

**TOWN AND VILLAGE OF CHAMPLAIN
SMART GROWTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Community Survey Final Report (Task 7a)
July 2025**



**Department
of State**

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Introduction

In Fall 2024, residents from the Town and Village of Champlain shared their voices in a community survey to shape future development. The goal? Understand what people love, what needs attention, and how the community can grow while keeping its small-town charm. The effort gathered 119 responses through paper and online formats, supported by postcards, press releases, and social media outreach. The survey included 30 questions across a range of topics: demographics, housing, infrastructure, land use, economic development, transportation, recreation, and community preferences. Responses included both quantitative data and over 1,000 open-ended comments. This summary synthesizes all collected data, integrating information from spreadsheets, narrative summaries, and thematic analyses to present a unified set of findings, examples, and implications. Raw data references are noted where applicable.

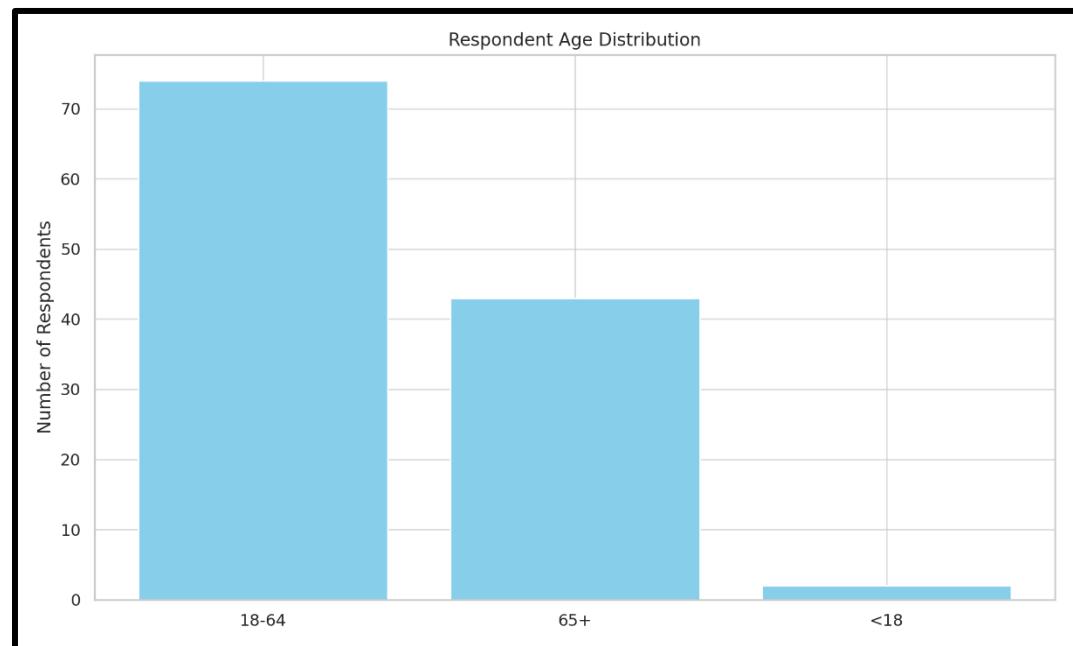
Demographic Profile--Who Took the Survey

"We've lived here 35 years—our kids grew up here, and we're staying put."

Respondents reflected long-term, invested residents who care about Champlain's future.

Sample coverage: ~3% of adult population, but geographically and age diverse.

62% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 64, 36% were 65 or older, and just under 2% were under 18.



