

Mason County

Community Vision Survey Report

September 2024



SCJ ALLIANCE

Community Vision Survey Results

In late May of 2024, Mason County staff published a public survey for folks to express their voices, be heard, and make a difference in the current periodic update of the county-wide comprehensive plan. This survey included questions about community vision, housing priorities, climate planning and resilience, and survey respondent demographics. **125 survey responses have been compiled and analyzed to create this report.**

Community Vision

Q. 1: What is your relationship to Mason County?

Based upon survey responses, **over 95% of survey respondents live in Mason County**, over 57% shop and use services in Mason County, over 35% work in Mason County, and over 12% own a company in Mason County.

Q. 2: In a few words, what makes Mason County great today?

Survey respondents stated that there are a multitude of reasons to love Mason County, but the most common answers were clear. First, what people find makes Mason County great today is that it is **a rural and small community**. Second, Mason County's **abundance of natural beauty** and **access to outdoor recreation** such as hiking, fishing, and mountain biking. Third, the **affordability** of living in Mason County. And fourth, the **people** who live in this county.

Q. 3: What do you think would make Mason County even better 20 years from now?

Survey respondents stated many different desires for Mason County to make it better in the next 20 years, but once again, there were a few answers which were the most common throughout. First, the **revitalization of downtown and business opportunities** within the county. People mentioned improving downtown Shelton and encouraging more local businesses to start up to avoid a need to go farther distances, such as Olympia, to attain essential items and to create more jobs for Mason County residents. The second common answer for survey respondents was the **improvement of transportation infrastructure, both for bikes and cars**. Projects such as Highway 3 improvements and downtown bike pathways were specifically mentioned. The third common answer which many survey respondents mentioned was **increased affordable housing**. Respondents mentioned that affordable housing is one reason that people love Mason County, and that is not something that they want to see change as home prices continue to rise.



Q. 4: What do you think Mason County's top five (5) priorities should be in the next 20 years?

The five most common priorities which survey respondents thought that Mason County should focus on in the next 20 years once again ranged from affordability to community character. The most chosen priority for survey respondents was maintaining a **safe community**. Second was the **preservation and reinforcement of Mason County's northwest woodland character**. Third was providing **more parks and recreation opportunities**. Fourth was **revitalizing/redeveloping underused or vacant sites**. And fifth was providing **more affordable housing**.



Housing Priorities

Q. 5: What specific challenges, if any, have you encountered regarding housing in Mason County?

There were four commonly chosen challenges regarding housing in Mason County which survey respondent stated. First was **affordability**. The second was **availability** of suitable housing types such as single-family homes and apartments. Third was **homelessness**. And fourth was **accessibility** for people with disabilities.

Q. 6: What do you consider to be the top priorities for housing in Mason County?

Regarding the top priorities for housing in Mason County, there were four commonly chosen answers. These priorities were, one, **encourage mixed-use development**, meaning a variety of businesses and residences with pedestrian-friendly connections. Second, **support the development of affordable housing**. Third, **support expansion and preservation** of single-family neighborhoods. And the fourth priority for housing in Mason County was support **flexible development standards and relaxed zoning regulations**.



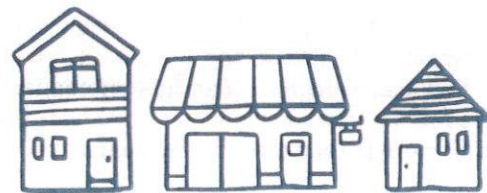


Q. 7: Which types of housing does Mason County need the most?

Based upon the responses from survey respondents, the top five most highly desired housing types in Mason County are, first, **single-family residential**. Second, **mixed-use residential apartments and condominiums**. Third, **cottage housing**, meaning individual housing units with shared spaces, such as yards or gathering space. Fourth, **accessory dwelling units**, meaning independent residential units located on stand-alone home lots. And fifth, **5+ unit apartments**.

Q. 8: Which of the following do you see as feasible strategies for increasing housing availability and affordability in Mason County?

Survey respondents stated that they thought the most feasible strategies for increasing housing availability and affordability in Mason County were, one, **encouraging a wider variety of housing types**, including missing middle housing. Second, **using inclusionary zoning requirements** to build new housing in mixed-use commercial and multi-family residential zones. Third, to **provide density bonuses and incentives** specifically for affordable units within Mason County. And fourth, to provide options to further **encourage development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs)** within Mason County.





Climate Planning & Resilience

Q. 9: How concerned are you about the potential impacts of climate change on Mason County?

Based upon answers from survey respondents, **over 46% of respondents are very concerned about the potential impacts of climate change on Mason County**, and **over 22% of respondents are somewhat concerned**. Whereas on the other hand, over 15% of respondents are neutral, and 16% of respondents were not concerned with climate change impacts in Mason County.

