

Upson County Community Growth & Development Survey

155 responses

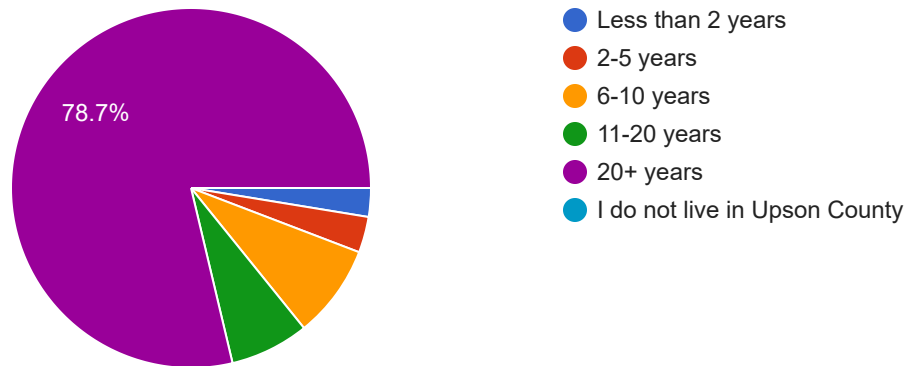
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Community Demographics

How long have you lived in Upson County?

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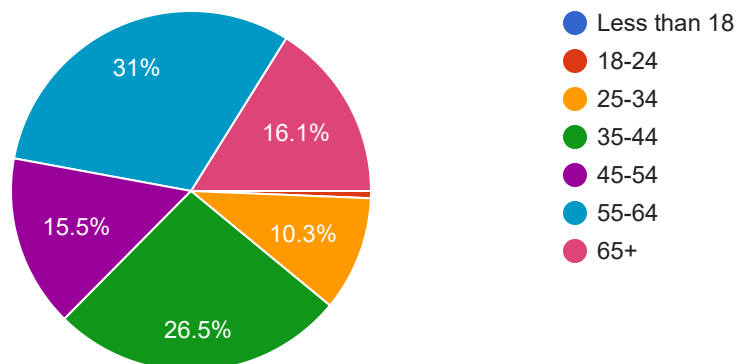
155 responses



What is your age group?

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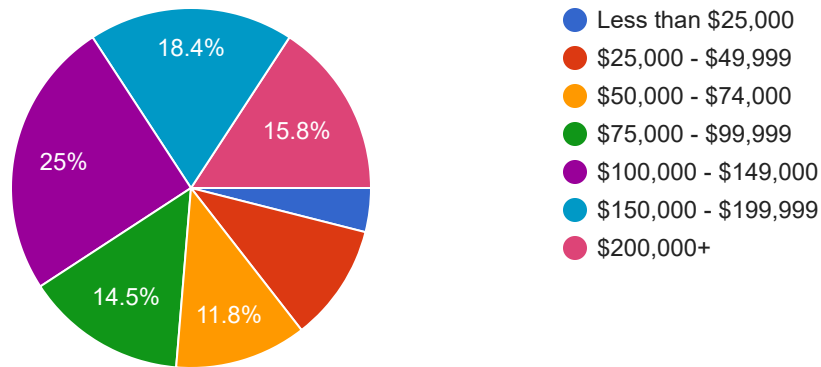
155 responses



What is your household income?

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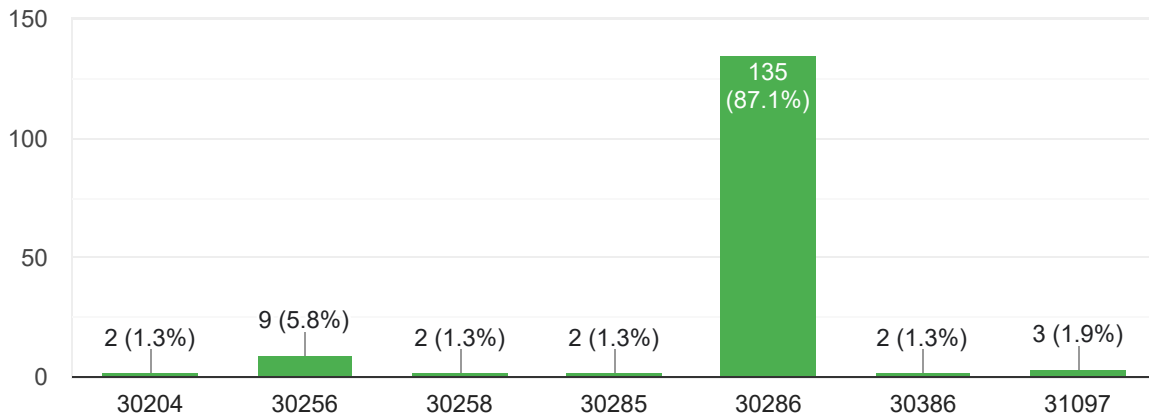
152 responses



What is your residential zip code?

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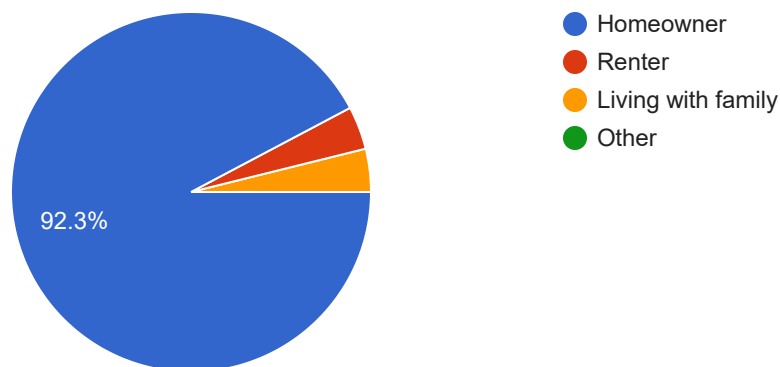
155 responses



What is your current housing status?

