

Five Villages: One Future

Montague Comprehensive Plan Survey

Responses collected June - October, 2022

352 fully completed surveys

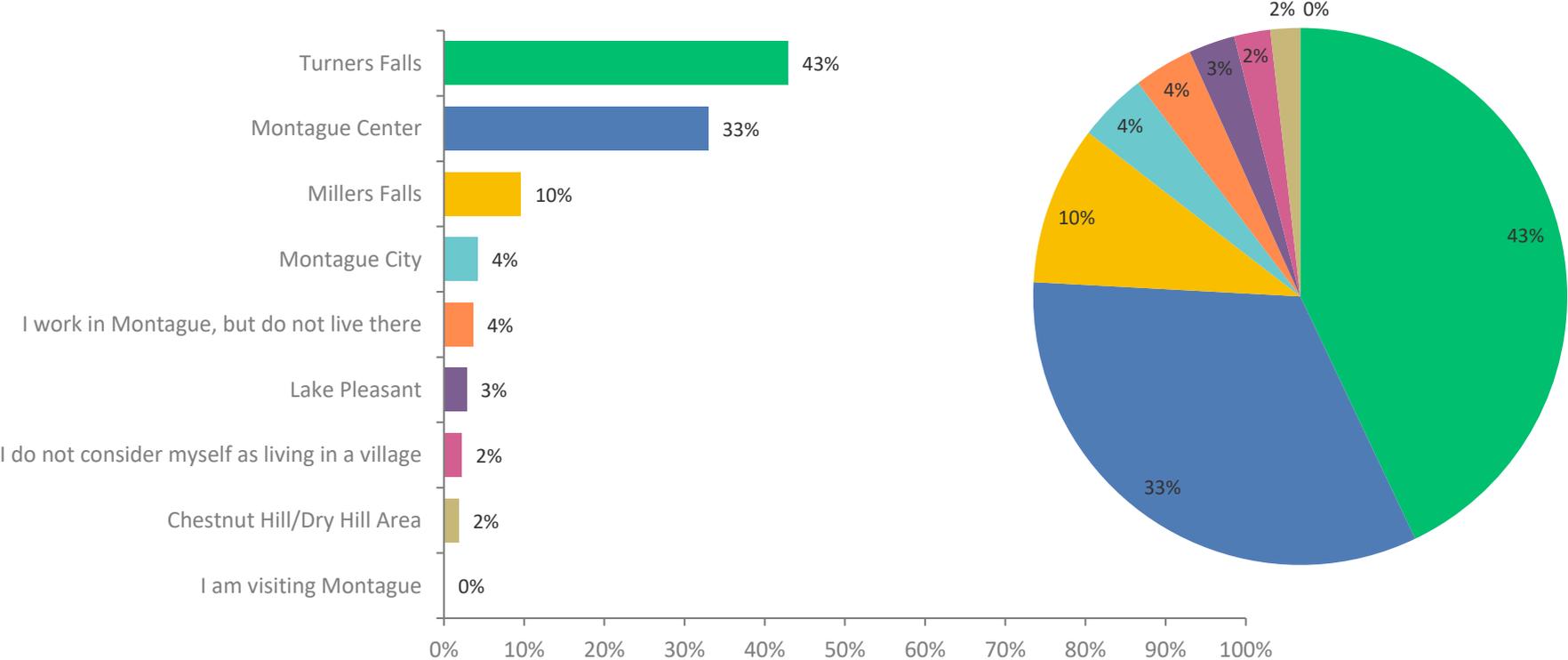
6 in Spanish

346 in English

Demographics of Survey Respondents

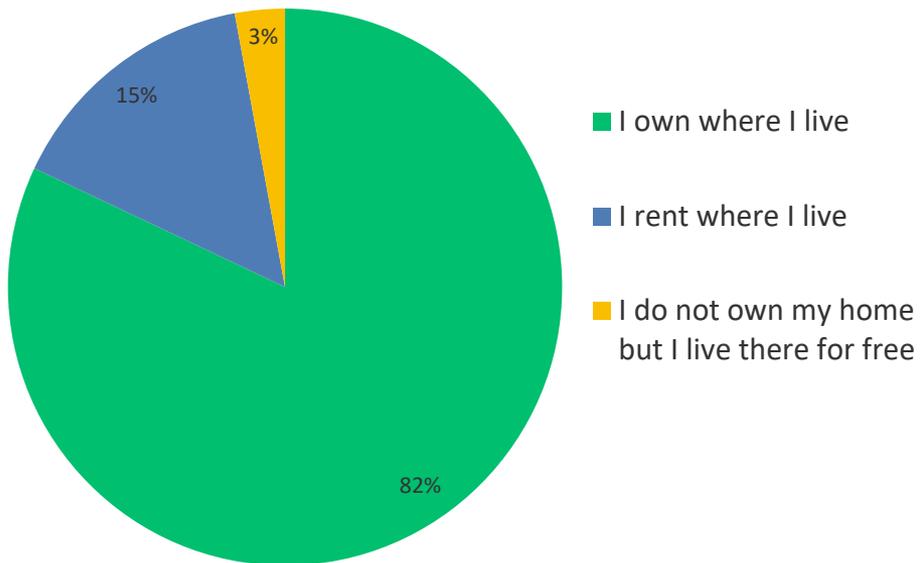
Q1: Where do you live in the Town of Montague? *Select one.*

Answered: 501 Skipped: 5



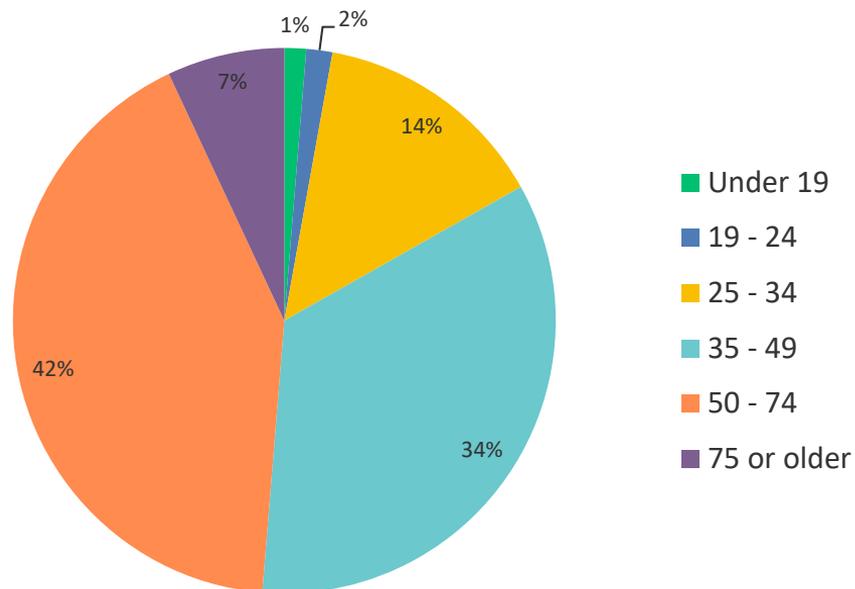
Q16: Select the phrase that best describes your housing. *Select one.*

Answered: 378 Skipped: 121



Q17: What is your age? *Select one.*

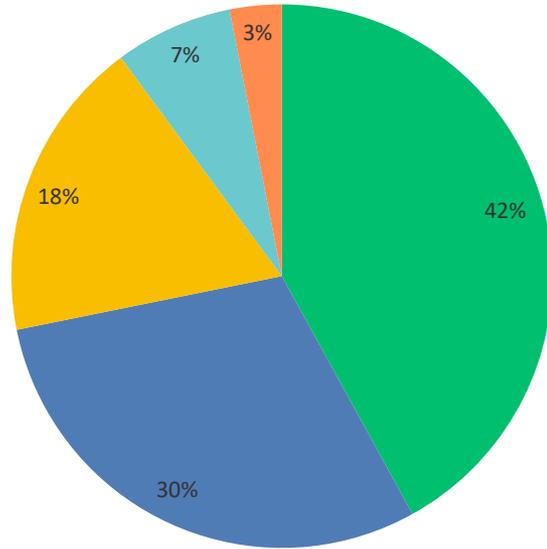
Answered: 386 Skipped: 120



Q18: What is your current living situation?

