Imagine 2050 Visioning Survey
Methodology, Strategy, & Results

Imagine 2050: A Vision for Central Massachusetts is a comprehensive planning initiative to create long-range strategies for the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission's 40 communities, located in Southern Central Massachusetts.

Methodology

As part of the first phase of Imagine 2050, Visioning, a three-question survey was designed to collect input from residents throughout the Central Massachusetts region. The survey follows the framework of the Imagine 2050 plan, which mirrors the Sustainable Development Framework called the "Three E's": Economy, Environment, and Equity.

For each pillar, ten strategies were developed between November 2021 to March 2022 through three public meeting visioning sessions hosted through CMRPC's Quarterly Commission Meetings. Participants were asked to answer the following questions:

"What would you like our Central Massachusetts economy to look like in 30 years?"
"What would you like our Central Massachusetts environment to look like in 30 years?"
"What would you like equity in Central Massachusetts to look like in 30 years?"

The most popular answers out of 500 comments were compiled to create the first draft of the visioning survey's ranking activity. Language was then crafted to erase any inaccessible jargon. The final survey ranking questions are below:

By 2050, I Imagine a Central Massachusetts with...

ECONOMY
Local economic development & workforce development

Rank the following 1-10
(1 = most important funding priority)

- Many small, local businesses
- Vibrant town centers
- Walkable, mixed-use areas
- Distribution centers
- Career-centered technical schools
- Support for work from home
- Investment in tourist attractions
- Diverse housing options
- Decreased regulations on businesses
- Expanded industry clusters (biotechnology, healthcare, education, infrastructure)

ENVIRONMENT
Local intersections of all living species, climate, & resources

Rank the following 1-10
(1 = most important funding priority)

- Open space conservation
- A thriving local food system & farms
- Lots of renewable energy use
- Many trails throughout the region
- Environmental education in schools
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Many recreational opportunities
- Preparedness for the local impacts of climate change
- Clean waterways & good stormwater management
- Clean air, water, & soil

EQUITY
Consistent & systematic fair and impartial treatment

Rank the following 1-10
(1 = most important funding priority)

- Housing that is affordable
- Cheap & convenient public transportation
- Health care for all income levels
- Promotion of healthy living/preventative care
- Transparent local government
- Access to healthy food for all
- Broad accessibility for those w/ disabilities
- Geographic fairness of regional benefits
- Equal access to education (regardless of race, income, and location)
- Engaged & inclusive community leadership

Three demographic questions were added to the survey to ensure understanding of how representative the survey respondent sample is in relation to the entire Central Massachusetts region. The survey requested respondents provide their place of residence, age, and race/ethnicity. All demographic data remains anonymous.

The survey was created as an introduction to Imagine 2050 to articulate the scope of a comprehensive regional plan to Central Massachusetts residents. The final survey took approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. The survey was designed to be accessible and respectful of the time and resources of our respondents. We found that this strategy was effective to include a diverse range of residents in our survey process. Final answers will be utilized to create the vision, objectives and goals of the plan.

Strategy

CMRPC conducted a holistic community engagement campaign in hopes of spreading our Imagine 2050 Visioning Survey as far and wide as possible.

- A social media campaign through Instagram, Twitter, Linked-In, and Facebook was conducted throughout the period of the survey.
- The Imagine website served as a vessel for the digital version of the survey, which linked to the main CMRPC site (cmrpc.org) and numerous town hall pages.
- A link to the survey was published in local publications including Auburn News, Blackstone Valley Tribune, Charlton Villager, Killingly Villager, Putnam Villager, Southbridge News, Spencer New Leader, Sturbridge Villager, and Thompson Villager
- Paper survey boxes were distributed at town halls and libraries.
- Paper surveys & QR codes for the digital survey were distributed at events around the region including:

Hope Day Celebration, Southbridge
Sustainable Westborough Energy Fair
Worcester County Food Truck Throw-Down
Asparagus Festival, West Brookfield
Millbury Food Truck Festival
Worcester Tercentennial Celebration
Grafton Farmers' Market
Sturbridge Food Truck Festival and Craft Fair
West Brookfield Farmers' Market
Blueberry Festival, Charlton
Spencer Food Truck Festival and Craft Fair
Regional Environmental Council Block Party, Worcester
Sturbridge Farmers' Market
*Beaver Brook Farmers' Market, Worcester*
Holden Days

- Surveys were distributed at subregional and regional visioning sessions conducted between April and September. Visioning Sessions were also utilized to collect more free-form comments through open discussion:

Rutland Planning Board Meeting
Southbridge Library
Community Harvest
Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services
Regional Environmental Council

Age Friendly Central MA
Central MA Boards of Health
Southern Worcester County Economic Development Organization
Elder Services of Worcester Area
Town Planners of Central Massachusetts
Pernet Family Health Services
African Community Education
Subregional Infrastructure & Transportation Summits

Results

75 respondents chose not to disclose their race and ethnicity. From those who disclosed their race/ethnicity, the pie chart on the left and table summarize the percent of surveys we received from each race/ethnicity. We compared these results with the demographic breakdown of our 40-community region within Central Massachusetts, which is displayed through the pie chart on the right and the table. The CRMPC population by Race and Ethnicity data is sourced through the 2022 American Community Survey.
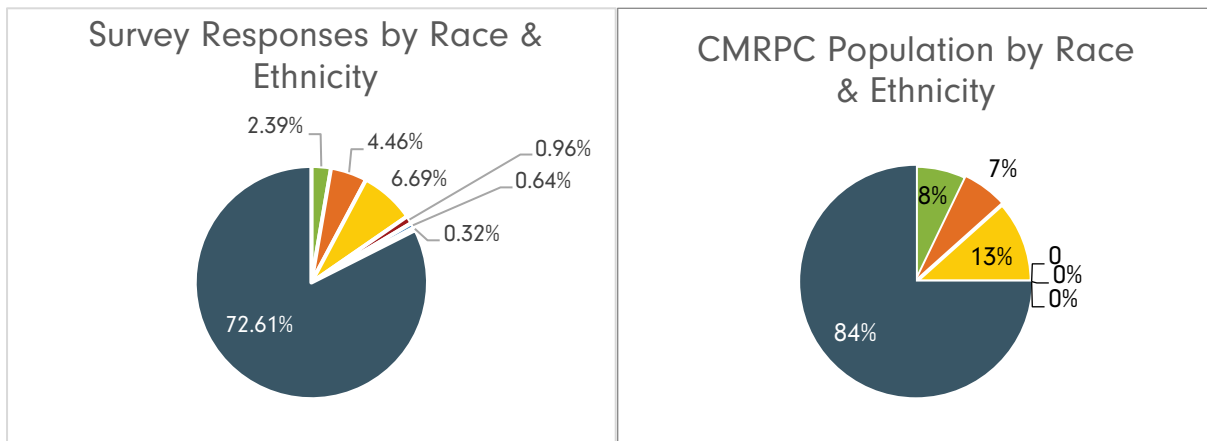
	# surveys	% of surveys	CMRPC %
Asian	15	2%	8%
Black or African American	28	4%	7%
Hispanic or Latino	42	7%	13%
Middle Eastern or North African	6	1%	N/A
Native American or Alaska Native	4	1%	0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	2	0%	0%
White or Caucasian	456	73%	84%
Prefer not to answer	75	12%	

Approximately 10% of respondents chose not to disclose their age. Also, 19 respondents were under the age of 18. For respondents under the age of 18, we collected and utilized their responses but did not include their age in the chart below.

