



UNLOCKING POTENTIAL
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Memorandum

To: Township Committee, Township of Millburn

Copy: Joe Portelli, RPM Development Group, Conditionally Designated Developer
Anthony D'Agosta, Inglese Architecture + Engineering, Project Architect

From: Graham Petto, PP, AICP, Township Planner

Date: May 11, 2022

**SUBJECT: 9 Main Street Affordable Housing Design
Public Outreach Results**

I. Background

Pursuant to the Settlement Term #12 (a-q) of the Township's [Settlement Agreement with Fair Share Housing Center](#), the Township of Millburn is required to develop a portion of the Department of Public Works (DPW) site located at 9 Main Street with a 75-unit, 100% affordable housing project. As part of this process, the Township, Topology, RPM Development Group, and Inglese Architecture + Engineering conducted extensive public outreach between April 18 and May 3, 2022, to solicit public feedback on the design of the affordable housing development, also known as the 9 Main Street Development.

A proposed development design was not proposed; instead, discussion and questions were designed to solicit community members' preferences. Questions focused on building architecture, sustainability, resident amenities, and public open space / streetscape design. The questions were complimented by precedent imagery from Downtown Millburn and other example developments, potential sustainability and streetscape improvements, and opportunities for open-ended feedback.

Public outreach took two forms:

- Online Survey, available April 18 to May 3:
 - 635 Responses
- Hybrid In-Person/Virtual Workshop April 26:
 - ~15 in-person attendees, ~40 virtual attendees

Together, the survey and workshop received input from nearly 700 community members, providing a substantial set of feedback to guide the design of the 9 Main Street Development. While the survey and workshop asked similar questions, the scope was adjusted to better accommodate each form of outreach. The survey was generally more detailed / specific in its questions, asking about preferences for specific building materials and design treatments. Conversely, the workshop asked broader questions, comparing various example developments as a whole and encouraging discussion among participants, with additional emphasis placed on potential streetscape and open space improvements.

II. Summary of Responses

a. Downtown Character

One priority for the project is that the development fit within the physical context and character of Downtown Millburn. Respondents were asked to select from a set of images of downtown which best reflect the downtown's character. Responses were mixed, with a wide variety of preferences demonstrated. The results correlate with sentiments shared by several respondents that Downtown Millburn lacks a cohesive, defining character.

Despite this variety, Schoolhouse Plaza and the Millburn Deli received notably strong support. The survey used a ranking system, and the Millburn Deli and Schoolhouse Plaza received about

50% and 25% of first-place votes, respectively. Buildings at the southeast and southwest corner of Essex Street and Main Street also received considerable support.

b. Architecture – Massing

Respondents generally supported building design strategies that reduce the perceived size of the building, including:

- “Stepping back” the top floor along the front façade (80%)
- Breaking up the appearance of the building through façade design (59%)
- Mixing flat and sloped roofing (56%)

Several respondents also expressed concern about the scale of the development to avoid a “big city” feel. Workshop participants supported building examples with step backs and designs that break up the building appearance.

Together, these sentiments correlate with other demonstrated preferences, including respecting the existing scale of Downtown and fondness for the character of the Millburn Deli.

c. Architecture – Materials

Respondents strongly prefer masonry and wood building façade finishes. Over 90% of survey respondents preferred masonry as appropriate or very appropriate, while 50% said the same about wood. Siding and paneling are not desired by residents, with a plurality of survey respondents saying such materials are not at all appropriate (40% and 43%, respectively). Where sloped roofing is used, respondents strongly prefer shingle roofing to metal roofing.

Among workshop participants, there was a strong preference for brick buildings with flat roofs, as well as for a residential style, sloped-roof building with mixed materials.

Beyond basic material preferences, many respondents provided more nuanced opinions. Several respondents expressed that material color – in addition to a well-rounded color palette and colors complementary to the existing downtown palette – are as important as material type. In addition, other respondents emphasized using “real” materials, as opposed to materials like faux wood and plastic composites. While some respondents opposed a “gray box” style, others would be fine with such a modern-style development if faux and plastic materials are avoided. Lastly, some respondents preferred materials that were cost-effective without jeopardizing the building design.

d. Architecture – Other Design Elements

Survey respondents strongly support building design differentiating the ground floor (84%), while respondents were mixed on whether upper floor window openings should be medium (43%) or large (45%) in size. Most respondents (52%) like material highlights for window openings, with significant support for shutters (38%) and window cornices (31%) as well.

Concerning overall character of the development, respondents have diverging views. Some emphasized traditional building designs with classic red brick like Schoolhouse Plaza. Yet others think the building should reflect newer development in downtown with clean, straight lines, such as the adjacent Common Lot building. Lastly, others seek a more “transitional” style, such as the Basilico building.

e. Streetscape

The survey asked whether the sidewalk design recently installed in along portions of Main Street and Millburn Avenue should be extended as part of the project, to which 67% of respondents said yes. However, several respondents noted that sidewalk improvements should match those across the street that connect the Paper Mill Playhouse and the downtown, particularly the sidewalk light bollards.

In addition, both the survey and workshop provided open-ended opportunities for input, which provided many insights for the Townships. Residents demonstrated a strong desire for street trees, greenery/landscaping, public seating, wide sidewalks, and burying of utility wires. A theme in some of these responses was to use these treatments to provide a buffer between pedestrians / cyclists and automobiles, while other respondents noted that trees and landscaping

would help mitigate the scale of the development. Several respondents also supported various gateway treatments, such as murals, improving the NJ Transit rail bridge, and placing millwheels – a Township symbol – at intersections.

In addition, many residents requested improvements to enhance the pedestrian and bicyclist experience, including widened sidewalks, bike lanes and bike parking, enhanced crosswalks, well-lit streets, limiting/removing on-street parking, and other traffic calming measures. Conversely, other respondents are concerned about the impacts of the project and street improvements on automobile traffic and parking, requesting things such as angled parking, additional parking spaces, and preservation of travel lanes, as well as avoiding use of curb “bump-outs.” In addition, respondents are concerned about the project’s affect on traffic through the corridor and proposed improvements to mitigate the issue, such as a traffic light at the site’s driveway, removing northbound on-street parking to provide a turning lane and a through lane.

f. Open Space

While both survey and workshop respondents were asked for preferences regarding potential open space improvements as part of the project, the workshop expanded the scope of potential open space to include vacant space on JCP&L property south of the site.