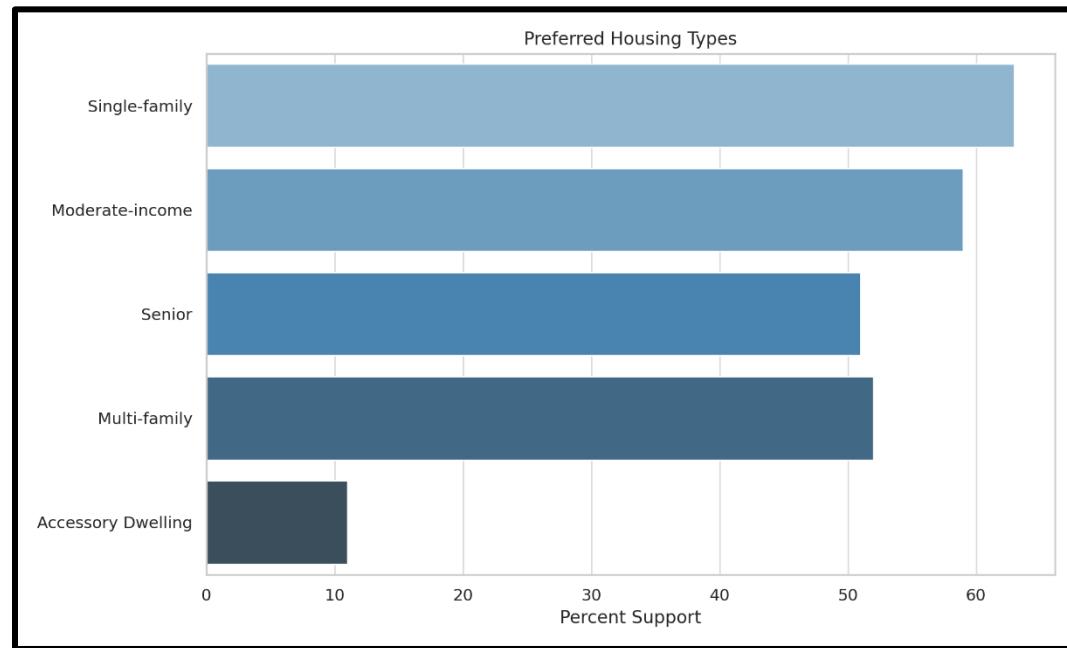
Over 91% own their homes. 57% have lived in Champlain for 20+ years. 47% employed full-time; 46% retired. 91.6% homeowners, 6.7% renters → Renters underrepresented.

Geographically, half live outside the villages, with 41% in the Village of Champlain and 8% in Rouses Point.

This shows a solid sample of established adult residents with strong community ties. Respondents reflected a mature, deeply rooted community. Community satisfaction rated 3.39 out of 5 – suggests modest approval with clear areas for improvement.

Housing Needs and Preferences

"We need affordable homes so our kids can stay here and raise families too."



People want more housing—especially options for working families, seniors, and long-time residents looking to downsize. Over half of respondents support more housing availability, especially single-family and moderate-income homes. Many emphasized the need for senior-friendly options and rental properties for younger families. There was strong support for single-family and moderate-income housing..

54% said Champlain needs more housing options.

63% prefer single-family homes; 59% support moderate-income housing. 51% support housing for seniors.

52% → Multi-family housing

11% supported adding accessory dwelling units (like backyard cottages).

Only 19% opposed new housing outright; 27% were unsure, indicating openness with proper planning.

Issues:

- Aging housing stock and lack of affordable homes.
- Underutilized areas suggested for housing: downtown Champlain, the mall site, and land near Route 11.

Comments included:

“Many homes are outdated or non-code compliant.”

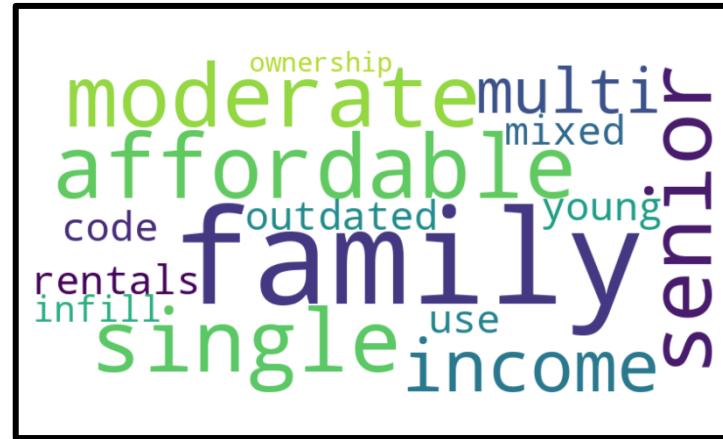
“There needs to be support or accountability.”

