

West Hickory / Westmont Neighborhood Plan Survey Results

August 13, 2020



Life. Well Crafted.

Introduction

- ▶ Current neighborhood plan was completed in 2000
 - ▶ Has not been updated since, although a number of goals and strategies have been carried out
- ▶ Staff is working on an update given the neighborhood's interest and the timing of the Highway 321 and bond project improvements
- ▶ Staff has completed an updated demographic analysis, a “windshield survey,” a preliminary SWOT questionnaire, and conducted an online/mail neighborhood survey

Demographic Analysis

▶ RACE

- West Hickory has diversified over the last 20 years
- 52.7% White, below City average of 69.4%
- 18.6% Black, higher than City average of 14.3%

▶ AGE

- Based on data collected, West Hickory should see an increase in the 65 and over category in 2020 census

▶ HOUSEHOLD

- 41% are one-person households
- 13% are single-parent households
- There was a significant increase in one-person/single-parent households between 1990 and 2010

Demographic Analysis Continued

▶ HOUSING VALUES AND RENT

- Median home value in West Hickory is \$135,030, which is significantly lower than City's median of \$167,900
- Home value percentage has increased since 2000

▶ MEDIAN INCOMES

- West Hickory averages below citywide median household and family incomes

▶ HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

- Housing units have increased 38.7% since 1990, mostly due to multi-family construction
- West Hickory has evolved from an owner occupied, single-family neighborhood to a more diversified neighborhood where more than 40% of all the residential dwelling units are rentals

Windshield Survey

- ▶ Structural and land use analysis completed by staff
- ▶ Overall, neighborhood's rating fair condition
- ▶ Approximately 894 single family structures and 242 multi family units
- ▶ Large percentage of industrial land

Preliminary SWOT Analysis

► STRENGTHS

- Diversity has increased in the neighborhood
- Church involvement
- Steady decline in crime in the last 10 years
- Increase in median house value
- Recreational facilities (now)

► WEAKNESSES

- Highway 321 serves as a barrier between the neighborhood and the majority of the City to the east
- Lack of single family housing opportunities
- Increase in one-person and single-parent households
- Abandoned structures

- Many buildings in need of repair
- Rental properties in disrepair, absentee landlords
- West Hickory Park in need of additions
- Poor street conditions
- Pollution
- Lack of “greenfield” developable sites
- Lack of infill opportunities for new housing construction
- No grocery stores
- Lack of retail businesses
- Lack of healthcare/medical offices
- Lack of transitional zoning
- Lack of sidewalks

Preliminary SWOT Analysis Continued

▶ OPPORTUNITIES

- Brownfield program
- Highway 321 expansion
- Restoring and renovating West Hickory Park and Senior Center
- City Walk
- Aviation Walk / BUILD grant
- Former Southern Desk
- Former S&W Chemical site
- Former Kroger site

▶ THREATS

- Highway 321 traffic congestion
- Vagrancy
- Lack of redevelopment opportunities
- Prostitution
- Higher percentage of vacant housing compared to Hickory, as a whole
- Decreased opportunities for East/West traffic due to Hwy 321 project

Meeting with Neighborhood Leaders

► Issues Discussed

- “Food desert” (lack of grocery stores)
- Absentee landlords
- Low end recreation opportunities
- Lack of bus routes and shelters
- Skill gaming businesses

► Suggestions

- Neighborhood/Church members helping clean up yards to assist Code Enforcement
- Ensure survey is able to be accessed by all residents
- Expand/strengthen the Neighborhood Association

