

Town of Lyons Community Housing Needs and Growth Survey 2024 Base Data Analysis

Prepared for: The Board of Trustees

Prepared by: Planning Staff

Staff Notes and Disclosures:

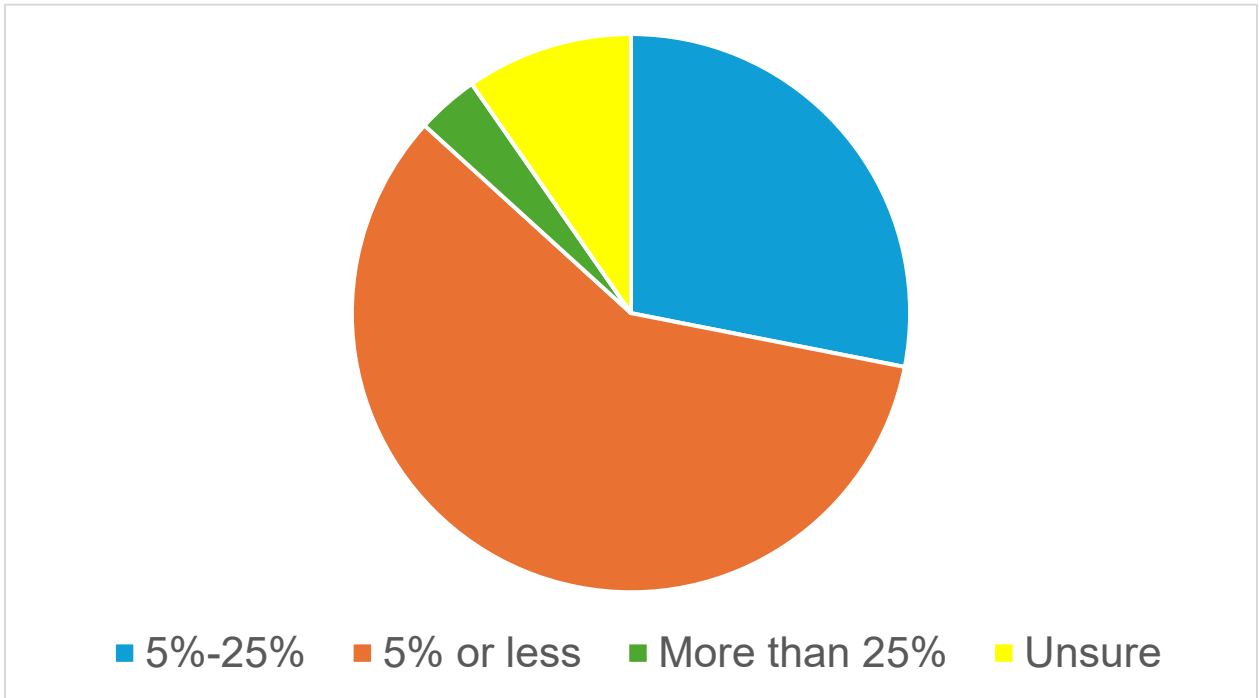
1. Staff included information about the survey via three town-wide e-blasts, the town's utility bill newsletter, and the town's social media account, which residents then shared further.
2. The survey was first included in the BOT recap email on 11.1.24 and in a Voices Heard email on Nov 5. The final email reminder was sent on 11.12.24.
3. Staff and trustees are not survey professionals, and it is possible that the survey questions were asked, organized, ordered, and presented in a way that could create bias.
4. As noted, staff did their best to ensure the survey was submitted only once per person by removing the obvious duplicates and including information regarding multiple IP addresses.
5. It is possible that duplicate IP addresses are from locations with multiple users, such as Town hall, firehouse, school, and/or library. We are not sure, as that is not our expertise.

Response Tables and Charts:

Over the following pages, staff have provided tables and graphs for each question asked. For this memo, staff are not providing question analyses but raw data only. To provide a basic summary of trends for open-ended questions, staff used Chat GPT's Open AI tool (using three separate prompts) to find the most recurrent trends. This tool was used to limit any bias in answer interpretation.

Question 1: By 2050, should Lyons' population grow by?