“We need to attract more young families by offering affordable homes and safe neighborhoods.”

“We need affordable homes so our kids can stay here and raise families too.”

“Too many properties are vacant or falling apart—it affects the whole neighborhood.”

“This is a community where people know each other, but it needs to attract younger families.”



Community Infrastructure and Services: Getting the Basics Right: Water, Sewer, Lighting

While many use town water and sewer, people want to see stronger investment in core infrastructure. Water and sewer services are used by the majority, but residents want better streetlighting, natural gas access, and sidewalks. Streets like Ashline Drive, Elm Street, Oak Street, and Route 9 were mentioned for improvements.

52% have public water

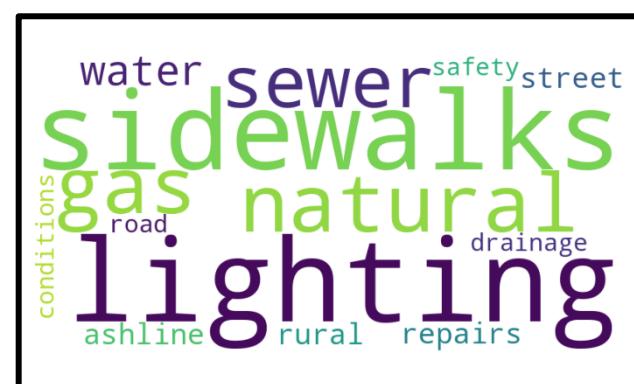
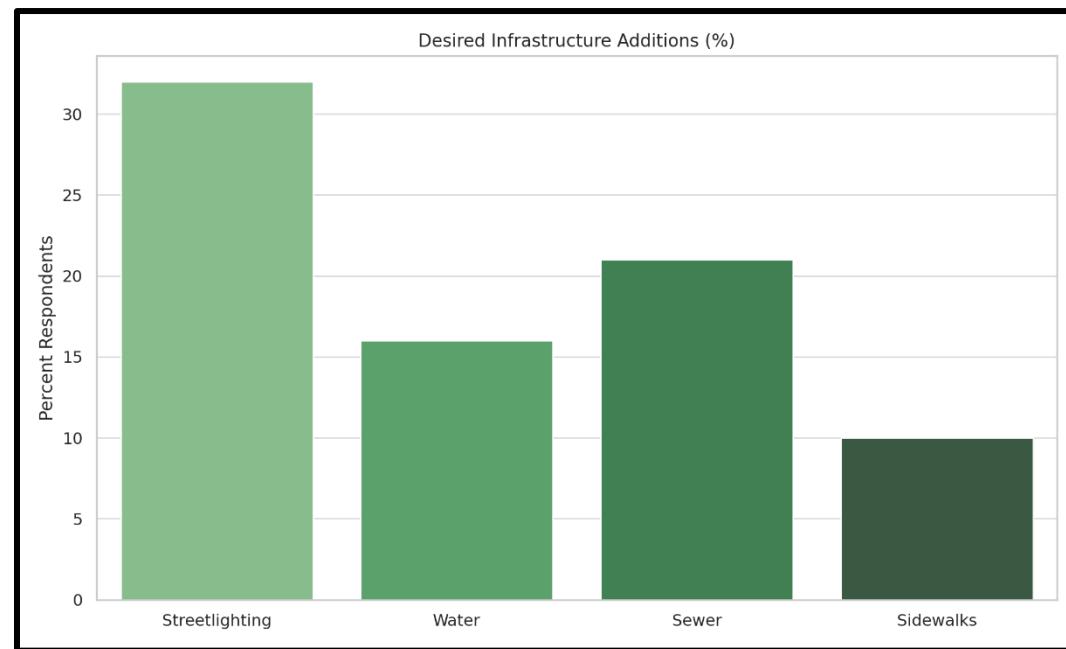
47% use public sewer.

