

# Duke Street Land Use Plan

## Poll Summary

September 2025

Below is a summary of the over 1600 responses to the Duke Street Land Use Plan poll. This summary includes feedback from 77 small business owners. The business poll included additional questions; for the purpose of this summary, only the questions that overlap across both polls were considered. A separate summary of the Business poll has also been developed.

The initial section of this report reviews how the Department of Planning and Zoning (P&Z) and Public Engagement Associates (PEA) teams organized and conducted the poll.

The second part of this summary includes responses to all the quantitative questions. Quantitative questions help to measure or quantify opinions, perspectives, and characteristics of those taking the poll.

The third part summarizes the responses to all the qualitative questions. The qualitative questions in this poll enabled the team to explore the responses in greater depth, uncovering nuances and rationales. This section also includes a summary of some of the key takeaways from the qualitative questions,

### The Process Used

Over the summer, the City of Alexandria officially launched the planning process to update the comprehensive land use vision for the Duke Street Corridor, which covers the area from the West End Development (the former Landmark Mall) to Alexandria Union Station. In addition, the City launched a poll for community members concurrently with a business owner's poll. P&Z staff developed the poll in Spring 2025 to be ready for the June 9 Kick-off meeting.

The City shared the poll with the public using its usual methods of engagement, including the City's eNews, its website and social media platforms, a dedicated WhatsApp group, and banners, yard signs, and posters.

Additionally, to increase community engagement, the City hosted a series of pop-up events—portable, interactive outreach sessions designed to meet residents where they already gather. These events were held at popular locations such as farmers' markets, the Beatley Library, King Street Metrorail station, and community celebrations like National Night Out, helping reach residents who might not typically attend formal meetings. 27 pop-up events were held over the summer, reaching approximately 1100 people. Prior to the 6/9 Kick-off Event, the City hosted 11 additional pop-ups which engaged approximately 200 residents. Overall, the City has hosted 38 pop-ups between April and September 2025, reaching nearly 1300 community members. Analysis of the feedback collected from the Pop-up Events can be found on the plan webpage: [www.alexandriava.gov/DukeStreetPlan](http://www.alexandriava.gov/DukeStreetPlan).

### Key Takeaways from the Qualitative Questions

In general, participants who provided answers to the open-ended qualitative questions in the poll agreed that traffic, congestion, and mobility are their top priorities. Addressing traffic and congestion was the most common topic among the responses to three of the four open-ended questions (the only question that did not have that as the number one topic was "What do you like about Duke Street"). This consensus is reflected in the responses to several of the other quantitative poll

questions as well. Importantly, concerns about reducing travel lanes and/or generally about making driving more difficult came up in these comments as well.

In the same three questions where traffic and congestion appeared as the most common topic comments, multi-modal transit improvements was either the second or third most common. There is a clear interest from some community members to have expanded and safer bike, pedestrian, and transit networks. Importantly, there are additional comments highlighting the need for an integrated multimodal system that incorporates bike/ped infrastructure without reducing car infrastructure.

Responses to the question “What do you like about Duke Street” revealed a departure from some of the common topics seen in the other open-ended comments and in some of the quantitative questions. The most common response to this question was the diversity of businesses in the Duke Street area. This same response was either third or fourth ranked in the two quantitative questions where businesses or economic wellbeing were options. Community members clearly feel that the businesses along Duke Street are an asset that they both appreciate and want to retain. In response to the question “What is your hope for the future of Duke Street,” improving access to economic development and businesses was the third most common topic, indicating that while community members appreciate and value the businesses along the corridor they also feel that the corridor itself may be a barrier to accessing these businesses (a sentiment also shared by many of the business owners who responses to the business-specific questions).

Unsurprisingly, other topics like housing affordability, quality of life, development expectations, and parks and open space also came up regularly in the qualitative question responses, however just less frequently than traffic, congestion, and businesses and economic development.

Lastly, across the qualitative question responses there were also several clear and competing interests that came through. For example, responses advocating for more development and responses advocating for less development appeared at relatively the same rate. Even among the most common topics, disagreement among participants is evident. For example, some participants want an expansion of bike infrastructure, including utilizing travel lanes to do so, while other participants very clearly advocated against taking travel lanes for anything except vehicle traffic. These disagreements, while unsurprising given the diversity of the corridor, are still an important finding from these responses that illustrate the different and potentially contradictory values and needs of the corridor's residents.

