

# City of Newcastle Online Survey Results Summary

To gather public feedback on the Newcastle community vision for the 2024 comprehensive plan update, an online 35-question survey was created using the Alchemer platform and was available to the public for four weeks from December 29, 2023 to January 29, 2024. The online survey was intended to gain community input on their vision for Newcastle's future with emphasis on factors that could affect revisions to the city's comprehensive plan. The survey comprised 35 questions. A total of 501 people participated, and 86% of respondents answered the survey in its entirety.

## Who Responded?

**Survey respondents are longtime residents, property owners, and earn a household income equal to or greater than the area median income.**

The vast majority of survey respondents answered they live in the City of Newcastle (95.4%) with nearly half (47.9%) stating that they own property in the city. 38.9% have lived in Newcastle for over 20 years, followed by more recent arrivals (1-5 years at 22.4%). Most who took the survey do not work in Newcastle (71%), indicating many who participated currently commute or are retired. Most (58%) answered they have no dependent children living in their household and 64.7% of respondents answered they are somewhere between 40-69 years of age (evenly split among 10-year increments). 12.6% answered they are over 70 and 11.7% answered they are between 30-39 years of age<sup>1</sup>. 35.8% of respondents earn more than \$200,000. 28.6% preferred not to answer and 12.9% earn between \$100,001 and \$150,000<sup>2</sup>

## Key Takeaways:

**There is interest in growing central places within the community.**

Survey respondents indicated an interest in establishing open, and walkable central nodes within Newcastle which may provide housing, recreation, and commercial opportunities. While most respondents answered they either agreed (25%) or strongly agreed (33%) with the vision of an inviting, vibrant, and walkable downtown, some who answered neutral or disagreed questioned its viability. Some mentioned Coal Creek Parkway as a barrier. Others questioned how Newcastle's topography may inhibit non-motorized transportation to the commercial

*"Do we really have a downtown?"*

*"I'm not sure how this would work but I'd love to see it happen."*

*—public comments*

---

<sup>1</sup> The median age in Newcastle is approximately 37.3 (ACS 2022 5-year estimates, Table DP05)

<sup>2</sup> The median household income in Newcastle is approximately \$151,007 (ACS 2022 5-year estimates, Table S1901)

center. Some expressed concerns about parking. Regardless, a desire for more restaurants and other “third spaces (Consistent with the footnote)”<sup>3</sup> is evident.

## More housing types may be acceptable but with conditions.

Respondents indicated tentative acceptance of introducing some additional housing types to existing neighborhoods and central nodes, but also noted a preference for types such as ADUs, cottages, and townhomes over multi-story apartments and condos. Further, respondents expressed reservations about the ability of existing services and infrastructure to accommodate growth and advocated that housing be developed concurrent with services needed to support it.

*“...you can have new buildings that just share space but still look like the traditional neighborhood house. Just with more doors.”*  
—public comment

75% of respondents answered that they think Newcastle offers enough variety of housing types. When asked where more variety of housing should be planned for, 57% answered within the central business district, while 35% thought housing variety should be dispersed throughout the city. Only 9% answered that more housing variety should be planned for only in existing neighborhoods. The types of housing that received the most support for integration into existing single-family neighborhoods beyond state requirements of ADUs and duplexes were cottage style developments (40.7%) and townhomes (39.1%). 40.5%, however, answered that they prefer only to allow what is required by the state.

Some of those who commented on the topic advocated for ensuring new development was not out of scale with existing neighborhoods, primarily concerning height. Concerns about maintaining the “bucolic” aesthetic of Newcastle were also expressed and one commenter suggested that cottages and townhomes may be most appropriately integrated towards the edges of existing single-family neighborhoods to better blend within those neighborhoods.

With regards to housing in the downtown (or what could become one), most respondents (57%) answered they would prefer to see mixed-use buildings around the QFC and Safeway shopping centers—consistent with results supporting an “inviting, vibrant, and walkable downtown,” in an earlier question. 12% answered they would prefer a mixed-use site without residential and commercial within the same building and 21% of respondents preferred little to no change to the existing commercial development pattern but with additional multi-family in the surrounds.