32% requested more streetlighting, especially in rural areas.

10% want better sidewalks, many mentioned safety and walkability.

Natural gas access came up frequently in comments.

Roads and bridges reported as deteriorating in several areas.



“Sidewalks on Ashline Drive are cracked and unsafe for my kids walking to school.”

“The lack of lighting in rural areas makes it hard to feel safe walking after dark.”

“We've been waiting years to get public sewer where we live.”

Economic Development: Business, Dining, and Reviving Main Street

“We need something other than another Dollar Store. Support local, unique shops.”

“The Village of Champlain’s Main Street is the gateway—make it look ok.”

Residents want more options for dining, shopping, and entertainment—especially small, local businesses. Restaurants and grocery options were the most requested new businesses. There is strong support for restaurants, grocery stores, and entertainment venues. Many want revitalization of Main Street and incentives for small businesses. Specific suggestions: farmers markets, cafes with Wi-Fi, local deli, and ice cream shop.

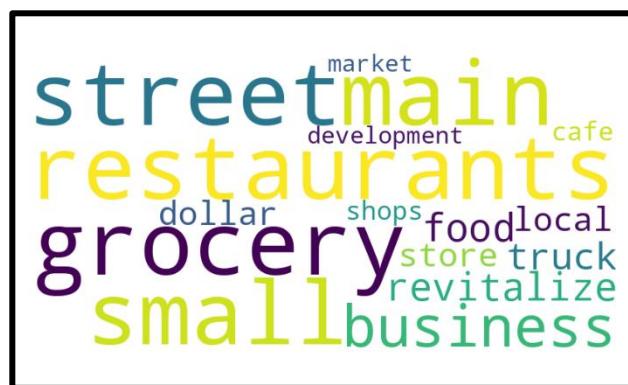
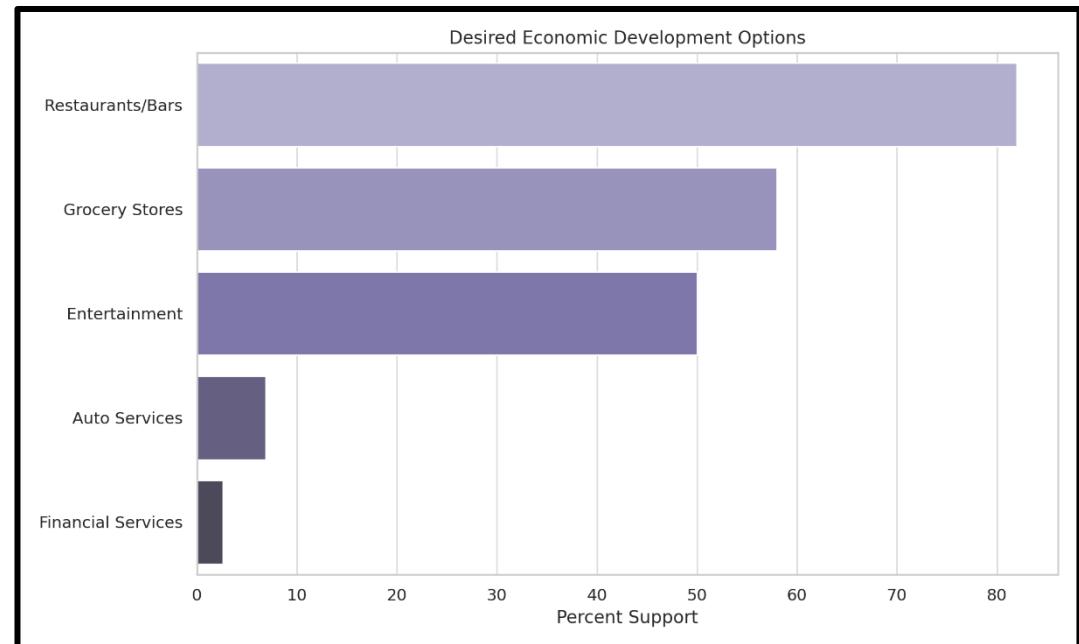
Strong opposition to big-box or low-value retail.

