

Questionnaire Results Summary

Pleasant Hills Implementable Comprehensive Plan
November 2023

Background

The Community Questionnaire is a major component of public engagement that will inform the selection and framing of Key Issues at the heart of the Pleasant Hills Comprehensive Plan. Plan consultant Pashek+MTR workshopped the questions with the plan's appointed Steering Committee, incorporating input that could inform the direction of Pleasant Hills during the lifetime of this plan.

Pashek+MTR and Pleasant Hills promoted the questionnaire to maximize participation and to educate the community about the planning process. Over summer 2023, email blasts, flyers and social media posts encouraged residents to visit the project website, *imaginepleasanthills.com*, to learn about the project and complete the questionnaire. Paper questionnaires were available with collection boxes at the Borough Building and Library. In August, Pashek+MTR staged a booth at Community Day to collect input and promote the questionnaire. As a final push, the Borough mailed a postcard to every household encouraging completion of the questionnaire by the October 31 deadline.

Response rate

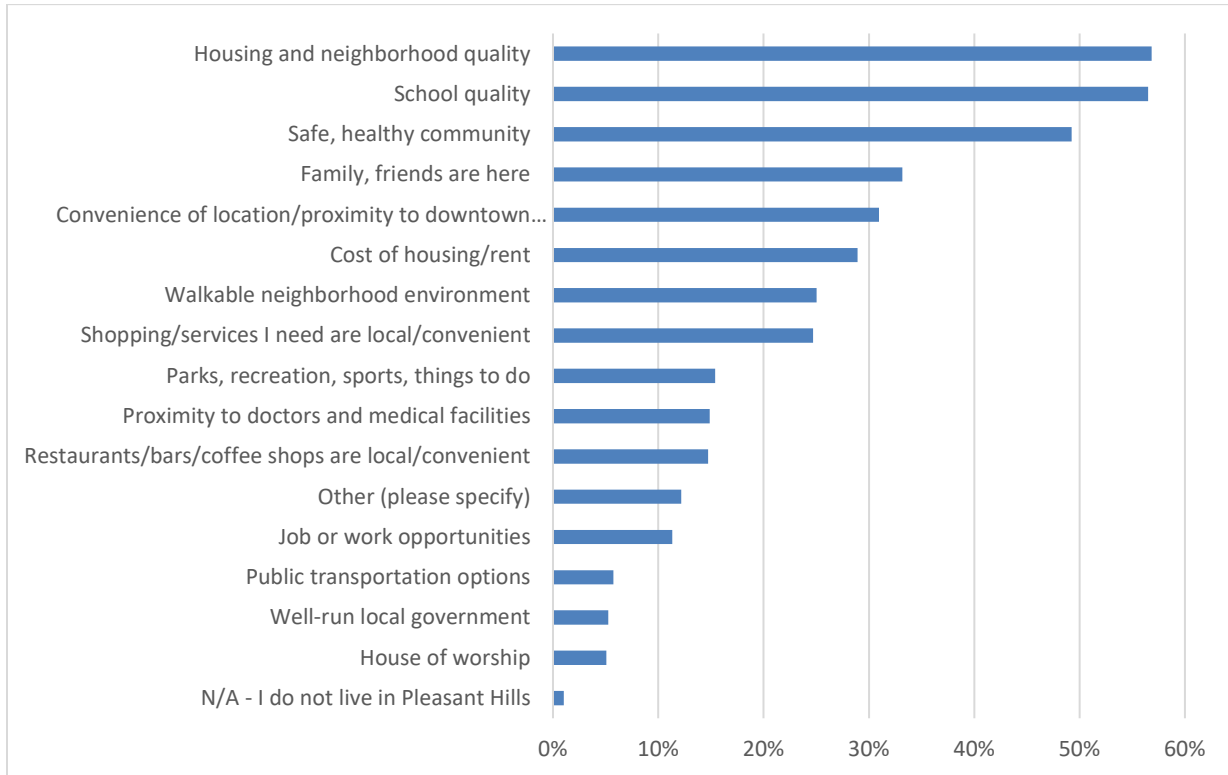
Overall, the questionnaire received 594 responses. In validating the data, Pashek+MTR flagged any IP address (the address of an individual device) associated with four or more responses for further analysis, acknowledging that multiple responses from the same device could represent multiple members of the same household or different responses from a public location, such as a library computer. A detailed review of the results from such devices indicated that they were unique and unlikely to be the result of any effort to unduly influence results.

