

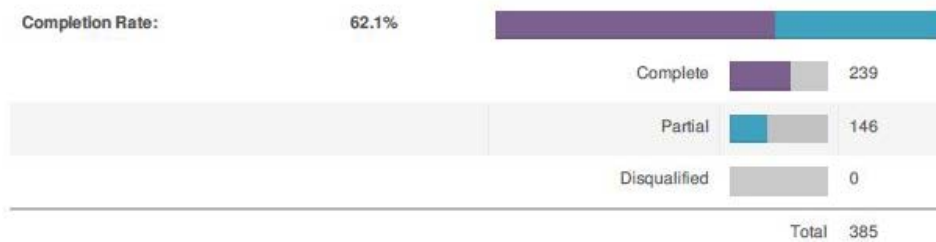
## Report for East Range Joint Powers Board Comprehensive Plan Survey

Each of the following 5 communities will have their own section of summarized responses based on feedback from the survey.

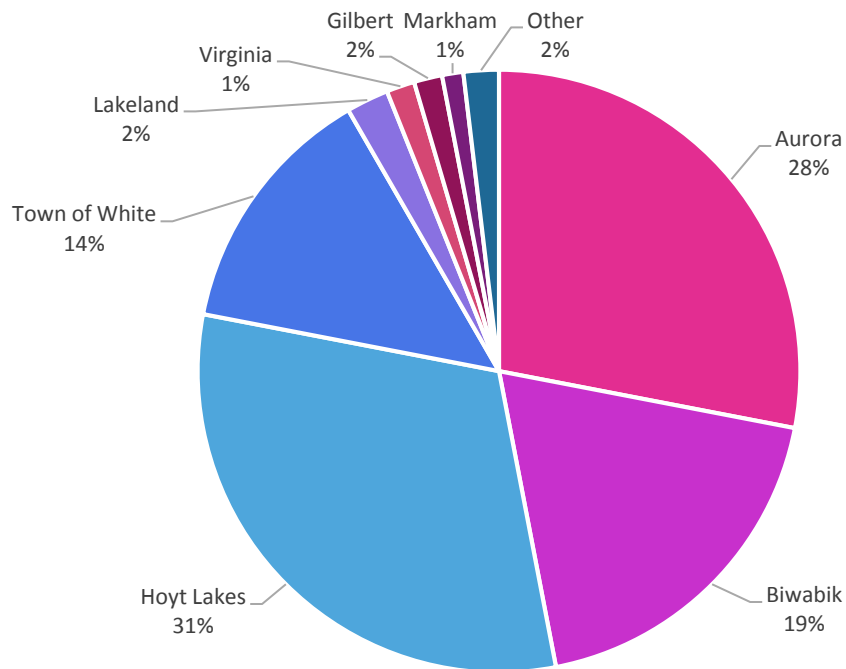
- Overall East Range
- Aurora
- Hoyt Lakes
- Biwabik
- Town of White

