

CITY OF HOMER

Comprehensive Plan Rewrite



What We've Learned and What's Next

SEPTEMBER: Over 550 surveys and more than 200 comments on the interactive comment map! Join us at one or more of the gatherings below to **view and hear the results** and how they are informing Growth Scenarios and Draft Plan Development.

September 10: Economic Development Advisory Commission

September 12: Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Board Meeting

September 17: Library Advisory Board

September 18: Planning Commission/Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture (PARC) joint work session
(tentative)

September 23: City Council

September 25: Port & Harbor Advisory Commission

View meeting details at www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/meetings

OCTOBER sneak peek: **Explore our future!**

Using a combination of community input and other information, the project team is developing **three potential growth scenarios** to explore how Homer could change over the next ten years.



The **three scenarios will be shared for community feedback the week of October 22**, with both in person and virtual options to share your thoughts.

Save the Date!

COMMUNITY WORK SESSION

October 22, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Islands and Oceans Visitor Center
more details to come!

Contact Information

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- **Project Consultant:** Shelly Wade, shelly@agnewbeck.com, 907-242-5326

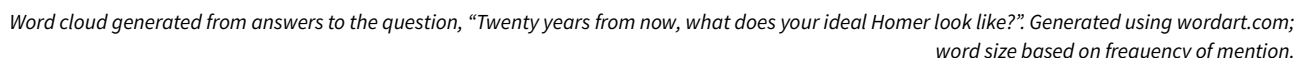
Resources

- **Project** website: www.homercompplanupdate.com
- City of **Homer** on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cityofhomerak>





September 6, 2024

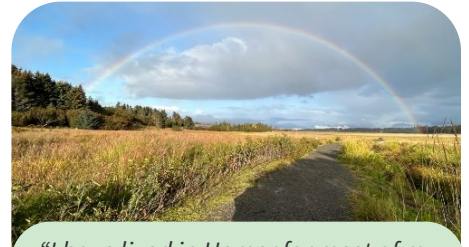




"Thank you for gathering this input! Homer has been an amazingly connected and healthy place for me, and I want it to remain so for my kids and any who are drawn to our engaged, connected community."



"I came here to work a seasonal job... I stayed because Homer gave me the space and support to be who I am. I love this place deeply; I love the fun and quirky community that I've found."



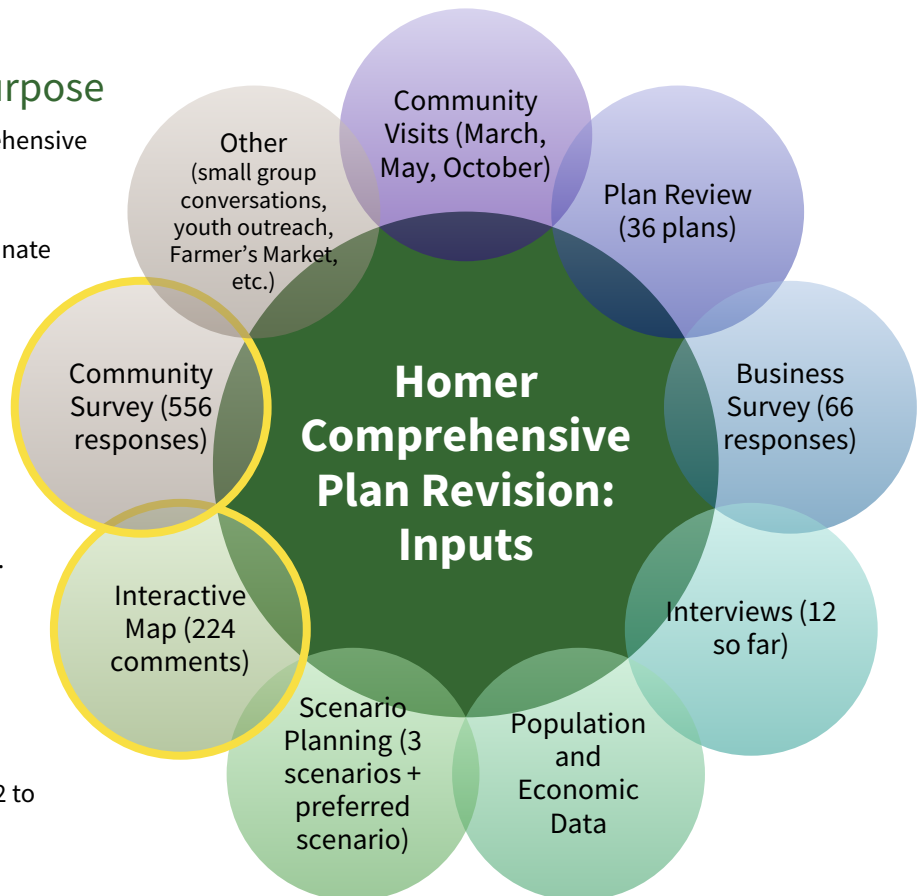
"I have lived in Homer for most of my life and absolutely love this town and its surrounding areas. It is the most beautiful place I have ever seen. This community is just as beautiful as the land... Homer is my Home <3"

Executive Summary

Survey and Comment Map Purpose

The City of Homer is updating the 2018 Comprehensive Plan to recognize and celebrate what we have accomplished, to address new challenges and opportunities for our community, and to coordinate efforts to achieve our shared vision for a future Homer.

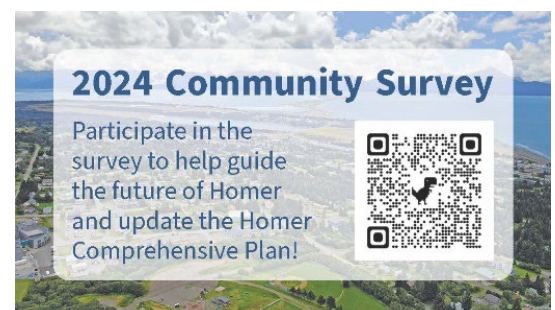
A community survey and interactive comment map were created to gather Homer residents' ideas and concerns about Homer's future. Survey results help the project team understand community priorities and develop strategies for the updated Comprehensive Plan.



Process

- **DATES:** The survey and interactive comment map were open from April 22 to July 1, 2024.
- **OUTREACH:** The survey and map were promoted via:
 - Facebook
 - E-blasts to the project distribution list
 - Announcements at City Council and other public meetings
 - Outreach by the Project Steering Committee
 - Through business cards featuring the survey and comment map QR code and links at business, local events, and to individuals.

See example business card →



Who Responded?

556 people participated in the survey, exceeding our goal of 500 participants.

224 comments were received on the interactive map.

Of the 556 survey participants:

- 70% of have lived in Homer more than a decade.
- 91% live in Homer year-round.
- 39% reside within the City of Homer limits.

Highlight of Results



Top 3 themes: What three things do you **value most** about living in Homer?

- Community, small town feel, family and friends
- Natural beauty and scenery
- Access to outdoor activities and ocean



Top 3 themes: What three things do you find **most challenging** about living in Homer?

- Overall cost of living
- Infrastructure and transportation challenges
- Lack of affordable housing



Top 3 themes: 20 years from now, what does your **ideal Homer** look like?

- Homer has retained its small-town character
- Affordable housing and reasonable cost of living
- Walkable, vibrant downtown



Quality of Life

- A combined 82% rate the quality of life in Homer as good/excellent.
- A combined 88% rate Homer as a good/excellent place to raise a family.

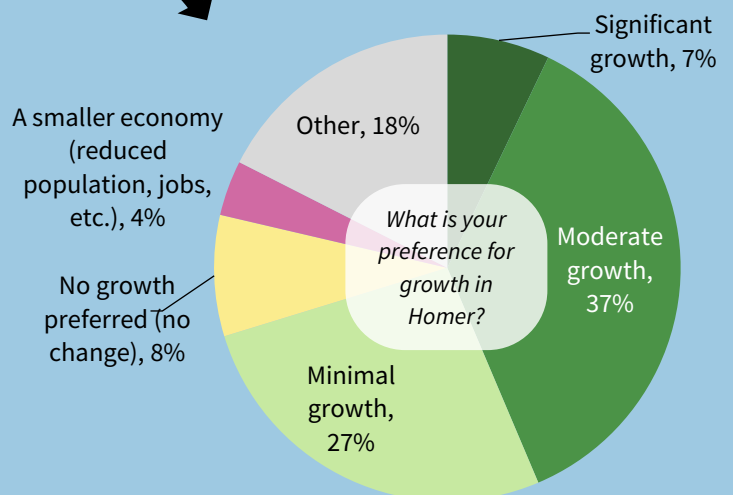


Housing Highlights

- 76% of survey participants are satisfied/very satisfied with their current housing situation.
- 68% say housing is too expensive in Homer.
- 66% say more attainable starter homes are needed for younger residents, families, or residents that wish to downsize.



Desired Growth



Most open-ended comments about growth discuss “sustainable and controlled growth” with a focus on planning that considers environmental impact, infrastructure capacity, and preservation of Homer’s character.

Top Priorities and Projects for Homer to Focus on for the Next 10-20 Years

- Increase supply and accessibility of affordable housing
- Encourage the retention and creation of more year-round, higher wage jobs
- Preserve open public spaces within the city from development
- Create a livable, walkable, vibrant downtown
- Encourage renewable energy projects

Identified as “important/very important” by 74% or more of survey participants

Introduction

To inform planning work, the project committee collected community feedback in two ways: a survey of open-ended questions and a comment map where participants could identify locations of interest. When appropriate to a specific survey question, feedback collected from the survey map has been included in the survey results using purple text. Partner groups, including the Homer City Council, Homer Planning Commission, Economic Development Advisory Council, Chamber of Commerce Marine Trades Association, Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP), and others assisted in promoting the survey.

Community Survey Process

- **Timing:** The Homer Community Survey was open for a little over two months, from April 22 to July 1, 2024.
- **Promotion:** The survey was promoted via Facebook, e-newsletters, announcements at City Council and other public meetings. Survey participation was also sought through outreach by the Steering Committee, and through handouts at business, local events, and to individuals. Hard copies were available at City Hall and the library. Partner groups were encouraged to help share and promote the survey.

Response Summary

We exceeded our goal of 500 survey responses, with 556 responses received. 552 residents responded online via SurveyMonkey and 4 responded via hard copy.

The common themes highlighted below were those that received approximately five percent or more mentions of the answers submitted. Additional relevant or topical themes are also included in the analysis on most of the questions. ChatGPT was used for some analysis and results verified by team members.

Interactive Comment Map

Process

- **Timing:** The interactive comment map was launched on May 13, 2024. The comment tool was disabled on July 3, 2024. The map with results remains live and can be viewed [here](#).
- **Promotion:** The comment map was promoted via e-newsletters to the project distribution list, announcements at City Council and other public meetings, and through outreach by the Steering Committee. Partner groups were encouraged to help share and promote the survey.

Response Summary

The comment map received 224 responses. Most location-based responses were concentrated within the City of Homer limits (90%) and the primary focus areas of interest were Transportation, Quality of Life, Land Use & Environment, and Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Change.



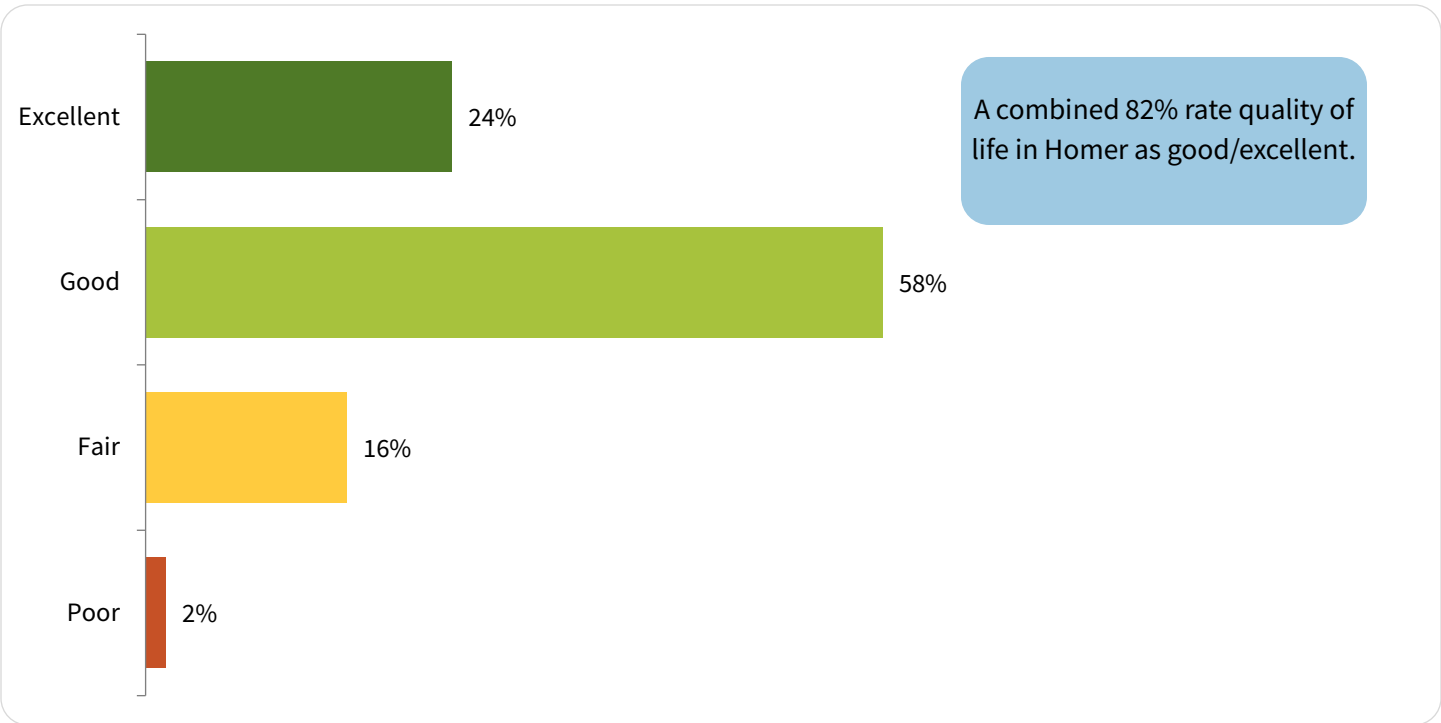
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Community Survey Results

Q1: How would you rate quality of life in Homer?

Answered: 553.



Q2: What three things do you value most about living in Homer?

Answered: 539; up to three answers per response.

Theme	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Community: Small town feel, community spirit, friendliness, sense of community, and peace and quiet	420	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People - community and good friends• The slower, quiet pace• Small town vibe and being able to establish relationships with other folks that live here.• Community collaboration and interdependence• The small business centered economy• Opportunity for generations to grow and have viability to have a small business• Knowing my neighbors, being part of a community• Everyone looks out for each other and cares for one another• Loving community that rallies when needed• There are endless opportunities to be involved in the community and people truly get involved• Freedom• No large industry dominates town• The love and community mindset folks have• The People, (Community and passion in varied interests and willingness to do the work).• Energetic, friendly and tight-knit community• The people with their can-do spirit
Natural Beauty and Scenery:	350	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The beauty and proximity of nature• Open, green spaces are widespread and plentiful.

