

Community Engagement Update

CENTRALIA HOUSING ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE | APRIL 6, 2023



Engagement Objectives

- Build a **common understanding** of unmet housing needs in Centralia.
- Identify opportunities to create a **shared vision** for housing in Centralia.
- Determine **desired housing types** for people at all income levels in Centralia.
- Engage **diverse perspectives** and demographic groups to promote equitable access to housing.
- Design **equitable outreach and engagement strategies** to reflect all perspectives and opinions.
- **Build consensus** on strategies and tactics for the CHAAP.

Engagement Activities

- Pre-engagement Interviews
- Tabling @ Centralia College
- Interviews
- Housing Needs Survey (English & Spanish)
- Spanish Language Focus Groups
- Next Steps
 - Balancing Act
 - Legislative Process
 - Still collecting input

Pre-Engagement Interview Findings

- **Housing affordability continues to be a top issue.**
 - Lack of affordable housing continues to be a problem.
- **Community partners are responding to needs for affordable housing.**
 - Centralia College providing below-market housing for students
 - Reliable Enterprises seeing an uptick in applications.
- **Infrastructure development and enforcement is critical for housing opportunities.**
 - Poor condition of rental units.
 - Utility expansion is costly
- **There is strong local pride in Centralia.**
- **Ensure in language services in Spanish are available.**

Additional Interviews

- **Housing Needs**
 - Housing supply is super inefficient, creating high utility costs
 - We have a shortage of 1 and 2 bedroom units
 - Transitional housing is zoned out in Centralia and Chehalis
- Centralia has a proud history, but we need to meet the needs of all community members.
- Housing is benefiting landlords and speculators, but challenging for local people
 - Vacancy rates are super low
 - People are flipping houses and not living in them.
 - There is a greed factor from folks looking to rent their houses
- Expanding inspection services
- We need to make sure we're accounting for 100-year floods
- Connecting to sewer is expensive. Coordination with county is needed for septic tank inspections

Spanish Focus Groups

- Conducted by the Equity Institute using existing client lists and snowball sampling.
- March 15th, 2023: **3 participants**
- March 16th, 2023: **12 participants**
- March 17th, 2023: **9 participants**



What are some of the housing challenges that you face?

- Restrictions and extra charges in mobile home parks.
 - Landlords bringing new mobile homes making parks overcrowded.
 - High lot charges (+\$1,000)
 - Inability to move home
- Too many regulations asked for tenants, with little to none on the landlords.
- Parking issues. It is very hard to find space even on the street sometimes.
- Quality issues, their apartments and mobile homes, are not in the best conditions.
- Cost of renting, owning a house keeps increasing astronomically. Options are non affordable or nonexistent.
- Lack of space for kids to play.
- Lack of home ownership opportunities
- Discrimination is still existent, people can still feel discriminated against in their neighborhood and by landlords.

In your opinion, what housing does Centralia need more of and why?

- Mobile home parks with less regulation for people who are owners of their own trailer.
- Accessible financing for properties or homeownership
- Low income apartments that aren't limited to agriculture workers
- Accessible public transport
- Green space community (More accessible parks, playground)

What neighborhood problems should Centralia try to solve?

- Road conditions
- Parking issues
- Substance Use
- Mental health issues
- Multiple participants reported gas being stolen from their tanks
- Not quick enough police response outside of city limits
- Homelessness

How can centralia better meet the needs of your community?

- More regulation on landlords and mobile home park management companies
- More accessibility to housing for the Latino community
- More accessibility to tenant rights resources
- Less eviction and displacement
- Transportation accessible community.

What do you want the city to know about opportunities and challenges in Centralia?

- There are many regulations and barriers put in place by the city that do not allow the community to grow and prosper. Example: Such as what someone can and cannot build/install on their property.
- Landlords are taking advantage of the lack of regulation and supervision on their end which makes living in Centralia difficult.
- Centralia Latino communities want to prosper but there needs to be opportunities tailored to the unique conditions in which our community lives in.
- Many participants only make minimum wage, therefore, it is hard to make rent payments on time.
- Most participants believe they're not being heard by the city because of their race.
- Language is another barrier for them when they cannot communicate properly their needs and complaints to landlords and the city.

Housing Needs Survey

Preliminary results. Spanish survey officially closed on April 5th.