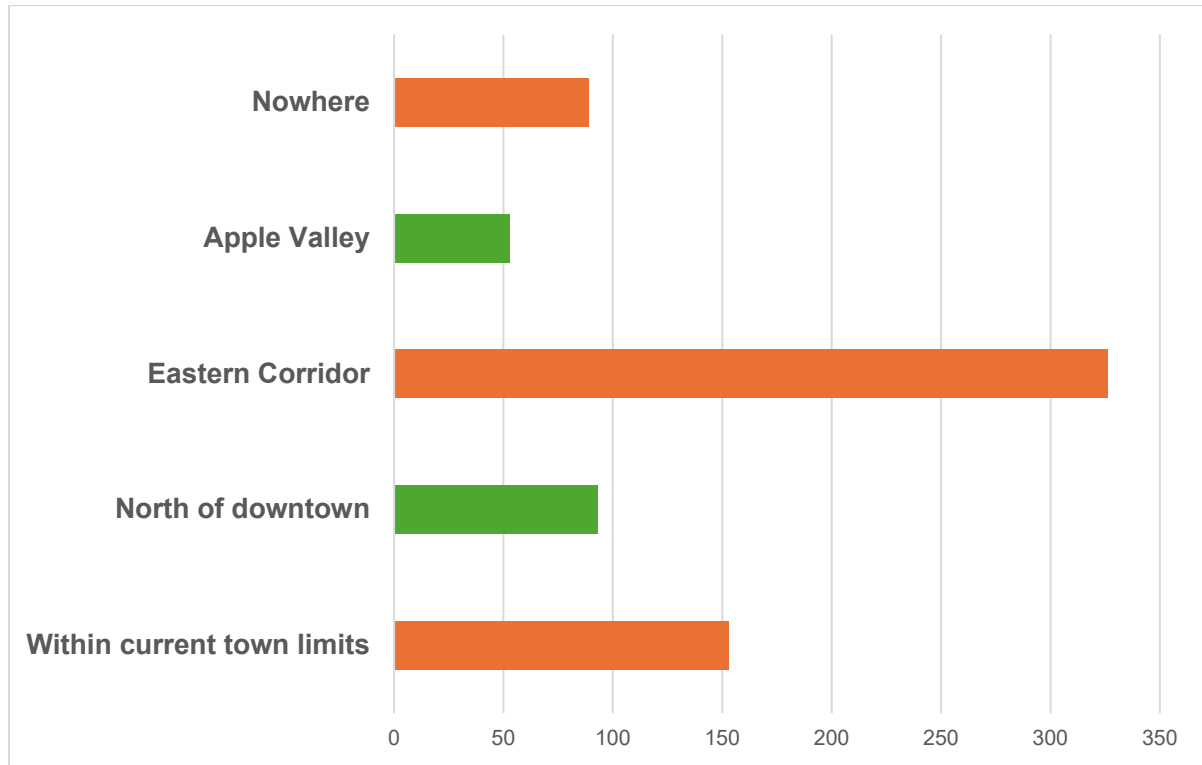
5%-25%	5% or less	More than 25%	Unsure
125	261	16	43



Note: The chart above shows that the majority of respondents want the community's growth rate to be 5% or less.

Question 2: Where should the Town seek to develop a more diverse mix of housing types (e.g., duplexes, cottage/bungalows, condo units, apartments)?

Within current town limits	153
North of downtown	93
Eastern Corridor	326
Apple Valley	53
Other	See the response summary below
Nowhere	89



Note: As shown above, most respondents would seek diversity in housing in the Eastern Corridor.

Note: Below are summaries of the responses under the “other” category. To see the full list, see attached Raw Data.

As stated before, no interpretation of open-ended questions has been personally provided by staff. To limit improper paraphrasing and or bias, Chat GTP's Open AI system was used by staff to summarize all responses. Three prompts were used to provide summaries and seek higher summary integrity, with all responses individually uploaded to each prompt. These are as follows:

Prompt no. 1: (FIND THE FIVE MOST COMMON THEMES OF THESE RESPONSES)

Prompt no. 2 (SUMMARIZE THESE RESPONSES IN FIVE KEY POINTS)

Prompt no. 3 (SUMMARIZE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES)

Prompt no. 1: (FIND THE FIVE MOST COMMON THEMES OF THESE RESPONSES)

The five most common themes in these responses are:

1. *Downtown and Main Street Focus:*
Many responses favor housing development within walking distance of downtown and Main Street, suggesting a focus on infill and mixed-use developments in these central areas.
2. *Mixed-Use Development:*
There is strong support for combining residential and commercial spaces, especially with housing above businesses, to maximize space and increase density.
3. *Utilization of Underused or Vacant Areas:*
Several responses highlight specific vacant or underused areas (such as the burn lot, dog park, and vacant businesses) as potential locations for new housing.
4. *Concerns Over Preserving Small-Town Feel:*
Some responses express concerns about the impact of new housing on property values and the small-town character of Lyons, indicating a preference for limited or carefully integrated growth.
5. *Infrastructure and Market Considerations:*
There are worries about whether current infrastructure (like sewer systems) can support additional housing, and some respondents emphasize that housing development should align with market demand rather than enforced quotas.

