

## Online Survey Overview

A vital element of the Strategic Economic Development Plan is that it is founded on community input. An online survey gathered input from community members regarding their needs, goals, priorities, and vision for the future of Wise. The survey was deployed both within the community at large and UVA Wise in an effort to gather a variety of perspectives representative of the Wise community. The survey collected a total of 561 responses from June 13 – September 5, 2022. This appendix provides the detailed results of both the Community Survey and the UVA Wise Survey.

**Wise Community Survey: Economic Development Strategic Plan**

**2. About You**

**1. What is your home residence zip code?**

**2. Mark all of the below that describe you**

I live in the Town of Wise

I work in Wise

I live in the Wise Area, but OUTSIDE of the town limits

I am a visitor to Wise

I am a business owner in Wise

I am a property owner in Wise

I am a student at UVA Wise

I am faculty/staff at UVA Wise

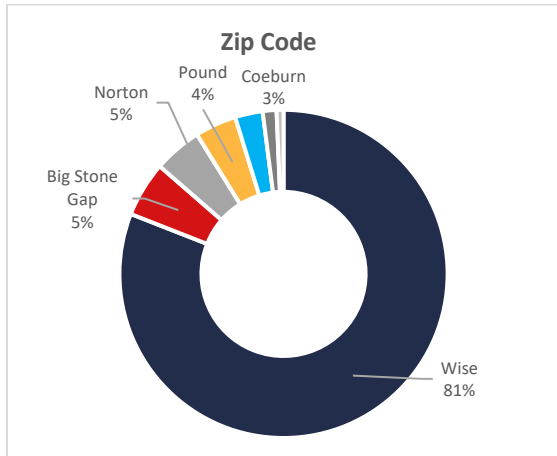
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# Community Survey Results

The community survey engaged 178 participants from June 13 to July 20, 2022.

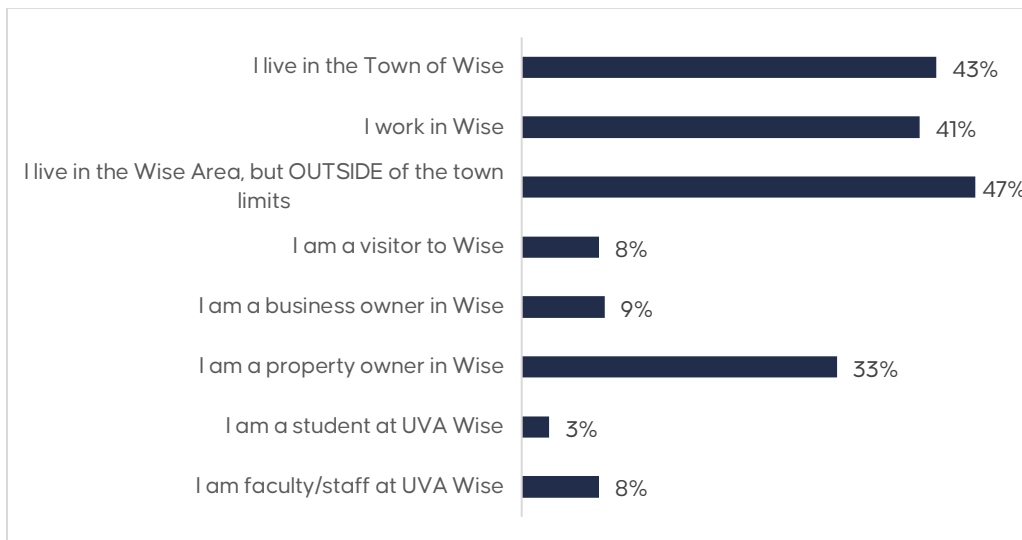
## Question 1: What is your home residence zip code?

81% of participants in the community survey live in Wise zip codes.



## Question 2: Mark all of the below that describe you.

The majority of respondents either live or work in Wise. 43% of respondents live in the Wise town limits, and another 47% live in the Wise area but outside of the town limits. 41% of respondents work in Wise. The survey also captured a few visitors, business owners, and UVA Wise faculty and students.







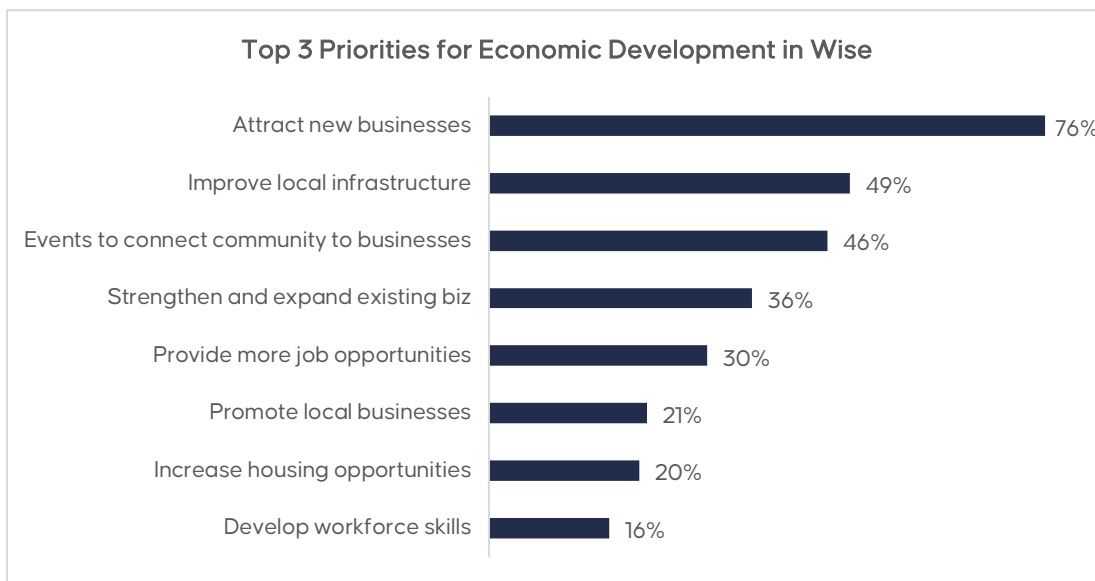
### Question 7: What is Wise's greatest area of economic need?

The following themes emerged when respondents were asked about Wise's greatest economic needs:

- **Businesses:** need for additional businesses including restaurants and retail.
- **Recreation and Activity:** desire for more things to do including entertainment, events, sports, and recreation.
- **Employment:** attract employers and good paying jobs.
- **Physical Planning:** pedestrian improvements, parking
- **Housing:** affordable housing, senior housing, additional housing options
- **Services:** need for services including medical, childcare, community center

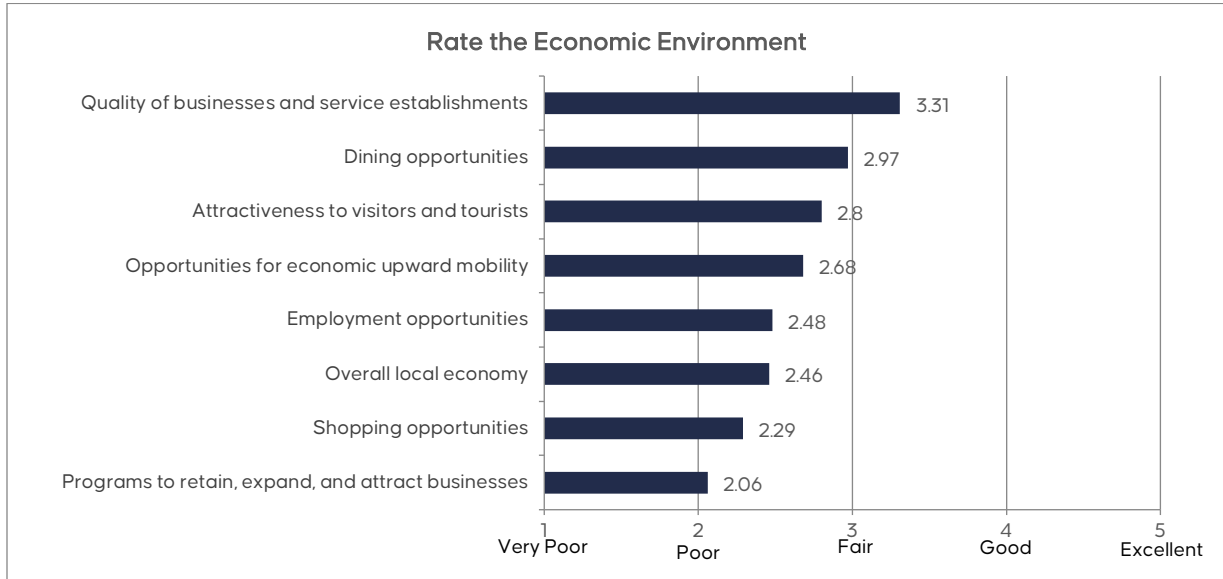
### Question 8: What are your top 3 priorities for economic development in Wise?

Attracting new businesses was by far the top response, followed by improving local infrastructure and having events to connect the community to businesses.