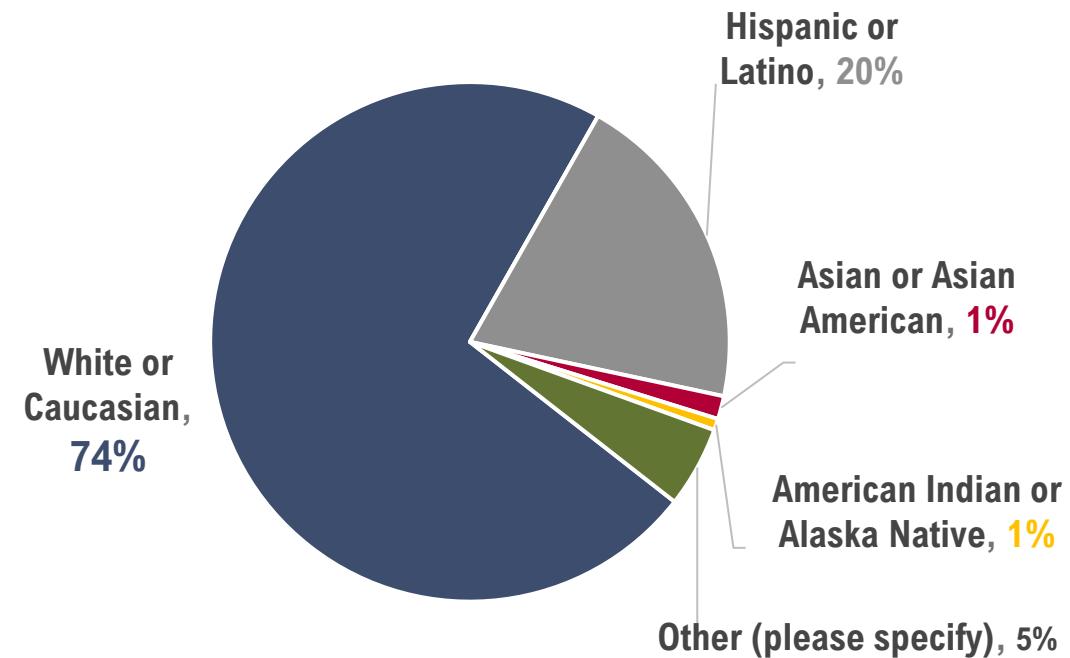
175 Respondents

137 English survey respondents

78% of respondents compared to 87% of community members who speak “English only”

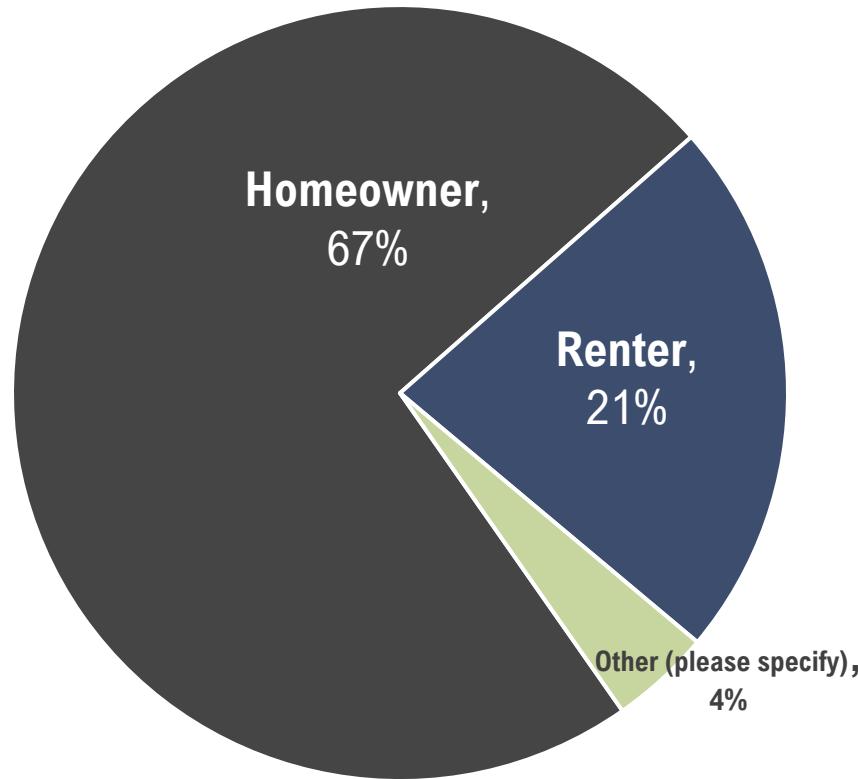
38 Spanish survey respondents

22% of respondents compared to 12% of community members who speak Spanish at home.

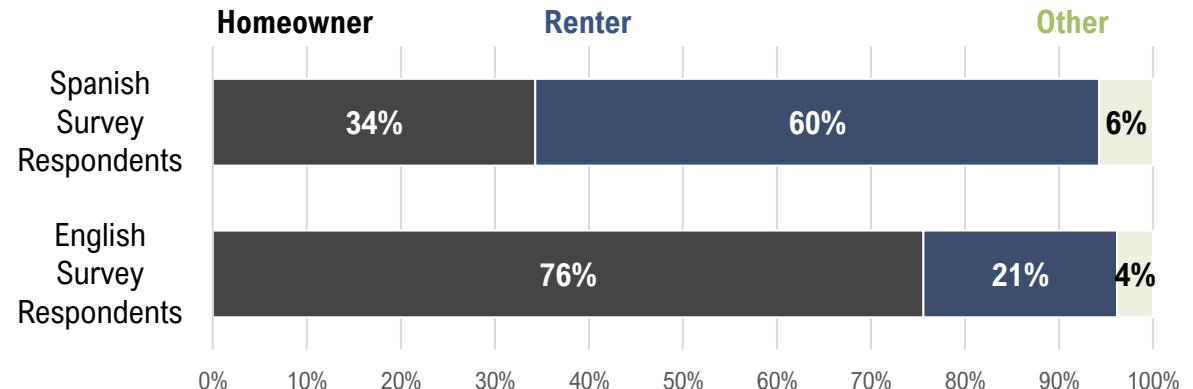


What best describes your living situation?

