

Anchorage Housing Survey for ADU Homeowners - Summary

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Introduction

The Anchorage Housing Survey for ADU Homeowners (“ADU Homeowner” survey) was intended to collect feedback from homeowners with experience with accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The effort is in partnership with the Municipality of Anchorage’s Planning Department, as well as additional stakeholders including NeighborWorks Alaska. Lindsey Hajduk is an Anchorage resident who works for NeighborWorks Alaska and currently undergoing a remote graduate program at the University of New Hampshire. This information was provided in the introduction to the survey.

The ADU Homeowner survey launched on November 29, 2021, and closed on January 3, 2022. Using the Municipality of Anchorage’s property records public database, 568 homeowners with permitted ADUs were identified. The list was randomly reduced to 250 addresses in order to send two rounds of mail to each household. The survey was mailed with a return-addressed, stamped envelope for the resident to mail the survey back to NeighborWorks Alaska. There was also a website and QR code provided if the resident would like to take the survey online instead of mailing the document back.

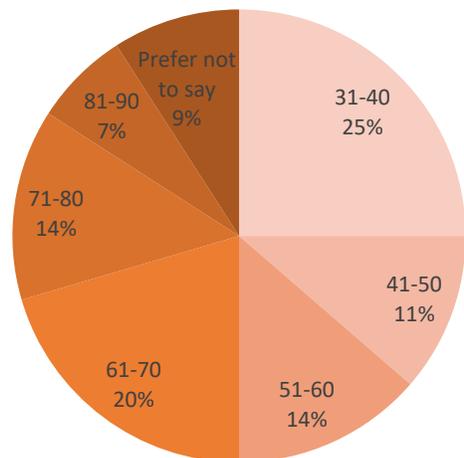
Overall, 44 surveys were completed, with 33 returned paper surveys and 11 were completed online. An incentive of four \$25 gift cards was also promoted to encourage participation. The survey responses were removed from any self-identifying information for the incentive, keeping the survey response data confidential.

Demographics

Age of respondents

Respondents were asked to share the year they were born in, which was converted into decade groupings. Of the 40 respondents who included a year of birth, most respondents were under the age of 40 (25.0%), followed by 20.5% in their sixties, 13.6% both in their fifties and seventies, 11.4% in their forties, and 6.8% in their eighties.

Respondent ages (in decades)



Gender

Respondents were almost evenly split with 21 male and 20 female respondents, with just one respondent not including their gender.

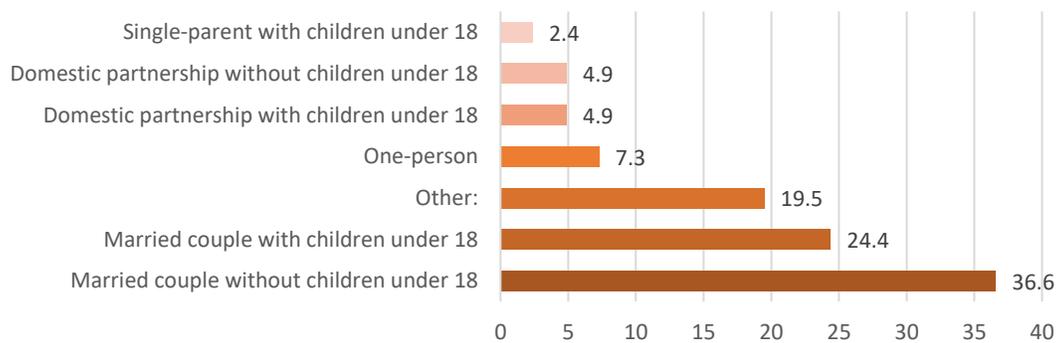
Race and ethnicity

The majority of survey respondents identified as white 35 of the 44 respondents, or 85.4% of all responses. There were 3 respondents who identified as American Indian/Aleut/Eskimo/Alaska Native, and one respondent each as Asian, Mixed race, and other. Overall this is not a representative sample comparable to Anchorage’s racial community. No respondents identified as Hispanic, Latino, or Latina.

Household type

Of the 41 respondents who answered this question, most respondents describe their households as “married couple without children under 18” (36.6%) and 24.4% were “married couple with children under 18.” Respondents with other household types included living with extended family members, grandchildren, and also included their ADU tenants.