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155 responses

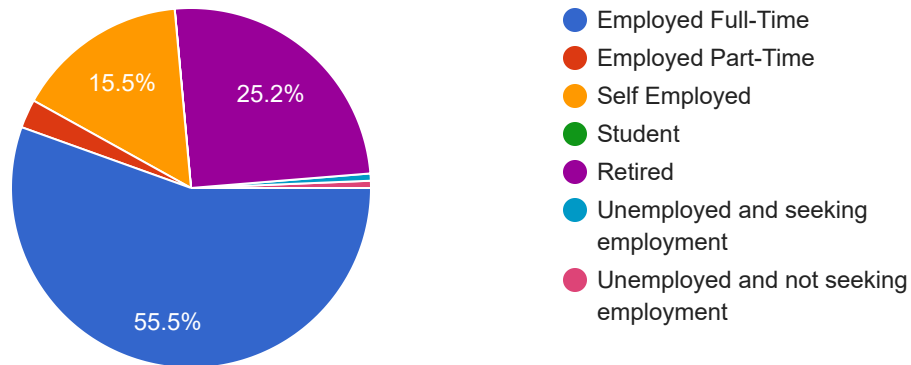


Employment and Workforce

What is your current employment status

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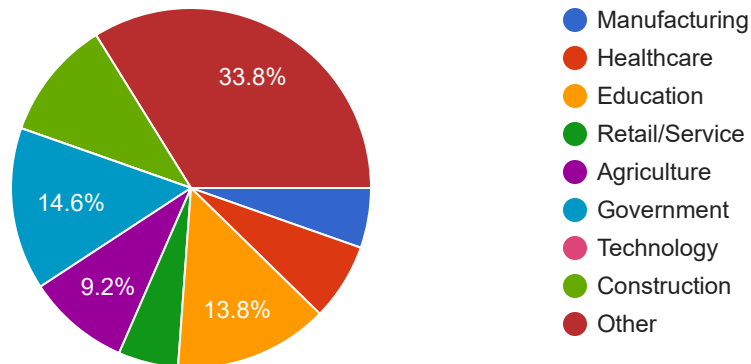
155 responses



In which industry do you currently work?

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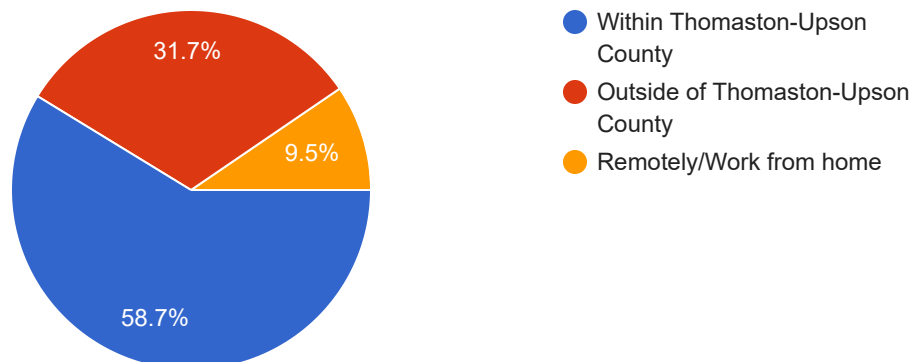
130 responses



Where is your primary place of work located?

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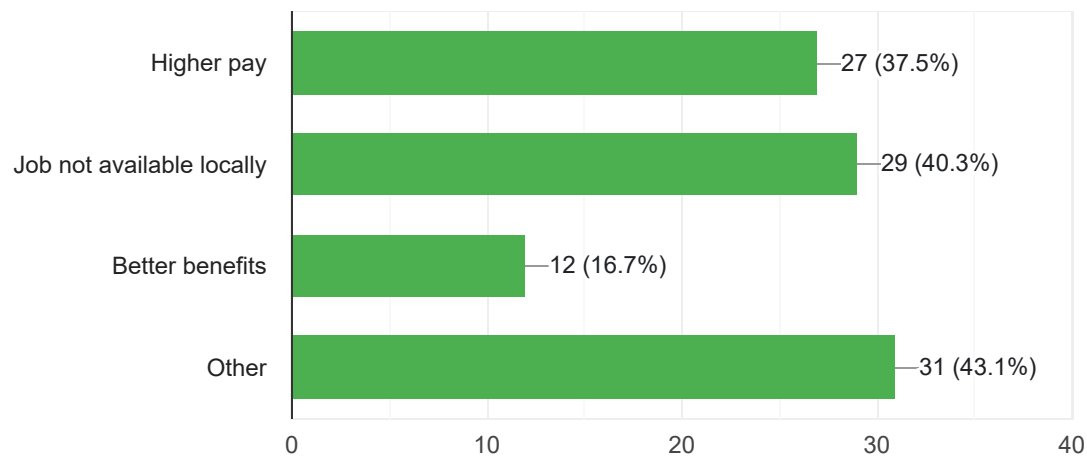
126 responses



If you commute outside the county, what is the primary reason?

[Copy chart](#)

72 responses

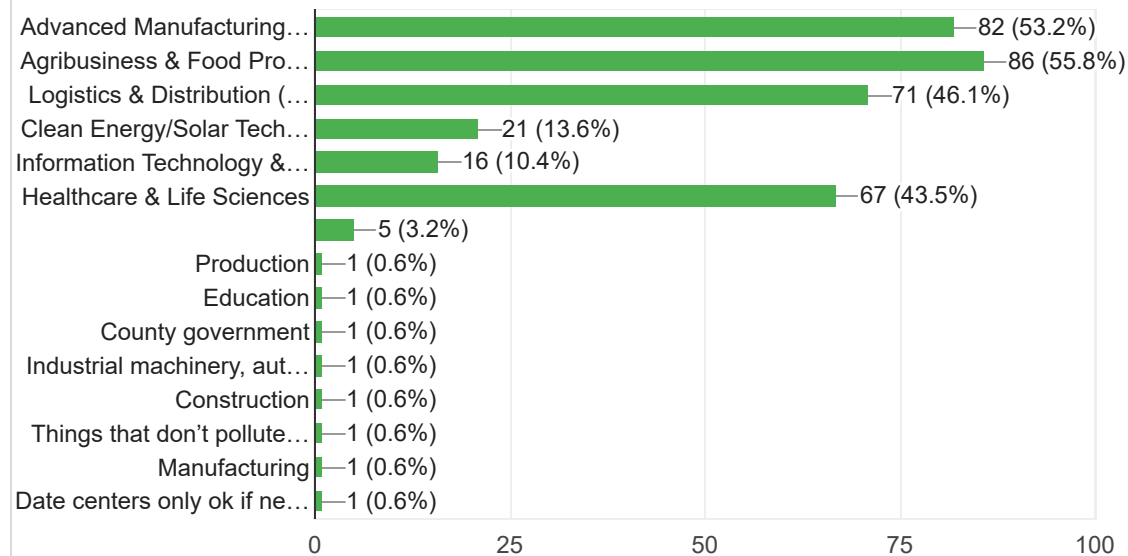


Industrial Growth & Target Sectors

Which of the following industries do you believe are most suitable for Upson County?