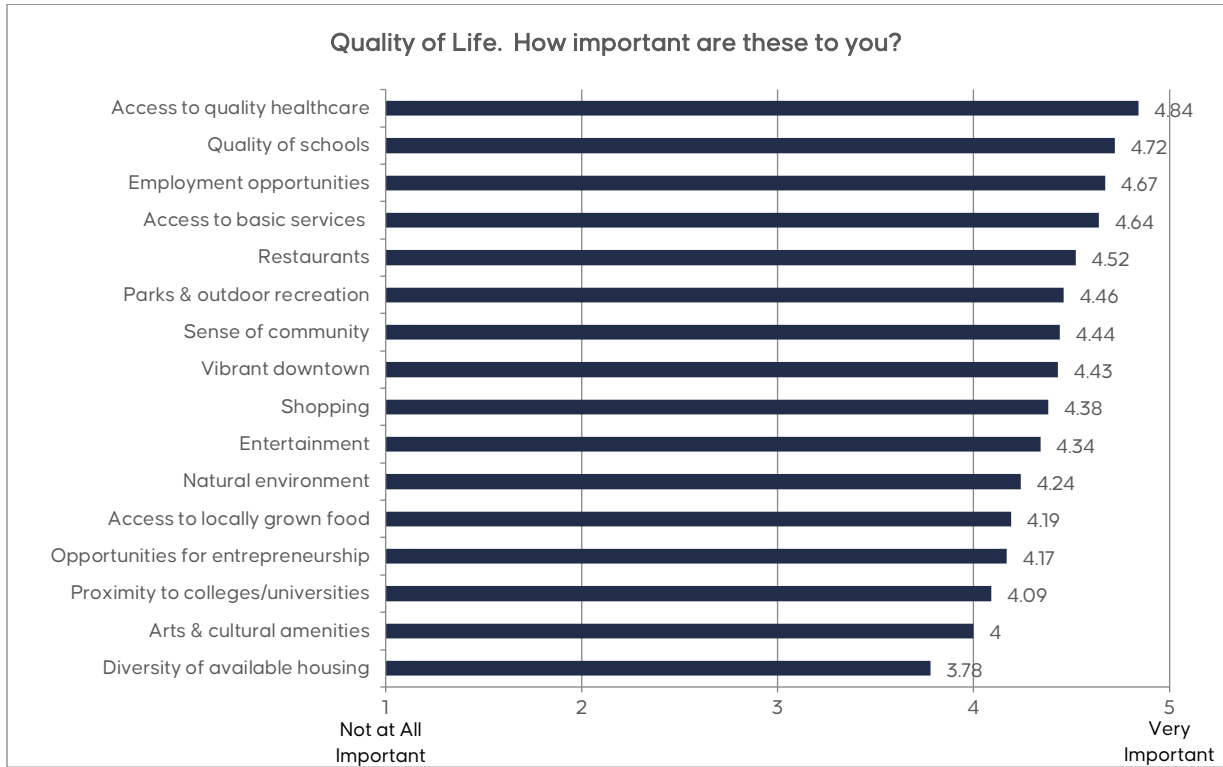
**Question 9: Please rate each of the following aspects of the economic environment in Wise on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being Very Poor and 5 being Excellent.**

The quality of businesses and service establishments rated the highest, while programs to attract and retain businesses rated the lowest. The comments mention that Wise is losing both businesses and visitors to surrounding towns that offer more.



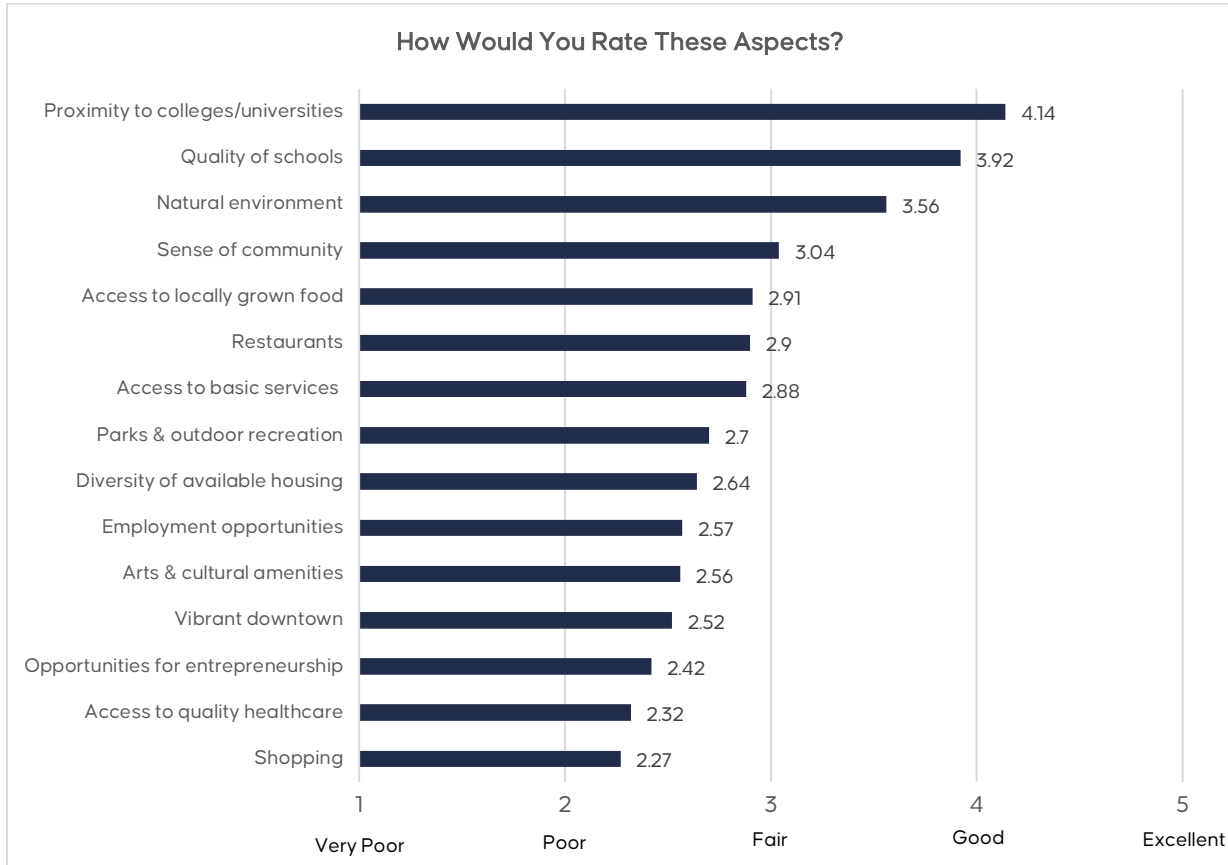
**Question 10: On a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being Not At All Important and 5 Extremely Important, how important are the factors below to your quality of life?**

Nearly all of the quality of life aspects are important to the respondents, with the highest being access to quality healthcare, quality of schools, employment opportunities, and access to basic services.



**Question 11: On a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being Very Poor and 5 being Excellent, how would you rate each of these factors in WISE?**

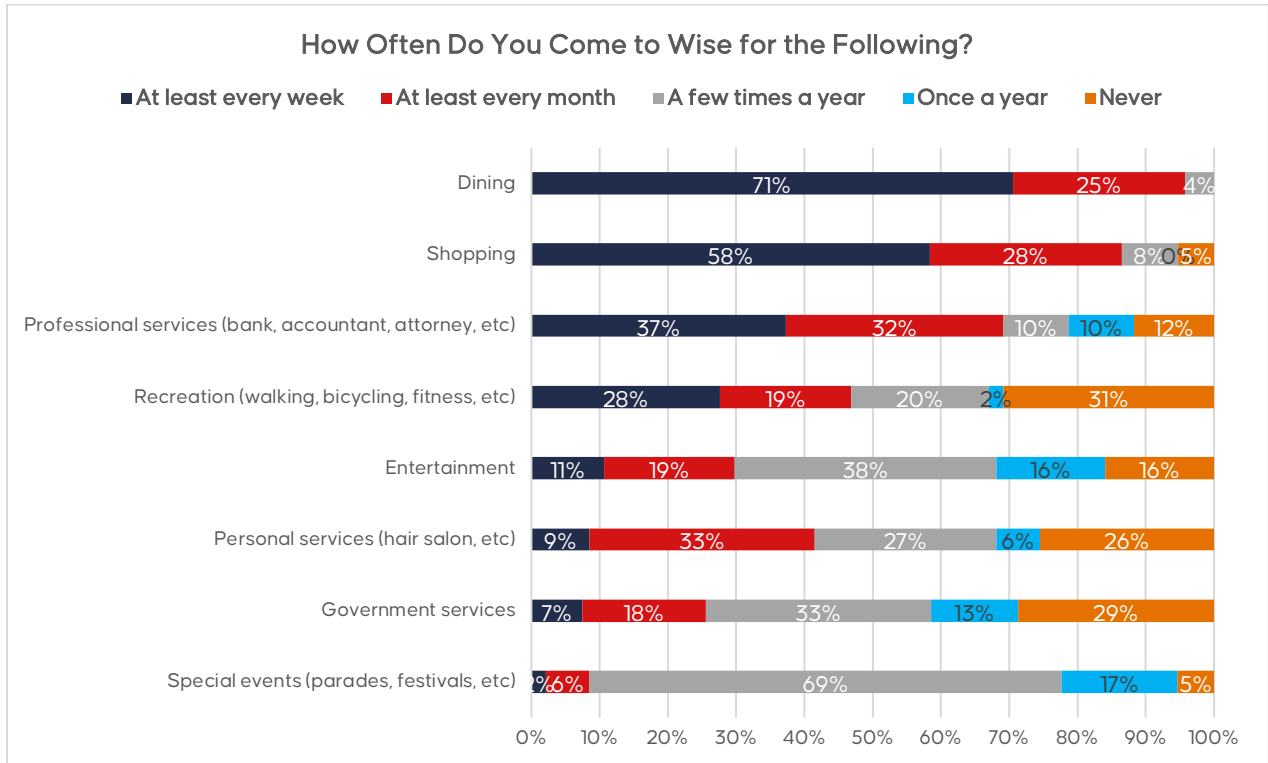
In question 10, respondents ranked access to quality care as being very important to them. But in question 11, respondents noted that access to quality healthcare in Wise is poor. The aspects that rated the highest are proximity to the college, quality of schools, and the natural environment.