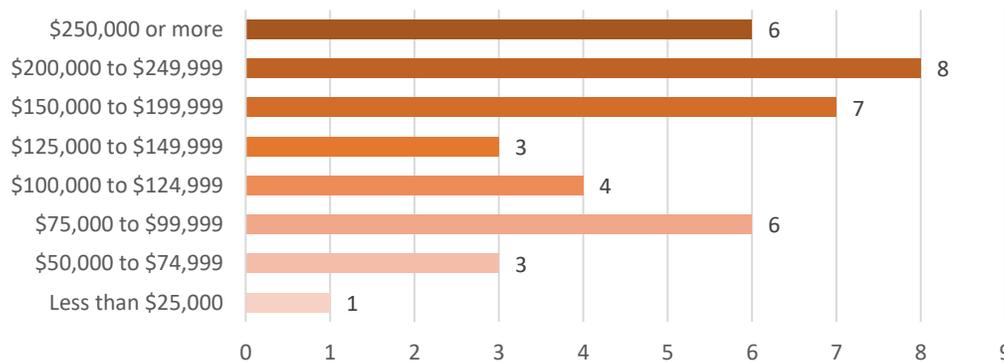
Which option describes your household type?



Household income

Respondents were asked to share their annual household income. Most respondents (55.3%) earn over \$150,000 annually, followed by 16.4% earn between \$100,000-149,999, and 23.7% earn between \$50,000-99,999, and 2.6% (one respondent) earn below \$25,000.

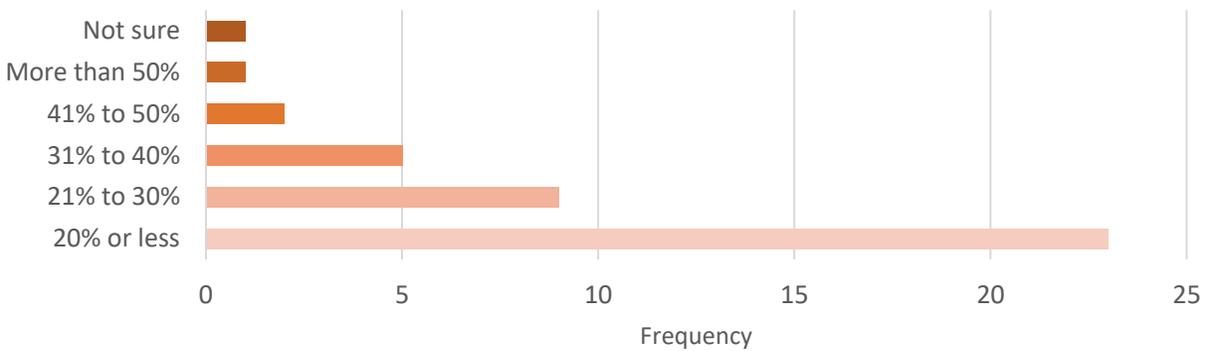
What range describes your annual household income?



Income toward housing

Most respondents (78.1%) spend 30% or less of their total household income on housing each month. Eight respondents (19.5%) spend over 31% of their income on housing each month. Households who pay more than 30% of their income on housing may have difficulty affording other necessities, like food, clothing, transportation, and health care. Severe rent burden is for households paying more than 50% of their income on rent. One senior respondent indicated they spend more than 50% of their household income on housing.

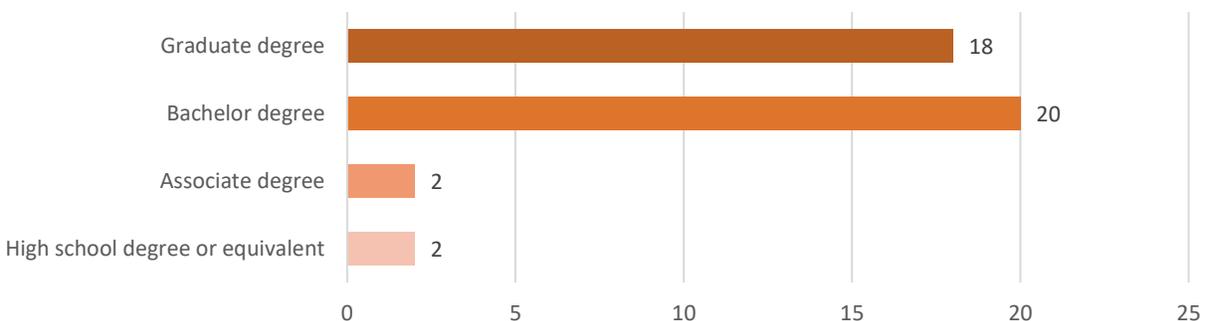
Approximately what percentage of your total household monthly income would you say you spend on housing (mortgage or rent)?