While the large number of total responses provides a rich and incredibly useful data set for the Steering Committee's review, it is worth noting that the questionnaire was not intended to achieve statistically valid results, as its sample was not random.

Findings

Pashek+MTR summarized the most notable responses to the questionnaire and conducted qualitative analysis of the open response question to identify key themes and sentiments. For additional tabulations and much more detail in qualitative comments, see the full questionnaire output.

Q1 Why did you move to Pleasant Hills Borough? (Select all that apply) (591 responses)



Q2 What three things does our community do best? (514 responses)

Top responses:

- **Community safety:** general sense of safety and security in the Borough
- **Police/Fire/EMS services**
- **Public works:** snow removal, general maintenance of roads and public facilities
- **Community amenities:** municipal parks, community/recreational programming, and the municipal library
- **School district**

Q3 What three things would you like to see change in our community? (346 responses)

Top responses:

- **New/additional community spaces:** Especially the idea for a new community center and rec center/pool
- **Improved and expanded sidewalks**
- **Increased enforcement** of zoning/code ordinances and traffic laws

- **Local commercial activity:** more restaurants and business options in the borough, respondents would like to see these be small/local options
- **Road conditions:** both quality/maintenance of infrastructure as well as traffic management

Q4 How would you describe our community? (478 responses)

Top responses:

- Community feel: safety, friendliness, family-oriented, close-knit, quiet and small feel
- “Niceness” of the borough: well-maintained facilities, cleanliness, natural beauty
- Quality of services and amenities in the community

It should be noted that some negative descriptions were observed in the responses with regard to these same themes. However, the majority of responses described positive sentiments about these qualities in Pleasant Hills.

Q5 How important are each of the following issues to the future of Pleasant Hills? (Please rate the importance of each, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important.) (554 responses)

The five issues that were most frequently ranked “very important” were:

Issue	% response
Community safety (police, fire, EMS)	81.4%
Attracting businesses to Pleasant Hills	68%
Addressing the appearance of Route 51 and other commercial areas	61.2%
Developing/revitalizing parks and recreational facilities	58.7%
Communication with residents and business owners	57.7%

The five issues most frequently ranked “not important” were:

Issue	% response
Revitalizing public facilities (e.g. the Borough building)	10.7%
Addressing environmental concerns (air quality, tree canopy, climate resilience)	5.8%
Collaboration with nearby communities and/or the school district	5.1%
Improving walking and/or biking conditions	3.5%
Attracting businesses to Pleasant Hills	2.4%

It should be noted that “Attracting businesses to Pleasant Hills was also ranked as the second most important issue, with 375 respondents giving the issue a “very important” ranking.

Respondents who gave other issues as their most important for the community mentioned the following themes:

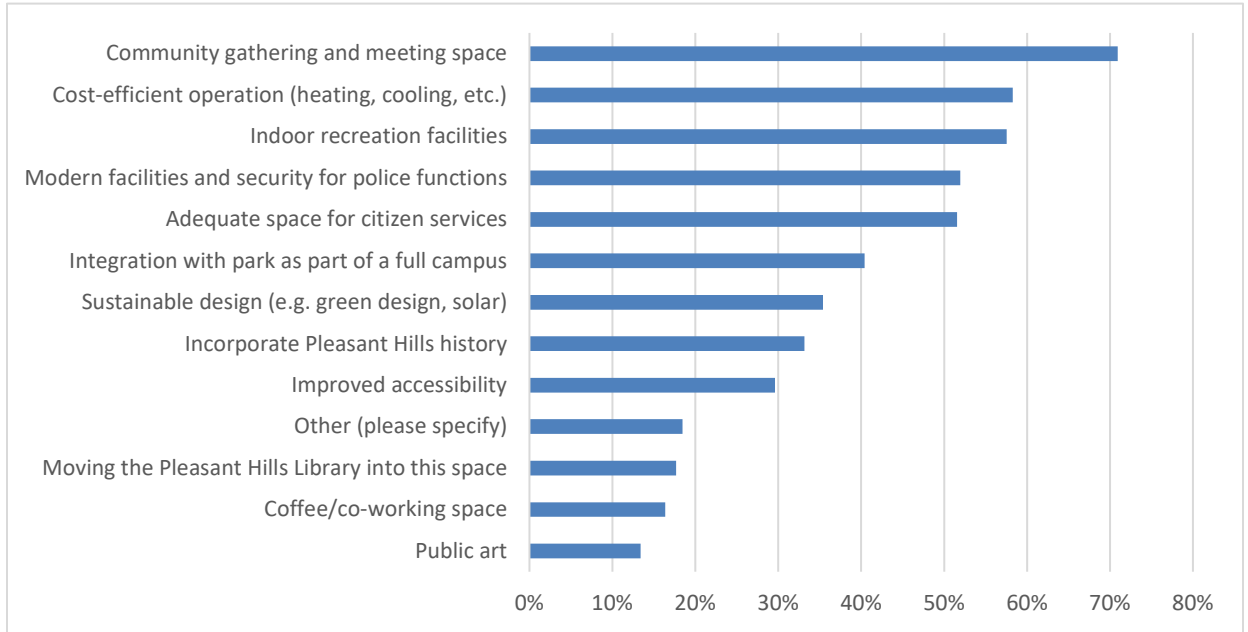
- Concerns and ideas about the idea for a new Borough building
- Parking availability and management
- Traffic safety
- Communication between the municipality and residents

Q6 How can the Borough best serve its senior citizens during the next decade? (369 responses)

Respondents mentioned the following themes:

- **Taxes:** Respondents were adamant about not wanting higher taxes, with many wishing to see seniors get a break from paying school taxes. Concerns with property taxes were also expressed.
- **Senior programming and community participation:** Many respondents hoped to see improved senior programming and community activities.
- **Transportation access:** Ensuring that seniors can get where they need to go. Some respondents wished to see a local shuttle for seniors while others advocated for safe and accessible pedestrian infrastructure.

Q7 The Borough building requires improvements and modernization to meet today's public facility needs. If the Borough building were rebuilt, what would you like to see it include? (Select all that apply.) (537 responses)



It should be noted that among the 99 people who responded “other,” the frequently mentioned themes were:

- Parking space and dealing with existing space constraints.
- Preventing tax increases and/or keeping costs under control.
- Add a community pool as part of any new development.
- Consider new locations within the borough and/or redevelop existing buildings for this project.

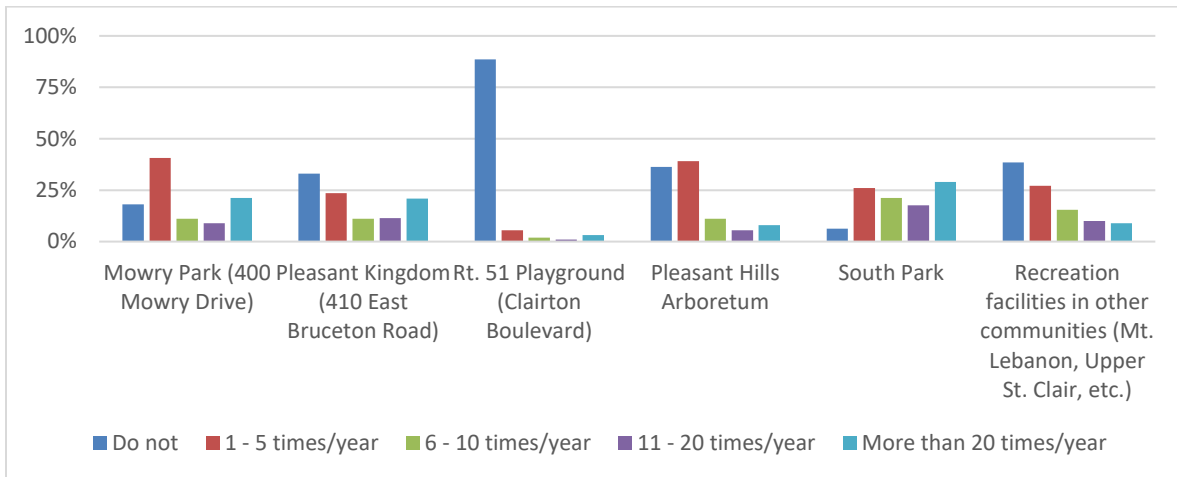
Q8 Generally speaking, would you be in favor of raising Borough capital funds to finance development of a new Borough building? (545 responses)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	25.14%	137
No	34.31%	187
Not sure	40.55%	221
Comments		131
	Answered	545

