

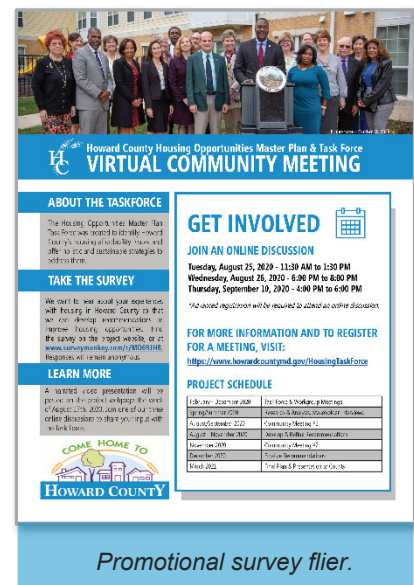
# Howard County Housing Opportunities Master Plan Public Survey Summary Report

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The purpose of the Howard County Housing Opportunities Master Plan Public Survey was to gain a better understanding of Howard County residents' experiences with housing in the County. All answers to the survey were anonymous, and it is the intent of the Task Force to use survey results to appropriately craft recommendations for the Housing Opportunities Master Plan for Howard County.

The survey was available from June 16, 2020 to September 28, 2020 and received 2,312 responses. Advertisement of the survey was conducted at a variety of public, private, and nonprofit levels and was crucial to successful response rate of the survey.

Outreach efforts included advertisement by the county on its social media accounts and website, advertisement by Task Force members to their networks, and outreach to landlords and property managers to share with their residents. Additionally, encouragement to take the survey and get involved was included on promotional materials for the series of virtual community meetings that were held by the Task Force in August and September. These fliers were distributed throughout the county and could be found in libraries, community centers, food bags, and online.



Promotional survey flier.

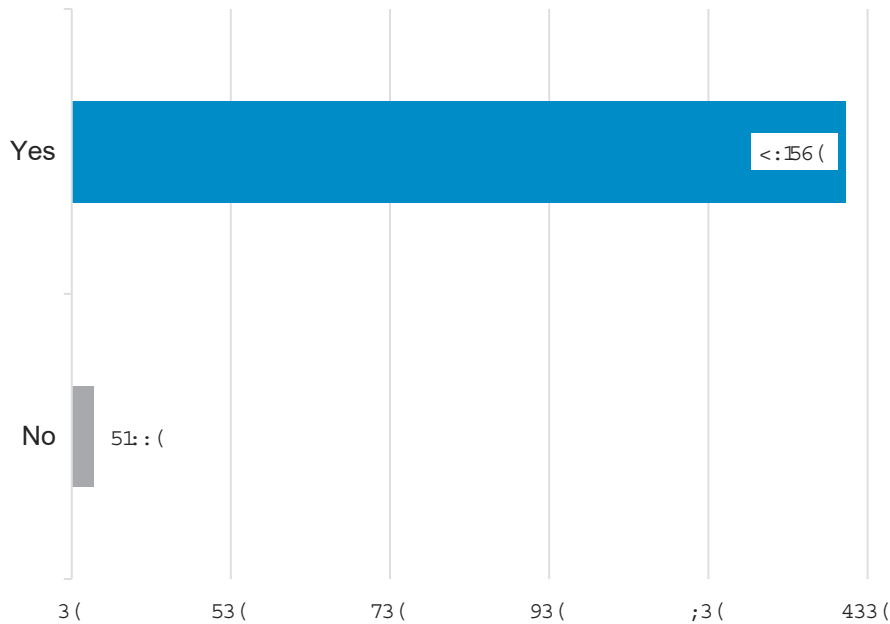
Analysis of survey results have shown that 97 percent of respondents live in Howard County. 36 percent of the 2,312 respondents also work in the county. 71 percent own their home, while 5.5 percent are receiving housing assistance of some type. Additionally, over half of respondents (52 percent) do not think there are enough reasonably priced housing options in the county. This trend was supported by many of the comments that were left throughout the survey, in which respondents noted that affordable options are not spread out equally throughout the county, causing pockets of poverty and wealth to be created.

When asked about the most important considerations to take into account when shopping for a home, the majority of respondents selected home cost and affordability as the most important, followed by low crime rate, home quality, and proximity to quality schools. Elements of these themes are interwoven throughout survey responses and it is crucial to take this feedback into consideration as recommendations are developed.

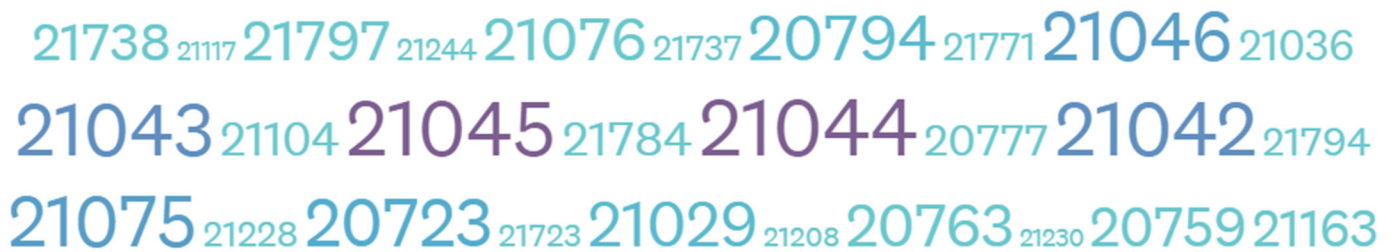
The following is a detailed report of the results of this survey.

