



Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

A Multi-Disciplinary Regional Planning Agency Serving:

Billerica – Chelmsford – Dracut – Dunstable – Lowell – Pepperell – Tewksbury – Tyngsborough – Westford

MEMORANDUM

To: Billerica Planning Board and Planning Staff
From: Kelly Lynema, Deputy Director, and Michael Asciola, Senior Housing and Land Use Planner II, NMCOG
Date: October 11, 2024
Re: Billerica MBTA Communities Survey Summary and Next Steps

The Billerica MBTA Communities Survey closed at midnight on Tuesday, October 8, 2024. In total, there were 998 individual “starts” to the survey, with 537 respondents submitting their prioritized rank of potential subdistricts for Billerica’s MBTA Communities zoning. On October 8, the Board was provided with a PDF summarizing all 513 complete responses to the survey – this represents respondents who completed the survey by hitting “submit” after the last survey questions.

This memo provides additional analysis of the 537 respondents who completed the survey through the question asking for preferences on subdistrict options.¹ As explained in the IP address analysis below, nine responses were eliminated due to evidence of duplicate entries, therefore a total of 528 responses were analyzed and cross-tabulated.

IP Address Analysis

NMCOG reviewed the IP addresses of respondents to ensure that no single respondent attempted to overly influence survey responses. There were 48 IP addresses that were used for more than one survey response, however 36 of those IP addresses were used by two individuals, five were used by three individuals, and four were used by four individuals, suggesting that multiple members of a single household took the survey. Of these 45 IP addresses, five responses were suspected as duplicates due to the back to back timing of the survey, identical responses (and in particular identical responses to the open ended question), and were therefore filtered from the analyzed respondent pool.

Of the remaining three IP addresses with multiple respondents, one showed evidence of an attempt to tamper with survey results (five duplicate entries were submitted in rapid

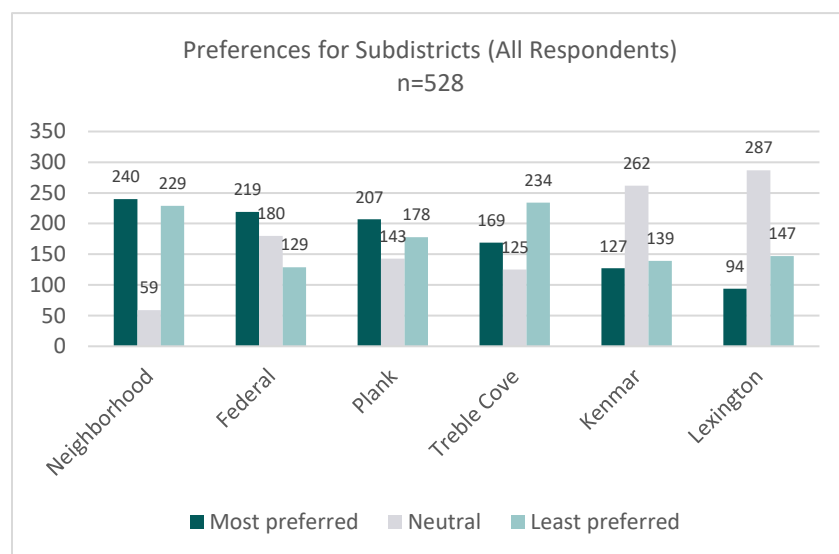
¹ SurveyMonkey, the online tool used to administer the survey, collects responses even if a respondent does not hit submit, therefore there were more respondents who completed the survey through question 4 than those who officially submitted their responses. As noted above, staff will review and eliminate any duplicate responses from IP addresses to ensure that preferences are not overweighted.

succession from the same address). For that IP address, all but one response was eliminated. The other two IP addresses received 29 and 10 responses, respectively, however the responses were from residents across multiple neighborhoods with significantly different answers – this suggests that these two IP addresses are based in broadly used public areas, such as the library or Town Hall. Unless there was a clear indication of exact duplicate responses, results from these two IP addresses were not thrown out.

In total, nine survey responses were eliminated from the final analysis, leaving 528 total responses.