### Quantitative Questions

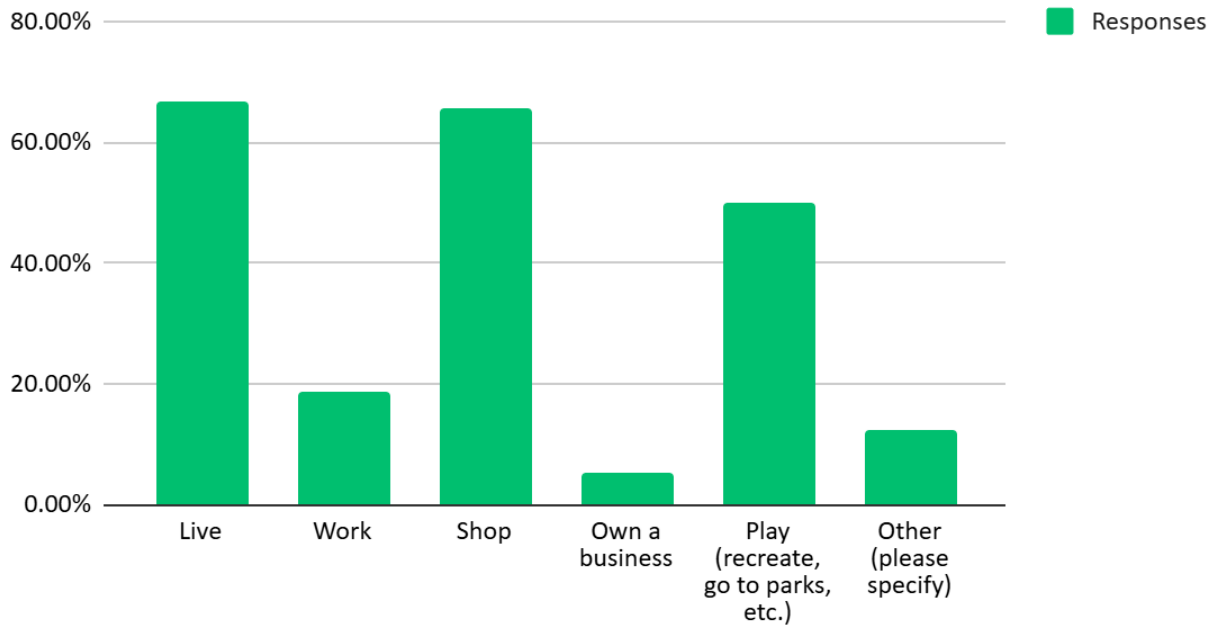
#### Option to see more background information

Participants were offered the opportunity to see background information. 49% of poll respondents who answered this question opted to view additional background information on the plan. 90% of respondents answered this question; 10% skipped this question.

## Relationship to Duke Street

Respondents could check all the options that applied to them on this question. 67% of respondents live in the corridor, 66% shop there, and 50 % play there. Almost 19% of respondents work in the corridor, 5% own a business there, and 12% selected other. A sampling of the other responses includes, “commute through” the corridor, “own property” in the area, and “pick up and drop off kids at school.” Overall, 94% of people answered this question.

### What is your relationship to Duke Street? Select all that apply:

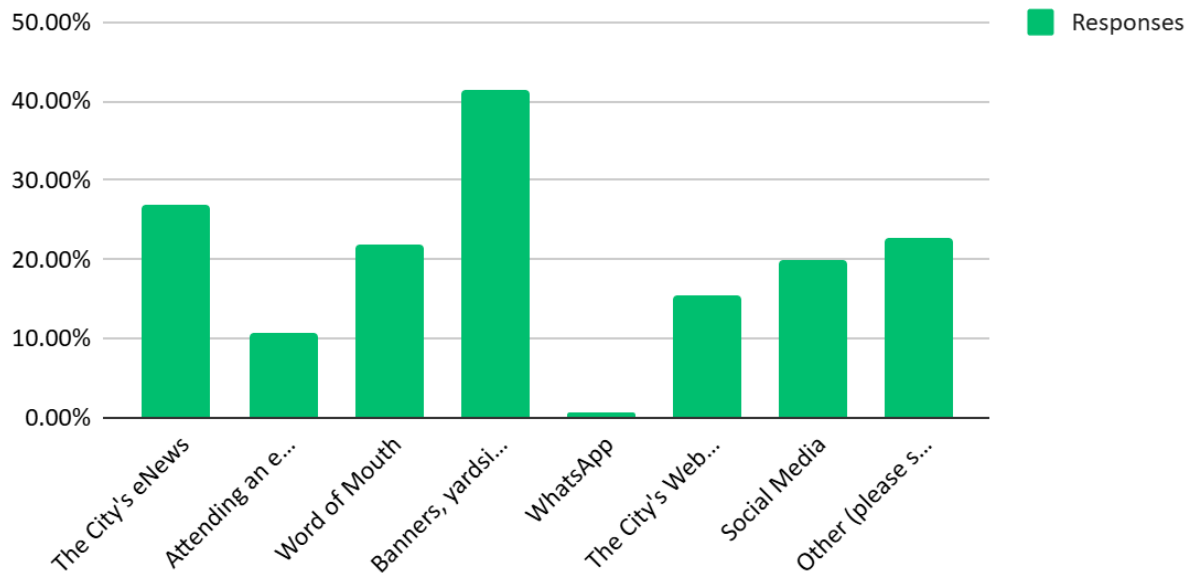


## How did you hear about the Plan?

Once again, respondents could check all the options that applied to them. 41% selected banners, yard signs, or other posters. 27% indicated the City's eNews. 22% said Word of Mouth. 20% selected Social Media. 15% chose the City's Website. 11% selected attending an event or pop up. 23% selected other, which included a civic/neighborhood/affinity group, ALXnow.com, local media, or a canvasser.

23% selected other, which included a civic/neighborhood/affinity group, ALXnow.com, local media, or a canvasser.

