



Homer Comprehensive Plan Rewrite

Growth Scenarios Report Card Results

Final, December 2024

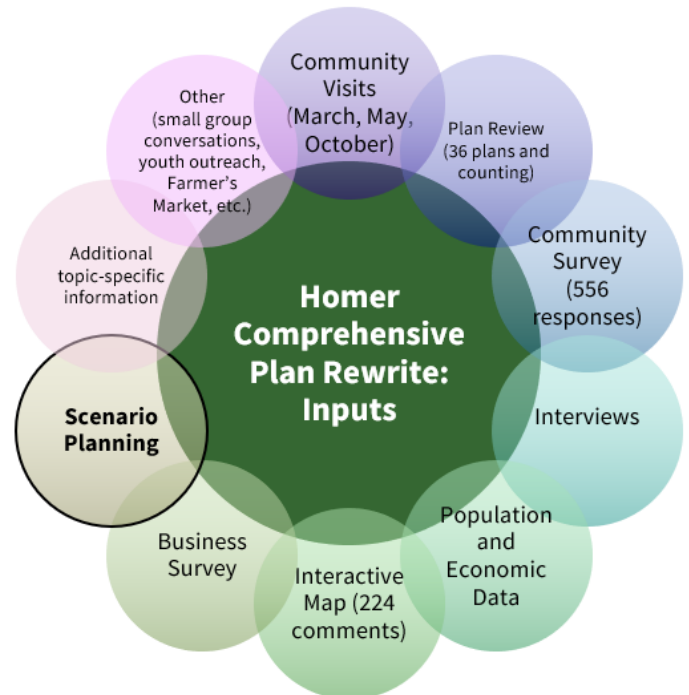
Introduction

The City of Homer is [updating the 2018 Comprehensive Plan](#). As part of this process, three scenarios were developed to explore what a desired future Homer could look like. **These exploratory scenarios can help navigate uncertainty about the future by using data and community input to illustrate what a desired future Homer *could* look like.** The scenarios can also:

- **Build education** and awareness around issues faced by Homer now and in the future.
- **Build consensus** around possible solutions.
- **Define a strategic direction** for the plan by identifying variables and key drivers of change.
- **Clarify plan goals, strategies, and actions** to guide Homer toward its desired future.

The Details

- **Timing:** The scenarios debuted at the October 22, 2024, Community Work Session at the Islands & Ocean Center, where over 90 Homer residents provided feedback. The Story Map-based online version of the scenarios and report card were available on the project website during the first two weeks of November 2024.
- **Design and Promotion:** The growth scenarios Story Map and report card were designed and promoted with assistance from the City of Homer planning staff and Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee members. The in person work session and virtual report card were promoted via e-blasts to the project listserv, social media, radio announcements, and an ad in the Homer Times. The work session event flyer was included in packets for all City committees and commissions.
- **Responses:** The report card received 123 total responses from both the work session and the online growth scenarios Story Map. Some individuals may have completed both the in-person work session and online report cards.
- **In-person versus online:** The wording and numbering on the report cards was minimally modified between the in-person meeting and the online Story Map. In addition to the report card, in-person attendees were able to fill out comment forms with no prompting questions, the responses to which were included in Question 9 for analysis below.



Scenarios Overview

The project team created three scenarios for consideration. Input from the public through the community and business surveys, interactive comment map, interviews, and small group conversations strongly guided the direction of the three scenarios. The three scenarios are summarized below:

- **Status Quo:** Maintain current trends, keep current zoning and land use policies.
- **Enhance:** Increase density minimally through minor code modifications and focus on current economic drivers.
- **Amplify:** Increase density moderately through major code modifications and encourage new economic drivers aimed toward young families.

View the three potential growth scenarios [here](#).

Key Takeaways

Overall, the **Enhance** and **Amplify** scenarios were preferred by Homer residents over the **Status Quo** scenario.

- Over 75% of respondents say the **Enhance** (34%) or **Amplify** (41%) scenario best aligned with their vision for Homer in 2035 (Question 1).
- While the **Amplify** scenario is preferred by the largest group when thinking about a vision for Homer in 2035 (Question 1), in the more detailed grading, **Enhance** receives the most A and B grades and the fewest D and F grades out of all three scenarios (Question 2), showing more consensus around **Enhance** than **Amplify**.
- Many respondents prefer **Enhance** or **Amplify** but identify elements of the other scenario that they also like. Responses to questions 3-5 shed some light on this dynamic:
 1. For **Density & Housing Attainability**, **Amplify** receives more A and B grades than **Enhance** (54% vs. 49%).
 2. For **Sustainability & Resilience**, **Enhance** receives more A and B grades than **Amplify** (52% vs. 47%).
 3. For **Parks & Open Space**, **Enhance** and **Amplify** are nearly tied in terms of A and B responses, with **Enhance** receiving only 1% more than **Amplify**.
 4. For **Economic Opportunity**, **Amplify** received 15% more A and B grades than **Enhance**, showing a clear preference among respondents.
 5. For **Financially Sustainable Infrastructure**, **Enhance** received more A and B grades than **Amplify** (54% vs. 46%).
- The top 3 biggest priorities respondents identify for the next 10 years were (Question 6):
 1. Suitable/sustainable development (34%)
 2. Financially sustainable infrastructure (20%)
 3. Attainable housing (19%)
- In response to questions about policy changes, respondents frequently mention support for increased density, environmental protection, and strategies to increase housing affordability. There is also broad support for updating the City's Title 21 Zoning Code. Opinions on economic development vary, but the consensus appears to be that development should prioritize the needs of local residents and small business owners and support the growth of the working population in Homer.