## Traffic and safety are of the greatest concern to respondents regarding growth.

Significant concern was expressed about the relationship between growth, safety, and mobility. While some respondents noted parking as an important amenity to them, a more common method to prepare for growth

---

<sup>3</sup> [\*The Great Good Place\* - \(Oldenburg, 1991\)](#) argues that gathering places other than work or home are essential to community life. *Third spaces* also provide [health benefits](#).

was stated as being investments into pedestrian facilities, primarily taking the form of multi-use trails that enable safe and comfortable access to natural areas. Traffic was cited as the largest concern for managing growth (32%), followed by public safety (26%). Environmental impacts (12%), loss of community character (11%), and demands on services (10%) were an even split among other respondents. 8.4% of respondents cited “other,” and many of those who commented felt that many of the choices provided were of equal concern. It is worth noting that “all of the above” was the last option provided and only 4 respondents chose it.

Consistent with previous engagement efforts, public safety arose as a key concern among those who commented. While some mentioned traffic and pedestrian safety concerns, many cited a perceived rise in crime and advocated for additional law enforcement personnel. Considering the support expressed by respondents for design and site design standards for new development, policies to encourage or require standards relating to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)<sup>4</sup> may also be worthy of consideration.

*“I am concerned with what I perceive as increasing crime....”*

*—public comment*

## Other Takeaways and Comments

Very strong support was expressed by survey respondents for parks, recreation, open space, and trails. Some of those who provided comments advocated for a dog park. Several others would like to see more transit opportunities. There was also some general concern expressed within the comments for further allowance of high-density housing.

*“Newcastle is desirable because of the trails, the nature, the trees, and the sense of a small-town community. It's beautiful. This needs to be preserved.”*

*—public comment*

*“..will have actively-engaged residents who have regular opportunities to volunteer, come together at community events, and participate in city government.”*

*—public comment*

*“Newcastle should remain a safe, and vibrant city with abundant open spaces.”*

*—public comment*

---

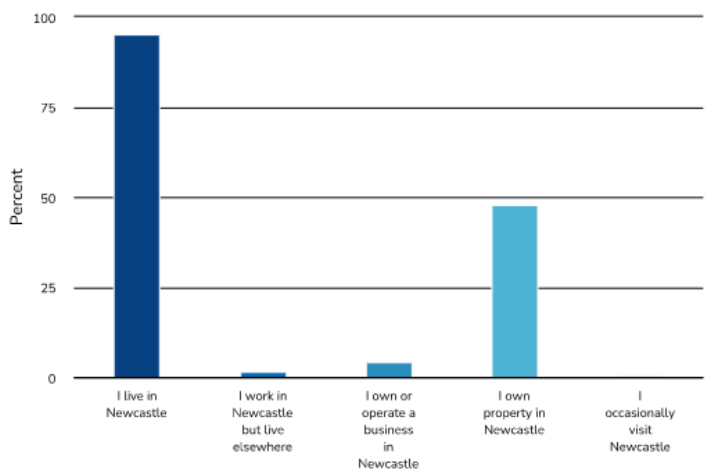
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cpted.net/>

# Detailed Summary

## Relationship to Newcastle

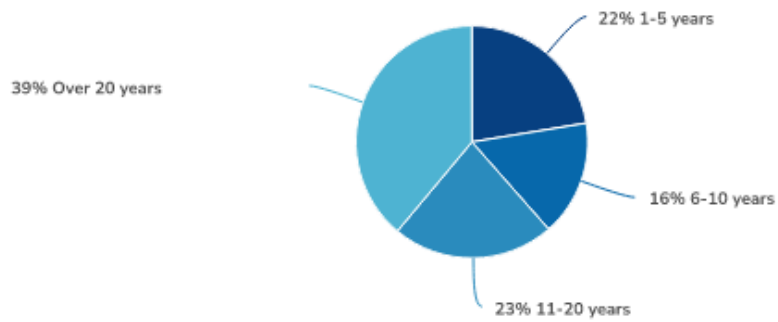
Seven questions were asked to determine the demographic information of the survey respondents. These questions asked for respondents’ age, ethnicity, and income, in addition to household size and connection to Newcastle. Nearly all survey respondents are Newcastle residents, about half own property in the city, and just over 4% of respondents are proprietors of a business within Newcastle. See the results below for specifics on the connection of respondents to Newcastle.

