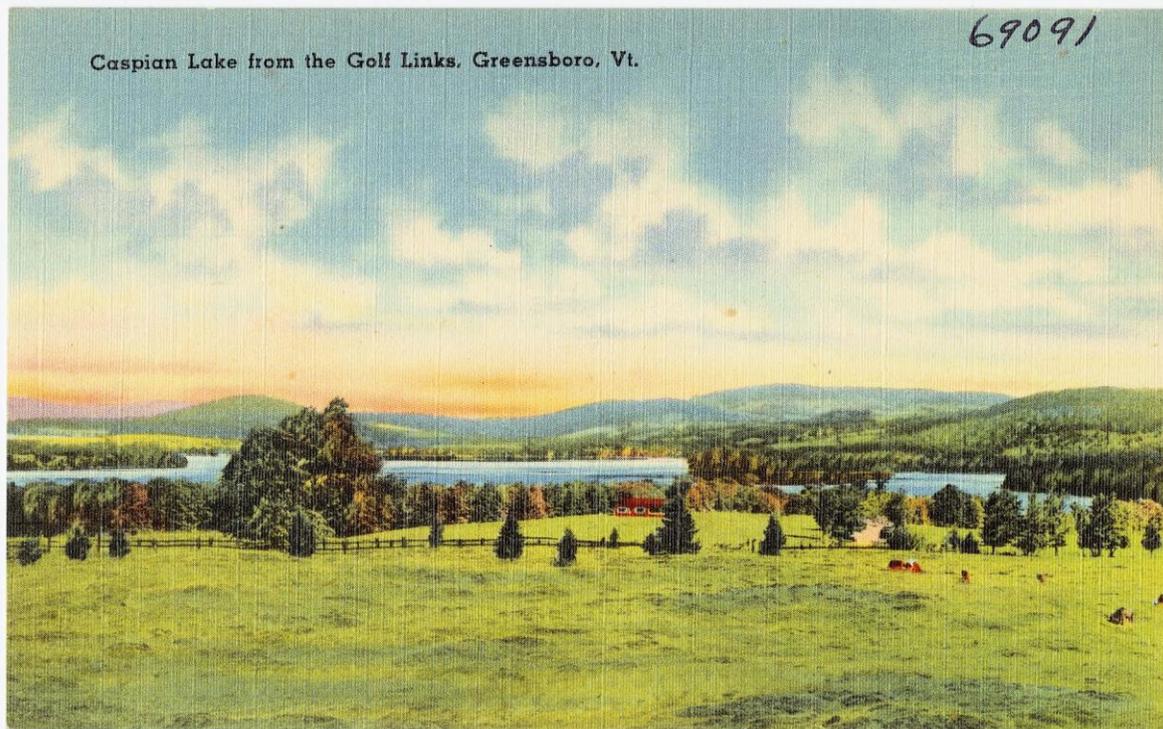


# Working in Greensboro

An Assessment of Employee Housing, Commuting, and Quality of Life



**Authors:** Allison Betelak, Evan Foster, Henry Groves, Katherine Helmer, Cayden Hewes, Benjamin Holland, Isabel Lisle, Trevor McMaster, Rebecca Morrow, Jillian Murphy, Emma Riccardi, Lily Schroeder, Zoe Spett, Jack Straton, Lucia Sullivan Possehl, Emma Wood

**Instructor:** Cheryl Morse - Cheryl.Morse@uvm.edu

**Integrated Studies of Earth and Environment / Geography of Vermont GEOG 61 SL**  
**Department of Geography, University of Vermont**  
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# Report Summary

## Project Overview

Students enrolled in Geography of Vermont (GEOG 61), a service learning course at the University of Vermont, partnered with the Greensboro Planning Commission to conduct research on the employment and residential geographies of employees who work in Greensboro. The purpose of this survey was to gather information on housing, commute to work, and residential satisfaction from Greensboro employees in order to assist with town planning efforts.

## Methods

Students designed, distributed, and analyzed an online survey of Greensboro employees. In preparation for the survey, students met with employers and members of the Planning Commission in Greensboro, and conducted a tour of the town. We also drew on economic, commute, income, and household information from the US Census to inform the survey. The survey focused on demographic information including age, employment situations, income, town of residency, housing and household situations, and transportation methods. The survey also asked respondents to explain their housing and residential preferences, and posed questions about people's preferences such as where they would like to live and where they would like to work if given the choice.

## Findings and Recommendations

Our research found that the town of Greensboro lacks affordable housing for its employees. However, we also found some employees would prefer not to live in Greensboro due to a complex set of reasons. Employees drive long distances to Greensboro. We recommend that town leaders take a regional approach to affordable housing and transportation planning. We also recommend that the Greensboro planning commission consider services and amenities as community culture issues. Greensboro and the surrounding area lack satisfactory cell service. Survey respondents reported a need for more services in the community, such as stores, restaurants and places to socialize. A few respondents perceived that surrounding communities had "better" schools. With these findings in mind, our broader recommendations and areas for future research in Greensboro include making affordable housing available in creative ways, lobbying and creating public solutions for increased cell service, promoting more services and amenities, developing innovative transportation options for employees and residents, promoting school successes, and conducting additional research on the needs of year-round residents.

## Introduction

The Greensboro Planning Commission partnered with the Department of Geography at the University of Vermont to design a service learning opportunity for first year students that would also provide research assistance to the PC. In Spring 2017 Geography of Vermont (GEOG 061 A), students conducted research on employees who work in businesses and institutions located in the town of Greensboro. The goal was to gather information on housing affordability and satisfaction, commute to work, and perceptions of Greensboro and surrounding communities. The analysis aims to assist the town of Greensboro as they create their next town plan. This report includes an overview of our background research, summarizes our methods and the results of our survey, and contains an analysis of our research findings. The report closes with an analysis of housing opportunities in Greensboro and our recommendations for future planning efforts.

## Methods

We designed an online survey to research the question: does Greensboro need additional affordable housing? The survey was distributed only to people who are employed in the town of Greensboro. Employers in Greensboro emailed the survey to their employees (in one place of work, paper copies were provided). The survey was developed after preliminary research and a visit to Greensboro, as well as after consultation of housing and income data from the U.S. census. It was designed to assemble demographic information including age, employment situations, financial situations, town of residency, housing situations, and transportation methods as well gain information on personal preferences such as where they would like to live and where they would like to work if given the choice. The research was conducted with the approval of University of Vermont's Institutional Review Board. The survey did not gather names, gender, or places of work in order to protect the identities of respondents.

The resulting data were statistically analyzed and graphed with the aid of Excel and the SPSS 23 statistical software package. The narrative data were hand coded to identify themes and differences. We also used other resources to analyze the affordability of housing and transportation for fictionalized people made up of a composite of real respondents to the survey. The recommendations we offer are based on our findings and the result of many group discussions about the significance of our findings.

## The Greensboro Community: Work, Housing, and Landscape

Greensboro is a small, rural town in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. There are two town centers (Greensboro and Greensboro Bend), each with a few essential businesses. Greensboro has a limited number of employers and job positions. Jasper Hill Farm, a cheese company, has the most employees in the town, with more than 80 employees. The Lakeview Elementary

School employs about 30 to 40 full and part time employees. The Greensboro Nursing Home has about 30 full and part time employees. Willey's Store, the general store in the center of town, has about 20 employees, most of whom are part time. The Hill Farmstead Brewery employs about 15 to 20 people. The Town of Greensboro employs seven or eight full and part time employees. Other businesses employ only one to three people. Many of the employees in Greensboro are from surrounding towns and towns far away. The majority of Greensboro residents commute to work from other towns, with an average commute time of 23.1 minutes. The residents generally travel to work in cars, trucks, and vans.

Greensboro has a population of 762. The town is not racially diverse; 96.7% of residents identify as white. Greensboro's population rises seasonally, attracting many who spend their summer vacations near and on Lake Caspian. These visitors and seasonal residents pursue hobbies such as sailing, golfing, hunting, fishing, and camping. Some of these residents retire to Greensboro homes and bring a lot of money into the town. The average family income is \$73,000 per year while the average value of Greensboro houses is \$190,800. Greensboro is a classic small New England town with a rural and natural feel that many people seek out for its beauty.

## Findings

We received **87 fully completed responses** to our survey. The respondents are diverse in terms of income, commute times, and their perceptions of Greensboro and preferences for housing. Below we share the findings from the survey. In the Analysis section, we explore how these findings may be put into context and offer a few recommendations in the Implications and Recommendation section.

### **Survey Respondents by Age, Household Size, Marital Status, and Dependents**

Greensboro employees who responded to the survey are **spread across the age spectrum** (Figure 1). The single largest category of respondents are 23-33 years old (35.4%), but we have representation from all age categories. There is an almost equal split between respondents who are married/in a civil union and those who are not married (Figure 2). The majority of Greensboro employee respondents live in a two-person household (Figure 3). In addition, the majority of the employees live with no dependents (Figure 4).