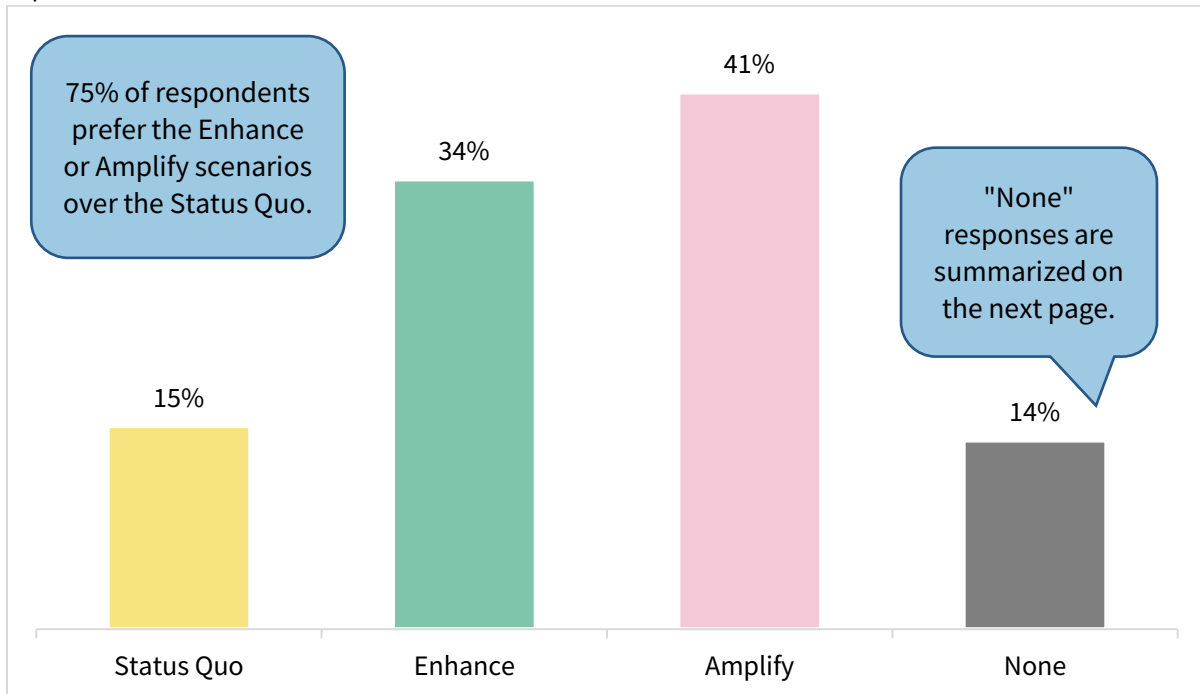
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- 1: Overall, which scenario aligns most with your vision for Homer ten years from now?..... 4
- 2: Please grade each scenario on how well it achieves your vision for Homer. 5
- 3–5: Please rank Status Quo's / Enhance's / Amplify's ability to achieve your vision in specific categories..... 6
- 6. My biggest priority for Homer over the next 10 years is: 11
- 7 and 8: What action or policy change will help achieve your priority? What is the barrier to implementation? . 11
- 9: What other comments, questions, or concerns do you have for the project team? 15

Survey Results

Question 1: Overall, which scenario aligns most with your vision for Homer ten years from now (i.e., Homer in 2035)? Please check the box.

Answered: **91**. Multiple choice question. Respondents who answered “None” were prompted to provide an explanation.



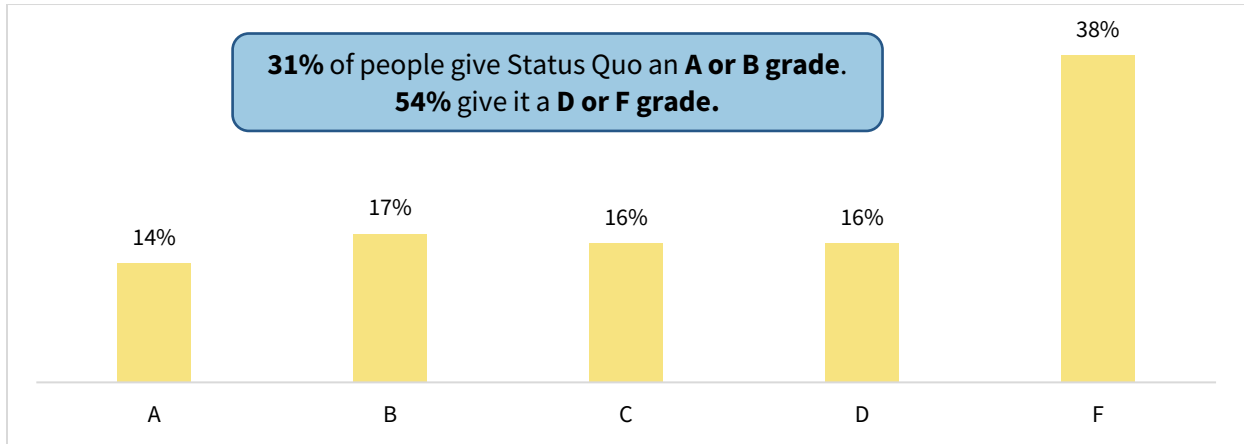
Key themes from the explanations given for the “None” responses include:

- Respondents who indicate an overall preference for Status Quo in terms of growth (prefer no growth or “natural”/unguided growth), while desiring some specific elements from other scenarios:
 - Sustainability & resilience policies.
 - Parks & open spaces expansion.
 - Nonmotorized transportation policies.
 - More arts, education, and healthcare.
- Respondents who would like to see the City focus on revising the zoning code and ordinances.
- Comments about management of city water.
- Comments expressing a desire for additional protections for green spaces, wetlands, and other critical natural environments.

