

1. 7:00 P.M. Planning Commission June 2020 Regular Meeting

Documents:

01 - JUNE 2020 AGENDA.PDF  
02 - VIRTUAL MEETING PUBLIC NOTICE.PDF  
03 - MAY 2020 MEETING MINUTES.PDF  
04A - 50 ECORSE STAFF REPORT.PDF  
04B - 50 ECORSE LIMITED SITE PLAN.PDF  
05 - NON-MOTORIZED ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER APPROVAL.PDF  
06 - HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY AND SURVEY.PDF  
JUNE 2020 PACKET.PDF

**Agenda**  
**Planning Commission**  
**Wednesday, 17 June 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Please be advised that due to COVID-19, City Hall will not be open to the public. This meeting will be held electronically on a video conferencing application in accordance with Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order. The access code is posted in the Public Notice on [www.cityofypsilanti.com](http://www.cityofypsilanti.com) and attached in the packet. The public may choose to participate during Audience Participation or the Public Hearing through the video conferencing application, or may submit e-mailed comments to [aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com](mailto:aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com) by 4 pm, June 17.**

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair	P	A
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair	P	A
Eric Bettis	P	A
Michael Borsellino	P	A
Mike Davis Jr.	P	A
Jessica Donnelly	P	A
Phil Hollifield	P	A
Heidi Jugenitz	P	A
Michael Simmons	P	A

**III. Approval of Minutes**

- May 20, 2020 Meeting

**IV. Audience Participation**

*Open for general public comment to Planning Commission on items for which a public hearing is not scheduled. Please limit to five minutes.*

**V. Presentations and Public Hearing Items**

- Limited Site Plan Review: Marihuana Retailer, 50 Ecorse Rd.

**VI. Old Business**

**VII. New Business**

- Election of Officers
- Bylaws Discussion

**VIII. Future Business Discussion / Updates**

**IX. Committee Reports**

- Non-Motorized Committee Report
  - Approval of Members
- Master Plan: Housing Affordability and Access Committee Report
  - Executive Summary and Survey Findings

**X. Adjournment**



**PUBLIC NOTICE  
CITY OF YPSILANTI  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING – VIRTUAL MEETING**

The Ypsilanti Planning Commission will hold a virtual meeting on Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held in accordance with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-75.

The Planning Commission meeting is being held virtually in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The meeting can be attended through the below link, or through the below toll free numbers.

**June 17, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Virtual Access Link**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82604403260>

When prompted, enter **Meeting ID**: 826 0440 3260

**June 17, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Toll Free Phone Number Access**

877 853 5257 US Toll-free  
888 475 4499 US Toll-free

When prompted, enter the **Meeting ID**: 826 0440 3260, followed by the #, press # again to be connected.

The public will be able to make comment during *Audience Participation*. To address the Planning Commission, meeting participants will need to "raise their hand" to indicate they want to speak.

To raise your hand while participating online, click the "Raise Hand" icon at the bottom of the Zoom Screen or press \*9 via phone. After you raise your hand you will be informed when it is your turn to speak, and your microphone will be unmuted at that time. Your microphone will be muted again when you have finished your comments or when your speaking time has expired.

**Instructions for Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with disabilities who need accommodations to effectively participate in the meeting should contact the City Clerk, Andrew Hellenga at [ahellenga@cityofypsilanti.com](mailto:ahellenga@cityofypsilanti.com) by 5:00 p.m. on the day before the meeting to request assistance. Closed Captions will be provided during the meeting.

City Clerk's Office  
One South Huron Street  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197  
(734) 483-1100

Andrew Hellenga  
City Clerk  
Posted: June 15, 2020

**Meeting Minutes  
Planning Commission  
Wednesday, 20 May 2020 – 7:00 P.M.  
Virtual Meeting**

**Please be advised that due to COVID-19, City Hall will not be open to the public. This meeting will be held electronically on a video conferencing application in accordance with Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order. The access code is posted in the Public Notice on [www.cityofypsilanti.com](http://www.cityofypsilanti.com) and attached in the packet. The public may choose to participate during Audience Participation or the Public Hearing through the video conferencing application, or may submit e-mailed comments to [aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com](mailto:aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com) by 4 pm, May 20.**

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair	P
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair	P
Eric Bettis	P
Michael Borsellino	P
Mike Davis Jr.	A
Jessica Donnelly	A
Phil Hollifield	P
Heidi Jugenitz	P
Michael Simmons	A

Chair Dunwoodie explained the Zoom Meeting participation details.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

- May 6, 2020 Special Meeting  
*Motion to approve*

**Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz. Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**

**IV. Audience Participation**

*Open for general public comment to Planning Commission on items for which a public hearing is not scheduled. Please limit to five minutes.*

N/A – No one spoke.

**V. Presentations and Public Hearing Items**

- Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment: Drive-through financial services as special land uses in Center zoning districts.

Staff presentation by City Planner Andy Aamodt. Mr. Aamodt summarized the request, submitted by Eastern Michigan University Credit Union. Mr. Aamodt then

explained what a drive-through financial services facility may look like and how it is presently interpreted. There are other zoning districts, HHS, HC, NC, and GC, in which drive-through financial services are permitted as a special land use. A map spatially representing these districts was shown.

Staff does not believe drive-through facilities should be allowed, special land use or not, in Center districts. This is based on the Master Plan's vision for Center "City Framework", which is in other words the Master Plan's Land Use Plan. Zoning changes need to be backed by this Master Plan. In the zoning ordinance, drive-throughs clearly contradict the Center zoning district's stated purpose and intent. Additionally, there are concerns from an environmental sustainability planning standpoint if Center districts are overwhelmed by vehicle travel rather than alternative modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and transit. An increase of drive-throughs could mean increased emissions from vehicles, and increased impervious surface which could mean both stormwater runoff problems and heat island problems. There is the potential for safety issues with possible pedestrian-vehicle conflict if a drive-through facility is implemented in a walkable, Center district.

Staff does not believe the standards for a zoning ordinance text amendment are met. Mr. Aamodt lists the standards that this request violates. Therefore, staff recommends Planning Commission recommend City Council deny the text amendment.

Commissioner Dunwoodie asked if Center districts allow drive-throughs of other types. Staff is not aware of any, as fast food restaurants do not allow for drive-through facilities in Center districts either.

Commissioner Dunwoodie wondered about the history of the corridor and if it had always been a similarly zoned district. Staff later confirmed it had been a central business district zone, zoned B-3 in the past.

Commissioner Dunwoodie asked if there are zoning ordinance safeguards dealing with pedestrian to vehicle traffic. Staff replied that one section to look at is the traffic visibility section. Staff also emphasized that an increase in curb-cuts in a walkable urban district is discouraged.

Commissioner Hollifield asked about the nonconforming use nature of the bank drive-through downtown.

The applicants, Bob Hoida of Hobson Black Architects, and DeAnne Ramos of EMUCU spoke about the request. They presented their thoughts on the property EMUCU now owns at 611 W. Cross St. They have another drive-through on Carpenter Road in Pittsfield Township, which has a full service drive-through that is much appreciated by their clients. The applicants understand a Center district and the Master Plan, but do not think they can help their clients properly without a drive-through. They stress they are re-developing a site in a sustainable way rather

than creating a new site, and believe sites should be examined individually on a special use basis.

Commissioner Bettis inquired about the customer base- about both the preferences of the customer base as well as the traffic that a drive-through facility might demand.

*Motion to open the public hearing.*

**Offered By: Commissioner Jugenitz; Seconded By: Commissioner Hollifield. Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**

John Franks- spoke about the drive-through, prefers drive-throughs, and believes this is a good idea. Mr. Franks also emphasizes the credit union use the name EMUCU rather than UMCU.

Amy- inquired about the Sustainability Commission. Staff suggested Amy contact Department of Public Services for Sustainability Commission details.

*Motion to close the public hearing.*

**Offered By: Commissioner Jugenitz; Seconded By: Commissioner Hollifield. Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**

Commissioner Talaga expressed concerns about the potential conflicts of pedestrians and vehicles in a Center district, especially relevant on W. Cross with EMU students. Commissioner Jugenitz echoed these thoughts and expressed concern of reducing walkability in Center districts if allowed.

Commissioner Dunwoodie expressed concerns about opening drive-throughs up across all Center districts. There might be more automobile focus on W. Cross than Downtown or Depot Town, but this request is for the entirety of Center district. This may make the zoning ordinance less consistent seeing the zoning ordinance doesn't allow for other drive-through facilities for other uses such as restaurants.

Commissioner Hollifield expressed that even though we should encourage walking and bicycling, automobiles should still have some consideration. Does not want to further outlaw the automobile in certain areas of these Center districts. A mixture of transportation modes should be considered. Some sites, including this one, have multiple curb-cuts.

Commissioner Talaga and Commissioner Bettis worried about setting a standard if a Center district site would be given a special use permit, and what that would mean for future sites going forward.

Commissioner Bettis also expressed there could be potential for bicyclist collisions and automobiles if the automobile traffic is increased.

*Motion that the Planning Commission recommend denial of the proposed text amendment to Chapter 122: Article IV, Division 3, Subdivision II (§122-446), with the following findings:*

- (1) The proposed amendment is inconsistent with the guiding values of the Master Plan;*
- (2) The rezoning is inconsistent with description and purpose of the proposed district;*
- (3) The proposed amendment is inconsistent with the intent of this Zoning Ordinance;*
- (4) The proposed amendment will not enhance the functionality, transportation network or character of the future development in the City;*
- (5) The proposed amendment will not preserve the historic nature of the surrounding area and of the City;*
- (6) The proposed amendment will not enhance the natural features and environmental sustainability of the City;*
- (7) The proposed amendment will not protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public;*
- (8) The proposed amendment will not address a community need in physical or economic conditions or development practices;*

**Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz.**

**Motion Passes: Yes – 5; No – 1 (Hollifield); Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**

Mr. Aamodt reiterated that this action is a recommendation to City Council; the case will go before Council at an upcoming meeting.

**VI. Old Business** N/A

**VII. New Business** N/A

**VIII. Future Business Discussion / Updates**

Andy Aamodt stated the goal is to have the Master Plan draft update, the 50 Ecorse revised site plan, and conflict of interest research as items at the next meeting, June 17<sup>th</sup>.

**IX. Committee Reports**

- Non-motorized Committee Report
  - N/A – No recent meeting
- Master Plan: Housing Affordability and Access Committee report
  - The Committee met last week virtually. Will meet again. They are updating a list of recommendations and will hope to present this and a report to Planning Commission soon.

**X. Adjournment**

**Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz.**

**Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**



**City of Ypsilanti**

Community & Economic Development Department

**17 June 2020**

**Staff Review of Limited Site Plan  
Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC (Green Vitality)  
*Marihuana Retailer Use*  
50 Ecorse Rd.**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Applicant:</b>	Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC 50 Ecorse Rd. Ypsilanti, MI 48198
<b>Project:</b>	Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC (Green Vitality) - <i>Marihuana Retailer</i> Limited Site Plan Review
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	17 June 2020
<b>Location:</b>	Ecorse Rd., east of Center St. and north of Towner St.; Parcel ID# 11-11-10-267-002.
<b>Zoning:</b>	"GC" General Corridor
<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval
<b>Staff Recommendation:</b>	Approval

**PROJECT AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

The applicant received Special Use Permit approval by Planning Commission at its May 6, 2020 special meeting. However, the Site Plan Review case was tabled because of inconsistencies/confusion in the plan that was submitted. This is a review of the applicant's new, revised site plan.

The existing suite in the building is currently used as a medical marijuana provisioning center. City Council recently amended the zoning ordinance to allow for recreational marijuana uses. This property is zoned "GC". The subject suite is approximately 2,300 square feet in a commercial plaza building of approximately 15,150 square feet. The lot is approximately 1.865 acres. There is currently parking in the large lot to the north and east, and a parking area to the east. There is vehicle access from Ecorse Road. The existing building is a legal nonconforming structure and may not be expanded regardless.

The applicant also applied for its Marihuana Facility Permit. The facility will not be granted its Marihuana Facility Permit unless its Special Use permit is granted. A condition of the Special Use permit is this site plan approval.

**Figure 1: Subject Site Location (2015 Aerial)**



**Figure 2: Photograph of Site (Google Street-View, July 2019)**



**Figure 3: Land Use and Zoning of Surrounding Area**

	<b>LAND USE</b>	<b>ZONING</b>
<b>NORTH</b>	Automotive uses; Animal clinic	GC
<b>EAST</b>	Automotive uses; Restaurant	GC
<b>SOUTH</b>	Multi-family residential	HHS
<b>WEST</b>	Restaurant; Institutional	GC; HHS

**SITE PLAN: CRITERIA AND REVIEW**

**§122-311**

For zoning compliance reviews, or plans where a Special Use permit is required but no site changes will likely be needed, the applicant may, at the determination of the City Planner, submit a limited site plan for review in lieu of a full site plan per §122-309(t).

**STANDING**

**§122-311(a)**

The applicant is legally eligible to apply for site plan review, and all required information has been provided.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**§122-311(b)**

"The proposed site plan conforms with all the provisions and requirements, as well as the spirit and intent of this chapter and the Master Plan. The proposed development will meet all the regulations of the zoning district in which it is located."

The applicant is proposing continued re-use of the existing suite in the existing building. This is a (legally) nonconforming building and (legally) nonconforming site. Such re-use is permissible under §122-352. The site plan provided accounts for no changes to the existing building and few changes to the site. We have attached the required limited site plan (see Figure 4 for capture of plan).

***Items to be Addressed:*** None.



**BUILDING LOCATION AND SITE ARRANGEMENT**

**§122-311(c)**

*"All elements of the site plan shall be harmoniously and efficiently organized in relation to the character of the proposed use, the size and type of lot, the size and type of buildings, and the character of the adjoining property. The site shall be so developed as not to impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in this chapter."*

The applicant is proposing to keep the current business arrangement as is. The business is in a suite in the commercial plaza. There are no proposed changes to the overall building.

**Items to be Addressed:** None.

**Figure 5: Photograph of Site (Google Street-View, July 2019)**



**SITE ACCESS, TRAFFIC, AND PARKING**

**§122-311(d)**

*"With respect to vehicular and pedestrian circulation on the site, including walkways, interior drives, and parking; circulation shall to the extent possible create potential cross-and joint-access to adjacent parcels and the existing block layout. Special attention shall be given to the location, number and spacing of ingress and egress points; general interior circulation including turnaround areas; adequate provisions for delivery of services (trash removal, school buses, mail and parcel delivery); separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic; avoidance of building corners next to access drives; identification of addresses; storage of plowed snow; and arrangement of parking areas that are safe and convenient, and insofar as practicable, do not detract from the design of the proposed buildings and structures, neighboring properties, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, access to transit and flow of traffic on adjacent streets. All buildings or groups of buildings shall be so arranged as to permit adequate access by emergency vehicles as required by the city building code."*

In terms of pedestrian access to the site, there is a wide sidewalk as part of the right-of-way, however it is in poor shape, curbed, and is not accessible for disabled persons. The conditions and curbing make bicycling difficult as well. The site plan provides for ramped sidewalks. The plan also provides for a marked pedestrian path linking the sidewalk to the building.

In terms of vehicular access, there are three access drives off Ecorse Road. Currently the site's parking space striping is in poor shape. It is difficult to discern where to park. The proposed resurfacing and restriping of the spaces based on the site plan will better organize the parking situation. The site plan accounts for approximately 85 parking spaces serving the commercial plaza, four which are barrier-free.

Because this is a *change in use* (§122-681.b), parking requirements must be met for the subject suite, as well as the rest of the businesses throughout the commercial plaza. The site plan meets the minimum parking requirements. Additionally, this is a large site which is automobile-oriented, zoned "GC," and proposes no increase of paving. Therefore staff feels a nominal over-parking at this site is satisfactory.

**Items to be Addressed:** None.

**Figures 6-8: Photographs of Sidewalk (March 11, 2020)**





**Figures 9-10: Parking Lot (March 11, 2020)**



**SCREENING**

**§122-311(h)**

*"The site plan shall provide reasonable visual and sound privacy for all dwelling units on or adjacent to the property. Fences, walks, barriers, and landscaping shall be used, as appropriate, for protection and enhancement of the property. All outdoor storage of materials, loading and unloading areas, and refuse containers shall be screened or located so as not to be a nuisance. Outdoor lighting shall be shielded so as to not adversely affect neighboring properties or traffic on adjacent streets."*

Currently, the fence on the rear property line is in poor shape and does not adequately screen this commercial use from the adjoining multi-family residential use. The site plan proposes the privacy fence to be repaired, thus creating sufficient screening.

**Items to be Addressed:** None.

**Figures 11-12: Rear Screening (March 11, 2020)**





## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: SITE PLAN**

Staff recommends the Planning Commission **approve** the Limited Site Plan for the Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC (Green Vitality) existing facility at 50 Ecorse Rd. with the following findings:

### Findings

1. The application substantially complies with §122-310.
2. The existing building and site design are nonconforming under §122-352.

---

Andy Aamodt  
City Planner, Community & Economic Development Department

CC     File  
          Applicant team

Project:

# Green Vitality

50 Ecorse Road  
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Designed J. G.

Drawn L. A.

Approved S. S. P.E.

Scale AS NOTED

**Notes**

All drawings and written material appearing herein constitute original and unpublished work of Gumma Group and may not be duplicated, used or disclosed without the written consent of Gumma Group.

Do not scale drawings. Use given dimensions only. If not shown, verify correct dimensions with Gumma Group. Contractor shall check and verify all dimensions and conditions at job site.

Project No. 19-72

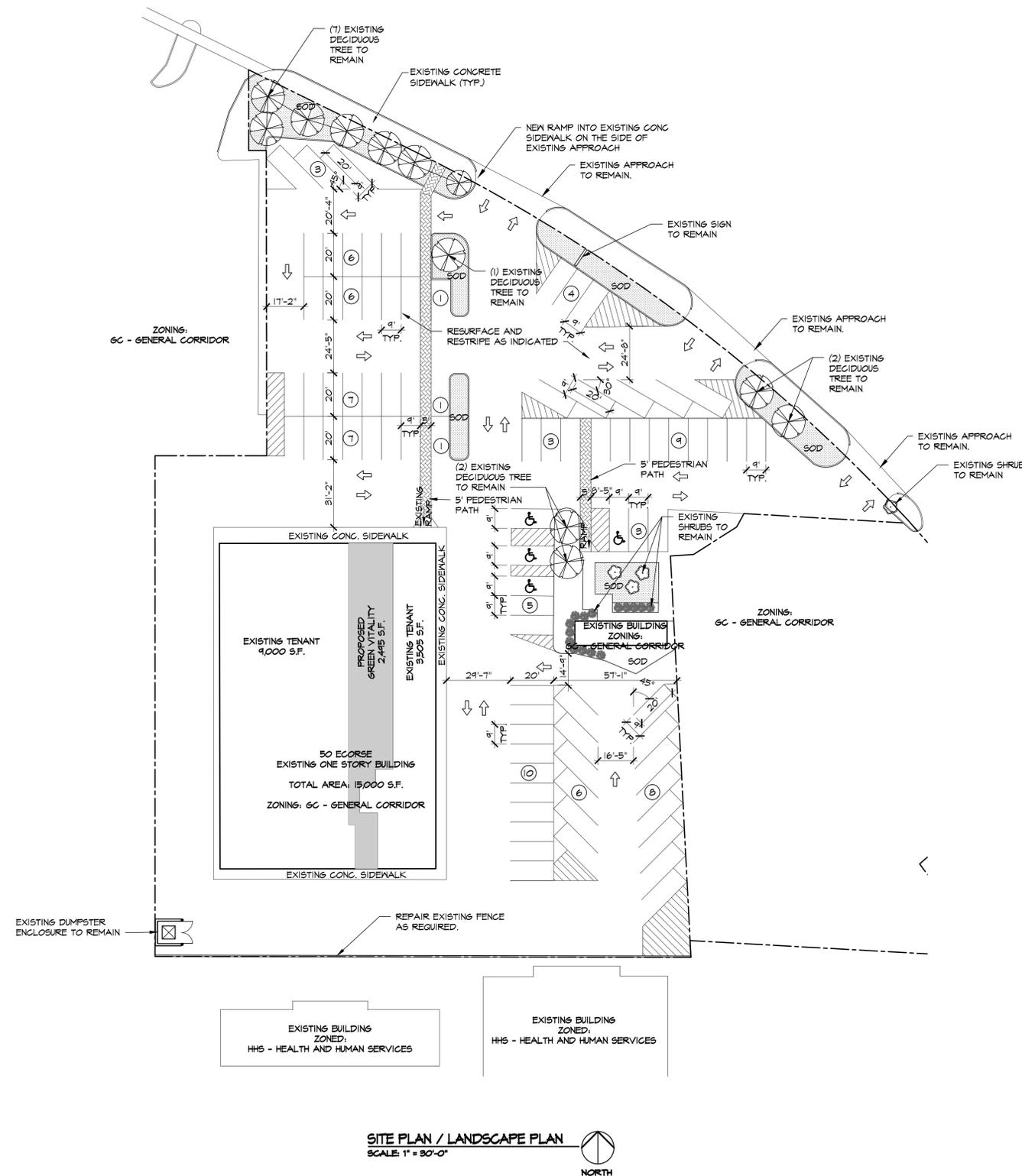
**Issued**

Site Plan Review 05/21/20

Sheet Title and Number

Site Plan /  
Landscape Plan

A-1



Nominee For City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee  
Term of office: June 17, 2020 to June 30, 2022

Renee Echols

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

My name is Renee Echols and I am a blind resident of the Third Ward. I am very interested in serving on the City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee. I feel I have a lot to offer both the Committee and Planning Commission as a disabled pedestrian that will benefit both disabled citizens and all other citizens who travel the sidewalks and streets via foot. Further, I am a mom with two young children, so representing the interests of families and children is also a top priority for me. I have lived in the city since 2016.

## Executive Summary Report of the City of Ypsilanti Sub-committee on Housing Affordability and Accessibility

Submitted to Planning Commission on June 12, 2020

Throughout 2016 and 2017, members of the public repeatedly voiced concerns to the City of Ypsilanti Planning Commission regarding (1) rising rents in the City that were putting people at risk of displacement, and (2) limited physical accessibility of the City's aging housing stock. In response to these concerns, the Planning Commission voted in December 2017 to charter a citizen sub-committee to study the issues of housing affordability and accessibility, and to "develop and issue recommendations for specific land use and policy changes for consideration by the Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council."

The purpose of the sub-committee, as described in its founding charter, was to inform updates to the City of Ypsilanti's 2013 Master Plan with a focus on preserving and enhancing housing affordability and accessibility, in keeping with the guiding values that "anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti."

The first phase of the committee's work was devoted to fact-finding in sub-groups and was followed immediately by a second phase focusing on analysis of the situation. **Five problem statements** were formulated to capture the key challenges facing the City with respect to housing affordability and accessibility:

- **The cost of housing is increasing steadily.** After the crash of the housing market in 2008, Ypsilanti saw a steep decline in housing prices, accompanied by an increase in foreclosures and a decline in the homeownership rate due to an influx of "house flipping," whereby landlords and speculators purchased foreclosed homes and converted them into investment properties. For-sale housing prices remained low for several years post-crisis before starting to pick up again in 2012-2013. Since then, available housing stock has dried up, leading to a very low vacancy rate, increases in demand, and higher prices for both rental and for-sale housing.  
As a result of these trends, housing in Ypsilanti is increasingly unaffordable for many residents. Because a strong majority of housing units in Ypsilanti (69.2%) are renter-occupied, and because renters in Ypsilanti have lower incomes, on average, than homeowners, renters are disproportionately affected by increasing housing costs. However, a significant proportion of homeowners in Ypsilanti are also affected. Nearly half of households in Ypsilanti are cost-burdened (meaning >30% of household income goes to housing costs), and Ypsilanti has significantly higher rates of cost burden than both Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County as a whole.
- **Existing data and measures do not adequately capture the local situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility.** There is a pressing need for improved measures and additional information to paint a more comprehensive picture of the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility challenges, and how it impacts specific populations, including seniors, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and school-aged youth experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.
- **Ypsilanti's old housing stock poses health, safety and accessibility challenges.** While Ypsilanti's old and historic homes add character to the City, their age and condition present challenges for affordability and accessibility. Most homes were constructed before contemporary health and safety codes were in place; and just one in 10 houses or

apartments in Ypsilanti was built in the 1990s or later, when updates to the Fair Housing Act and building codes began requiring some accessibility features in new housing, such as stepless entry and ground-level bathrooms and bedrooms. As a result, Ypsilanti residents face health risks from lead paint, radon exposure, and mold; high heating bills from poor insulation; and difficulty finding housing that will accommodate a disability. Rental households are at increased risk for all of these factors. In addition to a general lack of accessible housing, there are few housing options adapted to the needs of seniors, many of whom live on modest fixed incomes and/or have limited physical mobility.

- **Ypsilanti does not have a lot of land available to build new housing.** Nearly all land in the City has already been developed, limiting opportunities for construction of new housing. Much of the land that is currently vacant, like Water Street, is considered “brownfield,” meaning past industrial activity has left behind contamination that adds cleanup costs to development; other available parcels have potential or actual wetlands on them. There are significant limits on what types of homes can be built, due to a combination of zoning restrictions (e.g. minimum building envelopes, setback requirements) and historic preservation requirements. And because new housing is typically more expensive than existing housing -- especially in the Ann Arbor construction market, where labor costs are relatively high -- replacing older housing with new construction has the potential to exacerbate housing affordability issues.
- **Current and past policies at the state and local levels have contributed to our affordability and accessibility challenges.** The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance limits construction and conversion of multi-unit dwellings and smaller-scale single-unit dwellings through a combination of single-family zoning, accessory dwelling unit (ADU) restrictions, and residential lot and building envelope requirements. In addition, the City currently imposes a limit of three (3) on the number of unrelated adults that may occupy a single dwelling, a regulation that is stricter than in surrounding communities and which contributes to under-utilization of available housing units. Inadequate oversight by the State of Michigan in administering federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to private real estate developers led to the exploitation of a loophole that allowed several apartment complexes in Ypsilanti City and Township to shed their affordability requirements far ahead of schedule. Seniors residing at Cross Street Village apartments have seen dramatic escalation in rent as a result.

Based on the above understanding of the problem, our committee designed and implemented a multi-stage public engagement process consisting of:

- **A Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey** to gather up-to-date information on the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility issues experienced by Ypsilanti residents. The survey was circulated online and via paper questionnaires and was completed by more than 500 respondents between October 2018 and January 2019.
- **Interviews** with three landlords of residential properties in Ypsilanti (one with a small number of rental properties, one with a moderate number of rental properties, and one with a large number of rental properties).
- An **Open Forum** to present the survey and interview findings to the public and to solicit public input on a preliminary set of housing affordability and accessibility strategies for the City of Ypsilanti.
- An **Ypsilanti Housing Strategies Survey** to gather quantitative feedback from Ypsilanti residents on the favorability of specific housing affordability and accessibility strategies in six key domains: (1) Renters’ rights, (2) Sustainable development strategies, (3) Need-based assistance strategies, (4) Physical accessibility strategies, (5) Zoning strategies, and (6) Partnership and advocacy strategies. The Housing Strategies Survey was launched online

on September 3, 2019 and closed on October 22, 2019. More than 360 responses were collected.

- Finally, the committee welcomed public comment and input through its standing monthly meetings, held from January 2018 to May 2019.

Despite efforts to solicit input from a representative cross-section of Ypsilanti residents, the survey demographics indicate that some groups were underrepresented while others were overrepresented. Males, Black/African Americans, and renters were underrepresented in the survey by a significant margin.

Our key findings with respect to **housing affordability** are the following:

- Prices of both for-sale and rental housing are rising fast and show no signs of abating, in line with national trends.
- The most commonly used measures of housing affordability fail to capture the total cost of housing as experienced by most Ypsilanti residents, and especially those who earn the median income or less. Monthly rents do not capture the full picture with respect to the cost of rental housing; most rentals require a deposit equal to a full month's rent.
- Over half (54.6%) of Ypsilanti renters are cost-burdened with respect to housing, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their income on housing (ACS 2017). Data from the committee's Housing survey closely track ACS data on this point.
- The consequences of the **boom-bust cycle in for-sale housing** have not been the same for all residents and stakeholders. Real estate investors -- some local, others from outside of the area -- who bought homes in Ypsilanti during the housing crisis in order to "flip" them have profited from increasing sales prices. Many Ypsilanti homeowners who purchased their homes at depressed prices (i.e. from 2008 to 2013) have seen their property values escalate rapidly since 2013, resulting in substantial growth in home equity. The flip side of these benefits has been a sharp decline in access to homeownership for Ypsilanti and other area residents who currently rent their homes. In addition, the boom-bust housing cycle -- by first displacing people with limited wealth and/or income from their homes through foreclosure or short sales and then making it difficult or impossible for them to afford another home in the same neighborhood -- has had a gentrifying effect.
- The consequences of **rising rents** have been acutely felt by Ypsilanti residents, particularly those with lower incomes. Some of the disruptive effects have included frequent moves motivated by sharp rent increases; being forced to settle for poorly maintained rental units that are less accessible to public transportation and other essential amenities; displacement, especially among seniors and people with disabilities; housing insecurity; and homelessness.
- Protecting and advancing housing affordability and accessibility will require decisive and sustained action at multiple levels of government, including the municipal, county, state, and federal levels. Collaborating with policymakers and officials at other levels of government will be essential to ensuring that all people, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.
- One-size-fits-all solutions do not apply; we will need a combination of strategies that are tailored to the specific housing needs and preferences of Ypsilanti residents, including seniors who wish to age in place, people with disabilities.

Our key findings with respect to **housing accessibility** are the following:

- Only a small portion of units offer wheelchair accessibility, and houses often require modifications to doorways, bathrooms, and kitchens to serve a resident with a disability.

- The City of Ypsilanti 2012-2016 census statistics reported that 6.7% of persons under 65 have a disability, or about 1400 disabled persons (auditory, visual, cognitive, ambulatory impairments).
- Accessibility is not limited to the needs of wheelchair users. According to a broader definition of disability, 32% of Ypsilanti residents are living with a disability of some type. The highest concentrations of residents with a disability are in areas with the lowest average incomes.
- AARP/Harvard reports that 90% of seniors plan to age in place, and SEMCOG estimates the over-65 demographic will increase in our area by 240% by 2035. Given the proportions of owner-occupied to rental units in the City, it is important to create accessible options in both categories.
- Survey results further emphasize these basic facts, with two-thirds of survey respondents (66.7%) reported that their homes have no accessibility features. Over 1 in 4 reported that barriers to physical accessibility in a home had limited their quality of life.
- Many survey respondents say that accessibility is a consideration in the selection of their next residence with over half of respondents saying a ramp or step-free entrance would be a factor in their choice, and at least 1 in 5 saying that every accessibility option listed in the survey would be a desirable factor from parking, to bathroom and kitchen amenities, to doorways and elevators.

Based on input and feedback from 361 respondents who reviewed 26 housing strategies included in the committee's Housing Strategies survey, our committee recommends that the City consider adoption and implementation of **11 strategies**. The selected proposals reflect the input of Ypsilanti residents who engaged with this survey and, if implemented, will respond to pressing housing needs and start to correct housing inequities in Ypsilanti. They are:

1. **Tenant Right of First Refusal:** Enact a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance mandating that tenants receive advance notice when their landlord intends to sell the property and have the opportunity to purchase the property before it is offered for sale to outside buyers.
2. **Just Cause Eviction:** Enact a 'Just Cause Eviction' ordinance to protect renters from wrongful eviction. The ordinance would limit a landlord's ability to evict tenants to specific reasons, such as failure to pay rent or for violation of the lease terms.
3. **Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance:** Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance that 1) defines the parameters for affordable & accessible housing based on Ypsilanti's Area Median Income (AMI) and 2) requires new housing developments to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units based on Ypsilanti's need.
4. **Homeless Shelter:** Construct or establish an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.
5. **Community Land Trust:** Work with local non-profit agencies and neighboring communities to establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long-term housing affordability and accessibility through community control of land. Community Land Trusts are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. CLTs provide an opportunity for democratic ownership of land with private ownership of the structure on the land in order to maintain long-term housing affordability. CLT properties can be interspersed throughout one or more neighborhoods and can include rental homes and businesses.
6. **Assist low-income residents with home-buying:** Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance.
7. **Minor home repair:** Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners. Eligible repairs

could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation.

8. **Visitability ordinance:** Enact a Visitability Ordinance to ensure that newly constructed homes incorporate basic accessibility features that make it easier for mobility-impaired people to visit or live in Ypsilanti. A home is “visitable” if it has: (1) at least one no-step entrance; (2) doors with 32 inches of clear passage space; and (3) a bathroom on the main floor that is wheelchair-accessible.
9. **Increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a dwelling:** Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by changing the Zoning Ordinance definition of “Family” to include a limit of two unrelated persons for each bedroom in the dwelling.
10. **Rent Control:** Advocate with state lawmakers to grant municipalities the authority to cap annual rent increases.
11. **Ask local universities to invest in the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund:** Advocate with the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund and to actively support other county-wide housing affordability measures.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and civil unrest due to systemic racial inequities, we share a conviction that it is more important than ever for local governments to proactively address the needs and interests of communities under duress. With a view to accelerating action, we offer a prospective three-phase pathway and timeline for rolling out housing policies and programs.

### **Phase One (current Budget year)**

**Make the Ypsilanti Housing Trust permanent:** Assure a sustainable funding source for housing affordability and accessibility by formalizing and making permanent the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund started by Councilmember Pete Murdock and nourishing it with an annual contribution of no less than \$100,000.

**Allocate staff time to housing affordability and accessibility:** Allocate a significant portion of an existing staff member’s time to the coordination and monitoring of City housing affordability and accessibility policy and to liaising with other units of government and partners on housing affordability and accessibility.

**Draft and implement** the Tenant Right of First Refusal ordinance (Strategy 1), the Just Cause Eviction ordinance (Strategy 2), the Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance (Strategy 3), the Visitability Ordinance (Strategy 8), and the Zoning Ordinance text amendment to increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a single dwelling (Strategy 9) from three total to two persons per bedroom.

**Begin advocating** for rent control legislation at the State level (Strategy 10) and for local university contributions to the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund (Strategy 11).

### **Phase Two (Budget year 2021)**

**Draft an affordability-focused property acquisition plan** that would go into effect in the event of another housing crisis resulting in a surge of foreclosures of multi-unit residences. The aim of

this plan would be to ensure that such properties can be converted to sustainable affordable and accessible use, either in partnership with a local housing non-profit or through the launch of a Community Land Trust.

**Introduce** a home-buying assistance program (Strategy 6) and the Minor home repair program (Strategy 7).

### **Phase Three (Budget year 2022-2030)**

**Create and invest in institutions that promote community stability and build toward long range sustainable housing goals.** Pursue affordability and accessibility-focused collaborations at the county and regional levels, with a view to leveraging resources from outside of the City of Ypsilanti. These would include construction or establishment of an overnight homeless shelter (Strategy 4) and establishment and investment in a Community Land Trust (Strategy 5).

# Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey Results

October 2018 – January 2019

City of Ypsilanti

The survey was published online (via Google Forms) and made available in hard copy at several locations throughout the City of Ypsilanti. Of 604 total responses received, more than 500 were submitted online.

Limitations: Because non-probability sampling was used, we were unable to calculate confidence intervals and margins of error. In addition, several groups were underrepresented or overrepresented in the survey, compared to their relative size as reported by the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS). See comparisons below.

#### Underrepresented (Survey vs. ACS)

Black/African American (13.5% vs. 30.3%)

Male (25.4% vs. 52.6%)

Under 18 years (7% vs. 13.6%)

18-24 years (15.1% vs 25.1% age 20-24)

Hispanic (3.3% vs 4.5%)

Asian (2.4% vs. 3.5%)

#### Overrepresented (Survey vs. ACS)

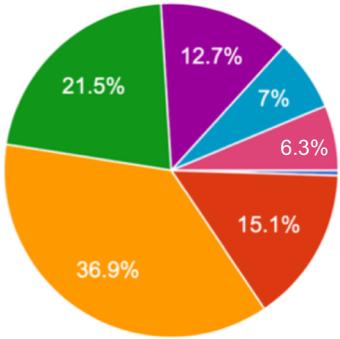
White/Caucasian (77.5% vs. 66.9%)

Female (63.6% vs. 47.4%)

25-34 years (39.9% vs 18.2%)

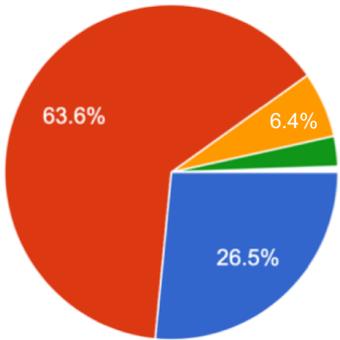
35-44 years (21.5% vs 7.8%)

45-54 years (12.7% vs. 7.3%)



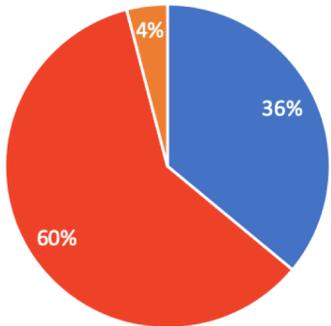
Age

- 17 years or under
- 18-24 years
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or over



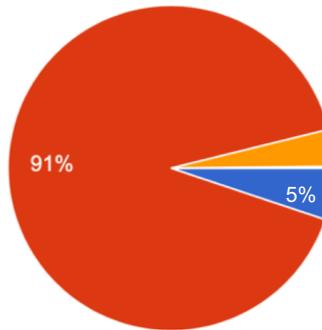
Gender

- Male
- Female
- Nonbinary
- Prefer not to say
- male
- Trans man
- transgender



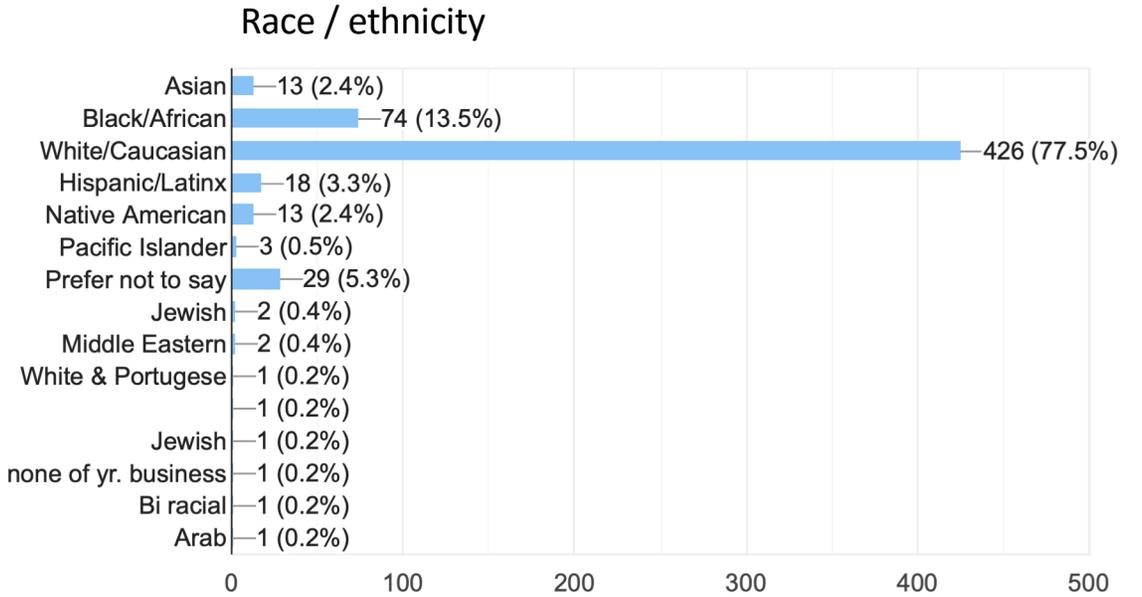
LGBTQ household member?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

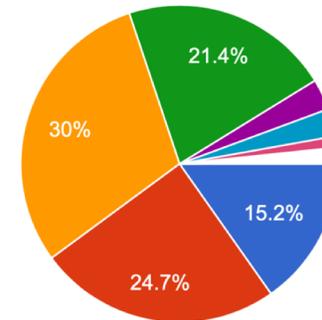


Transgender?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



Race / ethnicity

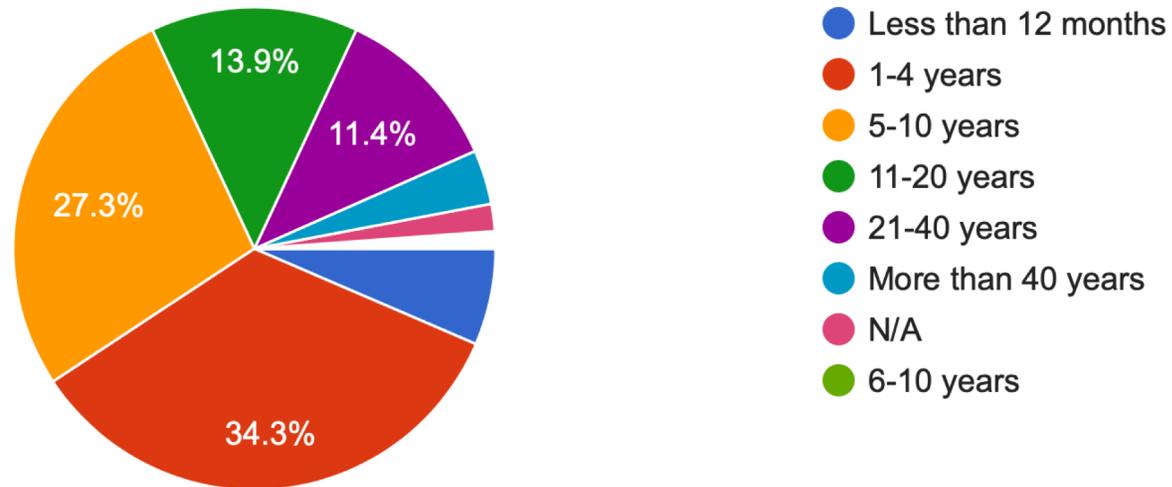


Place of residence?

