



## **AGENDA**

### **Joint Planning Board and Planning, Licenses & Development Committee**

**Monday February 12, 2018**

**6:30 PM**

**Council Chambers**

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of meeting minutes – December 11, 2017
3. Presentation on “*There’s No Place Like Home: A Critical Analysis of the Millennial and Student Housing Markets in Keene*” by Keene State College Geography Students Mark Landolina, Kevin Saline, and Kathryn Van Veen, and Faculty Mentor, Dr. Christopher Cusack
4. Approve changing the May 2018 meeting date to May 16 – Due to Budget Meetings
5. Next Meeting – March 12, 2018
6. Adjourn

THIS PAGE IS INTENDED TO BE BLANK.

**CITY OF KEENE  
NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**JOINT PUBLIC WORKSHOP  
PLANNING BOARD/  
PLANNING, LICENSES, AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, December 11, 2017

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

**Planning Board Members Present**

Gary Spykman, Chair Spykman  
Douglas Barrett, Vice-Chair  
Andrew Bohannon  
Mayor Kendall Lane  
Nathaniel Stout  
Councilor George Hansel  
Chris Cusack  
Martha Landry  
Pamela Russell-Slack

**Planning Board Members Not Present**

David Webb, Alternate  
Tammy Adams, Alternate

**Planning, Licenses and Development  
Committee Members Present**

Councilor David Richards  
Councilor Philip Jones  
Councilor Robert Sutherland  
Councilor George Hansel

**Planning, Licenses and Development  
Committee Members Not Present**

Councilor Bart Sapeta

**Staff Present**

Rhett Lamb, Planning Director  
Tara Kessler, Planner

**1. Roll Call**

Chair Richards called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and a roll call was taken.

**2. August 14 meeting minutes**

Chris Cusack offered the following correction:

Page 2 of 8, last paragraph, last sentence – the sentence to be deleted.

A motion was made by Mayor Lane that the Joint Committee accept the August 14 meeting minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilor George Hansel and was unanimously approved.

**3. Land Use Code Update Project Presentation**

Planner Tara Kessler was the first to address the Committee and stated the goal for today is to update the Committee on the progress made with the Land Use Code Update project and on how staff intends to move forward with this project.

She indicated the goal of this project is to update the City's regulations related to the use, development and redevelopment of land and to create a more user-friendly regulatory environment that reflects the City's current community goals as identified in the Comprehensive Master Plan. Ms. Kessler noted during the past few months, staff has talked a lot about the project, however, they have not addressed how the rest of the City's regulations will be impacted by this effort. She then turned the presentation over to Med Kopczynski.

Mr. Kopczynski stated the intention is to review and reorganize the sections of City Code and the Planning Board regulations so that these regulations are in one document (called a Unified Development Ordinance or Land Use Code) and practitioners can see all land use and land development rules in one place. At this time some city codes are contradictory and definitions are different, so there is a need to update these regulations to address inconsistencies and items that are no longer relevant. Mr. Kopczynski added that simplicity is one of the goals the city is trying to achieve with this process as well as to be more user friendly.

Mr. Kopczynski explained that City staff intend to provide regular updates on the Land Use Code Update project to the Joint Committee. As sections of the City Code are being reorganized into the Land Development Code, there will be a need to review the entire City Code of Ordinances to some extent. Mr. Kopczynski noted this would be a significant project.

Ms. Kessler stated the project involves more than just the reorganization of the regulations and called attention to a draft work plan she had shared with the Committee. The primary components would be to review the regulations and figure out where they can be updated and improved, including where zoning districts are working well and where they may need to be modified slightly.

Another component of this project is the pursuit of Form Based Zoning (also known as Character Based Zoning) in the downtown (focusing on how buildings are placed on lots in relationship to the street, rather than on the uses). This effort would involve a separate type of outreach and engagement. Ms. Kessler noted as this type of Zoning is introduced to the downtown, it would be integrated into the Unified Development Ordinance. A final component of the project is an effort to streamline and improve the application and review processes.

Mr. Kopczynski reiterated this process does entail outreach to the public and targeted audiences. He added the administration portion is going to be a task. He stated that they do envision substantial, if any, changes to a majority of the City's Zoning District. The primary focus will be on improving the structure and readability of the regulations and on enhancing the zoning in the downtown areas.

Councilor Sutherland asked who will find this to be the most restrictive. Ms. Kessler stated the development community who are most familiar with the city's regulations would find it challenging and getting up to speed but staff plans to engage them sooner in the process and making them part of the outreach. Mr. Kopczynski felt everyone is going to have a learning curve.

Councilor Hansel asked whether the land use code would be driving this process. Mr. Kopczynski agreed the land use code will be driving this process.

Ms. Landry asked how we can keep track of what has changed. Mr. Kopczynski stated the original drafting version would be red-lined and the final version would be a complete substitution.

Councilor Jones asked when developing the Unified Development Ordinance would be the time to bring in the development community. Ms. Kessler stated staff feels including the development community during all phases of this project would be critical. Ms. Kessler stated the public engagement strategy is included in the work plan but would need to be further refined as consultants are brought in. The plan is to develop communication strategies that help staff communicate the project in an easy to understand way, knowing the mechanism for communication will vary depending on who the City is trying to reach. There is also the need to align the regulations with the master plan goals. As the City looks at existing zoning, the City would also need to conduct neighborhood meetings. Ms. Kessler felt the public engagement piece is going to be multi-faceted, it is going to rely a lot on social media, web-based communication, print media as well as in person meetings and workshops. The plan is to bring in a communication specialist to help with the right language and tools.

Mayor Lane felt once the stakeholders are identified they need to be part of the development of this process right through the end - if the city wants it to be successful. Ms. Kessler agreed and added the City has a lot to learn from the development community and stated they would be key partners in this process.

Councilor Sutherland asked whether complete streets were going to be included in this process and asked about projects that have been just completed, such as Emerald Street. Ms. Kessler stated they are looking at complete streets as being part of this process. As far as projects moving forward, the City plans on having a new set of regulations sometime in mid-2019 so changes won't be made prior to that. However,



she noted that partnering with the groups working on large projects like the visioning happening for the downtown will be an important component of the project.

As far as projects that are underway, she wasn't sure the city will go back in time and changing them and referred that question to Mr. Kopczynski. Mr. Kopczynski stated complete streets is a policy not an ordinance. There are a number of items within the ordinances, such as policies and regulations that would need to be included into this land development code which might take some sorting. A majority of this can be achieved by codification and how this would affect things like a Public Works projects at this time is unknown and it depends on where it all lands.

Councilor Sutherland stated he was wondering about the work being anticipated for Marlboro Street and what the changes being proposed would look like for streetscape. Mr. Kopczynski stated his recollection for Marlboro Street is that it does incorporate complete streets.

Mr. Stout stated the Code of Ordinances was referred to earlier, which encompasses a larger area than what this project encompasses. He referred to page 19 of the Committee's packet which talks about the chapters within the City Code that may be affected by this study. He asked whether this is the listing of the Code Chapters that will be affected. Ms. Kessler stated what staff has done is to look at each chapter of the Code of Ordinances and have a conversation with departments about what might impact the land development code and what will have no impact. The decision needs to be made as to what stays within the Unified Development Code and if it does, where does this fit. Mr. Kopczynski referred to the Fire Code (Chapter 42) which is a maintenance code. Most permits related to this chapter refers to how a building is utilized. So a review of Chapter 42 would be to determine whether Chapter 42 would be included in the Unified Development Code. It may be that only a few items from this chapter would end up in the Unified Development Code, or that this chapter is referenced in it. He added these regulations need to be simplified for people to understand.

Mr. Stout asked how the land development code would eventually get adopted. Ms. Kessler stated the same process outlined in the City Code will be followed: the Joint Committee will look at proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance and these changes would be reviewed and approved by City Council. The Planning Board would review and approve changes to the site plan and subdivision regulations and development standards. The Historic District Commission would review and approve change to the Historic District Regulations. The City Council would review and approve any changes to City Code. All of these processes would involve public hearings. These Boards will be engaged throughout the process, so when the time comes for adoption, they will be familiar with the proposed changes.

Ms. Kessler stated as she has mentioned earlier, they plan on bringing in a consultant to support them in this process. The first would be a communication specialist to help with branding and marketing of this and to develop key message. Staff is working on a RFQ for this consultant to be brought in. The other consultant would be a land use attorney licensed in the State of New Hampshire to ensure the city is complying with state and federal laws.

The third would be a design firm to take a lead on form based zoning or character based zoning in the downtown. This firm will need to be skilled in engaging the public, developing graphics and visualization not only for form based zoning but also for the unified development ordinance. As well as providing support to city staff.

Ms. Kessler reviewed the work that has been completed to date:

- Creating a draft work plan.
- Engaging departments that have a role in this and to begin an internal review of City Code chapters
- Staff has started the regulatory analysis, looking at the trends over the past five years, looking at variances, building permits, and site plan approvals that have been issued.
- Developing RFQ's to bring consultants on board.

She stated staff still has a lot of work to complete in the spring and hopes to have the consultants on board soon and to begin the outreach work. The bulk of this work will happen in the spring through early fall of 2018 to begin the adoption process. Mr. Kopczynski added the regulatory analysis might push the work out further.

Councilor Hansel asked whether staff sees the communication specialist as a separate contract or whether this could be rolled in with the land use planning consultant. Ms. Kessler felt there was value in having someone who is skilled in the area of communications who is not a land use specialist. Ms. Kessler stated there are terms that are planning specific and not easy to navigate and having someone whose focus is entirely on communication, marketing and branding will help staff communicate well to the various audiences it wants to reach. Councilor Hansel stated the challenge would be to make sure the land use consultant and the communication specialist work well together. The Councilor stated his biggest concern was making sure this a substantive update and to make sure it is an effective regulation.

Ms. Landry asked what the budget for this work was. Ms. Kessler stated they have \$134,000 budgeted for consultant support and staff will work within this budget. The rest will be staff driven and supported. Ms. Landry clarified this funding will get the city through adoption. Ms. Kessler noted that there are no other sources of funds available to support the effort, and that staff will work within the budget that is available to usher the project through adoption. Mr. Lamb added in 2012, \$200,000 was appropriated and at that time the project was not as well defined and a portion of those funds were used for phase 1 work (to define what the options were). The original project was designed to be one phase and there has already been an adjustment made to that. Ms. Landry stated her concern was the project being derailed should the City run out of funding. Mr. Lamb stated as Ms. Kessler has indicated the City plans on using the consultants in the most efficient method possible and find people who are going to dedicate their time to this project.

#### **4. Approve 2018 Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Lamb stated the Joint Committee meetings fall on the second Monday of each month except in October and November when the meetings fall on a Tuesday.

A motion was made by Mayor Kendall Lane that the Joint Committee approve the 2018 meeting schedule. The motion was seconded by Councilor George Hansel and was unanimously approved.

Mr. Lamb reminded the Board about the site visit for the Food Coop happening on Wednesday.

Mayor Lane stated those Planning Board members who were members of the Coop would need to be recused from hearing this application next month. Mr. Lamb stated this issue has been discussed at the Steering Committee and it was decided that those who are members of the Coop disclose that they are members and make a statement as to how their membership would not adversely affect their ability to vote fairly on this application, if they feel accordingly. At that time, members of the public would be permitted to object to or comment on the actions of these members.

#### **5. Next Meeting – January 8, 2018**

#### **6. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Krishni Pahl,  
Minute Taker

Reviewed by Rhett Lamb, Planning Director and Tara Kessler, Planner

CITY OF KEENE  
NEW HAMPSHIRE

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Joint Committee of the Planning Board and the Planning Licenses and Development Committee

FROM: Tara Kessler, Planner

DATE: February 7, 2018

SUBJECT: Presentation on “There’s No Place Like Home: A critical analysis of the millennial and student housing markets in Keene”

At the February 12 Joint Committee meeting there will be a presentation made by Keene State College Geography students Mark Landolina, Kevin Salina, and Kathryn Van Veen on their recently completed report analyzing Keene’s housing market with a focus on millennial and off-campus student housing. These students will be joined with their Faculty Mentor, Dr. Christopher Cusack.

The Report is attached for your review in advance of the meeting. It includes a literature review, a data analysis of Keene’s current housing market, surveys of subject matter experts including surveys of millennials and college students and key findings. The presentation on February 12<sup>th</sup> will highlight these key findings.

As you may remember, in 2016, the Joint Committee identified “identifying and facilitating more options for workforce housing” and “identifying ways to retain younger individuals in the community” as priority strategies for implementing the 2010 Comprehensive Master Plan. The Committee began to further understand the options and need for housing by inviting Keith Thibault, Chief Development Officer of Southwestern Community Services, to present on this topic and to facilitate a discussion on how Keene can work to expand and diversity housing options. This presentation will tie into these previous conversations, and will explore a subset of the housing market in Keene.

THIS PAGE IS INTENDED TO BE BLANK.

# There's No Place Like Home

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MILLENNIAL AND  
STUDENT HOUSING MARKETS IN KEENE



Department of  
Geography

Faculty Mentor:  
Dr. Christopher Cusack

## Authors

Mark Landolina

Kevin Salina

Kathryn Van Veen

KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our group would like to express our deepest appreciation for those who have committed tireless efforts in assisting us in this endeavor. We are especially indebted to our Professor, Dr. Christopher Cusack, whose dedication to our project has inspired us and helped us grow as geographers and students. In addition, it gives us great pleasure to acknowledge the support of the following individuals:

- Nikki Sauber, President of the *Keene Young Professionals Network*
- Tara Kessler, Planner for the *City of Keene*
- Robin Picard, Coordinator of Student and Community Relations for *Keene State College*
- Frank Richter, Housing Inspector for the *City of Keene*, Landlord
- Will Schoefmann, GIS Technician for the *City of Keene*
- Tony Marcotte, Senior Project Manager for *MDP Development, LLC*
- Attendees of our Millennials focus group:
  - Kasha Bell
  - Mari Brunner
  - Drew Bryenton
  - Mike Giacomo
  - George Hansel
  - Andrew Madison
  - Meghan Spaulding
  - Jahdiel Torres-Cabá
  - Nikki Sauber
- Faculty who enabled distribution of student survey in their classes:
  - Dr. Steve Bill, Department of Geology
  - Dr. Dudley Blossom, Department of Management
  - Dr. Michael Hanrahan, Department of Computer Science
  - Dr. William Hofmann, Department of Management
- The Department of Geography
- Our fellow classmates

## ABSTRACT

The City of Keene, New Hampshire is currently facing a demographic shift. A stagnation in the Millennial (ages 18-35) population, and a recent decline in Keene State College student enrollment, is impacting the local economy. Housing vacancies in the student housing market, coupled with a housing market that does not necessarily meet the needs of young professionals is having a potentially detrimental impact on neighborhoods and overall socioeconomics of Keene. The city's future depends in part, on the size, composition, and distribution of young professionals and the strength of the student housing market. The purpose of our project is to provide geographic analysis of housing trends and neighborhood revitalization in Keene, with a focus on both off-campus student housing and millennial housing. This project will use geographic analysis to investigate recent changes in housing trends and analyze possible neighborhood revitalization solutions.



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Mark Landolina** grew up in Tolland, Connecticut, and is now a Senior at Keene State College with a double major in Geography and Environmental Studies. Mark is currently a Policy and Technology Intern at Keene Housing, and a former Ecological Survey Intern at the Harris Center in Hancock, New Hampshire. After graduation, he hopes to pursue a career as an urban or environmental planner, or as a renewable energy scientist specializing in Geographic Information Systems.

**Kathryn Van Veen** is from Brookline, New Hampshire, and is a Senior who is graduating with degrees in Secondary Education and Geography. Geography is her passion and she is pursuing graduate study in international political economy, immigration, and genocide and conflict. Kathryn has always been interested in geography and social studies as she is planning on researching in Asia-Pacific.



**Kevin Salina** is a Keene State Senior double majoring in Geography and Business Management. Kevin grew up in Tolland, Connecticut, and first gained interest in geography by taking classes in sustainable development and city/urban planning. He has worked as a GIS Intern at Windham Regional Planning Commission and currently is a Policy & Technology Intern at Keene Housing. He hopes to undertake a career involving data analysis or GIS.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>About the Authors</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Revitalizing Neighborhoods .....	9
Improving Quality of Life.....	11
Gentrification and Revitalization .....	14
Millennials and Home Ownership.....	17
College and Community Development .....	21
College and Student Housing Markets.....	23
<b>Chapter 3: Background of Keene</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Geography.....	27
Demography.....	29
Keene State College .....	31
Housing and Economic Characteristics .....	34
Policy and Publicity .....	40
<b>Chapter 4: Current State of Keene’s Housing Market</b> .....	<b>42</b>
Student and Private Housing Markets .....	43
Aging Housing Stock.....	45
New Apartment Options .....	47
Economy.....	48
Rental Prices.....	49
Housing Prices .....	51
Tenure of Housing.....	53
Geography of Housing.....	54
<b>Chapter 5: Expert Interviews</b> .....	<b>57</b>
Expert Interviews .....	58
Robin Picard .....	58
Tara Kessler .....	59
Frank Richter.....	61

Focus Group .....	62
Housing .....	63
Employment.....	65
Recreation.....	67
<b>Chapter 6: Millennials Survey .....</b>	<b>69</b>
Millennials Survey Methodology .....	70
Survey Respondent Demographics .....	72
Examination of Survey Results.....	73
Discussion.....	82
<b>Chapter 7: College Survey .....</b>	<b>88</b>
Methodology.....	89
What Type of Housing Do Students Live in.....	90
Overall Satisfaction Levels of Housing and Neighborhoods .....	91
Perception of Student Neighborhoods .....	94
Student Housing Preferences.....	96
Student Housing Priorities .....	97
Post Keene State College .....	100
<b>Chapter 8: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>102</b>
Student and Millennial Research .....	103
Overarching Conclusions.....	105
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Appendix B.....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Appendix C.....</b>	<b>142</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Four Common Milestones of Adulthood .....	3
1.2 New England Millennial Inflow & Outflow.....	5
1.3 Keene Population 2011-2015.....	6
2.1 Characteristics of Distressed Neighborhoods .....	9
2.2 Off-campus Student House on Elliot Street .....	10
2.3 Four Elements of a Healthy Neighborhood .....	11
2.4 Median Student Debt vs Median Wages .....	18

2.5 MSCDC Revitalization of Inner City Unit .....	22
3.1 Map of Keene, New Hampshire .....	27
3.2 Main Street and Downtown Keene .....	28
3.3 Horatio Museum in Downtown Keene .....	28
3.4 Cobblestone Bar in Keene.....	29
3.5 Population Distribution in Keene.....	31
3.6 Entrance to Keene State College.....	31
3.7 Appian Way at Keene State College.....	31
3.8 Undergraduate Enrollment in New Hampshire Public Universities.....	32
3.9 Fiske Residence Hall.....	33
3.10 Keene Student Rentals still looking for tenants.....	34
3.11 Downtown Keene in 1900s .....	36
3.12 Downtown Keene in 1950s .....	36
3.13 Top Employers in Keene.....	37
3.14 Traffic Circle on Main Street .....	38
3.15 Full Tax in Dollars in New Hampshire .....	39
4.1 The Mills Apartments.....	44
4.2 Arcadia Apartments .....	44
4.3 Tenure by Year Structure Built.....	46
4.4 Median Year Household Built per Census Block Group .....	46
4.5 Construction of New Apartments at Washington Park .....	47
4.6 Year over Year Change in Covered Private Employment.....	49
4.7 Median Rental Prices 2007-2017 .....	50
4.8 Median Rental per Unit Size .....	51
4.9 Median Owner-Occupied Unit Value 2010-2015.....	52
4.10 Median Owner-Occupied Unit Value in New England.....	52
4.11 Tenure of Keene Housing Units .....	53
4.12 Median Age and Tenure by Census Block Group.....	55
4.13 Keene Housing Values 2008.....	56
5.1 Housing Availability, Affordability, and Price for Millennials.....	60
5.2 Focus Group Setup.....	62
5.3 Focus During Discussion.....	63
6.1 Millennials Housing Survey .....	70

6.2 Millennial Survey Demographics .....	73
6.3 Millennial Satisfaction Levels for Various Qualities of Keene.....	74
6.4 Ideal Housing Situation Response.....	81
6.5 Millennials Ideal Housing Currently and in 10 Years .....	81
6.6 Do You Plan on Moving Out in the Next Five Years? .....	82
6.7 Important Qualities versus Need Improvement Qualities.....	84
6.8 Top Rated Financial Barriers of Millennials .....	84
6.9 Locals in (or Near) Keene Millennials Would Ideally Live .....	85
6.10 Reasons Young Professionals Choose to Live in Keene .....	87
7.1 Percent of Students Living Off-Campus .....	89
7.2 Numbers of Percentages of Survey Results .....	90
7.3 Where DO You Currently Live? .....	90
7.4 How Much is Your Monthly Rent? .....	90
7.5 If you Live Off-Campus What Street Do You Live On .....	91
7.6 Likert Scale Housing and Neighbor Satisfaction Questions .....	91
7.7 Satisfaction Levels Among Students Living On-Campus, or in Off-Campus Houses/Apartments.....	92
7.8 Quality of Life in Neighborhood.....	95
7.9 Quality of Life in Neighborhood Based on Satisfaction .....	95
7.10 Top Choice of Housing .....	96
7.11 Single-family Home Wordle .....	97
7.12 Student Housing Priority Questions.....	97
7.13 Choose the Top 3 Reasons Why You Chose Your On/Off Campus Residence .....	98
7.14 Do You Plan on Staying in Keene? .....	101
7.15 What Type of Housing After Graduation? .....	101
8.1 Student Neighborhood Preferences .....	104
8.2 Millennial Neighborhood Preferences .....	104

**LIST OF TABLES**

6.1 Millennial Satisfaction Test .....	76
6.2 Millennial Satisfaction Test (Older versus Younger) .....	77
6.3 Millennial Satisfaction Test (Income Levels) .....	79
6.4 Millennial Ideal Living Situation Test .....	80
7.1 Student Satisfaction Test .....	93

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION



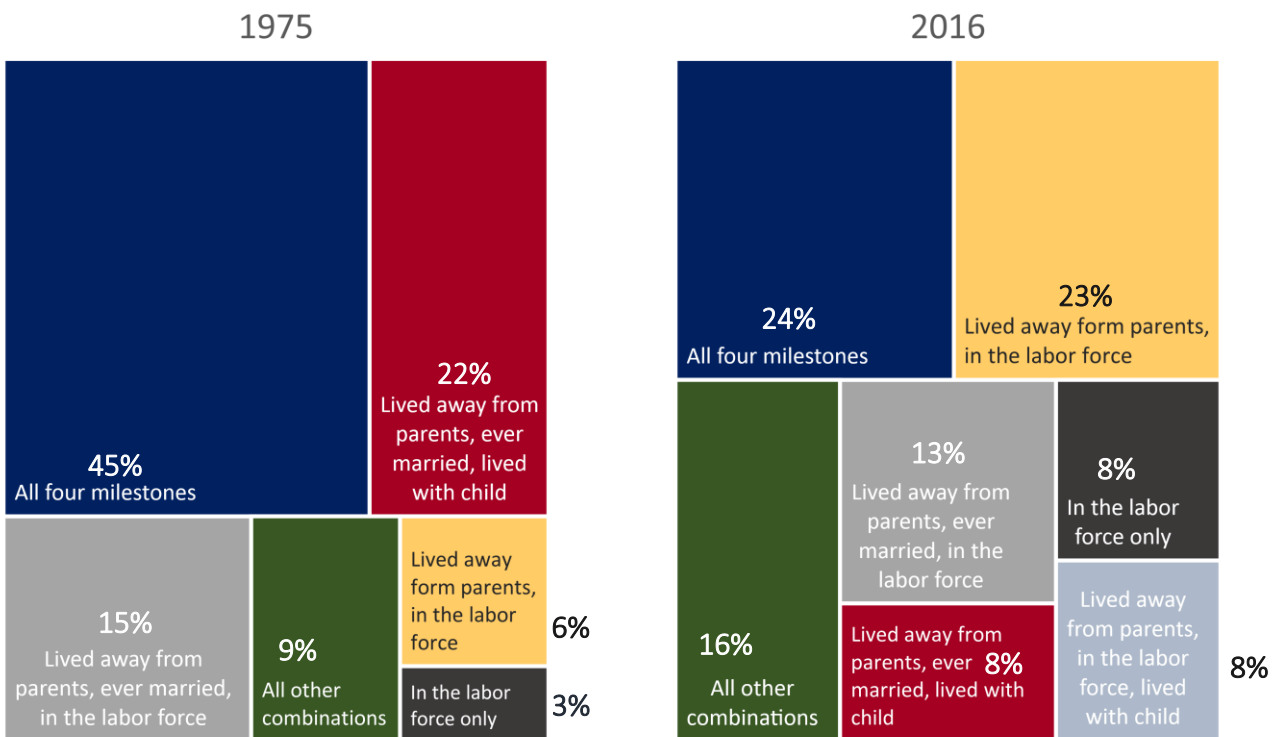
Society is experiencing a shift from the typical “American Dream” of white-picket fence in suburbia to the new dream of mixed-used communities and urbanization. This shift is being fueled by the Millennials, the generation born between 1982 and 1998, who are helping to reshape the physical makeup of cities and their populations. While cities that have embraced this new generation are capitalizing on the opportunity, other cities are left facing the challenge of aging populations and diminishing resources. Staying ahead of the curve requires meeting the wants and needs of the millennial demographic. Keene, New Hampshire is one such city that can benefit from an influx of Millennials, and the city of focus for this paper.

Keene is the economic and cultural hearth of Cheshire County. Nonetheless, it is facing a number of critical scenarios that are dramatically impacting its neighborhoods throughout the city. This includes stagnant population growth, an aging workforce due to low Millennial migration and an aging housing stock predominantly adjacent to Keene State College and downtown Keene. The complexity of these matters, in the midst of diminishing public resources available, calls upon the community and local government to take a comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization and community building. By taking a new approach to the Keene housing market, the city may see the long-term, positive changes needed in order to remain vibrant. This approach should integrate the dynamics between neighborhood housing quality, employment opportunities, local policy and amenities for residents.

Over the past decade, many American cities have been transformed by young professionals of the Millennial generation, with downtowns turning into bustling neighborhoods full of new apartments, shops, and restaurants. Millennials can benefit cities and towns in a myriad of ways, including “economic revitalization, an improved tax base, a pronounced *youthification*,

and a general increase in vitality” (Myers 2016 p2). There are, however, ample reasons for why Millennials choose to live where they do thanks to the dynamics of their generation. This can make it difficult for any city to figure out just exactly how to attract and retain such a fluid cohort. At 87 million strong the Millennial generation is the largest cohort in the American population, surpassing the Baby Boomers in 2016 (Joint Center for Housing Studies 2017). They are a diverse, expressive and optimistic group who have grown up in a time of rapid change, giving them a set of priorities and exceptions that differs from those of previous generations.

**Figure 1.1** examines the four common milestones of adulthood – getting married, having children, working and living independently – the changes are drastic among generations. In 1975 the percentage of 25 to 34 year olds who had accomplished all four milestones was 45 percent. In contrast, only 24 percent of 2016’s young adults have done the same (Census Bureau 2017).



**Figure 1.1.** Four common milestones of adulthood – Percentages of 25 to 34 year olds in 1975 and 2016. **Data Source:** Census Bureau 2017.

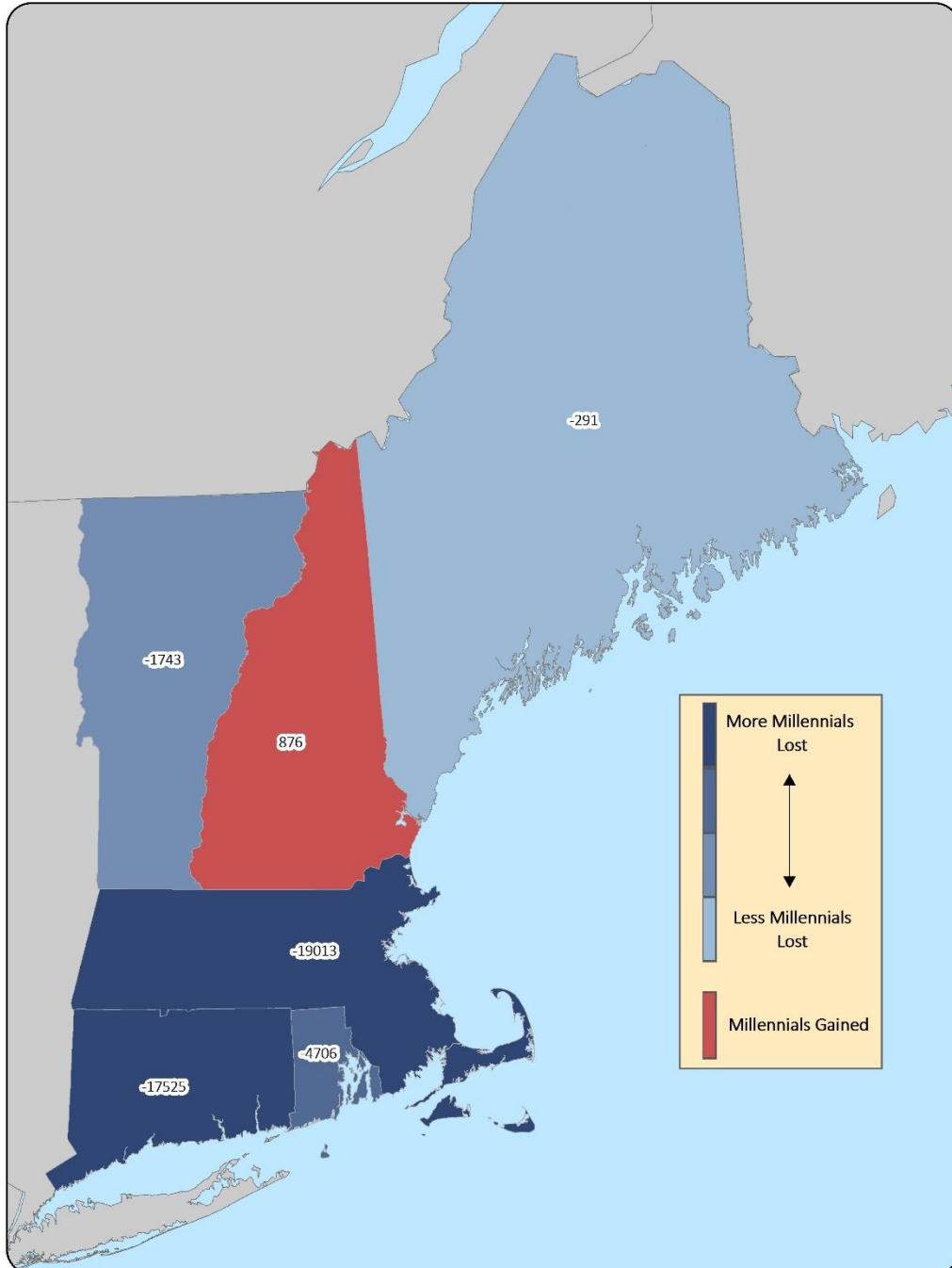
These changes in lifestyle preferences begin to paint a picture of the Millennial generation and help provide an understanding of the living and housing preferences of Millennials. While Millennials are the largest American generation to date, they are buying houses at lower rates than those in previous generations and are living at home with their parents at a higher rates. Many are also dealing with lower relative incomes and higher relative student loan debt while coming of age and entering the workforce during difficult economic times. Thus many Millennials have become savvy shoppers, wary when it comes to purchasing housing.

Millennials are also often portrayed as aspiring urbanists, and many prefer to live in the type of mixed-use communities found in urban centers. Notably, the cities widely seen as millennial magnets are not the only places they choose to live. Urban areas such as San Bernardino, California, Newport-News, Virginia, and Buffalo, New York all experienced higher growth rates in Millennials since 2000 than the stereotypical millennial cities such as Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City (Johnson 2017). This reveals that smaller areas can be just as effective at drawing in young adults as large mainstream metropolitan areas. In fact, while Millennials are more likely to choose urban areas than other age groups, they are increasingly enjoying suburban and exurban communities as well (Cox 2014). Keene therefore has ample potential when it comes to attracting Millennials. The city offers an urban feel with a vibrant downtown, while still having the amenities and comfort suburbia can bring to couples looking to start a family.

However, the inflow of Millennials to New England from years 2011-2015 was not overly exuberant. In fact, New Hampshire was the only New England state to have a net increase in the number of Millennials between years 2011-2015 (**Figure 1.2**) (Internal Revenue Service 2017). Even so, New Hampshire only gained 876 Millennials over the 5-year span, which translates to a

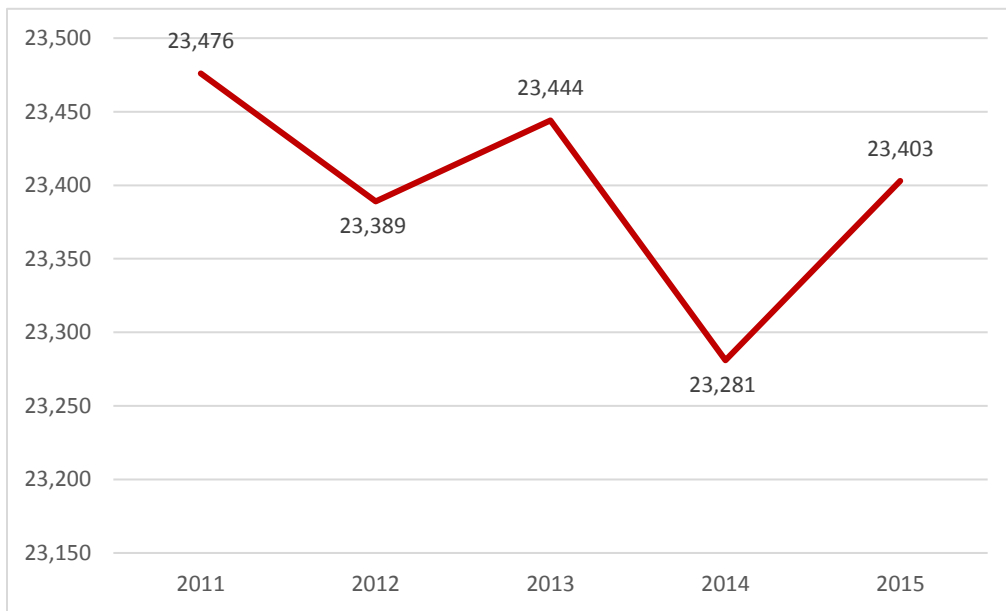


total increase of 0.1 percent. This amount of growth is rather insignificant, and on top of it Keene saw very little of that growth.



**Figure 1.2.** New England Millennial inflow and outflow 2011-2015 (Raw number). *Data Source:* Internal Revenue Service 2017.

Over the same 5-year period, Keene experienced an estimated total net decrease of 73 people (**Figure 1.3**). This number again is a rather negligible amount, but illustrates the stagnation Keene faced over the past half-decade. If the City of Keene hopes to attract more people, especially those in the Millennial generation, something will have to change in order to accommodate their needs and wants.



**Figure 1.3.** Keene population 2011-2015. *Data Source:* Census Bureau 2017.

Understanding the current condition of the housing market and factors attracting or repelling the Millennial demographic in Keene necessitates original research. This includes meeting with experts related to the subject; researching scholarly literature based on similar studies; studying demographic, economic and housing related data; and collecting data related to opinions, experiences and ideas from both Millennials and college students in Keene. Accordingly, there are a few hypotheses that aid in grasp of the current housing market.

The hypotheses are as follows:

1. Overall Millennial satisfaction with Keene's housing is inadequate (lacking)
2. The Millennial shift in postponing homeownership causes a difference among Millennial renters' and homeowners' overall housing satisfaction
3. Due to less demanding standards and needs, college students believe that the quality off-campus housing and neighborhoods are satisfactory and are generally sufficient

Therefore, the purpose of this report is to critically and geographically analyze housing and demographic trends in the city of Keene, with the goal of providing a framework for attracting and maintaining Millennials through neighborhood revitalization. Addressing the housing occupancy and conditions in both the Keene State College off-campus housing and the city housing market is important for planning for the future of the city. It is also important to assess both markets because college age Millennials and working age Millennials have varying values and priorities when it comes to housing. By defining the differences between declining neighborhoods versus healthy neighborhoods, it is possible to determine the state of Keene's neighborhoods in hopes to find effective solutions. Additionally, attracting Millennials to any city is a worthy investment. These young professionals bring energy and enthusiasm to the workforce and culture. They generally impose few demands on city services such as health care, they are not afraid to take risks in finding more creative ways of problem solving, and they bring security and longevity for a region's economy. Cities that successfully attract and maintain young professionals thrive and the value of Millennials to the City of Keene is self-evident.

