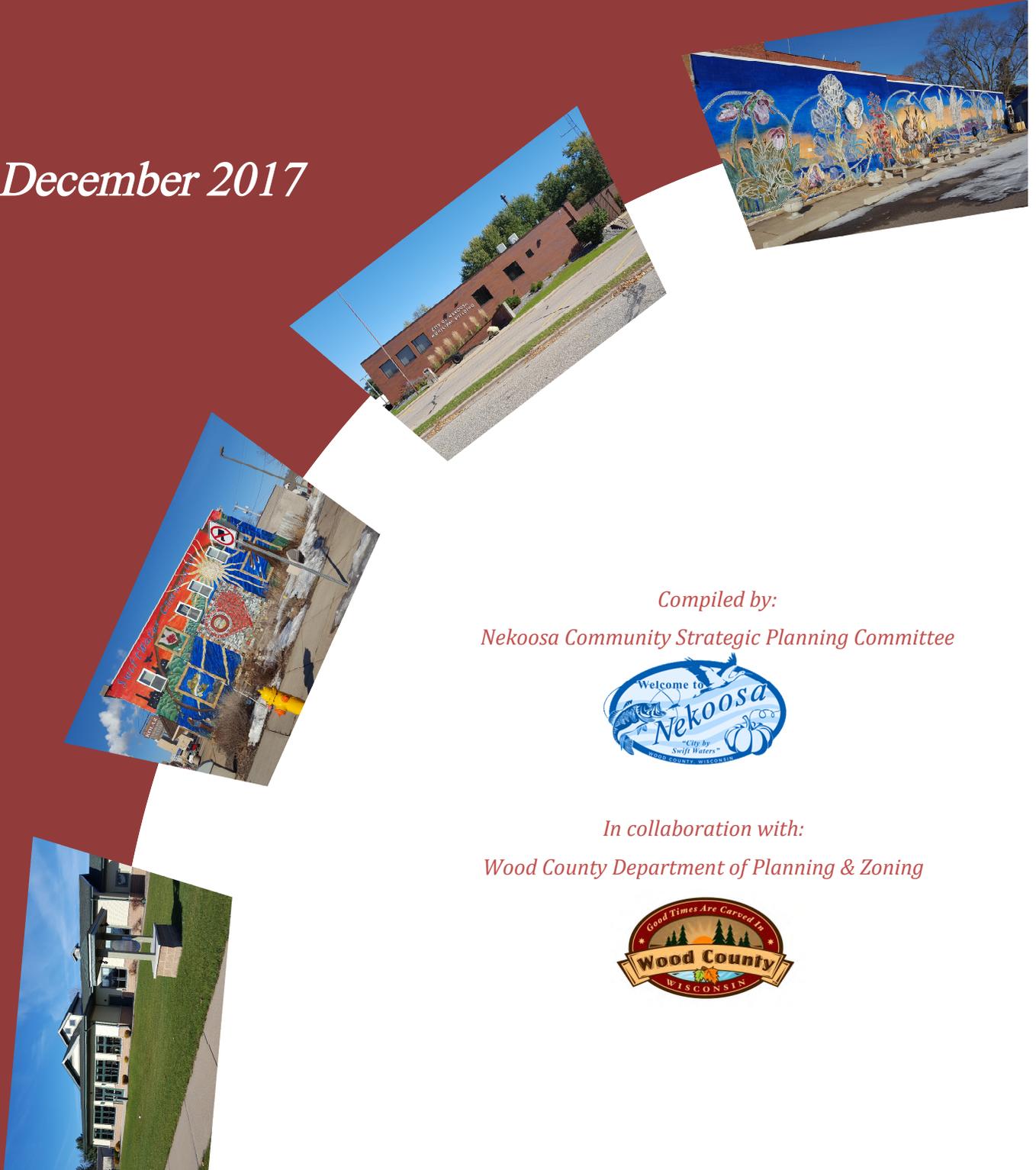


Community Survey Summary

Nekoosa Community Strategic Plan

December 2017



Compiled by:

Nekoosa Community Strategic Planning Committee



In collaboration with:

Wood County Department of Planning & Zoning



INTRODUCTION

The Nekoosa Community Strategic Planning Committee began developing a Strategic Plan in the fall of 2017. A public participation strategy was identified early in the planning process to incorporate an accurate representation of public opinion into the plan. A community survey was one means of collecting public input. Surveys were mailed out to each household receiving a municipal utility bill. Over 200 surveys were completed and returned. Additionally, over 50 surveys were completed by Nekoosa High School students. Student responses are specifically tabulated for certain relevant questions.