- Ward 1
- Ward 2
- Ward 3
- Ypsilanti Township
- Pittsfield Township
- Superior Township

# How long have you lived in the City of Ypsilanti?

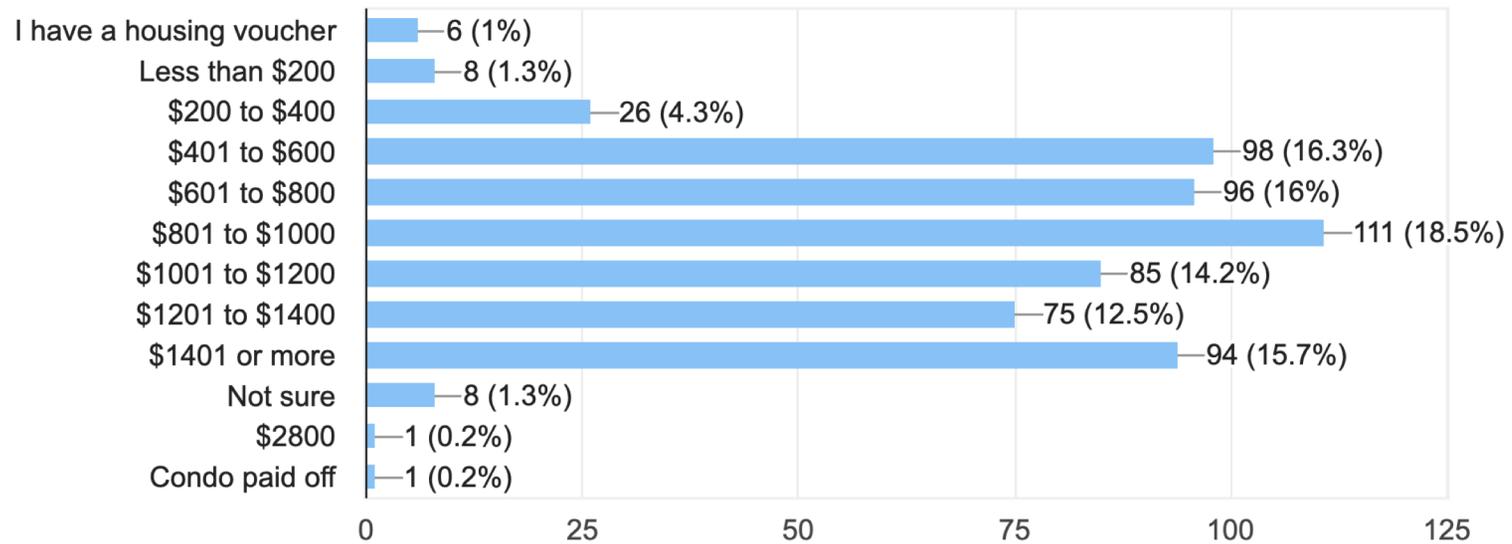
604 responses



Housing affordability

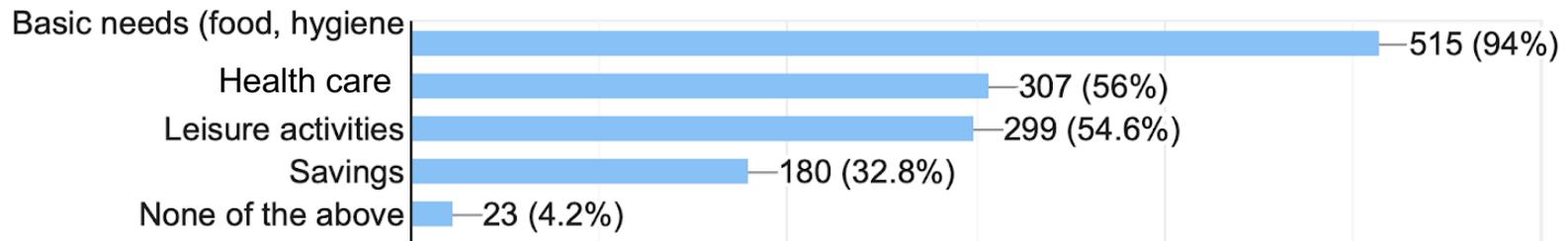
# On average, how much do you spend on housing-related costs each month?

600 responses



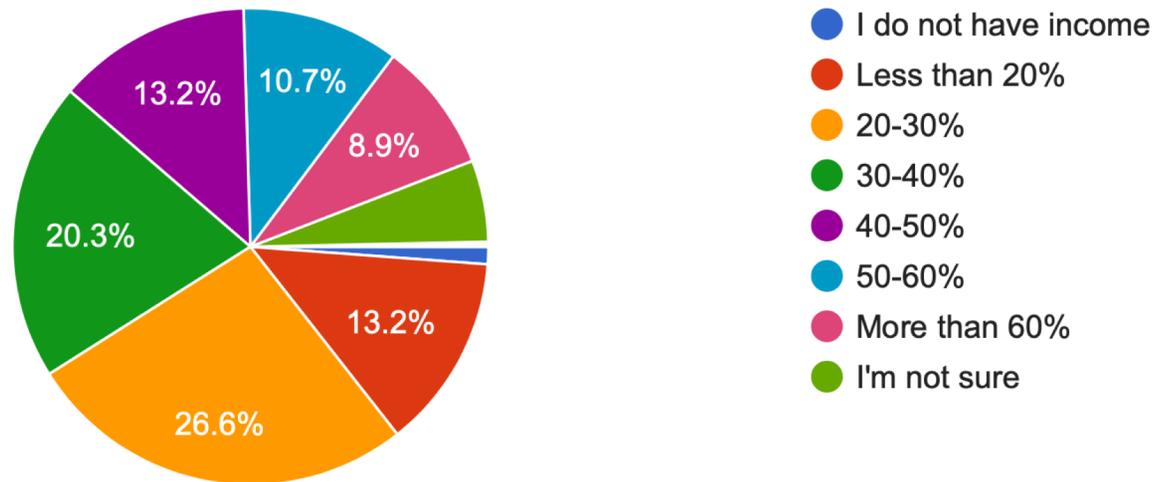
# After paying your monthly housing costs, which of the following are you able to afford:

548 responses



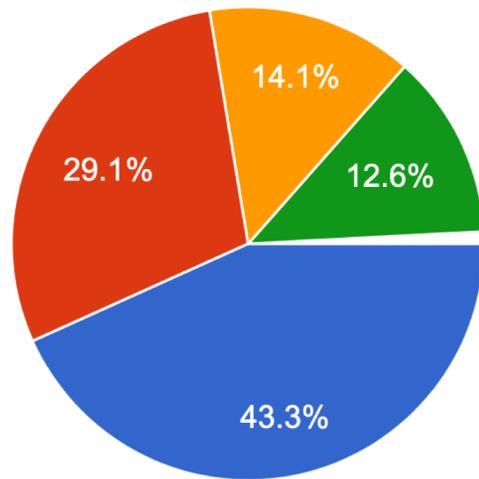
# Approximately what share of your gross (pre-tax) monthly income do you spend on the above housing-related costs?

597 responses



# How many people, besides yourself, do your housing costs cover?

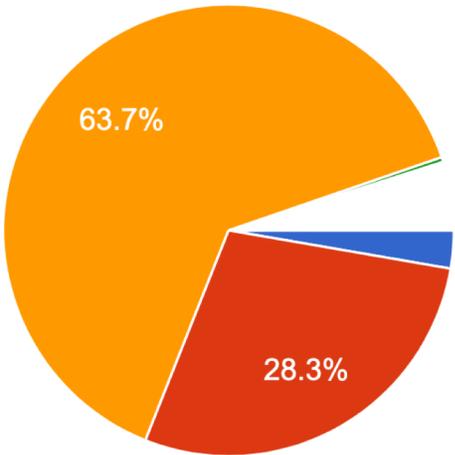
601 responses



- No one - my housing costs cover only myself
- 1 other person
- 2 other people
- 3 or more other people
- i pay roughly 1/4 of the mortgage fo...
- I share an apartment- my roommate...
- split costs with partner
- 4
- one pet cat

# Over the past 4 to 5 years (since 2014), would you say your housing costs in the City of Ypsilanti have:

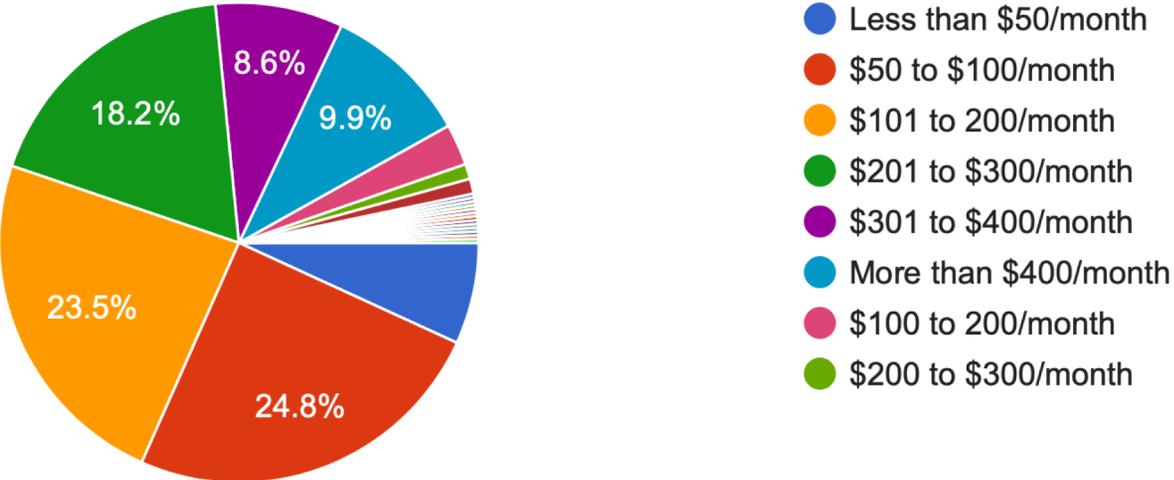
590 responses



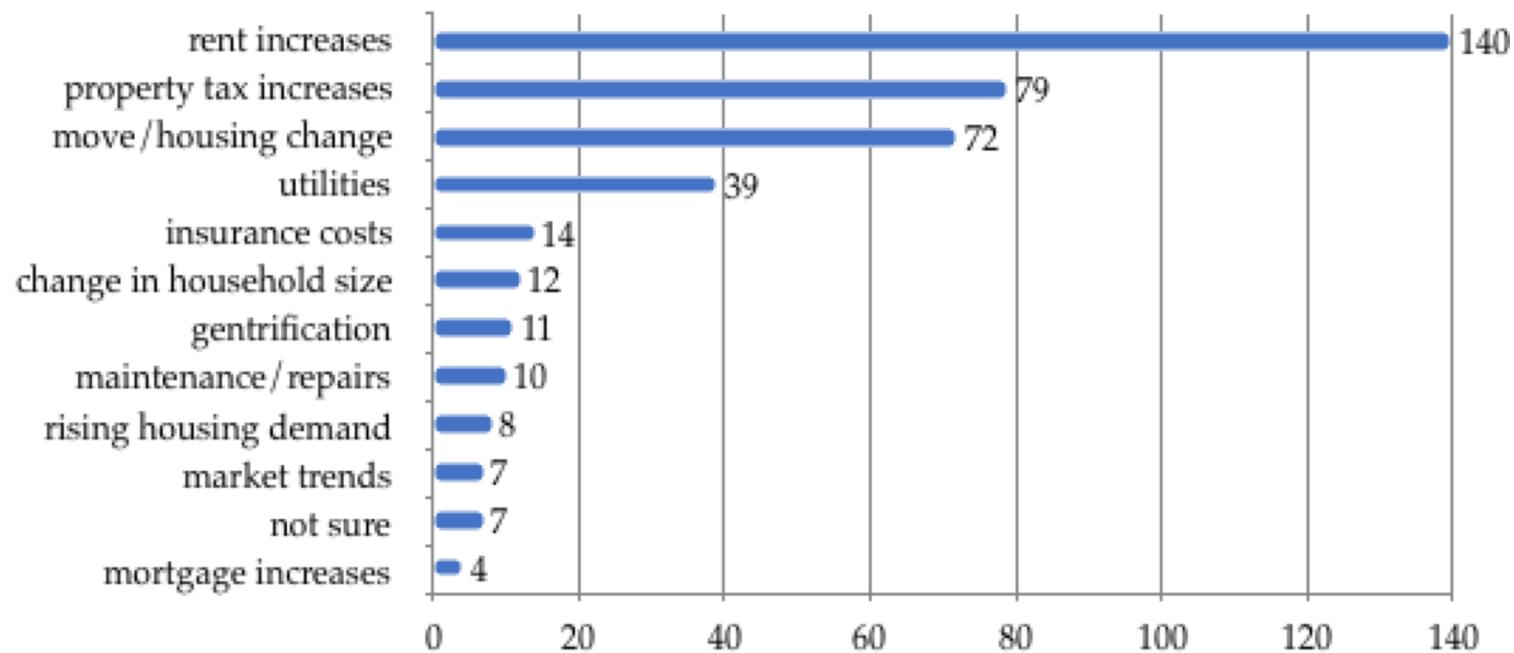
- Decreased
- Stayed roughly same (in line with in...)
- Increased
- N/A
- My rent is cheaper than even the ot...
- Increased a lot! Too much for senior...
- Only been here 1.5 years, stayed s...
- Not sure. I live with family rent free.

# By how much have your monthly housing costs changed since 2014?

395 responses

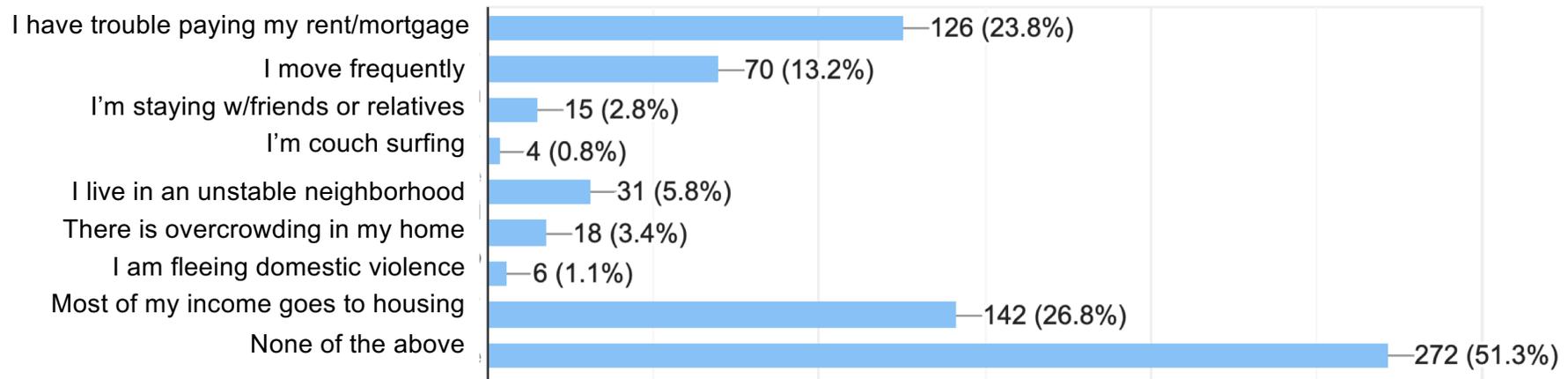


# What caused the change in your housing costs since 2014?



# Do any of the following describe your current or most recent housing situation? (select all that apply)

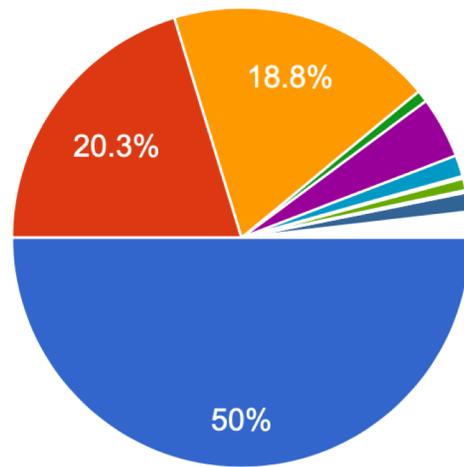
530 responses



Housing type & tenure

# Which of the following best describes your current or most recent home in the City of Ypsilanti?

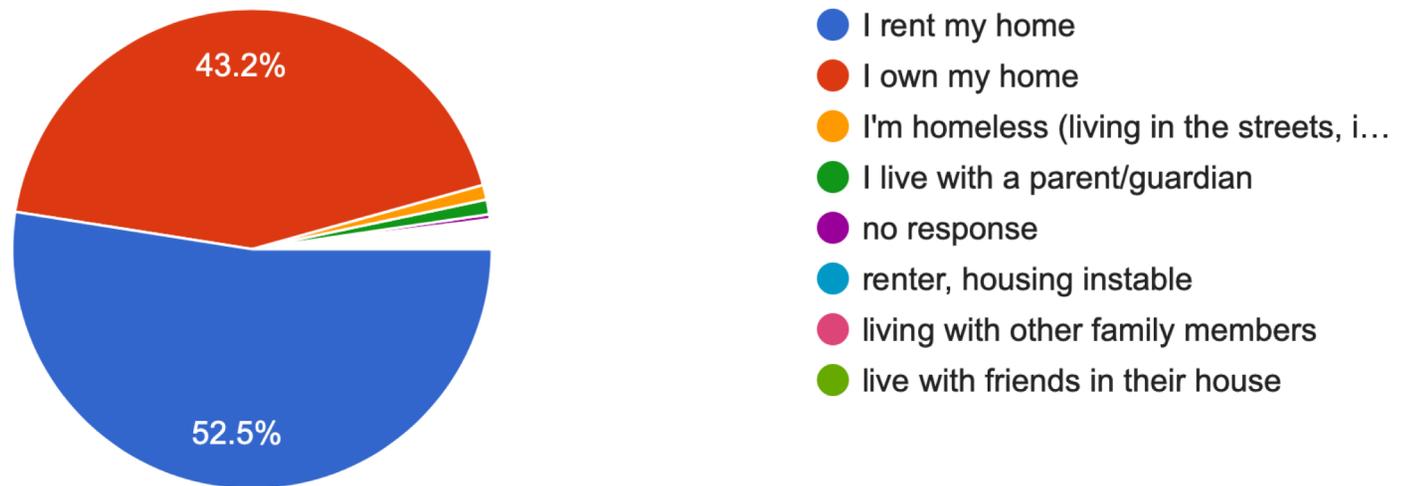
602 responses



- Standalone house: a building that o...
- Apartment house: a building that ha...
- Apartment complex: a building or se...
- Student dormitory
- Shared living or "rooming" house: a...
- Apartment above business: a home...
- Supportive housing: a living arrange...
- Townhome: a home that is attached...

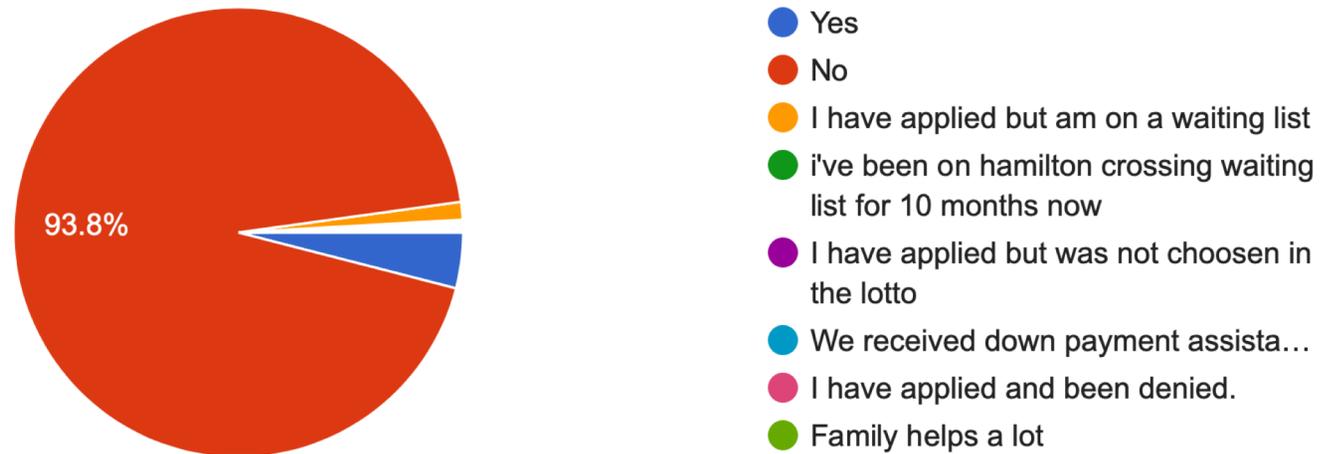
# Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

604 responses



# Do you currently receive housing assistance (such as housing choice vouchers or subsidized housing) through federal, state or local government?

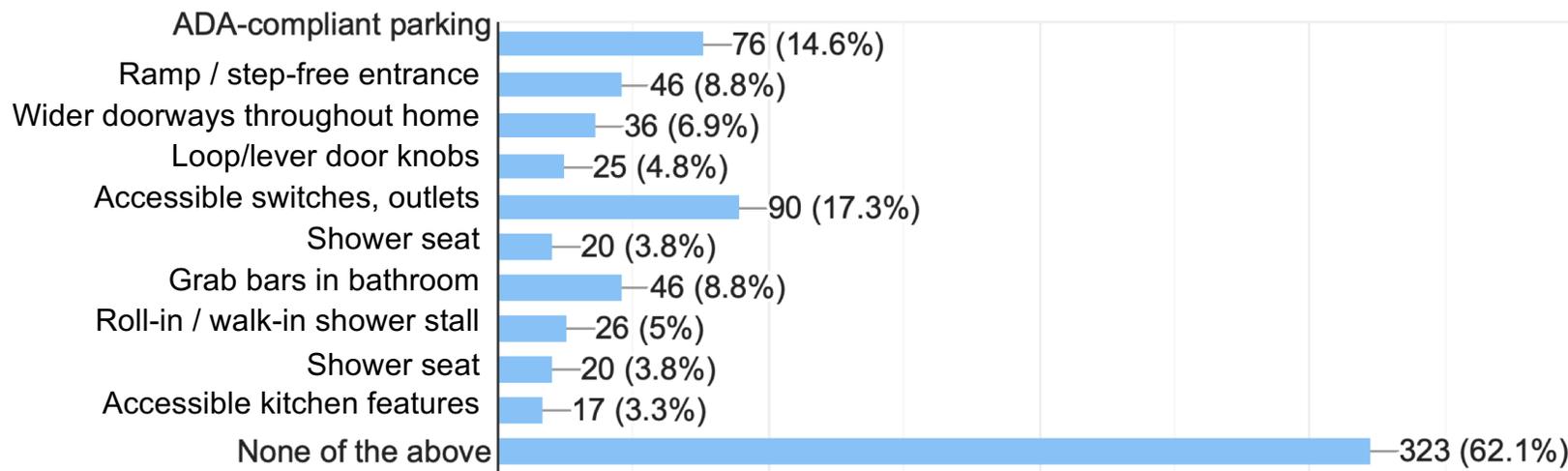
551 responses



Housing accessibility

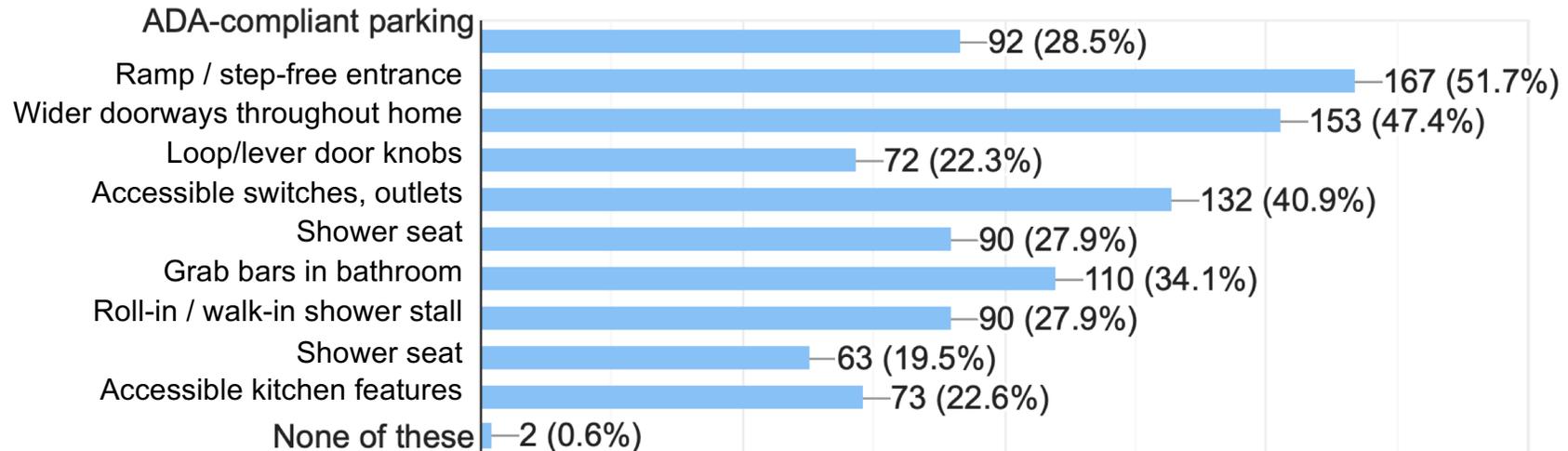
## Which of the following features does your current or most recent home have to make it accessible to people with a disability?

520 responses



# Which physical accessibility features will you take into consideration in choosing your next home (whether for y...y and friends who visit you at home)?

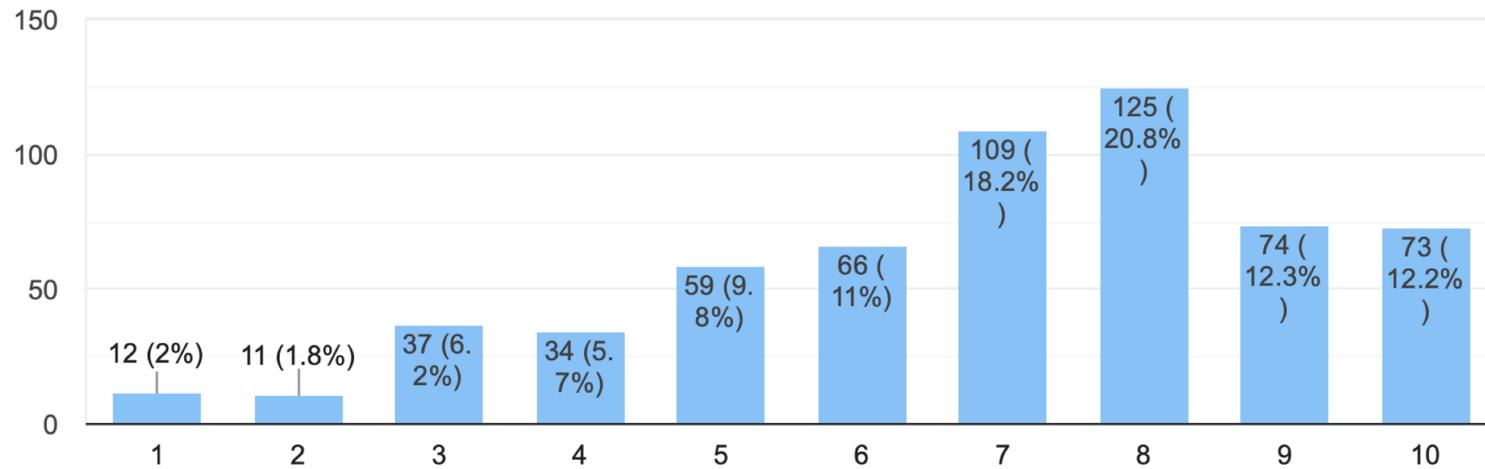
323 responses



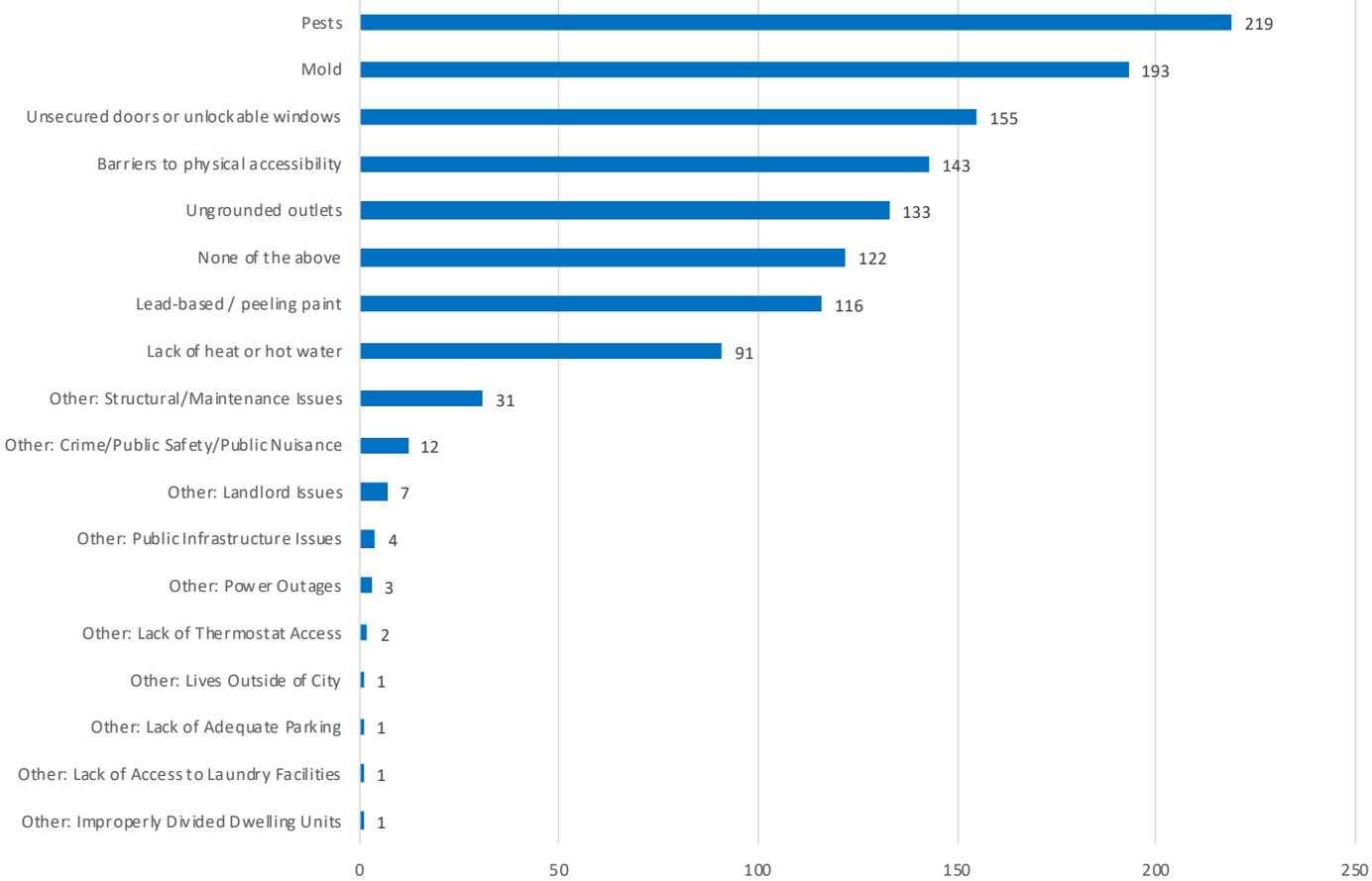
Housing quality, satisfaction & preferences

## On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your current housing situation?

600 responses

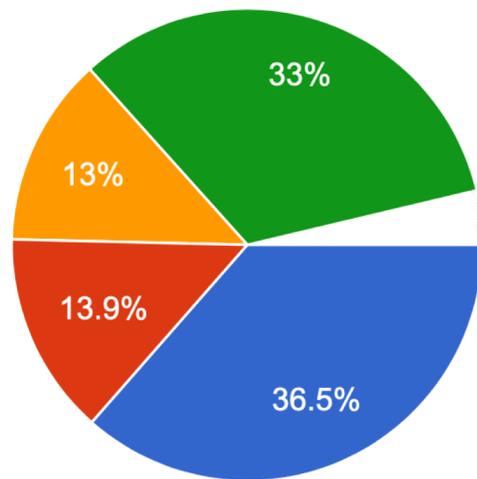


# Which housing quality issues have you experienced in the City of Ypsilanti?



# Would you feel comfortable asking your current landlord or housing provider to correct a quality-of-life issue (e.g. pests, physical access issues)?

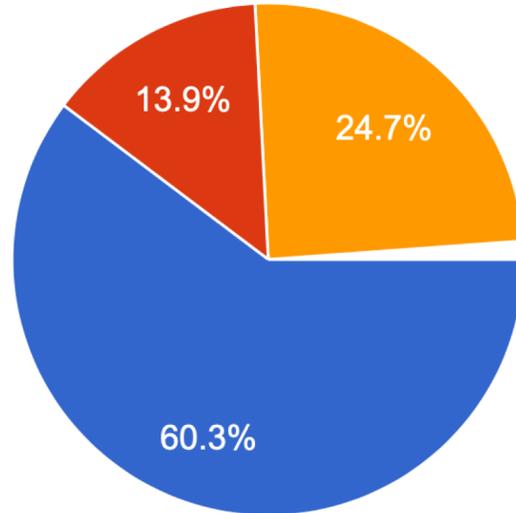
540 responses



- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- N/A
- depends on landlord temperament
- Some landlords are very unhelpful (...)
- ABSOLUTELY NOT. i learned the h...
- Only when I knew I wasn't going to...

# Would you like to live in the City of Ypsilanti 3 to 5 years from now?

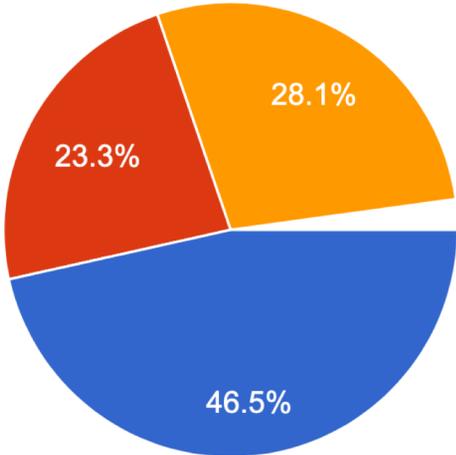
604 responses



- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- if I could afford it, but probably will n...
- I would prefer Ann Arbor but Ypsila...
- Can't with the taxes
- If I stay I plan to buy a house, if not...
- I would love to stay in Ypsilanti, but...

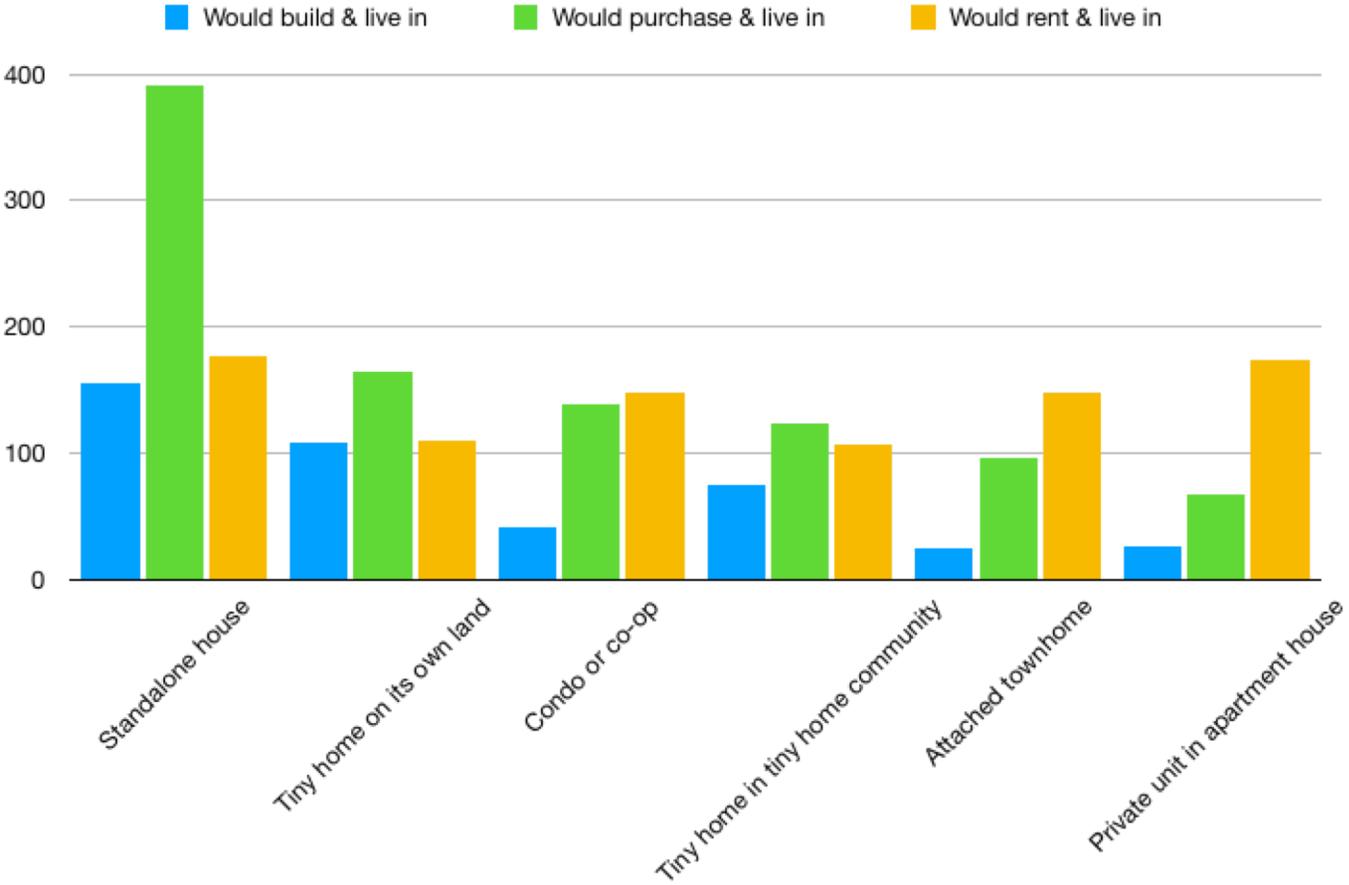
# If the cost of housing remains as it is today, do you see yourself living in the City of Ypsilanti 3 to 5 years from now?

602 responses

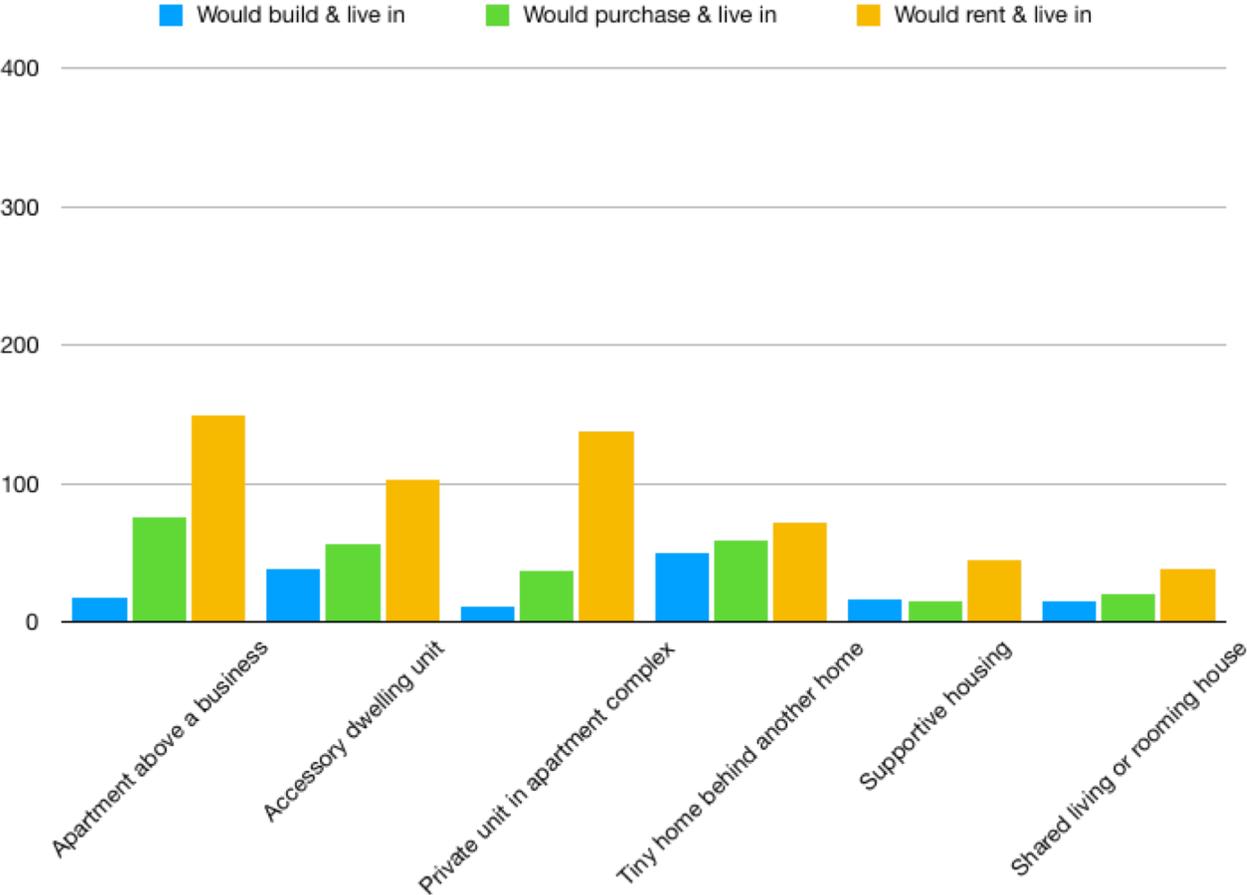


- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- No, because City of Ypsi taxes are t...
- houses for sale price would need to...
- i am currently being priced out. i trie...
- The problem is wages don't keep u...
- Well, when I bought a house I ende...