# CHAPTER 2

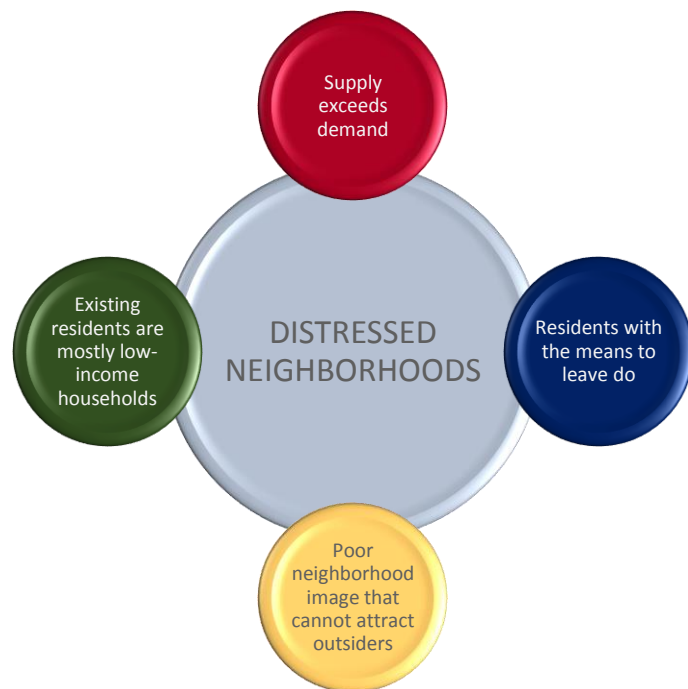
## LITERATURE REVIEW



## REVITALIZING NEIGHBORHOODS

Housing is a core component of any community's fabric. The housing market is a representation of the local economy and health of any community (Boehlke 2004). Not all housing markets in the United States are the same as there is a complex array of factors that play into whether a housing market is thriving or declining. Such factors include the variations of geographic space, economic hubs, and other push-pull factors. However, all markets conform to the same principles of supply and demand. A stagnant housing market is due in part by an absence of young professionals moving to the city. This has left a bleak outlook for the opportunity of economic growth. Many cities have too similar cities too many houses with too few buyers that possess the requisite resources to own and maintain properties at a level that attracts other residents (Boehlke 2004). Important challenges cultivate complex questions. Why do some neighborhoods fail while others succeed? Can a cycle of a declining housing market be reversed? How can this be accomplished?

What must government, businesses, civic leaders and residents do to make the transformation happen? Firstly, it is important to determine what constitutes a distressed neighborhood versus a healthy neighborhood. According to Donald Poland (2009), factors that exist in distressed neighborhoods are included in **Figure 2.1**.



**Figure 2.1** Characteristics of distressed neighborhoods.

In addition, HUD determines the main signs of a declining neighborhood as:

- An overwhelming presence of an aging housing stock that is in significant physical despair and/or functionally obsolete
- A community that can be experiencing problems with crime and drug abuse
- Presence of housing or retail vacancies
- Inadequate, insufficient or poor quality service delivery

Studies have shown that adding new and modern housing options to weak-market neighborhoods with aging, outdated and deteriorating housing stock only leads to more distress as supply increases and demand stays the same (Poland 2009). Cities can then begin seeing these problems spread as the factors of distress factors persist. Any housing market is essentially a business in the sense that each home is a billboard for the image of the community (Boehlke 2004). Abandoned/or run-down houses, such as the house in **Figure 2.2**, in any neighborhood drive down property values so much that nearby home owners discouraged to rationalize any home improvements. According the US Census Bureau, an abandoned house drives down the property values of houses within 500 feet by up to eight percent. This results in a feedback loop of disinvestment, which could lead to more abandonment and distress (Fitzpatrick 2012).

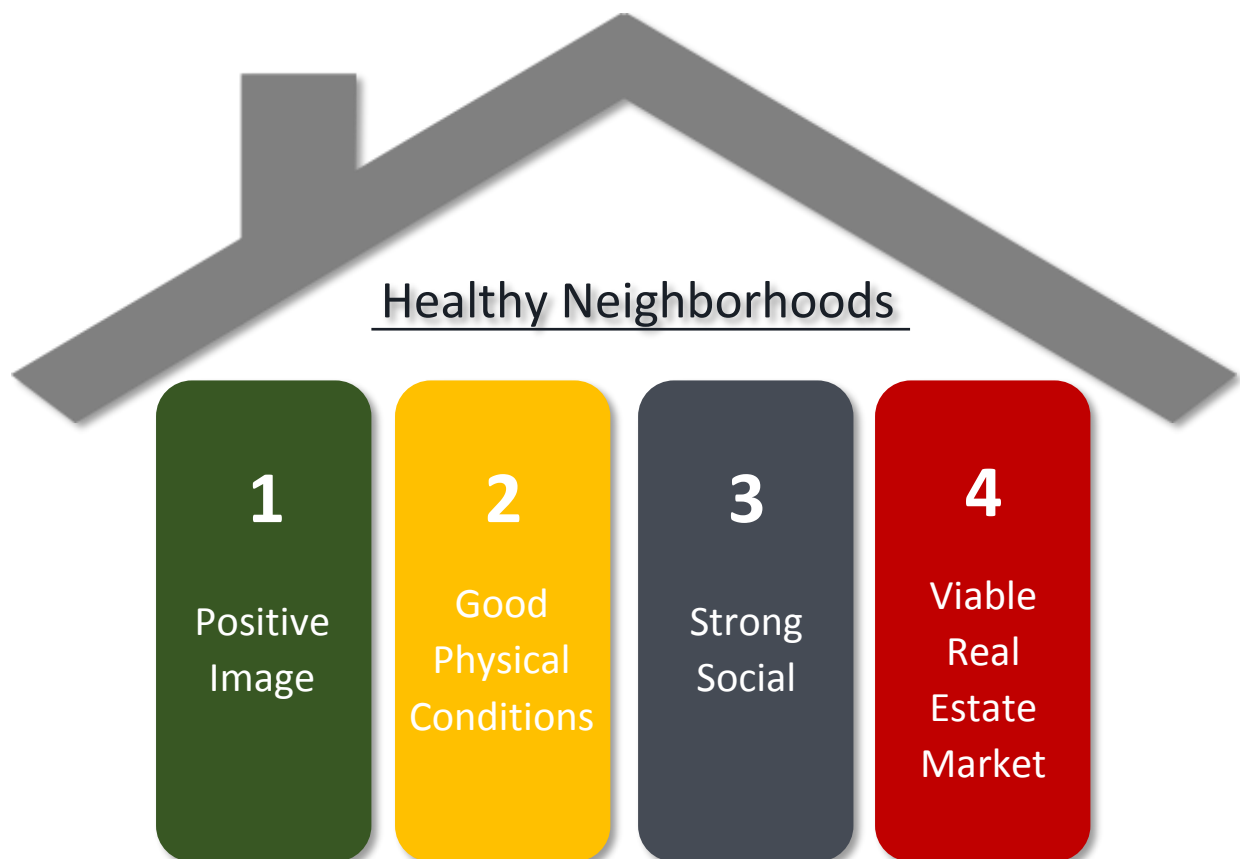


**Figure 2.2** Off-campus student house on Elliot Street.  
**Photo Source:** Authors



## IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

The overarching goal of any neighborhood revitalization effort is to re-establish a viable and sustainable livelihood in a community (HUD). Defining a healthy neighborhood is helpful to set standards for a city such as Keene. Generally, a healthy community is one where people want to live, work and spend time. Residents of a healthy community maintain and invest in their homes and their properties. Businesses are open, attract customers, and earn profits. Open spaces are used by residents and visitors, are well maintained and are perceived to be welcoming and safe places (HUD). The core structure of a healthy community is having a dynamic system of stable residential and commercial development that supports accessible transit, working infrastructure, open space, residential activates, social services and a sense of safety. According to Boehlke (2004), four elements of the stability of a healthy neighborhood are illustrated in **Figure 2.3**.



**Figure 2.3** Four elements of a healthy neighborhood.

Addressing revitalization efforts requires a careful look at the big picture and the inner workings of the community at large. Issues regarding the housing market cannot be resolved with a single action. The issues surrounding a weak housing market are diverse and interconnected with all facets of a community. To address such issues, it is important that communities consider the commitment to a multidimensional approach to help bring the community to its feet again.

A policy approach to the revitalization of neighborhoods is an important first step. City Planning and Zoning Departments are in control of the development in a city, which makes them key contributors to the housing market (Pogodzinski 1990). Over several decades, public policies have merely disregarded the principles of supply and demand in the real estate market. Many cities believe building new houses will revive the housing market. In reality, this can only magnify the distress in the community if not planned correctly (Boehlke 2004).

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has administered several successful programs that are designed to spur community reinvestment, while contributing to neighborhood revitalization. There are numerous studies that analyze the impact of zoning on the housing and land market and on population density. One approach for revitalization of neighborhoods is to encourage the mixed use of space between businesses, housing and open space. The City of Kingston, New York is an example of a successful revitalization initiative that used mixed-use land use regulations. The city used land use regulations that facilitate growth of niche industries by using form-based code to focus on the relationship between the buildings and outdoor spaces instead of the type of land-use. The city improved the image of the city by directing public investments towards activity centers such as downtown and industry clusters. The overall goal was to create a sense of place by encouraging a mix of uses



(Mid-Hudson). Since the revitalization efforts, Kingston has seen a 30 percent increase in jobs, which are being filled by the next generation of workers: Millennials. Thus, attracting new employers and industries seeking their skills. Similar zoning initiatives are in the processes of being implemented east of downtown Keene, in the neighborhoods adjacent to Marlboro Street. Zoning regulation changes and redevelopments in cities such as Kingston and Keene promote the reuse of underutilized properties by allowing businesses to operate among healthy living areas that are walkable and collaborative. These policy approaches can introduce new funds towards neighborhood revitalization efforts in hopes to re-establish a positive neighborhood image to attract young professionals (Nelson 2015).

Integrating these characteristics into research about zoning regulations offers insight into how the local government is impacting the economy and housing market conditions. A policy approach is especially important because zoning is the most common tool for municipalities to influence the real-estate market for the best interest of the community. However, there is little agreement about the effects of zoning, or even how to correctly measure it. Government interference in the free-market is something often debated. Some believe the market should drive itself, while other believe the government should set regulations to “protect land values” and lead to the maximization of land values (Ohls 1973).

The local government also plays a major role in the economics of housing. Housing is interconnected with the local, state and national economies in ways that make them dependent on one another. The most prevalent form of economic gain towns receive is in the form of property taxes. When more housing units are filled, there is more tax revenue provided for the city (Fitzpatrick 2012). New Hampshire towns and cities, including Keene, are dependent on property

taxes because of the lack of sales taxes. In addition to the number of housing units, property values are equally as important for the town's budget (New Hampshire 2017).

Without question, thriving communities are characterized as having houses that retain or increase their value. Stagnant or declining home values, often associated with a failing sense of neighborly responsibility, may translate into a community few would choose to call home. Deliberate action must be implemented through tried and tested neighborhood revitalization strategies in cities that are experiencing hardship (Poland 2009).

## GENTRIFICATION AND REVITALIZATION

Gentrification is a process in which a neighborhood is improved to the point of a social change in which problems can occur. Harvard defines the term as “demographic and physical changes in neighborhoods that bring in wealthier residents, greater investment, and more development” (Bosquet 2017). Ruth Glass, who coined the term, observed this phenomena in London in 1964 local working-class groups were displaced from their homes (Atkinson 2003). Areas that were once run down, unsafe at times, and inexpensive to live in are revitalized to the point where a completely new demographic settles into this area. The collective of refurbished houses and buildings, addition of “complete” streets (trees, sidewalks, accessible and safe crosswalks, for example), introduction of new industry, and more can raise property values and the economy of a given area. This in turn attracts more residents and can boost local economies by becoming more welcoming to those who wish to spend their money.

The notion of “Live, Work, Play” is one that directly feeds off gentrification. When neighborhoods are revitalized to their fullest extent, people want to live, work, and spend leisure time in the same place. This is, in a sense, the holy trinity that most locales wish to achieve. This is

beneficial for towns and cities because it increases the amount of spending and production within their limits, while people strive for this because it decreases amount of time traveling and being away from who they care about most. Many cities have attempted and succeeded at revitalization, and according to a study conducted by *Governing Magazine*, the cities with the highest amount of gentrified neighborhoods are Portland, Oregon (53.1 percent), Washington, D.C. (51.9 percent), Minneapolis, Minnesota (50.6 percent), and Seattle, Washington (50 percent) (Maciag 2013). Many critics of gentrification say that the costs outweigh the benefits, but that is far from certain. In a case study on the small city of Dillsboro, North Carolina, similar circumstances as Keene, New Hampshire ,are prevalent. With a small, two-block downtown with tourism as its main source of revenue, both are historic and scenic towns. While Dillsboro had different circumstances which led to revitalization, both cities are in similar shape. Dillsboro tackled the economic issue of stagnating population and economic output by partnering with Brandon University to assess how to revitalize the city. By questioning university staff and employees of the city's major employers, they were able to reach a consensus on how to improve their marketability for employees and new residents of the area. They concluded that the "study grew out of the recognition that a university has a role to perform in the economic, social, and cultural well-being of its surrounding geographic regional area" (Grunwell 2014, 43). This shows that there is a necessary give-and-take relationship that universities and colleges must have with their cities.

The most important part to revitalization is to provide the tight-knit community that residents wish for. In order to harbor the "Live, Work, Play" mentality, there needs to be institutions in place. One tactic is by nurturing cultural development. Cultural development can be supplemented through three strategy types:

*Entrepreneurial*: through the focus of tourists, affluent residents and suburbanites, economic growth through tourism and city image can bring the community positive press that brings people into the city to increase revenue;

- *Creative Class*: with the most attention on young professionals and skilled workers, arts and entertainment facilitate improvement of quality of life amenities through collaboration between the arts and private sectors;
- *Progressive*: looking at underserved neighborhoods to encourage community development and cultural production by creating community centers.

These three strategies can help bring the community closer which in turn revitalizes otherwise depressed neighborhoods. With the implementation of these strategies, officials can “work to create an attractive business environment through a host of incentives such as tax abatements, land contributions and write-downs, and relaxed zoning regulations, placing strong emphasis on creating high-profile facilities and events to catalyze private developments and market their cities as ‘places to play’” (Grodach 2007, 353). When businesses, schools, and the town work in harmony, people will naturally flock and participate in the revitalization process.

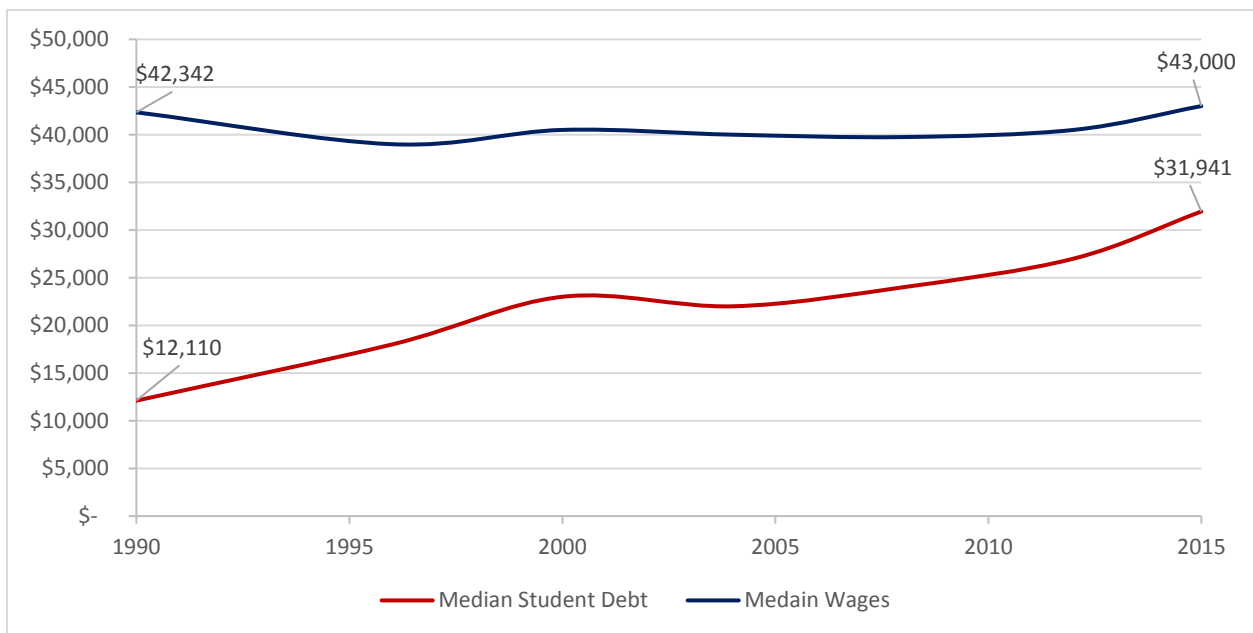
Abatements and other programs aimed towards citizens can also help revitalize a city. Most young professionals have a student loans along with an entry level, so by giving them a chance to find affordable housing while receiving loan pardons is one monumental struggle that would be alleviated. The “Live, Work, Play” frame of mind can only be achieved when there is a homeostasis of housing affordability, cultural and community development, and local enterprise working together to create an ideal place to live.

## MILLENNIALS AND HOMEOWNERSHIP

In the United States, housing and homeownership has long been romanticized and subsidized with policies that encourage Americans to buy their own homes. However, since the devastating losses of the Great Recession 2008, it has been brutally proven that owning a house is not always better than renting, either for the owner or the neighborhood. Unfortunately, many U.S. housing markets are still slow to recover, and according the U.S. Census Bureau (2017) homeownership rates have now dropped to the lowest rates in nearly 50 years, sitting at around 63 percent. This represents a nine percent decrease since 2004.

A major contributor to the historically low ownership rates, are the 18-34 year olds that make up the Millennial generation and that had constituted the bulk of first-time homebuyers. Until the recession, more than half of all first-time homebuyers were between the ages of 25 and 34, and approximately 40 percent of all homebuyers have been first-time homebuyers. With many young adults avoiding post-recession homeownership, the share of total home sales made to first-time buyers dropped to 33 percent by 2014. In fact, the share of first-time buyers of single-family home sales in 2015 dropped to the lowest level since 1987 (Gittelsohn 2014). While Millennials still appear to value homeownership and desire to own their own homes, a number of lifestyle choices and financial barriers have postponed them from reaching their aspirations (MacArthur Foundation 2015). With the homeownership rates so low, the past decade shaped up to be the landlord's market, with renter households increasing by nine million between 2005 and 2015 - the largest increase in any 10 year period. However, the U.S. rental market is still facing a staggering Millennial rental base, with an estimated two million Millennials that have not even entered the rental market yet (Goodman 2015).

One principal reason for this delay is that it has become the default for many willing Millennials to return home to live with their parents in what would could be considered multi-generational homes. Financially it just makes sense for Millennials to live at home, with the poverty rate among young adults who live with their parents at 9.8 percent, as compared to their counterparts living on their own at 17.4 percent. An all-time high of 35.6 percent of 18-34 years old lived at home in 2015 (American Community Survey), with 83 percent of young adults who returned home during the recession doing so to ease financial hardship. These young adults continue to be burdened with low stagnant incomes and mounting student debt as well. Figure 2.4 shows the median debt at graduation for bachelor’s degree recipients, as well as median wages for graduates aged 22-27. It reveals that overall median wages have increased 1.6 percent over the last 25 years while median student debt has risen 163.8 percent. In other words, the typical college student graduated with debt equal to 28.6 percent of their annual earnings in 1990, and 74.3 percent in 2015.



**Figure 2.4** Median student debt versus median wages. **Data Source:** Federal Reserve Bank of New York and Upjohn Institute for Employment Statistics.

Despite this slow start for Millennials and their muted impact on housing demand, they will soon have a significant presence in housing markets as the simple fact of aging pushes the oldest members of their generation into their mid to late 30s, a point at which most adults live independently. The annual *State of the Nation's Housing* published by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (JCHS), dives deeper into this notion. At 87 million strong Millennials are the largest and most diverse generation in the history of the United States. Estimates show that by 2025, minorities will make up 36 percent of all U.S. households and 46 percent of all minorities will be aged 25-34. Minorities will account for nearly half of the typical first time home-buyer (Hsu 2014). It is also estimated that by 2035 Millennials will head 49.8 million households, as compared to the 16 million in 2015. Thus, effectively and profoundly reshaping the housing demand in the United States (JCHS 2017). The U.S. rental and housing markets will have to soon accommodate this significant impact and diversity the millennial generation will bring. This includes tackling problems such as high housing costs and the possibility that millions of older households will decide to age in place, which could limit the supply of suburban homes available for sale to millennials; or even possibly for the fact that Millennials may not want to live in suburbia at all.

It is crucial for towns, cities and housing markets across the country to understand the Millennial generation - their needs and wants, social characteristic and lifestyle preferences - as the United States tries to reinvent itself in the vision of what it thinks Millennials want. This is no easy task however, as it is difficult to accurately generalize an entire diverse generation of 87 million people. However, there are some broad assumptions and characteristics that many Millennials do in fact share, as reported in the 2014 *Millennials - Breaking the Myth* study

conducted by the Nielsen Holdings Company. This study found that 62 percent of Millennials prefer to live in the mixed-use communities, often ones found in urban centers where they can live in close proximity to a mix a commercial activity such as shopping, restaurants and business offices (Nielsen 2014). Millennials currently live in urban areas at higher rates than previous generations, and 40 percent say they would like to live in an urban area in the future (Russonello 2013).

The transition from the classic ‘white picket fence in the suburbs’ American Dream to ‘brownstone stoop in the heart of the city’ is a radical change from the social and lifestyle preferences of older generations, but what is interesting is how they may begin to blend together into some sort of hybrid. Even when Millennials start to age and move out of highly dense urban centers and the older cohorts of the generation begin to start families in single-family homes, Millennials will want to live in places that are a hybrid of both cities and suburbs. These places revolve around a relatively new concept of urban burbs. Urban burbs are becoming more popular in redevelopment as suburban communities make changes to create urban environments with walkable downtown areas and everyday necessities within close reach.

Leigh Gallagher touches on this concept in her 2013 book and Ted Talk *The End of the Suburbs: Where the American Dream Is Moving*, in which she describes developers’ desire to urbanize the suburbs. Areas such as Kentlands Maryland, which mix traditional and townhouse style living, or Libertyville, Illinois, which recently developed a 26 single-family home community with sidewalks and walkability to the nearby downtown became successful even in the depths of the financial crisis. Examples from across the country that share very similar characteristics to Keene are not uncommon.



This concept of new smart growth and urban living are also connected to the concept of New Urbanism brought up by urban planner Peter Calthrope (1993). New Urbanism applies the successful design principles of urban areas to suburban developments including an emphasis on “diversity in both community design and population, pedestrian and transit-friendly, environmental consciousness, mixed housing types (single-family, townhomes and apartments), historic preservation and public parks for community gathering” (Nielsen 2014).

## COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Not only are these new concepts being applied in American suburbia, but college campuses as well are great examples of urbanization that planners have been working so hard to emulate. Campuses are models of compact design and mixes of housing types; green space is central to their aesthetic appeal; their residents are economically and ethnically diverse; and they incorporate a variety of uses and offer multiple transportation options (Khalil 2012).

The University of South Carolina is an example of a school that is in the process of instituting a new urban redevelopment plan (named the Innovista Master Plan) for a 500-acre brownfield that aims to integrate downtown Columbia with the university campus by establishing new urban neighborhoods (Sasaki 2017). The project looks to promote pedestrian interaction, reinforce positive urban form, establish active street-facing-facades, provide appropriate signage and lighting, minimize the visual impact of parking and service areas, and use trees, landscaping and other streetscape amenities for street enhancements (Khalil 2012). One of the main goals however, is to retain university graduates and attract new young adults to live and work for the city as well as to foster continued economic development for the downtown. The university and Columbia community hope the mixture of urban density development with retail, residential and

commercial space will create the live, work, play and learning environment young adults actively seek out.

Other examples of colleges engaging with their local housing community include Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, a city that has struggled with under crowding and crime problems in the past. In 1996, Trinity announced a \$175 million neighborhood revitalization plan of the community surrounding its campus. Working with local education and health organizations, as well as area banks, state and city agencies, the college provided low-interest mortgages to encourage home ownership and supported the rebuilding of a safe, viable and strong neighborhood (Bowditch 2001).

Another example can be found in Worcester, Massachusetts, where the neighborhood around Clark University was losing population at one point so fast the local Catholic Church reportedly experienced a 50 percent drop in collections. Thus the college forged a partnership with the community and created the Main South Community Development Corporation (MSCDC), a nonprofit that has constructed several housing projects including the renovation of 170 affordable housing units and 14 triple-decker



**Figure 2.5** MSCDC Revitalization of inner city unit. *Photo Source: MSCDC 2017*

residencies near the college (**Figure 2.5**). In addition, a homebuyer incentive program that provides housing grants to staff members who buy in the neighborhood was also implemented. Free college tuition programs for residents who have lived in a qualify Main South neighborhoods for five years has also been offered. (Bowditch 2001; Center for Community Progress 2017).

## COLLEGE AND STUDENT HOUSING MARKETS

It is also important to understand the role a college plays in the local housing market. Colleges provide cultural and recreational amenities to the surrounding area, but lifestyle choices of students may create negative externalities that depress property prices causing uncertainties in local markets. For example, the benefits colleges bring to municipalities, such as the campus itself, open green space, water bodies, recreation facilities, arts, and technology all play a positive role in housing prices, as well as having the possibility to attract more commercial development due to a sufficiently large student body market (Lahr 2009). While at the same time they can increase dis-amenities such as litter, traffic, safety concerns, substance abuse and noise as the college-aged population grows in local housing and rental markets. This may also cause these neighborhoods to be less stable as student housing patterns shift yearly.

Despite such concerns, college towns in New Jersey are associated with house prices that are about 10 percent higher than towns that do not have a college (Lahr 2009). However, the interaction of college residents and enrollment has a significant and negative correlation. It was found that smaller colleges have the largest effect on housing prices, and this positive effect on price diminishes when college enrollment reaches about 12,500 students. Thus, Keene State College with a student population of less than 4,000 could be considered a college that has significant effect on local housing.

It is often seen that student migration into surrounding neighborhoods causes family residential homes to be turned into rental properties (Gopal 2008). These converted properties often end up substandard as they were not purposely built for students and therefore lack sufficient requisite facilities for student living (Ghani 2016). Getting houses for rent in the private

market by students may be difficult in most cases as private housing for rent may not be sufficient in supply, students may not know the intricacies of the housing market, and information between landlords and students may lack transparency in terms of property claims and violations (Sadayuki 2015; Ghani 2016).

However, it has also been revealed that university on campus housing is often times more expensive for students than private off campus rental options. At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, on campus housing was up to 130 percent higher than the rent charged for housing managed by private property owners (Sadayuki 2015). The same held true at Purdue University and The Ohio State University, which were about 185 percent and 210 percent more expensive than the cost of off campus housing respectively. These schools share similar policies to KSC in which first year students (and second year students at KSC) are required to live on campus, while upperclassmen may choose to live on or off-campus. Comparatively, about 60 percent of University of Illinois students living on campus move to off-campus the next year, and 81 percent of KSC upperclassmen decide to to move off campus too (2017 data). This suggests students prefer lower costs, freedom from stricter rules and regulations of residence halls even if it means sacrificing security, reliable maintenance, location, and the positive influence campus housing has on persistence, degree completion and opportunities to interact with peers.

With a large proportion of KSC students willing to live off campus, landlords have little incentive to keep properties well maintained. This notion coupled with typical student behavior lowers the general housing quality and perception of these neighborhoods. Poor housing and overall property quality can rub off on surrounding properties and have a spiraling negative effect on neighborhoods (Doran 2005). Keene State College and the city of Keene have an opportunity,

especially with recent declines in KSC enrollment, to revitalize these city neighborhoods, increase property quality and perception, and lure younger professional into the area to make use of the amenities Keene has to offer.

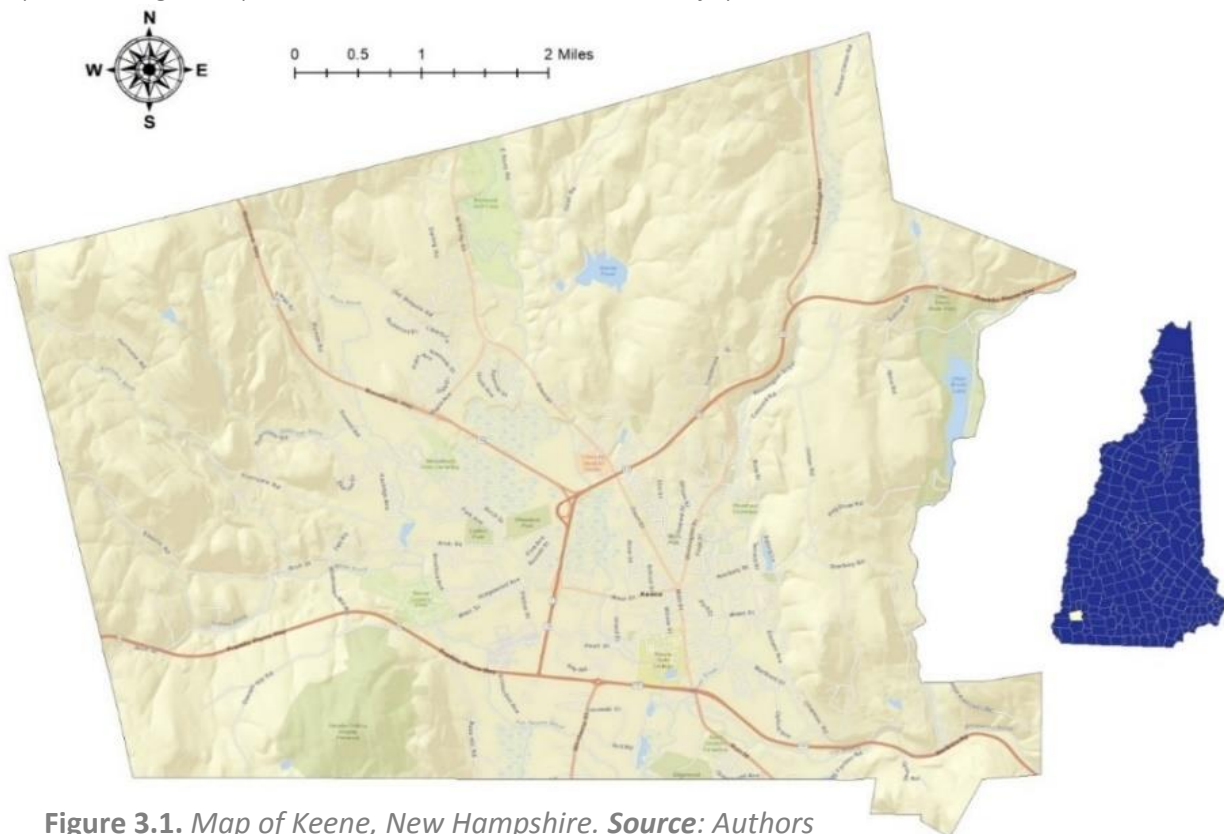
# CHAPTER 3

## BACKGROUND



## GEOGRAPHY

The City of Keene is located at the center of Cheshire County, and occupies the southwest corner of the State of New Hampshire (Figure 3.1). It is part of the northeastern region of the United States, which is well known for experiencing the charm of all four seasons, and a wealth of history and attractions. Keene is situated just northwest of Mount Monadnock, one of the most summited mountains in the world. The city lies on top of an ancient glacial lake bed that is now a low, flat valley within the foothills of the Wapack Mountain Range. The Ashuelot River, one of the tributaries of the Connecticut River, weaves through the heart of Keene and the surrounding hills and mountains. These natural features provide excellent recreational opportunities including hiking, bike riding, mountain climbing, skiing, kayaking and camping. Along with these recreational activities within the beautiful natural scenery outside of the city center, Keene also offers plenty of parks and greenspace for residents and visitors to enjoy.



**Figure 3.1.** Map of Keene, New Hampshire. *Source:* Authors



Keene is well known for its legacy of arts and culture. Downtown Keene is a quintessential example of a quaint New England city. From the historical homes from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century lining the street, to the bustling sidewalks along the busy restaurants and shops and the church steeple overlooking the great Central Square; there is a perfect combination of urban and rural that life leaves something for everyone to enjoy. Keene hosts a plentiful number of cultural events throughout the year, including the famous Pumpkin Festival, which brings people from around New England to celebrate the fall season. There is enough excitement and charm for anyone to be proud to call Keene home.

The location of Keene is within proximity to a number of attractions outside of the city boundaries. State Highways Route 9, Route 12 and Route 101 run right through Keene, making traveling convenient. Keene is situated just under 100 miles from Boston, Massachusetts; about 220 miles from New York City; 100 miles from Hampton Beach/Portsmouth and 150 miles to the White Mountains. Thus, residents in Keene have plenty around to meet the needs of any weekend or business related travels.



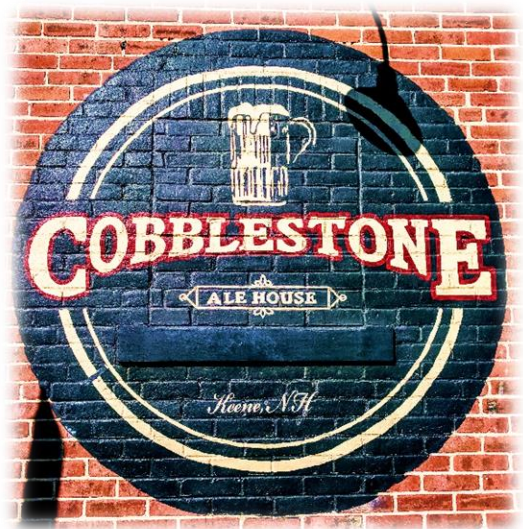
**Figure 3.2.** Main Street in downtown Keene. **Photo Source:** Authors



**Figure 3.3.** Horatio Museum in downtown Keene. **Photo Source:** Authors



Keene is also known for its nightlife, especially for the college students. On Main Street, there are a series of bars, including Cobblestone Ale House, Lab 'n' Lager, and Scores. These bars are often crowded with college students and recent graduates. People line the sidewalks on Thursday nights for what is known as “dollars”, which the bars in Keene offer \$1-\$2 well drinks. Besides bars, Main Street is a major



**Figure 3.4.** Cobblestone bar in Keene.  
**Photo Source:** Authors

source of revenue for Keene. There are many shops and quaint restaurants that people of all ages enjoy. There are several barbers and hair studios, clothing boutiques, and patio seating in front of the restaurants. The tree-lined street is a bustling part of the city that is beautiful and functional. West Street is perpendicular to Main Street. This busy street houses two strip malls with tattoo shops and small businesses along its sides. One of the strip malls has a grocery store and retail shopping. The mall directly across from it is mostly retail with an Aldi grocery store. Further down West Street is a bowling alley that has specials for college students. Closer to the college, Winchester Street is another section of restaurants, shopping, and other amenities, such as a movie theatre. Keene is mostly known for its variety of restaurants and bars. It is somewhat lacking other features, such as other sources of nightlife and activities for young families.

## DEMOGRAPHY

New Hampshire, as a whole, is a state that is currently facing a demographic shift. According to a study conducted by the University of New Hampshire, the rate of population growth is stagnating. The biggest reason for this is that there are fewer people migrating to the state

(Johnson 2012). This is extremely important because the shift ultimately affects the local economy. Historically, New Hampshire's population growth was mostly the result from migration, so having this diminish only hurts the state. The study does mention that a large factor to population decline is due to the Great Recession of 2007, but these trends have appeared even before then. The loss of migrants "has an immediate financial impact on the state and implications for its human, intellectual, and social capital" (Johnson 2012). New Hampshire needs to continue to attract people in order to remain productive in the United States.

Keene itself has a total population of 23,406 residents, which has grown by 843 residents from the year 2000, and has seen a slight decrease in the last 5 years. This trend is similar to the surrounding Cheshire County; however, population growth has been increasing more quickly in the state of New Hampshire as a whole than in either Keene or Cheshire County. The median age of Keene is 33.5, which is relatively low when compared to both Cheshire County and the state of NH, which have median ages of 42 and 42.2 respectively. The main reason for such a low median age in Keene is largely due in part to the presence of Keene State College (KSC) that has an undergraduate student population of 4,068 students aged 18-22 traditionally.

These numbers are reflected in **Figure 3.5** on the next page, which shows the population distribution in Keene. What is also worthy of recognition, are the latter age cohorts of the Millennial generation: ages 25-29 and 30-34. These groups severely fall off after the college aged population, and also have smaller stacks than those aged between 40-60 years old. This suggests that Keene is not able to fully capitalize on the young workforce brought to the city via the college, and many college graduates leave in search of other places to live and work, either in New Hampshire or elsewhere. In addition, the diminished Millennial prevalence leads to fewer kids and

families in Keene, also in Figure 5. Children under 5 and between ages 6-10 have smaller cohorts than a majority of the age groups 40-60.

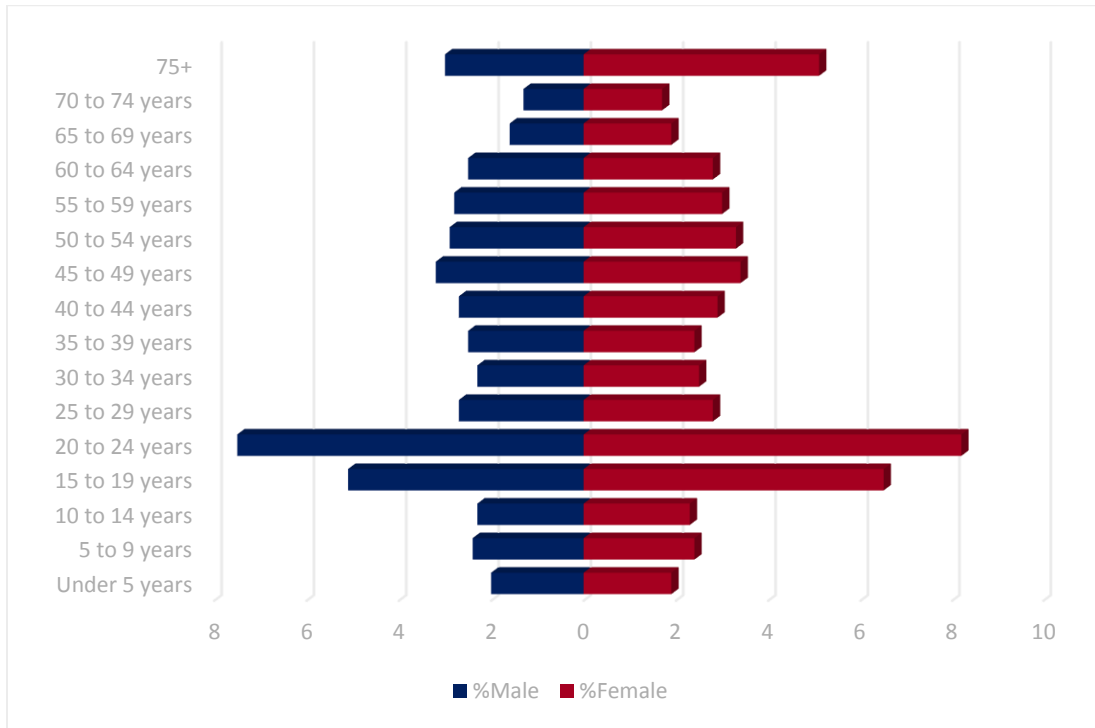


Figure 3.5. Population distribution in Keene, New Hampshire.

