

Community Survey Results

Strategic Planning

December 2025



Overview

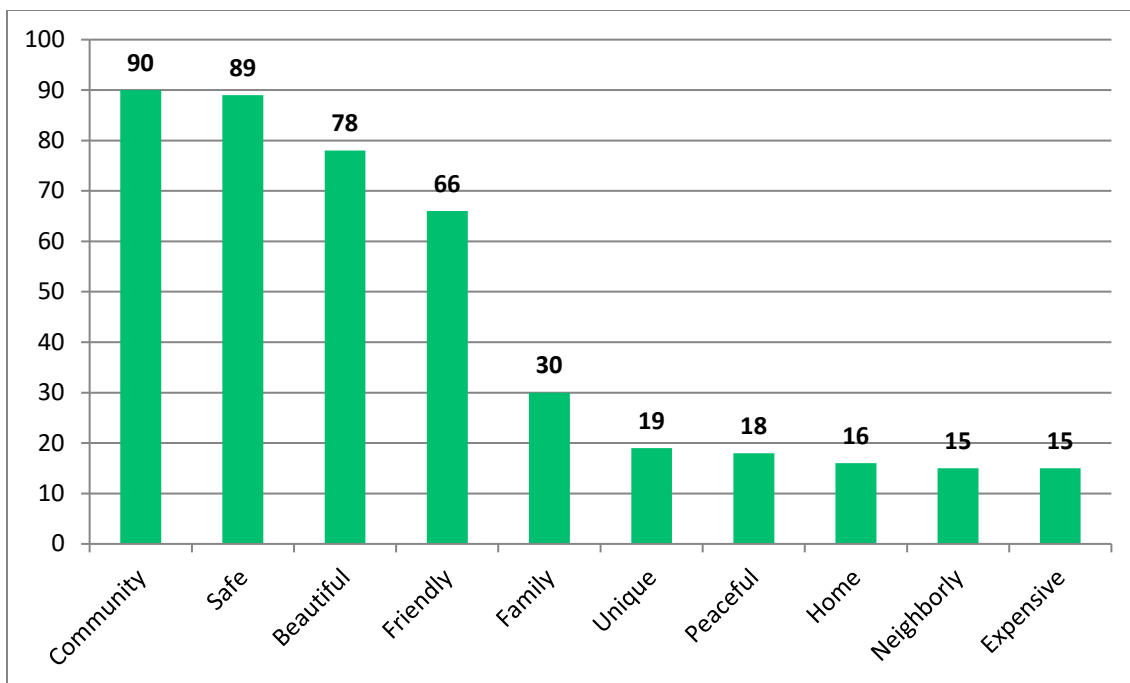
In November and December 2025, the Village of Maple Bluff conducted a community survey to gather input related to the Village's pending strategic plan. The survey was primarily conducted using Survey Monkey—an internet survey tool. Residents also had the option to complete a hard copy survey. The Village used various approaches on different occasions to direct residents to the survey.

The survey elicited 359 responses, which represents about 34% of Maple Bluff's adult population (there were no respondents under 18 years old). This is an excellent response percentage for surveys of this type. Basic demographics of survey respondents compared to Maple Bluff's adult population as a whole are provided later in this report. Not every respondent answered every question.

Substantive Survey Results

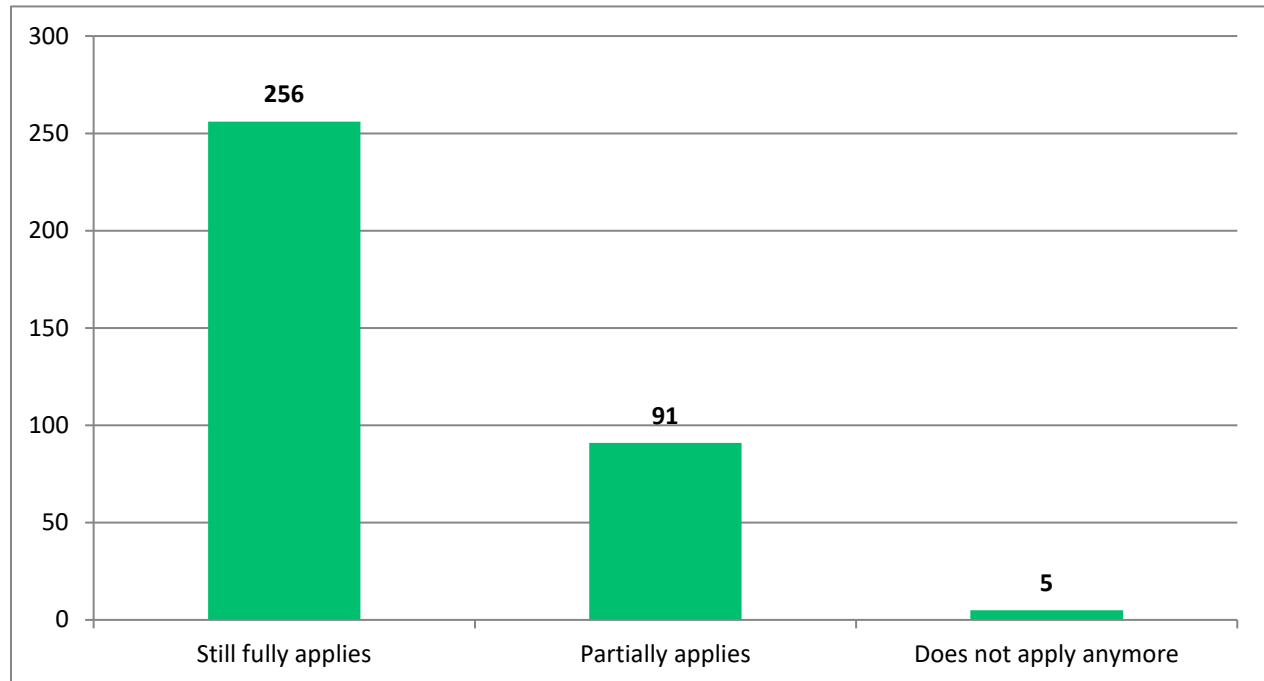
Question 1: What one, two, or three words would you use to describe the Village of Maple Bluff today?

Responses to this open-ended question were analyzed using ChatGPT. The following chart shows the ten words respondents used most frequently to describe the Village today:



Other words included in 10 to 14 responses were: neighborhood, quiet, pretty, walkable, comfortable, active, nice, inclusive, welcoming, beautifully maintained, small, and close-knit.

Question 2: The Village’s “vision” is the aspirational future state the Village is striving to create. In 2003, the Village Board approved the following vision statement: “The Village of Maple Bluff will continue to maintain its identity as a small, attractive, pedestrian-friendly lakeside residential community. Over the next 20 years, the Village will enhance its character and sense of place, which is defined by its unique neighborhoods, geography, extensive greenspace and recreational opportunities, corridors, Village edges, and proximity to Madison.” To what extent do you think this vision still applies going forward?