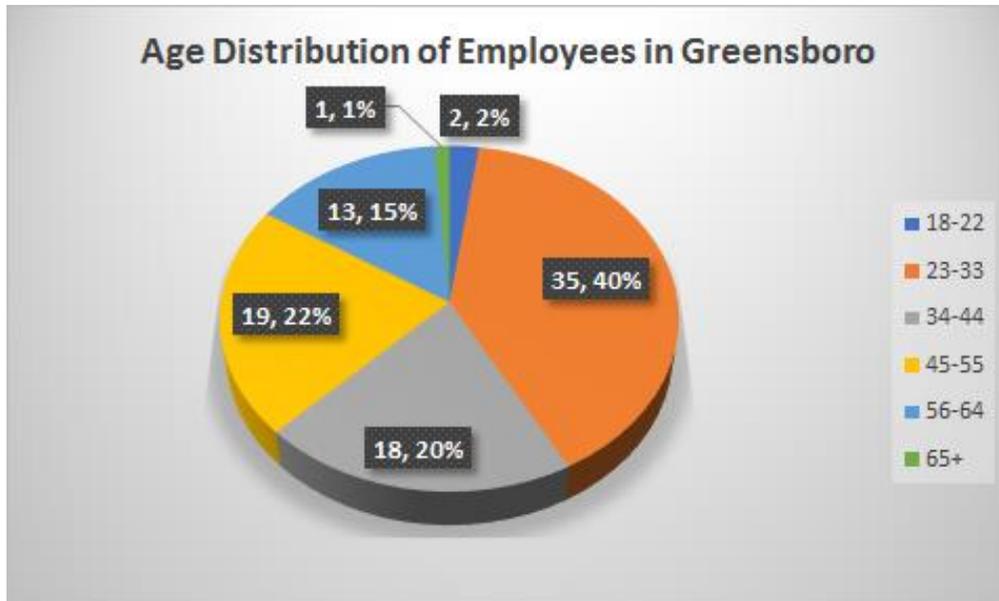


Figure 1. Age distribution of survey respondents

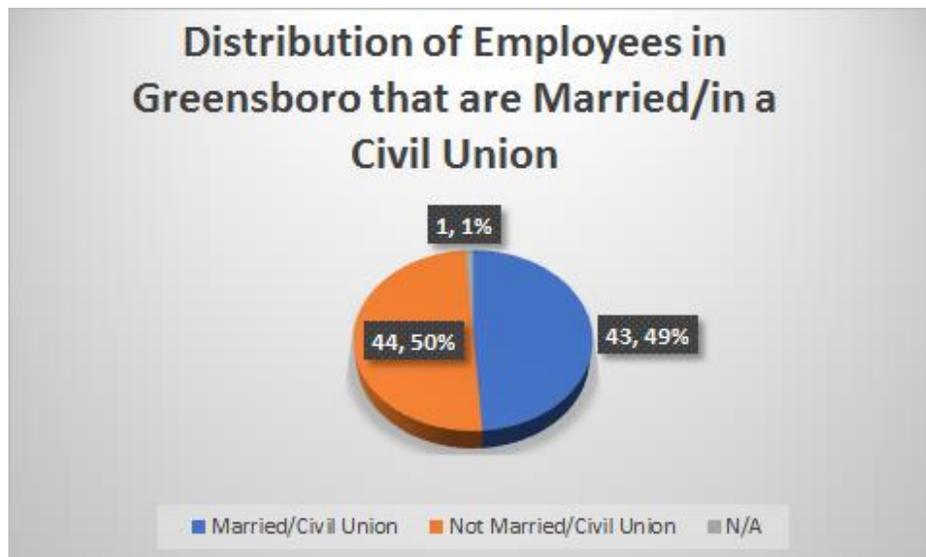
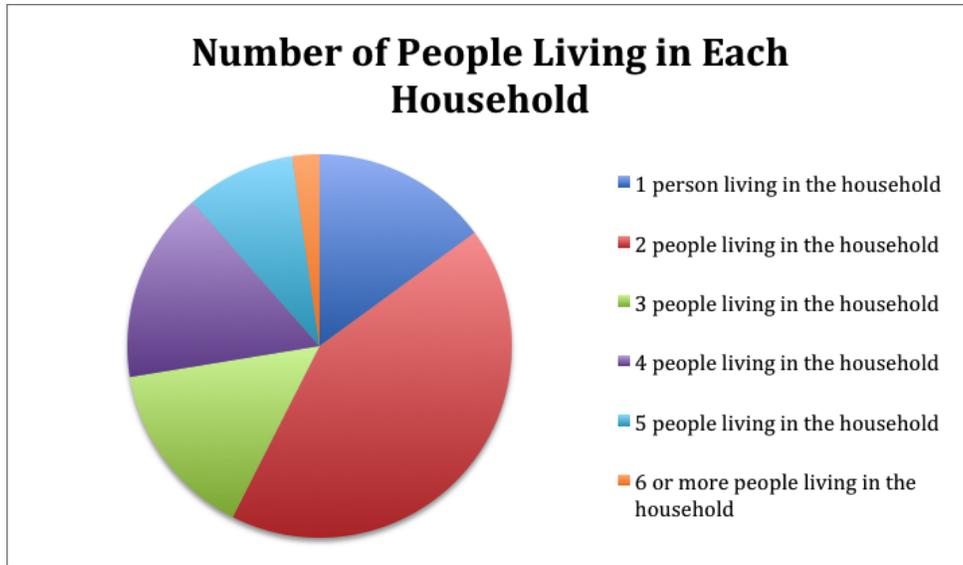
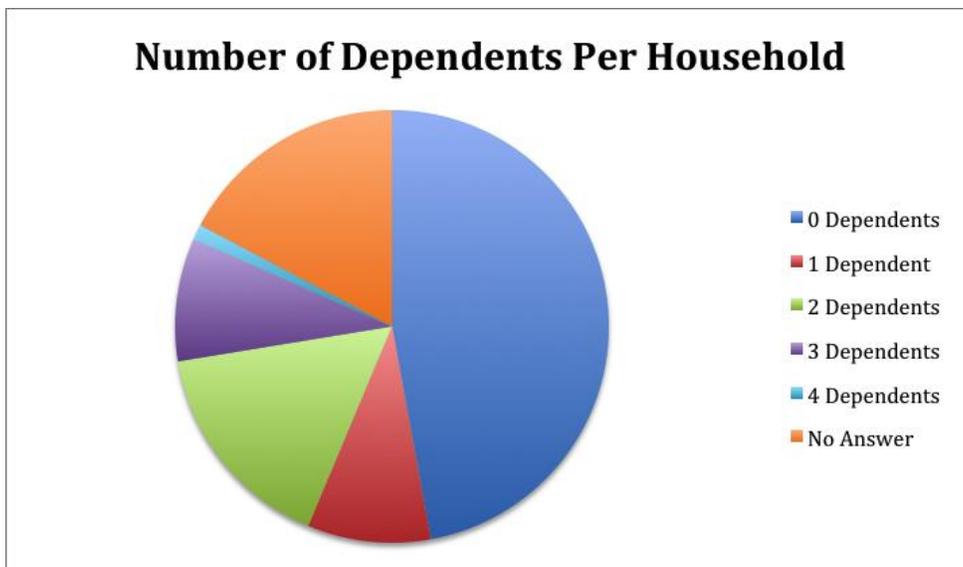


Figure 2. Percentage of Greensboro employee respondents by relationship status



*Figure 3. Number of people in each Greensboro employee household*



*Figure 4. Number of dependents living in each Greensboro employee household*

### Respondents by Childhood Geography

We found that about **only about half the Greensboro employees grew up in Vermont**, and of these people, the majority grew up in a town 21-50 minutes away from Greensboro (Figures 5 and 6). Only one person who responded to this survey grew up in Greensboro. Employees, therefore, have been drawn to the area from elsewhere.