Survey Creation

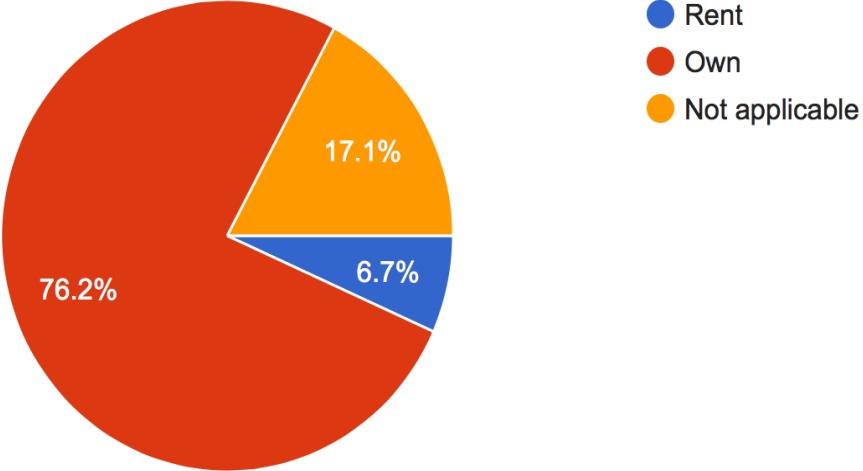
- ▶ Modeled after the Green Park neighborhood survey
- ▶ Google Doc
- ▶ Survey translated into Spanish and Hmong
- ▶ Press Release
- ▶ Mailed 508 Copies
- ▶ Left 25 copies at Bethany Lutheran Church

By the Numbers

- ▶ Mailed out 508 Surveys
 - No Responses: 374
 - Google Forms: 15 (English only)
 - Translated Google Forms: 0
 - Unable to Deliver: 31
 - Responded Without Completing: 5
 - Paper Copies: 98
- ▶ Total Responses: 118, 23.2%
 - ▶ Figure does not include five additional responses since cut off

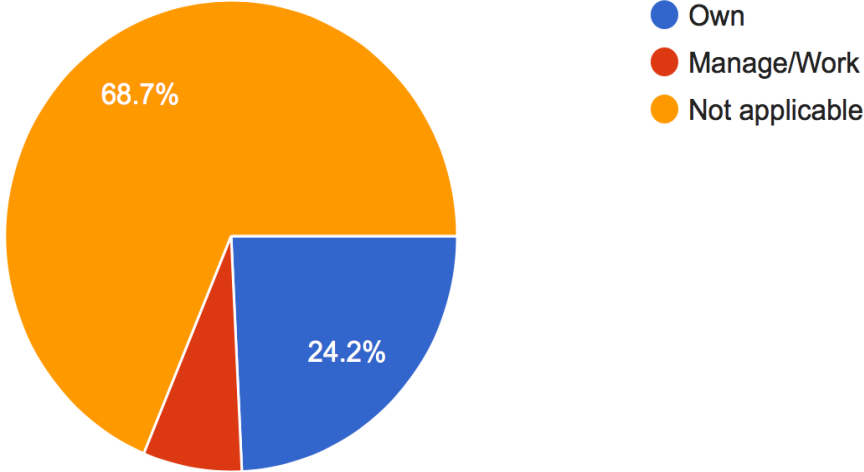
1A. If you live in the West Hickory/Westmont Neighborhood, do you:

105 responses



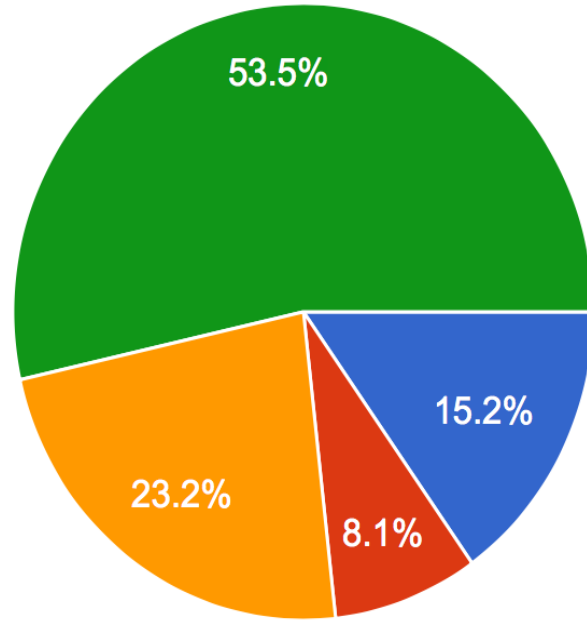
1B. If you work in the West Hickory/Westmont Neighborhood, do you:

99 responses



2. How long have you lived in West Hickory? (Answer if applicable)

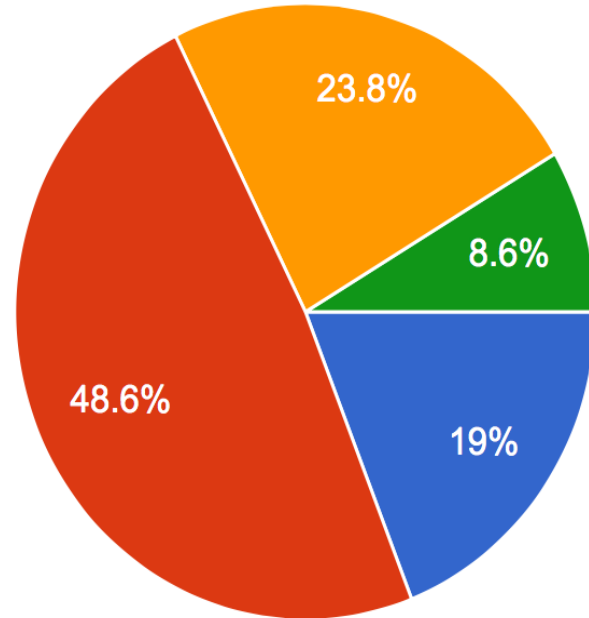
99 responses



- Less than 5 years
- 5 to 9 years
- 10 to 19 years
- 20 or more years

3. How well do you know your neighbors?

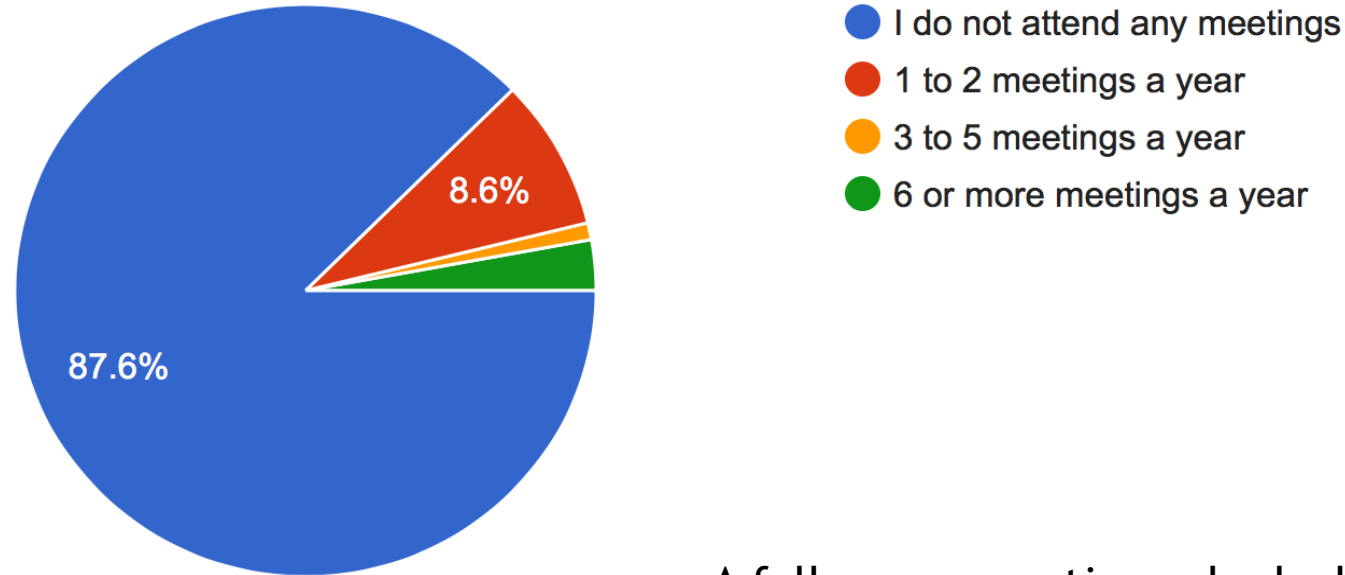
105 responses



- Know most
- Know a few on my street
- Know just the ones next to me
- Don't know any

