

# Community Survey Report

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**BOROUGH OF DOWNINGTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

# Survey Overview

**Purpose:** To gather feedback from residents, business owners, employees, and visitors to the Borough of Downingtown to inform priorities for the Comprehensive Plan

Multiple choice, satisfaction ratings, and prioritization questions, along with opportunities to elaborate on their answers in comment boxes

Taken by people that live, work, and own properties and/ or businesses in the Borough of Downingtown

Open from July 1<sup>st</sup> – August 28<sup>th</sup>  
**920 Responses**

## BOROUGH OF DOWNINGTOWN Comprehensive Plan

***Tell Us What You Think!***

Take the Borough of Downingtown  
Community Survey

Share your thoughts on housing, business, the  
environment, and more!



Scan the QR code to take the survey!



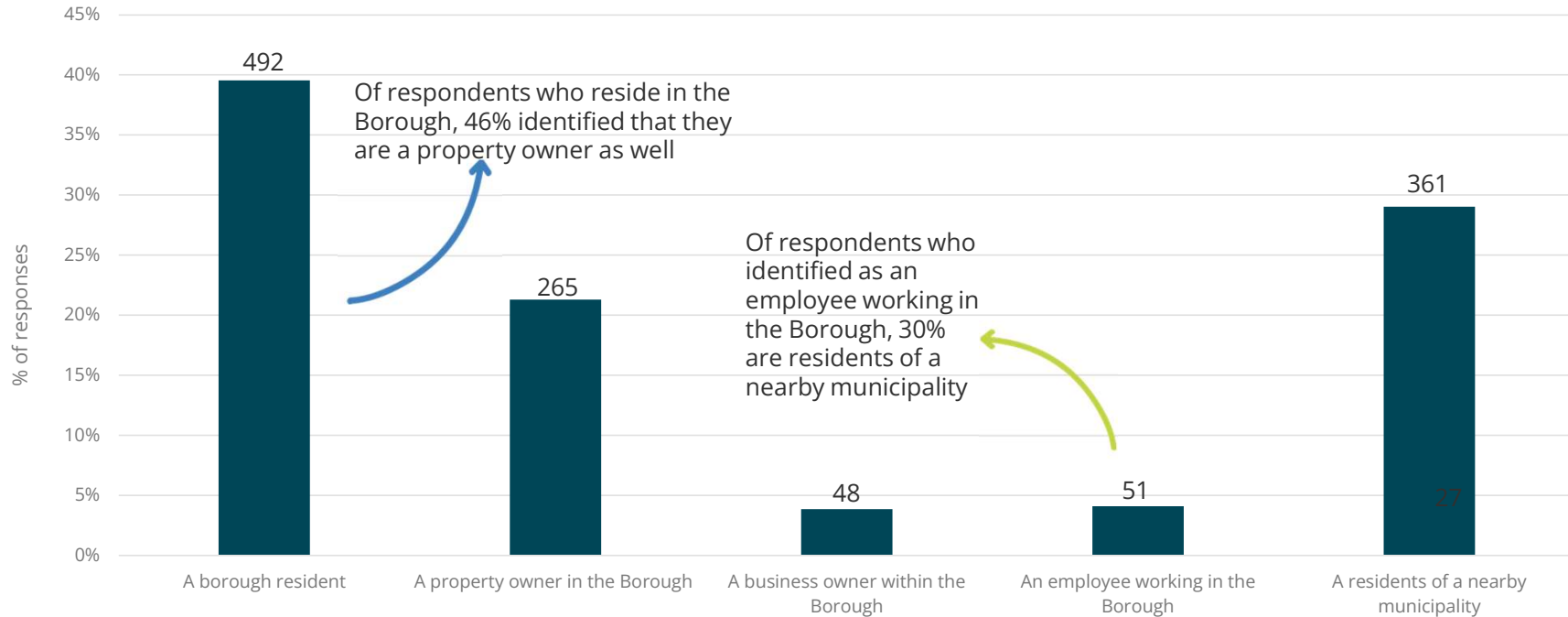
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/downingtwn>

# Demographic Information



- I am a....
- Where do you live in the Borough?
- How old are you?
- What is your race/ ethnicity?

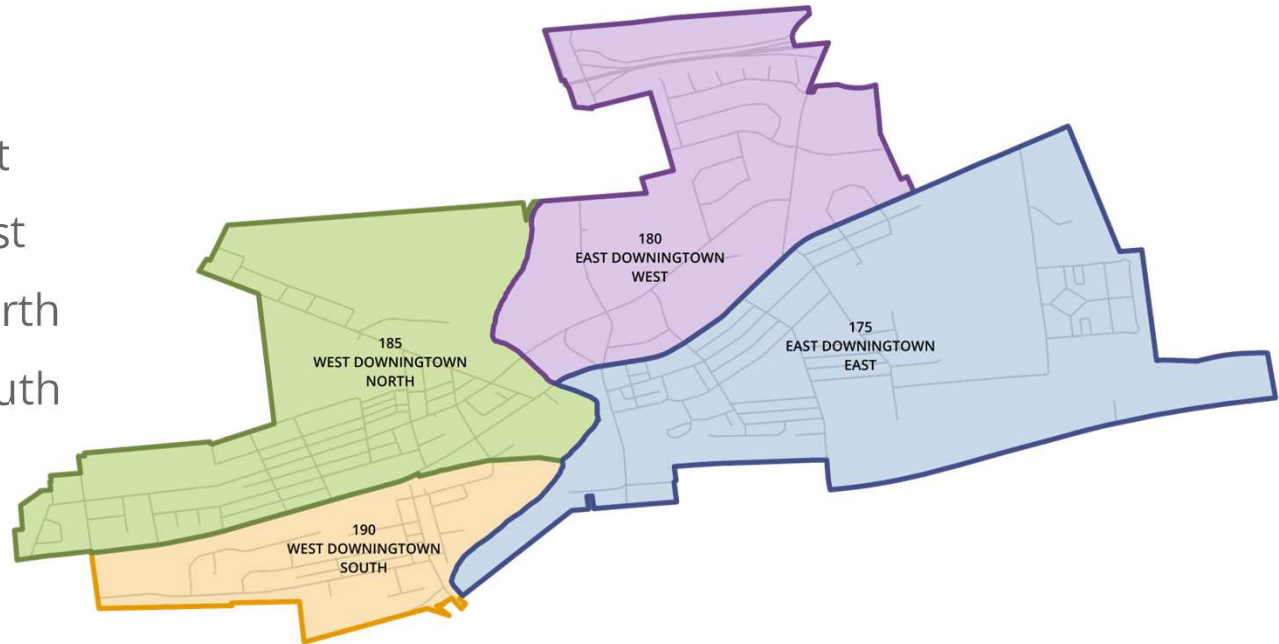
# I am a...



# Where do you live in the Borough?

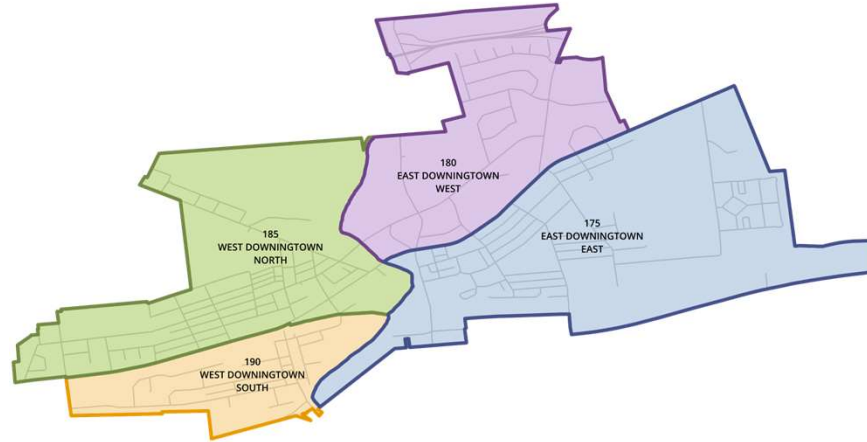
To analyze responses based on geographic location in the borough, voting districts were used.

- 175 – East Downingtown East
- 180 – East Downingtown West
- 185 – West Downingtown North
- 190 – West Downingtown South

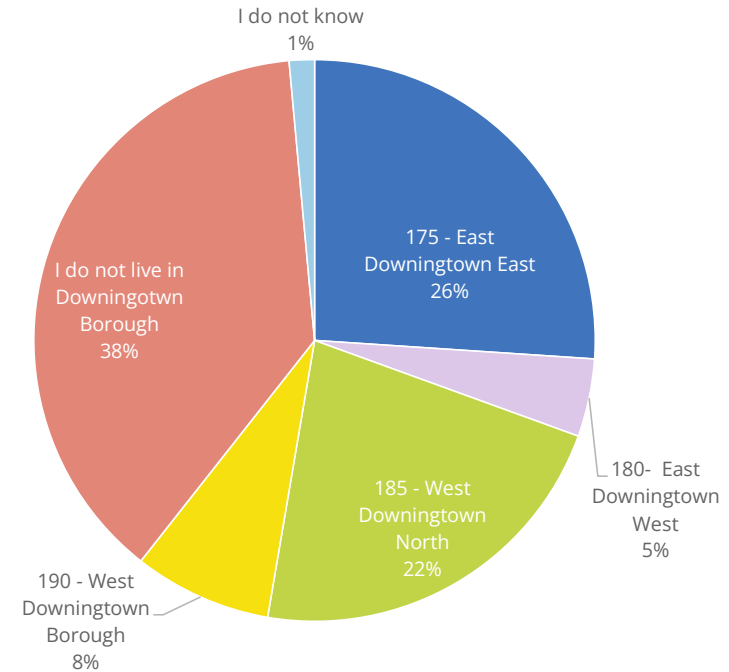


# Where do you live in the Borough?

To analyze responses based on geographic location in the borough, voting districts were used:



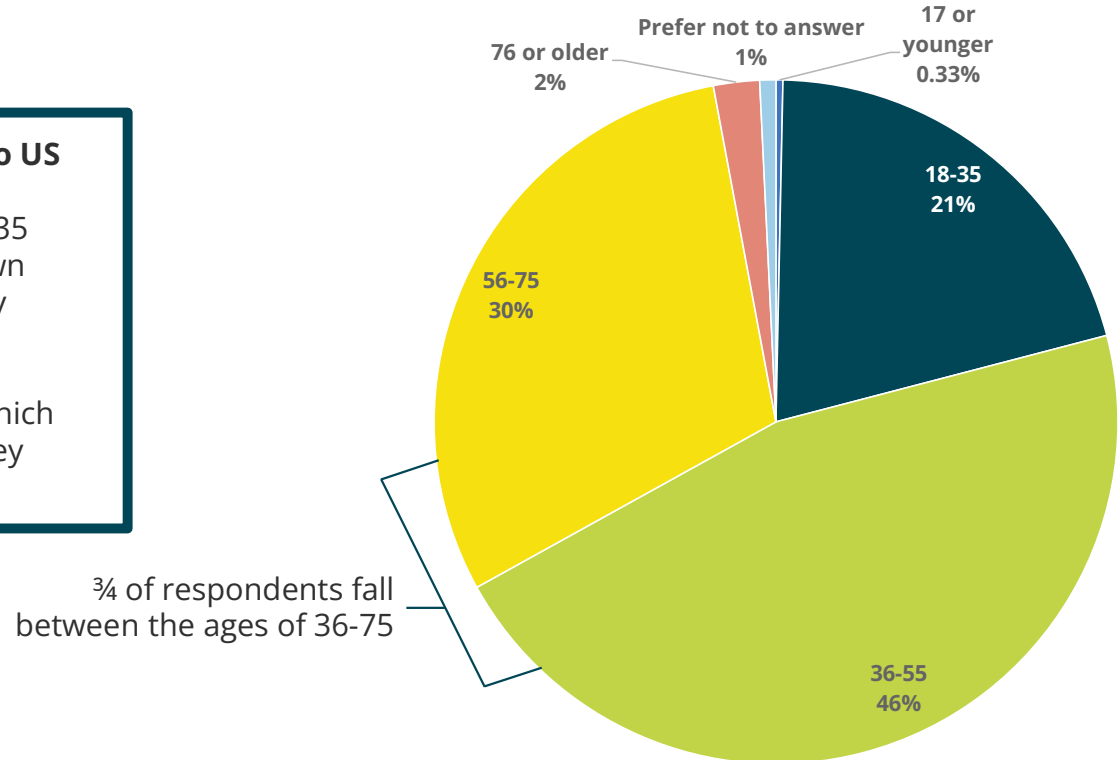
- Of respondents who identified as residents of a nearby municipality, the majority live in East Brandywine or East Caln Township
- Aligns with the districts that have the most housing units (West Downingtown North and East Downingtown East)



# How old are you?

## How do the survey findings compare to US Census data?

- According to US Census residents 18-35 make up 24% of the total Downingtown population, 3% higher than the survey responses
- Median age for the Borough is 39.3 which falls within the largest section of survey respondents

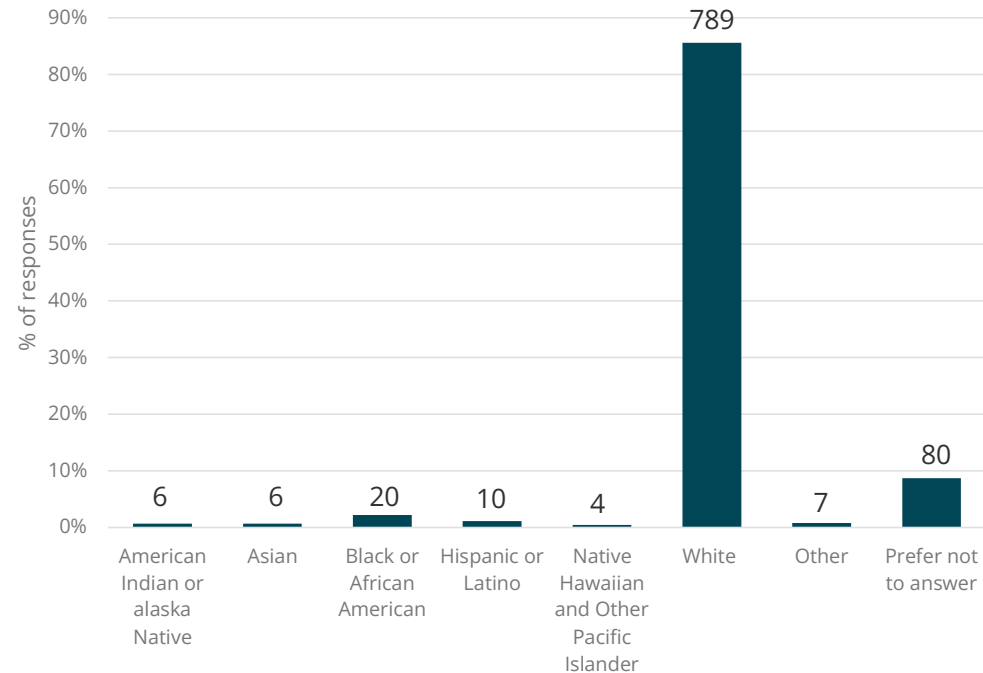


# What is your race/ethnicity?

## How do the survey findings compare to US Census data?

The survey response data aligns with US Census data on race and ethnicity for the county.

- Majority of respondents identify as white (86.51%)
- 1.1% of the respondents identify as Hispanic or Latino





# Living and Working in Downingtown



**To better understand Borough residents' experiences, the following questions could only be answered by those who responded that they were a Borough residents in the first question:**

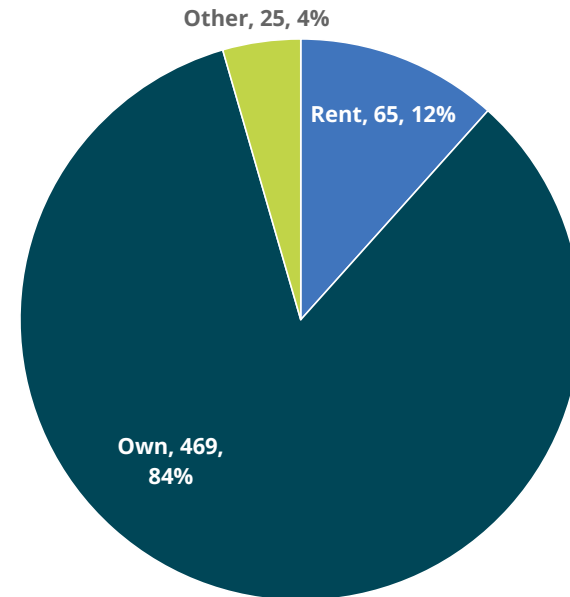
- Do you rent or own your home?
- How long have you lived in Downingtown Borough?
- Why did you move to Downingtown Borough?
- How do you commute to work?
- Do you work in the Borough?
- Do you volunteer in Downingtown Borough?

# Do you rent or own your home?

- 20% of respondents who are renters are ages 18-35
- Of respondents who identified as renters, 38% have lived in the Borough for less than 1 year

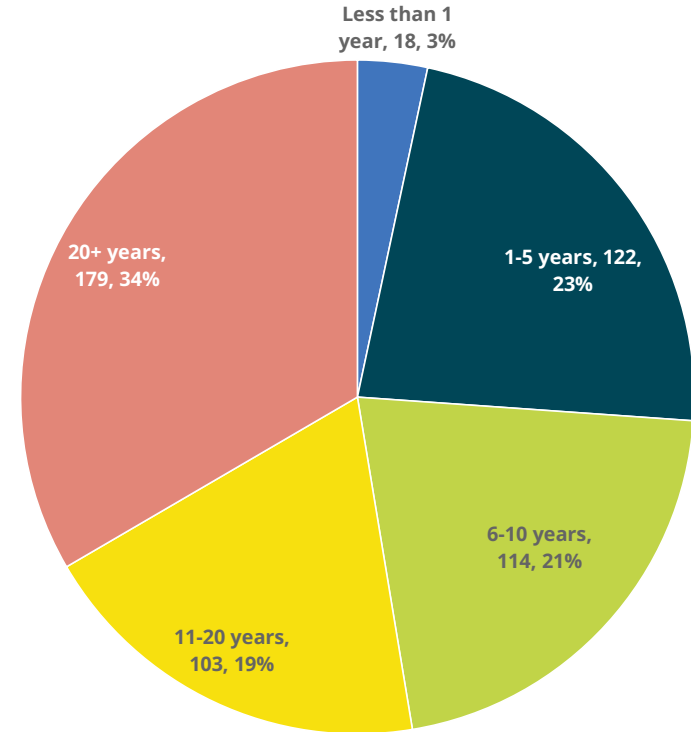
## Census Data Comparison

According to the US Census, 40% of housing units in the Borough are renter occupied



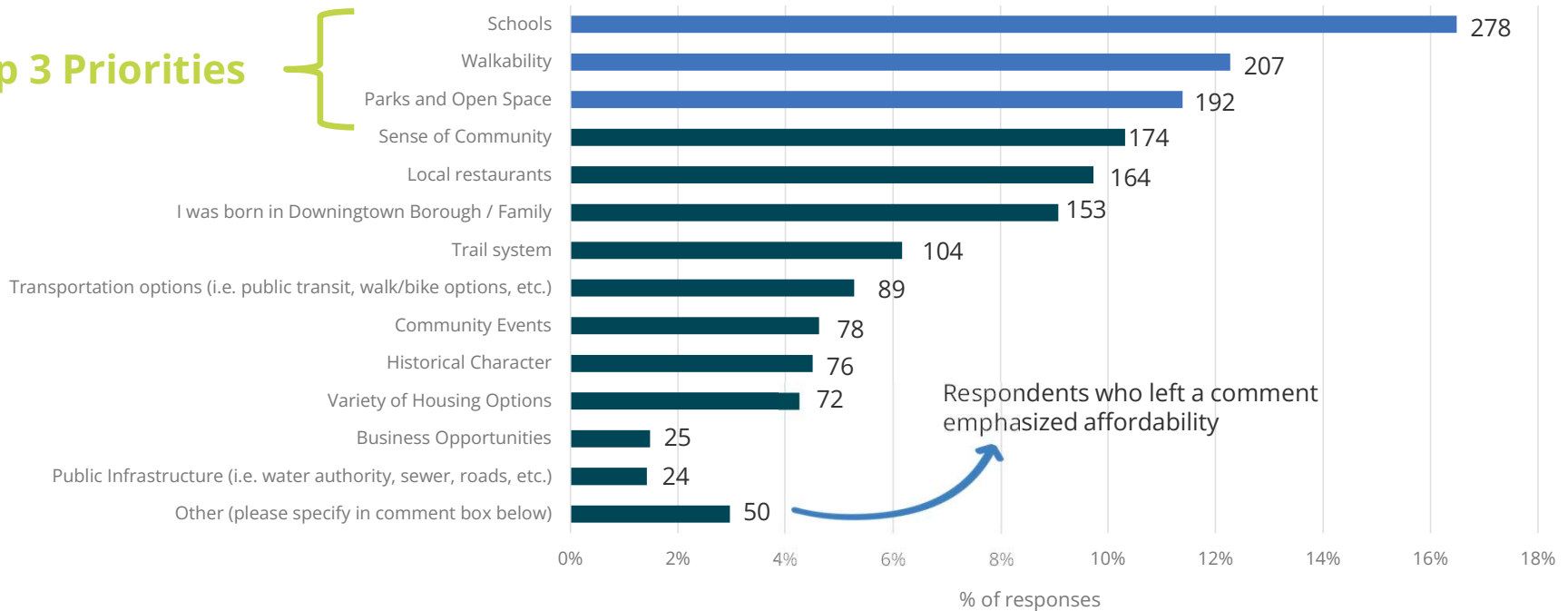
# How long have you lived in Downingtown Borough?