Most respondents are **homeowners**.



The survey sample over represents English-speaking **homeowners** and Spanish-speaking **renters**.

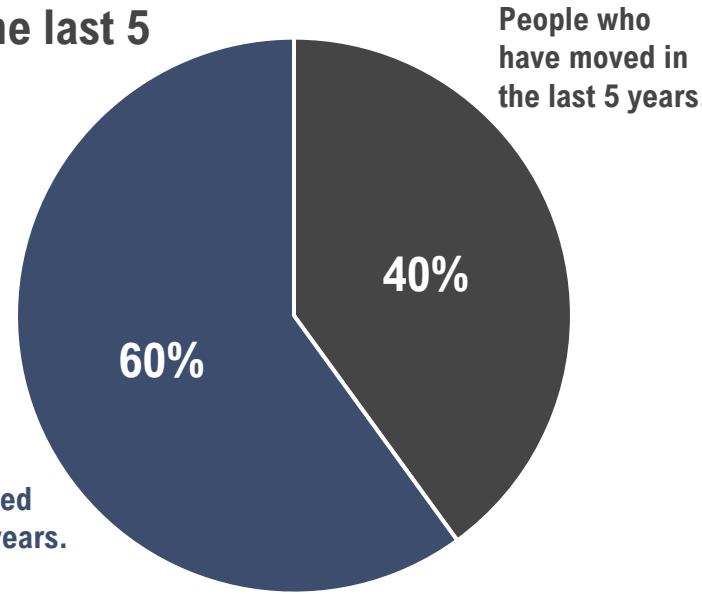


Other responses:

- Homeowners that rent in an MHP
- Living with family members
- Homeless

Have you moved within the past five years?

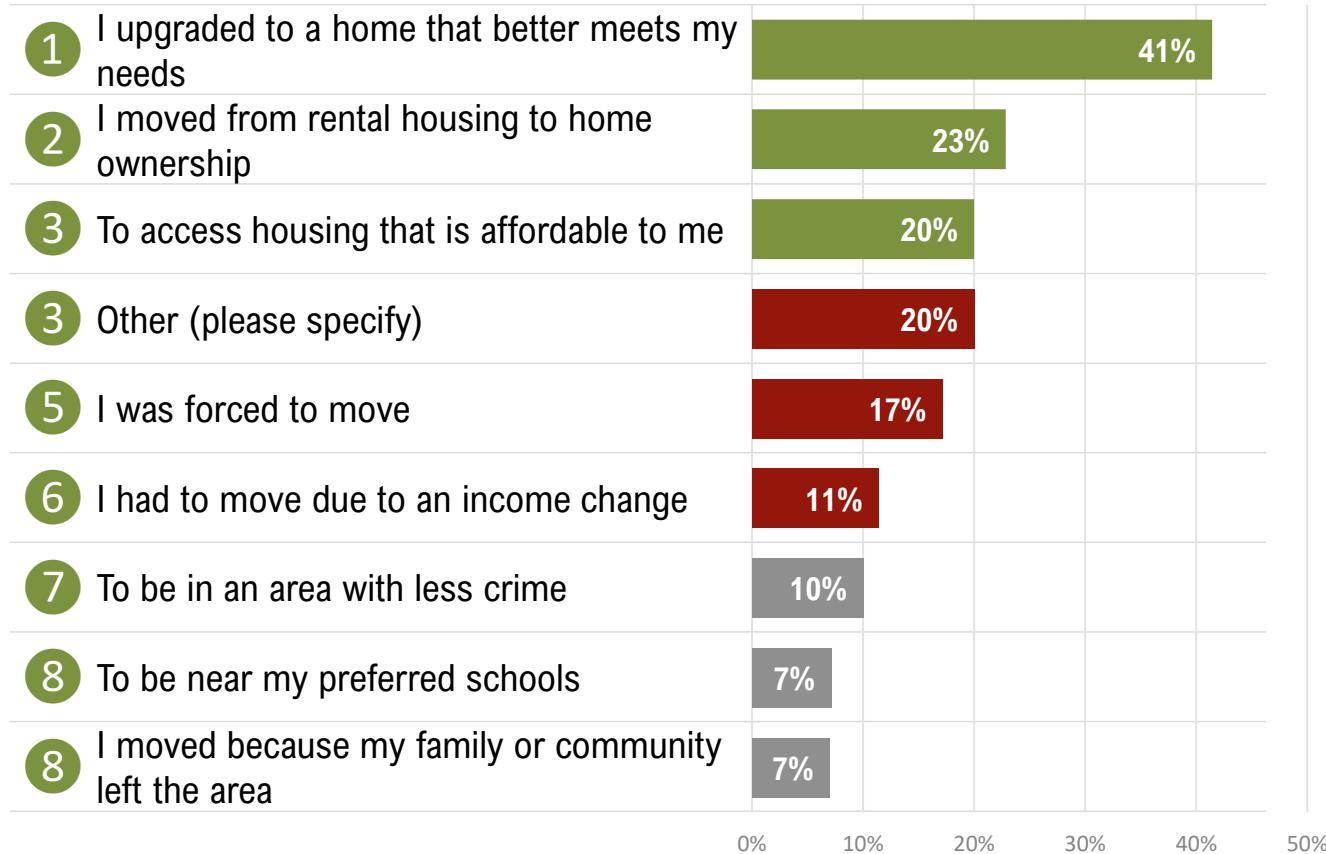
Two fifths of respondents have **moved in the last 5 years**.