28. What best describes your relationship with Newcastle? (Please select all that apply)\*



Value	Percent
I live in Newcastle	95.4%
I work in Newcastle but live elsewhere	1.6%
I own or operate a business in Newcastle	4.4%
I own property in Newcastle	47.9%
I occasionally visit Newcastle	0.7%

Among the residents of Newcastle, a plurality of respondents noted that they have lived in Newcastle for over 20 years, whereas residents who have lived in the city for less than 5 years, between 6 and 10 years, and between 11 and 20 years were more evenly distributed.



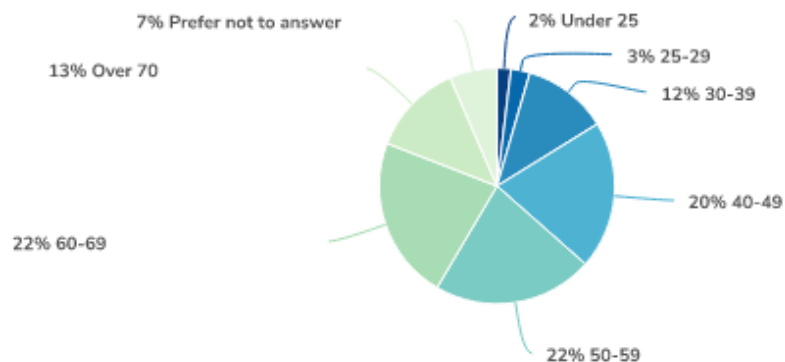
Value	Percent
1-5 years	22.4%
6-10 years	16.1%
11-20 years	22.6%
Over 20 years	38.9%

Finally, 29% of respondents reported living and working within Newcastle, while 71% are employed outside of Newcastle.

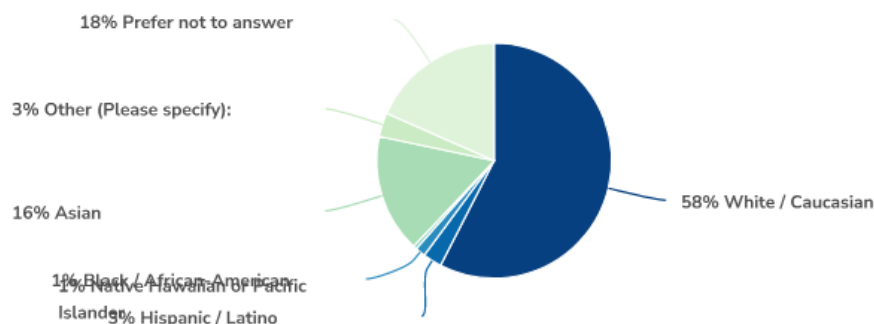
## Respondent Demographic Details

The following data obtained from the survey questionnaire demonstrate the demographic diversity of Newcastle residents.

32. What is your age range?

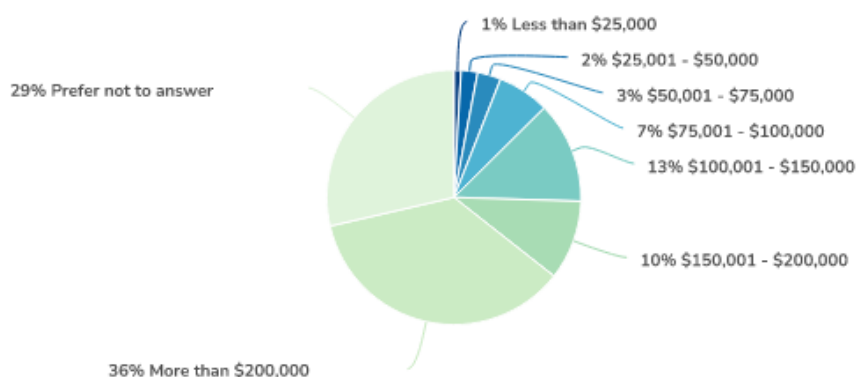


### 33. What is your ethnicity?



*Note: 1% of respondents identify as Black/African American, 1% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 1% as Hispanic/Latino.*

### 34. What is your household income?



## Survey Details

### Word Cloud Exercise

Respondents were asked to provide one or two adjectives that best describe what they like best about Newcastle in its current form as well as a second question asking what aspects of Newcastle they would like to see changed or improved. In the word cloud exercise, most common responses appear larger and bolder, indicating their shared importance among respondents, while less common responses appear smaller and fainter, demonstrating that these responses were less widely shared among respondents.

