



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.

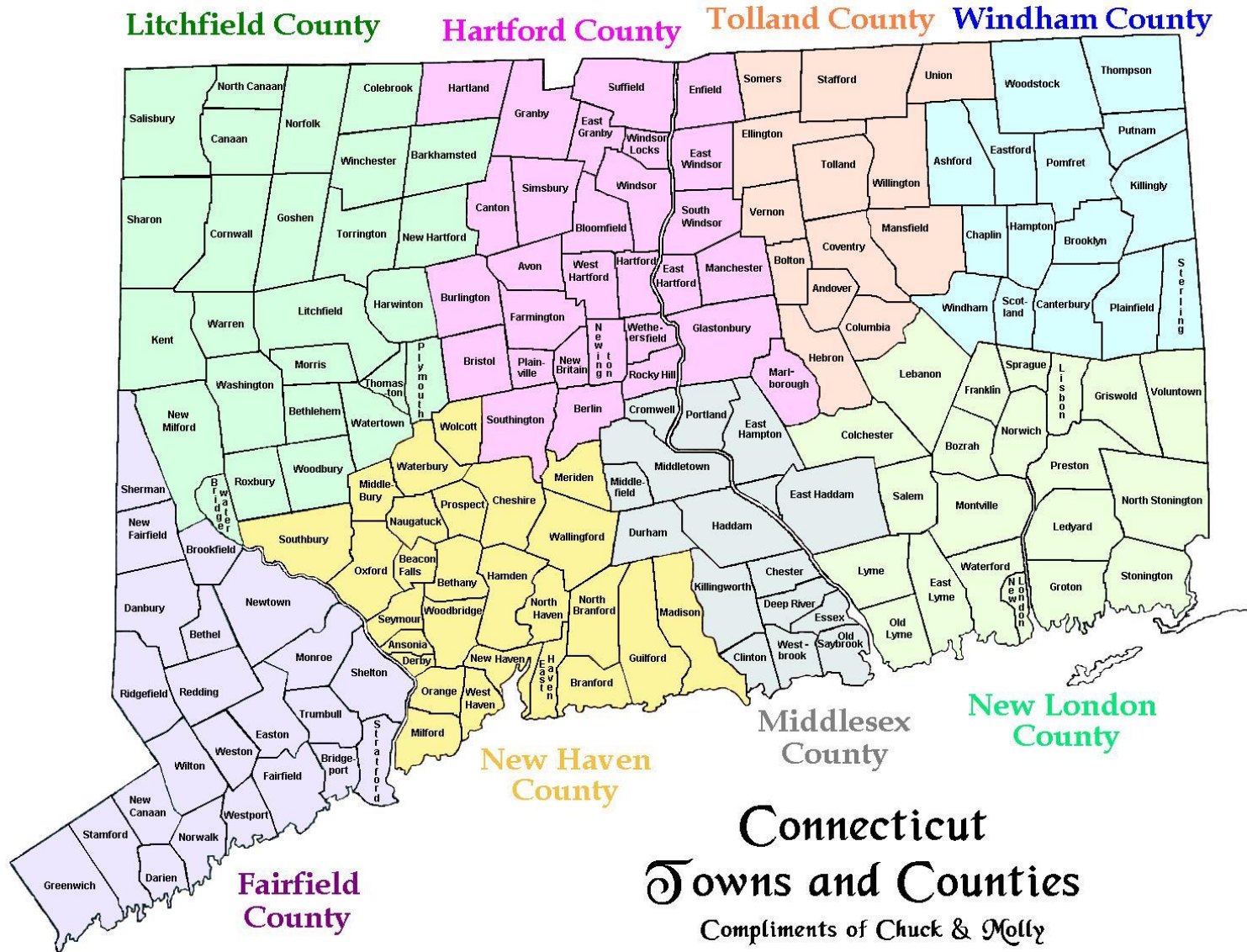
Hartford Courant, 2001. City loses Blacks to Suburbs. <https://www.courant.com/hc-census-0321-story.html>

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-eoobsguoybguznkoa4n2rawwli-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.

²⁴Town of Hebron. 1959. Town of Hebron Annual Report. 1959..