82% want more restaurants and bars.

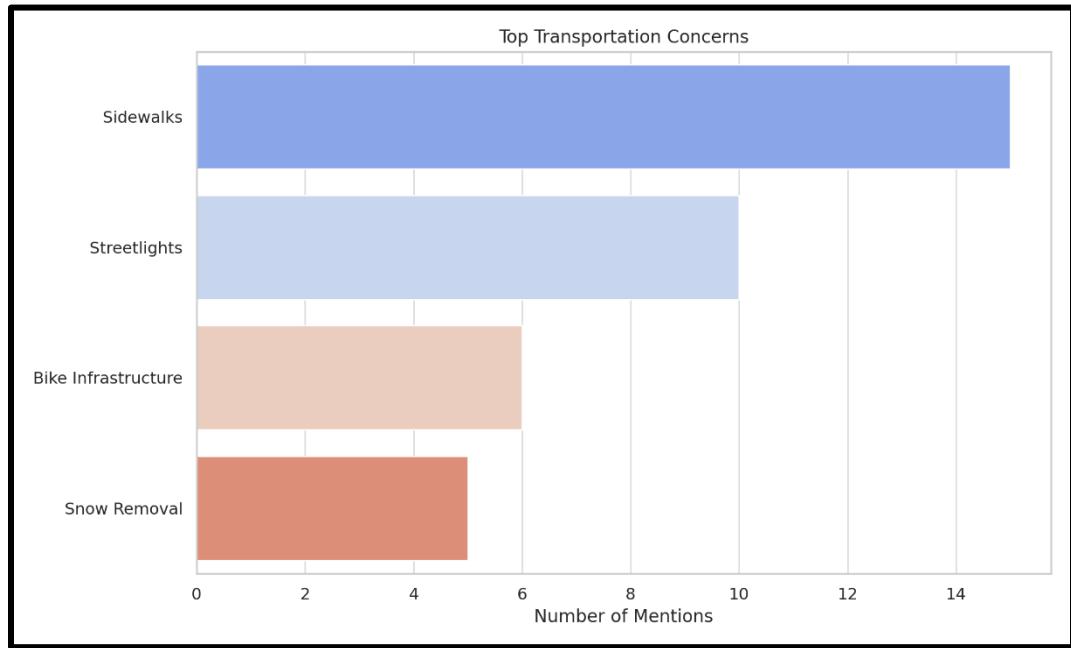
58% want better grocery options.

50% want local entertainment venues.

7% supported expanding auto repair or ATM services.



Transportation and Mobility: Walking, Driving, and Getting Around



Driving is essential in Champlain—but people want safer ways to walk and bike, too. Driving is the dominant mode of transportation (96.6%). Respondents cited poor sidewalks, limited pedestrian infrastructure, and snow removal issues.

Specific Concerns:

- Route 9 and Ashline Drive noted for pedestrian safety concerns.
- Need for better lighting and signage, especially near EMS and schools.

97% rely on personal vehicles.

