



# **Burlington ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Public Engagement Report**

## **January 2022**

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### **Background**

On March 11, 2021 President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act. This legislation awarded funds to states, municipalities and territories to help combat the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

As a result, the City of Burlington will receive a total of \$27 million\* to assist in addressing the public health emergency, the negative economic impacts of individuals, households and local businesses, the replacement lost public revenue and investing in water/sewer/wastewater infrastructure. While at least \$12 million has been used to replace lost public revenue and restore full City services, the remainder of the funds still must be carefully invested.

Mayor Weinberger instructed Economic Recovery Director, Kara Alnasrawi, to engage the public to better understand their desires for the best use of these one-time funds.

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### **Process & Public Engagement Methods**

The Economic Recovery Director, through input from all City Department Heads, the administration and the economic recovery team, designed a survey to gauge public sentiment.

The survey was broken into five main categories which were identified as eligible under ARPA and critical to Burlington's recovery, equity and economic health:

- Houselessness
- Racial Equity
- Housing
- Small Business Support
- Community Infrastructure

\*For the purposes of this document, monetary figures have been rounded

The Economic Recovery Team then engaged in an outreach process with the goal of collecting responses from a broad base of the Burlington community. This plan included:

- Translating the survey into 8 major languages spoken in the Burlington area
- Mailers sent to every private residence in Burlington
- Lawn signs installed throughout all neighborhoods
- Appearing on the African Variety Show on both radio and television
- Meeting with the Trusted Community Voices team
- Providing paper copies of the survey to those who don't use or have access to technology
- Placing volunteers at
  - The Miller Center
  - City Market
  - Fletcher Free Library
  - Farmer's Market
  - Jake's ONE market
  - City Hall Park
  - YMCA
  - AALV & the Family Room
- Engaging the following community partners to amplify in their networks
  - Champlain Housing Trust
  - All City departments
  - Racial Justice Alliance
  - Boys & Girls Club
  - Cathedral Square
  - COTS
  - AALV
  - Heineberg/Elderwood Senior Centers
  - Mercy Connections
  - Let's Grow Kids
  - UVM
  - Burlington School District
  - Front Porch Forum
  - King Street Youth Center
  - Burlington Housing Authority
  - Sara Holbrook Center
  - Small Business Developmt. Center
  - North Avenue News
  - All local childcare centers
  - Channel 17 News
  - Center for Women ad Enterprise
  - Spectrum
  - Somali Bantu Community Center

