



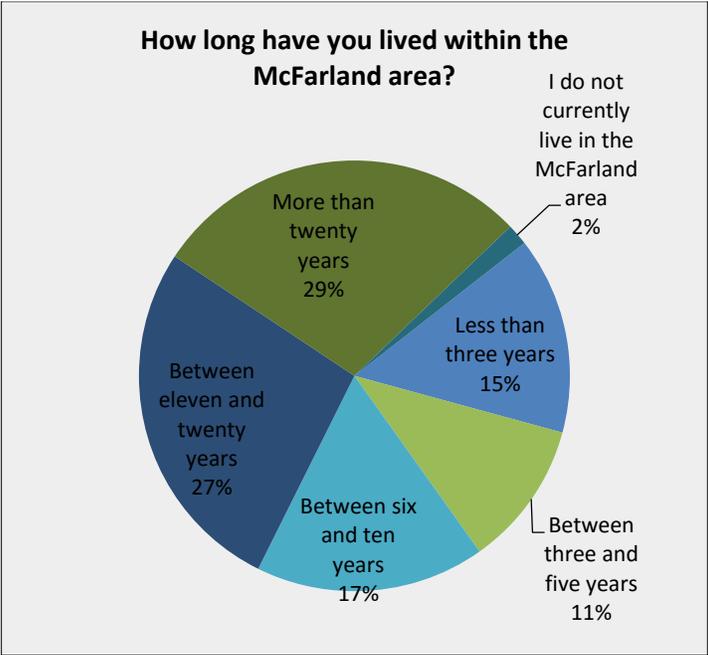
## Village of McFarland Comprehensive Plan Community Survey Results Summer 2016

In spring/early summer 2016, with direction from the Village Plan Commission, Village staff and consultants conducted a community survey to gather input on community priorities and preferences. The survey results will advise the Village on the update of its Comprehensive Plan—a guide to McFarland’s growth, change, and preservation. The results will be blended with other input and data collected during the Comprehensive Plan update process to inform policy directions within the Plan.

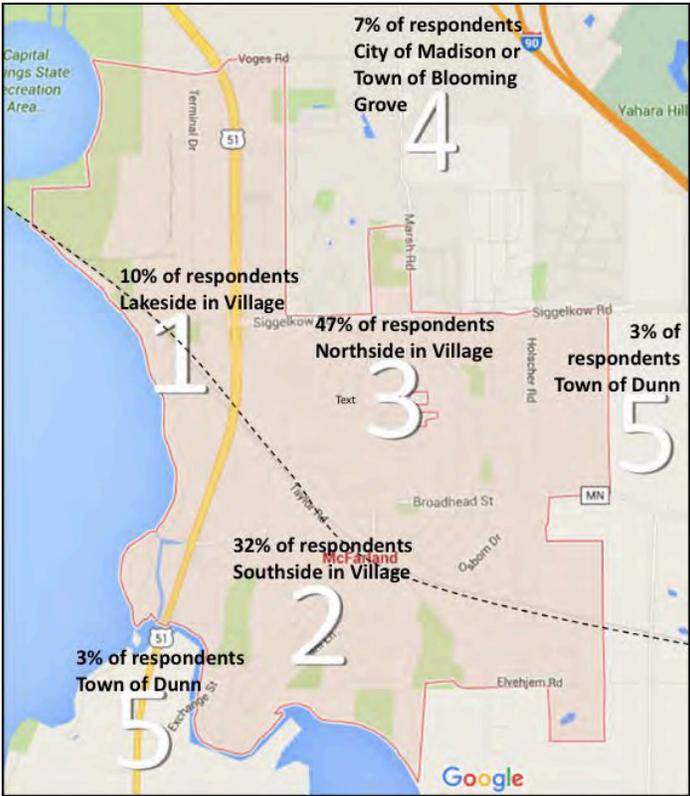
The survey was primarily conducted using an internet survey tool, but hard-copy surveys were also available. The Village utilized various means to make the public aware of the survey. These include the Village newsletter, articles in the community newspaper, the Village’s Web site and Facebook page, email blasts, and postings on signs and in other locations in the community.

