

Planning Commission Meeting

433 Cherry Street, Sumas
Monday, September 16, 2024 at 5:30 PM

Agenda

Open Meeting

1. Review/Correct and/or Approve Minutes

[A.](#) August 19, 2024, Draft Minutes

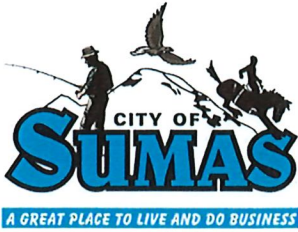
2. Old Business

[B.](#) Comprehensive Plan Review

3. New Business

[C.](#) Memo - Proposed Population & Employment

4. Adjournment



Planning Commission Meeting

433 Cherry Street, Sumas
Monday, August 19, 2024, at 5:30 PM

Minutes

PRESENT

Ex-Officio Josh Clawson
Carson Cortez, City Planner
Michelle Quinn, City Clerk

Planning Committee

Present
John VanWingerden
Helen Solem
Teresa Josephson
Lizette Custer
Jacob Williams

Review/Correct and/or Approve Minutes

John VanWingerden made a motion to approve July 15, 2024, Minutes, Lizette Custer, seconded; all were in favor the motion carried.

Carson Cortez, City Planner explained this discussion will be about the business district zoning areas, adding, amending, and removing chapters of the code book. The city has three business districts, business district general, business district traffic oriented and business district low impact.

Carson started with the business district traffic oriented, this pertains to the businesses on Cherry Street south of the bridge. One of the proposed changes for this district is to change the name to Highway Business District. This district will be reserved for businesses along Highway 9 whose primary base of customers are visitors travelling through.

Business General is the businesses on Cherry Street north of the bridge. The proposed name change will be Central Business District. The purpose for this district is for businesses which would provide day-to-day goods and services.

Business District, low impact, Carson is proposing to remove/repeal this district because it is a small area and very under-utilized. Carson is proposing a new chapter 20.43 for Municipal Business District the purpose for this district will be reserved for businesses for which the primary customer base are the residents of Sumas. Carson explained this district is also meant to function as a transition zone between the residential and commercial areas of town.

Discussion about causing more traffic on Sumas Avenue with the zone changes and adding the businesses; if that would be a good option or not for the residents that live in town. Lizette Custer would like to see more of a vision for our town and building the town off that vision.

Carson gave an update on the UGA that the city proposed to the county; he is still waiting to hear back from them on any decisions.

Teresa Josephson stated that she will be reviewing the capital facilities element, Lizette will be reviewing the housing element, and Helen will review the land use element from the current comprehensive plan.

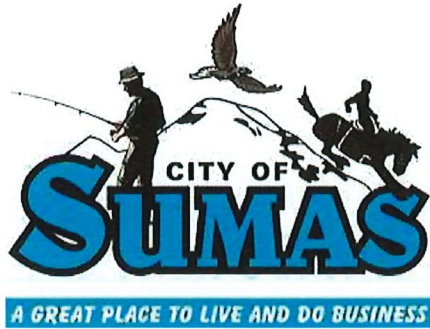
Lizette would like to know the ratio between homeowners and rentals currently in our city.

The next planning commission meeting was set for September 16, 2024.

John VanWingerden made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Jacob Williams seconded; all were in favor the motion carried.

