South Hadley Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) Survey Results: A Collection of Community Voices

Liz Auguste

Community Based Learning Research Project

Mount Holyoke College

May 2015

Table of Contents

Abstract……5

Introduction……..5

Method……6

Participants……...6

Demographics……..7

Procedure……...12

Data Analysis……12

Results ……...……13

South Hadley Residency……13

Housing……..17

Transportation……29

Education……...31

Land Use and Community Design……34

Waste Management and Recycling……38

Community Services……..40

Groceries……41

Library Services……42

Recreational Activities and Open Spaces……..44

Senior Services……...45

Youth Services……...47

Restaurants……50

Adult Education……51

Cultural Activities……..53

Shopping……54

Personal Services……...57

Community Information and Involvement……59

Open Comments…….65

Transportation……65

General comments…….65

Driving and road maintenance……...65

Walking and sidewalks……..65

Public transportation……..66

Biking and bike paths…….66

Community Services and Resources……..66

Groceries, restaurants, and retail……66

Library services……..66

Cultural activities……...67

General comments…….67

Community Information and Involvement……67

Politics……...67

Community life……..67

News……..67

Contributed Topics……68

Town budget and finances…….68

Survey experiences and opinions……...68

General comments…….68

Recreational Opportunities and Open Spaces……68

Education……...69

Housing……..69

Condominiums……...69

Affordable housing……69

General comments…….69

Waste Management……....70

Land Usage……70

Youth Services……...70

Senior Services……...70

Discussion……..71

References……..72

Appendix……73

Abstract

In 2010, the Master Plan Implementation Committee developed a nine-section trajectory for the development of South Hadley, MA. Inspired by the vision of the 2010 Master Plan conducted in 2015, a survey was developed in order to assess the needs of the community and to see how it has developed since then. Residents expressed their opinions regarding residency, housing, transportation, education, land use and community design, waste management and recycling, community services within and outside of the town, recreational activities and open spaces, community information and involvement, and additional topics. Analyses of the data regarding the status and development of South Hadley are discussed.

Introduction

The Master Plan Implementation Committee created a Comprehensive Plan for the development of South Hadley that focuses on preservation, long-term goals, shorter-term action steps, and encouragement of citizenship. The plan is grounded in four core principles: management towards a vision, communication, sustainability, and leading by example ("South Hadley, MA – Master Plan Implementation Committee"). Within this framework, there are five core initiatives: "1. revitalize South Hadley Falls, 2. Invest in the Route 116/ Route 33 Commercial Focus area as a mixed-use center, 3. Connect South Hadley's Centers, 4. secure open space in the range, river and rural areas, [and] 5. Update the regulatory infrastructure to support the community's desired outcomes" (("South Hadley, MA – Master Plan Implementation Committee"). The plan organizes these core initiatives and additional items along the topics of land use and community design, economic development, municipal services and facilities, open space and recreation, natural resources, historical and cultural resources, housing, and transportation and transit.

The plan clearly outlines these components, however, it asserts that these are recommendations, and invite the entire community's contributions in shaping and implementing. This survey is a way to extend this invitation in order to continue moving forward with the development of South Hadley in a way that represents the needs of the community.

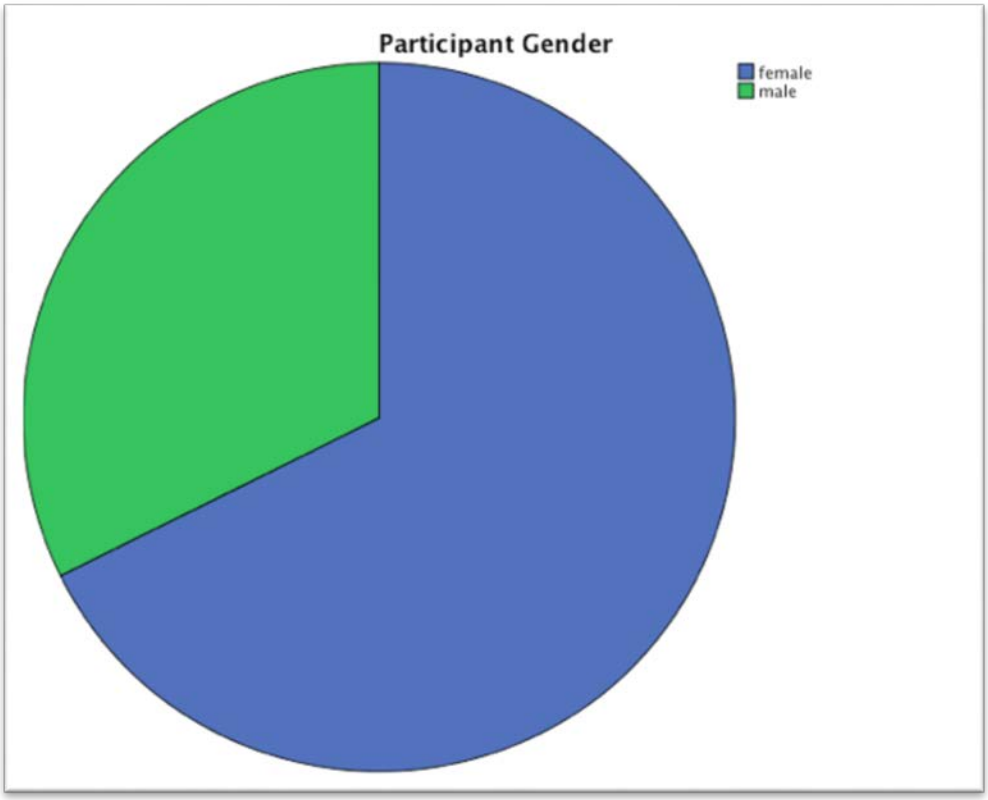
Method

Participants

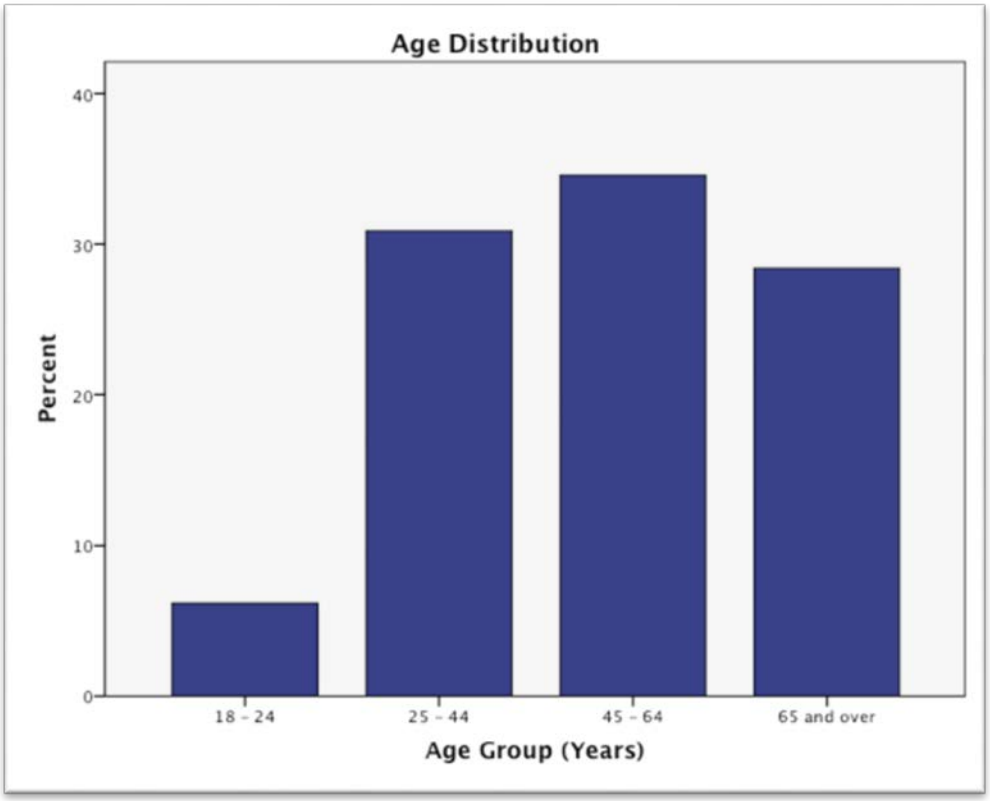
Paper surveys were left at various public locations around South Hadley: South Hadley Public Library, Gaylord Library, Town Hall, Loomis Village, the Council on Aging, and Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and the Odyssey Bookstore. The Odyssey Bookstore did not make the survey available to customers. The link to the online version of the survey was posted at the top of each paper survey to encourage ease of access. An announcement with the online survey link was placed in the school newsletters of Plains Elementary School, Mosier Elementary School, Michael E. Smith Middle School, and South Hadley High School.

Demographics

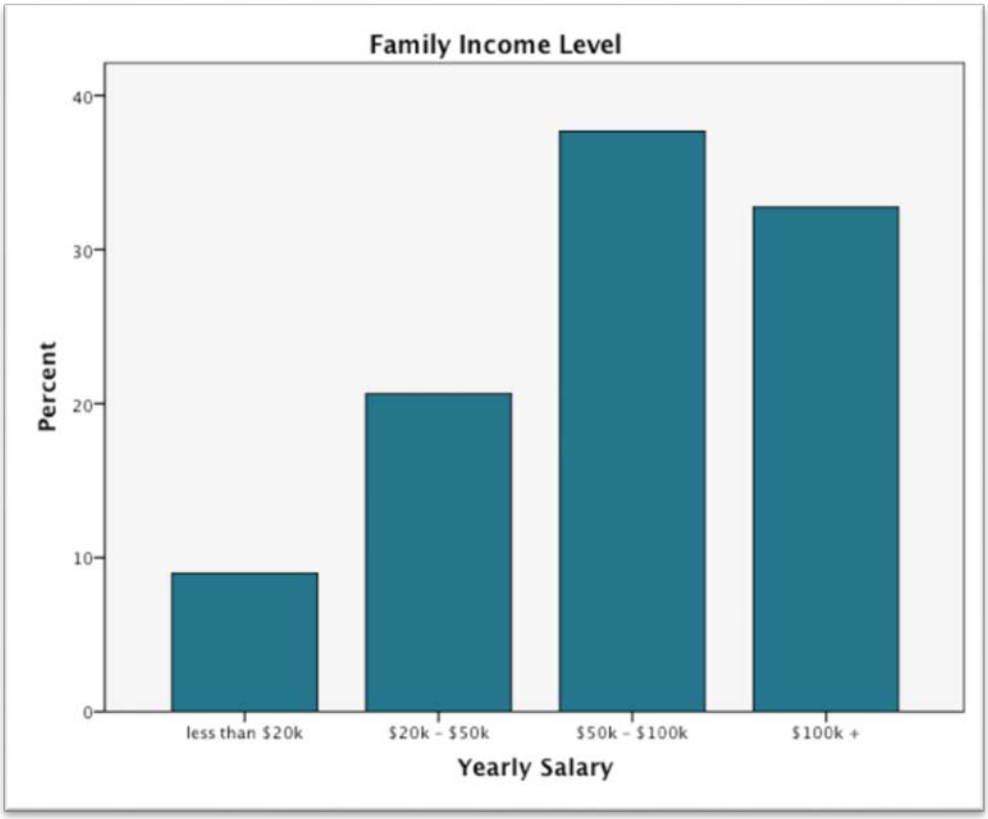
Demographics of the survey participants were collected as follows. In total, 245 South Hadley residents completed the survey: 184 completed the online version, and 61 completed a paper version. 68% of participants were female, while 32% of participants were male.



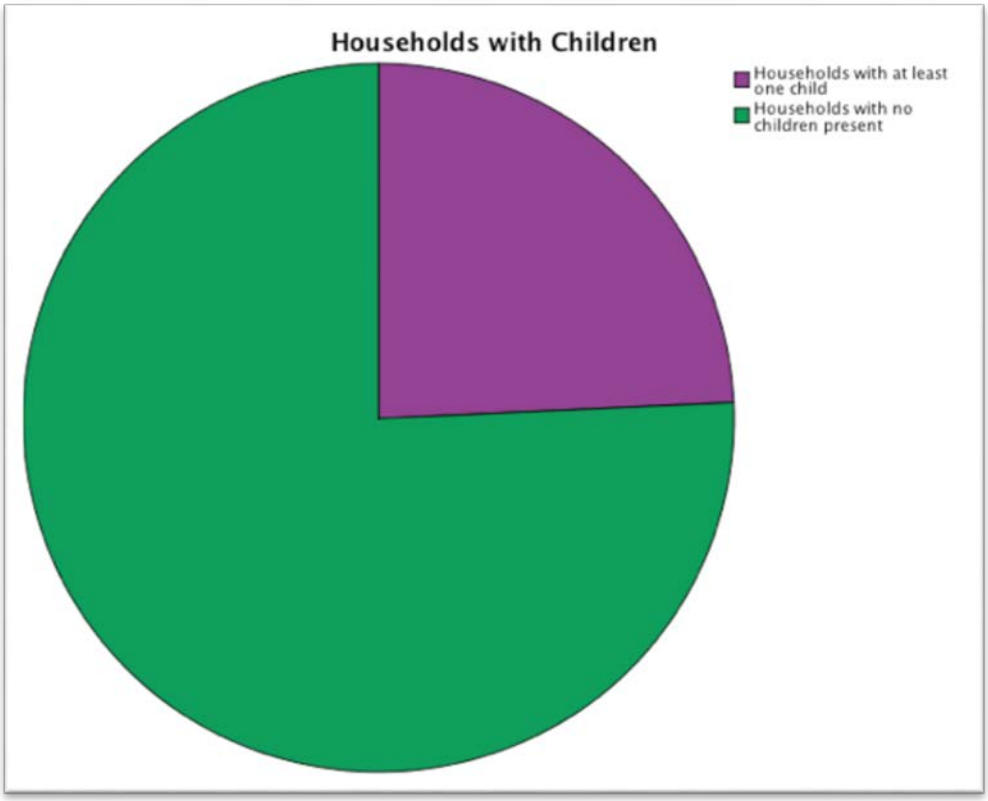
Participants could select one of four age categories. 35% of participants were between the ages of 45 and 64, 31% were between 25 and 44, 28% were 65 and over, while only 6% were between 18 and 24.



Regarding family income level, 33% of participants earn over $100,000 annually, 38% earn $50,000 to $100,000, 21% earn $20,000 to $50,000, and only 9% earn less than $20,000.



Lastly, 24% of participants have at least one child in the household.



Discussion

Demographics of the participant pool revealed a variety of participants within the South Hadley community. While the sample of this survey was 68% female and 32% male, the population of South Hadley is 59% female and 41% male according to census data ("Community Profile"). The demographics of the survey show that the age categories 25-44, 45-64, and 65 and over all have approximately 30% of participants, with remaining being 18-24 years old. The median resident age in South Hadley is 40.6 years ("Community Profile"). According to the family income levels collected, 33% of participants earn over 100,000/yr, while 9% of residents

earn less than 20,000/yr. The majority of residents earn at least 50,000/yr. This is in comparison to the median income in South Hadley of $59,808 (“Community Profile”). Additionally, 6% of residents are below the poverty level (“Community Profile”). Lastly, 24% of participants have at least one child in the household. 61.2% of South Hadley residents have reported a family household; however, child ages and schools will vary. While census data is a more thorough investigation of the variety of voices within a community, survey results can provide insight into a broad scope of participants and do not require government implementation. Future research may focus on investigating specific populations within South Hadley, such as the 6% of residents below the poverty level who are not represented in this survey.

Procedure

See Appendix for a copy of the survey.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the survey was input into SPSS for statistical analysis, while qualitative data was analyzed and coded according to salient theme.

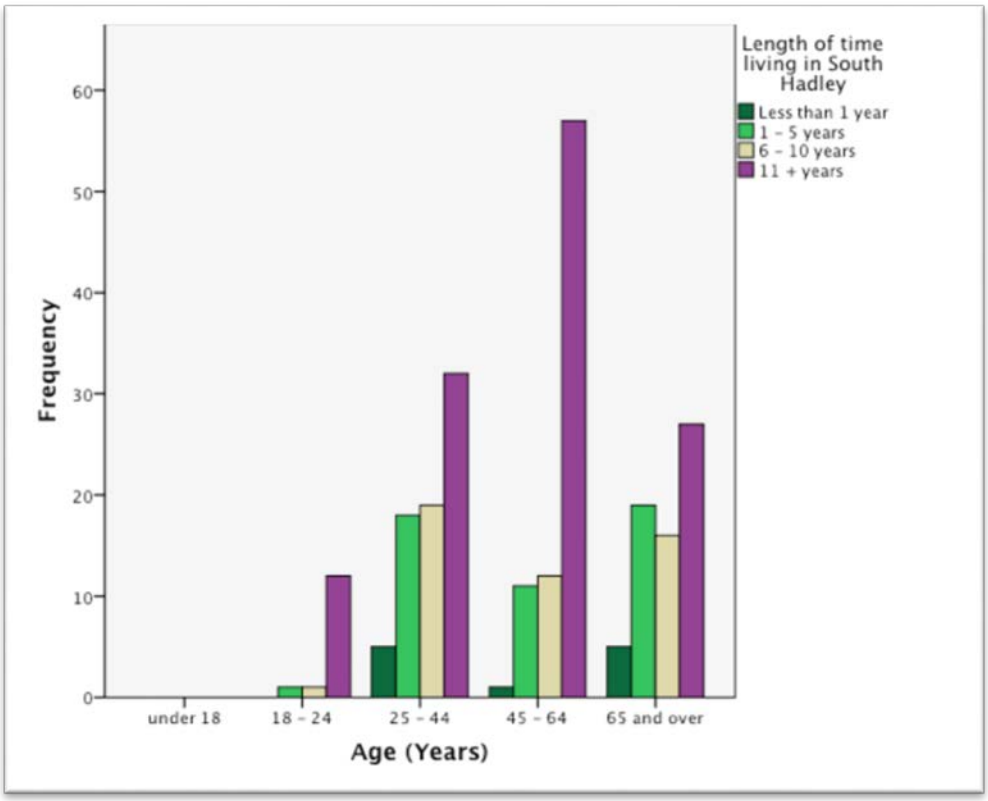
Using SPSS, the researcher produced descriptive statistics for frequencies and crosstabs; Pearson's chi-square analyses were run for each question in the survey using the following demographic information: age, gender, family income level, presence of children in the household, and map area selection of residence.

Qualitative data was closely read and coded for common themes until saturation was reached, using textual coding units. When thematic saturation was achieved, salient themes were categorized and organized according to subject.

