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Albemarle County Community Survey 2023

University of Virginia | Center for Survey Research



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia conducted the Albemarle County Community Survey during the fall of 2023 to determine opinions about quality of life in Albemarle; assess satisfaction with County services, preferences for tax allocation, and views on growth and development; identify barriers and level of access to resources and assets within the County; and measure experiences with local civic engagement.

A total of 1,867 Albemarle residents participated in the survey; 1,220 of these completions were probability-based and 647 were non-probability. Because of the scientific methods used to recruit the probability sample, these results may be used to draw statistical inference to the full Albemarle population with an overall margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points. Highlighted findings, which are identified below, are based on responses from the probability sample.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Nine out of ten (90%) respondents classify overall quality of life in Albemarle County as either "Excellent" or "Good".
- Respondents are divided on how they expect quality of life in the County will change over the next 5 years: 15% expect quality of life will improve, 52% expect it to get worse, and 34% expect it will stay the same.

Among those who expect quality of life will worsen, the primary concern is that Albemarle's growth could outpace the capacity of its infrastructure, leading to overcrowding, increased traffic, and lack of affordable housing.

SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

- Two-thirds of Albemarle residents (66%) consider the quality of County services overall to be either "Excellent" or "Good."
- Fire services and emergency medical services, county trails, fire prevention and education services and parks received the highest quality ratings, whereas, land use, planning, and zoning received the lowest quality ratings.

ALLOCATION OF TAX DOLLARS

The majority of residents are either "Somewhat satisfied" (56%) or "Very satisfied" (11%) with the value of services for their tax dollars, though responses differed by income level and locality.

Residents identify improvements to roads, bike/pedestrian paths, public transit, parks and recreation, and school facilities as the most important focal areas for tax allocation.

ACCESS AND EQUITY

Across various assets and services within Albemarle, fire and rescue services are the most conveniently accessed asset, followed by grocery stores, places of worship, and trails. EV charging, bike lanes, public transportation, childcare, and sidewalks were among the most inconvenient assets to access.

Residents would like the County to improve roads, sidewalks, crosswalks, biking lanes, trails, and parking throughout the County. Other areas of concern are access to recycling centers, the need for more conveniently located amenities, and concerns about school facilities.

Inclusion and equity are important to the majority of residents:

- Three-quarters of residents consider it either "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for them to live in a diverse and multicultural community.
- Over 90% of residents feel it is "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for people who work in Albemarle to be able to live in Albemarle.
- 86% consider it "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for there to be affordable housing options in all parts of the County.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Eighty-five percent of residents consider it either "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for the County to support economic development. Yet, the majority of respondents (70%) think the County's rate of growth over the past few years has been too fast, indicating that while residents support development, they want to ensure the County controls growth at a managed pace.

While respondents recognize future growth and development may improve job availability, they also express concerns that housing affordability, ease of getting around by car, and parking could all worsen as a result of future growth in Albemarle County.

I. Introduction

About the Survey

The 2023 Albemarle County Community Survey was conducted by the Center for Survey Research (CSR) on behalf of the County. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Determine opinions about quality of life in Albemarle County
- Assess satisfaction with County services and Albemarle County government
- Capture preferences for allocation of tax dollars
- Identify barriers and level of access to resources and assets within the County
- Understand residents' own sense of belonging and preferences for diversity and inclusion
- Understand residents' sense of safety across different settings in the County
- Measure opinions on growth and development
- Assess level of civic engagement and barriers to participation

Survey Methodology

To support community-wide participation and maintain statistical integrity, the survey followed a mixed-probability and mixed-mode design. The probability sample was based on a stratified address-based sample (ABS) of 5,000 Albemarle County households. Survey administration to the ABS sample employed a mail-forward design with a delayed web alternative. These participants were first mailed an advance letter followed by a questionnaire packet that contained a cover letter and postage-paid return envelope. Shortly thereafter, non-respondents were mailed a reminder/thank you postcard. As a final contact, a second questionnaire packet was mailed that contained instructions to participate in the survey online as an alternative to the enclosed paper questionnaire. The probability sample provides the survey's basis for statistical inference to the Albemarle County population.

To ensure all Albemarle residents could voice their perspectives and participate in the survey, an open-source online version of the questionnaire was posted to Albemarle County's website and available for any individual to complete. The questionnaire included two eligibility criteria: the respondent must (1) be at least 18 years old and (2) reside in Albemarle County.

A timeline of key dates during survey design and data collection is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey tasks and dates

Task	Date
Mail advance letters	September 25, 2023
Mail first questionnaire packets	September 29, 2023
Mail thank you/reminder postcard	October 9, 2023
Open-source web survey launched	October 26, 2023
Mail second questionnaire, web-referral packets	October 27, 2023
Close data collection	January 16, 2024

Data collection ended on January 16, 2024, after which time, no additional responses were recorded. CSR managed the tracking of responses and performed data entry for all paper questionnaire completions. Data entry validation was performed on approximately 10% of submitted questionnaires. The survey was available in English and Spanish.

Survey Response

A total of 1,867 responses were collected, 1,220 of which were probability-based and 647 were non-probability. The survey response rate (based on returns from the probability sample) was 24.8%, with a margin of error of ± 3.4 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence¹. For a detailed discussion of the survey methodology, including sampling design and weighting procedures, please see Appendix G. A copy of the survey questionnaire is presented in Appendix H.

Weighting

An early task in the analysis of any survey data is comparing the demographics of the survey sample with the known demographics of the population being studied. For example, surveys often over-represent women and people in higher socio-economic categories. When there are discrepancies between the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents and the full population, it may be advisable to "post-weight" the data in order to compensate for these differences. In post-weighting, greater statistical weight is assigned to respondents who are in categories under-represented in the survey results compared to the population, whereas those in over-represented groups are given lesser weight. Put differently, applying weights allows the survey sample to approach closer alignment with the demographics of the population, which is, in this case, Albemarle County.

These weights are calculated by matching the survey sample's percentages to the population percentages on selected variables. The weighting procedure leads to small differences in the survey results but increases their accuracy by making them more reflective of the actual study population.

The probability survey data were post-weighted to the population (Albemarle County residents) on two characteristics: (1) homeownership status by race and (2) age. This means that survey responses from individuals in under-represented race/homeownership categories and/or age categories will be given greater weight so that the final data file more closely matches the distribution of these categories in the population. The non-probability results are not weighted. For a complete description of the weighting procedures, including the base weighting conducted to counteract the effects of the probability sampling design, see Appendix G.

Table 2 and Table 3 provide the proportion distributions across samples and population of the characteristics used for post-stratification weighting. The first column shows the distribution of the categories among the non-probability sample, which as noted, is not weighted. The second

¹ This margin of error is calculated using the finite population correction factor (fpc), which was 0.984 for this survey, and incorporating the design effect due to weighting, which was 1.26.

column of the table presents the distribution of the probability sample prior to any weighting. The third column shows the results of the probability sample after weighting has been applied. Notably, the narrative of this report focuses on the weighted probability sample as it is this data that provides the study's ability to draw statistical inference and generalize survey results to the population of Albemarle County. The fourth column presents estimates of the Albemarle County population, when available. These population estimates are from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

As seen in Table 2, renters were under-represented across racial/ethnic affiliations, and White homeowners were over-represented. Weighting effectively brought the probability sample's representation across race and homeownership status into closer alignment with the Albemarle County population as a whole.

Table 2. Sample and population distributions across racial/ethnic affiliation by homeownership status

	Non-probability Sample		Probability Sample Unweighted		Probability Sample Weighted		Albemarle	
	Own	Rent	Own	Rent	Own	Rent	Own	Rent
White	88.6%	5.3%	75.4%	12.6%	59.0%	23.5%	58.2%	23.2%
African American/Black	1.7%	0.3%	1.8%	1.2%	3.8%	3.2%	4.2%	4.4%
Asian	0.6%	0.0%	2.2%	0.8%	2.3%	1.7%	2.2%	1.7%
Hispanic/Latino	0.8%	0.0%	1.4%	0.9%	1.8%	2.5%	1.7%	2.6%
Multiracial/ Another race	2.8%	0.0%	2.9%	0.9%	1.3%	0.9%	1.0%	0.8%
<i>Total</i>	94.5%	5.5%	83.7%	16.3%	68.2%	31.8%	67.3%	32.7%

Table 3 presents the distribution of age across survey samples and the population. While both unweighted samples skew older than the population, the unweighted probability sample encompassed approximately twice the representation of respondents under the age of 40 relative to the nonprobability sample. Once weighted, the probability sample now more closely aligns with the age distribution of all Albemarle adult residents.

Table 3. Sample and population distributions across age

	Non-probability Sample	Probability Sample Unweighted	Probability Sample Weighted	Albemarle
39 and younger	7.3%	13.5%	37.1%	38.4%
40-49	12.2%	12.4%	14.3%	14.0%
50-59	16.5%	12.5%	15.3%	15.1%
60-69	30.2%	23.0%	15.8%	15.5%
70 and older	33.8%	38.7%	17.4%	17.0%
<i>Total</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Demographic Overview

Demographic Overview

The following demographic overview presents other characteristics of the non-probability and weighted probability data. The characteristics presented in this chapter are a selection of demographic characteristics. Complete demographics for the full sample can be found in Appendix B.

As seen in Table 4, gender is similarly distributed across samples with somewhat higher representation of women than men (which is reminiscent of the distribution within the Albemarle population). Approximately 30% of weighted probability respondents report having a child in the household.

Table 4. Sample distributions across gender, age, and children status

	Non-probability Sample		Probability Sample Weighted	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Men	175	42.6%	501	43.9%
Women	232	56.4%	620	54.3%
Nonbinary/I wish to provide my own description	4	1.0%	20	1.8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>411</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1,141</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
Household has children in the home				
Yes, have children	100	22.1%	345	30.1%
No, no children	353	77.9%	906	69.9%
<i>Total</i>	<i>453</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1,146</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

As seen in Table 5, the employment distribution between the non-probability and weighted probability samples vary significantly, specifically with respect to full-time and retired respondents. Over half of the weighted probability respondents report working full-time (58%), an additional 8% work part-time, and 24% are retired. Approximately half of the probability respondents report a household annual income below \$100,000, which is similar to Albemarle’s distribution, whereas the non-probability sample skews toward higher-income households.

Both the non-probability and weighted probability sample skew toward more highly educated respondents than is representative of all Albemarle residents. Approximately 16% of weighted probability residents’ highest achieved educational level is up to some college or less. Approximately one-third (34%) have attained a four-year college degree or an Associate’s degree. Half have done some graduate work or completed a graduate degree.

Table 5. Sample distributions across employment status, income, and education

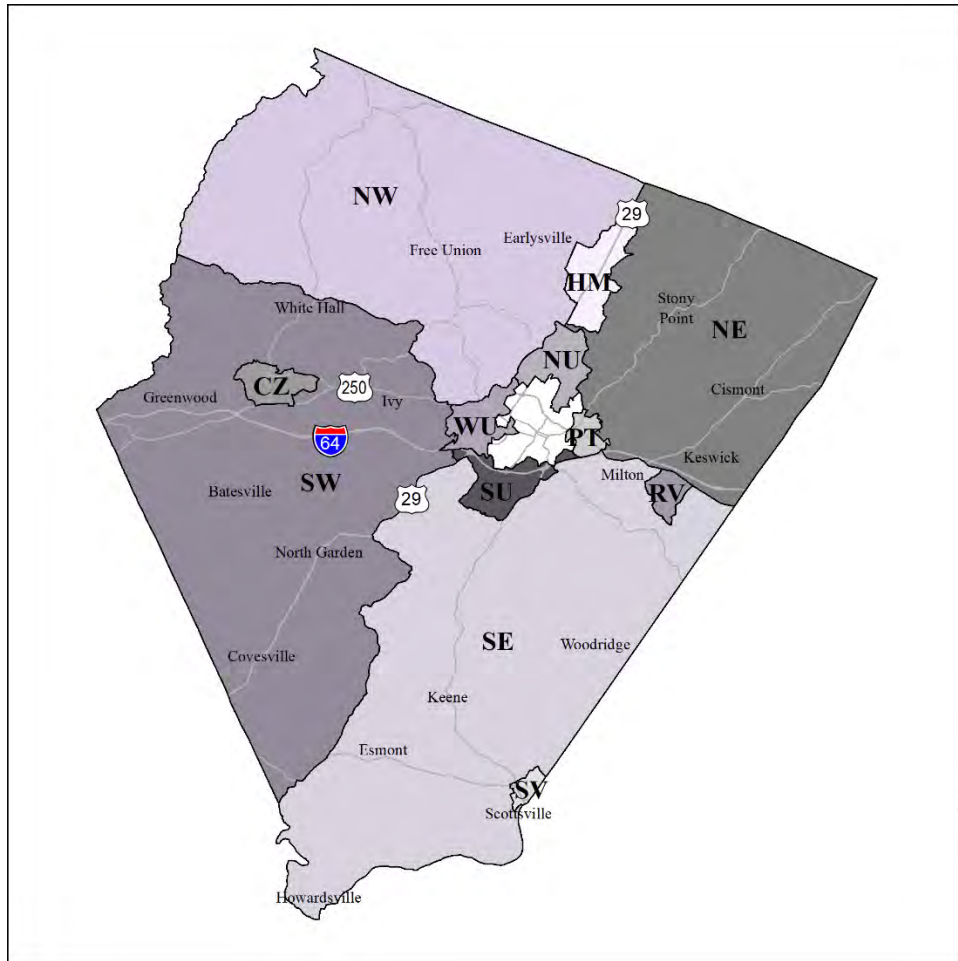
	Non-probability Sample		Probability Sample Weighted	
	N	%	N	%
Employment status				
Employed full-time	168	38.5%	675	57.8%
Employed part-time	32	7.3%	92	7.9%
Looking for work	3	0.7%	18	1.6%
Stay-at-home-parent/Homemaker	13	3.0%	47	4.1%
Student	1	0.2%	23	2.0%
Retired	207	47.5%	277	23.7%
Disabled	1	0.2%	17	1.5%
Other	11	2.5%	18	1.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>436</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1,168</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
Household income				
Less than \$50,000	29	8.8%	177	18.0%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	98	29.9%	303	30.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	79	24.1%	203	20.6%
\$150,000 or more	122	37.2%	301	30.6%
<i>Total</i>	<i>328</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>985</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
Education				
Less than a high school diploma	2	0.5%	22	1.8%
High school graduate/GED	11	2.6%	61	5.2%
Some college, no degree	35	8.1%	100	8.6%
Associate's degree/trade	21	4.9%	65	5.6%
Bachelor's degree	113	26.2%	331	28.3%
Some graduate work	51	11.8%	88	7.6%
Master's, Professional or Doctoral degree	198	45.9%	502	42.9%
<i>Total</i>	<i>431</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1,170</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Locality

For all probability cases,² the research team used ArcGIS to match respondent household addresses to the County's designated planning areas (Figure 1).

² A confidential data collection protocol was followed for the probability-based sample. As the open-source survey was administered anonymously, this level of geographic precision was not captured for the non-probability responses. Thus, locality is only reported for the probability responses.

