PORTLAND CENTRAL CITY TASK FORCE SURVEY RESULTS

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OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY

Survey Design   InCommon Agency and the Oregon Business Council

Survey Distribution   Published on the Task Force website and in the media. Task Force members also circulated the survey to their networks.

Survey Open   September 25th

Survey Close   October 18th

Total Survey Responses 9,198 (Almost 1,000 respondents were from out of state).

SURVEY LIMITATIONS

Tight Taskforce timelines called for expediency in the survey development and analysis, which ultimately resulted in limitations in the demographic representation of survey respondents and the accuracy of the analysis.

Demographic Representation

- Opt-in online survey (faster, more convenient and less expensive) rather than probability-based sampling method.

- The survey responses are thus not representative of Portland area residents (responses skew "whiter" and "older" than the Portland Metro population).

- Further studies should do more direct outreach to populations who were underrepresented in the survey (primarily people of color and 18 to 24-year-old people).

SURVEY LIMITATIONS

Qualitative Analysis: Accuracy and Specificity

- Expedited analysis of over 15,000 open-ended survey responses.

- Only one analyst reviewed survey responses for each open-ended question. Analysts could not perform an inter-coder agreement test (ensuring that each analyst would apply the same codes to the same quotations).

- Analysts used text searches and other Atlas.ti tools that can result in inaccuracies in the absence of an extensive quality control check after an initial round of coding. Time limitations did not leave room for an extensive quality control check or more than one round of coding.

- Analysts used broad code language and descriptions to prevent inaccuracies, but the trade-off of this decision prevented specificity of the analysis.

SURVEY LIMITATIONS

Harmful or Hostile Survey Responses

When reviewing the raw data collected from the open-ended responses of this survey, analysts discovered quotations with harmful, violent, and hostile language. Analysts attempted to code these responses into a "Harmful Response" code so that they are flagged for others reviewing the data. However, time limitations prevented the analysts from actively searching for these responses and ensuring that they are all flagged. Therefore, there may be quotations with harmful language that are not coded as a "Harmful Response".
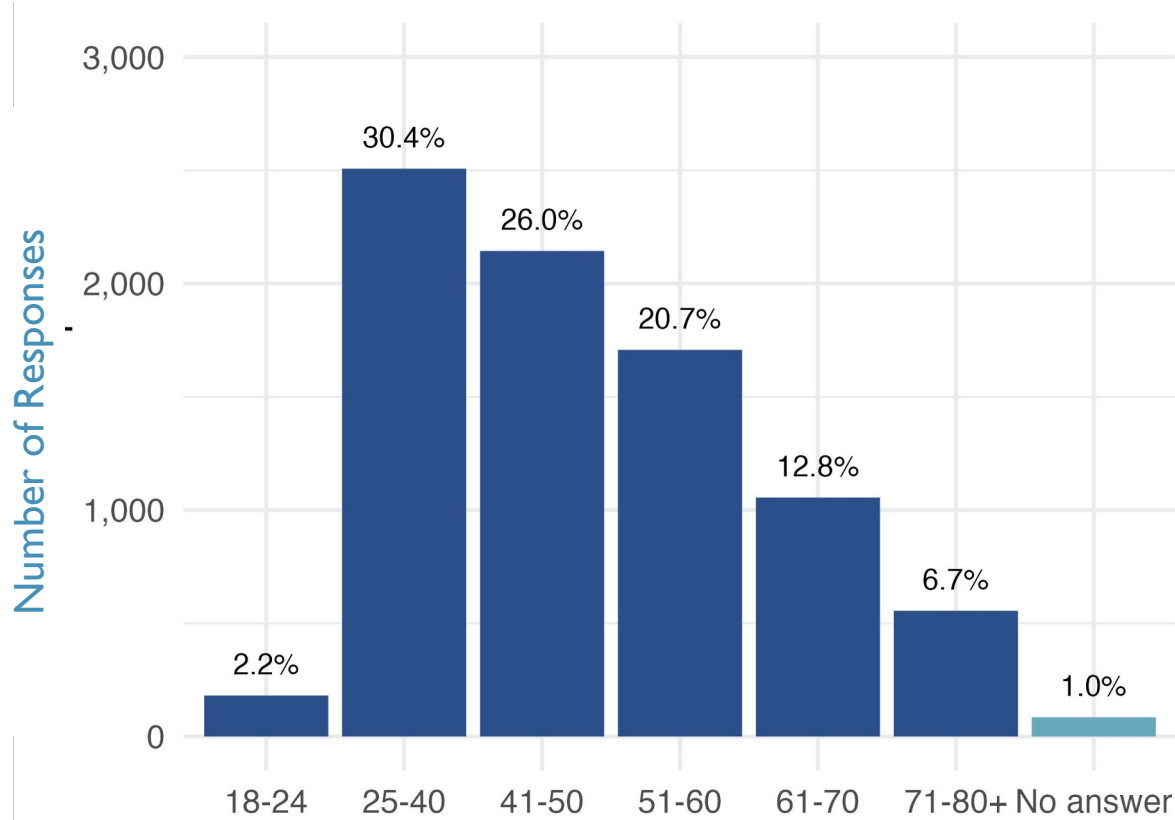
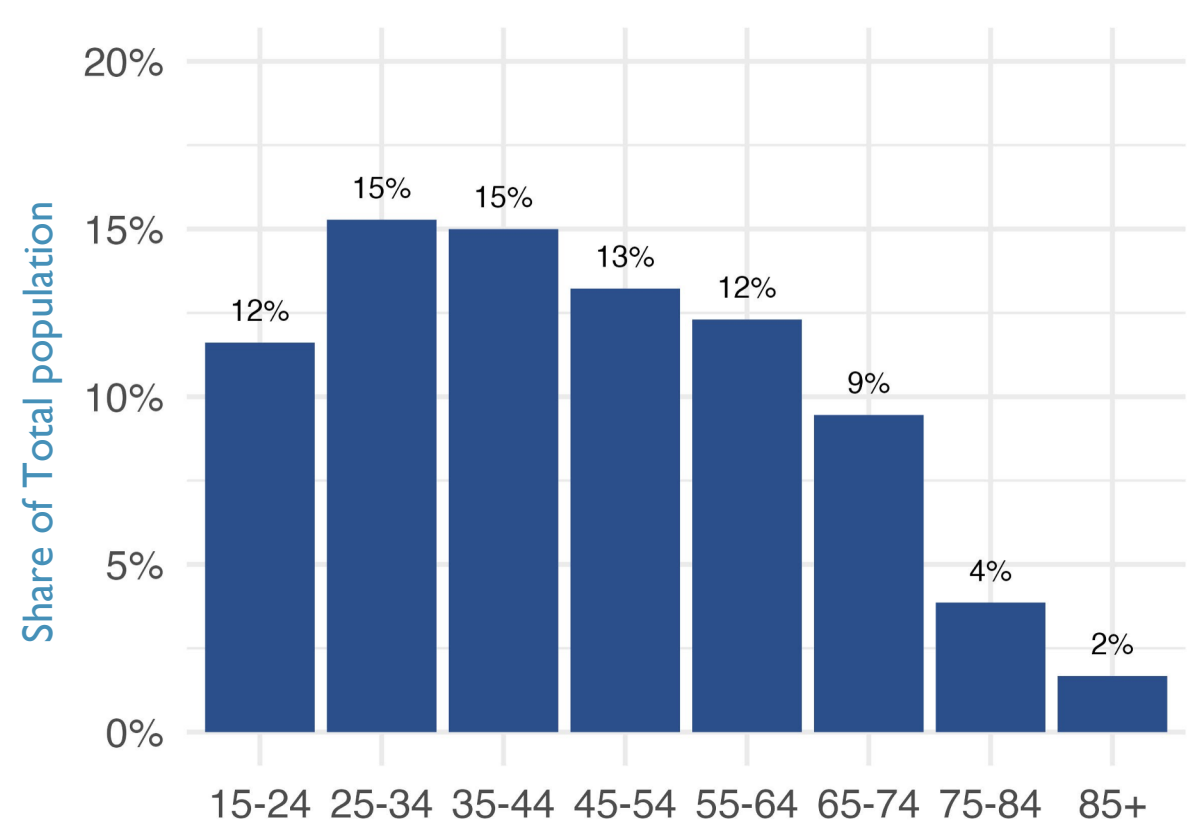See the Methodology Memo for a more detailed description of the survey analysis limitations.

DEMOGRAPHICS

WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY?

Age: Survey Respondents — Number of Responses

- 18-24: 2.2%
- 25-40: 30.4%
- 41-50: 26.0%
- 51-60: 20.7%
- 61-70: 12.8%
- 71-80+: 6.7%
- No answer: 1.0%

Age: Portland Metro Population — Share of Total population

- 15-24: 12%
- 25-34: 15%
- 35-44: 15%
- 45-54: 13%
- 55-64: 12%
- 65-74: 9%
- 75-84: 4%
- 85+: 2%

Survey respondents skewed older than the Portland population.

