

# TOWN OF HAMBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## SURVEY SUMMARY

April 1, 2021



HIGHLAND PLANNING

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# OVERVIEW

## Background

The Town of Hamburg began a process to develop a comprehensive plan in November 2020. A comprehensive plan is an expression of the community's values and future vision. The process to develop the plan involves a broad section of the community to create a vision that will help guide the future of the Town. A comprehensive plan communicates a community's goals and objectives, provides a blueprint for future land use, and serves as the basis for zoning, subdivision, and land use codes. A community survey was administered to gather public input on growth and development and the vision for the community.

## Key Findings

**Respondents identified empty retail space as a major concern.** Three-quarters of respondents to the question of what should get more emphasis in the next decade identified addressing empty retail spaces as a priority, a higher share than any other answer to this question received. It was also the most frequently identified important challenge over the next decade, selected by 66% of respondents to this question. Additionally, it may have been on the minds of the 77% of respondents who selected redevelopment of existing buildings in response the question of what future growth should look like in the Town. This too comprised the largest percentage of responses to the question.

**Quality of life in the Town received high marks from respondents.** Of the 1,603 survey respondents who rated quality of life in the Town, 90% selected "good" or "excellent," with 30% of all respondents rating quality of life as "excellent." Just one percent (13 respondents) rated quality of life as "poor."

**Roads, highways and other infrastructure were identified as a challenge though the condition of local streets received mostly positive ratings.** "Aging infrastructure (e.g., condition of roads, drainage systems, water)" (56%) was the third most frequently selected answer by respondents to the question on important challenges. Highways & Roadways (46%) was the area most frequently selected by respondents to the question of what should be targeted for revitalization in the next three years. However, more road paving projects (36%) and addressing drainage problems (31%) received only moderate support among respondents to the question of future emphasis. Additionally, when asked to rate the condition of the street they lived on, respondents selecting "excellent" or "good" (68%) far outnumbered those selecting "poor" (9%). These differences in the prioritization of road, highway and infrastructure issues may require further analysis.

**Greenspace and sustainability were valued by respondents.** Among respondents to the question about what future growth should look like, focus on sustainability (42%) and [preserve] undeveloped land (47%) were the most frequently selected scenarios behind redevelopment of existing buildings. When respondents were asked about what issues the Town should put greater emphasis on, more sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes (49%) was the second most frequently selected option. Combined with high levels of agreement with the statement “The Town of Hamburg should further develop its green infrastructure spaces and parks” (79%), survey respondents showed an interest in tailoring development in such a way that greenspace and recreational opportunities could still flourish.

**Residential property taxes were a frequently identified challenge for the Town of Hamburg.** When prompted to identify the most important challenge for the Town in the next decade, “residential property taxes” (62%) was the most frequently selected option behind empty retail spaces.

**Public transportation was not a high priority for respondents, but the story was more mixed on biking and walking.** Just 31% of those who reacted to the statement “the Town of Hamburg has the capacity for increased public transportation” voiced agreement, the lowest proportion of favorable responses of any of the presented vision statements. In a separate question, more sidewalks, trails, and, bike lanes (49%) was the second most frequently selected area where respondents wanted to place more emphasis in the future.

**Lakeview and Village respondents’ answers closely matched overall responses on questions of development and growth but with predictable differences.** In response to the question of where in the community you live or identify with, 269 respondents selected either the Villages of Hamburg (213) or Blasdell (56) and 262 respondents selected Lakeview. Village respondents prioritized walkability for revitalization (44%) and wanted a greater emphasis on sidewalks, trails and bike lanes (58%) when compared with respondents overall. Lakeview respondents prioritized the Lake Erie Shoreline (46%) and waterfront access and design (46%) for revitalization more frequently than all survey-takers. Similarly, they wanted a greater emphasis on protection of waterfront assets (50%) and more waterfront access and development (48%) than respondents overall.

**Respondents reflected the demographic makeup of the Town in important ways while skewing older than the general population of the Town.** More than 90% of survey respondents to questions on race identified as white or Caucasian, on par with the general population of the Town. Older residents were over-represented among survey respondents, with seniors making up 15% of the general population but 27% of survey-takers who responded to questions on age. Most respondents who lived in the Town had resided there for more than a decade (79%).

## About the Survey

The online questionnaire was hosted on SurveyMonkey.<sup>1</sup> The survey was open from January 28, 2021 to March 23, 2021 and received 1,710 responses. The survey was heavily promoted by the Town and the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Efforts to encourage survey response included ads in the *Hamburg Sun*, an online video, social media posts, email blasts, inclusion in local newsletters, flyers, and word of mouth.

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<sup>1</sup> This survey was designed to be qualitative and exploratory. It employed an opt-in methodology (i.e., non-probability), meaning some members of the population had zero chance of responding. The results cannot be used to infer from the sample to the general population in statistical terms. The survey is one of multiple public engagement activities to be undertaken for the purpose of gathering feedback from the public.

# SURVEY RESULTS

## Residents and Workers

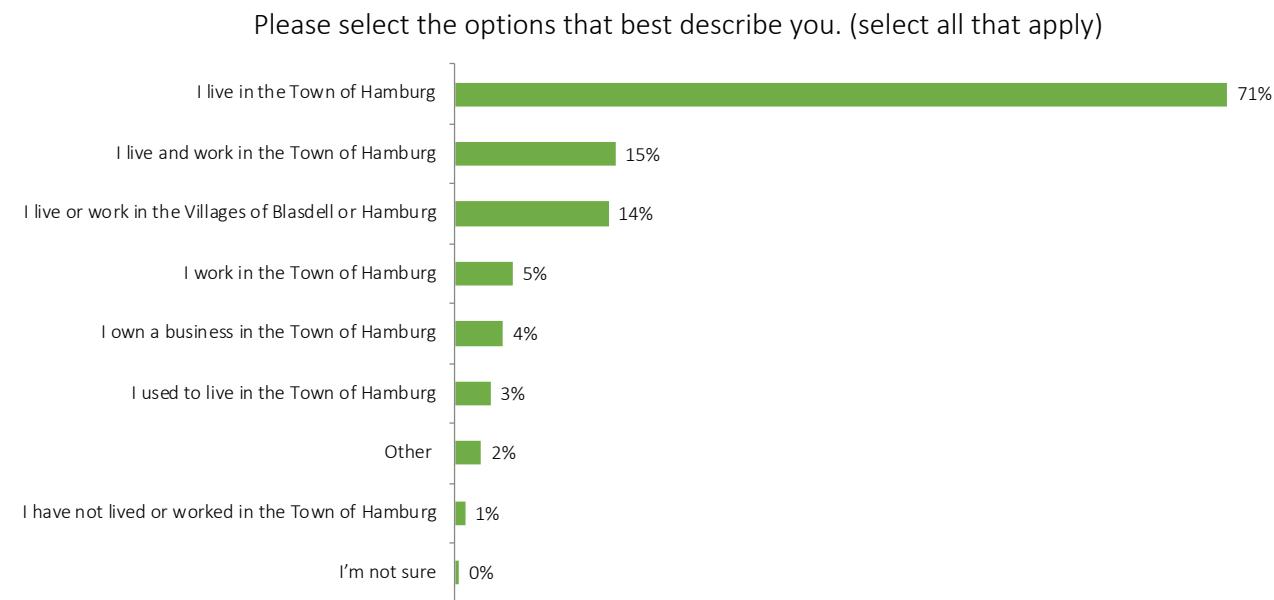
Questions 1 and 2 established respondents' relationship to the Town of Hamburg (i.e., lived, worked, etc.).

