

# Report for Gratiot Community-Wide Master Plan Survey

## 1. Response Counts

Completion Rate:

100%



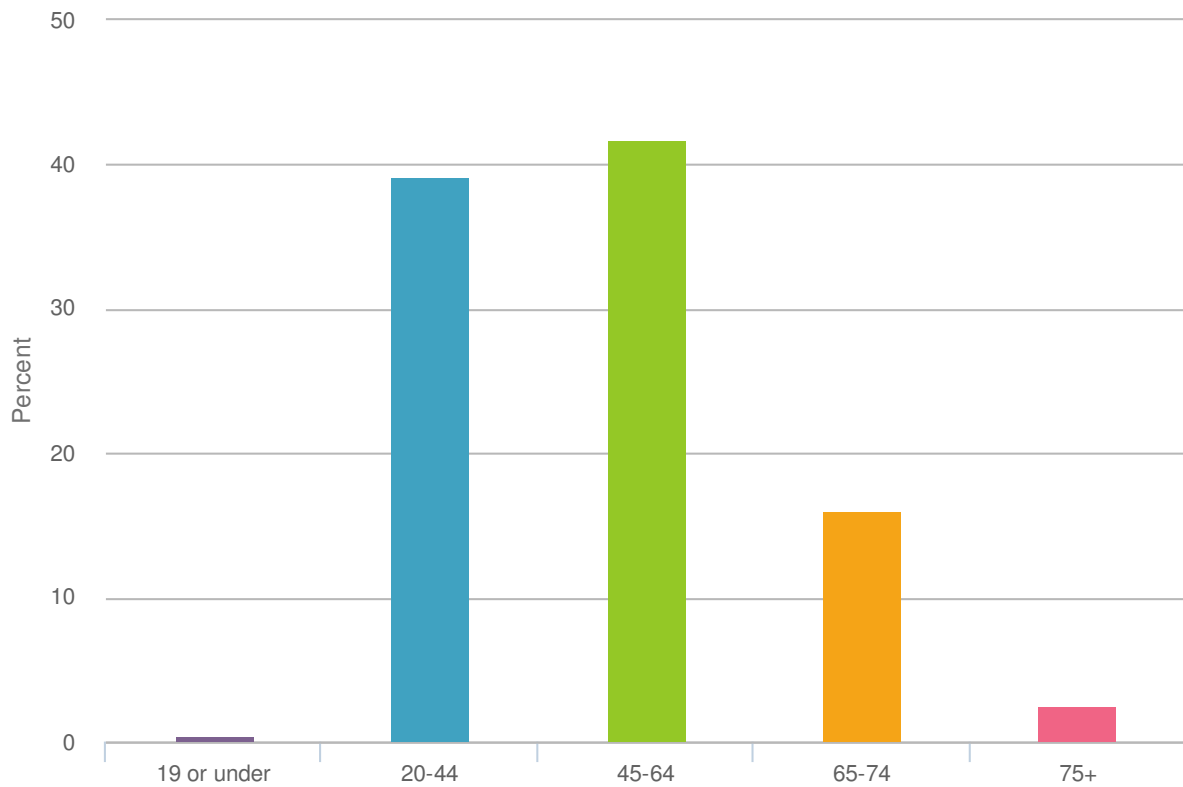
Complete 270

Partial 0

Disqualified 0

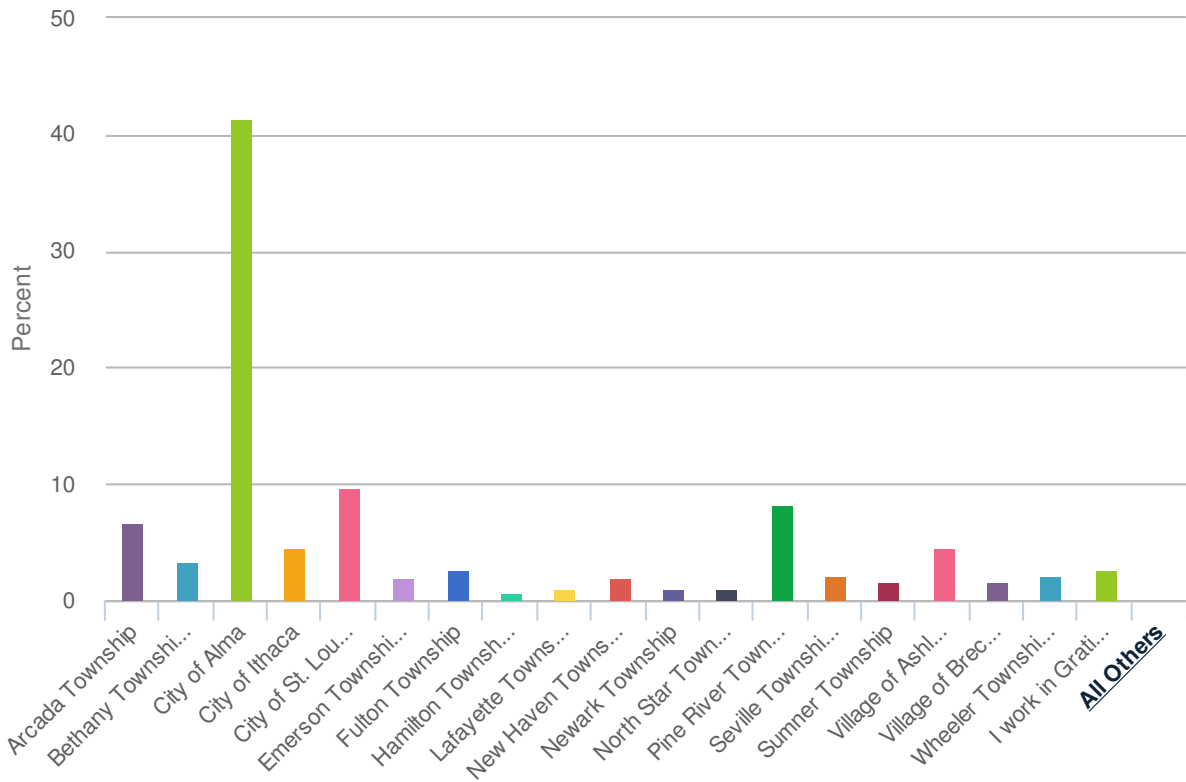
Total 270

## 2. What is your age category?



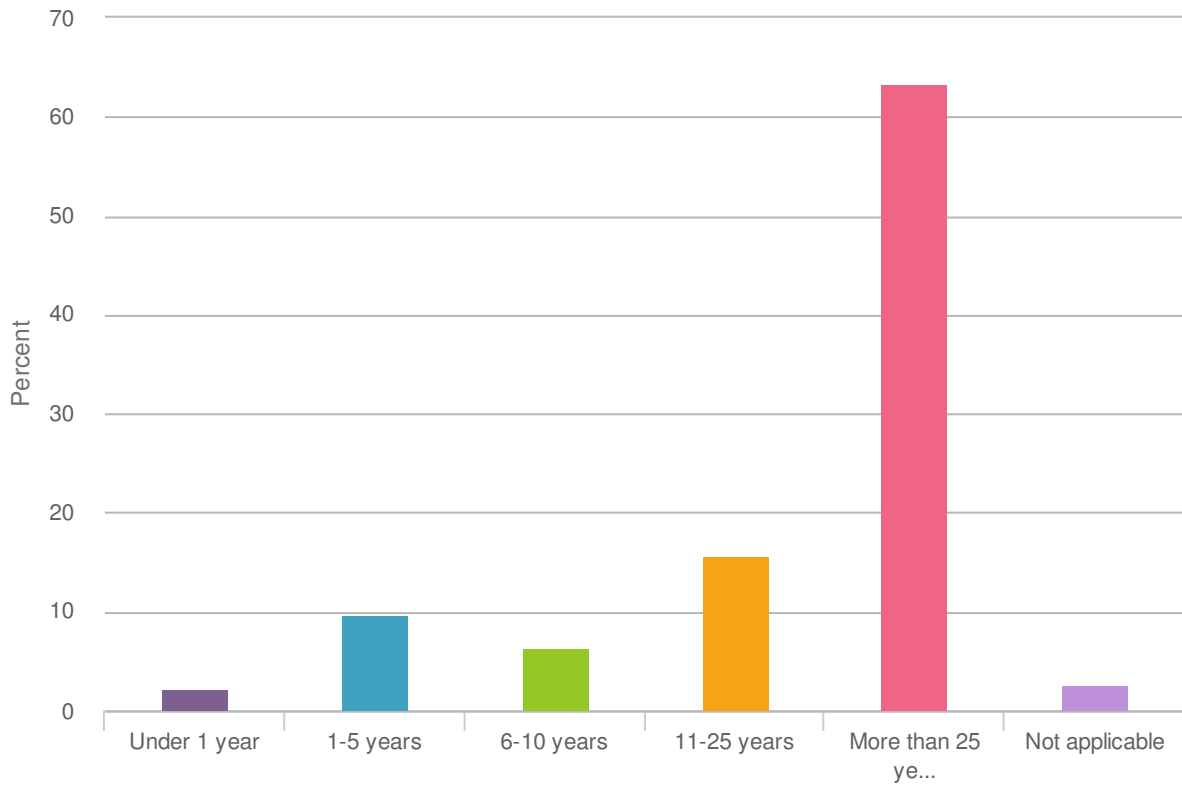
Value	Percent	Count
19 or under	0.4%	1
20-44	39.2%	105
45-64	41.8%	112
65-74	16.0%	43
75+	2.6%	7

