



CITY OF PETERSBURG  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE  
**ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**  
MARCH 2023





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## OVERVIEW

PetersburgNEXT, the City of Petersburg's Comprehensive Plan, will be based on research, data analysis, and, most importantly, community input. Throughout the process, this Comprehensive Plan update will take deliberate and extensive steps to ensure that all community members have an opportunity to help shape the visions and goals outlined in the Plan. This report summarizes the following community engagement activities conducted as part of the initial phase of community engagement (November 2022 – February 2023):

- ***Community Survey***: A survey consisting of 27 questions tailored to identify strengths, weaknesses, and future needs of Petersburg was made available for community members to complete online as well as in a paper format. A total of 374 community members completed the community survey.
- ***Public Workshops***: During four public workshops – three in-person and one virtual – community members were introduced to the Comprehensive Plan process and invited to share their perspectives on Citywide strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. In-person attendees were also invited to work together in small groups to complete topic-focused, map-based exercises. 64 people participated in the Public Workshops in total.
- ***Focus Groups***: Community members, organization representatives, business owners, City department heads, and other regional experts participated in eight roundtable discussion sessions. Each session focused on a separate theme relevant to the Comprehensive Plan update process. In total, 54 people representing 45 organizations participated in the focus groups.
- ***City Council Interviews***: The Berkley Group facilitated individual interviews with City Council members in February 2023 to learn more about priorities and opportunities for the City over the next twenty years. Six of the seven Council members participated in interviews.
- ***Website and Email Updates***: The PetersburgNEXT project website was regularly updated to inform community members of upcoming opportunities to provide input for the Comprehensive Plan. Email updates were sent regularly to individuals who provided their email addresses at a public workshop, through the survey, or through the online subscription form. The project website will be updated throughout the drafting process, and email updates will be sent to inform the community of Planning Commission worksessions.

## IDEA WALL SUMMARY

In November 2022, the City of Petersburg launched the official website for the PetersburgNEXT Comprehensive Plan update process. This website contains links to public engagement opportunities and useful resources, news posts and pertinent information, and an Idea Wall where community members were encouraged to post a comment to share their big ideas, hopes, and goals for the future of Petersburg.

As of March 1, 2023, 11 comments have been posted to the Idea Wall. Comments on the wall have ranged in topic with the most prevalent themes pertaining to investment in the City's youth, connecting residents to parks and green space, and implementing public arts initiatives.

Examples of comments posted to the Idea Wall include:

- "Join Tree City USA to solicit feedback from the community about tree canopy, identify opportunities for green space and provide a balance to the increasing pressures to build and pave areas in the city."
- "Currently many residents of Petersburg do not know of the [Petersburg National Battlefield's] existence or how to even gain access to the park. The park's exit is currently on Crater Road leaving many in the City unable to enter the park unless they drive out of Petersburg and search for the entrance. Possible remediations for our community - The National Park Service could make the park exit a two way road up to the interpretive site of the Crater allowing for Petersburg residents to drive into the park without having to navigate outside of the City allowing for more local residents and tourists to enjoy the park while staying close to Olde Town possibly bringing more tourism dollars into the coffers of the city's small businesses..."
- "Invest In Our Teens and Young Adults ... The Comprehensive Plan should include a youth initiative for teens and young adults with a focus on youth employment and skill-building involving mentoring, life skills, tutoring, reading help, financial literacy, and workforce development with measurable objectives and outcomes. The results will be their successes."

The full list of comments currently posted to the Idea Wall can be found in Appendix A of this document as well as on the project website at [www.petersburgvanext.com](http://www.petersburgvanext.com). The Idea Wall will remain active throughout the duration of the Comprehensive Plan update, and new comments added to the Wall will continue to be tracked and considered throughout the update process.

## **PUBLIC WORKSHOPS SUMMARY**

The City of Petersburg conducted four Comprehensive Plan Update Public Workshops to gather input from the community. Three in-person workshops were held on January 12, January 19, and January 26, 2023 at the Petersburg Public Library. An additional workshop was held virtually via Zoom on February 27, 2023. There were 42 community members who attended the in-person workshops; 22 community members attended the virtual workshop for a total of 64 public workshop participants.

The in-person Public Workshops began with a presentation that briefly explained the comprehensive planning process and detailed the importance of public input. Attendees then worked in small groups to complete two discussion-based exercises. Groups recorded their input in exercise packets and on maps of the City. Each group discussed and documented Citywide strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, as well as goals for the future. Additionally, each group focused on a key planning element: Land Use, City Character, and Development; Community Facilities and Infrastructure; Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources; Arts, Culture, and History; or Economy and Workforce Development.

The virtual public workshop consisted of a similar presentation to the in-person workshop and was followed by a moderated discussion of Petersburg's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, along with a question-and-answer period.

Overall, attendees are passionate about their community and identified many assets that make the City a great place for them to call home. Attendees have a positive outlook for the future and see Petersburg's weaknesses not as liabilities but as untapped opportunities for growth and forward movement. The compiled responses from these exercises can be found in Appendix B.

### **Strengths and Assets:**

- Rich history and well-preserved inventory of historic sites
- Location at Interstates 95 and 85
- Historic and attractive downtown
- The people and the sense of community

### **Weaknesses:**

- Struggling public education system
- Lack of law enforcement to adequately address community needs
- Poorly maintained infrastructure and public spaces
- Blight

### **Opportunities and Goals for the Future:**

- Improvements for water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure
- Increased provision of affordable housing and associated opportunities for homeownership
- Investment in public education, activities, and opportunities for the City's youth
- Stricter zoning and code enforcement on blighted properties

## **FOCUS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY**

Eight focus group meetings were held throughout the community engagement process. Focus groups were conducted at the Petersburg Public Library on November 17, 2022, and January 9, 12, and 26, 2023.

The Berkley Group facilitated all eight focus groups. Focus group attendees were selected by the City for their direct involvement in each given topic: Mobility, Community Facilities, and Infrastructure; Quality of Life; Health and Social Services; Public Safety; Economic Development and Tourism; Land Use, City Character, and Development; Environmental Stewardship; and Education and Workforce Development. Attendees were experts in their respective fields and represented nearly 50 local, regional, and state organizations, as well as City departments.

The sessions gave attendees an opportunity to discuss questions pertaining to their area of expertise regarding existing conditions and planning for the future of the City. Briefly summarized below are some of the most common themes that were discussed during the meetings, though many other topics were raised. Full summaries of the focus group discussions can be found in Appendix C, along with a complete list of organizations represented at the meetings.

- The people are seen as Petersburg's greatest resource; they are passionate and committed. They love their City, believe in it, and want it to improve.
- Petersburg's rich inventory of historic resources, including Petersburg National Battlefield, Old Towne, Pocahontas Island, and the historic districts, is a unique and important asset. Natural resources such as the Appomattox River and recreational spaces such as Legends Park and Petersburg Sports Complex are other assets with untapped potential.
- Negative perceptions of the City continue to prevent growth and investment and are often incorrect. These negative perceptions could be improved by more transparency from the City and more consistent communication that reinforces positive messaging about the City.
- One of the biggest needs for the community over the next twenty years is investment in City-owned facilities, many of which have fallen into disrepair and are unsafe and/or unattractive for regular community use. Water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure also need improvement to both provide appropriate levels of service and facilitate new investment.
- Blight, the struggling public school system, and a lack of recreational opportunities and programming for youth create an environment that is conducive to crime.
- Similarly to public workshop attendees, focus group attendees viewed the City's challenges not as liabilities but as opportunities for innovative problem-solving and implementation of creative solutions. However, to achieve equitable and sustainable outcomes, local organizations and community members must be regularly engaged.
- Accountability, commitment, collaboration, and communication are key themes that should be explored in the Comprehensive Plan.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

During the community engagement process, a public survey was made available to collect input from the broader community. The survey included 27 questions designed to provide an understanding of the top concerns and goals of the community. Of these 27 questions, 18 were directly related to the Comprehensive Plan, 8 were optional demographic questions, and 1 was for optional contact information.

The survey was available online from November 15, 2022 through February 15, 2023. Paper copies of surveys were distributed throughout the community from February 1, 2023 through February 15, 2023. In total, 374 community members took the survey. This response rate yields a 5% margin of error at a 95% confidence level, which is the industry standard, and translates to a 95% likelihood that the answers are reflective of Citywide opinions with a range of 10%.

The results of this survey are summarized below. For the full survey results, please see Appendix D.

### Comprehensive Plan Survey Summarized Results<sup>1,2</sup>

- **Top valued attributes of the City of Petersburg:**
  - Local history and culture (52.9%)
  - Sense of community (28.3%)
  - Cost of living (25.1%)
- **Top concerns about the City of Petersburg's future:**
  - Crime (63.5%)
  - Public education system (38.5%)
  - Residential or commercial blight (32.4%)
- **Top priorities the City of Petersburg should focus on as it plans for the future:**
  - Enhancing public safety (police, fire, rescue, emergency services) (49.9%)
  - Improving public education and workforce development (47.4%)
  - Improving the economy and access to well-paying job opportunities (42.3%)
- **Most desirable types of new residential development:**
  - Single family homes (77.0%)
  - Rehab/repair of existing homes (73.3%)
  - Housing for seniors, older adults, or disabled (59.0%)
- **Most desirable types of new commercial or industrial development:**
  - Local and small businesses (84.3%)
  - General retail – e.g., grocery store, pharmacy (76%)

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Percentages (%) represent what percentage of respondents chose that particular response and is not based on a total percentage equaling 100%.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Respondents could select multiple answers, and additional "Other" answer choices were available for some questions. These summarized results show the most selected answers for each question and their corresponding percentages.

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- Entertainment – e.g., bowling alley, arcade (72%)
- **Top priorities for improving public facilities and services:**
  - Public schools (#1 out of 11)
  - Fire and rescue/ambulance service (#2 out of 11)
  - Law enforcement (#3 out of 11)

*Demographic Questions<sup>3</sup>*

- **Place of Residence:** Most respondents (25.3%) reside in Ward 3, and 20.6% of respondents do not reside in the City of Petersburg.
- **Place of Employment:** Just over a quarter (26.5%) of respondents work within the City of Petersburg. Other highly represented places of employment were the City of Richmond (13.4%) and Chesterfield County (8.2%). Retired individuals represented 16.4% of respondents, and 10.8% of respondents work from home.
- **Age:** Most respondents (22.2%) were between the ages of 45-54. Only 3.3% of respondents were under the age of 24.
- **Race:** Most respondents (39.4%) identified as white; 37.9% of respondents identified as Black/African-American.
- **Tenure:** Most respondents are relative newcomers to the City, with 24.3% saying they had resided in the City for under 5 years.

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<sup>3</sup> Note: Answers to demographic questions were not required.

## **CITY COUNCIL INTERVIEWS SUMMARY**

The Berkley Group conducted interviews with Petersburg City Council members to gather their input for the Comprehensive Plan update. Six of the seven Council members participated in the interview process. Four of these interviews were held in person on February 23, 2023 at City Hall. The remaining two interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom on February 27, 2023. All interviews consisted of a facilitated discussion of Petersburg's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, as well as input on how to improve the Comprehensive Plan as a tool to guide and inform the City Council's decision-making process.

City Council members echoed the public's passion and love for Petersburg. In summary, despite past setbacks, Council members believe the future is positive and filled with opportunity. Council members stated that a strong historic core, new pharmaceutical investments, and increased investment from the state level are important contributors to a bright future for Petersburg. Other opportunities identified included the revitalization of Old Towne and investment in outdoor trail networks.

# APPENDIX A

## IDEA WALL COMMENTS

Date	Topic	Idea Wall Comment
10/19/2022	Tree City USA	Join Tree City USA to solicit feedback from the community about tree canopy, identify opportunities for green space and provide a balance to the increasing pressures to build and pave areas in the city.
11/16/2022	Halifax Square Implementation Project	<p>The Halifax Triangle affectionately known as the Avenue; is historically significant as the once thriving Black business mecca within the city of Petersburg. It was our own black wall street and mini Harlem, where black entertainment and enterprise intersected. Years of neglect and economic disinvestment has reduced this area to a dismal desolate eyesore, now referred to as "Death Avenue". The two adjacent funeral homes (Bland and Wilkerson) are two main prominent businesses remaining. Sadly the only activity in the area are planning and attending funerals. Once a year the Halifax Music Festival (formerly Jazz and blues festival) brings life and energy back to the triangle for 2 days the second weekend in June. In 2023, this will be the 16th year! Without brick and mortar structures, a public square is proposed to bring people, life, energy, and activities back uptown. Imagine, movie nights in the Spring - early Fall, with Food trucks, Farmer's Market, and monthly Game nights. Perhaps an Art Park with a walking museum of sorts as a tourist attraction that tells the stories of former businesses. The possibilities are ENDLESS with some creative vision and a joint city and community inspired partnership; a reinvestment of time, ideas, and innovation! The Petersburg Center for Development, Inc., a small local nonprofit would welcome the opportunity to spearhead this project. Human capital is an unique but viable option to change the landscape and trajectory for A-Venue re-imagined.</p>
12/12/2022	A Dog Park In Petersburg	<p>Currently the City of Petersburg owns a large fenced-in baseball field called Cooper Field in Legends Park, which is for the most part unused. With slight modifications the field could be modified to accommodate a dog park. The municipality of Petersburg would have to create new ordinances in Chapter 18 and amend Article IV Dogs to include a section regarding Dog Parks. Similar to what the town of Danville, California has done as shown below. "Dog Park Rules &amp; Regulations The off-leash dog area is for dogs, their handlers and those accompanying them. No other use is allowed. Children under 8 years old are not allowed in the off-leash area. Children between the ages of 9 and 16 must be accompanied by an adult. All dogs must have a current license and vaccinations. No dogs under 4 months of age are allowed in the park. Female dogs in season are not allowed in the park. Dogs must be on leash when entering and exiting the off-leash dog area. Dogs must be under control and in view of their handler at all times. Handlers must have possession of the dog leash at all times. Aggressive dogs are not allowed. The handler of any dog exhibiting aggressive or unruly behavior is required to immediately remove the offending animal. Handlers must clean up after their dogs. Maximum of three dogs per handler. Handlers are responsible for any injuries caused by the dog(s) under their control. Users of the facility do so at their own risk. Neither _____ shall be liable for any injury or damage caused by any dog in the off-leash area. The _____ reserves the right to close the facility for maintenance and repair." - Town of Danville What are your thoughts regarding a dog park in Petersburg? Dog park amenities are known to bring tourists, millennials, and families to localities while promoting a healthy and active lifestyle for the dog and their owner.</p>

12/12/2022	Connecting Petersburg to the National Park	<p>Currently many residents of Petersburg do not know of the park's existence or how to even gain access to the park. The park's exit is currently on Crater Road leaving many in the City unable to enter the park unless they drive out of Petersburg and search for the entrance. Possible remediations for our community - The National Park Service could make the park exit a two way road up to the interpretive site of the Crater allowing for Petersburg residents to drive into the park without having to navigate outside of the City allowing for more local residents and tourists to enjoy the park while staying close to Olde Town possibly bringing more tourism dollars into the coffers of the city's small businesses. Another Option could be a trail connecting The National Park to Blandford Church and Cemetery which is the second largest cemetery in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The first being Arlington National Cemetery which is also a large tourist attraction. So why not Petersburg's Blandford Cemetery? The trail could be situated at the back of the cemetery and connect the city with the national park.</p>
12/12/2022	Hydroelectric Power	<p>When looking at the future of some of the major trailheads which will be at the intersection of the Virginian Fall Line, here in Petersburg, at Campbell's Bridge on University Boulevard. These plans call for the demolition of this penstack which was used to harness the power of the canal, which still runs along the Lower Appomattox River Trail. Why not try and utilize this piece of technology which has been used for millennia? In the present era we have created micro hydro power generators that could be used to offset the power needs for the future trailhead park on University Boulevard using the penstack and highlighting the City of Petersburg's history of industry. While attempting to create a LEED Certified park in Petersburg.</p>
12/12/2022	Crime in Petersburg	<p>The Governor's office could also look at amending the policy to allow for more surveillance here in Petersburg. Currently photo-monitoring systems can only be located at no more than 10 intersections, or at no more than one intersection for every 10,000 residents within each county, city, or town in the Commonwealth. If Petersburg could install more, they would be able to not only catch more reckless drivers but also have more eyes in the city. The Governor's office could also look at changing the public school systems curriculum to require students who have acted out violently, inappropriately, or have exhibited mal social skills to take a social training class to aid in the development of social skills, to help them understand what is illegal, and that their actions will have consequences, with cause and effect lessons. The Petersburg Police Department also asked the public if they see something then they should say something, yet for those of us that report issues, they often fall on deaf ears. Another visible issue can be seen in this city regarding the numerous drug rings operating in this city. Some homes have 10 to 20 different cars pulling up on a daily basis, and yet they are able to operate out of Petersburg. To deal with illegal drug houses the Commonwealth needs to look at increasing the penalties for drug dens which would fall under "Common Nuisances and Forfeited Drug Houses" in the code. An increase in the penalties would enable law enforcement to clean up their communities. In the past there were numerous programs in Petersburg to stop the crime wave enveloping our city. With programs like Operation Safe Streets and The Clean Streets Initiative. These programs worked with The United States Marshals Fugitive Task Force, Virginia State Police, and numerous Federal Law Enforcement Agencies. This program took almost 50 violent offenders off the streets here in Petersburg in just a few months. These programs worked, why not bring them back? These are just a few ideas off the top of my head.</p>

12/31/2022	Theatre Arts in Petersburg	<p>Petersburg is a place filled with families, groups fo diverse backgrounds, cultures. Theatre is a place where we learn about the world, and ourselves, together. Theatre is important because it brings light to what connects us, and what makes us individuals. Theatre is a place where a person can reach within themselves and find what it is to be human, to be us. Theatre connects people, it shares stories, it asks questions, and it gives answers. Theatre is community. Petersburg needs Theatre to share its stories, its cultures, its questions, and its answers.</p>
1/13/2023	Invest In The Youth	<p>The city needs a new school. More effort needs to be implemented from the city to improve our schools. Why would new businesses come or more people move here, if they do not want their kids to go to school here? Various people involved in improving Petersburg do not live in Petersburg. They want to go here and build, but don't want to live here because their kids can't go to school here. Make that make sense. We are trying to revitalize the city. What sense does that make if the youth of our city are not being taken care of? So we care about downtown but not taking care of uptown. Make it make sense. The kids are rioting in the schools, the teachers are quitting left and right, and if they don't play a sport they don't have anything to do after school. "The City" is so into the Arts but how is it accessible for the children? Do we have the different businesses connecting with the schools to give the students a view at what being an entrepreneur looks like? We have to do something about the schools and providing opportunities for the youth. It is of the utmost importance. Because this city that we are building up, let's be real, it is not for them, it's for the people passing through.</p>
1/15/2023	Invest In Our Teens and Young Adults	<p>First of all, their input should be solicited and included in the plan. Secondly, they need a place to meet. The school gymnasiums were built for after school programs and community events when the community centers were closed. Not for a select few people and/or organizations. Third, they need transportation in order to participate in after school activities, attend city events, and to get outside the city to places other than Southpark Mall in Colonial Heights. Lastly, they need reading specialists, K-12, to get them reading at or above grade level. The Comprehensive Plan should include a youth initiative for teens and young adults with a focus on youth employment and skill-building involving mentoring, life skills, tutoring, reading help, financial literacy, and workforce development with measurable objectives and outcomes. The results will be their successes.</p>
1/17/2023	Old Town Reimagined	<p>Curb Appeal — Vacant/dilapidated storefronts, unattractive signage, and cluttered retail windows have a negative impact on the perception of a commercial corridor's vitality and quality of the consumer shopping experience. Create excitement with temporary eye-catching hoarding panels advertising messages asking potential business owners what they envision for the space. Implement discrete, functional methods for trash/recycling bins, etc. Help Old Town achieve cohesiveness and become a more visually appealing place to live, work, shop, and play. Rebuild Sustainably — Influence the city's population using positive green initiatives. Consider eco designs of urban landscapes and solar-powered infrastructure (e.g., solar trees/flowers). It's an ideal opportunity to engage and educate our youth on the movement toward green energy. Perhaps the city can offset the initial cost and create a recurring revenue stream through sponsorship. (Park)ing — Transform unsightly expanses of concrete and asphalt lots in/around the city, turning them into inclusive spaces for families, youth, and seniors. Create opportunities for gathering neighbors or at special events, which could result in an innovative, vibrant community space. Work with local artists to create modern, public art installations to improve street aesthetics. Consider converting these eyesores into cost-effective and low-maintenance green space that includes a wide variety of opportunities to produce a joyful community.</p>

2/4/2023	Youth Recreation Facility	<p>Our youth need a place to go where they can play games such as table soccer and video games. There could also be a dedicated area for reading, doing homework or learning new computer skills. Additionally, there could be an area for teaching life skills; cursive writing is still important for signing bank checks and legal documents. Our children need to learn about banking and investing before they graduate from high school. We need to teach our children about the importance of home ownership. We need to teach our children that guns is not the way to settle an argument. Our children need a place to call their own. When I lived in Germany on the military base as a teenager, we had a place to call our own to interact with our peers, and I am grateful for it.</p>
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# **APPENDIX B**

## PUBLIC WORKSHOP RESPONSES

Appendix B includes the full range of responses given across all four public workshops.

## Strengths

The top strengths of the community were stated to be the following:

- Historic, attractive downtown
- Good parks and recreational spaces
- History and well-preserved historical sites, including Petersburg National Battlefield
- The Appomattox River and associated FOLAR greenspace, along with newly developing trail networks
- Location at Interstates 95, 85, and 295
- Historic, attractive downtown
- Good parks and recreational spaces
- Architecture and real estate inventory
- Proximity to several higher education opportunities such as Virginia State University (VSU)
- The people and sense of community, along with the community's tenacity and resiliency
- General opportunities
- Cultural and educational opportunities such as the Petersburg Public Library, Petersburg Family YMCA, and Appomattox Regional Governor's School

Additional strengths and assets that were highlighted include the following:

- Home to Pocahontas Island, the oldest free Black community in the United States
- Historic churches
- Cultural diversity
- Affordable cost of living
- A+ bond rating
- Convenience of transportation services, especially trains
- Longstanding local businesses
- The overall potential of the City
- Local community events
- Welcoming atmosphere
- Walkability potential
- Proximity to Richmond
- Proximity to Southpark Mall in Colonial Heights
- The City serves as a gateway to other areas of Virginia
- Free fares on Petersburg Public Transit
- Petersburg Sports Complex
- Dogwood Trace Golf Club

## Weaknesses

The top weaknesses or challenges were stated to be the following:

- Lack of law enforcement to adequately address community needs
- Blight
- Weak public education system
- Communication gap between City and the community; poor public messaging and lack of transparency
- Poverty
- Poorly maintained infrastructure and public spaces
- Lack of grocery stores and access to proper nutrition
- Lack of affordable housing
- Crime
- Lack of programming for the City's children
- Public health
- Challenges with City leadership, such as transparency and perception of fiscal mismanagement
- City offices are disorganized and not citizen oriented. Technology is old and outdated, and this is causing issues.
- The City has a negative reputation, and this perception can prevent investment
- Homelessness

Other weaknesses and challenges that were highlighted include the following:

- Limited availability of affordable housing and a low homeownership rate
- Declining population due to lack of jobs and employers leaving the City over time
- Distressed government and a lack of continuity in leadership
- Holding City meetings during business hours
- Poor code enforcement
- Lack of financial investment
- Public transportation system
- Prevalence of substance use disorders
- Lack of businesses and available jobs, especially entry-level jobs for new high school graduates
- High tax rates
- City government bias towards Old Towne
- Lack of hospitality-oriented businesses such as hotels and restaurants
- Need for increased preservation of at-risk historic landmarks, such as Pocahontas Island and Martin Luther King, Jr. safe house on Harrison Street
- Flooding in low-lying areas
- High heat index and lack of tree canopy

## Goals and Opportunities

Public workshop participants identified the following as the top goals and opportunities that the City should focus on in the next 10-20 years:

- Investment in public education, activities, and opportunities for the City's youth
- Stronger communication and highlighting the positive aspects of the City
- Grassroots investments and greater collaboration with neighborhood groups. The City needs to find more ways to engage citizens in decision-making.
- Access to food and grocery stores, and teaching residents how to sustainably grow food in an urban area
- Attracting middle-aged individuals through variety in jobs, mentoring and after-school programs, and diversity in opportunities
- Attracting new employers and higher salary jobs
- Greater investment in City infrastructure, including water, sewer, and broadband
- Greater zoning enforcement and code enforcement on blighted properties
- Finding creative uses of vacant properties and empty lots, such as a land trust or land bank, or converting older or abandoned buildings to apartments
- Creating more affordable single-family homes
- More community gardens and neighborhood-centric projects to help promote community engagement
- Decrease crime and improve public safety

Other goals and opportunities that the City should focus on in the next 10-20 years include the following:

- Healthcare
- Expansion of local historic districts as another preservation tool for the City's unique historic properties
- Certify Petersburg City Schools
- Bolster Fire & EMS and police forces, along with their facilities
- Create more pedestrian and bike infrastructure, especially in areas with existing green space such as Wilcox Lake
- Couple local public transit with regional public transit, and improve public transportation overall
- Improve the City's technological infrastructure
- Build the connection between the City and Virginia State University, as it is an untapped resource
- Improve management and accountability of City Hall
- Changing the culture and mentality surrounding Petersburg
- Improved maintenance of public schools facilities
- Need for greater incentives to attract and retain teachers
- Improving the perception of the City through better leveraging historic resources and tourism opportunities

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- Increase opportunities for homeownership
- “Reverse” the weaknesses
- Have City meetings during the evenings
- More town hall meetings for the community
- Establish new health initiatives to show people that the outcome of an entire City can be changed through strategic initiatives
- Continued leveraging of opportunities and investment through Partnership for Petersburg



## Public Workshop Mapping Exercise Input

During two of the in-person public workshops on January 19 and 26, 2023, attendees participated in a mapping exercise that was tailored to one of five topics: Community Facilities and Transportation; Land Use, City Character, and Development; Arts, Culture, and History; Economy and Workforce Development; or Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources.

Findings from the mapping exercise are listed by topic on the next several pages.

### Community Facilities and Transportation

#### 1. Identify and describe public facilities or infrastructure improvements.

#	Facility/Service/Utility Type	Describe the issue or type of improvement needed.
1	Public Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New buildings, upgraded with 21<sup>st</sup> century technology. In the next twenty years, the City will likely need at least 3 entirely new buildings.</li> <li>• Better organization and redistribution of materials, with consideration for online learning</li> <li>• Cultural training and a trauma-informed environment</li> <li>• More creative instruction</li> <li>• More music in classrooms</li> <li>• End SOL testing</li> <li>• Tie kids to the greater community</li> </ul>
2	Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase pay</li> <li>• Increase community pride</li> <li>• More community engagement and events needed, such as a Police Athletic League (PAL) program to build trust between law enforcement and children, or a civilian liaison between community and police</li> <li>• Need more crosswalks, lighting, and infrastructure</li> </ul>
3	Fire & Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fix broken equipment</li> <li>• Train volunteers</li> <li>• Establish a pipeline for high school students to grow careers in fire and rescue, or volunteer while they are still in high school</li> <li>• Build a new firehouse</li> </ul>
4	Libraries & Community Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach to schools and education</li> <li>• Build a community center</li> <li>• Repurpose existing buildings and churches to serve as community spaces</li> <li>• The library and YMCA are good. Parks as community centers should be considered more, to help residents get fresh air</li> </ul>



#	Facility/Service/Utility Type	Describe the issue or type of improvement needed.
5	Health & Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger partnership between the City and the YMCA</li> <li>• Creation of bike lanes</li> </ul>
6	Utilities (water, sewer, cell service, broadband)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent billing rates</li> <li>• Centralize City buildings/offices</li> <li>• Investment in solar energy</li> <li>• More exercise equipment in parks</li> <li>• Water improvements are a priority</li> </ul>

**2. Identify and describe up to three needed vehicular transportation improvements.**

#	Location: Describe the location where improvement is needed. Mark and clearly label the location on the map.	Explain the issue or type of improvement needed.
	Lighting	Increase visibility for cars to see pedestrians after dark.
	Speed humps	TBD of placement, but speed humps should reduce speeding in residential areas.
	Parking garage upgrades	Need secure 24-hour parking.

**3. Identify and describe up to three needed pedestrian or bicycle improvements.**

#	Location: Describe the location where improvement is needed. Mark and clearly label the location on the map.	Explain the issue or type of improvement needed.
	Bike racks	Bike racks should be located next to bus stations, downtown, and parks.
	Bike lanes	Bike lanes are needed on Halifax, Dupuy, Sycamore, Washington, Wythe, and Johnson.
	Crosswalks	Should be located at major road intersections



Land Use, City Character, and Development

1. Identify goals for land use and development in Petersburg.

Vision / Goal
Transportation improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists, including crosswalks, bike paths, and sidewalks
Establish community centers out of vacant buildings or old apartments
Expand commercial uses in Wards 5 and 6
Greater connection of resources
Repurposing and development of unused buildings in Ward 6

Arts, Culture, and History

1. Top cultural assets in Petersburg:

- Artists' community
- Petersburg National Battlefield
- Pocahontas Island
- MLK Houses
- Blandford Church
- Old Towne District
- Halifax Triangle

2. Identify three threats or challenges to historic and cultural preservation in Petersburg. Then, identify what actions you think Petersburg should take in response to those threats or challenges.

#	Threat or Challenge	What action should Petersburg take in response to the threat or challenge?
1	Money	Food and lodging taxes should actually go to historic preservation efforts.
2	Aging population	Find more ways to help support people; establish more reasonable tax assessments
3	Crime/perceived crime and blight	More staffing for Police and Fire/Rescue



3. Identify and describe up to three priority areas for historic or cultural preservation.

#	Location: mark on map if applicable (label with corresponding #)	Describe the area. Why should this area be considered a priority for historic or cultural preservation?
1	Black history sites and heritage	Underrepresented, despite being rich in history and reflecting the City's population
2	Rethinking historic preservation in the City	The focus is centered on historic districts and downtown. Broaden the definition.
3	Navigating historic preservation landscape and tourism opportunities	

4. For each use/amenity type listed below, identify whether it is sufficient to meet community needs.

Use/Amenity	Is this use/amenity meeting community needs? (Y/N)	Describe the issue or type of improvement needed. Mark each identified area on the map and clearly label each area/location.
Museums, studios, or art galleries	Y	Friday for the Arts needs to be regularly open.
Historic sites & landmarks	N	Improvements needed to tell the story, include more assets, and be more open.
Libraries	Y	
Community centers	Y	We need more community centers in neighborhoods.
Festivals, programs, and special events	Y	We need more and improved parking.
Green spaces, gardens, and parks	Y	Keeping up green spaces and having accessible equipment is needed.
Public Art	Y	Erect more public art.



Economy and Workforce Development

1. Specific assets and strengths that can help attract and retain business and/or industry to Petersburg:

- Interstate 85/95 corridors
- Availability of land and large, vacant buildings
- Riverfront
- Petersburg Public Library
- Transit station
- Historical sites
- Golf course and sports complex
- A+ bond rating
- Higher education institutions
- Pharmaceutical hub
- Location

2. Obstacles that may limit economic growth in Petersburg now or in the future:

- Public perception and negative reputation
- Safety
- Job opportunities
- Public schools
- Taxes

3. Goals and supporting actions for economic or workforce development within Petersburg:

Goal	Supporting Action
Change the narrative of Petersburg.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build collaborative partnerships</li> <li>• Information sharing</li> <li>• Improve public health (water, technology, and food), safety, and schools</li> <li>• Accountability of City officials</li> </ul>
Improve information sharing of workforce and economic development opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use various vehicles and venues to advertise (advertising bus)</li> <li>• Encourage community participation</li> </ul>



Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources

1. Top recreational and/or environmental assets existing in Petersburg:
  - Appomattox River and the runs
  - Parks, including small neighborhood parks – however, some parks are not marked, and people don't know they're for everyone
  - Some places for youth activities exist already, but more are needed
  
2. Identify and describe up to five top priorities for future investment in parks, recreation, and natural resources.

#	Location: Mark on the map and clearly label each location.	Describe the type of recreation facility ( <i>parks, green space, community center sports fields, playgrounds, tracks, bike trails, etc.</i> ) or improvement needed
1	River walk / park	Already started but continue from east to west. Improve access and parking for visitors.
2	Riverfront in Rotary Park, Pocahontas Landing	Keep some wildlife through conservation efforts
3	More pocket parks and places for kids	Citywide
4	Civil Rights History	
5	Petersburg Legends Historical Park	Create easier access to Wilcox Lake waterfront. Improve the playground and fix parking.
6	Playgrounds	Improve playgrounds throughout the City and fix broken equipment. Improve parking.
7	Connecting Parks	Connect battlefields, City parks, and the river walkway through trails or some other form of transportation, such as trolleys.



3. What investments are necessary for Petersburg to better serve the recreational needs of each of the following age groups?

