

Appendix A

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Summary

As part of the Housing Element update drafting process, a Public Engagement Plan (PEP) was developed by City staff to provide the community with public participation opportunities during the development of the Housing Element under Gov. Code Section 65583 (c)(9). During the development of the PEP a specific effort was made to enable the community to address the draft Housing Element digitally as pandemic restrictions were in place during most of the outreach effort time frame. To that end, the City contracted with Trepepi Smith and ZenCity to provide outreach and engagement support on the City's website and via social media.

Before the social media campaign and Housing Element announcements, the City compiled a list of community stakeholders, Table A-1: Stakeholder List, consisting of community organizations that represented a broad spectrum of the demographic make-up of the City as well as income levels. The stakeholders were identified as community-based organizations or organizations active in the City of Hercules that, in most cases, offer direct and indirect services to protected or underserved groups. These organizations were emailed and called directly to set up one-on-one interviews that assisted the City in providing a framework for the tone and tenor of the Housing Element, especially in developing the Housing Resources and Housing Plan. The interview questions and summaries of the conversations held from December 2021 to February 2022 are provided in the Housing Element Stakeholder Interview Summary section.

Table A-1: Stakeholder List

Company/Organization	Group Served/ Sector									
	Elderly/ Seniors	Persons Experiencing Homelessness	Families (large families, female-headed families)	Persons with disabilities	Persons with developmental disabilities	Lower-income households	Farmworkers	Spanish speaking residents	Affordable Developer	Market Rate Developer
Boy Scout Troop 76			x			x				
Girl Scouts			x			x				
Sub Scouts Pack 693			x			x				
Hercules Teen Center			x			x				
Hercules Senior Citizens Club	x		x	x	x	x		x		
Friends of the Hercules Senior Center	x		x	x	x	x		x		
Hercules Education Foundation			x	x	x	x		x		
Hercules Community Library Foundation	x		x	x	x	x		x		
Friends of the Hercules Library	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		
Hercules Historical Society	x		x	x	x	x		x		

Table A-1: Stakeholder List (Con't)

Company/Organization	Group Served/ Sector									
	Elderly/ Seniors	Persons Experiencing Homelessness	Families (large families, female-headed families)	Persons with disabilities	Persons with developmental disabilities	Lower-income households	Farmworkers	Spanish speaking residents	Affordable Developer	Market Rate Developer
East Bay Silver Dolphins Swim Team	x		x	x				x		
Contra Costa Community College		x	x	x	x	x		x		
West Contra Costa Youth Soccer League		x	x	x	x	x		x		
Pinole – Hercules Little League		x	x	x	x	x		x		
Piranhas Swim Team		x	x	x	x	x		x		
Running Rebels Track Club			x			x				
Hercules Community Garden	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Contra Costa Climate Leaders (4CL)	x	x	x	x	x	x				
Sierra Club (SF Bay Chapter)		x				x				
John Muir Land Trust										
350 Bay Area	x	x	x			x	x	x		
Save the Bay	x	x	x			x		x		
Sunflower Alliance	x	x	x			x		x		
Chinese Association of Hercules	x	x	x	x	x	x				
SAAWEDO	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		
Hercules Sister City Associations	x	x	x	x	x	x				
PHREED (Pinole, Hercules, Rodeo, El Sobrante for Equity and Diversity)	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		
Contra Costa Racial Justice Coalition	x	x	x			x		x		
Lupine Hills Elementary School		x	x	x	x	x		x		
Rotary Club of Hercules	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		

Table A-1: Stakeholder List (Con't)

Company/Organization	Group Served/ Sector									
	Elderly/ Seniors	Persons Experiencing Homelessness	Families (large families, female-headed families)	Persons with disabilities	Persons with developmental disabilities	Lower-income households	Farmworkers	Spanish speaking residents	Affordable Developer	Market Rate Developer
Hanna Ranch Elementary School	x	x	x	x	x		x			
Hercules Middle/High School	x	x	x	x	x		x			
Lions Club	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		
Soroptimist Club	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		
Fair Housing Advocates of Northern CA	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Monument Impact	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Moms4Housing			x	x	x	x		x		
Eden Housing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
North Short Business Park Association									x	
Bayfront Chamber of Commerce	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Valley Bible Church	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		
The Grove Church	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		
Contra Costa County Veterans Service Office	x	x		x	x	x		x		

Stakeholder Interview Summary

Introduction

As part of Hercules 2023 – 2031 Housing Element, MIG conducted eight interviews with both internal and external community members and stakeholders held via telephone, Zoom, and/or email. These interactions provided an opportunity for participants to share their feedback the City of Hercules’ strengths, challenges, and explore options for future growth. Interviews were generally conducted as one-on-one conversations with the project team and stakeholders.

Summary

The stakeholder interviews revealed several key insights about the City of Hercules. Residents value the city's strong sense of community, safety, and access to open spaces and parks, that contribute to a friendly, small-town feel. Affordable housing and diverse demographics are also seen as assets, making the city attractive to young locals and families. However, Hercules faces challenges due to limited developable land, inadequate commercial amenities, and transportation issues, with residents often relying on nearby cities for services. Concerns about overcrowding in schools and dense residential developments were also highlighted.

Priorities for future housing development include addressing climate change, improving transportation access, and providing affordable housing for local residents, including seniors, teachers, and police officers. There is a call for more single-family homes and a variety of housing styles, with an emphasis on walkability and thoughtful urban design.

Stakeholders also identified several potential development sites, such as the waterfront and industrial areas, but noted the need to preserve open spaces. A downtown area was seen as a desirable addition, offering a walkable, commercial hub with shops and restaurants to keep spending local. Improved transit options, such as bus routes, rail service, and possibly a ferry, were seen as crucial for supporting growth.

Looking ahead, the community expressed a desire for smart, climate-conscious development that aligns with the city’s character. They envision more affordable housing, better amenities, and city services to accommodate population growth while preserving the shoreline and natural assets. The creation of a vibrant downtown and additional social spaces were also key future aspirations.

Interviews and Schedule

Hercules Historical Society	February 8, 2022
Sylvia Villa-Serrano, Bayfront Chamber of Commerce	January 5, 2022
Ariel Mercado, BART Community Relations Rep	January 4, 2021
Steve Kirby, Retired school teacher at local Hannah Ranch Elementary	December 29, 2021
Southern African & American Women Economic Development Organization, SAAWEDO	December 27, 2021
Karen Rosenberg, Greenbelt Alliance	December 22, 2021
Myrna deVera, Former Mayor and Planning Commissioner	December 15, 2021
Jo Ellen Marcotte, Hercules Community Library	December 14, 2021

Key Findings

Strengths and Assets

Stakeholders highlighted that Hercules provides a safe and community-driven environment with a keen sense of connection. Residents appreciate the small-town feel, friendly neighbors, and a variety of community events. The city's open spaces, parks, and shoreline are significant assets, offering nature access and recreational opportunities. Walkable amenities and affordable housing allow younger locals to stay in the area, and the city's ethnic and economic diversity adds to its vibrancy. Additionally, Hercules offers employment opportunities and a range of housing options that appeal to different age groups.

Challenges

One of the major challenges is the limited amount of developable land, which restricts future growth. Stakeholders noted that the lack of amenities such as restaurants and commercial businesses forces residents to rely on nearby cities. Concerns were also raised about the ability of local schools to accommodate an increasing population, while poor infrastructure, including transportation and high-speed internet, adds to the challenges. The community also lacks parking and public spaces, with overly dense housing developments not aligning with residents' desires for single-family homes and mixed-use developments. Difficulty obtaining business permits and current legislation further deter development, making it hard for small businesses to thrive locally.

Priorities for Housing Development

Housing development in Hercules should focus on addressing climate change, reducing urban sprawl, and designing housing that prioritizes people over cars. Stakeholders emphasized the need for accessible transit and employment opportunities, along with affordable, well-designed housing with walkability. They advocated for less dense housing options, including more single-family homes, townhomes, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Strong leadership from the planning commission is essential to ensure thoughtful development that allows locals to invest in real estate and stay within the community.

Affordable Housing

The community supports building mixed-income affordable housing that caters to a broad spectrum of residents, including seniors, teachers, and police officers. Housing should not be low-income exclusive but designed to help locals who want to remain in the area. There is currently a lack of affordable single-family homes, and only one senior housing development exists, highlighting a need for more options. Creative approaches to housing development, such as building near mass transit at the waterfront, were encouraged to make affordable housing more accessible.

Examples of Housing Projects/Development Trends

Stakeholders pointed to several nearby cities with successful housing projects that Hercules could emulate. Alameda Point, Emeryville's Sherwin-Williams site, and Sacramento's Brentwood were noted for their mixed-income residential developments. Cities like Walnut Creek, with its good transit and accessibility, and St. Helena, with its tourist-attracting downtown, were also suggested as models. However, they cautioned against replicating areas like El Cerrito, which has seen overly dense development along its main corridor.

Specific Sites for Development

Developing underutilized industrial sites is critical for Hercules, although some sites, such as former industrial sites, may pose safety concerns. Stakeholders identified the Hill Town and Loop sites, along with the waterfront, as key areas for potential development. They suggested mixed-use residential development, particularly around the transit center, and continued redevelopment of former industrial sites like the former dynamite plant approved for redevelopment as the Hercules Bayfront, surrounding the planned Hercules Hub Capitol Corridor rail station. Additionally, the Link21 project could create more transit opportunities, with Hercules Transit Center serving as a future station.

Downtown Location

There is no current downtown in Hercules, but stakeholders expressed a strong desire for one. A downtown could create a walkable, dense commercial area with small shops, restaurants, and open spaces. The approved Sycamore Crossing development was suggested as a potential site for a downtown area, along with the waterfront district, which has significant development potential. Residents believe that creating a downtown area would help keep spending local and provide a central hub for the community to gather and shop.

Transportation Opportunities

While bus services in Hercules are decent, stakeholders called for more routes and increased frequency, especially for commutes to San Francisco. Accessibility for all residents should be a priority, and rail service along the waterfront, along with BART or ferry options, would greatly enhance transportation options. Stakeholders also emphasized the need for housing near transit hubs to accommodate commuters and reduce freeway congestion. They praised the efforts of WestCAT but noted that private businesses should also be located near transit. More thoughtful planning for schools and future transportation infrastructure is essential as the city grows.

The Future of Hercules

Looking ahead, stakeholders envision a future where Hercules embraces affordable, climate-smart housing development that fits the city's character. Protecting the shoreline from sea level rise is a priority, along with electing leaders who can plan for long-term prosperity. They also hope to see a better community center, more social spaces, and a vibrant downtown. As the population grows, additional amenities like performance centers, schools, and small businesses will be necessary to meet residents' needs. Stakeholders also see the potential for more upzoning to create affordable housing, smaller residential buildings, and increased transit options like a train station and ferry terminal.

Interview Questions

The set of questions below were used for all stakeholder interviews.

1. What are the **strengths** and **assets** that make Hercules a great place to live?
2. What are the most critical **challenges** related to residential, industrial, and commercial development facing Hercules?
3. What are your **priorities** for housing development in Hercules?
4. Where does affordable housing fit in? What **is your definition** of affordable housing and who does it serve?
5. Are there housing projects (or general development trends) in other cities that are **examples** of what you would like to see in Hercules?
6. Are there corridors or specific sites where you'd like to see new housing? How do you feel about some industrial sites converting to alternative uses that are less industrial, such as mixed-use residential?
7. Should Hercules have a **Downtown**? Where should it be located and what does it look like? Should it include housing?
8. What do you believe are the biggest transportation **opportunities** or **challenges** in the community? Do you believe there are enough services in Hercules? Grocery stores, schools, libraries, pharmacies, parks, etc.?