Respondents expressed a strong preference for green space (70%), as opposed to a hardscaped/plaza treatment (14%) or no open space (16%). Workshop attendees responded well to “linear park” concepts that provide wide walkways buffered by trees and landscaping. Such a design is consistent with the desires expressed for streetscape improvements and would advance the opportunity described by Topology at the workshop to better connect the Middle School and Paper Mill Playhouse with downtown.

Regarding outdoor amenity space for the development, 71% of survey respondents support screening such amenity space from public view.

g. Sustainability

Respondents support most sustainability options, demonstrating the Township’s commitment to sustainable design. Respondents preferred stormwater mitigation, energy-efficient treatments, and electric vehicle parking. Given downtown’s susceptibility to flooding, residents supported measures such as stormwater retention, rain/grey water recycling, and green roofing. Many write-in respondents support rooftop solar panels. Several respondents also noted that building materials should be sustainably sourced.

III. Conclusions + Next Steps

In general, respondents prefer a masonry and/or wood building that uses step backs, material and façade design, and varying rooflines to break up the size the building. While there is not much agreement regarding the downtown’s existing character, residents agree that the building should respect and complement existing downtown building design, particularly within proximity of the development site.

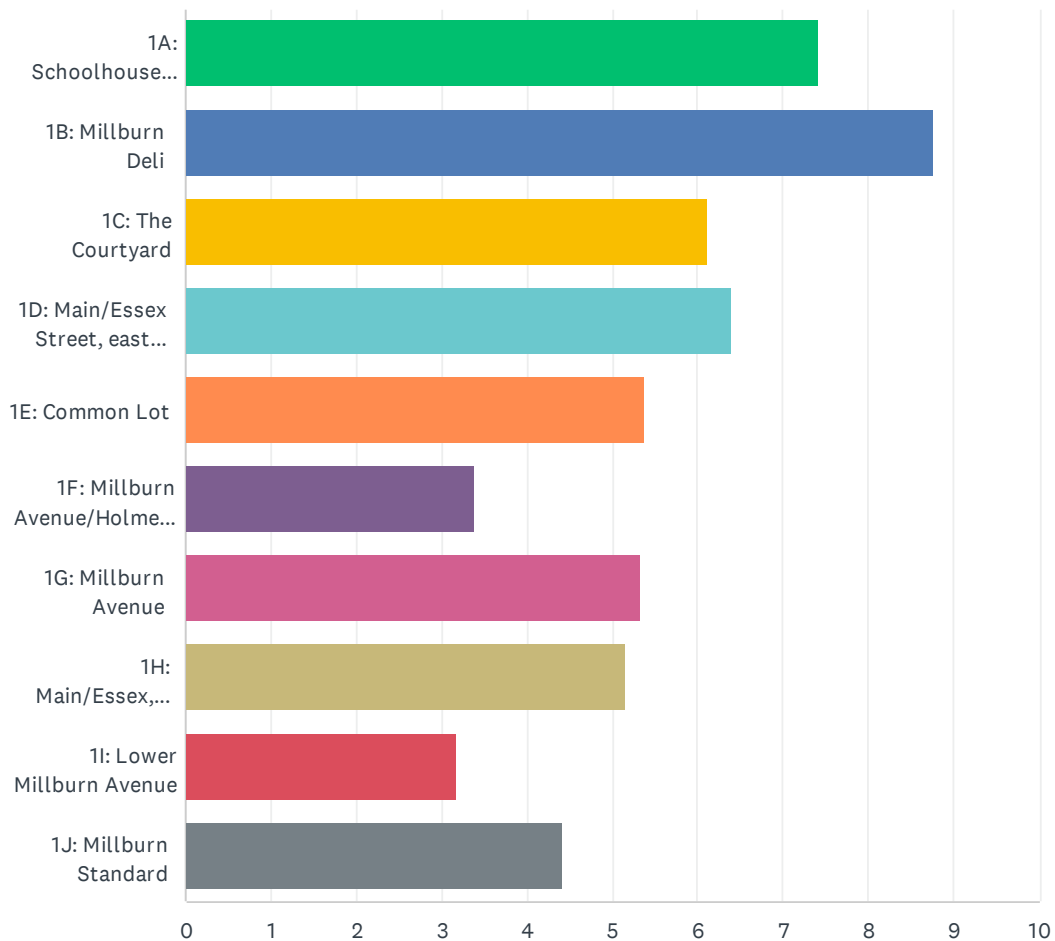
Sustainable building design is important to residents, both financially and environmentally. Material choice should be cost effective without resorting to faux or low-quality materials. Building design should incorporate a variety of stormwater management systems, energy-efficient appliances and design, and electric vehicle parking.

Respondents recognize and embrace improving the pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Middle School / Paper Mill Playhouse and the downtown. Such connection should be enhanced by wide, high-quality sidewalks, buried utility poles, and the use of a wide, landscaped walkway / linear park that shields pedestrians and cyclists from automobile traffic. To the extent possible, such connection should not impact automobile traffic on Main Street and should use the vacant portion of the JCP&L site. We note that the concept for improving the vacant JCP&L space is a preliminary concept that requires approval from JCP&L and may be pursued separately from the 9 Main Street Development.

Next, RPM Development Group and Inglese Architecture + Engineering will use this public feedback to inform and guide design of the 9 Main Street Development, with a new project design anticipated for early June.

Q1 Please rank the below images by which best reflect the character of downtown Millburn, with 1 being the image that best reflects the downtown character.