4. How often do you attend West Hickory Neighborhood Association meetings?

105 responses

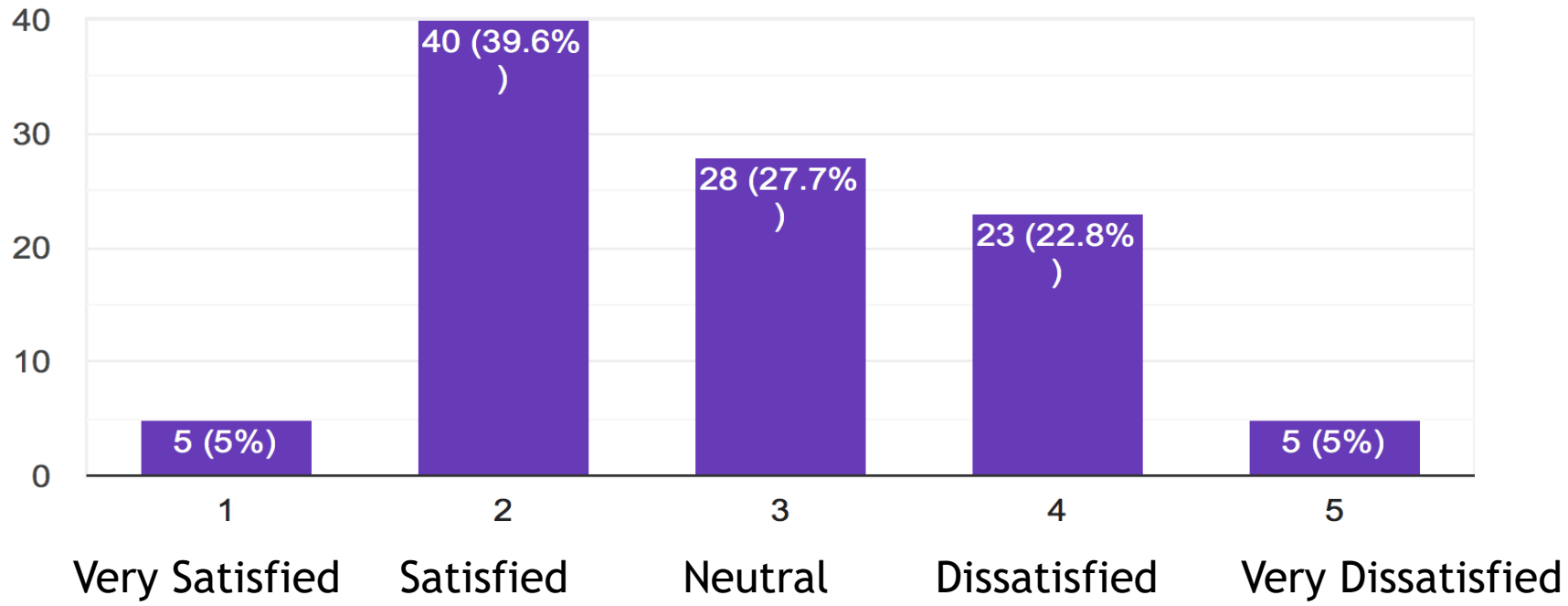


A follow up question asked why respondents did not attend meetings.

The most common answers were not knowing about the meetings, having a scheduling conflict, and did not see results after having attended.