User Group	Describe the type of recreation facility or improvement needed ( <i>parks, sports fields, playgrounds, equipment, tracks, bike trails, maintenance, safety improvements, etc.; N/A if no improvements are needed</i> )
Preschool (under age 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playgrounds with improved ADA accessibility</li> </ul>
Children (ages 5-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe walking routes to schools</li> <li>• Nature walks</li> <li>• Sports facilities</li> </ul>
Teens (ages 13-17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports facilities</li> <li>• Afterschool activities and programs</li> <li>• Skate park</li> </ul>
Adults (ages 18-64)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports facilities, especially indoor and free facilities</li> <li>• Intermural programs</li> </ul>
Senior adults (ages 65+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe and accessible places to walk</li> <li>• Outdoor stretching areas</li> </ul>
All ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce development activities</li> <li>• Expanding internship programs</li> <li>• Community exercise group activities/programs</li> <li>• Planning for ADA = planning for everyone</li> </ul>

# **APPENDIX C**

FOCUS GROUP NOTES +  
ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED

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Organizations Represented at Focus Groups**



Organizations Represented at Comprehensive Plan Focus Groups

Appomattox Regional Governors' School (ARGS)	James River Association
Battersea Foundation	McKenney Foundation
Brightpoint Community College	Metropolitan Business League (MBL)
Cameron Foundation	National Park Service (NPS)
City Attorney's Office	Pathways
City of Petersburg Anti-Poverty Commission	Petersburg Area Regional Tourism (PART)
City of Petersburg Bureau of Police	Petersburg Area Transit (PAT)
	Petersburg City Schools
City of Petersburg Department of Community Corrections	Petersburg Family YMCA
City of Petersburg Department of Economic Development, Planning, and Community Development	Petersburg Healthy Options Partnerships (PHOPs)
City of Petersburg Department of Neighborhood Services	Petersburg Public Library
City of Petersburg Department of Public Works and Utilities	Petersburg School Board
City of Petersburg Department of Recreation, Special Events, and Volunteerism	project:HOMES
City of Petersburg Department of Social Services	Restoration of Petersburg CDC
City of Petersburg Economic Development Authority	Richard Bland College of William and Mary
City of Petersburg Fire Marshal's Office	Roslyn Farm Corporation
Communities In Schools of Petersburg	Southern Virginia Regional Chamber of Commerce
Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA)	Tri-Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (TCAMPO)
Crater Health District	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Crater Planning District Commission (CPDC)	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
Crater Small Business Development Center (SBDC)	Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR)	Virginia State University (VSU)
	Virginia's Gateway Region

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On November 17, 2022, the Berkley Group facilitated a focus group meeting with representatives from organizations related to mobility, community facilities, and infrastructure. This meeting was held at the Petersburg Public Library in a roundtable discussion format. Participants discussed questions regarding existing conditions and planning for the future of the City. The following is a summary of the subsequent discussion.

The organizations represented at the Mobility, Community Facilities, and Infrastructure Focus Group on November 17, 2022 were:

- City of Petersburg Department of Public Works and Utilities
- Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR)
- Petersburg Area Transit (PAT)
- Petersburg Healthy Options Partnerships (PHOPs)
- Tri-Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (TCAMPO)
- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

**1. *What are the City of Petersburg's biggest assets or strengths in terms of mobility, community facilities and infrastructure?***

- Petersburg Area Transit (PAT) has a relatively new city fleet, new facility, and enjoys strong partnerships with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), financial institutions, the City of Petersburg, and transportation boards.
  - There have been recent improvements in transportation connections, including potential bus connections to Southside Virginia (Greensville/Emporia/Stony Creek), and working toward connectivity with Williamsburg and Virginia Beach.
  - There is a new parking deck at the transit station with 215 spaces.
- The people are Petersburg's greatest resource; they are passionate and committed. They love their City, believe in it, and want it to improve.
- Appomattox Regional Governor's School (ARGS) is in good condition.
- The City has "good bones" for active transportation and walkability with the river and green space.
- Dogwood Trace Golf Course is self-sustaining, and the Petersburg Sports Complex is a diamond in the rough but needs to be revitalized to become a significant community hub.
- Legends Park has a lovely wildflower garden and unique history but is underutilized and could benefit from additional promotion/publicization.
- The pool is up and running now, though it needs continued upkeep.
- The library is an asset.

**2. *Are there any major projects or initiatives that your department is undertaking that will influence the Comprehensive Plan?***

- Infrastructure:
  - By 2026, water/sewer infrastructure will be rebuilt/rehabilitated. The project will provide wastewater capacity and increased water pressure.
  - Water line replacement project awaiting funding and material challenges; it is a few years out.

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- City has allocated \$2.8 million to fix flooding issues in Lakemont neighborhood near the Petersburg National Battlefield.
- Stormwater GIS coming in 14 months, along with a comprehensive drainage study.
- Transportation:
  - The Tri-Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (TCAMPO) has studied possible improvements at the I-85/I-95 interchange. State and federal plans don't seem to mention I-85/I-95 interchange improvements, even though this interchange is unsafe and hectic. The Virginia Secretary of Transportation made a recent commitment to interchange improvements, but it is unclear where or what improvements entail.
    - Budget request has already been submitted; TCAMPO version of Comprehensive Plan completed to support funding and improvements.
  - TCAMPO is updating socioeconomic data; VDOT will present a safety plan to TCAMPO on December 2. TCAMPO is gearing up for a multi-modal bike, pedestrian, and transit plan for its entire region, including initiatives to help people get to bus stops. The time frame is around 12-14 months, mainly based on safety, economic vitality, and quality of life.
  - Three SMART Scale applications are in process right now with City support, all related to the Appomattox River Trail; additional information will be available in January.
  - PHOPS is conducting a study of empty green/gray spaces in the City and how to connect them to walking and bike paths. PHOPS also holds a monthly Active Transportation Work Group and is pursuing infrastructure for Safe Routes to Schools to reduce absenteeism. PHOPS also has a written road safety audit that identifies short, medium, and long-term goals.
  - TCAMPO has Thriving Communities program and is applying for parks-related technical assistance for areas with persistent poverty that are manageable in size (such as Petersburg).
  - VDOT-funded pedestrian road safety audit could help to improve safety on roads and neighborhood connectivity.
  - DRPT has recently completed a parking garage, as well as a feasibility study about a phased replacement of a 42 year-old bus maintenance facility.
  - DRPT has started a new grant program to connect Greensville and Emporia, with a two-year fare-free grant to extend fare suspension for all PAT routes.
  - DRPT study feedback about non-emergency medical transport in the area is incoming within the next year.
  - City is currently exploring the conversion of large old buses to electric and providing electric bus infrastructure
    - The U.S. Army (Ft. Lee) is going electric, and the City is deficient in high-level charging; goal/partnership opportunity could provide level-3 charging in proximity to Ft. Lee main entrance.
    - Exploring potential for magnetic in-ground charging for buses.

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- TCAMPO V-Trans effort has identified several locations with higher-than-normal accident rates. The survey was derived from their own comprehensive planning efforts and asked people their opinions on unsafe locations, which mostly correlated with data.
- PAT recently finished a route study with a strategic plan and is planning to reassess routes every 5-10 years.
- Community Facilities:
  - The Historic Southside Depot is currently being renovated.

**3. *What changes or improvements are needed for City facilities and infrastructure?***

- Infrastructure
  - Overall, infrastructure is dated and located in private property without easements, making access and maintenance very difficult for the City.
  - Water and wastewater are extremely valuable assets; however, the infrastructure needs significant work. The City contributes 52.5% to wastewater; additional money is needed for upgrades.
  - Reduce flooding in many areas.
  - City sewer is at capacity; force main issue causes overflow into Petersburg National Battlefield.
  - Strong FiOS city-wide would be beneficial as many residents lack sufficient Internet connectivity.
  - New LED streetlights have air monitoring and 5G capabilities; City funding for these efforts may be helpful, even if more costly and difficult to get through procurement. Streetlights were recently replaced but do not have these features.
  - City lacks strong design and/or environmental plans for grant applications.
  - Dominion Energy ownership of electric utility poles and lines prevents the possibility for a City-led undergrounding effort.
- Community Facilities:
  - Full rehabilitation is needed for City facilities, especially schools and historic facilities—they are barely maintained at a functional level.
  - City facilities are aging. Many are historic and we need to navigate renovation/retrofitting for new uses better than we currently do.
  - The City needs a new fire facility; service is currently at a deficit.
  - There are few shelters in the City for unhoused individuals, and the homeless presence makes people feel unsafe and further cuts down on pedestrian mobility.
    - Overall, there should be a greater regional effort for finding solutions to house the unhoused/transient population.
    - The number of residents living in extended stay hotels has grown in recent years due to high eviction rates.
    - Unhoused individuals tend to camp out around the Library at night; this leads many individuals to not feel as safe walking or biking around the Library.

**4. *What transportation improvements are needed in Petersburg?***

- A higher proportion of Petersburg residents don't own cars and are suffering from social determinants that make transportation and mobility difficult.
  - Connect sidewalks and trails (including Appomattox River Trail) to transit, not just recreation—and connect to bike/pedestrian infrastructure for all ages, abilities, connected to downtown and all of Petersburg
  - Improve access to healthy food, medical care, and educational opportunities via active transportation.
  - Areas dangerous in terms of walkability are also dangerous because of the urban heat island effect within the City. A heat island study was recently conducted.
- Public Works & Utilities has requested a budget amendment for significant paving over the next five years; current paving budget is deficient. The City does not have a systematic plan or study for repaving.
- Sidewalks:
  - Sidewalks are in disrepair, especially in Old Town off Washington and Wythe Streets.
  - Sycamore Street is not ADA accessible; people are forced to travel on street into oncoming traffic.
  - Traffic lights do not impact ADA access on sidewalks City-wide, but large puddles and drainage issues do, as does overgrowth from trees and plants.
  - No crosswalks or walking signals in many areas.
  - The City needs additional funding to fix existing sidewalks and expand the sidewalk system, although sidewalks and ADA improvements may not line up with road improvements that might come later (e.g., repaving, curb and gutter repairs).
  - Lakemont should be a priority for sidewalk investment.
- Transportation resources are deficient across the city, especially in neighborhoods like Lakemont.
- Congestion is not a major issue.
- Problematic/dysfunctional intersections include:
  - Puddledock and Washington; signaling is poor and the stop bar on Puddledock is over 100 feet from light due to railroad tracks.
  - I-95 exits onto E. Washington and Wythe Streets; the guardrail for the onramp was removed arbitrarily, and lanes are confusing at that interchange.
    - These exits are also poorly lit, making visibility difficult after dark.
  - S. Sycamore and S. Crater: five-way stop, both safety and congestion issue.
  - Market (southbound) at Wythe problematic because of fire station at intersection—drivers either wait far back behind the stop bar or fire trucks are blocked from exiting.
  - Several road crossings are unsafe on and around Johnson Road for students traveling to Petersburg High School. This needs to be addressed in future planning and investment efforts.
- PAT bus service:
  - Several bus stops are not located in ideal places, and routes have changed little or not at all over the past 50 years. PAT route assessments are planned to occur every few years.

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- Most stops do not have shelter, lighting, seating, or trash cans, and shelters are expensive and require trash cans to be installed and serviced. Additionally, the homeless will claim bus stop shelters as long as homeless shelters are not available, which would deter riders from wanting to use those shelters or ride the bus from that location.
- Park and Ride facilities:
  - Vicinity of I-85/I-95 interchange has been identified as a potential site.
  - Residents of Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg travel back and forth for work, and some existing and growing employment centers are located outside of MPO boundaries. Census data is available to support this.
- Historic preservation legacy and regulations add cost and additional layers of bureaucracy when federal funding is used.
- City of Petersburg needs an arborist to manage its urban forest and has recently submitted an RFP to hire one.
  - Historic trees are ripping up sidewalks, making pedestrian travel difficult for wheelchairs and strollers, but their removal would be antithetical to important climate change and historic preservation goals.
  - City needs better communication with residents about tree care responsibilities, including potential contracts with tree care groups.
- More Level 3 electric vehicle charging stations are needed, especially in Old Town as another incentive for tourists to come to the area.
- There is a minimal appetite for e-bikes and e-scooters, as the population in areas the City has already considered for this may not be comfortable with using them. Sidewalks and roads are a barrier to e-mobility. The City also needs to pursue additional public education on the boundaries between car and bike/scooter lanes.
  - People without bank accounts would use pre-paid credit cards to pay for services, which scooter companies do not allow as a form of payment.

**5. *How is your organization planning for future facility/utility capacity and maintenance? How will changes in future land use and development in the City impact this?***

- The City is looking at grant funding for stormwater studies in the Poor Creek area with the goal of reducing flows in that area by 20% or more, later moving to other places where development is headed.
- The City is also considering IOT leak detection.
- VDOT is commissioning a study on roads and riverine areas in the era of climate change.
- Lieutenant's Run and Brickhouse Run need grant funding for management, but both water bodies run through private property without easements. Houses will need to be moved to properly manage these water bodies, which is a huge challenge.

**6. *How do you anticipate mobility and community facility needs and service delivery may change as we look ahead to the next generation?***

- The City should plan for changes to transportation networks as a result of climate change.

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- Pocahontas Island: all new potential development will be in floodplain and inaccessible to bus routes. New development would have to be on stilts, but residents do not want that new form of development
  - The Comprehensive Plan needs to incorporate the floodplain expansion along creeks and in Old Town due to climate change.
  - The City has no pavement management study, or GIS data for stormwater or sanitary systems.
- 7. *As you look ahead to the next 5, 10, and even 20 years, what opportunities should the City of Petersburg take advantage of that would improve quality of life in the community? What assets can the local government build upon?***
- The City should look to development in southeast section of city for revenue streams for revitalization.
  - The City should engage with groups which lead retrofitting of abandoned/unused buildings for uses such as aquaponics, hydroponics, etc.
- 8. *Do you have any other questions or concerns related to mobility, community facilities, and infrastructure that should be considered in the Comprehensive Plan?***
- Petersburg has a high incidence of vacant and blighted buildings, including some city-owned facilities (e.g., Peabody). Blight and aesthetics remain a problem throughout the City – and what kind of message do we send the younger generation through continuing to leave properties in a widespread state of disrepair?
    - City has no way to enforce seizure/closing of abandoned building, and some legislators being landlords makes it difficult to act.
  - A significant amount of the City's current funding comes from COVID relief packages, which will run out in a few years. How can the City find sustainable funding sources?
  - Greater public engagement for projects is needed.
  - The River Street Market is a valuable asset, and many residents rely on it for their supply of fresh and healthy food. Expanding access in the winter months through an indoor market or an incubator space for local growers would be vital in continuing to provide a healthy food supply year-round.

On November 17, 2022, the Berkley Group facilitated a focus group meeting with representatives from organizations related to arts, culture, historic preservation, and parks and recreation around the City – all important factors of overall quality of life. This meeting was held at the Petersburg Public Library in a roundtable discussion format. Participants discussed questions regarding existing conditions and planning for the future of the City. The following is a summary of the subsequent discussion.

The organizations represented at the Quality of Life Focus Group on November 17, 2022 were:

- Battersea Foundation
- City of Petersburg Department of Economic Development, Planning, & Community Development
- City of Petersburg Department of Recreation, Special Events, & Volunteerism
- McKenney Foundation
- Petersburg Family YMCA
- Petersburg National Battlefield

**1. *What are the City of Petersburg's biggest assets or strengths related to art, history, culture, and recreation? Is Petersburg fully capturing the potential of these assets/strengths? How can the City build upon them?***

- Historic Resources:
  - There are wonderful historic buildings in Old Towne and the Poplar Lawn and West High neighborhoods.
  - We have the Architectural Review Board (ARB) to preserve character.
  - Petersburg National Battlefield is an important historic resource, as are plaques and other signage downtown explaining the City's war heritage.
  - The City's Revolutionary War heritage is also sufficient for robust tours.
  - The high proportion of National Historic Register properties in Petersburg brings in many visitors.
  - Civil Rights history is a unique asset.
- Parks & Recreation:
  - The many neighborhood parks are assets; they are not perfectly maintained but the infrastructure is in place.
  - Petersburg is a basketball town and already has basketball courts in many parks.
  - The Petersburg Sports Complex is a great recreational opportunity, but the City is not fully capturing its marketing and tourism potential. The complex has been neglected, and the City hopes to revitalize it soon. Rehab is estimated to cost \$1.6M.
  - The Recreation department is currently revitalizing a baseball field and has been investigating the sports complex revitalization as part of efforts to increase and responsibly promote tourism.
  - The City has created a new trail route as part of East Coast Greenway; biking tourism is becoming increasingly popular.
- Partnerships:
  - There is strong collaboration between the City's recreation department and other community groups. The City and YMCA do a good job coordinating and filling in the gaps and not overlapping in resource provision for children and teenagers.

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- Groups like FOLAR are very important in the area by planning active transportation projects that bring more people — hopefully more young people and more athletic people — into Petersburg.
- PHOPs is set to be refunded and is promoting a trailhead in the Lakemont neighborhood. The organization has been undertaking more work recently to encourage parks and wellness activities.
- Opportunity is there for partnerships with Dinwiddie County.
- Events:
  - Local food pantry held a successful festival at The Iron Works in May; Halifax Music Festival happens yearly and is popular; 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks at Trapezium was successful and will continue. Visitors tend to activity-hop across municipalities in the area.
  - Festivals are generally popular and successful when put on. There could be a potential for a new festival every month, especially festivals that are seasonal or oriented around the holidays.

**2. *What weaknesses, challenges, or barriers exist when it comes to providing arts, culture, history, and parks/recreation in Petersburg?***

- Historic Resources:
  - Two City museums are dated, underfunded, and not well attended.
  - National Park land was given to the City in 1970s; this land included Confederate and Union earthen defenses (i.e., earthworks). The City maintains no record of many of these historic resources, and they have not been adequately protected (e.g., ditches dug through earthen defenses). These earthworks should be identified and be nominated to NRHP and in GIS, so the City and the public know to treat them as historic resources and not as the public right of way.
  - An “Alphabet soup” of historic groups bonded by a relatively inactive consortium makes preservation efforts difficult, and most are dominated by the same few members.
  - The City’s ARB is focused on local districts, which does not help protect historic properties outside of these designated districts.
    - Additional local historic districts may need to be considered because the ARB does not review changes to buildings in other historic neighborhoods (e.g., Delectable Heights).
    - The City needs to better educate the public about historic significance and historic preservation outside of Old Towne. Many residents are scared by the prospect of historic protection on their property and don’t understand the importance.
  - The GIS data for City does not fully reflect all its historic preservation needs. The City should know more about its historic resources to be able to protect, preserve, and promote them.
  - The City has trouble attracting younger people to historic sites.
  - Many historic buildings have code violations due to property owners not having the financial means to make improvements or the knowledge to be familiar with the grant funding and other assistance available for maintenance and rehabilitation. Some City-owned buildings would likely be considered code violations if enforced.
  - The City could improve accessibility to historic places in accordance with federal guidelines.

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- Residents hold a perception that cemeteries are not being serviced/maintained—which is partially untrue—but many historic sites (i.e., cemeteries) cannot be readily accessed due to limited parking.
  - Great ideas for civil rights/Black history promotion have been lost with changes in leadership.
  - Parks and Recreation:
    - Recreation competes too much regarding double scheduling/overscheduling for events.
    - The City's Recreation department needs more money, staffing, and better organizational capacity to execute its plans.
    - The City has no football field of its own, which residents are demanding.
    - Eventually, the City would like to invest in tennis, golf, etc.—“alternative sports” for residents who don't play football or basketball.
    - Maintenance is an issue, and the City currently has no regular maintenance plan for its parks and park equipment.
  - Tourism:
    - Petersburg Area Art League is now the only active art group. More art activities are supposed to be occurring with Friday for the Arts, but it is not sustainably/routinely promoted.
    - Lodging is limited in Petersburg. City loses out on lots of “overnight money” here. Corporate visitors and VSU alumni in town for homecoming only stay in Richmond because there are no four-star or higher-rated hotels in Petersburg.
    - The City needs a downtown central restroom facility, as none currently exists outside of the library. This is especially important for tourists.
  - Government:
    - Extensive turnover in City government has made the provision of services and expansion of community programming difficult.
    - Need to communicate the role of different City employees more clearly to citizens to build trust and transparency.
- 3. How well is the City achieving each of the following objectives? Identify any specific improvements needed. What specific actions should the City take to address these needs?**
- Maintaining City-owned parks, recreation, and historical resources:
    - Prioritize the maintenance and repair of existing resources before adding new spaces/amenities.
    - The City needs to be more proactive about maintenance issues when they arise rather than waiting until down the road to fix the issues and letting issues snowball. Much of this is related to lack of capacity.
    - Three City museums require significant renovation. One of the museums requires \$6M in improvements. Most localities don't own these types of museums—it would benefit the City to find other strong nonprofits to take over Centre Hill and Exchange Building, but most local nonprofits are not strong enough to be self-sufficient. Some felt the City should keep Blandford Church in its ownership due to the Tiffany glass windows in the building.
  - Providing amenities and recreation programming that residents want and use:
    - The Petersburg Family YMCA is a great resource, but the City has no community or rec center of its own.

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- Protect and enhance passive recreation opportunities.
- The Exchange Building needs to be reimaged.
- Museums need interactive exhibits.
- Ensuring safe and accessible facilities:
  - Introduce therapeutic recreation (for example during a playground renovation, add accessible elements). Playground equipment needs to be both 'therapeutic' and accessible to those with disabilities.
  - New football fields need to be in a safe location so visitors from other parts of Virginia will feel comfortable visiting.
  - The City needs to make facilities safer by improving lighting and closing facilities at the right time. Parks are not well-served day-to-day—never really “closed”, always open to illegal activities.
- Promoting parks and open spaces to residents:
  - Lack of Internet access is an issue.
  - A dedicated PAT bus route or bus program (e.g., trolleys) to transport people to green spaces could benefit visitation to parks and historic places.
  - The City newsletter is quarterly; the City needs a seasonal cultural and recreational activity guide that does not require Internet access, so that residents without a cellphone or Internet can still be informed.
- Preserving historic resources (buildings, landmarks, sacred spaces):
  - The City should find ways to better leverage the institutional knowledge of long-time residents. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) visited a few years ago to teach residents how to nominate historic structures to NRHP—similar efforts could work going forward.
  - Better education and stewardship to teach people, especially youth, about the importance of historic places should be a priority for the City moving forward.
  - Historic preservation education is a challenge.
    - Informational postcards were sent out to property owners in historic districts a few months ago but this did not gain a lot of traction.
    - Historic Petersburg Foundation put on an event a few years ago but only already interested people came, not those property owners that needed to be reached.
  - Potential for façade improvement program to improve appearance and condition of dilapidated buildings. The last façade improvement was funded through CDBG but fell through the cracks due to a weak framework.
  - Large trees can damage earthwork in strong storms—should be removed from their vicinity when prudent.
- Celebrating Petersburg's story through arts, culture, and historic preservation
  - Tourism has largely fallen to non-profits. The City needs to get involved in programs that are currently funded through non-profits (e.g., trolley, docents, joint events like reenactments — “draws in families”).
  - Festivals work here. The City needs a special events coordinator.
  - The City needs a welcome center, and there are plenty of good places with parking to accommodate it (i.e., Greyhound Station, Neptune Station, Southside Depot, or other downtown locations).

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- Hopewell does better at promoting tourism than Petersburg, even though they have less built heritage to leverage.
- Main Street program is not accredited.
- The City does a poor job of promoting civil rights resources. Development of a civil rights trail may help to bolster this.
- Achieving equitable provision of recreation and cultural services
  - All City parks currently need reinvestment. Most City parks/facilities are in a similar state of disrepair.
  - Some hold the perception (whether right or wrong) that downtown gets more allocation of resources than outer areas such as the Route 36 corridor. The recent closure of the landfill in the area may help, but the perception still exists.
  - Lakemont area needs attention; PHOPs is working in this area.
  - Determine where amenities are more geographically concentrated and consider allocation and maintenance of these amenities across the City.
  - Make sure long-time residents and families can remain rather than being driven out by gentrification.

**4. *What types of partnerships or funding opportunities could be leveraged to help meet recreation and cultural needs in Petersburg?***

- The Petersburg Family YMCA offers free youth opportunities (2 times per month).
- The City needs to sort through the creation of a “general fund” for tourism efforts.
- A community renewal organization is conducting ongoing Liberty Street improvements: potential for this model to be replicated elsewhere.
- HistoriCorps and Historic Petersburg Foundation help to fund historic building repairs and train people to sensitively renovate/rehabilitate.
- Petersburg National Battlefield could do more to provide direction to myriad of local historic preservation groups.
- Stronger partnerships between PHOPs & FOLAR (previously discussed).

**5. *Do you have any other questions or concerns related to arts, culture, history, and/or recreation that should be considered in the Comprehensive Plan?***

- More funding is needed to maintain historic resources.
- The City has a flat tax base—COVID relief and Partnership for Petersburg have both provided helpful funding, but the funding will run out in several years.

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**Public Safety Focus Group Meeting Notes**



On January 12, 2023, the Berkley Group facilitated a focus group meeting with representatives from organizations related to public safety. This meeting was held at the Petersburg Public Library in a roundtable discussion format. Participants discussed questions regarding existing conditions and planning for the future of the City. The following is a summary of the subsequent discussion.

The organizations represented at the Public Safety Focus Group on January 12, 2023 were:

- Petersburg City Attorney's Office
- Petersburg Department of Community Corrections
- Petersburg Department of Neighborhood Services
- Petersburg Fire Marshal's Office
- Petersburg Police Department
- Petersburg Sheriff's Department

**1. *What are the City of Petersburg's biggest assets in terms of public safety? How can the City continue to build upon these assets?***

- Staff are dedicated, caring, and willing to be innovative in coming up with solutions to serve the community.
  - City staff is working harder and working longer hours with fewer resources.
  - A strong pool of long-term employees gives the City foundational support and expertise and helps send a positive message of stability to citizens.
- The City is good at maintaining civil process and interdepartmental coordination.
- Petersburg has improved dramatically in the last four years, and the City is continuing to head on a trajectory of continued improvement.

**2. *What are the community's top public safety concerns?***

- The top public safety concerns discussed were crime (overall and violent), drug prevalence, and poverty.
- What feeds crime within the City?
  - The lack of job opportunities and opportunities to build a financially stable career contributes to high crime rates.
  - Dilapidated extended stay hotels contribute to crime. The City needs to look at its zoning along the U.S. Rt. 460 corridor and what by-right uses are allowed in those zoning districts.
  - Nightclubs create issues. How are they defined and enforced by the City? The City should consider creating an entertainment district to concentrate nightclub type uses and reevaluate how it is penalizing underground nightclubs.
  - Blight and struggling school systems create an environment that is conducive to crime.
  - Crime has spread throughout the entire City and is not just concentrated in one ward.
    - Teenagers who can get access to guns hang out in other neighborhoods, causing resident alarm.
    - Pervasive inequality and very stratified neighborhoods feed crime as well.

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- Methods of drug distribution, as well as gang activity, have transferred to digital platforms.
  - Both local and national gangs have presence in Petersburg.
  - Digital gang wars mean that violent crime is more "random," meaning that gang members will take random sightings as opportunities for gun violence.

**3. *What are the biggest challenges that your department or organization faces in responding to emergencies or providing effective public safety services?***

- Overall, the City's public safety departments do not have the manpower to combat the crime rate.
  - The Police Department handles everything as opposed to passing off cases to other agencies, and they must multitask due to lack of staff.
  - The number of homicides in the City inversely correlates with budget and manpower in the Police Department.
- Negative media coverage of the Police Department and the City overall makes it challenging to maintain a positive reputation in the community and the region.
  - Stigma issues are part of the problem, and the City needs to figure out how to overcome the stigma.
  - Social media continuously reinforces the negative reputation; a lot of citizens promote the negative narrative about Petersburg in addition to the media.
  - The population who comes to Council meetings are not the people who are experiencing the day-to-day struggles of life in Petersburg and are not helping to offer solutions.
- Historic government instability makes it difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. This lack of staff and funding is perhaps the biggest challenge the City faces in public safety provision.
  - The City is competing with Colonial Heights and Prince George County for staff.
  - Neighboring localities also have career development programs and incrementally increasing benefits. The City used to offer these opportunities, but no longer does.
    - Poor health insurance benefits contribute to retention issues.
  - Each police officer receives 25-30 calls per day; this is much higher than the call rate in neighboring localities.
- The City's fire stations are older buildings in need of maintenance and are not strategically located throughout the City. This combination decreases response times.
  - Over time, development in the City has not matched the initially strategic placement of fire stations.
  - There is inequity in response times – some areas have 2-4 minute response times; other areas have as high as 8-10 minute response times.
  - There needs to be constant examination of the relationship between growth and development and public service safety provision.
  - There is a strategic plan for Fire and EMS that is about three years old and evaluated the station potential based on call volume.

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- The mental health crisis in the community places a strain on an already overworked and underpaid police force.
  - Last year alone, 4,000-man hours were spent on Temporary Detention Order (TDO) / Emergency Custody Order (ECO) calls. This equates to 177 days and \$111,000 worth of overtime.
- Rehab centers that are unsanctioned and unauthorized by the state are popping up around the City. This is creating problems in residential neighborhoods.
  - The City should consider how to limit rehab centers and in-home counseling locating in residential neighborhoods where they should not be located.
- Precincts are manned 24/7; substations are open for part of the day and serve primarily as places for officers to stop in and work on cases as schedules permit.
  - The Police Department has one primary location, one satellite location for detectives and other officers, and one substation near Old Towne.
- The vision is constantly changing due to the frequent turnover in City administration. There is no set vision or long-term commitment.
- Having a regional jail and having to transport prisoners 20-25 minutes away is time consuming and takes manpower off the ground.
- Buildings that are deemed to be “historic” can be a liability in terms of addressing blight.
  - Blight creates concerns for safety, economic development, and community corrections. It has been a problem for 20 years or more and has continued to spiral over time. Staff is working very hard to address it, but needs support and patience from Council and the community to continue to address it and make a difference.

**4. *How can the City better support your department or organization in responding to emergency events?***

- More staff for public safety departments are desperately needed.
- The City should develop a comprehensive maintenance program for City-owned properties.
- In the past, the City’s Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) has been treated as an “unfunded wish list.” The CIP needs to be financially supported.
  - The City can be reluctant to allocate money because of fiscal crises in previous years.
- Recently, City Council approved the Police Department to convert a property located at 400 Farmer Street into a new police headquarters. However, this is an abandoned structure that needs quite a bit of work to remedy damage and make it a usable space. Frequent turnover in the Public Works department has also stalled the progress of the project.
- All City-owned facilities are in very poor condition and need to be improved in order to better support staff and facilitate service delivery to residents.
  - In the case of the Police Department, this is also an issue of keeping violent criminals away from civilian staff. There is no physical separation between the two groups in the building.
  - Ceilings have caved in multiple times; this creates safety concerns for staff who are in the City facilities daily for work.

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- Create a centralized location for the provision of City services as opposed to the current model of departments being spread out in multiple buildings around the City.
    - City Council has extensively discussed the creation of a municipal complex; this is one of the City's greatest needs.
  - City Council needs more consistent messaging to department heads regarding how to address community issues.
- 5. *As you look ahead to the next 5, 10, and even 20 years, how do you anticipate public safety service delivery may change?***
- The creation of a pharmaceutical cluster will lead to an influx of people into Petersburg.
  - The casino legislation and the possibility of a casino in the City is a potential future challenge to service delivery. If law enforcement is strapped now, this will be exacerbated several years down the road when tens of thousands of people are visiting the casino.
  - There are questions over how the new courthouse project will be staffed.
  - Fire and EMS has great equipment needs, but the cost of new equipment is exorbitant. One possible solution for the future is to explore the creation of a volunteer unit.
- 6. *What metrics are most appropriate in helping the City know when it has met its public safety goals?***
- Neighborhood Services provides a weekly report to City Council with metrics.
- 7. *Do you have any other comments or concerns related to public safety that should be considered in the Comprehensive Plan?***
- Considering how land use and development trends relate to crime will be important to include in the Comprehensive Plan.
    - Adaptive reuse of old buildings to multi-family residential units can place pressure on dated infrastructure, which creates safety concerns for these residents.
    - Water and sewer problems make it difficult for the City to play "catch-up."
    - Crime prevention through design has been discussed historically, along with community policing. However, due to staffing constraints, it has been difficult for the department to focus on community policing and the provision of School Resource Officers (SROs).
    - The City's gateways and major transportation corridors have many unattractive uses, such as junkyards and used car lots. The City has come a long way in improving its gateways over time but can continue to find ways to increase its attractiveness.
  - Standard of living and safety are important to consider in code enforcement and physical development.
  - The City needs a criminal justice board or criminal justice planner to track data and create a roadmap for the future moving forward.

# City of Petersburg Comprehensive Plan Update Health and Social Services Focus Group Meeting Notes

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On January 12, 2023, the Berkley Group facilitated a focus group meeting with representatives from organizations related to health and social services in the City of Petersburg. This meeting was held at the Petersburg Public Library in a roundtable discussion format. Participants discussed questions regarding existing conditions and planning for the future of the City. The following is a summary of the subsequent discussion.