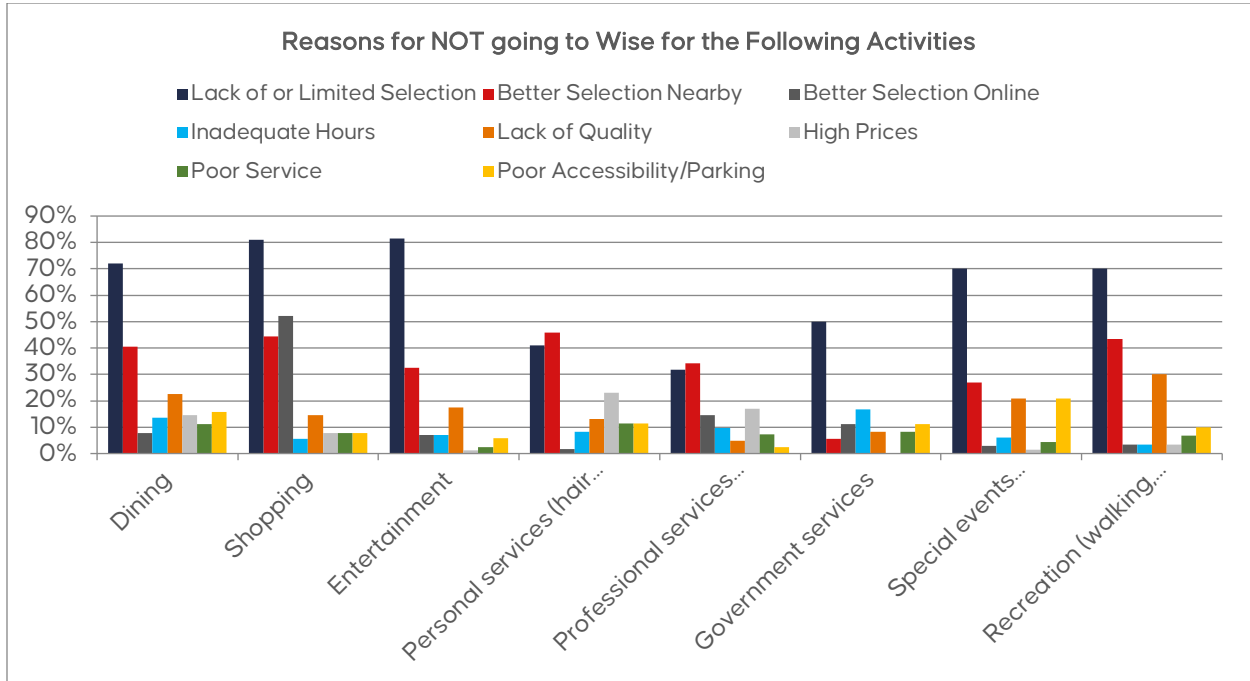
**Question 12: How often do you come to Wise for the following? For the purpose of this question, think about your activity in the Wise town limits including Downtown, Ridgeview Shopping Center, Wise County Plaza, and businesses along Woodland Drive, East and West Main, etc.**

Dining and shopping are the top reasons for coming to Wise.



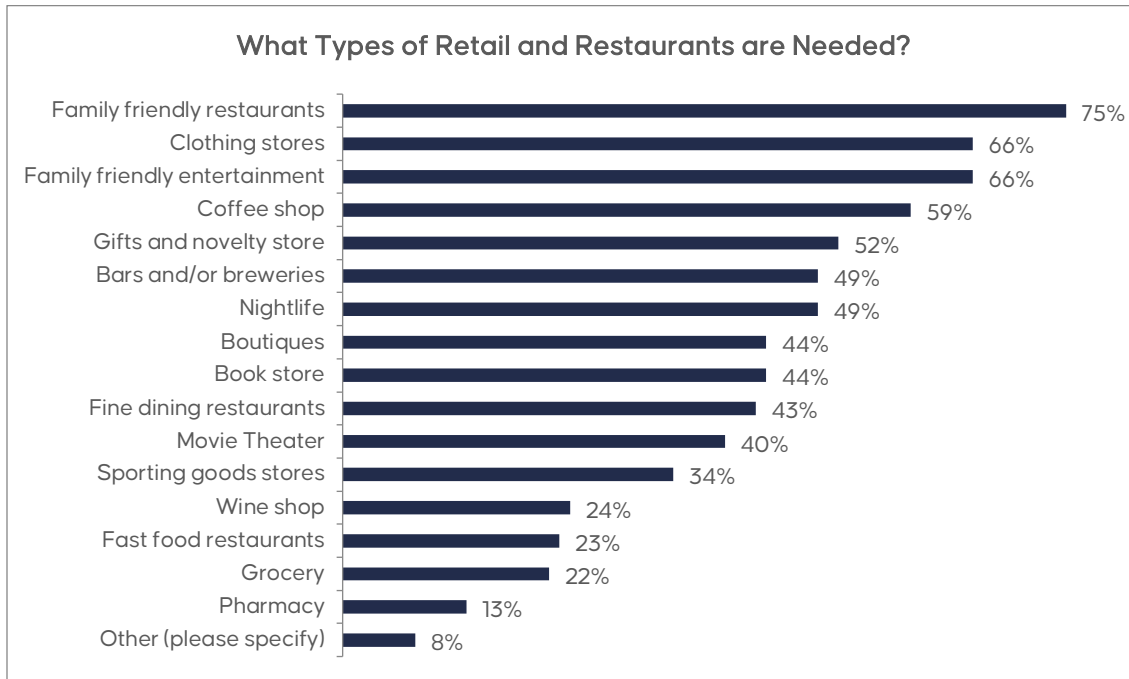
**Question 13: For what reasons do you NOT go to Wise for the following? (check all that apply) For the purpose of this question, think about your activity in the Wise town limits including Downtown, Ridgeview Shopping Center, Wise County Plaza, and businesses along Woodland Drive, East & West Main, etc.**

The main reason cited for not going to Wise for activities such as shopping and dining is lack of or limited selection, followed by having a better selection nearby.



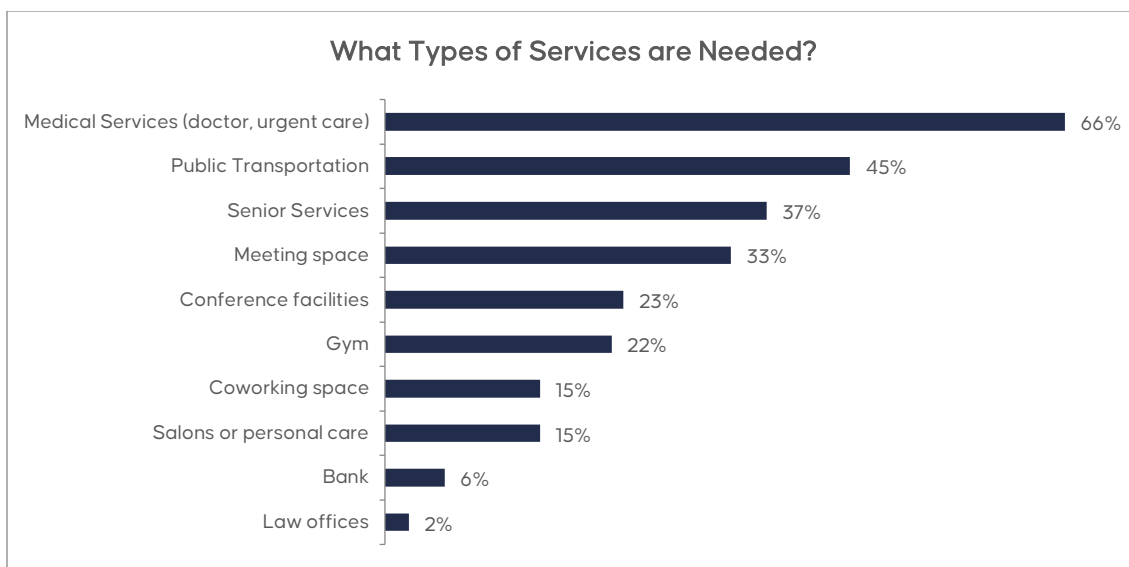
**Question 14: What types of retail and restaurant businesses are needed in the Town of Wise?**

Family friendly restaurants received the most responses, followed by clothing stores, family friendly entertainment, and coffee shops. Comments included additional ideas such as an antique store, ice cream shop, health foods, grocery options, sports bar, arcade and pool hall. One comment mentioned that it is important not to duplicate what is already available in Norton.



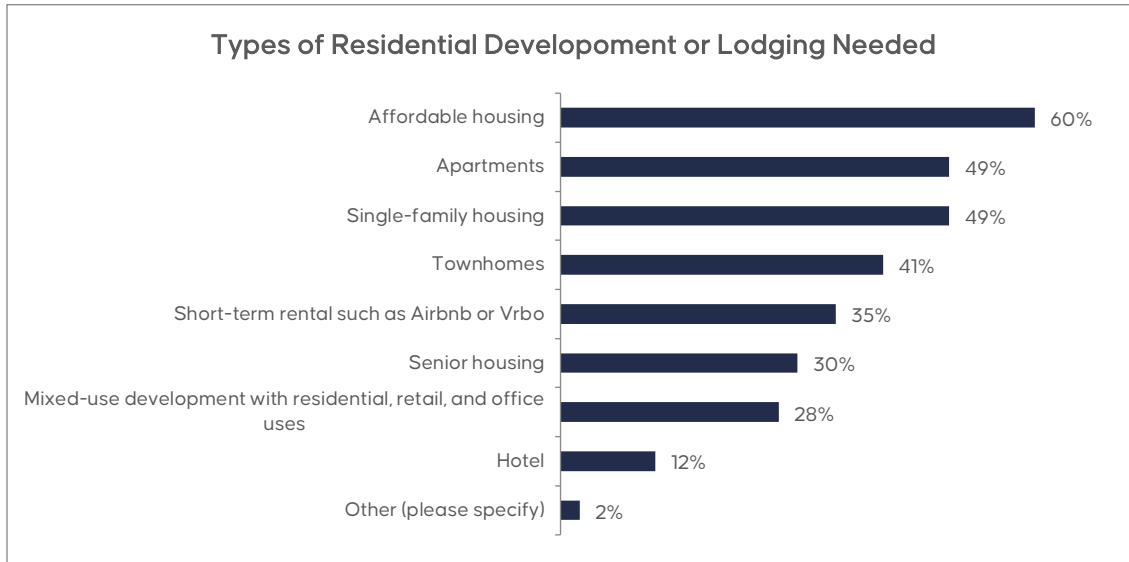
**Question 15: What types of services are needed in the Town of Wise?**

Medical services was the top response followed by public transportation, senior services and meeting space. Comments mention sports facility, YMCA, playground, senior citizen center, and new police department.