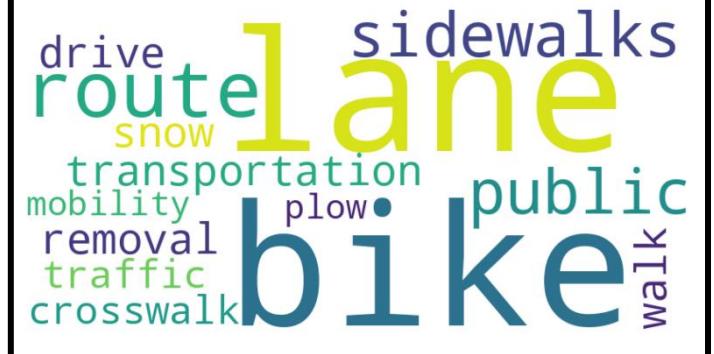
People want safer sidewalks, bike lanes, and snow removal.

Winter walking is especially challenging in village areas.

"Public transportation doesn't exist here. It's difficult for seniors without a car."

"We need a bike lane on Route 9."

"There should be better signs and lights for kids walking near the school."

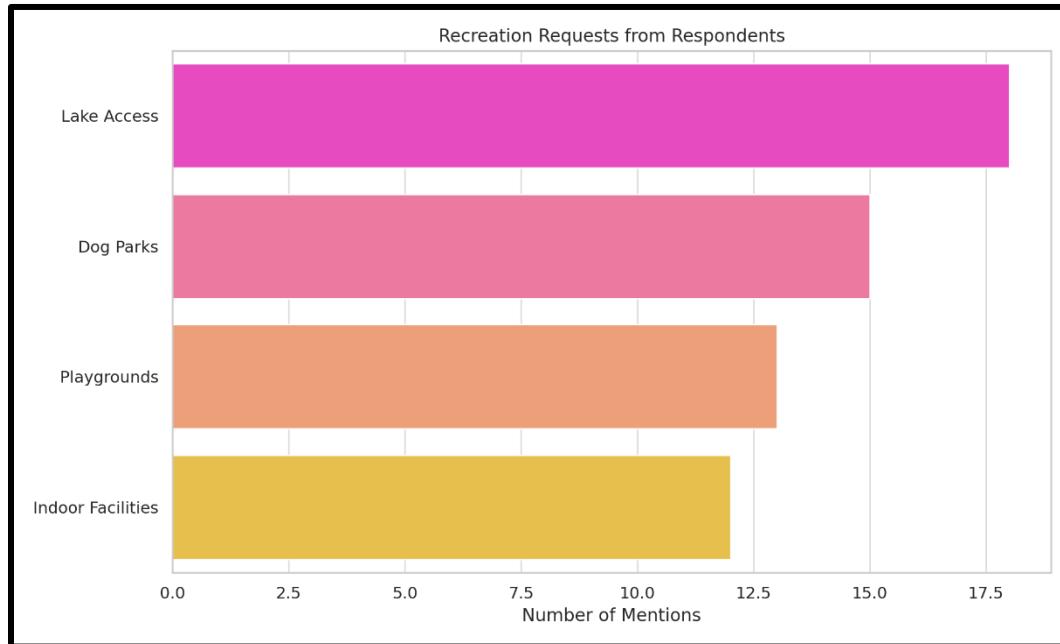


Recreation and Quality of Life: Parks, Trails, and Lake Access

"There's nothing for teens to do locally—we need indoor activity options."

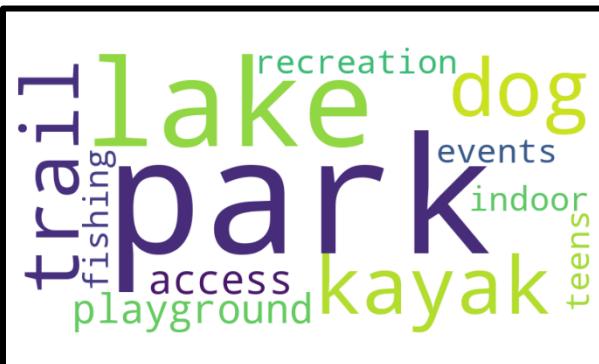
"Let's use the lake better—kayak launches, events, trails."

"Trails that connect places would get people out more. It would be healthier and safer."



