



Indian River County

Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Appraisal Report (EAR)

Appendix B. Public Engagement Summary

PREPARED BY:

Kimley»»Horn



Public Engagement Summary Report

Fall 2023

PREPARED BY:

Kimley»»Horn



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INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

John Titkanich, Jr., ICMA-CM, AICP
Andrew Sobczak
Chris Balter
Rebeca Guerra
Cindy Thurman

KIMLEY-HORN & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Kelley Klepper, AICP
William Roll, Jr., AICP, CNU-A
Heather Glisson, AICP
Morgan McMullen
Jill Grimaldi, BCES
Tori Bacheler, M.S., PWS
Lisa Celano, M.S., Environmental

Adam Kerr, P.E.
Shelby Graziani, E.I.
Kristina Belt
Molly Williams, P.E.
Kim Arnold, PG
Madeleine Kender, P.E.



PREPARED BY:

Kimley»Horn



Introduction

In March 2023, **Indian River County** (the “County”) initiated the process of completing an **Evaluation and Appraisal Review (EAR)** of their **2030 Comprehensive Plan** (the “Plan”). Each local government in the state of Florida (the “State”) is **required** to assess its comprehensive plan every seven (7) years to determine if plan amendments are necessary to reflect a minimum planning period of at least 10 years as provided in Florida Statutes (F.S.) 163.3177(5) or to reflect changes in state requirements in this part since the last update of the comprehensive plan. The County engaged the support of Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., (“Kimley-Horn”) to complete the EAR in conjunction with County Staff (“Staff”). Further, the County invited citizens into this process to collect community input on its Comprehensive Plan (the “Plan”) and inform any recommendations for updates to the Plan, now and in the near future. **Indian River County hosted public engagement activities during the fall of 2023; these activities and their results are summarized in this report.**

Engagement Activities Overview

In-Person and Online Public Workshops

The County facilitated six (6) public workshops over the course of three (3) separate days.

November 16	<p>North County Library</p> <p>📍 † 11:00am - 12:30pm OR 📍 † 6:30pm - 7:30pm</p>
November 29	<p>Commission Chambers</p> <p>📍 † 11:00am - 12:30pm OR 📍 † 6:30pm - 7:30pm</p>
December 13	<p>Intergenerational Center</p> <p>📍 † 11:00am - 12:30pm OR 📍 † 6:30pm - 7:30pm</p>

📍 Hybrid Meeting: In-Person and via Zoom.

† Due to technical difficulties, audio was not recorded for this hybrid meeting.

In addition to a brief presentation explaining the EAR process and eight (8) key elements – out of twelve (12) elements – of the Plan. These public workshops focused on:



- Future Land Use
- Public Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Coastal Management
- Conservation
- Parks & Recreation

Each workshop included five (5) stations to collect community input

using thought-provoking activities. Station activity descriptions will be provided in more detail

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while exploring the input collected in this report. Attendees were also invited to speak directly to on-site County Staff to ask questions and provide input. They were given the opportunity to provide miscellaneous feedback through an Additional Comments open-ended response form. Approximately **298 people** attended these public workshops, based on Sign-In Sheets.



PublicCoordinate

Using Kimley-Horn's proprietary software, **PublicCoordinate**, community feedback was collected through an interactive online map and multi-question survey hosted through SurveyMonkey and available as part of the PublicCoordinate landing page. PublicCoordinate enables the public to select a topic, place a point for that topic on the map to provide a location reference for the comment, and then provide an open-ended comment on the point they placed. PublicCoordinate is a secure software with measures in place to prevent spam comments. PublicCoordinate meets ADA web accessibility standards and provides language translation options, to make the software as accessible to the public as possible. This tool was available between November 16, 2023, through December 31, 2023, and received a total of **284 responses**. The interactive map and survey were made available again temporarily between February 1, 2024, through February 15, 2024. No additional responses were received during the temporary reopening of these systems.

A promotional graphic for PublicCoordinate. It features the Indian River County logo, the title "Indian River County EVALUATION & APPRAISAL REPORT (COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE)", and a call to action: "Help plan Indian River County's future! Add comments to our online interactive map and take the survey!". It includes a QR code and the text "PublicCoordinate A Kimley-Horn Software Solution".

<https://bit.ly/irc-ear23> Survey closes 12/31/23

Copies of the Workshop presentation and substantially unedited collected data are available in the Appendices. Responses were edited for brevity and/or profanity, but the comment's intent was retained to the extent feasible.



In-Person and Online Public Workshops

A total of six (6) public workshops were held in three different locations. Four of the six meetings were hybrid, offering a Zoom alternative to listen to the meeting presentation and provide feedback or ask questions via the Zoom chat feature, which was monitored closely during all hybrid meetings.

At each workshop, Staff introduced the purpose and importance of the workshop, then introduced the Consultant team supporting Staff in this important document review, Kimley-Horn. Kimley-Horn provided a brief presentation to all in attendance, discussing what a comprehensive plan is, what it isn't, and some of the most important elements in the comprehensive plan on which we were seeking their perspective.

This section of the report provides a brief description of each activity and a summary of the results. Each sub-section will further note which Appendix provides the unedited raw data.

One Word – Activity Description

The One Word station enabled in-person attendees to review three separate One Word topics, as shown in the images below. Attendees were asked to provide one word in response to each question on the slip of paper and to respond to each topic area.

**Indian River County
Today & The Future**

One word that describes
Indian River County **TODAY**...

One word that describes
THE FUTURE of Indian River County...

Indian River County - Growth

Respond in ONE word:
If the County achieves its **HIGHEST
ESTIMATED GROWTH**, WHAT WOULD BE
YOUR TOP CONCERN?

**Indian River County
More of / Less of**

In **ONE** word, what does the County
need **MORE OF?**

In **ONE** word, what does the County
need **LESS OF?**





One Word – Results

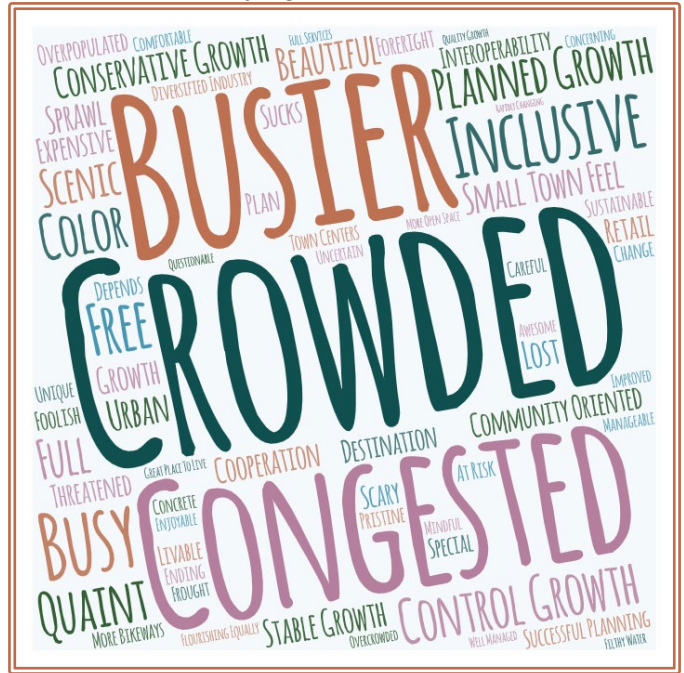
Today & The Future

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY - TODAY

The top results for what the community desires **more of** include: Beautiful, Quiet, Comfortable, Small Town Feel, Livable.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY – THE FUTURE

The top results for what the community desires **less of** include: Crowded; Congested; Busier; with Controlled or Planned Growth and Conservative Growth tying for the last two spots.



Highest Estimated Growth

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY - GROWTH

The top concerns related to the County reaching its maximum growth potential include: *Traffic and Environment, followed by a tie between Transportation, Congestion, Sprawl, Water, and Jobs.*



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Less of/More of

LESS OF

The top results for what the community desires less of included: *People, Storage Units, Traffic, Car Washes, and Restrictions [on development].*



MORE OF

The top results for what the community desires more of included: *Affordable Housing, Conservation, High Paying Jobs, Multiuse Trails, and Green Spaces.*



Ranking – Activity Description

Attendees were provided a set of six (6) stickers featuring key themes in the long-term planning process and asked to rank them individually in order of importance. The six (6) themes included Economic Development,



Land Use & Development, Environmental Conservation, Transportation, Parks & Recreation, and Housing.

Indian River County Comprehensive Plan Update Ranking Activity					
1 (Lowest Priority)	2	3	4	5	6 (Highest Priority)

Using the provided stickers, please rank each category from least to most important.

The ranking board was provided as a 24” x 36” printout, and each of the six (6) workshops were provided with fresh activity boards.

1 equals **lowest** priority

6 equals **highest** priority



Ranking – Results

Land Use

Environmental Conservation

Housing

Transportation

Parks & Recreation

Economic Development

The results of the ranking activity across all sessions are shown on the left. **Land Use** was ranked, on balance, as the community's number one priority, whereas **Economic Development** ranked at the bottom. It is worth noting that on average, each category ranked nearly the same in priority, ranging from only 3.14 to 4.29. Regardless, these averages further confirm the results shown on the left, reflecting the same order of priority.