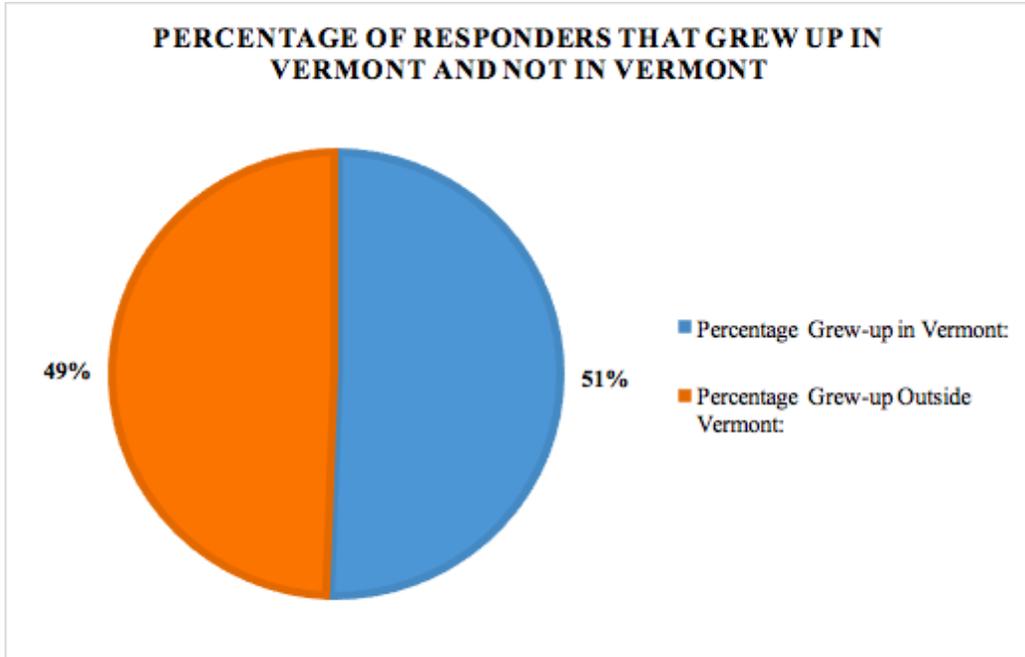


Figure 5. Percentage of Greensboro employees who grew up in Vermont

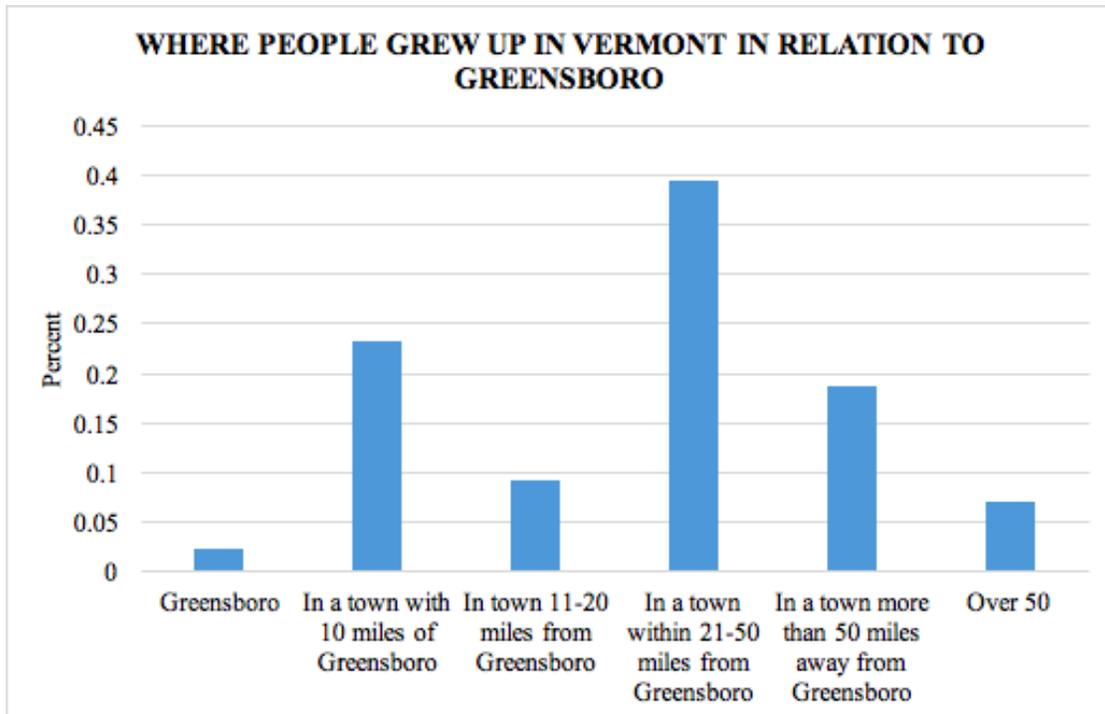
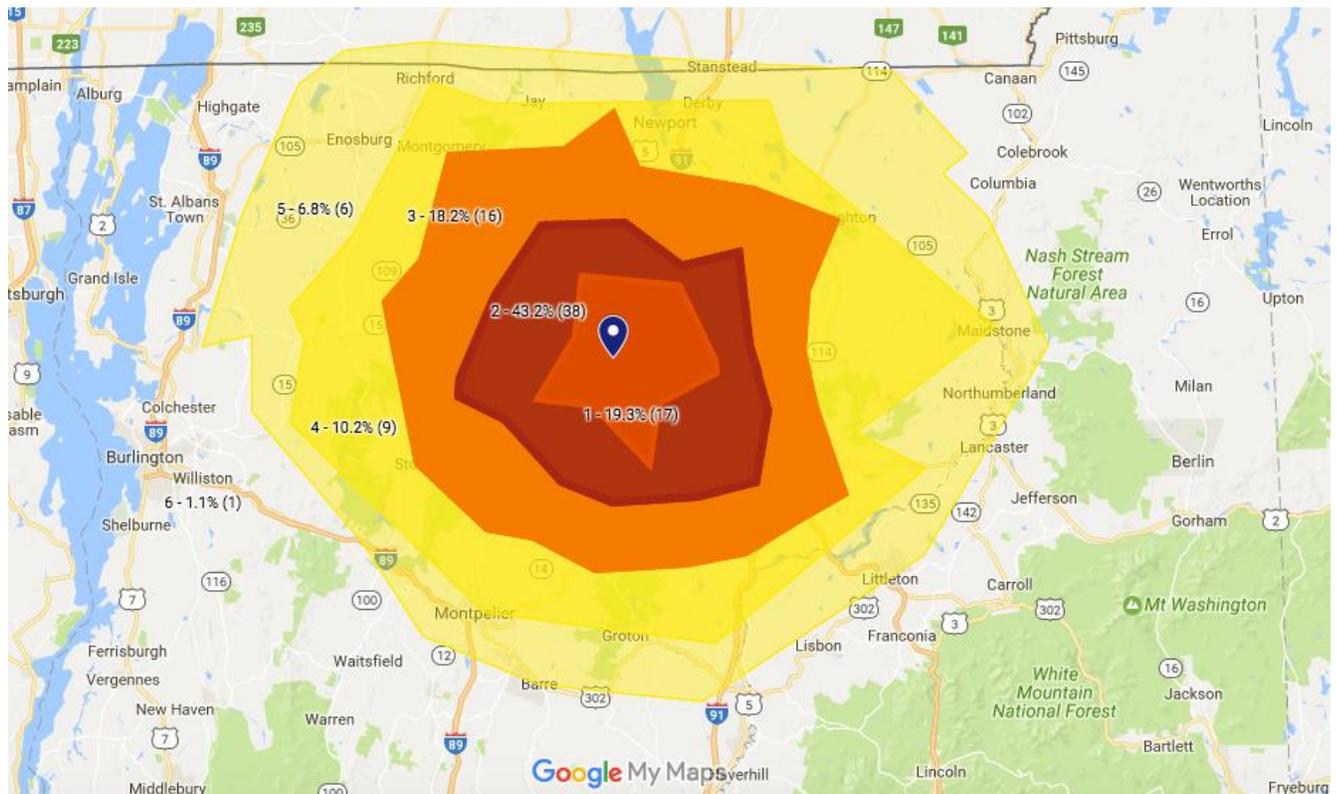


Figure 6. Location of childhood home of those who grew up in Vermont

## Where Greensboro Employees Live Now

**Greensboro employees who participated in this research live in 29 towns spread over the northern half of Vermont.** We grouped housing locations into zones to show the concentration of employee residents by distance from Greensboro (see Figure 7). Greensboro occupies zone 1 and all other zones radiate out from this point. This map's primary purpose is to show the general locations of Greensboro's workers and the distances they must go to get to work, while still keeping the worker's anonymity. Each section (apart from section 6 to keep anonymity) has been assigned a color in correlation with the population that exists there -- the darker the color, the larger the population. Essentially, the data show that the majority of the working population for Greensboro lives within Sections 1-3 (80.7%). This means that the most workers live either 0 to 3 towns away from Greensboro. Overall, we found that the most common towns of residence for Greensboro employees are Greensboro and Hardwick/East Hardwick.



*Figure 7. Residence zones of Greensboro Employees*

### Figure 1 Residential Zones Legend:

Greensboro: 19.3% (17 people)

Zone 1 (towns contiguous to Greensboro): 43.2% (38 people)

Zone 3: 18.2% (16 people)

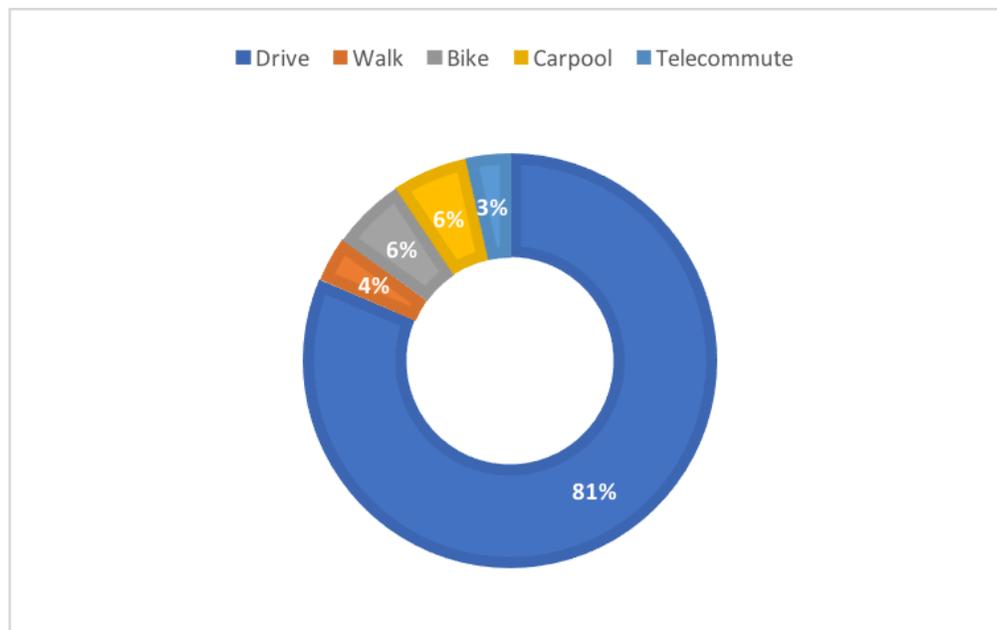
Zone 4: 10.2% (9 people)