Figure 1. Map of Albemarle with designated planning areas



For the purposes of the survey's comparative analysis, the 11 areas were further collapsed. Table 6 portrays the schema followed to group the 11 planning areas into four localities and the resulting distribution across localities within the weighted probability sample.

Table 6. Geography/locality schema and sample distribution

11 Planning Areas	4 Localities	Probability Sample Weighted
Northeastern Albemarle Northwestern Albemarle	Rural Northern Albemarle	17.9%
Southeastern Albemarle/Scottsville Southwestern Albemarle	Rural Southern Albemarle	20.2%
Village of Rivanna Crozet	Satellite Communities	11.3%
Southern urban neighborhoods Northern urban neighborhoods Western urban neighborhoods Pantops 29 North/Hollymead	Urban Ring/29 North	50.6%

Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Frequencies across all close-ended questions are presented in the appendices. Specifically, Appendix A presents the complete frequencies from the weighted probability sample. Appendix B presents the complete frequencies split by probability and non-probability responses, presented side by side for each question.

Open-end Responses Coding

To provide respondents ample opportunity to fully share their experiences and opinions, the survey questionnaire contained multiple open-ended questions where respondents could write-in their answers. CSR performed thematic coding across the open-ended responses, which entailed an inductive and iterative process. When a similar or related response appeared repeatedly for a given question, a code was assigned to represent that response category. These codes were tracked, assigned, and tallied using Microsoft Excel.

For the close-ended questions that contained an open-ended answer choice (e.g., an "Other, please specify"), responses were manually reviewed to assess if the response was an original answer or if it fit an existing category, in which case the response was reassigned to the existing category.

For many of the free-form, open-ended questions (e.g., "Why do you think the quality of life in Albemarle County will improve, get worse, or stay the same in 5 years from now?"), a summary of the recurrent common themes that emerged across those responses is provided in the narrative. The complete list of verbatim open-ended responses by question can be viewed in Appendices E (probability responses) and F (non-probability responses).

Group Comparisons

For this study, cross-tabulations were conducted accompanied by tests of statistical significance³ to examine possible statistical differences between various subgroups. Chi-Square tests of independence were used to determine statistical significance for the cross-tabulations. Put simply, if a survey result is found to be statistically significant, one can confidently expect a similar pattern to exist in the population (i.e., Albemarle County).

The cross-tabulation analysis examined all quantitative survey questions by each of the following demographic variables:

- *Locality*: Residences in rural southern Albemarle, rural northern Albemarle, the Urban ring/29 North and satellite communities were compared.
- *Age*: Five categorized groups were used to compare age—18 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59, 60 to 69, and 70 and older.

³ Design effect was applied when running tests of statistical significance.

- *Racial/ethnic affiliation*: Self-identified racial/ethnic groups of White, African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, and Multiracial/Another race⁴ were compared.
- *Rent/Own*: Three categories were used to compare housing status— own or buying own home, rent, and "other."
- *Total household income*: Five categories were used to compare total household income: Less than \$50,000, \$50-99,999, \$100,000-\$149,000, and \$150,000 or more.

The results of the demographic cross-tabulation analysis are presented in Appendix C.

In addition, the results from the 2019 Albemarle County survey are presented alongside the 2023 results. Year comparisons were only included for questions that were identical to the 2019 measurement. Cross-tabulations and mean comparisons between survey years are presented in Appendix D.

Unless otherwise noted, the analysis and summary of findings in this report are based on weighted probability responses only, which provide the necessary measures of prevalence and enable statistical inference to the larger Albemarle population.

While the scientifically drawn probability sample provides the statistical basis for the study, it was still worthwhile to include non-probability data collection. First, the non-probability design permitted additional household members to respond, not just those selected from the ABS sample, making the survey process more inclusive. Additionally, the non-probability design provided the opportunity for any resident to express their opinions and experiences living in Albemarle County. Because of the opt-in nature of the open-source survey, the non-probability platform very well may have attracted more engaged and impassioned respondents, compared to the probability cases, as the former are individuals who sought out the survey. As already noted, complete non-probability responses can be found in Appendix B.

⁴ Race/ethnicity was asked as a multiple-response item. Selections of American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, non-listed/self-described categories, and multiple-selections were combined for this analytic category. These affiliations could not be preserved as separate categories in comparative analysis due to the small number of cases within each category.

II. Life in Albemarle

Quality of Life Today

As a general quality measure, respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of life in Albemarle County. Nine out of ten respondents rated the quality of life as either "Excellent" (36%) or "Good" (54%). Just nine percent of respondents rated the quality of life as "Fair," and one percent rated it as "Poor."

Ratings of quality of life did statistically vary based on several demographic characteristics. In general, ratings on quality of life were significantly higher among homeowners and respondents with higher household incomes. Additionally, residents in rural northern Albemarle reported higher quality of life ratings than those in the other localities. Additionally, quality of life ratings varied by race, with respondents who identified as White, Hispanic/Latinx, and Multiracial/another reporting higher ratings than respondents who identified as African American/Black. There were no significant differences between views on quality of life and age. See Appendix C (Weighted Probability Cross-tabulations by Select Demographics) for complete percentage comparisons.

Desirability of Albemarle as a Place to Live

To gauge respondents' views on desirability of living in Albemarle, respondents were asked, "On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 represents the worst possible community in which to live, and 10 represents the best possible community, where would you rate Albemarle County as a place to live?" Respondents rated Albemarle highly, with a mean rating of 7.7, which was only slightly down from 2019, when the mean was 8.1. Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) rated Albemarle with a value of 8 or higher as a place to live, 29% rated Albemarle as either a 6 or 7, and just 7% reported a rating of 5 or below.

Quality of Life in Five Years

Respondents were also asked to speculate on future quality of life with the prompt: "Thinking about 5 years from now, do you think the quality of life in Albemarle County will improve, get worse, or stay the same?" Outlooks were mixed, though the largest response—reported by 52% of respondents—expected quality of life to get worse. Only 15% expected life to improve, and 34% expected it to stay the same. Outlooks appear to be slightly more negative in 2023 compared to 2019 when 22% reported that quality of life would improve in Albemarle County.

There were significant differences on these ratings across several characteristics. The youngest respondents (39 and younger) were more likely to expect life to improve than those 40 and older and were the least likely to think life would worsen. Homeowners were more likely to report life in Albemarle County will get worse compared to renters. Respondents with the lowest household income (Less than \$50,000) were significantly more likely (approximately three-fold) to report life in Albemarle County will get better compared to residents from higher income brackets.

Additionally, respondents who identify as Asian or Hispanic/Latinx were much more likely to report quality of life will improve. Respondents who identify as White and those residents who identify as multiracial or another race were more likely to expect quality of life to get worse compared to the other groups. Finally, responses also significantly varied by locality, with higher proportions of residents from the satellite communities and rural northern Albemarle expecting quality of life to worsen. See Appendix C for specific percentage comparisons across groups.

Open feedback on why quality of life in Albemarle will change

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to elaborate on why they thought the quality of life in Albemarle would improve, get worse, or stay the same. Among those who had reported life would get worse, one of the most prevalent concerns was around rapid growth, development and overcrowding negatively impacting quality of life. Many respondents expressed fears that the county's infrastructure, including roads, schools, utilities and services, is not adequately expanding to handle the influx of new residents. Concerns about overcrowded schools, traffic congestion, and strain on public services were repeatedly mentioned. Respondents often felt growth was happening without sufficient planning to address these impacts.

Another major worry was the loss of natural areas, open space, and rural character as a result of development. Numerous comments lamented disappearing farmland and forests being replaced by new housing and commercial development. The changing landscape and density in some areas seemed to be altering the feel of the community for many. Related to this were concerns about zoning and land use policies, seen by some as too permissive to dense development. Housing unaffordability and rising costs of living were also key issues for many respondents. Increased property values and taxes, along with expensive housing and rent, led to concerns about gentrification pricing out middle- and low-income families. Some feared growth was geared toward wealthy residents without providing enough affordable housing options for average workers. Transportation was another significant pain point, with worsening traffic frequently cited as a problem. Many felt roads and transportation options were not keeping up with population increases. Lack of adequate public transit and bike/pedestrian infrastructure was also noted.

Other common complaints centered around what was perceived as mismanagement by local government. For some, county leaders were seen as catering to developers' interests over those of residents. Comments indicate there is an opportunity to expand public involvement. Others felt the county was becoming too liberal and progressive in its policies. Other critiques included high taxes, onerous regulations, and lack of fiscal responsibility.

Alternatively, some respondents expressed more positive outlooks. Growth and development were seen by this group as bringing increased economic opportunities, amenities, and diversity to the community. Confidence was expressed that county leadership would capably handle the challenges of growth. Cultural assets like dining, wineries, arts, and community events were

aspects of Albemarle highlighted by some respondents. Many appreciated the natural beauty and outdoor recreation in the area. For complete verbatim responses, see Appendices E and F.

Intent to Live in Albemarle Area in Five Years

Respondents were also asked to speculate on whether they intend to continue living in the area with the prompt: "Thinking about 5 years from now, do you intend to live in Albemarle, Charlottesville or somewhere else?" Almost three-quarters of respondents reported they would likely be living in Albemarle County 5 years from now, and another 7% expected to either be living in Charlottesville or another surrounding county. Approximately one in five respondents reported they expect to be living somewhere else outside of the area.

Intention to live in the area varied significantly across several demographic groups. Likelihood of staying vs. moving elsewhere had a clear linear relationship with household income, with respondents from lower income brackets reporting significantly higher rates of expecting to live elsewhere compared to respondents from higher income brackets who reported higher rates of intending to still live in Albemarle. Additionally, respondents under the age of 40, respondents of color, and renters reported at significantly higher relative rates the expectation to live elsewhere.

Open feedback on why you intend to live in Albemarle area or elsewhere in five years

For those who intend to remain in the area, which comprised the majority, respondents express a multitude of reasons for this intention. For many, the decision to stay is deeply rooted in the strong sense of community and familial connections that have been cultivated over years, if not generations, in the area. Some individuals have called Albemarle County home for decades, having lived in the area since childhood or even owning family land passed down through generations. This longstanding attachment to the community fosters a profound sense of belonging and identity, making the prospect of leaving difficult to contemplate. Moreover, Albemarle County's appeal is tied to its picturesque landscapes and access to outdoor recreational activities. The county's rolling hills, verdant forests, and proximity to the Blue Ridge Mountains provide residents with ample opportunities for hiking, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits. Additionally, the area's charming small towns and vibrant cultural scene, anchored by the city of Charlottesville, offer residents a diverse array of entertainment options.

However, despite the allure of Albemarle County's natural beauty and cultural amenities, some residents grapple with the financial challenges associated with living in the area, which they credit as why they may see themselves living elsewhere. High property taxes and escalating home prices present significant barriers to mobility for many individuals and families, particularly those on fixed incomes or with limited financial resources. The increasing cost of living, coupled with concerns about affordability and access to healthcare, complicate the decision-making process for residents contemplating a move.

In addition to the rising financial demands of the area, residents express dissatisfaction with certain other aspects of local life. Issues such as the lack of walkable communities, concerns about rising crime rates, and frustrations with local governance and taxation policies contribute

to residents' ambivalence about their long-term plans. Nevertheless, for many, the decision to stay in Albemarle County is ultimately driven by a combination of personal connections, lifestyle preferences, and practical considerations for the future.

Amidst these considerations, a significant segment of the population expresses a strong desire to age in place, emphasizing the importance of maintaining independence and continuity in their living arrangements as they grow older.

Sense of Belonging and Inclusion within Albemarle

Feeling welcome in Albemarle County

As a measure of residents' sense of inclusion, respondents were asked, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how welcome do you feel in Albemarle County?" Generally, the vast majority of respondents feel welcome in Albemarle. Over two-thirds of respondents reported a value of eight or higher (68%), 21% reported a value of 6 or 7, and 11% reported a value of 5 or lower. The mean rating of feeling welcome in Albemarle County was down slightly from 8.4 in 2019 to 8.0 in 2023.

There were statistically significant differences in ratings across certain demographic traits. A rating of eight or higher was more common among White, Asian, and Hispanic/Latinx residents relative to Black/African American and multiracial respondents. Additionally, residents with higher household income as well as respondents over the age of 70 report relative higher ratings of feeling welcome.

Sense of belonging in Albemarle County

As an additional measure of inclusion that speaks to the respondent's own sense of attachment and affiliation, respondents were asked about their sense of belonging. Specifically, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your sense of belonging in Albemarle County?" More than half of respondents reported a sense of belonging in Albemarle. Fifty-six percent of respondents reported a value of eight or higher, 27% reported a value of 6 or 7, and 17% reported a value of 5 or lower. The average rating across respondents was 7.6, which is down just slightly from 2019 (8.0)

Statistically significant differences in ratings are again observed across certain demographic characteristics. Sense of belonging holds a positive, linear relationship with both age and household income, with older respondents and respondents from higher income brackets reporting higher ratings of their sense of belonging in Albemarle. There were not statistically significant differences in this rating between racial/ethnic groups.

Sense of belonging in Neighborhood

Respondents were also asked about their sense of belonging within their neighborhood or area. Specifically, "On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate your sense of belonging in the neighborhoods/area where you live?" Two-thirds of respondents reported a value of eight or higher, 22% reported a value of 6 or 7, and 12% reported a value of 5 or lower. The average rating for sense of belonging in one's neighborhood across respondents was 7.9, which is down just slightly from 2019 (8.2).

Sense of belonging in one's neighborhood was relatively higher among older respondents and homeowners. There were not statistically significant differences in sense of belonging by income.

Importance of Living in a Diverse Community

To get a sense of residents' opinions and priorities regarding inclusion and diversity within the county, respondents were asked, "How important is it to you to live in a diverse and multicultural community?" Over three-quarters of respondents considered it either "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for them to live in a diverse community (78%), 12% reported it was "Somewhat unimportant," and 10% reported it was "Very unimportant."

Across demographic groups, most Albemarle respondents believe living in a multicultural community is important; however, relative importance ratings vary. Specifically, rates of importance were higher for respondents who live in the Urban ring/29 North. Additionally, residents who are 39 or younger, renters, and residents who identify as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx reported statistically higher rates of importance on this item. See Appendix C for complete percentages by group.

Dependability of Community

Respondents were also asked, "To what extent do you feel like you can depend on people in your community for support in tough situations?" Almost seventy percent reported they can depend on people in their community for support "A great deal" or "Somewhat." Only 8% reported "Not at all." Respondents from the Urban ring/29 North were significantly less likely to report that there are people in their community they can depend on "A great deal" relative to residents from other regions in Albemarle. Homeowners and respondents with higher income were significantly more likely to report that they could depend on people "A great deal" in their community for support in tough situations.

Dependability of Local Government

Respondents were also asked, "To what extent do you feel like you can depend on your local government for support in tough situations?" Only a small portion reported "A great deal" (8%). Approximately one-third reported they could count on their local government "Somewhat," and an additional one-third reported "A little." One in four respondents reported "Not at all" (26%).

People 40 to 49 years of age, as well as respondents who identify as Black or African American or Hispanic/Latinx, were significantly more likely to report "Not at all" for the extent to which they can depend on their local government. There were no significant differences for this question by locality, household income, or homeownership status.