Prompt no. 2 (SUMMARIZE THESE RESPONSES IN FIVE KEY POINTS)

1. *Preference for Downtown and In-Town Locations:*
Many responses favor housing within town limits, especially in areas near Main Street and downtown, prioritizing walkability and integration into the community's core.
2. *Support for Mixed-Use and Infill Development:*
There is a common interest in creating mixed-use spaces, with residential units above businesses, especially on Main Street and in vacant commercial properties, to optimize existing space.
3. *Utilizing Vacant or Underused Land:*
Suggestions include repurposing underutilized areas like the burn lot, dog park, and specific vacant buildings to expand housing without developing new land.
4. *Desire to Preserve Small-Town Character:*
Some respondents worry that large apartment or condo complexes would harm the small-town feel and property values, preferring smaller, integrated housing options instead.
5. *Infrastructure and Market Readiness:*
Concerns were raised about the town's current infrastructure capacity and the need to align housing development with market demand and available town resources, such as sewer systems and public services.

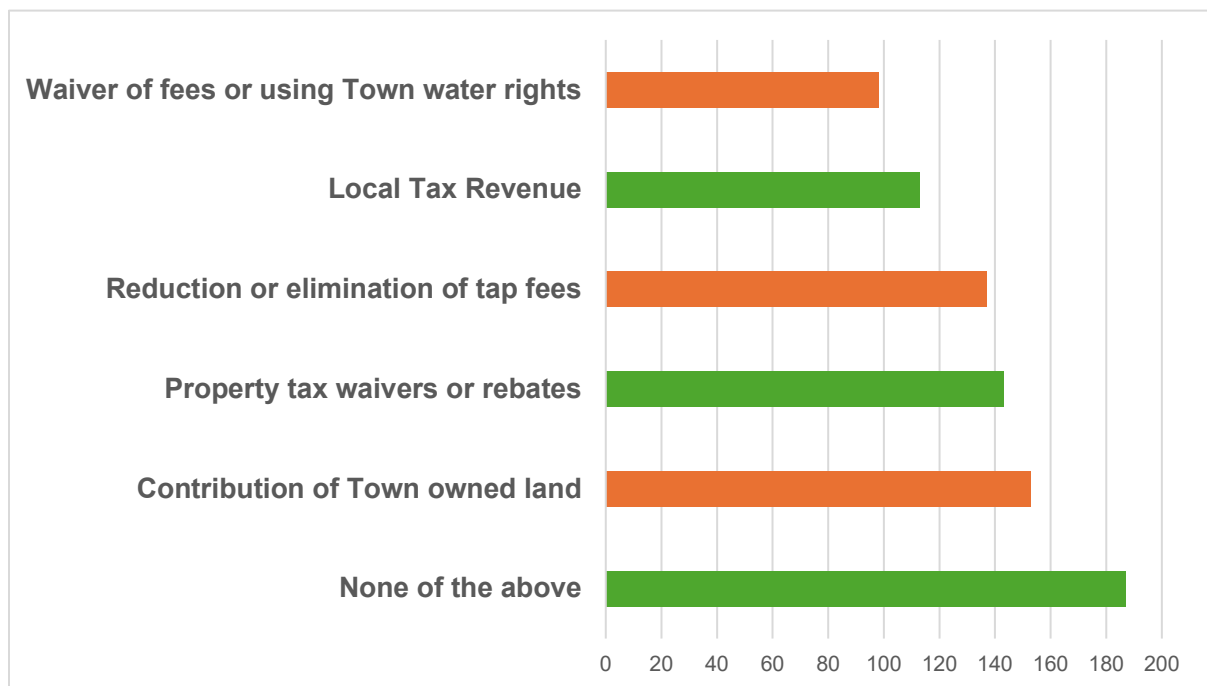
Prompt no. 3 (SUMMARIZE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES)

The responses highlight these key points:

1. *Preference for Central Locations:*
Many suggest focusing on housing development within walking distance of Main Street and downtown to enhance accessibility and integration into the community.
2. *Support for Mixed-Use and Infill Development:*
Respondents favor mixed-use projects, such as residential units above commercial spaces, and utilizing existing vacant or underused properties to accommodate growth.
3. *Use of Specific Vacant or Underutilized Lots:*
Areas like the burn lot, dog park, vacant businesses, and parcels along the Eastern Corridor are commonly proposed for new housing development.
4. *Preserving Small-Town Character:*
There is concern about large apartment or condo complexes altering the town's character, with a preference for smaller-scale, integrated housing solutions that fit within the community.
5. *Infrastructure and Market Feasibility Concerns:*
Respondents note that current infrastructure may be insufficient for more housing, and emphasize the need for housing types aligned with market demand and supported by local businesses and services.