Views, scenery, wildlife, proximity to the ocean and mountains, and clean air and water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Natural environment, living by the ocean</i> • <i>Being able to walk on the beach every day— the fact that motorized vehicles are limited at Mariner Park beach, and there is ample parking there for locals</i> • <i>View across the bay - that magic moment pulling off at Baycrest as you come into town</i> • <i>Kachemak Bay's rich natural habitat</i> • <i>The environment (scenery, climate, clean air and water)</i> • <i>The wild land still integrated within the city</i> • <i>Breathtaking, accessible natural beauty and wildlife</i> • <i>Moose in my yard, slow tempo of life, natural beauty, quiet</i> • <i>My kids get to grow up in wild places</i> • <i>Beautiful. I can see the blue ocean and ice capped mountains from my driveway</i>
Access to Outdoor Activities: Outdoor recreational opportunities and experiencing nature	140	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Access to world-class outdoor recreation opportunities</i> • <i>Access to fishing and hunting and supportive resources to do so</i> • <i>Outside space/recreation</i> • <i>Access to Kachemak Bay</i> • <i>The access to the outdoors</i> • <i>Able to walk/bike to many places</i> • <i>Fishing, camping across the bay, hiking, walking and biking trails</i> • <i>Year-round outdoor activities</i> • <i>Lifestyle and subsistence culture based on surrounding land and ocean</i> • <i>Access to outdoor activities (skiing, hiking, boating)</i>
Safety: Low crime rates, feeling safe in Homer	71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not a lot of crime</i> • <i>Low crime</i> • <i>Safety. I don't worry about my kids riding their bikes around the neighborhood</i> • <i>Safe environment</i> • <i>Feeling of safety</i> • <i>mainly a safe place to live</i>
Arts and Culture: Local creative activities and opportunities to experience arts and culture	62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The people and all their artistic proclivities</i> • <i>Pratt Museum</i> • <i>A creative engaged community - lots of art and efforts</i> • <i>Culture, arts community and nonprofits</i> • <i>Food and arts</i> • <i>I appreciate the vibrancy of the creative arts in Homer.</i> • <i>Arts and culture investments</i> • <i>Community events, focused on arts and nature</i> • <i>Arts, Music, and Entrepreneurship. (creativity in general)</i> • <i>Access to arts and culture despite being small town</i> • <i>Lively creative inclusive crowd</i> • <i>The many community opportunities for art, theater, classes, groups</i> • <i>The arts community, the farming and flower growing</i>
Friends and family: Friends and family and the feeling of “home”	49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My family nearby</i> • <i>Personal ties, friends, family</i> • <i>Our friendships</i> • <i>The people! Newcomers and old timers.</i> • <i>My family's history here</i> • <i>My friends and neighbors</i> • <i>My community of friends and musicians</i> • <i>Kindness of neighbors, sense of belonging</i>
Education: Quality of schools and	34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strong schools</i> • <i>Educational and job training opportunities are valued</i> • <i>Good public services - schools, health care, library, museum</i>

educational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent schools • The college campus: for its availability of diverse community events as well as its educational programs • Good place to raise kids/schools
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Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Healthcare
- Environmental Awareness and Protection

Q3: What three things do you find most challenging about living in Homer?

Answered: 539; up to three answers per response. Responses in purple text are from the comment map.

Theme	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Overall Cost of Living: Cost of food, utilities, fuel, transportation and other supplies; Wages not comparable to cost of living.	281	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending 30% of my income on food per month • Lack of jobs that offer a livable wage & benefits • The cost of groceries/gas/utilities • People are being priced out of the town • Wages are not enough to cover living expenses • Property prices very high for “average” working family • Price of utilities, food and rent • Expensive for families to participate in activities • The cost of living is high in Alaska and because we don’t get barge or container ships delivering directly to our port we have to pay to truck everything in from Anchorage and beyond. Folks in Anchorage will complain that the cost off living is high there but that’s where we go to stretch our shopping dollars • Cost of services like mechanics, water taxis, and medical services
Infrastructure and Transportation: Pedestrian and biking safety, road maintenance (especially during winter), limited public transportation, and difficulties with local and out-of-town connectivity	191	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor road maintenance • Traffic and flow of traffic • Road maintenance--sand more and get rid of salt brine • Concern about future infrastructure with the growing outlying population that does not contribute to the tax base • Roads - East End as an example - when was the last time it received real maintenance, not just emergency repairs? • It's not a walking friendly city, even though I love all the little city trails, I wish there was more. Also, sidewalks are missing and not being maintained in the winter • Lack of public transportation • No cohesive downtown or walking core of businesses • Lack of infrastructure for growth - east end and spit for example • No Dog Park • I wish it was more walkable- needs more crosswalks, needs more enforcement of crosswalk rules, sidewalks need clearing/ sanding in winter • Lack of sewer and water in some areas of Homer • There’s no real public restrooms at parks with flush toilets and sinks • Subsidizing tourists' water and sewer while I have to pay • I wish it felt easier to walk to places for basics like groceries. I live in town, but it takes me 30 minutes walking to get to the nearest grocery store due to lack of connections between parallel streets.
Affordable Housing: Expensive housing costs and rent, limited rental options, impact of	163	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of affordable homes/rentals for locals year-round. I have a year-round dwelling, but I am seeing many service workers being priced out of living here • Quality housing affordability • I wish the housing market was better/more affordable for young folks/families wanting to invest

seasonal vacation rentals, workforce housing, and new, expensive housing being built by non-locals		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support and especially housing for seniors • Housing for workforce • Housing / rental costs astronomical • The cost of housing is not reflective of our local economy and is rapidly outpacing the middle class wage earner
Overdevelopment: Impacts of development on the environment, increased noise and traffic (especially during tourist season), and how new development affects character of Homer	133	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gridlock on the spit in summer. It is overdeveloped to extend it is no longer attractive • Downtown moose habitat is being destroyed by new development • Development by those who want to make a buck, exploiting the beauty • RAPID GROWTH • Summer crowds and not enough parking for local boat owners on the spit • Summer crowds keep growing • Growing too fast • Unplanned, big development threats
Limited recreational opportunities: Limited indoor recreational activities particularly for children, teenagers and during the winter	69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like more trails and bike paths • Affordable access to hiking • Best hiking is on the other side of the Bay • Lack of functional/usable year-round maintained trail systems • I wish there was a space (larger than the SPARC) for indoor walking in the winter, for seniors especially • Lack of fun things to do in the winter inside (bowling) • Trails are really limited and not connected to each other - walking is a major form of recreation • Areas for young kids yr round • Lack of accessible organized sports for kids or camps, lack of indoor recreation center • I wish there were more trails here. I'm an avid outdoors person and boy do we have loads of places to ski and I'm so grateful for KNSC but hiking and biking trails are so limited on this side of the bay and across bay is expensive • [The south end of Bridge Creek Reservoir on Crossman Ridge Road] would be a benefit as a recreational park with established picnic areas. It's already used as such all summer.
Access and availability of goods: Similar to “cost of living” but comments focused on limited selection of goods and fresh foods.	67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs and limitations associated with geographic isolation • Limited choice for shopping. Inconsistent hours and seasons restaurants and some services • Very difficult to get skilled services done, such as plumbing, fixing leaky roof or auto repair • Costs and limitations associated with geographic isolation • Access to groceries and other goods - slim pickings & expensive • Limited food & shopping options • Proximity to Amenities (Kenai/Anchorage)
Isolation and weather: Challenges of living in remote area and effects of winter weather.	67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting here and away requires a big drive since the flight schedules have gotten trimmed down • Middle of winter weather • Winter can be pretty grim, and so much is closed and shut down • Winter ice • Lack of activities in the winter (I don't Nordic ski) • Traveling out in urgent situations (planes/ Ravn is unreliable) • Remoteness and the expense of getting to ANC for travel

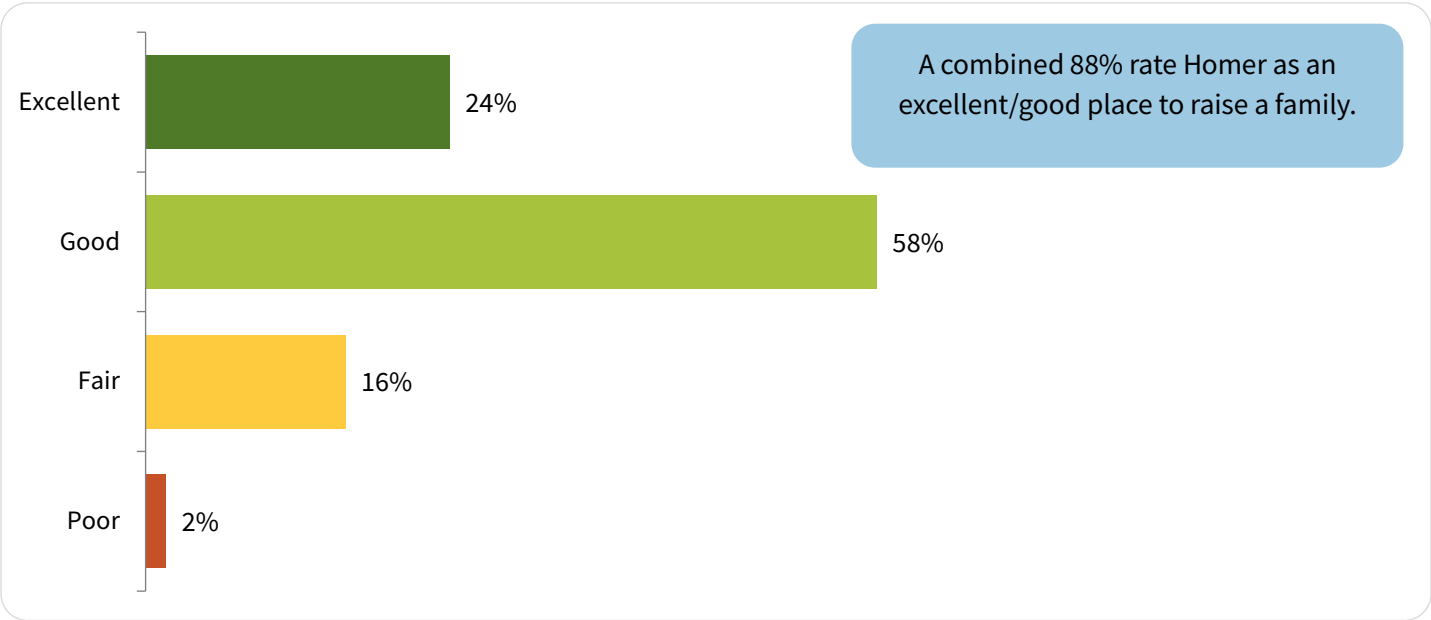
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Long cold dark winters</i> • <i>It can be expensive and difficult to travel elsewhere</i> • <i>Winter windstorms</i> • <i>Feels isolated sometimes</i> • <i>The dark days of early winter.</i>
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Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Lack of cohesive community vision; political and religious divisiveness; lack of diversity.
- Criticisms of local government decisions, taxes, and regulations.
- Lack of access to specialized medical care, behavioral health services, and substance abuse services.
- Lack of funding for education and accessible childcare.
- Impacts of climate change.

Q4: How would you rate Homer as a place to raise a family?

Answered: 544.



Q5:, In five words or less, how would do you describe Homer’s character, people, and attributes?

Answered: 482.

Theme	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Creative, Artistic, Unique	120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Independent, artistic,</i> • <i>Free thinking, non-conforming</i> • <i>Funky, mostly okay people, great art</i> • <i>Unique. Artisanal</i> • <i>Kind of grumpy but okay</i> • <i>Hardy, artistic, nutty</i>
Friendly, Supportive, Community-Minded	90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respectful, kind</i> • <i>Caring, religious</i> • <i>Friendly and compassionate minded people</i>

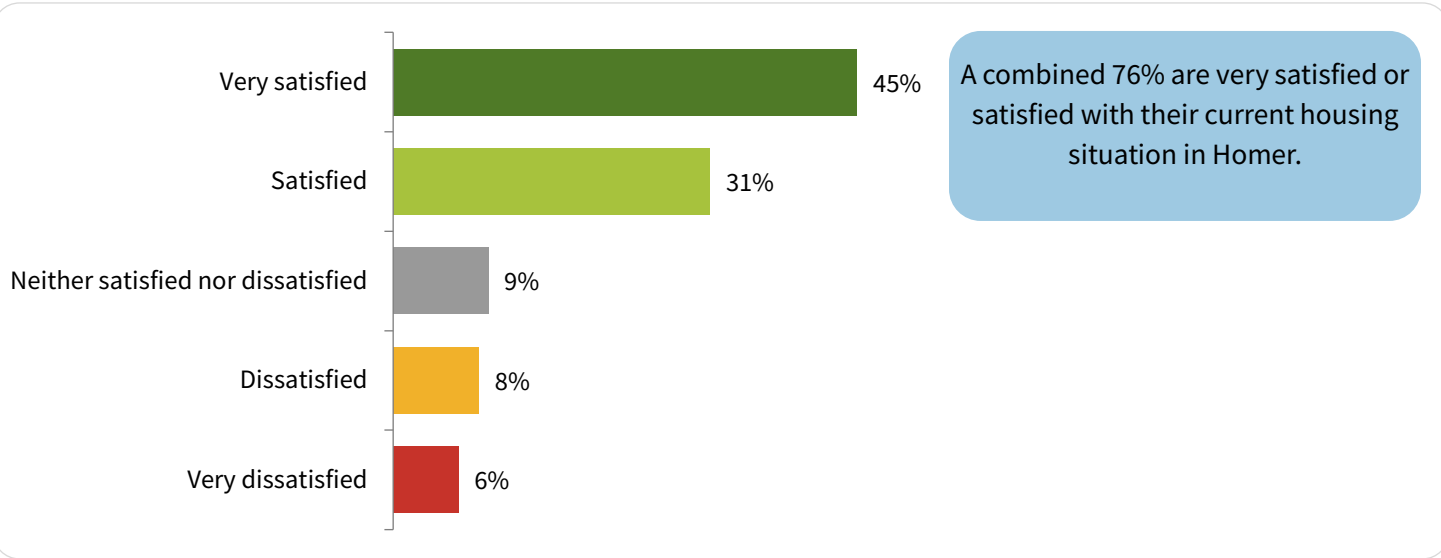
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Homer is feisty, fun & kind</i> • <i>Generous, caring, community minded</i> • <i>Sweet as a fuzzy kitten!</i> • <i>Encouraging, welcoming, helpful</i>
Opinionated, Diverse, Civically Engaged	58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Very opinionated residents</i> • <i>Small town politics</i> • <i>Welcoming, but increasingly fractious</i> • <i>Layered</i> • <i>Politically and religiously diverse</i> • <i>Colorful, opinionated, kind and generous if given a chance to connect face to face</i>
Independent, Resilient	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Driven, robust</i> • <i>Hardy</i> • <i>Resilient, generous, respectful, and upbeat</i> • <i>Stubborn and caring</i> • <i>Entrepreneurial</i>
Outdoorsy, Active, Nature-Loving	69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Outdoor oriented</i> • <i>Healthy, outdoorsy, active</i> • <i>Attractive community, natural beauty</i> • <i>Outdoorsy, friendly,</i> • <i>Fishing people</i> • <i>Environmentally conscience</i>

Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Laid back and slow paced
- Changing
- Adapting

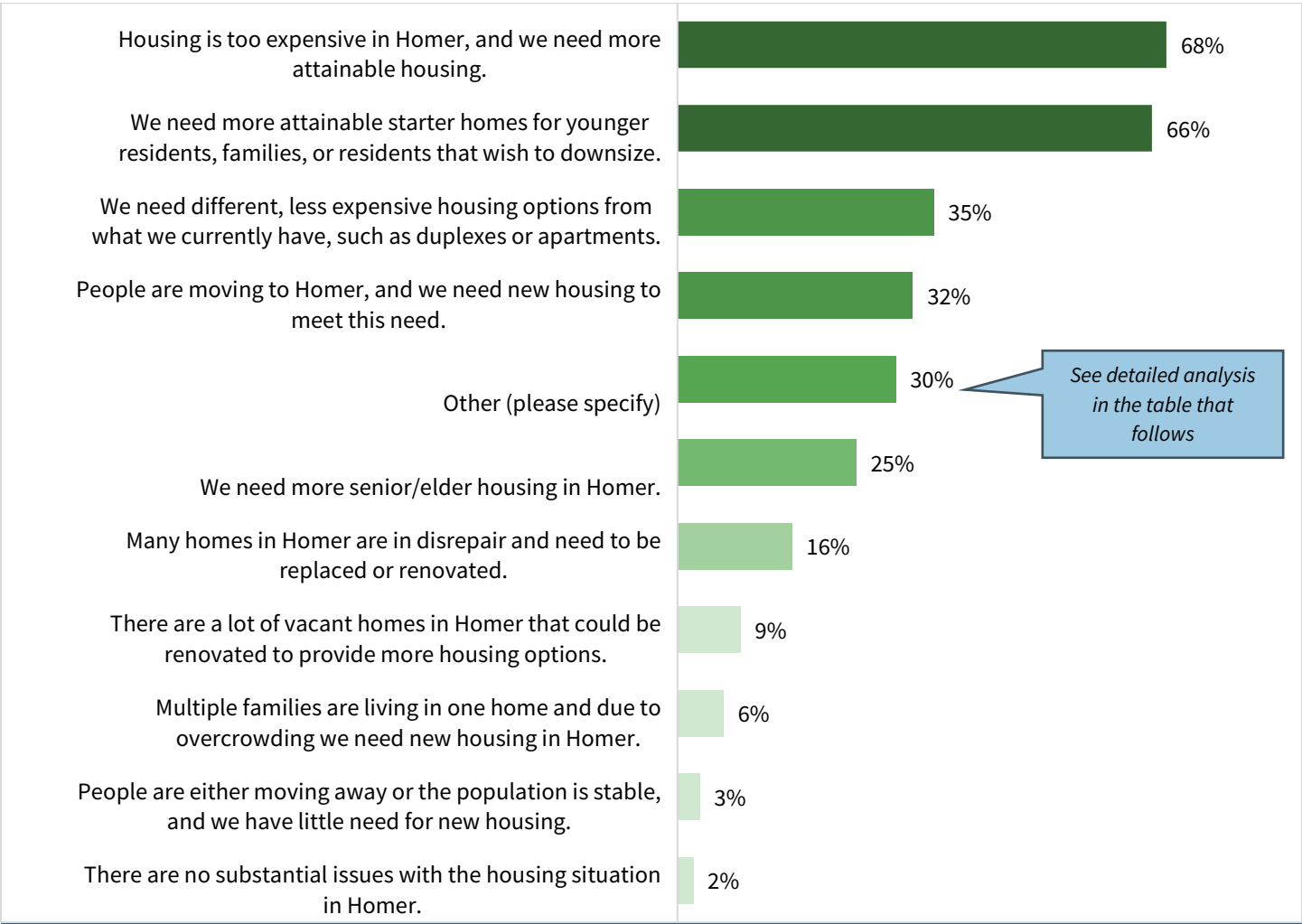
Q6: How satisfied are you with your current housing situation?