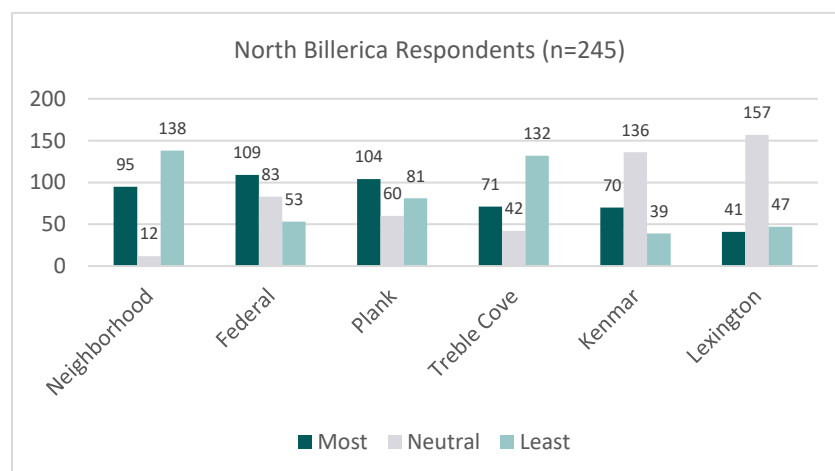
Preferences by Neighborhood

To better understand preference for or against a given subdistrict option, responses were aggregated by preference – most preferred and second-most preferred responses were grouped into a “most preferred” subset of responses, third and fourth preferred responses were clustered into a “neutral” category, and fifth and least preferred responses were grouped into a “least preferred” category.



Of the 528 responses analyzed, the most preferred locations for MBTA Communities zoning were the Neighborhood, Federal, and Plank subdistricts. However, the Neighborhood subdistrict was also the most controversial, with respondents nearly equally in support and opposition to the option (45% most preferred, 43% least preferred). Greater consensus of preferences was indicated for the Federal and Plank subdistrict options.

Nearly half (46.4%) of all respondents reported living in the North Billerica neighborhood. Of those respondents, while there was still significant support for the Neighborhood subdistrict, there was greater opposition to the subdistrict. North Billerica residents showed a higher preference for the Federal and Plank subdistricts, and nearly equal opposition to the Treble Cove subdistrict as their



opposition to the Neighborhood subdistrict.

Similarly, residents from East Billerica were split on support for the Neighborhood subdistrict (31 most preferred, 35 least preferred). In contrast, residents of Pinehurst, Town Center, Nuttings Lake / South Billerica, West Billerica, and those unsure of their neighborhood showed greater consensus for support of the North Billerica subdistrict option.

Respondents showed greater consensus in preference for the Federal and Plank subdistrict options. Overall, 41% of respondents preferred the Federal subdistrict, with 76% either supporting or neutral in their support for the option. Only respondents from Nuttings Lake / South Billerica showed less support for the Federal subdistrict than more support, with 28% indicating most preferred and 39% indicating least preferred. The Federal subdistrict option was proportionally most supported by those who indicated they were not residents of or worked in Billerica, with 71% of those respondents selecting most preferred or second-most preferred for that subdistrict.

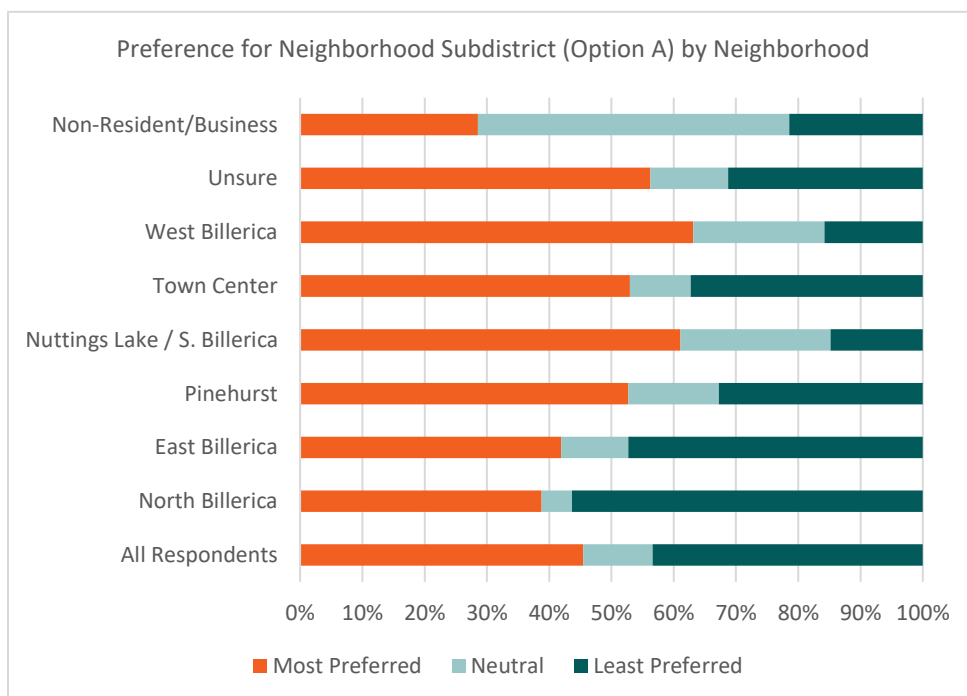
Similar results emerged for the Plank subdistrict, with 39% of all respondents in support of the subdistrict, and 66% either supporting or neutral in their support for the option. A neighborhood sub analysis indicates that residents from Pinehurst (20 for, 27 against), Nuttings Lake/South Billerica (14 for, 16 against), and those unsure of their neighborhood (5 for, 7 against) showed greater opposition than support for the option.