²⁵Town 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}

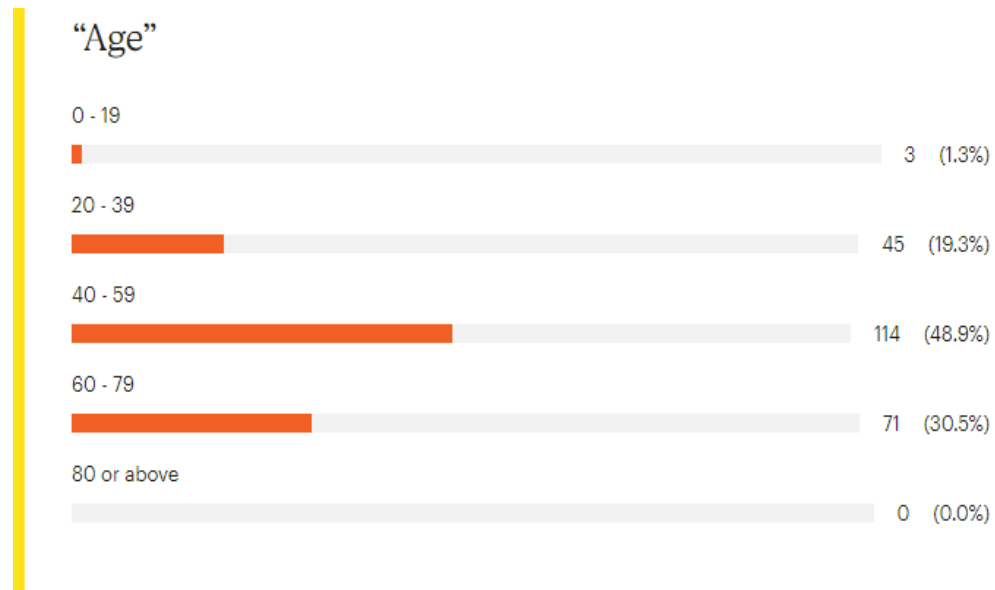
²⁹https://hebronhistoricalsociety.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=208&catid=182. See the story of Cesar and Louis Peters.

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

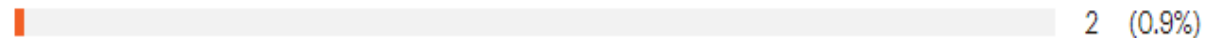
Question 3 has 235 answers (Checkboxes)

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

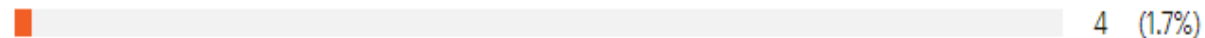
White



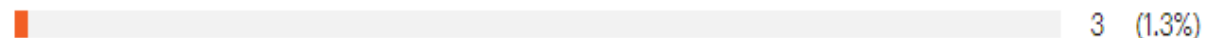
Black or African American



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

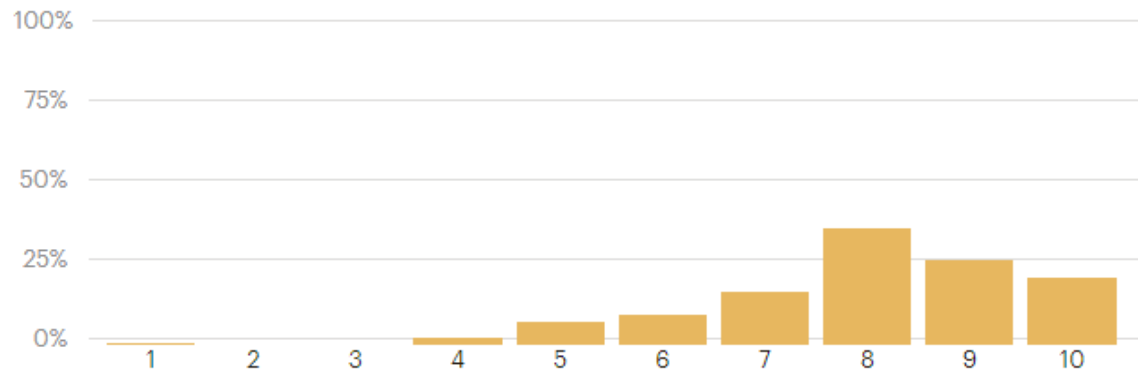
What Drew You to Hebron?