### 3. Where do you live?



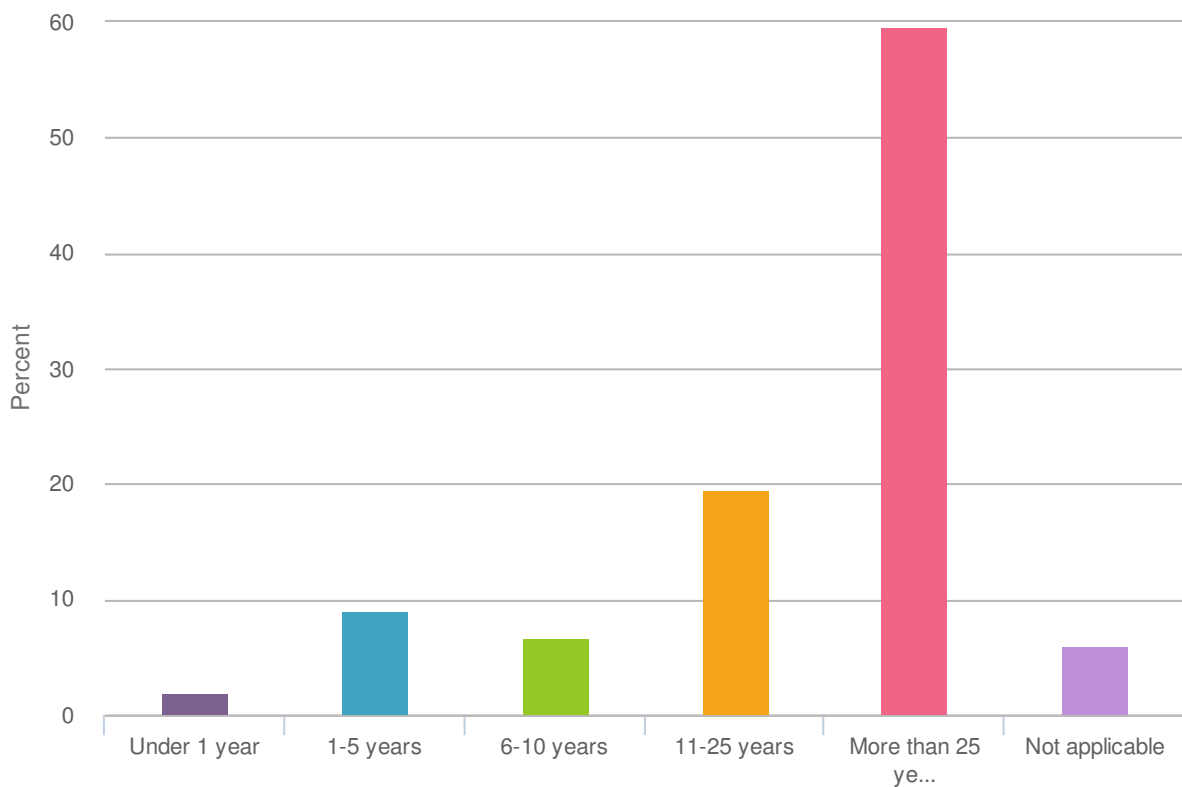
Value	Percent	Count
Arcada Township	6.7%	18
Bethany Township	3.4%	9
City of Alma	41.4%	111
City of Ithaca	4.5%	12
City of St. Louis	9.7%	26
Pine River Township	8.2%	22
Village of Ashley	4.5%	12
<a href="#">All Others (click to expand) ▾</a>	21.9%	59

#### 4. How long have you lived in Gratiot County?



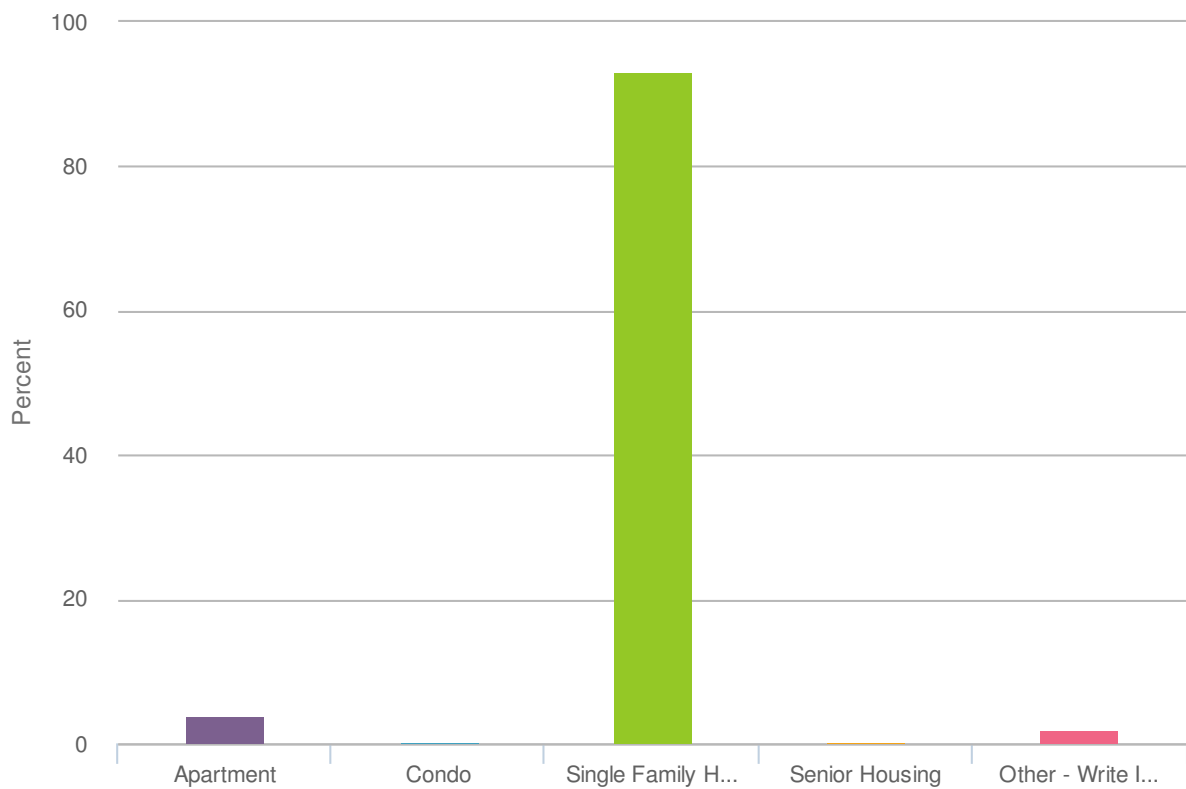
Value	Percent	Count
Under 1 year	2.2%	6
1-5 years	9.7%	26
6-10 years	6.4%	17
11-25 years	15.7%	42
More than 25 years	63.3%	169
Not applicable	2.6%	7

