

# Watkins/Bennett Area Vision Study

**SURVEY #1 RESULTS**

**JANUARY 2021**



**ARAPAHOE COUNTY**  
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

**WATKINS/BENNETT**  
AREA VISION STUDY

# Overview and Questions

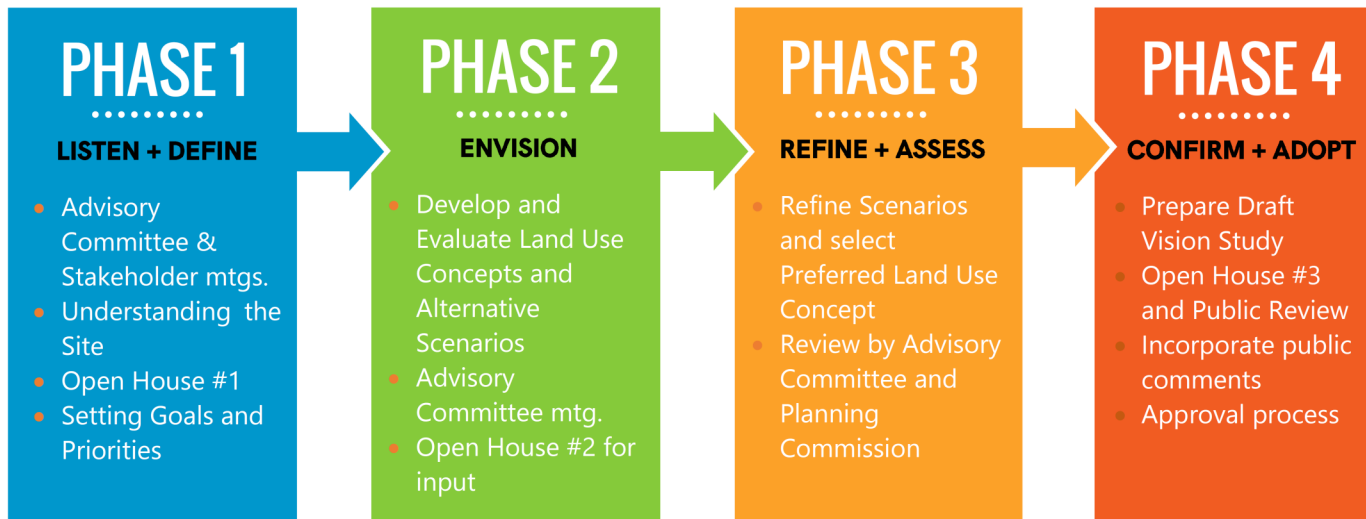
The purpose of the **Watkins/Bennett Area Vision Study** is to develop, with the community, a concept for future land use and transportation for the 42-square-mile study area. The vision study will guide Arapahoe County's policies and daily decisions for a period of approximately 25 years.

The planning process consists of four phases, as shown in the graphic below. In **Phase 1, called Listen and Define**, the first of three public meetings was held virtually on December 9, 2020, to introduce the public to the study and existing conditions in the area, and ask for their comments through an online survey. The survey was open for four weeks between December 9, 2020 and January 6, 2021.

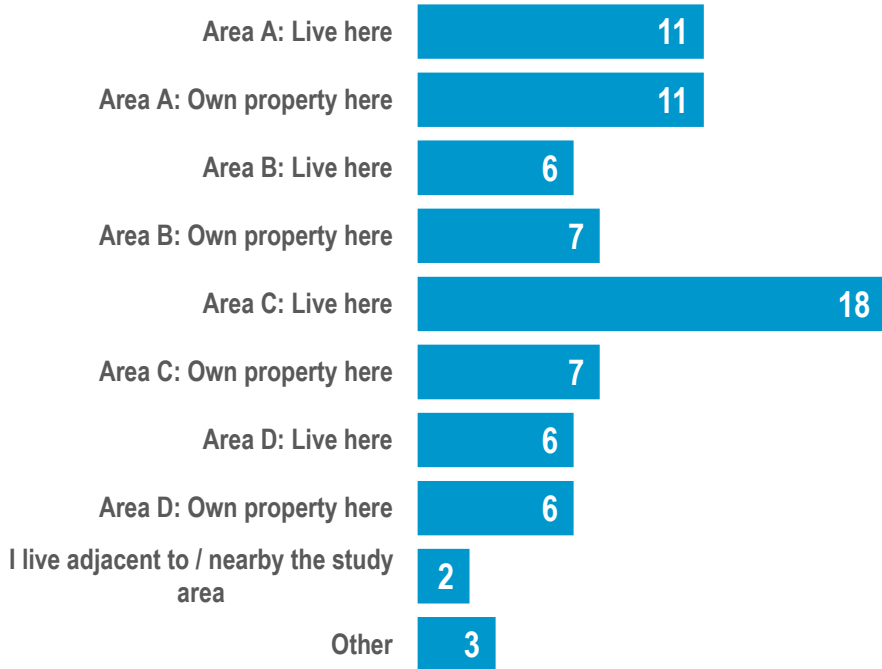
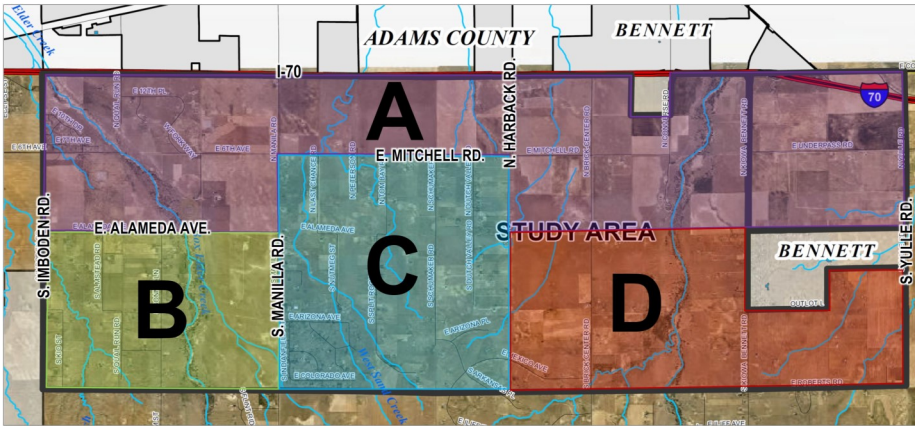
The purpose of **Phase 1** was to focus on listening to the residents and property owners, to understand their values, perception of issues, and what