Answered: 616 Skipped: 18

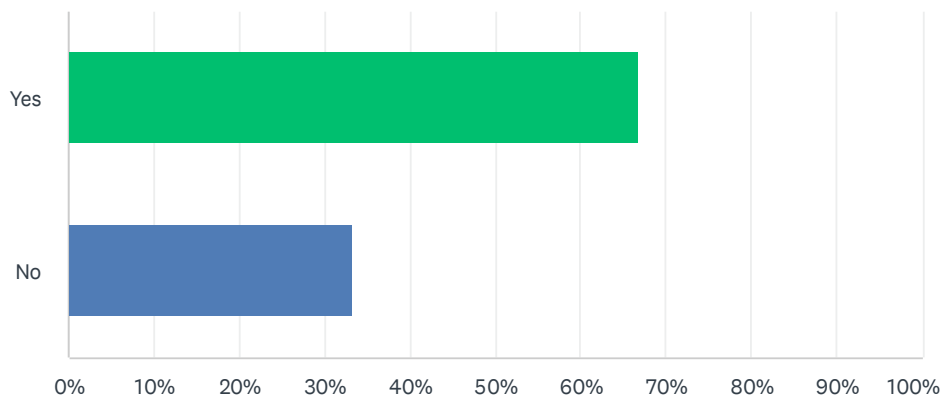


9 Main Street Affordable Housing Development - Design Survey

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
1A: Schoolhouse Plaza	25.65% 147	21.82% 125	13.79% 79	7.85% 45	8.20% 47	6.28% 36	4.19% 24	4.71% 27	5.06% 29	2.44% 14	573
1B: Millburn Deli	49.49% 292	22.88% 135	11.19% 66	5.25% 31	4.24% 25	1.53% 9	2.37% 14	1.19% 7	0.68% 4	1.19% 7	590
1C: The Courtyard	5.35% 30	10.70% 60	21.39% 120	15.86% 89	10.16% 57	8.73% 49	8.56% 48	8.38% 47	5.88% 33	4.99% 28	561
1D: Main/Essex Street, east corner	3.75% 21	13.04% 73	15.71% 88	24.29% 136	13.39% 75	11.61% 65	6.07% 34	4.82% 27	4.82% 27	2.50% 14	560
1E: Common Lot	5.48% 31	7.24% 41	7.77% 44	9.36% 53	21.38% 121	13.96% 79	10.07% 57	10.25% 58	6.89% 39	7.60% 43	566
1F: Millburn Avenue/Holmes Street Apartments	0.89% 5	2.31% 13	2.14% 12	3.56% 20	6.23% 35	17.62% 99	13.52% 76	11.21% 63	12.99% 73	29.54% 166	562
1G: Millburn Avenue	4.62% 26	7.99% 45	9.77% 55	9.41% 53	10.48% 59	12.79% 72	23.27% 131	11.37% 64	6.39% 36	3.91% 22	563
1H: Main/Essex, west corner	3.01% 17	6.56% 37	9.40% 53	13.30% 75	11.35% 64	11.70% 66	11.88% 67	21.28% 120	10.11% 57	1.42% 8	564
1I: Lower Millburn Avenue	1.43% 8	1.07% 6	2.86% 16	3.57% 20	5.71% 32	6.79% 38	9.64% 54	16.79% 94	35.54% 199	16.61% 93	560
1J: Millburn Standard	5.65% 32	8.48% 48	7.42% 42	7.95% 45	8.13% 46	7.60% 43	9.01% 51	7.95% 45	10.07% 57	27.74% 157	566

Q2 Should the sidewalk design along Millburn Avenue and Main Street be extended as part of the development project? (See example images below.)

Answered: 533 Skipped: 101



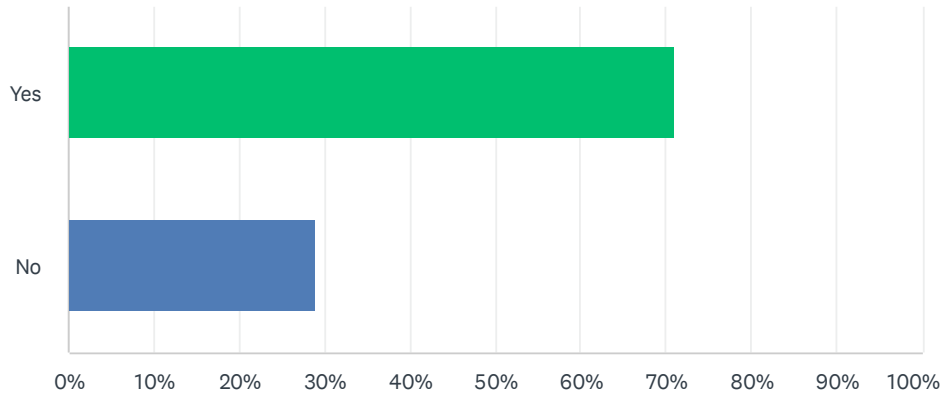
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	66.79%	356
No	33.21%	177
TOTAL		533

Q3 Are there other streetscape improvements that should be considered as part of the project?

Answered: 155 Skipped: 479

Q4 Should outdoor amenities for building residents be screened from public view?

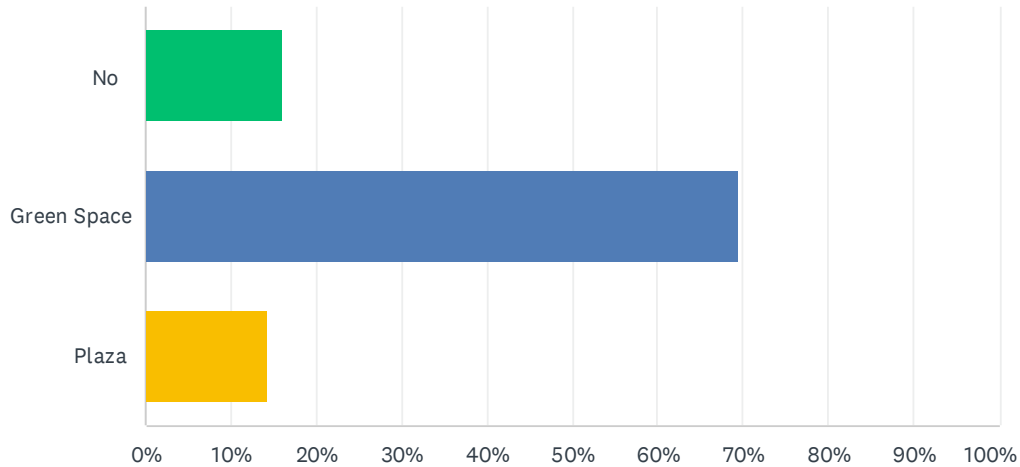
Answered: 527 Skipped: 107



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	70.97%	374
No	29.03%	153
TOTAL		527

Q5 If feasible, should the 9 Main Street project provide public open space along Main Street?

