



Findings and Recommendations

Phase I

Racial Justice and Equity Committee

TOWN OF HEBRON

Overall Objectives

The intention of this committee was to explore what barriers, if any, exist that have inhibited the natural progression of Hebron becoming a more diverse community. This work was completed over a short time period with limited resources and was meant as a Phase I to begin discussion to be followed by a Phase II.

We asked:

Why are Hebron's demographics different than the state average?

Are there legal and cultural barriers that have prevented or inhibited African Americans and people of color from moving to Hebron?

What positive steps can be taken to increase diversity?

Information and Data Gathered

- ▶ Hebron history and demographics
- ▶ Regional history and demographics
- ▶ Possible legal and cultural barriers to movement of African Americans and other people of color to Hebron
- ▶ Survey of Hebron citizen attitudes
- ▶ Survey of Hebron school teachers and staff

Hebron Demographics

- ▶ Though African Americans and other people of color have been present since its founding in 1708, Hebron has been and still is predominantly white.¹
- ▶ In early times, Hebron's water mills were a source of some wealth. However, certainly after 1850 and until 1960, Hebron was relatively poor and geographically remote, which is reflected in its demographics.²
- ▶ Because of geography and other factors, Hebron historically was not an area of economic growth or wealth. "From 1920 to 1960, Hebron was the slowest growing town in the area"³ including Andover, Bolton, Columbia, Colchester, Glastonbury, Lebanon and Marlborough. Net migration 1950-1960 was lowest in both numbers and rate in comparison to the other area towns."⁴ "For some time in the past, and for various reasons, the Eastern part of the State, of which Hebron is a part, has not shared in Connecticut's dynamic economy....of primary importance is Hebron's increasing orientation toward the Hartford area....in addition, Hebron is influenced somewhat by the seven adjoining towns."⁵

¹Communication of John Baron, local historian, to the Hebron Board of Selectmen. He also makes the point that human habitation in Hebron goes back at least 13,000 years. For more information, see David Reich, *Who We Are and How We Got Here: Ancient DNA and the New Science of the Human Past*.

²Sibun, J. 1958. *Our Town's Heritage, 1708-1958*, Hebron, Connecticut. Douglas Library of Hebron.

³Yard and Block. 1965. *A Comprehensive Plan of Development for the Town of Hebron, Connecticut*. January, 1965. Yard and Block, Inc., Town Planning Consultants, Simsbury, CT.

⁴Ibid

⁵Ibid

Hebron's Population through Time^{6,7,8}

Year	Population
1782	2,205
1850	1,345
1930	839
1960	2,100
1970	3,819
1990	7,709
2000	8,610
2010	9,616
2019	9504

⁶ <https://connecticuthistory.org/over-time-hebrons-historical-population/>. Accessed November 27, 2020.

⁷State of Connecticut. Accessed November 26, 2020. <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Register-Manual/Section-VII/Population-1970-2010>

⁸US Census. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/CT>.

Regional Demographics

- ▶ Hartford was four percent African American in 1940 with a substantial density located in the north part of the city.^{9,10}
- ▶ Hartford and country was transformed by the Great Migration¹¹ in the mid 20th Century. Taking place throughout the early years of the 20th century, the Great Migration refers to the resettlement of more than 6 million African Americans from the rural south to more urban communities in the North.^{12,13,14}
- ▶ By 1960, African Americans made up a majority of Hartford's schoolchildren.¹⁵
- ▶ Project Concern – program beginning in 1968 to bus Hartford schoolchildren to suburbs. Hebron was not asked because of its remoteness, it was not considered part of metropolitan area, and its lack of resources.^{16,17}
- ▶ Development of a robust African American middle class who began to leave Hartford in 1970s, 80s and 90s for the suburbs. Hebron and Eastern Connecticut towns were not destinations of choice.¹⁸

⁹Daughter, J. <https://www.slideshare.net/JackDougherty/west-hartford-hartford-percent-black-population-19402007>.

¹⁰Sacks, M. Suburbanization and the Racial/Ethnic Divide in the Hartford Metropolitan Area.

¹¹Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns : the Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. New York :Vintage Books, 2011.

¹²The Great Migration in Hartford, <https://scholarscollaborative.org/Hartford/social-issues/the-great-migration-in-hartford/>

¹³Great Migration of African Americans to Hartford, Connecticut, 1910–1930: AGIS Analysis at the Neighborhood and Street Level, Kurt Schlichting, Peter Tuckel and Richard Maisel.

¹⁴Interestingly, there was a migration of European Jews fleeing the persecution and pogroms Eastern Europe to Eastern Connecticut towns including Hebron from the 1890s to the mid-20th century. This migration is documented in, *Harvesting Stones*, <https://www.courant.com/community/killingly/hc-kn-killingly-harvesting-stones-0316-20170314-story.html>. The title suggests the poor quality of the farm soils in the area.

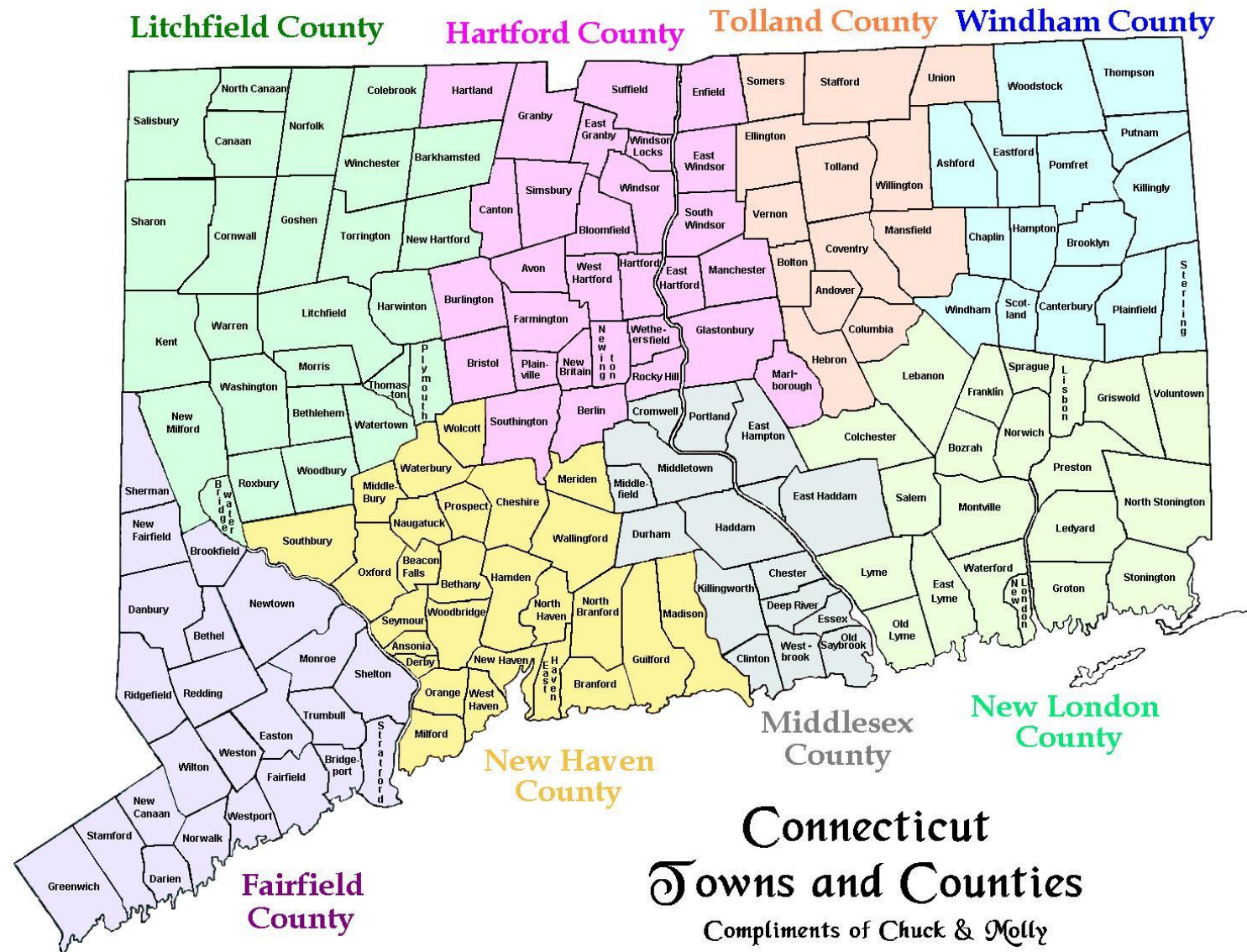
Hartford Courant, 2001. City loses Blacks to Suburbs. <https://www.courant.com/hc-census-0321-story.html>

¹⁵Crain, Robert and Others. 1992. *Finding Niches: Desegregated Students Sixteen Years Later*. Final Report on the Educational Outcomes of Project Concern, Hartford, Connecticut.

