

RACIAL EQUITY IDEA Community Survey



The Town of Lincoln
July 2023



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Quantitative Survey Items

The Racial Equity Group conducted a community survey on behalf of Lincoln's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism Committee from June XX to June XX. Over 400 residents responded. Following are some key takeaways:

- Residents agreed that they have access to quality fire, police, emergency, and rescue services, fair/respectful treatment by Town employees, access to quality parks and recreation programs, access to groceries and household necessities, and access to quality health and human services.
- Respondents generally indicated that they do not experience barriers or challenges in accessing and utilizing Town services and programs.
- Respondents were not satisfied with the Town's inclusion efforts to attract residents of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- Residents expressed that they do not have access to groceries or household necessities within walking distance. White respondents had greater agreement than people of color regarding opportunities to provide input and feedback in developing the Town's budget (Q1), input and feedback on the Town's policy (Q2), satisfaction with transparency in Town decision-making process (Q3), satisfaction with the Town's communications and engagement efforts (Q4), access to quality parks and recreation, access to groceries and household necessities (Q9), access to public transportation (Q11), access to participate on the Town's boards and commissions (Q13), accessibility of Town meetings (Q14), connection to the Town (Q17), and belief that they see their culture and/or identity reflected in Town government and activities (Q21). Female respondents reported significantly higher familiarity with the Town's commitment to advance Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-racism than did males.
- Males reported significantly higher belief that town buildings are accessible to people with limited mobility than did female respondents.
- Respondents of unknown gender did not have significantly higher mean scores than male or female respondents for any of the statements. Home owners had significantly higher agreement regarding access to quality fire, police, emergency services (Q5), quality parks and recreation (Q6), familiarity with the Town's commitment to advance Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-racism (Q18), satisfaction with the Town's efforts for equitable access for all (Q19), belief that the Town is welcoming and inclusive of racially diverse groups (Q20), and that they see their culture reflected in Town government and activities (Q21) than renters.
- Renters reported higher agreement experiencing barriers or challenges in accessing and utilizing Town services and programs (Q26) than homeowners.

Generally, increased age and increased income was associated with significantly greater agreement with town items while younger respondents and lower income levels with lower agreement with town items.

Qualitative Survey Items

In Lincoln's Community Survey, participants were presented with three open-ended questions regarding the accessibility of town meetings, critical actions that could be done to advance IDEA in Lincoln, and how the Town can better assist residents to have a higher quality of life and sense of wellbeing. The responses were reviewed, and codes were applied to summarize concepts.

Access to Town Meetings

Respondents had a variety of suggestions on how to improve accessibility to town meetings, including developing **inclusive access** such as virtual options, sign language interpreters, and addressing transportation needs. They also suggested improving **the process of the meetings**, including changing when they are scheduled, providing childcare, and updating the voting process. They finally stressed the need for **diverse opinions** in the town meetings, as they felt that the meetings were generally biased towards specific groups such as wealthy,

white, older residents.

Critical Actions to Advance IDEA

One way that respondents wanted to see IDEA advanced in Lincoln is through **access to the town**, as they felt the lack of affordable housing, the high cost of living, and the insufficient public transportation would cause diverse populations to steer clear of Lincoln. They noted a need to **build and support diversity in the community** through supporting the METCO program, planning more diverse events, increasing diversity in Town staff, and ensuring that everyone is being treated equitably. They noted a variety of ways that **discrimination** is present in Lincoln, primarily towards those with physical disabilities, different races, and the elderly or younger generations. Some respondents expressed the desire for further **training and discussions** around diversity and inclusion, while others suggested that the discussions are causing divisions and need to be stopped.

Assist Residents to Have a Higher Quality of Life and Sense of Wellbeing

A primary concern from respondents and their ability to achieve a higher quality of life and sense of wellbeing was **affordability** – they suggested lowering the cost of living by looking at utility costs, focusing on the economy by building new stores, and building affordable housing. They expressed a need to **build community** within Lincoln by working with nearby towns, embracing new residents, and developing new events. Respondents also wanted to see **improvements in town resources and environment** and suggested increasing public transportation, updating town facilities, improving school policies, updating technology, and changing the voting process. A significant number of respondents (13) also shared that they were concerned about **focusing too much on IDEA** – they were concerned that the focus would cause more division than intended.

Focus Groups Connections

During the focus groups held in May 2023, participants shared that they were concerned about getting the entire town on board for DEI efforts. They discussed that many residents would prefer it if Lincoln stayed the way it is and were unsure how the government would get them involved in the process. The community survey confirmed their concerns, as many responses across all three qualitative questions **indicated** that they wanted to stop these initiatives.

“Stop focusing so much on this issue- it's dividing the community.”

“Stop what you're doing and focus on the people who live here. So many families are unhappy with the poor services and lack of community.”

“Stop talking about it-it's very off-putting.”

The focus group respondents also echoed the community survey results in the need for additional affordable housing, and the generational and wealth bias present in the town.

Sincerely,



Bird Guess

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Commented [JG1]: Can we quantify “many”?

Commented [E2R1]: There really is not a way to specify a concrete number as these are pulled from different questions and different responses and different codes.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

A total of 629 individuals engaged with the survey invitation and information with 197 individuals who clicked the survey link but did not engage with any of the survey items. The survey response data for the remaining 432 actual respondents was reviewed to determine the validity of individual responses. Responses were reviewed to ensure respondents took a reasonable amount of time to complete the survey, they responded to enough of the items to provide meaningful content, and their responses varied from one item to the next. Respondents who completed the survey too quickly (less than a minute), who answered less than a third of the survey questions, or who answered the same way across all items were removed from the final data. In addition, duplicate survey responses were removed from the survey. Out of the 432 respondents who began the survey, 422 valid surveys were identified and considered for analysis. There were five surveys removed for dropping out within the first 5 survey items and an additional five cases removed for having no variance to items across the survey (or answering the same number for every item).

Demographics

The valid sample contained responses from 422 Lincoln Community residents. Participants answered the 24 statements related to the Town. Additionally, respondents answered demographic and background questions in order to create a more robust profile of the respondents. Demographic frequencies are presented below. The overall results are reviewed, as well as the results stratified according to key demographics such as minority status, gender, home ownership, age, and income. The majority of the sample are white (61.8%), straight (heterosexual) (62.1%), homeowners (73.0%), do not have a disability (73.7%), do not own/operate a business within Lincoln (74.9%), neither live nor work on Hanscom Air Force Base (82.2%), and live in Lincoln (62.3%). The largest group of participants are female (47.2%), have Masters degrees (30.1%), are retired (28.4%), are 65-74 years old (19.2%), and earn over \$300,000 annually (25.1%). Unknown or prefer not to say responses account for 13%-34% of responses for the demographic items. The largest group of unknown/PNS responses are for sexual orientation (33.6%), race/ethnicity (27.0%), and gender (23.0%).