### 1. Please select the options that best describe you. (select all that apply)

Question 1 received 1,710 responses. Respondents could select more than one answer.

Respondents most frequently selected live in the Town of Hamburg (71%) followed by "live and work in the Town" (15%) and "live or work in the Villages of Blasdell or Hamburg" (14%) as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Responses to Question 1

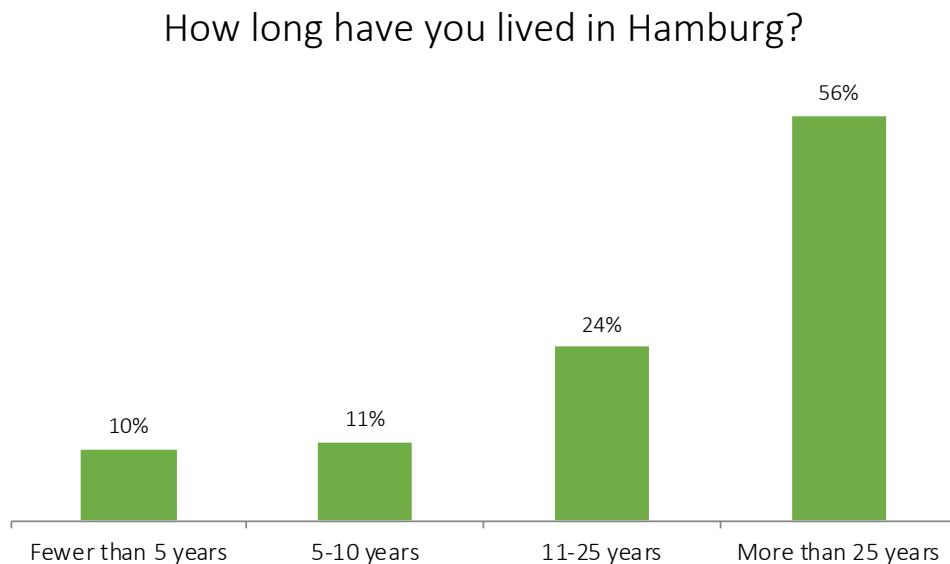


Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## 2. How long have you lived in Hamburg?

Respondents to Question 1 who answered that they live in the Town were skipped to Question 2. Question 2 received 1,404 responses. Among respondents to Question 2, the most frequently selected option was “more than 25 years” (56%) as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Responses to Question 2



Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## Quality of Life

Questions 3, 4 and 5 covered quality of life in the Town of Hamburg.

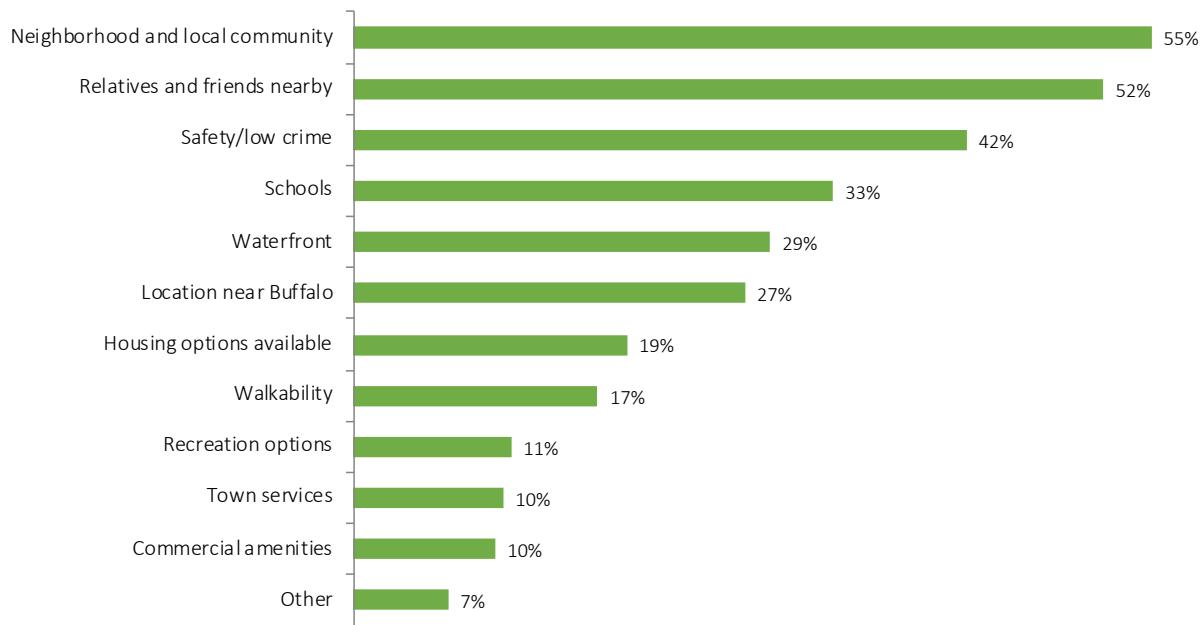
## 3. Why do you choose to live in or visit the Town of Hamburg? (select up to three (3) of your top reasons)

Question 3 received 1,607 responses. Respondents could select more than one answer. Among respondents to Question 3, the most frequently selected reason to live in/visit the Town was

“neighborhood and community” (55%), followed by “friends and relatives nearby” (52%) and “safety/low crime” (42%), as shown Figure 3.

Figure 3 Responses to Question 3

Why do you choose to live in or visit the Town of Hamburg? (select up to three (3) of your top reasons)

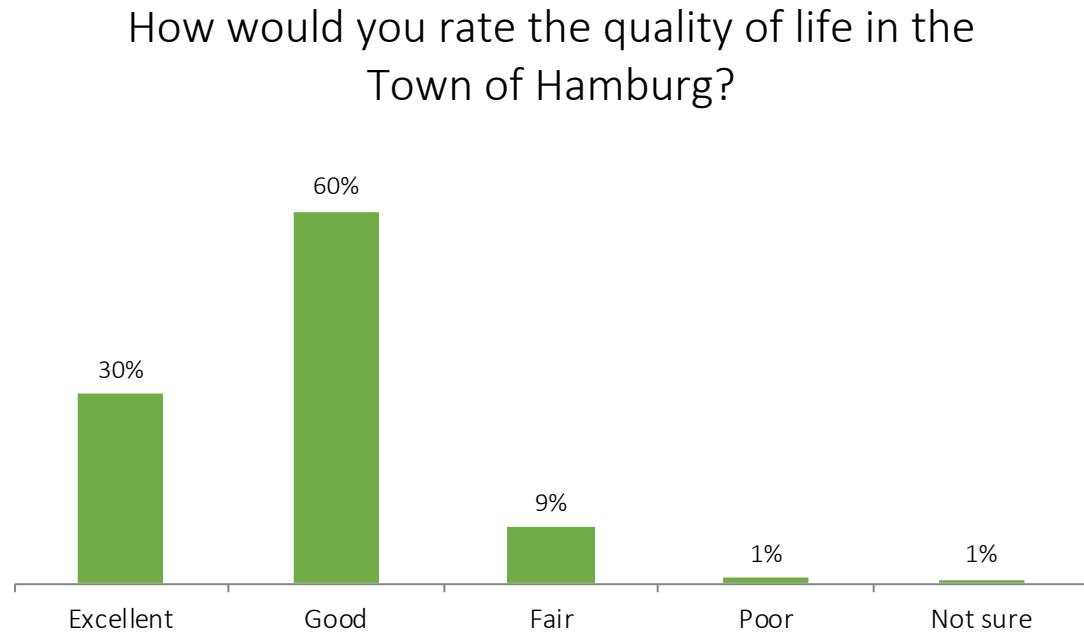


Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

#### 4. How would you rate the quality of life in the Town of Hamburg?

Question 4 received 1,603 responses. Among respondents to Question 4, quality of life was most frequently rated as “good” (60%) or “excellent” (30%), as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Responses to Question 4



Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

**5. What factors led you to give that rating?**

Question 5 received 917 responses. Themes of open-ended responses included community, the village, schools and taxes, as shown in Figure 5. Full results are available as an appendix.