Land Use	4.29
Environmental Conservation	4.15
Housing	3.92
Transportation	3.33
Parks and Recreation	3.22
Economic Development	3.14

Thought Wall – Activity Description

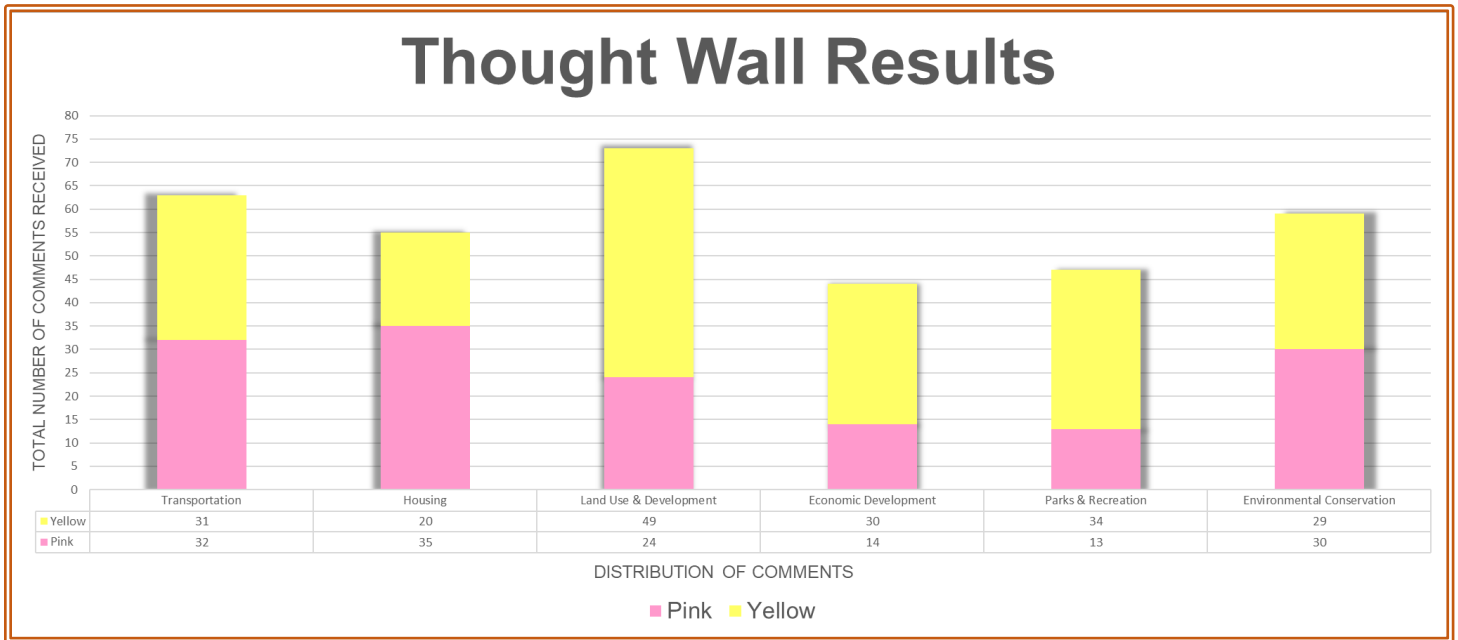
The Thought Wall provides six (6) thematic boards: Economic Development, Land Use, Environmental Conservation, Parks & Recreation, Housing, and Transportation. Attendees were provided three (3) **yellow post-its** and one (1) **pink post-it**. The **yellow post-its** are to provide **any thoughts** related to a particular topic and post them to that topic. Attendees are asked to write their **most important thought** on the **pink post-it**.





Thought Wall – Results

This exercise collects numerous, miscellaneous thoughts limited to the six thematic categories to inform the Plan’s understanding of existing conditions. By having participants self-select a planning theme for each of their thoughts, a frequency of priority (post-its per theme) and an intensity of priority (most important thoughts per theme) may be determined.



This data visualization provides the following insights:

- High Priority Themes** (based on total number of comments): Land Use & Development, Transportation, and Environmental Conservation.
- Priority Thoughts (pink post-its)** were highest for Housing, Transportation, and Environmental Conservation respectively.
- General Thoughts (yellow post-its)** were fairly evenly spread across topics, peaking at 49 entries for Land Use & Development, whereas the fewest were applied to Housing, though this may be associated with the high rate of pink post-its applied there.
- Least Popular:** In alignment with the Ranking Activity previously discussed, Parks & Recreation and Economic Development received the fewest comments among the categories.

On the following page, a table provides a summary of needs and suggestions provided by attendees from all workshop sessions combined. The comments received via this exercise have not been reproduced below verbatim but combined and summarized as appropriate. Italicized Words or phrases were included on pink post-its one or more times between all six sessions. Italicizing these words and phrases enables an at-a-glance understanding of the highest-priority thoughts provided by the community.



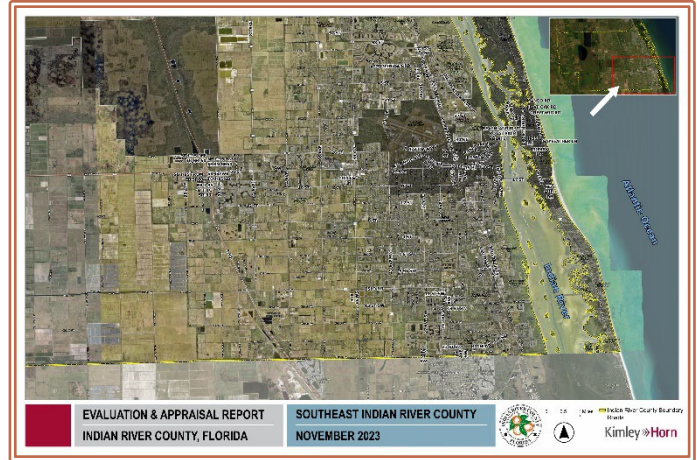
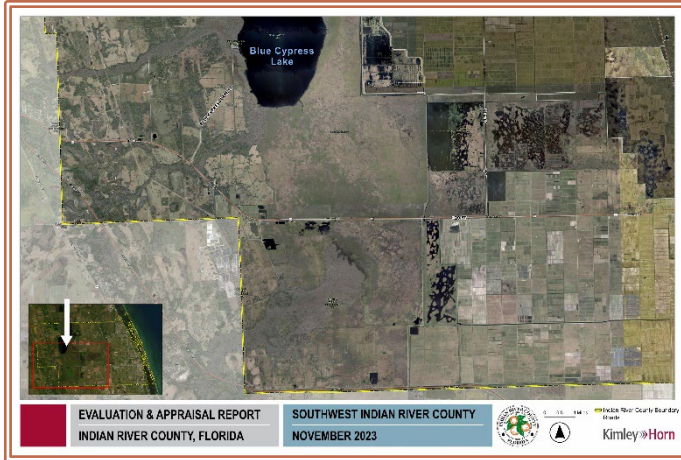
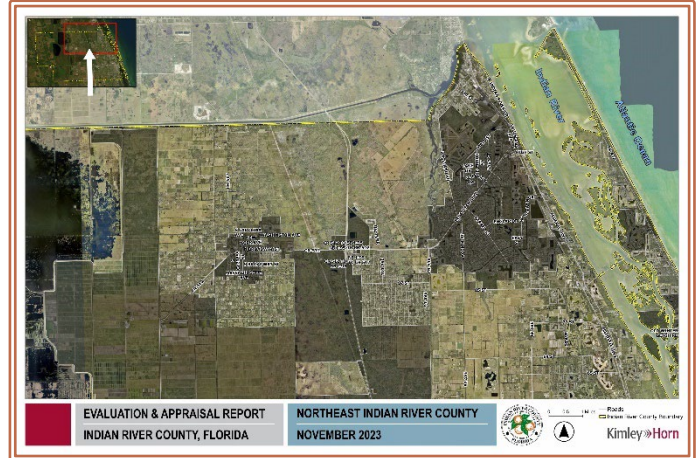
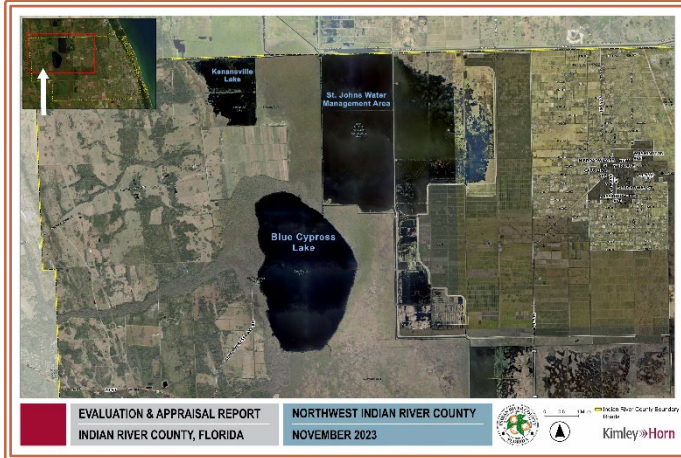
Planning Theme	Summary of Needs and Suggestions ¹
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pedestrian and bicyclist improvements: <i>Safe sidewalks and trails, dedicated bike/multi-use paths</i>, and prioritize vulnerable road user safety ▪ Better transit services: Increase hours and routes and include more frequent pick-ups ▪ Improve: <i>Street connectivity</i>, road maintenance, <i>street lighting</i>, transit availability in low-income areas, dirt roads, and the diversity of transportation alternatives ▪ Add green space ▪ Consider and manage the impact of growth on traffic ▪ <i>Encourage walkable mixed-use development</i> ▪ <i>Most respondents not in favor of Brightline Stop in IRC, though one is in favor</i>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Affordable housing: Must be a top priority. A new approach is needed. Lower-cost areas should have high access to transit. The diversity of housing options must increase.</i> Affordable senior living areas and <i>workforce housing</i> should each be encouraged or incentivized, and <i>accessory dwelling units</i> should be considered. ▪ Plan for housing the homeless ▪ Explore mitigating or reducing trailer parks
Land Use & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Maintain the urban service boundary</i> ▪ Control and manage development, <i>prevent urban sprawl</i> ▪ <i>Increase mixed-use developments</i> ▪ Incentivize green housing and construction ▪ Increase conservation efforts, including but not limited to: Protect the Indian River Lagoon, and focus on preserving green space, agricultural land, and open spaces ▪ Reduce automobile reliance and <i>disallow septic tanks</i>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic growth (controlled) and job creation in specific areas ▪ <i>Increase job diversification, especially the availability of opportunities for higher-paying jobs, youth jobs, and jobs for the low-income population</i> ▪ Promote redevelopment of underutilized areas ▪ <i>Eliminate height restrictions west of I-95</i> ▪ <i>Industrial / Development zone</i> ▪ <i>Encourage sustainable industries and promote locally-owned small businesses</i> ▪ Seek innovation, such as through a partnership with a university
Parks & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add green spaces, trails, and recreational facilities for people of all ages and abilities ▪ Maintain existing parks and beaches, including making them more accessible for seniors and disabled individuals ▪ <i>Create a countywide sidewalk and multi-use recreational trail network</i> ▪ Enhance park amenities based on community needs ▪ Encourage and invite private sector involvement in providing recreation options ▪ Specific suggestions: <i>Increase the number of pickleball courts and public golf courses</i>, develop more lagoon parks with boat-dock access, schedule County-sponsored activities that accommodate working individuals, <i>add an “IG type center” in the northern portion of the County, increase promotion of local recreation opportunities</i>
Environmental Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and preserve: <i>Water quality</i>, wildlife habitats, <i>agricultural lands, trees, open green land / natural land.</i> ▪ Maintain and improve stormwater management ▪ Control the negative side effects of growth on the environment, including but not limited to <i>reducing the removal of mature trees for new development</i> ▪ Designate more conservation areas and increase conservation efforts ▪ Implement stricter environmental protection rules, <i>including requiring sewer hookup</i> and increasing mitigation costs for developers ▪ <i>Provide ecotourism opportunities</i>