### 5. How long do you plan to continue living in Gratiot County?



Value	Percent	Count
Under 1 year	1.9%	5
1-5 years	9.0%	24
6-10 years	6.7%	18
11-25 years	19.5%	52
More than 25 years	59.6%	159
Not applicable	6.0%	16

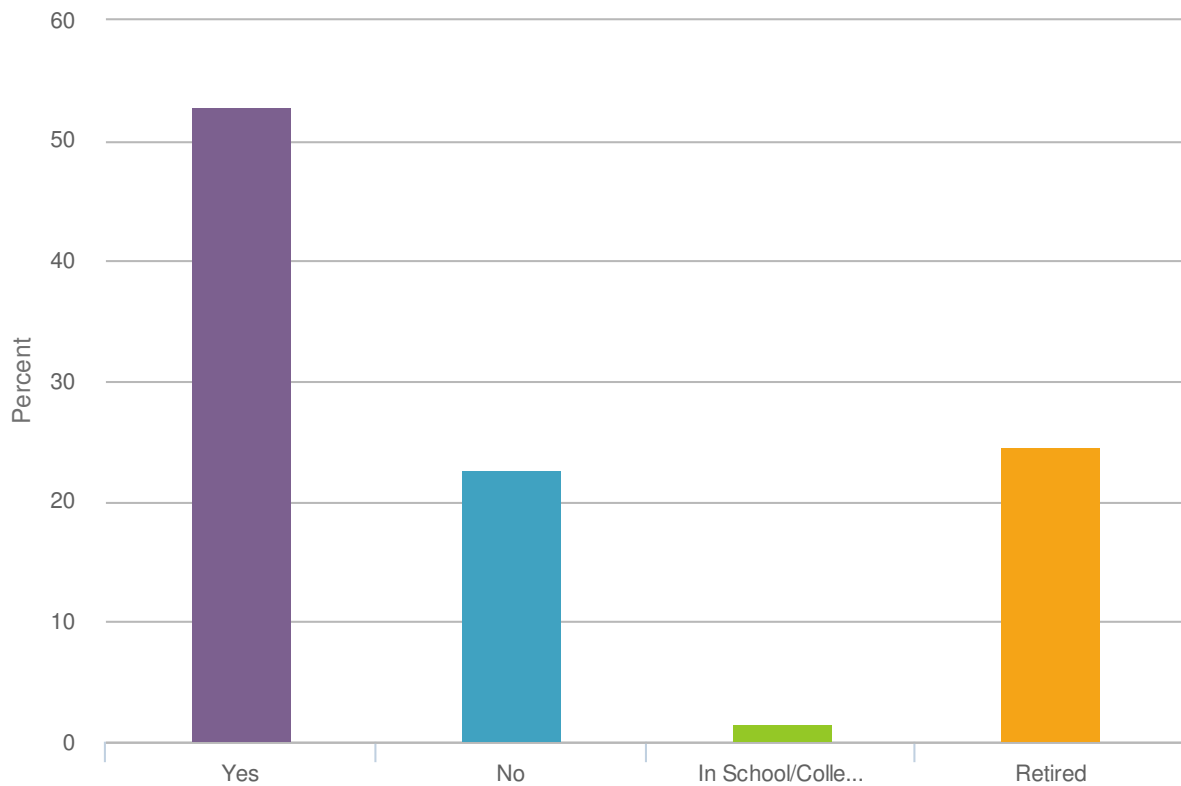
## 6. In what type of housing do you live?



Value	Percent	Count
Apartment	4.1%	11
Condo	0.4%	1
Single Family Home	93.2%	248
Senior Housing	0.4%	1
Other - Write In	1.9%	5

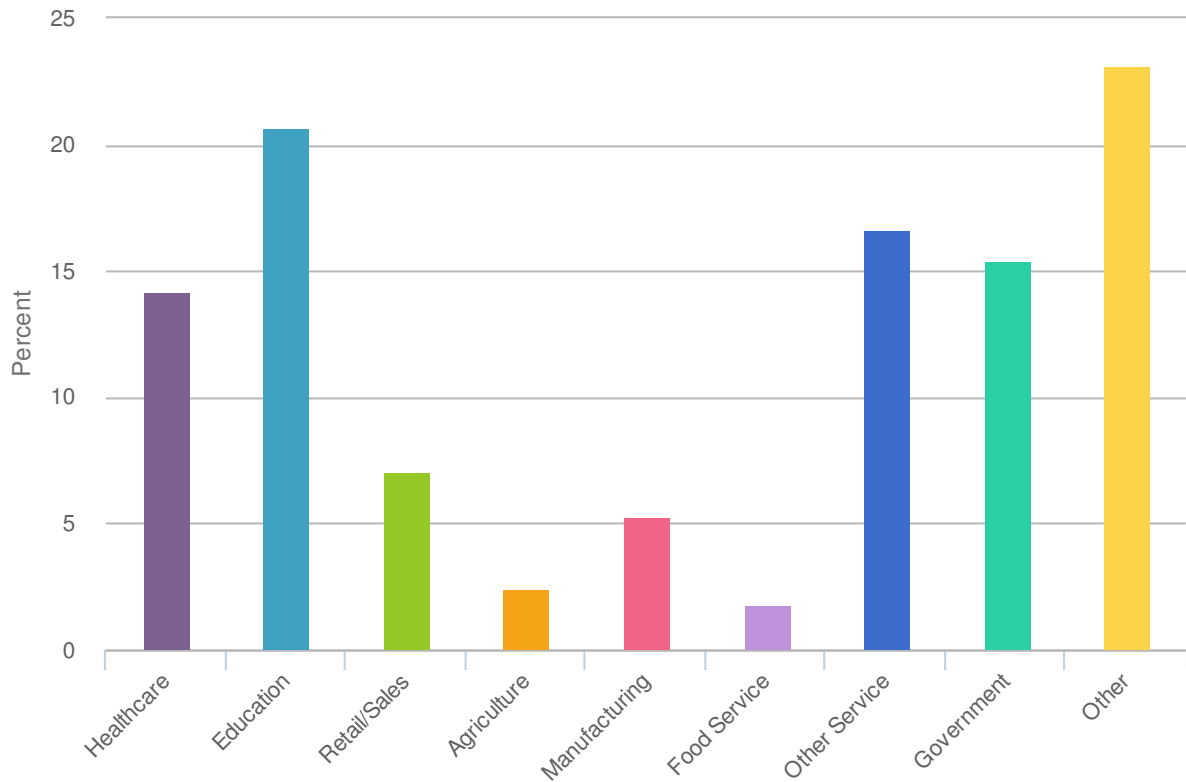
Other - Write In	Count
Apartment	1
Farm	1
Trailer	1
own home	1
trailer park in mobile home.	1
Total	5

## 7. Do you work in Gratiot County?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	52.8%	140
No	22.6%	60
In School/College & Working	1.5%	4
Retired	24.5%	65

8. If you do work in Gratiot County, what industry do you work in?



Value	Percent	Count
Healthcare	14.2%	24
Education	20.7%	35
Retail/Sales	7.1%	12
Agriculture	2.4%	4
Manufacturing	5.3%	9
Food Service	1.8%	3
Other Service	16.6%	28
Government	15.4%	26
Other	23.1%	39



9. During the last planning process, participants developed the following list of topics to address (presented in no particular order) and these helped shape the direction of the plan. We would like to know how concerned people still are about each of these topics. Please indicate how important you feel each of these are using the following scale: 1= Not Important 2= Slightly Important 3= Moderately Important 4= Very Important 5= Extremely Important

	1	2	3	4	5
Cleaning and protecting the Pine River	4 1.5%	8 3.0%	23 8.7%	65 24.6%	164 62.1%
Making vocational programs available to students	3 1.1%	6 2.3%	46 17.4%	110 41.5%	100 37.7%
Businesses that sell locally produced farm products	4 1.5%	10 3.8%	73 27.8%	95 36.1%	81 30.8%
Expanding industrial parks	15 5.7%	23 8.7%	105 39.8%	75 28.4%	46 17.4%
Maintaining and improving downtowns	3 1.1%	3 1.1%	50 18.8%	104 39.1%	106 39.8%
More local government, school and agency cooperation	5 1.9%	16 6.0%	65 24.4%	92 34.6%	88 33.1%
Collaborative marketing efforts	12 4.5%	30 11.3%	101 38.1%	73 27.5%	49 18.5%
More public transportation options	20 7.6%	55 20.8%	83 31.4%	61 23.1%	45 17.0%
Entrepreneurship/business mentoring programs	12 4.5%	32 12.1%	92 34.8%	91 34.5%	37 14.0%
A county-wide recycling program	13 4.9%	20 7.5%	57 21.4%	83 31.2%	93 35.0%
More county-wide recreational opportunities	6 2.3%	28 10.6%	58 21.9%	94 35.5%	79 29.8%
More citizen involvement in local government decisions	2 0.8%	16 6.0%	67 25.3%	107 40.4%	73 27.5%
Improved and well-maintained infrastructure	1 0.4%	9 3.4%	42 15.8%	119 44.9%	94 35.5%