Select one.

Answered: 355 Skipped: 151



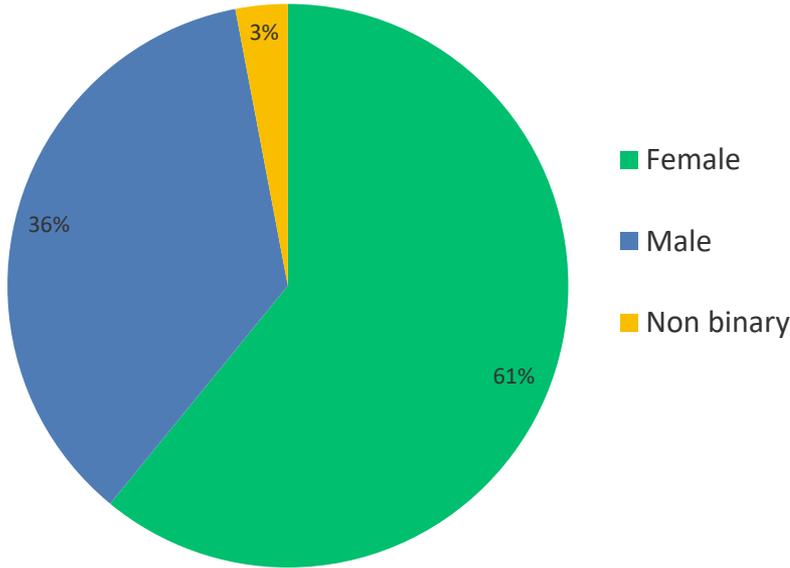
- Couple without children
- Couple with school-age children
- Single adult living alone
- Single adult - shared quarters
- Single parent with school-age children

Q19: Where do your children attend school? *Open ended.*

School	% of respondents with school-age children
Hillcrest Elementary	23%
Elementary out-of-town	17%
Middle/high school out-of-town	16%
Turners Falls High School	13%
Sheffield Elementary	9%
Great Falls Middle School	6%
Gill-Montague Regional School District, unspecified	5%
Homeschool	4%
Gill Elementary	3%
Franklin Technical School	3%
Preschool in Montague	2%

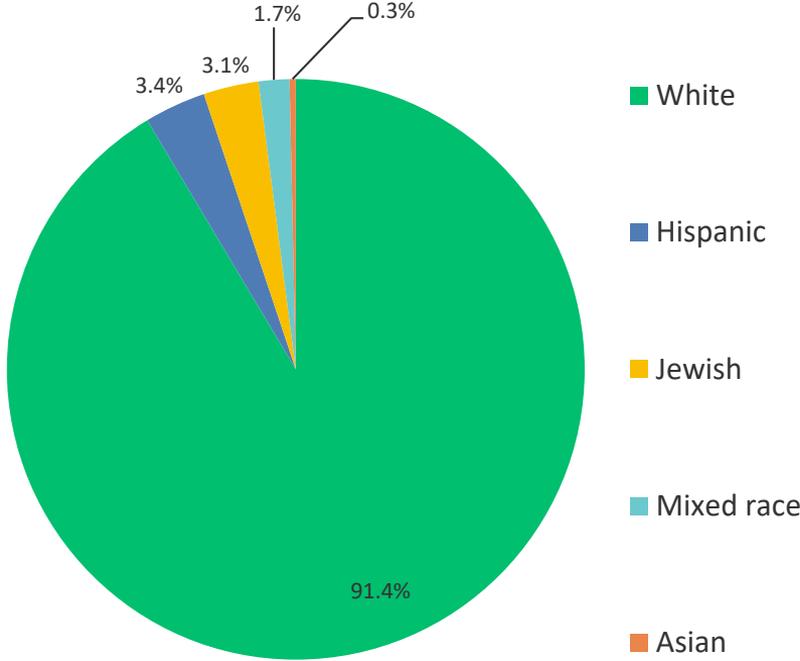
Q20: What is your gender? *Open ended.*

Answered: 334 Skipped: 174



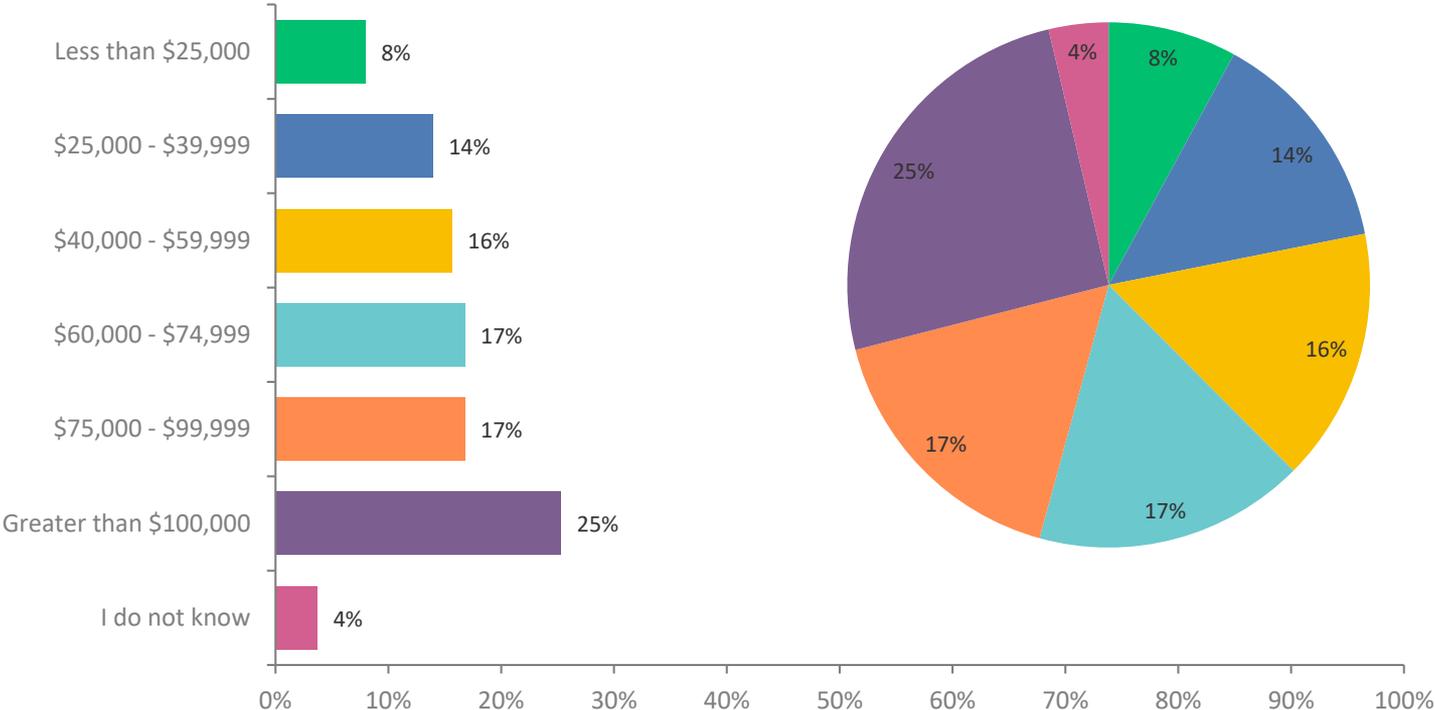
Q21: Which ethnic or racial group do you most closely identify with? *Open ended.*