Councilmember Josh Clawson, Ex Officio

City Clerk

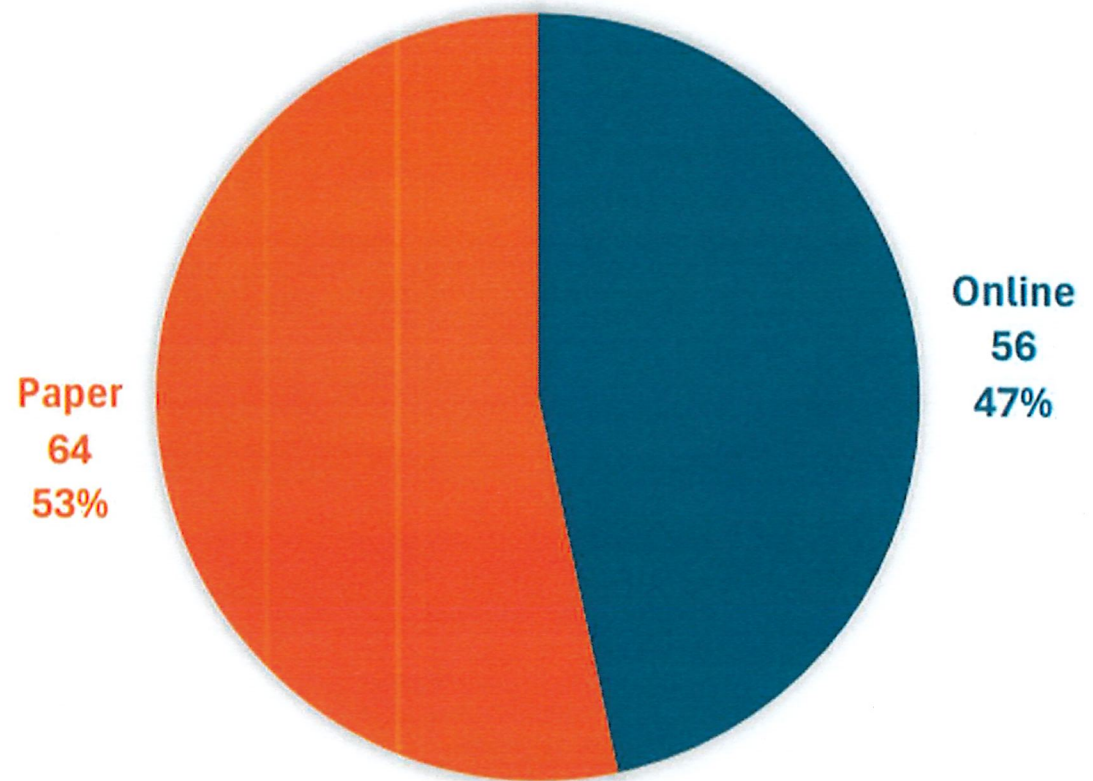


Sumas 2024 Community Survey Response Results

Total Responses: 120

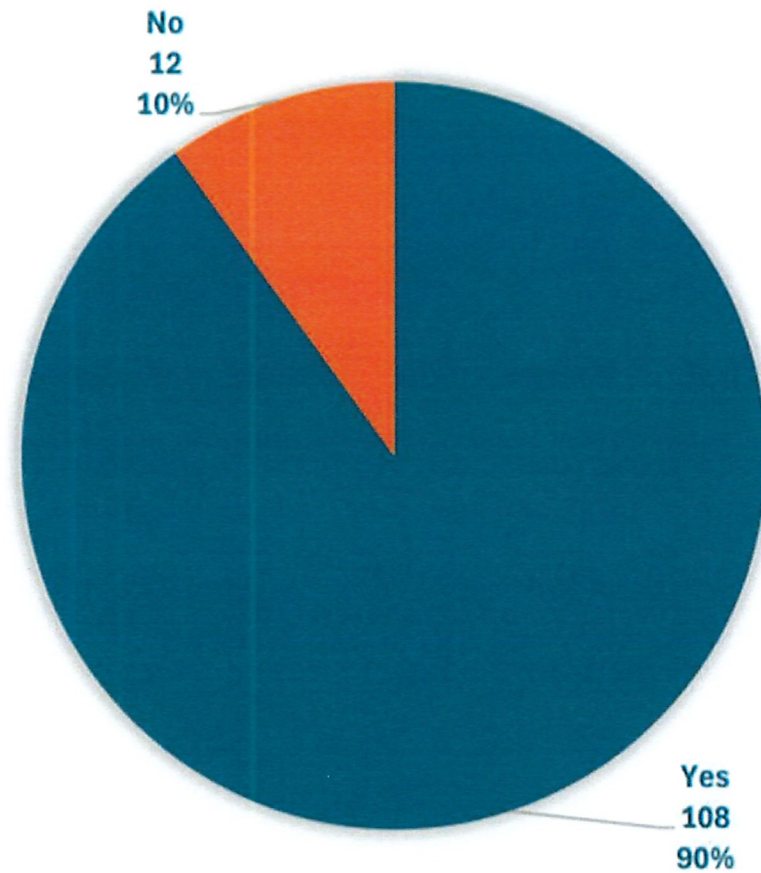
Survey Response Type

- Possible Types
 - Online
 - Paper



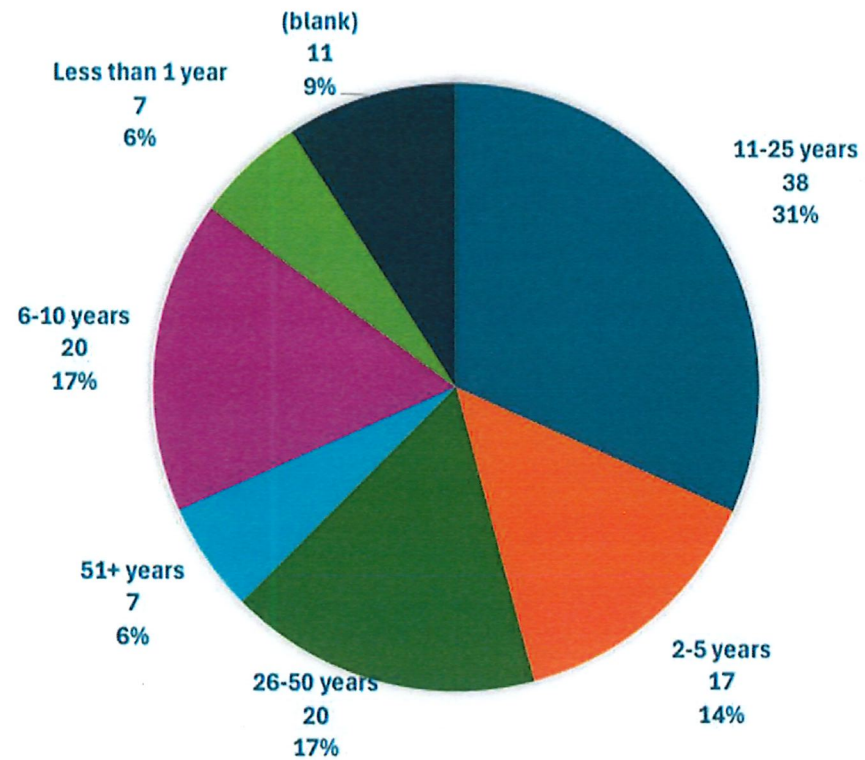
Question 1: Do you
currently live within the
city limits of Sumas?

- Possible Responses
 - Yes
 - No



Question 1a: If answered yes to the previous question, how long have you lived in Sumas?

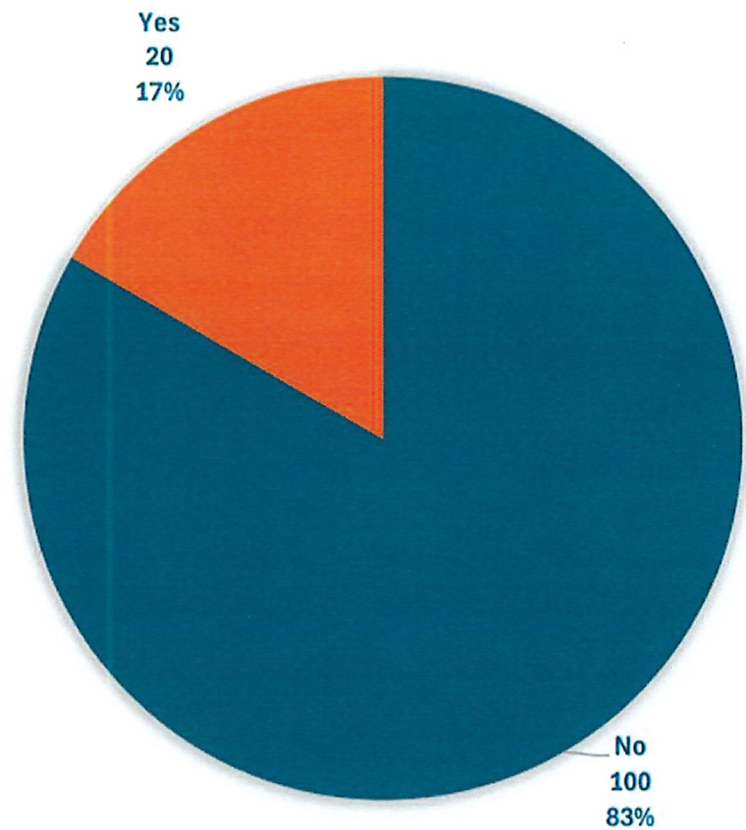
- Possible Responses
 - Less than 1 year
 - 2-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-25 years
 - 26-50 years
 - 51+ years



Question 2: Do you currently own a business within Sumas city limits?