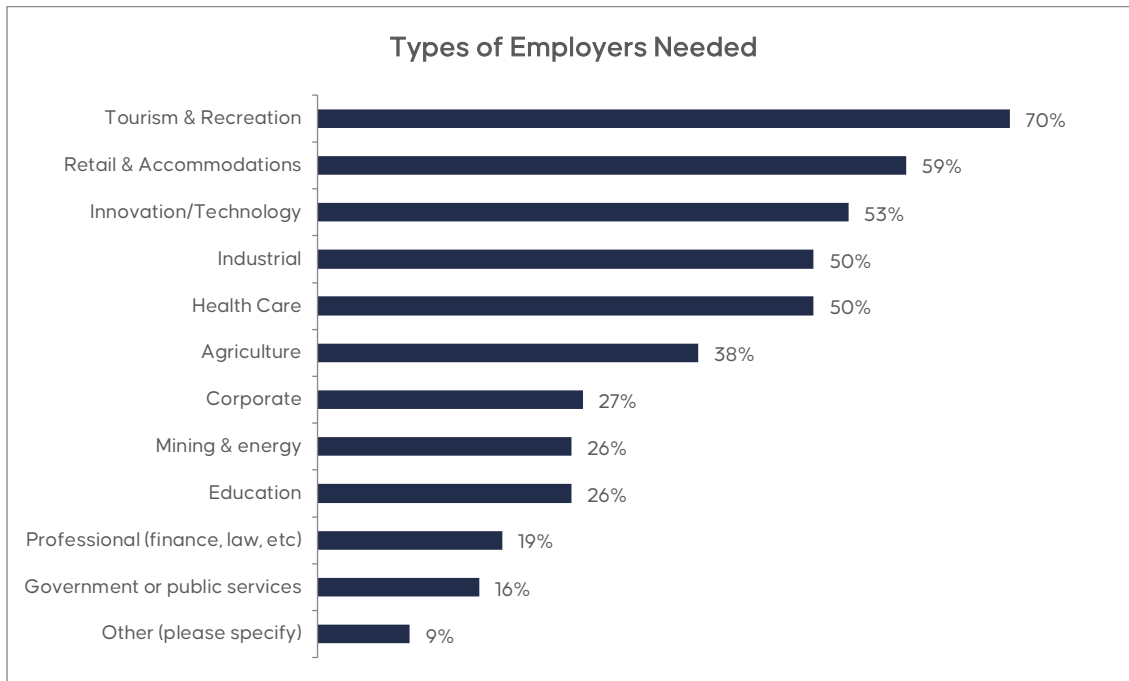
**Question 16: What types of residential development or lodging is needed in the Town of Wise?**

Affordable housing was the top response in regards to types of residential development needed.



**Question 17: What types of employers do you feel are needed in Wise?**

Tourism and recreation ranked the highest, followed by retail and accommodations, and innovation/technology.



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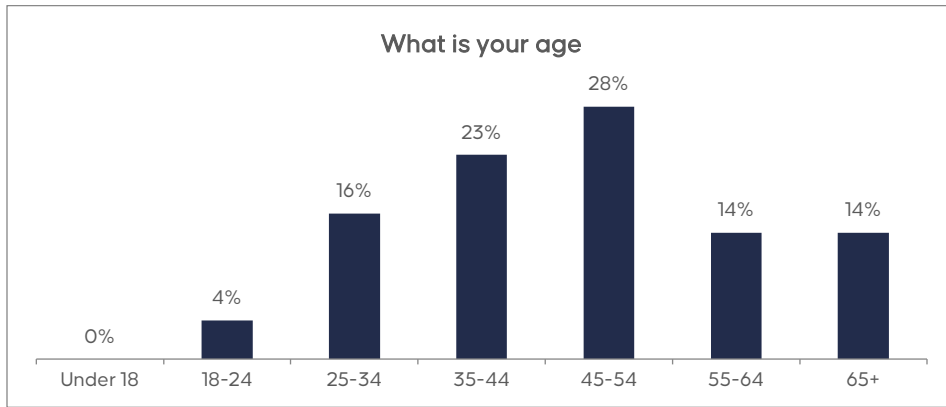
**Question 18: What is your vision for Wise in the next 10 years?**

Sample responses include:

- "Wise will grow at a modest pace alongside the university and the town's economy will diversify and strengthen."
- "Wise will become a place for all the region by providing excellent dining options, recreational opportunities, shopping venues by utilizing our natural beauty and enhancing what we have been given."
- "The University, as Wise's greatest economic asset will continue to expand. Regular and seasonal events that promote small businesses will occur, all while upholding our quality of life and historic charm."
- "Wise will be a fun, safe and all-inclusive place for my children to grow."
- "Wise will have a growing downtown with local shops, boutiques and the Inn thrives!"
- "Wise will be a more welcoming, pedestrian-friendly community where you can have a coffee and take a nice long walk - using crosswalks, walking paths, and trails."
- "Wise will have large companies with 100+ jobs and housing variety for those employees."
- "Wise will explode with opportunities, businesses, and new people. We will have true vibrancy and a sense of community."
- "To make it a true college town."
- "Would love to see more retail, restaurants, more coming together as a community, embracing the college and the supplies things for the college kids to do."
- "A more welcoming, pedestrian friendly downtown where you can go have a coffee and take a nice long walk; enforced crosswalks, crosswalk connecting library to the schools; walking paths."
- "To explode with opportunities, businesses and people. To have a true vibrancy and sense of community."
- "See it grow, prosper, and just be a good place to live and visit."

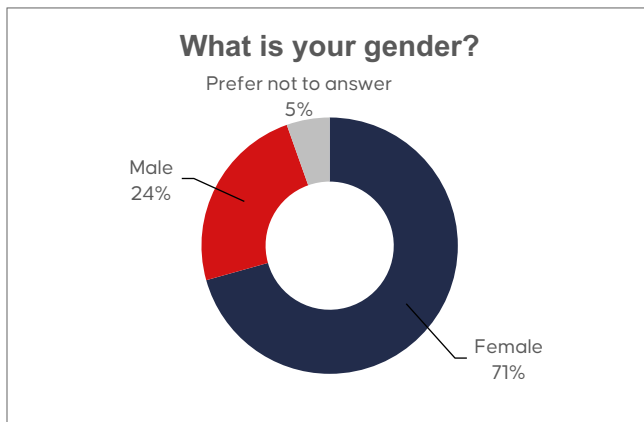
**Question 19: What is your age?**

The survey respondents represented a range of age groups.



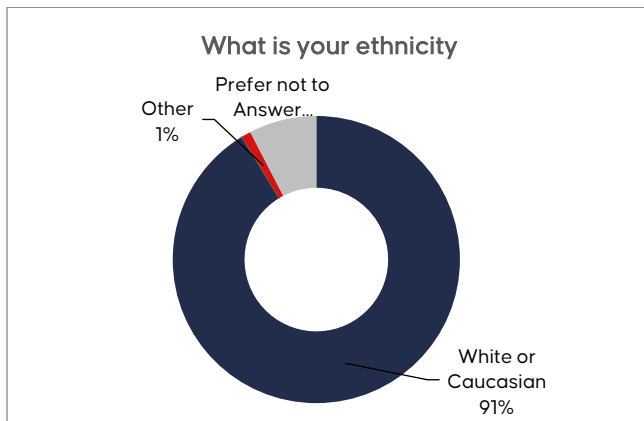
**Question 20: What is your gender?**

71% of survey respondents are female.



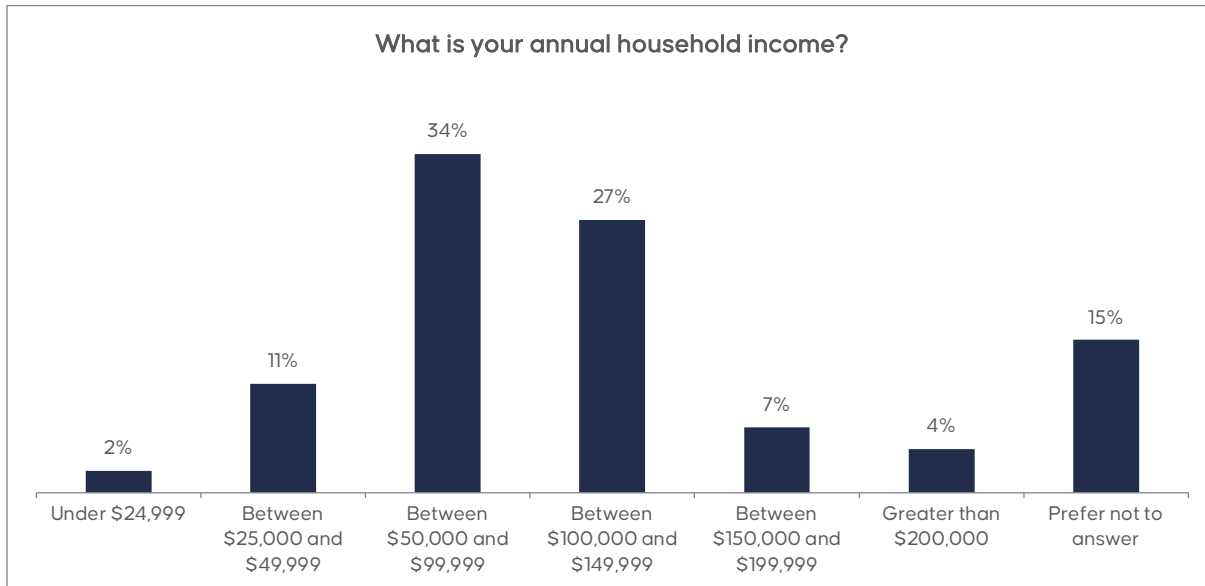
**Question 21: What is your ethnicity?**

91% of survey respondents identify as white or Caucasian.



### Question 22: What is your annual household income?

The survey captured responses from individuals with a range of household incomes.



### Question 23: Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to provide?

Sample responses include:

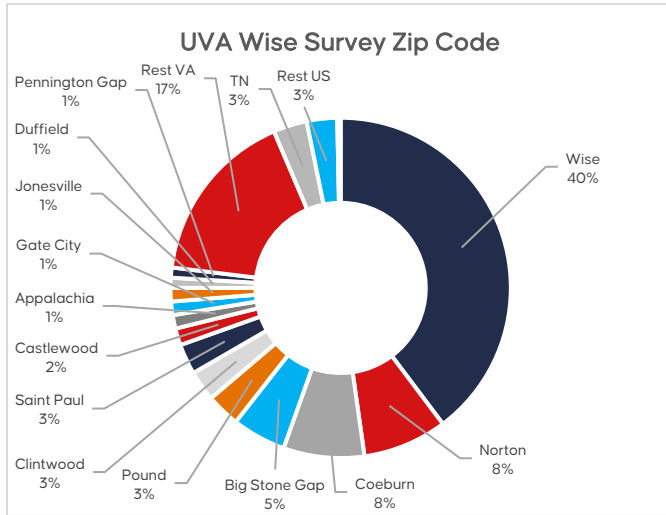
- "The college and the Town of Wise need to be working together."
- "Wise is being left behind, all of the towns are moving forward except Wise."
- "Providing community activities that allow for the town and UVA wise to be more connected is important. The two identities need to coexist not be seen as separate. One benefits the other."
- "We have so much potential to grow. We have had the same people running things for too long. I know we have some new faces and I have such high hopes for them and our future!"
- "1) We need a task force to actively recruit industry to this area. 2) The downtown could do a better job of providing appealing reasons to stay in the area to shop. I see that Big Stone Gap and Appalachia is going "all in" to provide fun activities that keep people returning. I would suggest closing off the downtown section (as long as there is an easy bypass) once a week during the evening inviting food trucks and street vendors. Perhaps the few downtown businesses could extend their business hours during that time."
- "We used to be the place to be. Now all the other towns are more attractive especially their new businesses and events. It's time for Wise to step up their game. Sadly, We are so behind."
- "Keeping a clean, strong infrastructure should hopefully accommodate a future upswing"
- "We have to have grants to help business owners and those wanting to open businesses. We have to have the support of council. We have to get out of this mindset from the 70s and 80s"

## UVA Wise Survey Results

The same survey that was distributed to the community was deployed to UVA Wise students, faculty and staff from August 5<sup>th</sup> to September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The UVA Wise survey engaged 383 participants.