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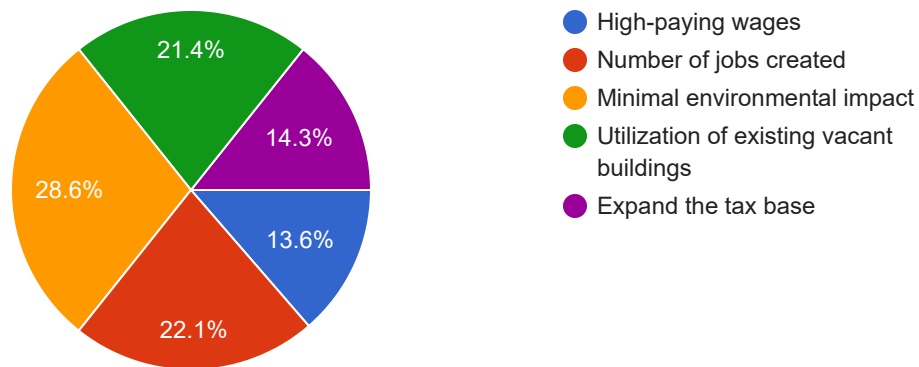
154 responses



What is your top priority for new industrial development?

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154 responses

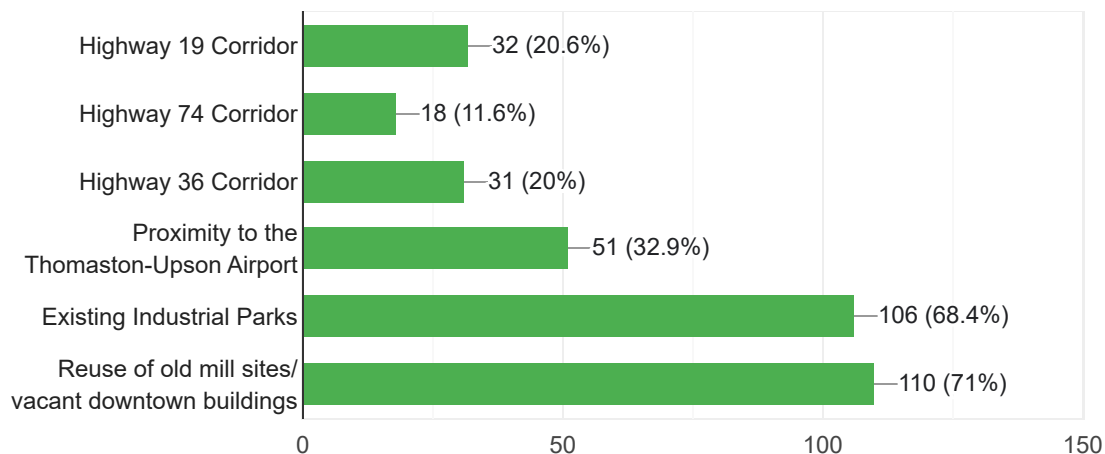


Strategic Locations

Which areas in Upson County do you feel are most suitable for new industrial development?

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155 responses



Are there specific areas in the county where you feel industrial development should be avoided?

77 responses

No

Residential

Country settings. Keep away from citizens property to eliminate values being negatively impacted

West Upson and 19 North Corridor

Please do not use untouched Ag land. Let's focus on filling up empty existing spaces!!!

Heavily residential areas and our farmlands should not be used for industrial.

Wild life areas and wetlands.

Anywhere that is considered residential

Stay away from the farms and river

Most of the county.

West Upson County

Anywhere currently zoned AR or adjacent to AR

The Rock

Ag areas

Rural areas

No new industrial park

Yes rural farm land is the beauty of this place. You could quickly make this whole place look like Macon, Jonesboro, or Locust Grove which are all hellsapes now.

Undisturbed rural areas such as The Rock (outside the existing industrial park), Crest, and Yatesville

Western Upson co

Where residential area exist

South of town

Hwy 74W is already a traffic nightmare. With plans toward 16/75 I would stay in current industrial sites.

Proximity to public schools

Farmland and residential areas

Residential, agricultural and recreational areas should be avoided at all cost

Flint River area

Near water ways

AR zones throughout the county.

Close proximity to residential neighborhoods and schools

Near schools

Western Upson County, Flint River area

agricultural lands, rural residential, low density, timber lands, and high density residential

Away from schools, city limits, and agricultural land

AR zoned areas

Silvertown and East Thomaston.

Residential and agricultural areas

19 corridors

Anything close to residential

Downtown, historic areas, natural beauty areas (bluff, creek,)

Western and Southern Upson

Agricultural areas

Anywhere not already zoned commercial.

Near the airport and any residential/agricultural area.

Agricultural areas

Leave farm land alone

Nothing will ever happen west of Hwy 19 because logistically the truck routing services flag the corridor as having too many stoplights... Hwy 36 near the airport does not

Hwy 19 South

County/rural areas

Inside city limits

Residential and active agriculture areas

Near Flint River

Near homes- avoid any areas that may negatively impact the people living in the area.

Not sure. But we definitely do not want any other industries that would empty contents into our ponds, creeks or the Flint River.

In current rural/forested areas.

Residential areas

Agriculture areas

Areas with residents if it's anything that could potentially be harmful, such as Brightmark (microplastics in the air and soil) or data centers (excess radiation that could drive cancer rates)

Rural areas, work with what we have and expand in those areas

Delray Rd, close to neighborhoods.