If they were available in Ypsilanti, which types of homes would you consider living in in the next 3-5 years?



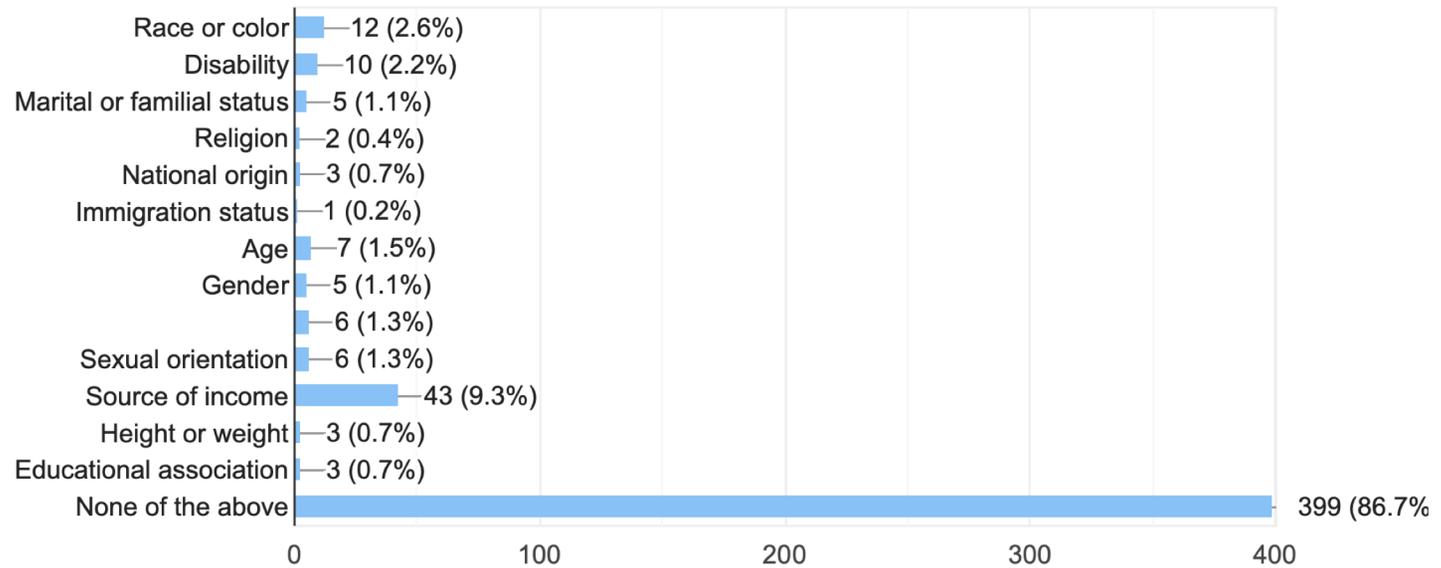
If they were available in Ypsilanti, which types of homes would you consider living in in the next 3-5 years?



Eviction & discrimination

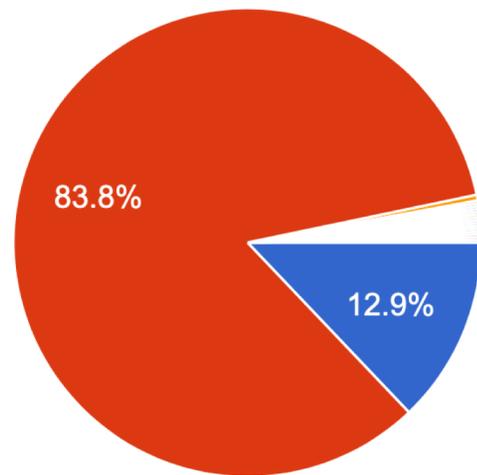
## Have you ever have been denied housing or evicted from housing due to any of the following in the City of Ypsilanti:

460 responses



# Have you ever been evicted or have you ever moved to avoid eviction due to rent increases you could not afford to pay?

520 responses



- Yes
- No
- Over 15 years ago after losing job.
- from 2 questions above: i have bee...
- threatened and chilled out of home
- Came very very close more than once
- Planning to next year
- I have moved consistently due to ro...

# Housing Strategies Survey

September - October 2019

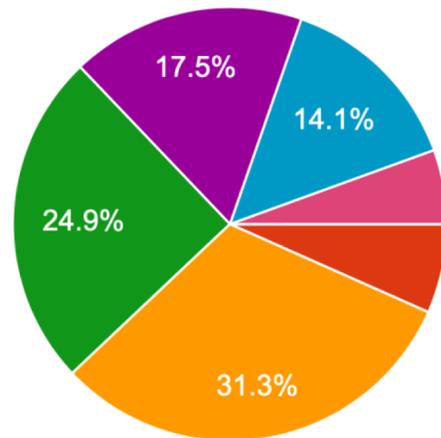
City of Ypsilanti

Respondent demographics

# Age

Which age group best describes you?

361 responses

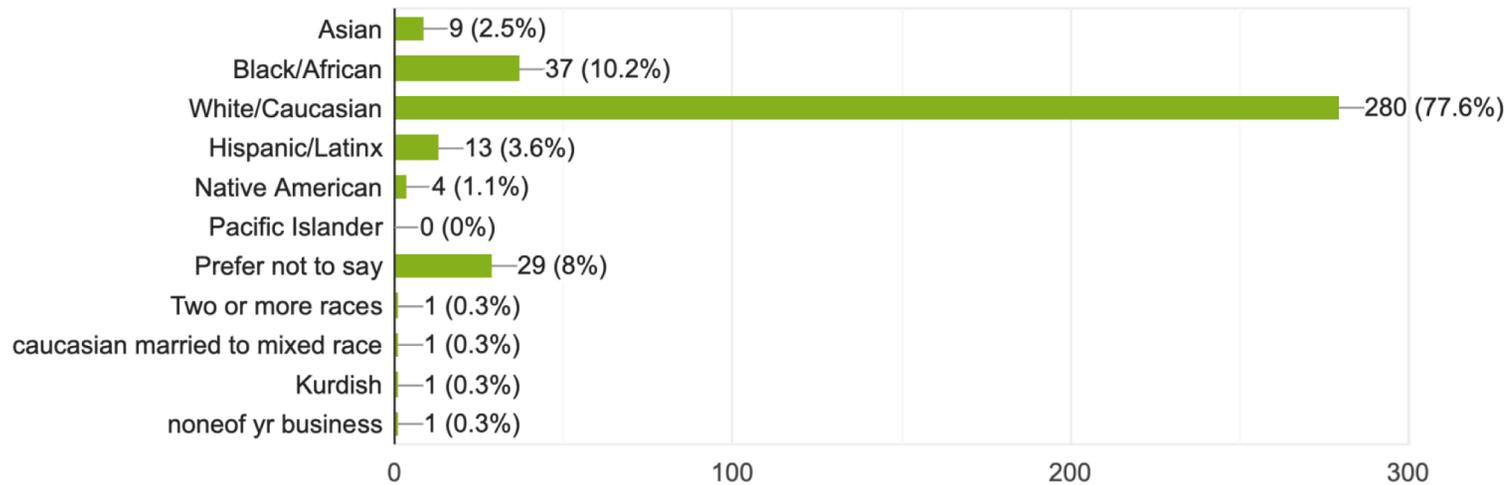


- 17 years or under
- 18-24 years
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or over

# Race and ethnicity

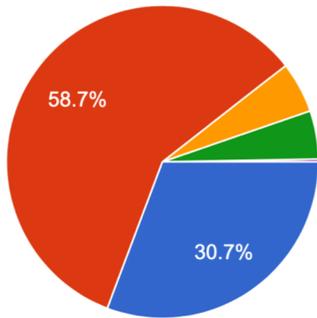
Which of the following races/ethnicities do you identify as (select all that apply)?

361 responses



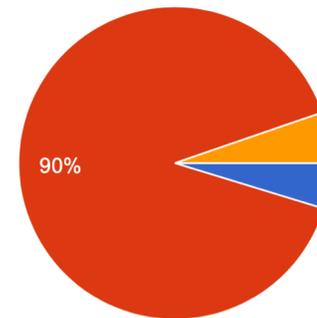
# Gender

Gender:  
361 responses



- Male
- Female
- Nonbinary
- Prefer not to say
- Gender Fluid

Do you identify as transgender?  
361 responses

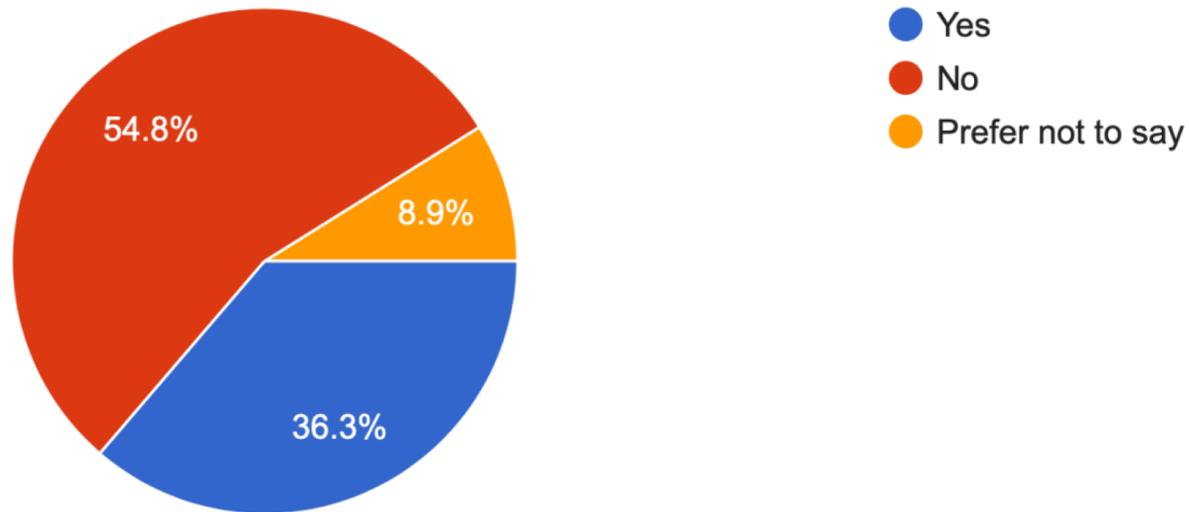


- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

# LGBTQ

Are you or a member of your household a part of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community?

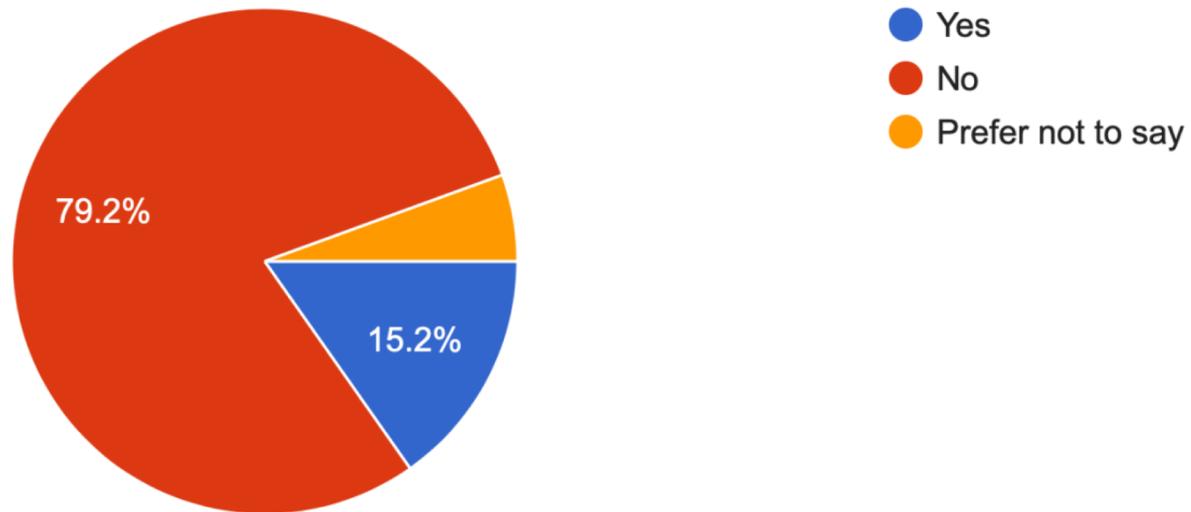
361 responses



# Disability

Do you identify as living with a disability?

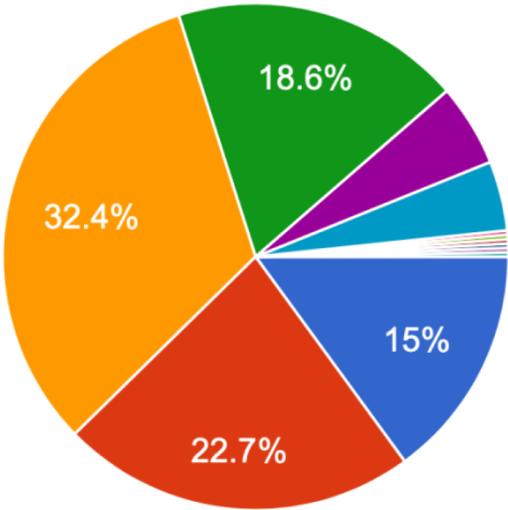
361 responses



# Place of residence

Which area of Ypsilanti do you currently reside in?

361 responses

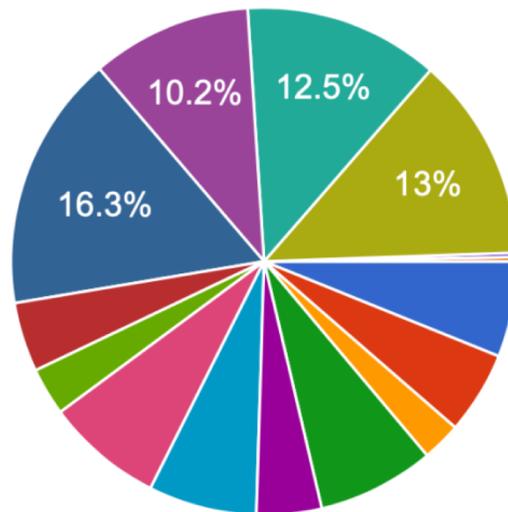


- Ward 1: See map below
- Ward 2: See map below
- Ward 3: See map below
- Ypsilanti Township
- Pittsfield Township
- Superior Township
- Ingham county
- just outside of ward 1

# Income

Which of the following best describes your income in the past 12 months?

361 responses



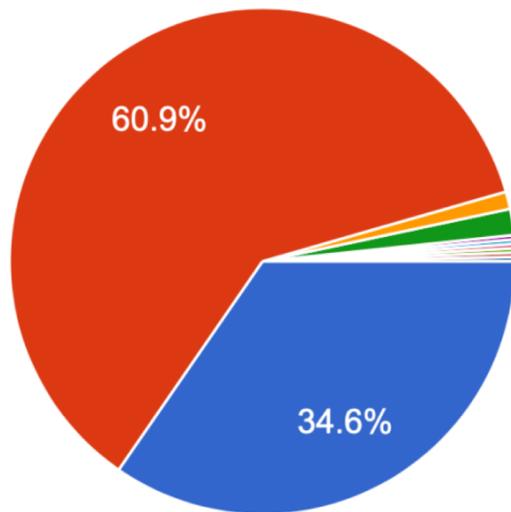
- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$14,999
- \$15,000 - \$19,999
- \$20,000 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$44,999
- \$45,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,000
- \$100,000 or more

Half of respondents

# Housing situation

Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

361 responses



- I rent my home
- I own my home
- I'm homeless (living on the streets, in...)
- I live with a parent/guardian
- I want to take this survey without defin...
- Multigenerational living with matriarch...
- My significant other owns our home
- Live with friend

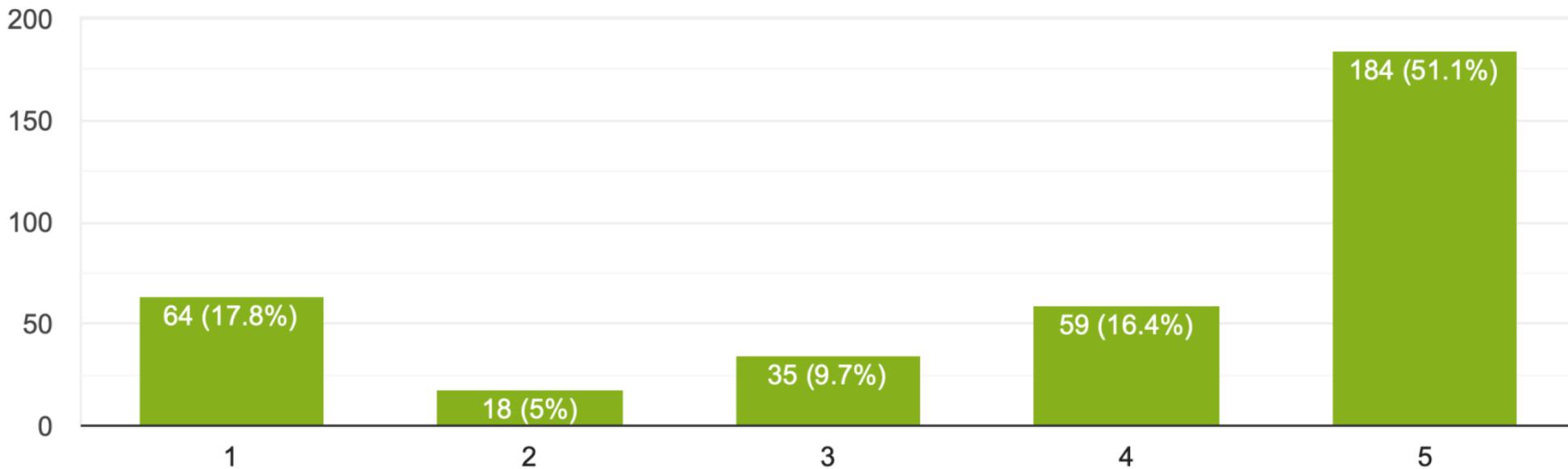
Affordability & accessibility strategies

# Section 1: Renters' rights

# 1. Protect renters from improper eviction

proposal rating:  
360 responses

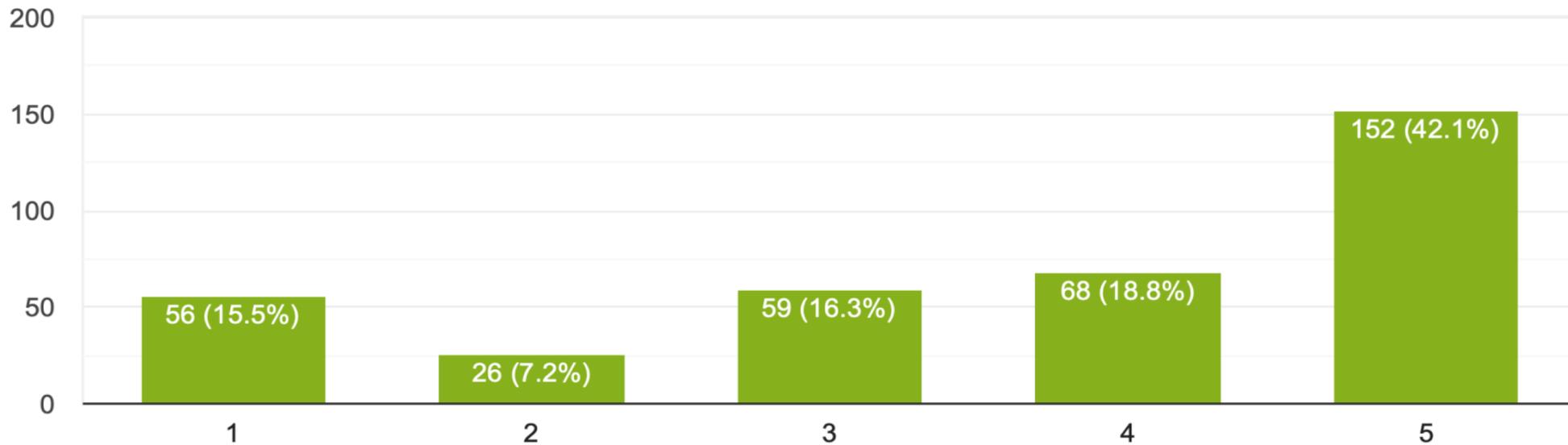
**Proposal: Enact a 'Just Cause Eviction' ordinance to protect renters from eviction for an improper reason. Just Cause Eviction statutes protect tenants from wrongful eviction. They limit a landlord's ability to evict tenants to certain reasons, such as failure to pay rent or for violation of the lease terms.**



## 2. Give renters with criminal records a fair chance

proposal rating:  
361 responses

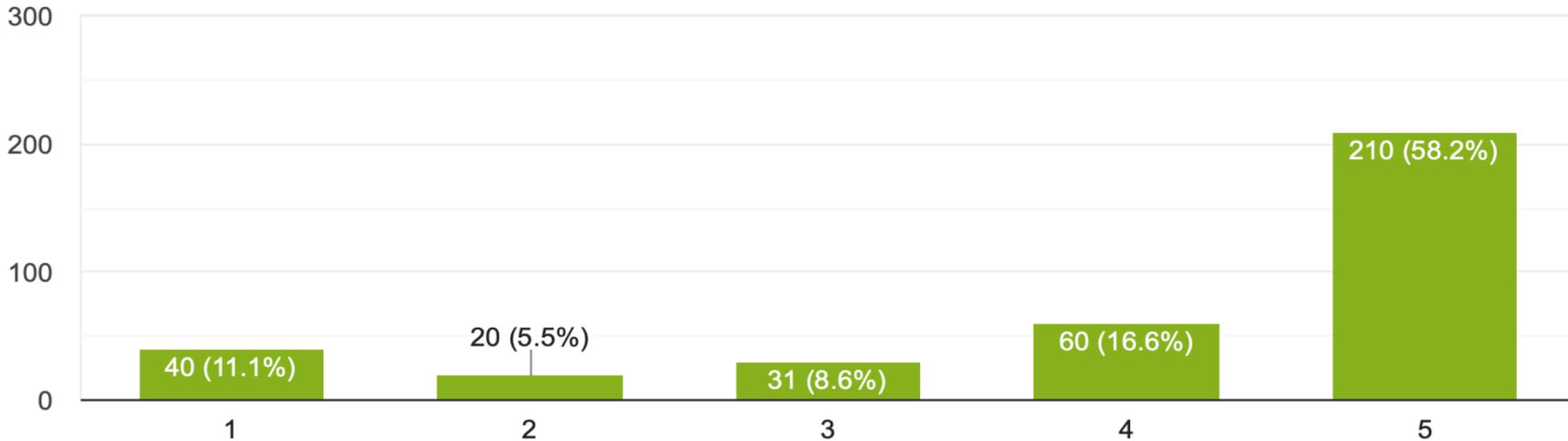
**Proposal: Enact a 'Ban the Box'/'Fair Chance' ordinance to protect renters with criminal records by restricting landlords from asking about criminal history on rental applications.** Detroit recently decided to Ban the Box in another category: housing. Under Detroit's new ordinance, landlords with portfolios of five or more units are no longer allowed to ask questions about criminal history on housing applications.



### 3. Give tenants right of first refusal

proposal rating:  
361 responses

*Proposal: Enact a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance that will allow tenants to have a certain notice period and time to purchase their properties, should the owner wish to sell their units. Tenant Right of First Refusal can set in motion a process that transfers property ownership either to residents or to another entity willing to preserve the long-term affordability of the property. It has produced a number of resident-owned properties and partnerships among residents and nonprofits in Washington, DC.*



## Renters' rights: Priority ranking

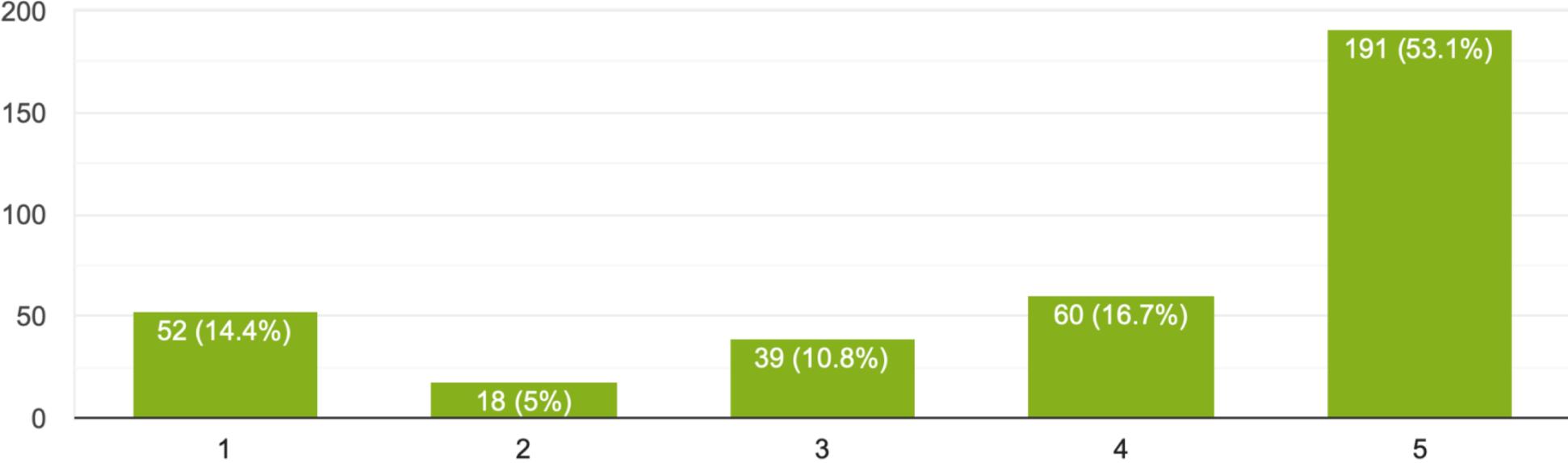
1. Protect against improper eviction (52.7% of respondents)
2. Give tenants right of first refusal to purchase properties (39.6% of respondents)
3. Give renters w/criminal records a fair chance (38.8% of respondents)

## Section 2: Sustainable development

# Build on public land

proposal rating:  
360 responses

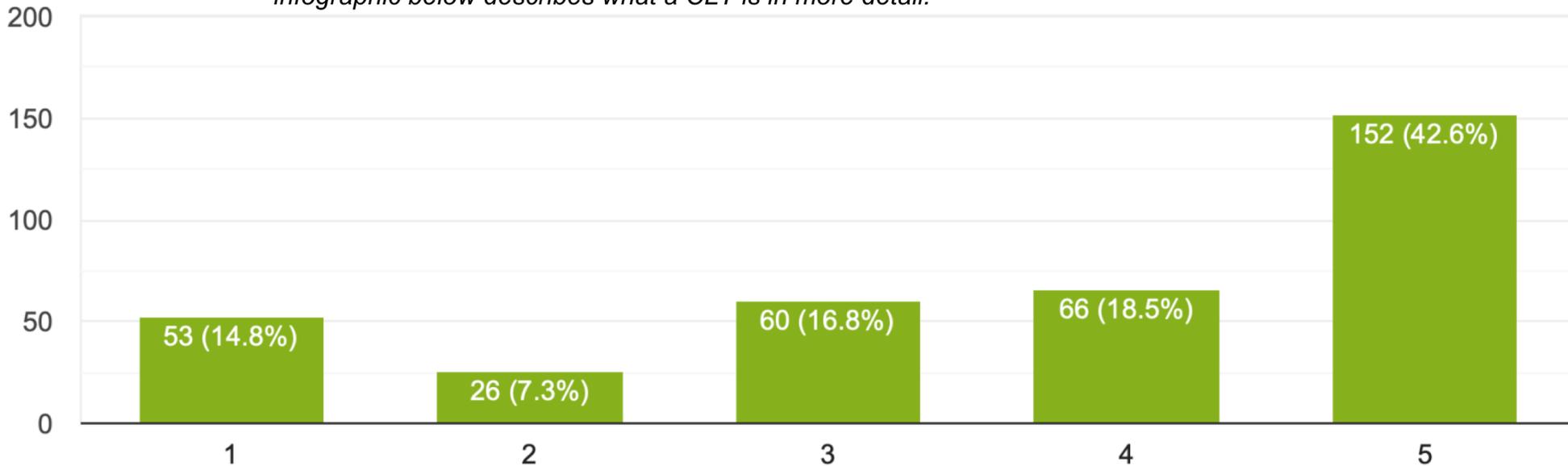
*Proposal: Prioritize using public land for public good—build affordable & accessible housing on the available public lands in the City of Ypsilanti (such as Water St. and 220 N Park). Other possible uses of public land for public good: incentivize construction of an affordable grocery store to address Ypsilanti's food desert, build a recreation center for resident youth and adults, or establish Community Land Trust (see below) on available public land.*



# Establish a community land trust

proposal rating:  
357 responses

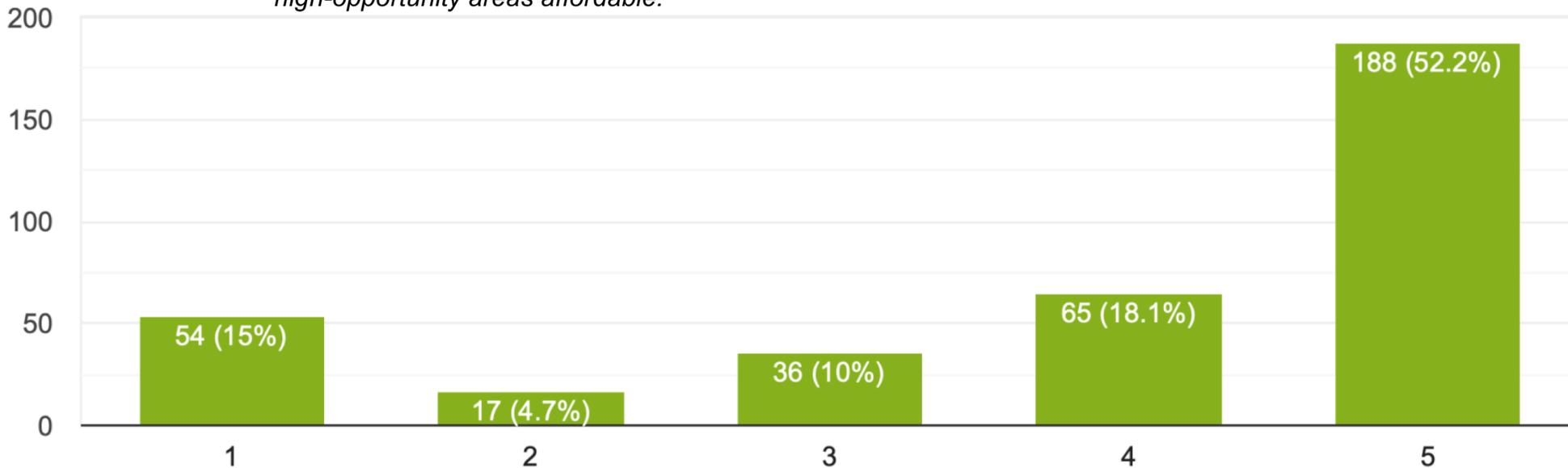
**Proposal: Proposal: Establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long term housing affordability & accessibility through community control of land.** CLTs are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. CLTs combine democratic ownership of land with private ownership of the structure on the land in order to maintain long term housing affordability. CLTs can be interspersed throughout a neighborhood, and can include rental homes and businesses. The infographic below describes what a CLT is in more detail.



# Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance

proposal rating:  
360 responses

*Proposal: Enact an Inclusionary Housing ordinance to require private developers include a certain percentage of units at below market rate. Inclusionary zoning requires (or incentivizes) private developers to designate a certain percentage of the units in a given project as below market rate. In D.C. and around the country, inclusionary housing is an increasingly popular way to produce affordable housing through the private market—it is one of the main tools cities have for maintaining neighborhood diversity, and keeping high-opportunity areas affordable.*

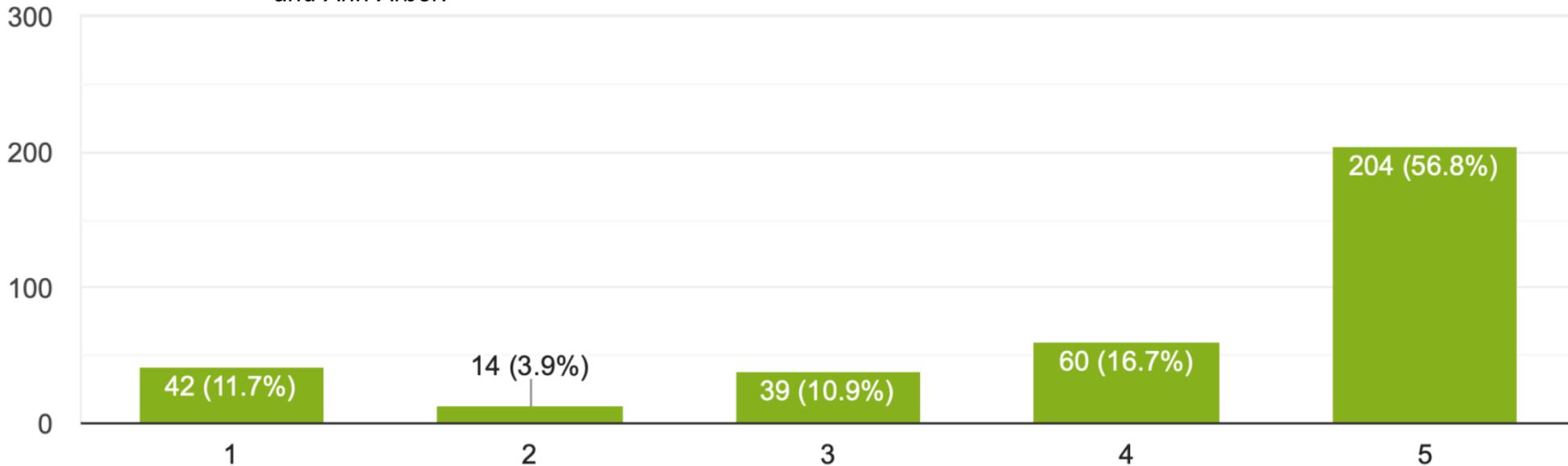


# Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance

proposal rating:

359 responses

**Proposal: Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance to 1) Define the parameters for affordable & accessible housing based on Ypsilanti's Area Median Income (AMI) and 2) Require new housing developments to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units based on Ypsilanti's need.**  
*An Affordability Ordinance would enhance a future inclusionary housing policy by setting affordability rates based on Ypsilanti's AMI, thus acting in consideration of income disparity and segregation between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.*

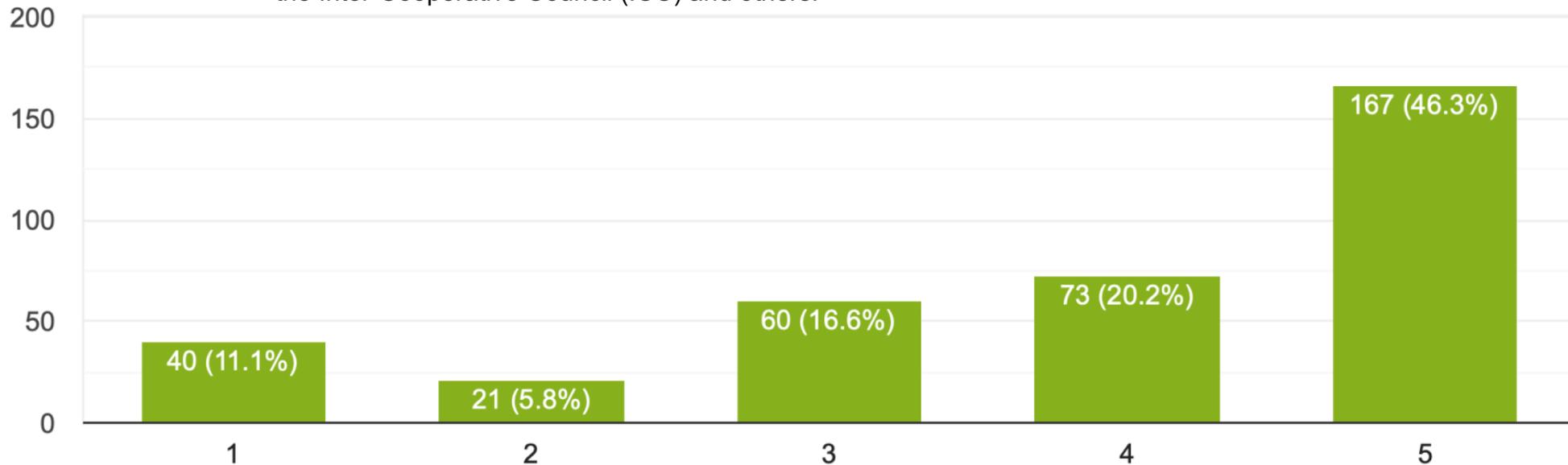


# Incentivize co-op conversion

proposal rating:  
361 responses

***Proposal: Create a legal framework incentivizing co-operative housing conversion and assist tenants in the purchase of rental units for the purposes of creating affordable co-operative housing.***

Cooperative housing is a type of home ownership—it is formed when people join on a democratic basis to own or control the housing and/or related community facilities in which they live. Co-operative housing usually includes an apartment building or buildings. Ann Arbor has many co-operative housing options via the Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC) and others.

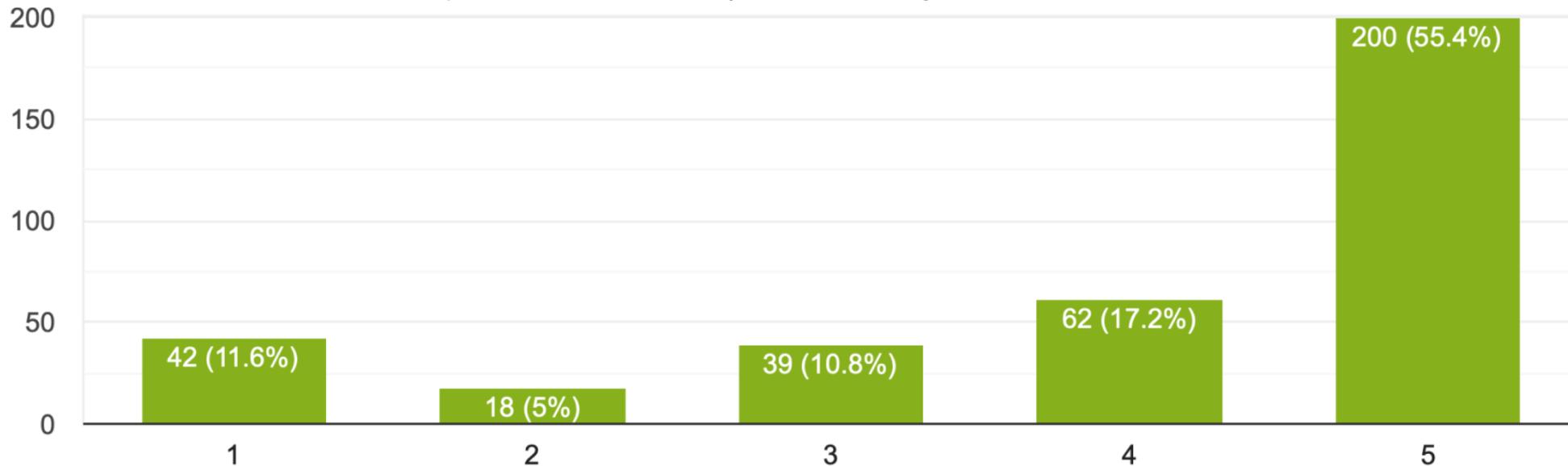


# Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti

proposal rating:

361 responses

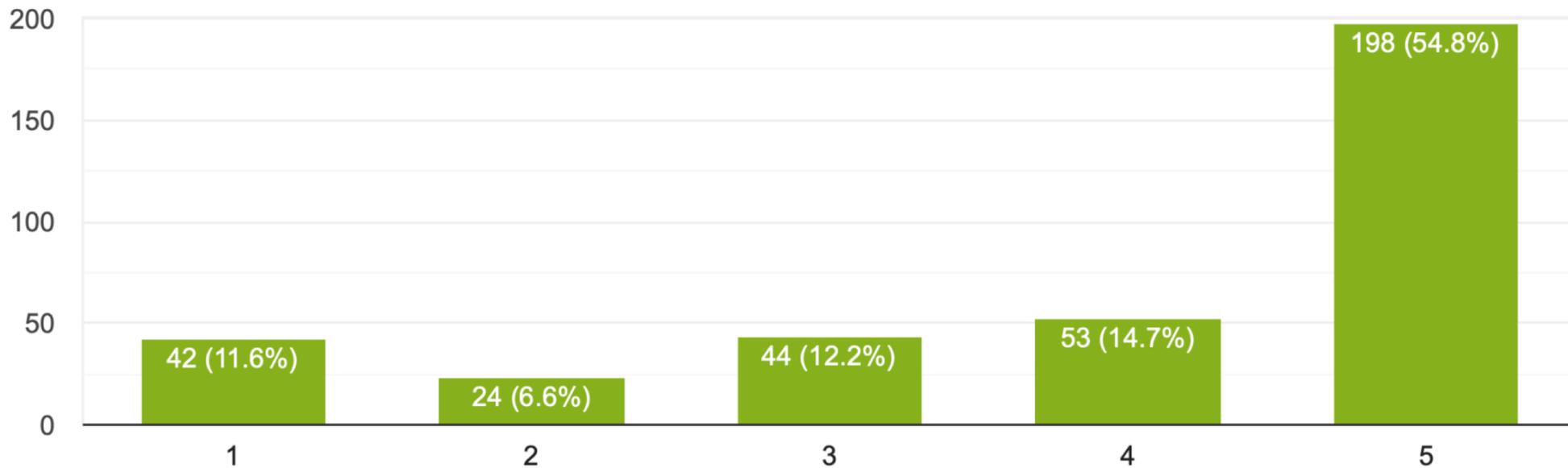
**Proposal: Build a shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.** Ann Arbor's homeless shelter, The Delonis Center, has 50 resident beds this year (down from 77 beds in 2018) and is serving a significant percentage of people who identify their last address as being in Ypsilanti. At the same time, reports from Ypsilanti Community Schools and Eastern Michigan University show increased rates of student homelessness. A youth shelter, Ozone House, is currently under new construction. Ypsilanti does not currently have an overnight shelter for adults.