The organizations represented at the Health and Social Services Focus Group on January 12, 2023 were:

- Cameron Foundation
- Central Virginia Health Services
- City of Petersburg Anti-Poverty Commission
- City of Petersburg Department of Social Services
- Crater District Health Department
- Petersburg Bureau of Police
- Petersburg Healthy Options Partnerships (PHOPs)

**1. *What are the City's biggest assets or strengths related to health, wellness, and social services? Is Petersburg fully capturing the potential of these assets/strengths?***

- Community organizations, civic and social organizations are a major asset to the City. It is easy for the community to tap into them and meet their needs.
  - Many of these community organizations have services available through mobile units.
  - There are lots of non-profit organizations who truly care about the community and tap in and fill in gaps where they can. They truly care.
- The Petersburg Public Library is an asset.
- Free transportation through Petersburg Area Transit is a strong benefit for the community.
- Trauma informed conferences occur and help organizations provide better informed care to the community.
  - The community feels that there is good access to healthcare in Petersburg.
- Petersburg has an overwhelmingly caring community. The community networks and bonds help facilitate information sharing. The spirit collaboration is already in place in several aspects of the community, not just in health and social services.
- Petersburg is fortunate to have university level research thanks to programs at Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and Virginia State University.
- Since the governor has stepped in through Partnership for Petersburg, Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) have taken a more increased presence. MCOs are able to have a greater role in educating the community and providing children with technology. Another positive effect is that there has been increased transparency about the different benefits MCOs offer to the community, including coupons for fresh produce, smartphones, and free rides to grocery stores, DMV, DSS, etc.
  - The population of Medicaid users in the community knows how to use their benefits, except for transportation services.

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**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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- There are some pockets where information regarding healthcare and social services is readily available, but one of the things that holds the City back is that we are trying to build on an antiquated infrastructure, both physical infrastructure and technological infrastructure.
  - The City is walking into a new era with an old foundation.
  - Community trauma tends to push people inward. Additionally, the generational mindset of older adults who didn't grow up going to the doctor can be skeptical of receiving healthcare.
- It's not that the resources are not already available in Petersburg; they are just not being used.
- The City is NOT capturing the full potential of its healthcare and social service assets.
  - The City is always reevaluating over time.
  - No centralized community clearinghouse makes it difficult to push out information – there needs to be ONE place where all of the information for the community exists. The lack of information and community awareness leads to the underutilization of resources; for example, the POP market at the public library.
  - Community organizations have tried to step in, but efforts can be siloed.
  - The City's Department of Social Services (DSS) should only be handling certain priorities, but they tend to handle way more work than they have the capacity to. More public-private partnerships would help address issues with manpower and caseload. 16,000 Petersburg citizens are enrolled in Medicaid, and DSS serves more than 21,000 people, or 60% of the City's population.
- Petersburg Crimson Clinic is part of CVHS. They have two other clinics within the City. One of these is a school-based health center, and CVHS Petersburg, Downtown, and Addiction Recovery Center. Both mental and physical health services are offered.
  - Crimson Clinic fills a huge gap for mental health provision for the City's youth community
  - Crimson Clinic pushes out all immunizations that are due and collaborate with Westview when it is time for preschoolers to go to public school. They run immunization clinic
  - People often wait until the very last minute and then they have trouble getting into school
    - Low levels of health literacy, and there are other priorities for families
    - Difficult to teach children the importance of vaccinations and health if it's not being taught or prioritized at home
    - Educating the children to be health advocates (Hopewell). Gives the children a sense of responsibility. They had wanted to do the same project in Petersburg but hit a brick wall – unsure why but could be due to frequent leadership turnover and the difficulty of introducing new curriculum in schools. School system has other priorities – namely, being accredited.

2. *What health challenges are the most common in the community? Who are the most vulnerable community members?*

- There are numerous health challenges in the community. The most common challenges include:
  - Infant mortality
  - Increase in drug use
  - Poverty
  - Chronic disease
  - Homicide
  - Housing challenges
  - Food deserts
  - High rates of STIs
  - Teen pregnancy
  - Mental health – leads to substance and drug abuse
  - Accountability of administration
  - The need for reproductive health education
- A lot of people are unaware that the issues listed above are common and are ashamed to voice their health challenges.
- Mental health is the most significant challenge, and adults who are living on Social Security are the most vulnerable.
- Crime is a strong social determinant of health in Petersburg. Many parents don't let their kids play outside because of safety issues and fear of getting shot; this has impacts on physical and mental health.
- The City's most vulnerable populations are children, the elderly, the LGBTQIA+ community, the BIPOC community, and people with disabilities.
  - The elderly community in the City suffers from unprecedented levels of loneliness and isolation.
  - 72% of the LGBTQIA+ community nationwide reaching out for mental health, and 42% nationwide lack permanent housing.
- 18% of Petersburg residents do not have access to personal vehicles, and the current infrastructure is not set up well for alternative methods of transportation.
  - A lack of overall sensitivity among drivers who provide transportation services associated with healthcare benefits discourages residents from taking advantage of healthcare services.
  - Low dental care utilization and limited access to mental health providers remain challenges for the community.
  - Suicide rate is high in Petersburg (28.7 in 2019). This, and other health concerns, are direct results of the consequences of systemic racism over time.

3. *What are the biggest challenges to providing health and social services in the City of Petersburg?*

- Major challenges to providing health and social services in Petersburg include:
  - Limited access to primary care providers (PCPs)
  - Lack of funding
  - Low health literacy
  - Poor interagency communication
  - Lack of transportation for families who want to access extracurricular and recreational activities
  - Unmanageable workload for DSS
  - Access to food that is both affordable and nutritious
  - Lack of centralized healthcare; everything is spread out throughout the greater Richmond region
  - Low technological literacy and access to affordable broadband
- The City tends to lump everything into DSS, but that defeats the purpose of being able to address things because they cannot address everything. There is not currently the opportunity to look for other orgs who do things well.
- President Biden's administration will discontinue the Public Health Emergency (PHE) for Medicaid on March 31. This gives DSS only 12 months to investigate tens of thousands of cases.
  - Many individuals will lose healthcare over noncompliance.
  - Challenges with mail delivery in the City and a lack of health literacy magnifies the negative impacts of this change.
- Every application at DSS is done through CVHS.
- Community Wi-Fi would change the City, as everyone would be able to access resources and information related to care and services.
- The community needs consistent messaging about why it is important to seek regular healthcare. Framing the need for healthcare in a negative light (i.e., not receiving a vaccination will make you sick) instead of in a positive light (i.e., receiving a vaccination will keep you healthy) reinforces skepticism.
- Isolated older adults call 911 and the police frequently just so they have someone to talk to; this strains an already overworked and underpaid police force.
- The faith-based community should do a better job of engaging the neighborhood around them. There are over 300 churches in the City of Petersburg.
  - A lack of collaboration within the faith-based community and a large population that comes from surrounding localities inhibit efforts to reach the community.

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**Health and Social Services**  
**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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4. *What types of development would be most effective in helping make Petersburg a healthier City to live, work, and play (i.e., parks, trails, grocery stores, clinics)?*
- Examples of development that would help promote community health and well-being included:
    - Homeless shelter
    - Housing options that are both affordable and diverse
    - Functional pedestrian infrastructure, especially along S. Crater Road
    - Lighting
    - Stop signs
    - Bike lanes that are both clearly marked and protected from vehicular traffic
    - Mixed-use properties to both create a sense of community and reduce the need for automobile dependence
    - Tactical urbanism and traffic calming
    - Full-service grocery stores
    - Community gardens
    - Bike racks and locks – there is nowhere to lock your bike when you access services
  - CARES is getting ready to open back up; this serves women and children.
  - Addressing neighborhood blight is important in promoting safety, which has a direct impact on health.
  - Petersburg is what could be described as a “fun” desert due to the lack of recreational opportunities for youth.
  - Veterans’ support services are desperately needed to help promote physical and mental health among this subgroup.
  - The City’s sports complex is an underutilized resource because it is only accessible to people with personal vehicles. Investing in the City’s parks would be an effective planning strategy, as they are closer to the neighborhoods and in great need of improvement.
  - There should be a greater focus on neighborhood investment – but one size does not fit all. Individualized solutions will be necessary.
  - The Fall Line Trail connection will have many positive benefits on the City, both in regard to health and the economy and tourism.
  - Major grocery store chains are a large need in the community.
    - A lot of people leave City limits to go to another grocery store, especially those with dietary restrictions due to lack of options.
    - A full-service grocery store in Old Towne is in the works. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has been working closely on this.
    - \$3 million goes to SNAP annually, so it’s not like there’s no revenue to support a full-service grocery store in the City.
    - Dollar stores tend to locate in minority communities and this continues to reinforce negative health outcomes.

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**Health and Social Services**  
**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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- Community gardens would be a valuable educational opportunity on teaching the community how to grow food and would help provide food justice to historically underserved populations.
    - Virginia Cooperative Extension has done initiatives in the community for growing food.
- 5. *How can the City better support your organization in providing health and social services to the community?***
- The City can build better relationships with local organizations to ensure consistency when staff turnover occurs.
    - Frequent City staff turnover hurts project progress.
    - The City needs to be continuously updating its website with current staff contact information, and up-to-date information in general.
    - The City can continue to be a partner in the work that has already occurred, and help to generate new ideas.
  - Continuing to promote partnerships will be critical for the future. Everyone operates in a silo – both in terms of programming and funding.
    - The City can continue its ongoing conversations with local organizations and make sure all relevant players have a seat at the table.
    - The City needs to do a better job of providing more direct support so that resources are not spread so thin.
  - The City does not have a centralized department or person to handle all health and human services and should explore creating one.
  - The most vulnerable populations in the City are generally disregarded by the City government.
  - The City needs to reevaluate its messaging to be more positive. Additionally, messaging should be a realistic presentation of what services are and who is responsible for providing different services.
  - Metrics for progress need to be established; what gets measured gets done.
  - The City can find best practices from other cities that have faced similar challenges and been successful. The wheel does not need to be reinvented.
- 6. *Do you have any other feedback or concerns related to health and social services that should be considered in the Comprehensive Plan?***
- The City will need to exhibit significant commitment to making policy changes.
  - Education is our best friend – develop a historical understanding of why health issues are happening. Personal accountability is important, but we need to be able to acknowledge systemic racism.
  - Commitment and consistency will be critical in seeing progress moving forward. You can be committed to the cause but need to be consistent with that commitment and messaging.

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**Health and Social Services**  
**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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- Accountability, commitment, collaboration, and communication are key themes to consider in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Overall, there needs to be some informational clearinghouse from the City for the community.
- Craft the message of healthcare and community services differently; the message needs to be an asset-based perspective rather than a deficit-based perspective.
- The system isn't working. Learn to recognize systemic issues and shake it up. It may be uncomfortable to acknowledge, but discomfort leads to change, and change leads to improvement.

City of Petersburg  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
**Economic Development and Tourism**  
**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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On January 19, 2023, the Berkley Group facilitated a focus group meeting with representatives from organizations related to economic development and tourism. This meeting was held at the Petersburg Public Library in a roundtable discussion format. Participants discussed questions regarding existing conditions and planning for the future of the City. The following is a summary of the subsequent discussion.

The organizations represented at the Economic Development and Tourism Focus Group on January 19, 2023 were:

- City of Petersburg Department of Communication, Tourism, Marketing, and Government Relations
- City of Petersburg Department of Economic Development, Planning, and Community Development
- Crater Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Economic Development Authority
- Petersburg Area Regional Tourism
- Southern Virginia Regional Chamber of Commerce (SOVA Chamber)
- Virginia's Gateway Region

**1. *What makes the City of Petersburg a good place for business investment and industry attraction? What are the challenges businesses and industries are facing?***

- Assets:
  - The location is fantastic, with proximity to major highways, Fort Lee, and educational institutions including Virginia State University (VSU), Richard Bland, Brightpoint Community College, and Appomattox Regional Governors School (ARGS).
  - The City is strategically located in the Richmond metro area, with access to other major markets such as Hampton Roads and Washington, D.C.
  - The City has unique historical assets. Pocahontas Island is the nation's oldest free Black community, and VSU is a top HBCU.
  - The new pharmaceutical cluster will bring employment and workforce development opportunities.
  - There are grant and 0% loan opportunities available to small business owners.
  - Petersburg is a land-rich city with a low cost of living.
- Challenges:
  - Negative perceptions of Petersburg can cause businesses and consumers to go elsewhere.
  - The public water system is aging and in need of repair, which has deterred businesses from locating in Petersburg. Some areas of the City are still on well and septic systems.
  - The proximity to Richmond – 27 minutes to downtown – is an asset, but also a drawback. Petersburg often gets overlooked with Richmond so close.
  - There are no advocates for Petersburg at the regional and state level. This is why Petersburg missed out on the Tobacco Fund opportunity, which could have provided 20 years of incentives for the City. The City needs unified leadership at both the local and state levels.
  - There is no transit rail connecting Petersburg to major hubs. The City's Amtrak station is actually in Chesterfield County.
  - It is difficult and slow to get transportation infrastructure improvements funded and implemented when competing with Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads.

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- The process to obtain a business license in the City is overly complicated, especially for small business owners and entrepreneurs.
- There should be more training opportunities for small business owners.
- The school system needs to improve to attract workers with families. Its negative reputation deters potential residents.
- The median income level in the City makes it difficult to build the tax base.
- Regional partners can also be competitors for grants and other opportunities.
- High tax structure – machinery and tools tax structure deters businesses from locating to Petersburg.

**2. *What are the City's biggest tourism assets/strengths? What are the City's challenges when it comes to tourism?***

- Existing Assets:
  - Historical resources, especially Petersburg National Battlefield, bring tourists into the City.
  - The Appomattox River is an untapped asset with tremendous recreation and tourism potential – land along the river is largely undeveloped. Existing and proposed regional trails and blueways, such as the Fall Line Trail and Appomattox River Trail, can tie into local networks to bring visitors into the City.
  - There is ample park and green space within City limits, although not all of it is maintained at this time.
  - Resources here are authentic and original, not reconstructed. Movies and TV shows that were filmed in Petersburg showcase the City's tangible assets.
  - There was a lot of resistance at first, but Dogwood Trace Golf Course has become a draw for tourists.
  
- Potential Assets:
  - A revamped sports complex could allow Petersburg to host large events, but opinions are mixed on whether this is the time and place for it. There are already several sports complexes in the region to compete with to host events, and the City doesn't currently have enough hotels to support a large visitor base. However, if successful, a sports complex could easily pay for itself and could spark economic development opportunities in the surrounding area.
  - A casino has a lot of potential to bring visitors and tax revenue.
  - Old Towne could be reinvented to attract tourists; for example, marketing it as a "foodie" destination due to its already strong restaurant presence.
  - The City owns three main tourist attractions; foundations also need to step up with coordination and marketing efforts, along with funding for maintenance.
  - The City needs an overall reinvention of its attractions. Black history, ecotourism, bike tourism, and sports tourism are all existing or emerging assets to leverage for tourism.
  
- Challenges:
  - Historically negative perceptions of the City deter new visitors.
  - The City's appearance could be improved, especially along its entrance corridors. There is often visible trash and blight where people get their first impression of Petersburg.
  - Civil War resources have historically been a tourist draw but are not representative of the City's entire history and are not as popular among younger generations. Locals know the

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**Economic Development and Tourism**  
**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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City's history very well, but it is not widely known or marketed to visitors. There could be more emphasis on the City's African American heritage, such as Pocahontas Island.

- Several historic buildings have potential but are in dilapidated condition at this time.
- The Appomattox River is difficult to access and needs to be dredged.
- There is a lack of lodging and amenities that keep tourists and tax dollars in the City. The new boutique hotel could help with this, but there need to be more affordable hotels and more expansion of the bed & breakfast uses.
- A lot of businesses are closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, which can leave a bad impression with visitors.
- Airbnbs are currently not paying lodging tax. The City needs to explore how to better regulate these uses.

**3. *How can we ensure that Petersburg continues to be a successful location for economic development and tourism? Are there existing assets that could be improved or better leveraged?***

- There should be more state agencies located in Petersburg, especially given that it is so close to Richmond.
- The City needs more partnerships with VSU and other nearby colleges and universities.
- The City needs more staff, including project managers to seek and implement funding more efficiently.
- There could be more education and outreach to inform local business owners about permitting and licenses processes.
- Pocahontas Island is underutilized – there is a lot of potential there, especially on its brownfields. Could be a good location for a business incubator.
- There needs to be a City-wide plan for existing assets and historic sites. The City has 1,600 vacant acres and there is no plan for how to best use them.
- A lot of people do not know about cultural opportunities in Petersburg. For example, the Petersburg Symphony is not widely marketed. It could have a positive impact on tourism.
- There is a "tug-of-war" going on with industrial recruitment; the City needs to revamp its machinery and tools tax structure due to stronger incentives and structures in other localities.
- There needs to be consistent messaging from the City.

**4. *Does City infrastructure (e.g., roads, rail, aviation) fulfill needs for industry, tourism, and businesses? If not, what improvements need to be made?***

- Water and wastewater systems are aging and in need of upgrades.
- There are legacy issues from the former toll plaza and the road development around it.
- The City needs to invest in technology to attract and retain businesses and workers. A study was done, but unsure of its status.
- Rail gave Petersburg an advantage for some industries, but not all businesses need rail, so they'll go somewhere cheaper.
- Stormwater management and stream projects are needed.

**5. *How can the City of Petersburg differentiate itself in recruiting industries or attracting tourists?***

- There needs to be a strategic marketing plan that tells the story of Petersburg and its history.

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**Economic Development and Tourism**  
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- The City could consider purchasing vacant land and proactively rezoning it to support future commercial or industrial development. It has been done before (Boards Head property). It has also been successful for multifamily development.
- There should be accountability and a sense of urgency, both locally and regionally. Consider a regional approach to lobbying, similar to what has been modeled in Southwest Virginia. Regional unity leads to a lower risk.

*6. How will Petersburg know when it has met its economic development and tourism goals? What metrics are most appropriate in measuring success?*

- For tourism, meals and lodging taxes are good metrics.
- Business growth, job creation, and property values are all good metrics.
- Increase in the number of business contacts expressing interest – not everyone ends up locating to Petersburg, but more interest generates real proposals.
- Minimum wage increases that small businesses can afford.
- When successful businesses close or retire, there are no plans to either continue the business or replace it – the buildings often sit vacant. Reduced time to fill vacancies would be a good metric.
- Petersburg needs to keep up with technology and look ahead to anticipate new trends. Technology will change the nature of jobs.
- Traditional metrics are jobs and investments. There also need to be incentives to drive business investment.

*7. Do you have any other questions or concerns related to economic development and tourism that should be considered in the Comprehensive Plan?*

- The City needs more staff, including a permanent project manager to pursue and oversee grant funding.
- Petersburg needs more advocates at the regional and state level. The City is losing out on opportunities like the Tobacco Fund that could directly support economic development.

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Comprehensive Plan Update  
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**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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On January 19, 2023, the Berkley Group facilitated a focus group meeting with representatives from organizations related to land use, housing, and development. This meeting was held at the Petersburg Public Library in a roundtable discussion format. Participants discussed questions regarding existing conditions and planning for the future of the City. The following is a summary of the subsequent discussion.

The organizations represented at the Land Use, City Character, and Development Focus Group on January 19, 2023 were:

- Pathways
- Petersburg Bureau of Police
- project:HOMES
- Restoration of Petersburg Community Development Corporation
- Roslyn Farm Corporation
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- Virginia State University (VSU)

**1. *How would you characterize recent development trends in the City of Petersburg?***

- There is a good, affordable housing stock.
- Apartments are trending – density is popular.
- Restaurants and night life are becoming increasingly popular.

**2. *What types of new development would benefit the community? Where should new development be located?***

- Dredging the Appomattox River would facilitate new recreational opportunities, such as water sports.
- There needs to be more diversity of housing stock for all income levels and lifestyles: rentals, condos, multifamily, single family. People can look forward to moving into their preferred housing as they age/grow in family.
- Gateways and entrance corridors to the City, namely Washington and Wythe Streets, need to be redeveloped, including redevelopment of the interstate ramps themselves. The current design does not promote visiting and staying in the city. There need to be amenities to attract people to stay in Petersburg – hotels, gas stations, etc.
  - Making Washington and Wythe Streets two-way streets would decrease speeding and open opportunities for “complete streets” development.
  - Route 36 leading to Fort Lee is another gateway that should be redeveloped. It hasn’t changed much since the 1970s/1980s.
- There is an area near the CSX Collier Yard and Squirrel Level Road that could be appropriate for an industrial park.
- Downtown needs a grocery store. Aldi or Lidl would be great. The closest grocery store is 15 minutes away.
  - The City has been making recent progress on attracting a new grocery store to Old Towne.
- Any new development should be walkable and bikeable for the community, whether it is residential or commercial/industrial. People should be able to get to their jobs without a car.

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- Green spaces, connectivity, sidewalks, and bike paths can all become transit for people that can't afford a car.
- New development should not decrease the City's tree cover.
- Petersburg also needs to say no to certain developments. Petersburg has a reputation of taking what it can get, but we need to have high standards, too.
  - Don't just duplicate what other cities in Virginia may be doing. Make Petersburg a unique destination.
- There are opportunities for Petersburg's Enterprise Zone. The City can tailor the local incentives to meet the needs of the businesses we are trying to attract.

**3. *What challenges does the City face when it comes to land use and development?***

- Both real and perceived issues with the City's public school system need to be addressed. There is a lot of potential in the schools, but families with children are not moving into the City due to the reputation of the school system – or if they do, their children attend private schools.
- There is a lack of industry and job opportunities to attract a permanent workforce and resident base.
- People who live here don't necessarily work here. Petersburg is a bedroom community for Richmond, and people often eventually end up moving to Richmond.
- Petersburg is seen as a secondary market to Richmond. More state agencies or company headquarters could be located in Petersburg, but it is overlooked.
- There is a good stock of historic homes, but there are also issues such as lead in the historic housing stock.
- There is not enough investment in things for people to do - schools, infrastructure, parks.
- New or renovated residential units are not marketed to people who already live here.
- Petersburg has a high level of poverty and single parents, but the current investments aren't benefiting those demographics. There are not enough daycares and other support for working parents.
- There are many blighted homes with absentee landlords. The City needs a more aggressive approach to blight abatement and code enforcement
- There is a lack of communication between the City and residents regarding rehabilitation and redevelopment opportunities – it has created mistrust among residents.

**4. *How do we ensure that Petersburg encourages desirable development while balancing other needs:***

- ***Preserving its historic character?***
  - There is a conundrum between protecting the City's historic character through regulations and deterring investors who do not want to spend the extra money.
  - Historic properties can be cost prohibitive, and many residents don't understand how tax credits work. Incentives can help encourage investment in restoring and maintaining historic properties. This is also an opportunity for greater investment in skilled trade jobs, as they can be financially stable and also fill a demand for historic preservation projects.
  - There needs to be more lighting downtown. Streetlights can be in a historic style to complement existing character. The City should consider reworking its lighting ordinance.
- ***Preventing displacement of long-term residents?***

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Comprehensive Plan Update  
**Land Use, City Character, and Development**  
**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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- When getting grant money, you need to ensure that the people who can use it have access to it and understand how to use it. Crowdsourcing and mutual aid are two avenues to explore further.
- Expand on programs that offer incentives that benefit city residents, such as tax abatement programs. The City has tax abatement programs for commercial and residential properties, but this has inadvertently led to higher taxes for neighbors – an unwanted ripple effect.
- ***Incorporating transportation, infrastructure, or quality of life improvements in new development?***
  - Petersburg Area Transit (PAT) service ends at 7pm and is not available on Sundays. Public transit access needs to expand.
  - Alternative modes of transportation – sidewalks, bike racks, and bike paths are needed.
  - Incorporating new access to the Appomattox River and parks is highly valuable.
- 5. ***Are there specific zoning, regulatory, or process requirements that need to be addressed to help facilitate desirable development?***
  - The City needs improvements to the lighting and landscape ordinances. Minimum lighting and vegetation standards will beautify the City and address safety concerns. Urban tree cover also improves the heat island effect.
  - Setbacks and minimum lot size – there needs to be more flexibility to create smaller lots more appropriate for an urban layout. Currently, the minimum lot size is too large. There are many nonconforming lots that can't be subdivided or used for ADUs because the ordinance doesn't match the scale of the City.
    - Undo older era suburban zoning regulations and update to reflect Petersburg's urban scale.
    - Allow "shotgun" style homes and duplexes; take advantage of this historic street grid.
  - Improvements are needed to the grass ordinance to enforce grass mowing during the summer.
  - Design standards should guide new development to match the character and aesthetic of the surrounding neighborhood. Zoning regulations should address tree cover, roof color, and bike lanes.
  - Vacant warehousing is not maintained; this can be problematic.
- 6. ***Are there any new or emerging development or land use considerations that the City needs to start planning for?***
  - We do see some level of interest in developing the City from a commercial standpoint – it's happening but it's slower.
  - The new pharmaceutical cluster will spark development around it.
- 7. ***Do you have any other feedback or concerns related to land use and development that should be considered in the Comprehensive Plan?***
  - There should be a dedicated grant writer/project manager to apply for and administer funding for projects.

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- It's essential for Petersburg to realize it is unique. Doing things the way other cities do it might not be the best choice for Petersburg. It would be very wise to think outside the box. Take creative approaches and embrace differences.
- There is park space, but much of it is in poor condition. Legends Park in particular needs improvement.
- The community needs to be more involved in decision making; this can help increase transparency and restore trust.
- New development should create recreational opportunities for the City's youth.

# City of Petersburg Comprehensive Plan Update Environmental Stewardship Focus Group Meeting Notes

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On January 26, 2023, the Berkley Group facilitated a focus group meeting with representatives from organizations related to environmental stewardship. This meeting was held at the Petersburg Public Library in a roundtable discussion format. Participants discussed questions regarding existing conditions and planning for the future of the City. The following is a summary of the subsequent discussion.

The organizations represented at the Environmental Stewardship Focus Group on January 26, 2023 were:

- City of Petersburg
- Crater Planning District Commission (CPDC)
- Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR)
- James River Association
- Petersburg Healthy Options Partnerships (PHOPs)
- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Virginia Department of Health, Crater Health District

## ***1. What are the City of Petersburg's unique environmental assets and resources?***

- The Appomattox River and a riverfront that is largely undeveloped. There are new trails and blueways in the works, such as the Fall Line Trail, the Appomattox River Trail, and the East Coast greenway.
- The City's historic and environmental resources support each other.
  - Pocahontas Island is a place of community pride and the oldest free Black community in the United States. Pocahontas Island was also an important location along the Underground Railroad.
  - Wilcox Lake and Legends Park is a largely undeveloped natural area. The lake was constructed and maintained through programs such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA).
- There is still some rural agricultural land on the City's southern edge, which is unique for an urban area. The National Park site (Petersburg National Battlefield) makes it a unique locality.
- Coopers Field has a natural meadow that reflects how Petersburg looked pre-development.
- There is access to nature close to an urban core. There is a lot of tree cover in some areas.
- The park system is extensive. There are a lot of City-owned parks.
- Petersburg Oasis Community Farm provides a space for urban farming and education. It is a great example of repurposing a vacant lot.
  - Vacant buildings are opportunities for demolition, with expansion of green space in those newly vacant properties.

## ***2. What are the biggest environmental challenges facing the City of Petersburg today?***

- Some of the parks are not maintained as they should be. There are safety issues, and the grass is not mown in the summer. Safety considerations need to be incorporated into parks planning.
- There is a lack of signage at parks, which leads to a lack of community awareness. Historical signage should also be installed at significant locations around the City.
- Some parts of the City are still on well and septic systems. This is primarily on the south side of the City. No septic would be ideal.
- GIS data for Petersburg's public parks and easements is incomplete.
- The Appomattox River is a resource, but there are concerns about development and pollution impacts; for example, sedimentation, construction waste dumping, and trash dumping.
- Wilcox Lake tends to get algae blooms.

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- The biggest environmental challenges facing Petersburg today are the consequences of climate change. There is increased precipitation and more frequent extreme weather events. Low-income communities like Petersburg are often those most impacted by climate change.
- Storm sewer infrastructure is undersized in many parts of the city, which leads to localized flooding. Residents are experiencing flooding damage, even if they do not live in a floodplain. This is a common occurrence for the Lakemont neighborhood in particular.
- There are urban heat islands in the city.
- There may be many unknown underground storage tanks in the City.
- There are not a lot of resources for environmental education except for the governor's school, but there is an interest among students.

**a) Are these challenges specific to particular areas of the City?**

- The city has map data of where drainage issues are reported. It shows where a significant number of issues have been reported.
- The landfill area is close to Lakemont. It has a physical and psychological impact on the community. The Lakemont community also has to deal with frequent flooding caused by failing infrastructure.
- Lead exposure in older houses is dangerous for children. It can also create problems for urban gardens that haven't remediated the soil.
- There are brownfield sites in Petersburg. The City has received state and federal funding in the past to clean up a few sites, but more remain. The City has applied for a small community grant for the Pocahontas Island area. There are other funding programs that could be appropriate for Petersburg, but they need the staff to pursue them.
- There are unknown underground storage tanks (USTs) throughout the City. It can be difficult to track them, especially older tanks that were installed before permitting records were more consistent. It may be possible to build a more complete inventory through historical building permits. Where USTs are found, funding and planning are needed to remediate the soil and find a new use for the site.
- Mapping air quality would be a proactive approach to help identify which areas have a prioritized need for air quality improvements like street trees and green spaces.
- Even if green spaces are restored, the City does not currently have a dedicated maintenance plan for the parks. Funding and planning need to address the long-term staffing and maintenance of parks.
- Vacant properties and abandoned buildings can contribute to environmental concerns.

**b) How can the City help to address these challenges?**

- Hire a City arborist who can address the need to balance the preservation of historic trees with repairing the City's failing infrastructure.
- Repurpose vacant lots for green space and gardening opportunities.
- Programs to educate the community would be beneficial; for example, native species giveaways, education outreach.
- Apply for grants that help remediate, rehabilitate, or redevelopment abandoned sites and brownfield.
- Revise City ordinances to require more site landscaping and street trees in new development, with best practices for tree cover and native species incorporated.
- A Complete Streets ordinance to address the balance of design and long-term maintenance would be beneficial. A community advisory committee consisting of long-term residents should be consulted in developing such an ordinance to preserve generational knowledge and indigenous ways of caring for green space.

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- Public transportation should connect residential areas to food access points.
  - The City can support creative incentives for converting vacant lots, such as allowing businesses to use vacant lots in return for lot maintenance.
  - The City should apply for water quality improvement grants.
  - Proactively implement watershed improvement plans for impaired waterways.
  - Use heat island data to determine priority areas for street trees and greenspaces.
  - The City needs to tap into generational knowledge about caring for the environment before that information is lost.
3. *Have the City's efforts to protect and preserve natural resources been effective, and if so, why have they been effective? If not, how could efforts be improved and expanded?*
- There needs to be more investment in trees and greenspaces to help mitigate heat islands and other negative impacts.
4. *What initiatives, efforts, or partnerships could be implemented to involve more community members in environmental protection and stewardship efforts?*
- Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR) hosts Stewardship Saturdays once a month to support stewardship culture. Volunteers do activities such as trash pickup and invasive species removal, and can learn skills to use in their own homes.
    - These events could be expanded through partnerships with Virginia State University (VSU) and other local groups.
  - Collaborate with local civic groups (like Kiwanis) to establish Adopt-A-Street and similar programs.
    - Petersburg City Public Schools (PCPS) could require community service hours.
  - Consideration should be given to developing an invasive species management plan.
  - Facilitate stronger connections between the community and environmental organizations. There is a need for greater environmental education.
  - The City could consider designating a "stewardship liaison."
5. *What should the City be doing to integrate environmental stewardship and climate change adaptation into its plans for future development (consider specific locations, projects, etc.)?*
- There are pending opportunities related to Partnership for Petersburg.
  - Financial opportunities through grants are available, but the City needs a good grant writer to pursue those opportunities.
  - Crater Planning District Commission (CPDC) seeks funding related to coastal zone management, coastal resource management plans, watershed improvement plans, RGGI, etc. and would like a bigger role in assisting Petersburg with applying for funds to address climate change and resilience.
  - Form an urban design committee to advise the Planning Commission. Look at public projects through the lens of good urban design and what works best for the people who live there.

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6. *Is there any other insightful information to share with the City related to environmental stewardship in the City of Petersburg, or the Comprehensive Plan generally?*
- As river access opens, there needs to be a campaign to educate people about environmental safety on the river and permanent signage posted.
  - The City has been working on water system infrastructure. There are frequent water main breaks because the infrastructure is so old. Some residents don't have access to potable water. Virginia Department of Health staff can assist with potential grants.
  - Environmental themes need to be thoughtfully written into the comp plan. Sustainability is supported when equitable opportunities are created. Community autonomy and grassroots ownership are important.

City of Petersburg  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
**Education & Workforce Development**  
**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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On January 26, 2023, the Berkley Group facilitated a focus group meeting with representatives from organizations related to education and workforce development. This meeting was held at the Petersburg Public Library in a roundtable discussion format. Participants discussed questions regarding existing conditions and planning for the future of the City. The following is a summary of the subsequent discussion.