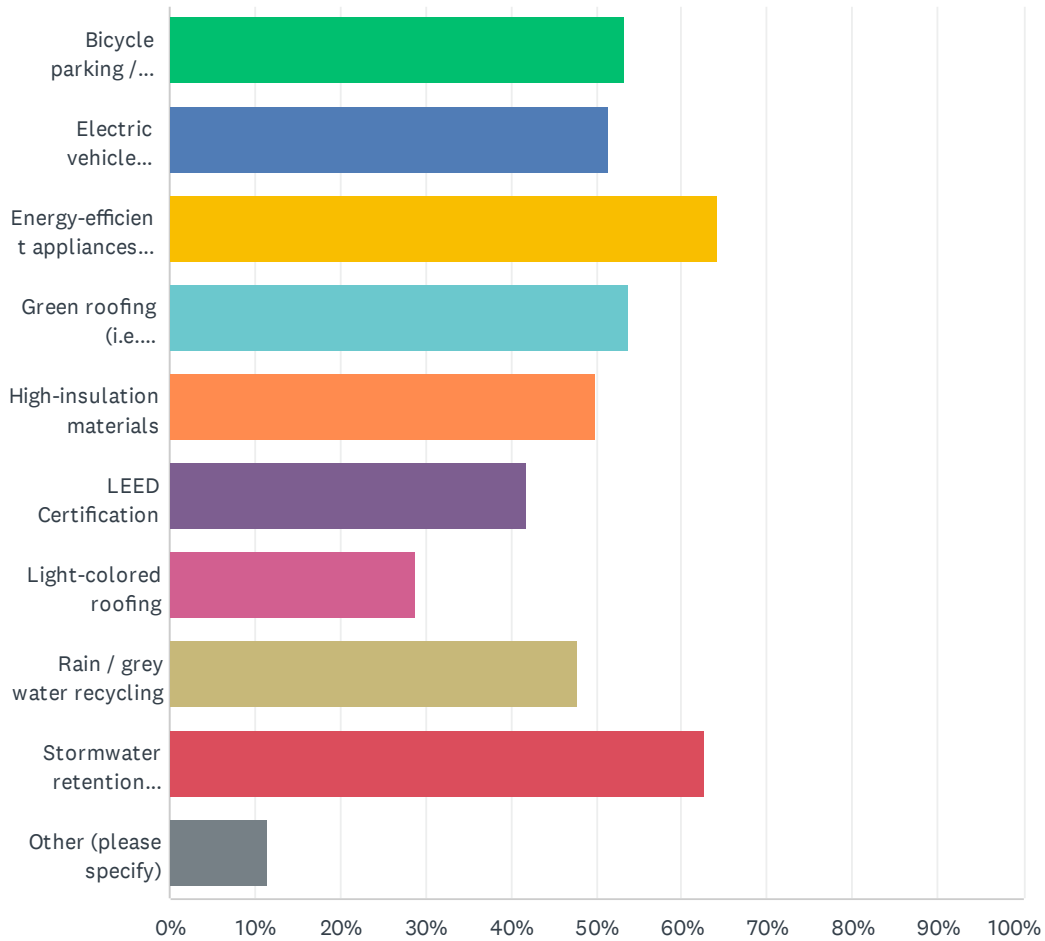
Answered: 529 Skipped: 105



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	16.07%	85
Green Space	69.57%	368
Plaza	14.37%	76
TOTAL		529

Q6 What kinds of sustainability measures would you like to see included in the 9 Main Street project?

Answered: 437 Skipped: 197

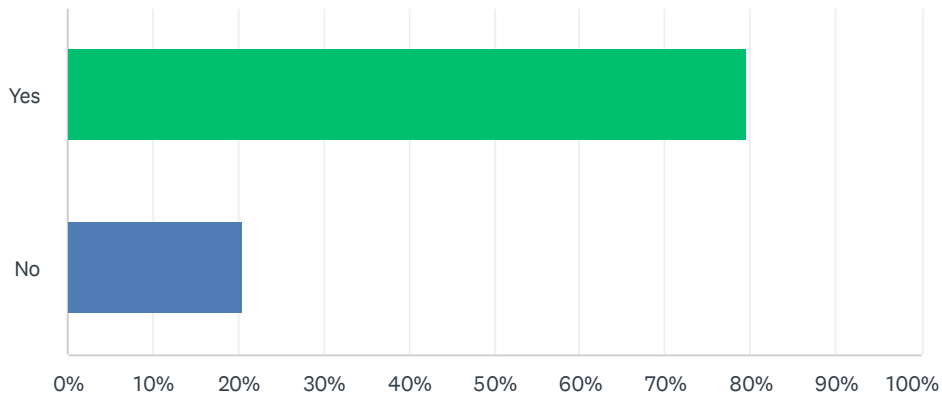


9 Main Street Affordable Housing Development - Design Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bicycle parking / storage	53.32%	233
Electric vehicle charging stations	51.49%	225
Energy-efficient appliances / lighting	64.07%	280
Green roofing (i.e. vegetation on the roof)	53.78%	235
High-insulation materials	49.89%	218
LEED Certification	41.88%	183
Light-colored roofing	28.83%	126
Rain / grey water recycling	47.83%	209
Stormwater retention systems	62.70%	274
Other (please specify)	11.44%	50
Total Respondents: 437		

Q7 Should the building "step back" from the façade at the top floor? (See diagram and example below)

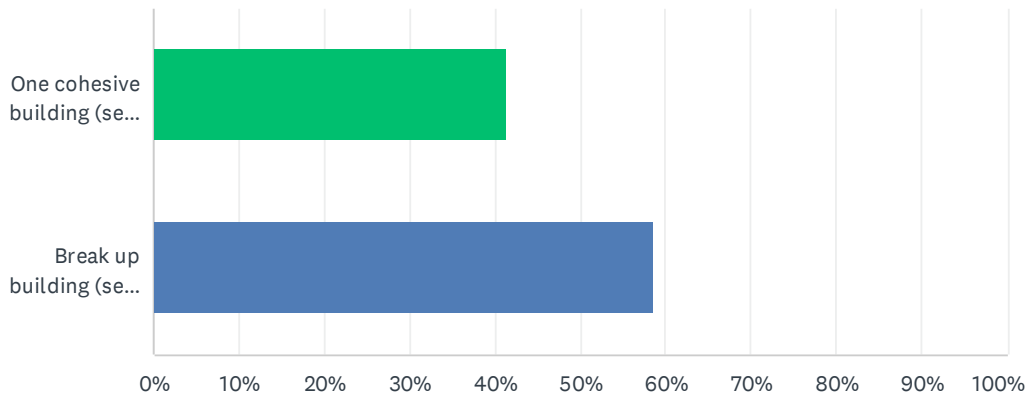
Answered: 435 Skipped: 199



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	79.54%	346
No	20.46%	89
TOTAL		435

Q8 Should building design break up the building or create one cohesive building design? (See below images for examples.)

