

City of Madison: Southeast Area Plan Survey Part 2 - Survey Results

Prepared by the City of Madison Planning Division | 2025



Introduction:

This report presents a research-based analysis of survey data collected from residents in Madison's Southeast Area. The primary goal of the survey was to gain a deeper understanding of residents' priorities related to housing affordability, transportation access, and neighborhood development. By incorporating cross-tabulated visualizations, this analysis highlights how these concerns vary across demographic groups.

Urban planning in Madison is deeply informed by community input gathered through public engagement efforts. In 2024–2025, the City of Madison's Planning Division, in collaboration with Ph.D. students from the UW–Madison Sociology Department, conducted a two-part survey to help inform the Southeast Area Plan, a long-range vision for equitable and sustainable development. This report focuses on **Part 2** of the survey, which received responses from more than **140 residents** and included questions on housing types, affordability, public transit, infrastructure needs, and neighborhood characteristics.

Data for this report were drawn from a household survey distributed across the Southeast area. The respondent pool reflects a broad range of **ages, income levels, and racial and ethnic backgrounds**. Both summary statistics and cross-tabulated visualizations are used to identify patterns in resident concerns and priorities, providing a nuanced picture of community needs to inform future planning decisions.

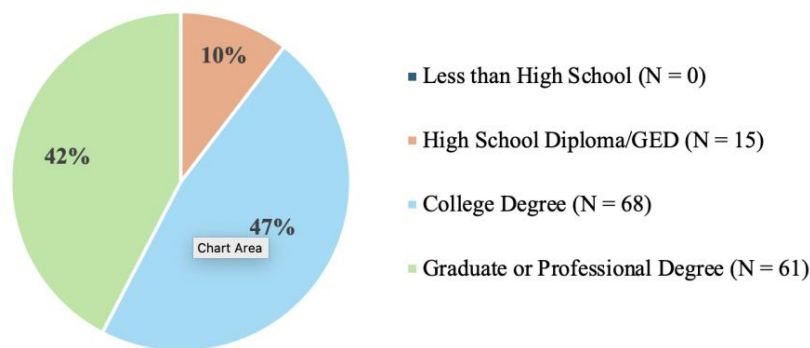
Respondent Demographics:

This section provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of respondents who completed Part 2 of the Southeast Area Plan Survey. Understanding who participated in the survey is essential for contextualizing the findings and recognizing the perspectives that are most represented in the results. Figures 1 through 8 illustrate key demographic variables, including race, ethnicity, age, education, gender, housing tenure, length of residence, and household income.

Racial Composition

The respondent pool was overwhelmingly White, with 95% of participants identifying as such (n = 136). Smaller shares identified as Asian or Pacific Islander (3%), American Indian or Alaska Native (1%), and Black or African American (less than 1%). While this distribution does not fully reflect the broader diversity of the Southeast area, it provides insight into the perspectives most represented in the survey responses.

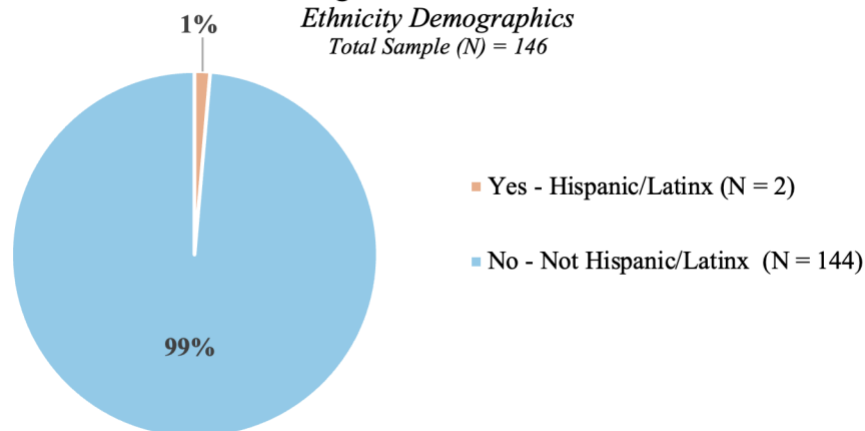
Figure 4 - Southeast:
Education Demographics
Total Sample (N) = 144



Ethnicity

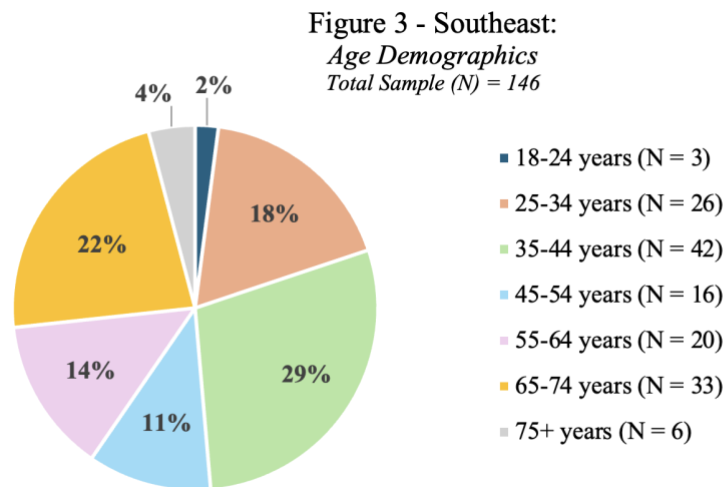
Nearly all respondents (99%) reported not being of Hispanic or Latino origin, with only 1% (n = 2) identifying as Hispanic/Latinx. This limited representation suggests that Latino/a/x perspectives are underrepresented in the survey sample.

Figure 2 - Southeast:
Ethnicity Demographics
Total Sample (N) = 146

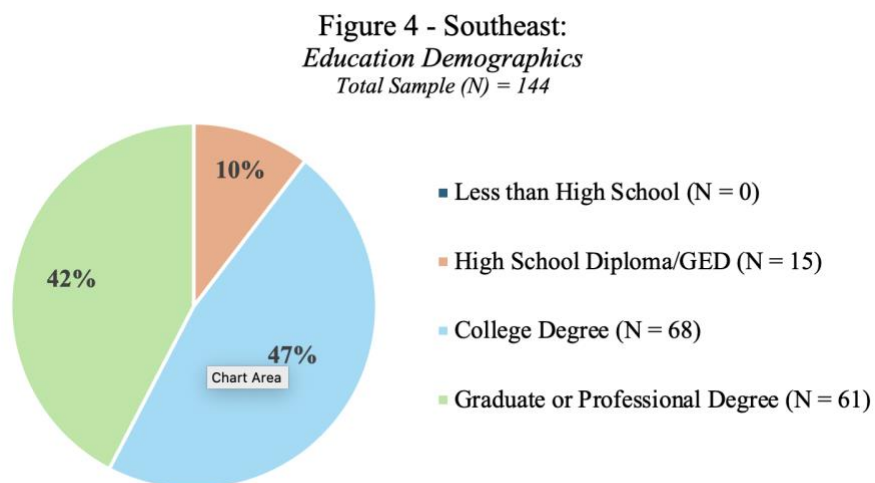


Age Distribution

Survey participants represented a wide range of age groups. The largest share of respondents were between the ages of 35–44 (29%) and 65–74 (22%). Adults aged 25–34 made up 18% of the sample, while 14% were 55–64 and 11% were 45–54. Smaller proportions included respondents over 75 (4%) and young adults aged 18–24 (2%). This distribution indicates that both middle-aged and older adults were well represented in the sample, while younger residents contributed to a lesser extent.