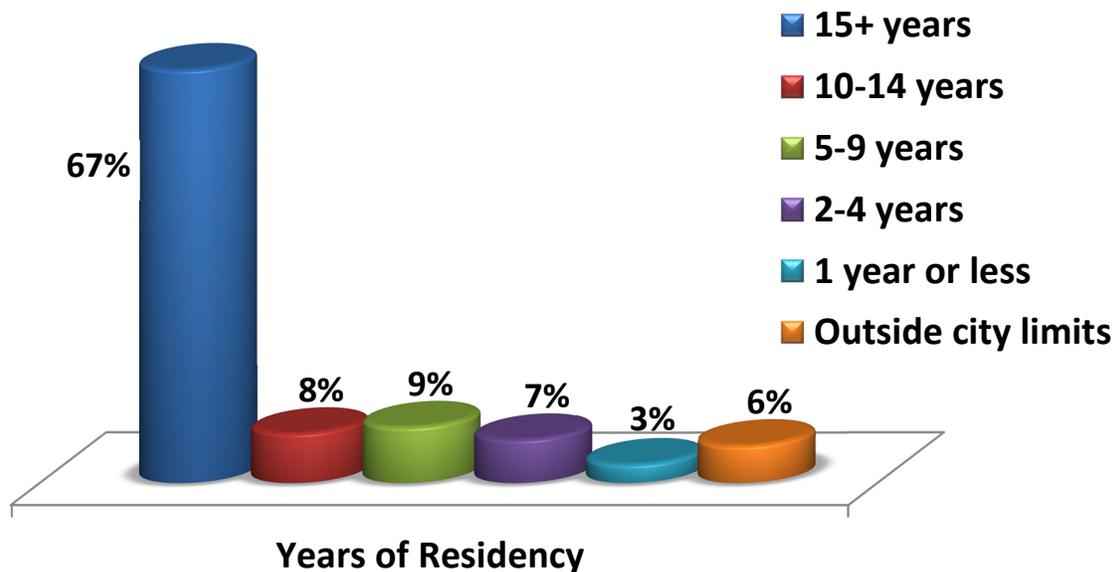
The survey gathered information on community values, priorities, and attitudes that will shape and guide the future of Nekoosa over the next several years. The input collected through this survey was utilized by the Strategic Planning Committee in the development of a strategic plan.

This report presents numeric tabulation and graphic representation of the questions and answers in the community survey.



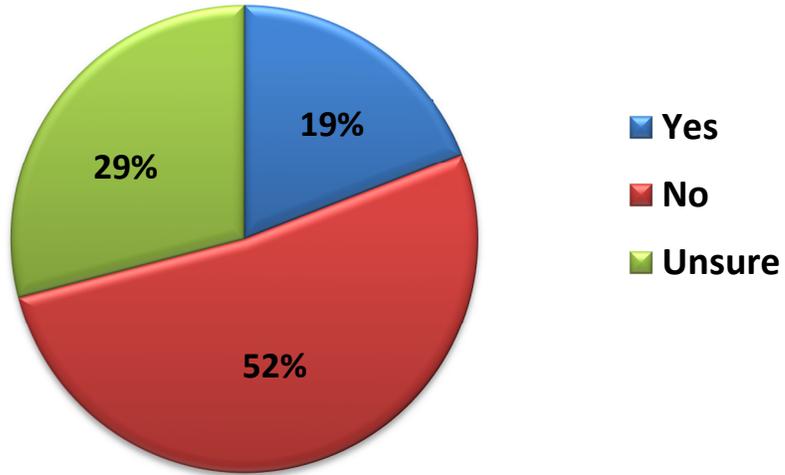
Question 1: How long have you resided in Nekoosa?

- 67% = 15+ years
- 8% = 10–14 years
- 9% = 5–9 years
- 7% = 2–4 years
- 3% = 1 year or less
- 6% = Live outside the city limits