English respondents' rate: 41% (14)

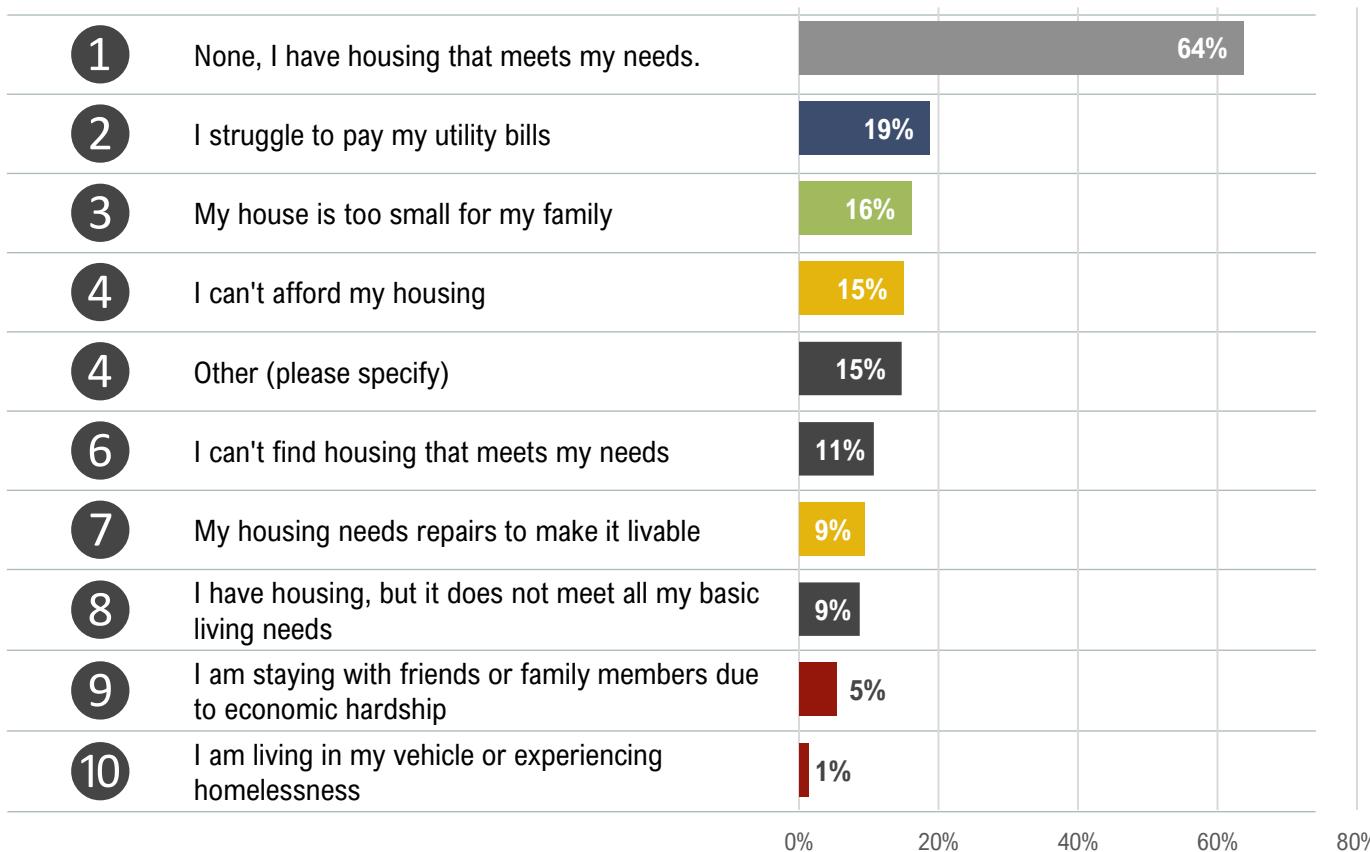
Spanish respondents' rate: 37% (56)

Most movers **moved by choice**, into housing that better met their needs.

