

Middle Housing Project

Round 1 Outreach Summary

Winter 2020/2021

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Project Overview

The City of Gresham is working to meet State requirements to increase the amount and type of housing available to all Oregonians as part of House Bill 2001, which was adopted in 2019.¹ The purpose of the outreach effort was to help the City understand the thoughts and concerns of the public regarding middle housing and other housing issues in Gresham.

Between November 2020 and January 2021, the City of Gresham outreach efforts included distribution of informational flyers, posting updated web content, holding a virtual open house, and hosting an online survey to identify concerns about middle housing and other housing needs in Gresham.

Outreach and Notification

The online survey and virtual event were advertised by the City through:

- A 35-word blurb in a Community-Based Organization e-newsletter distributed on November 30, 2020.
- A website update providing information and links to both the survey and registration for the event that went live on November 30, 2020.

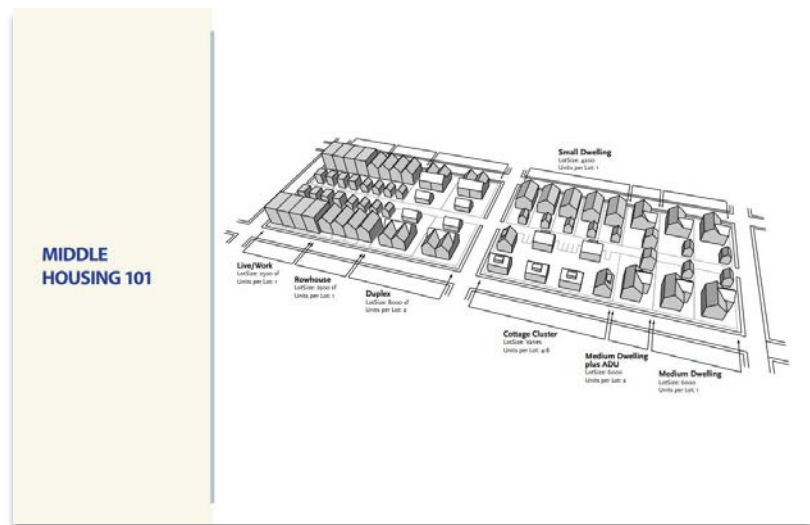


Figure 1 - Middle Housing Presentation

¹ The Bill requires Gresham to update its development code to allow duplexes on any lot that allows detached single dwellings and to allow all middle housing types in any area zoned to allow detached single dwellings. Middle housing refers to housing types that fill the gap between apartments and detached single dwellings including duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, townhomes, and cottage clusters.

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- An email to the project notifications sign-up list.
- A citywide, printed newsletter distributed on December 10, 2020.
- Social media posts on the City’s Facebook and Twitter accounts throughout November and December 2020.

Participation and Format

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

The virtual open house was hosted on Zoom with presentations by Urbsworks, the City of Gresham, and JLA. The event took place on Wednesday, December 16, 2020, from 5:30 pm until 7:30 pm. Staff presented project concepts, information about “middle housing” and its role in Gresham, and addressed common concerns associated with this type of project. The event was primarily providing “information out” to the attendees, but the project team also sought input on what attendees’ perceptions and concerns were of middle housing, to better guide the project moving forward.