¹⁶Mahan, Thomas. 1968. *Report on the Effectiveness of Suburban School Placement for Inner-City Youth*

Regional Demographics¹⁹

	White	African American	Hispanic	Asian Alone	Two or More Races	Affordable Housing
Hebron	96.6	0.1	3.2	1.9	1.2	3.08
Bloomfield	36.0	57.9	8.2	2.1	2.2	11.1
Windsor	51.2	38.2	9.0	4.4	2.8	7.57
Manchester	62.0	19.7	17.9	5.1	4.5	14.6
Colchester	92.6	1.9	4.0	2.3	1.8	8.93
Glastonbury	86.4	1.2	9.2	5.6	1.8	5.73
Marlborough	97.3	1.6	5.7	0.6	1.2	2.01
Farmington	81.5	2.2	6.5	12.3	2.0	7.93
Mansfield	82.0	4.1	5.4	10.6	2.5	6.60
Windham	71.6	6.2	41.4	1.8	7.1	28.66
Windham County	92.0	3.2	12.4	1.5	2.5	
Tolland County	88.6	3.9	5.9	5.0	2.0	
Connecticut	79.7	12.2	16.9	5.0	2.5	



²⁰Chuck and Molly.

Why People Don't Move to Hebron

- ▶ Geography - Hebron is far from cities, metro areas.
- ▶ Economic – houses can be expensive, taxes are high.
- ▶ Lack of infrastructure – public transportation is lacking.
- ▶ Without a commercial base, there are few jobs.
- ▶ Few stores for shopping, no movie theaters, etc. there is not a lot to do in Hebron....

Possible Barriers to Migration – Zoning^{21,22}

- ▶ Historically, there is no doubt that zoning was used to preserve the rural character of the town and that preserving the rural character of the town is a real value of current Hebronians.²³
- ▶ The committee researched historical Town of Hebron Annual Reports and Comprehensive Plans to determine the motivation for basic zoning laws. No overt evidence to suggest that zoning was used to prevent African Americans or people of color from moving to Hebron was found.^{24,25,26}
- ▶ However, many believe that the predominance of 2-acre zoning lots favors more affluent, older and more established people.²⁷

²¹A Steady Habit of Segregation, the Origins and Continuing Harm of Unequal Housing and Public Schools in Metropolitan Hartford, Connecticut. This study is timely and useful. However, it would be strengthened by specific data gathered from rural towns in Connecticut.

²²Hartford Courant, February 19, 2021. West Hartford is mostly white, while Bloomfield is largely Black; how that came to be tells the story of racism and segregation in American suburbs <https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-news-west-hartford-bloomfield-housing-segregation-discrimination-20210214-eoobsguoybguznkoa4n2ravwli-story.html>. A core question may be: how similar is the history of Hebron and Connecticut's rural communities to Hartford's inner suburbs?

²³Yard and Block. 1965. A Comprehensive Plan of Development for the Town of Hebron, Connecticut. January, 1965. Yard and Block, Inc., Town Planning Consultants, Simsbury, CT.

²⁴Town of Hebron. 1939. Town of Hebron Annual Report. 1939.

²⁵Town of Hebron. 1959. Town of Hebron Annual Report. 1959..

²⁶Town of Hebron. 1979. Town of Hebron Annual Report. 1979.

²⁷<https://www.courant.com/politics/hc-pol-connecticut-zoning-changes-desegregation-20210314-dicno3tpzrdbbfhgtz54z5cg4m-story.html>. Drastic changes in the relationship between towns and the state are being proposed at the Connecticut legislature. At the heart of this debate is will these changes promote diversity and social justice or just fundamentally change the nature of Connecticut towns?

Possible Barriers to Migration - Redlining

- ▶ In our small sample of interview and observation, we found no direct evidence of the Town or area businesses directing certain racial or socioeconomic classes to or away from Hebron.
- ▶ An African American resident recounted that in 1980 the lawyer at her housing purchase closing held her check up to the light to determine if it was good, which she believed to be a racist act and a way to delegitimize her as a Black women.²⁸

²⁸Conversation between John Collins with an unnamed Hebron Resident. June 20, 2020.

Possible Barriers to Migration – Cultural Racism

- ▶ While very little can be said about individual beliefs and actions of people in the past, and, in fact, there are historical examples of noble acts and causes in the defense of equality and minority rights,²⁹ it would be a good assumption that Hebron and Hebronians were part of the overall cultural milieu that permitted or encouraged discrimination against African Americans and others.
- ▶ For example, dances were advertised at Gilead Hall in 1907 that used overt and offensive racist language.³⁰
- ▶ Racism is not always overt and intentional. Racism can sometimes be accidental that results from lack of experience and exposure. Responses from people of color in the survey point to anecdotal experiences that made them feel unwelcome.^{31,32}

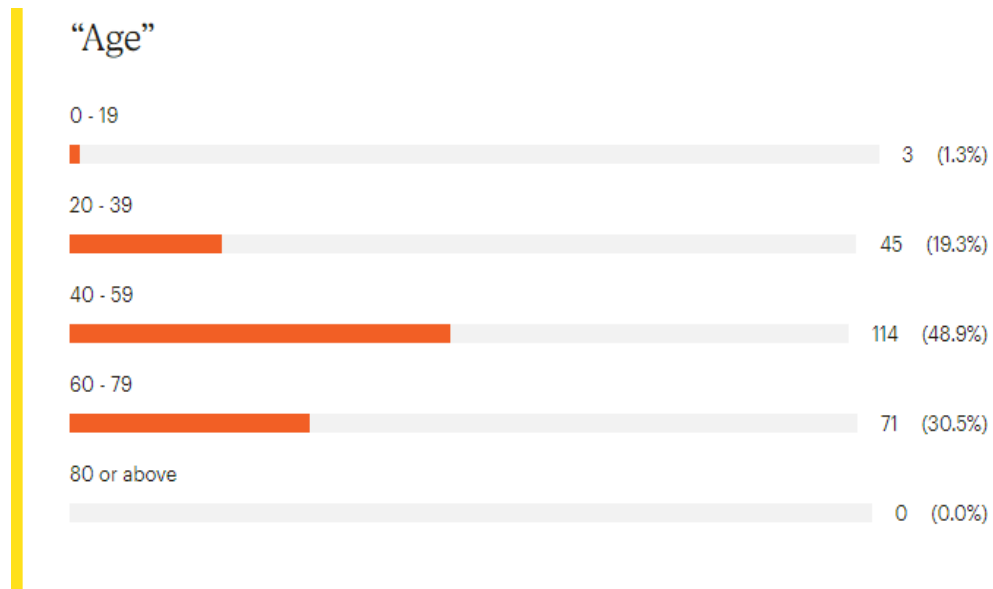
²⁹https://hebronhistoricalsociety.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=208&catid=182. See the story of Cesar and Louis Peters.

³⁰Unless requested, we've decided not to present these advertisements in this report. It was only through a random occurrence that a committee member found them suggesting that other examples could be found with a more concerted effort.

³¹Kendi, X. 2019. How to be an Antiracist.

³²McWorther. Racist is a Tough Little Word. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/07/racism-concept-change/594526/>. McWorther's writings provides an interesting rebuttal to Kendi and the current debate on racial justice.

Results of a Survey of Hebron Residents³³



³³Survey of Hebron Residents Conducted in February and March, 2021.