Gender	N	Percent
Male	118	28.0%
Female	199	47.2%
Non-binary/non-conforming	3	.7%
Transgender	1	.2%
Other	4	.9%
Unknown/PNS	97	23.0%

Race/Ethnicity	N	Percent
Asian or Asian American	14	3.3%
Black or African American	8	1.9%
Hispanic or Latinx (non-white)	8	1.9%
White	261	61.8%
Multiracial	11	2.6%
Other	6	1.4%
Unknown/PNS	114	27.0%

Age	N	Percent
Under 24 years old	4	.9%
25 - 34 years old	14	3.3%
35 - 44 years old	55	13.0%
45 - 54 years old	58	13.7%
55 - 64 years old	58	13.7%
65 - 74 years old	81	19.2%
75+ years old	65	15.4%
Unknown/PNS	87	20.6%

Minority	N	Percent
Person of color	41	9.7%
White	261	61.8%
Unknown/PNS	120	28.4%

Sexual Orientation	N	Percent
LGBQ	18	4.3%
Straight (heterosexual)	262	62.1%
Unknown/PNS	142	33.6%

Home Ownership Status	N	Percent
Own	308	73.0%
Rent	36	8.5%
Other	15	3.6%
Unknown/PNS	63	14.9%

Disability Status	N	Percent
Yes	36	8.5%
No	311	73.7%
Unknown/PNS	75	17.8%

Education	N	Percent
Associates Degree & HS	12	2.8%
Bachelors	97	23.0%
Masters	127	30.1%
Graduate Degree	37	8.8%
PhD, MD, JD	62	14.7%
Unknown/PNS	87	20.6%

Own/Operate business within Lincoln	N	Percent
Yes	43	10.2%
No	316	74.9%
Unknown/PNS	63	14.9%

Occupation	N	Percent
Student	3	.7%
Employed within private sector	98	23.2%
Employed within the public sector	39	9.2%
Self-employed/business owner	66	15.6%
Unemployed and seeking work	2	.5%
Unemployed and not seeking work	14	3.3%
Disabled and not able to work	1	.2%
Retired	120	28.4%
Other	22	5.2%
Unknown/PNS	57	13.6%

Total Annual Household Income	N	Percent
Less than \$60,000	38	9.0%
\$60,000 to \$99,999	30	7.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	55	13.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	56	13.3%
\$200,000 to \$249,999	38	9.0%
\$250,000 to \$299,999	33	7.8%
Over \$300,000	106	25.1%
Unknown/PNS	66	15.6%

Live/Work in the Town	N	Percent
Live		62.3%
Work		3.8%
Both		16.8%
Neither		2.6%
Unknown/PNS		14.5%

Live/Work on Air Force base	N	Percent
Live	2	.5%
Work	12	2.8%
Neither	347	82.2%
Unknown/PNS	61	14.5%

Lincoln Community Overview

The aggregate mean scores for each of the 24 statements provide an overview for the current state of the Town of Lincoln. Results are presented for individual items, but general trends are discussed. The higher the mean score, the greater the consensus. There were five statements with consensus agreement reflected by mean scores above 4.0 out of 5.0. Residents agreed regardless of background and demographics regarding access to quality fire, police, emergency, and rescue services (*Mean* = 4.67, *SD* = .78), fair/respectful treatment by Town employees (*Mean* = 4.43, *SD* = .98), access to quality parks and recreation programs (*Mean* = 4.33, *SD* = 1.06), access to groceries and household necessities (*Mean* = 4.26, *SD* = 1.08), and access to quality health and human services (*Mean* = 4.15, *SD* = 1.00).

There were only two items with consensus responses with a mean score below 3.0 indicative of a collective consensus on the disagreement side. Respondents disagreed with the Town's inclusion efforts to attract residents of different racial and ethnic backgrounds (*Mean* = 2.92, *SD* = 1.39) and location within walking distance to groceries and household necessities (*Mean* = 2.49, *SD* = 1.49).

The final survey item requested information regarding barriers or challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing Town services and programs. *This item was the only reverse scored item where the more equitable/desirable response was reflected by disagreement rather than agreement.* The mean score for this item was 2.01 indicating disagreement that they experienced barriers or challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing Town services and programs.

Overall, two-thirds of the items (16 out of 24 statements) had mean scores between 3.0 and 4.0 indicating that responses reflected aggregate levels between neutral and some agreement with the statements.



	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
Feedback and Input on Town's Budget Development	12%	17%	18%	30%	24%	3.37
Input and Feedback on Town's Policies	13%	16%	13%	34%	25%	3.43
Town's Decision-Making Process Transparency	12%	17%	19%	27%	25%	3.37
Town's Communications and Engagement	8%	16%	14%	31%	30%	3.60
Access to Fire, Police, and Emergency Services	2%	1%	5%	13%	79%	4.67
Access to Parks and Recreation Services	3%	5%	8%	21%	62%	4.33
Access to Health and Human Services	2%	4%	20%	25%	49%	4.15
Access to Affordable and Quality Housing	16%	19%	27%	15%	23%	3.09
Access to Groceries and Household Necessities	2%	9%	6%	24%	58%	4.26
Walking Distance to Groceries and Household Necessities	38%	20%	10%	16%	15%	2.49
Access to Public Transportation	17%	17%	10%	32%	24%	3.28
Buildings Accessible for Limited Mobility Individuals	5%	6%	29%	28%	31%	3.75
Participation on Town Boards and Commissions	7%	9%	16%	25%	42%	3.87
Town Meeting Accessible	10%	11%	10%	21%	48%	3.86
Town Employees Treat Fairly and Respectfully	2%	5%	7%	19%	67%	4.43
Connection to the Town	6%	12%	13%	31%	38%	3.83
Familiar with Town's Commitment to Advance	6%	7%	15%	34%	37%	3.89
Satisfaction with Town's Equitable Access Efforts	9%	10%	17%	32%	33%	3.70
Town is Welcoming and Inclusive of Racially Diverse	12%	17%	17%	26%	27%	3.40
My Culture is Reflected in Town Government and Activities	14%	8%	15%	19%	43%	3.68
Town's Inclusion Efforts Attracting Diverse Residents	20%	21%	25%	15%	19%	2.92
Town Employment Opportunities Access	7%	6%	47%	21%	20%	3.41
Town Vendor or Contractor Access	8%	6%	62%	13%	11%	3.14
Experience Barriers Accessing Town Services and Programs	47%	21%	20%	9%	3%	2.01

Note. The blue bar reflects the average/mean rating on a 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree scale. The number reflects the percent of respondents who selected each category.