1. Italicized items were *priority thoughts* provided on one or numerous pink post-its for a given theme.



Mapping Exercise – Activity Description

For the Mapping Exercise, four (4) maps of the County were provided to display its four quadrants, allowing for the maps to be zoomed in more closely for increased legibility.



Attendees had up to 21 stickers to choose from across six (6) topics:

- **Land Use:** Shopping Center, Gas Station, Industrial / Manufacturing, Office
- **Transportation:** Bus Stop, Sidewalk / Trail, Bicycle Infrastructure
- **Public Infrastructure:** Water, Sewer, Stormwater/Flooding
- **Recreation:** Recreation Center, Sports Field / Court, Playground, Waterfront Access, Pool
- **Conservation/Coastal:** Habitat Preservation, Wildlife Preservation, Rural Preservation
- **Housing:** Single Family, Duplex / Townhome, Multifamily

Attendees were invited to place stickers on the maps using the available stickers. Placement of a sticker “as-is” would indicate a desire to see that item in that location, e.g., placing a Shopping Center sticker “as-is” on the map would indicate that person would like a Shopping Center-like development there. However, if one *did not* wish to see something, such as a Gas Station, one could put an “X” over the gas station on the sticker and then place the sticker on the map as desired. Attendees were not limited in the number of stickers they could use nor restricted categorically. For example, an attendee could have picked up five (5) bus stop stickers, two (2) stormwater stickers, and three (3) bicycle infrastructure stickers. That person then had the



freedom to place all ten (10) stickers on one of the quadrant maps or place them on various maps. Additionally, it's important to note that the quadrant maps have overlapping land areas, which were minimized to the extent feasible, but may influence the frequency of a particular topic in a particular location, such as if attendees applied the same sticker to the same land area on more than one quadrant map. Despite this conceptual duplication of data, it is favorably interpreted in this write-up to represent the intensity of the importance of the topic to the attendees.

Mapping Exercise - Results

The mapping exercise results must be considered from multiple perspectives. This report focuses on the frequency of the presence of each topic, in each quadrant and across all quadrants totaled. It is equally important to consider the placement of the stickers, which is best done by reviewing the map results from each session, available separately from this document.

The Northeast and Southeast maps each received the most stickers, and given this is largely the urban area, that is to be expected. Attendees across all sessions primarily placed stickers related to wanting:

- **Preservation** (12% habitat, 11% rural land, and 12% wildlife)
- **Residential Development** (6% single family, 7% duplex/townhouse, and 5% multifamily)
- **Public Infrastructure** (4% sewer extension or improvements and 5% stormwater/flooding extension or improvements)
- **Recreational Opportunities** (3% recreation centers and 3% waterfront access)
- **Transportation Infrastructure** (7% for bicycle infrastructure extension or improvements and 7% for sidewalk/trail extension or improvements)

One (1) sticker specifically noted that any single-family housing developments should be affordable, and approximately five (5) stickers specified that equestrians were the type of wildlife that should be preserved.

As for developments or services *not wanted*, attendees primarily noted where they did not wish to see any multifamily (24%) or single-family (24%) developments.

See the next page for a tabular breakdown of sticker frequency.





Topic	Map Quadrant				Total	%	Xs	%
	NW	NE	SW	SE				
Commercial Development: Office(s)	0	2	0	2	4	1%	0	0%
Commercial Development: Gas Station(s)	0	5	0	9	14	3%	3	6%
Commercial Development: Shopping Centers	0	3	0	9	12	3%	3	6%
Housing - Duplex/Townhouse Development(s)	1	9	1	16	27	7%	7	14%
Housing - Multifamily Development(s)	1	12	1	8	22	5%	12	24%
Housing - Single Family Development(s)	1	7	1	16	25	6%	12	24%
Industrial Manufacturing Developments	2	4	4	10	20	5%	3	6%
Preservation - Habitat	11	17	8	11	47	12%	0	0%
Preservation - Rural Land	11	10	13	9	43	11%	0	0%
Preservation - Wildlife	12	18	9	8	47	12%	0	0%
Public Infrastructure: Sewer Extension or Improvements	0	10	0	8	18	4%	1	2%
Public Infrastructure: Stormwater / Flooding Extension or Improvements	2	11	1	5	19	5%	0	0%
Public Infrastructure: Water Extension or Improvements	0	4	0	4	8	2%	1	2%
Recreational Opportunities: Playground(s) (New or Improvements)	1	0	0	1	2	0%	0	0%
Recreational Opportunities: Public Pool	0	2	0	3	5	1%	1	2%
Recreational Opportunities: Recreation Center	0	8	0	3	11	3%	1	2%
Recreational Opportunities: Sports Field(s)/Court(s)	0	4	0	1	5	1%	1	2%
Recreational Opportunities: Waterfront Access	0	3	0	8	11	3%	2	4%
Transportation Infrastructure: Bicycle Extension or Improvements	12	9	3	6	30	7%	3	6%
Transportation Infrastructure: Bus Stop(s) (New or Improved)	0	3	0	3	6	1%	0	0%
Transportation Infrastructure: Sidewalk/Trail Extension or Improvement	4	7	1	16	28	7%	0	0%
Totals	58	148	42	156	404	100%	50	100%

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Geographically, the community expressed interest in preservation (habitat, rural land, and wildlife) especially in the County's northeast, northwest, and southwest areas, which is on balance consistent with the existing development patterns in the County. The community would like to see more housing and commercial or industrial developments in the eastern portion of the County, a portion that is generally urbanized. Recreational opportunity desires were focused in the northeast. Finally, bicycle infrastructure extensions or improvements were primarily requested in the northern portion of the County while sidewalk/trail infrastructure extensions or improvements were primarily requested in the eastern portion of the County.

PublicCoordinate & Online Survey Results

PublicCoordinate

PublicCoordinate, a proprietary mapping software created by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., shares project information with the public and gathers comments online and interactively in a user-friendly map-based platform. In addition to collecting geographically specific feedback on any project, it integrates seamlessly with SurveyMonkey to display custom surveys within the map sidebar. The software meets web accessibility guidelines to which state and federal agencies are required to adhere.

Indian River County's PublicCoordinate project was available between November 16, 2023, through December 31, 2023, during which time 284 comments were made on the map. The County's project map was briefly reopened for the first two weeks of February 2024, during which time no new comments were received.

Users had the opportunity to select between six themes: Commercial / Office, Conservation, Housing, Infrastructure, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation. Users then may place that theme in an area of the map on which they would like to leave a comment related to that theme. Comments are open-ended responses, and other users can reply to comments, which are similarly open-ended. The following table shows the breakdown of comments and replies received by category.

