-term rentals is reducing the housing stock due to the stagnation in development. Participants mention potential changes in the zoning code that could help in the development of housing in the future as well as infill as an opportunity for smaller growth.

Mobility

Other issues raised by participants included traffic management, parking for tourism, and pedestrian access. Participants mentioned high congestion on Reservoir Road between the CVS and Tractor Supply. This seems to be exacerbated by wrecks on interstate 81 which often direct people through town to route 11 and can affect traffic on any given day. Trucks routed through town have issues with turns and often pull things down downtown. Another issue raised was the school drop off. Participants said it often takes 30 minutes or more to drop their kids off at school, with Ox Road, Reservoir Road, Susan Avenue, and Hoover Road bearing most of the congestion. Parking downtown was also a concern, especially with the upcoming Rails to Trails. Folks mentioned asking churches to allow public parking after hours and allow them to set hours and charge.

Participants mentioned other non-vehicular safety concerns as well. Around the schools, Route 11, and Sheetz, participants mentioned safety concerns for kids as the attempt to cross the road to school. Pedestrian access downtown was also mentioned, especially as folks may need to walk further from parking areas to downtown. Similarly, adding bike lanes downtown was mentioned as a need as Rails to Trails continues.

Economic Development

Many participants came from small businesses and the issues surrounding business downtown were discussed. Participants noted that there are approximately five anchor institutions in downtown Woodstock, among those are Flour and Water and the Woodstock Café. Residents and tourists alike demand additional retail and restaurants downtown. However, there are barriers, including staffing, building conditions, and affordability of rents. Participants mentioned that, despite the demand for additional restaurants and retail, staffing is an issue. Participants mentioned that current restaurants downtown do not open all days of the week in part due to staffing. This is compounded by the fact that those staff cannot afford to rent somewhere within town, so many younger folks continue to live with their family or outside of town. Available housing for younger professionals is non-existent. Folks also mentioned that while there are vacant storefronts and buildings in the downtown area,

the conditions of those buildings are not fit for use currently. The issue of affordability for a small business to invest in a rental storefront was discussed, especially as there are no buildings that are currently fit for a restaurant, which would take immense investment to build out and they would not gain the equity if they were just renting. Participants mentioned that the town should consider helping small businesses through grants or low-cost loans to develop spaces that work for them, as well as using tools such as inspection and condemnation to bring abandoned or vacant buildings up to code.

Tourism to Woodstock seems to be on the rise, according to participants. A participant from the local hotel industry mentioned that they are often sold out in the summertime and have as many as 200 rooms rented throughout the rest of the year. A participant from local retail mentioned that she saw an uptick in tourism this year during the winter, which is generally the slow season. Local tourism from Winchester and Harrisonburg seems to have increased, with those folks looking for a bit of small-town experience with local food and shops. As previously mentioned, short-term rentals such as Airbnb have increased in recent years to cater to these increases in tourism.

Participants mentioned density and smart growth on Main Street as a solution to many of these concerns. A lot of the downtown buildings have second stories, and these areas could be better utilized as apartments for workforce housing. The location also allows for less car use, as staff at local retail or restaurants could walk to work. Infill in the downtown area was also mentioned to provide additional housing and/or retail spaces. However, barriers to these changes could include zoning, cost and timeline of development, and available spaces for development.

Participants mentioned that the future of Woodstock is in their youth. Many of the participants left Woodstock for college and returned to raise their children, and feel that their children may want to do the same. However, they hope that growth in Woodstock can continue to be managed and steady to maintain the local character and feel of town. Participants mentioned that in order to maintain what they currently have in Woodstock, they need renewal and change and managed growth.

Additional Input

A handful of virtual interviews and additional meetings were also conducted for other stakeholder groups. Their discussion and response to various questions is summarized below and on the next pages:

Local Business Owner

This community member felt that they were heavily invested in the Town and that it was disappointing to see so many vacant storefronts downtown. Tourism is the main reason people come and visit, and it was noted that tourists are who typically patronize the downtown businesses rather than local residents. They felt that although the Town does many nice things and is a nice place to live, there is still lacking coordination between different efforts that create shared value. For instance, local wayfinding maps that show all of the businesses in the downtown are missing or there are no historical plaques on many buildings telling the story like there are in other communities. There is also a gap between the resources potential business owners with new ideas have and their ability to build out existing available spaces to meet their needs. There's a need for more places to stay

particularly in the downtown as well as more apartments. Ultimately, providing more opportunities and coordination to help start more businesses, thinking about how to specifically attract people to downtown and keep them there, and ensuring that the investments the Town does make further contribute to shared value increasing. Placemaking ideas such as new outdoor seating, activities, or other amenities would be desirable.

Shenandoah County Administration

Although the Town of Woodstock is an independent entity from Shenandoah County, it is important to coordinate planning efforts to ensure mutual success. Shenandoah County is currently working on their Comprehensive Plan update. Their plan emphasizes preserving the rural economy and the beauty of the natural landscape. The County recognizes it is fortunate to have so many thriving communities in the valley and wants to help further enhance tourism and other efforts, though it hopes it can benefit from it alongside the local Towns. Current working relationships are great between the County and its local Towns and it is hoped this will continue into the future.