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.)”



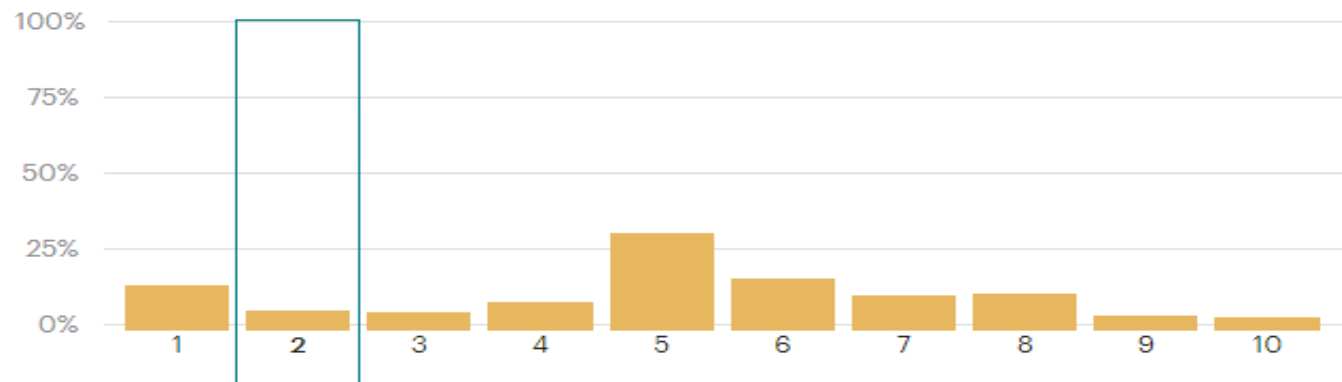
How Can Hebron Improve?

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.) ”



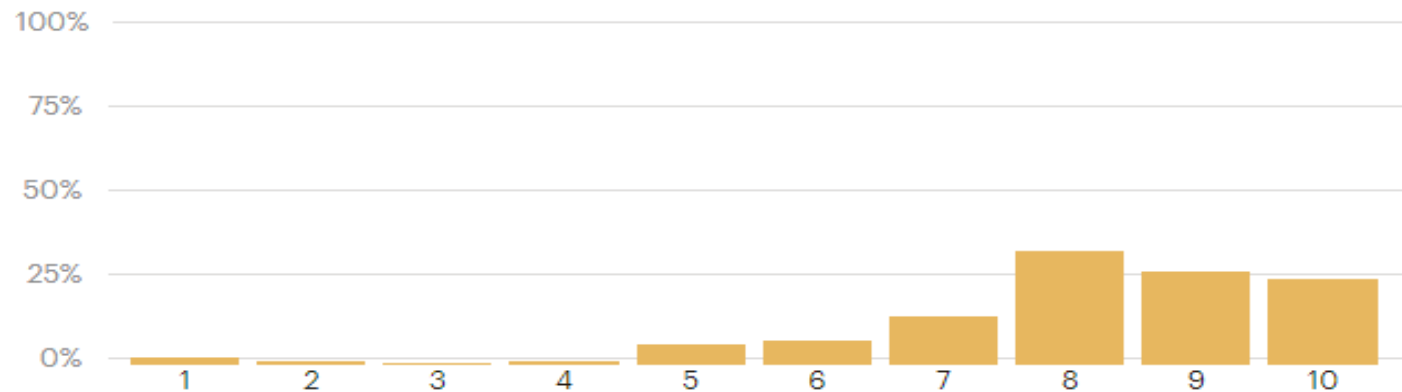
Economic Opportunity (by Age)

