

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER SURVEY REPORT



JANUARY 2026

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Introduction	2
Key Findings.....	2
Background & Demographic Information:	2
Neighborhood Character:	3
Sidewalks:	3
Fences:	3
Attached Garages:	4
Housing Types:	4
Conclusion	6
Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire.....	i
Appendix 2: All Survey Results.....	xv
Demographic Question Responses:.....	xv
Neighborhood Character Question Responses:	xvi



Introduction

The Neighborhood Character Survey was developed to gather people’s opinions on characteristics of their neighborhoods that were important to them, including sidewalks, fences, attached garages, and housing types. The feedback from this survey is intended to inform the zoning code rewrite, which includes zoning districts and historic preservation. To gather this feedback, the survey was divided into five sections: background & demographic information, South Hastings, West Hastings, Central Hastings, and East Hastings. South Hastings was identified as the area south of South Street within the city limits. West Hastings was identified as the area west of Baltimore Avenue within the city limits. Central Hastings was identified as the area bounded by 1st Street, 14th Street, Baltimore Avenue, and Eastside Boulevard. East Hastings was identified as the area bounded by 2nd Street, 14th Street, Eastside Boulevard, and 6th Avenue. The final survey question was open-ended and asked for people’s thoughts or comments on characteristics or positive improvements they would like to see in their neighborhood or community. The survey was available online and in person at the Hastings Museum from November 17 through December 31, 2025. The Survey was advertised through Facebook posts, radio, and TV interviews to ensure that people were aware of the survey. Additionally, City staff held four public engagement meetings to discuss historic preservation and this survey.

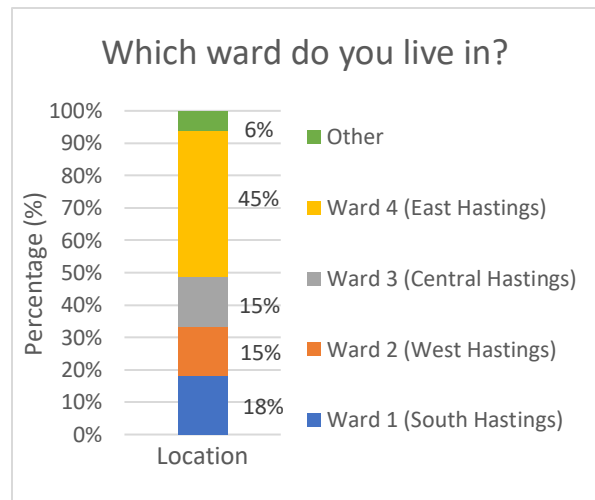
Key Findings

Background & Demographic Information:

The Background & Demographic Information section of the Neighborhood Character Survey was focused on determining respondents’ community affiliation and age. This information is important to determine if the survey responses are representative of Hastings as a whole and whether respondents call the community home.

When respondents were asked which ward they lived in, the majority of respondents selected “Ward 4 (East Hastings)”. This was followed by an even split of respondents among the other wards.

When asked about their age, 48% of respondents selected “35-65”, 27% selected “86 or older”, and 21% selected either “26-34”, “19-25”, or “18 or younger”. In comparison, the population of Hastings is primarily in the “35-64” and “17 or younger” age categories in the 2020 Census. With the majority of survey respondents in the “35-65” age category, this is in line with the overall population.



Neighborhood Character:

The next four sections of the survey were focused on each of the wards in Hastings. Respondents were asked questions about sidewalks, fences, attached garages, and housing types they would like to see in each of these wards. This information is essential for determining which neighborhood characteristics are important to participants and for assessing differences in these characteristics across various parts of the community.

Sidewalks:

Respondents were asked which of the following options they would like to see in their neighborhood. The majority of respondents, ranging from 79% to 91%, in all parts of the community preferred the “With Sidewalks” option. Some respondents did not respond to this question.



With Sidewalks



No Sidewalks

Fences:

Respondents were also asked which fencing type they would like to see in their neighborhood. The majority of respondents, ranging from 55% to 67%, in all parts of the community preferred the “Privacy Fence” option. Between nine to 27% of respondents either didn’t respond to the question or stated that they would be okay with any of the options.



With Chain Link Fence



With Privacy Fence



No Fence

Attached Garages:

When asked which option of attached garage respondents would rather see, the majority of respondents, ranging from 52% to 64%, in all parts of the community preferred the “Setback Garage” option. This was followed by respondents being fairly evenly split between preferring the “Hidden Garage” or not having a preference between any attached garage type. Between 15% to 24% of respondents preferred a “Hidden Garage” and between 12% to 30% of respondents expressed no preference for an attached garage type.