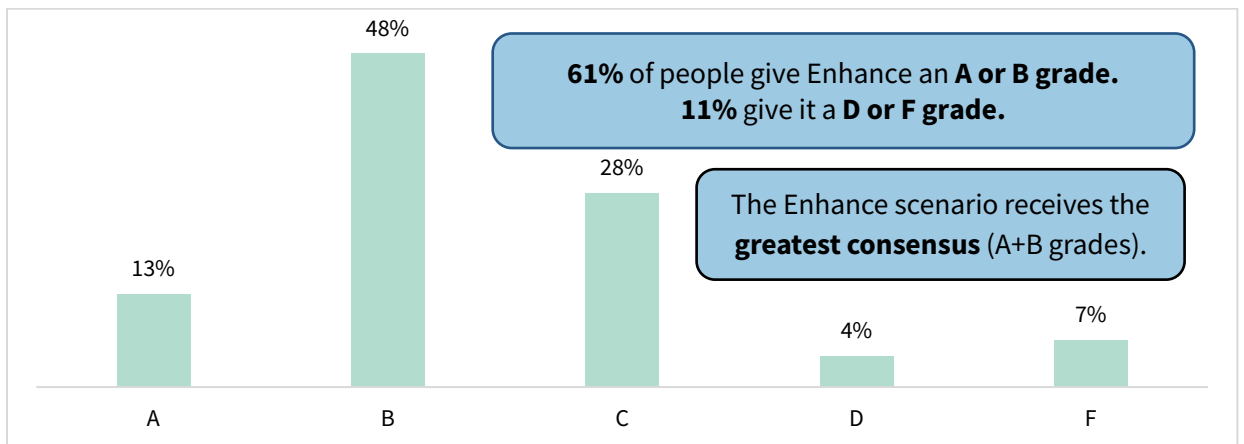
Question 2: Please grade each scenario on how well it achieves your vision for Homer. “A” = Very well; “C” = Neutral; “F” = Not at all

Answered: 96. Multiple choice question.

