Chapter 3. Public Participation



Marketing Flyer for Community Survey

Do You Share this Future Vision? **Jackson County is an engaging** community, enthusiastically creating opportunity, supporting growth, and enhancing quality of life for all who live, work, and visit. https://eciatrans.org/jackson_county_ et us know! comprehensive_plan.php

Source: ECIA

Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

Shared Vision Flyer for Community Outreach

OVERVIEW

One of the primary objectives of the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan is to bring people together to build a community consensus around a vision for the future. To achieve this objective, a

transparent and inclusive planning process was developed to provide diverse interests with the opportunity to create a shared vision for Jackson County and identify broad goals and future priorities.

This chapter outlines the comprehensive planning process, describes community outreach efforts, and analyzes community input collected through this process. Table 3.1 shows the planning process and project schedule.

TASKS	FREQUENCY	TIMEFRAME
1. Project Management		
a. County Zoning and ECIA Team Meetings: project planning	Monthly	July 2023 – June 2024
b. Zoning Commission public meetings: updates	Monthly	July 2023 – June 2024
c. Board of Supervisors public meetings: updates and direction	Monthly	July 2023 – June 2024
2. Community Data Analysis		
a. Review of existing county plans & policies	Ongoing	July 2023 – January 2024
b. ECIA Team: Analysis of Federal, state, regional, and county data	Ongoing	July 2023 – January 2024
3. Draft Plan Chapters and Maps		
a. County Zoning and ECIA Team: Develop draft chapters and maps	Ongoing	August 2023 – February 2024
b. Zoning Commission public meetings to review drafts	Monthly	July 2023 – January 2024
4. Public Engagement		
a. Project Website	Ongoing	July 2023 – December 2024
b. Community Survey: develop, distribute, analyze input	Ongoing	July 2023 – January 2024
c. Steering Committee public meetings	Three	October 2023, January and March 2024
d. Community Outreach	Ongoing	July 2023 – June 2024
5. Finalize Draft Plan		
a. Publish and post draft plan	30-60 days	February – March 2024
b. Public comment period (minimum 30 days)	30-60 days	February – March 2024
c. Zoning Commission public meeting: Finalize draft plan	30 days	April 2024
6. Plan Adoption		
a. Zoning Commission: Public Hearing and Recommendation	30 days	May 2024
b. Board of Supervisors: Public Hearing & Plan Adoption	30-60 days	May – June 2024

PLANNING PROCESS: KEY PLAYERS

Below is a summary of the roles of the key players in the planning process.

Jackson County Zoning Department

The Zoning Department served as the county's Project Manager and primary point of contact with East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA). ECIA staff met with the Zoning Department throughout the planning process to plan and prepare for meetings, workshops, and public input; to review draft documents and survey results; and to provide direct input on the contents of the comprehensive plan.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

The Board of Supervisors appointed a 17-member Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee representing a wide spectrum of stakeholder groups with a variety of skill sets and perspectives. The Steering Committee met three times with the Zoning Department and ECIA staff to identify the county's strengths, challenges, issues, and opportunities; draft a vision for the future of Jackson county; and identify broad goals and future priorities to realize that vision.

Jackson County Zoning Commission

The Zoning Commission met with the Zoning Department and ECIA staff throughout the planning process to give direction on public participation efforts; to review draft documents, Steering Committee input, and survey results; and to provide direct input on the contents of the comprehensive plan. Under Iowa Code, the Zoning Commission's role is to hold a public hearing on the final draft of the comprehensive plan, and then recommend the plan's adoption to the Board of Supervisors.

Jackson County Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors contracted with ECIA to prepare the comprehensive plan. During the planning process, the Zoning Department provided project updates and sought direction from the Board of Supervisors. Under Iowa Code, after receiving the Zoning Commission's recommendation, the role of the Board of Supervisors is to hold a public hearing, and then adopt a final version of the comprehensive plan.