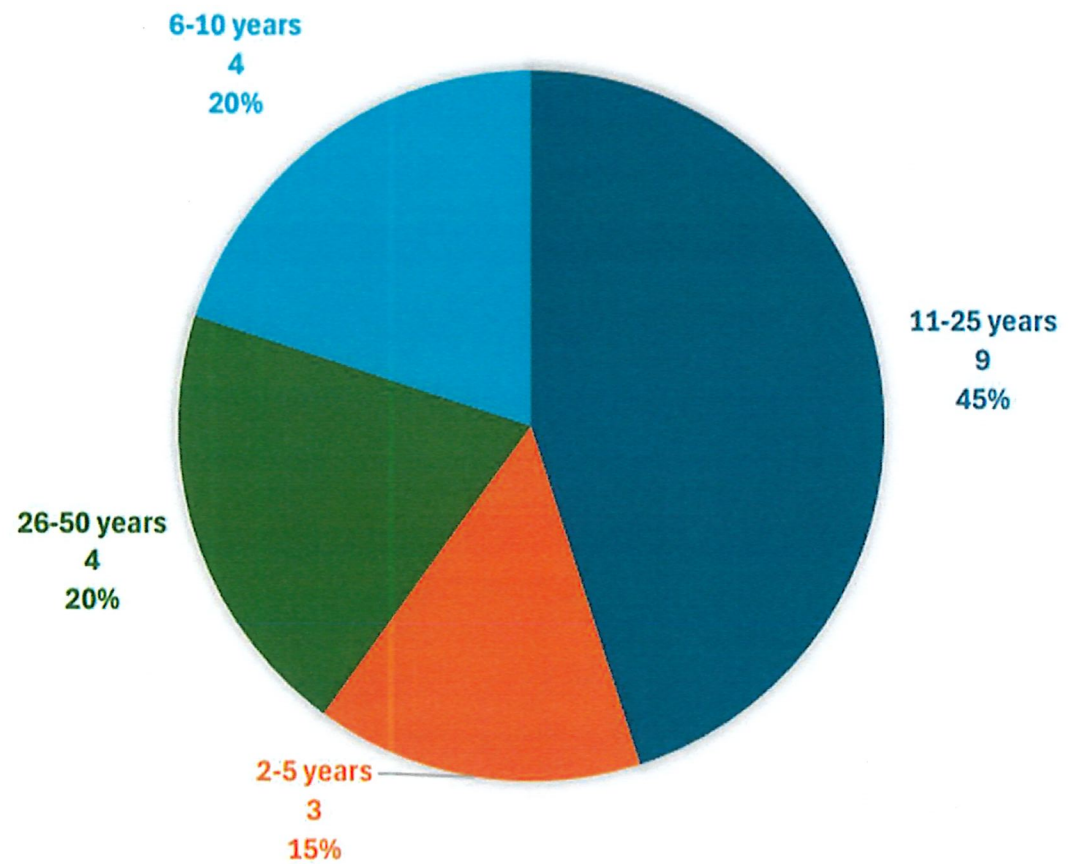
- Possible Responses

- Yes
- No



Question 2a: If you answered “yes” to the previous question, how long have you owned a business in Sumas?

- Possible Responses
 - Less than 1 year
 - 2-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-25 years
 - 26-50 years
 - 51+ years



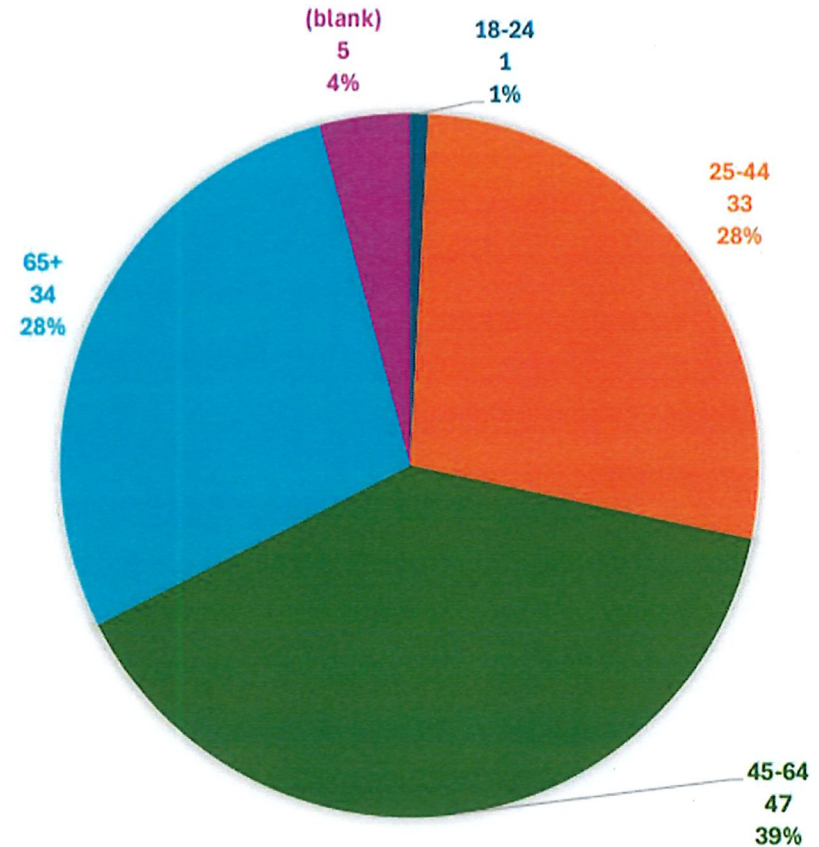
Questions 3, 4, and 4a

- Question 3: Would you like to learn more about the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update process?
- Question 4: Would you like to be contacted regarding project updates?
- Question 4a: If you answered “Yes” to either question above, please write in your name, email address, and/or mailing address to receive more information
- **Question responses not shown (Internal use only)**