Education level in household

Most respondents reside in a household that has a member who has achieved a bachelor or graduate degree (86.4%), while just 9.0% had an associate degree or high school degree or equivalent.

What is the highest level of education completed in your household?

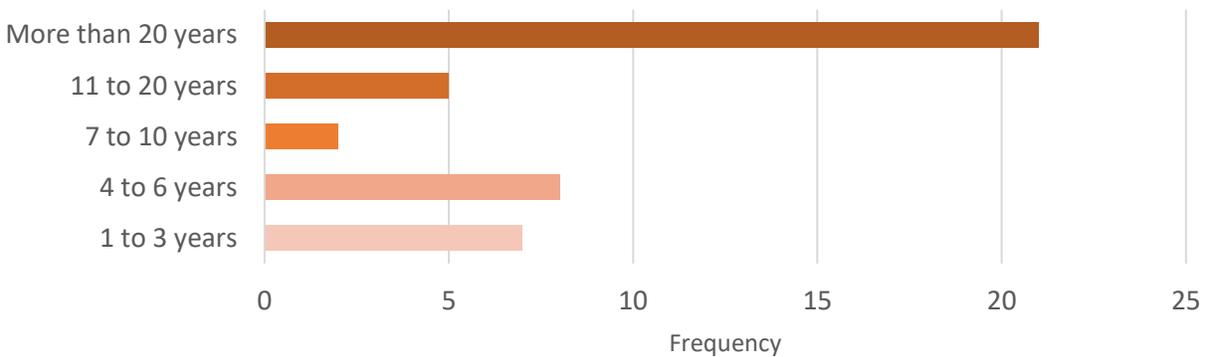


Engagement in Neighborhood

Length of time in neighborhood

Of the 44 survey respondents, most respondents (47.7%) have lived in their neighborhood for over 20 years, followed by 18.2% for 4-6 years, 15.9% for 1-3 years, 11.4% for 11-20 years, and 4.5% at 7-10 years. Only one respondent did not respond.

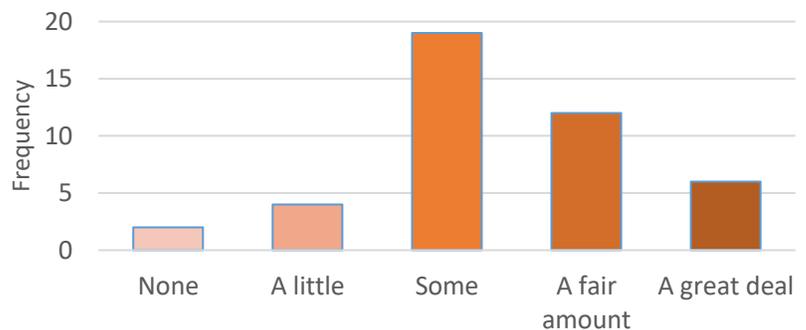
How long have you lived in your neighborhood/community?



Belief to make a positive difference in community

Most respondents believe they can make a fair amount and a great deal of positive difference in their community (40.6%), while 13.6% believe they can make little to no difference. The majority of responses (43.2%) were in the middle believing they can make some difference.

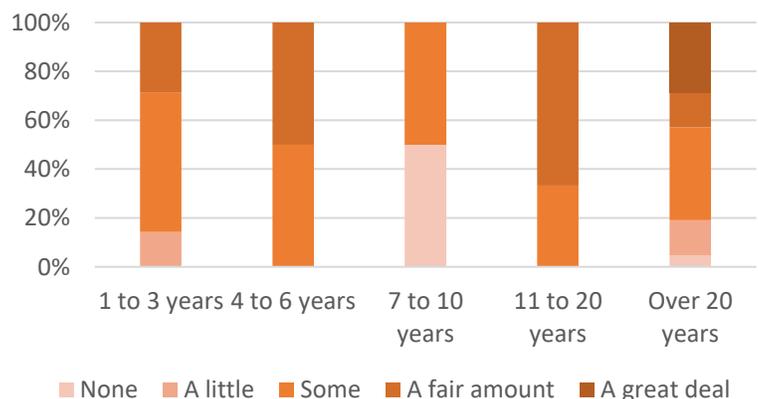
How much of a positive difference do you feel that you, yourself, can make in your community?