Zoning Department and ECIA staff working with Steering Committee members

Photo Credit: Jackson County Zoning Department

East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA)

ECIA is a regional council of governments that serves five counties in Northeast Iowa in six broad categories: Community Development, Economic Development, Housing Assistance, Special Programs, Transit, and Transportation and Planning.

PLANNING PROCESS: PUBLIC OUTREACH

The process of listening to the community is critical to identifying important issues and building consensus around plans for the future. Below are descriptions of the key outreach components of the planning process.

Communitywide Outreach

The planning process emphasized meeting people where they are, such as community events, and encouraging stakeholders, such as City Councils, Steering Committee members, and community groups, to help get the public engaged in the planning process, returning surveys, sharing ideas, etc.

The County Zoning Department made approximately 1,000 direct contacts and numerous indirect contacts through extensive community outreach from July-November 2023 in a variety of settings and formats:

 Shared information with Jackson County employees, cities, and local groups to post on their Facebook pages and websites.

- Shared information with service agencies, food banks, childcare centers, local businesses, high school students, non-profits, and community groups (300+/contacts).
- Shared information at the Jackson County Fair's parade, booths, and talent show (200+ contacts).
- Set up community survey stations at the County Courthouse and the Hurstville Interpretive Center.
- Attended City Council meetings in Andrew, Bellevue, LaMotte, Maquoketa, Miles, Preston, Sabula, Spragueville, and Springbrook (86 contacts).
- Shared information at local events, including Music on the Green in Maquoketa (200+/- contacts) and "Unwrap the Magic" vendor show in Bellevue (100+/- contacts).
- Shared information during KMAQ Radio's "Just Talk" program in July, August, and October 2023.

 Shared media releases and project flyers in July and October 2023, and in March and May 2024.

Public Meetings

The Zoning Commission held work sessions on the comprehensive plan during their monthly meetings from July 2023 to April 2024 at the County Courthouse. Notices of these public meetings were posted on the Jackson County website and at the Courthouse. The meetings also were available via Zoom, offering video and audio connections for the general public.

Updates on the comprehensive planning process were provided by the Zoning Administrator to the Board of Supervisors at their public meetings at the County Courthouse. Board meetings have similar posting requirements, and also are available via Zoom.

Meetings of the Steering Committee were held as public meetings at the Courthouse, with the same posting of notices as for the Zoning Commission meetings. Committee meetings also were available via Zoom.

ECIA Project Website

In July 2023, ECIA began hosting a project website for transparent information sharing and to collect public input at https://eciatrans.org/jackson county comprehensive plan.php. The project website describes what a comprehensive plan is, why everyone's ideas are important, how to share ideas, and where to find out more. The project website has a **Your Ideas** page and a **Community Survey** link where people can share what they want the future of Jackson County to be. Figure 3.1 shows the project website's home page.

By May 17, 2024, the project website had 510 views by 298 users with an average of 1.71 views per user and an average engagement time of 19 seconds. The project website will remain for six months after adoption of the plan.

ECIA Facebook Page

ECIA maintains a Facebook page to share information about regional events, plans, and programs. Information about the comprehensive plan was posted in December 2023 and March and May 2024.

Public Open House

A public open house was held on October 23, 2023 at the County Courthouse to share information about the comprehensive plan and survey; to gather input about Jackson County's strengthens, challenges, issues, and opportunities; and to gather ideas for a shared vision, broad goals, and future priorities. Only three county residents attended the public open house.

Public Hearings

Under Iowa Code, a public hearing must be held by the Zoning Commission to recommend a comprehensive plan to the Board of Supervisors. Upon receiving the Commission's recommendation, the Board of Supervisors then holds a public hearing to consider adoption of the plan. Legal notices for both public hearings must be published in the local newspapers serving Jackson County.



