

JULY 2018

STEWARTVILLE, MN
EDA

SYNOPSIS OF STEWARTVILLE, MN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2018

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INTRODUCTION



Purpose

In an effort to better understand citizen thoughts, ideas and aspirations, the Stewartville Economic Development Authority (EDA) has produced and distributed a community survey.

The survey results included in this document may be utilized in future planning and will be submitted to appropriate boards/commissions for consideration where appropriate.

Furthermore, the aggregated data will allow the City and EDA to evaluate programs, initiatives, etc. with respect to citizen goals and desires.

Background

The EDA has prioritized community engagement within their 2018 work plan.

So far this year, the EDA has held productive conversations with the community's youth population through exercises with 8th grade and 12th grade student classes.

The community round table event which occurred on June 19, 2018 allowed for more in-depth conversation with citizens from other population demographics.

The survey instrument was created as another means of understanding resident and business feedback as well as encouraging and facilitating conversation surrounding the community's future.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

373 Responses

The City was able to capture a significant number of responses from a variety of age groups.

81.5% Rate the Quality of Life Good-Very Good

Most respondents expressed that the quality of life they experience in Stewartville is positive. Only 3% of survey respondents denoted a below neutral opinion of the quality of life in the City.

61.7% Most Impressed with Parks & Recreation/Open Spaces

The majority of survey respondents shared that the City's parks and open spaces were the best amenity available in the community.

32.4% Want a Focus on Commercial/Retail Development

The most popular selection that individuals would like to see the City focus on in the coming years is Commercial/Retail Development.



METHODOLOGY

How was this survey constructed, distributed, collected and analyzed?

DESIGN

This mixed-methods survey was designed in-house with the purpose of understanding resident and business opinions and ideas for the future of the community. All questions were carefully crafted to avoid leading language.

The survey instrument is comprised of 10 quantitative multiple choice and Likert Scale questions and 5 qualitative, short answer and clarifying questions. Only quantitative questions were "required" to be completed. The brevity of the survey was a crucial strategy to drive response numbers.

To facilitate analysis and understand priorities, most questions require respondents to select only one answer (even if multiple may apply, they are encouraged to choose the most applicable response).

The survey was designed in Google Forms which allows responses to be collected cumulatively and anonymously. Further, this format is easy to share through a clickable link to any end user with internet access. Responses are immediately delivered to the assigned researcher.

Respondents were clearly asked in the survey instructions to only submit one response.

The population for this survey includes residents and business owners currently residing or doing business within the City of Stewartville. According to 2016 data from the MN State Demographer's office, the population of Stewartville is approximately 6,269.

DISTRIBUTION

The survey was distributed through social media channels: Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter over the course of one month.

The survey was also sent to all subscribers of City News and Economic Development via email.

Finally, to accommodate those individuals who may not have internet access, the City offered physical copies of surveys at City Hall, the Stewartville Library, and the Center for Active Adults. Paper copies of surveys could be returned to City Hall where staff would manually enter responses for inclusion in the overall results and analysis.

COLLECTION

Responses were collected automatically through electronic Google Forms software. Respondents were not required to enter an email address to avoid the inclusion of identifiers.

Researcher had access to individual and summary data throughout the collection process.

The majority of responses were received electronically; 4 responses were physically delivered to City Hall and subsequently entered into the data set.

In total, 373 responses were received. This number represents the sample for this survey.

ANALYSIS

Quantitative analysis was performed on questions with 5-point Likert scaling to determine mean responses.

Multiple choice questions also employed quantitative analysis. This method allowed the researcher to better understand respondent preferences.

Qualitative research methods were utilized in the analysis of open-ended and clarifying questions. The researcher carefully and methodically evaluated responses. Each response was deliberately categorized based upon emerging themes. Some free-text responses met inclusion criteria for multiple categories and were recorded accordingly.

Some responses inquired about similar themes to establish internal validity of survey data. Comparative analysis of these questions determined high internal validity.

It is also important to note that based on the sample size for this survey, 373, and the known population size of 6,269, we calculated 100% power to detect a one (1) point difference in our Likert Scale responses with a P value of 0.05 and an assumed standard deviation of one (1).

Based on these power calculations, the researcher can say with confidence that our sample size was large enough to accurately reflect the population of the City.

ANALYSIS

An in-depth look at the responses

Respondent Information

Question 1:

What is your age?

Understanding the age of a respondent is important for our team to collect, because distinct and varying priorities may exist for different age groups. To assure that data results from the survey were statistically significant, the researcher chose to collect this piece of information.

Survey respondents were asked to select one (1) age range out of the following choices:

- *Under 12 years old*
- *12-17 years old*
- *18-24 years old*
- *25-34 years old*
- *35-44 years old*
- *45-54 years old*
- *55-64 years old*
- *65 years or older*

Question 1 Results:

2 respondents were under 12 years old.

4 respondents were between 12-17 years old.

12 respondents were between 18-24 years old.

122 respondents were between 25-34 years old.

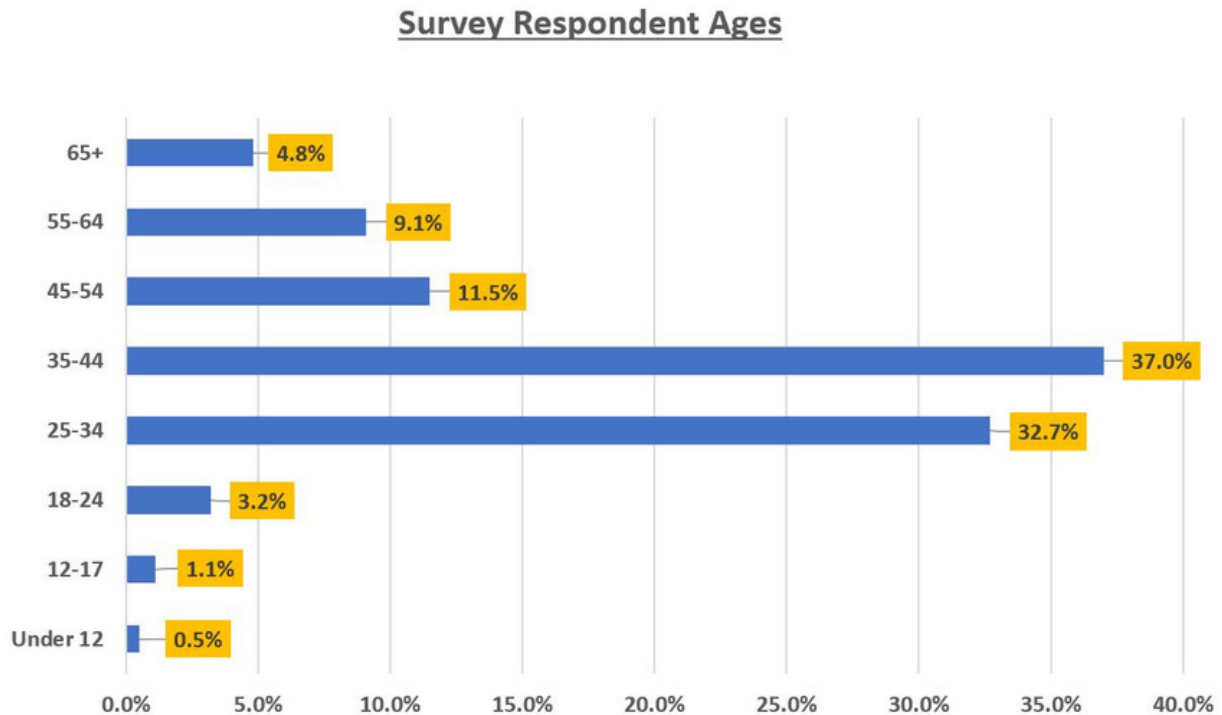
138 respondents were between 35-44 years old.

43 respondents were between 45-54 years old.

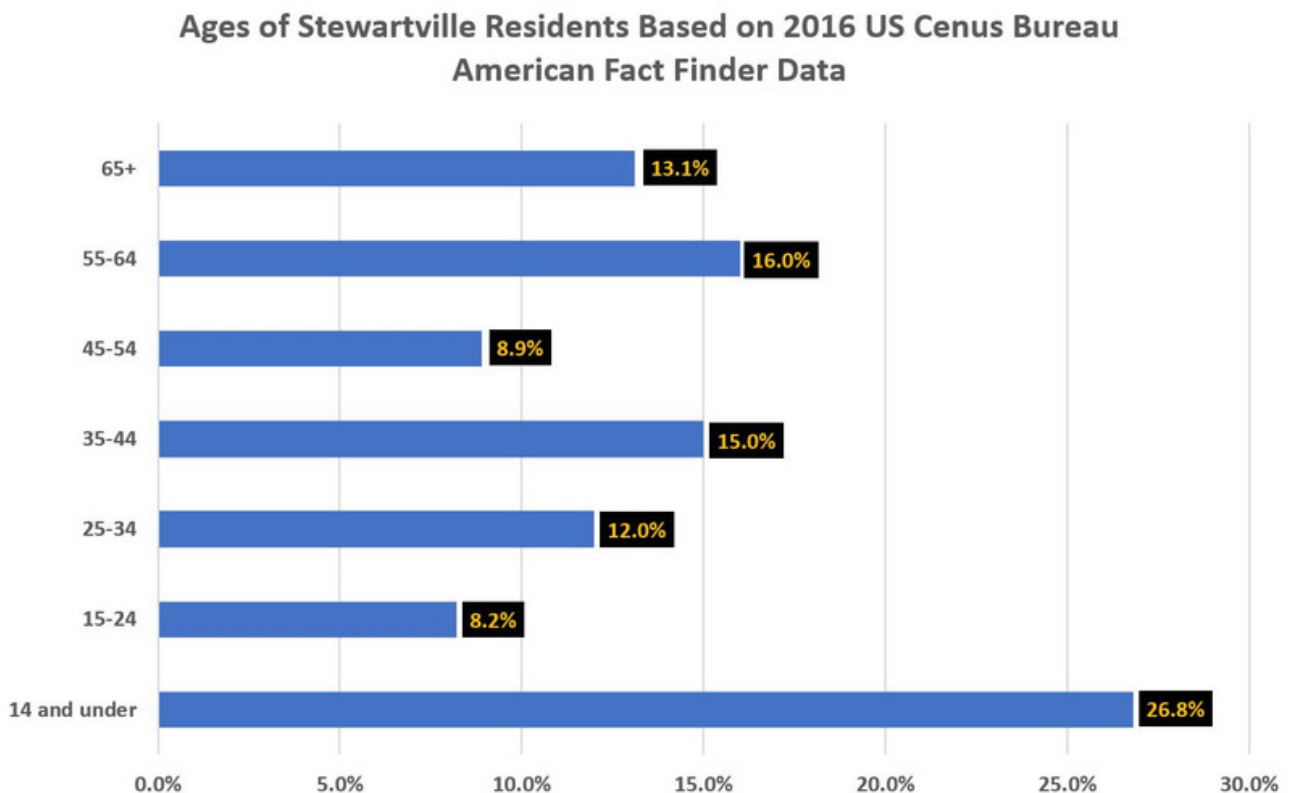
34 respondents were between 55-64 years old.