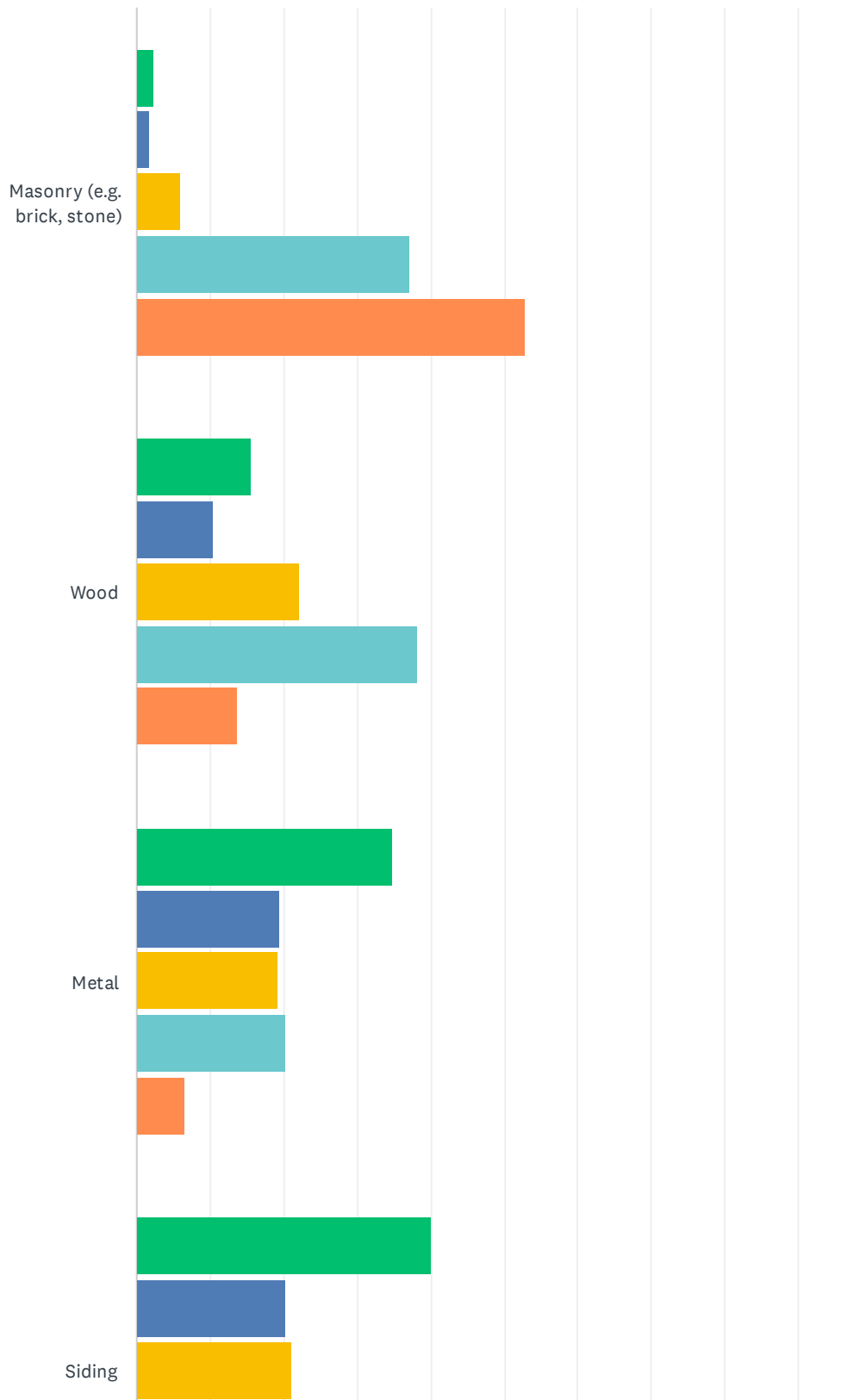
Answered: 441 Skipped: 193



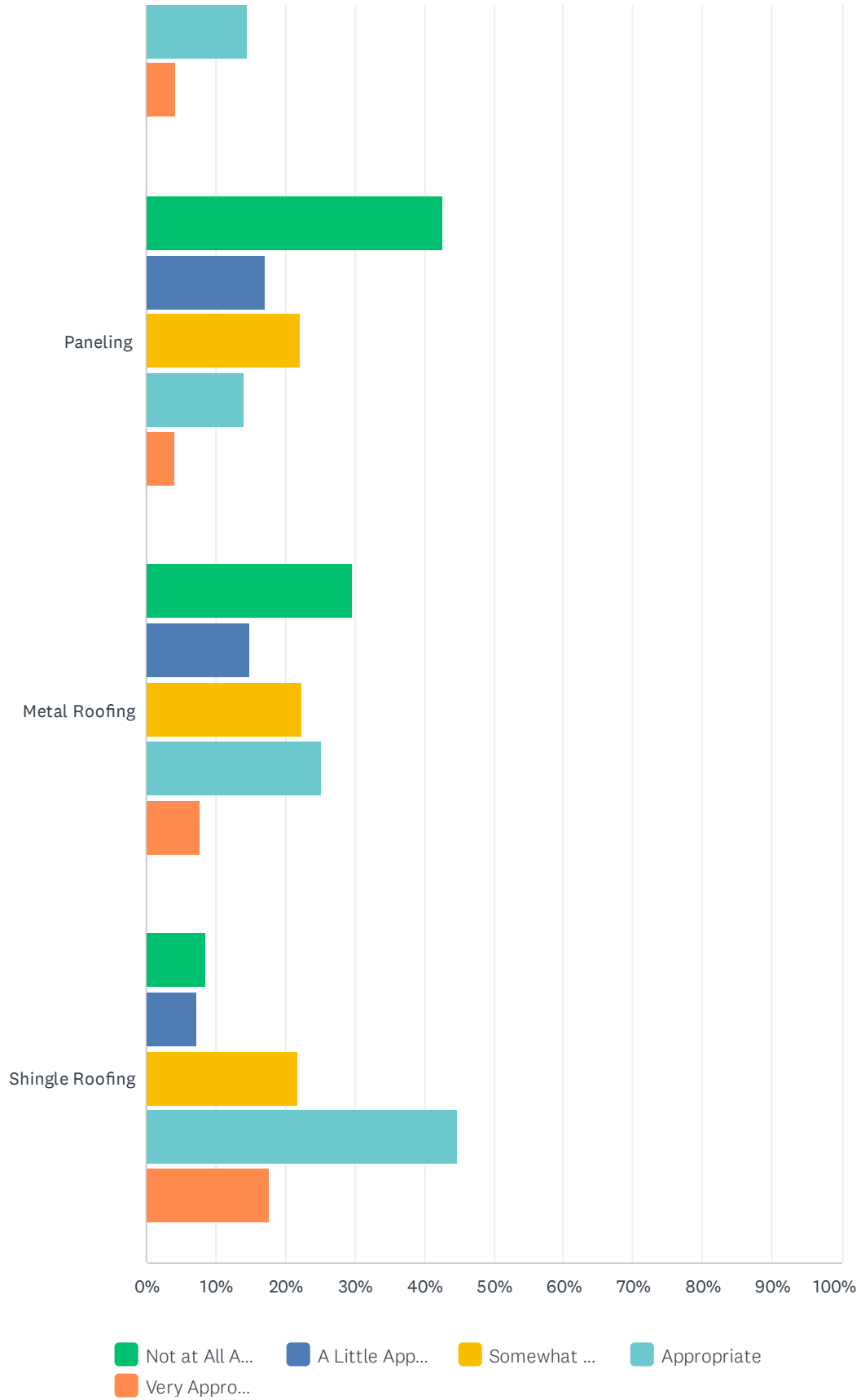
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
One cohesive building (see Images 8A and 8B)	41.27%	182
Break up building (see Images 8C and 8D)	58.73%	259
TOTAL		441

Q9 Which building materials are most appropriate for the project? (See examples below)

Answered: 430 Skipped: 204



9 Main Street Affordable Housing Development - Design Survey

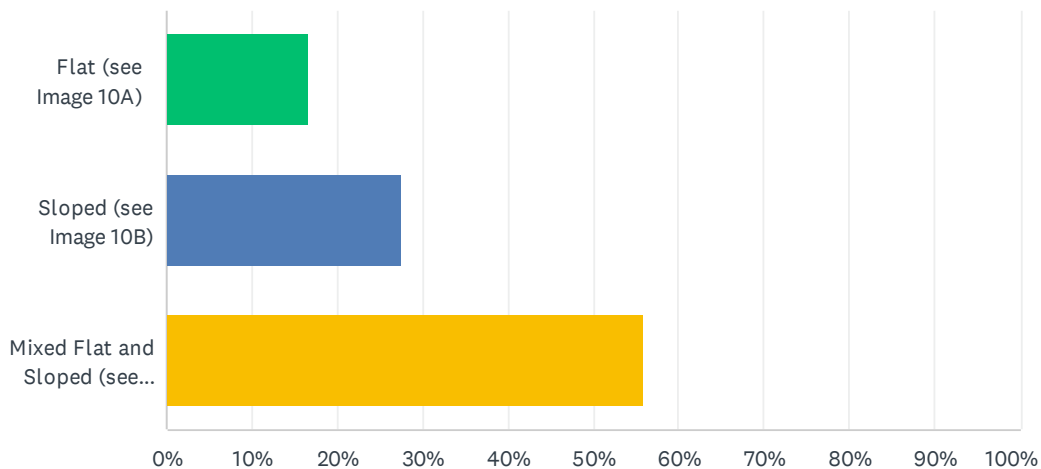


9 Main Street Affordable Housing Development - Design Survey

	NOT AT ALL APPROPRIATE	A LITTLE APPROPRIATE	SOMEWHAT APPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE	VERY APPROPRIATE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Masonry (e.g. brick, stone)	2.36% 10	1.65% 7	5.91% 25	37.12% 157	52.96% 224	423	4.37