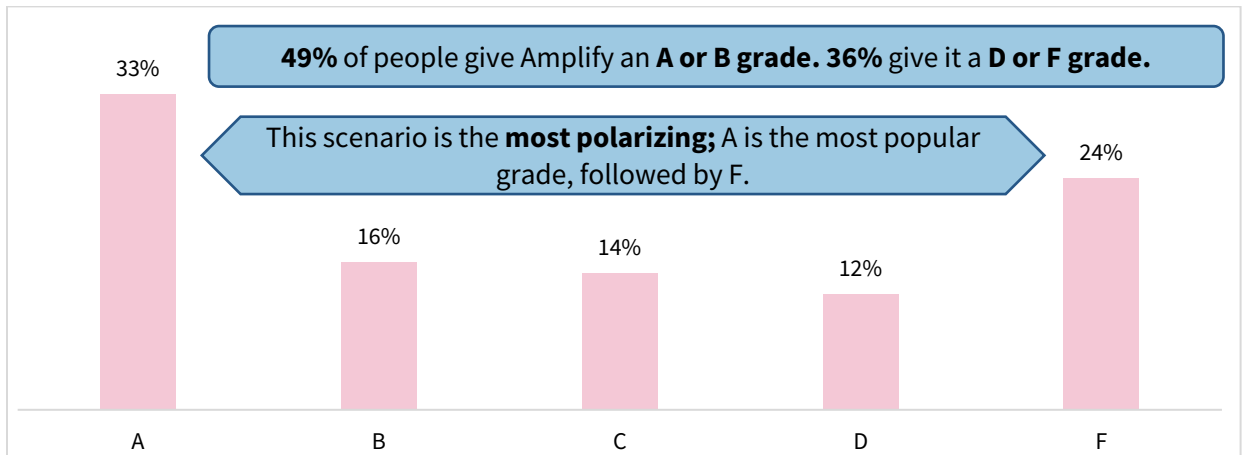
Status Quo



Enhance



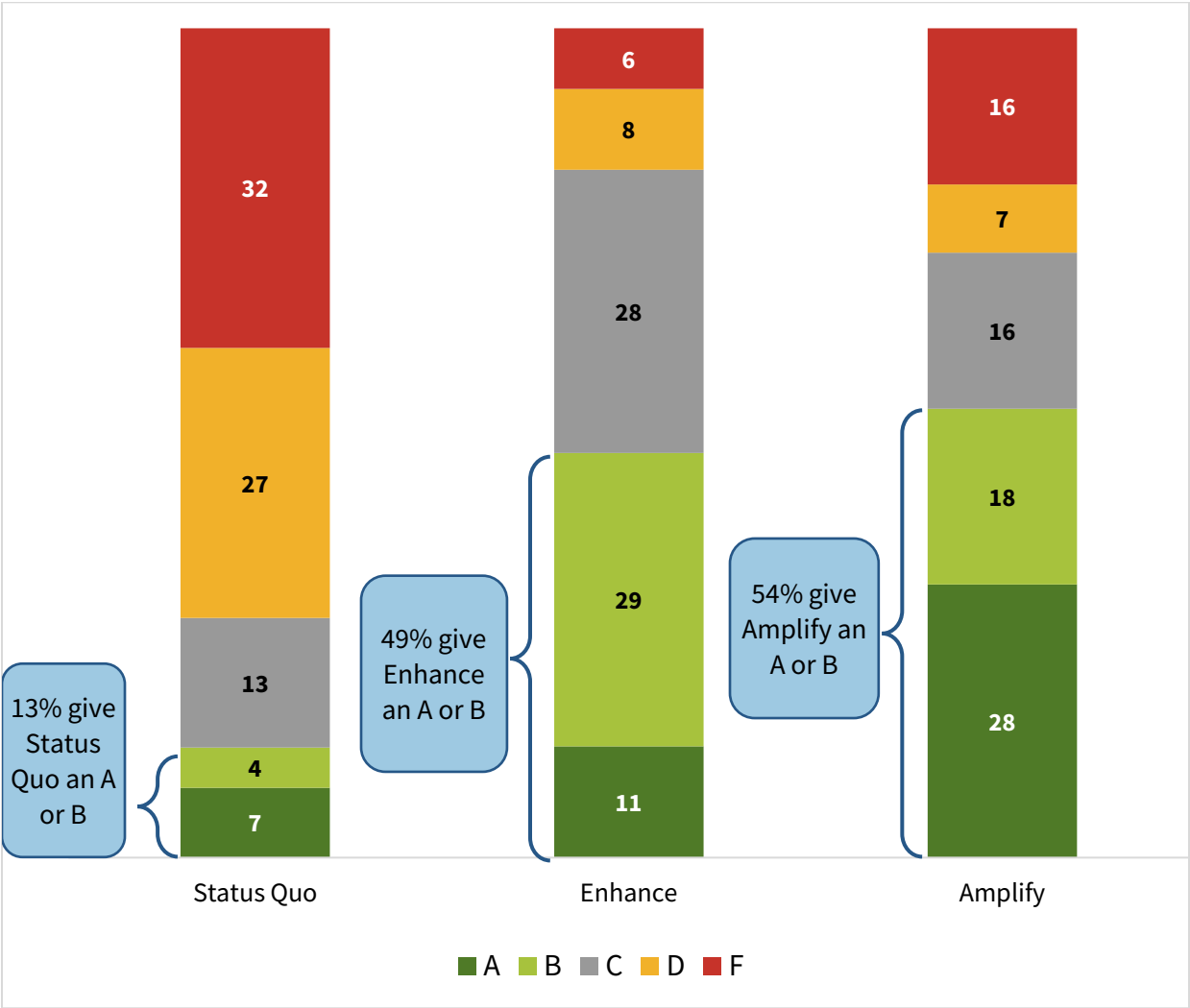
Amplify



Questions 3–5: Please rank *Status Quo's* / *Enhance's* / *Amplify's* ability to achieve your vision for Homer in specific categories. Please circle one grade per scenario/per category. “A” = Very well; “C” = Neutral; “F” = Not at all

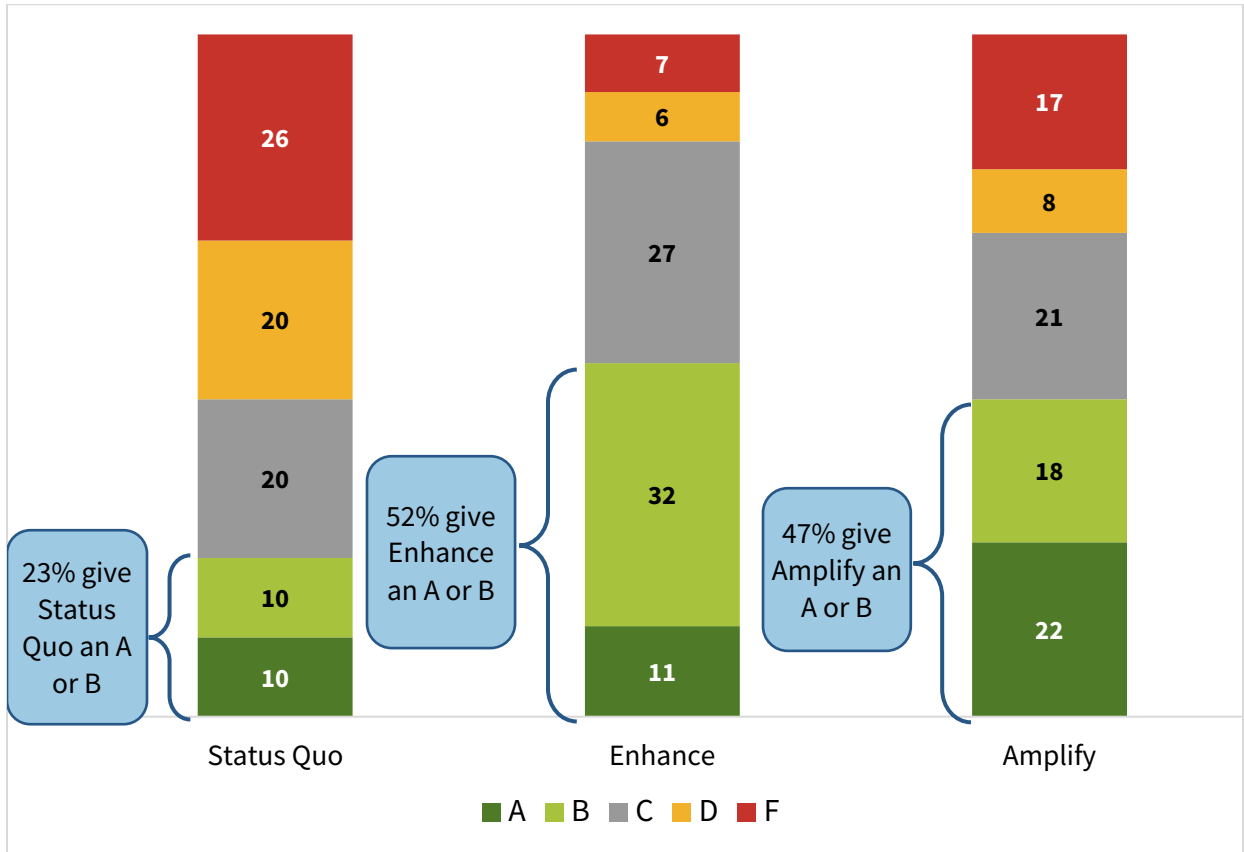
Density & Housing Attainability

Answered: **96** (Question 3 – Status Quo), **93** (Question 4 - Enhance), **101** (Question 5 - Amplify). Multiple choice questions. The chart shows the number of respondents who selected each grade, along with a callout showing the combined overall percentage of A and B grades out of the total.



