

Town of Sophia Comprehensive Plan

November 2017



WVU**LAW**
LAND USE & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LAW CLINIC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|----|
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 3 |
| Chapter 2: Needs Assessment..... | 7 |
| <i>Existing Land Use Map</i> | 18 |
| <i>Development Constraints Map</i> | 19 |
| <i>Future Land Use Map</i> | 22 |
| Chapter 3: Action Plan | 30 |
| <i>Implementation Matrix</i> | 47 |
| | |
| <i>Appendix 1: Public Input Procedures</i> | |
| <i>Appendix 2: Online Survey Results</i> | |
| <i>Appendix 3: Stakeholder List</i> | |
| <i>Appendix 4: Sources</i> | |
| <i>Appendix 5: Funding Sources</i> | |
| <i>Appendix 6: Maps</i> | |
| <i>Appendix 7: Adoption Materials</i> | |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

WHY DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Town of Sophia was incorporated in 1912. The town served many of the local coal camps in the area and as such was a bustling, thriving place. Since the decline of the coal industry, Sophia has continuously lost population and businesses. The development of a comprehensive plan provides the opportunity for residents, including elected officials, to take a hard look at the future of their town and decide how to change it for the better.

Make not little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.

- Daniel H. Burnham, architect (1846-1912).

Just like people plan for everyday life and their future (vacations, large purchases, retirement), local governments should plan as well. Local governments are tasked with providing services to their residents, which is often not an easy task. Many local government services (recreation, transportation, community facilities) require planning, especially those that require money. In order to correctly plan for the future, a local government should have a plan in place. This type of plan is called a comprehensive plan. The term comprehensive is used because the plan looks at all facets of a community: land use, transportation, housing, economic development, recreation, and community services. Communities need to have a plan in place in order to make informed land use decisions. The plan should be used to enhance the quality of life of residents and to guide investments to the right places.



Town of Sophia

The goal of this plan is to not list several action items that the town does not have the financial means or capacity to implement. This plan seeks to determine which action items are most crucial to achieving the county's vision.

Town Council should use this plan anytime a decision needs to be made regarding a development proposal, capital improvement project, or policy change. The plan should be reviewed annually by the planning commission to ensure that the vision and goals identified in the plan are still consistent and applicable. The plan must be updated at least every 10 years.

PLAN LAYOUT

The comprehensive plan was developed to be accessible and useful. Therefore, the plan is separated into three chapters. The plan revolves around the key issues and concerns in the town.

- ❖ Chapter 1: Introduction
- ❖ Chapter 2: Needs Assessment
- ❖ Chapter 3: Action Plan

CHAPTER 8A: LAND USE PLANNING

The West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning, sets out the rules that local governments must follow when developing land use plans. The Planning Commission is tasked with preparing a Comprehensive Plan. The Town of Sophia has never had a Planning Commission. Therefore, the town appointed a planning commission to lead the development of the plan, with assistance by the West Virginia University College of Law Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic. The Town of Sophia Planning Commission consists of five (5) members that represent a wide range of interests within the town. The Planning Commission should review the plan annually to help with implementation of the plan, and to also ensure that any new development or proposed zoning change is consistent with the comprehensive plan. The plan must be updated every 10 years.

Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code: Land Use Planning requires several elements in a Comprehensive Plan. The tables below display the mandatory elements and where they can be found in the Town of Sophia Comprehensive Plan.

| Required Objectives of a Comprehensive Plan | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>W. VA. Code §8A-3-4</i> | |
| Code Provision | Page # |
| Statement of goals and objectives | Located throughout Chapters 2 and 3 |
| Timeline on how to meet short and long-term goals and objectives | 31, 47, 48 |
| Action plan with implementation strategies | Chapter 3 |
| Recommendations of a financial program for necessary public funding | 31 |
| Statement of recommendations concerning future land use and development policies | 21, 22, 36, 40 |
| A program to encourage regional planning, coordination, and cooperation | 30, 31 |
| Maps, plats, and/or charts that present basic information on the land, including present and future uses | Maps- 18, 19, 22 Charts- located throughout Chapter 2 |

| Required Components of a Comprehensive Plan | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>W. VA. Code §8A-3-4(c)</i> | |
| Code Provision | Page # |
| <i>Land Use</i> | |
| Different land uses (including, for example, residential, agricultural, historic, conservation) | 18 |
| Population density and building intensity standards | 18, 21 |
| Growth or decline management | 21, 22 |
| Projected population growth or decline | 19, 20 |
| Constraints on development (including identifying flood-prone and subsidence areas) | 18, 19 |
| <i>Housing</i> | |
| Analyze projected housing needs and different types of housing needed (including affordable housing and accessible housing for persons with disabilities) | 13, 14, 21 |
| Identify the number of projected housing units and land needed | 20, 21 |
| Address substandard housing | 13, 15, 37 |
| Rehabilitate and improve existing housing | 15, 37, 38 |
| Adaptive reuse of buildings into housing | 14 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Transportation</i> | |
| Vehicular, transit, air, port, railroad, river, and any other mode | 24, 41 |
| Movement of traffic and parking | 24, 25 |
| Pedestrian and bicycle systems | 17, 24, 39, 41, 42 |
| Intermodal transportation | 24 |
| <i>Economic Development</i> | |
| Analyze opportunities, strengths and weaknesses | 9, 10, 11, 12 |
| Identify and designate economic development sites and/or sectors | 12, 34, 36 |
| Identify types of economic development sought | 12, 35, 36 |
| <i>Miscellaneous Components</i> | |
| Infrastructure | 24, 25, 26, 43 |
| Public Services | 23, 25, 26, 27, 43, 44 |
| Rural | 21 |
| Recreation | 16, 17, 39 |
| Community Design | 23, 34 |
| Preferred development areas | 21, 22 |
| Renewal and/or redevelopment | 21, 22 |
| Financing | 31 |
| Historic Preservation | 23, 34, 35 |

CHAPTER 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

VISION STATEMENT

To help guide overall plan development, a vision statement was created that captures the aspirations of town residents. The vision statement should guide the everyday functions and decisions of the town. The vision statement provides clarity for the future and will help inspire residents to realize change. The Town of Sophia Planning Commission developed the vision statement, using the vision statement created during the Blueprint Communities process as a starting point and refined it based on the public input that was received from residents throughout the comprehensive planning process.

The Town of Sophia is known as the gateway to the Winding Gulf Coalfields with a bustling downtown business district, local historical attractions, and easy access to numerous tourism destinations. Friendly residents and small town charm have made Sophia a desirable place to live and do business.

PUBLIC INPUT

A robust public input strategy is important to the success of a comprehensive plan. Residents of a community will be more willingly to support projects detailed in the plan if they have had some say in the future of the community. Public input is also required by the West Virginia Code. The West Virginia Code requires public input procedures and two public hearings by the Planning Commission and Town Council respectively. The Sophia Planning Commission adopted public input procedures in August of 2015 and June of 2017, included in [Appendix 1](#).

The Planning Commission is responsible for the development of the comprehensive plan. The Planning Commission was established in 2015 and consists of five members. The commission was essential in spearheading the planning process and providing initial input on the issues and concerns in the town. Public meetings were held to gather information from as many residents as possible. The first public meeting was held in April 2015 and a final meeting was held in January 2017 to present the action plan to the public.

An online survey was also created to solicit additional feedback on issues and concerns in the town. A total of 65 people took the survey. A final survey was created to solicit feedback on the action items developed by the planning commission. A total of 4 people also took the final survey. Results of the online surveys can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Numerous stakeholder surveys were also conducted. Stakeholders provided valuable insight on specific needs within the town. The Planning Commission identified stakeholders and sent a questionnaire, asking about the function of their organization and any issues or concerns they may have regarding the future of the Town of Sophia. Stakeholders identified included those involved in economic development efforts, public safety organizations, water/sewer services, housing, and various community organizations. The stakeholder list can be found in [Appendix 3](#).

CRITICAL ISSUES

After the initial public input was received, the Planning Commission reviewed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats exercise completed by the commission, as well as the public and identified seven (7) critical issues. The remainder of the planning commission meetings for the comprehensive plan revolved around discussing the critical issues and action steps that needed to be taken to address the concerns of the public. The critical issues are as follows:



CRITICAL ISSUE #1: LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

The West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A calls for a comprehensive plan to analyze strengths, opportunities, and weaknesses of the local economy. This section examines the US Census data and public input received throughout the planning process relating to economic development. The analysis of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities conducted by the town is used as a framework.



Strengths

The Town of Sophia is ideally located, which is one of its biggest strengths. The town is minutes away from the City of Beckley and major roadways, such as I-77, I-64, US Route 19, and the Coalfields Expressway.

Sophia's Main Street includes several small shops and restaurants that serve residents as well as visitors and travelers. The town is also close to major tourist attractions, such as the Burning Rock ATV Park.

Due to its proximity to Beckley, there are many job opportunities available in the immediate region for residents. The top employers in Raleigh County are within close driving distance to Sophia.

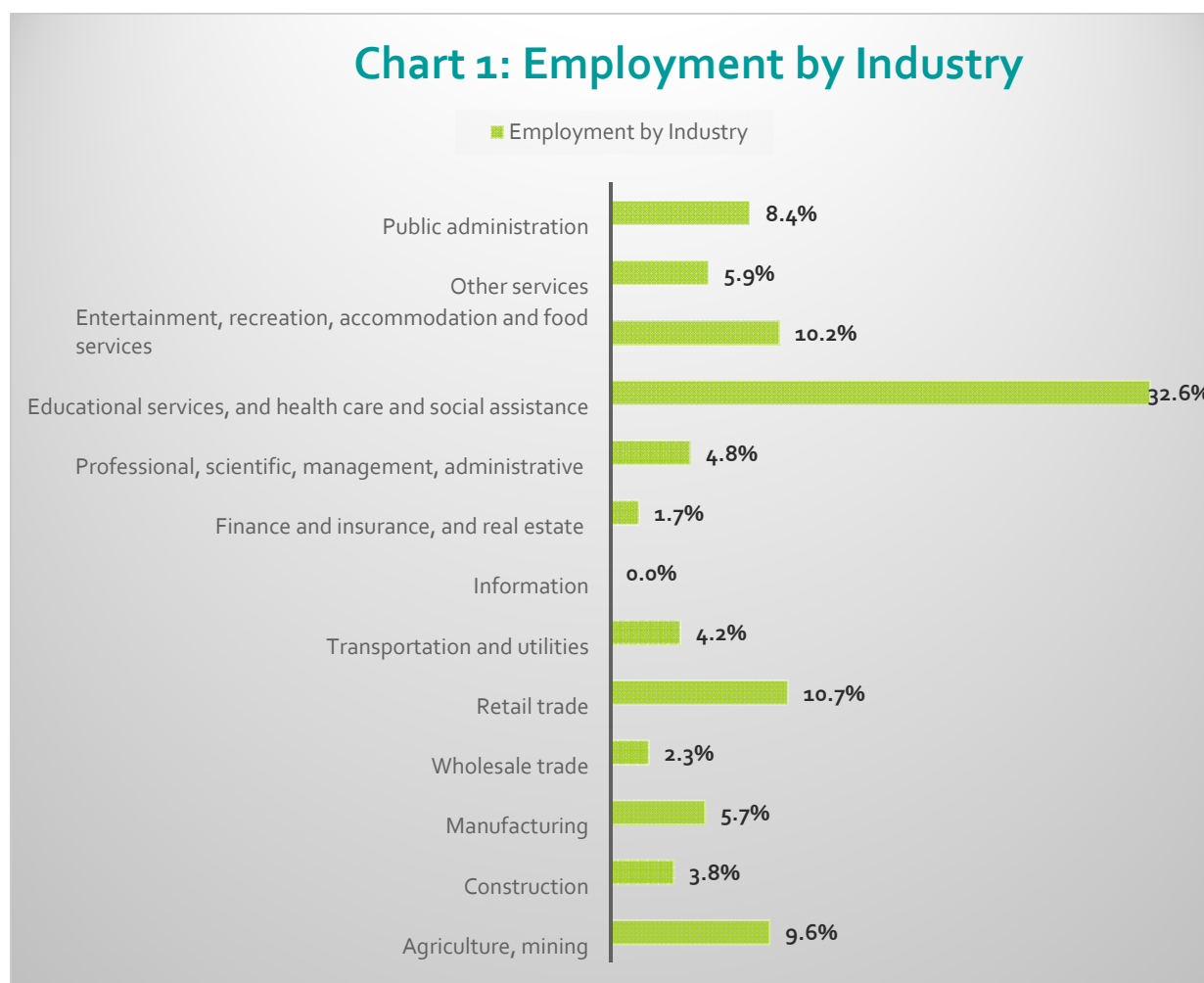
Top Employers in Raleigh County (2016)

1. Raleigh County Board of Education
2. Raleigh General Hospital, LLC
3. Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
4. US Department of Veterans Affairs
5. Appalachian Regional Healthcare
6. Alpha Natural Resources Company
7. Cramer Security and Investigations, LLC
8. Federal Prison System
9. Little General Store, Inc
10. Kroger

Weaknesses

According to the 1996 Comprehensive Plan, the economy in town has been influenced by the coal industry. As the coal industry continues to decline, the work force and population has declined. The available workforce in Sophia is a major concern. According to the American Community Survey 2014, the unemployment rate at the time was 10 percent. This is higher than Raleigh County's employment rate of 6.5 percent and West Virginia's rate of 8.2 percent.

There is also a lack of diversity in the workforce, which is a concern for businesses looking for a specific skillset, as shown on [Chart 1: Employment by Industry](#). Over 30 percent are employed in educational services, social assistance, or health care. There are very few residents employed in finance and insurance, real estate, information science, construction, and manufacturing.

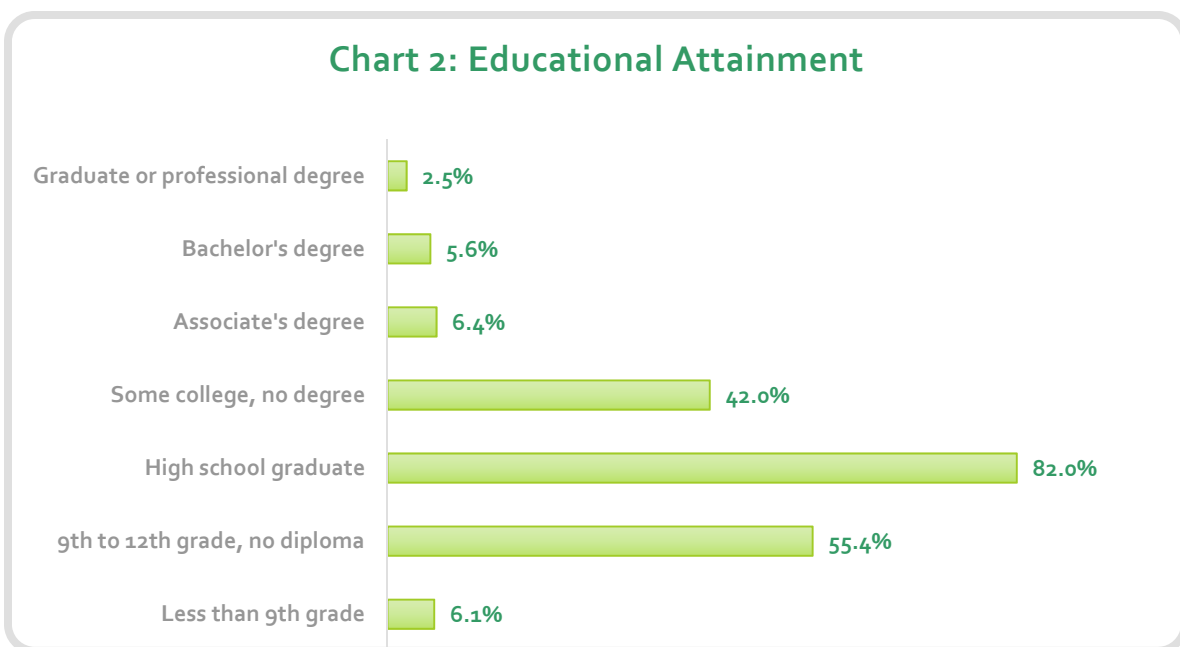


The median household income in the Town of Sophia in 2014 was \$36, 250. While household income has increased since 2000 (\$31,200), it is still lower than the state (\$41,576) and county (\$41,576) average, perhaps due to a lack of diversity in the workforce.

The number of residents who receive income, other than from earnings, is a concern, as shown on [Table 1: Earnings](#). While residents receive more money from earnings and less from social security and retirement compared to the county and state, more residents receive supplemental security income, cash public assistance, and food stamps/SNAP benefits. The predominance of this type of income source could be attributed to the fact that approximately 21 percent of residents in Sophia live in poverty, compared to 18 percent in West Virginia and 17 percent in Raleigh County.

| | Sophia | Raleigh County | West Virginia |
|------------------------------|--------|----------------|---------------|
| Earnings | 70.7% | 66.3% | 68.2% |
| Social Security | 27.2% | 42.4% | 38.8% |
| Retirement Income | 17.3% | 25.5% | 23.5% |
| Supplemental Security Income | 16.9% | 7.8% | 7.9% |
| Cash Public Assistance | 3.2% | 2.4% | 2.3% |
| Food Stamp/SNAP benefits | 20.8% | 17.0% | 15.8% |

Educational levels are a good indicator of how well a community can meet the demands of employers who need skilled labor or an educated workforce. [Chart 2: Educational Attainment](#) shows that approximately 82 percent of residents in the town have a high school degree and approximately 6 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. While the number of students graduating high school is higher than the state average, the number of residents who then went on to receive a bachelor's degree is lower than the state. However, this number could



change as residents in the 18-24 age cohort are attending college at a faster rate than before. The educational levels of residents are a concern when attracting new businesses to the area who rely on a specific skill set.

Besides economic conditions, one of the biggest challenges to increased economic growth is the lack of developable land. Currently, large landowners own much of the property within town, as well as property that surrounds the town. This limits investment in the community.

Opportunities

There are several opportunities for development in Sophia due to its geographic location near major roadways and the City of Beckley. The town desires additional commercial development to help increase the tax base. There is the potential for development on Route 16. While there is some available property in town, annexation would have to occur for larger scale development. Once the Coalfields Expressway is completed, there will be additional traffic traveling through Sophia that local business and industry can capitalize upon.

Another potential opportunity for Sophia is tourism. Sophia is ideally located near the Burning Rock Outdoor Adventure Park. Sophia is also not far from the Hatfield McCoy Trailhead in Pineville. Sophia could capitalize upon ATV riders, as many trail riders travel through town.

Another opportunity to attract visitors to Sophia is to publicize the Boy Scout cabin. The cabin was built by a local troop in the 1930s. The cabin had set empty for years and was located in the floodplain. The Boy Scout cabin was then re-located and renovated in 2011. When the cabin was dedicated in 2011 the town had a vision for the area near the cabin to be a town park for residents and visitors. This has not yet occurred and needs to be re-visited. There is also a need for directional signage to the cabin and historic plaques.

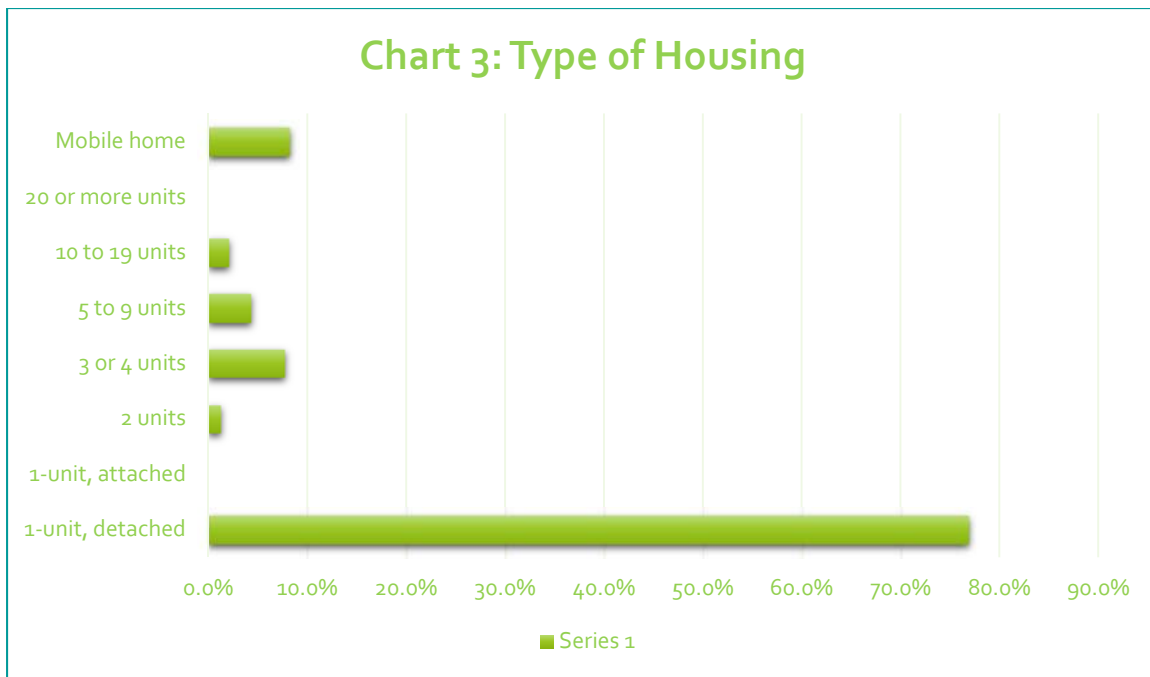


Boy Scout Cabin

A tourist train has also been discussed that would travel through the winding gulf coalfields to promote the coal and rail history throughout southern West Virginia. Sophia would be one of the towns the train would stop in. A tourist train is yet another avenue to bring people into the community. The following communities have written a letter of support regarding the tourist train: Mullens, Welch, Bramwell, Princeton, and Sophia. The following counties have also written a letter of support: Raleigh, Wyoming, and Mercer.

CRITICAL ISSUE #2: ABANDONED AND DILAPIDATED HOUSING

Housing quality can directly affect the quality of life in communities. Quality housing is essential to meet the basic needs of residents. Housing quality includes the physical condition of housing, age of housing, diversity of housing stock in a community, and affordability. Information was gathered from the 2010 US Census and 2014 Community Survey to better understand housing data trends in the Town of Sophia.



As shown on [Chart 3: Type of Housing](#), the majority of housing in town is single-family residential units (77 percent). The next highest category of housing type is mobile homes (8 percent). Few multi-family units exist in town. Affordable housing is available at Apple Tree Apartments and Ashley Manor. Ashley Manor also offers housing accessible to persons with disabilities.

During the planning process, the presence of abandoned and/or dilapidated homes was repeatedly mentioned as an issue in town. Vacancies can negatively affect residential neighborhoods. Approximately 10 percent of the housing units in the town are considered vacant. In 2000, the vacancy rate was 8.6 percent. The increase from 2000 to 2010 illustrates that vacant housing continues to be a problem in Sophia. While the vacancy rate is high, it is not as high as the county's rate of 11 percent or the state's rate of 13 percent. Although there are a number of vacant homes, there is a need for homes priced between \$135,000-\$150,000 for middle income families, and townhomes and apartments for students at the newly opened

West Virginia University Campus in nearby Beckley. At this time, there are no opportunities for adaptive reuse of buildings into housing.

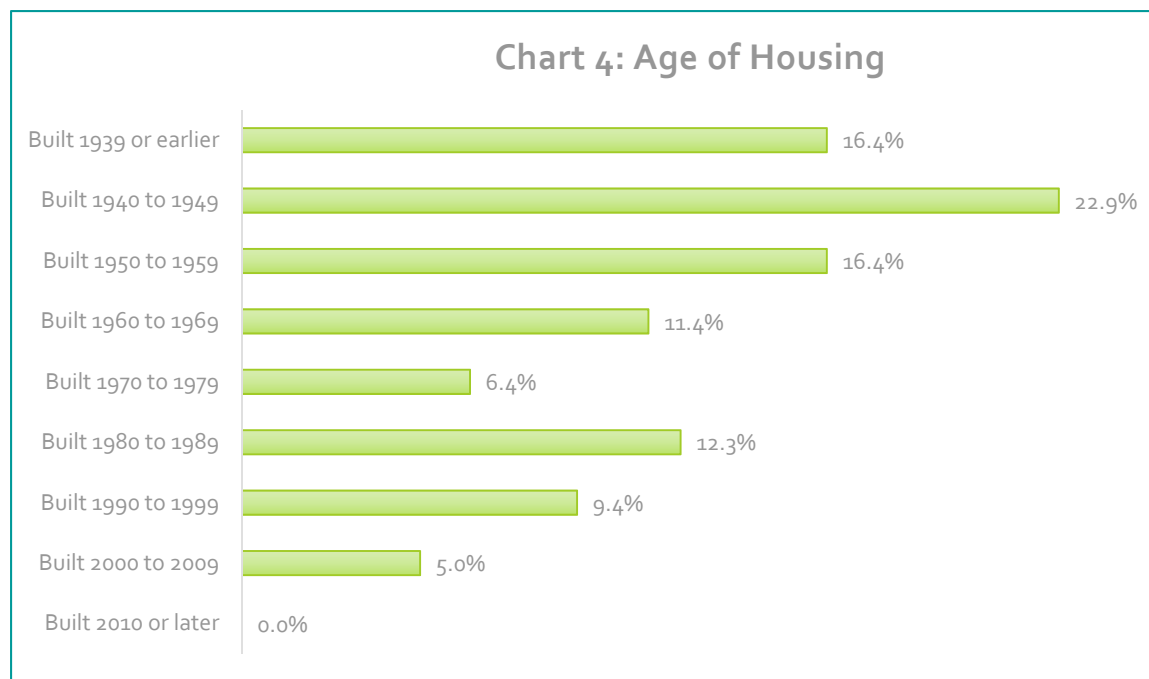
The majority of vacant homes (40%) in Sophia are offered for rent. The next highest category of vacant homes includes "all other vacants (38.5%)." According to the US Census bureau the term "all other vacants" refers to units held vacant for personal reasons by the owner.

Common reasons include:

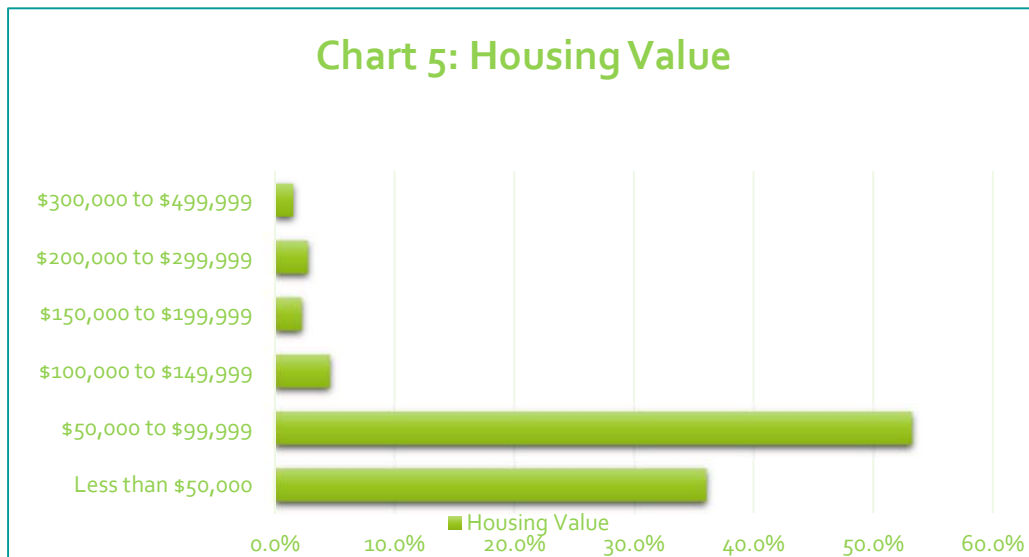
- ❖ No one lives in the unit and the owner is making repairs
- ❖ Owner does not want to rent or sell
- ❖ Owner using the home for storage
- ❖ Owner is elderly and living in a nursing home or elsewhere

The data illustrate that available but unrented homes exist in town. These homes may not be rented due to housing condition or cost of the rental. Of the occupied housing units available in town, 64 percent are owner occupied and 36 percent are renter-occupied. A good portion of the residents in town rent their homes, raising concerns that rental properties may create conflicts in traditionally single-family owner-occupied neighborhoods. Home-owners tend to take better care of their home whereas some renters may not stay in the community as long, or have a stake in the appearance and quality of the home.

The age of housing is also a concern in Sophia. As shown on [Chart 4: Age of Housing](#), over half of the homes in Sophia were built before 1960. Older homes can be expensive to maintain, especially for those on a fixed income.