Additional charts showing preference by respondents' reported neighborhoods are provided in Appendix A.

Specific Subdistrict Analysis

As noted above, the Neighborhood, Federal, and Plank subdistricts received the highest levels of support from respondents regardless of neighborhood. The charts below provide a breakdown of preference for individual subdistricts by respondents' self-reported neighborhoods.

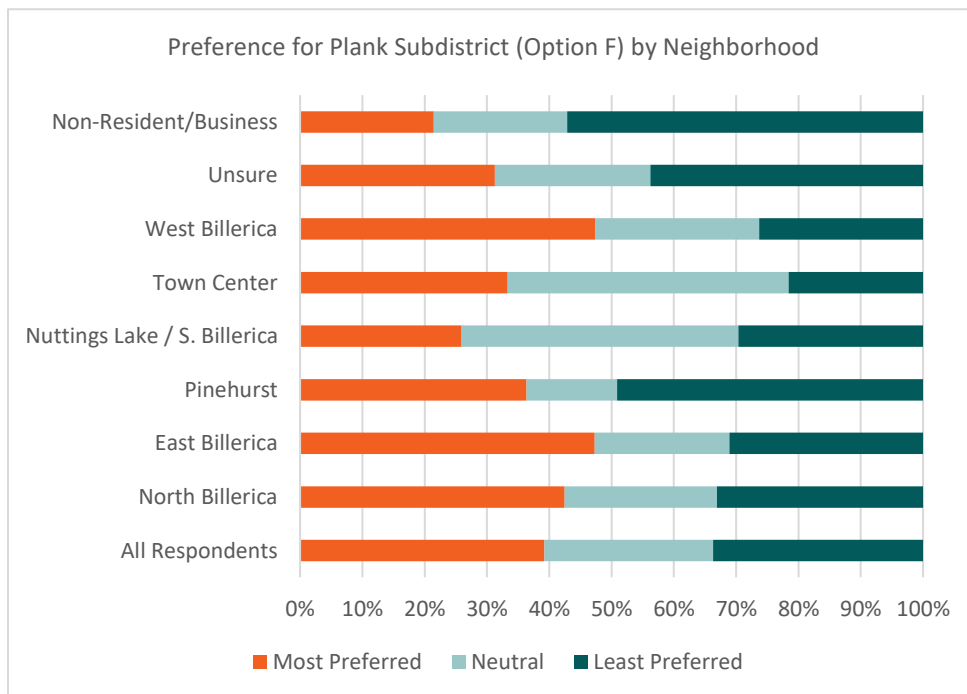
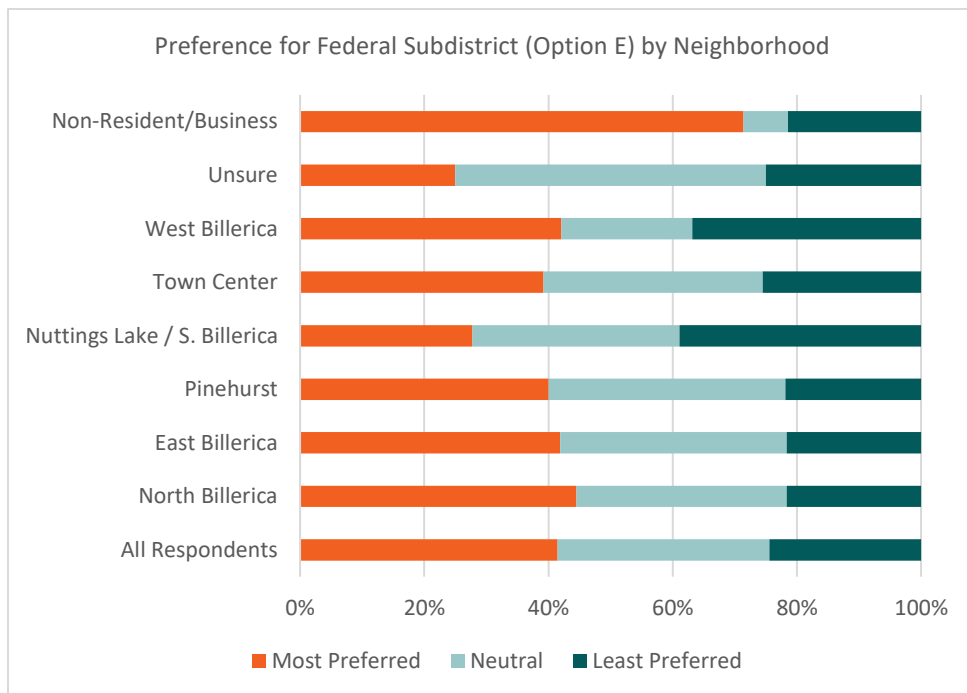
As noted above, the Neighborhood subdistrict was a polarizing option, with respondents nearly equally split