they would like to see happen for the long-term in the study area. These survey comments will help define the guiding principles, which will in turn inform the land use concepts as they are developed in **Phase 2**.

A total of 77 people participated in the survey and this report presents the survey results. The intent of the survey was to pose questions so that the project team could distill the different concerns and opinions of the respondents. Many of the questions were open-ended to provide an opportunity for commentary on issues, concerns and suggestions.



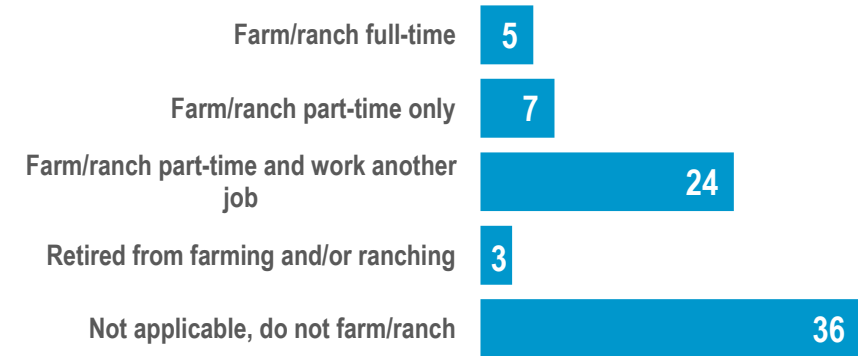
**Q1. The study area is outlined in the map. Please indicate which zone you live or own property in.**



To start off the survey, we were curious in which area the respondents live and own property. The majority of the respondents live in Area C, the central portion of the study area.

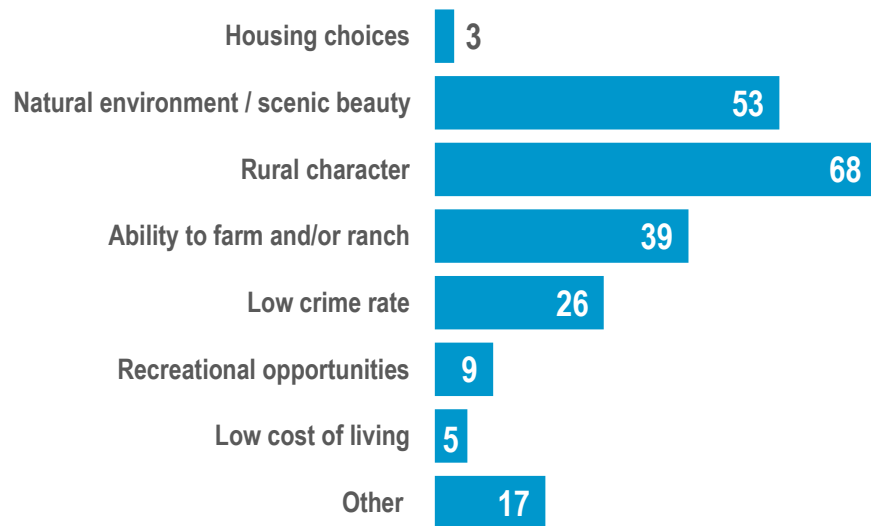
- A few people responded as "Other", and they indicated that they:
- Were interested in buying property in the area, or
  - Ranch in the study area but live outside of the study area.

**Q2. If you farm or ranch in this area, what best describes you?**



The majority of the respondents (36) do not farm or ranch, but a significant number (24) do farm or ranch on a part-time basis and have another job.