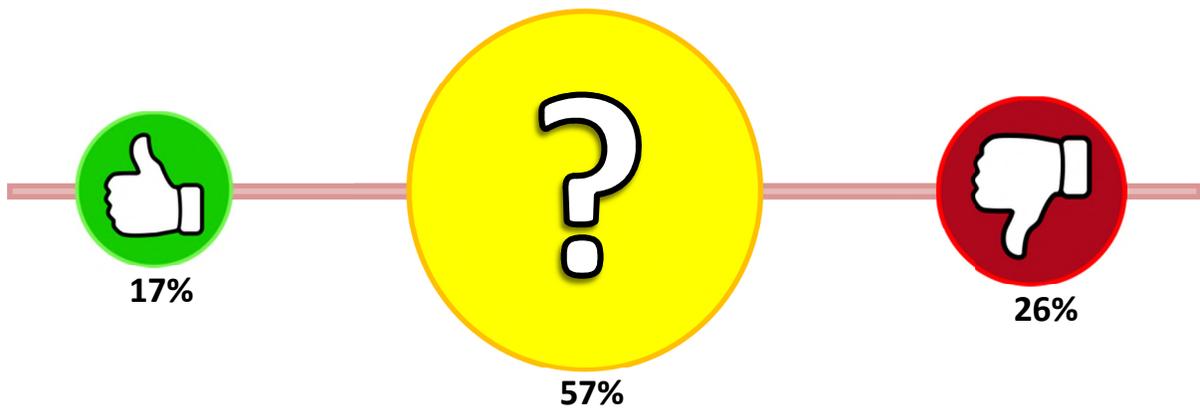
Question 2: Do you have plans to move away from the community within the next five years?

- 19% of respondents answered Yes *(Student response: 51%)*
- **52% of respondents answered No** *(Student response: 9%)*
- 29% of respondents answered Unsure *(Student response: 40%)*



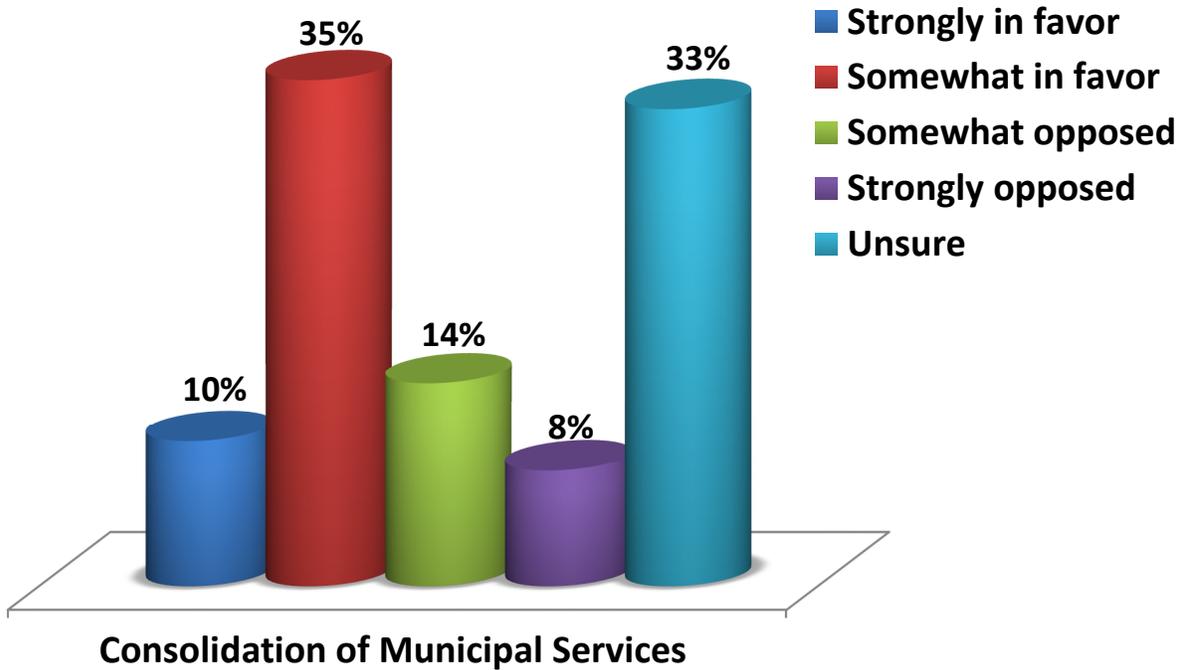
Question 3: Overall, where is the community headed?