Housing values were also examined to better understand the housing market and vacancy rate in Sophia. The average housing value in Sophia is \$55,100. The median value in Sophia is much lower than the county median housing value of \$98,600. As displayed on [Chart 5: Housing Value](#), over 50 percent of the homes are valued between \$50,000 to \$99,999.



Residents are concerned with the increasing presence of abandoned and dilapidated buildings. As shown on [Table 2: Housing Public Survey Results](#), many residents are not satisfied with the housing options available in town, as well as

TABLE 2: HOUSING PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| HOUSING OPTIONS | 2.0% | 32% | 36% | 31% |
| ENFORCEMENT OF ORDINANCES | 8% | 29% | 31% | 31% |
| VISUAL APPEARANCE OF SOPHIA | 10% | 33% | 44% | 13% |

the enforcement of ordinances and appearance of town. In fact, one of the top concerns of residents is the visual appearance of Sophia. The town does not have ordinances related to exterior sanitation and nuisance violations.

The town recently enacted a vacant property registry to help defray the cost of vacant buildings on community services. The town has identified 11 homes that are problem properties and 2 homes that should be demolished. The town recently enacted the International Property Maintenance Code and the International Building Code, which should help in dealing with abandoned and dilapidated properties. The town plans on either collaborating with the City of Beckley or Raleigh County to help enforce the codes. In the future, the town wants to participate in the Home Rule program to help with addressing abandoned and dilapidated buildings.

CRITICAL ISSUE 3: NEED FOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

Residents, overwhelming, want more recreational opportunities available in Sophia as displayed in [Tables 3 and 4: Recreation Public Survey Results](#).

Residents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction regarding availability and activities in Sophia. The majority of residents that responded felt the level of recreation and activities were poor.

TABLE 3: RECREATION PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| AVAILABILITY OF RECREATION | 6% | 8% | 31% | 55% |
| ACTIVITIES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS | 3% | 14% | 29% | 54% |
| ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH | 2% | 9% | 21% | 68% |

Table 4: Recreation Public Survey Results

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT RECREATION PROVIDED IN SOPHIA?

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| There are enough recreational facilities for families | 9% | 91% |
| There are enough programs and facilities for teens and children | 5% | 95% |
| There are enough programs and facilities for senior citizens | 16% | 84% |
| The facilities are adequately maintained | 44% | 56% |
| More park space and facilities are needed | 78% | 22% |

The town just recently built an interpretive park on Railroad Avenue that will include walkways, landscaping, benches, and other improvements. A handicap swing is also available. There is potential for a playground at the Boy Scout Cabin. Currently, the interpretive park is the only park owned and maintained by the town. The National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) recommends 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. This means that the Town of Sophia should provide 10 acres of parkland. The town currently does not meet those standards. There is a little league in Sophia, however the baseball games are played at Affinity Park, which is outside town limits.



Sophia Interpretive Park

An opportunity exists for a walking/bicycling trail in Sophia, which would not only benefit residents but could attract visitors as well. The potential trail would utilize the abandoned CSX railroad near Cemetery Road. The rail line travels from Sophia for 17 miles to Mullens in Wyoming County.

The Raleigh County Board of Education is in the process of consolidating and closing two elementary schools (Crab Orchard and Lester) and building a new elementary school in Sophia. The new school will most likely be opened in fall of 2018 and will include outdoor classrooms and wellness trails.

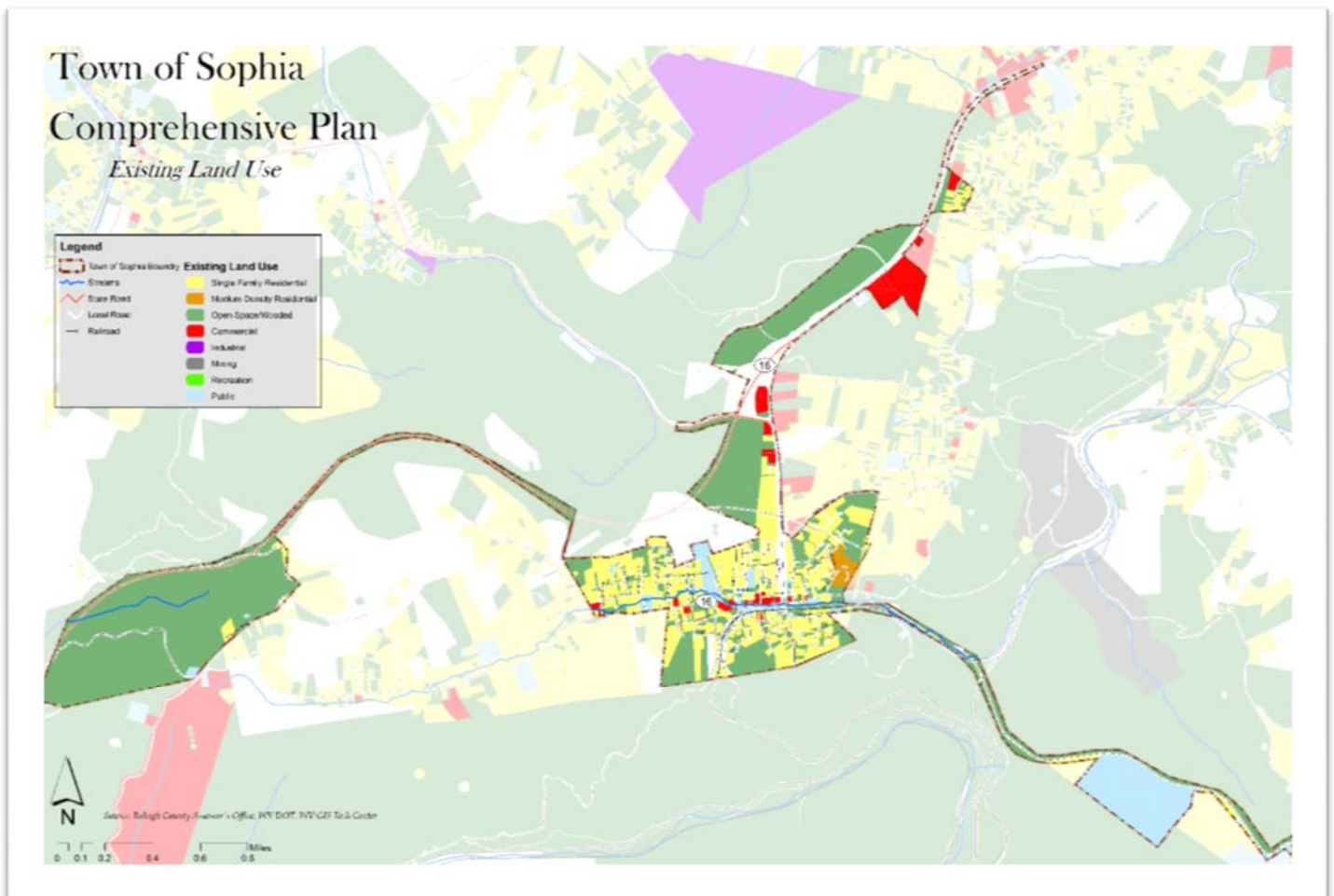
Sophia-Soak Creek Elementary School is also currently located in Sophia and there is a chance it may also be closed once the new school is built. If the school is closed, it could potentially be a great building for the town to purchase and offer recreational and community activities, as well as expand the types of recreational facilities offered.



Sophia Interpretive Park

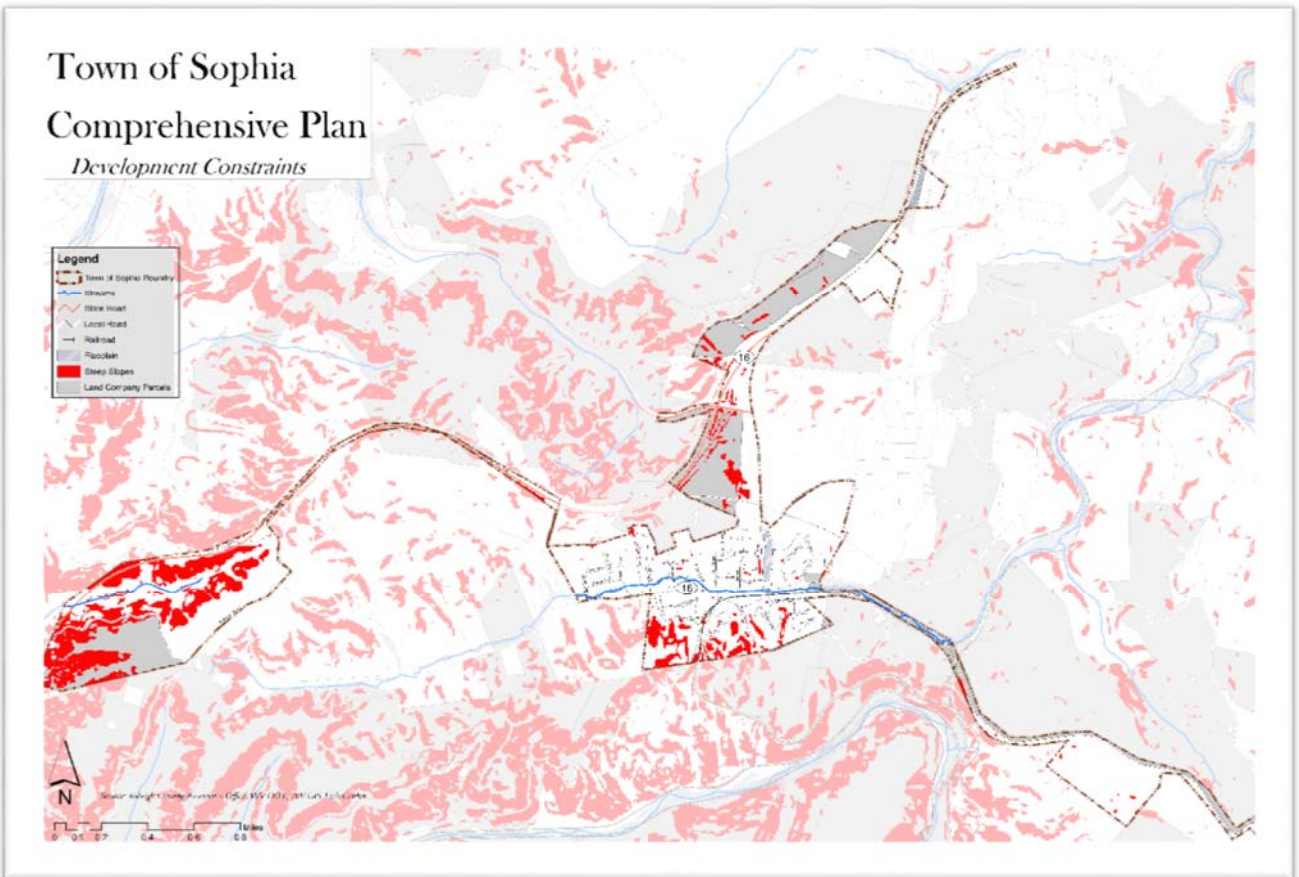
CRITICAL ISSUE #4: LACK OF LAND USE PLANNING

The majority of the Town of Sophia is single-family residential uses as shown on [the Existing Land Use Map](#). Commercial uses are located along State Route 16 and Main Street. Very limited multi-family residential uses exist in town. Public uses include town hall, Coal City Elementary School, Independence Middle and High Schools, and various churches. Sophia, one of five municipalities in Raleigh County, has a population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile.

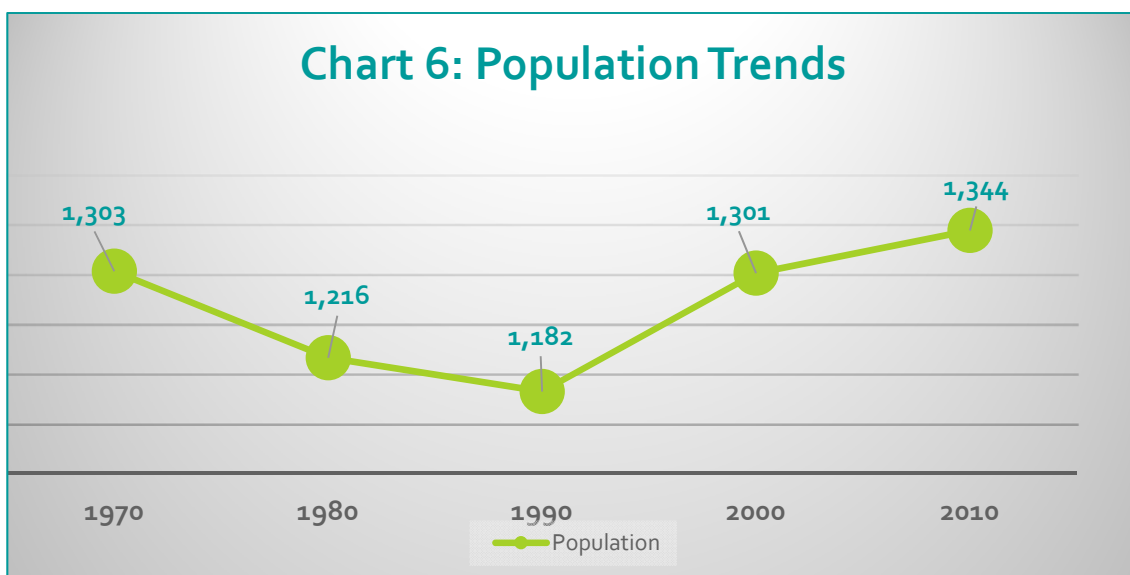


There are some development constraints in Sophia due to the location of the floodplain and steep slopes in the southern portion of the town as shown on the [Development Constraints Map](#). At this time there are no subsidence issues in the town. Very little land remains available for development in Sophia as the town is mostly built-out. Potential for development exist along Route 16. However a large land company currently owns the land along Route 16. The land company leases the land to developers, which is not ideal for long term investment. The town would also like to see additional development outside of town limits and annex the land

to include the property within municipal boundaries. However, most of the property surrounding the town is also owned by a large land company.




Past population counts were examined to determine a future land use plan for the Town of Sophia as shown on [Chart 6: Population Trends](#). From 1970 to 1990 the population of the town



declined. However, from 1990 to 2010 the population steadily increased to 1,344 people. The American Community Survey estimated a small decrease in population in 2014, with a total of 1,337 residents.

The West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A, requires that population projections be included in comprehensive plans. However, population projections are difficult to estimate as models do not take into account economic circumstances. No organization completes population projections for municipalities in West Virginia. Therefore, past population numbers were examined to determine the population growth rate for the Town of Sophia over the past 40 years.



| |
|----------------------------------|
| 1970-1980: -7.2% POPULATION LOSS |
| 1980-1990: 2.8% POPULATION LOSS |
| 1990-2000: 9.1% POPULATION GAIN |
| 2000-2010: 3.3% POPULATION GAIN |

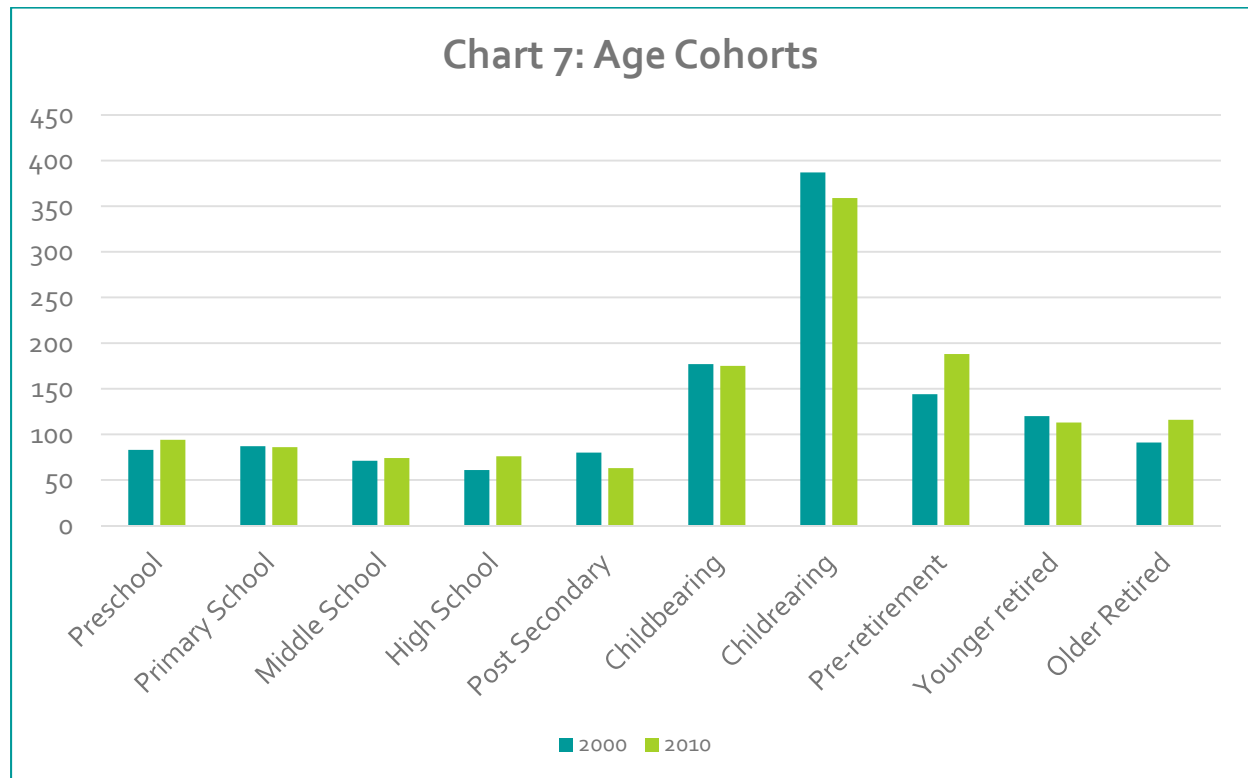
Table 5: Population Loss and Gain since 1970

Sophia over the years has maintained its population, except the period from 1970 to 1990, as shown on [Table 5: Population Loss and Gain since 1970](#). Therefore, taking into account the average population gain per year, the Town of Sophia will most likely continue to experience modest population growth. In the next 16 years, the population of the town is projected to be approximately 1,508 people. Additional housing may be needed to support a growing population. Based on the 2010 average household size, the town may need 72 additional housing units.

The age composition of residents in the town is also important to examine as different age cohorts require different types of services. School age residents will require school facilities, recreation facilities, and youth activities. An older population may need access to health care facilities and public transportation. The type of housing that various age cohort's desire is also different. Younger people with families may want larger single family homes, whereas those residents who are older may wish to downsize to a smaller home or a multi-family unit without maintenance. Age cohorts from 2000 to 2010 were examined to determine trends in the county, as shown on [Chart 7: Age Cohorts](#).

The median age of Sophia has decreased slightly from 2000 to 2010. In 2000 the median age was 41.1 and in 2010 40.1. The median age is slightly lower than Raleigh County. However, the Town of Sophia's population is getting older, with an increase in the pre-retirement and older retired age cohorts from 2000 to 2010. The decrease in the childbearing and childrearing age cohorts raises concerns. These age cohorts typically comprise the workforce of a community and therefore tend to spend more money than those in the older age cohorts. The preschool,

primary school, middle school, and high school age cohorts show slight increases, which is important as young people are the future of the community.



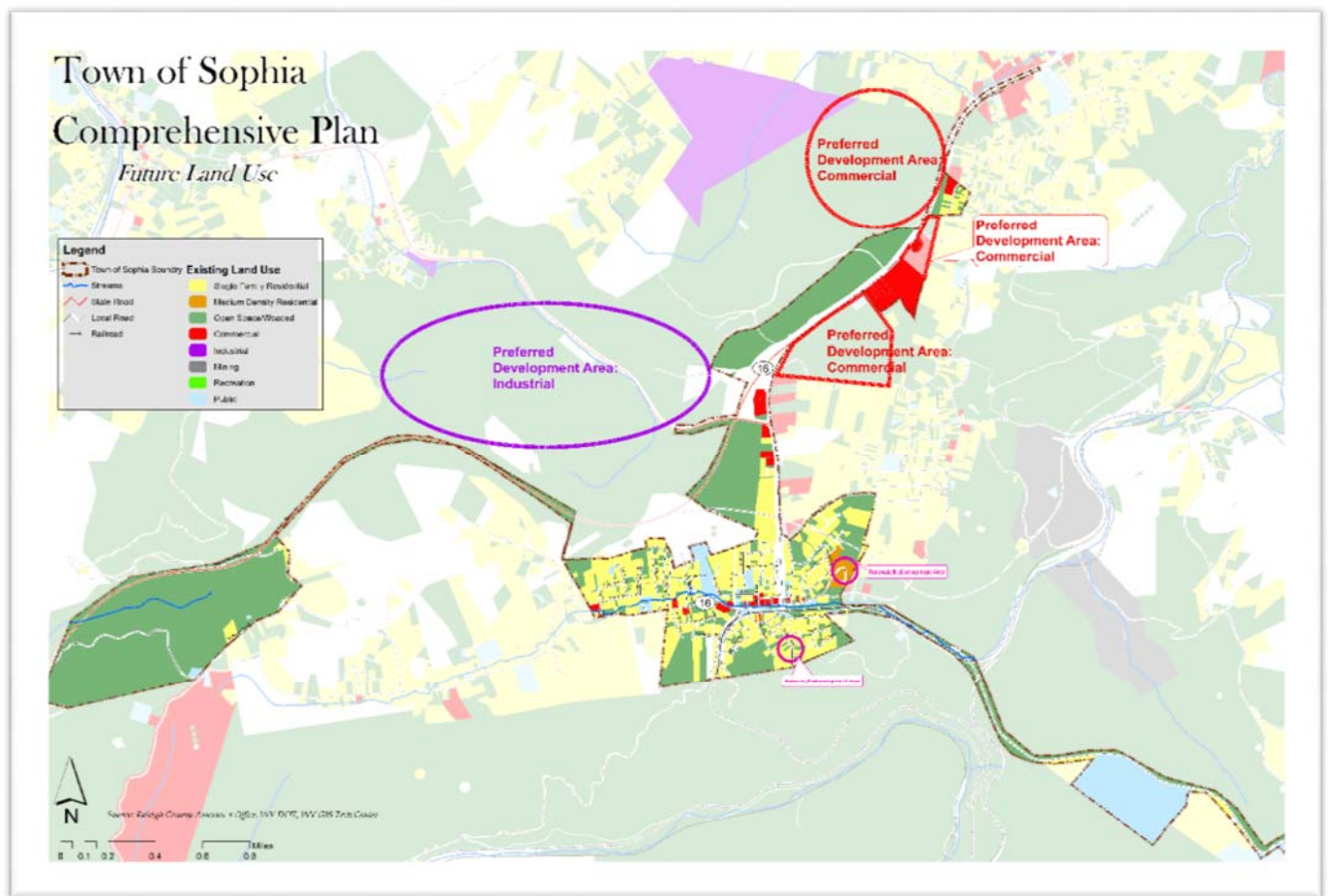
Taking into account existing land use, population and housing projections, and public input, a future land use map was developed to illustrate how the town wishes to develop in the next ten years. As most of Sophia is built-out, annexation is a priority for the town. Several preferred development areas were identified along State Route 16 for commercial development as shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#). An industrial preferred development area was also identified due to its strategic location near the Coalfields Expressway. The town also identified two renewal/redevelopment areas in residential neighborhoods due to dilapidated housing concerns. No areas of the town were identified as rural lands as most of the town is already built-out and the public desires additional development in the future.

Table 6: Future Land Use Public Survey Results

*What type of new development would you like to see in Sophia?
Please check all that apply.*

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Single family residential | 28.0% |
| Multi-family residential (includes townhouses, condos, and apartments) | 22.8% |
| Commercial | 51.8% |
| Industrial | 26.3% |
| No new development | 4.4% |

The public was asked what type of new development they would like to see in the future in town as shown on [Table 6: Future Land Use Public Survey Results](#). Over half of the respondents would like to see additional commercial development. Respondents stated that more retail is needed in town, such as a small grocery store and family restaurant.



The Town of Sophia enacted zoning regulations in the 1990s. The town has also enacted the property maintenance code and state building code, but has not enacted a subdivision and land development ordinance. The town is developing a stormwater management plan and corresponding stormwater ordinance.

The zoning ordinance establishes 5 zoning districts:

- R1 Rural/Agricultural
- R2 Single Family District
- R3 General Residential District
- B1 Commercial Business District
- M1 Industrial Business District

The zoning ordinance also includes regulations regarding non-conforming uses, signs, off-street parking and loading, mobile home parks and campgrounds, and administration and enforcement of the ordinance. A concern of the public is the lack of enforcement of ordinances.

Sophia's Main Street between Polk Street and Riffe Street is a historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Currently there are no regulations in place to protect the historic character of Main Street. Main Street has been improved throughout the years with various projects, such as installation of period lighting and banners. However, during the planning process residents stated that more could be done to promote a sense of character and identity of Sophia. Sophia has adopted the slogan "Gateway to the Winding Golf Coalfields", however there are no marketing or branding materials in town to illustrate the slogan to visitors.



Downtown Sophia: Gateway to the Winding Coalfields

CRITICAL ISSUE #5: LACK OF TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

The Town of Sophia is ideally located near major transportation networks. Interstates 64 and 77 are within five miles of town. US Route 19 and the Coalfields Expressway are also nearby. State Routes 16 and 97 travel through town. The town also has other modes of transportation readily available to residents. The Raleigh County Memorial Airport is approximately 15 miles from Sophia and there are 3 train stations within a reasonable travel time, located in Prince, Thurmond, and Hinton. Norfolk Southern Railroad travels through Sophia twice a week adjacent to Main Street. Norfolk Southern serves the coalfields to the south of Sophia. Parking is abundant, with a municipal parking lot with over 200 spaces and on street parking on Main Street. Traffic flow is regulated by two traffic lights.

As there is no river located in Sophia, the nearest port is located in Charleston, which is approximately 50 miles from Sophia. Public transportation is available through New River Transit (NRT). At this time, there are also no intermodal transportation options for the town.

While the town has many strengths and opportunities in regards to transportation, there are concerns by residents, shown on [Table 7:](#)

[Transportation Public Survey Results](#).

The biggest concern is public transportation. The NRT Raleigh West Route services Sophia, however the route is only available on Tuesdays and Thursday by calling ahead. There also seems to be a lack of knowledge of the existence of the route to begin with. More marketing may be needed so that residents are aware of their options.

TABLE 7: TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| PEDESTRIAN SAFETY | 5.2% | 38.1% | 35.1% | 14.4% |
| SIDEWALKS | 17.0% | 46.0% | 24.0% | 13% |
| STREET CONDITION | 15.7% | 43.1% | 31.4% | 9.8% |
| TRAFFIC CIRCULATION | 14.0% | 47.0% | 31.0% | 8.0% |
| PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION | 4.1% | 5.1% | 27.6% | 63.3% |

Another concern by residents is street condition and condition of sidewalks. There are roads that need to be paved and sidewalks that are in need of improvement. The town is currently working on paving all streets in Sophia. Sidewalks or sidewalk improvements are needed on Main Street, 1st Street, Virginia Street, West Main Street. A sidewalk from the town to GoMart is needed, as many people walk from town to the gas station.

CRITICAL ISSUE #6: EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Town of Sophia is tasked with providing specific community services to residents. Community services that the Town of Sophia provide include fire protection, police protection, emergency management, provision of water and sewage, and public works.

The town is currently determining if there is a possibility to move town hall in the downtown area. The current town hall is small and lacks sufficient parking. There is also a need for additional staff to help with the day to day functions of the government.

The Town of Sophia VFD, Inc. was established as a volunteer fire department in 1977. The VFD uses 25 active volunteers to cover an approximately 4 square mile service area. Fire hydrants are located throughout the town. Funding is provided by state insurance, Raleigh County Fire Levy, and Bingo. The VFD needs new equipment and updates to the current fire station. The current fire station is small and there is no land to expand. The VFD is also exploring the possibility of building a second fire station. The current fire station currently serves as the emergency shelter for the town. The town is currently working on a plan to alert



Sophia Town Hall

TABLE 8: COMMUNITY SERVICES PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| FIRE PROTECTION | 27.9% | 57.7% | 11.5% | 2.9% |
| POLICE PROTECTION | 19.6% | 37.3% | 29.4% | 13.7% |
| PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM | 22.7% | 50.5% | 21.6% | 5.2% |
| LIBRARY SERVICES | 33.3% | 48.6% | 13.3% | 4.8% |
| EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT | 10.5% | 40.0% | 43.2% | 6.3% |
| STORMWATER MANAGEMENT | 10.3% | 23.0% | 48.3% | 18.4% |
| RECYCLING | 4.2% | 11.6% | 23.2% | 61.1% |
| ANIMAL CONTROL | 3.9% | 18.4% | 26.2% | 51.5% |



Sophia VFD

and communicate with residents in the event of a natural disaster.