Race/Ethnicity: Survey Respondents

- White — 77%
- Hispanic/Latino — 4%
- Asian — 3%
- Mixed race — 2%
- Black or African American — 2%
- American Indian or Native Alaskan — 1%
- No answer — 10%

Number of Responses
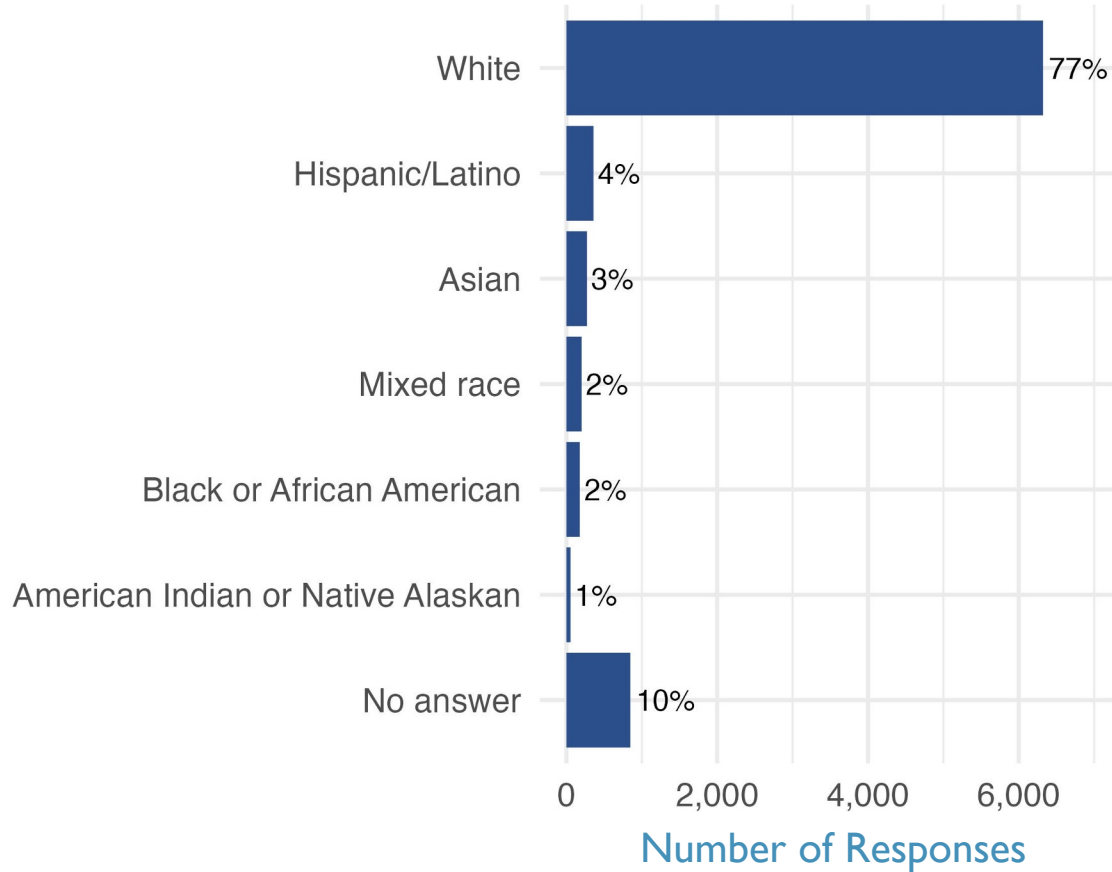
Race/Ethnicity: Portland Metro Population

- White — 71%
- Hispanic/Latino — 12%
- Asian — 7%
- Mixed race — 5%
- Black — 3%
- American Indian and Alaska Native — 0%

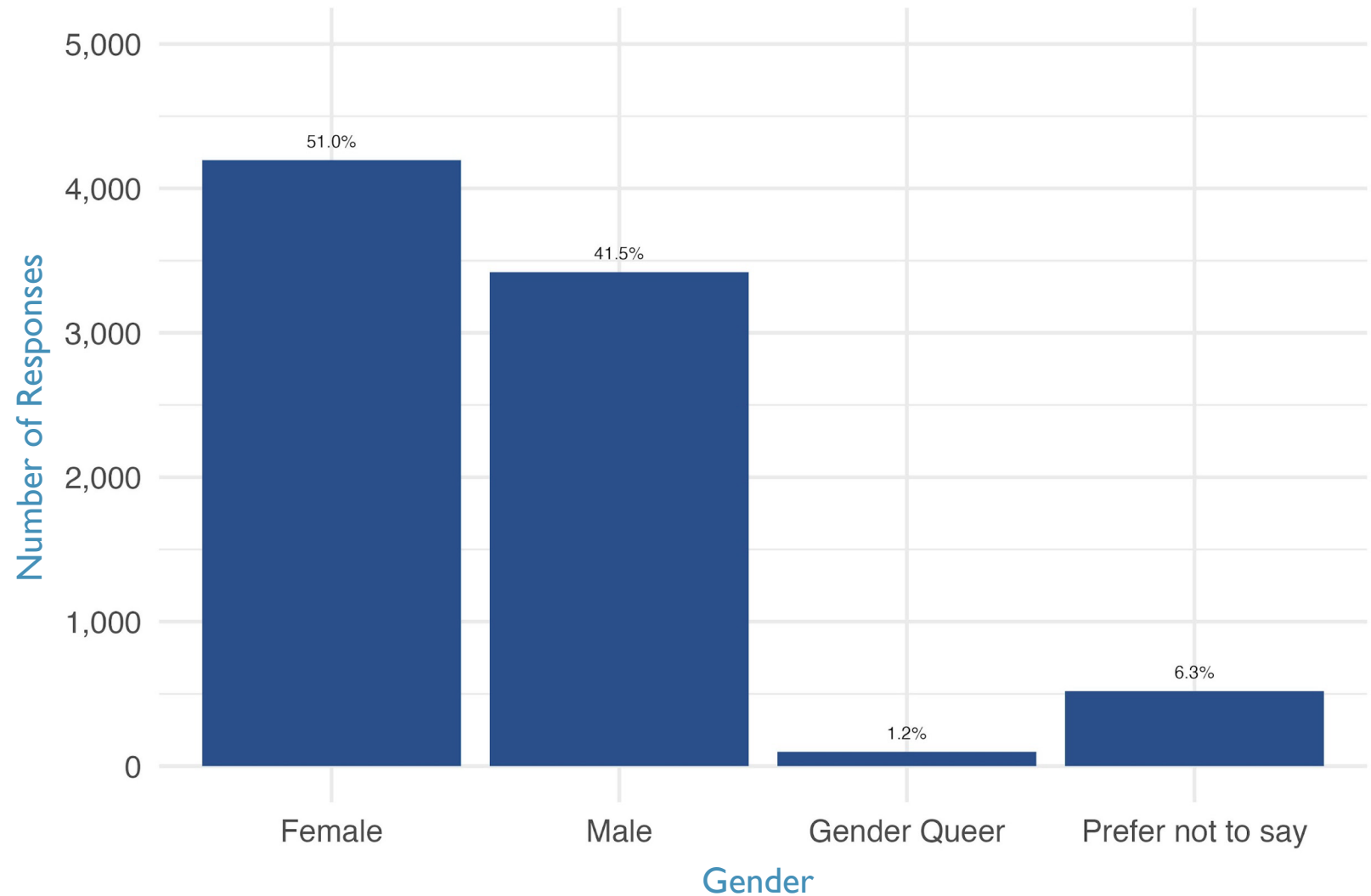Share of the Total Population
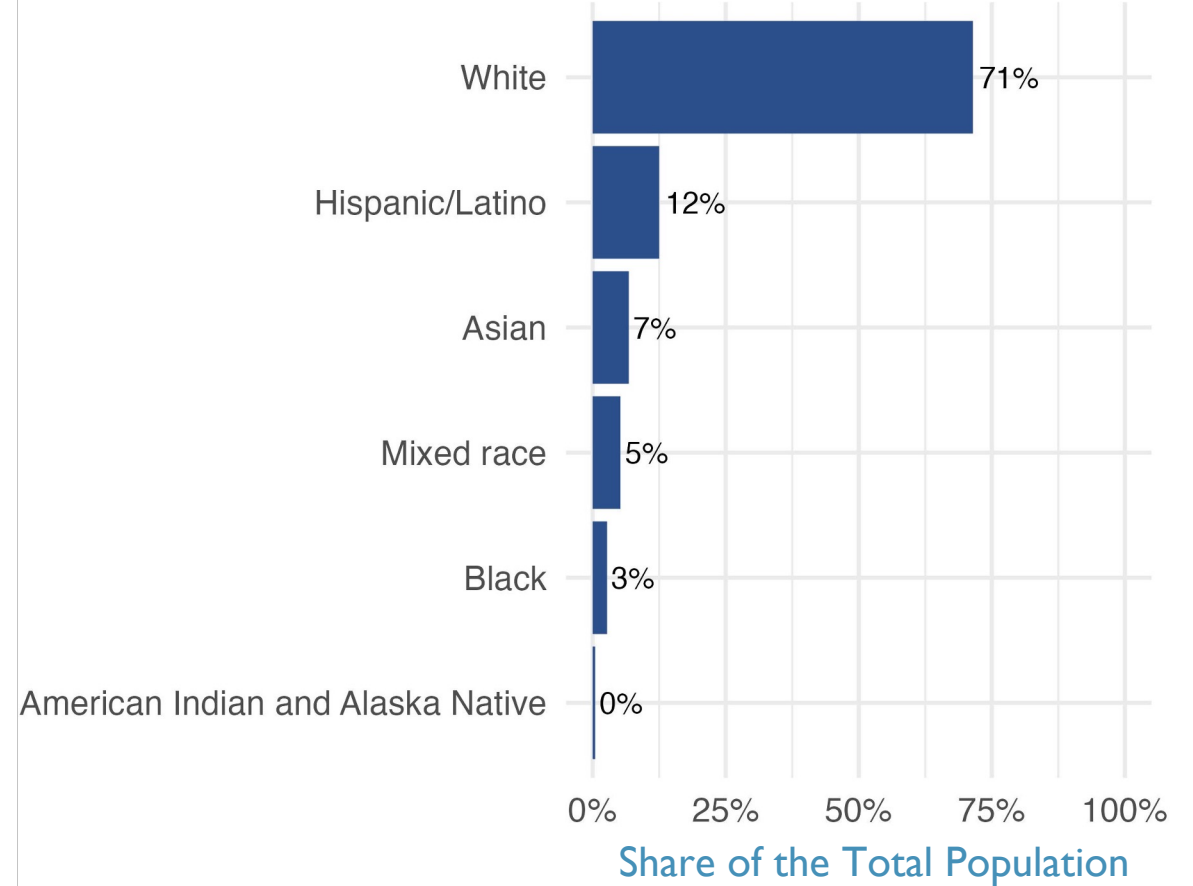
Survey respondents skewed more white (77%) than the Portland population (71%).
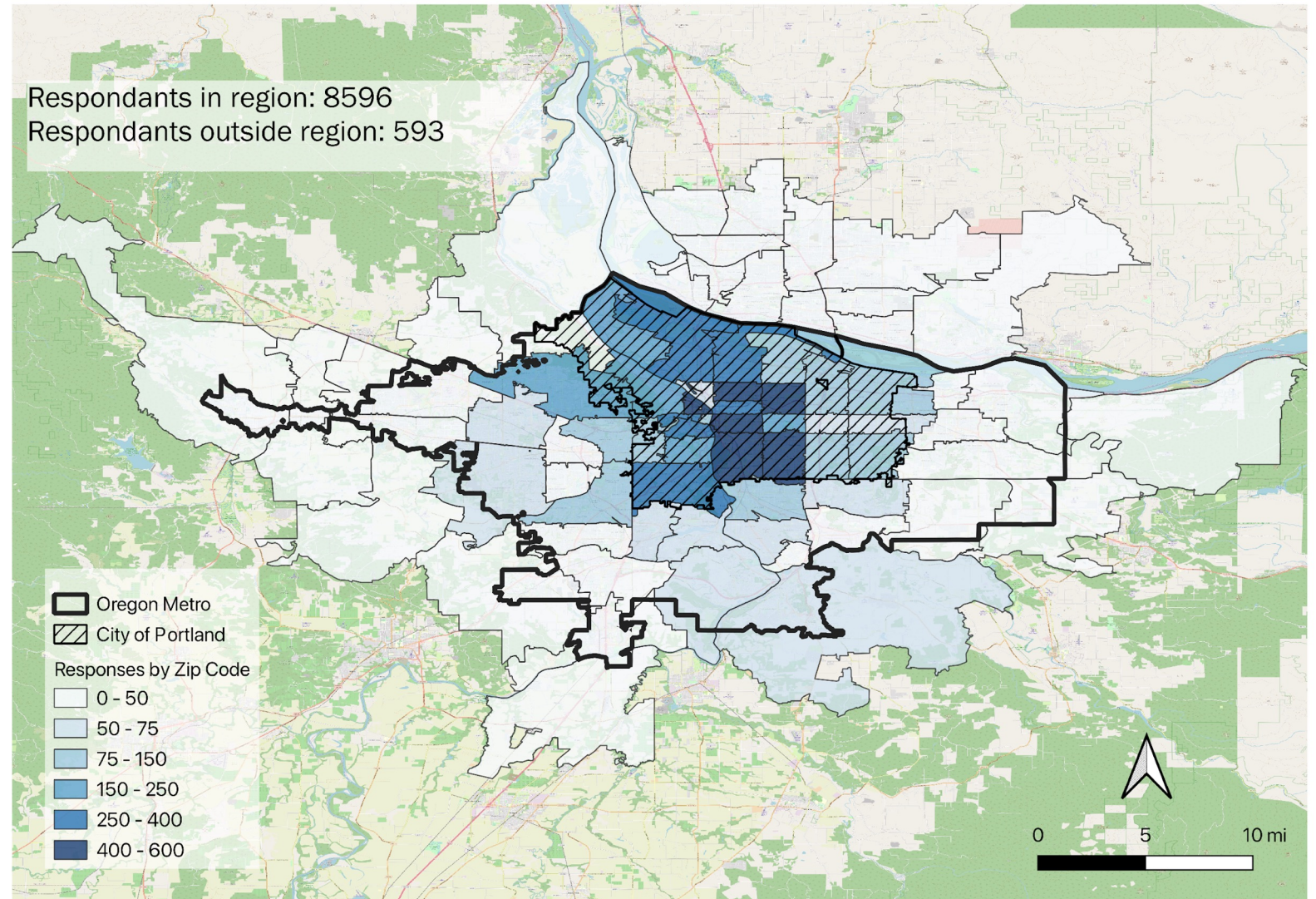
GENDER