Wood	15.63% 63	10.42% 42	22.08% 89	38.21% 154	13.65% 55	403	3.24
Metal	34.69% 136	19.39% 76	19.13% 75	20.15% 79	6.63% 26	392	2.45
Siding	40.05% 153	20.16% 77	21.20% 81	14.40% 55	4.19% 16	382	2.23
Paneling	42.74% 162	17.15% 65	22.16% 84	13.98% 53	3.96% 15	379	2.19
Metal Roofing	29.64% 115	14.95% 58	22.42% 87	25.26% 98	7.73% 30	388	2.66
Shingle Roofing	8.55% 33	7.25% 28	21.76% 84	44.82% 173	17.62% 68	386	3.56

Q10 What type of roofline is appropriate for the project? (See examples below.)

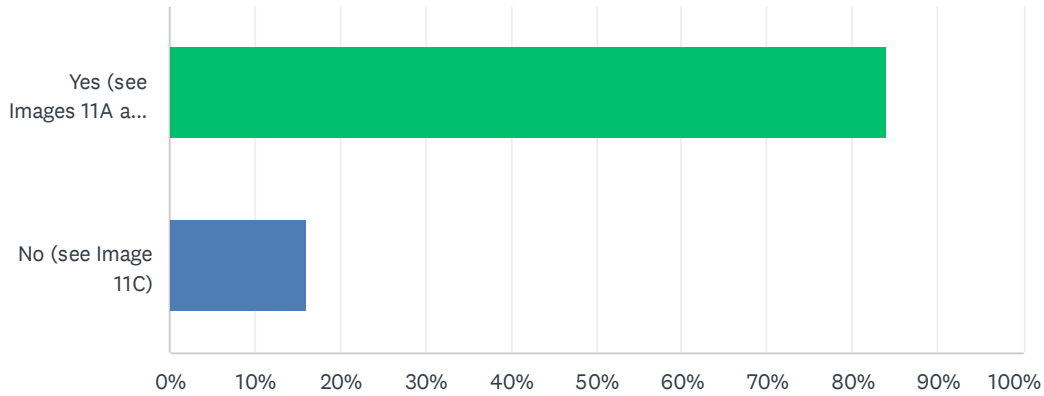
Answered: 407 Skipped: 227



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Flat (see Image 10A)	16.71%	68
Sloped (see Image 10B)	27.52%	112
Mixed Flat and Sloped (see Image 10C)	55.77%	227
TOTAL		407

Q11 Should building design highlight / differentiate the ground floor? (See examples below.)