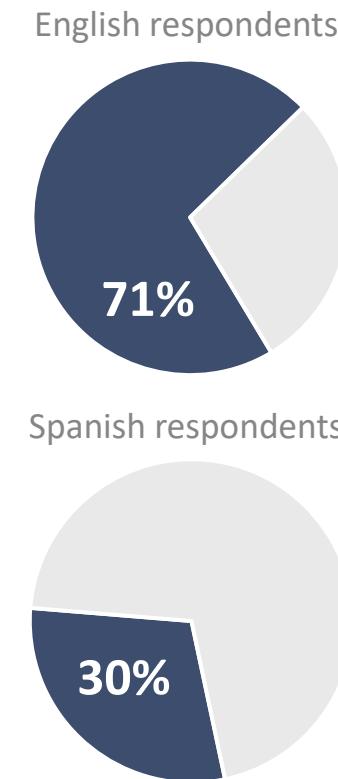


Are you, or your household, experiencing any of the following housing challenges?

Most are **not experiencing** housing challenges. The most common challenges relate to **utility bills**, **home size**, and **cost**.

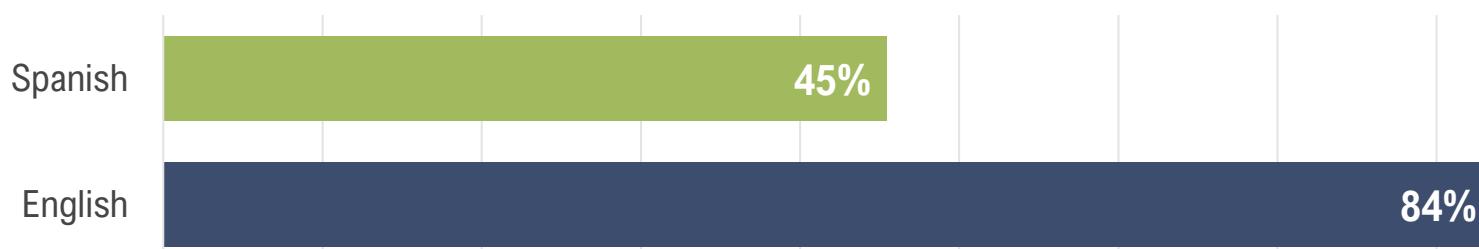


English survey respondents are more likely to report that their **housing meets all their needs**.

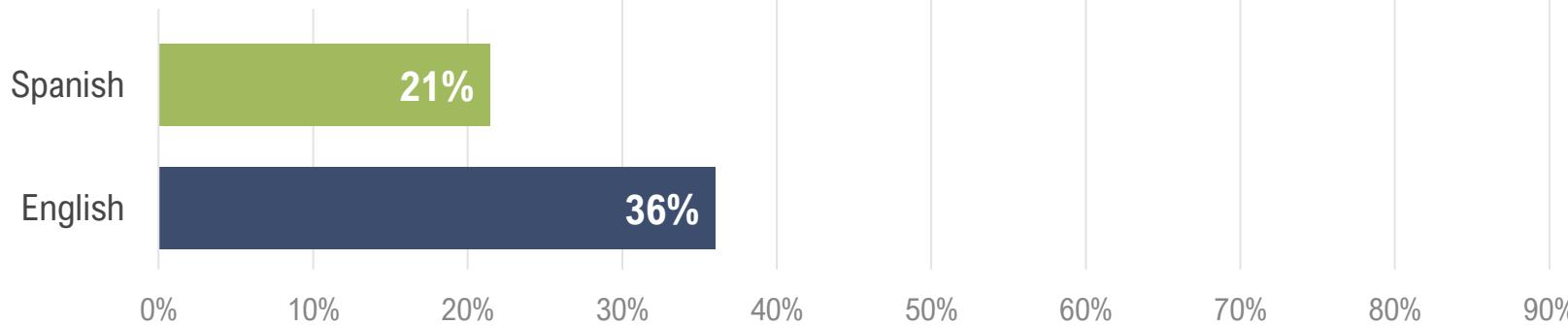


Are you, or your household, experiencing any of the following housing challenges?

Homeowners reporting that their housing meets their needs



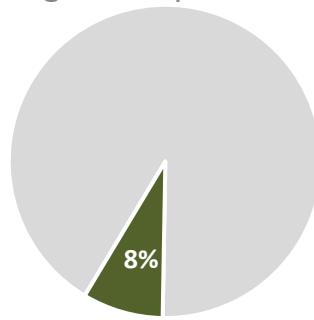
Renters reporting that their housing meets their needs



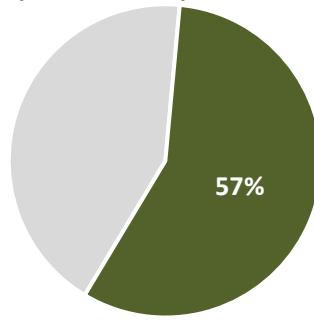
Do you need housing assistance?