## How did you hear about the Duke Street Land Use Plan? Select all that apply



Which frequent community comments do you agree with (select all that apply)?

Two topics received more than 60 % of the responses:

- We need a more walkable community with safer sidewalks and crosswalks (63%)
- The traffic is really bad and the roads are unsafe (63%)

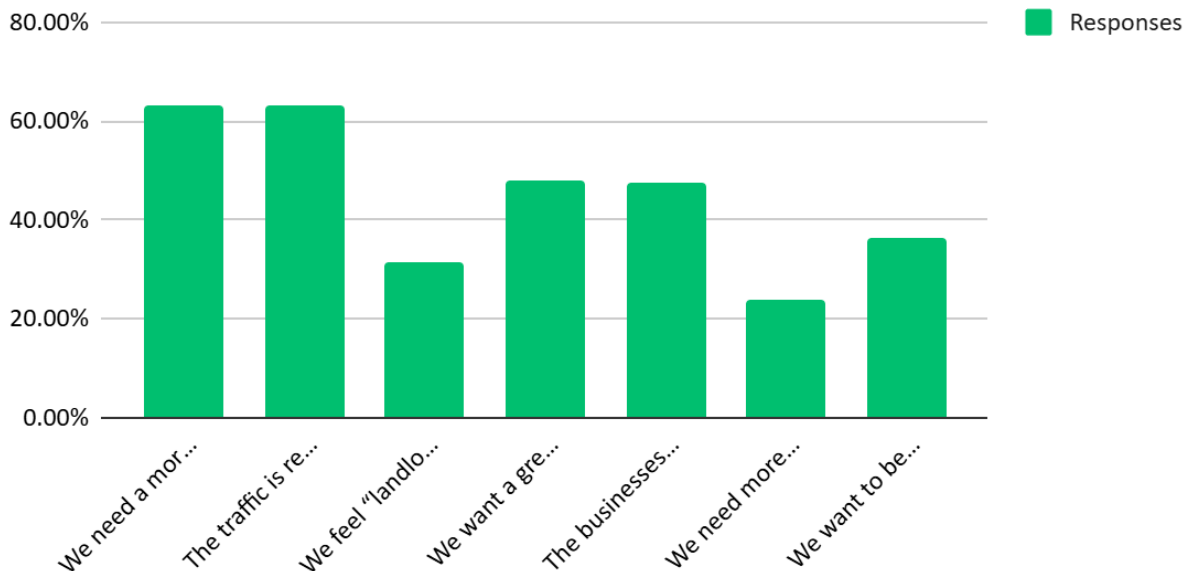
Two topics received between 40 % and 60 % of the responses:

- We want a greener neighborhood with more trees, shade, and places to sit (48%)
- The businesses are important; having greater variety would be an improvement (48%)

The final three topics ranged between 24% and 36% of the responses:

- We want to be able to bike around our neighborhood and to the grocery store (36%)
- We feel "landlocked" by Duke Street because it's hard to get in and out of our neighborhood (32%)
- We need more housing, but I'm wondering where it will go (24%)

We started pre-planning work in December 2024. Since then, we have held over 25 discussions with community groups, business...



Pick the 3 topics most important to you as we start the Plan.

The highest ranking topic received more than half of the responses:

- Being able to move around from one place to another along the corridor (52%)

Three topics received more than 30 % of the responses:

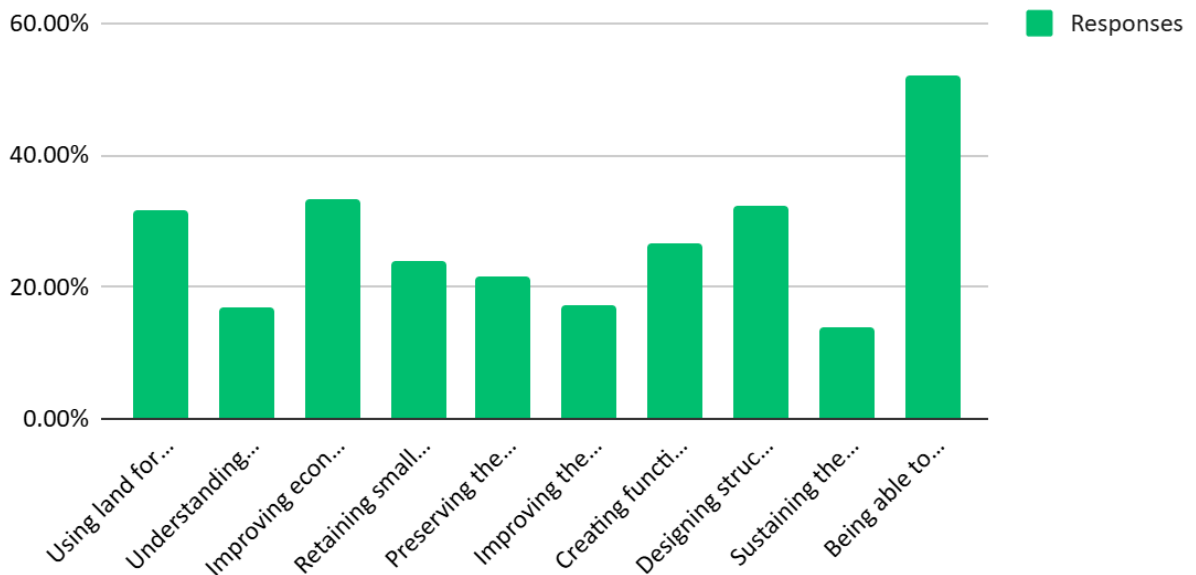
- Improving economic well- being, growth, and stability in the corridor (33%)
- Designing structures in the corridor that enable pedestrian and bike safety (32%)
- Using land for Parks & Open Spaces in the corridor (32%)