Zone 5 (Distant towns in Vermont): 6.8% (6 people)

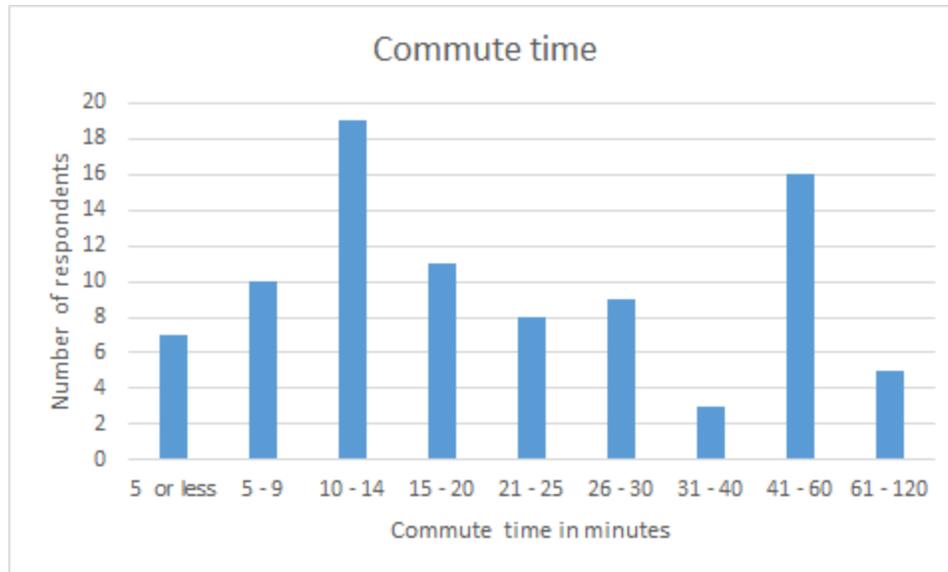
Zone 6 (Out of state): 1.1% (1 person)

### Getting to Work and Commute Times

The survey asked respondents to explain how they travel to work. **A large majority of Greensboro employees (81%) drive their own car to work.** A small number of people travel by other means: 3 people walk, 5 people bike, 5 people carpool, and 3 people telecommute. Many of the people that use a form of transport also drive on occasion to work. This suggests that driving is the most convenient form of transportation for the people of Greensboro, with the other options only being used sometimes. The time it takes for employees to travel to work from their homes varies considerably (Figure 9). **It should be noted that 30% of the survey respondents (24 people) drive for between 31 minutes and two hours to get to work (16 people report a 41-60 minute commute and 5 people said they drive between one and two hours, one way to get to work).**



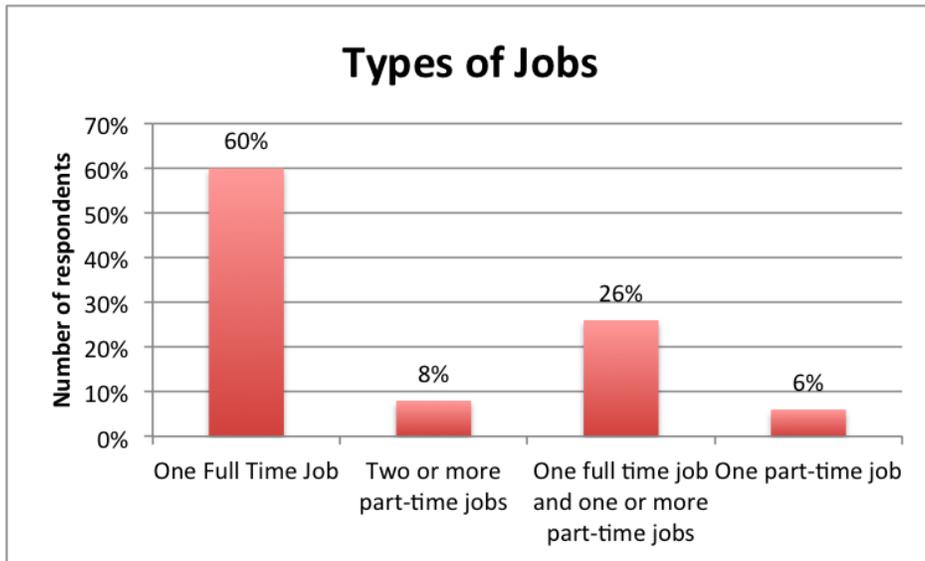
*Figure 8. How survey respondents travel to work*



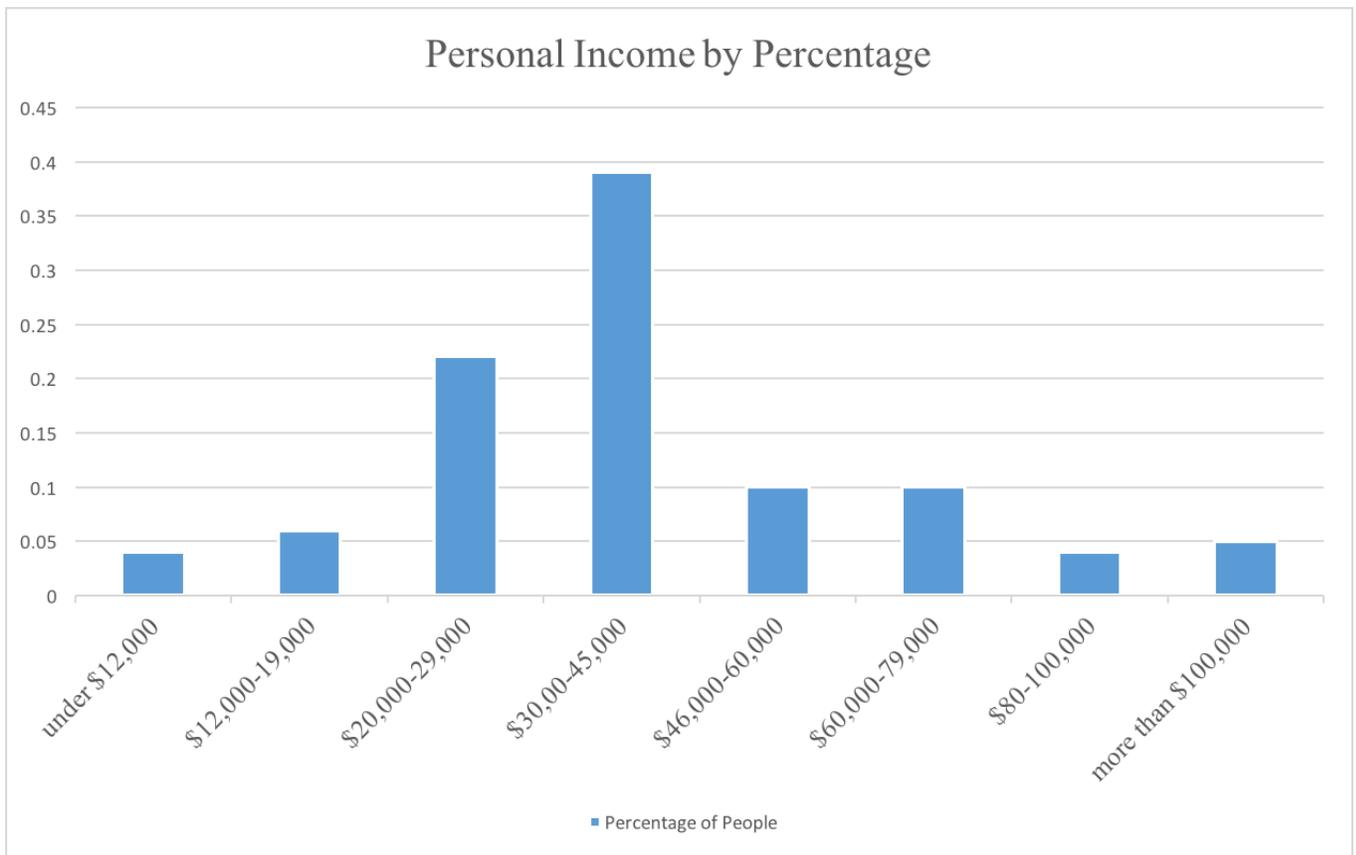
*Figure 9. Commute time to work in winter*