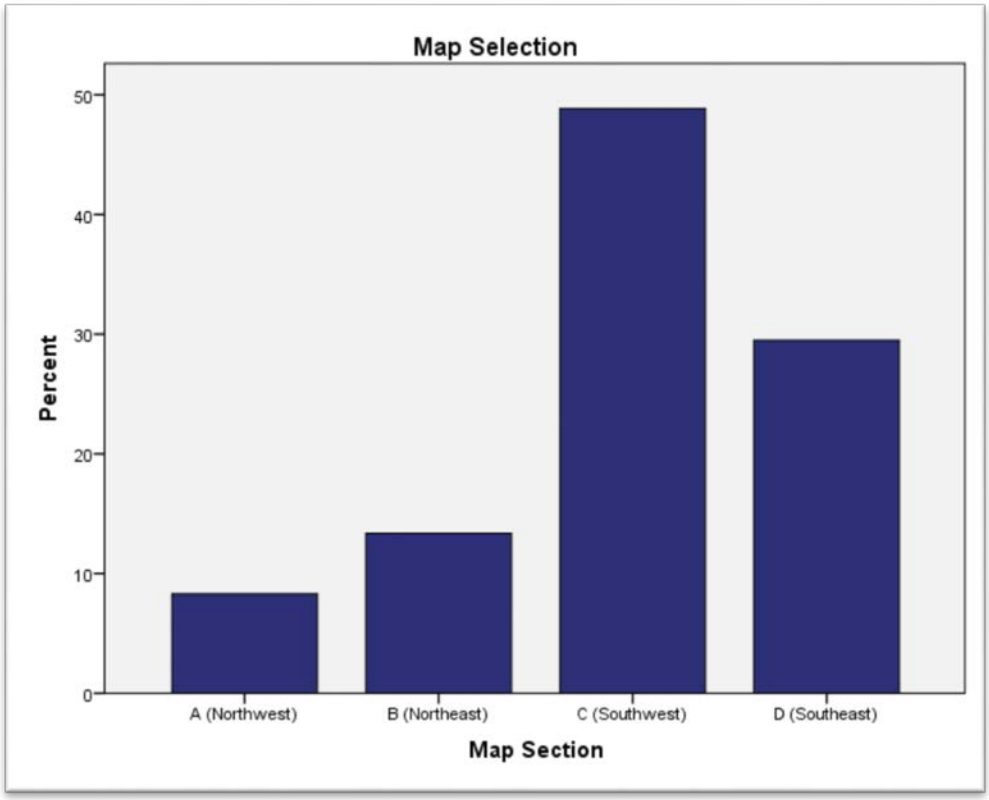
Results

South Hadley Residency

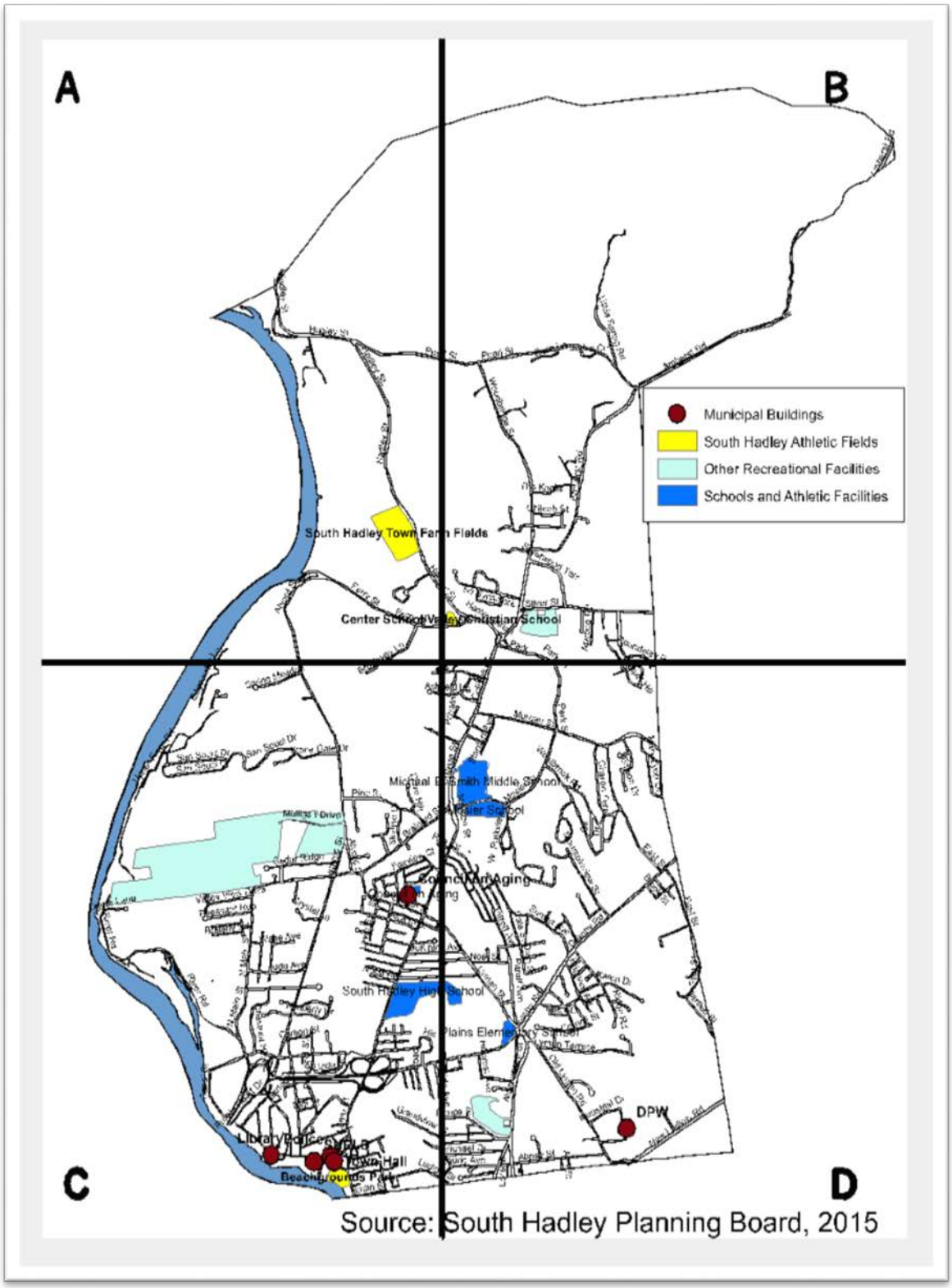
Participants were asked how long they have resided in South Hadley. Chi-square analysis showed that length of time corresponded well with age, $x^2(9, N = 236) = 24.45$, $p = .004$. As one would expect, those who have lived here longest tend to be older. However, the largest group of respondents were those who were between ages 45 and 64, and who had lived in South Hadley for at least eleven years. The graph below shows the frequencies for different age groups in response to how long they have lived in South Hadley.



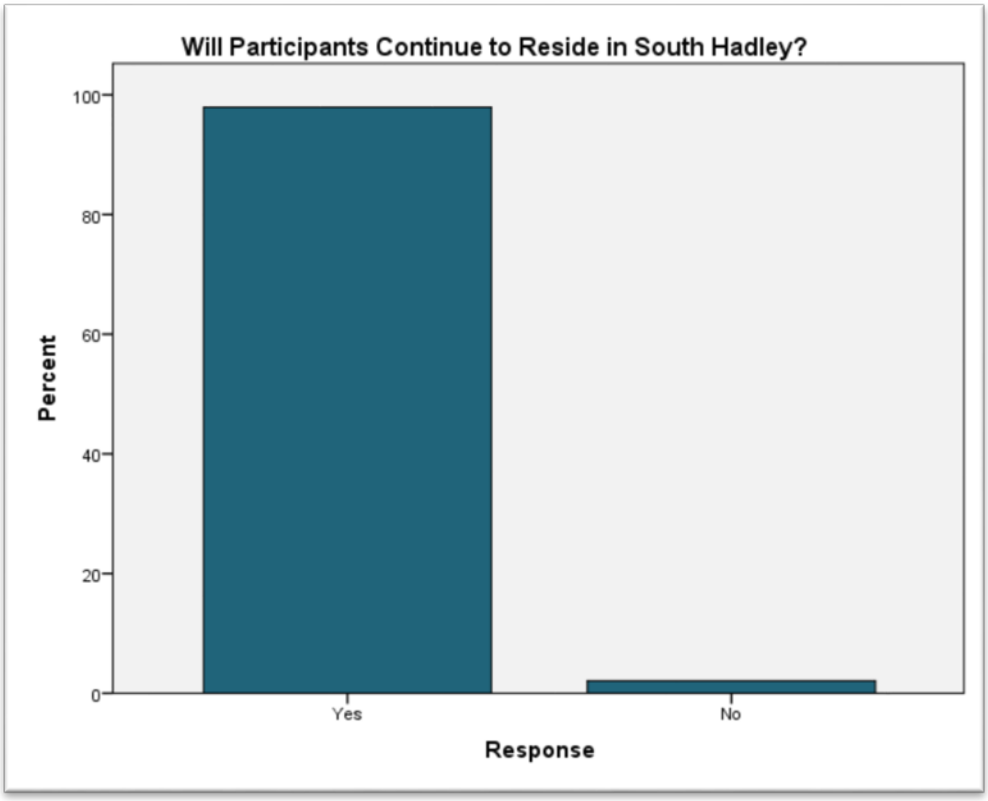
A map of South Hadley was sectioned in quadrants A, B, C, and D (see page 12). A corresponds to the northwest portion of the map, B to the northeast, C to the southwest, and D to the southeast. Residents selected the approximate portion in which they reside, with the majority selecting C, the southwest portion. 49% live in the southwest (C); 30% live in the southeast (D), 13% live in the northeast (B), and 8% live in the northwest (A).



Survey Map


A
B
C
D
Municipal Buildings
South Hadley Athletic Fields
Other Recreational Facilities
Schools and Athletic Facilities
South Hadley Town Farm Fields
Center School
Valley Christian School
Michael D. Smith Middle School
Fairer School
Council on Aging
South Hadley High School
Plains Elementary School
DPW
Library
Police
Town Hall
Playgrounds Park
Source: South Hadley Planning Board, 2015

Participants were asked if they plan to live in South Hadley for the foreseeable future, with 98% answering yes and 2% answering no.



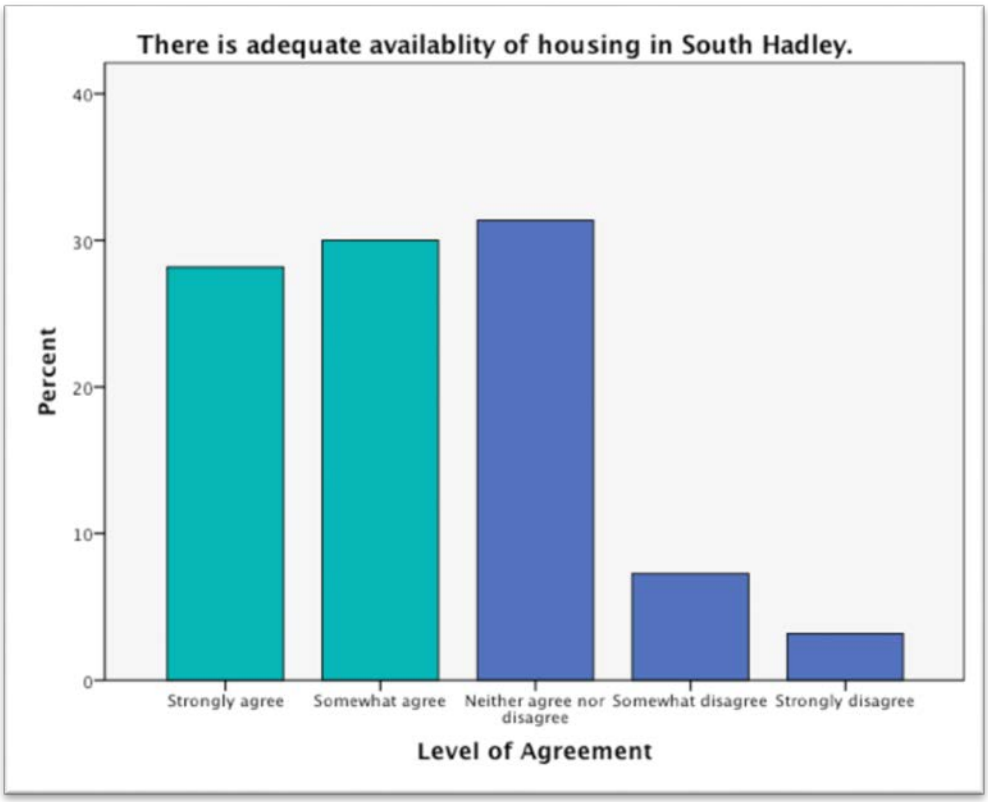
Discussion

Overall, the residential data shows that many participants in this survey have lived in South Hadley for a longer period of time, and plan to continue doing so. Data was not collected at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, which houses over 2,000 college students in the community annually. Future research may want to explore how to encourage new residents within South Hadley.

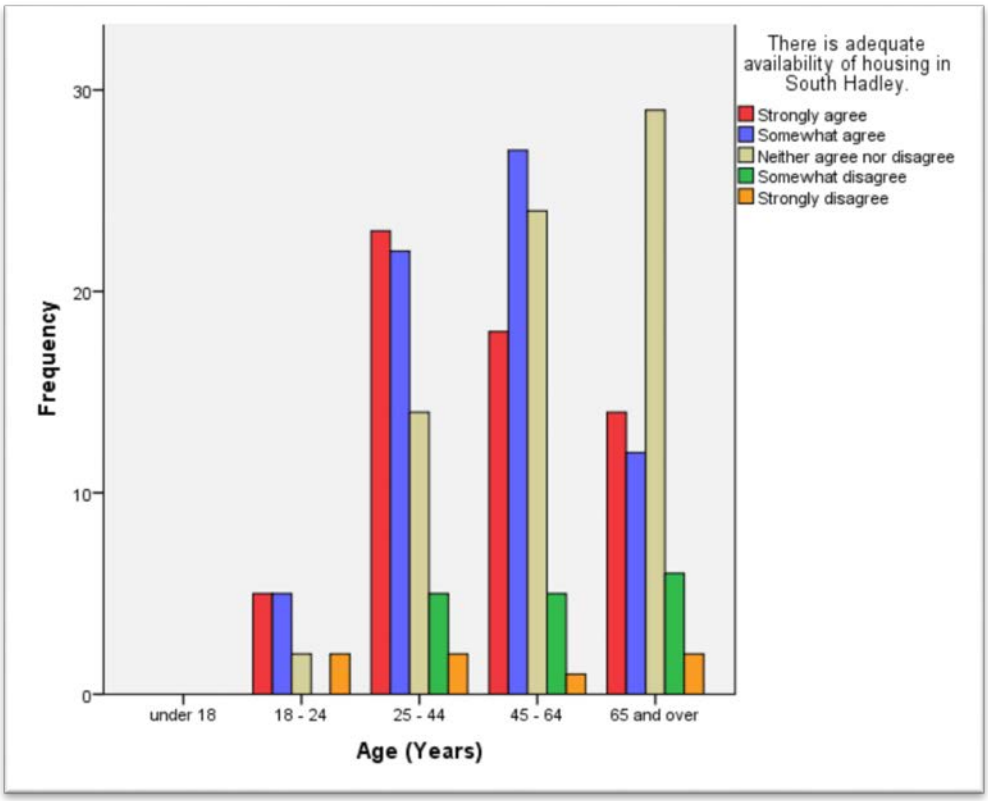
Housing

Participants were asked to rate a series of statements regarding their opinions on the availability and affordability of housing options in South Hadley.

When asked about general availability, 58% of participants either somewhat or strongly agreed that there is an adequate amount of housing available in South Hadley. As seen in the graph below, only 10% of participants somewhat or strongly disagreed with this statement.

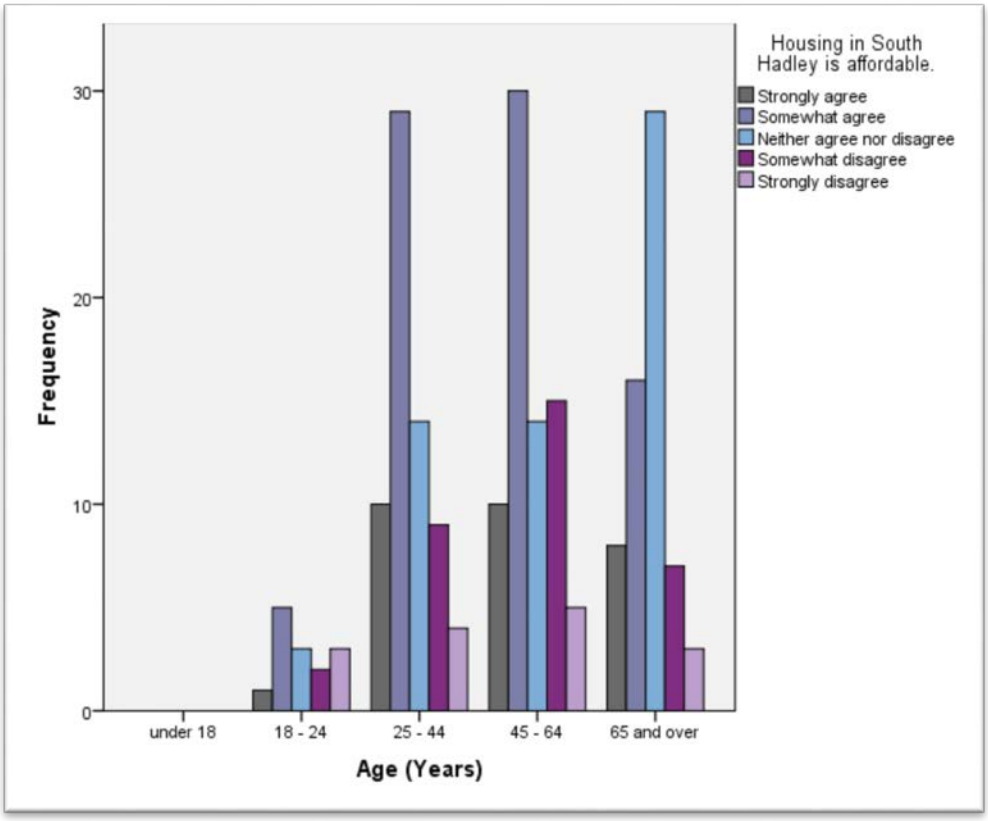


Chi-square analysis showed a relationship of participant age to their opinion regarding housing availability, $x^2(12, N = 218) = 21.78$, $p = .04$. Ambivalence regarding housing availability may increase with age: the most popular interaction is participants who are 65 and older who neither agree nor disagree that there is adequate housing. However, the majority of participants in all other age groups seem to somewhat or strongly agree. The graph below shows the frequencies for different age groups in comparison to their level of agreement regarding availability of housing in South Hadley.

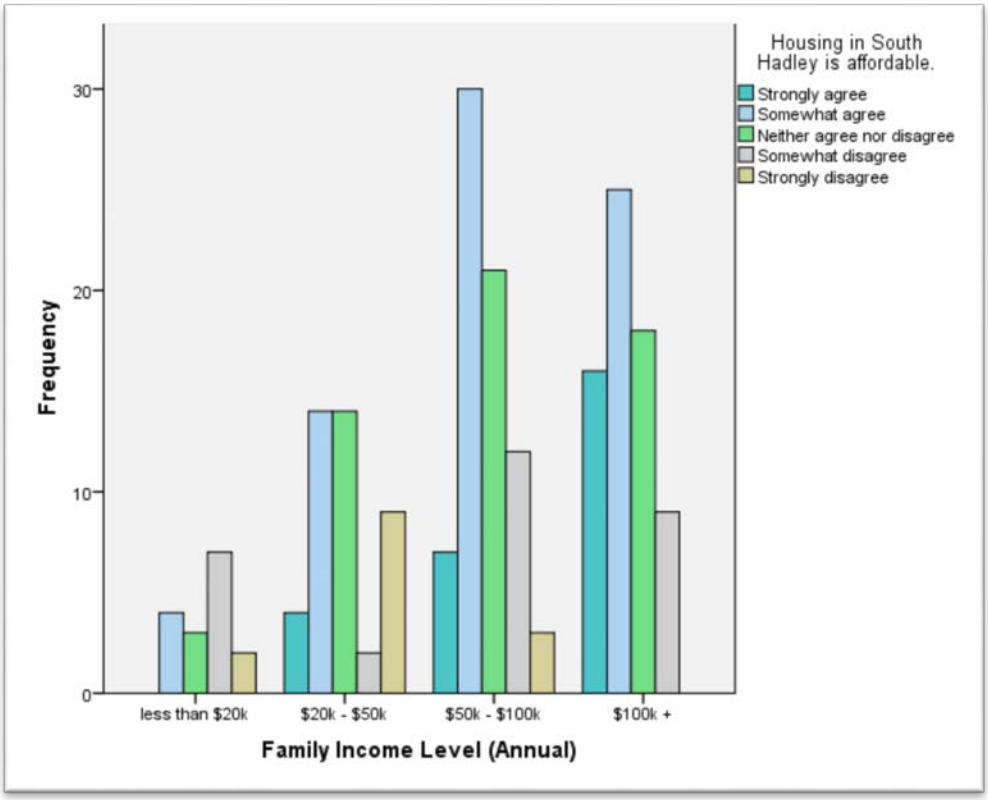


Opinions about affordability followed a similar pattern to availability, with 51% of participants either somewhat or strongly in agreement that housing is generally affordable. Disagreement doubled, with 22% of participants somewhat or strongly disagreeing that housing is affordable.