Proportion reporting that they
need housing assistance.

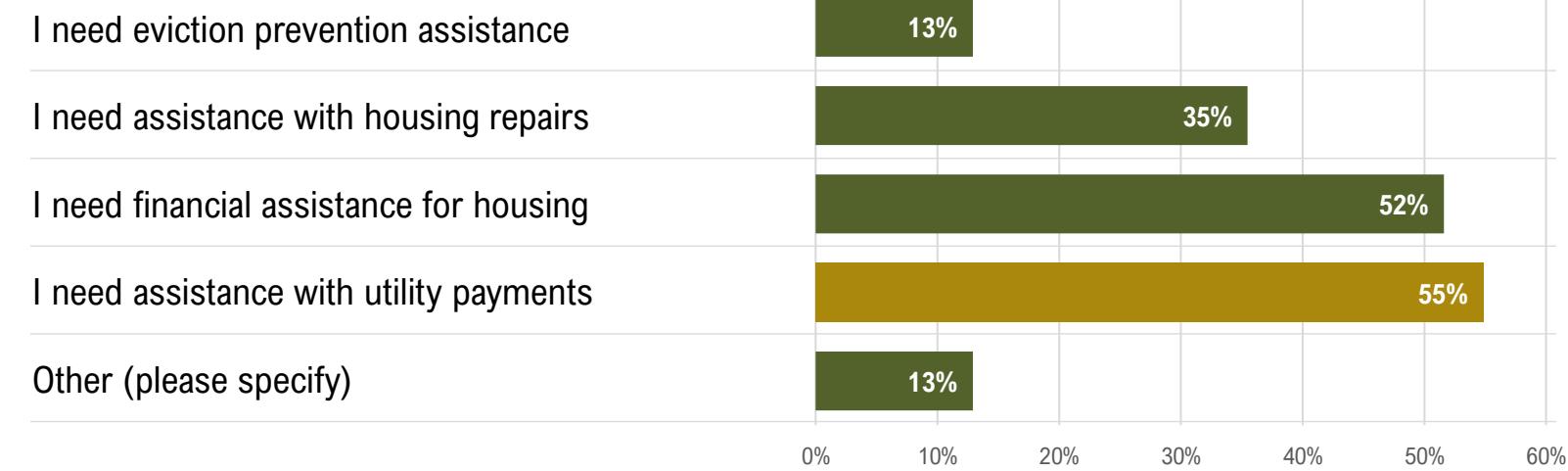
English Respondents



Spanish Respondents



Respondents most commonly report needing assistance with **utility payments**.