Q. 10: Do you believe Mason County is adequately prepared to address and adapt to climate change?

Based upon answers from survey respondents, **almost 45% of respondents thought that Mason County is not adequately prepared to address and adapt to climate change** and need to take more action to enhance preparedness. Over 35% of respondents thought Mason County is somewhat prepared, but there is still room for improvement. And lastly, 20% of respondents thought that Mason County is well-prepared to address and adapt to climate change in Mason County.

Q. 11: In your opinion, what are the most critical climate-related risks facing Mason County?

Survey respondents stated that, in their opinion, the most critical climate-related risks facing Mason County were, first, **extreme weather events** such as floods and large storms. Second, **drought and water scarcity**. Third, **heatwaves and urban heat island effects**. And fourth, **sea-level rise**.



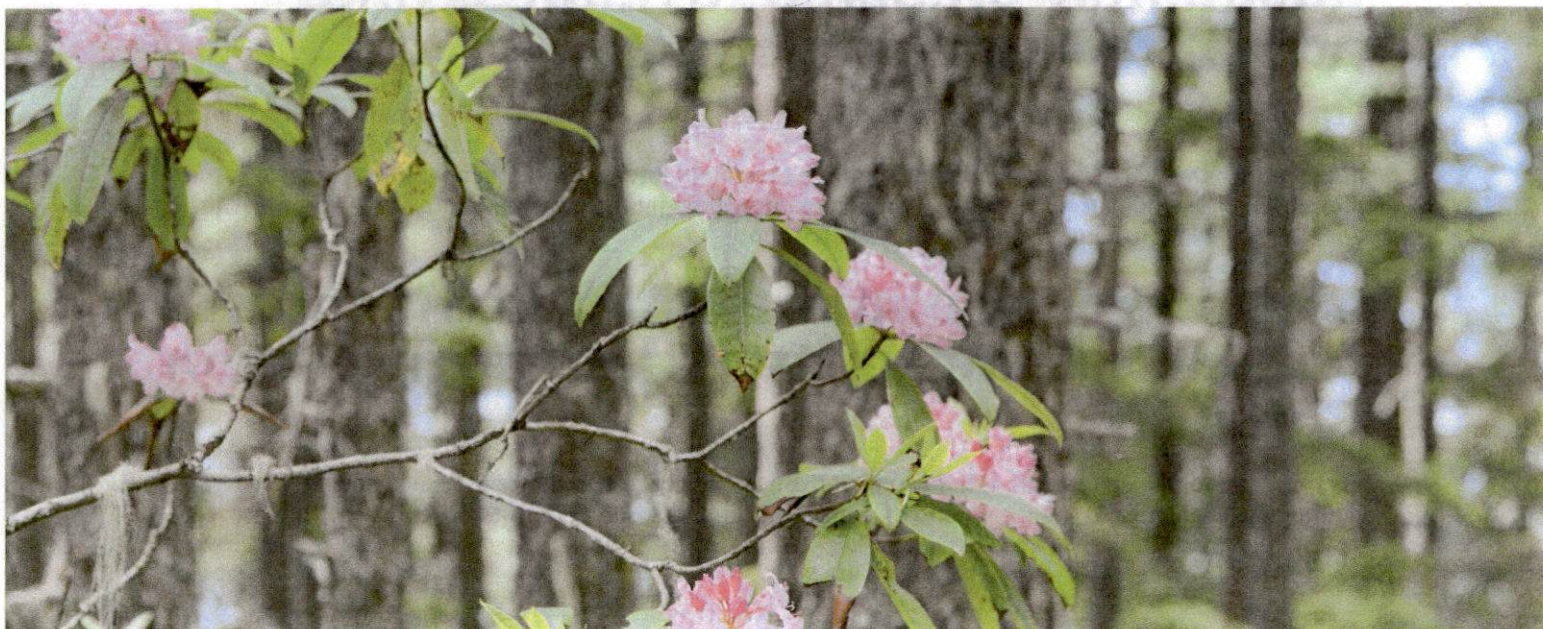
Q. 12: What actions do you believe Mason County should take to mitigate the effects of climate change and increase resilience?

Survey respondent's answers provided many different ideas regarding actions that Mason County could take to mitigate the effects of climate change and increase resilience. First, respondents stated that **forest management** would be a critical action in climate change preparedness. Specifically, areas such as fire management and brush clearing, reduction of clear cutting, and increasing the focus on critical-area protection and preservation were mentioned. Another area of focus that was commonly stated was the **educating of the public** on the challenges that climate change will pose, what can be done to mitigate and adapt to those challenges, and also how the community can get involved in climate resilience. One more action that was commonly mentioned was **conscious future development,**

specifically regarding sea level rise. Considering sea-level rise before developing new homes was commonly mentioned. It is also important to mention that **many respondents stated that they were unsure what to do.**

Q. 13: What community assets exist in Mason County that should be protected against climate impacts?

Survey respondents stated multiple community assets that exist in Mason County that should be protected against climate impacts. The most common of these community assets to be mentioned was the **forests and trees** of Mason County. Specifically, native trees and legacy forests were mentioned. Also, another commonly stated community asset that should be protected against climate change was **water**. Responses included all natural shorelines, waterways, and estuaries. In addition, community assets such as **agricultural lands, roads and bridges, and wildlife habitats** were all mentioned often.