Figure 3.1 ECIA Project Website for Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

Community Survey

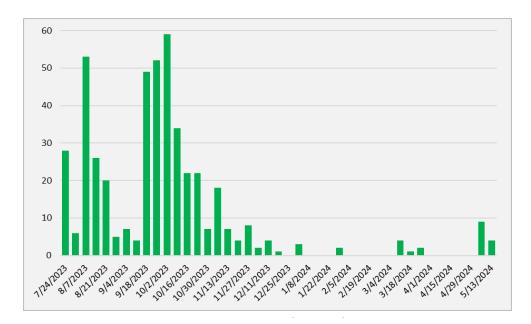
ECIA worked with the County Zoning staff to develop a community survey, create promotional items, generate weekly reports, provide monthly highlights, and prepare an analysis. The survey was available in July 2023 in hard copy and at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3DVXLLV. From July 24, 2023 to May 17, 2024, 463 surveys were submitted with an 81% completion rate. Figure 3.2 shows the survey responses by week (beginning on Sundays). A Community Survey Analysis is found later in this chapter.

Community Survey Business Card

In July 2023, the County Zoning staff created a business card to promote the community survey. By January 2024, they had distributed 840 cards.



Community Survey Business Card
Source: Jackson County Zoning Department



Community Survey Highlights: Top Fives

Top 5 Qualities of Jackson County:

- 1. Convenient location highway access
- 2. Recreation state and county parks, trails, rivers, forests
- 3. Rural agricultural character
- 4. Safe place to live
- 5. Locally owned and operated shops and restaurants

Top 5 Concerns for Jackson County:

- 1. Employment opportunities
- Properties are not attractive, clean, and well maintained
- 3. Housing is not affordable, safe, and decent
- 4. Does not welcome residents with racial and ethnic diversity
- 5. Healthy, affordable food is not easy to get everywhere

Top 5 Growth & Development Priorities:

- 1. Improve the quality of life for current and future residents
- 2. Promote economic development within and around cities
- Preserve and protect viable land for agriculture
- 4. Encourage healthy, active living for all residents
- 5. Retain and expand local businesses and jobs

VISION, BROAD GOALS, AND PRIORITIES

A comprehensive plan presents a shared vision for the future, with long-range community goals. With a shared vision everyone has a common destination and common goals. People then can work together as a team, supporting and encouraging each other to reach community goals.

The role of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was to focus on a shared vision with broad goals and priorities for the future of Jackson County.

The Steering Committee's first public meeting was on October 10, 2023. After reviewing Jackson County data and early community survey results, Committee members identified Jackson County's strengths, challenges, issues, and opportunities. Then, Committee members placed dots next to their top 3 to 5 items in each of the four categories.

Committee members who were not able to attend the meeting, and participants at the public open house, also voted with dots for their top 3 to 5 items in the four categories. The dots represented "votes" and helped identify the initial priorities.

At their second public meeting on January 30, 2024, Steering Committee members reviewed an analysis of the most important strengths, challenges, issues, and opportunities. Votes for the most important items in each category ranged from 15 to 0. The votes were divided into three levels: High (11-15), Medium (6-10), and Low (0-5).

In analyzing these votes in High, Medium, and Low levels, three major themes emerged: Business, Workforce; Housing; and Recreation, Resources, Amenities. Based on these themes, the Steering Committee recommended a shared vision with broad goals and priorities.



ECIA staff working with Steering Committee to identify County's strengths, challenges, issues, and opportunities *Photo Credit: Jackson County*

Shared Vision: Jackson County is an engaging community, enthusiastically creating opportunity, supporting growth, and enhancing quality of life for all who live, work, and visit.

Broad Goals and Priorities:

- ✓ Rural quality of life and safe communities that compete well with larger cities
- ✓ Recreational opportunities, historic sites, natural resources, unique amenities, and river access points
- ✓ Business retention, expansion, and recruitment
- ✓ Available, trained workforce of professionals, skilled trades, and labor in general
- ✓ Locally owned and operated shops and restaurants engaged in their communities
- Quality, affordable, and accessible housing options and pathways, especially for underserved populations
- ✓ Affordable childcare available countywide
- √ Strong volunteerism

Figure 3.2 shows the analysis of the most important strengths, challenges, issues and opportunities, and the three major themes.