The organizations represented at the Education & Workforce Development Focus Group on January 26, 2023 were:

- Appomattox Regional Governor’s School (ARGS)
- Brightpoint Community College
- Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA)
- Communities in Schools of Petersburg (CIS)
- Metropolitan Business League (MBL)
- Petersburg City Public Schools (PCPS)
- Petersburg City School Board
- Petersburg Public Library
- Richard Bland College of William and Mary
- Virginia’s Gateway Region
- Virginia State University (VSU)

***1. What are the biggest strengths of Petersburg’s educational services and workforce development programs?***

- The Appomattox Regional Governor’s School is in the City, and there is close proximity to multiple colleges and universities: Virginia State University, Richard Bland College, and Brightpoint Community College. There is a lot of potential for expanding partnerships.
  - The region’s community colleges are innovative and there is strong potential for community college expansion within the City in future years.
- The pharmaceutical cluster will bring new opportunities for economic and workforce development. The training and job creation this can generate would be impactful.
- There are currently dual enrollment, entrepreneurship, apprenticeship, and women in business programs to support students and business development. These programs are supported by several different groups, including Petersburg City Public Schools (PCPS) and Virginia State University (VSU).
  - However, while dual enrollment in PCPS exists, there is a lack of awareness among students and inconsistent communication.
- There is support for Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the City, including the new Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee created by the School Board.
- Petersburg is a passionate and committed community.

***2. What are the biggest challenges to providing quality education and opportunities for workforce development in the City?***

- Petersburg’s reputation leads to misperceptions about the actual existing conditions and potential of the City and can deter potential businesses and investors. But Petersburg has a lot of good qualities that need to be capitalized on.
- Community colleges do not have the physical footprint in Petersburg that is needed. The City would benefit from opening a community college branch with sophisticated facilities and labs.

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- Making healthcare, skilled trades, and truck driving programs available through the community college system would be attractive to Petersburg residents.
- While there are some relationships with area programs and colleges, there is not enough collaboration between the City and regional education partners. The City could be more proactive in reaching out to local partners at ARGIS, Brightpoint, etc.
- Students are often faced with difficult situations at home, so they are not always able to give their best during school hours.
- There are not enough community centers with activities for students to use their time productively after school hours.
  - Community centers should be located throughout the City to reach students. Currently, the YMCA is the only option, and it is often crowded.
  - Parents need opportunities to build their skillsets through training. Community centers could also house workforce development programs and opportunities.
  - Vacant City property could also be converted to a community hub or family resource center.
- Recruiting and retaining quality and qualified educators is a challenge. High turnover reduces institutional knowledge and requires resources for training new teachers. Students have interest in certain courses, especially CTE, but there are not enough qualified candidates to teach them.
  - The primary reasons why it is so difficult to attract and retain qualified candidates are due to fiscal constraints and the stigma surrounding the demographics of the community.
  - Walkable, mixed-use communities are a land use opportunity that can also help attract younger teachers.
- Petersburg City Public Schools does not own the school buildings; the City does. Many of the school facilities and playgrounds need to be updated.
- Programs need to serve the entire spectrum of students, not just “gifted” students. All students need opportunities for enhanced learning and growth in a variety of subject areas.
- There are grant opportunities that would benefit Petersburg, but the requirements attached to the grants often disqualify Petersburg. State and federal objectives do not have enough flexibility to meet the City’s specific needs.
- Many families do not have the ability to transport students to and from extracurricular activities, and PAT does not adequately service the City’s public housing. This creates challenges for students who want to participate in after-school activities but have no way to access those activities.
- Better branding of Petersburg would help attract investment. How do we focus and promote the good that’s already here?
- There is a lack of vision and needing to be creative. The funds are available through grants; the City needs to be able to take advantage.

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**Education & Workforce Development**  
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3. *Do students in the City feel that post-high school opportunities (e.g., college, workforce, military) are achievable? What could be done to better support students in post high school transition and opportunities?*
- Many students do not inherently feel that academic or workforce success is achievable for them, or do not know what type of opportunities exist. More exposure to a variety of fields and jobs would help students find a career path that interests them.
    - Routine exposure gives children a sense of belonging and helps open the door to the world outside their neighborhood. This could be done through field trips, job shadowing, and career fairs.
    - Larger scale college and career fairs existed prior to the pandemic; there are ongoing efforts to reestablish these.
  - Many students qualify for college financial aid but struggle to get their foot in the door because they cannot afford the initial application fees and place-holding deposits. There needs to be more financial support for these upfront costs that create barriers for cost-burdened students.
    - One possible avenue to explore is a community fund.
    - Another action item is for school counselors to evaluate communication methods to provide regular, consistent information about post-graduate opportunities.
  - More support is needed for young adults to transition out of high school. Young people entering the world at 18 do not always have the life skills they need to be successful.
    - The Boys and Girls Club changed their focus from ages 4-12 to ages 12-24 to help address this gap.
    - Criminal activity impacts child mindsets. Children go from a forward-looking mentality to operating in survival mode in a heavy presence of gang activity.
  - The high school needs more consistent information campaigns explaining college matriculation and job opportunities. There are some potentially easy and inexpensive methods that can be used to inform students of academic processes and opportunities, such as displaying the information daily on the school's existing TV screens and providing brochures.
  - "Lights On" programs utilize existing public school facility space at night to offer programs and resources for students, parents, and workers. These programs integrate both academic support and extracurricular, hobby-based activities. Petersburg would greatly benefit from a Lights On program.
4. *Do employees have access to opportunities to expand their skills to meet the needs of business/industry? What workforce development opportunities are most needed?*
- Career and Technical Education representing a variety of technical and vocational fields are needed to help residents find real job prospects.
  - There are opportunities for workforce training at the local community colleges, but Petersburg would be better served by their own local branch. The commute can be a deterrent for City residents.

City of Petersburg  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
**Education & Workforce Development**  
**Focus Group Meeting Notes**

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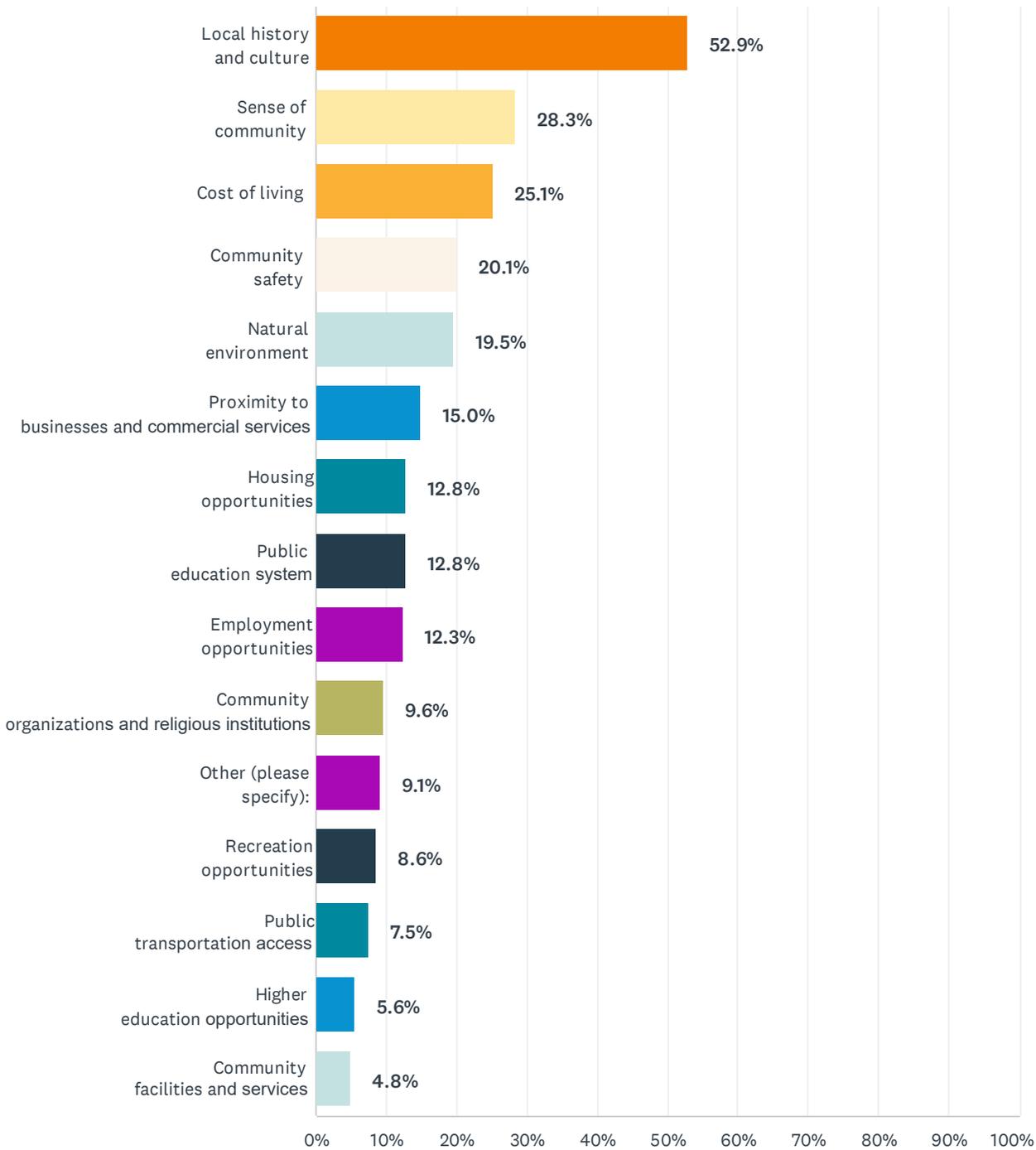
- The new pharmaceutical cluster will bring a lot of potential for new workforce training. Historically, Petersburg has been overlooked in favor of Richmond, so having a new medical-industrial base could spur the local opportunities that are needed in the City.
- 5. *What does your organization need to increase and maintain its impact and sustainability?***
- Brightpoint Community College needs more of a footprint in the city to establish effective, permanent programs. There needs to be an informal advisory group of local community members to help Brightpoint and the Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA) meet the specific needs of Petersburg.
  - Metropolitan Business League (MBL) has an office in Petersburg, but the location is not ideal due to perceptions of the area; it has had several instances of violent crime in a short amount of time. The MBL would benefit from a functional space in an area that is accessible and trusted.
    - A centralized incubator or co-working space with a shared kitchen would be beneficial.
  - Better public transportation is needed for students and workers, connecting all parts of the greater Richmond region. People need to have easy access into and out of Petersburg for classes and job opportunities.
  - The school system needs to recruit more teachers, which starts at the City level. There needs to be quality housing for all income levels and amenities to attract new teachers.
  - Public school teachers need to have better training and awareness of the typical student experience. They also need assistance with organizing and communicating, as well as developing special events.
  - An expanded Richard Bland footprint in Petersburg would be beneficial. Other ideas for greater connectivity include a dedicated bus route between Richard Bland and the City, community events and STEM camps, and partnerships with PCPS and Parks and Recreation to hold after-school activities and sports camps on the campus.
- 6. *Over the next 5, 10, and even 20 years, what trends or challenges related to education and workforce development do you anticipate? What do you see as potential solutions to address these challenges?***
- There will be more automation, which could eliminate certain jobs but will also create new types of jobs, especially in IT. High school and college programs need to follow industry trends to ensure they are providing useful education and training for the future.
  - Remote work and remote learning are here to stay in some capacity. There was a learning loss among students during the pandemic. Remote learning for schools can be both a benefit and a challenge for keeping students engaged through alternative methods.
  - There needs to be consistent support for quality CTE programs that set students up for success in the job market.

# **APPENDIX D**

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

# Q1 What do you value most about Petersburg? (Choose up to three):

Answered: 374 Skipped: 0

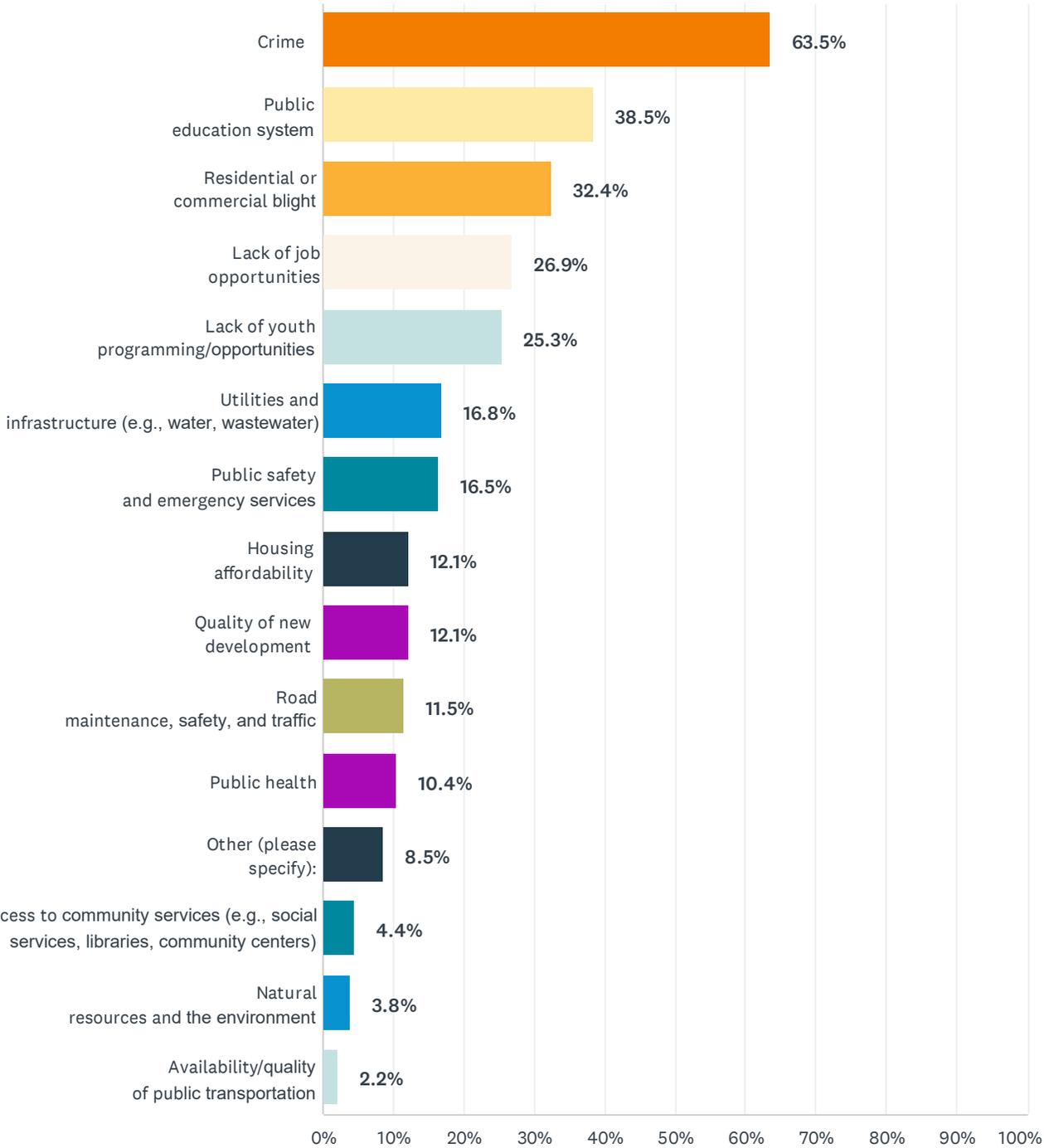


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	The African American History	2/14/2023 5:16 PM
2	Old Towne Restaurants	2/14/2023 8:19 AM

3	Restaurants and entertainment	2/13/2023 5:29 AM
4	Local businesses	2/12/2023 4:48 AM
5	The resilience & determination of its citizens	2/10/2023 1:54 PM
6	My Home Town	2/9/2023 11:39 AM
7	Reduction on property taxes and city water	2/8/2023 3:54 PM
8	Other than the 2 I selected the town is sadly lacking in all other areas. I want to love where I live but due to lack of funds the city is deteriorating and is depressing to see on a daily basis.	2/7/2023 5:35 AM
9	Unfortunately I can't say I value anything in Petersburg	2/6/2023 1:16 PM
10	I could list others, but the city is severely lacking in the other areas.	2/6/2023 12:24 AM
11	Historical downtown and local businesses	2/5/2023 9:01 PM
12	Local businesses	2/1/2023 6:40 AM
13	Business opportunities	1/31/2023 9:59 AM
14	Restaurants	1/31/2023 8:50 AM
15	Family	1/29/2023 11:39 AM
16	Combo of cost of living & housing-- these beautiful historic neighborhoods that I can afford to love in	1/25/2023 10:23 AM
17	The potential of Petersburg	1/25/2023 8:59 AM
18	It has a lot of potential	1/18/2023 7:09 PM
19	Nothing	1/14/2023 8:39 AM
20	Housing costs	1/4/2023 9:01 PM
21	Family	1/3/2023 9:19 PM
22	the potential to see the above done	12/29/2022 5:37 PM
23	College VSU	12/22/2022 8:55 AM
24	No opportunities is presented in Petersburg	12/21/2022 11:01 AM
25	Better communication-Newsletter	12/19/2022 7:30 AM
26	A CLEAN CITY!!! no trash, no litter, grasses cut regularly	12/15/2022 8:59 AM
27	Petersburg Fire Department and Southside Virginia Emergency Crew	12/6/2022 4:04 PM
28	has recreation but needs more to the river	11/30/2022 2:50 PM
29	Historic fabric	11/28/2022 11:24 AM
30	Nice to be somewhere new and i get to live here with my dad	11/18/2022 2:22 PM
31	better school food or a private that don't cost that much money to attend to	11/18/2022 11:53 AM
32	Reducing poverty	11/16/2022 6:48 AM
33	time-capsule quality of life	11/15/2022 6:49 PM
34	The Black history of the city.	11/15/2022 12:48 PM

## Q2 What concerns you the most about Petersburg's future? (Choose up to three):

Answered: 364 Skipped: 10

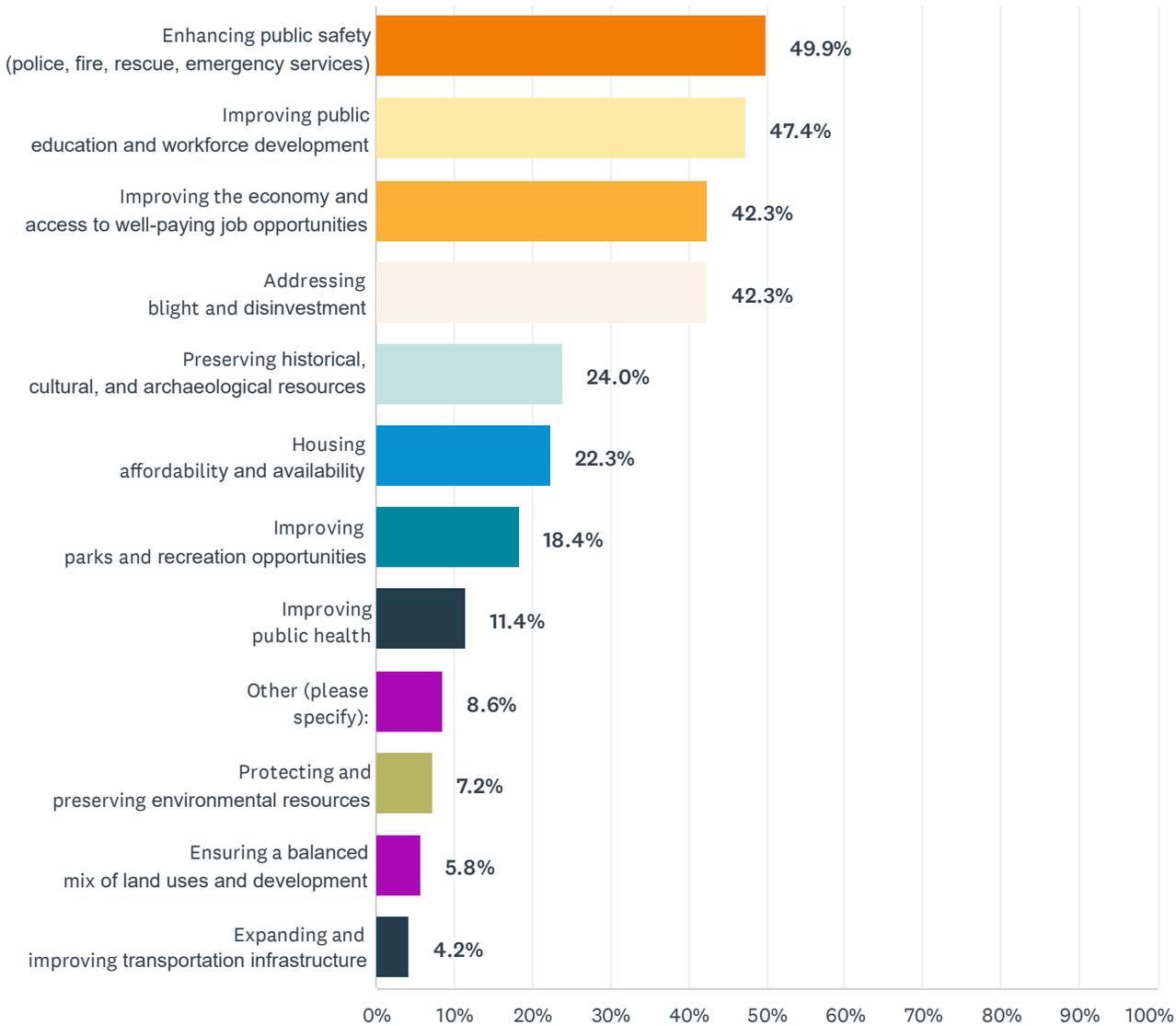


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	Accessibility - safe sidewalks & handicap parking in downtown	2/13/2023 11:25 AM

2	Broken families	2/13/2023 7:02 AM
3	All of the above	2/12/2023 12:27 PM
4	City government	2/12/2023 10:36 AM
5	Lack of recreation & child care opportunities	2/10/2023 1:57 PM
6	Government corruption	2/10/2023 11:25 AM
7	Everything on the list	2/7/2023 3:29 PM
8	Untruthful ways with city council and the mayor	2/6/2023 1:17 PM
9	Lack of integrity, honesty, and transparency of city officials, including the council.	2/6/2023 12:25 AM
10	It doesn't seem like the city leadership listens to the people.	2/5/2023 5:45 PM
11	mis-management by city council	2/5/2023 7:52 AM
12	Threat of a casino	2/3/2023 10:15 AM
13	City Council	2/3/2023 6:09 AM
14	The ethics and behavior of elected officials who sit in council but don't live in our city	2/1/2023 8:17 PM
15	The corruption in Petersburg Government	2/1/2023 5:58 AM
16	I want to check everything here. To have a healthy community, we need better schools, more jobs, less blight. My personal wishlist rates better use of natural resources (parks, riverfront, etc) highly, but I know overall that basic services need attention first.	1/25/2023 10:26 AM
17	blight, crime, education, lack of parks, lack of youth programming, lack of infrastructure maintenance/upkeep, lack of beautification	1/18/2023 7:12 PM
18	Pall above	1/14/2023 8:40 AM
19	Inept city council and incompetent and unprofessional government workers.	1/4/2023 9:02 PM
20	Senior living facilities	1/3/2023 9:19 PM
21	Lack of communication	12/19/2022 7:31 AM
22	Recreational activities	12/14/2022 12:54 PM
23	Public Health, lack of job opportunities, lack of youth programs	12/10/2022 3:47 PM
24	Homelessness	12/8/2022 7:18 AM
25	Lack of youth opportunities	12/7/2022 9:22 AM
26	leadership is a mess	11/30/2022 2:50 PM
27	Huge city employee salaries	11/19/2022 2:14 PM
28	Community apathy, Gentrification, Poverty	11/15/2022 8:10 PM
29	corrupt city government, cronyism	11/15/2022 6:51 PM
30	leadership	11/15/2022 2:34 PM
31	Personal Property Cost	11/15/2022 12:42 PM

# Q3 What should Petersburg prioritize as it plans for the future? (Choose up to three):

Answered: 359 Skipped: 15

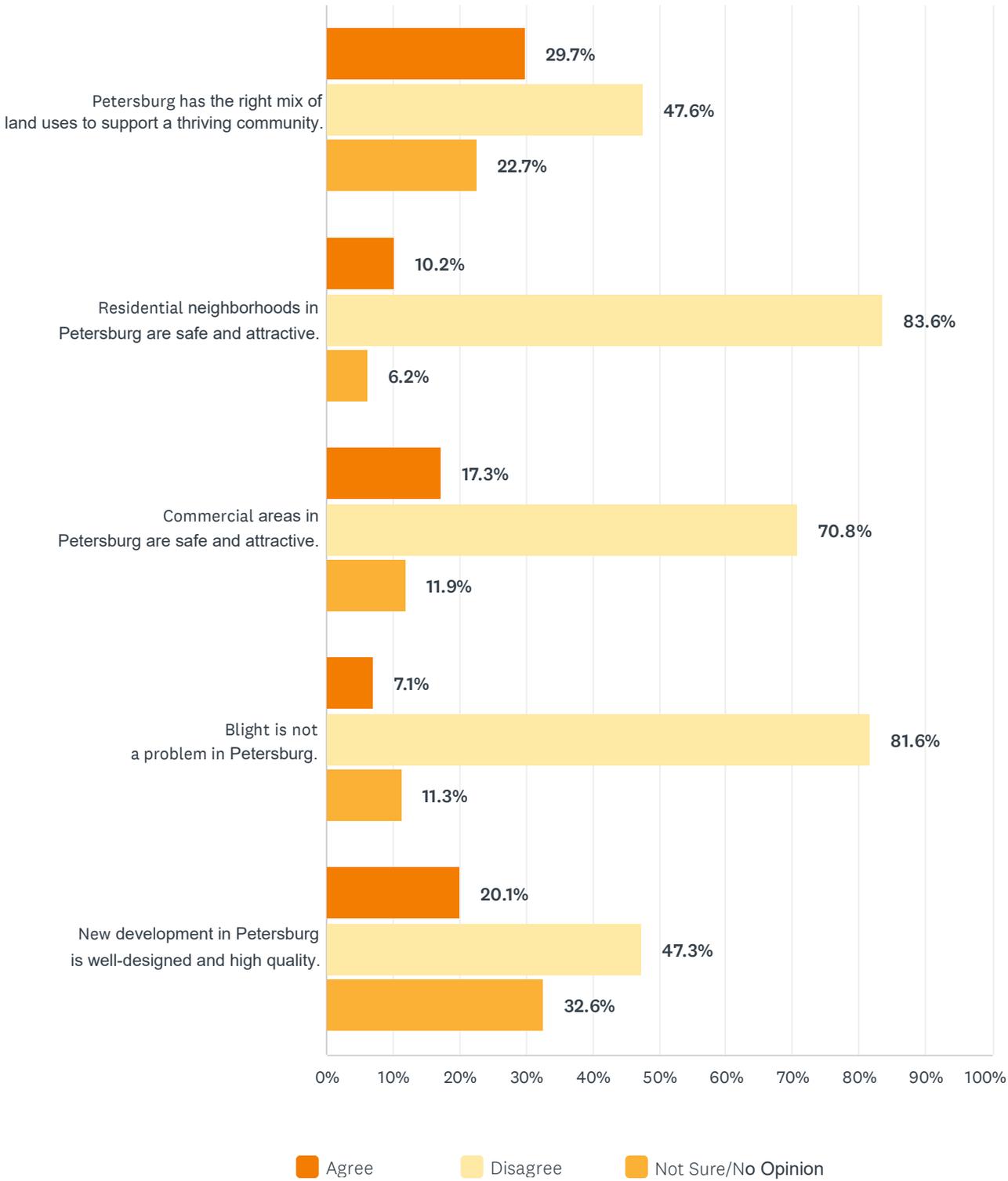


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	Youth programs	2/14/2023 4:54 AM
2	City government	2/12/2023 10:36 AM
3	Homeless shelters	2/12/2023 10:12 AM
4	Reducing crime	2/12/2023 4:49 AM
5	Food deserts	2/11/2023 6:53 AM
6	Government corruption	2/10/2023 11:25 AM

7	Public awareness (this survey should have been on T V News)	2/9/2023 11:44 AM
8	Reducing property taxes and water bill.	2/8/2023 3:57 PM
9	N	2/7/2023 7:49 PM
10	Investing in our children. Programs	2/6/2023 11:42 PM
11	Improvement of schools and school system	2/6/2023 1:18 PM
12	Decrease crime	2/5/2023 2:11 PM
13	Term limits for city council member	2/5/2023 7:54 AM
14	Crime	2/3/2023 10:16 AM
15	Accountability of elected leadership	2/1/2023 8:18 PM
16	Planting new life throughout the city. Trees, bushes, flowers	2/1/2023 3:18 PM
17	Updated availability and technology in working with the City offices.	2/1/2023 12:14 PM
18	Stopping crime and protecting citizens	2/1/2023 8:16 AM
19	The corruption in the Petersburg Government	2/1/2023 5:59 AM
20	Gun violence	1/31/2023 1:29 PM
21	All of the above!	1/18/2023 7:13 PM
22	Food Access and affordability	1/10/2023 5:14 PM
23	Ridding itself of incompetent and unprofessional city workers.	1/4/2023 9:04 PM
24	Reducing crime	12/14/2022 12:56 PM
25	Lowering crime	12/10/2022 5:13 PM
26	Make more startup grants for entrepreneurs	12/7/2022 9:23 AM
27	leadership leadership leadership	11/30/2022 2:51 PM
28	PAY THESE KIDS !!! UP TO ABOUT \$500 and pay PARENTS MORE	11/18/2022 9:05 AM
29	Encouragement of worker cooperatives, Rank choice voting, Referendums, Trades and Skills Training	11/15/2022 8:30 PM
30	open government, eliminate culture of corruption	11/15/2022 6:52 PM
31	leadership development	11/15/2022 2:35 PM

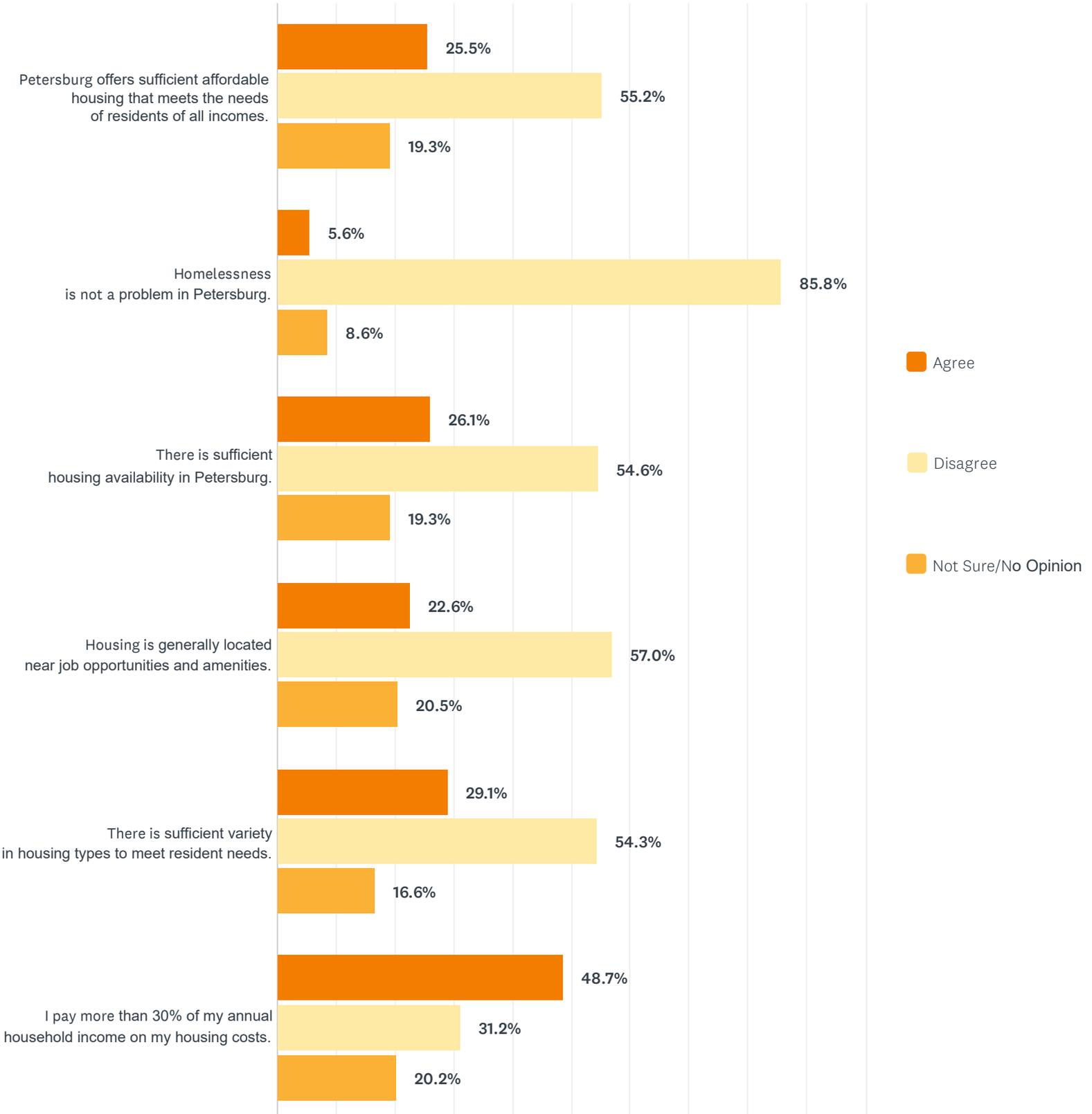
# Q4 Would you agree or disagree with the following statements related to land use and development? (Check one for each):