- 17% of respondents said Right Track *(Student response: 6%)*
- 26% of respondents said Wrong Track *(Student response: 44%)*
- **57% of respondents said they were Unsure** *(Student response: 50%)*



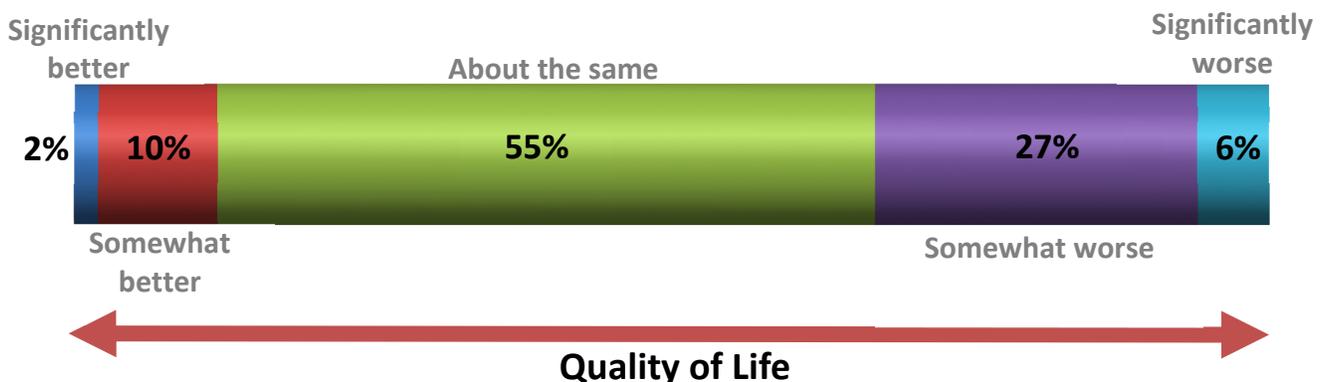
Question 4: Should the City of Nekoosa consider consolidating municipal services with surrounding communities?

- 10% of respondents were strongly in favor
- **35% of respondents were somewhat in favor**
- 14% of respondents were somewhat opposed
- 8% of respondents were strongly opposed
- 33% of respondents were unsure



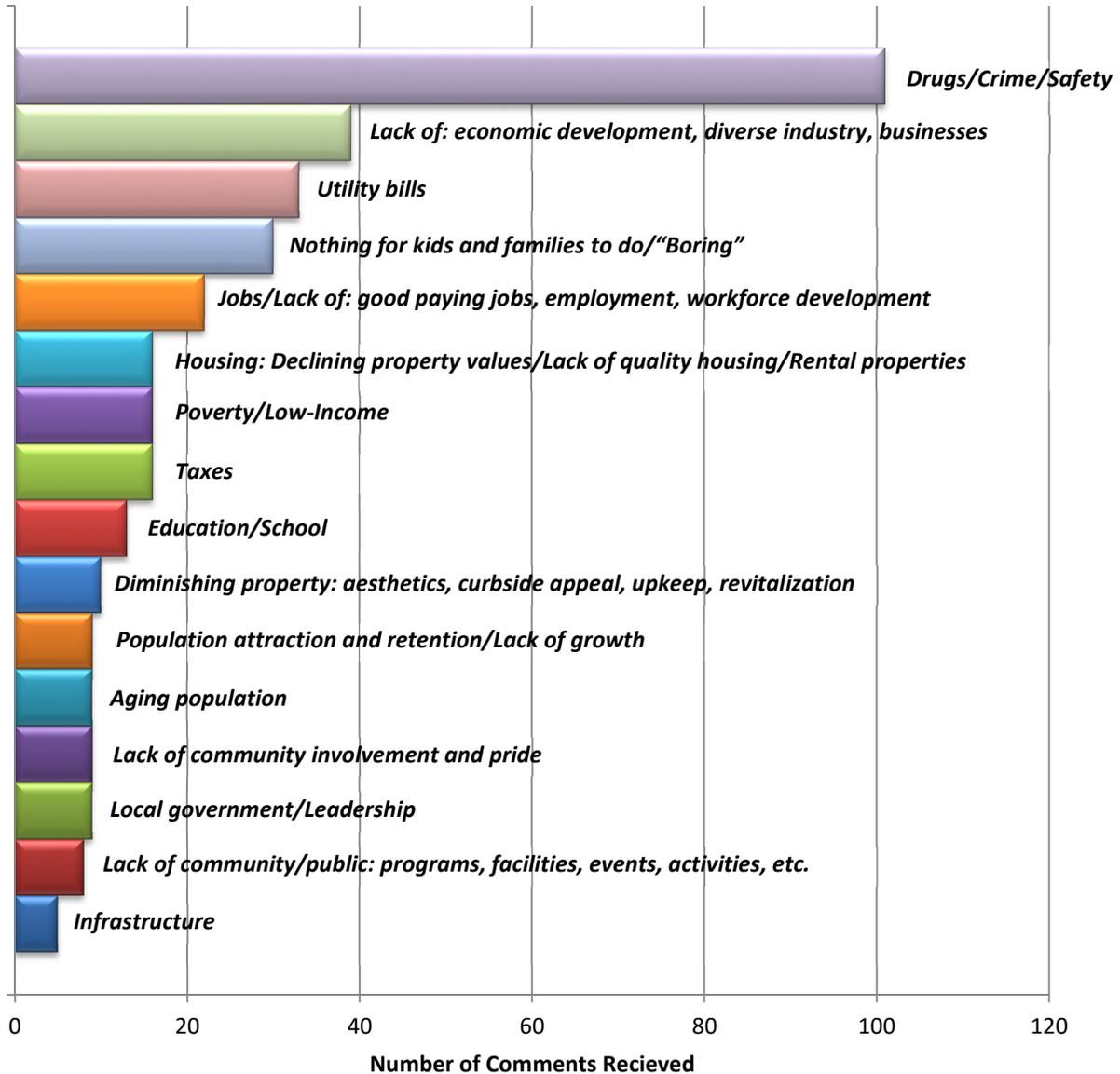
Question 5: How do you think the quality of life in the community will be five years from now?