Question 3: Would you be in favor of using the following Town resources to support affordable or attainable (workforce) housing?

None of the above	187
Contribution of Town owned land	153
Property tax waivers or rebates	143
Reduction or elimination of tap fees	137
Local Tax Revenue	113
Waiver of fees or using Town water rights	98
Grand Total	831



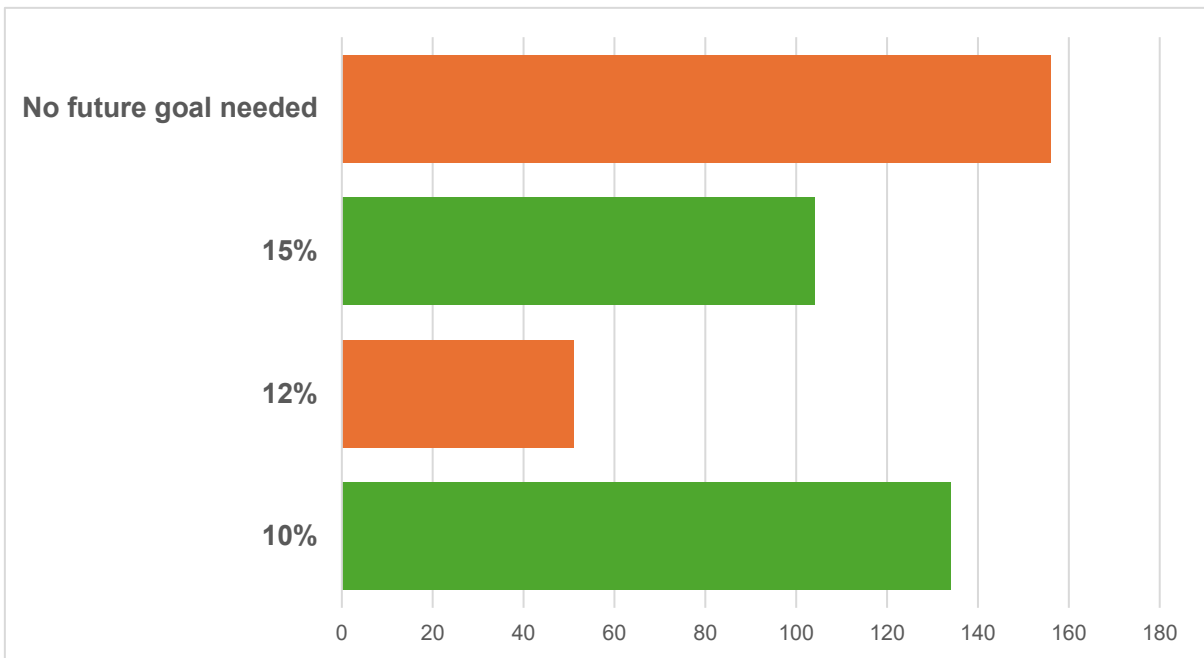
Note: Some respondents chose multiple options, which is why the total responses for this question exceeded the total response rate.

Note: Approximately 40% of respondents reported that they would not favor any of the town's resources listed to support affordable or attainable housing. Staff cannot determine whether this means "none of these measures should be used" or "some other measure should be used." Again, staff are not determining any responder's intent behind the answers given.

Note: The contribution of town-owned land was the most favorable resource reported from the list provided.

Question 4: Lyons currently has a 10% Permanently Affordable Housing goal. What do you think Lyons' future goal should be?