## KEENE STATE COLLEGE

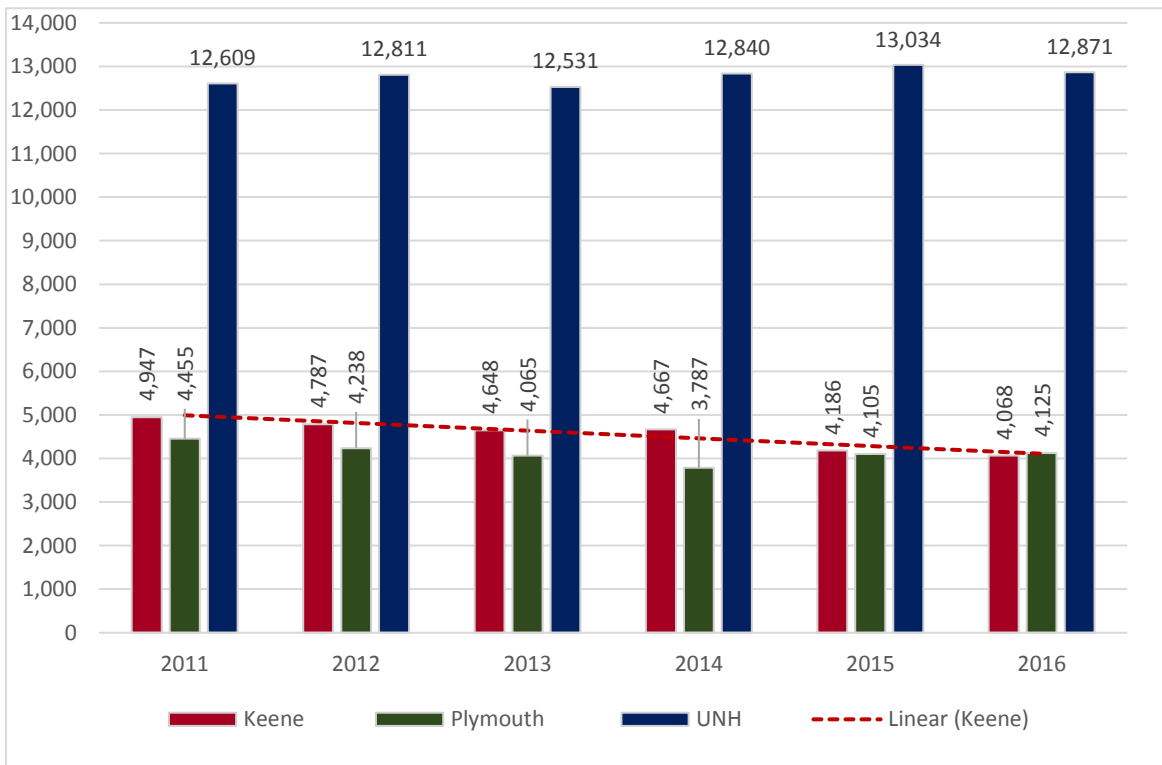


Figure 3.6. Entrance to the college.  
Photo Source: Authors



Figure 3.7. Appian Way at the college.  
Photo Source: Authors

Keene State College is a fundamental feature of the city of Keene, founded in 1909 originally as a teacher's college along Main Street adjacent to the historical district of Keene. KSC presently is a liberal arts school that offers 40 areas of study and is a member of the University System of New Hampshire. KSC currently has 4,068 full time and part time undergraduate students. This number has been declining steadily over the past six years however, and is currently down almost 900 students (18 percent) from 2011 when the total undergraduate population was about 4,947. This is a new trend for Keene, as for the prior seven years' total undergraduate enrollment went up 15 percent or 635 students. When compared to other four year public institutions in New Hampshire, Plymouth State shares a similar yet less dramatic seven percent decrease between 2011 and 2016, while the University of New Hampshire (UNH) saw an increase of about two percent (Figure 3.8).



**Figure 3.8.** Undergraduate enrollment in New Hampshire's public universities. **Data Source:** NH University Fact Books



**Figure 3.9.** *Fiske Residence Hall.* **Photo Source:** *Authors*

UNH and Plymouth State have also outperformed Keene State in the number of applications received from prospective first-year students (4185, 2811, and 529 respectively) and in the number of those students who enroll. This

loss of enrollment effects revenue from tuition. In 2013, the Education Policy Institution conducted a study on the relationship between attrition to revenue loss from students leaving a university. When comparing Keene and Plymouth, Keene State loses about 7.5 percent more revenue than Plymouth due to attrition (EPI 2013). The reasoning behind Keene's loss in student enrollment can factor back to 2014 when riots erupted on the outskirts of the Keene Pumpkin Festival near the school. Moreover, changing standards for incoming students, demographic shifts and stronger efforts by Massachusetts and Connecticut colleges and universities to keep their students in-state effect enrollment. From 2014 to 2015, Keene lost 66 first time students from Massachusetts, 99 from Connecticut, and 147 from New Hampshire (Keene Fact book).

New Hampshire also boasts some staggering facts in regards to college enrollment, tuition and student debt that can have negative effects on Keene State enrollment. Nationally, 18.8 percent of recent high school graduates leave the home to attend college out-of-state. In New Hampshire however, 48 percent of recent high school graduates migrate out of the state to attend college and 60 percent of New Hampshire's college-going high school graduates leave the state, making New Hampshire the highest exporter of four year college students in the nation. New

Hampshire also has among the highest tuition rates for public two-year and four-year universities in the nation. The state ranked 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50<sup>th</sup> states in net tuition as percent of total educational revenue in 2015, and last in higher education support per capita by state in 2014. In addition, the average student debt in 2015 for New Hampshire four-year college graduates was \$36,101, making it the highest in the country for that year (New Hampshire Department of Education 2015).

## HOUSING AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

There are essentially two overarching types of housing markets in Keene: student housing, and everything else. There are, of course, different tiers of the ‘regular public housing market’, which may include affordable housing options run by landlords, low-income housing run by the Keene Housing Authority, and then regular real-estate housing options for medium and high income families/individuals. Additionally, the geography of these different housing markets are



**Figure 3.10.** *Keene Student Rentals still looking for tenants. Photo Source: Authors*

predominantly separate from one another.

West Keene, which is mostly composed of suburban neighborhoods, has a housing market predominantly run by homeowners.

While East Keene, near the college campus, is characterized by a mix of housing and

includes the overwhelming preponderance of student housing landlords, who rent their

units to only Keene State College students. These different housing markets are often independent of each other, but may have some overlapping. For instance, college enrollment does effect



whether there is an overstock or understock of college housing, but does not directly influence whether a family in West Keene wants to buy a house.

The local economy has lasting effects on any local housing market. Over time, the Keene housing market and economy have molded into what it is today. Keene was previously a major industrial city in New Hampshire, by producing wooden-ware, pails, chairs, sashes, shutters, doors, pottery, glass, soap, woolen textiles, shoes, and other goods. The post-Great Depression era changed the industrial fabric of the city, much like the rest of New England, which in-turn changed the community as a whole. **Figures 3.11** and **3.12** represent downtown Keene in the early 1900's and the 1950's respectively. As shown in the early photo of Keene, the buildings and streets are primarily built as mill buildings for manufacturing. The post-industrial era photo below shows the beginning of the Keene that is still present today, where retail shops took over the downtown region. Today, Keene still resides as the economic center of Cheshire County. However, Keene's economy is composed of a variety of industries and occupations that collectively contribute to the local economy. The city has over 12,900 people in the labor force. Currently, educational services, and health care and social assistance leads all industry categories by employing 3,762 people (or 34 percent of all employment). Additional major industries include retail trade with 1,402 employees (12 percent); and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services with 1,300 employees (11 percent). As far as occupations in Keene; management, business, science and arts employ 4,530 people (or 39 percent of the population) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).



Figure 3.11. *Downtown Keene in the 1900s. Photo Source: Historical Society of Cheshire County*

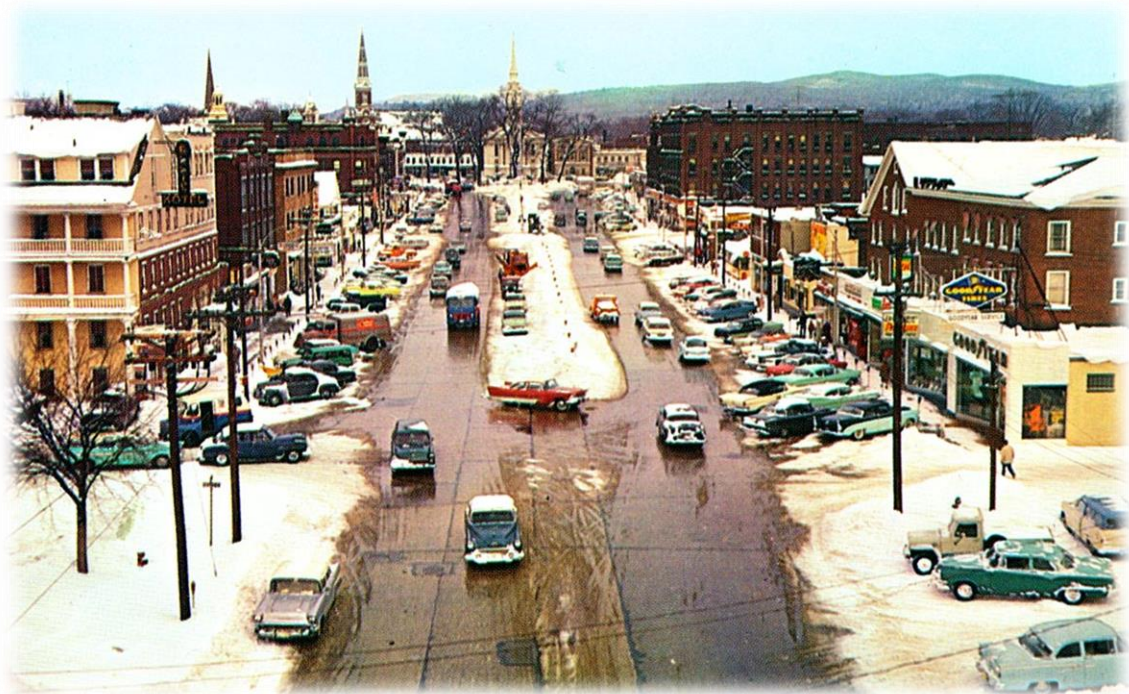
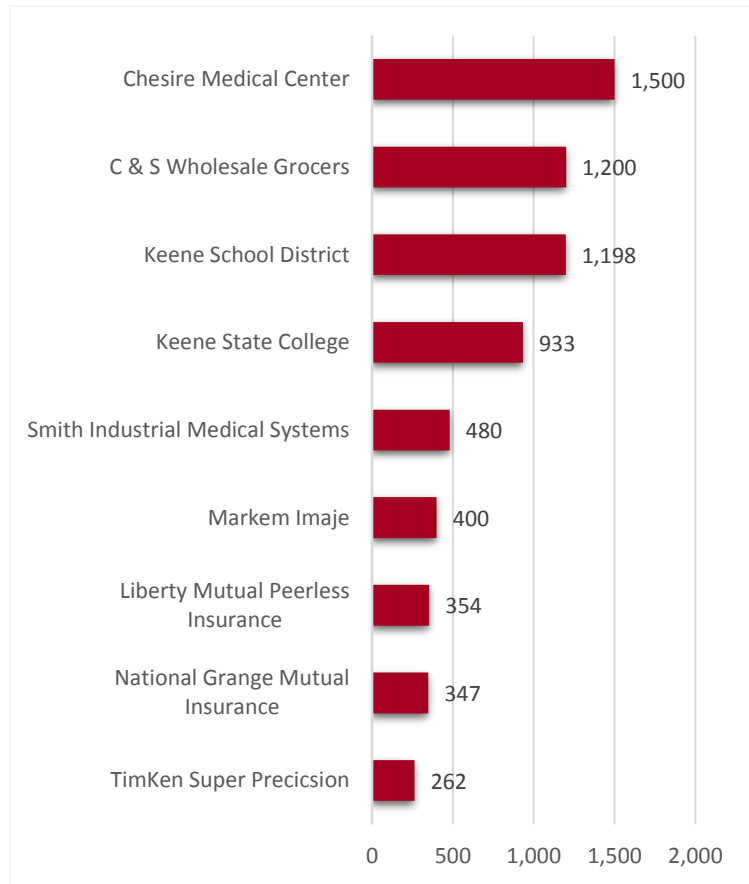


Figure 3.12. *Downtown Keene in the 1950s. Photo Source: Historical Society of Cheshire County*



Keene is home to many large employers, and even more small family-owned businesses.

**Figure 3.13** indicates the top employers in Keene in terms of number of employees (NHES). These businesses fall under many industry types, for instance: top social service based employers like Keene State College, the Keene School District and the Cheshire Medical Center; notable science/medical based businesses



include Smith Industrial Medical Systems and some manufacturing

**Figure 3.13.** *Top employers in Keene. Data Source: New Hampshire Employment Security*

based businesses include Markem Imaje and Timken. Several of the top ten employers in Keene are manufacturing based which is a representation of Keene’s former industrial roots.

An integral part of a city being the economic center of the region is that it must include shopping centers to meet the needs of local consumers. Keene has numerous retailers like Walmart, Home Depot, Target and the many grocery store chains including Market Basket, Hannaford's and Price Chopper that bring in customers from the region. Additionally, small family-owned businesses have establishments all throughout downtown Keene and in the many shopping

centers in Keene; such as Hannah Grimes, the Brewbakers Coffee Shop, and Ted’s Shoe and Sports. These businesses are cornerstones of the local community image and serve as employment sources and draws on customers. The housing market in Keene is dependent on the success of these stores and businesses.

Along with employment, median income is a critical factor of the economy and housing market. The median household income in 2015 for Keene is \$52,636, whereas the median income for New Hampshire residents was \$66,779. This may have to do with the fact that there are about 4,300 non family households in Keene, making a median income of only \$31,495, many of which are likely to be from student occupied housing, or Millennials. This income gap for residents of Keene makes it hard for many to find affordable housing and reliable housing within the town and may force younger workable residents to find housing elsewhere.

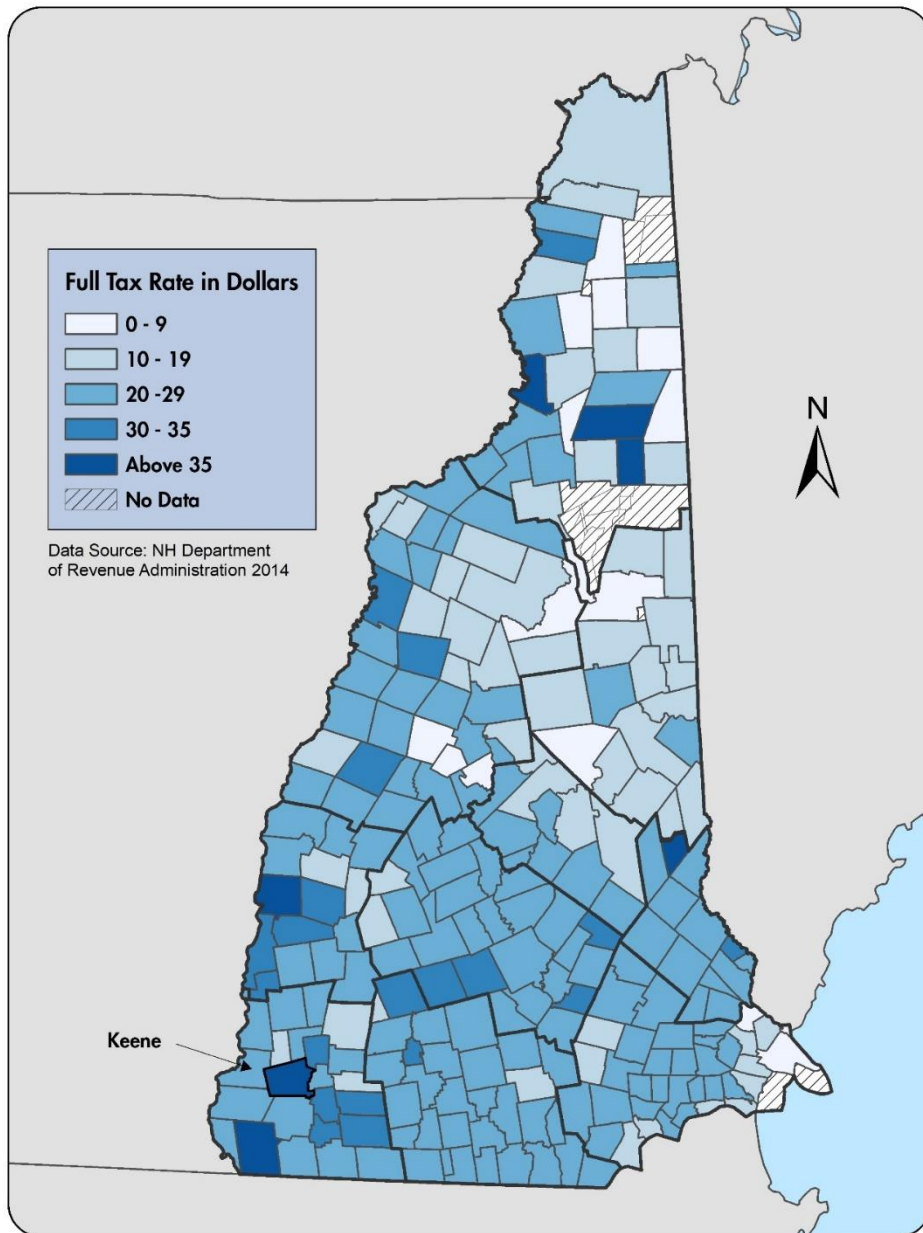


**Figure 3.14.** *Traffic circle on Main Street. Photo Source: Authors*

The above average tax rates residents pay in comparison to other towns in New Hampshire is another factor that is keeping younger home buyers and renters out of Keene’s market. The New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration annually calculates full tax rates for all 230 New Hampshire municipality. The full tax rate represents the estimated tax rate for a municipality if all taxable property was assessed at 100 percent (per \$1,000). According to the 2016 data, Keene currently ranks

226 of 230 with a full tax rate of \$35.98. In comparison,

towns bordering Keene such as Westmoreland and Swanzey have rates of \$23.87 and \$27.50 respectively, and towns with similar populations to Keene such as Portsmouth and Londonderry have rates of \$14.15 and \$20.46 respectively. **Figure 15** represents the tax rates in New Hampshire.



**Figure 3.15.** Full tax rates in dollars in New Hampshire. Map created by authors.  
*Data Source: New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration, 2014*

The issue of the impending “Silver Tsunami” of older people paired with concerns of the relative absence of productive young professionals has been discussed extensively within New Hampshire. Steven Norton, executive director of the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies, warns that the Baby Boomer generation will soon outnumber the rest of the population, with estimates that the number of residents over the age of 85 will rise over 35,000 by 2035. He said that, “the state is not looking strategically at this issue. This is not on anyone’s radar” (McGauley 2016, A1). This is significant because the demand for medical care and infrastructure may soon buckle under the aging population’s needs and the thinning of support of working professionals. As the former Medicaid director of New Hampshire, Norton outlined the series of events that will happen if the aging trend continues:

- Home health care will be driven by modifications in Medicare and Medicaid programs. The elderly will demand more resources and stress social security;
- Spending trends will shift because they consume less and spend more on health care;
- Older people will be more vulnerable in rural areas because cities have the more advanced health opportunities.

The biggest problem, Norton adds, is that “Medicaid can take care of those who are poor, and the rich can afford care, but it’s the big middle that face problems” (McGauley 2016, A1). Young professionals throughout the country are struggling to afford their own housing due to student loans and other factors such as medical concerns. Premiums have risen along with rent and student loans, so the deck is tremendously stacked against their favor. Norton is warning New Hampshire that the aging population affects everyone, not just the people that are retiring.

To help combat the problems that the Silver Tsunami generate, New Hampshire governor Chris Sununu created a Millennial Advisory Council through an executive order on September 20, 2017. This council consists of 25 members of Millennials and their purpose is to provide the governor with insight and recommendations regarding the attraction and retention of young professionals (Landen 2017). The intent is to try to set policies to help keep Millennials interested in living in the state. This council is still within its infancy. Several of the young professionals in this committee have expressed their opinions and hopes for this development in an article published in the Keene Sentinel. George Hansel, 31, is a Keene city councilor who is also the national sales manager at Filtrine Manufacturing Co. He believes that “a lot of the cultural issues and the demand for more modern housing will be worked out once young people with high-paying jobs come into the state to contribute to our economy”. Perhaps rezoning downtown areas will encourage an influx in young professionals as it will provide a “more modern residential construction that is close to the downtown area” (Landen 2017). Danya Landis, 28, who is the co-founder of the Keene-based arts, events, and design company Machina Arts, stresses the need to provide welcoming places for young professionals to “have a good time”. She says that “as a rural state, it can be easy for young people to feel isolated in New Hampshire” (Landen 2017). She also mentions that the minimum wage is a deterrent and that big businesses are encouraged to provide livable wages for their employees.



# CHAPTER 4

## CURRENT STATE OF KEENE'S HOUSING MARKET



The City of Keene encompasses dynamic interactions between the residents, the housing market and businesses. Despite these vibrant interactions, currently a steady shift in each of the above elements clouds the predictability for the future of Keene. However, by analyzing and interpreting relevant data, it is possible to create a better understanding of these complex interactions. It is essential to understand these demographic, housing and economic transformations in order to stay ahead of the curve by planning for the future.

## STUDENT AND PRIVATE HOUSING MARKETS

The two major sub-housing markets in Keene include student off-campus housing and privately owned housing units. These two markets are separate, but not mutually exclusive. When one market either declines or thrives, the other market will almost always feel the effects. However, the reasoning for each market's state of health is bound to different audiences but can overlap. For example, there are many instances where houses flip from being family owned, to being student rented, as shown in Appendix A. This occurrence can create instability in a neighborhood and housing market. In order to understand the overarching housing market of Keene, it is essential to examine each submarket.

First, the Keene State College student off-campus housing market is going through a significant shift in tenants and quantity of housing units with several factors in play. The first shift in off-campus housing came after the decision to require Sophomores to live on campus rather than having the choice to live on or off campus in 2013. With only Seniors and Juniors living off campus, a whole class of students was taken out of the market. Additionally, and perhaps the most notable factor of the distressed off-campus housing market, is the steep decline of student enrollment in the past five years. According to the Keene State College Fact Book the current

student enrollment is 4,068 full-time students, 18 percent less than the 2011 enrollment of 4,947. With fewer overall students attending the college, coupled with a whole class being taken out of the market, there is naturally less students filling the off-campus housing units. This, in turn, is causing higher vacancy rates. The Keene State off-campus housing market has traditionally been composed of single-family houses in the surrounding neighborhoods that are rented out to college students. Over time, new buildings have been added to the housing stock, while other houses have shifted from student housing to family housing (Appendix A). Like most major development projects, there are both positive and negative side effects. A perfect example of this are the new apartment buildings such as the Mills (**Figure 4.1**), Arcadia (**Figure 4.2**) and Davis Street Apartments that have all been introduced to the housing market within the past five years. These three apartment units alone added almost 500 new bedrooms to the off-campus student housing market, and are both located in close proximity to campus and other college neighborhoods.



**Figure 4.1.** *The Mills Apartments.*  
*Photo Source: Authors*



**Figure 4.2.** *Arcadia Apartments.*  
*Photo Source: Authors*

The benefit brought by these contemporary apartment buildings is the new development of housing added to a severely aging housing stock. This provides more options and appeals to the college age group, but Millennials may still be hesitant to life in such proximity to the college



students. However, this does not take away from the fact that the principles of supply and demand have been ignored, resulting in a distressed off-campus housing market. The additional apartments likely contributed to the skyrocketed vacancy rates to 8.5 percent in 2012, a record in Keene since 1990. A greater supply of housing and shrinking number of consumers results in a decline of home values and an increase in number of empty units. This results in a loss of revenue and taxes. According to the New Hampshire Employment Security (2017), 2016 trends show a -6 percent drop in median sales price and a -14 percent drop in median rent per month.

## AGING HOUSING STOCK

Building structures in Keene are becoming aged. More than 50 percent of houses are half a century or older and more than one third were built pre-1939. **Figure 4.3** shows the tenure by year of each housing structure built in Keene. Shifting demographics indicate that housing built from 1970 on may not meet the needs of Keene's current and future residents. The older housing stock may be a deterrent for some, as those units may lack modern amenities and luxuries Millennials actively seek out. **Figure 4.4** uses the median year housing structures where built in each census block of Keene. The distribution of houses based on year built is necessary for understanding the geography of distressed neighborhoods.

Much of the housing stock is aging and in many cases, deteriorating, especially when there is little investment in revitalization. As a result, housing quality becomes a relatively significant concern for the city of Keene, especially in East Keene and downtown where the median year households were built is 1939 (Figure 4.4). This impacts the housing market because older houses generally require more maintenance costs and they have safety concerns such as lead-based paint. Higher income residents that once lived in East Keene, in proximity to downtown, have now shifted

to the newer West Keene neighborhoods. This left behind a housing market in East Keene that, in part, is typified by investor landlords renting to lower income residents and students.

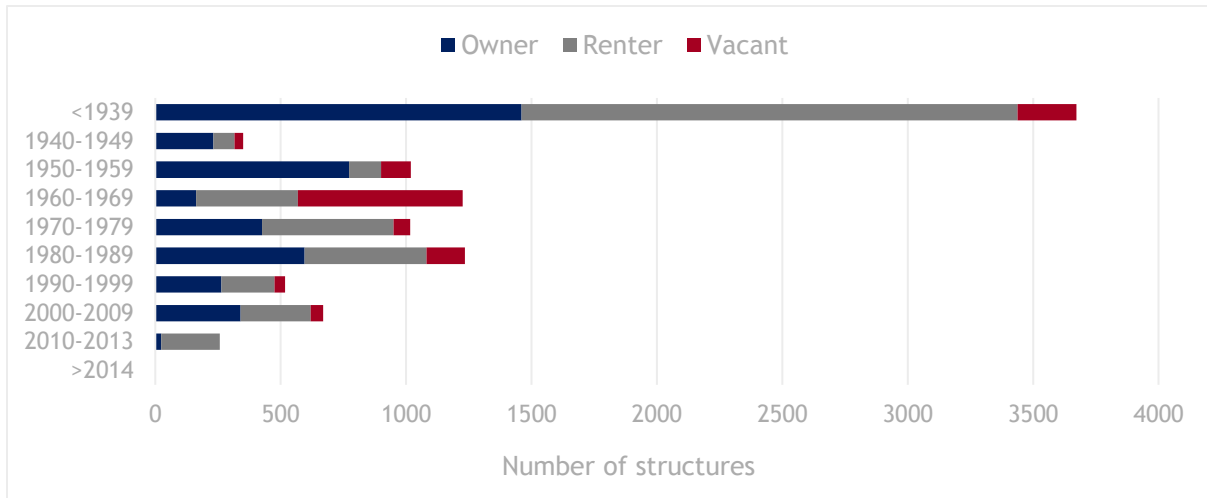


Figure 4.3 Tenure by year structure built, Keene NH. Data Source: Census Bureau 2017

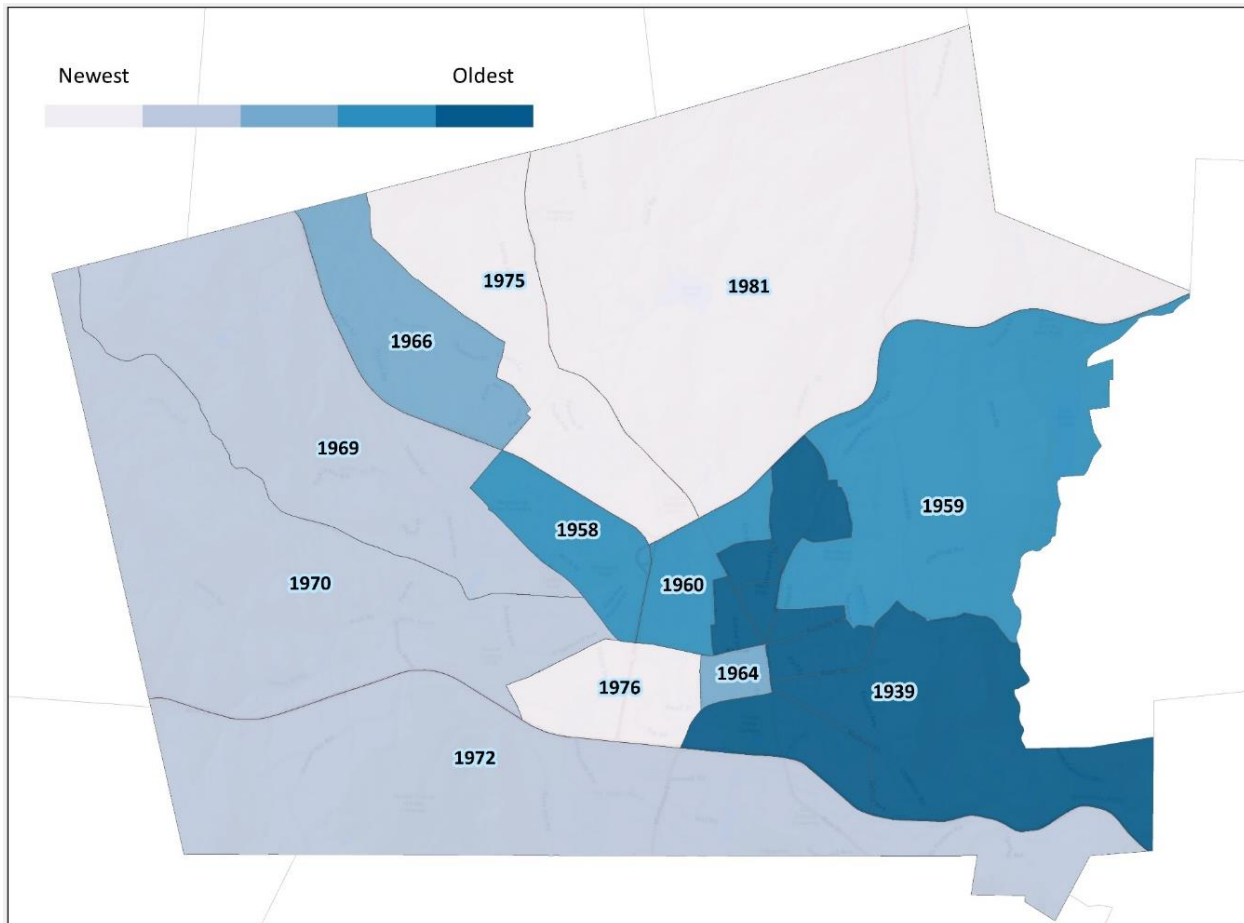


Figure 4.4 Median year household built per census block group. Data Source: Census Bureau 2017

## NEW APARTMENT OPTIONS

Another factor with enduring influence on the housing market is the constructing of new multi-unit luxury apartment buildings in Keene. One such apartment complex is being built at the former middle school grounds (Figure 4.5). The structure will be four-stories in height with 65 two-bedroom and 70 one bed-room apartments, and are aimed at the



**Figure 4.5.** *Construction of new apartments at Washington Park of Keene LLC. Source: Authors*

“millennial demographic of 25- to 35-year-olds, earning in the range of \$40,000 a year” (Stein 2016). Another structure will be erected at the once-thriving Colony Mills plaza, which is owned by Brady Sullivan Properties. The project will convert the shopping plaza and adjacent accessory building into 90 apartments or condominiums, and currently has no direct demographic target.

These plan brings up many questions. First, Keene’s population growth has stagnated, with only a 1% increase since the year 2000. Much like the student housing market, adding to the supply of housing stock to a population that is not growing could mean more vacant units and loss of revenue. Secondly, there is uncertainty around where the people in these apartments would be working. There are few entry-to-mid level jobs in Keene with adequate wages to attract new millennials to Keene to live in these units. So, the question remains as to who will fill these new apartments without leaving other houses in Keene vacant. History proves that this is troubling for any housing market. Much like the effects the off-campus housing market felt after the

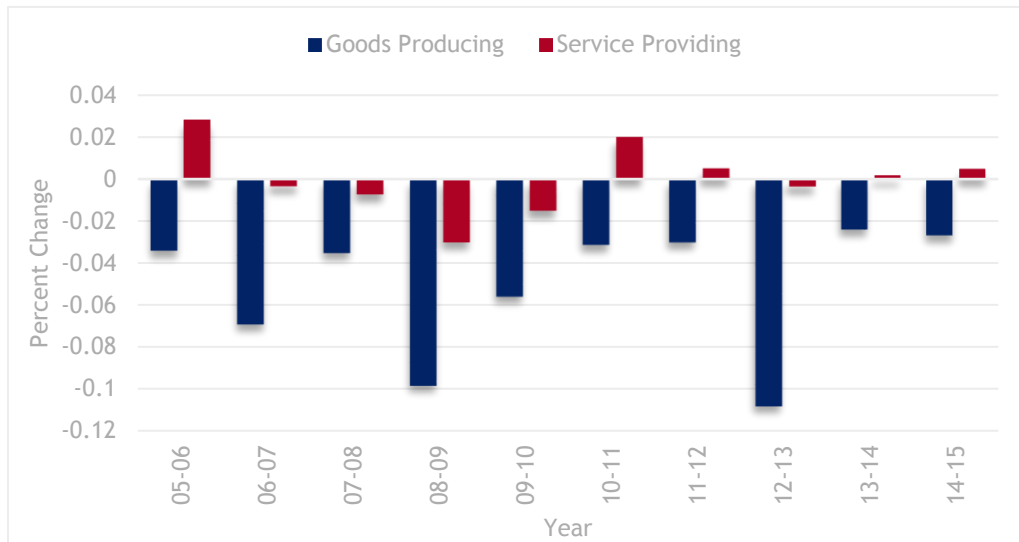
introduction of the new apartment buildings, the new luxury apartment complexes in Keene may cause similar effects on the housing market city-wide. However, these brand new units may be enticing enough for a new wave of Millennials to enter Keene. According to Senior Project Manager Tony Marcotte, there are many attractive and promising features incorporated with the new Washington Park development. Along with housing, plans for both structures call for a restaurant/bar on site. The Washington Park structure also has plans for office space and a large performance space. The hope is to create the ideal live, work, and play environment within the apartment building and to utilize aspects of ride sharing to reduce the dependency on vehicles. These amenities coupled with their close proximity to downtown could prove to be major selling points to potential Millennial buyers for both complexes.

## ECONOMY

The local economy has direct effects on the housing market and the number of new residents that choose to move to Keene (or move away). One-third of Keene's population is composed of working individuals, while the rest of the population is either dependent children, disabled individuals, or retired elderly. Shifts in employment affects not only the employees, but their children and any other dependent of them. Current trends show a steady increase in average wages for the Keene private workforce, but a decrease in jobs, especially in goods producing industries (**Figure 4.6**).

Goods producing type industries have not seen a positive increase any year from 2005 to 2015, but instead roughly a 50 percent decline in ten years. On the other hand, service producing type industries have only seen slight increases in 2005, 2010 and 2011, but have overall seen decline in the decade. Additionally, increasing wages are likely a symptom of the aging workforce

in Keene as workers are gaining seniority status. This is troubling news for the city of Keene. As these jobs leave Keene, more residence are forced to leave as well. The housing market is then faced with a large uphill battle as finding new homeowners and tenants to fill units becomes tougher.

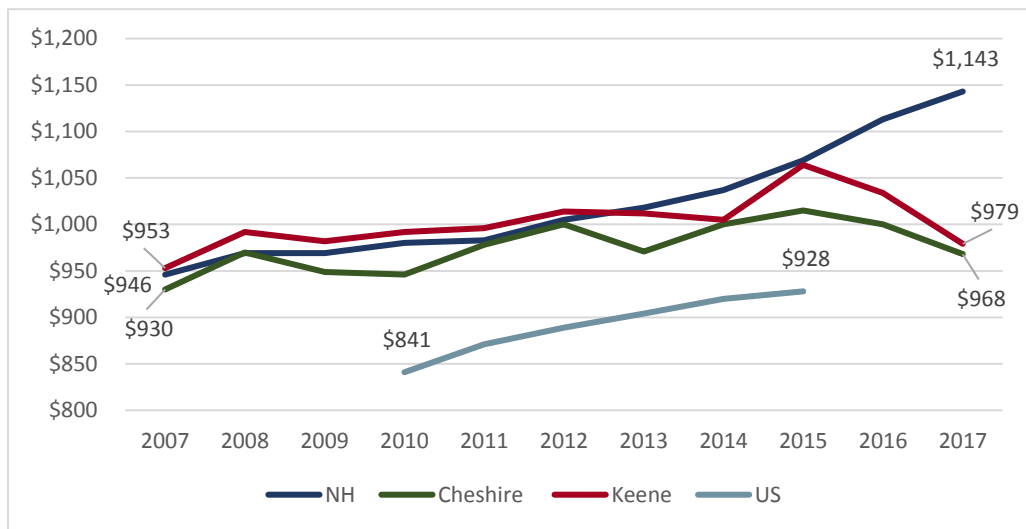


**Figure 4.6.** Year over year change in covered private employment in Keene, NH.  
*Data Source:* NHHFA.

## RENTAL PRICES

According to an Urban Land Institute survey of 1,270 Millennials in 2014, nearly 50 percent of respondents were renters. Of those 60 percent rented apartments or townhouse style units and 40 percent rented single-family homes. Financial constraints play a major role in many Millennial's lifestyle choices, and a reason why nearly 35 percent home in 2015 (American Community Survey 2015). However, as younger Millennials continue to age, transition to better paying jobs, and gain independence, many will look to move out on their own initially to rentals. Mobility, freedom, maintenance, and lower costs are all enticing reasons for Millennials to want to rent over buy, especially those in the younger portion of the generation.