# Install public toilets and benches in our parks

proposal rating:  
361 responses

***Proposal: Install high-quality public toilets and napping benches in our parks for the use of the general public, including residents experiencing homelessness. Ypsilanti also receives the Mental Health & Public Safety millage which could be used to fund projects like these and others that promote the health the safety of residents experiencing homelessness.***



## Sustainable development: Priority ranking

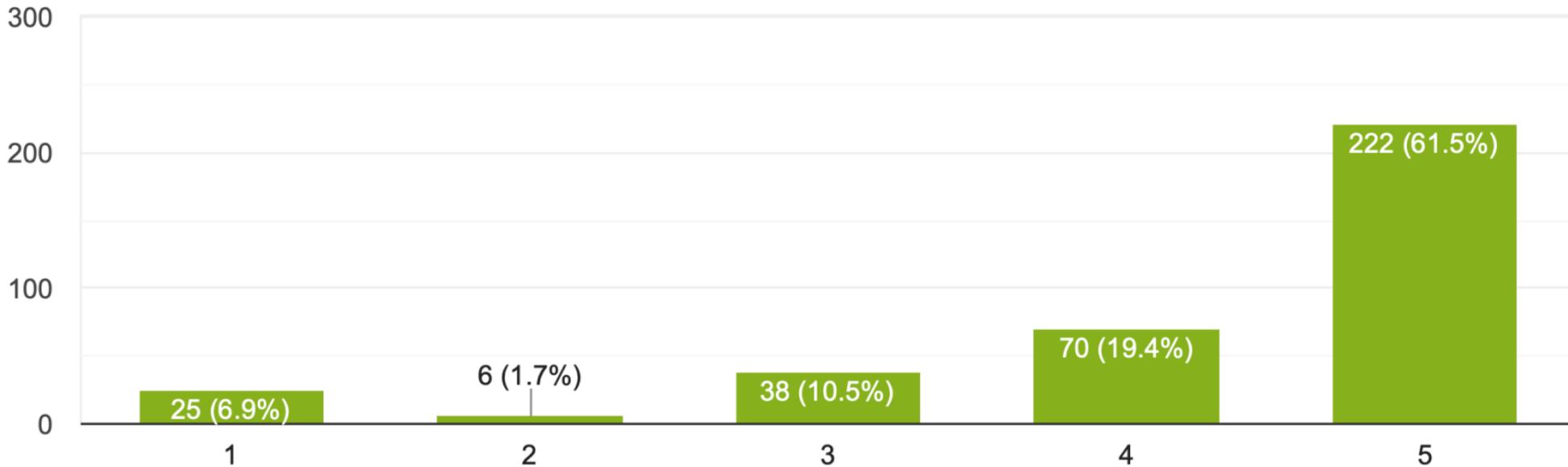
1. Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance (44.9%)
2. Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti (39.9%)
3. Install public toilets and benches in our parks (35.9%)
4. Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance (32.7%)
5. Build on public land (28.9%)
6. Establish a community land trust (27.1%)
7. Incentivize co-op conversion (25.4%)

## Section 3: Need-based assistance

# 1. Establish a minor home repair program

**Proposal: Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners.** Eligible repairs could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation. The City could offer small grants for home improvements.

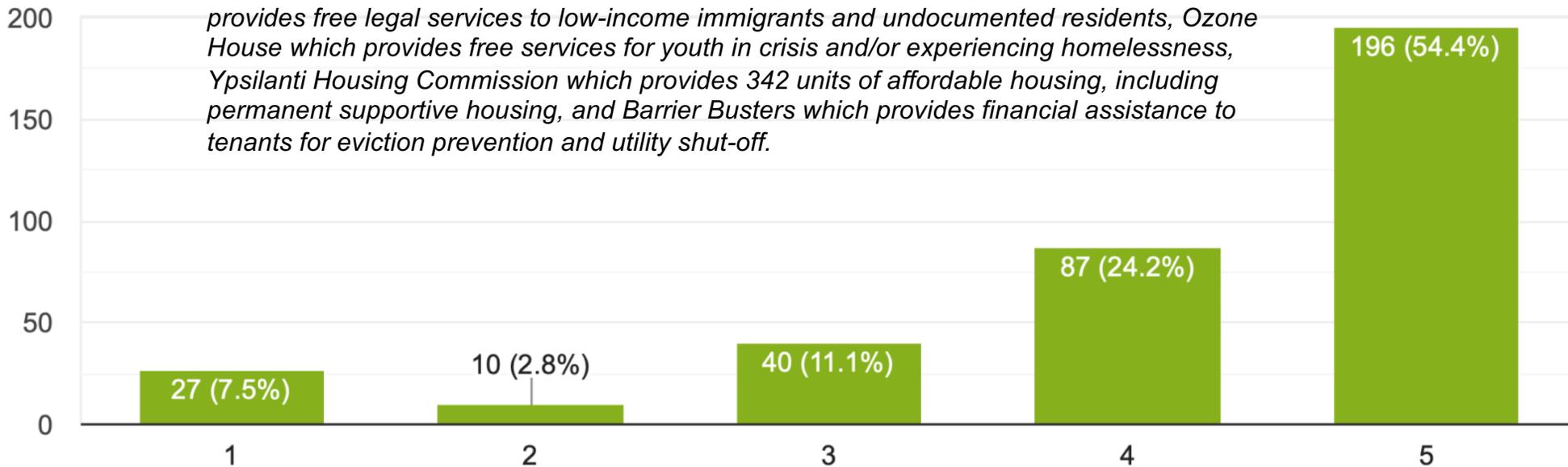
361 responses



## 2. Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance

360 responses

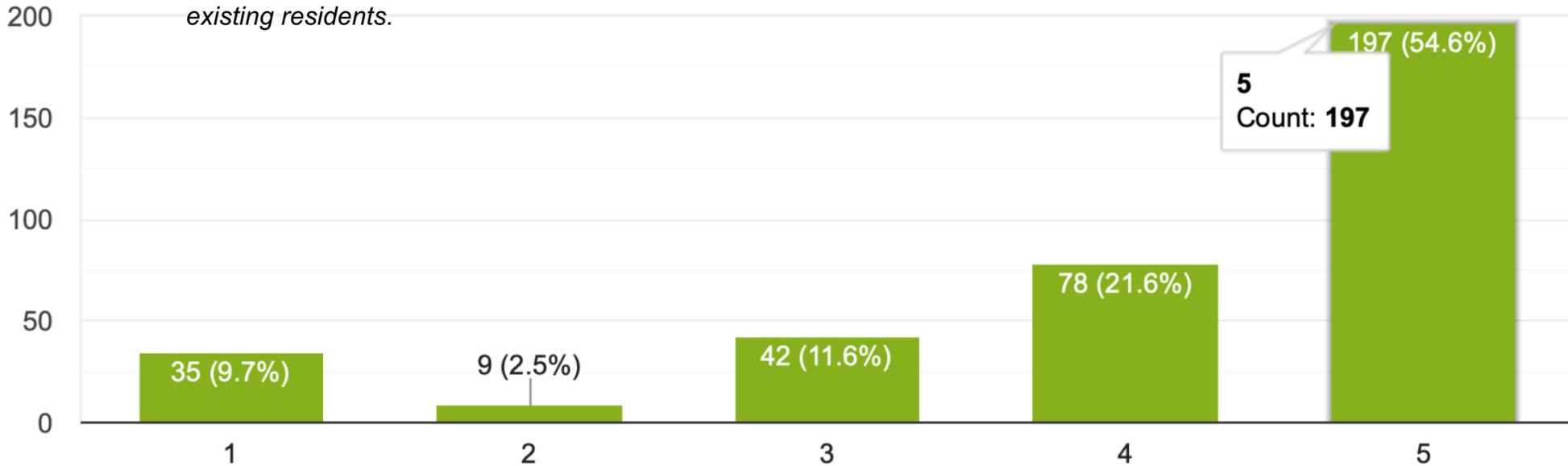
**Proposal: Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance to further expand services and programs to Ypsilanti residents.** Agencies that provide need-based assistance include Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM) which provides free legal representation to low-income tenants, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) which provides free legal services to low-income immigrants and undocumented residents, Ozone House which provides free services for youth in crisis and/or experiencing homelessness, Ypsilanti Housing Commission which provides 342 units of affordable housing, including permanent supportive housing, and Barrier Busters which provides financial assistance to tenants for eviction prevention and utility shut-off.



### 3. Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Avenue to qualify for same incentives as new homebuyers

361 responses

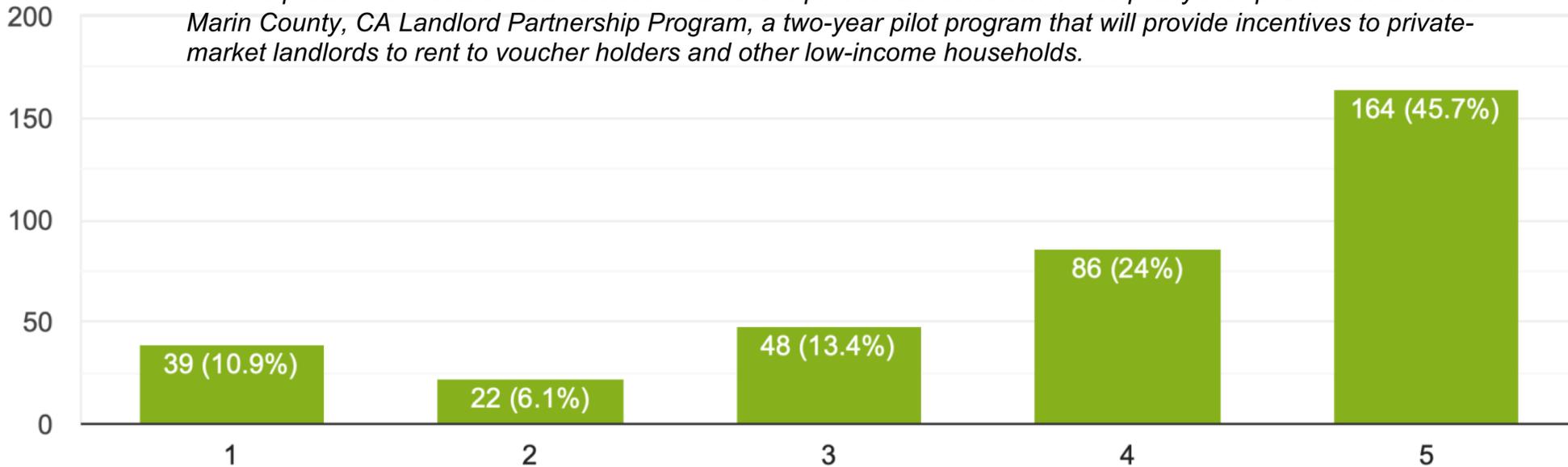
*Proposal: Modify the policy for the South of Michigan Avenue Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) to allow existing homeowners to qualify for the same tax breaks as new home-buyers. Under the current City of Ypsilanti NEZ policy, tax breaks granted to homeowners who rehabilitate existing properties are of shorter duration than tax breaks granted to owners of newly constructed properties, which favors investors and newcomers over existing residents.*



## 4. Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent

359 responses

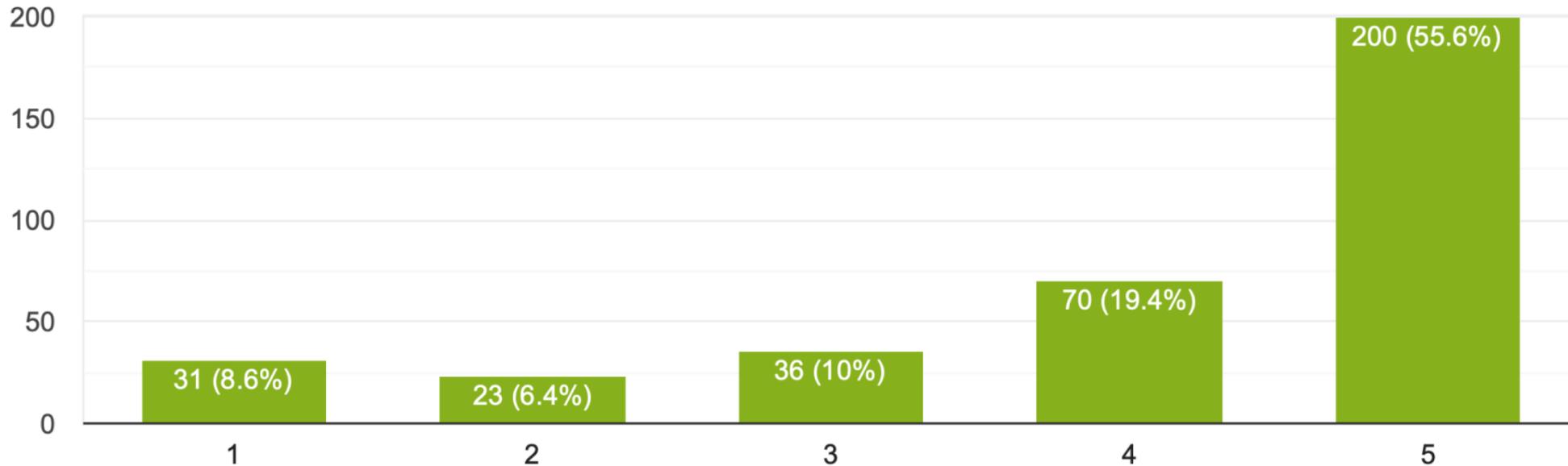
**Proposal: Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent by offering tax abatement and/or funding for property improvements in exchange of keeping rent stable for a period of time.** 70% of Ypsilanti households are renter households, and much of the housing stock in the rental market is older and in disrepair—this program looks to produce the dual benefit of stable rent and improved unit conditions. This policy is in practice in the West Marin County, CA Landlord Partnership Program, a two-year pilot program that will provide incentives to private-market landlords to rent to voucher holders and other low-income households.



## 5. Assist low-income residents with home buying

**Proposal: Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance. 70% of households in Ypsilanti are renter households—a significantly higher percentage to comparable college towns of its size. The city could provide assistance to low-income households who wish to buy homes, to reduce barriers to homeownership and promote housing stability.**

360 responses



## Need-based assistance: Priority ranking

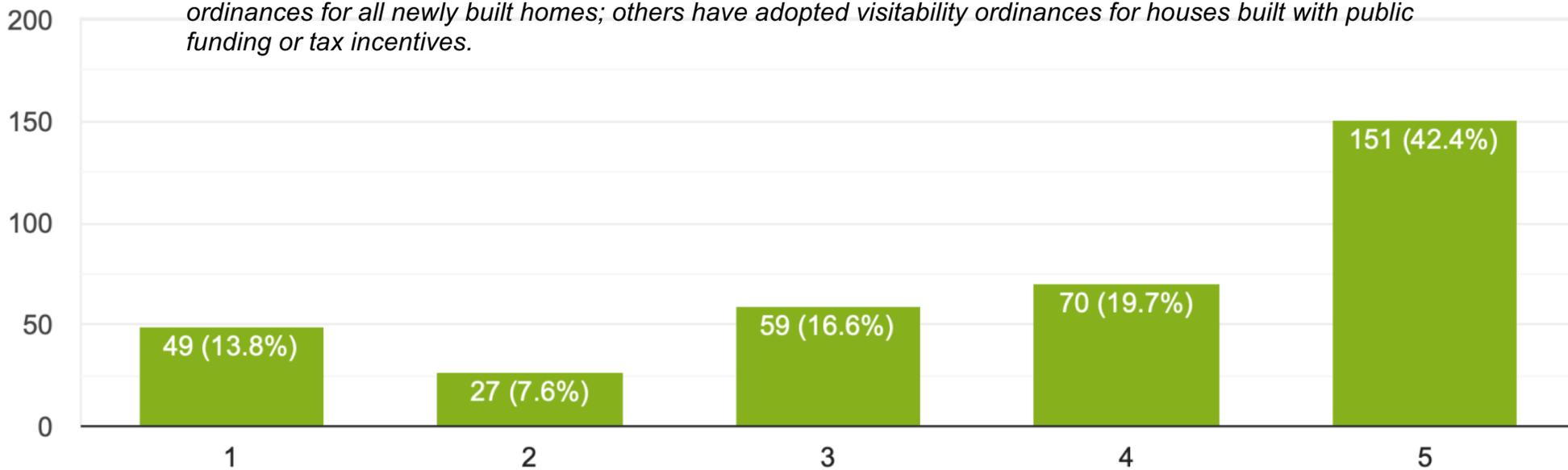
1. Assist low-income residents with home buying (49.1%)
2. Establish a minor home repair program (42.4%)
3. Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent (40.9%)
4. Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance (39.2%)
5. Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Avenue to access the same incentives as new homebuyers (32.2%)

## Section 4: Physical accessibility

# Adopt a visitability ordinance

356 responses

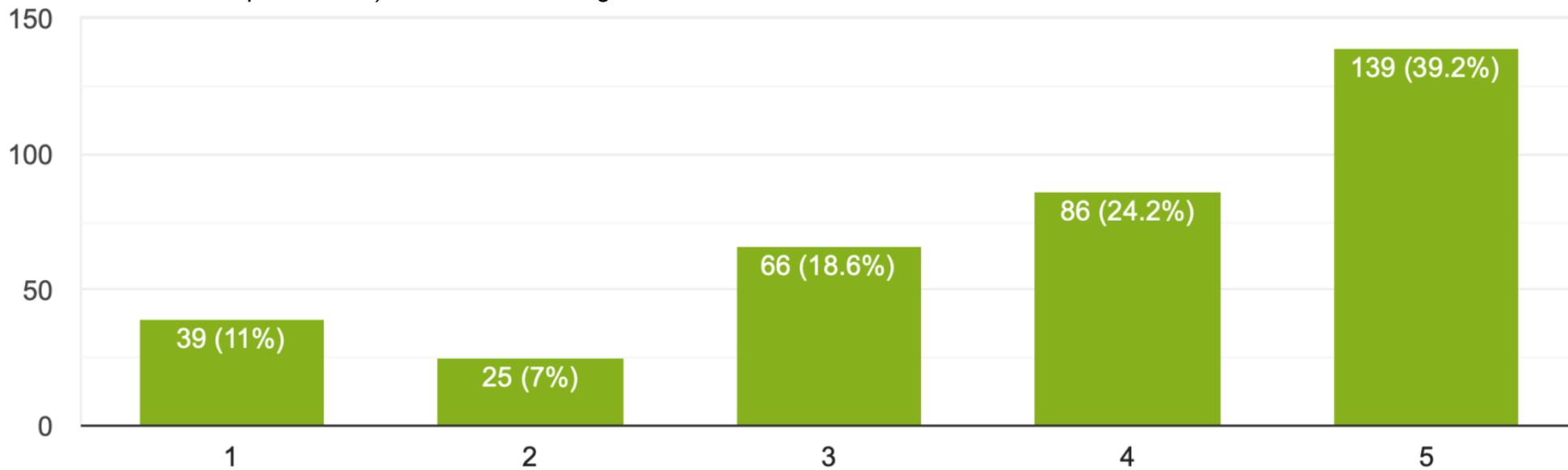
**Proposal: Adopt a Visitability Ordinance to ensure that newly constructed homes incorporate basic accessibility features that make it easier for mobility-impaired people to visit or live in Ypsilanti.** A home is “visitable” if it has: (1) at least one no-step entrance; (2) doors with 32 inches of clear passage space; and (3) a bathroom on the main floor that is wheelchair-accessible. Some US cities have adopted mandatory visitability ordinances for all newly built homes; others have adopted visitability ordinances for houses built with public funding or tax incentives.



# Launch a universal design program

355 responses

**Proposal: Launch a Universal Design Program to encourage homeowners and landlords to make modifications that support barrier-free living throughout a dwelling.** The program could consist of a resource guide that describes and illustrates Universal Design features and provide small incentives (like waived or reduced work permit fees) for Universal Design modifications.



## Physical accessibility: Priority ranking

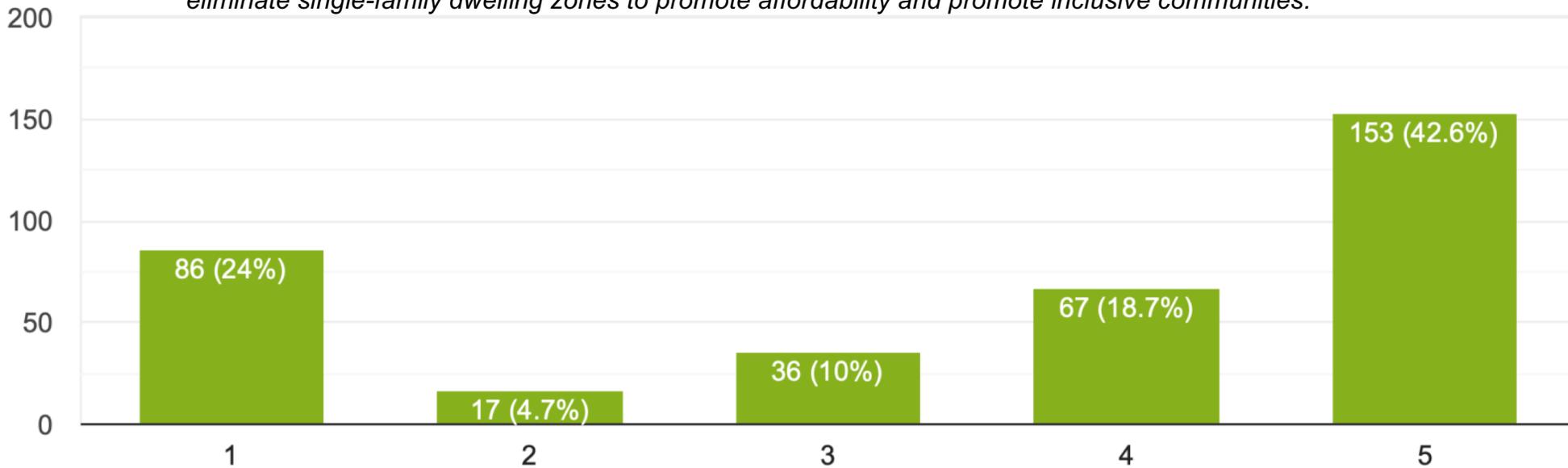
1. Launch a Universal Design program (60.4%)
2. Adopt a visitability ordinance (59.4%)

# Section 5: Zoning

# Change single-family zoning districts to allow 2- or 3-unit homes

*Proposal: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow duplexes or triplexes in the Single-Family Residential district to allow for the construction of housing that tends to be more affordable than detached single-family homes. Restriction of multiple family dwellings has historically been a part of race or class segregation strategies in some communities. Some municipalities (such as Minneapolis) have taken action to reduce or eliminate single-family dwelling zones to promote affordability and promote inclusive communities.*

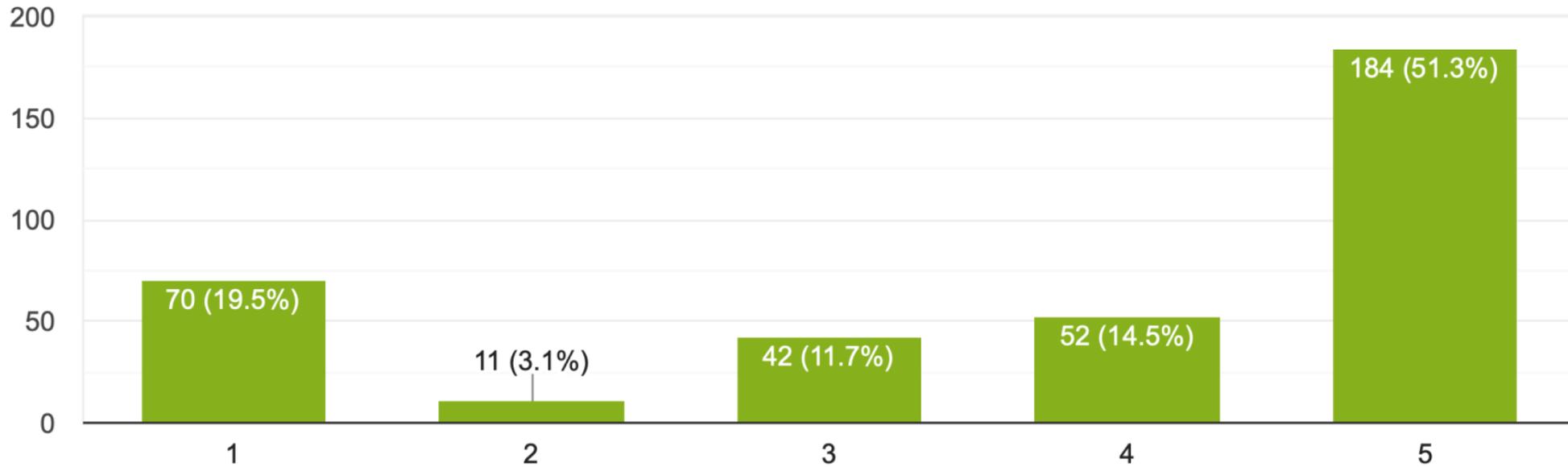
359 responses



# Lift limit on non-related persons living in a single dwelling

359 responses

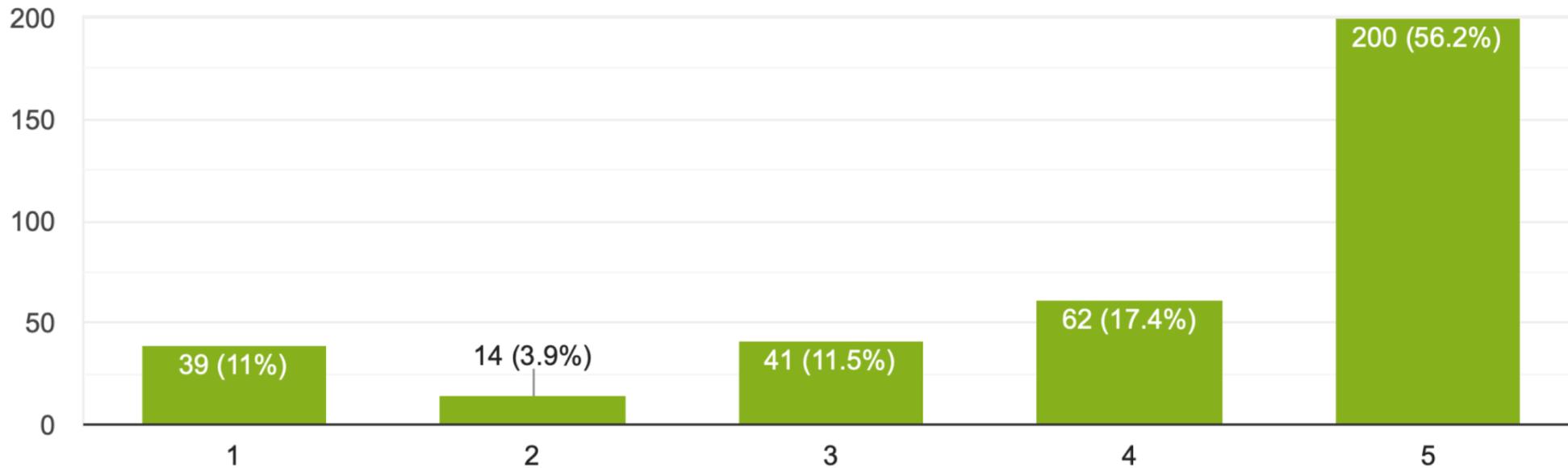
**Proposal:** Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by revising the Zoning Ordinance definition of a “family”. The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance definition of a “family” limits the number of unrelated individuals that may occupy a single dwelling to three. This limit can be increased generally or tied to the number of bedrooms available in that dwelling.



# Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the City

**Proposal:** Revise the zoning ordinance to better accommodate affordable housing in small, independent residences known as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). ADUs can take the form of detached garages, backyard cottages, or basement/attic apartments located on the same lot as an existing residence. Currently ADUs are permitted in the Core Neighborhood, Core Neighborhood-Mid, and Historic Corridor zones.

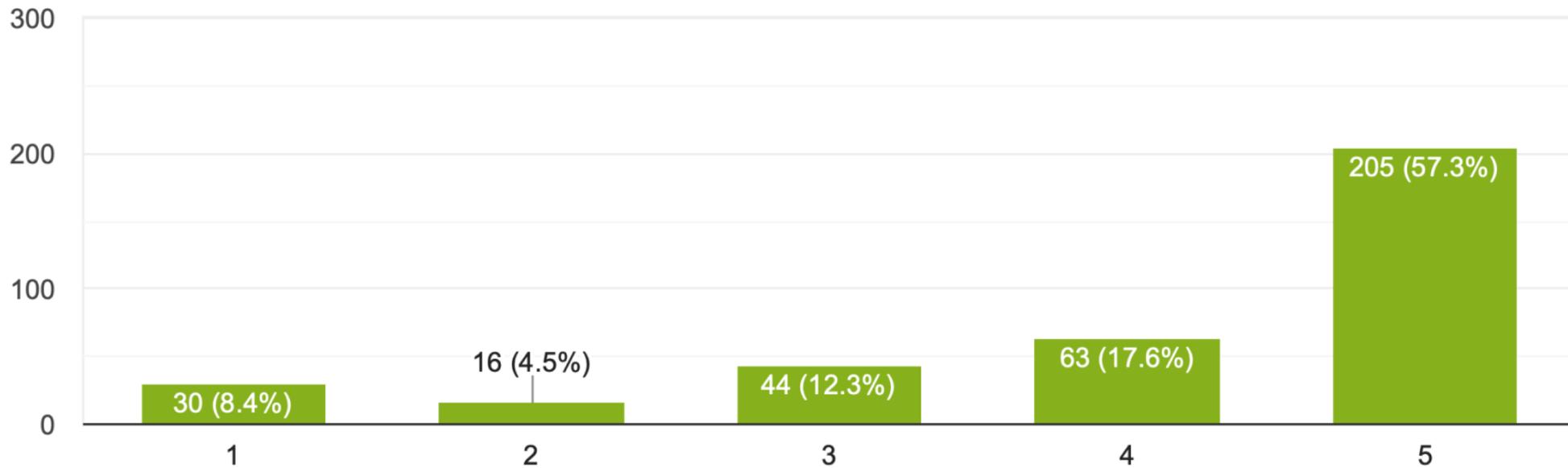
356 responses



# Alter zoning ordinance to accommodate tiny homes

**Proposal: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to remove barriers to tiny home construction and occupancy.** *Tiny homes can provide an affordable alternative to larger, traditional homes. They can come in a variety of styles, many of which are complicated by zoning requirements governing building frontage, lot coverage, and portability.*

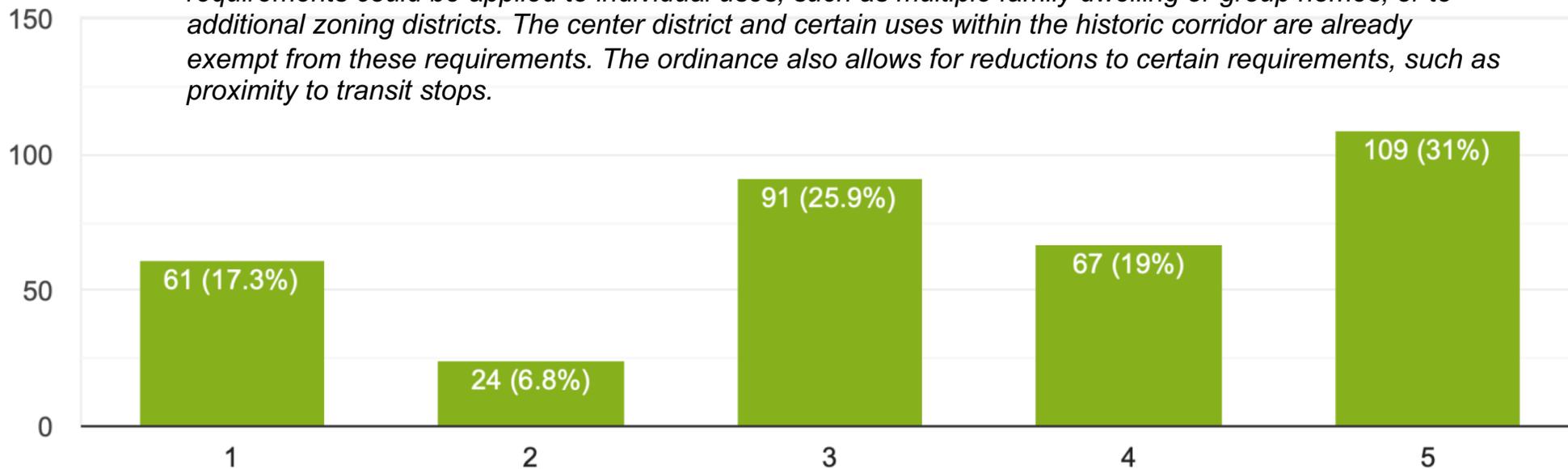
358 responses



# Change parking space requirement for new housing developments

352 responses

**Proposal: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the number of parking spaces required for new housing development or altered housing.** Reduction of parking requirements can lower the cost of construction or provide more site-layout options for new or altered housing. Reductions in parking space requirements could be applied to individual uses, such as multiple family dwelling or group homes, or to additional zoning districts. The center district and certain uses within the historic corridor are already exempt from these requirements. The ordinance also allows for reductions to certain requirements, such as proximity to transit stops.



## Zoning: Priority ranking

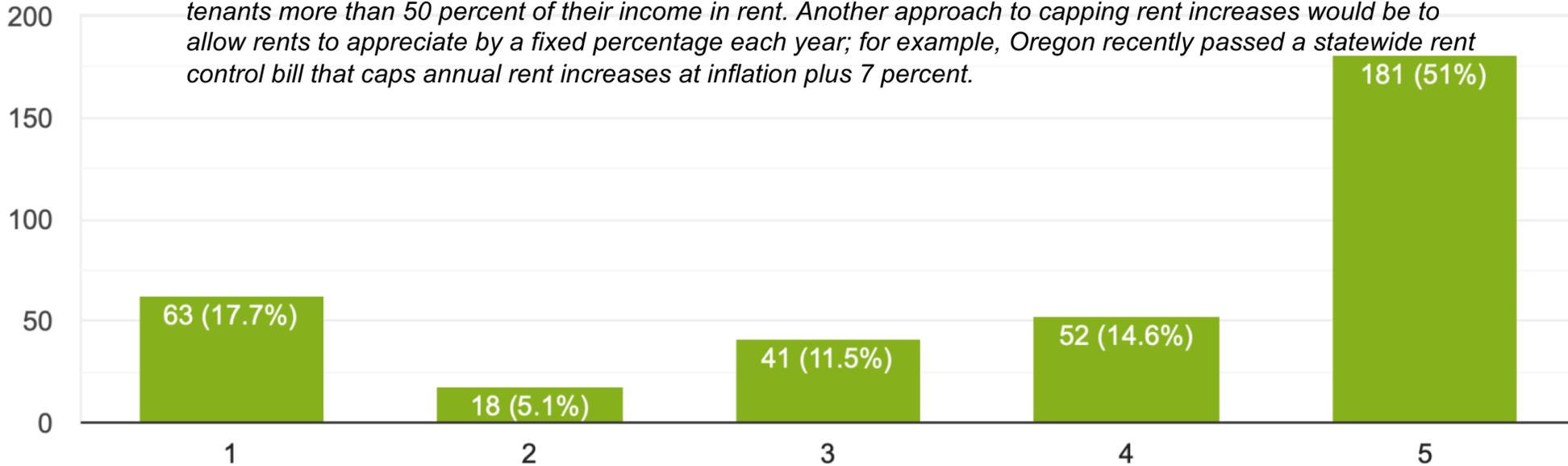
1. Alter zoning ordinance to accommodate tiny homes (52.3%)
2. Lift the limit on non-related persons living in a dwelling (44.6%)
3. Change single-family zoning districts to permit 2- or 3-unit homes (44%)
4. Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the City (39.1%)
5. Change parking space requirement for new housing developments (19%)

## Section 6: Partnership & Advocacy

# Advocate for rent control legislation

355 responses

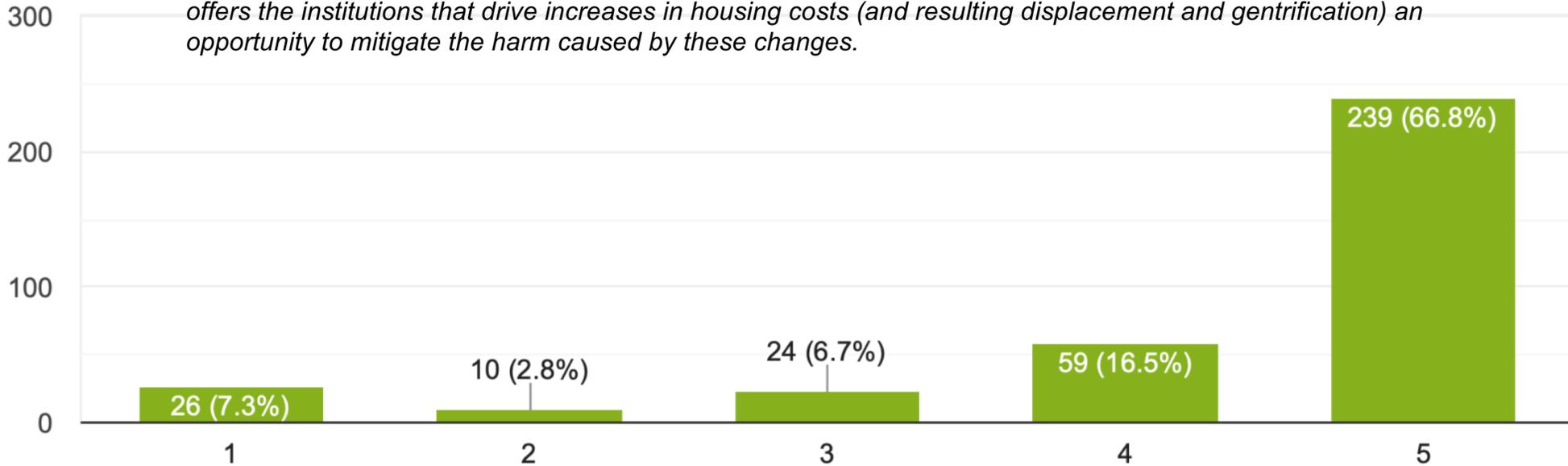
**Proposal: Advocate with state lawmakers to grant municipalities the authority to cap annual rent increases.** Michigan law currently prohibits local government units from enacting or enforcing rent control policies. House Bills 4686 and 4687 would (1) revise the law to create an exception to the rent control prohibition and (2) give local governments the power to prevent landlords from charging tenants that have a disability or elderly tenants more than 50 percent of their income in rent. Another approach to capping rent increases would be to allow rents to appreciate by a fixed percentage each year; for example, Oregon recently passed a statewide rent control bill that caps annual rent increases at inflation plus 7 percent.



# Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust

**Proposal: Advocate for the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund and to actively support other county-wide housing affordability measures.**  
*Many reports, including the 2014 OCED housing report, point to Ann Arbor's increasing rental rates driving the displacement of Ann Arbor residents to Ypsilanti. Asking local universities to fund the Ypsilanti Housing Trust offers the institutions that drive increases in housing costs (and resulting displacement and gentrification) an opportunity to mitigate the harm caused by these changes.*

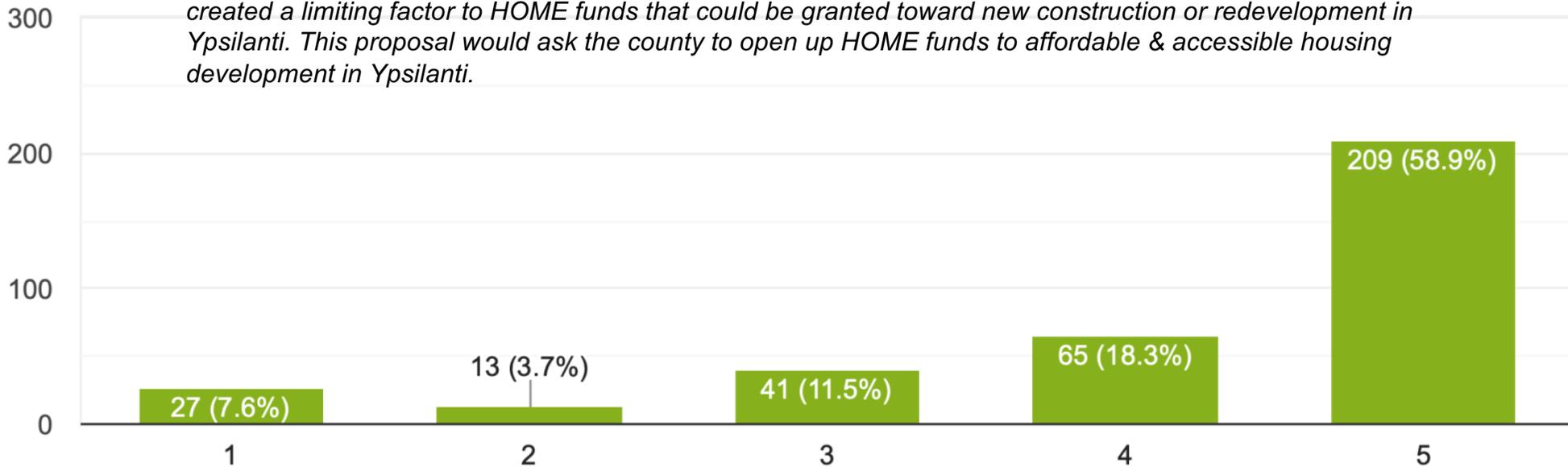
358 responses



# Ask OCED to fund affordable, accessible housing in Ypsilanti

**Proposal: Advocate for Ypsilanti to receive HOME funds for affordable & accessible housing development.**  
The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) is a type of United States federal assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to States in order to provide decent and affordable housing, particularly housing for low- and very low-income Americans. The 2014 OCED housing report created a limiting factor to HOME funds that could be granted toward new construction or redevelopment in Ypsilanti. This proposal would ask the county to open up HOME funds to affordable & accessible housing development in Ypsilanti.