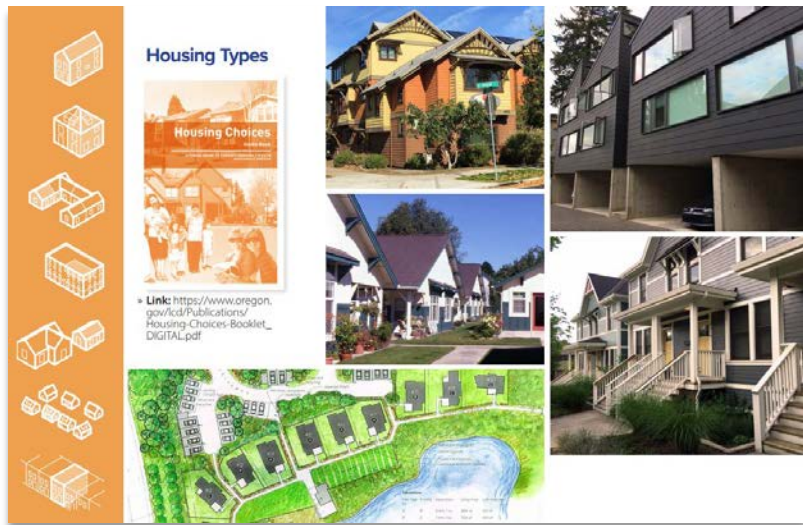


Figure 2 - Middle Housing Presentation

Following a 30-minute presentation (which included two interactive polls), there was an opportunity for attendees to ask questions of the project team. There were **26 people in attendance, with 13 attendees participating in the two polls conducted.**

ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey included 11 questions and a link to an approximately 12-minute long recorded presentation answering common questions that would help participants take the survey . The online survey was open from November 30 to December 18, 2020 then was extended until January 4, 2021. The average respondent was a white homeowner age 45-64. **A total of 129 surveys were submitted online.**

ROUND 1 OUTREACH FEEDBACK SUMMARY

While the general response of participants, both in the virtual event and the online survey, was positive there were some concerns and outright objections to the prospect of middle housing in Gresham. Many participants expressed desires for housing in Gresham, such as a need for smaller detached single-family homes and homes that serve the needs of seniors and the disabled, that align with the provisions granted by middle housing.

Common themes:

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- Concerns about access and availability of limited resources (such as parking, transportation, and public amenities such as schools and hospitals).
- Concerns over middle housing potentially changing the character of people’s neighborhoods and making the neighborhoods less desirable or safe.
- Many respondents expressed their desire for more home ownership in Gresham, over that of more rental opportunities.
- There was also concern over increasing Gresham’s density and making it too much like other cities.

Much of the concern expressed by participants seems to come from a fundamental misunderstanding about what middle housing is, with many complaints related to negative stereotypes about low-income housing. The more people learned about what middle housing is, the more they seemed to perceive it as aligning with their desires for housing in Gresham.

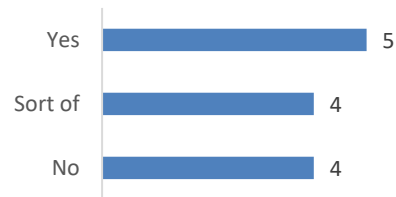
Detailed Responses

The following represents the general summary of feedback received during the virtual event and the aggregate results of the completed surveys. The full text of the questions posed by event participants in the “Q & A” feature of the Zoom event can be found in **Appendix A**, while the full text of the open-ended questions from the survey can be found in **Appendix B**, and the raw data from the rest of the survey questions can be found in **Appendix C** at the end of this document.

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE RESPONSES

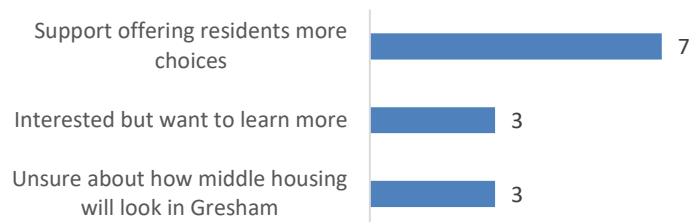
Poll #1: Were you familiar with “middle housing” concept before participating in the online survey and/or this event?

Out of the attendees that participated in the poll, nine (69%) were either familiar or “Sort of” familiar with the concept of middle housing prior to the survey and/or event, while four said they were not. This indicates that most of those in attendance likely had at least some understanding of the housing type. **A total of 13 people responded to this poll.**



Poll #2: How do you feel toward “middle housing” in Gresham, now that you’ve been provided more information?