	1	2	3	4	5
Preserving natural areas (e.g. woodlands & wetlands)	3 1.1%	11 4.1%	44 16.5%	84 31.6%	124 46.6%
Preserving open spaces (e.g. farmlands & fields)	11 4.2%	17 6.4%	53 20.1%	108 40.9%	75 28.4%
Utilizing alternative energy sources	12 4.5%	24 9.1%	43 16.2%	97 36.6%	89 33.6%
Completing US-127	20 7.5%	37 14.0%	74 27.9%	74 27.9%	60 22.6%
Developing riverfronts	17 6.4%	32 12.0%	82 30.7%	79 29.6%	57 21.3%
Developing non-motorized pathways	20 7.5%	54 20.4%	76 28.7%	72 27.2%	43 16.2%
Redeveloping empty lots and contaminated sites	3 1.1%	12 4.5%	52 19.5%	105 39.3%	95 35.6%
Expanded internet service	14 5.3%	27 10.3%	63 24.0%	82 31.2%	77 29.3%
A Gratiot County community college	46 17.4%	44 16.7%	77 29.2%	54 20.5%	43 16.3%

10. During the last planning process, participants developed the following list of topics to address (presented in no particular order) and these helped shape the direction of the plan. We would like to know how concerned people still are about each of these topics. Please indicate how important you feel each of these are using the following scale: 1= Not Important 2= Slightly Important 3= Moderately Important 4= Very Important 5= Extremely Important - comments

The Pine has become a weed bogged swamp! It is a shame!

How about improving residential area.?

Expanding the collaboration for services like fire and police are real possibilities

Better housing options for professionals to want to move to Gratiot County.

Allowing backyard chickens

Clean up the river, protect our natural resources ... loose the stupid foot bridge

Having those resources go directly to Gratiot County residents.  
N/A

Count	Response
1	-What does the infrastructure include? -Re 127: Why would this be a question? Is it even an option to NOT finish it??
1	... while not forcing them to choose between vocational classes and other required classes. Fitting them in is extremely difficult right now.
1	A Gratiot County Community College (?) We have the opportunity to bring already established community college courses to our county as it is...WHY does this county always try to start from the ground up instead of taking advantage of what resources are already available, viable and RATIONAL!!
1	Access to affordable education is extremely important in any community and communities who find a community college have significantly improved access for their citizens. There is an existing framework for one in Montcalm. I am sure this college would partner with Gratiot if the community sought out a millage. This would share the high administrative costs and would better utilize faculty. I don't think it would be good to have an independent community college so close to others.
1	After paying out of pocket for the terrible sidewalk replacement program in Alma there defiantly needs to be more citizen involvement in government decision. Considering citizens taxes pay for the government to even exist citizens fronted 100% of the bill and then we were billed on top of that. And the work done was terrible the side walk is uneven.
1	Allowing backyard chickens
1	Better housing options for professionals to want to move to Gratiot County.
1	Clean up the river, protect our natural resources ... loose the stupid foot bridge
1	Downtowns need to develop niche markets and give the best customer service. Government/Schools need to work together to provide partnerships that will keep our children here.
1	Even though i do really enjoy the rail-trail, i am not really impressed with the one running along I-127. I fear with the trail along 127 eventually i can see a vehicle sliding off and someone getting killed and will result in a very negative image from this multi-million dollar project.
1	Everything mentioned so far are things that every community should feel important to a thriving area to live!!
1	Expanding the collaboration for services like fire and police are real possibilities
1	Gratiot County does not have very many locations where kids can play baseball. With the City of Alma not wanting to take kids safety into mind with the restoration of Euclid fields, it would be nice if the county can implement more places for kids to play ball. Alma's 5 year plan is now in it's 11th year, having been pushed back into it's third 5 year master plan. The Alma Little League does an amazing job trying to keep up the fields but with NO help from the city, there is only so much they can do or should have to pay for as the cities busiest park.