Answered: 551.



Q7: Please choose up to three statements from the options below that best summarize the housing situation in Homer.

Answered: 551; respondents could select up to three from the list below.



Themes from Responses to “Other (Please Specify)”

Answered: 166. Responses in purple text are from the comment map.

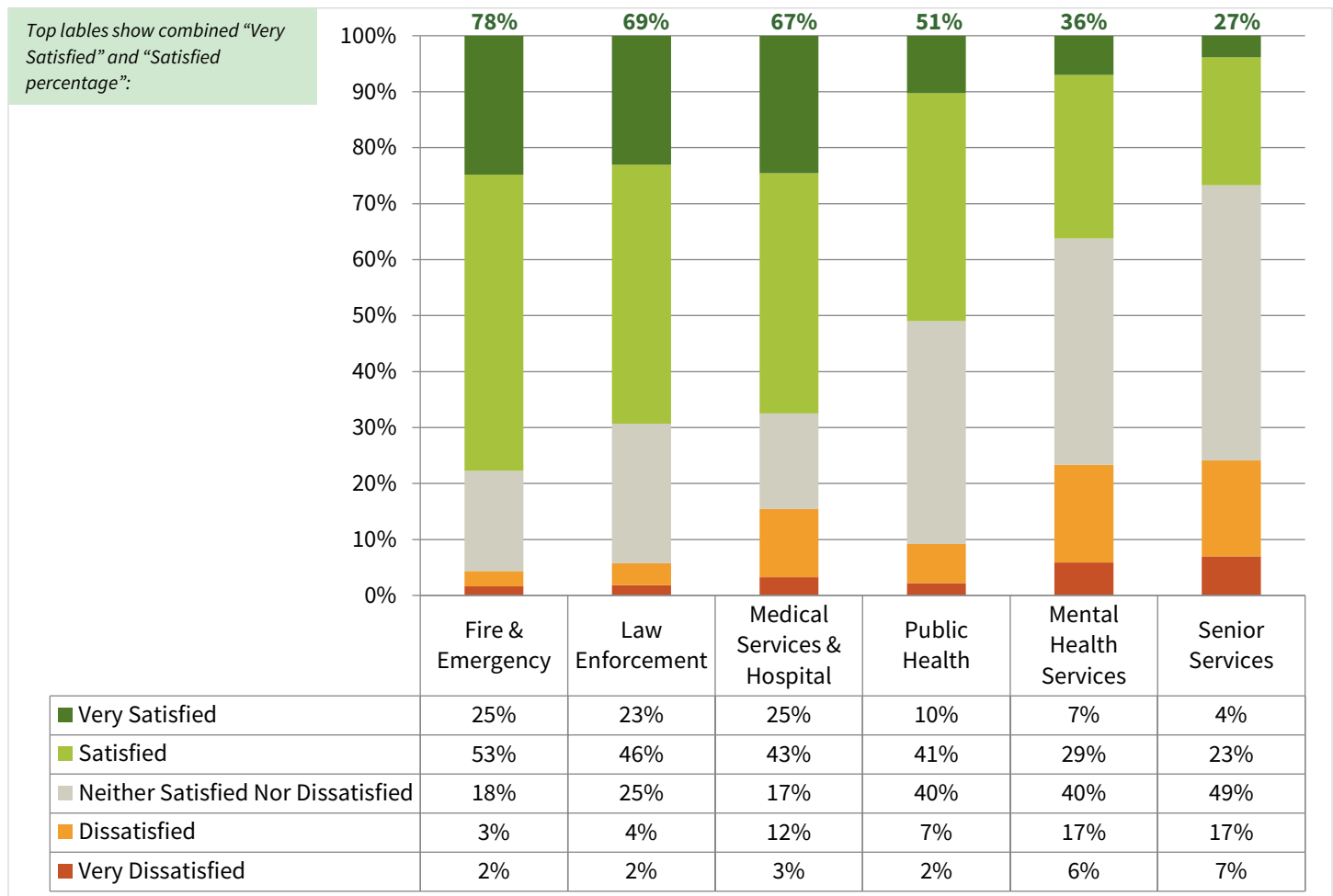
Theme	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Short-Term Rentals and Vacation Homes - Impacts of short-term rentals and vacation homes on housing availability, affordability, and community character	112	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many vacation rentals that take away from having available real estate on the market. Increases prices and decreases availability I think short term rentals are causing this bubble that makes it hard for young working families to start out here Air bnbs are taking all the mid to small houses from local people. Rentals are very hard to find at reasonable prices and home prices are so high that they are out of reach for the average young family. We don't need more housing, we need fewer BnB's and fewer people People are moving to Homer and building huge houses only living here part-time, making it harder for those full-time residents to afford to stay. I think that there is more than enough housing options, and the only issue is that our land is being used for vacation rentals. This is only destroying more of what makes homer a beautiful travel destination! Zone to clarify that only owner-occupied short-term rentals are allowed in all residential zones. No non-owner occupied STRs in residential zones to prevent the hospitality industry from taking over our neighborhoods. Zoning of the Cranberry Peninsula neighborhood needs to prohibit non-owner-occupied short-term rentals to prevent it from becoming a hospitality industry zone.
Affordability and Housing Costs - High cost of housing, including both rentals and homes for purchase	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We don't need MORE housing. We need to find ways to make the current housing affordable! Seasonal workers cannot afford housing We need to incentivize people willing to build affordable, year-round housing High property taxes combined with very high square footage costs and interest rates are making it nearly impossible for average family to buy (and getting harder for families to sell because not affordable/attractive to new buyers with high property taxes) Overpriced real estate/housing, excessive property tax values/utilities make housing difficult. People with poor credit/lack of affordability are most vocal about the issue The cost of rentals has skyrocketed! Seemingly due to the current cost of seasonal housing. It's gotten absolutely ridiculous! People want to charge locals the same amount in winter!

Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Lack of rentals that allow pets
- Regulation and zoning
- Gentrification and influx of wealthy outsiders
- Overdevelopment and loss of green space
- Housing for families and young residents
- Role of government in housing

Q8: How satisfied are you with the availability of the following Health & Safety programs or services in Homer?

Answered: 552.



Responses to "In the space below, please share more about those things you are dissatisfied with – this will help us better understand potential needs and priorities. Don't see a program/service in the list above? Tell us more here."

Answered: 294. Responses in purple text are from the comment map.

Theme	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Senior Services and Housing: Existing senior care facilities; limited housing options; limited hospice and in-home care options	85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need better senior housing options There needs to be a Memory Care Unit here We need another Assisted Living Facility, more licensed hospice care, and maybe a skilled nursing/rehab facility As seniors living in Homer, you are on your own if you have no family or friends to assist. This leads to depression and isolation. Senior services are as essential as youth programming There is a huge lack of senior care and senior housing in this community. The assisted livings are already full, and we are expecting a silver wave in this community.

High Healthcare Costs and Access to Healthcare: High cost of medical services in Homer; limited availability of medical specialists; Homer residents must travel to larger cities for certain types of care	81	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care is too expensive, especially considering both taxes and service costs • Healthcare costs are very high, wait time to see a doctor is far too long, there is a shortage of wound care and surgeons, all major emergency situations require life flight to Anchorage, elderly and disabled transportation is a major issue • It takes months to get in anywhere even with private insurance. Several of the people in our community either don't have insurance or are on state insurance which limits their access to mental health services even more. The workers in this field do all they can but we need more of them to support our rapidly growing population • Long waits for regular appointments with local doctors, dentists, and counselors who take my insurance (and I hear the same from others) • Medical services are ridiculously expensive, basic things like x-rays cost several times the national average
Mental Health Services: Shortage of mental health providers; long wait times; challenges accessing care, especially for children and seniors	73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little to no help for those who suffer from mental illness and isolation • Not enough mental health professionals to fill the need; the ones we have are overburdened • Mental Health Services were excellent ten years ago. Cuts from State funding have changed the quality and availability of mental health and social services • Very few mental health providers take Medicare - I was referred, and the waiting list was over 7 months • There is a massive mental health crisis facing every demographic in Homer right now. There are simply not enough providers to meet patient demand • Mental health professionals are already difficult to retain, add in a sky-high cost of living and unattainable housing, and they won't stay for long • There is no support for being who are struggling with severe mental illness and drug misuse. Folks who have severe mental illness are also victims of houselessness, domestic violence and sexual assault
Fire and Emergency Services: More staffing and resources needed; challenges posed by relying on volunteers for critical emergency services	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not enough law enforcement to cover the city of Homer and outlying areas • It would be great to have all services with designated staff instead of volunteers. Takes a long time for responses by time the volunteers get to the station, then out on the call • Our fire and emergency services are grossly understaffed. Please fix it. We finally increased the staff from one to two on call at night but that is still insufficient • Public safety should be first and foremost on the minds of a local government, the rest is details • Our fire and emergency response teams need more funding so they can hire more staff. They have a very large area to cover and with limited staff their ability to do their job is negatively impacted.
Public Health: Decline in public health services due to state funding cuts; a lack of proactive community health initiatives	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health Services have declined due to State funding cuts. Vaccination education is not consistent and there is a threat from old childhood diseases rebounding • Public Health nurses used to go and do "home checks"/"wellness checks" and there is no staff to do that. • Public Health: there's ONE PH nurse, that's not enough, services have suffered • I would like to see more traditional public health service aimed at supporting young families and decreasing rates of child abuse and neglect • Public Health was gutted by the state years ago. They used to do wonderful work supporting families, helping new parents, (all socioeconomic statuses) providing vaccination, etc.

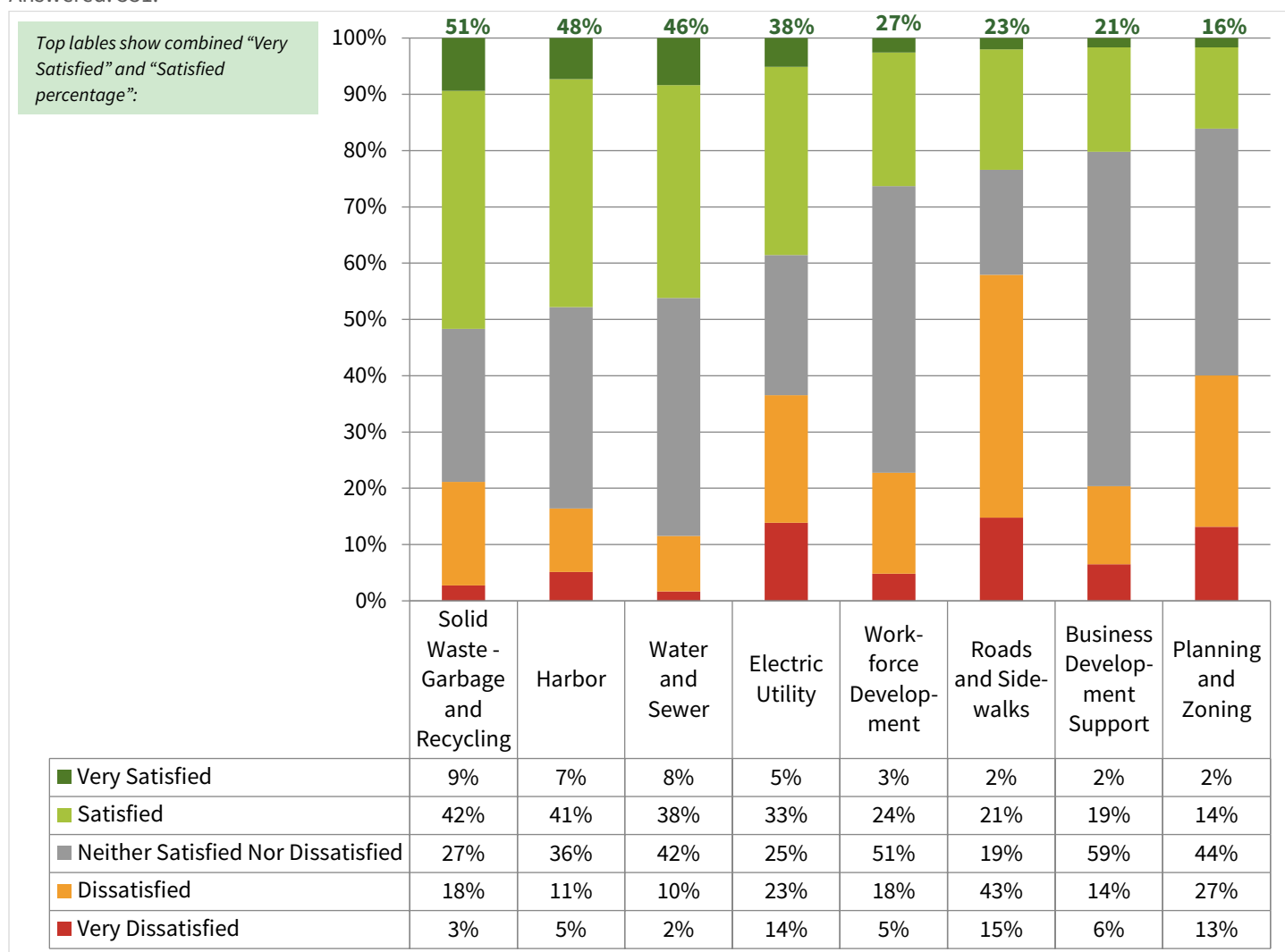
- *The HERC needs to be modified into more of a community center space. It would be lovely to see Head Start, WIC, Sprout, OCS and Public Health in one spot and I think this is the perfect place to enhance public, family and community growth.*

Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Recreational opportunities
- Preventive health resources
- Homelessness
- Substance abuse services

Q9: How satisfied are you with the availability of the following Community & Economic Development programs or services in Homer?

Answered: 551.



Reponses to “In the space below, please share more about those things you are dissatisfied with – this will help us better understand potential needs and priorities. Don’t see a program/service in the list above? Tell us more here.”

Answered: 364. Responses in purple text are from the comment map.