*Figure 5 Word Cloud of Responses to Question 5*



Source: SurveyMonkey, 2021

**6. Of the following, which are the most important characteristics in the Town? (select all that apply)**

Question 6 received 1,387 responses. Respondents could select more than one option. Among respondents to Question 6, the most frequently selected characteristic of the Town was

“neighborhoods/communities” (64%), “waterfront & beaches” (53%) and “restaurants” (52%), as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6 Responses to Question 6

Of the following, which are the most important characteristics in the Town? (select all that apply)



Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## Growth and Development

Questions 7, 8 and 9 covered the issues of growth and development in the Town.

**7. What are the most important challenges you see for the Town during the next ten (10) years?  
Please select as many as apply and feel free to identify others:**

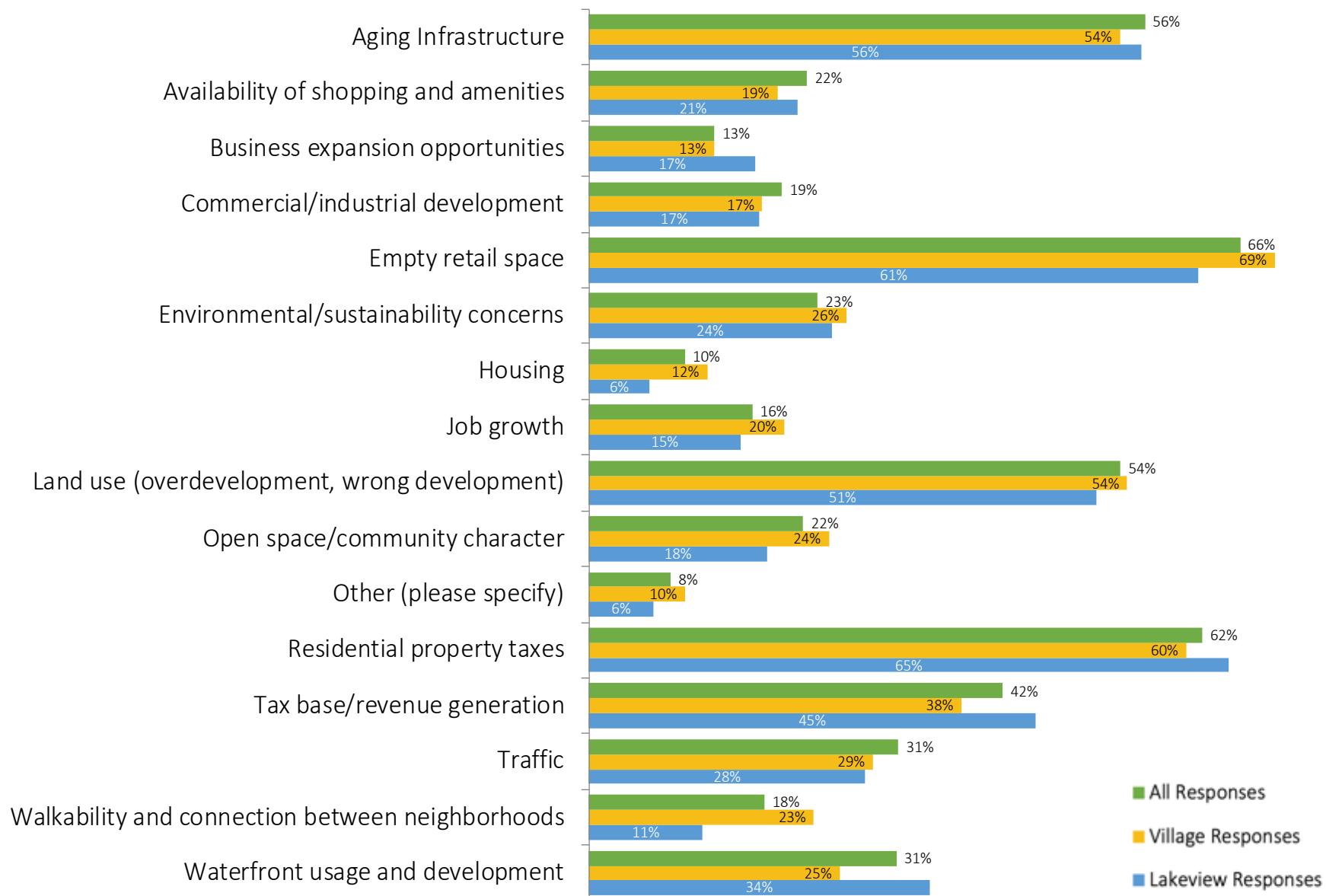
Question 7 received 1,397 responses. Respondents could select more than one option. Among all respondents to Question 7, the most frequently selected important challenges were empty retail space (66%), residential property taxes (62%), and aging infrastructure (56%) which included road conditions, drainage and water.

Answers to Question 7 from **Village respondents** were largely in line with overall responses but with a slightly greater proportion identifying walkability (23%) as an important challenge than the proportion among all question respondents (18%). The proportion of Village respondents identifying waterfront usage and development (25%) as an important challenge was lower than among all respondents (31%).

Answers to Question 7 from **Lakeview respondents** were also largely in line with overall responses but a slightly greater proportion identifying waterfront usage and development (34%) as an important challenge than the proportion among all question respondents (31%). The proportion of Lakeview respondents identifying walkability (11%) as an important challenge was lower than among all respondents (18%), as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7 Responses to Question 7

What are the most important challenges you see for the Town during the next ten (10) years? Please select as many as apply and feel free to identify others:



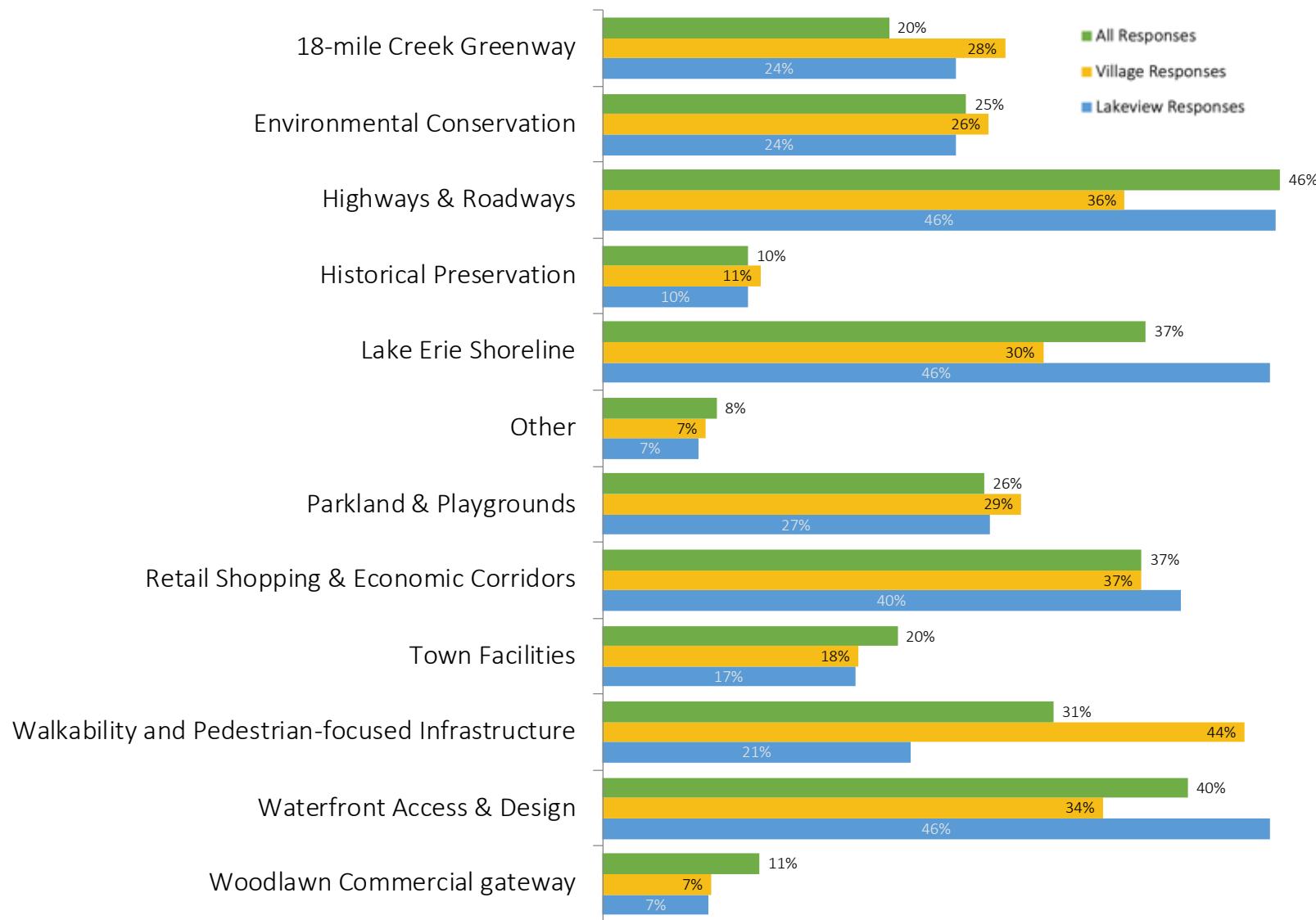
**8. Which areas of the Town of Hamburg should be targeted for revitalization in the next three years (select 3)**

Question 8 received 1,390 responses. Respondents could select more than one option. Among all respondents to Question 8, the most frequently selected area that should be targeted for revitalization in the next three years was highways and roadways (46%), followed by “Waterfront access and design” (40%), Lake Erie Shoreline (37%) and retail shopping and economic corridors (37%).

Answers to Question 8 from **Village respondents** were largely in line with overall responses but with a greater proportion selecting walkability and pedestrian-focused infrastructure (44%) as an area that should be targeted for revitalization in the next three years than the proportion among all question respondents (31%). The proportion of Village respondents selecting waterfront access and design (34%) and Lake Erie shoreline (30%) was lower when compared with the share of all respondents selecting water access and design (40%) and the Lake Erie shoreline (37%).

Answers to Question 8 from **Lakeview respondents** were also largely in line with overall responses but with a greater proportion identifying waterfront access and design (46%) and the Lake Erie Shoreline (46%) as areas that should be targeted for revitalization in the next three years when compared with the share of all respondents selecting water access and design (40%) and the Lake Erie shoreline (37%). The proportion of Lakeview respondents identifying walkability and pedestrian-focused infrastructure (21%) was lower than among all respondents (31%), as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8 Responses to Question 8



Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

**9. What should future growth look like in the Town of Hamburg? (Check all the types you would like to see).**

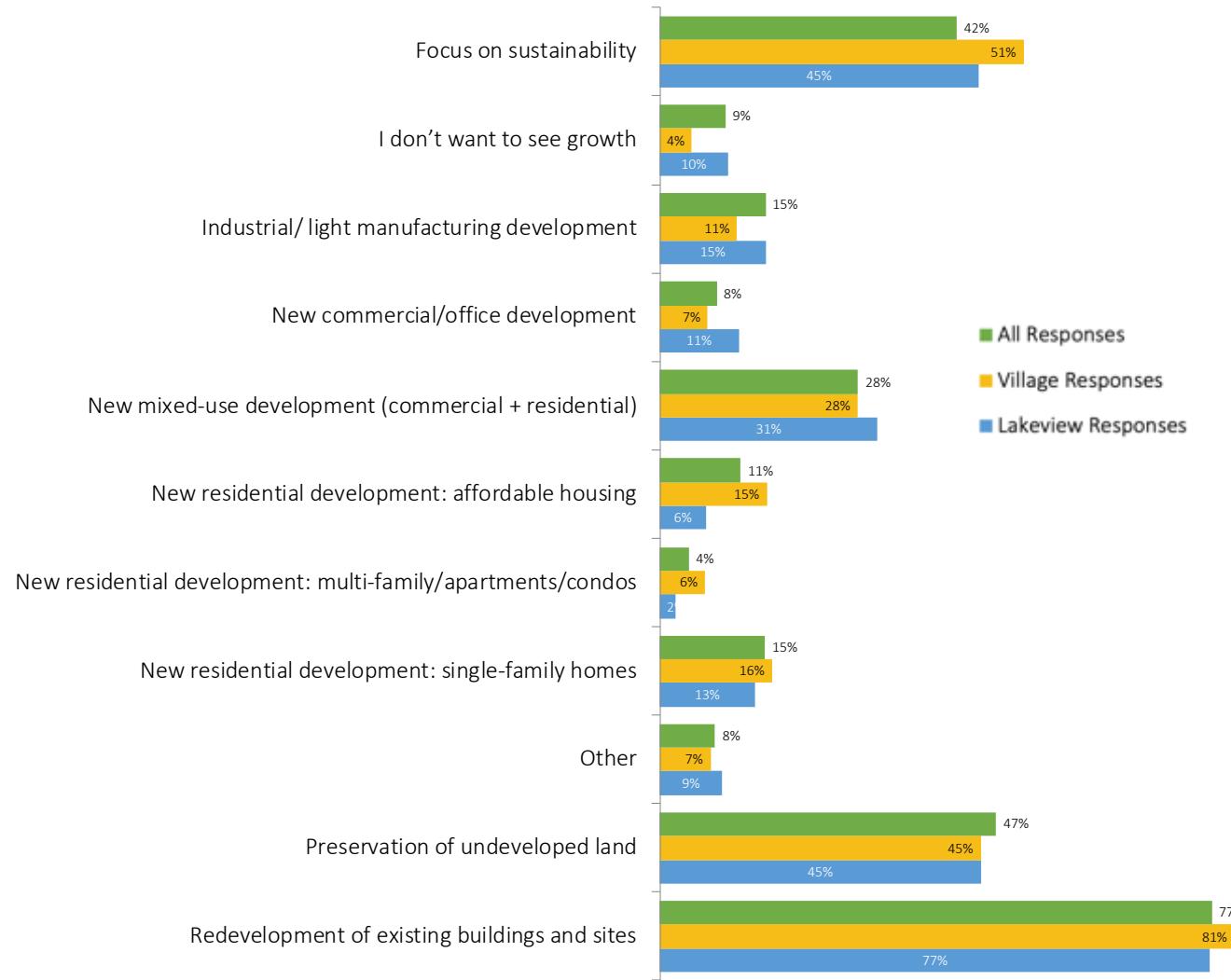
Question 9 received 1,392 responses. Respondents could select more than one option. Among all respondents to Question 9, the most frequently selected scenario for future growth was redevelopment of existing buildings and sites (77%), followed by preservation of undeveloped land (47%) and focus on sustainability (42%).