More women than men took the survey, which is typical of survey respondents.

GEOGRAPHY

Respondents were primarily clustered in the central area of the Portland region.

Respondants in region: 8596
Respondants outside region: 593

Oregon Metro
City of Portland
Responses by Zip Code
0 - 50
50 - 75
75 - 150
150 - 250
250 - 400
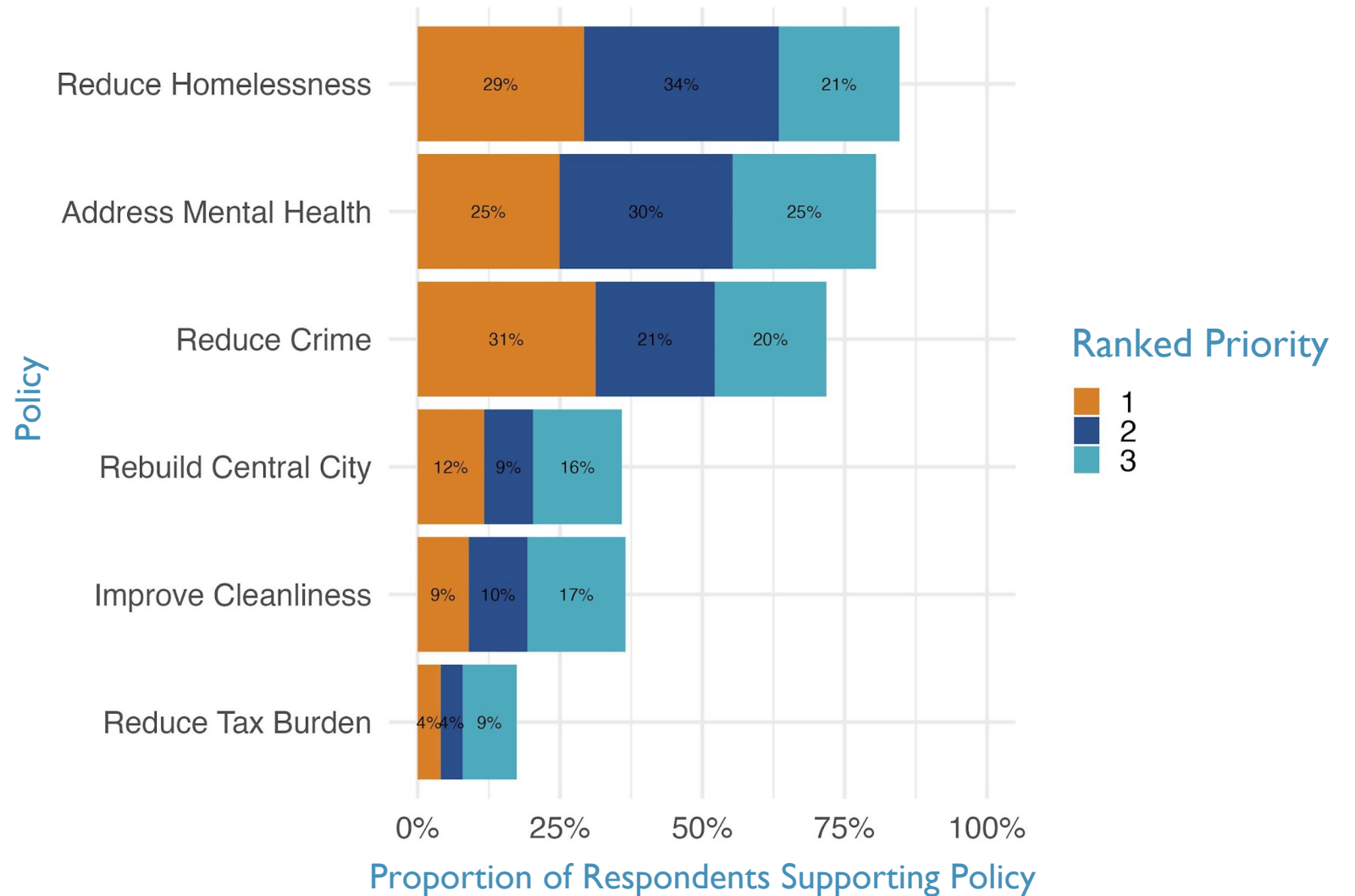400 - 600

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QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

PRIORITIES

The top three priorities for all respondents were:

1) reduce homelessness

2) address mental health

3) reduce crime

These priorities received the highest number of rankings in general as well as the most top-priority rankings.

Ranked Priority

1
2
3

AMENITIES WITH "GOOD RATINGS"

Respondents gave professional sports, restaurants, and food carts the highest percentages of "good" ratings among all amenities.

Amenities with the most "Good" ratings

Amenity	Percent (%)
Professional sports	44%
Restaurants	43%
Food Carts	37%
Arts/Entertainment	30%
Parks and Recreation	28%
Hotels	28%
Festivals	24%
Education	24%
Office buildings	20%
Shopping	16%
Other	7%
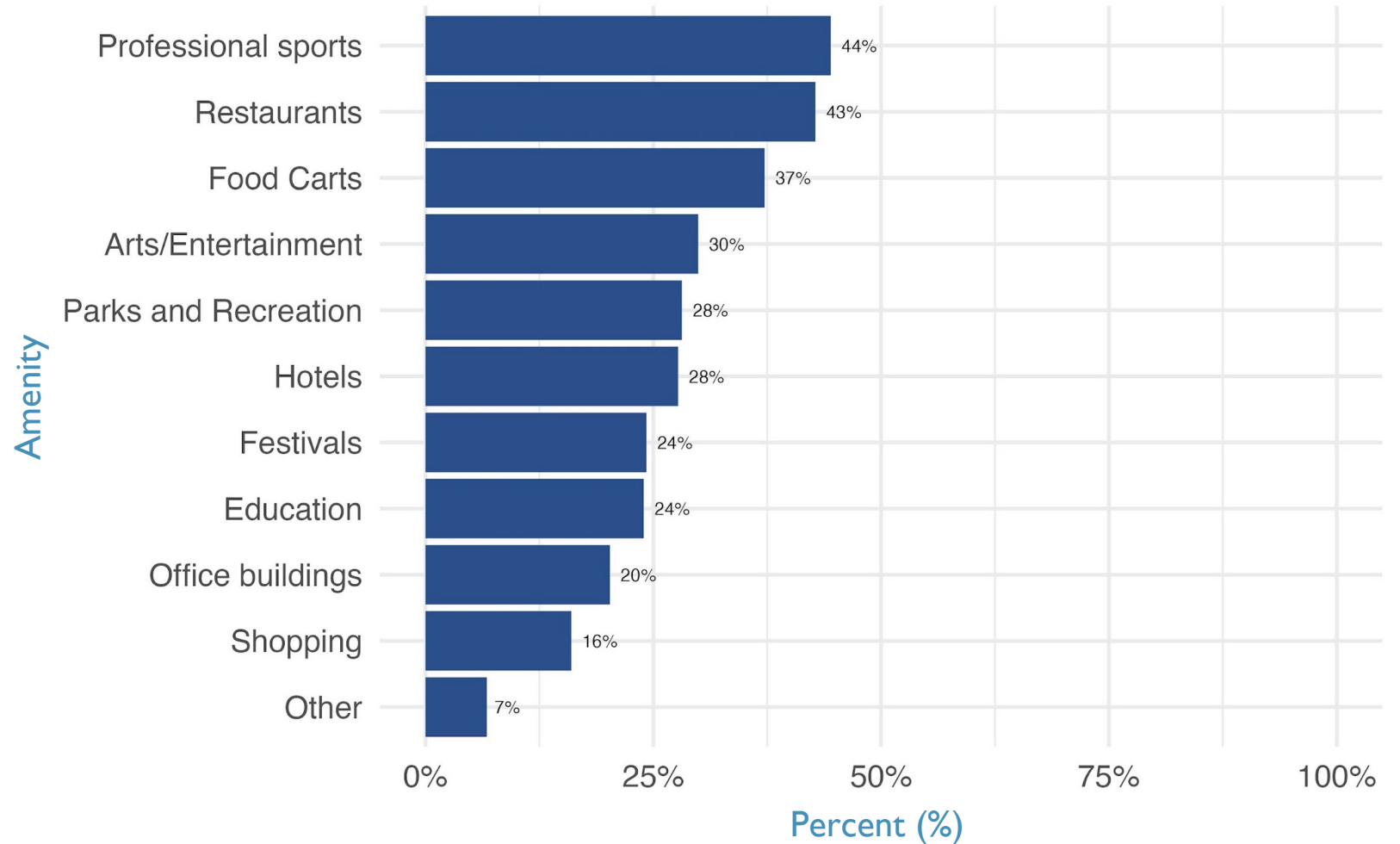
AMENITIES WITH "POOR" RATINGS

Respondents gave shopping, office buildings, and parks/recreation the highest percentages of "poor" ratings of all amenities.

