



# ROCKY RIVER MASTER PLAN

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS



July 23, 2018



## County Planning

### **Cuyahoga County Planning Commission**

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### **About County Planning**

The Cuyahoga County Planning Commission's mission is to inform and provide services in support of the short and long term comprehensive planning, quality of life, environment, and economic development of Cuyahoga County and its cities, villages and townships.

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# ROCKY RIVER MASTER PLAN

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS



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## SECTION 1

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ROCKY RIVER COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The City of Rocky River conducted the 2016 Survey to understand residents' attitudes on a variety of important issues and topics. The survey results are intended to be used to inform and guide City policies and planning documents.

In coordination with City officials, County Planning designed, distributed, collected, and analyzed the survey to produce the report.

### WHAT'S IN THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY?

This Executive Summary provides a snapshot of the most important and compelling survey results. The summary is organized by topic area and mirrors the organization of the results document as a whole.

It includes an overview and analysis of the most important information from the survey, as well as associated graphics.

### HOW DO I USE IT?

The Executive Summary is a snapshot of the results and can give an overview of residents' most pressing issues. Use this summary as an overview and refer to the detailed findings section of the results document for additional analysis and context.

# CITY QUALITIES

Respondents were first asked to select the reasons they reside in Rocky River. The top reasons respondents chose to live in the city were quality of the school system, safety, property as a good investment, and proximity to Lake Erie.

When asked why one might consider moving out of the city, almost 40% of respondents said they would not consider moving out. The top four reasons why respondents would consider moving were for lower taxes, for a different climate, for more home for the money, and for one-floor living accommodations.

## TOP FOUR REASONS FOR RESIDING IN ROCKY RIVER



**Quality of the School System**  
(44.9%)



**Safe City/ Neighborhood**  
(39.6%)



**My Property Is a Good Investment**  
(34.0%)



**Close to Lake Erie**  
(32.6%)

## TOP FOUR CONSIDERATIONS FOR MOVING FROM ROCKY RIVER



**For Lower Taxes**  
(26.9%)



**For a Different Climate**  
(15.0%)



**For More Home for My Money**  
(14.6%)



**For One-Floor Housing**  
(14.6%)

# HOUSING

The housing section asked respondents about various issues regarding housing policies in Rocky River. The first question asked about the priority of different types of housing. Nearly 86% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that maintaining existing housing and neighborhoods was a priority, with renovating and expanding existing homes as a second priority. This was followed by a desire for more options for seniors.

Of the remaining possibilities, respondents were split on the priority for more walkable housing options, more one-floor living accommodations, more townhouses, and more infill development. A majority of respondents said that more apartment buildings and more mixed-use buildings were a low priority.

Respondents were also asked their opinions on design codes to ensure that buildings are attractive and fit the character of the community. The opinions were nearly equal with nearly 69% of respondents saying there should be design codes for commercial properties and nearly 68% of respondents saying existing design codes are effective. In addition, 71% of respondents said new homes should match in scale and design. These opinions indicate that respondents agree that design codes are necessary, are largely effective, but that they may need to be strengthened.

## TOP THREE HIGHEST PRIORITY HOUSING POLICIES



**Maintaining Existing Housing  
& Neighborhoods**  
(85.6%)



**More Renovations &  
Expansions of Existing Homes**  
(54.4%)



**More Accessible Housing  
Options for Seniors**  
(46.0%)

## OPINIONS ON DESIGN CODES

1. **New homes should match in scale and design** (70.8%)
2. **There should be design codes for commercial properties** (68.7%)
3. **Existing design codes are effective** (67.8%)
4. **There should be design codes for residential properties** (54.0%)

# INFRASTRUCTURE & IDENTITY

The next section asked a series of questions on the quality of city infrastructure and community identity. The results show that respondents see the need for improvements to streets, trails, and sidewalks. Respondents also believe stormwater should be handled in more environmentally friendly and efficient ways.

In terms of identity, respondents were asked about the attractiveness of City streets and ranked Lake Road, Hilliard Boulevard, and Detroit as the most attractive. Wooster Road and especially Center Ridge Road were ranked lowest, showing the need for improvements to these streets.

## TOP FIVE INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENTS



**Streets Need to Be Improved**  
(77.4%)



**Trails and Bikeways Need to Be Available**  
(60.5%)



**Wayfinding Signs Are Effective**  
(59.5%)



**Stormwater Should Be Handled in More Environmentally Friendly Ways**  
(59.0%)



**Sidewalks Need to Be Improved**  
(55.1%)

## MOST ATTRACTIVE STREETS

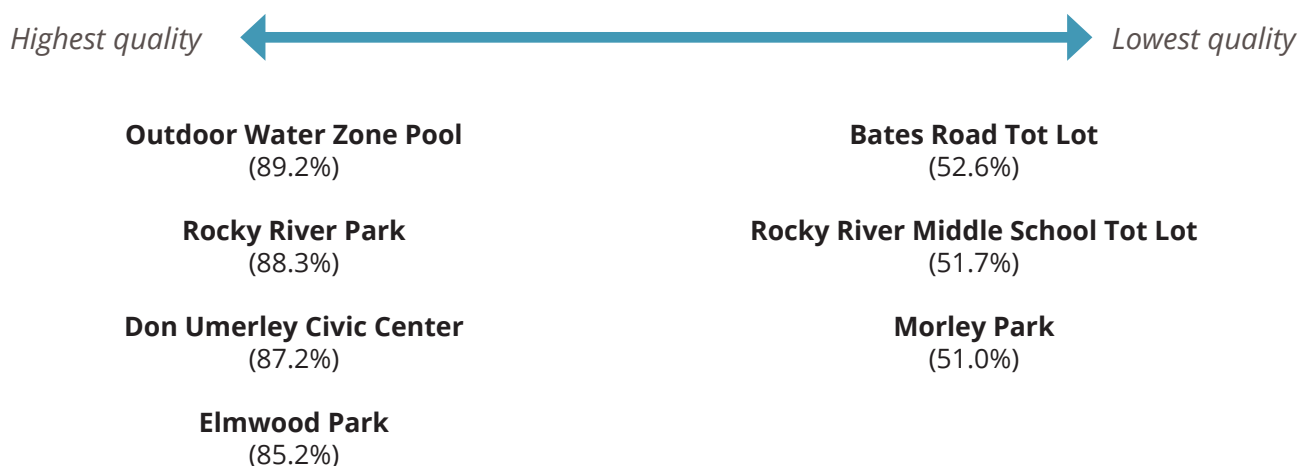
1. **Lake Road** (82.9%)
2. **Rocky River Streets, Generally** (70.7%)
3. **Hilliard Boulevard** (67.4%)
4. **Detroit Road** (62.3%)
5. **Wooster Road** (28.4%)
6. **Center Ridge Road** (14.6%)

# PARKS AND RECREATION

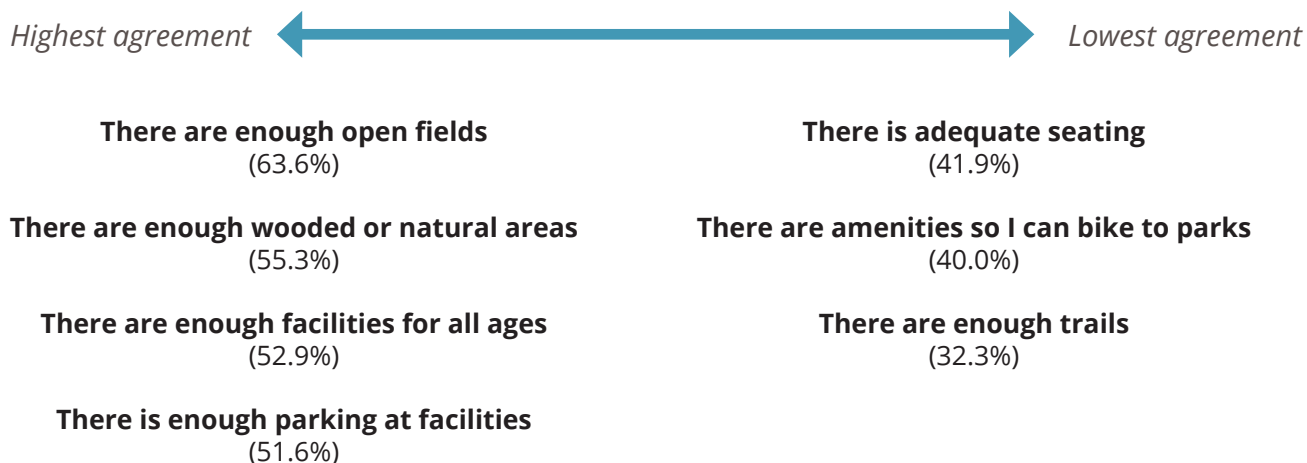
Respondents were asked to rate the quality of the city's parks and recreation facilities. The Outdoor Water Zone Pool and the Rocky River Park were the highest rated, with almost 90% of respondents ranking the facilities as "Excellent" or "Good." Overall, a majority of respondents rated all parks and facilities positively. Morley Park and the city's two Tot Lots were ranked lowest in quality.

Respondents were also asked whether they agreed with various statements about park features. Among question respondents, a majority agreed there are enough open fields, wooded areas, facilities for various ages, and parking. Less than half agreed that there was adequate seating, bike amenities, and trails in city parks.

## QUALITY OF EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES



## AGREEMENT ON PARK FEATURES STATEMENTS



# COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The next survey topic covered commercial development. Given a list of statements, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with each. Results showed that a majority of respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that new commercial development should maintain a neighborhood scale and character, the city should update sign codes to ensure attractive design, development efforts should focus on Center Ridge Road, and mixed-use development is important.

When asked the highest priority for aesthetic improvements, respondents clearly said that commercial development along the entire length of Center Ridge Road was the highest priority. This was followed by Downtown Rocky River, Detroit Road, and Wooster Road.

## TOP FOUR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT STATEMENTS



**Maintain a  
Neighborhood Scale  
and Character**  
(83.5%)



**Update Sign Codes  
to Ensure Attractive  
Design**  
(70.9%)



**Focus Development  
Efforts on Center  
Ridge Road**  
(68.8%)



**Focus on Mixed-  
Use, Walkable  
Development**  
(52.6%)

## TOP PRIORITY AREAS FOR AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENTS

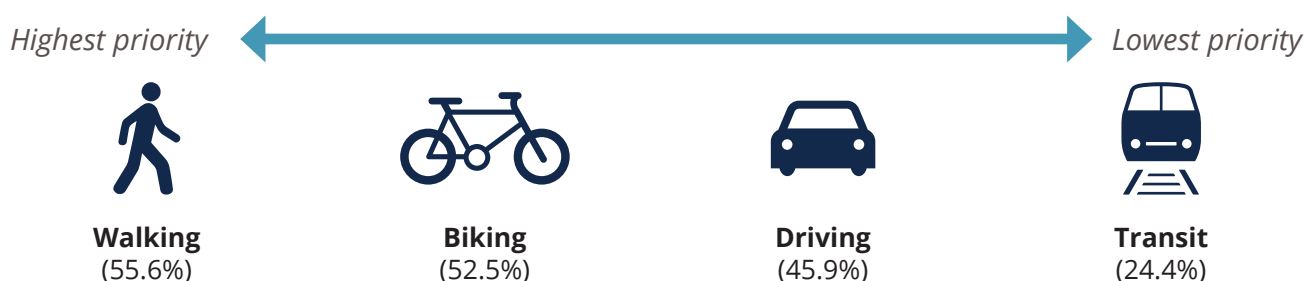
1. **Center Ridge Road (West of Northview Road)** (71.1%)
2. **Center Ridge Road (East of Northview Road)** (68.1%)
3. **Downtown Rocky River** (45.8%)
4. **Detroit Road (West of Downtown)** (43.0%)
5. **Wooster Road (at Hilliard Boulevard)** (43.0%)

# TRANSPORTATION

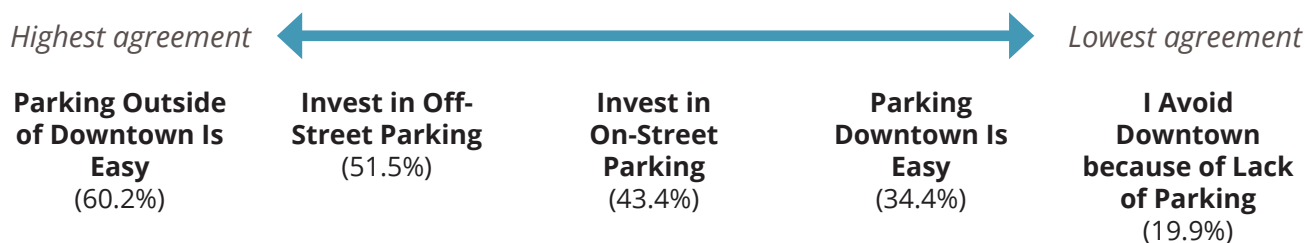
In the transportation section of the survey, respondents were asked their priority for improving the ease and safety of getting around the city by various transportation modes. Improving the environment for walking and biking were the highest priority for residents. This was followed by improvements to the driving environment and improvements to transit. Together this indicates that respondents would especially like to see improvements to sidewalks and bikeways.

Respondents were also asked whether they agreed or disagree with statements regarding parking in Rocky River. Overall, respondents said that parking in other commercial districts is easier than parking in Downtown River and that the city should invest in off-street parking improvements; however, few respondents said they avoid Downtown River due to lack of parking.

## PRIORITY FOR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS



## AGREEMENT WITH PARKING STATEMENTS



# COMMUNICATION

Respondents were asked their preferred method of receiving information about City meetings, events, projects, and issues. The most preferred methods among the respondents were direct mail at 56%, email at 51%, and city website at 47%. Overall, 43.5% of respondents say city communication is above average, indicating some room for improvement.

## TOP THREE DESIRED FORMS OF COMMUNICATION FROM THE CITY



**Direct Mail** (55.9%)



**Email** (50.5%)



**City Website** (46.8%)

## OVERALL CITY COMMUNICATION



# QUALITY OF LIFE

Respondents were asked about the overall quality of life in the City of Rocky River. Results show that over 96% of respondents say that their quality of life is either "Excellent" or "Good."

## OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE







WALKWAY  
OLD BRIDGE

RESERVED  
PARKING  
ONLY

MAX FINE  
\$350.00

THE BISTRO



## SECTION 2

# INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Rocky River Community Survey was an opportunity for public officials to gather the thoughts and opinions of residents. The outcomes of the survey are intended to assist in the Master Plan process and policy formation.

to give context to the detailed results provided in later sections of the report.

### WHAT'S IN THIS SECTION?

The Introduction Section includes a description of the topics surveyed, reference maps, the methodology used for the survey, and a description of the data tabulation and analysis process.

### HOW DO I USE IT?

The Introduction describes what is in the document and how to read and interpret the data. This information should be used

# PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

County Planning worked with the City of Rocky River to conduct the 2016 Rocky River Survey. The goal for the survey was to produce statistically valid responses that could be used to inform City actions, policies, and future planning activities.

## SURVEY TIMELINE

The City of Rocky River and County Planning began by drafting possible questions, refining them, and adding follow up questions. These were tested on volunteers to ensure question and response options were clear. Upon revision, County Planning finalized questions and received approval to mail surveys to Rocky River residents.

County Planning compiled a master list of all Rocky River residential addresses and selected a random sample of 1,400 households. Addresses were cross-checked against known vacant houses to ensure surveys were sent to occupied homes.

On August 11, 2016, County Planning mailed the 12-page survey to 1,400 households. Each packet included an introductory letter from Mayor Pamela Bobst. A reminder postcard was sent on August 22, 2016, to encourage residents to complete the survey by the September 16, 2016, deadline.

## SURVEY DESIGN

The Rocky River Community Survey was comprised of 18 multiple choice questions arranged by topic, six demographic multiple choice questions, and six additional open-ended questions throughout the survey. A short summary of the write-in responses is included in the report, while a complete compilation is available in Appendix A. A data table containing the raw numbers as well as

calculated percentages for each question in the Survey will be available in Appendix B.

## DATA TABULATION

The returned surveys were scanned and tabulated by a software program. The results highlighted potential scanning errors, which were manually reviewed by County Planning staff and updated to ensure they accurately reflected the intention of the respondent. Random software checks were completed to ensure the software program appropriately counted marked answers.

## RESPONSE RATE

Of the surveys mailed, 503 were returned and included in the analysis for a 35.9% response rate. With 8,822 households according to the 2014 American Community Survey data, this equates to a 95% confidence level and a +/- 4.24 margin of error.

When reading and interpreting the results of the survey, the statistical error rate should be taken into account. Additionally, because not every respondent answered every question, error rates for individual questions may vary. Similarly, error rates for cross-tabulations can be significantly higher due to the fewer responses within cross-tabulated groups.

**Table 1**

Response Rate and Statistical Error Rate

	2016 Survey
<b>Universe</b>	8,822 Households
<b>Mailed Surveys</b>	1,400 Surveys
<b>Returned Surveys</b>	503 returned
<b>Response Rate</b>	35.9%
<b>Confidence Level</b>	95%
<b>Margin of Error</b>	+/- 4.24

# SURVEY TOPICS

The survey responses should be used to inform Rocky River's public policy, regulations, actions, and planning documents.

## TOPIC AREAS

As in the survey form, the survey results document is organized by topic area. The document includes a detailed summary of each topic as well as a description of the individual questions. Some questions have also been cross-tabulated with demographic data to provide a fuller picture of community attitudes. The question numbers are provided for reference throughout the document.