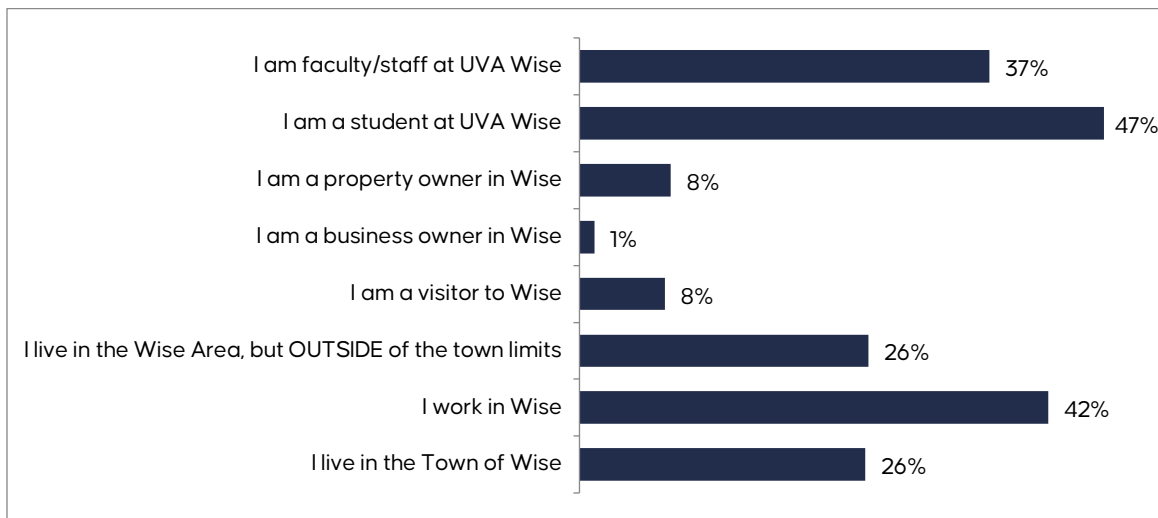
### Question 1: What is your home residence zip code?

Compared to the community survey, the UVA Wise survey had a greater reach in terms of participant zip code. However, the vast majority of participants were still local, with 40% living in Wise zip codes and 77% living in the LENOWISCO region (Lee County, Norton, Wise County, and Scott County).



### Question 2: Mark all of the below that describe you.

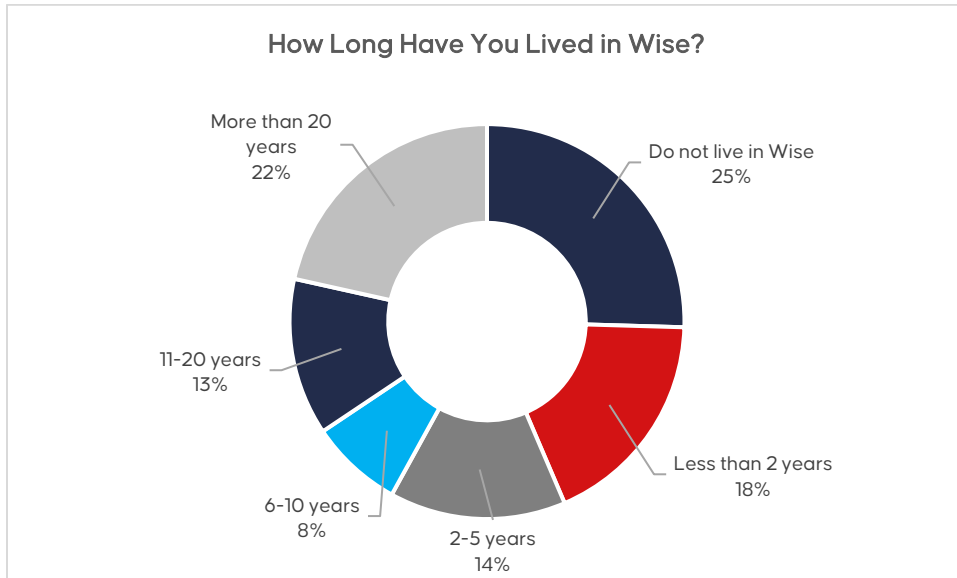
37% of respondents are faculty/staff at UVA Wise and 47% are UVA Wise students.





**Question 3: How long have you lived in the Wise area?**

The UVA Wise survey captured both long-term residents, newcomers, and people living outside of the Wise area.



**Question 4: What specific places (destinations, restaurants, businesses, etc) within Wise would you recommend to a person visiting the community for the first time?**





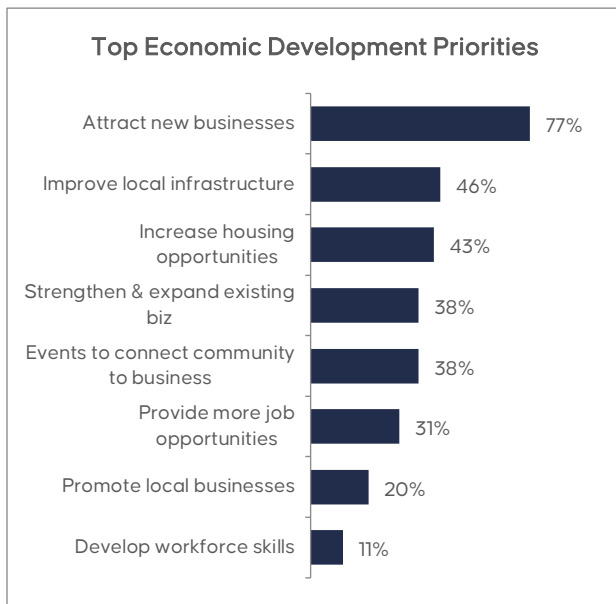
**Question 7: What is Wise’s greatest area of economic need?**

The following themes emerged when respondents were asked about Wise’s greatest economic needs:

- **Businesses:** nightlife, bars, breweries, entertainment, student-friendly businesses
- **Recreation and Activity:** activities for students, bowling, mall, community recreation center, sports facility, artisan center, trails
- **Employment:** better paying jobs, industry, diversity of jobs
- **Housing:** affordable housing for students and non-students, more housing options
- **College Town:** embrace the college town
- **Vibrancy:** create a more walkabout downtown with more shopping, dining, jobs and things to do

**Question 8: What are your top 3 priorities for economic development in Wise?**

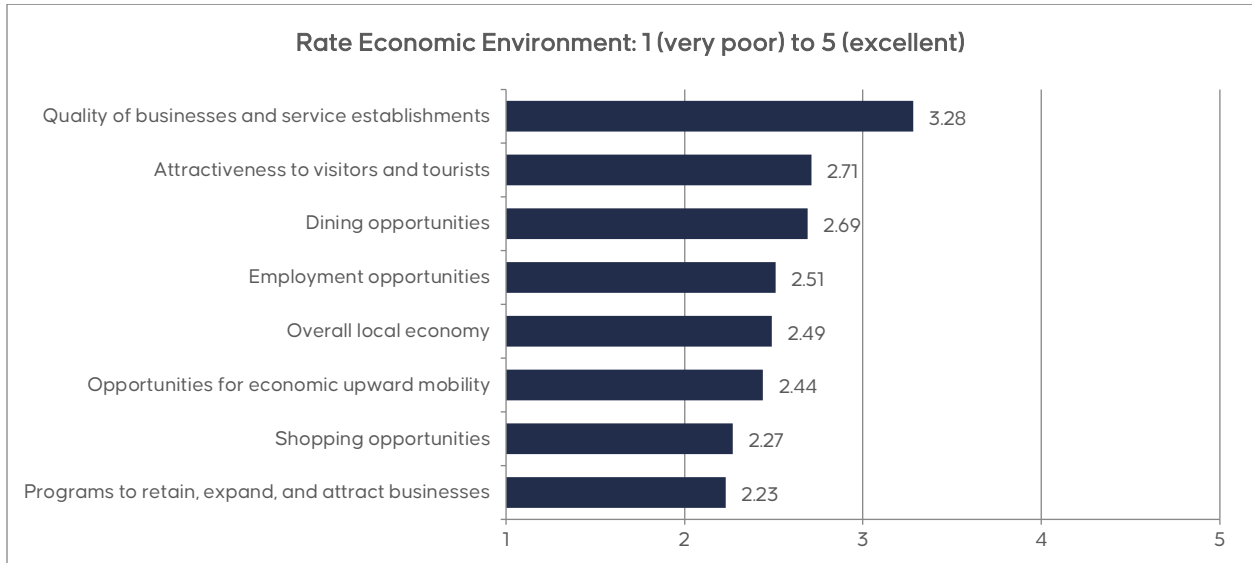
Attracting new businesses was identified as the top economic priority following by improving local infrastructure and increasing housing opportunities.