Shenandoah County Public Schools

The schools are growing and need to expand facilities to have adequate capacity. In Woodstock, particularly there is a known issue with Reservoir Road during school start and end times with traffic congestion as well as safe access for pedestrians and bicycling students. Challenges that students express about life in Woodstock include there being "nothing to do on weekends and evenings." Staff express that there are not enough choices for restaurants in the area. Some students say that they want to return after college, but many say they will not if they don't have local opportunities keeping them in the area. It was noted that local businesses are very supportive of students and some provide internships. There is an issue with the teacher turnover rate, particularly because of the culture and climate around education right now in Virginia, not necessarily the County in particular. If there was something to improve for the local student population, it would be ensuring there is good sidewalk and bicycle access throughout the community, ensuring there are activities for youth on the evenings and weekends that are well advertised, and addressing traffic particularly on Reservoir Road.

Central High School & Triplett Tech Students

Over two days in a local government class, Woodstock's staff discussed the Comprehensive Planning process with students from Central High School and Triplett Tech. Students generally responded in comments and discussion that they want more opportunities for employment and more entertainment or recreational activities. Although most are likely living at home with their families, they are aware that affordable housing is an issue in the community. They see the businesses elsewhere they have to drive to access and want those types of attractions in the Town. When asked for words that describe the Town, each of the sessions generally replied that the Town felt "Small, Boring, Expensive" and that they wanted more businesses. While students acknowledged that it was a strong community that was a nice place to grow up, the reoccurring theme was to ask for more opportunities in every way.

Particularly, a lack of affordable housing for them to acquire in the future, jobs and gainful employment for the future, a feeling of disconnection from the rest of the community, and a lack of activities for teenagers were all identified as key issues for this group. Ideas for activities for teenagers included a roller rink, arcade, paintball arena, trampoline park, or other amenities specifically attractive to their age. Students expressed that the Town's parks did not really serve them. Students also noted that there should be more crosswalks, sidewalks, and other means of traffic management, particularly to deal with congestion around the school campus in the mornings and afternoons. Safely accessing their route to schools and the rest of their community via sidewalks in the Reservoir Road area was of special importance to many students. Two students also expressed that they wished the Woodstock Hospital offered maternity services.

Students participated in paper survey responses that were collected as part of the sessions. Of those who returned paper responses, the majority replied generally negatively to statements about whether they can see themselves living in the Town in the future, whether they feel like they are part of the community, or whether there are fun things to do in Woodstock. Almost every student noted that Woodstock is "charming, pretty, and boring." Feedback included wanting to "keep the rural vibe while still growing a bit," and "develop but still stay kind of small." This tracks with the discussion about how the Town feels unexciting to young people. It is important to consider ways to make the community more attractive and affordable to both allow and encourage young people to stay or return after college education.

Shenandoah County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

On February 20th, Summit Design and Engineering partnered with the Town of Woodstock to meet with the Woodstock Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The meeting included around 10 local business owners to discuss the Comprehensive Planning process, request feedback and survey responses, as well as discuss issues facing their community. During the hour-long conversation, the topics of business, connection, and stormwater were raised. First, the participants mentioned the difficulty in starting a local business. They discussed having a difficult time navigating the local and state processes, finding adequate space for their proposed business, and a general lack of materials in Spanish. Second, participants discussed an appreciation for the Town in reaching out to the community to ensure inclusion in many processes and planning efforts, such as the Bicycle & Pedestrian Trail Master Plan. Participants thought this connection was important and could aid future business and community efforts. Finally, participants mentioned flooding issues in certain areas of town that seem to disproportionately affect Latine owned and operated businesses. Participants hoped that these comments could aid future efforts to ensure the success of Latine businesses and greater community.