Farm Land and High Residential Areas

AR zoning, rural areas

City

Need to be avoided near residential areas.

Downtown, hwy 19

No

Yes. Avoid highly populated areas

Preserve natural resources

Hwy74 and Hwy 36

they don't make land anymore so utilize areas that are already developed, tear down old buildings and rebuild if needed but don't take away the little bit of agricultural land we have left.

Country settings. Keep green space and away from farms/housing

Farm land and waterways

South side; should stay more rural; lack of large enough utilities to sustain industry

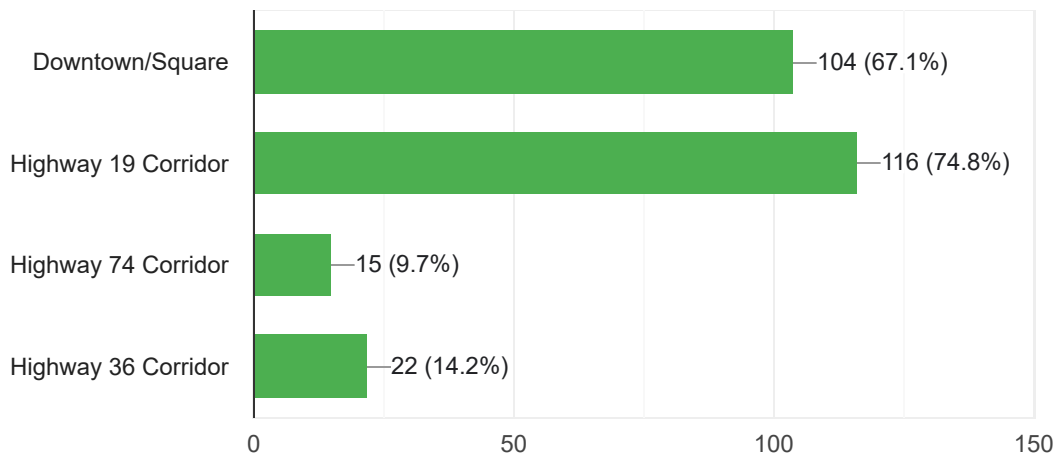
All rural areas

Retail & Commercial Desires

Which areas in Upson County do you feel are most suitable for new retail development?

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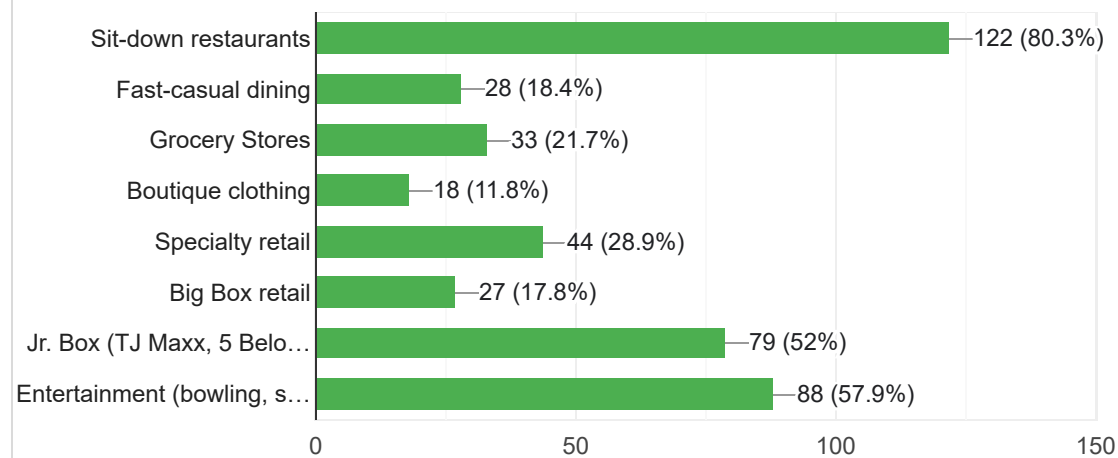
155 responses



What types of retail or dining would you most like to see added to Upson County?

[Copy chart](#)

152 responses



When you shop outside of Upson County (e.g., Griffin, Macon, Columbus), what is the main thing you are looking for?

123 responses

Clothing

Variety

THINGS TO DO!! activities etc..

Variety

Better prices and selection

Different selections although I do not mind traveling for this. I do understand that when I buy outside county lines it benefits other boundaries but I do shop 80%in Upson.

Jr. Box

Fine dining

Bigger selection

More options that would be specialty... Things that it would be difficult to get in a smaller town, think music stores, computer stores, things of that nature. Guitar Center and Micro Center are good examples.

specific clothing, hunting/outdoor items, plant nursery

Shoes and home decor

On line

Shoes, gifts, clothing, home improvements

Lower taxer

We don't normally shop outside of our town

Food

Better quality supermarkets

Unique items at a great price/ clothing/ home decor

Shoes, clothes, Sam's, ag supplies, arts and crafts, dining, fun for kids

Any where but Thomaston

Household decor

Clothes

Peace and Quiet

Harbor Freight, Clothing, and sporting goods.

If Thomaston doesn't have it, I order it online.

Macon, Griffin & Atlanta

Household items and clothing that others in town don't own. I love our boutiques, but don't want to show up to an event in the same dress as someone else.

Cheaper prices

Specialty retail

Specialty store, better pricing, etc.

Clothing, food, entertainment

Clothing, home items

Retail, Meat, Entertainment

Stores I visit are Ollie's, Harbor Freight, Kroger

Restaurants

Good restaurants

Furniture

Big box store

Athletic shoes

Clothes/shoes/ good deals

Farm equipment,clothing

A better selection

Things not in Upton - Hobby Lobby, Costco, Smith & Davis Clothing (Good shoes), Academy, Bass Pro Shop)

Retail options, better quality grocery options, better choice of restaurants

Safe places to shop

Everything

I shop local

High end dining, Costco, and outdoors/big box retail

Griffin

Store not located in Upton or better selection of merchandise

Clothes, electronics, shoes

Retail clothing & Big box stores and dining

Dining

Anything that you cant get at walmart

Luxury

Pretty much everi

Clothes and pet supplies

Clothes

Lower sales tax

More quality restraints

TJ Maxx, Marshall's, Home Goods! Hobby lobby is another good one. No craft store.