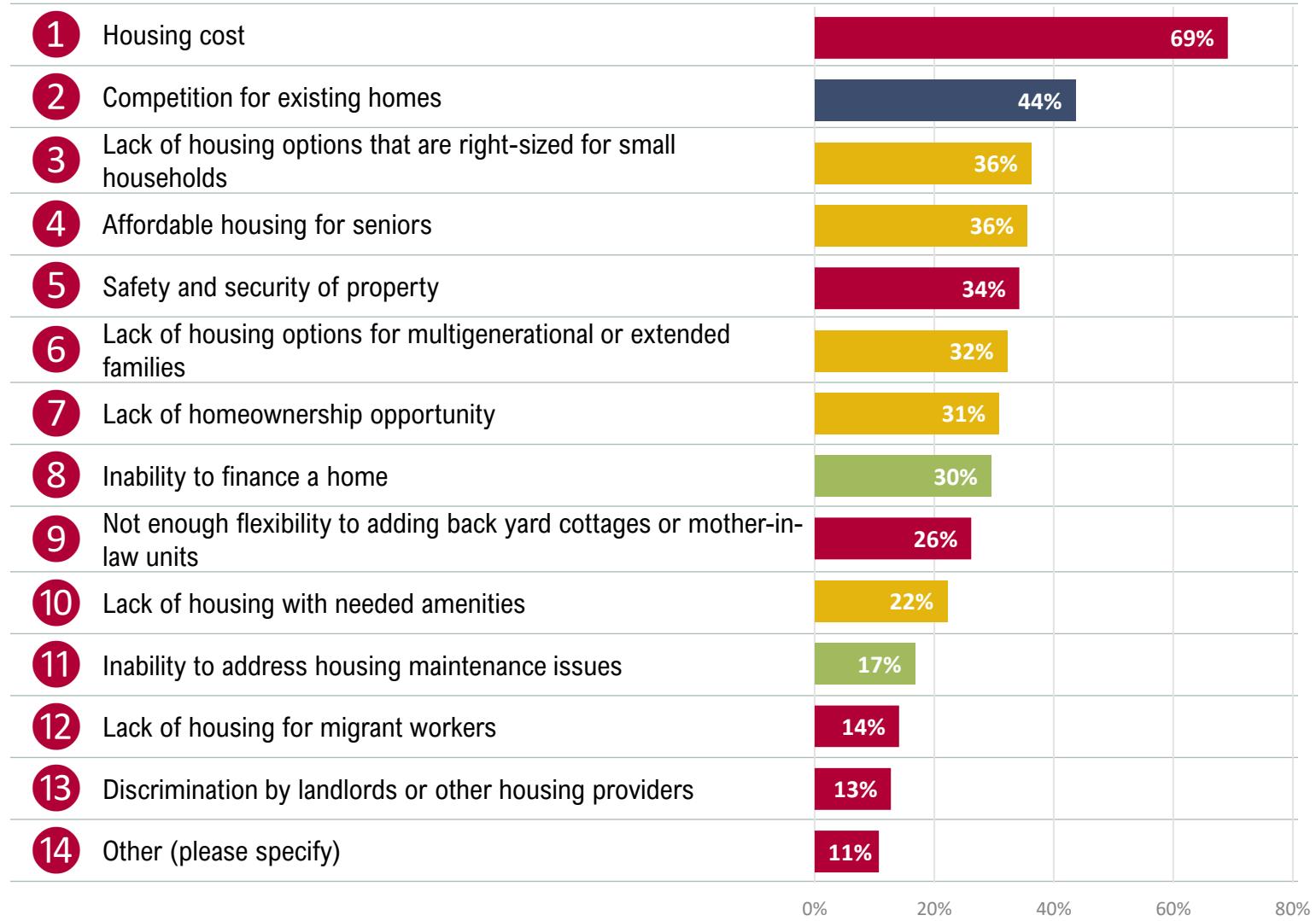


Which of the following are housing challenges in Centralia?

Other responses:

- More quality affordable apartments
- Housing supply/ continuum of options
- Homelessness
- Regulations
- Taxes

Most feel **housing cost** is a challenge in Centralia, followed by **competition**, and **sundry needs** for different housing types.