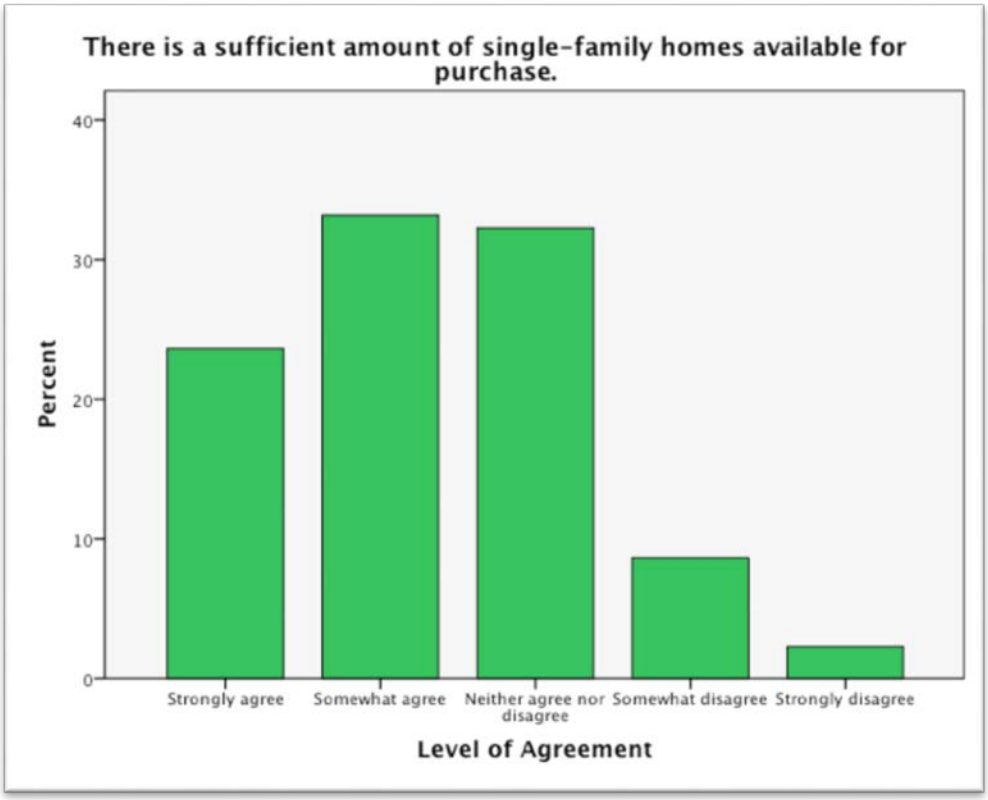
Again, there was an interaction between age and housing, this time regarding opinions about housing affordability, $x^2(12, N = 217) = 21.75$, $p = .04$. Participants most frequently selected "somewhat agree" except for the 65 and over age category, who most frequently selected "neither agree nor disagree."



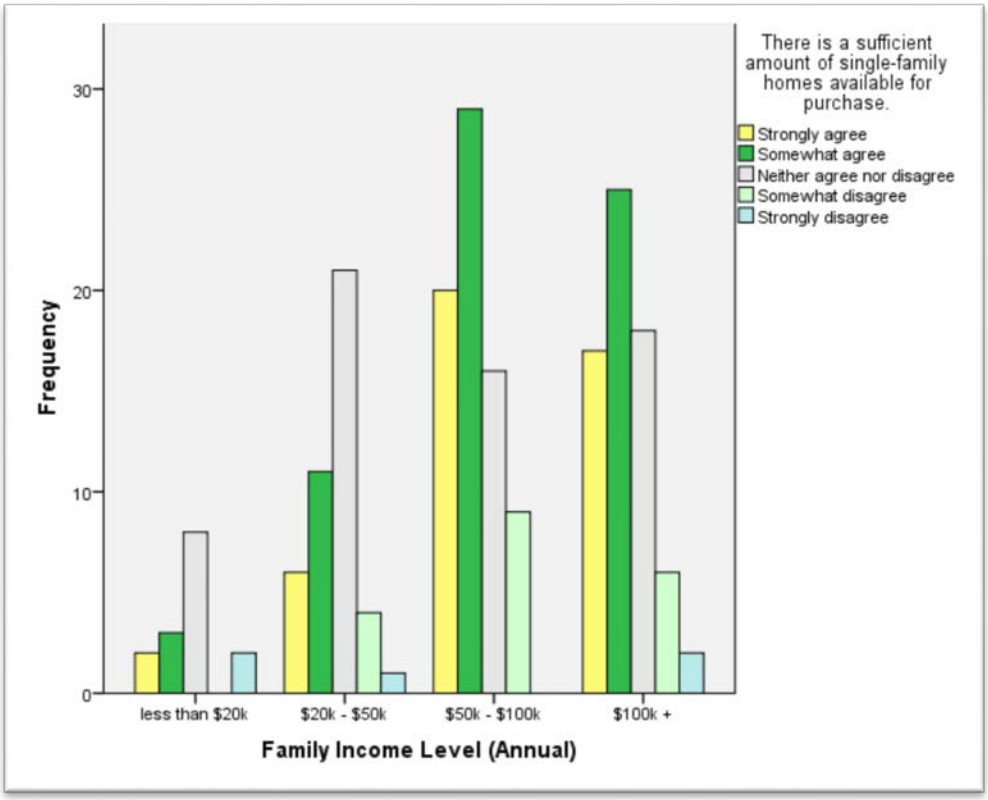
Family income level also strongly influenced participants' views regarding the affordability of housing. As expected, chi-square analysis revealed income level generally increased with agreement, $x^2(12, N = 200) = 41.05$, $p = .00$. Participants who reported lower incomes were less likely to report that housing is affordable.



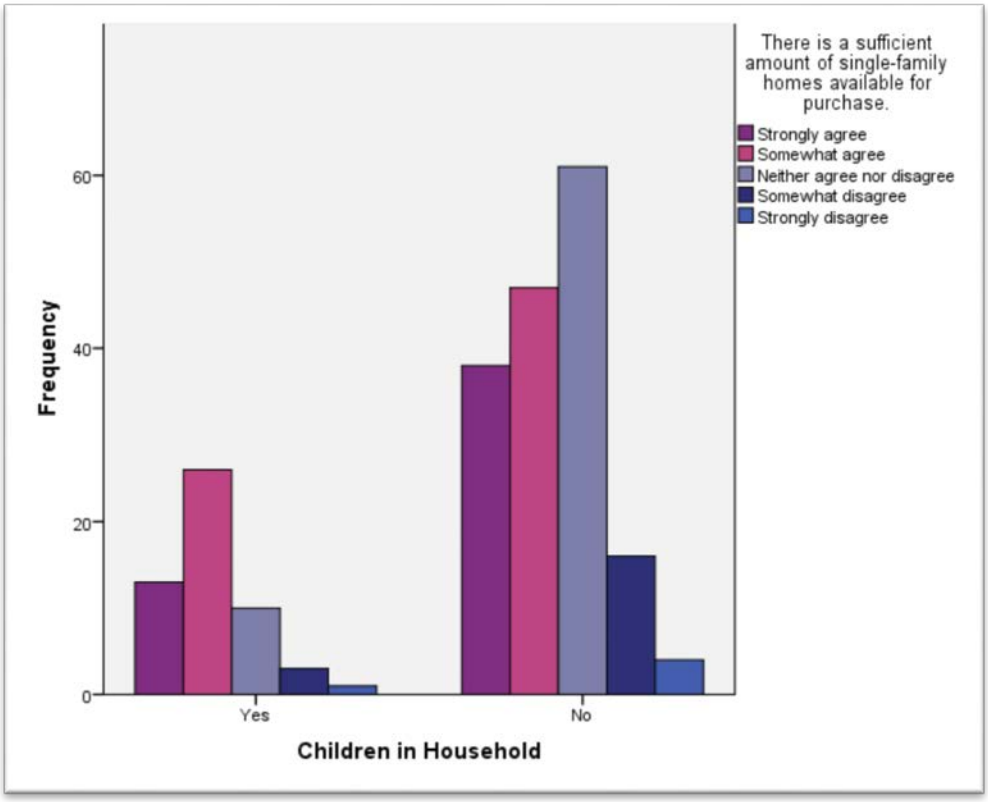
Next, participants were asked about the availability of both single and multi-family homes, in order to account for different socioeconomic housing needs. Following the pattern of the general housing questions, 57% of participants felt there was an adequate amount of single-family homes available for purchase. The percentage of people who neither agreed nor disagreed remained consistent proportionally, as seen in the graph below.



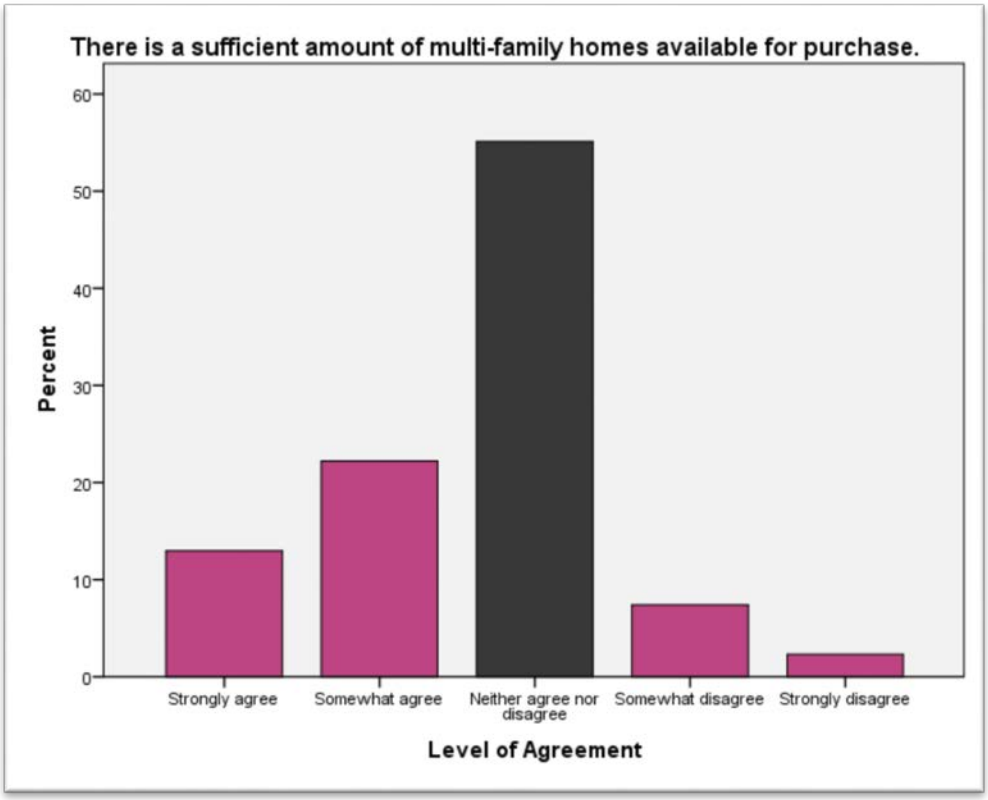
Family income level also affected whether or not participants agree that there are enough single-family homes available for purchase $x^2(12, N = 200) = 25.49$, $p = .01$. Level of agreement increased as reported income increased, with the most popular category being those who earn between $50 and $100k somewhat agreeing that there are enough single-family homes.



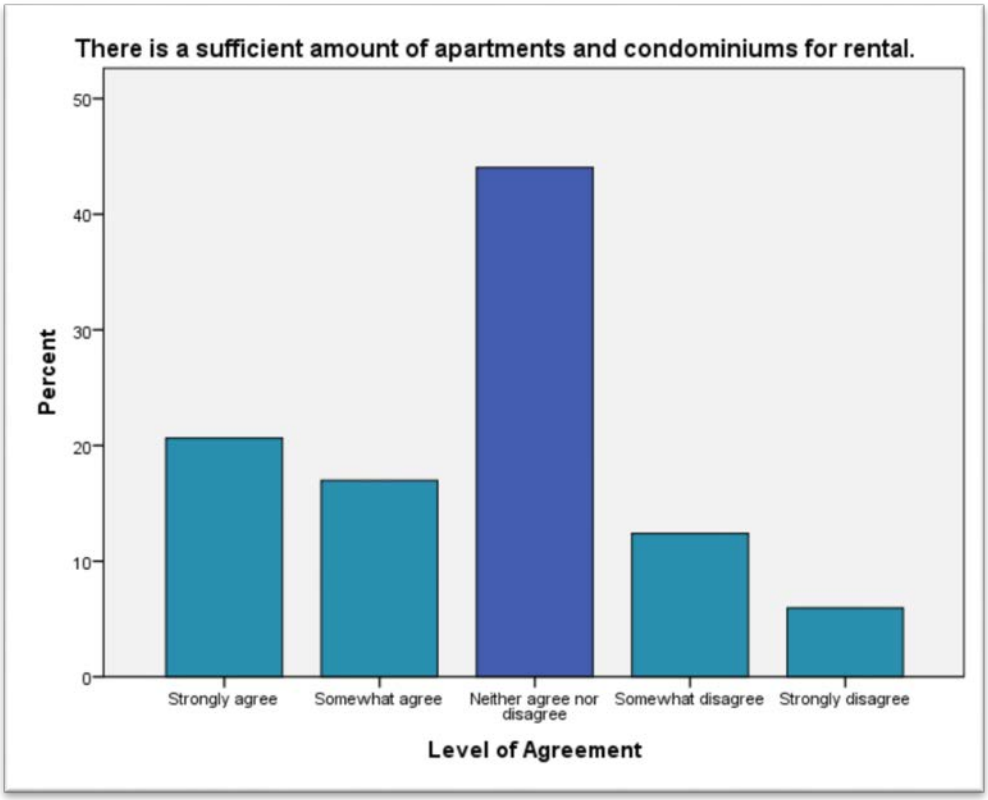
There was also an interaction between whether or not participants had children in the household and their opinion about single-family homes, $x^2(4, N = 219) = 9.97$, $p = .04$. Participants with children most frequently selected “somewhat agree” (49% of demographic), while participants without children most frequently selected “neither agree nor disagree” (37% of demographic).



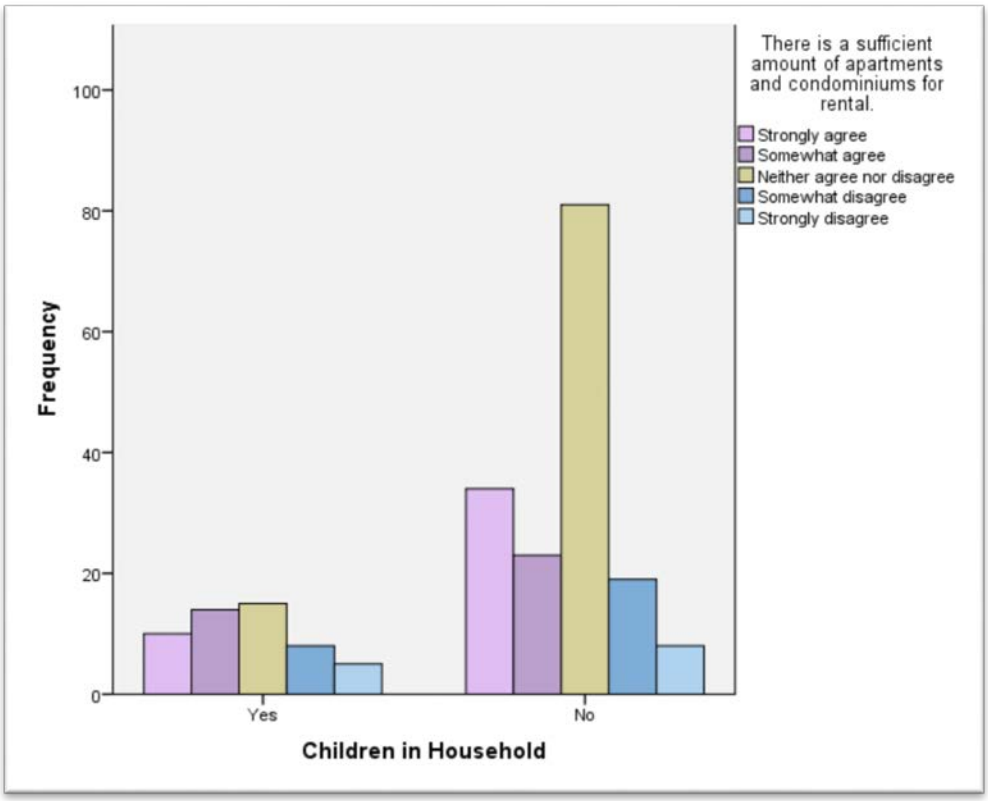
The pattern regarding multi-family home purchases was different in frequency from single-family homes, with the majority of people (55%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing that there was a sufficient amount available. As seen below, 35% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed, while 18% of participants somewhat or strongly disagreed.



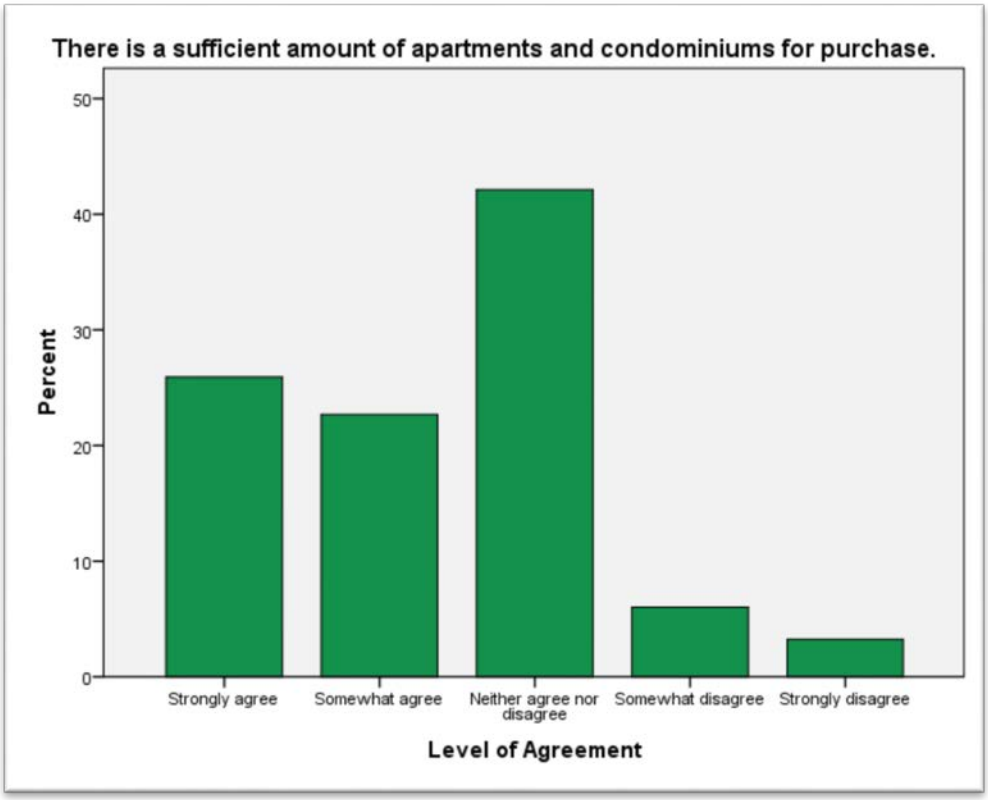
Next, participants were asked about apartments and condominiums. Following the pattern of multi-family home availability, the largest number of participants (44%) neither agree nor disagree that there is a sufficient amount available for rental.