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## Survey Results

### Overall

**5 Weeks** – Length of survey and Economic Recovery Team led outreach

**3,877** – Number of responses; the highest response rate of any City survey

**3,000+** – Number of written-in suggestions on the survey under various categories

### Who took the survey (multiple answers possible)

**74%** Residents

**46%** Work in Burlington

**27%** Property Owners

**10%** Business Owners

**7%** Visitors (not allowed to complete survey)

### Personal Identification

**57%** Female

**34%** Male

**5%** Prefer not to say

**3%** Non-binary

**2%** Two-spirit, a-gender, or prefer to self-describe

**79%** White

**9%** Prefer not say

**4%** Prefer to self-describe

**2%** Black

**2%** Biracial

**2%** Asian

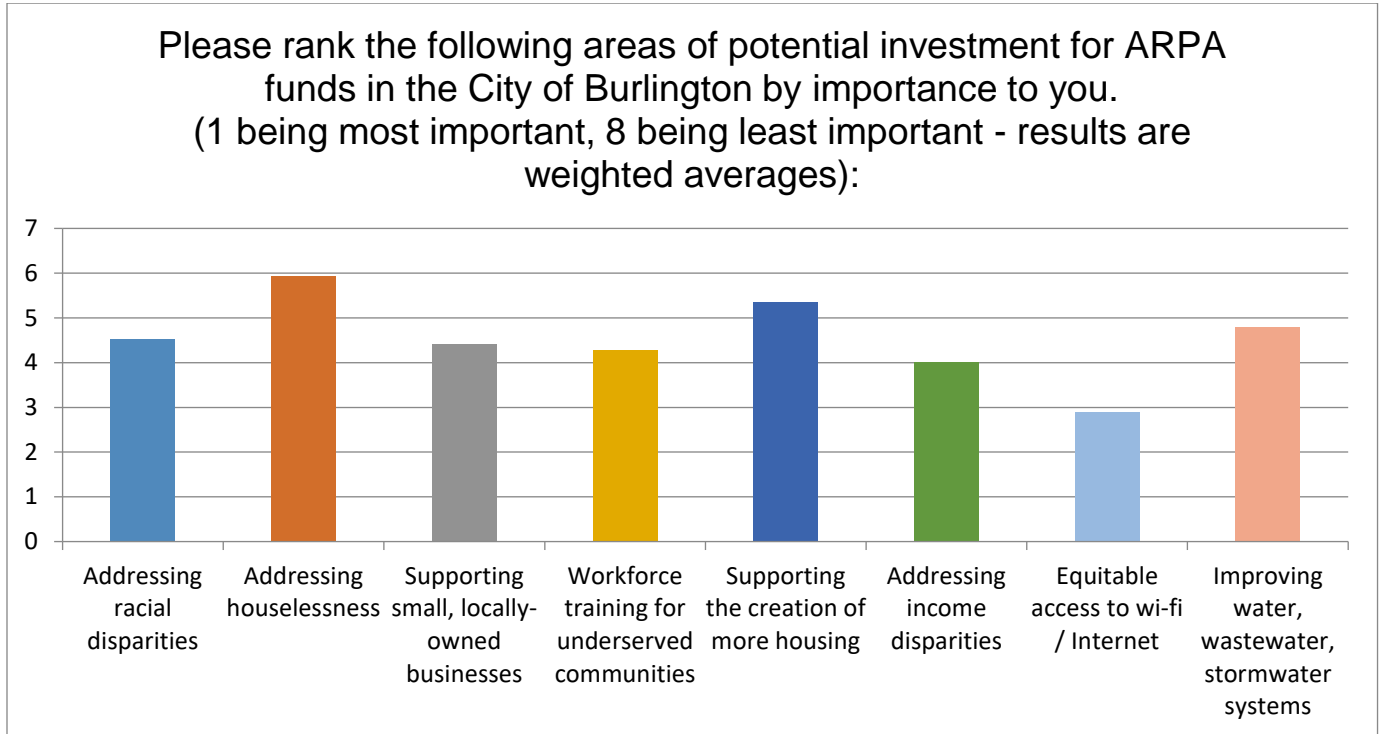