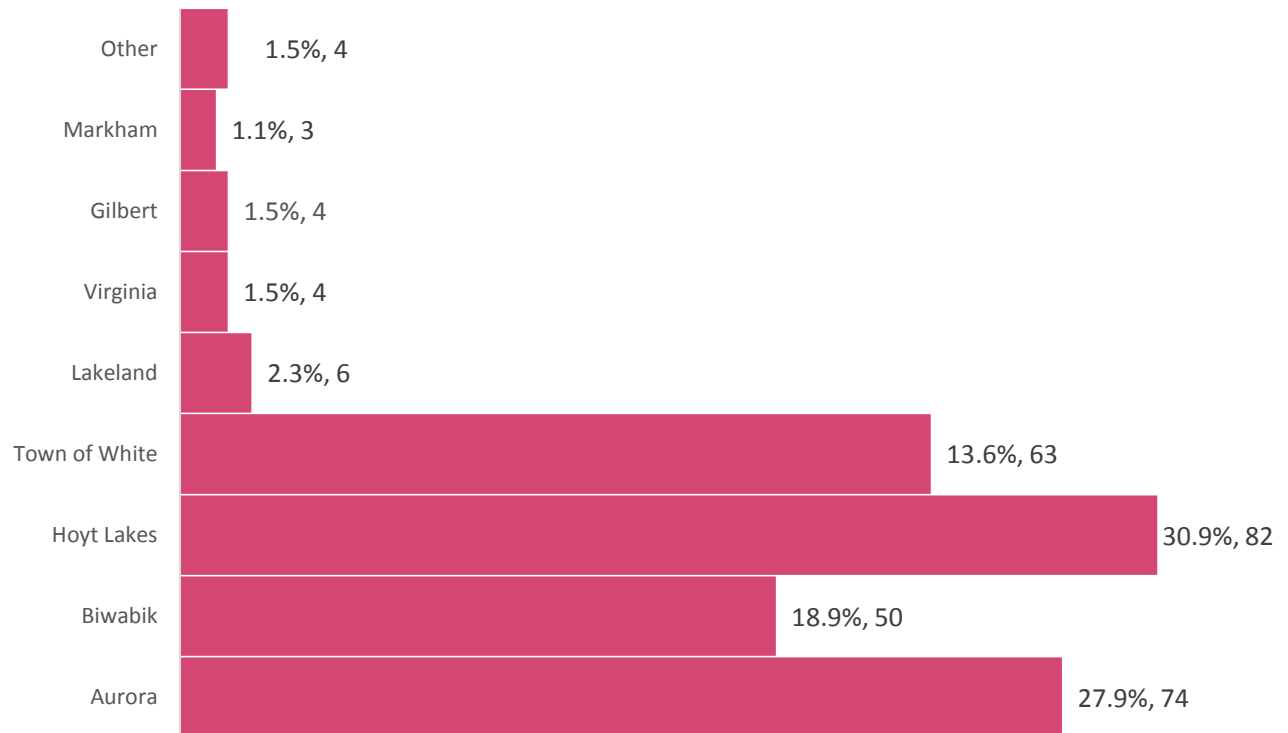
### Overall East Range

#### Survey Count



#### 1. What community do you live in?





## 2. What *WOULD* you change in the East Range communities?

### Stores-Retail-Services

- Wifi throughout towns
- Water quality
- Water access on public trails
- Grocery store for all local communities
- Drug Store
- Less Dollar stores
- Mains streets where there is a business/shopping district
- Create policy for vacant store fronts
- Coffee Shops
- Brewery in town
- More small / locally owned businesses
- Farmers Markets
- Additional bus service in town
- Combine emergency services such as ambulance and fire departments by the 4 communities working together
- More competitive priced and better run trash services

### **Housing-Visual Standards**

- Less low income housing
- Blight ordinances / policy for action
- Need more options for housing in general
- Property owners should have rules against trash and refuse in yard
- Leash Laws and enforcement of policy

### **Jobs-Economic Development**

- Need more employers and more jobs
- Create hospitable environment for diversity of jobs in the East range area
- Combine some churches, schools and fire/ambulance services in some parts of the east range, supposedly to save money?
- Now there are too many regulations on new job creators
- Downtown tourist districts
- Shopping opportunities should be increased locally, less travel to big box stores means more, smaller, and diverse retailers to thrive
- Giants Area Ridge can be built up as a regional attraction
- Livable wage paying jobs that are separate from Mining and Industry
- Encourage jobs through industry to locate professional offices here

### **Tourism-Activities-Quality of Life**

- More activities during already existing events; 4<sup>th</sup> of July or Water Carnival for example should be more inclusive to all neighboring communities and have a lot of participatory events
- Activities for youth need to be more available, consistent and updated
  - Youth center
  - Wifi activities
  - Cultural and heritage learning and training opportunities
  - Get high schools involved and aware of issues present in home communities and greater overall range region
  - Bowling or Swimming pools need to return to the areas
  - More sports funding
  - Children's Museum
  - Sports Dome near St. James Pit – also doubles as a train head and center for the Northern Lights Music Festival
- Update amenities like downtown corridors for shopping and dining, sidewalks, lighting, and trails.
- City Signage to help attract people off freeways
- Try to keep towns neat and clean
- Utilize Giants Ridge and Trails for tourist draw with all the Lakes around and natural environment
- Create an “Active Communities” group dealing with issues of healthy life choices; there are severe problems with smoking, drugs and drinking

- Work together throughout all communities to plan events, show the new generations how to be successful through collaboration
- “Community Night Out” get to know local police force and neighbors

3. What would you NOT change in the East Range communities? (Each asterisk represents 1 mention of the topic after the original mention)

- Community Atmosphere / Community Togetherness \*\*\*\*\*
- Small Town (feel) \*\*\*\*\*
- Working together and Sharing Services \*\*\*\*\*
- Outdoor Activities \*\*\*\*\*
- Schools \*\*\*\*\*
- Maintain local small “mom and pop” stores \*\*
- Natural Amenities \*\*\*\* take advantage of the natural beauty for residents and tourists alike.
- Mining Jobs \*\*
- Cultural Events \*\* - please do not stop hosting fairs, festivals, school and sports related events in our communities.

4. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following statements?

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
There is an effective level of governmental cooperation and coordination between the 4 East Range communities	80 32.7%	115 46.9%	50 20.4%
There is an adequate supply of living wage jobs in the 4 East Range communities	5 2.0%	28 11.2%	216 86.7%
Streets and roads in the 4 East Range communities are generally well maintained	64 25.6%	60 24.0%	126 50.4%
The regional economy is sufficiently diverse to provide a variety of employment opportunities	10 4.0%	45 18.1%	194 77.9%
There is a good support system in place for entrepreneurs and new businesses	32 12.9%	119 48.0%	97 39.1%
The East Range communities are welcoming and attractive to visitors	96 38.6%	72 28.9%	81 32.5%
The 4 East Range communities are well managed	75 30.2%	132 53.2%	41 16.5%

*Comments:*

- Blight and vacant store fronts seems to be a huge issue consistently with all residents.
- Water and sewer treatment and service also seems to be an issue when it comes to service providers, cost and inclusion.
- Want more community events, organizations, task forces, and group projects.
- Use Giants Ridge as a planned event space and activity outpost.
- Road ways and paved hwys / county roads seem to be in bad condition, especially in winter.
- The administration needs to support local business owners and new job creators.
- Shopping center is ugly and outdated and in bad repair.
- Move from industrial and mining jobs to something more forward thinking.
- The existing hotels seem to be below par for visitors so many people camp have RV's.
- Develop enforceable visual standards for homes and businesses.
- Some discontent with city officials and administration, where their priorities lay and transparency.

5. Regarding the 4 East Range community's parks and trails, please mark your level of agreeance with the following statements:

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
The east range area offers a good selection of year-round, outdoor family recreation opportunities	188 76.1%	35 14.2%	24 9.7%
Community parks are well maintained	160 64.5%	70 28.2%	18 7.3%
The 4 communities are easy to access from the trail system	137 55.5%	69 27.9%	41 16.6%
The number and types of parks and open spaces is adequate	152 61.3%	58 23.4%	38 15.3%
The off-street trail system should be improved / extended	136 54.6%	80 32.1%	33 13.3%

6. What specific park amenities or trails (if any) do you feel are need (and where) within the community?

**Parks and Park Services**

- Dog parks are of interest\*\*
- Playgrounds need updating \*\*
- Maps of park locations would be great
- Children's swimming pool\*\*\*\*, climbing wall, alpine slides, tennis courts, rope course
- All parks need better lighting and bathrooms\*\*\*\*

- ADA issues at most parks
- **Aurora**
  - Has only 1 adequate park
  - Continue restoration of Pine Grove Park
  - Skate park is an eye sore
- **Biwabik**
  - fields need updating (softball / baseball)
  - kid friendly options to play
  - Good park pavilion model for other towns
- **Hoyt Lakes**
  - Fisherman's Point needs improvement
  - Needs to be connected to other towns and Mesabi Trail
  - Youth hockey arena needed
  - Lacks sidewalks
  - Park on Suffolk and Guilford is dangerous and outdated
- **Twin Lakes in TOW** is mentioned as a positive area to build in

#### **ATV and Snowmobile Trails**

- Upgrades needed to ATV trails
- Trails should connect all communities, some are not accessible
- Places to stay would be nice to have along trails
- Trails between McKinley and Biwabik
- Hoyt lakes to Brimson / Two Harbors
- Create snowmobiling and Nordic trails
- Complete the trail to Babbitt
- 4 Wheel accessible map desired
- Remove atv trails that cut through parking lots
- Would like to have beach access

#### **Bike and Recreation Trails**

- Pedestrians are in danger when walking on trails that are disconnected, there are many.
- Canton and Biwabik mines would be a great place to have a trail and needs historical markers.
- Make dirt trails off 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. west making it safer (*doesn't say which community*)
- Western range region is disconnected via trails
- Create a dedicated network for safety. Not shared with cars
- Invest in Giant's Ridge mountain bike trails
- **Mesabi Trail**
  - Bike lanes
  - Finish to connect all towns
  - Paths from Aurora to Hoyt Lakes separate from highway