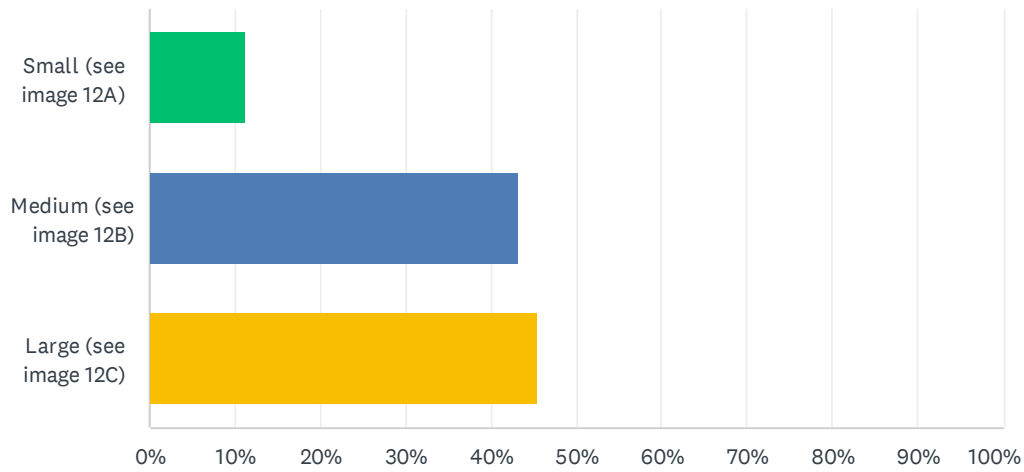
Answered: 409 Skipped: 225



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (see Images 11A and 11B)	84.11%	344
No (see Image 11C)	15.89%	65
TOTAL		409

Q12 How large should upper floor window openings be?

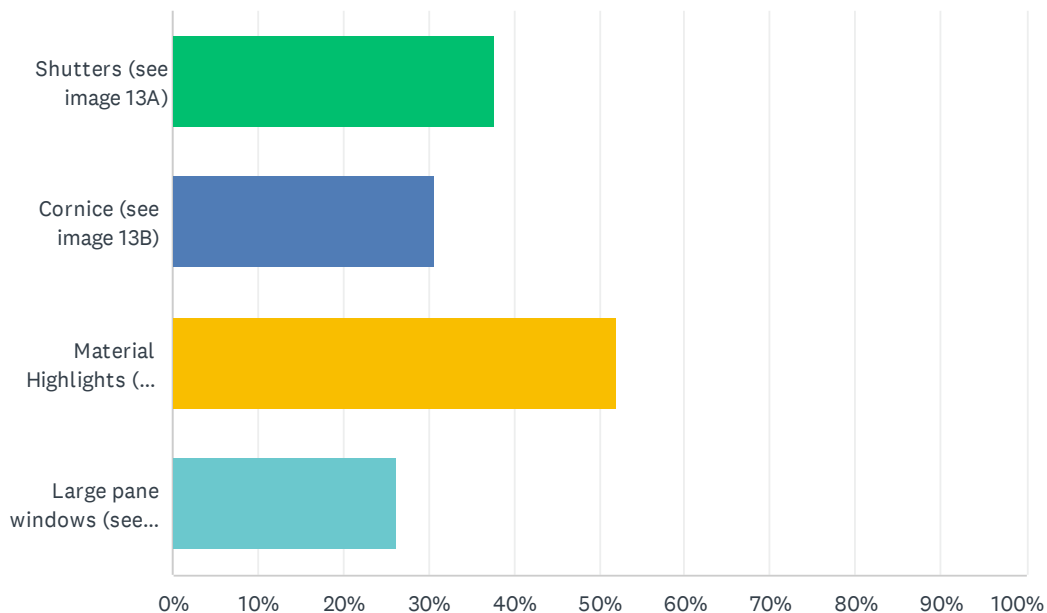
Answered: 416 Skipped: 218



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Small (see image 12A)	11.30%	47
Medium (see image 12B)	43.27%	180
Large (see image 12C)	45.43%	189
TOTAL		416

Q13 What types of window treatments should be used? (Select all that apply.)

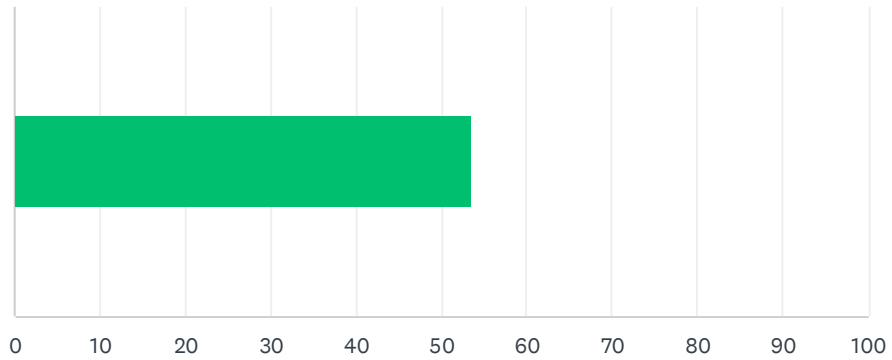
Answered: 414 Skipped: 220



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Shutters (see image 13A)	37.68%	156
Cornice (see image 13B)	30.68%	127
Material Highlights (see image 13C)	51.93%	215
Large pane windows (see image 13D)	26.33%	109
Total Respondents: 414		

Q14 What is your age?