Educational Attainment

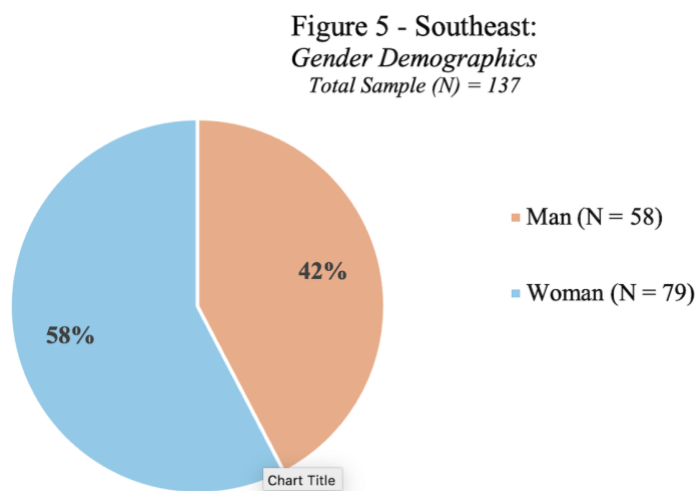


Survey participants reported relatively high levels of educational attainment. Nearly half (47%) indicated they had completed a college degree, and an additional 42% reported holding a

graduate or professional degree. A smaller share (10%) had earned a high school diploma or GED. No respondents reported having less than a high school education. This distribution suggests that the survey reflects perspectives primarily from residents with higher levels of formal education

Gender

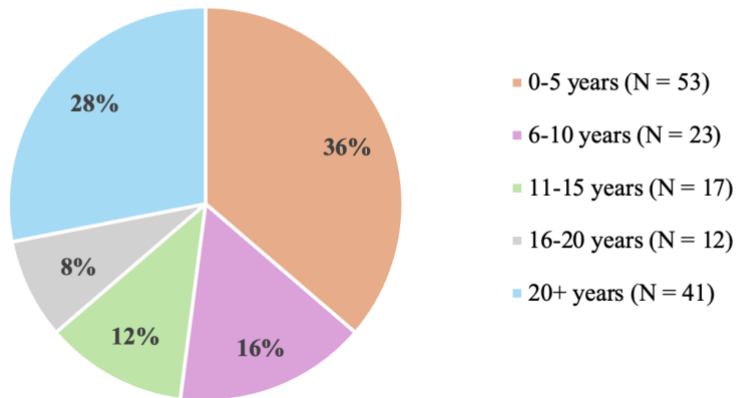
The survey sample included slightly more women (58%) than men (42%). While not evenly distributed, this balance provides perspectives from both groups and helps contextualize priorities expressed in the survey results.



Length of Residence

Respondents reported a range of residential stability in the Southeast area. Over one-third (36%) had lived in their homes for five years or less, while 28% had resided in the same home for more than 20 years. Other responses were distributed across intermediate categories, with 16% in their homes for 6–10 years, 12% for 11–15 years, and 8% for 16–20 years. This mix suggests that the survey reflects the perspectives of both newer residents and long-term community members.

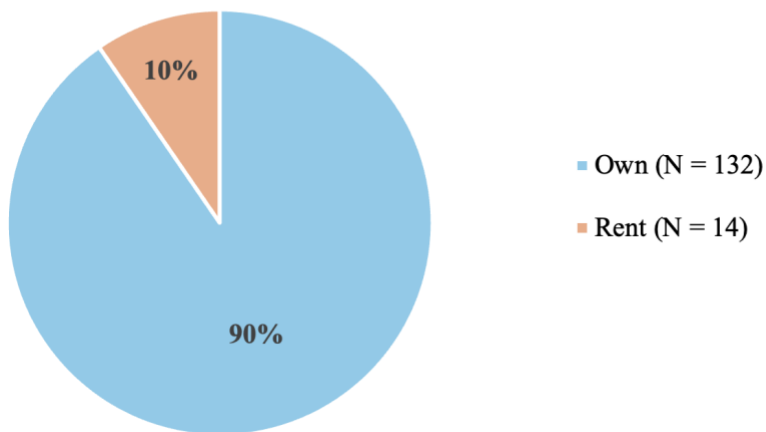
Figure 6 - Southeast:
Length of Stay at Residence
Total Sample (N) = 146



Housing Tenure (Rent or Own)

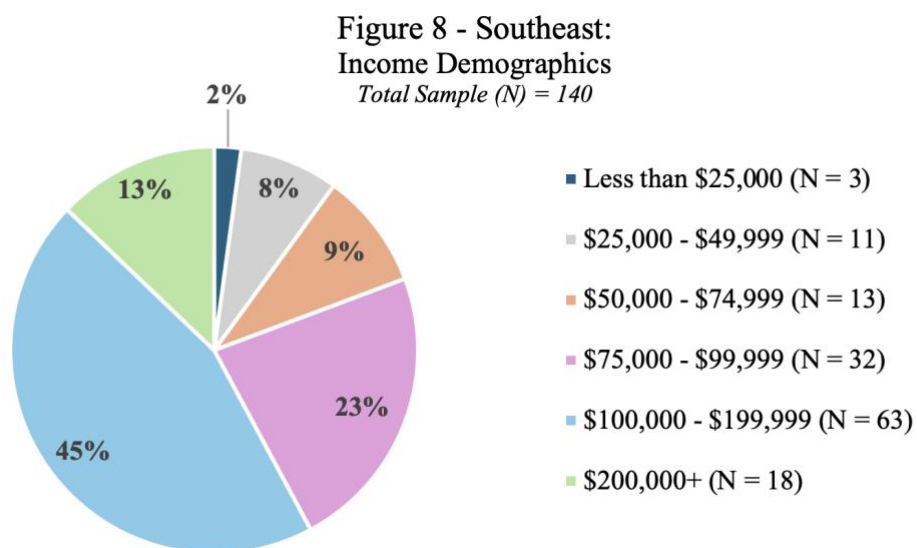
A large majority of respondents (90%) reported owning their homes, while only 10% identified as renters. This distribution indicates that homeowners were the primary participants in the Southeast survey, with comparatively limited input from renters.

Figure 7 - Southeast:
Residence Type: Rent or Own
Total Sample (N) = 146



Household Income Levels

Survey respondents reported a broad range of household income levels. Nearly half (45%) reported annual incomes between \$100,000 and \$199,999, while 23% fell within the \$75,000–\$99,999 range. Thirteen percent reported earning \$200,000 or more. Smaller shares included those earning \$50,000–\$74,999 (9%), \$25,000–\$49,999 (8%), and less than \$25,000 (2%). While responses reflect economic diversity, higher-income households were more strongly represented in the survey sample.



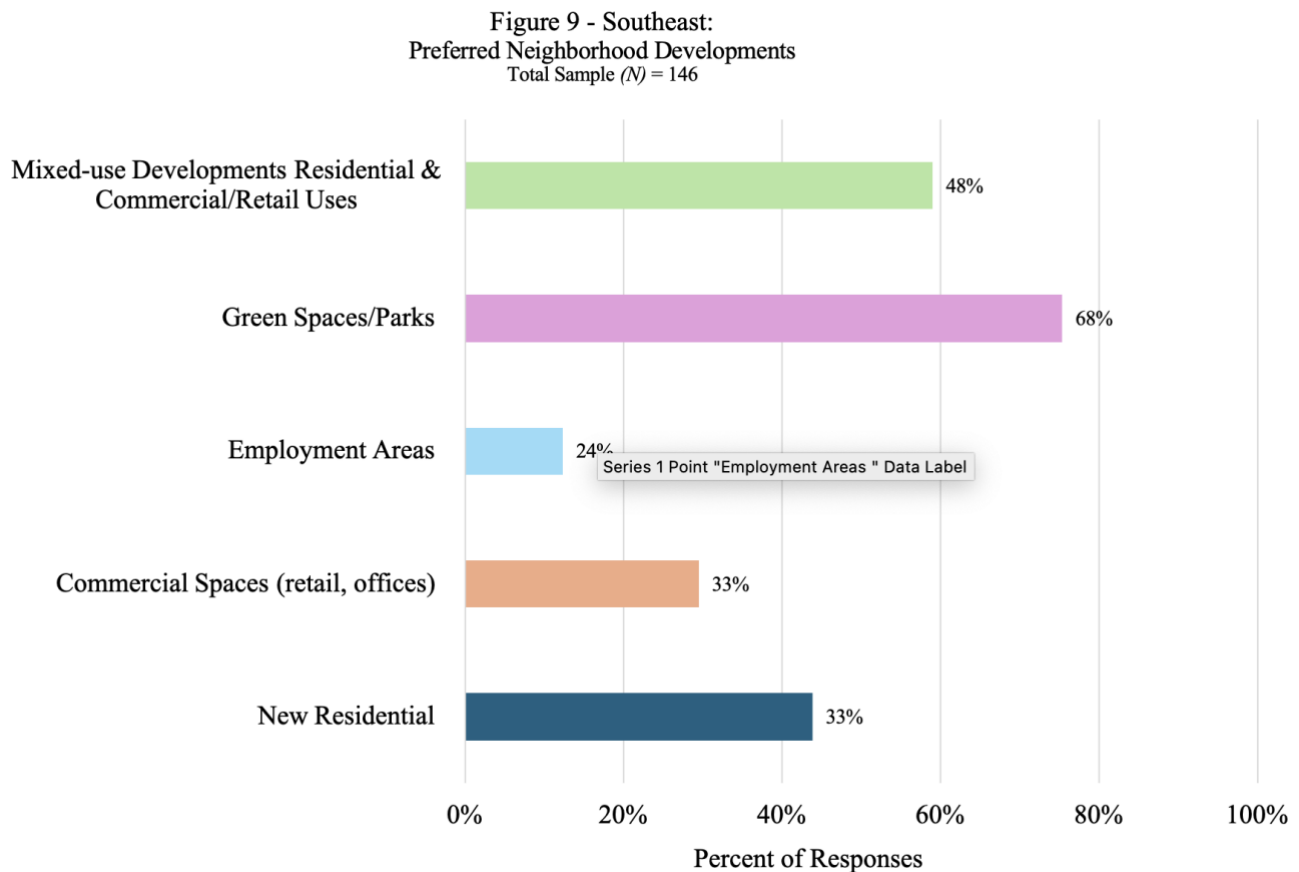
Survey Results – Part 2:

Neighborhood Development Preference

To better understand community priorities for future land use and neighborhood improvements, the survey asked residents what types of development they would most like to see in their neighborhoods. The most frequently selected option was green spaces and parks, chosen by 68 percent of participants. This highlights the importance residents place on access to natural and recreational areas.

Nearly half (48 percent) supported mixed-use developments that combine residential and commercial or retail uses, reflecting interest in more walkable, integrated community spaces. About one-third of respondents identified either new residential development (33 percent) or commercial spaces such as retail or offices (33 percent) as desirable. A smaller share, 24 percent, prioritized the development of employment areas, such as job centers or office districts.

Overall, the results suggest that Southeast residents see neighborhood development as an opportunity to enhance quality of life through expanded green space and mixed-use environments, while also recognizing the importance of housing, retail, and employment opportunities.

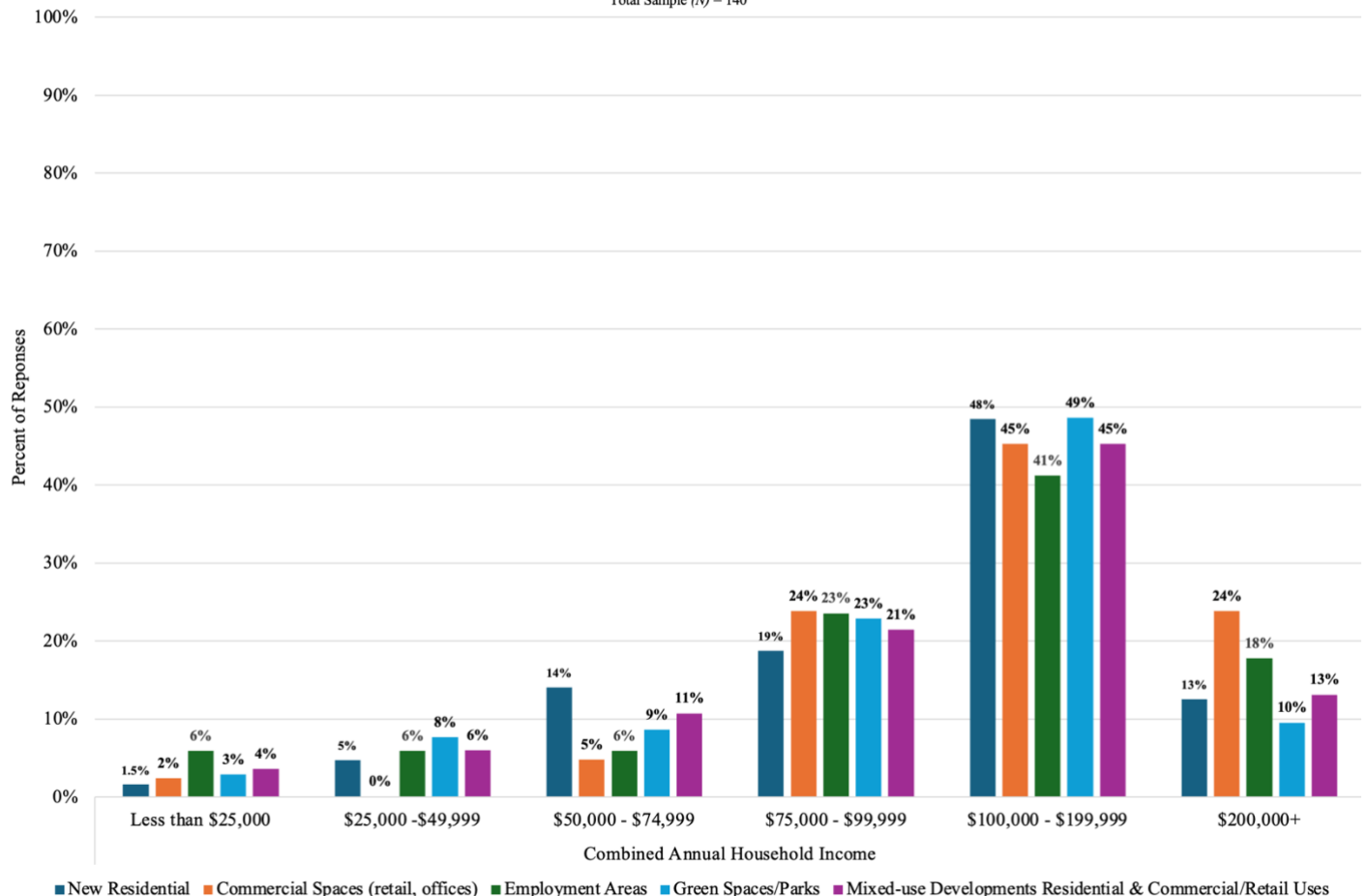


When broken down by household income, preferences for neighborhood development show clear variation. Respondents with incomes between \$100,000 and \$199,999 most frequently selected all development categories, with green spaces and parks (49 percent), commercial spaces (48 percent), and mixed-use developments (45 percent) ranking highly. Similarly, those in the \$75,000 to \$99,999 group expressed notable support for commercial and mixed-use spaces, each around 23 to 24 percent.

At the highest income level (\$200,000 and above), preferences were more evenly distributed, with no single category exceeding one-quarter of responses. Meanwhile, respondents in lower-income groups (under \$50,000) selected development types at lower rates overall, with green

spaces showing modest support but fewer responses across other categories. These results suggest that middle- and upper-income households were more likely to express strong preferences across a range of development options.

Figure 10 - Southeast:
Preferred Neighborhood Developments by Household Income
Total Sample (N) = 140