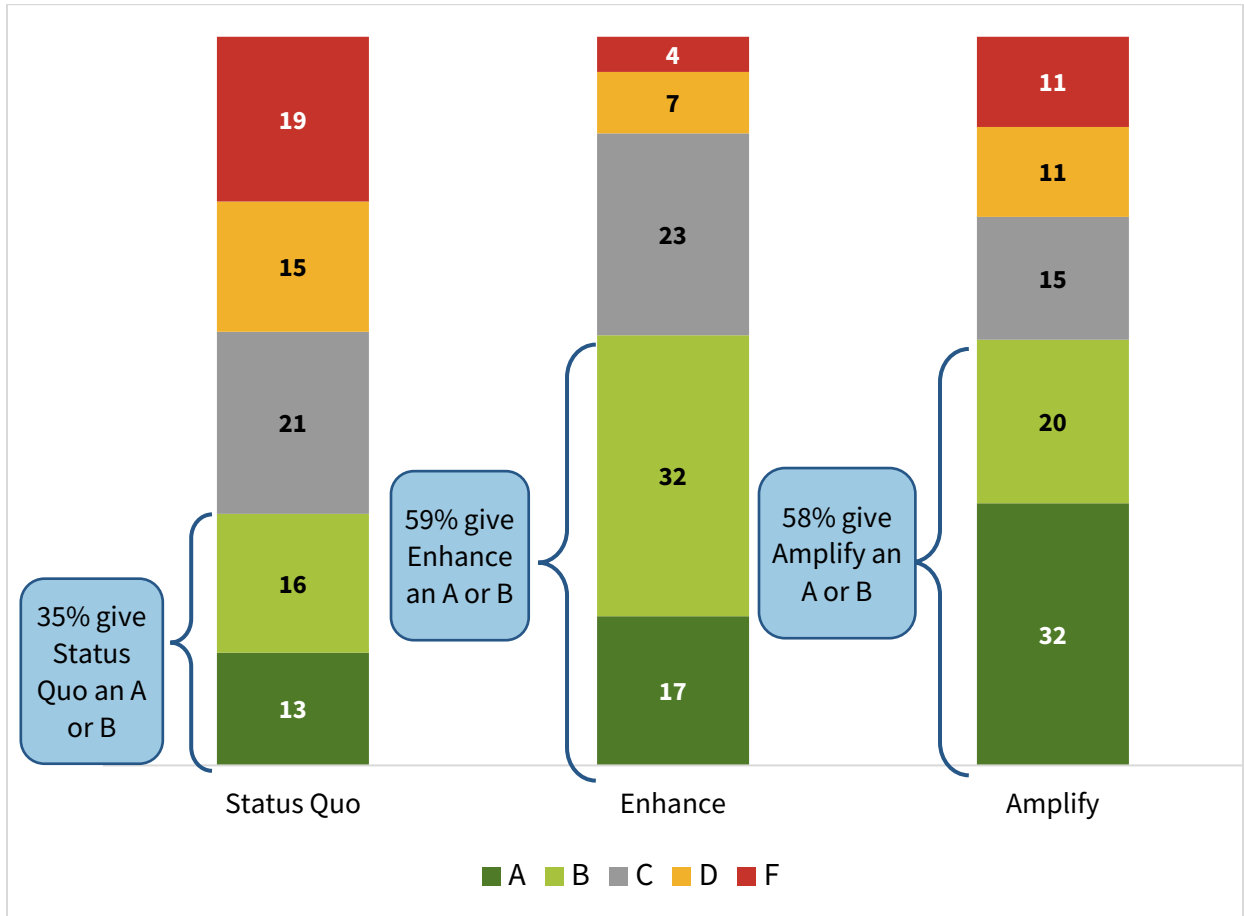
Sustainability & Resilience

Answered: **96** (Question 3 – Status Quo), **93** (Question 4 - Enhance), **101** (Question 5 - Amplify). Multiple choice questions. The chart shows the number of respondents who selected each grade, along with a callout showing the combined overall percentage of A and B grades out of the total.