Length of time in neighborhood and belief to make a difference

Generally, the longer amount of time a respondent has lived in a neighborhood the more optimistic they are in their ability to make a positive difference in their community. Residents of 11-20 years were most optimistic (60.0% positive), followed by 4-6 years (50.0%),

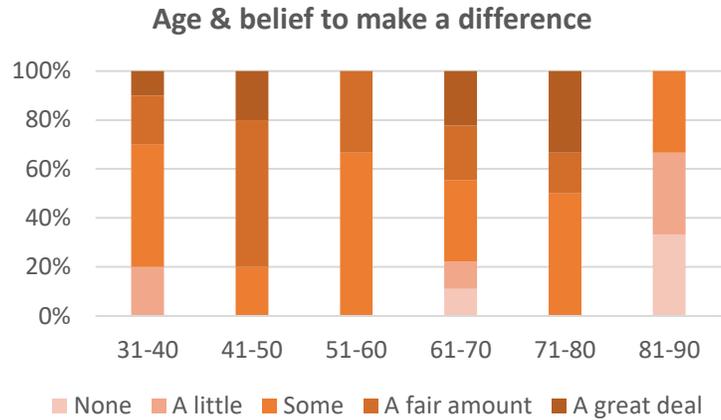
Length of time and belief to make a difference



over 20 years (42.9%), then 28.6%). The 7-10 year range is a small sample size of just 2 respondents.

Age and belief to make a difference

Overall, respondents of all ages are generally optimistic in their ability to make a positive difference in their communities. Those that are 41-50 years old are most optimistic (80.0% positive), followed by 71-80 (50.0%), 61-70 (44.4%), 51-60 (33.3%), and finally, 31-40 (27.3%). Only those 81-90 (three respondents) were more pessimistic with 55.7% negative responses.



Involvement in community

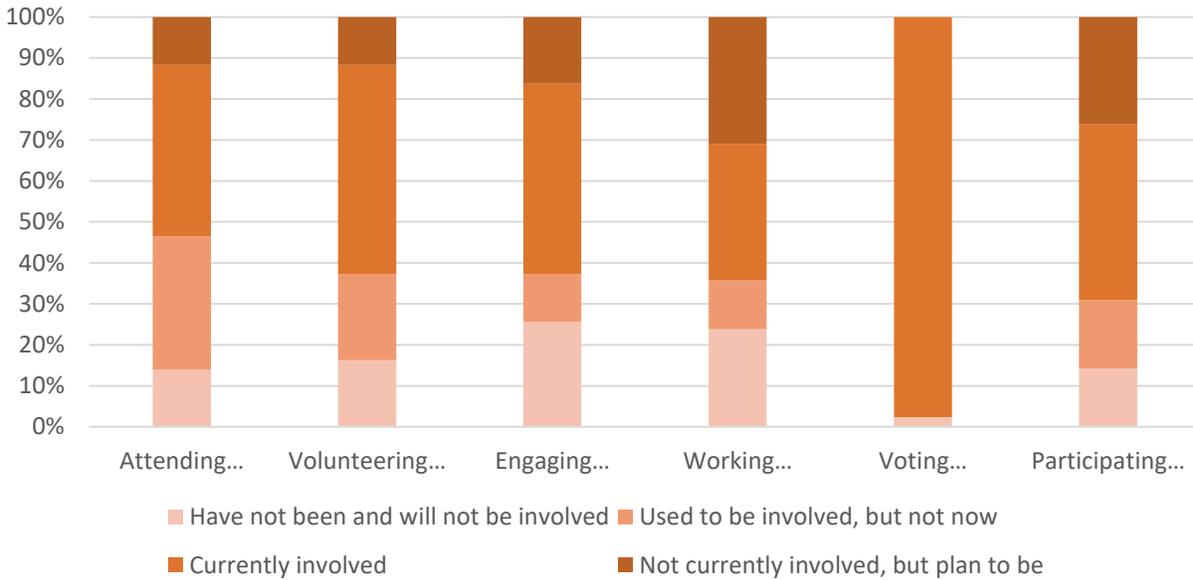
Respondents were asked about their level of involvement in various community activities and could indicate when they have been involved if ever, currently or in the future. For each activity, most respondents are currently involved in the efforts, which is the majority response for each category. This is most clearly seen regarding voting, where 95.5% of respondents currently vote.