Safe areas, proximity to other stores for fast in and out

Lower sales tax.

Target, Kroger, Publix, sit down restaurants or healthy restaurants like jersey mikes, chicken salad chick, Panera, etc.

Nothing

Things not provided here .

There are NO good soft goods retailers in Upson, especially for men's clothing... Belk is a joke... and there are NO athletic/sports stores... Thomaston needs an Academy Sports

Things we don't have in Thomaston- dining options or retail stores

Macon Ga

Clothing, sporting goods, groceries

Quality, uniqueness

Quality products not available in Upson and nice clean eating options.

Sporting goods, clothing

Shoes

Quality Furniture, specialty shops

Most everything I can't find here

Clothes, shoes, sports equipment

Clothing, shoes, sports equipment,

Better sit down restaurant

Bulk warehouse stores

Sporting goods, clothing

Unavailable items

Organic grocery options

Obscure parts not in store

Discount Stores and Restaurants

Bigger selection

sporting goods

Construction Needs/ Home Decor

Craft and thrift stores, discount furniture

Macon

Antiques

Clothing

Variety of stores in close proximity to each other

Reasonably priced Clothing

Clothing and shoes

Things like a Dicks or Academy where you can our phase shoes and athletic attire

Something not available local

Just a different style

Clothing, shoes, sports equipment. There is no where in upson county to buy a nice pair of tennis shoes or an outfit for your toddler (besides paying \$100 for one outfit at little ones)

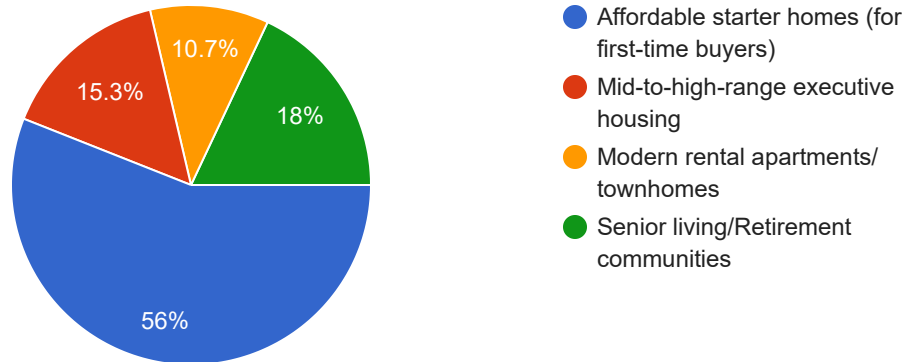
14 more responses are hidden

Housing Needs

In your opinion, what is the greatest housing need in Upson County today?

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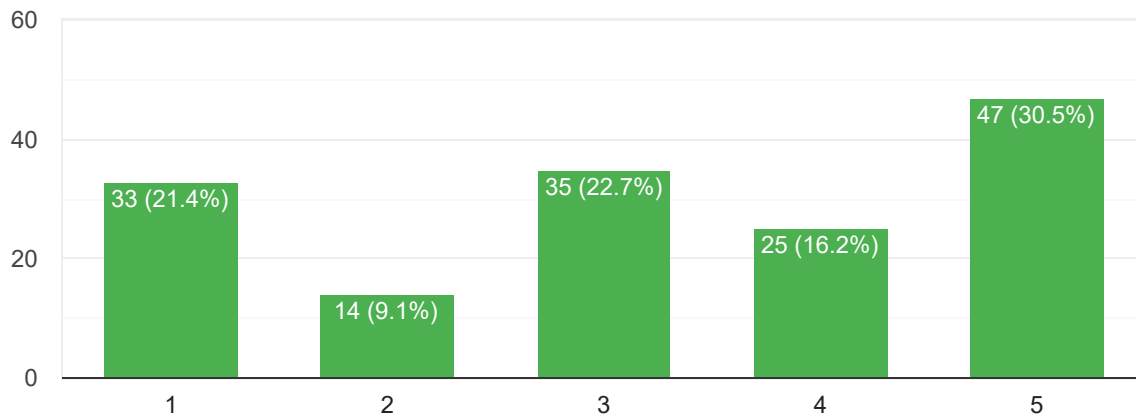
150 responses



If you were to move within the next 3 years, would you prefer to stay in Upson County?

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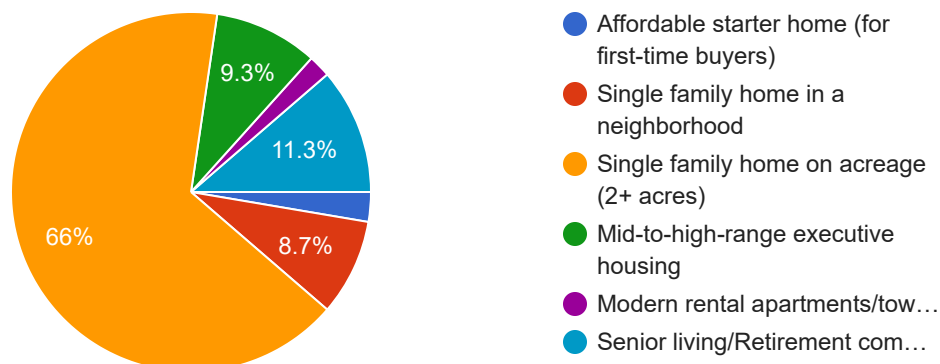
154 responses



If you were to move within the next 3 years, what type of housing would you be in the market for?