## RESULTS

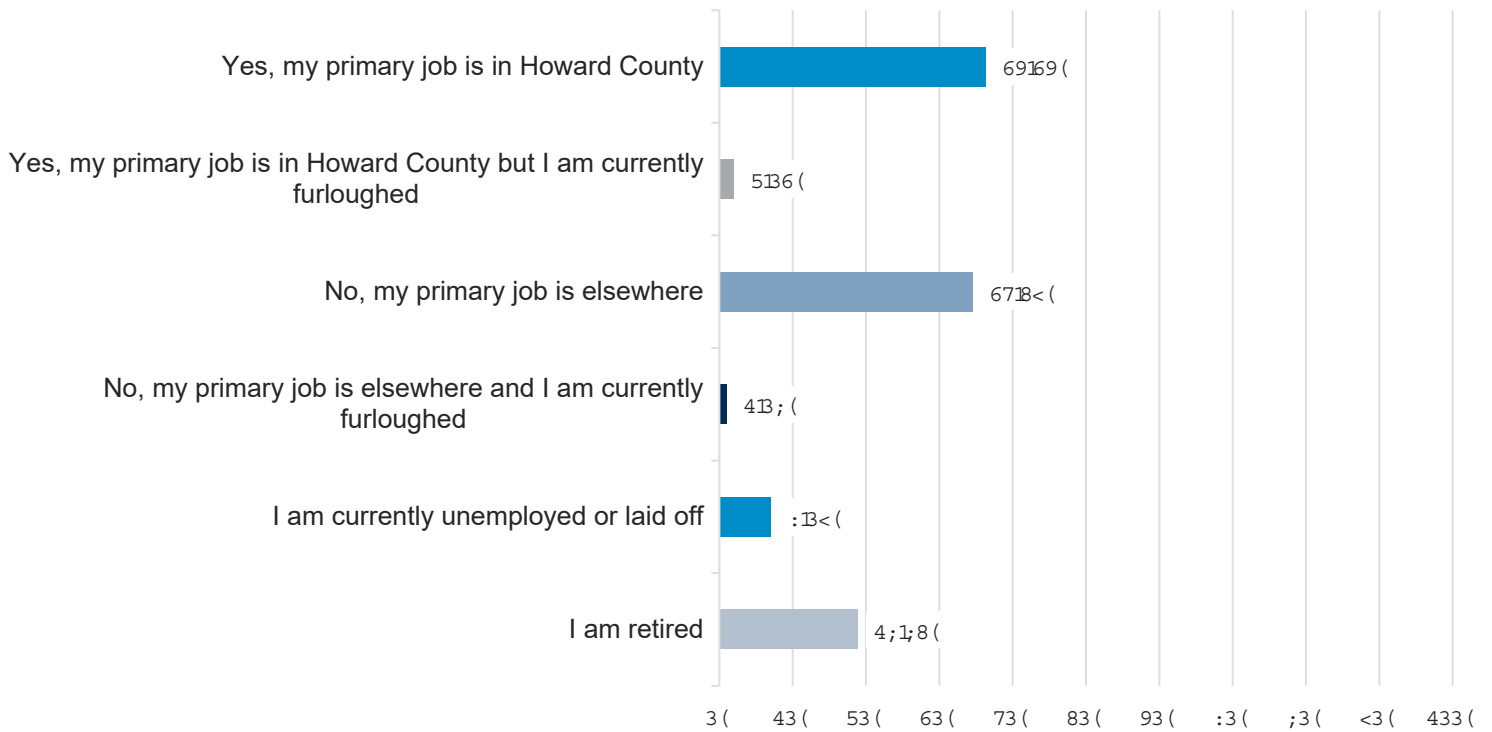
### 1. Do you currently live in Howard County?



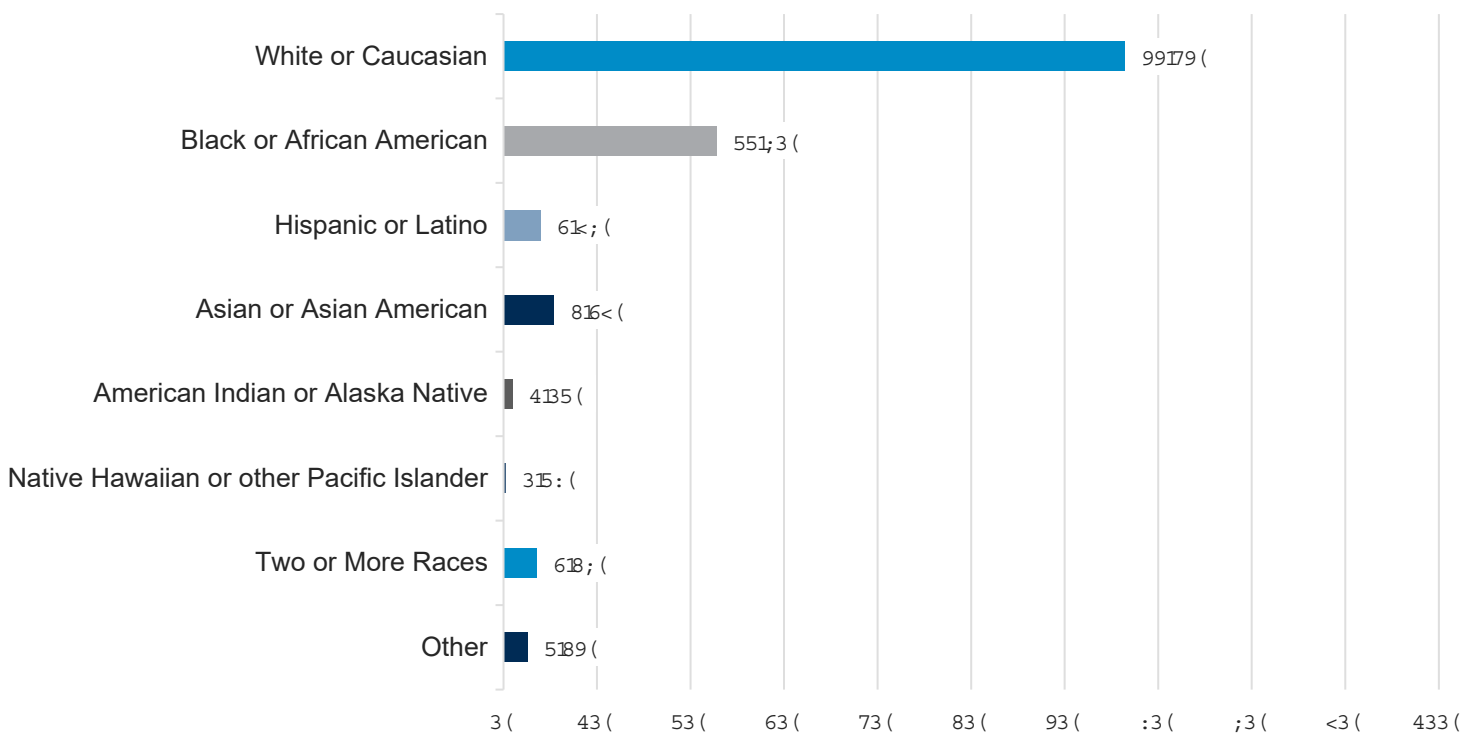
### 2. What is your zip code?