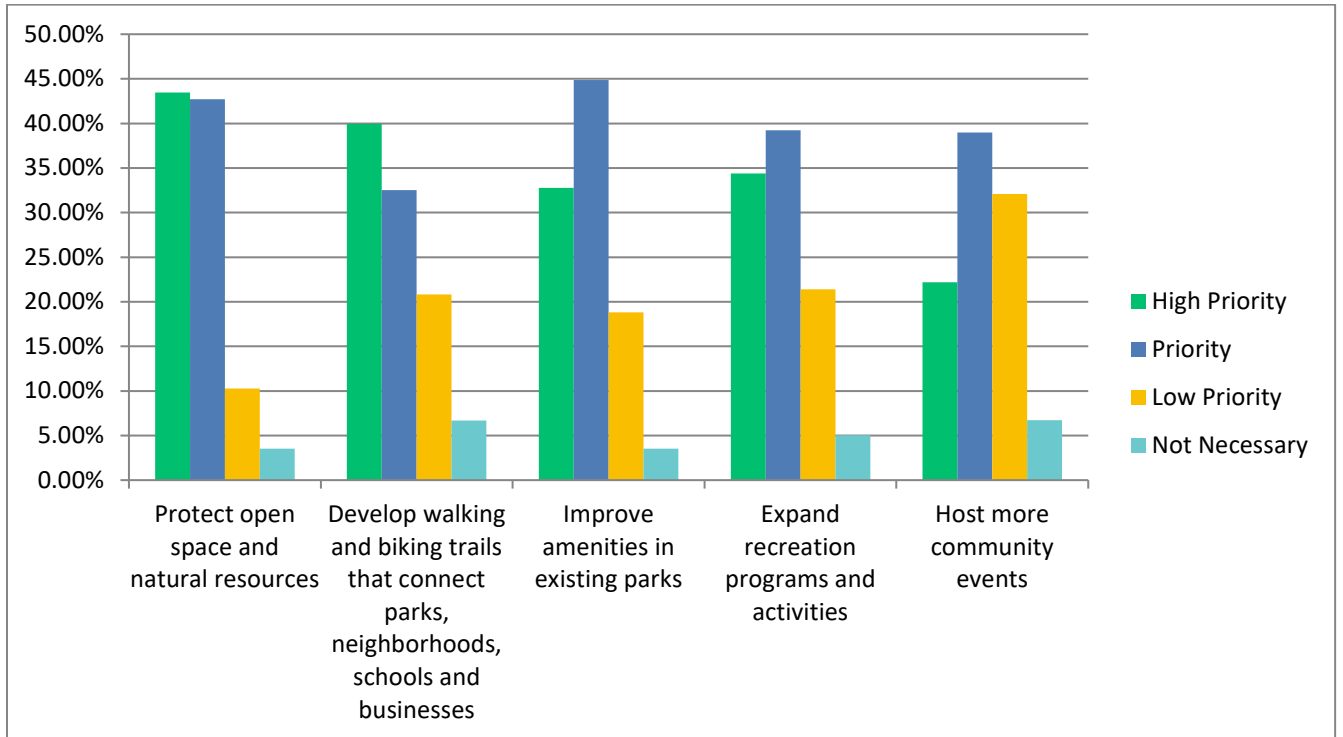
In addition to a Yes/No/Not Sure answer, 131 respondents provided additional comments. Some of the major sentiments expressed include:

- **Financial concerns:** A desire to avoid/prevent any increase in taxes. With some wondering if alternative funding strategies could be explored.
- **Optimization of existing space:** Some felt the Borough should try to improve existing functioning/and use of space before committing to a new building.
- **Other comments:** A desire for transparent project planning and budgeting; and an openness to funding the project if there are clear community benefits.