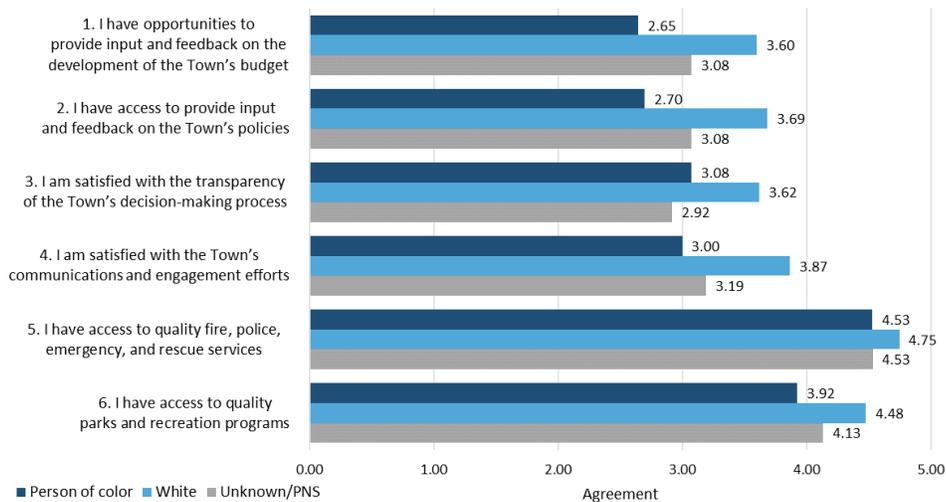
Minority Consensus on Racial Equity Commitment

The overall mean scores present the profile of the Town collectively, but further analysis segmented by minority racial/ethnic background provides important context. White respondents had greater agreement than people of color regarding:

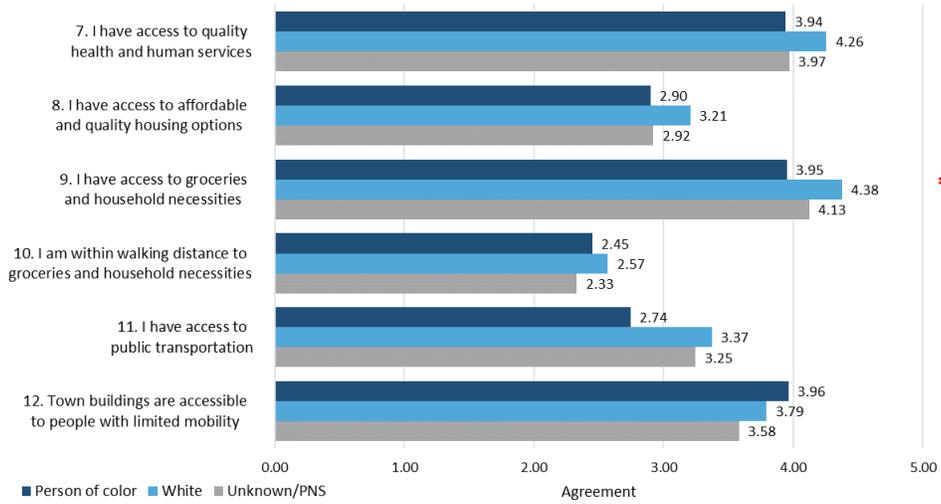
- opportunities to provide input and feedback in developing the Town’s budget (Q1)
- input and feedback on the Town’s policy (Q2)
- satisfaction with transparency in Town decision-making process (Q3)
- satisfaction with the Town’s communications and engagement efforts (Q4)
- access to quality parks and recreation, access to groceries and household necessities (Q9)
- access to public transportation (Q11)
- access to participate on the Town’s boards and commissions (Q13), accessibility of Town meetings (Q14)
- connection to the Town (Q17), and
- belief that they see their culture and/or identity reflected in Town government and activities (Q21).

Respondents of unknown race had significantly lower mean scores for most of these items as well as several others. There were no statements where people of color or people of unknown race/ethnicity had significantly higher levels of agreement with any of the statements than did white people. One fourth of the statements (6 out of 24) had no significant associations with minority status. The numbering matches the survey numbers distributed to participants. Questions 15 and 23 were open-ended qualitative statements and thus not presented for quantitative analyses. Red asterisks indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship for that question and the examined demographic (minority, gender, etc.). This suggests that the results are likely to be attributed to a specific cause as opposed to random differences. Means are presented, but both mean scores and individual categorical responses were evaluated to identify significant findings (proportions of males strongly agreeing compared to proportions of females strongly agreeing with the same statement).

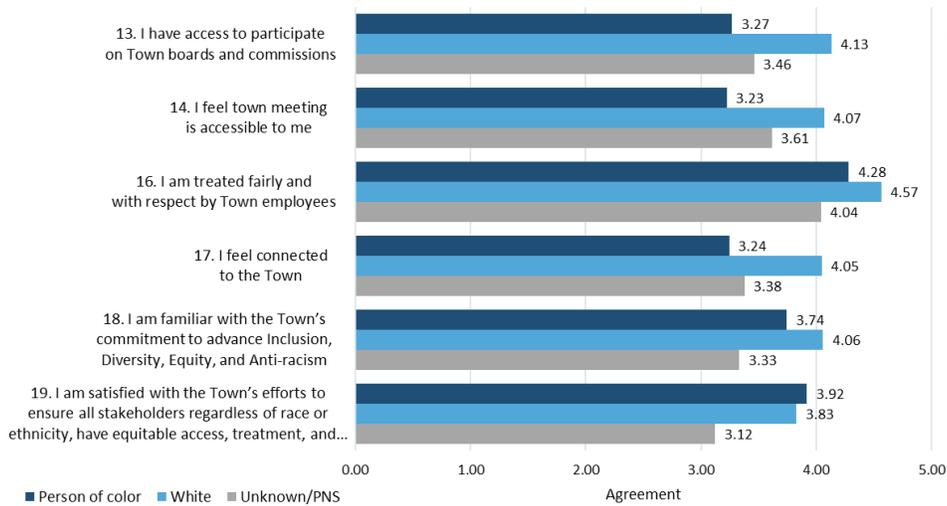
Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Minority (1 of 4)



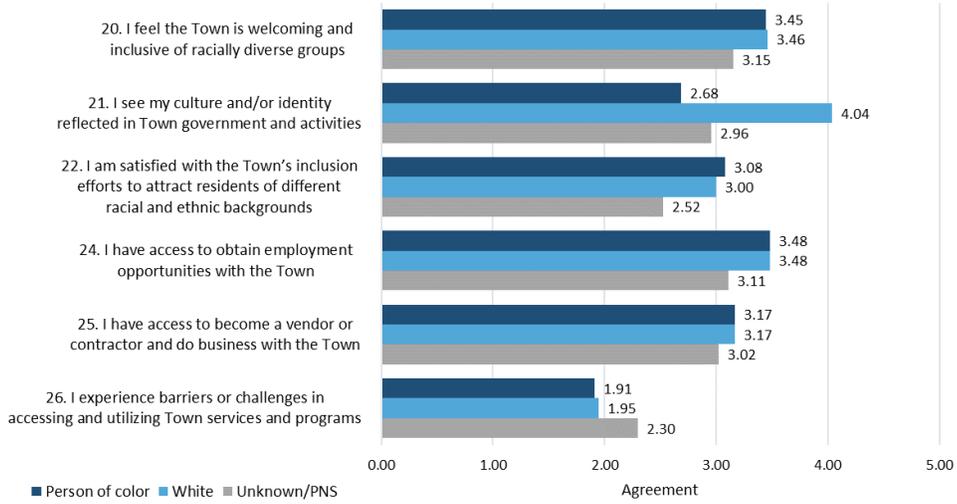
Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Minority (2 of 4)



Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Minority (3 of 4)



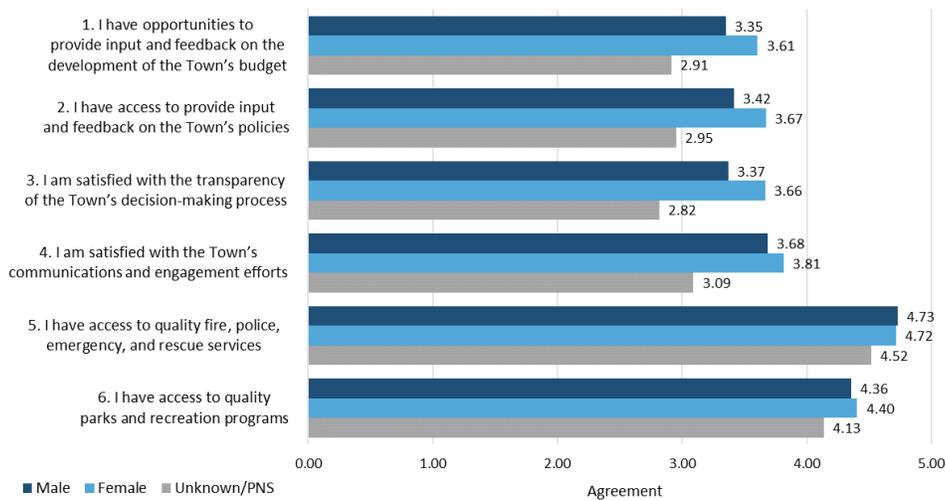
Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Minority (4 of 4)



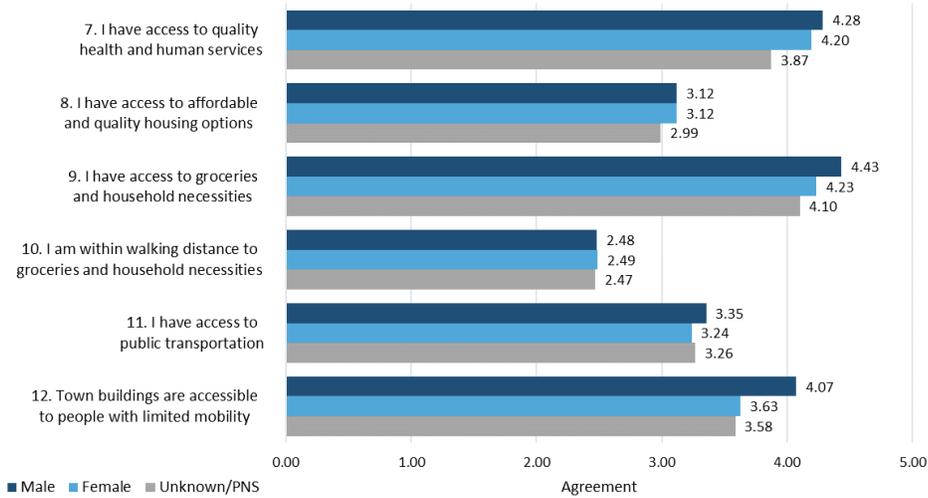
Gender Consensus on Racial Equity Commitment

Additional analysis stratified by gender reveals subsequent relationships segmented by gender. Nearly half of the statements (11 out of 24) had no significant associations with gender. Results displayed show that most significant differences according to gender involve mean scores for male and/or female participants being significantly greater than mean scores for respondents of unknown genders. There were only two statements where male and female respondents had significantly different mean scores. Female respondents reported significantly higher familiarity with the Town’s commitment to advance Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-racism (*Mean* = 4.14, *SD* = 1.05) than did males (*Mean* = 3.78, *SD* = 1.15). Males reported significantly higher belief that town buildings are accessible to people with limited mobility (*Mean* = 4.07, *SD* = .96) than did female respondents (*Mean* = 3.63, *SD* = 1.17). Respondents of unknown gender did not have significantly higher mean scores than male or female respondents for any of the statements.

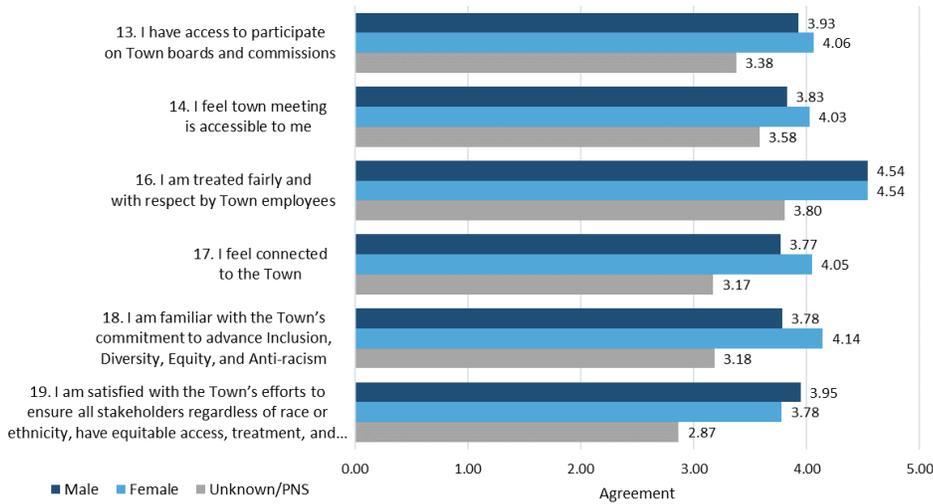
Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Gender (1 of 4)



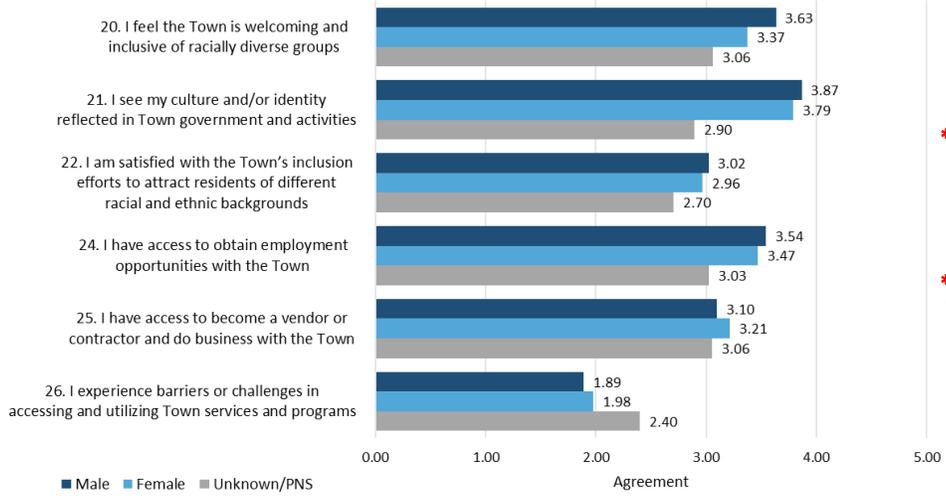
Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Gender (2 of 4)



Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Gender (3 of 4)



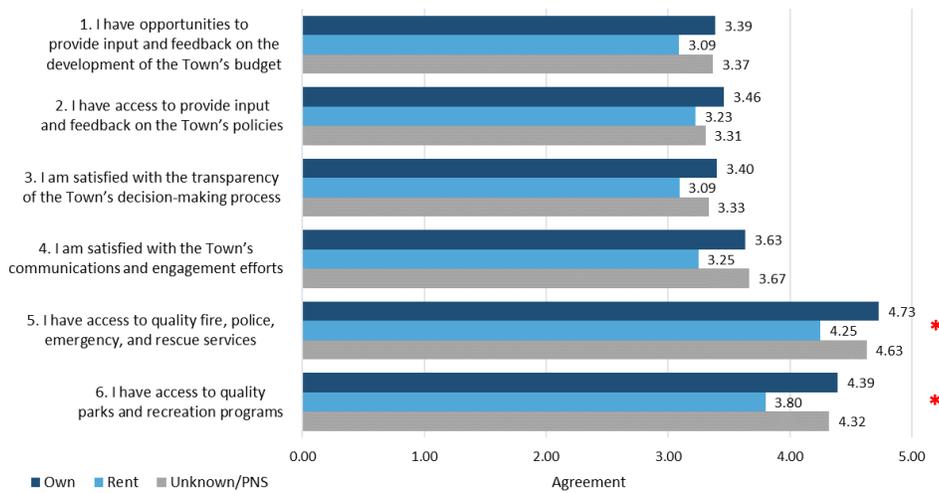
Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Gender (4 of 4)



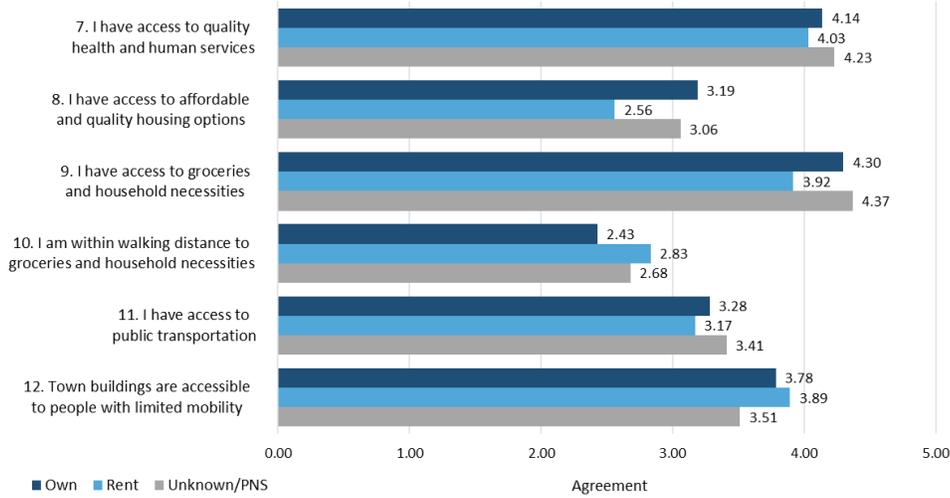
Home Ownership Consensus on Community Items

Further analysis stratified by home ownership status (own, rent, unknown/PNS) assessed the level of consensus on community items by home ownership status. There was no significant relationship between home ownership status and the survey statements for nearly early three-fourths of the items (17 out of 24). Home owners had significantly higher agreement regarding access to quality fire, police, emergency services (Q5), quality parks and recreation (Q6), familiarity with the Town’s commitment to advance Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-racism (Q18), satisfaction with the Town’s efforts for equitable access for all (Q19), belief that the Town is welcoming and inclusive of racially diverse groups (Q20), and that they see their culture reflected in Town government and activities (Q21) than renters. Renters reported higher agreement experiencing barriers or challenges in accessing and utilizing Town services and programs (Q26) (*Mean* = 2.52, *SD* = 1.30) than homeowners do (*Mean* = 1.95, *SD* = 1.13).

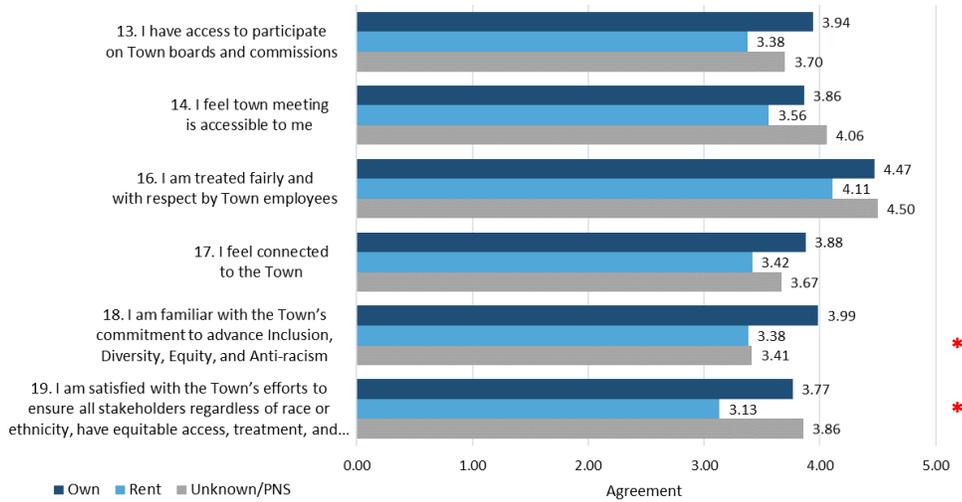
Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Home Ownership (1 of 4)