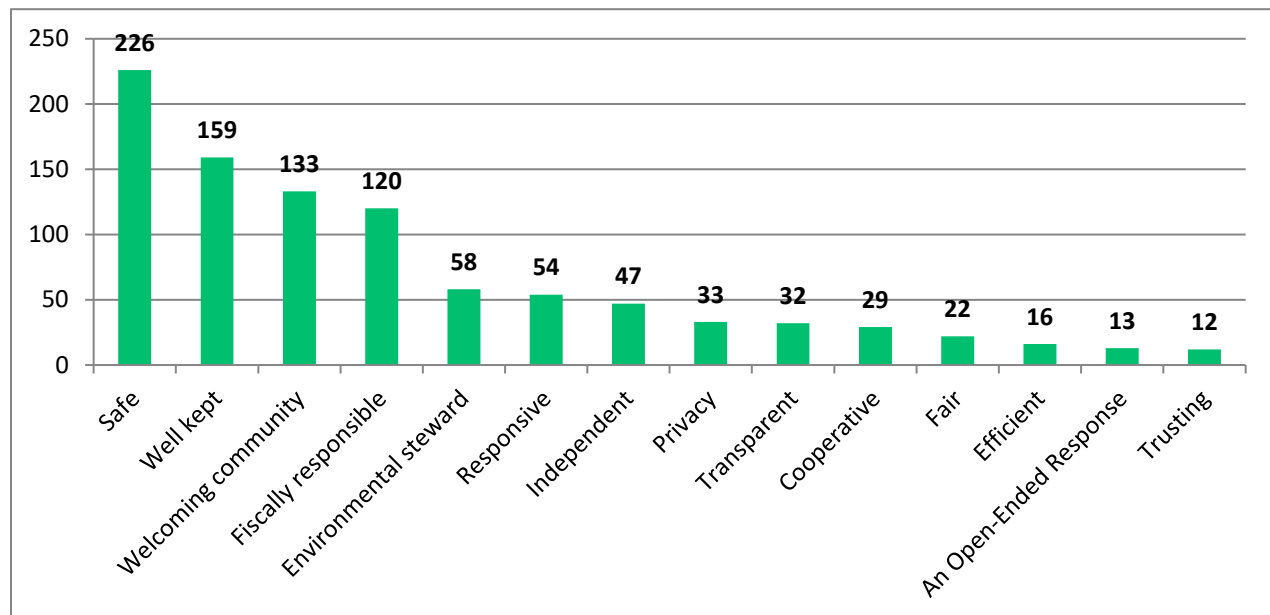
Therefore, nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated that the Village vision statement crafted more than two decades ago “still fully applies.”

Question 3: What would you change in the 2003 vision statement to better reflect your future vision for Maple Bluff?

This question was asked to those 96 persons in Question 2 who responded that the 2003 Village vision either “partially applies” or “does not apply anymore.” A ChatGPT analysis of the 77 responses to question 3 suggested the following desired areas of stronger emphasis:

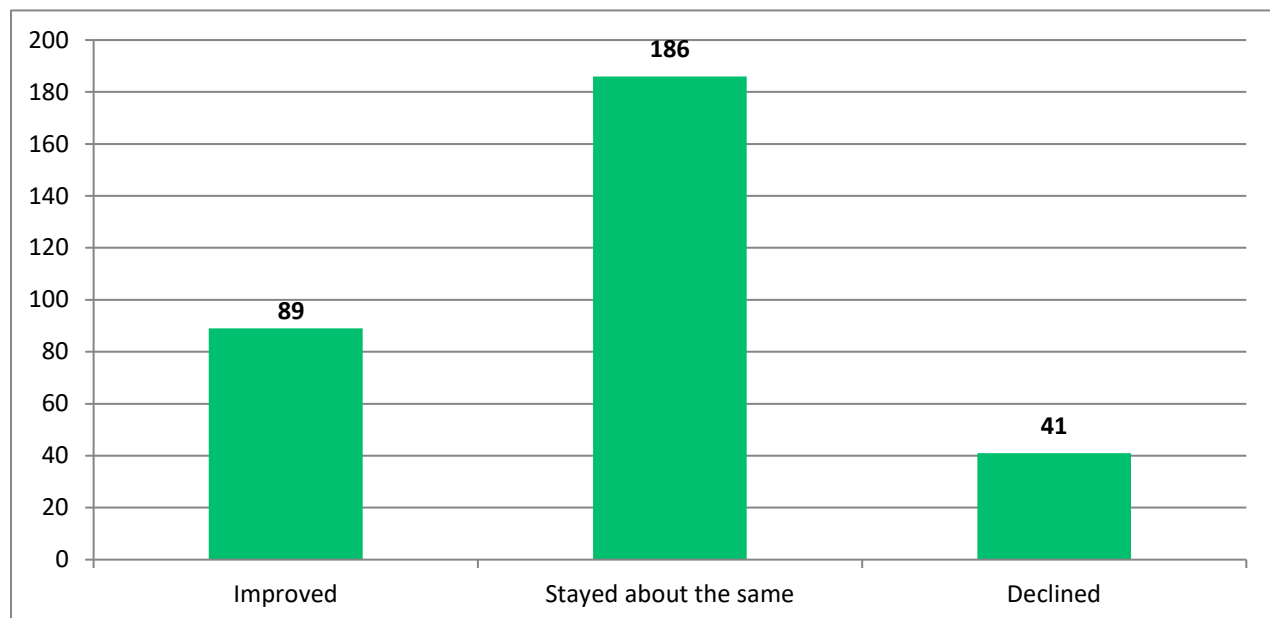
- Safety and Security – Resident safety, traffic management, and protection from changes in nearby Madison neighborhoods.
- Inclusivity and Community Engagement – Maple Bluff should be welcoming to all cultures, races, genders, and ages, fostering a tight-knit, socially connected community that also engages with the larger Madison area.
- Preservation of Character and Environment – Historic charm, green spaces, lake access, and environmental stewardship.
- Walkability, Accessibility, and Infrastructure – Pedestrian- and bike-friendliness, safe streets, sidewalks, and recreational access—addressing perceived current deficiencies in mobility and connectivity.
- Clearer and Measurable Vision – More concrete, actionable language that reflects practical priorities like high-quality public services, support for families and seniors, and active involvement in community and regional issues.

Question 4: “Community Values” are core principles that guide the Village’s conduct, decisions, and expectations. Thinking about Maple Bluff’s future, please check up to THREE community values from among the choices below that are most important to you.



The words “safe”, “well kept”, “welcoming community”, and “fiscally responsible” formed a clear top tier of responses to Question 4.

Question 5: Over the past five years (or since you began living in Maple Bluff), has your overall experience living in the Village...



Most respondents suggested that their overall experience in the Village has “stayed about the same.” Other respondents were more than twice as likely to suggest that their experience has “improved” rather than “declined.”

Question 6: Briefly explain the reason for your answer to the last question please.

255 respondents chose to elaborate in their response to Question 5 via this open-ended question. For those who responded that that experience has “improved”, the following reasons were most commonly given per a ChatGPT analysis:

- Stronger sense of community and neighbor connections – Knowing more neighbors, feeling welcomed, and growing community spirit supported by events and the influx of young families.
- Improved parks, recreation, and programming – Upgraded parks and playgrounds, expanded youth and adult activities, and vibrant community events.
- High-quality Village services and staff – Responsive public works, well-maintained infrastructure, reliable police and fire services, and strong staff continuity.
- Increased safety and security – Visible police presence, traffic calming efforts, and the return of the Village ambulance.
- Enhanced beauty and upkeep of the Village – Attractive properties, reinvestment in homes, tree planting, and overall care of public spaces.