The presence of children in a household somewhat influenced answers to this question. Chi-square analysis found a difference between those with and without children in regards to apartment and condominium rental availability: those with children were most likely to agree that there was a sufficient amount, and those without children were most likely to neither agree nor disagree, $x^2(4, N = 217) = 9.59$, $p = .05$. The most frequent category in this interaction was the latter, that of people who do not have children and neither agree nor disagree with apartment and condominium rental availability as sufficient.



When asked whether there is a sufficient amount of apartments and condominiums available for purchase as opposed to rental, level of agreement increased to 49% (in comparison to 38% for rentals).

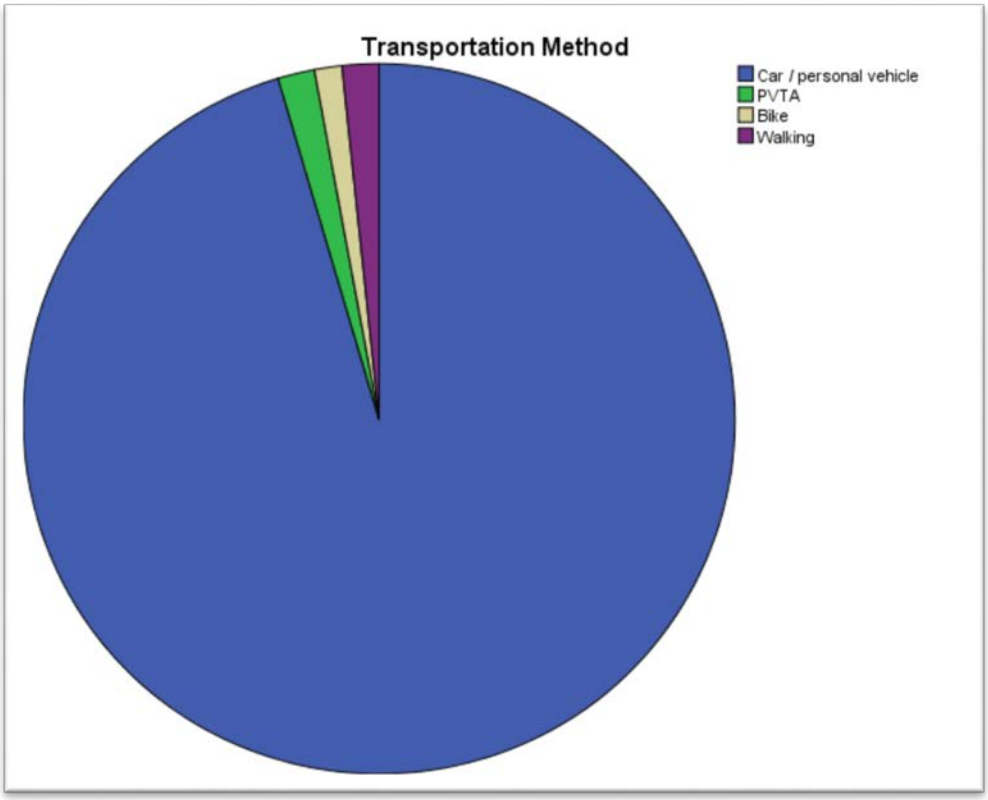


Discussion

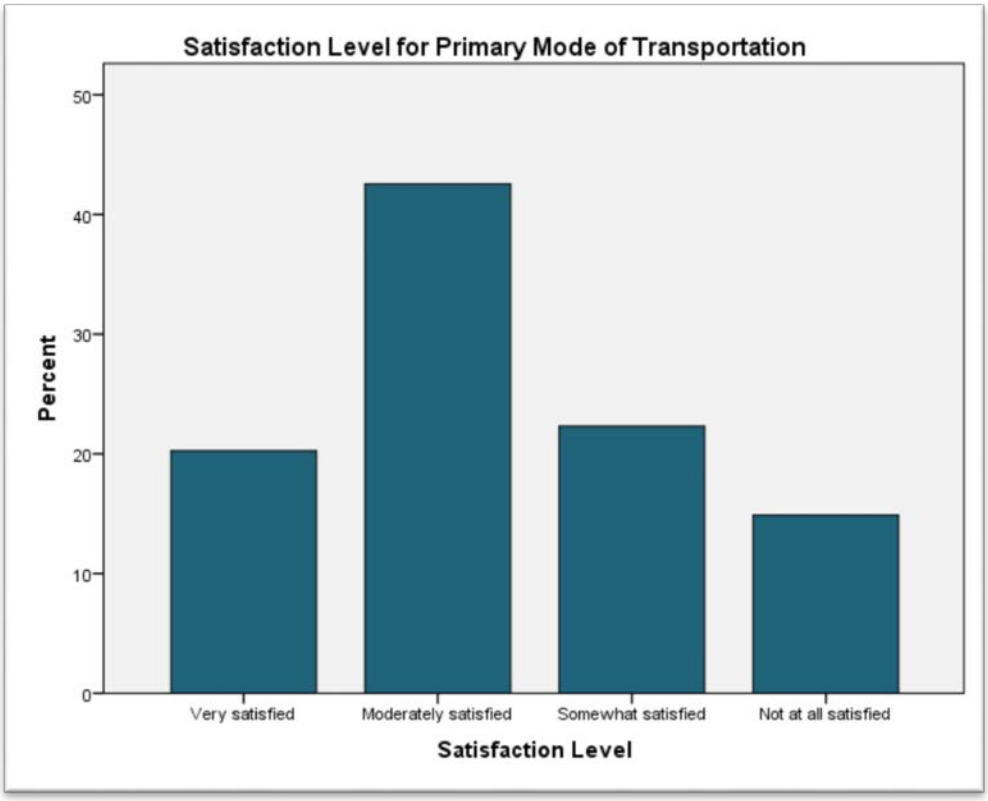
Overall, data regarding housing opinions was variable, with many participants selecting the “neither agree nor disagree” option. Age and income modulated answers to housing questions, suggesting that lower income and younger residents may also be of use in future housing research to assess community needs.

Transportation

Data regarding the types of transportation used in South Hadley and satisfaction levels was collected. Most participants use a car or personal vehicle as their primary form of transportation (95%).



Overall, participants reported moderate satisfaction with transportation in South Hadley (43%), with a total of 37% reporting that they were “somewhat” or “not at all” satisfied.

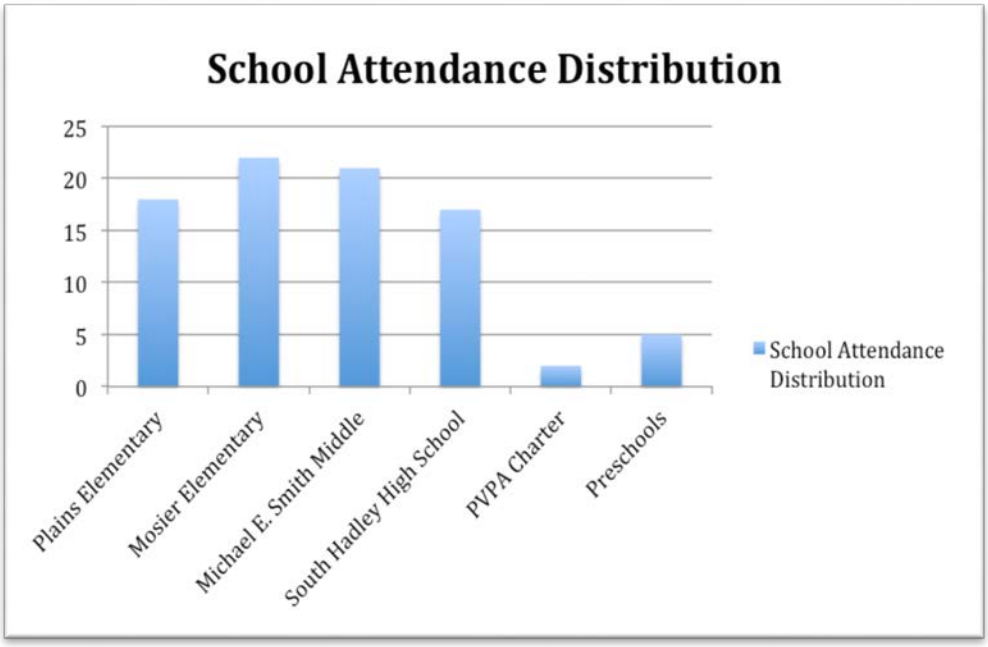


Discussion

The overwhelming majority of survey participants drive vehicles in South Hadley, and the largest category of satisfaction selected was moderate. The comments section provides a fuller picture of some opinions about vehicle transportation and road maintenance in South Hadley. Data is needed regarding the use of the PVTA, biking, and walking as modes of transportation.

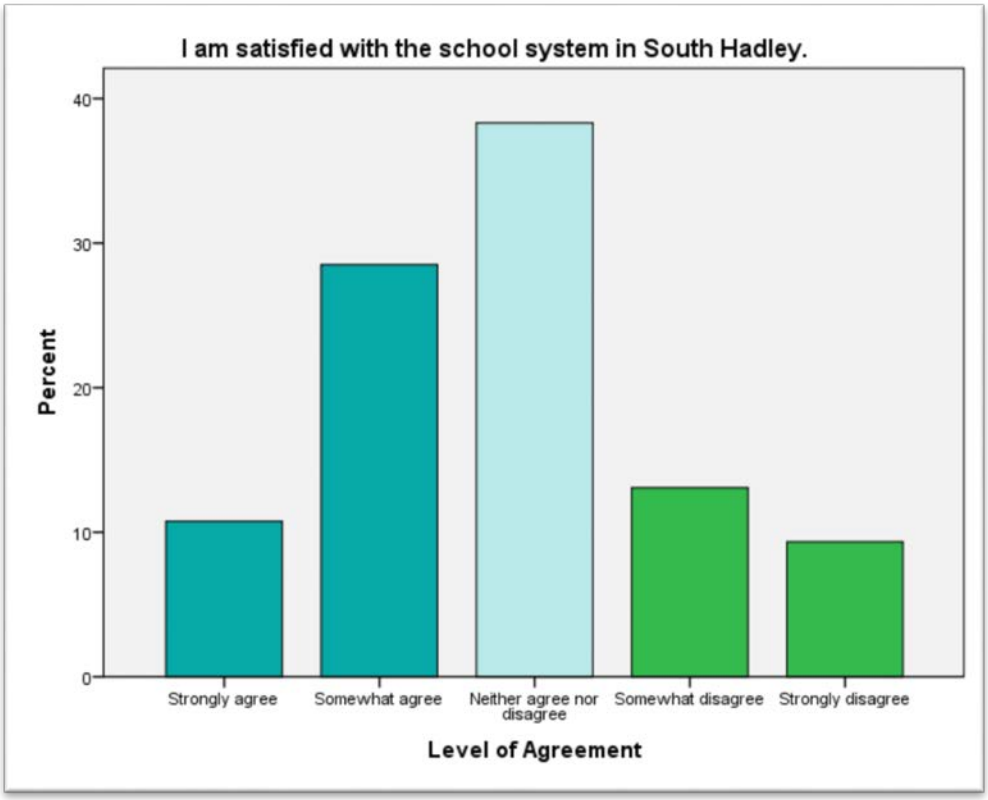
Education

Participants with school-aged children reported which schools in South Hadley their children attended. The frequencies of attendance are shown in the graph below.



Within the preschool category (*N* = 5), 40% of participants reported that their children attend Gorse, while 20% each reported attendance in Chicopee, RSA, and Criterion.

Satisfaction levels of the schools in South Hadley were collected, with 40% of participants reporting they strongly or somewhat agreed that they were satisfied with the schools in comparison to 22% reporting they strongly or somewhat disagreed.



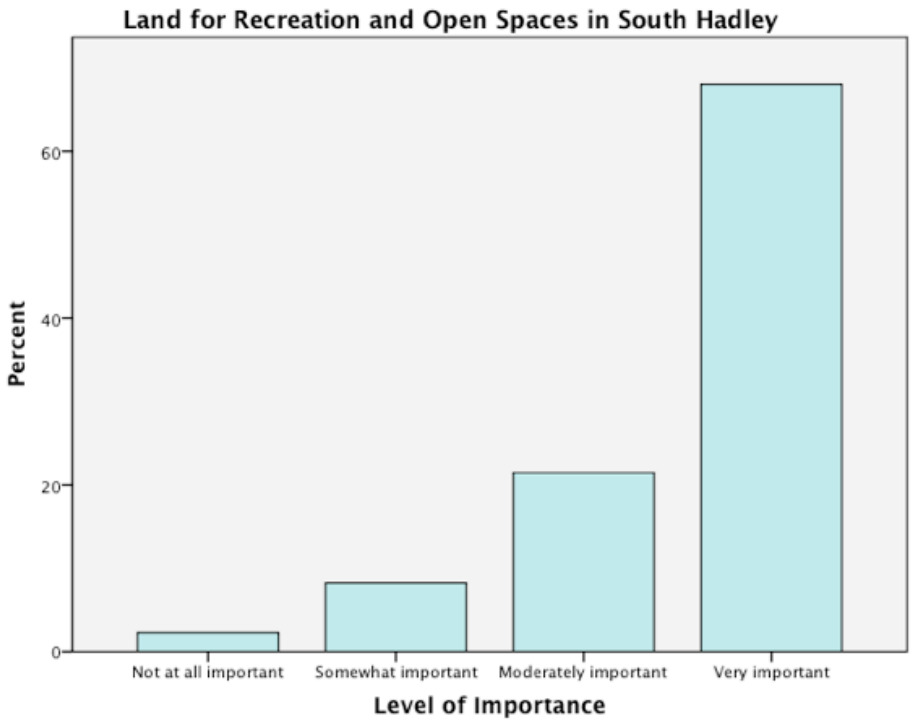
Discussion

Within the 24% of participants with children in their households, the span of schools within South Hadley were represented at lower frequencies. The largest level of agreement category was “neither agree nor disagree.” It is possible that this category speaks to the question being inapplicable to the participant, or that the participant remains ambivalent or lacking in information about the topic. The education comments section helps briefly expand on opinions

about South Hadley schools. Future research, perhaps using the methodology of recruitment for this survey, may be useful is assessing the educational needs of South Hadley.

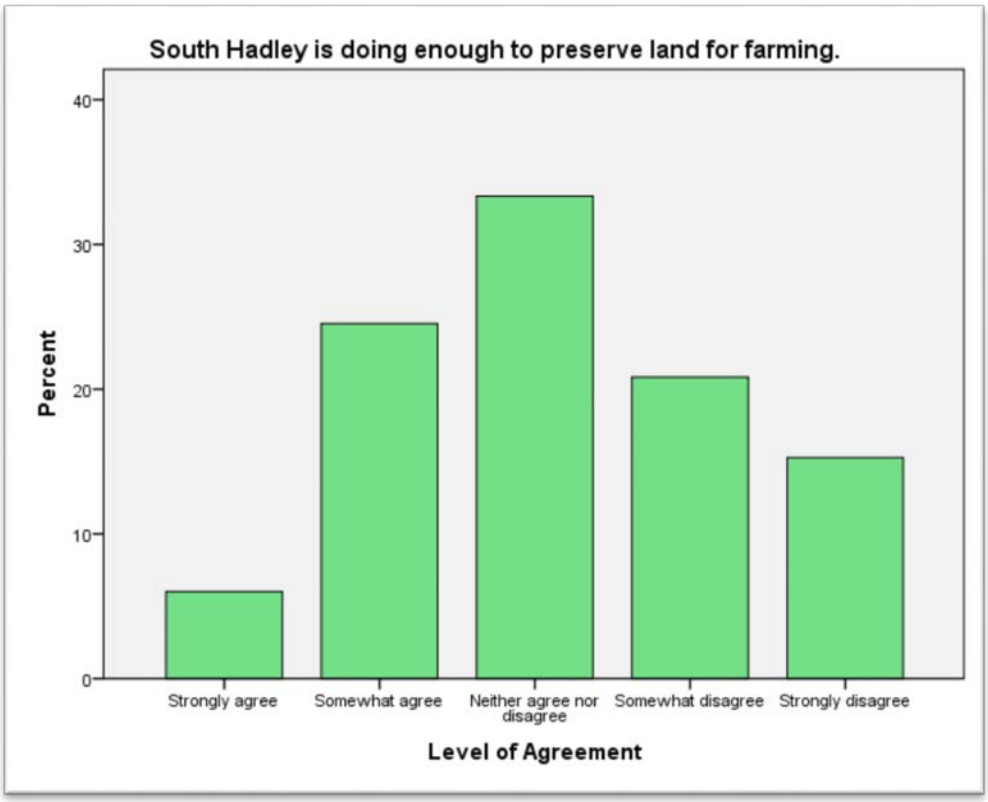
Land Use and Community Design

Recreational activities and open spaces were explored as both a matter of land use and community design, and a matter of community services. Participants were asked how important they felt this aspect of land use was in South Hadley, with a majority rating it as “very important” (68%). A combined 90% of participants rate recreational activities and open spaces as either moderately or very important, as shown in the graph below.



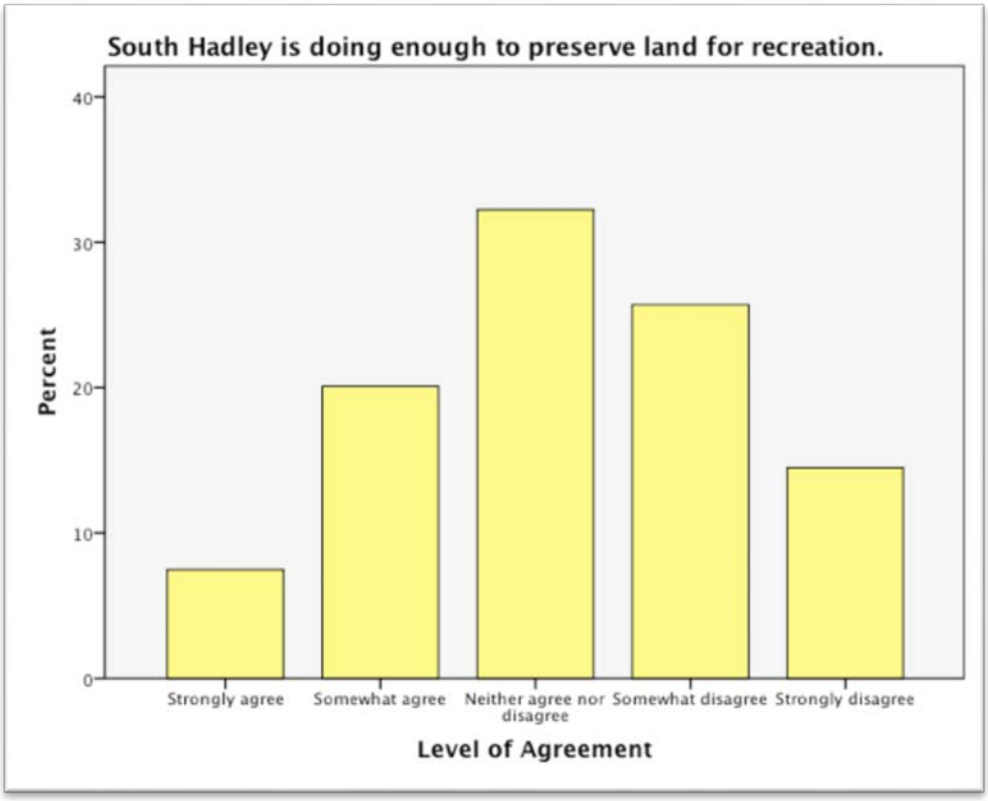
Land usage for farming, gardening, and recreation were assessed separately. Participants were asked if they felt South Hadley was doing enough to preserve land for these purposes. Across each category, around one third of participants neither agreed nor disagreed that South Hadley was engaging in enough land preservation.