The police department has four (4) full-time and three (3) part-time staff. The department sponsors a citizen crime watch and Shop with Cop Program. Concerns of the police department include aging vehicles, need for better equipment, additional full-time trained officers and better patrolling of officers.

The provision of water and sewage is an essential public service. The Sophia sewage system covers 10 square miles and includes Sophia and Soak Creek. The town is working on extending sewage to Coal City to serve an additional 458 customers. With the proposed extension, the present treatment plan will be at capacity. Upgrades will need to be made to the existing plant or a new plant will need to be built. There is also a need for portable generators for power outages at the pumping stations.

Residents would like recycling opportunities located in town as shown on [Table 8: Community Services Public Survey Results](#). Currently there are no drop-off locations for recycling, the nearest location is in Independence. Cardboard can be recycled at Sophia-Soak Creek Elementary School.

There are other community services that are not provided by municipal government. Overhead electric utility lines and underground gas lines run throughout the town. Cable and internet infrastructure is also available for residents. The West Virginia Code also requires an analysis of the medical, cultural, community, social, and educational needs of current and future residents.

The Town of Sophia is fortunate to have Coal City Elementary School, Independence Middle School, and Independence High School within town boundaries. A new elementary school will be built in Sophia on Tank Hill that consolidates Sophia-Soak Creek, Crab Orchard and Lester Elementary Schools. A branch of the Raleigh County Library is located on Main Street in Sophia. The town is also close to several colleges, such as the New River Community and Technical College, University of Charleston in Beckley, Concord University in Beckley, and WVU Tech. Raleigh County Head Start manages a Pre-K program in Sophia. There are two private school in Sophia; the Sophia Christian Academy and House of Prayer Christian Academy. The Sophia Christian Academy serves students grades K-8 and House of Prayer Christian Academy serves students K-12.

Three hospitals are located within five miles of town; Beckley ARH Hospital, Beckley VA Medical Center, and Raleigh General Hospital. There is one family medical practice located in town limits.

The Sophia Library is located on First Street and is a branch of the Raleigh County Public Library System. The library is staffed with one (1) full time and two (2) part-time employees. Services offered by the library include preschool reading groups, children crafts, book groups, adult coloring circle, Medicare help, book groups, and Head Start story hour.

Residents of Sophia are fortunate to have cultural, community and social opportunities available in nearby Beckley. However, there is a need for additional community events in Sophia.

CRITICAL ISSUE #7: LACK OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Town of Sophia is governed under a mayor-council form of government. There are five members on council. A town recorder is also elected by residents. There are also several volunteer community organizations, such as the Blueprint Community and Crime Watch Program. However, these organizations are no longer active. A concern of members of the Planning Commission is the lack of real community involvement and the need for more people to serve to help improve the community. The Planning Commission needs to spearhead community development efforts.

As shown on [Table 9: Community Involvement Public Survey Results](#) the public is satisfied with how they receive information about town events and matters. However, there is room for improvement. While the town has a website, it is not updated regularly. The town should make an effort to make updates weekly and post important documents on the website for the public to review. A Facebook page was created for the Blueprint Program, but is also not updated regularly. The town may want to consider either updating the page more frequently or creating a town Facebook page that posts official business and updates to the general public.

Planning Commission members would also like to see more input from the youth in the community. During the planning process, the local Boy Scout troop attended an open house regarding the planning process and provided valuable input on the future of the town. The Planning Commission would like to continue to solicit this type of input.

Table 9: Community Involvement Public Survey Results

Please rate your level of satisfaction for the following:

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| Getting information about town events and matters | 6.9% | 33.7% | 43.0% | 16.8% |

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

After the seven (7) identified critical issues were analyzed, the Planning Commission then developed goals to address the issues identified during the planning process. The goals in the comprehensive plan are the long-term ambitions of the town. The goals define the steps that must be taken in order for the Town of Sophia to realize its vision.

Goal 1: Provide for Sustainable Business Growth and Tourism Development to Increase Economic Activities

Goal 2: Develop a Strategy to Address Housing Concerns to Revitalize Neighborhoods in Sophia

Goal 3: Create Recreational Facilities and Activities for All Age Groups

Goal 4: Protect the Small Town, Friendly Atmosphere of Sophia Through the Use of Land Use Planning Tools

Goal 5: Develop a Multi-Modal Transportation System that Provides Residents with a Variety of Transportation Options

Goal 6: Provide Efficient and Effective Community Services to All Residents and Business Owners

Goal 7: Increase Citizen Involvement Opportunities

The Planning Commission also developed objectives to reflect the specific issues identified during the planning process. The objectives answer the question “What are we trying to accomplish?” The objectives will assist the Town of Sophia in the creation of action steps to carry out the goals and ultimately the vision of the comprehensive plan. The objectives are detailed in [Chapter 3: Action Plan](#).

CHAPTER 3: ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION

Developing a comprehensive plan is often easier than actually implementing the plan and incorporating the plan's vision into everyday governmental functions. The town must use the plan when preparing budgets and planning for future projects. The comprehensive plan should be considered when developing the annual budget. The Town of Sophia's Planning Commission should use the plan to develop projects identified as priorities by the community and for grant applications.

Implementation of many projects detailed in the Action Plan will be costly for the Town of Sophia. However, there are many other funding sources the Town should consider when budgeting for implementation. A list of funding opportunities that should be considered for implementing the plan can be found in Appendix 4.

To further assist Sophia with implementation, case studies are also discussed. The case studies seek to give local elected officials a better idea of how other communities successfully completed similar projects. Local elected officials and citizens are encouraged to further research the case study communities and to even contact the communities to gain a better understanding of what can be done to address the specific issue.

REGIONAL PLANNING

Intergovernmental cooperation is essential in land use planning. Communities don't exist in a vacuum; they should engage in planning with surrounding jurisdictions as much as possible. Several of the recommendations in the Action Plan involve partnerships and cooperation between various organizations and forms of government.

The Town of Sophia realizes the importance of regional planning and has already established working relationships with other governments and organizations. The Town should continue their working relationships with Raleigh County and other organizations to help implement the Comprehensive Plan. The Town should consider working relationships with other communities in the county. Other communities can provide key insights on how they have implemented planning projects. The town already has a great working relationship with the Region 1 Planning and Development Council. The town should work together with Region 1 to

implement and fund projects detailed in the Comprehensive Plan. The town should also ask the City of Beckley for help in developed and implementing a stormwater ordinance. There could also be potential partnerships with the City of Beckley and Raleigh County in regards to code enforcement.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

One of the most important parts of the Action Plan is the Implementation Matrix. The matrix is very important for the Town as it details priorities, potential partners, estimate of probable costs, and potential funding sources.

With limited funds available, it is important to establish priorities. While many of the action steps are important to implement, only a few can be implemented at one time due to funding and staff capacity. Action steps are identified as either high, medium, or low priority. High priorities are those that were identified by the public and town as being the most important. A timeframe for each action item was also identified by the Planning Commission. Short-term projects are those that are expected to take between 1-3 years to complete. Mid-term projects are projects that are expected to take between 4-7 years to complete. Long-term projects will take the longest to complete and may still be in process when the time comes for the comprehensive plan to be updated, which is every 10 years.

Potential partners are important to implementation of the plan. Fortunately, many community groups are working to improve the Town. The Planning Commission should hold a meeting with all community groups, as well as Town Council, to kick-start the implementation of the plan and get stakeholders on the same page. The implementation matrix details probable costs, as well as funding sources. This is not an exhaustive list of funding sources, but a list of grants that are common for communities to consider. Probable costs are only estimates and are not accurate reflections of the total cost of a project.

The Planning Commission should use this implementation matrix to help begin implementation of the plan immediately after the plan is adopted by Town Council. The purpose of the implementation matrix is to help guide the Planning Commission during implementation, so that the plan does not sit on the shelf. The Planning Commission should also review the plan annually to determine the status of each project and any obstacles that have been encountered.

TOP FIVE (5) PRIORITIES

This comprehensive plan details several action items for the town to work on. While each action item has a corresponding priority level, the Planning Commission wanted to focus on five (5) key projects immediately, as shown below.

Critical Issue 1: Lack of Economic Development Opportunities

- Continue to engage local *businesses* to help revitalize *Sophia*

Critical Issue 2: Abandoned and Dilapidated Housing

- Apply for Home Rule status in order to enact regulations regarding abandoned and dilapidated buildings

Critical Issue 3: Need for Recreational Facilities and Activities

- Develop a rail trail to expand recreational opportunities for residents and visitors

Critical Issue 4: Lack of Land Use Planning

- Update the zoning ordinance to be consistent with the comprehensive plan

Critical Issue 5: Lack of Community Involvement

- Create a youth commission to solicit input from area youth

GOAL 1: PROVIDE FOR SUSTAINBLE BUSINESS GROWTH AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT TO INCREASE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Action Step 1: Continue to engage local businesses to help revitalize Sophia

A recommendation of the 2014 Blueprint Study was for the town to hold bi-monthly business group meetings on a regular basis. A group was formed but has since become in-active. The Planning Commission has recently begun the process of rejuvenating the merchants group.

The group's main priorities should be marketing and branding the businesses in town, networking, and business communication. The group should also establish a partnership with town government to help with marketing efforts.

Objectives

1. Support and market existing businesses
2. Improve the appearance of Sophia
3. Develop an online presence to better market Sophia to visitors and provide information to existing residents
4. Increase the tax base to support governmental functions
5. Capitalize on tourism opportunities

Action Step 2: Create a business directory to highlight business and services

One of the first priorities of the Merchants Group should be the creation of a business directory. While the town's official website discusses local attractions, the discussion is general and no specific businesses and contact information is given. The business directory should be posted on the town's website, as well as any future marketing materials created for the town.

Case Study

The Town of Delbarton, West Virginia's official website includes a business directory. The business directory is broken up into different categories (arts, entertainment, restaurants, shopping, etc.) and lists the address of each business, general information and hours of operation.

<http://delbartonwv.us/business-directory/>

Action Step 3: Create a beautification committee to improve the appearance of Main Street and neighborhoods throughout Sophia

A beautification committee should be created by Town Council to oversee beautification and revitalization efforts in Sophia. If the town does not want to create another board, the Planning Commission could also serve as the beautification committee. Activities of the board could include landscaping in the downtown (hanging baskets, potted plants, etc.), gateway signage, general signage, façade improvement, clean up days, and other streetscape (benches, lighting, etc.) projects. The committee should have the youth involved in beautification efforts, an example would be painting of a mural in the downtown.

Case Study

The City of Bluefield Beautification Committee was established to enhance the aesthetic beauty of the city. Projects undertaken by the committee include the construction of a sculpture at a major intersection in the city, erection of a new welcome sign, installation of a clock in front of the courthouse, and theme flags throughout the city. Projects are financed by private donors, grants and fund raisers.



Action Step 4: Create signage to direct visitors to the Boy Scout Cabin

The Boy Scout cabin is a wonderful opportunity the town needs to capitalize upon. Currently there is no signage alerting residents and visitors of the presence of the Boy Scout cabin. Sophia's prime location near major interstates could potentially draw visitors into the town if there was signage directing them to the Boy Scout Cabin. The Planning Commission is in the process of securing permission from Town Council to appoint a Scout Cabin Steering Committee. The committee will be responsible for how to bring awareness to the cabin and also to give the local boy scouts an opportunity to help with maintenance of the cabin.

Action Step 5: Develop a master site plan for the Boy Scout Cabin to determine the best use for the site

The Town had one time had a vision for the Boy Scout Cabin and surrounding property to be a town park. The town should re-visit this idea by developing a master site plan for the site. A master site plan will determine the highest and best use of the site and detail potential costs and funding sources.

Action Step 6: Update the existing town website to include current events and important information

The Town has a great website that includes general information about the town. However, the website is not updated on a regular basis and has not been updated in the past year. The Town should appoint a staff person to update the website on a regular basis and also include more information regarding town council meetings (agendas, meeting minutes) and other boards and commissions. Community events, specific business information, and local attractions should also be included.

Action Step 7: Hold more community events and festivals to attract visitors

Community events and festivals are a great way to install community pride and attract visitors. The following events are held annually in the city: annual Christmas Parade, Fall Festival, Gospel Nights, and Trunk or Treat. The Planning Commission is in the process of trying to hold a community festival in October in town. The festival would benefit the marching band and the town's Shop with a Cop program.

Events and festivals should be promoted so that the public is aware of opportunities available. All events and festivals should be listed on the town's website and publicized in the local newspaper. Ideas for events and festivals include a street party, movie nights, and farmers market.

Case Study

The City of Weston has established a Fairs and Festival Committee to oversee the development of activities in the downtown. Events organized by the committee include the annual street fair, Weston's Amazing Week (week long activities such as farmers market, pet contest, ice cream social, history challenge, movie night at the park), Small Business Saturday, Annual Make it Shine (community clean-up day), co-sponsor of 4th of July celebrations with local VFD, Halloween Event, Christmas Parade, and Chocolate Lovers event.



Action Step 8: Determine the feasibility of a tourist train through the winding gulf coalfields

Potential exists for a tourist train throughout the southern portion of the state, with Sophia being one of the locations for a stop. Letters of support have been received from numerous municipalities and counties discussed in [Chapter 2: Needs Assessment](#). The train would most likely need to utilize the active Norfolk Southern rail line. A point person needs to be established for this project and that person should contact Norfolk Southern to determine the feasibility of a tourist train. Local and state representatives should also be contacted for their help in setting up a meeting with Norfolk Southern.

Action Step 9: Consider annexation to increase the tax base

To accommodate new development and increase the tax base the Town of Sophia would like to annex lands as discussed in [Chapter 2: Needs Assessment](#). High priorities for annexation are shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#) in Chapter 2 and include the areas surrounding Route 16 and the Coalfields Expressway. The City should coordinate with Raleigh County on the annexation of lands. This would be a great opportunity to promote regional planning between the County and Town.

GOAL 2: DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO ADDRESS HOUSING CONCERNS TO REVITALIZE NEIGHBORHOODS IN SOPHIA

Action Step 1: Apply for home rule status in order to enact regulations regarding abandoned and dilapidated buildings

The Home Rule Program has been instrumental in helping municipalities deal with abandoned and dilapidated buildings. The Home Rule Program allows municipalities to experiment with ideas currently not permitted via statewide code. The town should consider applying for Home Rule to deal with specific problems relating to abandoned and dilapidated buildings, as well as other issues. If the town is awarded Home Rule Status, local elected officials should consider the use of on-site citations, which would allow city officials to issue citations to a property owner for sanitation and nuisance violations, without the need to go to court.

Objectives

1. Enact specific regulations to ensure quality housing
2. Develop programs to install community pride and address property maintenance issues

Action Step 2: Consider applying public pressure to address neglected properties

The town should consider adopting a policy that publicizes the most notorious property violators and repeat offenders. The hope is that it will force the property owner to clean the property up.

Case Study

In Fayette County, the Building Department will place a Notice of Violation sign on problem properties. The Notice of Violation sign includes the property owner's name and the property's address, and states that the building is in violation of the Fayette County Dilapidated Building and Beautification Ordinance. The Building Department also sends a letter to the landowner. These measures are taken only after the building has been designated dilapidated by the County's Beautification Committee. (Source: WV LEAP Toolkit, 2015)

Action Step 3: Develop a home improvement contest to improve property appearance

A Pride Campaign should be developed to increase the pride of local residents and business owners by improving the appearance of homes, as well as the overall appearance of the town. The town or beautification committee should sponsor a monthly yard and home contest where residents can enter and win a prize. This type of contest would provide motivation to residents to improve their property. The municipalities could ask local businesses to sponsor the contest by donating prizes, free meals to area restaurants, gifts, etc. While this type of contest would typically be only held in the summer, the municipalities could extend it into the holiday season by sponsoring a community Christmas decorating contest, as well.

Case Study

In the City of Weston, the city holds an annual clean-up week where the Street Department picks stuff up that residents want to get rid of. Community groups also team up to clean the city.

In the City of Elkins, a Make it Shine contest rewards residents \$300 for cleaning and improving property within city limits. Participants must enter before and after photos. Prizes are also available for runner ups.

GOAL 3: CREATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGE GROUPS

Action Step 1: Develop a rail trail

An abandoned CSX railroad right-of-way in Sophia could serve as a rail trail. The town needs to first determine if the corridor actually is, or is in the process of, being abandoned. The status of abandonment can be determined by either contracting CSX and/or contacting WV DOT. Research may also be needed to determine ownership. If the development of a rail trail is feasible, the next step would be to purchase the corridor or obtaining an easement or securing a donation of the corridor. As the development of a rail trail is a lengthy and time consuming process, the town should work with Raleigh County, Region 1 Planning and Development Council, and West Virginia Rails-to-Trails Council.

Objectives

1. Expand recreational opportunities for residents and visitors

Action Step 2: Determine the feasibility of purchasing the Sophia Soak Creek Elementary School if the school closes to provide additional recreational activities

The town should start working with the Raleigh Board of Education so that they have the first option to purchase the Sophia Soak Creek Elementary School if it would happen to close in the future.

GOAL 4: PROTECT THE SMALL TOWN, FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE OF SOPHIA THROUGH THE USE OF LAND USE PLANNING TOOLS

Action Step 1: Update the zoning ordinance to be consistent with the comprehensive plan

As the zoning ordinance was enacted in the 1990s, amendments are needed so that the ordinance is in compliance with the 2004 changes to the West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A.

The zoning map should also be revised to reflect the vision of the future land use map shown in [Chapter 2: Needs Assessment](#).

Objectives

1. Update and enforce land use regulations
2. Participate in flood mitigation efforts

Action Step 2: Take part of the Community Rating System through FEMA to realize cost savings on homeowner flood insurance

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS) program recognizes communities' floodplain management efforts and discounts floodplain insurance rates based on the type of floodplain management activity completed. The town should consider participating in this program in the future.

Action Step 3: Enforce existing ordinances and regulations to address recurring problems

While the town has many different ordinances and regulations to address issues and concerns, currently they are not being enforced. The town recently has hired a third party to act as the code/zoning officer. The town should work with new code/zoning officer to ensure all ordinances are being enforced and complaints are being addressed.

GOAL 5: DEVELOP A MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES RESIDENTS WITH A VARIETY OF TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Action Step 1: Continue to work with New River Transit to expand daily service to Sophia

The Town of Sophia should lobby for a bus stop on a fixed schedule in Sophia. Currently the New River Transit Raleigh West Route only stops if the rider calls ahead and is only available two days a week.

Objectives

1. Expand public transportation
2. Repair and construct sidewalks

Action Step 2: Market the existing bus route to Sophia to all residents

The Planning Commission feels that residents do not take advantage of the public transportation that is available because they are unaware of the route. Marketing of the service is needed to residents. The town should contact New River Transit to work with them on a marketing plan. Simple ways to get the word out could include fliers and mailers. A bus shelter should also be considered in the downtown business district.

Action Step 3: Develop a sidewalk program to prioritize the repair and construction of sidewalks

The town should develop a sidewalk program to help facilitate such repairs as well as the construction of new sidewalks. A point system could prioritize and establish which sidewalks should be repaired or constructed first. The point system would take into account the following factors:

- Street's proximity to parks, local government facilities, schools, businesses, etc.
- Topography of the street
- Connectivity with other sidewalks
- Average Daily Traffic (ADT)
- Street Width
- Conflicts with other utilities
- Available right-of-way

The Town should then repair and/or construct sidewalks on the streets that received the highest amount of points based on the factors above. The Town should also develop maps showing existing sidewalks, sidewalks in need of repair, and potential areas for new sidewalks.

Priority areas listed by residents for sidewalk improvement or sidewalk construction are Main Street, 1st Street, Virginia Street, and West Main Street. There is also a need for a sidewalk to GoMart. All new sidewalks should meet ADA requirements.

Case Study

Orrville City Council requires installation of sidewalks along streets that score enough points to warrant sidewalks. Points are awarded as follows:

- Need to connect areas with existing sidewalks in order to provide safe walkways for pedestrian traffic
- Street's proximity to schools, business districts, apartment complexes, or senior citizen housing
 - Topography of the street
 - Citizens in the area have petitioned for sidewalks
 - Street is an arterial or collector street
 - To eliminate the necessity of busing school children

The City pays 50 percent of the installation cost if senior citizen or handicap households meet the income guidelines for low-moderate income. There is also a cap on the maximum cost per lineal foot to be borne by each property owner.

Source: City of Orrville (www.orrville.com)

GOAL 6: PROVIDE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY SERVICES TO ALL RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS

Action Step 1: Determine the feasibility of constructing a second fire station in Crab Orchard

A second fire station would help the town be better able to respond to emergencies. One possible location for a second fire station would be the old Crab Orchard Elementary School that will close after the new elementary school is built.

Objectives

1. Enhance community safety
2. Ensure the current infrastructure can serve the needs of current and future residents
3. Increase the capacity for municipal service delivery

Action Step 2: Explore the possibility of moving town hall

The sanitation board for the Town of Sophia recently purchased a former funeral home building as an investment property for the future. There is additional space in the building that town government could utilize. The town should explore the possibility of combining operations as the building is conveniently located in the downtown and sufficient parking is available.

Action Step 3: Construct a new waste water treatment plant

The current sewer plant is over 30 years old and is near or at capacity. A high priority of the town should be redesigning and upgrading the plant. The town should work with Regional VII Planning and Development Council (RPDC) to find funding to complete this project.

Action Step 4: Reactivate the Crime Watch Program

The town at one time had an active crime watch program. Town Council and the police department should work together to reactivate the program.

Case Study

The City of Dunbar, WV has a very active neighborhood watch program that encourages residents to report suspicious behavior to the police. The program also provides an opportunity for residents to get to know the police and their neighbors better. The program has an active Facebook Page that details meeting dates and other information to keep everyone informed. Meetings are typically held month and address a variety of topics.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/DunbarNeighborhoodWatch/>

Action Step 5: Continue to support the police department and purchase new equipment as needed

The town should also continue their support of the police department by assisting the Department with funding requests and grant applications. The police department is in need of additional equipment, full-time officers, and newer vehicles. The town should consider a capital improvements plan to help budget new equipment.

Action Step 6: Buy portable generators for all pumping stations

If an outage were to occur, there are no portable generators to supply electricity to the town's pumping stations. Ideally the town would like to install permanent generators, however trailer mounted diesel powered generators would also be sufficient.

Action Step 7: Develop a plan to alert and communicate to residents in the event of an emergency or natural disaster

Emergency management should be a priority of the town. A plan for alerting residents in case of an emergency also needs to be established. The town should consider the use of text messaging alerts, email alerts, and posts online on the town website to let people know what is going on. An emergency preparedness plan should also be developed. Municipal organization during an emergency or natural disaster should also be discussed.

Action Step 8: Consider hiring an executive assistant/administrative assistant to help with the day to day functions of government

The Town of Sophia operates under a mayor-council form of government. The mayor and council volunteer their time to help run operations in Sophia. Sophia is in need of an executive assistant or administrative assistant to help with the day-to-day operations, apply for grants, implement policies, and advise town council on important matters.

GOAL 7: INCREASE CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Action Step 1: Create a youth commission to solicit input from area youth

During the planning process the youth were asked for input on the future of Sophia. The local Boy Scout Group had many great ideas. Developing a youth board in Sophia ensures that the youth have the opportunity to present their ideas and discuss problems and needs, as well as promote youth involvement in the community.

Objective

1. Encourage an interactive relationship between residents and local government

Case Study

The Greater Morgantown Area Youth Advisory Committee make recommendations to various boards and city council regarding youth involvement in parks and civic engagement.

Action Step 2: Develop a town Facebook page to provide information and updates to residents and visitors

The Town should also consider developing an official Town of Sophia Facebook page. Facebook is an efficient way to get information out to as many people as possible. Many people are using social media to stay informed rather than reading the local newspaper.

Case Study

The City of Elkins has an official Facebook page to help inform residents of current events and issues within the City. The page is maintained by the clerk's office. Currently the page has over 2,700 likes.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

| Recommendation | Priority | Timeframe | Reference page # | Responsible Party | Recommended Partners | Estimated Costs | Funding Sources |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Goal 1: Provide for sustainable business growth and tourism development to increase economic opportunities | | | | | | | |
| Continue to engage local businesses through a merchants group to help revitalize Sophia | High | Short-Term | 33 | Local businesses | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Volunteer Time | N/A |
| Create a business directory to highlight businesses and services | High | Mid-Term | 33 | Local businesses | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Volunteer Time | N/A |
| Create a beautification committee to improve the appearance of Main Street and neighborhoods throughout Sophia | High | Mid-Term | 34 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission, Sophia Merchants Group | Staff and Volunteer Time | General Fund; Grant Sources |
| Create signage to direct visitors to the Boy Scout Cabin | Medium | Short-Term | 34 | Town of Sophia | Boy Scouts of America; Raleigh County CVB | Dependent on types of signage | Grant Sources |
| Develop a master site plan for the Boy Scout Cabin to determine the best use for the site | Low | Long-Term | 35 | Town of Sophia | Boys Scouts of America | Dependent on scope of site plan | Grant Sources |
| Update the existing town website to include current events and important information | High | Short-Term | 35 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Staff Time and/or Consultant Fees | General Fund |
| Hold more community events and festivals to attract visitors | High | Short-Term | 35 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Staff and Volunteer Time | General Fund; Donations |
| Determine the feasibility of a tourist train through the winding golf coalfields | High | Long-Term | 36 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Dependent on scope of project | Grant Sources |
| Consider annexation to increase the tax base | High | Long-Term | 36 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Staff time; attorney fees | General Fund |
| Goal 2: Develop a strategy to address housing concerns to revitalize neighborhoods in Sophia | | | | | | | |
| Apply for home rule status in order to enact regulations regarding abandoned and dilapidated buildings | High | Short-Term | 37 | Town of Sophia | WVU Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic | Staff time, attorney fees | General Fund |
| Consider applying public pressure to address neglected properties | High | Short-Term | 37 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Staff and Volunteer Time | General Fund |
| Develop a home improvement contest to improve property appearance | High | Mid-Term | 38 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Staff and Volunteer Time | General Fund; Donations |
| Goal 3: Create recreational facilities and activities for all age groups | | | | | | | |
| Develop a rail trail | High | Short-Term | 39 | Town of Sophia | Beaver Coal Company | Dependent on scope of project | General Fund; Grant Sources; Donations |
| Determine the feasibility of purchasing the Sophia Soak Creek Elementary School if the school closes to provide additional recreational activities | High | Short-Term | 39 | Town of Sophia | Raleigh County Board of Education | Dependent on cost of building | General Fund |

| Recommendation | Priority | Timeframe | Reference page # | Responsible Party | Recommended Partners | Estimated Costs | Funding Sources |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------|------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Goal 4: Protect the small town, friendly atmosphere of Sophia through the use of land use planning tools | | | | | | | |
| Update the zoning ordinance to be consistent with the comprehensive plan | High | Short-Term | 40 | Town of Sophia | WVU Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic | \$25,000 | General Fund |
| Take part of the Community Rating System through FEMA to realize cost savings on homeowner flood insurance | High | Mid-Term | 40 | Town of Sophia | FEMA | Staff Time | General Fund |
| Enforce existing ordinances and regulations to address recurring problems | High | Short-Term | 40 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Staff Time | General Fund |
| Goal 5: Develop a multi-modal transportation system that provides residents with a variety of transportation options. | | | | | | | |
| Continue to work with New River Transit to expand daily service to Sophia | High | Short-Term | 41 | Town of Sophia | New River Transit | Staff Time | N/A |
| Market the existing bus route to Sophia to all residents | High | Short-Term | 41 | Town of Sophia | New River Transit | Staff Time | N/A |
| Develop a sidewalk program to prioritize the repair and construction of sidewalks | Medium | Mid-Term | 41 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Dependent on scope of project | General Fund; Grant Sources |
| Goal 6: Provide efficient and effective community services to all residents and business owners | | | | | | | |
| Determine the feasibility of constructing a second fire station in Crab Orchard | Medium | Mid-Term | 43 | Town of Sophia Volunteer Fire Department | Town of Sophia | Dependent on scope of project | General Fund; Grant Sources |
| Explore the possibility of moving town hall | High | Short-Term | 43 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Sanitation Board | Dependent on scope of project | General Fund; Grant Sources |
| Construct a new waste water treatment plant | High | Short-Term | 43 | Town of Sophia Sanitation Board | Town of Sophia | Dependent on scope of project | Grant Sources |
| Reactivate the Crime Watch Program | High | Short-Term | 43 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Police Department | Volunteer Time | General Fund |
| Continue to support the police department and purchase new equipment as needed | High | Short-Term | 44 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Police Department | Dependent on cost of equipment needed | General Fund; Grant Sources |
| Buy portable generators for all pumping stations | Medium | Mid-Term | 44 | Town of Sophia Sanitation Board | Town of Sophia | Dependent on cost of equipment needed | General Fund; Grant Sources |
| Develop a plan to alert and communicate to residents in the event of an emergency or natural disaster | High | Long-Term | 44 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Volunteer Fire Department, Town of Sophia Police Department, Raleigh County Office of Emergency Services | Dependent on cost of equipment needed | General Fund; Grant Sources |
| Consider hiring an executive assistant/administrative assistant to help with the day to day functions of government | High | Mid-Term | 45 | Town of Sophia | N/A | Salary/benefits for position | General Fund |
| Goal 7: Increase citizen involvement opportunities | | | | | | | |
| Create a youth commission to solicit input from area youth | High | Short-Term | 46 | Town of Sophia | Raleigh County Board of Education | Volunteer Time | General Fund |
| Develop a town Facebook page to provide information and updates to residents and visitors | High | Short-Term | 46 | Town of Sophia | Town of Sophia Planning Commission | Volunteer Time | General Fund |

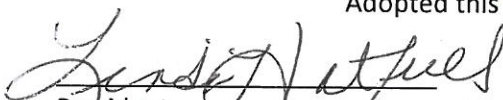
APPENDIX 1: PUBLIC INPUT PROCEDURES

Town of Sophia, West Virginia
Planning Commission
Comprehensive Plan Public Input Procedures


Pursuant to the requirements of W. Va. Code § 8A-3-6(c), the Planning Commission of the Town of Sophia, West Virginia (hereinafter "Town") hereby adopts the following procedures to encourage and promote public participation in the drafting of the Town's comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan is being drafted pursuant to W. Va. Code § 8A.