Aging in Place

To assess the extent to which residents of Albemarle County felt they could live in their current home as they age, sometimes referred to as "aging in place," respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement "I believe that I will be able to live in my current

home as I age." Over two-thirds of Albemarle County residents felt they could live in their current home as they age, while a combined 31% reported they "Somewhat disagreed" or "Strongly disagreed" with this statement.

There were statistically significant differences in beliefs about the ability to age in place by select demographics. In general, agreement that one could age in place in their current home was significantly higher among respondents 70 and older, respondents who identify as White, homeowners, respondents with higher household income, and those in rural northern Albemarle and rural southern Albemarle. See Appendix C for complete percentages.

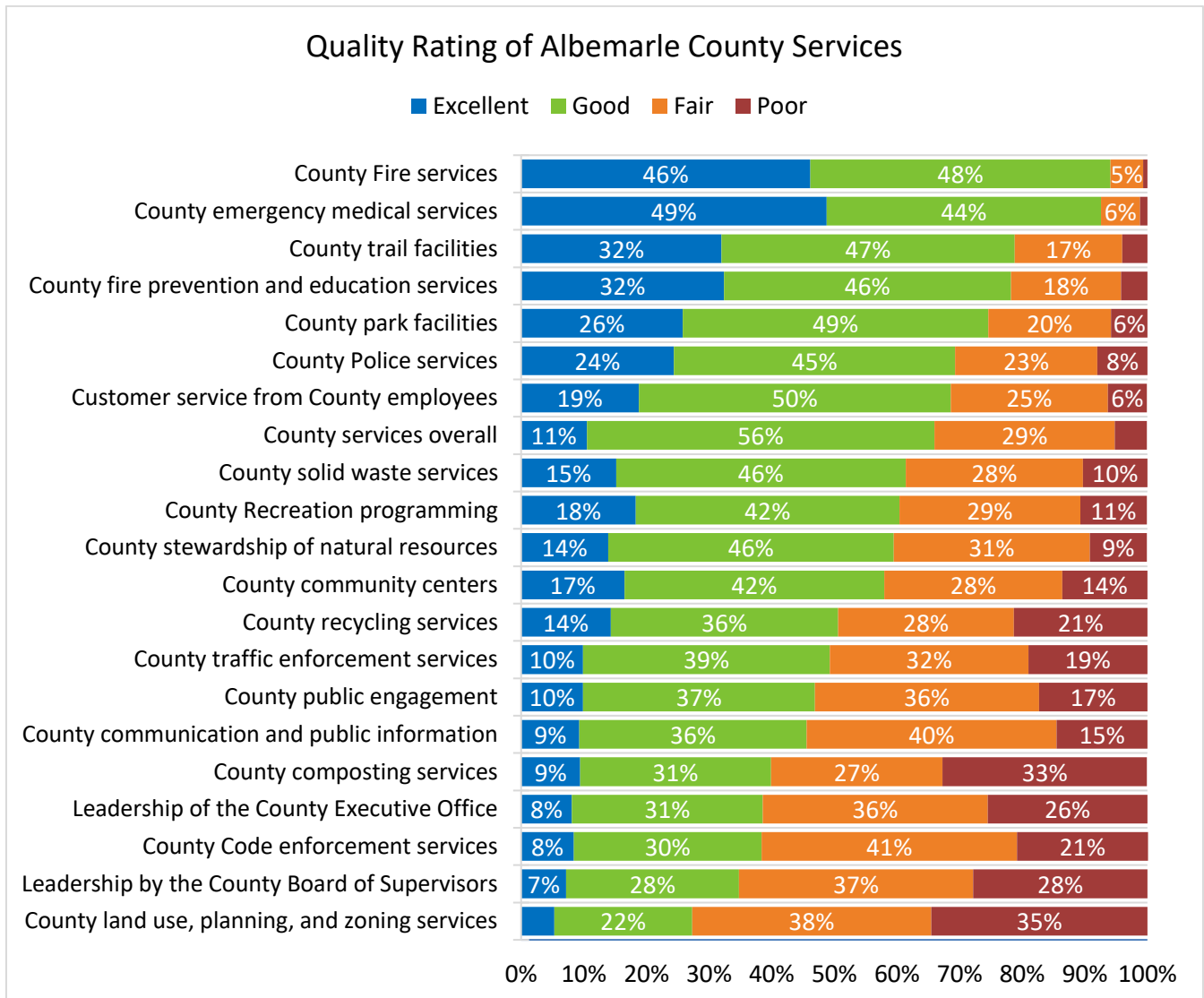
III. County Services and Value

Rating of County Services

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of 21 different Albemarle County services or functions as well as to rate the quality of County services overall. Services were rated among four categories: Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. As seen in Figure 2, County services overall were somewhat well-rated, with 66% of respondents reporting a rating of either "Excellent" or "Good."

Fire services, emergency medical services, county trails, fire prevention and education services, and parks were the highest-rated services, each with at least a 75% combined rating of "Excellent" and "Good." There are also areas for relative improvement among County services. The two lowest-rated items based off of the "Poor" selection were County land use, planning and zoning services, and County composting services (35% and 33%, respectively).

Figure 2. Quality rating of Albemarle County services



There were several statistically significant differences in the quality ratings of the County services overall. Compared to other racial/ethnic groups, Black/African American respondents reported the relative lowest ratings while Asian respondents reported the highest quality ratings. Respondents under 40 years old reported lower quality ratings relative to older age groups. Additionally, respondents with a household income between \$50,000 and \$99,999 reported lower quality ratings relative to respondents from other income brackets.

There were also statistically significant differences in quality ratings of police by race/ethnicity, with residents who identify as White or Black/African American reporting lower "Excellent" ratings. Across age, residents 39 years or younger reported higher rates of "Poor" relative to other age groups.

Ratings of the quality of County solid waste services as well as recycling services differed by locality. Satellite communities reported high ratings for solid waste services compared to the other localities, with rural northern Albemarle reporting the lowest ratings for this service. Similarly, residents in rural northern Albemarle reported the lowest ratings for recycling services compared to residents from the other areas of the county.

Asian residents reported significantly high ratings for County recreation programming, whereas Black/African American residents reported the poorest rating for County recreation programming.

There were significant differences in quality ratings of leadership by the County Board of Supervisors, with Urban ring/29 North residents reporting slightly higher ratings and satellite communities reporting significantly lower ratings. Ratings of the quality of leadership of the County Executive Office also differ significantly by locality, with satellite communities and rural southern Albemarle reporting lower ratings relative to residents from the Urban ring/29 North and rural northern Albemarle. See Appendix C for complete percentages by group.

Value for Tax Dollars

Respondents were asked their level of satisfaction with the overall value of service provided in Albemarle for their tax dollars. Approximately one in ten Albemarle residents are "Very satisfied" with the value of services for tax dollars, with the majority (56%) reporting they are "Somewhat satisfied." Fewer residents in 2023 reported they were very satisfied than in 2019, when 20% of residents reported they were "Very satisfied" with the overall value of services Albemarle provides. Likewise, the share of residents who report being "Very unsatisfied" is 12.3%, nearly double the rate in 2019 (6.7%).

Residents with an annual household income of \$100,000 and higher report higher satisfaction with the value of services for their dollar. Ratings also varied by where the residents lived, with those living in rural southern Albemarle and the satellite communities reporting relatively lower satisfaction ratings. Ratings did not differ significantly by race, age, or homeownership status. See Appendix C for complete percentages by group.

Treating Residents Fairly

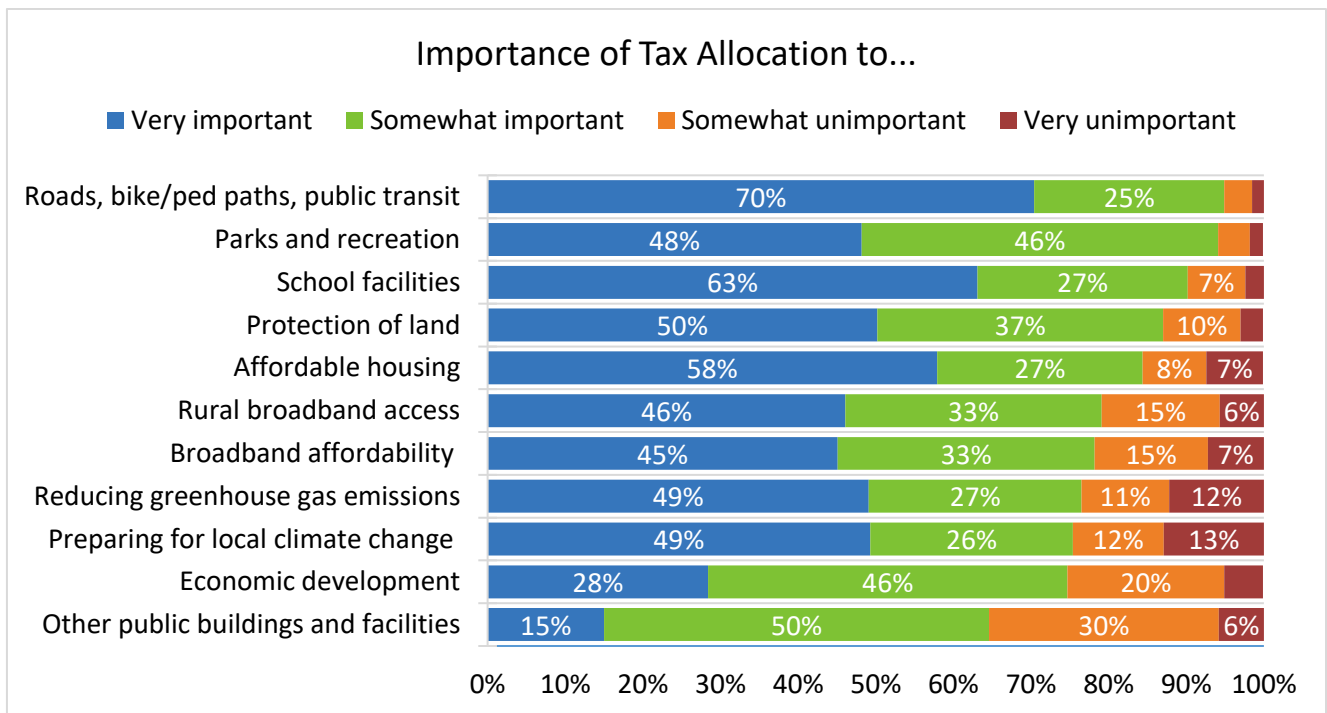
Over two-thirds of Albemarle residents are “Very satisfied” or “Somewhat satisfied” with the extent to which the County treats all residents fairly. Ten percent of respondents are “Very unsatisfied” with the extent to which the County treats all residents fairly.

Satisfaction with the extent to which the county treats all residents fairly differed significantly by each age and race. Satisfaction on this item was significantly higher among respondents 70 and older. Additionally, satisfaction with the extent to which Albemarle treats residents fairly was highest among Asian respondents and lowest among Black/African American respondents as well as respondents who identify as multiracial or of another race. See Appendix C for complete percentages by group.

Tax Allocation

Respondents were given a list topic areas and asked to assess the importance of Albemarle County allocating tax dollars to each area. The highest rated area, based on combined ratings of “Very important” and “Somewhat important,” is improvements to roads, bike/pedestrian paths, and public transportation (selected by 95% of respondents), followed by parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services (94%), and improvements/expansion of school facilities (90%). See Figure 3 for importance ratings across all topic areas. An “Other” option was also presented to respondents, and allowed write-in responses. The write-in answers varied and included education, police services, public transportation, traffic and infrastructure like roads, public safety, and support for unhoused individuals.

Figure 3. Importance of tax allocation across various topic areas



Demographic differences in tax allocation preferences

Ratings of importance across these areas did statistically vary by respondents' demographic characteristics. Improvements to roads, bike/pedestrian paths, and public transit received a higher rating of importance by those in satellite communities and the Urban ring/29 North.

Improvements/expansion of school facilities differed by locality and age, with a higher rating of importance by respondents from satellite communities and younger respondents, especially those 40 to 49.

Improvements to rural broadband access also differed by locality and age. Respondents in rural northern and rural southern Albemarle had the highest relative rating for the importance of rural broadband access, and importance ratings for this item increased linearly with age.

Supporting broadband affordability efforts received a higher rating of importance by those living in rural northern Albemarle and rural southern Albemarle, respondents who identify as Black or African American, respondents 60 and older, and respondents in the lowest income bracket (less than \$50,000).

Ensuring affordable housing in the County received a higher importance rating by those in the Urban ring/29 North and rural southern Albemarle, respondents who identify as Black or African American, those 39 and younger, renters, and those with a household income below \$50,000. See Appendix C for complete percentages by group.

Open feedback on Albemarle County's allocation of tax dollars

In addition to answering specific questions about tax allocation, respondents were given the space to share general feedback and comments on Albemarle County's allocation of tax dollars in their own words. Those responses further shed light on the importance ratings reported above.

Education emerged as a top priority for many residents, with calls for investing in schools, teachers' salaries, educational programs, and building new school facilities to accommodate population growth. Affordable housing is another prominent concern, with residents urging the county to prioritize the development of affordable housing options for working families, young people, and seniors on fixed incomes.