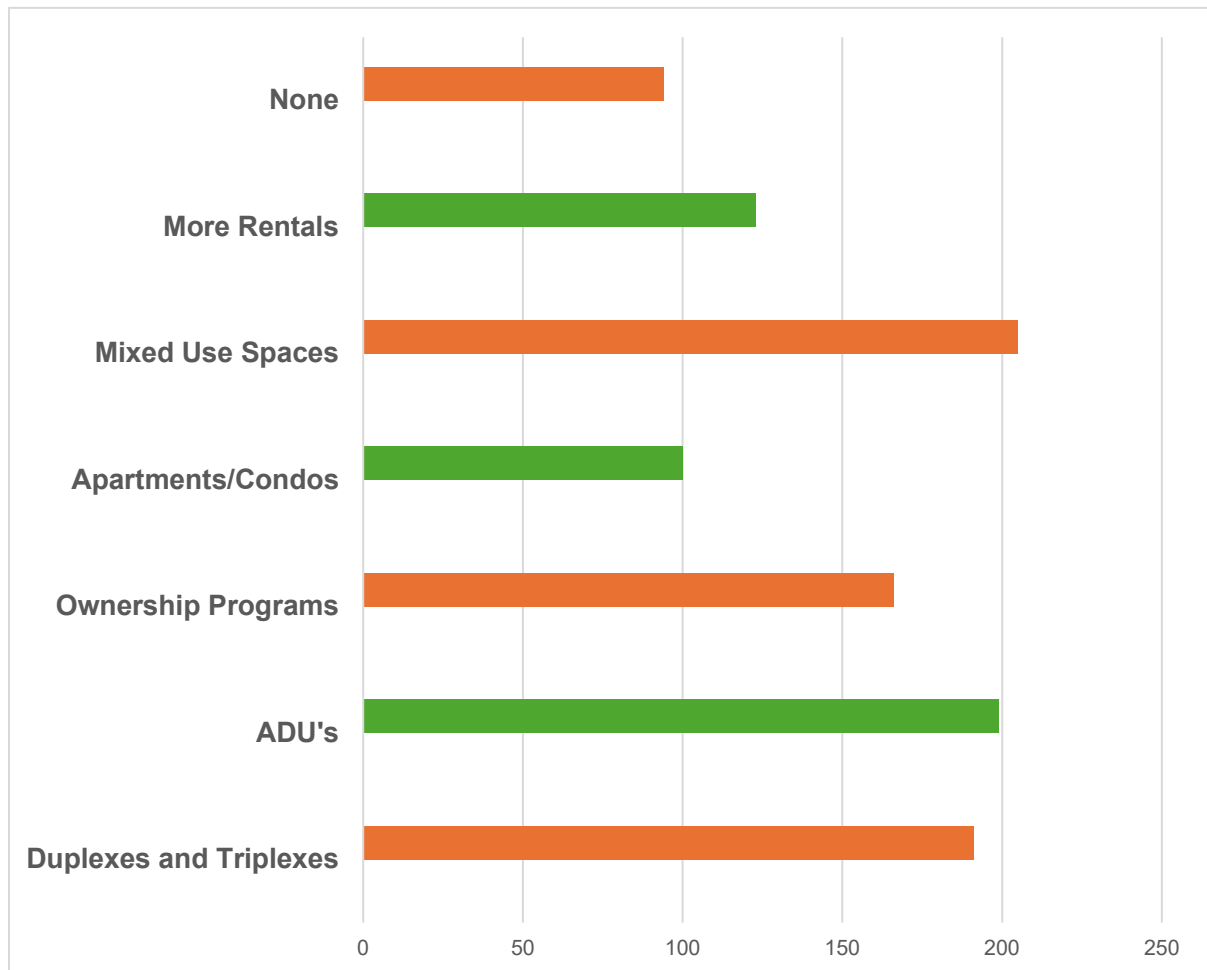
10%	134
12%	51
15%	104
No future goal needed	156



Note: Thirty percent of respondents stated no goal was needed for affordable/attainable housing development. The majority of respondents to this question feel that a goal of 10-15% is reasonable.

Question 5: What type of housing affordability options would you like to see in Lyons?

Duplexes and Triplexes	191
ADU's	199
Ownership Programs	166
Apartments/Condos	100
Mixed Use Spaces	205
More Rentals	123
None	94



Note: The utilization of mixed-use spaces received the highest response rate.

Question 6: Are you willing to develop an ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) on your property?