This question was asked at the end of the event. Seven (54%) said they “Support offering residents more choices”, while three (23%) expressed that they were “Unsure about how middle housing will look in Gresham.” This indicates that participants were more supportive of “middle housing” in Gresham, than not. **A total of 13 people responded to this poll.**



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Questions and Comments

Participants had the opportunity to pose questions and offer comments to the project team. Many of the questions and comments were positive. The overall responses were more supportive and less polarized than survey responses. The most common comments centered around how increased density would impact limited resources and amenities, such as schools, hospitals, stores, and parking. Other concerns included:

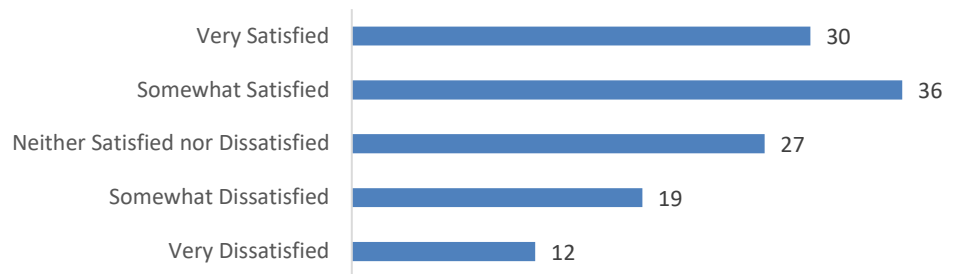
- Parking capacity/on-street parking in neighborhoods with new “middle housing.”
- The number of services and amenities in some communities are already insufficient.
- Transit access and expanded transit service through neighborhoods that were not build for it.
- A lack of variety or equitable mix of housing throughout the city, as opposed to concentrated in one area.
- The process involved in determining where middle housing will be allowed.
- The desires of existing communities to keep their character and not have undesirable development change their neighborhood.
- Fears that middle housing will be low-income housing.
- Rental versus ownership of dwellings, and whether the effort will lead to more rentals in neighborhoods.
- How Home Owner Associations (HOAs) will play into new developments.

ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

A total of 129 surveys were received via the online survey. Below is a summary of the responses; not all questions required answers so the total number of responses will not total 129 for each question.

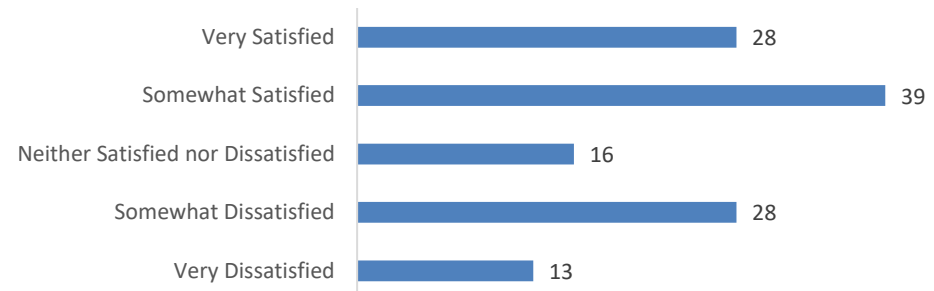
How satisfied are you with the overall availability of housing in Gresham?

Participants were generally more satisfied with the availability of housing in Gresham than not. The responses show that 66 (53%) selected either “Very Satisfied” and “Somewhat Satisfied” compared to only 31 (25%) that selected “Very Dissatisfied” and “Somewhat Dissatisfied. A large amount of participants said they were “Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied”, with 27 (21%) of the responses, indicating neutrality.



How satisfied are you with the overall variety of housing in Gresham?

The responses to this question displays a little more polarization, with only 16 (13%)