Champlain's natural setting is a major asset—and residents want more ways to enjoy it. Champlain's rural charm and peace are deeply appreciated. However, residents want more access to Lake Champlain, trails, and youth-oriented recreation.

People asked for lake access, boat launches, and connected trails. Dog parks and indoor recreation for teens are also top requests. Most people love the peace, scenery, and sense of community. Community pride remains strong, but high taxes and lack of youth activities are concerns.

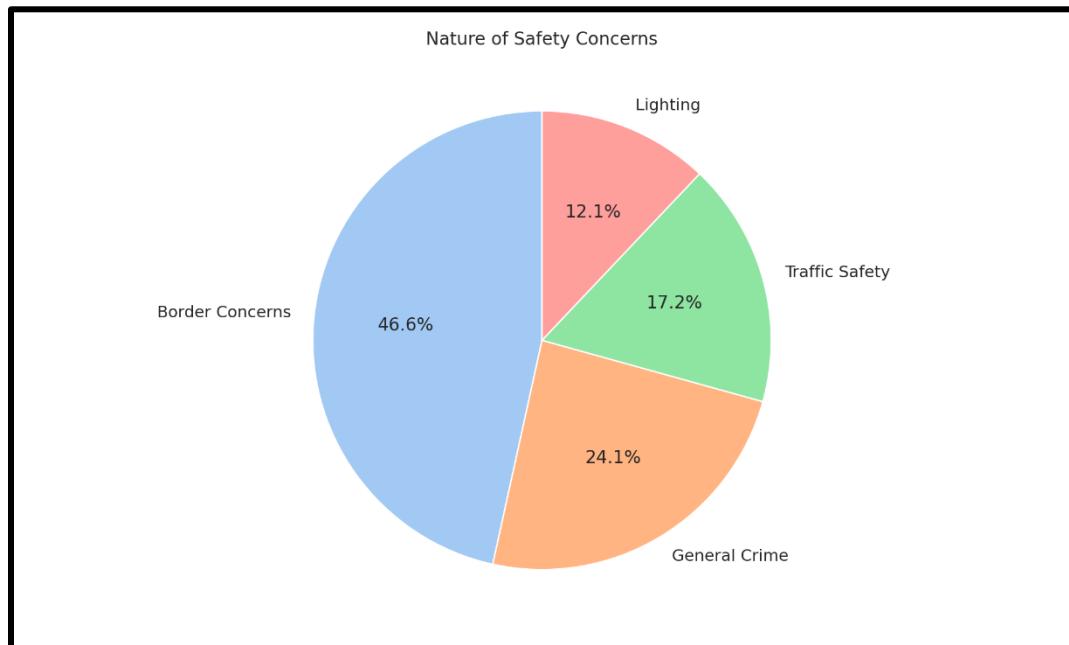


Public Safety: Feeling Safe

"It's gotten worse since the pandemic. Too many break-ins."

"Security near the border needs to improve."

"People coming across the border make some of us feel uneasy."



Safety is a big concern, especially near the border and on poorly lit streets. Safety concerns were raised by 50% of respondents—most related to illegal border crossings, crime, and traffic. Lighting and police presence were also noted.

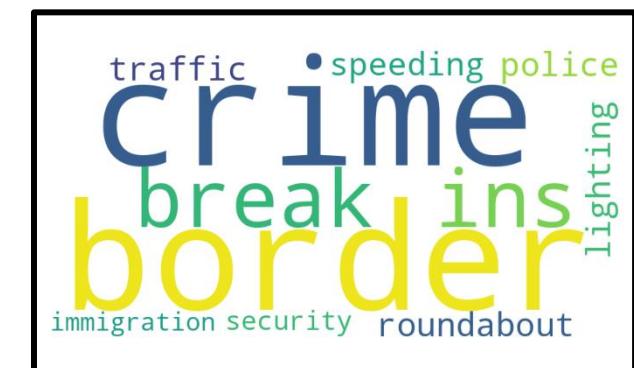
50% of people raised safety concerns.