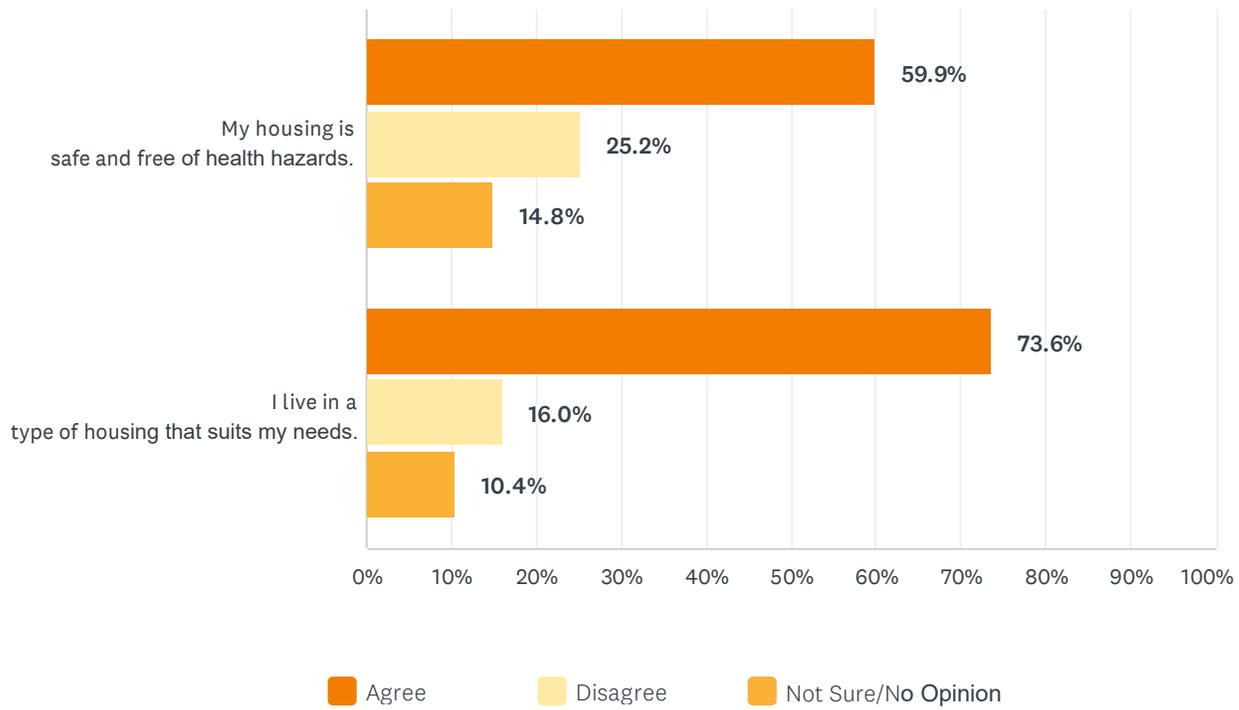
Answered: 353 Skipped: 21



# Q5 Would you agree or disagree with the following statements related to housing? (Check one for each):

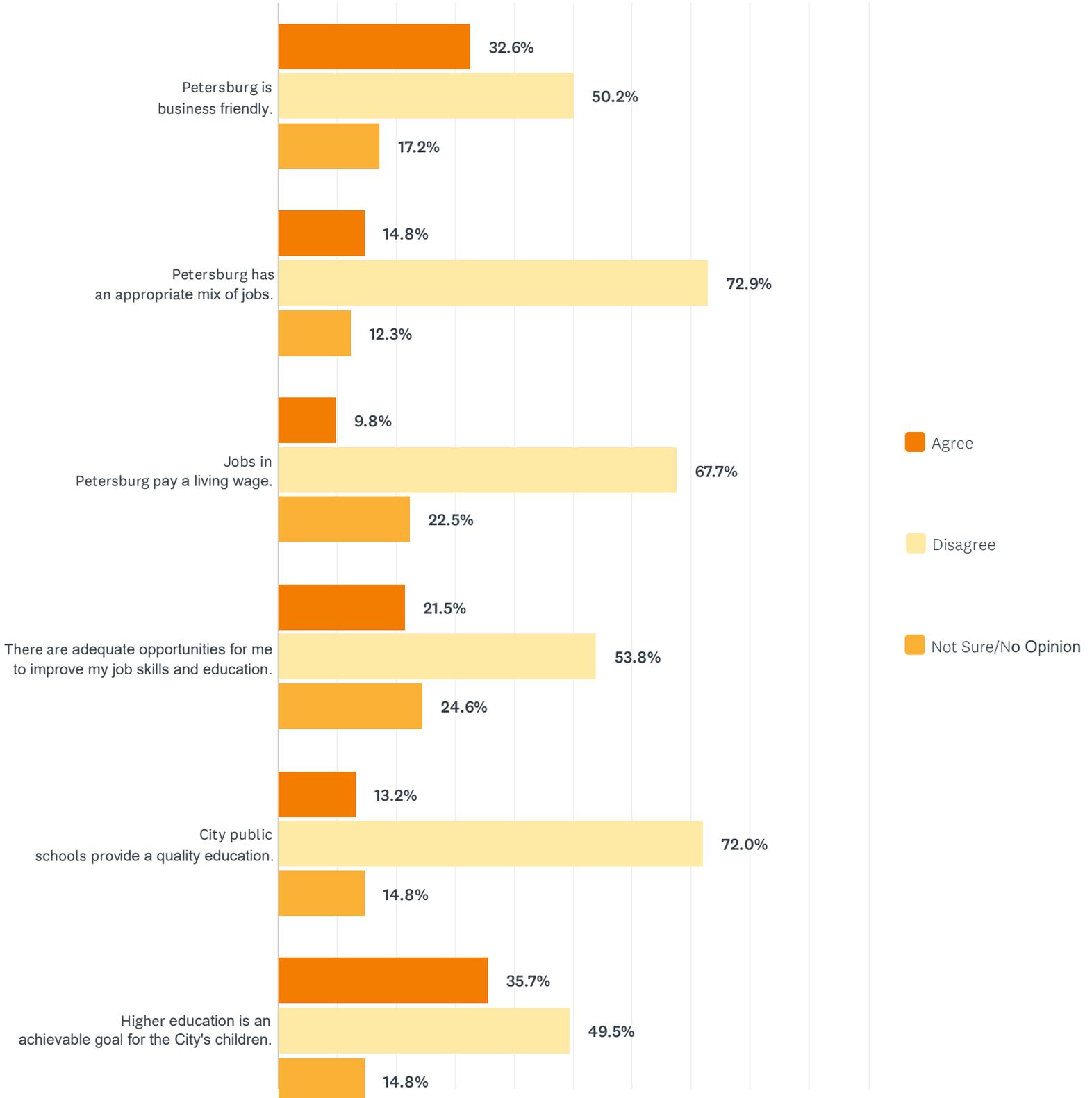
Answered: 337 Skipped: 37

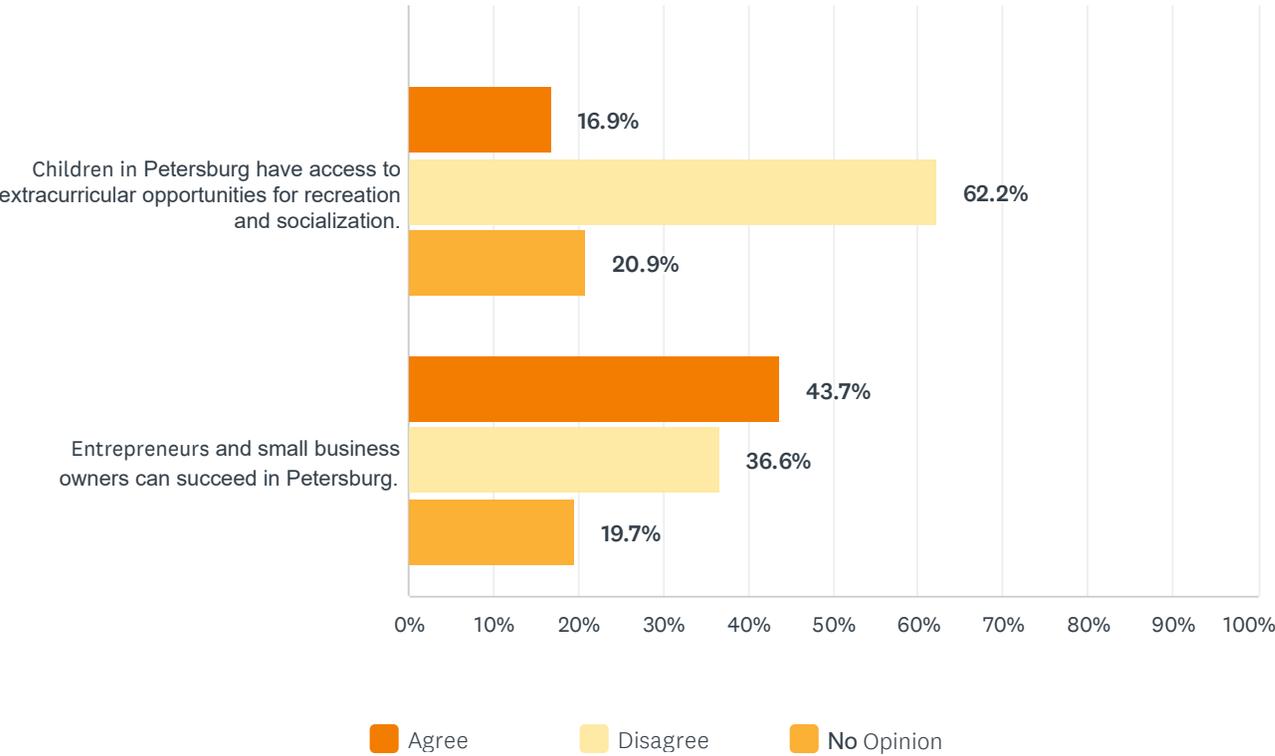




# Q6 Would you agree or disagree with the following statements related to education, the economy, and workforce development? (Check one for each):

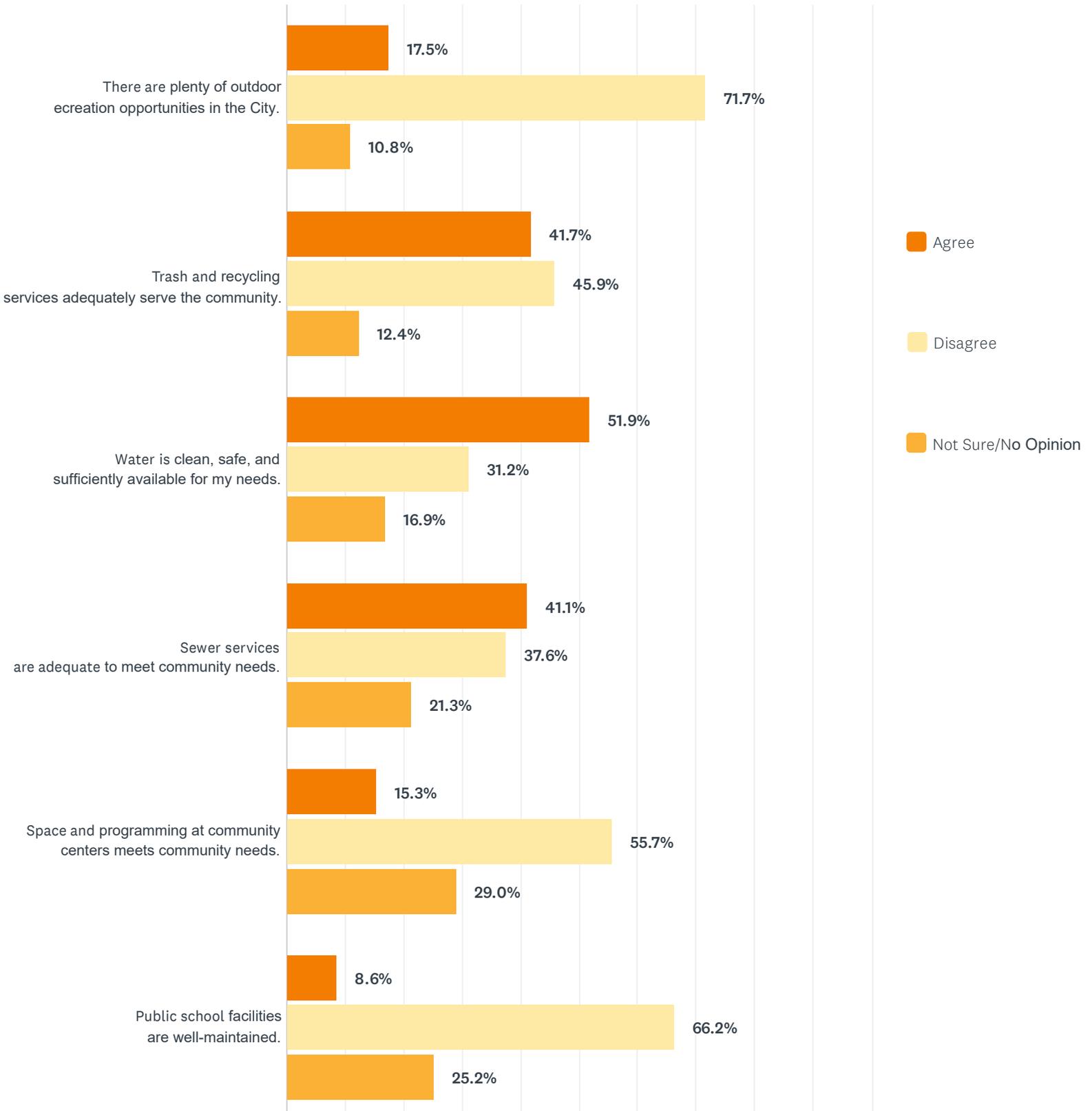
Answered: 325 Skipped: 49

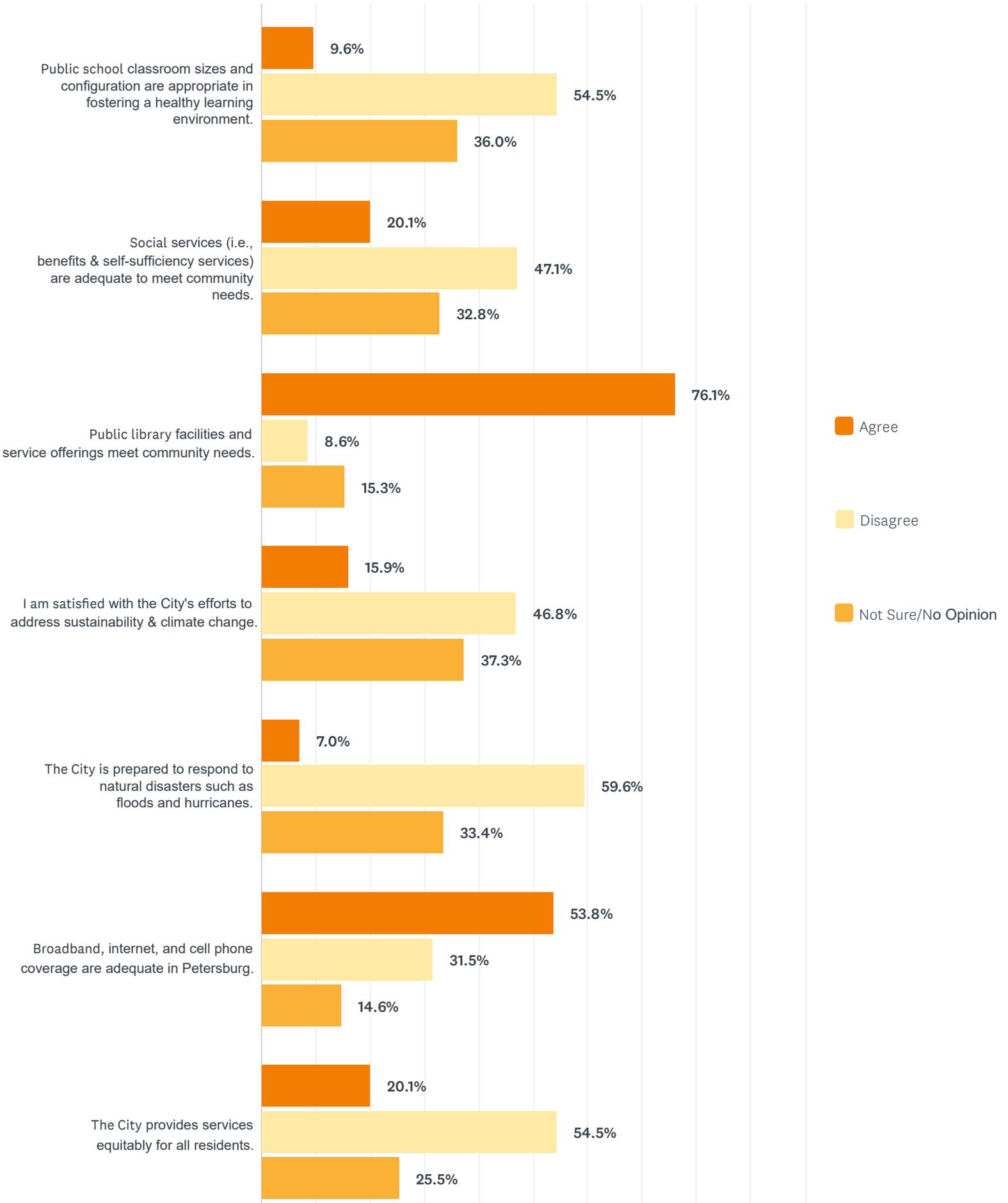


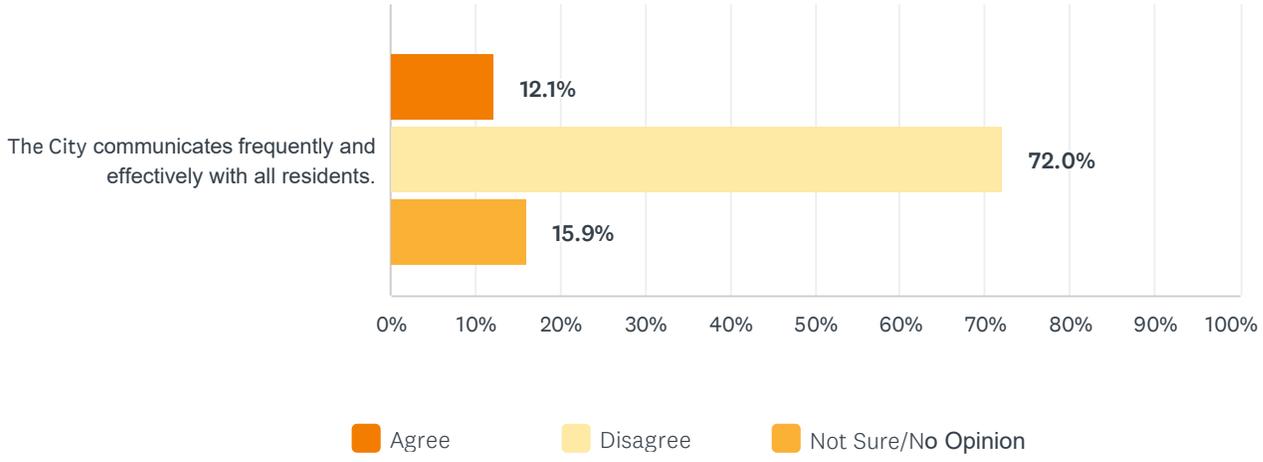


# Q7 Would you agree or disagree with the following statements related to community facilities, services, and infrastructure? (Check one for each):

Answered: 314 Skipped: 60

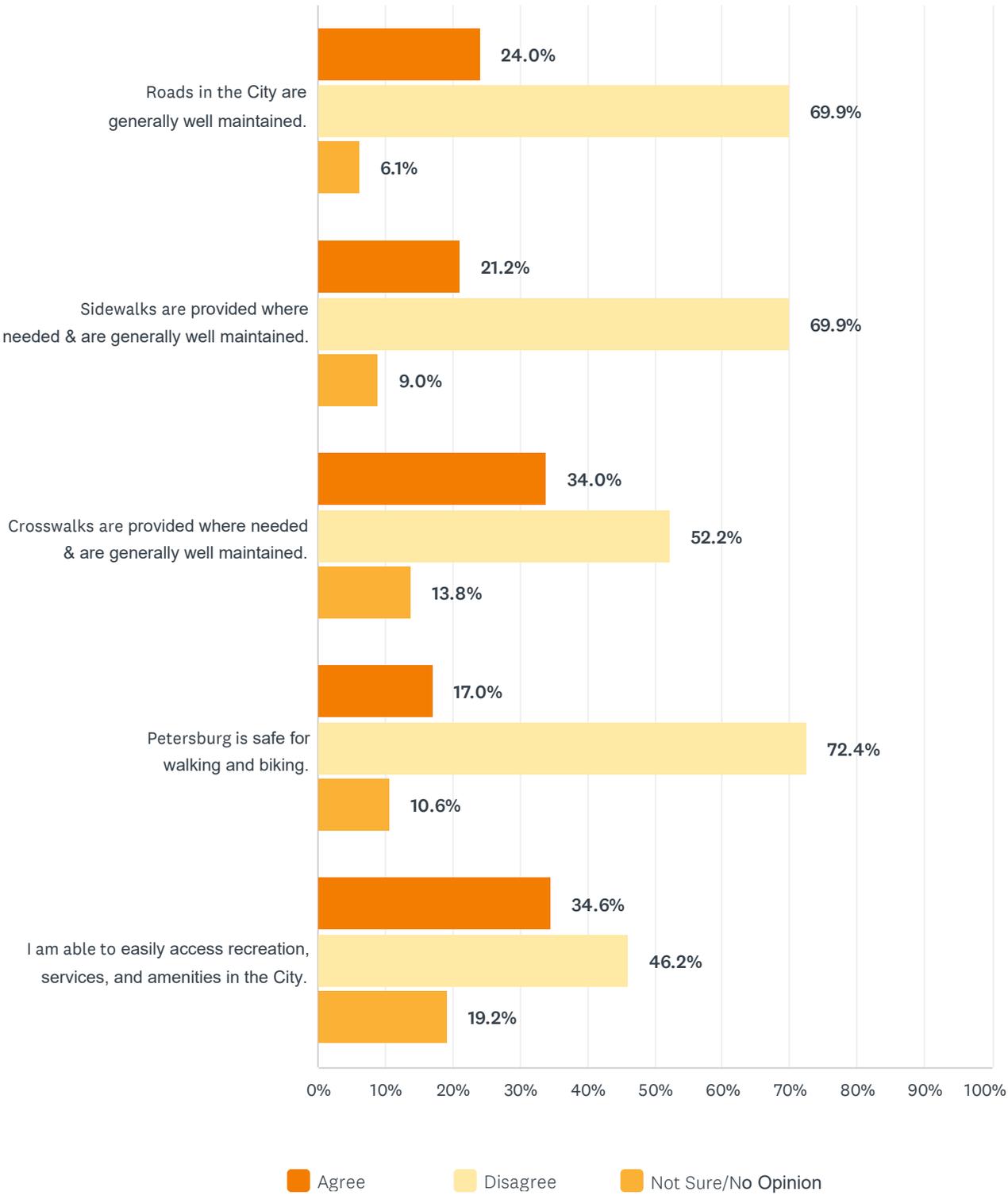






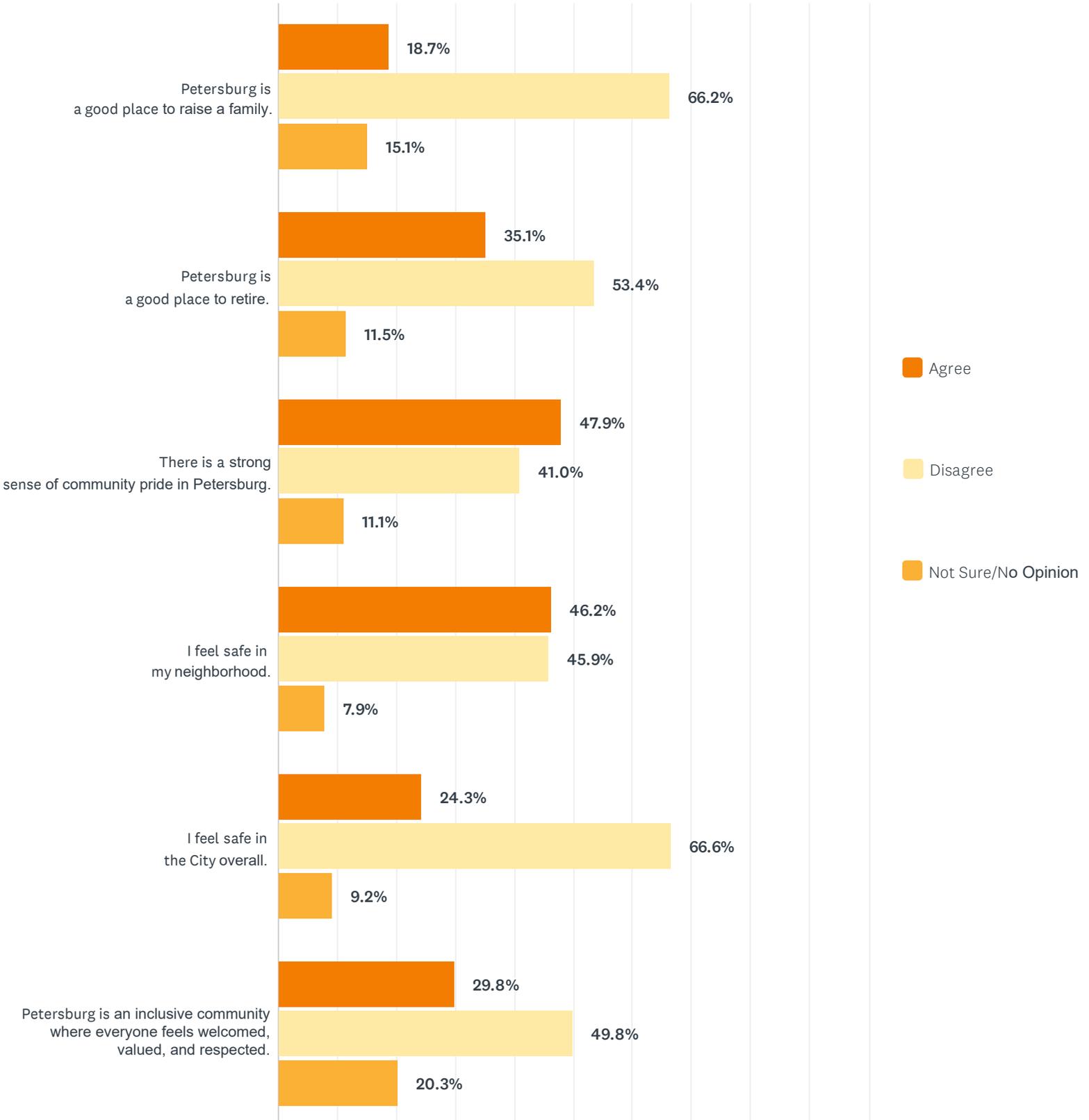
# Q8 Would you agree or disagree with the following statements related to transportation? (Check one for each):

Answered: 312 Skipped: 62

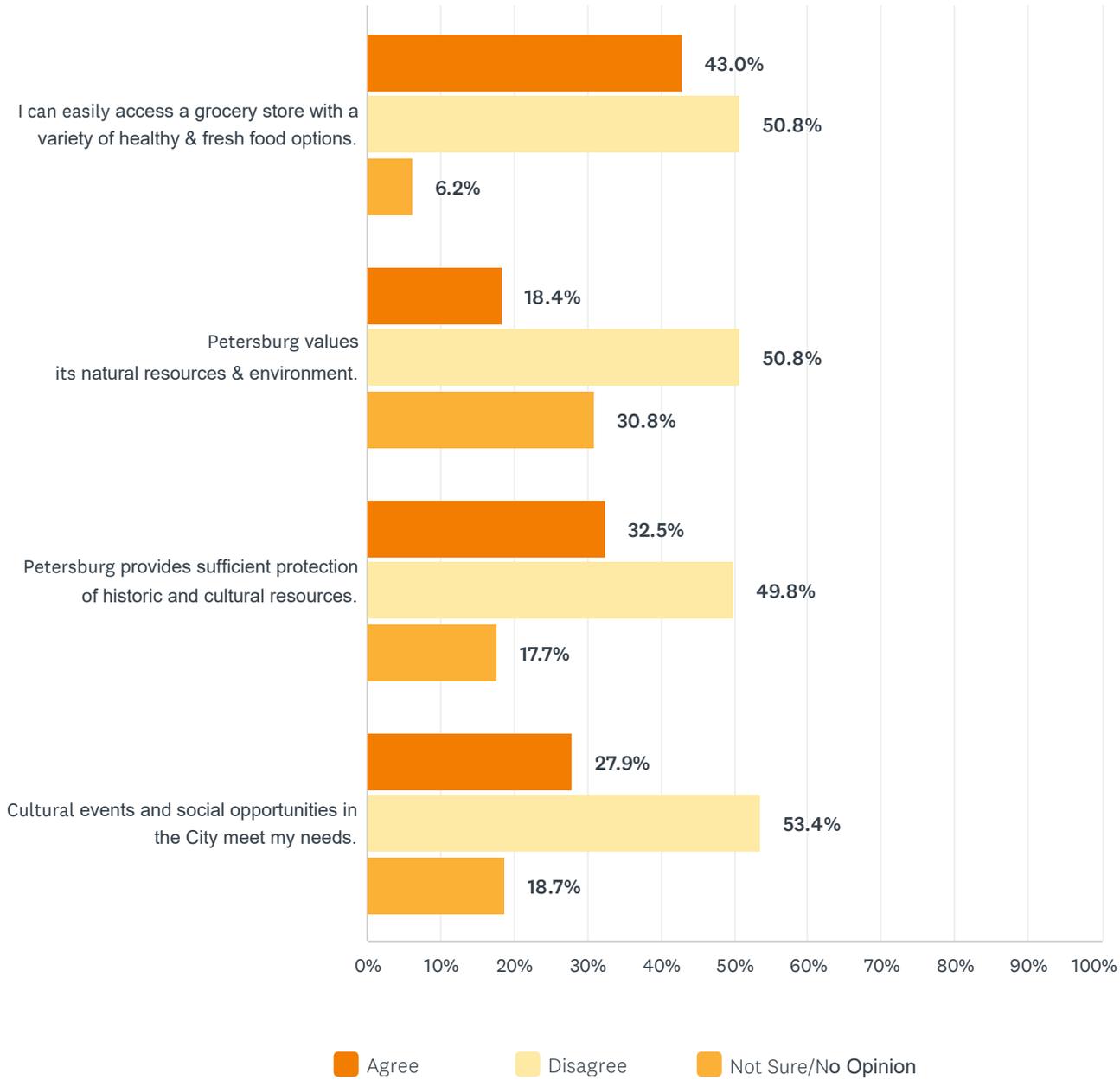


## Q9 Would you agree or disagree with the following statements related to overall quality of life? (Check one for each):