Votes for the items in each category ranged from 15 to 0. The votes were divided into three levels: High (11-15), Medium (6-10), and Low (0-5). The top-rated themes are as follows.

- 1. Business, Workforce (purple text) rated four High and four Low items, with 59 total votes.
- 2. Housing (red text) rated two High, two Medium, and two Low items, with 45 total votes.
- 3. Recreation, Resources, Amenities (green text) – rated two High items and 1 Medium item, with 36 total votes.

The Steering Committee's third public meeting was held on March 11, 2024. At

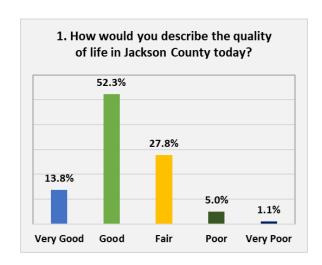
VOTES	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES
HIGH 11- 15	Quality of life - 15	Harder to find professionals, skilled trades, and labor in general - 14	Lack of available, trained workforce - 14	Business retention, expansion, and recruitment - 13
	Recreation – Natural Resources - Unique Amenities – River Access - 15	Affordable childcare (county wide) - 13	Lack of affordable, quality housing for renters and young professionals (including buyers) - 14	Preservation of historic and natural resources - 12
	Safe place to live - 12	Quality affordable housing for all (Bellevue landlocked) - 11	Competition from larger cities (Dubuque, Quad Cities) - 11	
	Strong volunteerism - 11			
	Locally owned and operated shops and restaurants (community engagement) – 11			
MEDIUM 6-10	Strong school districts/education system – 7	Lack of development space to build - 9	Aging and decreasing population – 10	Marketing/growing recreational opportunities - 9
	Rural agricultural character – 6	Conditions of properties - 6	Operation and maintenance of roads and bridges - 8	Aggressive housing strategies – 8
			Public health and mental health issues – 8	Community cooperation - 7
			Awareness of/addressing low-income population – 6	Program to transition renters to buyers - 6
LOW 0-5	Low cost of living (competitive) – 3	Conditions of roads, streets, and bridges - 5	Business and Family Farm succession – 4	Public/private partnership – 5
	Convenient location – highway access – 2	Economic conditions – 4	Funding market-rate housing – 4	Non-profit organizations - 4 [Community Foundation]
	Low taxes (compared to metros) – 2	Growing class sizes/school consolidation – 2	Lack of programs created to keep/train workforce locally – 1	Federal, state, regional partnerships - 3
	Cooperation – 1	Lack of infrastructure capacity – 1	Lack of younger generations getting involved – 1	More senior housing – 2
	Smaller class sizes – 1	Quality of school buildings - 1	Focus on the arts as a destination - 1	Building improvement assistance (Bellevue businesses) – 1
	New healthcare facility with growing services - 1	Quality of schools - 1		Entrepreneurial opportunities with Innovate 120 - 1
	Open access to government - 0	Rising development costs – 0		Welcoming new residents – 1
				Growing the next generation of businesses/small business supports - 1

this meeting, the Steering Committee finalized their recommendations for an Implementation Strategy for the Comprehensive Plan. This strategy is in Chapter 14. Implementation of this plan.

COMMUNITY SURVEY ANALYSIS

The community survey was 33 questions divided into nine major sections. There were eight open-ended questions for comments. The following charts reflect the question number. A total of 463 community surveys were submitted from July 24, 2023 to May 17, 2024. A total of 1,596 comments were received for the open-ended questions.

(Where Jackson County demographic data is available to compare with the survey responses, it is shown in italics. Sources include: 2020 U.S. Census, 2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, and 2023 Jackson County Economic Alliance (JCEA) estimates.)