Interview Findings

Key findings from the stakeholder interviews are summarized below. Some community comments have been edited for clarity.

Strengths and Assets:

City of Hercules provides its residents with a safe, community driven environment. The open space and parks are a utilized asset in the community.

- Strong Sense of Community, small town feel, friendly
- Wonderful community events
- Safe
- Good use of open space, nature is accessible, beautiful shoreline, great parks.
- Good amenities and places to walk and bike.
- Reasonably priced housing allows younger locals to stay in the area.
- Employment opportunity
- Diverse population (ethnically, economically, age)

Challenges:

Limited land makes developing difficult. Future growth could limit access to public parks and spaces, as well as the available schools. Due to a lack of commercial businesses, residents utilize nearby cities.

- Lack of developable land, not enough land to build on
- Does not have amenities that attract tourists or developers.
- Limited nearby opportunities within the city, such as restaurants, commercial businesses
- Quality of schools is decent, but most likely won't be able to accommodate the new developments and population that comes with development.
- Poor infrastructure and high-speed internet
- Transportation challenges, traffic to surrounding areas.
- Not enough parking or public spaces/community assets to accommodate new housing.
- Residential housing development is too dense, not enough single-family homes or mixed use.
- Community spends money outside of Hercules.
- The small businesses that come in have issues with signage and city approval
- Difficulty getting permits to open business.
- Current legislation and policies make it difficult for business owners/developers to invest in real estate.

Priorities for Housing Development

The priorities for the City of Hercules are to provide affordable, diverse housing to the locals. Transportation and nearby traffic congestion is also a priority. As Hercules is on the coast, climate change should also be a priority.

- Need to respond to sea level rise/climate change.
- Reduce sprawl.
- Build for people not cars.
- Ensure access to transit and employment opportunities.
- Affordable housing, good housing design with walkability
- Less dense housing, more single-family homes, townhomes, ADUs, and condos
- Strong planning commission to support housing development.
- Allow residents the opportunity to invest in real estate.

Affordable Housing:

The key recommendations include: building a variety of housing styles (single-family homes, condos, apartments) and prioritizing seniors, police officers, teachers, and locals.

- Mixed income affordable housing
- Creative thinking
- Build mass transit near Waterfront.
- Lack of single-family homes that are affordable.
- Affordable housing is not low income, should serve teachers and residents that want to stay.
- For teachers, seniors, police, only one senior housing development in the area
- Affordable housing currently not in the interest of the community, many cannot afford to purchase a house.

Examples of housing projects/development trends:

Below are examples of cities with housing projects or development trends suggested by the stakeholders.

- Portions of the redeveloped Alameda Point (residential development at many income levels)
The Sherwin-Williams site in Emeryville
- Sacramento's Brentwood
- Pittsburg,
- Examples from the Bay Area, as they have houses being built for the community.
- Emulate Marin
- Walnut Creek (good transit, accessibility)
- Not El Cerrito (San Pablo Ave.) as it is lined with 5-story buildings.
- St. Helena (a downtown core that tourists can visit during the weekend)
- Vallejo's downtown
- Pleasant Hill.

Specific Sites, converting industrial sites:

Developing industrial sites and underutilized land in Hercules is critical. The railroad and former industrial sites may pose challenges. The open space should continue to be conserved while considering transit options and commercial uses for the community's needs.

- Hill Town and Loop Site.
- Finish up waterfront development on former dynamite plant site.
- Convert remaining former dynamite plan buildings into active uses.
- Develop Hercules Point.
- Transit center is well used, but no housing around the area, it would be nice to see apartments near this area like housing around BART stations
- Not much commercial space to convert
- Chemical factory wouldn't be safe to build on.
- Natural open space should continue to be protected.
- Transit center and Waterfront.
- Diversify the housing. Hill Town is planned to be multi-family housing with some single-family homes.
- Link21 should be considered, Hercules Transit Center would be a station on this line.
- Other parcels in the New Town Center corridor - of all current uses, including church - should be upzoned for residential.
- Mixed-use residential is a problematic zoning requirement.

Downtown Location:

Overall, a downtown could provide a walkable, dense, commercial area for the residents of Hercules. Space is a concern and Currently The library and city offices, Refugio Valley Park, community center are gathering spots for the community.

- Add mixed use retail, areas for walking and parks and open space, EV charging.
- Follow the Waterfront District Master Plan to protect the economics of providing small-shop space and creative flexible uses.
- Historic assets must be protected, and the form-based design rules enforced.
- The closest downtown will be Richmond, El Sobrante
- If there was a downtown area people would use it, however, no space for a downtown.
- Downtown Creekside with a park is similar to a downtown, consider adding a main street.
- Sycamore Crossing is the only spot left to build a downtown area. If there was a downtown area with places to eat and shop that would be great to keep money in the area.
- Waterfront is great opportunity area with train station, it should include housing, mixed use.

Transportation Opportunities:

Overall, there are enough city services. Transit could be improved upon, especially providing different modes of transit. Consideration for future growth is imperative.

- Busses are decent, more routes and frequency are needed, especially for travel to SF for jobs and education.
- Accessibility should be a priority.
- Rail service on the Waterfront, the city should continue strong efforts to get the station built.

- WestCAT is doing a fantastic job and deserves more funding Private services businesses should be adjacent to transit.
- Current transportation does not cater to the average resident.
- The Lynx bus at the transit center is great, would like to see the Waterfront area serviced.
- Would like to have BART.
- Would like to have a ferry.
- Nearby Freeway is very congested, need an easy way to get to Oakland for work and leisure. Should be housing near the transit center.
- No housing near the transit center or park and ride
- Ferry and Amtrak are both supposed to be built on west side.
- 3 elementary schools, middle school, and high school
- Safeway opened in the last year.
- We have one of the best libraries in the Bay Area
- We need a place for families to go and have something other than pizza.
- Not enough planning for new schools for growing community
- Consider dedicated bus lanes.

The Future of Hercules:

Affordable housing is important to the community, but smart development and design that correlates with the city's character are key. Residents would like to see other amenities, such as a performance center, additional schools, and city services to accommodate the predicted population growth.

- More upzoning and more affordable housing to keep locals around longer.
- Prioritize climate justice.
- New development should be climate smart.
- Protect the shoreline which is at risk of sea level rise.
- To ensure general prosperity, housing must be delivered on existing and new parcels in quantities and at prices commensurate with today's conditions.
- Elect leaders able to plan for the community.
- Would like to see a better community center and space for socializing, as well as a downtown with stores and unique shops and places to explore
- Draw in smaller businesses and retail for the growing population
- City services will not be able to support the increasing population.
- Smaller 3-story buildings and ADUs
- Building a train stop and ferry terminal.
- Hotel and more dense housing at the Waterfront

Community Workshops

In preparation for two community workshops—one in February 2022 focused on Housing Resources, and another in April 2022 to discuss the Housing Plan—several outreach efforts were made. Regular meeting announcements were published, a project webpage was created, and an online survey was conducted. Before the February workshop, the initial Housing Resources sites were identified and reviewed by Staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. These Housing Resources sites were then refined and presented at the first community meeting in February.

Due to COVID safety protocols implemented by the State of California, the City meetings were held virtually, and in-person meetings did not resume until the summer of 2022. Community Meetings #1 and #2 were hybrid events held in the City Council Chambers, where the Housing Plan was further refined based on discussions. During this time, outreach consultants Trepepi Smith and ZenCity helped boost social media exposure, sharing links to the draft Housing Element on the City’s website. The draft link was also distributed via the City’s ListServ.

In June and July 2022, a draft of the Housing Element was made available for public comment. Additional revisions were made based on stakeholder interviews, survey responses (including open comments), and the feedback collected during this period. The draft was then submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in August 2022. The public comment period on the draft remained open through August 2024. Following the release of the first draft in July 2022, four additional revised drafts were posted in December 2022, March 2023, November 2023, and August 2024.

This collaborative, community-driven process led to the presentation of the draft Housing Element to the Planning Commission and the Community Council in publicly announced and advertised meetings, following City requirements. In between the public meetings, an online survey was conducted, receiving 112 responses. A summary of these responses can be found in Appendix A-4: Survey Summary.

City of Hercules Housing Element Mapping Exercise

Image A-1: Hercules Housing Element - Mapping Exercise, highlights various housing-related sites and feedback as part of a community engagement effort with the City of Hercules staff. The following elements are visible on the map:

Key Components

Legend:

Hercules Boundary: Dashed line marking the city limits.

Hercules Parcels: Shaded in grey.

4th Cycle Sites: Highlighted in brown.

4th & 5th Cycle Sites: Highlighted in orange.

Vacant Residential: Shaded in light green.

Vacant Non-Residential: Shaded in light blue.

Markers on the Map:

Colored Comment Boxes: Spread across different regions of the map. These represent community feedback or observations regarding housing and land use in specific areas.

Icons: Various icons are scattered across the map, which signify points of interest or specific housing-related concerns.

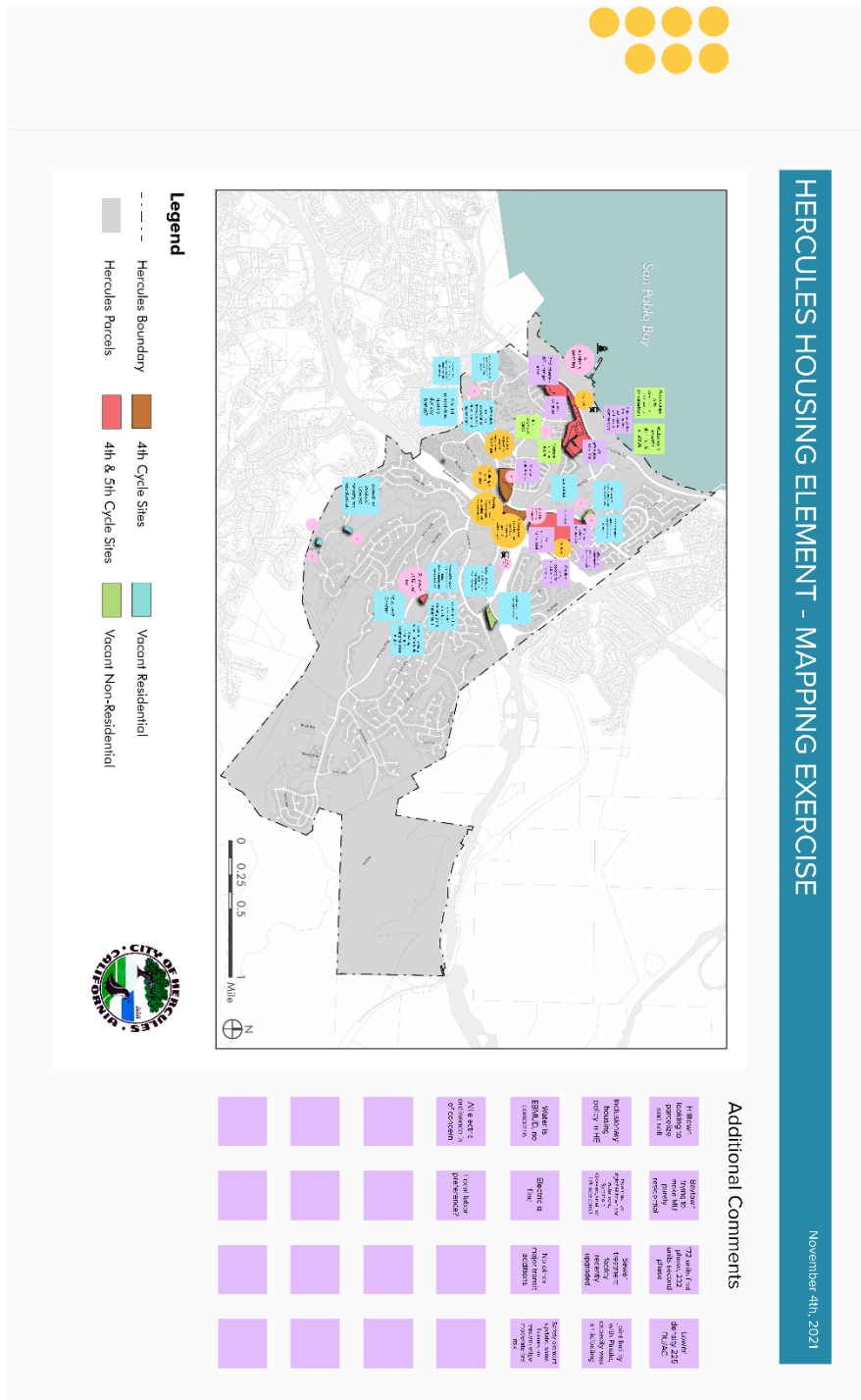
Additional Comments Section (Bottom Right):