Theme	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
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Electricity Costs and Utility Services: High costs associated with electricity and inconsistent utility services; high cost of water and sewer services; lack of availability for many residents within city limits.	92	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our electric utility is ridiculously expensive • Electricity is expensive...really expensive • The high cost of electricity is an issue • Electric prices continue to climb as there is no competition • Water/sewer should be available to all residents • Our electricity is all solar, because the expense of extending HEA services from the next lot over is prohibitive • Electricity is expensive even when not using a lot • <i>About 1/2 of the water that goes into the Reservoir is ground water and 1/2 is surface water. Homer needs to do more research to understand this dynamic, protect the groundwater discharge slopes from development, and develop a water budget to ascertain how much water can be harvested from the reservoir. This is the true measure of how much development Homer can support.</i>
Sidewalks, Walkability, and Bikeable Areas: Need more sidewalks, better pedestrian and bike infrastructure; improved winter maintenance	77	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks which are available are not cleared in the winter months in a timely manner ever and puts pedestrians at risk frequently and this is very inequitable to those who either choose or must walk • Would like to see more sidewalks and more traffic lights • Bike paths are lacking • I would not consider Homer a very walkable/bikeable community. Connector sidewalks or trails are needed in town and from east hill and west hill • Roads and sidewalks are a huge issue. I know they're a money pit, but as an external observer, I don't see evidence of a lot of comprehensive or strategic planning as related to mitigating issues, but also growing pedestrian and bike-friendly infrastructure • Better sidewalks and crosswalk signals • <i>It would be great to extend the walking trail from the library all the way to Main Street.</i> • <i>Can sidewalks and/or bike path be added along Skyline/East Hill. A lot of bikers/walkers. It's dangerous.</i>
Road Conditions and Maintenance: Poor road conditions; potholes; inadequate maintenance	70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roads are in horrible shape: Kachemak Drive, Skyline Drive just awful • Road maintenance could be much better particularly in winter • Roads need repair and upgrade. East End Road is dangerous between the people speeding, drifting while on the phone or texting and the animals in the road • Potholes on roads are very damaging and not always permanently fixed • Prioritize public tax dollars towards maintaining the existing road system (not expanding it) • <i>This sidewalk [north side Sterling Hwy near Chevron] is in terrible condition in winter. Can it be maintained?</i>
Planning and Zoning: Issues surrounding zoning regulations; new developments; overregulation; inconsistent zoning enforcement; a lack of vision in planning	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Zoning Department needs more staffing and a more balanced approach to development • Planning is too slow. Need to speed up. Way behind the curve • I wish there were more zoning laws outside city limits. • Would like to see more congruence in planning/zoning - esp. in the downtown Pioneer area • Planning needs consistent enforcement and long-term goals - new subdivisions should be required to have sidewalks, for example • <i>This once nicely wooded area [west of Karen Hornaday] is now a horrible eyesore, with cleared brush sitting (burn hazard) and erosion from access to property left undeveloped. Planning and zoning should consider development. This bluff is not stable.</i> • <i>Restrictions on development have aided in Pioneer's lack of walkability. There are too many large vacant parking lots and no public parking. Additionally, if property developments weren't required to install or maintain green space on</i>

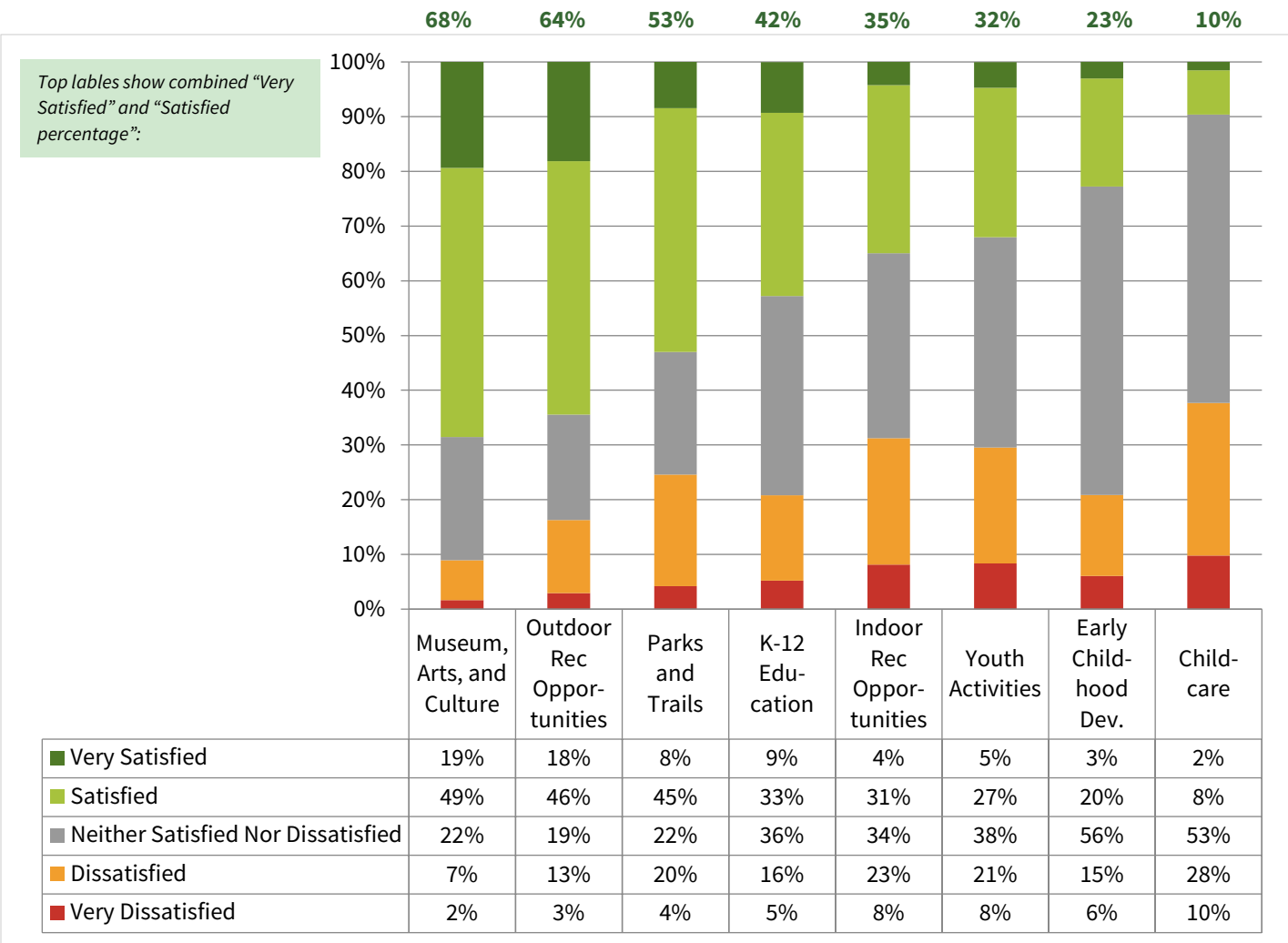
		<i>their properties there would be more space for commerce. There is enough green space in the surrounding areas to keep our town beautiful. Planning and EDC need to recognize the zoning and codes that are preventing our downtown from reaching its full potential.</i>
Recycling and Solid Waste Management: Recycling efforts; solid waste management practices and services	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Would love to see more recycling communication and maybe the option to recycle MORE. Love the electronics recycle days!</i> • <i>The landfill is inadequate in size and scope</i> • <i>There should be more public trash bins in the city</i> • <i>The dump should be open more often to accommodate people working 9-5pm Mo-Fr.</i> • <i>Would love to see more options for trash pickup services</i> • <i>Overnight camping should not be allowed where there are no waste disposal options at the Bishops Overlook parking lot, which also needs support and improvement.</i>
Harbor Expansion and Management: Conflicted thoughts about the planned harbor expansion	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Harbor needs some funding, two dilapidated dry docks one of which is now closed, these are things our local working fishermen actually use and use year round</i> • <i>Harbor: love the plans for a larger harbor, we need it. Can we pave the parking lots, so the lines aren't spray painted on each summer?</i> • <i>Harbor is expensive for locals and keeps going up. We don't need an expensive expansion. Increase fees for non-locals</i> • <i>I'm not very educated about the harbor, and whether expansion is a good thing</i> • <i>Small sports boats should not be allowed to park in the larger boat area of the harbor. Too many commercial fishermen are blocked out by tiny boats using valuable space on this side.</i> • <i>Please continue to pursue the harbor expansion! It is much needed.</i> • <i>The annual beach replenishment on the west side of the spit is ridiculous. This comp plan should focus on over slope development in the harbor.</i> • <i>There is a lot of space that appears to be underutilized.</i> • <i>The harbor should only be expanded to the minimum size absolutely needed, otherwise over the next decades, residents will be stuck with paying massive maintenance bills and dealing with environmental degradation, which will reduce tourism</i> • <i>Harbor should only be expanded if the cost-benefit analysis truly warrants it and there is dedicated funding for O & M.</i>

Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Workforce development and vocational training
- Tourism and business development

Q10: How satisfied are you with the availability of the following Quality of Life programs or services in Homer?

Answered:551.



Reponses to “In the space below, please share more about those things you are dissatisfied with – this will help us better understand potential needs and priorities. Don’t see a program/service in the list above? Tell us more here.”

Answered: 326. Responses in purple text are from the comment map.

Theme	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Childcare Availability and Affordability: Lack of affordable childcare and the impact on working families	110	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We need more childcare options for all, but especially low income familiesIt’s almost impossible to find childcare or preschool without waiting on a very long wait listMore childcare is need for littles we haveHomer has a serious lack of childcare and early preschool options. Of the options there are, there are some truly wonderful programs... but not enough and also expensiveSummer childcare availability is very limited and makes it hard for working full time parents in summerHomer needs more youth oriented space, activities especially between 3 and 5 pm, especially after school. Places they can go until parents free from workI believe childcare is hard to find here and inadequate for the need

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Having a community funded childcare/after school activities for pre-k through 6th grade would increase parents ability to work until kids are old enough to be left unattended after school</i> • <i>Licensed childcare spots need to be available for families so they can receive financial support. Childcare that meets the needs of young children with a variety of behavioral needs is important</i> • <i>Childcare workers need better wages</i> • <i>Preschool and daycare options are VERY limited and only for those with financial security. Not helpful for healthy families or stimulating local economy</i>
Public Transportation, sidewalks, trails, and parks: Better sidewalk infrastructure; more bike paths and trails; improved public transportation options to enhance walkability	154	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parks and trails-can always use development of more trails</i> • <i>I'd love to see the city develop more parks and trails, to allow access to the outdoors for both residents and visitors. We have some, but not too many on this side of the bay (and it's really pricey to get across!), and a lot of our trails seem vulnerable to landowners trying to block easement access</i> • <i>City Parks need improvements</i> • <i>More bike paths, especially along Kachemak Drive.</i> • <i>There could be better maintenance of the current parks, not to mention more park development especially in the vacant lots in town. Put in walking parks like in Kenai. But also, bathrooms at the park next to McDonald's and Karen Hornaday, not just porta-potties</i> • <i>The community needs a comprehensive trail system (not just the Spit Trail) to encourage a more pedestrian in-town, user-friendly atmosphere Could use improved indoor rec opportunities</i> • <i>I'd like to see more trails, more affordable indoor and outdoor exercise opportunities for elders</i> • <i>Lack of a community-member user friendly aquatic and indoor exercise / recreational facility (such as Bay Club)</i> • <i>Homer needs a community center</i> • <i>There are plenty of lower-income households out here whose jobs, errands, and activities rely on transportation into Homer. How can we get safe, reliable public transportation from out here into town?</i> • <i>If the new road was built, a bike path should be included. This would connect the Spit with East End paths, and those on Ocean Dr.</i> • <i>Ocean drive needs a sidewalk/bike lane.</i> • <i>The bike path becomes a sidewalk without any notice here [intersection of E Hill Rd and East End Rd]. A safe lane for cyclists on the road or a better shoulder would be great. This area also notoriously has a lot of sand in the shoulder and is dangerous for cyclists. More road sweeping is needed!</i> • <i>Kachemak Drive should have a bike path which connects directly to the bike paths on the spit and east end road</i> • <i>It would enhance the quality of living to have more trails on this side [west] of the bay. Is it possible for the city to develop the old Bob Gordon Road up above Karen Hornaday Park, to a destination bench or picnic table, then back down again? Accessed up and back from Hornaday Park. The old road provides a good start.</i> • <i>This parcel [south of Cook Inletkeeper] should be acquired by city, with trails connected to the Kachemak Bay Conservation Center/Cook Inletkeeper office. As in-filling occurs, this parcel becomes even more important to retain open space and trails. The city also has an obligation from acquisition of the adjacent parcel from Tony Neal to make Beluga Lake amenable for ice skating in winter.</i> • <i>Add a public trail to connect Mission Rd to Streamhill park trail system. This would give many East Hill residents a safer route to access East End Rd and in-town services.</i> • <i>We still have a lot of work to do to make our trails ADA compliant. Not just trails! but in town locations, parking lot to business accesses etc. I hope the Beluga slough trail will finally get completed so the gravel path (out the picnic table in</i>

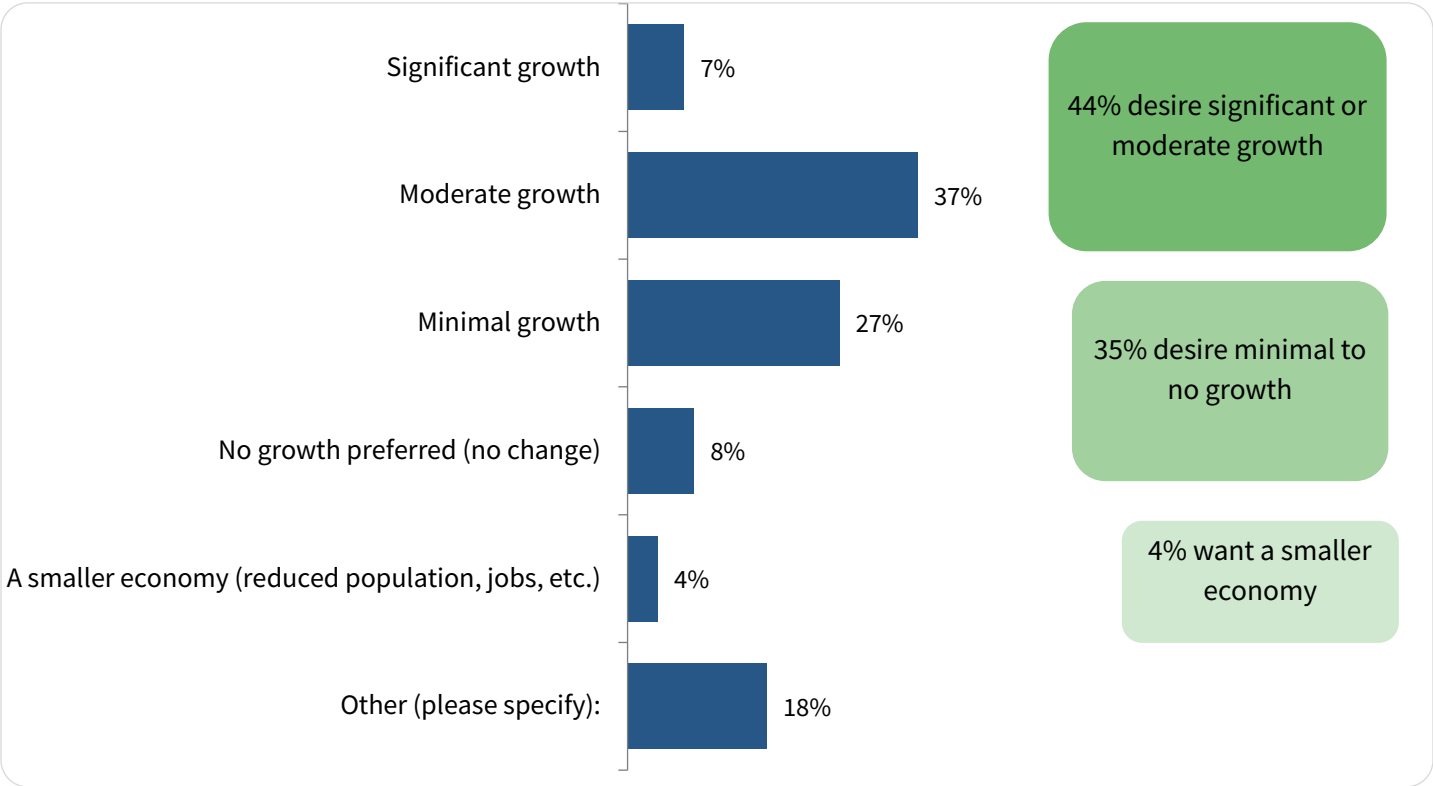
		<p><i>the slough) will be wheelchair and walker friendly. That would make that whole loop usable.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Homer Shares the Road' information at the Visitor Center would be VERY helpful.</i>
K-12 Education and School Funding: Declining school funding; teacher retention	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Our schools are great, but lack stable funding from the state which makes for a challenging environment</i> • <i>Childcare and K-12 education is inadequately funded and, therefore, we are unable to attract and retain educators and related professionals.</i> • <i>K-12 services need more financial and institutional support. Teachers are underpaid and the quality of instruction is therefore poor, but even more importantly, classroom services aren't equipped for the personal problems of Homer students</i> • <i>We are failing our youth with lack of advocacy for education, K-12 as well as Early ed/daycare. Teachers are leaving and class sizes are increasing, leading to less support in the classroom</i> • <i>Seriously, if there is only one thing important in this community, it is to INVEST IN OUR CHILDREN! We want a healthy, smart, social, and proud community, and that starts and ends with providing the youth the ability to become this</i>
Youth Activities and Spaces: More activities and spaces for youth and teenagers, especially indoor recreation options during the winter	85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More activities/programs for school aged kids is needed</i> • <i>Indoor play area for toddler young kids in the winter</i> • <i>Children need more opportunities for indoor recreation in the winter</i> • <i>Youth Activities: thank goodness for the SPARC, but we need more!</i> • <i>Many other cities in the peninsula help fund youth activities and buildings that house those things. Kenai and Soldotna have affordable youth hockey programs funded through their city. They also have affordable soccer programs and facilities as well. All with nice buildings taken care of by our city. More kids could have access to this awesome opportunity if it was more affordable</i> • <i>Youth activities: we do not have enough. Growing up here I struggled to find things to do outside of school. Herds of children end up at the library to play on computers. We used to have the Boys & Girls Club but that is no longer.</i> • <i>The city set aside money to improve [Bayview Park] 3 years ago and it is still sitting empty. This is an important recreation access place for neighborhood kids and pets.</i> • <i>The Pratt Museum has inspired community engagement for decades, while ensuring Homer's history is collected and preserved for future generations. Homer's people are our greatest asset. Support for organizations like the Pratt and other nonprofits is essential for growing future leaders who can realize many of the goals of this project.</i> • <i>Something needs to happen with [the HERC lot]. Either renovate or raze. It could be a great center for community rec and after school programs for middle school and/intermediate elementary because of its location, but it is underutilized now.</i>

Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- More funding and support for arts and cultural organizations
- Support for City Parks Department and staff

Q11: What is your preference for community/economic growth in Homer (increased population, jobs, specific industries expanding, etc.)?

Answered: 548.



Reponses to “Other (please specify).”

Answered: 146 – “#of mentions” may total more than 146 because of multiple comments or topics mentioned by a single respondent. Responses in purple text are from the comment map.

Responses to “Other (Please Specify)”	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Sustainable and Controlled Growth: Focus on planning that considers environmental impact; infrastructure capacity; preservation of Homer’s character	67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable, with respect for natural setting Rational, measured, sustainable growth Growth however it may be, but we need to plan for what is likely to be coming. Not always reacting after it's a crisis Growth that reflects community values and benefits the local economy--not growth for growth's sake. Keep local input central Sustainable, minimal growth that prioritizes year-round residents Carefully crafted growth I don't think you can hold back growth but a thoughtful vision on how to accommodate it is in the best interest of the community I would like growth with mindfulness.
Minimal to Moderate Growth: Limited growth, suggesting that Homer should maintain its small-town feel and avoid overexpansion or overdevelopment	54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed minimal growth--control water distribution Minimal growth with planning, please! Planned incremental slow growth with long term vision Controlled growth that brings in revenue and promotes physical growth I would like to see moderate growth so long as adverse impacts of such growth are mitigated. For example, do not bring in big cruise ships if we don't have the infrastructure to support them

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Slow, moderate growth that focuses on year-round residents, recreation, "working" people (i.e. fisherman, marine trades), and avoids catering to large corporations, second homeowners, and cruise ship-tourism</i>
Economic Opportunities and Local Business Growth: Growth that supports local businesses and creates more job opportunities, particularly in year-round industries such as marine trades and small businesses	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The new port construction will add to the economic growth. More family sustaining, year-round jobs will pay into the tax rolls and help the things happen</i> • <i>Growth of young people with very small businesses pursuing their passions</i> • <i>I would like to see the opportunity for local people to establish businesses here</i> • <i>Increase the number of businesses in the community from within</i> • <i>No growth of population or oil and gas industries</i> • <i>Prioritize preservation of environment and commercial fishing, and smaller businesses</i> • <i>Significant growth in the fishing and tourism sectors, and the creation of a remote service economy</i> • <i>Doyon Hotel: It was a mistake to not allow Doyon to build the hotel. That project would have been used by hundreds of Birders to the pictures, walk the greatly expanded walking path/observation area, and provide jobs for many young people - which is greatly needed.</i>
Zoning and Planning for Future Growth: Improved zoning, infrastructure planning; development strategies that accommodate growth without compromising Homer's natural beauty or livability	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Until the City can support growth with good infrastructure of facilities, roads, etc., limit growth plans</i> • <i>Planned growth. I want brave leadership that embraces complex challenges of community sustainability through systemic solutions.</i> • <i>Strict zoning imperative</i> • <i>Any kind of growth, whether rampant or minimal, without zoning is very hard on the environment and the people who already live here. There seems to be a mentality that if someone owns a piece of land they can do whatever they want to with it regardless of how it impacts others in the immediate vicinity or community</i> • <i>You cannot stop the growth in Homer but you could try to enhance it with better planning and less regulations on size of lots and homes</i> • <i>Create a Professional Corridor along East End Road to allow for services like dental, optometry, legal, and other similar often-used services. This can be combined with residential. All of these buildings should have high architectural standards resembling residential appearances.</i> • <i>How is a one-acre lot at 1308 Lakeshore Drive allowed to contain an air taxi service, restaurant, RV site, 6 rental cabins, an event center and 2 suites with inadequate parking so vehicles crowd Lakeshore Drive?</i> • <i>Some of this area [Highland Drive near Jade Drive] is served with City water/sewer. This expensive infrastructure should be leveraged by upzoning to allow more dense residential development.</i> • <i>There are times when development in Kachemak City adversely affects property in the Homer City Limits. Also, Homer's sewer lines serve parts of Kachemak City. There needs to be better coordination between the cities to manage these issues most effectively.</i> • <i>[Homer FAA Site Subdivision lot] is one example of a property that would make sense for in-fill development, there are several others. As we consider whether to incentivize in-fill development, we should first evaluate wildlife travel corridors to preserve natural pathways that moose (and other animals) already consistently use.</i>
Balancing Tourism and Local Priorities: Concerns about tourism, particularly	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Support tourism and growth in the community</i> • <i>Tourism that prioritizes local businesses, local owners, and is definitively NOT cruise or tour company related</i> • <i>Cap on tourism. It's ruining the town for locals</i> • <i>Local economy growth, less focus on tourism</i>

large-scale cruise ship tourism

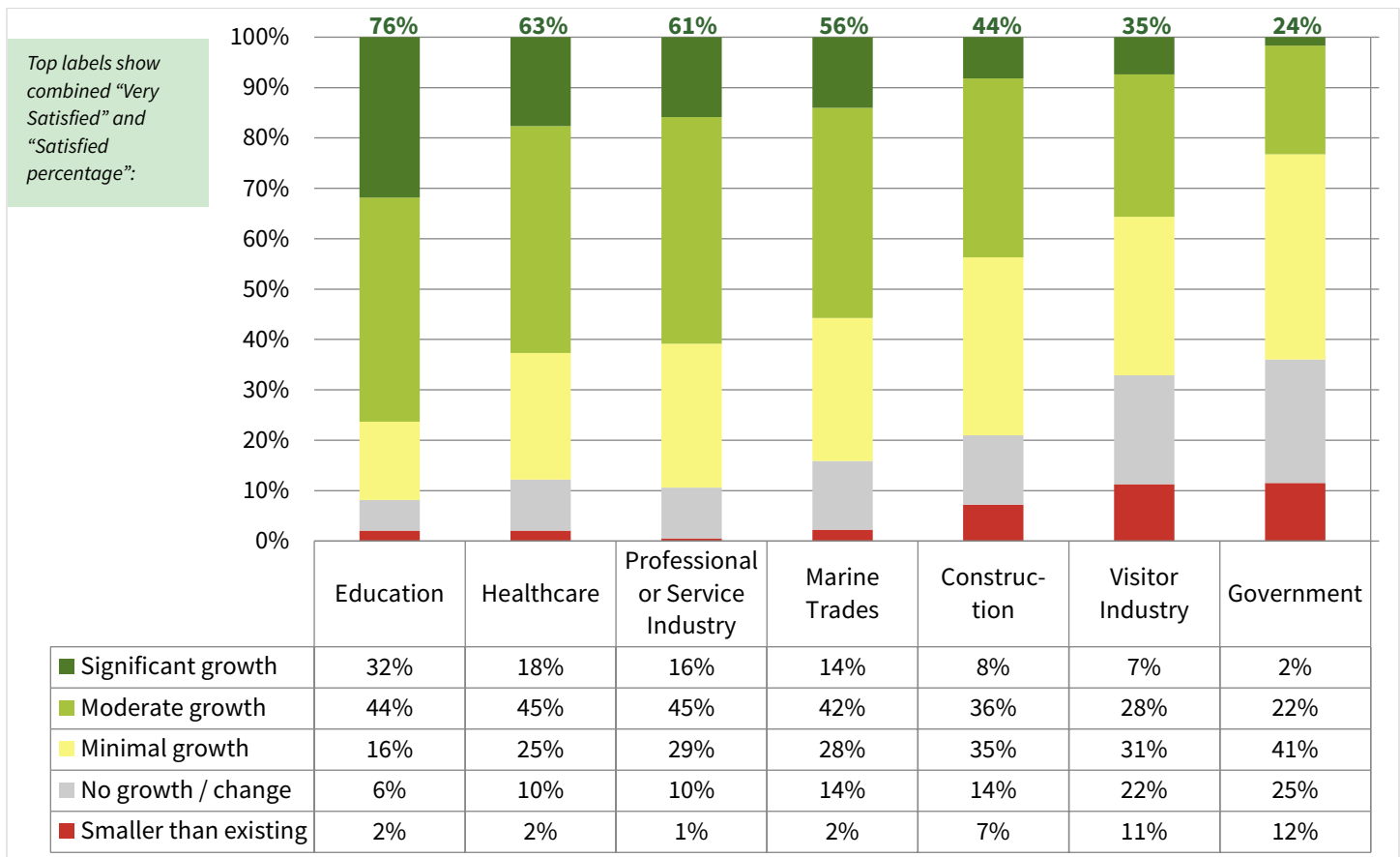
- *STOP all public money from marketing Homer and the Kenai Peninsula as a tourist destination, retirement haven or a great place for remote workers to live. Stop promoting growth incompatible with an economy that benefits year-round local people. Instead, I would like to see a core economic foundation in marine trades, education (particularly trade schools and an expanded residential college) as well as nonprofits, government entities such as NOAA and other scientific agencies, as well as environmental and cultural institutions*
- *Carefully crafted growth. Not cruise ships but making Homer a must-see destination*
- *Tourism is an opportunity to capture revenues from outside the Kenai Peninsula Borough rather than just moving money around within the Borough's distinctly different source of revenue. I hope the Comprehensive Planning Process will provide better economic development/revenue/tax revenue information alongside the 'gotta have' and 'like to have' improvements or land use options in a transparent, understandable fashion that will facilitate a meaningful conversation on how we can shape our community going forward.*

Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Housing affordability and infrastructure
- Environmental and community preservation
- Market-driven growth vs planned growth
- Wealth inequity and outside investment

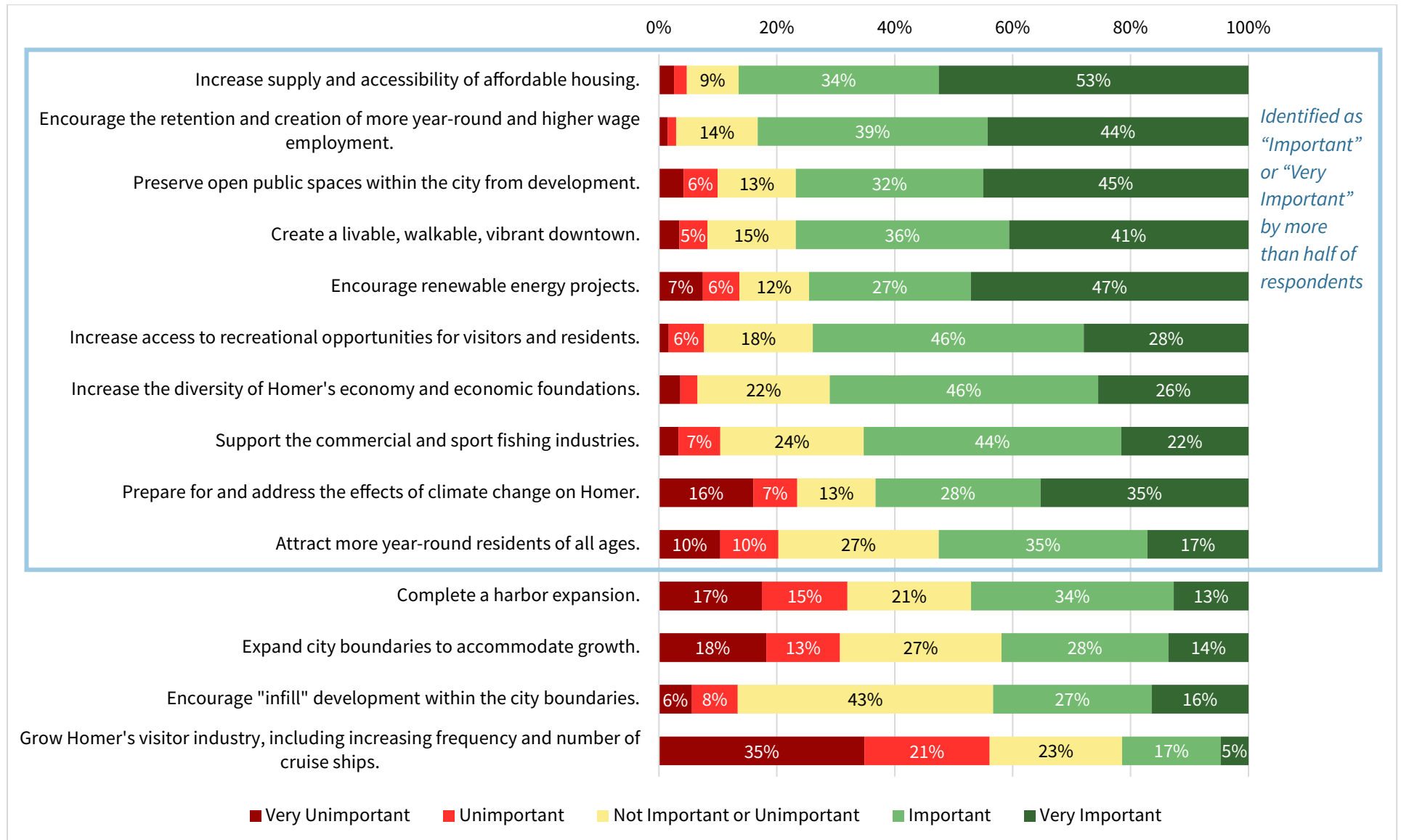
Q12: Please indicate your preferred level of growth for the following key economic sectors:

Answered: 544.



Q13: Listed below are potential priorities for the greater Homer community to focus on for the next 10-20 years. For each potential priority, please indicate level of importance.

Answered: 551.



Reponses to “Other (please specify).”