There were 258 responses to the survey, which is equal to about 8% of Village households. Survey respondents generally reflected the actual age distribution in the Village, and were generally longer-term residents. Respondents were weighted more heavily towards homeowners, women, and parents with children when compared to the characteristics of all people and households in McFarland, as detailed below:

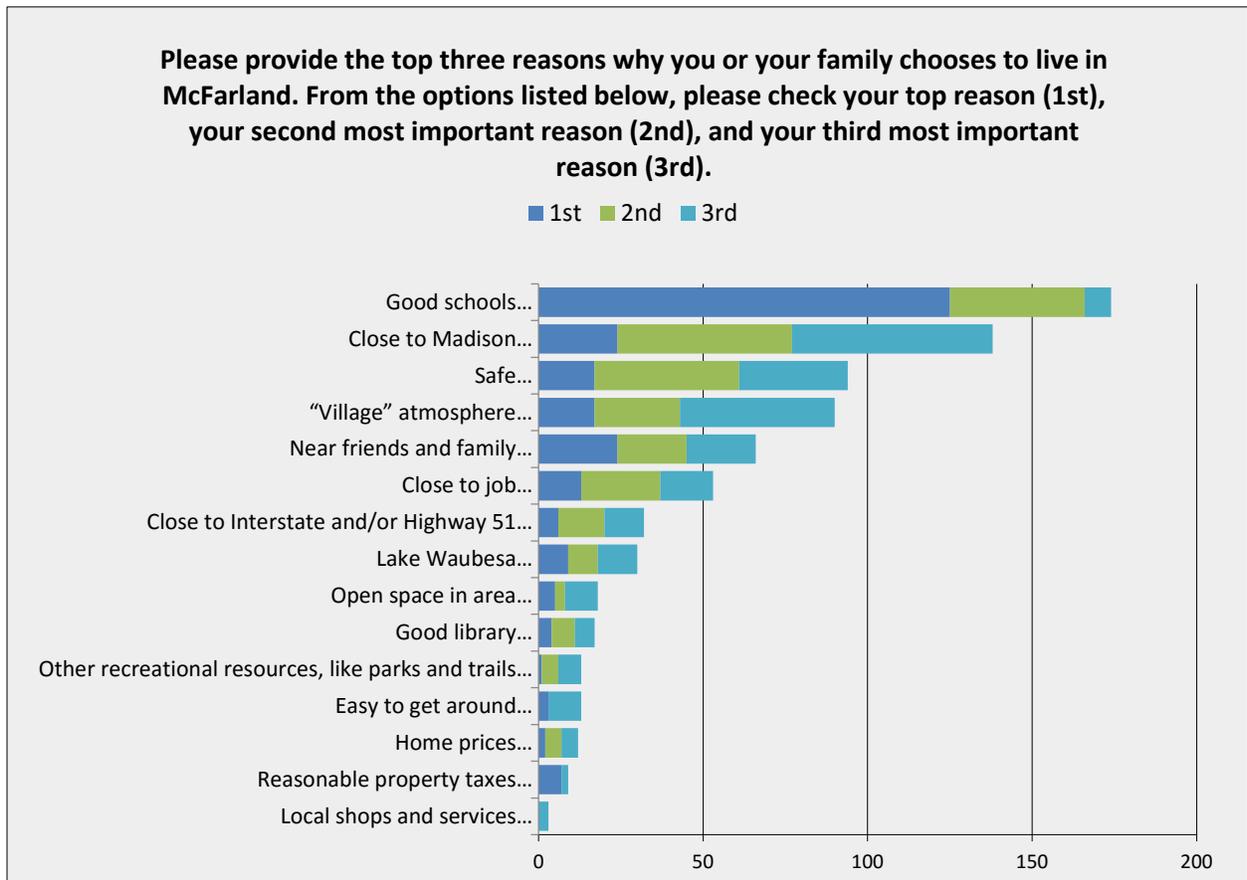
- About 93% of respondents were homeowners, compared to the 73% of the McFarland’s total population that lived in owner-occupied residences in 2010, per the U.S. Census.
- About 61% of survey respondents were women, compared to the 52% of McFarland’s adult population that was female in 2010.
- About 60% of all respondents reported having school-aged children in the house. About 39% of all McFarland households had individuals under age 18 in 2010.
- 7% of survey respondents were between the ages of 20-29; in 2010, 13% of McFarland’s adult population was in that age range.
- 26% of survey respondents were between the ages of 30-39; in 2010, 17% of McFarland’s adult population was in that age range.
- 23% of survey respondents were between the ages of 50-59; in 2010, 30% of McFarland’s adult population was in that age range.
- A majority of survey respondents have been residents of the Village for at least 11 years, as represented in the first chart on the next page.