Amenities with the most "Poor" ratings

Amenity	Percent (%)
Shopping	34%
Office buildings	27%
Parks and Recreation	23%
Other	21%
Festivals	19%
Education	18%
Arts/Entertainment	17%
Hotels	16%
Food Carts	13%
Restaurants	13%
Professional sports	7%
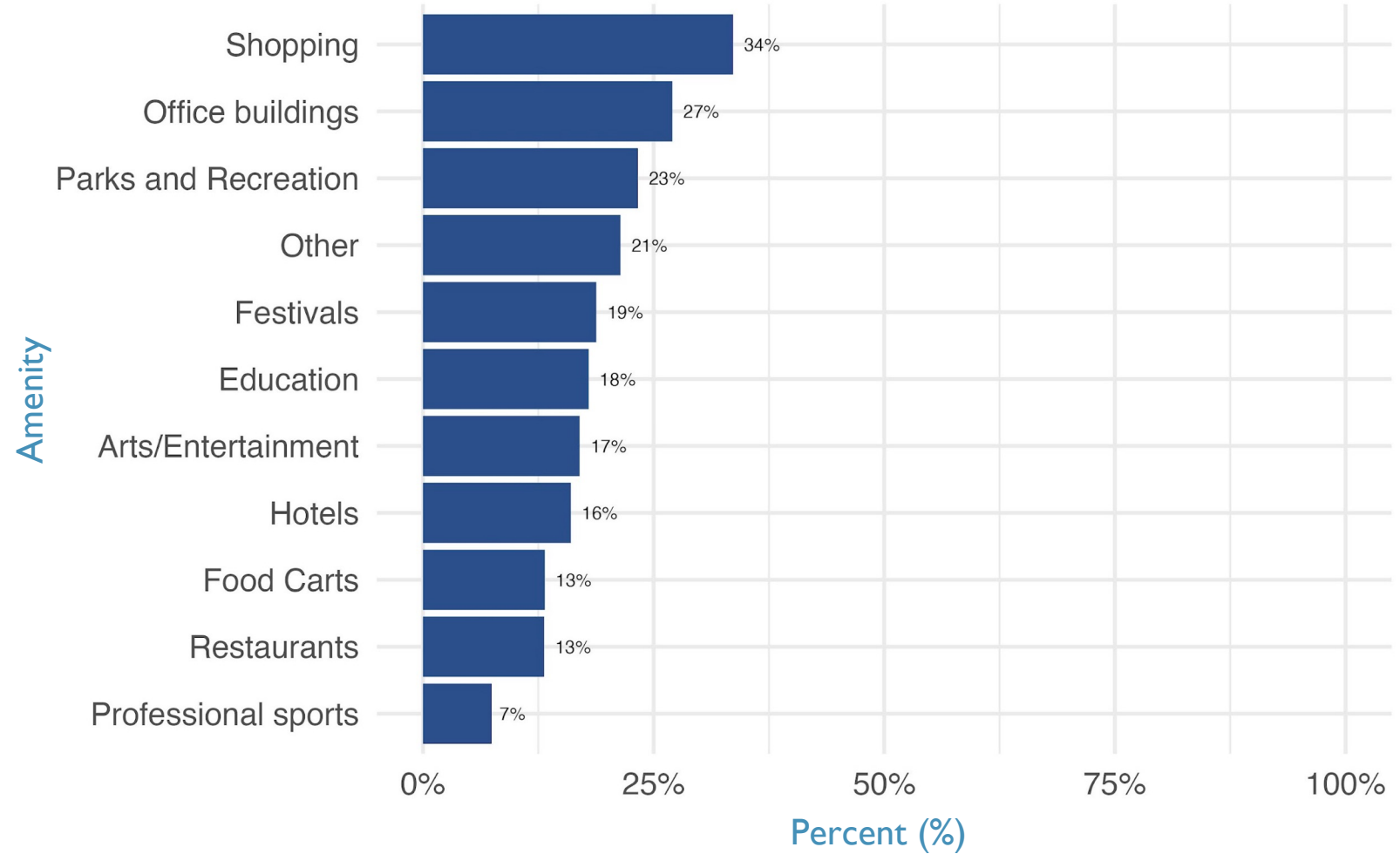
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

The survey analysis found that there were no significant demographic differences in responses to the survey questions by age, race/ethnicity, gender, or geography.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

WHAT THEMES EMERGED AMONG OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES?

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Using both Excel and Atlas.ti (a qualitative analysis tool), analysts coded thousands of open-ended survey responses through both an inductive and deductive coding process that grouped survey responses into main themes and sub-themes. The analysis covered survey responses to the following open-ended questions:

1. What would bring you to downtown or central city Portland more often?　(8,503 responses)
2. What other solutions do you propose to revitalize Portland's Central City?　(6,870 responses)

Answers to **question one** were primarily coded into **"Vision"** codes, while answers to **question two** were primarily coded into **"Action Item"** codes.

Analysts used both a **deductive** and **inductive** approach to coding the survey data. The analysts began with pre-determined codes based on the focus of the Task Force, and then created new codes as the analysis continued and new themes emerged. Atlas.ti allowed the analysts to code survey responses in a limited timeframe using text searches, word clouds, and a concept/phrase finder. The software also provided a code co-occurrence tool that allowed the analysts to identify common crossover between different codes.

Deductive Coding	Inductive Coding
Analysts created codes and subcodes based on predetermined themes.	Analysts created codes and subcodes based on what they noticed in the data.

OVERVIEW OF THEMES AND SUBTHEMES USED FOR CODING

Analysts sorted survey responses into the following themes (codes) and subthemes (subcodes).

Community Environment

- Clean Environment
- Converted Infrastructure
- Land Use/Zoning
- Parking
- Public Transportation and Walkability
- Roads and other Infrastructure

Equity

- Affordability
- General Diversity
- Reduce Discrimination
- Reduce Inequality

Gather/Connect

- Arts/Culture/Food Scene
- Child and Family Friendly Activities
- Riverfront/Parks/Public Space
- Sense of Community
- Shopping

Governance

- Decrease/Increase Public Investment
- Decrease/Increase Tax
- Leadership
- Social Services

Housed and Healthy Community

- Diverse, Affordable Housing
- Reduce Homelessness
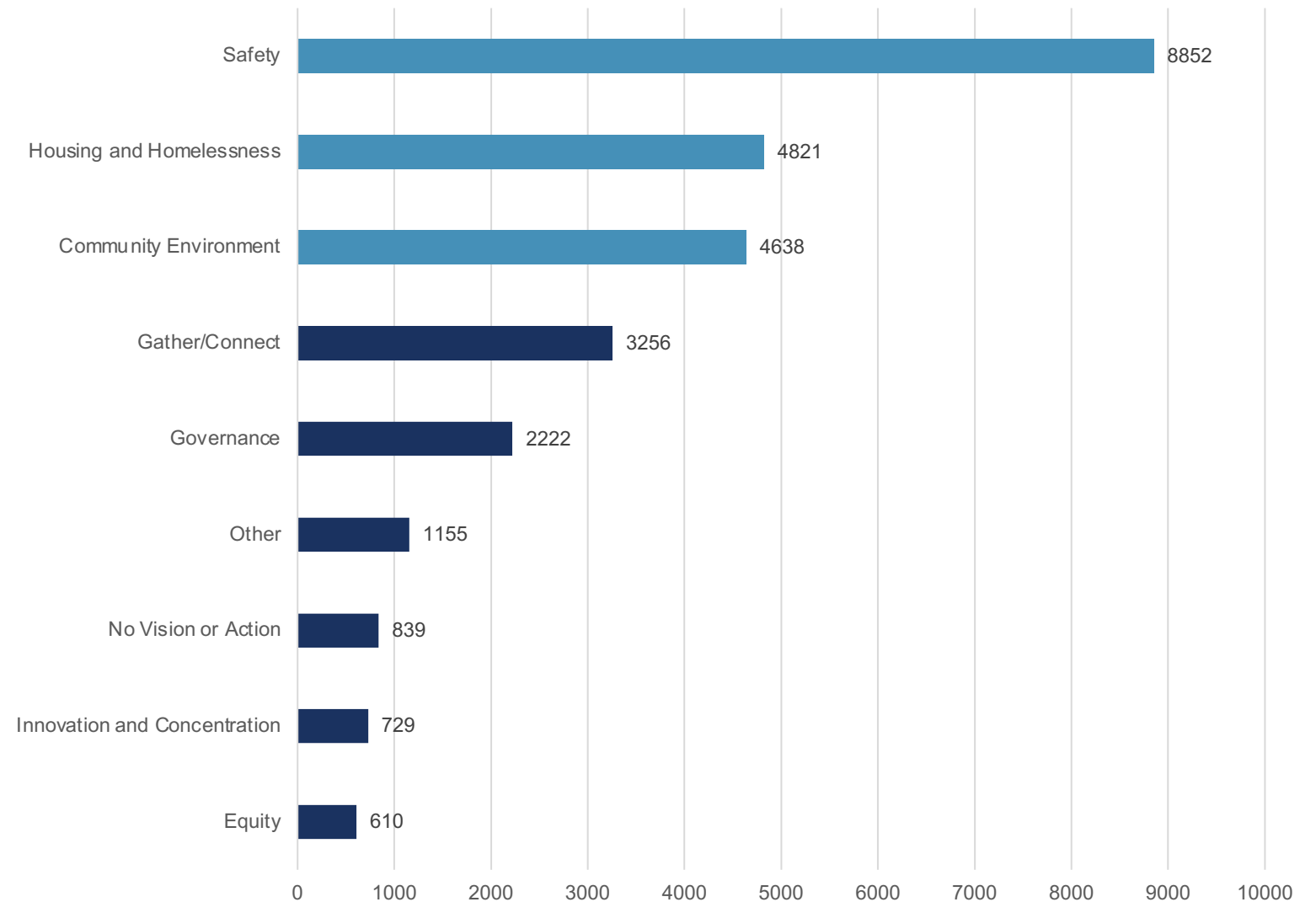- Sustainability and Health