The grid of purple boxes summarizes community feedback or housing priorities. Some of the comments relate to specific topics such as accessibility, environmental concerns, and housing preferences.

General Insights:

The exercise documents the initial process of identifying and discussing locations for future housing, whether for development, preservation, or to address housing needs for different population groups. Specific areas are marked for potential development that may have been identified in previous housing cycles (e.g., 4th or 5th cycle), or indicating phases of housing planning. The community comments (additional comments section) reflect concerns like traffic, environmental impacts, or specific demographic needs such as housing for seniors, veterans, and low-income families. This map served as part of the public engagement process to gather input for future housing and land use plans in Hercules.

Image A-1: Hercules Housing Element – Mapping Exercise



City of Hercules Housing Resources

Image A-2: Hercules Housing Element – Sites Inventory provides an updated and refined overview of the City of Hercules Housing Element - Sites Inventory for the 6th Cycle (2023-2031), building upon the initial mapping exercise for housing resources sites. The map identifies potential locations for new housing developments, with detailed information about each site, such as the number of housing units and specific addresses. Notable locations include 101 Manzanita Pl. (37 units), 1899 Railroad Ave. (60 units), and 1000 Sycamore Ave. (20 units). These sites are marked in different colors to indicate their status: red for sites previously identified in the 4th and 5th cycles, blue for potential new sites, and green for new 6th-cycle housing sites.

This refined map was developed through community involvement and feedback. Below the map, a section titled Additional Comments captures community input, highlighting concerns and suggestions related to housing. These comments focus on issues like the need for affordable housing, potential environmental impacts, and the importance of maintaining and improving local infrastructure to support future developments.

In addition to site-specific details, the map also emphasizes what the community values about Hercules, such as its open spaces, parks, diversity, and safety. The feedback reflects both the community's support for responsible growth and its concerns about preserving the unique qualities of Hercules as housing development moves forward.

Overall, this update refines the initial exercise of identifying housing resource sites, incorporating community feedback, and presenting a clearer plan for future housing development in Hercules.

HERCULES HOUSING ELEMENT - Sites Inventory

Additional Comments



- | Previous 4th Cycle Sites | Previous 4th & 5th Cycle Sites | New 6th Cycle Sites |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |



February 2022

Additional Comments

How does the City
Portfolio as of
the end of 2021
know its working
the Bill for the
the cycle?

WILLIAMSON, JR.
COOKING REC.
EYES & EYEWID?
BURNERS
COOKING WITH GREEN PEAS
BURNERS AND BURNERS
OFFICERS, ETC.

Context
specific, not
look back.
Next cycle
starts now.

Feeling about
housing by use of
positive, location,
ideally, affecting
rooms, form
category

demand vs supply? Only too < all trends (5-8, aging

11

11



Hercules Housing Element – Community Meeting #1

The image from the Hercules Community Meeting #1 in March 2022 not only showcases potential housing sites but also highlights community engagement through various feedback sections.

Meeting Summary

Housing Sites: The map indicates several potential housing development sites totaling 1,110 units, with specific locations marked for each.

Community Feedback:

Public Q&A: Participants shared thoughts and concerns during the question-and-answer segment. Feedback included worries about traffic impacts, the necessity for affordable housing, and potential infrastructure challenges. Community members expressed specific concerns regarding site development, including environmental impacts and the importance of maintaining the character of existing neighborhoods.

Site-Related Comments:

Attendees provided detailed comments about specific housing sites. Feedback emphasized the need for environmentally responsible development, the promotion of sustainable practices, and the inclusion of additional amenities like parks and public spaces. Many expressed a desire for thoughtful development that aligns with community values.

What Do You Love About Hercules?

Participants were invited to share positive aspects of their community. Common themes included the sense of community, access to natural spaces, and the diversity of residents. Respondents underscored the importance of preserving these qualities as the city grows.

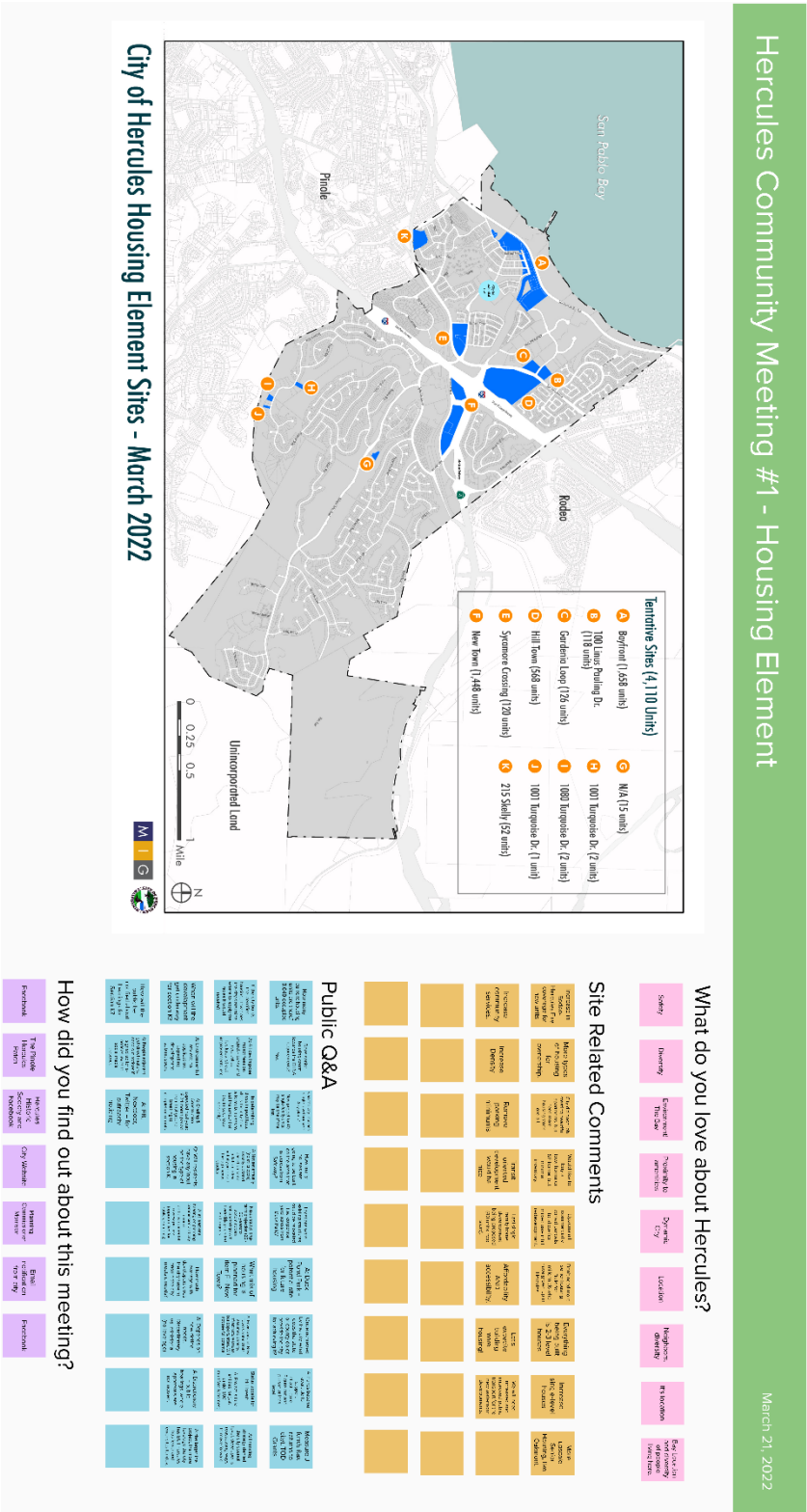
How Did You Find Out About This Meeting?

Participants reported various methods through which they learned about the meeting. Common sources included social media, community flyers, word of mouth, and city newsletters. This highlights the effectiveness of diverse outreach strategies in engaging community members and encouraging participation in the planning process.

Conclusion

Overall, the meeting demonstrated strong community interest in shaping housing development in Hercules, with a focus on affordable housing, environmental stewardship, and maintaining the city's unique character as planning moves forward. The engagement feedback underscores the importance of clear communication and active outreach in fostering community involvement.

Image A-3: Hercules Housing Element – Community Meeting #1



Hercules Housing Element – Community Meeting #2

During Community Meeting #2, the 6th-cycle Housing Plan and Actions outlined in the draft Housing Element were reviewed. The presentation included various color-coded tables and charts, each representing various aspects of the housing plan. Key topics discussed included special needs housing, AFFH, housing stabilization, housing variety, energy efficiency and funding. The meeting aimed to organize and present information systematically to facilitate discussions and decision-making regarding the community's housing goals and strategies. The use of color coding helped differentiate between sections, making the information more accessible and easier to follow for the attendees.

Key Concerns

Affordability

Many attendees expressed worries about the affordability of housing, particularly for low-income families and individuals. There was a strong call for more affordable housing units to be included in the plan.

Special Needs Housing

Concerns were raised about the availability and accessibility of housing for special needs populations, including persons with disabilities and the elderly. Attendees emphasized the need for more supportive housing options.

Homelessness

The issue of homelessness was a significant topic, with community members urging for more comprehensive strategies to address and reduce homelessness in the area.

Housing Variety

There was a discussion about the need for a diverse range of housing types to cater to different demographics, including single-family homes, multi-family units, and accessory dwelling units.

Environmental Impact

Some participants were concerned about the environmental impact of new housing developments, advocating for sustainable and eco-friendly building practices.