- Of respondents who identified as renters, 20% have lived in the Borough for more than 20+ years
- Of respondents who identified as property owners, 22% have lived in the Borough for 1-5 years
- Respondents aged 18-35 are most likely to have lived in the Borough for less than 1 year

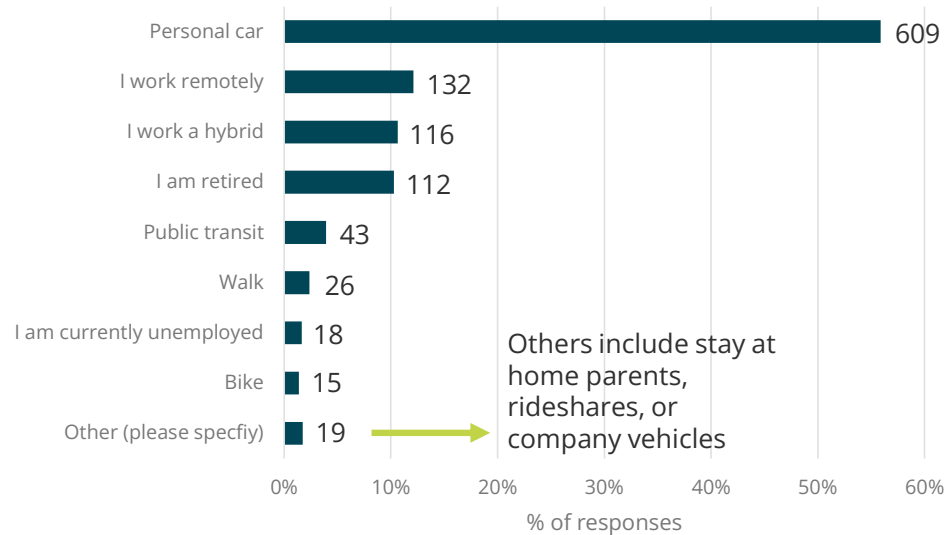


# Why did you move to Downingtown Borough?

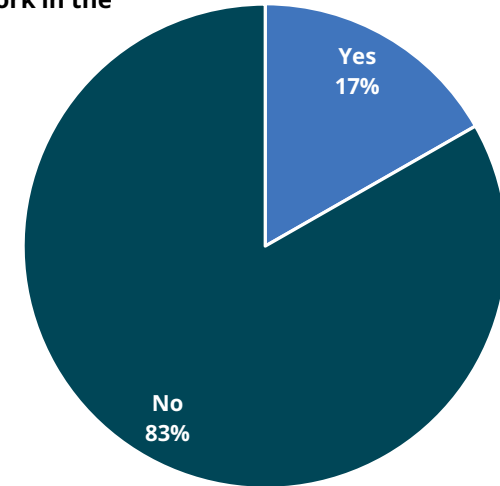
## Top 3 Priorities



# How do you commute to work?



Do you work in the Borough?



- Respondents aged 36-55 are most likely to take public transit
- Of respondents who identified as living in another borough, 10% work in Downingtown

# Do you volunteer in Downingtown Borough?

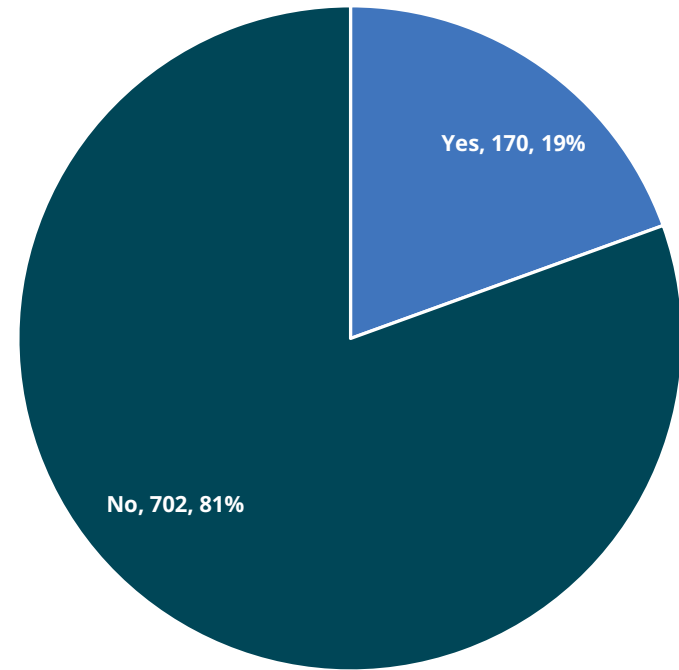
- Of respondents who left a comment, 15% said they volunteer with a community / civic group

All of the committees are best friends, family or cliques. If you're not born in Downingtown, you'll be treated as an outsider.

Most of the events have poor communication for volunteering

I volunteer in neighboring municipalities - with Downingtown Area Robotics (Exton), my daughter's dance team (Lionville), our church (East Whiteland), and my daughter's school (East Goshen).

I help at my kids' preschool. I'd also like to volunteer for some civic activities as well.



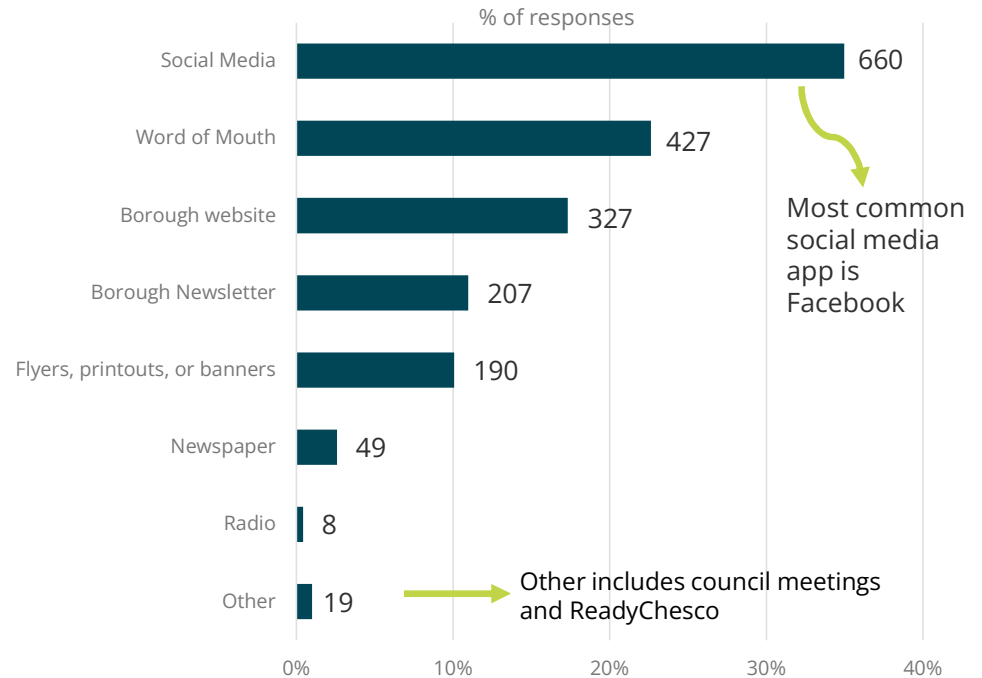
# Communications



- How do you find out about Borough news, events, and resources?
- What is your preferred method of communication for emergency warnings (e.g., hazardous weather warnings)?
- Please rate the Borough's overall communication regarding Borough news, events, volunteer activities, etc.
- How could communication from the Borough be improved?

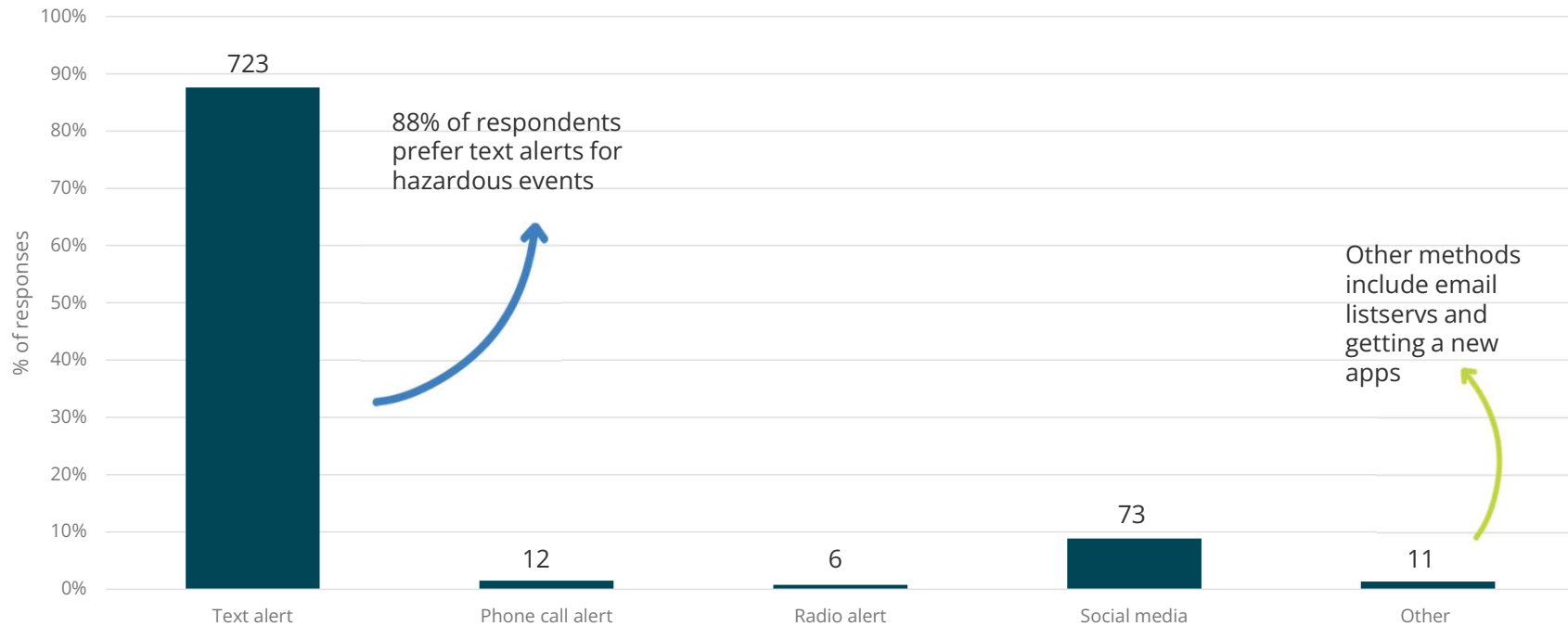
# How do you find out about Borough news, events, and resources?