Tell Us About Yourself

Q. 14: How long have you lived in Mason County?

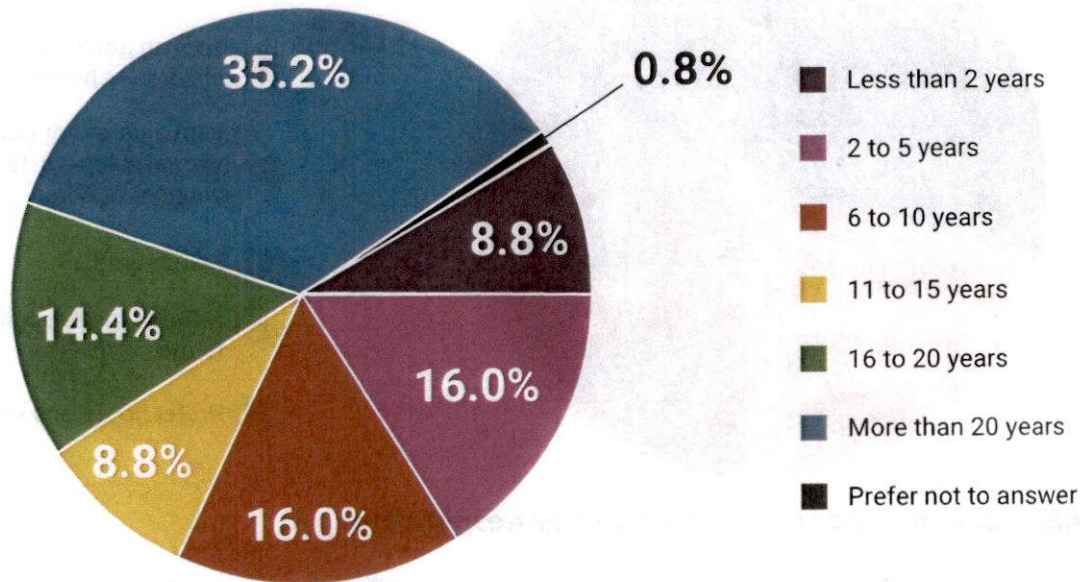


Figure 1: Length of Time Spent in Mason County by Survey Respondents

Q. 15: What is your age range?

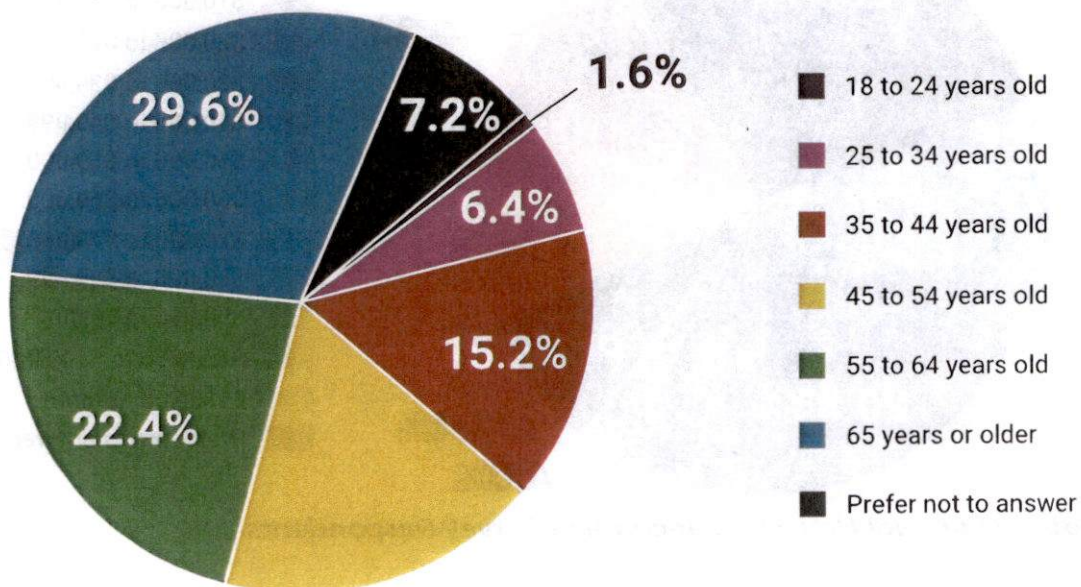


Figure 2: Age Range of Survey Respondents