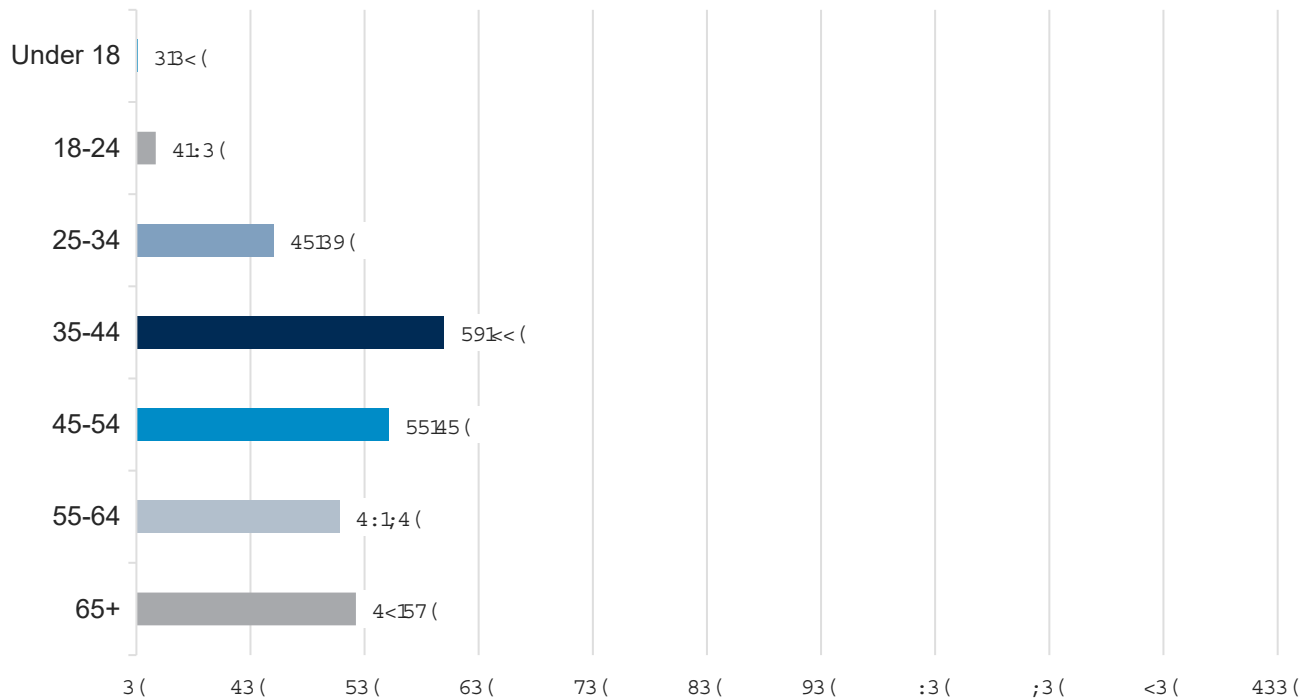
### 3. Is your primary job located in Howard County?



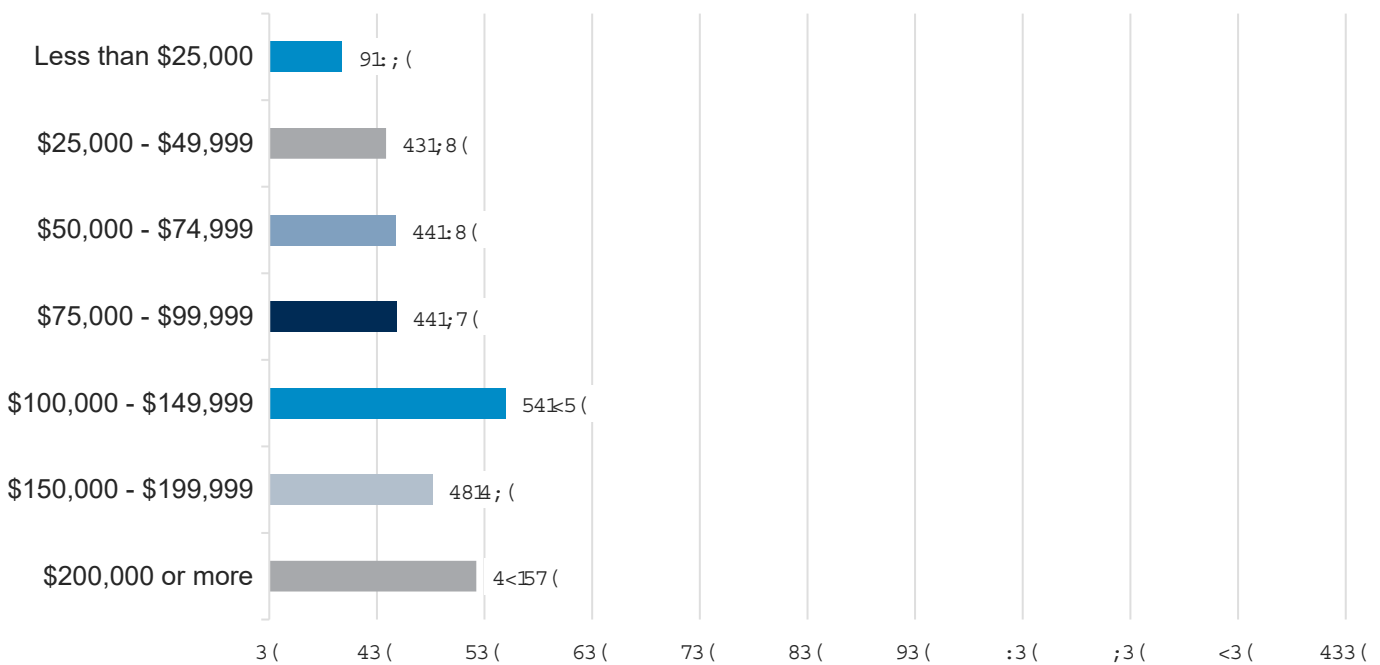
### 4. What is your race or ethnic background (choose all that apply)?



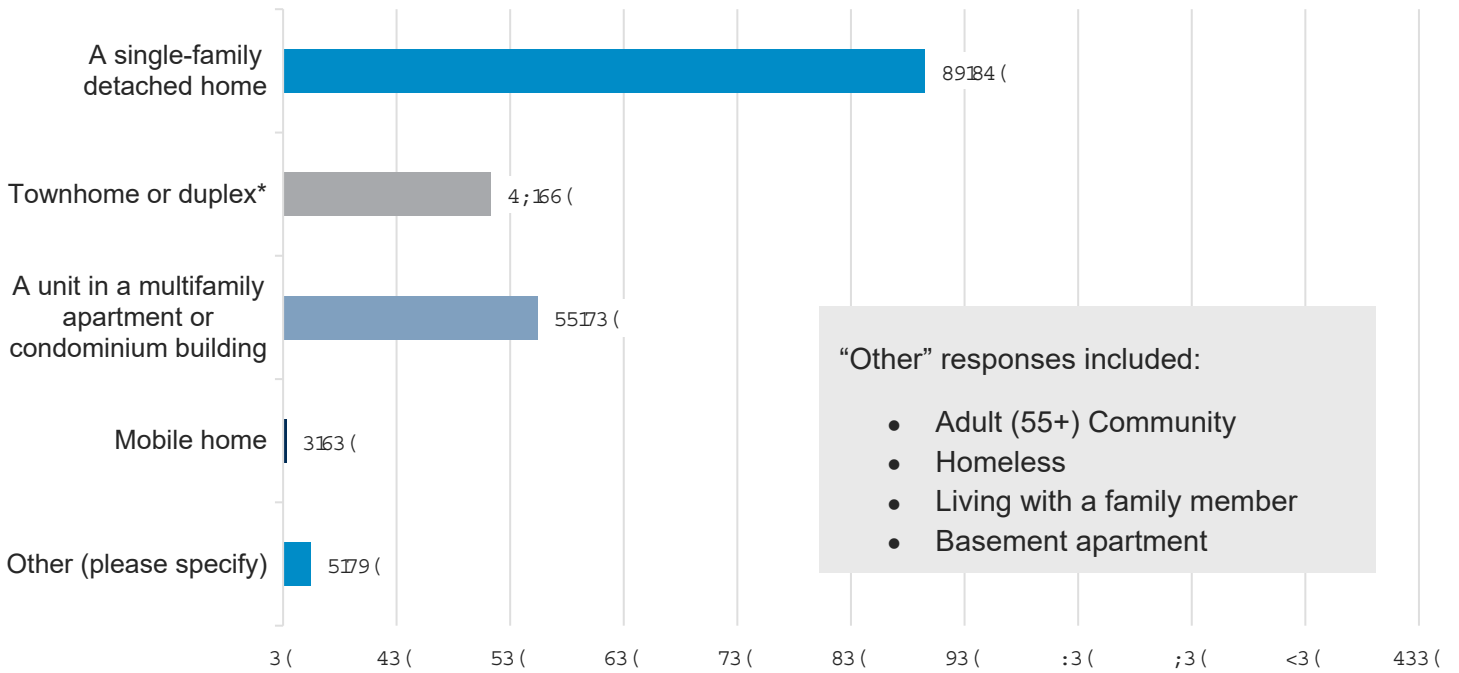
### 5. What is your age range?