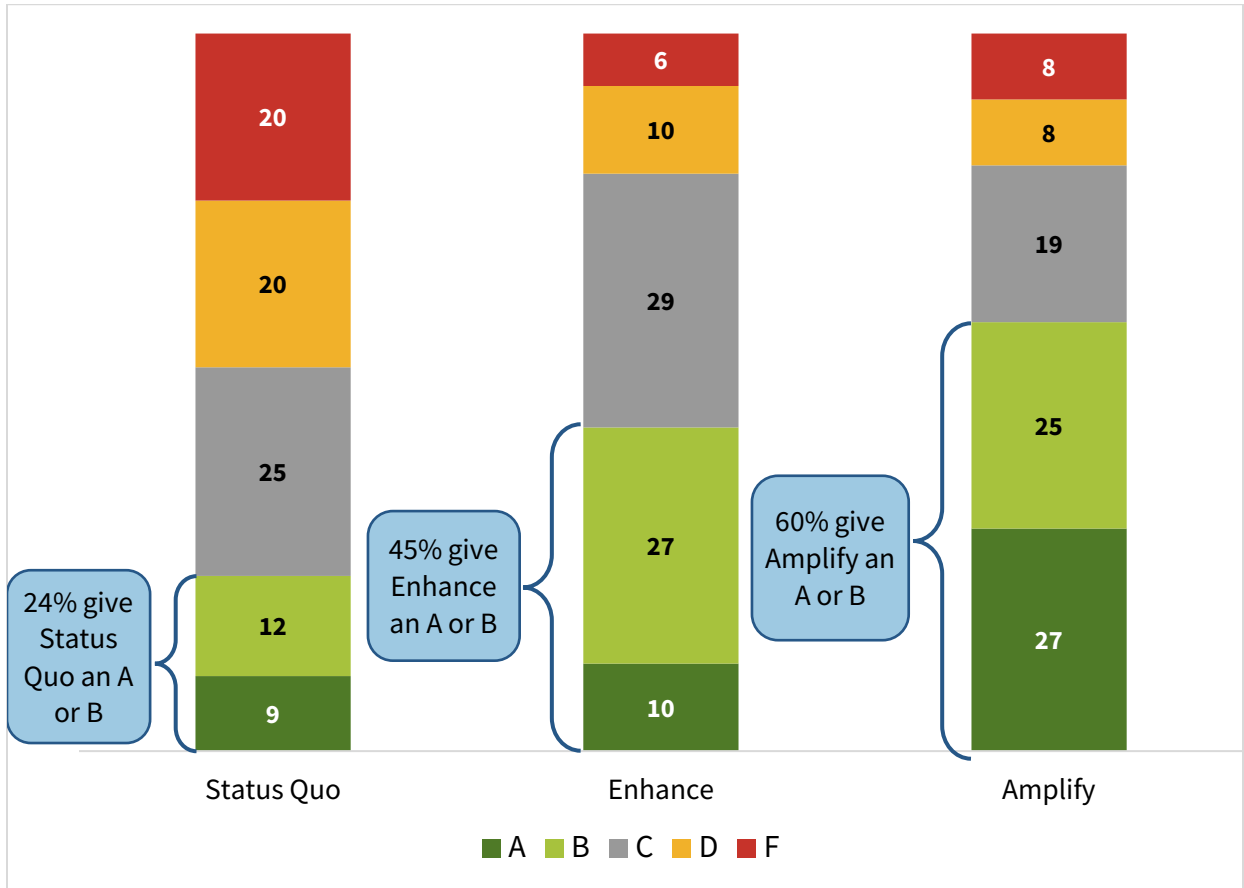
Parks & Open Space

Answered: **96** (Question 3 – Status Quo), **93** (Question 4 - Enhance), **101** (Question 5 - Amplify). Multiple choice questions. The chart shows the number of respondents who selected each grade, along with a callout showing the combined overall percentage of A and B grades out of the total.



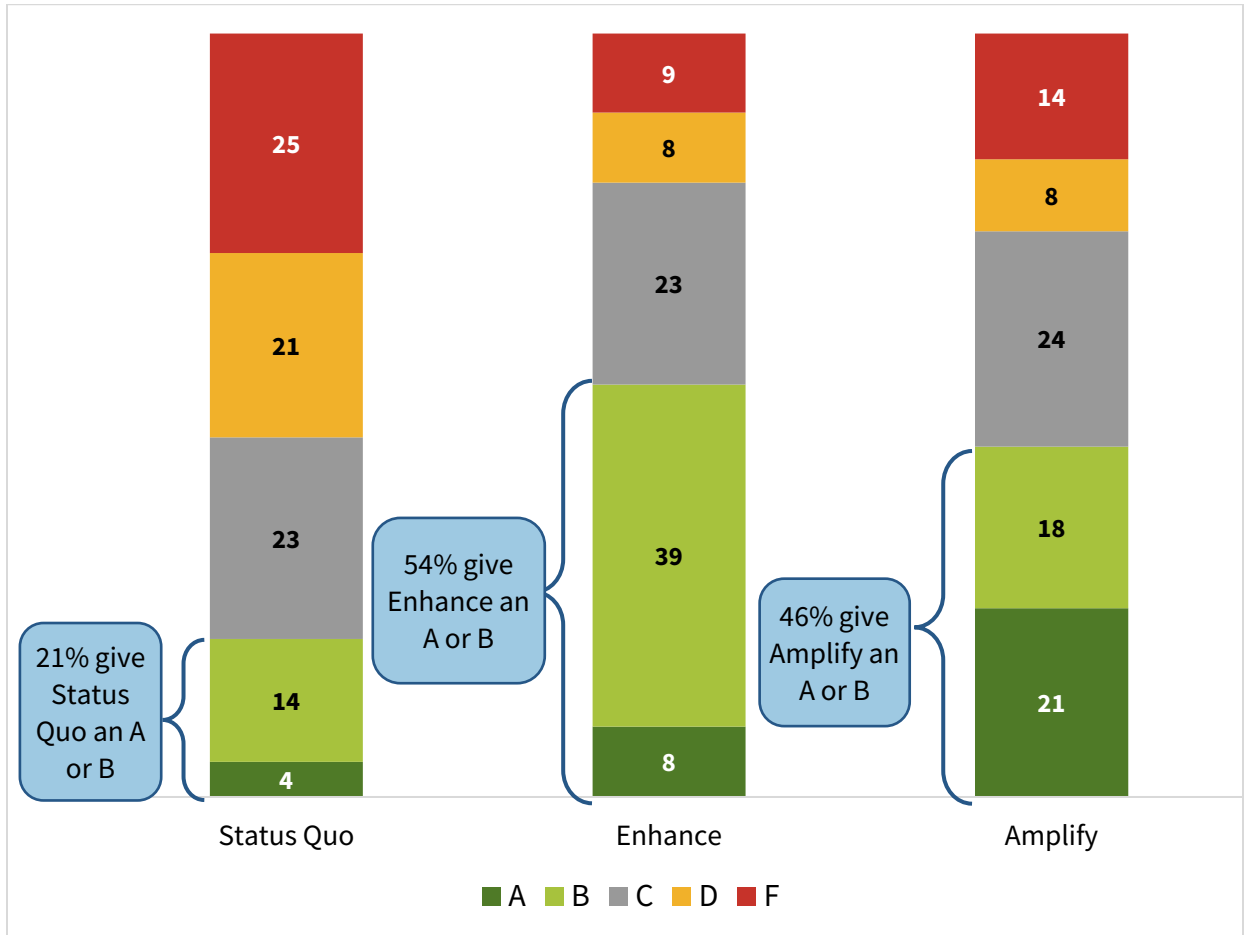
Economic Opportunity

Answered: **96** (Question 3 – Status Quo), **93** (Question 4 - Enhance), **101** (Question 5 - Amplify). Multiple choice questions. The chart shows the number of respondents who selected each grade, along with a callout showing the combined overall percentage of A and B grades out of the total.