	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	5.0

Public Schools

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

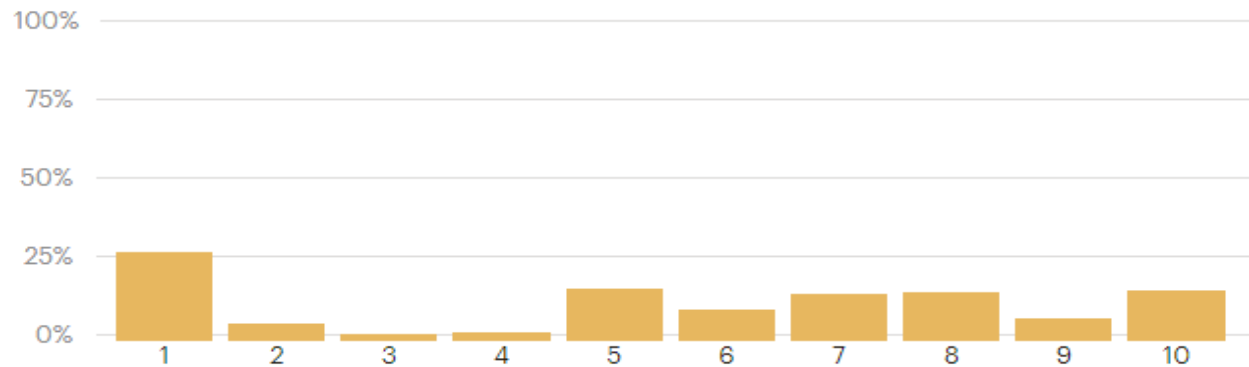
“How would you rate Hebron public schools? (Please rank on a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being Excellent and 1 being Poor.) ”



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.)”

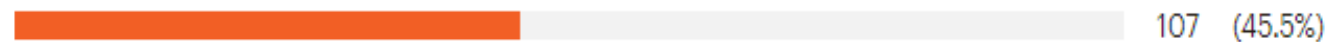


Diversity of Friendships

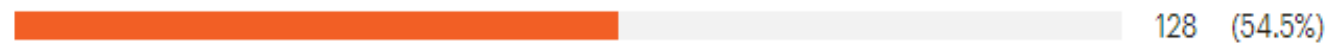
Question 13 has 235 answers (Radio Buttons)