Question 5: Age

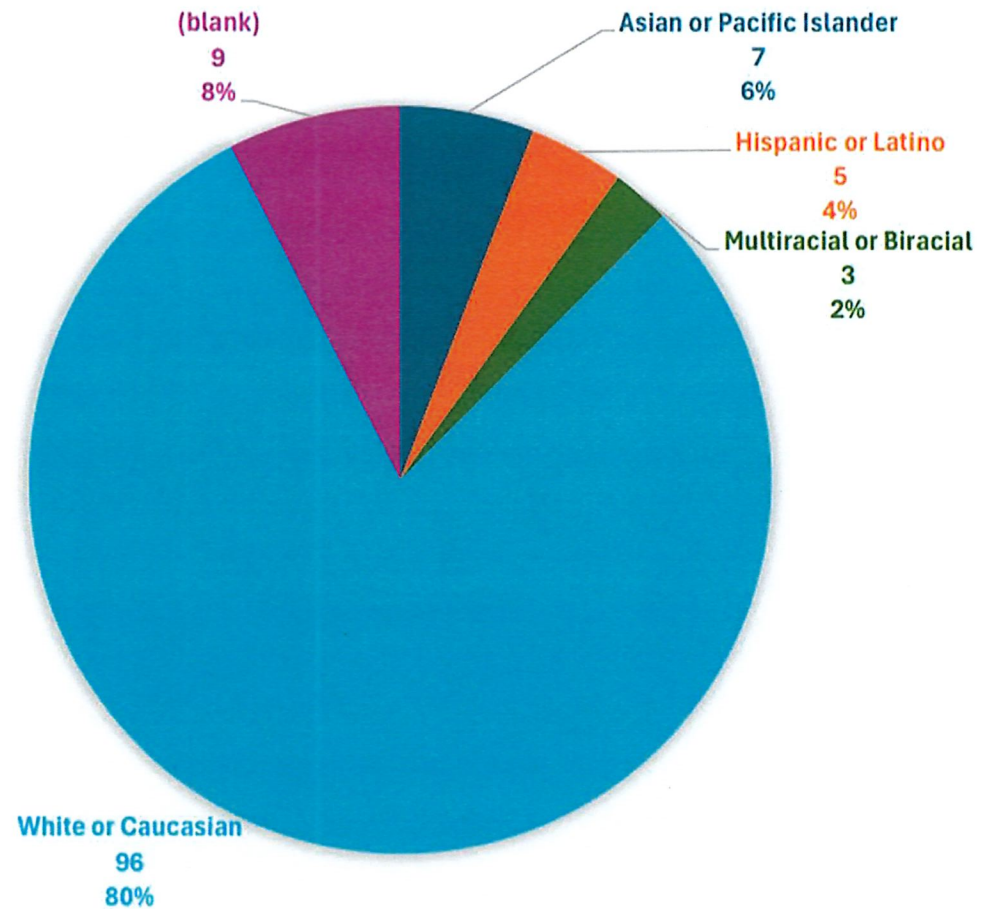
- Possible Responses:

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-44
- 45-64
- 65+



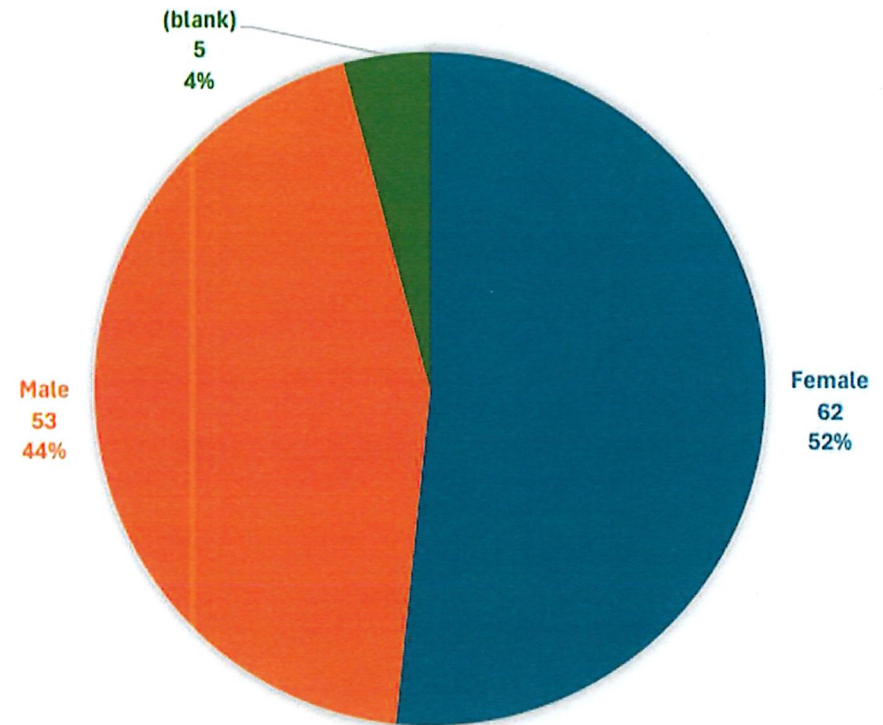
Question 6: Race/Ethnicity

- Possible Responses
 - Asian or Pacific Islander
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Native American or Alaskan Native
 - White or Caucasian
 - Multiracial or Biracial