The New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA) keeps up to date information on all of New Hampshire’s housing and rental trends. **Figure 4.7** shows median rent prices over the past ten years for Keene, Cheshire County, and the state of New Hampshire. It also compares national median rent prices for years 2010-2015; the most recent data available.

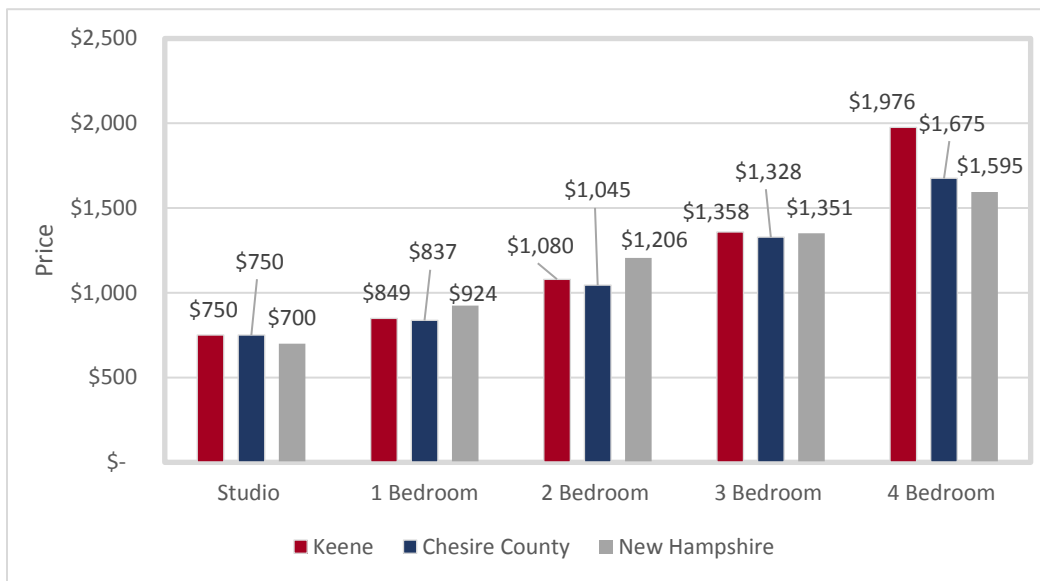


**Figure 4.7.** Median Rental Prices 2007 – 2017. *Data Source:* NHHFA 2017 & Census Bureau 2017

In 2007 the median rent prices for Keene, Cheshire, and New Hampshire were relatively close at \$953, \$930, and \$946 respectively. However, over the past 10 years the gap has widened. From 2007 to 2017 New Hampshire’s median rent has risen by 21 percent, or \$197. In comparison median rent in Keene and Cheshire County have only risen 2 percent and 4 percent respectively. The National median rent price from 2010-2015 rose about 10 percent. These numbers show relatively stable prices in Keene and lower overall price tags than New Hampshire as a whole. This could possibly indicate that the new apartment developments will not have a significant effect on existing rent prices throughout Keene, as the market has proven to be steady.

**Figure 4.8** presents the median rental prices for various size rentals units within Keene, Cheshire County, and the State of New Hampshire for the year 2016 (NHHFA 2017). The three are

quite comparable, and nearly identical in price for various unit sizes. However, Keene’s 4 bedroom and plus unit sizes carry median costs of \$300 more than either Cheshire County or the State of New Hampshire. Many Millennials may find the \$1,000 median rental price for all rental sizes to be on the expensive side.



**Figure 4.8.** Median Rental Prices per unit size 2016. *Data Source:* NHHFA 2017

Many Millennials look for luxury apartments with amenities such as a central location, close enough to range of shops, restaurants and services providers. They also desire laundry facilities, fitness centers, and security; and, of course, it should be competitively priced in the region of \$1,000 or less per month. These demands are often times not available to first time renters/homebuyers, especially in Keene which has a particularly old housing stock. However, the new apartment complexes may change this dependent on the final pricing.

## HOUSING PRICES

Not surprisingly, those seeking to set up a stable family unit desire a stable place in which to live. While most Millennials will rent their next home, more than 8 in 10 already own, or plan

to own their own home someday (Demand Institute Housing & Community Survey 2013). This makes the Millennial generation still an ‘ownership’ generation, as they value the space, financial investment, independence and security a home gives a family. Assessing the value of Keene’s owner-occupied units is therefore important in understanding how it compares to the surrounding area, state, and nation.

Figure 4.9 provides the median value of owner-occupied units over a 5 year period (2011-2015) (NHHFA 2017 & Census Bureau 2017). The values of homes in Keene decreased 8 percent from 2010 – 2015, while in comparison both Cheshire County and New Hampshire values dropped 6 percent, and nationally the values dropped 8 percent.

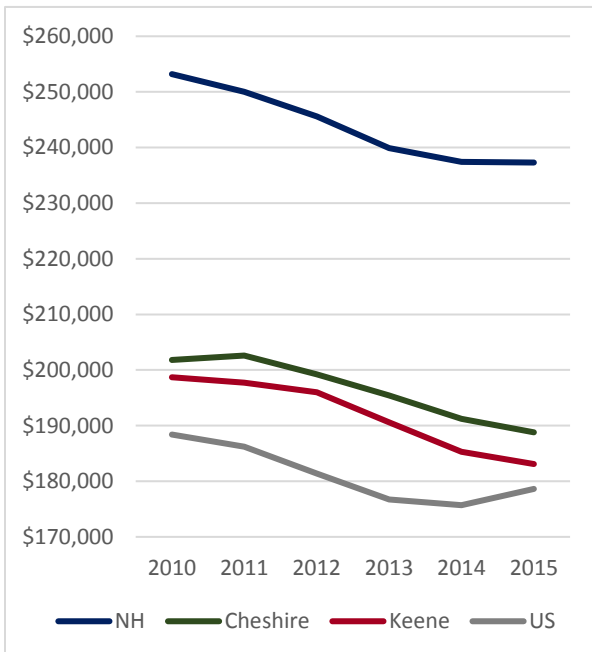


Figure 4.9. Median owner-occupied unit value. Data Source: NHHFA 2017

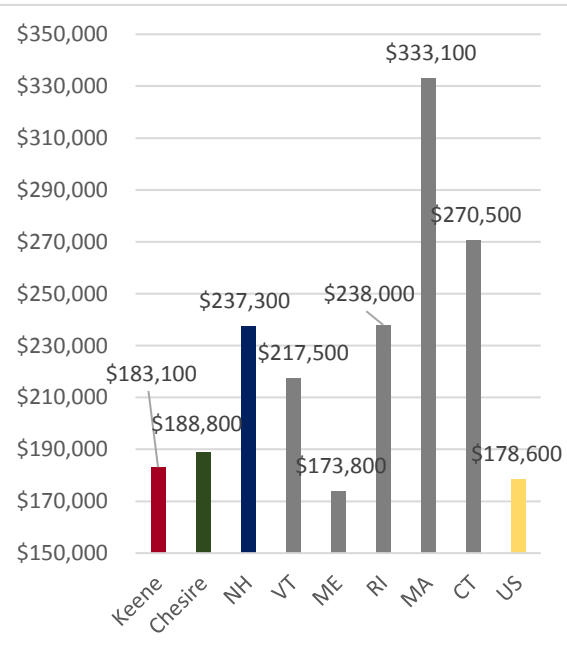


Figure 4.10. Median owner-occupied unit value in New England (2015). Data Source: NHHFA 2017

Figure 4.10 compares the 2015 value of owner-occupied units in New England and nationally (NHHFA 2017 & Census Bureau 2017). Keene’s value at \$183,000 puts home ownership



within reach for Millennials, especially when compared to the other states in New England. In New England, only Maine has a lower median price tag than Keene, and nationally Keene is only 2.5 percent above the median.

## TENURE OF HOUSING

Today, there are almost 9,961 housing units in Keene. Of these units; 4,881 are single-family units, 5,100 are multiple-family units and 450 are mobile homes or other housing units (ACS 2015). It is worth noting that multi-family units include mostly college housing, town houses and apartment buildings. These are primarily found in the densely populated downtown (found in the East Keene region) and are primarily built before 1990. **Figure 4.11** illustrates the change of tenure over the past 10 years. The most notable change is the 7 percent drop in renter occupied multi-family units, which could be explained by the drop in attendance rates at Keene State and thus lower renting rates in college housing. However, renter and owner-occupied single-family units have seen an increase in 2 and 3 percent respectively, indicating a subtle change in the market.

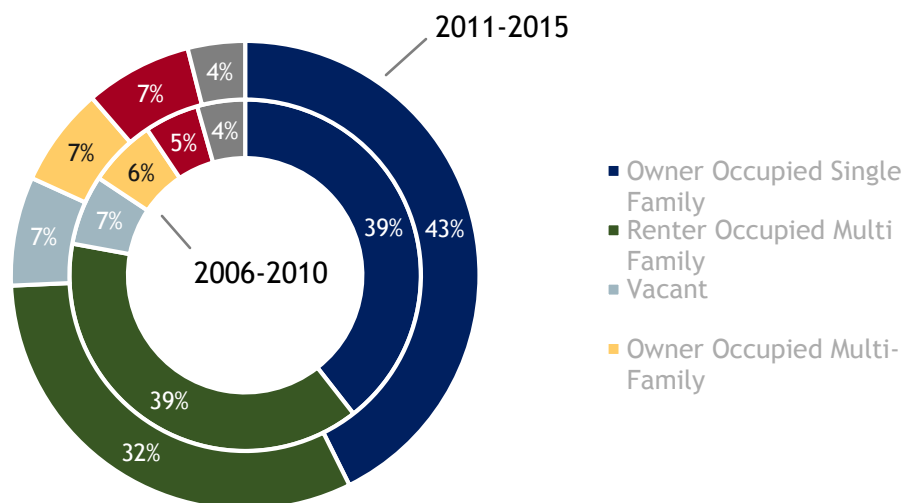


Figure 4.11. Tenure of Keene's housing units. Data Source: Census Bureau 2017

## GEOGRAPHY OF HOUSING

Keene also has some reoccurring spatial patterns when looking at several characteristics of housing and demographics. **Figure 4.12** is a bivariate map of Keene's census block groups by median age and tenure (Census Bureau 2017). The color for the block group represents median age while each pie chart represents the percentage of renters to owners for that block group. Keene's central business district and the adjacent areas are the youngest block groups in Keene by far, with median ages of 19.8, 20.5, and 24.3 due to the presence of college students. These areas as a result have the highest rates of renters too. This spatial pattern shifts however the further expanded out into town. Median ages significantly increase to 52.9, 49.3, and 44.7 in West Keene, and 42, 41.4, and 47.8 in North Keene. The percentage of renters also drops as the further extended outward. This suggests a strong correlation between age and tenure, and it is spatially evident where each demographic predominantly resides.

Furthermore, this spatial trend also contrasts when analyzing housing values throughout the city. **Figure 4.13** takes housing valuations from the New Hampshire Department of Revenue and displays them each with a dot; the darker the dot the higher the value of the house (2008). Downtown and East Keene show relatively lower prices than when compared to some areas in West and North Keene, barring neighborhoods surrounding the Keene Middle School. Also noticeable is the wealthy strip of homes lining Court Street, incongruous of homes in adjacent neighborhoods. These values seem to spatially correlate with figure 4.12 and figure 4.4 in terms of median year built, median age, and percent of tenure. That is, areas with lower valuations tend to have an older median year built, younger median age, smaller property size, and higher

percentage of renters and vice versa. This conveys an observable segregation among housing throughout the city.

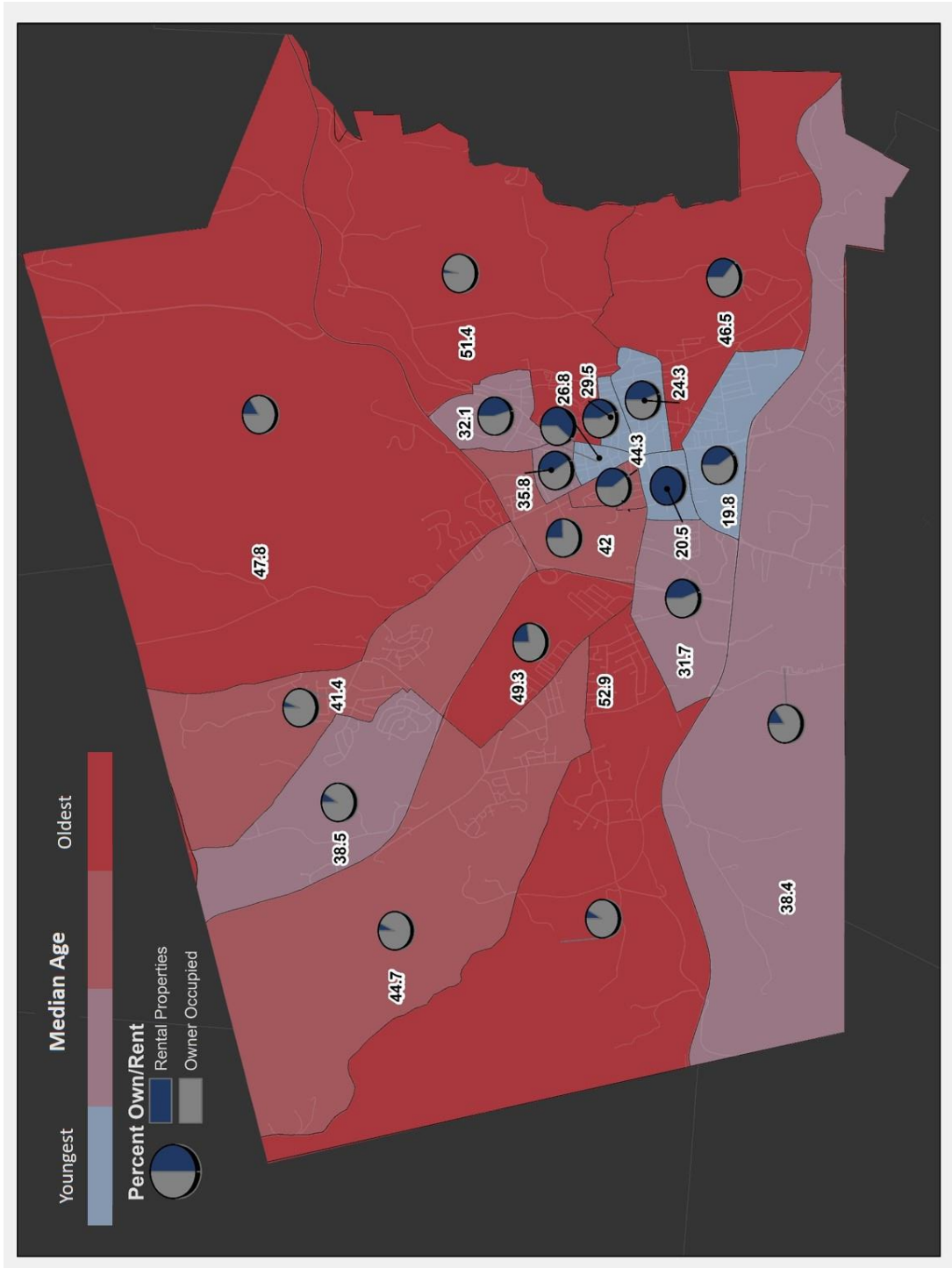


Figure 4.12. Median age and tenure by census block group. Data Source: Census Bureau 2017

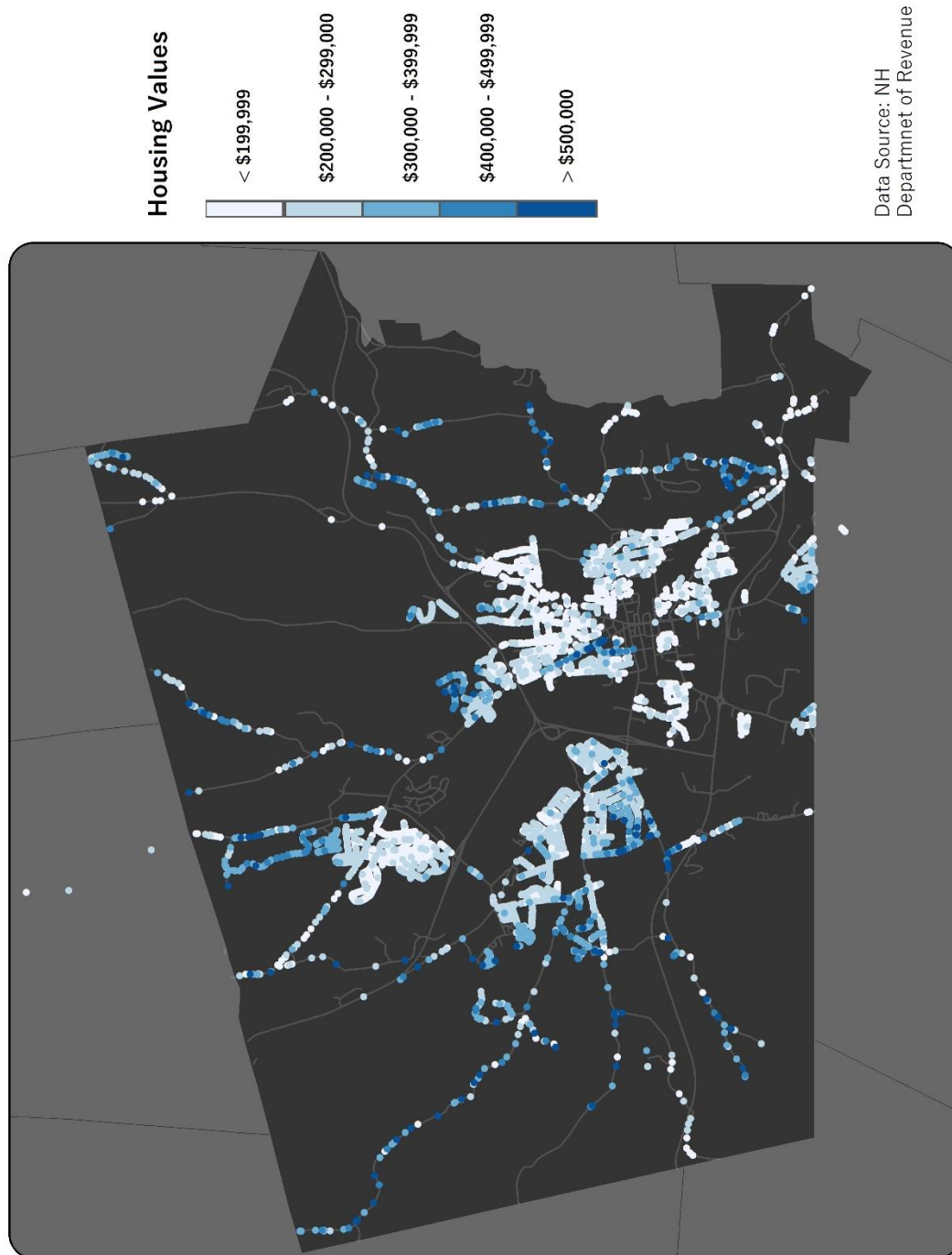


Figure 4.13. Keene Housing Values 2008. Data Source: NH Department of Revenue

# CHAPTER 5

## EXPERT INTERVIEWS



## EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Throughout this case study, interviews with experts were key in figuring out the direction in which the city of Keene is going. City councilors, city planners, on-campus employees, and more explained all opinions on housing, zoning, management, demographics, legislation, and cost. Among those interviewed are:

- Frank Richter: Housing Inspector, City of Keene
- Tara Kessler: Planner, City of Keene
- Robin Picard: Coordinator of Student and Community Relations, Keene State College.

The three of these professionals are experts of Keene and the student population. The many insights they provided to the case study served as jumping-off points for further investigation.

## ROBIN PICARD

The first interview was with both Ms. Kessler and Ms. Picard. Together, they were able to talk about the issues that Keene State students face, coupled with the city's role regarding undergraduate students. Picard was a landlord on Washington Street before working at Keene State. She notes that landlords and landowners may feel that some students may generate complaints associated with litter and noise. These complaints are perhaps magnified because of the proximity of student housing to Main Street. After her days of working as a landlord, Picard is now working for the college's Residential Life Office. She works closely with landlords, students, and city officials to ensure that off-campus housing is safe and healthy.

Picard notes that there is an issue with housing occupancies within the student rentals and that property owners are considering opening up their traditionally student-only rentals to everyone else. This is an issue more for the landlords because they are not making as much money

from single families than students. For example, Arcadia Apartments is a relatively new building near the college and charges \$599 per bedroom including utilities. For a three-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment, the total is almost \$1,800. In comparison, someone can rent a four-bedroom single-family home starting at \$1,650, not including utilities (according to current listings on realtor.com). Landlords are potentially losing money with the decrease in student population and non-student families are not likely to want to live in student apartments because there is not as much privacy or space. With the perception of living amongst “rowdy” college students, many families will completely dismiss such complexes entirely. Picard boils this problem down to there being two housing markets in Keene: student and everybody else. This becomes more apparent when student apartments such as The Mills and Arcadia Apartments have vacancies.

Unfortunately, there is some question as to the exact number of vacancies in Keene. Picard has talked to landlords in the city but, understandably, many of them do not want to share their vacancy rate due to the fierce competition. The responses she has received have corroborated that there are many vacancies. Interestingly, landlords are also mentioning that student needs are becoming an issue, noting especially the need for companion animals which has created a confusing legal grey zone for those landlords who do not allow pets.

## TARA KESSLER

As Tara Kessler was listening, she reverberated some of the same sentiments while providing additional information regarding housing vacancies. Ms. Kessler is more focused on residents and young professionals of Keene because she works with the public every day. She notes that the Monadnock region in general has a stable economy, but mentioned a study that shows that the region is about as productive as Coos County. She also raised the issue of the



generally growing aging population and its potential impact on economic growth. Interestingly, Kessler mentioned that both older and younger people have the same needs and preferences, such as proximity to services and stores. In response, the City of Keene is promoting mixed-use zoning to attract more people into the city instead of its outskirts.

One of the key points that Kessler stands on is that there is a discrepancy between housing



**Figure 5.1** *Housing availability, affordability, and price are the key factors in Millennial home searches.*

prices, availability, and affordability (Figure 5.1). She emphasizes that because there is a relatively low vacancy rate, it becomes difficult for young professionals to find quality housing in a mixed-use area that is within their budget. This is in part why the city has moved forward with the Marlborough Street rezoning project, which

is transforming the street into mixed-use zoning in downtown Keene to allow for the three points desired by Millennials and young professionals. Additionally, Kessler projects that this zoning change will create jobs by bringing in more business. This, she hopes, will help to grow the local economy

Kessler also proposed another idea that could help refresh Keene’s economy and retain more young professionals. She believes that incentivizing housing in the SEED District, an area of downtown Keene dedicated to use of sustainable energy and resources, would be key in young professional retention. This could be supported through loans and credits for reverting housing from apartments back to single-family homes. Many young professionals want to have more

privacy and space in comparison to college students, so it is key to have more single-family houses available for rent. Another thought would be to encourage businesses to provide company housing. This would be helpful for workers who could not otherwise afford housing.

## FRANK RICHTER

A third interview was conducted with Frank Richter, who performs inspections on properties throughout Keene. He has also been a landlord for twenty years in Keene and Spofford, and is very knowledgeable about housing. He first managed low-income housing, but now works with Millennials and young professionals. He has never had a difficult time filling his units and it is largely due to referrals. His job with Code Enforcement is to inspect over 600 apartments. With his experience between the two positions, he finds that the issue is not with housing vacancies, but with finding quality tenants. Being too close to campus can also potentially drive young professionals away.

Like Ms. Kessler, Mr. Richter suggests that one way to retain young professionals in Keene is by creating incentives for young professionals, and stresses that loan forgiveness is a huge proponent for professionals who recently graduated college. Many experts agree that student loans are the biggest barrier to home ownership and making other large financial decisions. Richter specifically mentioned introducing tax abatements from the city, which would be used to make housing more affordable.

Tara Kessler, Robin Picard, and Frank Richter are three experts that help explain the housing market in Keene. There are essentially two markets, one for students and one for everyone else, and this creates a dichotomy in the community. Permanent residents of Keene have voiced concerns regarding college housing and its impact on an otherwise beautiful and vibrant

city. These three experts mentioned several ways to alleviate the housing situation. These include tax abatements and grants. Without question, the college and community are working together in order to improve the housing situation in Keene, and to make the city a better place in which to live.

## FOCUS GROUP

In addition to the interviews, conducting a focus group of young professionals was crucial in providing firsthand knowledge for this case study. Knowing what young professionals and Millennials think about Keene and living in New Hampshire is the foundation of this study. The panel consisted of nine participants from various institutions and professions. All are either professionals of Keene and/or live in Keene. All have shown interest in this case study and were eager to contribute to the conversation. Nikki Sauber, a graduate of Antioch University, provided a list of people in the Young Professionals Network – an organization of which she serves as President – with the opportunity to join the discussion. The YPN is where most of the participants were derived.



**Figure 5.2** Focus group setup at Keene Chamber of Commerce.

The format of the focus group was meant to be informal so the participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences, concerns, and ideas. The meeting was purposely in a central location at Keene’s Chamber of Commerce, which is located on Central Square. The top floor serves as a conference and meeting room, so a large table with

chairs accommodated everyone nicely. Sauber was kind enough to provide the arrangements. The style of the focus group was meant to be conversational and not tied to an overly specific set of questions.

## HOUSING

At the outset, the researchers asked if everyone was satisfied with their living situation. The participants had varying responses, ranging from happiness to frustration. The group agreed that Keene is an expensive place in which to live. Rents are considered to be abnormally high, and one respondent needs roommates in order to afford to live in Keene. She also mentioned that she loves living in Keene, but is having increasing difficulty finding a nicer quality house for an affordable price. She stated that she has been searching for a house for five years with no luck. Others mentioned that the taxes are what drives the price too high and makes housing unnaturally high for a low-quality house. One participant rents out a duplex and finds that his rate of return to be fairly profitable.



**Figure 5.3** Focus group during discussion. **Left-Clockwise:** Nikki Sauber, Andrew Madison, Drew Bryenton, Kasha Bell, Jahdiel Torres-Cabá, Meghan Spaulding; **Right-Clockwise:** Mari Brunner, Kevin Salina, Mark Landolina, Mike Giacomo, George Hansel. **Photo Source:** Authors.

In terms of cost and quality of housing, the potential of revitalization was then broached. One participant noted that there is such a high turnaround with apartments that landlords seem

not to want to spend the money to spruce up their properties. With such a high turnaround, many people may abuse the property. Another young professional explained that most houses in Keene were built at the turn of the century, and are several decades – if not centuries – old. The process of converting single-family houses into multi-family accommodations furthers the lack of quality with shoddy materials and undesirable features, such as small cabinets that have not been updated in decades.

In an attempt to suggest alternate housing, the authors brought up the idea of traditionally student-only housing, such as The Mills and Arcadia apartments, being open up to the general public. The entire focus group unanimously agreed within a heartbeat that college students negatively impact their housing decisions. Absolutely zero Millennials are willing to live with students. Returning back to housing costs, it was suggested that houses may be more affordable than apartments and that owning a home is less expensive in Keene compared to other places in New Hampshire. For young professionals, this is partly a concern because many prefer to live in an apartment because of the simplicity. One participant prefers not to own a house because she wants the ability to move when needed and not to worry about maintenance costs, even if it was an ultimately cheaper way to live. Another responded by saying that it is the student rental demographic that is driving the rent prices because Keene State College “has given landlords opportunity to constantly have rentals filled... for everyone else” and house prices remain unaffected.

One Millennial, a registered nurse in the region, explained that she bought a “flipped” or renovated house as a private sale. She has been happy with her house and has had no issues with it so far. This elicited a response that “not all houses are poor quality, some are just good deals,”

in that bargains can be found in Keene that do not necessarily need to be renovated to become livable. A participant then advocated for revitalization, saying that it allows the owners to make their house the way they want it to be. Another cautioned that buying a house is complicated and qualifying for a mortgage is the hardest part of the process. Revitalization, he agreed, is the best way to add equity into the house and is worth the investment of time and money.

## EMPLOYMENT

After discussing the issues and concerns of housing in Keene, the next order of business was to discuss employment options and opportunities in the city, as many Millennials and young professionals move for their jobs. The authors were interested in understanding the number and quality of jobs offered in the area. A participant immediately noted a problem that Keene is currently facing. She fears that there is a lack of suitable jobs that pay enough, and that there are



---

*“There is an oversaturation of highly educated people, but there are many unskilled jobs available”*

---



many “hiring” signs, but those positions do not provide livable wages. She also voiced her concerns with the lack of full-time positions with benefits. This could lead to an exodus of Millennials since they cannot afford to live in the area and have no savings upon graduating from college. She further noted that there are “many educated people with Antioch [University] and KSC [Keene State College],” but they produce people who are forced to leave in pursuit of jobs within their field of expertise. She blames the “oversaturation of highly educated people, but there are many unskilled jobs available”. Another participant noted that there are plenty of manufacturing jobs in Keene that are not advertised enough. She also mentioned the blue collar culture, thinking that many people

believe that those jobs are “beneath them” even though they are great jobs. A Millennial who works at Markem has been in the market for hiring manufacturing workers, though finding qualified candidates is not easy. Another participant agreed, saying that there needs to be “programs to teach how manufacturing jobs can lead to growth,” in that workers will not get “stuck” in a position, but will have a long and successful career.

To further the conversation, the next question was to see if there is a specific industry that is lacking in Keene and if there is anything that should be capitalized on. Green energy was identified as an industry that needs to be augmented, offering jobs in energy security and targeting the cost of energy. This could be accomplished with the manufacturing backbone of Keene, contributing to BPI weatherization and recruiting developers to install new technology. Another industry that is lacking in the Monadnock region is tourism. It was mentioned that the region’s assets need to be highlighted with investments in ecotourism and utilization of technology to attract more visitors to Keene. The volume of undergraduate, graduate, and Ph.D. graduates in fields related to the environment was then identified as something that Keene should incentivize so as to retain those students from Antioch University and Keene State College. Likewise, it was posited there are plenty of jobs in education, so Keene is a perfect area for those who wish to work in the education field.

## RECREATION

Lastly, the authors wanted to know how recreation and leisure activities impact the livability of Keene. Most of the participants in the focus group believed that Keene actually has as much or more to do than other places in New Hampshire, and that there is not much that needs to change about the culture of the city. One participant observed that “people underestimate just



how much is in Keene” and that there may be a marketing issue, but “there is probably something for everyone, they just need to find it.” Another Millennial noted that she is always finding new things to do in Keene, which is why she loves living in the city so much. She agrees that there is a marketing issue, which is why some may claim that there is not enough to do in Keene. Another participant suggested that the Thorne Art Gallery on the Keene State



**5.4 Millennial themes from the focus group.**

College campus is a “cultural opportunity that isn’t usually in this area.” After one of the participants had graduated from Antioch, he found reasons to stay. He thinks that accessibility is fine in Keene and that there is enough connectivity to other cities, such as Concord and Boston.

A participant did mention that the one thing that Keene is missing is live music. Another noted that two venues for live music closed in the city and other restaurants used to have live music, but for the most part it has dried up. Still another contributor observed that there is not much of a “late night town” in that not many venues want to open business since not many people are out and about later at night. Even with these few suggestions, Millennials and young professionals are mostly happy with recreational opportunities in the City of Keene.

Overall, the focus group was successful in providing an understanding of the attitudes and climate of Millennials and young professionals in Keene. The purpose was to see what Keene could potentially do to increase the suitability for this demographic to live, work, and play. Out of the

three, recreational activities should be the least of the city's concerns. Housing is tricky, and people are struggling to find quality housing at an affordable price. Revitalization is not necessarily an issue, and this group seemed to be accepting of home renovation. However, it is the renters that seem to be having the most issues with housing. Young professionals are having trouble affording housing for themselves. For some, the only way to live in Keene is by having roommates, which is not necessarily what people want. The overarching problem in Keene is job selection. There is a flood of very educated graduates from Antioch and Keene State, snatching what little opportunities are available. According to this focus group, Keene needs to incentivize new markets to attract different sectors and skillsets.

# CHAPTER 6

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH: MILLENNIAL SURVEY

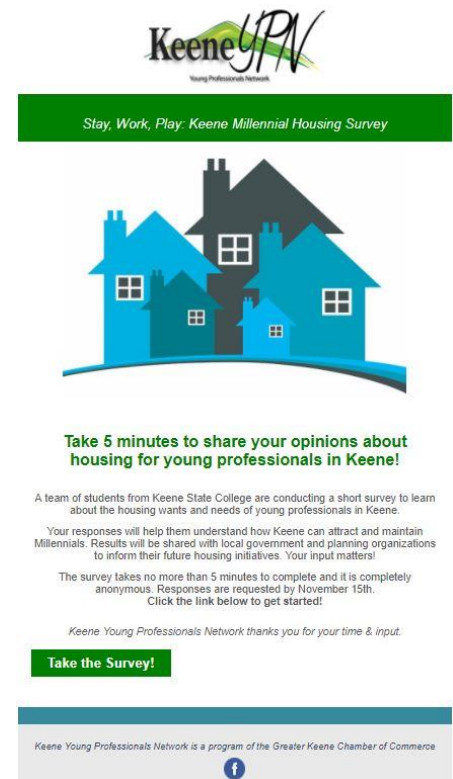


## MILLENNIALS SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In order to create a comprehensive evaluation of how Keene can attract and retain the Millennial population, we conducted a survey to gain an understanding of the opinions and experiences of Millennials in Keene. The survey's focus is related to the quality of life in Keene with a specific emphasis on housing. The main goal of the survey is to gain enough insight needed to determine how Keene can attract and maintain the young adult population. Based on research and similar studies about the high standards of housing qualities and the Millennial shift in postponing homeownership, we can expect to find the following results:

- Overall Millennial satisfaction with Keene's housing is inadequate.
- Millennials who rent are more satisfied than Millennials who own.

The survey questions, created to help answer if these statements in fact true, shown in the Appendix B. We worked in collaboration with the *Keene Young Professionals Network* and used feedback from the Millennials focus group to tailor the questions to gain the most from the survey (**Figure 6.1**). The survey 28 questions composed of closed response questions such as yes or no; list rankings (1-5), and Likert scale ratings; some open ended questions for brief explanations, and a question with a map for the respondent to indicate their ideal living location in Keene. The survey is split into two parts. The first half is focused on information relevant for understanding the background of the survey taker. This helps categorize individuals in certain



**Figure 6.1.** Millennials Housing Survey sent out online through the Keene Young Professionals Network.

demographics and to enable statistical testing and analysis that helps find patterns in the data. The variables covered in the background section include; age, gender, family status (single/married, children/no children), education level, household income, town of residence, and the type of housing in which the survey taker resides.

The second half of the survey investigates the respondents' opinions related to housing in Keene as the main focus, with other qualities of living in Keene acting as a supporting role. The housing factors brought up in the survey include the respondents:

- Current ideal housing type
- Ideal housing type in 10 years
- Willingness to live in a mixed neighborhood of college student
- Location in Keene in which the respondent would ideally live
- Overall satisfaction with qualities of housing in Keene, including:
- Housing quality, affordability, location, selection, property taxes.
- Other factors that are important to the overall quality of living in Keene that were addressed in the survey include satisfaction levels of:
- The sense of community, the local government, walkability, safety, types of jobs availability/selection, salary/benefits, entertainment, social life, recreational activities, sustainability, and the local education system.

The survey was created using Qualtrics software and sent to local Millennials through the *Keene Young Professionals Network* email chain and private Facebook page, as well as in emails to various other Millennials in Keene. Qualtrics then provides a detailed report of the completed surveys, which can then be exported to statistical programs such as Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) as raw data.

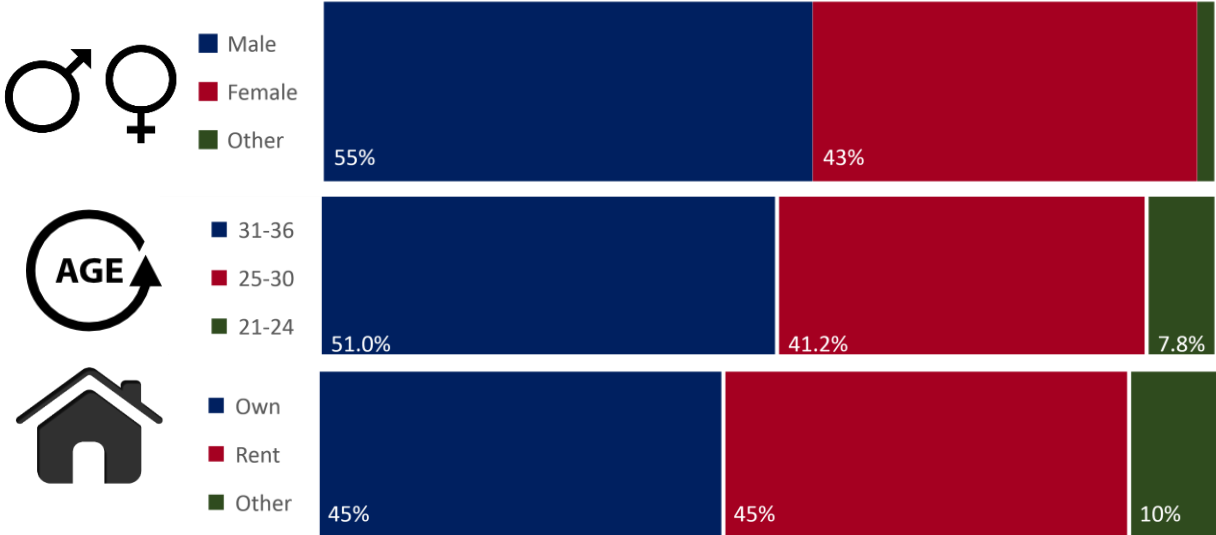
The data are then analyzed in order to test the two hypotheses related to the Millennial population as well as gain a full grasp of the current and future trends. These trends include

comparisons between owners versus renters, younger versus older Millennials, and income levels to understand the relationship between the numerous factors weighing in on patterns in opinions and experiences based on demographics. One method of analysis used was SPSS, which tests if there is a statistically significant difference between variables (such as owners versus renters). The program offers an array of statistical tests that the user can choose from based on the data. For example, a two-sample difference of means test determines if there a statistically significant difference between the average results of the two separate samples. If the test results in a significance level of less than .05, then the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning there is a statistically significant difference between the two averages. This form of analysis is important for making concrete conclusions of patterns in the data. Another method of analysis used was inputted data into excel to address patterns in the data and graph results. By using these two forms of data analysis, a complete mosaic of the current state of local millennials' opinions and experiences is will be created.