18 respondents were 65 years old or older

Question 1 (Cont.): *What is your age?*



For comparison, a chart with information on Stewartville community-wide age demographic information is provided below:



Also relevantly, according to Census data, the Median Age of Stewartville residents is **36.8**

Question 2:

How long have you lived in Stewartville?

This question was asked in order to determine longevity in the community. The City's goal is to obtain feedback from individuals who have been residing in the community for many years as well as those who are relatively new to the City. Analyzing responses to this question ensures that this is achieved.

Survey respondents were asked to select one (1) range out of the following choices:

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years

Question 2 Results:

8 respondents have lived in the community for less than 1 year.

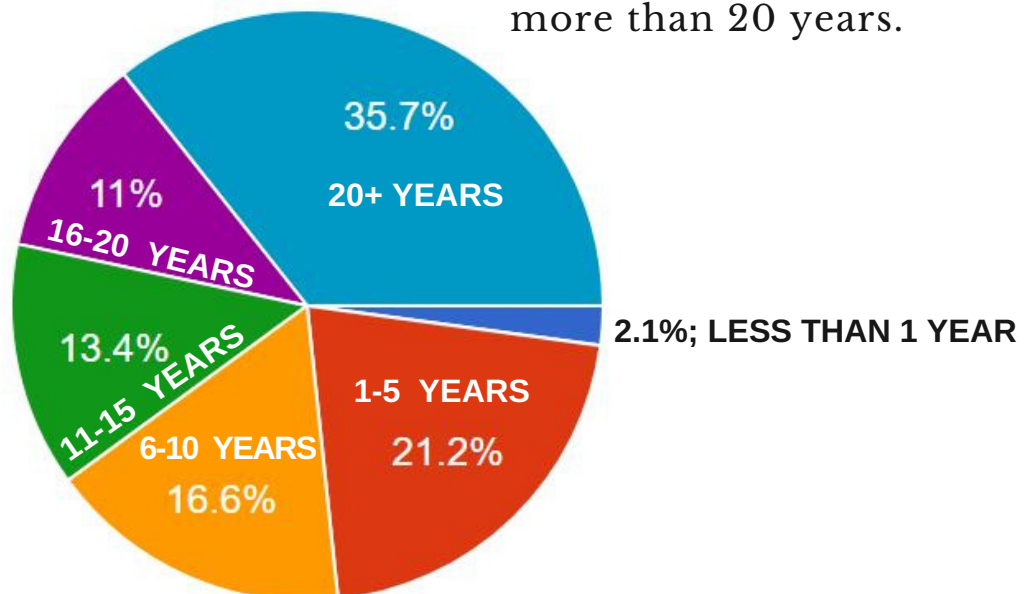
79 respondents have lived in the community for 1-5 years.

62 respondents have lived in the community for 6-10 years

50 respondents have lived in the community for 11-15 years.

41 respondents have lived in the community for 16-20 years.

133 respondents have lived in the community for more than 20 years.



Question 3:

What is your reason for living in the City of Stewartville?

The response(s) to this question were important to the researcher because the results will help establish current marketable assets that staff can promote to encourage other individuals and families to move into the community.

Survey respondents were asked to select as many options as were applicable out of the following choices:

- *Grew up in Stewartville*
- *Job is in Stewartville*
- *Convenient Location*
- *Affordability*
- *Schools*
- *Parks/Recreation*
- *Friendliness of Residents*

**Respondents were also allowed to fill in an "other" category to capture potentially missed attributes that attract residents to the City.*



Question 3 Results:

126 respondents live in the City because they grew up there.



44 respondents live in the City because their job is located there.



183 respondents live in the City because it has a convenient location.



71 respondents live in the City because of its affordability.



165 respondents live in the City because of the School District.



48 respondents live in the City because of the parks and recreation opportunities.



69 respondents live in the City because of the friendliness of its residents.

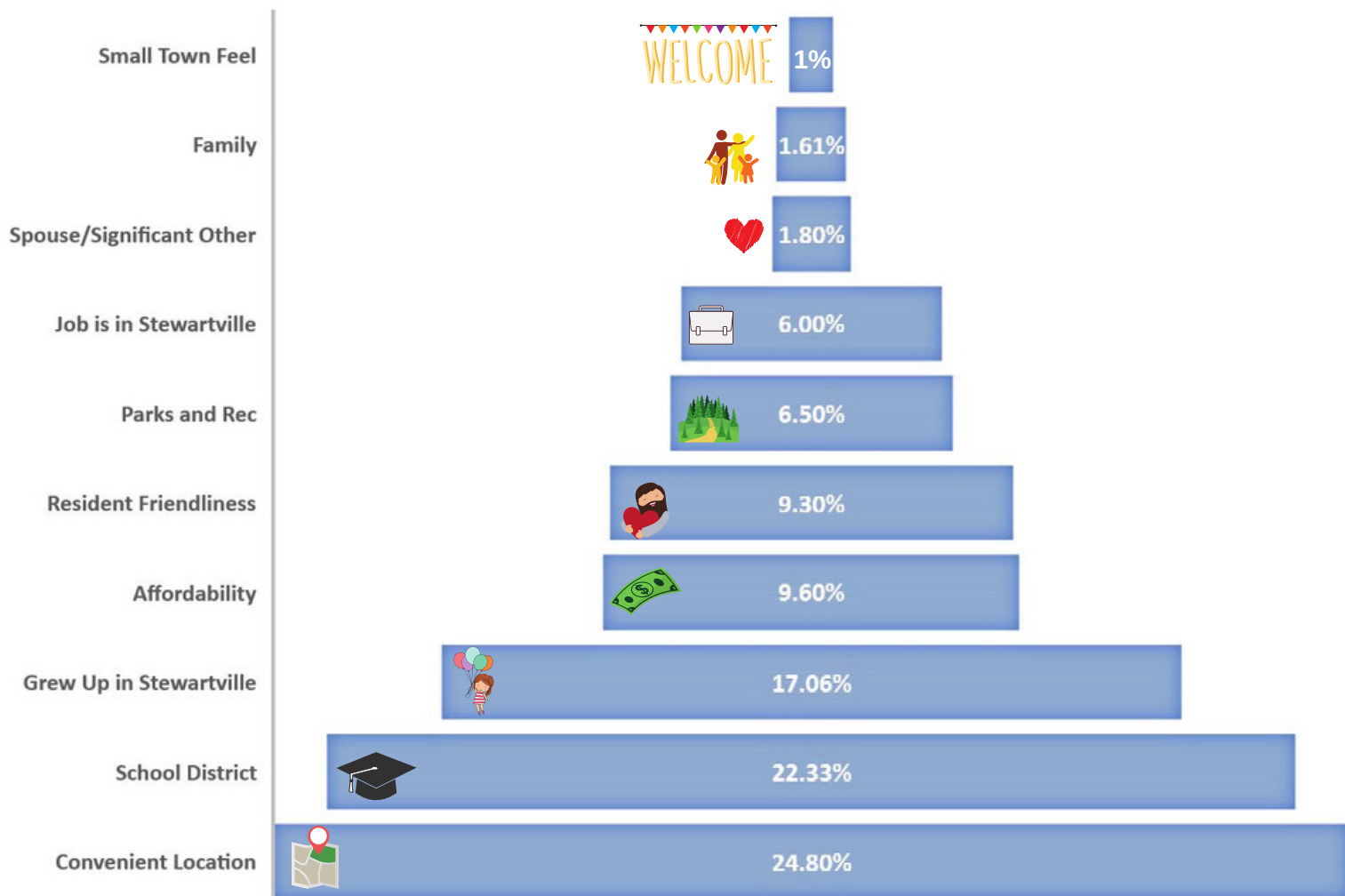


Question 3 (Cont.): *What is your reason for living in the City of Stewartville?*

Survey respondents were able to list "other" categories that impacted their decision to live in the City of Stewartville. Out of these additions that were provided by respondents, noteworthy categories included:

- Family living in the City (12)
- A spouse or significant other living or growing up in the City (13)
- Small town feel (8)

REASONS TO LIVE IN STEWARTVILLE



As indicated above, the most popular reason for living in Stewartville was its convenient location. This was followed closely by positive perceptions of the school district and growing up in Stewartville.

The respondent identified categories of family, having a spouse from/in Stewartville and the small town feel of the community are also important additions to consider in the evaluation of the data.

Quality of Life Information

Question 4:

How would you rate the overall quality of life that you experience living in the City of Stewartville?

The question was structured using a 5-point Likert Scale with 1 representing very poor and 5 representing very good.

The mean response was **4.0**.

The majority, 81.5%, of respondents felt that their quality of life was positive (4-5).

Only 3.4% of respondents felt their quality of life was negative (1-2).

Question 4 Results:

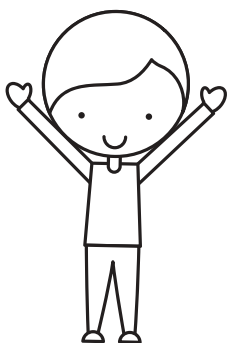
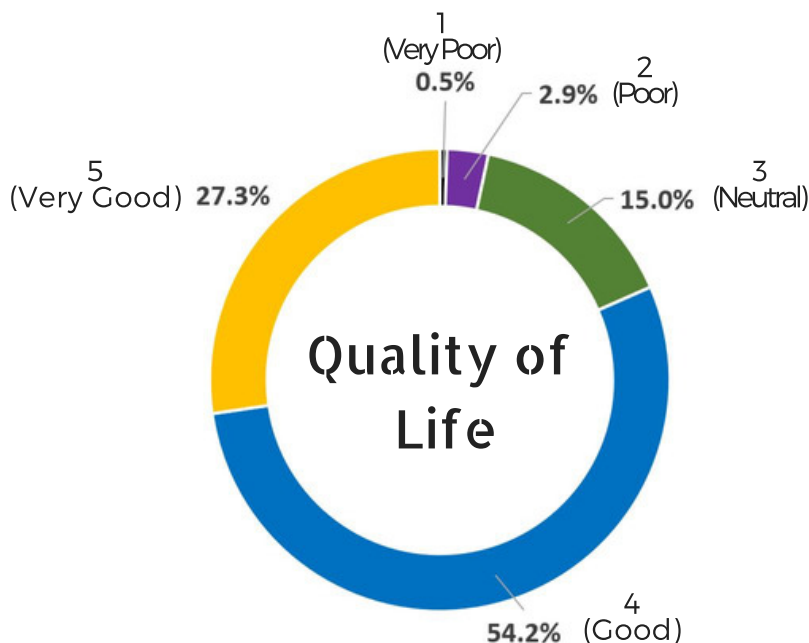
2 respondents indicated that their quality of life was a (1) or "Very Poor."