Respondents were asked to identify in what part of the McFarland area they lived. Per the following map, 97% are Village of McFarland residents:



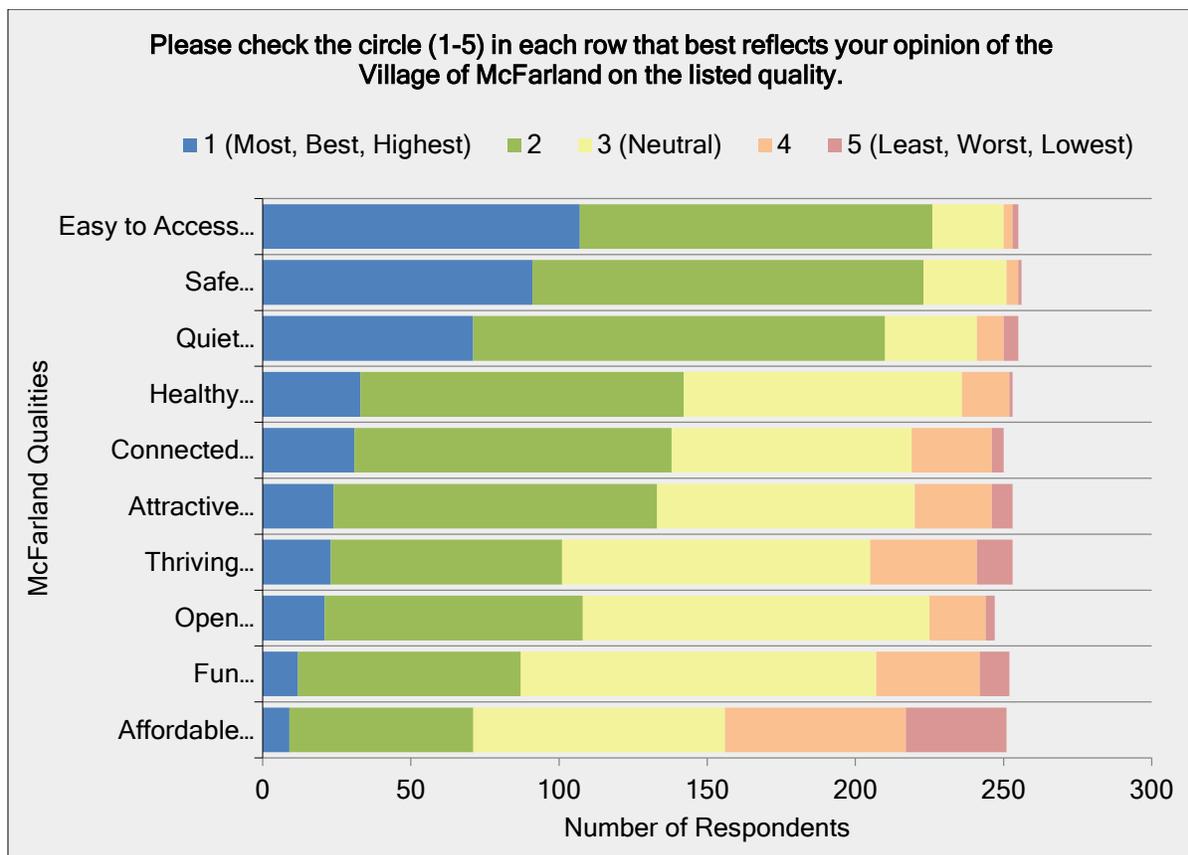
Survey respondents were asked to select their top three reasons for choosing to live in McFarland, from among 15 potential reasons listed. “Good schools” and “Close to Madison” were most often listed among respondents’ top three reasons, with “good schools” the most frequently cited top reason by a significant margin. Community safety and “village” atmosphere were also commonly selected reasons. Proximity-related responses closely followed (i.e., to job, friends and family, highway network).