### **Respondents by Employment Type, Income Category, and Percent of Income Spent on Housing**

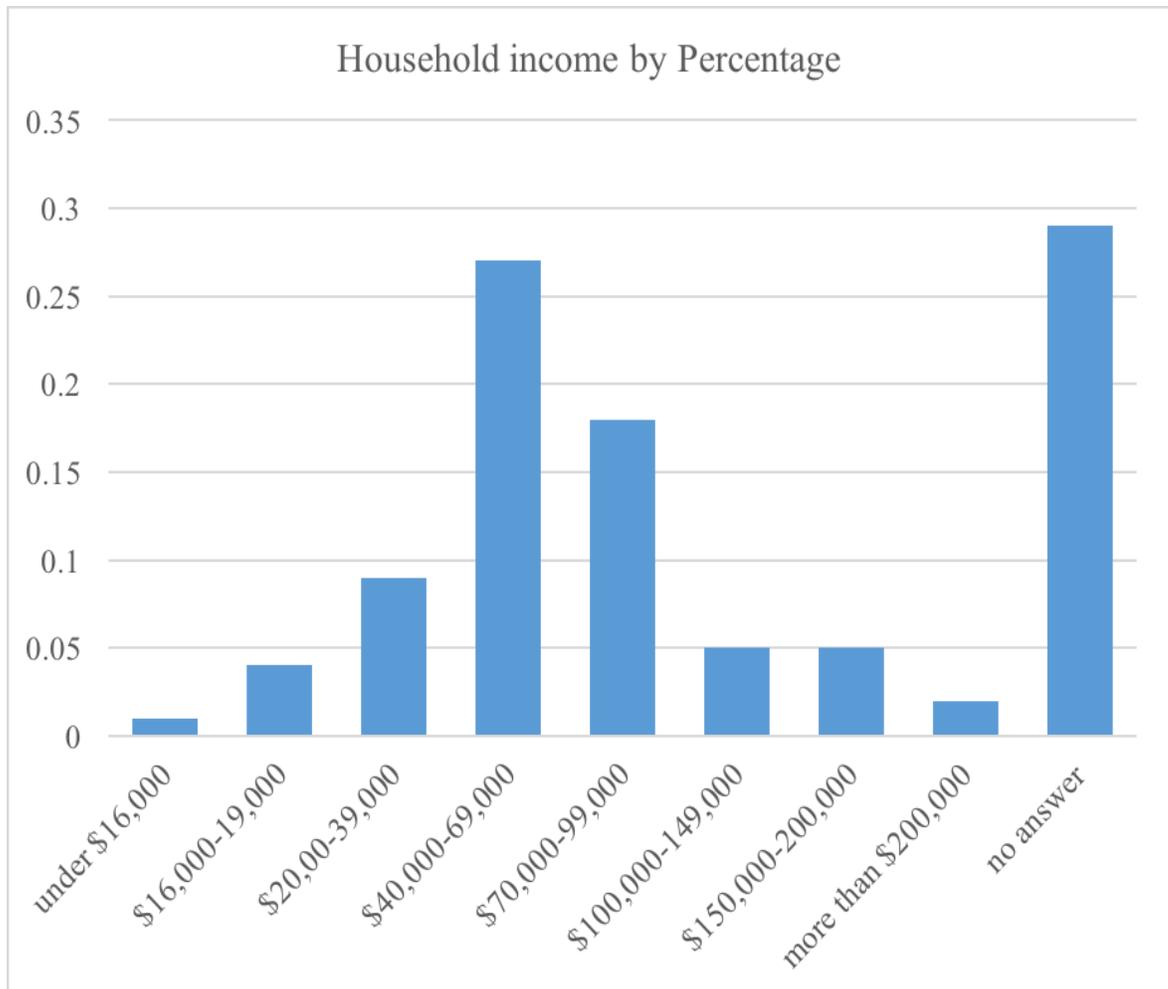
We found that the majority of Greensboro employee survey respondents (60%) have one full-time job. However, **over a quarter of respondents have one full-time job and one or more part-time jobs**, and a small number of people have either two or more part-time jobs or one part-time job (Figure 10). The majority of the respondents work year-round at their job in Greensboro. **The most common personal income bracket for Greensboro employees is \$30,000-\$45,000 per year**, and the next common income bracket is \$20,000-\$29,000 per year (Figure 11). **The most common income bracket for households is \$40,000-\$69,000 per year**, and the next common income bracket is \$70,000-\$99,000 per year (Figure 12). **The percentage of personal income spent on housing varies greatly among survey respondents** (Figure 13). However, it is important to note that **thirty percent of respondents spend more than 31% of their income on housing**.



*Figure 10. Number of jobs held by Greensboro employees*



*Figure 11. Personal income categories as a percentage of respondents*



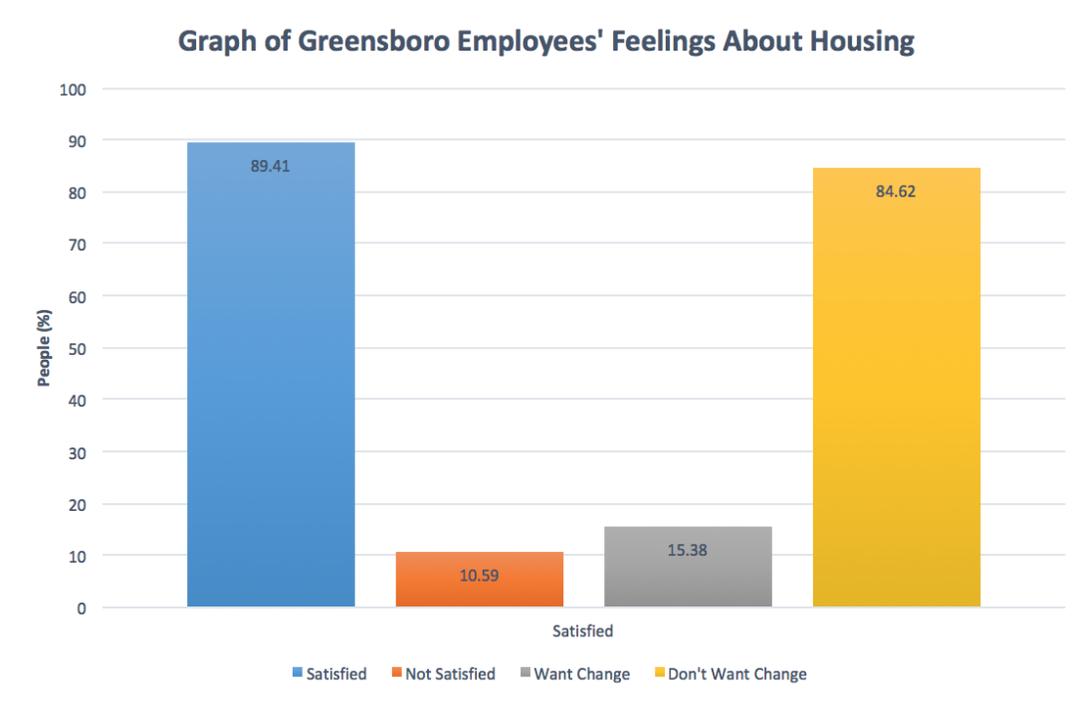
**Figure 12. Household income categories as a percentage of respondents**



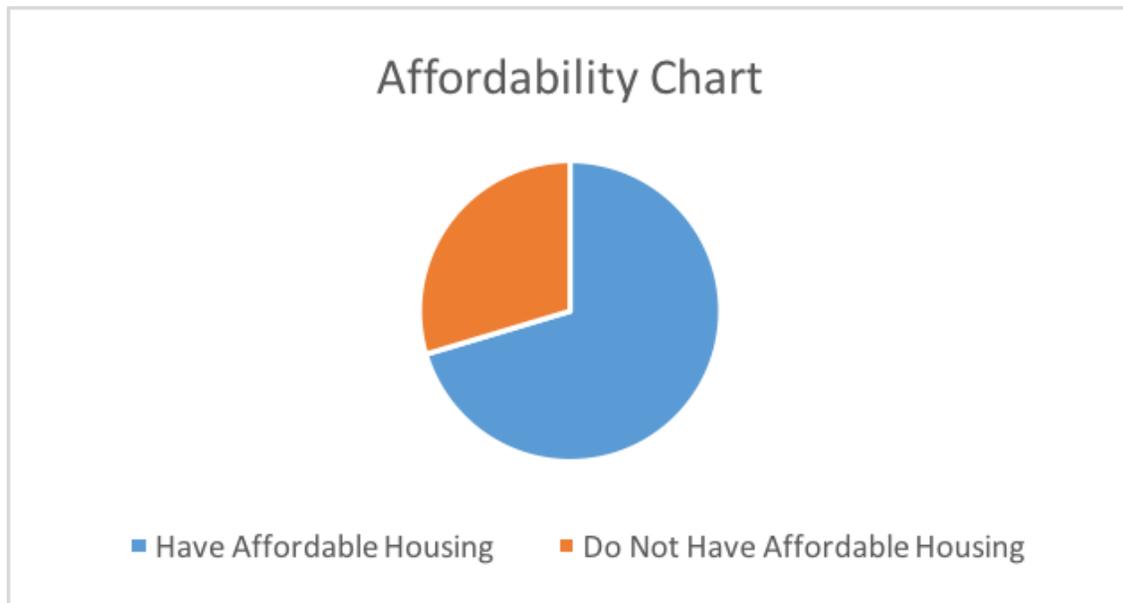
*Figure 13. Percent of personal income spent on housing expenses*

### **Housing Type, Satisfaction and Affordability**

Nearly all survey respondents live in single family homes. The next most popular housing type is an apartment or duplex. Most are satisfied with their current housing situation and would not want to make changes (Figure 14). We found that 65% of Greensboro employees are the sole supporters of their household with no dependents contributing towards any bills and 35% live with dependents contributing towards bills. In addition, **70% of these employees find their living situation fairly affordable, while 30% find their living situation not affordable** (Figure 15).