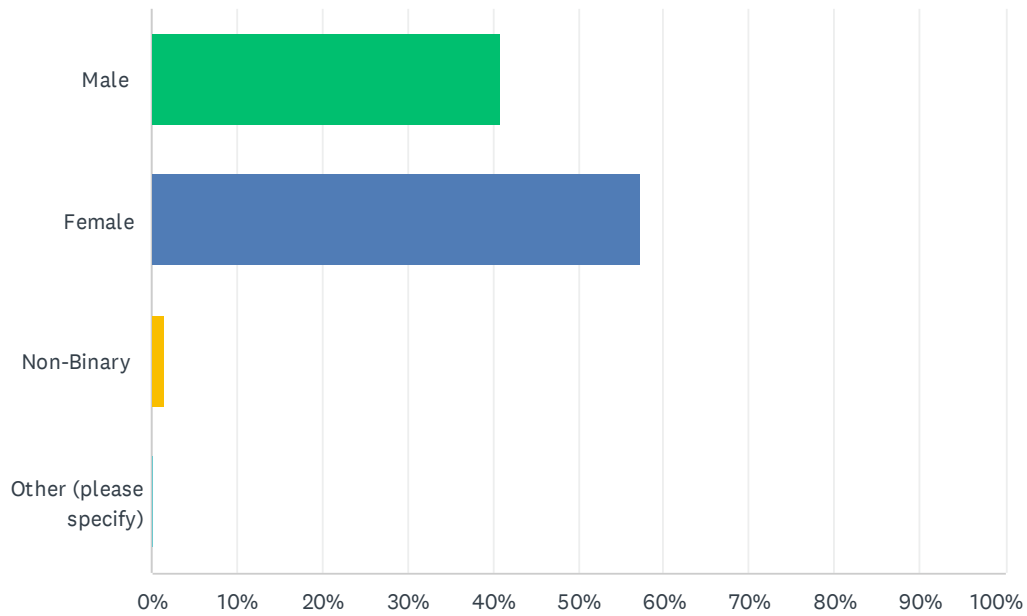
Answered: 419 Skipped: 215



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	53	22,397	419
Total Respondents: 419			

Q15 What is your gender

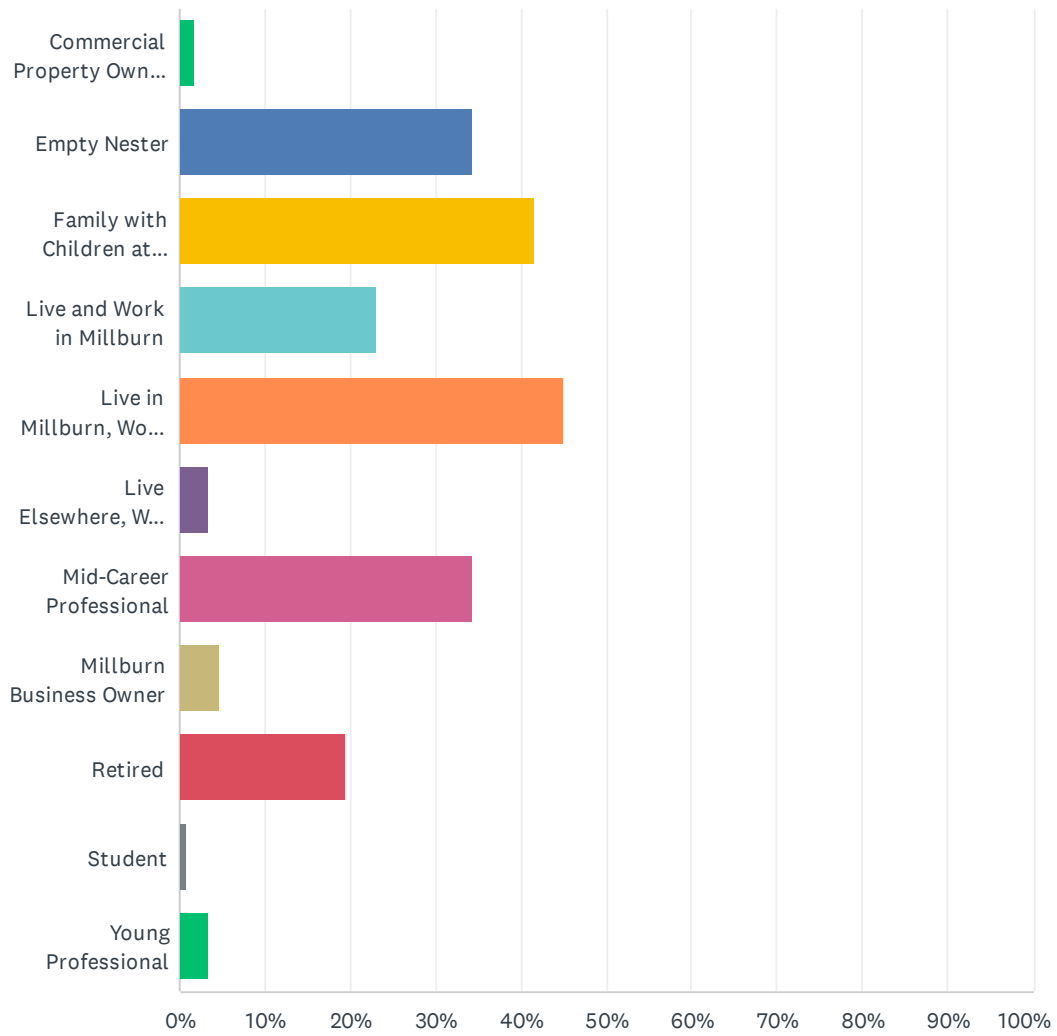
Answered: 423 Skipped: 211



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	40.90%	173
Female	57.45%	243
Non-Binary	1.42%	6
Other (please specify)	0.24%	1
TOTAL		423

Q16 Select all categories that describe you (check all that apply)

Answered: 430 Skipped: 204



9 Main Street Affordable Housing Development - Design Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Commercial Property Owner in Millburn	1.63%	7
Empty Nester	34.42%	148
Family with Children at Home	41.63%	179
Live and Work in Millburn	23.02%	99
Live in Millburn, Work Elsewhere	44.88%	193
Live Elsewhere, Work in Millburn	3.49%	15
Mid-Career Professional	34.42%	148
Millburn Business Owner	4.65%	20
Retired	19.30%	83
Student	0.93%	4
Young Professional	3.49%	15
Total Respondents: 430		