Answers to Question 9 from **Village respondents** were largely in line with overall responses but with a slightly greater proportion selecting redevelopment of existing buildings and sites (81%) and focus on sustainability (51%).

Answers to Question 9 from **Lakeview respondents** were also largely in line with overall responses as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Responses to Question 9

What should future growth look like in the Town of Hamburg? (Check all the types you would like to see).



Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## Community Vision

Questions 10-15 covered respondents' vision for the Town.

**10. During the next 10 years, what would you like to see get more emphasis in the Town? Please select as many as apply (the following list is not in any order of priority):**

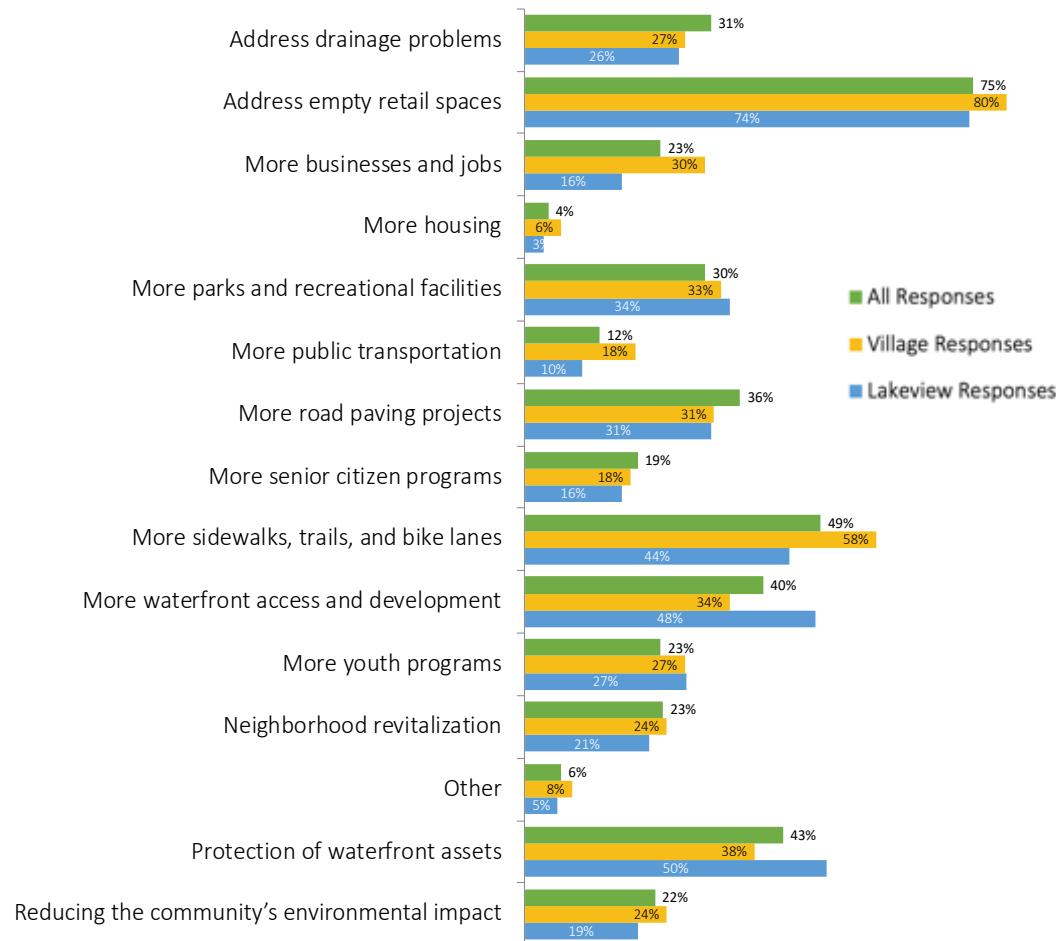
Question 10 received 1,393 responses. Respondents could select more than one option. Among respondents to Question 10, the most frequently selected option to greater emphasis on in the next ten years was addressing empty retail spaces (75%), followed by more sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes (49%) and protection of waterfront assets (43%).

Answers to Question 10 from **Village respondents** were largely in line with overall responses but with a slightly greater proportion selecting address empty retail spaces (80%) and more sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes (58%).

Answers to Question 10 from **Lakeview respondents** were also largely in line with overall responses but with a greater proportion selecting protection of waterfront assets (50%) and more waterfront access and development (48%) than share of overall respondents selecting protection of waterfront assets (43%) and more waterfront access and development (48%), as shown in

Figure 10 Responses to Question 10

During the next 10 years, what would you like to see get more emphasis in the Town? Please select as many as apply.