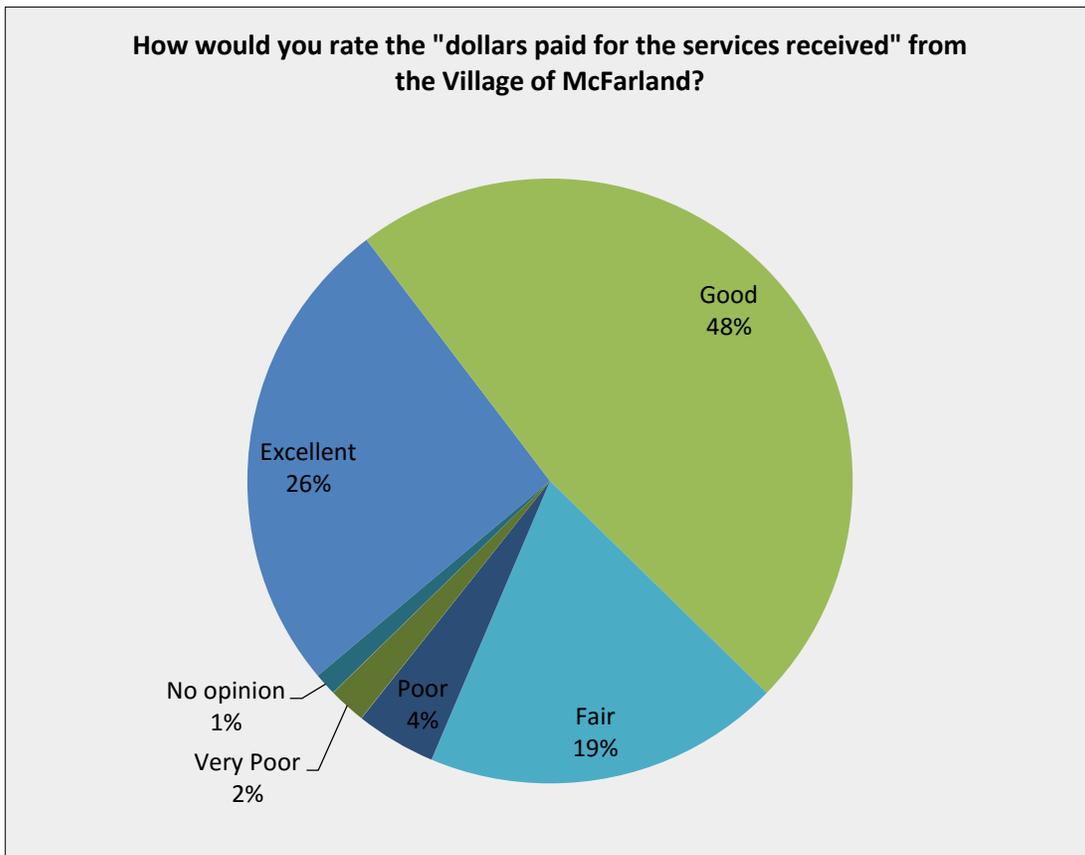
Expense-related reasons, such as home prices and taxes, and the available local shops and services were the least commonly cited reasons. These results correspond with responses to later questions, which suggested concern over housing affordability in McFarland and indicated support to expand retail and commercial service choices.

Through another question, respondents were asked to assign ratings to a list of ten potential qualities of McFarland on a 1 to 5 scale. A “1” response to a particular potential quality meant that McFarland “most”, “best”, or “highly” exhibited that quality in the mind of the respondent. A “5” response meant that McFarland was rated “least”, “worst”, or “lowest” on that quality by the respondent.