11 respondents indicated that their quality of life was a (2) or "Poor."

56 respondents indicated that they were neutral about their quality of life in the City with a (3).

202 respondents indicated that their quality of life was a (4), or "Good."

102 respondents indicated that their quality of life was a (5) or "Very Good."



Question 5:

Clarifying "Why" for Quality of Life Rating.

A response to this short answer question was not required. Respondents were allowed to enter a limited number of characters to articulate "why" their quality of life was quantified negatively or positively.

This page seeks to provide some of those significant findings. Team members will be better equipped to market the community and plan for its successful future by understanding this information.

98 viable responses to this question were recorded and sorted. Significant categories and trends identified from this question are detailed in the adjacent column.

Question 5 Results:

20 respondents shared that they feel that the friendliness of the community positively impacts their quality of life.



17 respondents shared that a low crime rate positively impacts their quality of life.



16 respondents shared that Stewartville's convenient location positively impacts their quality of life.



14 respondents shared that the good schools in Stewartville positively impact their quality of life.



9 respondents shared that the parks and trails in the City positively impact their quality of life.



2 respondents shared that the community engagement in the City positively impacts their quality of life.



9 respondents shared that a lack of restaurants negatively impacts their quality of life.



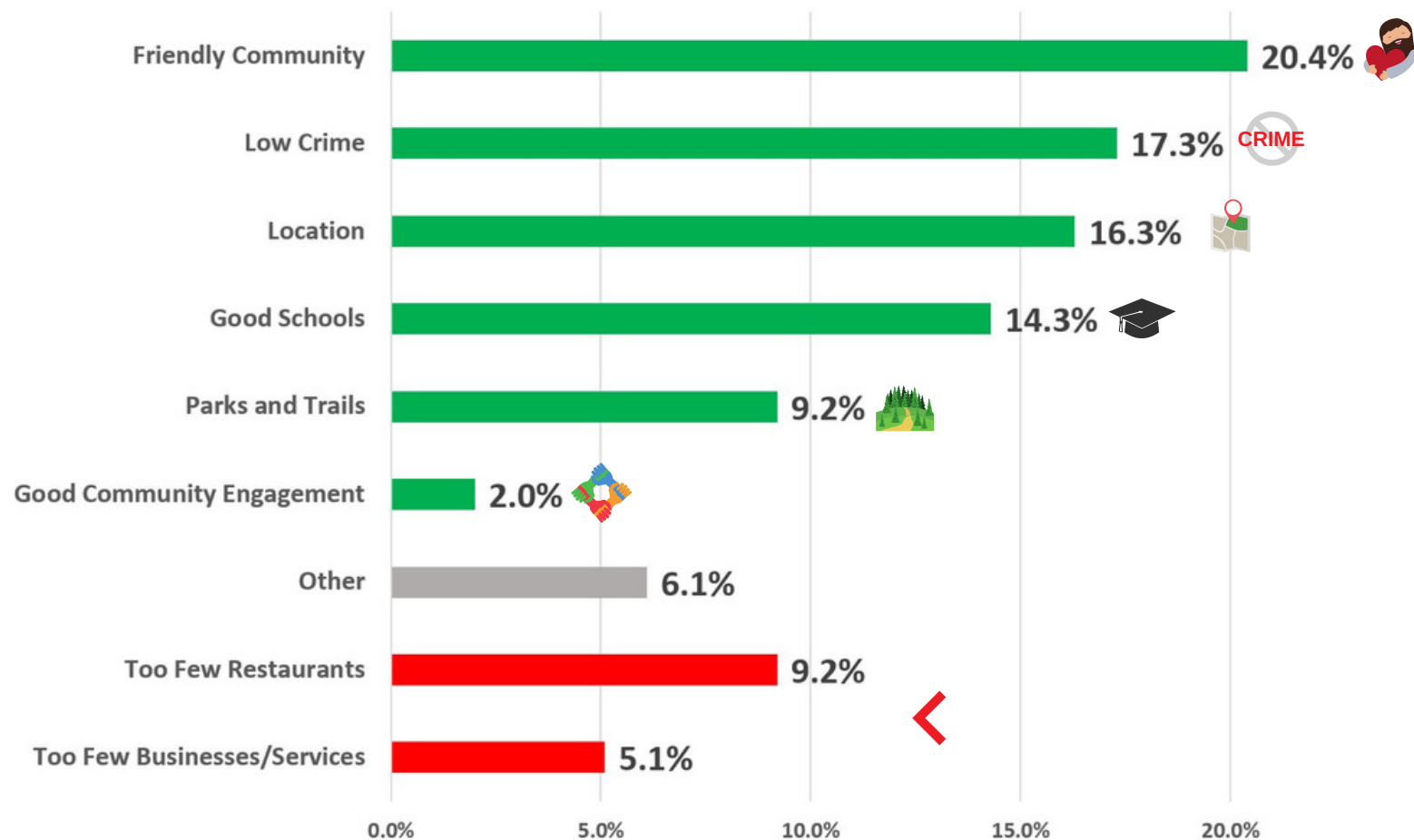
5 respondents shared that a lack of businesses and services negatively impacts their quality of life.

Some other relevant responses that were mentioned by respondents in the "other" category include:

Other Positive - Cleanliness, Affordability, Pool/Aquatic Center.

Other Negative - Lack of Diversity/Inclusion, Insufficient Affordable Housing and High Taxes.

Question 5 (Cont.): Clarifying "Why" for Quality of Life Rating.



Residents again provided feedback that many community members enjoy the friendliness that they experience in the City of Stewartville.

Low crime rates, convenient location and good schools followed closely behind as *positive* indicators of quality of life. Parks and trails and community engagement were also trending in survey data.

Residents felt that a deficit of restaurants, businesses and services created a *negative* sentiment for some individuals.

City Amenities & Attributes

Question 6:

In your opinion, what is the City's best amenity or attribute?

This question was multiple choice, and respondents were asked to select only one option.

Although many options may apply, it was important to understand the **most** attractive amenity in the eyes of City residents. Multiple amenities may be important to respondents, but the desired data was related to the prioritization and classification of one particular amenity that stands out as superior.

The following choices were provided:

- Parks and Recreation/Open Spaces
- Commercial/Industrial Business Community
- Residential Housing
- Transportation

**Respondents were also allowed to fill in an "other" category to capture other not-listed amenities and attributes that are important to residents.*

Question 6 Results:

230 respondents selected Parks and Recreation/ Open Spaces as the City's best amenity.



87 respondents selected Residential Housing as the City's best amenity.



15 respondents selected Commercial/Industrial Business Community as the City's best amenity.



4 respondents selected Transportation as the City's best amenity.



"Other" Emerging Categories

13 respondents selected Convenient Location (including proximity to Mayo Clinic and Rochester) as the City's best amenity.



8 respondents selected the school district as the City's best amenity.



4 respondents selected the safe/small community feel as the City's best amenity.



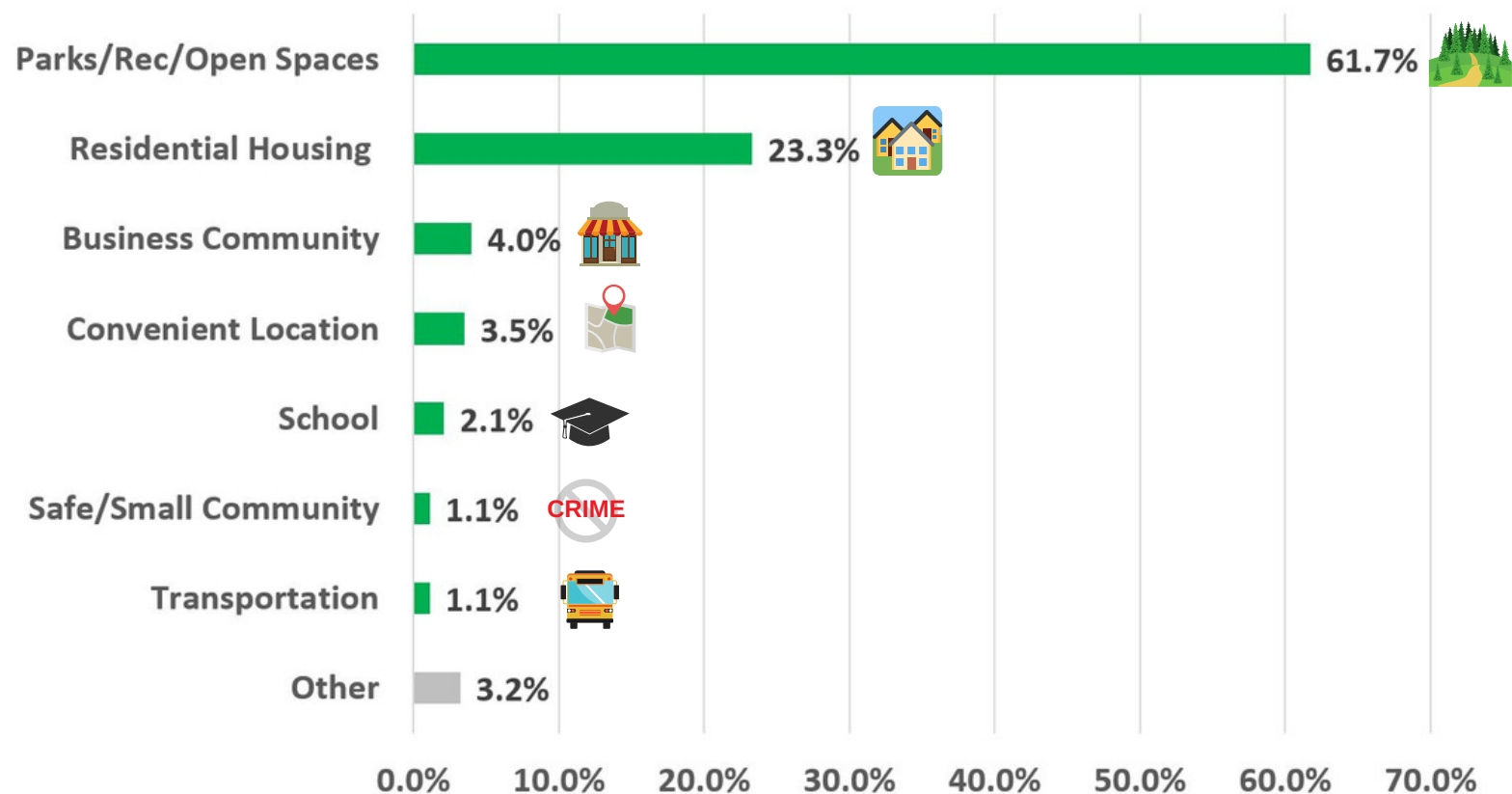
The survey results also included mention of other beneficial amenities such as: **Library; Friendliness of the Community; Community Events; Aquatic Center; Brush and Compost Site/Leaf Pick Up.**



Question 6 (Cont.):



In your opinion, what is the City's best amenity or attribute?