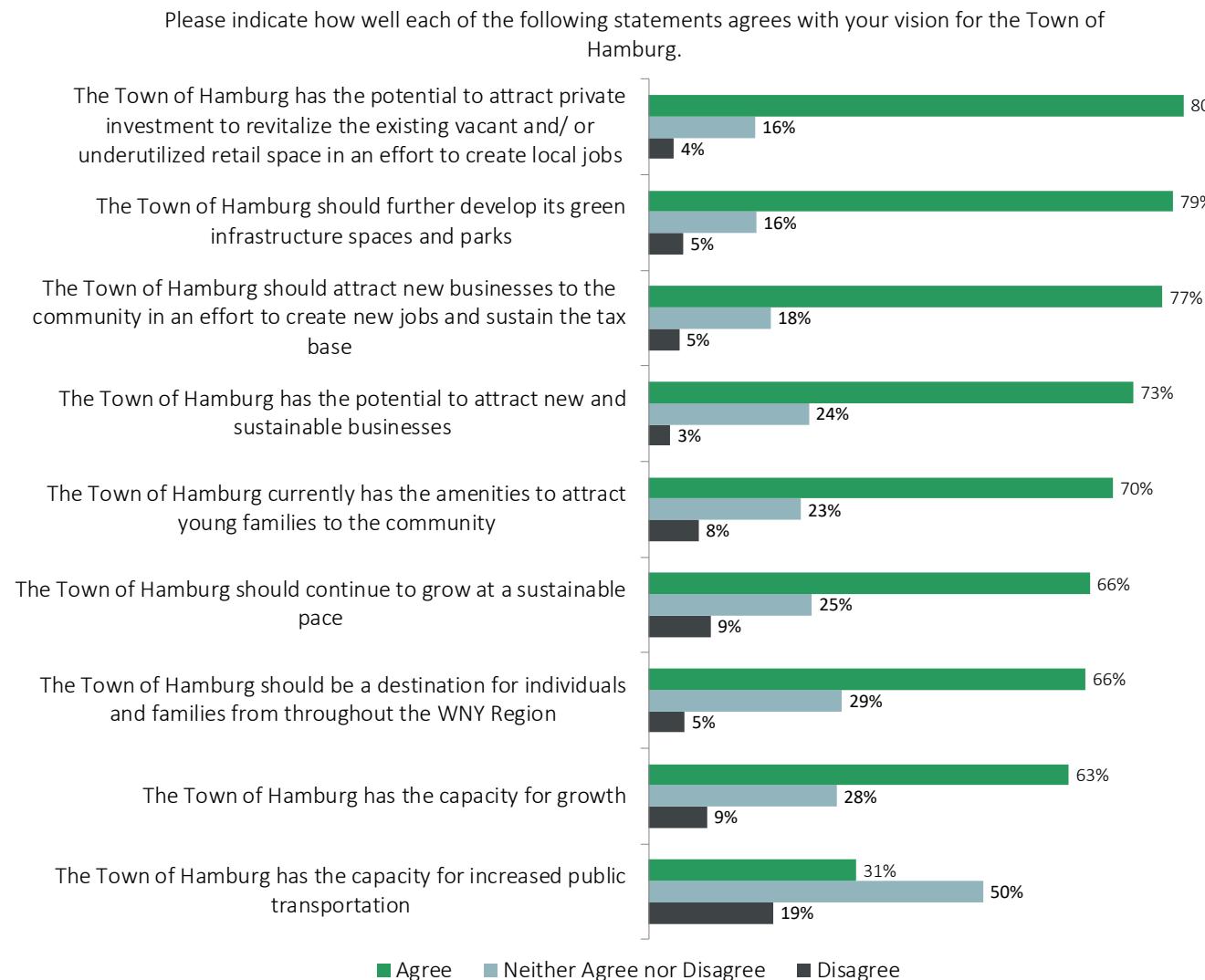


Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

**11. Please indicate how well each of the following statements agrees with your vision for the Town of Hamburg. (Agree/Neither Agree nor Disagree/Disagree)**

Question 11 received 1,392 responses. Among respondents to Question 11, agreement with all statements exceeded 60% with one exception. The statement that was most frequently agreed with was “The Town of Hamburg has the potential to attract private investment to revitalize the existing vacant and/or underutilized retail space in an effort to create local jobs” (80%). The statement *least* frequently agreed with was “The Town of Hamburg has the capacity for increased public transportation” (31%). More than half (50%) of respondents to this statement neither agreed nor disagreed and it also had the largest number of respondents who disagreed with its sentiments (19%), as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11 Responses to Question 11

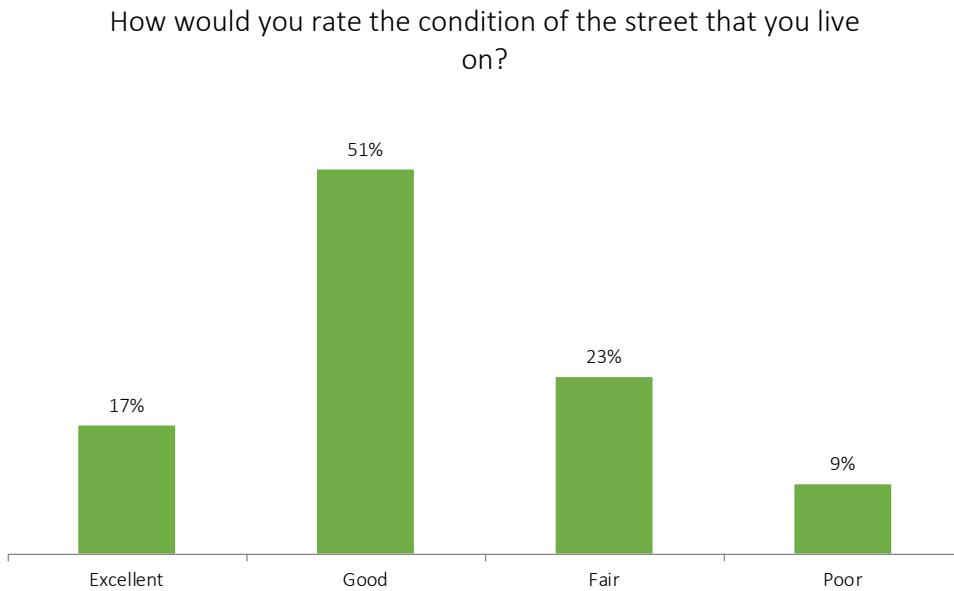


Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## 12. How would you rate the condition of the street that you live on?

Question 12 received 1,377 responses. Among respondents to Question 12, the most frequently selected street condition was “good” (51%) followed by “fair” (23%) and “excellent” (17%), as shown in

*Figure 12 Responses to Question 12*



*Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021*

**13. In fifteen (15) years, what three words would you like to be able to use to describe the Town of Hamburg to your friends/children/grandchildren?**

Question 13 received 1,082 responses. Themes included affordability, friendliness, safety, beauty and cleanliness, as shown Figure 13. Because respondents were asked to pick three words, some words appear multiple times. Full results are available as an appendix.

Figure 13 Word Cloud of Responses to Question 13



Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

**14. Please provide your comments regarding your visions for the Town of Hamburg**

Question 14 received 678 responses. Themes included development, the waterfront, green space and businesses, as shown in Figure 14. Full results are available as an appendix.

Figure 14 Word Cloud of Responses to Question 14



A word cloud visualization representing the responses to Question 14. The words are colored in shades of blue, with larger words indicating more frequent themes. The most prominent words include 'home', 'beautiful', 'schools', 'many', 'concern', 'town', 'needs', 'property', 'focus', 'put', 'street', 'new businesses', 'one', 'playgrounds', 'great', 'access', 'improve', 'bike paths', 'residents', 'plan', 'think', 'lots', 'opportunities', 'also', 'see', 'town', 'safe', 'beach', 'live', 'help', 'stop', 'come', 'village', 'drive', 'make', 'want', 'developed', 'big', 'use', 'walk', 'see', 'neighborhoods', 'development', 'bring', 'keep', 'McKinley Mall', 'Hamburg', 'feel', 'area', 'attract', 'town', 'move', 'need', 'taxes', 'community', 'nice', 'business', 'maintain', 'people', 'already', 'good', 'allow', 'buildings', 'retail', 'going', 'small businesses', 'Space', 'infrastructure', 'road', 'traffic', 'will', 'don t', 'waterfront', 'add', 'green space', 'Buffalo', 'grow', 'place', 'much', 'housing', 'families', 'sidewalks', 'growth', 'well', 'continue', 'vacant buildings', 'parks', 'less', 'look', 'mall', 'left', 'fix', 'years', 'options', 'time', 'love', 'see', 'love', 'new', 'way', 'Please'.

Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## Demographics and Future Engagement

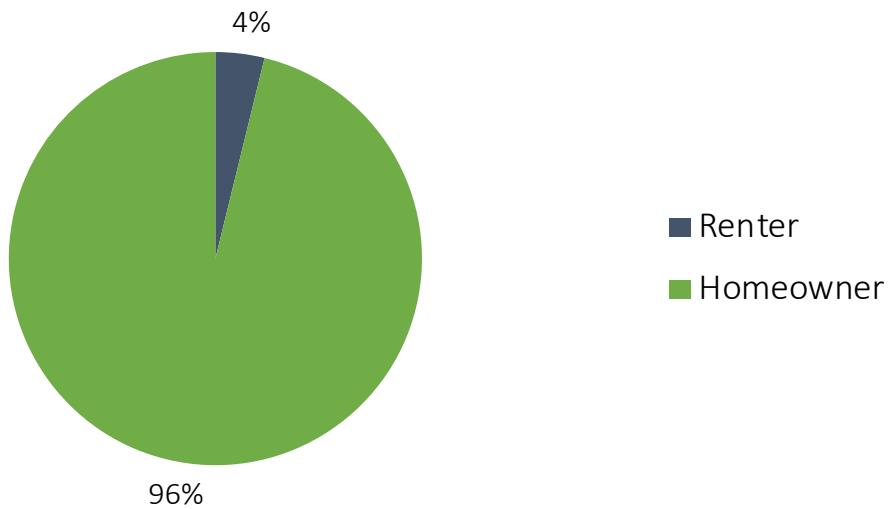
Questions 15 – 24 covered demographics and respondent contact information.