Race/Ethnicity of Responders

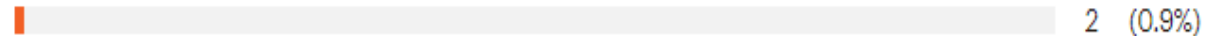
Question 3 has 235 answers (Checkboxes)

“Race/ethnicity (please check all that apply)”

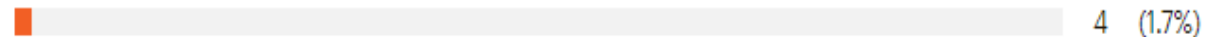
White



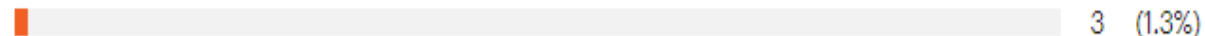
Black or African American



Hispanic or Latinx



American Indian or Alaska Native



Asian

Happiness with Hebron (10 is very happy)

	Years Lived in Hebron	Average Response
Based on your experience living here, how satisfied are you with the quality of life in Hebron? Time in Hebron.	Total (all responders)	8.0
	0-5	8.0
	5-10	7.6
	10-20	8.1
	20+	8.4

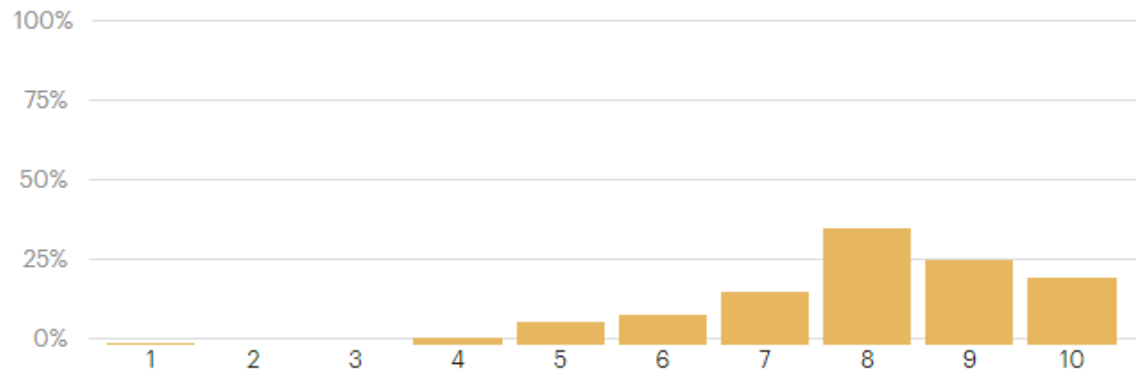
What Drew You to Hebron?

What characteristics / perceptions of Hebron drew you to want to move/live here?	Characteristics (Choose as Many as You Feel Appropriate)	Percent Who Responded that this Characteristic was Important
	Rural Setting/Close to nature	78
	Schools	64
	Low Crime	51
	Affordability of Housing	27
	Recreational Opportunities	19
	Knew someone/Raised in Town	18
	Community Care	16
	Job Opportunity	4
	Faith	6
	Businesses and Shopping	4
	Racial/Ethnic Diversity	3

Quality of Life

Question 7 has 235 answers (Range) Avg rating: 8.0

“Based on your experience living here, how satisfied are you with the quality of life in Hebron? (Please rank on a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being Very Satisfied and 1 being Not at all Satisfied.)”



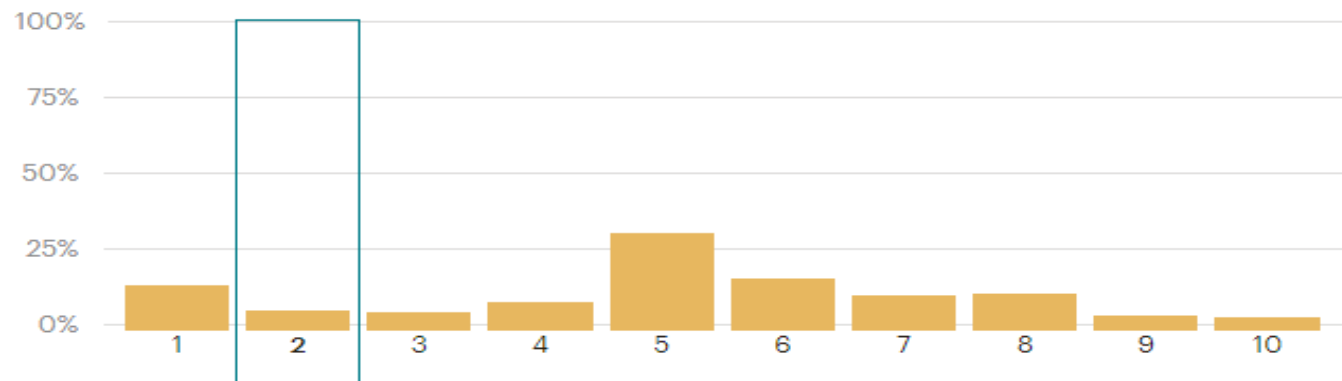
How Can Hebron Improve?

Options	Percent Who Responded
Businesses/Places to Shop	59.6
Racial and Ethnic Diversity	52.3
Affordability of Housing	41.7
Transportation Options	36.2
Job Opportunities	30.2
Recreational Opportunities	28.1
Care and Concern for Community Members	13.2
Schools	11.1
Crime	8.2

Economic Opportunity

Question 11 has 235 answers (Range) Avg rating: 5.2

“To what extent do you agree that the town of Hebron has offered you good opportunities to get ahead economically? (Please rank on a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being Strongly Agree and 1 being Strongly Disagree.) ”



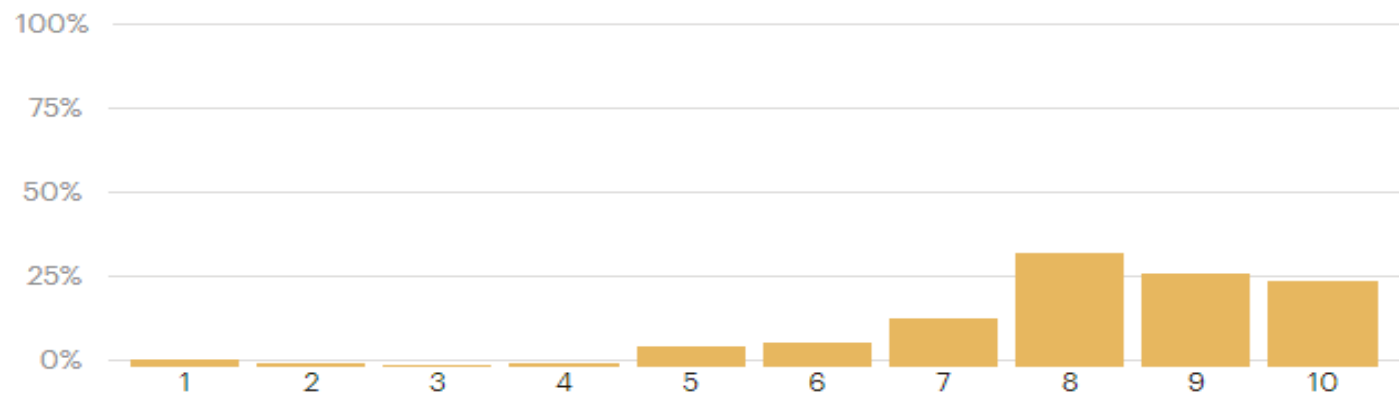
Economic Opportunity (by Age)

	Age (Years)	Average Response
Hebron offered you good opportunities to get ahead economically?	Total (all responders)	5.2
	0-19	6.7
	20-39	5.5
	40-59	4
	60-79	5.9

Public Schools

Question 10 has 227 answers (Range) Avg rating: 8.0

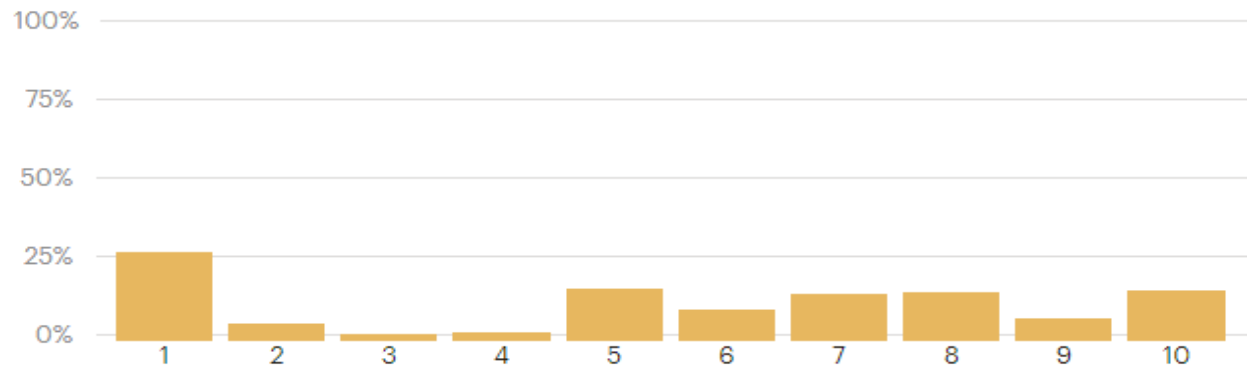
“How would you rate Hebron public schools? (Please rank on a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being Excellent and 1 being Poor.) ”



Importance of Diversity

Question 12 has 235 answers (Range) Avg rating: 5.5

“As of the last US Census report, Hebron was 97 percent White. How important is it for you and your family to live in a diverse town? (Please rank on a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being Very Important and 1 being Not at All Important.)”