## SURVEY TOPICS

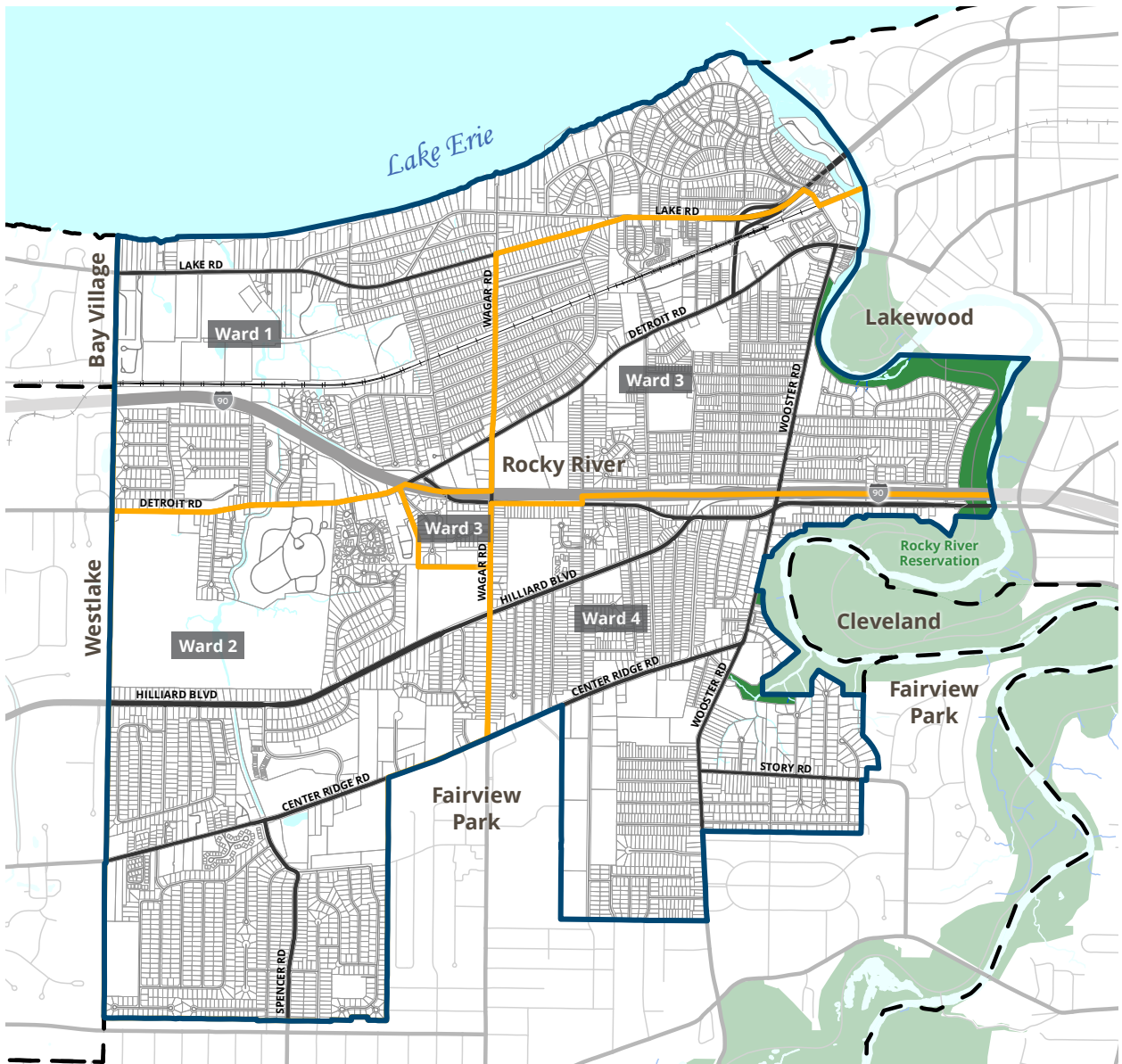
The topics covered in the Rocky River Survey are as follows:

- *City Qualities*: Overall likes and dislikes about living in Rocky River, beginning on page 24.
- *Housing*: Priorities for new types of housing developments and the necessity of design codes, beginning on page 28.
- *Infrastructure and Identity*: Desires for infrastructure improvements, the attractiveness of city streets, and the need to improve city gateways, beginning on page 32.
- *Parks and Recreation*: Ratings and ideas for parks, public spaces, and access to Lake Erie, beginning on page 36.
- *Commercial Development*: Desired types of new development and priority areas for focusing economic development efforts, beginning on page 43.
- *Transportation*: Evaluation of the ease and safety of getting around the city by










different transportation methods, beginning on page 46.

- *Communication*: Review of preferred ways by which residents receive communication, beginning on page 50.
- *Quality of Life*: Overall question about quality of life in the community, beginning on page 52.

## MAP 1 PLANNING CONTEXT

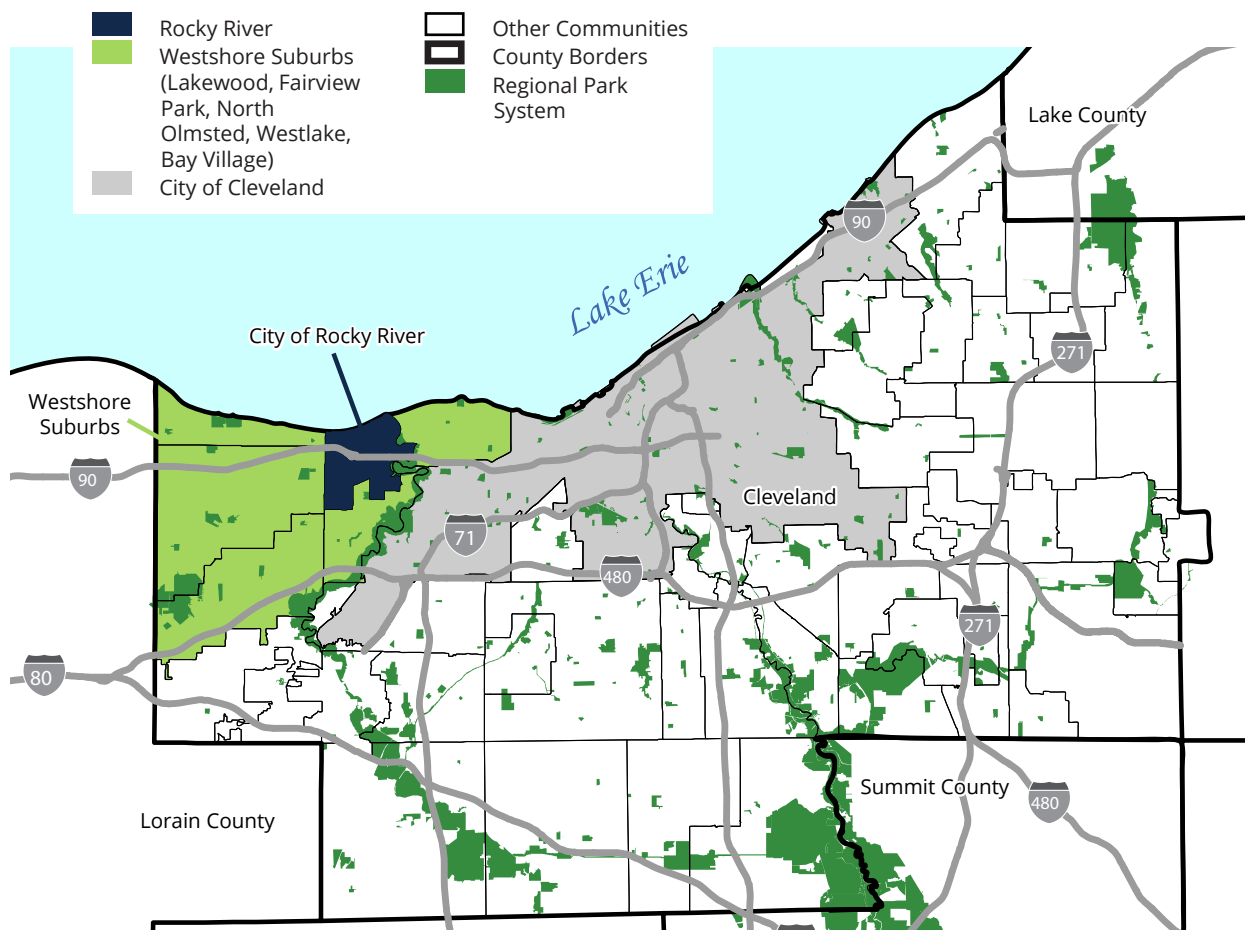


### LEGEND

- |   |                         |   |                      |
|---|-------------------------|---|----------------------|
|  | Rocky River             |  | Community Boundaries |
|  | City Wards              |  | Highways             |
|  | Rocky River Reservation |  | Major Roads          |
|  | Parcels                 |  | Minor Roads          |
|   |                         |  | Railroads            |

## MAP 2 REGIONAL CONTEXT

### LEGEND



The City of Rocky River (in blue on Map 2) is located in the western part of Cuyahoga County and abuts the Rocky River, Cleveland Metroparks, and Lake Erie. Rocky

River borders the Cities of Lakewood, Fairview Park, Westlake, and Bay Village.





## SECTION 3

# DETAILED FINDINGS

The results of the survey can be used to determine respondents' overall opinions on important issues and topics.

### WHAT'S IN THIS SECTION

Answers to individual questions are arranged by topic and are described, displayed graphically, and analyzed in this section.

In addition to analyzing each question individually, some questions were also cross tabulated with certain demographic questions to gain a better understanding of how characteristics such as age of the respondent changed the results.

### HOW DO I USE IT?

The information presented in this report may be used by members of the community and community leaders to assess common themes, policies, and opinions important to the respondents as they relate to the City of Rocky River.

The analysis should be understood within the context of the demographic profile of respondents and how it relates to the City as a whole. This information is described in detail in the Demographics Section on page 55.

# CITY QUALITIES

## COMMON THEMES

- The quality of the school system is the most commonly cited reason for why residents choose to live in Rocky River
- Respondents feel safe in the City and in their neighborhoods
- The proximity to Lake Erie is one of the higher rated reasons for choosing Rocky River
- Different age groups would consider moving out of Rocky River for different housing types: large homes for young adults, one-floor living for working age adults, and retirement-friendly communities for seniors

The first survey questions asked respondents to select their top reasons for residing in Rocky River and the reasons why they might consider moving. By understanding those qualities that residents enjoy most, public officials can work to enhance them. Similarly, by understanding those qualities enjoyed least, officials can seek to reduce their impacts where possible.

## REASONS FOR RESIDING IN ROCKY RIVER

**Question 1** asked respondents to select up to four choices out of 18 as why they choose to live in Rocky River. Out of 503 survey respondents, 497 selected at least one reason for a total of 1,998 responses.

As shown in Figure 1, more than 30% of respondents chose “The quality of the school system” followed by “I feel safe in the city / my neighborhood,” “My property is a good investment,” and “I am close to Lake Erie” as the top four reasons for residing in the city.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, less than 10% of question respondents said “I enjoy Downtown Rocky River,” “My housing costs fit my budget,” and “I have easy access to city parks.”

In general, schools, safety, services, and housing were high on the list. For proximity issues, being close to Lake Erie and Downtown Cleveland were more important than being close to work, shopping, or natural areas.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR MOVING FROM ROCKY RIVER

**Question 2** asked for what reasons residents might consider moving out of Rocky River. However, if question respondents selected “I would not consider moving out of the city of Rocky River,” they were asked to not select any additional options for that question.

Out of 487 question respondents, almost 40% chose “I would not consider moving out of the City of Rocky River,” as shown in Figure 2. This was by far the most popular answer to the question. While survey instructions asked respondents to not select additional reasons if they selected that they would not consider moving out, some respondents did select more options. All responses were included in the results.

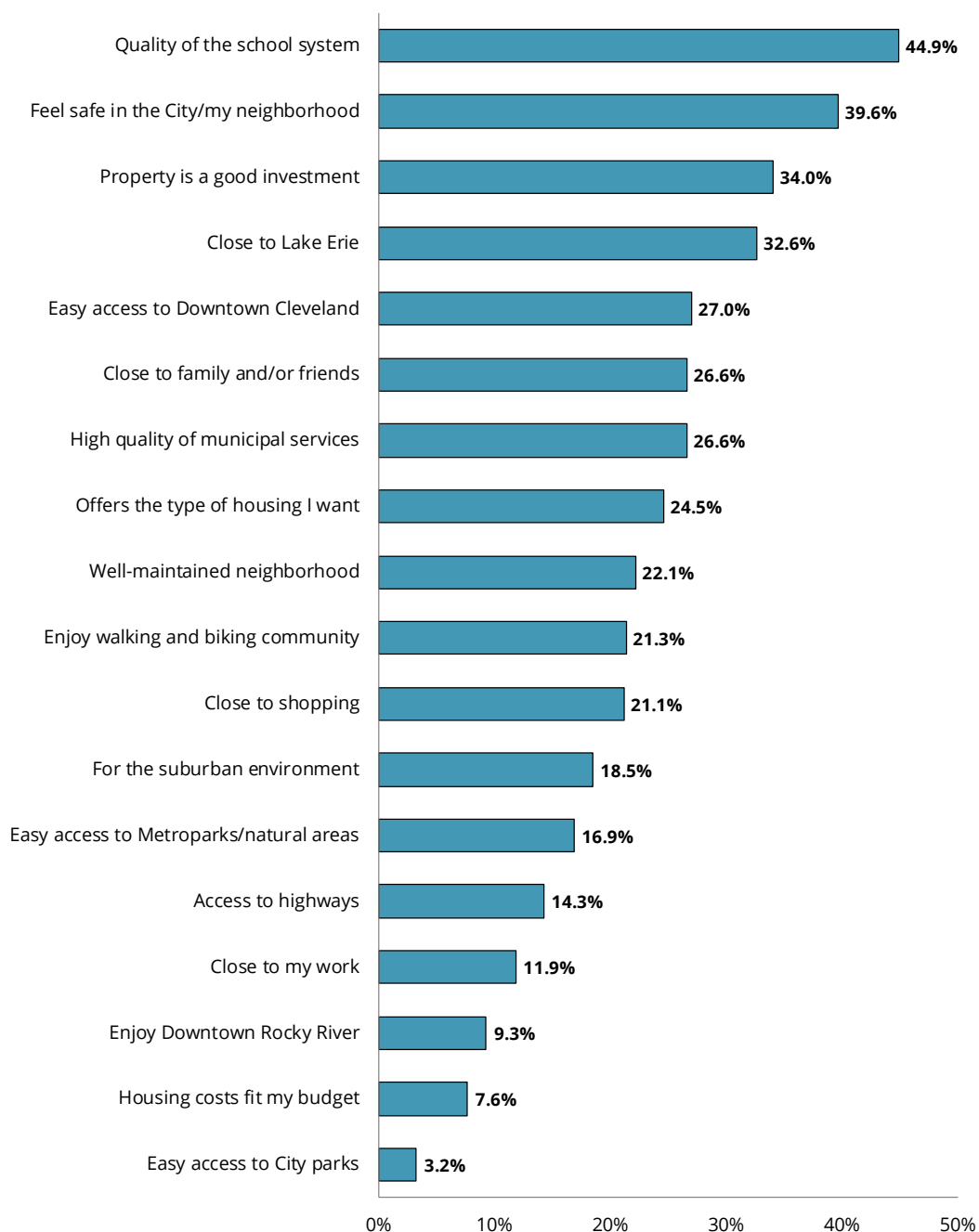
The next most popular answer, selected by 26.9% of question respondents, was “For lower taxes.” This was the only negative

option that was selected by more than 20% of respondents. Five additional options were selected by more than 10% of respondents: "For a different climate," "For more home for my money," "For one-floor living accommodations," "To be closer to family and/or friends," and "For a newer house."