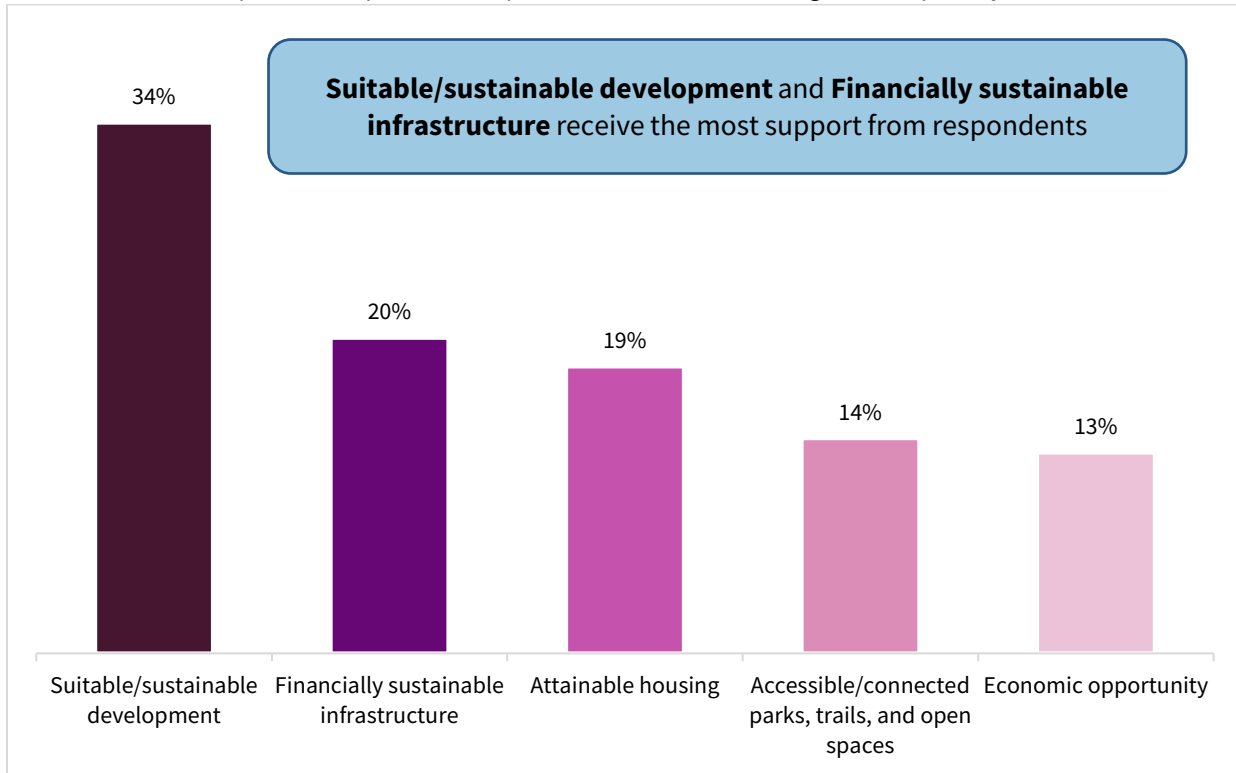
Financially Sustainable Infrastructure

Answered: **96** (Question 3 – Status Quo), **93** (Question 4 - Enhance), **101** (Question 5 - Amplify). Multiple choice questions. The chart shows the number of respondents who selected each grade, along with a callout showing the combined overall percentage of A and B grades out of the total.



Question 6: My BIGGEST PRIORITY for Homer over the next 10 years is:

Answered: **108**. Multiple choice question. Responses sorted in descending order of priority.



Questions 7 and 8: What SINGLE ACTION or POLICY CHANGE will help achieve your biggest priority from the previous question? AND What is THE BIGGEST BARRIER to implementing the action/policy you've described above?

Answered: **100** (Question 7), **94** (Question 8). Open-ended question coded for themes, organized in descending order by frequency of mention. Some responses have multiple themes, so the count is higher than the total number who answered. The tables include themes that are repeated at least four times. For tables that have fewer than four comments, all themes represented in more than one comment are included.

Suitable/Sustainable Development

ACTION OR POLICY CHANGE

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Change zoning code	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning for infill, smart parking Change zoning to allow increased density and lot coverage in central business district
Incentivize desired development/housing types	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand walkability & density in city center. Avoid urban sprawl, preserve green spaces outside town. LESS single family homes.
Enforce zoning code and implement comprehensive plan	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't make exceptions to code, hold developers etc. to spirit of sustainable growth Require city planners to guide development according to goals in comp plan

Prioritize the natural environment	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control and manage growth along environmentally sustainable and culturally supported lines Policies and regulations need to be strengthened to control growth and protect wetlands, streams, rivers, aquatic habitat, etc.
Update permitting process and building code	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strict/environmentally sound building code and land use Building permit process w/ qualified personnel + codified environmental considerations
Maintain small town character/limit growth	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit Homer's exponential growth Keep the longtime character of Homer, which we are already losing in the last 10-15 years. Do not allow development to change this into a different place
Tax or restrict short-term rentals and vacation homes	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize out of town short term rental ownership. Limit Airbnb and Sedona home millionaire expensive housing
Promote infill and higher density	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of core area. Infill of vacant, underutilized lots. Revisit the Town Center concept and encourage public/private partnerships to develop the heart of Homer.