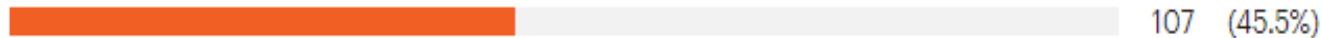


Diversity of Friendships

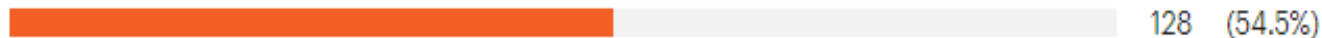
Question 13 has 235 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you have a friend here in Hebron who is of a different race or ethnicity than you?”

Yes



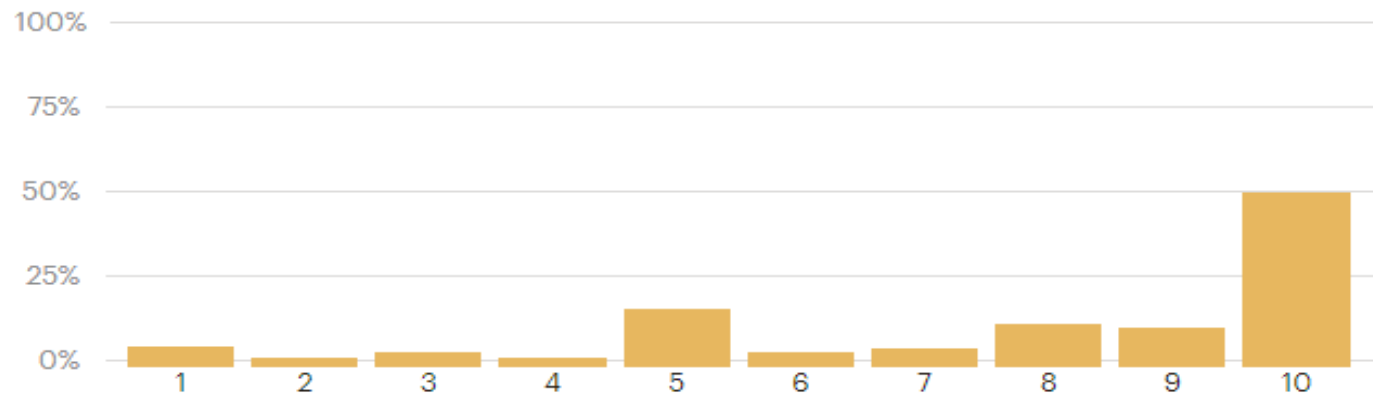
No



Importance of Diversity in Preparing Children to Live in the World

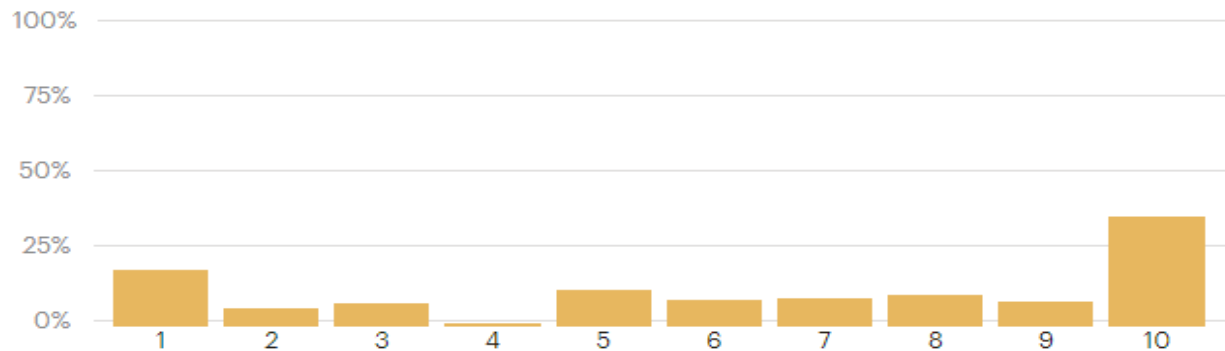
Question 15 has 235 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.6

“Children who learn in a diverse school alongside children of different races, ethnicities and cultures are better prepared to live and work in a diverse world. (Please rank on a scale of 1–10 with 10 being Strongly Agree and 1 being Strongly Disagree.)”



Should the Local Government Act to Address Racial Justice?

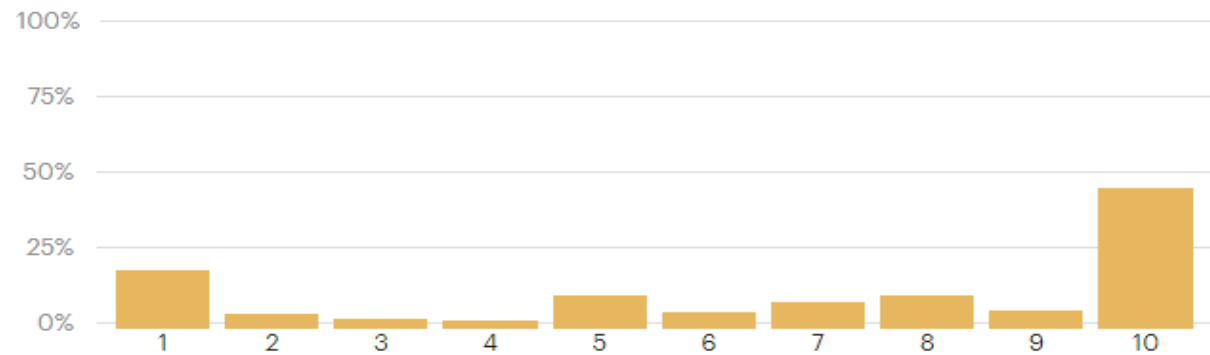
“How high a priority should it be for local government to address racial equity gaps in education, criminal justice, jobs, health, housing and other areas? (Please rank on a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being High Priority and 1 being Not at all a Priority.)”



Should Institutional Barriers be Examined?

Question 17 has 235 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.8

“Town regulations/policies should be examined to identify any barriers preventing people of color from moving to and living in Hebron. (Please rank on a scale of 1–10 with 10 being Strongly Agree and 1 being Strongly Disagree.)”



Support Efforts to Promote Racial Diversity?

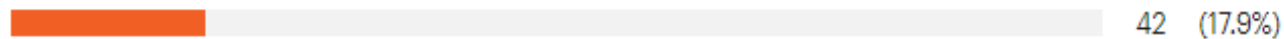
Question 18 has 235 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Would you support efforts to promote more racial diversity in Hebron?”

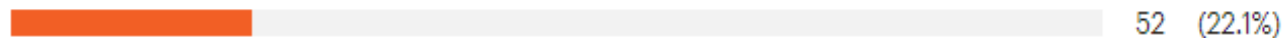
Yes



No



Not sure

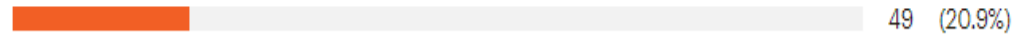


Have You Seen Racial Discrimination in Hebron?

Question 20 has 235 answers (Checkboxes)

“Have you seen any racial discrimination occur between individuals in Hebron?”

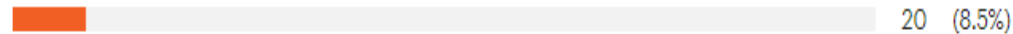
Yes



No



If yes, please explain:



Would You and Your Family Benefit from a More Diverse Community?

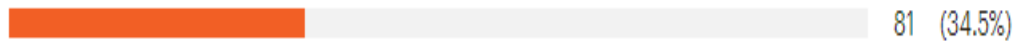
Question 14 has 235 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you think you and your family would benefit from living in a more racially and ethnically diverse community?”