- 78% of respondents find out about news from social media
- Respondents who have lived in the Borough for 6-10 years are the most likely to use the Borough newsletter (34%)
  - Respondents who have lived in the Borough for 20+ years are most likely to use the Borough website (55%)
- Word of mouth is used the most by those 76 or older (66%)





# What is your preferred method of communication for emergency warnings (e.g., hazardous weather warnings)?



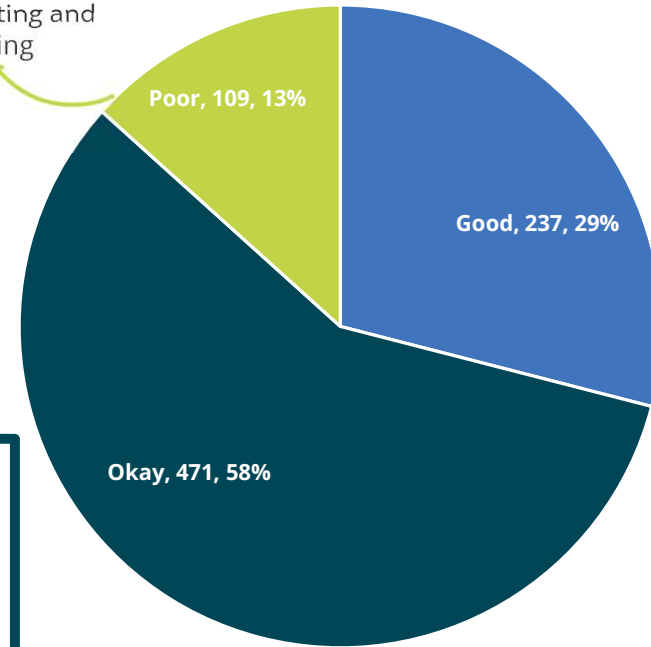
# Please rate the Borough's overall communication regarding news, events, volunteer activities, etc.

- 16% of respondents in East Downingtown East believe Borough communications is poor
- Respondents aged 18-35 (18%) and business owners (31%) are the most likely to believe Borough communications are poor

The Borough is terrible at communicating outward to the community. Their social media posts are few and have little information. The newsletter provides limited information and requires too many "clicks" to get to.

When there is news I don't really hear about it. I don't get a flyer in the mail saying "hey neighbor, good neighbor day is coming!!" At most a banner appears on a street lamp.

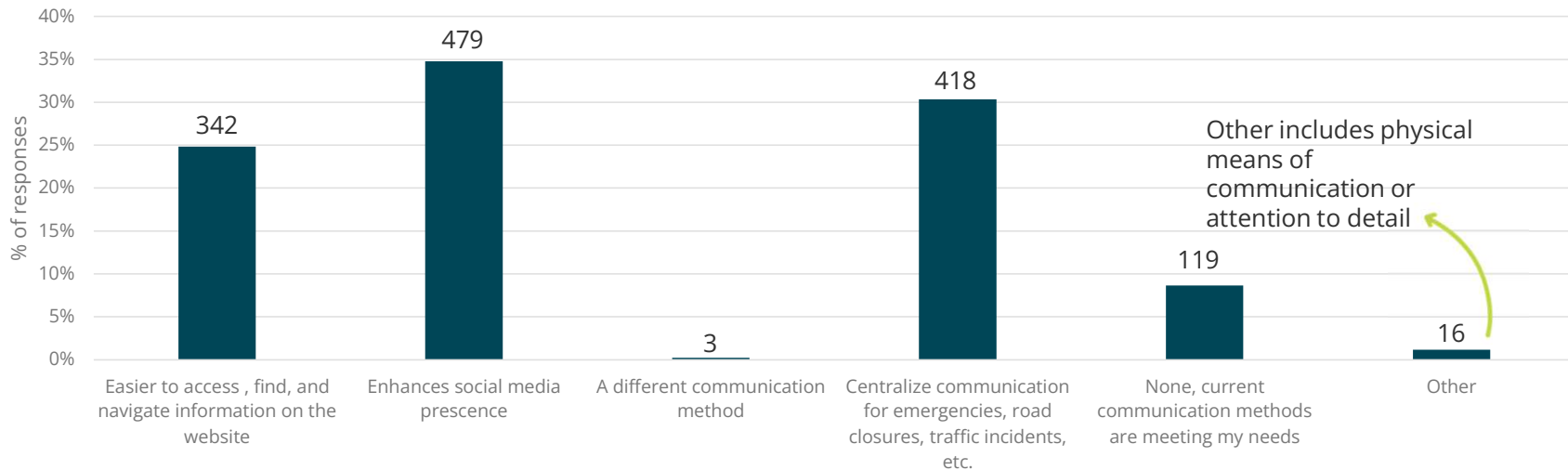
Common complaints include inconsistent posting and difficulty navigating



Others say there is enough information out there between different websites

# How could communication from the Borough be improved?

- 42% of respondents who left a comment wrote that an increase in accessibility would help
- Other responses focused on physical means of communication i.e., a mailing list

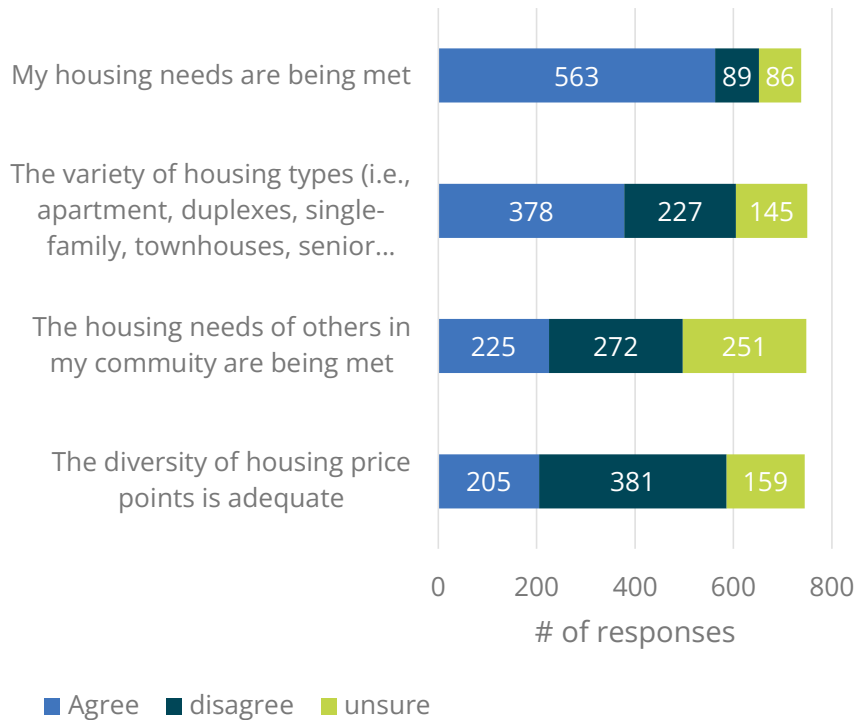


# Housing



- Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about housing in the Borough
- In Downingtown, I would like to see more housing like...
- Which three housing-related initiatives should Downingtown prioritize?

# Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about housing in the Borough?



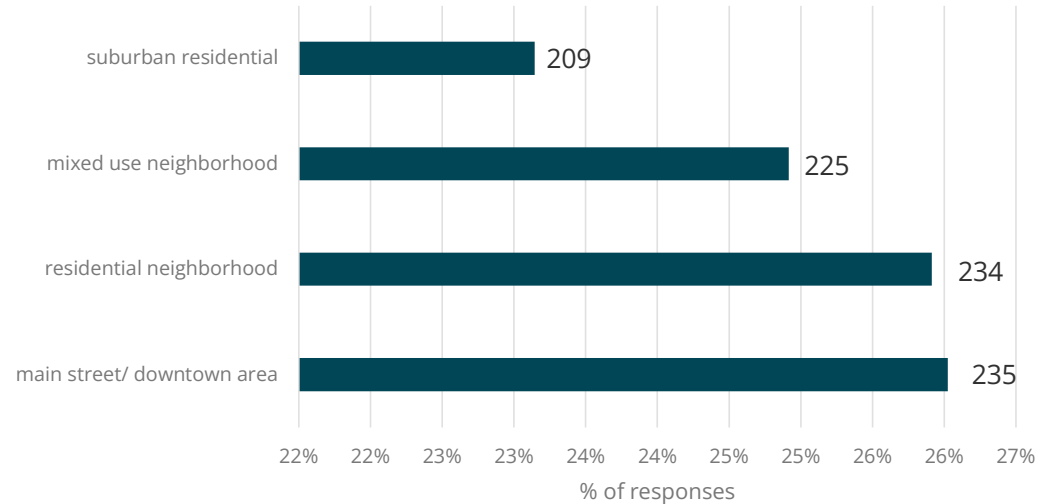
- Respondents aged 18-35 were most likely to disagree that their housing need is being met
- Across all demographics people were most likely to disagree that the diversity of housing price points is adequate
- Majority of respondents who left a comment said housing affordability is a problem

Many seniors on a fixed income and lower-income residents (service industry, single parents and disabled) seem to have difficulty securing affordable housing in good repair. Hurricane Ida only exacerbated this problem.

The common theme is that there is not enough affordable housing in the area and the mega apartment complexes are driving costs up.

# In Downingtown, I would like to see more housing like...

- Business owners were the most likely to pick main street / downtown area housing (54%)
- Respondents ages 18-35 were the most likely to want suburban residential (44%)
- Respondents who left a comment explained they do not want to see anymore growth in the Borough

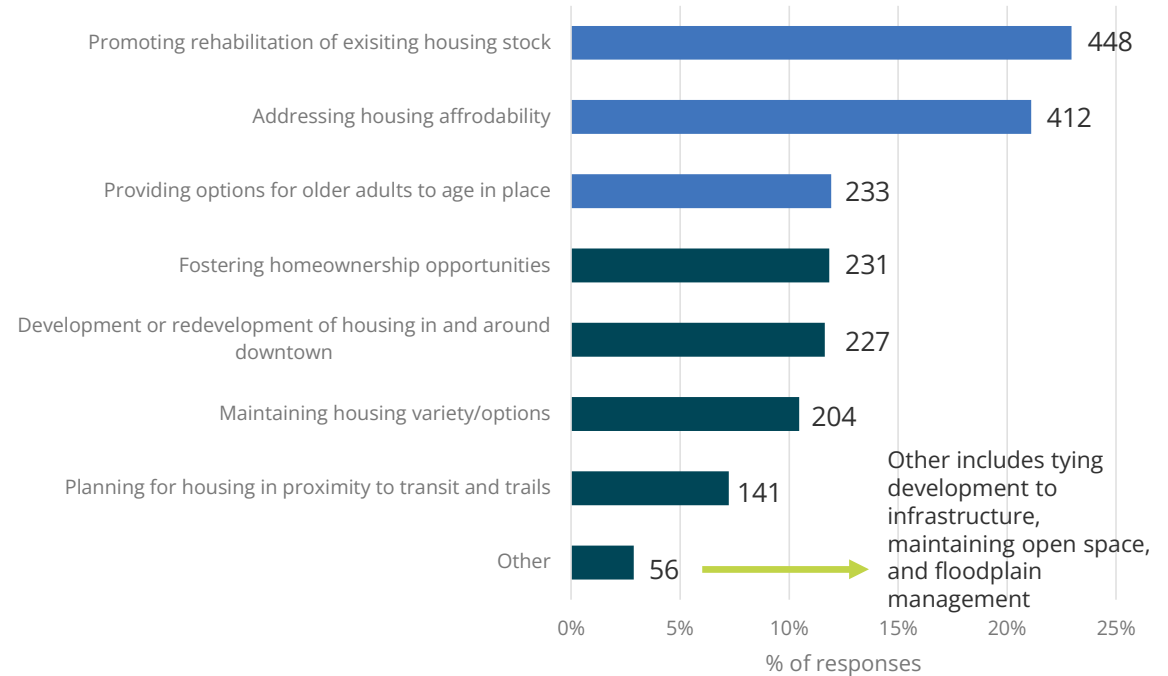


# Which three housing-related initiatives should Downingtown prioritize?

- Respondents who have lived in the Borough the longest want to see housing affordability addressed the most

Addressing housing cannot be done in a vacuum. The roads/infrastructure need to be addressed as well.