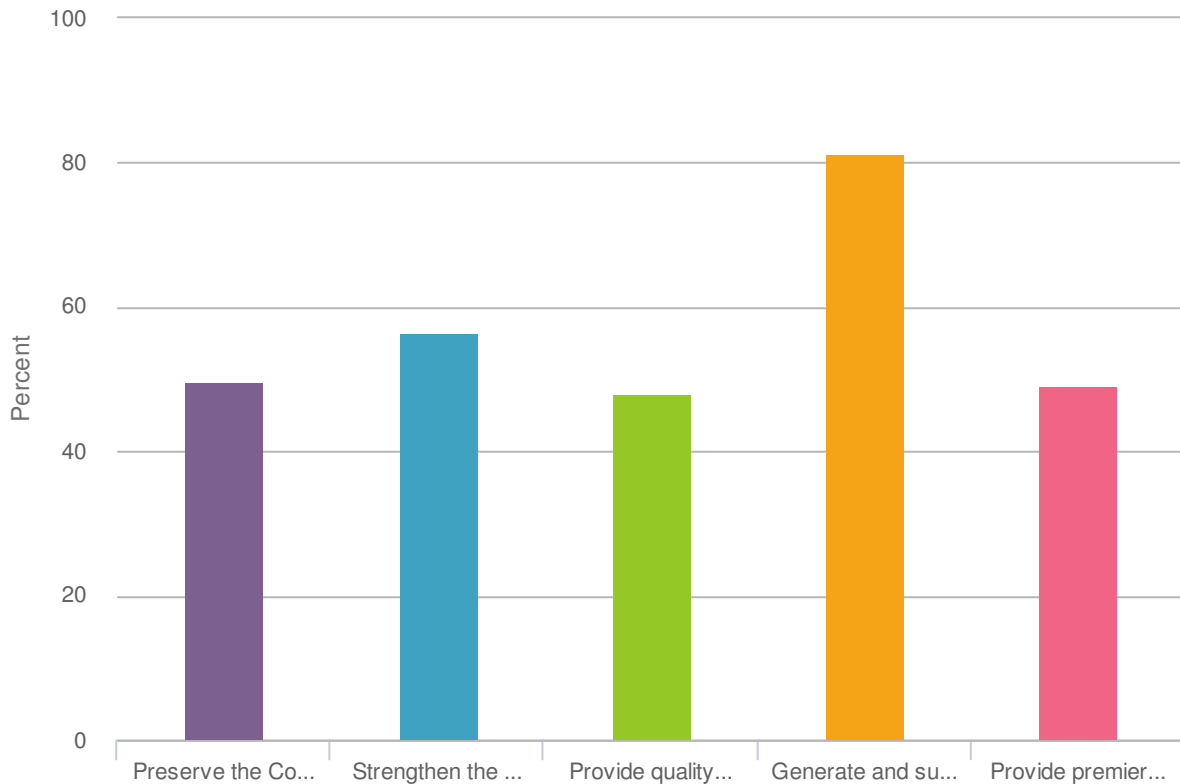
**Count    Response**

1	Having those resources go directly to Gratiot County residents.
1	How about improving residential area.?
1	I don't know what "Completing US 127" means. Seems complete to me. More options for drop off and curbside recycling. Coordinate with Padnos? Expand recyclables taken - currently there is no place in the county that takes glass recycling or styrofoam. Explore participation in regional train service to Lansing, Grand Rapids, etc. Also expanding bike paths and bike lanes on streets / roads in the region.
1	I think a lot could be done to promote business and growth especially in Alma! Need more Popular Eating Establishments like Mt. Pleasant has!
1	Improving the appearance of the City of Alma is very important. People are not going to want to move, work, visit, or open up businesses here, if the City doesn't look desirable.
1	N/A
1	Please consider using some of the park millage money to improve city parks, that are closer to the population.
1	River restoration efforts should not mimic that of the Gratiot County Drain Commissioner and his boys club. The cement along the river in Alma is not the answer.
1	Stop using concrete hard armoring on shoreline of city parks. Use more aesthetically pleasing means. River restoration practices should be intended to keep the river natural and beautiful.
1	The Gratiot County Community College idea is an interesting one, but I would need more information to get behind this idea. I have also said for years that we need to have a YMCA, or similar entity in Gratiot County
1	The Pine River is one of Gratiot's most valuable resources. There is so much that could be done. I appreciate those that have 'watched over' it in recent years but beyond protecting it, it needs to be utilized to its full potential.
1	The Pine has become a weed bogged swamp! It is a shame!
1	The Pine winds it's way through 5 different towns and villages in our county. It is our most important riparian water resource. It's past hasn't been a healthy one but it's future can be. There are several active volunteer groups attempting to see it restored to the exceptional water way it once was. By making this an important priority of the county will help show how significant and important it is and will help pave the way to valuable funding sources. One strong measurement of the desirability to live somewhere is the environmental health of that community. Improving on this will have far reaching benefits. Developing riverfronts will fall into place once the rivers health has improved.
1	The pine Should be cleaner than it currently is, very disappointed with The Pine rivers current quality. People should be able to Safely play in it by now! Vocational education is vital to small town communities.
1	We need to protect our environment. Any pollution needs to be addressed and corrected.
1	We need to reduce the number of CAFO's within Gratiot County, local governments should have a say in what is brought to their community.

**Count    Response**

1	What good is developing riverfronts. with the river being so bad. How about fixing the river first. And improving downtown, should not be redoing things that do not need to be done. There are other things that need to be fixed...
1	cannot believe how scummy the river is. This is Michigan, home of the Great Lakes and waterways. You can't even navigate the river due to all the Lilly pads and algae. Why spend money developing park and recreation when you can't safely boat on River. With a nice riverfront, downtown could be thriving rather than a ghost town. A successful community attracts new residents (people NOT cows) and industry. Healthy recreation helps maintain this. So sad CAFOs are allowed to pollute and destroy environment with no repercussions. Pretty soon we'll all be drinking bottled water like Flint. Business selling local farm products, great. I prefer to buy local. But family owned farms not a factory farm.
1	nice but not necessary
1	number 1 on my list is properly cleaning up contamination and making vacant lots usable. The community cannot thrive and grow without this as a priority.
1	we used to have 3 in the county which left due to declining enrollment and location. No one wants to take college classes in their old high school

11. Based on the previous version of the Master Plan and the input we have received so far, the Steering Committee has developed the following set of draft goals. Please mark the three goals that you think are the most important to Gratiot County.



Value	Percent	Count
Preserve the County's quality rural character – Keep productive farms and healthy natural features	49.6%	130
Strengthen the existing cities, villages, and hamlets - "Placemake" Gratiot's downtowns to ensure that they serve as quality community centers	56.5%	148
Provide quality public services and infrastructure – Carefully coordinate and plan services to ensure quality and cost effectiveness	48.1%	126
Generate and sustain economic opportunities – Retain, attract and grow quality employers and workforce	81.3%	213
Provide premier cultural and recreation resources - Develop Gratiot as a cultural and recreational destination that serves people of all generations	49.2%	129

12. What actions do you think will help support these goals?

industry cities area good  
 local alma  
 attract improve

# working tax businesses community

County Response

2	Community involvement
1	Consistency in the city leaders to grow the city and the workforce In a modern and thoughtful approach. Using the Scotland USA namesake for this whole town and marketing on that would be an amazing start!
1	Adapt to the times. Stop being so conservative. Change will help the community, the local culture, and future generations.
1	Adding local type restaurants to draw the locals to and others visiting from out of county. Maintaining/developing the heartland trail (it is a very good addition to this county)
1	Adequate funding with long term commitments.
1	Again cleaning up the river... more support for small businesses because they can't compete with the big box stores, too many people can't afford to live on what they are being paid in this area
1	All of these goals may require cooperation between different local governments.
1	Allowing backyard chickens, starting a community garden
1	Apply for grants to further develop our county parks. Offer incentives to local employers to hire local people.
1	Being a trustee on the Village of Ashley, i really appreciate the job Don Shurr did to help us and the Agro-Liquid project but the roads from all the semi traffic coming into the village and is really caused damage to our roads and we don't have the funds to replace the damaged roads. Garfield/Sectionline st is in terrible condition between Wisner Rd and Ransom Rd and it would be great to see some of the county road money to help resurface it. I know tax base has always been a factor with anything for us down here int eh southern end of the county but i would like to think our residents should get the same treatment as the northern half!
1	Better use of money spent by the City. City Commissioners need to really take notice of how money is being spent by the City. It's insanely ridiculous.
1	Bike lanes throughout towns and county Support for local theater and the arts Summer camps for kids Working to bring nationally and I ternstonslly renown artists and performing groups in corroboration with alma college
1	Bringing in good businesses who invest in downtown areas and bring some jobs
1	Citizen involvement

Count	Response
1	Clare seems to be finding a blend of maintaining their rural character, yet finding some unique niche businesses like "Cops and Doughnuts" and some nice little restaurants too. I would talk to their planning boards to see what they are doing. It would be nice if Ithaca could become the Clare of the South. :)
1	Clean the river ....
1	Clean up rural communities like Riverdale
1	Clean up the Pine River and other contaminated areas to assure this is a safe place to live.
1	Clean up the city; I have lived in a lot of diverse cities and Alma isn't very attractive: empty buildings, overgrown weeds, bad roads, side walks etc. Maybe lower taxes for businesses or give some incentive for them to move their business to Alma. I worked for a company in St Louis who wanted to expand but said Alma was too expensive.
1	Clean up the river is basic to everything!
1	Clean, healthy River. Get it flowing and clear again. Decrease number of CAFOs, don't allow new ones. develop downtown - look at Clare. New business, maybe one that can turn manure into something environmentally friendly, alternate fuel source.
1	Cleaning up the contaminated areas and grow small businesses and get vacant lots productive
1	Collaboration amongst business and agriculture to support each other. All towns/villages working together for One Gratiot.
1	Committing financially to improve all of Gratiot county..especially the river areas. (No more financing to improve alma and Ithaca)
1	Communities working together.
1	Community College, a board and calendar for all events and recreation with all the cities and county on same page.
1	Complete the opera house in Alma. Improve downtown area with beautification efforts. Free festivities and recreational opportunities. Clean up riverfront and industrial sites for use.
1	Connect the new 127 bike path to the Heartland trail in Alma. Hold those who use chemicals and produce waste byproducts more accountable on how they use and dispose of them.
1	Continue to create an awareness of the value of strong cities and villages within the county. Also continue to utilize the strong bond/bridge that has been created between the industry/business community and the local school districts.
1	Continued marketing/communication that Gratiot County is a good place to live, work & raise a family.
1	Cooperation among cities, villages, county
1	County-wide collaboration and communication.
1	Creation of a county park in northern gratiot. Extension of greater gratiot development.



**Count    Response**

1	Develop downtown areas in cities to attract more cultural events and institutions such as art film cinema venues, and traveling museum exhibits. We shouldn't have to drive to Lansing or Grand Rapids for an art film.
1	Developing a community college
1	Doing more to help people with fresh ideas...instead of making it difficult.
1	Elect someone to replace Snyder!
1	Encourage more industry to help broaden the tax base and provide stable jobs.
1	Everyone working together
1	Expanding the rail trail so that it eventually connects to the Pere Marquette trail in Clare helping to make Alma a cycling destination.
1	Find sustainable solutions to Pine River water quality issues Increase investments in infrastructure and amenities in the County's central business districts Continue recruiting manufacturing business as we have in the past
1	Find ways to attract more industry
1	Get job opportunities to Gratiot!
1	Getting people involved, and that is hard. Anymore people want, but don't want to be involved.
1	Getting people out to vote in local elections
1	Good management of all resources
1	Help industry to grow.
1	Here's the thing that scares me about the above goals, especially when you start talking about public services and infrastructure...you can sell this to the low information voters everyday of the week..and for those in government this is great, as it provides more opportunity to raise taxes and grow government. However, if I wanted to live in a communist utopia, I'd have stayed in Bay County..they have every freaking service known to man, and they tax the crap out of you if you live there. I moved here primarily for my job, however, I love the rural nature of the area, the farms, the fields, the people...AND...I love the low tax rates. You start messing with that and sure, you'll provide all these wonderful services but you will also have to get the money from somebody. I do not want to see this great county and great place to live ruined by a bunch of government bureacrats run amok trying to create some government controlled utopia. Gratiot county works, it's a cheap place to liv
1	I feel that providing premier cultural and recreation resources is an excellent feature to bring in revenue for existing businesses and entice new businesses to our area.
1	I want to see a decent park in Alma for families to utilize frequently.
1	Important to make better laws regarding farming practices to ensure local family farms can prosper. And CAFO's are under control.