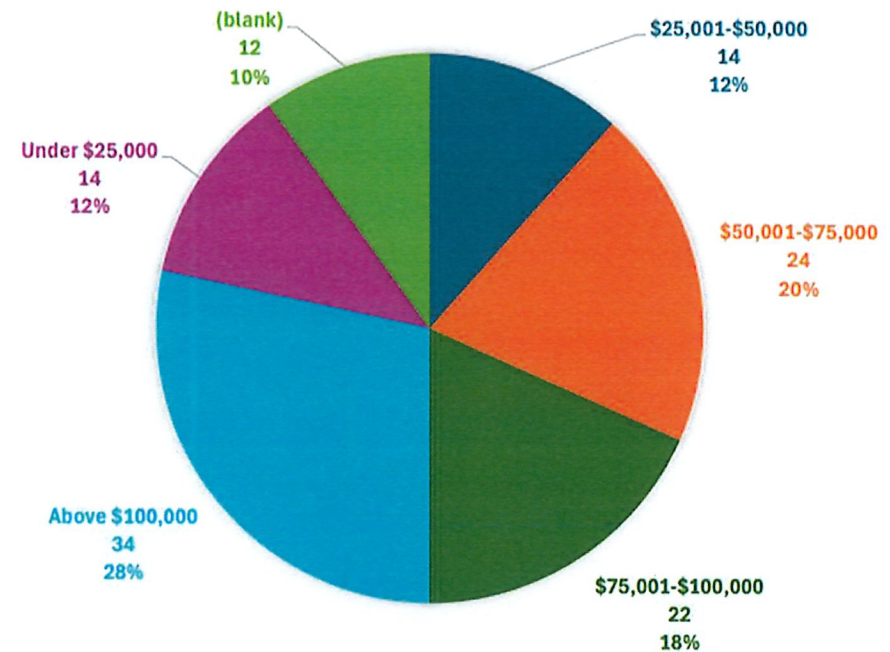
Question 7: Gender Identity

- Possible Responses
 - Female
 - Male



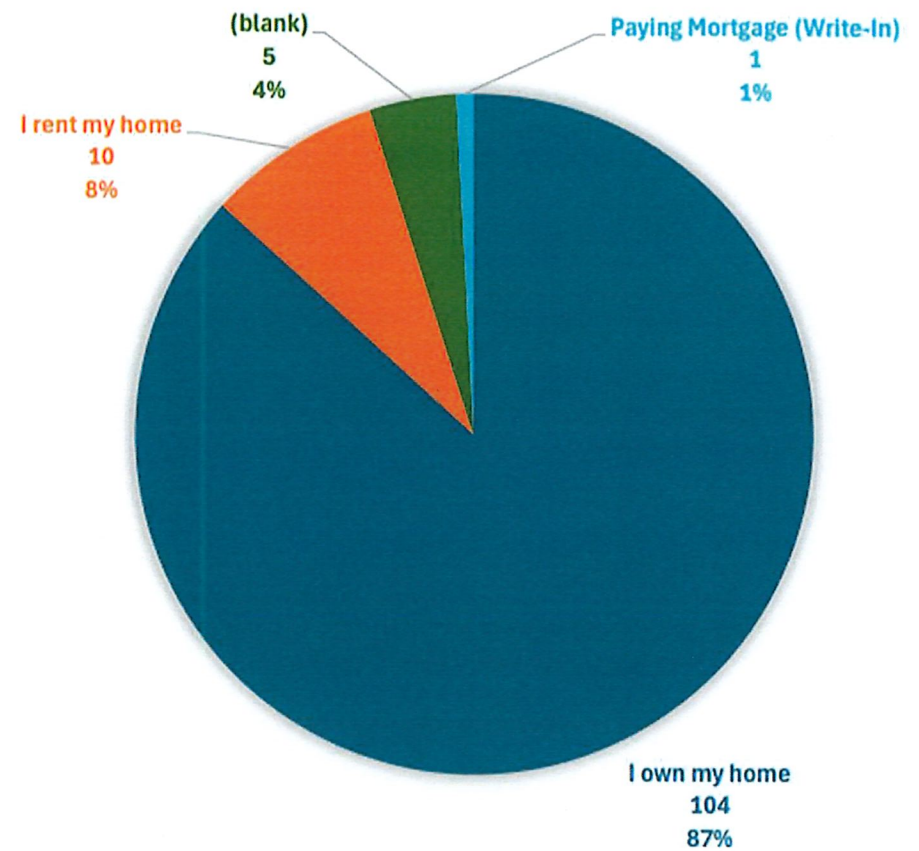
Question 8: Annual Household Income

- Possible Responses
 - Under \$25,000
 - \$25,001-\$50,000
 - \$50,001-\$75,000
 - \$75,001-\$100,000
 - Above \$100,000



Question 9: Home Ownership/Rental Status

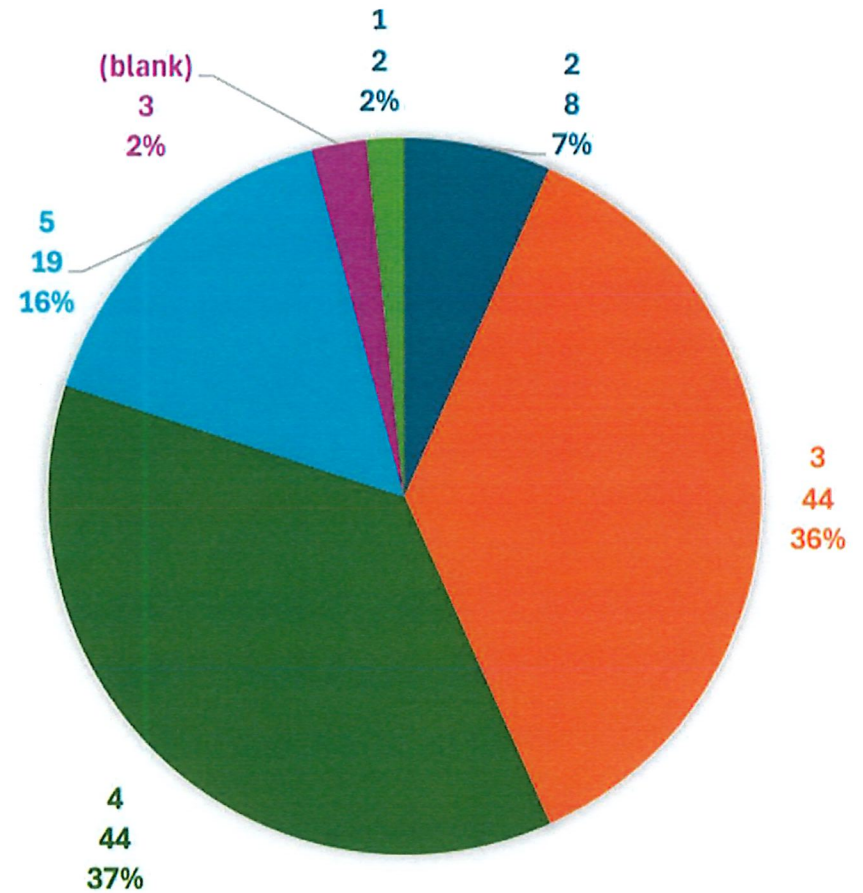
- Possible Responses
 - I own my home
 - I rent my home



Question 10: Do you think Sumas is heading in a good direction? (1 to 5 Scale)