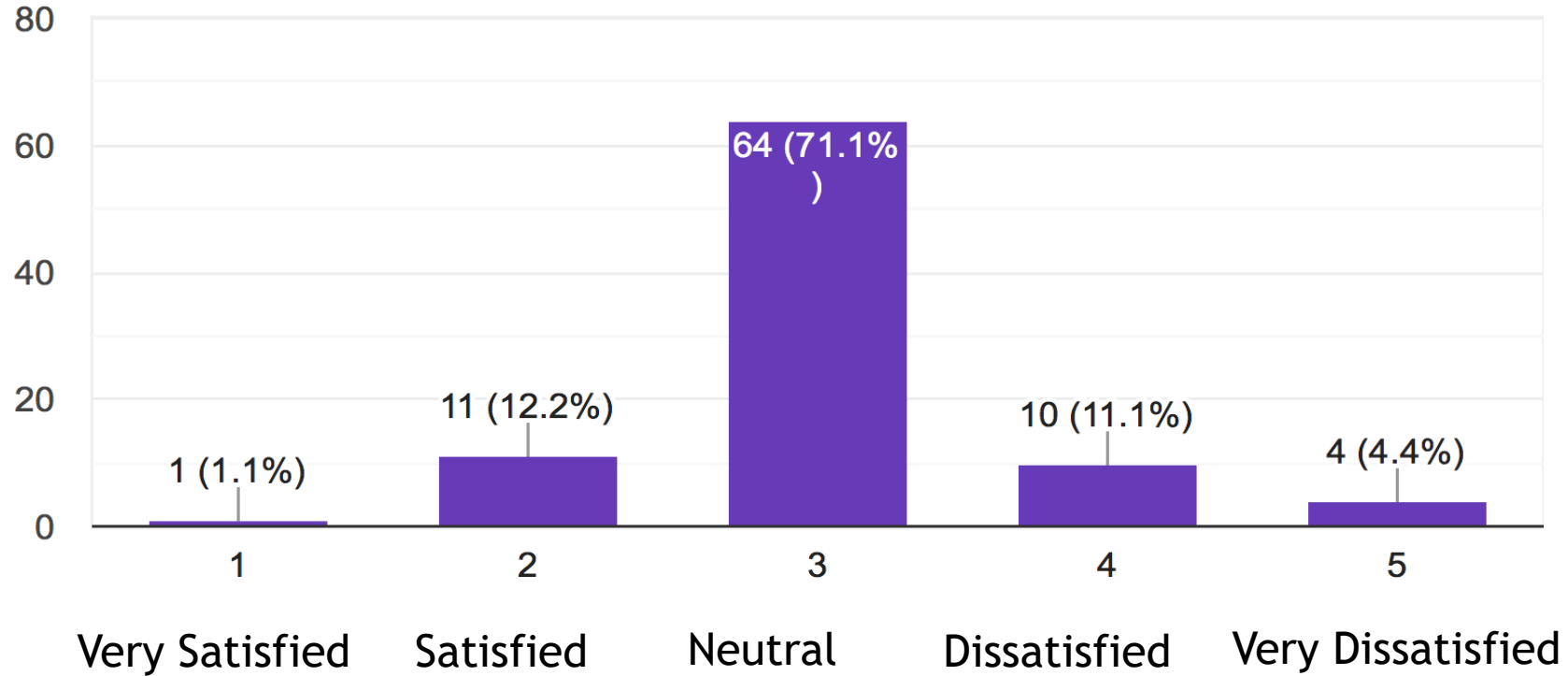
6. How satisfied are you with the quality of life in the West Hickory neighborhood?

101 responses



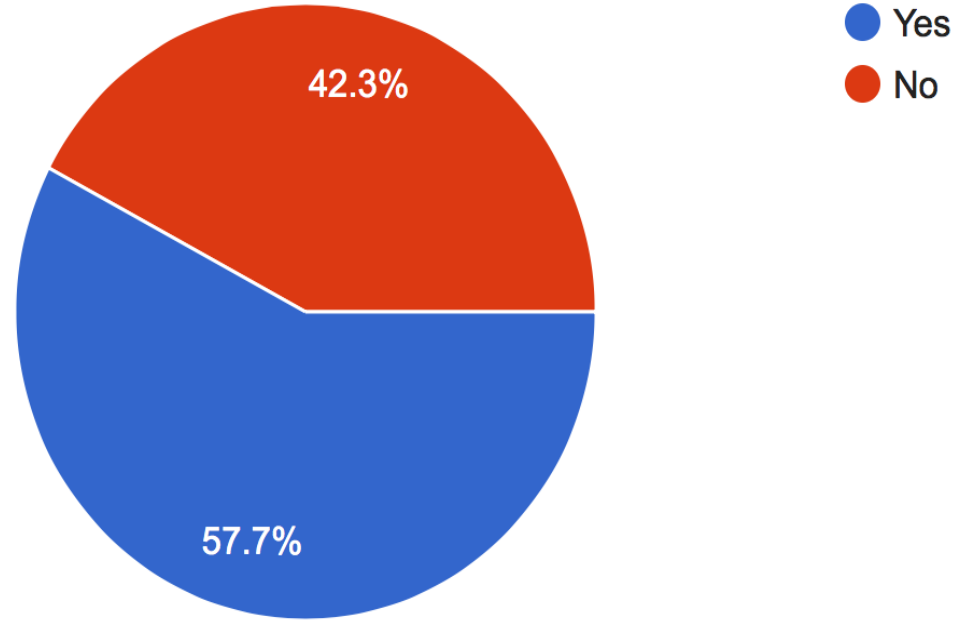
7. Do you believe the neighborhood association has strong leadership?