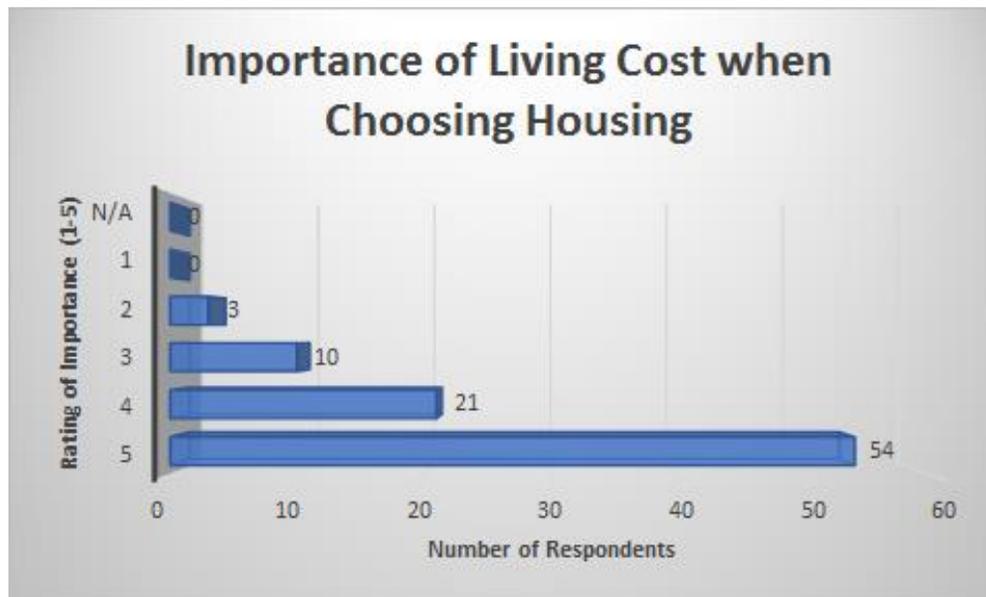
**Figure 14. Satisfaction with housing and desire to change housing as percentage of respondents**



**Figure 15. Percentage of people who said their housing is affordable or not affordable**

## Factors Survey Respondents Weigh When Choosing Housing Location

More than half of survey respondents rank cost of living and quality of life as very important factors when considering where to live. Environmental factors and living near friends and family were less important to most respondents. Figures 16-19 show how each quality was rated on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being very important and 1 being not important at all.



*Figure 16. Importance of living costs in choosing housing*



*Figure 17. Importance of quality of life factors costs in choosing housing*

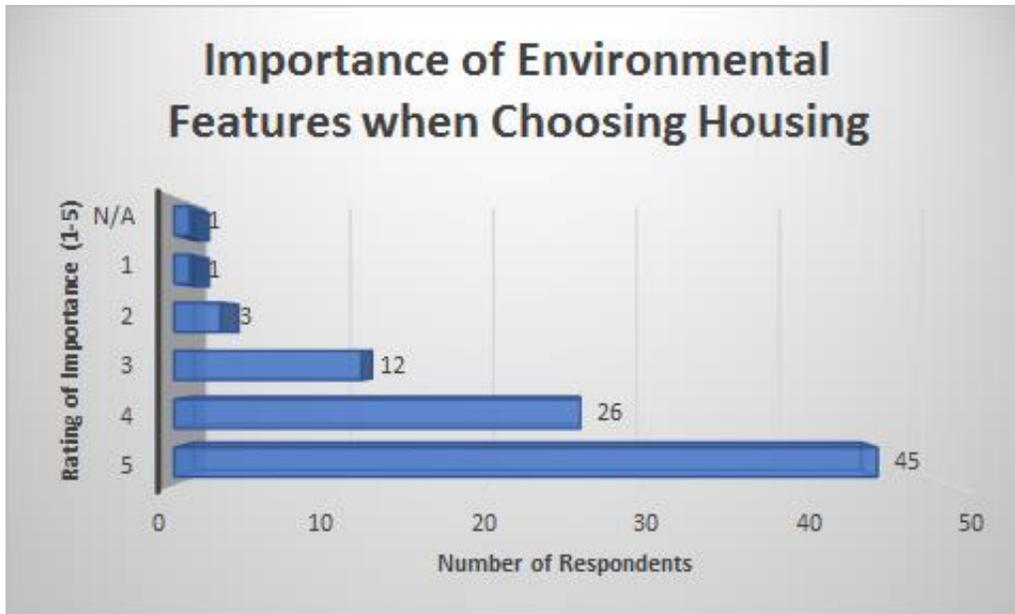


Figure 18. Importance of environmental features in choosing housing

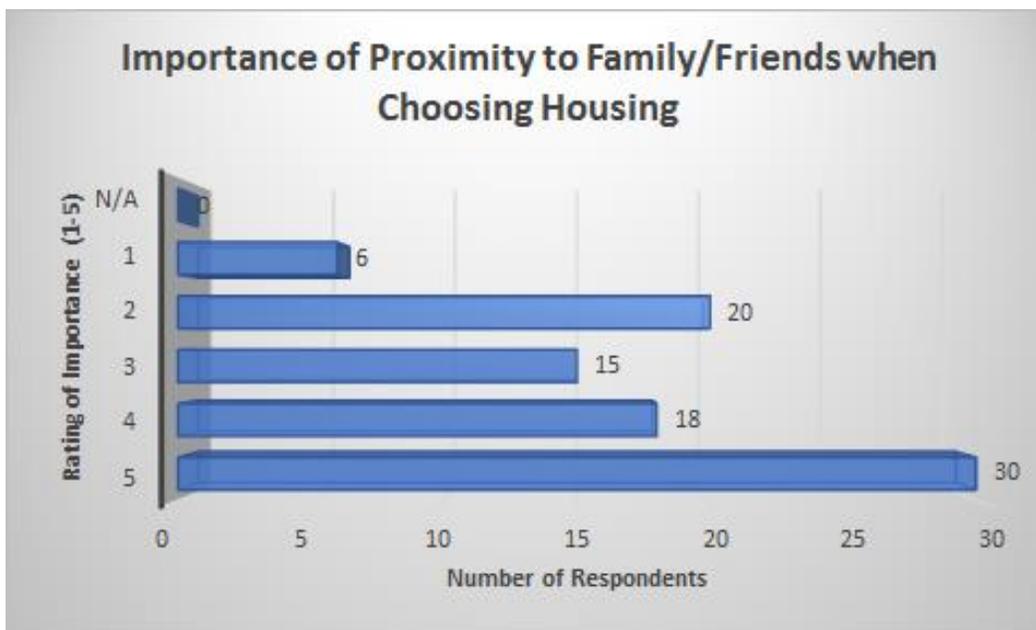


Figure 19. Importance of proximity to friends and family in choosing housing

## Where Greensboro Employees Would Prefer to Live

We asked survey respondents three specific questions to better understand their residential preferences. We asked everyone the general question: **“Ideally, would you prefer to work in the town you live?”** We then asked employees who do not live in Greensboro **“If you could find suitable housing you could afford, would you like to live in Greensboro?”** Finally, we asked everyone, **“If you could live anywhere, where would it be?”** Together, answers to these three questions illuminate the complex factors that go into residential and work decisions.

We found that **just over half of Greensboro employees would prefer to live in the town where they work** (Figure 20). About 38% of these employees would not prefer to live in the town where they work based on factors such as the school system, their partner’s commute, and personal preference. The remaining 11% of the employees were unsure of their preference to live in their town of employment or not. However, **most Greensboro employees (61%) who do not live in Greensboro now reported that they would not prefer to live in Greensboro**, even if they could find suitable housing (Figure 21). Twenty-four percent (24%) of people not living in Greensboro said they would consider moving to town, and 15% said they would like to move to Greensboro.

Many of those who said no to the idea of living in Greensboro did so because they are satisfied with their current housing, or find that Greensboro is too underdeveloped (lacking cell service, good roads, nightlife, restaurants, bars, and music venues) for their lifestyle preferences. Those that said they do wish to live in Greensboro expressed a want for integration into the Greensboro community. Respondents who said maybe expressed many concerns, such as different commute times for either themselves or their spouse, or there were just too many factors for them to organize before moving to Greensboro. Those who would move to Greensboro said they would like to take part in participate in town events and decisions.

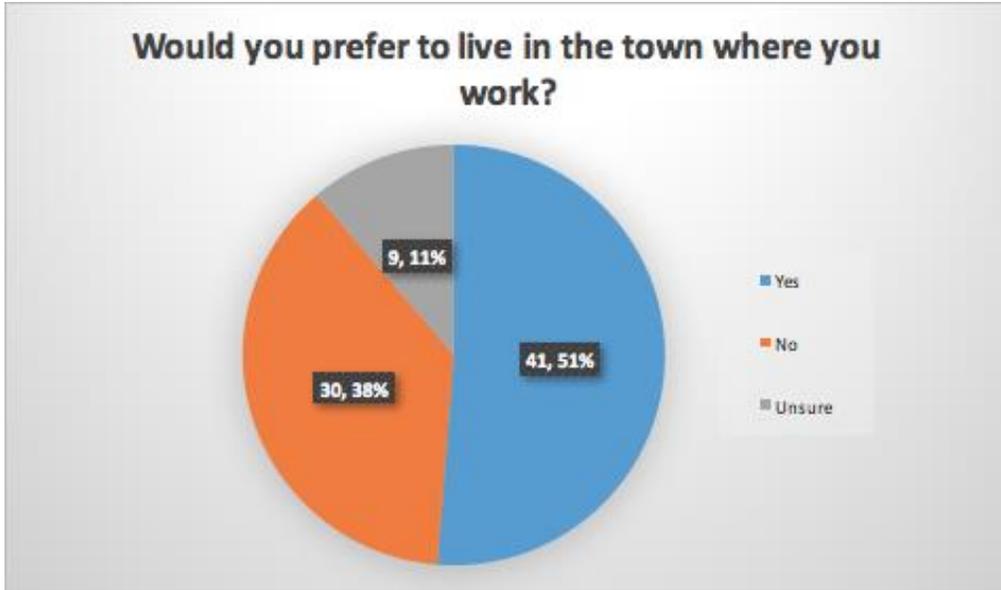


Figure 20. Percentage of people who would like to live in the town where they work