Answered: 313 Skipped: 186



Q22: What is your approximate annual family income? *Select one.*

Answered: 346 Skipped: 153



Summary of Demographics of Survey Respondents Relative to Montague Population

Villages:

The majority of respondents are from the villages of Turners Falls and Montague Center. Turners Falls residents are slightly underrepresented, and Millers Falls residents are very underrepresented. (Table 1)

Housing:

Homeowners are overrepresented in the survey, at 82% compared to the actual rate of 61%.

Age:

Three-quarters (77%) of survey respondents were between the ages of 35 and 74, while this group represents 54% of the population. This survey was geared towards adults, so it was not expected to have a representative response rate from children and youth.

Table 1. Villages

Village	% of Responses	% of Current Pop.
Turners Falls	43%	45%
Montague Center	33%	
Montague City	4%	
Millers Falls	8%	14%
Lake Pleasant	3%	

*Current population as defined in U.S. Census. The Census only provides statistics for Turners Falls and Millers Falls

Summary of Demographics of Survey Respondents Relative to Montague Population

Gender:

Nearly 2 times as many female-identifying respondents (60%) took the survey as male-identifying (36%) and non-binary (3%) combined.

Race:

91.5% of survey respondents identified as white, closely matching the current population who is 90% white. Latinx respondents represented 4% of survey takers, closely matching the 4.7% of current residents.

Income:

The ratios of other income groups who responded corresponds fairly closely with current population, although the higher income groups are more represented in the survey, and people who earn less than \$25,000 are not well represented. (Table 2)

Table 2. Income

Income bracket	% of Responses	% of Current Pop.*
Less than \$25,000	8%	22%
\$25,000 - \$39,999	14%	15%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	16%	18%
\$60,000 - \$74,999	17%	6%
\$75,000 or more	42%	38%

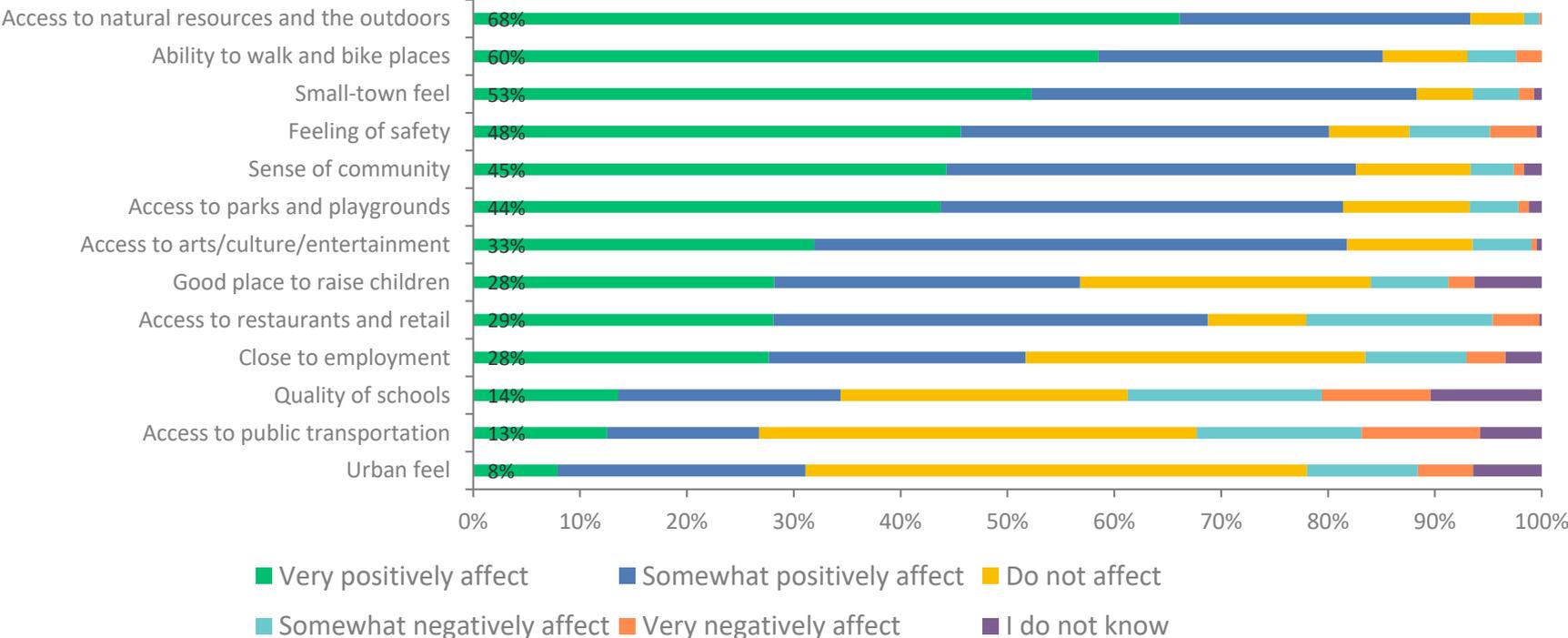
2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census
*% of the current population in brackets \$25,000 - \$39,000 and \$40,000 - \$59,000 had to estimated in order to match the survey question categories.

Quality of Life

Q2: How do the following factors affect your life in the Town of Montague?