- (1) Under W. Va. Code § 8A-3-6(b), once the Planning Commission has completed a draft of the comprehensive plan, and before submitting a plan to the Town Council for adoption, the Planning Commission must give proper notice and hold a public hearing on the draft of the comprehensive plan.
 - a. More particularly, under W. Va. Code § 8A-3-6(b), at least thirty(30) days prior to the date set for the public hearing, the Planning Commission will publish a notice of the date, time and place of the public hearing as a Class I legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty-nine of the West Virginia Code. The notice shall run in a general circulating publication, the publication area will be the area that will be covered by the comprehensive plan.
 - b. In addition to the requirements at W. Va. Code § 8A-3-6(b), above, the Planning Commission will publish its draft of the comprehensive plan at least thirty (30) days prior to the public hearing. Specifically, the Planning Commission will post hardcopies for public review at Sophia Town Hall.
- (2) The Planning Commission will request input from governing bodies and units of governments that may be affected by the adoption of the comprehensive plan.
- (3) Public notice of Planning Commission meetings will be given pursuant to the West Virginia Open Governmental Proceedings Act, where applicable.
- (4) No provision herein shall be construed as limiting the Planning Commission's ability to engage in additional public participation efforts as the Planning Commission deems appropriate. No provision herein shall prohibit the Planning Commission from amending these procedures.

Adopted this 26 day of JULY, 2017.



President



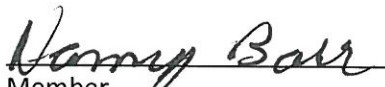
Vice-President



Member



Member

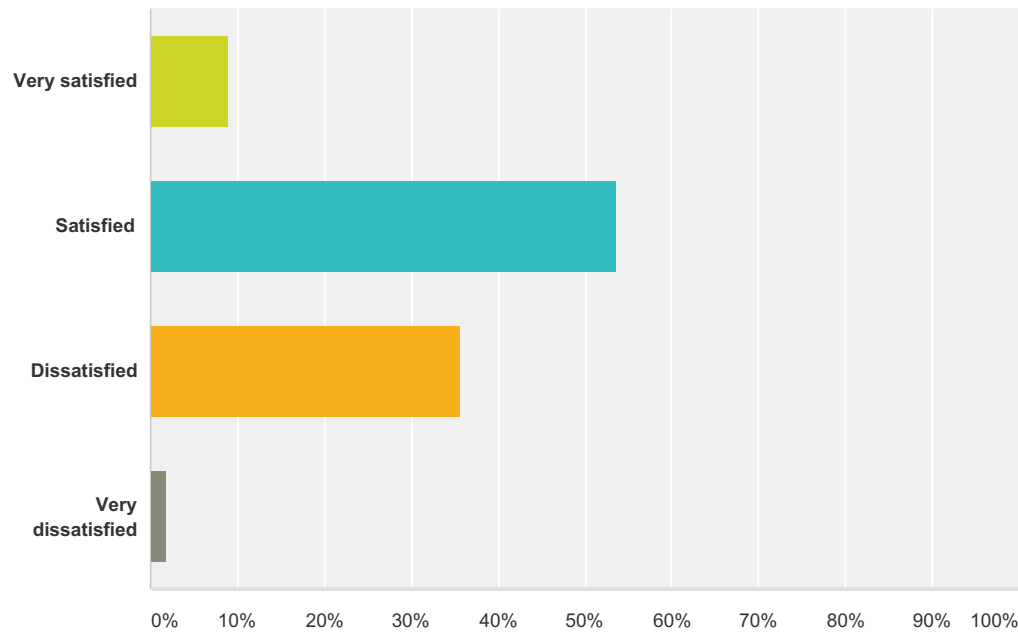


Member

APPENDIX 2: ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Q1 How do you feel about the quality of life in Sophia?

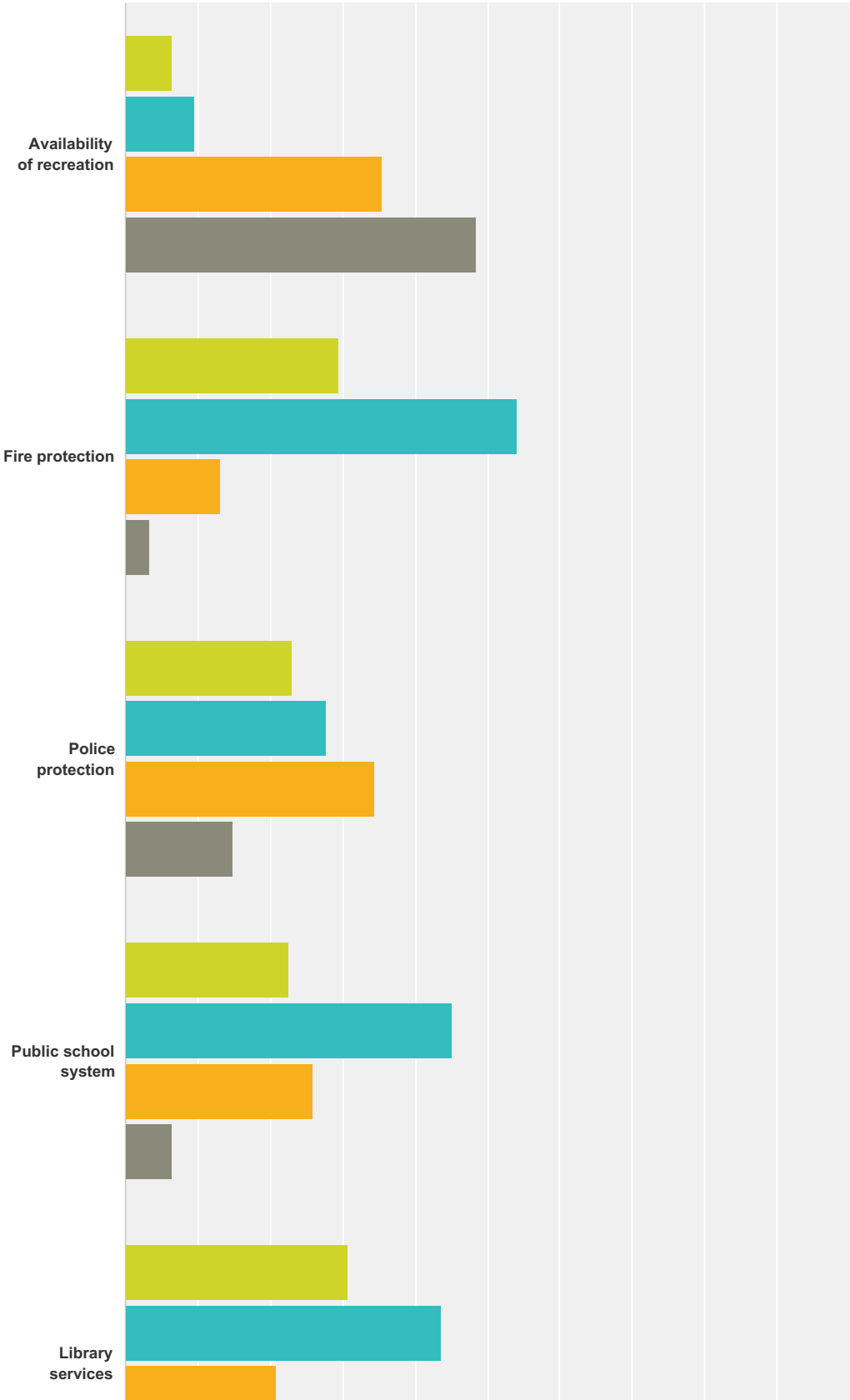
Answered: 56 Skipped: 9

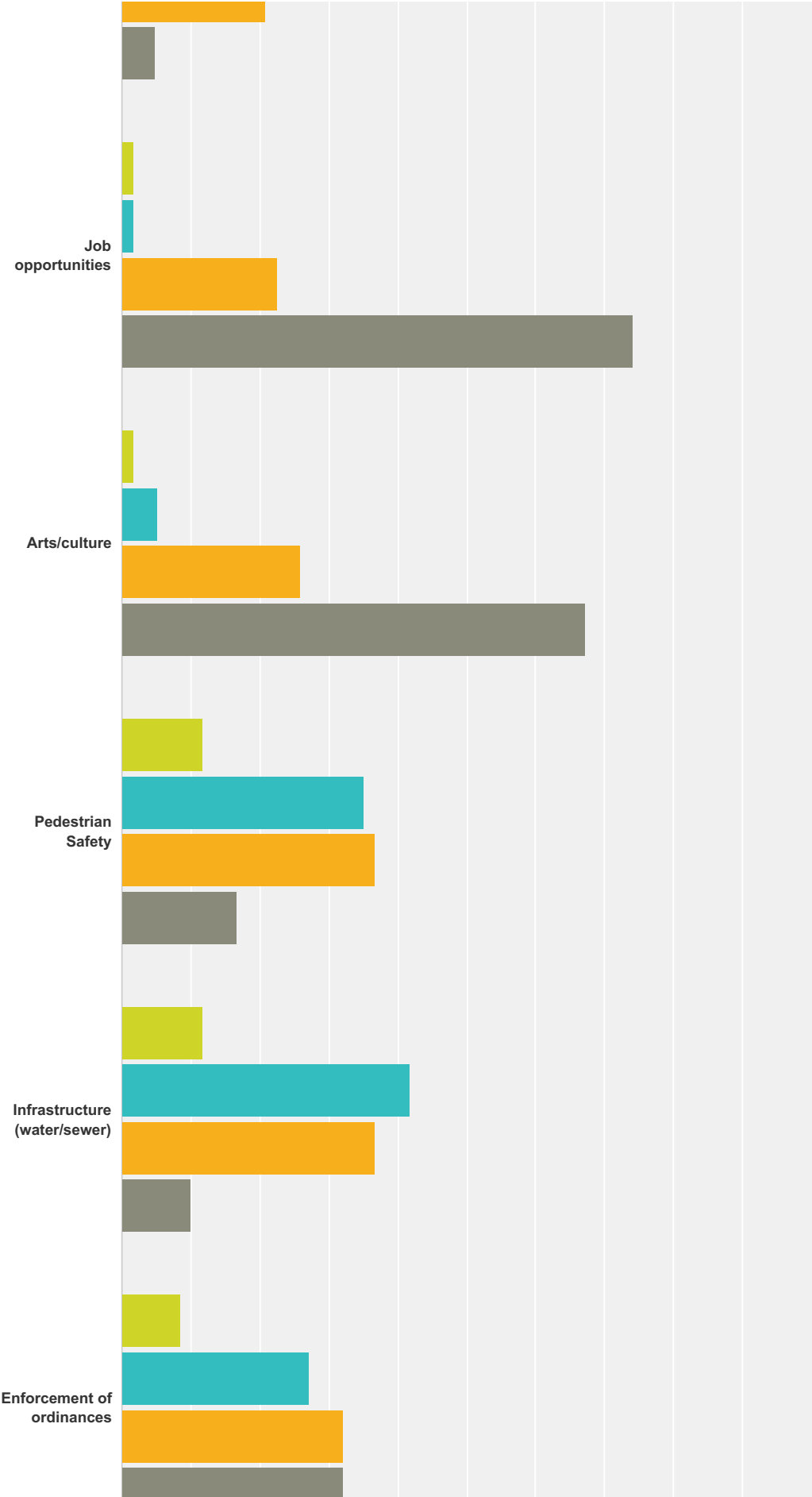


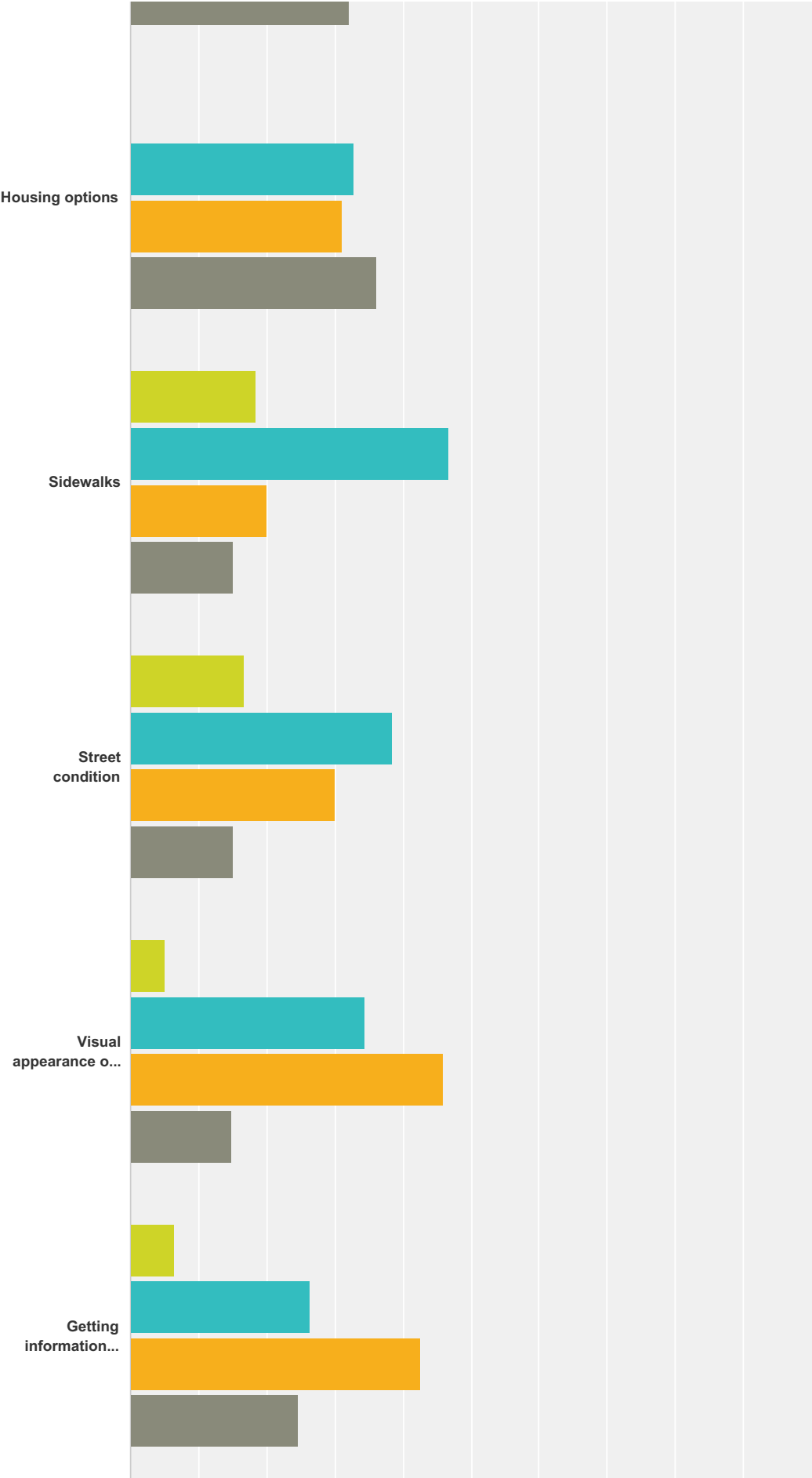
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-------------------|-----------|----|
| Very satisfied | 8.93% | 5 |
| Satisfied | 53.57% | 30 |
| Dissatisfied | 35.71% | 20 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1.79% | 1 |
| Total | | 56 |

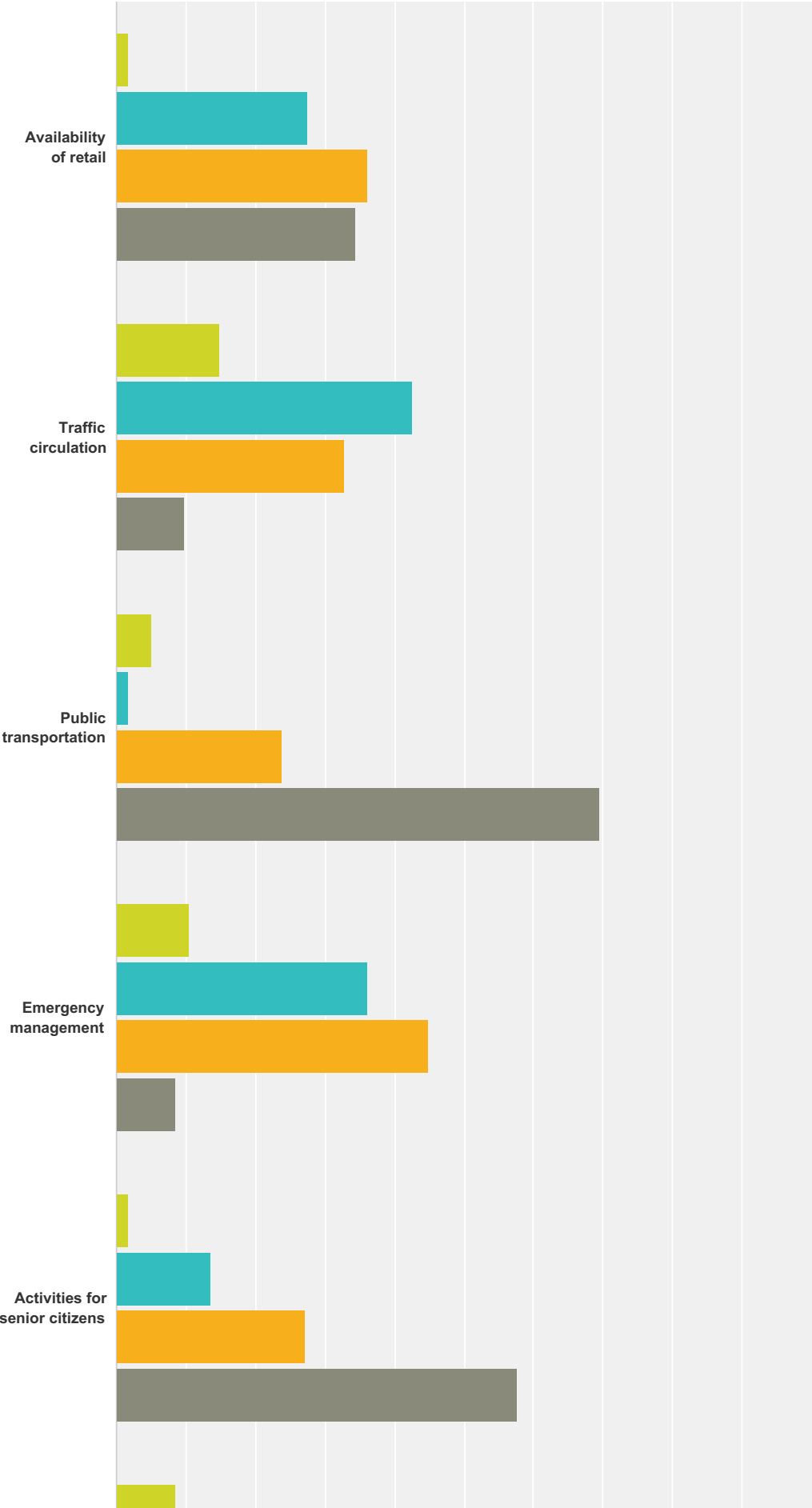
Q2 Please rate your level of satisfaction for each of the following:

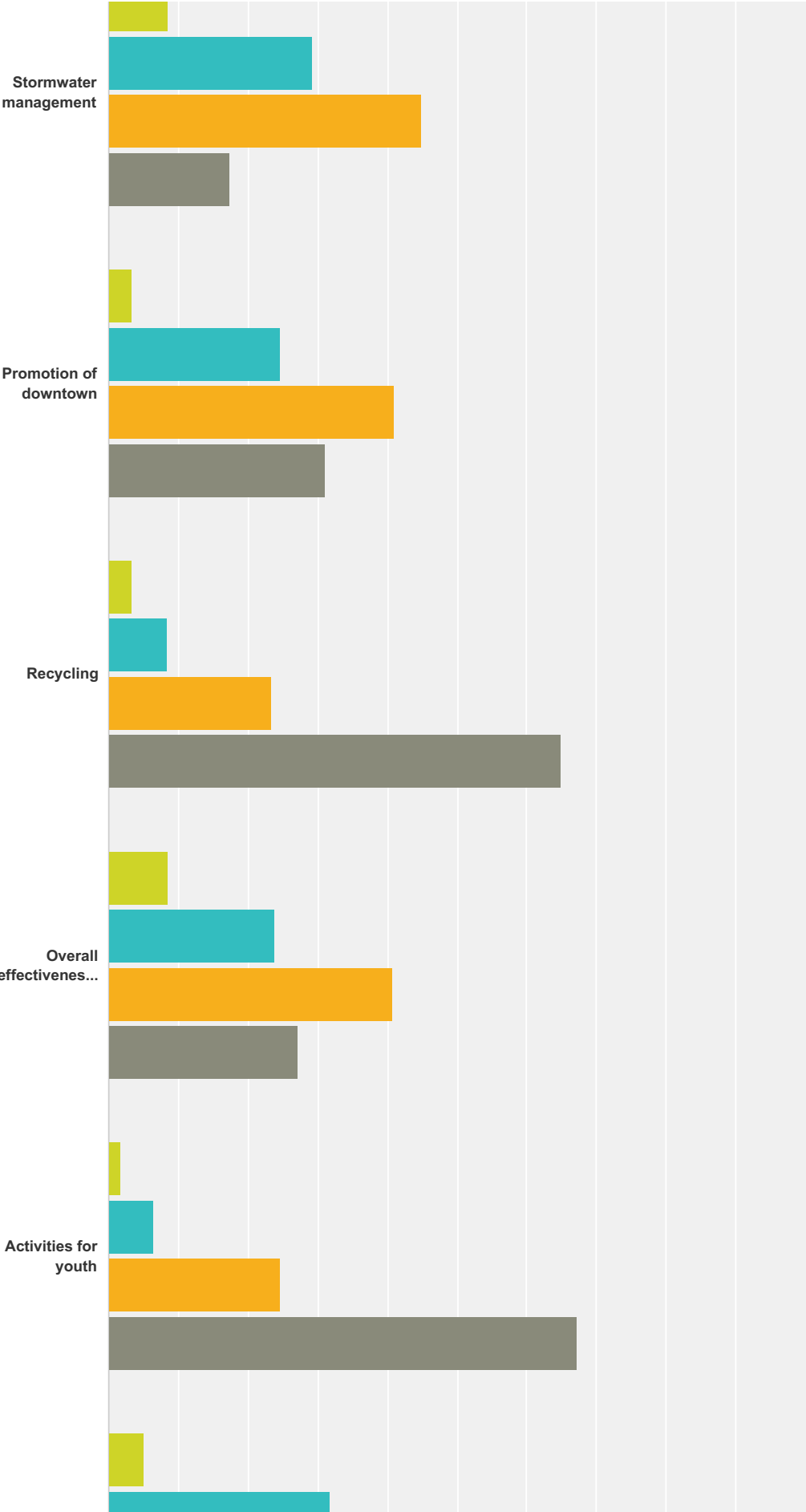
Answered: 63 Skipped: 2

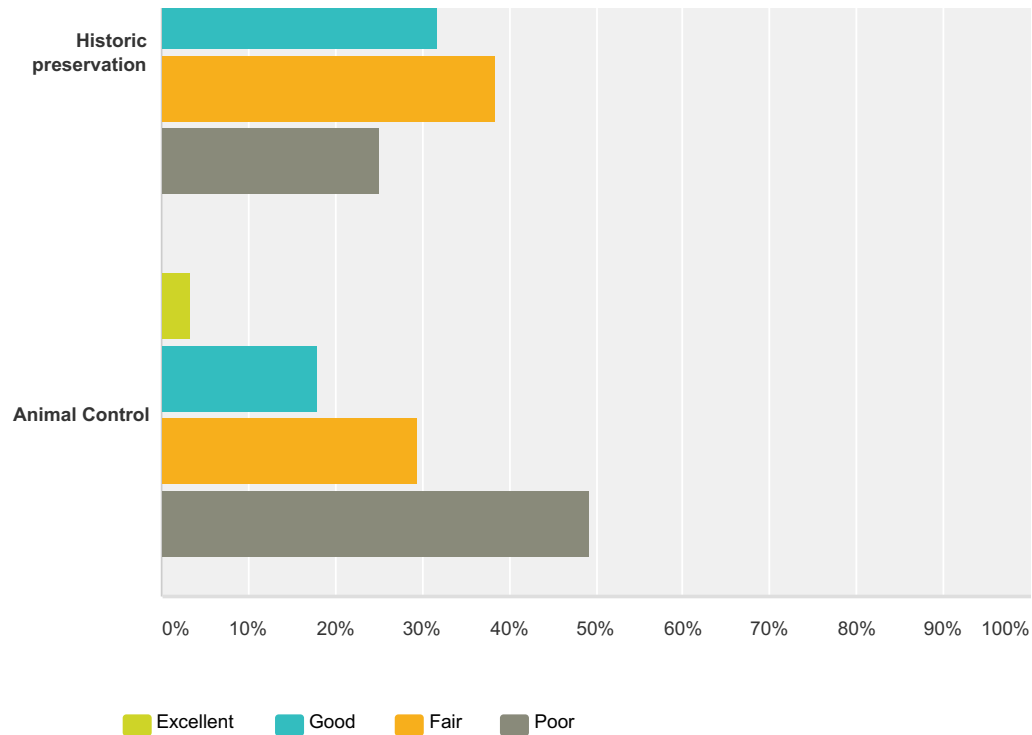










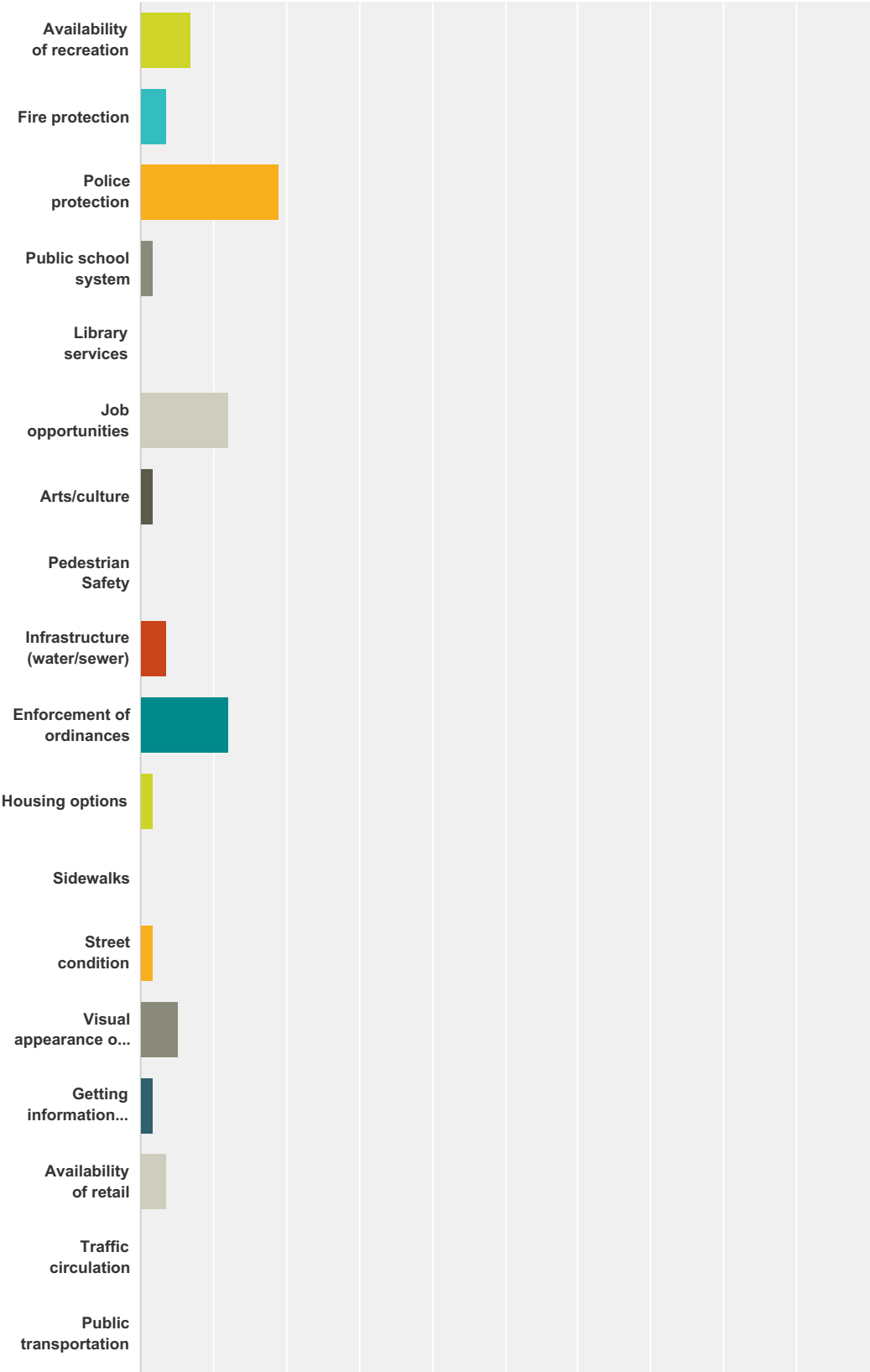


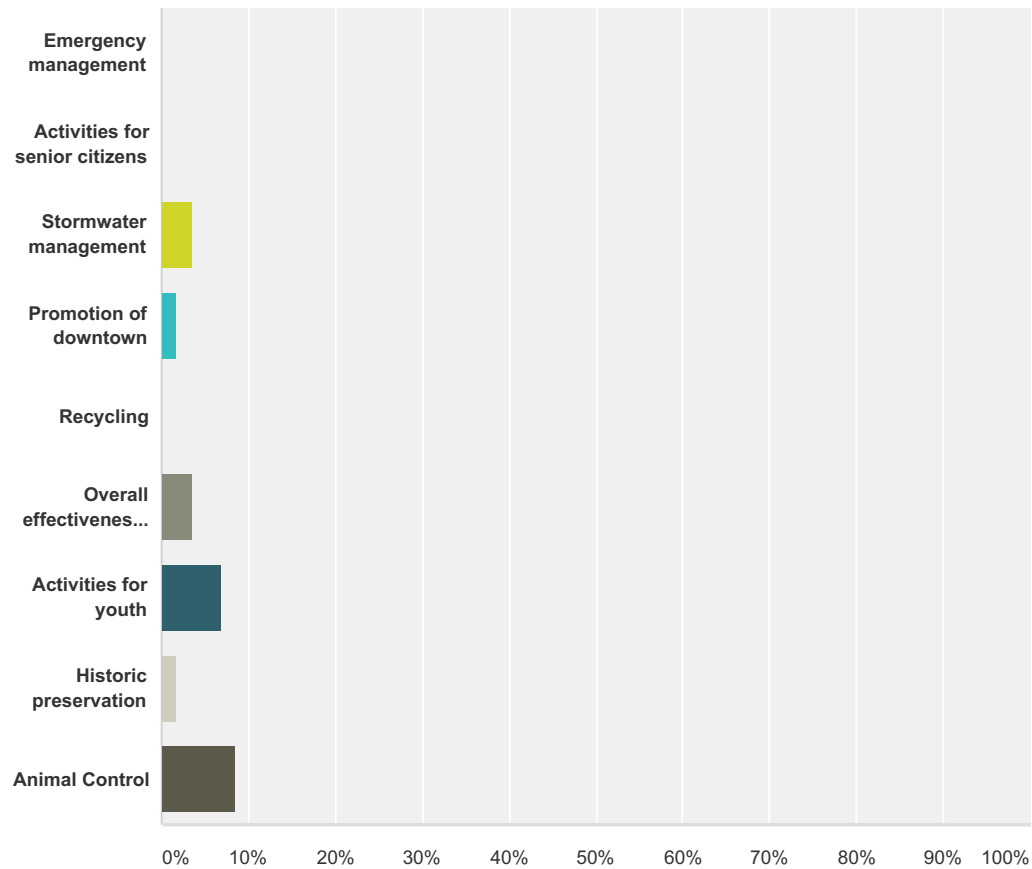
| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Total |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Availability of recreation | 6.45% 4 | 9.68% 6 | 35.48% 22 | 48.39% 30 | 62 |
| Fire protection | 29.51% 18 | 54.10% 33 | 13.11% 8 | 3.28% 2 | 61 |
| Police protection | 22.95% 14 | 27.87% 17 | 34.43% 21 | 14.75% 9 | 61 |
| Public school system | 22.58% 14 | 45.16% 28 | 25.81% 16 | 6.45% 4 | 62 |
| Library services | 30.65% 19 | 43.55% 27 | 20.97% 13 | 4.84% 3 | 62 |
| Job opportunities | 1.61% 1 | 1.61% 1 | 22.58% 14 | 74.19% 46 | 62 |
| Arts/culture | 1.72% 1 | 5.17% 3 | 25.86% 15 | 67.24% 39 | 58 |
| Pedestrian Safety | 11.67% 7 | 35.00% 21 | 36.67% 22 | 16.67% 10 | 60 |
| Infrastructure (water/sewer) | 11.67% 7 | 41.67% 25 | 36.67% 22 | 10.00% 6 | 60 |
| Enforcement of ordinances | 8.47% 5 | 27.12% 16 | 32.20% 19 | 32.20% 19 | 59 |
| Housing options | 0.00% 0 | 32.79% 20 | 31.15% 19 | 36.07% 22 | 61 |
| Sidewalks | 18.33% 11 | 46.67% 28 | 20.00% 12 | 15.00% 9 | 60 |
| Street condition | 16.67% 10 | 38.33% 23 | 30.00% 18 | 15.00% 9 | 60 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----|
| Visual appearance of Sophia | 4.92% 3 | 34.43% 21 | 45.90% 28 | 14.75% 9 | 61 |
| Getting information about Town events and matters | 6.56% 4 | 26.23% 16 | 42.62% 26 | 24.59% 15 | 61 |
| Availability of retail | 1.72% 1 | 27.59% 16 | 36.21% 21 | 34.48% 20 | 58 |
| Traffic circulation | 14.75% 9 | 42.62% 26 | 32.79% 20 | 9.84% 6 | 61 |
| Public transportation | 5.08% 3 | 1.69% 1 | 23.73% 14 | 69.49% 41 | 59 |
| Emergency management | 10.34% 6 | 36.21% 21 | 44.83% 26 | 8.62% 5 | 58 |
| Activities for senior citizens | 1.69% 1 | 13.56% 8 | 27.12% 16 | 57.63% 34 | 59 |
| Stormwater management | 8.62% 5 | 29.31% 17 | 44.83% 26 | 17.24% 10 | 58 |
| Promotion of downtown | 3.28% 2 | 24.59% 15 | 40.98% 25 | 31.15% 19 | 61 |
| Recycling | 3.33% 2 | 8.33% 5 | 23.33% 14 | 65.00% 39 | 60 |
| Overall effectiveness of government | 8.47% 5 | 23.73% 14 | 40.68% 24 | 27.12% 16 | 59 |
| Activities for youth | 1.64% 1 | 6.56% 4 | 24.59% 15 | 67.21% 41 | 61 |
| Historic preservation | 5.00% 3 | 31.67% 19 | 38.33% 23 | 25.00% 15 | 60 |
| Animal Control | 3.28% 2 | 18.03% 11 | 29.51% 18 | 49.18% 30 | 61 |

Q3 Of the things listed above, what is the one that you feel is MOST important for Sophia to improve?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 7



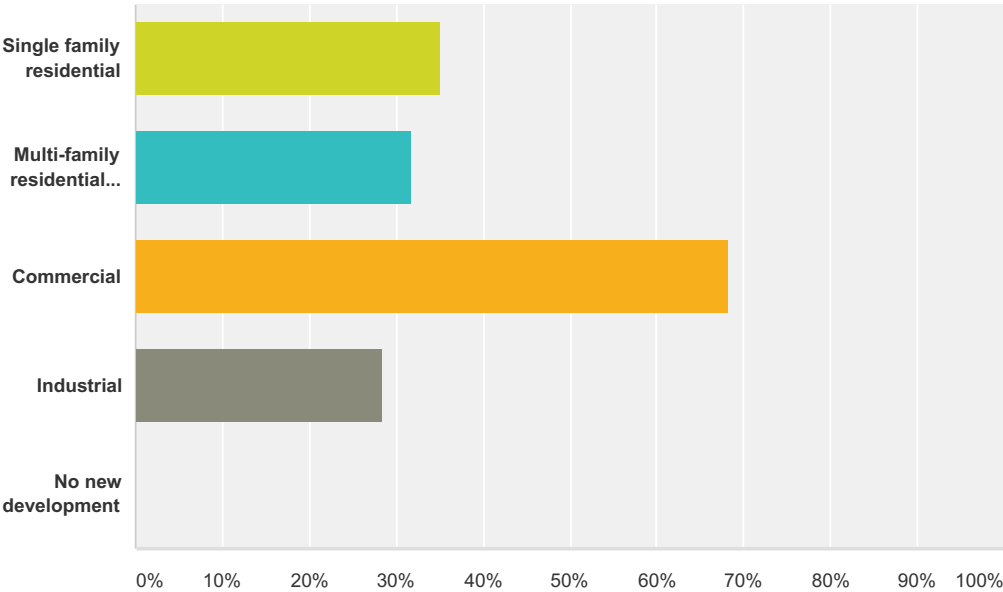


| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Availability of recreation | 6.90% 4 |
| Fire protection | 3.45% 2 |
| Police protection | 18.97% 11 |
| Public school system | 1.72% 1 |
| Library services | 0.00% 0 |
| Job opportunities | 12.07% 7 |
| Arts/culture | 1.72% 1 |
| Pedestrian Safety | 0.00% 0 |
| Infrastructure (water/sewer) | 3.45% 2 |
| Enforcement of ordinances | 12.07% 7 |
| Housing options | 1.72% 1 |
| Sidewalks | 0.00% 0 |
| Street condition | 1.72% 1 |
| Visual appearance of Sophia | 5.17% 3 |
| Getting information about Town events and matters | 1.72% 1 |
| Availability of retail | 3.45% 2 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| Traffic circulation | 0.00% | 0 |
| Public transportation | 0.00% | 0 |
| Emergency management | 0.00% | 0 |
| Activities for senior citizens | 0.00% | 0 |
| Stormwater management | 3.45% | 2 |
| Promotion of downtown | 1.72% | 1 |
| Recycling | 0.00% | 0 |
| Overall effectiveness of government | 3.45% | 2 |
| Activities for youth | 6.90% | 4 |
| Historic preservation | 1.72% | 1 |
| Animal Control | 8.62% | 5 |
| Total | | 58 |

Q4 What type of new development would you like to see in Sophia? Please check all that apply.

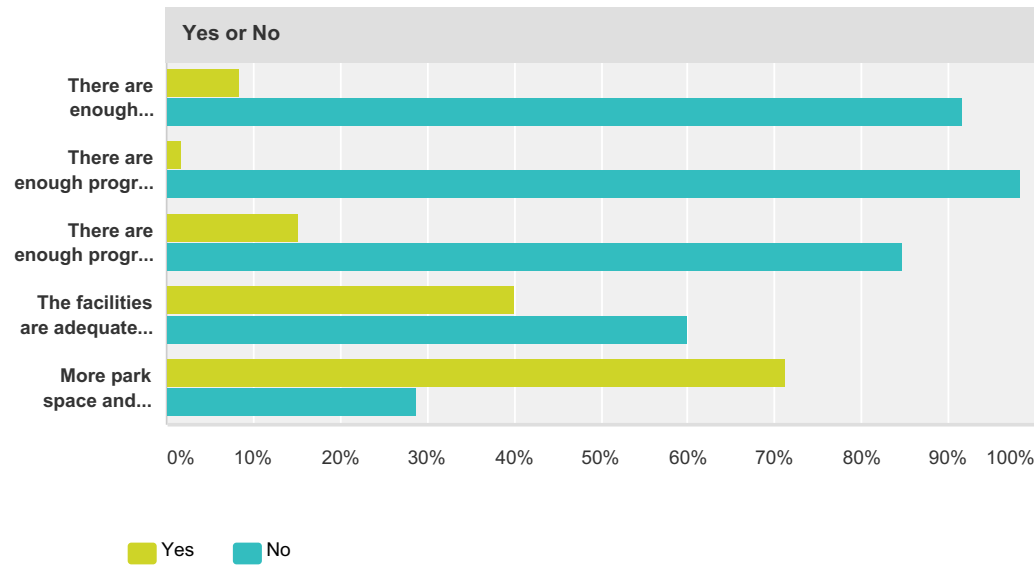
Answered: 60 Skipped: 5



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----|
| Single family residential | 35.00% | 21 |
| Multi-family residential (includes townhouses, condos, and apartments) | 31.67% | 19 |
| Commercial | 68.33% | 41 |
| Industrial | 28.33% | 17 |
| No new development | 0.00% | 0 |
| Total Respondents: 60 | | |

Q5 What is your opinion about the recreation provided in Sophia? Please answer yes or no.

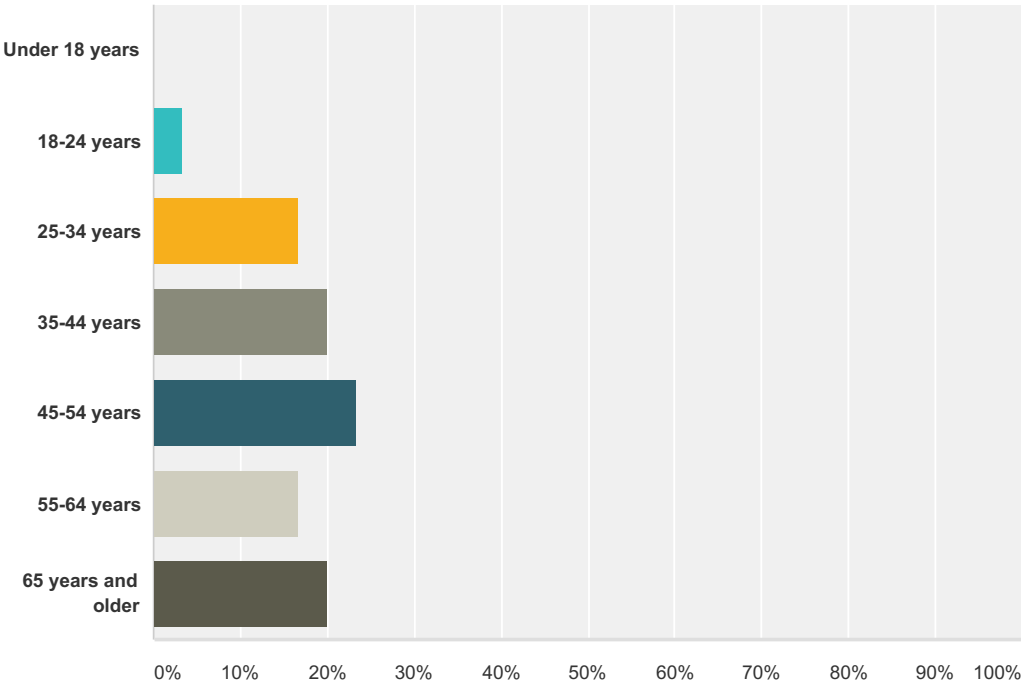
Answered: 60 Skipped: 5



| Yes or No | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| | Yes | No | Total |
| There are enough recreational facilities for families | 8.33% 5 | 91.67% 55 | 60 |
| There are enough programs and facilities for teens and children | 1.67% 1 | 98.33% 59 | 60 |
| There are enough programs and facilities for senior citizens | 15.25% 9 | 84.75% 50 | 59 |
| The facilities are adequately maintained | 40.00% 22 | 60.00% 33 | 55 |
| More park space and facilities are needed | 71.19% 42 | 28.81% 17 | 59 |

Q6 How old are you?

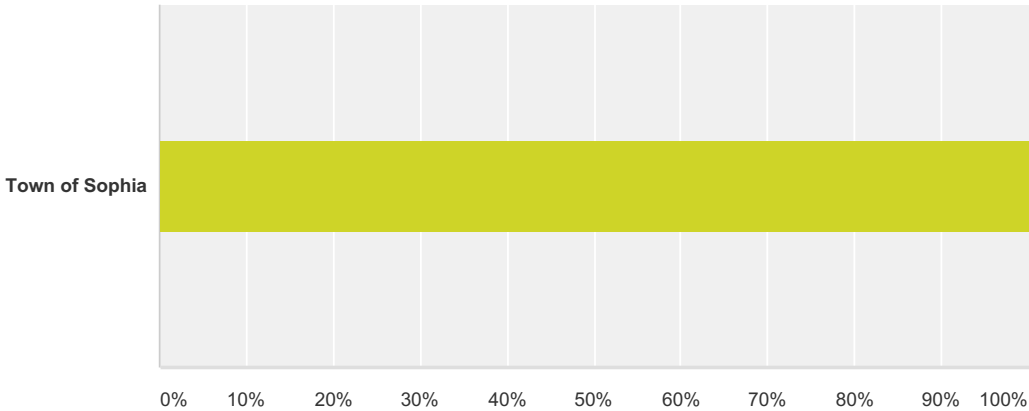
Answered: 60 Skipped: 5



| Answer Choices | Responses |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Under 18 years | 0.00%0 |
| 18-24 years | 3.33%2 |
| 25-34 years | 16.67%10 |
| 35-44 years | 20.00%12 |
| 45-54 years | 23.33%14 |
| 55-64 years | 16.67%10 |
| 65 years and older | 20.00%12 |
| Total | 60 |

Q7 Where do you live?

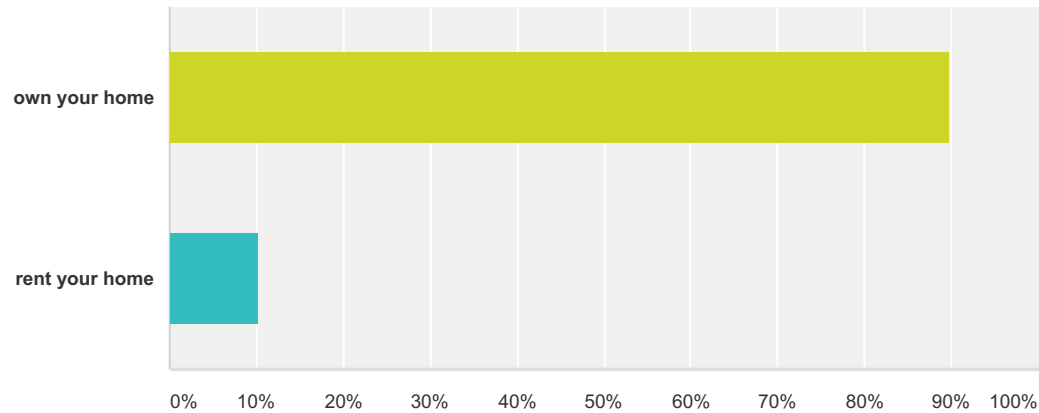
Answered: 47 Skipped: 18



| Answer Choices | Responses |
|----------------|-----------|
| Town of Sophia | 100.00%47 |
| Total | 47 |

Q8 Do you

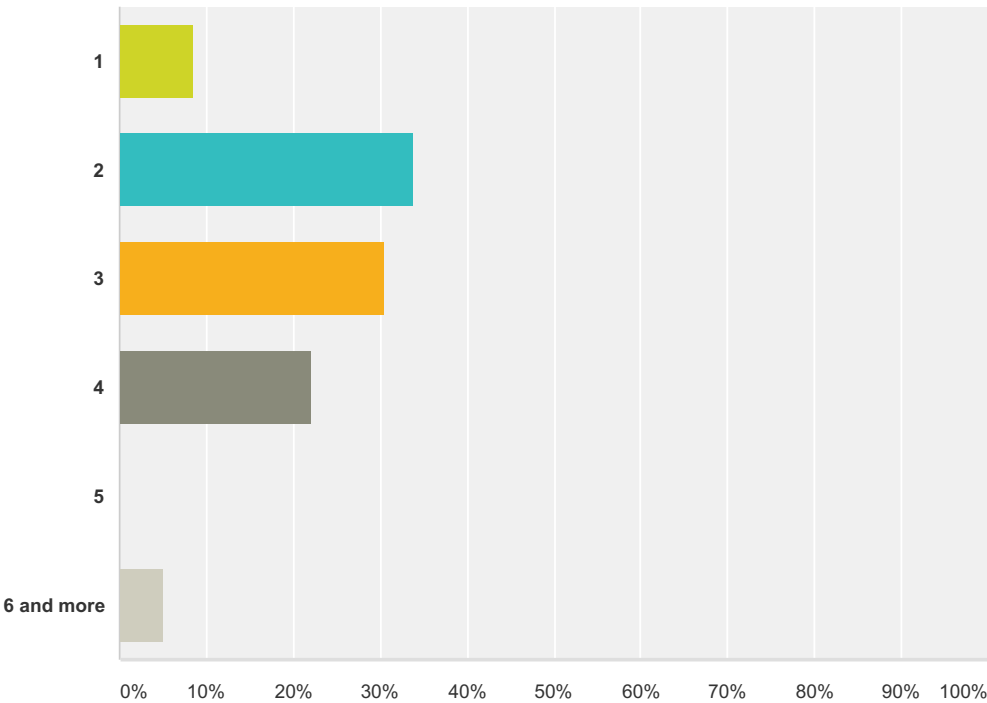
Answered: 59 Skipped: 6



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| own your home | 89.83% | 53 |
| rent your home | 10.17% | 6 |
| Total | | 59 |

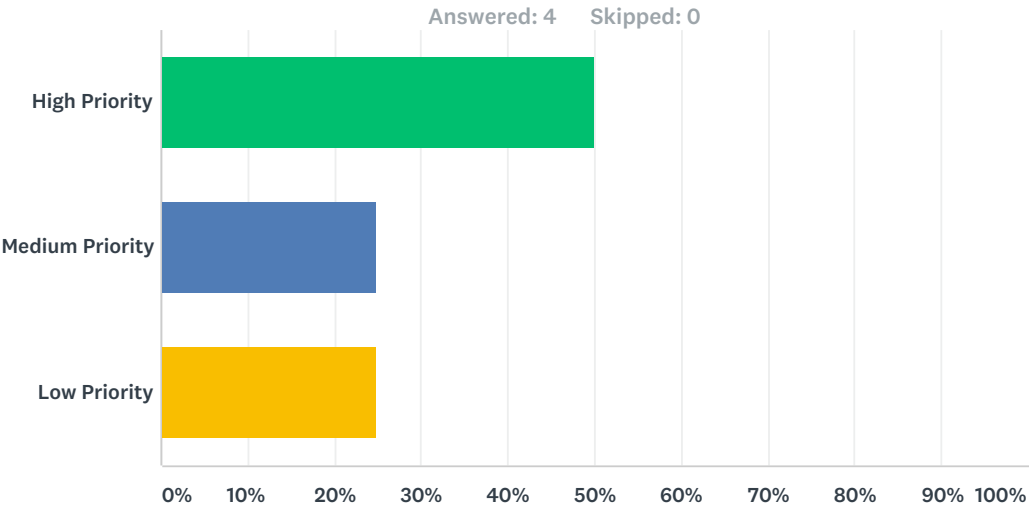
Q9 Number of people in your household

Answered: 59 Skipped: 6



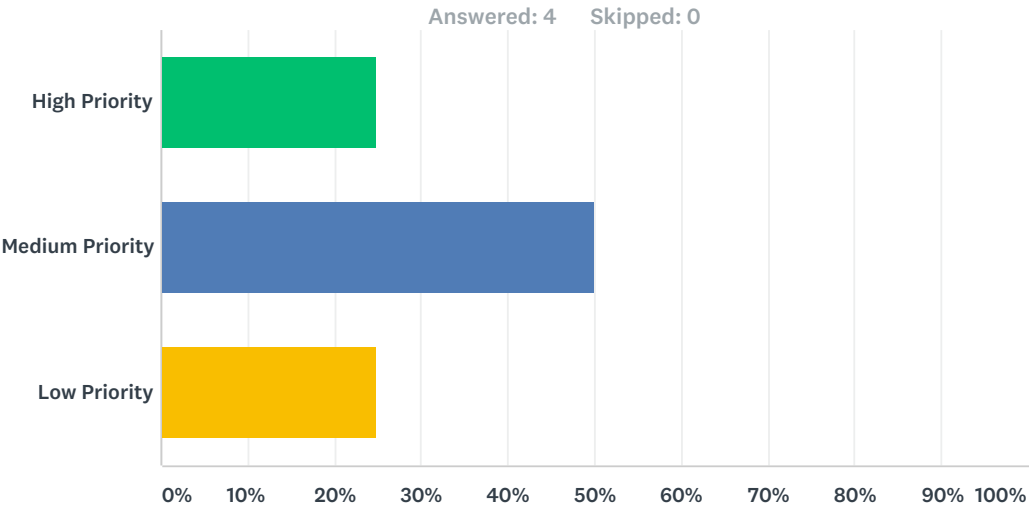
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| 1 | 8.47% | 5 |
| 2 | 33.90% | 20 |
| 3 | 30.51% | 18 |
| 4 | 22.03% | 13 |
| 5 | 0.00% | 0 |
| 6 and more | 5.08% | 3 |
| Total | | 59 |

Q1 Continue to engage local businesses through a merchants group to help revitalize Sophia



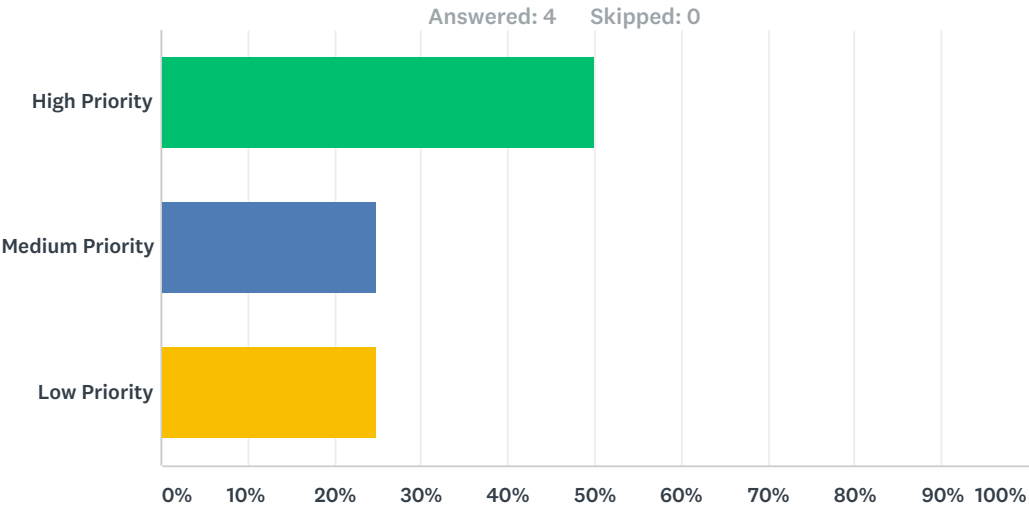
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 50.00%2 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Low Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Total | 4 |