**Count    Response**

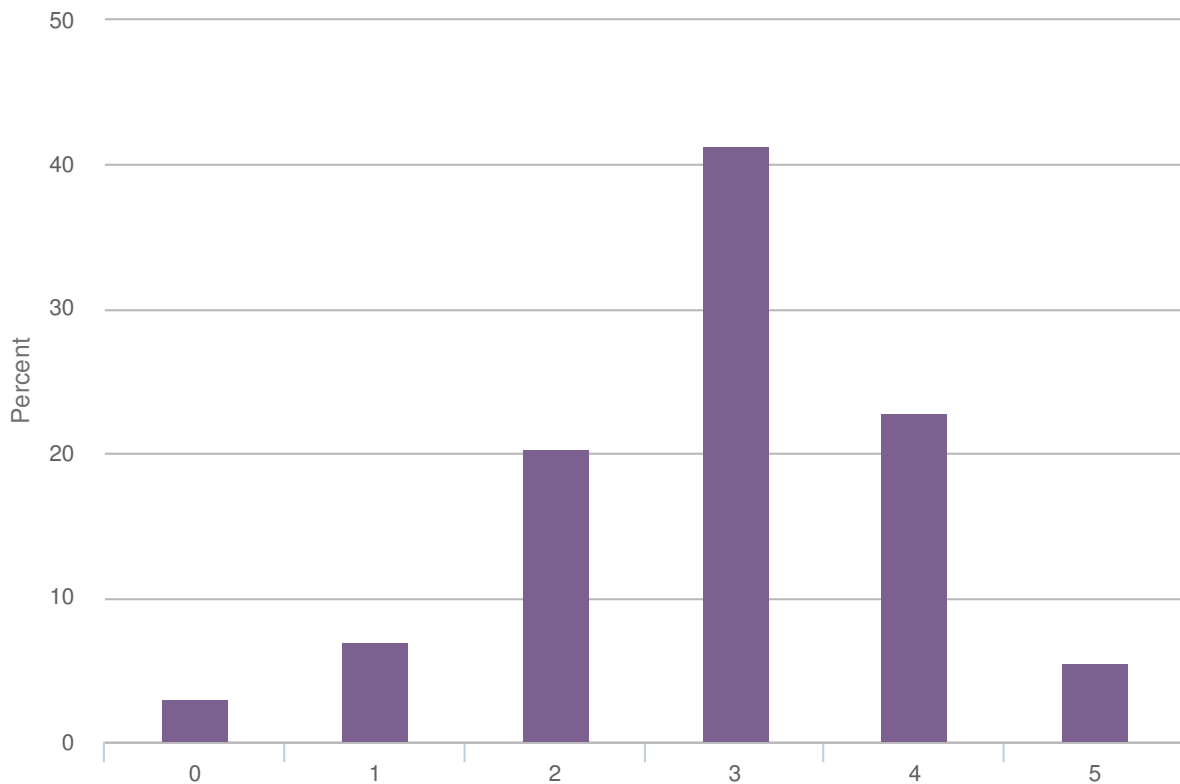
1	Improve high speed internet in rural areas.
1	Improve the officials elected.
1	Infrastructure is primary. Whether is be water treatment, new pipes in streets, etc.
1	Involvement!
1	It would make sense for some of the municipalities to combine services; much like Alma and St. Louis have done with their water board authority. There are way too many duplication of services within this small county.
1	Keep the manure OUT if the river. Less "feed lots & more "organic" farming. Bring the "Downtown" areas back to life. Help by supporting "Mom & Pop" shops. Restore manufacturing jobs. Bring in businesses like alternative energy source companies, etc.
1	Klick sum buts
1	Local govt willing to accept and act on the local citizens input; whether thru surveys like this or other forums. I am on the Gratiot Conservation District Board and would to participate in the Gratiot Master Plan.i have read much of the master plan on the website and In fact, I believe there be some areas in the master plan that the GCD has addressed or completed already.
1	MSU Extension Greater Gratiot
1	Maintain and support what we have started. Then develop them a little more every year till they are the best they can be.
1	Making these cities, villages, and hamlets desirable so we can retain, attract and grow.
1	More money!
1	More resident involvement but I don't know how you get that since fewer and fewer people want to volunteers.
1	My government involvement.
1	No more CAFOs.
1	Our existing institutions and organizations have done a good job in helping Gratiot get to where it is now. However, there is sure to be a change in the workforce, and we need to ensure there are opportunities for young people to stay in the County and fill positions left by retiring Baby Boomers.
1	Pay attention to what is currently working and not the old boys network.
1	Paying close attention to decisions that preserve and protect the county's natural resources and not allow them to be used and abused for personal financial gain. Reutilizing and reusing areas previously developed before expansion and/or new development. A sense of community, pride, connection are important for citizens to to keep the county environmentally, fiscally and culturally strong and viable.
1	Planned collaboration by elected officials and interested citizens.

**Count    Response**

1	Promote technical education opportunities for students of all ages. Work to improve pollution standards for large farms. Save the Pine River
1	Public and private partnerships need to be created to seek sustainable resolutions to issues such as water use, water contamination, and soil contamination.
1	Public involvement
1	Putting more resources into edc and the chamber to market and draw visitors and investors. The chamber receives no monetary support from the community as a whole and it struggles. It's non-profit, but there must be some means to help aside from dues.
1	Recognize the decline in our business and population tax base and behave accordingly. Cease building new, useless, random, "fancy" things. It is recognized that these types of projects are one-off and funded separately by grants but they do not detract from our crumbling infrastructure and still require local funds to write grants, match funds, oversee and maintain these types of projects. Make a centralized, concerted effort to maintain and fix our existing infrastructure. Make meaningful progress toward controlling antibiotic resistant animal waste flowing into our waterways. Either reduce the number of hurdles or develop ways (read: speed up) to better accommodate those seeking to open, improve or expand small businesses in our communities.
1	Reduce fees, taxes, and utility costs for encouraging business growth within brownfields in the City of Alma. Zone accordingly to enhance developments along the Pine River. Encourage low impact development. Work with the County Drain Commissioner and the NRCS to encourage reduction of agricultural runoff into the Pine River. Require low impact development along the river in future developments. Prevent additional industrial use along the river. Relocate Crawford Construction's storage yard on the Pine River to a more suitable location. Redevelop the shoreline wisely.
1	Reduce the number of ridiculous requirements and provide financial incentives to attract businesses and industry to the area, especially in Alma.
1	Resources to provide good jobs in Gratiot County. Take care of and promote our assets: education, river clean up, recreational and cultural opportunities.
1	Stop pushing high wage earners out of town who might want more for the town! That comment is for the City of Alma code enforcement
1	Stop the fertilizer of farms from dumping into the Pine River... Laws against polluting...
1	Stop using money on bike trails and use it to develop additional business and employment opportunities.
1	Support and reward sustainable agricultural practices. Increase taxes to provide funding for infrastructure. Make a plan to attract and support anchor businesses that bring people downtown --food coop like GreenTree in Mt. Pleasant, for example.
1	Support the local farmer, NOT the factory farm. We need to do something with the Ethanol Plant site as well.
1	Tax incentives and infrastructure to draw new industry. Zoning to allow for outdoor dining, benches in downtown areas, camping closer to towns, plus more community festivals and events.
1	The whole county working together.