90 responses

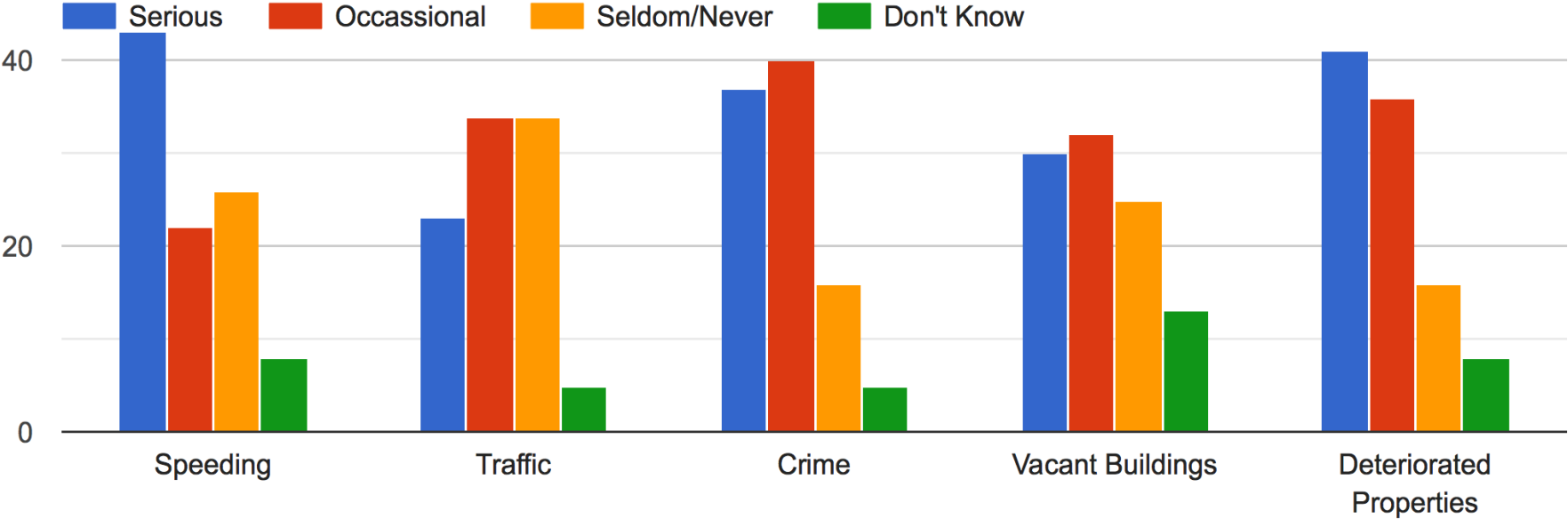


8. Are you optimistic in regards to the neighborhood's future?

97 responses



9A. Please rate the following concerns that you have for the neighborhood.