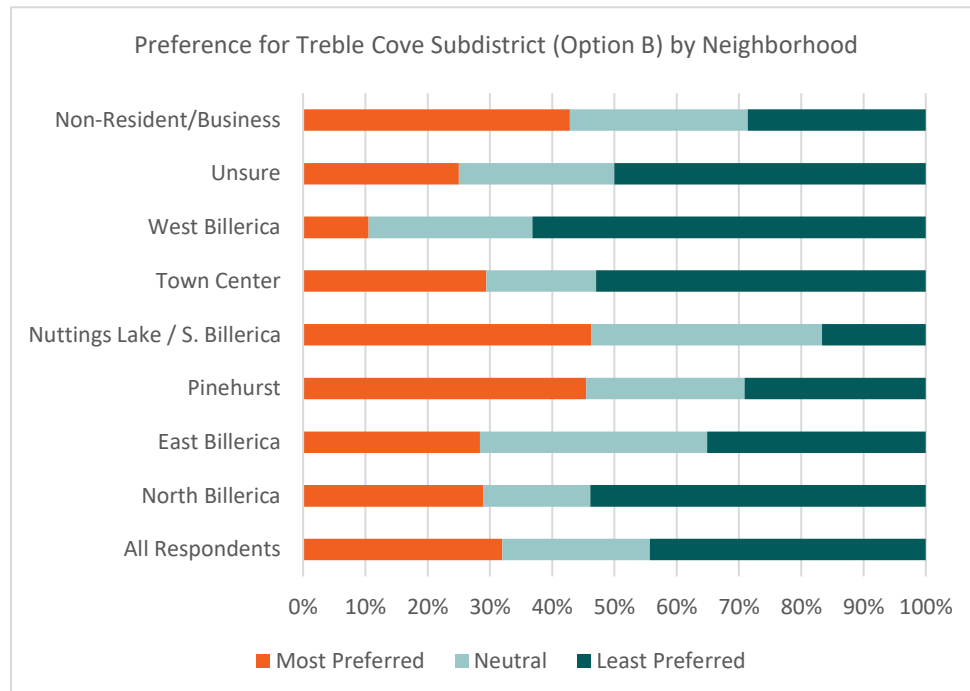
in their support for and opposition of the subdistrict. The greatest opposition to this subdistrict option came from North Billerica residents, while residents of West Billerica and Nuttings Lake/South Billerica indicating the greatest level of support for the option.

The Federal subdistrict option received less support but was also significantly less polarizing than the Neighborhood subdistrict. A significant proportion of respondents from all neighborhoods were neutral on the option, with the greatest support for this subdistrict coming from non-residents and employers and employees in local businesses.

Similarly, the Plank subdistrict received less support but also was slightly less polarizing than the Neighborhood district. West Billerica, East Billerica, and North Billerica residents showed the most support for this option, while it was least supported by non-residents and employers/employees and residents in Nuttings Lake/South Billerica.



Notably, while not overwhelmingly preferred by all respondents, the Treble Cove subdistrict received significant support from residents of Nuttings Lake/South Billerica and Pinehurst neighborhoods, with nearly 50% of respondents from those neighborhoods selecting most preferred or second-most preferred for the option, and 83% of Nuttings Lake/South Billerica residents and 71% of Pinehurst residents either preferring or neutral on the subdistrict.



Additional charts for each subdistrict option are provided in Appendix B.

Analysis of Open-Ended Question

After submitting their preference rankings for potential MBTA Communities subdistrict options, respondents were invited to submit additional ideas for appropriate locations in Billerica to explore. Areas mentioned, as well as additional comments, are provided below:

Commercial/Industrial Areas:

1. Billerica Mall/Kmart Mall: 3 mentions
2. Iron Horse Park: 3 mentions
3. Technology Park: 2 mentions
4. Plank Street Area: 2 mentions suggesting additional parcels off Plank Street and the Turnpike, and opening Plank Street to access Pinehurst
5. Rangeway Road Area: 3 mentions, including a note that this location has great highway access and plenty of commercial space
6. Pinehurst Area: 3 mentions
7. Commercially zoned side of 124-142 Pond St.: 1 mention
8. Billerica Road: 1 mention
9. Faulkner Mill: 1 mention

Residential Areas:

1. Concord Commons/Concord Crossing: 4 mentions
2. Saint Mary's Property: 1 mention
3. Rio Vista/Veterans Park Area: 1 mention
4. West of the Mills/Alpine St. Area: 1 mention
5. Further North on Billerica Ave./Town Farm Lane: 2 mentions
6. Parker St.: 1 mention
7. Dudley Rd.: 1 mention
8. 480 Boston Road: 1 mention
9. Expand Lexington Road Area: 2 mentions
10. Parlamont Park: 1 mention
11. Wilson St.: 1 mention, including the suggestion to have subdistrict A (Neighborhood district) encompass Wilson Street.
12. Gray St. Near Railroad Bridge: 2 mentions

Open Space or Undeveloped Areas

1. Open space behind Mazmanian Carpets: 1 mention
2. High St./Rogers St. Area: 2 mentions, noting the 16-acre parcel that runs along the railroad tracks crossing Rogers Street
3. Land surrounding old East Billerica station: 1 mention
4. Cider Mills: 1 mention

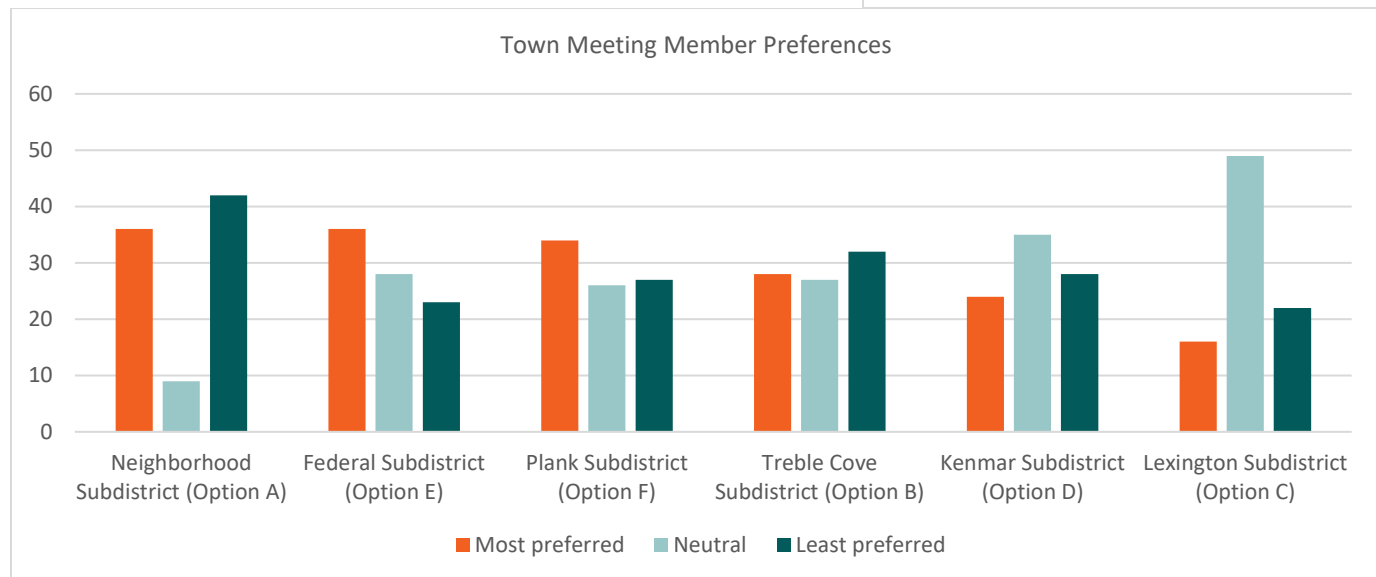
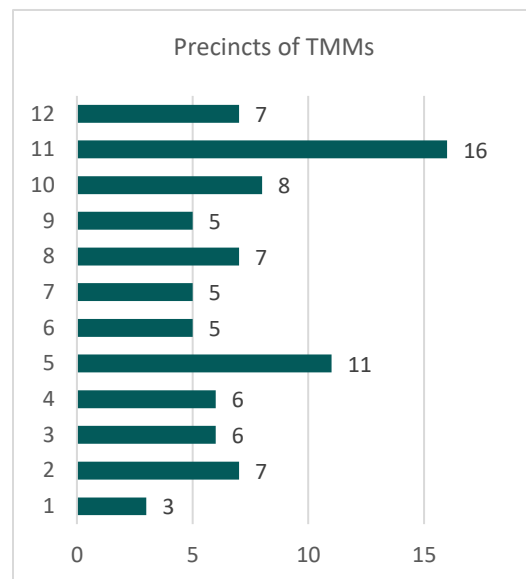
Miscellaneous Suggestions:

1. Not Complying/Fighting the Law: 33 mentions
2. General Suggestions/Comments: 3 mentions
 - Anywhere that creates new housing
 - Anywhere closer to an actual MBTA bus line!
 - Almost any area along Boston Road, outside of historic districts where commercial activity exists could be visually improved by multi-family housing.