Answered: 114 – “#of mentions” may total more than 114 because of multiple comments or topics mentioned by a single respondent. Responses in purple text are from the comment map.

Responses to “Other (Please Specify)”	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Concerns About Unchecked Growth and Over-Tourism	92	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned about further harbor expansion, but it could be improved instead! I think the harbor should be limited for recreational/private use and have more space for the fishing industry and other industry boats Homer needs to stay unique - please do not invite cruise ships here! I have no problem with growing the visitor industry, but I do not support larger cruise ships. We do not have the infrastructure to handle them The harbor expansion is a mistake. Cruises would be a disaster for quality of life. We need to prioritize year-round residents, especially young people and new families -- development is unaffordable to people who live here and who are not older with incredible wealth No more cruise ships. We have plenty of tourists that actually spend money without them. Limiting the spit to commercial, art, tourism etc. is thought provoking and worth more discussion. I'm not sure it's a bad thing to have crew housing or even offices- especially if they are related to fishing/maritime/tourism businesses.
Balancing Development and Growth with Green Space Preservation, Sustainability, and Maintaining character of Homer	73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage infill if preservation open public spaces protection within city is encouraged--even purchasing/trading for sensitive lands Improve what we have, in place. Preserve any low elevation well drained agricultural land if left. maintain wildlife corridors! Emphasize infill development, however, do it in a thoughtful way that facilitates moose travel from the hillside, through town, to the water's edge. (Establish moose travel corridors) Encourage infill but preserving green space is important as well, there's a balance One of Homer's attractions as a place to live is its relatively small size. I would like to see its growth slow down before it loses its small town quality of life I'd like to see this lot [south of Charles Way] acquired for Bishop's Beach Park expansion or otherwise protected from development for wildlife and stormwater management. Large buildings for overnight guests should be prioritized to be in town and not where they can degrade and block the views and small town feel of the spit, and significantly contribute to already bad traffic. This is no place for a major development. The development of housing in this area of lower West Hill has negative impacts on the seasonal movement patterns of wildlife, specifically moose, who would use this area for early season browsing, calving and grazing. The importance of integrating and prioritizing wildlife corridors in current and future zoning of private/public lands is essential for optimizing wildlife health while reducing wildlife/human conflict issues not only in this location but throughout the Homer area. If [the Spit] is developed with more housing and business, how exactly will they safely and quickly evacuate from a tsunami?
Need for Housing Solutions	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned about gentrification and cost, increasing rental prices and more exclusive housing, out placing low income families I'm wary of the impacts (on the housing market) of encouraging people to buy/build largely uninhabited 2nd homes/ summer homes

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There's a large portion of land available and for sale. It's just priced in the ridiculously high range</i> • <i>More compact density housing on a city lot (possibly 3-5 structures on a lot</i> • <i>Incentivize new affordable housing with tax, and permitting breaks, disallowing only those units that used incentive programs from being short term rentals</i> • <i>Expand employee housing so spit workers do not need to bring cars every day or have out of the way place to park. Also helps local businesses retain workers.</i>
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Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Unsure what “infill” means
- Support for local businesses and economic diversification
- Environmental concerns regarding development
- Infrastructure and public services adapting
- Economic equity and fair taxation

Q14: What is the single most important project we can do as a community over the next 10 – 20 years?

Answered: 482 - “#of mentions” may total more than 114 because of multiple comments or topics mentioned by a single respondent. Responses in purple text are from the comment map.

Projects	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Downtown Revitalization and Walkability Improvements: Projects aimed at improving downtown Homer’s walkability; beautifying the area; making downtown more vibrant and pedestrian friendly	92	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A walkable/accessible downtown: Creating and improving existing parts of the environment that allows our kids to walk from their schools to positive recreational activities in town. Making a welcoming downtown for our youth will create a pleasant place overall. Places we can exist as a community without the necessity to spend money</i> • <i>Develop the Homer city center. Make Homer more than a retirement community</i> • <i>Making downtown more vibrant, walkable and attractive. It is not attractive now. It’s a deterrent to visitors, especially year-round visitors</i> • <i>Continue to look at walkability and connectivity, planning to preserve green space to that end and allow denser housing options</i> • <i>Town Center</i> • <i>Enhance the downtown including making it a walkable city and improving the grocery store situation.</i> • <i>The Waddell lot (across from McDonald’s) has long been an eye-sore for locals. With such a central location, how can we turn this into a public park - showing how much Homer values greenspaces and community? And right by the Police Station and shopping!</i> • <i>The Farmers Market needs a different location with more parking to accommodate current and future needs.</i> • <i>Almost all of the downtown pioneer gardens are poorly maintained and overrun with weeds. Some shopkeepers are under the impression it is the city's duty to maintain them, and whether the city spent thousands of dollars or private owners spent thousands of dollars to create these gardens, it is a big waste for these areas to be let go and overrun with weeds.</i> • <i>Create a safer and more scenic way for those on bike or foot to connect from east end path to the spit trail and city center. Perhaps through creating a path from Calvin Coyle to Pennock or across the head of Beluga Lake to the airport road.</i> • <i>Our downtown area could use more green spaces/parks for folks to spend time in. Could we use some of our existing green spaces/undeveloped spaces for this purpose?</i> • <i>The city needs a plan for the lot it owns [south of Don Jose’s]. If the City can't do anything productive with it, the city should put it back in private hands.</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The City needs a new plan for this Town Center property. It is going to waste!</i>
Road, Transportation, and Infrastructure Improvements: Improve roads, sidewalks, and bike trails; expand utilities; upgrade infrastructure to support the town's growth	85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Fix roads</i> <i>Support our infrastructure. Our water and sewer facilities are at capacity, and we keep building new things with little thought to how we will maintain them</i> <i>Improve the roads and side streets</i> <i>Safe roads, sidewalks, and bike paths</i> <i>Build a Truck Route - FAA Rd to Turnview</i> <i>Make sure infrastructure keeps up with growth</i> <i>Expand city boundaries and services, repair roads, and sidewalk</i> <i>Invest in the infrastructure of this community, improving roads, improving parks</i> <i>Add more sidewalks to well-traveled area</i> <i>Decrease cost of power</i> <i>Expand utilities to those near town who don't have them</i> <i>I love the recent change to the campground. The disc golfers act as stewards to the area being encampment free and support the recreational area. More connecting trails would be very cool!</i> <i>The bike trail into town is really falling apart and difficult to ride a bike on. I live in Streamhill Park and would like to commute to the grocery store, but the sidewalk/bike trail is very difficult to ride on.</i> <i>Improve downhill mountain bike trails [near Tulin Ocean View Drive] and make this a destination to ride.</i> <i>[Kachemak Way corner near Nordic Living] is an incredible dangerous corner and hill with very little pedestrian infrastructure. The road is also degrading.</i> <i>It would be amazing to extend the bike path out further east, where the views from East End Road are breathtaking. Currently the road is too dangerous to bike on after the bike trail ends.</i> <i>A bike path on Kachemak Drive would be so great! Right now, it is dangerous to ride a bike on this road.</i> <i>A bike path or at least an expanded shoulder should be added to the East Hill Road. Many bikes and pedestrians use the road.</i> <i>Access road to the baseball fields is in terrible condition. The road receives a band-aid repair every spring; yet the road condition gets worse every year. Please implement a permanent fix.</i> <i>Can a guard rail be added along any cliff side exposed road on skyline? Winter driving along this road is terrifying in sections.</i> <i>When Eric Lane/West Fairview get paved, there will need to be traffic calming at base of Reber Trail.</i>
Affordable Housing Development: Increase affordable housing, including options for year-round residents, seasonal workers, and young families; regulate short-term rentals	77	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Establish ways to makes services and housing more affordable</i> <i>Affordable and safe housing for seasonal employees to support summer visitor influx, safe and affordable housing for our lowest income and most vulnerable residents</i> <i>Provide affordable housing and childcare for young families just starting out</i> <i>Housing affordable for young and senior</i> <i>Improving housing options for first time homebuyers</i> <i>Make a concerted effort to lower the number of short-term rentals, build affordable housing</i>
Harbor Expansion: Support the harbor expansion and marine industry	48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The port project has the best long-range possibilities</i> <i>The Deep Water Port</i> <i>Complete the Harbor Expansion</i> <i>Humbly expand the harbor</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the large vessel harbor expansion. If we support growth in the industry that supports our economy we'll grow a sustainable future for Homer and the outlying communities that rely on the Homer connection.. • Harbor expansion and cruise ships/ cargo ships. We used to get a lot in Homer and I think it would impact us a lot and encourage growth of the community • The harbor expansion and developing a diverse maritime support industry (cargo, fleet maintenance, and processing of fish) • Expand the harbor, incentivizing cruise ships and a broadened marine economy. • Would be nice to see the harbor expansion actually happen. There shouldn't be a multiyear waitlist to get a slip. • Harbor electrification must be a priority in the comp plan. The Blue Economy is taking off and the future of maritime operations will be clean and electric energy. • Petro Marine only opens the fuel dock a few weeks a year. It's some of the most valuable property in the entire harbor. It could be a water taxi hub and would push water taxi parking to backside of harbor. • The public restrooms on the spit are regularly disgusting and out of toilet paper or soap. We should make sure we're making every effort to keep our town a nice place for our locals and visitors alike. • Let's keep the Spit a working waterfront by supporting the commercial fishing industry as well as charter operators and recreational boaters. Economic diversity is key to resilience of a small town and commercial fishermen need to feel valued. • From a planner's perspective, Homer Spit should consider the recreational and hospitality corridor that it is. Some buildings are being converted into offices and housing for crews. This leads to a less vibrant merchant/arts/food corridor.
Youth and Family Support Facilities: Build parks and youth centers; improve schools and childcare	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give youth access to activities and earnings so that they stay out of drugs • Provide childcare and construct more elder services • Ensure the quality and sustainability of our schools and childcare programs. Everything starts from the ground up and families follow good educational opportunities • Send Homer High graduates to post-secondary training • Support for children and families. Safety for women and children • Investment in improving childcare and K-12 education. Address funding education from the local to state level via Municipal League, election of representatives and city council advocacy • Indoor playground for kids and toddlers • Little Fireweed needs to expand, how is the city going to support education with limited access to land and buildings?
Community Recreation & Activities: Community facilities, including sports, fitness and event spaces	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicate a parks and recreation department • Build a multipurpose recreational center. Allow for expansion of recreational complex. Allow for after school programs • Develop the Town Center with facilities. Eg: recreation center, fire hall, small hotel with conference center • Community center, fix Karen Hornaday • Create a centralized community space that serves all the community. Not just pickleball for all the retired community • Community center • Off-street parking (N side of road) for access to Lambert Lake • [Homer FAA Site Subdivision] would be the perfect venue for the performing and mixed arts facility that Homer has needed for the last 30+ years • City of Homer has a large parcel [west of Highland Drive] that is slated for recreational purposes, yet COH isn't doing anything to move that use forward. • Adding a pool modeled after the pool in Nikiski that could be open year-round would be amazing. Aquatic rehab, swim recreation, lessons, etc.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Homer needs an arcade/bowling alley/roller-skating rink for all ages healthy fun and maybe prevent the burning down of old structures.</i> • <i>The Diamond Creek Recreation Area Resource Management Plan which was adopted by COH in 2013 and never acted upon, needs to be part of the new comprehensive plan.</i>
Environmental Conservation and Green Space Protection: Protect green spaces and wildlife habitats; ensure responsible development	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preserve the remaining wilderness access we have and not allow developments to ruin areas with little thought to such things as drainage</i> • <i>Protect wildlife habitat, and plan maintainable community infrastructure for a future of climate uncertainty</i> • <i>Preserve our natural spaces. Keep some areas free from residential development</i> • <i>Radically reimagine the tapestry of our community with an emphasis on less parking lots, less car-oriented neighborhoods, more walkable spaces, public spaces, public transportation. More small business areas, and alternative housing like ADUs and trailer / tiny home parks</i> • <i>Develop plans and code that encourage moderate, sustainable growth that powers a diverse and vibrant economy in town and makes it easy to steward the natural beauty and resources OUTSIDE of the City Limits</i> • <i>Stop the erosion of the Spit and the bluff around Kachemak Drive. In tandem, develop these areas further to prevent future erosion. It is a very big issue that very little seems to be being done about</i> • <i>[South of Robert Avenue] would make a great spot for a green infrastructure project, thereby mitigating drainage issues from multiple neighborhoods as well as protecting the bluff and the Sterling Hwy.</i> • <i>The city should not allow the installation of City -owned water/sewer mains in areas of known geologic hazard.</i> • <i>[West of Sanjay Ct; south of Elderberry Drive] is a very environmentally vulnerable section of wildlife habitat. Increased housing and property development in the above neighborhood and cutting of old growth trees is increasing erosion and trail degradation. This is also an essential trail for fireweed and Homer HS youth. The trail must be maintained, and wildlife habitat preserved.</i>
Climate Change Preparedness and Renewable Energy Initiatives: Projects that focus on renewable energy, sustainability, and infrastructure improvements to prepare for climate change	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make our community fully sustainable</i> • <i>Prepare for climate change</i> • <i>Prepare for climate changes including major changes in marine environment and the fisheries it supports as well as local food security</i> • <i>Focus on resiliency for climate change</i> • <i>We need to make considerations about how we are going to get our energy in 10-20 years and adjust for climate change. Invest in ways to minimize our energy demand and alternative methods of harnessing our energy</i> • <i>The city should update its climate adaption plan and coordinate with other organizations that are drafting similar climate adaption plans or Water Resource Management Plans for the K-Bay Watershed.</i>

Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Reform government; reduce taxes and regulations
- Expand medical services in Homer

Q15: Twenty years from now, what does your ideal Homer look like?

Answered: 464 - “# of mentions” may total more than 114 because of multiple comments or topics mentioned by a single respondent.

Themes	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Preserving Small-Town Character and Charm	382	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Just like how it is now. But more food options and able to afford houses</i> • <i>A thriving community of no more than 30,000 people, a vibrant downtown with year-round bustle,</i> • <i>A small quaint town</i> • <i>Thriving community</i> • <i>A safe place for my children to grow up in</i> • <i>I moved to Homer for the small town feel. I would hate for us to lose that by growing larger</i> • <i>A small city feel and community- please don't encourage lots of growth that can't be sustained in the long run - look forward, not immediate</i> • <i>Nice downtown. Walkable and bikeable. Much more pedestrian connectivity and awareness. A vibrant, diverse community</i> • <i>A small tourist town that supports the beauty of the town in a clean and friendly environment</i> • <i>It doesn't become overgrown</i> • <i>Still very community based, about the same population, with a welcoming feel</i>
Affordable Housing and Reasonable Cost of Living	162	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Affordable higher density housing in town</i> • <i>More jobs, more housing. Supporting the locals not just the tourists</i> • <i>A thriving community with a happy population that can afford to live and have fun in our beautiful city</i> • <i>Young families move to town and stay in town because there are good jobs and cost of living is affordable</i> • <i>Hopefully we've found a better way to house and care for the residents, especially seniors</i> • <i>Services are more available and affordable for those who actively live here year round</i> • <i>Reasonable cost of living</i> • <i>Where people are making a livable wage, have access to healthy food options, housing resources are available</i> • <i>Housing for the workforce to live year-round and opportunity for all to affordably live</i>
Walkable and Vibrant Downtown	144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bike paths walking trails and a walking friendly downtown</i> • <i>Walking/biking paths throughout town, and out to Fritz Creek & Anchor Point. Safe bike path on the North Fork Road, and Old Sterling. No more trendy bandwagon events</i> • <i>Denser and multipurpose development downtown, highly walkable</i>
Environmental Preservation and Conservation	131	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>About the same size with little damage to our natural resources. I hope it looks a lot like it does now</i> • <i>Increasing development will damage our ecosystems and quiet way of life</i> • <i>More green spaces, more indoor well-lit community spaces for the winter</i> • <i>There's a focus on the community health and sustainability over tourism</i> • <i>Marine habitat and resources monitored for sustainability</i>
Economic Diversity and Year-Round Jobs	120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Good paying private sector employment, great fishing opportunity, vibrant economy not dependent on government or nonprofits</i> • <i>Thriving year-round businesses and employment opportunities</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community that has grown and developed to be able to support families living here without the stress of parents having to leave to earn a living • Thriving businesses makes for Thriving community • Homer would have a vibrant downtown area that is open year-round with various businesses that cater to all ages and interests • A thriving healthy economy with steady growth
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Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Community cohesion and inclusivity
- Improved infrastructure and public services
- Support for arts and culture
- Resisting over-tourism and cruise ship influx

Q16: What leaders or organizations do you look to for guidance about Homer’s future?