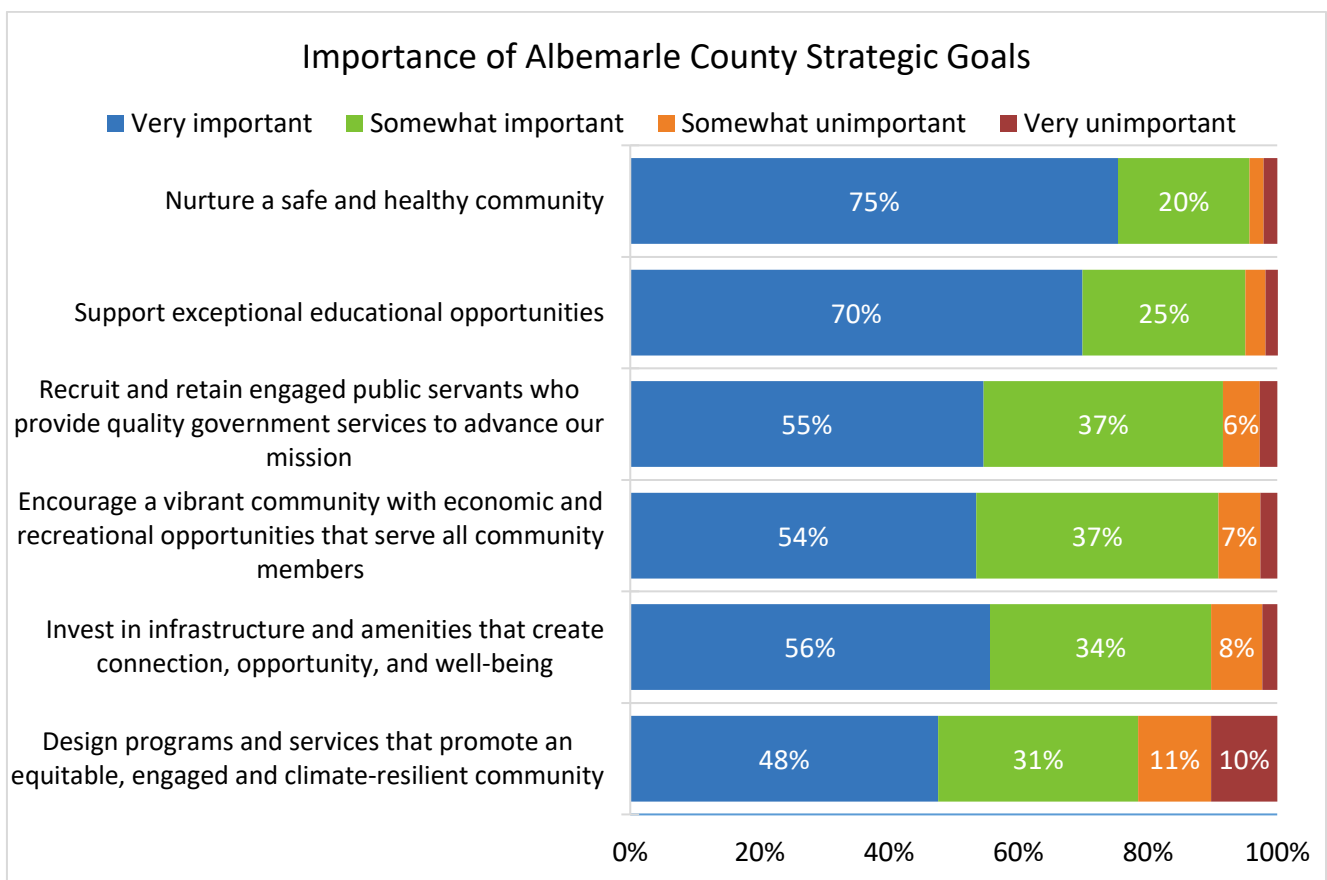
Infrastructure improvements, including road maintenance, public transportation, and broadband access, are also frequently cited as important areas for investment. Many residents express frustration with traffic congestion, poor road conditions, and limited public transit options, especially in rural areas. Environmental concerns, such as addressing climate change, preserving natural resources, and promoting sustainability, are highlighted by several comments. Residents call for initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect green spaces, and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Other recurring themes include economic development, support for public safety (police and fire departments), addressing homelessness, and improving community amenities like parks, libraries, and recreational facilities.

Overall, the comments reflect a desire for balanced investment in essential services, infrastructure, and quality-of-life improvements while addressing pressing issues such as affordable housing, education, and environmental sustainability. For the complete list of open-ended responses to this question, see Appendices E and F.

Importance of Current Strategic Goals

Respondents were presented with a list of the six strategic goals outlined in the current Albemarle County strategic plan and asked to rate how important they considered each goal, from “Very important” to “Very unimportant.” The top-rated strategic goal was “Nurture a safe and healthy community,” which was reported as “Very important” or “Somewhat important” by 96% of residents, followed by “Support exceptional educational opportunities” (95%) and “Recruit and retain engaged public servant who provide quality government services to advance our mission” (92%). See Figure 4 for importance ratings across all strategic goals.

Figure 4. Importance of Albemarle County strategic goals



Respondents in the Urban ring/29 North were more likely than other communities to highly rate the strategic goals “Design programs and services that promote an equitable, engaged, and climate-resident community” and “Encourage a vibrant community with economic and recreational opportunities that serve all community members” as important compared to residents from other areas of the county. See Appendix C for complete percentages by group.

Satisfaction with the Amount of Diversity in Local Government

Respondents were asked their level of satisfaction with the amount of diversity in Albemarle County government departments. A majority of respondents reported they were “Not sure” about their level of satisfaction (50%). Over a combined one-third of respondents reported they were “Very satisfied” or “Somewhat satisfied” (35%), and only 15% were “Somewhat unsatisfied” or “Very unsatisfied” with the amount of diversity in Albemarle County government departments.

Satisfaction with Transparency of Local Government

Respondents were asked their level of satisfaction with the transparency and honesty of the Albemarle County local government. A combined one-third were either “Very satisfied” or “Somewhat satisfied” (35%), while 28% were “Somewhat unsatisfied” or “Very unsatisfied” with the transparency and honesty of the Albemarle County local government. Approximately 37% of residents reported they were “Not sure” about their level of satisfaction.

Trust in Local Government

Respondents were asked, “Generally, how often can you trust your local government to do what is right?” Possible categories included “All of the time,” “Most of the time,” “Some of the time,” “Seldom,” and “Never.” “Some of the time” was the most frequently reported response at 41%, followed by “Most of the time” (35%), “Seldom” (16%), “Never” (6%), and only 3% reported they trust their local government to do what is right “All of the time” (3%).

IV. Community Development and Access to Resources

Importance of Economic Development

Respondents were asked, "Generally, how important do you think it is for Albemarle County local government to support economic development in the county?" and there was clear consensus. A combined 85% considered it either "Very important" or "Somewhat important".

Opinions on Rate of Growth

Having established respondents' views on the importance of the County to support economic development, another consideration is the rate of such development. Respondents were asked their opinion of the County's rate of growth over the past few years. Approximately 71% of residents were concerned about the pace of recent growth in Albemarle. Thirty-two percent considered the County's growth was "Much too fast," and 38% considered it "A little too fast." Twenty-two percent did think the County's growth rate was "About right," and a combined 8% reported it was "A little too slow" or "Much too slow."

Homeowners, those living in satellite communities or rural northern Albemarle, and respondents who are white, multiracial or of another race, all reported at relatively higher rates that they think the County is growing too fast. There was also a significant linear relationship with age, where ratings that the county was growing "much too fast" increased with age (see Appendix C for all percentage comparisons).

Anticipated Effects of Growth

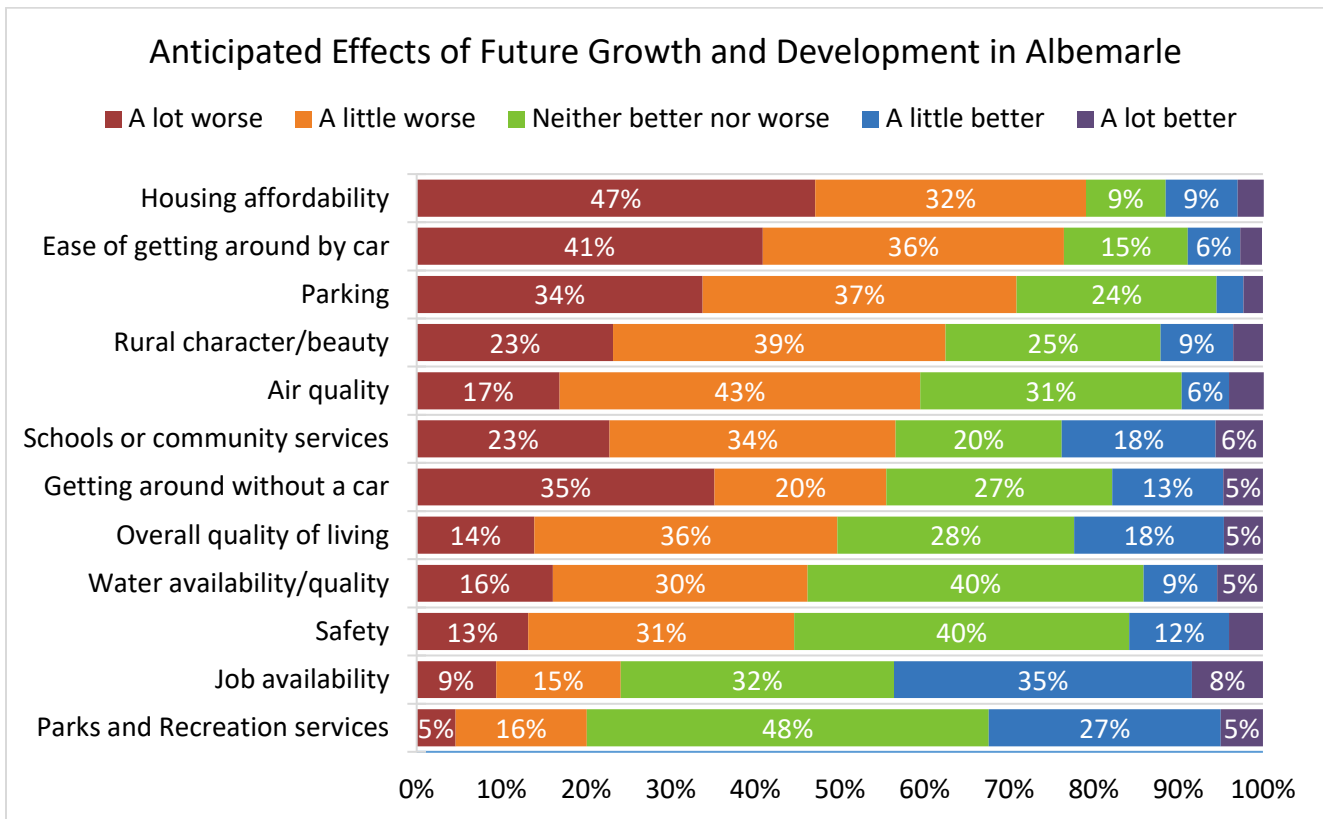
Respondents were asked to speculate on how they think future growth and development will affect various aspects of life in Albemarle County. On a 5-point scale from "A lot worse" to "A lot better," respondents reported the anticipated effects of development on the following aspects:

- Housing affordability
- Schools or community services
- Ease of getting around by car
- Parking
- Job availability
- Safety
- Parks and Recreation Services
- Rural character/beauty
- Water availability and/or quality
- Air quality
- Overall quality of living

As seen in Figure 5, respondents tended to anticipate worsened effects more often than improved effects across various aspects of life in Albemarle. In particular, housing affordability, ease of getting around by car, and parking were all expected to worsen due to future growth in Albemarle County. Job availability was the aspect the largest portion of respondents (44%)

considered likely to get better because of future growth and development, followed by parks and recreation services (32%), and schools or community services (24%).

Figure 5. Anticipated effects of future growth and development within Albemarle County



Perceptions of how future growth and development would affect housing affordability differed by locality, age, homeownership status, and household income. Respondents in the Urban ring/29 North, younger respondents, renters, and those with an income of less than \$100,000 all reported at higher rates the view that growth and development would make housing affordability worse.

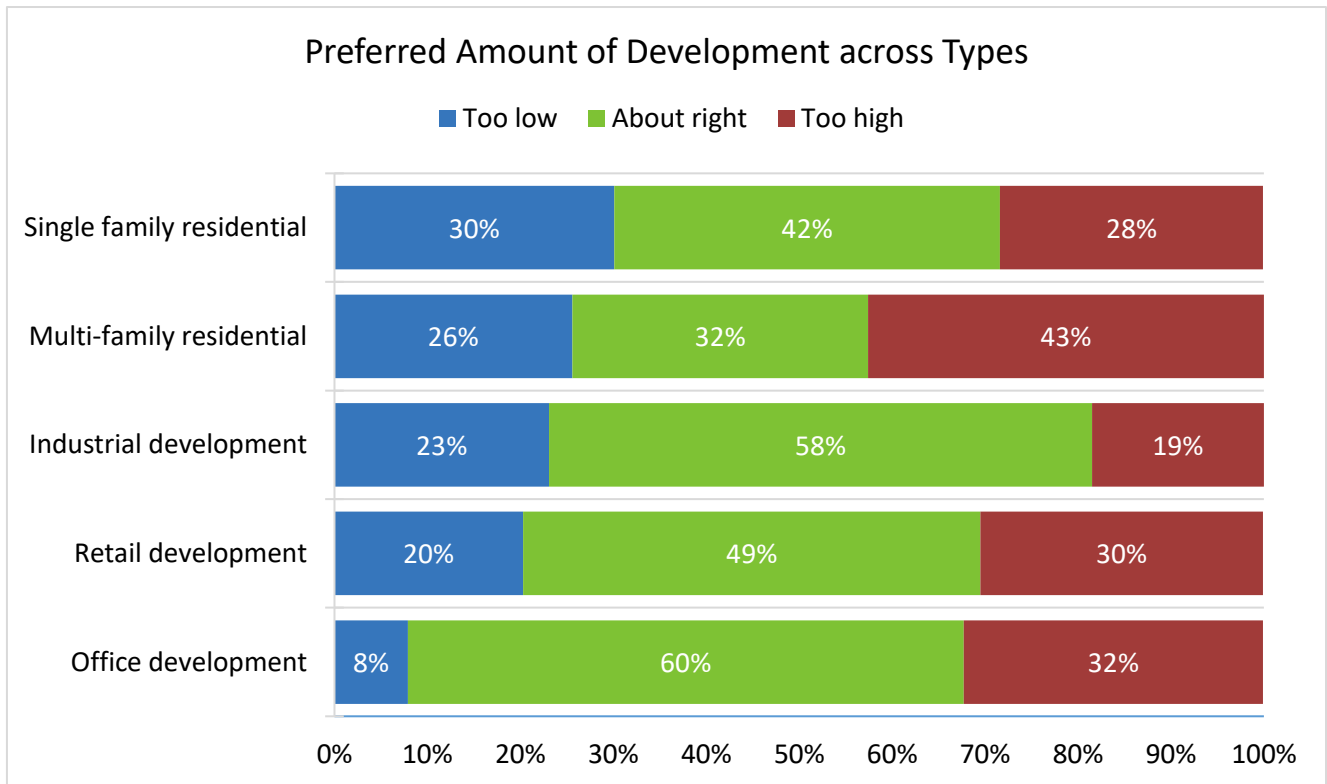
Respondents in satellite communities and rural northern Albemarle as well as respondents with higher incomes all reported at relatively higher rates the view that growth and development would make the ease of getting around by car worse. Perhaps relatedly, satellite communities and rural northern Albemarle residents reported at relatively higher rates that future growth and development would make parking “A lot worse.” See Appendix C for all percentage comparisons.

Preferences for Types of Development

To explore residents' opinions surrounding different types of development, respondents were presented with a list of five kinds of development, either built or approved: single-family residential, multi-family residential, office, retail, and industrial. Respondents were asked to rate their opinion on the amount of said development in Albemarle County.

Thirty percent of respondents think there is insufficient single-family residential development in the County, which is the highest share that any type of development was selected for being "Too low." However, residents' feelings were split, as twenty-eight percent reported single-family residential development was "Too high." Respondents also disagree on whether multi-family residential development is too low (26%) or too high (43%). Over half of residents report that the amount of industrial development (58%) and office development (60%) is "About right," and nearly half consider the amount of retail development to be "About right" (49%). Figure 6 presents these responses.

Figure 6. Preferred amount of development in Albemarle across different types of development



For single-family residential development, responses significantly differed by locality. Residents of the Urban ring/29 North and rural northern Albemarle were more likely to report development was "Too low," and residents of satellite communities and rural southern Albemarle were more likely to report single-family residential growth was "Too high." Additionally, respondents under 50 years old reported at higher rates the view single-family residential development was "Too low."