Three topics received between 20 % and 30 % of the responses:

- Creating functional and sustainable neighborhoods in the corridor (26%)
- Retaining small businesses in the corridor (24%)
- Preserving the affordability of housing in the corridor (22%)

The other three topics received between 14% and 17% of the responses.

Which of these topics is most important to you as we start the Plan? Pick three:

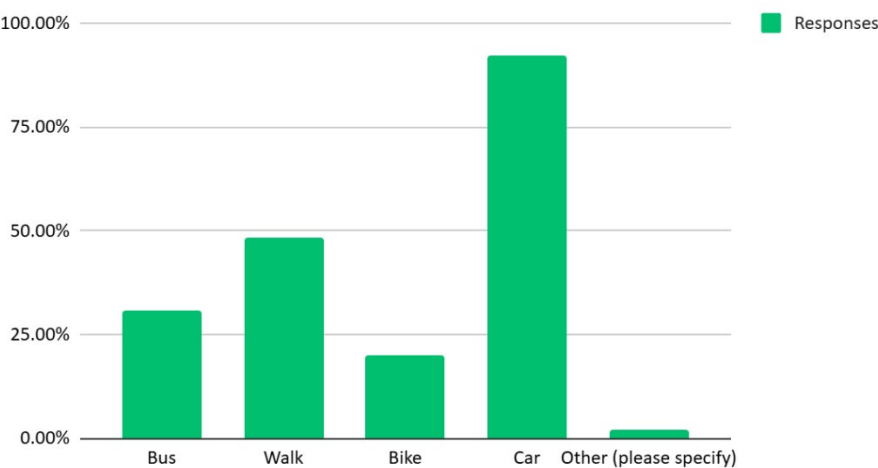


### How do you get around Duke Street?

For this question, respondents could select all options that applied to them.

The vast majority, 92% get around by car, while 48% walk, 31% ride the bus, and 20% ride bicycles. Less than 2% selected other, these responses included “metro”, “rideshare” and “scooter.”

How do you get around Duke Street? Select all that apply:

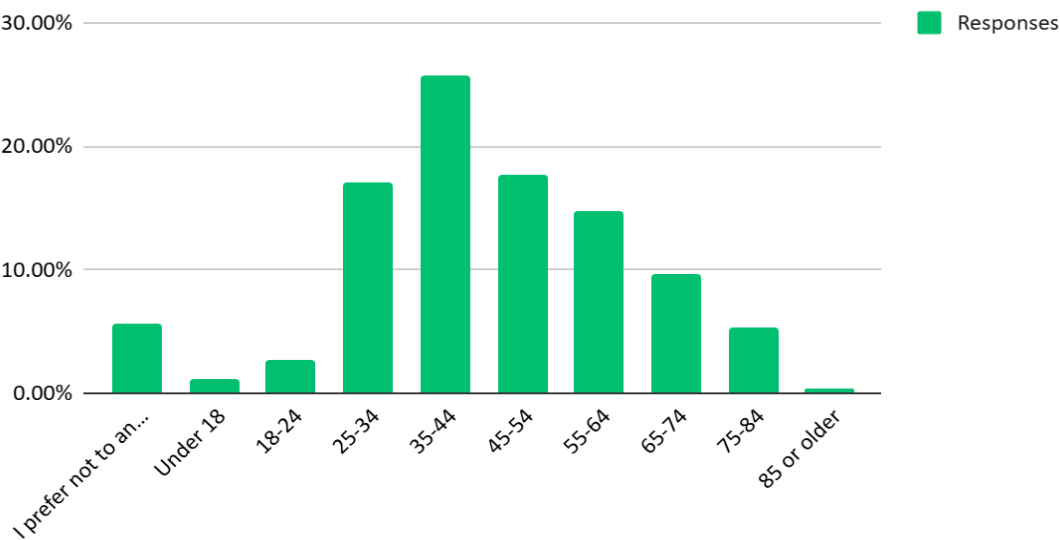


### What is your age?

Respondents largely fell into four age bands: 25- 34, 35- 44, 45- 54, and 55- 64. They comprised three- quarters of the over 1200 responses, with the 35- 44 age band having the highest percentage (26%) and the 55- 64 age band having the lowest (15%).

15% were older than 65, and nearly 6% preferred not to answer this question.

What is your age?