Prominent Garage



Setback Garage



Hidden Garage

Housing Types:

Participants were asked which housing type they would prefer to see in each of the identified neighborhoods in Hastings. Participants were able to select multiple options from the following choices: “Single-Family House”, “Duplexes/Triplexes”, “Four-to-six-unit Buildings”, and “Six-to-12-unit Buildings”. Other than the single-family house, these housing options are considered to be missing-middle housing. Missing-middle housing is defined as any housing type that is not a single-family house or an apartment complex and is considered missing due to not being commonly built. According to Nebraska Revised Statutes 19-901, zoning regulations shall comply with the Municipal Density and Missing Middle Housing Act. This act required the City to develop an action plan, and Hastings’ Affordable Housing Action Plan identified revising the zoning code to encourage housing variety and density as a key strategy for achieving affordable housing. This survey question was intended to ascertain where this type of density could fit.

Of the 46 responses provided for South Hastings, 50% selected “Single-Family House”, approximately 20% selected “Duplexes/Triplexes”, approximately 10% selected “Four-to-six-unit Buildings”, and approximately 10% selected “Six-to-12-unit Buildings”. The breakdown of responses was almost identical for West Hastings. For East Hastings, 54 responses were recorded for the question about housing types, with approximately 40% selecting “Single-Family House” and approximately 20% selecting “Duplexes/Triplexes”. “Four-to-six-unit Buildings” and “Six-to-12-unit Buildings” each received approximately 10% of the votes. The responses for Central Hastings were more evenly split between the different housing types, with a total of 51 responses. “Single-Family House” was selected by 43% of respondents. This was followed by respondents selecting “Duplexes/Triplexes”, “Six-to-12-unit Buildings”, and “Four-to-six-unit Buildings”, with 24%, 16%, and 14% of the votes, respectively.



Single-Family House



Duplexes/Triplexes

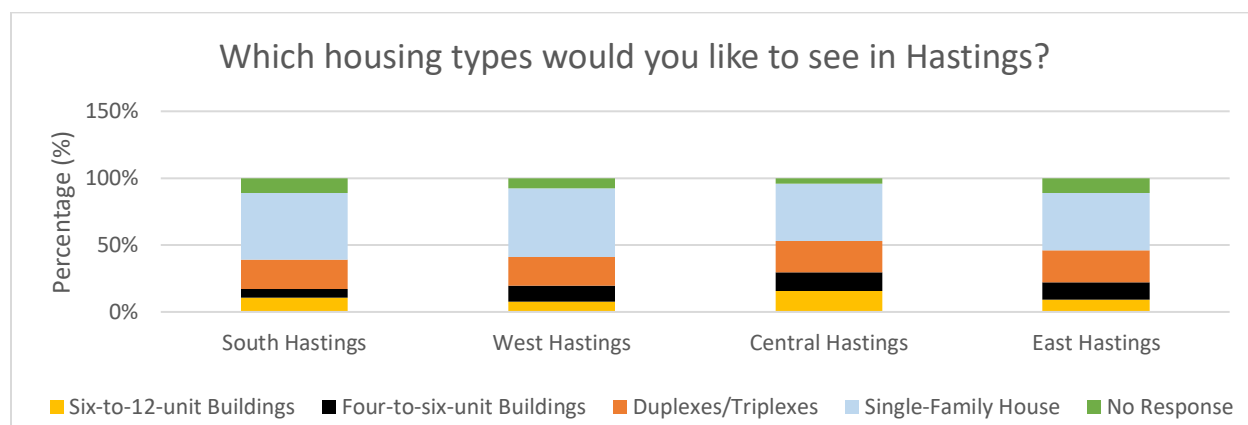


Four-to-six-unit Buildings



Six-to-12-unit Buildings

The following visual shows the breakdown of the housing types that respondents preferred for each location in Hastings. The orange, black, and yellow bars show the “Duplexes/Triplexes”, “Four-to-six-unit Buildings”, and “Six-to-12-unit Buildings”, respectively. Combined, these categories form the missing middle housing. As shown, respondents were most supportive of missing middle housing in Central Hastings, but also moderately supportive of missing middle housing in other parts of town, with at least 40% of respondents selecting some variety of missing middle housing.



Conclusion

The survey led us to multiple conclusions that a rewrite of the zoning code could address. Regardless of the part of the community considered, respondents consistently emphasized the importance of sidewalks in their neighborhoods. This further corroborates information identified in the Hastings Mobility and Walkability Study, which also identified a need for new and improved sidewalks. The future subdivision code rewrite could ensure the continuation of sidewalks through requirements for developers to provide sidewalks in new developments.