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

Yes



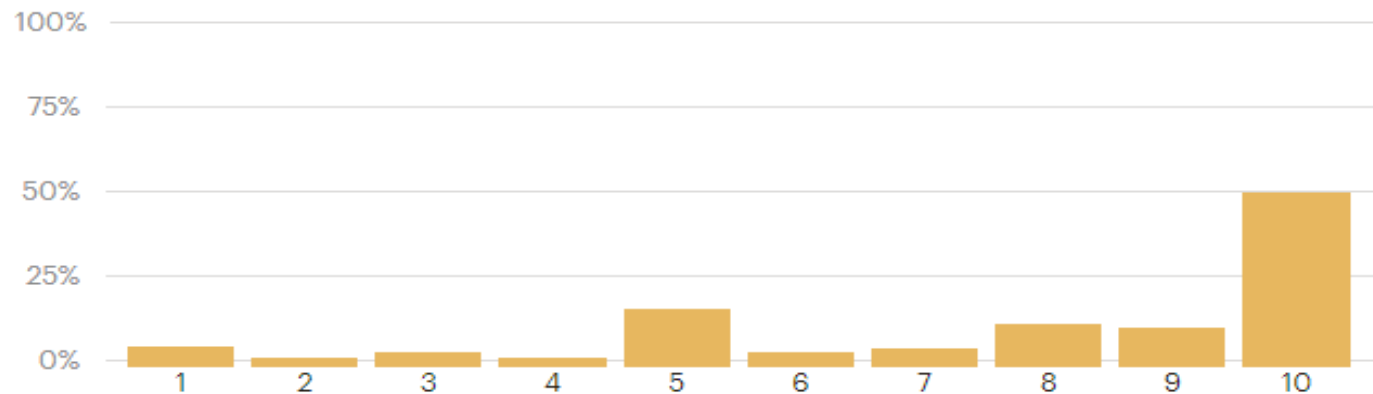
No



Importance of Diversity in Preparing Children to Live in the World

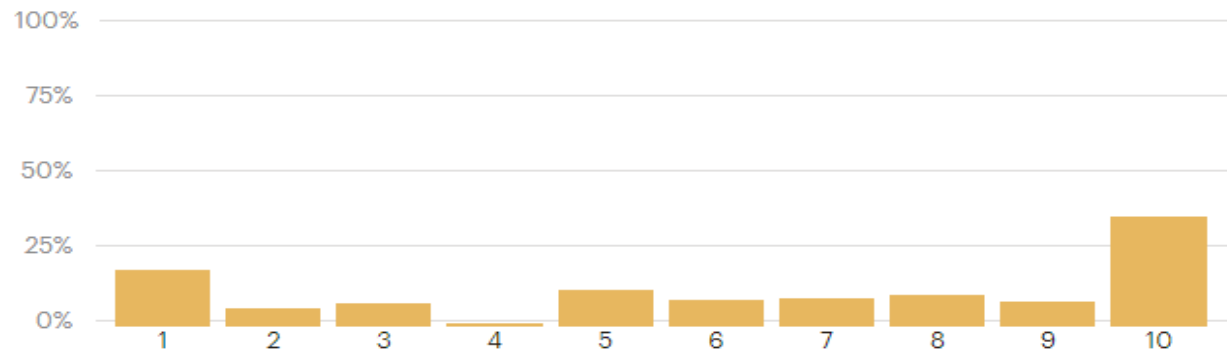
Question 15 has 235 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.6

“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?

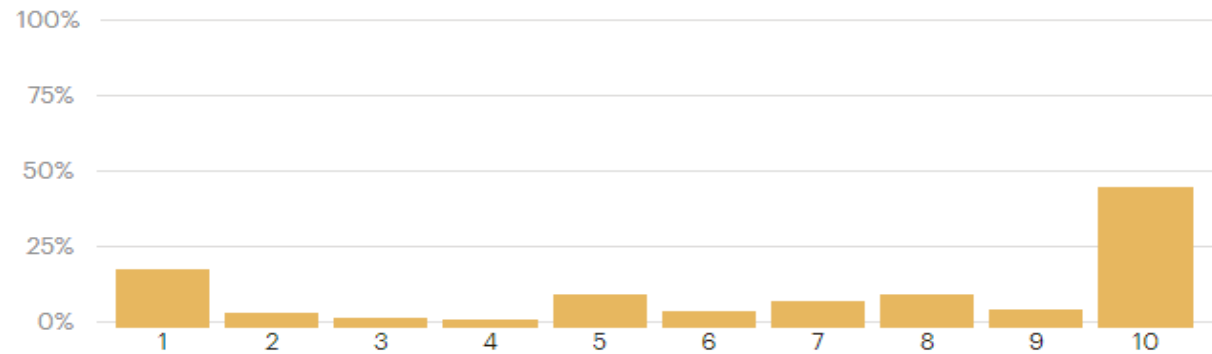
“How high a priority should it be for local government to address racial equity gaps in education, criminal justice, jobs, health, housing and other areas? (Please rank on a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being High Priority and 1 being Not at all a Priority.)”



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?

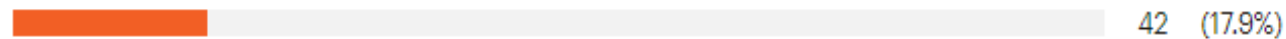
Question 18 has 235 answers (Radio Buttons)

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

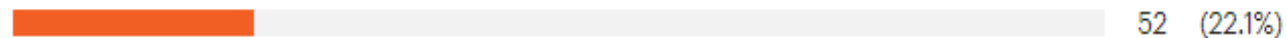
Yes



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?”

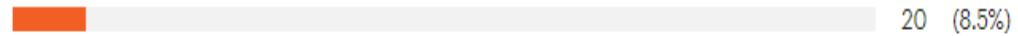
Yes



No



If yes, please explain:



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

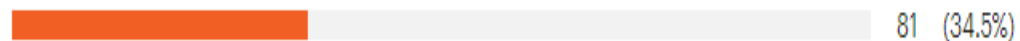
Question 14 has 235 answers (Radio Buttons)

“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.”