**2%** Lantinx

**1%** Native American, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Island Pacificer

### Detailed results:

The survey asked respondents to rank their answers in order of importance – the chart results are therefore weighted. It was not required to answer all questions to complete the survey.

### OVERALL

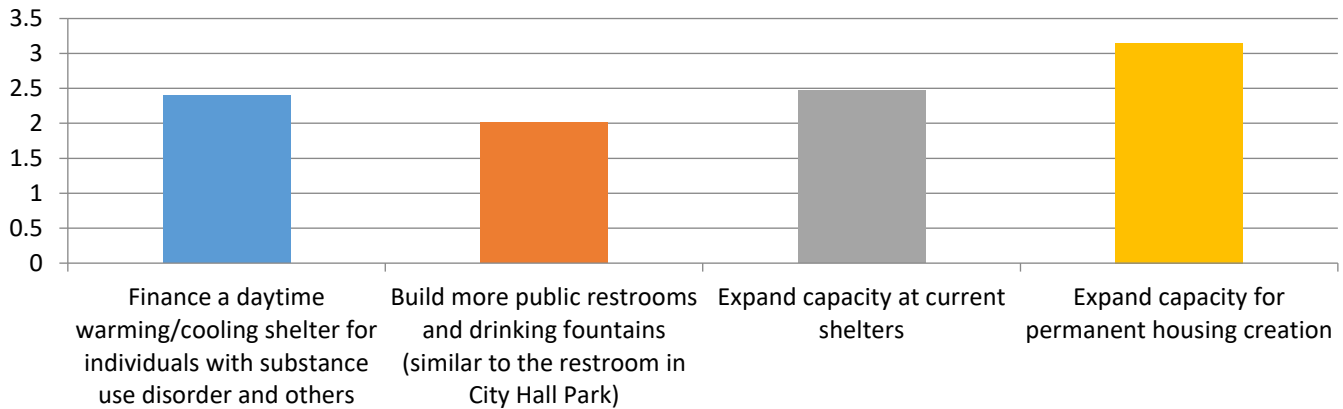


### Responses from individuals who self-identified as BIPOC in order of importance:

- ❖ Support creation of more housing
- ❖ Address houselessness
- ❖ Address racial disparities
- ❖ Workforce training for underserved communities
- ❖ Support locally owned businesses