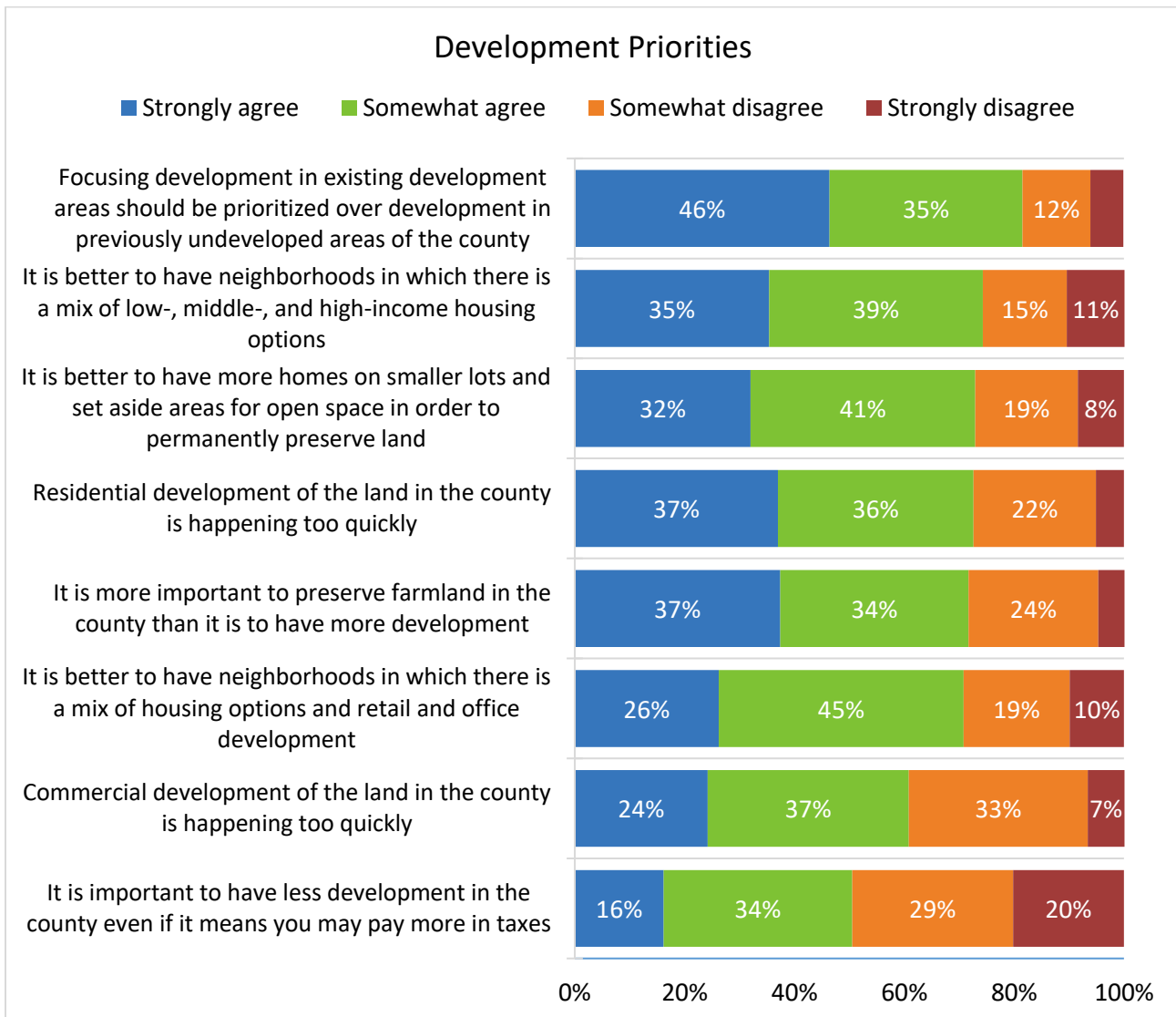
Following this same trend, respondents under 50 years old also reported at higher rates the view multi-family residential development was "Too low." Views on this type of development also varied significantly based off of one's homeownership status, as homeowners tended to report multi-family residential was "Too high" while renters reported at higher rates that this development was "Too low." Finally, respondents from satellite communities, followed by

residents in rural northern Albemarle, reported at relatively higher rates that multi-family residential development was “Too high.”

Possible Effects of Development

Respondents were presented with statements about development and were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the item. The statement that received the most agreement from residents was “Focusing development in existing development areas should be prioritized over development in previously undeveloped areas of the County,” as a combined 82% strongly agree or somewhat agree with this statement. The other statement with the highest rates of agreement was “It is better to have neighborhoods in which there is a mix of low-, middle-, and high-income housing options,” with 74% strongly agreeing or somewhat agreeing. The statement with the most divided opinion was “It is important to have less development in the county even if it means you may pay more in taxes,” with 51% agreeing and 49% disagreeing.

Figure 7. Development priorities



In terms of differences in agreement between residential groups, agreement with the statement “It is better to have neighborhoods in which there is a mix of low-, middle-, and high-income housing options” was significantly higher among residents 39 and younger, renters, residents with an income less than \$50,000, and residents living in the Urban ring/29 North and rural southern Albemarle.

Residents in satellite communities as well as homeowners reported high rates of agreement that residential development was happening too quickly. Further, rates of agreement increased with age of respondent, with older residents reporting higher rates of agreement that residential development was happening too quickly. This same pattern holds for views on commercial development, with older respondents reporting higher agreement that commercial development is happening too quickly.

Agreement that commercial development was happening too quickly held a negative linear relationship with income. That is, respondents from lower income brackets tended to agree more strongly that commercial development was happening too quickly, whereas disagreement with the statement increased at higher levels of income.

Convenience in Accessing Services and Assets

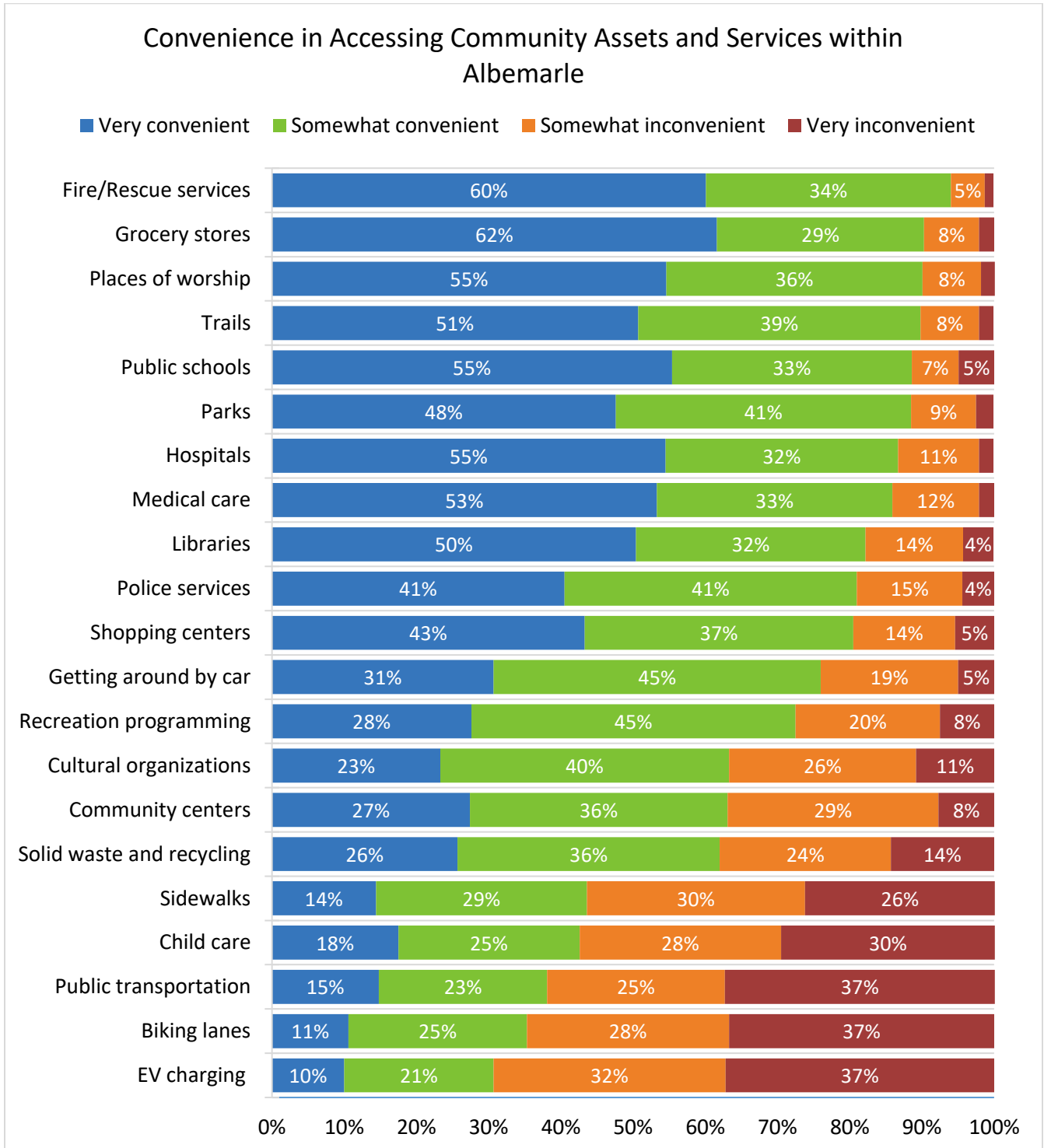
To assess residents' access to various services and institutions within Albemarle, respondents were presented with a list of 21 items and asked to rate their level of convenience in accessing each item. Many of the listed items are *not* services Albemarle County provides but rather an asset or good within the broader community. The question aims to capture respondents' ease of accessing a variety of assets or services within Albemarle, regardless of whether or not it is a public service/good. The items were:

- *Hospitals*
- *Medical care*
- *Police services*
- *Fire/Rescue services*
- *Public schools*
- *Libraries*
- *Childcare*
- *Grocery stores*
- *Shopping centers*
- *Places of worship*
- *Community centers*
- *Cultural organizations (e.g., galleries, theaters, etc.)*
- *Parks*
- *Trails*
- *Recreation programming*
- *Solid waste and recycling services*
- *Getting around by car*
- *Public transportation systems: Jaunt/Charlottesville Area Transit*
- *Sidewalks and pedestrian walkways*
- *Biking lanes*
- *Electronic Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure*

Figure 8 presents respondents' reported convenience in accessing these 21 items. Fire and rescue services were the most conveniently accessed items, followed by grocery stores, places of worship, and trails. For each of these items, 10% or fewer respondents reported experiencing inconvenience in accessing the asset. In contrast, EV charging, biking lanes, public

transportation, childcare, and sidewalks were among the most inconvenient services/assets to access, each with at least half of respondents reporting experiencing some level of inconvenience.

Figure 8. Convenience in accessing community assets and services within Albemarle



Convenience in accessing services varied between Albemarle residents. In particular, several services and assets were significantly less convenient for residents in the satellite communities

and rural southern Albemarle to access, including medical care and hospitals. Access to public schools, parks, recreation programming, childcare, solid waste and recycling services, and libraries were most inconvenient for rural northern Albemarle County residents. Bike lanes were rated as less convenient by residents living in rural northern Albemarle and rural southern Albemarle than in other localities. Residents of rural southern Albemarle County rated access to grocery stores as most inconvenient.

Additionally, access to cultural organizations, like galleries and theaters, was reported as *inconvenient* at significantly higher rates for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx residents. For specific percentage comparisons, see Appendix C. For the complete overall frequencies, see Appendix A.

Open feedback on convenience or inconvenience in accessing assets within Albemarle

In an open-ended question, respondents were invited to write in comments further explaining their convenience or inconvenience in accessing the previously discussed assets. Many respondents expressed concerns about traffic congestion and inadequate roads and parking infrastructure. They felt that population growth and development had outpaced improvements to roads, leading to heavy traffic and difficult commutes. Parking was also mentioned as a challenge, especially in downtown areas and near hospitals.

Recycling, waste removal, and environmental issues were another area of concern. Some respondents found recycling centers inconvenient to access or wanted expanded recycling services such as weekly pick-up. Others mentioned the need for more responsible waste management and environmental protection in the face of growth. Sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure were frequently cited as inadequate. Many felt that sidewalks are often missing, disconnected, or poorly maintained, making it difficult and unsafe to get around on foot. Crosswalks and pedestrian crossings on busy roads were also mentioned as areas needing improvement. Bicycling infrastructure, such as bike lanes and trails, was another common concern. Respondents said bike lanes are often missing or abruptly end, making cycling challenging and dangerous. Many wanted to see more dedicated bike lanes and off-road paths to improve safety and convenience for cyclists.

Over-construction of new retail and businesses, while old spaces sit empty, was frustrating for some. They felt the County allows too much new commercial development without supporting existing businesses. Others saw a need for more conveniently located grocery stores, restaurants, and other amenities in their area of the county. Expanding and improving public transit was a common suggestion. Many respondents saw current bus service as infrequent, unreliable or not reaching important destinations. They wanted to see more routes, increased frequency and hours, and better regional connectivity. Some mentioned concerns about schools, including overcrowding and the need for new facilities. A few commented on challenges with school bus transportation. Others raised individual issues like the need for more EV charging stations, challenges accessing healthcare and childcare, or concerns about over-development and loss of rural character. The complete list of open-ended responses can be viewed in Appendices E and F.

Barriers to Accessing Services and Assets

In addition to understanding the level of convenience (or inconvenience) respondents experience in accessing community assets, it was important to identify the barriers encountered that may drive that inconvenience. Towards that end, respondents were presented with the same list of services and assets⁵ and asked to indicate the barriers, if any, they encounter in accessing a given asset. Respondents could also indicate that they access the asset without encountering any barriers or that they do not use the asset. The barrier categories were:

- *Too far away/Does not exist in my part of the county*
- *Too expensive [AS APPLICABLE]*
- *Unaware of program/how to access*
- *Don't feel welcome/Don't fit in*

As an overview, Figure 9 shows the percentage of respondents who have encountered any barrier in accessing the service/asset, as well as the rate of use without encountering barriers, and the percentage of respondents who simply do not use the asset.