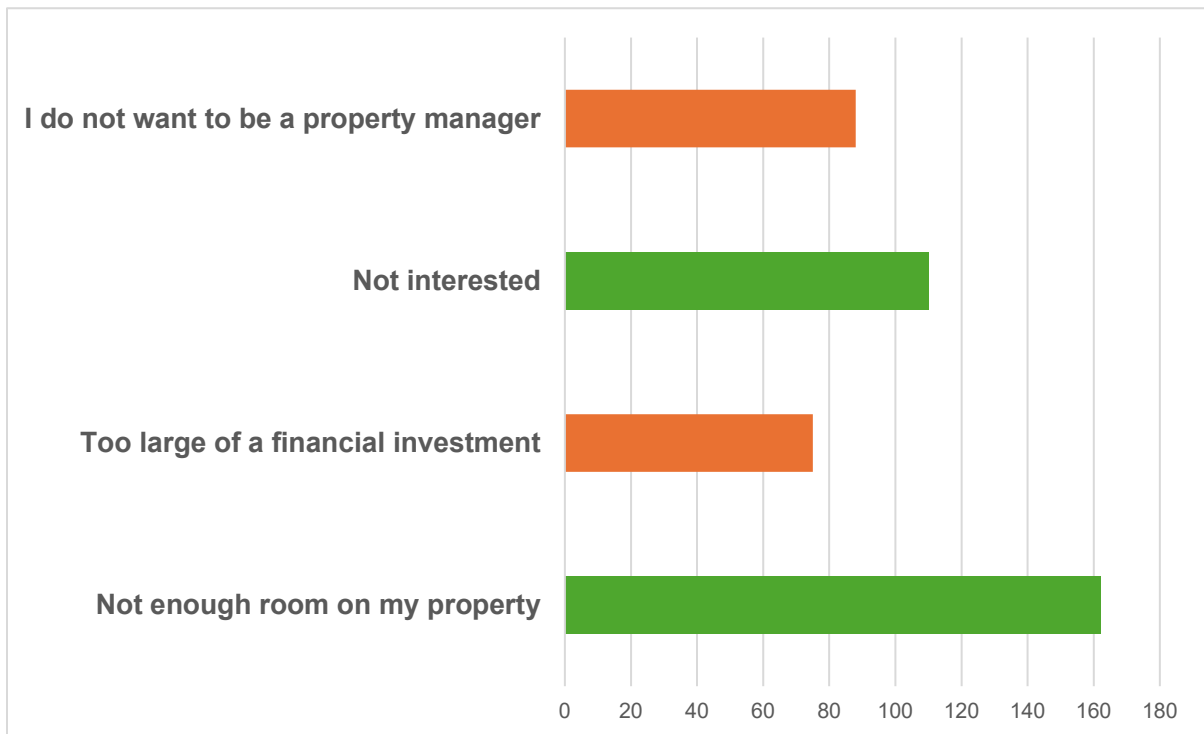
No	254
Yes	90
Not sure/I don't know	101
TOTAL	445



Note: As shown above, most respondents said they would not be interested in developing an ADU. However, 90 respondents did state that they would be, and 101 were unsure, which may make ADU development a viable option for housing development.

Question 7: If you are not willing to develop an ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) on your property, why not?

Not enough room on my property	162
Too large of a financial investment	75
Not interested	110
I do not want to be a property manager	88
Other	See the response summary below



Note: As shown above, lot size restraint was a prominent factor in the lack of interest in developing ADUs.

Note: Below are summaries of the responses under the “other” category

Prompt no. 1: (FIND THE FIVE MOST COMMON THEMES OF THESE RESPONSES)

Prompt no. 2 (SUMMARIZE THESE RESPONSES IN FIVE KEY POINTS)

Prompt no. 3 (SUMMARIZE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES)

Prompt no. 1: (FIND THE FIVE MOST COMMON THEMES OF THESE RESPONSES)

Here are the five most common themes from the responses:

1. **HOA Restrictions:** Many respondents mention that their homeowners' associations (HOAs) prohibit the construction of ADUs, making it impossible for them to consider building one.
2. **Financial and Regulatory Barriers:** High costs associated with permits, utility hookups, and meeting fire and building codes are frequently cited as prohibitive factors. Some respondents also mention that the town imposes additional fees, making ADUs financially unfeasible.
3. **Concerns About Increased Density and Overcrowding:** A significant number of people are concerned that ADUs would lead to overcrowding, strain local infrastructure, reduce parking availability, and change the character of the neighborhood.
4. **Preservation of Neighborhood Aesthetics and Character:** Many homeowners worry that ADUs would detract from the visual and social appeal of their neighborhoods, especially in historic or established communities.
5. **Lack of Ownership or Property Limitations:** Numerous respondents are renters or non-property owners who either cannot build ADUs or feel that the question is irrelevant to them. Some property owners also mention unsuitable land or space constraints as barriers to adding ADUs.