Theme	Total Parent Comments	Total Replies
Commercial / Office	16	19
Conservation	11	51
Housing	7	21
Infrastructure	17	35
Parks and Recreation	27	48
Transportation	10	22
Totals	88	196



Results

Note: The following comments have not been edited for grammatical accuracy. Further, they are provided as a representative summary of comments received for each theme.

Transportation

Location: 27°43'56.8"N 80°40'06.7"W

- “These train horns need to be stopped as was done in PBC. With Brightline laying on the horn 32 times a day. It’s out of control. Also early morning horns are 4:30am, 5:30 – unacceptable!!!
 - “Agree”
 - “Agree, the crossing gates and light should be sufficient.”
 - “If we have more protected crossings it would reduce horns.”

Location: Riverside Park

- “Consider a ferry service that goes from Riverside park to the future "power plant" redevelopment area. Combine this with a regular trolley service from riverside park to Ocean avenue on the island side ... and a regular trolley on the mainland side that connects the power plant area, miracle mile, downtown (14th). These three routes together would connect a number of major entertainment/retail/tourist locations via public transport. Ideally we could designate more of the area at riverside park for parking or find another location that connects into these routes thereby making ALL sites accessible without driving between them.”
 - “This idea is critical to the proper development of the Power Plant property.”

Location: Intersection of US-1 and 41st St

- “We need a road that goes over the railroad tracks and provides access to the hospital from the west that is not interrupted by trains. 41st is the best bet. Create a bridge over the RR tracks and highway 1. The land to the east of 1 and to the south of 4st is mostly open and we could build a road that connects into the hospital area easily. A civil engineer with road experience could design something better but my ammeter eyes on the map shows that SOMETHING is doable here. Do this before that open area off 41st toward the hospital is built out!”
- “Every city should have some roadways that are not interrupted by train travel. This is a potential disaster situation especially since most of the crossings are so close to US 1 where even short delays can cause huge tie up.”
- “This is the ideal place to have an overpass that crosses the railroad tracks from west to east and provides access to the hospital. The area to the south of 41st to the east of highway 1 is largely undeveloped and a road to the hospital could easily be built. Moreover creating such a route would create the opportunity for a "healthcare zone" between 41st and 37th along the new road.”
- “We should have more than one overpass over the rail crossings.”

Location: 20th Street downtown

- “Control of vehicle speeds through downtown should be encouraged and alternative higher speed through access should be encouraged around and outside downtown.”



- “If you wish lower speed post the limits and then enforce it. Speeding is not discouraged in this city. There are speeders in some locations every day. Our police do nothing to discourage it. Please look at the bridges, or A1A Beach side. It's everywhere. Take a look at the stop signs also, in Vero Beach it has come to mean slow down and roll on through.”
- “I would be cautious about planning an "alternative higher speed thru-way access" around/outside downtown VB. It will disincentivize drivers from visiting downtown VB and bypass the city altogether. The only ones who would drive into the downtown would be the workers. And, if no one is coming into downtown to spend \$\$ (shops, restaurants, etc), there will be no places to work!”

Commercial / Office

Location: Area NW of the intersection of Oslo Rd and 82nd Avenue

- “This isn't for comm'l/retail, but there isn't an option for industrial development. I am looking forward to the interchange being completed, as this area is designated for industrial use, per the county's FLU map.”

Location: Intersection of 14th Ave and 21st St

- “This is a key intersection and we should explore how we can build around it. 14th avenue restaurants. Revitalize area galleries. Look to encourage other destination establishments. If there is a downtown revitalization it will start her and extend past 20th street in a north/south pattern.”

Location: General Downtown Vero Beach

- “Mixed use housing/commercial should be incentivized in the Vero Beach core of the existing downtown and penalties should be place to reduce sprawl.”

Parks & Recreation

Location: Vero Beach Municipal Power Plant

- “Tear Down this ugly power plant. The only people that care about preserving such an eyesore are not the people that will drive the future of this city or this area. The American Icon Brewery was a different story - a cool brick building with a little history.”
- “The building has height that can't be replicated. The American Icon Brewery building was an ugly eyesore for years, the renovation is what made it beautiful and relevant once again. Our former power plant can also be transformed similar to the renovation in Savannah GA.”

Location: South of Intersection of Indian River Blvd and Tarpon Drive

- “Greenways should be encouraged and major public thoroughfares should relieve greater attention to landscaping.”
 - “I agree and would encourage green space when possible.”

Location: CubeSmart Self Storage (901 20th St, Vero beach, FL 32960)

- “Why was this allowed to become a massive mini-storage facility located in the heart of downtown Vero Beach? This should not have occurred in 2023, planners and politicians should understand the consequences of this sort of decision.”



- “This was the largest open space within our city that our leaders claim they wish to revitalize. They should have changed the current zoning to prevent the waste of this valuable space.”
- “I so agree, where was the planning on this?”

Infrastructure

Location: Intersection of US-1 and S Indian River Dr

- “Need traffic light. Past growth and new growth plans makes this dangerous.”
- “It’s obvious, try to pull out here without getting killed.”

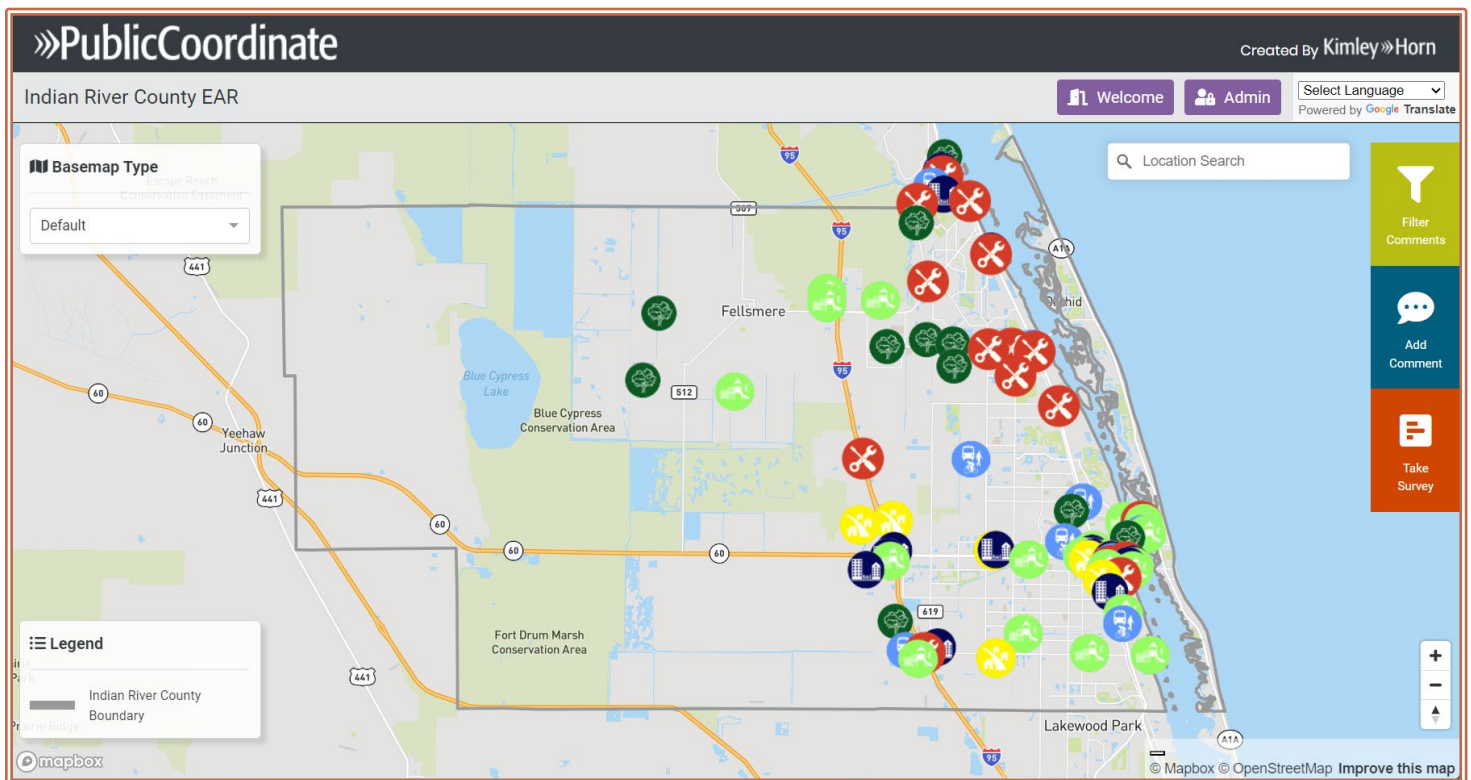
Housing

Location: Indian River Mall

- “I would love to see some sort of housing mix take over the closed stores at the IR Mall. Other communities have done this successfully. It might be worth contacting the owners to see what their interest level is.”

Location: Vero Beach Downtown

- “Mixed use housing/commercial should be incentivized in the Vero Beach core of the existing downtown and penalties should be place to reduce sprawl.”
- “This thought would have worked well where we now have a giant storage facility.”