Town Meeting Member Preferences

A total 87 respondents indicated that they are Town Meeting Members, with the distribution of precincts shown in the chart at right. Town Meeting Members from every precinct responded, with the greatest representation coming from Precinct 11.

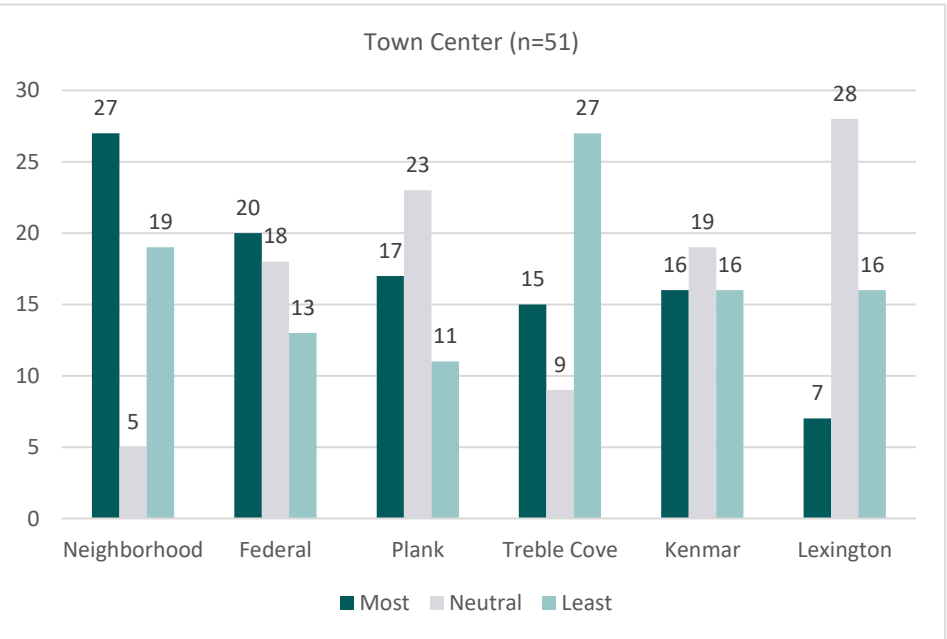
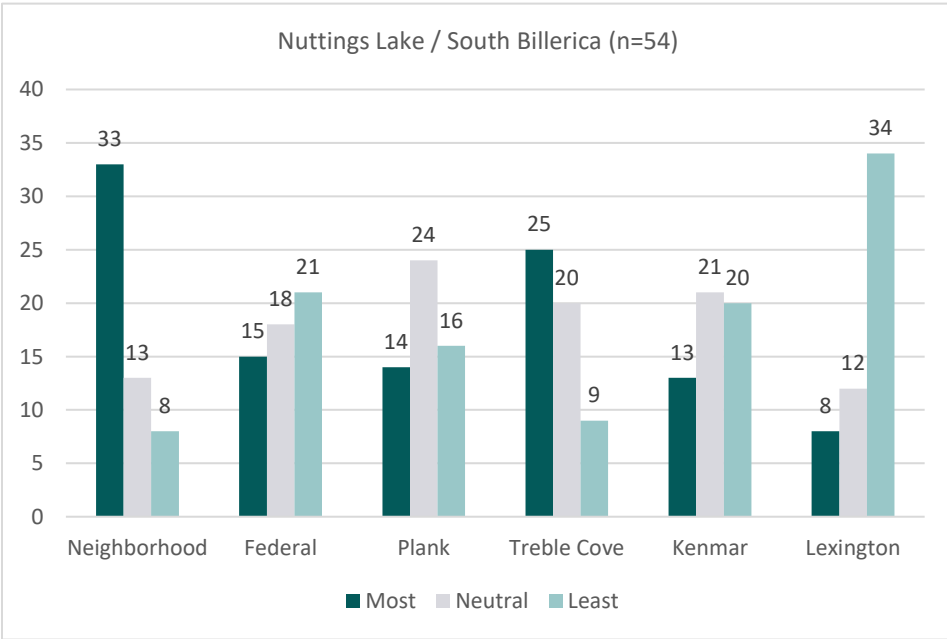