Yes



No



Survey of Hebron Teachers and Staff³⁴

Questions (Ranked on a Scale of 1-10 where 10 is the more positive response)	All Elementary School Teachers and Staff	Those that live in Hebron	Those that live outside of Hebron
Do you think we should increase efforts to increase diversity in our schools?	7.3	6.7	7.5
Children who learn in a diverse school alongside children of different races, ethnicities and cultures are better prepared to live and work in a diverse world.	8.1	7.4	8.5
How well do you think Hebron schools prepare students to live and work in a multi-cultural workplace/world?	5.3	6.1	4.9
As of the last US Census report, Hebron was 97 percent White. How important is it for you to live in a diverse town?	5.8	5.0	6.3

Survey of Hebron Teachers and Staff

Given your knowledge of Hebron, what areas do you think Hebron could improve?	Percent who responded (multiple responses were available)
Racial diversity and ethnic diversity	57
Affordability of housing	30
Businesses and places to shop	27
Faith communities	6
Job opportunities	6

What are your reasons for not living in Hebron	Percent who responded (multiple responses were available)
Happy where I am	67
Taxes/Cost of Living	21
Lack of racial diversity	15
Cost of housing	15
Too rural	3
Lack of business and stores	3

Would You Benefit From More Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Hebron?

Do you think you and your family would benefit from living in a more racially and ethnically diverse community? Percent Yes	Age (Years)	Percent Yes
	Total	66
	0-19	100
	20-39	73
	40-59	64
	60-79	65

White, Male, 40-59 Years Old, Hebron Resident

“Having lived in an urban environment for years, I moved to Hebron to get away from that environment. There is nothing stopping any race from moving to Hebron, it's just that humans like to be around people who look and act the same. But we will ignore that obvious inconvenient fact.

People like you always come up with the same solution "more low income housing"....

My advise (sic) to you is if you think living in a poor urban community is so great, your free to go. I did it for years. “



Hispanic, Teacher, 40-59, Resident of
Hebron for 1-5 Years

Have you seen discrimination? Yes.
“Derogatory comments towards Latino”

“I believe the lack of diversity in our schools make it really hard for the minorities, I believe people are not used to mingle with different socioeconomic people.”

White, Female, 40-59, Hebron Resident for 10-19 Years

- ▶ “My husband is an immigrant from Egypt. I was worried when we first moved out here honestly. I grew up and went to school in Hebron, I know the lack of diversity. But honestly he has been treated well with no issues in town. We hope that continues as our children go through the highschool in the future.”

White, Age 40-59, Resident for 20-39 Years

“I do not recognize race as an issue. Most people are good. I have not experienced a difference between people regardless of race. Most are good. Only a few have convictions that cannot see past color and I have not had the displeasure of meeting those people.... Laws that promote stereotypical behavior must be changed. But laws rarely change people, people change people. So if you see something say something. People are just people.”

African American, Age 20-39, Hebron Resident for 1-5 Years

How high a priority should it be for local government to address racial equity gaps in education, criminal justice, jobs, health, housing and other areas? *Answer: 2 (out of 10)*

Town regulations/policies should be examined to identify any barriers preventing people of color from moving to and living in Hebron. *Answer: 1 (out of 10)*

Do you think you and your family would benefit from living in a more racially and ethnically diverse community? *Answer: No.*

Hispanic, Male, Age 20-39, Hebron Resident for 1-5 Years

“I think it needs to be done in a manner that it doesn't look like a charity effort for inner city citizens. To highlight the benefits and opportunities it provides for all. To ensure that it doesn't dramatically financially impact current hebron residents. Address issues and have a plan in place for the residents that fear crime will become an issue.”

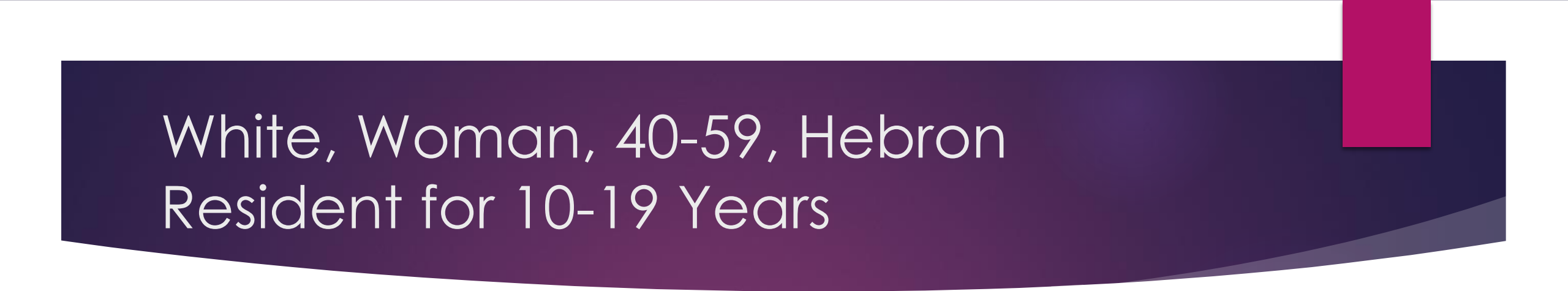


American Indian, Age 60-79, Resident
for 20-39 years

“It costs money to live here. If I
couldn't have afforded it, I would
be living elsewhere. You get
what you pay for. End of story”

Teacher, 0-5 Years, Non-resident

- ▶ “If we are to adopt a more anti-racist philosophy or curricular goals, it should not be a "one time only" kind of change- many shy away from discussions on race and discrimination because we are not a diverse town, but to me, that means our kids need more exposure to ideas and cultures different then their own. We owe it to our students to help them to see and understand the rich diversity of our nation.”



White, Woman, 40-59, Hebron
Resident for 10-19 Years

“It is hilarious to believe that old affluent white people think town funds and effort should be spent on making themselves feel better about their own prejudices rather than focusing on the actual needs of our town like more businesses and sustainable infrastructure.”

African American, Age 40-59 Years, Resident for 1-5 Years

“I do like the small rural town setting, but wish there were more diversity in race and ethnicity, and in business, particularly in restaurants.”

Have you personally felt discriminated against based on your race / ethnicity while in Hebron?

“Yes, The stares I get from some non-people of color when I'm in town.”



Asian, Age 20-39, Resident for 0-5
Years

“Hebron is very very very white
which I am unhappy about but
glad the committee was created.
Hope you are taking into account
feedback from POC.”

White, Woman, Age 40-59, Grew up in Hebron

“My husband and son are Hispanic, my son has experienced some uncomfortable situations/conversations with students and even some of his closed friends regarding race. Very sad that some young adults not children have been racist in his presence knowing he’s Hispanic.”



White, Male, Age 40-59, Hebron
Resident for 20-39 Years

“Hebron is a fantastic town to live in. But it definitely could use more diversity.”

Findings

- ▶ Though African Americans and other people of color have been present since its founding in 1708, Hebron has been and is predominantly white. There are many reasons for this demographic anomaly. Until 1960, Hebron was not a desirable place to live for many people. It was generally poorer and had less opportunities than other towns and cities in Connecticut. It was geographically isolated until road improvement gave it access to cities.
- ▶ Some reasons for a lack of diversity include geography, lack of jobs, lack of transportation infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, and possibly the generational impact of redlining, discriminatory lending practices, and high taxes.
- ▶ De facto near segregation as is found in Hebron often feeds on and perpetuates itself unless efforts are made to change it. While many or most individual white residents can truthfully say that they do not discriminate based on race, it is likely that the impact of systemic racism in the United States created and reinforced over time through physical, structural and legal barriers - have worked to inhibit people of color from moving to Hebron.
- ▶ It is clear that people move to and stay in Hebron because of its rural character, schools and low crime. At the same time, many express a desire for more diversity – in their neighborhoods and especially in our schools. It is possible to maintain the elements of Hebron that residents love and to achieve greater diversity. In fact, diversity will enhance the richness and vibrancy of our town and spur economic development, which are also goals of many residents and town officials.