### 6. What is the amount of money your family earns in a single year?

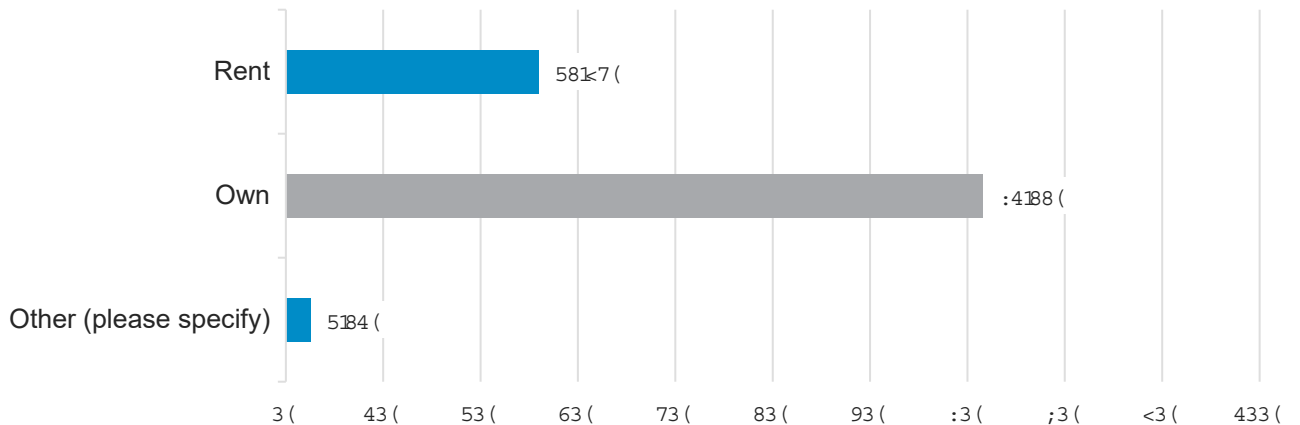


### 7. Which of the following describes the type of home you currently live in?



\*A townhome or duplex is defined as a single-family residence that is attached to one or more other single-family residences

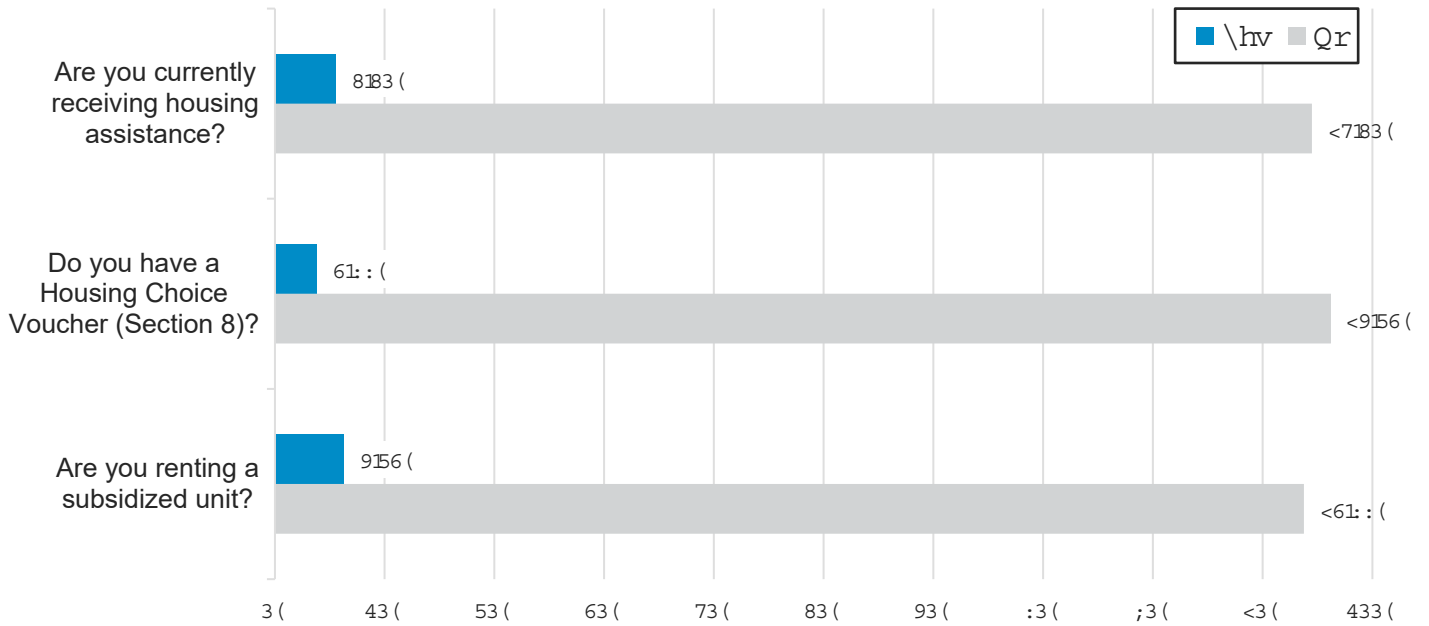
### 8. Do you rent or own your home?