Quality of Life

Question 1. Two-thirds rated quality of life as Very Good or Good.

Question 2. While nearly 20% felt the quality of life has declined over the past five years, 37% felt it has improved.

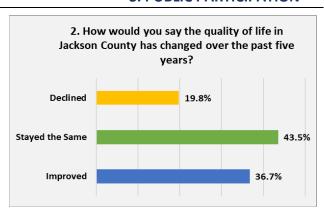
Question 3. When asked how far Jackson

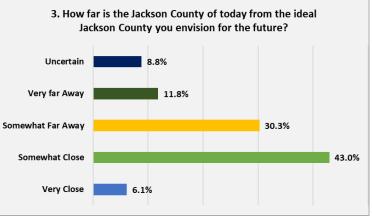
County is from what respondents envision for the future: 49% felt it was Very Close or Somewhat Close, and 42% felt it was Somewhat Far Away or Very Far Away.

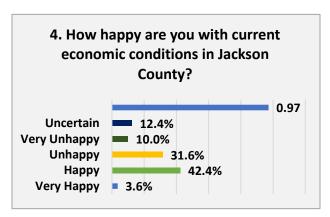
Question 4. When asked about current economic conditions, 46% Very Happy or Happy, and 41% Unhappy or Very Unhappy.

Question 5 asked: "Please provide us with two or three ways the quality of life in Jackson County might be improved." The 365 comments received to this question are in the Appendix.

Question 6 asked: "Please provide us with two or three reasons you decided on Jackson County as a place to live." The 374 comments received to this question are in the Appendix.







Jackson County at Present

Question 7 asked people to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the following series of statements.

7. Jackson County stands out when compared to other lowa counties because.....

properties are attractive, clean, and well maintained

it is a safe place to live

of its rural agricultural character

of its convenient location – highway access

of its recreation – state and county parks, trails, rivers, forests

it has good schools

it has access to community colleges and higher education

of its locally owned and operated shops and restaurants

it welcomes residents with racial and ethnic diversity

it has family/kid friendly activities

it has good health care and facilities

it is culturally vibrant—interpretive centers, museums, historic sites, art and music venues

of its employment opportunities

housing is affordable, safe, and decent

healthy, affordable food is easy to get everywhere

Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Jackson County's **top five qualities** were:

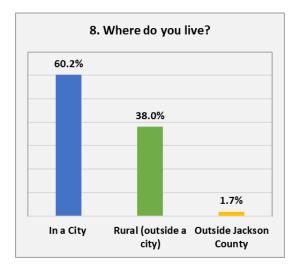
- 1. Convenient location highway access (80.0%)
- 2. Recreation state and county parks, trails, rivers, forests (74.1%)
- 3. Rural agricultural character (73.8%)
- 4. Safe place to live (71.6%)
- 5. Locally owned and operated shops and restaurants (66.8%)

Respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with some statements. Based on the percentages, **top five concerns** for Jackson County were:

- 1. Employment opportunities (39.4%)
- 2. Properties are not attractive, clean, and well maintained (28.0%)
- 3. Housing is not affordable, safe, and decent (27.8%)
- 4. Does not welcome residents with racial and ethnic diversity (25.3%)
- 5. Healthy, affordable food is not easy to get everywhere (24.1%)

Residential Development

Question 8. About 60% of respondents live in a city, and 38% live in a rural area outside of a city. (In 2020, 59.7% of county residents lived in a city.)



Question 9 asked people which city they call home. Surveys were received from residents of all 13 cities. Almost 41% of respondents live in Maquoketa, about 16% live in Bellevue, and nearly 26% live in a rural area outside a city. (In 2020, about 31% of residents lived in Maquoketa and 12% in Bellevue.)

Question 10 asked how long people had lived in Jackson County. 79% had for 10 years or more, about 16% for 3 to 9 years, and nearly 4% for 2 years or less.