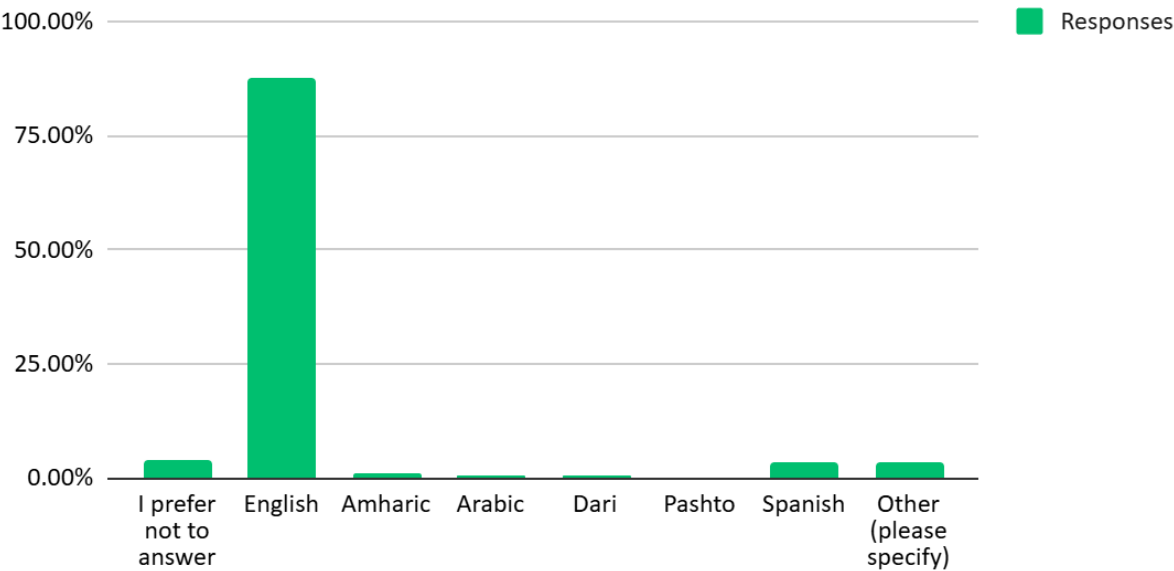


Which of the following languages do you speak at home? (select all that apply)

An overwhelming majority of respondents (88%) selected English as the language they speak at home. The next highest responses were:

- I prefer not to answer (4%)
- Other (3%)
- Spanish (3%)

Which of the following languages do you speak at home? (Select all that apply)

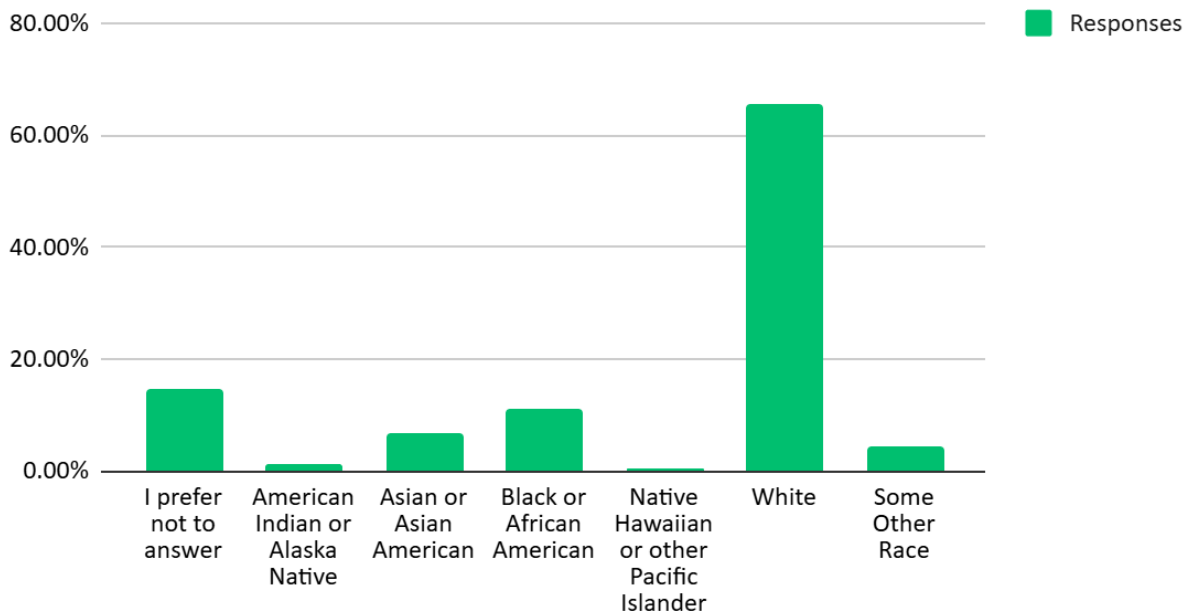


### What racial category best describes you? (select all that apply)

76% of respondents (over 1240 individuals) answered this question. Of those who responded, nearly 66% identified as White. Eleven percent (11%) of respondents selected Black or African American, 7% identified as Asian or Asian American, and 4% selected some other race.

Twenty-four percent (24%) of respondents (389 individuals) chose to skip this question. An additional 15% of respondents (181 individuals) answered the question but selected I prefer not to answer. In total, 570 individuals did not provide responses to this question.