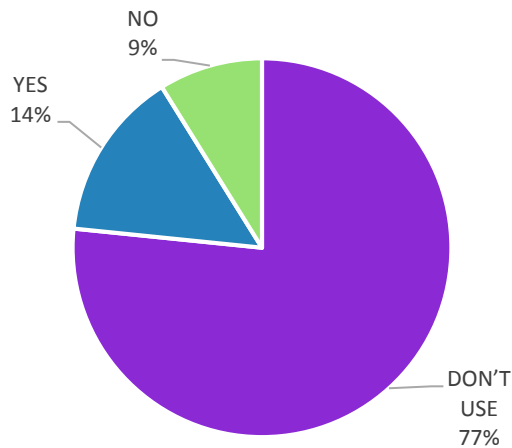
#### **Camping / Campgrounds / Misc.**

- Dog leash laws seem to give people serious anger. Need enforcement.\*\*

- Parking access to all trail entry points
- Campground by the pit
- Campground at Palo on Lake
- Camping at Twin Lakes\*
- Develop camping on the south side of St. James Pit.
- Make family friendly experiences for tourists and actually market them
- Zip Line through mines
- Stables to rent horses
- Golf Carts
- Mini Golf
- Shelter along trails is needed
- ADA access to fishing piers/docks
- Use signs to connect trails and shopping in town
- Create a true regional map with all amenities and visitor sites located
- Long year drill site improved (est. 1890 in Hoyt Lakes, it is now a FREE tourist attraction)
- **Aurora**
  - Skate Park
- **Why spend money on trails when roads are the REAL issue? \*\*\*\***

7. If you use a snowmobile to get around town and/or in between communities, are the facilities adequate to support snowmobiling?

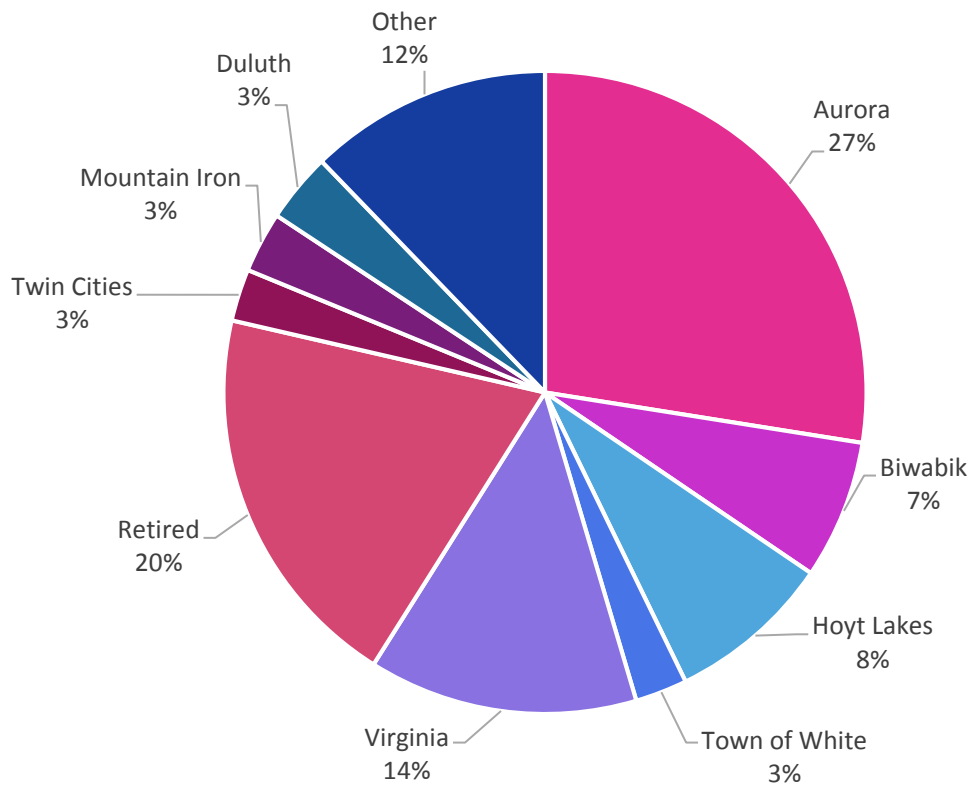
Value	Percent	Count
I do not use a snowmobile to get around town.	76.6%	190
Yes, the facilities are adequate.	14.5%	36
No, the facilities are not adequate (please explain in the Comments below).	8.9%	22
<b>Total</b>		<b>248</b>



*Comments:*

- Trails are blocked
- Should have more access on all roads
- Fuel access sparse without using town streets
- Need muffler / noise rules for use in town!
- Signage needed\*\*\*\*\*
- **Aurora**
  - Crossing the tracks by South Main is dangerous
- **Biwabik**
  - Not street legal for use
- **Hoyt Lakes**
  - No limiting rules for snowmobiles or atv's.