Additionally, the majority of survey respondents identified a preference for privacy fences in their neighborhoods throughout the community. The zoning code rewrite could also include requirements for fencing materials and heights to support this vision for the community.

Furthermore, Survey respondents primarily identified a preference for setback garages; however, hidden garages and no stated preference for garage type were also common responses. The zoning code rewrite could support preferences for setback garages by creating a separate setback requirement for an attached garage and house. For example, in Norfolk, the front yard setback is required to be 15 feet to the house and 25 feet to the garage. In Hastings, the setback regulations dependent on which zoning district houses are in. For example, in the historic core of Hastings, garages could be required to be setback to match the historic character of the neighborhood, while in newer subdivision, they may not require setbacks.

In regard to housing types, survey respondents were generally supportive of missing middle housing types with at least 40% of respondents selecting some type of missing middle housing for each portion of the community. This is in line with the 2025 Comprehensive Plan of Hastings, which identifies actions the City should take to support development, including encouraging missing middle development and higher density throughout the community. The zoning code rewrite could implement this vision by allowing for gentle density such as duplexes/triplexes throughout the community, as well as multi-plex buildings such as four-to-six-unit buildings and six-to-12-unit buildings in higher density residential zoning districts.

In conclusion, rewriting the zoning code to take into account survey respondents' opinions will provide community members with a way to ensure that the community fits their vision while also aligning with adopted codes and plans such as the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, 2023 Affordable Housing Action Plan, and relevant State Statutes.

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

Neighborhood Character Survey

The Neighborhood Character Survey will run from November 17 to December 31, 2025. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes and is comprised of approximately 20 questions. The questions are about the character of various neighborhoods in Hastings and have either or options. The feedback from this survey will be used to inform the zoning code rewrite, which includes zoning districts and historic qualifications. Please return your survey to the Development Services Office at 3505 Yost Avenue, Hastings, Nebraska. For more information, contact Kevin Kubo (kkubo@cityofhastings.org) or Ember Batelaan (ebatelaan@cityofhastings.org).

Background & Demographic Information (2 questions)

1. Which ward do you live in?
 - a. Ward 1 (South Hastings)
 - b. Ward 2 (West Hastings)
 - c. Ward 3 (Central Hastings)
 - d. Ward 4 (East Hastings)
 - e. Outside City Limits
 - f. Other Community
2. Which category below includes your age?
 - a. 18 or younger
 - b. 19-25
 - c. 26-34
 - d. 35-65
 - e. 66-85
 - f. 86 or older
 - g. Prefer not to respond

The following questions are about the character of various parts of Hastings. Feel free to answer all of the questions or only the questions for your own neighborhood. The last question asks about your thoughts and feedback regarding neighborhood character.

- South Hastings: South of South Street within City Limits
- West Hastings: West of Baltimore Avenue within City Limits
- Central Hastings: Between 1st and 14th Streets from Baltimore Ave to Eastside Blvd
- East Hastings: Between 2nd and 14th Streets from Eastside Blvd to 6th Ave

a. With Sidewalks



a. With Chain Link Fence



5. Which option of attached garage would you rather see in South Hastings?

a. Prominent Garage



b. Setback Garage



c. Hidden Garage



6. Which housing types would you like to see in South Hastings?

a. Single-Family House



b. Duplexes/ Triplexes



c. Four-to-six-unit Buildings



d. Six-to-12 units Buildings



West Hastings (4 questions)



7. Which option would you rather see in West Hastings?

- a. With Sidewalks



8. Which option would you rather see in West Hastings?

- a. With Chain Link Fence



9. Which option of attached garage would you rather see in West Hastings?

a. Prominent Garage



b. Setback Garage



c. Hidden Garage



10. Which housing types would you like to see in West Hastings?

a. Single-Family House



b. Duplexes/ Triplexes



c. Four-to-six-unit Buildings



d. Six-to-12 units Buildings



Central Hastings (4 questions)



11. Which option would you rather see in Central Hastings?

a. With Sidewalks

b. No Sidewalks



12. Which option would you rather see in Central Hastings?

a. With Chain Link Fence

b. With Privacy Fence

c. No Fence



13. Which option of attached garage would you rather see in Central Hastings?

a. Prominent Garage



b. Setback Garage



c. Hidden Garage



14. Which housing types would you like to see in Central Hastings?

a. Single-Family House



b. Duplexes/ Triplexes



c. Four-to-six-unit Buildings



d. Six-to-12 units Buildings



East Hastings (4 questions)



15. Which option would you rather see in East Hastings?

a. With Sidewalks

b. No Sidewalks



16. Which option would you rather see in East Hastings?

a. With Chain Link Fence

b. With Privacy Fence

c. No Fence



17. Which option of attached garage would you rather see in East Hastings?

a. Prominent Garage



b. Setback Garage



c. Hidden Garage



18. Which housing types would you like to see in East Hastings?

a. Single-Family House



b. Duplexes/ Triplexes



c. Four-to-six-unit Buildings



d. Six-to-12 units Buildings



19. Any last thoughts or comments about characteristics or positive improvements you would like to see in your neighborhood or community?