Answered: 378.

The following word cloud shows combined responses to this question; the size of the word indicates the frequency of mention. For a broad breakdown of responses by category, see the table below.



Group	# of mentions	Themes
Local Government	150	Respondents mention city council, the mayor, planning commission, and other government entities.
Non-profits and Environmental Organizations	180	Respondents mentioned local non-profits and environmental organizations like the Homer Foundation, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Cook Inletkeeper, MAPP, Homer Drawdown, Homer Trails Alliance, and various arts organizations like Bunnell Street Arts Center and Homer Council on the Arts.
Local Businesses and Industry Leaders	70	This includes mentions of small business owners, marine trades, and fishing.
Faith-Based and Religious Organizations	50	Respondents cited local churches and faith-based organizations as important sources of guidance, particularly for moral and community-centered leadership
Healthcare and Education Institutions	40	Respondents mentioned South Peninsula Hospital and the local school systems as organizations that are mindful of Homer’s future needs, especially regarding public health and youth development.
Skepticism and Disillusionment	40	Respondents express distrust or skepticism toward existing leadership and organizations, feeling that no one is adequately guiding Homer’s future or that there is a lack of unified vision.
Civic Engagement and Public Input	30	Respondents mention looking to public forums, community meetings, and input from long-time residents and knowledgeable citizens as sources of direction.
Youth	20	Respondents expressed a desire for younger generations to take on leadership roles, viewing them as key to addressing future challenges and long-term planning.

Comparisons to Other Models and Communities	20	This theme includes mentions of other successful small towns, tourism models (e.g., New Zealand), and urban planning theories (e.g., Strong Towns, Nordic models) as inspiration for Homer's future.
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Q17: What other questions, comments, or concerns do you have?

The final question in the survey asked respondents if they had any additional comments, questions or concerns.

Of the 222 responses, 26 wrote “nothing to add,” “n/a” or “thank you for this survey” or a similar response, with a revised total of 196 substantive comments. Other themes that emerged in the final question not already captured in previous response summaries above include:

Exclusion of residents outside city limits:

- *A big concern is that the actual city limits are so small compared to the actual areas that many local residents live in and thus many of us who own businesses and earn sales tax for the city, do not actually live within the city limit and therefore are not able to vote on city decisions. Nor do we qualify for city services, such as the Police and Animal Shelter, etc. Something needs to change around all of that. Perhaps we don't need the city water and sewer where we live but would sure like to have more of a voice.*
- *I currently live with my family out East End Road, so I am not the most informed on all the public services, but I have heard a lot from other people. I do plan to live in Homer in the future, but that looks difficult with the expensive and limited housing options.*

Cultural integration and recognition:

- *I'm concerned that there was zero reference to Alaska Native communities in this survey. Homer needs to do better in acknowledging all cultures of our land and seeking diverse voices.*
- *Ultimately, 10-20 years is not far enough into the future to be considering in any sort of future vision and we should be thinking within the 7th Generation concept so that we are far more considerate of our descendants to come who will live with the consequences of how we choose to live now.*

Desire for specific amenities or support for specific community assets and infrastructure:

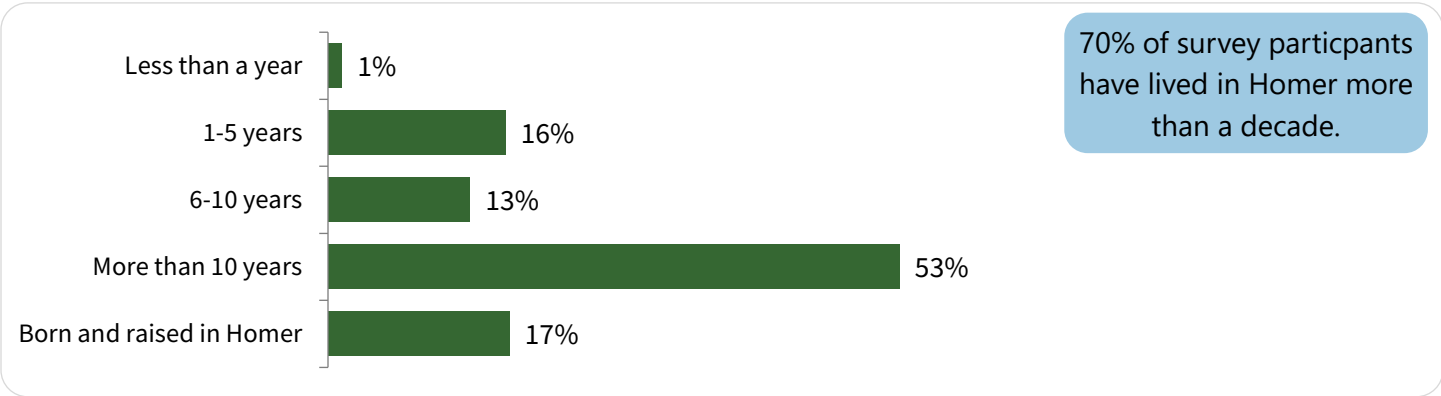
- *A permanent structure for the Saturday Market and outdoor music performances - place for our diversity to mingle. Soldotna does that really well.*
- *Can we get a bowling alley?*
- *Support the ice rink*
- *I am concerned about the airport using PFAS firefighting foams that drain into the Critical Habitat Area/Beluga Wetlands Complex. Two confirmed PFAS contamination sites drain directly into moose, shorebird, and riparian habitats.*
- *I really wish that there was a dog park somewhere near/within the City.*
- *I think the traffic and parking on the spit is crazy. It would be so cool to see a bus type of vehicle taking people in and out every hour or so to the spit so that we can cut down on the congestion of traffic, people can have a safe space to park, and maybe we can cut down on car pollution. There could be one place for pick up and one place for drop off, maybe at the islands and oceans visitor center and then by ramp 3. This should be extremely affordable and be attractive for the bus drivers.*

Demographic Questions

The following subsections summarize the demographic characteristics of survey respondents with comparison to demographic data of Homer’s population (the demographic comparison data for Homer is constrained to the City of Homer.) This information helps identify how closely survey respondent demographics match the overall demographics of the City of Homer and where there may be gaps in perspectives of specific groups. Most demographic data used for survey comparison was taken from U.S. Census data. When the demographic comparison data says “Homer” (as in “Homer Age”, “Homer Gender”, and “Race in Homer”) the area refers to Homer City as designated by the U.S. Census.

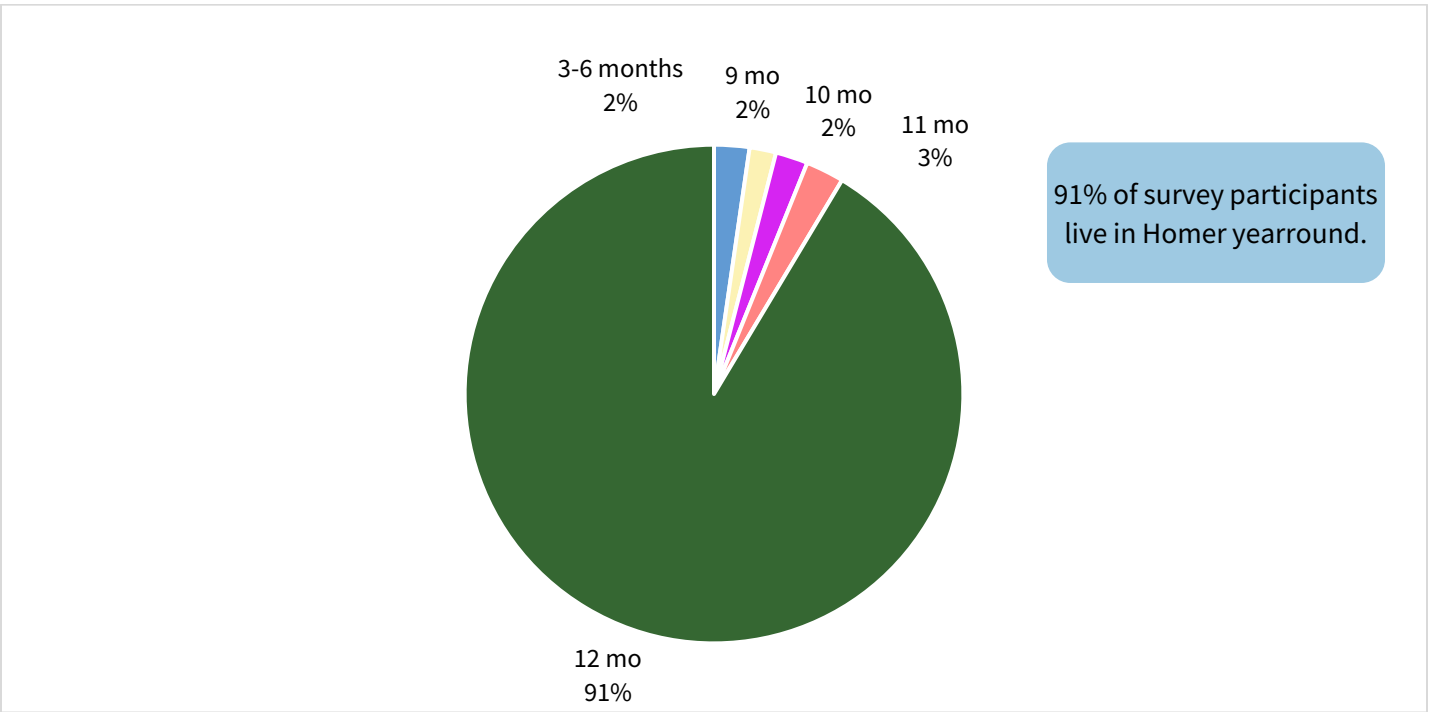
Q18: How long have you lived in the Greater Homer area?

Answered: 551.



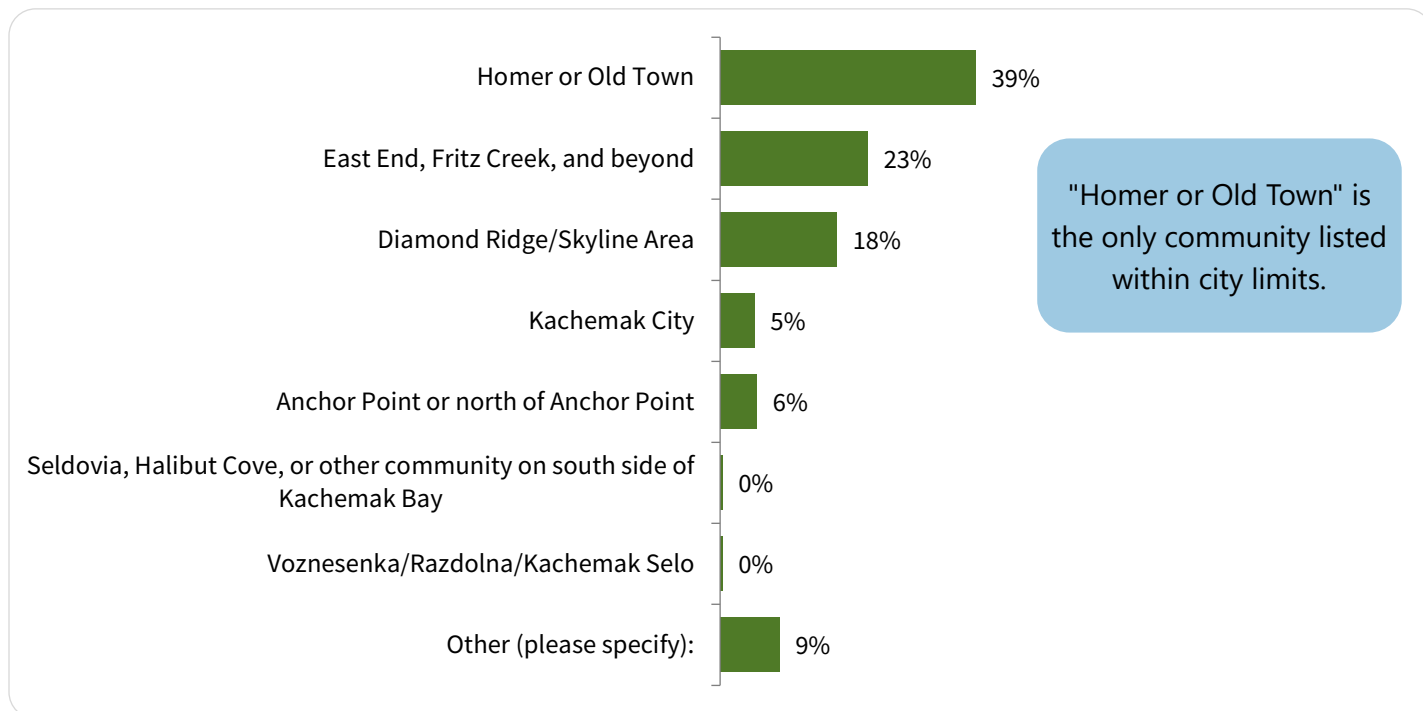
Q19: How many months of the year do you live in Homer? If you live in Homer seasonally, during what months are you typically in Homer?

Answered: 538.



Q20: Where do you live or own property in the Greater Homer Area?

Answered: 551.



Selection of “Other (please specify)” that received more than one mention:

- Baycrest
- East Hill
- Mountain View
- Old Sterling
- West Hill

Q21: In your own words, please describe your connection to the Greater Homer Area, and its people, lands, and waters.

Answered: 386.