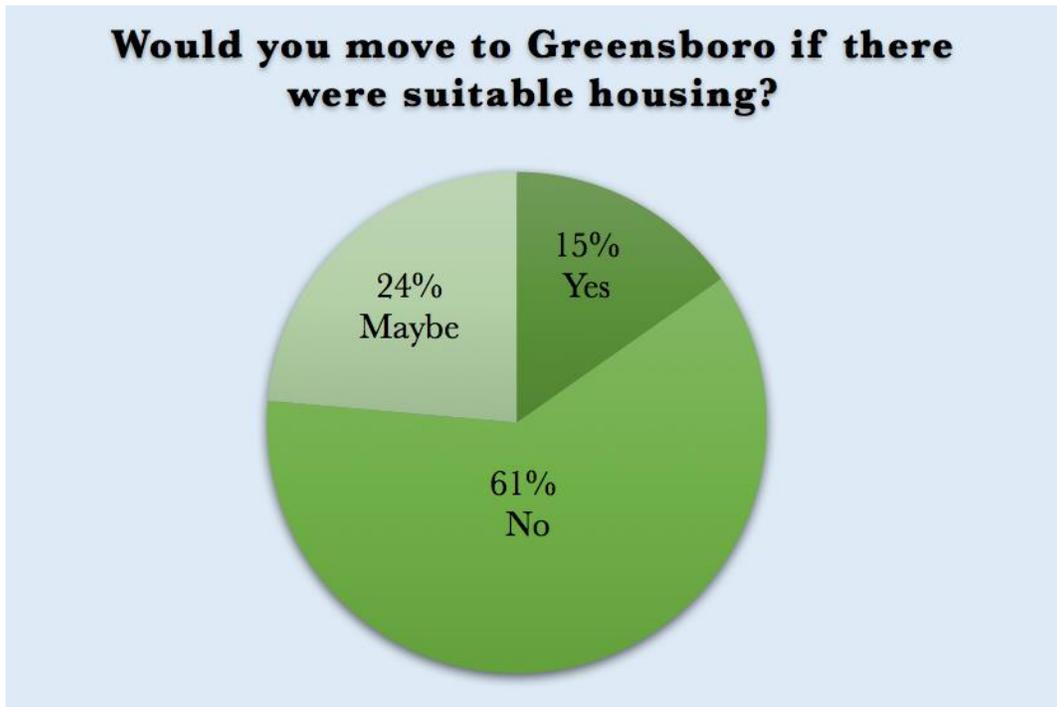


Figure 21. Percentage of Greensboro employees not presently living in Greensboro who would like to move to Greensboro if suitable housing were available

## If Greensboro Employees Could Live Anywhere...

There were 62 responses to the question “If you could live anywhere, and still work at your job, where would you like to live? Why?” Out of the responses, four key themes arose. The first and largest theme was that **people are content with where they are currently living**. For example, one respondent said that if they could live anywhere it would be “*where I presently live. Home is more important than work.*” A common trend was that living where they presently reside is more important than living in the town in which they work. The second theme that arose was the **commute factor**. People tend to want to live close to where they work. One respondent noted that she wants to live “*wherever gives my husband and me the easiest commute during the winter.*” The third theme that arose was the **property factor**, mainly living near Lake Caspian. One respondent noted that their ideal living situation would be “*in a cottage close to Caspian Lake, Greensboro Garage.*” The final theme was **amenities**. Some people would prefer to live in Greensboro because, as one respondent noted, “*the area is beautiful, there is lake access, Willey’s has everything you need, and I feel safe here.*” Therefore, a major selling factor of Greensboro are the amenities and the convenience that it holds for its residents.

## Similarities and Differences Among Survey Participants’ Responses

We analyzed the data to look for relationships that would aid our understanding of who might need affordable housing in Greensboro. We explored potential relationships between the number of people in each household and their town work preference, household income and where respondents are from, age and the importance of living near friends and family, the type of job one holds and their preference on where to live, the location of respondents’ childhood (Vermont or outside) and the importance of living costs when choosing housing, and the distribution of those single/married and the percentage of their income spent on housing. Among these potential relationships, only three stood out as statistically significant.

The first significant relationship is between whether or not a respondent grew up in Vermont, and the importance of living costs when they consider housing. The statistics show that **those who grew up in Vermont are more likely to classify housing costs as important when choosing housing compared to those who grew up outside of Vermont**. Among the respondents, 70.5% of those who grew up in Vermont classify housing costs as important when choosing housing, whereas 51.2% of those who grew up outside Vermont classify housing costs as important when choosing housing (p .05-.001)

**Another significant relationship is between personal income and importance of living costs.** Among those making under \$12,000, about 50% of respondents said living costs were either important or very important. Among those making an income ranging from \$12,000-\$60,000, the majority of respondents said the importance of living costs was very important when choosing housing. Among those making an income ranging from \$60,000-\$79,000, the responses were split three ways, where 50% considered the importance of living costs as very important, while 12.5% considered the importance of living costs somewhat important, and 37.5% were neutral on the matter. Among those making an income ranging from \$80,000-\$100,000, 75% considered

living costs as very important, while 25% were neutral. Among those making more than \$100,000, 66.5% were neutral when considering the importance of housing costs, while 33.3% considered the importance of housing costs as somewhat important. This means, **those making more than \$100,000 per year are less likely to say the cost of living is important when deciding where to live, while many making less than that consider housing costs when choosing housing an important matter.**

The third statistically significant relationship is between whether or not one grew up in Vermont and the importance of living near friends and family. **Among those who grew up in Vermont, 70% said living near friends and family is very important, while among those not originally from Vermont, 30% considered living near friends and family as very important.**

### **Greensboro Residents' Perceptions of Greensboro**

**Respondents have mixed perceptions of the Greensboro Community.** Greensboro employees hold one of two differing perceptions of the town. On the one hand, there are many people who enjoy the town and what it has to offer. Many respondents shared that they love their homes in Greensboro. The main reason cited for loving the town is the **sense of community**. One respondent who currently lives in Greensboro noted that they *“feel safe”* and enjoy a *“strong connection to the town.”* Another individual who commutes noted that in addition to appreciating the gas savings, *“I like the community here.”* While Greensboro has a unique community, many feel a strong sense of place for the Northeast Kingdom as a region: *“This is where I choose to live and love the NEK.”*

**It is this same sense of rural place that makes Greensboro less attractive to some.** One respondent complained of limited cell service, and noted this was a *“deal breaker.”* Others mentioned a negative perception of the schools in Greensboro. Some looked at schools in comparison to surrounding schools and cited that *“lots of...education opportunities”* elsewhere is a main reason for not living in Greensboro. Many respondents, who are not looking to move to Greensboro acknowledged a gap in local services and recreation with comments including: *“Needs more local transport, and gathering type locations,”* and *“I...would also like to somewhere with more of a music/ restaurant scene.”* One person put it bluntly, *“Greensboro is very limited as far as what it has to offer”*. One individual remarked that they *“would prefer to live in Greensboro”* with the catch that only if they *“can afford it one day.”*

## Analysis

### **Working in Greensboro, Finding Housing, and Getting By: Scenarios for Two Workers**

Below are fictional scenarios describing the lives of two Greensboro employees. Their stories are based on typical survey responses of people in two different income categories. We used data from the “2010 Vermont Basic Needs Budget” as a reference for the cost of housing (see citation below).

#### **Sally’s Story**

Sally lives in a modest sized house near a country club in Morrisville, Vermont. She is 30 years old, single, and she loves to go hiking with her St. Bernard puppy on the weekends. She makes \$45,000 per year as a teacher and spends 25% of this on rent. This leaves \$33,750 left over for other expenses, taxes, etc. During the week, she drives to her job in Greensboro, about 23 miles away. It usually takes her 40 minutes to get to her job as a teacher at the local school. During the winter, it is a struggle for Sally to drive through the snow to get to class on time. Luckily, she enjoys working with her students and teaching math. She spends about \$567 on transportation every month. On Wednesdays she shops at Hannafords to get her weekly groceries. Her monthly grocery bill is about \$297. Her other expenses include health care (\$142), clothing and household expenses (\$173), and her phone bill (\$119). Her annual tax bill is \$6,149. At the end of every year, she has \$12,025 to put in savings and spend on other activities. She enjoys skiing and mountain biking with her niece, both costly sports. Unfortunately, her mother is sick, and Sally must pay for her mother’s pricey medication. Even though she has the need for affordable housing, Sally is happy living near her family in Morrisville (see 2010 Vermont Basic Needs Budget).