Question 11. When asked how long people planned to live in Jackson County, over half indicated "21 years or more".



Question 12. Most respondents (92%) live in a single-family home.

Question 13. Most respondents (93%) own their current place of residence. (In 2023, about 72% of residents were owner-occupants.)

Question 14. Most respondents (86%) are satisfied with their current housing.

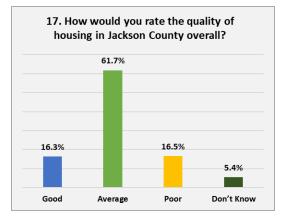
The follow-up to Question 14 was: "Are you satisfied with your current housing situation? Please tell us why." The 213 comments received to this open-ended question are in the Appendix.

Question 15. Most respondents (72%) do not want to move to different housing, while 16% would move within Jackson County, and 12% would move outside of Jackson County. The follow-up to Question 15 was: "Would you like to move to a different house or apartment? Please tell us why." The 147 comments received to this open-ended question are in the Appendix.

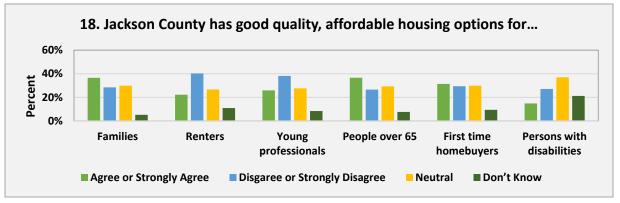


Question 16 asked: "If you would like to move, but have not, please tell us why." The 122 comments received to this openended question are in the Appendix.

Question 17. Most people rated overall housing quality as Good or Average.



Question 18 asked: "Jackson County has good quality, affordable housing options for...". Respondents rated housing options for renters, young professionals, and persons with disabilities slightly lower than for families, people over age 65, and first-time homebuyers.



Growth and Development Priorities

Question 19 asked people to rank the following items from 1 to 12 based on their importance to the future growth and development, with 1 as the most important. The ranking is shown here.

Rank	19. Growth and Development Priorities
1	Improve the quality of life for current and future residents
2	Promote economic development within and around cities
3	Preserve and protect viable land for agriculture
4	Encourage healthy, active living for all residents
5	Retain and expand local businesses and jobs
6	Retain, recruit, and build a highly skilled workforce
7	Preserve and protect parks, open spaces, and natural resources
8	Maintain and expand the variety of housing types, costs, and locations
9	Provide, maintain, and improve the safety and efficiency of the transportation network
10	Maintain and expand attractions for tourists and residents
11	Provide an opportunity for solar energy facilities
12	Provide an opportunity for wind energy facilities

Question 20 asked people to share what else they thought should be a growth and development priority. The 146 comments received to this open-ended question are in the Appendix.

Jackson County Government Offices

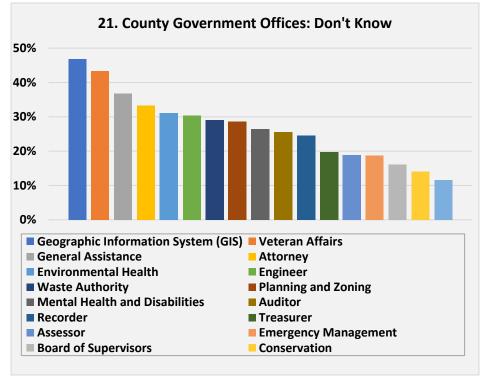
Question 21 asked people to indicate their level of satisfaction with the Jackson County government offices. At least 50% of respondents were satisfied with most county offices as shown here. The top five offices had over 70% level of

shown here. County offices with a higher percentage of respondents who chose "Don't Know" tended to have lower satisfaction ratings (see chart). This data suggests that there are opportunities for **Jackson County** government to inform residents

satisfaction as

about the services that their offices provide.