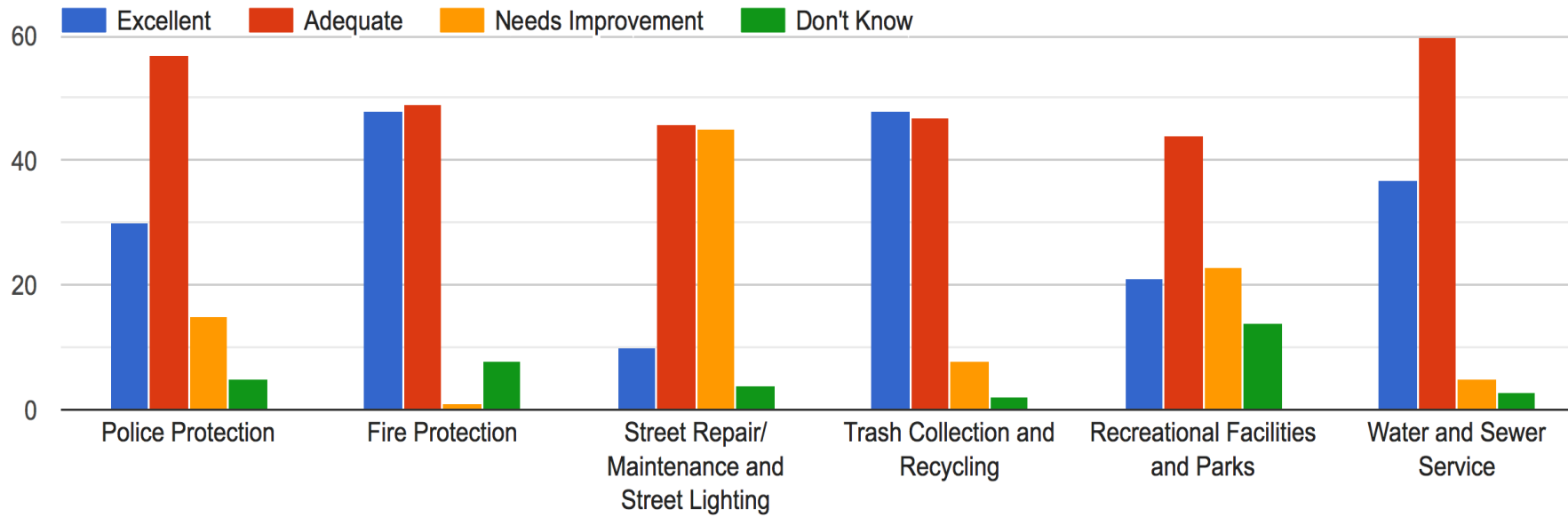


Speeding, crime, and deteriorated properties were serious concerns

- ▶ 10. Of the items about which you were concerned, please list your top three (3) concerns from above.
 - ▶ Crime (55.4%)
 - ▶ Deteriorated properties (42.4%)
 - ▶ Speeding (41.3%)
 - ▶ Traffic (29.3%)
 - ▶ Vacant buildings (21.7%)

- ▶ Wide variety of “other” answers
 - ▶ Drugs, homelessness, and littering were fairly frequent
 - ▶ Answers generally centered around four themes (policing, appearance, economic development, and addressing infrastructure)

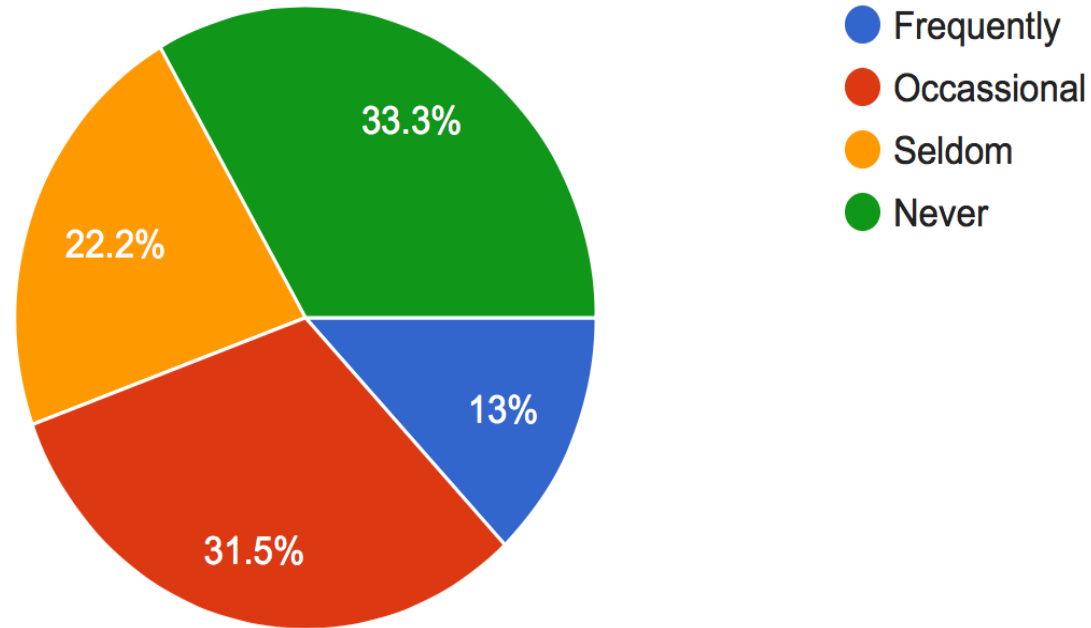
11A. Please rate the adequacy of the following public services and community facilities in West Hickory and the City of Hickory.