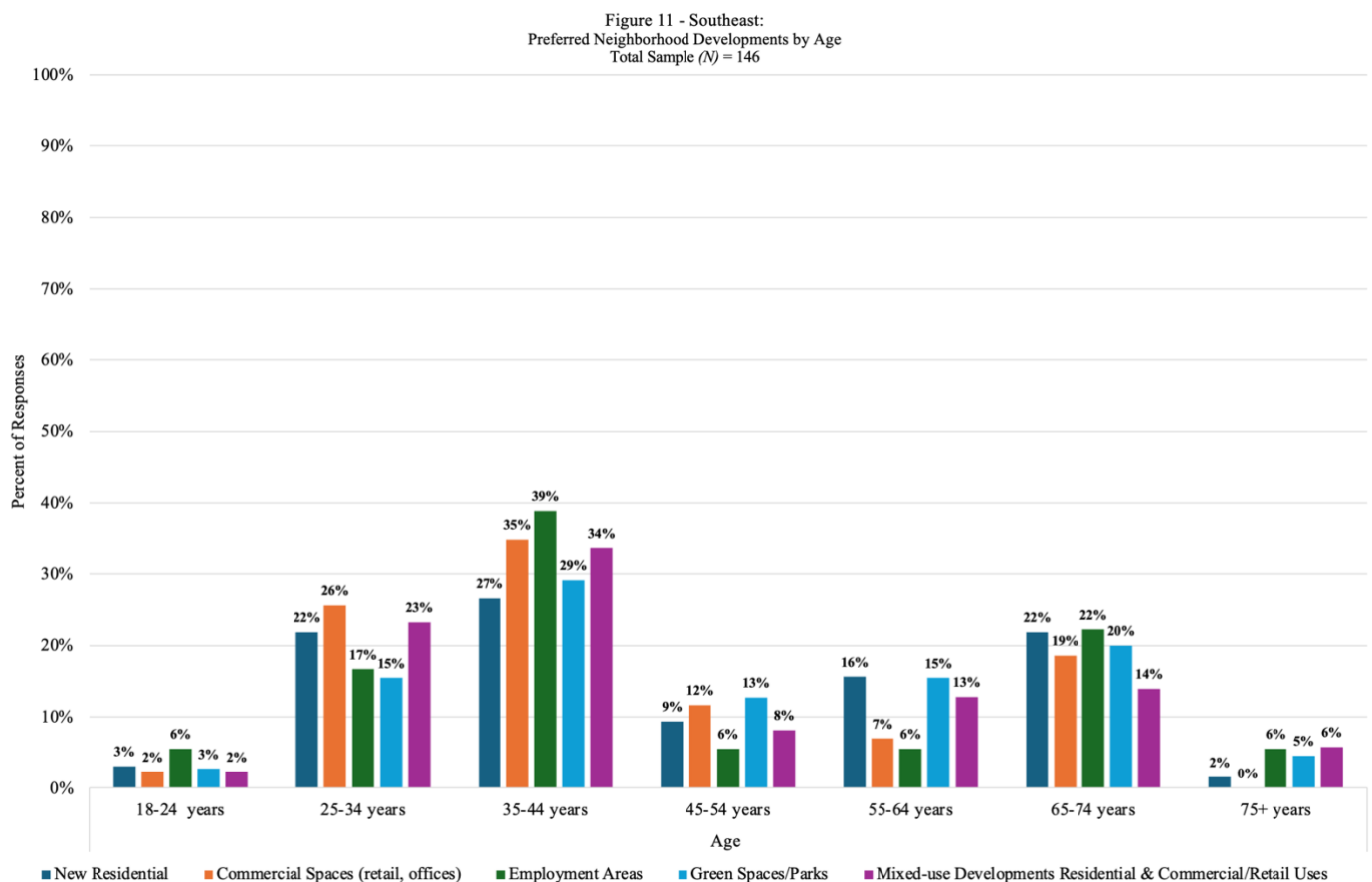


Differences also emerged across age groups. Respondents aged 35 to 44 reported the highest levels of support across multiple categories, particularly employment areas (39 percent), commercial spaces (35 percent), and mixed-use developments (34 percent). Those aged 25 to 34 also showed relatively strong preferences, with commercial and mixed-use spaces receiving notable support.

Older residents, particularly those 65 to 74, expressed more balanced interest across categories, with green spaces (22 percent), commercial spaces (22 percent), and employment areas (20 percent) appearing most often. In contrast, younger respondents aged 18 to 24 and older

respondents over 75 selected fewer options overall, with no single type of development exceeding 6 percent in either group.

Together, these cross-tabulations highlight how both income and age shape perspectives on future development. Middle-income and working-age adults were the most likely to express strong preferences across a variety of categories, while responses from lower-income, younger, and older groups were less concentrated.



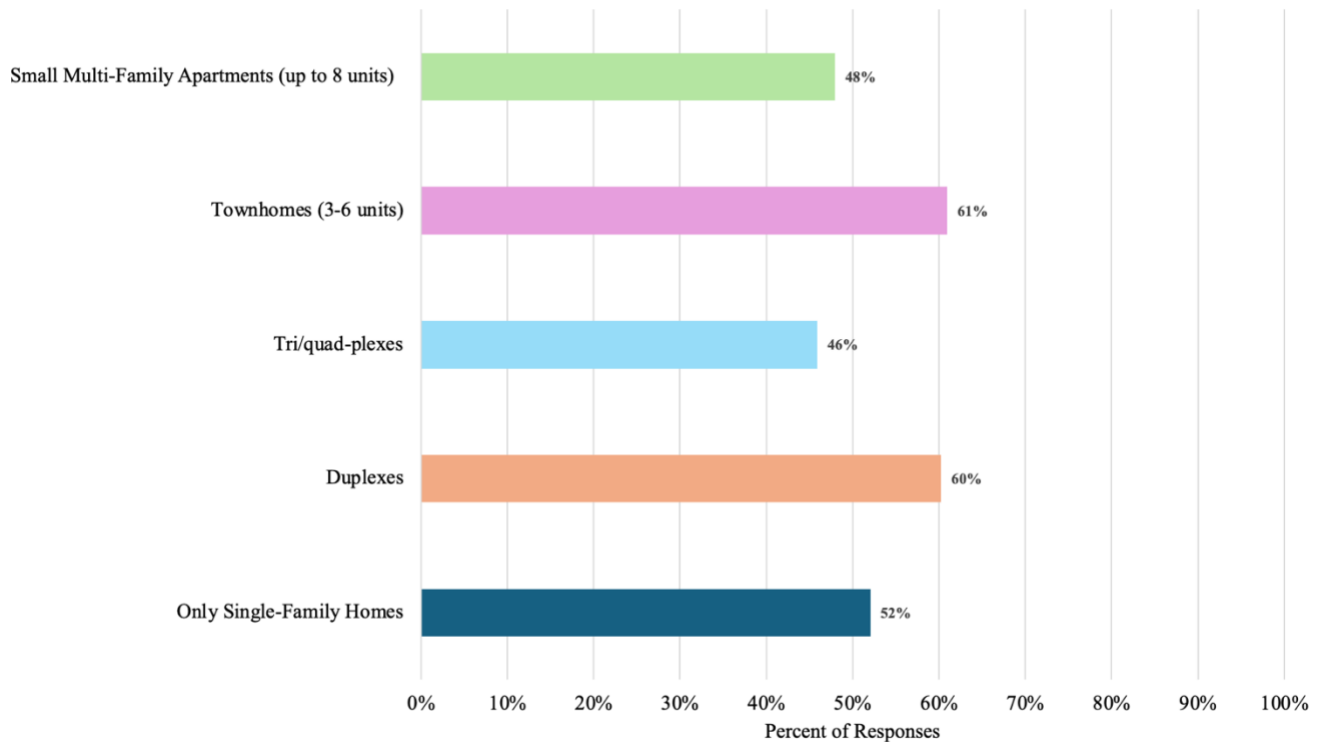
Preferences for Housing Diversity in Single-Family Neighborhoods

When asked, “Which other housing types should be allowed in neighborhoods currently developed primarily with single-family homes?”, respondents expressed support for a variety of options. The most frequently selected were townhomes (61 percent) and duplexes (60 percent). A majority also supported small multi-family apartments with up to eight units (48 percent) and

tri- or quad-plexes (46 percent). At the same time, 52 percent of participants indicated a preference for maintaining only single-family homes.

These results suggest that while many Southeast respondents are open to a mix of housing types, views are divided, with some favoring incremental increases in density and others preferring to preserve the existing single-family character of their neighborhoods.