Survey Responses by Age
Over 18 Survey Total= 609
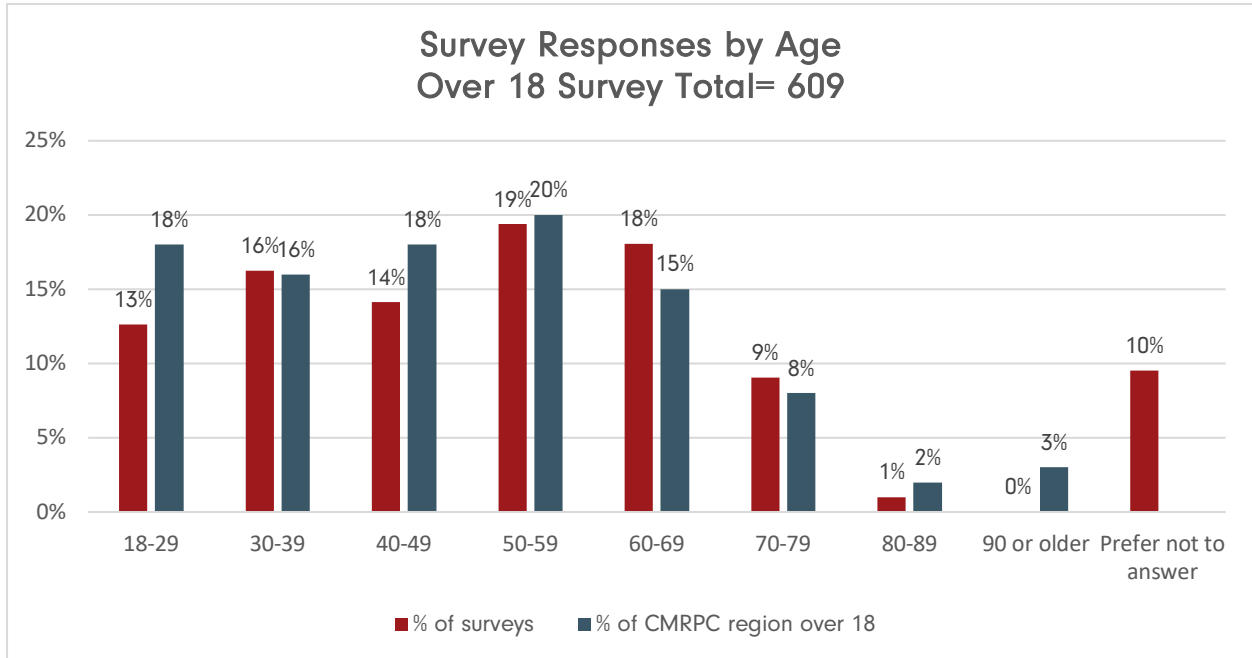
	% of surveys	% of CMRPC region over 18
18-29	12.64%	18%
30-39	16.26%	16%
40-49	14.12%	18%
50-59	19.38%	20%
60-69	18.06%	15%
70-79	9.03%	8%
80-89	0.99%	2%
90 or older	0%	3%
N/A	9.52%	-

Approximately 13% of respondents did not answer the question pertaining to place of residence. From the responses received, the following communities in green are proportionately represented in our survey respondents sample based on the community's population proportion compared to the CMRPC region.

Community	#	% of surveys	% of total pop
Auburn	12	1.91%	2.85%
Barre	6	0.96%	0.93%
Berlin	3	0.48%	.56%
Blackstone	1	0.16%	1.58%
Boylston	5	0.8%	.78%
Brookfield	5	0.8%	.61%
Charlton	17	2.71%	2.35%
Douglas	9	1.43%	1.57%
Dudley	5	0.8%	2.03%
East Brookfield	9	1.43%	.38%
Grafton	17	2.71%	3.45%
Hardwick	6	0.96%	.53%
Holden	27	4.3%	3.08%
Hopedale	2	0.32%	1.01%
Leicester	9	1.43%	1.92%
Mendon	1	0.16%	1.05%
Millbury	8	1.27%	2.35%
Millville	4	0.64%	.58%
New Braintree	0	0%	.18%
North Brookfield	3	0.48%	.77%
Northborough	11	1.75%	2.47%
Northbridge	7	1.11%	3.08%
Oakham	1	0.16%	.33%
Oxford	12	1.91%	2.44%