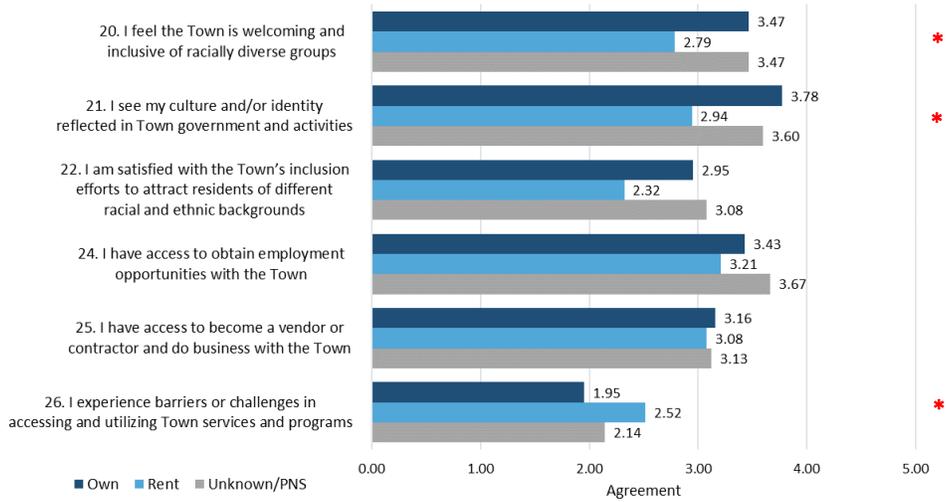
Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Home Ownership (2 of 4)



Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Home Ownership (3 of 4)



Lincoln Community Survey Statements by Home Ownership (4 of 4)



Age Consensus on Racial Equity Commitment

Participants responses to 19 of the 24 items were significantly related to age. Spearman's rho nonparametric correlations were evaluated for age and income levels as these demographics are ordinal in nature. This analysis enables to determine if increases in age or income is related to increased or decreased agreement with the individual statements. The analysis revealed that in general, agreement levels increased with age increases. Older individuals tended to agree more strongly than younger respondents for most items. The red asterisks in the figures below indicate a statistically significant correlation between increase in agreement with the survey item and an increase in income level or age level. Results revealed that older individuals reported stronger agreement with 17 of the 19 significant statements than did younger individuals. Increased age was associated with significantly greater agreement and younger respondents with lower agreement with:

- feedback and input on town's budget development
- input and feedback on town's policies
- town's decision-making process transparency
- town's communications and engagement
- access to fire, police, and emergency services
- access to parks and recreation services
- access to health and human services
- access to affordable and quality housing
- access to groceries and household necessities
- participation on town boards and commissions
- town meeting accessible
- town employees treat fairly and respectfully
- connection to the town
- familiar with town's commitment to advance inclusion
- satisfaction with town's equitable access efforts
- town is welcoming and inclusive of racially diverse groups
- my culture is reflected in town government and activities

There was no relationship between age and three of the statements. This means that responses were comparable for older and younger individuals for these questions. Inversely, the only two negative correlations with age were 1) walkable distance to groceries and household necessities and 2) barriers or challenges in accessing and utilizing Town services and programs. These findings suggest that older people have lower agreement that grocery stores and other needs are more walkable and that they experience less barriers and challenges accessing town services and programs. Younger people feel better about being within walking distance to groceries and household needs, but they also more strongly report experiencing barriers accessing and utilizing town services and programs.

Commented [JG3]: Needs a bit of clarification. Did younger respondents think services are walkable? Did they experience more or fewer barriers?

Commented [PG4R3]: Additional context added, the original wording was confusing/incomplete. Thanks

Income Consensus on Racial Equity Commitment

Participants responses were also reviewed according to household income levels to identify trends according to wealth. Generally, individuals with increased wealth had more favorable views related to the Town than respondents with lower income. Spearman's rho nonparametric correlations were conducted and revealed that increased income was associated with increased agreement (and lower income was related to lower agreement) for 11 out of the 24 statements. There were no significant relationships between income level and the remaining 13 statements.

Increased income was associated with significantly greater agreement and lower income with less agreement on:

- feedback and input on town's budget development
- input and feedback on town's policies
- town's decision-making process transparency
- town's communications and engagement

- access to fire, police, and emergency services
- access to parks and recreation services
- access to affordable and quality housing
- access to groceries and household necessities
- participation on town boards and commissions
- satisfaction with town's equitable access efforts
- my culture is reflected in town government and activities

Item	Age	Income
Feedback and Input on Town's Budget Development	0.154 *	0.174 *
Input and Feedback on Town's Policies	0.183 *	0.159 *
Town's Decision-Making Process Transparency	0.156 *	0.165 *
Town's Communications and Engagement	0.201 *	0.107 *
Access to Fire, Police, and Emergency Services	0.127 *	0.147 *
Access to Parks and Recreation Services	0.262 *	0.105 *
Access to Health and Human Services	0.297 *	0.015
Access to Affordable and Quality Housing	0.153 *	0.188 *
Access to Groceries and Household Necessities	0.153 *	0.170 *
Walking Distance to Groceries and Household Necessities	-0.151 *	-0.022
Access to Public Transportation	-0.098	0.073
Buildings Accessible for Limited Mobility Individuals	0.108	-0.011
Participation on Town Boards and Commissions	0.280 *	0.122 *
Town Meeting Accessible	0.356 *	0.022
Town Employees Treat Fairly and Respectfully	0.325 *	0.020
Connection to the Town	0.258 *	0.103
Familiar with Town's Commitment to Advance Inclusion	0.165 *	0.050
Satisfaction with Town's Equitable Access Efforts	0.165 *	0.146 *
Town is Welcoming and Inclusive of Racially Diverse Groups	0.127 *	0.107
My Culture is Reflected in Town Government and Activities	0.199 *	0.142 *
Town's Inclusion Efforts Attracting Diverse Residents	0.097	0.104
Town Employment Opportunities Access	0.107	0.111
Town Vendor or Contractor Access	0.056	0.087
Experience Barriers Accessing Town Services and Programs	-0.218 *	-0.088

Note. Spearman's rho correlation coefficients are presented for each item. Asterisks * indicate that the correlation is significant at the .05 level.

Commented [JG5]: A little more explanation of rho correlation coefficients would be helpful.

Commented [PG6R5]: Additional explanation added on Page 18. Income and age are ordinal and so correlations allow us to identify trends based on increases and decreases in these demographic measures whereas race, gender, homeownership categories are not inherently comparable (there's no such thing as an increase in race or an increase in gender, just a significant difference between female scores and male scores, or White individuals and POC individuals)

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

In Lincoln's Community Survey, participants were presented with three open-ended questions regarding the accessibility of town meetings, critical actions that could be done to advance IDEA in Lincoln, and how the Town can better assist residents have a higher quality of life and sense of wellbeing. The responses were reviewed, and codes were applied to summarize concepts.

Town Meeting Accessibility

Participants were asked for any suggestions they may have to make the town meetings more accessible. Their responses were organized into the following categories.

Inclusive Access

- 73 participants expressed that they would like to see **virtual options** available for attending the meetings so individuals who could not join in person would be able to participate.

"Online voting or ballots if not able to make it in person. I'm a mom and can't stay in person for 5 hrs. The only people who stay and vote are 70+ and while important, there are so many voices in town that are not represented."

- One participant suggested including a **sign language interpreter** to make the town meetings more accessible.