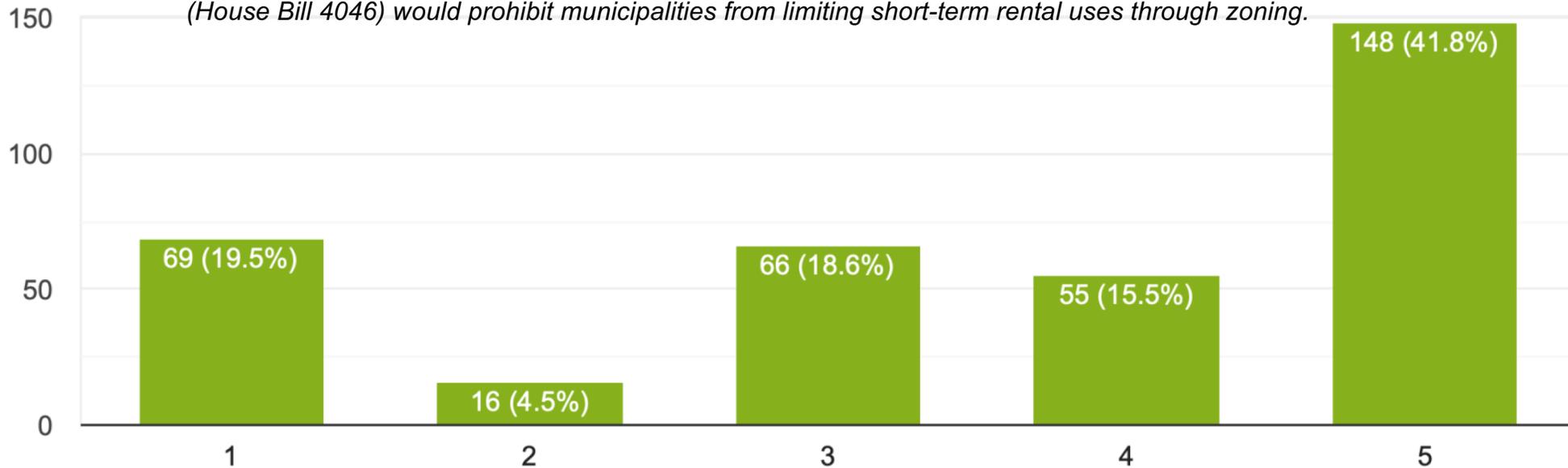
355 responses



# Advocate for local authority to regulate Airbnb/short-term rentals

354 responses

**Proposal: Advocate with state lawmakers for greater local government authority to regulate vacation and short-term rental uses such as Airbnb, HomeAway and VRBO.** Conversion of permanent housing units to vacation or short-term rentals can reduce the supply of housing available to local residents and increase rents. Michigan law currently prohibits most municipalities from imposing special taxes, and a recently re-introduced bill (House Bill 4046) would prohibit municipalities from limiting short-term rental uses through zoning.



## Partnership & Advocacy: Priority ranking

1. Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust (54.8%)
2. Advocate for rent control legislation at State level (54.2%)
3. Ask OCED to fund affordable and accessible housing in Ypsilanti (36.7%)
4. Advocate for local authority to regulate Airbnb/short-term rentals (28.2%)

**Agenda**  
**Planning Commission**  
**Wednesday, 17 June 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Please be advised that due to COVID-19, City Hall will not be open to the public. This meeting will be held electronically on a video conferencing application in accordance with Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order. The access code is posted in the Public Notice on [www.cityofypsilanti.com](http://www.cityofypsilanti.com) and attached in the packet. The public may choose to participate during Audience Participation or the Public Hearing through the video conferencing application, or may submit e-mailed comments to [aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com](mailto:aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com) by 4 pm, June 17.**

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair	P	A
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair	P	A
Eric Bettis	P	A
Michael Borsellino	P	A
Mike Davis Jr.	P	A
Jessica Donnelly	P	A
Phil Hollifield	P	A
Heidi Jugenitz	P	A
Michael Simmons	P	A

**III. Approval of Minutes**

- May 20, 2020 Meeting

**IV. Audience Participation**

*Open for general public comment to Planning Commission on items for which a public hearing is not scheduled. Please limit to five minutes.*

**V. Presentations and Public Hearing Items**

- Limited Site Plan Review: Marihuana Retailer, 50 Ecorse Rd.

**VI. Old Business**

**VII. New Business**

- Election of Officers
- Bylaws Discussion

**VIII. Future Business Discussion / Updates**

**IX. Committee Reports**

- Non-Motorized Committee Report
  - Approval of Members
- Master Plan: Housing Affordability and Access Committee Report
  - Executive Summary and Survey Findings

**X. Adjournment**

**Meeting Minutes  
Planning Commission  
Wednesday, 20 May 2020 – 7:00 P.M.  
Virtual Meeting**

**Please be advised that due to COVID-19, City Hall will not be open to the public. This meeting will be held electronically on a video conferencing application in accordance with Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order. The access code is posted in the Public Notice on [www.cityofpsilanti.com](http://www.cityofpsilanti.com) and attached in the packet. The public may choose to participate during Audience Participation or the Public Hearing through the video conferencing application, or may submit e-mailed comments to [aaamodt@cityofpsilanti.com](mailto:aaamodt@cityofpsilanti.com) by 4 pm, May 20.**

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair	P
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair	P
Eric Bettis	P
Michael Borsellino	P
Mike Davis Jr.	A
Jessica Donnelly	A
Phil Hollifield	P
Heidi Jugenitz	P
Michael Simmons	A

Chair Dunwoodie explained the Zoom Meeting participation details.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

- May 6, 2020 Special Meeting  
*Motion to approve*

**Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz. Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**

**IV. Audience Participation**

*Open for general public comment to Planning Commission on items for which a public hearing is not scheduled. Please limit to five minutes.*

N/A – No one spoke.

**V. Presentations and Public Hearing Items**

- Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment: Drive-through financial services as special land uses in Center zoning districts.

Staff presentation by City Planner Andy Aamodt. Mr. Aamodt summarized the request, submitted by Eastern Michigan University Credit Union. Mr. Aamodt then

explained what a drive-through financial services facility may look like and how it is presently interpreted. There are other zoning districts, HHS, HC, NC, and GC, in which drive-through financial services are permitted as a special land use. A map spatially representing these districts was shown.

Staff does not believe drive-through facilities should be allowed, special land use or not, in Center districts. This is based on the Master Plan's vision for Center "City Framework", which is in other words the Master Plan's Land Use Plan. Zoning changes need to be backed by this Master Plan. In the zoning ordinance, drive-throughs clearly contradict the Center zoning district's stated purpose and intent. Additionally, there are concerns from an environmental sustainability planning standpoint if Center districts are overwhelmed by vehicle travel rather than alternative modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and transit. An increase of drive-throughs could mean increased emissions from vehicles, and increased impervious surface which could mean both stormwater runoff problems and heat island problems. There is the potential for safety issues with possible pedestrian-vehicle conflict if a drive-through facility is implemented in a walkable, Center district.

Staff does not believe the standards for a zoning ordinance text amendment are met. Mr. Aamodt lists the standards that this request violates. Therefore, staff recommends Planning Commission recommend City Council deny the text amendment.

Commissioner Dunwoodie asked if Center districts allow drive-throughs of other types. Staff is not aware of any, as fast food restaurants do not allow for drive-through facilities in Center districts either.

Commissioner Dunwoodie wondered about the history of the corridor and if it had always been a similarly zoned district. Staff later confirmed it had been a central business district zone, zoned B-3 in the past.

Commissioner Dunwoodie asked if there are zoning ordinance safeguards dealing with pedestrian to vehicle traffic. Staff replied that one section to look at is the traffic visibility section. Staff also emphasized that an increase in curb-cuts in a walkable urban district is discouraged.

Commissioner Hollifield asked about the nonconforming use nature of the bank drive-through downtown.

The applicants, Bob Hoida of Hobson Black Architects, and DeAnne Ramos of EMUCU spoke about the request. They presented their thoughts on the property EMUCU now owns at 611 W. Cross St. They have another drive-through on Carpenter Road in Pittsfield Township, which has a full service drive-through that is much appreciated by their clients. The applicants understand a Center district and the Master Plan, but do not think they can help their clients properly without a drive-through. They stress they are re-developing a site in a sustainable way rather

than creating a new site, and believe sites should be examined individually on a special use basis.

Commissioner Bettis inquired about the customer base- about both the preferences of the customer base as well as the traffic that a drive-through facility might demand.

*Motion to open the public hearing.*

**Offered By: Commissioner Jugenitz; Seconded By: Commissioner Hollifield. Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**

John Franks- spoke about the drive-through, prefers drive-throughs, and believes this is a good idea. Mr. Franks also emphasizes the credit union use the name EMUCU rather than UMCU.

Amy- inquired about the Sustainability Commission. Staff suggested Amy contact Department of Public Services for Sustainability Commission details.

*Motion to close the public hearing.*

**Offered By: Commissioner Jugenitz; Seconded By: Commissioner Hollifield. Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**

Commissioner Talaga expressed concerns about the potential conflicts of pedestrians and vehicles in a Center district, especially relevant on W. Cross with EMU students. Commissioner Jugenitz echoed these thoughts and expressed concern of reducing walkability in Center districts if allowed.

Commissioner Dunwoodie expressed concerns about opening drive-throughs up across all Center districts. There might be more automobile focus on W. Cross than Downtown or Depot Town, but this request is for the entirety of Center district. This may make the zoning ordinance less consistent seeing the zoning ordinance doesn't allow for other drive-through facilities for other uses such as restaurants.

Commissioner Hollifield expressed that even though we should encourage walking and bicycling, automobiles should still have some consideration. Does not want to further outlaw the automobile in certain areas of these Center districts. A mixture of transportation modes should be considered. Some sites, including this one, have multiple curb-cuts.

Commissioner Talaga and Commissioner Bettis worried about setting a standard if a Center district site would be given a special use permit, and what that would mean for future sites going forward.

Commissioner Bettis also expressed there could be potential for bicyclist collisions and automobiles if the automobile traffic is increased.

*Motion that the Planning Commission recommend denial of the proposed text amendment to Chapter 122: Article IV, Division 3, Subdivision II (§122-446), with the following findings:*

- (1) The proposed amendment is inconsistent with the guiding values of the Master Plan;*
- (2) The rezoning is inconsistent with description and purpose of the proposed district;*
- (3) The proposed amendment is inconsistent with the intent of this Zoning Ordinance;*
- (4) The proposed amendment will not enhance the functionality, transportation network or character of the future development in the City;*
- (5) The proposed amendment will not preserve the historic nature of the surrounding area and of the City;*
- (6) The proposed amendment will not enhance the natural features and environmental sustainability of the City;*
- (7) The proposed amendment will not protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public;*
- (8) The proposed amendment will not address a community need in physical or economic conditions or development practices;*

**Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz.**

**Motion Passes: Yes – 5; No – 1 (Hollifield); Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**

Mr. Aamodt reiterated that this action is a recommendation to City Council; the case will go before Council at an upcoming meeting.

**VI. Old Business** N/A

**VII. New Business** N/A

**VIII. Future Business Discussion / Updates**

Andy Aamodt stated the goal is to have the Master Plan draft update, the 50 Ecorse revised site plan, and conflict of interest research as items at the next meeting, June 17<sup>th</sup>.

**IX. Committee Reports**

- Non-motorized Committee Report
  - N/A – No recent meeting
- Master Plan: Housing Affordability and Access Committee report
  - The Committee met last week virtually. Will meet again. They are updating a list of recommendations and will hope to present this and a report to Planning Commission soon.

**X. Adjournment**

**Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz.**

**Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)**



**City of Ypsilanti**

Community & Economic Development Department

**17 June 2020**

**Staff Review of Limited Site Plan  
Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC (Green Vitality)  
*Marihuana Retailer Use*  
50 Ecorse Rd.**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Applicant:</b>	Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC 50 Ecorse Rd. Ypsilanti, MI 48198
<b>Project:</b>	Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC (Green Vitality) - <i>Marihuana Retailer</i> Limited Site Plan Review
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	17 June 2020
<b>Location:</b>	Ecorse Rd., east of Center St. and north of Towner St.; Parcel ID# 11-11-10-267-002.
<b>Zoning:</b>	"GC" General Corridor
<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval
<b>Staff Recommendation:</b>	Approval

## **PROJECT AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

The applicant received Special Use Permit approval by Planning Commission at its May 6, 2020 special meeting. However, the Site Plan Review case was tabled because of inconsistencies/confusion in the plan that was submitted. This is a review of the applicant's new, revised site plan.

The existing suite in the building is currently used as a medical marijuana provisioning center. City Council recently amended the zoning ordinance to allow for recreational marijuana uses. This property is zoned "GC". The subject suite is approximately 2,300 square feet in a commercial plaza building of approximately 15,150 square feet. The lot is approximately 1.865 acres. There is currently parking in the large lot to the north and east, and a parking area to the east. There is vehicle access from Ecorse Road. The existing building is a legal nonconforming structure and may not be expanded regardless.

The applicant also applied for its Marihuana Facility Permit. The facility will not be granted its Marihuana Facility Permit unless its Special Use permit is granted. A condition of the Special Use permit is this site plan approval.

**Figure 1: Subject Site Location (2015 Aerial)**



**Figure 2: Photograph of Site (Google Street-View, July 2019)**



**Figure 3: Land Use and Zoning of Surrounding Area**

	<b>LAND USE</b>	<b>ZONING</b>
<b>NORTH</b>	Automotive uses; Animal clinic	GC
<b>EAST</b>	Automotive uses; Restaurant	GC
<b>SOUTH</b>	Multi-family residential	HHS
<b>WEST</b>	Restaurant; Institutional	GC; HHS

**SITE PLAN: CRITERIA AND REVIEW**

**§122-311**

For zoning compliance reviews, or plans where a Special Use permit is required but no site changes will likely be needed, the applicant may, at the determination of the City Planner, submit a limited site plan for review in lieu of a full site plan per §122-309(t).

**STANDING**

**§122-311(a)**

The applicant is legally eligible to apply for site plan review, and all required information has been provided.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**§122-311(b)**

"The proposed site plan conforms with all the provisions and requirements, as well as the spirit and intent of this chapter and the Master Plan. The proposed development will meet all the regulations of the zoning district in which it is located."

The applicant is proposing continued re-use of the existing suite in the existing building. This is a (legally) nonconforming building and (legally) nonconforming site. Such re-use is permissible under §122-352. The site plan provided accounts for no changes to the existing building and few changes to the site. We have attached the required limited site plan (see Figure 4 for capture of plan).

***Items to be Addressed:*** None.



**BUILDING LOCATION AND SITE ARRANGEMENT**

**§122-311(c)**

*"All elements of the site plan shall be harmoniously and efficiently organized in relation to the character of the proposed use, the size and type of lot, the size and type of buildings, and the character of the adjoining property. The site shall be so developed as not to impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in this chapter."*

The applicant is proposing to keep the current business arrangement as is. The business is in a suite in the commercial plaza. There are no proposed changes to the overall building.

**Items to be Addressed:** None.

**Figure 5: Photograph of Site (Google Street-View, July 2019)**



**SITE ACCESS, TRAFFIC, AND PARKING**

**§122-311(d)**

*"With respect to vehicular and pedestrian circulation on the site, including walkways, interior drives, and parking; circulation shall to the extent possible create potential cross-and joint-access to adjacent parcels and the existing block layout. Special attention shall be given to the location, number and spacing of ingress and egress points; general interior circulation including turnaround areas; adequate provisions for delivery of services (trash removal, school buses, mail and parcel delivery); separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic; avoidance of building corners next to access drives; identification of addresses; storage of plowed snow; and arrangement of parking areas that are safe and convenient, and insofar as practicable, do not detract from the design of the proposed buildings and structures, neighboring properties, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, access to transit and flow of traffic on adjacent streets. All buildings or groups of buildings shall be so arranged as to permit adequate access by emergency vehicles as required by the city building code."*

In terms of pedestrian access to the site, there is a wide sidewalk as part of the right-of-way, however it is in poor shape, curbed, and is not accessible for disabled persons. The conditions and curbing make bicycling difficult as well. The site plan provides for ramped sidewalks. The plan also provides for a marked pedestrian path linking the sidewalk to the building.

In terms of vehicular access, there are three access drives off Ecorse Road. Currently the site's parking space striping is in poor shape. It is difficult to discern where to park. The proposed resurfacing and restriping of the spaces based on the site plan will better organize the parking situation. The site plan accounts for approximately 85 parking spaces serving the commercial plaza, four which are barrier-free.

Because this is a *change in use* (§122-681.b), parking requirements must be met for the subject suite, as well as the rest of the businesses throughout the commercial plaza. The site plan meets the minimum parking requirements. Additionally, this is a large site which is automobile-oriented, zoned "GC," and proposes no increase of paving. Therefore staff feels a nominal over-parking at this site is satisfactory.

**Items to be Addressed:** None.

**Figures 6-8: Photographs of Sidewalk (March 11, 2020)**





**Figures 9-10: Parking Lot (March 11, 2020)**



**SCREENING**

**§122-311(h)**

*"The site plan shall provide reasonable visual and sound privacy for all dwelling units on or adjacent to the property. Fences, walks, barriers, and landscaping shall be used, as appropriate, for protection and enhancement of the property. All outdoor storage of materials, loading and unloading areas, and refuse containers shall be screened or located so as not to be a nuisance. Outdoor lighting shall be shielded so as to not adversely affect neighboring properties or traffic on adjacent streets."*

Currently, the fence on the rear property line is in poor shape and does not adequately screen this commercial use from the adjoining multi-family residential use. The site plan proposes the privacy fence to be repaired, thus creating sufficient screening.

**Items to be Addressed:** None.

**Figures 11-12: Rear Screening (March 11, 2020)**





## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: SITE PLAN**

Staff recommends the Planning Commission **approve** the Limited Site Plan for the Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC (Green Vitality) existing facility at 50 Ecorse Rd. with the following findings:

### Findings

1. The application substantially complies with §122-310.
2. The existing building and site design are nonconforming under §122-352.

---

Andy Aamodt  
City Planner, Community & Economic Development Department

CC     File  
       Applicant team



Nominee For City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee  
Term of office: June 17, 2020 to June 30, 2022

Renee Echols

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

My name is Renee Echols and I am a blind resident of the Third Ward. I am very interested in serving on the City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee. I feel I have a lot to offer both the Committee and Planning Commission as a disabled pedestrian that will benefit both disabled citizens and all other citizens who travel the sidewalks and streets via foot. Further, I am a mom with two young children, so representing the interests of families and children is also a top priority for me. I have lived in the city since 2016.

## Executive Summary Report of the City of Ypsilanti Sub-committee on Housing Affordability and Accessibility

Submitted to Planning Commission on June 12, 2020

Throughout 2016 and 2017, members of the public repeatedly voiced concerns to the City of Ypsilanti Planning Commission regarding (1) rising rents in the City that were putting people at risk of displacement, and (2) limited physical accessibility of the City's aging housing stock. In response to these concerns, the Planning Commission voted in December 2017 to charter a citizen sub-committee to study the issues of housing affordability and accessibility, and to "develop and issue recommendations for specific land use and policy changes for consideration by the Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council."

The purpose of the sub-committee, as described in its founding charter, was to inform updates to the City of Ypsilanti's 2013 Master Plan with a focus on preserving and enhancing housing affordability and accessibility, in keeping with the guiding values that "anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti."

The first phase of the committee's work was devoted to fact-finding in sub-groups and was followed immediately by a second phase focusing on analysis of the situation. **Five problem statements** were formulated to capture the key challenges facing the City with respect to housing affordability and accessibility:

- **The cost of housing is increasing steadily.** After the crash of the housing market in 2008, Ypsilanti saw a steep decline in housing prices, accompanied by an increase in foreclosures and a decline in the homeownership rate due to an influx of "house flipping," whereby landlords and speculators purchased foreclosed homes and converted them into investment properties. For-sale housing prices remained low for several years post-crisis before starting to pick up again in 2012-2013. Since then, available housing stock has dried up, leading to a very low vacancy rate, increases in demand, and higher prices for both rental and for-sale housing.  
As a result of these trends, housing in Ypsilanti is increasingly unaffordable for many residents. Because a strong majority of housing units in Ypsilanti (69.2%) are renter-occupied, and because renters in Ypsilanti have lower incomes, on average, than homeowners, renters are disproportionately affected by increasing housing costs. However, a significant proportion of homeowners in Ypsilanti are also affected. Nearly half of households in Ypsilanti are cost-burdened (meaning >30% of household income goes to housing costs), and Ypsilanti has significantly higher rates of cost burden than both Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County as a whole.
- **Existing data and measures do not adequately capture the local situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility.** There is a pressing need for improved measures and additional information to paint a more comprehensive picture of the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility challenges, and how it impacts specific populations, including seniors, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and school-aged youth experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.
- **Ypsilanti's old housing stock poses health, safety and accessibility challenges.** While Ypsilanti's old and historic homes add character to the City, their age and condition present challenges for affordability and accessibility. Most homes were constructed before contemporary health and safety codes were in place; and just one in 10 houses or

apartments in Ypsilanti was built in the 1990s or later, when updates to the Fair Housing Act and building codes began requiring some accessibility features in new housing, such as stepless entry and ground-level bathrooms and bedrooms. As a result, Ypsilanti residents face health risks from lead paint, radon exposure, and mold; high heating bills from poor insulation; and difficulty finding housing that will accommodate a disability. Rental households are at increased risk for all of these factors. In addition to a general lack of accessible housing, there are few housing options adapted to the needs of seniors, many of whom live on modest fixed incomes and/or have limited physical mobility.

- **Ypsilanti does not have a lot of land available to build new housing.** Nearly all land in the City has already been developed, limiting opportunities for construction of new housing. Much of the land that is currently vacant, like Water Street, is considered “brownfield,” meaning past industrial activity has left behind contamination that adds cleanup costs to development; other available parcels have potential or actual wetlands on them. There are significant limits on what types of homes can be built, due to a combination of zoning restrictions (e.g. minimum building envelopes, setback requirements) and historic preservation requirements. And because new housing is typically more expensive than existing housing -- especially in the Ann Arbor construction market, where labor costs are relatively high -- replacing older housing with new construction has the potential to exacerbate housing affordability issues.
- **Current and past policies at the state and local levels have contributed to our affordability and accessibility challenges.** The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance limits construction and conversion of multi-unit dwellings and smaller-scale single-unit dwellings through a combination of single-family zoning, accessory dwelling unit (ADU) restrictions, and residential lot and building envelope requirements. In addition, the City currently imposes a limit of three (3) on the number of unrelated adults that may occupy a single dwelling, a regulation that is stricter than in surrounding communities and which contributes to under-utilization of available housing units. Inadequate oversight by the State of Michigan in administering federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to private real estate developers led to the exploitation of a loophole that allowed several apartment complexes in Ypsilanti City and Township to shed their affordability requirements far ahead of schedule. Seniors residing at Cross Street Village apartments have seen dramatic escalation in rent as a result.

Based on the above understanding of the problem, our committee designed and implemented a multi-stage public engagement process consisting of:

- **A Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey** to gather up-to-date information on the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility issues experienced by Ypsilanti residents. The survey was circulated online and via paper questionnaires and was completed by more than 500 respondents between October 2018 and January 2019.
- **Interviews** with three landlords of residential properties in Ypsilanti (one with a small number of rental properties, one with a moderate number of rental properties, and one with a large number of rental properties).
- An **Open Forum** to present the survey and interview findings to the public and to solicit public input on a preliminary set of housing affordability and accessibility strategies for the City of Ypsilanti.
- An **Ypsilanti Housing Strategies Survey** to gather quantitative feedback from Ypsilanti residents on the favorability of specific housing affordability and accessibility strategies in six key domains: (1) Renters’ rights, (2) Sustainable development strategies, (3) Need-based assistance strategies, (4) Physical accessibility strategies, (5) Zoning strategies, and (6) Partnership and advocacy strategies. The Housing Strategies Survey was launched online

on September 3, 2019 and closed on October 22, 2019. More than 360 responses were collected.

- Finally, the committee welcomed public comment and input through its standing monthly meetings, held from January 2018 to May 2019.

Despite efforts to solicit input from a representative cross-section of Ypsilanti residents, the survey demographics indicate that some groups were underrepresented while others were overrepresented. Males, Black/African Americans, and renters were underrepresented in the survey by a significant margin.

Our key findings with respect to **housing affordability** are the following:

- Prices of both for-sale and rental housing are rising fast and show no signs of abating, in line with national trends.
- The most commonly used measures of housing affordability fail to capture the total cost of housing as experienced by most Ypsilanti residents, and especially those who earn the median income or less. Monthly rents do not capture the full picture with respect to the cost of rental housing; most rentals require a deposit equal to a full month's rent.
- Over half (54.6%) of Ypsilanti renters are cost-burdened with respect to housing, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their income on housing (ACS 2017). Data from the committee's Housing survey closely track ACS data on this point.
- The consequences of the **boom-bust cycle in for-sale housing** have not been the same for all residents and stakeholders. Real estate investors -- some local, others from outside of the area -- who bought homes in Ypsilanti during the housing crisis in order to "flip" them have profited from increasing sales prices. Many Ypsilanti homeowners who purchased their homes at depressed prices (i.e. from 2008 to 2013) have seen their property values escalate rapidly since 2013, resulting in substantial growth in home equity. The flip side of these benefits has been a sharp decline in access to homeownership for Ypsilanti and other area residents who currently rent their homes. In addition, the boom-bust housing cycle -- by first displacing people with limited wealth and/or income from their homes through foreclosure or short sales and then making it difficult or impossible for them to afford another home in the same neighborhood -- has had a gentrifying effect.
- The consequences of **rising rents** have been acutely felt by Ypsilanti residents, particularly those with lower incomes. Some of the disruptive effects have included frequent moves motivated by sharp rent increases; being forced to settle for poorly maintained rental units that are less accessible to public transportation and other essential amenities; displacement, especially among seniors and people with disabilities; housing insecurity; and homelessness.
- Protecting and advancing housing affordability and accessibility will require decisive and sustained action at multiple levels of government, including the municipal, county, state, and federal levels. Collaborating with policymakers and officials at other levels of government will be essential to ensuring that all people, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.
- One-size-fits-all solutions do not apply; we will need a combination of strategies that are tailored to the specific housing needs and preferences of Ypsilanti residents, including seniors who wish to age in place, people with disabilities.

Our key findings with respect to **housing accessibility** are the following:

- Only a small portion of units offer wheelchair accessibility, and houses often require modifications to doorways, bathrooms, and kitchens to serve a resident with a disability.

- The City of Ypsilanti 2012-2016 census statistics reported that 6.7% of persons under 65 have a disability, or about 1400 disabled persons (auditory, visual, cognitive, ambulatory impairments).
- Accessibility is not limited to the needs of wheelchair users. According to a broader definition of disability, 32% of Ypsilanti residents are living with a disability of some type. The highest concentrations of residents with a disability are in areas with the lowest average incomes.
- AARP/Harvard reports that 90% of seniors plan to age in place, and SEMCOG estimates the over-65 demographic will increase in our area by 240% by 2035. Given the proportions of owner-occupied to rental units in the City, it is important to create accessible options in both categories.
- Survey results further emphasize these basic facts, with two-thirds of survey respondents (66.7%) reported that their homes have no accessibility features. Over 1 in 4 reported that barriers to physical accessibility in a home had limited their quality of life.
- Many survey respondents say that accessibility is a consideration in the selection of their next residence with over half of respondents saying a ramp or step-free entrance would be a factor in their choice, and at least 1 in 5 saying that every accessibility option listed in the survey would be a desirable factor from parking, to bathroom and kitchen amenities, to doorways and elevators.

Based on input and feedback from 361 respondents who reviewed 26 housing strategies included in the committee's Housing Strategies survey, our committee recommends that the City consider adoption and implementation of **11 strategies**. The selected proposals reflect the input of Ypsilanti residents who engaged with this survey and, if implemented, will respond to pressing housing needs and start to correct housing inequities in Ypsilanti. They are:

1. **Tenant Right of First Refusal:** Enact a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance mandating that tenants receive advance notice when their landlord intends to sell the property and have the opportunity to purchase the property before it is offered for sale to outside buyers.
2. **Just Cause Eviction:** Enact a 'Just Cause Eviction' ordinance to protect renters from wrongful eviction. The ordinance would limit a landlord's ability to evict tenants to specific reasons, such as failure to pay rent or for violation of the lease terms.
3. **Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance:** Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance that 1) defines the parameters for affordable & accessible housing based on Ypsilanti's Area Median Income (AMI) and 2) requires new housing developments to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units based on Ypsilanti's need.
4. **Homeless Shelter:** Construct or establish an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.
5. **Community Land Trust:** Work with local non-profit agencies and neighboring communities to establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long-term housing affordability and accessibility through community control of land. Community Land Trusts are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. CLTs provide an opportunity for democratic ownership of land with private ownership of the structure on the land in order to maintain long-term housing affordability. CLT properties can be interspersed throughout one or more neighborhoods and can include rental homes and businesses.
6. **Assist low-income residents with home-buying:** Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance.
7. **Minor home repair:** Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners. Eligible repairs

could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation.

8. **Visitability ordinance:** Enact a Visitability Ordinance to ensure that newly constructed homes incorporate basic accessibility features that make it easier for mobility-impaired people to visit or live in Ypsilanti. A home is “visitable” if it has: (1) at least one no-step entrance; (2) doors with 32 inches of clear passage space; and (3) a bathroom on the main floor that is wheelchair-accessible.
9. **Increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a dwelling:** Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by changing the Zoning Ordinance definition of “Family” to include a limit of two unrelated persons for each bedroom in the dwelling.
10. **Rent Control:** Advocate with state lawmakers to grant municipalities the authority to cap annual rent increases.
11. **Ask local universities to invest in the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund:** Advocate with the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund and to actively support other county-wide housing affordability measures.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and civil unrest due to systemic racial inequities, we share a conviction that it is more important than ever for local governments to proactively address the needs and interests of communities under duress. With a view to accelerating action, we offer a prospective three-phase pathway and timeline for rolling out housing policies and programs.

### **Phase One (current Budget year)**

**Make the Ypsilanti Housing Trust permanent:** Assure a sustainable funding source for housing affordability and accessibility by formalizing and making permanent the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund started by Councilmember Pete Murdock and nourishing it with an annual contribution of no less than \$100,000.

**Allocate staff time to housing affordability and accessibility:** Allocate a significant portion of an existing staff member’s time to the coordination and monitoring of City housing affordability and accessibility policy and to liaising with other units of government and partners on housing affordability and accessibility.

**Draft and implement** the Tenant Right of First Refusal ordinance (Strategy 1), the Just Cause Eviction ordinance (Strategy 2), the Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance (Strategy 3), the Visitability Ordinance (Strategy 8), and the Zoning Ordinance text amendment to increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a single dwelling (Strategy 9) from three total to two persons per bedroom.

**Begin advocating** for rent control legislation at the State level (Strategy 10) and for local university contributions to the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund (Strategy 11).

### **Phase Two (Budget year 2021)**

**Draft an affordability-focused property acquisition plan** that would go into effect in the event of another housing crisis resulting in a surge of foreclosures of multi-unit residences. The aim of

this plan would be to ensure that such properties can be converted to sustainable affordable and accessible use, either in partnership with a local housing non-profit or through the launch of a Community Land Trust.

**Introduce** a home-buying assistance program (Strategy 6) and the Minor home repair program (Strategy 7).

### **Phase Three (Budget year 2022-2030)**

**Create and invest in institutions that promote community stability and build toward long range sustainable housing goals.** Pursue affordability and accessibility-focused collaborations at the county and regional levels, with a view to leveraging resources from outside of the City of Ypsilanti. These would include construction or establishment of an overnight homeless shelter (Strategy 4) and establishment and investment in a Community Land Trust (Strategy 5).

# Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey Results

October 2018 – January 2019

City of Ypsilanti

The survey was published online (via Google Forms) and made available in hard copy at several locations throughout the City of Ypsilanti. Of 604 total responses received, more than 500 were submitted online.

Limitations: Because non-probability sampling was used, we were unable to calculate confidence intervals and margins of error. In addition, several groups were underrepresented or overrepresented in the survey, compared to their relative size as reported by the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS). See comparisons below.

#### Underrepresented (Survey vs. ACS)

Black/African American (13.5% vs. 30.3%)

Male (25.4% vs. 52.6%)

Under 18 years (7% vs. 13.6%)

18-24 years (15.1% vs 25.1% age 20-24)

Hispanic (3.3% vs 4.5%)

Asian (2.4% vs. 3.5%)

#### Overrepresented (Survey vs. ACS)

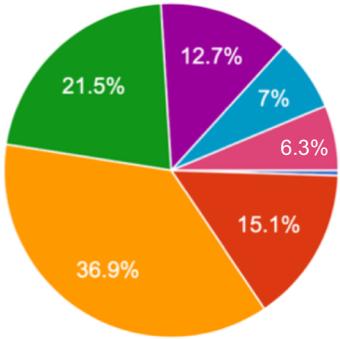
White/Caucasian (77.5% vs. 66.9%)

Female (63.6% vs. 47.4%)

25-34 years (39.9% vs 18.2%)

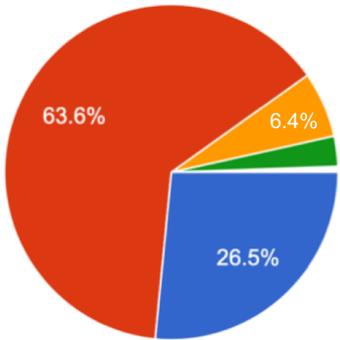
35-44 years (21.5% vs 7.8%)

45-54 years (12.7% vs. 7.3%)



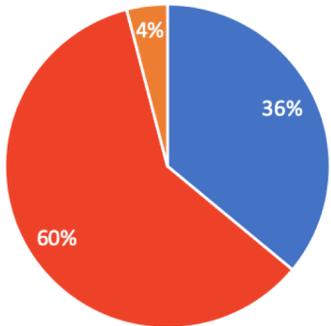
Age

- 17 years or under
- 18-24 years
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or over



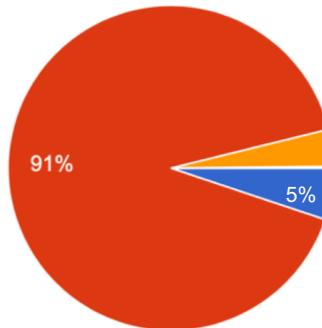
Gender

- Male
- Female
- Nonbinary
- Prefer not to say
- male
- Trans man
- transgender



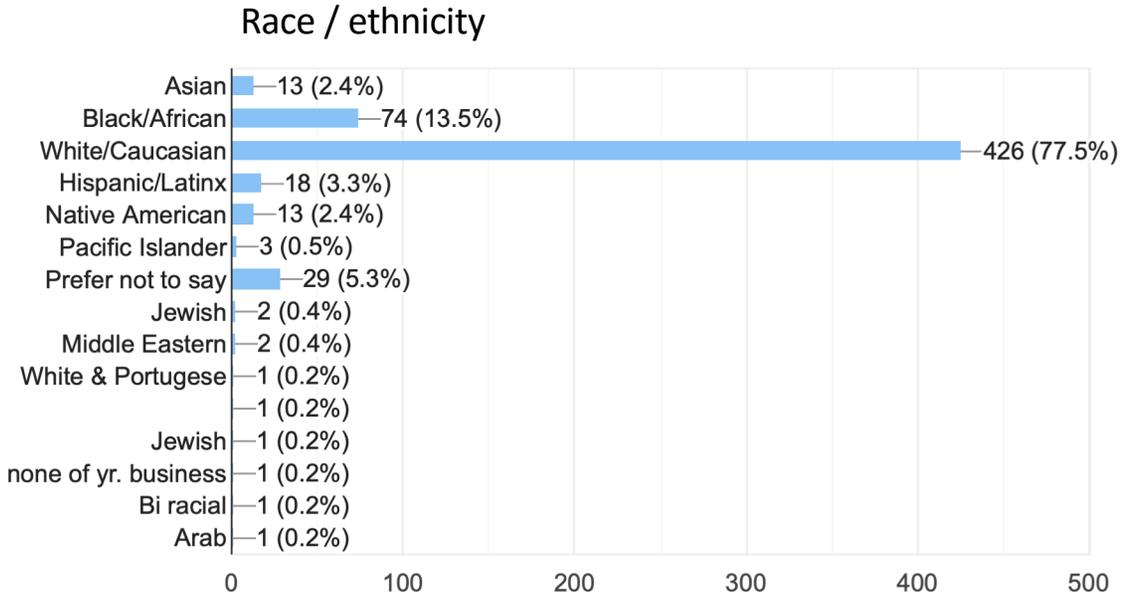
LGBTQ household member?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

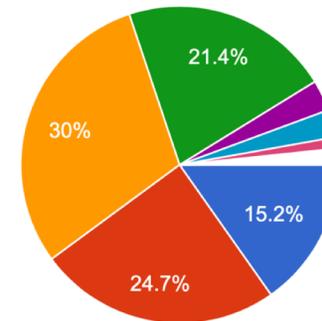


Transgender?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



Race / ethnicity

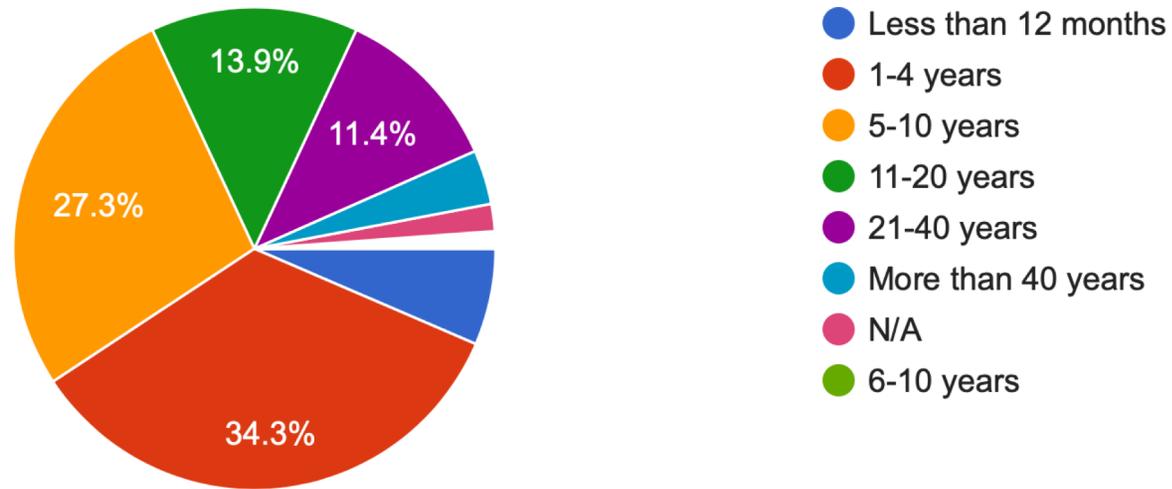


Place of residence?

- Ward 1
- Ward 2
- Ward 3
- Ypsilanti Township
- Pittsfield Township
- Superior Township

# How long have you lived in the City of Ypsilanti?

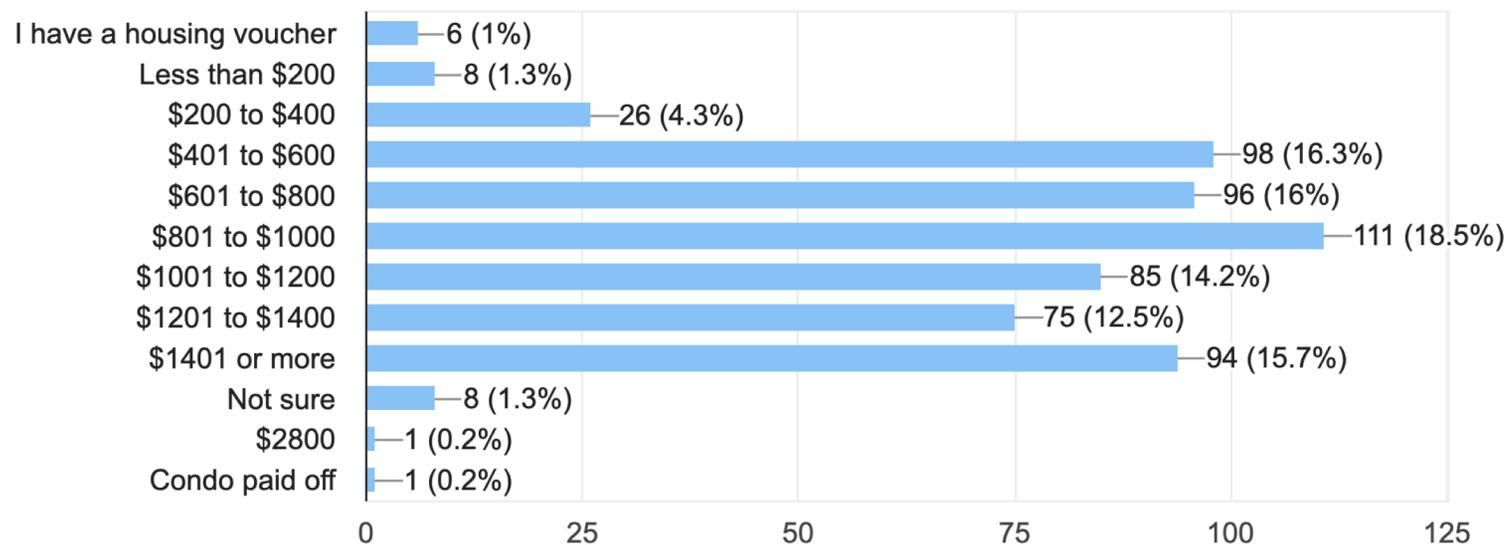
604 responses



Housing affordability

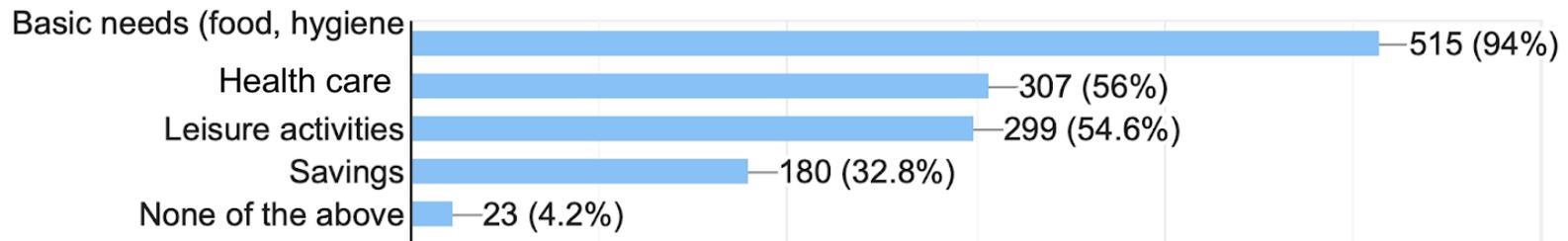
## On average, how much do you spend on housing-related costs each month?