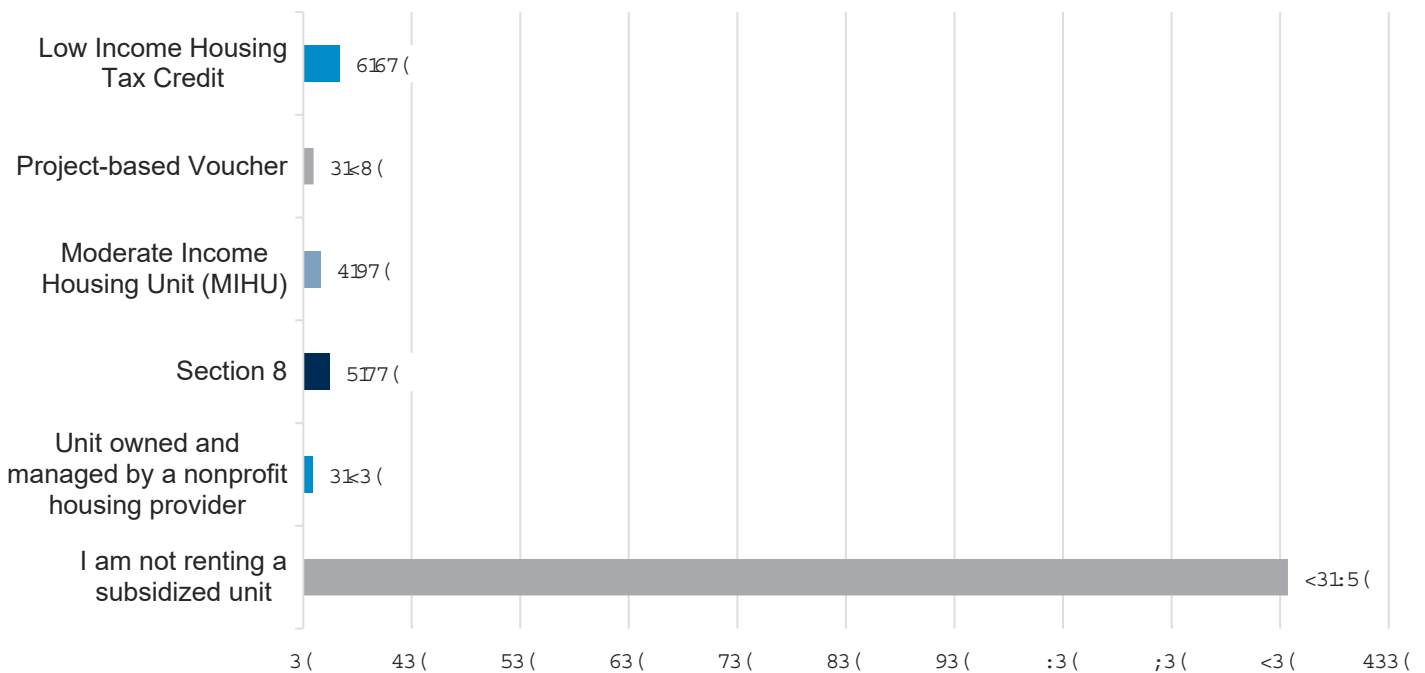
**"Other" responses included:**

- Live with family
- Homeless
- Transitional

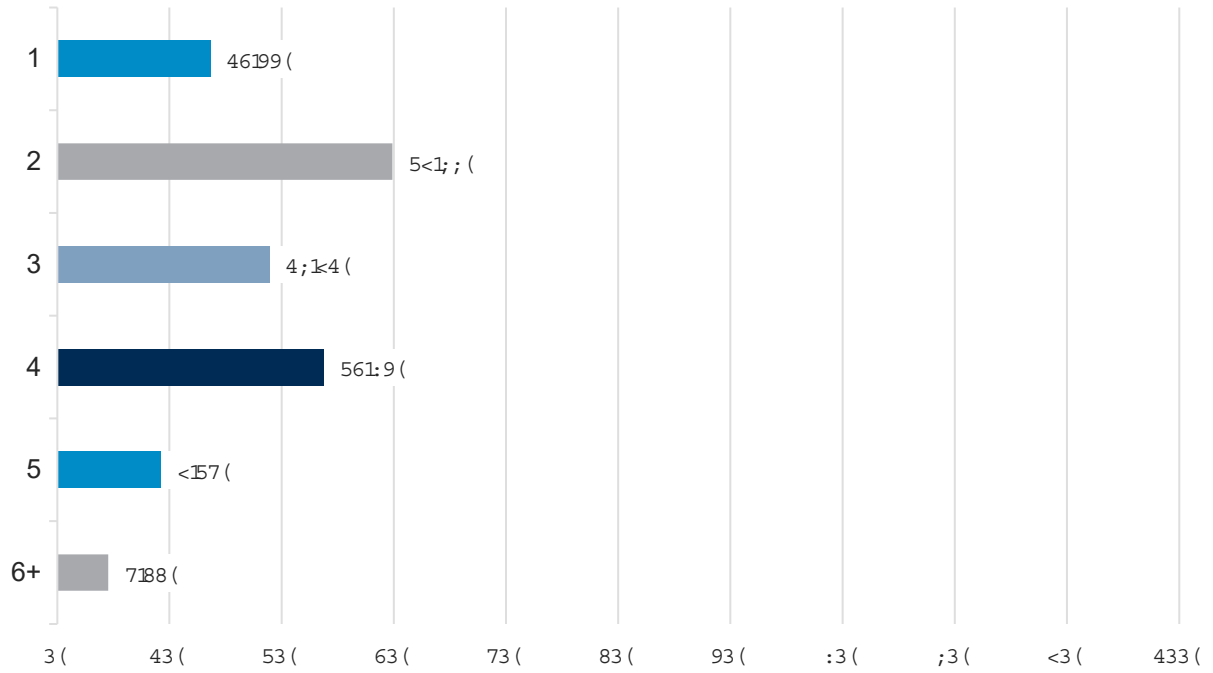
### 9. Housing Assistance:



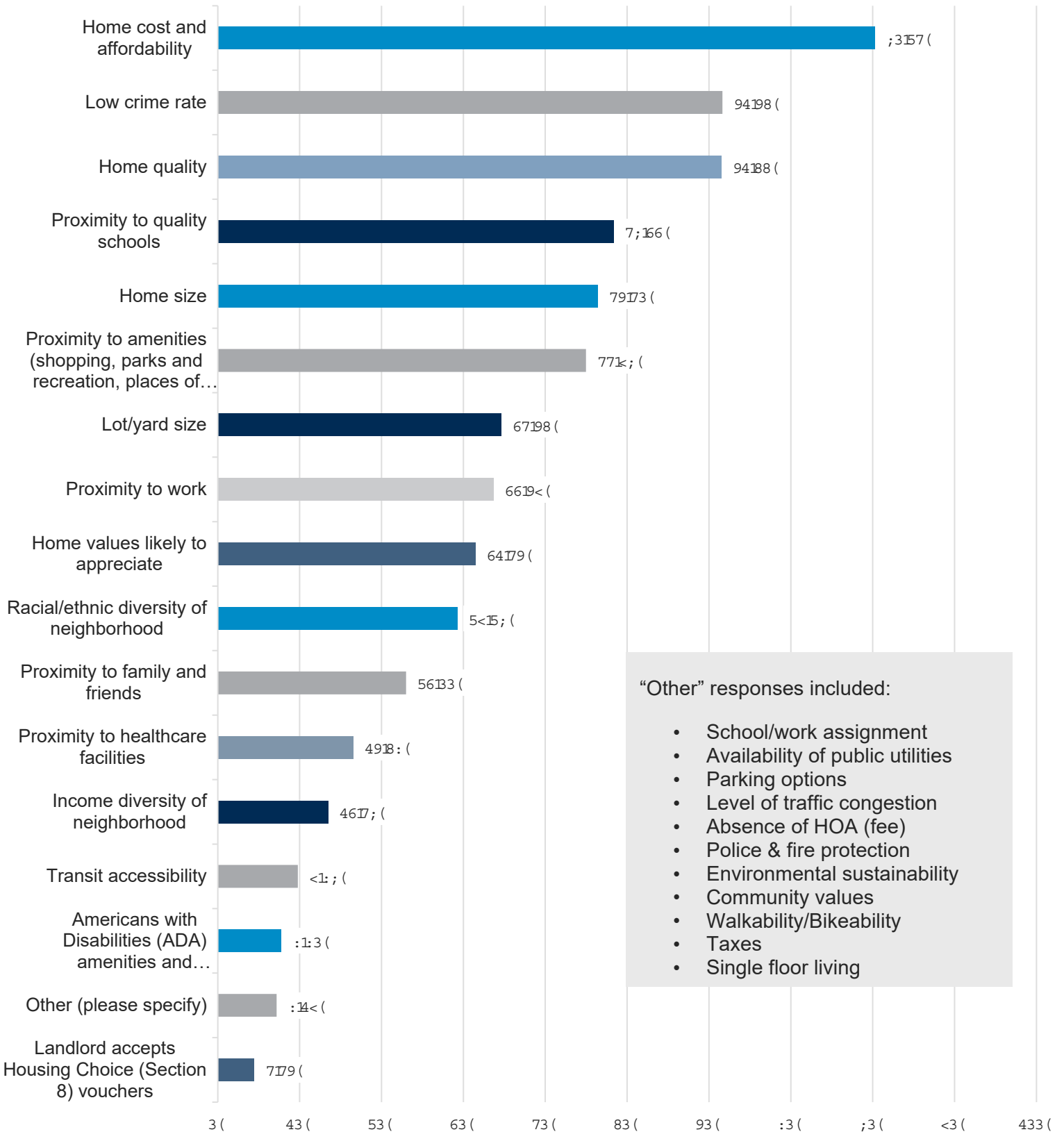
### 10. If you are renting a subsidized unit, please tell us what kind it is:



11. Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household?



**12. Which of the following considerations would be most important to you if you were shopping for a home to rent or own? (Please select top 5)**

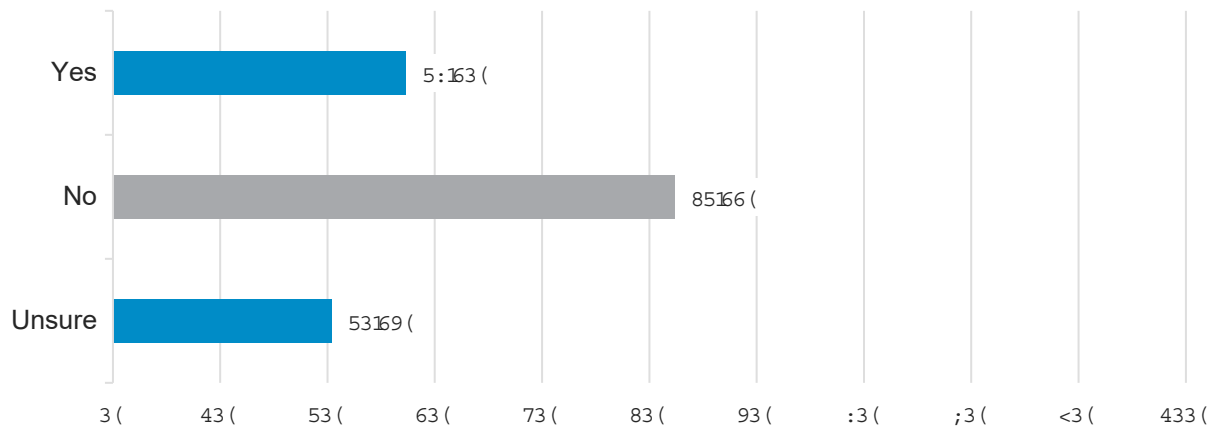


“Other” responses included:

- School/work assignment
- Availability of public utilities
- Parking options
- Level of traffic congestion
- Absence of HOA (fee)
- Police & fire protection
- Environmental sustainability
- Community values
- Walkability/Bikeability
- Taxes
- Single floor living