Safety

- Compassionate Safety Response
- Increased Police Presence
- Less Open Drug Use
- Safe Environment

MAIN THEMES ACROSS BOTH QUESTIONS

By far, the most prominent visions and action items were related to desires for a clean, safe environment with less open-air drug use and less homelessness. These concerns were grouped into the top three overarching themes:

- Safety

- Housing and Homelessness

- Community Environment

Main Themes (Both Questions)

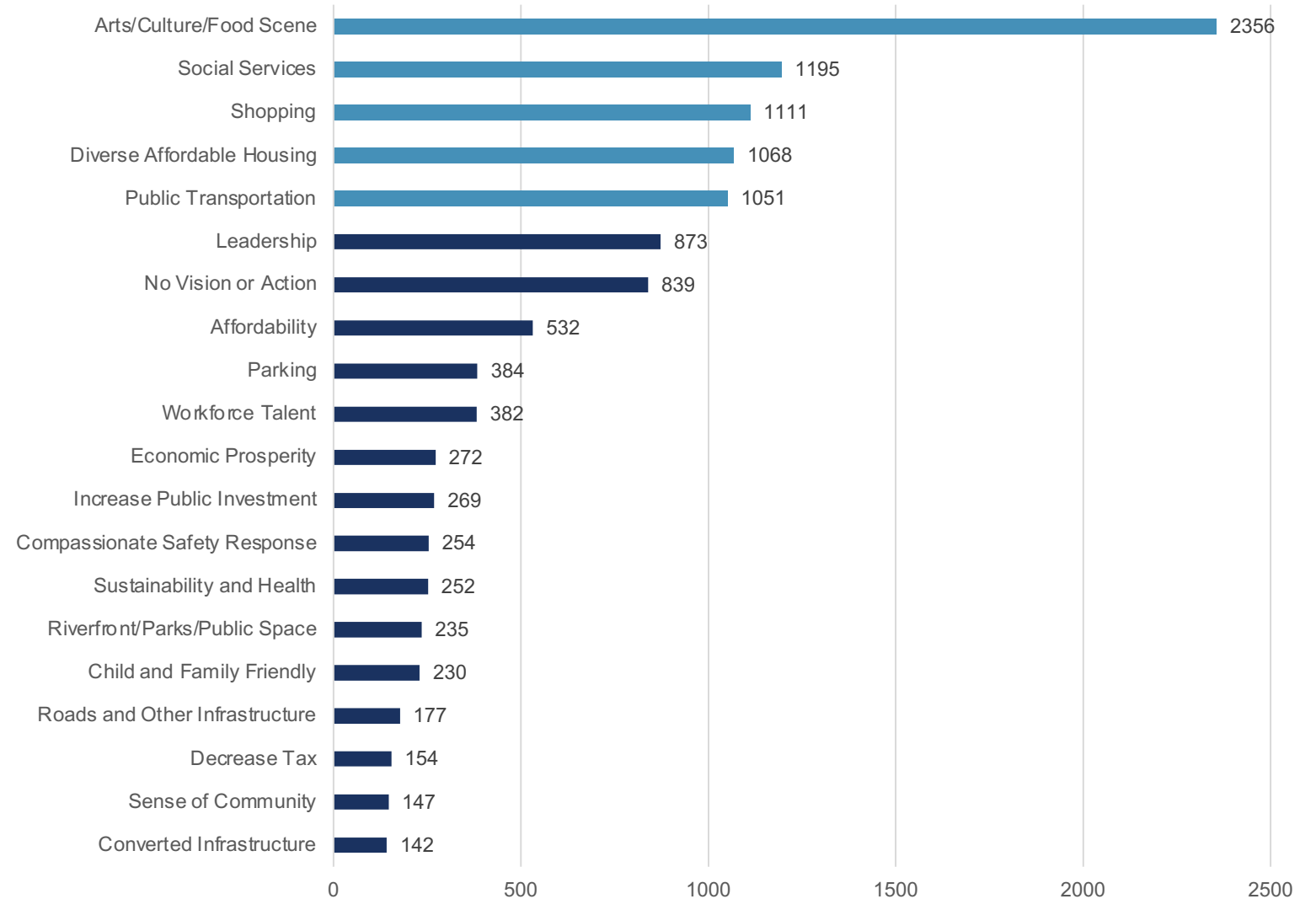| Theme	Value
Safety	8852
Housing and Homelessness	4821
Community Environment	4638
Gather/Connect	3256
Governance	2222
Other	1155
No Vision or Action	839
Innovation and Concentration	729
Equity	610

MAIN SUB-THEMES ACROSS BOTH QUESTIONS

After eliminating themes related to safety, housing/ homelessness, and cleanliness of the community environment, other prominent themes emerged, such as:

- desires for an expanded arts/culture/food scene,
- more unique and local shopping options,
- more social services, and
- more diverse & affordable housing.

Main Sub-Themes (Both Questions)

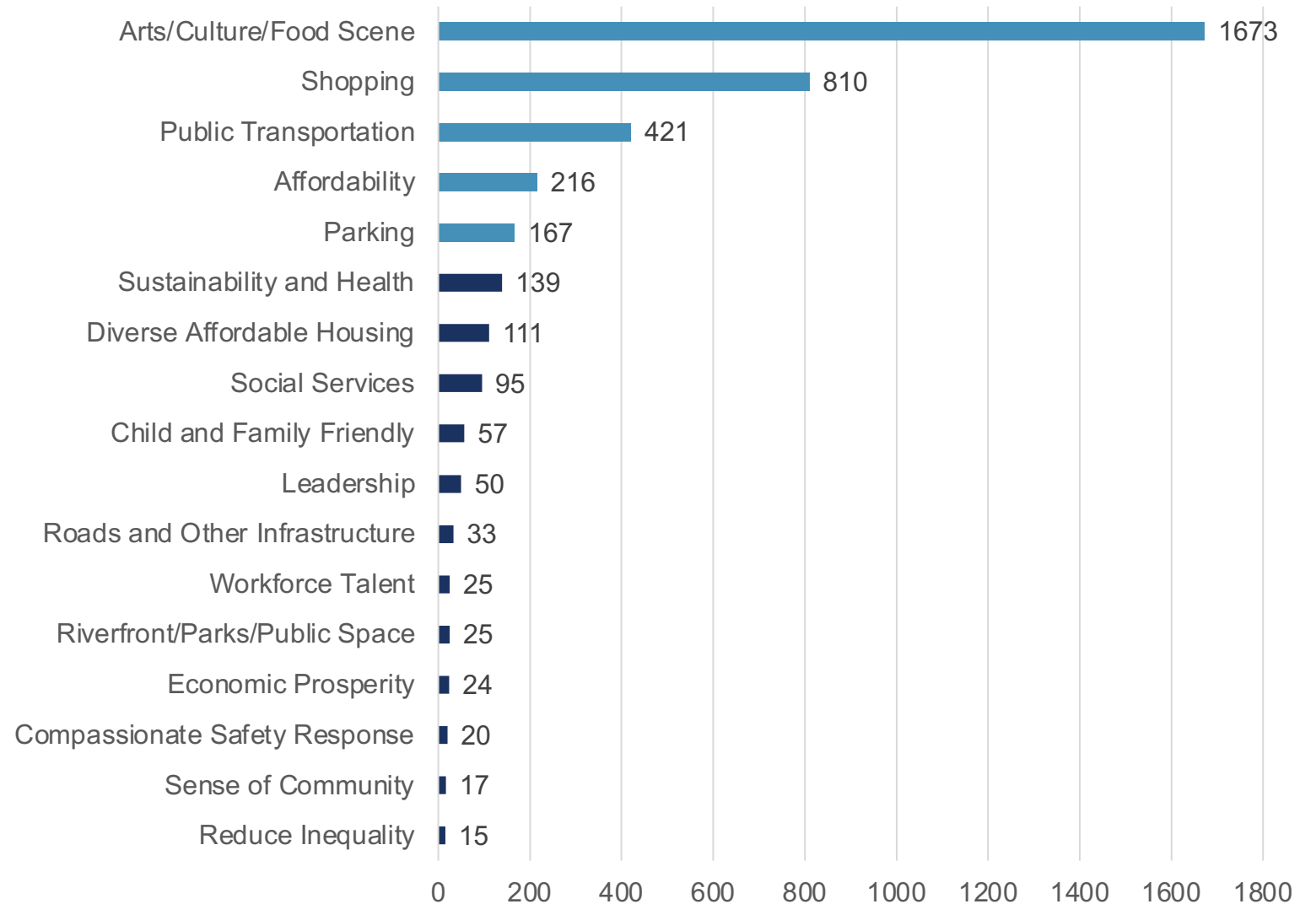| Theme	Value
Arts/Culture/Food Scene	2356
Social Services	1195
Shopping	1111
Diverse Affordable Housing	1068
Public Transportation	1051
Leadership	873
No Vision or Action	839
Affordability	532
Parking	384
Workforce Talent	382
Economic Prosperity	272
Increase Public Investment	269
Compassionate Safety Response	254
Sustainability and Health	252
Riverfront/Parks/Public Space	235
Child and Family Friendly	230
Roads and Other Infrastructure	177
Decrease Tax	154
Sense of Community	147
Converted Infrastructure	142

VISION THEMES

What would bring you to downtown or central city Portland more often?