The different activities respondents were asked about include:

- Attending a public meeting, writing to a public official, or talking with a public official
- Volunteering my time to support a nonprofit or community organization
- Engaging in community affairs, civic activities, or political issues
- Working to improve the public spaces in my neighborhood
- Voting in a local or national election
- Participating in a neighborhood association, a community civic organization, or a community event or activity

Overall, most respondents have been or are currently involved in these activities. Of the activities respondents have not and will not be involved, those most include engaging in civic affairs (25.0%) and working to improve public spaces (22.7%). Of the activities respondents are not currently involved in but plan to be in the future, those most include working to improve public spaces (29.5%) and participating on local organizations (25.0%). The impact of COVID-19 and reductions in in-person activities was not measured in this survey. However, after nearly two years of the pandemic many virtual or physically-distanced accommodations have been available, though they still may not be accessible for older residents or those without internet or technology access.

Different ways people become involved in their communities



Length of time in neighborhood and current involvement in activities

Residents of over 20 years have more engagement in community activities based solely on the numbers because we had more long-term residents respond to the survey. Instead, looking at the percentage of respondents from each category provides a more overall picture of who is currently engaged in these activities. Across the board, most respondents (80-100%) currently vote. Then, residents of 4-6 years volunteer most, followed by over 20 year residents, then 1-3 year residents. These lengths of times are just how long a resident has lived in their current neighborhood, however.

Age and current involvement in activities

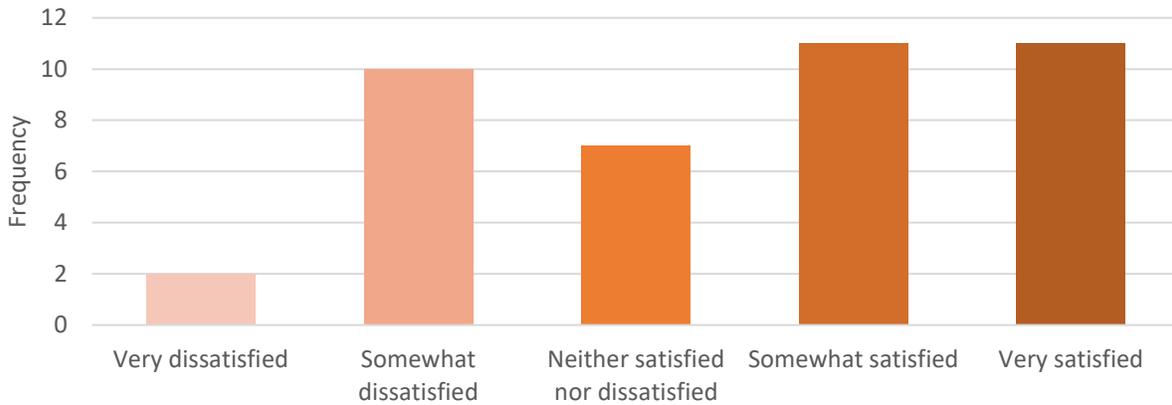
The age range of respondents that are currently involved with these activities are 61-70, followed by 71-80, then 31-40, and 41-50 year olds. There is a gap then for those age 51-60 years old, and of the 3 respondents between the ages of 81-90 all vote but are not involved in the other activities.

Housing

Satisfaction with available housing

When asked how satisfied respondents were with the type of housing available to them on their budget, half of respondents were overall satisfied (50.0%), 27.2% were overall dissatisfied, and 15.9% were neutral.

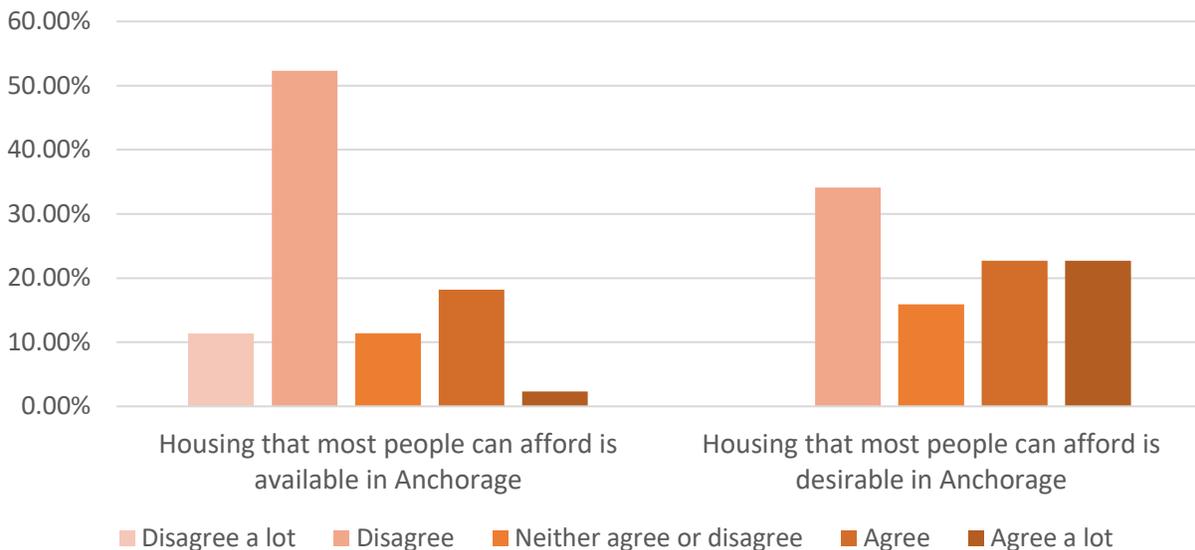
In general, how satisfied are you with the type of housing that is available to you on your budget?