As indicated above, a large majority of respondents (61.7%) selected Parks and Recreation/Open Spaces as the City's best amenity.

Residential Housing was the second most frequently selected option followed by the Commercial/Industrial Business Community, Convenient Location, Schools, Safe/Small Community and Transportation.

Question 7: *How satisfied are you with the following community attributes?*

This question asked respondents to select a satisfaction rating on a 5-point Likert Scale for 15 different amenities.

The scale ranges from 1, being very dissatisfied, to 5, being very satisfied.

Respondents were only able to select one number; the question **did** require a response.

The researcher compiled this data and calculated the weighted averages for each of the amenities of interest. This quantitative analysis will provide a basic understanding of resident satisfaction with current amenities in place within the City of Stewartville.

Amenity/Attribute Weighted Averages

City Parks/Open Spaces



4.0

Respondents, on average, were satisfied with the parks and open spaces. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "4."*

* (PLEASE NOTE- In this instance, "5" was only selected one (1) time less than "4")

Trails



3.7

Respondents, on average, were neutral to satisfied with the parks and open spaces. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "4."

Healthcare Services

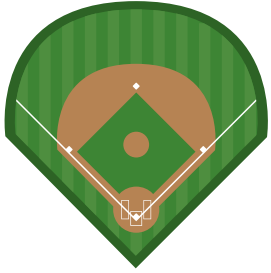


3.2

Respondents, on average, were neutral to satisfied about healthcare services. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "3."

Question 7 (Cont.): *How satisfied are you with the following community attributes?*

Amenity/Attribute Weighted Averages



3.9

Ball Fields

Respondents, on average, were mostly satisfied with the community ball fields. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "4."



3.1

Transportation

Respondents, on average, were mostly neutral about community transportation amenities. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "3."

Residential Housing Availability



2.9

Respondents, on average, were mostly neutral about residential housing availability. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "3."

Attractiveness of Neighborhoods



3.6

Respondents, on average, were neutral to satisfied with the attractiveness of neighborhoods. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "4."

Question 7 (Cont.): *How satisfied are you with the following community attributes?*

Amenity/Attribute Weighted Averages

Downtown Stewartville



2.8

Respondents, on average, were dissatisfied to neutral about downtown Stewartville. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "3."

Entertainment Options



2.3

Respondents, on average, were dissatisfied to neutral about entertainment options in the City. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "2."

Aquatic Center



4.0

Respondents, on average, were satisfied with the aquatic center. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "5."

Library Services



4.0

Respondents, on average, were satisfied with library services. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "4."

Question 7 (Cont.):

How satisfied are you with the following community attributes?

Amenity/Attribute Weighted Averages

Community Businesses



3.3

Respondents, on average, were neutral to satisfied with community businesses. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "4."

Business Assistance Available



3.0

Respondents, on average, were neutral about business assistance available through the City. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "3."*

*(PLEASE NOTE- 132 respondents did NOT answer this question)

Safety/Security



3.7

Respondents, on average, were neutral to satisfied with the safety and security they experience in the City. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "4."

Parking



3.6

Respondents, on average, were neutral to satisfied with parking. The modal value, or most commonly selected response, was a "4."

Question 8:

Are there any amenities that you do not feel that you have adequate access to currently?

A response to this short answer question was not required. Respondents were allowed to enter a limited number of characters to list/explain amenities that they do not have adequate access to within the City.

This page seeks to provide some of those significant findings. The information is valuable to the City, as it will assist relevant boards and commissions in their evaluations of potential future livability improvements.

108 viable responses to this question were recorded and sorted. Significant categories and trends identified from this question are detailed in the adjacent column.

Question 8 Results:

42 respondents noted a lack of access to fast food and/or restaurants.

11 respondents noted a lack of access to parks and trails.

10 respondents noted a lack of access to shopping and businesses.

9 respondents noted a lack of access to a coffee shop.

6 respondents noted a lack of access to dog parks.

5 respondents noted a lack of access to affordable housing and rental unit availability.

5 respondents noted a lack of access to downtown parking.

5 respondents noted a lack of access to bakery.

4 respondents noted a lack of access to youth activities.

3 respondents noted a lack of access to aquatic center hours and availability.

2 respondents noted a lack of access to hotels.

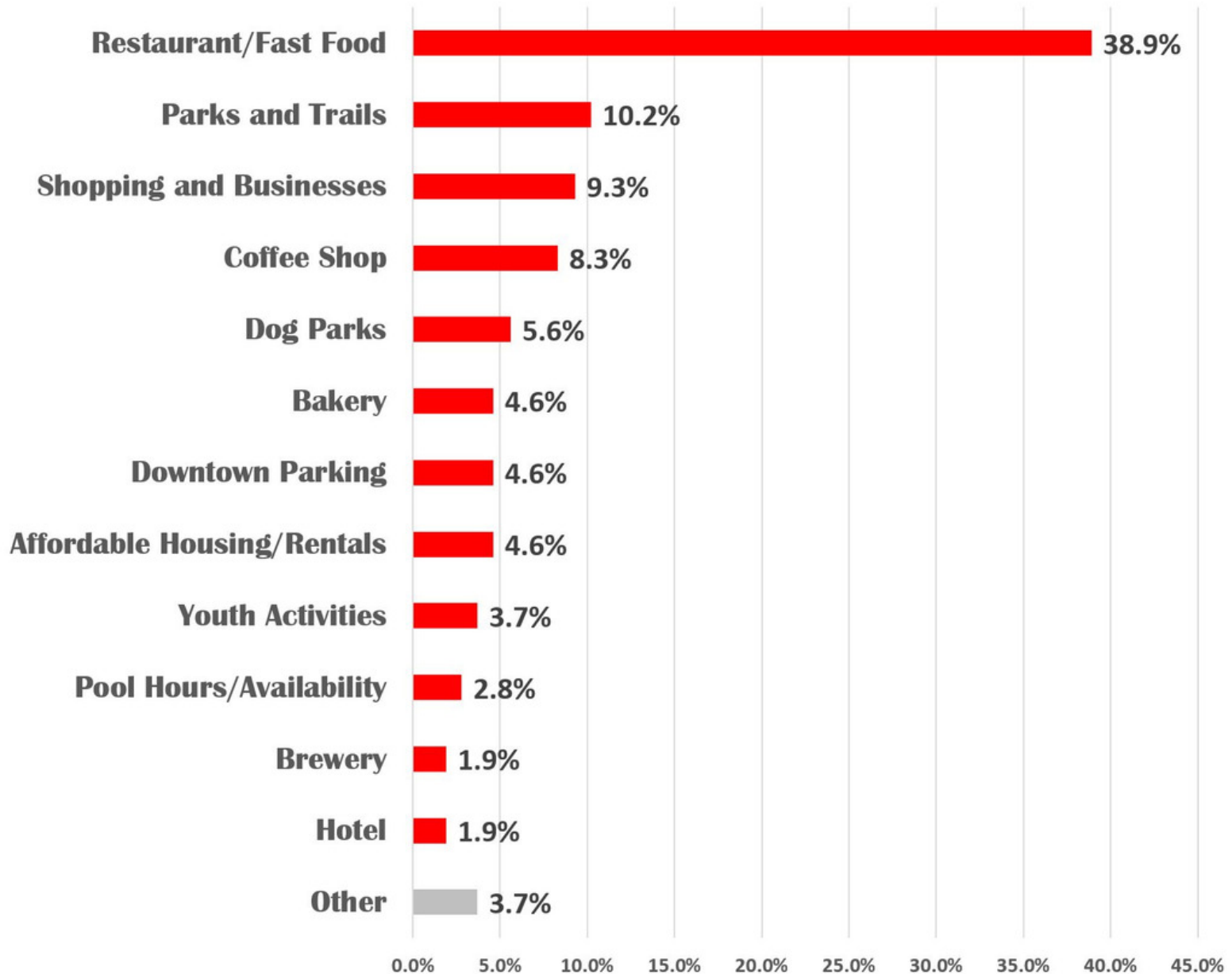
2 respondents noted a lack of access to breweries.

"Other" Mentioned Categories



The survey results also included mention of other desired amenities such as: Childcare, Floral Shops, Healthcare Options and Sunday Groceries.

Question 8 (Cont.): *Are there any amenities that you do not feel that you have adequate access to currently?*



The amenity most frequently listed as lacking was **restaurant/fast food options (38.9%)**. While survey respondents often expressed satisfaction with current restaurants in the community, they are hoping to see more available options in the future.

Also noteworthy: Some respondents expressed a desire to see a dog park develop. The City has been working on this concept, and it will be nearing completion soon. In order to create awareness, residents and businesses may benefit from more frequent updates/communication on City projects. The subsequent section on most used platforms for that communication will prove useful.

Community Engagement

Question 9:

How satisfied are you with the City's communication with the public?

The question was structured using a 5-point Likert Scale with 1 representing very dissatisfied and 5 representing very satisfied.

The mean response was **3.7**.

The most commonly selected (mode) response was a "4", or satisfied.

The majority, 58.7%, of respondents felt satisfied to very satisfied with the City's communication with the public (4-5).

Only 8.8% of respondents felt dissatisfied with communication (1-2).

Question 9 Results:

8 respondents answered with a (1) indicating that they were "Very Dissatisfied" with communication.