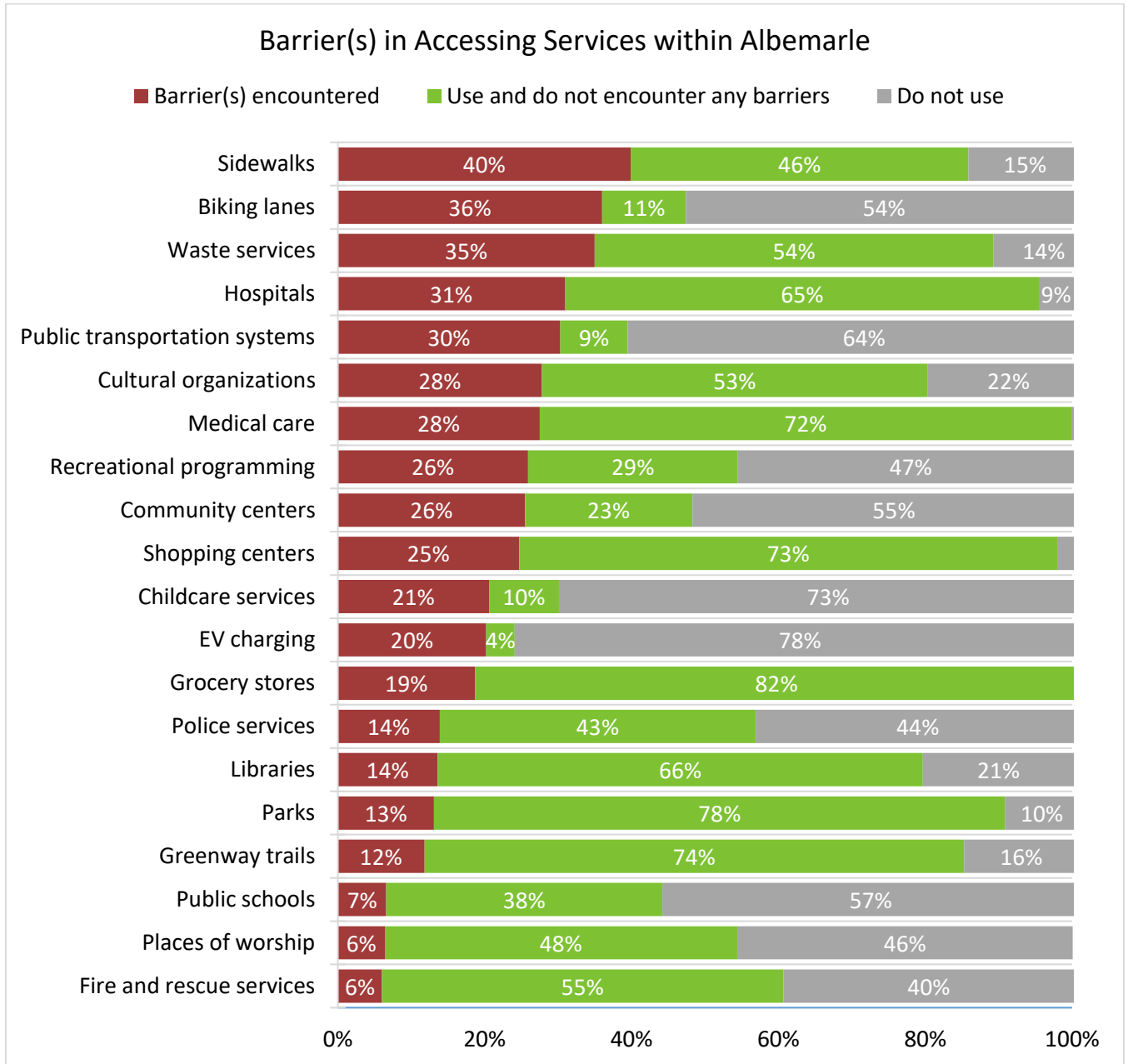
The assets for which the largest share of respondents encountered a barrier when accessing are sidewalks (40%), biking lanes (36%), and waste services (35%); each of which were reported by at least a third of respondents.

Regarding the specific barriers encountered for these assets, the primary barrier in accessing sidewalks was location, with sidewalks either being too far or simply not present in their part of the county. Thirty-five percent of respondents identified this particular barrier in accessing sidewalks. Similarly, distance was the most common barrier for accessing bike lanes. Thirty-two percent of respondents identified this as a barrier.

The most commonly reported barrier for waste services was also that the service is too far away or not present in their part of the county, selected by twenty-one percent of respondents. Though, an additional eight percent were unsure how to access the service, and five percent find it too expensive. See Appendix A for complete frequencies and the specific barrier selection for each item.

⁵ “Getting around by car” was excluded from the barrier assessment as the barrier categories did not apply to this item.

Figure 9. Barrier(s) encountered in accessing services and assets within Albemarle

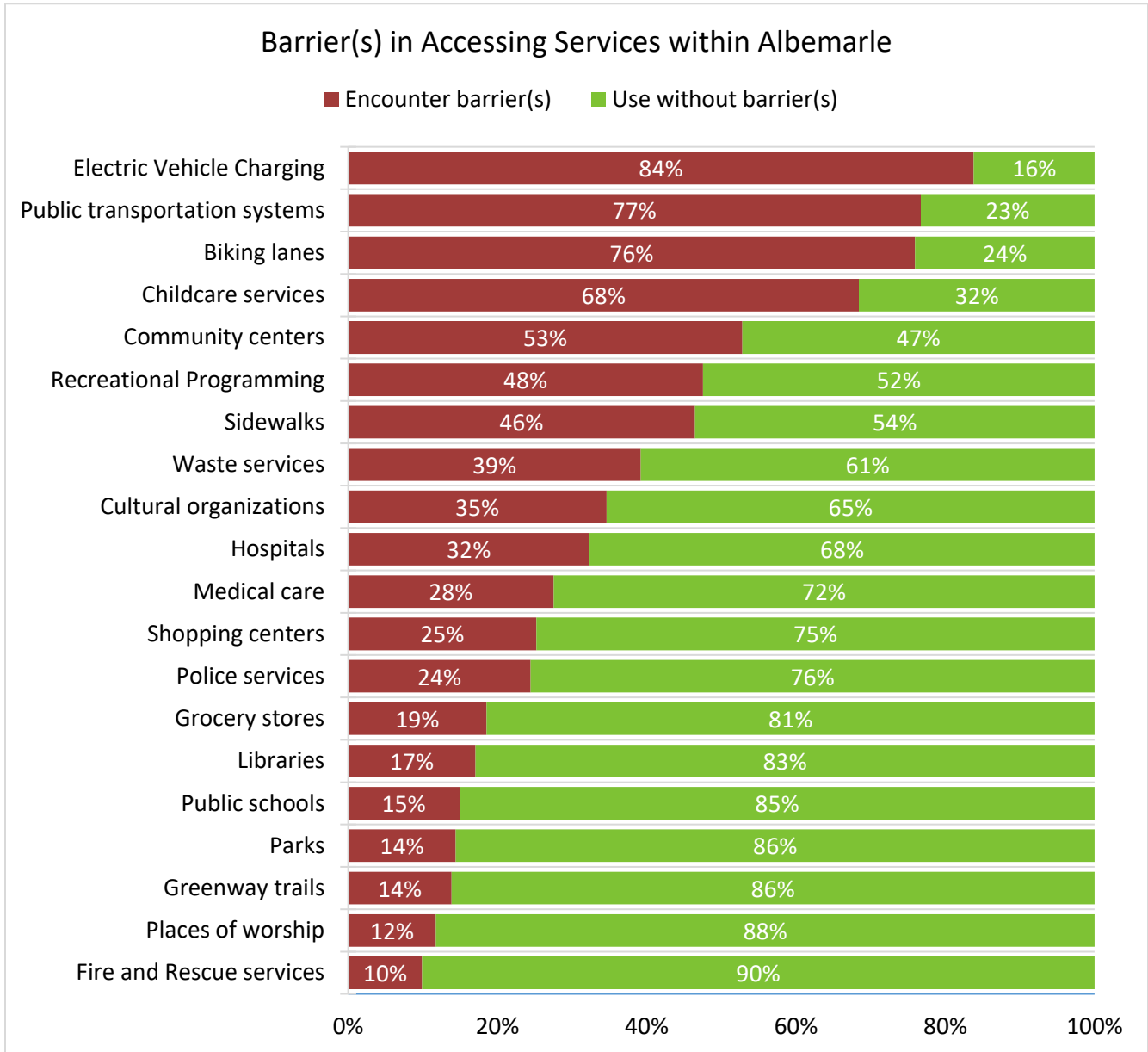


It is certainly important to be aware of the community assets for which the largest percentage of respondents encounter barriers in accessing, including those residents who do not use the service or asset, as presented in Figure 9. Additionally, it is illuminating to examine the experiences specifically of those respondents who use the services or assets. Figure 10 presents the incidence of encountering barriers just among those who use a given service and excludes respondents who selected “Do not use” from the reporting.

When looking at the rate of encountering barriers among residents who use a given service/asset, electric vehicle charging, public transportation, biking lanes, and childcare are the community assets for which residents encounter the most barriers.

Of those who use electric vehicle charging, 84% encounter barriers. Of those who use bike lanes, 76% encounter barriers. Of those who use public transportation, 77% encounter barriers. And of those who use childcare, 68% encounter barriers.

Figure 10. Barriers encountered in accessing services and assets among those who use them



The most common barrier respondents reported in using electric vehicle charging stations, public transportation, and bike lanes was not having the service available or nearby in their area of the county. The second most reported barrier for public transportation was being unaware of the program or how to access it. For the two-thirds of residents who encounter barriers accessing childcare, being too expensive, followed by distance, were the most common barriers.

Open feedback on barriers encountered regarding resources within Albemarle

Open-ended comments echoed many of these same findings. The vast majority cited transportation-related barriers as a major challenge. They mentioned a lack of sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transit options making it difficult and unsafe to get around without a car. Respondents said sidewalks are often missing, disconnected, or in poor repair. Bike lanes were described as scarce, disjointed, and abruptly ending. Rural roads with narrow shoulders and heavy traffic were seen as particularly dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. Traffic congestion and long distances to services were also frequently mentioned as barriers, especially for those living in rural areas of the county.

Access to convenient and comprehensive recycling and waste disposal was another concern. Some respondents found recycling centers hard to get to or they were unclear what materials are accepted. Others wanted to see curbside recycling pick-up expanded. A few mentioned a desire for more responsible waste management and a county composting program. Parking came up as a barrier for some, particularly in downtown areas and near hospitals. Respondents said parking can be hard to find, expensive, or feel unsafe. Accessing healthcare, especially emergency and specialist services, was another challenge cited. Respondents mentioned long waits for appointments, high costs, and a perceived shortage of providers as barriers to care. A few said UVA hospital feels overwhelmed and parking there is difficult.

Some respondents felt the county needs more parks, green space, trails, and recreational and cultural activities. They wanted to see existing parks and trails better maintained and expanded. A few mentioned a desire for more community centers, sports facilities, and cultural venues. Public schools were a concern for some, who mentioned overcrowding, under-resourced facilities, and long distances to schools as issues. A few objected to curriculum content and one mentioned challenges with the school bus system. Finding affordable, quality childcare and preschool was a barrier for a number of respondents. They said childcare options are limited, expensive, and can have long waiting lists. Accessing affordable early childhood education was a challenge.

See Appendices E and F for verbatim open-ended responses.

Importance for Those Who Work in Albemarle to Be Able to Live in Albemarle

The vast majority of respondents considered it important for people who work in Albemarle County to be able to live in Albemarle County. A combined 91% felt this was either "Very important" or "Somewhat important."

While the majority of respondents across all age groups considered this item important, higher ratings of importance were reported by respondents 39 and younger and those 50 to 59 years of age. Ratings of importance were also higher for residents with incomes under \$100,000 and renters. Residents in rural northern Albemarle were least likely to say it was "Very important" to live in Albemarle County (Appendix C).

Importance for Affordable Housing across the County

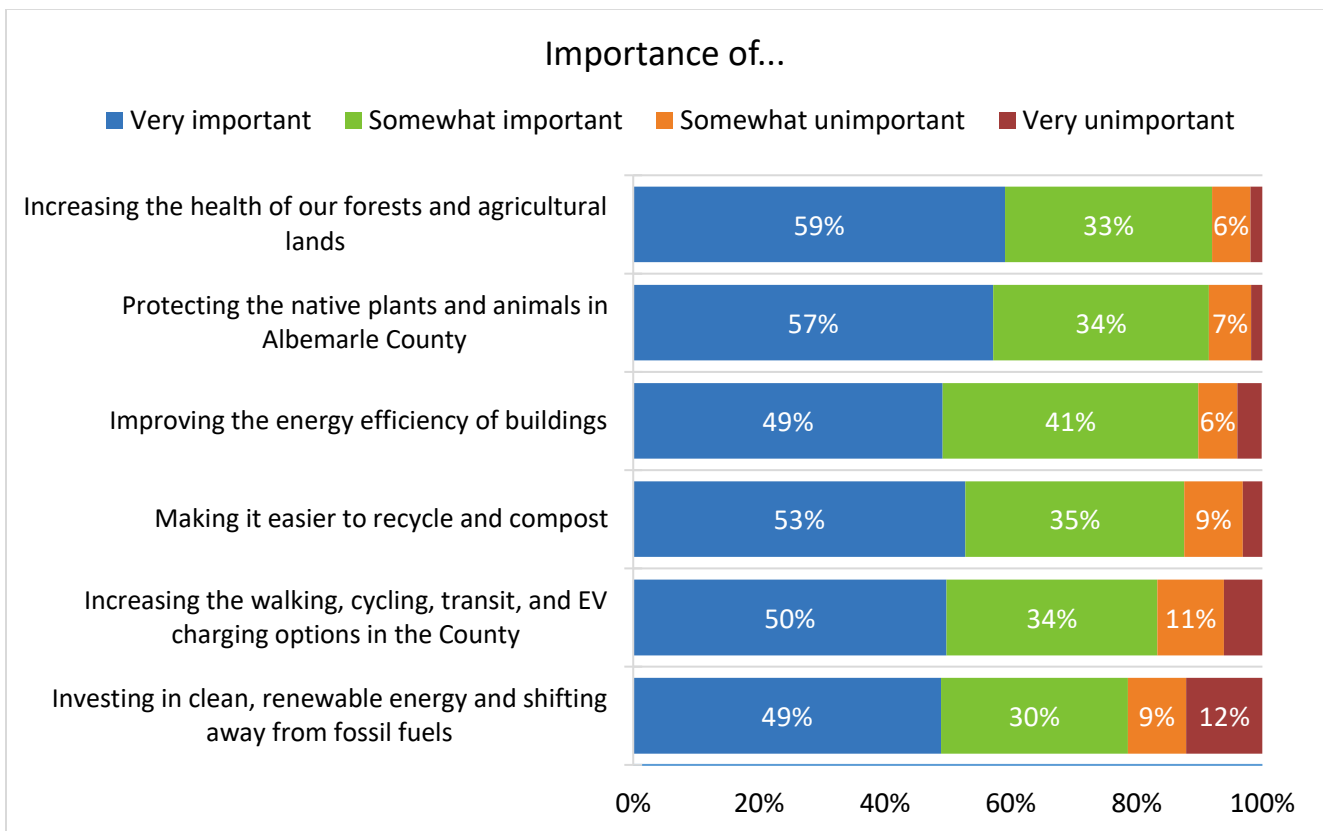
Residents responded similarly to the question, "How important do you think it is for there to be affordable housing options in all parts of the county?" Eighty-six percent consider it either "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for affordable housing to exist across the County."

In general, importance ratings for affordable housing were significantly higher for residents who live in the Urban ring/29 North, renters, households with annual income below \$100,000, respondents who identify as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx, and residents 39 years or younger. See Appendix C for percentage comparisons.

Importance of Environmental Investments

Respondents were presented with a list of 6 priorities to assess residents' opinions about sustainability and conservation priorities within Albemarle County. They were asked to rate how important these priorities were to them. Figure 11 displays the priorities in order of importance. The top two priorities were "Increasing the health of our forests and agricultural lands" and "Protecting the native plants and animals in Albemarle County," each with nine out of ten residents rating the priority as either very or somewhat important. Of note, all priorities were rated highly, including "Investing in clean, renewable energy and shifting away from fossil fuels" for which 79% of respondents rated as important. Yet this item has the most respondents who rated this priority as either "Somewhat unimportant" or "Very unimportant" (21%).