Count	Response
1	Thinking truly out of the heart instead of thinking what will make you officials look better with bigger pockets. Vanity is seemingly more important than actual problems in thus community. Its disgraceful.
1	This renewed master plan will help. Need to do another Gratiot County Strategic Plan, led by the new Gratiot County Administrator, in order to stay focused on the issues.
1	To help create awareness of events in the community there should be more outreach...using the Internet public forum. Alma does a fairly decent job of keeping the area clean and maintained. As far as rural development and Voc opportunities it is important to create opportunities for our youth and fund those opportunities to create the next generation that will carry on the small town and rural economy that we have and make it stronger. We need to get back to the basics in some areas and have people who know and care about these areas lead the way in the development of these programs.
1	We put too much emphasis on the farms. They buy up all the land and make it almost impossible for people to build new houses in this area. The towns stink from the smell of all these big farms and they are ruining the quality of life in some places.
1	Well I hadn't planned on this question or prepared an answer.
1	What you are doing with this initiative, coupled with funding & follow through of plan.
1	Wise spending and open minded leadership
1	Work on fill empty storefronts, attracting new residents, and keeping tax monies low enough to keep residents in Gratiot County, as well as continuing to work with area schools and colleges to keep new students/families enrolling in classes and staying in our communities. Keep law enforcement on top of drug crimes in our communities so residents feel safe.
1	Work together.
1	an historic dept/director
1	clean up the river so it could be used again like it was when I was younger. Told some people about the boat races on the river and they didn,t think anything like that could have happened.
1	new business
1	utilize land in and around cities and villages for development - avoid development in the farm areas.

13. Generally speaking, do you think the community has been heading in the right direction or gotten off track?



14. Generally speaking, do you think the community has been heading in the right direction or gotten off track? - comments

Its more as a culture than a community that I feel has gotten off track.

*Gotten off track.*

In the right Direction

A little off track

??

Just moved here

CAFOs have been bad for the county.

Gary knows the path to take to make this area better...

Haven't lived here long enough to know

My time of occupancy in Gratiot County is not sufficient to make a determination.

**Count Response**

1	??
1	A little off track

**Count    Response**

1	As a citizen for more than 25 years, my husband and I have always worked in namely Alma, I really see very little growth.
1	CAFOs have been bad for the county.
1	Communities are improving and marketing themselves, making infrastructure improvements as finances allow, and generally doing their best to make Gratiot County a good place to live and do business.
1	Community doesn't seem to be "heading" anywhere. Stuck in neutral. No vision. Major achievable things need to happen --like accessible internet for everyone; wifi hotspots; better use of the internet to communicate with residents keep them informed
1	Each year we see less and less community involvement in events and special projects; always fall to a few
1	Elected leaders at village, city, and county need to get together more - continue to work on common goals.
1	For the most part I believe that we have good intentions but there seems to be alot of "talking" and not much action.
1	For the most part, the community seems to be heading in the right direction. Not to pick on Alma, but they need to take more pride in their City.
1	Gary knows the path to take to make this area better...
1	Gotten off beam because of the economic climate but generally heading in the direction I think is important, which is -- more ecologically responsible approach to life and living and opportunities.
1	Gotten off track.
1	Gratiot County does not focus on bringing in businesses that require college degrees. People with degrees have difficulty finding quality housing to purchase that is comparable to what they are accustomed to in the bigger cities. People with degrees tend to earn more money who then buy bigger houses and pay more taxes on those houses and spend more money in their communities. When there are no jobs or housing in the area, the county misses out on a large revenue stream.
1	Haven't lived here long enough to know
1	I have been very impressed with this community and the vision of the local leaders in the 9 years I have lived here.
1	I have noticed some improvements in the right direction. I feel there still needs to be a greater focus on attracting business to the downtown area (especially for the college students), riverfront development, middle income apartment/condo housing for professionals, and attracting chain casual dining restaurants to the business corridor on Wright Avenue.
1	I moved to Alma in 2012 and was in love with it here. I feel the city has gotten worse in the 4 short years I've been here. The sidewalk program has made me so disgusted with the city between the cost and the poor workmanship I have little faith in the governments decisions. I do like that we have curbside recycling and yard waste pick up in city limits. It would be nice if recycling could extend or become mandatory for the entire county so we could do our environmental duty. I also wish there was more initiative to do something with all the empty buildings in Alma (Kmart, IGA, the old Family Video, Family Fare), the city is beginning to look run down. If we don't take care of these run down areas then I believe criminal activity will increase.

Count	Response
1	I've only been in St. Louis for 2.5 years so I don't feel qualified to answer this question.
1	In the right Direction
1	Ithaca has a nice relaxed, rural atmosphere and a little shopping for necessities. Finding places to eat out other than fast food joints is basically nonexistent though. I don't know why our downtown can't be a little more robust. We need to find a niche that will attract locals and out-of-towners in order for the downtown to grow.
1	Its great to see all the new sidewalks going in all the towns but it sure would be nice for some of us less fortunate cities/villages have help with writing grants to also be able to improve with.
1	Its more as a culture than a community that I feel has gotten off track.
1	Just moved here
1	My time of occupancy in Gratiot County is not sufficient to make a determination.
1	Need good services for aging population, but also increased work possibilities for young so they do not leave the area. Rural activites should be encouraged to draw people here for near home holidays and sports.
1	Need to expand local job opportunities for local area residents. I believe this can be done through an entrepreneurship and Vocational Technical Training.
1	New leadership on the county commission seems to be helping. Greater Gratiot continues to lead us in the right direction economically. School leadership seems to be lacking.
1	Not sure about this stuff in Alma. Putting a walk bridge next to a bridge with a sidewalk... Trying to make everything look nice, yet there is a "shit" plant outside of the city on a main road coming into town. Between that and all of the manure being dumped around the area. No wonder people are not coming to highland festival, among other events. Who wants to come smell all of that. It never use to be that way. It is just nasty. This year has not been as bad. I am afraid to say that. But what good is all of the recreation if the river is nasty and the air is nasty... Main reason I am even looking to move out of here.
1	Off track. I only notice improvements benefitting alma and Ithaca.
1	Pine River is a cesspool. Let's get it cleaned up!!
1	Since we are centrally located....we should build, attract, and develop business's without harming our environment.
1	Some of the Tea Bagggers took the county in a bad direction, seems to be headed back to reality.
1	St. Louis is doing a remarkable job, Alma not as well, but the attempt is improving! The loss of small Grocery Stores is heartbreaking! Restaurant choices need to improve!
1	Stay the course, minimum.
1	Talking to local shop owners, they don't feel supported by city government. It could/should be a destination area with cute shops and restaurants. New parks and boat launches - but who wants to go into that filthy water. Big concern with ecoli. Someone is going to get sick and die. Are we going to be the next Flint?

**Count    Response**

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1	The Pine River could be a draw, just as Alma College and the Fred M. Bike Trail are currently. There is a shortage of good jobs and housing.
1	The industrialization of farming and commercial agricultural feeding operations has grown beyond the capacity for the land and waterways to handle it.
1	The right direction but to slowly. There needs to be a real sense of urgency and the local officials need to work closely with the citizens or citizen organizations that are doing the most to get claeen up done and make businesses grow.
1	The river in Alma looks awful I can't believe the area above the dam in Alma and by the golf course the amount of algae and lilies are crazy it stinks so bad. I would love to go down by the river but the smell is just too much.
1	There are a lot of projects in progress around the city. I just wish they would finish one before moving on to the next one.
1	There is tremendous collaboration in Gratiot County.
1	Too hard to work with in regards to new businesses trying to start
1	Too many CAFO's, everything stinks from Wheeler to Alma, to Ithaca. We're covered in waste from CAFO's. This is not good for our community. I know many people are leaving because of these.
1	Wasting money on things that are worthless, footbridge and bike trails by the highway, yet the river is getting worse
1	We are headed in the right direction. New recreational spaces have been created, like parks and trails. Also, there has been great economic progress with the wind developments.
1	We are seriously off track. We can't even see the track anymore. Quality businesses have fled, taking white collar jobs with them, and dollar stores have taken their place.
1	We could use morenpeople getting involved in local groups and governance, and in demanding accountability of elected officials
1	We need coordinated efforts and support all the way up to State and Federal government.
1	We need to do more to bring in business to the area...we always put up roadblocks...something needs to be done about that horrible hotel owned by Mike Pung...it gives our area a bad look...the other hotels are not much better. Most people I know from out of town go to Mt. Pleasant to stay.
1	We need to embrace our College that is here in our town, and make a place for our younger generation to feel proud of their city.
1	We need to entice more business to come to Gratiot County. More good resturant chains and keep what we have from closing up taking employment from the area.