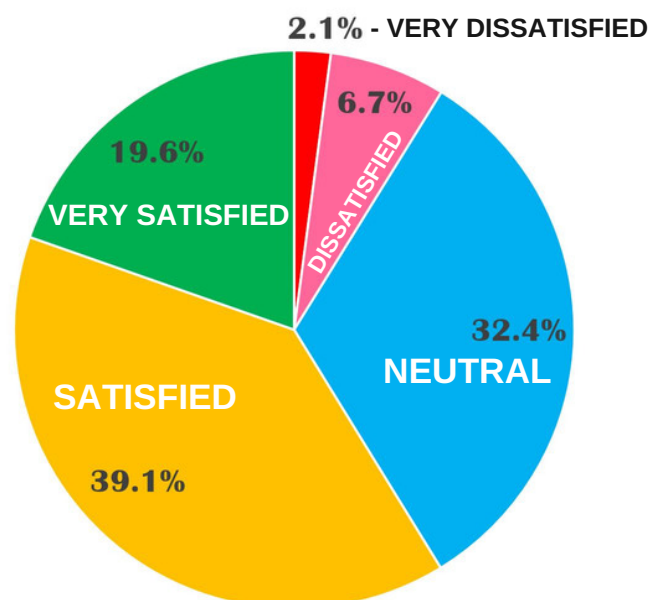
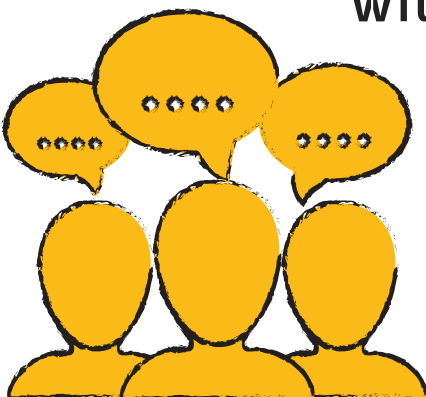
25 respondents answered with a (2) indicating that they were "Dissatisfied" with communication.

121 respondents indicated that they were neutral about communication with a (3).

146 respondents answered with a (4) indicating that they were "Satisfied" with communication.

73 respondents answered with a (5) indicating that they were "Very Satisfied" with communication.

Communication with the Public





Question 10:

Where do you go most often to get necessary information about the City?

This required, multiple choice question offered respondents an opportunity to share their most frequently used platform for seeking information on City related projects, initiatives, updates, etc.

Respondents were asked to select only (1) of the following options:

- City Hall
- City Website
- City Social Media Pages
- Local Newspaper

The researcher's evaluation of this data is useful to the City because staff will be able to better understand where citizens and businesses are seeking out information. Ultimately, this will allow the City to be more effective in its dissemination of updates, alerts and other points of interest.



Question 10 Results:

18 respondents shared that they go to City Hall most often to get necessary information about the City.

87 respondents shared that they go to the City website most often to get necessary information about the City.

184 respondents shared that they go to the City social media pages most often to get necessary information about the City.

84 respondents shared that they go to the local newspaper most often to get necessary information about the City.

With nearly 50% selection (49.3%), it is clear that a significant number of respondents seek information first from the City's social media presence.

72.6% of respondents selected an online medium (City social media/website) for their information seeking.



Question 11:

Do you follow the City on social media?

Respondents were required to answer this multiple choice question.

Respondents were allow to select only (1) of the following options:

- Yes
- No
- N/A

The City has amplified its social media presence in the past year. It is important for staff to understand how many individuals are finding benefit in this n of information distribution



Question 11 Results:

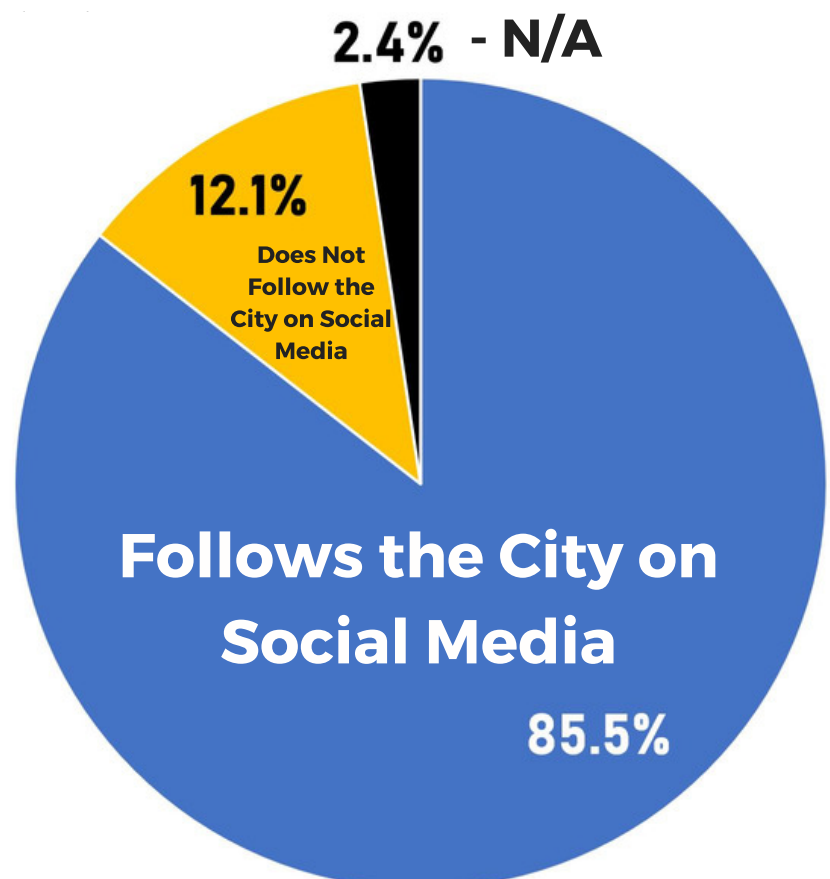
319 respondents follow the City on social media.

45 respondents do not follow the City on social media.

9 respondents selected Not Applicable.

A substantial majority of respondents (85.5%) indicated that they do follow the City on social media.

Currently, the City has social media pages/channels on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn YouTube and Instagram. Each of these platforms reaches different demographics of users that are equally important to the City.



Question 12:

Is there content that you would like to see the City add in its online presence?

A response to this short answer question was not required. Respondents were allowed to enter a limited number of characters to list/explain items or content that they would like to see added to the City's online presence.

As described in the previous two questions, a large segment of the population relies on the City's online social media and website platforms to receive information (72.6%). This section delivers ideas of additional, relevant content the City may consider incorporating or expounding upon in the future based on respondent feedback.

28 viable responses to this question were recorded and sorted. Significant categories and trends identified from this question are detailed in the adjacent column.

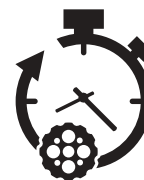
Question 12 Results:

13 respondents felt that there was a lack of awareness of the current event calendar or had a desire for more frequent updating of the event calendar.

5 respondents requested online swimming lesson sign-up.

2 respondents would like to see more progress updates on City business development projects.

2 respondents would like to see more frequent posting/updates from the City.

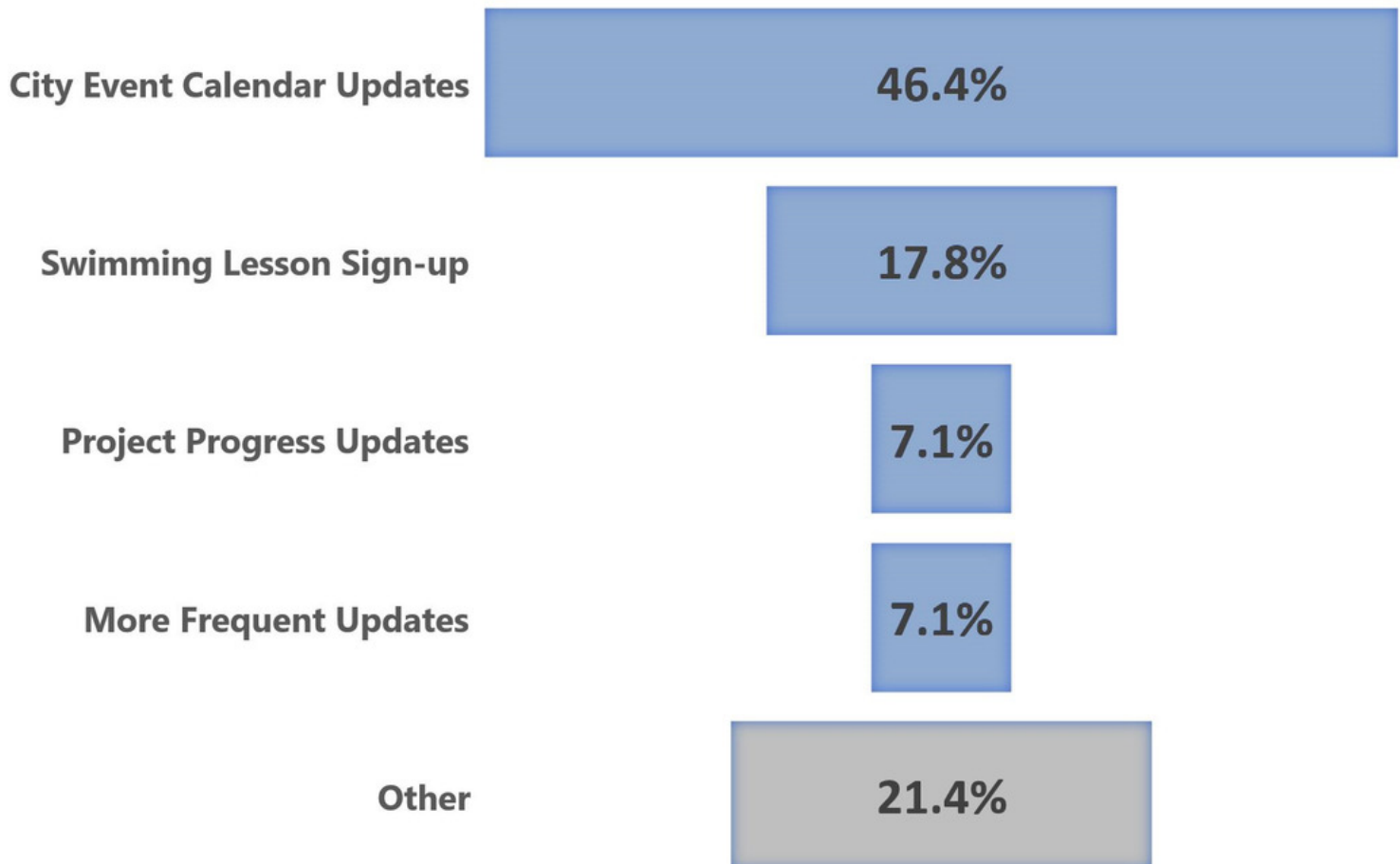


"Other" Mentioned Categories



The survey results also included suggestions for other desired content additions/updates such as: Increased Responsiveness, City webcam installation, Information on newspaper sign-up, public utility information, community civic organizations, notice of street sweeping and leaf pick-up times.

Question 12 (Cont.): *Is there content that you would like to see the City add in its online presence?*



The responses to this question showed a desire for increased communication about and updating of the City's event calendar. **46.4%** of respondents who answered this non-mandatory question shared this request.