"A sign language interpreter would make it more accessible."

- 13 participants suggested addressing the **transportation** needs of the community, including curb cuts and additional train routes.

"Not hold it at the school until curb cuts are made in appropriate places, such as the main entrance, the K-4 drop-off area, and sidewalks are placed from Hartwell to the main campus. It's dangerous for those with limited mobility."

Town Meeting Processes

- Nine participants suggested that there needed to be **better locations** for some meetings to ensure everyone will be comfortable attending.

"Some town buildings, such as Bemis, have less than optimal access for people with mobility challenges. Needs to be improved."

- 50 participants requested changes to the **voting process**, including online voting, paper ballots, and ensuring that votes are anonymous.

"I realize that town meetings are required but the way they are run is a disgrace. Whenever there is an issue on the agenda, it is never clear when the vote will actually be held. Why do I have to sit there for hours and hours just to cast my vote? The town clearly has a position and I'm forced to sit and listen to PowerPoint presentations that give only one point of the view, the point of the view the town has already decided is the one it wants to pursue. There is no democracy in this town whatsoever. Votes should be scheduled separately from the meeting and people should be told when and where they can show up and cast their vote in an anonymous manner."

- 69 participants suggested changes to the meeting **schedule** to allow retirees, those in the workforce, and parents to attend the meetings.

"Town meetings should end at or before 9:00pm. There are seniors and people who work for whom late night meetings are a physical burden and who are impeded from participating in meetings which are not resolved in a timely manner."

- 17 participants requested **additional collaboration with residents** by encouraging more questions and providing more time for residents to speak during meetings.

“Encourage more questions and discussion. City presentations are excellent and polished, but decisions seem made in advance, in some cases.”

- 36 participants noted that they struggled to attend because they did not have anyone to look after their children and requested that the Town provide **childcare**.

“Provide childcare and keep meetings to a shorter amount of time when they are at night.”

- 15 participants shared that they often did not know when the meetings occur and suggested improving **outreach techniques** to make sure residents know about the meeting.

“I don't know when they occur. I am not on social media and don't have time to research these meeting times/topics. Would be nice to have “calendar” emailed or mailed in advance of the month. And we could search for more information by going to particular website if wanted. Looking through pamphlet when most of the mail we get is junk is not user friendly. Postcards with writing on back and front are better.”

- 29 participants suggested that **the moderators** could be more patient with residents and keep the conversation focused.

“Perhaps the moderator could be a bit more patient with certain residents who are at the microphone for the first time and are visibly nervous.”

Need for Diverse Representation

- BIASED: 19 participants felt that the meetings were **biased** in favor of specific opinions and individuals which caused others to feel unable to or discouraged from sharing a different opinion.

“Committees should be more open to a variety of voices and opinions, not just those of the ‘status quo’ in town. Any differing or dissenting opinion is treated as an insult and accompanied by personal attacks.”

- Two participants shared that they desired more **diverse views** present in the meetings.

“More diverse views. The town is run by one group, with one expectation to achieve their ideological goals. If you dare to disagree, they dismiss you.”

No Suggestions

- 179 participants shared that they had **no suggestions** to improve access to the town meetings.

“No, I find the meetings easily accessible.”

Advancing IDEA

Participants were asked to identify the most critical action the Town of Lincoln could take to advance Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-racism. Their responses were organized into the following categories.

Accessibility

- 120 participants suggested that building more **affordable housing** is the most critical action that the Town could do to advance IDEA.
“The town should support affordable housing. I watch post after post on LincolnTalk, with why this isn’t possible. Then, I receive emails about ‘IDEA’, various reading groups on race at the library, etc... All these endeavors are pointless if housing isn’t built to encourage diverse individuals to be able to afford living here.”
- 18 participants stressed the idea that the **cost** of the town prohibits people of color with a low or medium level of income from moving into the town.
“The town is welcoming to people from different cultures as long as they are RICH. God forbid we allow low or moderate people of color to come to this town and be able to afford to be here.”
- 11 participants suggested that improving **public transportation** would help encourage diversity in the town.
“Lean on the MBTA to provide frequent and affordable trains and allow more space for parking and bike racks. Build more sidewalks.”

Build and Support Diversity in Community

- 6 participants stated that **supporting the METCO program** would help build diversity in the community.
“Use the empty classrooms to expand the METCO program. When children learn together, their chances of living together respectfully later in life are greater enhanced.”
- 37 participants suggested planning **new events** that would introduce diversity and bring the community together.
“Organize events to introduce other cultures – food, music, movie screenings, lectures, and other educational programs. The white residents need to widen their perspective and start interacting differently with people that do not look like them, only then will the town feel more welcoming to people of color.”
- 24 participants expressed that the Town could **hire more diverse staff** to advance IDEA.
“Have more diverse workforce, especially in the police and fire.”
- 15 participants felt that residents need to **treat each other equally** instead of putting the responsibility on the Town.
“There is no additional town action to take. Changes happen at the people level. People have to treat each other equally, respectfully and fairly.”

Discrimination

- 4 participants suggested that the Town needs to address the discrimination against those with **physical disabilities**, including the lack of curb cuts.
“You keep leaving out the Physically Disabled, which are also a protect class under the Constitution. Not just ‘ethnic or racial’ inclusivity! People can BECOME physically disabled in their lifetimes. Why have you not included the physically disabled?”

- 12 participants stressed that the Town needs to ensure **racial profiling** is not occurring between residents and in the government.

“Make sure the police don’t practice racial profiling, which I know has happened in the recent past.”

- 7 participants called out that the Town needs to focus on **working with younger generations** and incorporating their policies into the Town.

“Work with students/young people – they are who we need to be listening to!”

IDEA Trainings and Discussions

- 40 participants requested further **training and discussions** on how to include diversity in their daily lives.

“Continue to educate its residents and to model inclusion in all activities.”

- 68 participants were divided on **whether IDEA should still be discussed** – 39 respondents felt that it was important to have hard conversations while 29 other respondents wanted to stop focusing on IDEA.

“Move beyond anti racism rhetoric and dogma. Consider more deeply how we might make space and conditions for real conversation and understanding of what we each want from community. I fear that the anti-racism wave is becoming another form of political correctness that is limiting the real conversations about what matters and value of richly diverse community.”

No Suggestions

- 73 participants had **no suggestions** on how IDEA could be advanced in Lincoln.

“Lincoln is already very diverse. We have been here for 34 years and the whole town has completely changed with so many new ethnicities.”

Higher Quality of Life and Wellbeing

Participants were asked what the Town of Lincoln could do better to assist residents in having a higher quality of life and sense of wellbeing. Their responses were organized into the following categories.

Costs and Affordability

- Two participants suggested that adjusting the **costs of utilities** would improve the quality of life for residents.

“Provide municipal services in a cost-effective and competent manner.”

- Five participants stated that the Town should focus on **building Lincoln’s economy**.