Note from Open AI: These themes reflect a mix of practical, financial, and personal considerations regarding the addition of ADUs.

Prompt no. 2 (SUMMARIZE THESE RESPONSES IN FIVE KEY POINTS)

Here is a summary of the five key points from the responses:

1. ***HOA Restrictions and Regulations:***
Many respondents cite homeowners' associations (HOAs) that prohibit the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), making them unable to consider building one.
2. ***Financial and Regulatory Barriers:***
High costs, permit fees, and regulatory challenges, such as strict fire codes, make ADU development financially prohibitive for some respondents.
3. ***Neighborhood Density and Aesthetics Concerns:***
Respondents worry that ADUs will increase neighborhood density, strain infrastructure, and alter the character and aesthetics of the community.
4. ***Property Suitability Issues:***
Some properties are unsuitable for ADUs due to physical constraints like limited space, sloped land, or location within a floodplain.

5. *Non-Homeowners or Uninterested Owners:*

Many respondents are renters or do not own property, making ADU development irrelevant to them. Additionally, some homeowners are not interested in building an ADU due to personal or practical reasons.

Prompt no. 3 (SUMMARIZE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES)

This document appears to contain a variety of responses from people about their views on building or allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in their neighborhoods. Here's a summary of the primary points mentioned:

1. *Homeowners' Association (HOA) Restrictions:*

Many respondents indicated that their HOAs prohibit ADUs, making it impossible for them to consider building one.

2. *Financial Constraints:*

Several people expressed concerns over the high cost of building an ADU, including additional permit fees, electrical hookup fees, and compliance with fire codes.

3. *Infrastructure and Parking Concerns:*

There is significant concern that adding ADUs would increase density, leading to overcrowded neighborhoods, parking shortages, and strain on local infrastructure.

4. *Aesthetic and Character Preservation:*

Some homeowners worry that ADUs would alter the look and feel of their neighborhoods, especially in areas with historical or distinctive character.

5. *Privacy and Safety:*

Concerns about reduced privacy, increased liability, and fire risk are also highlighted.

6. *Renter Feedback:*

A number of responses are from renters, who either cannot add an ADU or are uncertain if they'd support them due to their non-ownership status.

7. *Interest in ADUs:*

Despite these concerns, there are some respondents who support ADUs, either for future rental income or to add flexibility to their property, provided there are incentives or reduced costs.

8. *General Opposition to Increased Density:* A few respondents are opposed to any efforts to increase density in their town, citing concerns over maintaining the "flavor" and community characteristics.

Note from Open AI. This summary highlights diverse perspectives, with common themes around financial, regulatory, and community impact issues.

Question 9: Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Prompt no. 1: (FIND THE FIVE MOST COMMON THEMES OF THESE RESPONSES)

Prompt no. 2 (SUMMARIZE THESE RESPONSES IN FIVE KEY POINTS)

Prompt no. 3 (SUMMARIZE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES)

Prompt no. 1: (FIND THE FIVE MOST COMMON THEMES OF THESE RESPONSES)

Based on the responses, here are the five most common themes:

1. *Responsible Development and Protection of Community Character:*
Residents prioritize maintaining the town's unique, small-town character, expressing concerns about overdevelopment and opposing high-density projects, especially in environmentally sensitive areas. They favor smaller, integrated housing options that align with the existing community style.
2. *Infrastructure and Safety Concerns:*
There is widespread concern that Lyons' current infrastructure—particularly roads, water, sewer, and emergency services—may not support additional development, especially in flood- and fire-prone areas. The eastern corridor is noted as a more suitable area for growth due to safety and accessibility.
3. *Affordability and Housing for the Workforce:*
Many respondents desire truly affordable housing options that cater to middle-income residents and local workers like teachers and first responders. There's frustration that current affordable housing often targets those displaced by floods, rather than serving the needs of the broader community.
4. *Environmental Considerations and Sustainability:*
Protecting the local environment is a high priority, with respondents emphasizing sustainable development practices, including energy-efficient building, responsible water use, and careful site selection to avoid impacts on wildlife and natural spaces.
5. *Community Engagement and Transparency:*
There is a call for greater community involvement and clearer communication in the planning process. Residents want transparency on project details, housing definitions, and political agendas to ensure that developments align with the community's needs and priorities.

Note from Open AI: These themes underscore a desire for development that respects the community's character, meets true affordability needs, and prioritizes environmental and safety considerations, while fostering open communication and collaboration.