**Q3. What top THREE items from the list below do you value most about living / owning property in this area?**

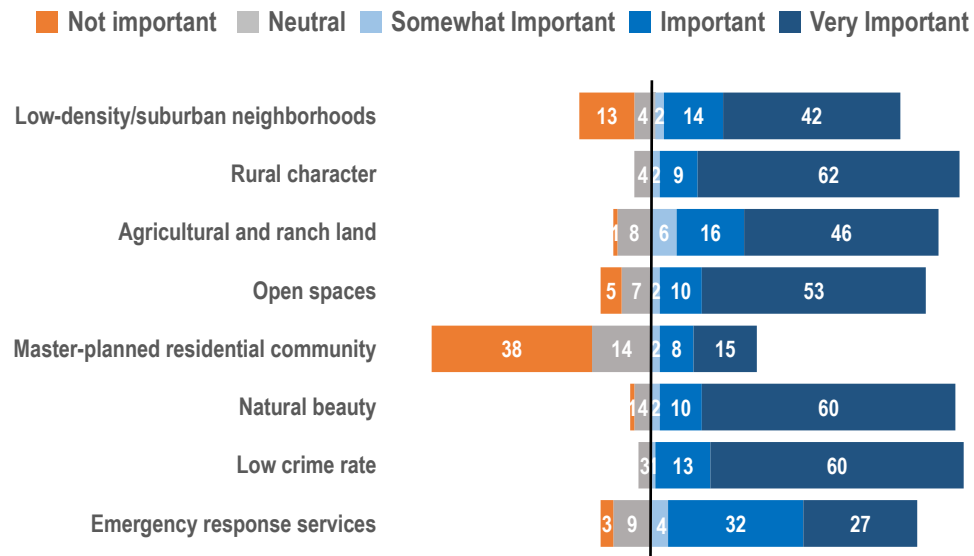


Rural character was the identified by the respondents as the most important thing they value about living or owning property in the area, and this is followed by the related appreciation of the natural environment / scenic beauty of the area, and the ability to farm and / or ranch .

There was a range of responses to the "Other" category:

- Investment value
- Peace and quiet, privacy
- Away from development
- Opportunities for first time homeowners
- Away from the city and dense housing projects
- Small school
- Ability to have animals/grow food for personal use
- Growth and development potential.

**Q4. How important to you are the following characteristics of this area?**



Through this question, we wanted to better understand the relative importance of characteristics in the study area using a five-point scale to prioritize the responses. In the chart, characteristics that are somewhat important, important, and very important are right of the black line, and neutral and not important characteristics are to the left of the black line.

Rural character was identified again as a very important characteristic, along with the natural beauty of the area and low crime rate.

More urban development, through master-planned residential communities or low-density / suburban neighborhoods are the two characteristics that were not considered important characteristics to the respondents.



- Having neighbors no more than 1/4 mile away.
- It is better for personal reasons because we were able to build a new barn, horse shed, fencing, etc. In the bigger picture our area remains the same rural area as 2010 which is the most important to us. We frequently comment on how blessed we are to be living in this rural masterpiece of the world. We can see the mountains from Pikes Peak to Longs Peak. The darkness at night allows for impeccable star viewing.
- None, to much county involvement
- More services...better commercial/grocery shopping and more restaurants. Good road maintenance and snow plowing. Improved internet services and fiber through ESRTA. Natural gas service has been made available down the roads.
- Paved roads
- Better finances
- Economic upturn
- Just staying in a country atmosphere.
- Things have stayed the same and we don't have a lot of noise and people and we in my area anyway all looking out for one another.
- It is over populated, too much traffic, the way of life from 10 year ago is completely destroyed.
- Road has been paved.
- We are right under 10 years. This rural life has allowed my husband and I to fulfill our childhood dreams, the sense of safety and low crime especially in 2020 is invaluable. My anxiety is no longer what it was in the city

**Q7. If quality of life is worse than 10 years ago, tell us why. What changes concern you?**



The following comments were made about what factors have made the quality of life worse for the respondent:

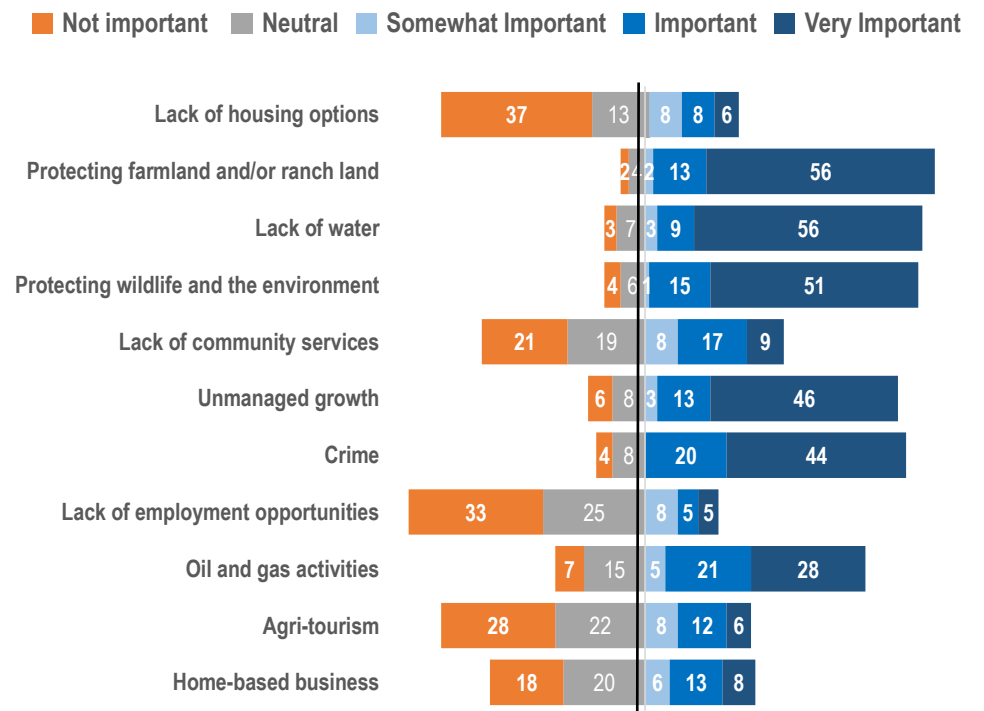
- Over development.
- Increase in population.
- Growing population. More people equals more crime, crowded places, traffic.
- Building houses and contributing ZERO to support schools has over filled the schools, classrooms and these kids are getting a terrible education.
- Low end housing, houses filled with multi family's. Concerns with water, crime, and congestion.
- The light pollution from all the building in Bennett proper hinders start gazing compared to 10 years ago