For those who responded that that experience has “stayed about the same”, the following reasons were most commonly given per a ChatGPT analysis:

- Stable, high-quality living experience – Safe, desirable, and family-friendly, with long-term satisfaction and continuity over decades.
- Strong public services – Streets, parks, trash/recycling, and other municipal services are well maintained and reliable, though some noted rising costs as a concern.
- Community connections – Neighborliness, family activities, and village traditions are valued, though volunteerism among younger residents is perceived as declining.
- Affordability concerns – Rising property taxes and housing costs worry residents about keeping the village accessible to young families and long-term residents.
- Safety and governance – Most feel safe, but some cite concerns about crime, policing, nearby City development decisions, and mixed perceptions of village leadership.

For those who responded that that experience has “declined”, the following reasons were most commonly given per a ChatGPT analysis:

- Rising costs – Sharp increases in property taxes and housing prices, worries about financial management and sustainability of village services.
- Decline in maintenance and infrastructure – Overgrown green spaces, delayed leaf/yard pickup, and aging roads, lighting, and public facilities.
- Safety and policing issues – Different reasons, including feelings of decreasing safety due to crime in surrounding areas, aggressive policing, surveillance, and a less welcoming community atmosphere.
- Governance and transparency concerns – Frustration with the Village Board, Building Board, and administrative staff including perceived inconsistent enforcement, lack of responsiveness, and overly centralized decision-making.
- Decline in neighborhood character – Shifts in demographics of the surrounding area, reduced volunteerism, over-signage, jet noise, and declining social cohesion have contributed to a less connected and welcoming environment.

Question 7: Please complete the following statement: As I look ahead to the next few years, I wish Maple Bluff would...

The following is a ChatGPT grouping of the 284 responses to this question, with actual responses that help form and provide detail for each group:

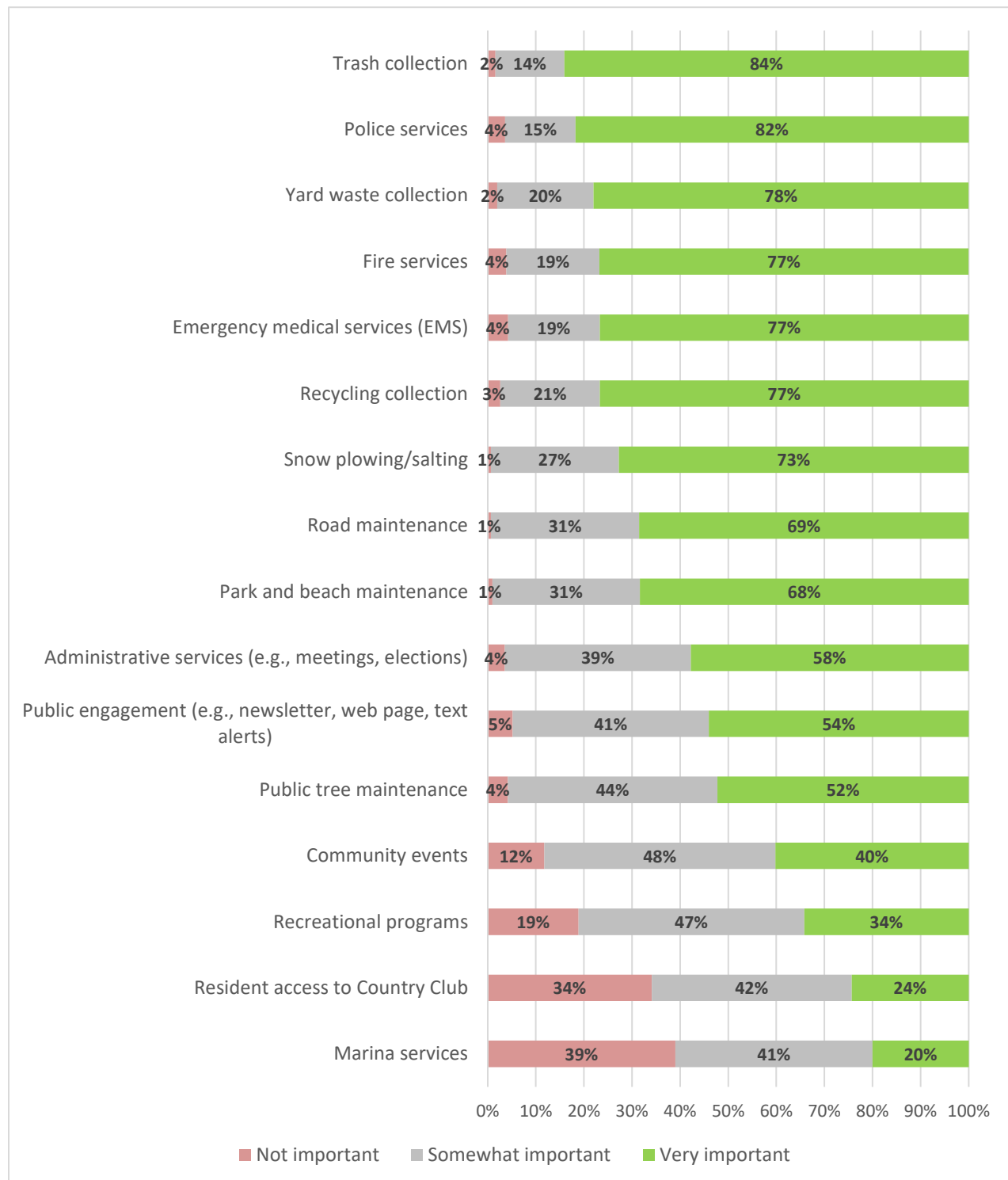
- Safety & Security – “...focus on safety.” “...control speeding.” “...increase security.” “...protect children and families.” “...prepare for traffic from nearby developments.” “...[install] gates or traffic measures.”
- Taxes & Fiscal Responsibility – “...lower taxes.” “...be fiscally responsible.” “...reduce property taxes.” “...maintain services without raising taxes.” “...stop excessive spending.”
- Community Character & Independence – “...remain independent from Madison.” “...maintain identity and privacy.” “...preserve single-family character.” “...resist annexation or outside influence.”
- Infrastructure & Environment – “...repave roads.” “...bury power lines.” “...add sidewalks.” “...maintain green space.” “...enhance community spaces.” “...improve parks and marina.” “...plant more trees.”
- Community Engagement & Amenities – “...continue events and activities for kids and adults.” “...expand recreation opportunities,” “...[provide] more programs for seniors.” “...foster neighborly connections.” “...build amenities like ice rinks, splashpads, and concert parks.”

Question 8: If you could change anything about Maple Bluff, what would you change?