68% of safety comments mentioned:

- o Border and immigration issues
- o Break-ins
- o Insufficient patrol and traffic enforcement

Requests included more patrols and lighting, particularly at night.

Traffic safety and policing were also mentioned.



Community Engagement: Volunteering and Involvement

"I already serve on two local committees."

"Happy to help but wasn't aware of opportunities."

"I'd love to help, but I don't know where to start—make it easier to plug in."

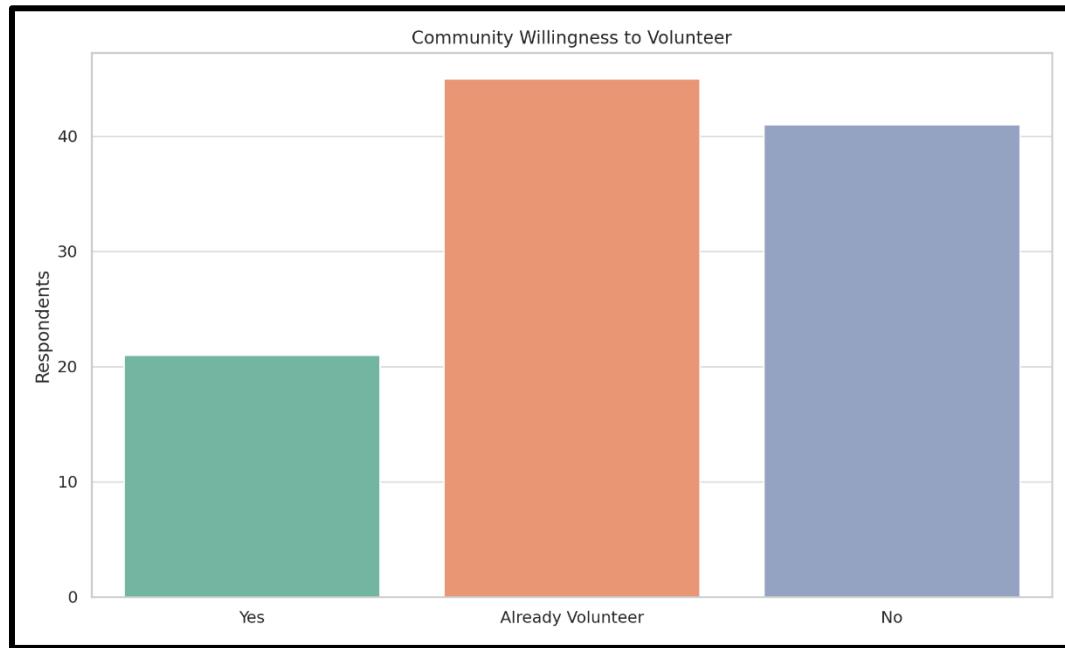
Many people already help out—and many more want to if they knew how. There is interest in volunteering and better communication.

38% said they're willing to volunteer. Several others already serve on boards or committees.

People asked for clearer communication about opportunities to get involved.

Suggestions:

- Standing community project committees
- Town newsletter and bulletin board
- "Volunteer Match" sign-up system



Planning Implications and Recommendations: What Comes Next

This survey reflects the voices of Champlain. Residents love their small-town character—but want to see thoughtful improvements in housing, infrastructure, safety, and quality of life. As the Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan moves forward, these results will help shape investments and policy.

Survey results support Smart Growth principles: expand affordable and senior housing, enhance sidewalks and infrastructure, support small businesses, preserve rural character, and improve recreation access. Zoning reform and local entrepreneurship programs were recommended.

The overwhelming message: maintain what's good while making careful, inclusive improvements.

This survey offers a clear roadmap for Champlain's future. Residents seek thoughtful, inclusive growth that maintains the community's identity while improving quality of life.

APPENDICES available upon request:

Raw data results from Survey Monkey

Cone Power Point for Comprehensive Plan Committee (DATE?)