- How big town of Bennett is becoming. We hate the fact that city slickers are over taking our rural town.
- Way to much traffic with not enough access roads - 6th and Manilla
- Too much growth in housing developments. Do not want housing developments in this area.
- Too much development and stress on the water
- Too much traffic and people who want to live rural but want to bring the city with them.
- More criminal activities
- Moved to current address 20 years ago from a nice but noisy neighborhood in Wheat Ridge CO and the high density or Metro-Area. That is what developers want to create out here for love of money only.
- There is too much traffic. We used to be able to move our cattle to another pasture a few miles away on foot and now we have to trailer them. It is also dangerous to move any farm equipment with all of the traffic. The people moving out to the area go very fast and do not respect the agricultural community.
- I have noticed a lot more crime in the last several years also it seems to be that they're a lot more people moving in and foreclosing on their houses in very short time. A big concern I have is all the industrial business that seems to be coming in. My concern is industrial normally brings low income workers and low income housing which I am concerned will devalue our area significantly
- Traffic at the I70/Bennett exit is much worse.
- Deterioration of ag lands vs. commercial by planning department  
Poor zoning control  
Lack of law enforcement  
Lack of affordable housing  
Political disregard for rural residents
- Connectivity is becoming an increasingly difficult situation. Its very poor.
- Bad roads not kept up. Too much building not enough water!
- Don't need any more people out here, crime will follow more people
- Not much planned development. What has been industrial and oil and gas which detracts from the natural character.
- Increasing traffic, increasing crime, trash everywhere in Bennett by

the King Soopers

- Too many people and higher crime rate
- New people moving into the area aggressively oppose livestock and frequently trespass onto agricultural land and neighboring properties.
- Way too many semi trucks travel Kiowa-Bennett road now– avoiding I-25 congestion presumably. Town of Bennett appears to be allowing unbridled growth with cheap housing developments.

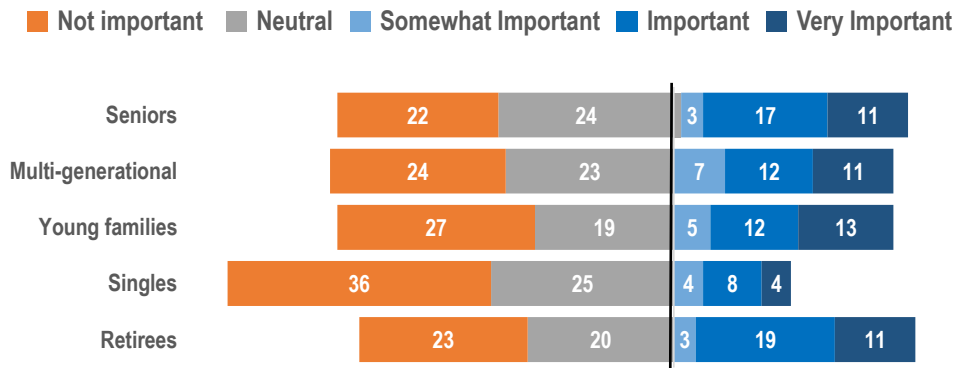
### Q8. Think about your quality of life for the next 20 years. How important is it for the County to address the following topics?



The topics that are considered most important for the County to address are the protection of farmland and ranch land, the availability of water, and the protection of wildlife and the environment. Unmanaged growth and crime are also topics that rated high.

On the left side of the chart, two topics were considered not important —the lack of housing options and the lack of employment opportunities. Other employment opportunities, agri-tourism and home-based businesses, also were considered not very important.