### What category best describes you? (select all that apply)

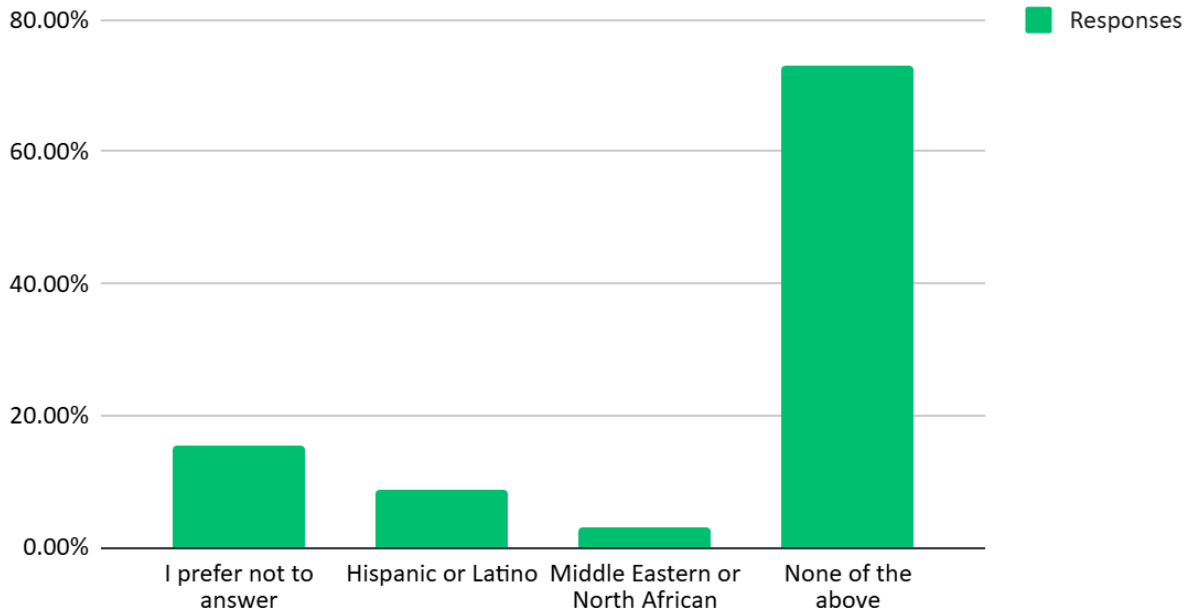


## What category best describes your ethnicity?

Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents (1230 individuals) answered this question; 73% of respondents selected none of the above; 15% of respondents selected I prefer not to answer; 9% selected Hispanic or Latino; and, 3% selected Middle Eastern or North African.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents (401 individuals) skipped this question.

### What category best describes your ethnicity (select all that apply)



## Do you rent or own your primary residence?

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of respondents answered this question. The majority of individuals (72%) selected I currently own my home, while 21% selected I currently rent my home, and 2% selected other.

Six percent (6%) of respondents (70 individuals) selected I prefer not to answer and 23% of respondents (381 individuals) did not answer this question.

### Please tell us about your primary residence:



## Qualitative Questions

Fewer people responded to the four qualitative questions, with responses ranging from a low of 805 to a high of 974.

What makes you want to be involved in the planning process?

Nine hundred seventy-four (974) individuals responded to this question. Sixteen themes emerged from the feedback. The themes are listed below, from most to least mentioned topics. Beneath each topic is a sampling of quotes from the poll results.

1. I want to improve traffic and congestion
  - "Because during rush hour it is the worst street in northern Virginia"
  - "Traffic is getting worse every day..but the building continues with the same roads from the 70's"
2. I want to "ensure expansion of roads and commuter support."
  - "I am concerned that future changes will cause increased congestion. Road diets and reduced traffic lanes have had negative impacts in other areas of our town"
  - "Don't want to see Duke Street traffic capacity reduced which causes traffic backups"
3. I want to advocate for "interest in transportation improvements other than private vehicles"
  - "Increase Transit- Oriented Development in Alexandria both for my own and my employees' ability to get to work and not be raging with road rage when they get here, but also for my customers and partners to be able to get to us with convenience"
  - "I'd like Duke to be more pedestrian/bike friendly and better bus service"
4. I live nearby
  - "I live off Duke Street so whatever plan is taking place affects my daily life"
  - "This is my home" I want to improve quality of life in the community
5. I want to improve quality of life in the community
  - "Want to see Duke street safer and more appealing and accessible for all"
  - "The opportunity to help shape this area into a place great for families"
6. I want a voice in the future
  - "I want a voice in making sure proposals are reasonable, cost appropriate, safe and least disruptive to the area and my neighborhood."
  - "Los planes son una oportunidad para planificar proactivamente el futuro y las diferentes ideas y perspectivas son importantes" [Plans are an opportunity to proactively plan for the future and different ideas and perspectives are important.]
7. I want to stay informed about what is happening in the community
  - "Knowing what is happening"
8. I want "to make our community safer"
  - "Me importa que la planificación se enfoca en la seguridad de peatones de todas edades y movilizaciones" [I care that planning focuses on the safety of pedestrians of all ages and movements.]
  - "to be safe & better environment"
9. I am interested in community businesses and development
  - "want to keep our business thriving, want healthy development that does not impede business"
  - "I want to be able to continue to shop at stores in shopping centers that remain easy to access"
10. I am concerned about changes