Collectively, respondents suggested that “easy to access”, “safe”, and “quiet” were the qualities that best defined McFarland. These correspond with the responses to the previous question. From among the ten potential qualities, McFarland rated lowest on affordability and qualities that suggested activity (e.g., fun, thriving). This foreshadows responses to a later question in which many respondents expressed support to expand recreational offerings in McFarland.



Respondent perceptions on Village services were generally positive. The Village provides services such as sewer and water, police and fire, garbage collection, street maintenance, snow removal, sidewalks and trails, parks, library, youth center, and senior services. 30% of residents' property tax bills are spent on these Village services. Over 70% of respondents rated the "dollars paid for the services received" by the Village as either "good" or "excellent". Only 6% rated "dollars paid for the services received" as "poor" or "very poor". This is a noteworthy level of satisfaction, particularly in an era marked by economic uncertainty and a fair amount of distrust of government.

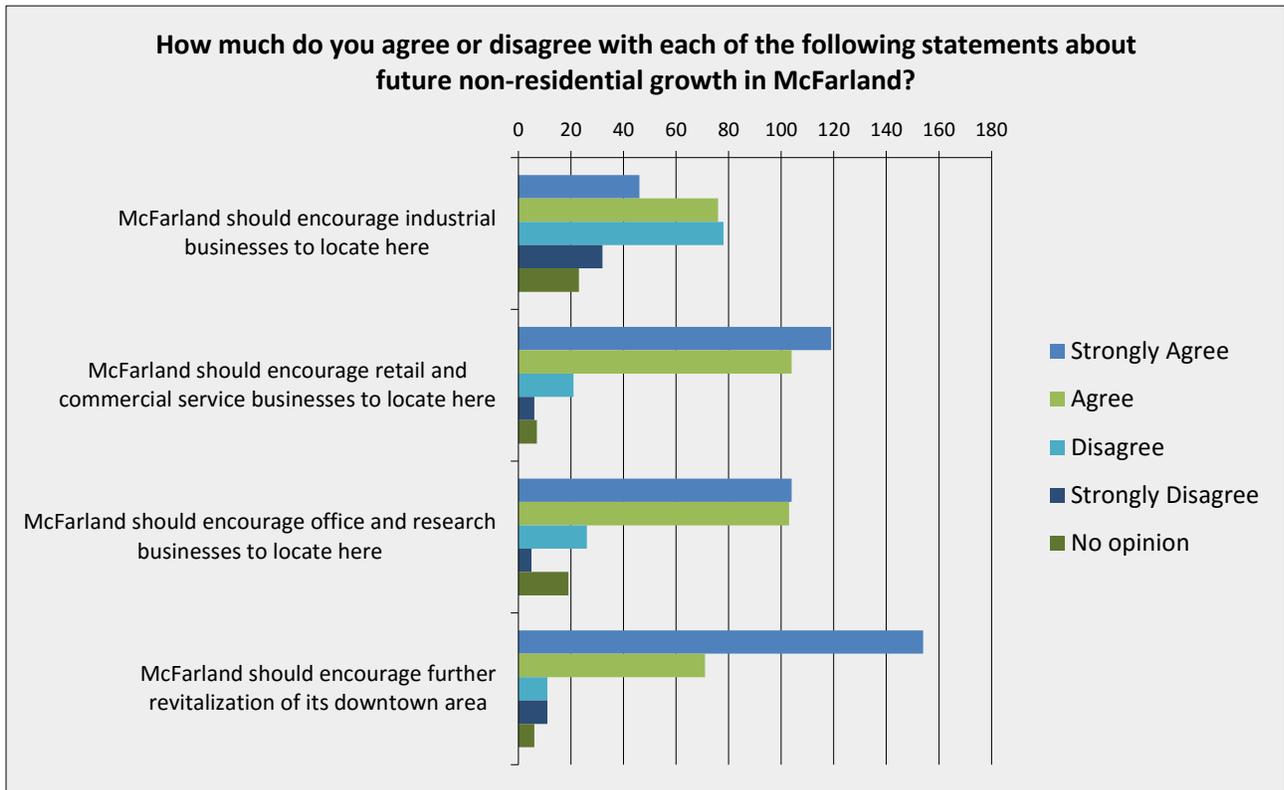


Respondents were asked a series of questions designed to learn attitudes on a potential future vision, policies, development types, and public projects that the Comprehensive Plan could include.