Answered: 424 Skipped: 82

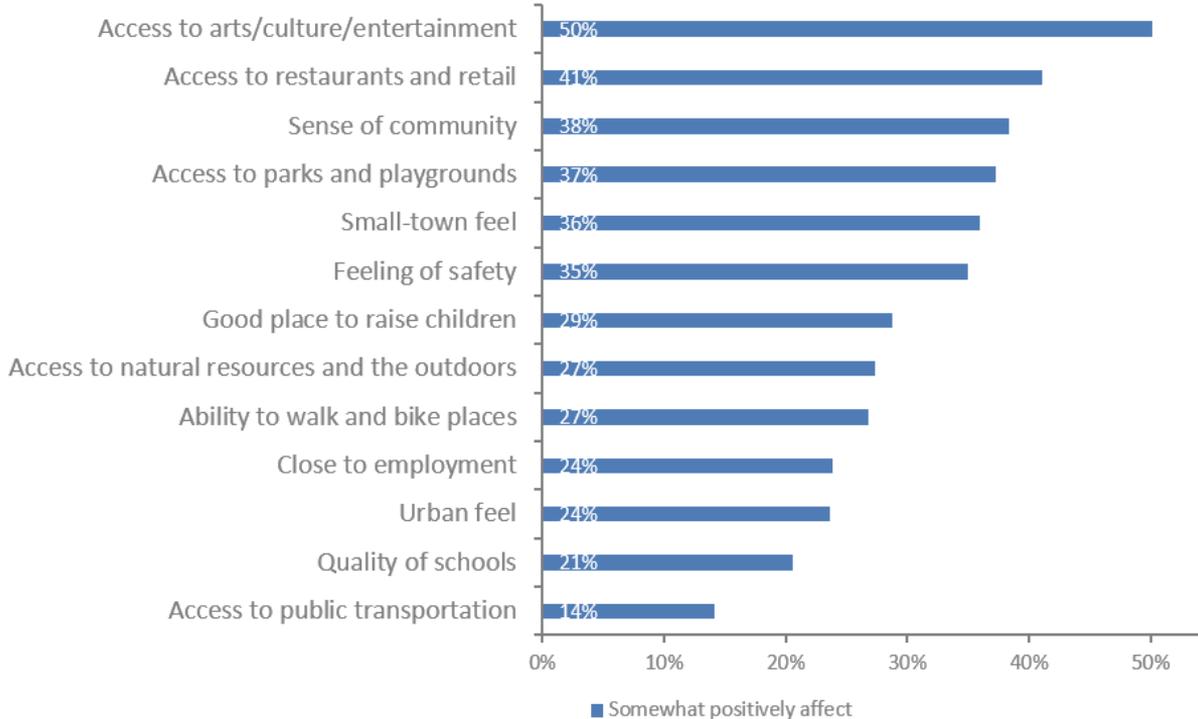
Ranked by those answering "Very positively affect"



Q2: How do the following factors affect your life in the Town of Montague?

Answered: 424 Skipped: 82

Ranked by those answering “Somewhat positively affect”



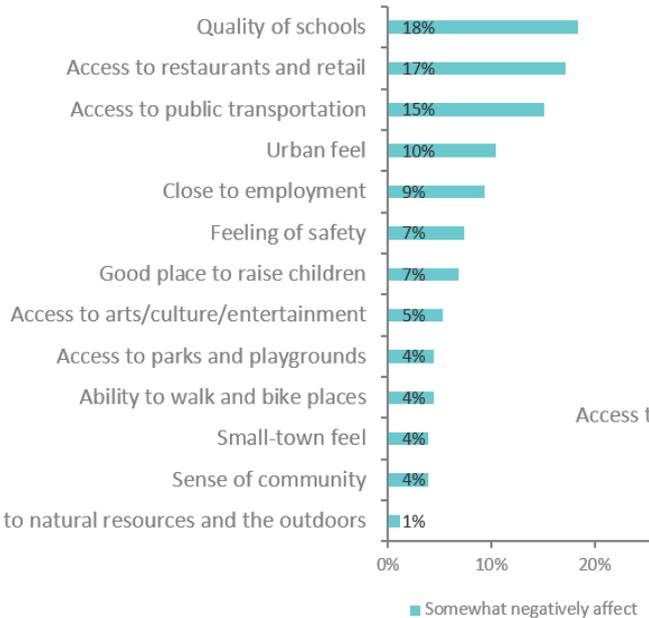
“Very positively” and “Somewhat positively” combined top 5 ranking:

1. Access to outdoors
2. Small-town feel
3. Ability to walk and bike
4. Sense of community
5. Access to arts/culture/entertainment

Q2: How do the following factors affect your life in the Town of Montague?

Answered: 424 Skipped: 82

Ranked by those answering “Somewhat negatively affect”



Ranked by those answering “Very negatively affect”



“Somewhat negatively” and
“Very negatively” combined
top 5 ranking:

1. Quality of schools
2. Access to public transportation
3. Access to restaurants and retail
4. Urban feel
5. Close to employment

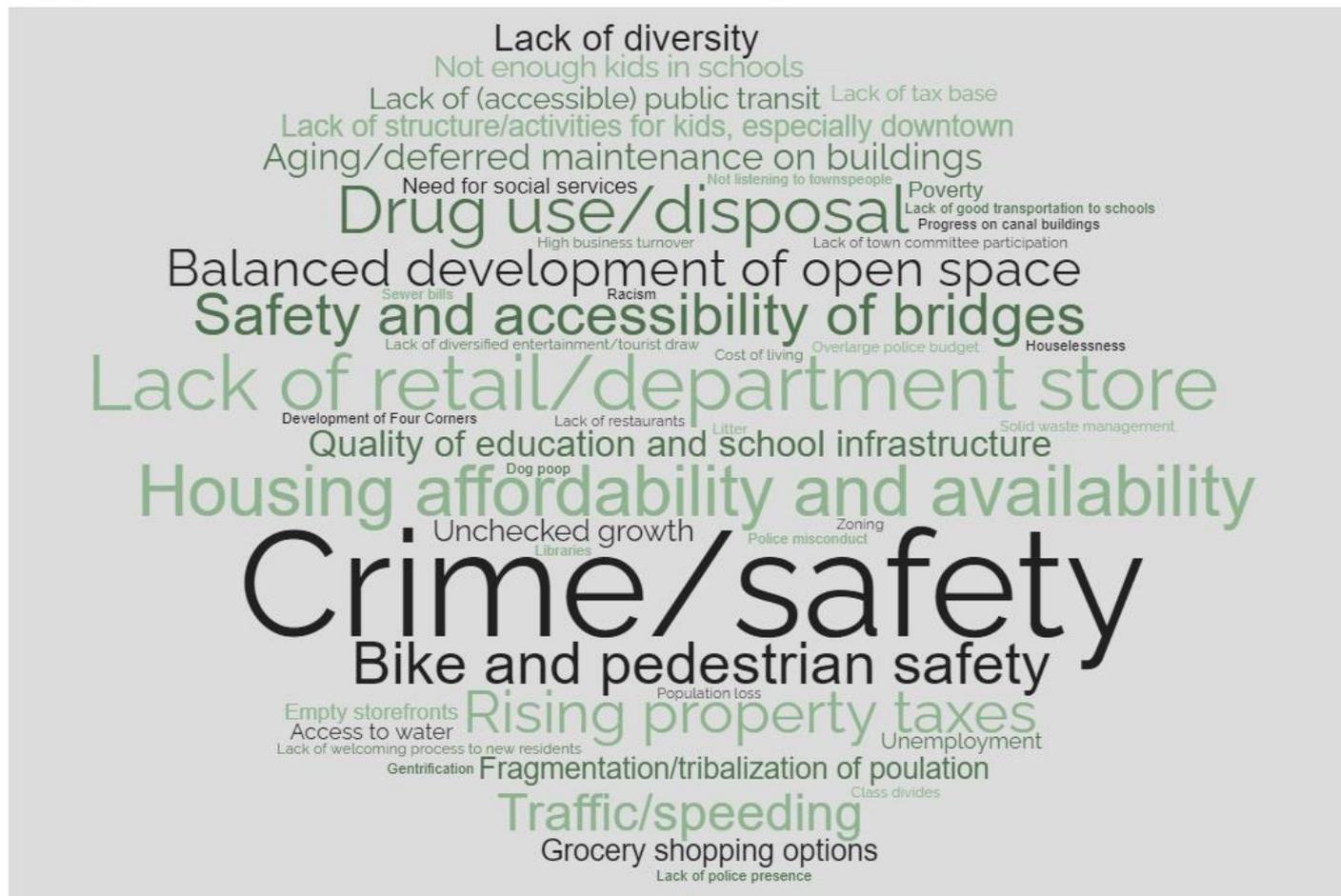
Q3: What is the best thing about our town? *Open ended.*