Q2 Create a business directory to highlight businesses and services



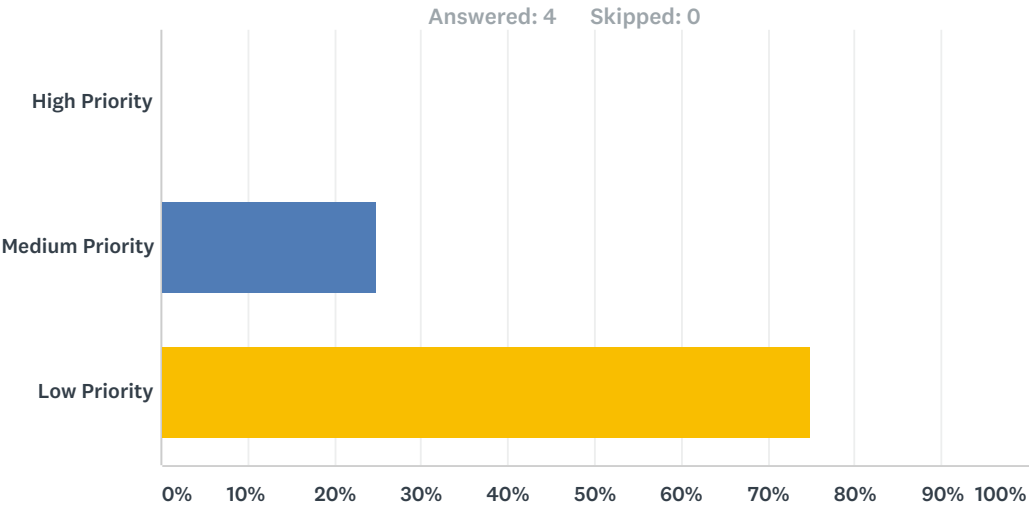
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Medium Priority | 50.00%2 |
| Low Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Total | 4 |

Q3 Create a beautification committee to improve the appearance of Main Street and neighborhoods throughout Sophia



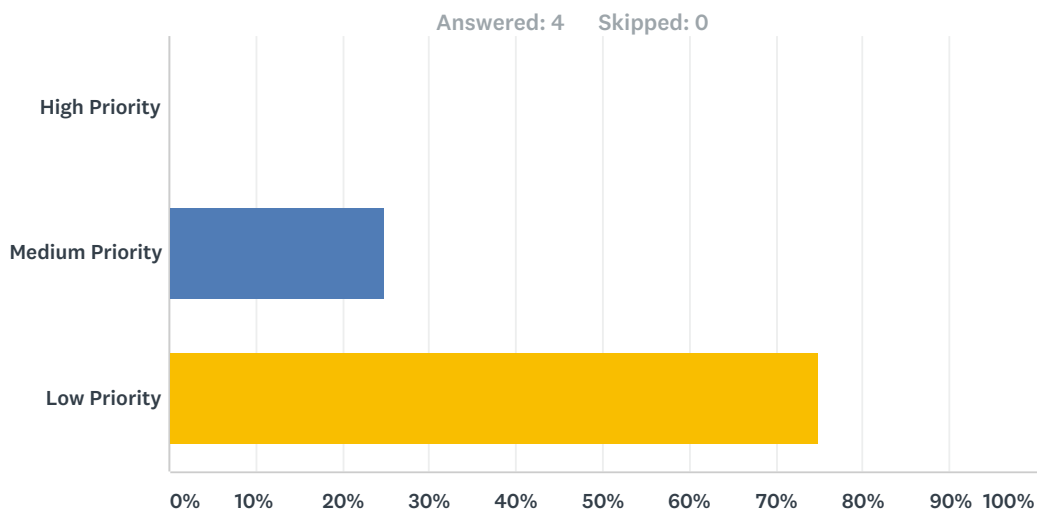
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Low Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q4 Create signage to direct visitors to the Boy Scout Cabin



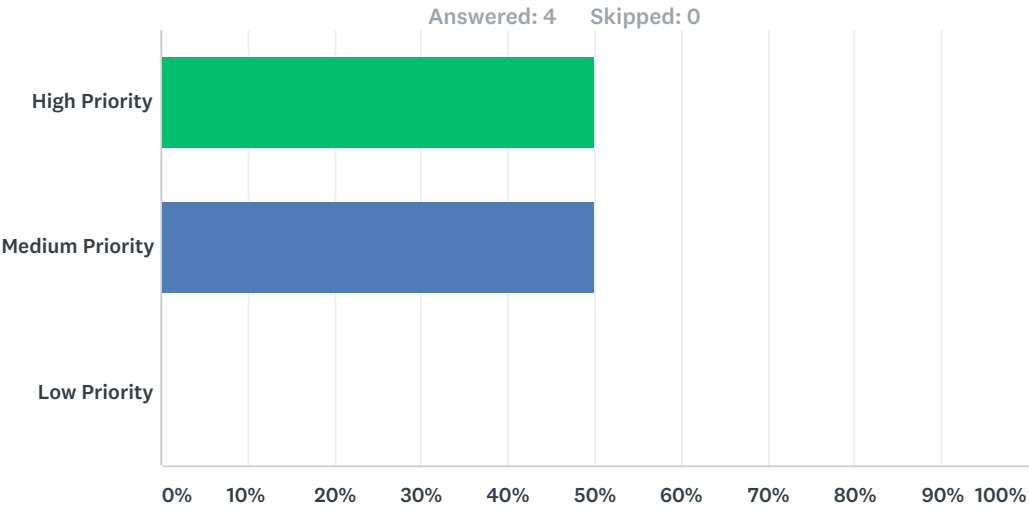
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Low Priority | 75.00% | 3 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q5 Develop a master site plan for the Boy Scout Cabin to determine the best use for the site



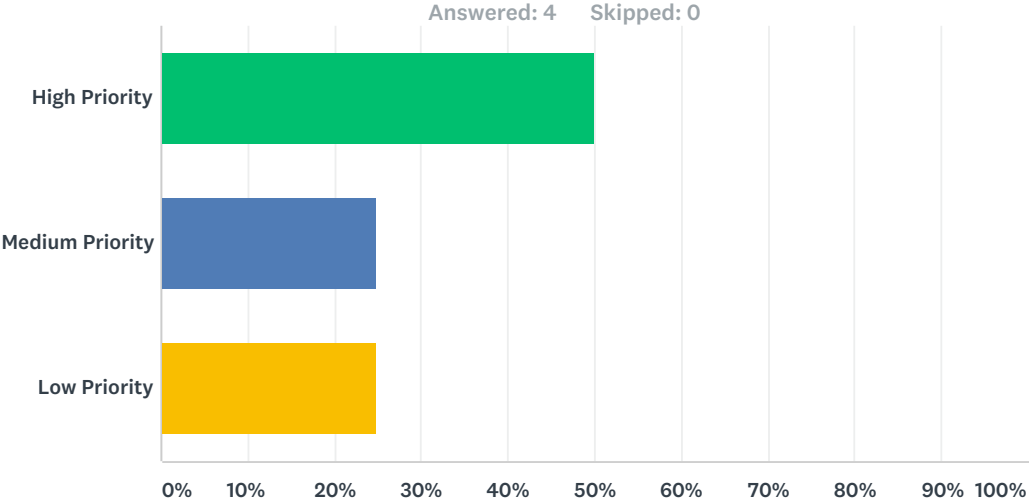
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 0.00%0 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Low Priority | 75.00%3 |
| Total | 4 |

Q6 Update the existing town website to include current events and important information



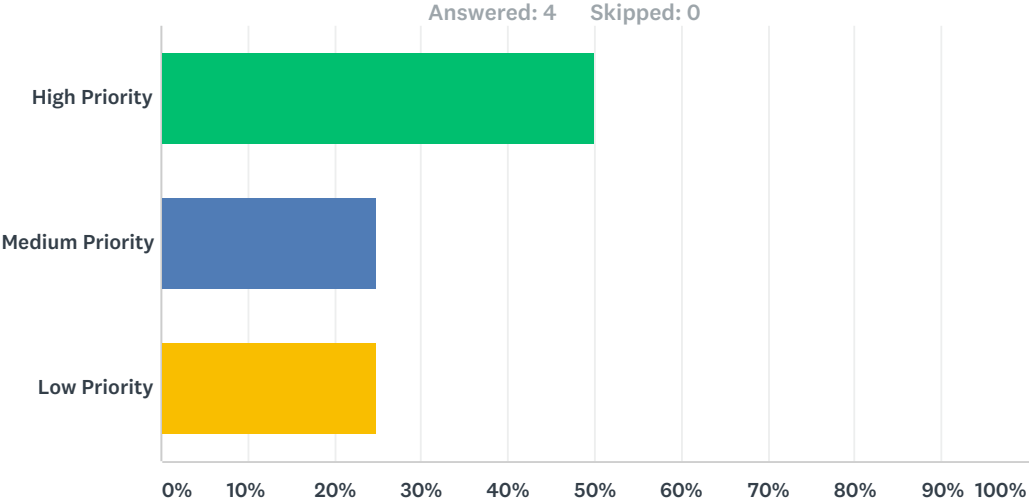
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Medium Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Low Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q7 Hold more community events and festivals to attract visitors



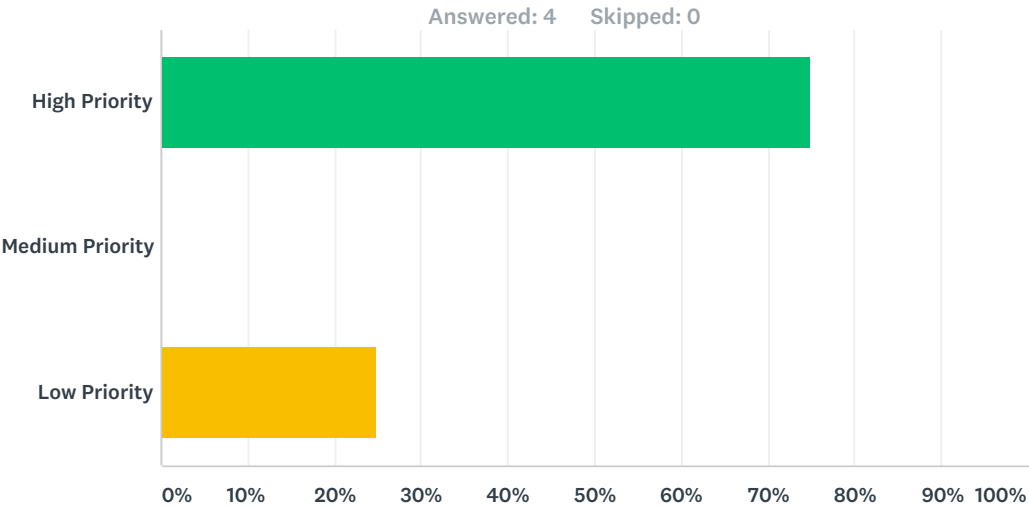
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Low Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q8 Consider annexation to increase the tax base



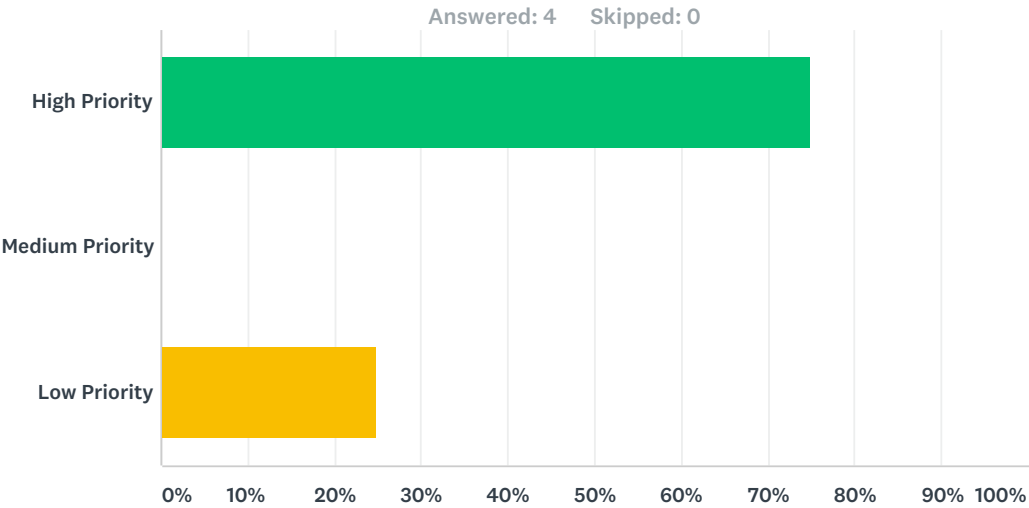
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Low Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q9 Apply for home rule status in order to enact regulations regarding abandoned and dilapidated buildings



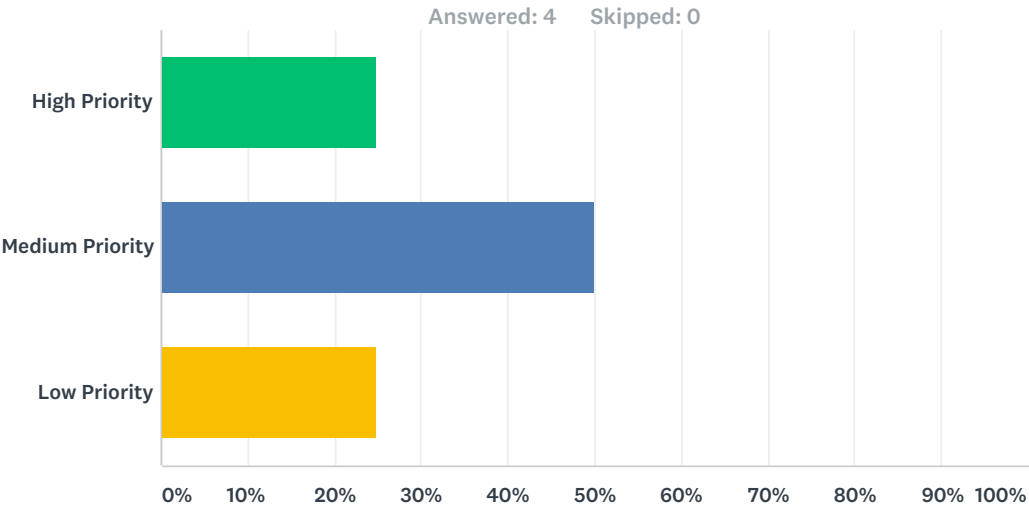
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 75.00%3 |
| Medium Priority | 0.00%0 |
| Low Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Total | 4 |

Q10 Consider applying public pressure to address neglected properties



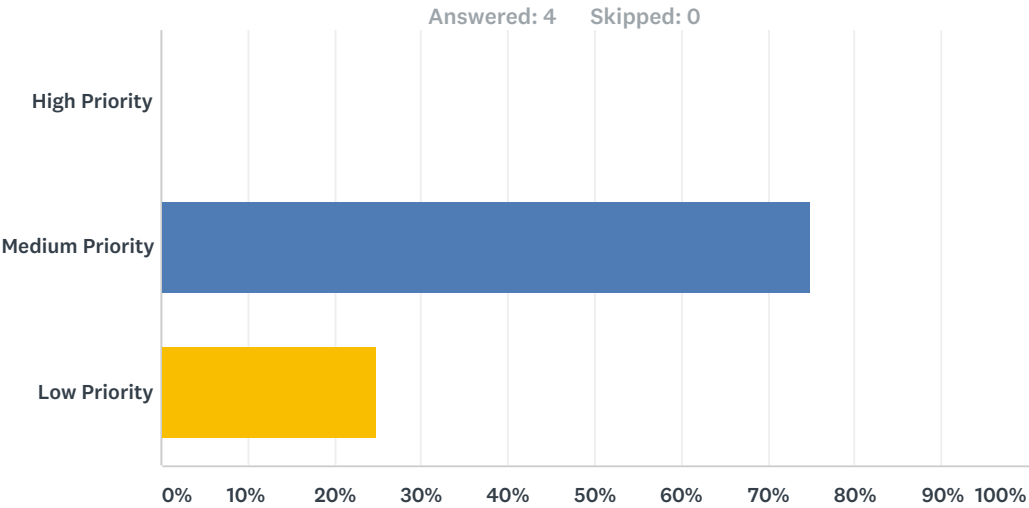
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 75.00% | 3 |
| Medium Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Low Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q11 Develop a home improvement contest to improve property appearance



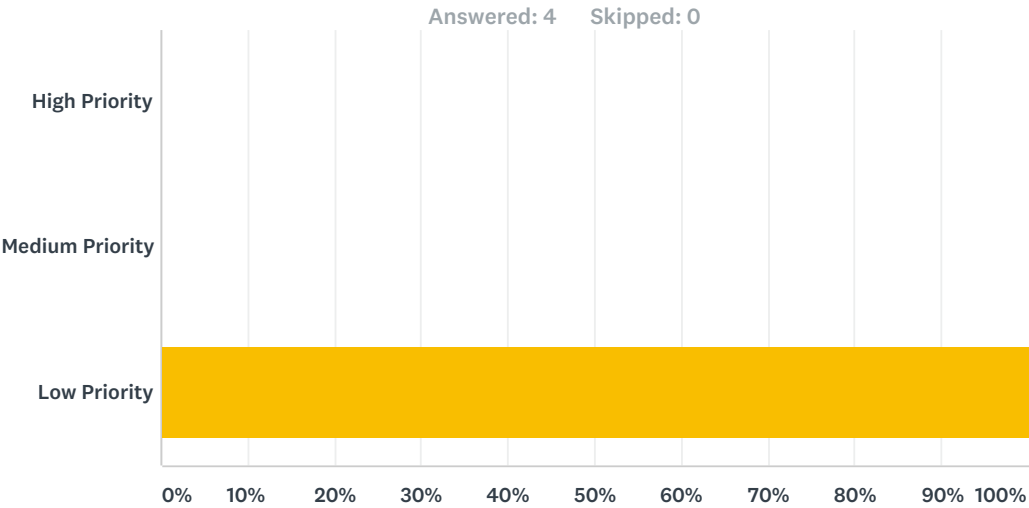
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Medium Priority | 50.00%2 |
| Low Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Total | 4 |

Q12 Develop a rail trail to expand recreational opportunities for residents and visitors



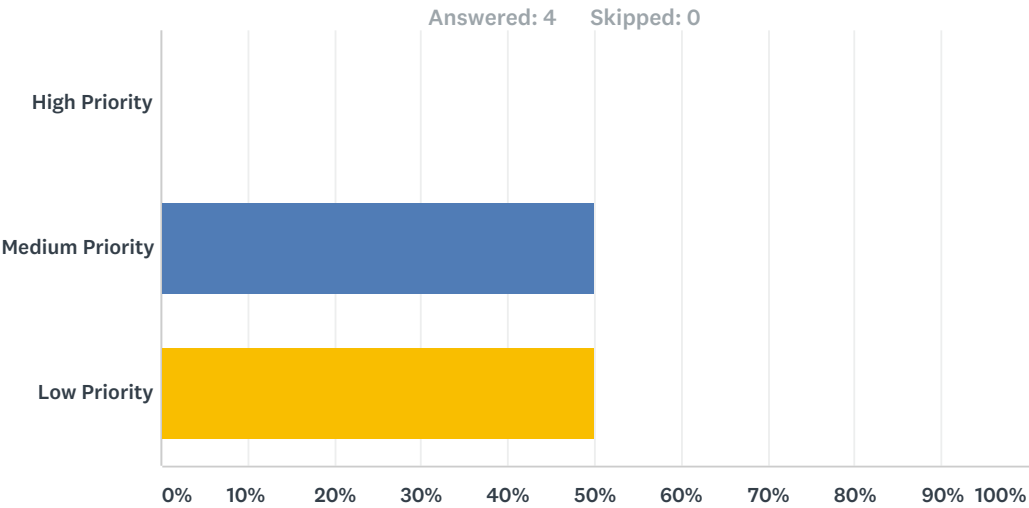
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 0.00%0 |
| Medium Priority | 75.00%3 |
| Low Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Total | 4 |

Q13 Determine the feasibility of a tourist train through the winding golf coalfields



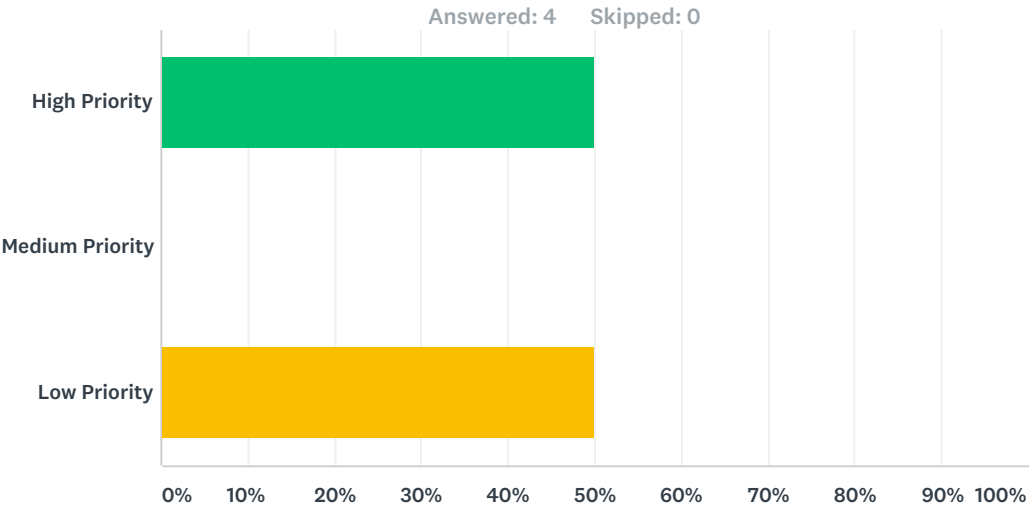
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 0.00%0 |
| Medium Priority | 0.00%0 |
| Low Priority | 100.00%4 |
| Total | 4 |

Q14 Determine the feasibility of purchasing the Sophia Soak Creek Elementary School if the school closes to provide additional recreational activities



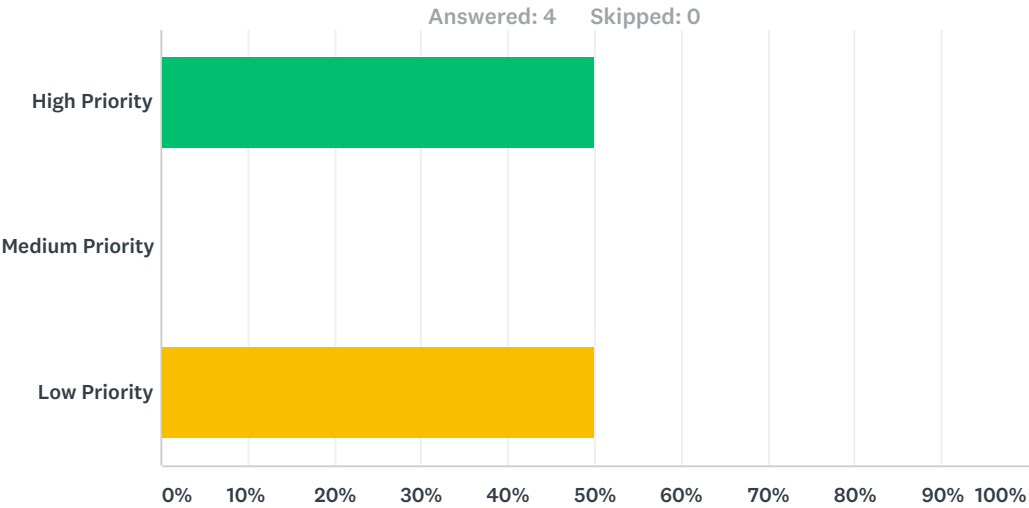
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Medium Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Low Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q15 Update the zoning ordinance to be consistent with the comprehensive plan



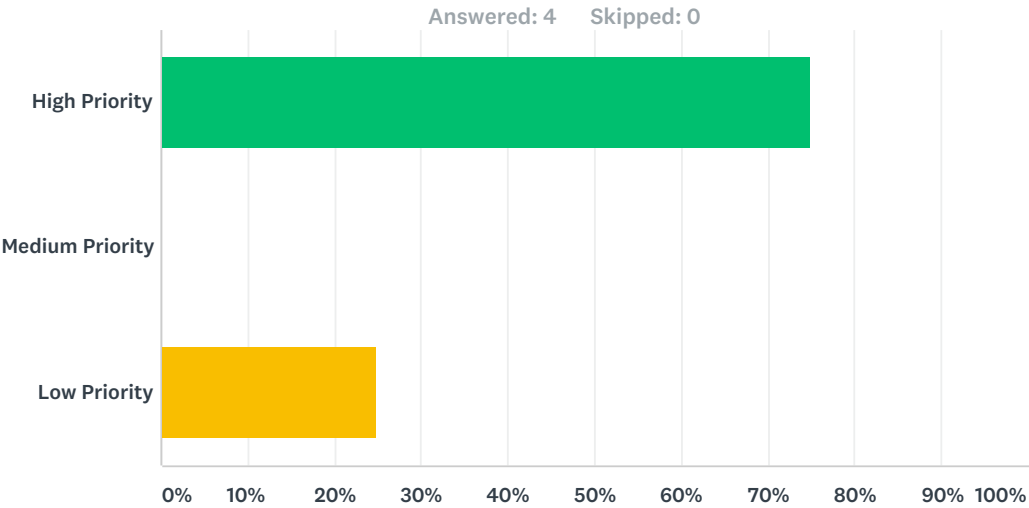
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Medium Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Low Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q16 Take part of the Community Rating System through FEMA to realize cost savings on homeowner flood insurance



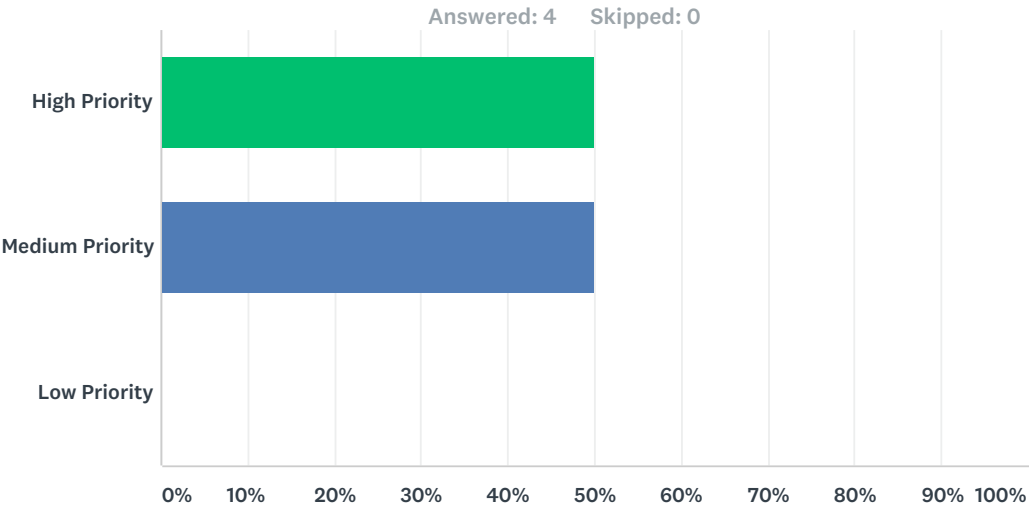
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 50.00%2 |
| Medium Priority | 0.00%0 |
| Low Priority | 50.00%2 |
| Total | 4 |

Q17 Enforce existing ordinances and regulations to address recurring problems



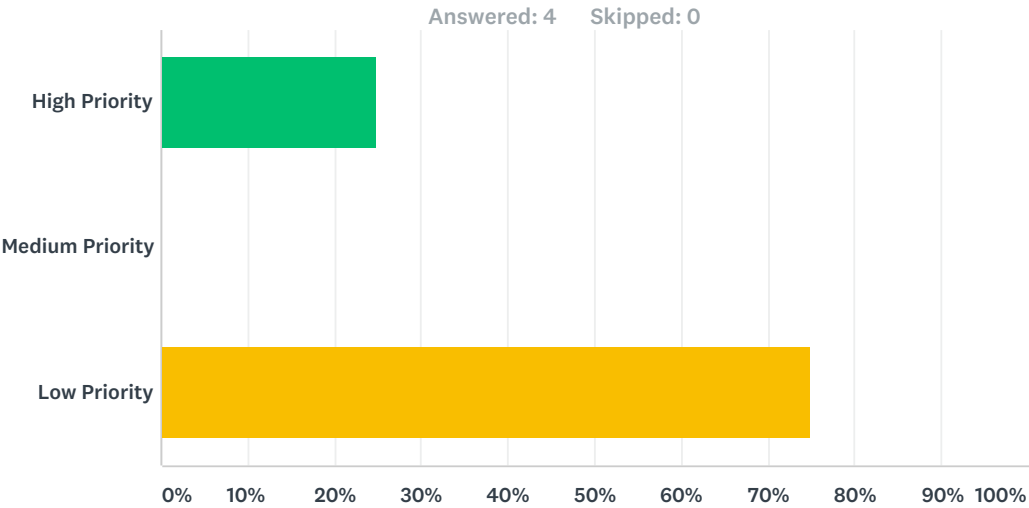
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 75.00% | 3 |
| Medium Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Low Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q18 Annex preferred development areas to provide for additional growth