When asked about farming, participants were 15% more likely to disagree that South Hadley was doing enough for land preservation than agree.



Regarding land use for gardening, participants were 10% more likely to rate the South Hadley was doing enough for land preservation (38%) than they were to rate that they disagreed (28%).

Lastly, participants selected the degree to which they feel South Hadley is doing enough to preserve land for recreation. 13% more participants disagreed with this statement (41%) than agreed (28%).

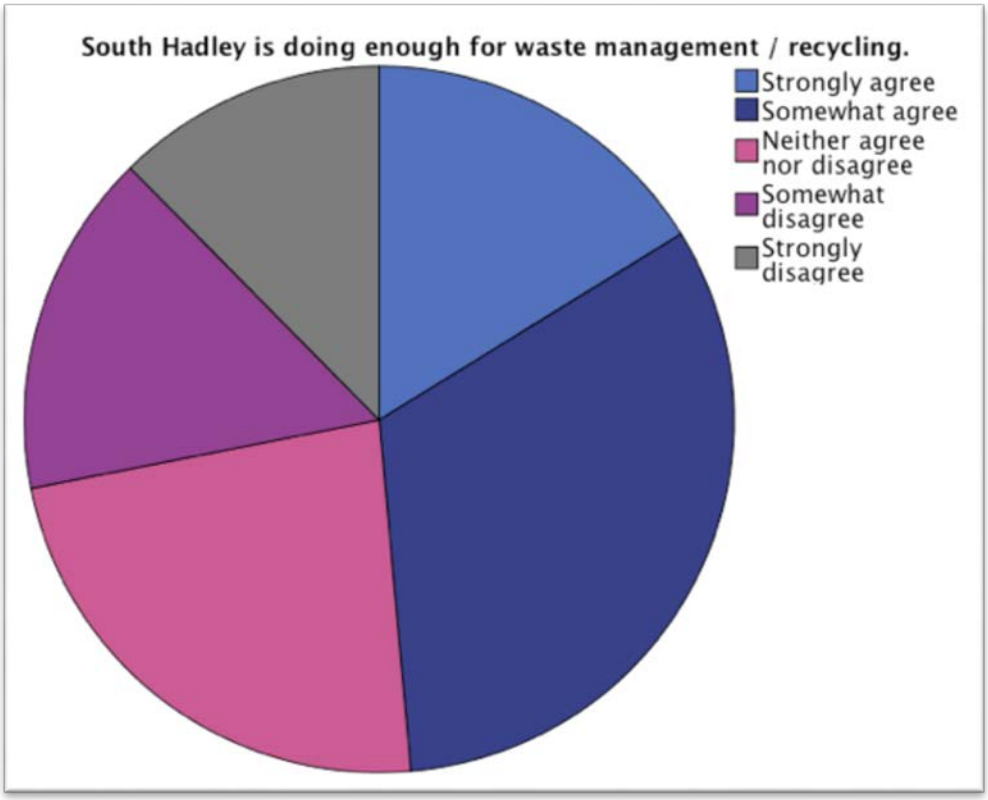


Discussion

Land use was a top priority for participants in this survey, with the majority marking it as "very important." As seen in the graphs, strong disagreement that South Hadley is doing enough for land preservation tended to be higher than strong agreement. Communication about the land use and plans, as well as future studies based on the comments about land use and civic engagement may be useful.

Waste Management and Recycling

Satisfaction of South Hadley's management of waste and recycling was assessed: the largest category of respondents selected "somewhat agree" at 32%, and 28% of participants somewhat or strongly disagreed that South Hadley was doing enough for this category.



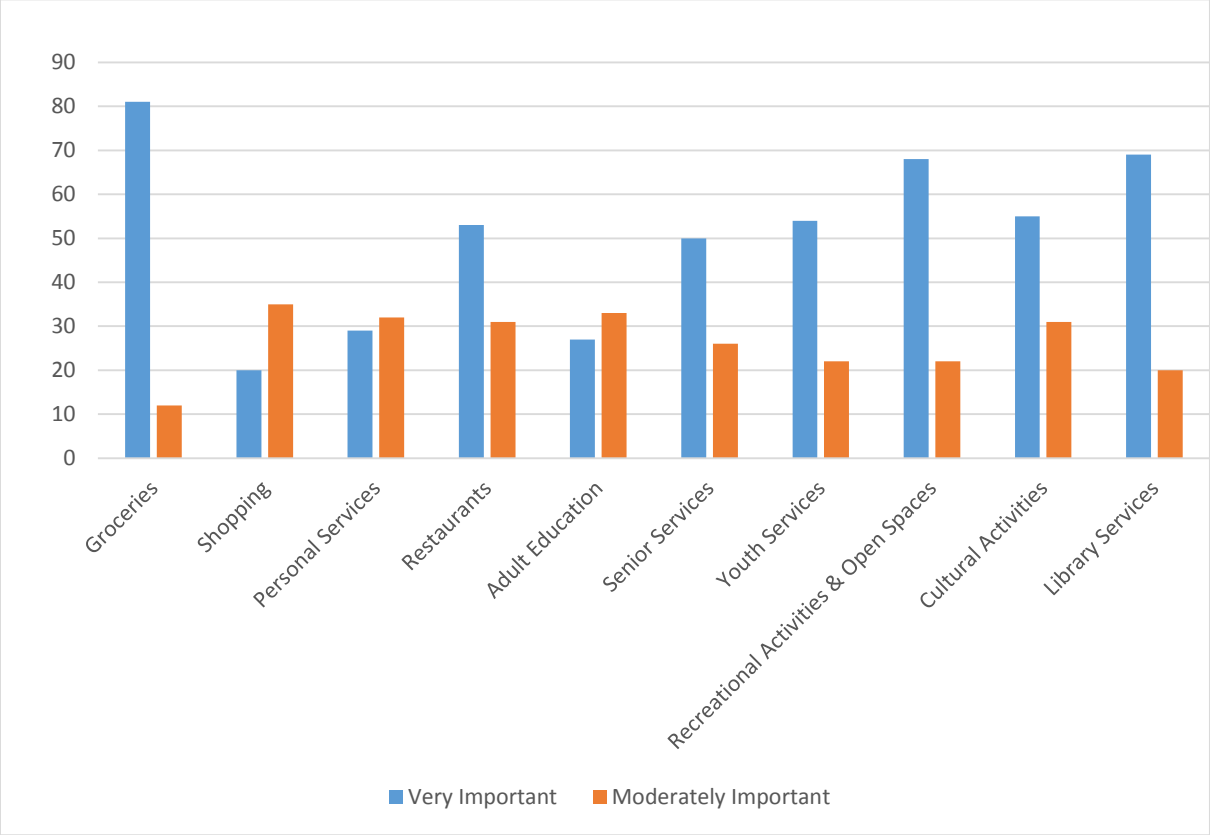
Discussion

The survey contained one question regarding waste management, and some participants elected to expand upon this topic in the comments. As seen above, satisfaction with waste management and recycling in South Hadley is variable. Most participants who elected to

comment about waste management expressed dissatisfaction. Further communication regarding waste management policies and practices and civic engagement may be useful.

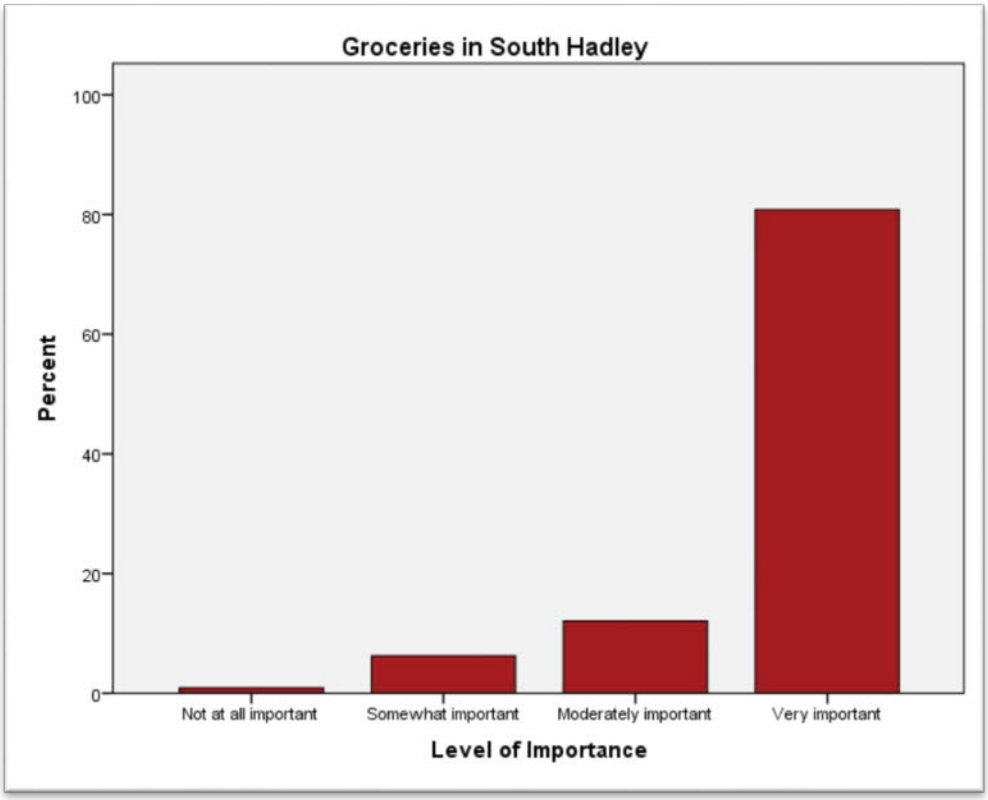
Community Services

The importance of community services was explored, and the top three categories of interest were groceries (81% rated as “very important”), library services (69% rated as “very important”), and recreational activities and open spaces (68% rated as “very important”). Additionally, participants were surveyed on the importance of shopping, personal services, restaurants, adult education, senior services, youth services, and cultural activities in South Hadley.



Groceries

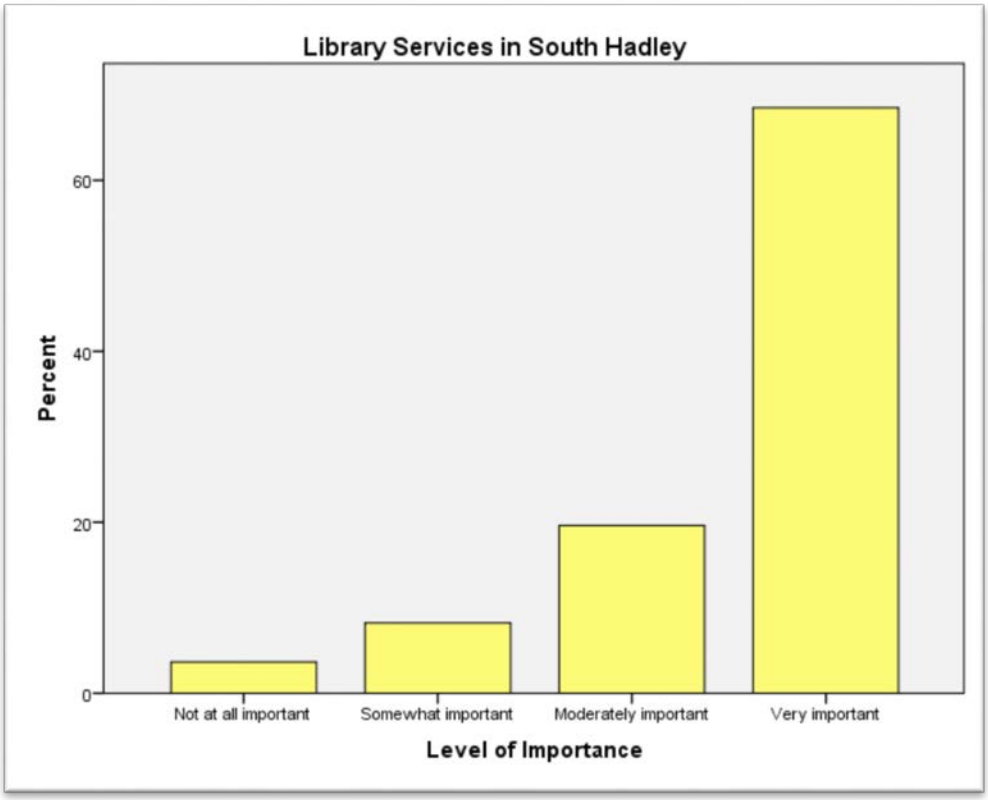
93% of participants rated groceries as being very or moderately important in South Hadley, with 81% of participants selecting “very important.”



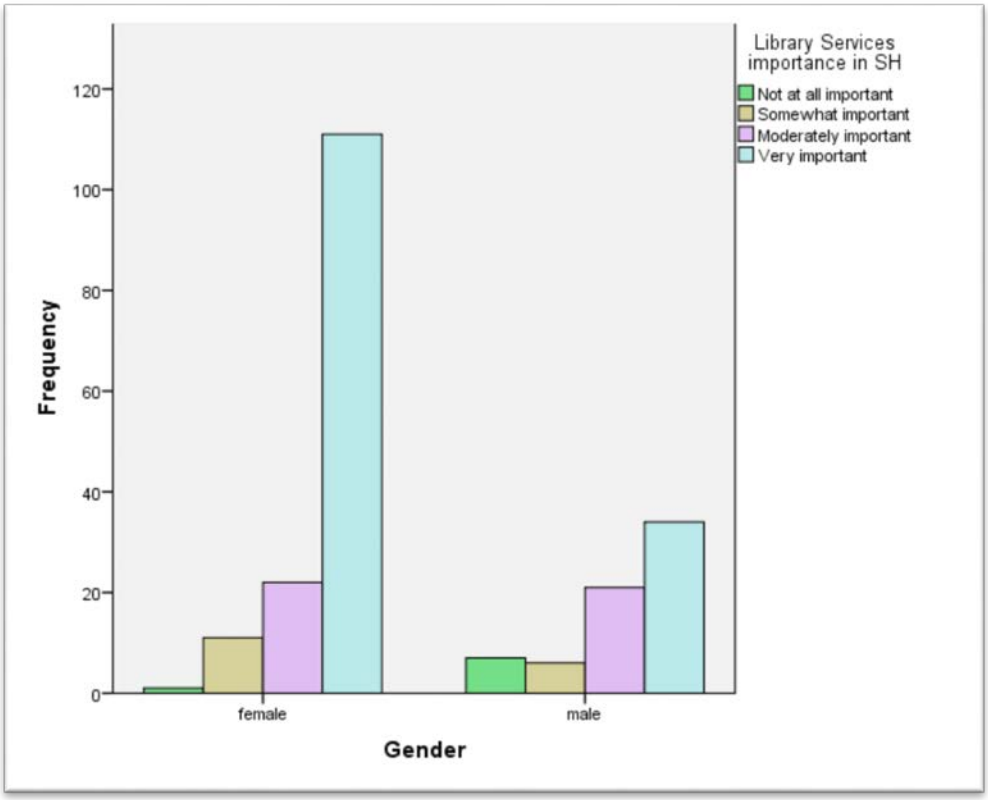
31% of participants reported staying in South Hadley for grocery shopping. The top three towns that participants travel to for groceries are South Hadley (31%), Hadley (31%), and Chicopee (30%).

Library Services

89% of participants rated library services as moderately or very important, with 69% rating them very important.

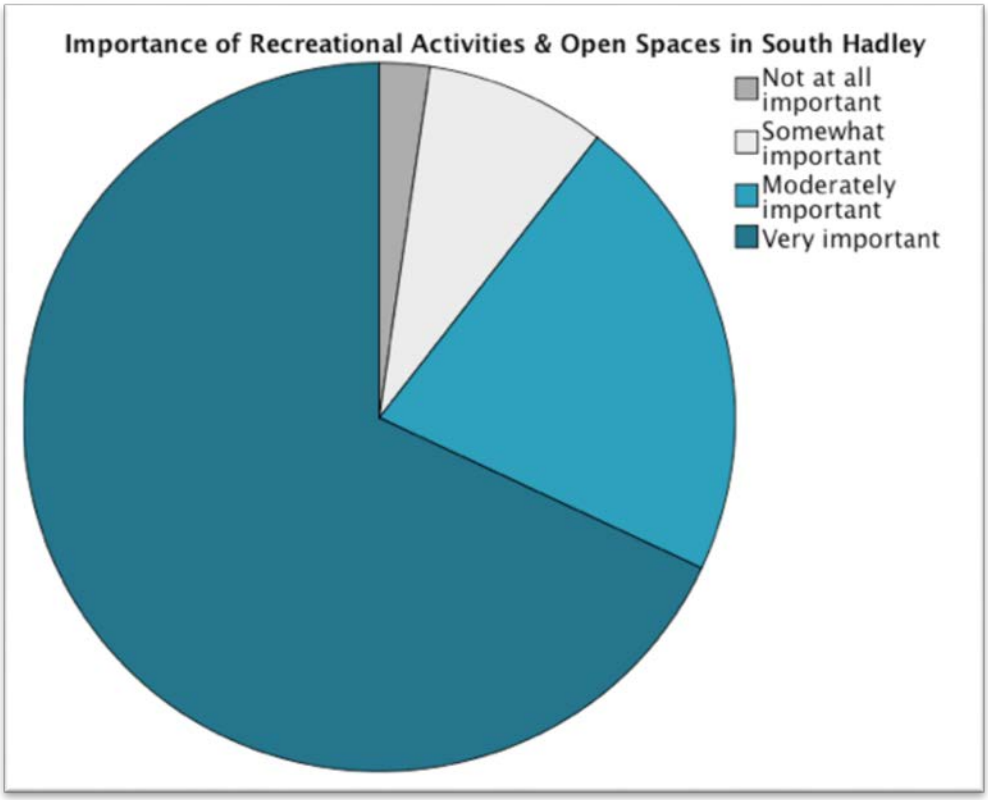


Women were more likely to rate library services in South Hadley as very important: 77% of those who selected “very important” were women, and 23% were men. The graph below illustrates the interaction between gender and library importance rating, $x^2(3, N = 213) = 21.91$, $p = .00$.