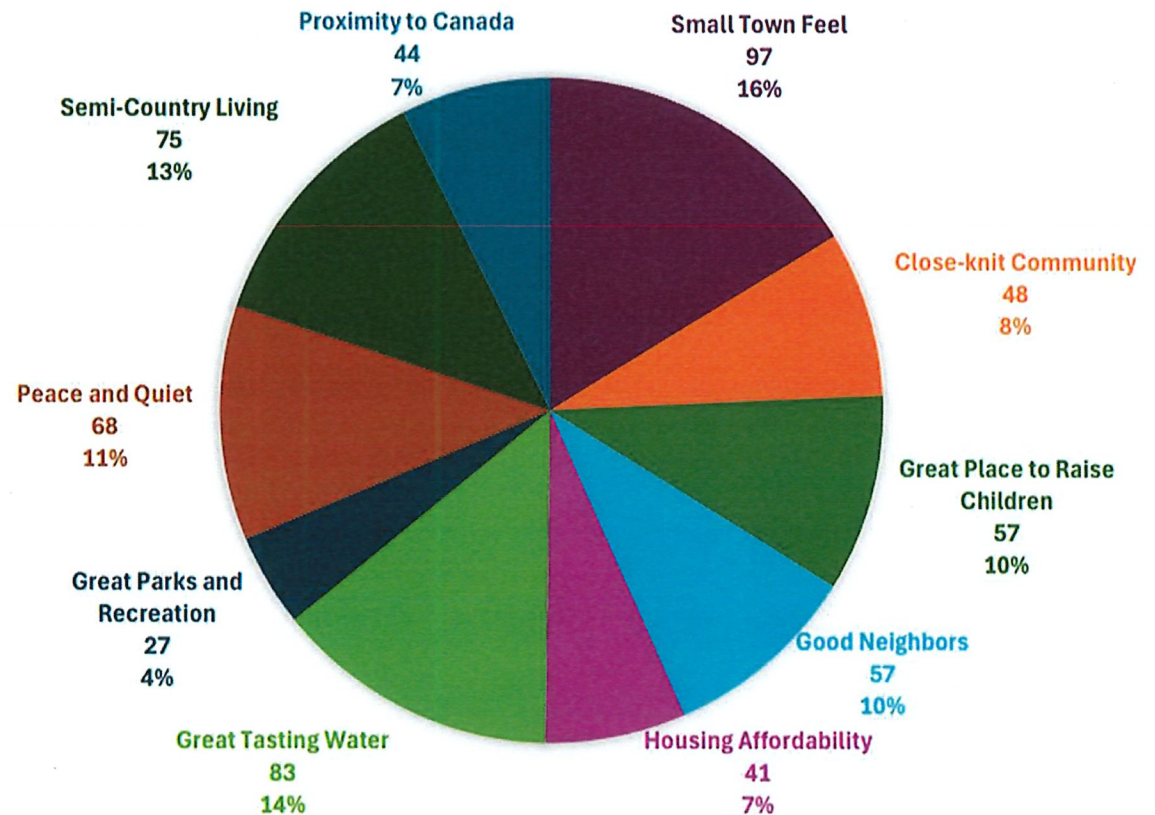
• Possible Responses

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5



Question 11: What do you consider to be Sumas' greatest strengths as a community? (Check all that apply)

- Possible Responses
 - Small Town Feel
 - Close-knit Community
 - Great Place to Raise Children
 - Good Neighbors
 - Housing Affordability
 - Great Tasting Water
 - Great Parks and Recreation
 - Semi-Country Living
 - Proximity to Canada
 - Other (Write Ins)



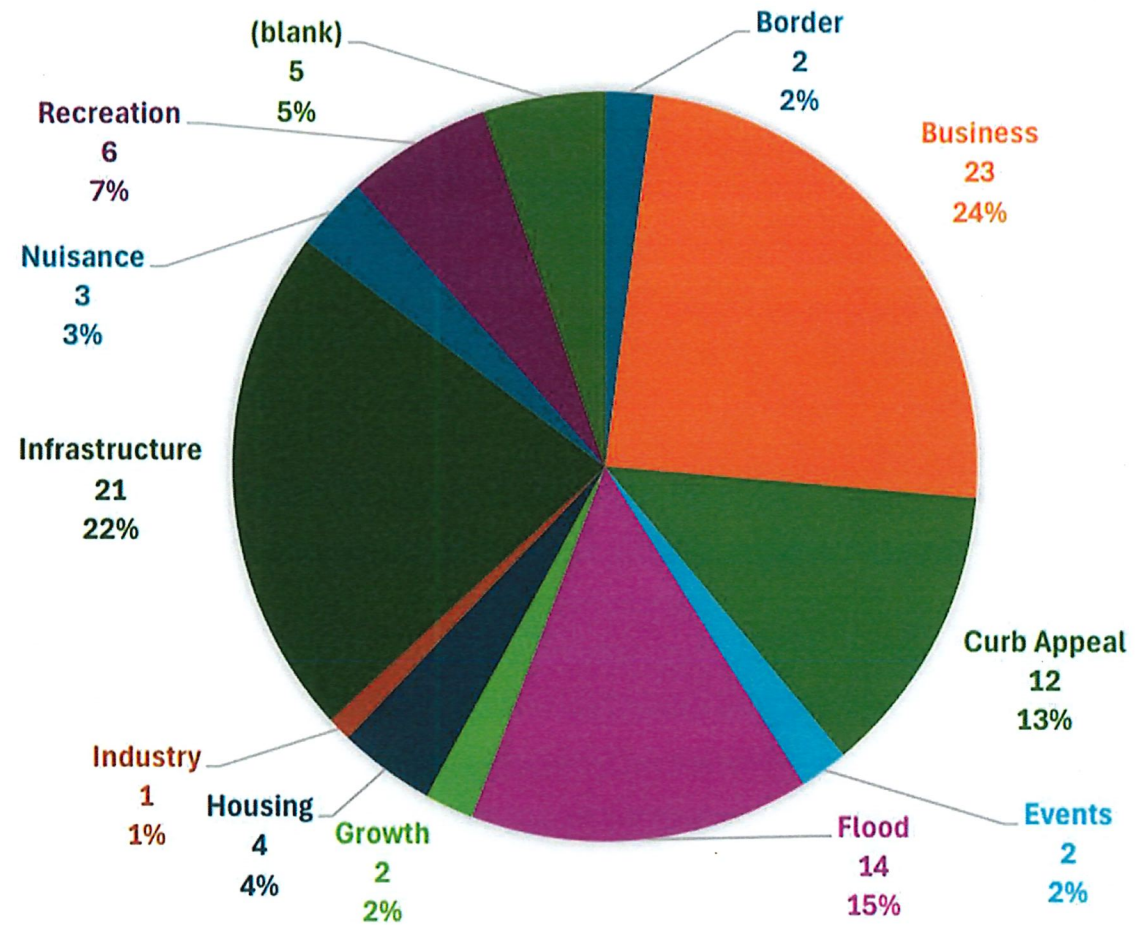
Question 11

Write-Ins

Write-Ins	
Safe Place to Live	1
City is good about being prompt to issues	1
Industrial Zone and Heavy Haul Road	1
Safe/good police dept	1