## HOUSELESSNESS

Houselessness (Being without a house or home.) Please rank these potential projects around houselessness by importance to you or suggest one. (1 being most important, 4 being least important - results are weighted averages):

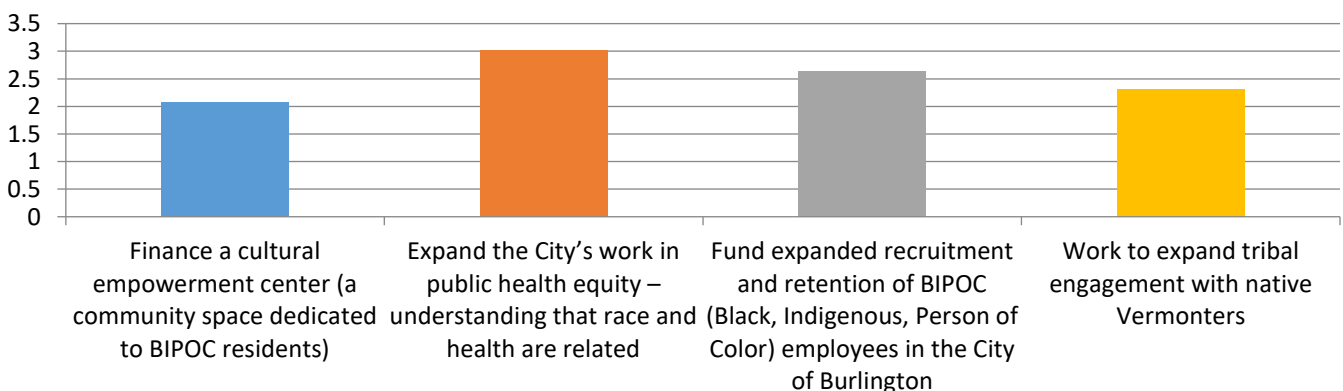


### Responses from individuals who self-identified as BIPOC in order of importance:

- ❖ Expand capacity for permanent housing creation
- ❖ Finance daytime warming/cooling station
- ❖ Expand capacity at shelters
- ❖ Build more public restrooms and drinking fountains

## RACE/RACIAL EQUITY

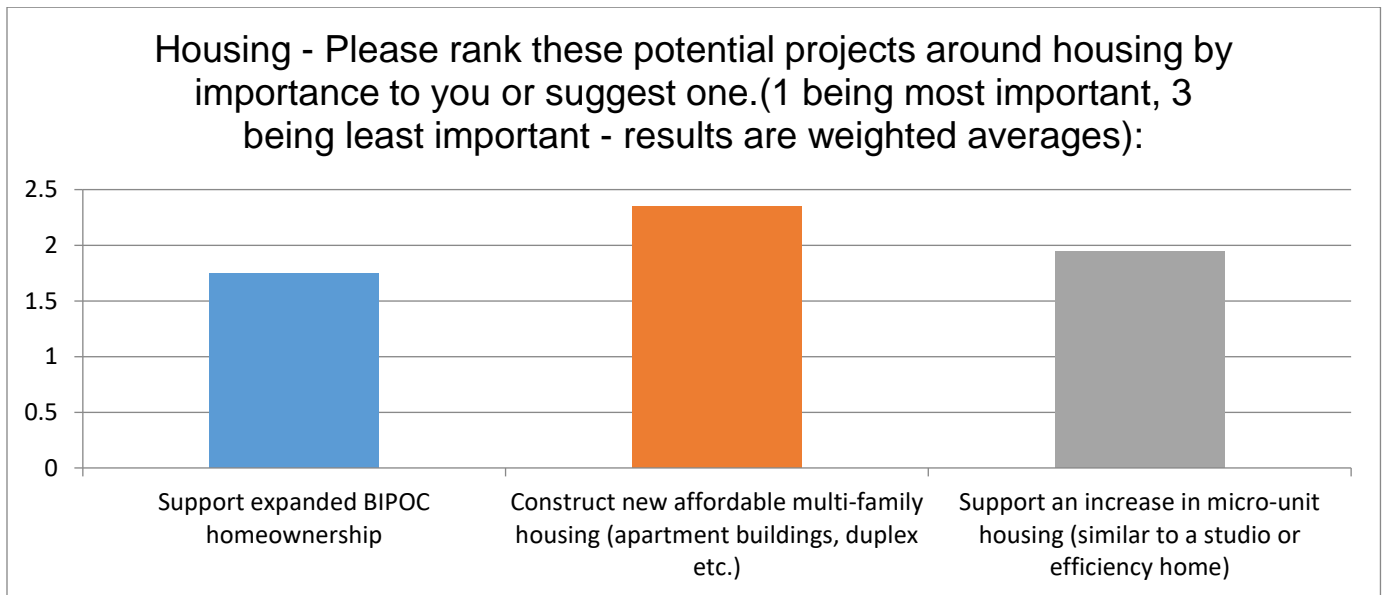
Race/Racial Equity - Please rank these potential projects around race/racial equity by importance to you or suggest one. (1 being most important, 4 being least important - results are weighted averages):



