

Next Generation: Roadmap to Washington's Future



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Abstract:

Western Washington University students collected input from college students across the state to inform the William D. Ruckelshaus Center's review of the Growth Management Act (1990). The project's aim is to articulate a vision for Washington's desired future.

Introduction and Background:

Washington state passed the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990. The state legislature asked the William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Center), a joint effort of Washington State University and the University of Washington, created to foster collaborative public policy in the state of Washington and Pacific Northwest, to review it. The project, called the Road Map to Washington's Future, is to articulate a vision of Washington's future and identify additions, revisions, or clarifications to the state's growth management framework of laws, institutions, and policies needed to reach that future.

In Fall 2018, Joe Tovar, FAICP, from the Center, introduced the Road Map project at the APA Washington Chapter's NW Section forum hosted at Western Washington University (WWU). He described both their process, as well as invited interested student to get involved in the project. The Center organized a series of workshops statewide for professionals and elected officials, and conducted interviews with key stakeholders. They asked participants to assess how the GMA is working, to get perspectives on current issues facing different regions, and register their desires for Washington's future. To complement their work, WWU student, with the help of Dr. Laninga, took on the "Next Generation" project to collect similar input from college students across the state. The Next Gen project produced data to supplement the Ruckelshaus Center's work and gave UPSD students hands on experience.

Methods

We used a workshop and online survey to collect insights from college students across the state. Twenty-five participants attended the workshop and fourteen responded to the survey. We heard from students at four universities in Washington. The workshop and survey used the same set of open-ended questions:

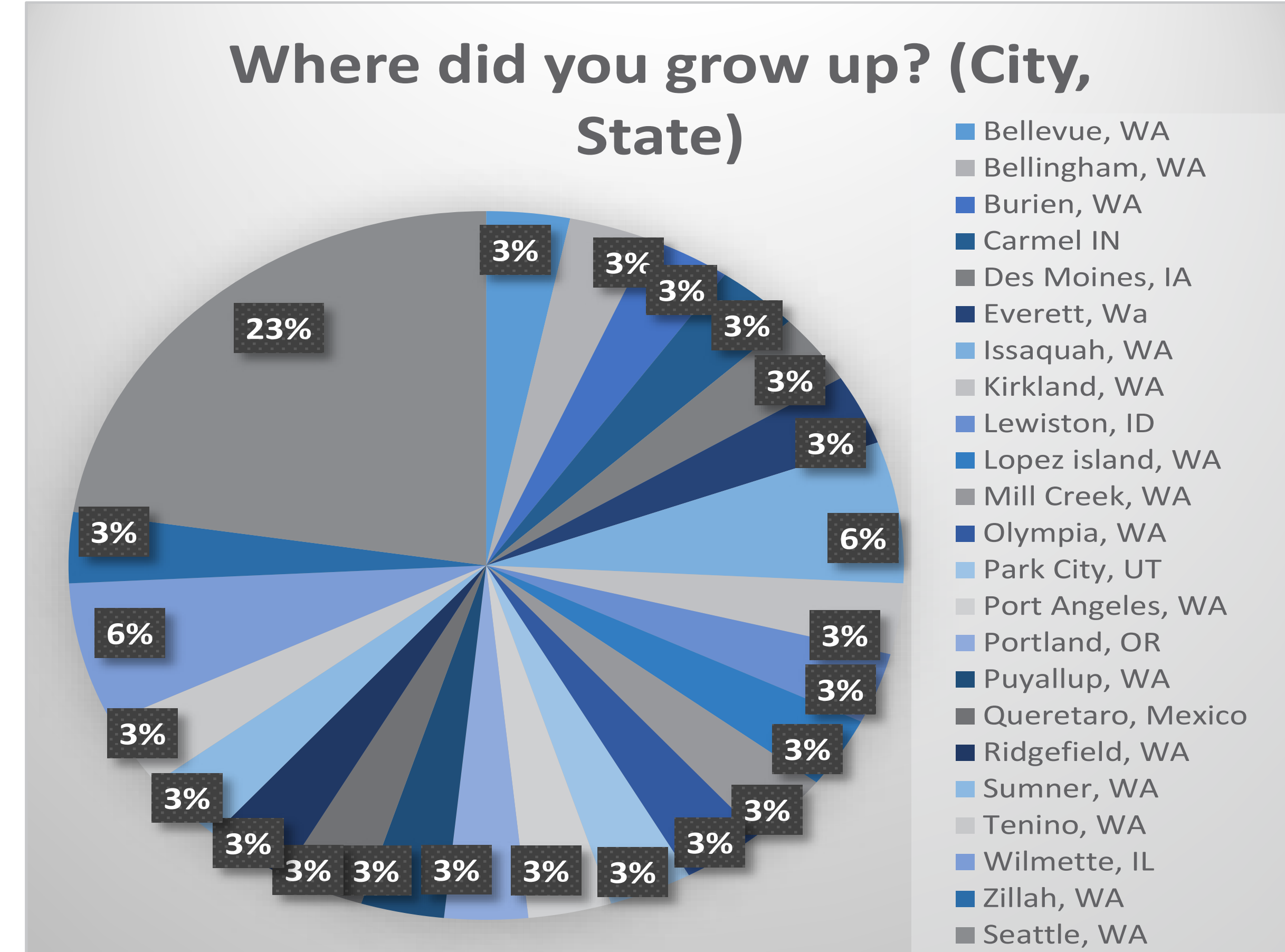
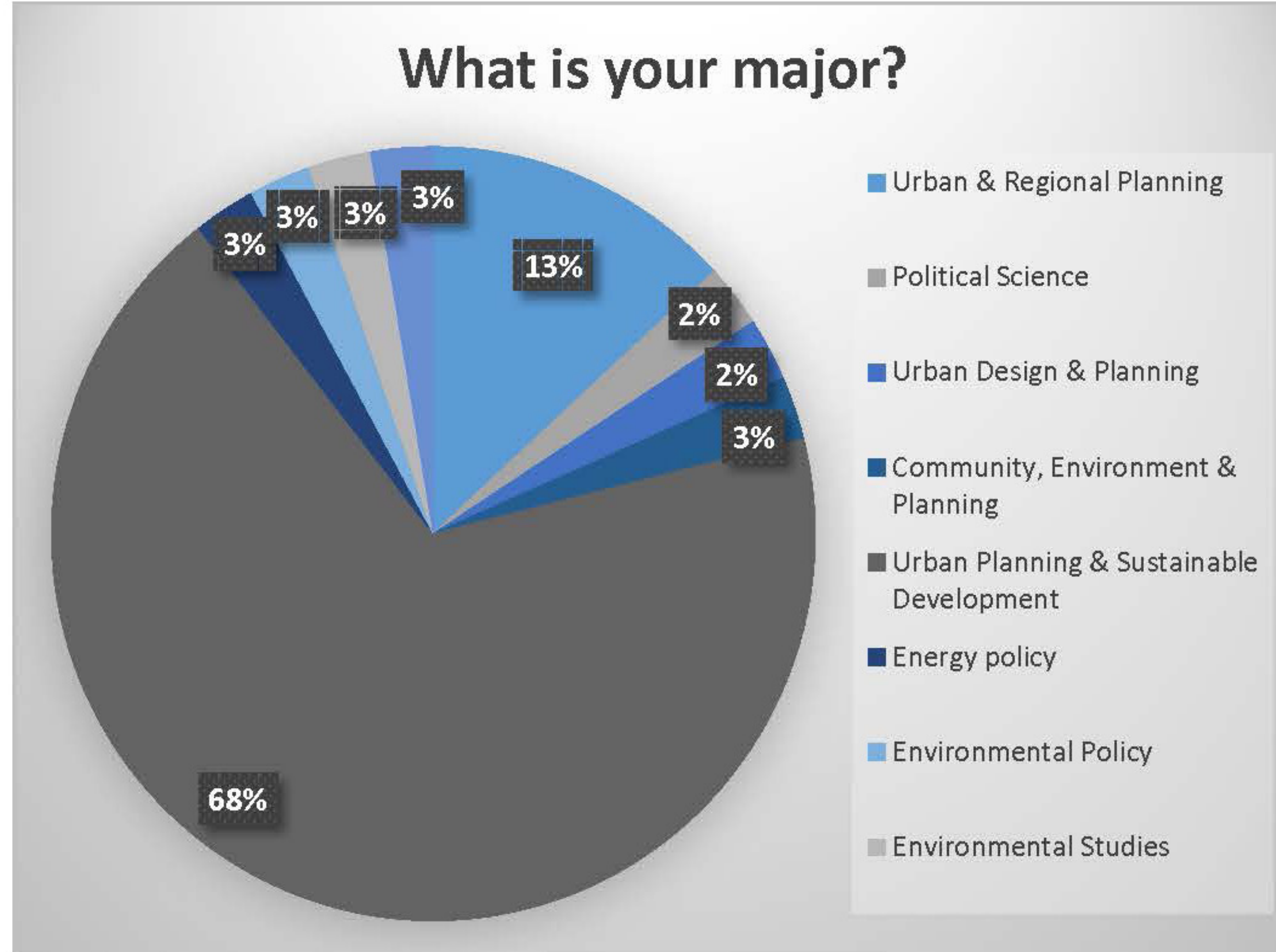
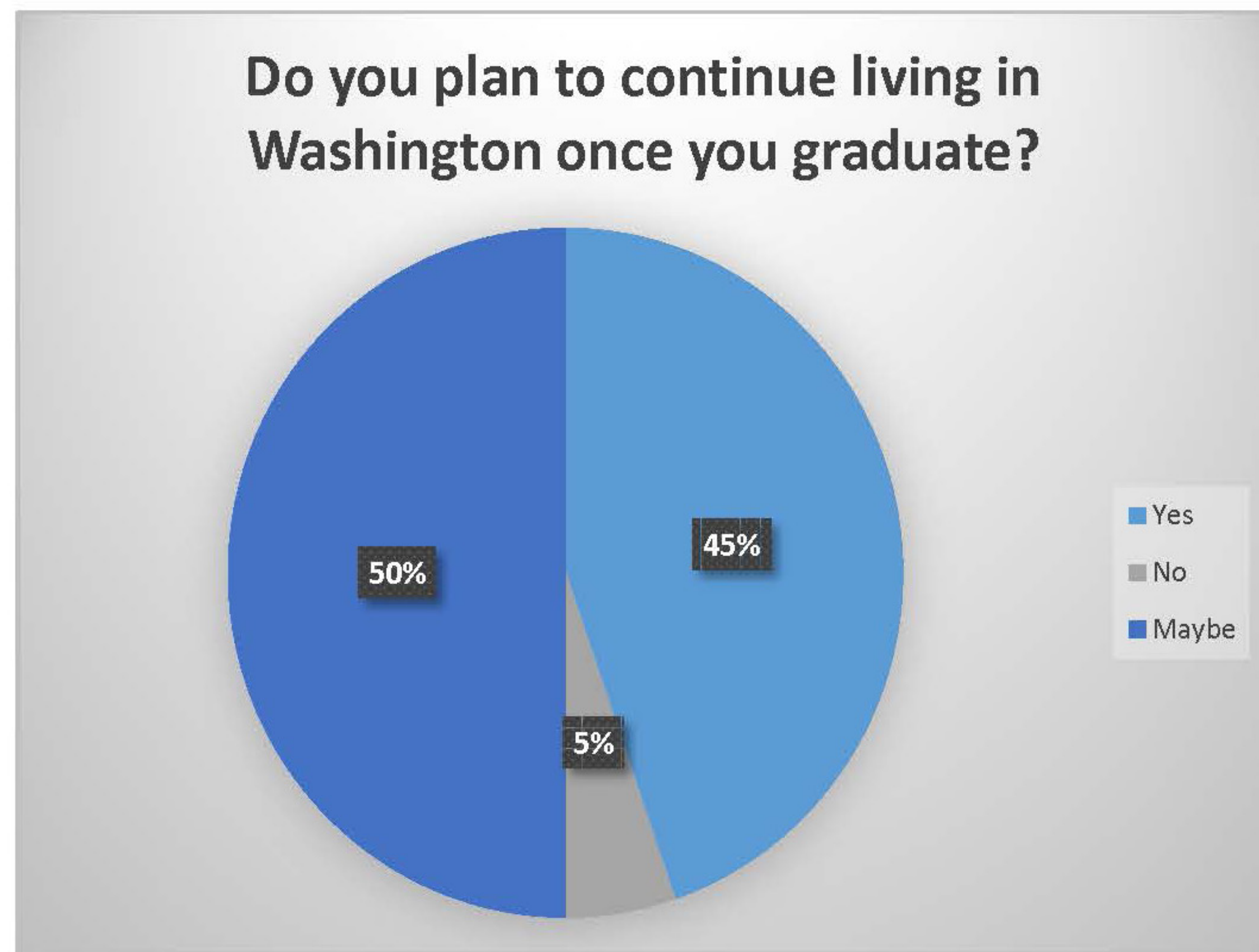
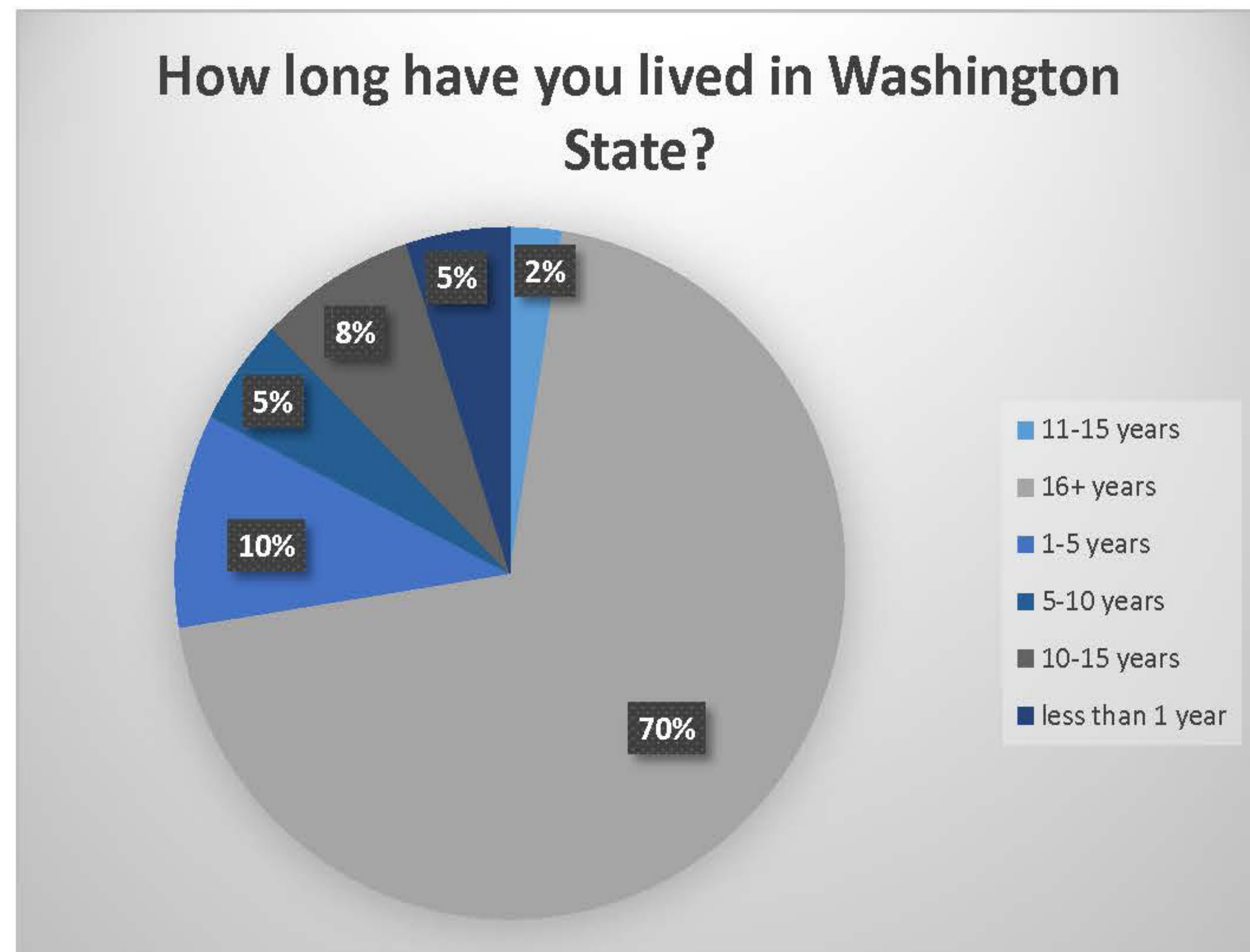
1. In general, what influences the quality of life in a community?
2. What do communities need to thrive?
3. In broad terms, what concerns do you have most about the future of the place you are currently living in?
4. What concerns do you have most about the future for Washington?
5. What is your desired future for Washington state?
6. What actions could local or state government take to positively influence Washington's future?