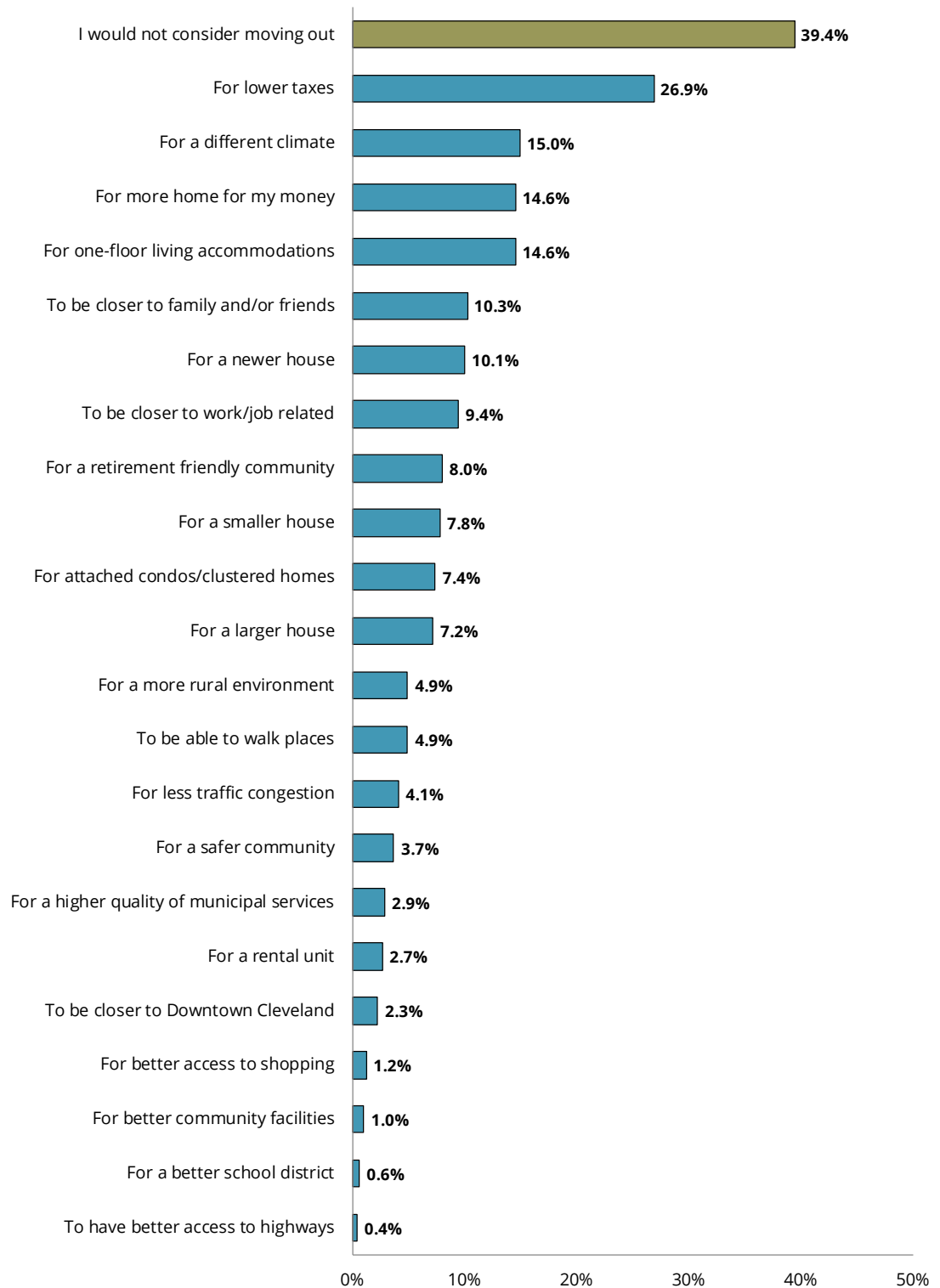
Conversely, the responses selected by 5% or fewer were the least popular considerations for moving out of Rocky River. The selections varied greatly. They covered transportation—better walkability (4.9%), less traffic congestion (4.1%), and better access to highways (0.4%). They also covered housing

**Figure 1**

Reasons for Residing in Rocky River



**Figure 2**  
Considerations for Moving from Rocky River



and location—for a more rural environment (4.9%), a rental unit (2.7%), closer proximity to Downtown Cleveland (2.3%), and better access to shopping (1.2%). Finally, answers covered municipal services—for higher quality facilities (1.0%), and a better school district (0.6%). These indicate that the city is generally succeeding in providing a safe community with high-quality services and facilities.

Specifically in terms of housing issues, respondents selected a wide variety of options including the desire for a newer house, a smaller house, a larger house, and for a rental unit. The wide array of answers indicates that a variety of housing types are needed to satisfy the wide demand from respondents.

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR MOVING FROM ROCKY RIVER BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

When cross tabulated with the age of respondent, the leading considerations for moving varied slightly among age groups, as shown in Figure 3. All three groups identified lower taxes as a main consideration for moving.

Among young adults age 18 to 44, top considerations included more home for their money (33.0%), a larger house (26.1%), and a newer house (20.9%), indicating that younger adults are seeking more space and newer housing.

Among working age adults between 45 and 64 years old, 24.0% of respondents said that they would consider moving from Rocky River “For a different climate.” Additionally, this group identified the need for one-floor living accommodations, smaller housing, and attached condos or clustered homes.

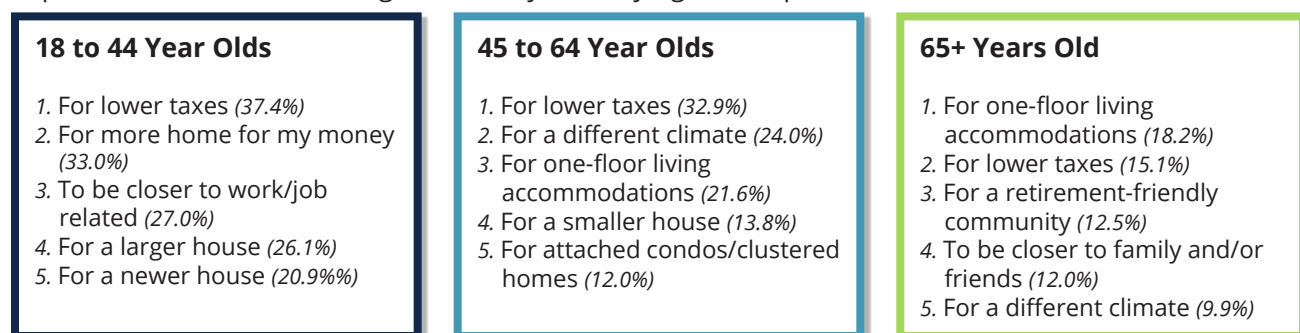
Among seniors age 65 years or over, 18.2% of respondents said the need “for one-floor living accommodations” was a consideration for moving from Rocky River. They also identified the need for a retirement-friendly community and to be closer to family and/or friends. In general, the desire for various housing types was the main difference among the various age groups.

### COMMENTS ON CITY QUALITY

**Question 3** provided space for survey respondents to write-in any comments regarding city qualities. In general, respondents to the Rocky River Survey were concerned about the image of the city. They wrote that the City of Rocky River is a great place to raise a family and that Rocky River has a positive identity. Respondents would like to maintain both of these qualities into the future. Other common themes were housing, safety, accessibility, senior living, and services. There were positive and negative comments, but overall, respondents are proud of the city and would like to see the city continue to be the place they choose to live.

**Figure 3**

Top Considerations for Moving from Rocky River by Age of Respondent



# HOUSING

## COMMON THEMES

- Maintenance of housing as well as renovations and expansions of existing homes were the most important issue for respondents
- A majority of residents are interested in seeing more accessible housing, more walkable options, and more single-family homes
- Residents do not prioritize more apartment buildings or mixed-use buildings
- Respondents want to ensure the City's residential structures are attractive through enforcement of existing design codes and potentially more specific residential codes

Housing is a critical component to a community, because strong neighborhoods that fit modern market demand are important to developing communities that cater to all ages and preferences. The next survey topic covered opinions on needed housing types in Rocky River as well as opinions on needed housing services.

## PRIORITY HOUSING NEEDS

**Question 4** asked respondents to indicate their priority for the types of housing needed in Rocky River. The results, displayed in Figure 4, show that question respondents overwhelmingly would like to see existing housing and neighborhoods maintained, with 85.6% of question respondents saying they rate this statement as a "Very High" or "High" priority.

A majority of respondents only rated two additional options as "Very High" or "High" priorities. First, 54.4% rated "More renovations and expansions of existing homes to add modern amenities" highly, and 46.0% rated "More accessible housing options for seniors looking to remain in the city" highly.

More respondents rated the next four options as "Very High" or "High" priority than "Low" or

"Very Low" priority. These were "More well-designed single-family, detached homes," "More housing options within walking distance to amenities," "More one-floor living accommodations," and "More housing types for young people."

More respondents marked "More well-designed townhouses in appropriate locations," "More well-designed condos in appropriate locations," and "More infill development on vacant land" as low priorities than high priorities; however, this did not constitute a majority of respondents.

Finally, a majority of question respondents deemed "More well-designed apartment buildings in appropriate locations" and "More well-designed mixed-use buildings with first-floor commercial and residential above" as low priority housing needs. Over 53% of respondents marked these options as "Low" or "Very Low" priority.

Overall, maintaining existing housing and neighborhoods are the main priorities for respondents.

## PRIORITY HOUSING NEEDS BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

When cross tabulated by age of respondent, most responses were consistent with the general trend regardless of age; however, in four cases, at least one age group differed from the average by at least ten percentage points.

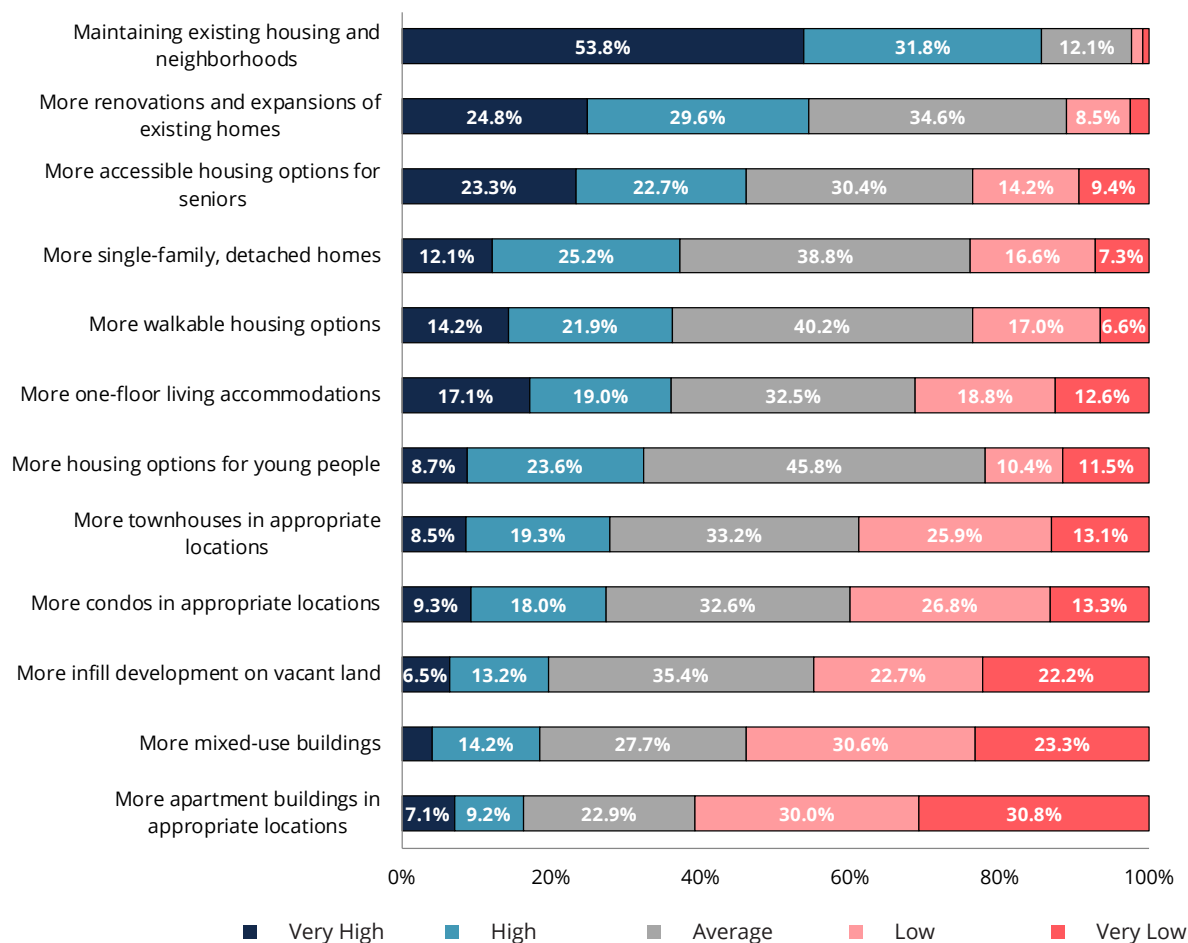
Among all respondents for this question, 46.0% rated “More accessible housing options for seniors looking to remain in the city” as a “Very High” or “High” priority; however, most support was concentrated among older residents. Among seniors, 69.7% rated this highly; among working age adults, 46.4% rated this highly; and among young adults,

only 10.2% rated this highly. This indicates an understanding among current seniors and those approaching retirement that there is a need for housing to accommodate them in the future.

Similarly, when asked to rate “More one-floor living accommodations,” younger respondents were less likely than older adults to see this option as a high priority. Among all respondents, 36.1% rated “More one-floor living accommodations” as a high priority. That number dropped to 8.3% among young adults, rose to 38.2% among working age adults, and spiked at 53.6% of seniors.

When asked to rate the priority of “More condos in appropriate locations,” support

**Figure 4**  
Priority for Housing Types



increased with age. Only 13.0% of young adults rated this option highly while 37.0% of seniors did.

Finally, younger residents were far more likely to rate “More renovations and expansions of existing homes” highly than older adults. Among young adults, 70.4% said this was highly important. This fell to 51.7% among working age adults, and 45.0% among seniors.

The priority for all housing types by age of respondent is displayed in Figure 5.

### OPINIONS ON DESIGN CODE STATEMENTS

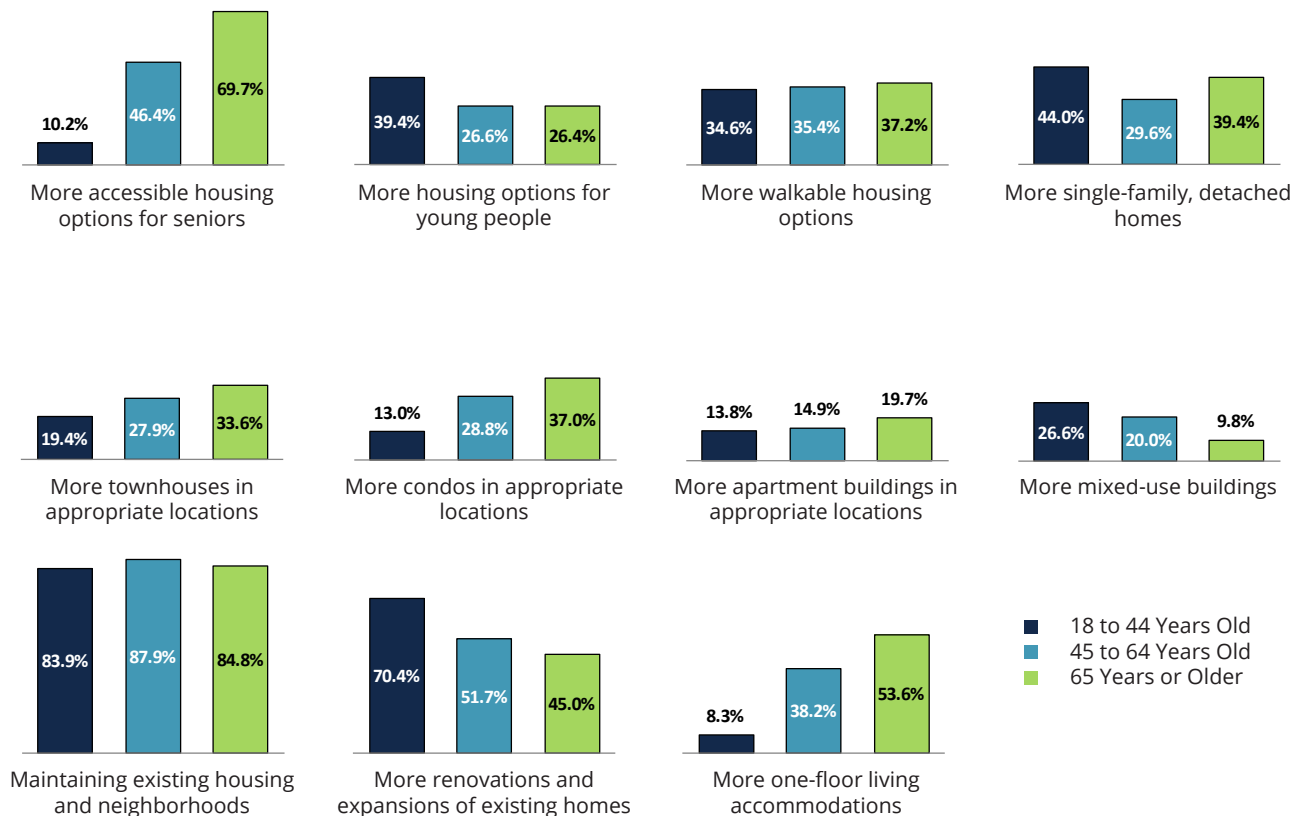
**Question 5** asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with statements about the city’s existing design codes. The design codes in Rocky River are intended to

ensure that buildings are attractive and fit the character of the community. A majority of the respondents selected “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” for all statements, as displayed in Figure 6.

Over two-thirds of question respondents agreed with three of the statements: “New homes should match the scale and design of existing homes,” “There should be specific design codes for commercial properties to ensure attractive design,” and “Existing design codes are effective in producing an attractive community.” In comparison, just over half of question respondents agreed that “There should be more specific design codes for residential properties to ensure attractive design.” This indicates that respondents agree that design codes are necessary, are largely effective, but that they may need to be strengthened.