- Other/Comments**
- Housing is biggest constraint on growth
  - More apartments are needed
  - Become a College Town
  - Events will make us a more thriving place
  - All of these are important

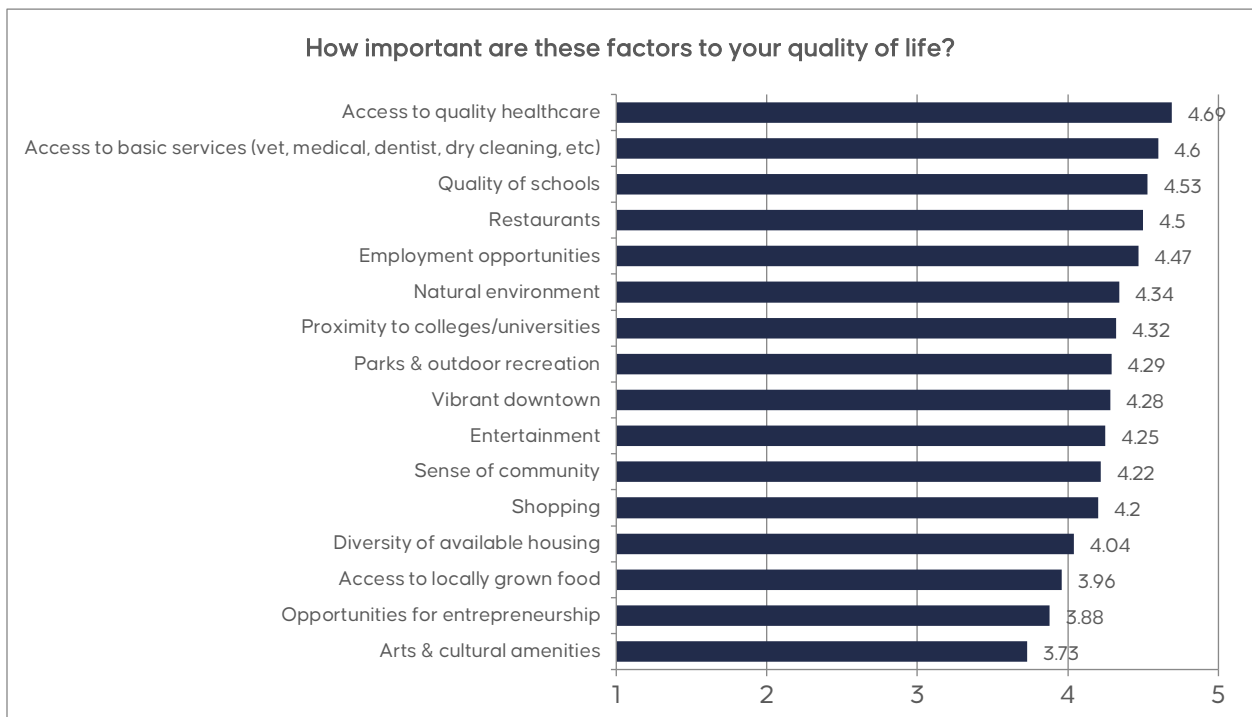
**Question 9: Please rate each of the following aspects of the economic environment in Wise on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being Very Poor and 5 being Excellent.**

The quality of businesses and service establishments rated the highest, while shopping opportunities and programs to retain, expand and attract businesses rated the lowest.



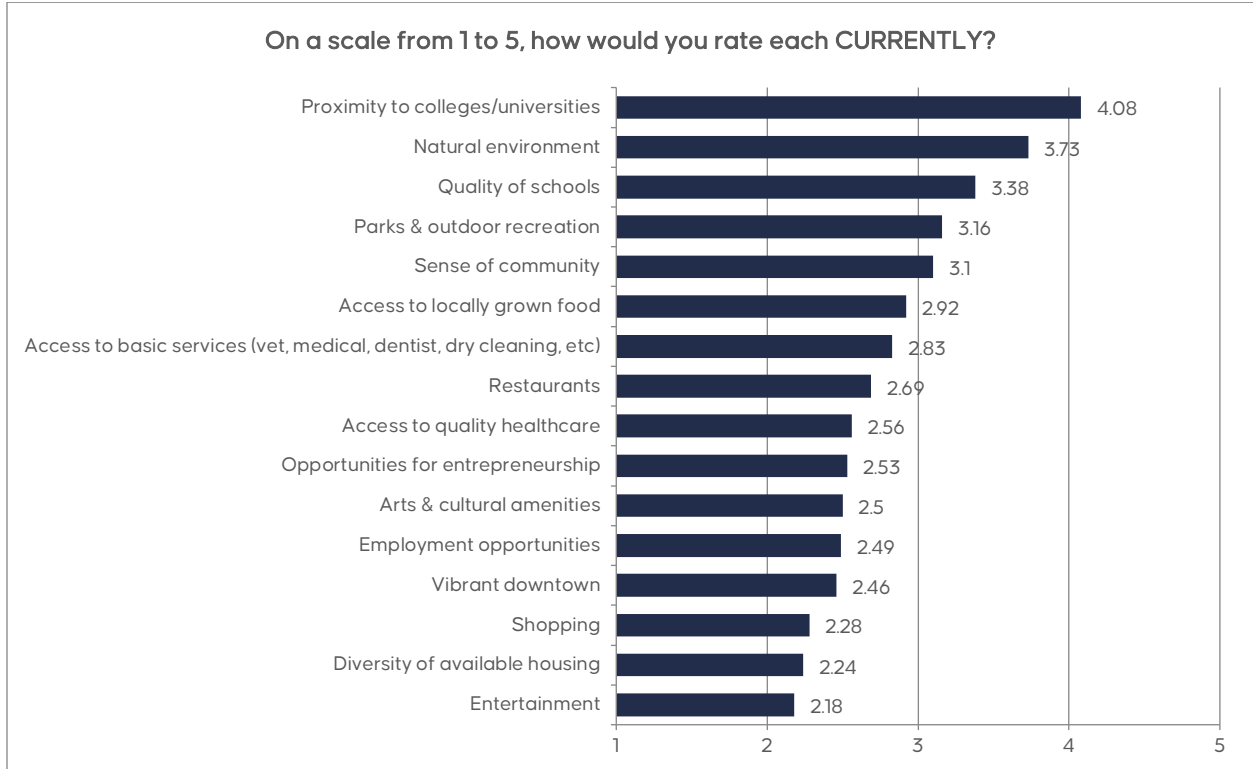
**Question 10: On a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being Not At All Important and 5 Extremely Important, how important are the factors below to your quality of life?**

Access to quality healthcare, access to basic services, and quality of schools rated the highest in terms of importance.



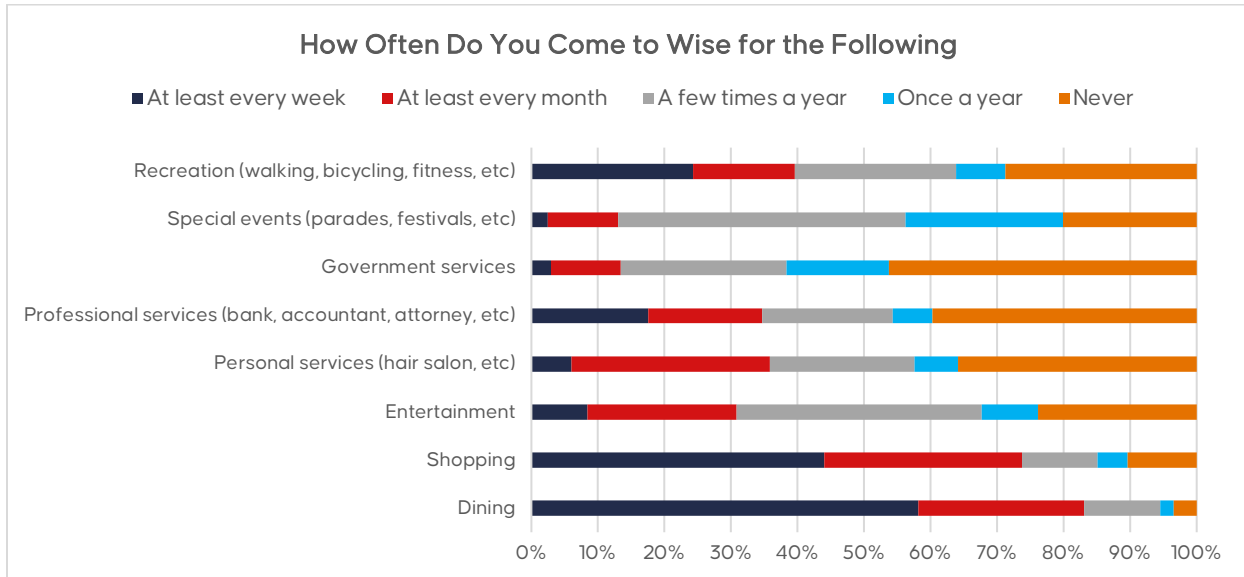
**Question 11: On a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being Very Poor and 5 being Excellent, how would you rate each of these factors in WISE?**

Proximity to colleges/universities, natural environment, and quality of schools rated the highest while shopping, diversity of available housing, and entertainment rated the lowest.



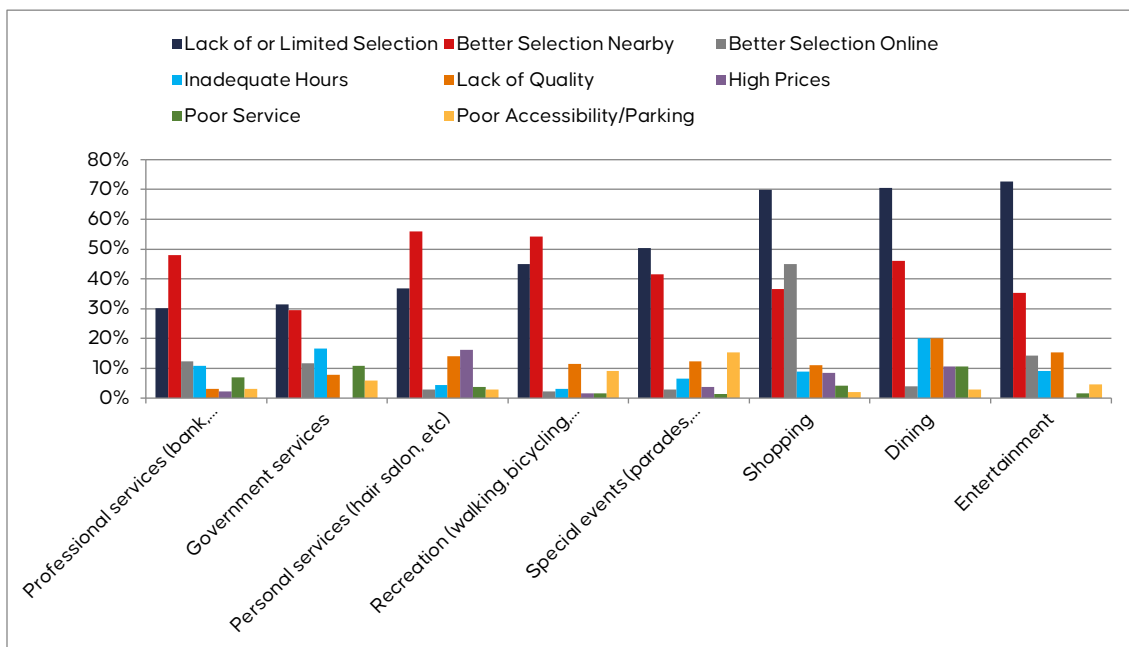
**Question 12: How often do you come to Wise for the following? For the purpose of this question, think about your activity in the Wise town limits including Downtown, Ridgeview Shopping Center, Wise County Plaza, and businesses along Woodland Drive, East and West Main, etc.**

Survey respondents most often come to Wise for dining, shopping, and recreation.