600 responses



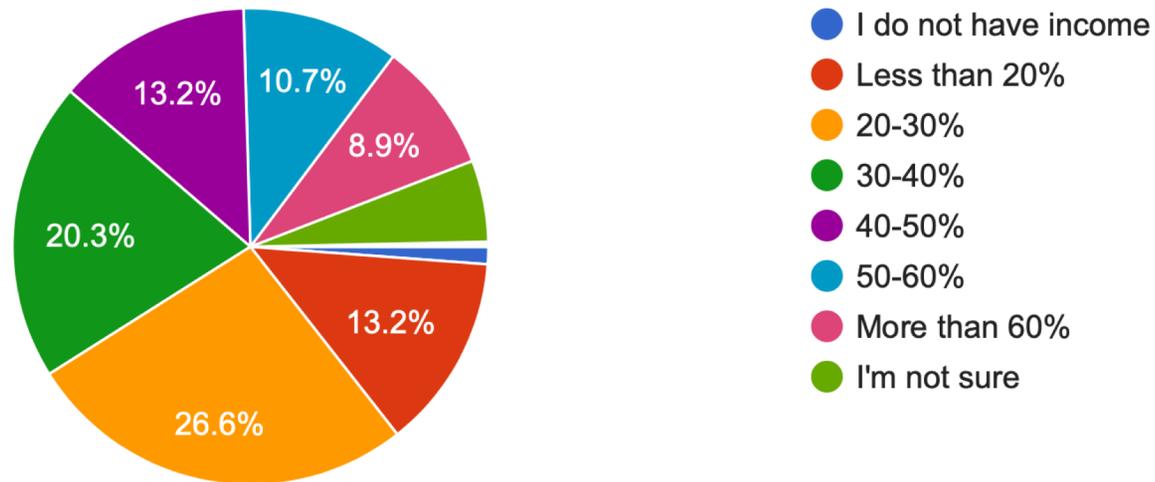
# After paying your monthly housing costs, which of the following are you able to afford:

548 responses



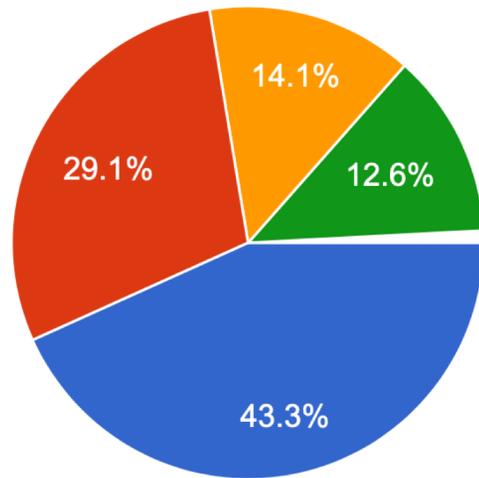
# Approximately what share of your gross (pre-tax) monthly income do you spend on the above housing-related costs?

597 responses



# How many people, besides yourself, do your housing costs cover?

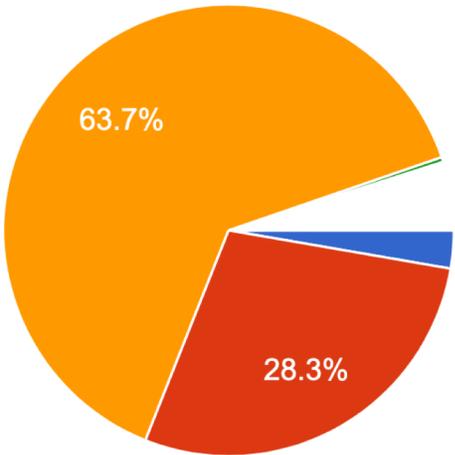
601 responses



- No one - my housing costs cover only myself
- 1 other person
- 2 other people
- 3 or more other people
- i pay roughly 1/4 of the mortgage fo...
- I share an apartment- my roommate...
- split costs with partner
- 4
- one pet cat

# Over the past 4 to 5 years (since 2014), would you say your housing costs in the City of Ypsilanti have:

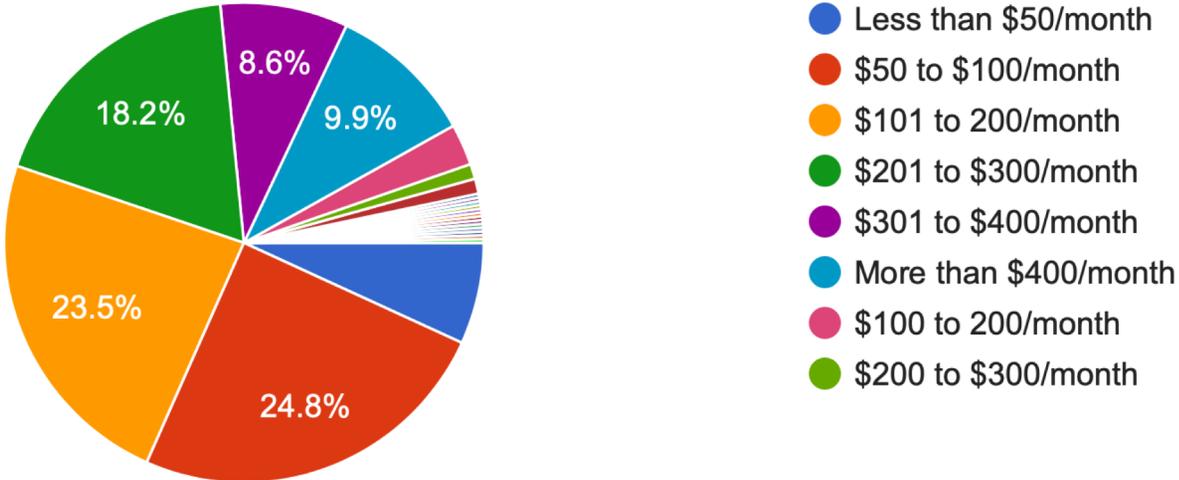
590 responses



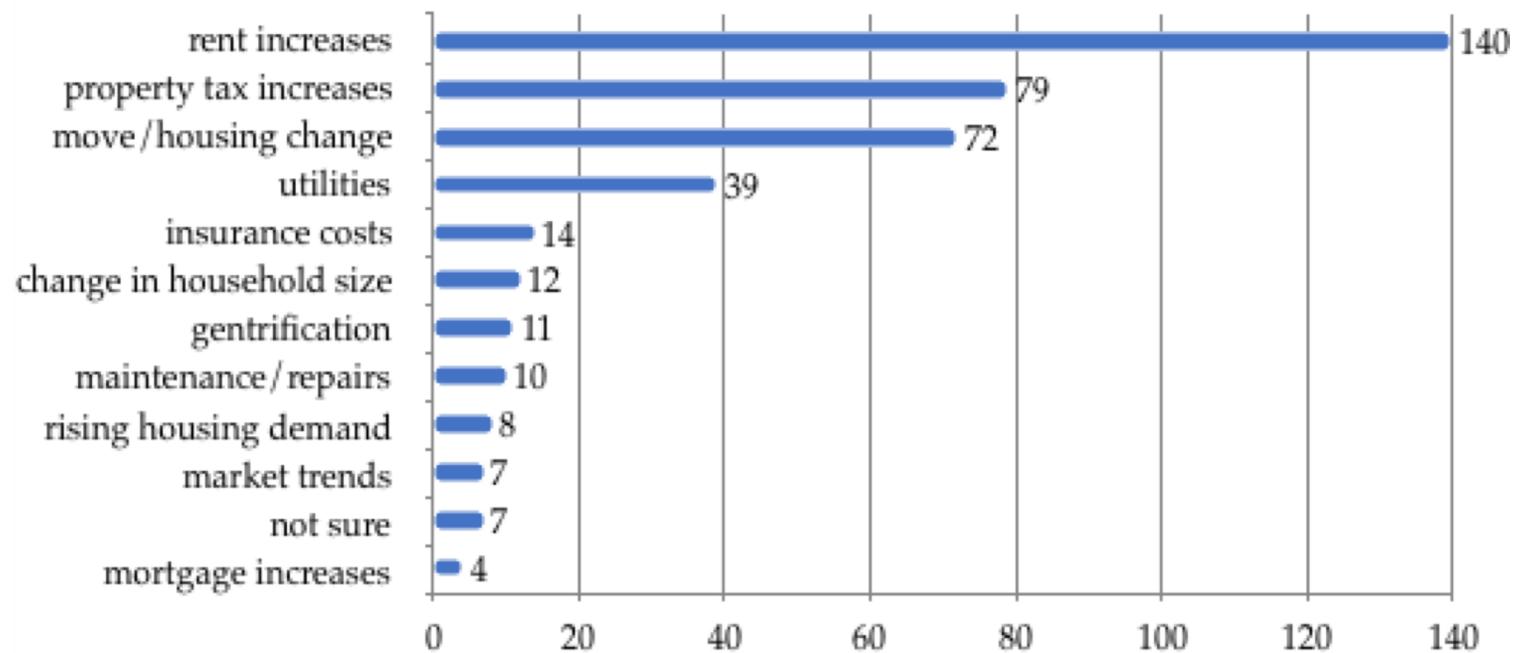
- Decreased
- Stayed roughly same (in line with in...)
- Increased
- N/A
- My rent is cheaper than even the ot...
- Increased a lot! Too much for senior...
- Only been here 1.5 years, stayed s...
- Not sure. I live with family rent free.

# By how much have your monthly housing costs changed since 2014?

395 responses

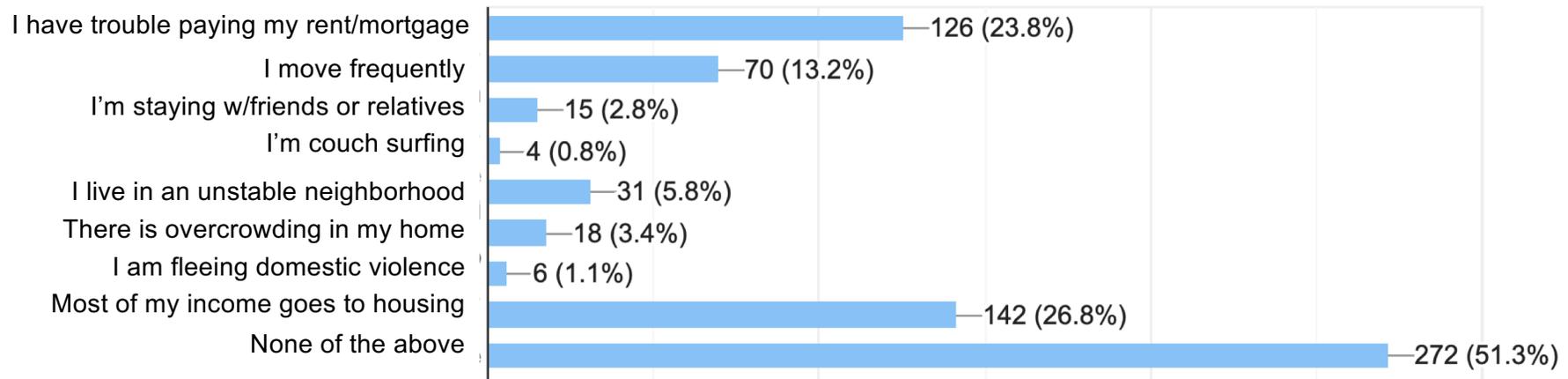


# What caused the change in your housing costs since 2014?



# Do any of the following describe your current or most recent housing situation? (select all that apply)

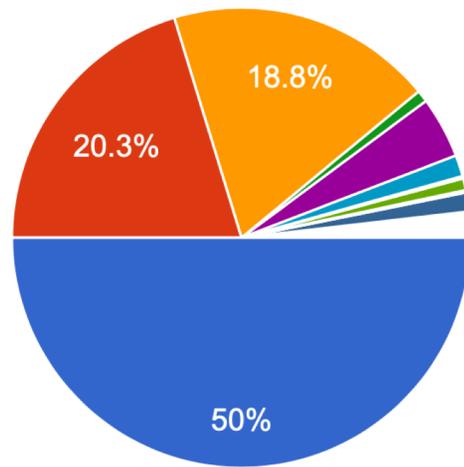
530 responses



Housing type & tenure

# Which of the following best describes your current or most recent home in the City of Ypsilanti?

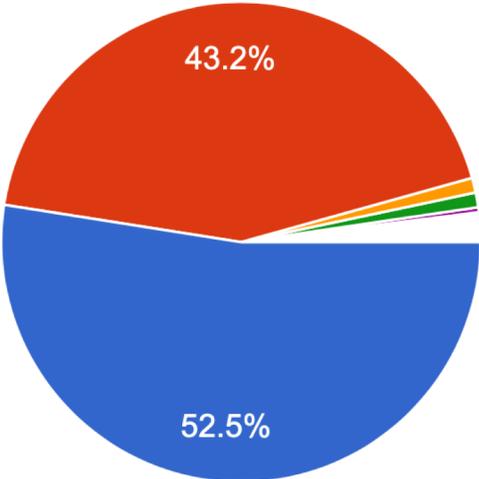
602 responses



- Standalone house: a building that o...
- Apartment house: a building that ha...
- Apartment complex: a building or se...
- Student dormitory
- Shared living or "rooming" house: a...
- Apartment above business: a home...
- Supportive housing: a living arrange...
- Townhome: a home that is attached...

# Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

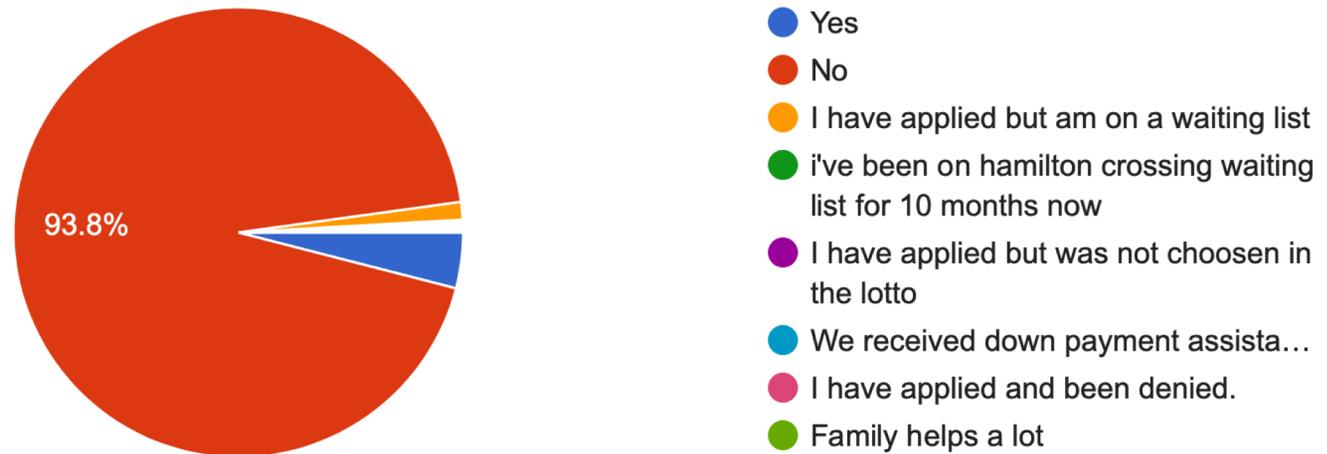
604 responses



- I rent my home
- I own my home
- I'm homeless (living in the streets, i...)
- I live with a parent/guardian
- no response
- renter, housing instable
- living with other family members
- live with friends in their house

# Do you currently receive housing assistance (such as housing choice vouchers or subsidized housing) through federal, state or local government?

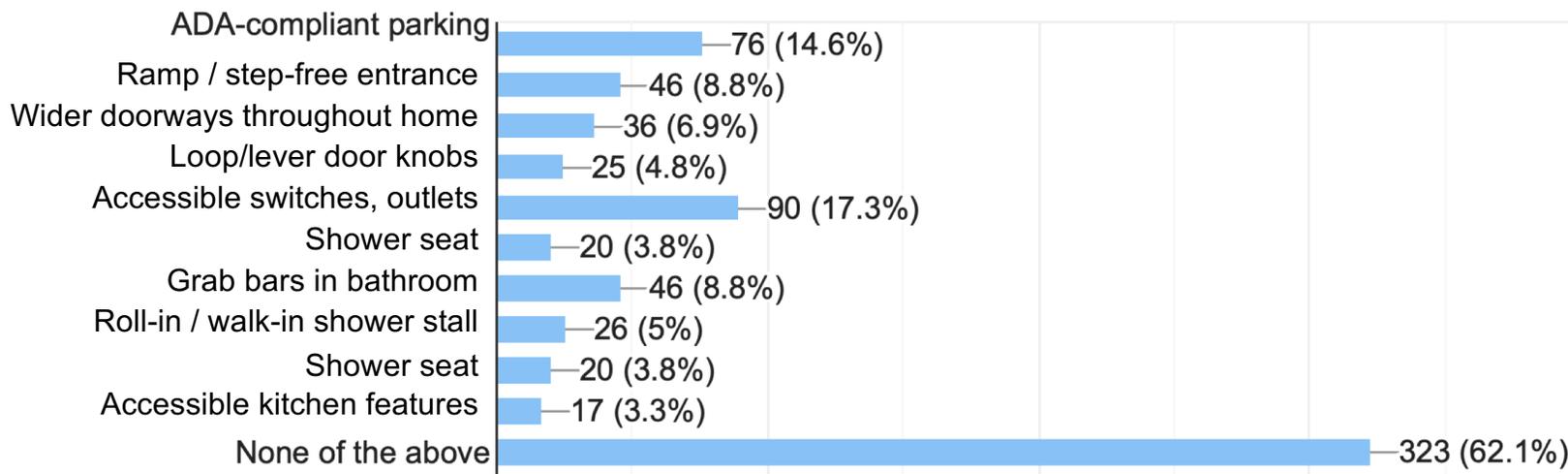
551 responses



Housing accessibility

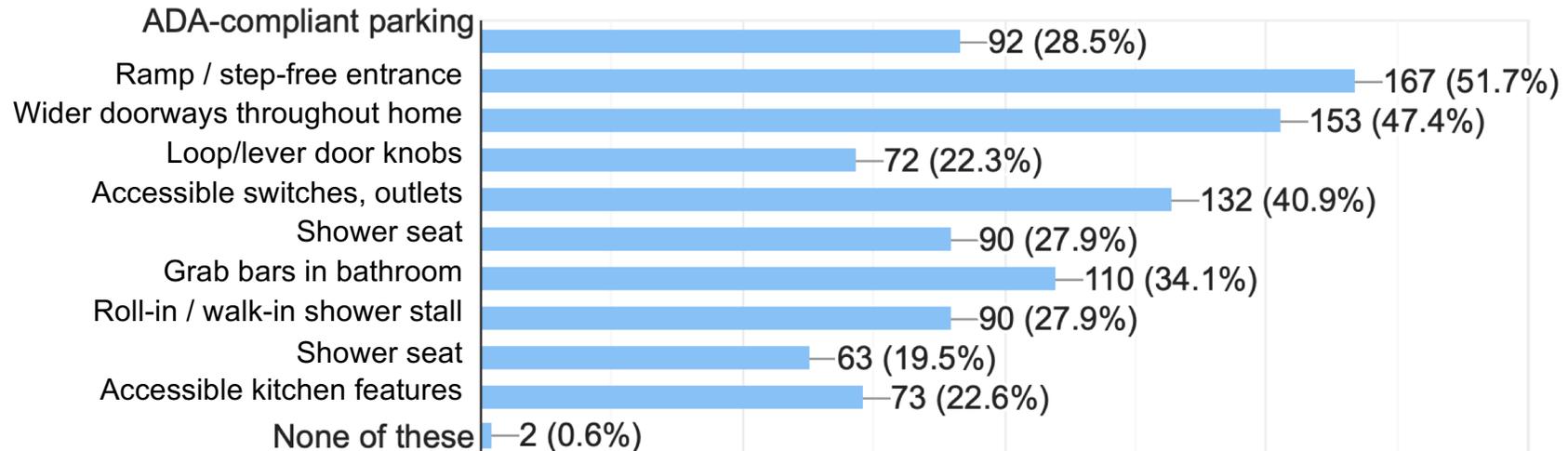
## Which of the following features does your current or most recent home have to make it accessible to people with a disability?

520 responses



# Which physical accessibility features will you take into consideration in choosing your next home (whether for y...y and friends who visit you at home)?

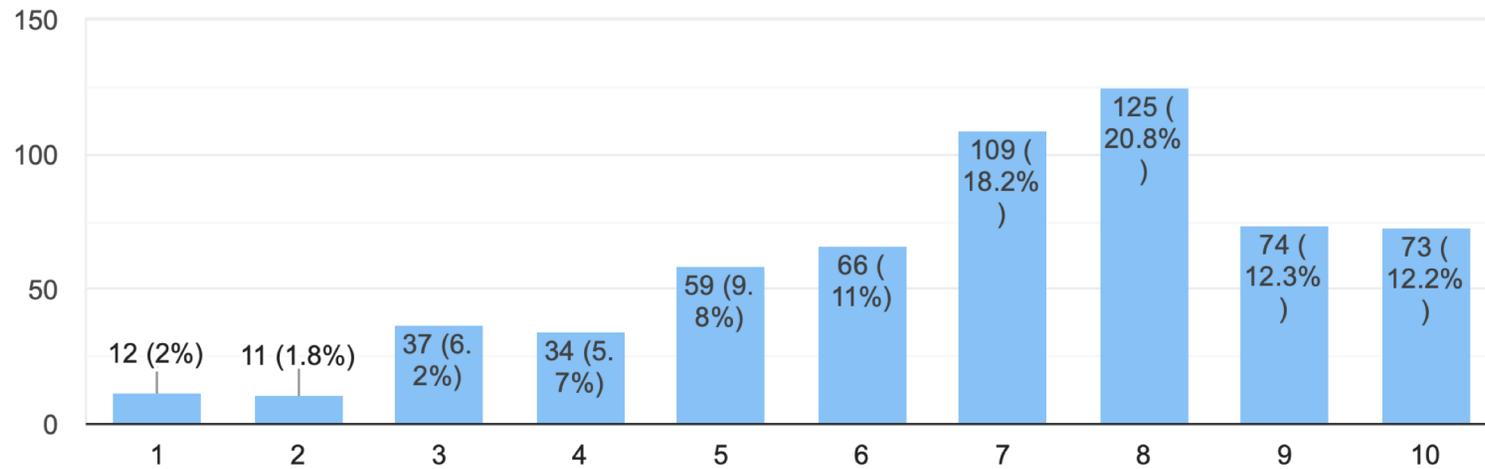
323 responses



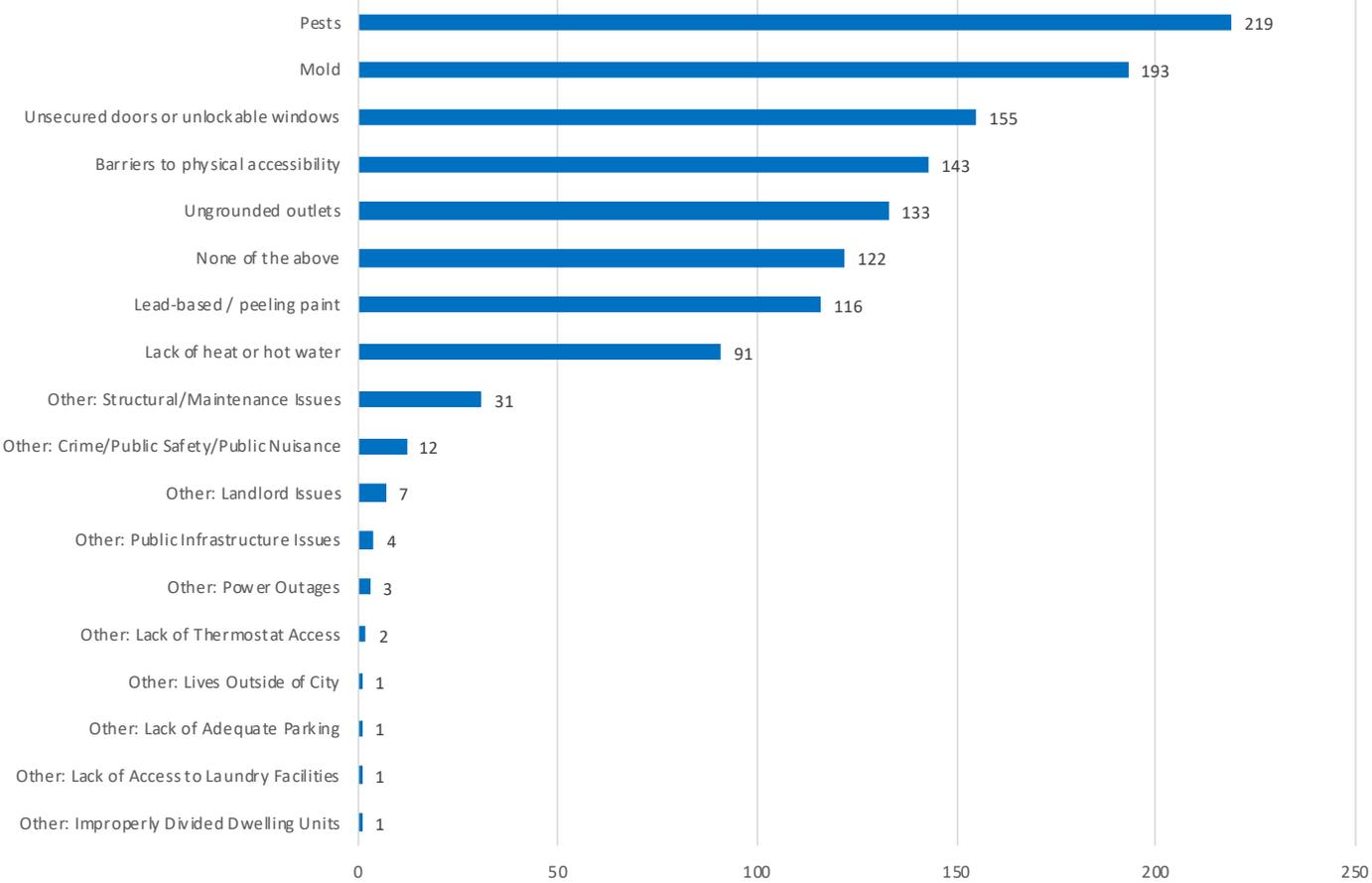
Housing quality, satisfaction & preferences

## On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your current housing situation?

600 responses

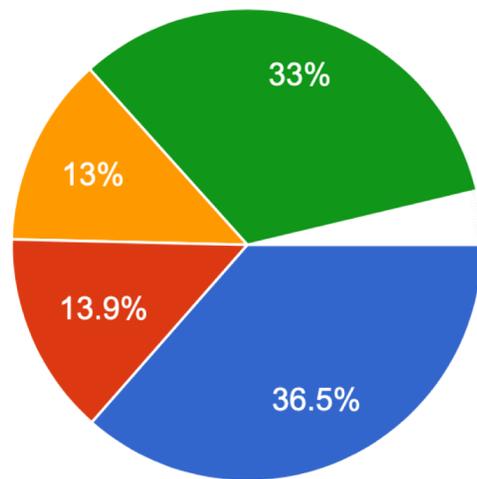


# Which housing quality issues have you experienced in the City of Ypsilanti?



# Would you feel comfortable asking your current landlord or housing provider to correct a quality-of-life issue (e.g. pests, physical access issues)?

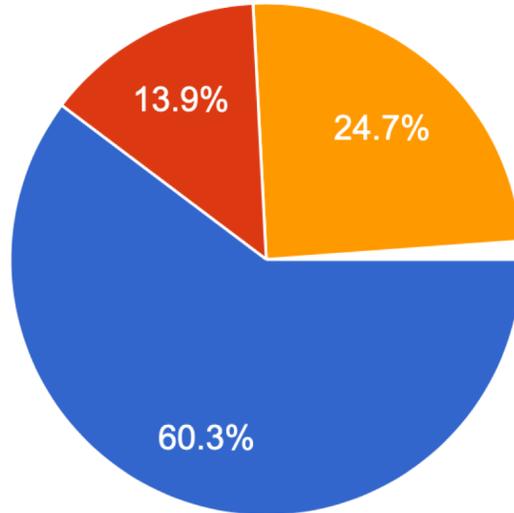
540 responses



- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- N/A
- depends on landlord temperament
- Some landlords are very unhelpful (...)
- ABSOLUTELY NOT. i learned the h...
- Only when I knew I wasn't going to...

# Would you like to live in the City of Ypsilanti 3 to 5 years from now?

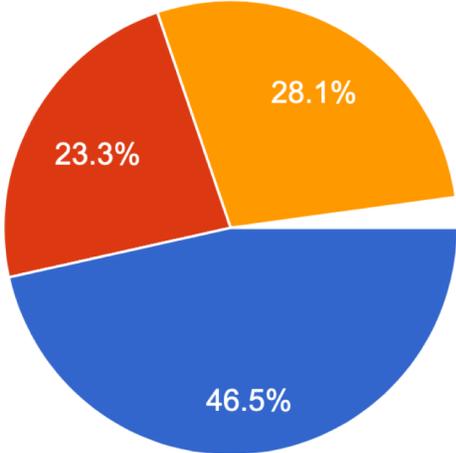
604 responses



- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- if I could afford it, but probably will n...
- I would prefer Ann Arbor but Ypsila...
- Can't with the taxes
- If I stay I plan to buy a house, if not...
- I would love to stay in Ypsilanti, but...

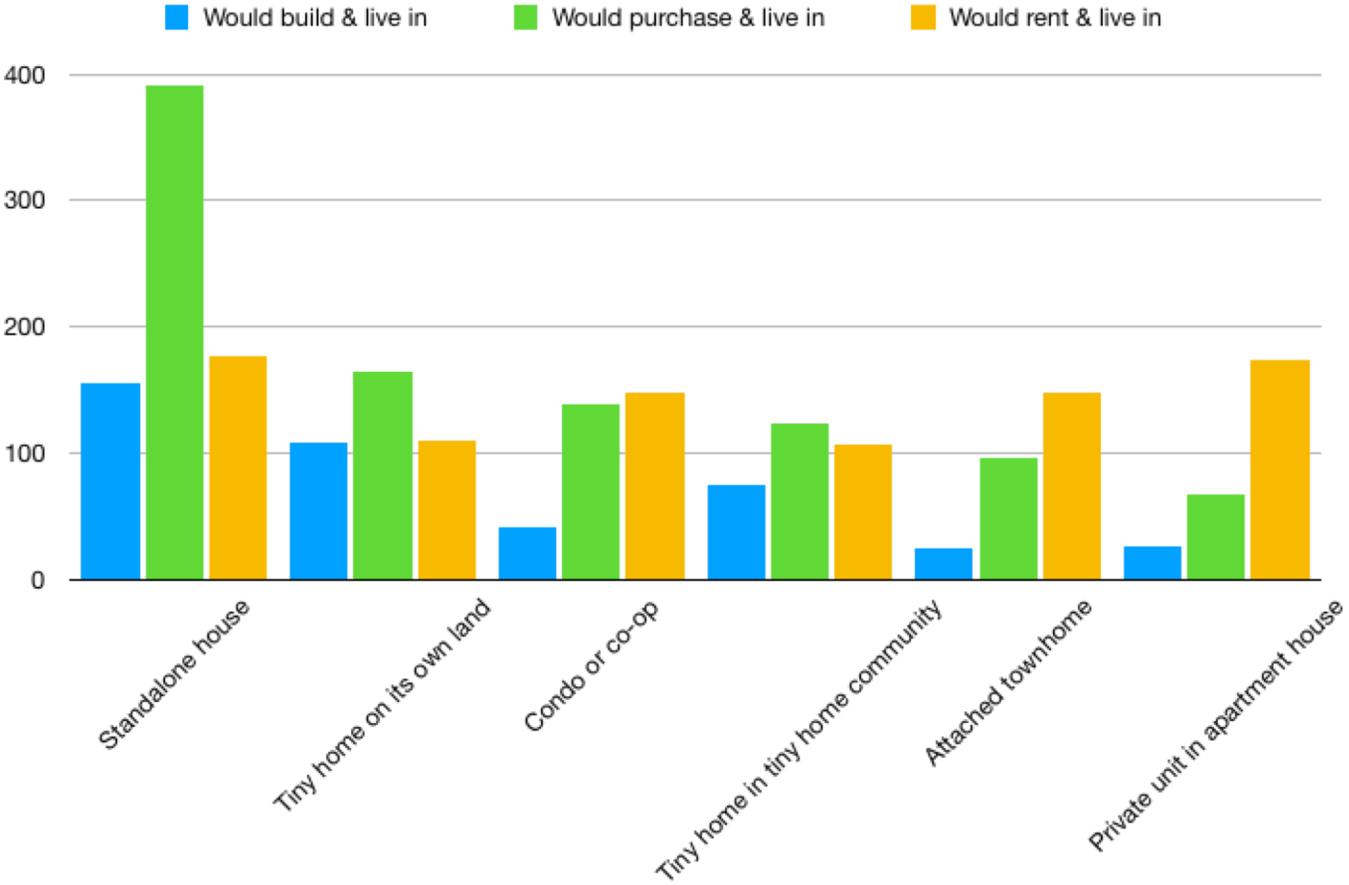
# If the cost of housing remains as it is today, do you see yourself living in the City of Ypsilanti 3 to 5 years from now?

602 responses

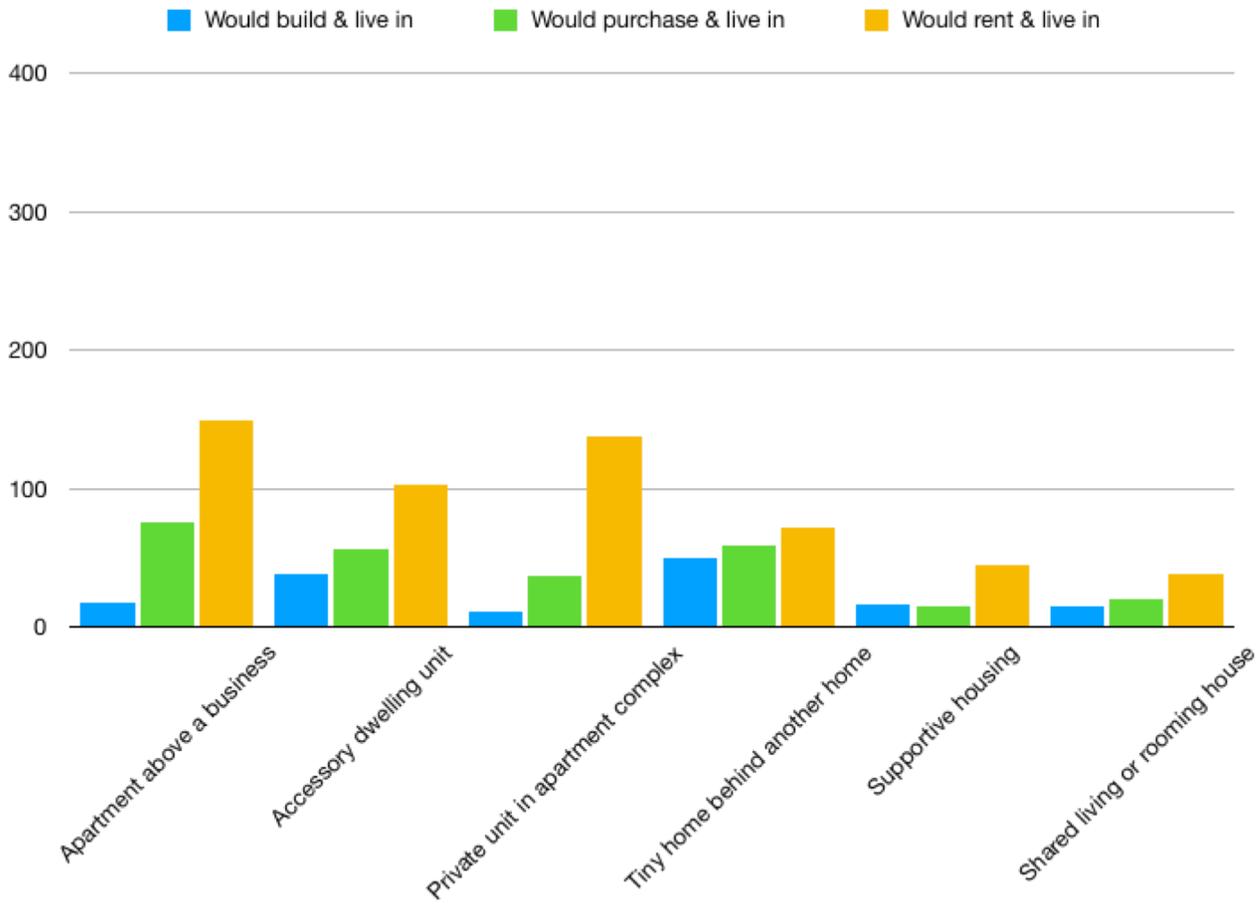


- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- No, because City of Ypsi taxes are t...
- houses for sale price would need to...
- i am currently being priced out. i trie...
- The problem is wages don't keep u...
- Well, when I bought a house I ende...

If they were available in Ypsilanti, which types of homes would you consider living in in the next 3-5 years?



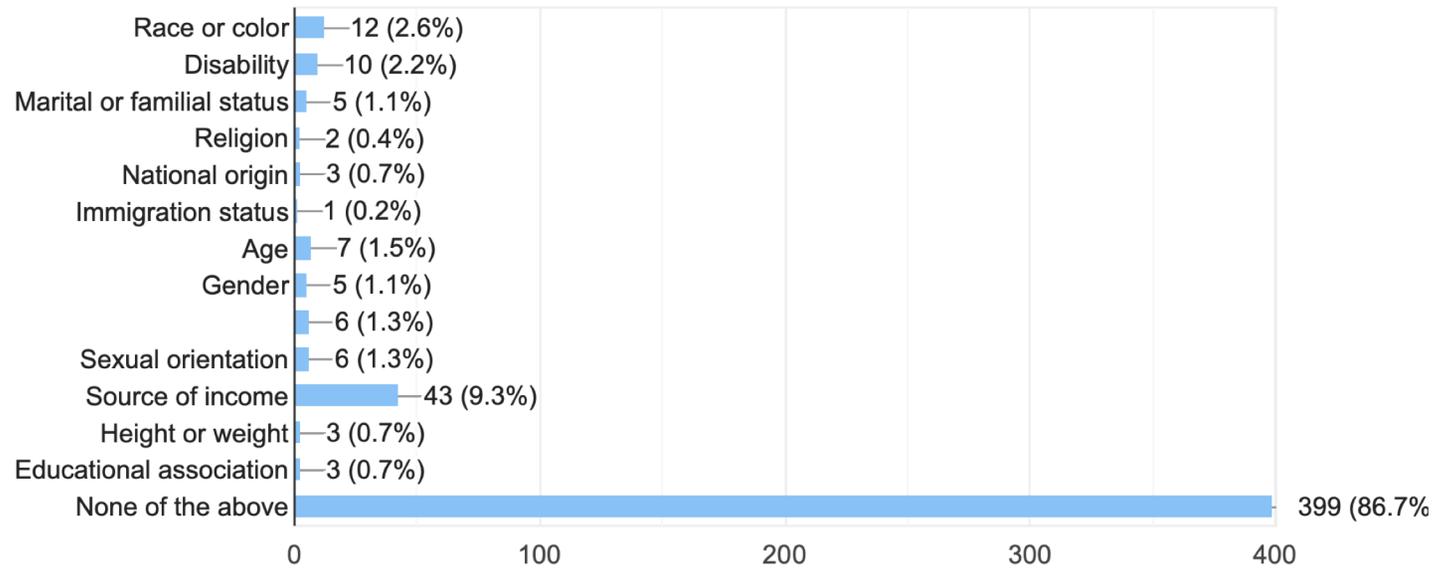
If they were available in Ypsilanti, which types of homes would you consider living in in the next 3-5 years?