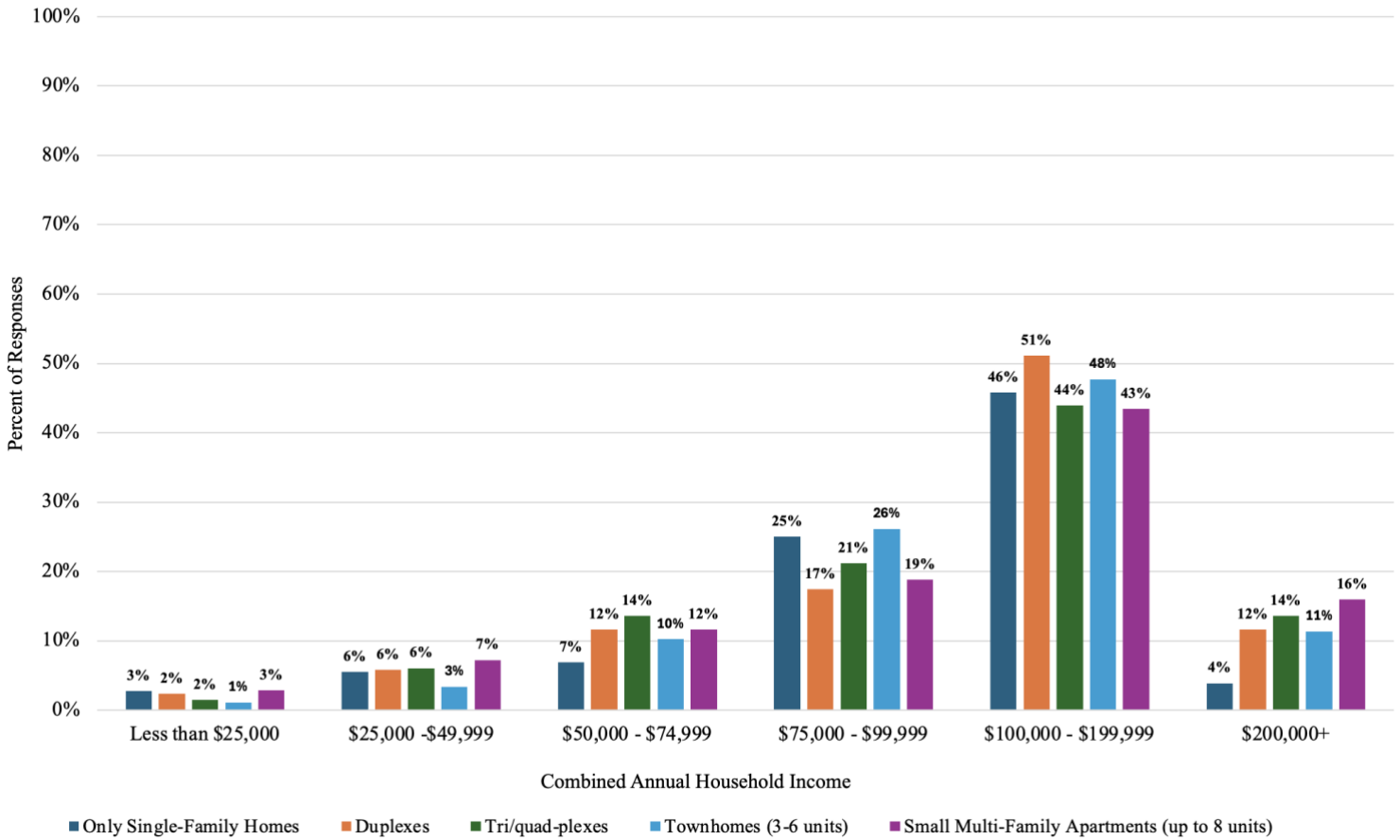
Figure 12 - Southeast:
Preferred Additional Housing Types in Predominantly Single-Family Neighborhoods
Total Sample (N) = 146



When broken down by income, respondents with household incomes between \$100,000 and \$199,999 were the most supportive of diverse housing options. Within this group, between 43 and 51 percent endorsed duplexes, townhomes, small apartments, and tri/quad-plexes. Responses from households earning \$200,000 or more were more limited, though support was still distributed across multiple housing types at lower percentages.

In contrast, lower-income respondents, particularly those with incomes under \$50,000, expressed fewer preferences overall, with no single housing type receiving more than 7 percent support. This indicates that middle-income households were more likely to engage with and support a wider range of housing alternatives.

Figure 13 - Southeast:
Preferred Additional Housing Types in Predominantly Single-Family Neighborhoods by Household Income
Total Sample (N) = 140

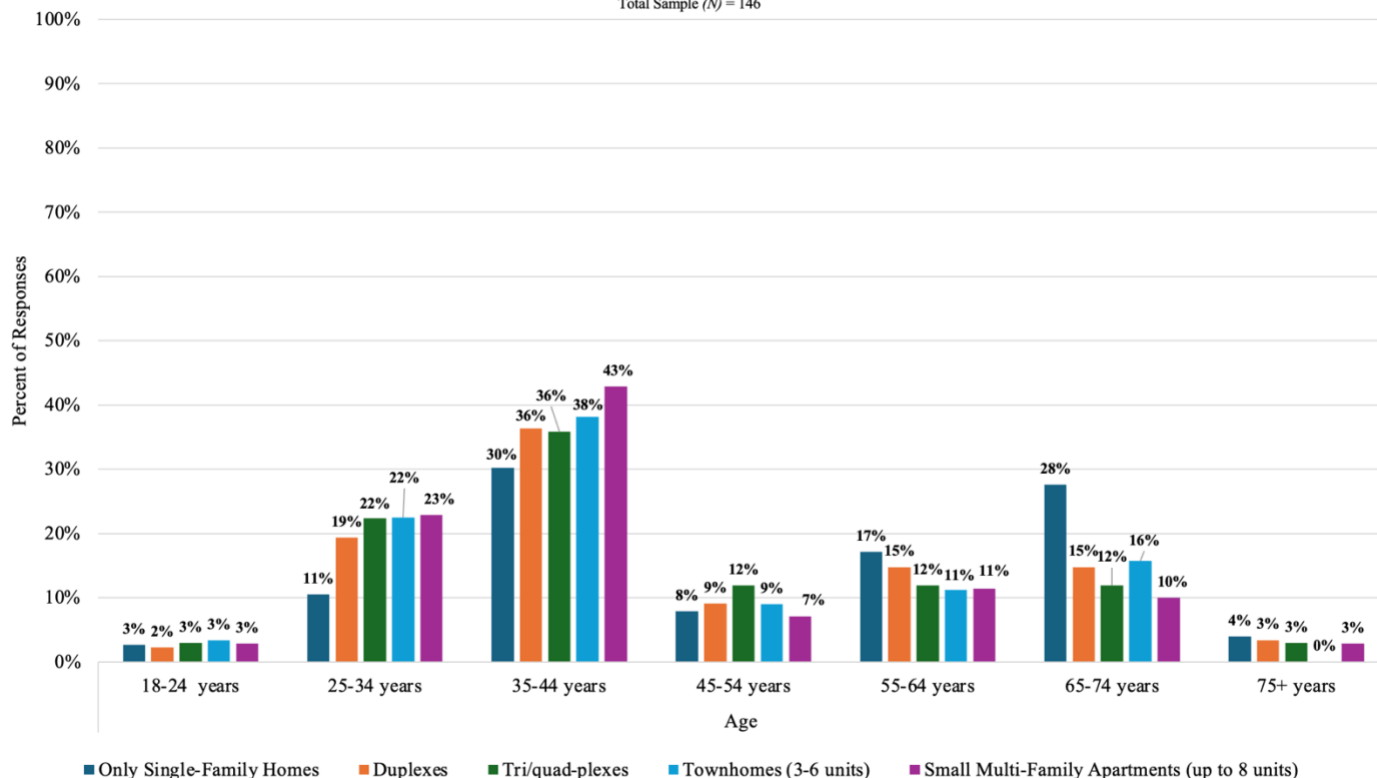


Age also influenced views on housing diversity. Respondents aged 35 to 44 showed the highest levels of support across all housing types, with 30 to 43 percent selecting options such as duplexes, townhomes, small apartments, and tri/quad-plexes. Adults aged 25 to 34 also expressed relatively strong support across these alternatives.

Older respondents presented more mixed views. Those aged 65 to 74 most frequently selected maintaining only single-family homes (28 percent), while also expressing some support for duplexes and other options. Younger residents (18 to 24) and the oldest respondents (75 and above) selected housing types at much lower rates overall, with no single category exceeding 4 percent.

Together, these results show that preferences for diversifying housing stock are most common among working-age adults, particularly those in their 30s and 40s, while older and lower-income residents show less consistent support.