- "I believe some of the proposed changes to Duke Street will significantly negatively impact my ability to get in and out of my neighborhood"
- "Minor changes can have significant negative life- quality impact"
- 11. I am concerned about too much development along the corridor
  - "Concern about city hall's development agenda"
  - "Reduce density of corridor"
- 12. I want to increase green space
  - "I would love to see recreational spaces that would allow for more physical activity and greenery as well as a space to sit and enjoy the entire environment."
  - "To ensure recreation and bicycle safety is considered"
- 13. I want to keep the community affordable
  - "Growing up in the area, it is important for me to make sure housing and the overall community remains accessible and affordable for not only myself, but for the CURRENT community"
- 14. I want to maintain the property values of homes in the area
  - "A bad plan will make my life miserable and my house worth much less"
- 15. I want to improve connections to Old Town and the rest of Alexandria
  - "From the "West End" there are limited practical routes to and from Old Town. It's already at times tough to reach our city's signature attraction. I don't want it to become tougher"
  - "There are a lot of good things along the Duke St corridor that I enjoy and a lot of stores, restaurants, and services that I use, but they all feel like little islands of activity along a highway rather than a contiguous city. I hope that a plan like this can help it feel more connected to the rest of Alexandria"
- 16. I am skeptical that my input will matter
  - "No one who's on the committee cares about how this affects residents. All changes so far have negatively affected residents. The request for input is purely gaslighting as none of our concerns have actually been considered"

### What is your hope for the future of Duke Street?

Eight hundred thirty- eight (838) individuals responded to this question. Fourteen themes emerged from the feedback. The themes are listed below from the most to the least mentioned topics. Under each topic, there is a small sample of quotes from the poll results.

1. Improve traffic flow and congestion
  - "Improved traffic flow would increase our quality's of life and limit the amount of time spent idling in traffic"
  - "To be more efficient and better design travel/ traffic patterns, so it does not block or eliminate access to the streets to get into neighborhoods"
2. Invest in multimodal transportation options to minimize traffic
  - "A street where all modes of transportation can flow with minimal obstruction. Cars can cross Alexandria with minimal stop lights. Bus use is expanded upon. Bike lanes are created and physically protected from motor vehicle traffic"
  - ".it is fundamentally unpleasant to navigate Duke Street in anything that is not a car. I would love it to be developed with better mixed use zoning, and more thoughtful pedestrian infrastructure."
3. Increase economic development and access to shopping and businesses
  - "That it is easier to travel and shop"

- "A good use of space that allows for small businesses to thrive alongside new and more commercial businesses"
- 4. Don't make changes that restrict car use
  - "That no substantial changes will be made in automobile accessibility and movement. Any changes to the number of automobile lanes or restrictions on use would negatively impact the lives and activities of the majority of Alexandria's citizens"
  - "My hope is that we do not equate an increase in bus or bike accessibility to a decrease in car traffic. This is a false correlation and will only exacerbate car traffic creating more pollution and worse quality of life for everyone who lives on or uses Duke st"
- 5. Improve the community feeling, quality of life, and amenities
  - "A vibrant community that meets the needs of a hugely diverse population"
  - "A more cohesive and functional renovation that brings communities together, instead of isolating and segmenting them within the footprint"
- 6. Prioritize green space, parks, and sustainability
  - "That there will be more soccer fields and recreational public parks"
  - "Please integrate more trees and shade into Duke Street"
- 7. "Maintaining existing neighborhood character"
  - "That we don't lose the diversity of the west end. The people, the restaurants, the affordability, the variety of offerings, etc."
  - "That it retains what it has now even in redevelopment - demographic mix, economic viability, ease of transit, and green space that makes it feel like home, not a thruway."
- 8. Realistic and thoughtful development
  - "The design of Duke Street should reflect that it is becoming more of an urban rather than suburban road"
  - "grow in a controlled and cohesive manner, improve services"
- 9. Keep it affordable
  - "Remain an area where middle class people can still affordably live and shop in. I don't want to be priced out my community"
  - "That we not lose affordable housing or business spaces - this is the last affordable place in Alexandria."
- 10. More housing development
  - "More housing (mix used), less parking lots, tree lined sidewalks, walkable neighborhoods, good quality housing that is affordable for professionals"
- 11. No to little change
  - "Don't try to turn it in to something you wish it might become. Accept the current realities and plan and adjust accordingly"
  - "To keep things as they are"
- 12. Residents of the corridor drive the decisions
  - "That neighborhoods have a greater say in decisions in their area."
  - "That decisions are made in the best interest of those who are most impacted and not for a handful of special interest groups."
- 13. Increase safety
  - "It will be a safe place for all resident and visitors to work, play and shop"
  - "Creating a safe community with reductions in crime"
- 14. Make it more attractive
  - "Prettier, less concrete, less traffic"
  - "That it would designed to enhance the lives of those who use with beautiful landscaping and architectural standards"

## What are some things that you like about the Duke Street corridor?

Eight hundred five (805) individuals responded to this question. Ten themes emerged from the feedback. The themes are listed below from the most mentioned to the least mentioned topics. Beneath each topic, there is a small sampling of quotes from the poll results.