*"...what you like best about the community of Newcastle..."*

Among the responses of what respondents like the best about Newcastle today, the three largest words, and therefore most common, were "Small", "Safe", and "Quiet". Other notable responses include "Trails," "Town," and "Friendly."



*"If there was one thing you could change or improve within the city..."*

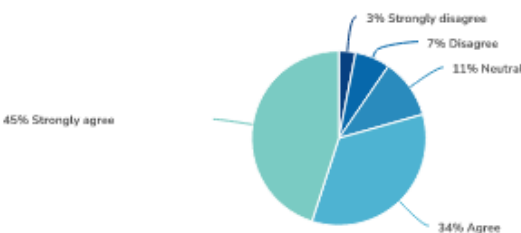
As for the responses of what about Newcastle respondents would like changed or improved, the largest and most frequently provided word by far was "Traffic." No other word came close to the frequency of "Traffic," but other notable words included "Downtown," "Creek," and "Coal."



# Community Vibrancy

## *“...will be a safe and resilient community.”*

The respondents were asked to what extent they agree with the following statement, “Newcastle will be a safe and resilient community.” The below chart demonstrates that safety is a shared priority of a majority of the Newcastle community. One respondent noted that safety should be characterized by “proactive investment in crime prevention and road safety” while another respondent noted they would appreciate “better communication with the community about public safety and how the city is moving forward towards safety and resiliency.” See below for the exact breakdown of response.

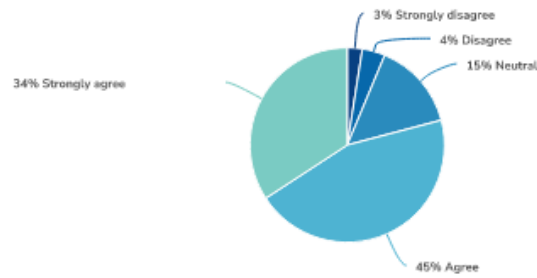


Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly disagree	3.1%	15
Disagree	6.5%	31
Neutral	11.0%	53
Agree	34.4%	165
Strongly agree	45.0%	216
Totals: 480		

## *“...will be a diverse, welcoming, and family-friendly community.”*

A strong majority of respondents also noted their desire for Newcastle to be diverse, welcoming, and family-friendly. One respondent added a nuanced perspective to this approach, stating, “[Newcastle] needs more resources for seniors and families not connected to the school system any longer.” This perspective seems to reflect the survey data that a majority of respondents don’t live with dependent children. One respondent noted that, “...diversity in the community is lacking...” and “...that is probably due to socio-economic disparity...”. See below for the breakdown of responses to the question.



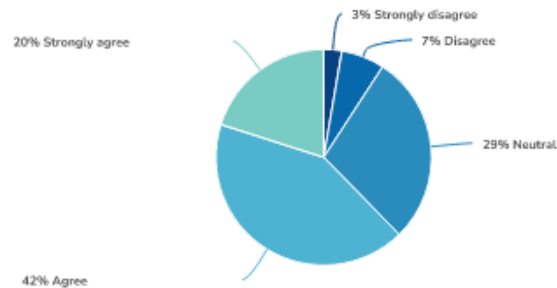


Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly disagree	2.5%	12
Disagree	3.8%	18
Neutral	14.6%	70
Agree	44.9%	215
Strongly agree	34.2%	164

Totals: 479

### *“...will have preserved its historical heritage.”*

While a majority of respondents indicated historic preservation as a value, 29% responded that they feel neutral on the topic. Many of the responses indicated that while historic preservation is appreciated, it is not a priority while other common responses indicated that respondents aren’t presently aware of Newcastle’s history.