Community	#	% of surveys	% of total pop
Paxton	3	0.48%	.86%
Princeton	3	0.48%	.6%
Rutland	33	5.25%	1.49%
Shrewsbury	24	3.82%	6.62%
Southbridge	22	3.5%	2.79%
Spencer	12	1.91%	1.9%
Sturbridge	20	3.18%	1.72%
Sutton	7	1.11%	1.59%
Upton	9	1.43%	1.58%
Uxbridge	18	2.87%	2.72%
Warren	9	1.43%	.9%
Webster	5	0.8%	2.9%
West Boylston	4	0.64%	1.37%
West Brookfield	4	0.64%	0.64%
Westborough	16	2.55%	3.23%
Worcester	136	21.66%	32.22%
Outside Central MA	4	5.41%	
Outside MA	4	0.64%	
No Town Indicated	85	13.54%	

After analyzing the survey responses we found that these were the top choices from the thirty options on the survey. The following percents include all respondents that chose the strategy as their first, second, or third option.

Economy
59% Many Small, Local Businesses
58% Walkable, Mixed-Use Areas
55% Vibrant Town Centers

Environment
46% Clean Air, Water, & Soil
43% A Thriving Local Food System & Farms
33% Open Space Conservation

Equity
54% Housing that is Affordable
47% Health care for All Income Levels
32% Access to Healthy Food for All

The table below lists all survey ranking options with the number and percent of survey respondents that marked the option as their first, second, or third option.

	Full Survey Responses	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
Economy	Many Small, Local Businesses	145 23%	111 18%	113 18%
	Vibrant Town Centers	121 19%	137 22%	89 14%
	Walkable, Mixed-Use Areas	104 17%	120 19%	142 23%
	Distribution Centers	6 1%	8 1%	12 2%
	Career-Centered Technical Schools	29 5%	52 8%	55 9%
	Support for Work from Home	10 2%	23 4%	40 6%
	Investment in Tourist Attractions	11 2%	13 2%	15 2%
	Diverse Housing Options	87 14%	48 8%	53 8%
	Decreased Regulations on Businesses	28 4%	23 4%	15 2%
	Expanded Industry Clusters (technology, healthcare, educational institutions)	31 5%	28 4%	28 4%
Environment	Open Space Conservation	78 12%	67 11%	62 10%
	A Thriving Local Food System & Farms	83 13%	97 15%	89 14%
	Lots of Renewable Energy Use	54 9%	58 9%	60 10%

	Many Trails Throughout the Region	25 4%	41 7%	53 8%
	Environmental Education in Schools	22 4%	24 4%	36 6%
	Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions	46 7%	35 6%	43 7%
	Many Recreational Opportunities	27 4%	22 4%	37 6%
	Preparedness for the Local Impacts of Climate Change	29 5%	28 4%	52 8%
	Clean waterways and good stormwater management	36 6%	100 16%	65 10%
	Clean air, water, and soil	158 25%	78 12%	54 9%
Equity	Housing that is affordable	184 29%	88 14%	65 10%
	Cheap & convenient public transportation	30 5%	86 14%	72 11%
	Health care for all income levels	85 14%	115 18%	98 16%
	Promotion of healthy living and preventative care	38 6%	38 6%	50 8%
	Transparent local government	61 10%	38 6%	41 7%
	Access to healthy food for all	52 8%	74 12%	77 12%
	Broad accessibility for those with disabilities	6 1%	16 3%	33 5%
	Geographic fairness of regional benefits	14 2%	11 2%	21 3%
	Equal access to education *(regardless of race, income, and location)*	54 9%	47 7%	54 9%
	Engaged & inclusive community leadership	30 5%	34 5%	31 5%

1,150 comments were collected from April 2022 to September 2022. All comments have been tagged and will be used to support the goals and objectives of Imagine 2050. The following word cloud illustrates the most prevalent topics discussed from the open ended portions of the survey, discussions during tabling events, and visioning sessions:

Community   More housing
Access to healthy food   Affordable housing
More parks   Equal education   Walkable areas
Bike trails
Renewable energy   Public Transportation
Open space   Clean energy
Workforce education
Planning for future climate change
Better healthcare   Clean water
Workforce training