**Figure 5**

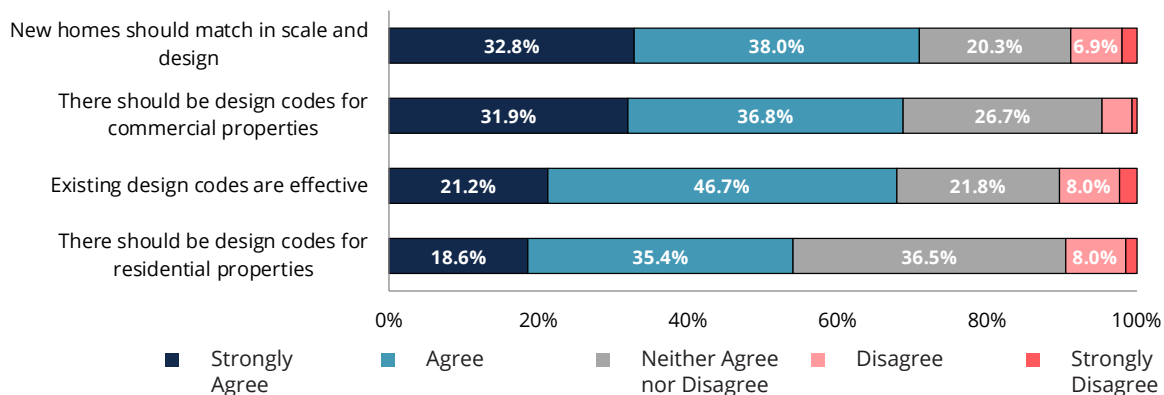
Very High or High Priority for Housing Types by Age of Respondent



## COMMENTS ON HOUSING

**Question 6** provided space for survey respondents to write-in any comments regarding housing. Respondents are most concerned with the appearance of the homes in and around their own neighborhoods. Many stated that they take pride in their homes and feel very strongly about their homes as an investment. Respondents would like for design codes to continue being enforced to ensure they are attractive, live up to the standards of Rocky River, and support the investment made in their homes as a valuable asset to the community. Similarly, respondents would like apartment buildings to be held to the same high standards as single-family residences.

**Figure 6**  
Opinions on Design Code Statements



# INFRASTRUCTURE & IDENTITY

## COMMON THEMES

- Street improvements are the most important infrastructure need for survey respondents, with Center Ridge Road cited as having the most critical need for improvements
- Historic preservation and environmentally-friendly development are core community values
- Wayfinding and gateways into the city should be improved

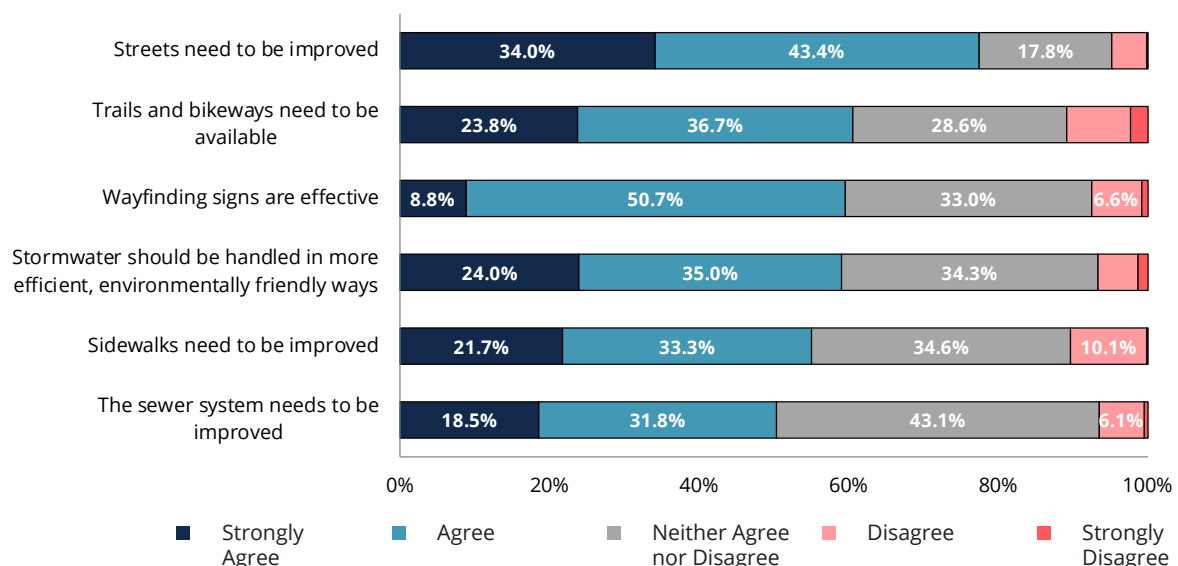
As emphasized by the City's logo, Rocky River's physical infrastructure is closely tied to its identity and image. Constructing quality infrastructure and reinforcing the city's image through attractive design ensures that those features match the strong qualities of the community. This survey topic covered policy statements regarding the city's infrastructure and image.

## OPINIONS ON INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENTS

**Question 7** asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with policy statements about streets, sewers, sidewalks, and bike-ways. More than half of question respondents said they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with every statement, as shown in Figure 7.

With the highest agreement, nearly 78% of respondents "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that

**Figure 7**  
Opinions on Infrastructure Statements



streets need improvements such as repaving, filling potholes, etc. This was the most popular statement and indicates that residents would like continued improvements to city roads.

The next most popular items were “Trails and bikeways need to be available” (60.5%), “Wayfinding signs are effective” (59.5%), and “Stormwater should be handled in more efficient, environmentally friendly ways” (59.0%).

### OPINIONS ON INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENTS BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

When cross tabulated by age, most responses were consistent with the general trend regardless of age; however, in two cases, at least one age group differed from the average by at least ten percentage points.

Among all respondents to Question 7, 50.3% agreed that the sewer system needs to be improved; however, agreement was highest among working age adults (57.3%) and lowest among young adults (32.5%).

Likewise, older adults were also more likely to support handling stormwater in more

environmentally friendly ways. Among young adults, only 43.5% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while that number rose to 64.0% among seniors. Opinions on all infrastructure policy statements are displayed in Figure 8.

### OPINIONS ON ATTRACTIVENESS OF STREETS

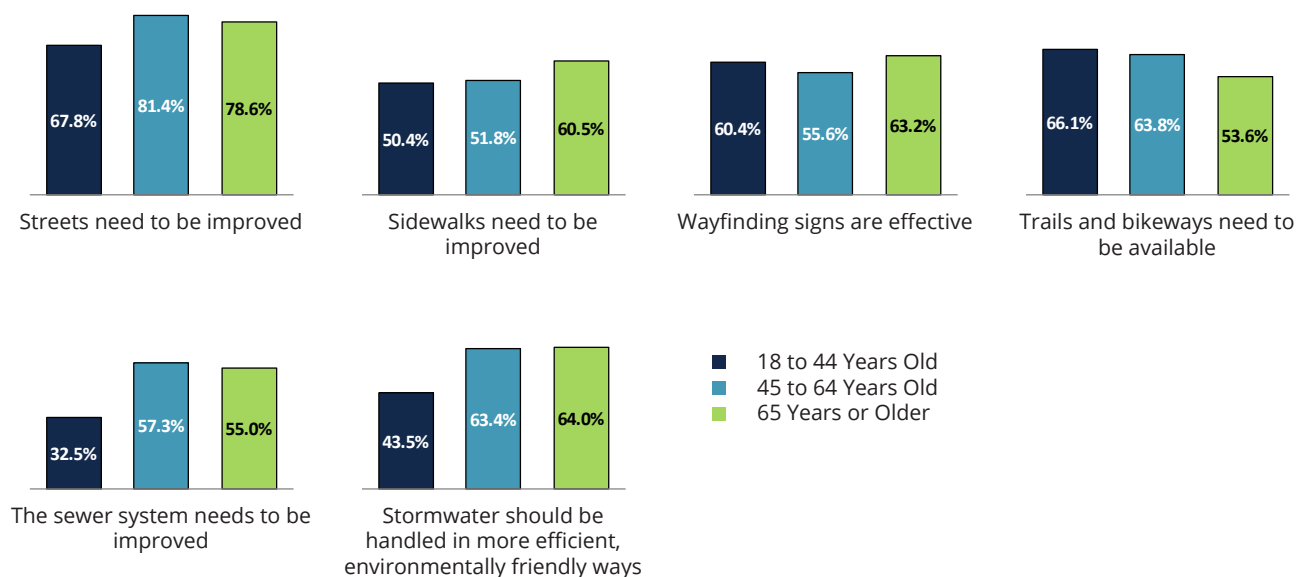
**Question 8** contained 11 statements about the characteristics of Rocky River. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with those statements. Although this question was grouped as a single topic, the analysis and charts separate this question into two distinct categories: opinions on the attractiveness of streets and on city identity.

The attractiveness of city streets question garnered some of the widest opinion in the survey, as shown in Figure 9. More than half of the respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that Lake Road, Hilliard Boulevard, and Detroit Road are attractive.

Alternatively, less than half of the respondents said Wooster Road is attractive, and more than 66% of respondents said they “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” that Center Ridge Road

**Figure 8**

Strongly Agree or Agree with Infrastructure Statements by Age of Respondent



is attractive. As such, Wooster and Center Ridge Road are particular areas of concern.

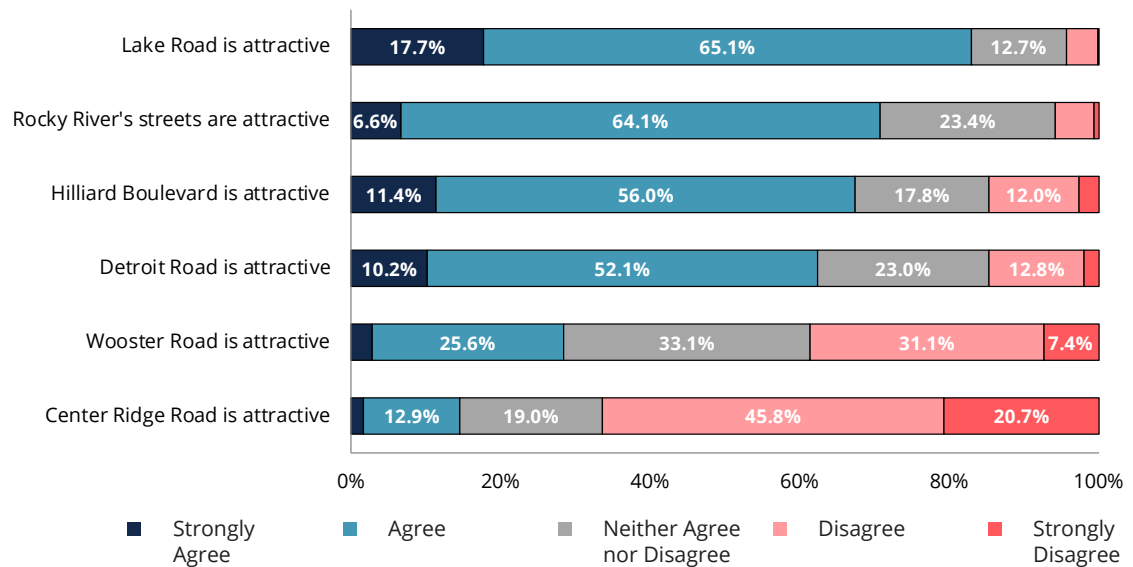
Overall, 82.8% of question respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that the streets in Rocky River are attractive, indicating that residents think the majority of residential thoroughfares are well-designed.

## OPINIONS ON CITY IDENTITY STATEMENTS

The other half of **Question 8** covered opinions on city identity. A very large majority (88.3%) of question respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that Rocky River has a unique and strong sense of place, as shown in Figure 10. Furthermore, large majorities agree that environmentally friendly development and historic preservation are

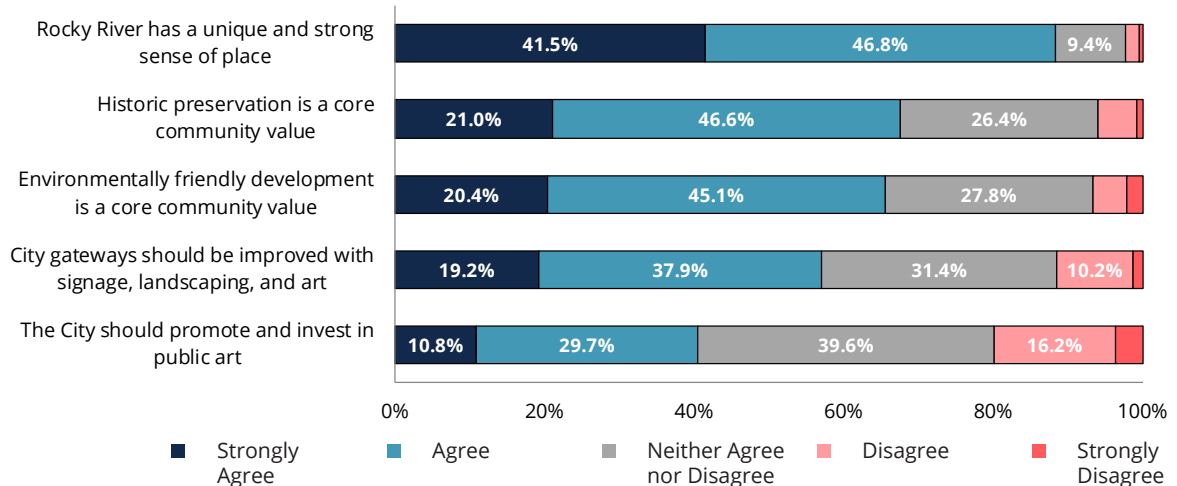
**Figure 9**

Opinions on Attractiveness of Streets



**Figure 10**

Opinions on City Identity Statements



both core community values, indicating that these should continue to be the focus of city initiatives.

When asked about the attractiveness of city gateways, a majority (57.1%) agreed that they should be improved with elements such as signage, landscaping, and art. Despite this, less than half of respondents agreed that the city should invest in public art. This may indicate that residents would like to see art in the city, but that it should not be publicly funded. It may also mean that residents believe public art should be confined to major gateways and nodes rather than dispersed throughout the city.

### OPINIONS ON CITY IDENTITY STATEMENTS BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

When cross tabulated by age of respondent, most responses were consistent with the general trend regardless of age. In only one case did the percentage from one age group differ from the average by at least ten percentage points. Among all question respondents, 40.5% agree that “The city should promote and invest in public art.” Among young adults, however, a majority (54.0%) agreed with this

statement. This decreased to 34.9% among working age adults and 36.5% among seniors. Opinions on all city identity statements by age of respondent are displayed in Figure 11.

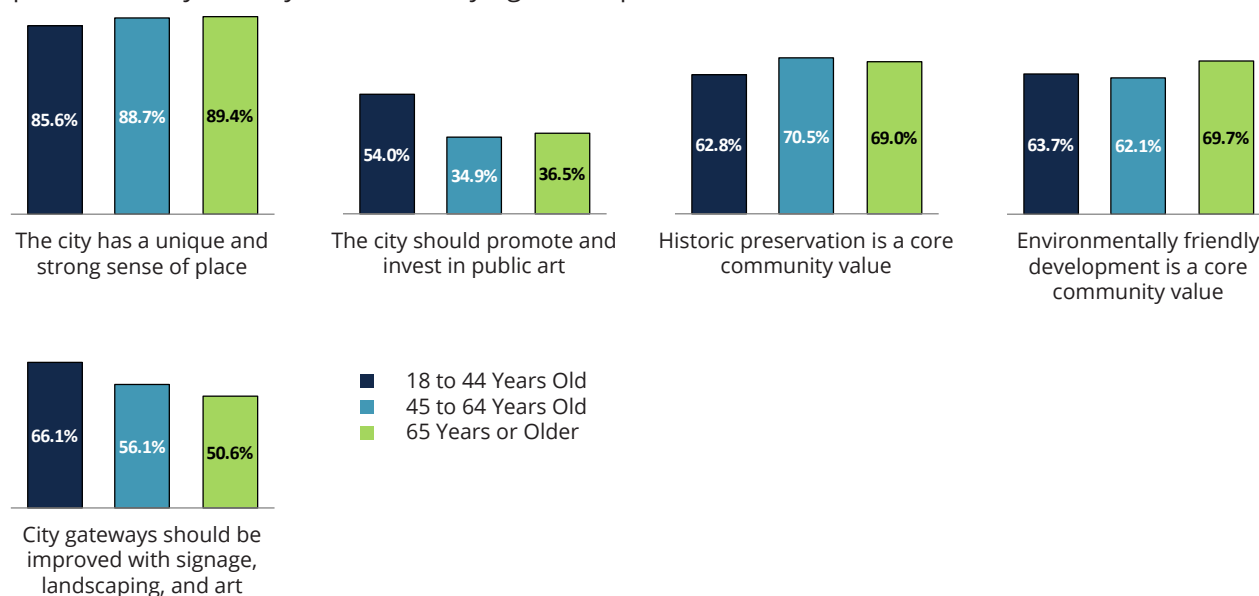
### COMMENTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE & IDENTITY

**Question 9** provided space for survey respondents to write-in any comments regarding infrastructure and identity. Respondents were very concerned about infrastructure and streets in particular, especially potholes, repaving, and safety of traffic turning onto other roads or into a business or establishment’s property from the street. Center Ridge Road was the street that raised the most concerns and garnered a large majority of the written comments. The other streets that were of the most concern for respondents were Hilliard Road and Wooster Road. They want these streets collectively to have a better appearance that contributes to the image of Rocky River as a great community.

In addition to improved infrastructure, less confusing signage along city streets was desired by commenters.

**Figure 11**

Opinions on City Identity Statements by Age of Respondents



# PARKS & RECREATION

## COMMON THEMES

- Respondents regularly use City parks and recreation facilities, enjoy the programming available, and rate facilities very highly
- The Outdoor Water Zone Pool, Rocky River Park, and the Don Umerley Civic Center were the City's most highly rated facilities
- Respondents would like to see additional seating, bike amenities, and trails in City parks
- Respondents do not feel the City should invest in additional, new parks and facilities; however, residents would like improved access to Lake Erie
- Young adults are most likely to use the City's parks and would like to see additional parks and community events

Parks and recreation facilities are important components of a complete community. They provide space for active living, community interaction, and physical activity. The survey asked respondents about accessibility to Lake Erie, the quality of existing Rocky River facilities, agreement with parks and recreation policy statements, and overall opinions on quality.