Protection or buy out of houses in repeatedly flooded areas. This will be an increasing concern with climate change.



# Transportation and Connectivity



- How do you get around the Borough?
- How satisfied are you with the following transportation infrastructure in the Borough?
- How often do you use the existing trails in or near the Borough?
- Which three transportation and connectivity initiatives should Downingtown prioritize?

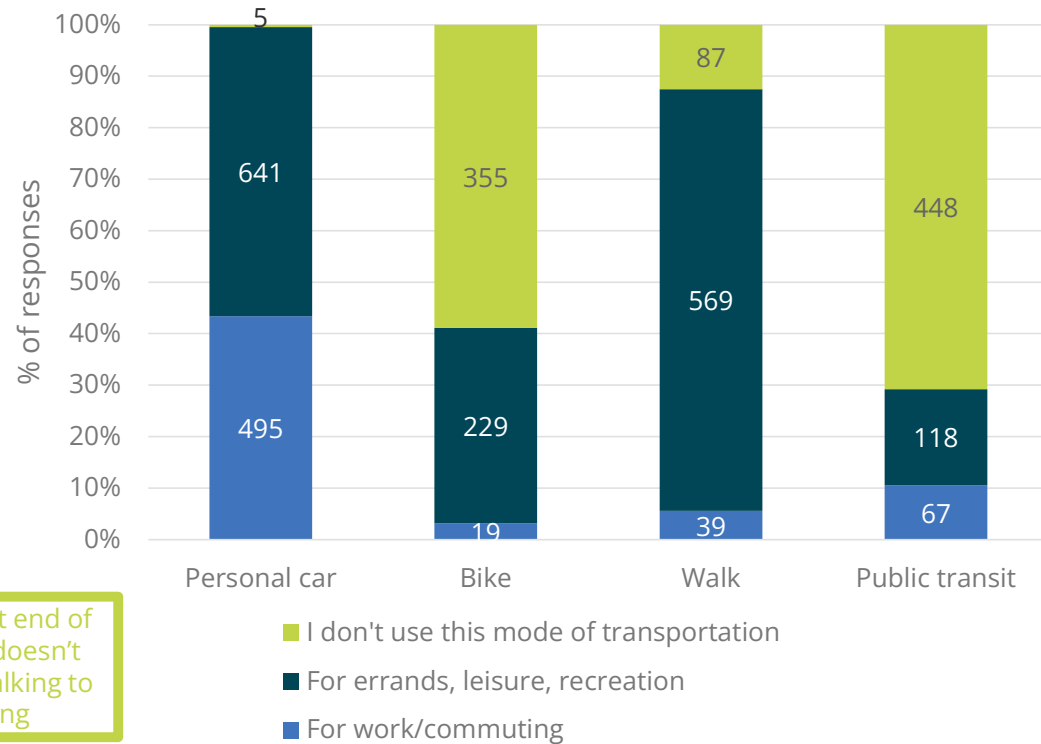


# How do you get around the Borough?

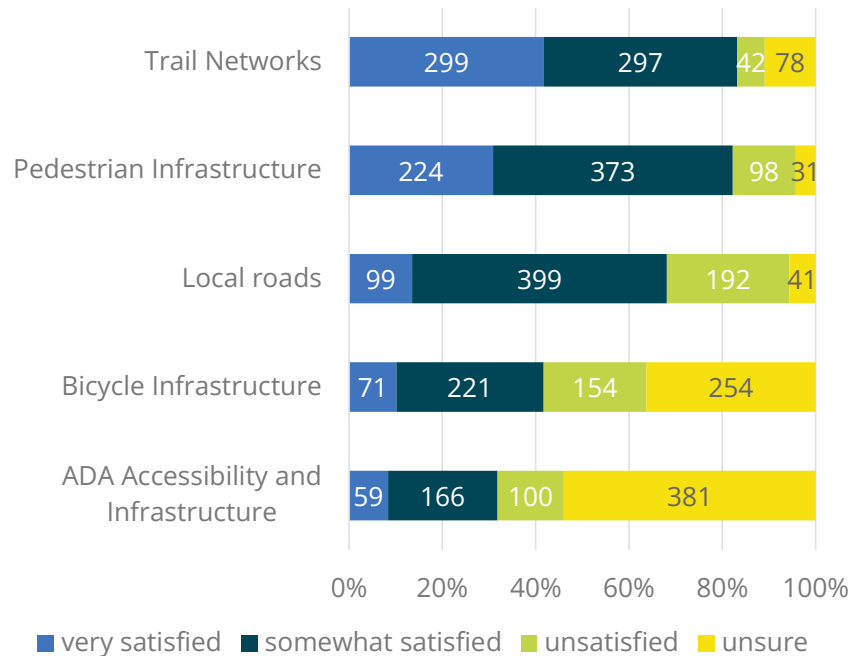
- Respondents who live in 185 - West Downingtown North are the most likely to walk for errands, leisure, and recreation
- Respondents who have lived in Downingtown for less than a year are the most likely to take public transit for work

Walking and biking around here is dangerous. Drivers are unsafe, exceed the speed limit, run stop signs and red lights. It's nuts. Do not bike or walk.

I'm at the very west end of town, so walking doesn't work so well for walking to events or dining



# How satisfied are you with the following transportation infrastructure in the Borough?

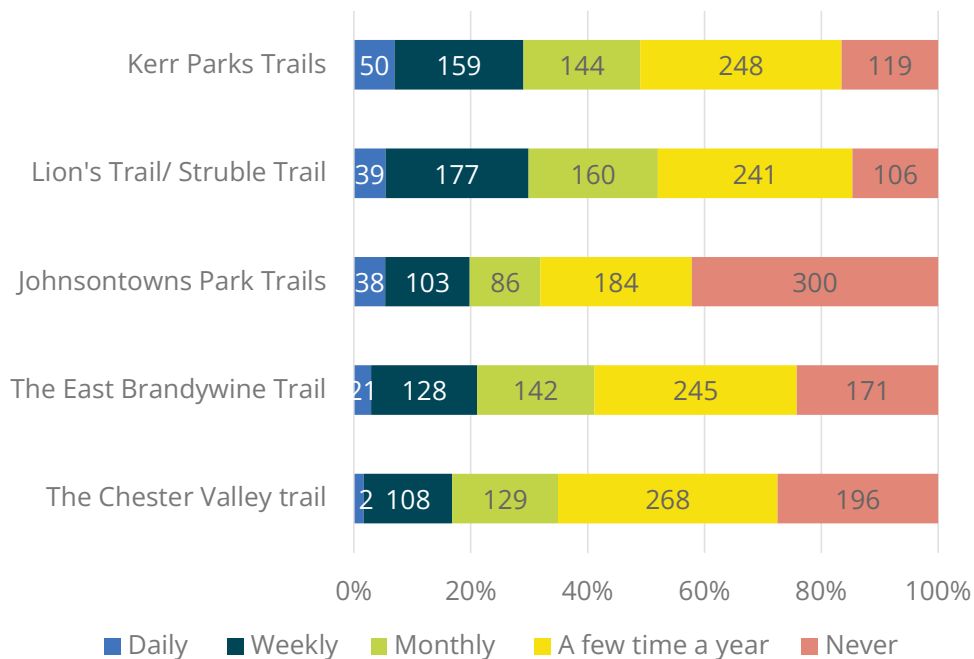


- Respondents aged 18-35 were the most unsatisfied with ADA accessibility and infrastructure
- 31% of respondents who left a comment said the Borough is not ADA/ accessible (i.e., curb cuts, strollers, etc.)

I do leverage the Struble Trail to access D'town and the walkability around Kerr Park is good.

I jog every day and crosswalks and other crossings should be improved. The one near Rite Aid is especially bad with people not stopping before rights in red while the walk symbol is lit. I wish we had more enforcement of speeds by police and prioritized pedestrian safety.

# How often do you use the existing trails in or near the Borough?



- The Lion's / Struble trail is the most popular trail for people who do not live in the Borough
- Respondents who left comments stated that they had concerns about safety

We love that we can walk/bike from our house! The trail system is amazing! Wish there was a safe way to get from the end of Bradford Ave to the trail off of 322.

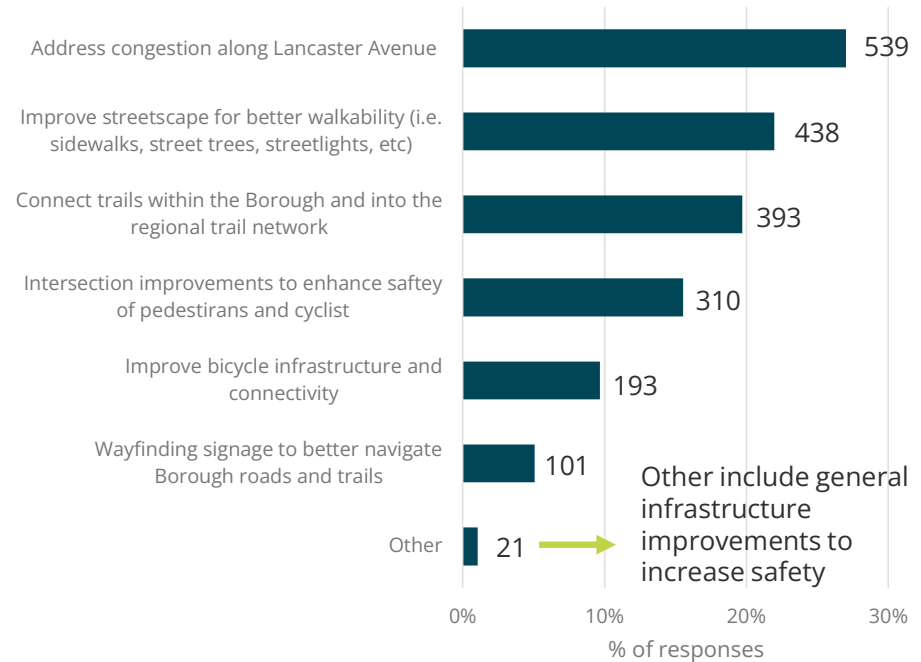
I did not know these existed. Maps of these would be nice.