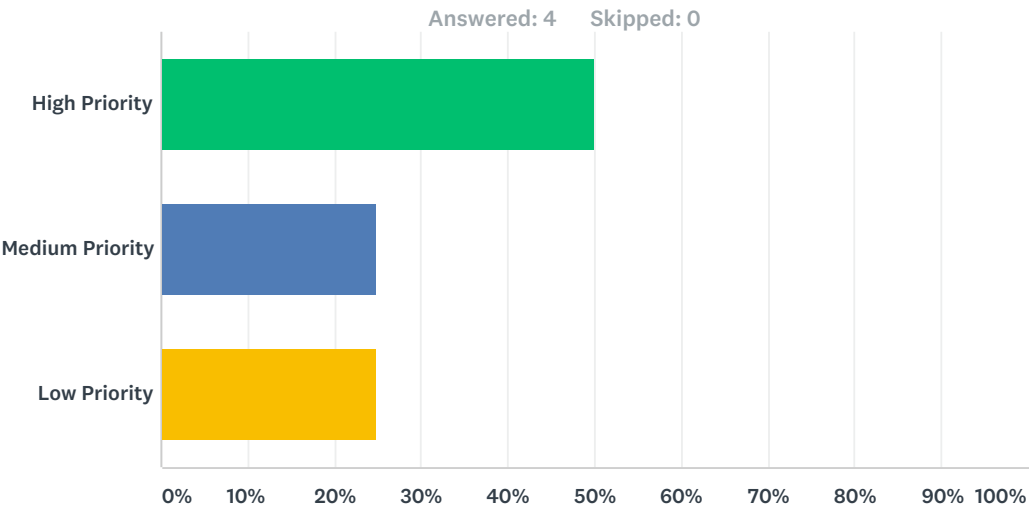
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Medium Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Low Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q19 Continue to work with New River Transit to expand daily service to Sophia



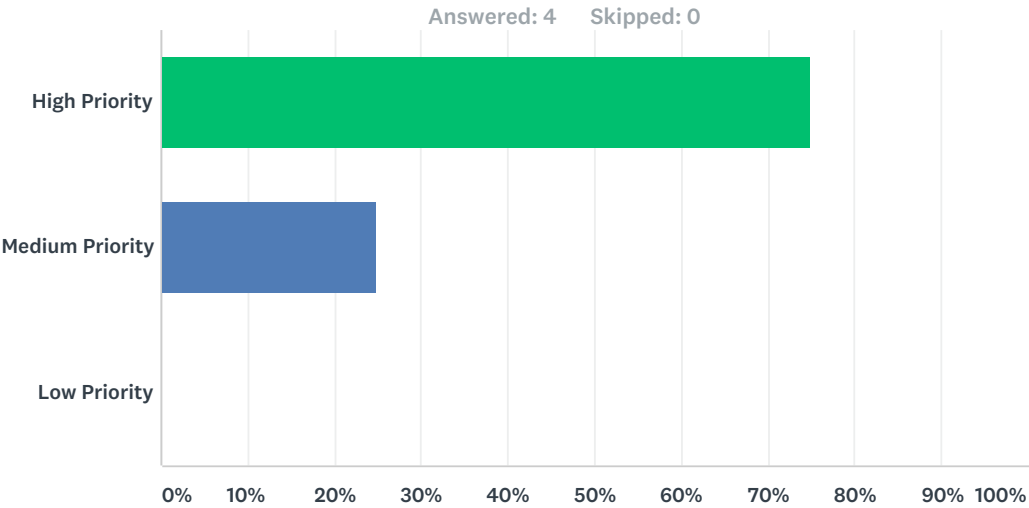
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Medium Priority | 0.00%0 |
| Low Priority | 75.00%3 |
| Total | 4 |

Q20 Market the existing bus route to Sophia to all residents



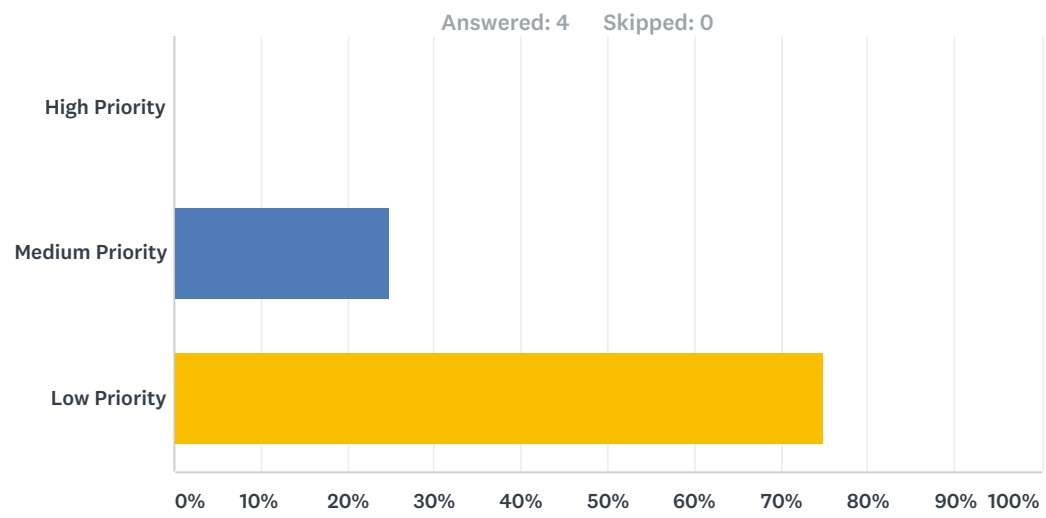
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Low Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q21 Develop a sidewalk program to prioritize the repair and construction of sidewalks



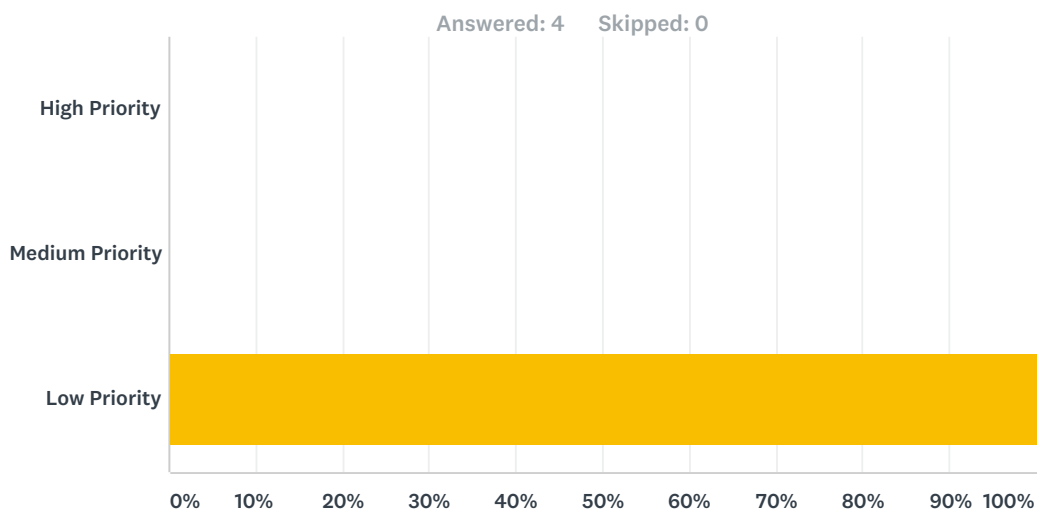
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 75.00% | 3 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Low Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q22 Determine the feasibility of constructing a second fire station in Crab Orchard



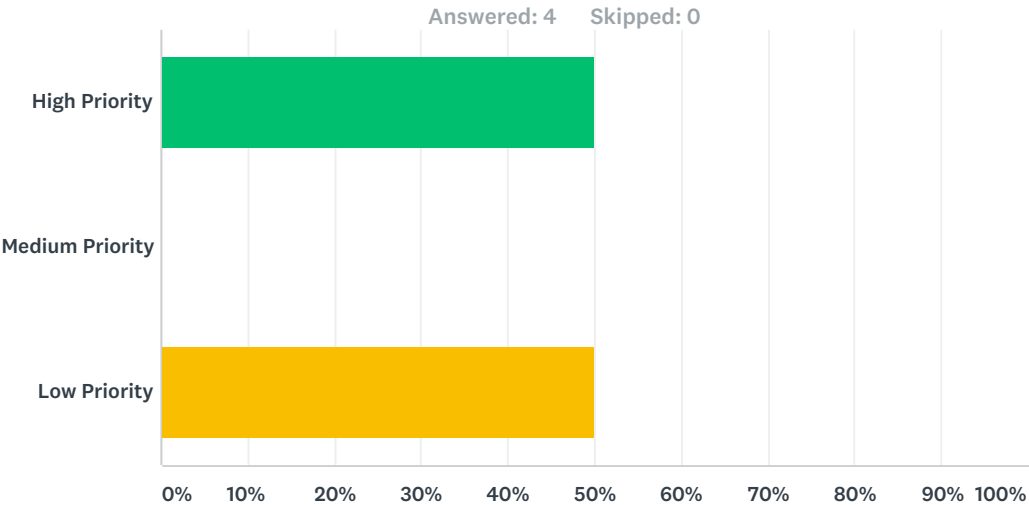
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 0.00%0 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Low Priority | 75.00%3 |
| Total | 4 |

Q23 Explore the possibility of moving town hall



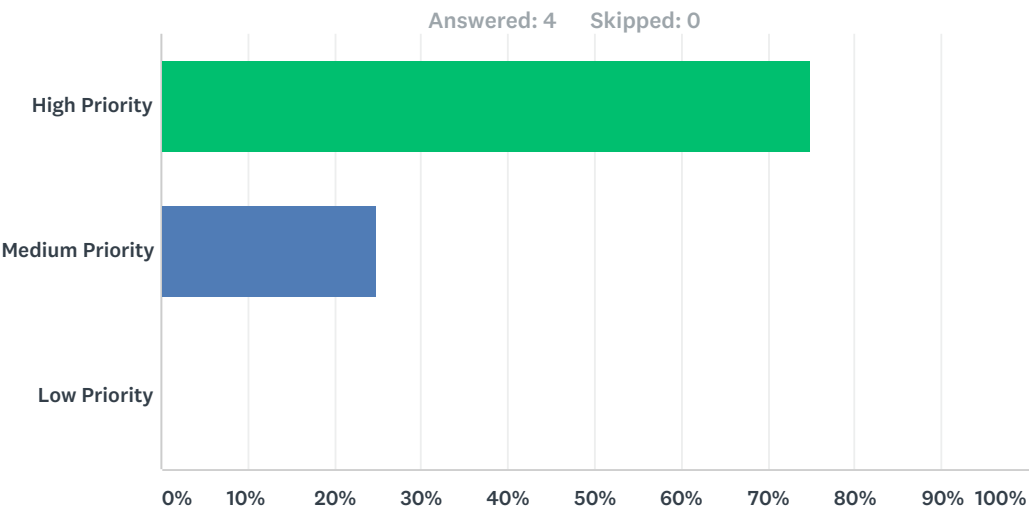
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Medium Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Low Priority | 100.00% | 4 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q24 Construct a new waste water treatment plant



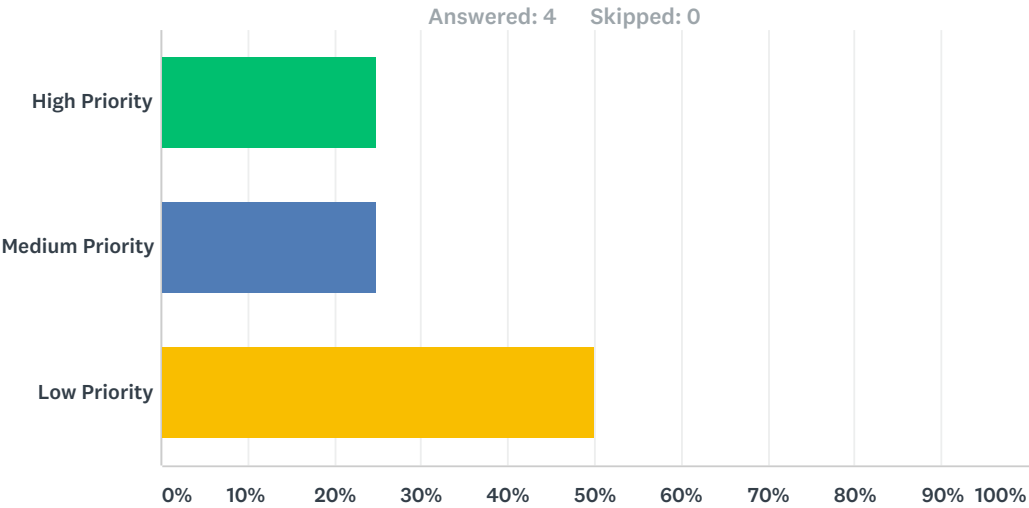
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Medium Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Low Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q25 Reactivate the Crime Watch Program



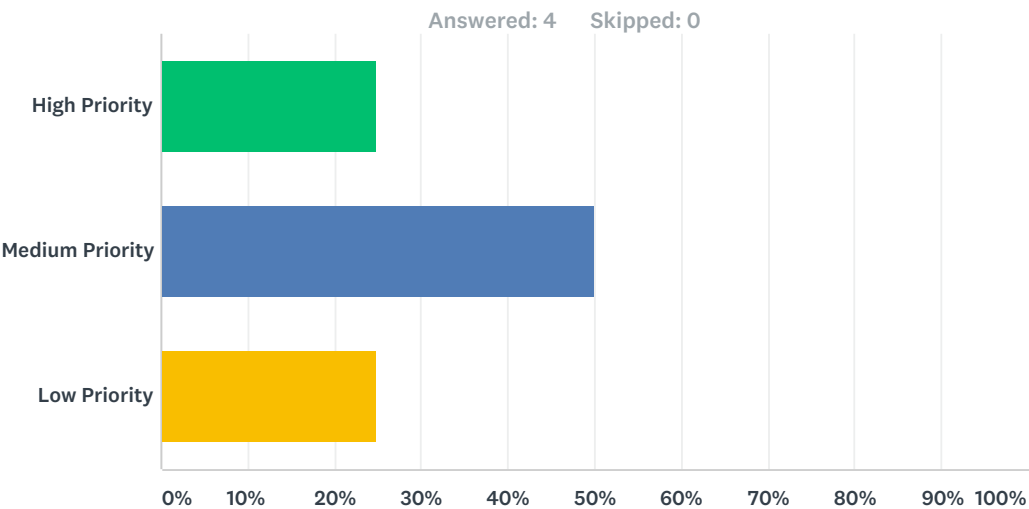
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 75.00% | 3 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Low Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q26 Continue to support the police department and purchase new equipment as needed



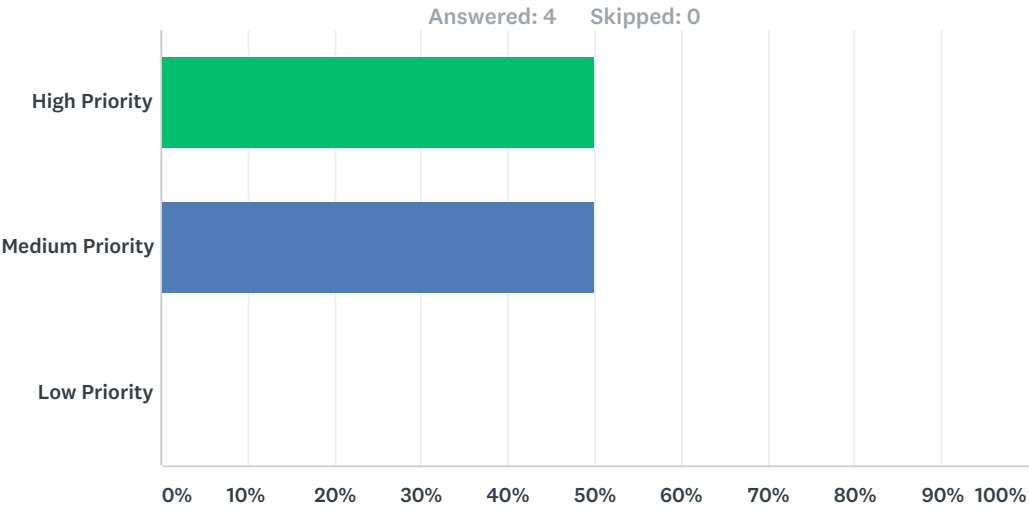
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Low Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q27 Buy portable generators for all pumping stations



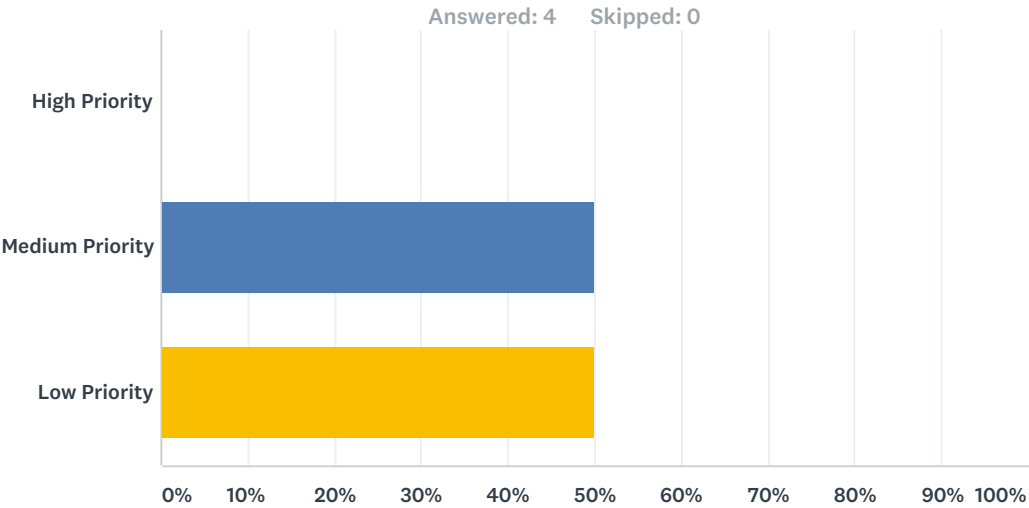
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Medium Priority | 50.00%2 |
| Low Priority | 25.00%1 |
| Total | 4 |

Q28 Develop a plan to alert and communicate to residents in the event of a emergency or natural disaster



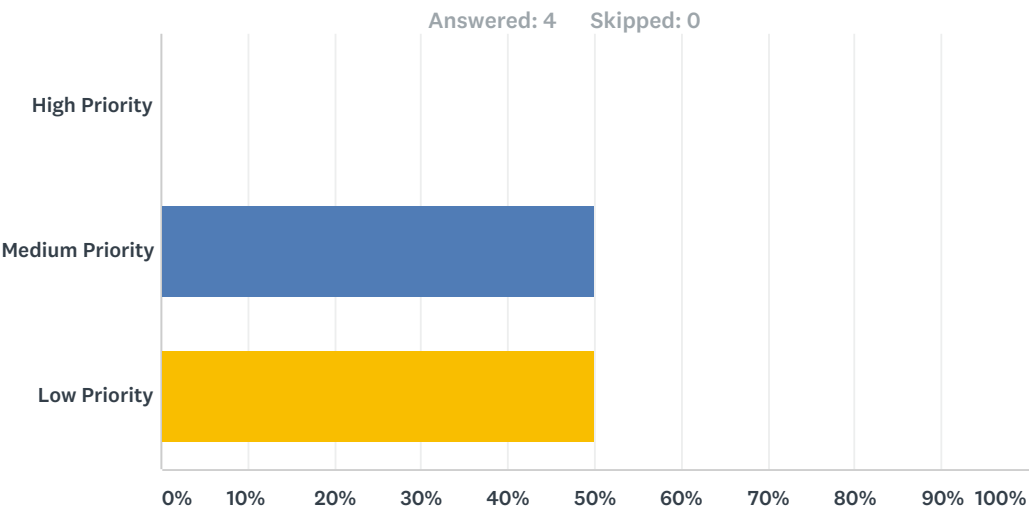
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Medium Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Low Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q29 Consider hiring an executive assistant/administrative assistant to help with the day to day functions of government



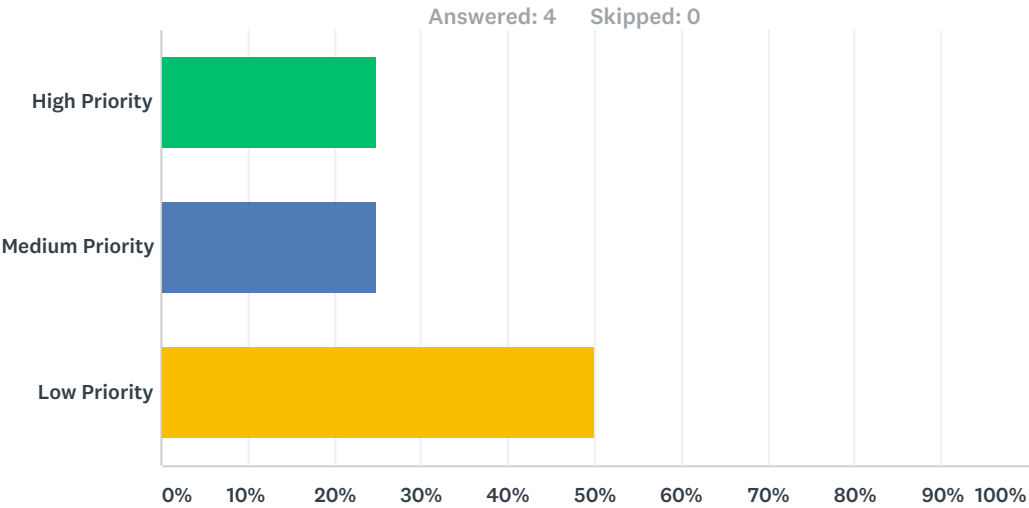
| Answer Choices | Responses |
|-----------------|-----------|
| High Priority | 0.00%0 |
| Medium Priority | 50.00%2 |
| Low Priority | 50.00%2 |
| Total | 4 |

Q30 Create a youth commission to solicit input from area youth



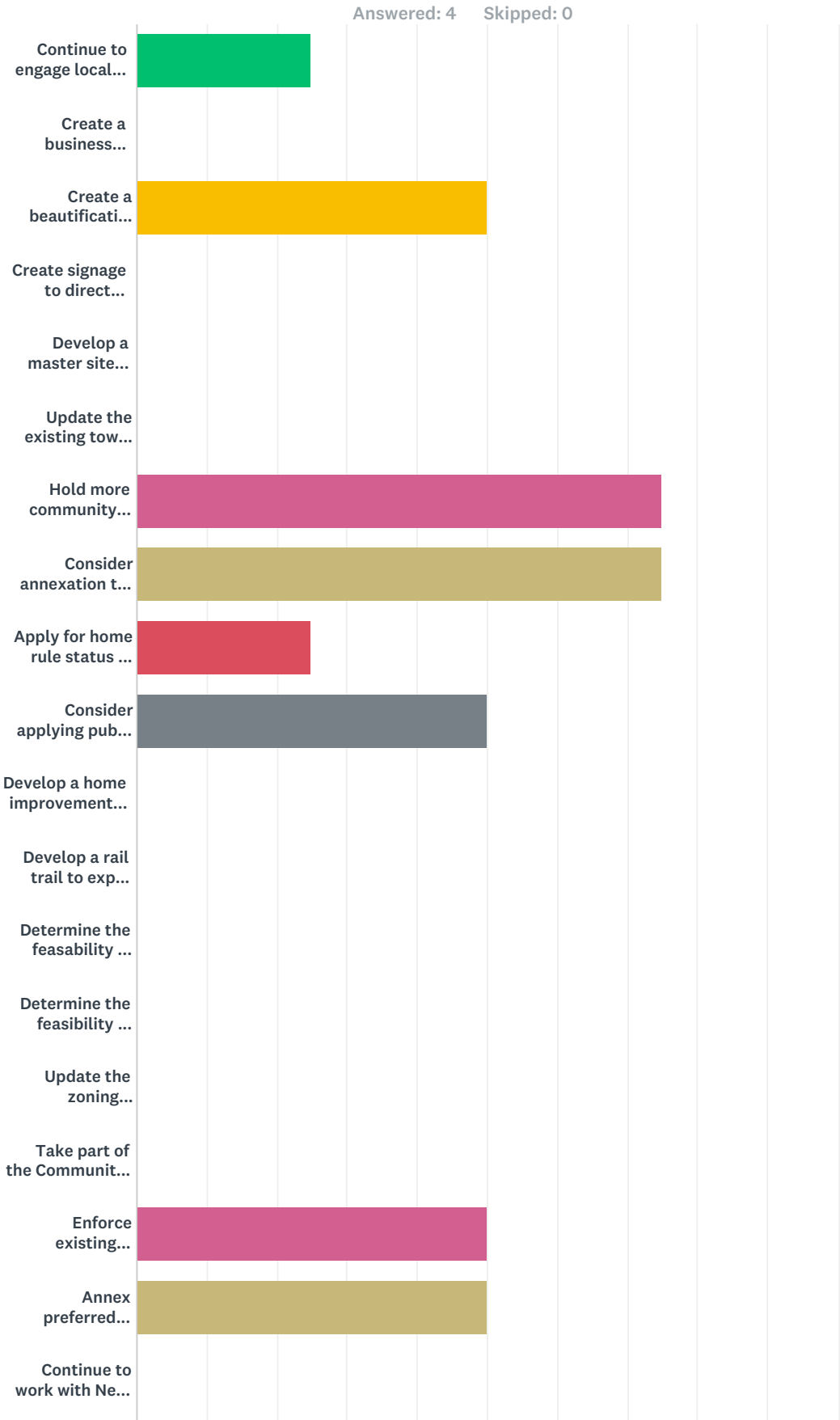
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 0.00% | 0 |
| Medium Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Low Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Total | | 4 |

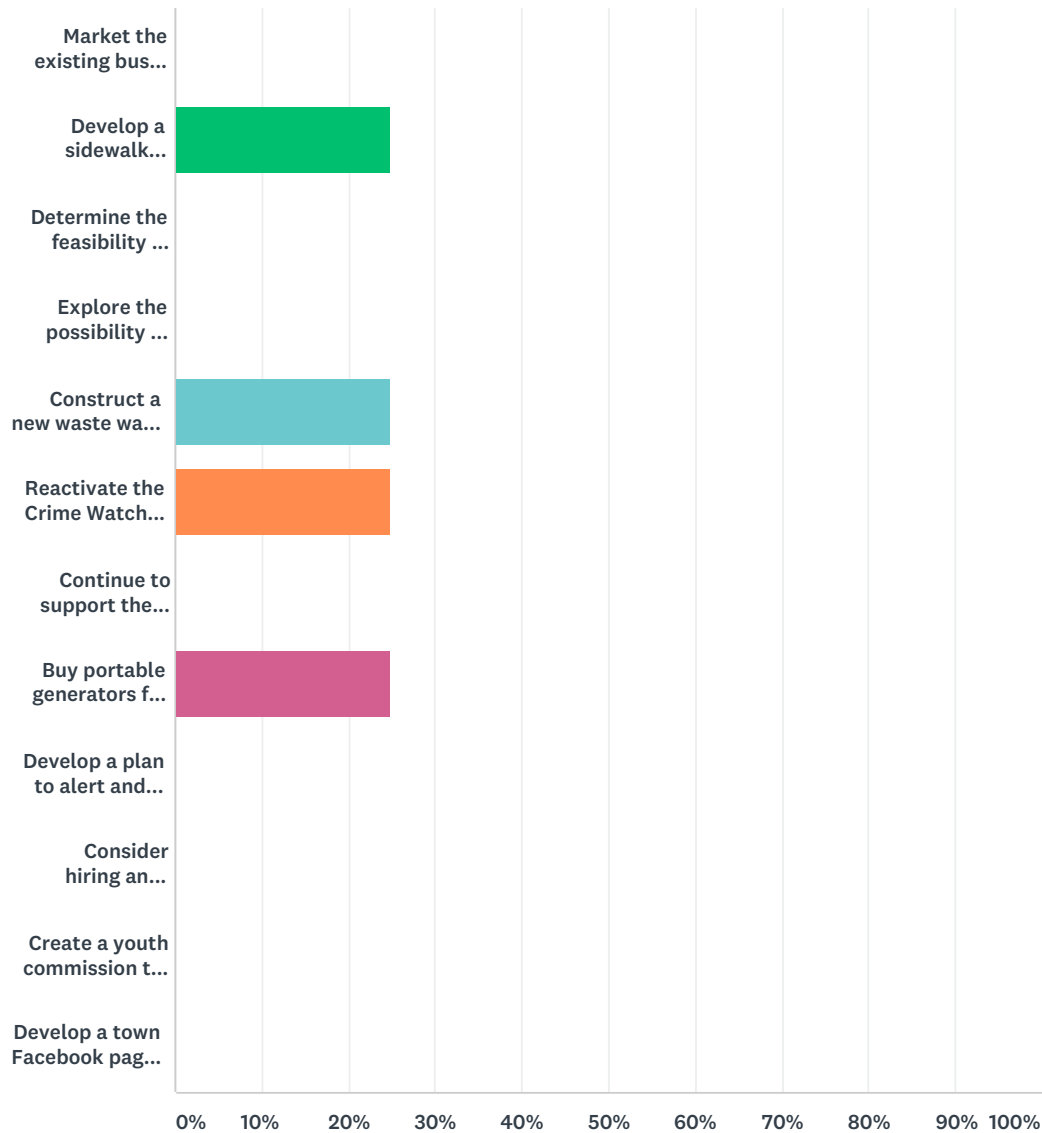
Q31 Develop a town Facebook page to provide information and updates to residents and visitors



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| High Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Medium Priority | 25.00% | 1 |
| Low Priority | 50.00% | 2 |
| Total | | 4 |

Q32 Please pick the top 5 action items that you feel the town should focus on implementing first.





| Answer Choices | Responses |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Continue to engage local businesses through a merchants group to help revitalize Sophia | 25.00% 1 |
| Create a business directory to highlight businesses and services | 0.00% 0 |
| Create a beautification committee to improve the appearance of Main Street and neighborhoods throughout Sophia | 50.00% 2 |
| Create signage to direct visitors to the Boy Scout Cabin | 0.00% 0 |
| Develop a master site plan for the Boy Scout Cabin to determine the best use for the site | 0.00% 0 |
| Update the existing town website to include current events and important information | 0.00% 0 |
| Hold more community events and festivals to attract visitors | 75.00% 3 |
| Consider annexation to increase the tax base | 75.00% 3 |
| Apply for home rule status in order to enact regulations regarding abandoned and dilapidated buildings | 25.00% 1 |
| Consider applying public pressure to address neglected properties | 50.00% 2 |
| Develop a home improvement contest to improve property appearance | 0.00% 0 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---|
| Develop a rail trail to expand recreational opportunities for residents and visitors | 0.00% | 0 |
| Determine the feasibility of a tourist train through the winding golf coalfields | 0.00% | 0 |
| Determine the feasibility of purchasing the Sophia Soak Creek Elementary School if the school closes to provide additional recreational activities | 0.00% | 0 |
| Update the zoning ordinance to be consistent with the comprehensive plan | 0.00% | 0 |
| Take part of the Community Rating System through FEMA to realize cost savings on homeowner flood insurance | 0.00% | 0 |
| Enforce existing ordinances and regulations to address recurring problems | 50.00% | 2 |
| Annex preferred development areas to provide for additional growth | 50.00% | 2 |
| Continue to work with New River Transit to expand daily service to Sophia | 0.00% | 0 |
| Market the existing bus route to Sophia to all residents | 0.00% | 0 |
| Develop a sidewalk program to prioritize the repair and construction of sidewalks | 25.00% | 1 |
| Determine the feasibility of constructing a second fire station in Crab Orchard | 0.00% | 0 |
| Explore the possibility of moving town hall | 0.00% | 0 |
| Construct a new waste water treatment plant | 25.00% | 1 |
| Reactivate the Crime Watch Program | 25.00% | 1 |
| Continue to support the police department and purchase new equipment as needed | 0.00% | 0 |
| Buy portable generators for all pumping stations | 25.00% | 1 |
| Develop a plan to alert and communicate to residents in the event of a emergency or natural disaster | 0.00% | 0 |
| Consider hiring an executive assistant/administrative assistant to help with the day to day functions of government | 0.00% | 0 |
| Create a youth commission to solicit input from area youth | 0.00% | 0 |
| Develop a town Facebook page to provide information and updates to residents and visitors | 0.00% | 0 |
| Total Respondents: 4 | | |

APPENDIX 3:

STAKEHOLDER LIST

Town of Sophia Stakeholder List

Stakeholders who completed questionnaires

Sophia Volunteer Fire Department

Sophia Sanitation Department

Sophia Police Department

Raleigh County School District

**Surveys were also sent to other individuals/organizations, but were not completed and returned by the identified stakeholders*

APPENDIX 4:

SOURCES

Sources

Appalachian Regional Commission website, <http://www.arc.gov/> Accessed September 2013.