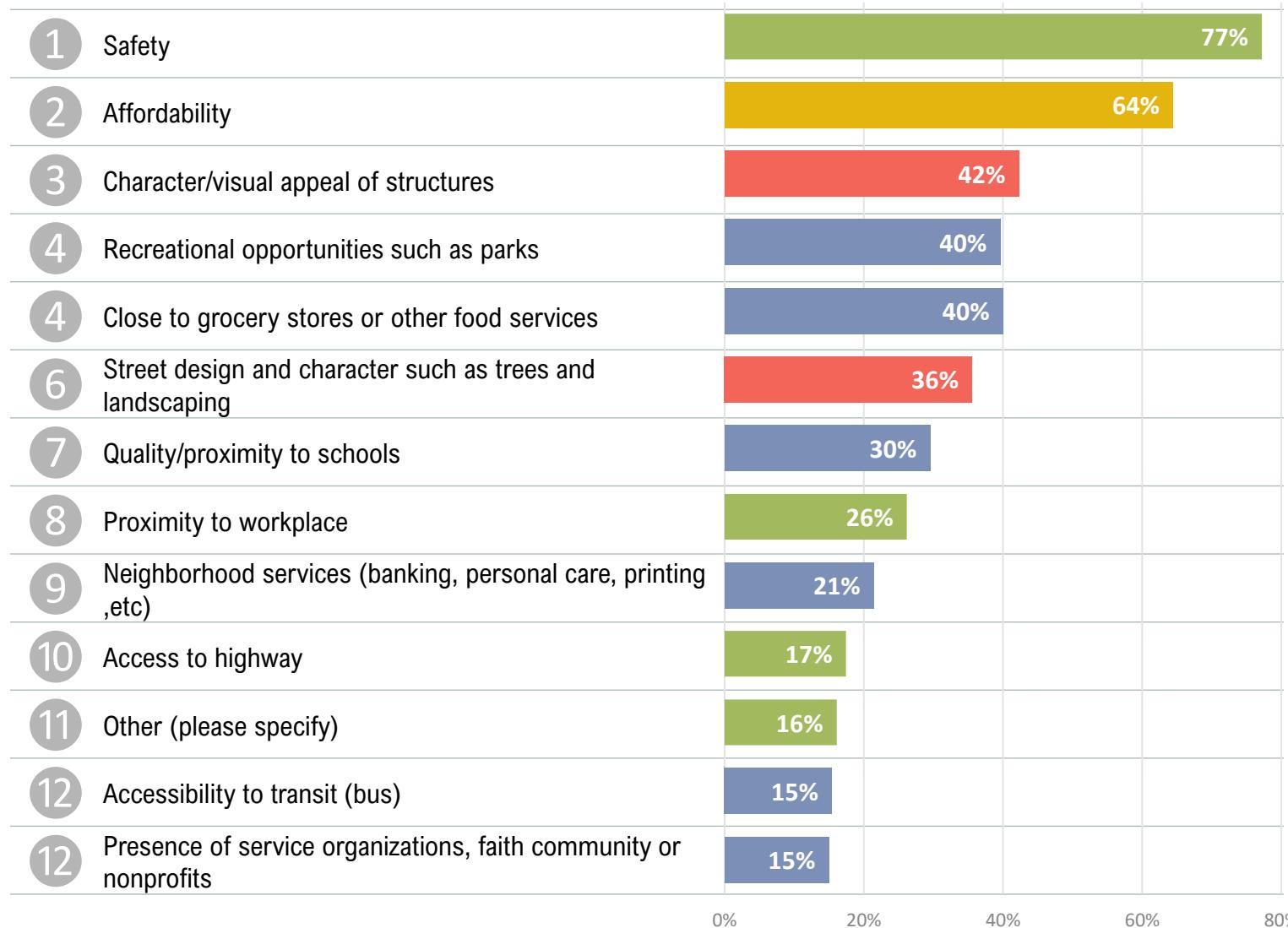


What neighborhood characteristics are most important to you?

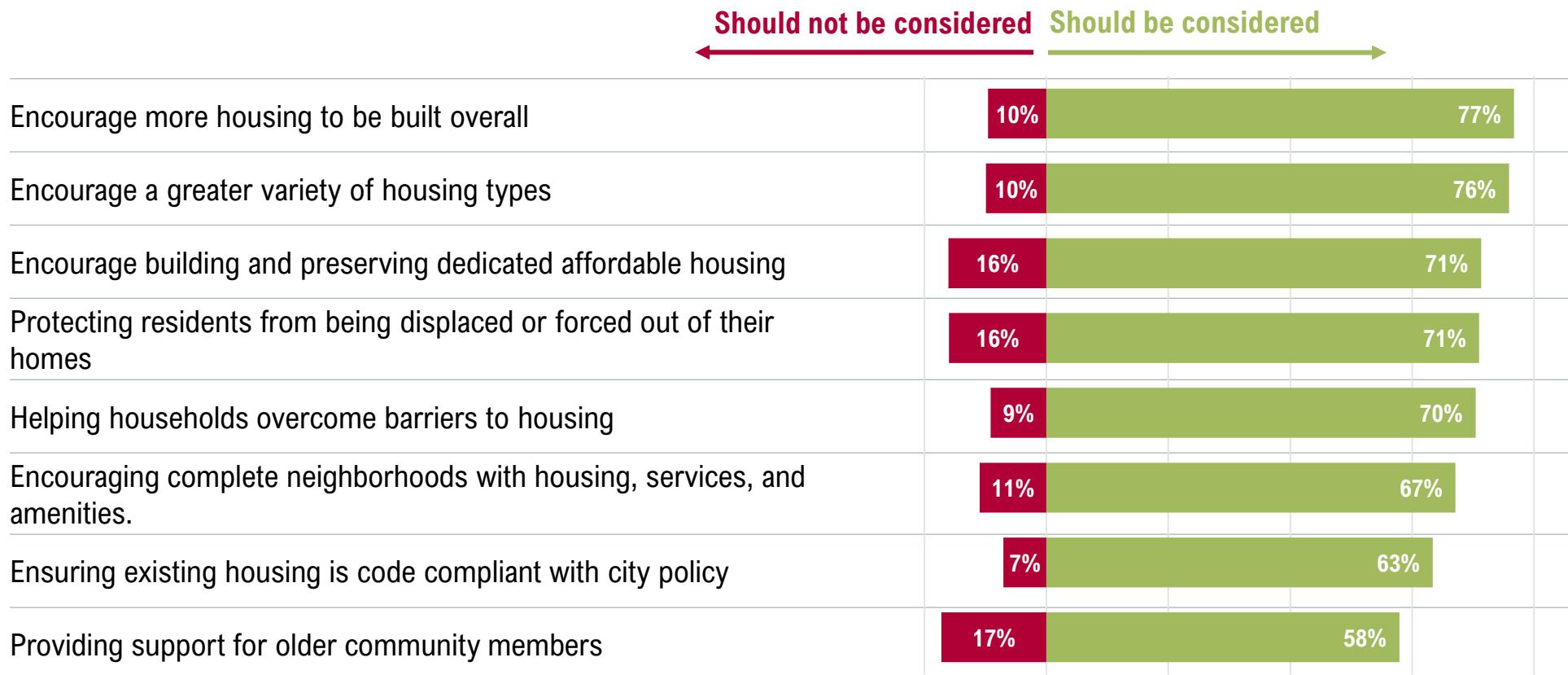
Other responses:

- Walkability (proximity, sidewalks, trails)
- Road conditions
- Open space and privacy
- Spanish respondents put more importance on proximity to services and public transit.

Safety is the most important neighborhood characteristic, followed by **affordability**. Moderate importance on **neighborhood amenities** and **visual design and character**.



Are the following solutions a good fit for Centralia's housing needs?





Thank you.