Eviction & discrimination

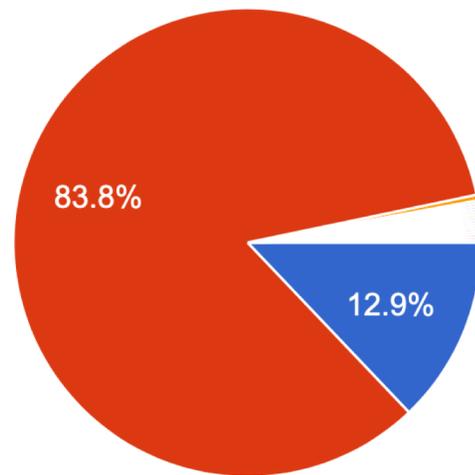
## Have you ever have been denied housing or evicted from housing due to any of the following in the City of Ypsilanti:

460 responses



# Have you ever been evicted or have you ever moved to avoid eviction due to rent increases you could not afford to pay?

520 responses



- Yes
- No
- Over 15 years ago after losing job.
- from 2 questions above: i have bee...
- threatened and chilled out of home
- Came very very close more than once
- Planning to next year
- I have moved consistently due to ro...

# Housing Strategies Survey

September - October 2019

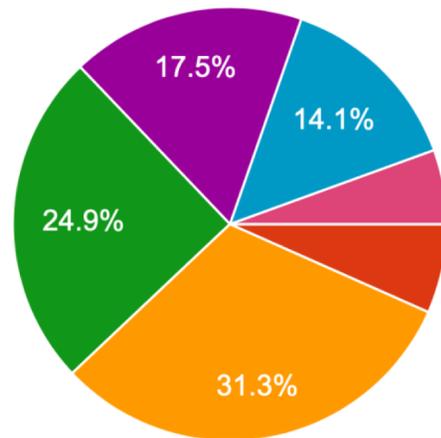
City of Ypsilanti

Respondent demographics

# Age

Which age group best describes you?

361 responses

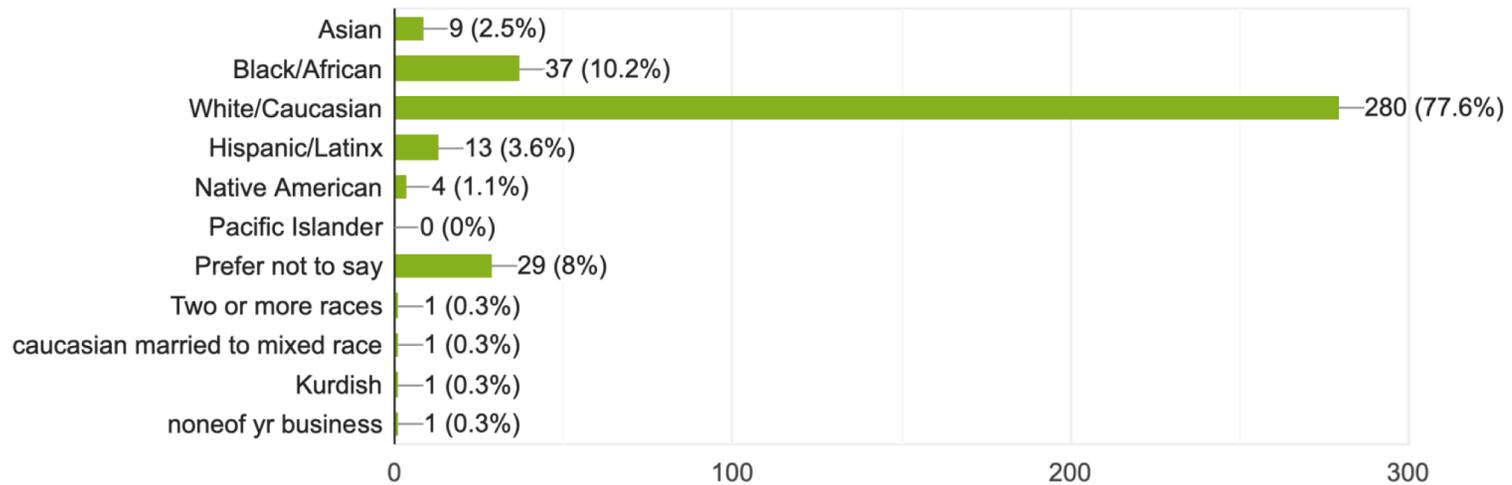


- 17 years or under
- 18-24 years
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or over

# Race and ethnicity

Which of the following races/ethnicities do you identify as (select all that apply)?

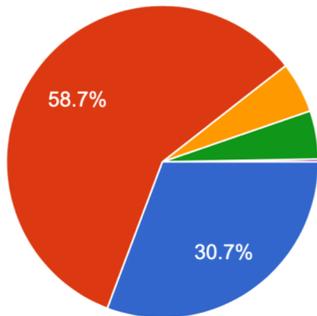
361 responses



# Gender

Gender:

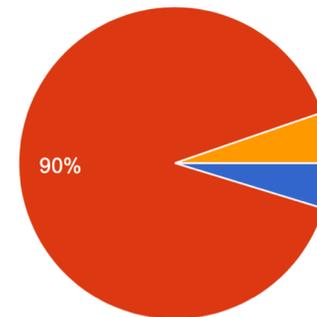
361 responses



- Male
- Female
- Nonbinary
- Prefer not to say
- Gender Fluid

Do you identify as transgender?

361 responses

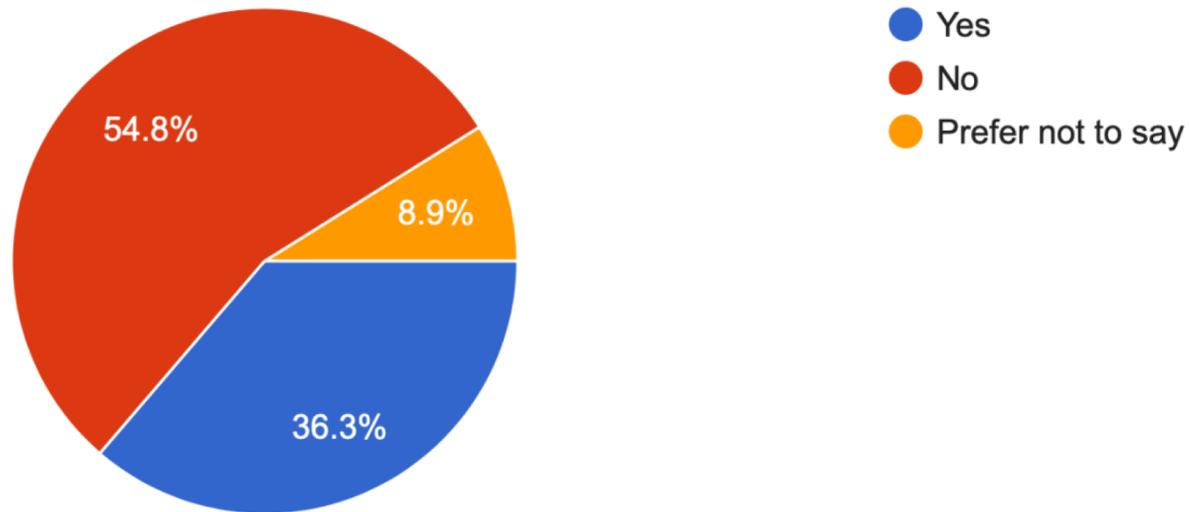


- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

# LGBTQ

Are you or a member of your household a part of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community?

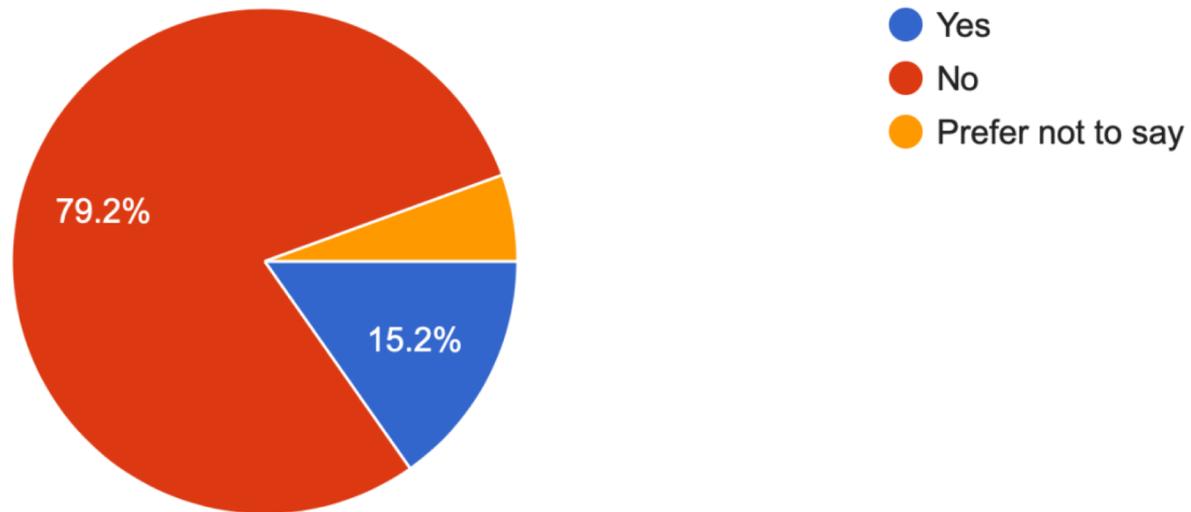
361 responses



# Disability

Do you identify as living with a disability?

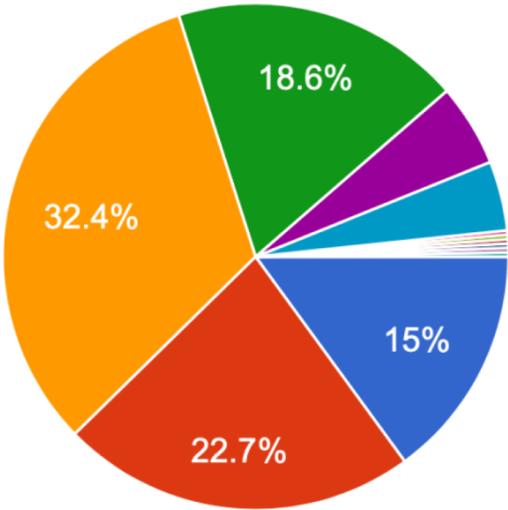
361 responses



# Place of residence

Which area of Ypsilanti do you currently reside in?

361 responses

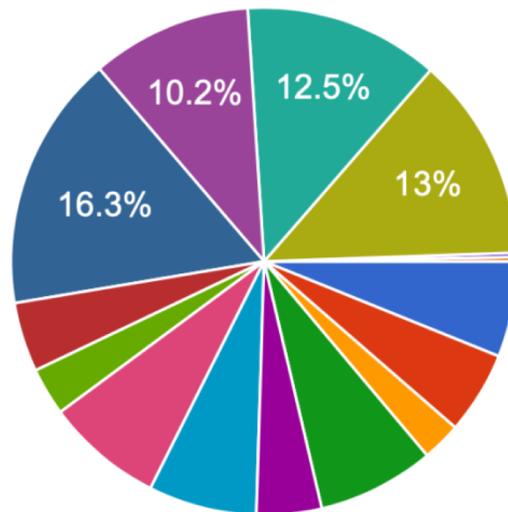


- Ward 1: See map below
- Ward 2: See map below
- Ward 3: See map below
- Ypsilanti Township
- Pittsfield Township
- Superior Township
- Ingham county
- just outside of ward 1

# Income

Which of the following best describes your income in the past 12 months?

361 responses



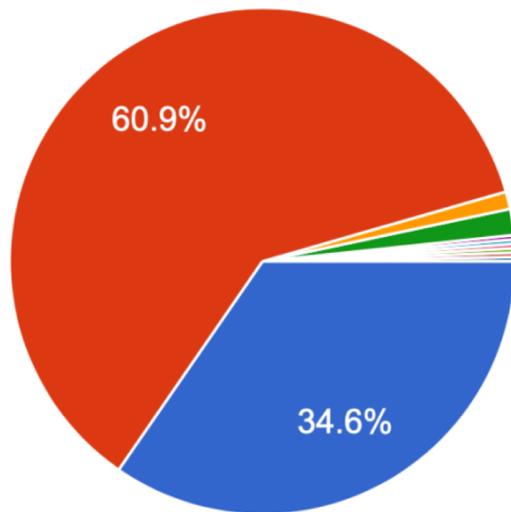
- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$14,999
- \$15,000 - \$19,999
- \$20,000 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$44,999
- \$45,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,000
- \$100,000 or more

Half of respondents

# Housing situation

Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

361 responses



- I rent my home
- I own my home
- I'm homeless (living on the streets, in...)
- I live with a parent/guardian
- I want to take this survey without defin...
- Multigenerational living with matriarch...
- My significant other owns our home
- Live with friend

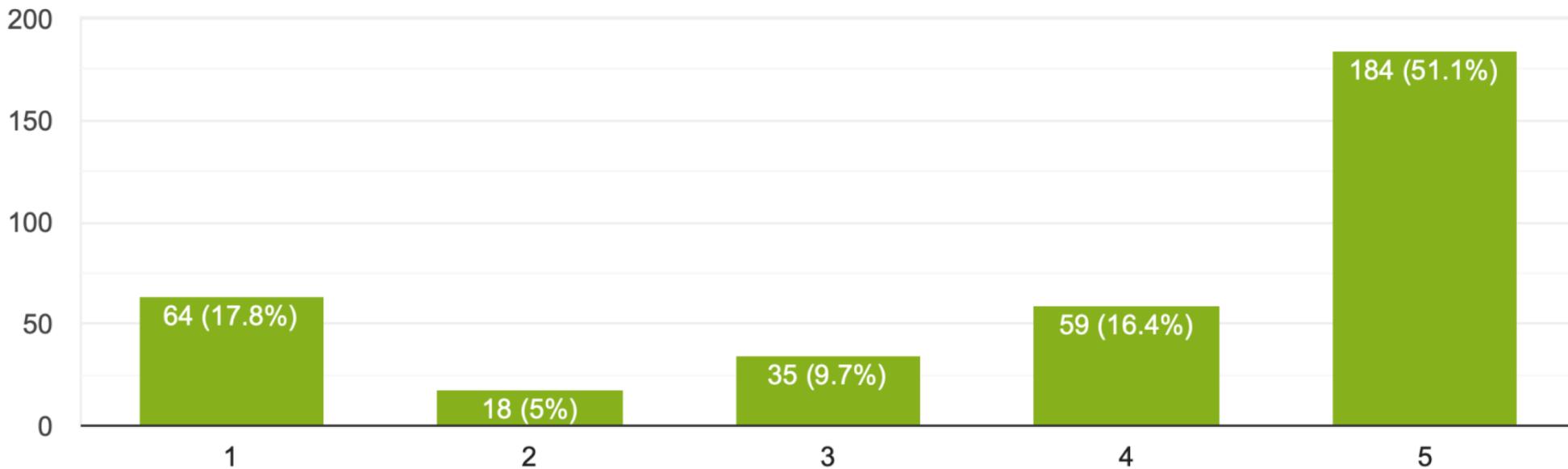
Affordability & accessibility strategies

# Section 1: Renters' rights

# 1. Protect renters from improper eviction

proposal rating:  
360 responses

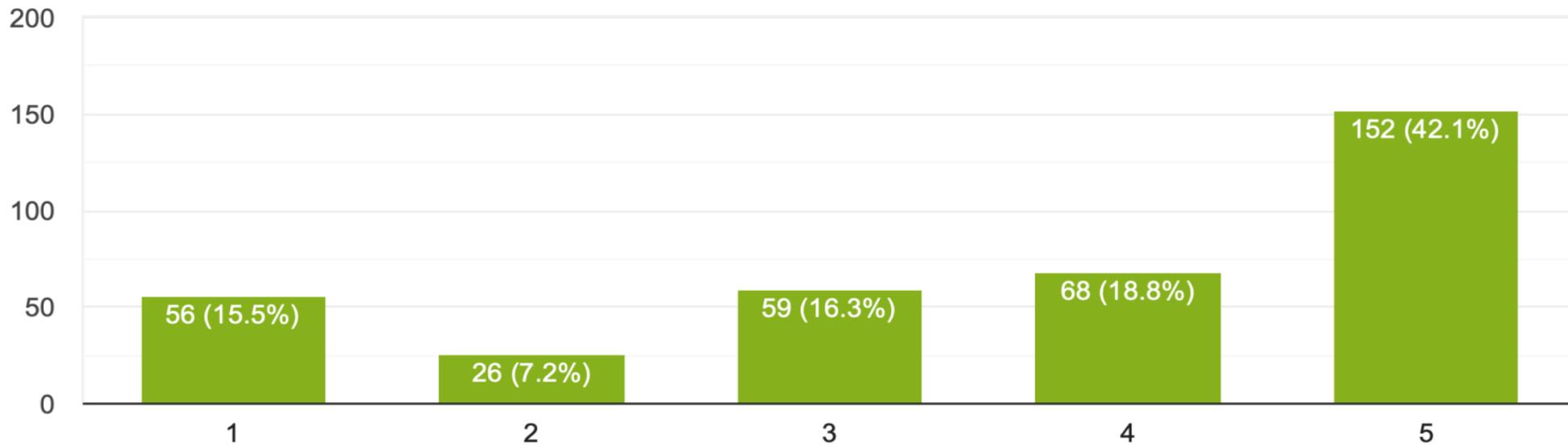
**Proposal: Enact a 'Just Cause Eviction' ordinance to protect renters from eviction for an improper reason. Just Cause Eviction statutes protect tenants from wrongful eviction. They limit a landlord's ability to evict tenants to certain reasons, such as failure to pay rent or for violation of the lease terms.**



## 2. Give renters with criminal records a fair chance

proposal rating:  
361 responses

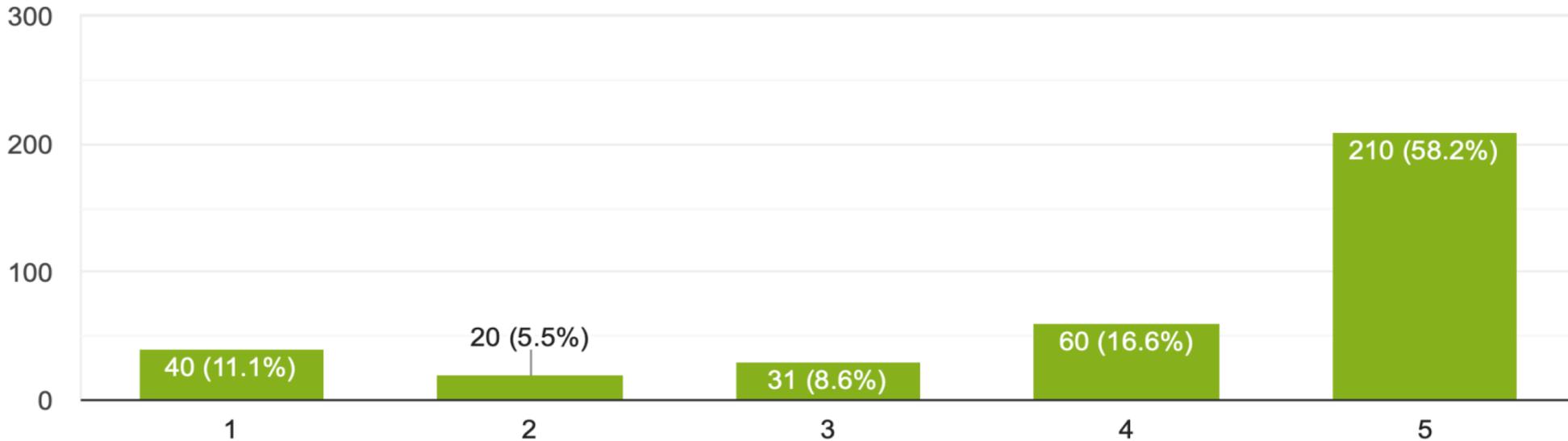
**Proposal: Enact a 'Ban the Box'/'Fair Chance' ordinance to protect renters with criminal records by restricting landlords from asking about criminal history on rental applications.** Detroit recently decided to Ban the Box in another category: housing. Under Detroit's new ordinance, landlords with portfolios of five or more units are no longer allowed to ask questions about criminal history on housing applications.



### 3. Give tenants right of first refusal

proposal rating:  
361 responses

*Proposal: Enact a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance that will allow tenants to have a certain notice period and time to purchase their properties, should the owner wish to sell their units. Tenant Right of First Refusal can set in motion a process that transfers property ownership either to residents or to another entity willing to preserve the long-term affordability of the property. It has produced a number of resident-owned properties and partnerships among residents and nonprofits in Washington, DC.*



## Renters' rights: Priority ranking

1. Protect against improper eviction (52.7% of respondents)
2. Give tenants right of first refusal to purchase properties (39.6% of respondents)
3. Give renters w/criminal records a fair chance (38.8% of respondents)

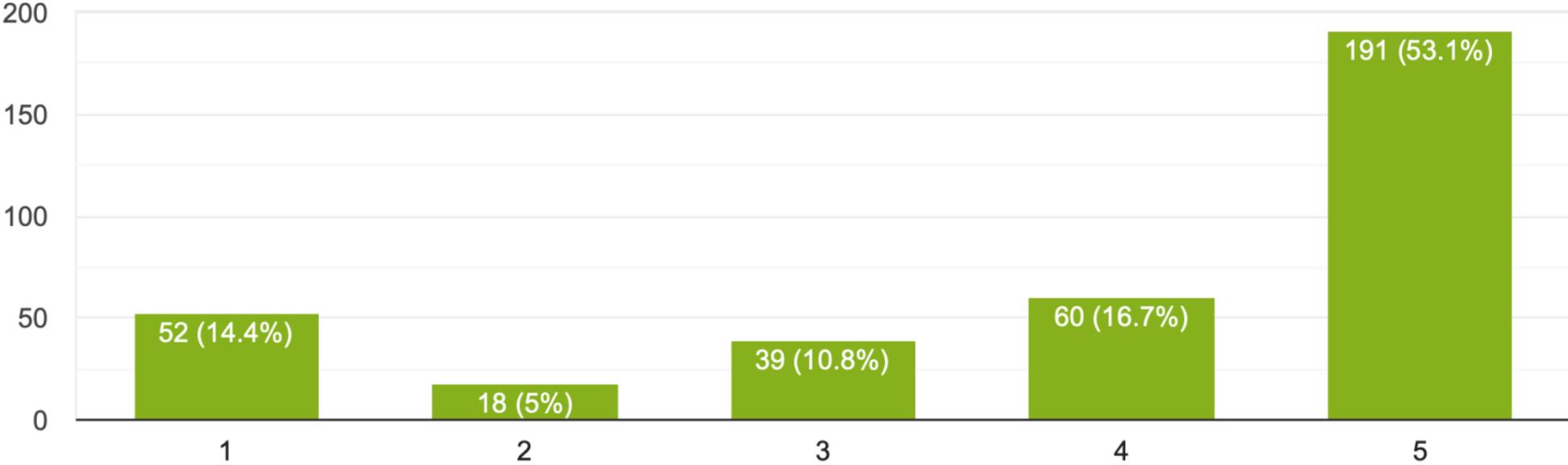
## Section 2: Sustainable development

# Build on public land

proposal rating:

360 responses

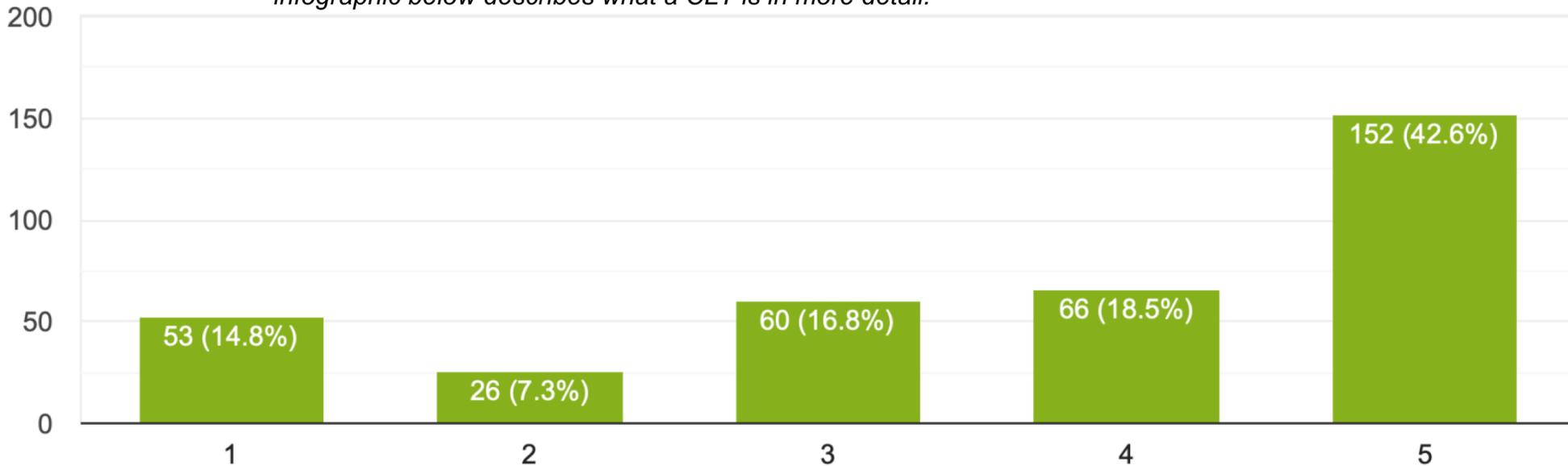
*Proposal: Prioritize using public land for public good—build affordable & accessible housing on the available public lands in the City of Ypsilanti (such as Water St. and 220 N Park). Other possible uses of public land for public good: incentivize construction of an affordable grocery store to address Ypsilanti's food desert, build a recreation center for resident youth and adults, or establish Community Land Trust (see below) on available public land.*



# Establish a community land trust

proposal rating:  
357 responses

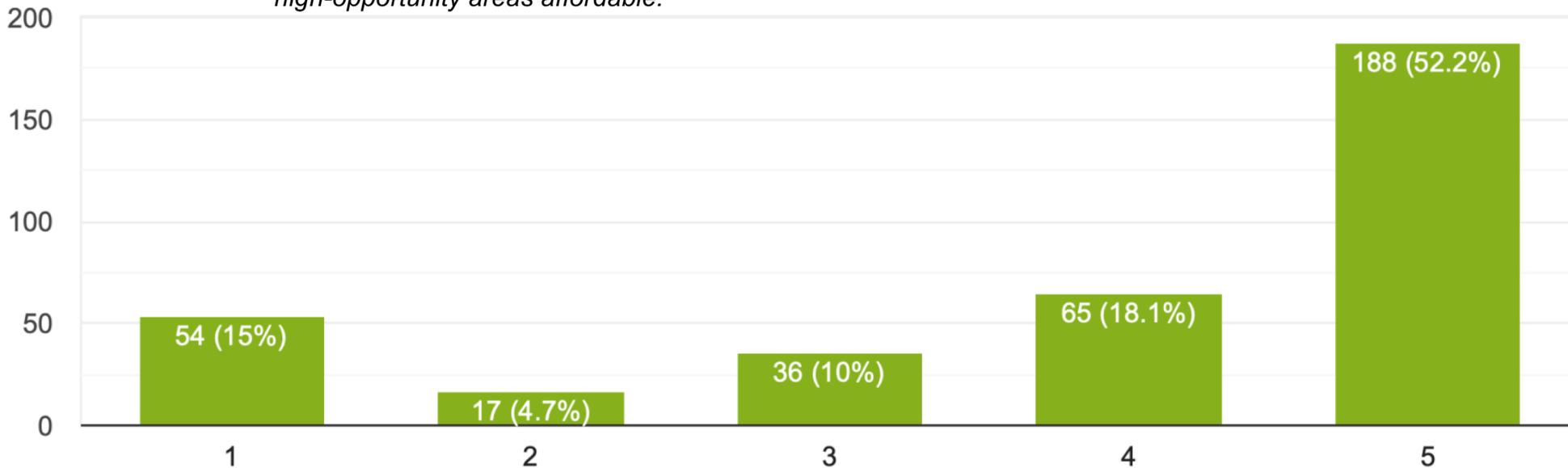
**Proposal: Proposal: Establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long term housing affordability & accessibility through community control of land.** CLTs are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. CLTs combine democratic ownership of land with private ownership of the structure on the land in order to maintain long term housing affordability. CLTs can be interspersed throughout a neighborhood, and can include rental homes and businesses. The infographic below describes what a CLT is in more detail.



# Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance

proposal rating:  
360 responses

*Proposal: Enact an Inclusionary Housing ordinance to require private developers include a certain percentage of units at below market rate. Inclusionary zoning requires (or incentivizes) private developers to designate a certain percentage of the units in a given project as below market rate. In D.C. and around the country, inclusionary housing is an increasingly popular way to produce affordable housing through the private market—it is one of the main tools cities have for maintaining neighborhood diversity, and keeping high-opportunity areas affordable.*

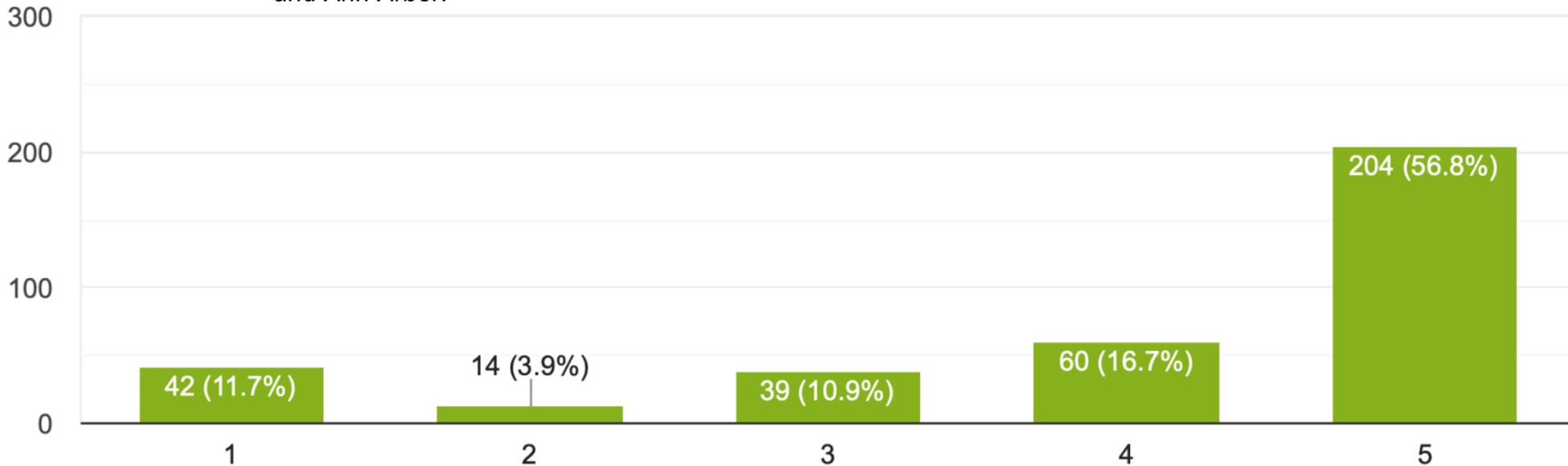


# Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance

proposal rating:

359 responses

**Proposal: Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance to 1) Define the parameters for affordable & accessible housing based on Ypsilanti's Area Median Income (AMI) and 2) Require new housing developments to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units based on Ypsilanti's need.**  
*An Affordability Ordinance would enhance a future inclusionary housing policy by setting affordability rates based on Ypsilanti's AMI, thus acting in consideration of income disparity and segregation between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.*

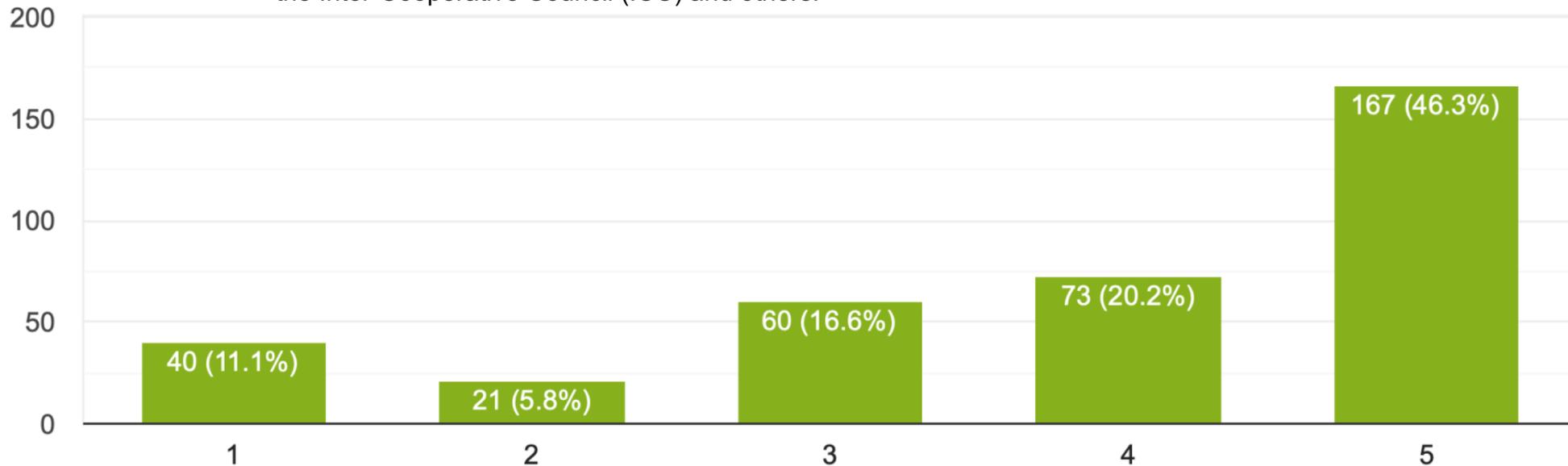


# Incentivize co-op conversion

proposal rating:  
361 responses

***Proposal: Create a legal framework incentivizing co-operative housing conversion and assist tenants in the purchase of rental units for the purposes of creating affordable co-operative housing.***

Cooperative housing is a type of home ownership—it is formed when people join on a democratic basis to own or control the housing and/or related community facilities in which they live. Co-operative housing usually includes an apartment building or buildings. Ann Arbor has many co-operative housing options via the Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC) and others.

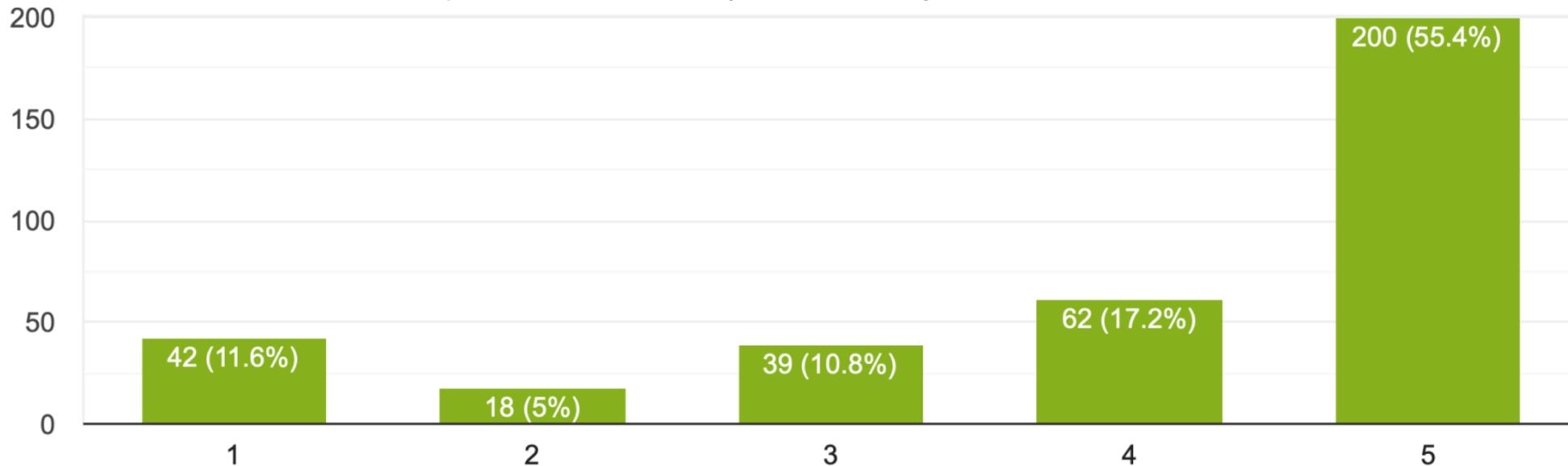


# Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti

proposal rating:

361 responses

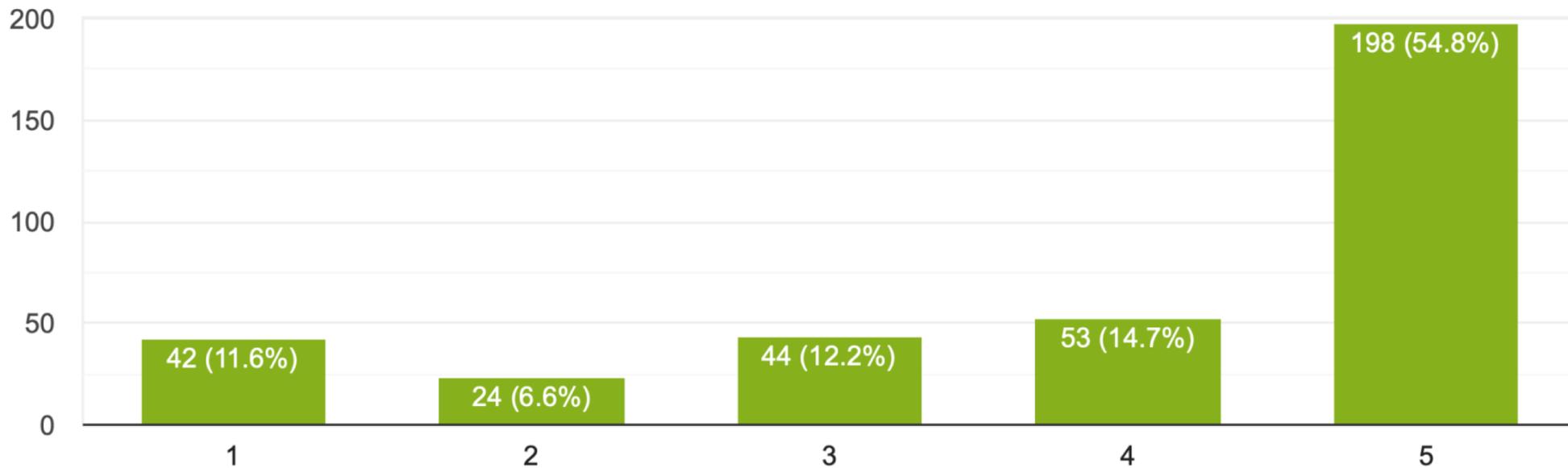
**Proposal: Build a shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.** Ann Arbor's homeless shelter, The Delonis Center, has 50 resident beds this year (down from 77 beds in 2018) and is serving a significant percentage of people who identify their last address as being in Ypsilanti. At the same time, reports from Ypsilanti Community Schools and Eastern Michigan University show increased rates of student homelessness. A youth shelter, Ozone House, is currently under new construction. Ypsilanti does not currently have an overnight shelter for adults.



# Install public toilets and benches in our parks

proposal rating:  
361 responses

***Proposal: Install high-quality public toilets and napping benches in our parks for the use of the general public, including residents experiencing homelessness. Ypsilanti also receives the Mental Health & Public Safety millage which could be used to fund projects like these and others that promote the health the safety of residents experiencing homelessness.***



## Sustainable development: Priority ranking

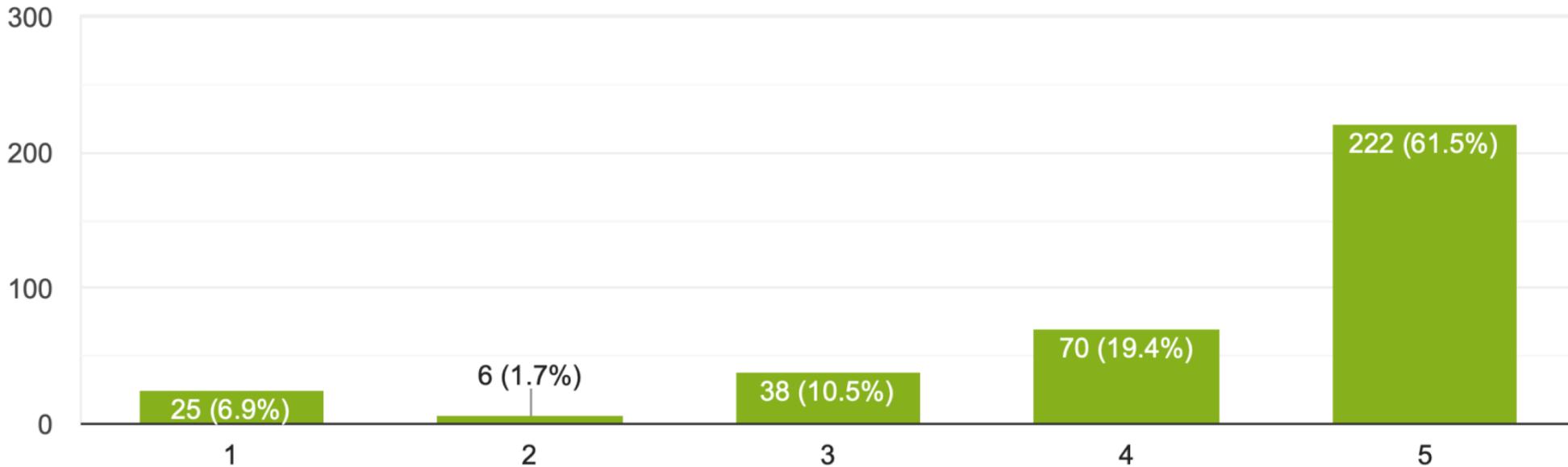
1. Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance (44.9%)
2. Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti (39.9%)
3. Install public toilets and benches in our parks (35.9%)
4. Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance (32.7%)
5. Build on public land (28.9%)
6. Establish a community land trust (27.1%)
7. Incentivize co-op conversion (25.4%)

## Section 3: Need-based assistance

# 1. Establish a minor home repair program

**Proposal: Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners.** Eligible repairs could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation. The City could offer small grants for home improvements.