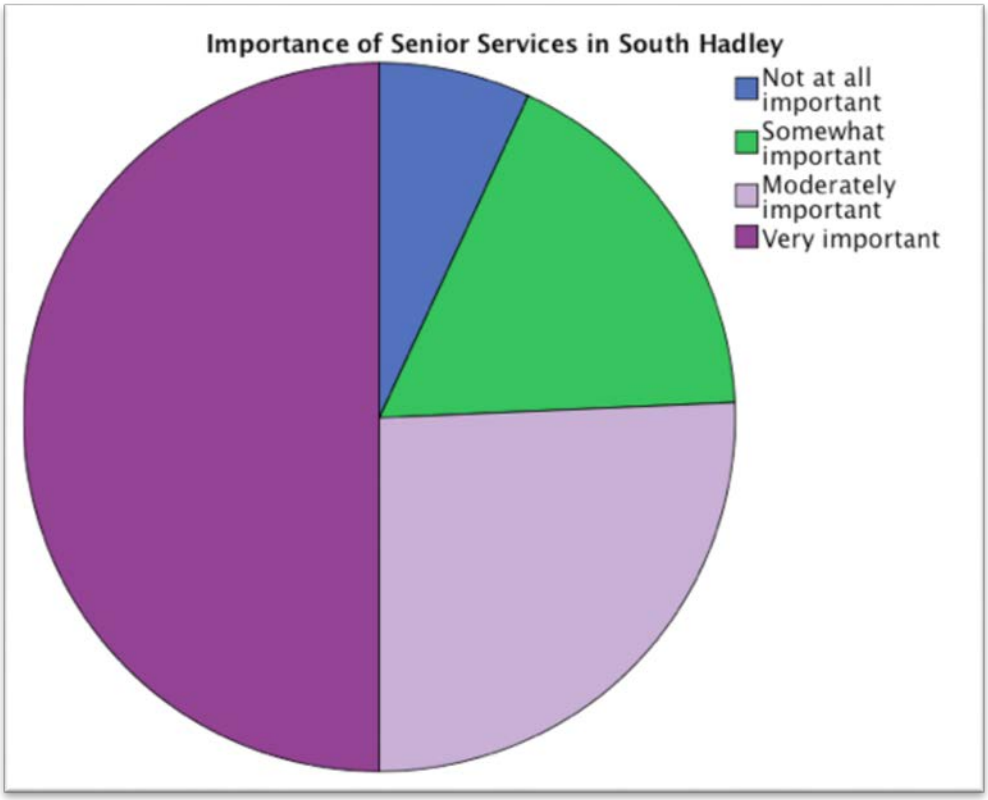
Recreational Activities and Open Spaces

90% of participants rated recreational activities and open spaces as moderately or very important in South Hadley; 68% rated them as very important.

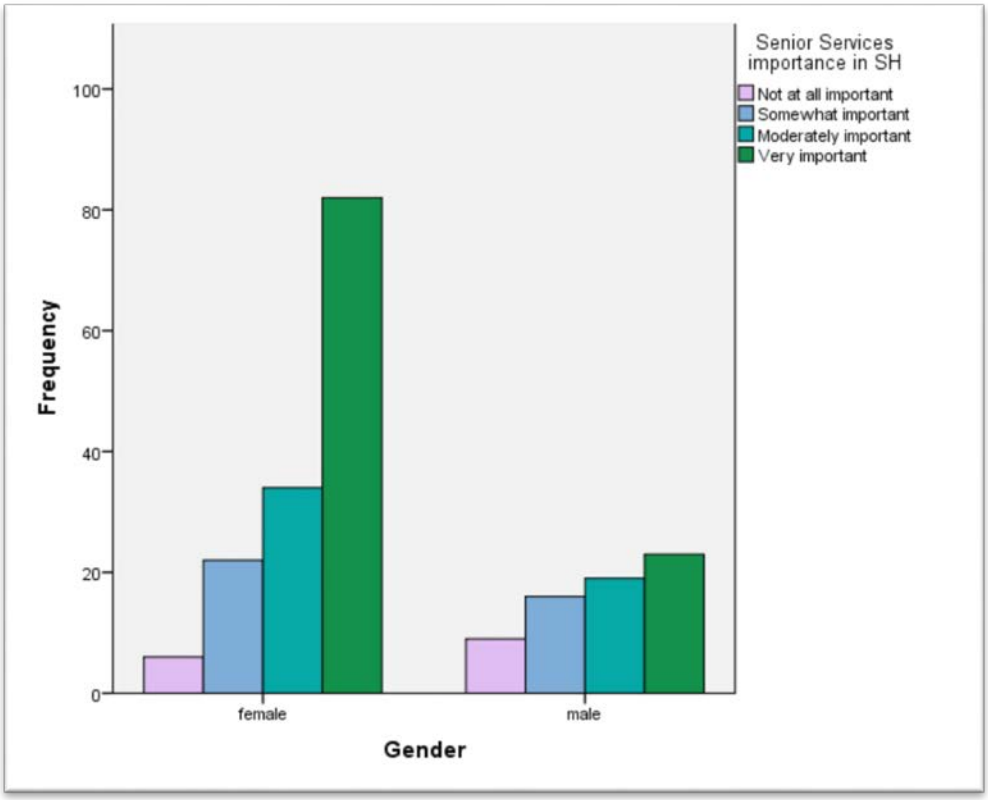


Senior Services

76% of all participants rated senior services as moderately or very important. 50% selected “very important.” The demographics of survey participants show that 28% of participants in this survey were ages 65 and above, and therefore eligible for senior services.

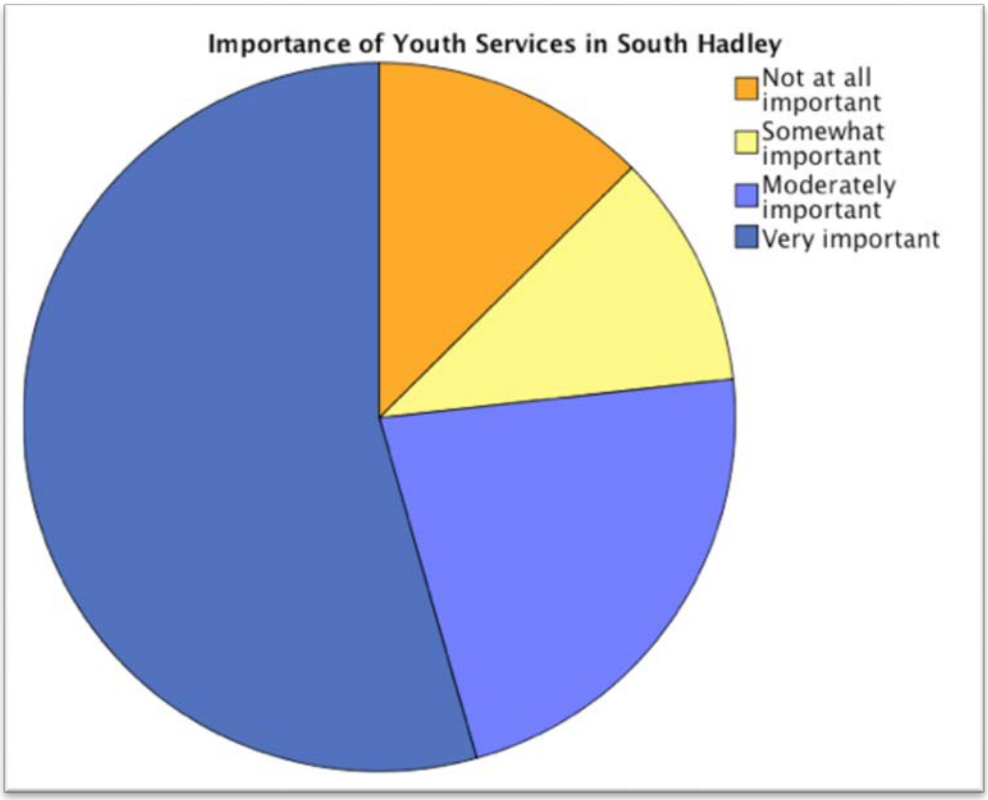


Women were more likely to rate senior services as “very important” than men, $x^2(3, N = 211) = 12.51$, $p = .01$. 57% of female participants and 34% of male participants rated senior services in South Hadley as very important.

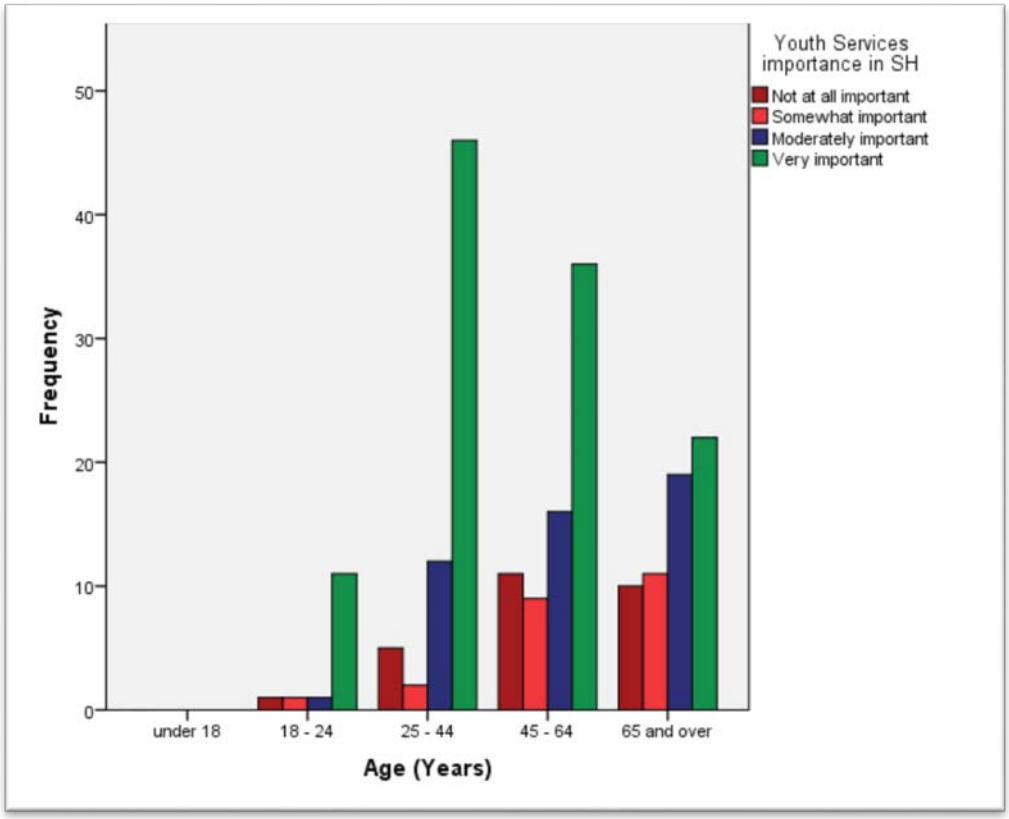


Youth Services

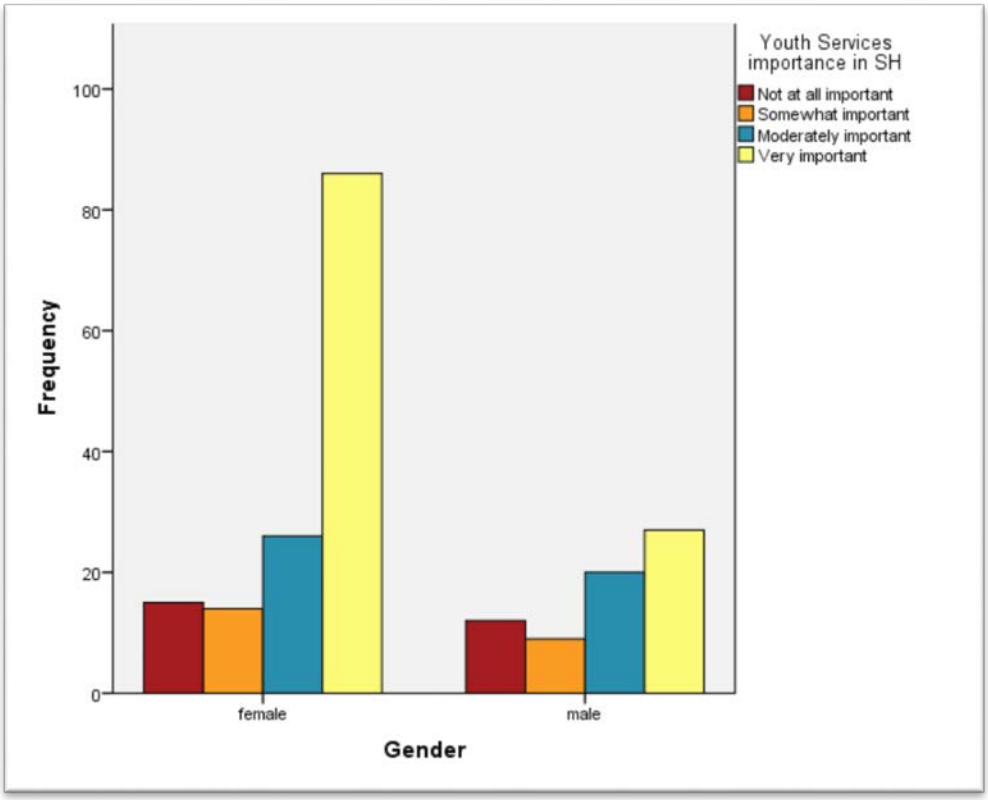
Youth services were rated as moderately or very important by 76% of participants, and as very important by 55%. As seen in the demographics, 24% of participants reported having a household with at least one child.



Chi-square analysis revealed that ratings of importance increased in frequency from not at all to very important within each age category, with the most popular category being participants ages 25 through 44 who rated youth services as very important (40%), $x^2(9, N = 213) = 22.17$, $p = .01$. The interaction in between age and youth services importance rating can be seen in the graph below.



In addition to age, there was also a relationship between youth services and gender, $x^2(3, N = 209) = 8.55$, $p = .04$. 61% of women and 40% of men rated youth services as very important, with the largest interaction category being women who rated youth services as very important, as seen in the graph below.



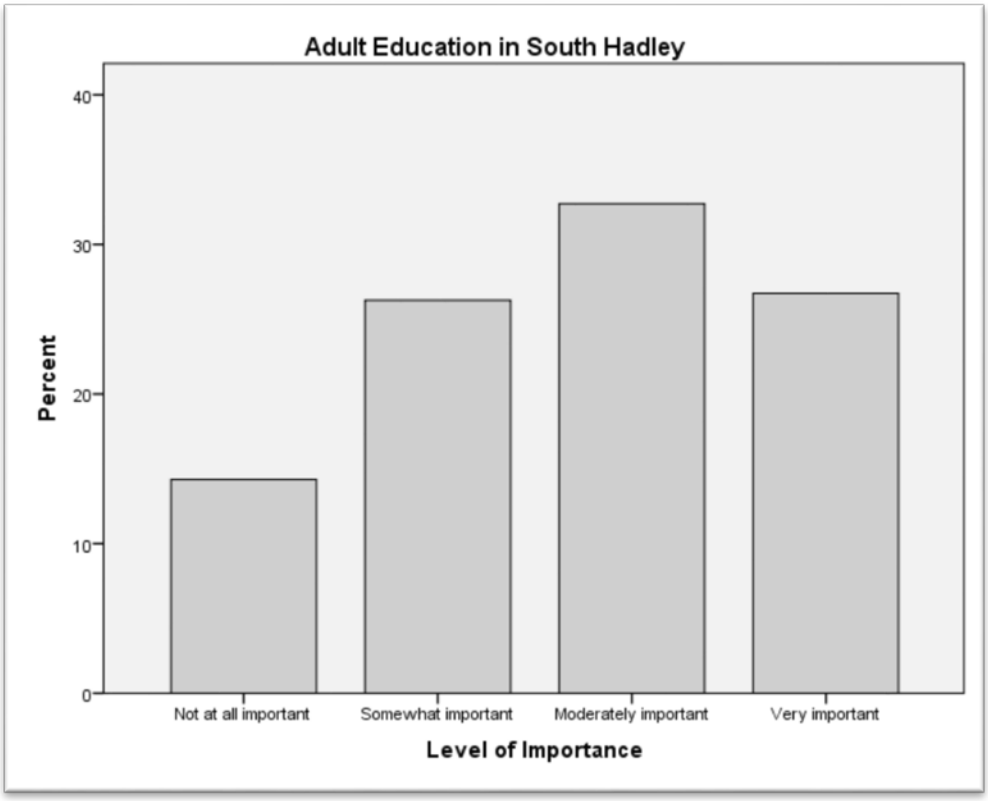
Restaurants

85% of participants reported that restaurants were moderately or very important in South Hadley; 54% of participants reported they were very important.

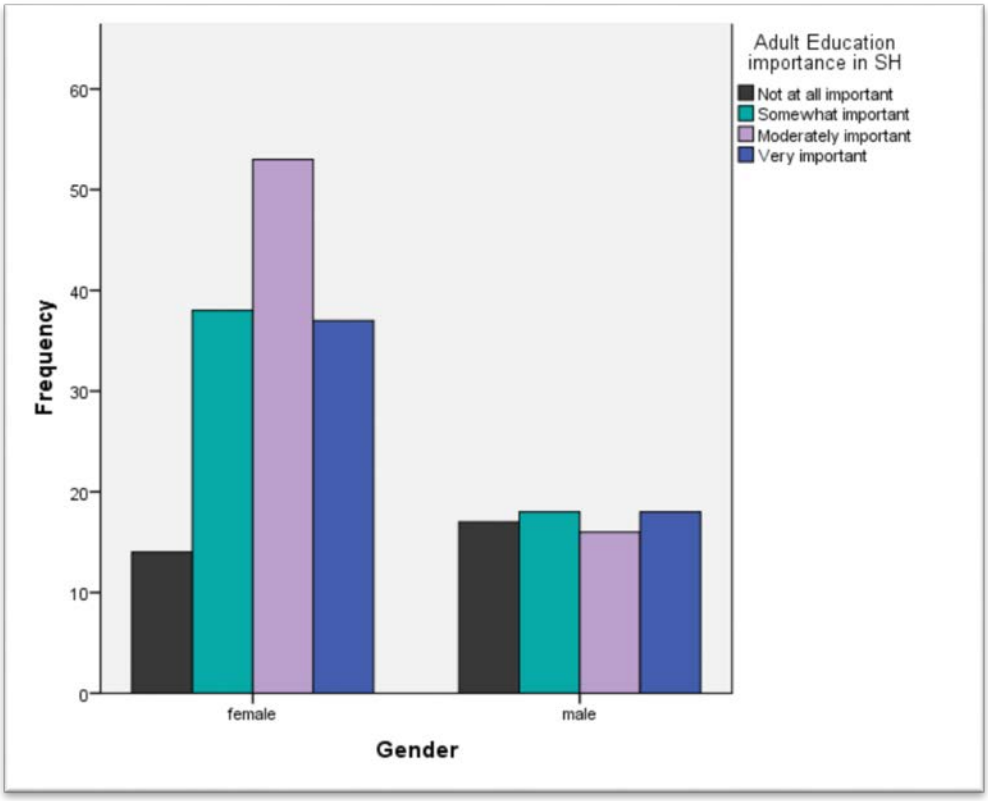
Although 26% of participants reported staying within South Hadley for restaurant patronage, the top three places that participants go to for restaurants are Northampton (51%), Amherst (37%), and Hadley (27%).

Adult Education

60% of participants rated adult education as moderately or very important in South Hadley, with 27% expressing that it is very important.