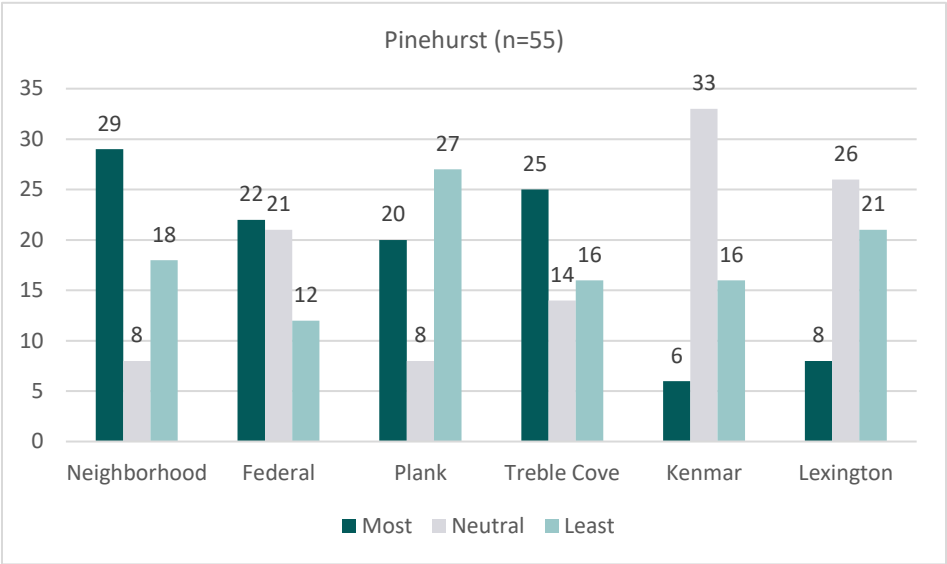
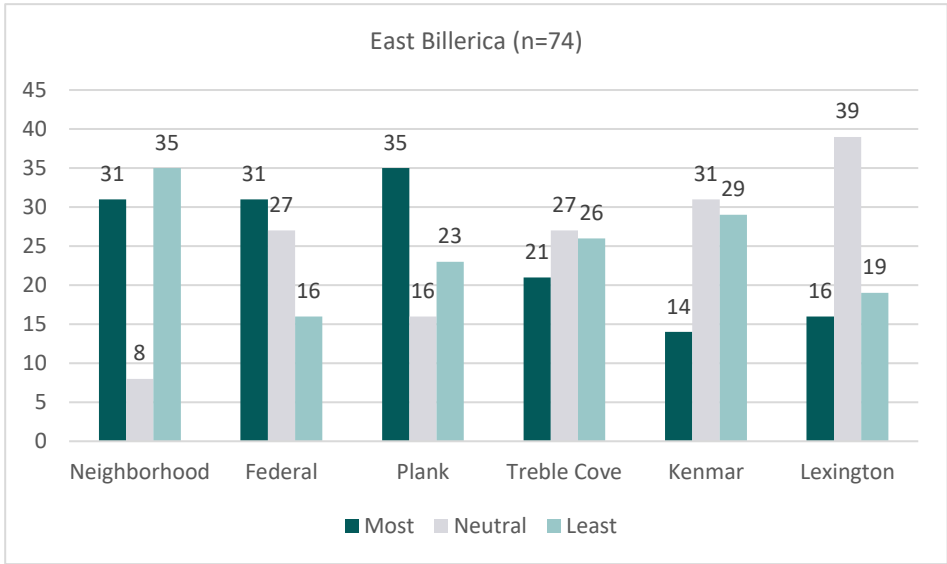
Town Meeting Member preferences largely mirrored those of the general respondent pool, with significant polarization in responses to the Neighborhood subdistrict, and the greatest level of support for the Neighborhood, Federal, Plank, and Treble Cove subdistricts.