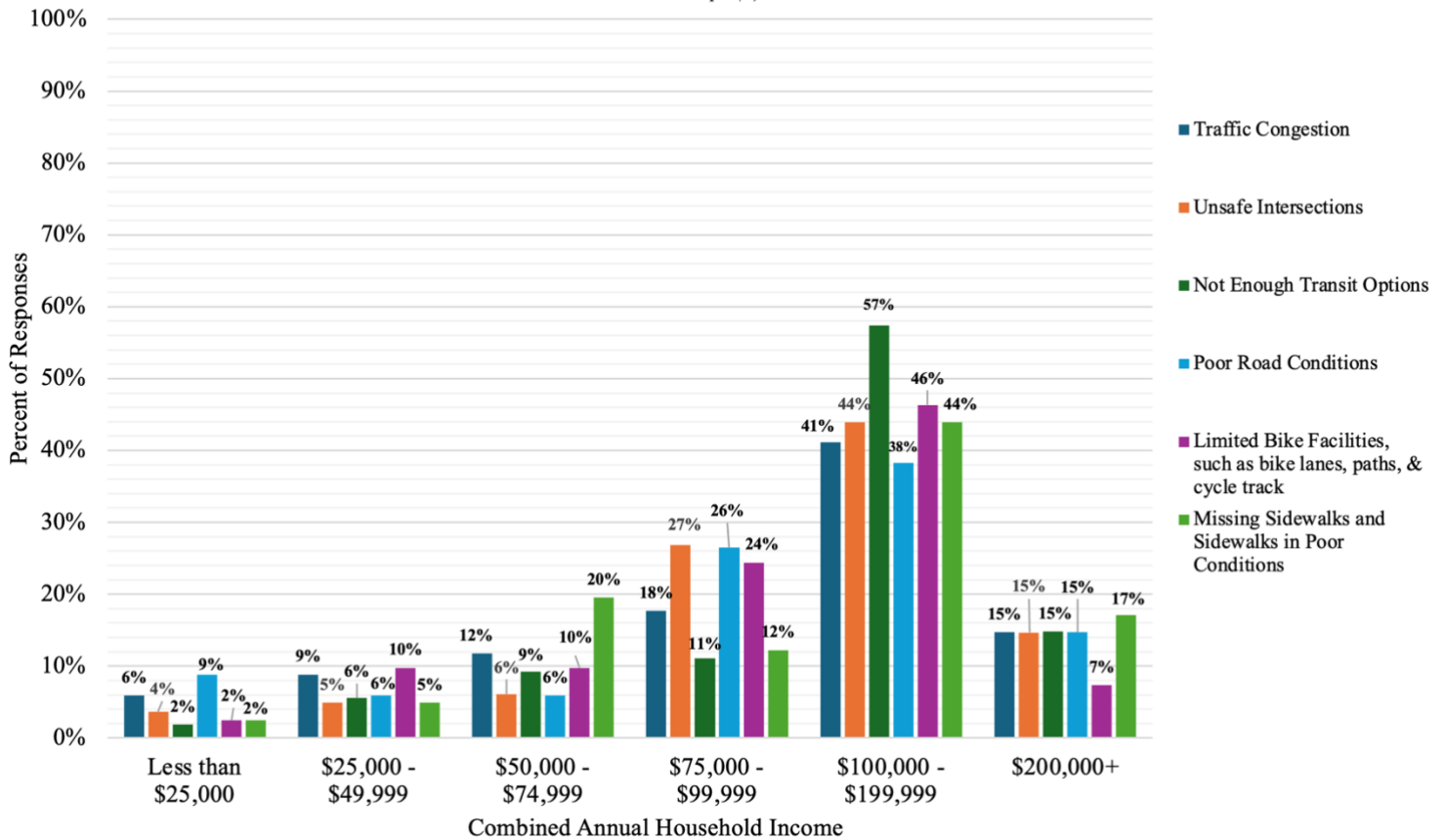
Figure 14 - Southeast:
Preferred Additional Housing Types in Predominantly Single-Family Neighborhoods by Age
Total Sample (N) = 146



Transportation Challenges

When asked, “*What are the biggest transportation challenges in your community?*”, respondents most frequently identified unsafe intersections as a key issue, with 60 percent selecting this option. The next most common concern was the availability of transit, with 38 percent indicating that there are not enough transit options. Nearly one-third of respondents also cited missing or poorly maintained sidewalks (29 percent) and limited bike facilities such as paths, lanes, or cycle tracks (29 percent). Traffic congestion (25 percent) and poor road conditions (24 percent) were mentioned less often, though still identified by a notable share of participants. These results suggest that while multiple aspects of transportation infrastructure affect residents, safety at intersections and transit availability stand out as the most widely recognized challenges.

Figure 16 - Southeast:
Top Transportation Challenges by Household Income
Total Sample (N) = 140



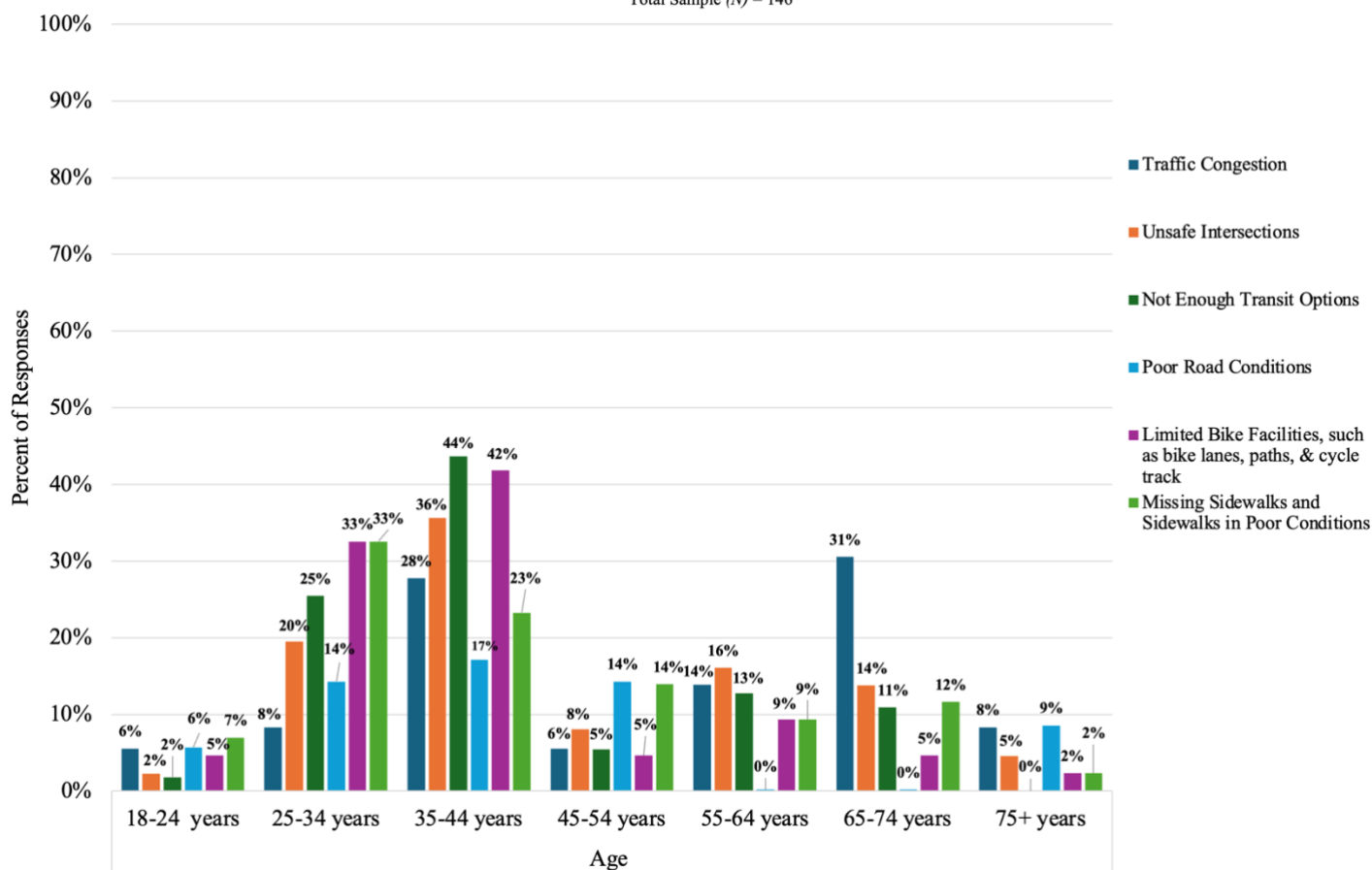
Responses varied by household income. Residents with annual incomes between \$100,000 and \$199,999 were the most likely to select nearly every challenge, with not enough transit options (57 percent), unsafe intersections (44 percent), and missing sidewalks (44 percent) reported at high levels. By comparison, higher-income households earning \$200,000 or more reported fewer transportation concerns overall, with no single issue exceeding 17 percent.

Lower-income households, particularly those earning less than \$50,000, identified concerns at lower rates across all categories, though they still noted issues such as traffic congestion, poor road conditions, and transit access. These patterns suggest that middle-income households were more likely to emphasize a wide range of transportation challenges.