*8. What community do you work in?*





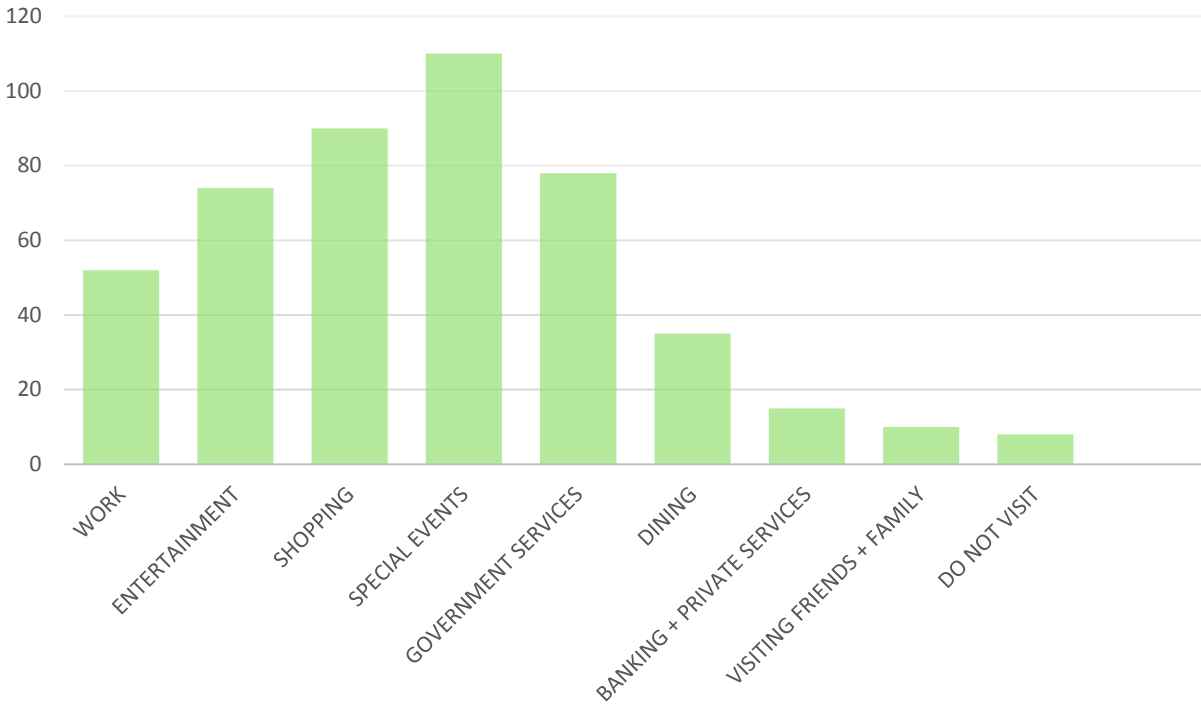
9. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I feel safe in my neighborhood	194 83.3%	29 12.4%	10 4.3%
My neighborhood is walkable	187 81.0%	28 12.1%	16 6.9%
My neighborhood is attractive	141 60.8%	61 26.3%	30 12.9%
I know many of my neighbors	154 66.1%	50 21.5%	29 12.4%
Streets and roads in my community are generally well-maintained	100 42.7%	65 27.8%	69 29.5%
New commercial business (restaurants, convenience stores) should be encouraged to locate in downtown.	197 84.9%	28 12.1%	7 3.0%