The following is a ChatGPT grouping of the 268 responses to this question, with actual responses that help form and provide detail for each group:

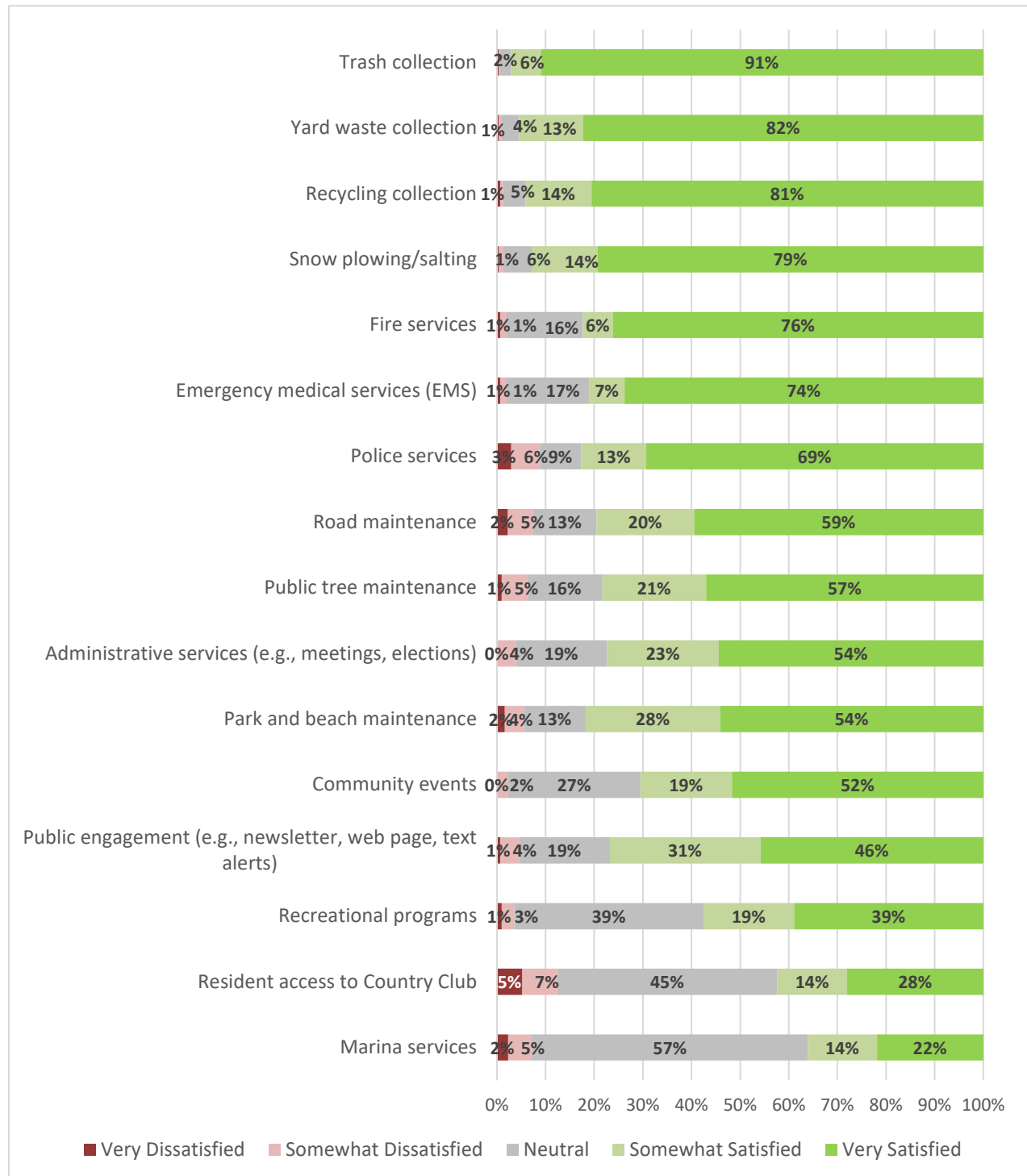
- Taxes & Affordability – “Make it more affordable.” “Lower the taxes.” “Reduce home prices for entry level homes.” “Increase its business tax base.”
- Schools & Education – “I would change the school situation in Maple Bluff.” “Public schools.” “Wish we still had a school.”
- Security & Safety – “Reduce speed of the traffic.” “Hire more police.” “Control access to the Bluff.” “Make it a gated community.”
- Walkability – “Make it more walkable and bike friendly.” “Slower speed limits.” “Better street lighting on streets without sidewalks.” “Add sidewalks in the Upper Bluff.”
- Community & Inclusivity – “More diversity in the community.” “Make it more welcoming to our City of Madison neighbors.” “Foster more connections between the village, families, and our local schools.” “More transparency and community involvement.”
- Parks & Green Spaces – “Invest in a landscaping service or team.” “More natural areas.” “Preserve green space, parks.”
- Environment & Wildlife – “Ban the use of pesticides,” “Less fertilizers,” “Encourage residents to tend to their yards in less invasive ways.”
- Marina & Waterfront – “Expand the marina...for residents only.” “Freshen up the boat storage area.” “Shore redevelopment at the marina.”
- Traditions & Culture – “Bring back old traditions and events (garage sale).” “Enhance the character of our lakeside community.” “Preserve historic structures.”
- Housing – “Not support multiple family housing.” “The trend toward McMansions.”

Question 9: Please indicate the IMPORTANCE TO YOU of each of the following Village services, by selecting one circle in each row [representing “not important”, “somewhat important”, or “very important”]?