Recommendations

- ▶ Hebron needs to take steps to increase diversity on town. One step that this community can take is to take more positive attempts to make all new citizens feel welcome. To do this, the Town needs to understand why people of different cultures, races, and ethnicities may not feel comfortable in town and so would not choose to live here. We suggest that during the next phase, the next committee investigate ways to make Hebron a more welcoming community to everyone, but especially to people of color.
- ▶ The town leadership program, *We are Hebron*, should be expanded to include training of Hebron Ambassadors to greet new arrivals to Hebron, to act as mentors, make introductions and, generally, to make new residents feel at home.
- ▶ The Hebron Economic Development Committee will be giving out a \$30,000 contract to a consultant to advise on encouraging economic growth in Hebron. More diversity will fuel economic development. As such, the Hebron Board of Selectmen should consider diversity in selecting this consultant and setting goals for their work. New economic initiatives should include initiatives aimed toward people of color such as a "Why Not Hebron?"
- ▶ The Hebron Board of Selectmen should include increasing diversity as a goal of the town and resources should be directed toward encouraging more people of color to live in the town. Proposed resolutions such as "Racism is a public health crisis," which has been found to be a true statement by many health organizations, should be adopted because they show a willingness to understand and appreciate the negative impacts of systemic racism on people of color.

Recommendations (Continued)

- ▶ Respondents from the Community Survey generally thought that diversity was important in schools. We recommend that the committee explore ways to bring more diversity to Hebron schools, including the participation of the town and the Regional high school, RHAM, in Open Choice.
- ▶ We recognize that the Hebron Board of Selectmen recently endorsed a resolution calling for more affordable housing in Hebron. However, Hebron does not meet the state requirement that 10 percent of its housing is "affordable" (at only 3.1 percent). Both our Conservation and Development Plan and the Study of Incentive Housing Zones recommended the need for and strategies to increase our affordable, mixed-income and mixed-use development in certain areas of town. Respondents to our Community Survey mention the need for more affordable housing as a way to improve Hebron. Therefore, during the next phase, the committee should research the barriers and pursue strategies to reach those goals. The creation of affordable and mixed income housing does not guarantee greater integration will occur. But, since people of color in Connecticut earn considerably less than Whites in America and have been held back by discriminatory policies in housing, zoning and lending statewide, it will give them more opportunity to move here, if they so choose. It will also enable more young people and those earning less than the current housing in Hebron requires, to move here, adding to our vibrancy and boosting our economic development.
- ▶ The Town should work with local organizations such CoDE, including its Community Conversations and other efforts to increase community awareness of issues around diversity.
- ▶ The Town should consider creating a Facebook group to share information about diversity, equity and inclusion resources, events, articles.
- ▶ Hebron should reach out to other towns and cities in the area with larger non-white populations and survey why African Americans and other people of color in these adjacent or nearby towns are not moving to Hebron. Anecdotally, there are many, maybe hundreds of people of color that travel through Hebron daily on their work elsewhere. Clearly, Hebron is closer to their work than where they live. Why not Hebron?

All Comments from Survey of Hebron Residents Concerning Racial Attitudes

1. My husband and son are Hispanic, my son has experienced some uncomfortable situations/conversations with students and even some of his closed friends regarding race. Very sad that some young adults not children have been racist in his presence knowing he's Hispanic.
2. Hebron residents are a very caring and welcoming community of persons from all cultures. This effort to improve diversity is nonsense and a waste of time and resources. Any person who wants to live here can move here. Low income housing will not improve the area and will only add to increase crime which residents are already concerned about. Low income housing does not mean it will increase diversity in the town.
3. I have family members that live in a city and go to a very diverse public school. I feel those children are very fortunate to be exposed to many people of different cultures, races, religions, etc.
4. Thank you for taking the time to consider how Hebron can help the state of Connecticut reduce its racial inequities.
5. Stop inventing problems to solve that will cost taxpayers money. I bought my home with a VA backed loan from my own hard work. The Democrats have built a trap that has failed to produce real equity since the known racist LBJ signed the Civil Rights Act in 1964.
6. I am disappointed that a survey on diversity focused only on black people. What about other diversity in race? religion? age? orientation?
7. Thank you for tackling this important issue!
8. African Americans resident in Hebron have been accepted and loved ever since revolutionary times.
9. Living in Hebron for more than 35 years it is a community of caring individuals who would and have included & welcomed people regardless of race, religion or ethnicity. Our opinion in looking for a problem that doesn't exist creates a problem. The one thing that would help lift low income individuals up is to give them school choice. Creating Identity politics only causes more divisiveness. As an additional note, I have grown up with minorities in my immediate family.

10. I don't care what your race, religion, sexual preference, or any other characteristic is as long as you are a good person. We are all people, I'm tired of us being divided into nice little groups for the sake of our politicians.

11. When we first bought a house in Hebron in 2007 before we had kids, we were attracted to it because of its location to our jobs at RHAM, the school system, and the rural/suburban feel. Now that I've been living here for more than 13 years and have been in the school system for more than 15 years, I definitely see the problems caused by Hebron's lack of racial diversity.

Nonwhite students can have trouble feeling comfortable at RHAM. Some white students associate Hartford with Black people and gangs/drugs. They associate Willimantic with "illegal immigrants" and drugs. It's likely they get these views from their parents.

Also, Hebron is not very accessible for people who don't have a car. There's no bus stop to get to Manchester or Middletown or Hartford, for example. How much designated low income/affordable housing does Hebron have? Now that I'm older and wiser, Hebron strikes me as a NIMBY (not in my backyard) kind of town. I acknowledge my complicity in that. We must change.

12. I am not against anyone living in Hebron. And I mean Anyone. The one big problem I have is paying more Taxes to set up programs to let people move in that can't pay there own way ! No sub. housing and no bus lines. The town is already Taxing people to much and house valves are down.
13. I wish our politics would stop dividing us up by race. Most people could care less about a persons race. Character is all that matters.
14. Lack of religious diversity and understanding of different religions is an issue as well as other diversity issues
15. Leave Hebron just the way it is!
16. Love Hebron just the way it is.
17. Inclusion must occur naturally. Youth is accepting of differences, more-so than adults in Hebron. Prejudice starts at home. Just hiring a diverse School administration is NOT the answer, especially with their own prejudices!
18. it was hard to answer some of these questions as my answer did not fit the options. We moved here to get away from the crime and school violence in Bristol. I like the fact that we are a quiet town. I just don't think we attract people who are used to a more active city life close to their work, family and friends. People who want to live here and can rent or buy a house should be able to. Non-white people in town should be treated like everyone else and I would expect school, business, citizens and government to support that. My daughter had a black teacher for 4th grade. My son played ball with her son. No big deal. If non-white people want to live here I support that, I just don't think racism is the reason non-white people don't come here. We don't offer a lot of services they might need or want, like public transportation, free preschool, free after school care, city water/sewer, city trash pick-up, sidewalks, etc. You really have to have car to live here.
19. We have not had enough diversity in Hebron to answer several of these questions.
20. Stop being racist so much. Don't think they are better than everyone else because they have money. Stuck up horrible people that look down on people when they are trying to make a living. Stop being so nosy. Stop thinking the world only evolves around you.

21. Husbands race is white however had a green card from immigrating here. Recently became an American citizen

22. I think it's important to be mindful of racial diversity vs. socioeconomic differences. They are 2 very different issues that often get co-mingled. I think both are worth looking at, but they need to be addressed differently.

23. The BOS should work to make Hebron more affordable

24. I love the small town because it feels safe and is a great place to raise children and our schools are great

25. I think this survey itself is racist. The way I see it is the only reason minorities don't live in Hebron is because they have no desire to. There are no obvious barriers blocking anyone from moving here.
I think this survey is an unnecessary waste of time.

26. Do not make slum areas just to satisfy in-racial justices. Build homes at a cost they can afford and not jam them in one small pocket in Gilead. Spread them apart give them homes next to all the other homes in town so they can have pride in the town.
- .
27. Came from a nearby racially diverse community so have no problem with differences. Just wanted a quiet place to live and still be able to commute to work.
28. The steering committee on racial justice and equality is silly. It might be more racist to do all of this than to not do anything at all. I've never seen or heard of inequality in Hebron. Its like a real life South Park episode about virtue signaling.
29. Grew up in Hartford, lived in EH and Manchester and FULLY experienced diverse environments. (both school and work) I'm fine with people that are of different races but am concerned with low income (any race) there is a difference when you own a home vs rent. Read some of the Hebron Facebook comments regarding the renters on Wall St....And btw I

was discriminated against (physically threatened, verbally abused) when attending Hartford High for being white. No one should ever have to deal with that. It goes both ways.