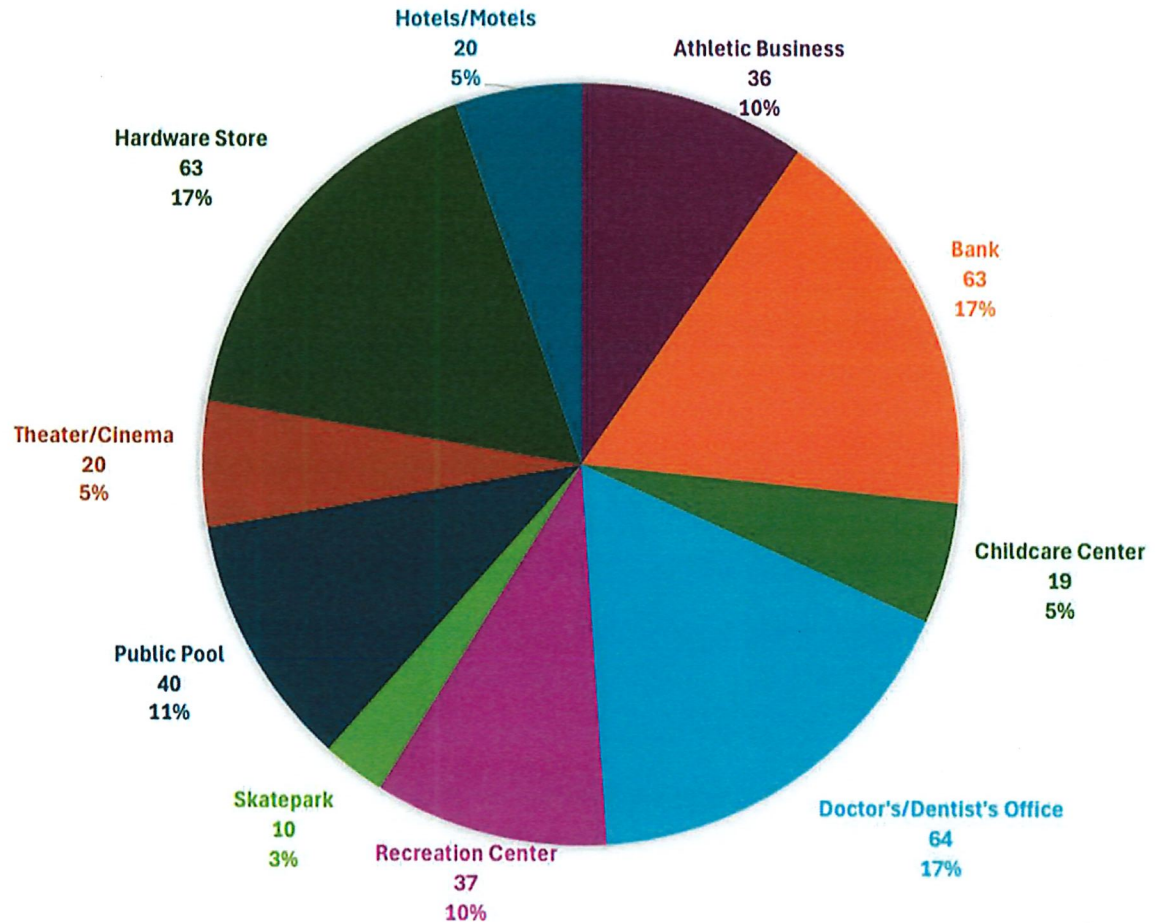
Question 12: What aspects of Sumas do you think could use improving? (Organized by response category)

- Possible categories
 - Border
 - Business
 - Curb Appeal
 - Events
 - Flood
 - Growth
 - Housing
 - Industry
 - Infrastructure
 - Nuisance
 - Recreation



Question 13: Which amenities would you like to see come to Sumas? (Check all that apply)

- Possible Responses
 - Athletic Business
 - Bank
 - Childcare Center
 - Doctor's/Dentist's Office
 - Recreation Center
 - Skatepark
 - Public Pool
 - Theater/Cinema
 - Hardware Store
 - Hotels/Motels
 - Other (Write Ins)