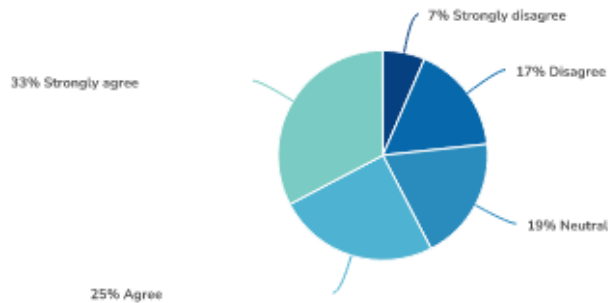


Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly disagree	2.7%	13
Disagree	6.5%	31
Neutral	28.5%	136
Agree	42.3%	202
Strongly agree	20.1%	96

Totals: 478

*“...will have cultivated an inviting, vibrant, and walkable downtown.”*

The responses to this question were fairly split, but a majority (58%) indicate an interest in growing a walkable town center. Many of the specific responses to this question focused on pedestrian access and comfort, with one respondent noting, “Must make infrastructure improvements for safe walking.” Many responses indicated confusion toward the question as Newcastle doesn’t presently have a center that resembles a traditional downtown, demonstrating that more will have to be done to craft a vision of “Downtown Newcastle.”

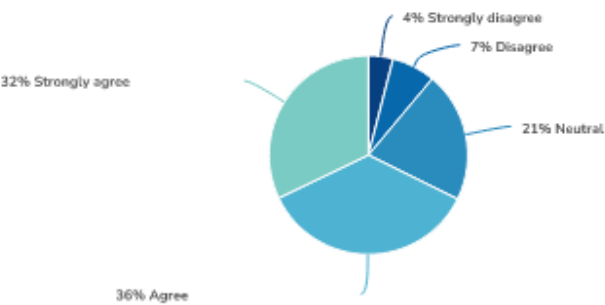


Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly disagree	6.5% <div><div></div></div>	31
Disagree	16.8% <div><div></div></div>	80
Neutral	19.1% <div><div></div></div>	91
Agree	24.9% <div><div></div></div>	119
Strongly agree	32.7% <div><div></div></div>	156
Totals: 477		

# Economic Development

*“...will have enabled locally owned businesses to successfully establish and thrive.”*

This question seems to have largely garnered support for helping small businesses in Newcastle succeed, with many respondents providing their own unique ideas on how this might be accomplished. One respondent called for more food trucks to operate in the city, others called for a greater diversity in retail and services, but some also indicated that whether a business is locally owned or not is not a priority. See below for the breakdown in preference.



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly disagree	4.0%	19
Disagree	7.1%	34
Neutral	21.2%	101
Agree	35.6%	170
Strongly agree	32.1%	153

Totals: 477

## In areas around the QFC and Safeway shopping centers, what type of development would you prefer to see?

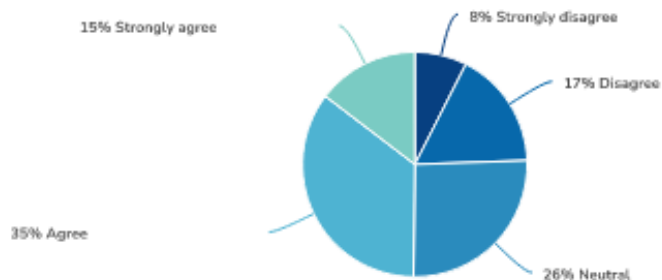
The majority of respondents to this question indicated an interest in seeing these nodes grow into mixed use centers with both housing and commercial opportunities, but roughly 20% indicated that they would prefer no change to these areas.