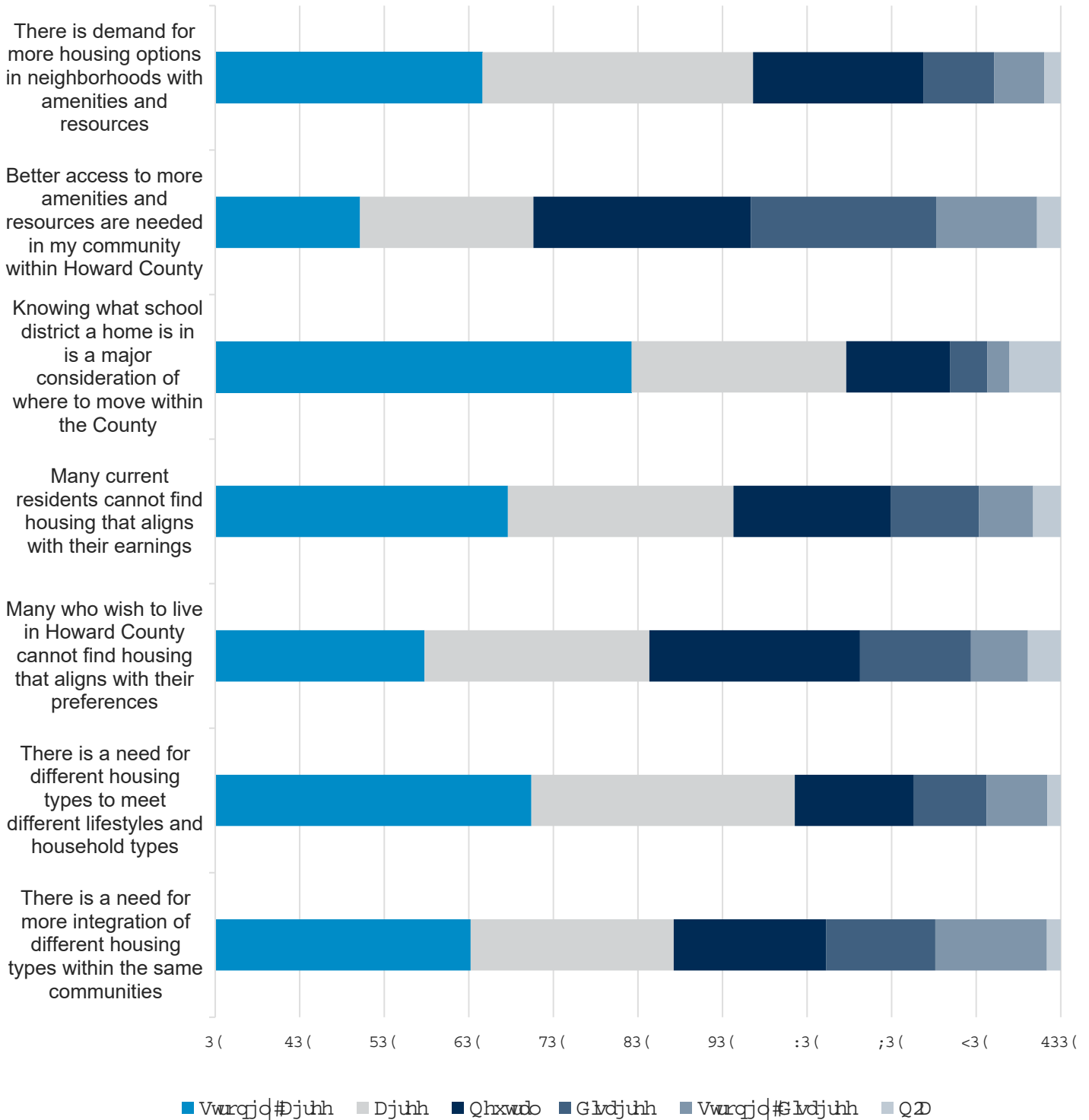
**13. Do you think that Howard County provides enough housing options that are reasonably priced to people who currently live or wish to live in the County in the future?**



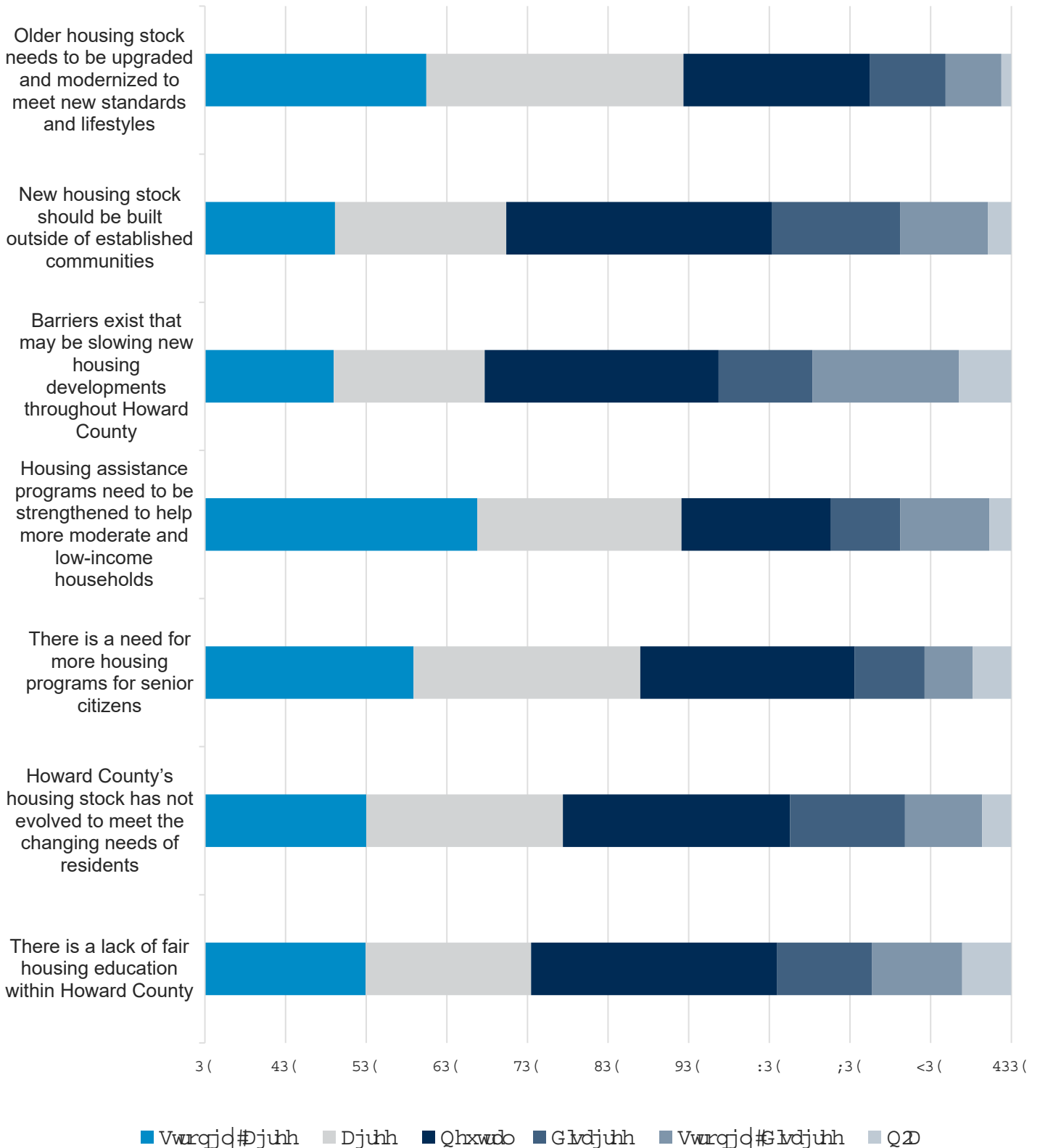
**Common themes from the comments received include:**

- There are not enough mid-range options available for the middle class (both price and structure wise) – there is nothing in between McMansions and townhomes or apartments/condos. Respondents would like to see more 1,200 square foot single family homes priced at less than \$400-500K.
- More housing assistance is needed for low to moderate income families
- Housing prices should be more affordable to allow for public servants and essential workers employed by or in the County to live there (teachers, police, fire fighters, other County employees, grocery store workers, hospital staff, etc.)
- Voucher amounts are not increasing, so it is hard to continue to afford living in the County
- Apartment rents are increasing, but the quality of units/complexes and their management companies are greatly declining
- Taxes are too high, and the bad quality (or lack) of infrastructure doesn't justify such high rates
- Young professionals and those with younger families can't afford to live in the County
- Affordable options are not spread out equally throughout the County – poverty and wealth are both concentrated in specific areas