- 2% of respondents said Significantly better *(Student response: 2%)*
- 10% of respondents said Somewhat better *(Student response: 9%)*
- **55% of respondents said About the same** *(Student response: 51%)*
- 27% of respondents said Somewhat worse *(Student response: 36%)*
- 6% of respondents said Significantly worse *(Student response: 2%)*



Question 6: What do you see as the most important problem or challenge facing the community?

- Top five problems or challenges:
 - 1- **Drugs/Crime/Safety**
 - 2- Lack of: Economic development, diverse industry, businesses/Future of mill
 - 3- Utility bills
 - 4- Nothing for kids and families to do/"Boring"
 - 5- Jobs/Lack of: good paying jobs, employment, workforce development

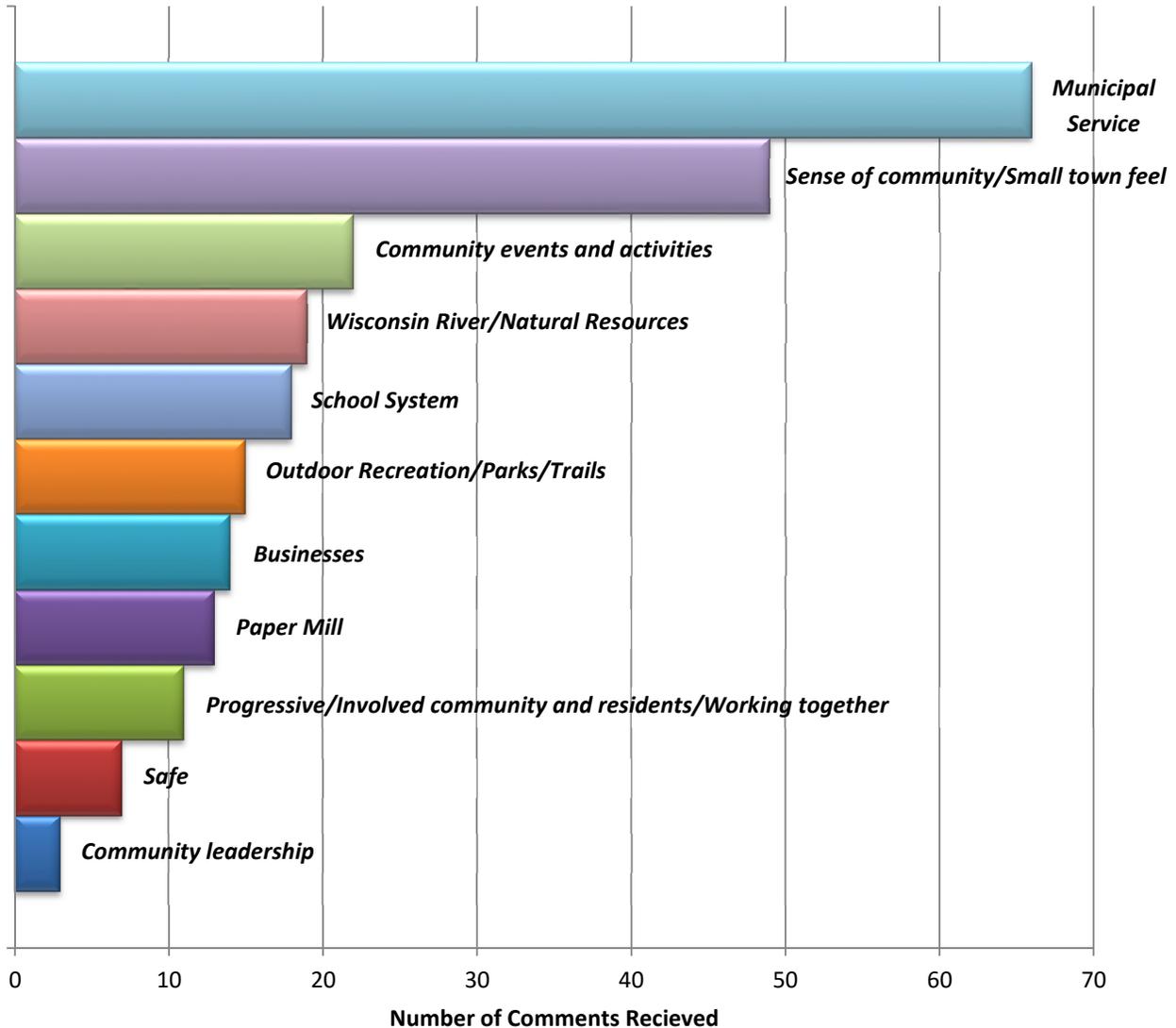


Student Response:

- 1- *Drugs/Crime/Safety*
- 2- *Nothing for kids and families to do/"Boring"*
- 3- *Population attraction and retention/Lack of growth*
- 4- *Jobs/Lack of: good paying jobs, employment, workforce development*

Question 7: What do you see as strengths or positives for the community?

- Top five strengths or positives:
 - 1- **Municipal Service (Police, Fire, EMS, City Staff/Departments, Library, Community Center, etc.)**
 - 2- Sense of community/Small town feel/Close-knit
 - 3- Community events and activities
 - 4- Location along the Wisconsin River/Natural resources
 - 5- School System



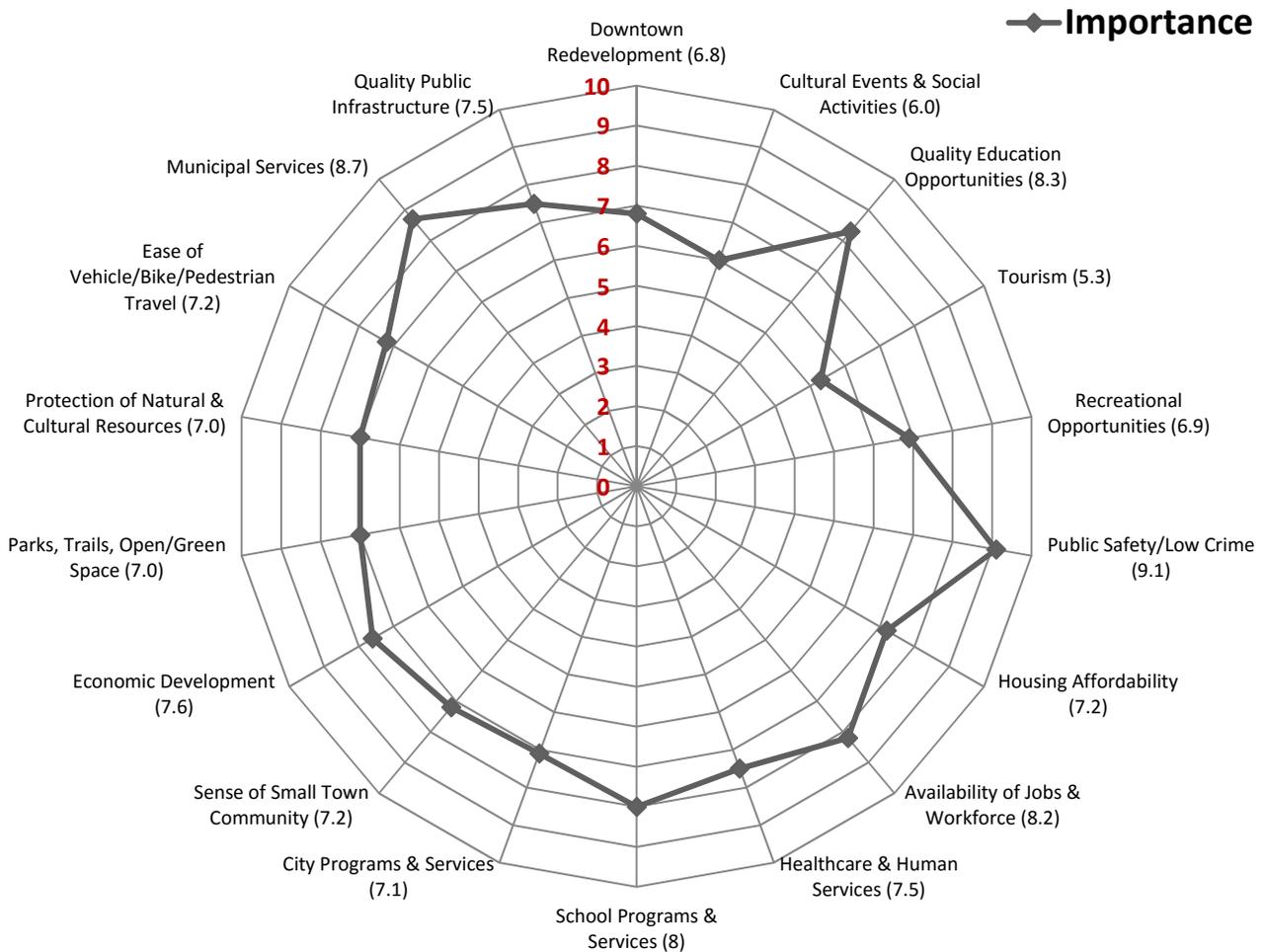
Student Response:

- 1- Sense of community/Small town feel
- 2- Progressive/Involved community and residents/Working together
- 3- Businesses
- 4- Community events and activities
- 5- Outdoor Recreation/Parks/Trails

Question 8: How important is it to you personally, that your community possesses the following characteristics on a 10-point scale?

➤ Top five highest average importance ratings:

- 1- **Public Safety/Low Crime (9.1)**
- 2- Municipal Services (8.7)
- 3- Quality Education Opportunities (8.3)
- 4- Availability of Jobs & Workforce (8.2)
- 5- Economic Development (7.6)



Student Response:

- 1- *Public Safety/Low Crime (8.2)*
- 2- *School Programs & Services (7.8)*
- 3- *Municipal Services (7.7)*
- 4- *Quality Education Opportunities (7.5)*
- 5- *Availability of Jobs & Workforce (7.4)*

Question 9: Additional comments or suggestions?

- The police department is doing a great job trying to combat the drug problem in Nekoosa.
- You know there is a problem with drugs. Take care of the problem. Better patrolling of all streets in the city.
- Make city safer.
- Light up the city/downtown, brighter street lights. If you want crime to go down. Also other street lighting.
- K-9 Dog
- Drugs are of major importance-when I moved out here it wasn't as prevalent as it is now. Something needs to be done.
- Keep drugs out of our area.
- Would like to see the traffic slowed down on Market St, Cedar St and Wood Ave.
- Water and sewer costs are too high!
- Water and sewer rates are expensive.
- Our water bills are also a deterrent for home buyers.
- Water bill is higher than what I am used to.
- For the area taxes are way too high as is the joke of a water bill.
- Fund the basic needs. Keep city services costs low
- Something that concerns us & others on fixed incomes is keeping prop. Taxes + water/sewer bills lower. Thank you!
- Use County for police protection.
- Do not hire school kids in summer. Make city works do their own job. What are they getting paid for?
- Duplication of services for Nekoosa and Port Edwards is not fiscally responsible for either community.
- What municipal services would be consolidated? How would that affect cost?
- We have a great crew in our city workers as they are always there to pick up leaves, grass and branches at no charge.
- Police are getting retarded. Pulling people for 6 mph over on a road marked 35 but should be 45.
- The City of Nekoosa should consider consolidating municipal services with surrounding communities if they can continue to provide good services at a lower cost.
- Should look at just one director for all emergency services.
- Taxes are higher than what I am used to.
- Lower taxes!!!!!!
- For the area taxes are way too high as is the joke of a water bill.
- Lower your taxes. Honestly what is keeping people here? My husband and I are looking elsewhere.
- Cutting taxes.
- Something that concerns us & others on fixed incomes is keeping prop. Taxes + water/sewer bills lower. Thank you!
- Smaller cities have nicer flowers downtown, nicer store fronts and better sidewalks.
- Sweep dead end roads and mow.
- Would love to stay but am seeing the city going in the wrong direction. City seems to appeal to lower income population. Would be a nice community for baby boomers to retire in. It's all just so sad.
- You destroyed the pool, built a dollar general and now more low-income housing.
- Has really gone downhill. As long as Nekoosa has the low income. Apartments, the drugs and low-life's that live there will rise.
- We have enough low income housing.
- Collaborate with the school system for youth programs.
- Principal at high school needs to go.
- We need to partner with a larger/regional economic group and create a vision around our "sense of place" and market that feeling to families.
- We need to draw more young families and our school system would be that vehicle.
- If I didn't work in the area and my house was worth anything I would move.
- I do not see us growing as a community, we are stagnant. I really do not see us growing in the future. We have not for many years now.
- Growing in Christ-more people filling church.
- Likewise for the property littered with trash, un-mowed lawns and peeling paint. Residents should be held responsible for the upkeep of their homes.
- I'm not considered as being low income so I don't qualify for any state or local assistance. It would be nice if there was a program in place for people like me to be able to update our exteriors of our homes.
- Some houses are looking pretty shabby and making neighborhoods look awful.
- Better upkeep of properties- Cleanup/repair individual homes and properties.
- The state of some people's properties needs to be addressed and trash in yards.
- We as a community need to focus on all ages of people in Nekoosa. Not just old folks, we need things in our community for all ages to go out and do.
- It's okay to aim for the older generations of this community but just remember there's a younger generation having to live here like me. Personally, where they built these old folks apartments they should have built an outdoor pool or an indoor pool for Nekoosa and Port
- Concentrate on being high quality residential community.