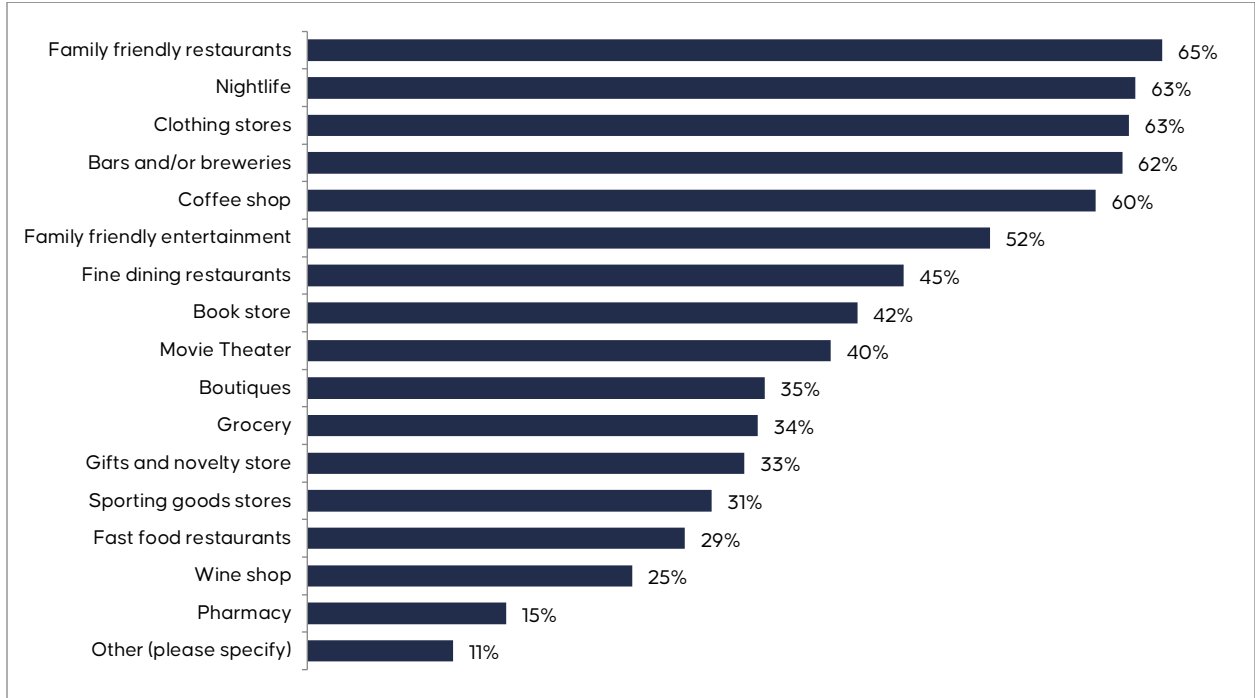
**Question 13: For what reasons do you NOT go to Wise for the following? (check all that apply) For the purpose of this question, think about your activity in the Wise town limits including Downtown, Ridgeview Shopping Center, Wise County Plaza, and businesses along Woodland Drive, East & West Main, etc.**

Survey respondents cite lack of selection and better selection nearby as the top two reasons for not frequenting Wise for the following activities



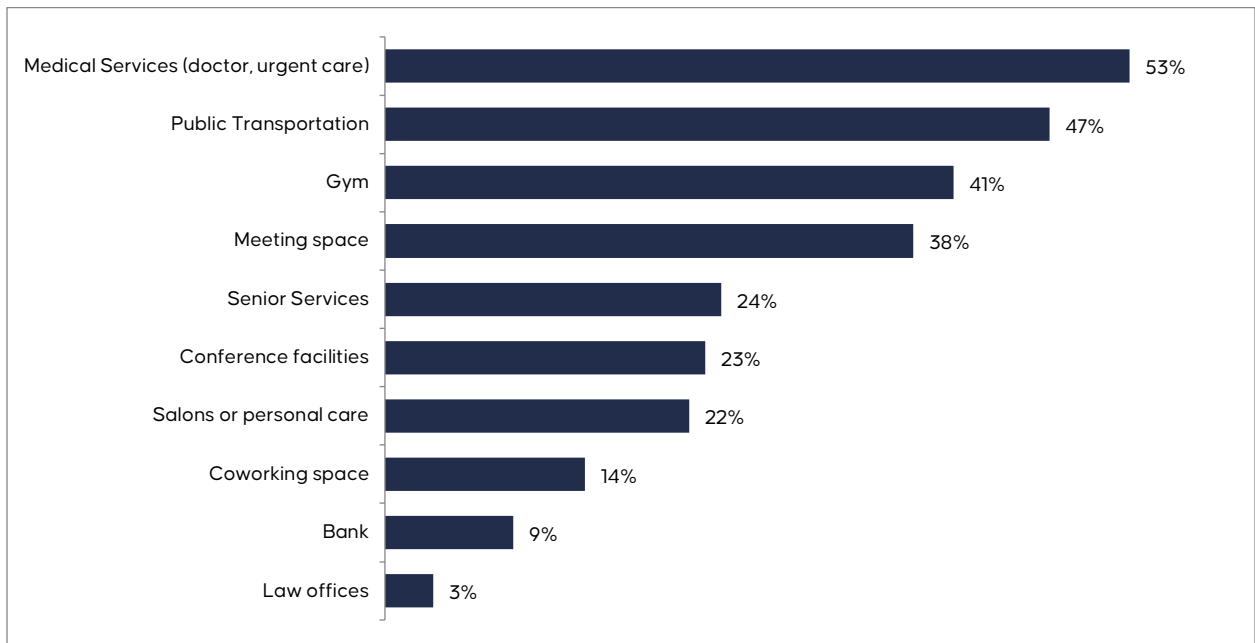
**Question 14: What types of retail and restaurant businesses are needed in the Town of Wise?**

Family-friendly restaurants, nightlife, clothing stores, bars and breweries, and coffee shops were the top requested retail and restaurant businesses.



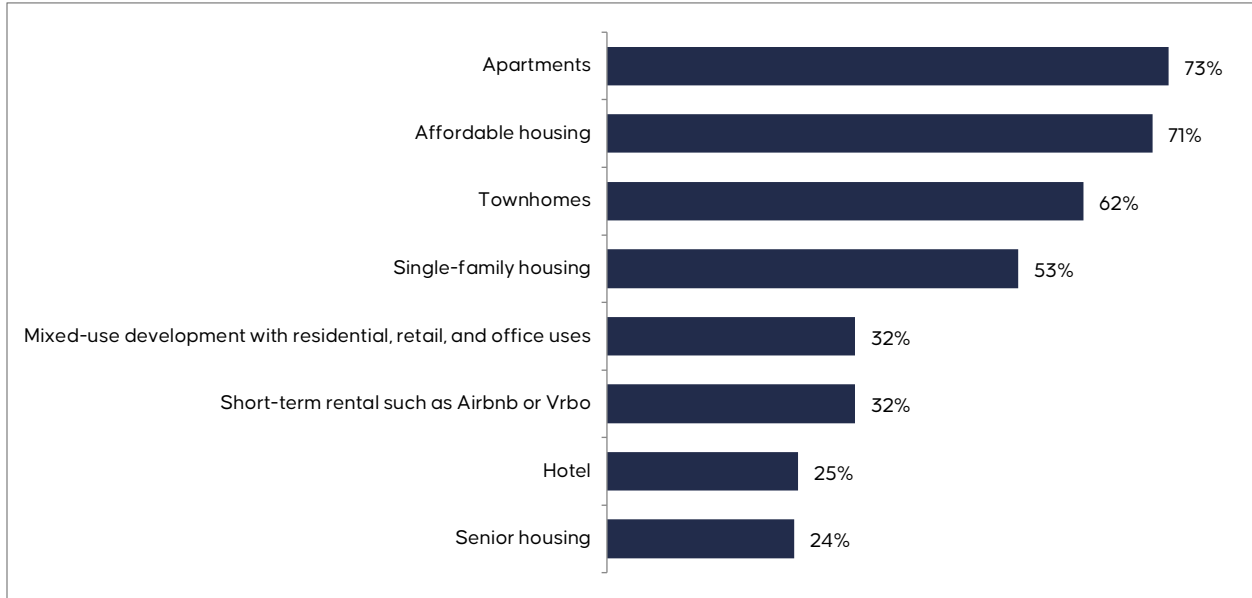
**Question 15: What types of services are needed in the Town of Wise?**

Medical services, public transportation, gym and meeting space were the top services mentioned.