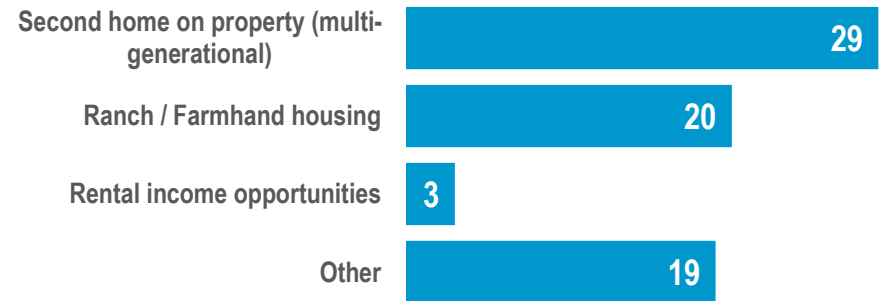
### Q9. How important is it to have housing options to attract and keep a diverse spectrum of residents?



The responses to this question indicate that having a range of housing options is a topic that the majority of the respondents either felt neutral on, or considered as not important.

Looking at the right side of the chart, the two housing types that had the most cumulative positive responses were housing for seniors and housing for retirees.

### Q10. What type of alternative housing options might be needed in this area?



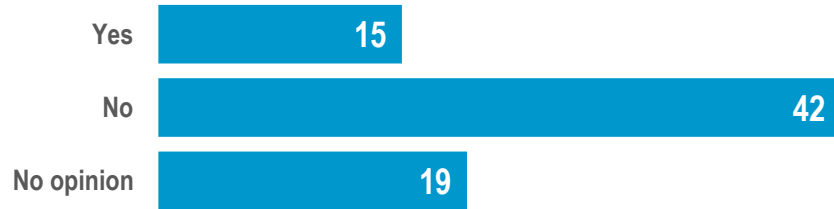
We wanted to discover what the respondents thought about alternative housing options, such as a second home on a property (also called an accessory dwelling unit). This was considered to be a housing option suitable for the study area, along with ranch or farmhand housing.

The following were identified in the "Other" category:

- Housing for first time buyers
- Apartments for low income hourly wage earners
- Small lot rural to estate size suburban
- Family housing.



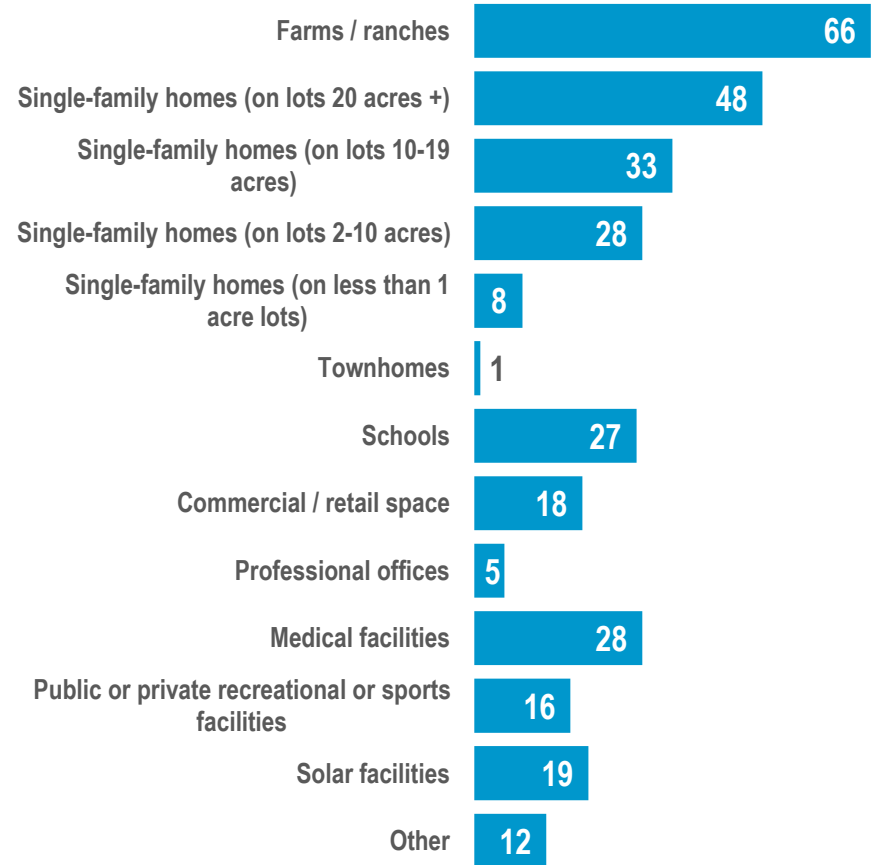
**Q11. Do you think there should be more employment opportunities in the study area? If you pick yes, please indicate what types of employment.**



The majority of respondents (42) were not in favor of more employment opportunities in the study area. Those who thought there should be more employment opportunities (15) identified the following types of employment:

- Manufacturing and industrial
- Retail
- Education/Recreation
- I'd like see growth both in agricultural and tech jobs. We cannot ignore how important local farming is and destroy it looking to satisfy the needs of a modern economy.
- Commercial
- Home Based Business
- Jobs to assist kids going to school to earn money and keep out of trouble!
- Employment for younger residents
- Enterprise zone(s).

**Q12. What five types of land uses do you feel are most appropriate for the study area?**



The following were identified in the "Other" category:

- Manufacturing & industrial along I-70
- Natural open space, public or private
- Single-family homes on 40 acre lots
- Preserving open space for farming and ranching.