Respondents primarily noted desires for more affordable arts/culture/food options, shopping options, public transportation, and parking.

Top Vision Themes

Theme	Value
Arts/Culture/Food Scene	1673
Shopping	810
Public Transportation	421
Affordability	216
Parking	167
Sustainability and Health	139
Diverse Affordable Housing	111
Social Services	95
Child and Family Friendly	57
Leadership	50
Roads and Other Infrastructure	33
Workforce Talent	25
Riverfront/Parks/Public Space	25
Economic Prosperity	24
Compassionate Safety Response	20
Sense of Community	17
Reduce Inequality	15

ARTS, CULTURE, AND FOOD

1,673 Comments

Respondents want downtown Portland to have more **unique activities** and things to do that **foster a sense of community.** This includes festivals, museums, arts, entertainment activities, and dining experiences.

Some specific events and experiences mentioned include: the **Winter Lights Festival**, **movies** and **concerts** in Pioneer Courthouse Square, new **food cart/beer gardens**, **Artist's Rep**, **farmer's markets** on Saturdays, **cat cafes**, and more **Portland Timbers/Thorns** matches.

"Events, and fun restaurants. For first time in years, I'm interested in going to downtown to see the new food cart beer garden. More things that Portlanders love, beer gardens, markets, cultural festivals, etc."

"Concerts and riverfront dining ambience, eclectic environment."

"More events/ concerns/ festivals, etc. that bring a critical mass of people together."

"Artist's Rep opening again, affordable restaurants…"

"More events (ex. Breakside block party), a clean waterfront…"

SHOPPING

810 Comments

Respondents want to see more **shopping options**, businesses (particularly local and small), and **more unique stores**. There is a lot of crossover between the desire for more shopping options and the desire for a safe and clean environment to shop in.

Few respondents mentioned specific stores they want to see, but some said that they want unique stores you wouldn't find elsewhere. There is a desire to move away from national chains.

"The return of a commercial center that offers food, shopping and dining options with safe and clean streets."

"Fewer national chains and more locally owned unique restaurants."

"Sports, walkability, shopping, restaurants."

"Unique shopping and food with easy access."

"Shops that only exist downtown but nowhere else."

"Local shops that are affordable."

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (421) AND PARKING (167)

There is some disagreement between respondents about whether the City should increase parking in favor of cars or decrease parking in favor of public transportation, walkability, and biking access. However, comments calling for more public transportation outweigh comments calling for more parking options.

More public transportation (421)	"More ways to get there easily and safely by bike or transit."
More parking, especially free and safe parking (167)	"More accessible parking - the need to walk more or walk around construction is difficult for those with mobility issues, including older people and people with young children"
Improvements to infrastructure, such as roads, sidewalks, lights (33)	"All new sidewalks to look like Chicago with 1 million flowers plants and trees planted the waterfront just like the river front in Chicago."

AFFORDABILITY

216 Comments

Respondents expressed a desire for more affordability, particularly with parking, public transportation, housing, shopping, and events.

"**Free 2 hour parking**. Lots of other cities do this."

"Reinstatement of **Fareless Square,** small independent local business incubators"

"More **affordable** and family-friendly **festivals, events, and activitie**s."

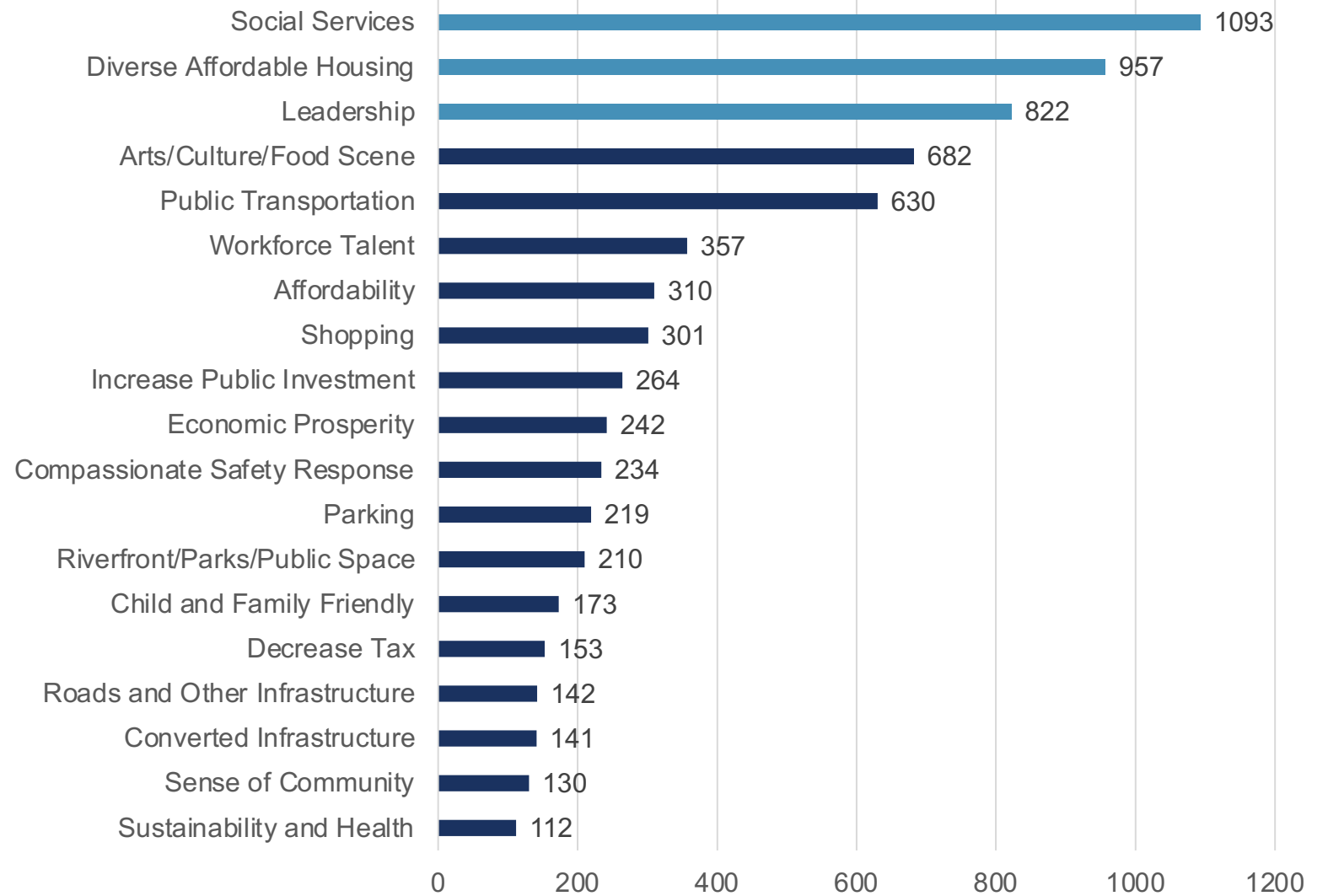"**Affordable housing** so more houseless people have a place to live."

"More **local shops** that are **affordable**."

ACTION ITEM THEMES

What other solutions do you propose to revitalize Portland's Central City?

Respondents primarily called for expanded social services, diverse and affordable housing, and improvements to government leadership.

Top Action Items

Action Item	Count
Social Services	1093
Diverse Affordable Housing	957
Leadership	822
Arts/Culture/Food Scene	682
Public Transportation	630
Workforce Talent	357
Affordability	310
Shopping	301
Increase Public Investment	264
Economic Prosperity	242
Compassionate Safety Response	234
Parking	219
Riverfront/Parks/Public Space	210
Child and Family Friendly	173
Decrease Tax	153
Roads and Other Infrastructure	142
Converted Infrastructure	141
Sense of Community	130
Sustainability and Health	112

SOCIAL SERVICES

1,093 Comments

Several respondents recommended that the City invest in more social services and programs for substance use, mental health, and homelessness.

> "I just want to emphasize that I think it's good that some drug possession has been decriminalized. The next big step is ensuring there is more funding for programs and resources related to addiction."

> "Government funded resources for housing and mental health services…"

> "Invest into people and not systems. Address root causes…"

> "Holistic programs to address trifecta of homelessness/ drug use/ mental health…"

> "Increase funding for Portland Street Response."

DIVERSE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1,068 Comments

Several respondents called for more affordable housing and a diversity of housing options. Some recommended converting office space into affordable housing.

"More houses. More money for housing. More apartments. More tiny houses. More duplexes. More fourplexes. Rezone if you need to. Buy up land or old parking lots if you need to. Build more affordable housing. Get houseless people into houses. Get resources, aide supplies to those in need. Treat people on the street as a medical and public safety issue instead of a criminal one."

"We need affordable housing for single, childless working individuals…"

"Providing cheaper housing, more options than just shelter to house homelessness, ability to access resources…"

"Converting commercial and office space to housing, sidewalk and street seating for restaurants…"

"Convert office space to housing. Go big– plan a festival on the scale of SxSW or Ediburgh Fringe."