“Work to ensure that services and retail businesses survive in the town. If that doesn't happen, we will all be driving out of town for everything.”

- 26 participants encouraged the Town to build more **affordable housing** in Lincoln.

“Provide more affordable housing so that more young people can move to the town.”

- 47 participants suggested looking at the **cost of living** in Lincoln to determine where costs could be reduced.

“Take a careful look as to why we are such an expensive town and try to reduce costs.”

Build Community

- One participant stated that the Town should **work closely with other towns** to understand how they are running their community.

“Work more closely with other towns rather than replicating activities and services.”

- Three participants suggested that the Town needed to be more **welcoming to new residents**, including a potential new resident orientation.

“Be more welcoming to newcomers.”

- 59 participants expressed that they would appreciate **more community events** that would bring residents together.

“We need more community events that invite everyone to come together. i.e., how can we develop a more vibrant Farmers Market? Lincoln Academy is great but targets Seniors. Could we create similar events that invite the town?”

Town Resources and Environment

- 70 participants suggested that the Town needs to focus on Lincoln’s **atmosphere and transportation needs**, such as building sidewalks and expanding public transportation.

“This is not one of the big issues you are investigating with this survey, but it drives me nuts that the transfer station is only open two days a week. It really feels insufficient, and I don't see how adding one more day would break the bank.”

- 68 participants shared that they would like to see improvements made to Lincoln’s **facilities and resources**, including new buildings and gym memberships.

“The fitness options through the rec dept. for adults are pretty weak. I have to pay for a membership elsewhere and go to other towns as a result.”

- Nine participants expressed the need for **higher quality of education** for children and developing anti-bullying policies.

“Improve the quality of education and discipline at the school. Stop sending out school surveys that ask no questions regarding the curriculum or the quality of instruction.”

- Seven participants felt that the Town needs to increase use and efficiency of **technology** for communication and outreach.

“Utilize technology to communicate. Short prerecorded video, access to clearly laid out town services on the website. Utilize social media to communicate for the residents who are 50 and below.”

- Three participants suggested allowing residents to complete **online or absentee voting** to ensure they are gathering the voices of everyone in the Town.

“Allow voting at Town Meetings for those not physically present or in attendance. I feel town decisions are decided by a select few of well connected, wealthy individuals.”

Mentality

- 13 participants shared that they were **hesitant to include IDEA concepts** into the Town as they felt that it would divide residents or make people feel excluded.

“Just be nice to people and provide quality services, obsessive focus on race does not make you a good person, or actually improve the lives of the person you think you are helping.”

No Suggestions

- 100 participants noted that they had **no suggestions** on improving the quality of life in Lincoln.

“We have a very high quality of life in Lincoln. It is not on the town to do more.”

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Community Survey



Town of Lincoln IDEA Community Survey Template

The purpose of the Town of Lincoln community online survey is to measure community satisfaction and ensure all stakeholders (e.g., residents, employees, students, visitors), are treated equitably and have equal access to quality services within the Town of Lincoln. The survey will help the Town identify and understand the lived experiences for Lincoln community members and discover opportunities to “move the Town forward towards integrating inclusion, diversity, equity, and anti-racism in the workplace, and within the Town.”

Within this survey, we ask a lot of personal demographics questions. We want to make sure we hear from a diverse group of people and understand their experiences. All questions on this survey are entirely voluntary.

In this survey you will be presented with a series of statements to rate your level of agreement with each. Some statements will refer to “access,” by this we mean: has the capacity, ability and means to obtain Town services, benefits, or opportunities. All references to the “Town” refer to the municipal departments and facilities, boards and committees, programs, and services. This survey will remain open until June 2, 2023. We value your experience and hope to hear from you!

Please respond using a scale with the following options:

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Don't Know

1. I have opportunities to access to provide input and feedback on the development of the Town's budget
2. I have access to provide input and feedback on the Town's policies
3. I am satisfied with the transparency of the Town's decision-making process
4. I am satisfied with the Town's communications and engagement efforts
5. I have access to quality fire, police, emergency, and rescue services
6. I have access to quality parks and recreation programs
7. I have access to quality health and human services
8. I have access to affordable and quality housing options
9. I have access to groceries and household necessities
10. I am able to walk to these places
11. I have access to public transportation
12. Town buildings are accessible to people with limited mobility
13. I have access to participate on Town boards and commissions

- 14. I feel town meeting is accessible to me.
- 15. Do you have suggestions for ways to make town meeting more accessible? **(Open Text Item)**
- 16. I am treated fairly and with respect by Town employees
- 17. I feel connected to the Town
- 18. I am familiar with the Town’s commitment to advance Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-racism
- 19. I am satisfied with the Town’s efforts to ensure all stakeholders (e.g., residents, employees, students, visitors) regardless of race or ethnicity, have equitable access, treatment, and quality in all Town services, programs, and operations.
- 20. I feel the Town is welcoming and inclusive of racially diverse groups
- 21. I see my culture and/or identity reflected in Town government and activities
- 22. I am satisfied with the Town’s inclusion efforts to attract residents of different racial and ethnic backgrounds
- 23. What is the most critical action the Town can do to advance Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-racism? (doesn’t work with the response matrix)
- 24. I have access to obtain employment opportunities with the Town
- 25. I have access to become a vendor or contractor and do business with the Town
- 26. I experience barriers or challenges in accessing and utilizing Town services and programs

To have higher quality of life and wellbeing, what can the Town do better to assist residents? **(Open Text Item)**

What is your race or ethnicity?

- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latinx (non-white)
- Native American or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races, please specify:
- Other - please specify:
- Prefer not to say

What is your age?

- Under 18 years old
- 18 - 24 years old
- 25 - 34 years old
- 35 - 44 years old
- 45 - 54 years old
- 55 - 64 years old
- 65 - 74 years old
- 75+ years old
- Prefer not to say

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary /non-conforming

Transgender

Gender not listed, please specify: _____

Prefer not to say

What is your sexual orientation? (check all that apply)

Lesbian

Gay

Bisexual

Queer

Straight (heterosexual)

Orientation not listed, please specify:

Prefer not to say

What is your current primary occupation?

Student

Employed within private sector

Employed within the public sector

Self-employed/business owner

Unemployed and seeking work

Unemployed and not seeking work

Disabled and not able to work

Retired

Not listed, please specify:

Other demographic questions:

- Do you live and/or work within the Town of Lincoln?
 - Live
 - Work
 - Both
- Do you live and/or work on Hanscom Air Force Base?
 - Live
 - Work
 - Both
- If you don't live in Lincoln, what brings you here?
 - How often do you come?
- Which category best describes your total annual household income?
- Do you own or operate a business within the Town of Lincoln?
- Do you own or rent your home within the Town?
- Do you live and work on Hanscom Air Force Base?
- What is the primary language spoken in your home?
 - Are other languages spoken?
- Do you have a disability?
- What is the highest level of education you have received?