Respondents were asked to complete the following open ended statement: “As I look forward over the next 10 to 20 years, I wish McFarland would...” Though there were a wide range of responses, the most common categories of responses (in general order of preference) were:

- ...increase commercial options, especially restaurants, grocery stores, and family-friendly entertainment.
- ...build community recreational facilities, like a pool or community center.
- ...pay careful attention to growth and development. (Responses suggested widely differing opinions about the appropriate pace of growth.)
- ...manage the ongoing quality and expansion of the schools. (Respondents often indicated an interest in Village-School District collaboration, and sometimes did not distinguish the two.)
- ...retain McFarland’s “village” or “small community” character.
- ...manage or lower property taxes.
- ...invest in the downtown and other older parts of the Village.
- ...continue to be a safe place for families.
- ...preserve and enhance natural resources.
- ...improve community appearance.

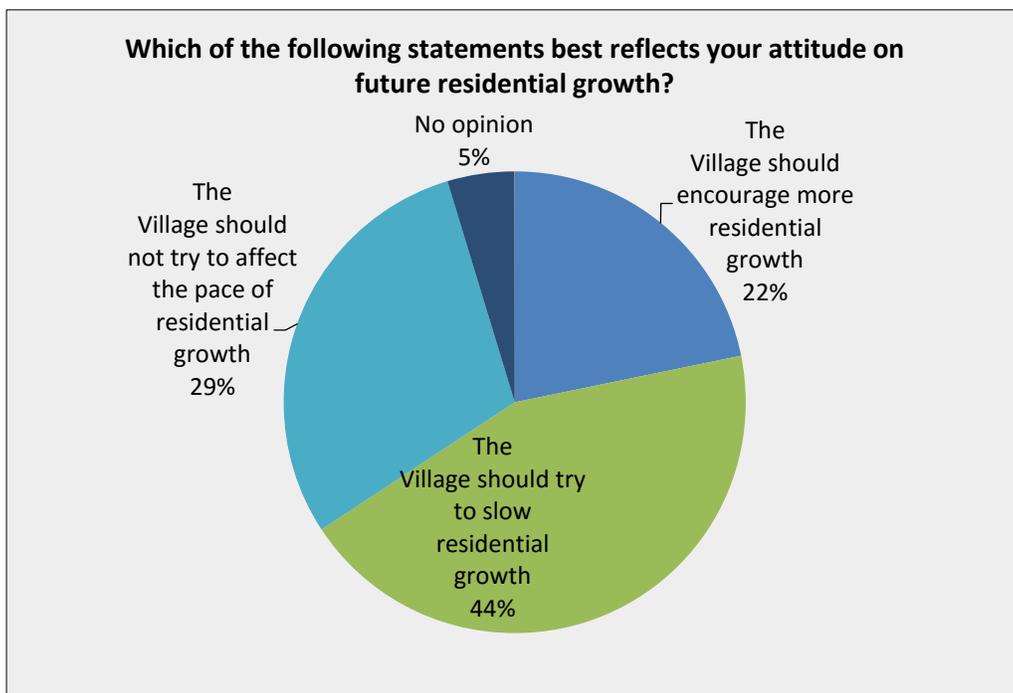
In response to a question about non-residential growth, a significant majority of respondents “strongly agreed” that McFarland should encourage continued downtown redevelopment , and retail, service, office, and research uses. Compared to the other non-residential options, there was less support for industrial development. This may be correlated to some open-ended responses suggesting concerns about the appearances of existing industries, and many respondents desires for a “quiet” community and “village” atmosphere.



Respondents were also asked two questions to gauge attitudes about future residential development.