### Responses from individuals who self-identified as BIPOC in order of importance:

- ❖ Expand the City's work in public health equity
- ❖ Expand recruitment and retention of BIPOC employees in the City of Burlington
- ❖ Work to expand tribal engagement
- ❖ Finance a cultural empowerment center

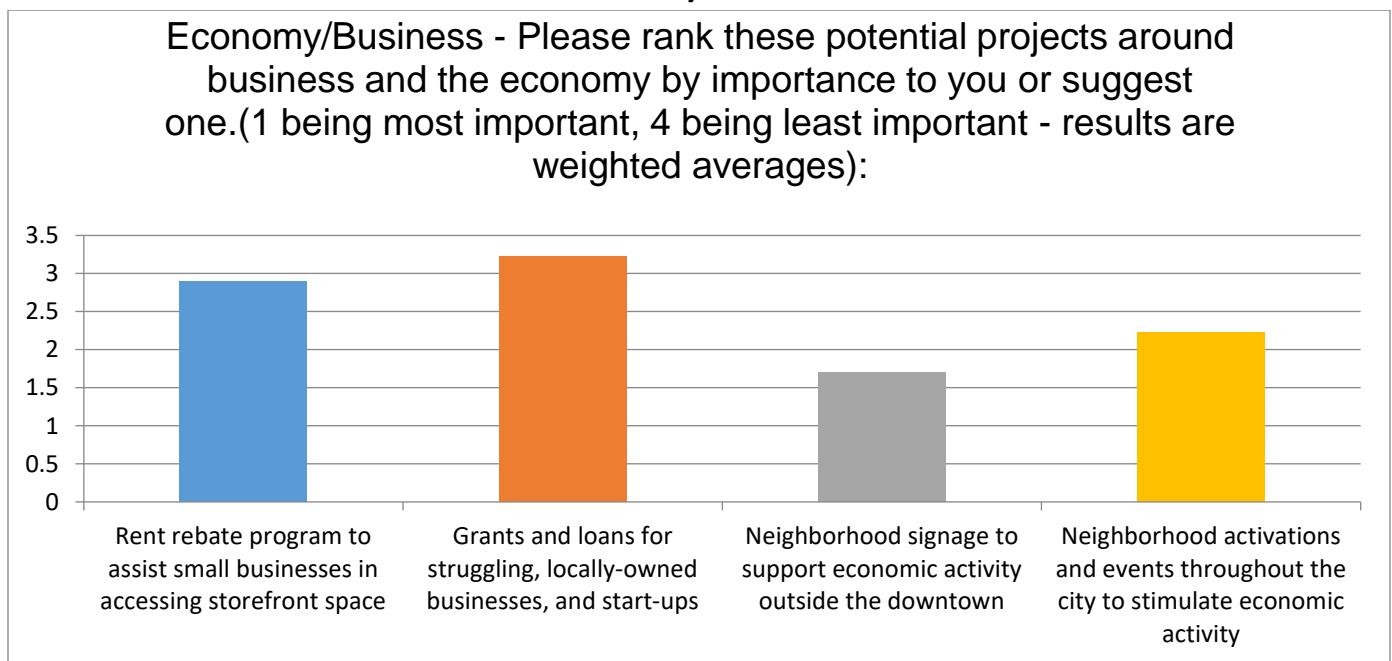
## HOUSING



### Responses from individuals who self-identified as BIPOC in order of importance:

- ❖ Construct new affordable multi-family housing
- ❖ Support expanded BIPOC homeownership
- ❖ Support an increase in micro-unit housing

## ECONOMY/BUSINESS

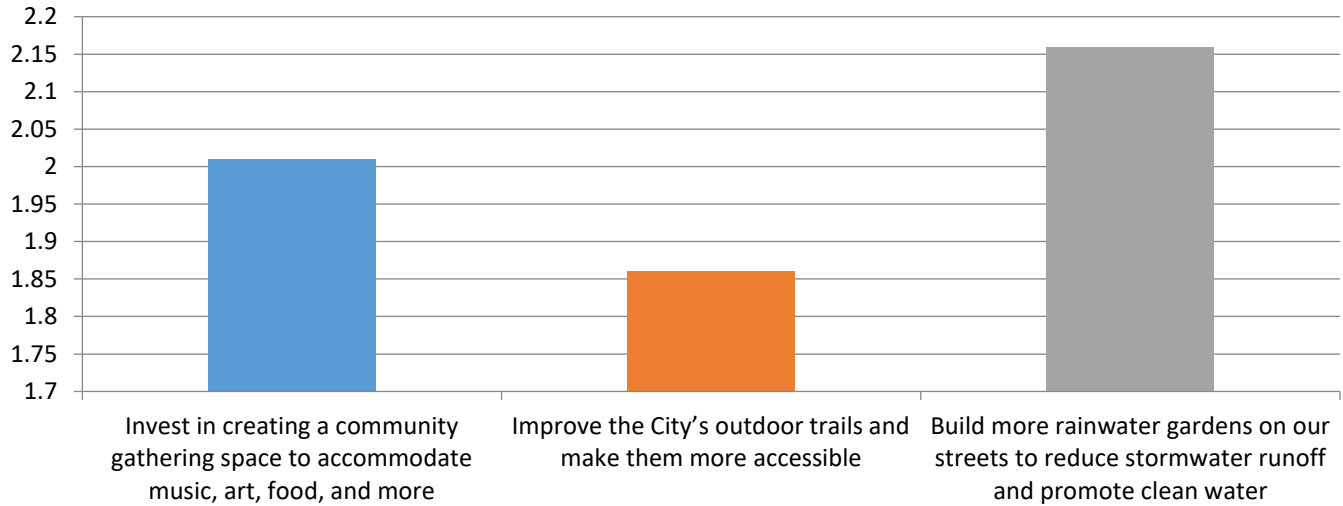


### Responses from individuals who self-identified as BIPOC in order of importance:

- ❖ Grants and loans for struggling locally-owned businesses
- ❖ Rent rebate program to assist in accessing storefront space
- ❖ Neighborhood activation and events to stimulate economic activity
- ❖ Neighborhood signage to support economic activity outside the downtown