Community Involvement

Attendees highlighted the importance of ongoing community involvement and transparency in the planning process, ensuring that residents have a say in decisions that affect their neighborhoods. These concerns reflect the community's desire for a balanced and inclusive housing plan that addresses various needs and challenges.

Image A-4: Hercules Housing Element – Community Meeting #2



City of Hercules Housing Element Update Community Survey

The City of Hercules developed a community survey to gather feedback for the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update from Hercules residents, workers, property owners and others interested in housing issues in the city. The survey was posted on the City of Hercules's website, distributed to service providers, and publicized on social media. It was available from February 26 to March 31, 2021. The survey received a total of 112 responses.

Summary

The responses from stakeholders in Hercules highlight a complex and diverse range of concerns regarding housing, growth, and the future of the community. Many residents expressed that while housing development is necessary, the city should prioritize other needs, such as expanding retail options, fixing roads, and improving schools and parks before adding more housing. There is also a strong sentiment against dense housing, with many preferring single-family homes or one-story houses that cater to seniors, disabled individuals, and multi-generational families. Additionally, there are worries that large apartment blocks might erode the sense of ownership in the town, leading to overcrowding and traffic congestion.

Public services and infrastructure are also major concerns. Residents worry that current police, fire, and public transportation systems may not be able to keep up with the city's growth. Traffic congestion, particularly along Highway 80 and San Pablo Avenue, is already an issue, and there is a call for better public transportation to alleviate these problems. Some also raised the need for better transit options for working parents, as well as increased services for seniors and residents with disabilities. The community is also seeking more affordable housing options, as rising costs have forced many young people and long-time residents to move away or live with family well into adulthood.

There is a strong desire to preserve the character of Hercules, balancing development with the need for open spaces and community services. Many residents called for more businesses and storefronts, rather than additional housing, to support the growing population. Additionally, there is concern about state mandates on housing, with many feeling that the state should not force cities like Hercules to develop in ways that don't align with local needs. Affordable housing is important to many, but there is a call for smart, proportional development that includes better public transportation and support services to maintain Hercules' sense of community.

Overall, stakeholders appreciate the city's leadership and the safety and diversity it offers, but they are cautious about growth that could disrupt its small-town feel. They want thoughtful planning that considers the community's needs, from affordable housing to public services, while preserving the unique charm and open spaces that make Hercules special.

Conclusion

The overall results reflect a community that prioritizes affordability, environmental sustainability, and preserving the character of Hercules. The highest support is given to ensuring children who grow up in Hercules can afford to live in the community (7.92) and addressing potential traffic and congestion (8.39). These two factors show that residents are deeply concerned about long-term affordability for future generations and managing the infrastructure impacts of any growth.

Additionally, respondents favor affordable housing for people who work in Hercules (7.49), indicating a preference for reducing commuting burdens and strengthening local ties. Environmental risks (7.86) and protecting environmentally sensitive areas (7.75) are also highly prioritized, emphasizing the community's strong focus on sustainability and hazard mitigation.

While there is substantial support for housing near public transit (7.25) and downsizing options for older residents (7.25), issues like streamlining housing construction (6.33) and addressing Fair Housing concerns (6.83) receive moderate support, suggesting that respondents value careful, balanced growth that aligns with the community's environmental and social values.

Shelters and transitional housing for the homeless (4.0) received the least support, indicating that homelessness solutions are not viewed as a pressing issue by most respondents compared to other housing challenges.

In summary, the community's priorities are focused on **affordability for future generations, sustainable development, and preserving the character** of Hercules, while cautiously approaching new housing development and construction policies.

Summary of Survey Data

Figure 1: Duration of Residence in Hercules

- Most residents (35.71%) have lived in Hercules for 20 years or more.
- **21.43% have been here for 10 to 19 years**, while 17.86% are relatively newer residents, having lived in Hercules for 1 to 4 years.
- A small percentage (6.25%) have lived in Hercules for less than a year, and **1.79% do not live in Hercules at all**.

Figure 2: Current Living Situation

- An overwhelming majority (88.39%) of respondents own their homes.
- A smaller portion (8.93%) rent their homes, and **1.79% live with friends/family without paying rent**.
- No respondents were identified as unhoused.

Figure 3: Perceived Housing Needs in Hercules

- 48.21% of respondents believe more single-family homes are needed, followed by townhomes (37.5%) and senior housing (36.61%).
- Condominiums and apartments with fewer than 6 units were also notable, **receiving 21.43% and 16.96% of votes, respectively**.
- Special needs housing and interim/transitional housing had fewer advocates, with **14.29% and 6.25% of the responses**.
- Other suggestions included the need for more affordable housing and community-focused developments, while some respondents felt there should be no new builds.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the following statements on a scale from (0-10), with 10 being the strongest response in support of the questions or statement.

Figure 4: Ensure that children who grow up in Hercules can afford to live in Hercules (Answered: 106, Skipped: 6)

Average score: 7.92

Summary: Respondents strongly support ensuring that local children can afford to stay in the community as adults, indicating a desire for long-term affordability and community continuity.

Figure 5: Provide opportunities for people who work in Hercules to live in Hercules (Answered: 105, Skipped: 7)

Average score: 7.49

Summary: There is significant support for allowing people who work in the community to live there, suggesting a focus on reducing commute times and fostering stronger local ties.

Figure 6: Provide more options for older residents to downsize and stay in the community (Answered: 105, Skipped: 7)

Average score: 7.25 Summary: There is strong support for creating more housing options for older residents to downsize while remaining in the community, reflecting the importance of aging in place.

Figure 7: Streamline the process for new housing construction (Answered: 105, Skipped: 7)

Average score: 6.33

Summary: There is moderate support for simplifying the housing construction process, though opinions vary on the urgency and need for this measure.

Figure 8: Establish housing for seniors, large families, veterans, and/or persons with disabilities (Answered: 104, Skipped: 8)

Average score: 6.25

Summary: Respondents are moderately supportive of creating housing for underserved groups, but this may not be seen as a top priority compared to other issues.

Figure 9: Provide shelters and transitional housing for homeless families and individuals, along with services to help move people into permanent housing (Answered: 105, Skipped: 7)

Average score: 4.0

Summary: This issue received relatively low support, indicating that providing shelters and transitional housing for the homeless is not viewed as a high priority by the majority of respondents.

Figure 10: Support programs to help homeowners at risk of mortgage default keep their homes (Answered: 104, Skipped: 8)

Average score: 6.15

Summary: There is moderate support for helping homeowners at risk of default, reflecting concern for economic stability but not as urgent as other priorities.

Figure 11: Establish housing near public transit (Answered: 104, Skipped: 8)

Average score: 7.25

Summary: Housing near public transit is viewed as important, with strong support for transit-oriented development to improve accessibility.

Figure 12: Address Fair Housing issues (e.g., discrimination, inadequate accommodations for people with disabilities, etc.) (Answered: 100, Skipped: 12)

Average score: 6.83

Summary: There is moderate concern for addressing Fair Housing issues, indicating a focus on equity and inclusivity in housing policies.

Figure 13: Environmental risks (e.g., wildfire, flood, etc.) (Answered: 101, Skipped: 11)

Average score: 7.86

Summary: Environmental risks are a top priority, with strong support for addressing hazards like wildfires and floods in development planning.

Figure 14: Potential traffic and congestion (Answered: 103, Skipped: 9)

Average score: 8.39

Summary: Traffic and congestion are major concerns, receiving the highest score, reflecting the importance of mitigating infrastructure strain with new developments.

Figure 15: Protecting environmentally sensitive areas (Answered: 103, Skipped: 9)

Average score: 7.75 Summary: Respondents strongly support protecting environmentally sensitive areas, emphasizing a community-wide commitment to environmental preservation.

Figure 16: Preserving community character (Answered: 104, Skipped: 8)

Average score: 7.51

Summary: There is considerable support for ensuring new developments preserve the established character of the community, reflecting pride in the community's identity.

Figure 18: Age Distribution

- **25-34 years:** 9.80% (10 respondents)
- **35-44 years:** 26.47% (27 respondents)
- **45-54 years:** 20.59% (21 respondents)
- **55-64 years:** 20.59% (21 respondents)
- **65+ years:** 22.5% (23 respondents)

- Under 18 & 18-24 years: 0% (0 respondents)

The majority of respondents are between 35-44 years old, followed by a substantial representation of older adults aged 55-64 and 65+.

Figure 19: Gender Distribution

- **Female:** 56.86% (58 respondents)
- **Male:** 39.22% (40 respondents)
- **Non-binary & Other:** 0% (0 respondents)
- **Prefer not to say:** 3.92% (4 respondents)

Most respondents identify as female, with a sizable portion identifying as male.

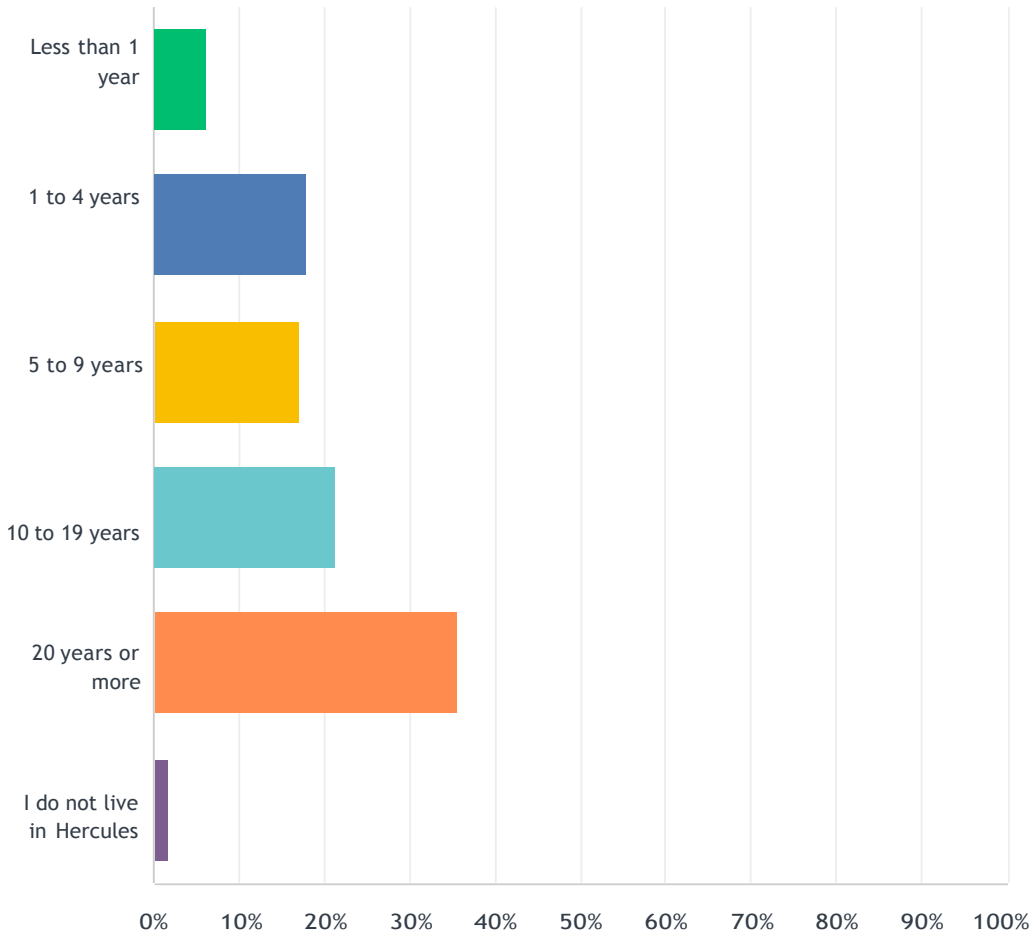
Figure 20: Racial and Ethnic Identification

- **White or Caucasian:** 39.22% (40 respondents)
- **Black or African American:** 17.65% (18 respondents)
- **Hispanic or Latino:** 10.78% (11 respondents)
- **Asian or Asian American:** 21.57% (22 respondents)
- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** 0.98% (1 respondent)
- **Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander:** 0.98% (1 respondent)
- **Another race:** 2.94% (3 respondents)
- **Prefer not to answer:** 14.71% (15 respondents)

Community Survey Data

The figures below display respondents' answers on how the City of Hercules might meet its housing needs in the coming years. The "n =" which follows at the end of each figure heading refers to the total number of responses for that question. Where multiple responses were allowed, the "n" may exceed the total number of respondents.