#### **Hal’s Story**

Hal is a 50 year old man who works in Greensboro. He earns \$19,000 per year. His wife Mary makes about the same amount of money, and they live on an income of \$35,000 per year. They spend half of their income on housing, leaving about \$17,500 to spend on the rest of their expenses. Hal commutes 80 miles everyday to work, and is exhausted by the time he gets home. He spends about \$166 a month, or \$2,000 annually on gas. He then pays \$96 a month, or \$1,152 annually on car insurance. Hal and his wife pay \$335 a month or about \$4,020 a year on health care. Mary spends about the same amount of money on her car. This leaves them with \$3,176 for the rest of their expenses including food, clothing, phone bills, dental care, and entertainment. According to the “Vermont Basic Needs Budget” the amount of money Hal and Mary will spend on food is twice that of what they can afford. Hal and his wife struggle to make ends meet, and they resent the high cost of their health and car insurance. Hal and Mary enjoy spending their free time with their grandkids and working with their church group. The budget is tight for Hal and Mary, so they rarely treat themselves to nice meals or trips to the movies. Spending half of their income on housing is a great financial burden for Hal and Mary, and if they had more

affordable housing their financial strain would be greatly alleviated.

### 2010 Vermont Basic Needs Budget

#### Single Person

Category	Urban	Rural
	<i>cost estimates are per month</i>	
Food	297	297
Housing	938	717
Transportation	541	567
Health Care	132	132
Dental Care	9	9
Child Care	0	0
Clothing & Household Expenses	173	173
Telecommunications	119	119
Rental Insurance	10	14
Term Life Insurance	0	0
Savings	111	101
<b>Total Monthly Expenses</b>	<b>2,331</b>	<b>2,128</b>
Annual Expenses	27,967	25,539
Federal & State Taxes	7,011	6,149
Annual Income	34,978	31,689
<b>Hourly "Livable" Wage</b>	<b>\$ 16.82</b>	<b>\$ 15.23</b>
<i>Average Wage PER Earner</i>		
<b>Tax Calculations</b>	<b>2010 Tax Year - Single Filer</b>	
AGI	34,978	31,689
Standard Deduction	(5,700)	(5,700)
Personal Exemption(s)	(3,650)	(3,650)
Taxable Income	25,628	22,339
Federal Tax (before credits)	3,425	2,932
Child Credit	-	-
Dependent Care Credit	-	-
<b>Net Federal Tax</b>	<b>3,425</b>	<b>2,932</b>
State Tax (before credits)	910	793
Dependent Care Credit	-	-
Renter Rebate (part 1)	(435)	(109)
Renter Rebate	-	-
<b>Net State Tax</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>793</b>
FICA/Medicare	2,676	2,424
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,011</b>	<b>6,149</b>

2010 Vermont Basic Needs Budget		
Two Adults with No Children (Two Wage Earners)		
	Urban	Rural
Category	<i>cost estimates are per month</i>	
Food	590	590
Housing	938	717
Transportation	1,081	1,114
Health Care	335	335
Dental Care	36	36
Child Care	0	0
Clothing & Household Expenses	190	190
Telecommunications	199	199
Rental Insurance	10	14
Term Life Insurance	21	21
Savings	170	161
<b>Total Monthly Expenses</b>	<b>3,571</b>	<b>3,376</b>
Annual Expenses	42,847	40,513
Federal & State Taxes	9,376	8,548
Annual Income	52,224	49,061
<b>Hourly "Livable" Wage</b>	<b>\$ 12.55</b>	<b>\$ 11.79</b>
<i>Average Wage PER Earner</i>	<b>LIVABLE WAGE</b>	<b>12.17</b>
<b>Tax Calculations</b>	<b>2010 Tax Year - Married Filing Jointly</b>	
AGI	52,224	49,061
Standard Deduction	(11,400)	(11,400)
Personal Exemption(s)	(7,300)	(7,300)
Taxable Income	33,524	30,361
Federal Tax (before credits)	4,191	3,717
Child Credit	-	-
Dependent Care Credit	-	-
<b>Net Federal Tax</b>	<b>4,191</b>	<b>3,717</b>
State Tax (before credits)	1,190	1,078
Dependent Care Credit	-	-
Renter Rebate (part 1)	-	-
Renter Rebate	-	-
<b>Net State Tax</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>1,078</b>
FICA/Medicare	3,995	3,753
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,376</b>	<b>8,548</b>

Citation for the charts:

“2010 Vermont Basic Needs Budget,” In *Basics Needs Budgets and the Livable Wage*, available at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/jfo/reports/2011%20Basic%20Needs%20Budget%20Report%2001-2011.pdf>

## Lack of Affordable Housing in and Around Greensboro

### Real Estate Options in Greensboro and Wolcott

We conducted a brief search for housing that is presently on the market in Greensboro and neighboring Wolcott. There are few options in either Greensboro or Wolcott that directly match what Hal and Sally are looking for in terms of property and price. The houses available are either too big and expensive, or not currently suitable to live in.

## Implications and Recommendations

Our research found that the town of Greensboro lacks affordable housing, that is, housing that all of the employees of Greensboro can afford. Employees commute long distances to their jobs in Greensboro, and live in 27 communities scattered across northern Vermont. Nearly 30% of survey respondents said their current housing is not affordable, and we learned that about 30% of respondents spend more than 31% of their personal income on housing. **These findings suggest that there is a demand for a affordable housing in Greensboro, and also in the wider region.** Such housing would lower living and commuting costs for employees, and would bring more full time residents to the community. **However, the research also found that a majority of employees who do not currently live in Greensboro would not prefer to move to the community even if suitable housing were available.** These facts led us to consider the affordable housing question from two perspectives: as a regional issue, and as community culture and services issue.

### Thinking about affordable housing and transportation from a regional perspective

There is a clear need amongst Greensboro employees for affordable housing. However, as their comments and responses to the survey suggest, the ideal location for such housing varies according to respondent and their household conditions and preferences. Some have spouses that work in other communities. Some prefer not to live within the community where they work. Some seek more services and amenities that other towns provide. **We suggest that Greensboro leaders consider the issue of affordable housing and transportation to workplaces as a regional issue.** Just as people are traveling long distances to come to Greensboro to work, Greensboro residents are leaving town every morning to drive to their job elsewhere.

Fifteen percent of employees who work in Greensboro but live outside of town would be willing to move to the community if suitable housing were available, near a quarter of the employee population would consider moving to Greensboro. This constitutes an unmet demand. Many of the respondents are single or in a relationship with no children. This suggests that housing units with one or two bedrooms could be in demand. It would be helpful for the town of Greensboro to

look into zoning for multiple unit housing. Aside from apartment complexes, viable options for affordable housing also include townhouses and duplexes, or attached apartments or living quarters over garages. Affordable housing units need not be concentrated in a single place; existing lots could be zoned to allow for auxiliary housing, such as a single apartment. Greensboro could also look into Section 8 Housing, which is a program that allows private landlords to rent apartments and houses to qualified low-income tenants for a fair price, while the landlord is compensated. This issue should be prioritized before all other recommendations.

**We suggest that Greensboro should work with the regional planning board to plan for the future.** Greensboro's fate is linked to that of surrounding communities, especially contiguous towns. A coordinated housing plan from the regional level makes good sense, particularly because couples and families have work that stretch over long distances in northern Vermont. **Similarly, transportation solutions should be approached from a regional perspective.** Carpooling and short shuttles would help residents reduce transportation costs, would lower emissions, and would reduce wear and tear on dirt roads. Employers in a single area could consider coordinating carpools or a shuttle van from a central parking place to the more distant employment locations on dirt roads.

### **Thinking about housing and quality of life as a community and infrastructure issue**

Each community has a place identity, and each person may have their own perception of a place. Those Greensboro employees who said they do not wish to live in Greensboro mentioned a range of conditions and perceptions that town leaders may wish to address. Below are issues that survey respondents raised.

#### ***Amenities and Services***

Some respondents noted a lack of services and venues in Greensboro. As a community that traditionally has served as a tourism and second home destination, the rural character is important to many. Yet, the community is also the home for people who live and work year round in the region. **We recommend considering the unmet service needs of residents** - such as an affordable place to eat and gather in the evenings, a hardware store or larger market, and an indoor recreational space that is open to the public and provides service to youth and adults, year round. We do not recommend a massive build-out of the community centers, but instead creative use of existing infrastructure, such as the school and library, along with a modest increase in services provided by new facilities.

#### ***Cell Phone Service***

Several respondents noted a lack of cell phone service in the community. We encourage Greensboro to work with the state and directly with cell signal providers to lobby for adequate

service across the town. Although it would be difficult for Greensboro to persuade a cell provider such as Verizon or AT&T to build infrastructure for a rural Vermont town, there are ways that Greensboro can improve cell service for its inhabitants. For example, if Greensboro invested in one cell phone signal booster, which costs roughly four hundred dollars for one unit. These devices work for all carriers and all cellular devices, boosting weak cellular signals. If a unit were purchased and kept in an accessible town building, such as the post office, members of the community can make phone calls without worrying about losing a signal or not having a signal at all.

### ***Perception of the School***

Several respondents suggested they choose to live in another town due to perceived difference in school systems. We are not qualified to make judgements or recommendations on this topic. Comments we received were vague and did not provide insight into what areas of the school system could use improvement. Perhaps a perception analysis of school systems across the region would shed light on how all schools are perceived. A discussion of how to promote Lakeview School's resources and student accomplishment may also be helpful.

Overall, our recommendations and suggestions for future research in Greensboro include making affordable housing available, increasing creative transportation options, taking a regional approach to future planning, increasing cell service, developing more year-round amenities and services, analyzing the perceived quality of the school system, and promoting the school's successes. In the future, Greensboro could also research the town's infrastructure, the impact of seasonal residents on the Greensboro community, and access to affordable food and household products.



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