Q. 16: Which of the following best describes your life stage?

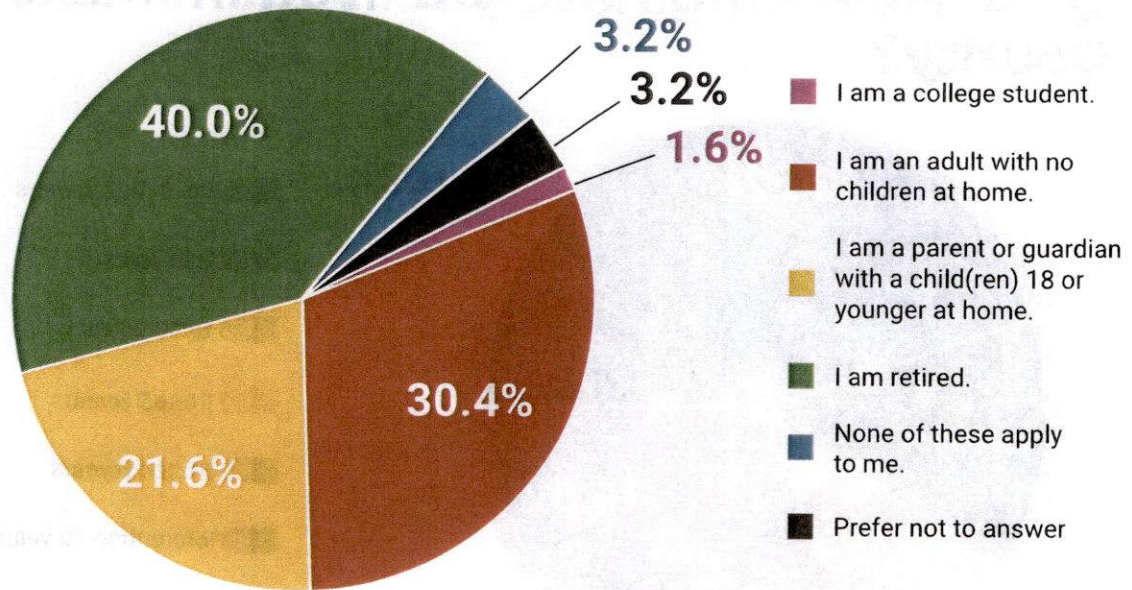


Figure 3: Indicated Life Stage of Survey Respondents

Q. 17: What is your annual household income?

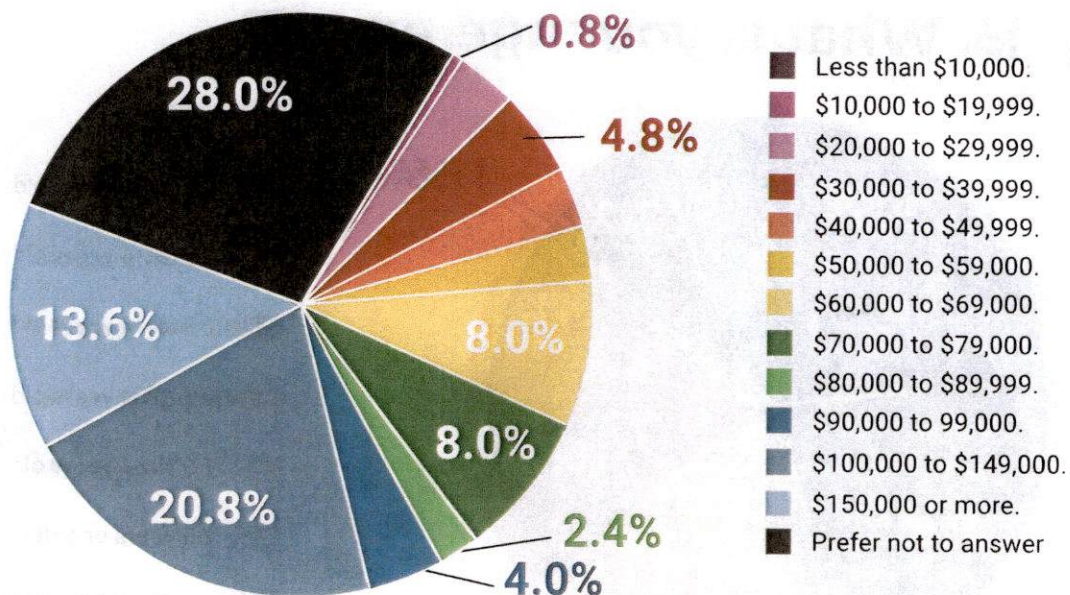


Figure 4: Annual Household Income of Survey Respondents

Thank You for Participating in this Survey!