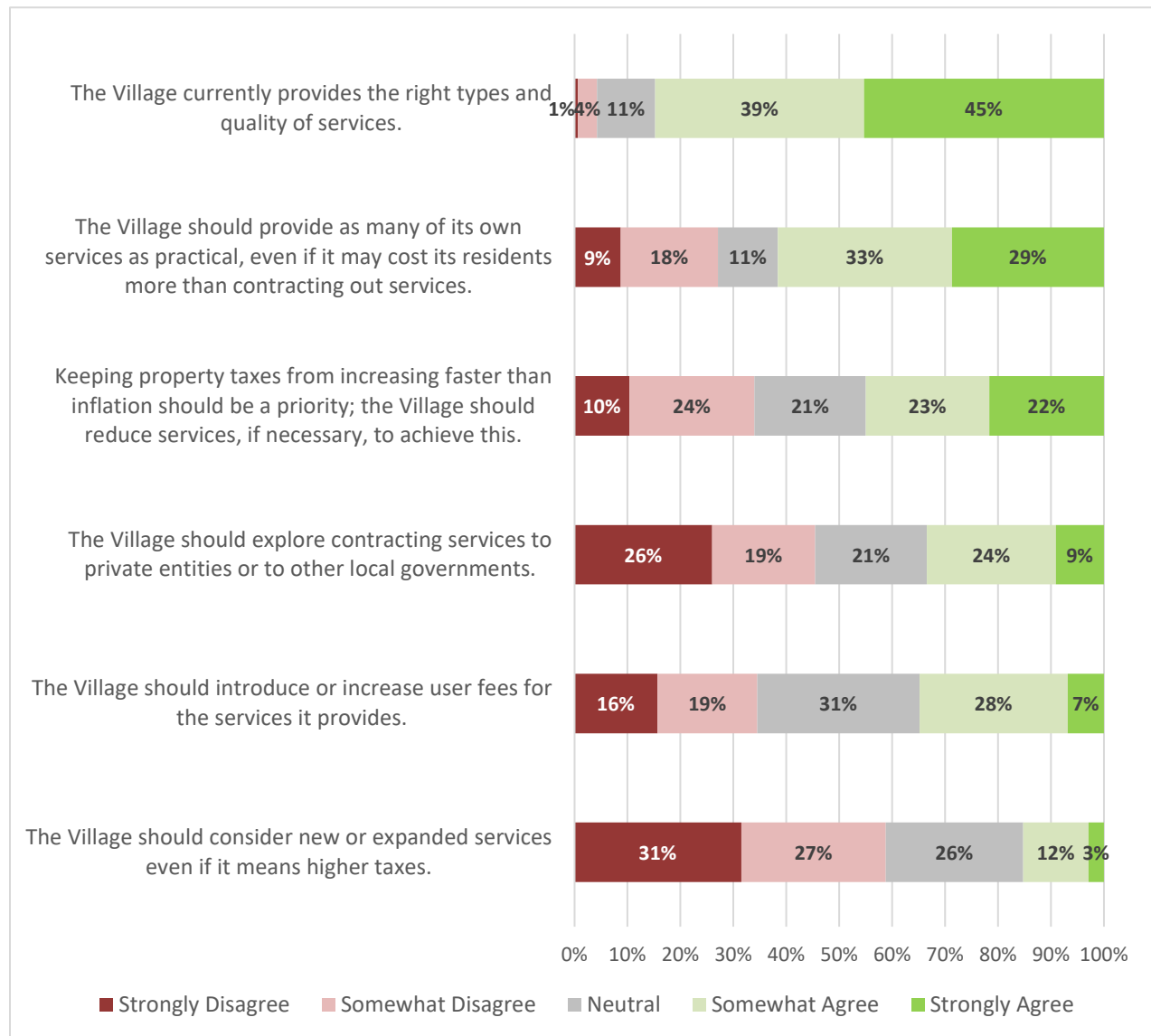


As reported below, older adult survey respondents were somewhat overrepresented compared to the general population. Respondents under 50 years old were more likely than all respondents to consider community events (59%) and recreational programs (55%) “very important”, and less likely to consider trash, yard waste, and recycling collection; fire and EMS services; and administrative and public engagement services “very important.”

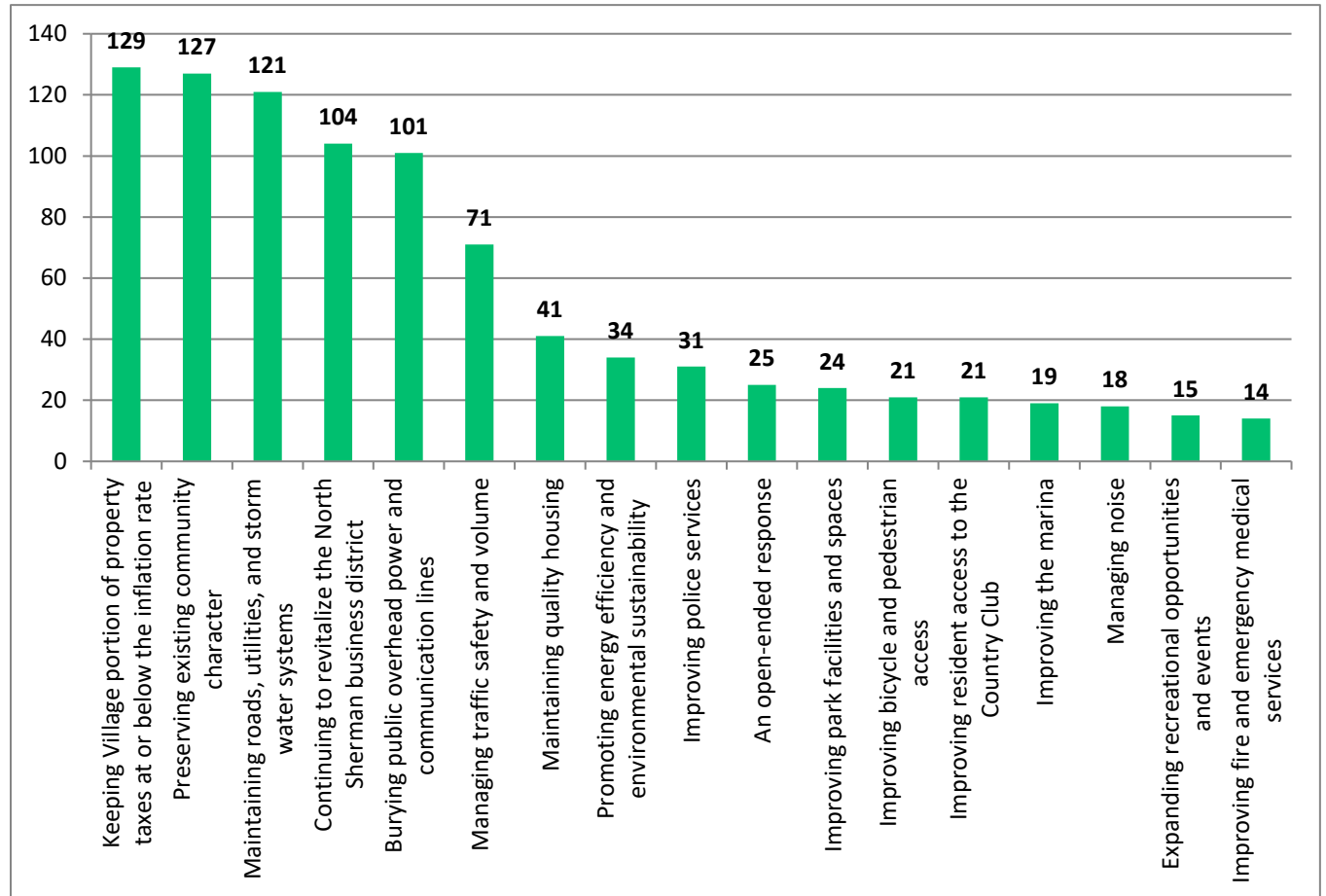
Question 10: Please indicate your LEVEL OF SATISFACTION with how the Village is delivering these same services today, by selecting one circle in each row [representing either “very dissatisfied”, “somewhat dissatisfied”, “neutral”, “somewhat satisfied”, or “very satisfied”].



Question 11: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding future municipal service delivery and expenses. Check the appropriate circle after each statement [representing “strongly disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, “neutral”, “somewhat agree”, or “strongly agree”].