## **SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

Upon receiving an adequate number of surveys to represent a fair sample size of the millennial population in Keene, the results of the survey were then quantified and compiled into a single dataset. Of the 58 surveys that were completed, 51 are considered Millennials between the ages of 21 and 36, while 7 are at or older than 37 years old. For the purpose of this survey, we are only concerned with the Millennial population and thus did not include the seven surveys over the age of 36 in statistical analysis, but rather gained other valuable information from their input.

The demographic makeup of survey respondents had relatively even distributions of each group. In other words, there were a balanced number of males versus females, distribution of age and renters versus owners (Figure 6.2). This is important for creating a full analysis of the Millennial population in Keene without over representing one group while misrepresenting another.



**Figure 6.2.** Keene Millennial Survey demographic percentages including gender, age and current housing type.

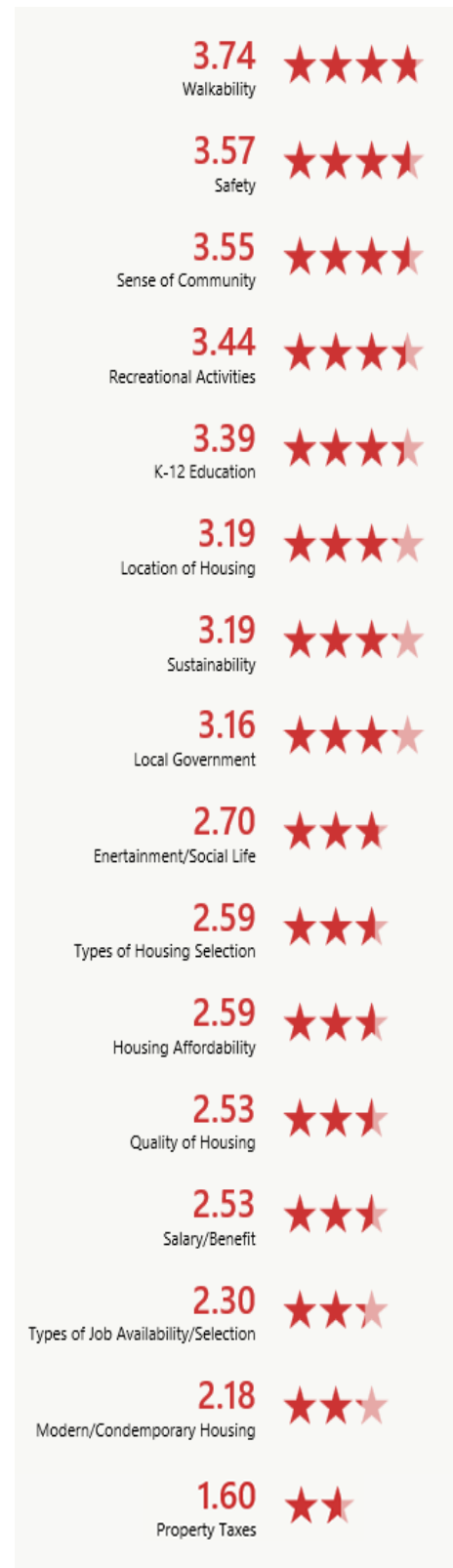
## EXAMINATION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Gaining insight on satisfaction of various qualities of Keene is vital for attracting and retaining Millennials now and in the future. To test our hypothesis, ‘Overall millennial satisfaction with Keene’s housing is inadequate’ a Likert scale question was implemented. Participants ranked various qualities of Keene based on their satisfaction level of each, including: the quality of housing, housing affordability, modern housing, types of housing section, location of housing,



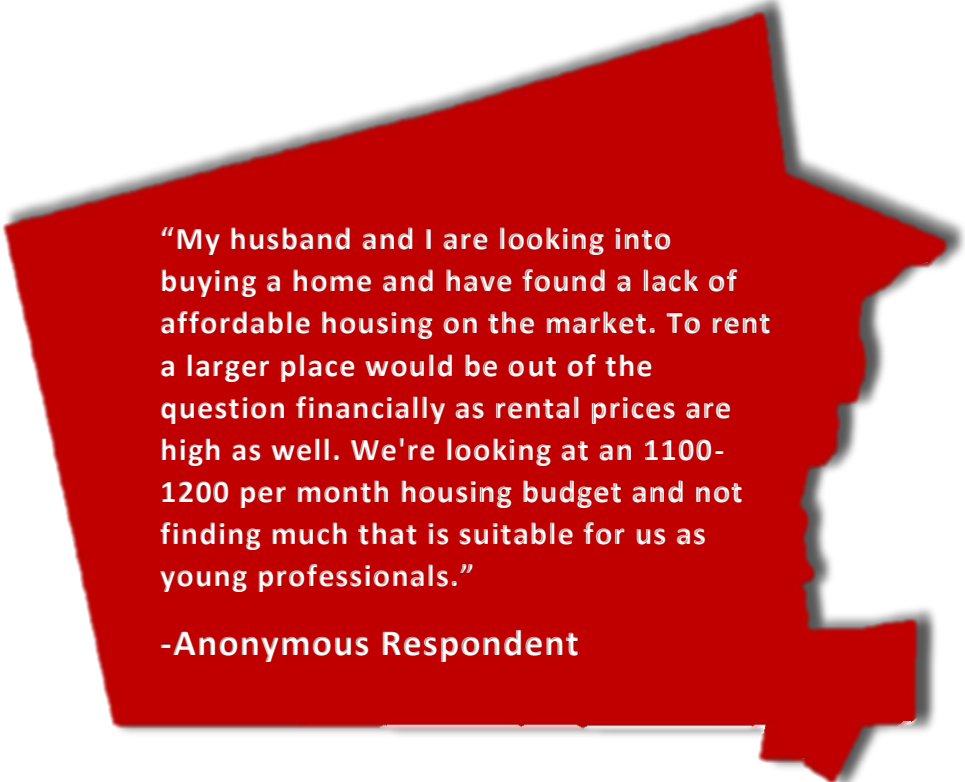
types of job availability, salary/benefits of local jobs, local government, sense of community, safety, property taxes, walkability and K-12 Education (Figure 6.3). Each category was rated out of five stars, with 0 stars being very unsatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. Any category that was ranked above 3 stars is considered satisfactory, while anything ranked below 3 stars is considered unsatisfactory. The final averages show that most qualities of Keene that are integral to the public community fabric; such as walkability, the sense of community, safety, K-12 Education, sustainability and local government were rated as satisfactory. In contrast, factors related to private/individual qualities such as jobs and housing in Keene had poor ratings. Thus, the null hypothesis is supported because it is perceived that young adults are not satisfied with the housing in Keene.

Housing and jobs are vital components of attracting and maintaining Millennials in any city. Addressing the unsatisfactory opinions of the housing and job market requires a complex view of all components leading to such perceptions. For the purpose of this research; housing is the focus because a city where Millennials want to live, work and play, starts with having enough adequate housing to



**Figure 6.3.** Millennial's Satisfaction levels for various qualities of Keene.

meet the demands of young professionals. It is imperative to interpret the satisfactory ratings of different groups of millennials based on owners versus renters, income levels and younger millennials versus older millennials. This will provide insight into whether some groups are more satisfied than others, which will determine if the possible solutions should be tailored towards certain demographics.



**“My husband and I are looking into buying a home and have found a lack of affordable housing on the market. To rent a larger place would be out of the question financially as rental prices are high as well. We're looking at an 1100-1200 per month housing budget and not finding much that is suitable for us as young professionals.”**

**-Anonymous Respondent**

To test for a statistical significance between the perceptions of those who own their housing versus those who rent, an Independent Samples T-Test in SPSS is employed. The results, shown in **Table 6.1**, indicate that there was only a statistical significance between total averages of owners versus renter opinions of walkability and K-12 education, with a significance level of .003 (walkability) and .049 (K-12 Education). Renters rated walkability as an average 4.18 where owners

rated walkability as a 3.33. Renters higher views of walkability is likely because renters are highly concentrated in the downtown region where there is an abundance of sidewalks and density, versus owners who live in the more rural parts of Keene that have a lower density. (Figure 4.12). In addition, renters maintain lower views of the K-12 education in Keene (3.167) than owners (3.77) likely because those that invest money to own a house and expect to raise a family in Keene likely would not do so if they thought poorly of the schooling in Keene. Thus, those who own a house and have children in Keene rated the K-12 education with an average of 3.9 stars out of 5.

**Table 6.1. Independent Samples T-Test of Millennial satisfaction levels of various qualities of Keene Owner versus Renters.**

**Group Statistics**

	OwnVsRent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Walkability	Own	24	3.333	1.1672	.2383
	Rent	27	4.185	.6377	.1227
K-12 Education	Own	24	3.771	.9086	.1855
	Rent	27	3.167	1.1929	.2296
Housing Satisfaction	Own	24	2.5529	.88852	.18137
	Rent	27	2.4104	.89081	.17144
Total Satisfaction	Own	24	2.9758	.70599	.14411
	Rent	27	2.8596	.63837	.12285

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Walkability	Equal variances assumed	6.873	.012	-3.283	49	.002	-.8519	.2594	-1.3732	-.3305
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.179	34.667	.003	-.8519	.2680	-1.3961	-.3076
K-12 Education	Equal variances assumed	1.101	.299	2.015	49	.049	.6042	.2999	.0015	1.2068
	Equal variances not assumed			2.047	47.933	.046	.6042	.2951	.0107	1.1976
Housing Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	.001	.972	.571	49	.571	.14255	.24961	-.35906	.64415
	Equal variances not assumed			.571	48.330	.571	.14255	.24957	-.35916	.64425
Total Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	.353	.555	.617	49	.540	.11620	.18823	-.26206	.49447
	Equal variances not assumed			.614	46.740	.542	.11620	.18937	-.26481	.49722

Another variable important to understand is the relative age of the Millennials, and how that relates to satisfaction levels. The reasoning for this is that younger Millennials are more inclined

to be paying off student loans and have entry level positions or still in school as compared to their older counterparts, which may influence satisfaction levels in Keene. In order to test this, we ran an Independent Samples T-Test in SPSS comparing satisfaction levels of respondents 30 years old or younger to those than 30 years old. The results show that there is no significance between the two age groups and their satisfaction for any category. Shown below in **Table 6.2** is the test run for the total housing satisfaction and the total satisfaction.

**Table 6.2.** *Independent Samples T-Test of Millennial satisfaction levels of various qualities of Keene older (31-36) versus younger (30 and under).*

Group Statistics					
	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Housing Satisfaction	30 and Under	25	2.5336	.96138	.19228
	31 to 36	24	2.3613	.80248	.16381
Total Satisfaction	30 and Under	25	2.8772	.76208	.15242
	31 to 36	24	2.9092	.53080	.10835

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Housing Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	.008	.928	.680	47	.500	.17235	.25353	-.33769	.68239
	Equal variances not assumed			.682	46.126	.498	.17235	.25259	-.33605	.68075
Total Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	2.187	.146	-.170	47	.866	-.03197	.18836	-.41090	.34696
	Equal variances not assumed			-.171	42.942	.865	-.03197	.18700	-.40911	.34518

Similarly, household income is an important contributor to how satisfied a person is with a city. This is because some cities have stronger programs and affordability for lower income households than others. Many cities have strong affordable housing projects for low-income families, but

when it comes to the private market houses are too expensive for Millennials to afford. Thus, by addressing the satisfaction levels of young adults from various income levels, we can begin to understand if Keene is affordable enough to attract a larger population of Millennials. We ran an Independent Samples T-Test between those with a household income of less than \$59,999 and those with a household income of greater than \$60,000. **Table 6.3** below shows the variables that produces a statistically significant difference in means between the two income level groups. Based on the results, income plays a significant role on Millennial satisfaction of Keene's housing location, property taxes, and housing satisfaction. Interestingly, those who have below a \$60,000 household income had higher satisfaction levels than Millennials that have higher income. There is no reasonable explanation of this other than the fact individuals with lower income are likely either renting or own smaller properties, thus paying less in taxes than people with higher income levels and larger properties. In addition, the location of housing and walkability satisfaction among lower income individuals are likely due to less expensive housing and more rentals adjacent to downtown, compared to more expensive housing in the suburbs in West Keene.

**Table 6.3.** Millennial Income Results. Tested between two groups: Millennials with a household income of less than \$59,999 (1) and those with a household income of more than \$60,000 (2).

Group Statistics					
	Income	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Location of Housing	1.00	24	3.500	.8597	.1755
	2.00	24	2.938	.8637	.1763
Property Taxes	1.00	24	2.188	1.3895	.2836
	2.00	24	1.063	1.0034	.2048
Walkability	1.00	24	4.021	.6338	.1294
	2.00	24	3.500	1.2158	.2482
Housing Satisfaction	1.00	24	2.7296	.89197	.18207
	2.00	24	2.2292	.77765	.15874
Total Satisfaction	1.00	24	3.0471	.59923	.12232
	2.00	24	2.7929	.64822	.13232

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Location of Housing	Equal variances assumed	.531	.470	2.261	46	.029	.5625	.2488	.0618	1.0632
	Equal variances not assumed			2.261	45.999	.029	.5625	.2488	.0618	1.0632
Property Taxes	Equal variances assumed	6.970	.011	3.216	46	.002	1.1250	.3499	.4208	1.8292
	Equal variances not assumed			3.216	41.859	.003	1.1250	.3499	.4189	1.8311
Walkability	Equal variances assumed	7.928	.007	1.861	46	.069	.5208	.2799	-.0425	1.0842
	Equal variances not assumed			1.861	34.641	.071	.5208	.2799	-.0476	1.0892
Housing Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	.002	.962	2.072	46	.044	.50042	.24155	.01419	.98664
	Equal variances not assumed			2.072	45.161	.044	.50042	.24155	.01395	.98688
Total Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	.359	.552	1.411	46	.165	.25417	.18019	-.10854	.61688
	Equal variances not assumed			1.411	45.719	.165	.25417	.18019	-.10860	.61694

Testing our second hypothesis ‘Millennials who rent are more satisfied than Millennials who own’ requires a comprehensive look at both the Likert scale ranking question as well as the questions regarding the respondents ideal housing. Based on the Likert scale question, every quality of Keene related to housing including the total average of all housing qualities and total average of all qualities, shows no statistical significant difference between owners versus renters. This question

represents the respondent's perceptions of the city. However, based on binomial tests in SPSS, Millennials significantly prefer owning a home or condominium both now and in the future, as opposed to renting (Table 6.4). As shown in Figure 6.4, 74 percent of people who own their own households are living in their ideal living situation. On the other hand, only 33 percent people who rent a house are living in their ideal housing situation, and only 25 percent of people that rent an apartment are living in their ideal housing situation. This shows that Millennials who own homes are far more satisfied with their housing than those who rent.

**Table 6.4.** Millennial ideal living situations currently (top) and future (bottom). Group 1 represents people who chose owning as their ideal, and Group 2 represents people who chose renting as their ideal.

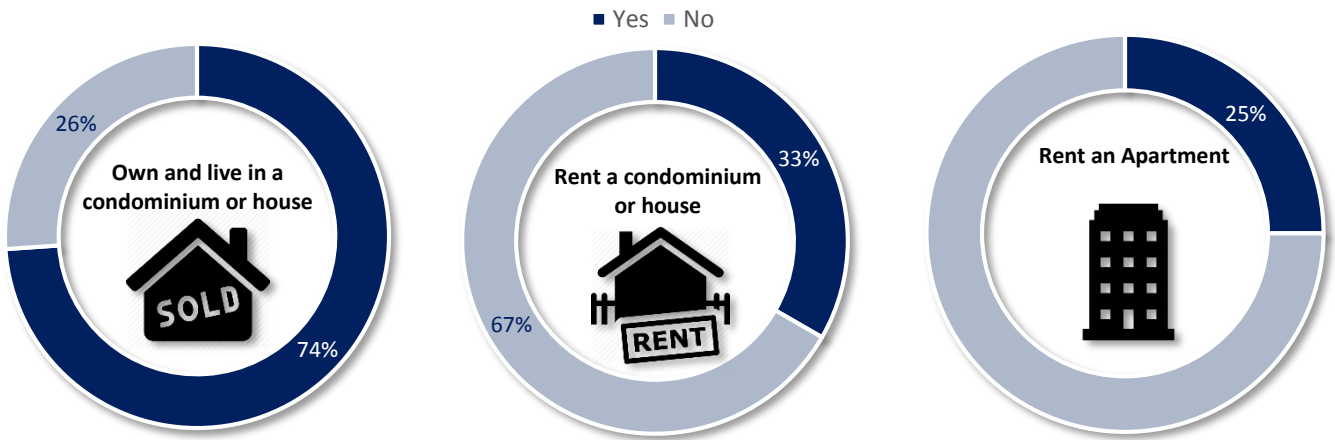
**Binomial Test**

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
CurrentIdeal	Group 1	1	36	.73	.50	.001
	Group 2	2	13	.27		
	Total		49	1.00		

**Binomial Test**

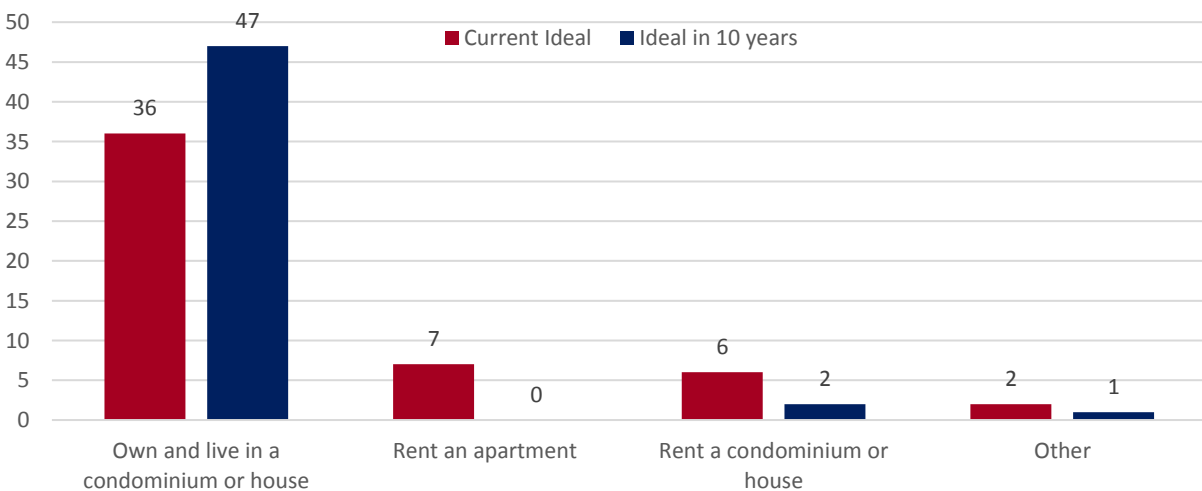
		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
FutureIdeal	Group 1	1	47	.96	.50	.000
	Group 2	2	2	.04		
	Total		49	1.00		





**Figure 6.4.** Answers to the question ‘are you currently living in your ideal housing situation’. Shows the answers of individuals who currently own a house/condominium (left), individuals who currently rent a house/condominium (middle), and individuals who currently rent an apartment (right).

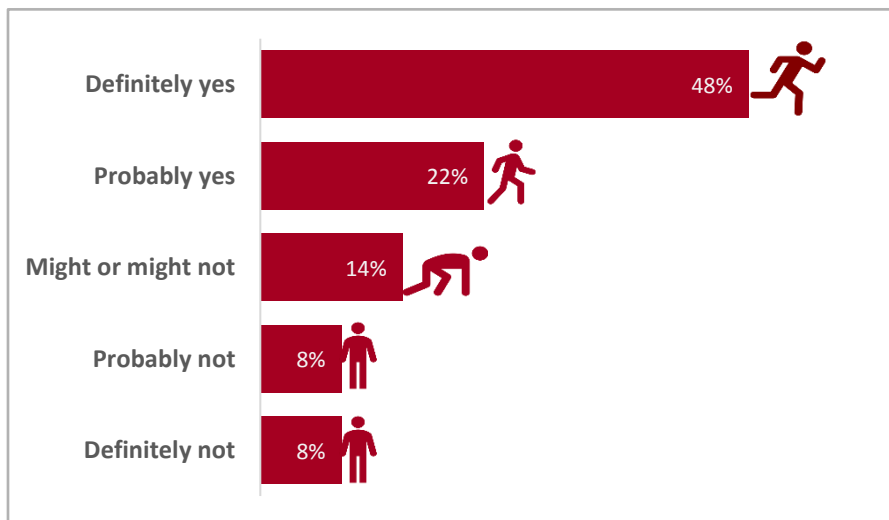
Millennials in Keene prefer owning a home over renting. This is contrary to some scholarly research, which indicates that Millennials are more attracted to renting a property for reasons that include the fact that rentals require less maintenance, less financial burdens, and more flexibility (MacArthur Foundation 2015). As Millennials age, however, they become more inclined to own a home. When asked what their ideal living situation would be in 10 years, 94 percent of millennials (all but three people) said they want to own a home or condominium (Figure 6.5).



**Figure 6.5.** Millennials ideal housing situation currently and in 10 years.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results, we can make the claim that Millennials in Keene are generally dissatisfied with the housing market. We can also make the claim that Millennials, whether they rent or own, or are of different ages, have the same overall perspectives on the Keene housing market. Keene Millennials are also much more attracted to owning single-family homes rather than renting an apartment or home. Keene must address these issues if the city wants to draw more of the young professionals into the municipality and making them want to stay. **Figure 6.6** displays the results to the question that asked respondents if they plan on moving out of their current residence within



**Figure 6.6.** Millennials answers to the question ‘Do you plan on moving of your current residence in the next 5 years’.

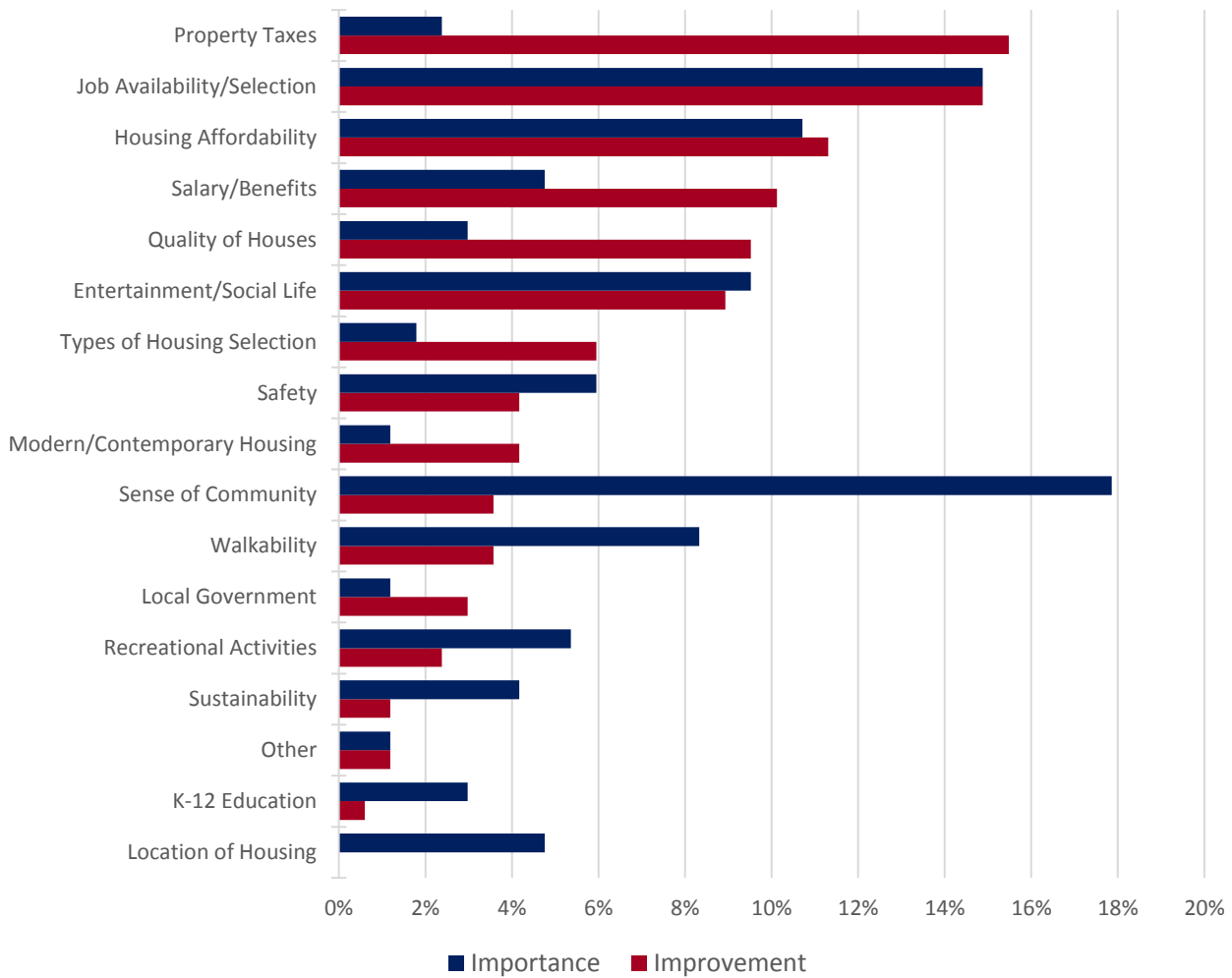
the next five years. As shown, 48 percent of respondents said they are definitely moving out in the next five years, and another 22 said they probably will be moving out in that

time. With 70 percent of

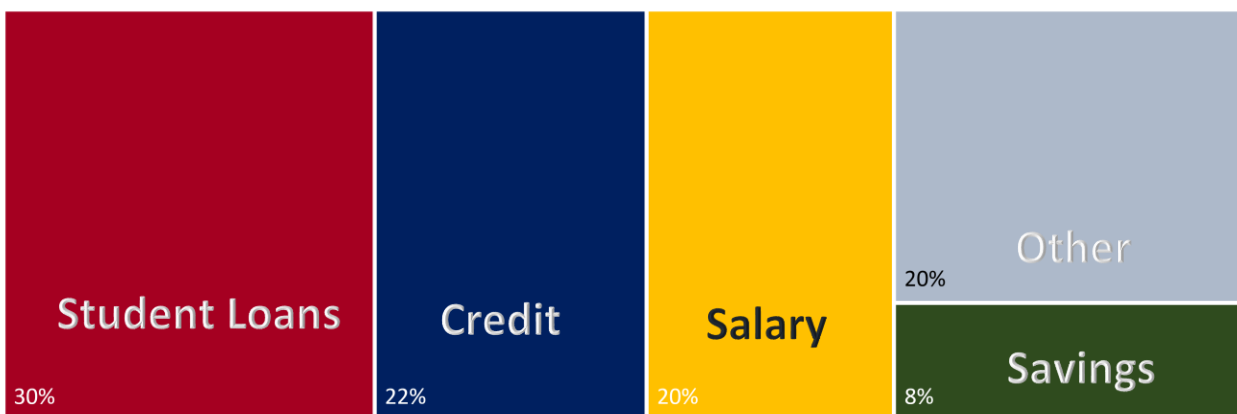
respondents planning to move, it is imperative that the city acts as soon as possible to ensure the city meets their needs and demands, or else they may move out of Keene entirely. Making Keene a city in which more young professionals want to live, work and play requires examination of what millennials look for in a city, as well as common needs that they require for comfortable living.

These qualities must then be implemented into the community. The first step is to identify these qualities, followed by an analysis of what the city can do in response.

**Figure 6.7** shows the qualities of a community that are the most important to Millennials as compared to the qualities that need the most improvement in Keene. Each respondent was asked to select the top three qualities out of the list. It is apparent the Keene property taxes are unsatisfactory for millennials because it is seen as the quality that need most improvements. Property taxes are a large repellent for millennials because it is clear they want to own a house, but when property taxes are so high they are often forced to rent instead. Job availability and selection is the quality that was ranked highest for both importance and needing the most improvements. The next highest ranked quality was housing affordability. Millennials are subject to many financial barriers due lack of extensive financial stability. Student loans are the largest financial burden for 30 percent of the respondents, with credit acting as the second largest at 22 percent (**Figure 6.8**). When individuals are looking to own a house, student loans and credit burdens deter people from qualifying for a mortgage or be able to afford the extra bills. This is especially unattractive when the quality of houses does not meet its price, which is the case in much of Keene based on the focus group discussion. One respondent left an additional comment, explaining ‘I tried so hard to find decent housing in Keene when we first moved here but I was priced out of the market from landlords trying to keep students out (and therefore also anyone else under 50 because it was so expensive).’ This person ended up being able to rent a three-bedroom house in Dublin for less than a poor quality two-bedroom apartment in Keene.

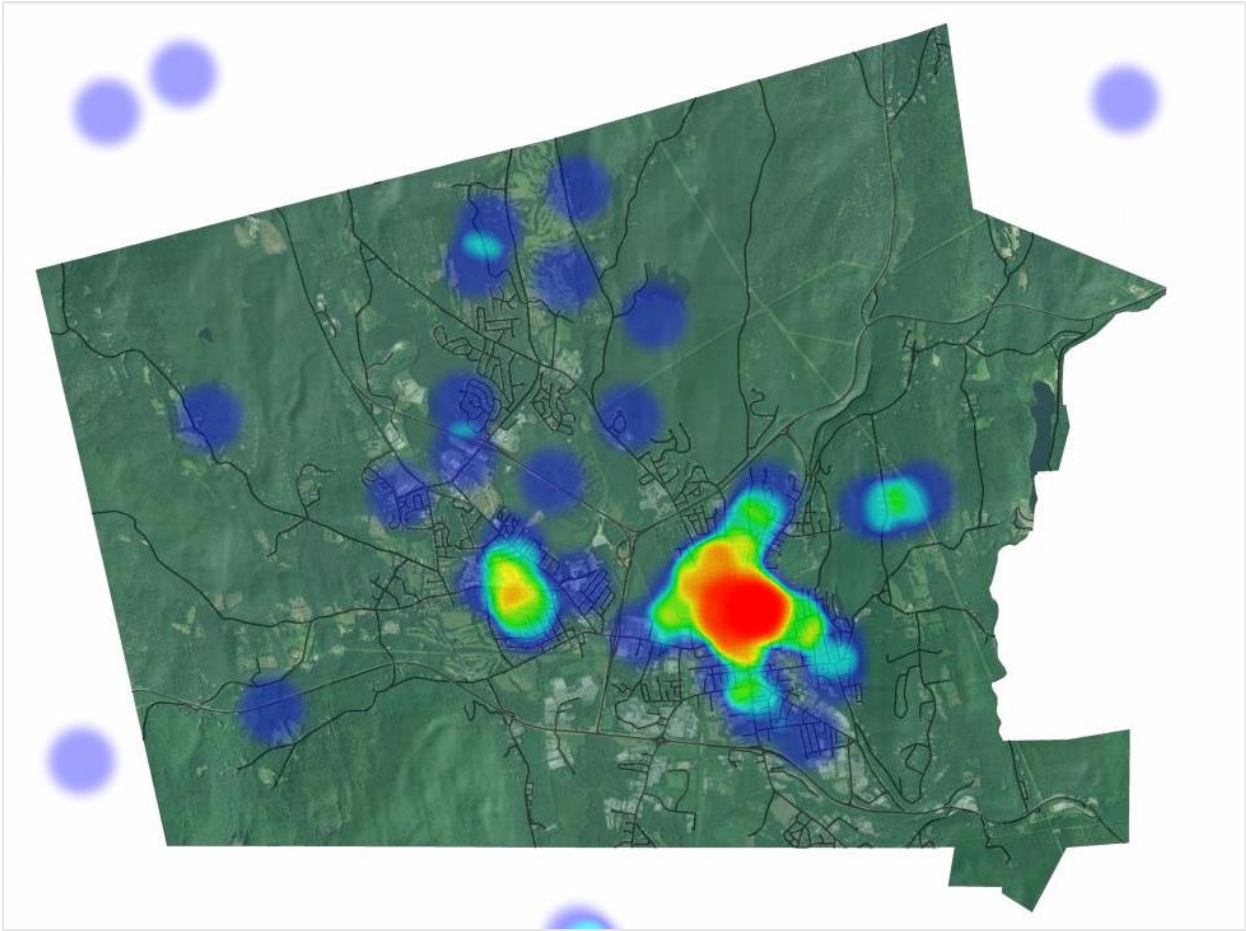


**Figure 6.7.** *The qualities Millennials find most important compared to the qualities that they think needs most improvement in Keene.*



**Figure 6.8.** *The top rated financial barriers of Millennials.*

If neighborhood revitalization was to be a strategy for attraction and retention of Millennials in Keene, it is important to know which neighborhoods upon which to focus. In similar studies, Millennials have been attracted to more lively urbanized settings, but without losing the comforts of suburban life. To understand where Millennials in Keene would ideally live, we included a map for respondents to mark. Based on the results, the majority of respondents were more attracted to downtown near Central Square (**Figure 6.9**). Thus, if Keene were to focus on housing, the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown would likely show the highest demand by young professionals.



**Figure 6.9.** *Millennial ideal living locations in (or near) Keene.*

The survey results are extremely useful for understanding how Keene can bring more millennials into the city, while keeping the population for years to come. Millennials choose to live in a city for several reasons. **Figure 6.10** shows the many responses to the question ‘briefly explain the reasons you live in Keene’. The survey asked each respondent to identify what brought him or her to Keene. The reasons that were frequently brought up was their job, family, the many activities in the area, the New England feel and the vibrant community and downtown. Keene is a place that many people are proud to call home. It is a city that has many desirable qualities. The first step in drawing a larger population is by enhancing and marketing the qualities that make Keene great; including the sense of community, outdoor recreational activities, vibrant downtown and rich history. The next step is to understand and meet the needs of Millennials. This new population can bring economic and social growth in Keene for future generations. Young professionals are not satisfied with the economic and housing qualities of Keene. The focus of the city should be to revitalize neighborhoods with single-family homes, and provide programs to make these neighborhoods affordable and attractive to Millennials. This can provide a positive feedback loop of economic growth as more are attracted to live, work and play in Keene.





# CHAPTER 7

ORIGINAL RESEARCH:  
STUDENT SURVEY



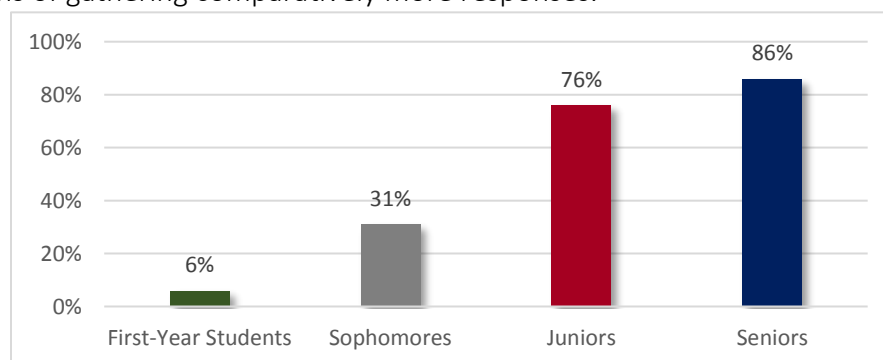


## METHODOLOGY

With 81 percent of Keene State upper-class students living off-campus (Fact Book 2017), student housing represents an integral part of the Keene housing market, and therefore necessitates thorough exploration. College age Millennials are in different stages of their lives when compared to working age Millennials, and by that fact itself, they have differing demands, priorities, and preferences when it comes to housing. Thus, a separate paper survey was constructed and distributed to students in various Keene State College classes. The goals of the survey were:

- To understand location and type of units in which students are living
- Quantify student overall satisfaction levels of their housing and neighborhoods
- Gather qualitative data on student housing preferences
- Explore students' post graduate housing plans

Since the focus of this report is on the Keene housing market as a whole, the target student sample were those who live in off-campus student housing. These students are predominantly juniors and seniors as shown in **Figure 7.1**. Thus, the surveys were chiefly distributed in upper-level classes with intentions of gathering comparatively more responses.



**Figure 7.1.** Percent of students living off campus. *Source:* Keene State Fact Book 2017.

In total, 110 surveys were collected, of which 89 percent were juniors or seniors, 61 percent males, and 72 percent lived in off campus housing (Figure 7.2).

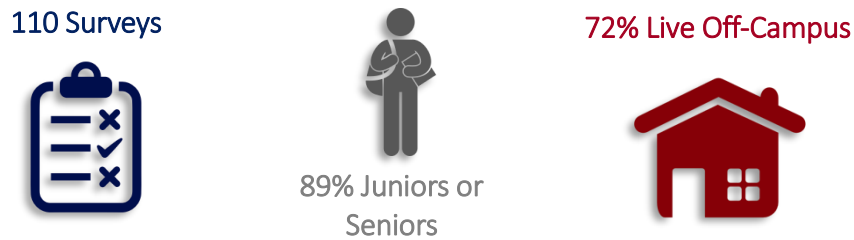


Figure 7.2. Numbers and percentages of survey results.

### WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING DO STUDENTS LIVE IN

Students were asked to identify their current living situation (either residence hall, off-campus apartment, off-campus house, or other/commuter) (Figure 7.3). A majority of respondents lived off-campus, with 44 percent renting out houses and 28 percent living in apartments. Those living in an off-campus apartment or house were asked about their monthly rent, with results expressed in Figure 7.4. Both apartments and houses were similar, with a majority of respondents paying anywhere from \$600 to \$699 each month, roughly a fourth paying over \$700, and about a fourth paying \$599 or below. Off campus students were also asked to name the street they currently reside, with the spatial distribution of respondents displayed in Figure 7.5. Most students surveyed lived directly adjacent to the college on Ralston, Blake, or Wilson Street.

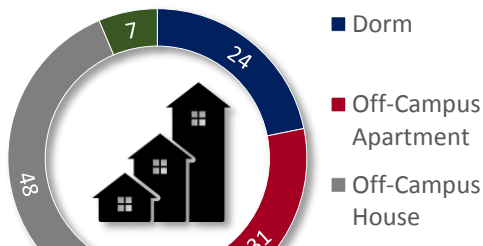


Figure 7.3. Where do you currently live?

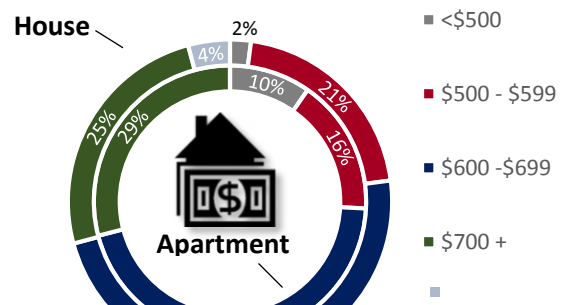


Figure 7.4. How much is your monthly rent?

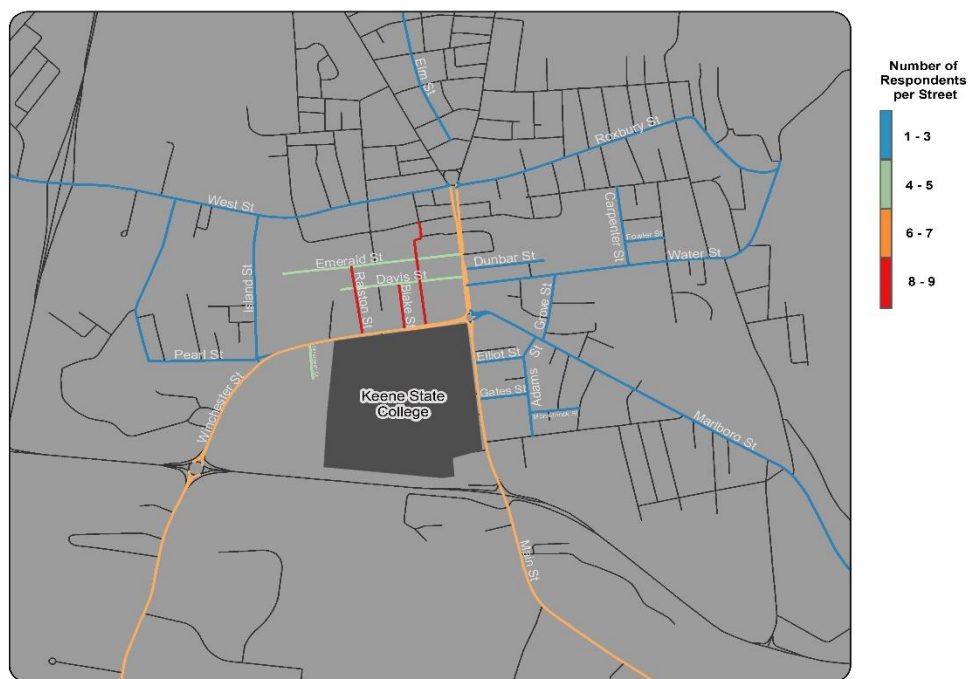


Figure 7.5. *If you live off campus, what street do you live on?*

## OVERALL SATISFACTION LEVELS OF HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

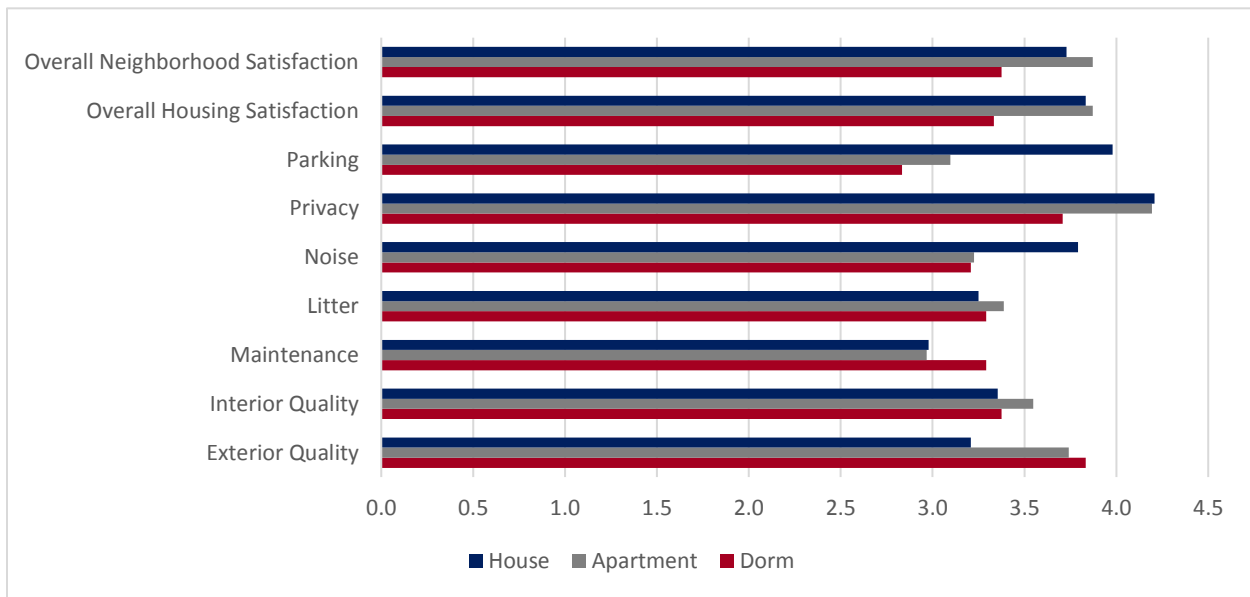
To gain insight on the levels of satisfaction among students living off-campus, students were asked to rank several aspects about their housing and neighborhoods. The rankings are on a Likert scale one to five, with one being very dissatisfied and five being very satisfied. **Figure 7.6** shows the nine aspects students were asked to evaluate.

Rate the following aspects of your housing and neighborhood from 1-5 (1 being very dissatisfied & 5 being very satisfied)

	1	2	3	4	5
Exterior Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interior Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quick & Effective Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighborhood Litter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noise Level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Housing Satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Neighborhood Satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 7.6. *Likert scale housing and neighborhood satisfaction questions.*

Overall, satisfactions were generally positive (above 3) when using the means for all surveys combined. However, it is important to see how the satisfaction levels differ, if at all, between those living in dorms, apartments, or houses. **Figure 7.7** divides up the satisfaction levels based on where the respondents lived.



**Figure 7.7.** Satisfaction levels among students living on campus, or in off campus houses and apartments

Again, respondents in each type of housing had generally positive levels of satisfaction. The highest ranked aspect for those living in a dorm was the exterior quality of the buildings at 3.83. For students living in off-campus apartments or housing the highest ranked aspect was privacy at 4.19 and 4.21 respectively. This makes sense, as many of the on-campus dorms have appealing facades such as the new LLC and Pondsides 3, while houses on streets such as Wilson Street are not the most aesthetically pleasing. However, dorms often fail to provide the same amount of privacy a house or apartment can offer, and those student living off campus value that privacy.

An independent samples T-test was run in SPSS to test for any significant differences in satisfaction levels among students living in off-campus apartments and houses. The results of the test found that the only significant difference between off-campus students and their satisfaction levels were with the exterior quality of the buildings at .029 significance, and the parking at .004 significance (Table 7.1). Again, the houses students rent out are generally not of the utmost exterior quality, whereas apartment buildings such as the Mills or Arcadia are well-kept and modern buildings. Thus students living in apartments were more satisfied with the exterior quality of their buildings.

**Table 7.1.** *Independent samples T-test for satisfaction among students in off-campus apartments and houses.*

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Exterior	Equal variances assumed	.022	.882	2.219	77	.029	.534	.240	.055	1.012
	Equal variances not assumed			2.228	65.038	.029	.534	.239	.055	1.012
Parking	Equal variances assumed	10.361	.002	-3.252	76	.002	-.967	.297	-1.559	-.375
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.019	48.581	.004	-.967	.320	-1.611	-.323

However, those same students ranked their satisfaction with parking significantly lower than those students living in private houses. This is likely due to the limited size of apartment building parking lots, such as at Arcadia. In general though, no matter where students chose to live, their overall levels of satisfaction were similar. This suggests that students are flexible when it comes to housing, and the housing on campus and surrounding the campus meet the basic requirements of students.

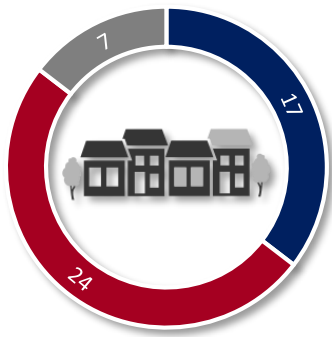
## PERCEPTION OF STUDENT NEIGHBORHOODS

Students were also asked to compare the quality of life in their neighborhood with the rest of Keene. This question was asked to get a better understanding of students' perceptions of their living situations, and how they may perceive the rest of Keene as a whole. By and large, students living in off-campus houses view their neighborhood as being of the same or higher quality in comparison to the rest of Keene (**Figure 7.8**). Only 7 of 48 students living in off-campus houses responded by saying that they believe the quality of life in their neighborhood was lower than that of other neighborhoods in Keene.

**Figure 7.9** displays results from the same question, but breaks down the answers by how satisfied each respondent is with their overall neighborhood satisfaction (question asked in Figure 7.6) and includes all respondents and housing types. It is not surprising to see that those who were less satisfied with their overall neighborhood were more likely to rank their neighborhood as being worse off than the rest of Keene. Overall this was a small percentage of the total sample size, as 74 respondents ranked satisfaction with their neighborhood at a 4 or 5, while only 36 ranked it as a 1, 2, or 3. Of those who ranked their neighborhood satisfaction below a 4, only 29 percent were willing to say their neighborhood was of lower quality than the rest of Keene.

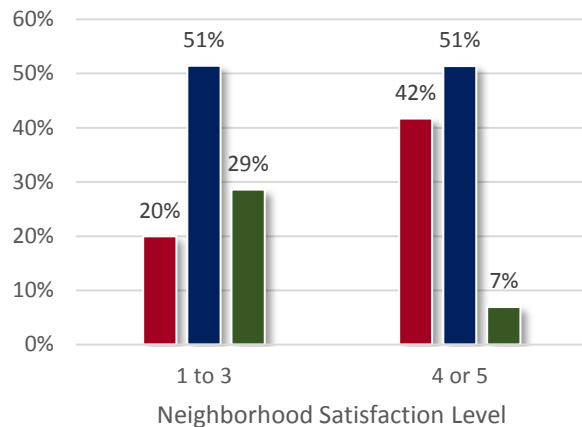
This suggests potentially two conclusions:

- Students who are less satisfied with their neighborhoods still view them as being of the same or higher quality than the rest of Keene
- In general, it does not matter the quality of the neighborhood, students will still be satisfied.



■ Higher ■ Same ■ Lower

**Figure 7.8.** *In comparison with the rest of Keene, would you say that the quality of life in your neighborhood is...(results of students living in off campus houses only).*



■ Higher ■ Same ■ Lower

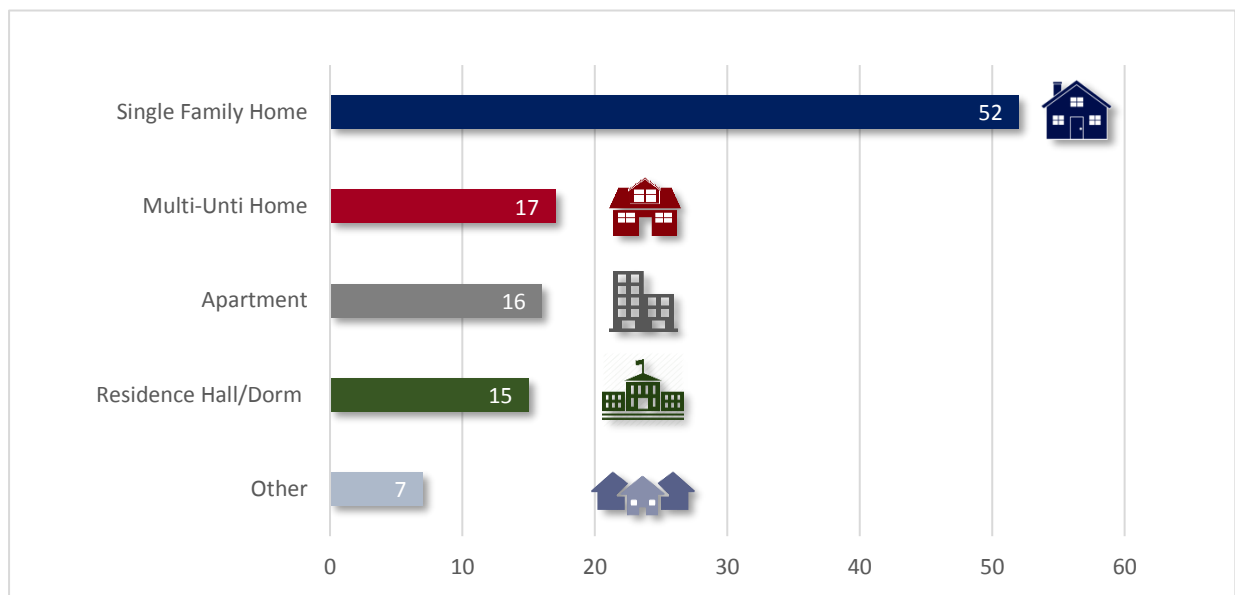
**Figure 7.9.** *Neighborhood perception in comparison to Keene based on overall neighborhood satisfaction levels (all respondents and housing types).*

The former of these two statements evince that college age Millennials do not have the most positive view on the quality of neighborhoods throughout the rest of Keene, or they simply have ignorance about these other neighborhoods. After all, there is little reason for students to explore Keene aside from being around campus, going to other student housing, going to and from their jobs, or enjoying the downtown area. If Keene wants to attract more of the college students to stay in Keene after graduation, informing them about neighborhoods and housing options separate from student housing may spark their interest.

The latter statement simply evokes the notion that college students are not overly concerned with the overall quality of student neighborhoods, they will be satisfied either way. This leads to less demand on maintenance and general upkeep of student housing, and gives little incentive to proprietors to pay for such an expense.

## STUDENT HOUSING PREFERENCES

Gaining appreciation on students' housing preferences and priorities will be insightful when it comes to discerning what students look for most in their housing, and what type of housing they would prefer if given the choice. We asked students to select their top choice of housing while attending Keene State College (**Figure 7.10**)

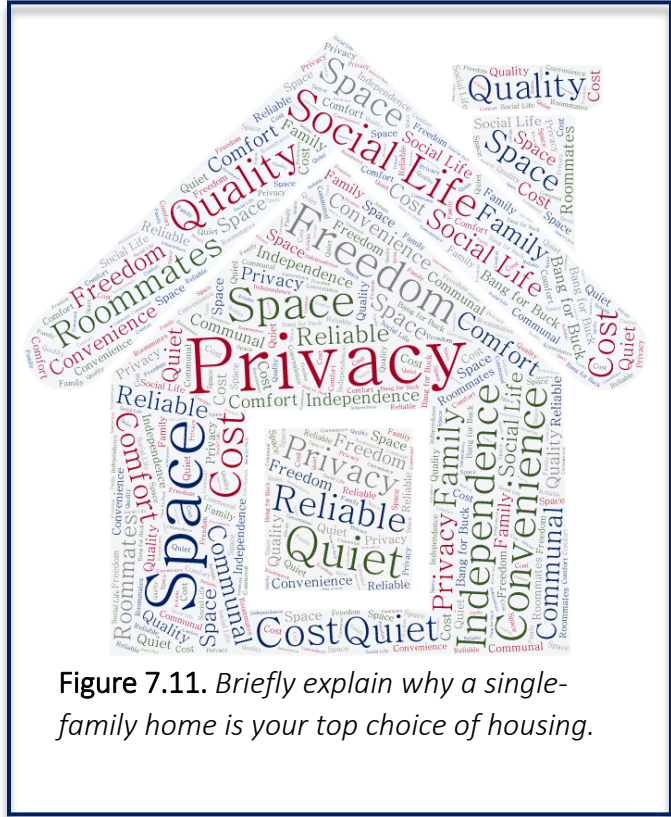


**Figure 7.10.** *Select your top choice of housing while attending Keene State College.*

At 49 percent, nearly half the respondents chose a single-family house as their preferred type of housing while going to school in Keene, while 44 percent were split between multi-unit homes, apartments, or dorms as their preferred. Students were also asked to briefly explain why they chose their preferred. Students who chose a single-family home as their top choice cited privacy, freedom, and social life as some of their top reasons (**Figure 7.11**). Those who identified either a multi-unit home, apartment, or dorm as their top choice had less homogenous reasons as to why they did, but convenience and independence were two of the most cited reasons. Of course, even with students predominantly preferring single-family homes, it does not mean those



living in multi-unit homes, apartments, or dorms are less satisfied. As determined earlier in this chapter, students had similar levels of satisfaction regardless of their current living situation. These findings merely reveal that there is more competition among the off-campus single-family housing market, and single-family houses will most likely be the first to go when students are looking for housing for the forthcoming year. This



also plays back to the notion that there is little incentive to maintain single-family student homes to high quality, due to the higher demand for them students will choose to live in them nonetheless.

## STUDENT HOUSING PRIORITIES

To get a better grasp on students’ demands and priorities when it comes to housing, students were also asked to choose their top three reasons from a list of 13 options on why they chose their current residence (**Figure 7.12**). Knowing what students are looking for in their housing can help the school, city, and proprietors optimize the available housing options.

- Choose the TOP 3 reasons why you chose your on/off campus residence:
- |                                       |                                          |                                    |                                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost         | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality         | <input type="checkbox"/> Selection | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Aspects  | <input type="checkbox"/> Location  | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience  | <input type="checkbox"/> Amount of Space | <input type="checkbox"/> Security  | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord Confidence |

**Figure 7.12.** Students housing priority question from survey

Figure 7.13 expresses the results of students in each living arrangement: dorm, apartment, or house. The numbers are percentages based on the total number of respondents for each type. On the right of the bar graph is also the total combined number of times that particular reason was chosen among all respondents.

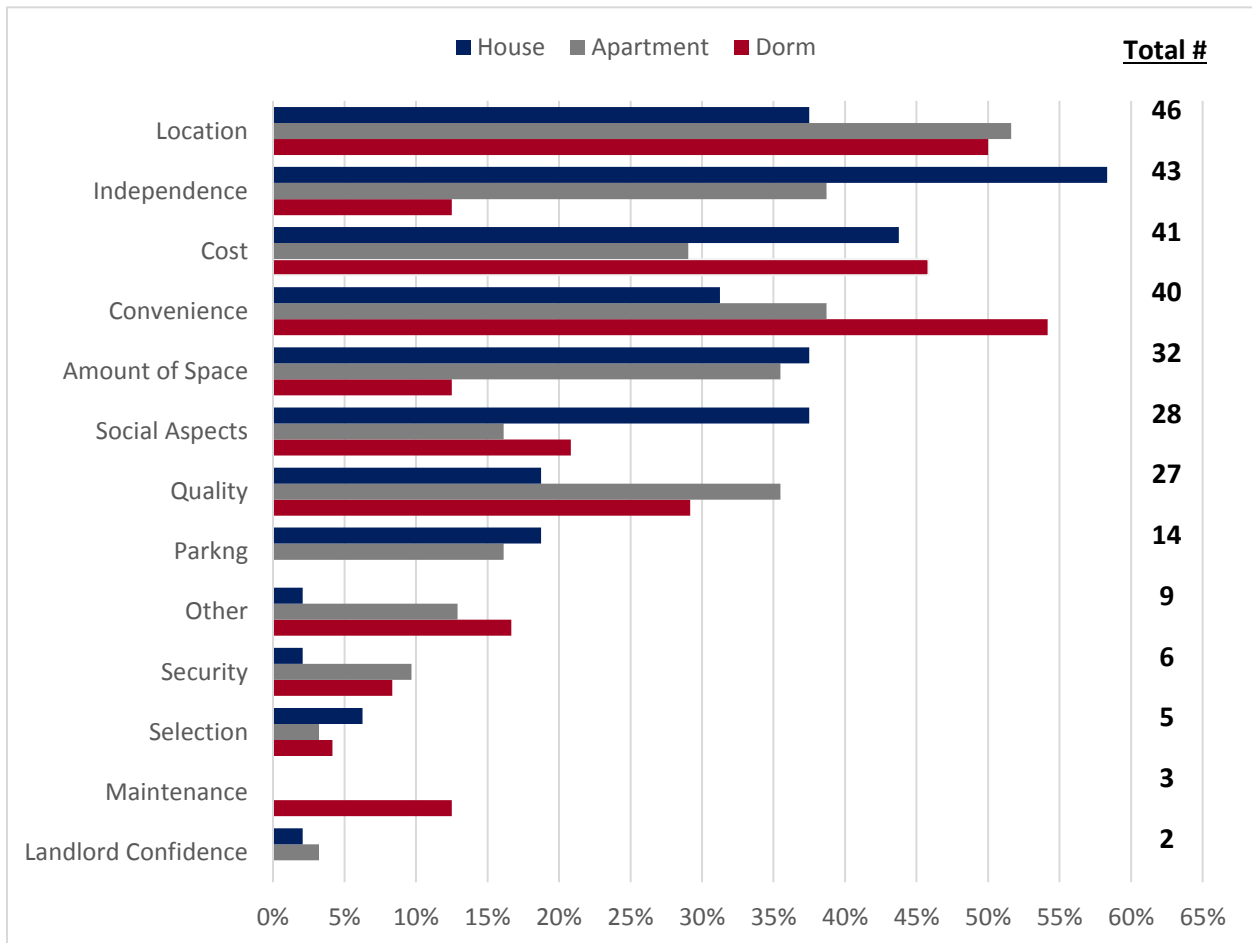


Figure 7.13. Choose the top 3 reasons why you chose your on/off campus residence

Focusing on students who live off-campus, the top three reasons for those living in an apartment are location, convenience, and independence. For those living in off-campus houses, the top two reasons are independence and cost with a three-way tie for third between location, amount of space, and social aspects. This reveals similarities behind why students decide to live

off campus. For starters, even though dorms are located on campus themselves, there are enough off-campus options surrounding the school where students still feel like they are close enough to easily get to and from class. Students do not feel that they have to be right on campus and are willing to sacrifice that particular benefit of on campus residence halls. Students also highly value the freedom and independence they gain from living off campus. Fully 58 and 39 percent of those living in a house or apartment (respectively) said independence was a major reason they chose their residence, whereas only 13 percent of those living in a dorm had the same response. Having your own place relieves students from campus resident assistants, residence hall rules, and room checkups. For many it is their first time living independently separate from parents and the college, making it appealing to a wide range of students. Off campus housing can often times also offer more space and privacy to students, and 38% of those living in a house said social aspects were a principal reason they chose to live there.

In contrast, only 19 percent of students living in single-family homes indicated that quality was a reason they chose to live there, as compared to 35 percent and 29 percent of those living in apartments or dorms respectively. This again reinforces the notion that many students do not see quality as an important or top priority when it comes to housing, as they are more focused on the independence and freedom gained with off campus housing.

Surprisingly, roughly 45 percent of students living in both dorms and single-family homes ranked cost as a top reason of why they chose where they live. Referring back to figure 7.4, 48 percent of students living in homes paid anywhere from \$600-\$699 a month. If the typical student lease is for 9 months, that is about \$5,400 - \$6,300 per school year. In comparison, room costs for

on campus housing ranges from \$6,882 for traditional doubles to \$9,634 for Bushnell 2 bathroom apartments. Even if a student is paying \$800 a month to rent a house, it would still cost less than a majority of the on campus housing. Of course, students who become resident assistants (RA) get room for free, which is a highly enticing reason to live on campus. A few respondents on the survey mentioned they were an RA, and this could account for the similarity among those living in a dorm or house.

It was also surprising however, that only 29 percent of students living in apartments put cost as a main reason they live there. Especially when referring back to Figure 7.4, they pay roughly the same amount as the students living in houses, but were 15 percent less likely to cite cost as a vital reason. One possible theory is that students in apartments chose quality as a top reason 20 percent more frequently than those in houses. They were also less satisfied with parking in comparison to students in houses (Figure 7.8). The superior quality of student apartments may give the impression that those living there are paying a premium for the building, when in reality the rates are similar among both houses and apartments. This, coupled with the fact that apartment students are not as satisfied with parking, may trigger them to rank cost as a less significant reason for wanting to live there.

## POST KEENE STATE COLLEGE

Lastly, exploring students' plans for after graduation in terms of both where they think they want to live and in what type of housing will help in gaging the housing aspirations of younger Millennials right out of college. Therefore, students were asked if they plan to stay in Keene after graduating. Overwhelming, 65 percent said no, 32 said they were not sure, and only 3 percent said yes (**Figure 7.14**). This does not currently bode well for the city of Keene, especially if the goal is to

retain more of the young professionals graduating from the college. This can relate back to figures 7.9 and 7.10 as well. If college students currently see themselves living in neighborhoods of the same or higher quality than the rest of Keene, it suggests that students do not have the best perception of Keene, or they are unaware of some of the nicer neighborhoods available in Keene. Broadening the scope of students' knowledge regarding the City of Keene will increase the chances of making the city a more appealing place to live post-graduation.

Lastly, students were asked about the type of housing they plan on living in after Keene State. This time, results are not as skewed and shared more equivalence among the respondents as 34 percent of students were unsure, 30 percent plan on renting their own place, and 26 percent plan on moving back home (Figure 7.15). These numbers are somewhat promising, as it means roughly a third of students are looking to go right into the rental market after they graduate. This affords more opportunity for the rental market in Keene to attract graduates to stay here if they are able to market right and at the right price. Combining aspects of educating students on the City of Keene and its rental market may be enough to capture the eye of more graduates.

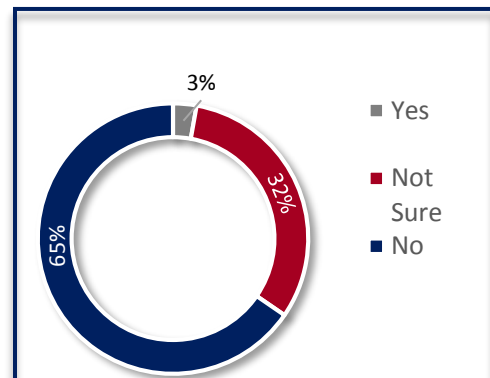


Figure 7.14. Do you plan on staying in Keene?

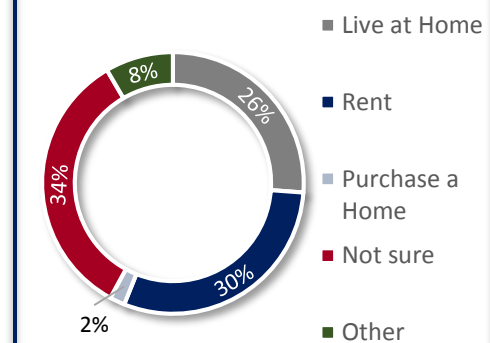


Figure 7.15. What type of housing after graduation?

# CHAPTER 8

## CONCLUSION



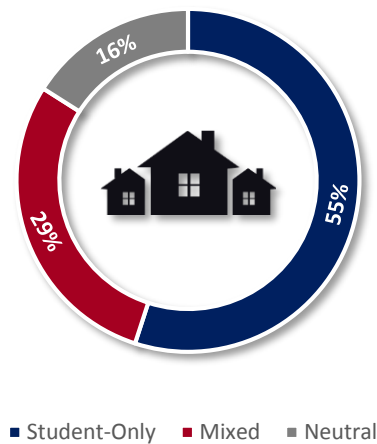


## STUDENT AND MILLENNIAL RESEARCH

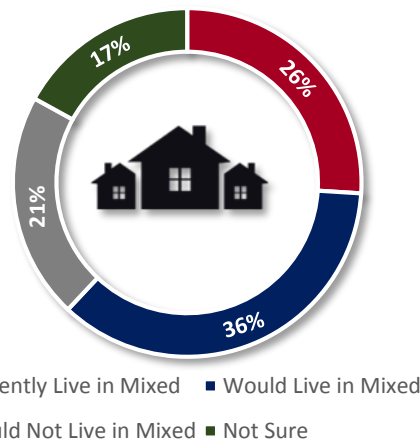
This comprehensive study of students and Millennials in Keene has demonstrated that there is quite a difference between the two in terms of housing satisfaction. Overall, college students appear to have a variety of off-campus housing choices. The same cannot be said about Millennials. Young professionals are extremely interested in mixed-use housing in downtown, though students are primarily living in these conditions. Through this research it is evident that more must be done to accommodate the housing needs of Millennials. Through the two surveys, it is noted that there is an excess of student housing, mainly multi-unit single-family homes, right near downtown. Young professionals have expressed a strong desire to have similar housing opportunities. Current student housing does not meet the standards of typical Millennial buyers, though an abundance of such houses, combined with the declining student population, could create a new opportunity for Keene. While property owners may not want to revitalize their properties and sell or rent to young professionals because the profit margin may not be the same as student rents, they may soon find no alternative.

A principal reason why students appear to be more satisfied with their housing compared to Millennials may be due to their general brevity in Keene. Students appear not to take their housing as seriously because they know that their living situation is temporary and their expectations might be lowered. One key finding, however, is that most students who completed the survey prefer to live in houses as opposed to apartments and residence halls. While they are accepting of these other options, they might prefer houses due to the “party culture” that off-campus houses provide for students.

Another significant finding of the student survey is their receptiveness to mixed neighborhoods. Mixed neighborhoods include residents from many walks of life, including newlyweds, families, young professionals, students, and retirees. Students are willing to live in these types of neighborhoods, with a 29 percent preference. However, 55 percent still prefer to live in a student neighborhood (Figure 8.1). Regardless, 80 percent of the students surveyed value having a positive relationship with their neighbors.



**Figure 8.1** Student neighborhood preferences based from survey. *Source: Authors*



**Figure 8.2** Millennial neighborhood preferences based from survey. *Source: Authors*

Millennials, on the other hand, are much more open to living in mixed neighborhoods. Over 62 percent of the young professionals surveyed reported that they either already live in a mixed neighborhood or would be open to living in one. Only 20 percent did not want to live in a mixed neighborhood and 17 percent were not sure (Figure 8.2). Contrary to popular belief, Millennials from Keene want to own a home, with 95 percent preferring to own over renting.



## OVERARCHING CONCLUSIONS

This research case study has also shown that Millennials in Keene are not necessarily the stereotypical Millennials from other areas of the United States. While Keene young professionals prefer to live in mixed neighborhoods, a surprising amount want to own a home instead of renting. The focus group contrasted the surveys slightly, where there seemed to be more of an even split between those who wanted or already owned a house and those who prefer to rent. Even for those who rent, many of them wish to eventually own a home. This does support the research that shows that Millennials are interested in owning eventually but financial barriers prevent them from affording a mortgage. This is perhaps amplified with Keene State College and Antioch University, where the young professional population with fresh degrees are frequently swamped with debt.

The purpose of this case study is to provide a framework for attracting and maintaining Millennials through neighborhood revitalization, as well as to critically and geographically analyze housing and demographic trends in Keene. Using the “Live, Work, Play” framework, the crux of the study is to determine how Keene can retain Millennials and students who graduate from Keene State College. The three hypotheses of the paper are supported by the research. They are the following:

- Overall Millennial satisfaction with Keene’s housing is inadequate (lacking);
- The Millennial shift in postponing homeownership causes a difference among Millennial renters and homeowners’ overall housing satisfaction;
- Due to less demanding standards and needs, college students feel that the quality off-campus housing and neighborhoods are satisfactory and are generally sufficient.

First, Millennials have indicated in the survey and focus group that housing in Keene is inadequate. According to the young professionals, rentals in Keene are too expensive for the quality and single-family homes have extremely high property taxes. Many of the Millennials surveyed are within an income bracket where they cannot afford their own housing (without roommates) but make too much to qualify for subsidized housing. Next, the survey does not point to any significant difference between housing satisfactions of renters versus owners, but the results did show that the majority of people who were satisfied with their housing are owners. Finally, students are more satisfied with their housing than Millennials. This is most likely due to the fact that most students leave Keene after graduation, so they do not have such high requirements for their temporary housing.

Out of the “Live, Work, Play” mentality, “Live” and “Work” are imperative for Keene’s focus. As mentioned previously, housing remains to be a financial concern for many young professionals in Keene. The focus group stressed that there are plenty of recreational opportunities in Keene, with the only suggestion being to include more live music in the downtown culture. However, besides housing, employment was the number one concern for survey-takers and the focus group participants. Students and Millennials agreed that there is an oversaturation of educated people, meaning that there are not enough jobs for recent graduates from Keene State College and Antioch University. Many students want to move back home because of student loan debt along with the lack of field-specific jobs. The focus group pointed out that there are some jobs that young professionals might not know about, such as manufacturing jobs, but they are not generally jobs that are relevant to students’ undergraduate degrees. Providing a wider selection of full time positions with benefits is arguably the key to Millennial retention in Keene.

## LITERATURE CITED

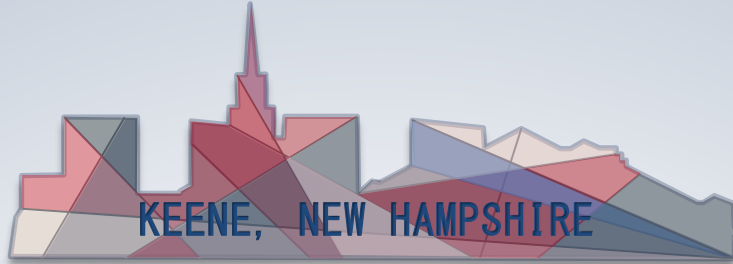
- Bowditch, S. 2001. Good neighbors? *Connection* 14 (3): 11-13.
- Calthorpe, P. 1993. *The next American metropolis: Ecology, community, and the American dream*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Census Bureau. 2017. *American community survey (ACS)*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- . 2017. *The changing economics and demographics of young adulthood: 1975-2016*. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/p20-579.pdf> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Cox, W. 2014. *Dispersing millennials*. <http://www.newgeography.com/content/004410-dispersing-millennials> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Doran, B., and B. Lees. 2005. Investigating the spatiotemporal links between disorder, crime, and the fear of crime. *Professional Geographer* 57 (1): 1-12.
- Education Policy Institute (EPI). 2013. *The cost of college attrition at four-year colleges and universities*. [http://www.educationalpolicy.org/pdf/1302\\_PolicyPerspectives.pdf](http://www.educationalpolicy.org/pdf/1302_PolicyPerspectives.pdf) (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Gallagher, L. 2013. *The end of the suburbs: Where the American dream is moving*. Portfolio: Penguin group USA.
- Ghani, Z., and N. Suleiman. 2016. Theoretical underpinning for understanding student housing. *Journal of Environment and Earth science* 6 (1): 163-176.
- Gittelsohn, J. 2014. *Boomers seen boosting new-home sales as millennials wait*. <http://www.my-property-report.com/articles/boomers-seen-boosting-new-home-sales-as-millennials-wait%5C> (last accessed 17 September 2017).
- Goodman, E. 2015. Here come the millennials: Are they ready to rent?. *Journal of Property Management*. 80 (1): 16-21.
- Gopal, P. 2008. *College towns: Still a Smart Investment*. <http://www.primepropertyinvestors.com/businessweek.pdf> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Hsu, J. 2014. Harvard releases state of nation's housing report. *Journal of Housing & Community Development* 71 (4): 15-15.
- Internal Revenue Service. 2017. SOI Tax Stats – Migration Data. <https://www.irs.gov/statistics/soi-tax-stats-migration-data> (last accessed 28 October 2017).
- Johnson, D. 2017. *The 25 cities where millennials are moving*. <http://time.com/4797956/citiesmillennials-moving/> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Johnson, K. M. 2012. New Hampshire demographic trends in the twenty-first century. Carsey Institute, University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire.
- Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS). 2017. *The state of the nation's housing*. [http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/harvard\\_jchs\\_state\\_of\\_the\\_nations\\_housing\\_2017.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/harvard_jchs_state_of_the_nations_housing_2017.pdf) (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Keene State College. 2016. *Fact book: Fall 2016 – spring 2017*. <https://www.keene.edu/office/ir/assets/document/factbook/download/> (last accessed 11 December 2017).