Other significant suggestions included swimming lesson sign-up online capability (**17.8%**), City/business development project updates (**7.1%**) and more frequent general updating of pages and information (**7.1%**).

Future Growth and Improvement

Question 13:

What do you feel is the most important thing for the City to focus on in the coming years?

This multiple choice question was required for respondents.

The following choices were offered; respondents were able to select only (1):

- Residential Housing
- Commercial/Retail Business Development
- Industrial Business Development
- Parks and Recreation
- Entertainment Options
- City Business Assistance Programs

Understanding data related to this question is meaningful as it will allow staff to discern citizen opinions about priorities for the future of the City. City boards and commissions can utilize the information in evaluation of potential projects and programs.

Question 13 Results:

90 respondents want to see a focus on residential housing.

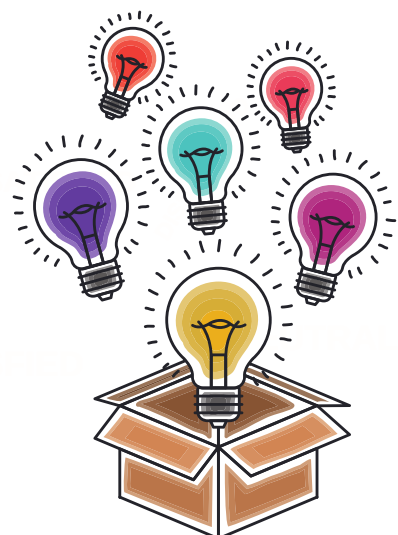
121 respondents want to see a focus on commercial/retail business development.

5 respondents want to see a focus on industrial business development.

40 respondents want to see a focus on parks/recreation.

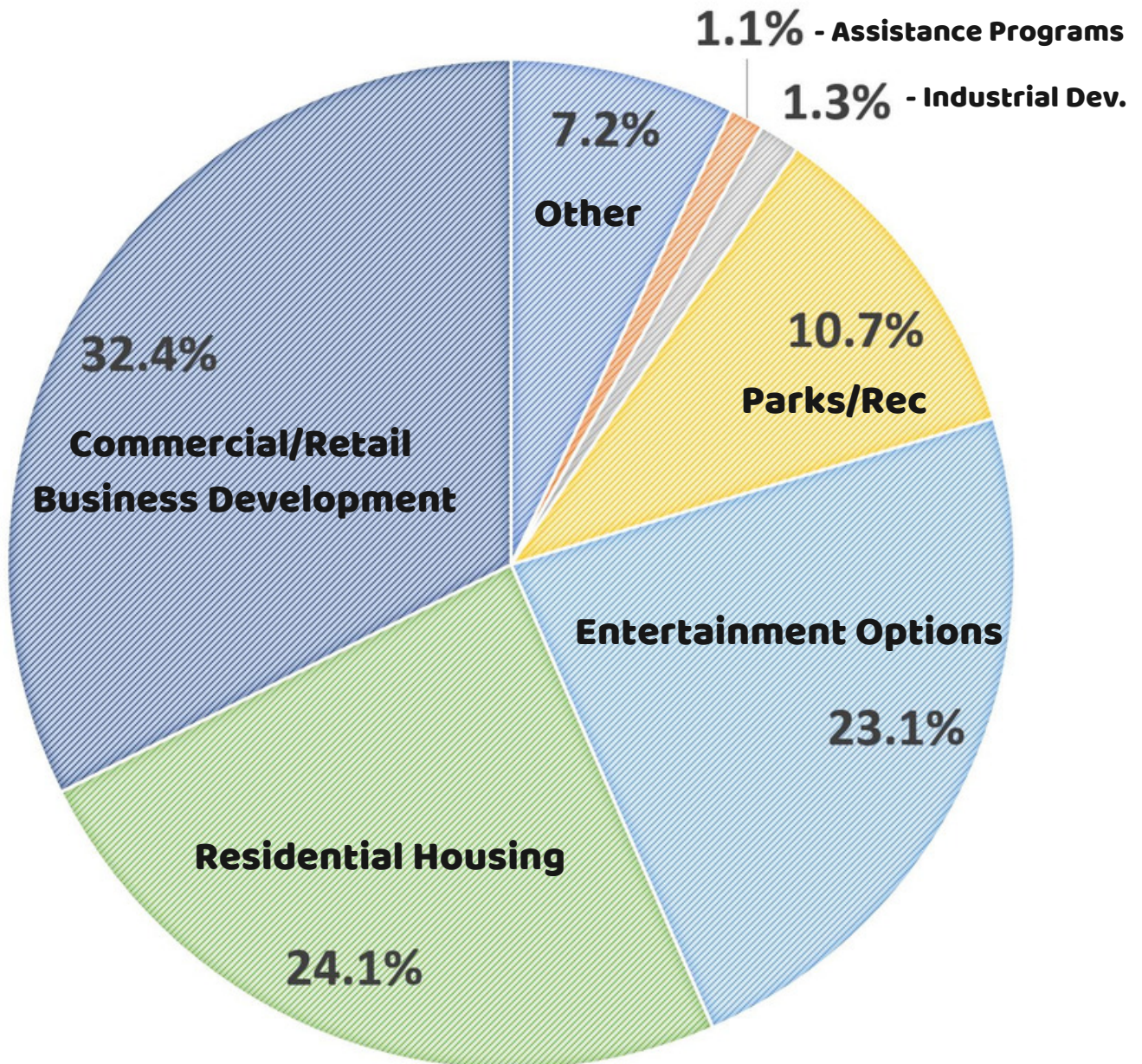
86 respondents want to see a focus on additional entertainment options.

4 respondents want to see a focus on City business assistance program.



Question 13 (Cont.):

What do you feel is the most important thing for the City to focus on in the coming years?



The most commonly selected response for this question was Commercial/Retail Business Development (32.4%). This selection was followed closely by Residential Housing (24.1%) and Entertainment Options (23.1%).

Parks and Recreation was also significant with 10.7%.

Respondents would like to see the EDA focus on a number of areas/initiatives. In fact, some individuals responded to later questions indicating that they had a difficult time with prioritization or selection of only one response.

Question 14:

Clarifying "Why" question for "What do you feel is the most important thing for the City to focus on in the coming years?"

This short answer question was not required. Respondents were able to clarify their selection for what the City should focus on in the coming years if desired.

This data will help the City to further identify reasoning behind selections made by respondents.

It's important to note that some respondents clarified that they could not select one option because all are equally important.

Some other response categories mentioned by respondents included:

a necessary focus on the environment and eco-conscious sustainable development; affordability of services and products in the community; a need to fill vacant commercial spaces; attraction of a bakery; legalization of chickens; and reduction of crime.

Question 14 Results:

17 respondents expounded on their eagerness to see more development of businesses and downtown aesthetics. Many felt that there are opportunities for growth and improvement for access and attractiveness.

16 respondents expounded on the need for housing. Many emphasized affordability; however, 4 of these respondents specifically noted the need for focus on high-end housing.

8 respondents expounded on a desired focus on parks and recreation. Trails could connect to one another (as well as destinations) and playground equipment could be updated.

7 respondents expounded on a need for more community events and entertainment opportunities. Families are driving to Rochester, but would prefer to find things to do in town.

5 respondents expounded on their desire to see more food options available in the community.

4 respondents expounded on their need for a coffee shop in town.

2 respondents expounded on the community's need for growth--this growth can support more business development.



Question 15:

Do you have any other thoughts about the future of the City?

This short answer question was not required. Respondents were able to add any other information they feel might be pertinent.

This data is especially important because the question is freely worded to capture any lingering thoughts, concerns or ideas that may not directly relate to the previous questions in this document.

A total of 97 viable responses were recorded and categorized.

Some other response categories mentioned by respondents included:

Amphitheater (Build/Don't Build);
Attract a brewery;
Invest in childcare;
Create youth hockey team;
Improve parking;
Attract a hotel;
Get a new dog park;
Decrease taxes;
Invest in the library;
Increase fire department;
Lower speed limits;
improve snow removal;
Improve communication;
Build relationships with other entities (chamber, school, City, EDA).

Question 15 Results:

16 respondents communicated their hope for the attraction of more businesses and services.

15 respondents specifically communicated their hope for the attraction of more restaurants.

7 respondents communicated their hope for more affordable housing.

6 respondents communicated a need to improve sidewalks, roads and transportation.

6 respondents communicated the severe need for additional entertainment options.

6 respondents communicated the need for investment in downtown.

4 respondents communicated the need for additional investment in parks and trails.

4 respondents communicated a hope for more community events.

3 respondents communicated a hope to attract a coffee shop.

3 respondents communicated a hope to attract a bakery.

3 respondents communicated a need to invest in schools.

3 respondents communicated a hope to ensure responsible planning for housing levels.