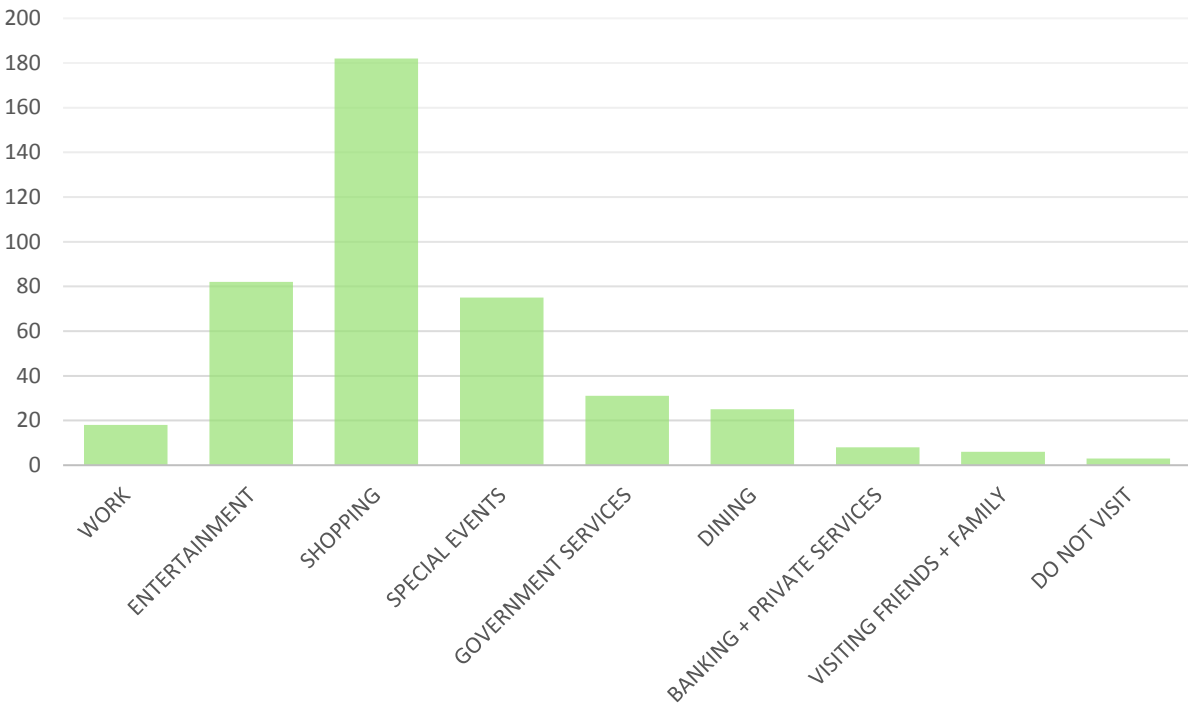
10. How often do you visit?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
Downtown Aurora	59 25.3%	85 36.5%	58 24.9%	17 7.3%	14 6.0%
Downtown Biwabik	43 18.5%	92 39.5%	76 32.6%	16 6.9%	6 2.6%
Downtown Hoyt Lakes	58 25.0%	50 21.6%	59 25.4%	46 19.8%	19 8.2%

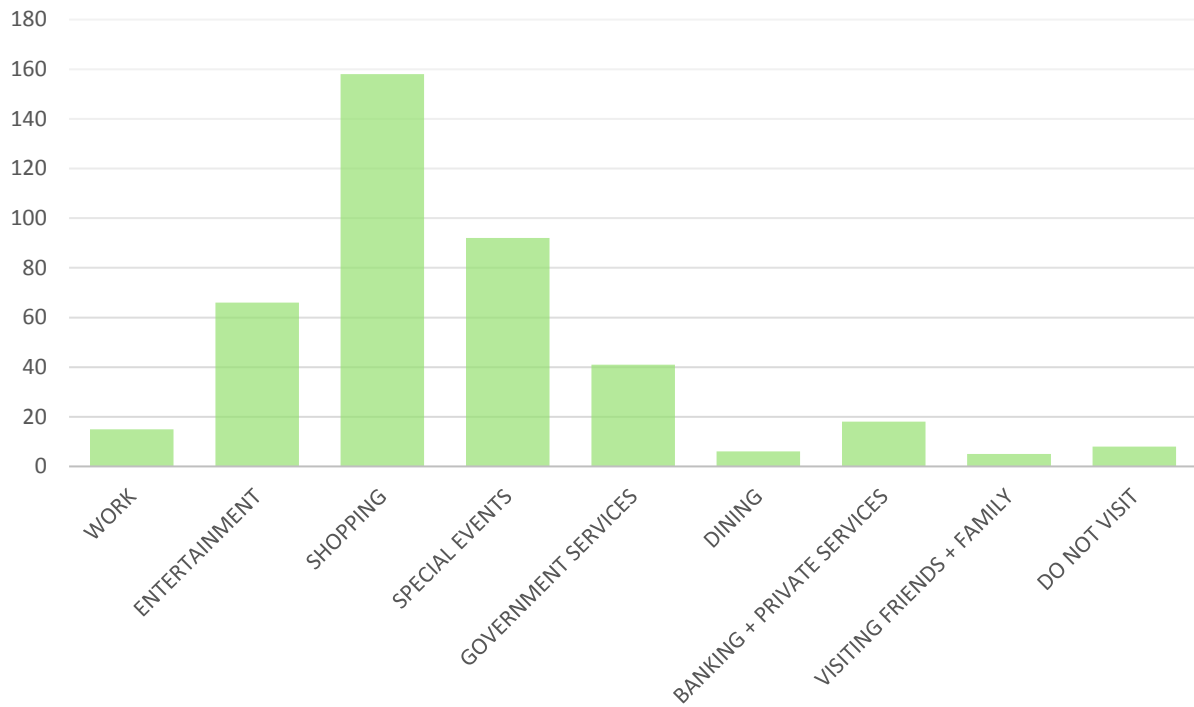
**11. Why do you visit downtown Aurora?**