Answered: 305 Skipped: 69

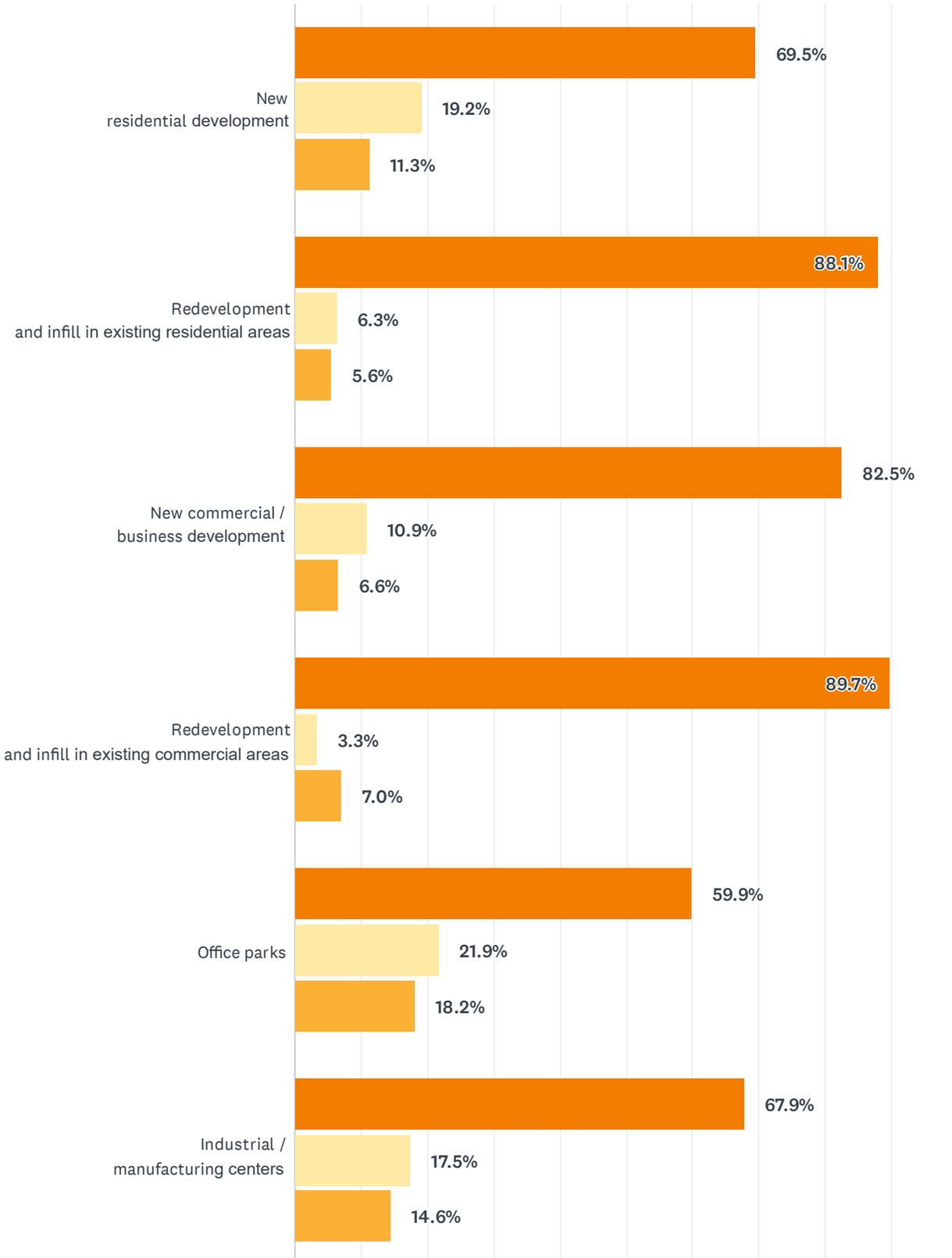


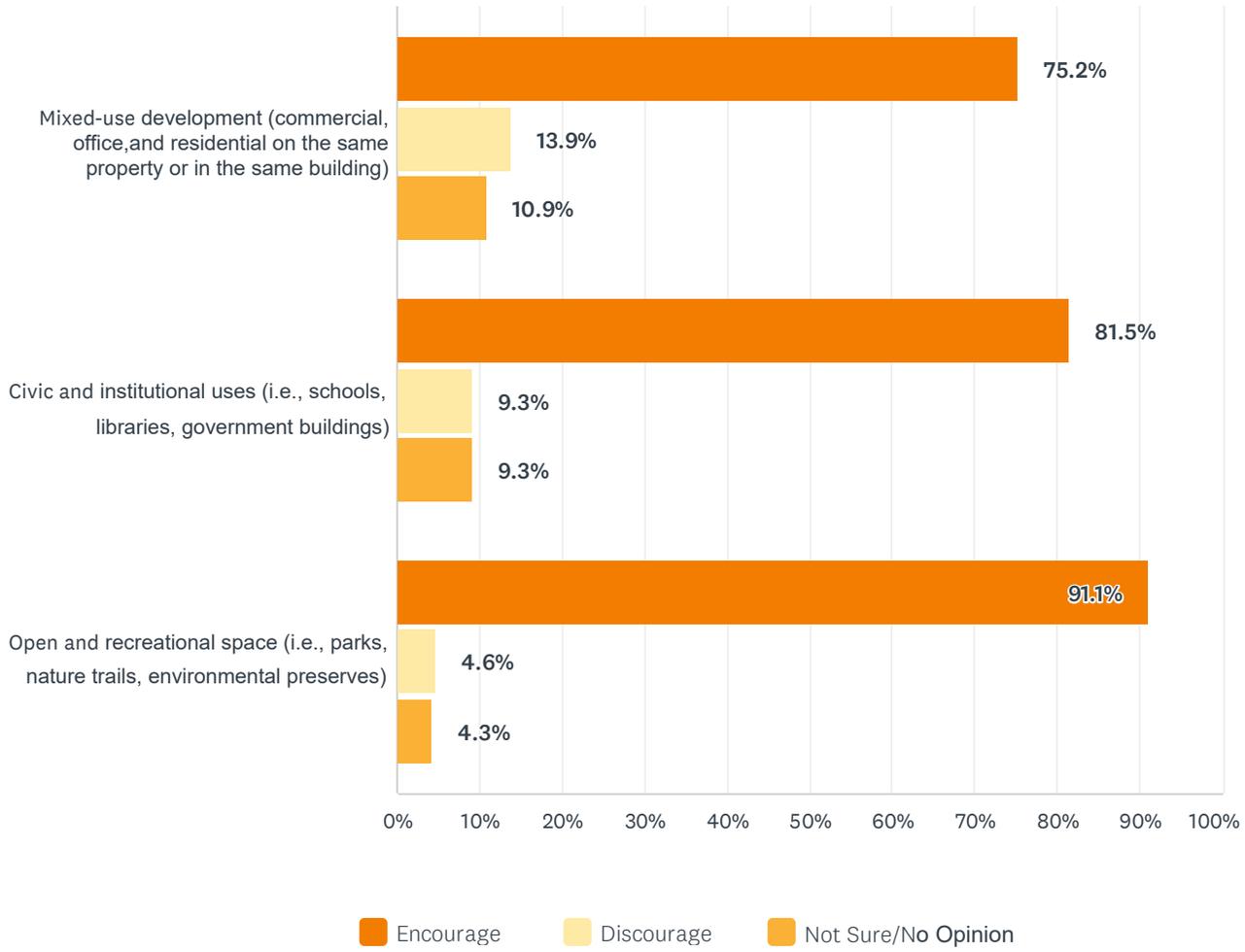
## City of Petersburg | Community Survey Results



# Q10 In general, would you encourage or discourage the following land uses in Petersburg? (Check one for each):

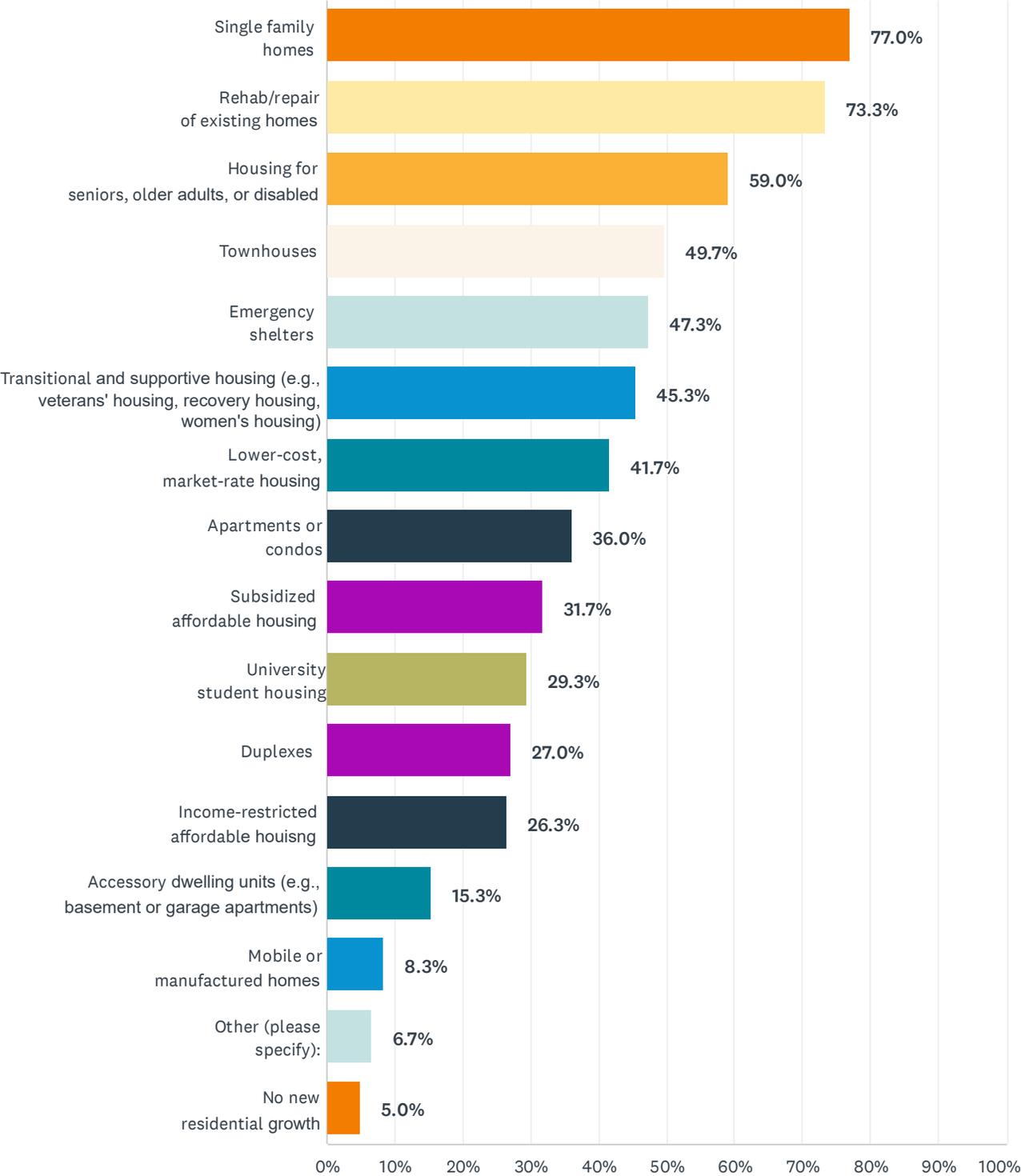
Answered: 302 Skipped: 72





# Q11 What types of new residential development would be desirable in Petersburg? (Choose as many as apply):

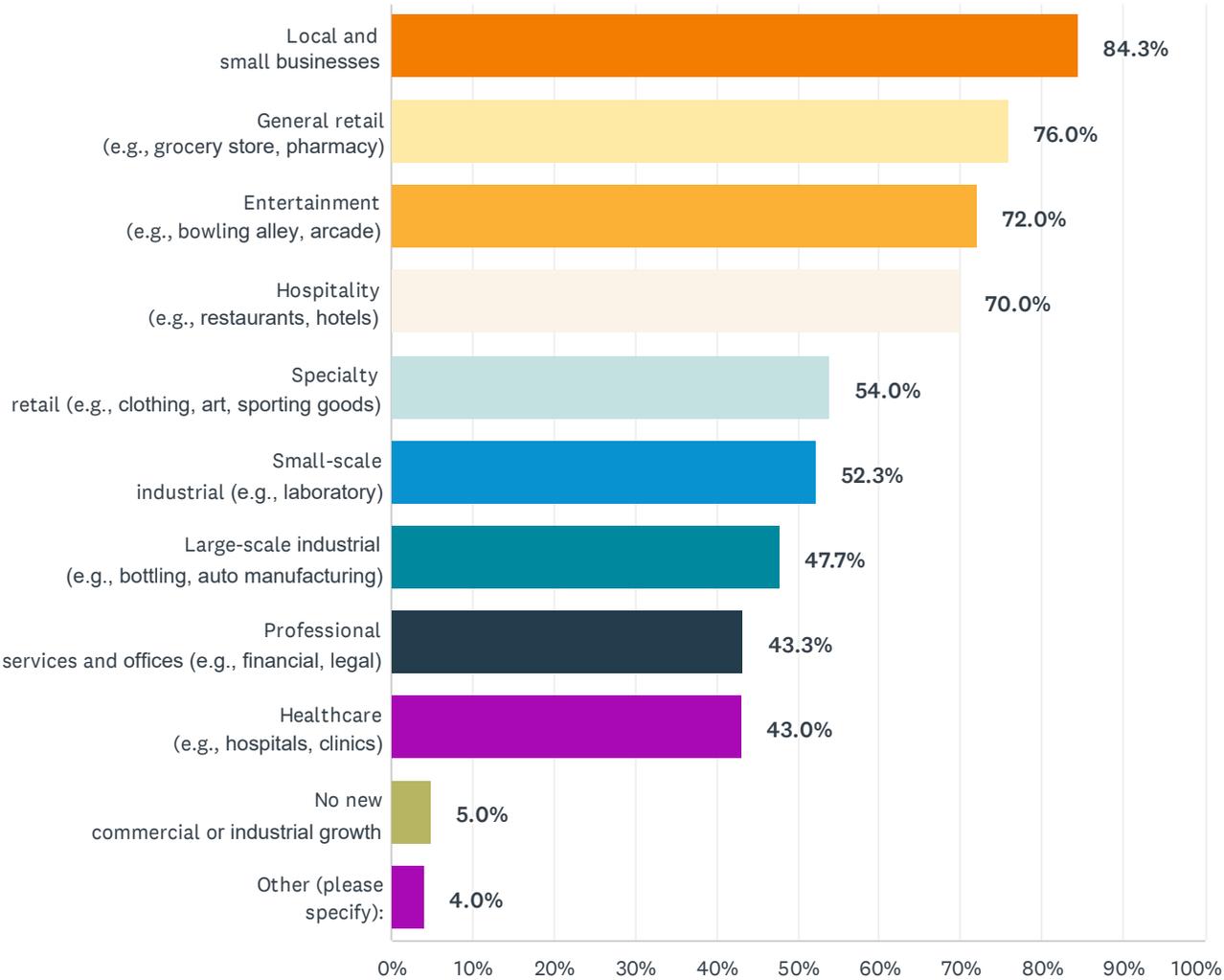
Answered: 300 Skipped: 74



#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	Affordable for middle class is needed not just low income.	2/13/2023 11:32 AM
2	New homes under 2000 Sq feet "starter homes"	2/8/2023 10:13 PM
3	Clean up the blighted housing that already exists to make them livable again	2/8/2023 5:45 AM
4	Housing for essential personnel	2/7/2023 8:22 PM
5	Families will not move into single family homes until schools improve	2/5/2023 4:41 PM
6	Commercial use with Residential apartments above stores	2/1/2023 8:36 AM
7	Sewers in Walnut Hill are clogged with leaves and grass!	1/31/2023 8:11 AM
8	Tiny Home Communities	1/26/2023 8:49 AM
9	No more "fake" loft spaces. Loft spaces are large. ArtSpace is a bad development.	1/22/2023 3:32 PM
10	NA	1/13/2023 11:40 AM
11	Please - avoid lower-cost, subsidized, and income restricted housing	1/4/2023 9:17 PM
12	Downtown clean up and redevelopment uniform look of store fronts	12/14/2022 12:07 PM
13	More Safety!	12/13/2022 6:41 PM
14	Revitalize existing neighborhoods and remove blight	12/13/2022 8:06 AM
15	Condos above shops and stores	12/12/2022 8:38 PM
16	Mid rise apartments	12/6/2022 7:39 PM
17	Mixed income housing, don't warehouse the poor or create gated communities for the rich	12/6/2022 2:25 PM
18	I don't know	11/18/2022 2:31 PM
19	people that aren't gang bangers like bloods and crips im 10 btw	11/18/2022 12:09 PM
20	Housing cooperatives	11/15/2022 8:31 PM

# Q12 What types of new commercial or industrial development would be desirable in Petersburg? (Choose as many as apply):

Answered: 300 Skipped: 74

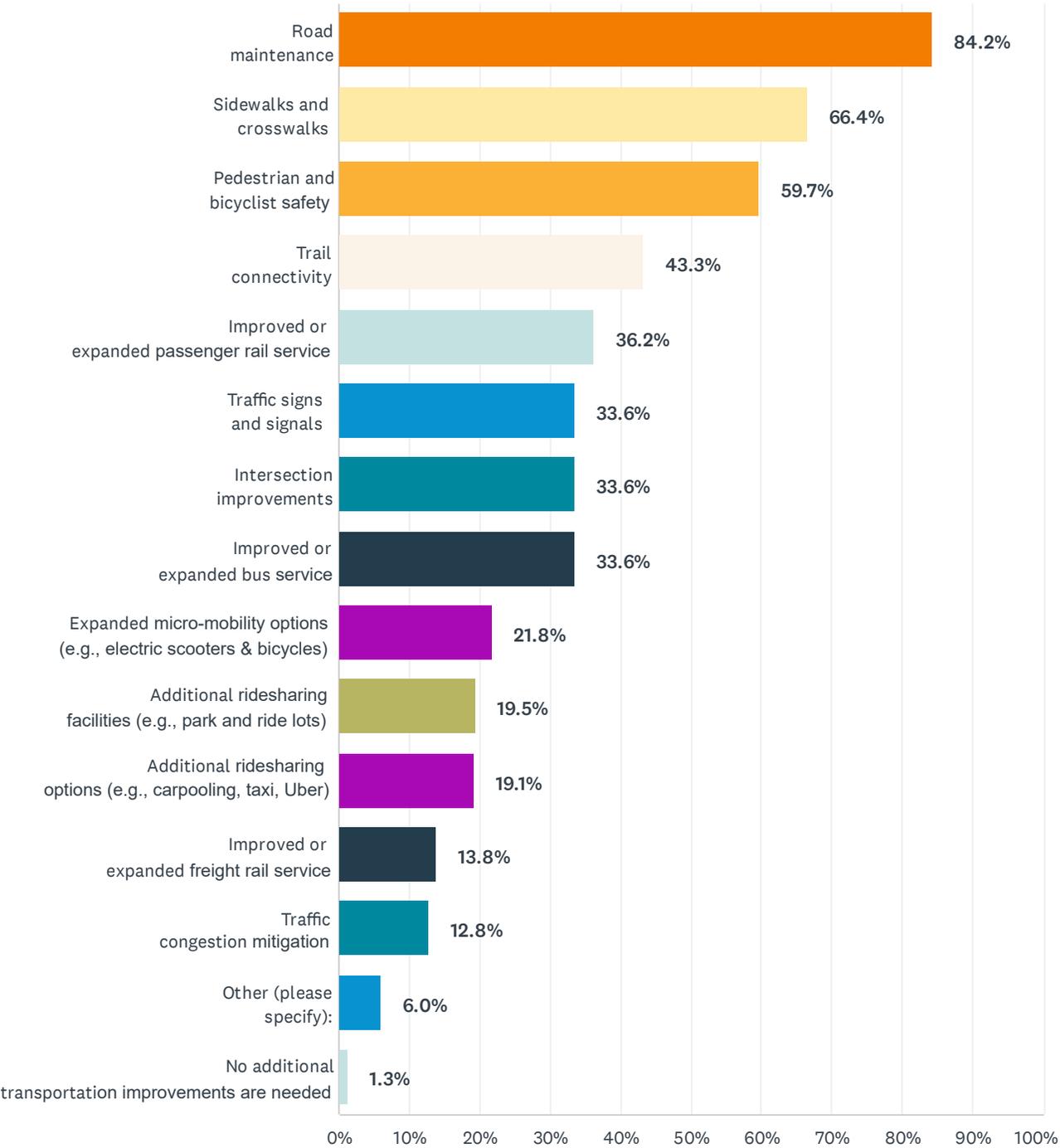


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	NO CASINOS	2/10/2023 10:09 AM
2	NO CASINO TO FURTHER IMPOVERISH THE CITIZENS OR CAUSE CRIME TO ESCALATE MORE THAN IT IS. BUILD PURPOSEFUL DEVELOPMENTS FOR EDUCATION DUE TO THE LOW LITERACY RATE. BUILD PLACES WHERE PEOPLE CAN LEARN NEW SKILLS. NOT A CASINO.	2/6/2023 12:40 AM
3	Sewers in Walnut Hill are clogged with leaves and grass!	1/31/2023 8:11 AM
4	Mixed use commercial	1/26/2023 4:40 PM
5	NA	1/13/2023 11:40 AM
6	grocery stores offering fresh produce	1/9/2023 3:24 PM

7	Old Towne access to walk to an Amazon Fresh Grocery, Trader Joe's, or other popular food/retail businesses would be awesome.	12/22/2022 3:43 PM
8	Job assistance buildings	12/21/2022 11:08 AM
9	Restaurants, Movie Theater, Mall	12/15/2022 8:51 AM
10	OUTDOOR ACCESS to river and trails	11/30/2022 2:59 PM
11	I don't know	11/18/2022 2:31 PM
12	ANY manufacturing or production	11/16/2022 5:40 PM

# Q13 What transportation improvements are needed in Petersburg? (Choose as many as apply):

Answered: 298 Skipped: 76

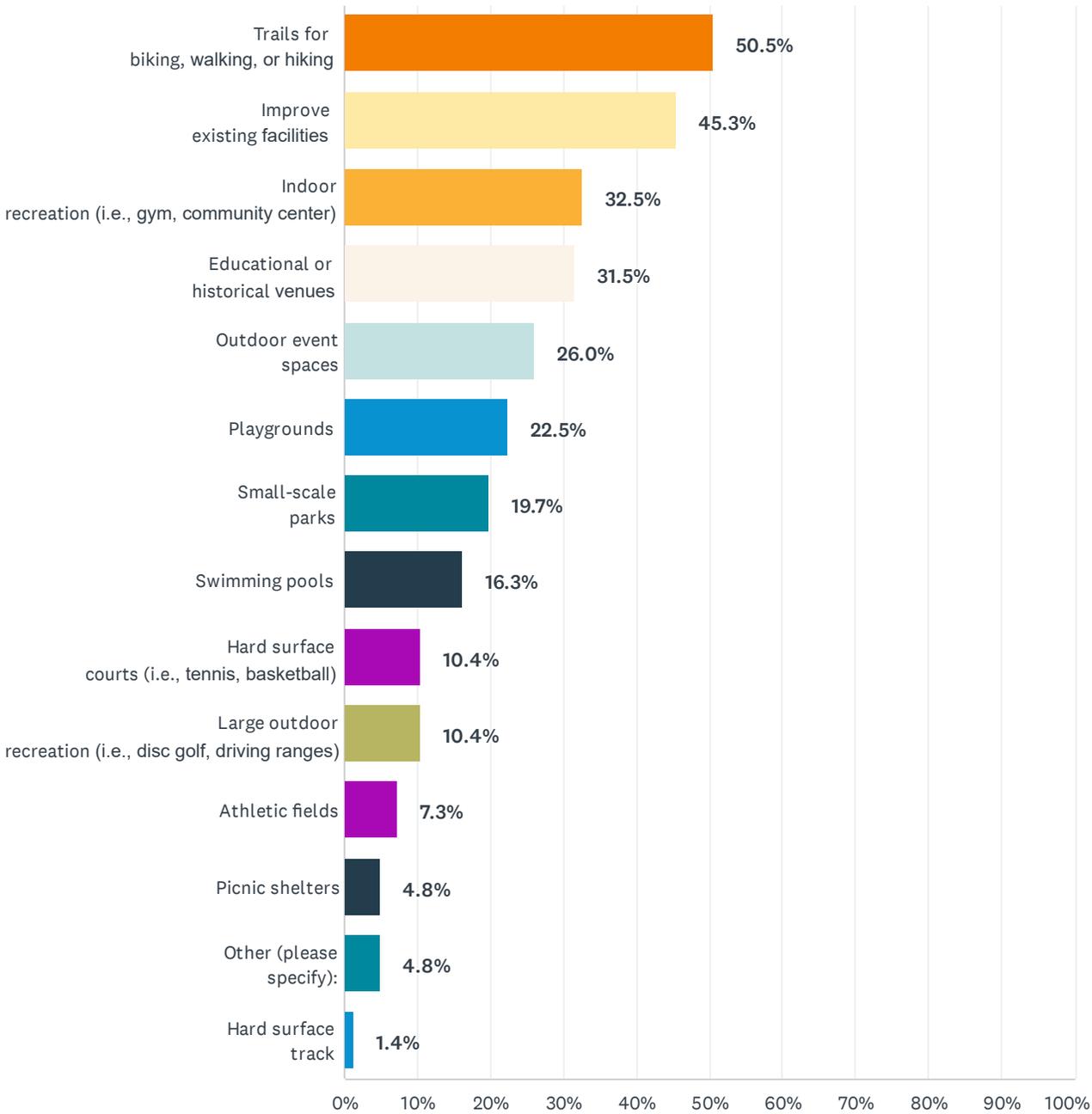


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	CHANGE SPEED LIMITS ON MAIN ROADS & REMOVE ONE WAY STREETS	2/15/2023 4:44 PM

2	N	2/13/2023 8:10 AM
3	Speed bumps on cut through streets.	2/12/2023 5:23 AM
4	The current bus station is a joke. It leaves seniors in the cold while they wait for transportation and the staff is nasty.	2/6/2023 11:47 PM
5	POTHoles SHOULD BE REPAVED NOT FILLED WITH CEMENT OR GRAVEL.	2/6/2023 12:41 AM
6	Safety to cover all of these	2/5/2023 9:19 PM
7	More street lights	2/5/2023 2:19 PM
8	reverse the unneeded one way streets to two way streets	2/3/2023 7:51 AM
9	Speed bump or speed deterrents	2/1/2023 12:34 PM
10	Teach people to use sidewalks instead of walking IN the streets	2/1/2023 6:47 AM
11	Sewers in Walnut Hill are clogged with leaves and grass!	1/31/2023 8:11 AM
12	Additional parking in the downtown business and residential areas	1/28/2023 2:50 PM
13	Change Washington and /Wythe back to 2-way streets, encouraging slower traffic through the city and allowing local business development	1/22/2023 3:34 PM
14	NA	1/13/2023 11:40 AM
15	Parking decks are greatly needed in Old Town. One could be made across from Dixie. One could be made in the lot behind the former Progress Index. There is already nowhere to park for all of the apartments and business in the area. How can we welcome more business to the area and nowhere to park?	1/9/2023 1:25 PM
16	Efforts to reduce speeding without reducing speed limits.	1/4/2023 9:21 PM
17	Limit street parking that often restricts turns onto N Sycamore St or retail/restaurant deliveries.	12/22/2022 3:44 PM
18	Brush cleared from sidewalks	11/16/2022 5:43 PM

# Q14 What recreation facilities do you want most in Petersburg? (Choose up to three):

Answered: 289 Skipped: 85

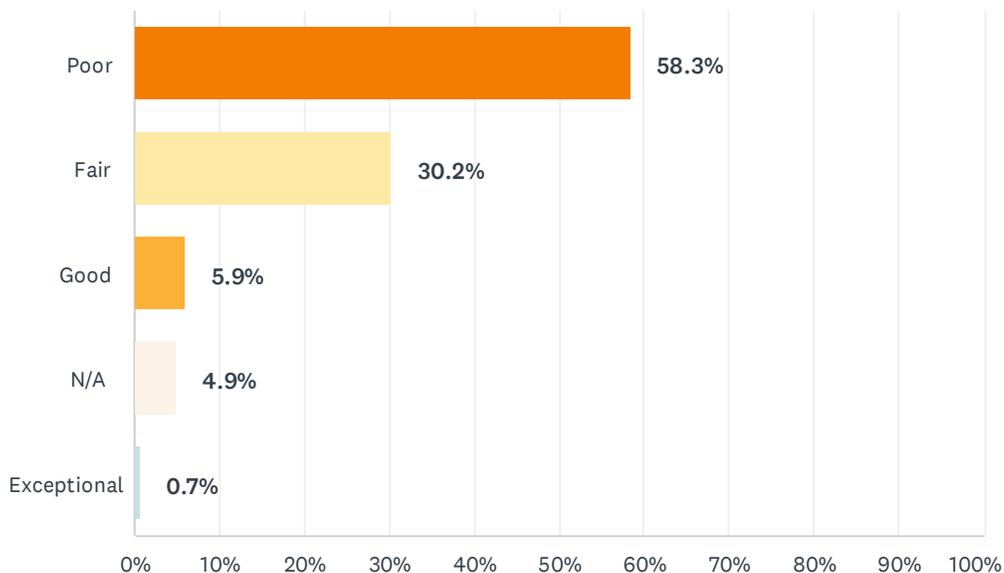


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	LGBTQ youth and young adult hang out	2/11/2023 2:24 PM
2	Culturally inclusive event spaces	2/10/2023 2:23 PM
3	Accessible playground	2/10/2023 10:12 AM

4	Safety to attend any of the above	2/5/2023 9:21 PM
5	The spaces that we have need serious maintenance	2/5/2023 5:55 PM
6	Better lighting at night	2/5/2023 2:20 PM
7	Sewers in Walnut Hill are clogged with leaves and grass!	1/31/2023 8:12 AM
8	All the above!	1/18/2023 7:20 PM
9	NA	1/13/2023 11:40 AM
10	Bring back the baseball games to Lee Park. They were once so popular, you could not find a parking spot.	1/9/2023 1:49 PM
11	Recreational center needs to be built for the children.	1/9/2023 10:31 AM
12	I just wish we had trees and natural beauty period	12/17/2022 11:53 AM
13	Dog parks	12/6/2022 2:27 PM
14	dress up events, swimming pools	11/18/2022 9:01 AM

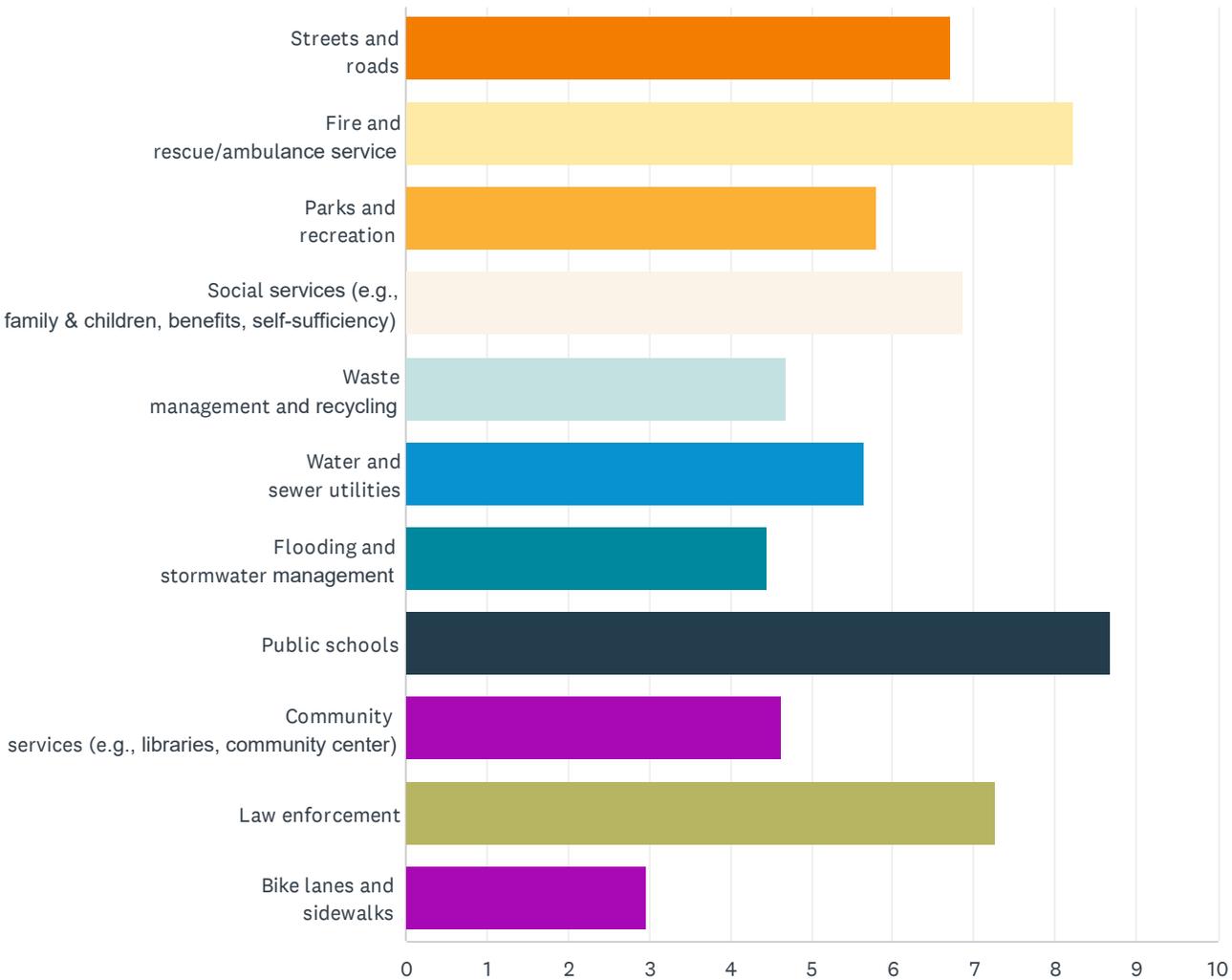
# Q15 How would you rate the value of City services (e.g., public schools, public safety, parks and recreation) compared to the taxes you pay?