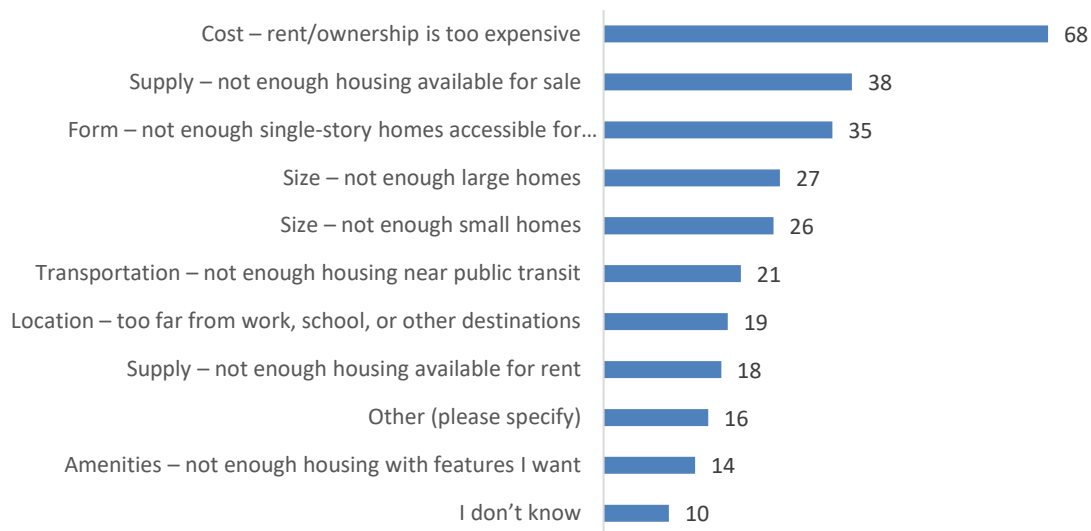
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participants, not feeling one way or the other. Overall, there were still more that were satisfied with the variety than were dissatisfied. The results showed that 67 (54%) said they were either “Very Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied” with the variety of housing, compared to 41 (33%) that said they were “Very Dissatisfied” or “Somewhat Dissatisfied”.

Which factors make it most difficult to find housing in Gresham?

Participants were asked to choose three answers from a list of factors that could make finding housing in Gresham difficult.

The most common response was that of “Cost – rent/ownership is too expensive” with 68 participants (23%) selecting it, followed by “Supply – not enough housing available for sale” with 38 participants (13%) selecting it. The overwhelming response indicates that cost is far and above the most prohibitive factor when attempting to find housing in Gresham, followed by not enough housing for sale and not enough single-story homes. The least common response, was that of “Amenities – not enough housing with features I want” with 14 participants (4%) selecting it, followed by “Supply – not enough housing available for rent” with 18 (6%) participants selecting it.



The fact that supply of housing for sale was the 2nd most popular response, and supply of housing for rent was the 2nd least popular response indicates that lack of opportunities for home ownership is a larger issue than rental housing availability.

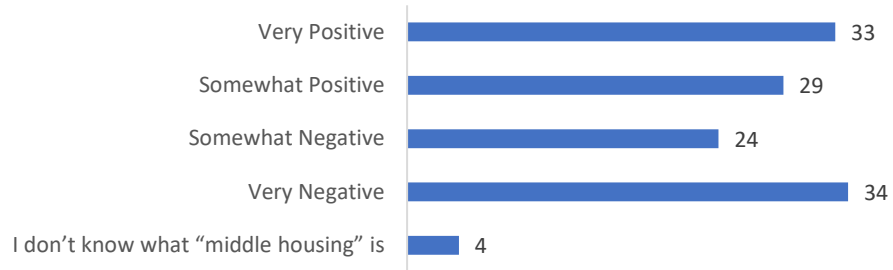
Of those that responded “other,” responses included:

- 5 respondents said that there are too many apartments or high-density dwellings without access to greenspace.
- 2 respondents said there is a lack of access to services.
- 2 respondents said that finding an area with low crime made it difficult.

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How do you feel about using “middle housing” to expand housing options in Gresham?

The response to this question was pretty evenly distributed, indicating a polarization in opinions about using middle housing to expand housing options in Gresham. The most common response was



“Very Negative” at 34 responses (27%), but the second most popular response was “Very Positive” with 33 responses (26%). Participants that felt positively about it amounted to 62 responses (50%), while participants that felt negatively about it amounted to 58 (46%), with only four (3%) responding that they didn’t know what it was.

How do you feel about the idea of allowing additional middle housing in Gresham?

Many of the comments noted the need for increased housing options in Gresham, even some that said they weren’t entirely happy about the concept said they knew it was necessary.

Based on these responses to this open-ended question, as well as similar questions, there are likely some negative connotations and misunderstanding about what “middle housing” actually is. Many people were concerned about increased density and the impact that it would have on access to services. Some other concerns, however, were tied to negative connotations about high-density affordable housing (crime, low-income residents, and a decrease in surrounding home value).