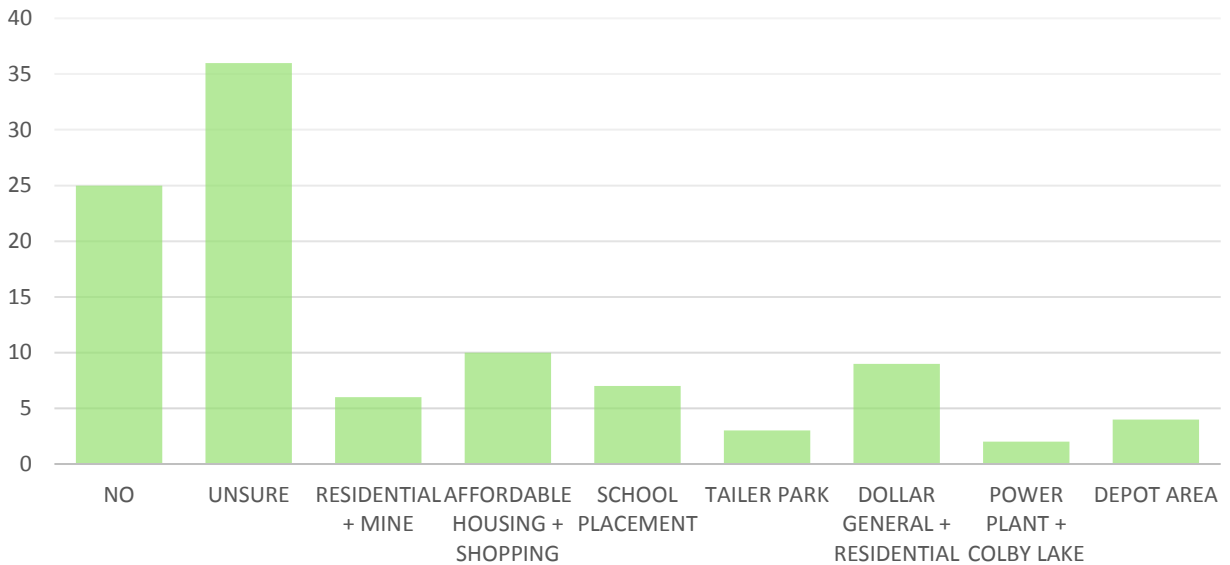
**12. Why do you visit downtown Biwabik?**



12. Why do you visit downtown Hoyt Lakes?



13. Are there places in the community where there are incompatible land uses next to one another?  
(Example: Industrial uses next to homes)



14. *Are there cultural assets in the community that should be protected?*

- **Aurora:**
  - Public library \*\*\*\*\*
  - Encourage 1900's look
  - Loon Lake Community Center
  - Veda Music Festival
- **Biwabik:**
  - Bavarian architecture
  - Themed living communities
  - Honk the Moose (statue)
  - Northern Lights Music Festival
  - 4<sup>th</sup> of July festival
- **Hoyt Lakes:**
  - Cross Country Ski Trails
  - Recreational Identity
  - Fisherman's Point
  - Golf and Fishing
  - Long Year Drill Site + Timber Arc Bridge
- **TOW:**
  - Laskiainen Festival (sledding annual festival)
- NO
- Local Business
- Green Spaces
- Lakes
- History