Age also influenced the types of concerns reported. Respondents aged 35 to 44 were the most likely to identify unsafe intersections (36 percent), limited bike facilities (42 percent), and insufficient transit options (44 percent) as major challenges. Those aged 25 to 34 also reported relatively high levels of concern across these categories, though at slightly lower percentages.

In contrast, older residents, particularly those 65 to 74, were more likely to identify traffic congestion (31 percent) and poor road conditions (14 percent) as their most pressing transportation issues. Younger respondents (ages 18 to 24) and the oldest group (75 and over) reported far fewer challenges overall, with no single category exceeding 8 percent in either group. Together, these findings indicate that concerns about transit, bike infrastructure, and intersection safety are concentrated among younger and middle-aged residents, while older adults are more likely to highlight road conditions and congestion.

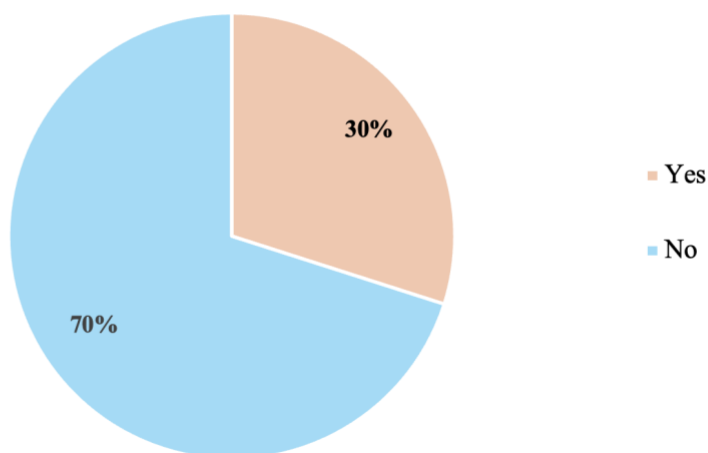
Figure 17 - Southeast:
Top Transportation Challenges by Age
Total Sample (N) = 146



Sidewalk Access and Safety Concerns

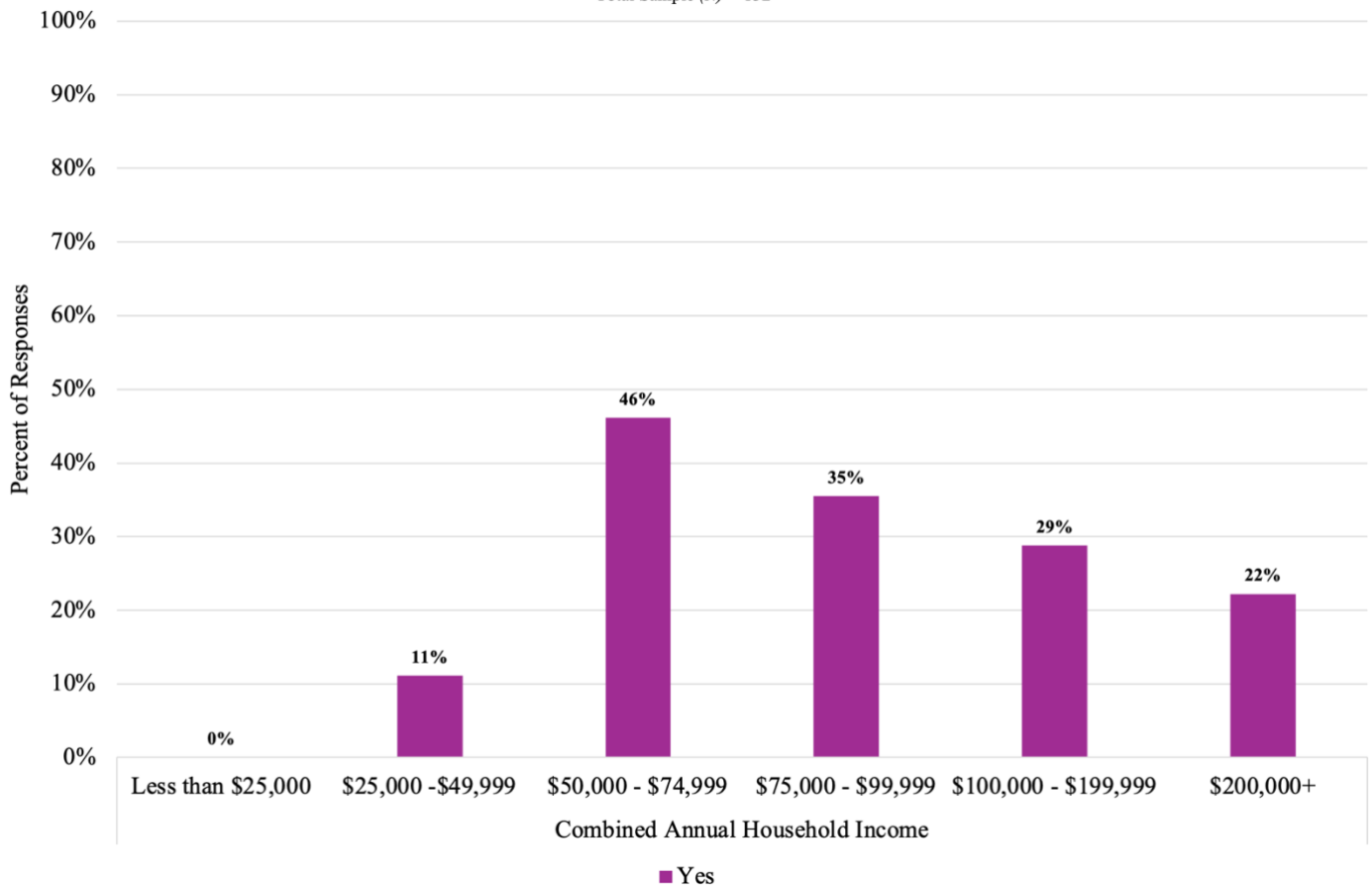
Resident responses to the question about whether missing sidewalks or sidewalks in poor condition make it difficult or unsafe to reach important destinations highlight a significant though not majority concern in the Southeast. Overall, 30 percent of respondents indicated that sidewalk conditions negatively impact their ability to safely access destinations such as schools, grocery stores, playgrounds, or bus stops, while 70 percent reported that this was not an issue for them. Although most residents did not identify sidewalk conditions as a barrier, the share who did points to a meaningful accessibility issue for a portion of the community.

Figure 18 - Southeast:
Resident Responses on Locations with Missing or Poor-Condition Sidewalks Affecting Travel Safety
Total Sample (N) = 137



When examining results by household income, notable differences emerge. Residents with annual household incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999 were the most likely to report difficulties, with 46 percent identifying sidewalk conditions as a safety or access concern. This was followed by 35 percent of those earning between \$75,000 and \$99,999, and 29 percent of those in the \$100,000 to \$199,999 range. Among the highest-income households (\$200,000 or more), 22 percent reported sidewalk-related challenges. Lower-income residents were less likely to identify this as an issue, with only 11 percent of those in the \$25,000 to \$49,999 range and none of those earning under \$25,000 reporting that sidewalk conditions created difficulties.

Figure 18 - Southeast:
Impact of Sidewalk Conditions on Access to Essential Destinations by Household Income
Total Sample (N) = 132