BARRIER

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Lack of time/political will	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Folks who desperately need affordable housing have little voice and visibility. Political will to adopt + pay for the infrastructure it would take to put this system in place
Lack of planning or regulations	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plats are issued and development is approved without restriction resulting in exponential growth Homer is growing too fast due to lax regulations allowing anyone to build large monster homes anywhere
Lack of sustainable development policy	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro-development, no taxation mindset It [suitable/sustainable development] doesn't seem to be required at this time. It seems looked on as a guide that can be ignored.
Lack of funding	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth outside the city depends on city services, city lacks funding to support growth outside city Anything that requires significant funding needs to start with stating who is willing to pay for it
Current zoning code/building code	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of policy and zoning Commitment to single family housing, laissez-faire approach to expansion

Financially Sustainable Infrastructure

ACTION OR POLICY CHANGE

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Reduce barriers to development	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce housing and development regulations to make utilities more affordable Reduce cost and regulation of development and improve existing infrastructure

BARRIER

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Lack of political will	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and representative support from city council Political will, proper “marketing” to voting public, and disciplined approach with “public interest” (vs “private interest”) as top priority
Lack of funding/capacity	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The city needs the funding to be able to support growth

Attainable Housing

ACTION OR POLICY CHANGE

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Incentivize desired development/housing types	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentivizing the development of denser housing to increase the availability of year round rentals + starter homes Please stop the single family home zoning
Tax or restrict short-term rentals and vacation homes	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bed tax on Airbnb’s + incentivize year-round rentals There needs to be something fundamentally done about the short-term rental units in Homer if we want to see new families and residents actually growing the city.
Promote long-term rentals	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide tax breaks for 5-10 years to anyone building a duplex or larger to rent >1 year leases to allow them the ability to keep rent low Landlord/renter laws improvement. Restrictions on monthly rentals.
Update permitting process and building code	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplification of permitting for development, particularly for affordable housing developments Build using universal design

BARRIER

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
High cost of living/cost of development	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning that prevents the building of multi-family units Expense + time of permitting process
Community pushback/lack of understanding	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIMBYism. It is common to be reluctant to change Community pushback and lack of funding
Current permitting process and building code	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shorten building permits to 2 years or require builders to meet current code

Lack of funding/partnerships	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public/private partnerships & visions
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Accessible/Connected Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

ACTION OR POLICY CHANGE

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Invest in parks and recreational facilities	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a centralized location that connects the community that is accessible to everyone We need to attract more families to Homer by investing in our education and recreation
Develop, fund, and implement a park maintenance program	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop & implement park specific maintenance plans to validate preventative maintenance Support parks + rec. including more support for nonprofits, e.g., bike, ski, trail clubs
Protect environmentally sensitive areas	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguard stream setbacks, don't build on steep slopes prone to landslides, don't build in the Homer Sponge
Plan for green/open spaces	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on open space, connectivity, and recreational opportunities

BARRIER

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Lack of funding/wrong funding priorities	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizing funds in the right way versus disbursing out for several different parks or trails Lack of funding and education for available opportunities

Economic Opportunity

ACTION OR POLICY CHANGE

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Update permitting process and building/zoning code	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less restrictive code for new development Building size restrictions
Attainable housing	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing for locals and a diversified economy
Expand Homer/develop commercial areas	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand Homer to include Kachemak City
Support business growth	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing more businesses to come to Homer

BARRIER

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Current zoning code	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property being zoned in a way for so few units Large lots sizes in subdivisions is a big barrier to more affordable housing

Question 9: What other comments, questions, or concerns do you have for the project team?

Answered: **88**. Open-ended question coded for themes. Some responses have multiple themes, so the count is higher than the total number who answered. These results include responses to the comment forms that were available during the in-person public meeting.

Themes	Count	Representative Quotes
Thoughtful economic development	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make Homer a good place to live & it will be a good place to do business</i> • <i>Tourism needs to be scaled to what maintains local ownership</i> • <i>A diverse economy is a healthier economy</i>
Need for action to promote housing affordability	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Homer cannot continue to develop by means of single family houses in clear cut fields</i> • <i>You can't have affordable housing without higher density units</i> • <i>Affordable housing developers would benefit from a simplified process with the city</i>
Sustainable development	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Unless Homer embraces change and alters the status quo, we will experience more of the sprawl model of development that we are already witnessing</i> • <i>Instead of developing outward into untouched spaces, develop upward and efficiently, while leaving those beautiful spaces alone</i>
Infrastructure improvements	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sewer and water must be available for all existing city lots</i> • <i>City needs to control infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, etc.) we care about</i> • <i>All options need to go "green" for service development, modification, maintenance</i>
Public spaces and parks	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consider the concept of creating dedicated (new or modify existing funding stream) funding for Recreation, Parks, Culture and Arts services with voter advisory/approval</i> • <i>I believe that encouraging density must go hand in hand (1) with intentional and strategic conservation of open space and (2) with a plan for how you ensure that the density you are creating is attainable housing</i>
Walkability and transportation	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We need a town center.</i> • <i>I believe while we increase density minimally, we should pursue many of the policies of the Amplify model: develop more green infrastructure, greater resiliency, best parks and recreation master plan</i>

		<i>ambitious policies for infrastructure, and a robust non-motorized system.</i>
Youth and recreation	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Youth should be considered when making decisions. Caring for their needs will serve the community as it ages.</i>
Clarity and accessibility of growth scenarios process	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I did not get a good sense of what is being considered and evaluating between them [the scenarios]. Feel like I need to read through this a couple times and work to interpret the graphics better.</i>
Environmental conservation	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The focus is on human activities without consideration of potential environmental impacts of the scenarios.</i>
Zoning and land use	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Multigenerational housing and neighborhoods. Wildlife corridors. Walkable. Consideration for water conservation. Preservation of wild spaces that mitigate impacts of climate change.</i>
Community health and wellbeing	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Make decisions like your children need to live here, and then their children</i>
Governance and leadership	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Hopes for a strong plan, well designed that can survive changes in city leadership over coming years</i>
Economic resilience	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Homer needs to grow and offer homes for younger people and families starting out or there will be no one to work in the service industries</i>