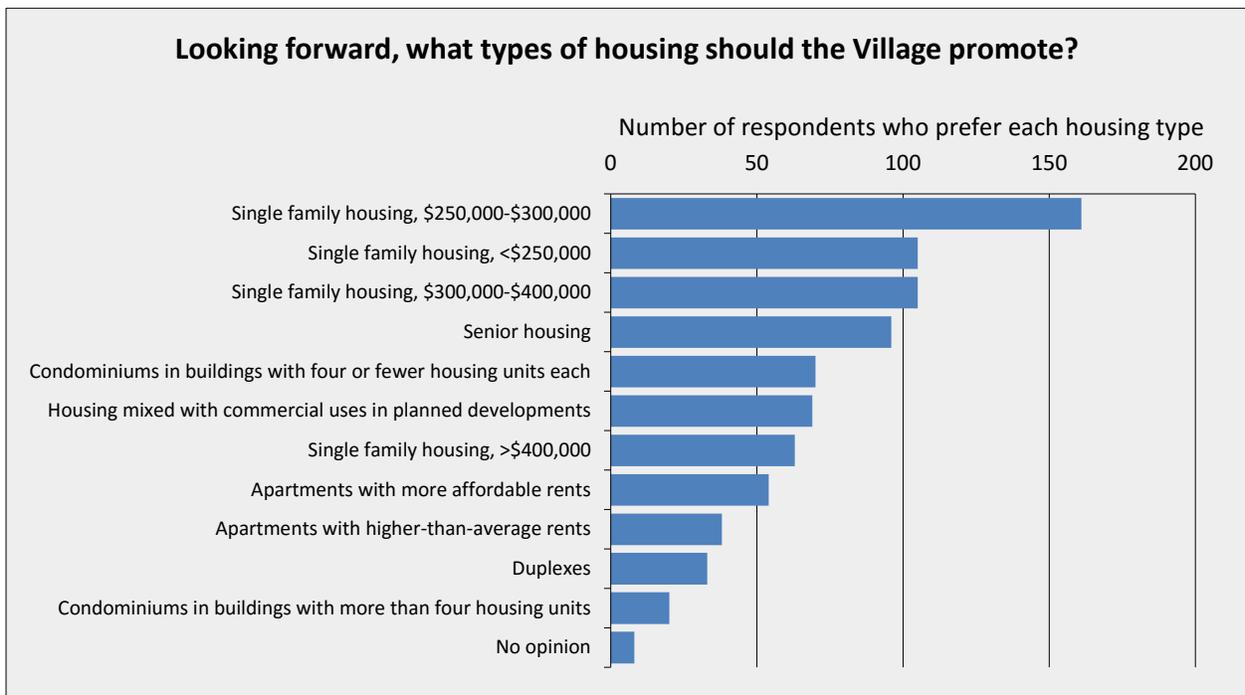
First, respondents were asked to share their opinion about the pace of future residential growth in McFarland. In response, 44% suggested that residential growth should be slowed, but a combined 51% suggested either that the Village should not try to affect the pace or should encourage more residential growth. Responses to other questions, including open-ended questions, suggest that some of those who favor slower growth are concerned about school overcrowding and/or the cost of potential school expansion.

The survey did not attempt to make any connection between preferred housing pace and types and preferred forms of non-residential development. For example, it can be challenging for a community to attract retail and commercial service development without significant population/housing density in a customer/employee service area.