15. *Suggest a theme, art, heritage, or cultural asset in your community.*

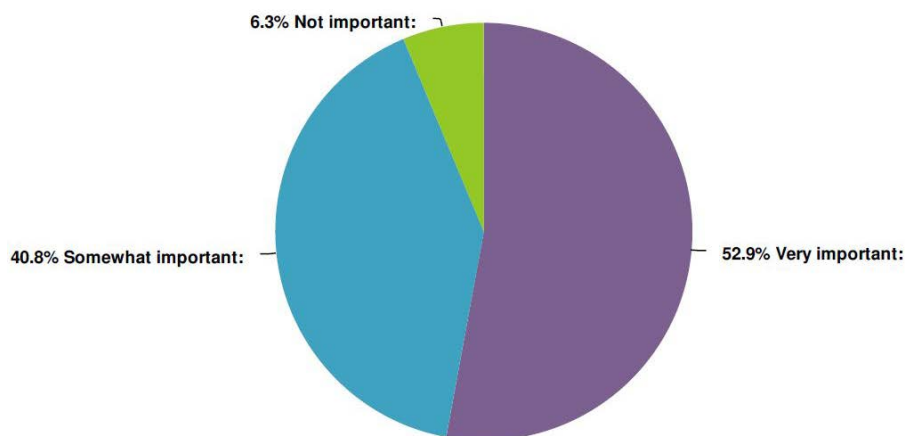
- Northern Lights Festival
- Churches
- Wahlberg
- Bavarian Theme downtown
- Christmas lights downtown (wants to reinstate)
- Railroad theme
- Astronomy in general in conjunction with the N.L.F
- Logging or Mining theme more obvious in towns
- Hockey Arena
- Gardening (club) and Agricultural activities
- Laskiainen\*\*\*
- Love to have a movie theater
- Mining Pioneers

- Military and Veteran Friendly
- Cultural heritage buildings to recognize diverse European histories
- Safe family living
- The great outdoors
- Senior Citizen Center
- Weihnachtsfest- a winter carnival type event in Biwabik MN@ giant’s ridge.
- Giants Ridge Golf Course
- Concerts and Music
- Picture Display in Aurora City Hall

16. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I can walk or bike directly to the Regional Trail Network (without using a car)	126 56.8%	56 25.2%	40 18.0%
There should be bike lanes on community streets. The community should be more bike friendly.	71 31.8%	79 35.4%	73 32.7%
Existing bicycle facilities are inadequate.	60 26.7%	93 41.3%	72 32.0%

17. How important is on/off street facilities to promote tourism and a healthy life style?



Value	Percent	Count
Very important	52.9%	118
Somewhat important	40.8%	91
Not important	6.3%	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>223</b>

18. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement about individual communities:

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
There is an adequate supply of well-built and well maintained quality housing choices	71 30.7%	61 26.4%	99 42.9%
More single family homes are needed	79 34.6%	96 42.1%	53 23.2%
More multi-family homes are needed	49 22.0%	87 39.0%	87 39.0%
New housing should be built in the downtowns or in existing neighborhoods to replace blighted buildings or on vacant lots	153 67.1%	45 19.7%	30 13.2%
New housing should be built in new, undeveloped locations that are outside of existing neighborhoods	88 38.9%	76 33.6%	62 27.4%

19. Is there anything you think the comprehensive plan should address? The topics that the comprehensive plan will address will include: Housing, Transportation, Land Use, Utilities, Community Facilities, Mining/Timber/Natural Resources, Parks/Recreation/Culture, Government Partnerships, and Economic Development.

- IRRRB needs to have grants again
- Need WIFI infrastructure
- Grocery Stores and Food Desert issues
- Address proximity to Duluth as bedroom community location
- Issues with illegal drug use
- Blight
- New housing is Lacking
- Address idea of density in new construction
- Dog Parks
- Slum Lords need to be penalized
- Audit the Communities. Money transparency in the government
- Partnership with schools and communities for athletic field facilities
- Community Pool
- Inter-Community Transit network
- Competitor for Minnesota Energy
- Address ambulance system and service
- Healthy Kids program
- Lower taxes
- Some communities need water and sewage
- Rebranding the cities for tourism

- Expand retirement communities
- Serious lack of child care on the east range
- Alternative energy subsidies