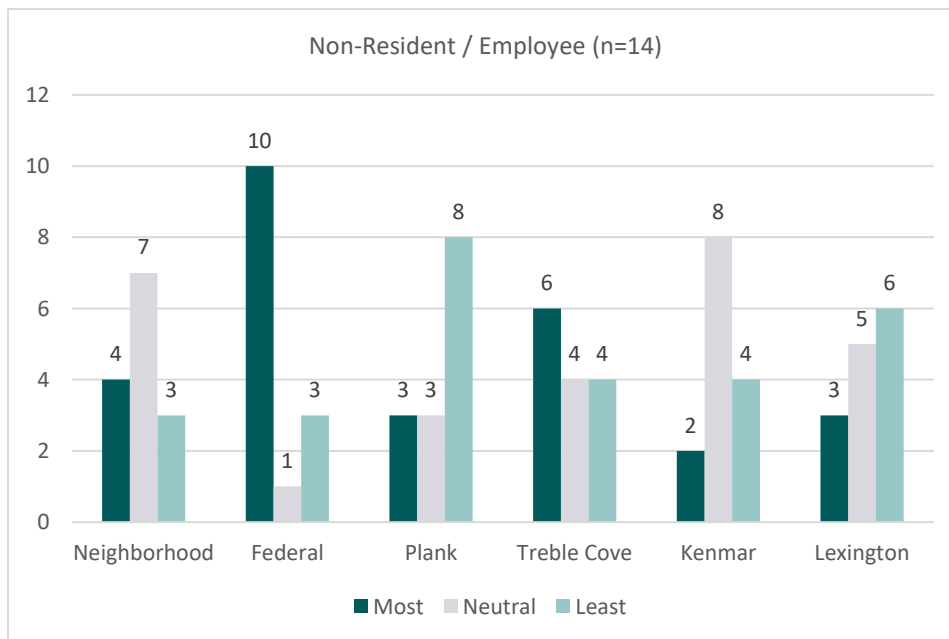
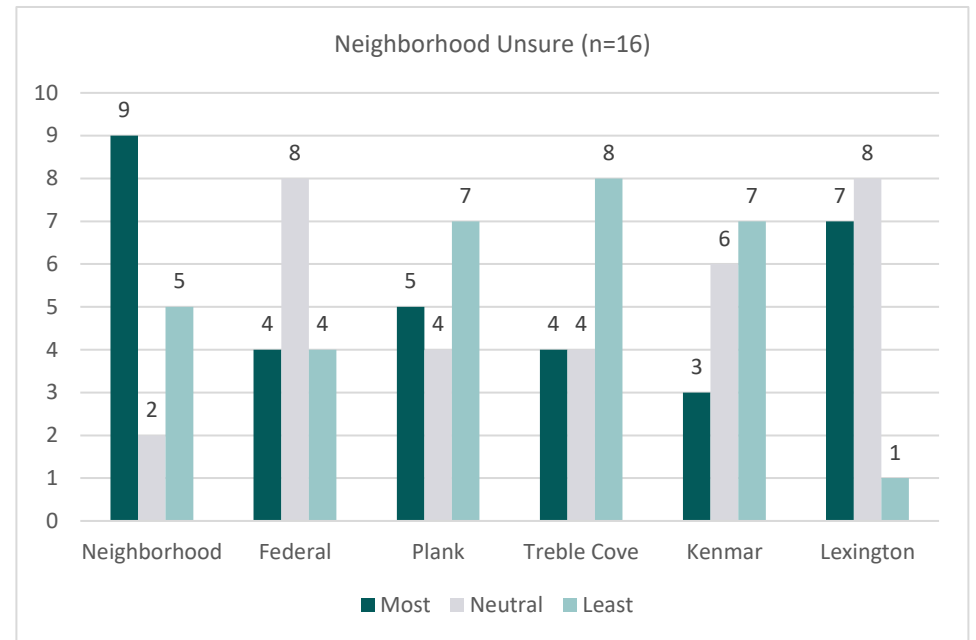
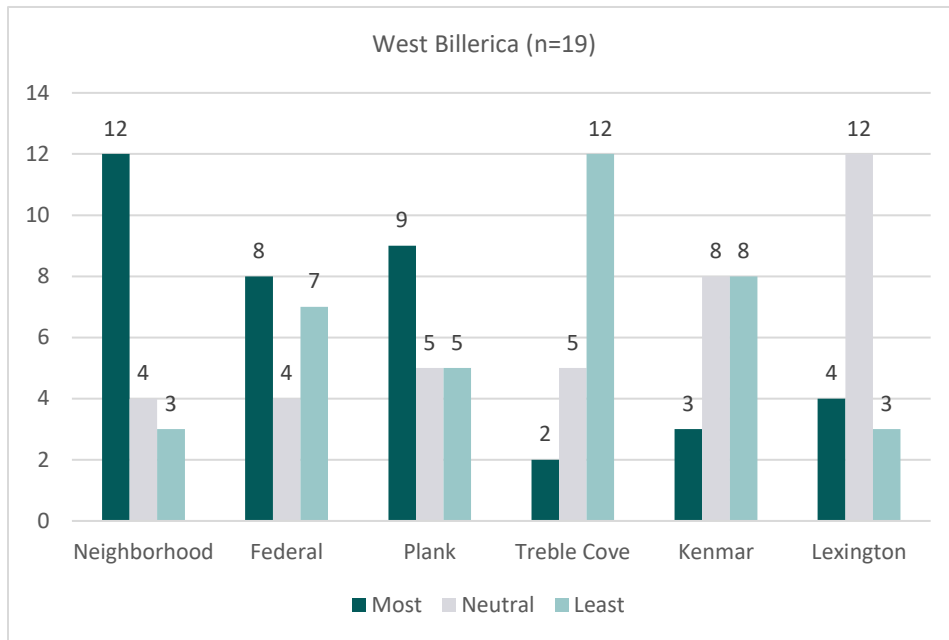


Next Steps

Our staff are available to explore any additional questions the Board would like to pursue. We will follow up with Billerica Planning Staff in the coming days to coordinate additional analysis that may be necessary. Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to Kelly Lynema, Deputy Director, at klynema@nmcog.org or 978-454-8021x116.

Appendix A: Respondents Preferences for Subdistricts by Self-Reported Neighborhood





Appendix B: Individual Subdistrict Preferences by Neighborhood