**Figure 1: How long have you lived in Hercules:
(Answered: 112, Skipped: 0)**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year	6.25%	7
1 to 4 years	17.86%	20
5 to 9 years	16.96%	19
10 to 19 years	21.43%	24
20 years or more	35.71%	40
I do not live in Hercules	1.79%	2

**Figure 2: Which best describes your current living situation?
(Answered: 112, Skipped: 0)**

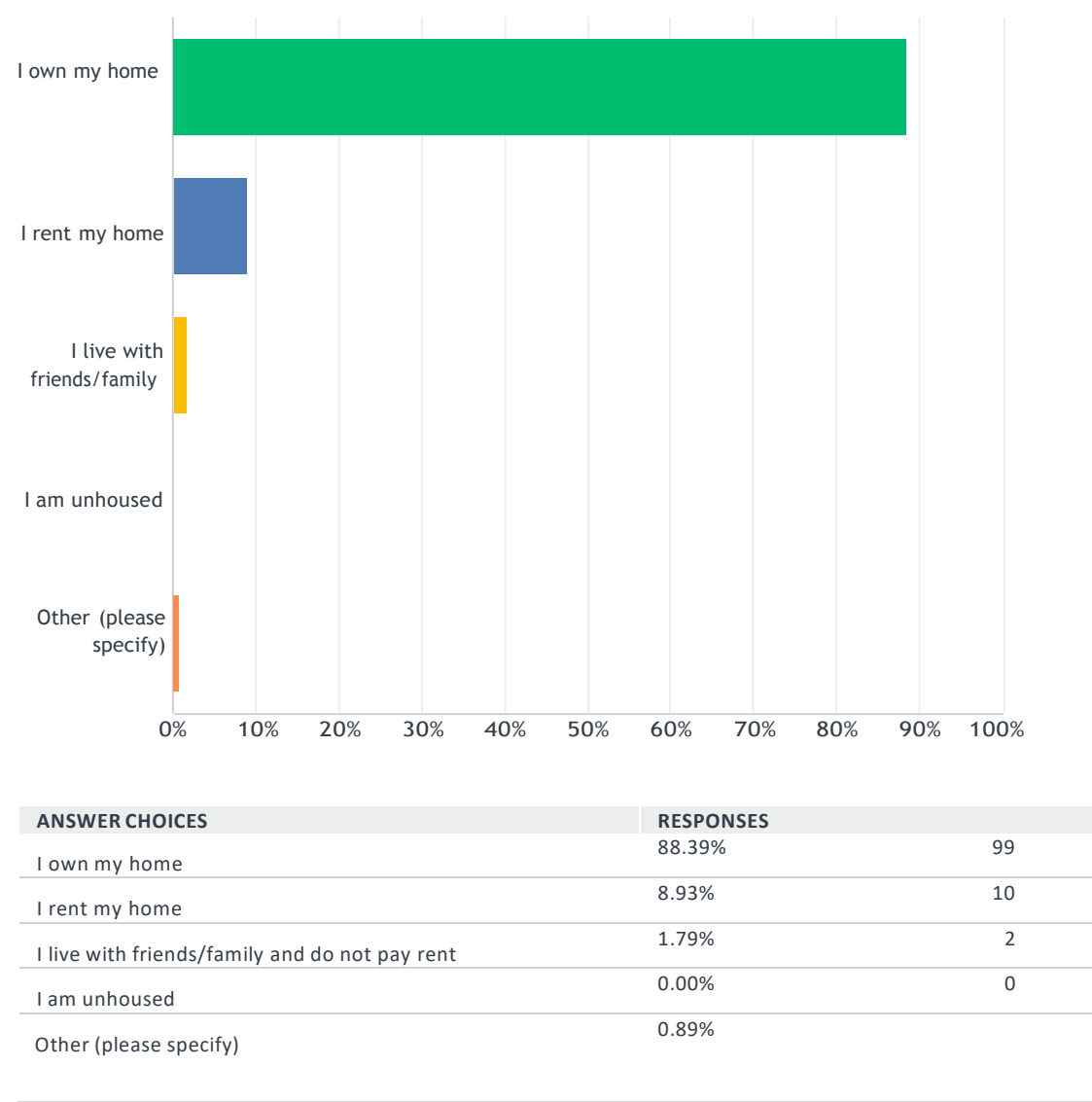
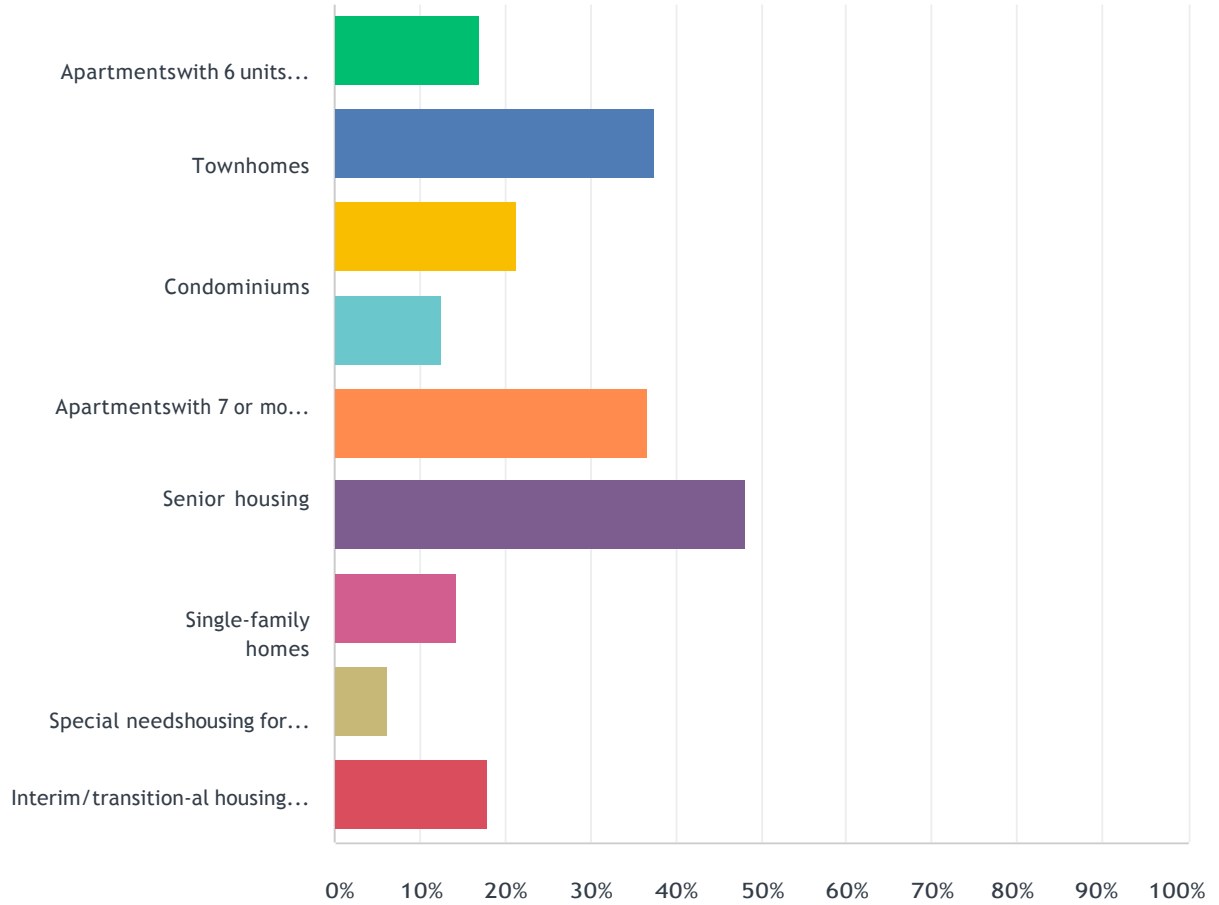


Figure 3: Which type of housing do you think Hercules needs more of? Pick your top 3. (Answered: 112, Skipped: 0)

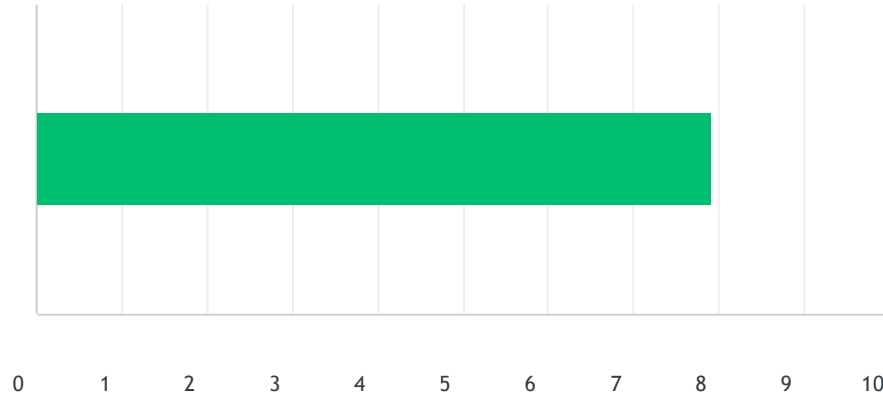


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Apartments with 6 units or less	16.96%	19
Townhomes	37.50%	42
Condominiums	21.43%	24
Apartments with 7 or more units	12.50%	14
Senior housing	36.61%	41
Single-family homes	48.21%	54
Special needs housing for families who need supportive services like jobs training and social services	14.29%	16
Interim/transitional housing for people looking to transition from homelessness	6.25%	7
Other (please specify)	17.86%	20

Other responses:

- No new builds
- Affordable Housing
- SFH with yards! Sorry, NO apartments! They bring in the wrong element.
- We have a lot of housing already.
- Single story family homes (one level)
- Hercules is in need of more businesses not housing. I do not see much of the sit-down restaurants.
- Individual owned
- The city and its streets are already at capacity with a variety of housing options.
- But only for seniors, not grown adult kids living with them allowed.
- Next-gen Housing (more than one generation)
- None too crowded Multi-family
- None
- Too many homes and not enough businesses
- No more homes needed.
- How about some nice restaurants and retail starter-type homes, affordable for working people
- No more
- Affordable single-family homes and townhouses