30. I grew up in Hebron and went to Hebron Public Schools and RHAM. My first experience with a Black educator wasn't until my first year of college. Representation in school matters for a lot of folks! I often wonder how my view of the world might have changed if I had grown up in a more diverse setting. I wish I had.
31. People move to Hebron for the town it is today. Data is widely available to show demographics. If racial diversity is strongly desired, individuals would choose to live in a diverse area that meets their desires.
32. I think affordability for seniors should also be included in this committee's scope of study. It some times ends up as a point of equity in our community
33. I move here from another state for work. My job is not in Hebron. I picked Hebron because it felt like a nice community with a nice village , decent cost compared to other towns. Larger home lots, open space, trails like the airline trail. The village and its businesses have become better nicer looking with investments in the buildings, and the town/State investment in sidewalks and such. I like that we have dairy farms, open space, tree farms, the maple festival and the harvest festival. People are nice and welcoming to all. Rural is not for all, Hebron will never be a city with everything around the corner and that's not a bad thing.
34. It costs money to live here. If I couldn't have afforded it, I would be living elsewhere. You get what you pay for. End of story.
35. I think that financial inequality affects more people in our town than racial justice. People pretend to have what they don't to try and keep up with those that do. Schools do not seem to get that.
36. All bullshit brought on by BLM and Dems! If there is not a problem, why pretend To create one. If someone wants to live in this town, they should do so. But a house, rent an apartment, and so on. Creating low income housing will bring the need for additional social services, increased crime and an end to the rural tranquility we now enjoy. I'm not a racist, I have worked with minorities for 35 years. I have long lasting friendships with minorities for 35 years. Don't create issues that do not exist so you can feel good about yourselves. Did someone express that they have experienced discrimination in town? I certainly hope not.

37. I believe racial diversity is a fantastic benefit to the community however it is best achieved naturally without government intervention other than making Hebron an inviting place for all to live.
38. Not sure I understand why our local government is pushing social ideology on its citizens. Race Relations and values should be a discussion that first starts in a family's home. It should not be pushed on an individual from its government officials.
39. Hebron residents need to be more considerate of each other in order for diversity to succeed.
40. LEAVE IT ALONE!!!
41. We're fine. It's a great community so why mess with it. Wherever government butts in, things always go down hill. If you want to move to Hebron busy your ass and earn it.
42. I strongly believe we are doing a disservice to our children by not providing a diverse educational setting. In addition, our community is limiting opportunities by failing to provide affordable housing. Our young teachers, recent graduates from Eastern, UCONN and other area schools, our kids coming home from college don't see Hebron as a community they can settle in. There are no cool apartments on Main Street where they can walk to grab something to eat, go to the library, meet friends out for a beer. It's been so many years where I have heard politicians, when campaigning, that economic development was a priority and every year, nothing happens. We need to do something different. Try affordable housing and try exploring educational opportunities to recruit diverse teachers and students.
43. I feel Hebron is already an open Community. The town doesn't need to get involved. Any one who wants to move here does not have a problem. We have low income housing. If any thing it would be because of taxes. I have several friends in town who are of different races, religions, ethnic and of low income. Hebron is a very diverse town for families. I don't see why the board need to get involved. there are more important things for them to do for the town.
44. Hear about high school kids bullying each other over supporting BLM vs cops, kids need to learn how to support a cause without insulting others and furthering the divide.
45. Hebron is very very very white which I am unhappy about but glad the committee was created. Hope you are taking into account feedback from POC.
46. If your not in the know, or on facebook, It's very hard to know what is going on. we usually hear about stuff after the fact in rivereast. Word of mouth is very important, If you don't know anyone that ends that. People either don't share because they don't know you or don't like you. If you have never met them how do they know they don't like you. It gets even worse if you are not in church.

47. I do not recognize race as an issue. Most people are good. I have not experienced a difference between people regardless of race. Most are good. Only a few have convictions that cannot see past color and I have not had the displeasure of meeting those people. If I believe that someone leans to the extreme I do not associate with that person. Those who lean toward extremes on either side of an issue, regardless of the issue, cannot take my precious time. Therefore my quality of life is not affected by issues such as this one. Stereotypes can only continue if you want them to. I do not. Would I say something if I witnessed an issue, absolutely. But it would not change my convictions that most people are good. Laws that promote stereotypical behavior must be changed. But laws rarely change people, people change people. So if you see something say something. People are just people.

48. Hebron is a fantastic town to live in. But it definitely could use more diversity.

49. It's a wonderful town with many advantages. I would consider a safe place to raise my daughter, with plenty of opportunities for outside adventures. However, my daughter being mixed-race, I am scared that she will be discriminated against on the school systems. There is no diversity in this town whatsoever, and judging by many residents outspoken political views, it is alarming to think that my daughter may be a victim to discrimination.

Due to the extremely high taxes in the town, I'm not sure my family will stay here past 2027 (when I retire from state service). I feel that we may be forced to move to an area with lower property taxes, as to remain in our budget.

50. We live in a free country which means people are free to live where they choose. It's not appropriate to change regulations and/or laws in favor of a particular race. Favoritism is racism.

51. I have two kids in the elementary school system which does a good job of teaching acceptance of all people. That said the cost of living in Hebron is high, housing costs are high and property taxes are high. Hebron has a lot to offer but reducing cost to live here should be a priority. To do that you need to bring in businesses to help reduce the tax burden on the home owners.

52. I would like to see a center town pond covered, shaded with a deck to shade water and island. Below the island a subterranean building to house a flea market style format. With small business booths mixed in with all the rest. The small business would be Mentored and supported by the community. New business owners can not afford the average cost of our local area.
- These Mentored small businesses should be open and encouraged by RHAM. Especially to the ones with special needs. Being sure it's available to ALL.

53. The school question should have inquired about both Hebron and RHAM schools.
The only way to quickly diversify the schools is for Hebron and RHAM to participate in a program that allows kids to come here.

I would suggest that the town, perhaps in cooperation with churches, try to acquire a piece of property and build less expensive housing.

54. I think it needs to be done in a manner that it doesn't look like a charity effort for inner city citizens. To highlight the benefits and opportunities it provides for all. To ensure that it doesn't dramatically financially impact current hebron residents. Address issues and have a plan in place for the residents that fear crime will become an issue

55. I actively seek opportunities for my children to form relationships with those of different cultures, ethnicities, and races knowing that these relationships make them better and more empathetic humans as well as better equipped to live and work in our diverse world. All of these opportunities for my children have been outside of our town of Hebron. I do not understand why Hebron has not participated in "Free Choice" and no longer participates in exchanges between urban "sister" schools.

56. When I was at RHAM I saw racial bullying occur that the administration never addressed. I also specifically moved away in my teens due to wanting to live somewhere with more religious and racial diversity - coming back I saw a lot of explicit racism (shirts at the Hebron Fair for sale for instance) and think that is a major issue.

57. I feel any changes to Hebron's Zoning regulations should not be overtly changed under the guise of racial diversity needs. I believe that can make people in town uncomfortable and more partisan... and prevent any real changes from occurring. The changes should be done to simply address allowing developers to build more multi-family / apartments / and low cost

single family home... to allow Hebron to more affordable for all, and thereby allowing a more diverse culture to move in, without labeling the changes as such.

58. The lack of diversity in this town is palpable. I find myself apologizing for it when the Haitian members of my family come to visit. When I first moved here, I definitely experienced a feeling of being (unknown word) because I am Jewish and most in this town are Christian and assume everyone is. I am also aware that a friend, who lives in Hebron and is not white has experienced some discrimination here. As you mentioned above, children who learn in a diverse school are better prepared to live/work in a diverse world.

59. I think discrimination is more subtle and not always blatant. Since by 2045 the US will have a minority white population, I think it would do white people everywhere a lot of good to learn to live, work, and socialize with people who don't necessarily look, think, sound or worship as you do.

60. Why do politicians feel it is their business to change it community, if they wanna different community they need to move to that

61. our children previously attended a diverse magnet school. one of our big hesitations was changing from a diverse school to the Hebron School System which despite being an excellent school severely lacks on diversity.
62. I feel that any barriers to living in Hebron do not include race or ethnicity.
63. Not sure what you all are trying to do with this survey, we have many friends that are diverse in town . It seems like we are trying to solve for a problem that doesn't exist
64. My husband is an immigrant from Egypt. I was worried when we first moved out here honestly. I grew up and went to school in Hebron, I know the lack of diversity. But honestly he has been treated well with no issues in town. We hope that continues as our children go through the highschool in the future

65. Diversity is not something the town should force upon residents. We all choose to live in a community of our choice.

Making this survey very racially biased is uncalled for .