21. Satisfaction with County Government Offices: Top 5	Percent
Conservation	77.6%
Sheriff	76.0%
Treasurer	75.7%
Emergency Management	70.8%
Recorder	70.7%



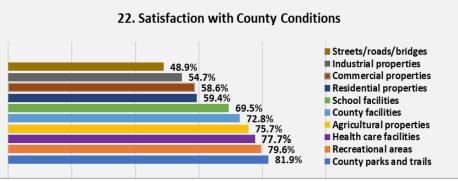
Countywide Conditions and Services

County parks and trails, recreational areas, health care facilities, agricultural properties, and county facilities rated a 70% or higher level of satisfaction.

Nearly 50% of respondents were satisfied with the conditions of streets, roads, bridges, and non-agricultural properties.

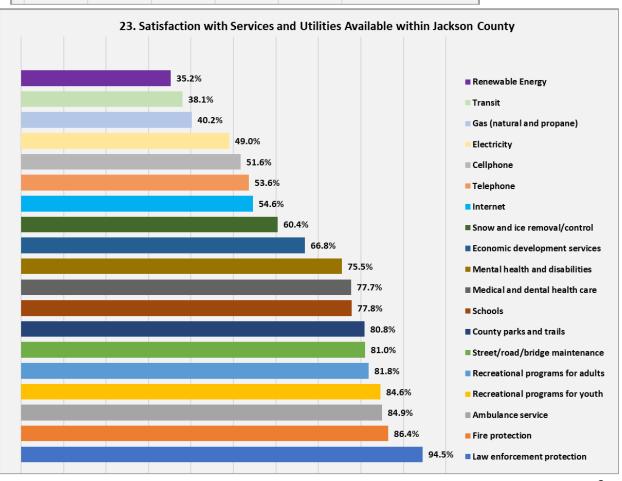
Question 23 asked people to indicate their level of satisfaction with the quality of services and utilities available within Jackson County. Fire protection rated nearly a 95% level of satisfaction. Many services and utilities rated 80% or higher. Only a few were below than 50%.

Question 24 asked: "Please share two or three ways to improve Jackson County government offices, countywide conditions, and the quality of services and utilities available in Jackson County." The 150 comments received to this open-ended question are in the Appendix.

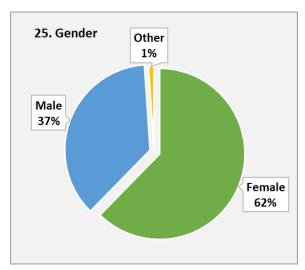


Demographic Information

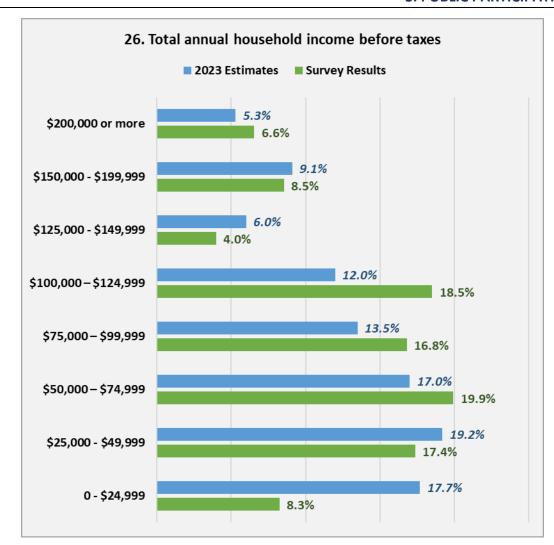
Question 25. About 62% of respondents identified their gender as female, 37% as male, and 1% as other as shown



here. (In 2022, Jackson County's population was 49.3% female and 50.7% male.)