## QUALITY OF CITY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

**Question 10** asked respondents to rate the quality of city parks and recreation facilities on a scale from "Excellent" to "Very Poor" with an option to select "No Opinion." The results, shown in Figure 12, display responses excluding "Have Not Used."

An overwhelming majority of question respondents (89.2%) rated the Outdoor Water Zone Pool "Excellent" or "Good." The next highest rated facilities were Rocky River Park (88.3%), Don Umerley Civic Center (87.2%), and Elmwood Park (85.2%). The ratings then fell by eleven percentage points with 73.9% of respondents rating City Hall Park as

"Excellent" or "Good." The Hamilton Ice Arena received 71.2% of respondents rating it as "Excellent" or "Good."

At the bottom of the list, three facilities were rated positively by only slightly more than half of respondents. The Bates Road Tot Lot was rated "Excellent" or "Good" by 52.7% of question respondents, 51.7% rated Rocky River Middle School Tot Lot highly, and 51.0% rated Morley Park highly. In general, neighborhood parks and playgrounds were ranked towards the bottom of the list. This indicates that neighborhood amenities are not as highly rated as some of the City's larger parks.

The ratings show the quality of parks and recreation facilities among those that selected an option; however, there is a high percentage of respondents that marked they have "No Opinion" on various facilities. Selecting "No Opinion" on a facility was used as a proxy for not using a facility.

As shown in Figure 13, those facilities that scored towards the bottom of the ratings for quality were the same facilities that respondents had "No Opinion" and did not regularly use. More than 55% of question respondents

selected “No Opinion” for Bates Road Tot Lot (74.2%), Rocky River Middle School Tot Lot (60.7%), and Morley Park (55.0%).

Despite some lower rankings of individual parks, the overall quality of Rocky River’s parks and recreation facilities were highly rated with a majority of the respondents rating quality highly and most facilities having been used by a majority of question respondents.

### OPINIONS ON PARK FEATURES STATEMENTS

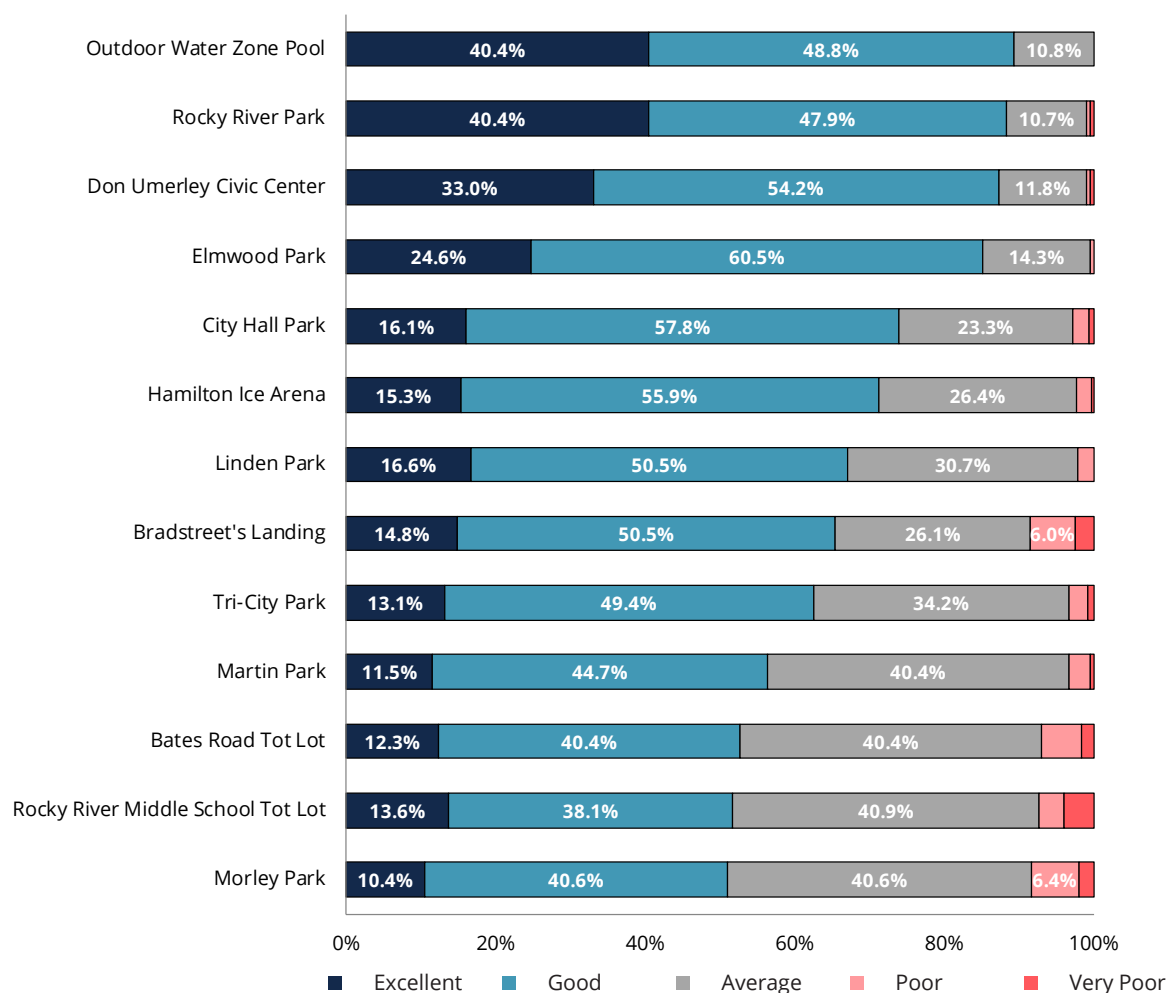
**Question 11** asked respondents to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with

thirteen statements about parks and recreation in Rocky River. Although this question was grouped as a single topic about the city’s parks and facilities, the analysis and charts separate this question into two distinct categories: opinions on park features and opinions on the direction of the Parks and Recreation Department.

As displayed in Figure 14, park features statements covered various park and recreation facility amenities, such as “There is enough parking at city parks and recreation facilities” and “There are enough open field areas in city parks.” Respondents were asked to say whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements.

**Figure 12**

Quality of Parks and Recreation Facilities



More than 50% of question respondents strongly agreed or agreed about four of the seven park features statements. Specifically, 63.6% agreed there are enough open field areas, 55.3% agreed there are enough wooded or natural areas, 52.9% agreed there are enough facilities for all ages, and 51.6% agreed that there is enough parking.

Conversely, less than 50% of question respondents selected “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” on three of the statements: there is adequate seating (41.9%), there are amenities so I can bike to parks (40.0%), and there are enough trails (32.3%). These statements indicate that respondents may want additional seating, bike parking, and trails to make city parks more enjoyable.

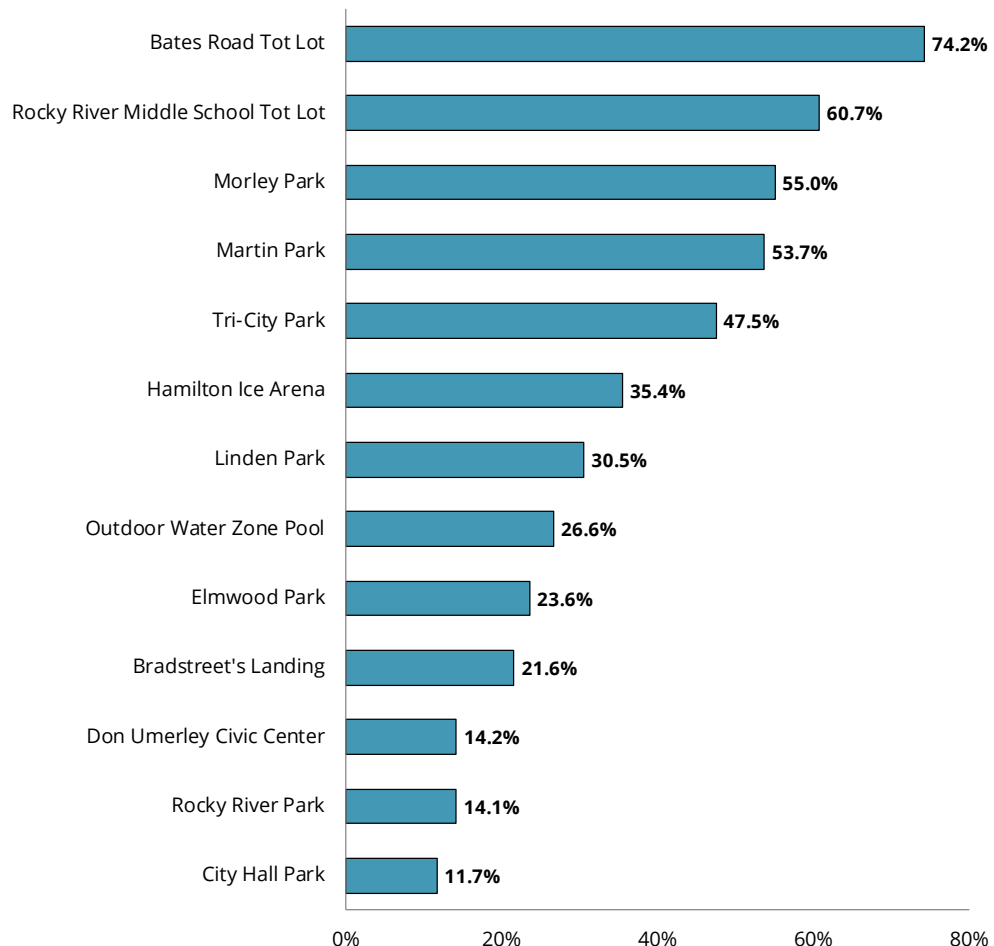
### OPINIONS ON PARK FEATURES STATEMENTS BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

When cross tabulated by age of respondent, most responses were consistent with the general trend regardless of age; however, in three cases, at least one age group differed from the average by at least ten percentage points.

When asked whether they agreed that there is enough parking at facilities, 51.6% of all question respondents agreed that there was. Among young adults, however, that number rose to 58.8%. Among seniors, only 40.0% agreed there was enough parking at facilities.

**Figure 13**

Percent of Respondents Who Have “No Opinion” on a Park or Facility (Used as a proxy for not using a park)



Likewise, seniors were less likely to agree that there are enough open field areas in city parks, with only 51.2% of seniors saying there are enough open fields compared to 63.6% of all questions respondents.

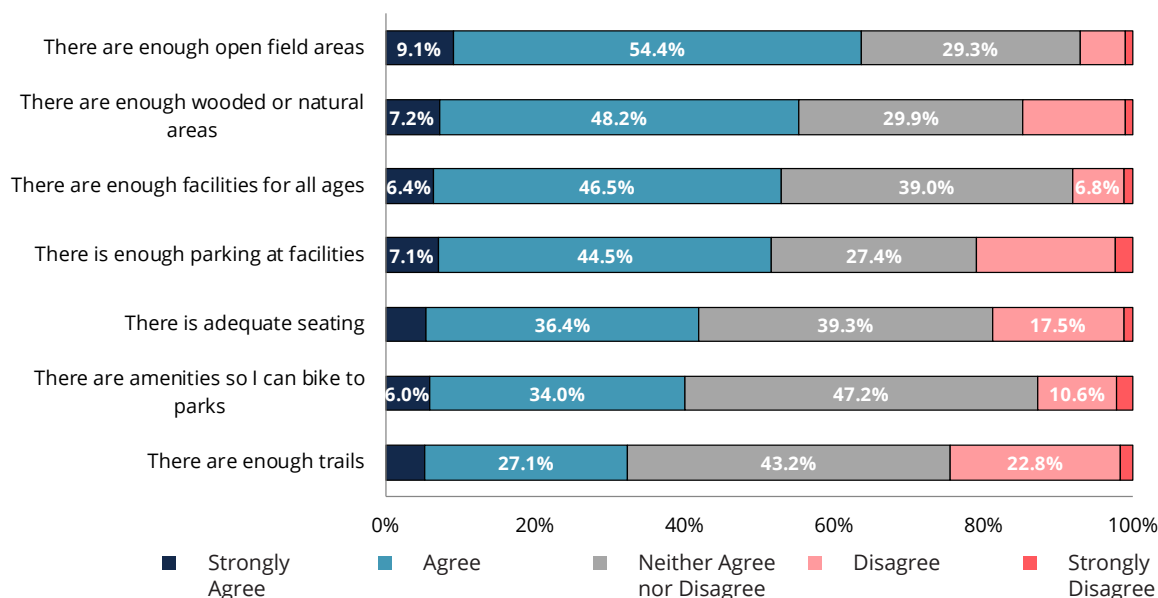
Finally, seniors were also less likely to agree that there were enough amenities to allow

them to bike to city parks. Only 29.6% of seniors agreed there were sufficient amenities to allow residents to bike to parks while 40.0% of all respondents agreed with the statement.

Opinions on all park features policy statements by age of respondent are displayed in Figure 15.

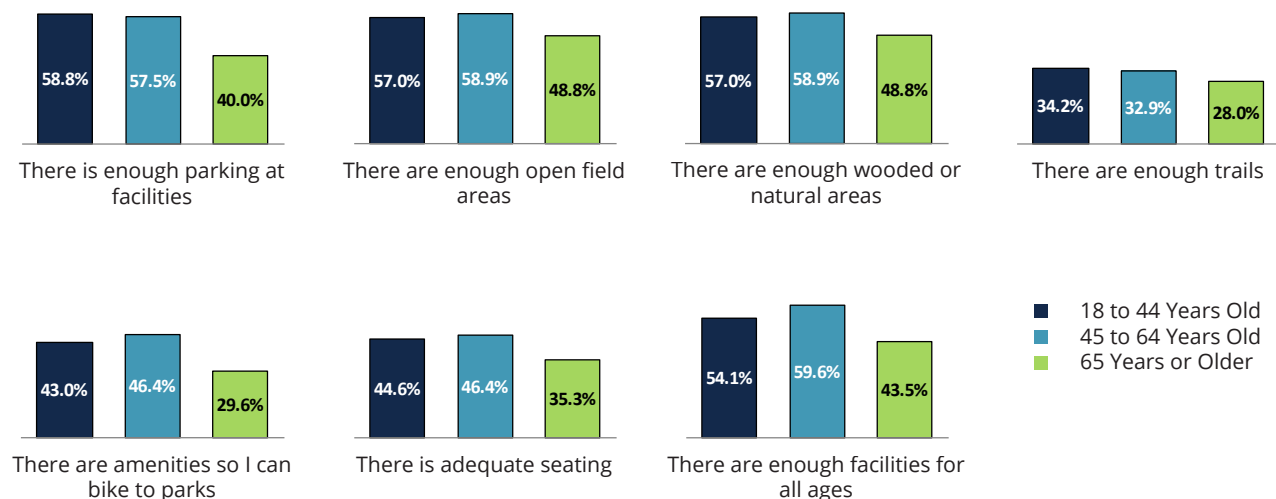
**Figure 14**

Opinions on Park Features Statements



**Figure 15**

Strongly Agree or Agree with Park Features Statements by Age of Respondent



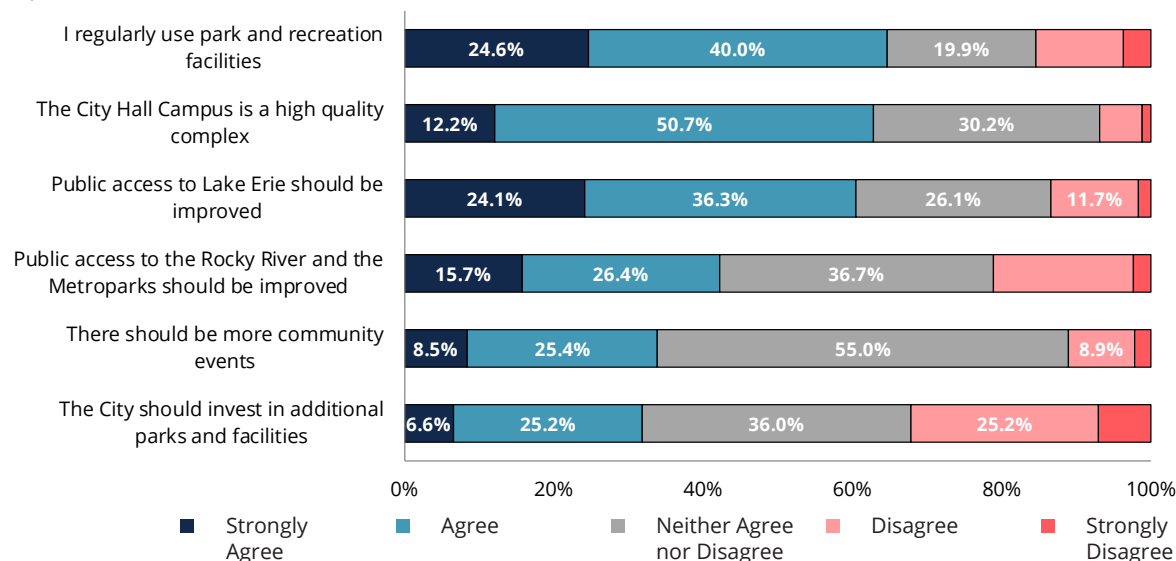
## OPINIONS ON PARK DIRECTION STATEMENTS

The second half of question 11 asked respondents to agree or disagree with statements about the direction the city should take the park system in coming years such as where Rocky River should invest in additional parks and facilities.