Answered: 352 Skipped: 154



Q4: What is your biggest concern about our town? *Opened ended.*

Answered: 354 Skipped: 152

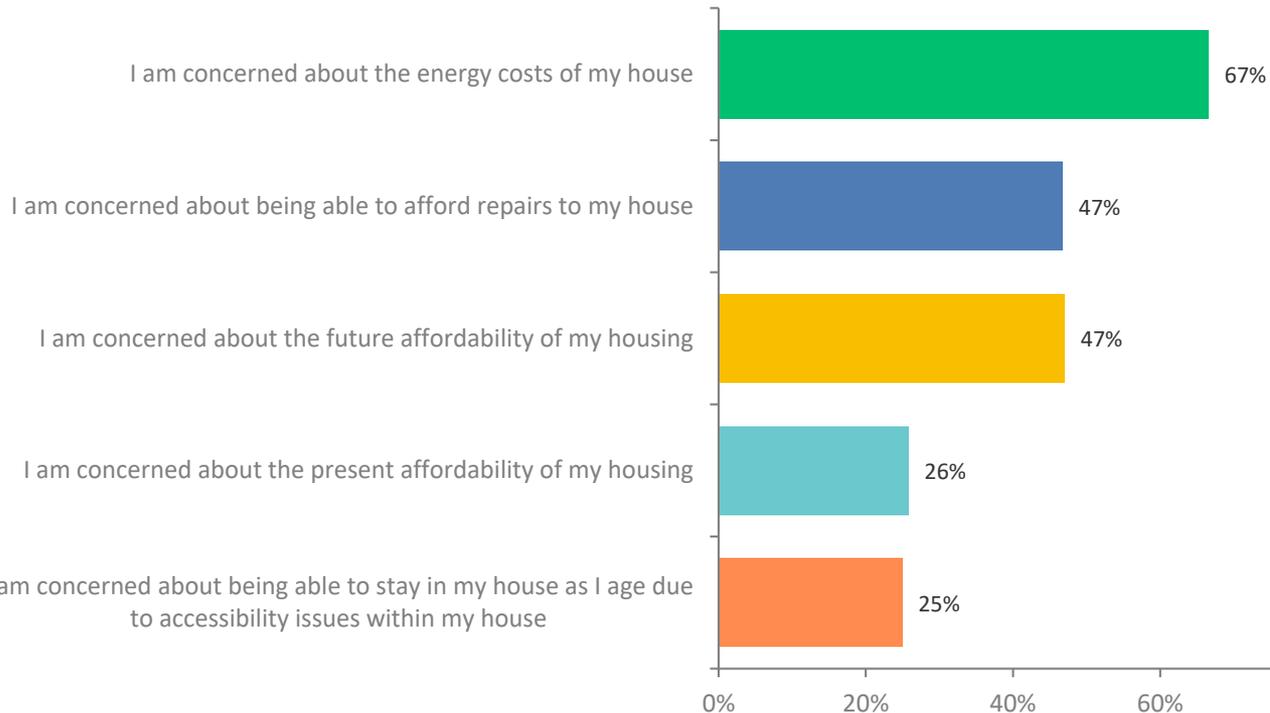


Housing

Q5: Do you agree with the following statements concerning housing in Montague?

Select all.

Answered: 353 Skipped: 153



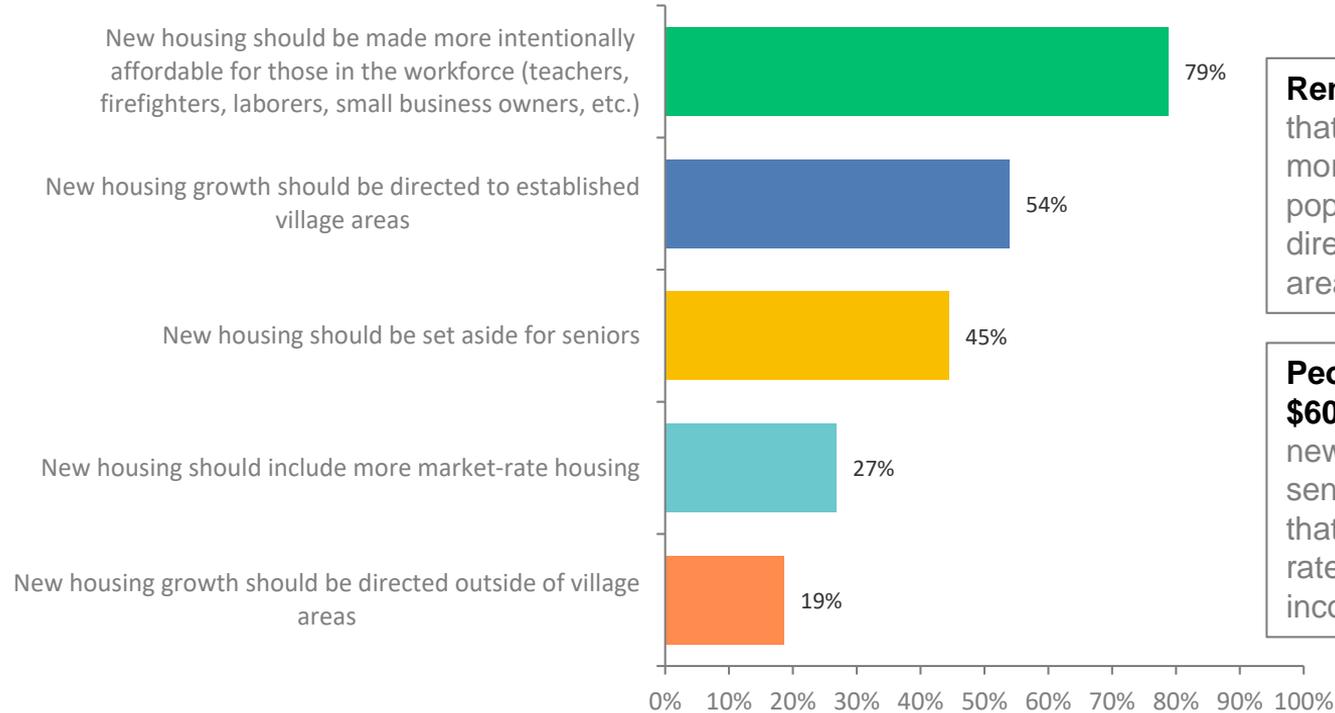
Renters were much more likely to be concerned about the present affordability of their housing (at 56%) and the future affordability of their housing (at 86%).