Themes	# of mentions	Representative Quotes
Emotional and Personal Connections, References to “Home,” and love for the area; Invested in the Area; Commitment to Future Generations of Homer Residents	148	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I have lived here over 40 years and know what a special place on earth Homer is</i> • <i>Homer is Home. It was always my intent to return to raise a family here. I have a wide circle of close friends who love and support one another</i> • <i>Some residents are really struggling. It's all of our responsibilities to lift up others, support the economy, and protect our youngsters as they grow and take their places in our community</i> • <i>This community is just as beautiful as the land. There are so many friendly and caring people in Homer from a variety of backgrounds, political parties, financial brackets, and religious beliefs who are all just trying to connect and help each other out</i> • <i>I love knowing my neighbors and seeing friends and acquaintances almost everywhere I go</i> • <i>I'm invested in land and a business here, my children were born and attend school here</i> • <i>This is my home by choice and my roots run deep</i> • <i>My neighbors are kind and caring, as are so many people in this town. Homer is truly one of a kind</i>

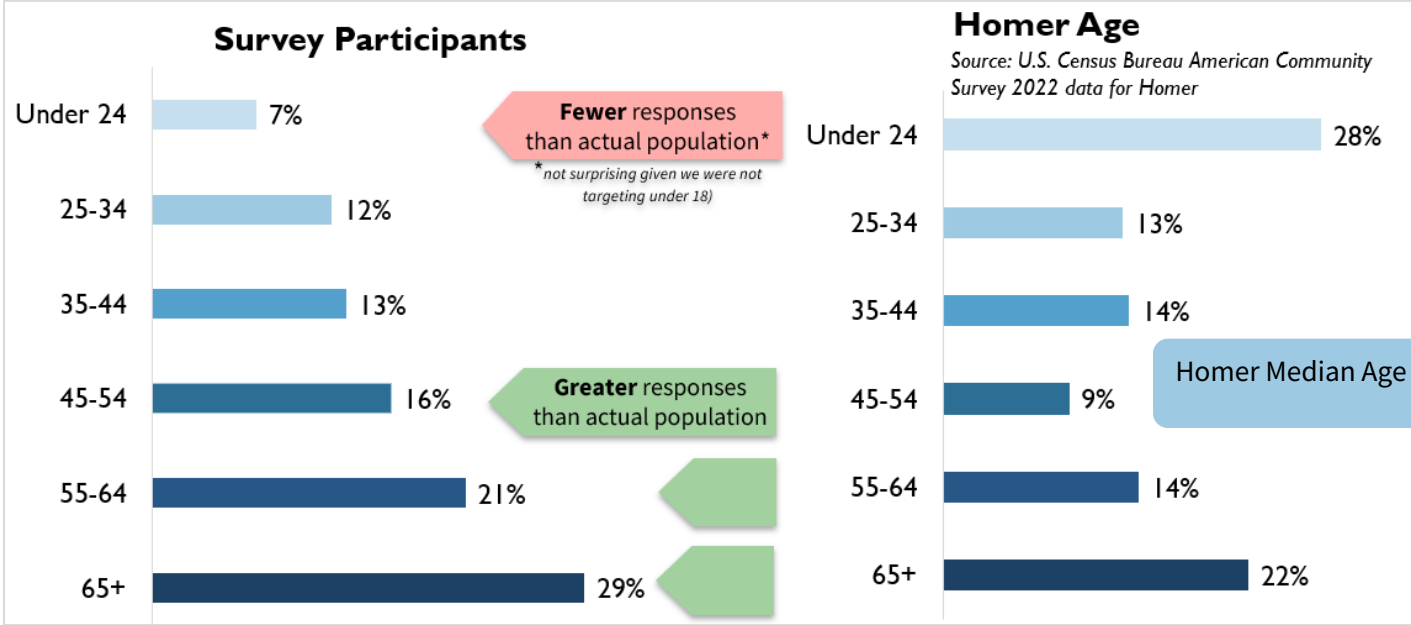
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Homer, its land, its people; this place is the Heart and Soul of my family</i>
Connection to Nature and the Environment, Outdoor Activities, and Stewardship	88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Beautiful, kind, peaceful and just amazing place to live. Couldn't image anywhere else</i> <i>My family regularly camps, hikes, fishes, skis, forages, walks on the beach, goes birding together and appreciates the community we have and the access to nature we've retained</i> <i>I hunt and fish and explore the hills</i> <i>We are invested in the sustainability, beauty, kindness, interdependence, and health of our community and the lands that belong to Native populations</i> <i>I care about property ownership with stewardship of the land</i> <i>More space, less people, more peace and quiet. More life qualities</i> <i>I am deeply connected to the land and waters around Homer</i> <i>I am a guest on Dena'ina and Sugpiaq ancestral lands. I am inspired to care deeply and think systemically by the stewardship practices of the original inhabitants of this land, who preserved its special qualities for generations</i> <i>Deeply invested in sustainability and shared resources for a brighter future</i>
Community Involvement with Local Organizations and Civic Activities Including Connection to or Appreciation of Arts and Cultural Activities	58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We have worked and volunteered around Homer in schools, fishing industry, sports, environment</i> <i>Spend a lot of time volunteering</i> <i>The community of people and non-profit organizations here have provided opportunities which have helped me thrive</i> <i>Concerned active participant at many levels</i> <i>Volunteer opportunities are unlimited</i> <i>Have enjoyed working with numerous arts groups and continue to do so</i> <i>Connected to the art, visitor, outdoor and various assistance programs (through Rotary and other organizations)</i>

Other themes mentioned (received fewer than 5% of answers):

- Job or own a business in Homer
- Can't afford to move

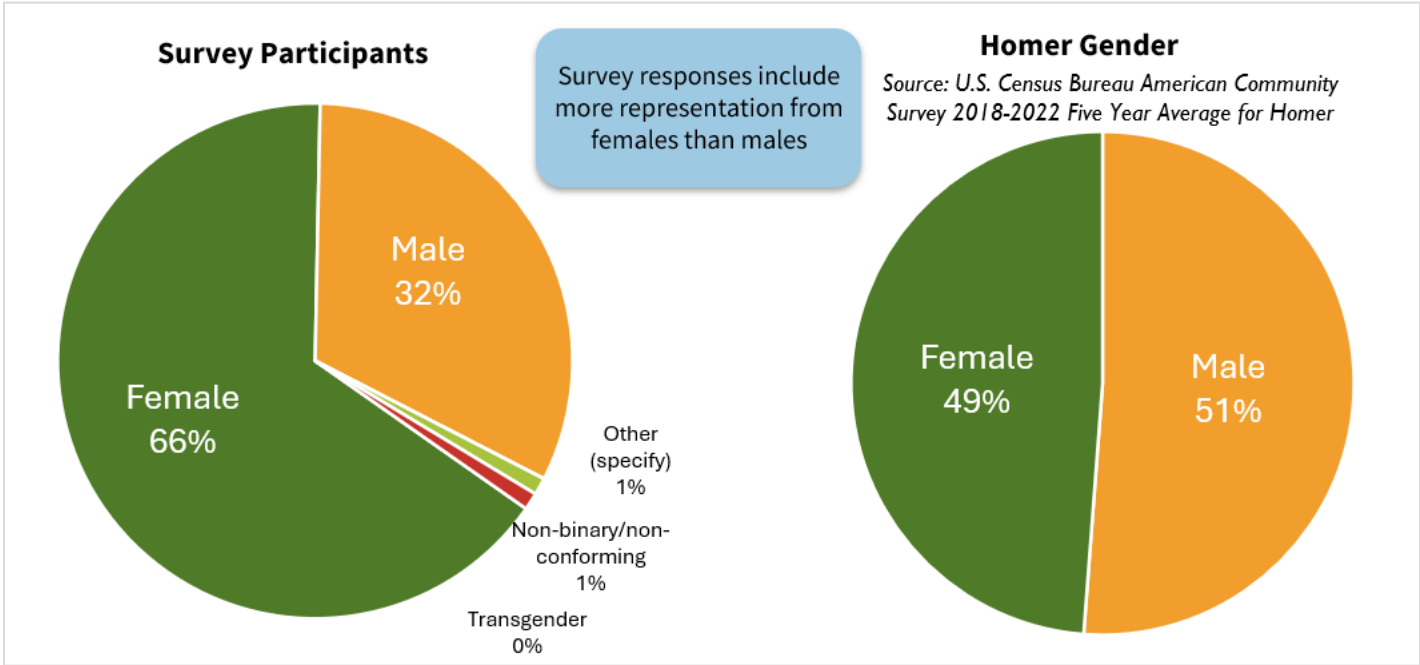
Q22: What is your age?

Answered: 552.



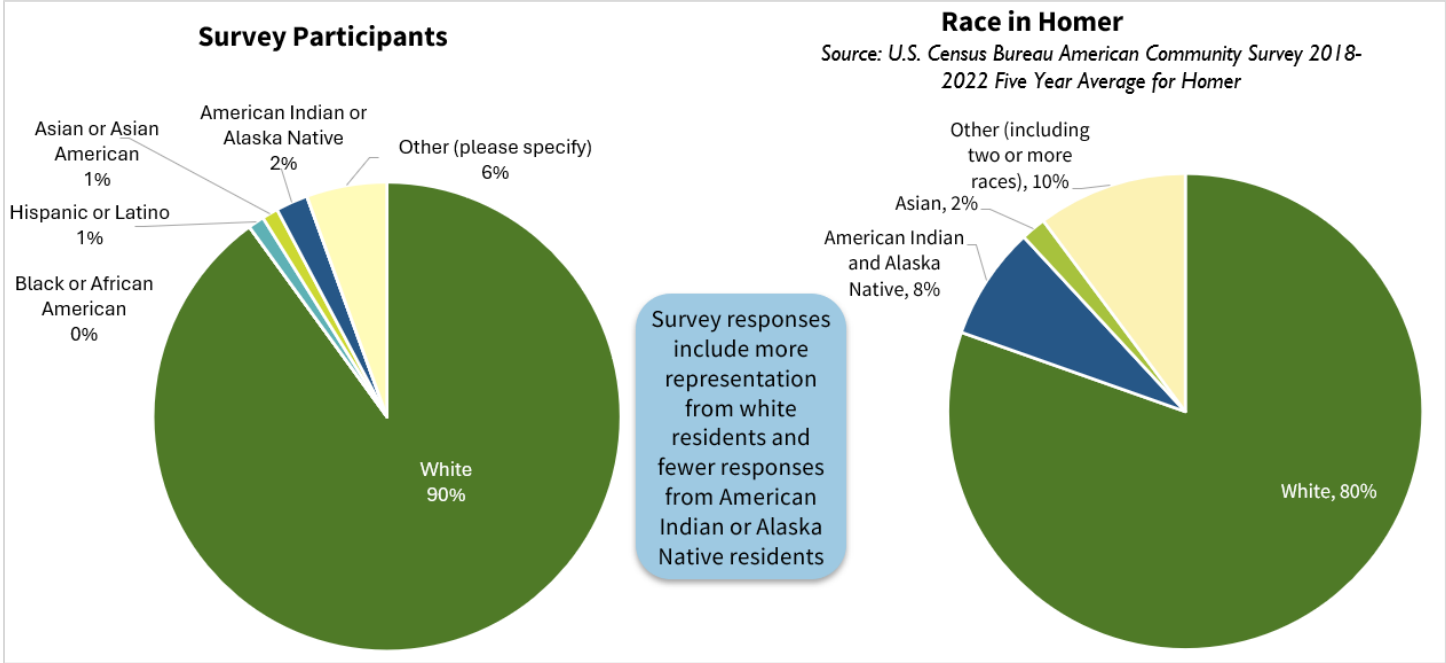
Q23: What is your gender?

Answered: 546.



Q24: What is your race?

Answered: 546.

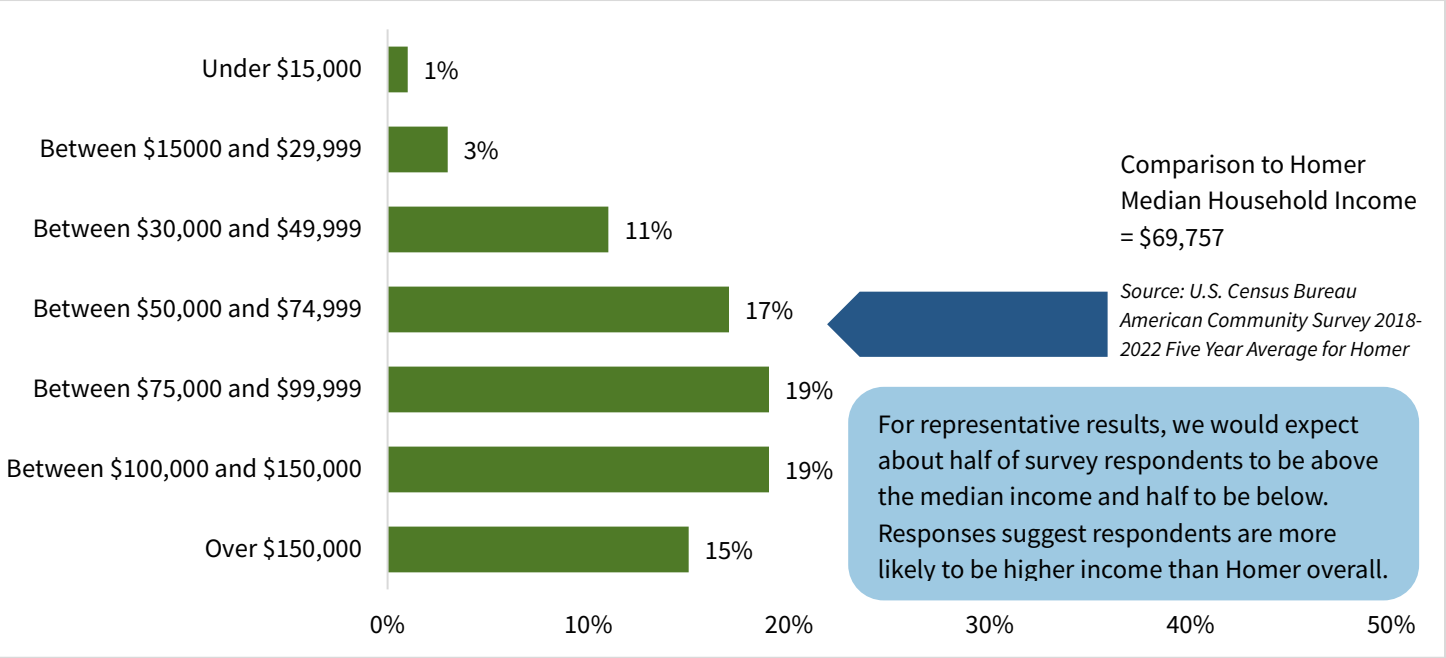


Choices received fewer than 2% of responses:

- Hispanic or Latino (1%)
- Asian or Asian American (1%)
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (Less than 1%)
- Black or African American (No responses)

Q25: What is your annual household income from all sources?

Answered: 546.



Total does not equal 100% - remaining 15% are participants that selected “prefer not to answer”

Interactive Comment Map Results

An interactive comment map was launched alongside the community survey to provide Homer area residents a way to pin their feedback to specific locations.. The comment map compiles 224 comments with 82% related to the City of Homer / Old Town locations. Comments are sorted by comprehensive plan focus areas.

Comment Map Table 1: Total Map Comments by Focus Area

<i>Focus Area-related Comments*</i>	<i>Total Comments</i>	<i>Includes comments about:</i>
Quality of Life	111	<i>Education, health services/programs/activities/spaces, culture/identity, affordability, natural environment</i>
Land Use & Environment	107	<i>Current and future land use, natural hazard mitigation, habitat value, zoning code</i>
Sustainability, Resilience, & Climate Change	96	<i>Air and water quality, climate change, natural hazard mitigation, habitat value, energy, active transportation modalities and connections, green infrastructure</i>
Transportation	89	<i>Roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, transit, transportation modes (bus, cycling, walking, ATVs, etc.), connections</i>
Public Services & Infrastructure	85	<i>Utilities (water, sewer, stormwater, solid waste, etc.), public buildings/ facilities/ programs/ spaces/ safety, taxation</i>
Health & Wellness	72	<i>Education, health services/programs/activities/spaces, accessibility</i>
Economic Development	40	<i>Small business support, workforce development, economic sectors (fishing, tourism, consumer goods, etc.)</i>
Other	18	<i>Comprehensive plan rewrite process, technical edits, maintenance requests</i>
Housing	10	<i>New construction, housing affordability/availability/preservation/revitalization</i>

Comment Map Table 2: Location of Comments

<i>Location</i>	<i># Comments</i>
Homer/Old Town	182
East End, Fritz Creek, and Beyond	6
Diamond Ridge, Skyline Area	7
Kachemak City	6
All areas or non-location-related	22

Most comments focused on the City of Homer boundaries.

Homer Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Comment Map Locations - August 2024

The interactive comment map was active from May 13 to July 3, 2024. Comments are summarized by Comprehensive Plan focus area below.

See the Full Map

To view all comments received during the survey period, go to <https://prod.mapfeede.com/comment/index.php?city=HomerPlan>

Transportation (89)

Comments focused on the conditions of roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails. Many encouraged improvements to public transit and making the area more accessible for various transportation modes, including buses, cycling, and walking. Some comments highlight the need for better connections between different transportation networks and enhancing safety and convenience for non-motorized transportation.

Land Use & Environment (107)

Many expressed the need for better natural hazard mitigation strategies, preserving habitat value, and ensuring that zoning codes support sustainable growth to protect sensitive areas.

Housing (10)

Some comments noted the need for affordable housing types and the expansion of workforce housing options.

Quality of Life (111)

Many comments supported improved educational opportunities, housing affordability, better health services, and more cultural activities.

Public Services & Infrastructure (85)

Comments noted the need for reliable utilities and the efficiency of public services, with some suggesting the need for better funding or taxation strategies to support infrastructure improvements.

Economic Development (40)

Comments highlighted the importance of supporting small businesses, workforce development, and the need for initiatives that could drive economic growth in various sectors. There was some concern about the sustainability of key economic sectors like fishing and tourism.

Health & Wellness (72)

Comments noted the need for accessible health services and expanding health-related activities, most with direct ties to active transportation and parks improvements.

Sustainability, Resilience, & Climate Change (96)

Many expressed the importance of maintaining air and water quality, addressing climate change, and enhancing resilience against natural hazards, with emphasis on protecting habitat value and promoting energy efficiency.