As shown in Figure 16, question respondents were generally not opposed to any of the policy statements. More than 50% of the respondents said they “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with three of the statements: “I regularly use parks and recreation facilities” (64.6%), “The City Hall Campus is a high quality complex” (64.6%), and “Public access to Lake Erie should be improved” (60.4%). The third

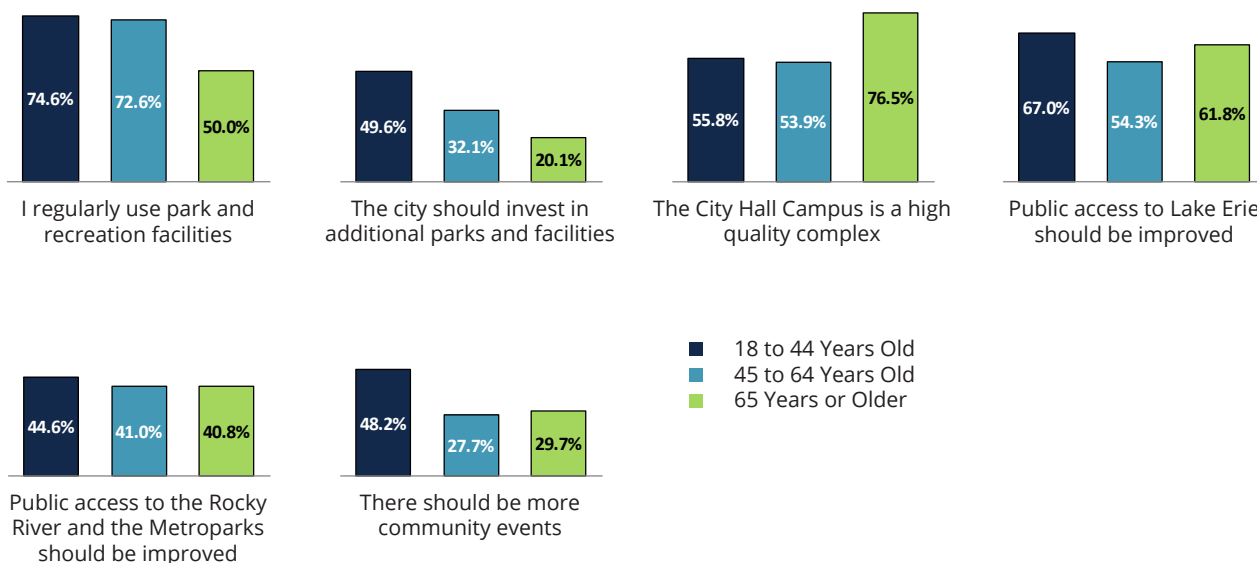
**Figure 16**

Opinions on Park Direction Statements



**Figure 17**

Opinions on Parks & Recreation Facilities Statements by Age of Respondent



statement indicates a desire for the city to focus on improving the ability of residents to access and enjoy the lake.

In three additional statements, question respondents were more ambivalent. Only 42.1% of respondents agreed that public access to the Rocky River and Metroparks should be improved, 33.9% that there should be more community events, and 31.8% that the city should invest in additional parks and facilities.

Together, these statements indicate that residents enjoy and use existing facilities, that they would like to reinvest in existing facilities, and that few new parks are desired with the exception of expanded access to Lake Erie.

### OPINIONS ON PARK DIRECTION STATEMENTS BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

When cross tabulated by age of respondent, responses varied greatly with age. In four of six cases, at least one age group differed from the average by at least ten percentage points.

When respondents were asked whether they agreed that they regularly use park and recreation facilities, 64.6% of all question respondents agreed; however, younger adults were far more likely to use parks regularly. Among young adults, 74.6% agreed they use parks regularly while only 50.0% of seniors agreed.

Similar to high park use among young adults, this age group was also far more likely to agree that the city should invest in additional parks and facilities or to agree that there should be more community events. Among young adults, 49.6% agreed the city should invest in additional facilities, while only 20.1% of seniors agreed. Among young adults 48.2% said there should be more community events, while that number fell to 27.7% among working age adults.

Finally, seniors were more likely to say that the City Hall Campus was a high quality complex with 76.5% agreeing with that

statement while only 53.9% of working age adults agreed.

These statements indicate that any new parks and recreation facilities or programming may need to be geared toward younger adults and families, while improvements to existing parks should include amenities for seniors.

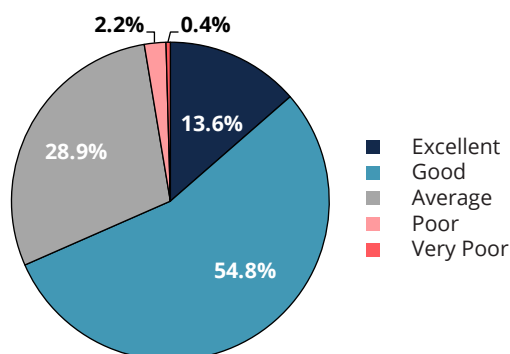
Opinions on all park direction policy statements by age of respondent are displayed in Figure 17.

### OVERALL PROGRAMMING AND QUALITY

**Question 12** asked respondents to rate the overall programming of parks and recreation facilities on a scale from "Excellent" to "Very Poor." More than 68% of question respondents rated the programming at parks and recreation facilities "Excellent" or "Good." Slightly over 28% of respondents rated the programming to be "Average," with 2.6% of the respondents rating the programming "Poor" and "Very Poor." This indicates that a majority of respondents agreed that programming at parks and recreation facilities are generally positive. This information is shown in Figure 18.

In **Question 13**, respondents were asked to rate the city's parks and recreation facilities, overall. As shown in Figure 19, four-fifths of the respondents (83.2%) rated Rocky River's parks and recreation facilities as "Excellent" or

**Figure 18**  
Overall Quality of Parks and Recreation Facility Programming



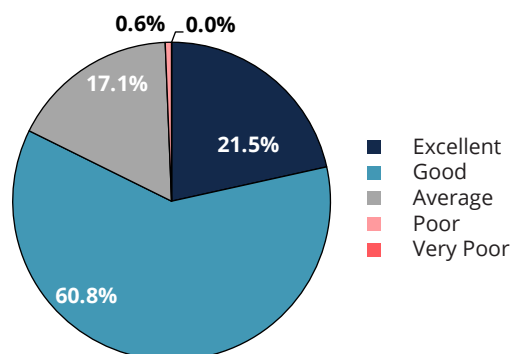
"Good" with less than one percent (0.6%) rating the park and recreation facilities as "Poor" or "Very Poor." This indicates exceedingly positive views of the parks and recreation system overall.

### COMMENTS ON PARKS & RECREATION

**Question 14** provided space for survey respondents to write-in any comments regarding the city's parks and recreation facilities. Overall, respondents are pleased with both.

Although some respondents wrote that they had not used the parks and recreation facilities, most respondents wrote that they would like improvements to the existing parks and facilities like Bradstreet's Landing and programming at the Recreation Center. Respondents would also like better access to Lake Erie.

**Figure 19**  
Overall Quality of Parks and Recreation Facilities



# COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## COMMON THEMES

- Respondents would like to maintain attractive design of commercial buildings with appropriate neighborhood scale and character, an effective sign code, and strong commercial design codes
- Residents would especially like to focus development efforts on Center Ridge Road, followed by Downtown River

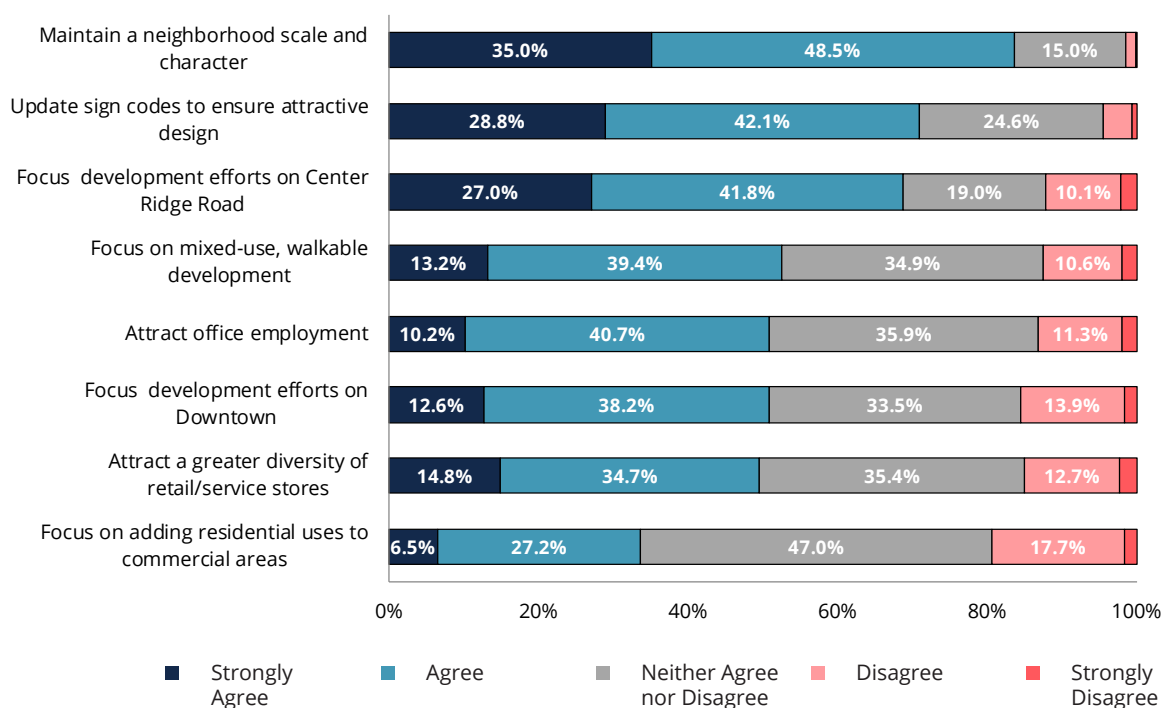
In the commercial development section of the survey, questions asked respondents their opinions on statements regarding future development, desired types of retail, and priority areas for improvements.

## OPINIONS ON COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT STATEMENTS

**Question 15** asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with eight different statements about commercial development in

**Figure 20**

Opinions on Commercial Development Statements



the City of Rocky River. A majority of respondents selected “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with all but two of the policy statements, as shown in Figure 20.

More than two-thirds of respondents agreed that the city should maintain a neighborhood scale and character in new developments (83.5%), that the city should update its sign codes to ensure attractive design (70.9%), and that the city should focus development efforts on Center Ridge Road (68.8%). These indicate clear directives for efforts on commercial development.

Just over 50% of question respondents agree that the city should focus on mixed-use, walkable development (52.6%); attract office employment (50.9%); and focus development efforts Downtown (50.9%).

Finally, less than half of respondents agreed that the city should focus on attracting a greater diversity of retail stores (49.6%) or adding residential uses to commercial areas (33.6%).

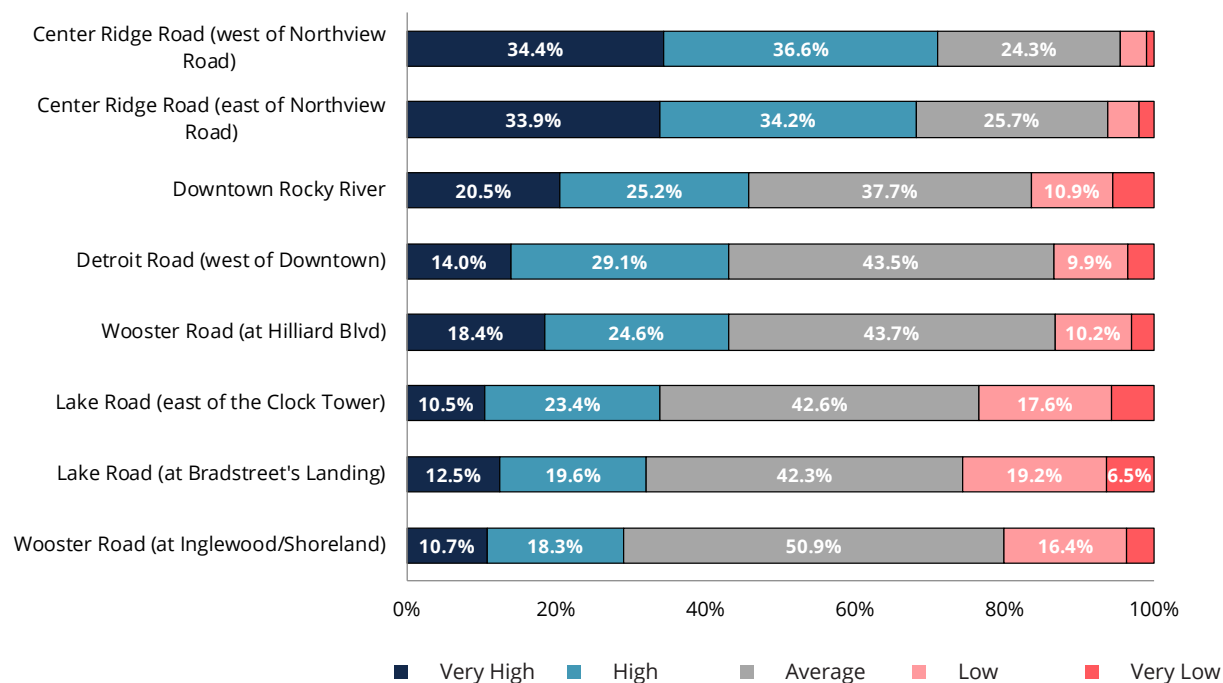
These responses indicate that respondents are generally in favor of development that maintains attractive design and neighborhood scale, especially on Center Ridge Road. Adding residential uses to commercial areas was less important to residents; however, respondents generally showcased ambivalence to this effort rather than disagreement with it.

## DESIRED TYPES OF RETAIL

**Question 16** asked respondents to write-in what types of retail they would like to see added in the community. A majority of respondents in this section favored adding local, small businesses or boutique-type establishments versus “big box” stores or some type of dining establishment or restaurant. Despite this, some respondents did desire larger retail establishments, especially sporting goods stores or other clothing stores.

Some respondents did not want the city to focus on additional retail, rather stating that there are enough retail establishments in

**Figure 21**  
Priority Areas for Aesthetic Improvements



the city. The full list of written comments is provided in Appendix A.

### **PRIORITY ON IMPROVING THE AESTHETIC OF COMMERCIAL AREAS**

**Question 17** asked respondents to rate their priority for “improving the look, feel, and vibrancy of commercial areas” on a scale from “Very High ” to “Very Low.” Respondents, overwhelmingly rated Center Ridge Road as the highest priority area for improvements to commercial buildings.

Downtown Rocky River and Detroit Road (west of Downtown) were the next highest rated, but less than 50% of respondents rated these areas as high priorities.

This indicates that respondents would like to see improvement to these areas, but Center Ridge Road is of the first priority. Wooster Road and Lake Road were considered the lowest priority areas for improvement, as shown in Figure 21.

### **COMMENTS ON COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Question 18** provided space for survey respondents to write-in any comments regarding commercial development. Survey respondents thought that in order to improve the commercial development potential of Rocky River, the focus should be on fixing city streets—especially Center Ridge Road—and on improving the appearance of the city as a whole. Suggestions included planting more trees and updating signage.

# TRANSPORTATION

## COMMON THEMES

- Residents prefer improvements to the walking and biking environment over the driving environment
- Parking in Downtown is not considered as easy as other commercial areas; however, few residents avoid Downtown River due to lack of parking
- Residents prefer off-street parking improvements over on-street improvements
- Public Transit is a low priority for improvements

Transportation is a critical component of city governance. The construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, and all-purpose trails are essential parts of economic development initiatives and quality of life for residents.

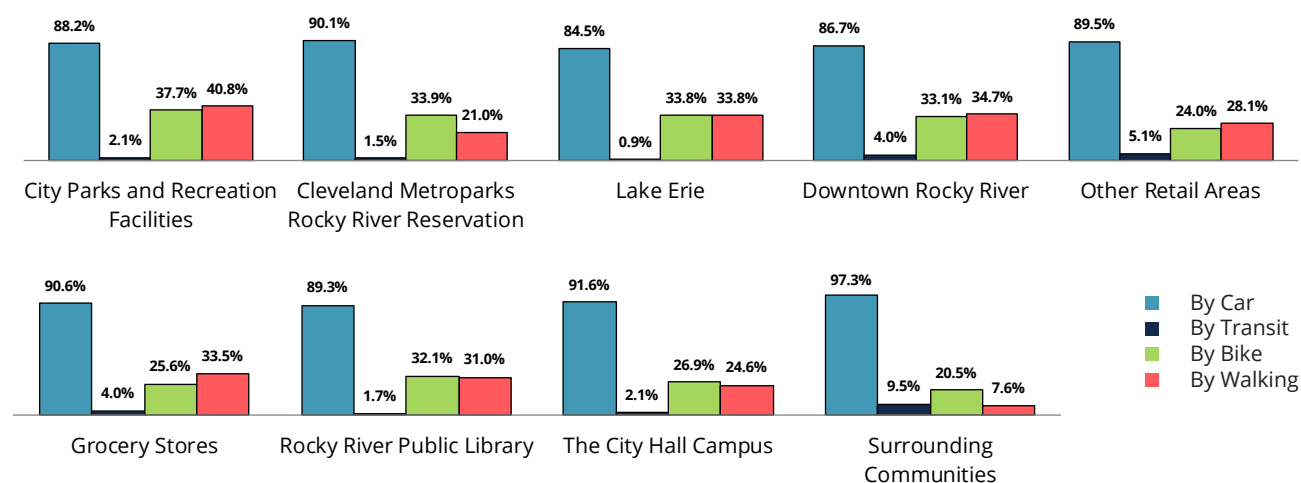
By understanding the priority level for improvements to transportation as well as priorities for improvements to particular streets, the city administration can prioritize funding to those initiatives.