The qualitative data received from both collection methods was analyzed using content analysis and is reported in the tables.



A picture taken by Dr. Tammi Laninga at the workshop which was conducted at Western Washington University. This workshop had about 25 participants which were split up into three smaller groups for more inclusive discussion.

Demographics



Results:

Tables 1-6 highlight the major themes identified for each of the questions. Themes are listed based on frequency of mention (those at the top mentioned most often).

Table 1: Factors Influencing a Community's Quality of Life

Major Theme	Subthemes
Connectivity	Social connection, gathering places, knowing neighbors, community engagement, civic spaces, sense of pride, sense of place
Sustainability	Environmental quality (clean air & water), green/open space, contact with nature, urban boundaries to control sprawl
Affordability	Housing choices
Equity and Diversity	Welcoming communities, security, governments that support most vulnerable, education
Mobility	Transportation options (public transit, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure), proximity to parks, schools, libraries and other amenities

Table 2: Factors Contributing to Thriving Communities

Major Theme	Subthemes
Connectivity	Trust, community events, socioeconomic diversity
Affordability	Housing options, better shelter
Mobility	Transit options, accessibility to services, walkability
Education	Robust, accessible, high quality
Urban Centers	Well-defined core, local businesses, mixed use
Economy	Local businesses, local food
Environment	Clean water & air
Government	Supportive: social services for homeless, disabled & students

Table 3: Concerns about Current Community

Major Theme	Subthemes
Housing	Affordability, quality, accessibility, options
Growth/Development	Sprawl, loss of agricultural land, gentrification, loss of community character, decreased sense of place, lack of diversity, loss of community identity
Employment/Economy	Lack of nearby employment, loss of local businesses
Political divide	East/West Washington, Right/Left, Urban/Rural

Conclusion:

The Next Generation project provided insights from college students on their desired future for the state. Several themes were distilled from the project data including social connectivity, sustainability, affordability, education, environmental protection and many more. The themes show what many youth in Washington State want to see happen in the future related to planning and policy endeavors. The data is an important component for the review process of the Growth Management Act. The Next Gen project also gave WWU students outreach and facilitation skills, and data collection and analysis experience. The Next Gen project produced a facilitation guide that could be used by students or others who wish to continue this project. The facilitation guide provides instructions on how to facilitate a workshop including a full script and outreach methods. The facilitation guide can be adapted to fit any state that has a growth managements act or similar planning enabling statutes that could benefit from community input.

Table 4: Major Issues in the State that Need Addressing

Major Theme	Subthemes
Divisions	Wealth disparity/inequality, political divide (west/east WA), urban/rural divide
Environment	Wildfires, water and air pollution, climate change, hazards, rapid population growth/development, energy sources & use
Housing	Affordability, lack of supply, outdated zoning (majority of cities are zoned single-family)

Table 5: Desired Future for Washington State

Major Theme	Subthemes
Environment	Stewardship/protection of natural resources, less pollution, healthy air, real action on climate change, no offshore drilling
Sustainable Economic Growth	Sustainable Economic Growth
Housing	Affordable, accessible, available for all economic backgrounds (not just a playground for the wealthy)
Tribal Relations	Greater sovereignty, greater recognition of and collaboration with Coast Salish people
Services	Free education, sanctuary state, adequate support for those in need

Table 6: Actions Local and State Government Should Take

Major Theme	Subthemes
Legislative Reform	Rules & Regulations that: 1. Address specific/unique growth/development concerns of western and eastern WA; 2. Restrict sprawl, especially in suburban/rural areas by requiring dense urban centers with mixed use 3. Protect natural resources, fragile lands, and water, and limit/restrict pollution
Housing/Infill	Incentives for infill/affordable units, more subsidized housing, code reform (allow ADUs, micro apartments), reduce minimum parking standards
Governance	Progressive leaders, regional cooperation, more accessibility to government information (written in plain terms), restructure elections (get money out of politics), develop community-based services
Education	Increased funding and free tuition; increased focus on sustainability, natural resources, and agriculture; broader options (technical schools)
Transportation	Incentives/options to reduce reliance on automobiles

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