Count	Response
1	We need to interest more qualified people to run for public office. As a county we really need to pull together to get the Pine River cleaned up!
1	needs to preserve more

15. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to add?



Count	Response
2	No
1	A community panel of residents to bring cultural events into town might be helpful.
1	A vast majority of side streets are badly in need of repair. This cannot be stated loudly enough. There has been great attention given to contamination issues and it seems a lot of attention has been diverted from streets. The crew that did yard replacements did a pretty poor job in my opinion.
1	Alma has a very large high school & seems to be losing student numbers. More vocational classes could be added to expand educational opportunities for future employment opportunities.
1	Alma is doing a good job.
1	Already did in earlier section

**Count Response**

1	As a college town and Highland Festival as a couple big pulls for Alma's community, it is such an let down that we have no new family chain restaurants (Applebees, etc.). Our current restaurants are ok, but I believe that a lot of community members along with me drive to Mt. Pleasant to dine for a better variety. I would love to see an actual large mall. That is something that no close counties have. My suggestion would be to purchase the farmland across from Dollar Store, Tim Hortons. We need something to draw in continuous shoppers. I'm not sure that it would hurt the down town area stores; it may give them more business as many like to shop quaint stores. I think a type of Chuckie Cheese business or other family, teen and child venue would be great.
1	As a senior citizen new to the area, I am really taken by this town and would hate to see it lose its quaintness.
1	As school districts in the county have fewer students, districts may need to cooperate more to provide services for students.
1	As small as this community is, the practice of turning a blind eye when it doesn't affect you and yours personally is appalling. I would never have dreamed when we researched the statistics of Alma before moving here that it was all a facade. We are extremely disappointed in the decision making and the priorities this prejudice and judgmental community has and instills in their youth. Alma, itself, will lead to its own demise.
1	Attracting business and people to move to our County is very important. The County could use more quality subdivisions for people to build homes.
1	Breckenridge seems to be forgotten in the county. We have a great Industrial Park, and Agricultural Park, the first of its kind. Why does it seem that we are left out when the money gets passed around? For example, why don't any of the Parks and rec monies come back to Breckenridge?
1	Clean water
1	Cleaning up by the river so you can actually see it is wonderful.
1	Dismantle the Michigan Right to Farm Act.
1	Gratiot county, especially Alma, needs quality family dining facilities. We've got too much fast food and not enough family restaurants. How about something that would utilize local meats and produce?
1	Hopefully, if Trump wins the election he will focus on bringing jobs back to the U.S. I hope Gratiot County will capitalize on that if Trump follows through. With jobs in local areas, comes increased spending, increased property values and increased (but not too much) traffic from external sources.
1	I already filled out the survey but forgot to add: We should be putting in a Chain hotel by the US127 on ramp in Ithaca. There is no good Chain hotel between Lansing and Mt. Pleasant. This would bring many people to the area that would otherwise not stop in Ithaca. These people need food and sometimes entertainment, both of which we have in the Ithaca/Alma area.
1	I appreciate the continuing collaboration between the community and Alma College (especially concerning the Pine River pollution - eventually it will affect our drinking water)!
1	I grew up with a junkyard along the best real estate spot in Alma. Glad to see it is gone. My dad shopped at Little Rock and I'm sad to see times have changed so much. That property should be developed.

Count	Response
1	I really like living in Alma. The people are wonderful.
1	I would recommend that the school leaders be contacted to find ways to more effectively give the students a chance to voice their concerns regarding local recreation opportunities. Their views are indeed valuable.
1	If a local city income tax is being considered, that would be a bad idea.
1	It would be nice if local media could do a better job of vetting local candidates.
1	It would be nice to see Gratiot County expand it's investments and interests into the east end of the county to include economic opportunities and recreational parks.
1	It would have been nice to try to make the old lumberyard a Farmers Market...the area currently being used for the Farmers Market is not popular. It is too hard to walk on the grass, especially for older people. I see no reason why it was moved from the original spot...plus it brought more people to the actual downtown. Starting to think the Opera House area will never be done.
1	Jane Keon for sainthood.
1	Less low income housing and dollar stores...build up existing homes for low income to afford and provide ownership and develop job skills. Dollar stores drive out family business. Towns need to offer more family friendly events in the evening..similar to the recent evening in Alma.
1	Look, I'm gonna be blunt here, Gratiot county is a great place to live...you want to attract industry and services..keep the taxes low..don't go all we need more government. That path is the easy one to go done..think outside the box. To put it very bluntly...DON'T SCREW UP A GOOD THING!!!
1	Making things pretty does not hide the fact, that things need to be fixed...
1	N/A
1	Need to "cleanup" the east side of Alma. It is very unattractive and sends a very negative impression of the city. Using Frankenmuth as an example, it is beautiful driving into the city from all directions. The city of Ithaca does a much better job of making its community more attractive.
1	Needed: more senior housing, better publicized and expanded resources for our transient population (provide help and they will stay and begin to contribute), drug treatment facility with proactive intervention programs, more coordination between and publicity for government and faith-based community programs, additional truancy intervention with family support.
1	Nice community
1	No thanks.
1	None
1	Overall Gratiot is a great place to live. I think there needs to be more people regulating our local government offices and monitoring the decisions that they make.
1	People are bored here...we need to bring people into our cimmunity not send them out of town...we have little to nothing keeping people here...low paying jobs....no restaurants worth a damn and no recreation.

**Count    Response**

1	Please clean up the river. That is basic for the health of EVERY aspect of this county.
1	Please do something about the Pine River! It has become an eyesore and an embarrassment when it should be a point of pride and a source of recreation.
1	Remember we are ALL apart of Gratiot County. We need to make a concerted effort to include and consider all townships, villages, towns and cities when determining where to focus our projects.
1	Some good ideas lately with the street festival and rec opportunities. However some embarrassments with buildings not being completed. Maintain the charm and history of downtown but still need to modernize with some bike lanes, alternative energy and better town websites.
1	Suitable infrastructure is key for attracting additional/new businesses to the community. Much infrastructure is out dated or still being developed with an "old school/Boys' club" mindset. Attracting young minds and diversifying government agencies will benefit the community greatly.
1	Support the Healthy Pine River group and protect the area as a rural, family community.
1	Thank you for asking input and putting energy into this.
1	Thank you for letting us have input into this.
1	Thank you for this convenient opportunity to gather feedback, to give input and for the hard work that is happening on behalf of the county and it's citizens.
1	Thanks for opportunity for online input
1	Thanks to all who are taking action to make our area a better place to live...
1	The 181 drain that has been a pain in everyone's side let alone being a financial burden to all the landowner's, really seems like a waste of ALOT of taxpayers money that could of been used else where. Unless the maple river is cleaned all the way through to Ionia all thats going to happen is things will flood worst down here in the south.
1	The City of Alma has made sure we are as uncomfortable as family could be living here!
1	The overall economic health appears to be good! I can say I am proud to live in this area!
1	We don't need more government regulation or federal government involvement. We need local groups to be created which will police themselves in the best interests of the county and community.
1	While I believe farming to be an important industry for Gratiot County the CAFO's & other large farming operations not classified as a CAFO are destroying the county roads. It doesn't matter what area of the county you are in, it is evident. The county residents should not have to suffer paying higher taxation to fix the roads nor should we have to travel on roadways that are not safe or destroy our vehicles.
1	Would be nice to have more people interested in helping out around town. My husband and I will clean up certain areas of trash when we walk around but having a group that can help clean up the town would be nice. I don't see a lot of pride in the town.
1	Would love to see a chain restaurant and hotel chain come to Alma.

**Count    Response**

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1            You have had years -- wait, decades to clean up the Pine River. Yet you haven't. No sense developing riverfront when the river is unsafe. While I am a huge supporter of higher education, I feel that with the educational opportunities in the surrounding counties, Gratiot can put their own community college on the back burner for now.

1            no

1            no, but thanks for seeking public input.

1            terrible lack of non subsidized housing apartments, condominiums etc. Makes use attack only low income non profesional residents