**Figure 4: Ensure that children who grow up in Hercules can afford to live in Hercules
(Answered: 106, Skipped: 6)**



**Figure 5: Provide opportunities for people who work in Hercules to live in Hercules
(Answered: 105, Skipped: 7)**

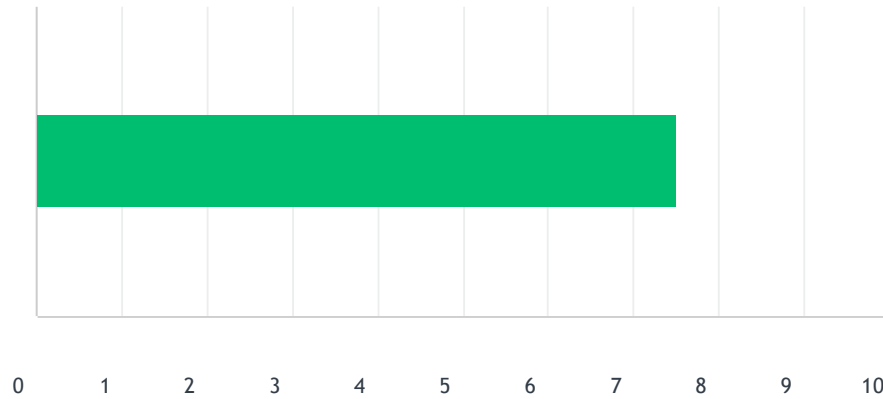


Figure 6: Provide more options for older residents to downsize and stay in the community. (Answered: 105, Skipped: 7)

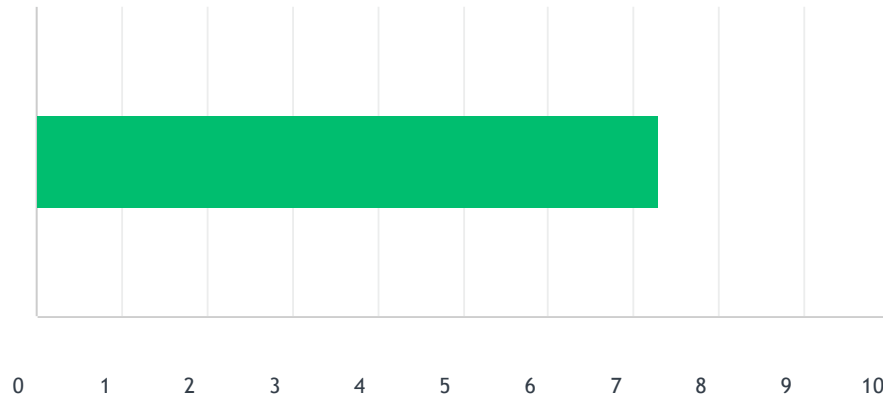


Figure 7: Streamline the process for new housing construction (Answered: 100, Skipped: 4)

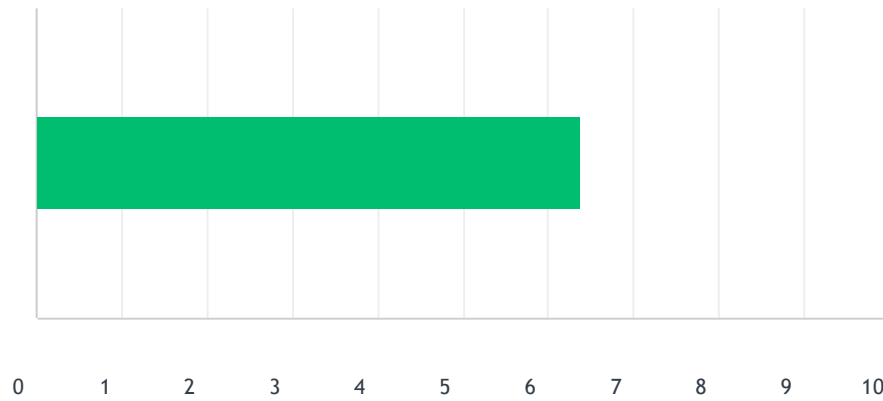


Figure 8: Establish housing for seniors, large families, veterans, and/or persons with disabilities. (Answered: 104, Skipped: 8)

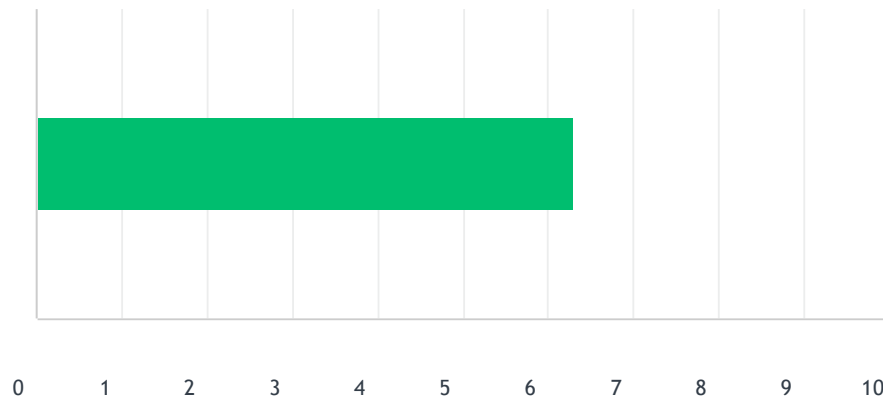


Figure 9: Provide shelters and transitional housing for homeless families and individuals, along with services that help move people into permanent housing. (Answered: 105, Skipped: 7)

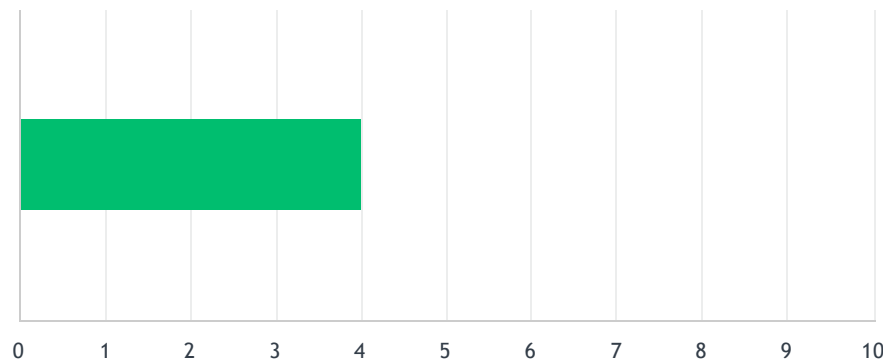


Figure 10: Support Programs to help homeowners at risk of mortgage default keep their homes. (Answered: 104, Skipped 8)

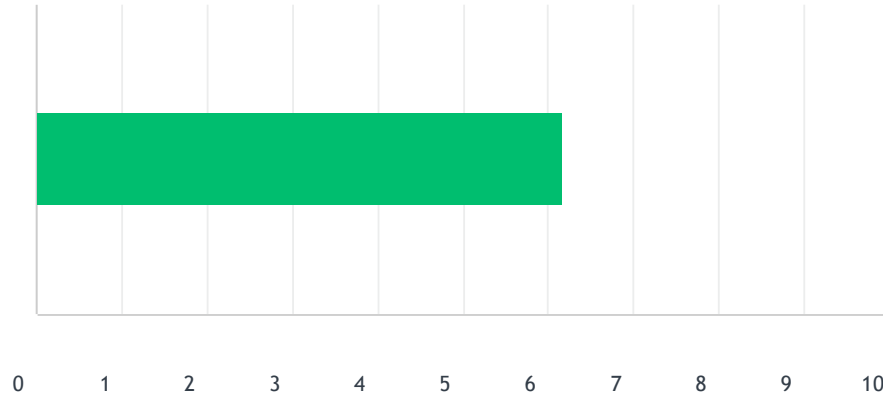


Figure 11: Establish housing near public transit (Answered: 104, Skipped: 8)

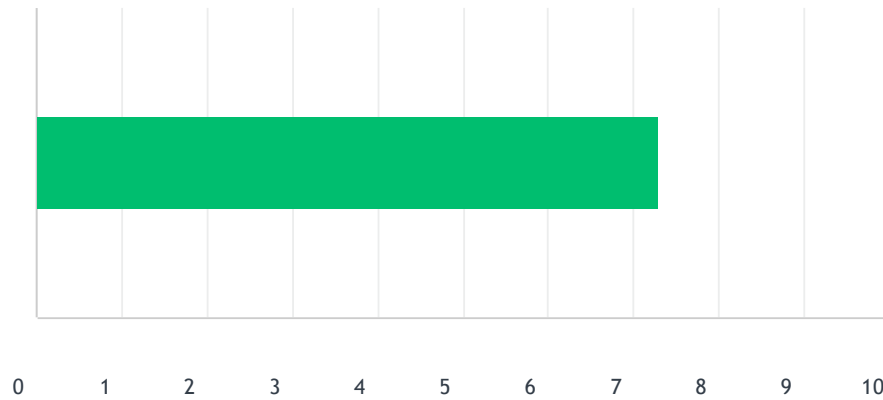


Figure 12: Address Fair Housing issues (e.g., discrimination, inadequate accommodations for people with disabilities, etc.)
(Answered: 100, Skipped: 12)

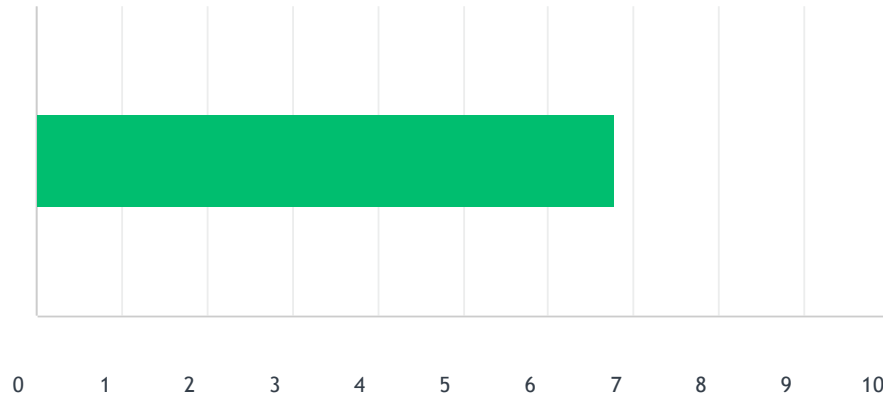


Figure 13: Environmental risks (E.g., wildfire, flood, etc.)
(Answered: 101, Skipped: 11)

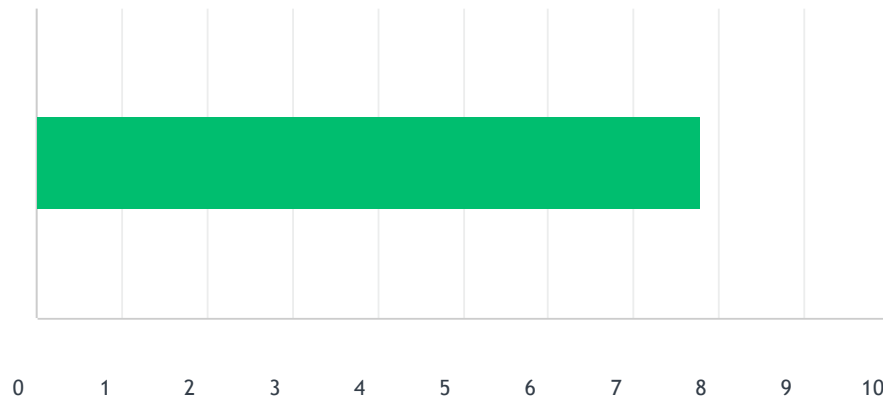


Figure 14: Potential traffic and congestion.
(Answered: 103, Skipped: 9)