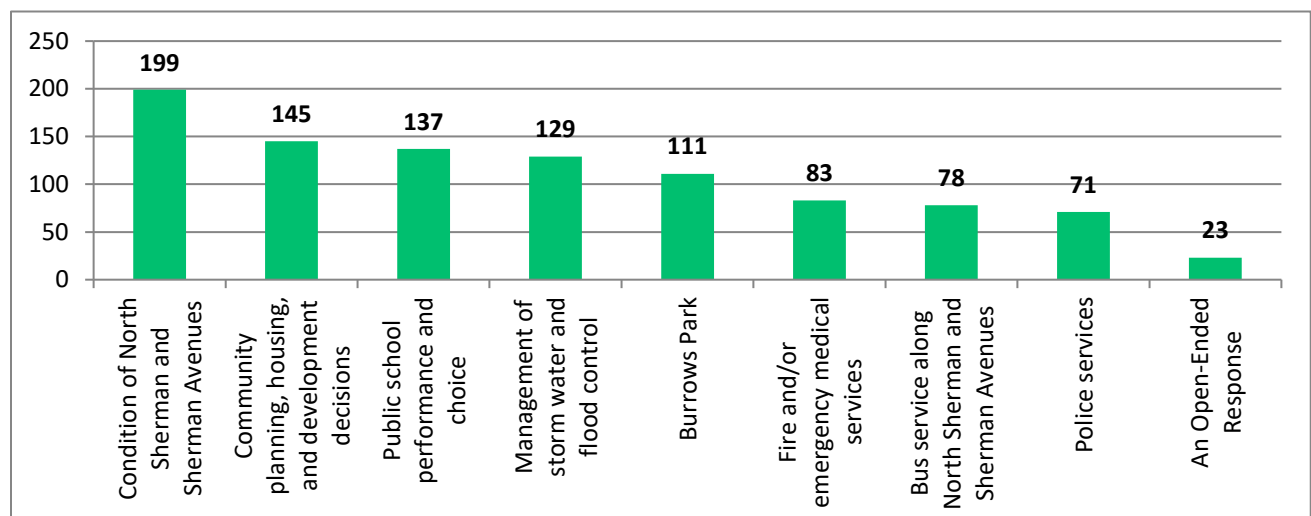


Question 12: From the choices below, what do you feel are the UP TO THREE most important things for Maple Bluff to address in the future?



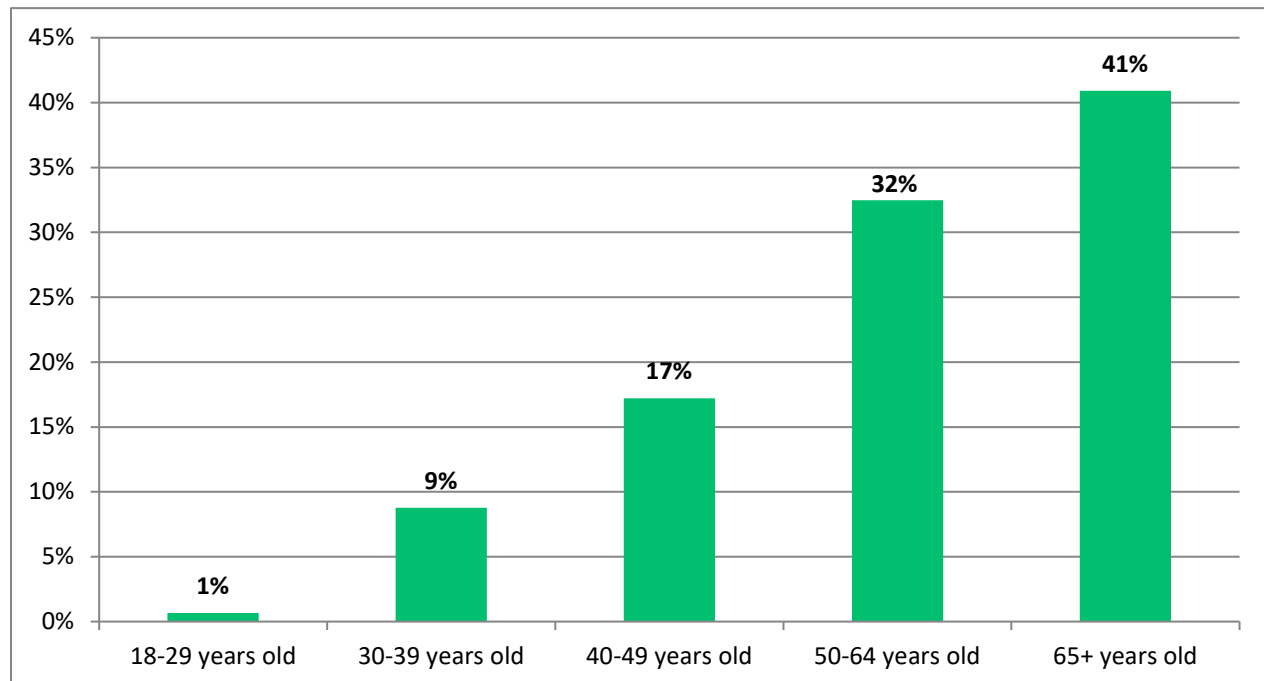
Of the 25 people who provided an open-ended response to question 12, interests generally focused on increased public safety and policing measures; improving local government efficiency, operations, and accountability; and enhancing the natural environment.

Question 13: On which of the following issues do you think the Village should explore collaboration with the City of Madison or the Madison Metropolitan School District? Check any and all that apply.



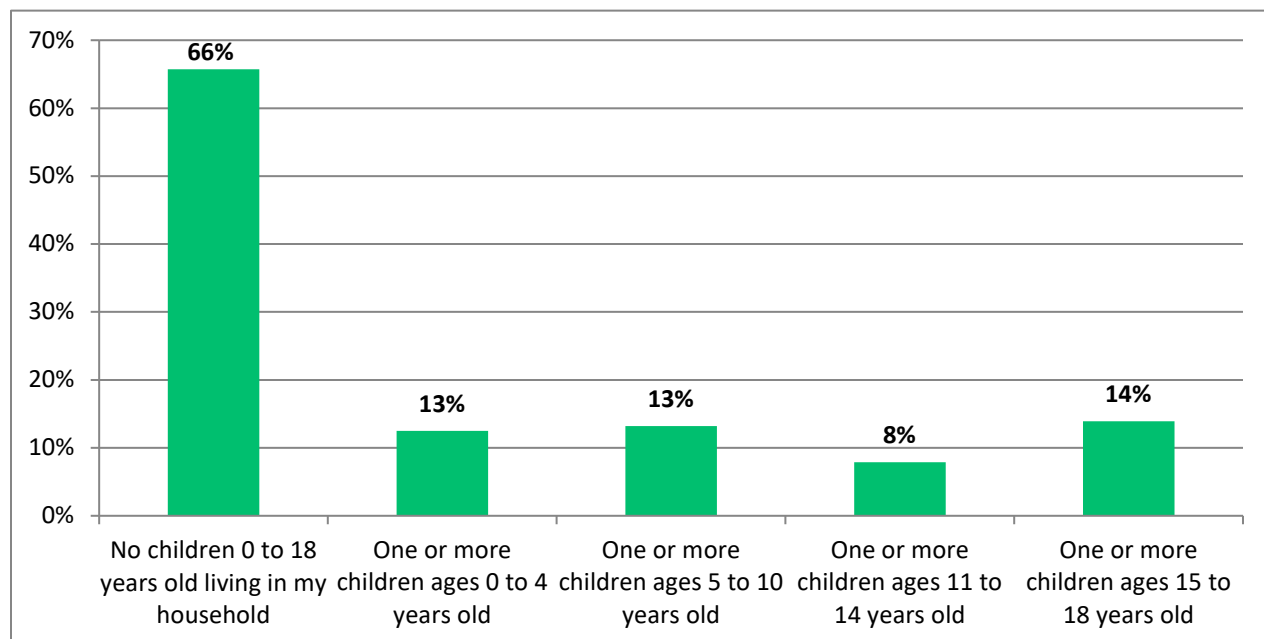
Respondent Demographics

Question 14: What is your age?