Online Survey

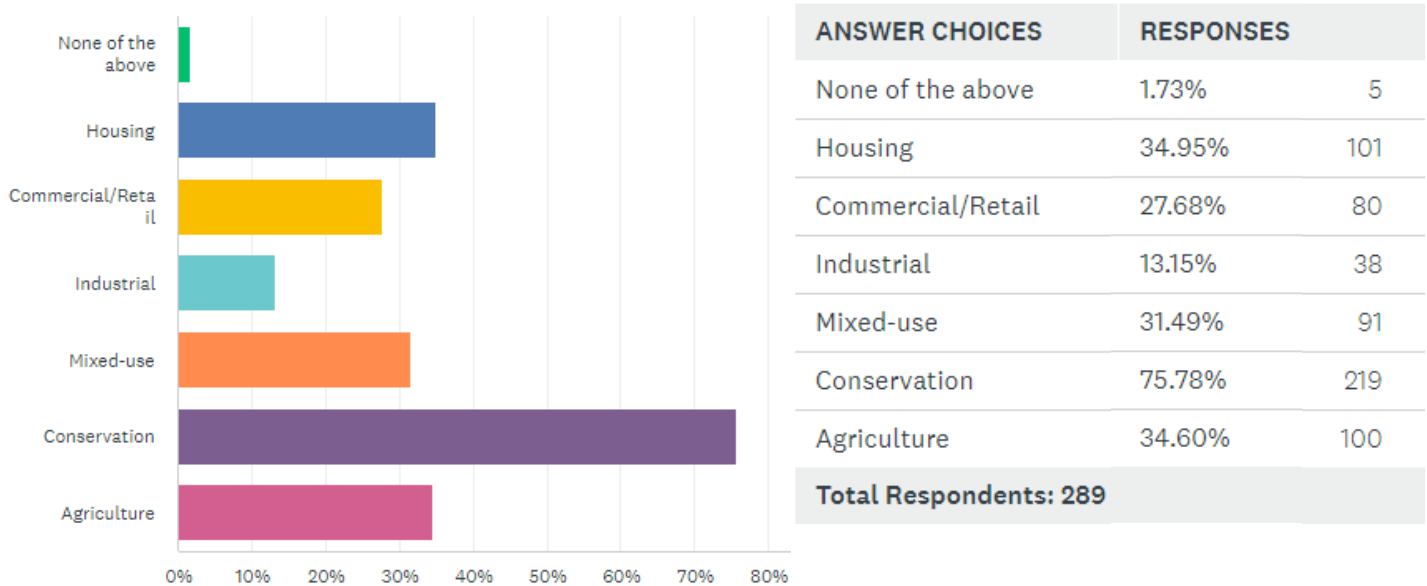
The online survey was hosted through SurveyMonkey and available through PublicCoordinate. 300 responses were received, though not all surveys were fully completed since most questions were optional. There were approximately 19 questions on the survey. Not all questions are summarized below, as they related to understanding who was responding to the survey, not questions on their feedback to the County’s comprehensive planning questions.

Results

Q1: What type of Land Use does Indian River County need?

The most commonly reported land uses needed include Conservation, Housing, and Agriculture.

Answered: 289 Skipped: 11



Respondents were also welcome to provide open-ended responses, of which there were 51. The main points respondents made were:

- There is a need for affordable housing, parks, green spaces, recreational facilities, more shopping options, and urgent care facilities.
- Recreational tourist sites such as museums and aquariums are important destinations.
- It is necessary to:
 - Refurbish main streets while preserving their character
 - Preserve the natural environment, including the Indian River and mangroves
 - Balance development with conservation
 - Ensure all members of the community have access to affordable housing and quality amenities

Q2: Where is new development or redevelopment needed? Please identify the type and location (e.g., address, intersection, or general location).

Respondents were invited to provide open-ended responses to this question. 212 respondents answered the question. A summary of the responses is provided:

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Some people express a need for more industry and job creation, while others emphasize the importance of protecting natural resources. Many suggest that redevelopment of existing buildings and areas should be prioritized over new development. Affordable housing, higher-density housing, and community gardens are also mentioned as potential areas of focus. Some areas are specifically identified as ripe for revitalization, including South County, Wabasso, and Gifford. There is also a call for more sidewalks and bike paths throughout the county. Respondents expressed that there is no need for new development in the HOA Housing area, but instead, the redevelopment of 21st Street is necessary, along with better shopping and retail options to improve its overall appearance. Along Route 1/5, various businesses such as car washes, motels, and random businesses need to be refreshed, while the businesses along Route 60 from 74th Avenue to 95 are also an eyesore. Lastly, there is a mention of the Indian River Mall and the West of I-95 region.

Q3: If the County reaches its highest estimated growth potential, what would be your top concern?

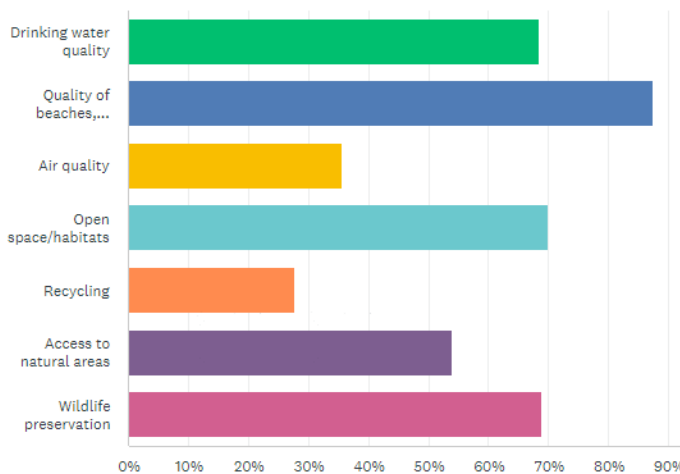
Respondents were invited to provide open-ended responses to this question. 273 respondents answered the question. A summary of the responses is provided:

Respondents discuss a variety of concerns related to growth and development, including the conservation of green areas and open spaces, creating parks, compromising water quality, improving roads and traffic signals, traffic congestion and roadway capacity, there being too many people for the fragile ecosystem, lack of affordable housing for workers, too much low-quality housing, inadequate infrastructure, loss of wildlife habitats, the proliferation of strip malls, and the impact of the growth on the environment and the County’s quality of life. The community encourages balancing growth and conservation, promoting environmentally responsible development, improving infrastructure, preserving open spaces, promoting diverse housing options, and cultivating a diverse economy.

Q4: What are the most important environmental issues in Indian River County?

The most important environmental issues in Indian River County include: the quality of beaches, rivers, and lakes; open space/habitats; wildlife preservation; and drinking water quality.

Answered: 286 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Drinking water quality	68.53%	196
Quality of beaches, rivers, and lakes	87.41%	250
Air quality	35.66%	102
Open space/habitats	69.93%	200
Recycling	27.62%	79
Access to natural areas	53.85%	154
Wildlife preservation	68.88%	197
Total Respondents: 286		

Of 50 open-ended comments submitted for this question, respondents mentioned various environmental concerns such as toxins in the environment, sea level rise, stormwater, lagoon

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pollution, natural habitat preservation, flooding, septic tanks, and climate change. Additionally, there is a call to leave Vero natural and undeveloped and mention the benefits of reduced traffic and overcrowding. Community members additionally expressed concerns about traffic, noise pollution, and overbuilding. Several people want the County's natural beauty maintained and for sustainable practices to be promoted, including providing organic waste pickup services.

Q5: What natural/environmental resources are most important to the County? How should these resources be protected? Please identify the resource and why it should be protected.

Respondents were invited to provide open-ended responses to this question. 234 respondents answered the question. A summary of the responses is provided:

- Water is abundant and can be used for outdoor recreation and fishing, but it needs to be uncontaminated, and chemicals should not be used.
- Protecting seagrass in the Indian River Lagoon can prevent biodiversity loss.
- Preserving land and water is important, and limiting housing development can reduce traffic, pollution, and water problems.
- Protecting the waterways, particularly the Indian River Lagoon and Blue Cypress Lake, is of utmost importance for the natural environment and the county's economic vitality.
- Development should be slowed, and no more housing developments should be built to protect the land and water.
- Wetlands, scrub jay, and gopher tortoise habitats should be preserved and conserved.
- Stricter boating and septic regulations are necessary to improve water quality.
- Water treatment plants should be used instead of septic tanks, and everyone should be hooked up to sewer.
- The sheriff's department should be given the resources and responsibility for protecting County wildlife and parks.
- Ditches and canals can serve the community for outdoor recreation and fishing, but chemicals should not be used.
- Rural areas, ranches, and farms should be conserved, and agriculture should be encouraged.

Q6: What are the biggest transportation needs in Indian River County?

Respondents identified the biggest transportation needs in the County as roadway improvements, better sidewalks and crosswalks, safety improvements, better transit service, more on-street bike lanes, and additional parking.