- 31 respondents (27%) said they thought middle housing was a good idea or that they were generally in favor of using this type of housing to expand options.
- 20 respondents (18%) said they thought it was a bad idea or that they didn’t support it in general.
- 10 respondents (9%) said they have concerns about access to services, parking, and transit if population density increases with middle housing.
- 9 respondents (8%) said they are worried that expanding housing in this way will lead to a more crowded Gresham.
- 8 respondents (7%) said they are worried middle-housing will negatively impact homeowners by decreasing home value, changing the character of their neighborhoods, bringing crime to their neighborhoods, and/or not attracting wealth.

What do you think Gresham needs, in terms of housing options?

Many respondents to this open-ended question said there need to be more affordable housing options that weren’t just apartments, indicating there is a need for the type of housing that middle housing would provide. There was also a general desire expressed for ownership options, which connects with the popular responses in previous questions about there being prohibitive costs in terms of buying a home.

- 24 respondents (22%) said there should be more affordable housing options for people that are not just apartments. 6 of those respondents (5%) said they thought there was a need for more

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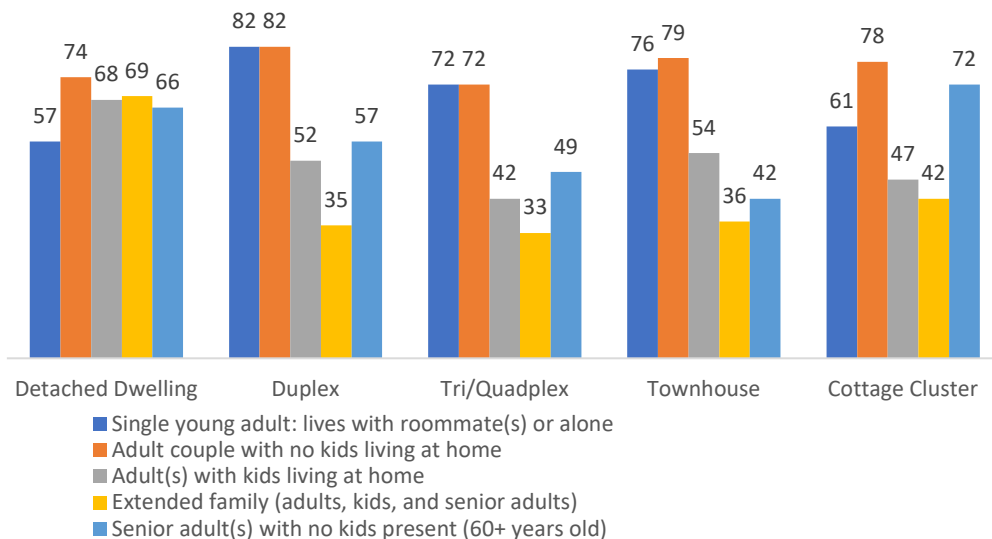
affordable middle-income housing.

- 11 respondents (10%) said Gresham needs more accessible housing, in the form of things such as single-story dwellings, for groups such as veterans, the disabled, and seniors.
- 9 respondents (8%) said there need to be more detached single-family dwellings.
- 6 respondents (5%) said they thought there should be more opportunities for home ownership.

Tell us which of the housing types below you think work for the different phases of life.

Participants were shown a list of different types of dwellings and asked what phase of life would use that housing type.

Respondents tended to view Cottage Clusters, Townhouses, Tri/Quadplexes, and Duplexes as a poor fit for families, while viewing Detached Dwellings as the preferred option for those groups. They also viewed Cottage Clusters as the best option for older adults, and saw Duplexes, Tri/Quadplexes, Townhouses, and Cottage Clusters as the best option for adults with or without kids living at home.