1. "The diversity of businesses"
  - "Alexandria's most interesting businesses are in the west end"
  - "Incredible diversity of businesses and cultures!"
2. Convenient and "Proximity to surrounding amenities."
  - "There are numerous amenities that can be reached without crossing the Beltway or 395"
  - "Services along the road such as the library, Breman Park, and restaurants"
3. As a main transit hub
  - "It serves as the central spine for much of Alexandria"
  - "Easy transit access to DC and Old Town"
4. The parks and public spaces
  - "I really enjoy the parks in the West End and am always grateful to be able to see nature in its natural glory in some areas such as Holmes Run Park"
  - "I love the parallel walking artery that is the park along the railroad. I think extending this helps create a green recreational corridor for all community members with lots of different points of accessibility"
5. Almost nothing
  - "Nothing. We live here despite Duke St."
  - "Not much as it is hard to get around because of the traffic."
6. "I like that Duke Street reflects the diversity of the DMV."
  - "I love the diversity of our community, the different families, ethnicities, and religions here"
  - "such variety of communities & people along Duke!"
7. The quality of Life
  - "urban but cozy"
  - "Duke Street is a vibrant community, and a few sections are walkable"
8. "Good public transportation options (metro and multiple bus lines)"
  - "Somewhat frequent transit service"
  - "Bus services son muy buenos." [Bus services are very good.]
9. Affordability
  - "I love that there are lots of small businesses here, ones that don't exist anywhere else in the city because this is the last affordable area in Alexandria. I don't want to change things so that these businesses (and the people who live here and run them) can't afford to be here."
  - "One of the more affordable corridors in the City to live on."
10. The people
  - "the community and people there"
  - "Beautiful history and wonderful people"

## What are some things you would change about the Duke Street corridor?

Eight hundred ninety-five (895) individuals responded to this question. Twelve themes emerged from the feedback. The themes are listed below from most mentioned to least mentioned. Beneath each topic are some quotes from the poll results.

1. "Find a way to reduce congestion" and traffic
  - "safe and pleasant for people who actually live here, not just funneling people through our neighborhoods to get in and out of Old Town & DC"
  - "Less likely to shop and dine because of traffic and parking"
2. Invest in multimodal transit options
  - "I'd like it to be safer for bike/ped/bus, which will make it safer for cars as well."
  - "Add a metro stop off Quaker Ln, make Duke St multi-modal with dedicated bus and bike space. Add traffic calming measures. Green space and walkability are important."
3. Increase green space, parks, and recreation options
  - "I would like to see a central park area that everyone can go to to get fresh air, exercise and even socialize. It would bring more life to the area."
  - "More wildflowers and biodiverse plants in the middle strip"
4. Make it more attractive
  - "Inviting sceneries such as improving the facades of the businesses."
  - "Moving away from set back strip malls with huge Duke St adjacent parking. Many industrial businesses facing Duke. Too few local small business bars and restaurants. High speed of traffic gives it a "stroad" highway feel, rather than a neighborhood feel"
5. Improve the quality of life
  - "Make it a place to visit, not travel through. Make the neighborhoods around it safe and not filled with cut through traffic, so the local community wants to use and visit Duke Street. It's not just about the street itself, but quality of life for surrounding communities."
  - "More entertainment activities to attract more people to business, new flavor to area."
6. Keep affordable
  - "Mas viviendas, pero al alcance real de las personas" [More housing, but within people's real reach]
  - "I am seeing a lot of families who lived here, grew up here, and still make a living here, being forced to move out, and it's extremely disappointing. They are being priced out bc there is no housing that is created for those in 30 - 40% AMI income range"
7. Increase development
  - "I would increase density along the corridor. There should not be empty parking lots, including at the several shopping plazas. Land is at a premium here, and the city has a great opportunity to extend the walkable nature of old town westward"
  - "Loosen zoning and land use regulations so more apartments, townhomes and commercial can be developed"
8. Decrease development and prioritize realistic and well thought out growth
  - "The challenge is we keep building housing which comes with more traffic, but are reducing the number of lanes in the roads. Cut through traffic is terrible..I am really concerned that the decisions being made are divorced from reality. I agree we need housing but that means we need more road capacity not less. Please be realistic when developing these plans"
  - "Don't keep trying to change the population density. We're really comfortable on mix of homes/green space"
9. Don't make changes that restrict car use

- "Stop removing traffic lanes for bike lanes"
  - "Traffic between King Street and Quaker Lane - especially during a rainy rush hour - is abysmal. Taking away lanes of traffic to accommodate a bus lane for a mile or two, at best, isn't a solution to a problem. It's creating another problem"
10. Increase safety
- "Less crime, more business"
  - "Drug zones are common"
11. Increase retail and restaurant options
- "Would love to have more shops and restaurants in the area"
  - "More variety of retail"
12. Nothing
- "whatever you're planning on doing, don't"
  - "The City Council needs to leave it alone"