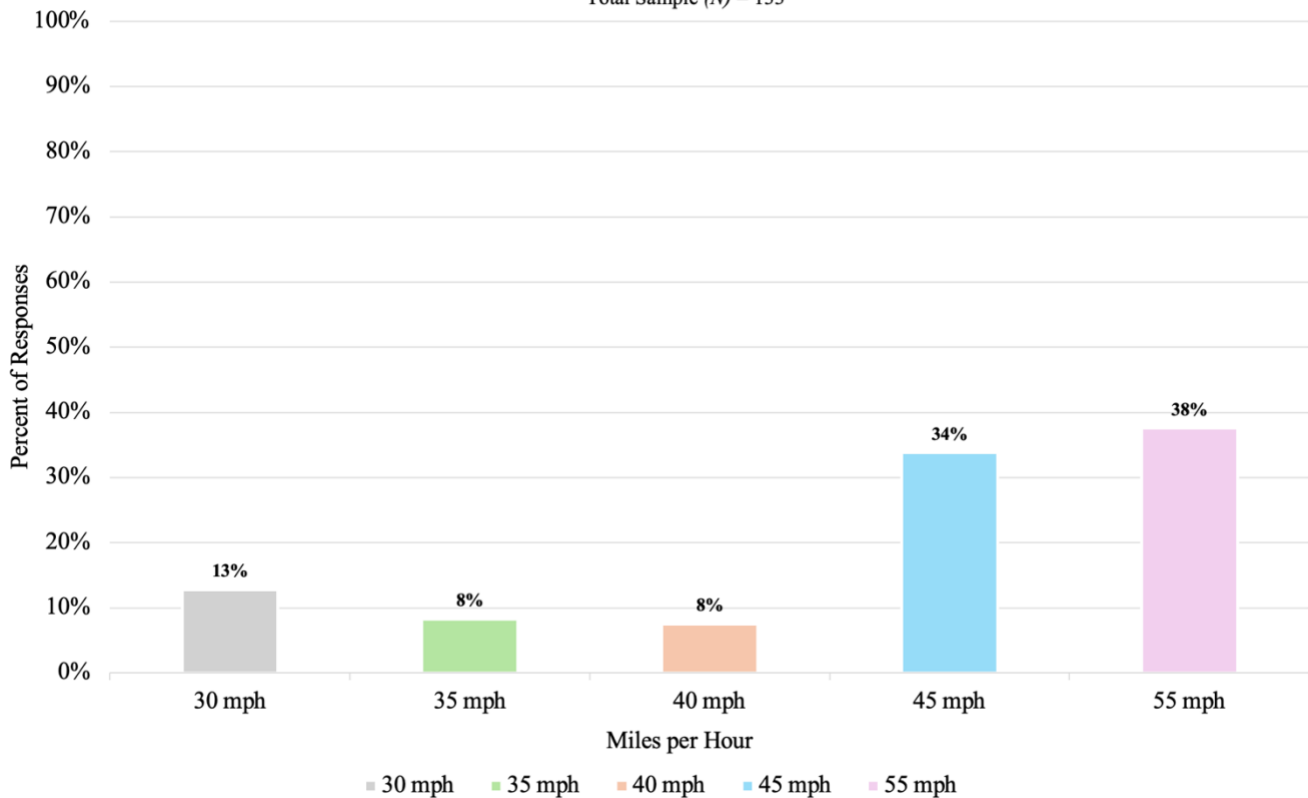


These findings suggest that concerns about sidewalk safety and accessibility are not evenly distributed across the community, with middle-income households reporting the greatest impact. This may reflect differences in travel patterns, reliance on walking for short trips, or variations in where respondents live within the Southeast area. While sidewalk conditions are not a universal problem, the results indicate targeted improvements could meaningfully improve safety and accessibility for certain segments of the population.

Highway 51 Speed Limit Preferences

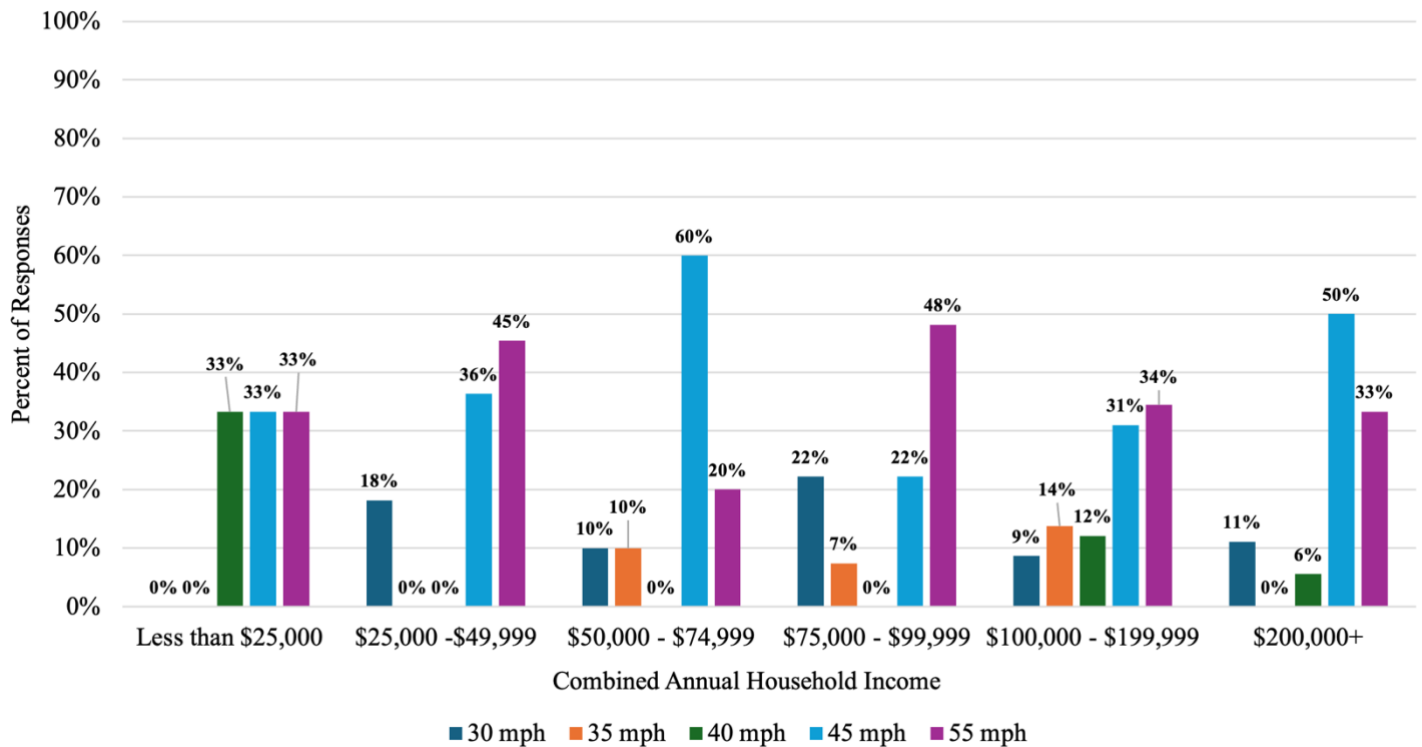
Residents were asked about their preferred speed limit for Highway 51. Responses varied, but a majority favored either maintaining or increasing speed limits above 45 mph. As shown in Figure 19, the largest share of respondents preferred a 55 mph limit (38%), followed by 45 mph (34%). Smaller proportions supported lower limits, with 13% selecting 30 mph, and 8% each choosing 35 mph and 40 mph.

Figure 19 - Southeast:
Resident Preferences for Highway 51 Speed Limit
Total Sample (N) = 133



When examined by household income, some differences emerge. Respondents with annual household incomes of \$50,000–\$74,999 most strongly supported a 45 mph limit (60%), while those in the \$75,000–\$99,999 range showed higher support for a 55 mph limit (48%). Among households with incomes of \$200,000 or more, half of respondents preferred a 45 mph limit, while one-third supported 55 mph. At the lower end of the income scale, respondents in the less than \$25,000 category were evenly divided among 40 mph, 45 mph, and 55 mph (33% each). Overall, the results show that preferences cluster around 45 mph and 55 mph, though variation exists across income levels.

Figure 20 - Southeast:
Resident Preferences for Highway 51 Speed Limit
Total Sample (N) = 127



Conclusion

The Southeast Area Plan Survey results provide important insights into how residents experience and prioritize conditions in their neighborhoods. The findings reveal both shared concerns and variations across demographic and income groups, particularly in relation to safety, infrastructure, and transportation preferences.

Across the survey, several key themes emerged. A substantial portion of respondents identified missing or poor-condition sidewalks as a barrier to safe travel, though a majority reported no such difficulties. Among those who did, concerns were more prominent among households with middle-range incomes, pointing to how sidewalk conditions may intersect with broader mobility needs.

Transportation infrastructure also surfaced as a central issue. Preferences for the speed limit on Highway 51 clustered around 45 mph and 55 mph, with significant variation by income level. Middle-income households showed a stronger preference for lower speed limits, while higher-

income households tended to favor maintaining or raising limits. These differences suggest that perspectives on roadway safety and convenience are shaped by household resources and travel patterns.

Overall, the results highlight a neighborhood engaged with questions of infrastructure quality, safety, and accessibility. While there is common agreement on the importance of maintaining safe and reliable transportation options, perspectives on specific improvements vary across demographic groups. As the City of Madison advances the Southeast Area Plan, these findings underscore the importance of balancing diverse priorities to ensure equitable and inclusive outcomes that reflect the experiences of all residents.