Prompt no. 2 (SUMMARIZE THESE RESPONSES IN FIVE KEY POINTS)

Based on the responses, here is a Summary of Key Points:

1. *Responsible, low-impact growth* to maintain the town's character.

2. Concerns about *infrastructure and safety*, particularly with regards to fire and flood risks.
3. A need for *affordable housing* options that address a broader range of incomes, particularly those who are priced out of the housing market but don't qualify for subsidies.
4. *Environmental sustainability* should be a priority in new housing projects, with attention to water usage and eco-friendly designs.
5. The need for *community engagement* and transparent decision-making in the housing process to ensure that development serves the needs of current residents while maintaining the town's values.

Note from Open AI: These recurring themes suggest that while there is support for additional affordable housing, it must be implemented thoughtfully, with a strong emphasis on balancing growth, safety, environmental impact, and community needs.

Prompt no. 3 (SUMMARIZE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES)

All input highlights the complex balance between maintaining Lyons' small-town charm and addressing the urgent need for affordable housing. I've summarized the key themes from your feedback below:

1. *Responsible and Thoughtful Growth:*
There is a strong desire to ensure that any new development, especially affordable housing, is done in a responsible and thoughtful way. This includes considerations like escape routes, fire hazards, wildlife preservation, and agricultural land protection. Building should avoid areas that are prone to flooding or high wildfire risk, and should be located within walking distance to public transportation to minimize traffic and congestion. A key area for potential growth mentioned is the eastern corridor, which is viewed as more suitable for development due to its lower risk for wildfire and flood damage.
2. *Affordability and Accessibility:*
Many respondents expressed frustration with the current definition of "affordable housing," especially for those who don't qualify for low-income housing but still cannot afford the high costs in town. This includes middle-income individuals and families who earn too much for subsidized housing but are priced out of the market. There's a clear desire for more affordable housing options specifically for workforce housing (teachers, nurses, first responders) and single renters, with calls for smaller units such as one-bedroom apartments, duplexes, and ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units).
3. *Infrastructure and Safety:*
Infrastructure concerns were raised, with a focus on ensuring that growth does not overwhelm the town's roads, utilities, water systems, or emergency services. There are worries about increased traffic, particularly near schools and downtown areas, and the potential for accidents and safety risks. Additionally, wildfire and flood risks must be carefully considered, with calls to avoid development in high-risk zones like McConnell Ponds or Steamboat Valley, which are sensitive areas for wildlife and flood risks.

4. *Impact on Community Character:*

A significant portion of feedback reflects concerns about maintaining the character and size of the town. Many long-term residents moved to Lyons because of its small-town feel and fear that rapid growth could erode the qualities that make it special. There's support for moderate, gradual growth (around 10%) but a strong resistance to large developments, especially multi-family complexes that could lead to a loss of open space, parkland, and views.

5. *Taxation and Costs:*

A number of residents expressed concerns about increasing property taxes or fees to support new affordable housing. Some suggested that new developments should contribute affordable housing units (e.g., 5-10%) through inclusionary zoning, rather than relying on town subsidies or increased taxes. Others expressed frustration with the rising costs of housing and rental rates, noting that some long-time residents are being priced out of town.

6. *Mixed-Use and Infill Development:*

Some respondents are open to mixed-use development in existing commercial areas and along Main Street, which could offer both housing and businesses in the same space, creating a more walkable, community-focused environment. This would allow the town to grow while still preserving its small-town charm and keeping housing close to jobs and services. Infill development—building on underutilized or vacant lots within existing neighborhoods—was also suggested as a way to grow without expanding too far.

7. *Government Role and Transparency:*

Several respondents noted the importance of transparency and public involvement in housing planning and development. They want clearer communication on housing definitions (e.g., affordable, attainable, workforce housing) and a more inclusive process that takes into account the needs of renters, workers, and middle-income individuals. There's also an interest in exploring non-traditional housing options like tiny homes or mobile home parks, which have historically provided affordable alternatives for young families and workers.

8. *Concerns About Specific Locations:*

Areas like McConnell Ponds and Steamboat Valley were mentioned as unsuitable for new housing due to their environmental sensitivity, wildlife concerns, and potential flooding risks. Several people also mentioned the triangle by the bridge on McConnell Drive, expressing concerns that such development could disrupt the neighborhood and lead to increased traffic.

Staff Note: All raw data is provided in a separate attachment in the BOT packet.