# What transportation and connectivity initiatives should Downingtown prioritize?

- Addressing congestion along Lancaster Avenue is most important to those who live in 190 – West Downingtown South

There is currently no safe place to cross Lincoln Ave as a walker. I would like to use the cross walk at the corner of Lincoln Ave and chestnut street to safely walk my kids to school.

We should build on what makes this area unique and desirable. We should improve walkability in the Borough, make biking much safer, and connect all trails safely.

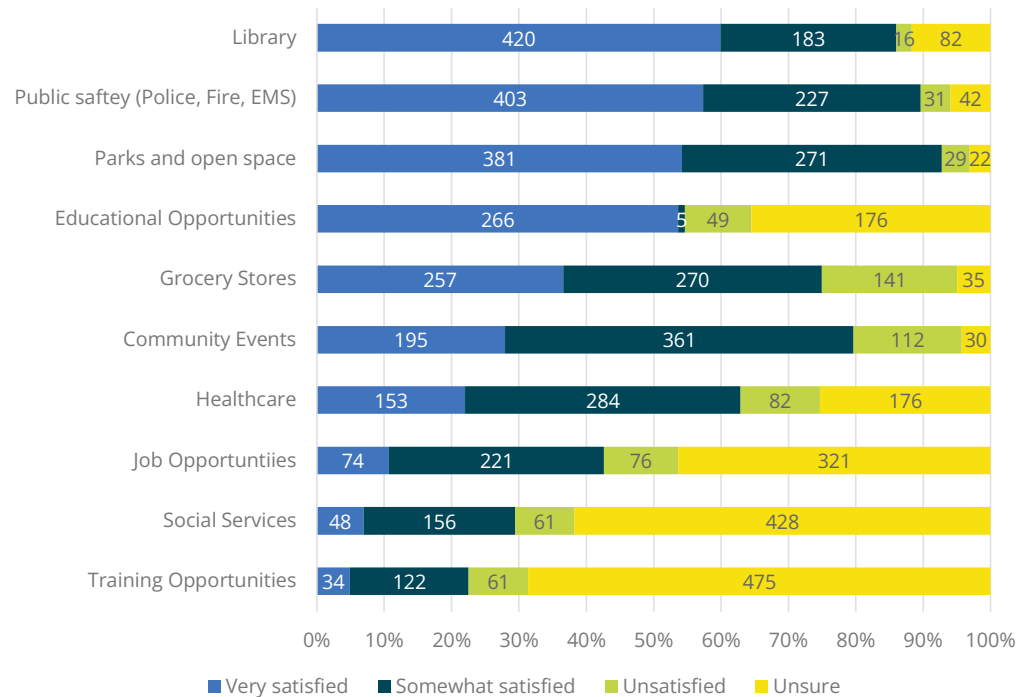


# Community Services and Facilities



- How satisfied are you with access to the following community services and facilities in the Borough?
- What three efforts to support community services and facilities should Downingtown prioritize?

# How satisfied are you with access to the following community services and facilities?



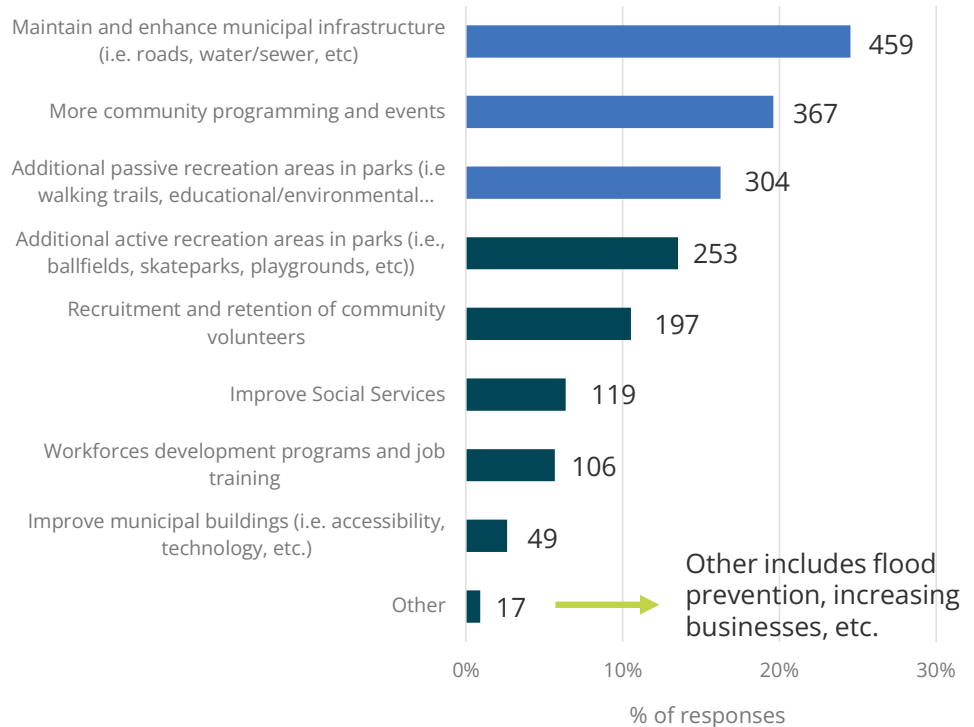
- Respondents who are 56-75 are the most unsatisfied with grocery stores
- Respondents who have lived in the Borough for 11-20 years are the most unsatisfied with community events
- Respondents who left a comment want more open space and affordable/accessible versions of the options listed

# What three efforts to support community services and facilities should Downingtown prioritize?

- Maintaining and enhancing municipal infrastructure is most important to employees working in the Borough
- Workforce development programs and job training is most important to those ages 76+

Make a cool main street area that becomes a destination w/ restaurants and shops - get rid of the junky buildings, slum lords, and have a large gathering area, and make sure there is parking.

Over 30 years living in the Borough on Chestnut Street and the flooding and crowding has gotten worse.



# Community Development

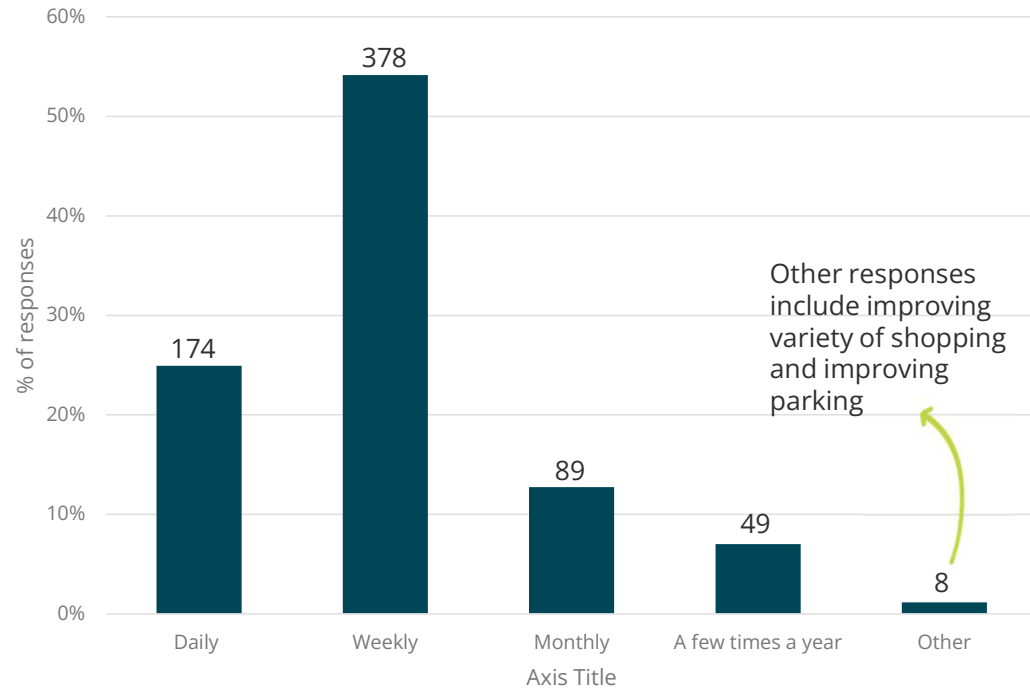


- How often do you visit a business located in Downingtown Borough?
- I would visit downtown Downingtown more often if there were...
- How would you like to see the Borough invest in historic preservation?
- Which three community development initiatives should Downingtown prioritize?



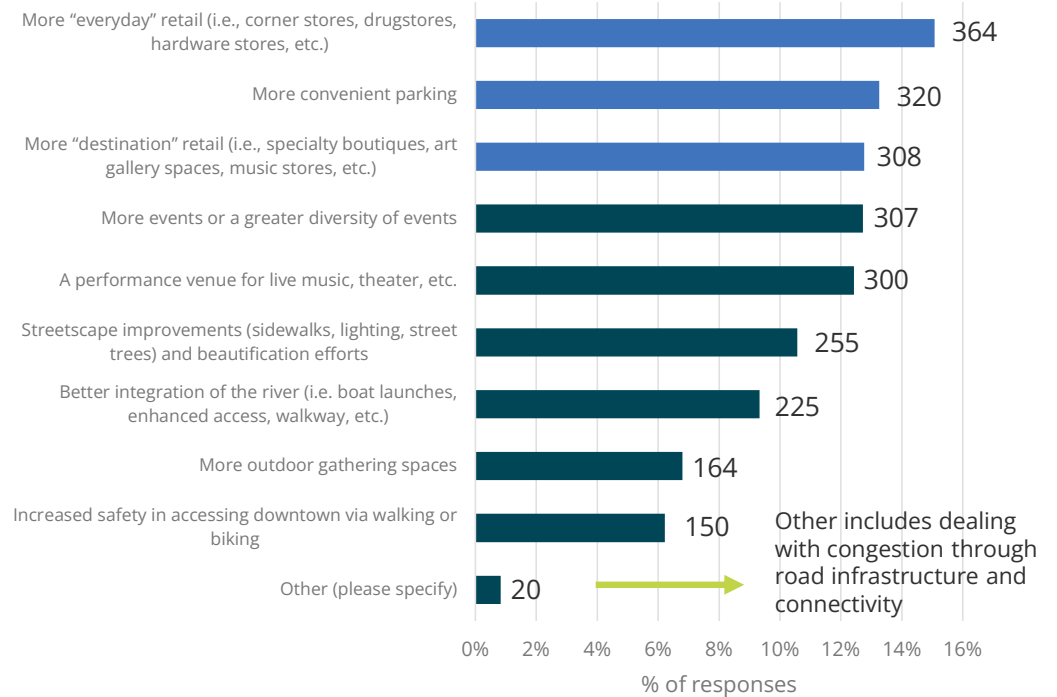
# How often do you visit a business located in Downingtown Borough?