Benedum Foundation website, www.benedum.org Accessed September 2013.

Beverly Heritage Center website, <http://www.beverlyheritagecenter.org/> Accessed September 2015.

City of Bluefield Beautification Committee website, <http://www.beautifulbluefield.com/> Accessed June 2017.

City of Orrville website, <https://www.orrville.com/> Accessed March 2014.

Dunbar Neighborhood Watch website. <https://www.facebook.com/DunbarNeighborhoodWatch>
[Accessed June 2017.](#)

New River Transit website, <http://newrivertransitauthority.org/> Accessed June 2017.

Smart Growth Implementation Assistance website, <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sgia.htm>
[Accessed September 2013.](#)

Town of Beverly. (2016). Beverly Active Community Plan. Downstream Strategies, Mills Group, and Terrell Ellis and Associates.

United States Department of Transportation- Federal Highway Administration, Transportation Alternatives Program website, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm> Accessed September 2013.

West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning website, <http://www.legis.state.wv.us> Accessed September 2013.

West Virginia College of Law, Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic. (2015) WV LEAP Toolkit. <https://wvleap.wvu.edu/> Accessed June 2017.

West Virginia Department of Commerce, Community Resources website, <http://www.wvcommerce.org/people/communityresources/default.aspx>
Accessed October 2013.

West Virginia Department of Transportation website, <http://www.transportation.wv.gov/ports>
Accessed March 2014.

Workforce West Virginia website, <http://www.workforcewv.org/lmi/> Accessed March 2017.

2010 American FactFinder, U.S. Department of the Census website, <http://www.census.gov>
Accessed 2014-2016.

APPENDIX 5:

FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Sources

Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) provides federal grant funds for the support of economic and community development in West Virginia. The goal of ARC is to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life.

Projects approved for ARC assistance must support one of the four general goals:

- Strengthen the capacity of the people of Appalachia to compete in the global economy.
- Increase job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation.
- Develop and improve Appalachia's infrastructure to make the Region economically competitive.
- Build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce Appalachia's isolation.

Activities generally eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, projects that:

- Improve infrastructure for community and economic development.
- Improve educational opportunities and workforce skills.
- Increase civic and leadership capacity.
- Increase entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Improve health care resources.

Benedum Foundation

The mission of the Benedum Foundation is to encourage human development in West Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania through strategically placed charitable resources. The foundation gives two types of grants; education and economic development.

Governors Community Participation Grant Program

The Governor's Community Partnership Grant program provides state grant funds for community and economic development projects throughout West Virginia. The program enables communities to expand, build and improve a variety of public facilities and services.

Eligible activities include but are not limited to permanent public improvements related to the following:

- City hall and courthouse facilities
- Community centers
- Construction and renovation of public facilities
- Demolition
- Economic development
- Flood and storm drainage
- Business and industrial parks
- Land and property acquisition

- Libraries
- Parks and recreation
- Parking facilities
- Preservation and beautification
- Street and sidewalk repair
- Technology
- Water and wastewater facilities and services

KaBOOM

KaBoom is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to creating play spaces for children throughout the United States. KaBoom offers three types of grants:

- Build it with KaBOOM!- work with KaBOOM! and their corporate partners. This grant provides coaching and facilitation of an experienced Project Manager to help design and build a permanent play structure
- Build it Yourself- grant (\$15,000) to be used toward the purchase of playground equipment
- Creative Play Grants- used to design play equipment that encourages creativity, communication, and collaboration in play

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund program (LWCF) provides supplemental federal funding for the acquisition and/or development of high-quality, public outdoor recreational areas throughout West Virginia. Proposed projects must be consistent with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Park renovations, expansions to promote active lifestyles, innovation in community cores, attracting or retain visitors to an area, development of trailheads or preservation of other natural areas to impact community health objectives and brownfields renewal efforts will receive funding priority.

Eligible activities include but are not limited to the development of outdoor recreation resources related to the following:

- “ Land acquisition for parklands
- “ Development or renovation of the following types of outdoor recreational facilities:
 - “ Campgrounds
 - “ Picnic areas
 - “ Sports and playfields
 - “ Golf courses
 - “ Swimming facilities
 - “ Boating facilities
 - “ Fishing facilities
 - “ Hunting areas
 - “ Trails
 - “ Winter sport facilities
 - “ Support facilities (walks, utilities, bathrooms, etc.)
 - “ Amphitheaters
 - “ Lake impoundments

- Visitor information centers
- Interpretive centers

Neighborhood Investment Program

The Neighborhood Investment Program (NIP) increases charitable giving to local nonprofit organizations. The program allows 501(c)3 designated charitable organizations to apply for tax credit vouchers. These organizations distribute the vouchers to contributing businesses and individuals. By donating to approved NIP organizations, contributors can support their communities and earn credits to reduce certain West Virginia taxes.

The West Virginia Legislature sets aside \$2.5 million annually in state tax credits for the NIP. To participate, a 501(c)3 charitable organization must apply to the West Virginia Development Office. Upon meeting program requirements and obtaining approval from the NIP Advisory Board, organizations are awarded tax credit vouchers. Businesses and individuals that contribute to NIP-approved organizations are eligible to receive up to 50 percent of the contributed amount in the form of state tax credits. Donors may use the credits to reduce liability for the Corporate Net Income Tax, the Business Franchise tax or the Personal Income Tax.

Projects generally eligible for program participation include but are not limited to the following:

- Health clinics
- Homeless shelters
- Educational programs
- Housing programs
- Preservation/revitalization activities
- Domestic violence shelters
- Children's shelters
- Meal delivery programs
- Senior citizens' centers
- Community foundations
- Scholarship programs
- Hospice care
- Transportation programs
- Day care centers
- Counseling services
- Services for the disabled

Small Cities Block Grant Fund

The Small Cities Block Grant program (SCBG) provides federal funds for community and economic development projects throughout West Virginia. The program supports job creation and retention efforts, local government efforts to provide affordable infrastructure systems and community efforts to improve the quality of life for low- to moderate-income citizens. Eligible units of local government may receive SCBG funds if they are documented to fulfill one of three national objectives:

- Activities benefiting low- and moderate-income people.

- Activities that aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight.
- Activities designed to meet community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community and where other financial resources are not available to meet such needs.

Activities generally eligible for funding include but are not limited to permanent public improvements related to the following:

- Community centers/senior citizen centers
- Construction and renovation of public facilities
- Demolition
- Economic development
- Flood and storm drainage
- Acquisition
- Parks and recreation
- Preservation and beautification
- Technology
- Water and wastewater facilities and services
- Community facilities renovation/construction

Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

The Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) program provides assistance from national experts to help communities explore barriers to smart growth implementation and pilot innovative ideas that create more sustainable communities. EPA will provide technical assistance to successful applicants.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

The TAP program now funds projects that would have previously been considered under the Transportation Enhancement and Safe Routes to Schools Programs.

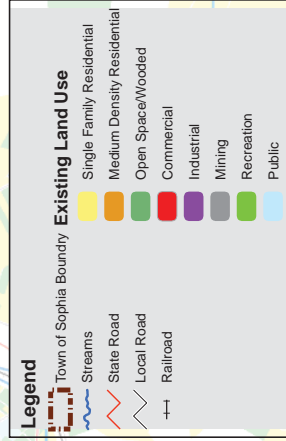
APPENDIX 6:

MAPS

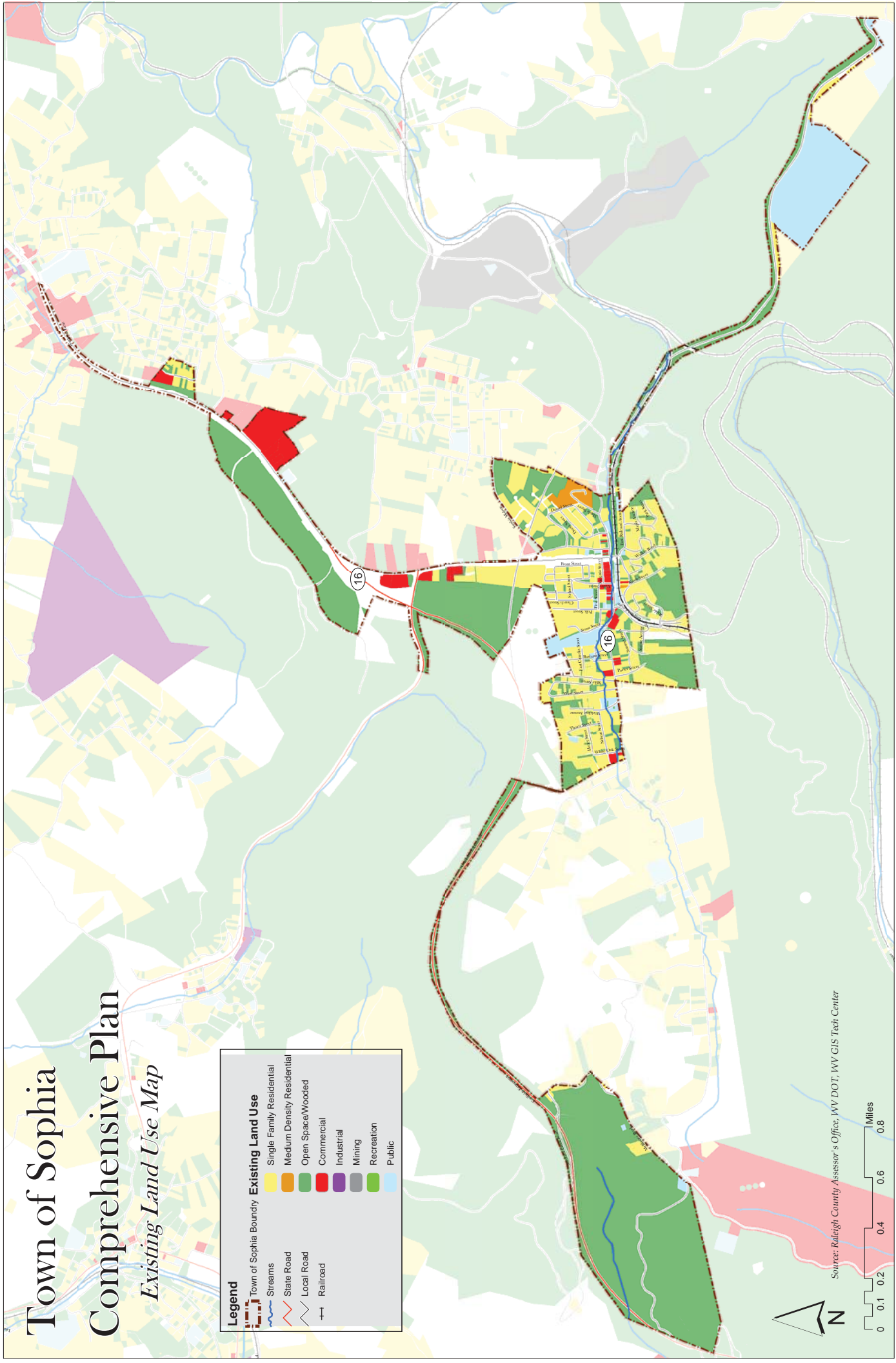
Town of Sophia

Comprehensive Plan

Existing Land Use Map



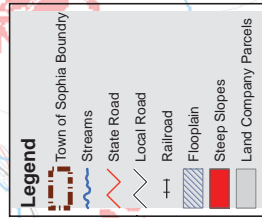
Source: Raleigh County Assessor's Office, WV DOT, WV GIS Tech Center



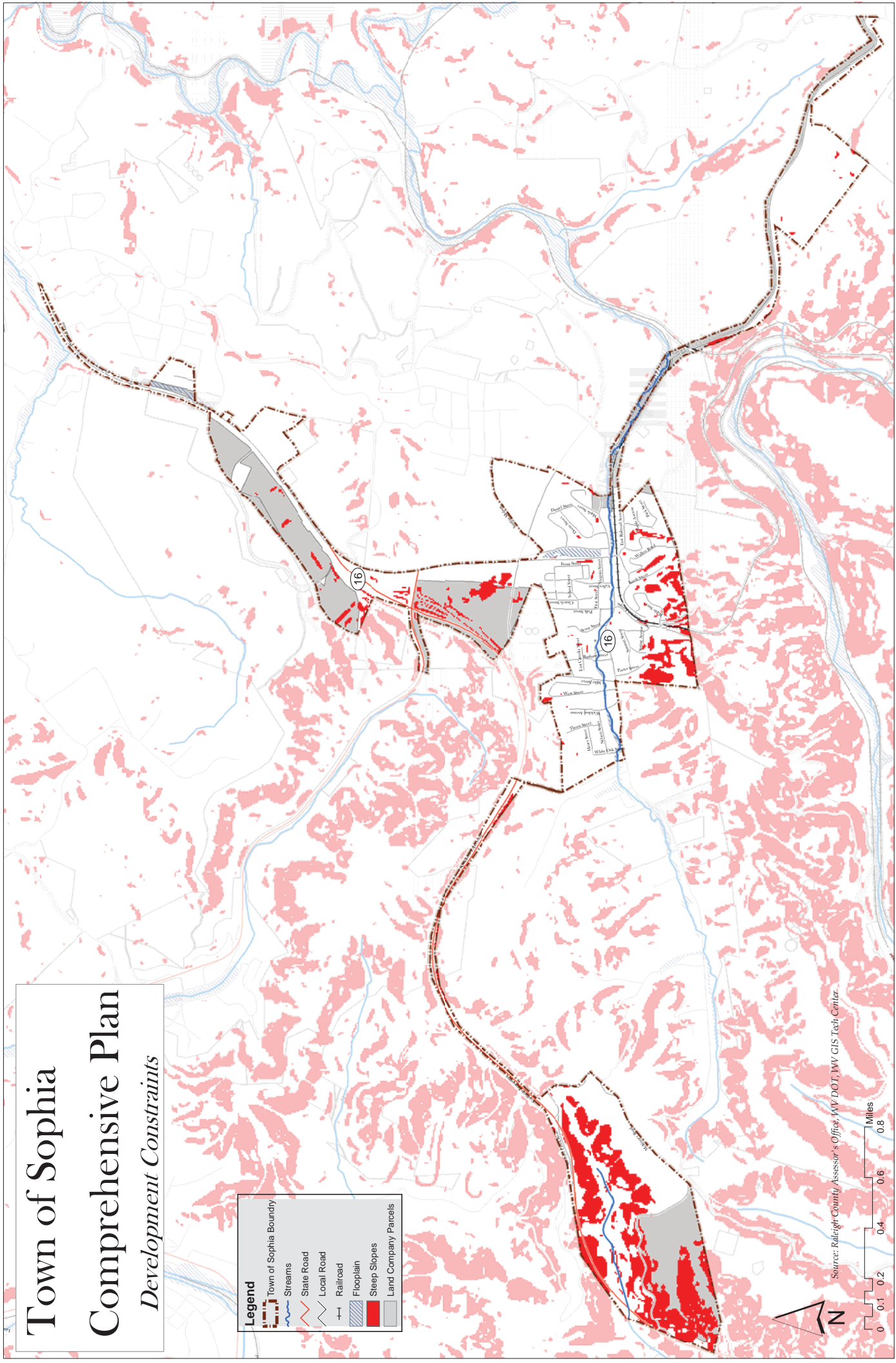
Town of Sophia

Comprehensive Plan

Development Constraints



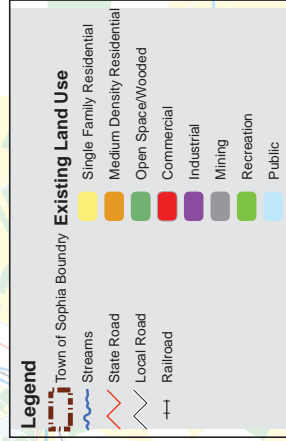
Source: Raleigh County Assessor's Office, WV DOT, WV GIS Tech Center.



Town of Sophia

Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Map



Preferred Development Area:
Commercial

Preferred Development Area:
Commercial

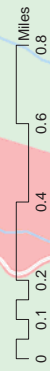
Preferred Development Area:
Commercial

Preferred Development Area:
Industrial

Renewal/Redevelopment Area

Renewal/Redevelopment Area

Source: Raleigh County Assessor's Office, WV DOT, WV GIS Tech Center



APPENDIX 7: ADOPTION MATERIALS

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION
BECKLEY NEWSPAPERS
BECKLEY, WEST VIRGINIA 25801

08/14/2017

COPY OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF RALEIGH, to wit:

ATTACHED

I, Tara Meyer, being duly sworn upon my oath, do depose and say that I am Legal Advertising Clerk for Beckley Newspapers, a corporation, publisher of the newspaper entitled The Register-Herald, an Independent newspaper; that I have been duly authorized by the board of directors of such corporation to execute this affidavit of publication; that such newspaper has been published for more than one year prior to publication of the annexed notice described below; that such newspaper is regularly published daily for at least fifty weeks during the calendar year, in the municipality of Beckley, Raleigh County, West Virginia; that such newspaper is a newspaper of "general circulation" as that term is defined in article three, chapter fifty-nine of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, within the publication area of areas of the aforesaid municipality and county; that such newspaper averages in length four or more pages, exclusive of any cover, per issue; that such newspaper is circulated to the general public at a definite price of consideration; that such newspaper is a newspaper to which the general public resorts for passing events of a political, religious, commercial and social nature, and for current happenings, announcements, miscellaneous reading matter, advertisements and other notices; that the annexed notice

of NOTICE

(Description of notice)

was duly published in said newspaper once a week for 1 successive weeks (Class 1), commencing with the issue of 08/14/2017 and ending with the issue of 08/14/2017, that said annexed notice was published on the following dates: 08/14/2017, and that the cost of publishing said annexed notice as aforesaid was \$ 24.29

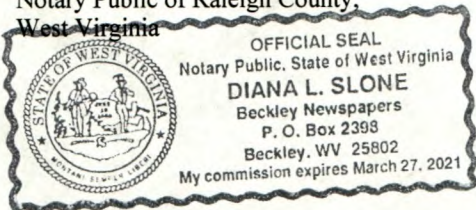
Signed

Tara Meyer
Tara Meyer
Legal Advertising Clerk
Beckley Newspapers

Taken, subscribed and sworn to before me in my said county this day:
08/14/2017

My commission expires March 27, 2021

Diana L. Slone
Notary Public of Raleigh County,
West Virginia



**RESOLUTION APPROVING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PREPARED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF
TOWN OF SOPHIA, WEST VIRGINIA**

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission for Town of Sophia, West Virginia, pursuant to Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code, has prepared a comprehensive plan for the Town;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has adopted procedures for public input throughout the comprehensive plan process;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has identified and addressed all required objectives and components pursuant to Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code;

WHEREAS, pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-6, notice was published in the Register-Herald on August 14, 2017;

WHEREAS, further pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-6, a public hearing was held before the Town of Sophia's Planning Commission on October 2, 2017;

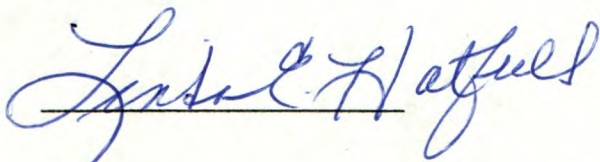
WHEREAS, all written comments presented to the planning commission pursuant to the notice of public hearing were duly considered; and,

WHEREAS, no oral comments were presented to the planning commission pursuant to the notice of the public hearing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission for Town of Sophia, West Virginia, that, pursuant to Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code, the comprehensive plan prepared by the Planning Commission for the Town of Sophia, West Virginia, bearing the date of August 2017, is made a part of this resolution by reference and is hereby recommended to the Town Council, without any amendments thereto entered into the official minutes of the Planning Commission.

PASSED and APPROVED at a special meeting of the Planning Commission of the Town of Sophia, West Virginia, held on October 2, 2017.

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Linda E. Hatfield", is written over a horizontal line.

President, Town of Sophia Planning Commission

October 3, 2017

Town of Sophia Council
P O Box 700
Railroad Avenue
Sophia, WV 25921

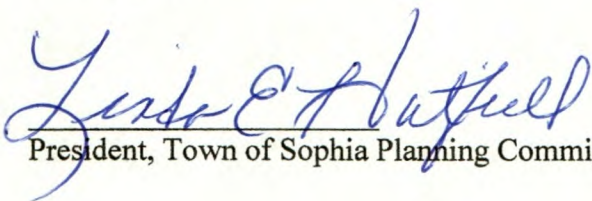
Dear Council Members,

On behalf of the Town of Sophia Planning Commission I would like to submit the recommended comprehensive plan, which has been prepared by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has taken great strides to ensure that this Plan is in conformance with Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code, which governs land use planning in West Virginia. This includes the adoption of public input procedures, by the Planning Commission, which have been followed throughout the planning process.

After holding a properly advertised public hearing on October 2, 2017, the Planning Commission convened and held a regular meeting where a quorum of the Commission, by way of resolution, recommended the plan and now submits the plan to Town Council for review and possible adoption.

At the next Town Council meeting the Planning Commission will present the comprehensive plan to Council where we would be happy to answer any question you or members of the Council may have. In order to present the comprehensive plan the Planning Commission requests that the matter be placed on the next Council's meeting's agenda.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Linda E. Hatfield".

President, Town of Sophia Planning Commission

Enclosure

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION
BECKLEY NEWSPAPERS
BECKLEY, WEST VIRGINIA 25801

10/24/2017

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF RALEIGH, to wit:

I, Tara Meyer, being duly sworn upon my oath, do depose and say that I am Legal Advertising Clerk for Beckley Newspapers, a corporation, publisher of the newspaper entitled The Register-Herald, an Independent newspaper; that I have been duly authorized by the board of directors of such corporation to execute this affidavit of publication; that such newspaper has been published for more than one year prior to publication of the annexed notice described below; that such newspaper is regularly published daily for at least fifty weeks during the calendar year, in the municipality of Beckley, Raleigh County, West Virginia: that such newspaper is a newspaper of "general circulation" as that term is defined in article three, chapter fifty-nine of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, within the publication area of areas of the aforesaid municipality and county; that such newspaper averages in length four or more pages, exclusive of any cover, per issue; that such newspaper is circulated to the general public at a definite price of consideration; that such newspaper is a newspaper to which the general public resorts for passing events of a political, religious, commercial and social nature, and for current happenings, announcements, miscellaneous reading matter, advertisements and other notices; that the annexed notice

of NOTICE

(Description of notice)

was duly published in said newspaper once a week for 1 successive

weeks (Class 1), commencing with the issue of 10/24/2017

and ending with the issue of 10/24/2017, that said annexed notice was

published on the following dates: 10/24/2017,

and that the cost of publishing said annexed notice as aforesaid was \$ 23.17

Signed _____

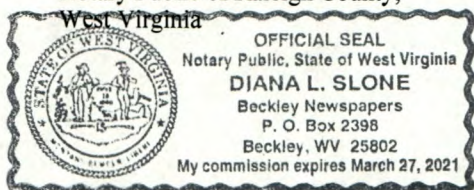
Tara Meyer
Tara Meyer
Legal Advertising Clerk
Beckley Newspapers

Taken, subscribed and sworn to before me in my said county this day:
10/24/2017

My commission expires March 27, 2021

Diana L. Slone
Notary Public of Raleigh County,

West Virginia



COPY OF PUBLICATION

ATTACHED

RESOLUTION ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF SOPHIA, WEST VIRGINIA

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission for the Town of Sophia, West Virginia, pursuant to Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code, has prepared a recommended comprehensive plan for the town;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has recommended that Town Council adopt the comprehensive plan;

WHEREAS, pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-7, a public hearing was held before the Town of Sophia's Planning Commission on Monday, October 2, 2017;

WHEREAS, the planning commission presented the comprehensive plan to Town Council on Thursday, October 19, 2017;

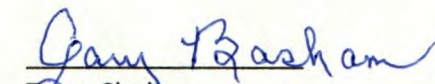
WHEREAS, pursuant to §8A-3-7, a public hearing was held before Town Council on Thursday, November 16, 2017;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT BE RESOLVED by the Town Council for the Town of Sophia, West Virginia, that, pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-8, the comprehensive plan prepared by the Planning Commission for the Town of Sophia, West Virginia, bearing the date of October 2017, is made a part of this resolution by reference and is hereby adopted without any amendments thereto entered into the official minutes of the Town Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this adopted comprehensive plan shall, pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-9, be filed in the office of the clerk of the county commission for Raleigh County, West Virginia.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Sophia, West Virginia, held on Thursday, November 16, 2017.

ATTEST:


Town Clerk