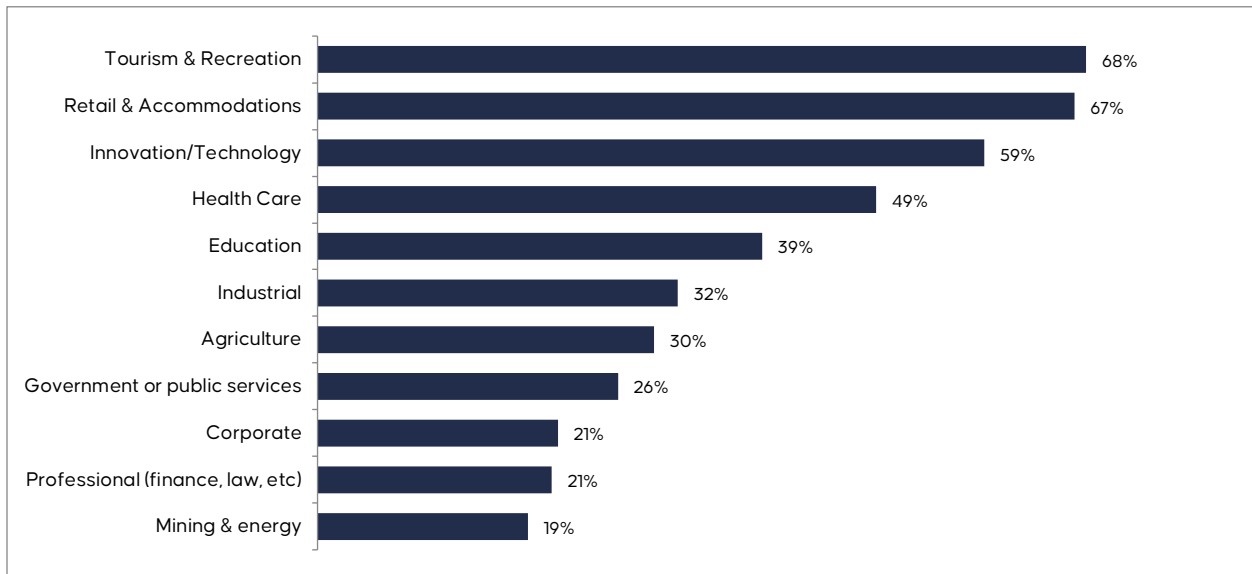
**Question 16: What types of residential development or lodging is needed in the Town of Wise?**

Survey respondents ranked apartments, affordable housing, and townhomes highest among the types of residential development and lodging needed in Wise.



**Question 17: What types of employers do you feel are needed in Wise?**

Survey respondents rated tourism and recreation, retail and accommodations, and innovation and technology as the top types of employers needed in Wise.





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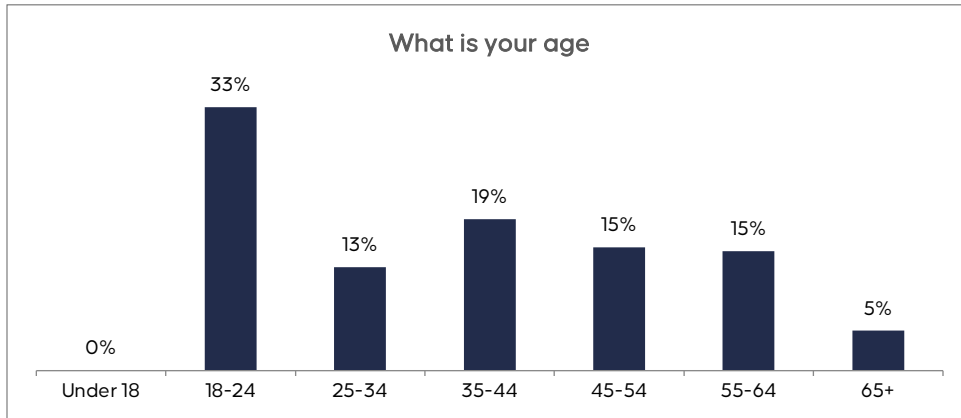
**Question 18: What is your vision for Wise in the next 10 years?**

Samples responses include:

- "Fully embrace the idea of being a college town with places for students to visit, hangout. Student friendly businesss, more events that students will enjoy."
- "Become a college town like Boone, NC."
- "Downtown becomes a local entertainment hub for surrounding areas & visitors, a destination for socializing & family fun - dining, coffee, having a drink - where young and old gather for fun."
- "Wise partners with UVA Wise to create strong base of educated citizens who use their knowledge to improve community."
- "Wise becomes a true college town with a vibrant downtown. People are walking up and down the streets, shopping and visiting restaurants."
- "A town that has fully embraced its setting here in the Appalachian Mountains, works with great intensity to establish and maintain connections with UVA Wise, its students, faculty and staff by providing rich memories of their times spent in the area so that each will always have a place to return to rekindle connections and make new ones."
- "Wise becomes a viable option for all to consider a place to live, work, and play. A vibrant community with community festivals, educational activities, music and theater events, workshops open to community and college such as painting, working with clay, woodworking, etc., walking trails, bike trails sidewalks and crosswalks from one end of town to the other, a connection from the town to the college campus."

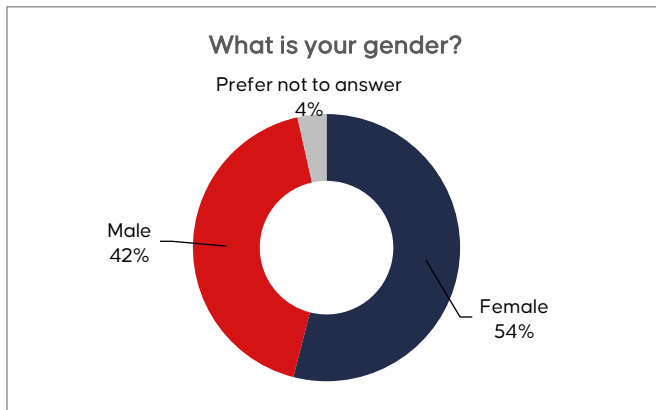
**Question 19: What is your age?**

The respondents to the UVA Wise survey were younger overall than the respondents to the community survey. 33% of respondents were age 18-24.

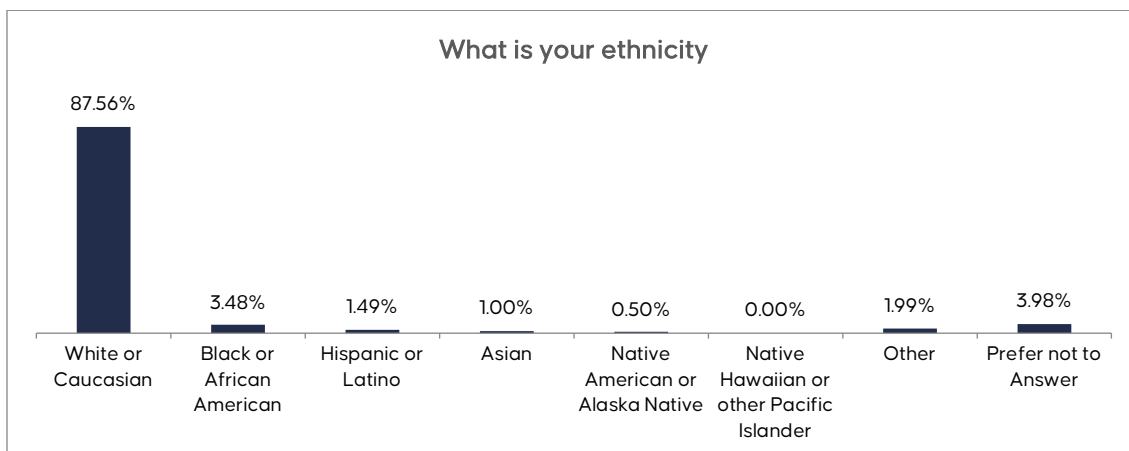


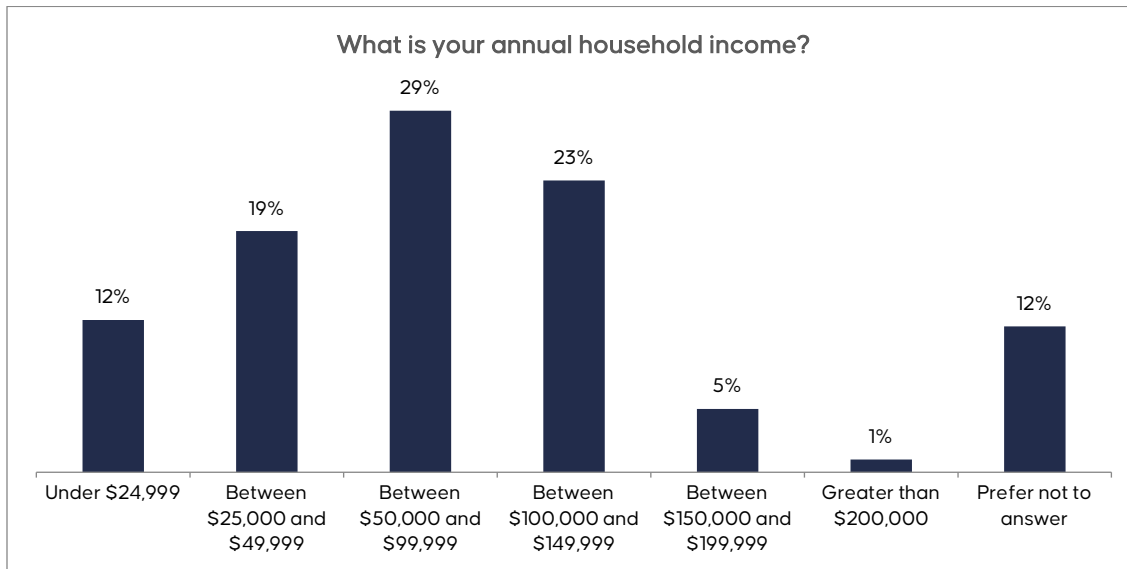
**Question 20: What is your gender?**

Survey respondents were 54% female and 42% male.



**Question 21: What is your ethnicity?**



**Question 22: What is your annual household income?****Question 23: Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to provide?**

Samples responses include:

- "Embrace the university and offer areas for the students. You will be amazed at what will happen."
- "Thanks for doing this. It's very needed if this place want to grow and thrive."
- "Let's move forward, looking for more opportunities for our community. Times are a changing."
- "Wise should follow the examples provided by Big Stone Gap and Norton. Invest in ecotourism and provide infrastructure to support the influx of tourists. Focus on the natural beauty of the area, especially for things like motorcycle groups etc."
- "UVA Wise is one of the biggest assets to the town of wise. It brings in new people both students and faculty from across the country and sometime internationally. The ability to work with the to provide the community with its needs is essential."
- "I hope to see Wise and the surrounding counties improve. Anything that can be done to bring in new businesses, attractions and opportunities would be wonderful. Wise has potential to be an amazing place."
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