Q9 How often do you, including family members, visit the following facilities? (545 responses)



Q10 Where do you think Pleasant Hills Borough should focus its parks and recreation efforts in the future? (542 responses)



Q11 How satisfied are you with the Borough website? (545 responses)

Answer Choices	Responses	
N/A - I do not use the Borough website	11.01%	60
Very satisfied	7.34%	40
Satisfied	33.39%	182
Neutral	37.98%	207
Dissatisfied	6.97%	38
Very dissatisfied	3.30%	18
	Answered	545

Q12 How can the Borough website be improved? (204 responses)

Common themes among the responses to this question included:

- More frequent and timely updates to website content and information, including:
 - Infrastructure and construction updates, road closures, and relevant safety updates.
- A more modern, visually appealing, and user-friendly design.

- Additional features to facilitate community engagement and communication, including:
 - Creating an app or offering text message updates.
 - Streaming public meetings
 - Creating an interactive event calendar.

Q13 On a scale of 1 to 5, what level of amenities and services do you expect your local government to provide? (1 = most basic, 5 = full complement) (540 responses)

Answer choices	Responses	
1 Stick to the fundamentals: Public safety, functional infrastructure	8.9%	48
2	3%	16
3 Address priority community needs/desires while limiting impact to the tax base	39.6%	214
4	13.3%	72
5 Full complement of amenities and services to enrich community life (programming, facilities should be as competitive as feasible with other communities in the area)	35.1%	190

Q14 What best describes you? (534 responses)

Answer Choices	Responses	
I am a renter in Pleasant Hills Borough	2.4%	13
I live in and own a home in Pleasant Hills Borough	92.5%	494
I live in and own or operate a business in Pleasant Hills Borough	3.6%	19
I own or operate a business in Pleasant Hills Borough but do not live in the Borough	0.6%	3
I do not live in Pleasant Hills Borough but am interested in planning for the community	0.9%	5

Q15 In what age range do you fall? (534 responses)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Younger than 18	0.56%	3
18 to 25	0.75%	4
26 to 34	9.93%	53
35 to 54	41.95%	224
55 to 64	18.35%	98
65 or older	25.28%	135
Prefer not to answer	3.18%	17

Q16 How long have you lived in, worked in or had a business in your community? (534 responses)

	Less than 5 years		6-15 years		15-20 years		More than 20 years		Not applicable		Total
Lived here	13.32%	7	24.39%	13	8.63%	46	52.91%	28	0.75%	4	533
Worked here	7.05%	3	9.69%	44	2.20%	10	11.67%	53	69.38%	31	454
Owned a Business here	2.04%	9	1.13%	5	1.81%	8	2.49%	11	92.52%	40	441

Q17 Which of the following things would you be willing to do to improve our community? (503 responses)

Attend council meetings	46.92%	236
Help to promote our community	33.80%	170
Help to implement some specific elements of the comprehensive plan, once it is completed	27.83%	140
Improve the appearance of my property	46.12%	232
Maintain a flower garden in a public space	18.89%	95
Plant a tree	30.82%	155
Run for elected office	6.96%	35
Serve on a committee or board	28.43%	143
Volunteer with the schools or a non-profit organization	39.76%	200
Work at a clean-up day	41.35%	208
Pay slightly increased taxes to fund new initiatives coming from the comprehensive plan	31.41%	158
Donate for specific initiatives	33.20%	167

Q18 If you would like to add comments that would help us better understand successes, issues or ways to better our community, please add them below. (165 responses)

Some of the reoccurring themes from this question's comments included:

- Code enforcement and property maintenance (both residential and commercial)
- Traffic management
- Concern over new development in and near Pleasant Hills
- Recreation facilities and park improvements
- Concerns about talk of a new borough building
- Air and noise pollution

- Concerns about rising taxes and school district taxes
- Desire for more community engagement and programming events (a willingness to volunteer)
- Desire for a sidewalk on East Bruceton to connect to Old Clairton Road

Finally, 240 of 594 respondents provided email addresses; these addresses will be added to the project mailing list, used to provide updates on the project periodically as the plan continues to develop.