- Respondents ages 36-55 are the most likely to visit a business in the Borough daily
- Respondents from East Downingtown West are the most likely to visit a local business daily



# I would visit downtown Downingtown more often if there were...

- Respondents ages 18-35 want more events or a greater diversity of events the most
- Respondents who have lived in Downingtown for 20+ years want mor convenient parking

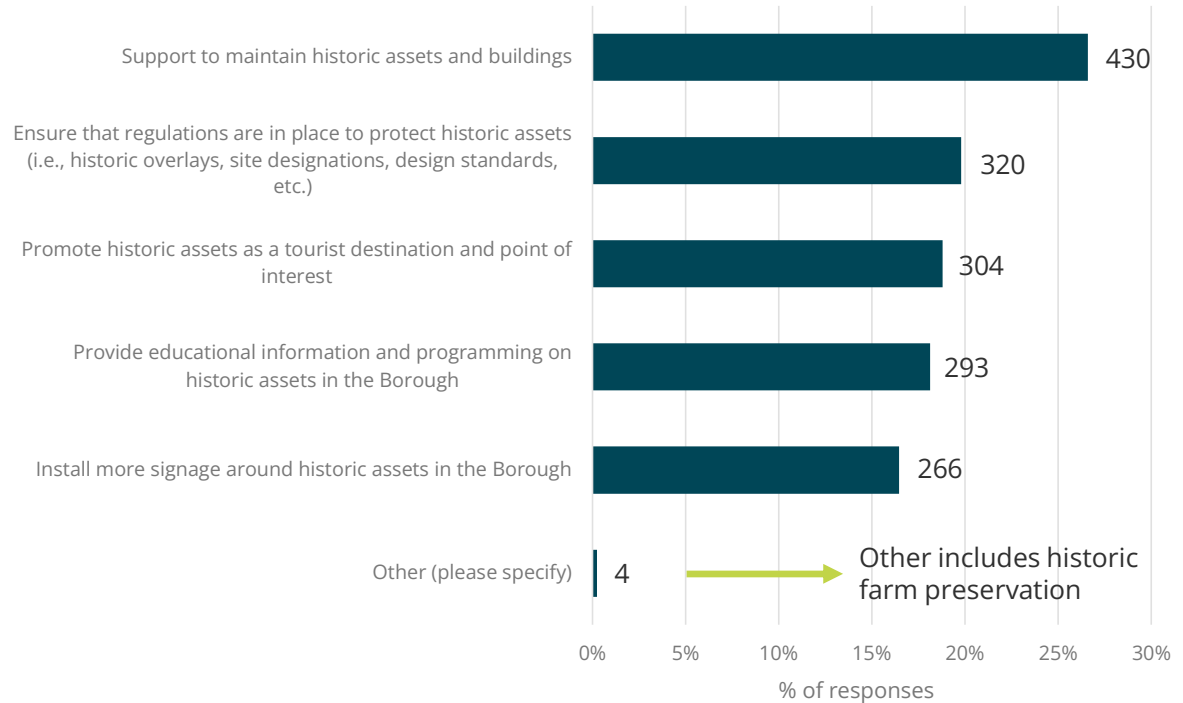


Downtown should invest in outdoor spaces and making walking more pleasant. Cars should be limited and slowed downtown. If our walk/bike was more safe and pleasant we'd spend much more time downtown. There's no point having cars flying through downtown streets - there are plenty of fast roads elsewhere. The riverfront could be much better utilized with a nice walkway and outdoor seating.

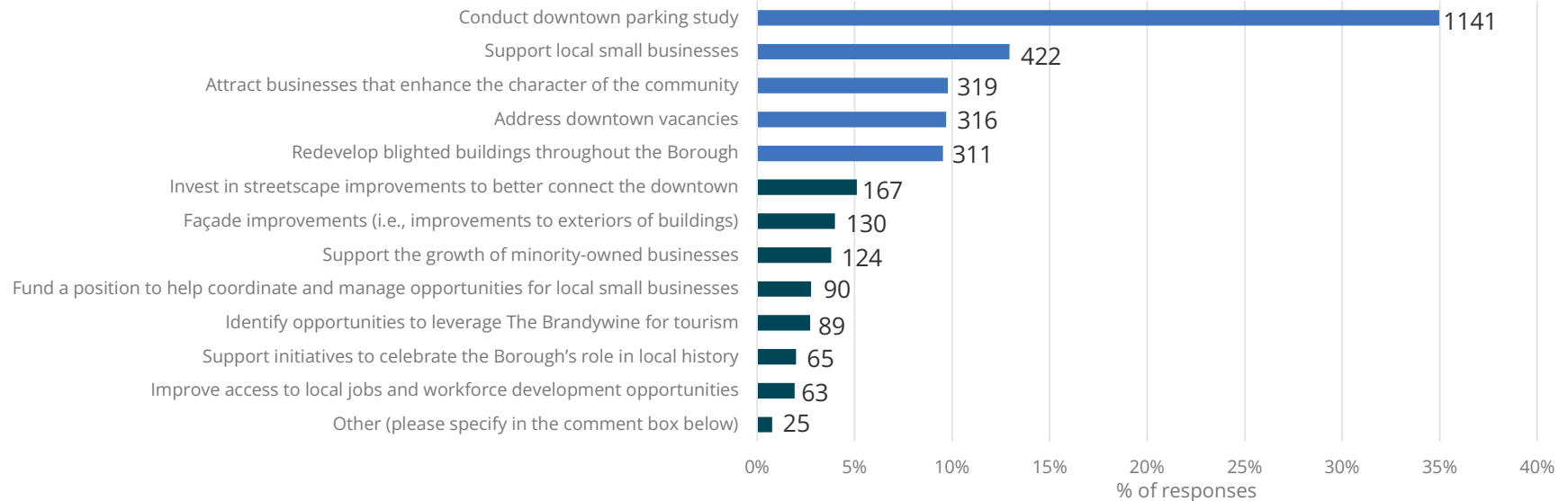
If I didn't have to pay to park.

# How would you like to see the Borough invest in historic preservation?

- Respondents ages 76 or older are the most concerned with ensuring there are regulations in place to protect historical assts



# Which three community development initiatives should Downingtown prioritize?



- Respondents who identified as living in another municipality are the most concerned with addressing downtown vacancies
- Respondents who left a comment elaborated on the desire to have parking downtown

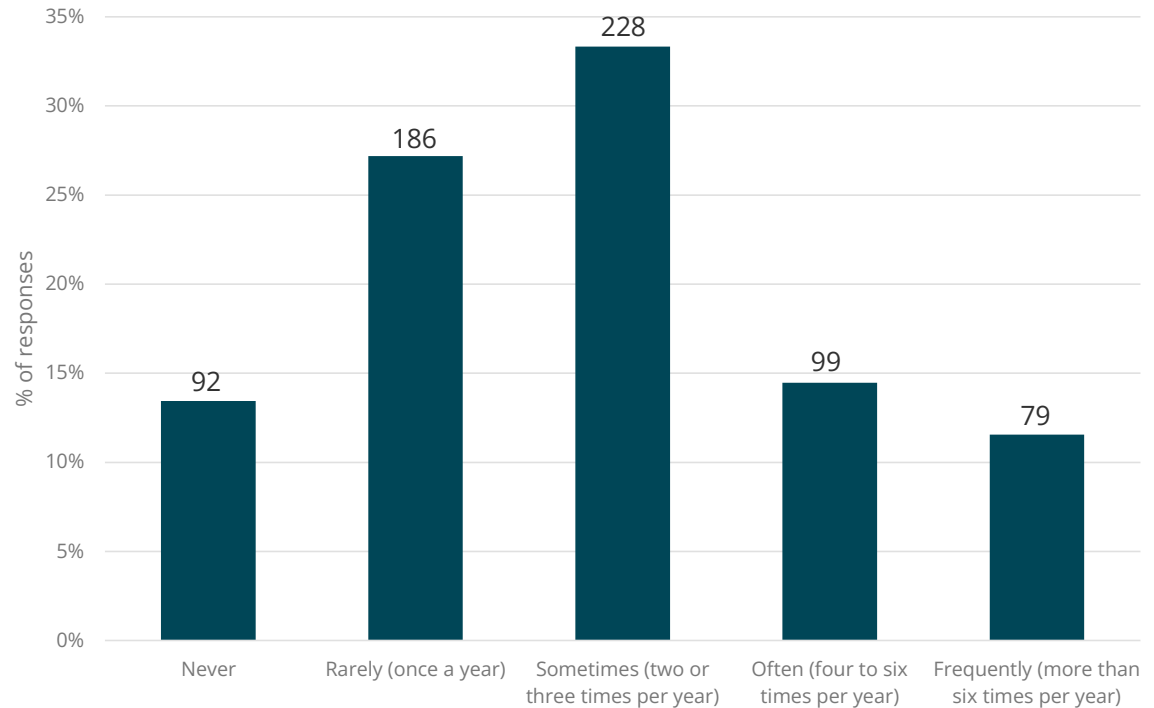
# Environmental Network



- How often is flooding a problem for you (i.e., it affect your property, places you visit regularly, your commute, etc.)?
- How can the Borough most support you prior, during, and after hazardous events?
- Which of the following environmental issues are you most concerned about in the Borough?
- Which three environmental efforts should Downingtown prioritize?

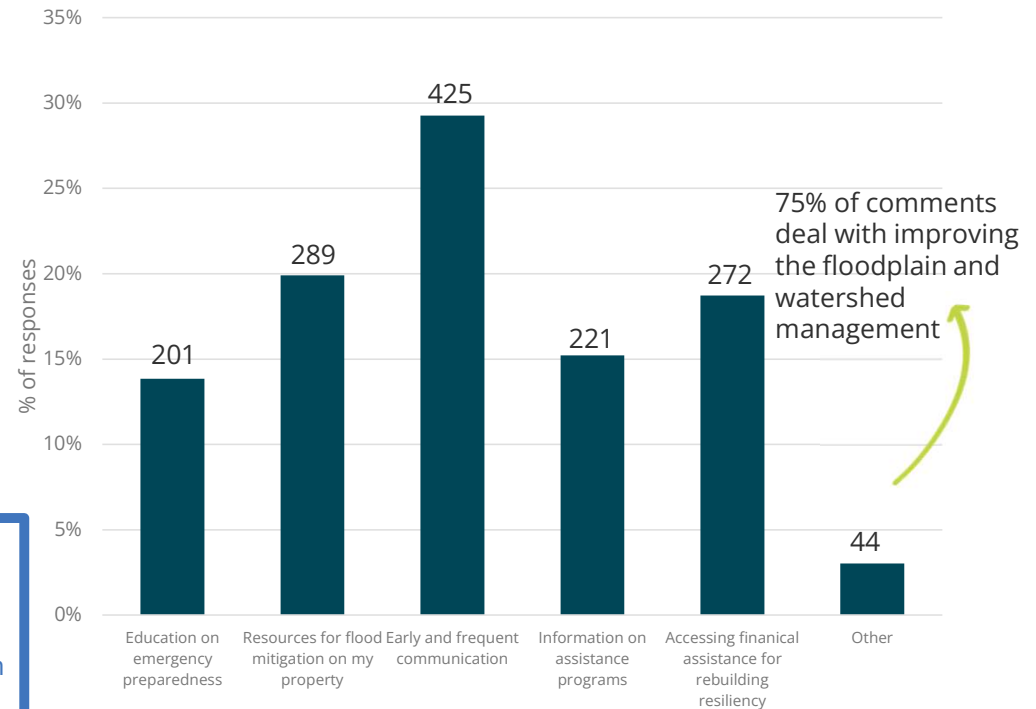
# How often is flooding a problem for you (i.e. it affects your property, places you visit, regularly, your commute, etc.)?