## 15. Housing Tenure

Question 15 received 1,359 responses. Among respondents to Question 15, the vast majority (96%) were homeowners, as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15 Responses to Question 15

Please select the option that best describes you:

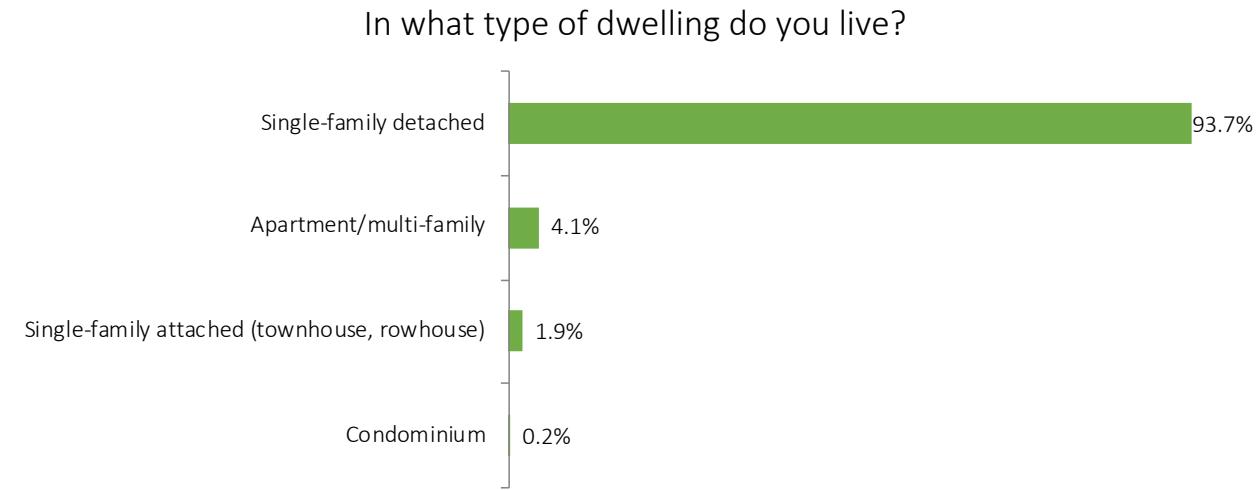


Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## 16. In what type of dwelling do you live?

Question 16 received 1,357 responses. Among respondents to Question 16, the vast majority (93.7%) resided in single-family detached dwellings, as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16 Responses to Question 16

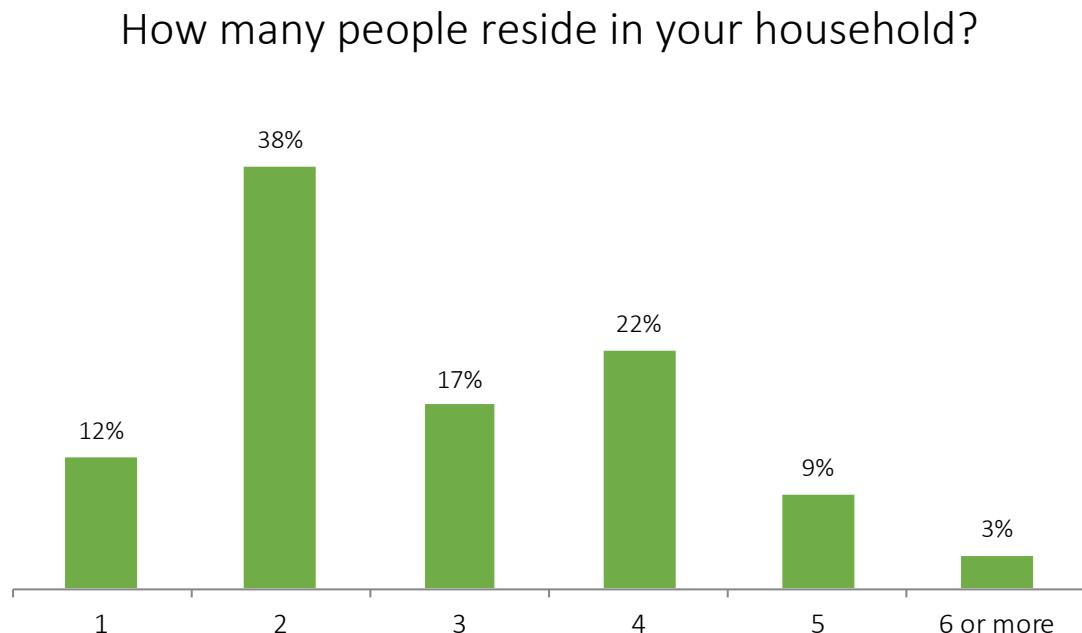


Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

### 17. How many people reside in your household?

Question 17 received 1,357 responses. Among respondents to Question 17, the most frequently selected option was two-person household (38%), four-person (22%) and three-person (17%) as shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17 Responses to Question 17

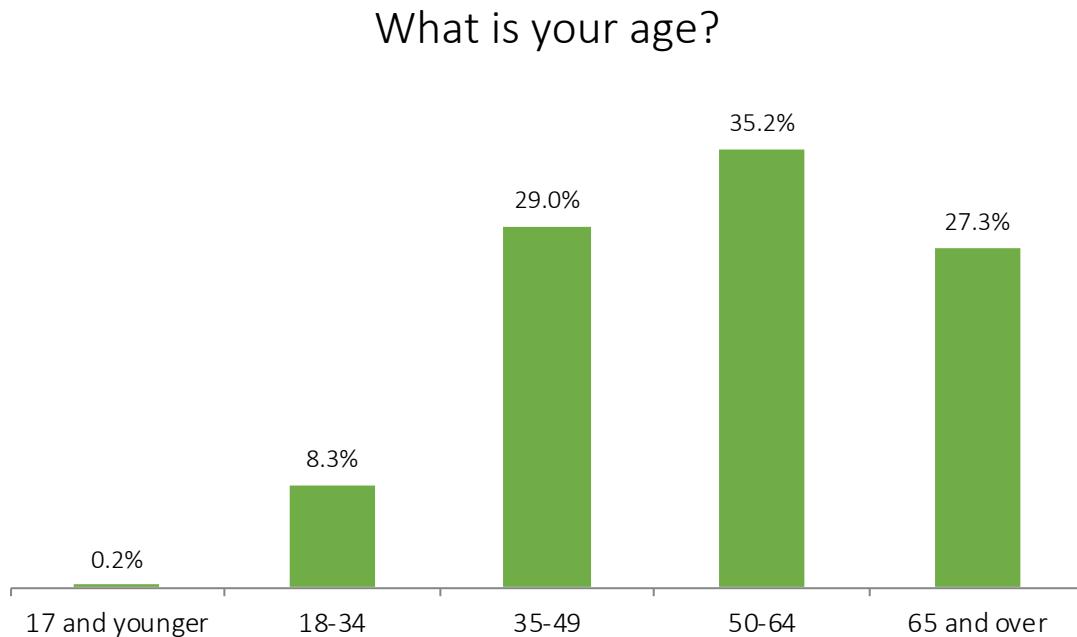


Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## 18. What is your age?