People of any race can move to Hebron it's there choice they are living in other area towns. Not everyone enjoys living in a rural community where there are limited public services to all who live in Hebron regardless of ethnicity . And taxes are also a reason people stay away from living here.

66. I feel that children growing up within a diverse community is important. The school systems I believe should teach classes related to diversity as a first step in understanding inequality. I homeschool and teach my kids that it's important to accept others regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual preferences. It's important to start this at home, build kindness among our community.

67. We just moved here October 2020 and we love it! We have two kids at Hebron Elementary School and the school is fantastic!

68. No low income housing! That's not diversity. Diversity starts with education! Our education system in this country is broken, and focuses on teaching to the test instead of teaching useful life skills and how to reason and discern information. Most importantly, school should promote work ethic and positivity of mind, to be a successful and useful citizen. Forcing or giving advantage based on skin color or ethnicity isn't the answer. Teaching civics and promoting the melting pot ideaology instills a sense of common purpose and opportunity based on the lesson of work hard and be rewarded in an open and free society, an American democratic republic. Moving a few ethnic families to Hebron doesn't make you diversified or solves the real issues of inequality in this country. Education, life skills, and a living wage create diversity by breaking down the economic and social barriers that created and continue to perpetuate the problem.

69. We are so removed from any sort of racial integration that we don't even know what the issues are and no incentive to care. We are hoarding resources for our own benefit without any care or obligation to ensure that all people in the state have the benefits that we enjoy in our own community. This is prioritizing our own self interest at its worst with no thought for inequities.
70. Beyond just race and ethnicity, should also include LGBTQ diversity awareness/inclusivity. Although I have not seen any discriminatory acts, there is a definite feeling of people would prefer things to stay as they are... Hebron is a great town, but does feel exclusive.
71. My child has a few classmates/friends who are of a different race. My child doesn't see them as being different. She sees them as a classmate/friend. I feel teaching them about white privilege and fragility will set the country back, and NO I'm not a racist. I have friends at work who are of another race.
72. I worked for the Town of Hebron for 11 years and I believe that Hebron is welcoming to all who want to move here. I always tried to make families feel like they belonged to the community no matter their race.
73. I agree that diversity should be implemented in all predominantly white suburban communities however the way our country is set up systematically that is not the reality. Bringing in housing to a community like Hebron would not solve this problem overnight. If you want people who are diverse to be treated equally I absolutely do not agree that putting low income housing in would be the answer. Diversity is woven in a community organically not in a way that feels forced.
74. My family loves Hebron and my children received a great education here. What our town does lack is diversity and cultural understanding. My guess, based on the couple incidents that I am aware of, is that people of color do not always feel welcome in Hebron. I also think lack of affordable housing associated with high taxes and the fact that we are a bedroom community contribute to our lack of diversity.
75. Hebron needs more businesses to increase its tax base. I do most of my spending outside of Hebron because we have nothing here. I may go to Ted's or CVS when I need an item right away but otherwise I go to Glastonbury, Windham, Marlborough, Manchester or buy online from Amazon, Target, or Walmart. Most of my friends do too. Young families move here for the schools (and the seniors here no longer want to fund a decent budget so Hebron will lose its "good schools") and value for \$ spent for a home but go anywhere else for everything else. There is nothing to attract diversity to Hebron. If you're used to living in an area that has a lot to offer, you're not going to choose to live in Hebron unless you're okay with driving 20-30 minutes to get to somewhere that has something to offer. I didn't fully appreciate the decision I was making when I purchased a home here until I started living it everyday and in hindsight I would have held out longer for a home in a neighboring town.

76. Diversity is integral to developing empathetic, successful, value-driven and principle guided young people who go on to become leaders, responsible citizens of our world and nation, and the people we want our community to have and to create. I know this because I had to go on a bus everyday at noon away from RHAM, an incredible school, just to find the diversity that did change and form me and I can say confidently that it was the best education I could have ever received, despite us boasting a community that already has that education. Our schools are great, but they are not as great as they could be without the opportunity to learn from other cultural perspectives, childhood backgrounds, and unique experiences.
77. You are trying to make an issue about racial injustices in this Town when there is none. So, please stop with this agenda. We The People have had ENOUGH!!
78. Hebron's Zoning Regulations promulgate exclusionary practices due to emphasis on large lots and regulatory barriers to creating more affordable multi-family homes or apartment buildings. This results in high cost of housing and limits ability of low- and moderate-income persons and families to move to Hebron.
79. I believe there are more ways than one to get our community to be more inclusive of differences in general. I think that is the main concern I have with my children, the schools and the adults in this town. We need to find a way to build more community, inclusion, and kindness and to be better role models for our kids. While I'd love there to be more racial diversity, I think what this survey is getting at is a very big ask and maybe there are other

ways to get benefit. Another idea is getting more racial diversity within the staff of the school systems.

80. Zoning regulations need to be researched and changed as needed so that affordable housing can be made available in Hebron.

81. I do like the small rural town setting, but wish there were more diversity in race and ethnicity, and in business, particularly in restaurants.

82. When my children were young I brought them to east Hartford for day care with more diversity so they would not grow up in a strictly white community and could learn at a young age that not all children are white like Hebron but all children are equal

83. I would like to see Hebron encourage the building of affordable housing. Low income families would benefit from our good schools and hopefully a welcoming community.

84. Hebron is a great town and I would like to see its rural character and the quality of life it provides preserved. The town seems to be well managed and taxes have been nicely controlled over my 18 years in town. It would be sad to see public policy, influenced by those with a political agenda, slowly erode away the quality of life, and strong school system the town provides. I think it is great that the town government solicits public opinion from local residents to shape local policy as opposed to enacting policy due to pressure from activists who are often not local residents or town taxpayers. The feelings of a majority of local residents should drive policy, not the vocal, politically-driven voice of a strong minority.

85. Hebron does not care about helping low income younger (25-40yrs old) people with housing who have been living here for years and want to stay. And landlords who extort and high price living. No help with housing unless you're a senior citizens.

86. This entire questionnaire is skewed, you can't just wave a pen and make Hebron more diverse. YOU, the board of finance and board of selectmen have made this town inaccessible to affordable middle class housing which certainly limits your diversity you see in this town.

I've worked in an inner city for 10 year and have seen more disparities than you will ever see in a lifetime. This committee is ridiculous. Put some work on bettering the community rather than labeling the community you SERVE as racist and bigots. And to be clear no I am not a Tumpist, no I am not a republican, no I am not a democrat... I am an American and a Hebronian. I applaud your enthusiasm but I personally believe it to be misplaced. I encourage you to focus on the real small town issues we face... for example a radical educational budget and building sidewalks to no where, and heaven forbid we have tennis courts in disrepair at the high school, 10's of thousands that could be better spent!

87. I don't feel that it is Hebron's job to make the town more affordable for anyone. The cost of living is what it is, the property taxes are high here due to the lack of commercial/industrial development and you can either afford to live here or you can't. Making us all pay more so a select few can live here more cheaply is not equitable.
88. We have always taken our children to the Caribbean where my mother was born. As a result they've had racially diverse friends. My granddaughter is bi-racial. Racial diversity is critical. Because our family, friends and part of our life is lived in one I have made it a priority. Yes it's critical.
89. This survey is nice but you are asking people who live here if its nice to live here and if its "diverse enough." To find out the character of the town from a more impartial point of view perhaps the survey should be sent in ethnically diverse communities to find what they would find desirable. If, for example, those surveys show people from different ethnic groups want more industry/job opportunities that Hebron offers, then Hebron is not for them as a number of town survey's have shown a strong reluctance to increase commercial industry here. I think Hebron welcomes anyone who wants to live in a neighborly and safe community with a small town vibe regardless of ethnicity. If by "diversity" we are talking subsidizing residents of color, then we are going down a road of good intentions that is littered with poor politics (quota's), corruption (who decides who is accepted), poor results and hard feelings. Advertise Hebron in a minority market, I'd be curious to see who we attract.
90. It is hilarious to believe that old affluent white people think town funds and effort should be spent on making themselves feel better about their own prejudices rather than focusing on the actual needs of our town like more businesses and sustainable infrastructure.
91. Some questions are questionable (i.e. 97% of Hebron is white, do you have a friend in Hebron of a different race? and how do you feel about Hebron schools - with no contex around diversity)
92. Diversity should happen organically please do not force this issue. If we had less mini mansion developments maybe that would help? My non white friends like Hebron but prefer not to live here since it's very rural.