LEADERSHIP

822 Quotations

Respondents called for improvements to city leadership, via different methods:

- Collaboration between city and organizational leaders

- Increase public funds for social services (e.g., homeless and drug addiction)

- Better use of current public funding to meet these needs

- Better marketing of downtown narrative

- New leaders in charge

"Gatherings of residents & city commission to work together to develop pilot programs to network solutions. Tracking tools to assure desired results and means to redirect resources for those programs that are determined to not meeting the intended outcome. Redirect resources to other programs that would have a beneficial impact"

"A more responsive city government. No one responds to emails sent to council members…"

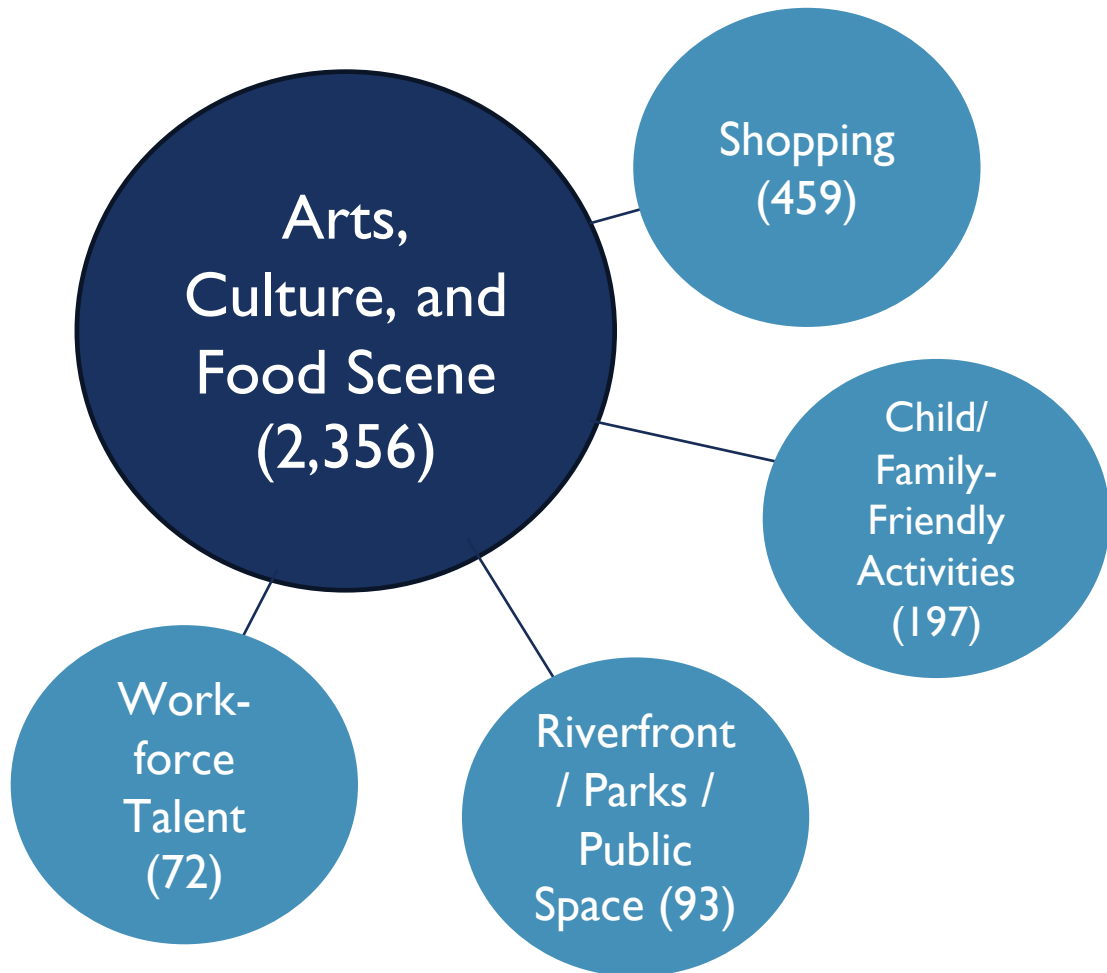City employees and other employees returning to work – bringing more people to the downtown"

"Encourage all levels of government to think creatively on how they can adjust their own policies to move faster."

"Diversity in planning approach, new voices."

NOTABLE CROSS-CODES

Some themes related to visions and action items were often cross coded with other themes. We investigated which topics most often appeared with other topics to see whether there were any notable connections.

ARTS, CULTURE, FOOD SCENE CROSS-CODES

Arts, Culture, and Food Scene (2,356)

Shopping (459)

Child/Family-Friendly Activities (197)

Work-force Talent (72)
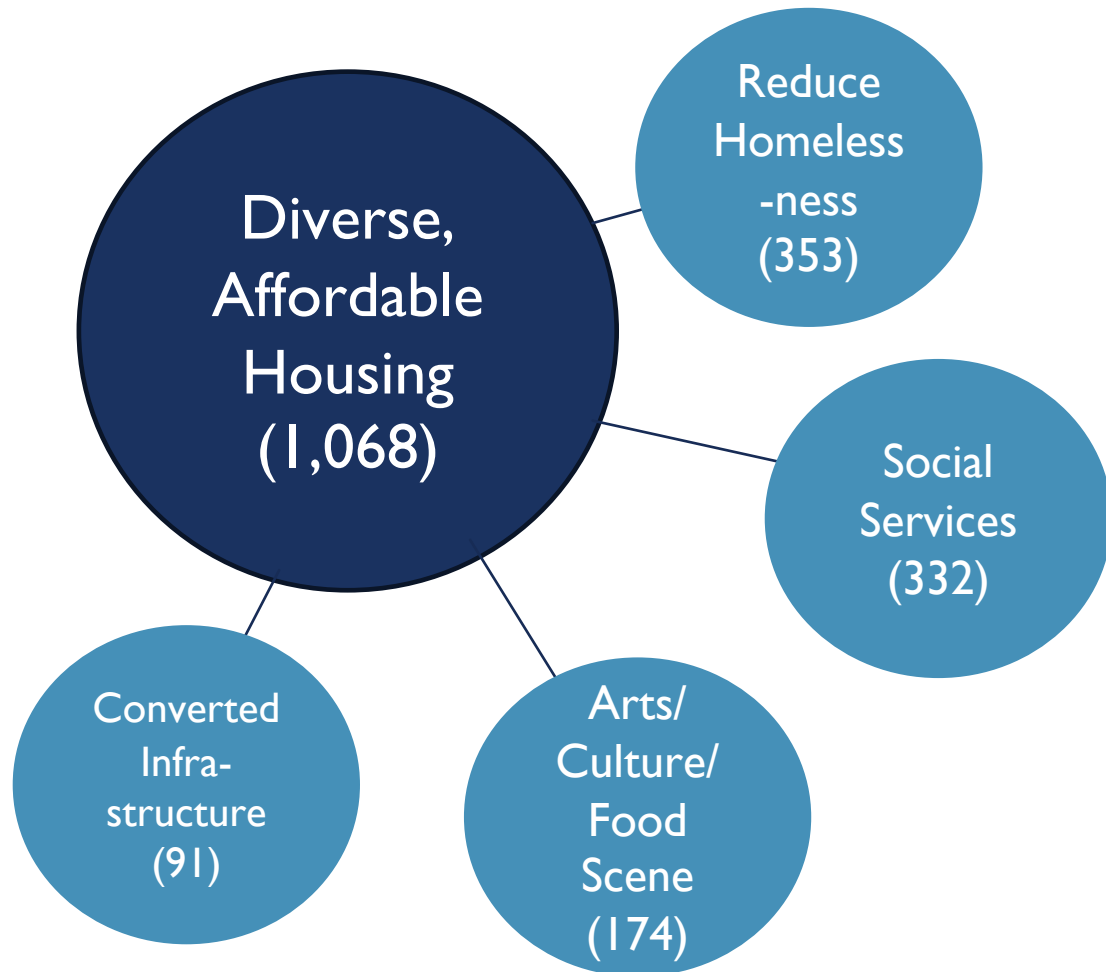
Riverfront / Parks / Public Space (93)

Respondents expressed a desire for more shopping and child/family-friendly activities alongside additional art, restaurant and cultural options. They believe that increasing these options will activate public spaces such as the Riverfront and provide increased workforce opportunities.

"Family friendly cultural events, shopping opportunities I can't find elsewhere (higher end or independent stores)"

"Concerts and riverfront dining ambience, eclectic environment"

"Underutilized downtown office would make great coworking spaces for remote workers. Community events seem to get people downtown! Increased minimum wage in the Central City."

DIVERSE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Diverse, Affordable Housing (1,068)

- Reduce Homeless-ness (353)
- Social Services (332)
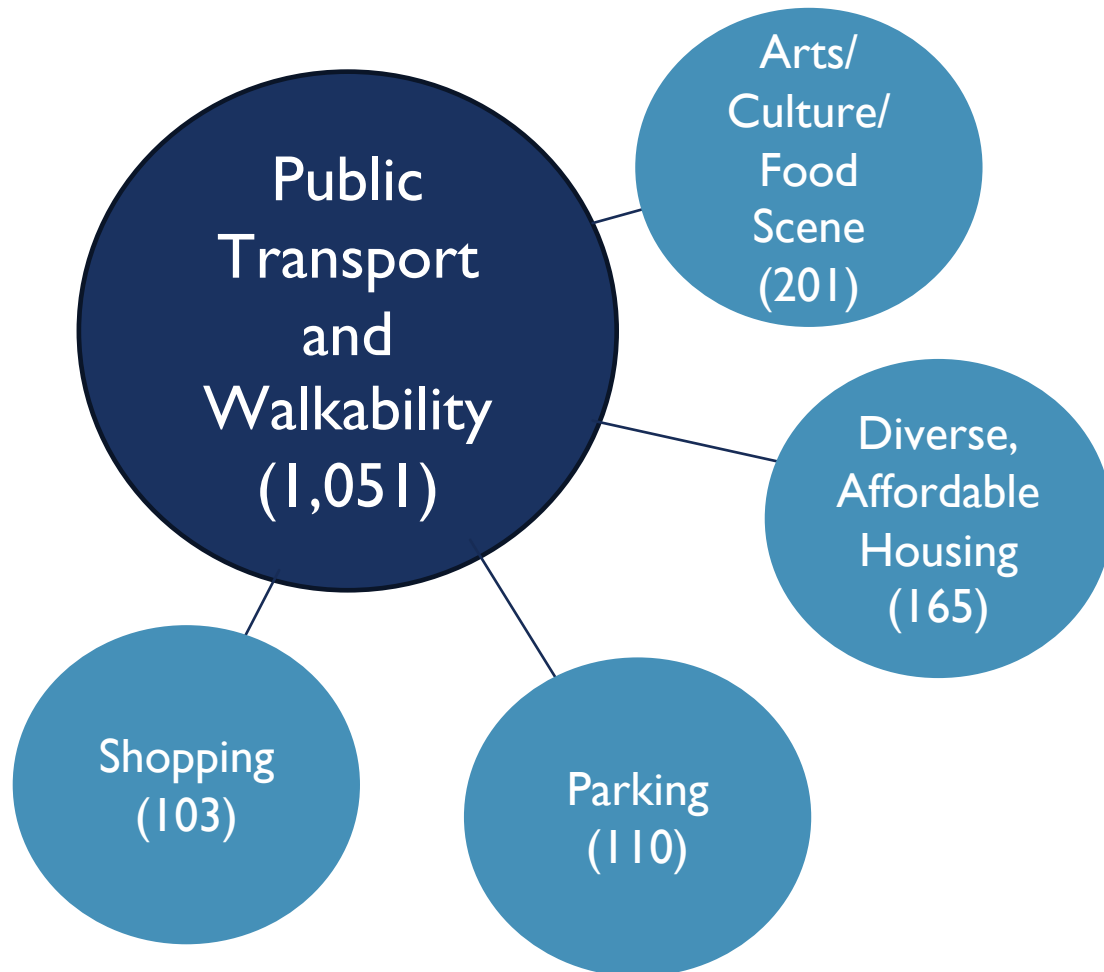- Converted Infra-structure (91)
- Arts/ Culture/ Food Scene (174)

Respondents often noted the strong connection between the lack of affordable housing in the City and the high homelessness rates. Respondents called for increased social services to help homeless individuals and suggested converting unused infrastructure—such as office spaces—into affordable housing.