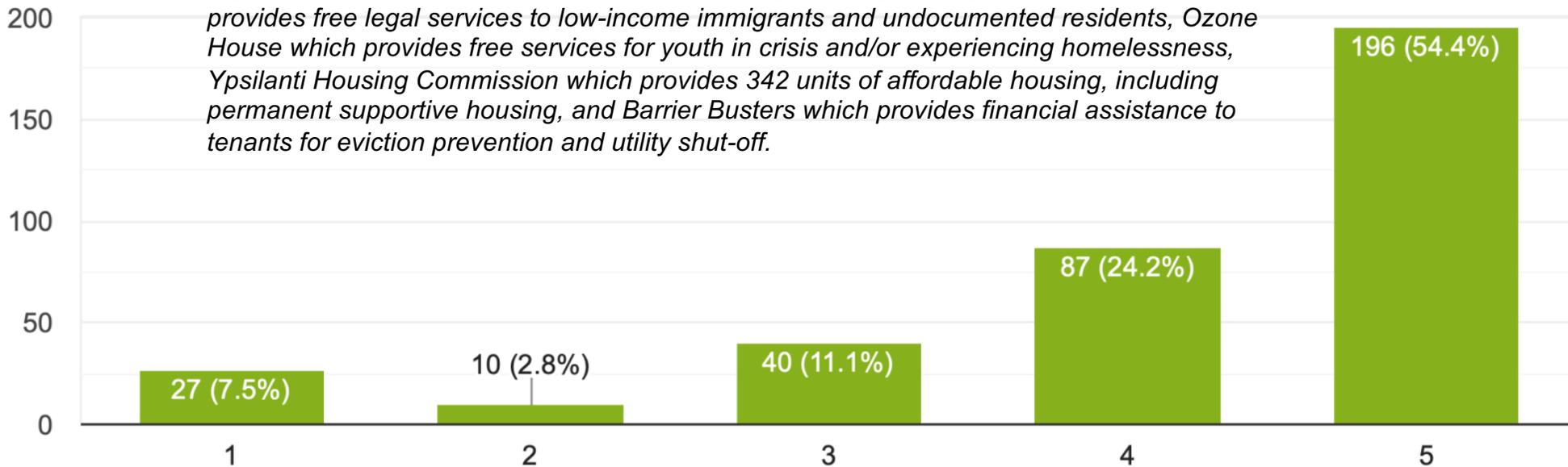
361 responses



## 2. Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance

360 responses

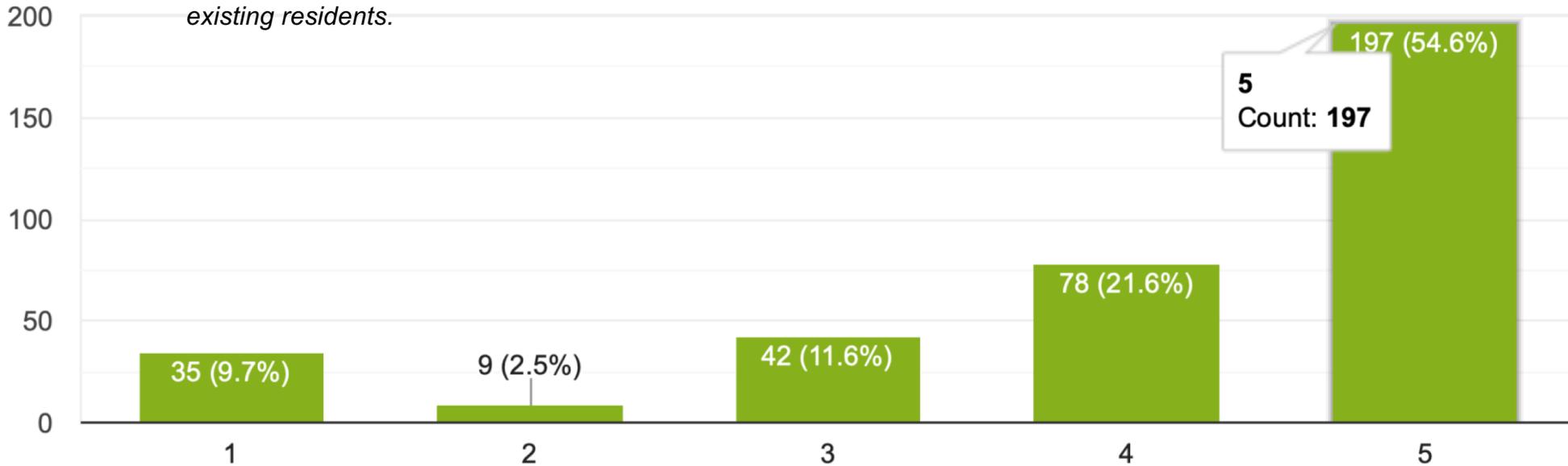
**Proposal: Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance to further expand services and programs to Ypsilanti residents.** Agencies that provide need-based assistance include Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM) which provides free legal representation to low-income tenants, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) which provides free legal services to low-income immigrants and undocumented residents, Ozone House which provides free services for youth in crisis and/or experiencing homelessness, Ypsilanti Housing Commission which provides 342 units of affordable housing, including permanent supportive housing, and Barrier Busters which provides financial assistance to tenants for eviction prevention and utility shut-off.



### 3. Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Avenue to qualify for same incentives as new homebuyers

361 responses

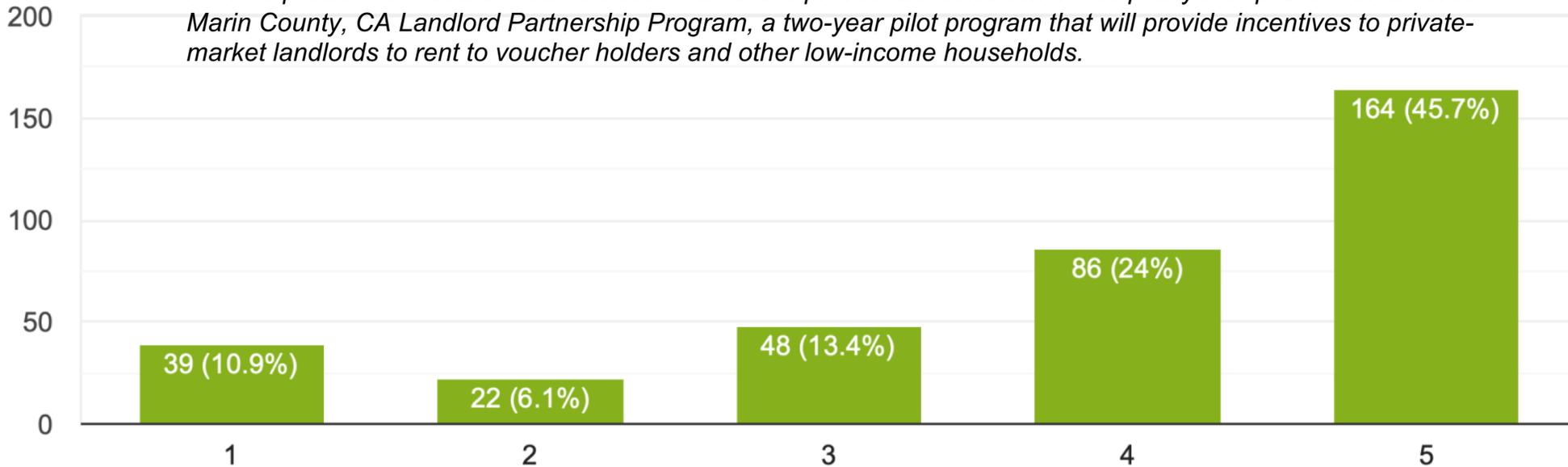
*Proposal: Modify the policy for the South of Michigan Avenue Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) to allow existing homeowners to qualify for the same tax breaks as new home-buyers. Under the current City of Ypsilanti NEZ policy, tax breaks granted to homeowners who rehabilitate existing properties are of shorter duration than tax breaks granted to owners of newly constructed properties, which favors investors and newcomers over existing residents.*



## 4. Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent

359 responses

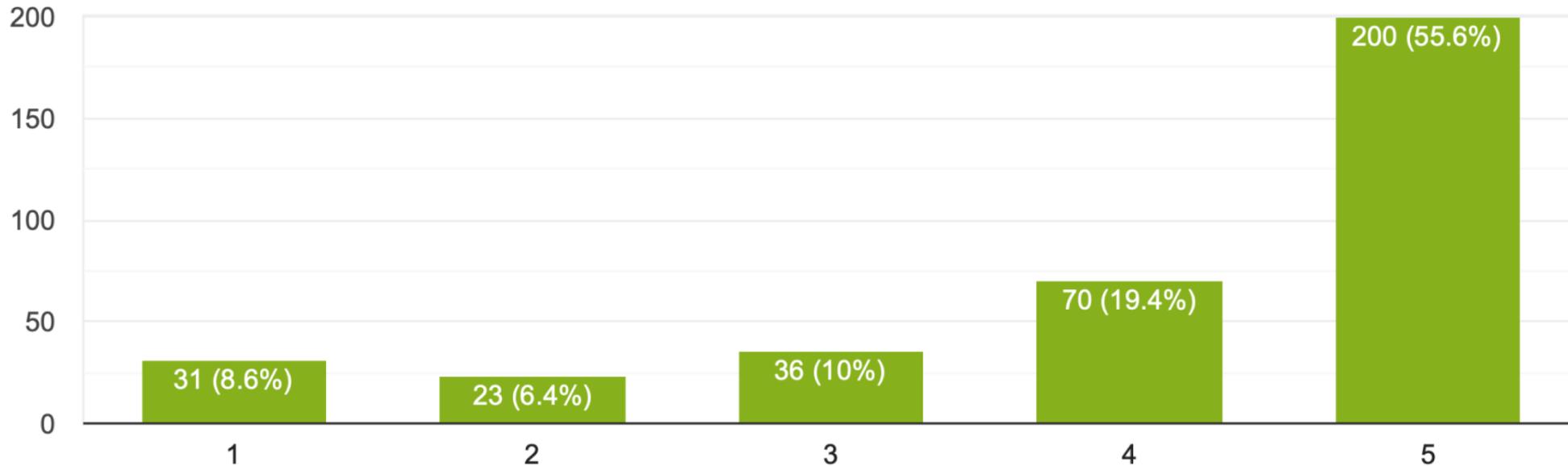
**Proposal: Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent by offering tax abatement and/or funding for property improvements in exchange of keeping rent stable for a period of time.** 70% of Ypsilanti households are renter households, and much of the housing stock in the rental market is older and in disrepair—this program looks to produce the dual benefit of stable rent and improved unit conditions. This policy is in practice in the West Marin County, CA Landlord Partnership Program, a two-year pilot program that will provide incentives to private-market landlords to rent to voucher holders and other low-income households.



## 5. Assist low-income residents with home buying

**Proposal: Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance. 70% of households in Ypsilanti are renter households—a significantly higher percentage to comparable college towns of its size. The city could provide assistance to low-income households who wish to buy homes, to reduce barriers to homeownership and promote housing stability.**

360 responses



## Need-based assistance: Priority ranking

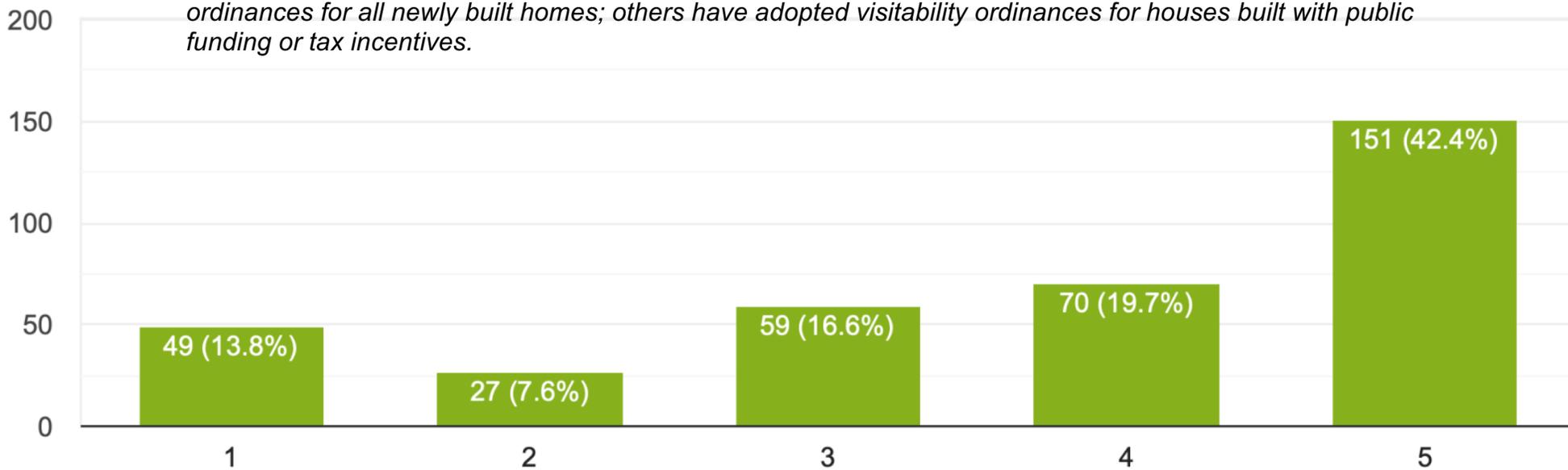
1. Assist low-income residents with home buying (49.1%)
2. Establish a minor home repair program (42.4%)
3. Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent (40.9%)
4. Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance (39.2%)
5. Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Avenue to access the same incentives as new homebuyers (32.2%)

## Section 4: Physical accessibility

# Adopt a visitability ordinance

356 responses

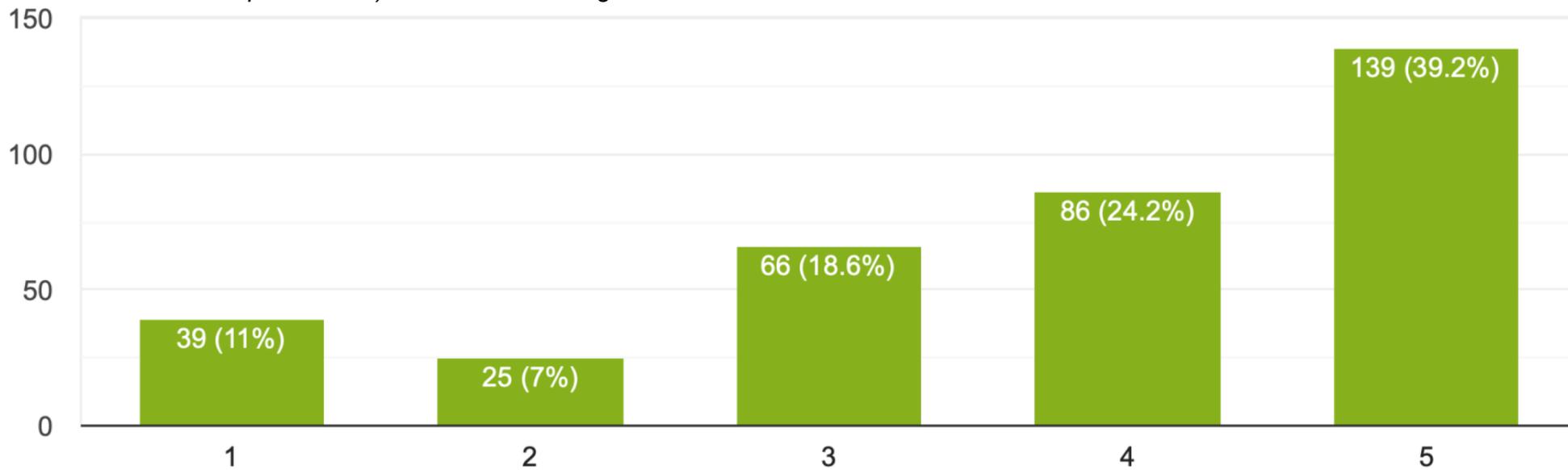
**Proposal: Adopt a Visitability Ordinance to ensure that newly constructed homes incorporate basic accessibility features that make it easier for mobility-impaired people to visit or live in Ypsilanti.** A home is “visitable” if it has: (1) at least one no-step entrance; (2) doors with 32 inches of clear passage space; and (3) a bathroom on the main floor that is wheelchair-accessible. Some US cities have adopted mandatory visitability ordinances for all newly built homes; others have adopted visitability ordinances for houses built with public funding or tax incentives.



# Launch a universal design program

355 responses

**Proposal: Launch a Universal Design Program to encourage homeowners and landlords to make modifications that support barrier-free living throughout a dwelling.** The program could consist of a resource guide that describes and illustrates Universal Design features and provide small incentives (like waived or reduced work permit fees) for Universal Design modifications.



## Physical accessibility: Priority ranking

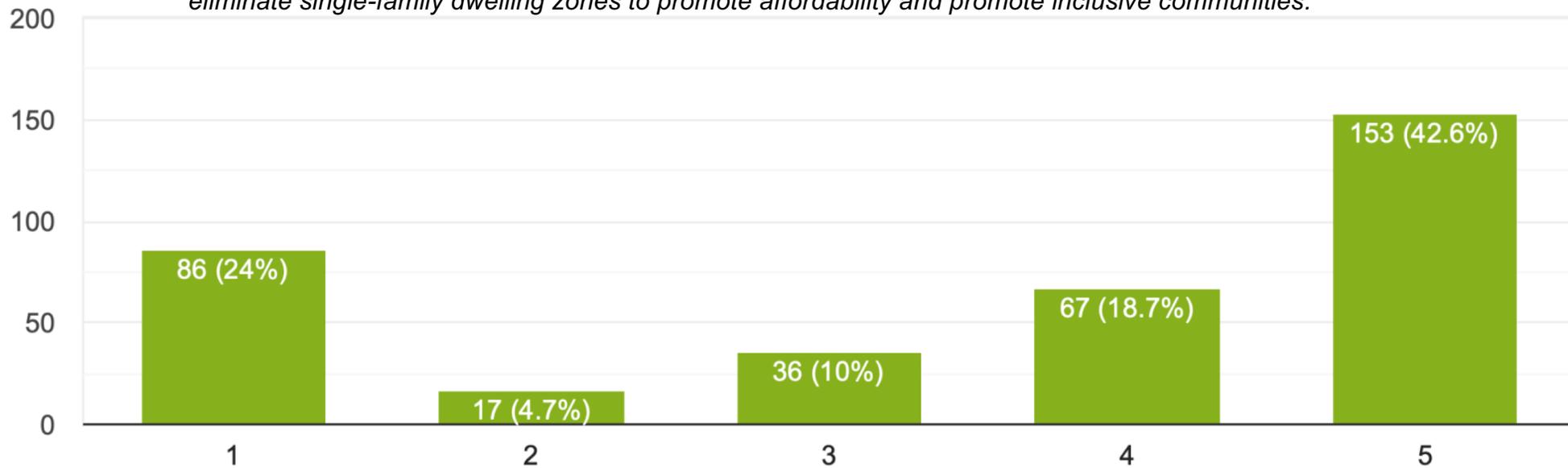
1. Launch a Universal Design program (60.4%)
2. Adopt a visitability ordinance (59.4%)

# Section 5: Zoning

# Change single-family zoning districts to allow 2- or 3-unit homes

**Proposal:** *Revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow duplexes or triplexes in the Single-Family Residential district to allow for the construction of housing that tends to be more affordable than detached single-family homes. Restriction of multiple family dwellings has historically been a part of race or class segregation strategies in some communities. Some municipalities (such as Minneapolis) have taken action to reduce or eliminate single-family dwelling zones to promote affordability and promote inclusive communities.*

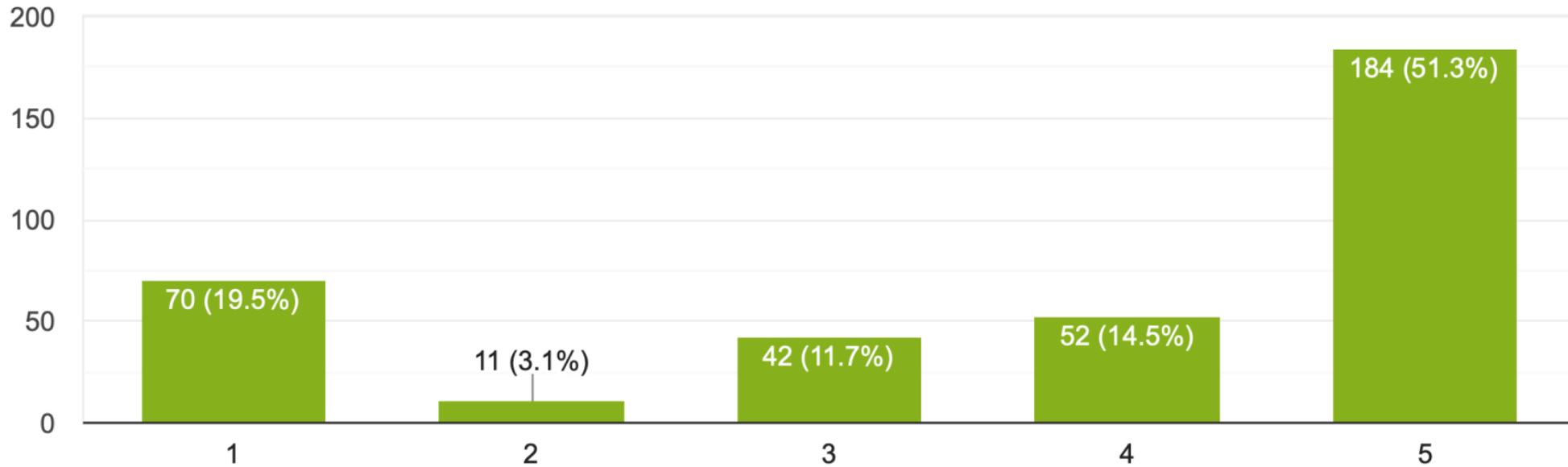
359 responses



# Lift limit on non-related persons living in a single dwelling

359 responses

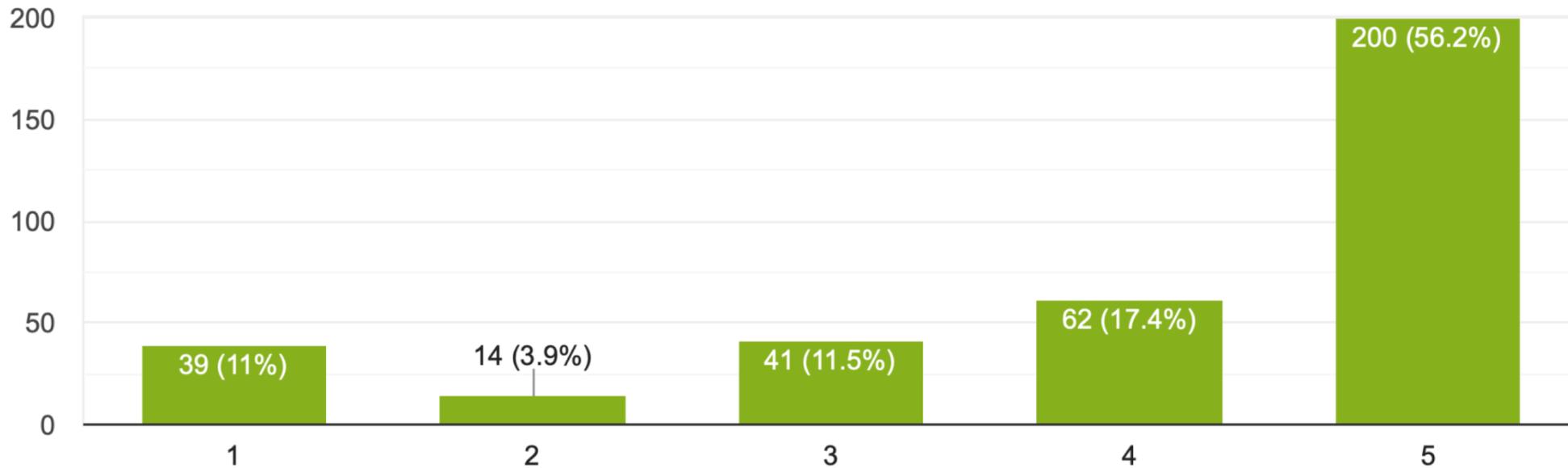
**Proposal: Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by revising the Zoning Ordinance definition of a “family”.** The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance definition of a “family” limits the number of unrelated individuals that may occupy a single dwelling to three. This limit can be increased generally or tied to the number of bedrooms available in that dwelling.



# Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the City

**Proposal:** Revise the zoning ordinance to better accommodate affordable housing in small, independent residences known as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). ADUs can take the form of detached garages, backyard cottages, or basement/attic apartments located on the same lot as an existing residence. Currently ADUs are permitted in the Core Neighborhood, Core Neighborhood-Mid, and Historic Corridor zones.

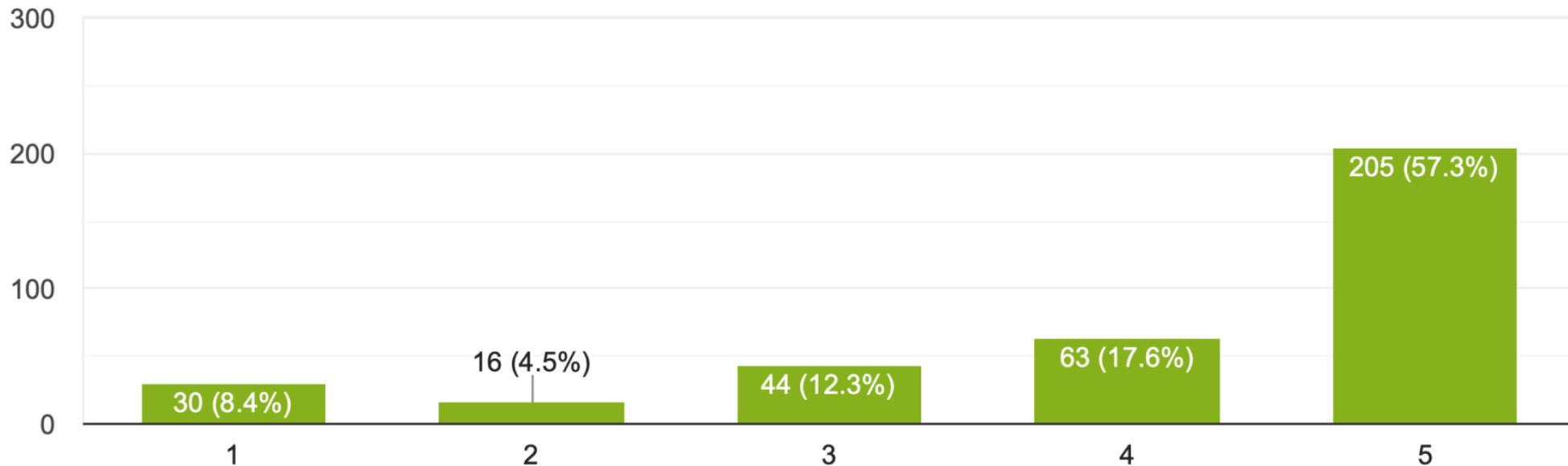
356 responses



# Alter zoning ordinance to accommodate tiny homes

**Proposal: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to remove barriers to tiny home construction and occupancy.** *Tiny homes can provide an affordable alternative to larger, traditional homes. They can come in a variety of styles, many of which are complicated by zoning requirements governing building frontage, lot coverage, and portability.*

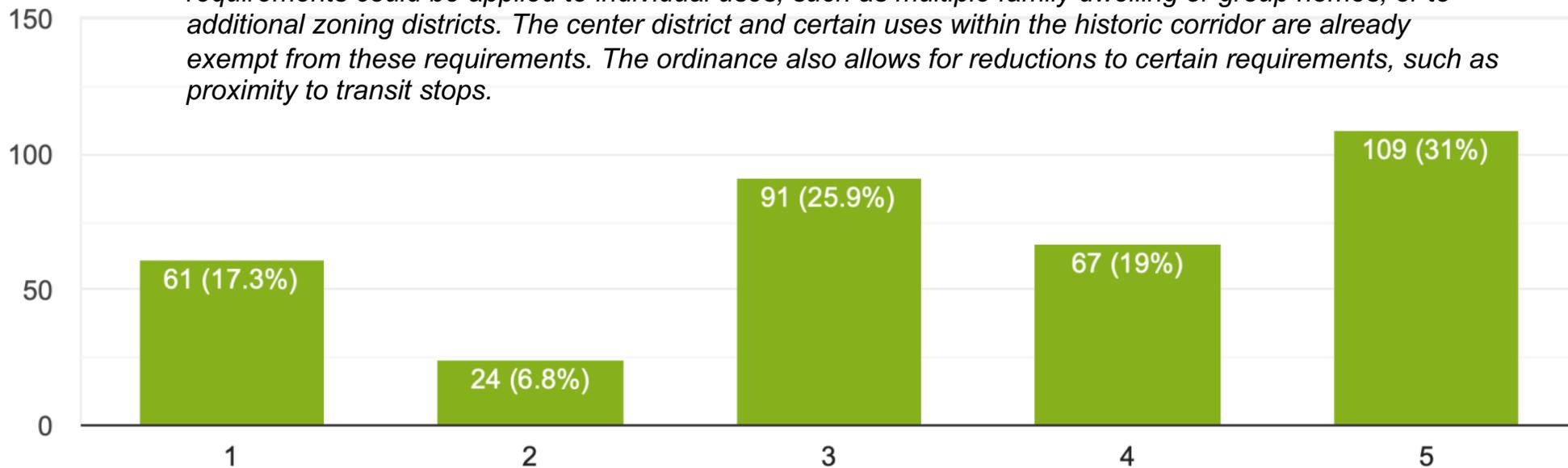
358 responses



# Change parking space requirement for new housing developments

352 responses

**Proposal: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the number of parking spaces required for new housing development or altered housing.** Reduction of parking requirements can lower the cost of construction or provide more site-layout options for new or altered housing. Reductions in parking space requirements could be applied to individual uses, such as multiple family dwelling or group homes, or to additional zoning districts. The center district and certain uses within the historic corridor are already exempt from these requirements. The ordinance also allows for reductions to certain requirements, such as proximity to transit stops.



## Zoning: Priority ranking

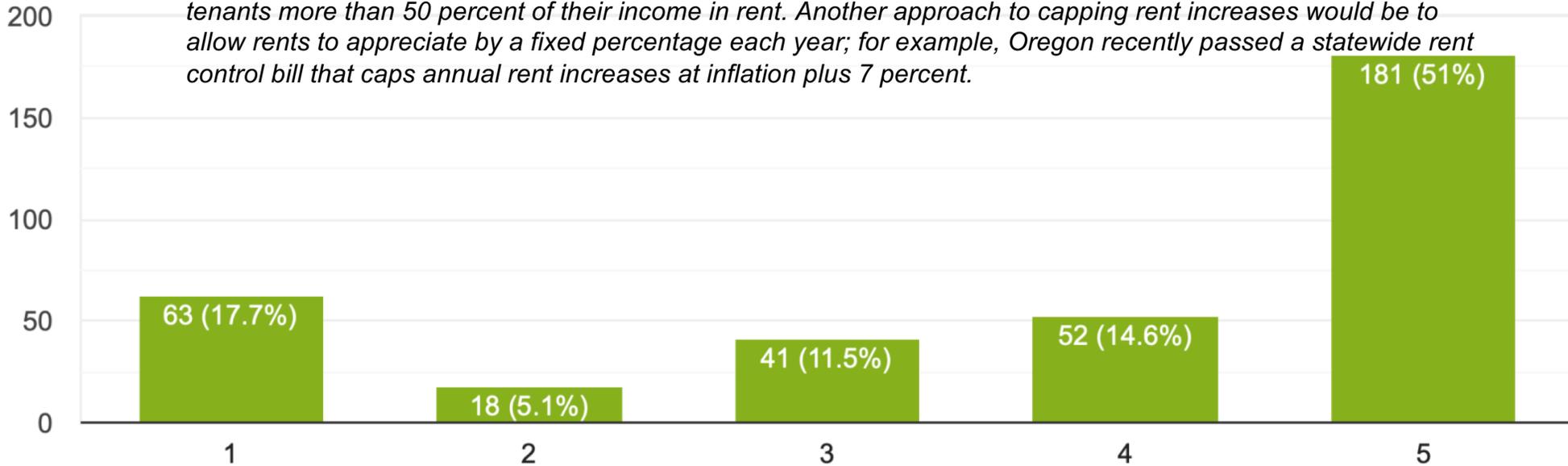
1. Alter zoning ordinance to accommodate tiny homes (52.3%)
2. Lift the limit on non-related persons living in a dwelling (44.6%)
3. Change single-family zoning districts to permit 2- or 3-unit homes (44%)
4. Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the City (39.1%)
5. Change parking space requirement for new housing developments (19%)

## Section 6: Partnership & Advocacy

# Advocate for rent control legislation

355 responses

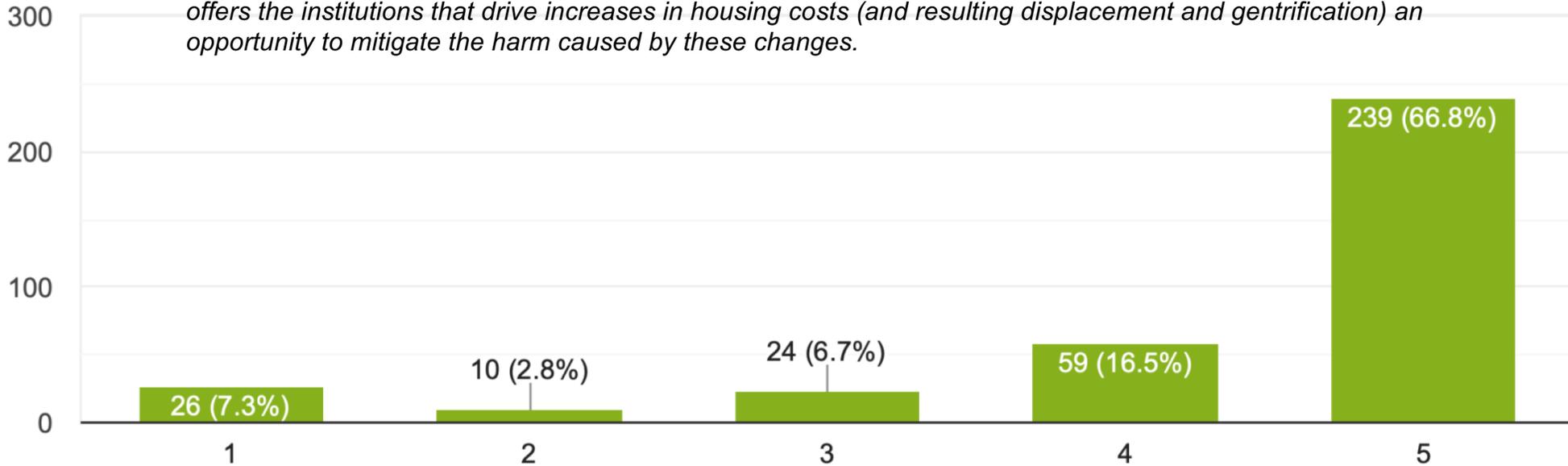
**Proposal: Advocate with state lawmakers to grant municipalities the authority to cap annual rent increases.** Michigan law currently prohibits local government units from enacting or enforcing rent control policies. House Bills 4686 and 4687 would (1) revise the law to create an exception to the rent control prohibition and (2) give local governments the power to prevent landlords from charging tenants that have a disability or elderly tenants more than 50 percent of their income in rent. Another approach to capping rent increases would be to allow rents to appreciate by a fixed percentage each year; for example, Oregon recently passed a statewide rent control bill that caps annual rent increases at inflation plus 7 percent.



# Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust

**Proposal: Advocate for the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund and to actively support other county-wide housing affordability measures.**  
*Many reports, including the 2014 OCED housing report, point to Ann Arbor's increasing rental rates driving the displacement of Ann Arbor residents to Ypsilanti. Asking local universities to fund the Ypsilanti Housing Trust offers the institutions that drive increases in housing costs (and resulting displacement and gentrification) an opportunity to mitigate the harm caused by these changes.*

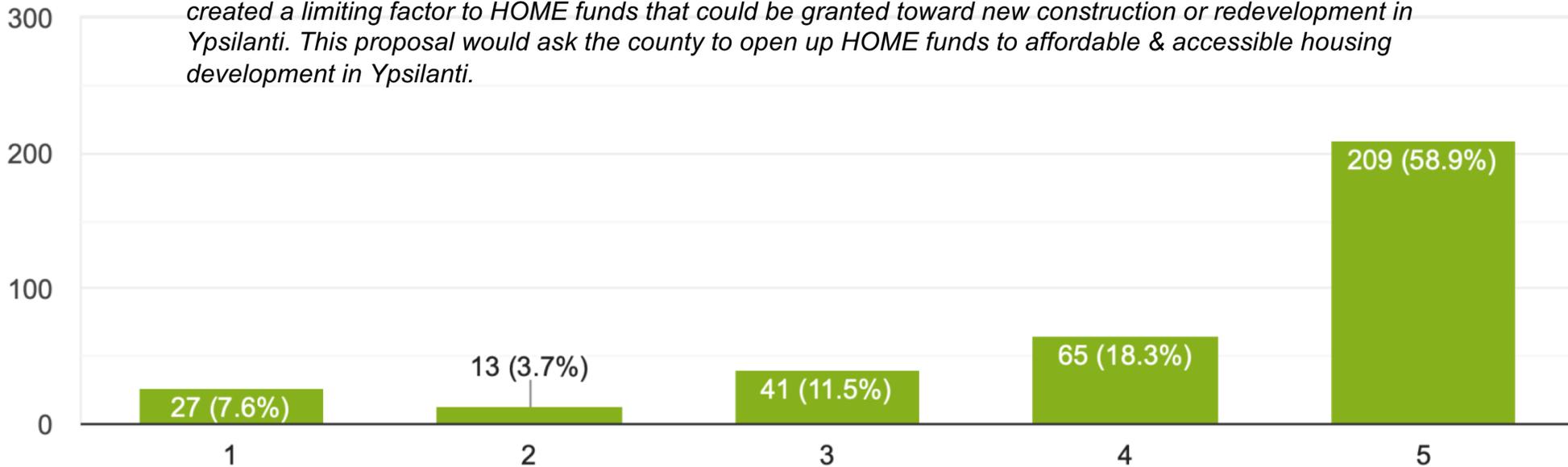
358 responses



# Ask OCED to fund affordable, accessible housing in Ypsilanti

**Proposal: Advocate for Ypsilanti to receive HOME funds for affordable & accessible housing development.**  
The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) is a type of United States federal assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to States in order to provide decent and affordable housing, particularly housing for low- and very low-income Americans. The 2014 OCED housing report created a limiting factor to HOME funds that could be granted toward new construction or redevelopment in Ypsilanti. This proposal would ask the county to open up HOME funds to affordable & accessible housing development in Ypsilanti.

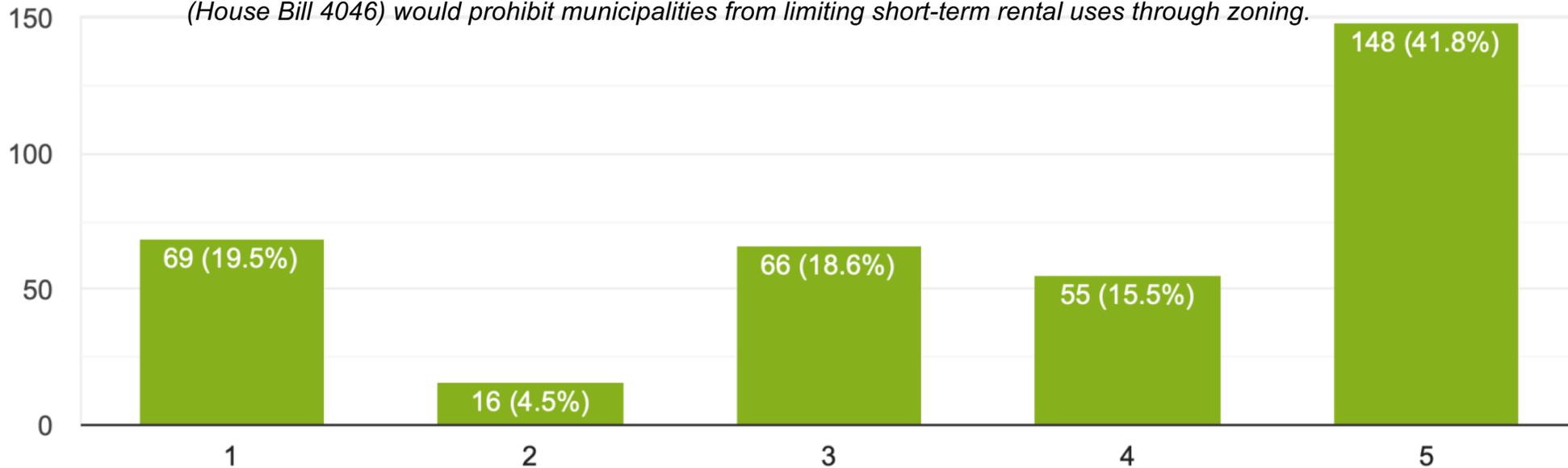
355 responses



# Advocate for local authority to regulate Airbnb/short-term rentals

354 responses

**Proposal: Advocate with state lawmakers for greater local government authority to regulate vacation and short-term rental uses such as Airbnb, HomeAway and VRBO.** Conversion of permanent housing units to vacation or short-term rentals can reduce the supply of housing available to local residents and increase rents. Michigan law currently prohibits most municipalities from imposing special taxes, and a recently re-introduced bill (House Bill 4046) would prohibit municipalities from limiting short-term rental uses through zoning.



## Partnership & Advocacy: Priority ranking

1. Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust (54.8%)
2. Advocate for rent control legislation at State level (54.2%)
3. Ask OCED to fund affordable and accessible housing in Ypsilanti (36.7%)
4. Advocate for local authority to regulate Airbnb/short-term rentals (28.2%)