## EASE OF TRANSPORTATION TO DESTINATION BY MODE

**Question 19** asked respondents to indicate which methods of transportation (by car, public transit, bike, or walking) they found easy to use to get to various destinations, such as city parks and recreation facilities, Cleveland Metroparks Rocky River Reservation, Lake Erie, Downtown Rocky River, grocery stores, Rocky River Public Library, the City Hall Campus, and surrounding communities.

**Figure 22**

Ease of Transportation to Destination by Mode of Transportation



Respondents were asked to select all of the methods they found easy to use to reach each destination.

As displayed in Figure 22, nearly 90% of question respondents said reaching every destination was easy by car, which was by far the easiest way to reach any of the listed destinations.

Walking and biking were roughly tied as the second and third easiest modes of transportation to various destinations. In most cases, between 25% and 35% of respondents said it was easy to reach the various destinations by bike or on foot. The greatest differences between these two modes of transportation was in getting to Rocky River Reservation, grocery stores, and surrounding communities.

The mode of transportation that question respondents found to be the least easy to use was public transit. Less than 10.0% of question respondents said getting to any of the destinations in and around the city was easy by transit.

The results indicate that a majority of respondents find it easiest to use a car to get in and around the city.

## PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING THE EASE AND SAFETY OF TRANSPORTATION

**Question 20** asked respondents to indicate their priority for improving the ease and safety of getting around their community by car, public transit, bike, or walking on a scale of "Very High" to "Very Low" with an option to answer as "Not Applicable." Among question respondents, over 55% selected walking as a "Very High" or "High" priority for improving the ease and safety of getting around. This was followed by 52.5% of respondents who said improvements to getting around by bike were a high priority.

Less than half of respondents (45.9%) rated improvements to getting around by car as a high priority, and only 24.4% said improvements to public transit were a priority. Indeed, a greater percentage (38.1%) rated public transit improvements as a "Low" or "Very Low" priority. These results are shown in Figure 23.

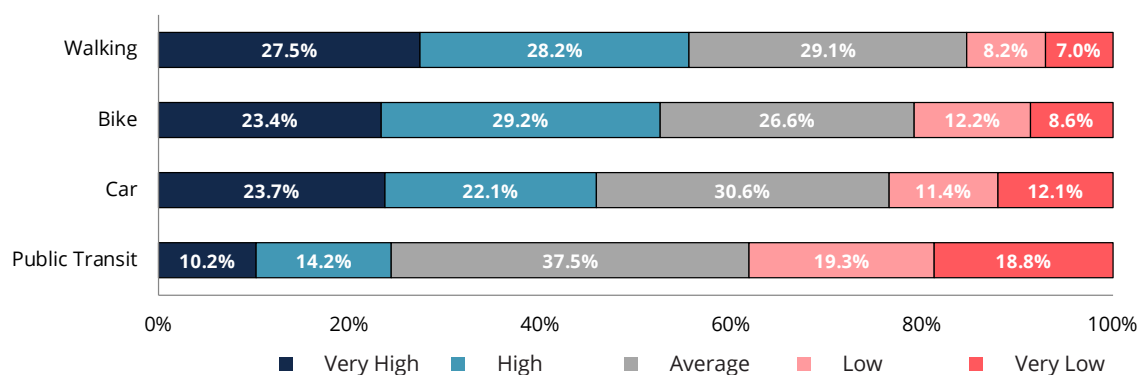
The question results indicate that residents prioritize improvements to the walking and biking environments over improvements to getting around by car or public transportation.

## PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING THE EASE AND SAFETY OF TRANSPORTATION BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

Priorities for improvements were cross tabulated with the age of respondent to see

**Figure 23**

Priority for Improving the Ease and Safety of Getting Around by Mode of Transportation



how varying age groups viewed transportation priorities differently. The charts in Figure 25 display the percent of each age group that marked improvement priorities by mode as “Very High” or “High.”

Among young adults age 18 to 44, the highest priority was for improving the biking environment in Rocky River followed by improvements to getting around on foot. Similarly, among working age adults, improvements to walking and biking were the highest priority; however, improvements to the walking environment were slightly higher.

Among seniors, improvements to getting around by car were the top priority, followed by improvements to getting around by food and on bike.

The data showcases how important to younger adults improvements to active transportation are in comparison to older adults who have a greater focus on getting around by car.

## OPINIONS ON PARKING POLICY STATEMENTS

**Question 21** asked question respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with six statements about parking. Over 60% of respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” parking in commercial areas outside of Downtown Rocky River is easy. Comparatively, only 43.4% of question respondents agreed that parking Downtown is easy.

When asked about improvements to parking Downtown, almost 52% of respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” the city should invest in off-street parking Downtown and 43.4% of respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” the city should improve on-street parking Downtown.

Despite some difficulty in parking Downtown, only 19.9% of questions respondents said they avoid Downtown Rocky River because of a lack of parking.

In addition to indications that respondents would like to see priority given to improving walking and biking infrastructure, 28.1% of respondents would rather walk, bike, or take transit to Downtown Rocky River.

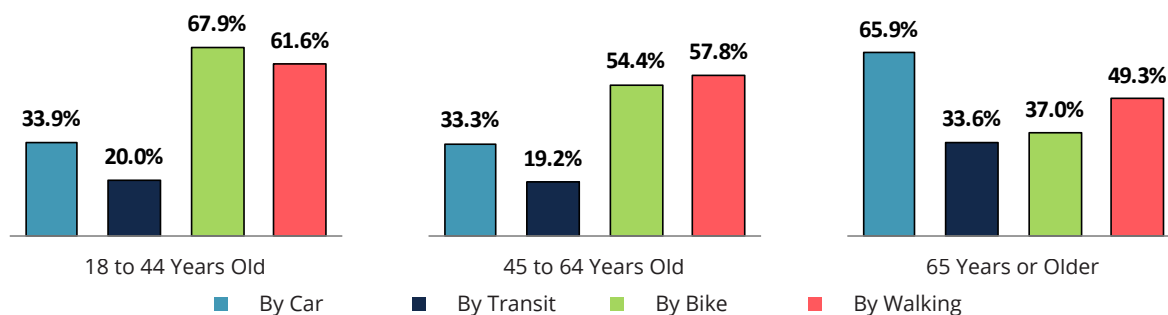
The results to parking policy statements are mixed; however, they indicate that parking in Downtown River is not stopping residents from visiting the business district. While a majority of respondents would like to see improvements to parking Downtown, a strong contingent would also like to see improvements to alternative forms of transportation into Downtown.

## OPINIONS ON PARKING POLICY STATEMENTS BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

When cross tabulated by age of respondent, most responses were consistent with the general trend regardless of age. In only one case did age groups dramatically differ from the average. When the responses to the option

**Figure 24**

Very High or High Priority for Improvement to Transportation Mode by Age of Respondent



"I would rather walk, bike, or take transit to Downtown" were cross tabulated with age of respondent, the agreement decreased with age. More young adults (40.0%) agreed than working age adults (32.1%). Only 15.8% of seniors agreed with this selection.

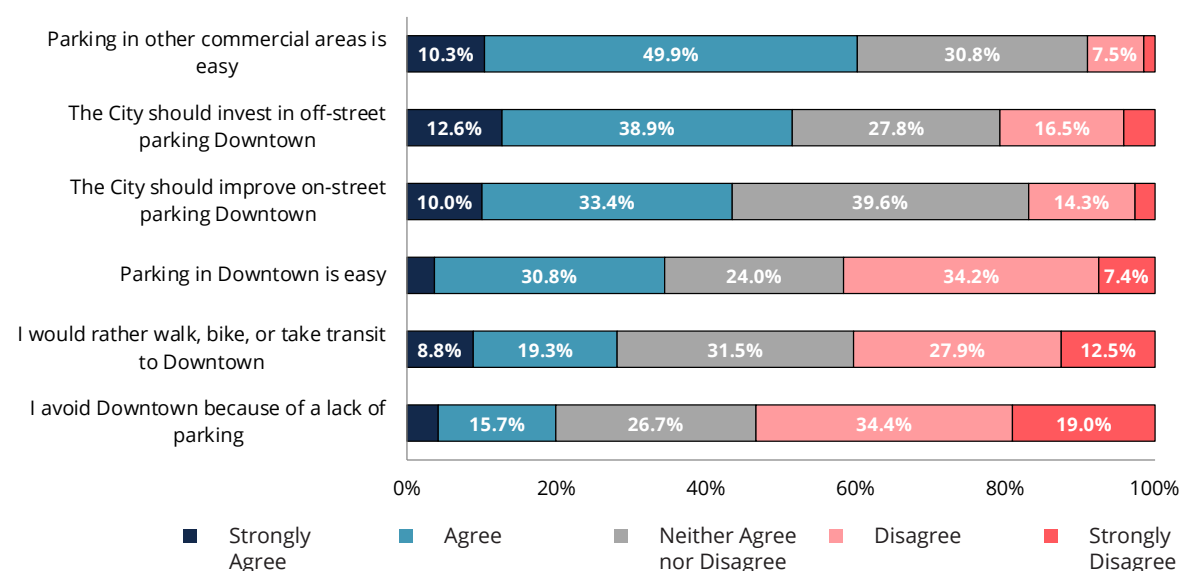
Opinions on all parking policy statements by age of respondent are displayed in Figure 26.

## COMMENTS ON TRANSPORTATION

**Question 22** provided space for survey respondents to write-in any comments regarding transportation. Parking in Downtown Rocky River, pedestrian safety, a need for bike paths and trails, and traffic congestion on major streets were the biggest concerns in this section of the survey.

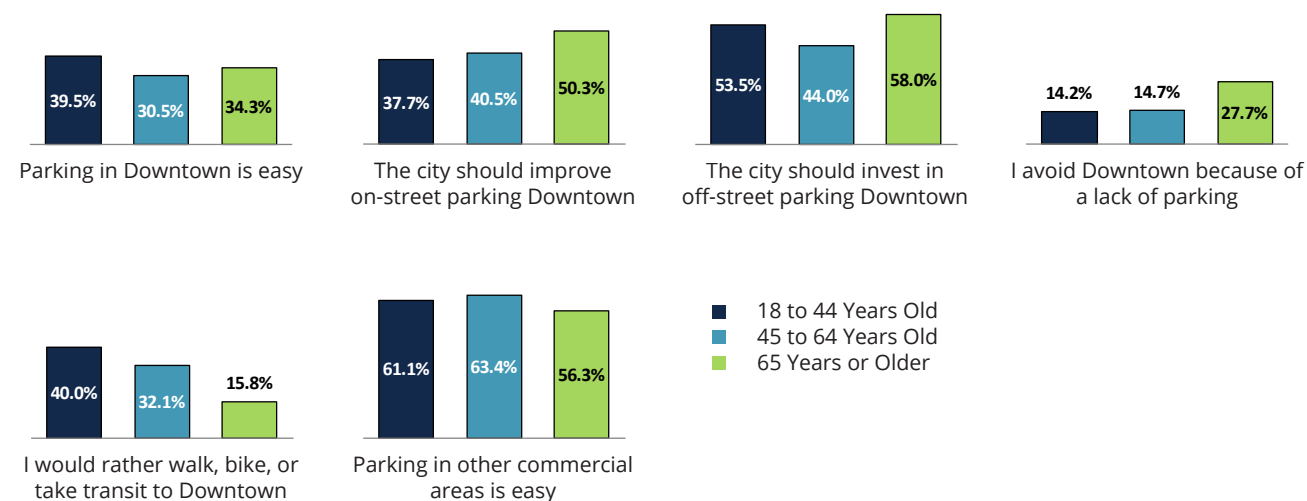
**Figure 25**

Opinions on Parking Statements



**Figure 26**

Opinions on Parking Statements by Age of Respondent



# COMMUNICATION

## COMMON THEMES

- More respondents rate City communication positively than negatively
- The most desired way to receive communication about City events is via direct mail, email, or the City's website

This topic covered policy statements regarding the city's communication efforts as well as the method by which residents would like to receive their information.

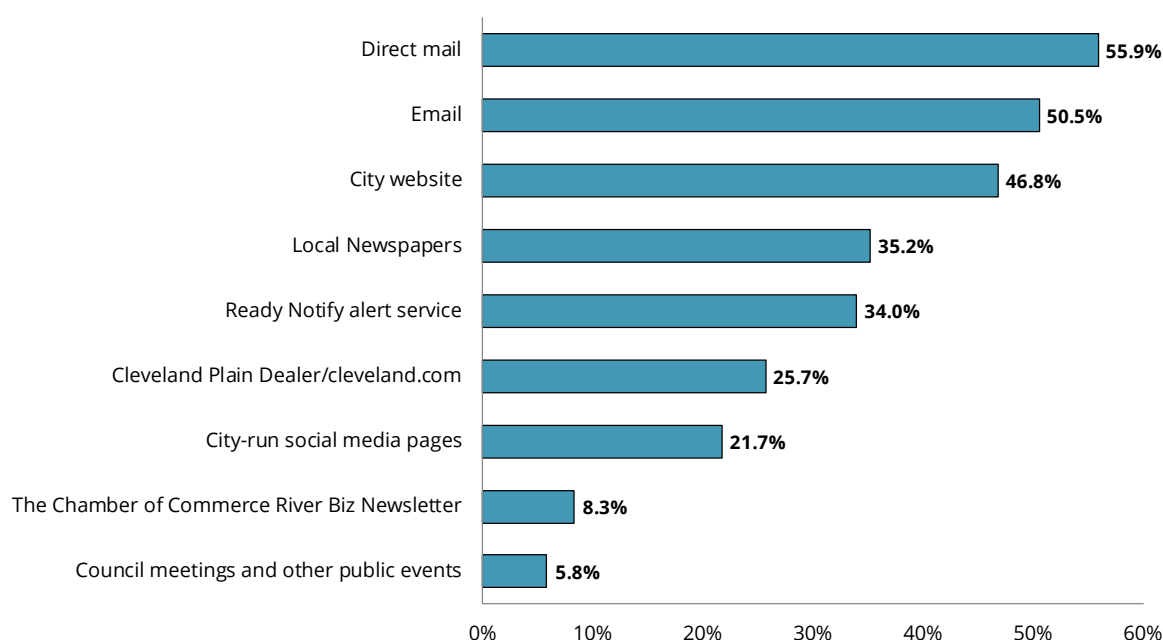
## OPINIONS ON DESIRED FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

**Question 23** asked respondents how they would like to get information about city

meetings, events, projects, and issues. Of the 483 question respondents, 55.9% said that they prefer to get information about the city via direct mail with email being the second preferred method with 50.5% of respondents selecting this option. More than 46% of respondents would prefer to use the city's website to get city news and information. This information is shown in Figure 27.

**Figure 27**

Desired Forms of Communication



Only 8.3% of the respondents prefer to receive communication via the Chamber of Commerce River Biz Newsletter and 5.8% of respondents prefer Council meetings and other public events for receiving communication from the city.

This indicates that most residents prefer to receive communication about the city through direct mail, email, or the website.

### OPINIONS ON DESIRED FORMS OF COMMUNICATION BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

When considering desired forms of communication by age, the top three forms differed, as displayed in Figure 28.

Email as a desired form of communication was in the top three for all ages; however, email preference decreased with age. A majority of young adults (61.1%) and working age adults (58.7%) preferred email, while 37.7% of seniors chose email. Likewise, direct mail was popular with all three groups, but most popular among seniors.

Among young adults and working age adults, the city website was the third preferred form of communication about city events. Among seniors, local newspapers were in the top three.

### OPINIONS ABOUT THE OVERALL QUALITY OF EXISTING COMMUNICATION IN THE CITY

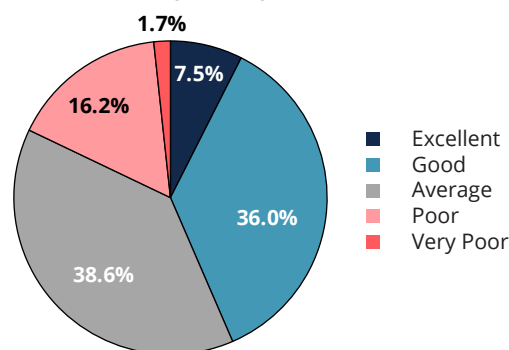
**Question 24** asked respondents to rate the overall quality of existing communication

about city meetings, events, projects, and issues. Respondents rated the overall quality evenly between “Good” at 36.0% and “Average” at 38.6%, as shown in Figure 29. Overall, a far greater percentage (43.5%) of question respondents rated city communication positively than rated it negatively (17.9%). Although respondents generally view the city’s communication efforts favorably, the results show there is room for improvement.

### COMMENTS ON COMMUNICATION

**Question 22** provided space for survey respondents to write-in any comments regarding city communication. Among those that wrote comments, respondents were concerned about how they received communication from the city. Some have never been notified of important city news, while others wrote that when they received information, it came via “word of mouth” or “after the fact.” To improve, respondents said they prefer email and a city website that is easier to navigate.

**Figure 29**  
Overall Quality of City Communication



**Figure 28**

Desired Forms of Communication by Age of Respondent

#### 18 to 44 Year Olds

1. Email (61.1%)
2. Direct Mail (54.0%)
3. City Website (53.1%)

#### 45 to 64 Year Olds

1. Email (58.7%)
2. City Website (24.0%)
3. Direct Mail (47.9%)

#### 65+ Years Old

1. Direct Mail (63.4%)
2. Local Newspapers (49.7%)
3. Email (37.7%)

# QUALITY OF LIFE

## COMMON THEMES

- The City has an overwhelmingly high quality of life rating
- Regardless of age or tenure, respondents rate quality of life exceedingly high

Quality of life can be described as the general well-being of an individual or community. Many of the surveyed topics contribute to the community's quality of life, but the final survey question asked residents to rate their quality of life overall.