[Copy chart](#)

150 responses

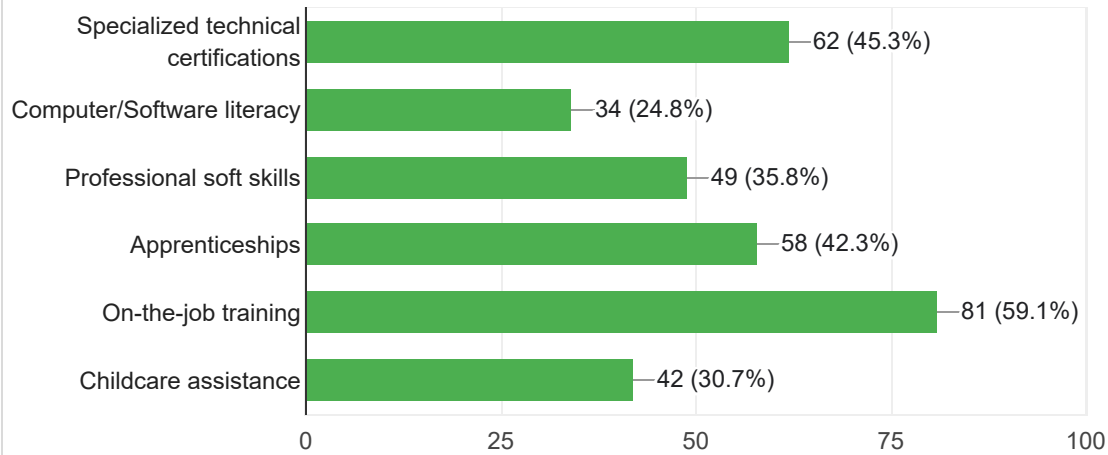


Job Training & Resources

What resources would help you or your family members find better employment?

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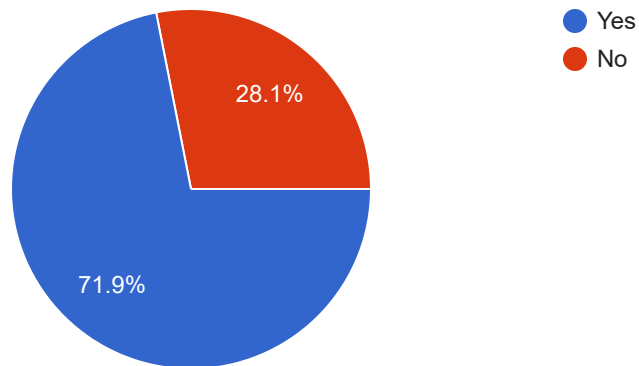
137 responses



Are you familiar with the training programs offered at Southern Crescent Technical College (Flint River Campus)?

[Copy chart](#)

153 responses

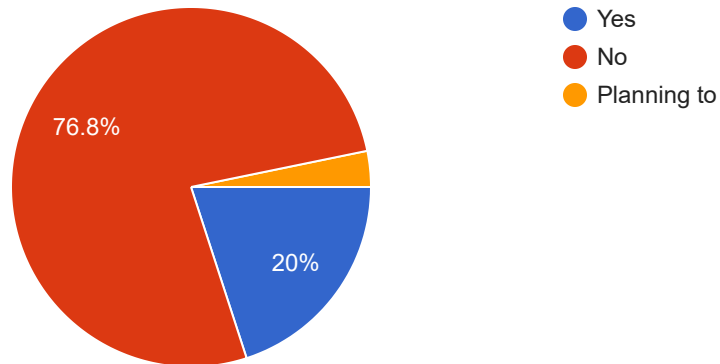


Light Industrial & Flex Space Demand

Do you currently run a small business or "side hustle" that requires physical space outside your home?

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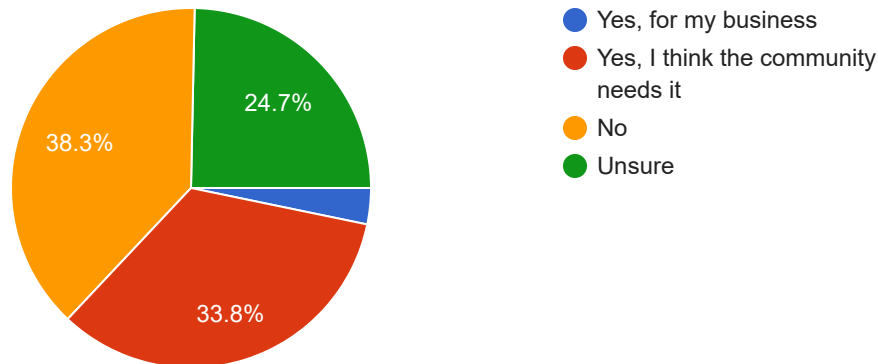
155 responses



If Upson County developed "Flex Spaces" (small 1,500–5,000 sq ft units), would this be of interest to you or someone you know?

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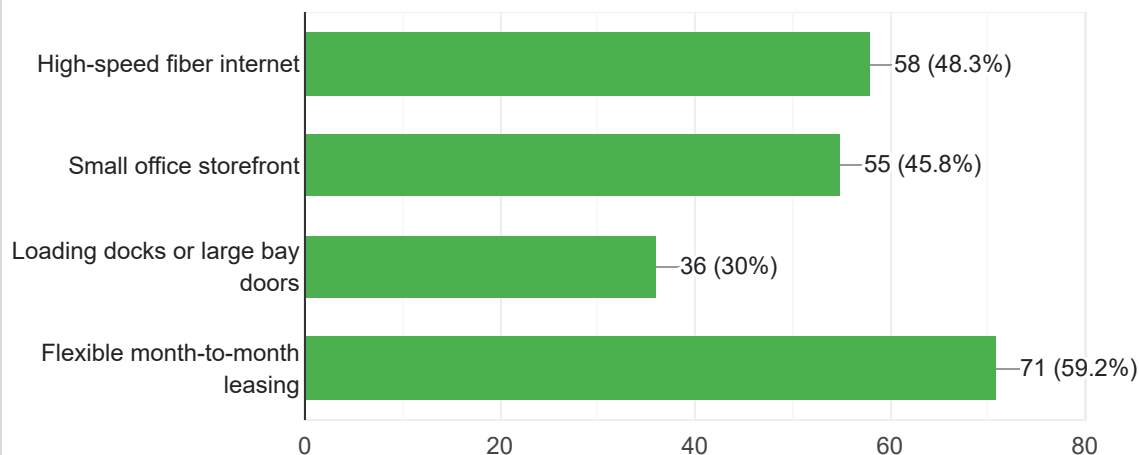
154 responses



What features would be most important for a local flex space?