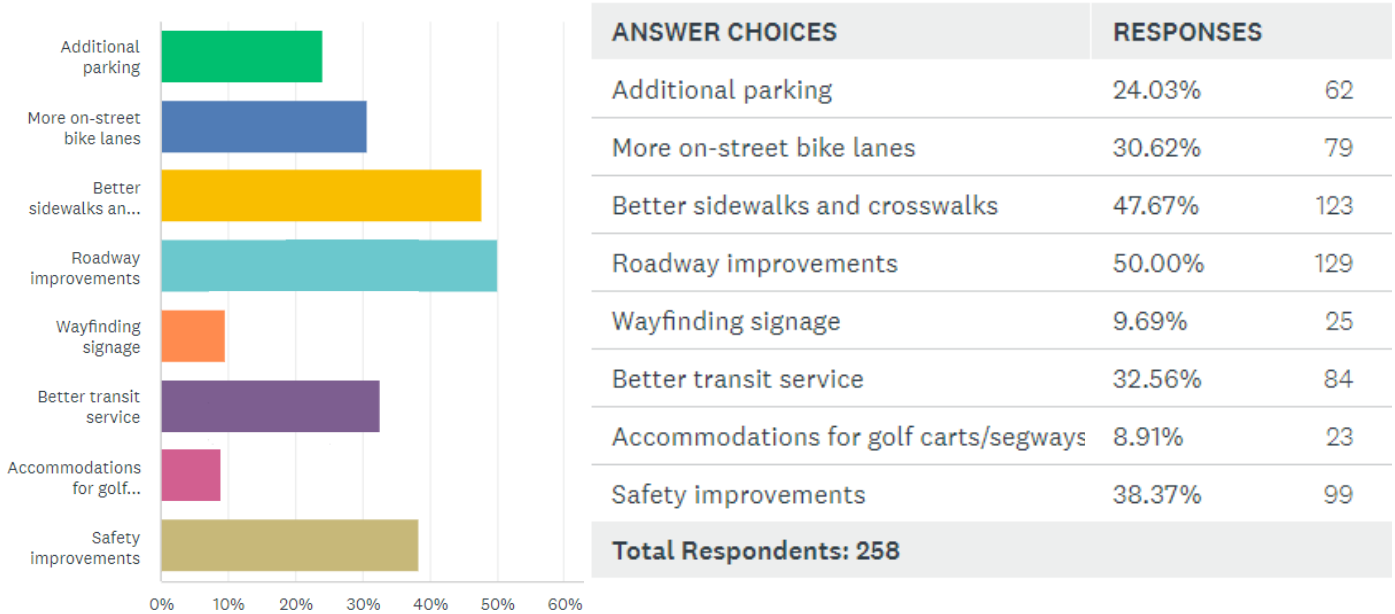
Respondents were invited to provide open-ended answers to this question as well, and 71 comments were received. A summary of the responses is provided:

- Request for a light to be installed at the intersection of S Indian River Drive and US 1
- Suggestion for landscaping public rights of way
- Concerns about bike lanes being potentially dangerous. More bike lanes and paths are desired, as well as increased police presence to deter dangerous driving.
- Request for unpaved roads to be paved
- Promote natural trails instead of concrete sidewalks, including a proposal for hiking trails to be created in existing conservation areas
- Reduce speed limits and enforce traffic laws
- Synchronize traffic signals



- Improve roadways at rail crossing intersections to improve safety
- Add electric charging stations
- Increase connectivity between communities through public transit

Answered: 258 Skipped: 42



Q7: Are there specific streets that need to be improved? If so, how? Please identify the street segment and the improvement that is needed (e.g., address, intersection, or general location).

Respondents were invited to provide open-ended responses to this question. 171 respondents answered the question. A summary of the responses is provided:

Respondents identified various complaints and issues related to road maintenance and traffic in Vero Beach. These include unpaved and unkept roads in residential areas; flooding on 73rd Street (east of Route 1), 18th Street, Jungle Trail, and 5th Court; disruptive road work during the season, reduction in Twin Pairs lanes to manage speed, and the need for a 4-lane road from US 1 to 512 at Shark Mart intersection. Some comments requested a larger focus on walking and/or biking trails along roadways, including Roseland Road. The community emphasized preparing for future development, especially industrial, and encouraged connections to existing and new roadways to support the movement of goods, services, and people. US-1 and 510 were both identified more than once as unsafe for bicyclists. Respondents recommend adding right-turn lanes along US 1, between 8th Street and 20th Street, or providing a different solution, such as overpasses, to reduce the bottleneck through traffic experiences. Guard rails were requested on 4th Street, 8th Street, 12th Street, 16th Street, and 20th Avenue. 12th Street between 58th and 66th is identified as a dangerous road that needs to be improved as soon as possible. Paving unpaved roadways was requested, with “16 and 12 Avenues east of 98 Street” being called out in particular. Many respondents expressed concerns about the ability of the transportation network to handle future capacity needs. The community at large called for more walkable downtowns, better paving

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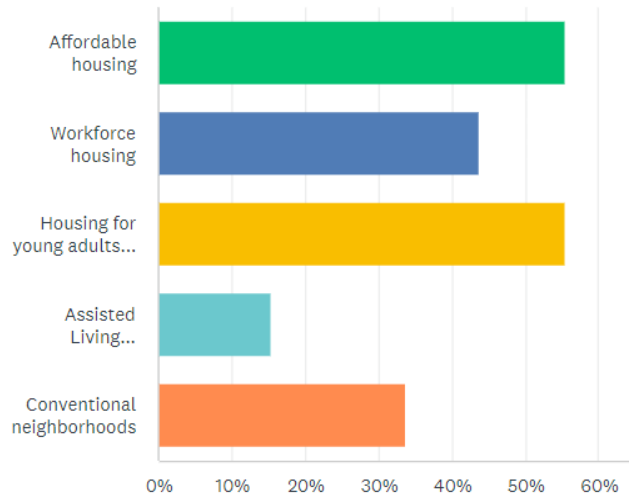




across the entire network, and additional parking for downtown. One respondent noted that the Oslo crossing at the railroad east of Old Dixie is especially dangerous, as they have twice witnessed cars stopped on the tracks due to the topography and roadway geometry. Road maintenance issues identified across the network include poorly maintained roadway paint, resulting in confusion, as well as overgrowth from bushes and trees creating blind spots. Many community members call for stricter speed restrictions and/or stronger enforcement of such restrictions.

Q8: Indian River County needs more: _____ Answered: 229 Skipped: 71

Respondents identified affordable housing, as well as housing for young adults, families, new residents, and retirees as equally important needs for the County. The County additionally needs workforce housing and conventional neighborhoods.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Affordable housing	55.46%	127
Workforce housing	43.67%	100
Housing for young adults, families, new residents, retirees	55.46%	127
Assisted Living Facilities	15.28%	35
Conventional neighborhoods	33.62%	77
Total Respondents: 229		

Respondents additionally left 62 comments on this question. In summary:

Several concerns were raised, including a request to stop building as there is enough, enforcement of loitering in parks, adding conservation areas to green spaces, preserving the quiet and unique character of Vero, and a general sentiment against more development in Indian River County. Respondents recommended: farms (agricultural, citrus, and/or co-op), innovative residential development regulations and patterns (clustered subdivisions, granny flats, “land-efficient” housing, low-impact development [LID] practices, and inclusive housing), affordable housing for low-wage earners, more middle-class housing, senior-friendly housing, community-focused developments with improved aesthetics and walkability, transportation-oriented development, more green space, and mixed-use neighborhoods.



Q9: Where should new households be located (e.g., in existing neighborhoods; in undeveloped areas; in downtown; in mixed-use developments)?

Respondents were invited to provide open-ended responses to this question. 211 respondents answered the question. A summary of the responses is provided:

One respondent suggested disallowing new housing unless it will positively impact the community's current water infrastructure issues, and that no development should be permitted to destroy natural habitats completely. Respondents recommend mixed-use development (vertically and horizontally), in-fill development in existing neighborhoods, and a combination of approaches for new households, focusing on areas where services like water and sewer can be or are already provided before moving on elsewhere. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings to create housing is suggested. Finally, the community is concerned about urban sprawl. Increasing density in built-up areas, adapting non-residential buildings into housing, and in-fill development in existing neighborhoods are the three main themes across responses.

One contributor wrote:

“At IRNA [Indian River Neighborhood Association], we believe that new low-income housing should be strategically located to support community integration and access to essential services. Integrating affordable housing within existing neighborhoods can foster diverse, inclusive communities and prevent the segregation of income groups. It's also beneficial to consider locations near downtown areas, where residents can have easy access to employment opportunities, public transportation, and amenities. Mixed-use developments are particularly promising, as they combine residential living with commercial, cultural, and institutional entities. This approach can reduce the need for transportation, lower living costs, and create a vibrant, active community. Additionally, developing low-income housing in areas planned for growth, where infrastructure can support increased density, ensures that such development is sustainable and beneficial for the entire community. In all cases, it's essential that these housing initiatives are undertaken with a focus on smart growth principles, ensuring that they enhance rather than detract from the existing character and needs of the county's diverse regions. We at IRNA are committed to advocating for housing solutions that not only provide affordability but also contribute positively to the overall quality of life for all residents.”

Despite the overarching themes described above, there are community proponents of development being pushed to undeveloped areas, especially western portions of the County.

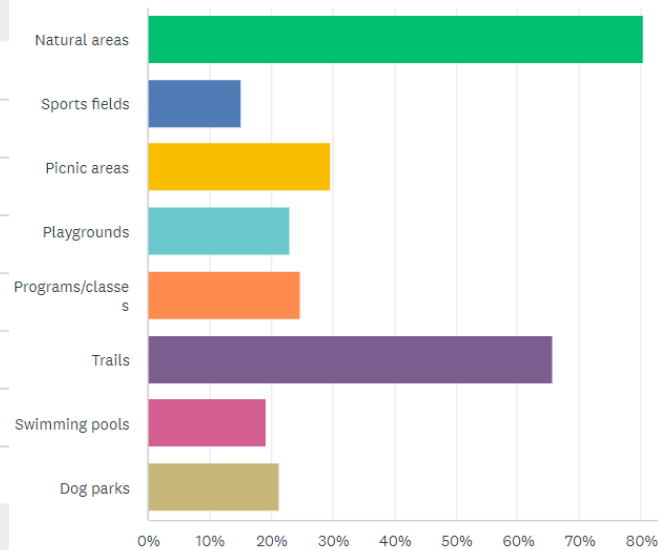


Q10: What park amenities does Indian River County need more of?