Answered: 288 Skipped: 86



# Q16 What should Petersburg's priorities be for improving public facilities and services? (Rank these in order of priority from 1-11, with 1 being your top priority and 11 being your lowest priority):

Answered: 279 Skipped: 95



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	TOTAL
Streets and roads	7.9% 22	7.9% 22	12.5% 35	14.3% 40	15.8% 44	9.3% 26	11.1% 31	4.7% 13	8.6% 24	5.0% 14	2.9% 8	279
Fire and rescue/ambulance service	18.3% 51	22.9% 64	14.7% 41	15.1% 42	7.5% 21	7.2% 20	3.2% 9	3.6% 10	2.2% 6	3.2% 9	2.2% 6	279
Parks and recreation	3.2% 9	5.0% 14	10.4% 29	11.1% 31	13.6% 38	10.8% 30	12.2% 34	10.8% 30	6.5% 18	13.3% 37	3.2% 9	279
Social services (e.g., family & children, benefits, self-sufficiency)	9.0% 25	12.9% 36	9.7% 27	18.3% 51	10.4% 29	10.0% 28	5.0% 14	10.0% 28	4.3% 12	4.7% 13	5.7% 16	279
Waste management and recycling	1.1% 3	0.7% 2	4.3% 12	5.4% 15	11.1% 31	11.1% 31	15.8% 44	17.9% 50	15.8% 44	9.7% 27	7.2% 20	279
Water and sewer utilities	3.6% 10	4.3% 12	6.1% 17	7.9% 22	12.5% 35	15.1% 42	13.3% 37	17.6% 49	12.5% 35	5.4% 15	1.8% 5	279
Flooding and stormwater management	1.4% 4	2.9% 8	3.6% 10	2.9% 8	6.8% 19	11.5% 32	15.8% 44	14.7% 41	18.6% 52	14.3% 40	7.5% 21	279
Public schools	29.7% 83	18.3% 51	17.6% 49	10.0% 28	5.4% 15	5.4% 15	3.9% 11	5.0% 14	1.8% 5	1.1% 3	1.8% 5	279
Community services (e.g., libraries, community center)	2.2% 6	4.3% 12	6.5% 18	5.4% 15	5.4% 15	11.8% 33	10.4% 29	7.9% 22	18.6% 52	18.3% 51	9.3% 26	279
Law enforcement	22.2% 62	16.8% 47	12.2% 34	7.5% 21	7.2% 20	3.6% 10	4.3% 12	2.5% 7	4.7% 13	9.3% 26	9.7% 27	279
Bike lanes and sidewalks	1.4% 4	3.9% 11	2.5% 7	2.2% 6	4.3% 12	4.3% 12	5.0% 14	5.4% 15	6.5% 18	15.8% 44	48.7% 136	279

# Q17 What is one word you hope will describe the City of Petersburg twenty years from now?

Answered: 277 Skipped: 97

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Healthy	2/15/2023 4:47 PM
2	thriving	2/15/2023 3:45 PM
3	Flourishing	2/15/2023 3:20 PM
4	Thriving	2/15/2023 12:56 PM
5	Inspiring	2/15/2023 8:45 AM
6	Growth	2/15/2023 6:45 AM
7	Family	2/14/2023 5:28 PM
8	vibrant	2/14/2023 9:39 AM
9	Better	2/14/2023 9:14 AM
10	Tax-base	2/14/2023 8:35 AM
11	Resilience	2/14/2023 7:44 AM
12	Safe	2/14/2023 6:48 AM
13	Thriving	2/14/2023 6:37 AM
14	Great	2/14/2023 5:41 AM
15	Thriving	2/14/2023 5:03 AM
16	growth	2/14/2023 4:29 AM
17	Better	2/13/2023 11:35 AM
18	Thriving.	2/13/2023 11:07 AM
19	Liveable	2/13/2023 9:52 AM
20	Flourishing	2/13/2023 8:12 AM
21	Incredible	2/13/2023 7:12 AM
22	Dying	2/13/2023 6:37 AM
23	Lawful	2/13/2023 5:43 AM
24	Affluent	2/12/2023 8:04 PM
25	Proud	2/12/2023 12:39 PM
26	Reinvigorated	2/12/2023 11:56 AM
27	Different	2/12/2023 10:42 AM
28	Revived	2/12/2023 10:19 AM
29	Home	2/12/2023 7:51 AM
30	Thriving	2/12/2023 7:13 AM
31	Revamped	2/12/2023 5:40 AM

32	Thriving	2/12/2023 5:25 AM
33	Safe	2/12/2023 5:03 AM
34	Innovative	2/11/2023 2:27 PM
35	Historic	2/11/2023 11:05 AM
36	Restored	2/11/2023 9:34 AM
37	Thriving	2/11/2023 7:01 AM
38	Thriving	2/11/2023 6:50 AM
39	Thriving	2/10/2023 2:26 PM
40	█	2/10/2023 11:32 AM
41	Improving	2/9/2023 4:55 PM
42	Thriving	2/9/2023 2:44 PM
43	SAFE	2/9/2023 12:15 PM
44	Great	2/9/2023 11:54 AM
45	Lively	2/9/2023 7:32 AM
46	Thriving	2/9/2023 6:47 AM
47	Safe	2/9/2023 6:27 AM
48	Swimming-pool	2/8/2023 10:15 PM
49	Crimeless	2/8/2023 9:42 PM
50	Thriving	2/8/2023 4:13 PM
51	TRANSFORMED	2/8/2023 12:49 PM
52	Thriving	2/8/2023 12:19 PM
53	Thriving	2/8/2023 11:50 AM
54	Pride	2/8/2023 5:53 AM
55	Thriving	2/7/2023 11:44 PM
56	Equality	2/7/2023 9:54 PM
57	Wonderful	2/7/2023 9:17 PM
58	Reinvigorated	2/7/2023 9:00 PM
59	Embrace	2/7/2023 8:28 PM
60	Historically	2/7/2023 8:13 PM
61	Thriving	2/7/2023 6:44 PM
62	Improvements	2/7/2023 6:21 PM
63	Opportunity	2/7/2023 3:48 PM
64	Regrowth	2/7/2023 2:02 PM
65	resilience	2/7/2023 10:50 AM
66	Thriving	2/7/2023 9:33 AM
67	Developing	2/7/2023 7:33 AM
68	Thriving	2/7/2023 5:48 AM
69	Safe	2/7/2023 5:26 AM

70	Thriving	2/7/2023 4:31 AM
71	Hopeful	2/6/2023 11:50 PM
72	Vibrant	2/6/2023 7:38 PM
73	safe	2/6/2023 7:11 PM
74	Thriving	2/6/2023 5:47 PM
75	Quaint	2/6/2023 4:27 PM
76	Safe	2/6/2023 4:02 PM
77	Restored	2/6/2023 3:53 PM
78	Sad	2/6/2023 1:27 PM
79	Safe	2/6/2023 8:25 AM
80	Greatly improved	2/6/2023 8:15 AM
81	Historical	2/6/2023 4:25 AM
82	Improved	2/6/2023 2:45 AM
83	RESTORED	2/6/2023 12:45 AM
84	Revitalized	2/5/2023 11:12 PM
85	Moving forward	2/5/2023 11:04 PM
86	Less corrupt	2/5/2023 10:32 PM
87	Thriving	2/5/2023 9:58 PM
88	Safe	2/5/2023 9:23 PM
89	Thriving	2/5/2023 8:01 PM
90	Improved	2/5/2023 5:57 PM
91	Revitalized	2/5/2023 5:56 PM
92	Flourishing	2/5/2023 4:47 PM
93	Affordable	2/5/2023 3:45 PM
94	Safe	2/5/2023 2:24 PM
95	survivor	2/5/2023 12:58 PM
96	Historic	2/5/2023 10:45 AM
97	Safe	2/5/2023 10:30 AM
98	Intentional	2/5/2023 8:16 AM
99	Prosperous	2/3/2023 10:39 AM
100	Town	2/3/2023 10:21 AM
101	nice	2/3/2023 7:55 AM
102	Desperate	2/3/2023 6:18 AM
103	Transformative	2/2/2023 9:54 PM
104	Safe	2/2/2023 11:08 AM
105	Changed	2/2/2023 9:31 AM
106	Safe	2/2/2023 8:15 AM
107	Renewed	2/2/2023 4:18 AM

108	Accountable	2/1/2023 8:23 PM
109	Engaging	2/1/2023 6:46 PM
110	Desirable	2/1/2023 5:39 PM
111	Beautiful	2/1/2023 3:47 PM
112	Vibrant	2/1/2023 2:31 PM
113	Beautiful	2/1/2023 2:29 PM
114	Revitalized	2/1/2023 12:41 PM
115	Flourishing	2/1/2023 12:38 PM
116	Thriving	2/1/2023 11:14 AM
117	Safe	2/1/2023 8:41 AM
118	Changed	2/1/2023 8:27 AM
119	Safe	2/1/2023 8:05 AM
120	Safe	2/1/2023 6:49 AM
121	Hidden Gem	2/1/2023 6:12 AM
122	Welcoming	1/31/2023 4:11 PM
123	Charming	1/31/2023 3:50 PM
124	Thriving	1/31/2023 1:37 PM
125	Resurrected	1/31/2023 11:30 AM
126	Evolved	1/31/2023 10:13 AM
127	Revitalized	1/31/2023 9:03 AM
128	NoCasino	1/31/2023 8:59 AM
129	Vibrant	1/31/2023 8:25 AM
130	Better	1/31/2023 8:15 AM
131	Thriving	1/29/2023 11:53 AM
132	Alive	1/28/2023 2:52 PM
133	Flourishing	1/28/2023 2:41 PM
134	Forward	1/27/2023 4:09 PM
135	Historic	1/26/2023 7:06 PM
136	Evolving	1/26/2023 6:31 PM
137	Grown	1/26/2023 5:18 PM
138	Vibrant	1/26/2023 4:52 PM
139	Revitalization	1/26/2023 4:44 PM
140	BEAUTIFUL	1/26/2023 4:17 PM
141	Wonderful	1/26/2023 8:53 AM
142	no words	1/25/2023 4:57 PM
143	transformed	1/25/2023 4:18 PM
144	Home	1/25/2023 12:26 PM
145	thriving	1/25/2023 10:37 AM

146	Rich (in opportunities, businesses, good schools. overall wellbeing)	1/25/2023 9:16 AM
147	vibrant	1/24/2023 9:05 PM
148	Thriving	1/24/2023 6:21 PM
149	Great	1/24/2023 9:01 AM
150	Awesome	1/23/2023 10:39 PM
151	Revitalized	1/23/2023 7:27 PM
152	vibrant	1/22/2023 3:37 PM
153	Progress	1/20/2023 3:33 PM
154	Reinvented	1/18/2023 7:23 PM
155	Thriving	1/14/2023 9:16 AM
156	Community	1/14/2023 8:50 AM
157	Magnificent	1/14/2023 7:53 AM
158	Successful	1/13/2023 6:44 PM
159	Inclusive	1/13/2023 12:17 PM
160	Safer	1/13/2023 11:46 AM
161	Healthy	1/13/2023 9:49 AM
162	Livable	1/13/2023 5:37 AM
163	Pride	1/12/2023 1:38 PM
164	Collaboration	1/11/2023 4:12 PM
165	Productive	1/10/2023 6:51 PM
166	Thriving	1/10/2023 5:37 PM
167	Safe	1/9/2023 3:40 PM
168	thriving	1/9/2023 2:01 PM
169	Historical	1/9/2023 11:54 AM
170	Smarter	1/9/2023 10:31 AM
171	vibrant	1/9/2023 10:28 AM
172	Thriving	1/9/2023 10:19 AM
173	Revitalized	1/7/2023 8:45 AM
174	Improved	1/4/2023 9:25 PM
175	Change	1/3/2023 10:11 PM
176	Revitalized	1/3/2023 9:58 PM
177	Prosperous	1/3/2023 9:35 PM
178	Progressive	1/3/2023 12:27 AM
179	Thriving	1/2/2023 9:45 PM
180	Beautiful	12/31/2022 9:44 PM
181	Better	12/29/2022 10:10 PM
182	Successful	12/29/2022 12:41 PM
183	Reborn	12/27/2022 6:37 AM

184	Phoenix	12/22/2022 3:45 PM
185	Depressing, underdeveloped by government compared to other communities	12/21/2022 11:10 AM
186	Growth	12/19/2022 7:52 PM
187	Community	12/19/2022 7:48 AM
188	Education	12/17/2022 9:31 PM
189	Beautiful	12/17/2022 11:55 AM
190	Interesting	12/16/2022 10:14 PM
191	Revolutionary	12/15/2022 9:21 AM
192	vibrant	12/15/2022 12:08 AM
193	Peaceful	12/14/2022 1:11 PM
194	Thriving	12/14/2022 12:14 PM
195	Thriving	12/14/2022 10:44 AM
196	Thriving	12/14/2022 7:18 AM
197	Diverse	12/14/2022 5:57 AM
198	Safe	12/14/2022 5:51 AM
199	Safety	12/13/2022 7:21 PM
200	Renewed	12/13/2022 4:34 PM
201	Peaceful	12/13/2022 3:02 PM
202	Recovered	12/13/2022 1:39 PM
203	reimagined	12/13/2022 12:57 PM
204	Exemplar	12/13/2022 12:12 PM
205	Prosperous	12/13/2022 9:06 AM
206	Revitalized	12/13/2022 8:08 AM
207	Thriving	12/13/2022 8:01 AM
208	Thriving	12/13/2022 7:33 AM
209	Peaceful	12/12/2022 10:11 PM
210	Beautiful	12/12/2022 9:50 PM
211	Crime less	12/12/2022 9:36 PM
212	Jubilant	12/12/2022 8:38 PM
213	Preserved	12/12/2022 8:31 PM
214	Prospering	12/12/2022 7:58 PM
215	Improve	12/12/2022 2:21 PM
216	Thriving	12/11/2022 4:36 PM
217	Renaissance	12/11/2022 11:48 AM
218	Flourishing	12/11/2022 6:18 AM
219	Improved	12/10/2022 5:27 PM
220	Historic	12/10/2022 6:41 AM
221	Thriving	12/9/2022 8:02 PM

222	Improved	12/9/2022 5:16 PM
223	Change	12/9/2022 10:54 AM
224	Promising	12/9/2022 12:47 AM
225	Tranquility	12/8/2022 4:00 PM
226	Sold	12/8/2022 10:52 AM
227	Safe	12/8/2022 7:30 AM
228	Thriving	12/8/2022 6:18 AM
229	Rebuilding	12/8/2022 5:10 AM
230	Hospitable	12/7/2022 9:42 PM
231	Thriving	12/7/2022 5:45 PM
232	Flourishing	12/7/2022 4:00 PM
233	Better	12/7/2022 11:07 AM
234	Beautiful	12/7/2022 10:27 AM
235	Thriving	12/6/2022 8:23 PM
236	Proactive	12/6/2022 7:41 PM
237	Connected	12/6/2022 7:18 PM
238	Progress	12/6/2022 5:36 PM
239	Better	12/6/2022 2:31 PM
240	RECREATIONAL AND OUTDOOR COMMUNITY	11/30/2022 3:06 PM
241	Progress	11/29/2022 10:03 PM
242	vibrant	11/29/2022 11:47 AM
243	vibrant	11/28/2022 11:31 AM
244	Energized	11/25/2022 9:53 AM
245	safe neighborhoods, outstanding education	11/22/2022 6:58 PM
246	Thriving	11/22/2022 4:23 PM
247	Safe	11/22/2022 10:47 AM
248	BETTER	11/19/2022 10:53 PM
249	Thriving	11/19/2022 9:47 PM
250	uncorrupted	11/19/2022 2:25 PM
251	Beacon	11/19/2022 7:34 AM
252	Emerging	11/18/2022 4:22 PM
253	lovely	11/18/2022 2:45 PM
254	A Great Community	11/18/2022 12:34 PM
255	Grown	11/18/2022 12:33 PM
256	Valuable	11/18/2022 12:32 PM
257	hopeful	11/18/2022 12:27 PM
258	safe	11/18/2022 12:07 PM
259	nice	11/18/2022 12:07 PM

260	Magnificent!	11/18/2022 9:43 AM
261	the best city or place in the world	11/18/2022 9:03 AM
262	Empowering	11/16/2022 5:53 PM
263	Better	11/16/2022 1:03 PM
264	Transformed	11/16/2022 6:57 AM
265	Autonomous	11/15/2022 8:31 PM
266	Safe	11/15/2022 8:23 PM
267	progressive	11/15/2022 7:02 PM
268	Booming	11/15/2022 6:33 PM
269	Magnificent	11/15/2022 3:59 PM
270	Revitalized	11/15/2022 3:50 PM
271	Thriving	11/15/2022 2:07 PM
272	Thriving	11/15/2022 1:58 PM
273	Affluent	11/15/2022 12:58 PM
274	Growth!	11/15/2022 12:51 PM
275	Flourishing	11/15/2022 11:55 AM
276	Progressive	11/15/2022 9:23 AM
277	Improved	11/1/2022 8:14 AM

# Q18 Is there anything else you would like to share that would make the City of Petersburg a more livable and enjoyable place for you?

Answered: 182 Skipped: 192

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Providing incentives for businesses offering healthy options with fresh foods, farming, physical activity and mindfulness	2/15/2023 4:49 PM
2	I think changing outside perception through cohesive marketing and branding would help a great deal with making the City more enjoyable. This could drive investment and show a community that works together, communicates, and thrives as a result.	2/15/2023 12:57 PM
3	We need to put more funds into the city. Remodel the old buildings, build new ones. Maintain the roads and create safe places for families and kids. Entertainment for young adults.	2/15/2023 8:47 AM
4	City leaders putting the city's needs over their's	2/14/2023 9:15 AM
5	You need to put the money in places that will attract a strong tax base.	2/14/2023 8:36 AM
6	No one wants to be part of a city with so much crime & terrible schools	2/14/2023 7:45 AM
7	Na	2/14/2023 6:49 AM
8	Requirement of educational & professional experience of all elected officials & city council members.	2/14/2023 6:41 AM
9	Improve the Public School System, get Crime under control, stop catering to Government Programs and Improve Fire & Ems.	2/14/2023 5:42 AM
10	Prioritize youth programming. I'm interested in being a part of creating opportunities for the youth within the city. Inspirevalc@gmail.com inspirer va.com 8043071253	2/14/2023 5:05 AM
11	More job opportunities	2/13/2023 8:12 AM
12	Culture of broken families and gangs needs to change. People need purpose and passion for something greater	2/13/2023 7:12 AM
13	Clean it up. Nasty and scary to go through. Need more fire and police presence	2/13/2023 5:44 AM
14	Amenities in walnut hill- a community center/ playground in my neighborhood	2/12/2023 8:05 PM
15	Be more aware of the residents needs and not the needs of the city government	2/12/2023 10:42 AM
16	Honest city officials	2/12/2023 5:40 AM
17	No casino, prioritize children and families	2/12/2023 5:03 AM
18	More free community activities, an lgbtq+ group/club/meeting space. I'd be happy to facilitate for my trans son and others in search of community.	2/11/2023 2:29 PM
19	Petersburg is a diamond in the rough. With the right vision and leadership it could be on the map for travelers to always come by and visit!	2/11/2023 11:07 AM
20	The history	2/11/2023 9:35 AM
21	Stop the food deserts in the different localities of the city	2/11/2023 7:02 AM
22	Build new fire/ems stations, apparatus, and bring back to full staff. Absorb southside ems into fire rescue and staff ambulances in all fire stations 24/7 365.	2/11/2023 6:53 AM
23	Safety	2/10/2023 2:26 PM
24	The Petersburg government is corrupt and personal property taxes are too high for what we see in this place. Commercial property owners are in the city council, so they are to their own	2/10/2023 11:34 AM

	interest, not the interest of the citizens. The mayor needs to be elected by the people as well, not appointed	
25	No	2/9/2023 4:55 PM
26	Communication, I feel, is the most important thing in living, working and getting along together. Without communication there is no understanding. With no understanding there is only confusion and mayham which leads to destruction. A city that does not have open communication with its people, I feel, will not be a livable and enjoyable place very long.	2/9/2023 12:43 PM
27	Continue to improve	2/9/2023 11:55 AM
28	Beautification of the old town and overall downtown area. Simple things more street lighting, trash receptacles and the matching improved outside facades would be an awesome improvement.	2/9/2023 7:35 AM
29	Honest elected officials	2/9/2023 6:47 AM
30	A community outdoor swimming pool	2/8/2023 10:16 PM
31	Reduce property taxes and water bills.	2/8/2023 4:13 PM
32	BETTER POLICING OF NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE MORE SENIORS DWELL; DETERRING YOUTH MISCHIEF AND PROPERTY DEFACEMENT!	2/8/2023 12:53 PM
33	To get the crime rate down and have better housing for low income .	2/8/2023 11:51 AM
34	Clean it up. From the top administration to the falling down houses, crime, broken streets, and horrible education services. Make home owners either clean up the homes, tear them down, or sell. Concentrating first on home owners that live put of state and use the houses as tax write offs.	2/8/2023 5:56 AM
35	All lives matter, stop the reverse racism in our City!	2/7/2023 9:55 PM
36	No	2/7/2023 9:17 PM
37	We need elected officials who care about the city and it's citizens first and realize they personally will gain if they put their personal and financial goals after making sure city thrives.	2/7/2023 8:30 PM
38	No	2/7/2023 6:21 PM
39	Citizens should be able to vote for the mayor!	2/7/2023 3:49 PM
40	Fix the fire and EMS!!!!	2/7/2023 2:02 PM
41	Invest in our children. Invest in the qualities of their teachers and administrators. Invest in their mental health. Promote self-esteem in the children and in the city.	2/7/2023 10:51 AM
42	The school system is horrible. I hope that there would be opportunities to improve and give the children places to go after school and not the street corner. Build more townhomes and condos for single people. Allow businesses to come to the area to increase the revenue .	2/7/2023 7:35 AM
43	The city has enormous potential, it lacks resources and management. Make the city safe and economically sound again. There are residents who care and desire to live in a clean, safe, and financially secure city.	2/7/2023 5:50 AM
44	Can you incentivize developers to buy up deteriorating buildings to replace or repair	2/7/2023 5:27 AM
45	Build the casino	2/7/2023 4:33 AM
46	The small wins are not disregarded. There are some great things happening. This survey alone reflects the effort. Continue to build momentum around the small wins and scream those from the rooftops but don't sweep the other issues under the rug. Engage the citizens as much as possible in small things like neighborhood cleanings, painting community centers, picking up trash. Make them feel ownership.	2/6/2023 11:53 PM
47	User friendly website that makes sense; continued increase use of a variety of social media platforms to promote or announce community news, topics of interest, or events, public comment periods etc.	2/6/2023 5:51 PM
48	No	2/6/2023 3:54 PM

49	Being able to elect the mayor currently its a buddy system	2/6/2023 1:27 PM
50	Clean up vacant lots and open spaces. Develop safe outdoor spaces for recreational activities (biking, walking, accessible to all including those without personal vehicles.	2/6/2023 8:27 AM
51	Grocery store	2/6/2023 4:26 AM
52	Equality, getting control of the high crime rate.	2/6/2023 2:46 AM
53	There needs to be accountability. Cut out all of the casino talk and actually do some improvements to the city. Police need to actually be solving crime and patrolling the streets versus hanging out in Old Towne. City Council members should be voted on collectively and not in Wards because you represent everyone, not just the people who voted for you. The incumbents are dishonest and lack integrity. The owners who are buying up properties should not be allowed to make enormous price hikes in rent. It's just another form of price gouging. There needs to be some affordable housing for persons with disabilities like myself. The citizens of this city have tremendous pride in it, but its leaders are often fulfilling self interests. A casino would not bring jobs to the people here because they can't pass literacy tests, background checks, polygraphs, and whatever qualifications that are needed. Many people are discussing gambling addictions and that is something very real and very possible if people can just go up the street to a casino. Let's not mention the crime. What happens when someone gets robbed or murdered for their winnings coming out of the casino because the crime and criminals are waiting for that. Fix Peabody. The alumni have been trying to repurpose it for educational and community uses, but you all have blocked that. The schools are not up to any one's standards. To say you want better and refusing to do better is ridiculous. Joe Morrissey is a cancer who is only out for self and could care less about how the citizens of Petersburg will be fairing 10 years from now. It's just another way for him to sling his weight around and intimidate people. Kim Taylor is going down the same road, but I believe she means well...just keeping bad company with him. Please, do some reevaluating and look to your citizens and your new councilman to understand what the people really want and need. Thanks for coming to my Ted Talk.	2/6/2023 12:56 AM
54	I am a local realtor and I will share with you the number one reason clients don't want to move to Petersburg. They all say the school system. If the city can figure out how to revitalize the school system it could bring more people into the city! Not just people, but homeowners that pay taxes who will be quality members of the city. Petersburg needs more neighborhoods like Berkeley Estates and West Park. Is there a company that can come in and access the school system and leave us with ways to improve it?	2/5/2023 11:20 PM
55	More things to do,A casino,A grocery store down town area,	2/5/2023 11:05 PM
56	Fix the problems with turnover of city employees.	2/5/2023 10:33 PM
57	You have to make this awesome area safe for people to come to and be part of the existing historical infrastructure that you already have a great base for. Crime, vagrants, unfocused youth and closed business and houses that should be leveled are what people see and what makes their decisions to eat, shop and life elsewhere an easy one. It is a shame. So much potential in such a historic area!	2/5/2023 9:29 PM
58	Listen. Listen to the people.	2/5/2023 5:57 PM
59	We need entertainment in the city. I grew up in a Petersburg that had a roller rink, movie theater, bowling ally, mall. I was proud of it and didn't need to leave for anything.	2/5/2023 5:57 PM
60	The social implications of poverty must be addressed in order for the city to be all that it has the potential to be.	2/5/2023 4:49 PM
61	Develop infrastructure around natural resources to make visitors come. Market the city as a good place to retire and vacation.	2/5/2023 3:46 PM
62	Increase police department, reduce crime. Citizens are afraid to leave their homes at night. Fix roads correctly. More street lights.	2/5/2023 2:26 PM
63	Crime reduction	2/5/2023 10:46 AM
64	-Stop fostering the defeatist attitude. Re-structure the programs and citizens they serve to a higher standard. -More timely promotion of events and amenities throughout the city. -Term limits for elected city officials. -Raise the level of professionalism of city employees. -Require	2/5/2023 8:27 AM

	a percentage of city employees to be Petersburg residents for at least a year. -Transparency of city government.	
65	no	2/3/2023 7:55 AM
66	Clean up government corruption. City council does not act in the interests of its community.	2/3/2023 6:19 AM
67	Focus on pharmaceutical, biotech and manufacturing sectors. Incorporate workforce pipeline to these sectors and work with adjacent localities to build product.	2/2/2023 9:55 PM
68	Stop hiring leaders based on race and sex and hire based on qualifications and references	2/2/2023 9:32 AM
69	Petersburg definitely needs to focus on their tree program since there isn't any in place. When this town was desirable to visit. They had all the streets lined with trees as well as the parks. I've been living here for 5yrs and haven't seen the city plant any trees. I'm constantly watching the city take down dead trees and never replacing them. It makes it unbearable to walk on the sidewalks during the summer. I hope the city can focus on this in the up coming years.	2/1/2023 5:47 PM
70	Revamp City Council for more concerned representation.	2/1/2023 3:48 PM
71	More transparent leadership	2/1/2023 2:31 PM
72	The city is not properly being ran by its administration. My hope is the corruption and theft will cease. I hope there's more continuity and structure. Also, don't gentrify and push black ppl out.	2/1/2023 2:30 PM
73	Petersburg seems to attract lower quality versions of retail stores than are in surrounding areas. For example, Walmart and Food Lion in Petersburg are physically smaller which means they are not able to carry as large of a variety of products so I find myself shopping outside of Petersburg to have access to a wider array of options. Additionally, Petersburg attracts lower quality retail establishments over those offering higher quality products. This holds true for grocery retailers and general department stores. Many large scale retail establishments in Petersburg are from companies who prey on lower income communities. I value the restaurant industry has remained focused on small business and hope that continues. Access to downtown retail locations, restaurant locations, event spaces etc. could be drastically improved with better parking availability. Many lots are not labeled for use or the surfaces are not well kept for safe driving. Additional night life opportunities would enhance the livability of the city for younger residents. Locations in the downtown area should be allowed to provide such nightlife as long as the area is physically safe. Higher noise volume should be expected as part of living in a downtown area.	2/1/2023 12:51 PM
74	More transparency from city council	2/1/2023 12:39 PM
75	Invest in the community starting with the younger members making Petersburg a better place to grow up and prosper as an adult.	2/1/2023 11:18 AM
76	City govt is incestorous. Council shouldn't have a mayor and vice mayor on council seats! Mayor should be voted upon. Until leadership is not in it for personal gain, the city will not function in a noncurrup manner	2/1/2023 8:43 AM
77	Address the crime and blight problems. Ensure homes are safe and the outsides are cleaned up.	2/1/2023 8:28 AM
78	Reduce crime, increase public safety.	2/1/2023 8:06 AM
79	Bragging about our schools being accredited is not a great thing. Accreditation is the bare minimum. My street is full of children, yet all but a very small handful attend private school or homeschool to get a real quality education that keeps up with current and long standing research on what's best for a child's well being and development.	2/1/2023 6:52 AM
80	We need school choice. I'm lucky to have gotten my daughter into private school with financial aid however, not many individuals are so lucky. The public schools are horrible. We need to do better for the future of our youth.	2/1/2023 6:15 AM
81	Lower Utilities Bill	1/31/2023 4:12 PM
82	No	1/31/2023 1:37 PM
83	Elected officials need to show their faces more in the communities they represent rather than only at election time. I'm a new resident here and I've not seen or heard who my council	1/31/2023 11:32 AM

	members are or anything. I don't even feel like they even care. It's making me want to move back to where I was.	
84	Become more business friendly	1/31/2023 10:14 AM
85	No Casino	1/31/2023 8:59 AM
86	Sewers in Walnut Hill are clogged with leaves and grass!	1/31/2023 8:15 AM
87	I have been to city council meetings and the complete disregard the council has for the citizens is shocking. They do not actually seem to care what the residents want and just do what they already decided they were going to do. This makes it difficult to feel like our opinions do not matter.	1/29/2023 11:55 AM
88	When we start to take care of the community members other areas will begin improving throughout the city. People first= affordable and livable housing, access to food, and community health services.	1/28/2023 2:54 PM
89	A City leadership that actually considers the health, safety, and quality of life for its citizens over personal agendas and personal financial gains.	1/28/2023 2:45 PM
90	Address the negative perception/narrative	1/26/2023 6:31 PM
91	There is so much potential. The residents must be involved in this process. Too often, decisions are made for the residents that are not effective and waste money and time.	1/26/2023 5:21 PM
92	More walkable and bike friendly. Cities should be built for people, not cars!	1/26/2023 4:44 PM
93	safe and secure	1/26/2023 4:19 PM
94	more for seniors	1/25/2023 4:57 PM
95	Petersburg is full of people who are interesting and invested. However, a disconnect exists between those who have power and responsibility and those who live here. There is not a unified vision. Petersburg is enjoyable because it is conveniently located and all of our basic needs can be met easily. It is important to note that that is because I have adequate transportation and economic stability.	1/25/2023 4:19 PM
96	I would like leadership to make their decisions and future planning more predictable and transparent.	1/25/2023 10:38 AM
97	It would appear that City Council is controlled by factions who are unwilling to change or have their own interest at heart. There are rumors it is corrupt. The City Council must run differently better if Petersburg is ever going to change.	1/25/2023 9:18 AM
98	no, great survey!	1/24/2023 9:06 PM
99	Respect for people of all faiths, creeds and traditions.	1/23/2023 10:40 PM
100	Reduce the Blight. Penalize owners with blighted properties of fix them.	1/23/2023 7:33 PM
101	I am worried about the new development in Petersburg because it is low quality. That is why I hesitate to blanket encourage it.	1/22/2023 3:38 PM
102	Let's continue to foster pride in our communities, neighborhoods and businesses. I feel we should encourage more community involvement such as trash pickup on roadsides, volunteer improvement work such as landscaping, painting curbs, trash receptacles and other city, public use facilities. We could also have meet and greets with public officials and agencies and the residents, such as cookouts, and work side-by-side with each other to make Petersburg a safe, welcoming and attractive place.	1/14/2023 9:21 AM
103	Bring family back . Healthy communities and living.	1/14/2023 8:51 AM
104	Get rid of the gangs!	1/14/2023 7:54 AM
105	I want people to take pride in their own community. So many people talk down about it...yet they do nothing to help improve the place they also call home.	1/13/2023 5:38 AM
106	Ya'll are heading in the right direction. You're talking to the people. All the people and that's the best way to find out what the city really needs. Thank you for this survey. Petersburg Pride is on the rise!	1/12/2023 1:41 PM