**14. When thinking about the current housing conditions in Howard County, please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:**



**14. (CONTINUED) When thinking about the current housing conditions in Howard County, please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:**



15. If you currently live (or have previously lived) in Howard County:

- a. **How long have you lived here? If a former resident, how long did you live here?**  
Survey respondents answered that they have lived in Howard County for as little as 2 days and as long as 60+ years.
- b. **Why did you choose to live here?**



- c. **What is your ideal housing situation, if different than your current one?**

Common themes from the comments received include:

- Many were happy in their current housing situation
- Increased affordability and homeownership – some wishing to own a larger, single family home with a lot of land and others wishing to downsize to a townhouse or one-floor single family residence
- A more rural housing situation where it is quieter and there is less traffic
- Better walking/biking/transit access to nearby amenities
- Age and condition of housing - more modern, updated housing amongst all housing types
- Increased diversity within communities and schools
- Less overcrowding in schools and no more redistricting

- d. **What changes to housing in Howard County have you observed in recent years?**

Common themes from the comments received include:

- Housing has become less affordable
- Significant overdevelopment and overcrowding
- There aren't enough single-family homes being built (most development is focused on townhomes and apartments/condos)

- There is too much development taking place that is negatively impacting the environment (green space and trees are disappearing) and infrastructure is unable to keep up (schools are overcrowded, lots of traffic)
- More low-income residents have moved in, pockets of poverty have been created
- Neighborhoods are lacking diversity
- What was once rural and suburban has become very urban

**e. How has your neighborhood or community changed over time?**

Common themes from the comments received include:

- Increased crime
- More diversity
- Overdevelopment/overcrowding with impacts to infrastructure (traffic, schools)
- More rentals
- Turnover in ownership – older residents are moving out and younger ones are moving in
- Farmland being converted into neighborhoods
- Deterioration of village centers and homes in older communities

**f. What changes to housing would you like to see made in Howard County in the coming years?**

Common themes from the comments received include:

- Less development
- More affordable housing, spread evenly throughout the County
- Plan to keep up with infrastructure – schools, roads, addition of sidewalks and bike paths, etc.
- Preservation of green space
- Addition of more housing options between McMansions and townhomes/apartments/condos
- Holding developers accountable for contributing towards infrastructure improvements/additions that are needed as a result of their projects
- Affordable options for seniors (ranchers, cottages, etc.)
- Return to Jim Rouse's vision

**g. How will these changes benefit the County in the future?**

Common themes from the comments received include:

- Increase in inclusivity and racial and socioeconomic diversity
- Improved infrastructure (less crowded schools and roads) and increased green space and walkability
- Better quality of life

- Create a stronger and better-connected community
- Bring back Jim Rouse’s vision - fairness and equity in housing opportunities
- People who work in the County can afford to live here
- Increased funding for infrastructure improvements/additions and lower property taxes
- Less crime

**16. If you don’t currently live (or have never lived) in Howard County:**

**a. Would you like to live in Howard County? Yes or No.**

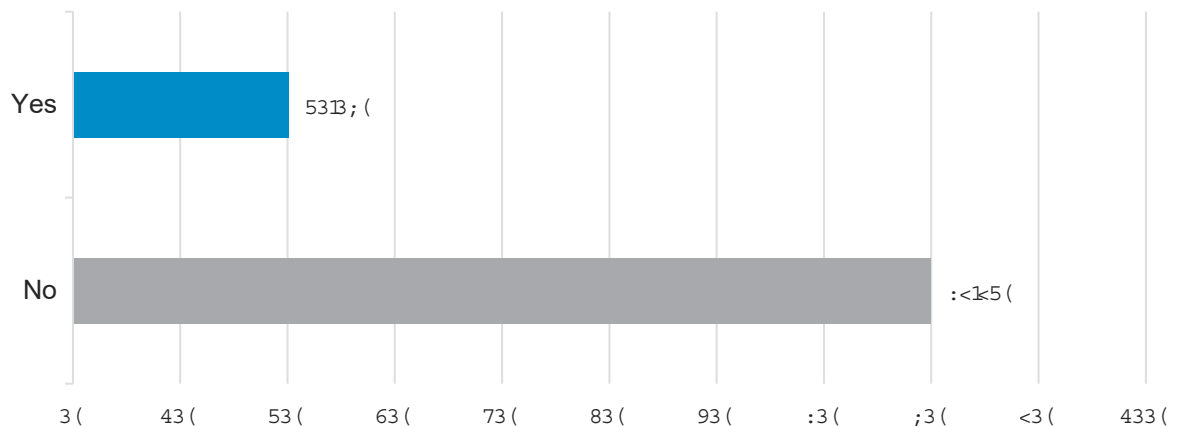
The majority of respondents answered that yes, they would like to live in Howard County.

**b. If yes, what is preventing you from moving here?**

Common themes from the comments received include:

- Lack of affordable housing: money goes much further elsewhere
- Lack of public utilities
- Uncertainty with taxes

**17. Has the current COVID-19 pandemic impacted your housing situation, or do you anticipate that it will in the future?**



Common themes from the comments received include:

**Job loss** Moving in with family  
Lack of childcare Facing eviction  
Isolation **Reduced Income**  
Missed rent/bill payments Working from home  
**Loss of benefits** Moving out of area  
Increasing home prices **Delayed home buying/selling**

18. Please provide any additional comments regarding your housing experience and vision for Howard County.

Common themes from the comments received include:

- Excessive growth without accommodations to infrastructure is causing problems county-wide - it is a factor driving many people to sell their homes and leave the County
- The County needs to be mindful of the green space it has left and make sure there are preservation efforts in place
- Developers need to be held accountable for the impacts that new development has on communities
- The County needs better predictability and stability when it comes to school zoning and assignments
- More affordable housing needs to be built in different areas of the County, and should be built to the same standards as market rate housing
- The County needs to consider how to use existing development and encourage repurposing unused or underused development rather than continuing to overdevelop
- The increasing crime rate has been a factor causing many families to relocate within the County or move away from the County
- Providing housing for diverse backgrounds is key for the continued success of the County
- Those who need help getting or finding affordable housing are uncertain in how to go about getting that help
- Older communities throughout the County need to continue to be invested in
- Increased assistance should be provided to moderate income citizens
- Housing development must slow down until more schools are built



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- The County should continue to invest in high quality transportation services/bike routes/and pedestrian infrastructure – residents rely on these amenities and are crucial for ensuring mobility at all stages of life
  - Senior housing efforts need to be improved county-wide