"Affordable housing & services for houseless; cafes and community activity"

"Convert office space to housing space, including (but not limited to) affordable housing. (We aren't going to change the fact that we are now in a work-from-home situation; we will not fill vacant office space.) Keep in mind that reducing unsheltered homelessness means addressing the mental health and addiction crisis and providing affordable housing."

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND WALKABILITY

Public Transport and Walkability (1,051)

- Arts/ Culture/ Food Scene (201)
- Diverse, Affordable Housing (165)
- Parking (110)
- Shopping (103)

Respondents pointed out how improved public transportation and walkability could enhance the public's experience of shopping and the arts/culture/food scene in the City. They also often asked for affordable housing alongside public transportation. At times, those calling for more public transportation advocated for less parking.

"A subway tunnel would help get people downtown without requiring more parking. Also, convert city owned properties to high density housing along transit lines."

"Reduce car traffic downtown by increasing pedestrian and biking networks- cities are better experienced out of cars. Window shopping, exploring in foot, bike and scooter, and enjoying street food/patios/sidewalk culture is way more attractive without being drowned in aggressive honking and exhaust from cars"

AFFORDABILITY

Affordability (532)

Arts/Culture/Food Scene (187)

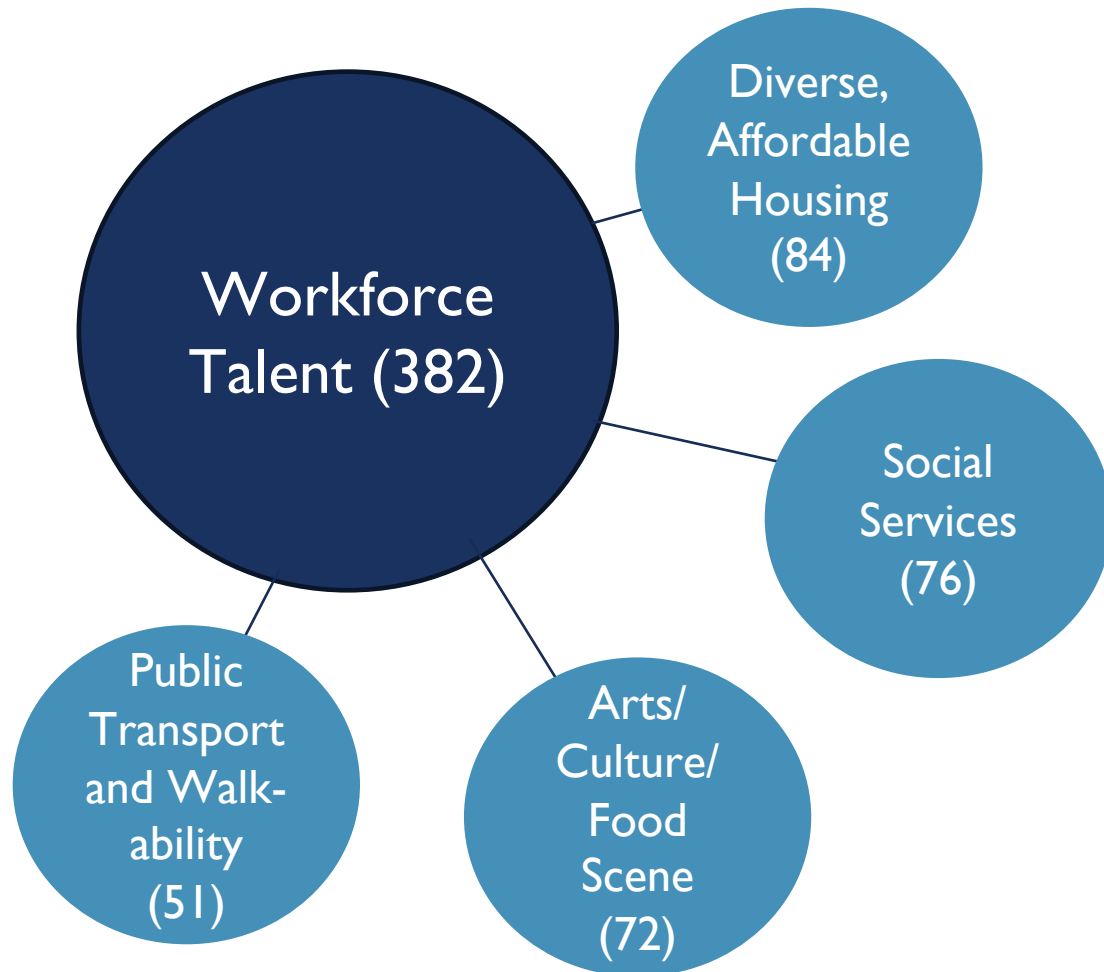Public Transport and Walk-ability (146)

Shopping (60)

Parking (143)
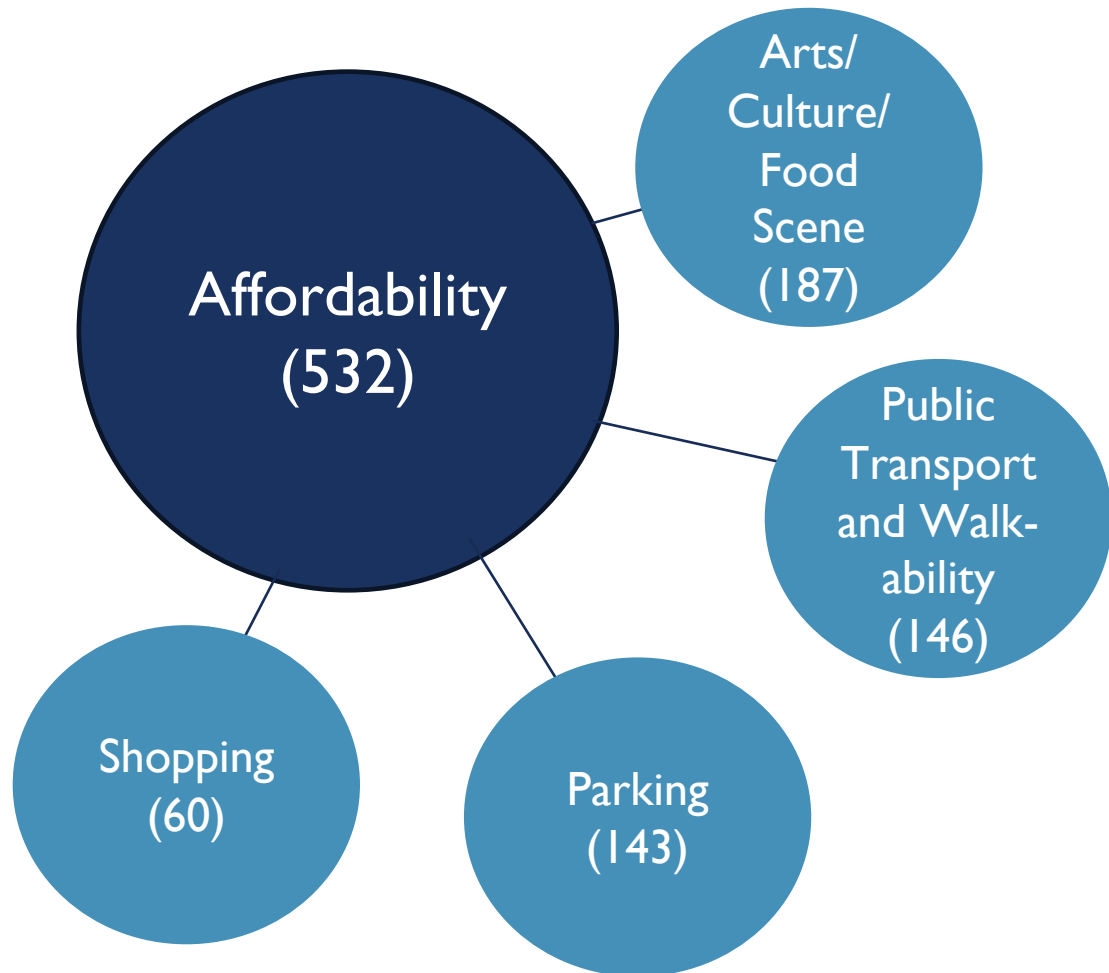
Several respondents want more affordable options in Portland. Specifically, they want more affordable shopping, events, public transportation, and parking.

"Late night transit, easier and safer access to pedestrian pathways, cheaper grocery stores, more community spaces, more music venues, late night restaurants and bars."

"Central City looks an order of magnitude better than a year ago. But the lack of foot traffic during the week, due to work from home, is causing ongoing strain for retail and other businesses. Please offer inducements for workers to want to be here, such as free street parking starting at 4 PM, street events, coupons for discounts at restaurants, bars, and coffee shops, etc."

WORKFORCE TALENT

Workforce Talent (382)

Diverse, Affordable Housing (84)

Social Services (76)

Public Transport and Walk-ability (51)

Arts/ Culture/ Food Scene (72)

Comments about expanding job opportunities were often combined with calls for more affordable workforce housing and better transportation. Moreover, respondents often mentioned social services that could assist with employment.

"Expanded jobs for cleaning the city, dedicated first responders to specific areas or plans for fast response in case of emergency, additional security on public transportation, incentives for event holders/hosts"

"Make affordable housing with supportive services to help people make positive changes in their lives and provide options for employment, substance use treatment and mental health support, as well as treatment for trauma."

INTERESTED IN ACCESSING THE DATA?

If you are interested in accessing the original survey data, (including the coded open-ended responses), contact the Oregon Business Council. When reviewing the open-ended survey responses, please be aware that there are some survey comments that use harmful and violent language, particularly to describe people experiencing houselessness, mental health challenges, and substance abuse. Please also be aware of potential harmful language around dissatisfaction with city leaders and current policies and measures in place.

Contact OBC:

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November 6, 2023