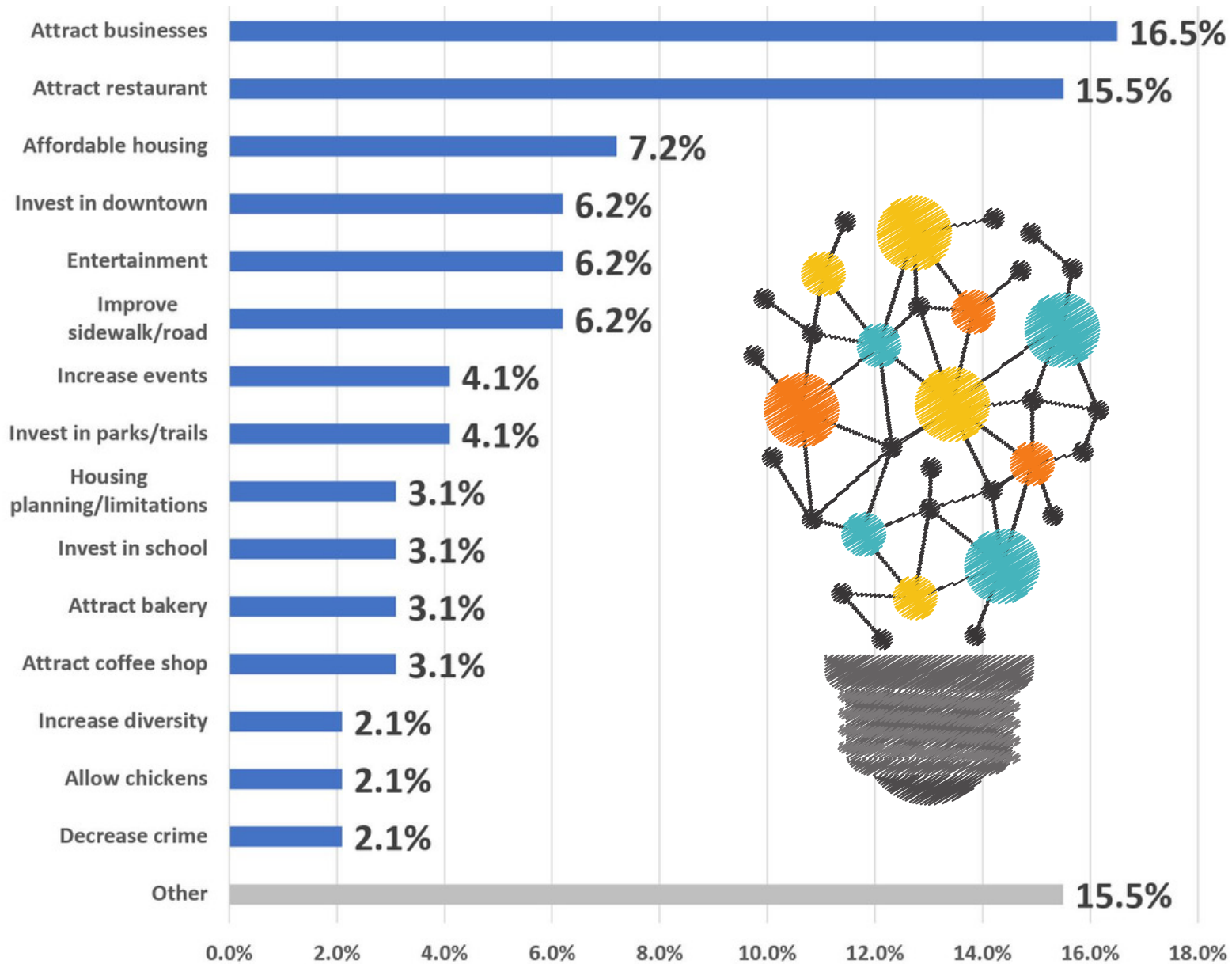
2 respondents communicated a need to decrease crime.

2 respondents communicated a need to allow chickens.

2 respondents communicated a hope to increase diversity

Question 15 (Cont.):

Do you have any other thoughts about the future of the community?



The most common theme that organically developed from this open ended question was a desire the City to attract more businesses and services (16.5%). Specifically, respondents would like the City to look into ways to attract more food options/restaurants (15.5%).

As noted from previous sections, respondents would like to see the EDA focus on a number of areas/initiatives.

CONCLUSION



Common Themes

While each question in this survey served its own purpose, common themes emerged from the study:

1. Residents enjoy Stewartville's convenient location.
2. Respondents would like to see more business development/food options attracted to the community.
3. Housing availability is a concern for many individuals.
4. Parks and trails are some of Stewartville's best assets; however, there could be more improvement with connections and equipment.
5. Although the City is close to Rochester, residents expressed that entertainment options in town are limited and they would like to see more events, activities, etc.
6. While residents are mostly satisfied with the communication with the City, they would like to see more updates on the events calendar and projects.
7. 81.5% of residents experience good-very good quality of life in the City.
8. Residents feel that Stewartville is a friendly community.
9. A large majority, 85.5%, follow the City on social media, where they get the majority of their City news.

Next Steps

With the EDA's prioritization of community engagement that was referenced in the background section of this report, the survey tool and its recorded data and analysis is extremely important to the City.

Staff plan to utilize this document as well as opinions gleaned from the community input session to evaluate programs and projects and their adherence to community indicated goals and objectives.

Furthermore, this data will be provided to relevant boards and commissions to promote awareness of these goals and objectives with ongoing consideration of responsible spending.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Local Residents and Businesses

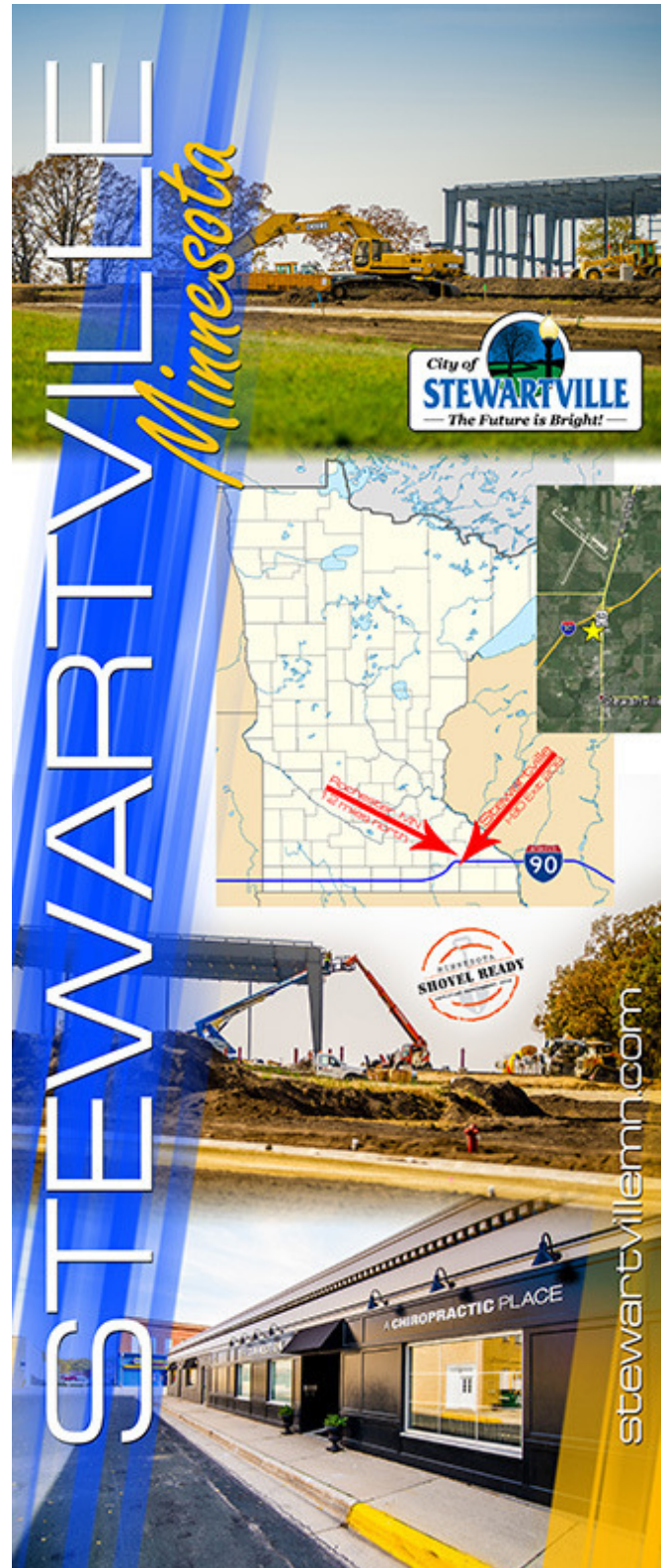
The City would like to thank the residents and businesses who took the time to provide valuable input and ideas. The community's successes and future are not possible without you. Please be assured that your opinions are very important and will be carefully considered.

Partner Organizations

Thank you to our partners at the Stewartville Area Chamber of Commerce, Stewartville Community Education, the Stewartville Star, and others who helped spread the word about this survey and the events and initiatives the EDA utilizes to make the community an even better place to live, work and do business!

Data

Data was gathered from reputable sources when necessary for comparison and/or context. Demographic information was utilized from the Minnesota State Demographer's Office as well as the United States Census Bureau American Community Survey.



ADDITIONAL RESEARCH



Focus Groups

While the power calculations were favorable for the survey tool instrument, it was important to supplement that research with qualitative focus group feedback.

Staff conducted organized meetings with the community's youth population as well as a community-wide input session to solicit any other thoughts, ideas and suggestions.



Additional Information

The following groups and their facilitated conversations are reviewed in the subsequent pages of this document:

8th Grade Students

High School Seniors (Economics Course)

Community-Wide Input Session

Center For Active Adults

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

8th Grade Students

City Staff and consultants worked with five (5) periods of 8th grade students. For the duration of the class period, the research team broke students up into small groups of 10-15.

The research team of facilitators were provided with a set of open-example questions. All questions were geared at understanding what students currently appreciate about their community as well as changes that they'd like to see implemented in the future. Researchers ensured that questions were not leading.

The students provided valuable insight:

City

- Students like Stewartville's convenient location.
- The history of the community is interesting; it could be told more.
- There are many impressive businesses that students would like to know more about.
- Many churches are located in the community. It's an important means of getting involved in civic activity. In fact, some students asked that an online location to find information on how to volunteer be added.
- The fire station makes students feel safe.
- The Civic Center was noted to be an important amenity.
- City-wide events are enjoyed by students. They would like to see more.
- Students would like to see more walk-ability (trail locations and connections, more sidewalks).
- Students would like to see more access to fresh fruits and vegetables (farmer's market/community gardens near school to allow student participation).
- Students were not aware of social media presence by the City. They would like to see activation of Instagram/Snap Chat.
- Students want to see culture picnics to learn about different foods/cultures to encourage acceptance and diversity.

School

- Students felt that schools are safe, well-respected and friendly.
- Students felt that the support they receive for school athletics programs is crucial and appreciated.
- Students want to see an expanded weight room.
- Students requested snow be removed from the track so it can be used in winter.
- Could a use for the unused portion of the central school building be found?

Parks/Recreation

- Students are proud of parks and bike/walking trails.
- The aquatic center is up-to-date and important, but they would like to see deeper sections, diving boards and areas for older children.
- Students enjoy fishing.
- Students would like to have tubing as an amenity.
- Frisbee golf is a great amenity; not all have access.
- Could rental options be implemented for fishing, tubing, etc?
- Would like to see more trash cans in parks.
- Students felt that more lighting on trails and sand volleyball courts was needed for safety.
- Updates on the dog park would be helpful.
- Bonner area ball fields could use improvement.
- Basketball nets could be added at Bear Cave Park.

Future of the City

Students also outlined some action items that they would like to see occur to ensure the future success of the community:

Students repeatedly noted that they would like to see expanded food options in the community. This could include fast food, sit-down, coffee shop, bakery, smoothies/juices and candy stores.

Jobs for 14+ are difficult to find. They would like to see employers create jobs for younger individuals in the community. Further, students would like jobs in walking distance of middle school for those with limited transportation options.

Students also want to come back to Stewartville to work. They're looking for tech, ag, and medical jobs primarily.

Students want to see the City increase entertainment options. While many options were noted, the most popular and recurring item was a recreation center/sports complex with basketball, swimming, tournaments, etc. Students also would like to see a teen center for them to play games, study, etc.