Value	Percent	Responses
Mixed use building (residential above ground floor businesses)	57.1%	253
Mixed use site (residential and commercial on site but not within the same building)	12.0%	53
Multifamily apartments and condominiums	1.1%	5
Townhouses	3.8%	17
I would prefer little to no change from the development pattern that exists today, with single-story commercial buildings for businesses and a variety of multifamily types of housing surrounding the commercial area.	21.2%	94
I am unsure	4.7%	21
Totals: 443		

## Housing

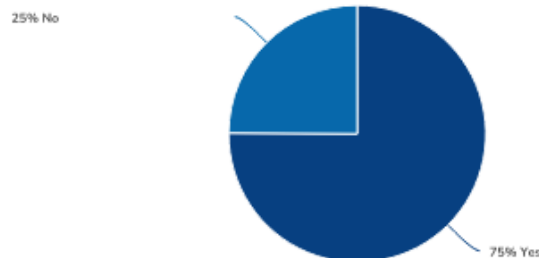
### "...will have a housing mix that serves a broad array of incomes and age gaps."

Just about half of respondents indicated agreement with the above statement, while a quarter of respondents were in disagreement with the statement. Many written? responses indicated a skepticism of publicly subsidized housing; instead respondents focused on solutions in which the city could prioritize actions which enable the private real estate market to provide housing for different segments of the socio-economic spectrum.



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly disagree	7.5%	36
Disagree	16.9%	81
Neutral	25.7%	123
Agree	35.1%	168
Strongly agree	14.6%	70
Totals: 478		

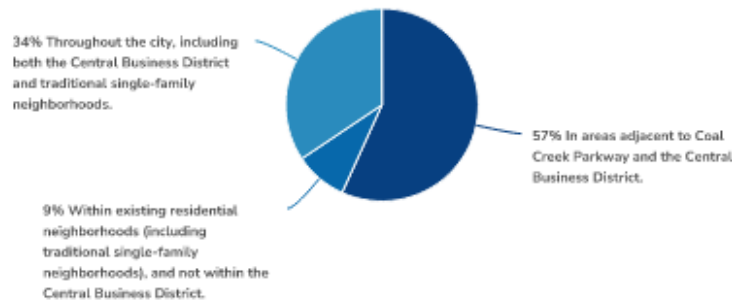
***“Do you think that Newcastle today offers enough variety of housing types?”***



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	75.1% <div><div></div></div>	334
No	24.9% <div><div></div></div>	111
Totals: 445		

***“Which of the following statements best describes your opinion of where more variety of housing types should be planned for?”***

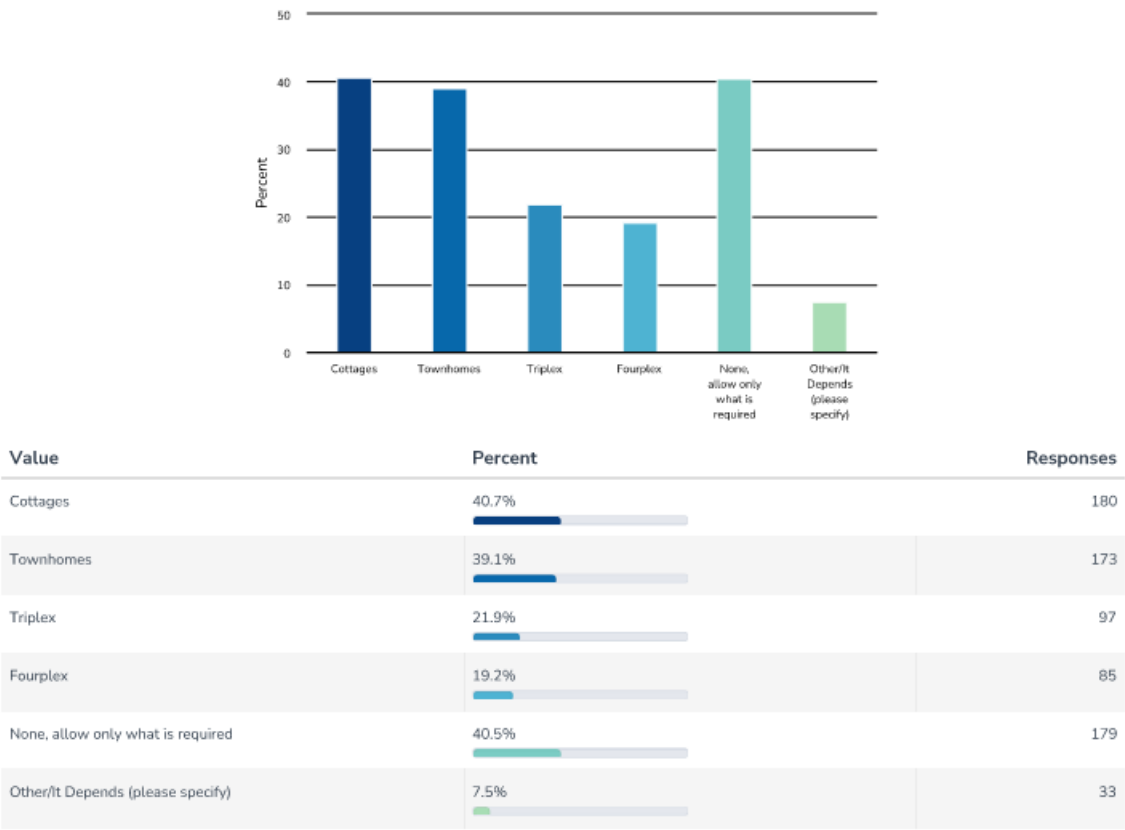
The majority of respondents stated that diverse housing types should be focused along Coal Creek Parkway and the Central Business District; however, 34% also noted that housing diversity would be appropriate throughout