Appendix 2: All Survey Results

Due to the limited number of responses, the number of responses to each answer choice is removed and only percentage of responses is shown to protect the anonymity of survey respondents. Additionally, answer choices with only one response were combined with the most similar category. (Ex. Outside City Limits/Other Community were combined).

Demographic Question Responses:

What is the method that the survey was taken?	
Responses	Percent
Online	82%
On Paper	18%
Total	100%

Which ward do you live in?	
Responses	Percent
Ward 1 (South Hastings)	18%
Ward 2 (West Hastings)	15%
Ward 3 (Central Hastings)	15%
Ward 4 (East Hastings)	45%
Outside City Limits/Other Community	6%
Total	100%

Which category below includes your age?		
Responses	Survey Respondents	Hastings 2020 Census
18 or younger/19-25/26-34	21%	49%
35-65	48%	34%
66-85/86 or older	27%	17%
Total	100%	100%

Neighborhood Character Question Responses:

Which option would you rather see in Hastings?				
Responses	South Hastings	West Hastings	Central Hastings	East Hastings
With Sidewalks	88%	85%	91%	79%
No Sidewalks/ No Preference/ No Response	12%	15%	9%	21%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Which option would you rather see in Hastings?				
Responses	South Hastings	West Hastings	Central Hastings	East Hastings
With Chain Link Fence	6%	6%	6%	-
With Privacy Fence	67%	64%	55%	55%
No Fence	15%	15%	30%	15%
No Preference/ No Response	12%	15%	9%	30%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Which option of attached garage would you rather see in Hastings?				
Responses	South Hastings	West Hastings	Central Hastings	East Hastings
Setback Garage	61%	58%	64%	52%
Hidden Garage	21%	21%	24%	15%
Prominent Garage/ No Preference/ No Response	18%	21%	12%	33%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Which housing types would you like to see in Hastings? Select all that apply.				
Responses	South Hastings	West Hastings	Central Hastings	East Hastings
Single-Family House	50%	51%	43%	43%
Duplexes/Triplexes	22%	22%	24%	24%
Four-to-six-unit Buildings	7%	12%	14%	13%
Six-to-12-unit Buildings	11%	8%	16%	9%
Missing Middle Housing*	40%	42%	54%	46%
No Response	11%	8%	4%	11%

*Missing Middle Housing is defined as any housing type that is not a single-family house or an apartment complex and is considered missing due to not being commonly built. In the survey, the “Duplexes/Triplexes”, “Four-to-six-unit Buildings”, and “Six-to-12-unit Buildings” fit this category.

Any last thoughts or comments about characteristics or positive improvements you would like to see in your neighborhood or community?
I would like to see the code enforced on the South side of Hastings. There are too many codes that are not enforced including parking on the lawns, lack of enforcement of the minimum maintenance code on rental properties and mowing/snow removal. Things are tolerated on the south side of Hastings that would never be tolerated in other areas.
Eastside roads are terrible. We are trapped by trains 5-7 times a day. Only way over is Burlington or showboat. Property taxes are too high for what Hastings has to offer.
More Stop signs
More sidewalks
Investment from the City in repairing and replacing sidewalks.
More neighborhood parks
Better signage to enforce the 15-mph speed limit on South 1st Avenue and repaint the pedestrian crosswalks in front of Goldbeck Towers.
Grants for residential properties 75 years or older for improvements. I would also like to see the community to make a greater effort to provide employment opportunities and entertainment for the town's youth. I have two adult kids in their 20s and one that is 14. There is nothing to do for teenagers besides the bowling alley or the Y. When I was young (80s-90s), there was so much more to do for teens. As for kids in their 20s, we have a lot of bars. That's it. They love Hastings, but have been unable to find a job that pays a living wage. One is looking for jobs outside the city. If you want to keep the local youth here, there needs to be something to keep them here.
I feel like the north part of town seems to be expanding at a nice rate, but it feels like other portions of town suffer as a result sometimes. I also am glad we have many building projects popping up but it feels like apartments and senior living areas take up a large chunk of that project focus.
Better sidewalks and better way over railroad for trails.

Thank you!