Question 18 received 1,354 responses. Among respondents to Question 18, the most frequently selected age cohorts were 50-64 (35%), 35-49 (29%) and 65 and over (27%), as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18 Responses to Question 18



Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## 19. Please select the [i.e., race/ethnicity] that best describes you:

Question 19 received 1,285 responses. Among respondents to Question 19, the vast majority were white or Caucasian (91%), with the second most frequently selected option being “prefer not to answer” (8%).

## 20. How do you get news about the Town of Hamburg? (select all that apply)

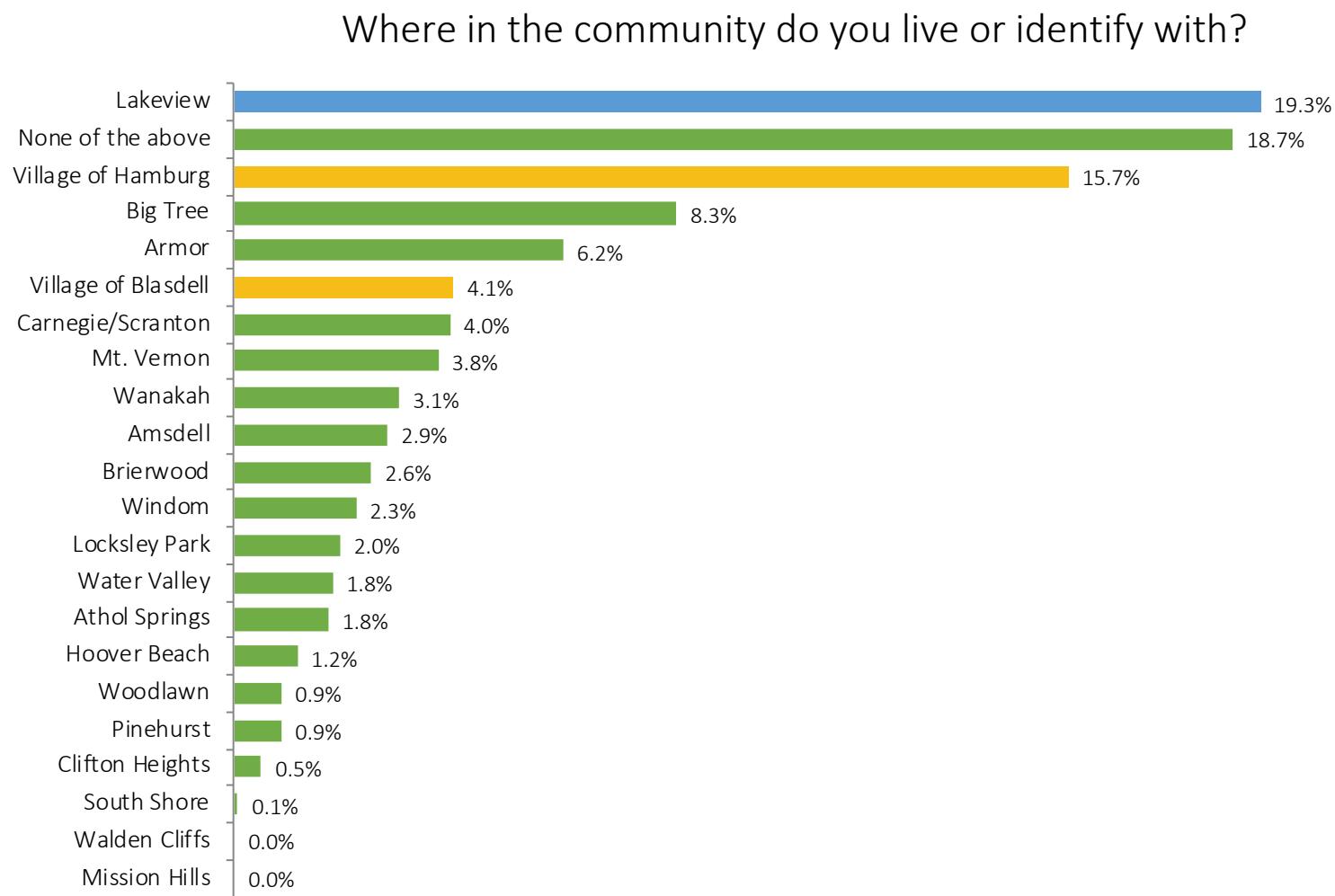
Question 20 received 1,357 responses and was included in the survey to identify the best means of reaching project participants in future engagement efforts. The most frequently selected option among respondents to the question was social media (66%), followed by neighbors and friends (58%) and local newspaper (52%).

## 21. Where in the community do you live or identify with?

Question 21 received 1,361 responses. Among respondents to Question 21, the most frequently selected community that people live in or identify with was Lakeview (19.3%), followed by the Village of Hamburg

(15.7%). The second most frequently selected option was “None of the Above” (18.7%), as shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19 Responses to Question 21

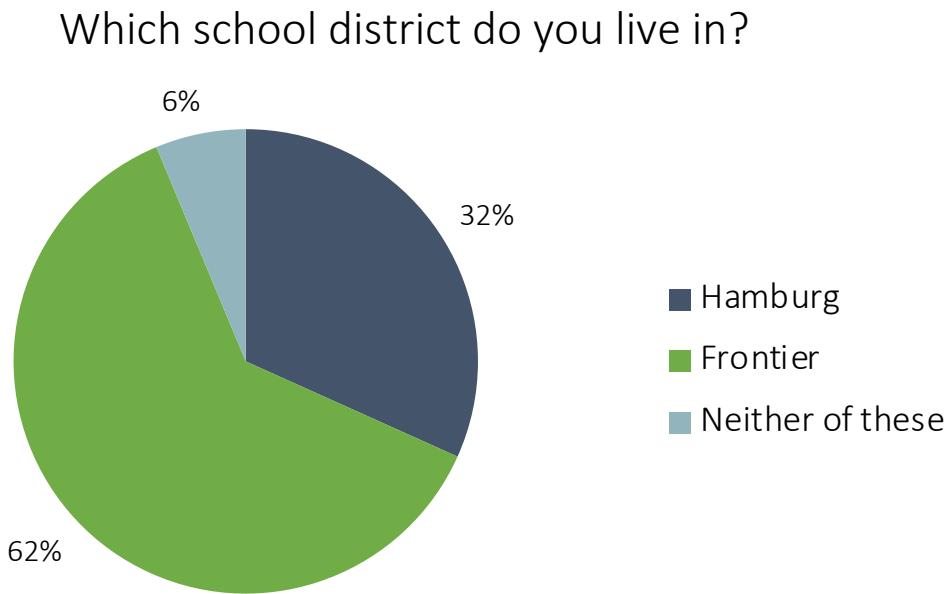


Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021

## 22. Which school district do you live in?

Question 22 received 1,368 responses. Among respondents to Question 22, the breakdown of answers was Frontier (62%), Hamburg (32%) and “neither” (6%) as shown in Figure 20.

*Figure 20 Responses to Question 22*



*Source: SurveyMonkey, Highland Planning, 2021*

The survey concluded with questions about contact information and future public engagement opportunities.

## APPENDIX A: OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

A list of open-ended responses to questions 5, 13 and 14 are included under separate cover.