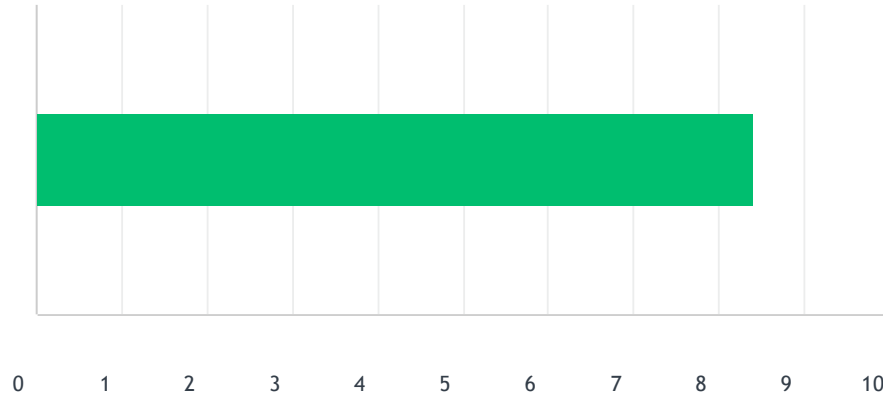


Figure 15: Protecting environmentally sensitive areas.
(Answered: 103, Skipped: 9)

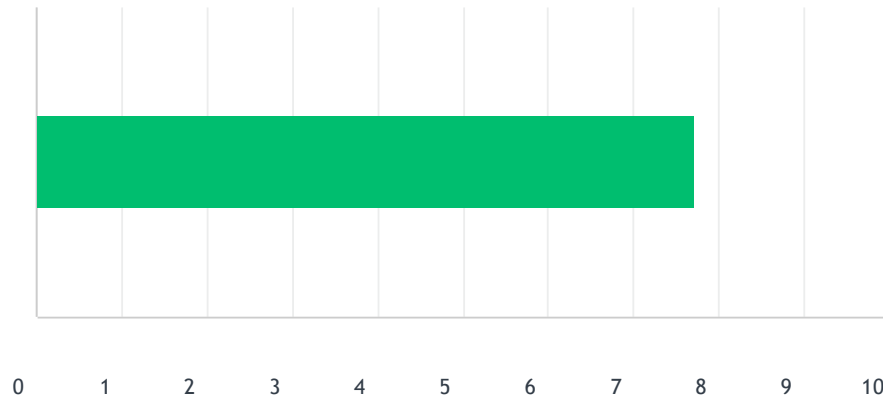


Figure 16: Preserving community character.
(Answered: 104, Skipped: 8)

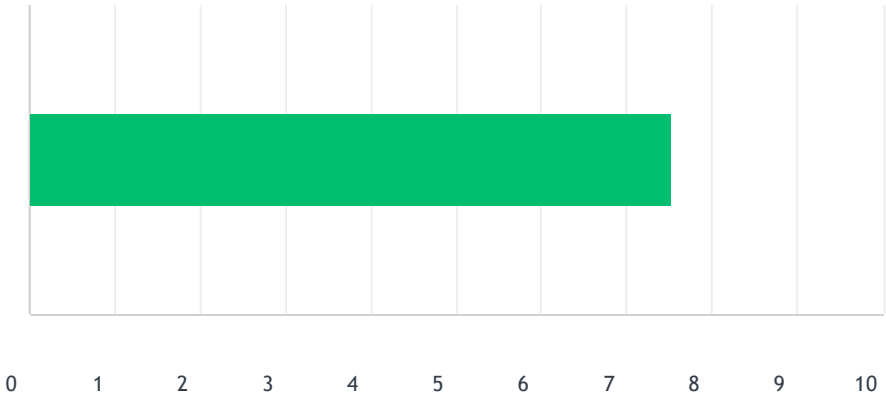


Figure 17: Any other comments or concerns related to the Housing Element? (Answered: 38, Skipped: 74)

Responses

- I know this is for housing but Hercules needs retail not more housing.
- Residents of Hercules should have priority. I lost my house 2011 here in Hercules for foreclosure banking fraud.
- I do feel bad but it's just a fact that dealing with certain element of the population you will have crime issues. It's not a race issue but money issue. The more sfh the better. Work towards benefiting seniors, disabled, and larger families. Working poor, ok but not "homeless". Unless we want to look like Richmond and Vallejo. There are plenty of cities that surround us that can offer those services.
- My concerns are police and fire services ability to proactively address growth and the anticipated traffic congestion brought on by this growth since many of our main arteries are single lane streets with one way into and out of communities. It sounds like the city is required to have a plan but may have flexibility for how much of the plan it implements.
- Public transportation needed to alleviate traffic on Highway 80 and San Pablo Avenue. Job opportunities for local population needed.
- Build
- There is not enough single one level houses for seniors, families with a disabled person and or in law capabilities (affordable)
- It's possible to preserve community character and the above priorities as well.
- Fix schools, fix roads, improve parks for the community before adding more people in Hercules.
- No more housing
- Hercules City is one of the best places to live. People are forced to relocate due to lack of affordable houses to buy and rent. Producing good results for our children who are with bright future. People selling houses and rentals to be governed by the city. Expensive homes cause crime rate, homelessness and traffic jam. Love Hercules City. Starting to see break inns at Lucky Store and car theft.
- Higher density housing near the waterfront at varying price points is needed. The housing being built there is just as expensive as renting a SF home in Hercules. Tenant protections resources are also needed. There are too many SF rental properties in the City and there is no oversight to ensure that the owners are being transparent and fair in how they lease them .

- More affordability. So many high school classmates of my year and prior years have to live and depend on family members due to such an imbalance. We can't afford the apartments in the area and have to continue living with family way into our 30's
- Fixing traffic congestion in main roadways
- Please no more building homes, Hercules is limited in and out of Hercules as it is way more challenging now with Safeway /gas station, we have major traffic issues that should be looked at, building more homes/ condos etc. would cause more traffic. Senior homes not so much .During the traffic commute San Pablo Ave is mainly congested with folks coming for Richmond and on trying to short cut from San Pablo Ave then onto the freeway.
- No more housing until more schools are opened & no homeless camps
- Hercules is too crowded. Stop building new houses
- Safety
- Concern about more blocks of massive apartment buildings turning the town into something people don't have an ownership stake in.
- We don't need any additional housing. It's already overpopulated. We need businesses and storefronts.
- The state should NOT in any way force cities to build housing. The state can only encourage cities to plan for housing. There is no one-size-fits-all all-housing solution for all the cities in California.
- We have enough high-end housing. More single-family homes. With more housing we also need more schools. Please keep that in mind when planning the development of new homes. Our schools are full where will we accommodate the children?
- Provide better, direct public transportation from the waterfront side of San Pablo directly to the shopping areas, library, AND schools! So, working parents can get their kids to/ from these areas without having their kids spend an hour or so and transfers for a 10-minute drive!
- Add affordable Day Care
- Having housing with more land
- Controlling noise pollution
- I LOVE living in Hercules! My adult children can't afford to live here. I couldn't afford to live here if I had to buy a home in today's market! We need more affordable (Really Affordable) housing and Section 8 homes. We do need to take care as we grow so that Hercules remains an Awesome and Diverse Beloved Community!
- N/A
- No

- I truly am grateful for the leaders of our City and staff that we have a safe and secure environment to live in harmony with all ethnic groups!
- Homes for people with disabilities should be encouraged, but Hercules needs businesses, and not many more new homes.
- No more dense housing
- Lower apartment rental costs, more equitable housing for young adults and young families, more affordable senior housing for those on a fixed income. Sustainable parks and open spaces
- Need services to support residents. Need proportionality between residents and services. Services means both city services and private sector — e.g. retail, restaurants, etc.
- It would be nice if the historic buildings by the Bay could be fixed up and used before they fall apart or burn down. They are part of what attracted me to Hercules 16 years ago.
- New construction should be drastically curtailed to reflect imminent water shortage.

Figure 18: How old are you?
(Answered: 102, Skipped: 10)