- . 2017. *Publications and reports*. <https://www.keene.edu/office/ir/publications/> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Khalil, R. 2012. Smart growth and new urbanism: Towards achieving a smart university campus. *Spaces & Flows: An International Journal of Urban & Extra Urban Studies* 2 (3): p129-147.
- Lahr, M., A. Lockshiss, and D. Vandegrift. 2012. Town versus gown: The effect of a college on housing prices and the tax base. *Growth and Change* 43 (2): 304-334
- Landen, X. 2017. Wisdom of youth: Local businesspeople join governor's millennial council. *The Keene Sentinel*
- MacArthur Foundation. 2015. *How housing matters: Key findings from a nationwide survey among adults conducted April-May 2015*. [https://www.macfound.org/media/files/E11540\\_How\\_Housing\\_Matters\\_2015\\_FULL\\_REPORT.pdf](https://www.macfound.org/media/files/E11540_How_Housing_Matters_2015_FULL_REPORT.pdf) (last accessed 17 September 2017).
- Main South Community Development Corporation (MSCDC). 2017. *Main South Community Development Corporation*. <http://www.mainsouthcdc.org/> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- McGauley, J. 2016. Growing old(er) study: State on verge of 'silver tsunami' due to aging population. *The Keene Sentinel*
- Myers, D. 2016. Peak millennials: Three reinforcing cycles that amplify the rise and all of urban concentration by millennials. *Housing Policy Debate* 26 (6): 928-947.
- New Hampshire Department of Education. 2016. *The status of higher education in New Hampshire*. <https://www.education.nh.gov/highered/research/documents/status-report.pdf> (Last accessed 11 December 2017).
- New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration. 2016. Comparison of Full Tax
- New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration. 2016. *Comparison of full value tax rates*. [https://www.revenue.nh.gov/mun-prop/property/equalization-2016/documents/full-value\\_ranking.pdf](https://www.revenue.nh.gov/mun-prop/property/equalization-2016/documents/full-value_ranking.pdf) (Last accessed 11 December 2017).
- New Hampshire Employment Security (NHES)(2017). *Cheshire County Profile*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/products/cp/documents/cheshire-cp.pdf> (10/2/2017)
- New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA)(2017). *Housing and Demographic Data*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nhhfa.org/housing-and-demographic-data> (10/2/2107)
- New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. 2017. *Housing and Demographic Data*. <http://www.nhhfa.org/housing-and-demographic-data> (last accessed 12 December 2017).
- Nielsen. 2014. *Millennials – Breaking the Myths*. <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2014%20Reports/nielsen-millennial-report-feb-2014.pdf> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Plymouth State University. 2017. *Common data sets*. <https://campus.plymouth.edu/institutional-research/common-data-sets/> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Rates.<https://www.revenue.nh.gov/mun-prop/property/equalization-2016/docume>
- Russonello, B. 2013. *Americans' views on their communities, housing, and transportation*. <http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/America-in-2013-Final-Report.pdf> (last accessed 11 December 2017).

- Sadayuki, T. 2015. Uncertainty in a college-town housing market: The case of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. *Journal of College and University Student Housing* 41 (2): 78-97.
- Sasaki. 2017. *University of South Carolina innovista master plan*.  
<http://www.sasaki.com/project/35/university-of-south-carolina-innovista-master-plan/>  
(last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Skykes, Don. (2011). Visit Downtown Keene. Retrieved from: <http://www.downtownkeene.com/>  
(10/2/2017).
- Stein, I. 2016. How new apartments will affect Keene housing market is uncertain. *Keene Sentinel*
- United States Census Bureau. (2017). Profile of General population and housing characteristics: Keene, NH. Retrieved from:  
<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmm>  
(10/2/2107).
- University of New Hampshire. 2017. *Common data sets*. <https://www.unh.edu/institutional-research/common-data-set> (last accessed 11 December 2017).
- Urban Land Institute. 2014. *Gen Y and housing: What they want and where they want it*.  
<https://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/Gen-Y-and-Housing.pdf> (last accessed 12 December 2017).



The flip from student housing to family housing.



Baker Street



Belmont Avenue

These houses in the Southeast Keene neighborhood have experienced flips. They were once single-family, then became student housing, but have since transferred back to single-family. This scenario represents the shifting dynamics between the student housing markets and private housing markets. It also illustrates the potential for Millennial growth in these neighborhoods. The decline in student enrollment provides opportunities for families and young professionals to move into housing formerly occupied by students.



Monadnock Court



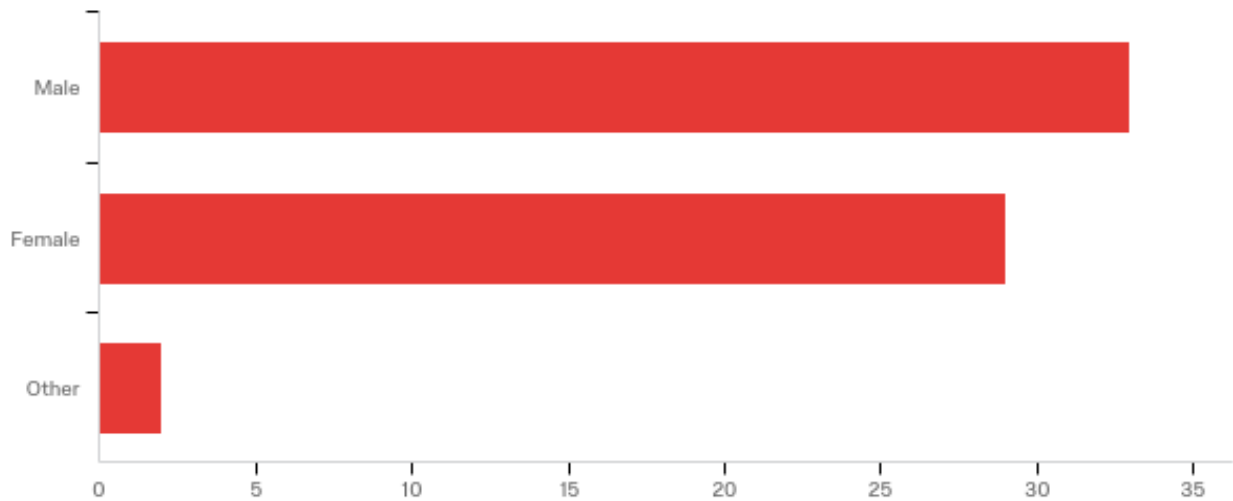
Colby Street

## APPENDIX B

### *Stay, Work, Play: Keene Millennial Housing Survey*

December 13th 2017, 10:30 am MST

#### Q1 - What is your gender?

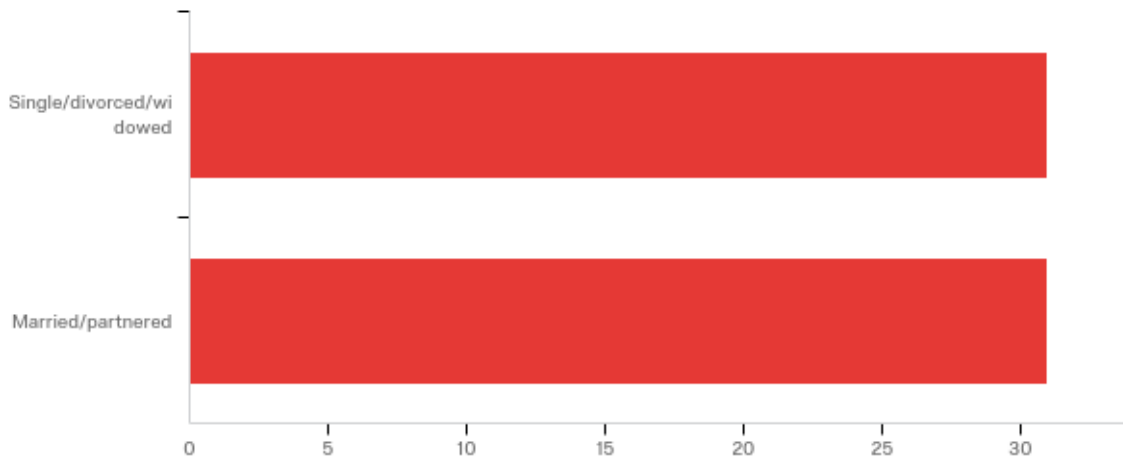


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	51.56%	33
2	Female	45.31%	29
3	Other	3.13%	2
	Total	100%	64

### Q2 - What is your age?

35	29	30	30
37	30	31	34
655	38	27	33
30	31	30	31
4	32	32	32
33	33	57	40
33	26	23	31
31	30	25	29
29	31	26	30
36	35	40	24
32	29	30	34
32	37	35	31
33	33	25	32
31	32	26	29
29	26	39	33
32	30	23	21

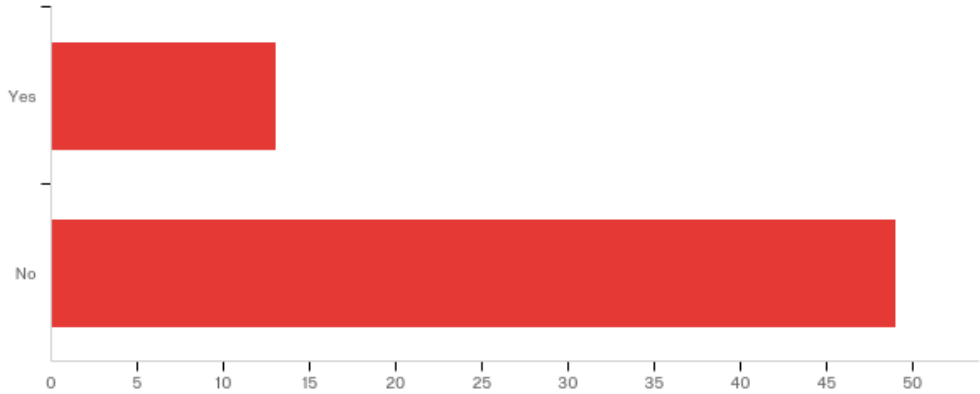
### Q3 - What do you currently identify with?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Single/divorced/widowed	50.00%	31
2	Married/partnered	50.00%	31
	Total	100%	62



**Q4 - Do you have children?**

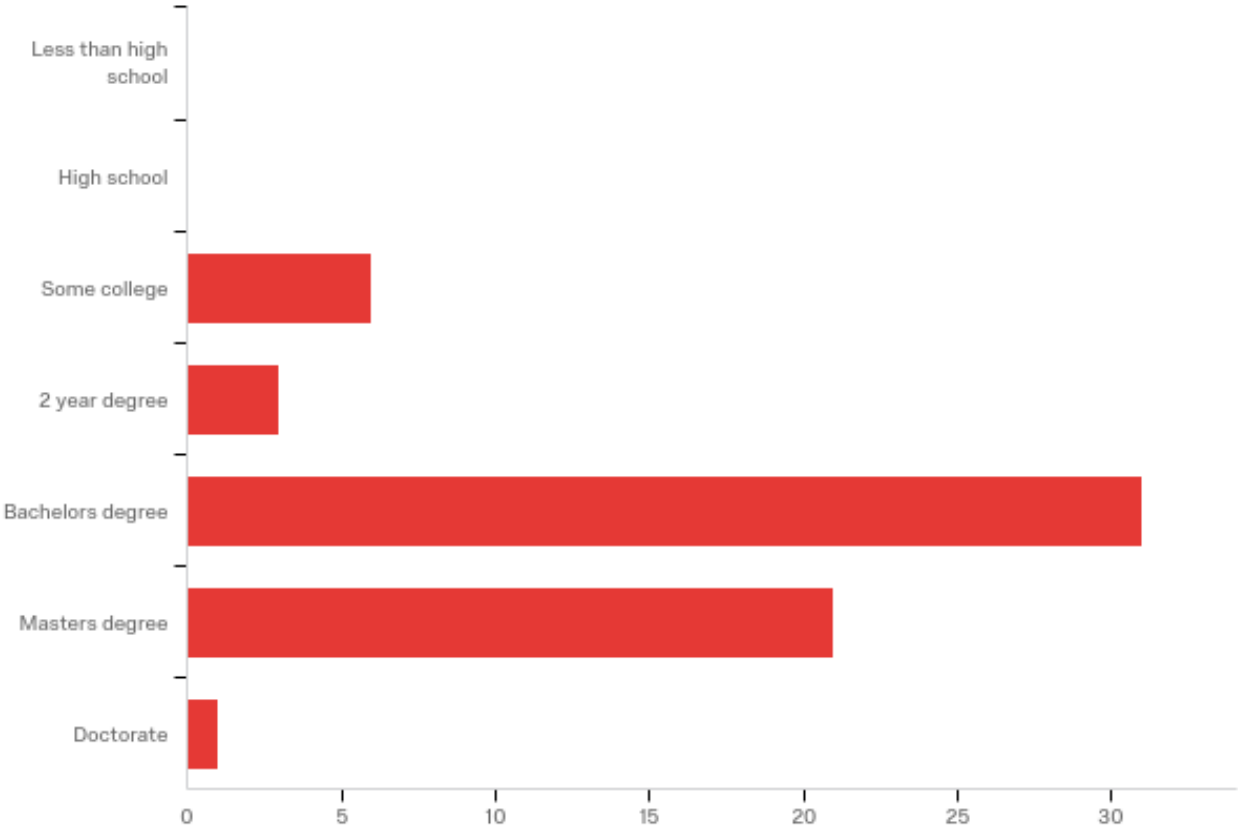


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	20.97%	13
2	No	79.03%	49
	Total	100%	62

**Q5 - Did you attend either Keene State College or Antioch University?**

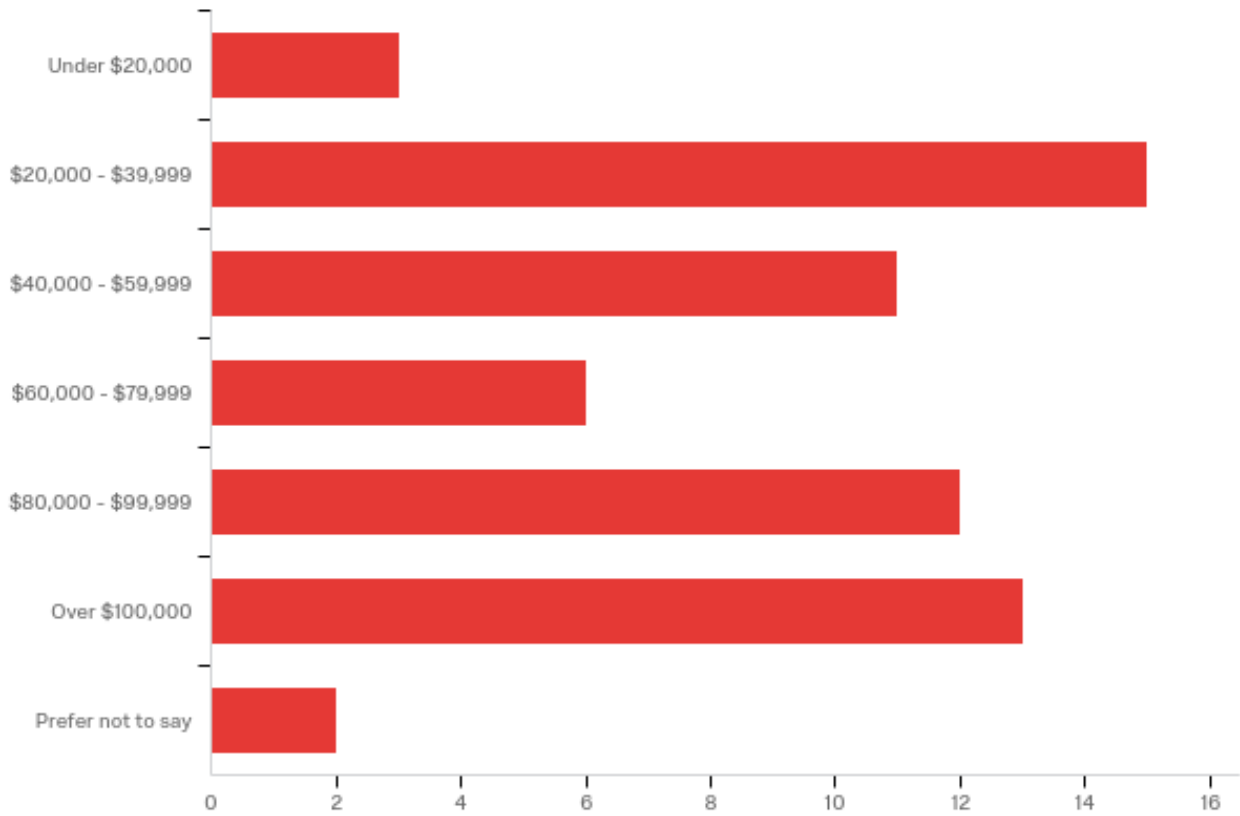
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	45.16%	28
2	No	54.84%	34
	Total	100%	62

### Q6 - What is your highest level of education?



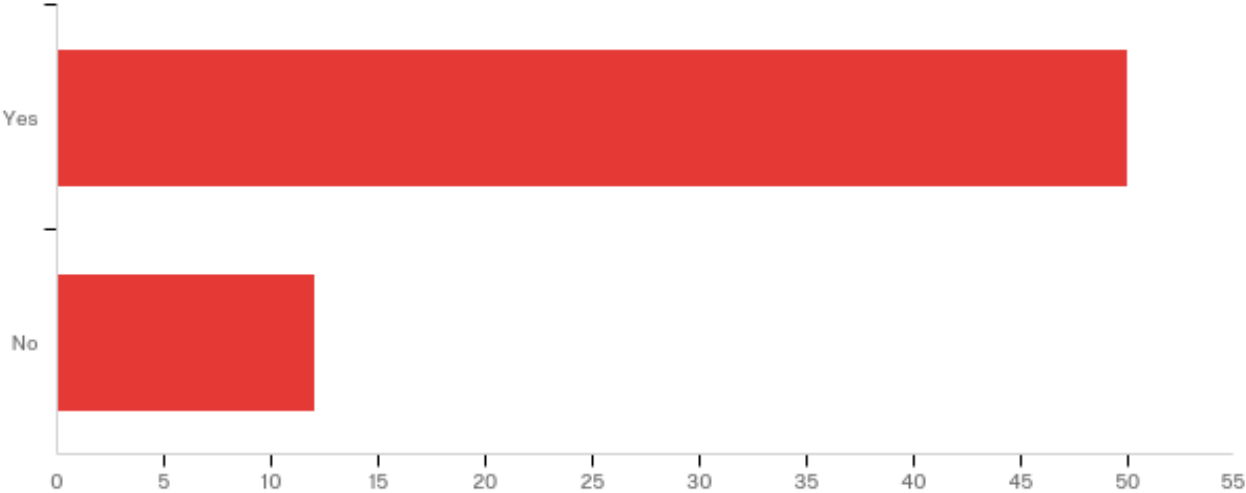
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than high school	0.00%	0
2	High school	0.00%	0
3	Some college	9.68%	6
4	2 year degree	4.84%	3
5	Bachelors degree	50.00%	31
6	Masters degree	33.87%	21
7	Doctorate	1.61%	1
	Total	100%	62

## Q7 - What is your current household income?



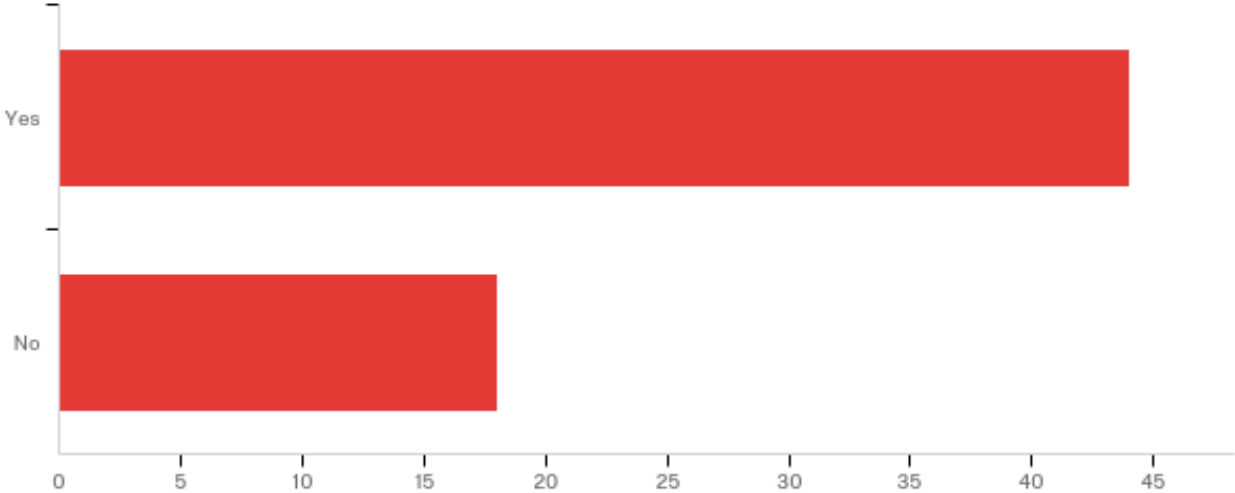
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Under \$20,000	4.84%	3
2	\$20,000 - \$39,999	24.19%	15
3	\$40,000 - \$59,999	17.74%	11
4	\$60,000 - \$79,999	9.68%	6
5	\$80,000 - \$99,999	19.35%	12
6	Over \$100,000	20.97%	13
7	Prefer not to say	3.23%	2
	Total	100%	62

**Q8 - Do you currently live in Keene?**



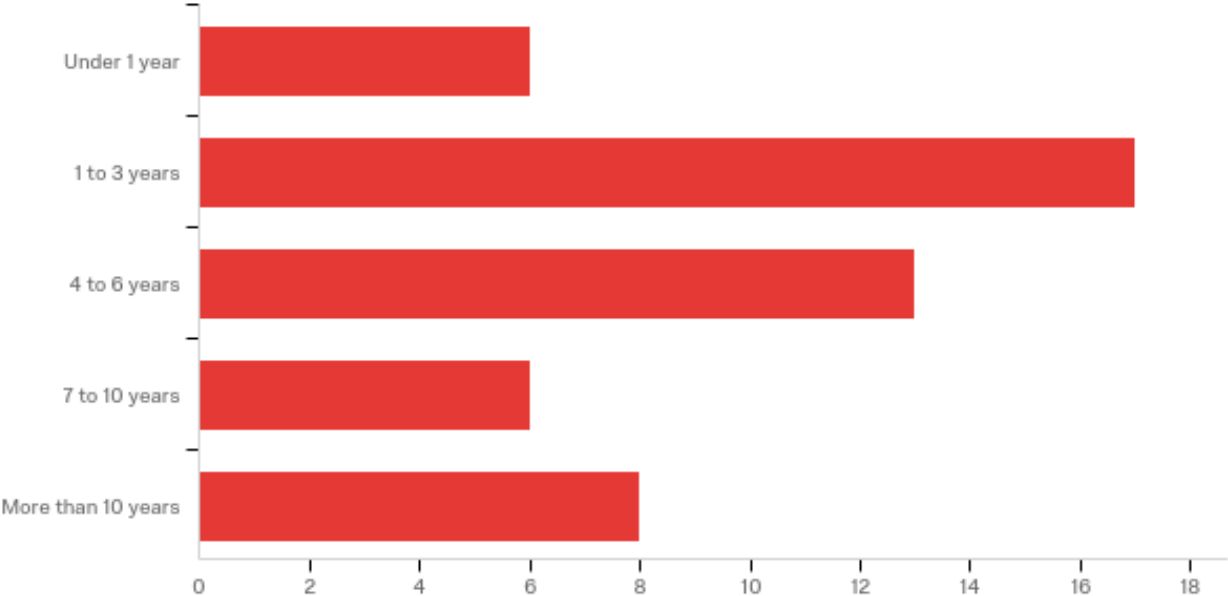
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	80.65%	50
2	No	19.35%	12
	Total	100%	62

**Q9 - Do you currently work in Keene?**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	70.97%	44
2	No	29.03%	18
	Total	100%	62

**Q10 - How long have you lived in Keene?**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Under 1 year	12.00%	6
2	1 to 3 years	34.00%	17
3	4 to 6 years	26.00%	13
4	7 to 10 years	12.00%	6
5	More than 10 years	16.00%	8
	Total	100%	50

**Q11 - In just a few words, please identify why you choose to live in Keene.**

In just a few words, please identify why you choose to live in Keene.

fdasdf

easy drive to bigger cities and airport

Closer to family

Live closer to friends

school system for kids, and was close commute to first job

Came for school, stayed for the community

The vibrant community.

My husband loves it here.

Work

I moved here to accept a job at Keene State College

a job in my degree opened up and I received the job after graduation

Community and Family

Nice town with good outdoor opportunities.

I took a job here

Work in keene and love the community

Community and convenience.

Close to everyday businesses/ downtown atmosphere

Work

Keene is where I went to college. I fell in love with the community and geographical area.

Great community, nearby family

Convenience to services

Community, family, not too big/small

Husband's family, school, work

Walkable/Bikeable, Community, Arts/Culture, Nature

The downtown is fun and bustling, my job is here, and I enjoy Northern New England.

---

My parents live here.

---

To live with my partner who teaches in the area.

---

Hometown/Best city in the area for where I work.

---

Work

---

Hjnj

---

Stayed after college

---

Can't afford to move

---

work

---

It's cheap and we like the country.

---

Lively small town with outdoor access

---

My family is here

---

I wanted to raise my family here

---

community, schools, place for kids to grow up relatively secure

---

The vibrant community and access to outdoor recreation spaces, stores, restaurants & entertainment.

---

Activity

---

My job

---

More young people; more things to do; more stores nearby

---

Work brought me here, the people kept me here

---

Vibrant downtown area, access to recreation

---

graduate school, job, opportunity to have an impact on my community

---

Proximity to family

---

Best neighborhood for what I was seeking

---

Husband's job transferred

---

Moved here for a job

---

College

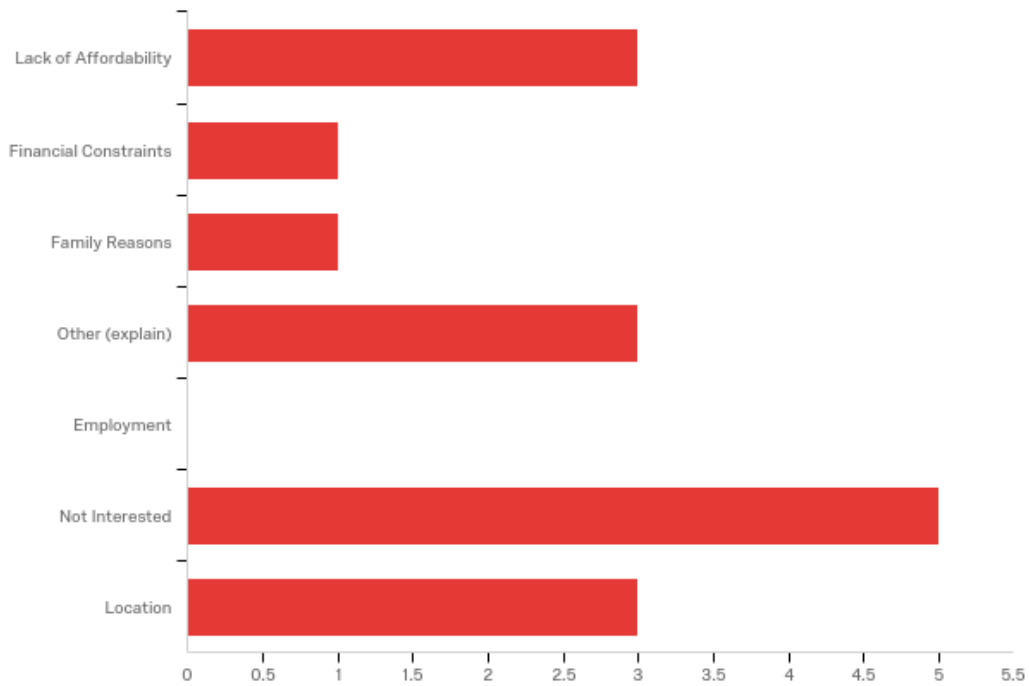
---



**Q12 - What town and state do you currently live in?**

Town	State
Walpole	NH
Spofford	NH
Harrisville	NH
Westmoreland	NH
Winchester	NH
Nelson	NH
Marlborough	NH
Swanzey	Nh
Walpole	Nh
Swanzey	NH
Dublin	NH

**Q13- Why do you not live in Keene? (Check all that apply)**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Lack of Affordability	18.75%	3
2	Financial Constraints	6.25%	1
3	Family Reasons	6.25%	1
4	Other (explain)	18.75%	3
5	Employment	0.00%	0
6	Not Interested	31.25%	5
7	Location	18.75%	3
	Total	100%	16

Other (explain)

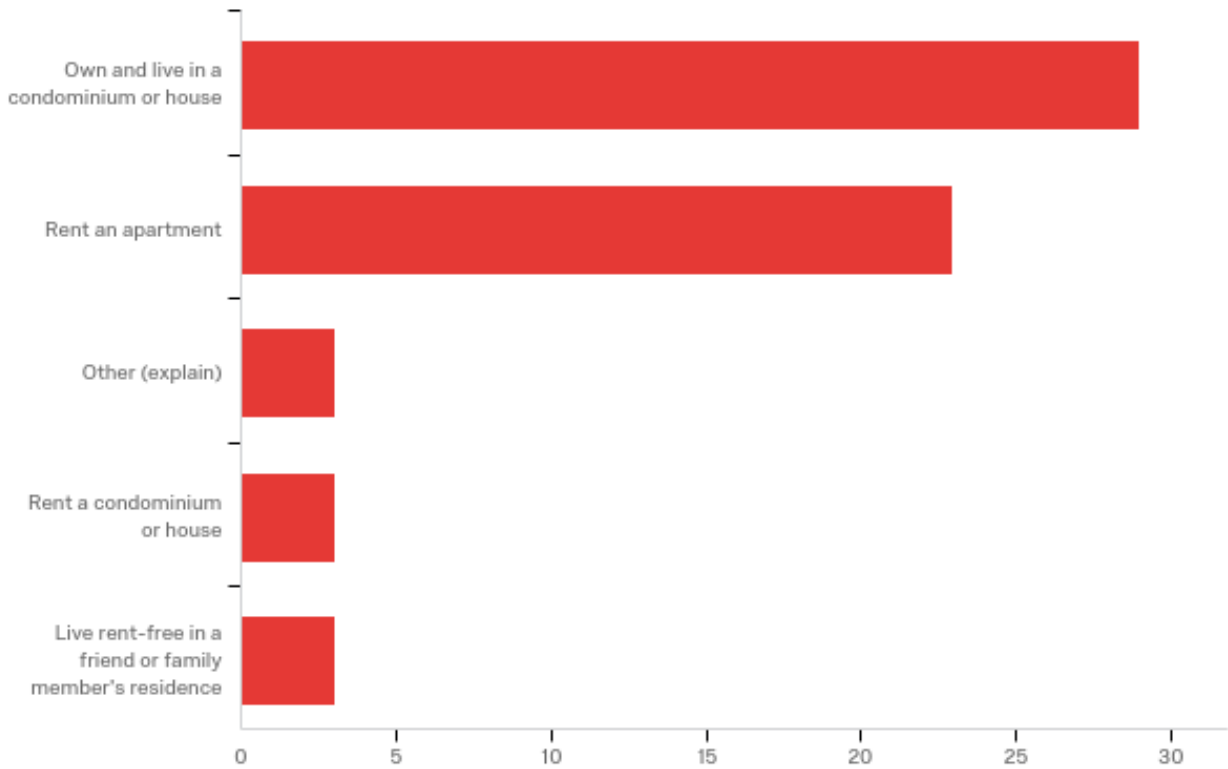
Other (explain) - Text

Taxes too high

Lack of adequate rental properties that allow dogs

Taxes

**Q14 - Which of the following best describes your current living situation?**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Own and live in a condominium or house	47.54%	29
2	Rent an apartment	37.70%	23
3	Other (explain)	4.92%	3
4	Rent a condominium or house	4.92%	3
5	Live rent-free in a friend or family member's residence	4.92%	3
	Total	100%	61

Other (explain)

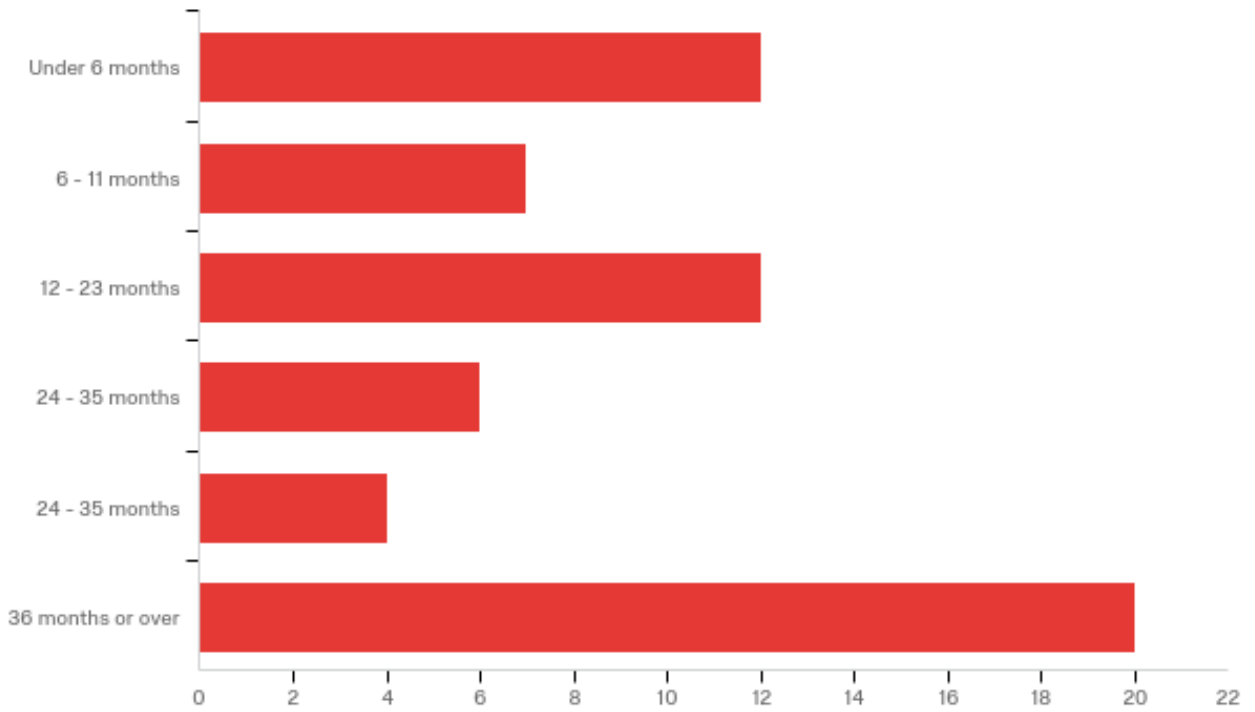
Other (explain) - Text

Caretaker

Rent a house with 3 roommates

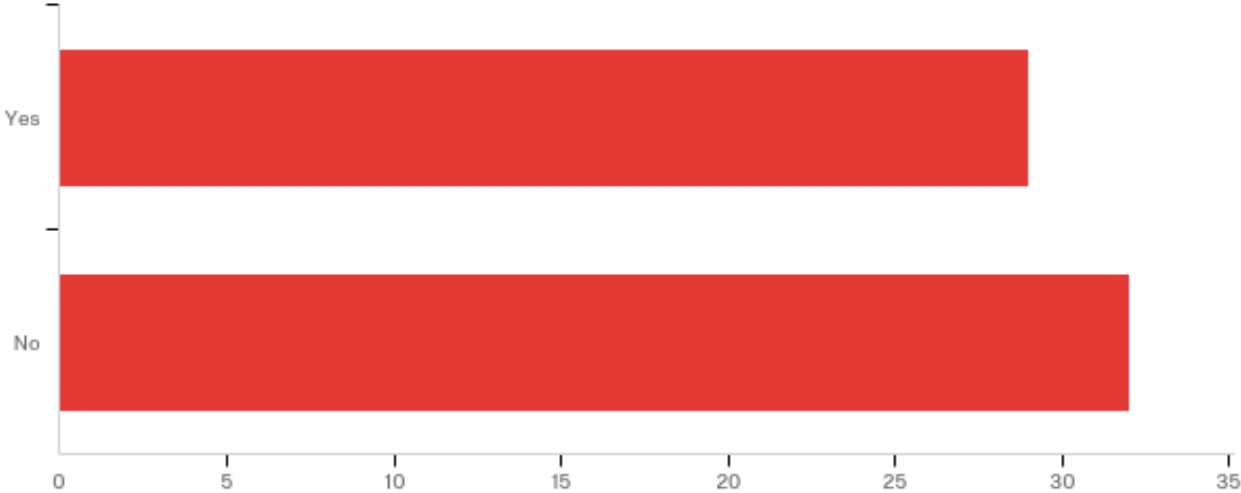
housing provided by job

**Q15 - Time living in current unit:**



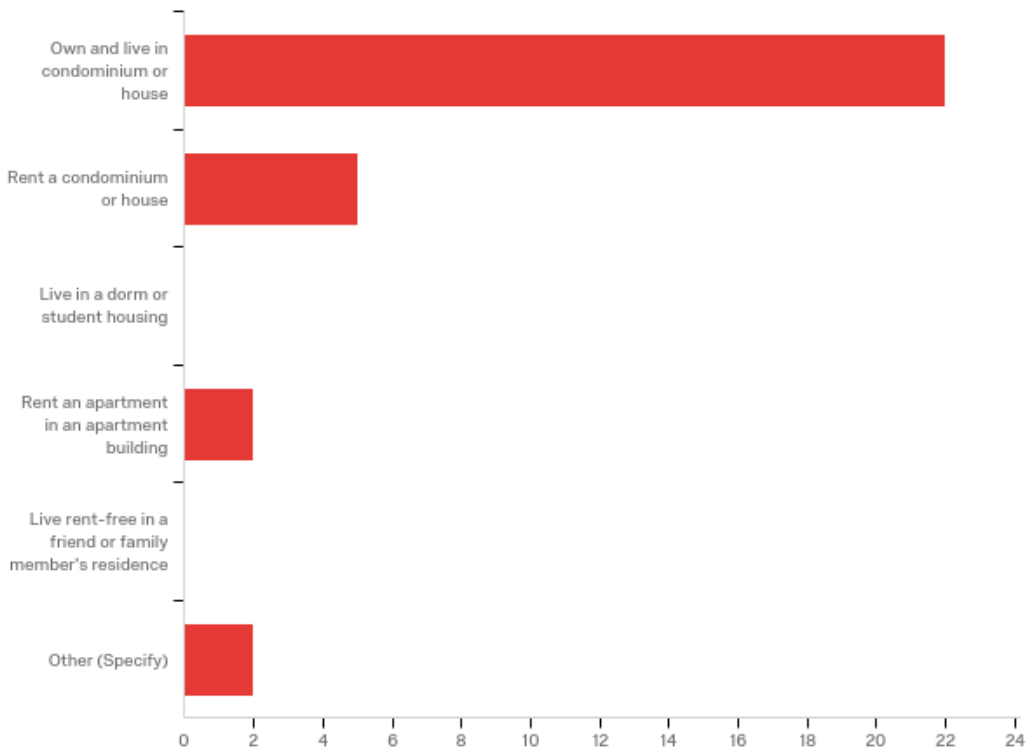
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Under 6 months	19.67%	12
2	6 - 11 months	11.48%	7
3	12 - 23 months	19.67%	12
4	24 - 35 months	9.84%	6
5	24 - 35 months	6.56%	4
6	36 months or over	32.79%	20
	Total	100%	61