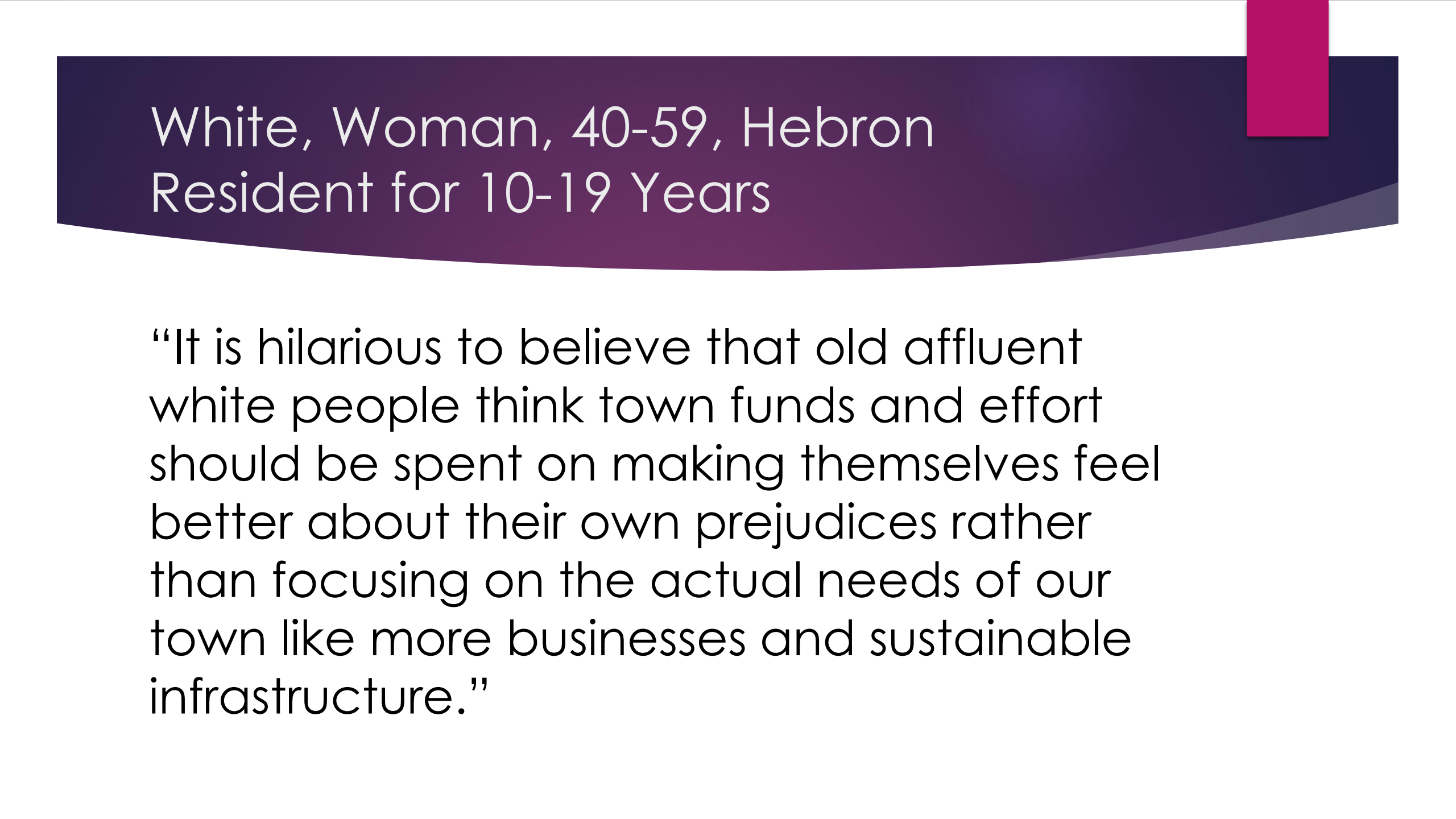


American Indian, Age 60-79, Resident
for 20-39 years

“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 than 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?