Affordability and desirability of housing

Respondents were asked to share their level of agreement or disagreement with two statements regarding housing. Based on their assumptions of what most people can afford, they were asked if they believe housing is available and desirable. Most respondents believe most people cannot find available housing they can afford (63.7%), while just 20.5% of respondents believe it is available. In contrast, most respondents believe the housing most people can afford is desirable, with 45.4% agreeing, while 34.1% disagree and 15.9% are neutral. Overall, this suggests though housing may be desirable in Anchorage, it is not available at levels most people can afford.

Housing people can afford and desirability

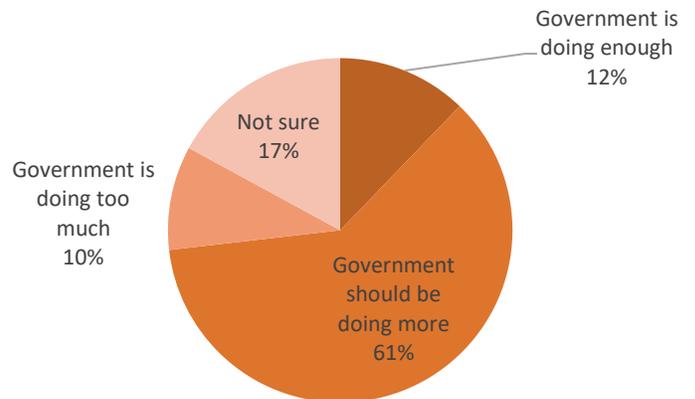


Local Housing Solutions

Local government action

The survey asked respondents about their belief in the role of local government, specifically the Anchorage Assembly and Mayor. By far, most respondents (56.8%) believe government should be doing more. Only 11.4% believe government is doing enough, 9.1% believe government is doing too much, and 15.9% of respondents were not sure.

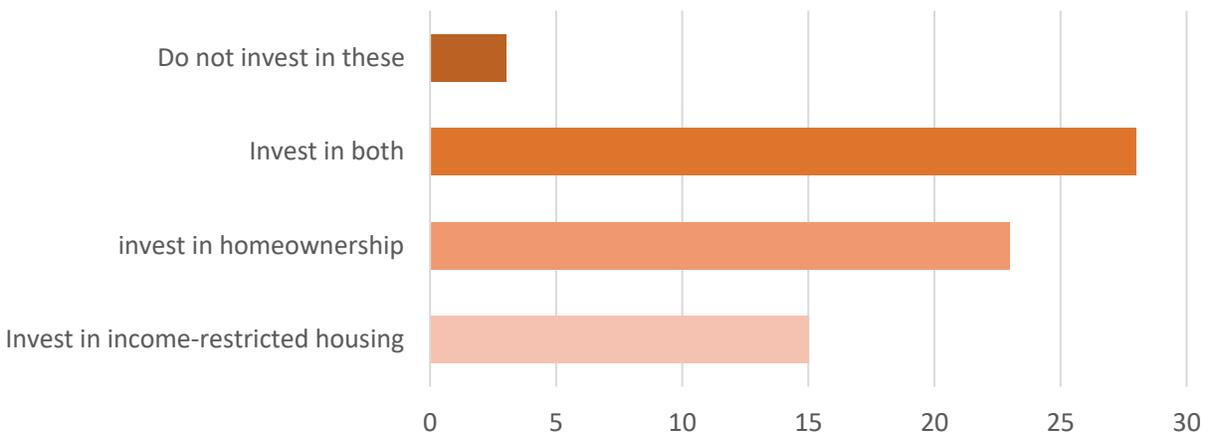
Do you think the local government (meaning the Anchorage Assembly and Mayor) is doing enough to ensure that there is sufficient affordable quality housing in Anchorage?