**Q14. What are the most pressing issues in the study area?**



Specific comments were:

- Lack of renewable water supplies. Developments that use groundwater are not sustainable,
- Keeping traffic and urban growth from encroaching on the area. Too many students in schools, too much traffic as it is, and crime is up ticking. Water is an important issue.
- Attainable housing
- Services to meet the growing populations. Paved roads and highway access.
- Traffic flow with the increase in housing and people going to work at the same time. Easy flow off and on I-70 with truck traffic. I-70 this year had way to many accidents and deaths. With more and more people we should also think about a medical center.
- I'm worried that the County is going to try and crowd our rural area (which is why we live her to begin with) and ruin what we have. We just want to stay small and spread out.

- Keeping the small town feel and not building developments like Prosper and Sky Ranch. Keeping commercial businesses on the north side of the highway and allowing the study area to be for living, farming/ranching recreating. The water situation is scary especially when most of us on the south side are on well systems.
- Water, minimize the oil/gas development impact, maintaining adequate public services to meet current populations before adding more population, Roads & Infrastructure
- Growth and lack of school/retail options
- Access to water Reduced Oil/Gas drilling
- Water! Where is the water going to come from to support the building that is happening around us now?! Part of the delight of having a 35 acre parcel is I know I can contribute to utilizing minimal water to sustain the plants and wildlife I support here.
- Division of 35 acres lots and roads 6th and Manilla
- I think the most pressing issues are already about the conflict between increased use vs rural character. For example, people using their large lots as a party venue, turning it into semi truck parking facilities, and other uses that are not allowed but difficult to enforce. Gun use is also an issue as the lot size restrictions for personal firing range use is much looser in Arapahoe than other counties, like Douglas County. This kind of tension and problems will increase as density of homes, and more mixed use occurs.
- No further growth. We bought land for the purpose of not living in urban setting or housing development nearby.
- Too many housing developments
- Water!!!!
- We do not want crowded residential housing. Houses need to be on 5 or more acres. The space is what makes it special. Its an easy commute to Denver. So we don't want commercial building.
- Urban sprawl
- Rise in crime. Water conservation and the need to keep farmland and open spaces.
- WATER and the funding for Bennett Schools
- We live in Watkins Farm which is identified as Urban Reserve in the





businesses to build right at the exits makes sense.

- Equine facilities, lessons are a huge potential out here. It's close enough to the city to be accessible to people who are living urban but want to ride a horse. But in order for those kind of facilities to really thrive, public riding trails or equine right of ways nearby are needed. Trees are only on the creek beds, but most of the creek beds are private property. Equine trails in Open Space creek beds would be very appealing to urban users of equine facilities.
- Better maintained roads.
- Atv trails, fishing
- Wildlife, open areas
- Update and expand the schools and what the schools can offer the kids.
- Keep development out, and make sure land use doesn't change
- Hunting, fishing, and wild animal preservation.
- More shopping and places to eat
- Untouched Land and more oil and gas drilling
- Keep the rural feel that's why I live here.
- I really like the rural characteristics of the area but I also understand that along the 70 hwy, it will be a place where urbanization will take place. It would be nice to see responsible development that doesn't just pave over every square inch of the land.
- More business development on the south side of I70 at HWY 79.
- More restaurants in the Bennett/Watkins business districts
- Open space and road maintenance
- peace and quiet, privacy
- Parks
- Rural feeling and natural surroundings.
- we are fine
- Open spaces. Trails and public access.
- Better maintained existing roads. No new through roads like Manila, Keeps the traffic down.

**Q17. Please indicate one or two negative characteristics of this area you would like to see eliminated or reduced.**



Specific comments were:

- Higher density development without adequate water sources. Junk and blight - the junk collectors that don't seem to care what their property looks like.
- More adherence to zoning - we have an outlying neighbor who has way more people on his place than is legal - and buildings going up all the time. And junk!
- Dirt roads
- Large trucks that take 2 lane highways and travel at high rates of speed. Make them stay on the highways and not go through housing developments.
- I would like to see Manila Rd. go through to Quincy. There aren't any other roads that go all the way through to the highway other than Watkins Rd. until you get to Brick Center.
- Greatly Increasing Traffic
- Property used as junkyards

- urban sprawl; we need to keep this to a minimum to keep crime down and preserve the water that is available in this area
- Crime
- Heavy semi-truck traffic. We have houses running semi-truck repair/parking businesses on their 5 acre lots. This results in several semis a day driving on our tiny neighborhood road. Lack of Sheriff presence--there's a surprising amount of petty crime for our area of 5 acre lots--shingles being stolen off of someone's roof while their house is being re-roofed, people racing on the street.
- Plans for housing developments
- Traffic.
- Fracking.
- Reduce or eliminate marijuana and hemp growth.
- Prairie dogs. Crime.
- None.
- Trash being dumped on our roadways Poor road repairs.
- It would be nice if County Rd 6 went west to Watkins Rd and if Manila Rd ran south to Quincy. More paved roads off of Cty Rd 6.
- Oil and gas
- Connectivity problems.
- A number of residents don't keep their acreage mowed and cleaned up. (Extreme fire hazard) A few homeowners have people living in RV's on their property.
- Becoming overgrown with housing and waaaaay tooooo much traffic for the roads and horrible bridges.
- Light pollution from a growing Bennett.
- Lose the rural feel of the eastern plains.
- The massive growth that is being allowed with NO plan for water. Residential/commercial growth I would like see slowed
- All the garage/warehouse type structures that are popping up all over. Also, all the cheaply built houses going up in Bennett.
- No enforcement of land owners running large scale trucking business, auto salvage or other businesses that are bringing people in, destroying existing roads and also increasing crime in some areas.