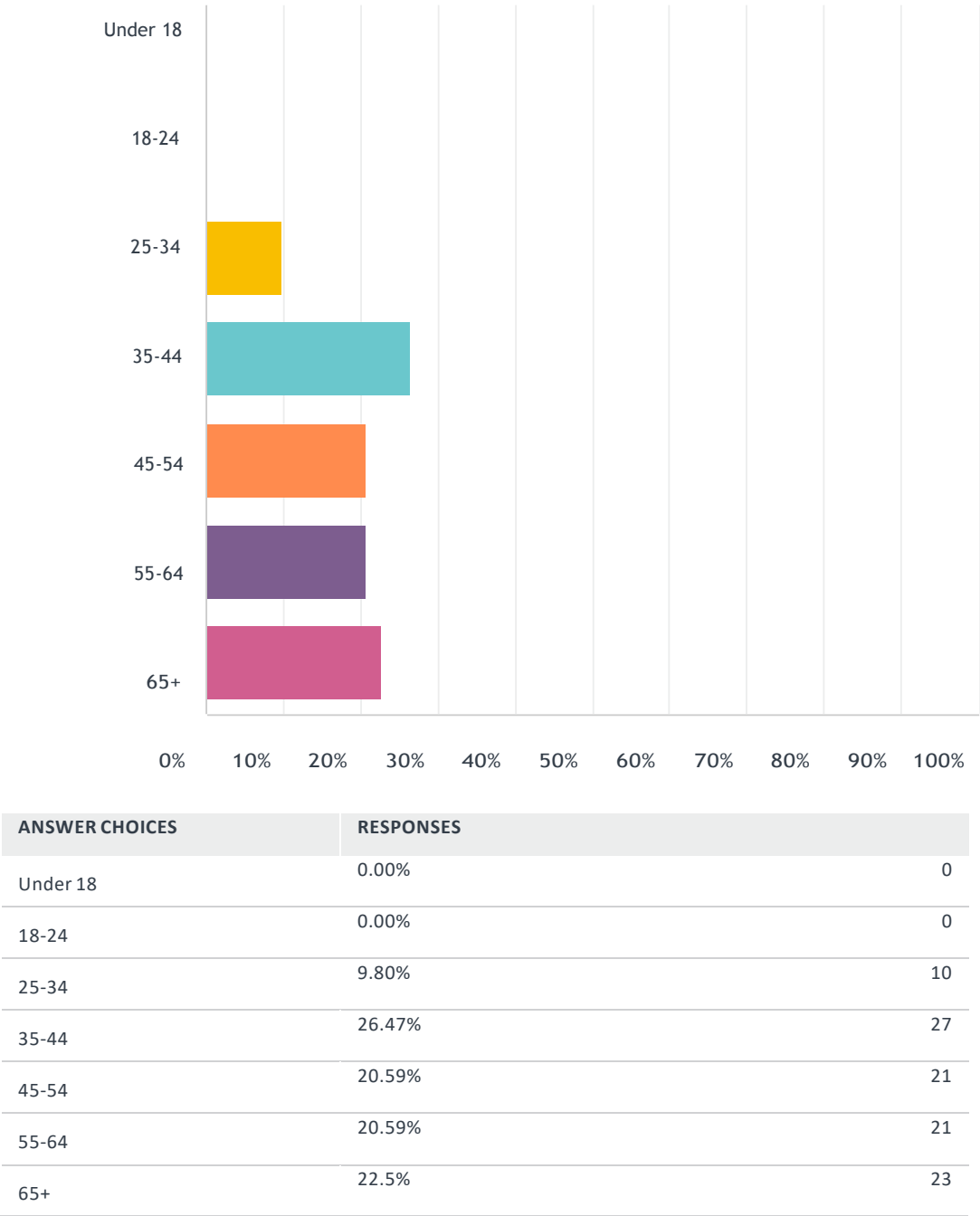
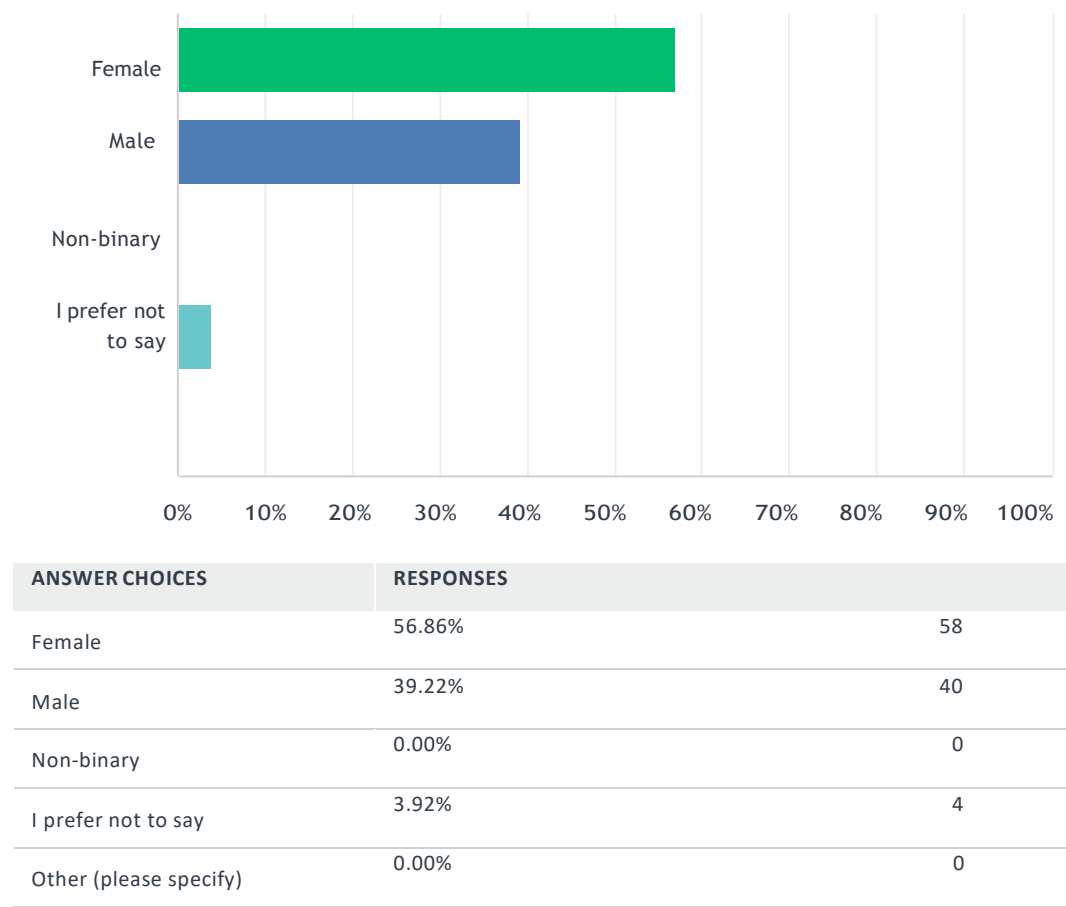
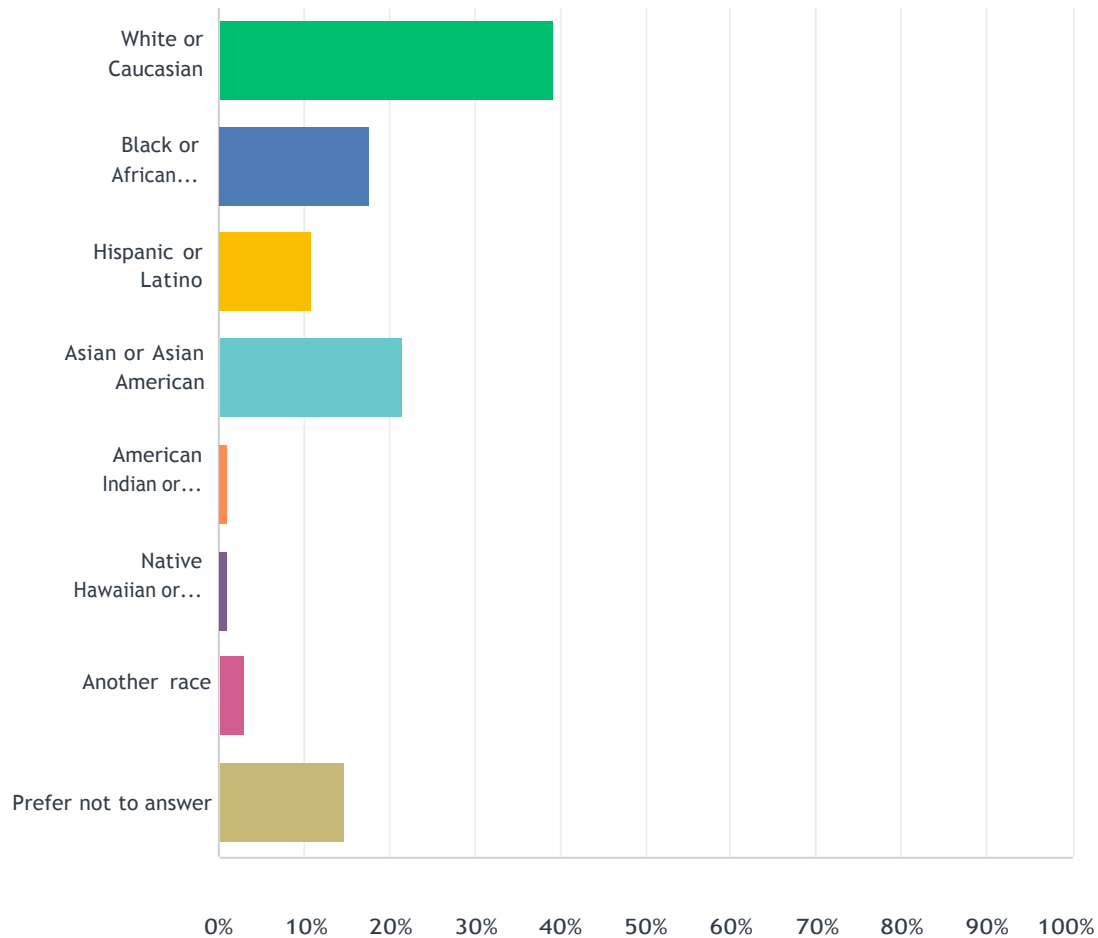


Figure 19: What is your gender?
(Answered: 103, Skipped: 10)

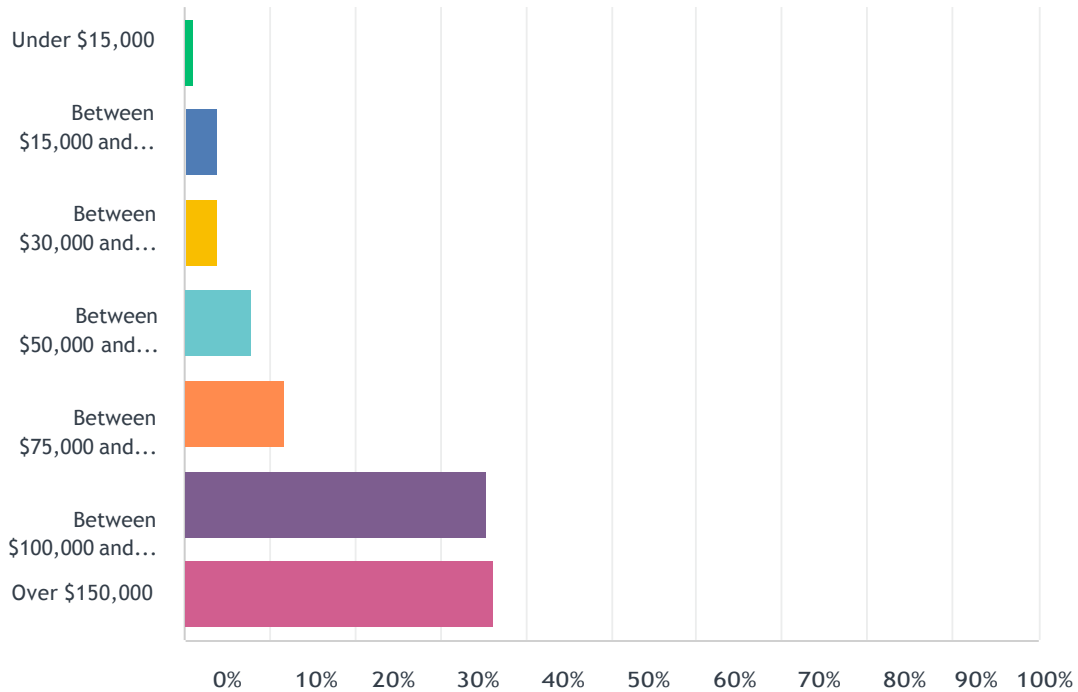


**Figure 20: How do you identify your face and ethnicity? Select all that apply.
(Answered: 102, Skipped: 10)**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White or Caucasian	39.22%	40
Black or African American	17.65%	18
Hispanic or Latino	10.78%	11
Asian or Asian American	21.57%	22
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.98%	1
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.98%	1
Another race	2.94%	3
Prefer not to answer	14.71%	15

**Figure 21: Which best describes your annual household income?
(Answered: 103, Skipped: 10)**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under \$15,000	0.98%	1
Between \$15,000 and \$29,999	3.92%	4
Between \$30,000 and \$49,999	3.92%	4
Between \$50,000 and \$74,999	7.84%	8
Between \$75,000 and \$99,999	11.76%	12
Between \$100,000 and \$150,000	35.29%	36
Over \$150,000	36.27%	37

**Figure 22: Thank you for your contributions to the Housing Element!
Please provide your email if you would like to be informed about future
outreach activities related to the Housing Element update.
(Answered, 32, Skipped: 80)**

- [REDACTED]@yahoo.com
- [REDACTED]@yahoo.com
- [REDACTED]@gmail.com
- [REDACTED]@gmail.com
- [REDACTED]@gmail.com
- [REDACTED]@gmail.com
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