## OPINIONS ABOUT THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE IN ROCKY RIVER

**Question 26** asked respondents to rate the overall quality of life in the City of Rocky River. Out of 473 question respondents, 96.2% rated their quality of life in Rocky River as "Excellent" or "Good." This information is shown in Figure 30.

When cross tabulated with age of respondent, opinions about overall quality of life were consistent across all age groups. The rating of "Excellent" or "Good" was highest among

young adults (98.3%) and seniors (96.8%). There was a slight decrease among working age adults (93.8%); however a vast majority still reported exceedingly high quality of life.

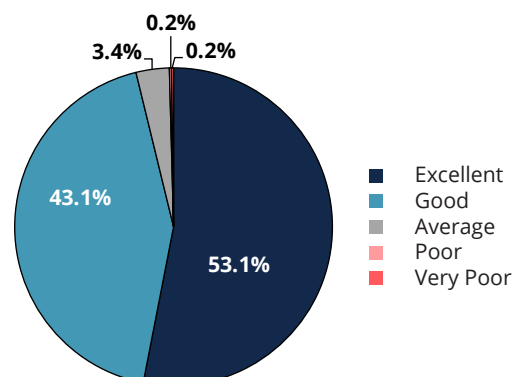
Similarly, when cross tabulated with the tenure of respondents—that is, whether someone owns or rents their home—the results were consistent. Among owners, 96.1% said quality of life was positive and among renters, 96.7% said quality of life was positive.

Overall, the results show that quality of life in the City of Rocky River is very high among residents. This is regardless of the age or tenure of respondent.

## COMMENTS ON QUALITY OF LIFE

The final question in the survey provided a large space for open-ended comment on quality of life or any other topics not covered in the survey. This question garnered the most in-depth responses of the survey. Respondents felt strongly that Rocky River should continue to be a great community with great schools. The most pressing concerns echoed those mentioned in other sections of the survey: road conditions, traffic, parking, safety, walkability, and access to Lake Erie. Overall, however, respondents were very pleased with the quality of life in Rocky River.

**Figure 30**  
Overall Quality of Life



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## SUMMARY OF COMMON THEMES

- The quality of the school system is the most commonly cited reason for why residents choose to live in Rocky River
- Respondents feel safe in the City and in their neighborhoods
- The proximity to Lake Erie is one of the higher rated reasons for choosing Rocky River
- Different age groups would consider moving out of Rocky River for different housing types: large homes for young adults, one-floor living for working age adults, and retirement-friendly communities for seniors
- Maintenance of housing as well as renovations and expansions of existing homes were the most important issue for respondents
- A majority of residents are interested in seeing more accessible housing, more walkable options, and more single-family homes
- Residents do not prioritize more apartment buildings or mixed-use buildings
- Respondents want to ensure the City's residential structures are attractive through enforcement of existing design codes and potentially more specific residential codes
- Street improvements are the most important infrastructure need for survey respondents, with Center Ridge Road cited as having the most critical need for improvements
- Historic preservation and environmentally-friendly development are core community values
- Wayfinding and gateways into the city should be improved
- Respondents regularly use City parks and recreation facilities, enjoy the programming available, and rate facilities very highly
- The Outdoor Water Zone Pool, Rocky River Park, and the Don Umerley Civic Center were the City's most highly rated facilities
- Respondents would like to see additional seating, bike amenities, and trails in City parks
- Respondents do not feel the City should invest in additional, new parks and facilities; however, residents would like improved access to Lake Erie
- Young adults are most likely to use the City's parks and would like to see additional parks and community events
- Respondents would like to maintain attractive design of commercial buildings with appropriate neighborhood scale and character, an effective sign code, and strong commercial design codes
- Residents would especially like to focus development efforts on Center Ridge Road, followed by Downtown River
- Residents prefer improvements to the walking and biking environment over the driving environment
- Parking in Downtown is not considered as easy as other commercial areas; however, few residents avoid Downtown River due to lack of parking
- Residents prefer off-street parking improvements over on-street improvements
- Public Transit is a low priority for improvements
- More respondents rate City communication positively than negatively
- The most desired way to receive communication about City events is via direct mail, email, or the City's website
- The City has an overwhelmingly high quality of life rating
- Regardless of age or tenure, respondents rate quality of life exceedingly high







## SECTION 4

# DEMOGRAPHICS

The Rocky River survey was sent to 1,400 random households in order to solicit opinions that encompass the range of thoughts held by the city's diverse population. The Demographics Section summarizes the population that responded to the survey.

### WHAT'S IN THIS SECTION?

This section includes the results of the six demographic questions asked in the Rocky River Survey. Each question is numbered and includes a description of the question, a chart or graph of the results, and some analysis of respondent answers.

### HOW DO I USE IT?

These responses should be used to give context to the detailed findings of the results document. The demographic questions can be helpful in comparing the survey respondent population to the City population as a whole. Over representation or underrepresentation of specific groups can alter overall opinions and should be considered.

# RESPONDENT INFORMATION

## AGE OF RESPONDENT

The Rocky River Survey asked the heads of households to complete the survey collaboratively. **Question 27** asked respondents their age, and for those households that completed the survey collaboratively, the question stated that the respondent who most recently had a birthday should list his or her age. The age of the respondent was compared to 2014 Census data from the American Community Survey for age of householder to determine the extent to which survey respondents aligned with citywide data.

For this question, 487 respondents selected one of the six age groups provided. In all age groups 55 years old and above, respondents were overrepresented as compared to their citywide population, while all age groups under 55 were underrepresented among survey respondents. This was especially true

of respondents age 45 to 54, which were particularly underrepresented. Outside of this age group, however, respondent age generally matched the age of residents citywide.

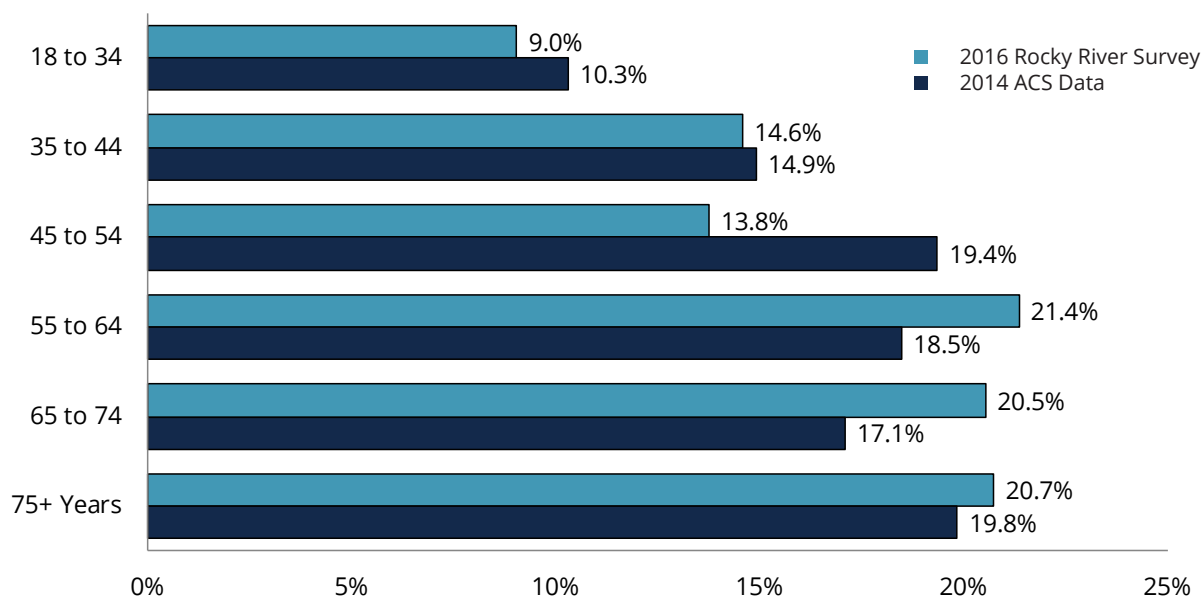
This information is illustrated in Figure 31 and should be taken into account when reviewing the results of the survey.

## LENGTH OF RESIDENCY

**Question 28** asked respondents how many years they had lived in Rocky River. In general, survey respondents were more likely to have lived in the city for longer periods of time. Of the 490 question respondents, only 23.3% had lived in Rocky River for five years or fewer, while 30.8% had lived there for more than 30 years, as shown in Figure 32.

**Figure 31**

Age of Respondent, 2016 Survey and 2014 ACS Data



**Question 29** asked respondents how much longer they planned to live in Rocky River. Of 470 respondents, the largest group marked that they did not intend to move out of Rocky River, with 54.9% of respondents selecting this option. In addition, however, 15.3% of respondents said they planned to move out of Rocky River within the next five years. This information is illustrated in Figure 33.

## TENURE

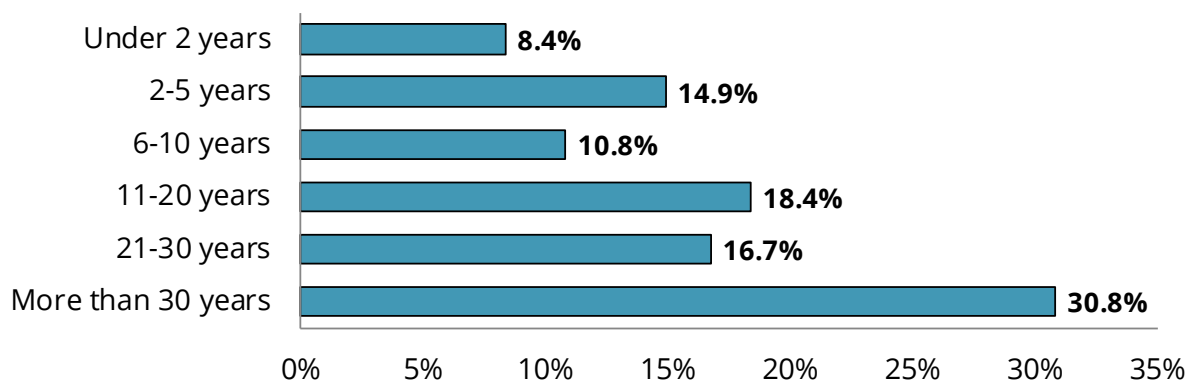
**Question 30** asked respondents whether they were a homeowner or a renter. Of the 490 question respondents, 86.5% owned

their home while 13.5% rented their home, as shown in Figure 34.

**Question 31** asked respondents whether they planned to own or rent their home in five years. Of the 470 question respondents 88.9% said they would own their home in five years while the remaining 11.1% said they would rent their home, as displayed in Figure 35. This is a very slight increase in the number of respondents who believe they will own their home in five years compared to the present day. This indicates that there may be an opportunity to convert current renters into homeowners in Rocky River.

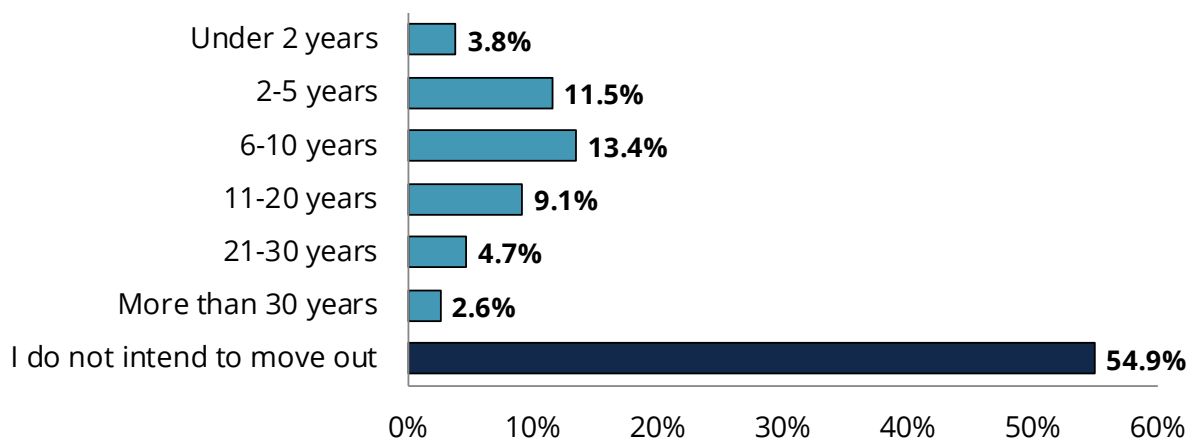
**Figure 32**

Length of Residency in Rocky River



**Figure 33**

Planned Length of Residency in Rocky River



## AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

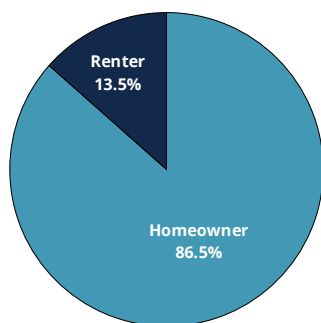
**Question 32** asked respondents to indicate the number of people in their household within specific age groups. To determine what extent the population characteristics of respondent households compared to the city as a whole, this information was also

compared to the 2014 Census data from the American Community Survey.

Rocky River has a large population of families with children. The percent of residents under age 18 is nearly 20% of the city's total population. The city has a lower percentage of young adults—those aged 18 to 34—which make

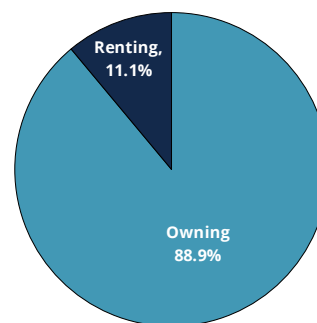
**Figure 34**

Respondent Tenure



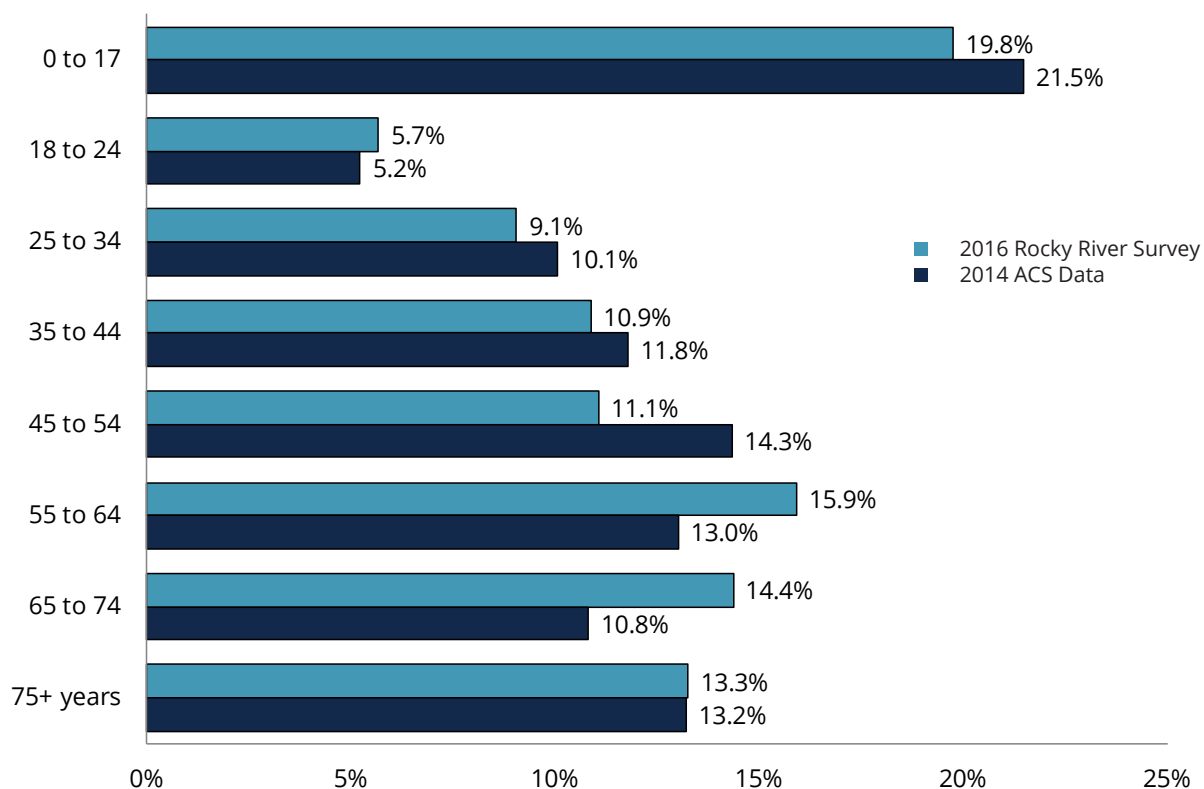
**Figure 35**

Respondent Planned Tenure in Five Years



**Figure 36**

Age of Household Members, 2016 Survey and 2014 ACS Data



up just 14.8%. Seniors, meanwhile, make up 27.7% of the city's total population.

The percentages of household members by age were generally consistent with the population of the city. Households with members over 55 were slightly overrepresented in the survey while households with children and with adults age 45 to 65 were slightly underrepresented. This information is displayed in Figure 36.



# County Planning

FOR OUR COMMUNITY  
FOR OUR REGION  
FOR OUR FUTURE