Example student survey

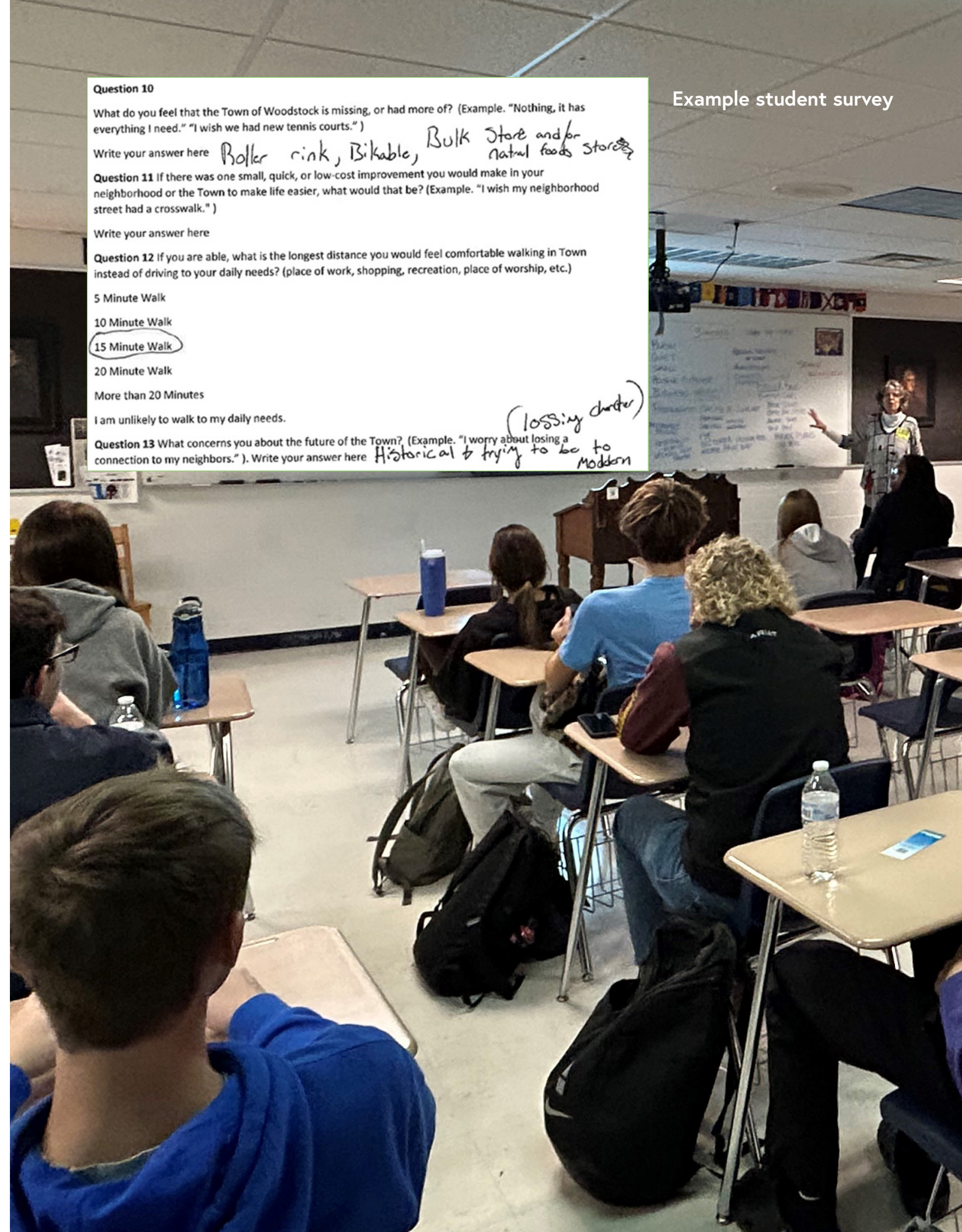
Question 10
 What do you feel that the Town of Woodstock is missing, or had more of? (Example. "Nothing, it has everything I need." "I wish we had new tennis courts.")
 Write your answer here *Roller rink, Bikable, Bulk Store and/or natural foods stores*

Question 11 If there was one small, quick, or low-cost improvement you would make in your neighborhood or the Town to make life easier, what would that be? (Example. "I wish my neighborhood street had a crosswalk.")
 Write your answer here

Question 12 If you are able, what is the longest distance you would feel comfortable walking in Town instead of driving to your daily needs? (place of work, shopping, recreation, place of worship, etc.)

5 Minute Walk
 10 Minute Walk
 15 Minute Walk
 20 Minute Walk
 More than 20 Minutes
 I am unlikely to walk to my daily needs.

Question 13 What concerns you about the future of the Town? (Example. "I worry about losing a connection to my neighbors."). Write your answer here *Historical & trying to be to Modern (losing character)*



Economic Development Authority Meeting

The Planning team met with Woodstock's Economic Development Authority (EDA) to discuss priorities for economic development in Woodstock, as well as their general vision for the future. The EDA is undergoing its own strategic planning process to further refine its targets for success. The Comprehensive Plan's recommendations should reflect the same priorities to ensure that all work being conducted is actively building shared value in the Town.

The discussion illuminated the character of Woodstock and the types of economic development that would be desirable, including attracting new businesses, ensuring there are affordable places to live for new workers, but also avoiding becoming a bedroom community. New growth and development must be "purposeful," jobs should provide a living wage, the local community should be uplifted, and the economy should be diversified and resilient.

More work was acknowledged as needed to be done regarding aligning the EDA with the Town Council and Planning Commission's priorities, it was noted these entities do not talk together enough. There is also more work that needs to be done to support keeping young people in the community and further integrating newcomers to the community into either new business or volunteer opportunities. Woodstock was acknowledged as doing an excellent job, due to the efforts of the Woodstock Enhancement group especially, of ensuring that the Town was clean, attractive, and beautiful, with a lot of great events. More improvement to the Town could be done to build the business ecosystem and develop leasable spaces for new ideas and grow the economy.