Figure 11. Sustainability and Conservation Priorities



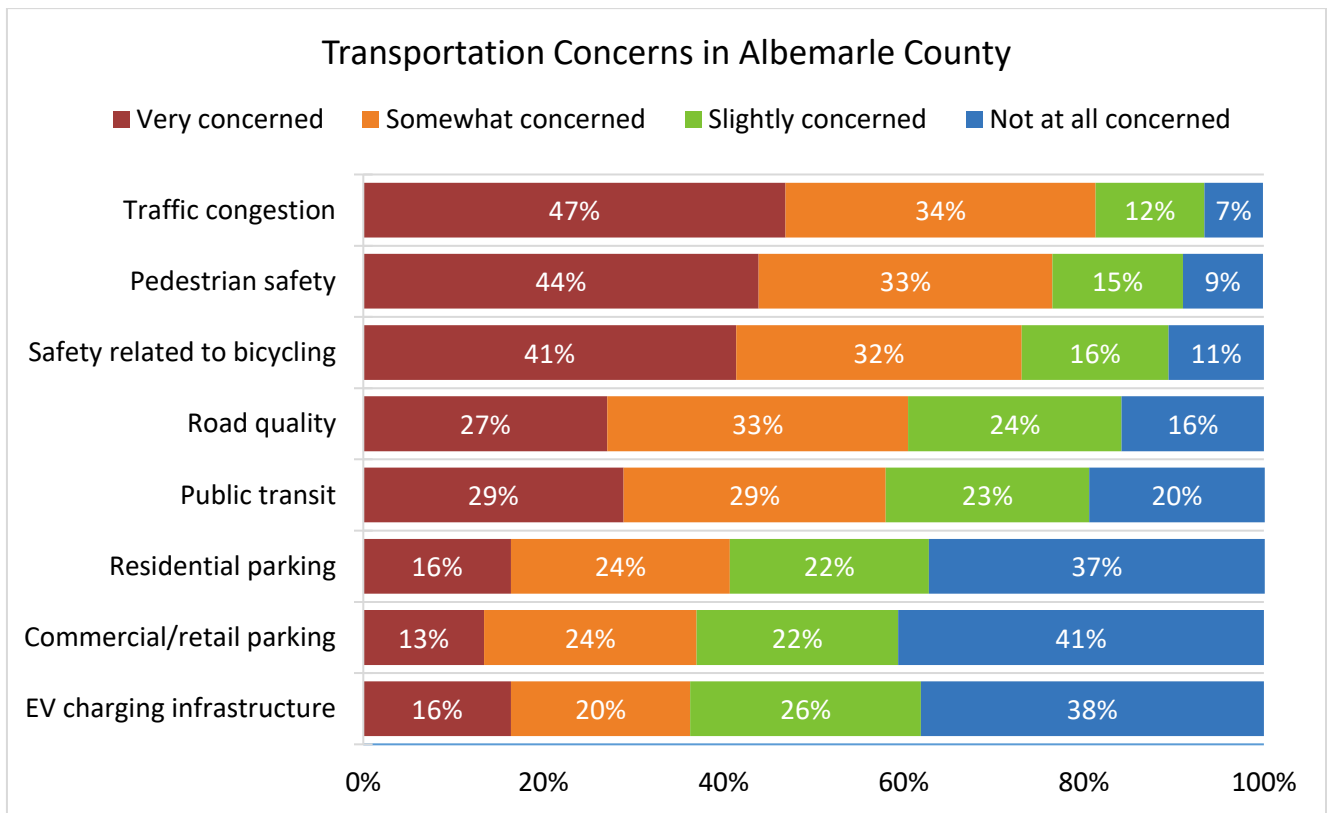
Importance ratings for increasing the walking, cycling, transit, and EV charging options in the County were significantly higher for residents living in the Urban ring/29 North, renters, and residents who are 39 and younger.

Transportation

Respondents were asked to consider transportation-related issues within Albemarle and rate their level of concern, ranging from "Not at all concerned" to "Very concerned." As shown in Figure 12, traffic congestion is the top area of concern, with a combined 81% of residents reporting they are either "Very concerned" or "Somewhat concerned" with traffic. Safety related to pedestrians (combined 77%), biking (combined 73%), and road quality (combined 61%) are all areas of concern to a majority of residents. Overall, EV charging infrastructure and commercial/retail parking in the county are less of a concern relative to other transportation issues.

The top concern for all communities is traffic congestion except for Urban ring/29 North residents, whose top concern is pedestrian safety. The other top concerns for Urban ring/29 North residents were residential parking and public transit. See Appendix C for complete percentage comparisons by demographics.

Figure 12. Transportation concerns in Albemarle County



V. Safety Services, Practices and Perceptions

Interaction with Police

Respondents were asked, "In the last two years, have you had any interactions with Albemarle County Police officers?" One-third of residents had an interaction with Albemarle County Police in the last two years. These respondents were then asked a series of follow-up questions relating to the nature of their interaction(s) and the quality of interaction(s).

Type of interaction

The three most commonly selected types of interactions were "Community events" (30%), "Called police for assistance or protection" (25%), and "Called police to report a crime or problem" (24%). The next most frequently mentioned was a traffic stop or being pulled over (23%).

Quality of interaction

Of residents who had an interaction with police in the last two years, half reported that the overall quality of their interaction(s) with the police officer(s) was "Very good." Almost one-quarter reported their interaction was "Good" (24%), and fourteen percent reported the interaction was "Acceptable." Ten percent of respondents reported their interaction was "Poor" or "Extremely poor."

Overall ratings of police interactions were generally positive but did differ significantly by some demographic characteristics. Positive interactions with police were significantly higher for rural northern Albemarle residents compared to other communities. While the majority of residents across all racial affiliations reported generally positive interactions, a portion of residents did disproportionately experience poor interactions. Specifically, "Very poor" interactions were reported at a relative higher rate for residents who identified as Black or African American, with one in five (22%) reporting having experienced a "Very poor" interaction with Albemarle Police.

Interaction with Fire Rescue

Respondents were asked, "In the last two years, have you had any interactions with Albemarle County Fire Rescue?" Twenty-eight percent of residents had an interaction with Albemarle County Fire Rescue in the last two years.

Type of interaction

The top three types of interactions were "Emergency medical and/or transport" (47%), "Community event" (33%), and "Public education/emergency preparedness" (18%). The next most frequently mentioned was the write-in "other" (17%) and included responses such as smoke or carbon monoxide alarm going off, fire or emergency at neighbors, and local events.

Quality of interaction

Of residents who had an interaction with Albemarle County Fire Rescue in the last two years, the vast majority reported it was "Very good" (86%) or "Good" (11%). Only 2% reported their interaction was "Acceptable," and 1% reported it was "Poor."

Smoke Detectors in Home

Respondents were asked if they had a working smoke detector in their home. Ninety-seven percent of Albemarle residents report having a working smoke alarm, 2% do not, and only 1% are not sure.

Frequency of Smoke Detector Testing

Residents were asked how often they or someone else in their home tested the smoke detector. Most respondents either check annually (39%) or "A few times a year" (37%). Eight percent check "Monthly," and 1% check "A few times a month." Fourteen percent of respondents reported, "We haven't tested them," suggesting the 97% who self-report having working smoke detectors may not directly reflect the actual rate of functionality of detectors in the home.

Knowledge in CPR

Respondents were asked to report how many people living in their home, including themselves, had been trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). A combined 60% had between one and three people in their home who were trained in CPR, but 38% did not have anyone in their home trained in CPR. Respondents from the satellite communities were significantly more likely to report that no one in the household knows CPR than other Albemarle communities.

Sense of Safety of Albemarle County Public Schools

Respondents with children who attended Albemarle County Public Schools were asked, "How safe do you feel your kids are while they are at school during the day." A majority say their children are "Somewhat safe" (50%) and 34% reported they feel their children are "Very safe." Thirteen percent reported they feel their children are "Somewhat unsafe," and 3% report they are "Very unsafe."

Sense of Safety at Home

All respondents were asked how safe they felt in their homes, and almost everyone reported feeling either "Very safe" or "Safe" (98%). While the vast majority of respondents across groups reported feeling safe in their home, there were significant substantive differences observed by household income. Six percent of respondents with a household income below \$50,000 reported feeling unsafe in their homes; while this is a relatively small number relative to those who feel safe, it is significantly higher than the 3% of respondents in the next income bracket (\$50,000-\$99,999) who report feeling unsafe, and strikingly, zero respondents in the next bracket (\$100,000-\$149,000) report feeling unsafe in their home. Additionally, respondents living in the Urban ring/29 North report relative higher rates of feeling unsafe in the home (3%) compared to the 1% or fewer residents in all other areas who report feeling unsafe. Finally, renters report higher rates of feeling unsafe in their home compared to homeowners (3% and 1.5%, respectively).

Open feedback on sense of safety at home

Some respondents mentioned lighting, roads, and trails/walking/biking as factors influencing their sense of safety. A few noted that their neighborhood lacks sufficient lighting, making it feel less secure at night. The condition and accessibility of roads, sidewalks, and trails was also cited, with some expressing concern about fast traffic and lack of safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Law enforcement and emergency responders were frequently mentioned as contributing to residents' sense of safety. Many said they feel secure knowing police and fire/rescue are nearby and responsive. However, a few in more rural areas expressed concern about longer response times due to distance. Some mentioned a desire for more police presence and patrols in their neighborhood.

Theft and crime were common concerns. Numerous respondents said that while they feel generally safe, they are aware of and have experienced issues like break-ins, car theft, and vandalism in their neighborhood. A few mentioned specific concerns about drug activity and domestic violence. Some have security systems, cameras and dogs for an added sense of security. Personal concerns related to age, gender, and race came up for some respondents. A few women, especially those living alone, said they feel less than 100% safe due to their gender. Some older residents expressed concern about the potential for falls and health emergencies and their ability to get help quickly. A small number of racial and ethnic minority residents indicated they feel more vulnerable due to their race in a predominantly white area. Population growth and density was another factor mentioned. Some residents said they feel safer in more rural, sparsely populated areas and expressed concern that growth and development could bring more crime. Conversely, others said they feel secure in denser neighborhoods where neighbors are close by and look out for each other.

Generally, safe was the most common response, consistent with the close-ended question discussed previously. Many residents said they simply feel their neighborhood and home are safe, often attributing this to factors like low crime rates, good relationships with neighbors, and proactive safety measures like locking doors and having security systems. Some mentioned feeling safe in their senior community or gated neighborhood. Other factors mentioned included the presence of guns in the home or neighborhood as increasing feelings of safety for some and decreasing it for others, concerns about national political polarization and unrest trickling down to the local level, and appreciation for safety features like smoke detectors and accessibility modifications in the home. See Appendices E and F for verbatim open-ended responses.

Sense of Safety in Albemarle

All respondents were asked how safe they feel in Albemarle County and the vast majority feel safe. Ninety-three percent of respondents reported they feel "Safe" or "Very safe" in Albemarle County. Only 6% report feeling unsafe, and 1% report feeling "Very unsafe."

As with feelings of safety in the home, feelings of safety within Albemarle also varied by household income, locality, and homeownership status. While the majority feel safe within the county, certain groups report relatively higher rates of feeling unsafe. Respondents living in

the Urban ring/29 North and renters report higher rates of feeling unsafe, and sense of safety decreases with income.

Open feedback on sense of safety in Albemarle

Culture, population, and downtown concerns were mentioned by some respondents. A few expressed worries about the homeless population and panhandling, especially downtown. Some mentioned feeling less safe due to population growth and demographic changes. Others commented on a general sense of community and caring among residents that contributes to feelings of safety. Many respondents said they feel generally safe in Albemarle County. They cited factors like low crime rates, a sense of community, good relationships with neighbors, and living in a safe neighborhood or area of the county. Some contrasted the county favorably with Charlottesville or other places they have lived.

However, crime and gun violence were top of mind for many respondents. Numerous mentions were made of shootings, gang activity, theft, and a perceived increase in violent crime in recent years. While some said they personally feel safe, they expressed concern about crime trends. A few mentioned specific incidents or areas of the county that feel less safe. Government services, especially law enforcement, were a point of divergence. Many respondents said they feel safe because police and emergency responders are professional, visible and responsive when needed. But some expressed concerns that law enforcement is understaffed, slow to respond, or not doing enough to address crime. A few criticized the courts and Commonwealth's Attorney's office approach to prosecution. Traffic, roads, and distance were safety concerns for some. Respondents mentioned issues like speeding, reckless and aggressive driving, congestion, and accidents. Those in rural areas expressed concern about longer emergency response times and lack of infrastructure like lighting and sidewalks.

Identity factors like gender, race and age shaped some respondents' views on safety. A few women, especially those who live alone, expressed feeling less than fully safe. Some older residents mentioned concerns about health emergencies and falls. A small number of respondents of color indicated they feel more vulnerable due to their race. Other issues mentioned included concerns about the political climate and polarization, a desire for more gun control, and the impact of growth and development on safety and crime. See Appendices E and F for verbatim open-ended responses.

VI. Local Civic Engagement

Interest in Local Issues

Respondents were asked to rate their “level of interest in community issues and local public affairs.” Most people reported at least some interest in community issues and local public affairs, with just 4% reporting they were “Not at all interested.” Specifically, a combined thirty-one percent reported they were “Very interested” or “Extremely interested,” and an additional 65% reported they were either “Moderately interested” or “Slightly interested.”

Satisfaction with Opportunities to Voice Concerns

Respondents were asked about their level of satisfaction with “the extent to which you have opportunities to voice your concerns as a county resident.” A majority of respondents reported they were “Somewhat satisfied” (50%), and 19% reported they were “Very satisfied.” Twenty-three percent of respondents reported being “Somewhat unsatisfied,” and 9% reported being “Very unsatisfied.”

Vote

Roughly nine out of ten respondents (91%) reported they are registered to vote in Albemarle County. Residents who are under 40 years old, renters, those living in the Urban ring/29 North, those with income less than \$50,000, and those who identify as Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, or Multiracial/Another race were all significantly less likely to report they were registered to vote in Albemarle.

Engagement in Local Affairs

Respondents were asked to rate their “level of engagement in community issues and local public affairs.” Only 7% of respondents considered themselves “Extremely engaged” or “Very engaged.” Most respondents reported being “Slightly engaged” or “Moderately engaged” (combined 71%), and 22% reported being “Not at all engaged.” There were no significant differences among the demographic variables for level of engagement in community issues.

Desire to be more engaged

Almost half of respondents said they wished they were more engaged than they currently are with community issues and local public affairs (48%), while 52% reported they did not wish to be more engaged. Respondents in the Urban ring/29 North, those 39 and younger, and renters were relatively more likely to report they wished they were more engaged in community issues and local public affairs.

Opportunities to be more engaged

Respondents were asked, “If you wanted to participate in community issues and local public affairs, do you think there is adequate opportunity for you to do so?” More than three-quarters reported “Yes,” they do believe there is adequate opportunity to participate in community issues and local public affairs (78%), whereas 22% reported “No” there were not adequate opportunities. Respondents in the Urban ring/29 North and residents who identify as Black or

African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Multiracial/another race were significantly less likely to report there were adequate opportunities if they wanted to participate in community issues and local public affairs compared to other groups.