Housing policy solutions

All but three respondents (4.3%) believe the local government should enact policies that invest in housing solutions. Overall, respondents agree the local government should do both, invest in policies that support homeownership as well as that create more income-restricted housing, with a slight edge for homeownership. Respondents selected multiple responses, but overall 66.7% respondents wanted to see both policies, 54.8% for homeownership policies, and 35.7% for income-restricted housing.

When it comes to housing policy, what do you think is more important for the local government (meaning the Anchorage Assembly and Mayor) to do right now?

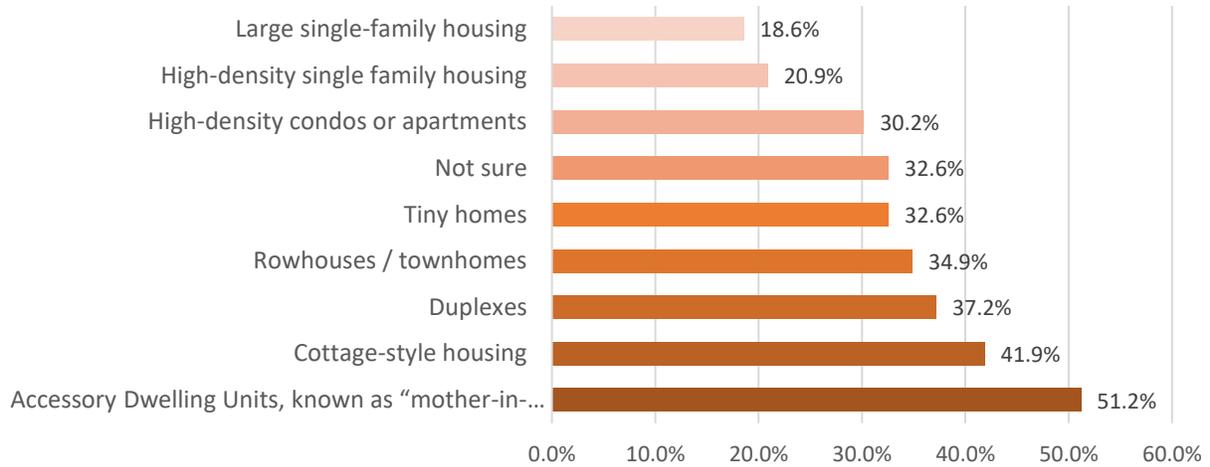


More housing options

Respondents overall support seeing more varieties of housing in Anchorage, with 51.2% supporting ADUs, then 41.9% for cottage-style housing, 37.2% for duplexes, 34.9% for rowhouses/townhomes, 32.6% for tiny homes, 30.2% for high-density condos or apartments, 20.9% for high-density single family

housing, and 18.6% for large single-family housing. Most noticeably is more support for smaller, denser housing, while both dense and large single family homes is supported the least.

What type of housing would you like to see more of?