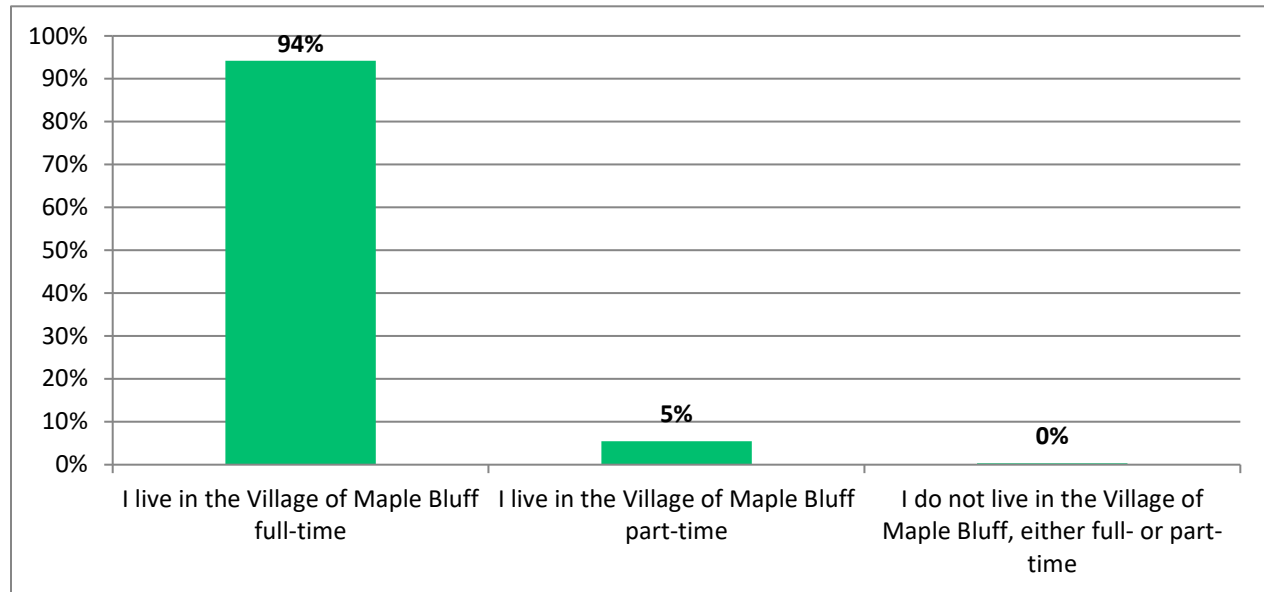
Approximately 41% of respondents to this question are 65 years of age and older. Per the 2023 Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), about 32% of Maple Bluff's adult population as a whole is 65 years of age or older. Furthermore, 73% of respondents are 50 years of age or older, while the ACS suggests that about 56% of Maple Bluff's adult population is 50 years of age or older. Therefore, survey respondents tended to skew slightly older than the Village's entire adult population, which is common for surveys of this type.

Question 15: If there are children living in your household, what are their ages? Check all that apply. Please include any children who live with you part-time.

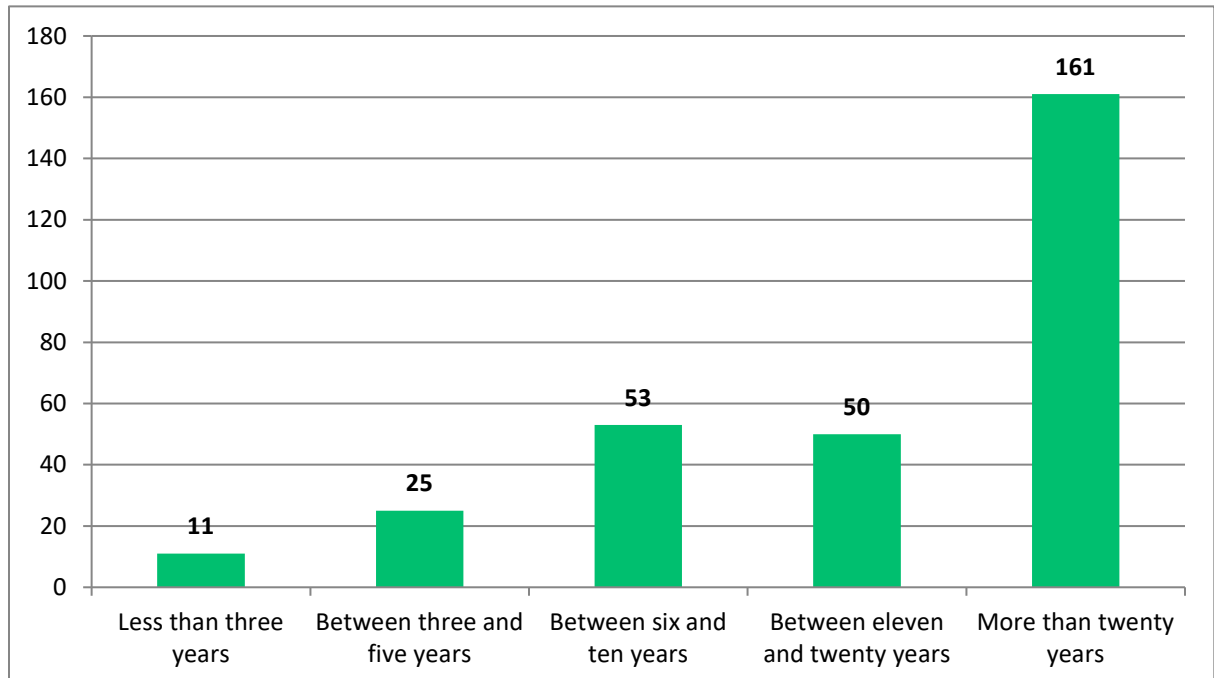


Approximately 34% of respondents stated they have one or more children under the age of 19 living in their household. The 2023 ACS reported that 32% of Maple Bluff *households* had one or more children under the age of 19. Therefore, the percentage of survey respondents with children at home is comparable to that of the entire Maple Bluff population.

Question 16: Which of the following statements best reflects your residency status?