 [Copy chart](#)

120 responses



Final Thoughts

What is one thing the Thomaston-Upson Industrial Development Authority could do to make you more optimistic about Upson County's future?

117 responses

Keep building. Bring jobs to Thomaston, & activities for adults too.

Transparency

Find industry that doesn't drain our ground water and pollute our air. There has never really been industry in Upson County outside the low wage paying mills that closed 20+ years ago. Quad was here for a while but that's about it. There nothing really notable about industry, jobs, etc in Upson County. There's not much for shopping, eating, or entertainment The drug dealers and addicts run rampant. Let's be honest, Thomaston is a shithole town.

Use existing commercial/industrial sites. Stay away from rural land. Keep country sides country. Be more conscious of what makes Upson a green,safe,hometown place to raise families. I do understand money makes the world go around but let us be cautious and smart in this endeavor.

Direct Marketing campaign highlighting existing companies, jobs, and opportunities. Need to connect people to places and places to community

Bring in industry providing a large number of entry level jobs to replace places like Quad graphics, mills, etc. The population here needs jobs that can be long term, provide a livable wage, but not require higher education. As well, please ensure these industries do not involve any questionable environmental effects!!

Ignore the haters and the facebook warriors. Keep trying to expand our tax base... More partnership and collaboration with the city of Thomaston. I know Slade regularly shows up at city meetings and that's good. Keep doing that.

more surveys like this, caring about resident input

Kill the deal with Brightmark

More jobs that pay a living wage and more senior living villages which are affordable.

Utilize the empty space/ buildings we already have available.

Stop closing the business down and stop sending the work to other countries.

Stop developing agricultural land into industrial until they utilize the current industrial space

More things available for our youth and more jobs/pay available to keep our young graduates in town or to entice college graduates to come back "home" to seek employment and support themselves/their family!

Stop the wasteful spending.

Do away with the IDA

Do no harm.

Begin rehabbing buildings/land the IDA owns in preparation for lease or sale to incoming businesses.

To use the existing land and resources. Stop putting additional taxes on homeowners to buy land when we already have industrial parks that are empty. New business should pay taxes. Stop offering tax free years to new businesses.

Bring businesses with jobs that are for workers, environmentally safe and that don't require employees with college education. Businesses that would bring employment to Thomaston. We need to clean up old mill area so it's inviting on Hwy 36. Be open and explain what's going on.

Be more discerning about businesses that are looking for places to bring their industry. Involve the County Commissioners in the process because they speak for the citizens and were elected by the citizens.

Concentrate on infrastructure first, most important for job growth. Water to is lacking in Upson county to support large growth

Deny Brightmart from coming here and stop focusing on alcohol being in every venue. We don't want to live in Atlanta or Macon!

Stop Brightmark from coming to town.

I appreciate the IDA Board. tough job these days!

Public Input

I'm a mechanical engineer with the most widely used degree by the manufacturing industry and CEO's, but I cant find a job in Upson. Let that sink in....

Listen to what the community is saying and stop pushing unpopular initiatives.

Think about the citizens and the environment before making decisions. Ask the citizens before making decisions. Yes we do need jobs in county. But they need to be environmentally friendly.

Smart growth. Everyone wants to grow but settling for just any industry is a bad practice. Upson county needs to be selective on who they attract and "court"

More jobs paying livable wages

Not to put something toxic or instability

Thomaston is dying. Get rid of section 8 housing. Section 8 is a reflection of the community. Thomaston is becoming poorer and poorer. There are no industries here. We desperately need growth not only for the community but the tax base. What is the IDA Director and board doing to bring industry here? We need industrial prospects. Quit relying on commercial and retail development. Only good that comes from commercial and retail development is sales tax collections increase. There are no real jobs being added or new housing starts. The Highway 19 corridor (county) looks bad. Northside to the county line has overgrown grass up to the waist and trash. The county needs to take a lesson from the city regarding how they maintain all the city property within downtown and the city limits out all four corridors. The city looks immaculate and appealing. The county is an eyesore.

Quit building vacant buildings. Use what we have now. We have several empty industrial buildings. Taxes are too high

The plastic recycling company was a really, really bad move. Optimism about Upson's future is in short supply these days.

Showing possibility of growth in Upson. Most of my family live and/or work outside of Upson due to job scarcity and livable wages in Upson. I retired after 35 years in Spalding Co. My husband worked multiple jobs outside of Thomaston.

More transparency with the public

Stop bringing in destructive environmental businesses that either can kill us or steal our resources

Obtain County Funding

Cancel the Brightmark deal

Retail shops, jobs for teens

Putting the IDA's ideas to public vote i.e Brightmark.

Doing excellent with the hand they are dealt

DO NOT BRING BRIGHTMARK TO UPSON COUNTY

Not embrace industries that other GA communities have refused on valid grounds

Be as transparent as you possibly can

Stop Brightmark from moving here.

Work ethics class taught in high schools.

Quit building NEW things and use empty buildings and spaces!

Action

Bring job and entertainment

Be more transparent, video record meetings, engage the public, stop pushing through decisions without public input (non disclosure agreements / fast tracked bond validation proceedings etc) if it is a great deal then you should not be ashamed to let the public know about it and rally their excitement.

Listen to their people! Savour the small town. Keep the potential damaging businesses off our land. There's other options out there to improve our space, not damage it. No to Brightmark. Help grow locally unless, you're building a connector between Columbus and Macon then reassess to larger corporations. But most importantly, listen to your people. And keep the bad businesses out

COMMUNICATE WITH TAXPAYERS! Taxpayers are funding and have zero input in real time. Surveys are a great start, but that should never replace the need to LISTEN AND TALK WITH TAXPAYERS. Your meetings should be held when more people can attend and they should be more interactive with taxpayers. Secrecy is NOT good. Arrogance is what the taxpayer sees. Stop buying land and use what you currently own. Your budget should not be a slush fund for AWFUL decisions like DimMark!

No data centers

Realize it's 2026

Protect historic places and stop clearcutting.