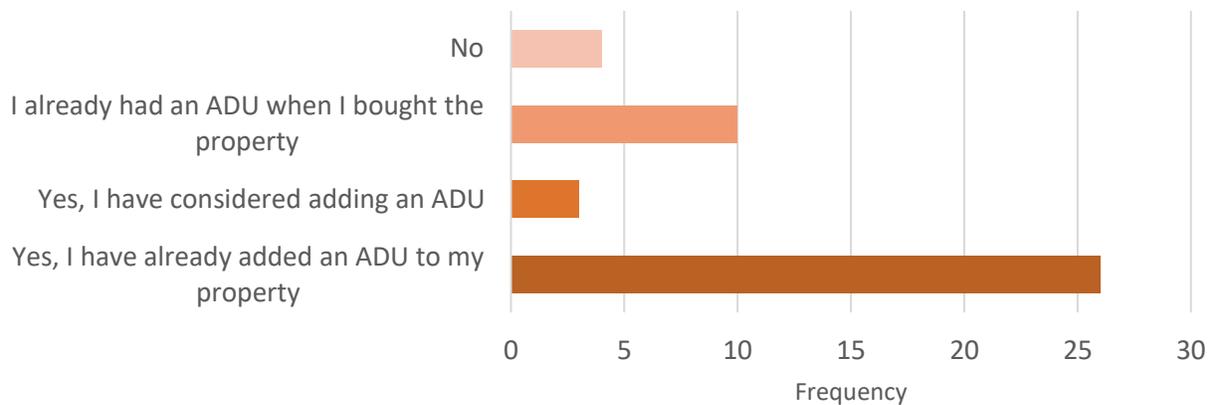


Accessory Dwelling Units

Experience with ADU

The intention of this survey was also to gather information from homeowners with experience with ADUs. Only 4 respondents do not have experience with ADUs, and 3 respondents have considered adding an ADU. Most respondents have added an ADU to their properties (26 respondents), 10 purchased a property with an existing ADU. Overall, 36 respondents currently have ADUs on their properties.

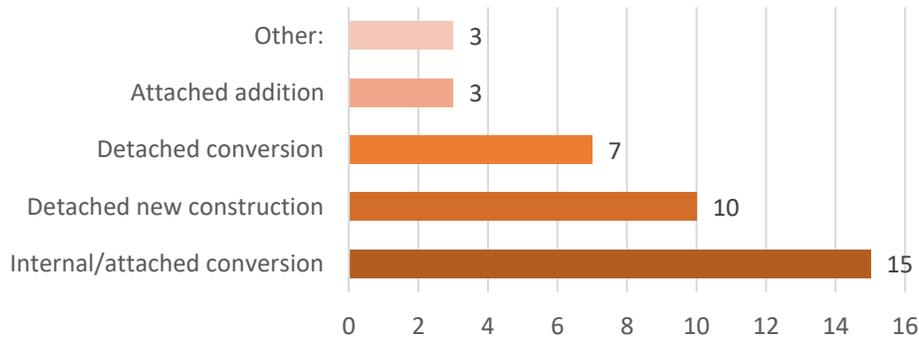
Have you added, or considered adding, an ADU to your property?



Type of ADU

Respondents included “other comments” indicating multiple ADUs in their ownership, or describing their ADU which fits in a designated category. Of the 36 respondents who currently have 38 ADUs, most have an internal/attached conversion ADU (39.5%), 26.3% have detached new construction, 18.4% have a detached conversion, 7.9% have an attached addition, and 7.9% indicated another response.

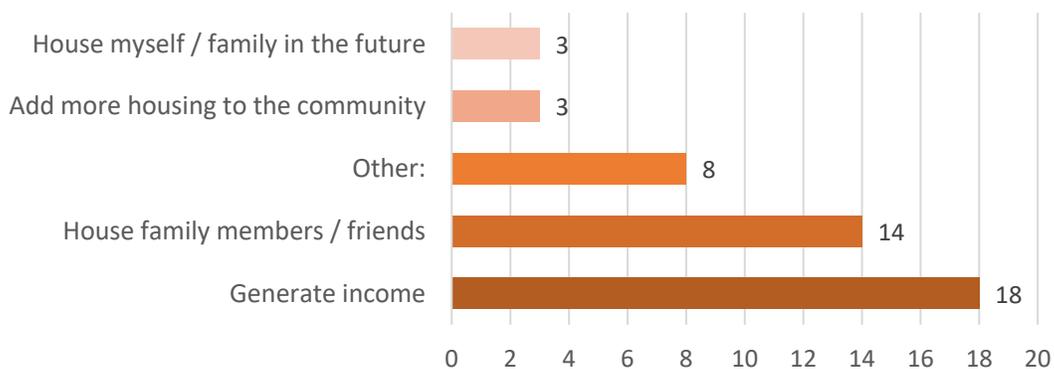
If you have an ADU, which type?
Other responses distributed



Reason for ADU

Some respondents selected multiple reasons to have an ADU on their properties. Overall, the primary reason respondents have an ADU is to generate income (34.0%), followed by housing family members and/or friends (30.4%). Other reasons indicated the properties already had an ADU built at the time of purchase.

Primary reason for having an ADU
(Other responses distributed)



Challenges building ADU

Respondents with ADUs indicated many challenges in the process to build one. Most respondents identified the biggest challenges as limitations to the zoning district (45.7%), permitting costs (42.9%) and property review process (42.9%), and construction and materials costs (40.0%). The future tax burden was also notable for 28.6% of respondents.

Comments shared included the challenges to understanding and meeting code requirements for compliance and difficulty working with the municipality on renovations or bringing properties to code.

Challenges in the process