- We need to bring property values up!
- Repair of downtown. Fill in holes from floods in park. Repair of city streets.
- Repave Fairview Lane. Road sucks.
- We need new signage on the corner of Vilas Ave & 7th Street. People drive right through the stop sign. Somebody's child is going to get hit by a car someday!
- Nekoosa has prepared itself well for the future. The infrastructure has been updated.
- We need much better cemetery maintenance. Trimming and road repairs. Get rid of the geese in Riverside Park!!!!
- Roads need work.
- I would like to see a cut out of the curb (like the one by the Credit Union) by the cemetery, right before you go down the hill to go to the park. A lot of bikers get off the trail and ride the road behind the Catholic Church and ride the side roads.
- Would be nice to have an exit/entry ramp near cemetery for the bike trail.
- City officials need to be thinking of the future of Nekoosa. Also, the NOW of Nekoosa. Work for many goals. Not just one or two.
- City & residents need to have better communications - remember, we pay your wages.
- New ideas are needed to much of the "good ole boys mentality". Get people who are educated in positions of power.
- More activities for children and teens.
- We really need a pool, not just a splash pad.
- Something for kids to do. New basketball courts. New ones are just old hoops on crappy concrete.
- We need more things to make the community more appealing and make it more fun for all ages.
- Need to do more things for the kids of Nekoosa.
- Lines on tennis courts to include pickle ball court.
- Repair existing recreational opportunities before bring new ones in.
- Love the Christmas lights in the park. Good idea!!!
- Need to allow a ATV/UTV route in town.
- Connect the bike path to go thru the downtown area or down 1st street and connect to the high school proposed trail from a few years ago. Thank you!!!!!!!
- UTV trail access.
- ATV trail through Nekoosa. This would allow ATV's to cross the WI River Bridge and would bring business to the community and add recreational opportunities.
- Extend the bike trail. Work with National Audubon Society to create more bird watching. Nita first would help with the school districts native trail.
- Access to ATV & UTZ trails.
- Drain tile in park. Enclose one shelter in park to be rented out.
- I believe an ATV/UTV trail would help businesses and tourism. Since this is the only bridge that you can drive over the WI River we should use to our advantage.
- Open roads for ATV/UTV use.
- Have a newspaper, 3 main churches together to offer programs and services to the community. Promote activities on Facebook, TV, radio, etc.
- The Pumpkinfest is great. Now build up the Hometown Christmas more to attract more revenue. Maybe consider a street dance in the future.
- Community events are crucial to a strong will to stay together and work together.
- It's a great city to live in!! Been here for 35 years since moving from Buffalo, NY. I love it. Will miss it when I move.
- For a small town Nekoosa is fine.
- Keep small town living realistic-not every services opportunity needs to be on a big city scale to increase every budget. Keep it small.
- None at this time. We don't really care to say any more. We think the community is going alright.
- I am glad we still have Piggly Wiggly. I know people from Wisconsin Rapids who come here to shop.
- Alderperson does a great job of communicating issues and their effect on the taxpayer.
- Inform public of help they can get.
- As a community we need to have more unification and less ignorance. We shouldn't be afraid of change.
- Think more about the future. Don't make all the decisions just based off of money.
- Be more environmentally orientation.
- I wiped paper, no finger prints, "Anonymous"!!!
- The river has potential for drawing tourists.
- Riverside Park is the nicest thing about Nekoosa.
- Also the noise from the mill is getting worse!
- The south & South West of town is being pounded by excessive mill noise!