PLEASE DO WHATEVER YOU CAN TO STOP BRIGHTMARK FROM LOCATING IN UPSON COUNTY.

Have more open forums for community engagement. Post more on social media of what's happening or create a news letter that is sent out or printed in the beacon discussing how it works and how the citizens can be apart of the process.

When people speak up against something, remember that you work for them, instead of finding ways to play devil's advocate.

Utilize the vacancies downtown.

Attract high-paying tech and manufacturing companies for future employment of our youth with apprenticeship programs. No data centers, no Brightmark, no solar panel farms, no windmills!

Just hit one home run !

Help with tax base providing pathway for industry

One thing this community is missing is a safe, fun place for our teenagers. Growing up, I remember having to beg my mom to take me and my siblings all the way to Griffin just so we could go bowling or skating. There was never much here for teens to do, and honestly, that still hasn't changed.

Our parks are great for little kids, and those absolutely need to stay and continue growing for families. But somewhere along the way, our teenagers have been overlooked. Teens need places where they can safely hang out, make memories, and stay busy in a positive environment. Right now, many of the parks have turned into places known more for fights, drug activity, and trouble than for giving teens something productive to do.

If we want better for the next generation, we have to give them better options. A bowling alley, skating rink, teen center, recreational space, or even organized activities could make a huge difference. Keeping teenagers entertained, involved, and included is just as important as creating spaces for younger children.

Inquiring into bigger companies for better jobs and community growth

What makes Thomaston special is the sense of community. There is "society" that exists here that does not show up in most small towns. Thomaston is special because it offers a controlled, easy lifestyle without the urban sprawl, pollution, crime, and randomness of other suburbs. People are proud to be from Thomaston. People are intentional. We are stewards of this unique oasis in the middle of a state that is culturally at war. What would make me optimistic about the future is to see this community invest in itself. Invest in local small business owners. Invest in the art and theatre that bear the soul of this community. Don't let it fall the way of Spalding or Henry counties in the name of 'development'. The city government needs to protect this town's heritage and legacy. What makes me optimistic about Thomaston is a mindfully curated future that honors its past and invests in its roots while welcoming new ideas that benefit us with open arms. Let's keep moving forward but don't ever Atlanta my Thomaston.

Get rid of planning and zoning so that industry could locate here

Don't listen to the squeaky wheels and use your expertise to make the best decisions for our community even if the decisions aren't popular.

Work towards expanding employment opportunities while not giving away huge tax credits to businesses that have a good environmental record.

Bring industry that actually produces a real product, not outdated recycling or data centers.

Expand reach to children.

Integrity, honesty, transparency, elected members, ballots before decisions

Recruit industry requiring large numbers of employees.

More food and grocery/store shopping to keep money within the county and not having to travel to griffin, Macon and Columbus.

This isn't industrial but they can't even fix a bridge .

Never allow the City of Thomaston to ever be involved in any recruitment of any new business - they only care about themselves and will work against any project that doesn't benefit them... and given that retail in downtown should be a focus of the IDA, build a parking deck behind Slices by tearing down everything on the block - this should be a SPLOST project municipal parking deck free to the public... the idiots at the City don't think there is a shortage of parking because they don't want to pay for a deck...

Concentrate on job development for the 18-30 year old group.

Clothing shoes no more fast food no groceries stores more places for young people for entertainment clean up the old houses streets etc

Protect our resources and community members

Consistency in rules and regulations for businesses, change in bad leadership

Launch an active campaign of clean up and prevention of litter and the unkept appearance of the entry corridors as well as remove (go underground) the crooked, unsightly power poles and lines that give a cluttered and haphazardly look of the community. If we want quality industry and quality people, we need to look like a quality community. We don't need to encourage low rent or subsidized housing nor the clientele associated with it. Nothing but problems and law enforcement expenses follow low rent housing and they don't add to the economy.

I think you're all doing a darn good job.

Do surveys on projects before you make the deal. This will give you a feel for how the people feel about it.

We do not need more low cost, subsidized housing. We need starter, first time home OWNERS, not more renters in this community. We need jobs, there are a large number of people that had been with Quad for more than 25 years, to still make the salary they were making at Quad, many of them are now working in Griffin. We have a lot of empty spaces in these run down shopping centers. We also need some type of sign ordinance especially in the County. Just look at the building where North Side Superette is. The amount of eyesores we have when people are just passing through town. Upson needs to Clean Up and Straighten Up, so this town can move Up and Attract tourism and home owners and future business owners. I wish that the County would also turn the Courthouse into a museum like what we had for the Smithsonian Exhibit.

We desperately need a decent hotel in Thomaston!!! Has been promised for years, almost happened several years ago but "insightful" city leaders had a better plan and then nothing happened. Hmmm....

Let's make this a priority. Quit trying to push all new development into our downtown area. Downtown development pads the pockets of only a few but then we lose sight of the broader community needs.

A lovely new 100 room Holiday Inn Express north on Highway 19 would be wonderful!

I feel things are being done to move us forward. Work ethics have majorly declined and this generation does not show pride for our community.

Cancel the Brightmark contract and listen to the citizens before signing contracts.

The make-up of the current board makes me optimistic. Good group of progressive people.

Stop Brightmark from causing environmental issues in our town. Also, prevent the unwanted traffic of large trucks and plastic waste that will be brought into our town from Brightmark. Ensure the safety of Upson Citizens by not allowing a company with a reputation of dangerous fires/explosions to be in Upson. Take into consideration that when surveyed Upson County citizens do not want Brightmark to be in Upson.

Improve communication with community

Avoid bringing industries that are potentially harmful to the health of our residents

Combating corporate greed and their unrelenting pursuit of a higher profit margin at the expense of everything else. They need to pay their fair share of taxes if our infrastructure is going to be strained.

Lower Rent and housing costs. More job options.

Work with local schools to offer working and professionalism classes. Lots of young people struggle with communication and professionalism in the real world which makes hiring quality candidates more challenging for local businesses.

New city council and new commissioner's

Say no to Brightmark

Keep data centers and plastic recycling places out of our county. We need jobs for people who live here.

Think about the environmental and other impacts on FUTURE generations and not just our current citizens

Doing something productive

15 more responses are hidden

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