People with family incomes below \$60,000 were much more concerned about present affordability of their housing (at 40%); and slightly more concerned about the future affordability of their housing (at 56%), being able to afford repairs to their housing (at 54%), and about aging in their home (at 33%).

Q6: How should new housing be prioritized over the next 15 years?

Select all that apply.

Answered: 385 Skipped: 114



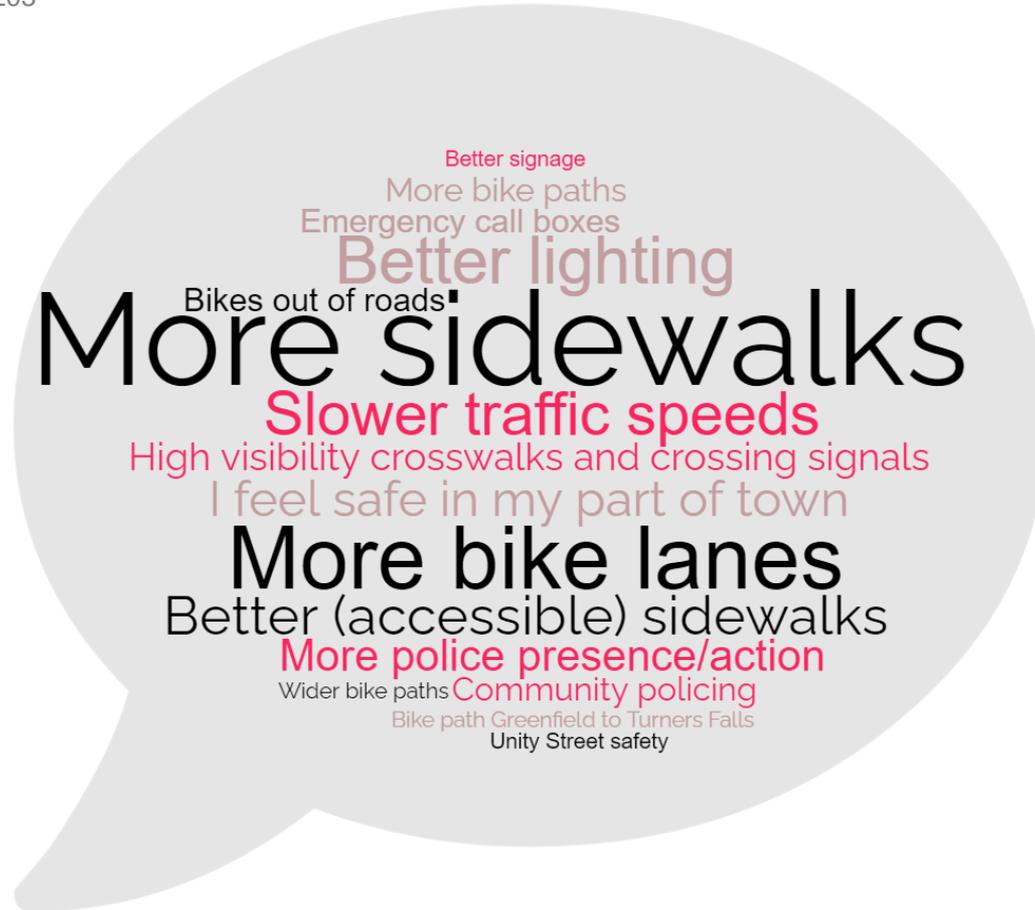
Renters were more likely to feel that new housing should be more affordable for workforce populations (85%) and be directed to established village areas (62%).

People with family incomes below \$60,000 are more likely to feel that new housing should be set aside for seniors (55%); and less likely to feel that new housing should be market-rate (21%) as compared to higher income families.

Transportation

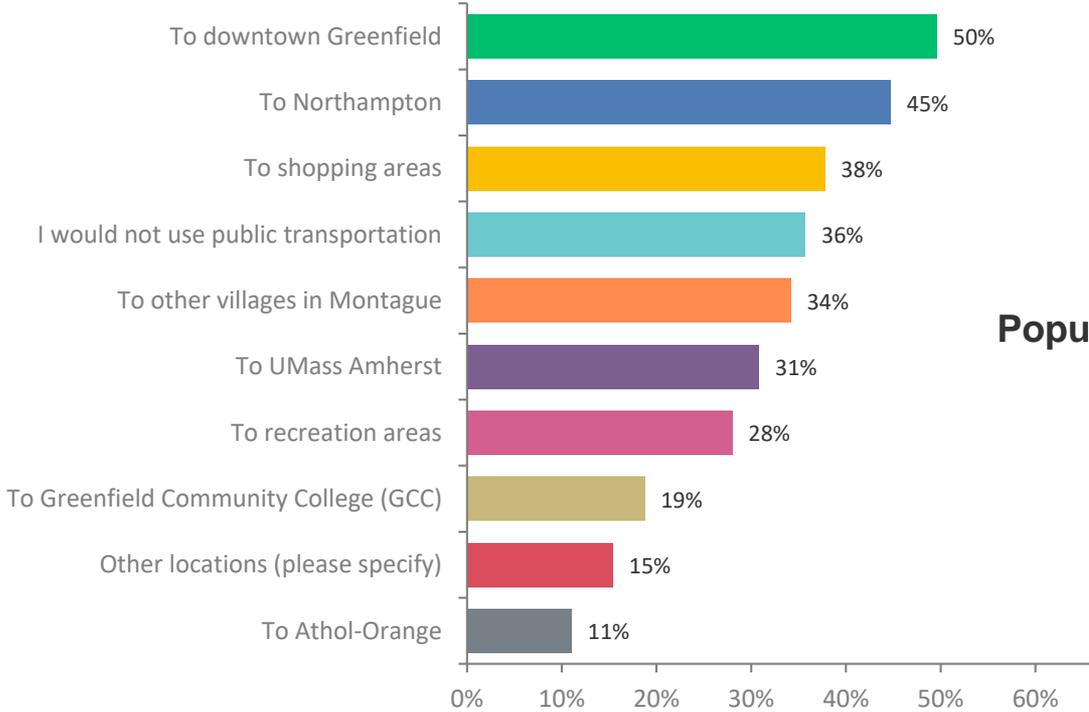
Q7: What could make walking and biking feel safer in town? *Select all that apply.*

Answered: 303 Skipped: 203



Q8: Where would you take public transportation if it were available? *Select all that apply.*