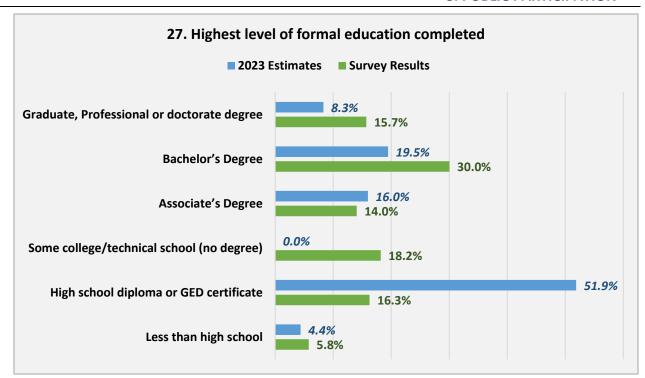
Question 26. There was a good range of total annual household levels among the survey respondents, with most between \$25,000 and \$125,000 as shown here with the green bars. (The 2023 County estimates for household base income are shown here with the blue bars and values in italics. The percentages are fairly consistent between the two data bases.)

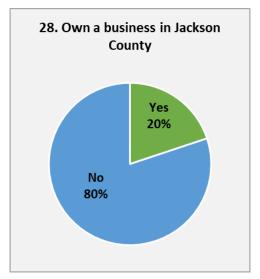


Question 27. With respect to highest level of formal education completed by survey respondents, nearly 6% haven't completed high school, 16% have a high school diploma or a GED (General Educational Development) certificate, and about 60% have an associate degree or higher as shown here with the green bars.

(The 2023 County estimates for educational attainment are for residents age 25 years or older. The 2023 estimates are shown here with the blue bars and values in italics. About 4% haven't completed high school, nearly 52% have completed high school, and 44% have an associate degree or higher. The largest gap between the two databases is for residents with high school diploma or GED certificate as their highest level of completed education.)

Question 28. Most respondents (80%) do not own a business in Jackson County as shown here.





Question 29. As shown here, 49.4% of respondents were over 55 years, and 40.0% were between 25 to 54 years. Only 2.4% were between 19-24 years, and 8.3% were age 18 or younger. (The 2023 County estimates for age categories are shown here with the blue bars and values in italics. The percentages are fairly consistent for respondents age 19+.)

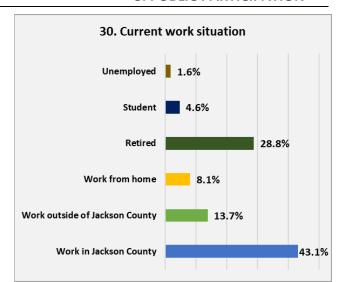
Question 30. As shown here, 43% of respondents work in Jackson County, and nearly 29% are retired.

Question 31. Nearly 98% of respondents identified their race/ethnicity as White. The other race or ethnicity identified by respondents were: Black/African American (0.27%), Hispanic/Latino (1.09%) and Another Race (0.82%). (The

2023 estimates are shown in comparison.)

Question 32. Most respondents (69.6%) don't have children under age 18 living at home.

Question 33 asked for additional comments on Jackson County or the survey questions. The 79 comments received to this openended question are in the Appendix.



31. Race and Ethnicity	Survey Results	2023 Estimates
White or Caucasian	97.82%	93.73%
Black or African		
American	0.27%	0.88%
Hispanic or Latino	1.09%	1.31%
Asian or Asian		
American	0.00%	0.24%
American Indian or		
Alaska Native	0.00%	0.24%
Native Hawaiian or		
Pacific Islander	0.00%	1.72%
Another Race	0.82%	0.47%
Two or More Races	0.00%	2.73%

■ 2023 Estimates ■ Survey Results 22.4% 65 or older 27.1% 15.5% 55 to 64 22.3% 12.6% 45 to 54 11.0% 35 to 44 13.7% 10.9% 25 to 34 12.1% 2.7% 20 to 24 19 to 24 2.4% 21.8% 19 or younger 20.9% 18 or younger

29. Age categories

Project website content, media releases, project flyers, and the community survey report (with comments) are in the Appendix.