Open feedback on opportunities to be more engaged

For the 22% of respondents who reported there was not adequate opportunity for them to participate in local public affairs, they were given the space to provide suggestions, in their own words, on how greater opportunity could be provided to facilitate their participation.

Many respondents suggested leveraging technology and social media to enhance participation. Ideas included allowing residents to sign up for email updates and newsletters, creating dedicated websites and social media accounts for County issues, livestreaming meetings, using online forums and surveys to gather input, and implementing online voting. Improving internet access in rural areas was also mentioned as a way to enable more residents to engage digitally. A common theme was the need for more proactive, widespread communication from the County about opportunities to participate. Respondents wanted more publicity and advance notice about meetings, agendas and ways to provide input. Suggestions included mailing information directly to residents, disseminating details via local media, providing a centralized calendar of events, and offering welcome packets to new residents. Some respondents noted that holding meetings only during traditional weekday work hours limits participation. They suggested offering some meetings in the evenings or on weekends to accommodate more schedules.

A few respondents highlighted the need to improve access for residents with disabilities, childcare needs or transportation limitations. Suggestions included offering virtual attendance options, providing childcare at meetings, and ensuring meeting spaces are accessible. One respondent noted the isolation faced by seniors in assisted living facilities. Some respondents expressed frustration that local political dynamics and a perceived lack of ideological diversity discourage them from participating. They described feeling unwelcome or unheard if their views do not align with the majority. A desire was expressed for public engagement to be less politically driven and more open to a range of perspectives. A handful of respondents suggested holding meetings at various locations around the community, such as schools, libraries, community centers, and apartment complexes, to facilitate wider participation. One mentioned a need for a centralized location for accessing county services.

Other suggestions included simplifying communications and avoiding jargon, allowing more time for public comments at meetings, conducting outreach to underrepresented groups, and involving younger residents. A few respondents said they were not interested in participating or did not have time. Others felt that officials did not genuinely consider public input.

Resources to Obtain Info about Albemarle County Government

Respondents were asked to indicate which sources they use to obtain information about the Albemarle County government and its activities, events, and services. The top five sources were NBC29 (60%), public postings at local businesses, libraries, and county offices (56%), CBS19

(36%), Daily Progress (36%), and Cville Weekly (33%). Other frequently mentioned sources were Nextdoor (31%) and “Word of mouth” (30%). Surprisingly, only 5% reported obtaining information about Albemarle County government directly from Albemarle County social media accounts.

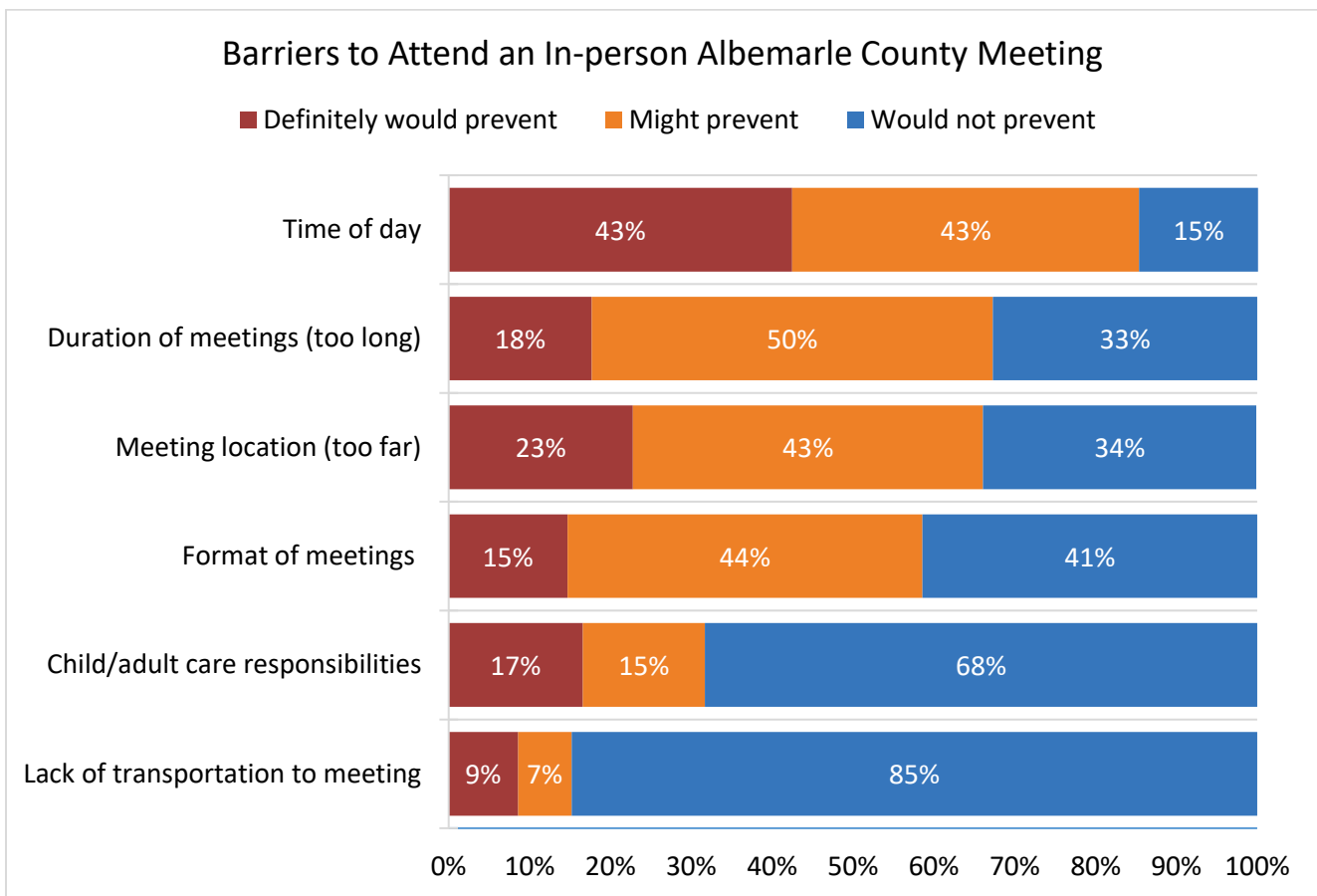
Satisfaction with Communication from Albemarle County Government

Respondents were asked about their level of satisfaction with “the level of communication from Albemarle County Government.” Sixty percent reported they were either “Somewhat satisfied” or “Very satisfied” with the County’s level of communication. Twenty-eight percent were “Somewhat unsatisfied,” and 13% were “Very unsatisfied.”

Barriers to Attending Albemarle County Meeting

To explore barriers to attending Albemarle County meetings, respondents were asked, “If you were interested in attending an in-person Albemarle County meeting, how much would each of the following *prevent* you from doing so? Figure 13 displays the barriers to attending in person.

Figure 13. Barriers to attending an in-person Albemarle County meeting



The top selected reason was the time of day, with a combined 86% reporting that this either “Might prevent” or “Definitely would prevent” them from attending an in-person meeting. The duration of the meetings was also listed as a top barrier (combined 68%). Respondents could

also select "Other" and provide a written-in response. These "other" reasons included age or health issues, lack of awareness about meetings or lack of time to attend, concerns about whether opinions would be heard or lead to meaningful change, and concerns around the meetings themselves (e.g., topics discussed, not feeling welcome).

Barriers to participation in in-person meetings did statistically vary by respondents' demographic characteristics. For locality, residents of the satellite communities and the Urban ring/29 North were likelier to report barriers related to time of day and meeting location being too far. Lack of transportation to meetings was highest for respondents in the Urban ring/29th North, and child/adult care responsibilities were reported most by residents in the satellite communities. For race, respondents who identify as Hispanic/Latinx were relatively more likely to report a lack of transportation to meetings. Residents who identify as Black or American were relatively more likely to report that the format of the meetings did not meet their needs. Also, respondents who identify as Asian and Hispanic/Latinx were significantly more likely to report barriers with child/adult care responsibilities as impeding participation in in-person meetings. The time of day, meeting location being too far, and childcare responsibilities were reported as barriers at relatively higher rates for respondents 49 years of age and younger compared to older respondents.

VII. Summary Findings

The Albemarle County Community Survey was designed to determine opinions about quality of life in Albemarle; assess satisfaction with County services and preferences for tax allocation; identify barriers and level of access to resources and assets within the County; understand residents' sense of belonging and safety; and measure opinions on growth and development in the County.

Life in Albemarle

In general, Albemarle residents enjoy a high quality of life (90% report their quality of life in Albemarle is either "Excellent" or "Good"). However, respondents report pessimistic opinions on how quality of life in the County may change over the next five years: only 15% expect quality of life to improve, 52% expect it to get worse, and 34% expect quality of life to stay the same.

The primary explanation among those who expect quality of life to worsen is based in a concern that Albemarle would grow too quickly and too fast for existing infrastructure to adequately accommodate the increased population, leading to overcrowding, increased traffic, lack of affordable housing, and a loss of natural areas and rural character. Conversely, among the respondents who feel quality of life in Albemarle would improve in the next five years, the most common reason was also related to growth and development, which they expect would bring additional amenities and opportunities and increased diversity to Albemarle. Other positives noted focus on the cultural assets of Albemarle County, including dining and wineries, as well as the natural beauty and outdoor recreation available.

Sense of safety

Almost all residents feel "Safe" or "Very safe" in Albemarle County (93%). The write-in comments echoed this finding, as many respondents reported feeling safe in Albemarle County because of low crime rates, a sense of community, and living in a safe neighborhood. Issues that made respondents feel less safe were concerns around crime and gun violence, traffic issues such as congestion and speeding or reckless driving, and people in rural areas of the county noted a lack of infrastructure around lighting and sidewalks and longer emergency response times.

County Services and Value

Indicating broad satisfaction, two-thirds of Albemarle residents rate the quality of County services overall as either "Good" or "Excellent." Across specific services, fire services, emergency medical services, and County trail facilities receive the highest quality ratings. Conversely, residents rate land use, planning, and zoning, as well as leadership by the County Board of Supervisors and County Code Enforcement Services, with the relative lowest quality ratings. When asked about transportation concerns, residents expressed overwhelming concern about traffic congestion. Safety related to pedestrians, biking, and road quality are all areas of concern to a majority of residents. The top concern for all communities was traffic congestion except for the Urban ring/29 North, where the top concern was pedestrian safety.

Allocation of tax dollars

When it comes to opinions regarding taxes, residents are considerably more divided. While over a majority of residents are "Somewhat satisfied" with the value of services for their tax dollars, responses vary along some demographic lines. Residents with an annual household income of \$100,000 and above report higher satisfaction ratings compared to respondents in the lower-income brackets. Further, residents in rural southern Albemarle and the satellite communities report relatively lower satisfaction ratings compared to the areas. Ratings did not differ significantly by race, age, or homeownership.

Regarding how tax dollars ought to be allocated, residents identified improvements to roads, bike/pedestrian paths, public transit, parks and recreation facilities, programs and services, and improvement/expansion of school facilities as the most important areas for tax allocation. In response to an additional write-in question, many residents expressed a desire for greater tax allocation towards education and schools, affordable housing, and infrastructure improvements.

Access to Services

Across 21 different assets and services within the County, fire and rescue services were the most conveniently accessed services, followed by grocery stores, places of worship, and trails. EV charging stations, bike lanes, public transportation, childcare, and sidewalks were among the most inconvenient services/assets to access.

Specifically, respondents indicated they would like to see improvements to roads, sidewalks, crosswalks, biking lanes and trails, and parking throughout the county. Other areas of concern were about access to recycling centers, the need for more conveniently located amenities like grocery stores and restaurants, and concerns around schools and the need for new school facilities.

Convenience in accessing services varied significantly by the locality. In particular, medical care and hospitals were significantly less convenient for residents in the satellite communities and rural southern Albemarle to access. Access to public schools, parks, recreation programming, childcare, solid waste and recycling services, and libraries was most inconvenient for rural northern Albemarle County residents. Access to cultural organizations such as galleries and theatres was most inconvenient for residents who identify as Black or African American and Hispanic/Latinx.

Access and equity priorities

Numerous measures related to equity and inclusion were reported as important by the majority of respondents. Over 90% of residents consider it either "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for people who work in Albemarle to be able to live in Albemarle. Over three-quarters of residents consider it either "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for them to live in a diverse and multicultural community. And 86% of residents also consider it "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for there to be affordable housing options in all parts of

the County. This importance rating does vary by certain demographics. Residents living in the Urban Ring/29 North, renters, households with an annual income below \$100,000, respondents identifying as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx, and residents 39 and younger all reported higher importance ratings for having affordable housing in all parts of the county.

Growth and Development

Growth and development, particularly the management of it, is a highly significant topic to Albemarle residents. A combined eighty-five percent of respondents consider it "Very important" or "Somewhat important" for the County to support economic development in Albemarle. While residents consider economic development important, seventy percent think the County's rate of growth over the past few years has been "A little fast" or "Much too fast." In particular, respondents who identified as White or Multiracial/another race, homeowners, older residents, residents living in the satellite communities, or rural northern Albemarle were most likely to indicate they think the county is growing too fast.

While respondents recognize that future growth and development in the County may improve job availability, they also hold concerns that other aspects of life in the County will worsen. In particular, housing affordability, ease of getting around by car, and parking were all expected to worsen due to future growth in Albemarle County.

Respondents' preferences for growth do vary by type of development. An almost equal number of residents reported that single-family residential development was "too low" (30%) and too high (28%). There was some disagreement on the amount of multi-family residential development, with 43% reporting the amount was "Too high" and a little over a quarter reporting it was "Too low. Residents from the Urban ring/29 North and rural northern Albemarle were more likely to report that single-family development was "Too low" compared to other localities. Urban ring/29 North residents were also more likely to report that multi-family residential development was "Too low" compared to other localities. Respondents from the satellite communities were most likely to report that multi-family residential development was "Too high." Almost half or more of residents reported that office development, retail development, and industrial development were "About right".

Local Civic Engagement

Approximately half of residents say they wished they were more engaged than they currently are with community issues and local public affairs (48%). While the majority of respondents feel there is adequate opportunity for them to participate in local public affairs, approximately one in five do *not*. When asked for suggestions of how their engagement could be supported, residents suggest leveraging technology and social media, e.g., email updates and newsletters, dedicated websites and social media accounts for County issues, and livestreaming meetings. Another common theme was the need for more proactive, widespread communication from the County about opportunities to participate.

Additionally, some residents focused on the accessibility of County Board meetings specifically, with suggestions for virtual attendance options and providing childcare at meetings. Others

described feeling unwelcome or unheard in these spaces if their views do not align with the majority. A handful of respondents suggested holding meetings at various locations around the community, such as schools, libraries, community centers, and apartment complexes, to facilitate wider participation.

While some of these suggestions could expand on current offerings, many are redundant of existing provisions offered by the County, suggesting a lack of awareness of some of the services and information Albemarle County is already carrying out. This theory is somewhat supported by the finding that just 12% of respondents obtain information about Albemarle County government directly from Albemarle County's website and 5% from Albemarle County social media accounts. Much more commonly, residents rely on obtaining this information through local media, both local broadcasting stations and newspapers.