Answered: 389 Skipped: 117

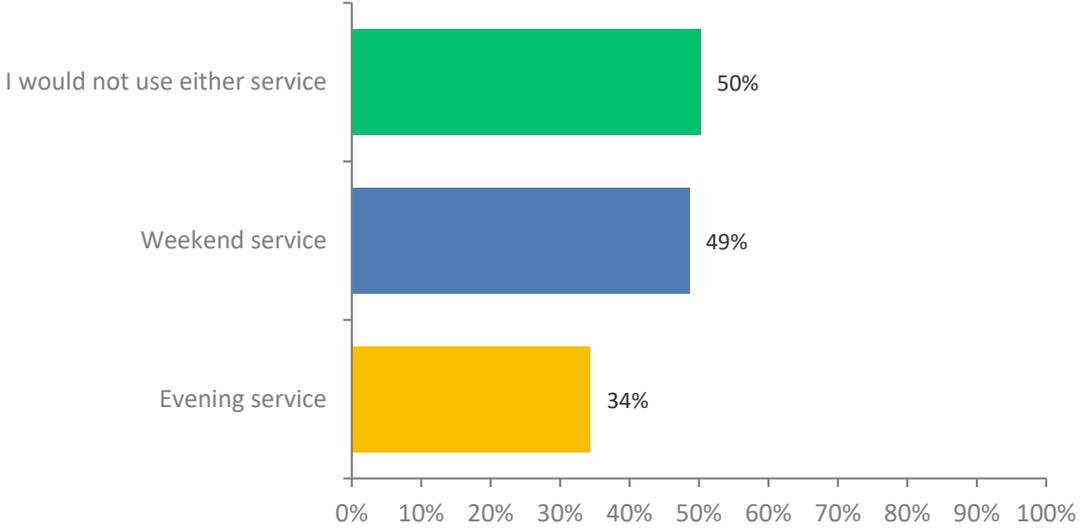


Popular other locations by # of mentions:

boston
northfield
downtown amherst
sunderland

Q9: Would you use the following public bus services if they were available? *Select all that apply.*

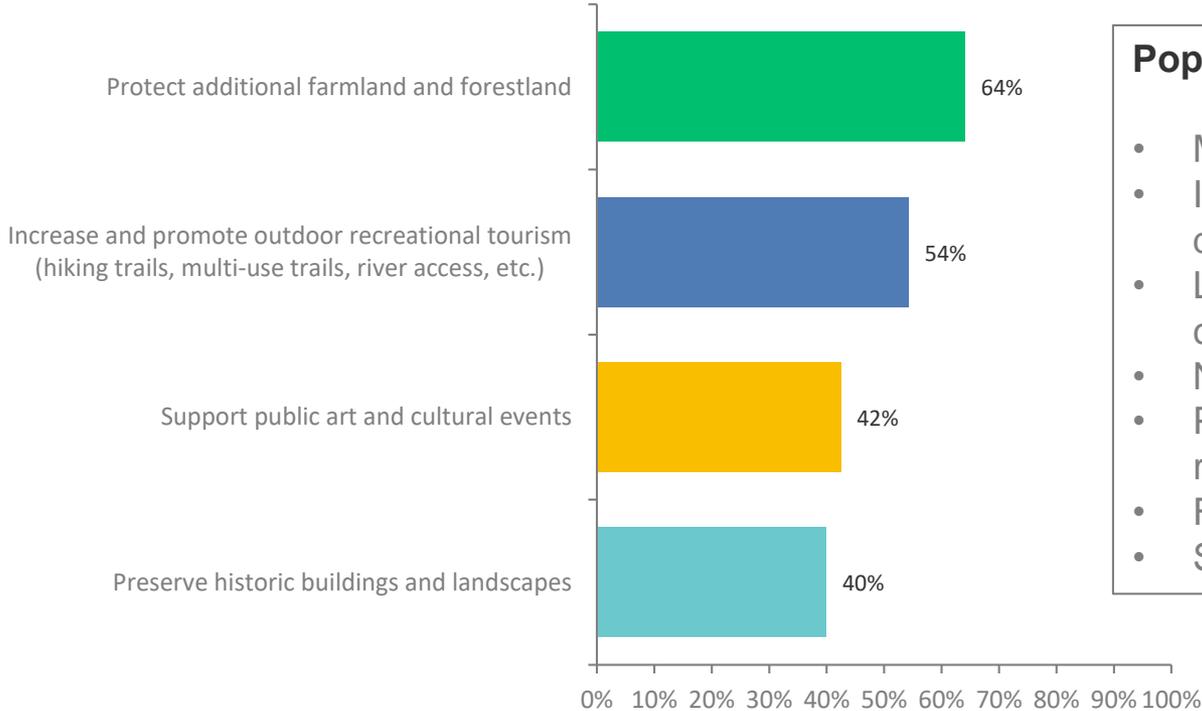
Answered: 367 Skipped: 132



Natural and Cultural Resources

Q10: How should the Town prioritize the following natural and cultural actions? *Select top TWO most important.*

Answered: 398 Skipped: 108



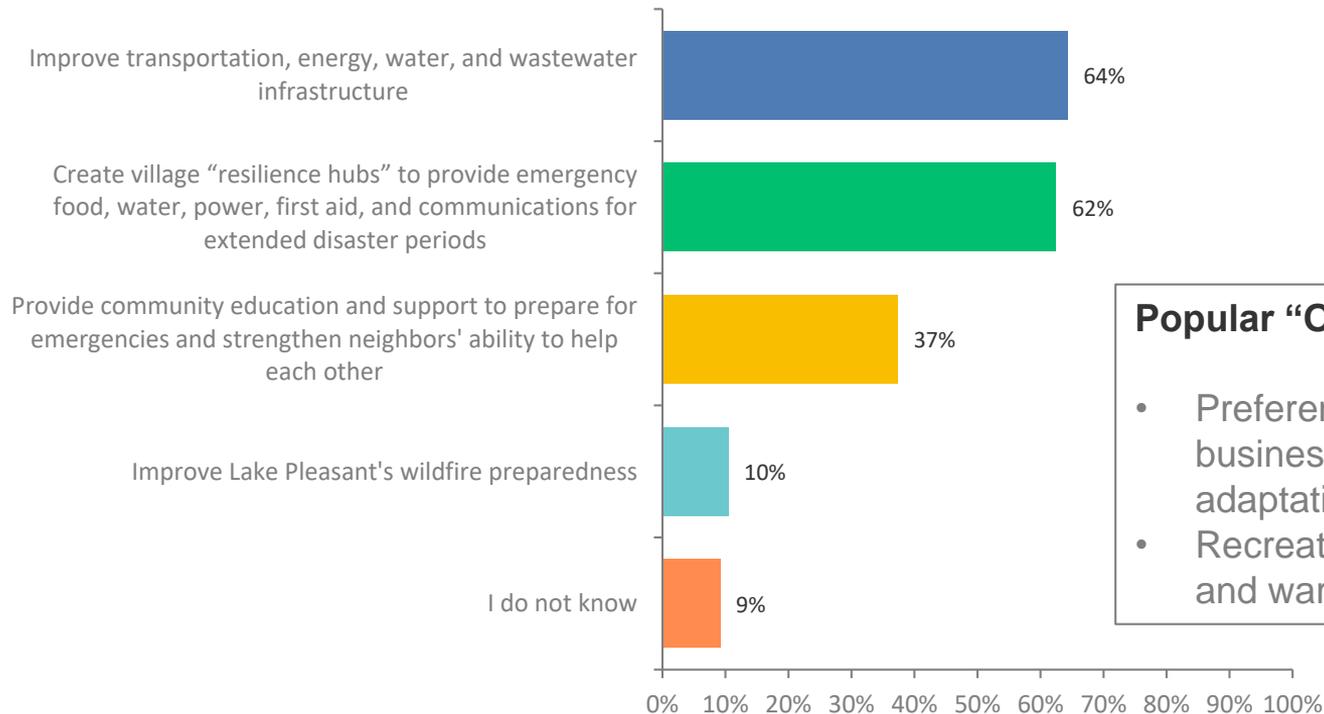
Popular “Other” answers:

- Multicultural activities
- Increase commercial development/reuse
- Land repatriation/support indigenous community
- New library
- Promote ecosystem health and resilience
- Focus on outdoor recreation tourism
- Support small business

Climate, Energy and Sustainability

Q11: Extreme weather and other environmental disasters are increasing due to climate change. Which of these top priorities should Montague focus on? *Select top TWO most important.*

Answered: 394 Skipped: 112

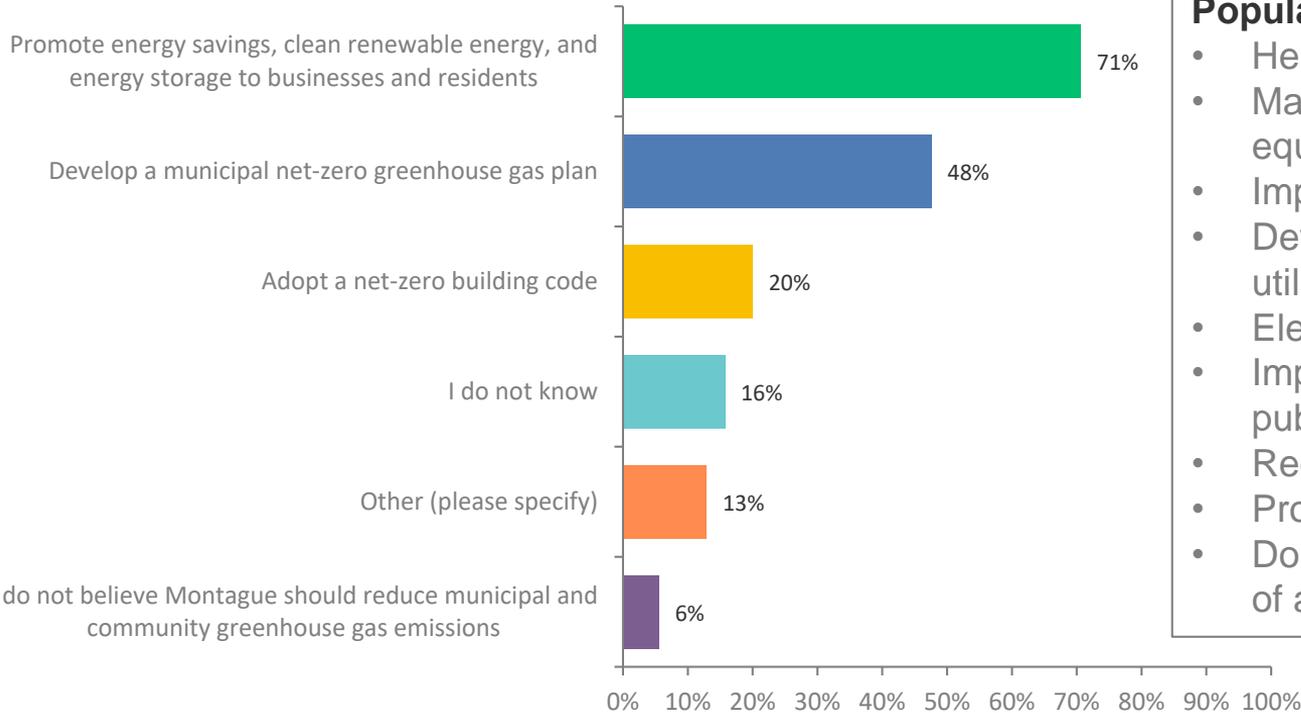


Popular "Other" answers:

- Preference for development and business growth over climate change adaptation
- Recreation center that acts as cooling and warming shelter

Q12: How should Montague reduce its polluting emissions to reduce climate change and protect health? *Select top TWO most important.*

Answered: 395 Skipped: 111



Popular “Other” answers:

- Help with residential energy transition
- Make sure net zero plan/code is equitable and financially sustainable
- Improve solid waste services
- Develop municipal solar/public energy utilities
- Electrify municipal landscaping tools
- Improve pedestrian, ride-share, and public transportation
- Reduce municipal and private mowing
- Promote solar
- Don't believe climate change is enough of a concern

Other ideas related to the environment, climate, energy, and sustainability (Q10 thru Q12)

Support net zero building

Do not need a Montague net-zero plan b/c already moving in that direction

Town's Greenhouse Gas Emissions are too insignificant to put work into

Install LED lighting with "dark sky" glare restrictions

Invest in commercial and business transition/growth

Sustainable building standards

Adaptive re-use of historic buildings with preservation parameters

Put solar on roofs instead of land

No more solar panels

Increase tax base

Lower tax rate for farmers

Lower tax rate for first responders

Allow for smaller houses and communal living

Mix uses so culture, living, work are all together and accessible

Stop spending public funds on land and building preservation

Limit short term rentals

Allow ADUs

Increase supply of market rate housing in Turners Falls village

Protect town from predatory holding companies

Stop gentrification

Home weatherization assistance

Incentivize homeowners to reduce carbon footprint

Create shuttle services to access shopping areas

More EV charging stations

Masks on vehicle tailpipes

Regenerative land management

Keep forests intact

Reforest trees when cut

Community gardens

Pollinator corridors

Return trash cans to The Patch

Reduce water pollution

Reduce pesticide use

Reduce risk of climate-related disasters

Clean up hazardous waste sites vulnerable to climate disasters

Clean stormwater drains

Improve areas of flooding

Decommission FirstLight dam

Stock emergency provisions on a town-wide scale

Improve emergency communication channels

Support skateboarding community

Boat launch ramp for non-motorized boats

Create a town swimming area

Outdoor art

Community Facilities and Services

Q13: Please rank the following actions that the Town could take in order of importance to you.

Answered: 371 Skipped: 128

Average ranking where
 1 = most important
 4 = least important

- #1 Invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and climate resilience for all facilities owned by the Town. 1.9
- #2 Invest to make municipal facilities more available for public use, social and cultural events, and/or recreational uses. 2.3
- #3 Improve the quality of municipal facilities and services. 2.7
- #4 Each of the five villages should have a physical space for community gatherings. 2.9

People with family incomes below \$60,000 were slightly more likely to regard improvement of municipal facilities and services and community gathering space at in each village as most important.

Renters and **people with children** were less likely to find each of the four actions as important.

Q14: Is there a municipal service or facility that is not offered that the Town should consider providing? Please describe.

Answered: 162 Skipped: 344



Q15: What municipal improvements or municipal priorities would you like Montague officials to focus on over the next 15 years?

Answered: 221 Skipped: 278



Top 5

1. Libraries
2. Transportation infrastructure
3. Schools
4. Bike and pedestrian infrastructure
5. Affordable housing

General

Q23: Is there anything not addressed in this survey that you believe to be important in planning for the future of our community?

Answered: 166 Skipped: 340

Common topics covered by open-ended responses were also covered in open-ended responses to earlier questions. Specific ideas related to long-term comprehensive planning will be captured in the written plan.