**Q18. Imagine it is 2035, what does the study area look like? What types of businesses, job opportunities, people/families are thriving in this area?**



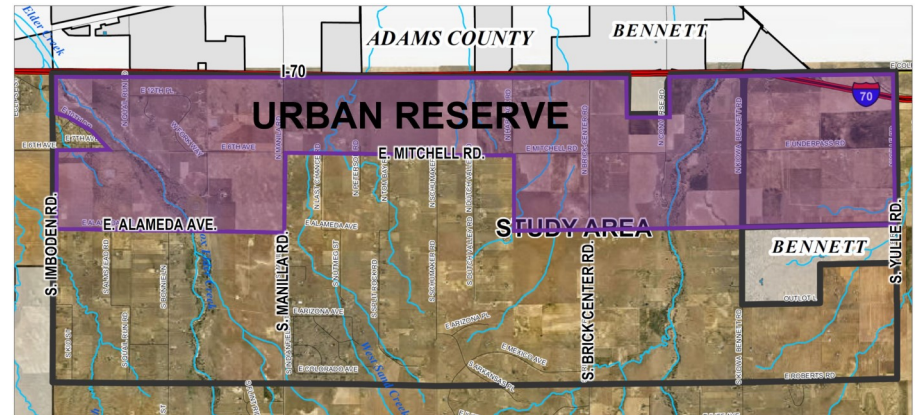
Specific comments were:

- Young families who want to rear their children in an environment away from the influence of the city, along with retirees and young professionals who are like minded - wanting to be where we know and care for our neighbors.
- Well-planned master planned communities with a balanced mix of housing, employment and services
- We want to see the local farm and agricultural life thriving rather than dense populations.
- Middle class families with roads and retail services that can keep up with the demand
- As long as you place areas of land in between developments it will

still feel like a rural area. I know that land is a high price so that might not happen. Put developments away from the highway will feel open.

- There are farm/ranch lands. Where people are able to grow crops and own livestock and be self sufficient. There will be employees that work at the Aeoropolis near the Space Port but there will still be the small businesses that are sole proprietorship companies out here that serve the community and also farm or employ the rural area as their base operation. These people have been able to serve the community for decades with friendly service whenever and wherever they need it. These are the backbone that keep this community going. People have raised their families and lived on the land for generations. The large subdivisions like Prosper and Sky Ranch as well as Aurora Highlands have brought in more crime, more traffic to the highway making for a horrible commute to town to work. People live in the study area to get away from the city life they had.
- Open farm/ranch land dotted with a few scattered houses. Cows moving about grazing. A Great Pleasant Retreat!
- Still strong rural roots but growth will cause a more urban shift. I could see a more self-sufficient community instead of needed to drive "to town" for retail, entertainment, and recreation.
- Shopping/restaurants/medical close to the exits make living and traveling through this area convenient and easy. Those businesses provide employment.
- Farm lands, small hobby farms, and Bennett and Watkins the way it is.
- Families, people who want to garden and have animals, more equine boarding and lessons, more services like school, day care, doctor, dentist. Less industrial/semi industrial stuff happening on ag lots
- Farms and ranches
- We want it the same as 2020. We don't want development.
- I believe it should all be ranch style homes with 5 plus acres each. Business should be all community supporting, medical, shopping so that resident's don't have to drive into Aurora. I would like to see this be a 4h friendly community where children can learn about ranching and farming

**Q19. Regarding the Urban Reserve, what do you think are the most appropriate land uses for that area? Please pick three.**