- Respondents who live in East Downingtown East have the most problems with flooding (21%)
- Respondents who left a comment elaborated that when it comes to flooding, roads are more of an issue than housing



# How can the Borough most support you prior, during, and after hazardous events?

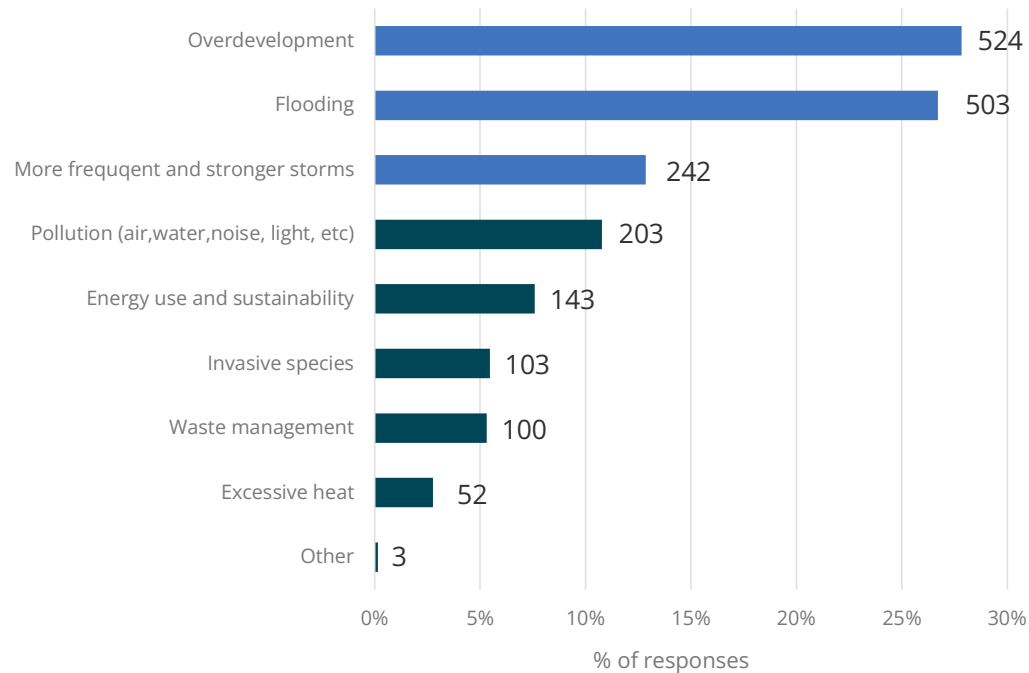
- Respondents aged 18-35 want more resources for flood mitigation on their properties
- Respondents who have lived in the Borough for 20+ years want earlier and more frequent communication



Better floodplain, runoff management, and working with the state and surrounding communities on improving water runoff management in those areas that contribute based on new building and infrastructure change.

Resources for flood mitigation within the Borough. Partnering with neighboring townships and the County to also help with flood mitigation.

# Which of the following environmental issues are you most concerned about in the Borough?



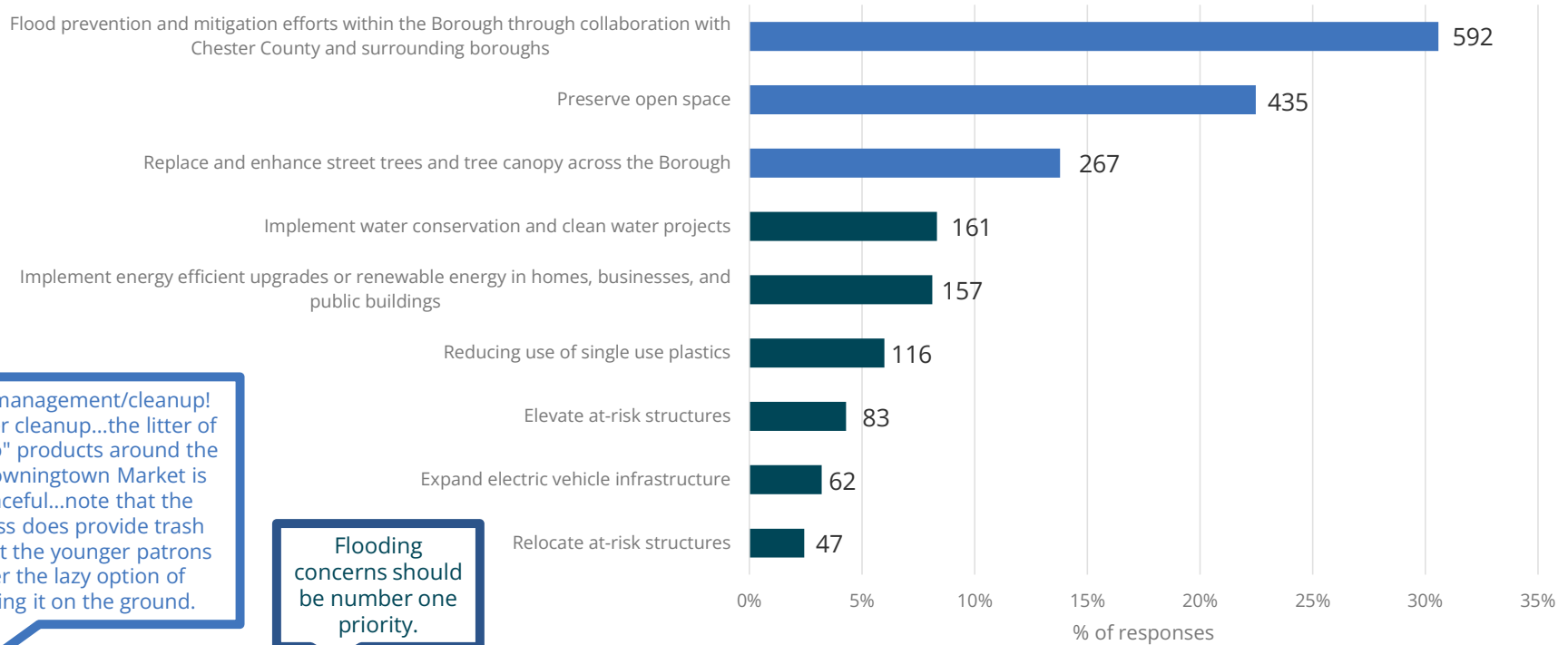
- Respondents most concerned with flooding live in West Downingtown South (83%)
- Majority of respondents who left comments stated concerns of overdevelopment (37%)

Trash cans everywhere...no accountability for who/where they belong. It's disgraceful.

The destruction of farms, woodlands and opens pace has caused the increased heat and flooding...compacted soil doesn't not absorb water, roads, developments don't absorb rain water.



# Which three environmental efforts should Downingtown prioritize?



Waste management/cleanup! And litter cleanup...the litter of "tobacco" products around the new Downingtown Market is disgraceful...note that the business does provide trash cans but the younger patrons prefer the lazy option of throwing it on the ground.

Flooding concerns should be number one priority.

# Downingtown Today & Tomorrow



- What are three words to describe Downingtown today?
- What are three words to describe the Downingtown you want to see 10 years from now?

# What are three words to describe Downingtown today?

- Community is the top word (70 occurrences)
- Congested is the second most popular word (44 occurrences)
- Potential is the third most popular word (42 occurrences)

Overpriced small town feel Cute small businesses improving up-and coming Welcoming Behind fun convenient overpopulated oriented downtown Quite Quiet Hometown better congestion BUSY dated Nice Lovely small town trails developed areas Historic Inviting Family Historical Overdeveloped Vibrant Overcrowded sleepy flooding Expanding Traffic much safe much traffic Friendly Family friendly Congested Good Neighbor community flooding traffic potential Accessible Growing buildings crowded apartments expensive peaceful Quaint Family-friendly Beautiful Homey Home tired small caring walkable coming needs Diverse parks growth town empty Great revitalize neighborly close-knit charming loss Old Thriving Evolving local comfortable much development opportunity flood zone outdated Boring

# What are three words to describe the Downingtown you want to see 10 years from now?

- Safe and community are tied for the top word (61 occurrences)
- Vibrant is the second most popular word (59 occurrences)
- Thriving is the third most popular word (50 occurrences)

spacious River innovative Allow shops place Peaceful Borough Revitalized gathering inviting  
 family-oriented business taking trails Booming building healthy neighborly parking  
 Progressive Small town lively Energetic open space prosperous flooding  
 restaurants Accessible historical Better Modern bustling desirable Quaint  
 Efficient town Stop home Happening fun cohesive Clean Caring  
 Beautiful stable Thriving Small business  
 community Planned safe inclusive Vibrant Busy  
 friendly Quiet walkable Maintained destination nice  
 Affordable new welcoming walk green Attractive  
 charming close-knit diverse great sustainable convenient small proud  
 less Family friendly historic community events downtown Resilient family connected  
 developed preserved active opportunity Flourishing pleasant open Dry people unique  
 Exciting Updated Clean safe around space Less flooding infrastructure housing

# Community Survey Pop- Up Events

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# Pop-up Events

The team with the help of Connect the Dots held four in person pop-up events for the Downingtown Community Survey:



Good Neighbor Day  
on July 4<sup>th</sup>



Farmer's Market  
Tomato Fest on July  
29<sup>th</sup>



Victory Brewing  
Company Happy Hour  
on August 15<sup>th</sup>



Picnic in the Park on  
August 19<sup>th</sup>



# Tomato Fest

- 185 People visited and engaged with the staff
- 85 comments were collected
- Questions asked:
  - *What do you like about Downingtown?*
  - *What are some areas of concern in Downingtown that should be addressed in the next Comp Plan?*
  - *How many years have you lived in Downingtown?*
  - *Why do you like to visit Downingtown?*

Nice shops & restaurants; 6 years resident hardly any place to rent in Downingtown

Concerned with flooding of River Station building - give them each a boat

Flooding and overcrowding with new apartment buildings, schools are divided and makes commute really long

Want more commercial areas. Love the schools and the events always happening. Like the library & parks

# Picnic at the Park

- 191 people who visited and engaged with the staff
- 93 comments were collected
- Questions asked:
  - *What do you like about Downingtown?*
  - *What are some areas of concern in Downingtown that should be addressed in the next Comp Plan?*
  - *How many years have you lived in Downingtown?*
  - *Why do you like to visit Downingtown?*
  - *What are 3 words/ideas to describe the future you want to see in Downingtown in 10 years?*

DT is a really nice place - nice people, good food, and a overall good community. It's perfect to meet people and hang out. Just really easy to make friends

Promoting local small businesses

Healthy, Respectful,  
Happy

Events like Farmer's Market is great. Live in Coatesville and come for events