**Q16 - Are you currently living in your ideal housing situation?**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	47.54%	29
2	No	52.46%	32
	Total	100%	61

**Q17 - Currently, select your ideal living situation in Keene.**



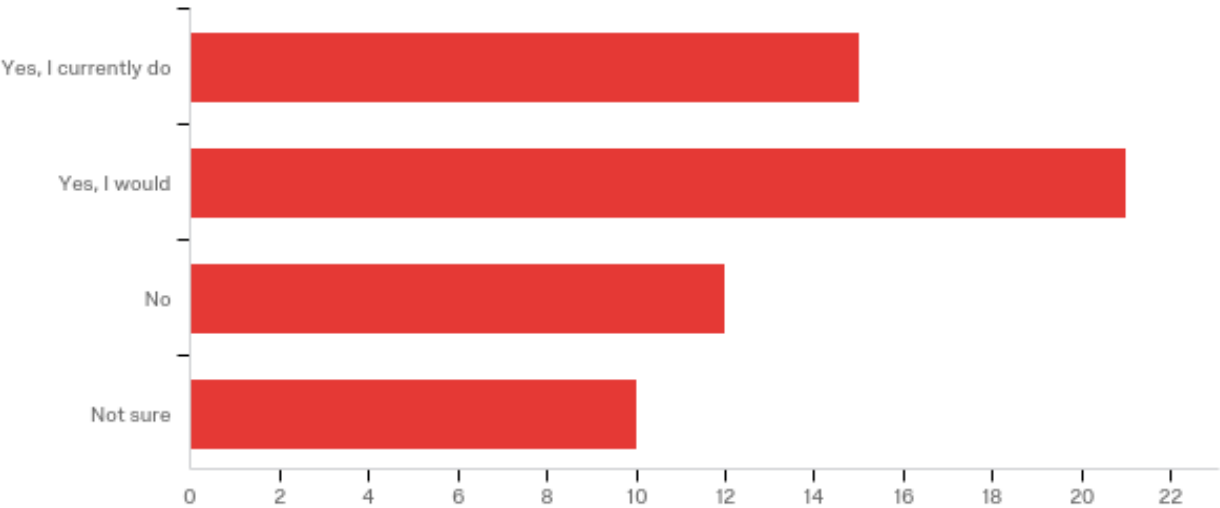
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Own and live in condominium or house	70.97%	22
2	Rent a condominium or house	16.13%	5
3	Live in a dorm or student housing	0.00%	0
4	Rent an apartment in an apartment building	6.45%	2
5	Live rent-free in a friend or family member's residence	0.00%	0
6	Other (Specify)	6.45%	2
	Total	100%	31

Other (Specify)

Other (Specify) - Text

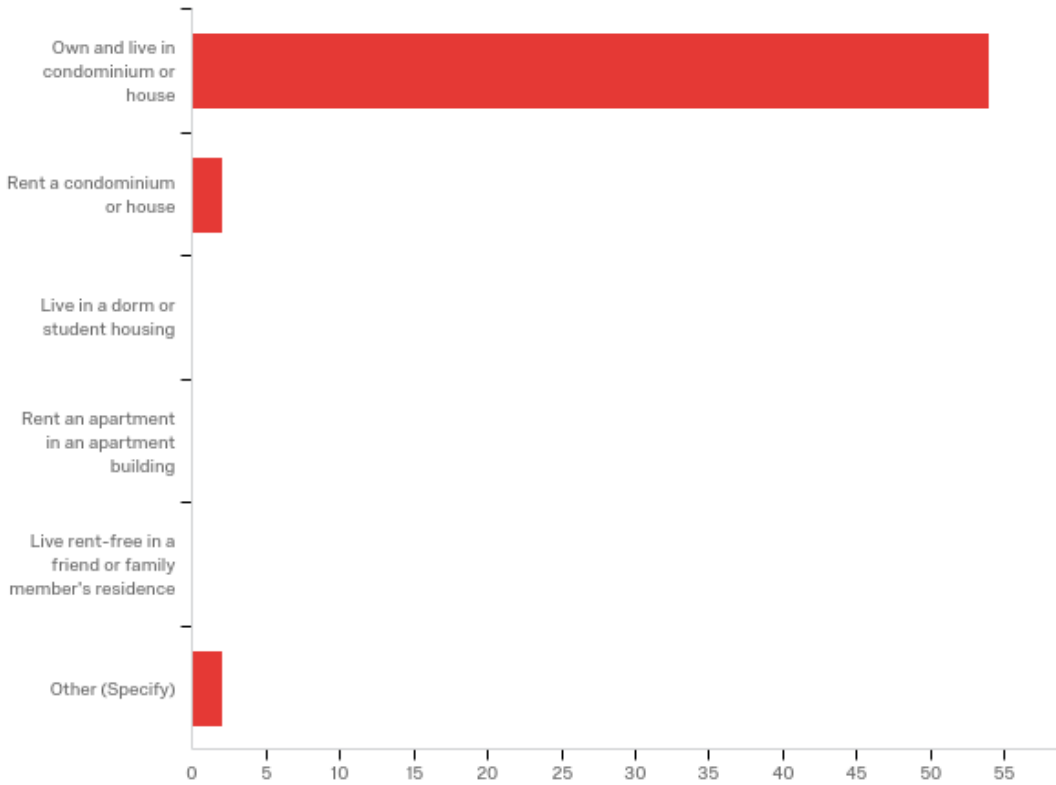
own tiny house in town

**Q18 - Would you be okay with living in a mixed neighborhood (college student and family housing)?**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes, I currently do	25.86%	15
2	Yes, I would	36.21%	21
3	No	20.69%	12
4	Not sure	17.24%	10
	Total	100%	58

### Q19 - What will your ideal living situation likely be in 10 years?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Own and live in condominium or house	93.10%	54
2	Rent a condominium or house	3.45%	2
3	Live in a dorm or student housing	0.00%	0
4	Rent an apartment in an apartment building	0.00%	0
5	Live rent-free in a friend or family member's residence	0.00%	0
6	Other (Specify)	3.45%	2
	Total	100%	58

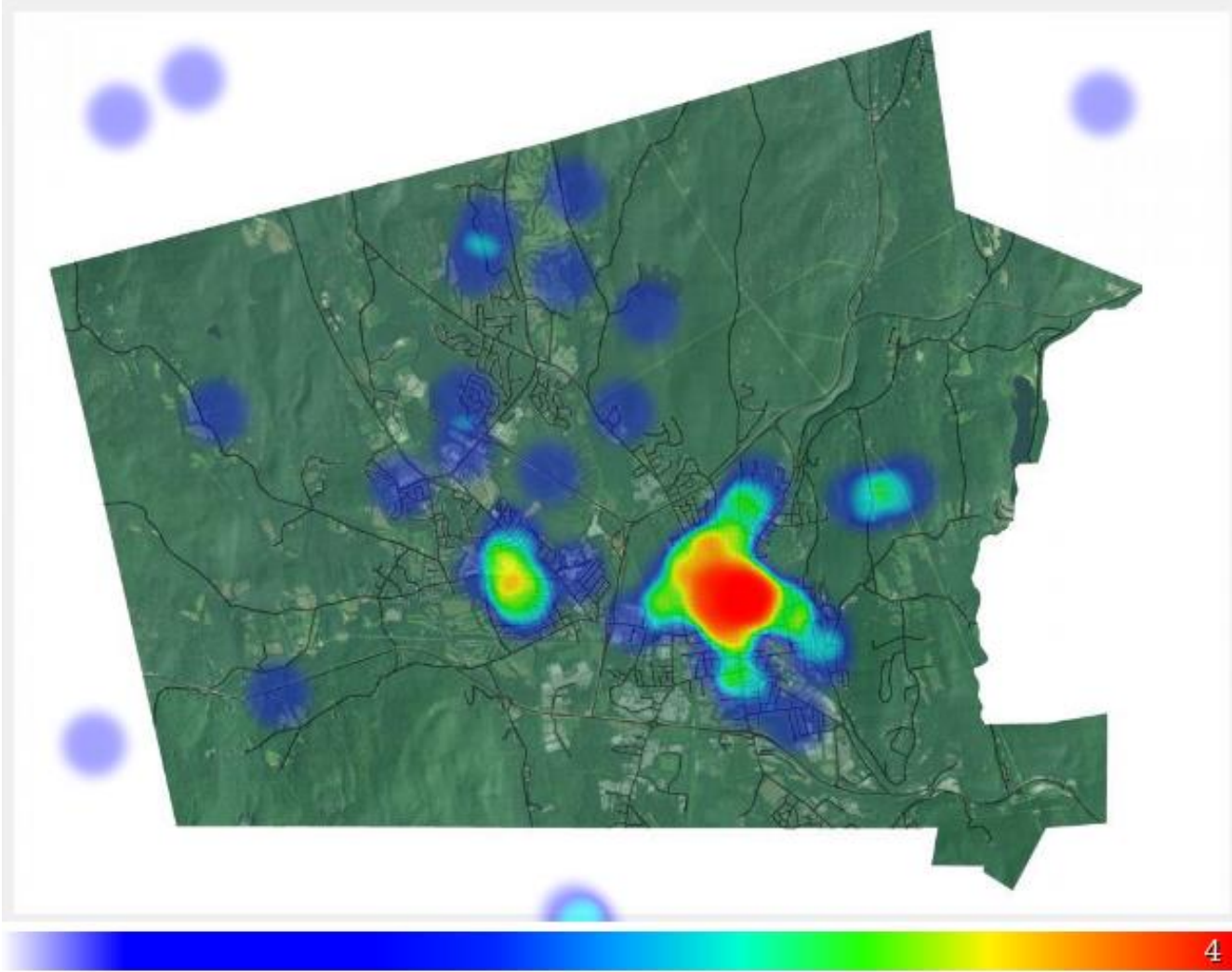
#### Other (Specify)

Other (Specify) - Text

own tiny house in the country with land



Q20- Please click on the area in Keene your current ideal living situation would be located.



**Q21 - Briefly explain what factors into your ideal housing situation and location.**

Briefly explain what factors into your ideal housing situation and location.

---

Affordability, space

---

Family friendly neighborhood

---

Land and rural setting.

---

Close to downtown

---

neighborhood, yard, house condition, taxes

---

land: fields and forests, proximity to interstate and cultural opportunities, quality schools

---

Close to downtown and the schools

---

Land and access to trails

---

I'm not sure that I want to buy in Keene as the taxes are ridiculous. I love living downtown, but I'd want to be farther away from student housing.

---

Walkable to downtown, neighborhood vibe, could use more open spaces close by

---

Cost (some properties are grossly over priced); Location/convenience to amenities, including stores/shopping, restaurants, etc.; Neighborhood feel/dynamic (friendliness/sense of community)

---

Neighborhood and good schools

---

I would like to own a place so that I can begin building equity. I'd like to live close to campus and town so that I can walk when the weather is nice and not worry about a long commute in winter

---

I do not see myself living in Keene once I buy a place.

---

Residential or Rural Zoning. Larger house, four bedrooms, two baths, 6+ acres of land

---

Close to downtown but with access to get out of town.

---

Being close to downtown

---

Good neighborhood near the hospital

---

Neighborhood feel- cul de sac residential- outside of downtown

---

Keene is too expensive I would prefer to live outside of Keene once I own my own house

---

Love being away from a lot of houses. Would love to live in the woods away from traffic, but close enough to drive into town.

---

Close to downtown, decent area, nearby schools, nearby friends

---

mixed residents, lots of wildlife buffer margins

Walk to downtown, not on a busy street, safe for kids to play in yard, large enough home to grow in & entertain

Close to downtown, ease of access to rt 12 north, affordability, nicely kept neighborhood, not on a main street

Safe, near downtown, good address

Close enough to downtown to walk to, far enough away that I can have a yard and it will be less noisy.

Away from the college and bars

Price and condition of house, neighborhood, lack of undergrad students and drug users

Proximity to restaurants, bars, shopping. Availability of parking. Ideally rent a 1 bedroom apartment - this is difficult in Keene (and elsewhere) due to rent prices.

Residential and quiet

Quiet, nice neighborhood

close to work and dt to reduce commuting

West Keene is nice for families.

Quiet, walk to schools, near rail trail

Queer community

I love our neighborhood in West Keene because it is full of kids in the streets and younger families like mine. It is also a true neighborhood that does not have major streets, roads or thru traffic.

Quiet, respectful neighbors. Easy access to commute and outdoor spaces. Limited traffic.

Walking distance to downtown; safe; beautiful, old homes

Access to schools/parks, relatively close to amenities, removed from the college

Close to Main St., but can use side streets to reach 101 and avoid downtown traffic.

Land, not too many neighbors, and serene.

Walking distance from downtown. Ability to collect rental income and supplement living expenses & high taxes

House size (small), and walking distance to restaurants/bars/shops

Beech Hill: beautiful views, still close to downtown, can hike to Robin Hood Park

more land

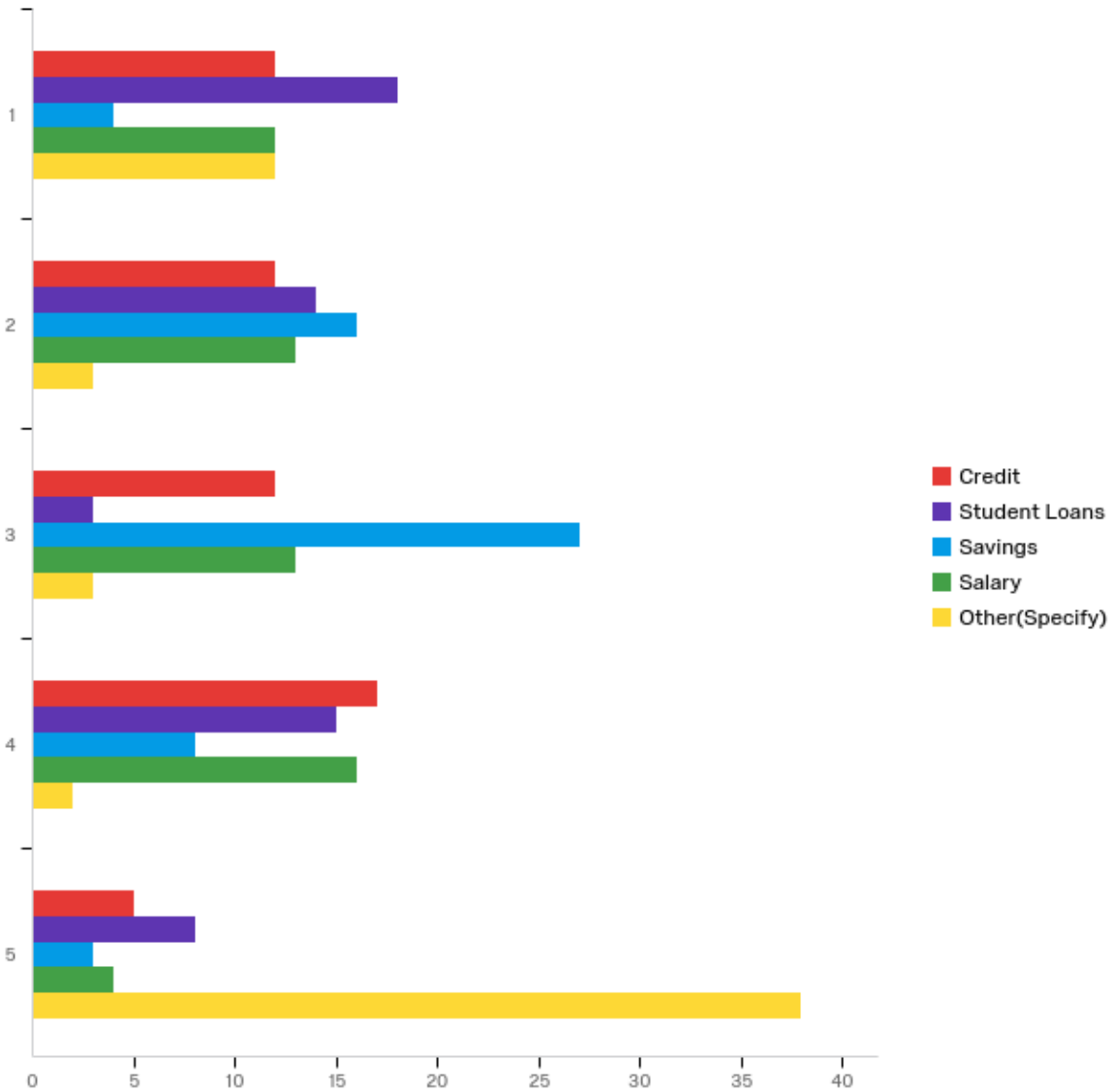
quiet neighborhood, commute, services available, space

Owning, lower taxes

I would like to be able to walk to work and be closer to downtown Keene

private space, own my own home

**Q22 - Please rank the following financial barriers keeping you from obtaining your ideal living situation. (1 as least significant, 5 as most significant)**



#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	Credit	20.69%	20.69%	20.69%	29.31%	8.62%	58
2	Student Loans	31.03%	24.14%	5.17%	25.86%	13.79%	58
3	Savings	6.90%	27.59%	46.55%	13.79%	5.17%	58
4	Salary	20.69%	22.41%	22.41%	27.59%	6.90%	58
5	Other(Specify)	20.69%	5.17%	5.17%	3.45%	65.52%	58

Q22\_5\_TEXT – Other (Specify)

Other(Specify) - Text

---

none

---

Student Loans & salary

---

These are not barriers for me.

---

none

---

Keene property values/ taxes

---

On track to attain ideal situation.

---

Sell our home

---

Cost of living

---

Community

---

Uncertainty about future job location

---

job/ income stability

---

nothing

---

Expenses

---

high taxes

---

Not ready to commit

---

Other debt

---

Other Expenses

---

Job stability - I may need to move for work (or my partner may need to move for work) which makes owning a place challenging

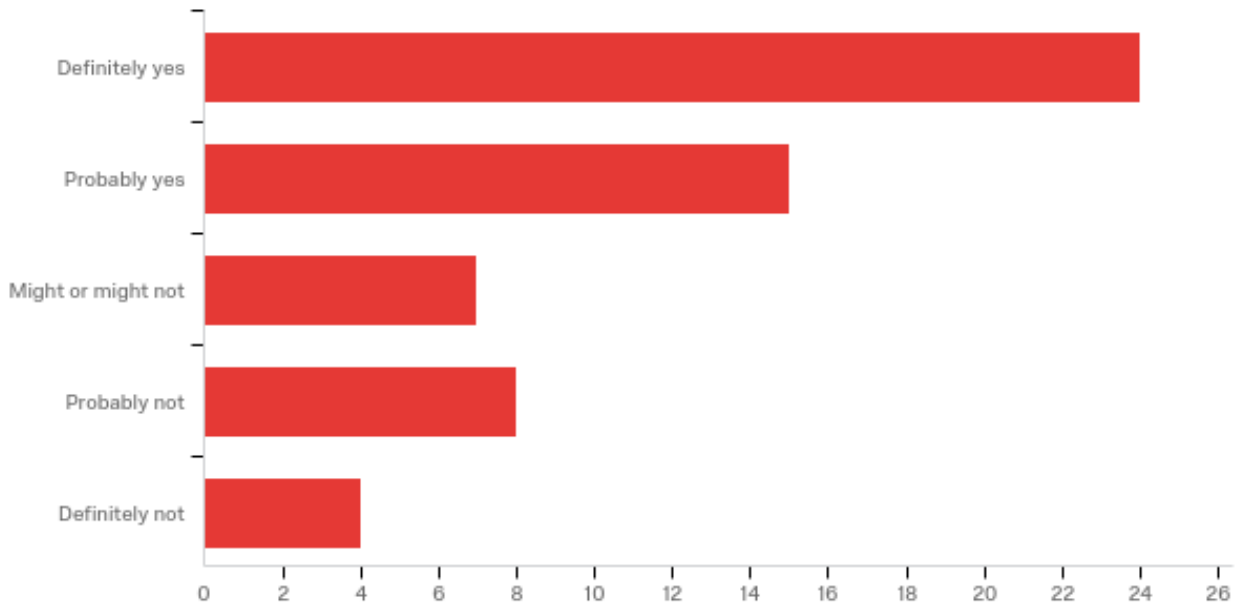
---

real estate investment goals

---

High taxes

**Q23 - Are you planning on moving out of your current residence within the next 5 years?**

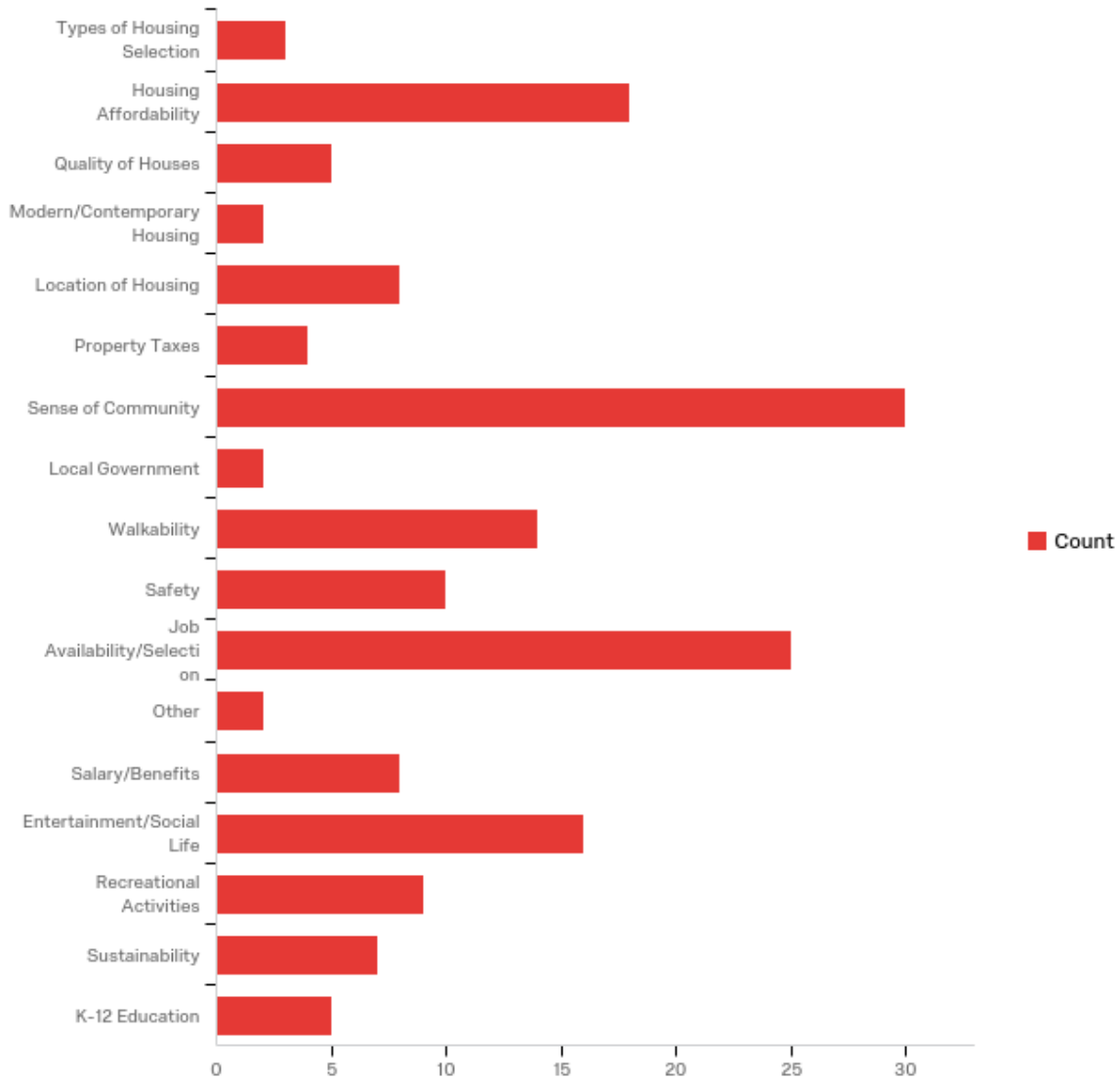


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Definitely yes	41.38%	24
2	Probably yes	25.86%	15
3	Might or might not	12.07%	7
4	Probably not	13.79%	8
5	Definitely not	6.90%	4
	Total	100%	58

**Q24 - This is the last page. You're almost done! Please rate the following qualities of Keene, NH. 1 star= very unsatisfied, 5 stars= very satisfied.**

<b>#</b>	<b>Field</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Count</b>
1	Types of Housing Selection	0.50	5.00	2.65	1.16	1.35	56
2	Housing Affordability	0.50	5.00	2.57	1.20	1.44	56
3	Quality of Houses	0.50	5.00	2.55	1.24	1.54	56
4	Modern/Contemporary Housing	0.50	5.00	2.18	1.23	1.51	56
5	Location of Housing	1.00	5.00	3.24	0.90	0.81	56
6	Property Taxes	0.00	5.00	1.50	1.26	1.58	56
7	Sense of Community	0.50	5.00	3.58	1.13	1.28	56
8	Local Government	0.50	5.00	3.14	1.11	1.23	56
9	Walkability	0.50	5.00	3.74	1.01	1.02	56
10	Safety	1.00	5.00	3.58	0.89	0.78	56
11	Types of Job Availability/Selection	0.50	5.00	2.29	1.08	1.17	56
12	Salary/Benefits	0.50	4.00	2.46	1.09	1.20	56
13	Entertainment/Social Life	0.50	5.00	2.64	1.19	1.41	56
14	Recreational Activities	1.00	5.00	3.42	1.02	1.04	56
15	Sustainability	1.00	5.00	3.23	0.97	0.95	56
16	K-12 Education	0.50	5.00	3.42	1.06	1.13	56

**Q25 - Please rank each quality of Keene based on what you find most important (top) to what you find least**

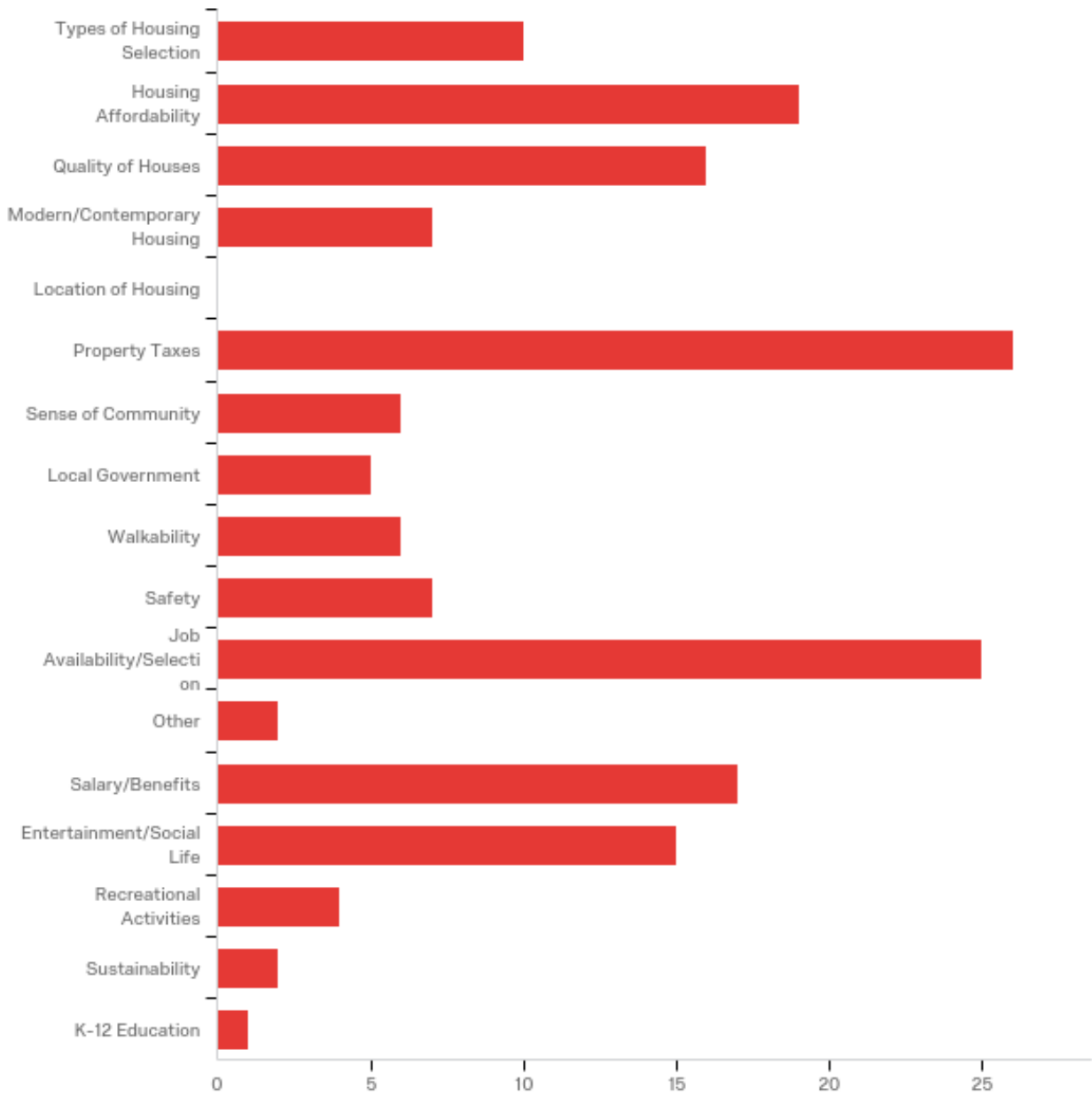


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Types of Housing Selection	1.79%	3
2	Housing Affordability	10.71%	18
3	Quality of Houses	2.98%	5
16	Modern/Contemporary Housing	1.19%	2



<b>4</b>	Location of Housing	4.76%	8
<b>5</b>	Property Taxes	2.38%	4
<b>6</b>	Sense of Community	17.86%	30
<b>7</b>	Local Government	1.19%	2
<b>8</b>	Walkability	8.33%	14
<b>9</b>	Safety	5.95%	10
<b>10</b>	Job Availability/Selection	14.88%	25
<b>17</b>	Other	1.19%	2
<b>11</b>	Salary/Benefits	4.76%	8
<b>12</b>	Entertainment/Social Life	9.52%	16
<b>13</b>	Recreational Activities	5.36%	9
<b>14</b>	Sustainability	4.17%	7
<b>15</b>	K-12 Education	2.98%	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>168</b>

**Q44 - Please select the three qualities you feel Keene needs the most improvement in.**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Types of Housing Selection	5.95%	10
2	Housing Affordability	11.31%	19
3	Quality of Houses	9.52%	16
16	Modern/Contemporary Housing	4.17%	7
4	Location of Housing	0.00%	0
5	Property Taxes	15.48%	26
6	Sense of Community	3.57%	6
7	Local Government	2.98%	5
8	Walkability	3.57%	6
9	Safety	4.17%	7
10	Job Availability/Selection	14.88%	25
29	Other	1.19%	2
11	Salary/Benefits	10.12%	17
12	Entertainment/Social Life	8.93%	15
13	Recreational Activities	2.38%	4
14	Sustainability	1.19%	2
15	K-12 Education	0.60%	1
	Total	100%	168

## Other

### Other - Text

---

access to healthcare

---

More accountability/penalties for slum lords

## Q39 - Additional Comments:

### Additional Comments:

---

I tried so hard to find decent housing in Keene when we first moved here but I was priced out of the market from landlords trying to keep students out (and therefore also anyone else under 50 because it was so expensive). I ended up being able to rent a three bedroom house in Dublin for less than a crappy two bedroom apartment in Keene.

---

It's tough because without a broad base tax system, NH has high property taxes which are then recuperated by property owners from renters. This adds to a high cost of living. There's also a lot of pay inequity that occurs at KSC, as well as stagnant raises for staff. Not sure if these factors are geographically cultural, but it adds to the fact that it doesn't make the Monadnock region a desirable location for someone my age to stay. I plan to leave for a better job in the next two years.

---

I hope that Keene comes up with a way to survive and thrive. Honestly, I have serious doubts about Keene just managing to survive. Taxes are outrageous. I've move too much and lived in many place, never have I paid so much for so little. Our local government is rampant with waste (probably due to corruption??), so bad it should probably gut it and start over. The few businesses that really support this town all appear on downturns. There simply isn't much good on our horizon.

---

Keene is a wonderful town, and I think with a little more community effort & entrepreneurship in providing modern & family oriented entertainment will grow our sense of community & provide more jobs. We can be very behind on trends & thus deter younger residents from staying/coming. Where's Keenes craftbrewery? Where can you casually go for live music during the week? Why is our movie theater 100 yrs old (not the Colonial ovsb)? Indoor activities for kids; laser tag, rock climbing, paintball?

---

Perfect timing! My husband and I are looking into buying a home and have found a lack of affordable housing on the market. To rent a larger place would be out of the question financially as rental prices are high as well. We're looking at an 1100-1200 per month housing budget and not finding much that is suitable for us as young professionals.

---

I love Keene. Make housing affordable for young professionals. Reduce downtown yuk factor - increase greenspace, arts/culture offerings. Install public art. Increase cool quotient.

---

There isn't an issue from housing from what i see. The big issue lies between the city and college and their relationship. The community has allowed for too much off campus housing for a school with low enrollment. There is an opportunity for KSC and Keene to become a civically engaged community due to the nature of our community and strong political interest locally and nationally. Plenty of housing not enough reasons to live here. Need for social entertainment life.

---

What is like to see in Keene: Tiny house communities, more small tech companies, solar initiative, better trash and recycling options, more bike infrastructure, better healthcare options (Dartmouth-Hitchcock is not good), more young people who aren't working 50 hours a week to pay off college and other debt, better continuing education opportunities, makerspace / tool share

---

I dont think its necessary a housing issue but a bigger issue with not having suitable jobs with modern HR practices. Top 5 players in Keene are not attractive employers for long-term growth, or that keeps young professionals here. The town caters to the elderly or Keene State, the middle is overlooked, which is dangerous as young professionals and families that will be the lifeblood of this region. College kids won't stay, elderly don't see this as an issue.

---

I couldn't zoom the map on my phone but I think west Keene is the most desirable place to live because of Wheelock Park, Symonds, the Y, and access to the rail trails.

I love Keene! My two biggest frustrations are absurd property taxes (especially for services received) and lack of job opportunities for all but a very small sector of professions. Even though I would prefer to work within biking distance, I work outside of Keene because there are almost no opportunities for me in town. I would also love to see better public transportation and shuttle options to other hubs like Brattleboro, Concord, and the Manchester airport.

APPENDIX C



KEENE STUDENT HOUSING SURVEY



Year:

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Non-traditional

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other

Where do you currently live?

- On-campus
- Off-campus apartment
- Off-campus house
- Other/commuter

**If you live off campus, what street do you live on?**

---

**If you live on campus, what is your residence hall?**

---

**If you live off campus – how much is your total individual monthly payment (rent + utilities)?**

- < \$500
- \$500 - \$599
- \$600 - \$699
- \$700 +
- Not

Sure/Prefer Not to Answer

**Choose the TOP 3 reasons why you chose your on/off campus residence:**

- Cost
- Quality
- Selection
- Maintenance
- Independence
- Social Aspects
- Location
- Parking
- Convenience
- Amount of Space
- Security
- Landlord Confidence  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Rate the following aspects of your housing and neighborhood from 1-5 (1 being very dissatisfied & 5 being very satisfied)**

	1	2	3	4	5
Exterior Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interior Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quick & Effective Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighborhood Litter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noise Level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Housing Satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Neighborhood Satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

**In comparison with the rest of Keene, would you say that the quality of life in your neighborhood is:**

Higher

Same

Lower

**What type of neighborhood would/do you prefer to live in?**

Mainly Student

Mixed (Family/Student)

Neutral

**Is a positive relationship with your neighbors important to you?**

Yes

No

---

**Of the following, select your TOP (1) choice of housing while attending Keene State College:**

Residence Hall/Dorm

Multi-Unit Home

Apartment

(Arcadia/The Mills)

Single-family Home

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Briefly explain why:**

---

**Do you plan on staying in Keene after graduating?**

Yes

Not Sure

No

If no, where?

---

**Where do you plan on living after graduating?**

Live At Home (Rent-free)

Rent

Purchase a Home

Not Sure

Other/Travel

---

**Additional Comments:**

**THANK YOU!**