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

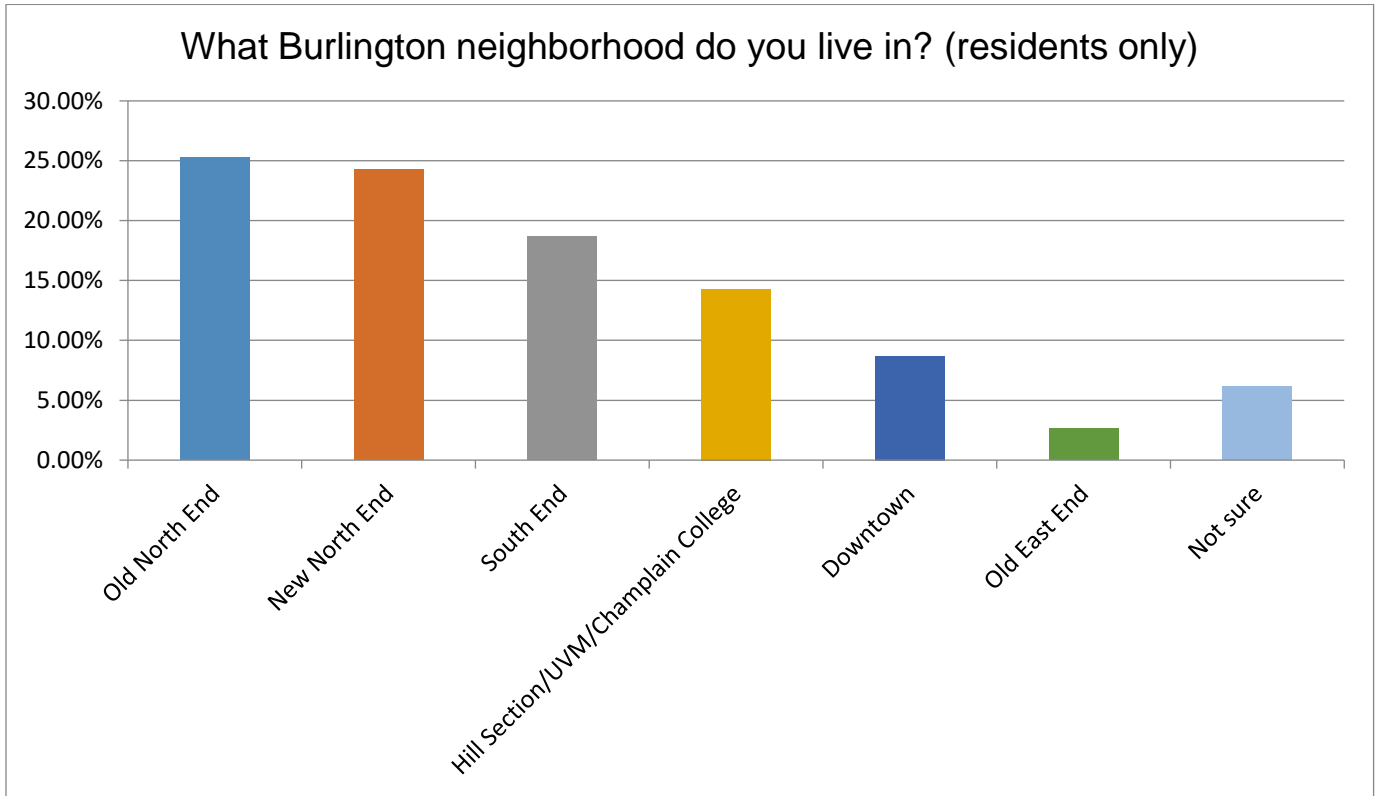
Community Infrastructure - Please rank these possible projects around community space by importance to you or suggest one. (1 being most important, 3 being least important - results are weighted averages):



### Responses from individuals who self-identified as BIPOC in order of importance:

- ❖ Invest in community gathering space for music, art, food and more
- ❖ Build more rainwater gardens to reduce runoff
- ❖ Improve City's outdoor trails