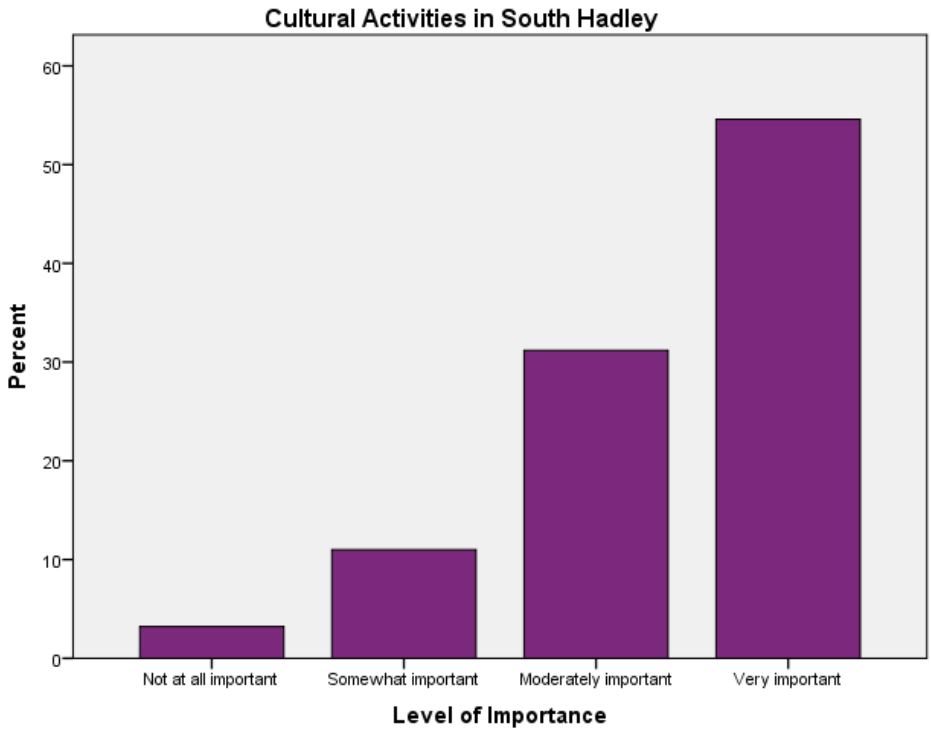


Women were more likely to rate adult education as very important (67%) than men (33%), $x^2(3, N = 211) = 9.75$, $p = .02$, as shown in the graph below.



Cultural Activities

Cultural activities in South Hadley were rated as moderately or very important by 86% of participants; 55% rated them as very important.

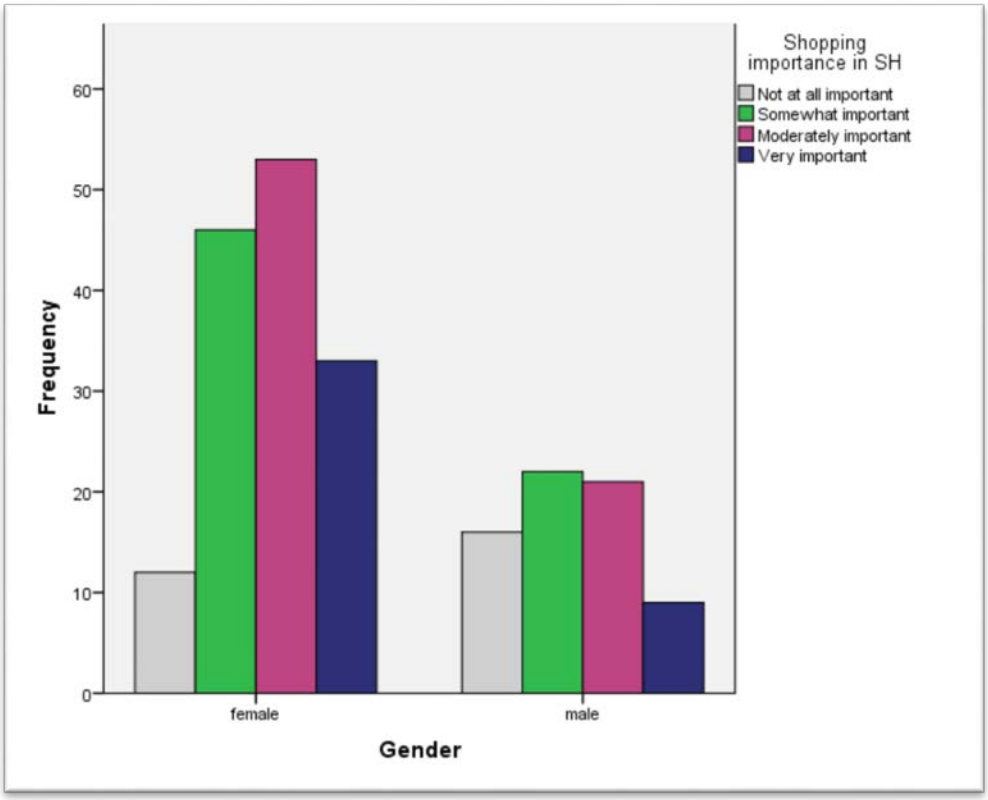


Shopping

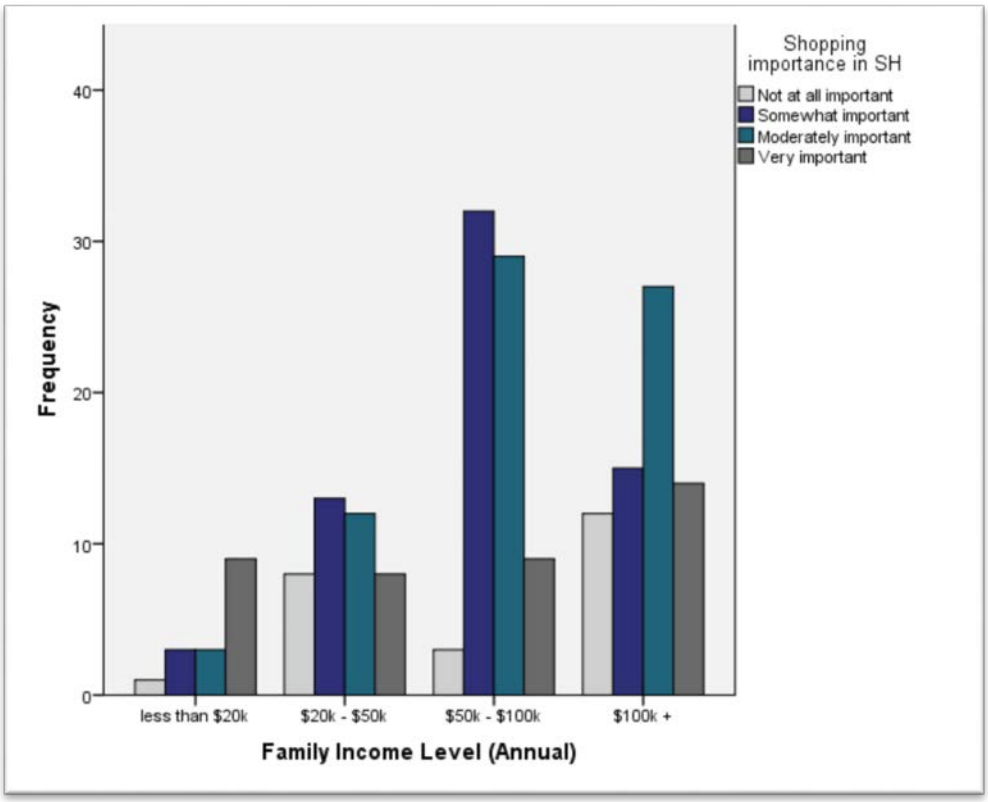
Participants were asked to rate the importance of shopping in South Hadley. 55% of participants rated shopping as moderately or very important, with 20% of participants rating it very important.

Only 4% of participants stay in South Hadley for shopping. The top three places participants go to for shopping are Holyoke (49%), Hadley (44%), and Northampton (23%).

Pearson's Chi-square analysis revealed an interaction with gender and shopping importance in South Hadley, $x^2(3, N = 212) = 10.73$, $p = .01$. In general, men reported shopping at lower levels of importance than women did. Women were most likely to rate shopping as moderately important (37% of female participants), while men were most likely to rate shopping as somewhat important (57% of male participants).

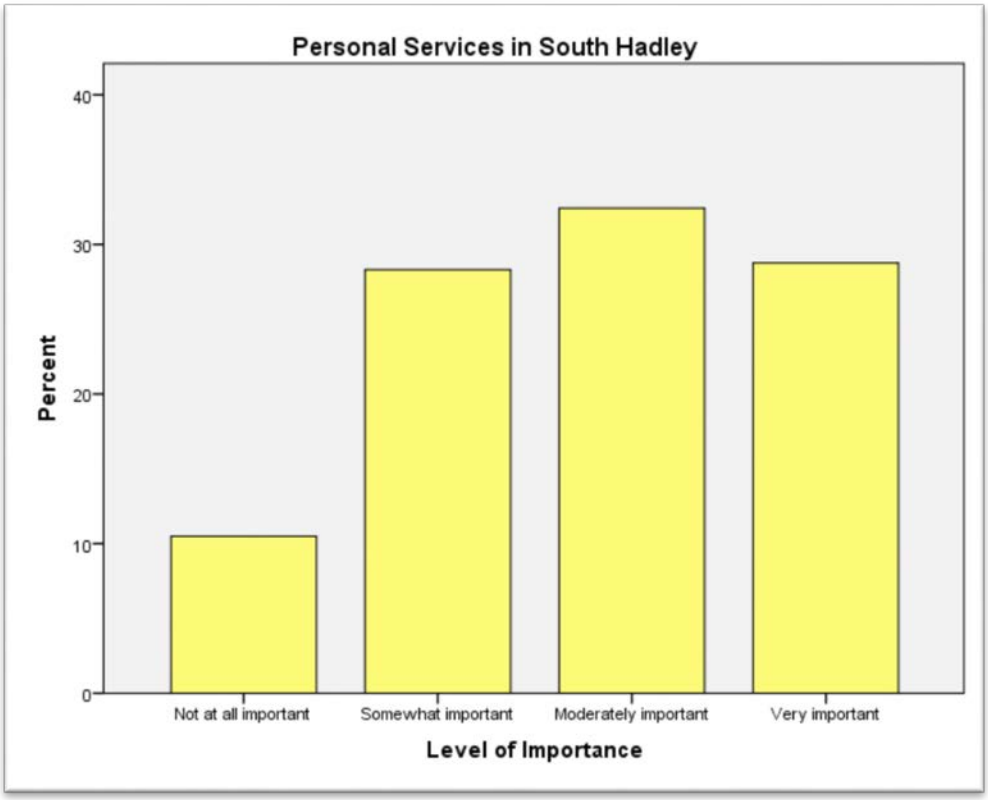


Additionally, shopping importance in South Hadley was found to interact with family income level, $x^2(9, N = 198) = 29.02$, $p = .00$. 75% of participants who reported income levels of $20k or below rated shopping as moderately or very important, as well as 61% of participants who reported income levels of $100k. Participants who earn between $50 and $100k and rate shopping in South Hadley as somewhat important make up the most popular category, as seen in the graph below.



Personal Services

Personal services include resources such as gyms, hair salons, and other establishments that help residents with personal care. 61% of participants felt that personal services were moderately or very important, with 29% rating them as very important.



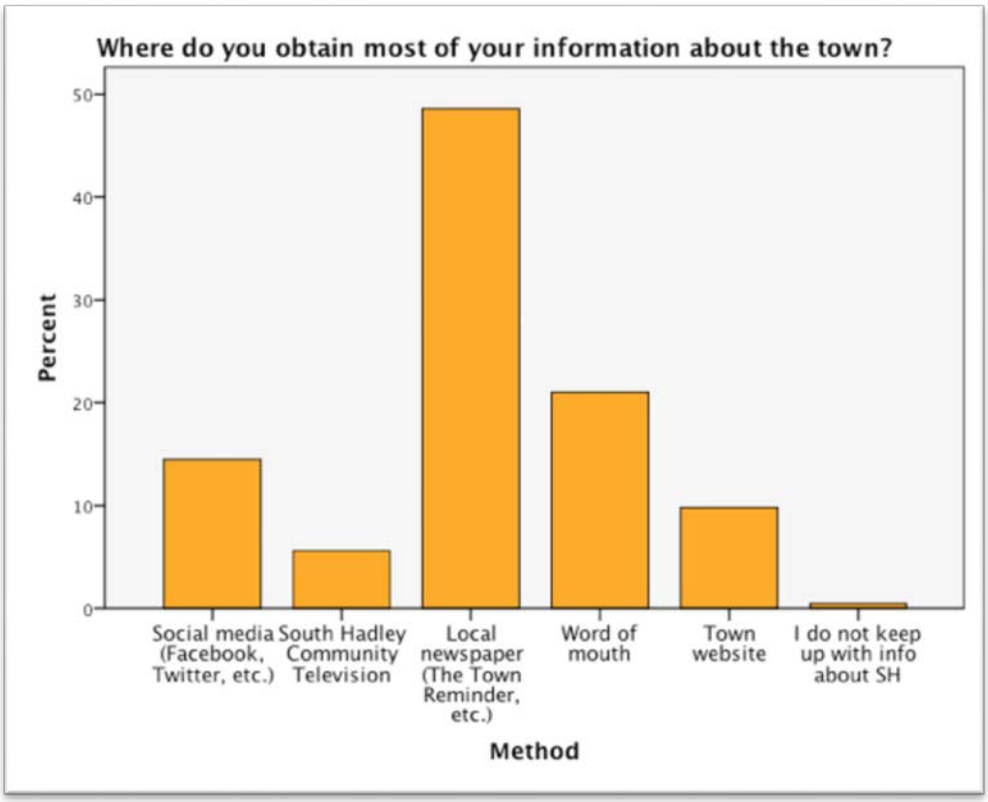
Discussion

Community services questions covered a broad range of topics, with groceries, library, and recreational activities and open spaces comprising the top three most popular categories in South Hadley for survey participants. Additionally, the top three categories that participants travel to other towns for were restaurants, shopping, and groceries. Some community service

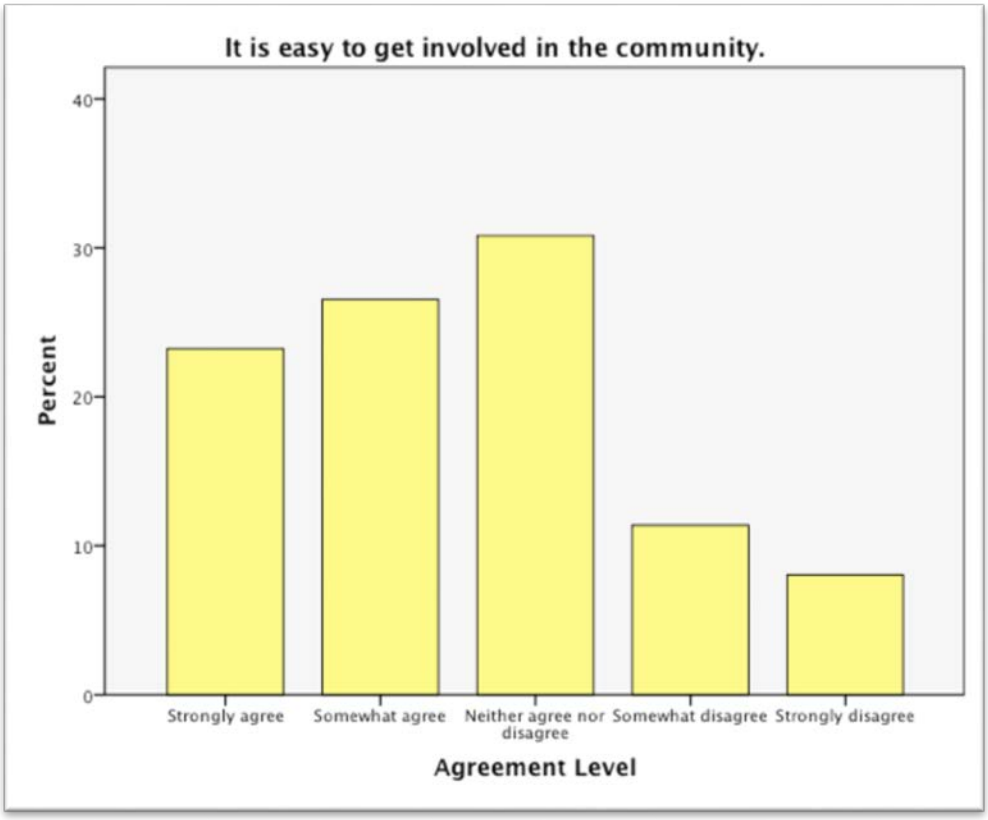
priority levels were modulated by income, age, and/or gender, suggesting that different demographics may show different trends in community needs. For example, shopping was modulated by income, which may mean that income level may be useful in future studies regarding commerce for South Hadley residents. Further detail and research may be useful to explore the nature of these community services, the populations that they affect and serve, and the manners and degrees to which they are both helpful and to which they can be further developed.

Community Information and Involvement

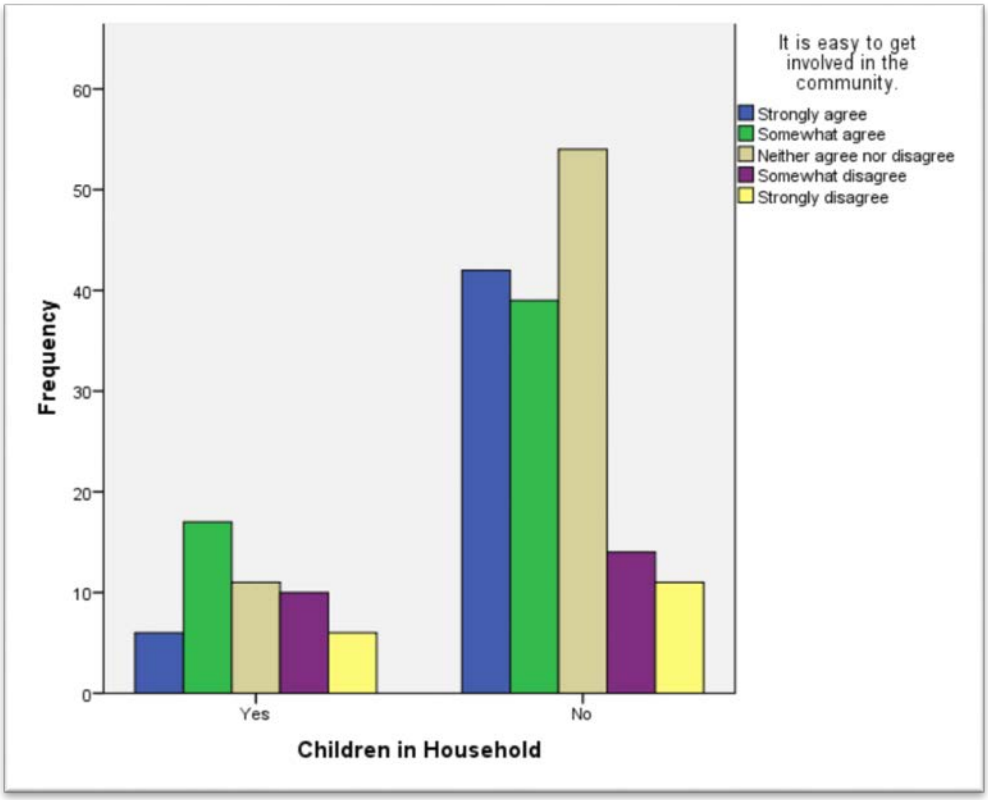
Questions were presented to participants to gage their views about communication within the community of South Hadley: how they receive their news about the town and how they view participation within the community. When asked how participants receive information about the town, 42% of participants refer to a local newspaper such as the *Town Reminder*. Reported information source usage is shown in the graph below.