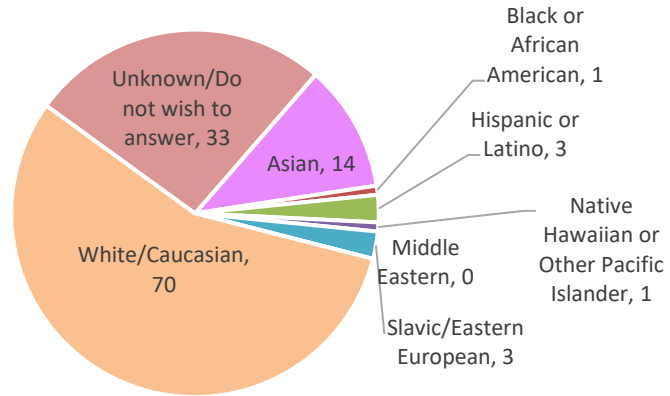
- A **cottage cluster** was viewed as best for an “Adult couple” followed by “Senior adult(s)”. The indication is that a cottage cluster is viewed to be more appropriate for phases of life that involve fewer people, rather than those that involve larger households.
- A **townhouse** was reported as best for an “Adult couple” and a “Single young adult” indicating that this type of housing is viewed as best for smaller households.
- A **tri/quadplex** was viewed as best for a “Single young adult” and an “Adult couple.”. The responses here again indicate that as a person moves into a phase in their life that includes more people in their household, they may outgrow a tri/quadplex.
- A **duplex** was viewed as best for a “Single young adult” and an “Adult couple,” similarly indicating this type of housing to less often fit the needs of a larger household.
- A **detached dwelling** was viewed by respondents to be most appropriate for an “Adult couple”, followed by an “Extended family” and “Adult(s) with kids.” The indication is that this type of housing is more appropriate for families, larger households, and couples, less so for the elderly or single adults.

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DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

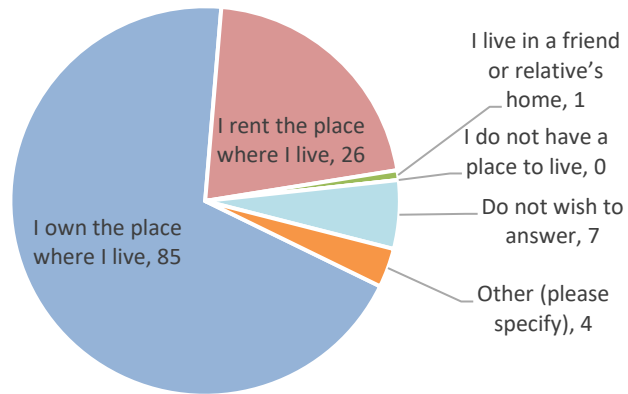
Your Race/Ethnicity

The most predominant race/ethnicity among respondents was “White/Caucasian” at 70 (56%), followed by “Asian” at 14 (11%), with 33 (26%) answering “Unknown/Do not wish to answer.”



Which best describes your living situation?

When asked about their living situation, 85 (69%) respondents said “I own the place where I live”, which was the most prominent answer, followed by “I rent the place where I live” at 26 (21%) responses.

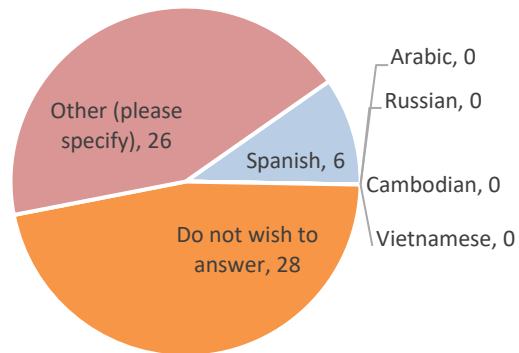


Of those that responded “other,” responses included:

- I share a place with my kids and grandchildren.
- Share a room with roommates.
- Live with S.O. she owns home.
- In a multigenerational house.

Languages spoken at home other than English.

The most popular response to the question of what languages are spoken at home, aside from “Do not wish to answer” at 28 (46%) responses, was “Other” with 26 (43%) responses, followed by Spanish with 6 (10%) responses. Of those that responded “other,” responses included:



- 16 respondents (16%) said they speak Zomi (Burma, India).
- 2 respondents said they speak French.
- Kirundi (Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda).
- Chinook Wawa (Pacific NW Tribal language).
- Romanian (Romania, Moldova).
- German (central Europe).

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What is your age?

According to the responses, the most prominent age group is “45-64” with 52 (40%) participants self-identifying, followed by “25-44” with 26 (20%) participants.