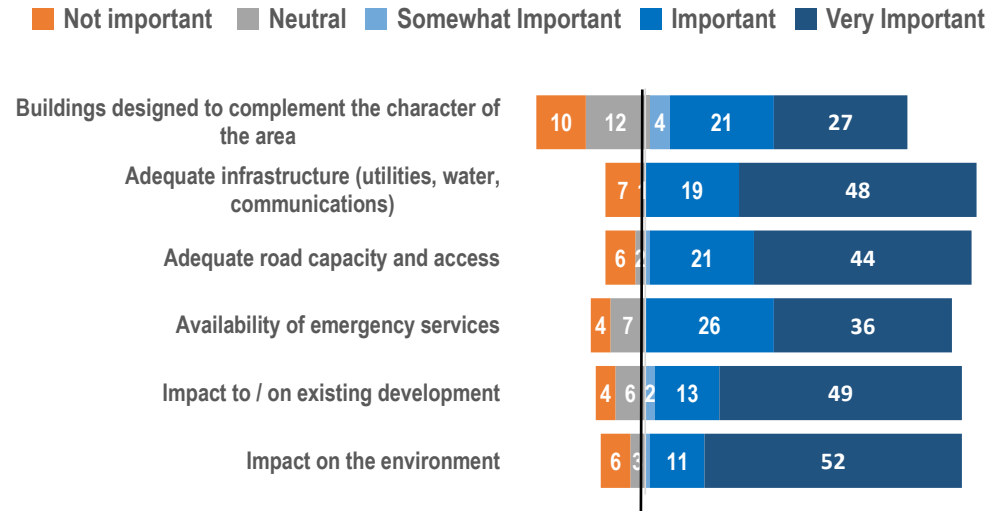


Overall, most respondents indicated that large lot residential and open spaces and trails would be most appropriate for the area.

There were a lot of suggestions in the “Other” category, specifically:

- Commercial & Industrial development
- No commercial. Leave the commercial for the actual town settings on the north side of the highway
- Farmland and/or ranch land. No housing developments nor public spaces.
- Gas stations
- Farms and ranches.
- Retail
- retail services
- Ranch & Farm Land
- Larger lot residential - 20 plus acres
- Residential
- Current zoning should remain.

### Q20. How important are the following considerations for any future developments in the study area?



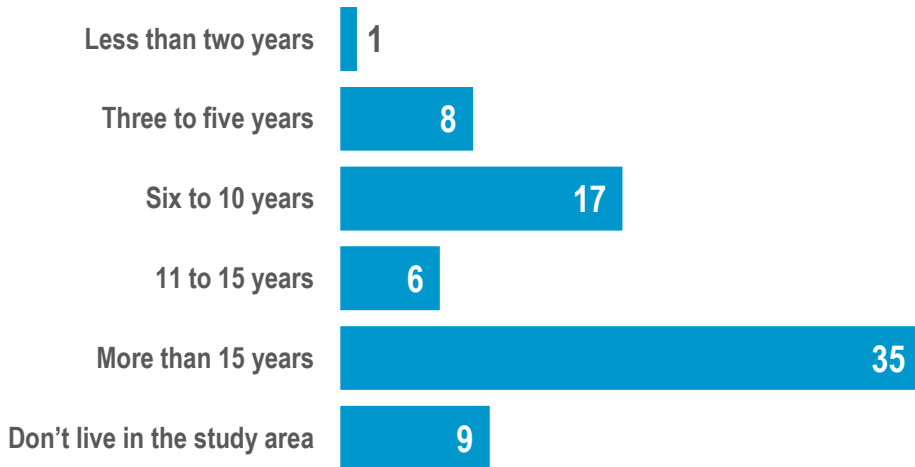
While most of these considerations were identified as important or very important by the respondents, the considerations that stand out are adequate infrastructure, adequate road capacity and access, impact on the environment, and impact to and on existing development.

Aesthetics, such as the design of buildings and compatibility with surroundings, was identified as being the least important consideration.

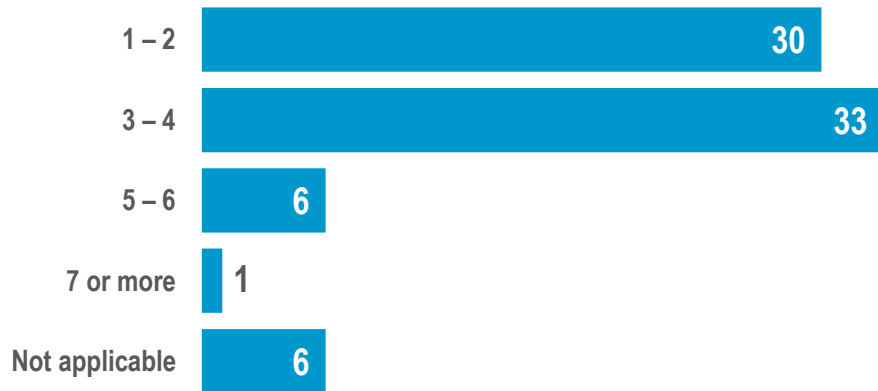


# Respondents' Characteristics

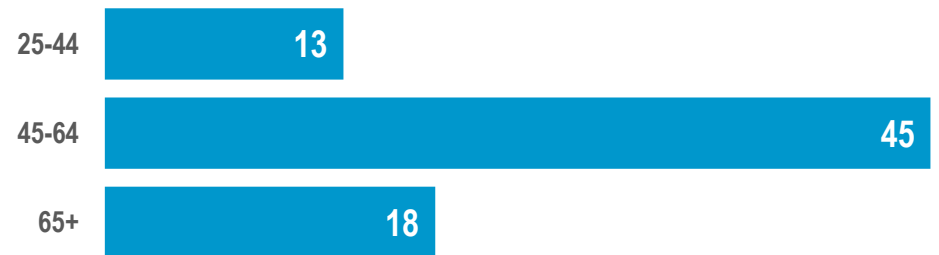
**Q22. How many years have you lived in the study area?**



**Q23. How many people live in your household?**



**Q24. What is your age?**



**Q25. How far do you commute for work?**