Respondents identified the biggest transportation needs in the County as roadway improvements, better sidewalks and crosswalks, safety improvements, better transit service, more on-street bike lanes, and additional parking.

Answered: 239 Skipped: 61

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Natural areas	80.33%	192
Sports fields	15.06%	36
Picnic areas	29.71%	71
Playgrounds	23.01%	55
Programs/classes	24.69%	59
Trails	65.69%	157
Swimming pools	19.25%	46
Dog parks	21.34%	51
Total Respondents: 239		



Respondents additionally left 49 comments on this question. In summary, these comments recommended:

- Better maintenance of existing resources
- Developing a greenway on Dixie Highway in Roseland
- Playgrounds incorporated into natural areas
- Dog beaches and parks
- Water and open space conservation
- More pickleball facilities, basketball courts, safe places to hike, affordable campgrounds, marinas and boat storage facilities, public pools, bike trails, boat and kayak launches, skateparks, racquetball courts, outdoor fitness parks, passive recreation areas such as for birding, and indoor/outdoor music venues
- More senior programming and summer activities for low-income children
- Separate fee structures for County versus non-County residents
- Adaptive reuse of the old power plant as an event or entertainment venue

Q11: Where are parks needed and where are there existing parks that need improvements? Please identify the type and location (e.g., address, intersection, or general location).

Respondents were invited to provide open-ended responses to this question. 132 respondents answered the question. A summary of the responses is provided.

Residents in Indian River County have expressed their desire for improved maintenance of existing parks, more access to natural areas, and better distribution of parks throughout the County. Some specific requests include more sports fields, better bike paths, more dog-friendly parks, and an expanded park and picnic area at the north tip of Indian River County. There is also a growing need for specialized parks that cater to specific ages, interests, and activities such as dog parks, skate parks, and community gardens. The Indian River Neighborhood Association

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(IRNA) encourages prioritizing natural parks and trails that preserve the County's beautiful landscapes and wildlife habitats while providing residents with serene spaces for outdoor activities. IRNA also advocates for the expansion of trails that connect different parts of the County, promote a healthy lifestyle, and provide safe, non-motorized routes for commuting and leisure. Finally, IRNA is committed to ensuring that these parks are integrated thoughtfully into the county's planning and provide maximum benefit to the community while preserving the environmental integrity of our natural surroundings.

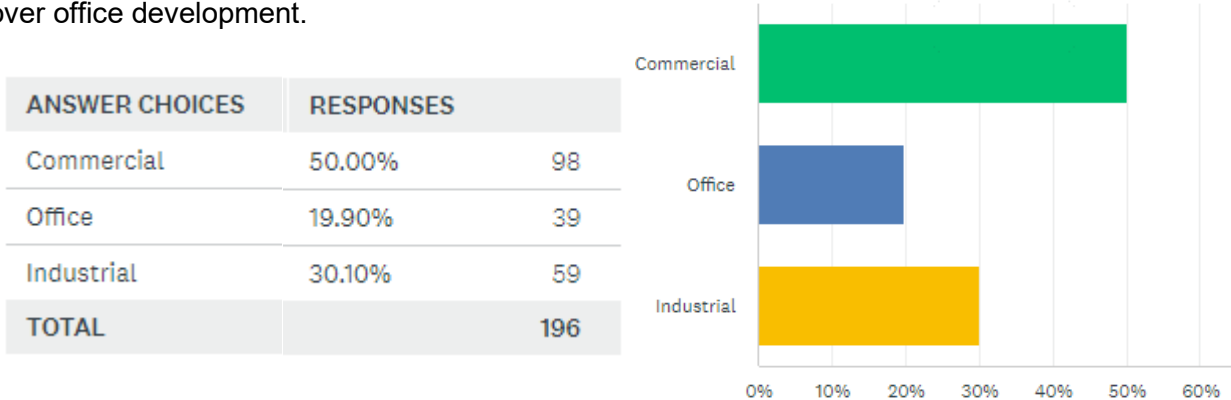
The community emphasized the importance of protecting and maintaining beach fronts and dunes with limited access to certain areas. They have noticed an increasing amount of litter.

The respondents generally suggested:

- Acquire properties for active or passive recreation, such as
- Acquire properties for conservation, such as near the river off 73rd Place
- Build walking trails other than sidewalks and off-street bicycle facilities
- Parks are needed in a variety of places – some respondents named specific subdivisions while others named general community areas. This includes Vero Lakes Estate, West Vero Corridor, south of Oslo Road, off 58th south side, land at the “point of US 1 and Indian River Drive before the bridge to Brevard County”, Wabasso Beach, the south end of the County, near 66th Avenue, waterfront parks, Vero Beach, Sebastian, the western area of the County,
- Park improvements are needed at Pocahontas Park, 14th Street Downtown Park, the boardwalk (specifically plantings), Charles Park,
- Provide recreation areas that provide good viewing areas for Space Port launches
- Add a swimming pool in the southern area of the County, potentially near the IG Center
- Increase the frequency of invasive species removal in conservation areas, such as the North Sebastian Conservation Area
- Future housing developments be required to provide recreational space
- Captain Forster Hammock Preserve has great potential but the current trails are limited and not maintained
- Develop a complex like the IG Center in the northern area of the County
- Acquire land to develop a facility similar to Markham Park in Broward County which has something for everyone.
- Improve local neighborhoods with pocket parks



Q12: What kind of economic development does Indian River County need (commercial, office, or industrial)?
 196 respondents answered this question. Half of the respondents determined the County needs commercial development. Of the remaining respondents, industrial development was emphasized over office development.



Q13: Where do you envision new or redeveloped economic development opportunities going in the County? Please identify a location (e.g., address, intersection, or general location) and type of development.

Respondents were invited to provide open-ended responses to this question. 173 respondents answered the question. A summary of the responses is provided.

People suggest various locations for economic development opportunities in Indian River County. Several people mention the need for industrial and commercial development, particularly in the west of the County, near I-95 and Route 60. There is also a desire for more commercial amenities, such as grocery stores, closer to downtown and residential areas, and for more local businesses to set up shop. Some people suggest attracting new industries, such as the tech industry or space travel program, to replace the lost agriculture industry. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in a shift to increased remote workers, it is suggested the County should invest in its digital infrastructure, create coworking spaces, and advertise its high quality of life to position Indian River County as an attractive destination for remote workers. Finally, there are concerns about traffic congestion in residential areas and the need for more medical office space in Sebastian. Responses emphasized redevelopment over new development.

The community generally envisions new or redeveloped economic development opportunities occurring:

- Along 14th Avenue, Route 60, 512, US 1, Highway 110, the Miracle Mile area, Aviation Boulevard, and 85th Street between US 1 and 86th Avenue
- At the Indian River Mall, “Three Corners”, “Four Corners”
- Via adaptive reuse of existing buildings, especially the old power plant
- Near I-95 interchanges such as Route 60 and the future Oslo Road interchange – industrial development is the preference here
- Where it will support sustainable growth and minimize environmental impact
- To attract Aldi, Costco, and Trader Joe’s
- In Fellsmere, downtown Vero, or by the airport
- By the Lagoon, similar to Bayfront Park in Miami, which features businesses, restaurants, entertainment, marina, boat slips, and fishing all in one spot

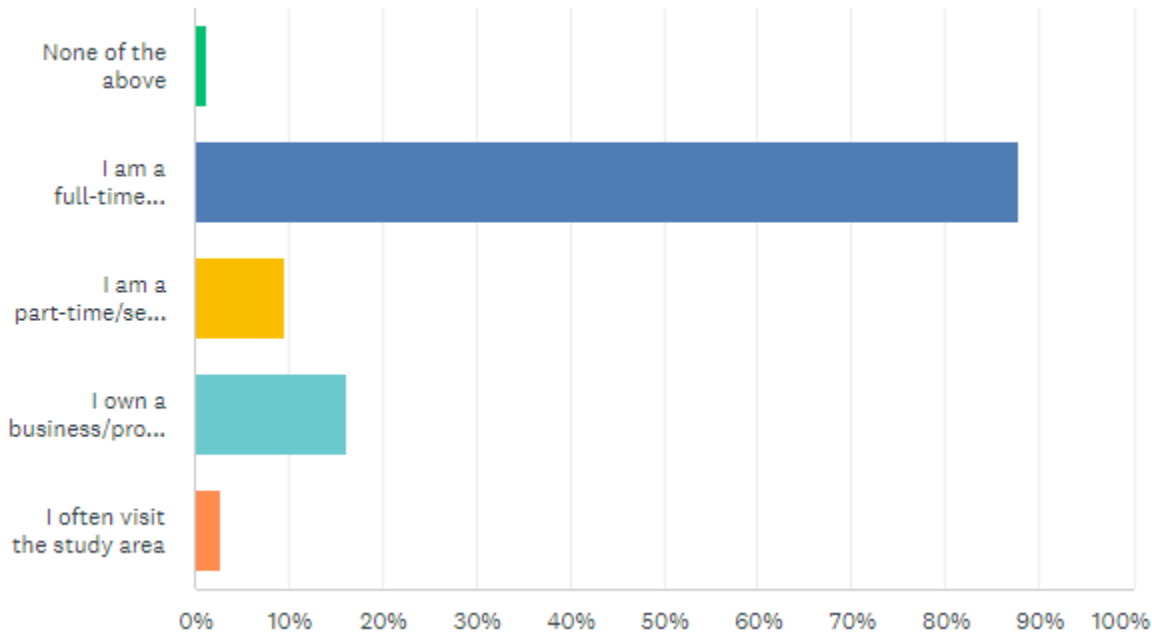


Q14: What is your email address (to join mailing list)?