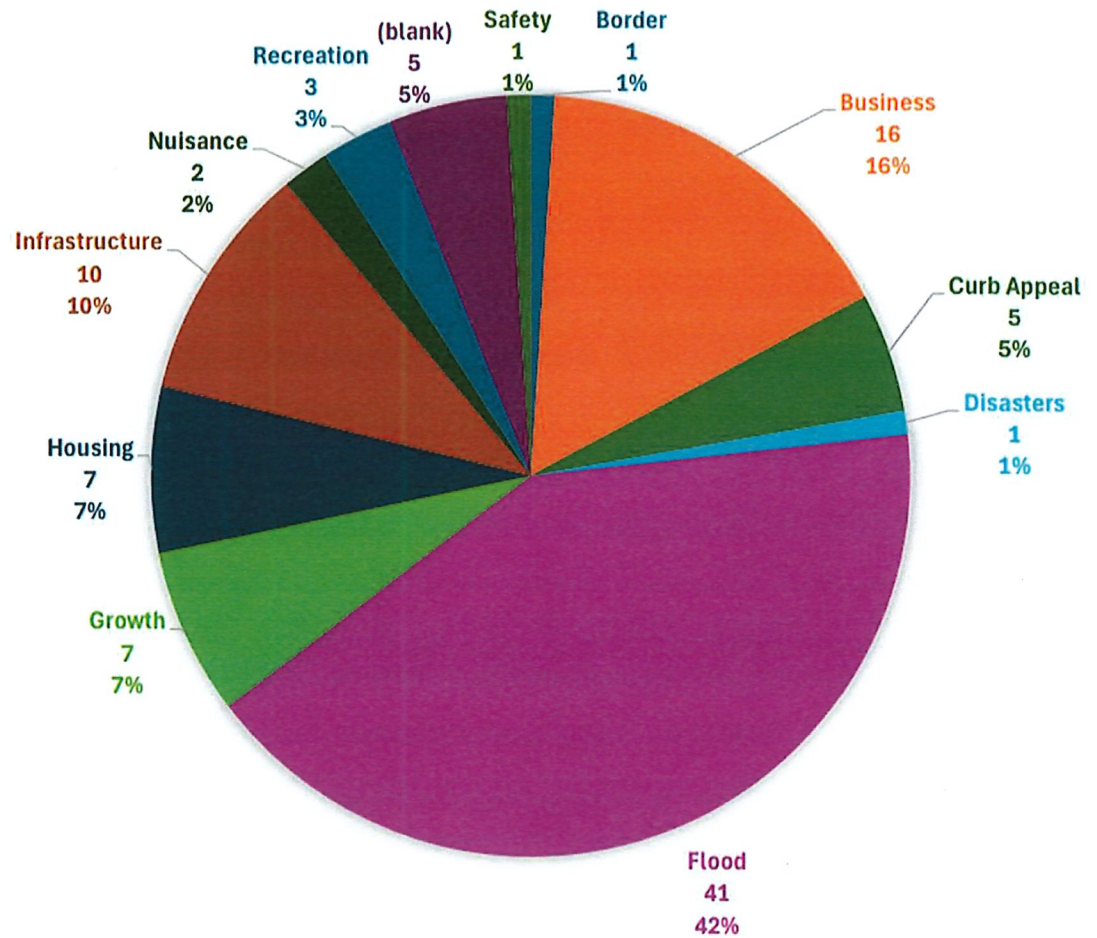
Question 13

Write-Ins

Write-Ins	
Sandwich/pizza shop	1
FAST FOOD OPTION	1
Cannabis Store	1
Quick food like subway or 7-11 and larger grocery store	1
fast food	1
Nature trail	1
Grocery Store w/ Butcher Meat Dept	1
Senior Living - Like Meadow Greens in Lynden	1
fast foods, restaurants	1
Fast Foods	1
Brand name Groc. Store	1
It's about affordability	1
Fast food restaurants, neighborhood Walmart	1
An actual grocery store. The Market being the only remaining source of groceries means they can rip people off.	1
Business center, shopping mall, senior activities, & tours outside Sumas	1
Grocery	1
Fast Foods	1
youth center	1
Pizza/fast food	1
Fast food Restaurant	1
Walking trail away from traffic	1
develop a "river walk", Urgent Care	1
Volunteer center, affordable restaurants, improved walkability	1

Question 14: What do you think should be the City of Sumas' top priority for the next 20 years? Why? (Organized by response category)

- Possible Responses
 - Border
 - Business
 - Curb Appeal
 - Disasters
 - Flood
 - Growth
 - Housing
 - Infrastructure
 - Nuisance
 - Recreation

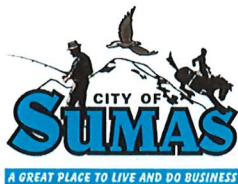


Question 15: Do you believe that Sumas is a great place to live and do business?

• Possible Responses

- Yes
- No
- Other (Write Ins)

Row Labels	Count of #
Yes	101
No	5
(blank)	3
Get Rivers and Ditches cleaned out!	1
Yes good place to live but really not so much businesses to do business in Sumas	1
It could be but I think it needs work.	1
Nice Place to Live	1
It has not been as great since the flood. I feel that the community received little help to build it back to where it was.	1
Yes to live, no to keep our business thriving	1
Great place to live. Needs more attention to business needs in order to be here doing business.	1
It could be, but it needs some work.	1
has possibilities	1
It could be - living here over the other Whatcom towns is fantastic. The drive to get things less so. And I know businesses *currently* are having a hard time.	1
To live but what business would you do here?	1
Grand Total	120



CITY OF SUMAS

433 Cherry Street/PO Box 9, Sumas, WA 98295

P: (360) 988-5711 F: (360) 988-8855

Memo

To: The Sumas Planning Commission

From: Carson Cortez, City Planner, City of Sumas, WA

Date: September 13, 2024

Re: Sumas Proposed Population and Employment Proposal

On April 15, the Sumas Planning Commission heard about the Whatcom County Population and Employment Projections report that was developed for Whatcom County by SCJ Alliance, a group contracted by Whatcom County and the cities to help with organizing the coordinated Comprehensive Plan update process. The report described the population and employment projections for the County that were made by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM).

OFM provided three possible projections for how much the County of Whatcom could grow in population and employment over the next 20 years. These three possible projections identified a range that the county could be expected to grow by. The first is the low projection. This projection identifies the least amount that Whatcom County could grow by over the next 20 years. The next is the medium projection. This represents OFM's best guess as to how much the County could grow by and has generally been accurate in past Comprehensive Plan update cycles. The final is the high projection, which represents the maximum amount that the County is expected to grow by.

Upon receiving the three population and employment projections from OFM, SCJ Alliance went through the initial process of allocating the projections between the 7 Whatcom cities, as well as unincorporated Whatcom County. In order to decide what percentage of the County's total projection growth each jurisdiction should reach; they used past percentages of the total County population that each jurisdiction has had over the past 10 years. For context, Sumas was determined to have occupied roughly 1.2% of the County's total population. Below are the low, medium, and high population projections that SCJ Alliance determined that Sumas could look to grow over the next 20 years, using the aforementioned 1.2% allocation:

- Low: 468
- Med: 697
- High: 1,052

Keep in mind that this number is only based on OFM's population projections and does not account for local conditions which may affect the town's growth.

As part of the County's overall coordinated Comprehensive Plan update with all the cities, they and SCJ Alliance are going through the process of developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify any impacts to the environment that this Comprehensive Plan process may have. As part of the EIS, the County and SCJ Alliance will establish 4 potential alternatives for what the conclusion of the Comprehensive Plan could look like. The first is the no-action alternative, required for identifying what would happen if nothing changed. After the no-action are two alternatives that are based on the medium and high population and employment projections allocated to the County by OFM. The final alternative, called alternative 2, is developed using proposed population and employment projections developed by the individual jurisdictions based on how much growth each city expects that they will have in 20 years.

In order to participate in this EIS process, the City of Sumas needs to develop our own proposal for how much growth we are okay with planning for over the next 20 years. Initially, I came up with a preliminary number using the size of the proposed UGAs as a baseline. **I initially project that if we were to annex all of the UGA areas that we are proposing, then we could see an increase in our population of about 1,000 people and 200 jobs over the next 20 years.** This initial projection of 1,000 new residents is very close to SCJ Alliance's projection for Sumas of 1,052 people using OFM's countywide projections. This is very similar to almost every other jurisdiction in the County who are also aligning with SCJ Alliance's high projection.

By the end of October, the City needs to decide on how much population and employment we are willing to grow by over the next 20 years. In order to achieve this goal, conversations regarding this topic have to begin at the City Council level as soon as possible. Before this is brought to the Council, it is prudent that the Planning Commission be given the ability to consider this topic first so that they may make a recommendation to the council.