Street repair / maintenance and street lighting were noted as needing improvements

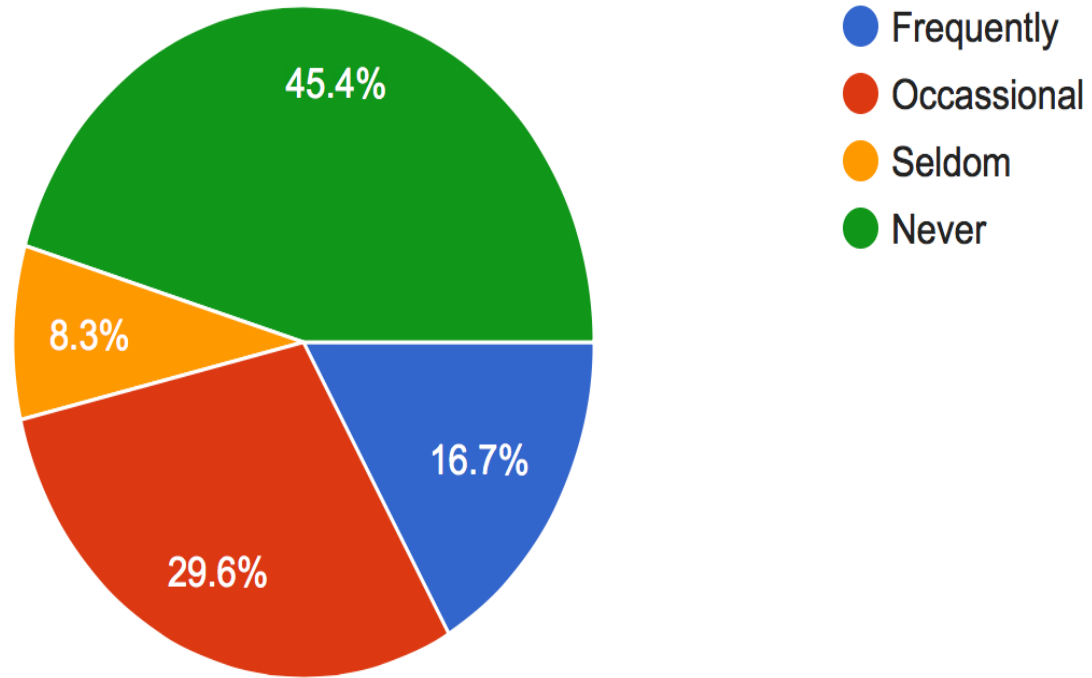
12. How often do you use the neighborhood's parks and recreational facilities?

108 responses



13. How often do you walk and/or ride a bicycle in the neighborhood?

108 responses



Key Take-Aways

- ▶ Neighborhood participation surpassed 20% response rate goal!
 - ▶ Most respondents were long time residents and property owners
 - ▶ While a majority of respondents did not attend neighborhood meetings, many were interested in participating moving forward.

- ▶ Neighborhood's top concerns summarized
 - ▶ Improve policing / code enforcement
 - ▶ Improve neighborhood appearance
 - ▶ Strengthen economic development efforts
 - ▶ Improve city infrastructure and services

Key Take-Aways Continued

- ▶ Neighborhood wants to see improvements to transportation infrastructure (road maintenance, new sidewalks, etc.) and greater police presence and code enforcement.
- ▶ Despite voicing various concerns, a majority were optimistic about the neighborhood's future and only ~28% were dissatisfied with quality of life.