Value	Percent	Responses
In areas adjacent to Coal Creek Parkway and the Central Business District.	56.8% <div><div></div></div>	251
Within existing residential neighborhoods (including traditional single-family neighborhoods), and not within the Central Business District.	8.8% <div><div></div></div>	39
Throughout the city, including both the Central Business District and traditional single-family neighborhoods.	34.4% <div><div></div></div>	152
Totals: 442		

the city. 9% stated that housing diversity should be focused within existing neighborhoods instead of the Central Business District.

*“Newcastle has the option of allowing other types of housing in single-family neighborhoods. Which other types of housing below (cottages, townhomes, triplexes, and fourplexes) do you think should be permitted?”*



While initial results indicate considerable acceptance of the different varieties of housing types, concern for denser housing types did exist and many respondents expressed conditions which should be accounted for when permitting non-single-family housing, such as lot size and dimensions, environmental site conditions, and proximity to services and infrastructure.

**Growth Management**

*“What is your biggest concern regarding growth in the City of Newcastle?”*

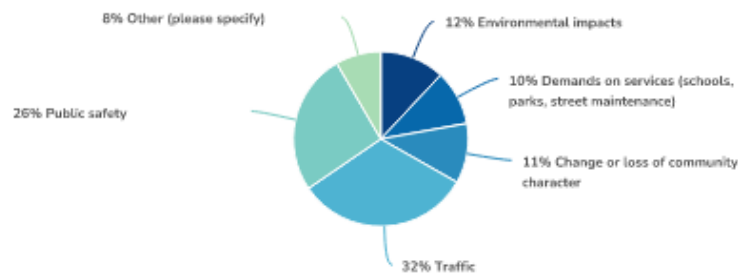
The greatest concern related to growth was traffic, with 32% of respondents indicating it as their greatest concern over others, but 26% also responded with public safety being their greatest concern.

*“What measures can the city take to better manage growth?”*

When asked how the city can manage growth and assuage concerns related to it, just over half of respondents noted that attracting businesses to the Central Business District would be good approach to growth management. Likewise, about half of respondents also noted that intelligent site design and development

standards should be utilized to manage growth. It should also be noted that measures such as improved transit service, and more recreational opportunities also received notable support. While these various measures received considerable support, when asked to elaborate, many respondents also expressed skepticism for growth altogether, stating that it should be kept to a minimum. While reluctance to accommodate growth was not a majority held opinion, it does demonstrate that a number of respondents wish to see growth managed in such a way that it does not compromise what drew many community members to Newcastle in the first place. See below for a breakdown of respondent concerns toward growth.

26. What is your biggest concern regarding growth in the City of Newcastle? (Please choose only one)\*



Value	Percent	Responses
Environmental impacts	12.0%	53
Demands on services (schools, parks, street maintenance)	10.2%	45
Change or loss of community character	11.1%	49
Traffic	32.3%	143
Public safety	26.2%	116
Other (please specify)	8.4%	37

Totals: 443