Due to the personally identifying nature of this question, no summary of responses will be provided in this report.

Q15: Which of the following best describe you?

248 respondents answered this question. The majority of respondents (87.9%) are full-time residents of the County. Approximately 16% own a business or own property in the County, comparatively.

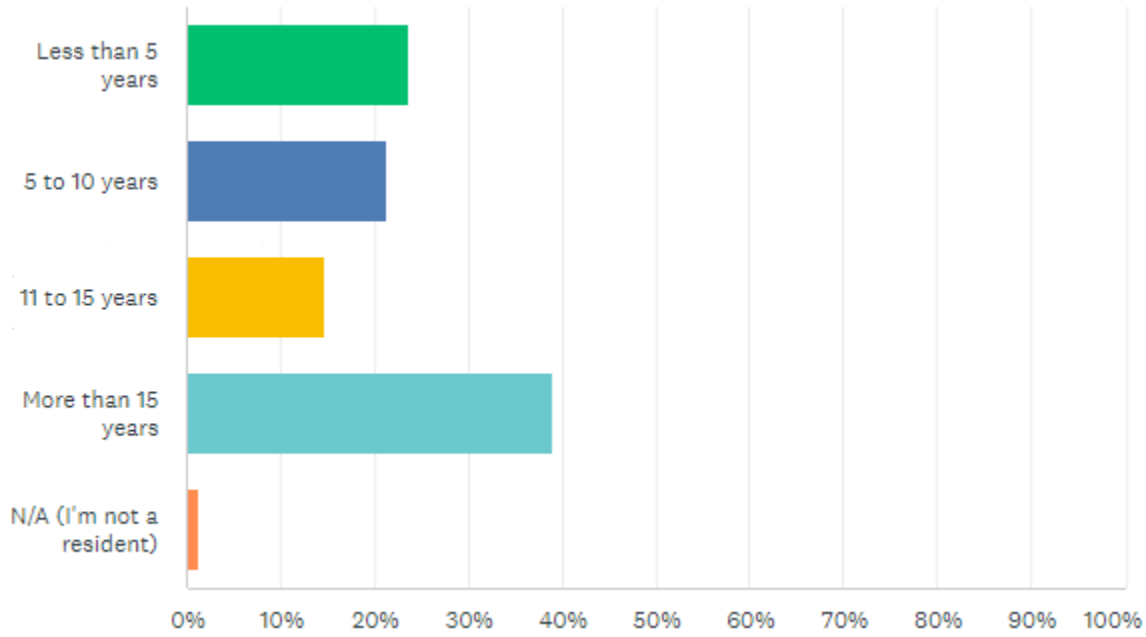


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	1.21%	3
I am a full-time resident	87.90%	218
I am a part-time/seasonal resident	9.68%	24
I own a business/property in Indian River County	16.13%	40
I often visit the study area	2.82%	7
Total Respondents: 248		



Q16: If you are a resident, how long have you lived here?

244 respondents answered this question. Nearly 40% of respondents have lived in the County for more than 15 years. Otherwise, the majority (approximately 45%) have lived in the County for less than 10 years.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 5 years	23.77%	58
5 to 10 years	21.31%	52
11 to 15 years	14.75%	36
More than 15 years	38.93%	95
N/A (I'm not a resident)	1.23%	3
TOTAL		244

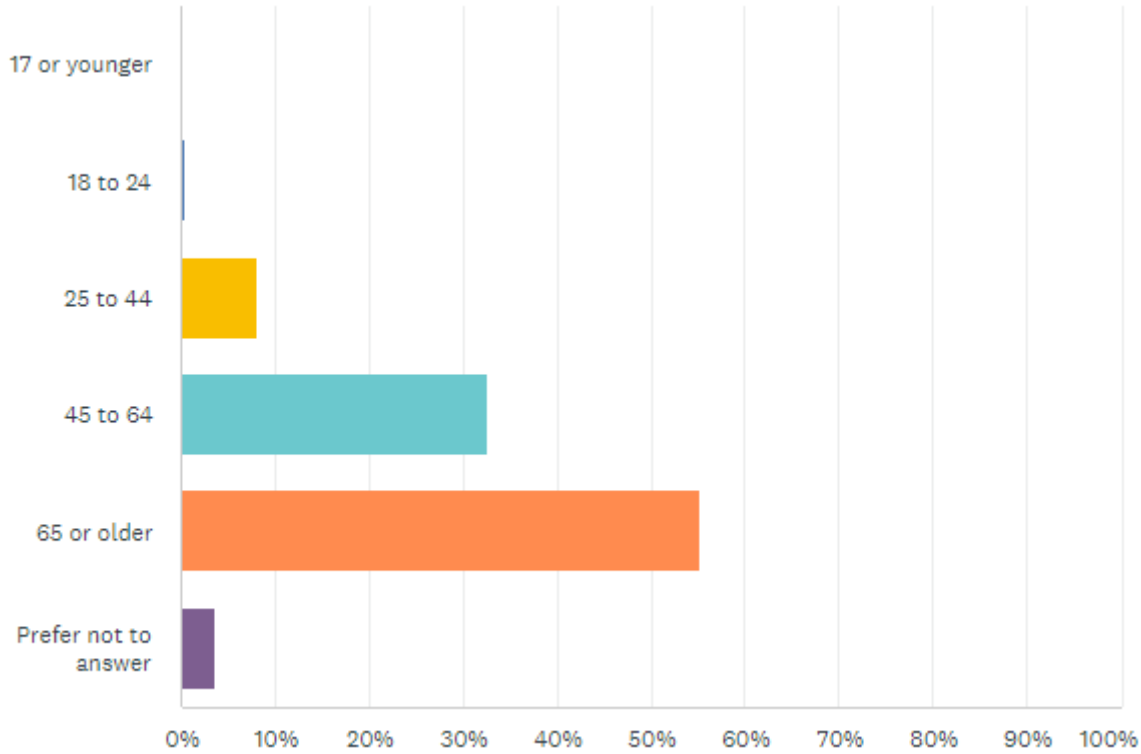
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Q17: What is your age?

248 respondents answered this question. The majority (55.24%) of respondents were 65 years of age or older. Of the remaining respondents, most were between 45 and 64. No respondents identified as 17 or younger, and only 1 respondent identified as between 18 and 24.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
17 or younger	0.00%	0
18 to 24	0.40%	1
25 to 44	8.06%	20
45 to 64	32.66%	81
65 or older	55.24%	137
Prefer not to answer	3.63%	9
TOTAL		248

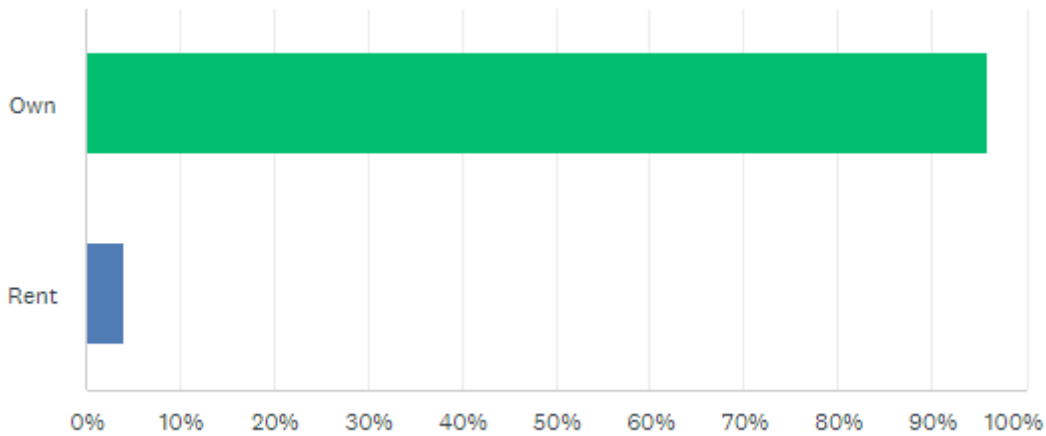
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Q18: Do you own or rent your home?

243 respondents answered this question. The majority of survey takers own their own home.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Own	95.88%	233
Rent	4.12%	10
TOTAL		243

Q19: Do you have any additional comments?

This final question was an open-ended response opportunity. 132 respondents answered this question. Some of the main themes include a desire for more grassroots efforts, relationship building between public service and residents, public/private sector collaboration, and a plan for growth that balances economic and environmental goals. Many residents expressed concerns about uncontrolled growth, crime, traffic, lack of healthcare, and the impact on the local economy. There are also calls for more walking and biking trails and a focus on sustainable development practices.

Individual Maps and Comments received during the Community Workshops are provided in the following section of this Appendix.