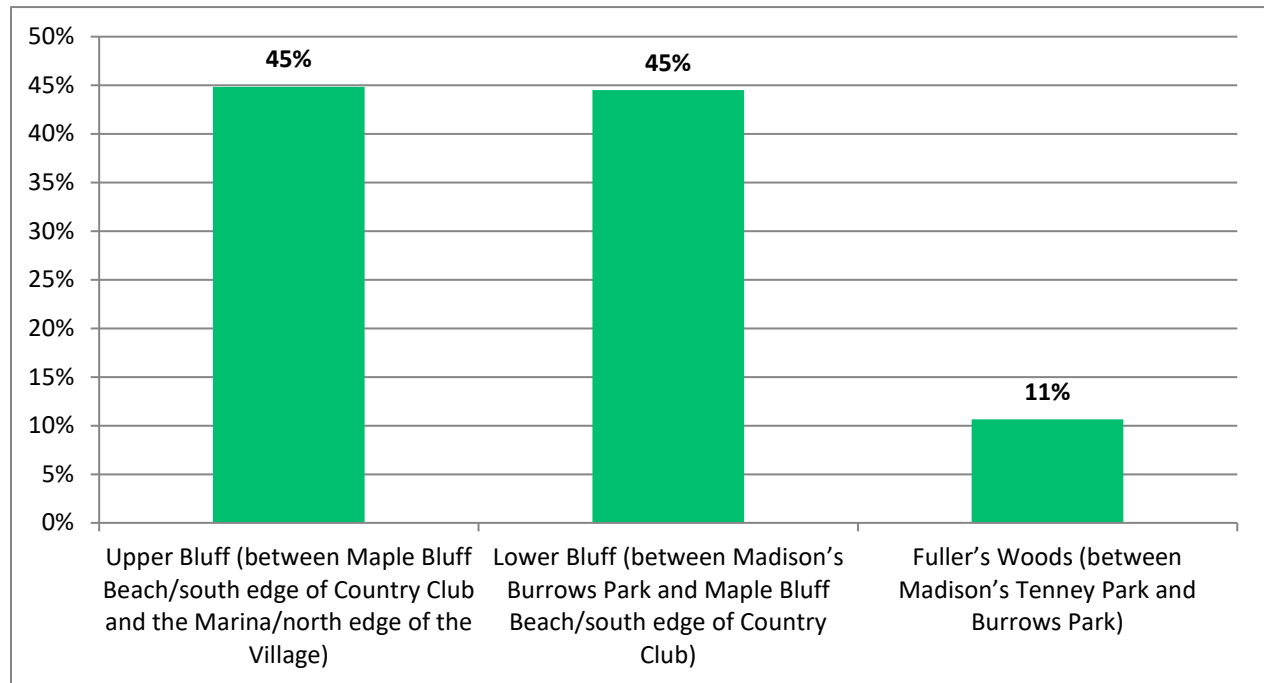


Question 17: How long have you lived within the Village of Maple Bluff?



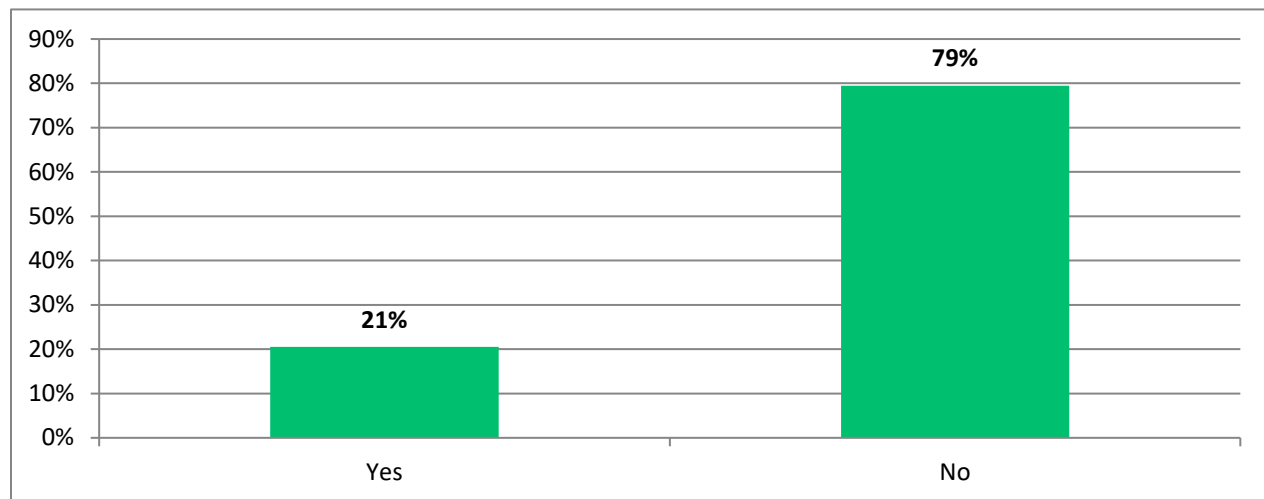
54% of respondents to this question have lived in the Village for more than 20 years, with 12% having lived in the Village for five or fewer years. Per the 2023 ACS, 40% of all Village residents lived in their home for more than 20 years, while 19% of residents lived in their home for five years or less. Therefore, longer-term residents were somewhat overrepresented among survey respondents, and shorter-term residents somewhat underrepresented.

Question 18: In which part of the Village do you live?



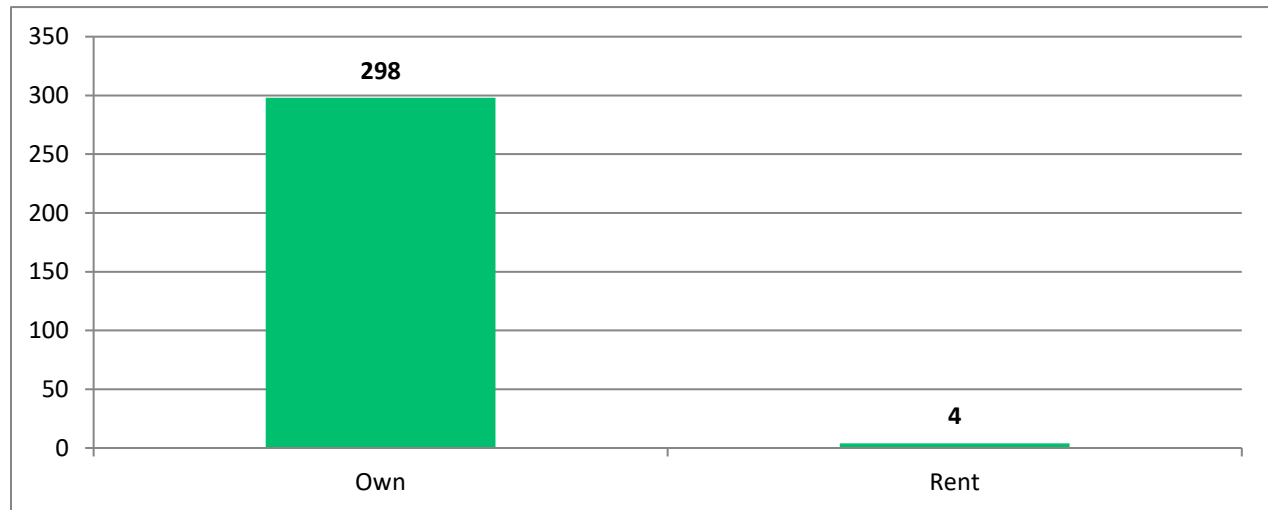
Per the Census Bureau's 2020 decennial census, there were approximately 421 adult residents in the Upper Bluff (40% of total Village adult population), 497 adult residents in the Lower Bluff (48% of total adult population), and 123 adult residents in Fuller's Woods (12% of total adult population). Therefore, survey respondents were generally representative of the geographic distribution of Maple Bluff's entire population.

Question 19: Does your Maple Bluff property have frontage on Lake Mendota?



Per Dane County records, there are 619 tax parcels in the Village of Maple Bluff, and 114 have frontage on Lake Mendota (18%). Therefore, survey respondents with and without frontage on Lake Mendota are generally comparable to the make-up of the general population.

Question 20: Do you own or rent your home in Maple Bluff?



Per the 2023 ACS, 93.6% of Maple Bluff housing units were owner-occupied, meaning that homeowners were somewhat overrepresented among survey respondents, which is common across surveys of this type.

Question 21: Please provide your email address if you would like to receive occasional updates regarding the strategic plan, or possibly participate in a resident focus group. Your email will not be used for any other purpose.

There were 134 responses to this question. The list of email addresses were provided to Village staff and will be used for future communications.