A tackle shop business/rental facility might promote water activities that students want to see increased.

Although Stewartville has a convenient location, they would like more shopping options (particularly retail).

Students would like to see a hockey and swim team created along with their respective practice facilities.

Urgent care/expanded medical services are something students would like to see occur.

A campground development would allow community members a means of entertainment as well as drawing in tourism.

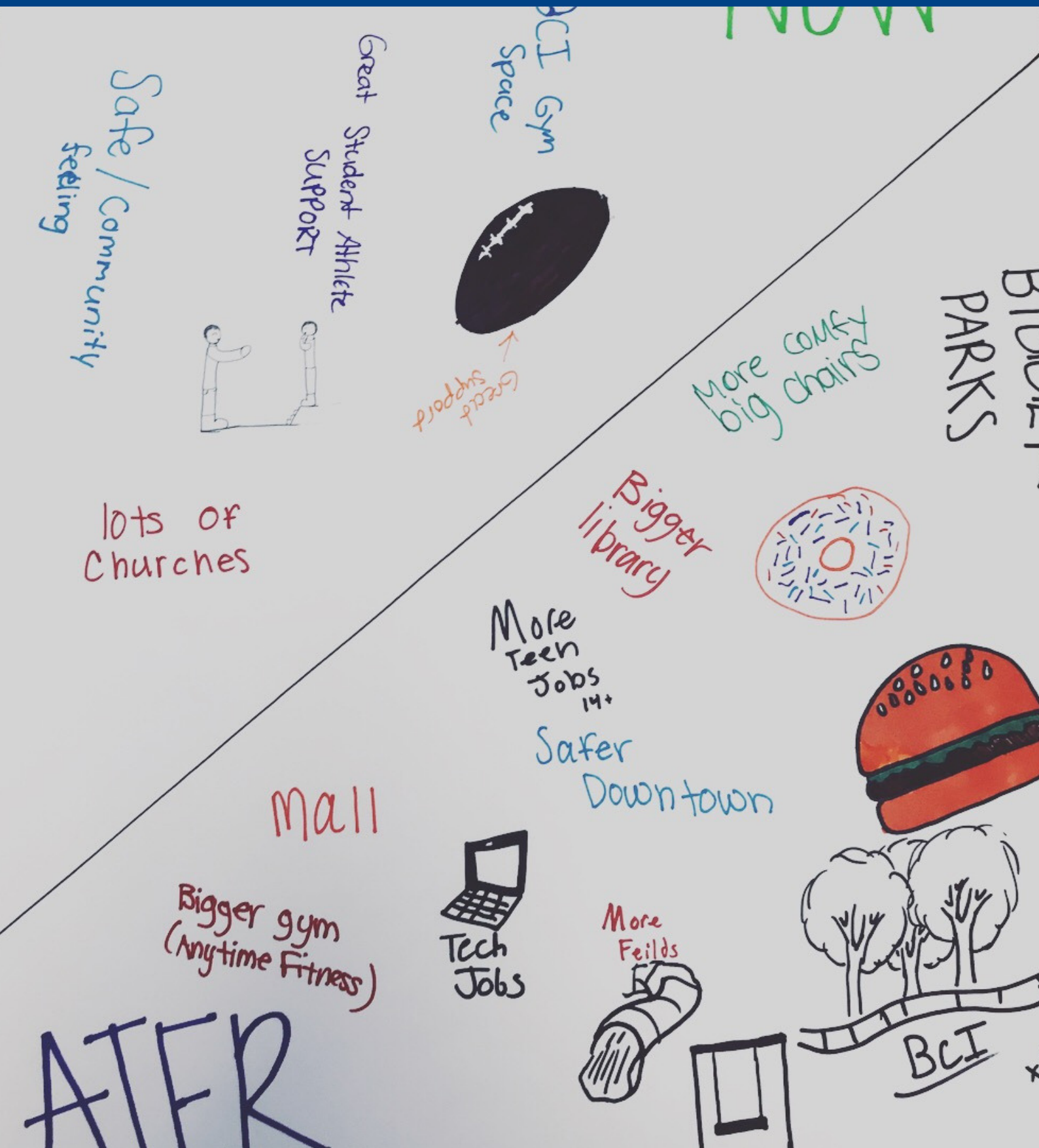
Students enjoy the library, but feel that it could benefit from quiet and non-quiet study rooms to work on projects, expanded wi-fi connectivity as well as large comfortable chairs to study in.

More stop lights may be necessary as the community grows.

Trails need to be lit in the future. Many trails lead to important resources such as businesses and schools, and they need to be properly lit to provide safety and accessibility.

Students would like to see vending machines added to parks.

8TH GRADE PRODUCED VISUALS



ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

High School Seniors

City Staff and consultants worked with two (2) periods of 12th grade economics students.

Students were provided with instructions to propose a hypothetical project that would benefit the future of the community. They were also given a worksheet that broke out research sections that may pertain to the project's process and overall completion.

Students were asked to provide the following information: project title, project description, estimated cost, potential partners, potential grants, other funding, steps to implementation and overall benefit.

The purpose of this assignment was to familiarize students with the process of working with local governments and their respective boards and commissions.

In addition, the project allowed students to have increased communications with their City boards. Ultimately, the City's hope was to ensure that students recognized their ability to invoke change and voice their opinions through process.

10 groups of students prepared PowerPoint presentations on projects of their choosing. These presentations were delivered to City staff and consultants, and ultimately to their peers.

Groups were offered the opportunity to present to the EDA for classroom extra credit. EDA Board members were impressed with the caliber of thought and effort put into these projects by students.

The Projects

The students' projects were self-selected, and 6/10 groups opted to present to the City's EDA at their regular May 15 meeting.

Projects were heavily focused on parks/recreation, but many of the proposed opportunities were included in the following categorical examples:

Creation of a Lake

These projects were felt to provide an amenity that caters to older youth in the community. Students thoughtfully prepared information on dredging, permitting, security, parking etc.

Rental Equipment for Tubing

Some students built out a model that would allow a rental facility to provide access to tubing and activation of the water in the community.

Lighting in the Park

Like the 8th grade classes, the seniors felt that safety and accessibility could be improved through utilization of additional lighting. Students provided exemplary research on potential grant funding.

Build Out of a City Center

Some student groups felt that there would be benefit in a space that would be able to serve as a City center/plaza/square. This space could offer an opportunity for gatherings, farmers markets, and entertainment options.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Community-Wide Input Session

The Stewartville EDA hosted a community-wide input session at its regular June 2018 meeting. All City residents and business owners were invited.

Invites were pushed on social media accounts, opt-in email distribution, and word of mouth.

Information on survey data analysis was not provided until the end of the input session so as not to invalidate data gathered from the discussions.

19 attendees were broken up into two groups that included EDA Board members and one (1) facilitator at each table. While facilitators were provided some open-ended sample questions, facilitators were careful to avoid leading questions.

The purpose of this exercise was to gather qualitative data from residents and business owners in the community.

City leaders hoped to glean valuable information on what these individuals currently enjoy about the community, and listen to any ideas or thoughts that they had about the future of the City.

Participants were informed that their discussions would be documented in aggregate to supplement the robust community engagement survey data.

Please note that many individuals who attended the session likely also contributed to the survey tool instrument data collected.

The Discussion

Feedback from the two groups generated the following pieces of information:

Housing

- Upscale Housing (\$450k +)
- Starter Housing (\$100-250k)
- People want topography that doesn't exist in the community. Cost would be associated with building out those characteristics.
- People do not want to wait for housing. They want it available when they're looking.
- Participants would like the City research what other communities have done to help developers manage the risk to encourage projects.
- Want more sidewalks to encourage walk-ability in neighborhoods.

Downtown

- Want to see vacant buildings filled.
- Would like to look into guidelines for building exteriors. We should encourage property owners to invest.
- Participants want to see ordinances amended to not allow deterioration of buildings. They also want to see more enforcement of violations (including fines/citations).
- Better and stricter requirements for attractiveness of signage.

Parks/Recreation

- People enjoy the parks in town, but would like to see more green space to beautify the community.
- Some mentioned a park in the center of town.
- Participants would like to see more prominent signage directing people to parks and amenities.
- Many asked for a covered, year-round farmers market.
- A splash pad is a desirable amenity for some families.
- Participants would like to see more trees.

Other Information

- More stoplights/slow people down on Main Street.
- On average, people enjoy the location, activities, parks, transportation, industrial development, and activities available, but would like to see a focus on securing the safety of the community in the future.
- Work to attract additional food options.
- Look into attraction of a coffee shop or brewery.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Center for Active Adults

The Stewartville Center for Active Adults provides recreational, social and leisure time activities for senior citizens in Stewartville and the surrounding area. The Center for Active Adults is located at the Stewartville Civic Center, and is open to any individual age 55 and over.

A dining service is provided by SEMCAC. Lunch is served each week Monday through Friday.

The purpose of meeting with this group was to gather qualitative data on community satisfaction and suggested areas for improvement.

As indicated by survey data above, the majority of respondents were from the age bracket ranges of 25-44. Meeting with the Center for Active Adults allowed the researcher to ensure a more comprehensive data set.

City leaders met with approximately 20 individuals in this age 55+ group to better understand what they currently enjoy about the community, and listen to any ideas or thoughts that they had about the future of the City.

Participants were informed that their discussions would be documented in aggregate to supplement the robust community engagement survey data.

The group was also encouraged to come to the City with any additional thoughts or ideas.

The Discussion

Feedback from the group generated the following pieces of information:

Businesses

- The group would like to see additional food options
 - Fast food
 - Monday food options
 - Sunday after church food options
 - Multiple participants shared that there is a lack of access to fresh fruits and vegetables. They would like to see a farmer's market reinvigorated.
- Many participants noted that they are impressed with the commercial and industrial growth that has been occurring in the City. They are hoping to see more retail options in the future.

Downtown

- One suggestion was made that Main Street/downtown should be moved off of Highway 63 to the east part of town. Discussion was held regarding the history of the decision for Main Street's location and the work with Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Parks/Recreation

- An indoor swimming pool was suggested. This pool could be used by all populations irrespective of seasonal weather conditions.
- Participants enjoy the trails for walking; however, they stated that they would use the trails more if there were more easy-to-use mapping options to show where trails were located.

Other Information

- Speeding was a recurring issue that was cited for safety and noise.
 - Enforce speed limit more (especially on 6th St. SE).
 - Put up "drive like your child lives here" signs to encourage slower speeds.
 - Add blinking speed reminder signs.
- Look into working with Storm Camp (Stewartville United Methodist). They have nearly 160 projects completed in 1 week which are worked on by 60 youth and 20 adults.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT!



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