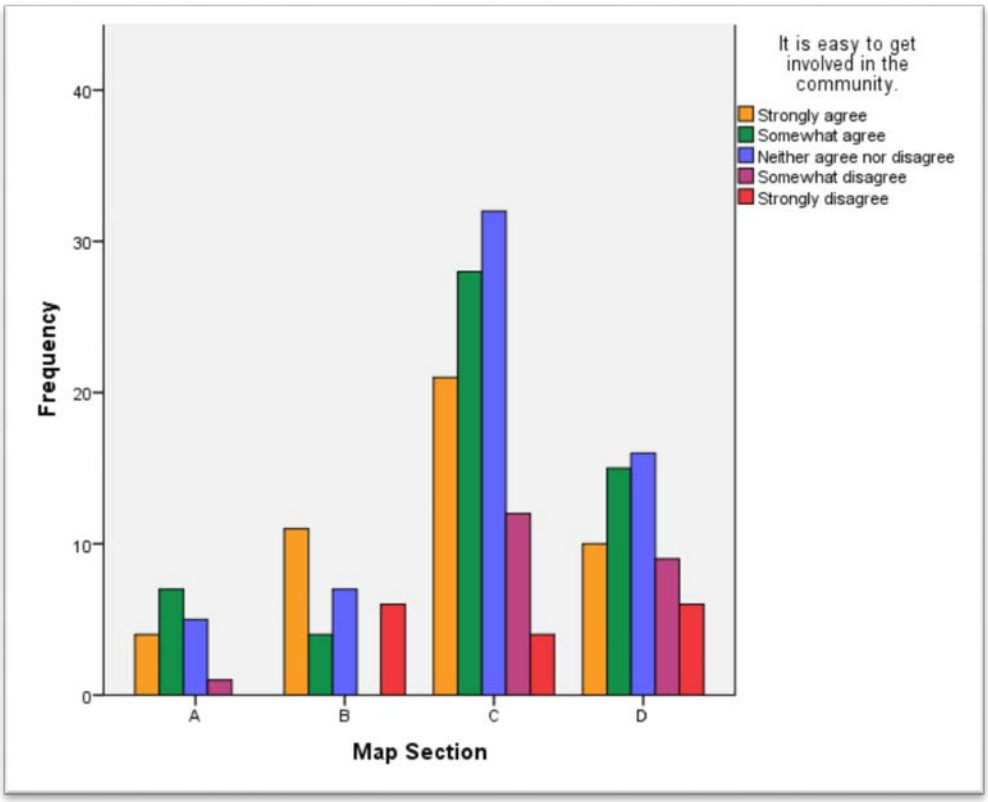
Participants were asked whether they felt it was easy to get involved in the community. 31% of participants neither agreed nor disagreed. 50% somewhat or strongly agreed, while the remaining 19% somewhat or strongly disagreed.



Additionally, question results were modulated by whether or not the participant reported children in the household, $x^2(4, N = 210) = 11.86$, $p = .02$. Participants without children were most likely to neither agree nor disagree (34%), while participants with children were most likely to agree somewhat (34%).



Chi-square analysis also revealed a relationship between the area of the map a participant selected and their views about the ease of community involvement, $x^2(12, N = 198) = 22.31$, $p = .03$. The most popular interaction was between those who selected map area C (southwest) and neither agreed nor disagreed that it is easy to become involved in the South Hadley community. Participants who selected C were most likely to somewhat or strongly agree with this statement, as seen in the graph below.



As a focus of the South Hadley Master Plan is to improve the short and long-term quality of life for residents and encourage community involvement, participants were asked how they viewed the difference in quality of life since its creation. 47% of participants report that they view improvement in South Hadley over the last four years.

Discussion

Community information and involvement questions align with a purpose of this survey: to foster increased knowledge of and participation in the community of South Hadley for its residents. Participants were most likely to select the newspaper as their method for gaining information about the town. 31% of participants expressed ambivalence about the ease of

becoming involved in the community, and ease of involvement perception was sometimes modulated by presence of children and map area selection. Lastly, 47% of participants have noted improvements in South Hadley since the inception of the Master Plan. Taken together, this data may be useful in further improvements in town communication, town development and the engagement of citizens within it, and reaching out to community members based on the 50% of participants who either were ambivalent or disagreed that it is easy to become involved in the South Hadley community.

Open Comments

Participants were provided with the opportunity to write open comments about the town of South Hadley. Comments focused on areas that they both appreciated and areas in which they found room for improvement. Salient themes from the comments are reported below in order of frequency.

Transportation

The largest category in the comments was transportation. Sub-themes included general comments, walking and sidewalks, driving and road maintenance, public transportation, and biking and bike paths (*N* = 36).

General comments. All general comments expressed a need for more transportation in South Hadley, particularly in regards to walking and bike paths (*N* = 14):

> "I would like to see a walking, biking path that goes around the community; even two. Better sidewalks in all neighborhoods and repairs to side streets."

Driving and road maintenance. Participants in this category all expressed the need for improvements to the major and minor roads in South Hadley (*N* = 10):

> "Roads in town could use some re-paving, not just the major roads - side roads need lots of help."

Walking and sidewalks. Most comments focused on sidewalks and walking communicated the need for more sidewalks in the town as well as maintenance for existing ones (*N* = 9):

> "Would like more sidewalks in town. Love to walk in our town but not really safe."

Public transportation. Comments about public transportation focused on gratitude for the current and improved services, as well as a need for an increase in this transportation service (*N* = 2):

> "The new bus route has made a difference to me as I can now access other parts of town without getting in my car."

Biking and bike paths. Some comments focused exclusively on biking and bike paths, and were therefore separated from the general comments section (*N* = 1):

> "A bike path for children and adults would be wonderful."

Community Services and Resources

Participants expressed their opinions about the services and resources available to them within the town of South Hadley. Subthemes of community services and resources include groceries, restaurants, and retail, library services, cultural activities, and general comments (*N* = 28).

Groceries, restaurants, and retail. Participants expressed a need for more grocery, restaurant, and retail options in the town of South Hadley, with a particular focus on filling the vacancy left by Big Y (*N* =18):

> "It would be nice to have more restaurants and a few stores in town. We do not stay in town for any shopping or eating."

Library services. In general, participants communicated appreciation for library services, particularly the new South Hadley Public Library (*N* = 11):

> "The building of the So[sic] Hadley Library…[has] significantly contributed to the quality of life in So[sic] Hadley."

Cultural activities. Participants who commented on cultural activities expressed the need for further opportunities for them, citing music, library events, and general arts (*N* = 5):

> "Develop the new library area into a cultural center….Host more concerts, markets etc. on the Commons & at the library."

General comments. Some participants expressed interest in the church communities as well as involving seniors in the general community (*N* = 2):

> "We have no community center, little in the way of adult education services, and an old senior center building with old-school offerings that have little appeal to 'younger' seniors."

Community Information and Involvement

Politics. Participants expressed a wide variety of opinions regarding politics in the town of South Hadley, from enthusiastic praise to need for improvement (*N* = 16):

> "There are so many committees working within the town that I think there is a lot of opportunity for involvement. Unfortunately, the tasks seem to fall on a relatively small group of people who actually get involved and get things done. Kudos to them!"

Community life. Opinions about community life within South Hadley were mixed, with some participants expressing appreciation for being welcomed into the community, while others expressing the need for more people to be encouraged and informed on how to become involved (*N* = 8):

> "More education about civic responsibilities. More events with town-wide participation."

News. A small amount of participants commented on news and information about the town, expressing either appreciation or the need for improvement (*N* = 2):

> "Coverage of Town meetings on Cable TV is excellent."

Contributed Topics

Participants added some additional topics not covered by the survey with their comments, creating the fourth most frequent theme: contributed topics. Subthemes included budget and finances, questions and comments about the survey they were taking, and general comments (*N* = 22).

Town budget and finances. Most participants in this category expressed disagreement with the budget and finances of the town and/or difficulty with affording the current taxes (*N* = 10):

> "We are retired and considering downsizing. We love South Hadley, but may have to move elsewhere due to high real estate taxes here."

Survey experiences and opinions. Some participants expressed appreciation for the survey; others expressed confusion or criticism regarding its design, and some added addendums to their answers or answer method (*N* = 10):

> "I moved here to Loomis Village, and have not yet become familiar enough with other aspects of South Hadley to make informed choices on the survey. Sorry that I cannot be of more help"

General comments. A small amount of comments expressed dissatisfaction with the behavior of law enforcement, as well as general appreciation for South Hadley (*N* = 2):

> "South Hadley Police department is overly aggressive."

Recreational Opportunities and Open Spaces

Desire for land conservation and preservation of open spaces for the public was another popular theme of participant comments. Additionally, participants expressed appreciation for some parks and open spaces (*N* = 11):

> “Lets[sic] continue to renovate and maintain park spaces. Ie:[sic] beechgrounds, butterybrook, etc. Other green spaces.”

Education

Participants who commented on South Hadley education expressed appreciation for the school system, concern about bullying, and/or a need for improvement (*N* = 10):

> “Partner more with Mount Holyoke College for adult ed[sic] offerings.”

Housing

In addition to the quantitative data collected, participants used the comments section to express their opinions on housing in South Hadley. Some expressed criticism of developments or lack of developments, and others expressed a desire for or against affordable housing for community members. Subthemes included condominiums, affordable housing, and general comments (*N* = 8).

Condominiums. All comments regarding condominiums expressed dissatisfaction with the increase or sale of this type of housing in South Hadley (*N* = 5):

> “There too many condos in town.”

Affordable housing. Comments that focused on this topic either encouraged or discouraged the increase of affordable housing in South Hadley (*N* = 2):

> “It's best to keep our residents with private affordable housing, stable job opportunities, so residents who rent can become homeowners and maintain a sense of town ownership and responsibility.”

General comments. One participant expressed general dissatisfaction with home improvement (*N* = 1):

> “Planning department makes it hard for people to make improvements to homes.”

Waste Management

Participants expressed difficulty with or suggestions for the waste management systems in town, particularly recycling (*N* = 8):

> "Town recycling center needs to be open more than two days a week. Single stream recycling would enhance our performance!"

Land Usage

All participants in this category expressed either criticisms or opinions on how land usage in South Hadley can be improved (*N* = 6):

> "Please do something with the Black Stevens Conservation property going from the High School to Plains School."

Youth Services

Comments that focused only on youth services expressed a need for an increase in this type of community service (*N* = 3):

> "Need more activities/places to congregate for young adults (Middle School/High School age)[sic]."

Senior Services

Lastly, a comment focused only on senior services was provided (*N* = 1):

> "If seniors don't have people caring for them on a regular basis, they remained basically trapped in their homes. It is also very challenging to obtain help [with] services such as snow shoveling, shopping assistance or basic yard help as needed."

Discussion

Overall, the data from the South Hadley MPIC Survey, collected over a two-month period, provides a broad overview of 245 voices in the community of South Hadley. Based on the vision of the 2010 Master Plan, the survey was adapted to assess the needs of the community and to see how it has developed since the Master Plan began. The survey assessed opinions about many different community services and resources, and provided an open comments section for people to voice their suggestions for continued improvement. Results showed active engagement with community development topics, and a desire for further engagement. As there was a large amount of data and categories, this design can be tailored to individual topics or aspects of the community that require further detail, increased or more specific participant pools, and further insight. For example, a whole study could be done on senior services, specifically uncovering the needs and services for this population. The qualitative data ends with the topic of community engagement, and it is my hope that this survey facilitates further conversation and expands the participants within that conversation. Lastly, I would like to extend a large thank you to everyone who helped with this project: the survey participants, the Community Based Learning Program at Mount Holyoke College, Alan Bloomgarden, Cheryl Lee, Judith Gooch, and the South Hadley MPIC.

References

"Community Profile." *Town of South Hadley, Massachusetts*. CivicPlus, n.d. Web.

"South Hadley, MA - Master Plan Implementation Committee." *South Hadley, MA - Master Plan Implementation Committee*. Town of South Hadley, Massachusetts, n.d. Web.

Appendix

South Hadley MPIC Survey

MPIC:

southhadleympic@gmail.com

South Hadley Planning Board:

(413) 538-5017 Ext. 128

South Hadley Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) Survey

Survey may be completed online at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/southhadley

We are interested in your experience as a resident of South Hadley. Your feedback will be used to assist the town as it moves forward.

What is your age?

- ☐ under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-44
- ☐ 45-64
- ☐ 65 and over

How long have you lived in South Hadley?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 – 5 years
- ☐ 6 - 10 years
- ☐ 11+ years

What is your gender? (please write below)

_____

Do you plan to continue to reside in South Hadley for the foreseeable future?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is your approximate family income level?

- ☐ less than $20k
- ☐ $20k-$50k
- ☐ $50k-$100k
- ☐ $100k +

Are there any children in the household who attend **South Hadley** schools?

Circle: yes no

If yes, what school(s)?

- ☐ Plains Elementary School
- ☐ Mosier Elementary School
- ☐ Michael E. Smith Middle School
- ☐ South Hadley High School
- ☐ Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

  Preschool: _____

What is your primary method of transportation?

- ☐ Car / personal vehicle
- ☐ PVTA
- ☐ Bike

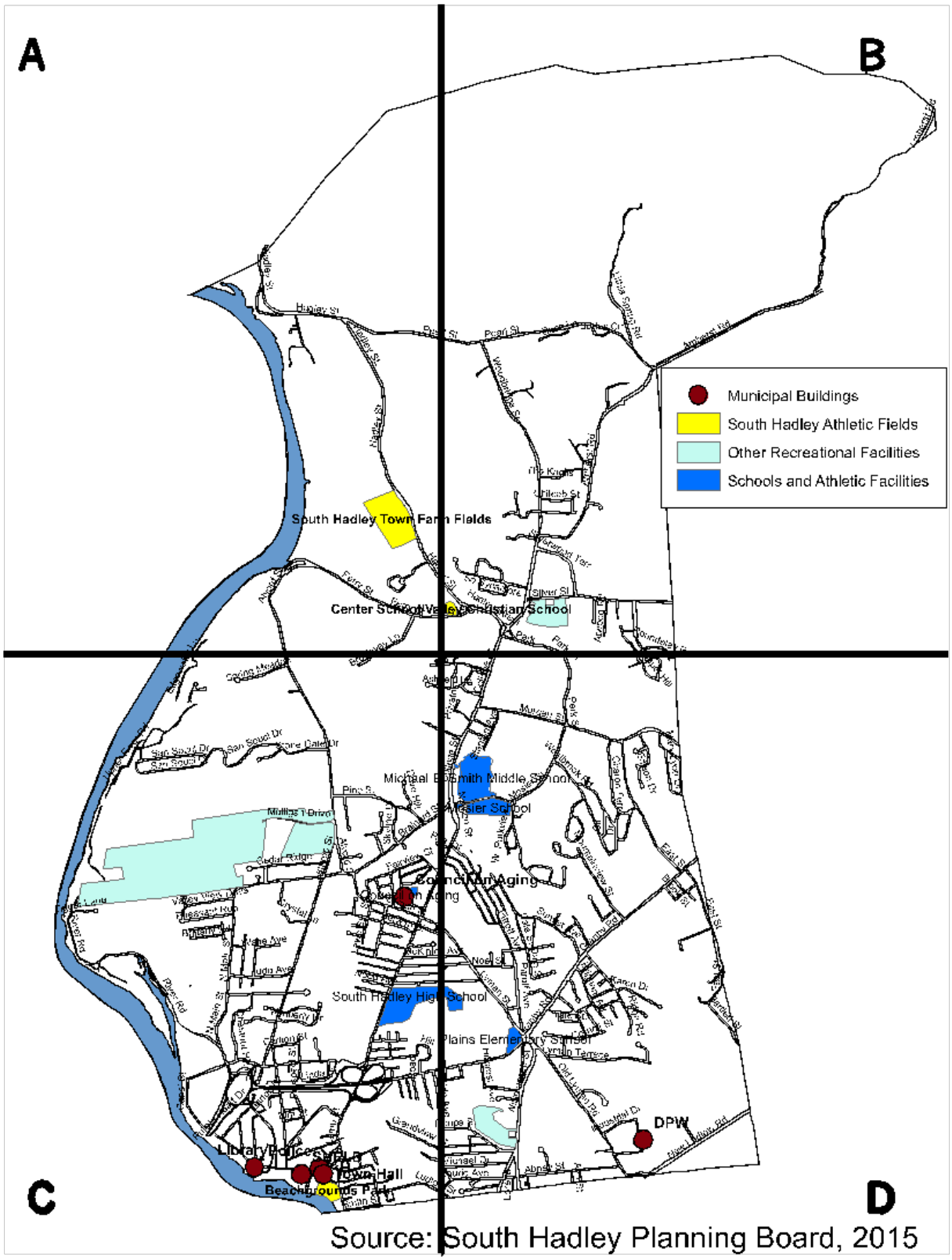
What is your degree of satisfaction with South Hadley's facilitation of this transportation method? (Ex: Roads and highways for cars, bus frequency and service for PVTA, bike lanes for bicycles, sidewalks etc.)

- ☐ Walking

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Moderately Satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat Satisfied
- ☐ Not at all Satisfied

Select the approximate section of town that you live in on the map below. (Please choose your best guess.)

- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C
- ☐ D



Source: South Hadley Planning Board, 2015

How important to you is it to have the following services available in South Hadley? (Check one per category)				
	Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Very Important
Groceries				
Shopping (clothing, gifts, etc.)				
Personal Services (gyms, haircuts, etc.)				
Restaurants				
Adult Education				
Senior Services				
Youth Services (education, activities, support)				
Recreational Activities & Open Space				
Cultural Activities				

Library Services				

For the following activities, please indicate how often you travel to other towns to participate in them. Then, please check all towns in which you do this activity.

	Frequency					Town							
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Amherst	Belchertown	Chicopee	Granby	Hadley	Northampton	Holyoke	Other, please specif

													y
Groceries													
Shopping (clothing, gifts, etc.)													
Personal Services (gyms, haircuts, etc.)													
Restaurants													
Adult Education													
Senior Services													
Youth Services (education, activities, support)													
Recreational Activities &													

Open Space													
Cultural Activities													
Library Services													

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements (select one per statement).	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree

			s a g r e e		
There is adequate availability of housing in South Hadley.					
Housing in South Hadley is affordable.					
There is a sufficient amount of single-family homes available for purchase.					
There is a sufficient amount of multi-family homes available for purchase.					
There is a sufficient amount of apartments and condominiums for rental.					
There is a sufficient amount of apartments and condominiums for purchase.					
South Hadley is doing enough to preserve land for farming in South Hadley.					
South Hadley is doing enough to preserve land for gardening in South Hadley.					
South Hadley should do more to preserve land for recreation in South Hadley.					
I am satisfied with the schools in South Hadley.					

South Hadley is doing enough for waste management / recycling.					
It is easy to get involved in the community.					

How do you feel that the overall quality of life for South Hadley residents has changed over the last 4 years?

- ☐ Improved somewhat
- ☐ Improved significantly
- ☐ Declined somewhat
- ☐ Declined significantly
- ☐ Remained the same

Where do you obtain most of your information about the town?

- ☐ Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- ☐ South Hadley Community Television
- ☐ Local newspaper (The Town Reminder, etc.)
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Town website
- ☐ Other:_____
- ☐ I do not keep up with information about South Hadley.

Thank you for taking this survey! Please feel free to add any additional comments below, such as comments on the current state of the town, this survey, and aspects that you value about South Hadley, and areas in which there is room for improvement.

Thank you for your participation!