## NEIGHBORHOOD

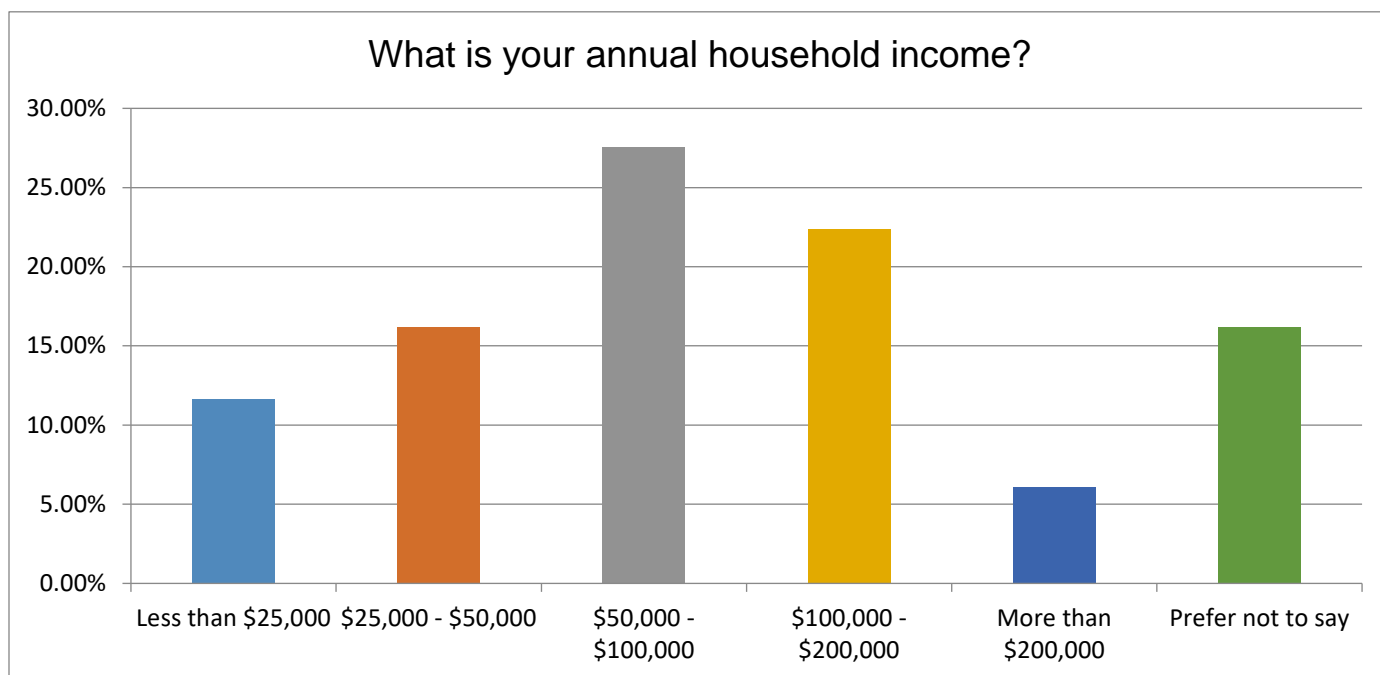


### Responses from individuals who self-identified as BIPOC in order of importance:

- ❖ Old North End
- ❖ New North End
- ❖ South End
- ❖ Hill Section/UVM/Champlain College
- ❖ Downtown
- ❖ Old East End
- ❖ Not sure



## INCOME



### Responses from individuals who self-identified as BIPOC in order of importance:

- ❖ \$50,000 - \$100,000
- ❖ \$25,000 - \$50,000
- ❖ Less than \$25,000
- ❖ \$100,000 - \$200,000
- ❖ Prefer not to say
- ❖ More than \$200,000

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### Qualitative Responses:

The Economic Recovery Team spent many hours reading and sort through the over 3,000 written suggestions.

Below are the most frequent and representative suggestions in each category:

#### Houselessness:

- ❖ Construct tiny home communities
- ❖ Support for mental health and substance use disorder
- ❖ Increase amount of affordable housing
- ❖ Create work programs for unhoused
- ❖ Increase low barrier beds

**Racial Equity:**

- ❖ Improve racial equity through better training/curriculum/hiring in school system
- ❖ Scholarships to subsidize BIPOC adult education
- ❖ Job training for BIPOC residents
- ❖ Multi-cultural events & community spaces for all to share/learn from each other

**Housing:**

- ❖ Convert existing structures into housing
- ❖ Build more affordable housing
- ❖ Support homeownership for everyone
- ❖ Support/grant to existing organizations (Habitat for Humanity, CHT frequently noted)

**Economy/Small Business:**

- ❖ Grants and loans to small locally owned businesses (access to capital)
- ❖ Public safety and security, especially downtown
- ❖ Events, Markets, and festivals
- ❖ Increase support for local startups
- ❖ Increase BIPOC business support

**Community Infrastructure:**

- ❖ Create a community gathering space (Memorial, Moran and 405 Pine St. most frequently noted)
- ❖ Protect the lake
- ❖ Community gardens
- ❖ Playgrounds
- ❖ Bike infrastructure (lanes, trails)