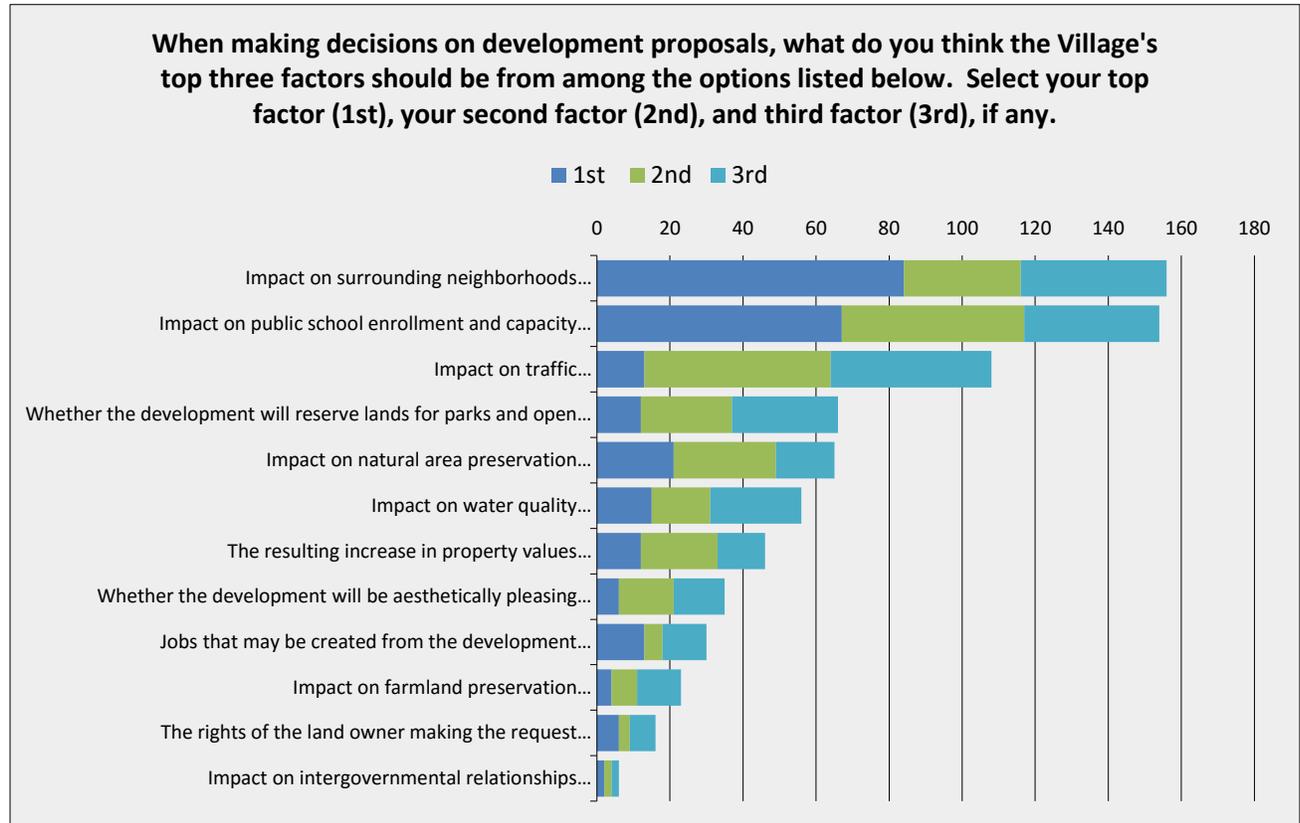


As suggested by the chart below, preferred forms of future residential development were dominated by single family residences with similar characteristics to newer homes in the Village today, and even more affordable single family options. A new house and lot in the Village generally costs between \$300,000 and \$360,000 today. These housing preferences were probably influenced by the housing types occupied by most respondents—9 out of every 10 respondents were homeowners.

Still, the survey also revealed support for senior housing, condominiums in smaller buildings, and housing mixed with commercial uses in planned developments. These housing types are often indicative and appropriate in downtown settings, which corresponds with support reported earlier for downtown redevelopment.



Respondents were asked to identify key factors against which the Village should evaluate future development proposals. Among 12 listed potential factors, common choices included surrounding neighborhood impacts, school enrollment and capacity impacts, traffic impact, whether parks and open spaces are provided, and whether natural resources are preserved. Less frequently selected factors included farmland preservation, the rights of the land owner making the request, and intergovernmental impacts.



Respondents were also asked to offer their opinion on public facility and infrastructure investments that the Village has considered or may consider in the coming years. Potential projects to expand recreational opportunities—including extending the off-street bike and pedestrian trail network, building an all-ages community center, and outdoor pool—were most often preferred. Another high-ranking priority was providing financial incentives for new business development that would not otherwise happen. Expanding utility and transportation infrastructure (aside from trails) did not receive as much support.