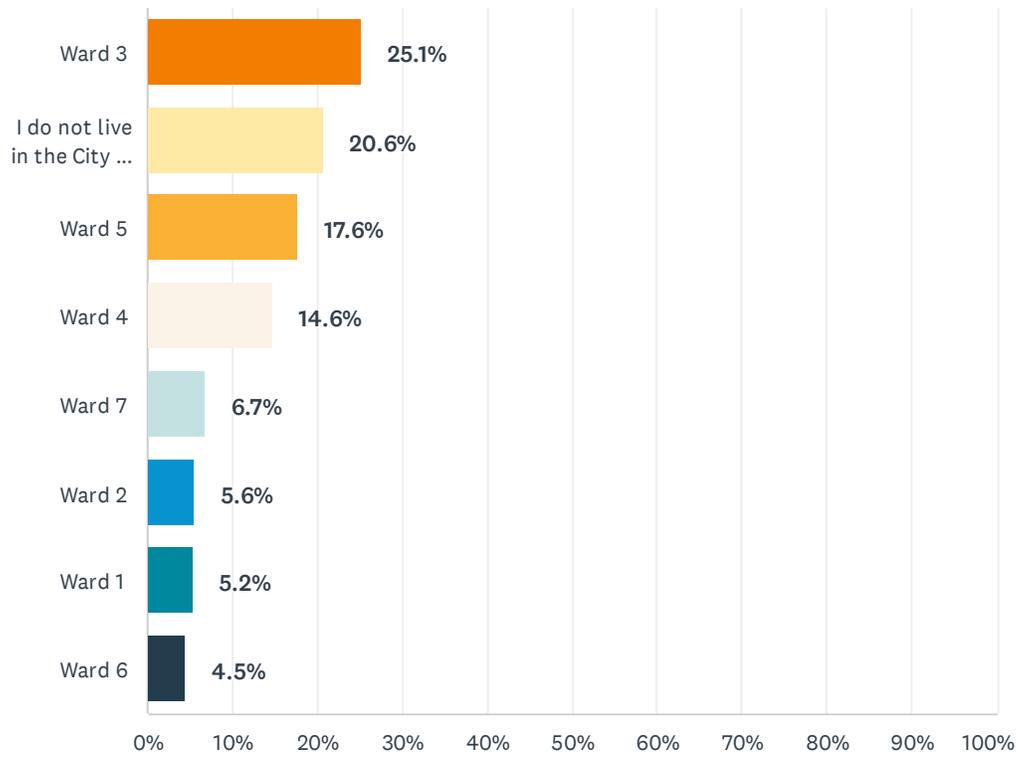
107	A sustainable environment for all.	1/11/2023 4:16 PM
108	N/A	1/10/2023 6:51 PM
109	More grocery stores with healthy food options with access for all.	1/10/2023 5:38 PM
110	Listen to the citizens. This survey is a good step. Have all departments in Petersburg (like the water dept.) answer the phone. Employ more police to reduce crime. Make Cameron Field an outdoor concert/entertainment venue. Make parking decks in the Old Town area, so that will encourage more shoppers to come shop, and more business will want to come to Old Town. There is nothing for the youth to do. Encourage the opening of an arcade, bowling alley, skating rink, etc. Get Parks & Rec to create basketball & baseball teams at Lee Park for the youth. Encourage a major grocery store like Kroger & hotels to come to Petersburg. Get rid of blight! Make Petersburg look better, cut the grass, pickup trash, etc. Bring the Casino! Petersburg has some of the highest real estate tax. Lower it!	1/9/2023 3:41 PM
111	Less trash on streets and around businesses	1/9/2023 11:56 AM
112	Assist community members who are willing to lead the youth. Provide places for the youth to grow outside of VDOA. If the cities goals are long term and want to improve the city with fidelity for the future, the city must focus on the youth, they are the future! If the city evaluates the previous 5-20 year trend, I believe the city would identify how removing activities, places (playgrounds), or anything that provided fun, mentorship, and camaraderie amongst and for the youth has affected the city in several ways.	1/9/2023 10:40 AM
113	Unless Petersburg drastically improves education from the classroom to administration, hires competent and professional government workers, and citizens elect city council members who are not self-serving, Petersburg chances of being anything more than what it is are slim to none.	1/4/2023 9:30 PM
114	Not at this time	1/3/2023 10:11 PM
115	No	1/3/2023 9:59 PM
116	We need to focus on our elderly adults and good adult living facilities for older adults	1/3/2023 9:36 PM
117	I love working in Petersburg and being part of the community. I think more focus on opportunities for improving the health and wellness of residents, (movement/recreation/public greenspace) would go a long way to make it a more enjoyable city.	1/2/2023 9:54 PM
118	More rehab of homes destruction of abandoned ones better schools and safer	12/29/2022 10:11 PM
119	Improve blight	12/27/2022 6:38 AM
120	It would be nice to have city officials upgrade Old Town's curb appeal, step out of the remnants of its outdated storefronts, its troubled past, and into a profitable picturesque city that rivals high quality towns like Blacksburg and Charlottesville.	12/22/2022 4:01 PM
121	The government needs to stop misplacing funds and help our community for once. Too many state police offices that care about quota instead of community	12/21/2022 11:11 AM
122	Reduce Taxes and get rid of blighted areas	12/19/2022 7:53 PM
123	Effective & consistent communication from city officials. More involvement with neighborhoods & activities for youth.	12/19/2022 7:50 AM
124	Let's beautify Petersburg, make it safe, and enhance opportunities	12/17/2022 11:57 AM
125	Get rid of the landlords that don't meet the City Codes for Rental Properties.	12/16/2022 10:16 PM
126	Lower the food taxes.	12/15/2022 9:22 AM
127	Work on the city's reputation as a lawless place. Hire a traffic division that is able to actually enforce vehicular infractions.	12/15/2022 12:09 AM
128	City officials need to have the city's people best interest at heart and not steal from the people.	12/14/2022 1:13 PM
129	Clean the streets in force residential codes. Tear down abandoned buildings. Clean up the downtown area especially when the new renovated hotel opens. Get a good quality grocery store!!! If I can help in anyway please contact me.	12/14/2022 12:17 PM
130	Community trash pickup events	12/14/2022 10:45 AM

131	Litter here is disgusting.	12/14/2022 7:19 AM
132	Safety	12/14/2022 5:57 AM
133	Stop crime, drugs, fix the pot holes, give the PFD & PPD equipment they need! New members in City Council!	12/13/2022 7:23 PM
134	We need more recreational activities for everyone. The bowling alley is gone. The skating rink is gone. The mall is gone. There's really nothing for anyone to do. There's are few restaurants but most are starting to shut down. Most living arrangements are not for people in the middle class. You either have to make little to no money or you are able to buy a house. The charm is there and people always say that Petersburg will grow soon but every year it feels like it doesn't get any better, more like it's gotten worst. Old buildings just sitting and rotting away.	12/13/2022 4:38 PM
135	I moved away to Richmond	12/13/2022 1:39 PM
136	Pedestrian zones in Old Town, attractive outdoor eating, leverage of the river to create a river trail system that integrates with the community, more public art.	12/13/2022 12:14 PM
137	Crime reduced. Economic development grants for small businesses to come in and revitalize Crater Road and other throughways in the city. Thank you.	12/13/2022 7:39 AM
138	Please make the city fun again, give the children something to do so that they don't grow up finding trouble and going down the wrong path	12/12/2022 10:12 PM
139	Less crime	12/12/2022 9:36 PM
140	Better people running the city	12/12/2022 8:39 PM
141	More places to purchase groceries. One food lion, one Walmart and one save a lot are not enough to support the City and surrounding areas	12/12/2022 7:59 PM
142	Good	12/12/2022 2:22 PM
143	Business opportunities would be great. There is so much potential, but running a business in Petersburg has proven to be extremely challenging.	12/11/2022 4:36 PM
144	I hope for better schooling. Clean up the homelessness and crime. More parks and recreation. More job opportunities	12/11/2022 11:50 AM
145	I hope that City Council would be better in tune with the needs of the people and not for their own selfish gains.	12/10/2022 5:28 PM
146	More community events, with frequent marketing.	12/9/2022 8:04 PM
147	Bring casino to Petersburg	12/8/2022 4:00 PM
148	We need more things for people that do do what they are suppose to, please reach out if you need more information James Walker 8047042897	12/8/2022 10:53 AM
149	Homelessness is a large issue within the city and a homeless shelter would help with that and help other community partners get her those individuals together and provide help that will help them become successful again.	12/8/2022 7:31 AM
150	I love living here, and I do feel safe, but I understand that others don't because there are ALWAYS gunshots heard near old towne	12/8/2022 6:19 AM
151	Used to have a wonderful Petersburg Info Center. Historians and their tours come here to see historic landmarks. The Info Center was in Olde Town and feels like a small history museum of our famous town. There was an array of brochures regarding the cemetery, the battlefield, Old Towne, even one on the movies that have been filmed here.	12/7/2022 9:48 PM
152	More transparency and INCLUSION of public opinion in what gets prioritized. This survey was a great idea as long as this information is used properly. Also make the city council meetings more inclusive and promoted more for the public to be more aware of when they are.	12/6/2022 8:24 PM
153	Address the blight on the main roads and clean the gutters on the main roads.	12/6/2022 7:42 PM
154	I want to see Petersburg become a gateway between the north and south, i want this city to become a beacon of the east coast	12/6/2022 7:19 PM

155	More business and entertainment for young people	12/6/2022 5:37 PM
156	Give the kids healthy outlets, recreational options, more and better role models. It's harder and scarier to walk and impossible to ride my bike, drivers are reckless. City government lacks transparency and I'm never convinced long term health and we'll being is the goal when I see graft and corruption and short term gain. The citizens are not the enemies.	12/6/2022 2:35 PM
157	More grocery stores, sit down restaurants, places for the kids to go ie.... Arcades, bowling alley, concert venues	11/29/2022 10:09 PM
158	To compete with other surrounding localities, the city needs to invest significantly in retaining its natural resources. The City of Hopewell is revitalizing its harbor, and we should do the same.	11/29/2022 11:53 AM
159	I really think we need to focus on fixing up what we have - and do a better job with signage and maintaince over all	11/28/2022 11:32 AM
160	good education helps bring about beneficial change to everything else	11/22/2022 7:00 PM
161	N/A	11/22/2022 4:24 PM
162	STOP BEINGS RACIST	11/19/2022 10:54 PM
163	Have a fiscally accountable city government that is more transparent to the citizens. Get rid of city council and have a board of representatives	11/19/2022 9:52 PM
164	Stop giving city leaders huge raises in pay.	11/19/2022 2:26 PM
165	stay safe	11/18/2022 2:46 PM
166	nahh	11/18/2022 12:37 PM
167	I want to be able to raise my kids here but now I can't.	11/18/2022 12:36 PM
168	not at this time	11/18/2022 12:34 PM
169	no	11/18/2022 12:28 PM
170	inside basketball court	11/18/2022 12:08 PM
171	more arcades	11/18/2022 12:08 PM
172	Provide and maintain a listing of reputable General Contractors who are knowledgeable of the processes involved in maintaining and improving historical homes.	11/18/2022 9:50 AM
173	kids 12+ should be able to do easy jobs like work at the ymca	11/18/2022 9:04 AM
174	More manufacturing and production job opportunities.	11/16/2022 5:54 PM
175	Transparency and integrity from the city leadership. Less overt nepotism, more leveraging the community for improvements.	11/16/2022 1:04 PM
176	A better social safety net to capture those slipping through the cracks.	11/15/2022 8:32 PM
177	People doing studies need to do their homework on how the city is governed and address that, rather than pretending it all works like a well-oiled machine	11/15/2022 7:03 PM
178	Economic development and crime reduction, particularly violent crime	11/15/2022 6:37 PM
179	Safety and assist the youth keep them busy and promote city functions early on like 3 weeks in advance	11/15/2022 4:01 PM
180	Transparency in government. Active, informed citizens. citizens.	11/15/2022 2:09 PM
181	Get rid of blighted properties (buildings and/or land) asap. Fully staffed police department & fire department with working equipment would decrease anxiety of living in the city by 50%. Invest more in public education to attract and retain quality employees that strengthen attendance and learning would see more home-owning families buy homes in the city.	11/15/2022 1:02 PM
182	Reduce poverty	11/15/2022 9:23 AM

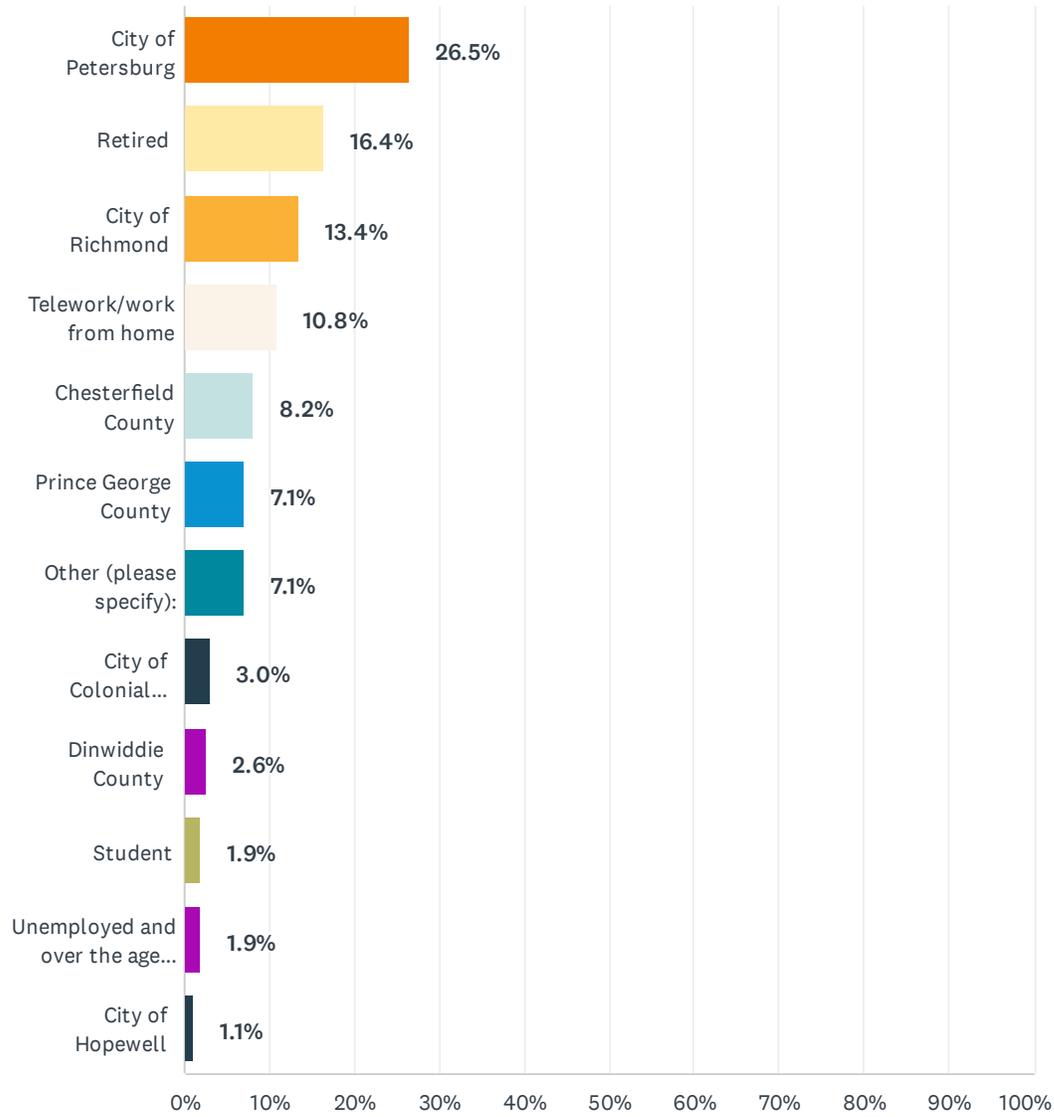
# Q19 In which City ward is your primary residence located?

Answered: 267 Skipped: 107



# Q20 Which best describes your current location of employment?

Answered: 268 Skipped: 106

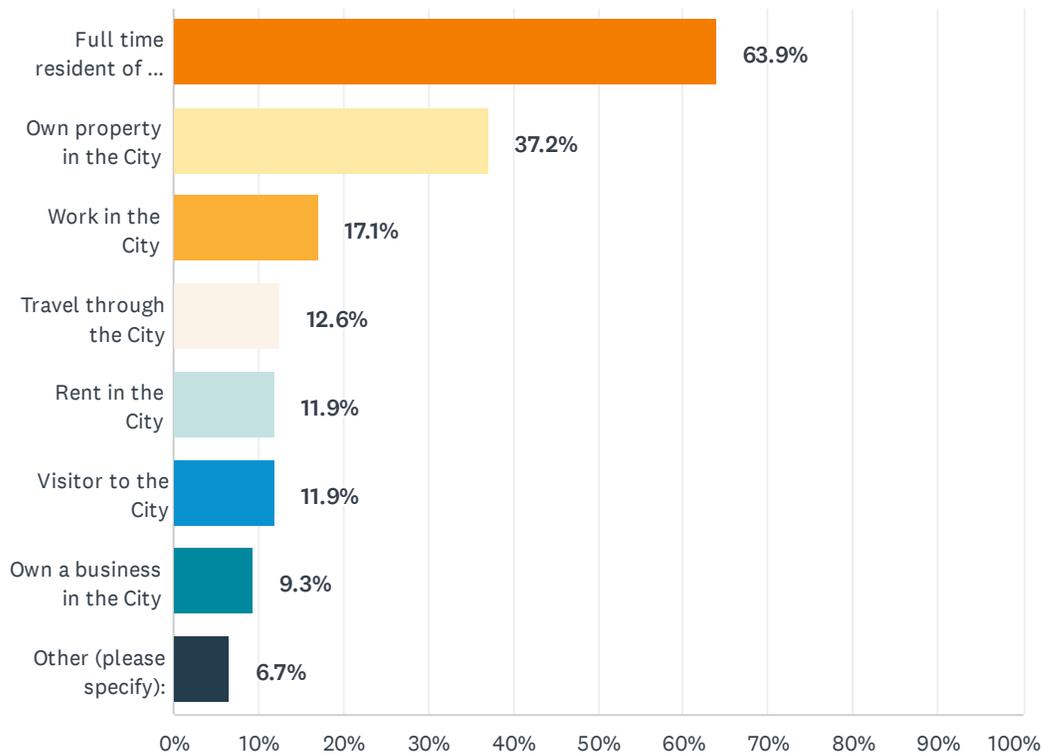


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	Henrico County	2/13/2023 9:54 AM
2	Seeking	2/12/2023 12:40 PM
3	Other sector	2/11/2023 6:54 AM
4	Washington dc	2/7/2023 9:18 PM
5	Sandston	2/7/2023 9:02 PM
6	Entrepreneurship	2/6/2023 7:38 PM
7	Chester	2/6/2023 2:46 AM

8	Disabled; Working from home.	2/6/2023 1:05 AM
9	Prefer not to answer	2/5/2023 10:35 PM
10	Northern VA	2/1/2023 8:24 PM
11	Homemaker	2/1/2023 6:52 AM
12	Semi retired	1/31/2023 4:15 PM
13	Seasonal worker	1/29/2023 11:55 AM
14	Ashland	1/25/2023 10:39 AM
15	Reitred	1/9/2023 11:57 AM
16	Ft. Lee	12/19/2022 7:51 AM
17	Disputanta	12/13/2022 9:14 AM
18	Out of state	12/12/2022 9:36 PM
19	Williamsburg	11/22/2022 4:25 PM

## Q21 Which best describes your status in regard to Petersburg? (Check all that apply):

Answered: 269 Skipped: 105

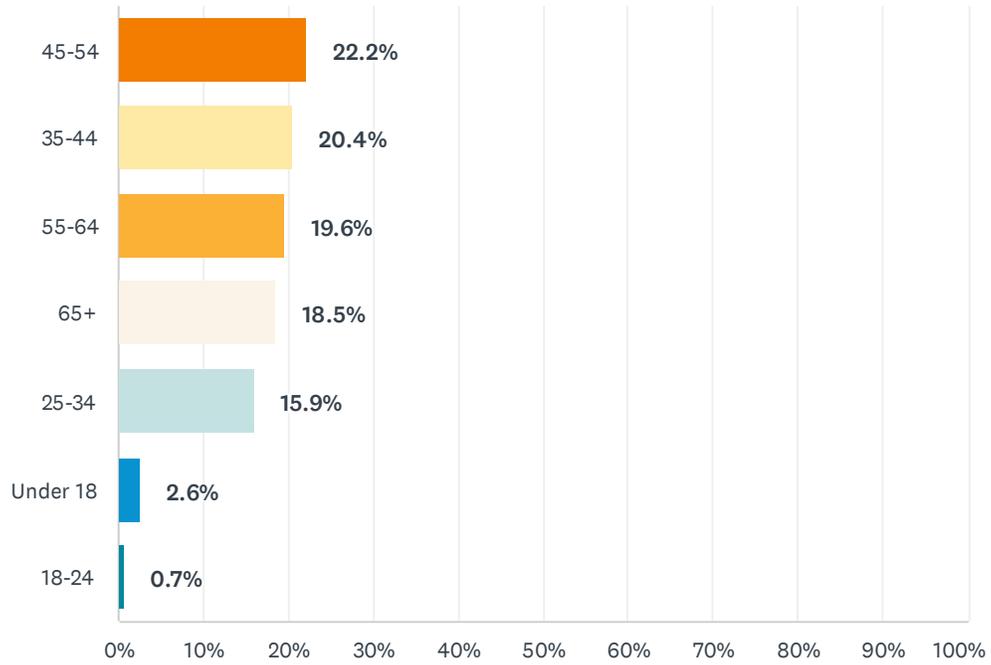


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	Past Employee	2/14/2023 5:43 AM
2	My mother was from Petersburg and taught at Walnut Hill.	2/13/2023 9:55 AM
3	Live adjacent	2/13/2023 6:38 AM
4	Shop in the city for all my needs	2/12/2023 7:14 AM
5	Shop/patronize business, live adjacent to the city (within walking distance)	2/12/2023 5:05 AM
6	Family live there too.	2/11/2023 11:09 AM
7	Family in city	2/11/2023 6:54 AM
8	BORN, RAISED, EDUCATED, RETIRED - SCHOOL SYSTEM	2/8/2023 12:55 PM
9	I was born and raised in Petersburg. I would love to see it restored .	2/8/2023 11:53 AM
10	Born and raised in Petersburg.	2/8/2023 5:57 AM
11	Shop in the city	2/5/2023 9:31 PM
12	Worked in city for 27 years and volunteer there now	2/5/2023 4:50 PM
13	planning to open a business soon	1/25/2023 10:40 AM
14	Religious Services	1/3/2023 10:13 PM

15	Military family who refused to live in Petersburg bc of the school system	12/17/2022 9:32 PM
16	being a kid in school	11/18/2022 9:08 AM
17	Born and raised in Petersburg	11/15/2022 3:51 PM
18	Employee	11/15/2022 9:24 AM

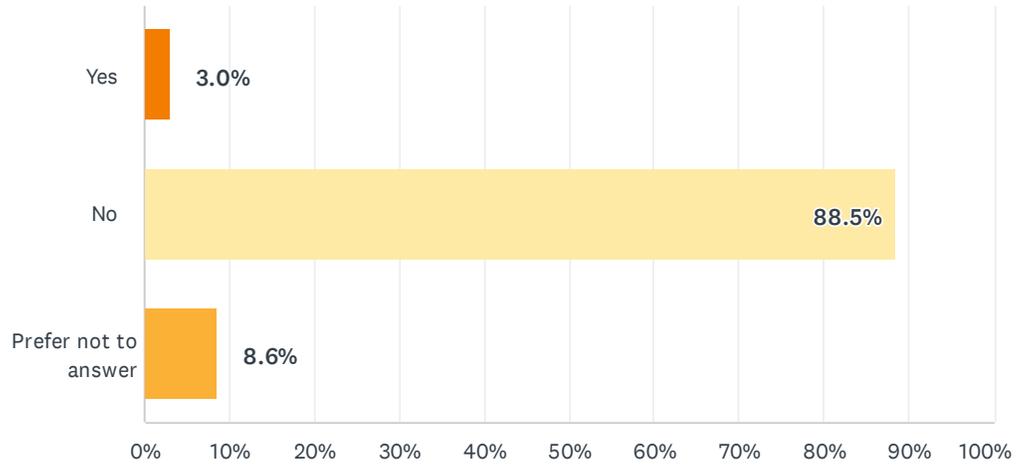
# Q22 What is your age?

Answered: 270 Skipped: 104



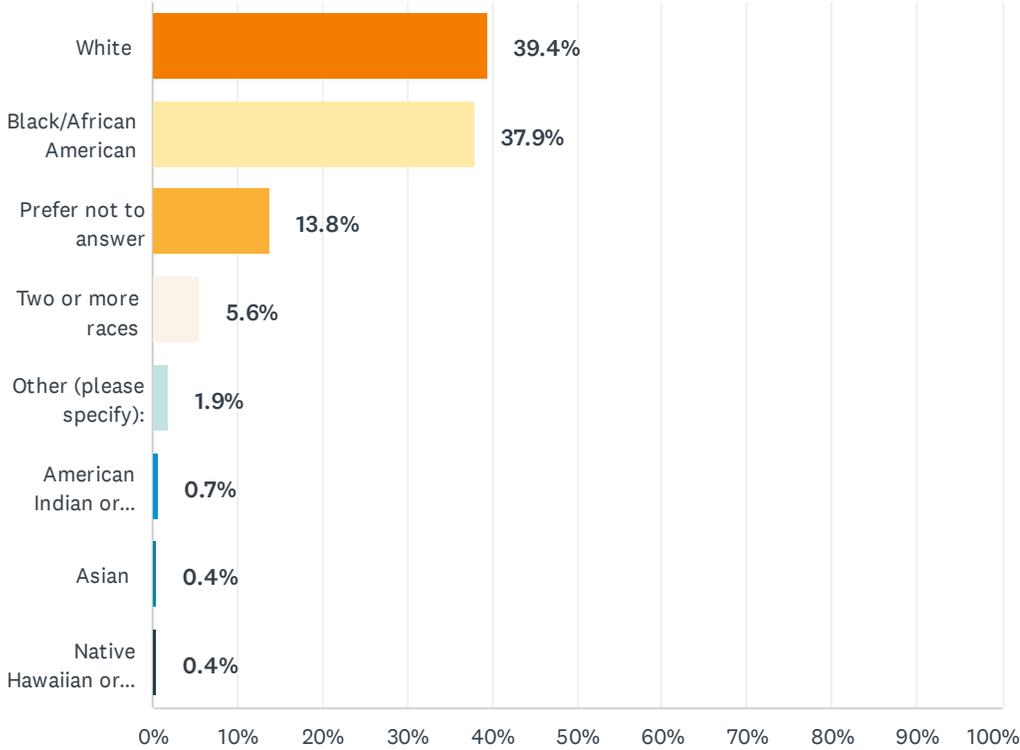
## Q23 Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

Answered: 269 Skipped: 105



# Q24 Which best describes you?

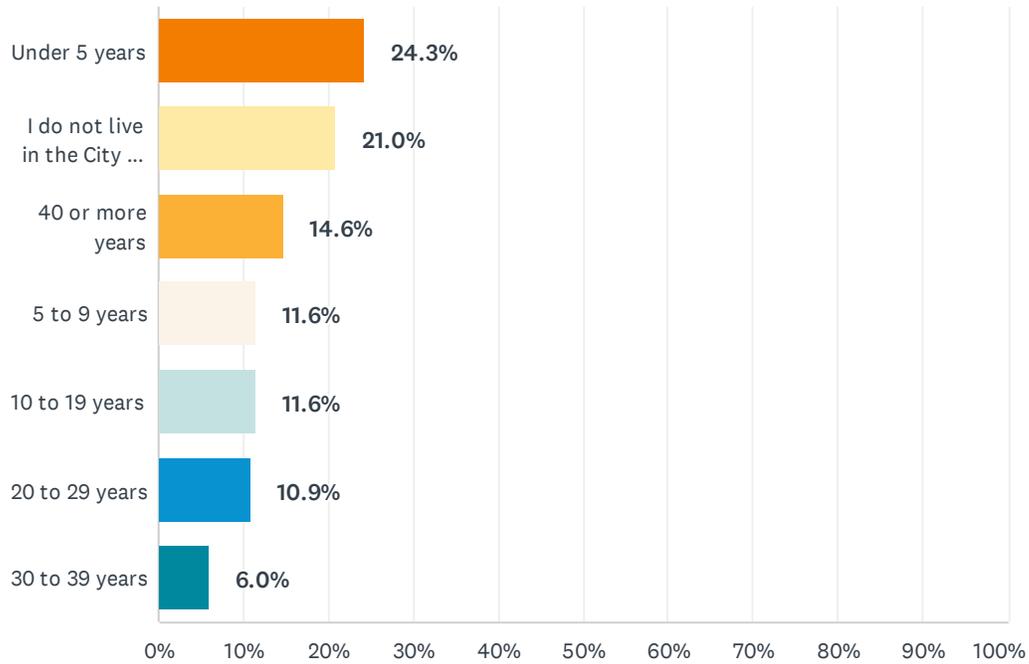
Answered: 269 Skipped: 105



#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	Human	2/12/2023 12:41 PM
2	DOES IT REALLY MATTER?	2/9/2023 12:47 PM
3	American	1/3/2023 10:03 PM
4	why does it matter?	12/13/2022 12:59 PM
5	black and Hispanic.	11/18/2022 12:11 PM

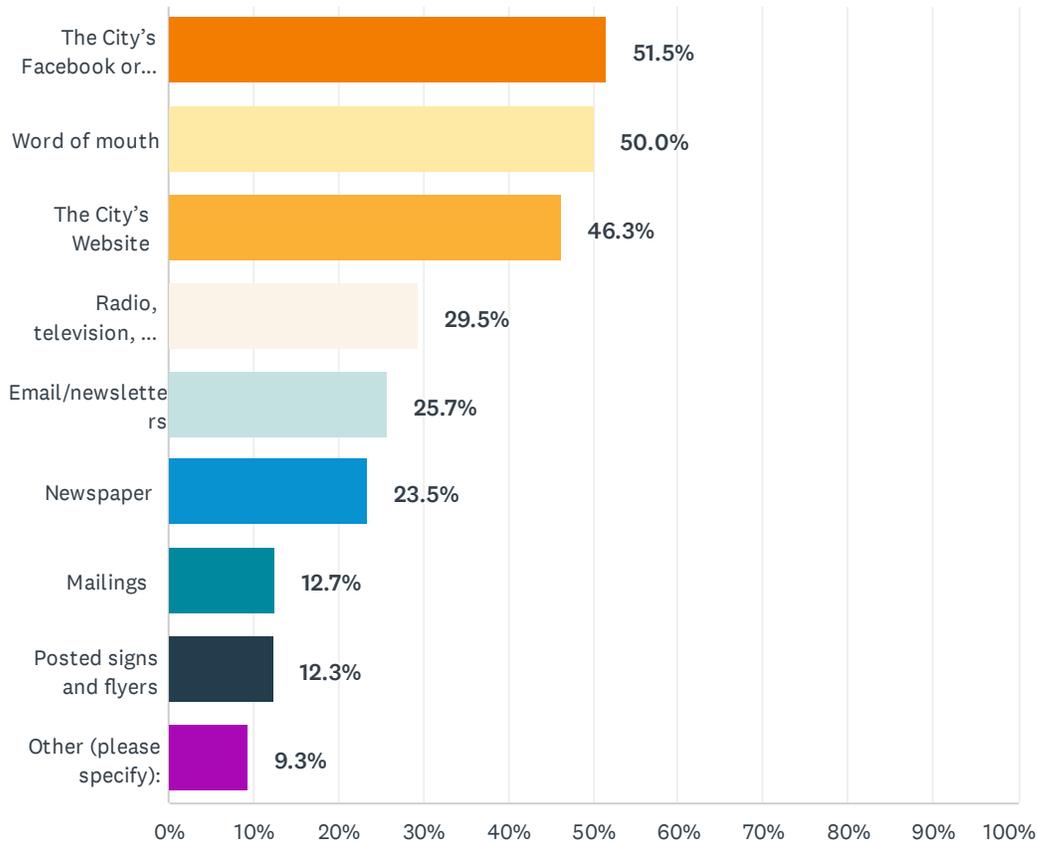
# Q25 If you are a resident of the City of Petersburg, how long have you lived here?

Answered: 267 Skipped: 107



## Q26 How do you usually access information about the City, meetings, events, and programs? (Check all that apply):

Answered: 268 Skipped: 106



#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	Social media	2/12/2023 12:42 PM
2	Family/friends	2/11/2023 6:55 AM
3	Groups that I'm involved in	2/5/2023 5:59 PM
4	Google	2/5/2023 3:48 PM
5	Facebook posts by others	2/5/2023 8:29 AM
6	Social media (not city)	2/1/2023 8:25 PM
7	Text notifications	2/1/2023 2:33 PM
8	Community Facebook groups	1/29/2023 11:56 AM
9	Others posting on social media	1/26/2023 4:55 PM
10	social media sites	1/25/2023 10:40 AM
11	Family	12/29/2022 12:42 PM
12	Nextdoor Neighbor app	12/19/2022 7:53 AM

13	Fb now	12/17/2022 11:58 AM
14	Phone calls	12/15/2022 9:31 AM
15	Social media	12/14/2022 7:21 AM
16	Social media	12/13/2022 8:04 AM
17	Facebook	12/10/2022 5:31 PM
18	Other people's Facebook pages	12/9/2022 8:06 PM
19	Twitter	11/19/2022 9:56 PM
20	tiktok	11/18/2022 2:49 PM
21	Unofficial community social media	11/16/2022 5:56 PM
22	Reddit	11/15/2022 8:34 PM
23	Community Facebook pages	11/15/2022 8:25 PM
24	other social media	11/15/2022 7:04 PM
25	Facebook & Petersburg & VaTriCities Reddit boards	11/15/2022 1:04 PM