

**TOWN OF BOLTON
BOLTON DIVERSITY COMMISSION
October 18, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.**

Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89780093476?pwd=eFBPdm tuNVhLZm0vZ20rQk J3Q0NiQT09>

Call-In Number: 1-929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 897 8009 3476

Passcode: 102866

The Diversity Commission met on October 18, 2022 with the Chair Amanda Gordon presiding. Also in attendance were: Vice Chair Kawan Gordon, John Toomey, Jennifer Cyr, Cheryl Udin, and Milton Ives.

1. Call to Order

- a. A. Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm

2. Public Participation

- a. There were no public comments

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. Approval of minutes from 9/20/22

- i. Motion: I move that we accept the minutes of 9/20/22

By: Jen Cyr Second: Milton Ives

Voting For- All in favor – Motion Passed

4. Presentation to BOS Recap

A. Gordon presented results of adult survey at the 10/4/22 BOS meeting. Also present at the meeting were Jen Cyr, Kawan Gordon, John Toomey and Paula Meyers. A. Gordon provided highlights of report:

- Why and how the survey was created and distributed
 - Key findings and recommendations.
- a. The Board will need additional time to digest the lengthy report.

5. Commission Extension

- a. Board was cognizant that our terms run out in November and that we have not completed youth survey. They do want to see the results of the youth survey and have granted the commission an extension until the Feb 2023 BOS meeting (likely 2/7/23) and voted to approve an extension of all our terms until then.

- b. This Diversity Commission will need to vote on meeting dates and times for Nov 2022–Jan 2023. Recommendation was keep same schedule of 3rd Tues of month. --Nov 15, 2022, Dec 20 2022 and Jan 17,2023 .
 - i. Motion: I move that we accept the meeting dates for the extended commission of 11/15/22, 12/20,22 and 1/17/23.

By: Cheryl Udin Second: Jen Cyr
Voting For- All in favor – Motion Passed

- c. Permanent extension of this commission was discussed but no action taken yet.
- d. It was noted that later in that evening’s agenda was an item discussing Diversity Training for the town employees (scheduled for December time frame). The BOS said that they will make it available to all town commission members but currently is not required (as was one of the report’s recommendations).
- e. The commission will look to request that a vote on a proclamation and a vote to make a permanent Diversity commission at the Feb. agenda. Will also request that the results of Survey be shared on Social media.

6. Youth Survey

- a. Paula Meyers is working on it and anticipated that we will discuss at the nov meeting.
- b. Note that because the Nov meeting is less than 30 days away it will be considered a special meeting so no additional items can be added to the agenda

7. Recap of Tasks

- a. Complete the youth Survey results and commission will try to socialize the importance of having a permanent Diversity Commission with town members.

8. Adjournment

- i. Adjourned by Consensus at 7:43

Next Meeting- November 15, 2022, 7:00

Bolton Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey Summary and Analysis



A project of the Bolton Diversity Commission

Written by Amanda Gordon, MSW, Chair - Bolton Diversity Commission

With written contributions from Diversity Commission Members: Vice Chair Kawan Gordon, Jennifer Cyr and input from Paula Myers, John Toomey, Rhea Klein, Anne Decker, Milton Ives and Daniel Bergin

Released October 2022

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Town of Bolton Diversity Commission (The Commission) was created by the Bolton Board of Selectman in 2021 to advise and assist the Board with issues of diversity, equity and inclusion that may exist within the town government and community-at-large. The Commission, in an effort to assess the feelings and experiences of other town residents, employees and students regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), deemed it necessary as a first step to create and distribute a survey to these constituents. This would ensure the assessment might be as representative as possible and not only reflect the views of Commission members.

Throughout the process of creating The Commission and the survey, statements were made by Selectpersons indicating surprise that there may be issues related to DEI in the Bolton community, within government and the broader community. There was an overall desire expressed that everyone in town should have respect for one-another and that the town should be welcoming to all and if there are issues, “we have to fix it.”¹

The results of this survey, while not analyzed from a standpoint of statistical significance, do indicate that there are survey respondents that have felt disrespected and unwelcomed in our Town either by town employees or by the words or actions of other community residents. As the expressed desire is that Bolton be a Town that is welcoming to all, the survey responses suggest changes will need to be made in order to attain this goal.

Survey Limitations and Results

The survey was distributed via social media, via flyers posted at business and via hardcopy at key locations throughout town. All responses were voluntary. The Commission acknowledges that due to the method of distribution which required respondents to choose to answer the survey questions there is a self-selection bias. This means that ultimately, there may be something that separates those that chose to respond to the survey, from those that opted not to respond to the survey, such as having stronger feelings about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, either positive, or negative.

A total of 182 survey responses were collected, 162 of which were from current residents representing a 4.1% response rate. While, the Commission had hoped that the survey respondents would reflect the overall population of Bolton, several populations are over-represented including 35-44 year olds, females, those with higher educational attainment, those with a disability and those with a left-leaning political ideology.

Findings

Through the quantitative comparison of Average Ratings and Favorability Percentages for the overall respondent pool and identified subpopulation and the surfacing of topics present in the responses to narrative questions, the Commission identified several themes that have been presented as general findings. First, respondents did not agree about whether or not Bolton is a welcoming town, though many indicated a desire that it be. Second, there is subset of respondents who feel strongly that diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are unnecessary and unwelcome in Bolton. Third, persons with disabling conditions in town reported negative opinions about the town and provided examples of these negative experiences. Four, many of the minority subpopulations analyzed reported reduced rates of a “sense of belonging” than other majority groups, even in cases where these groups rated Bolton more favorably in other parts of the survey. Five, affordability, specifically affordable housing, was elevated as a barrier to increasing diversity, equity and inclusion in town. Six, residents are desirous of having more opportunities to engage in person with other residents both at events with a DEI lens or focus as well as in general as a means to get to know one another.

¹ Bolton Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes January 5, 2021 https://cdn.branchcms.com/EzoyNLyL2-1704/docs/boards/selectmen/2021/minutes/BOS_01-05-21_Minutes.pdf

Recommendations

Following the identification of the aforementioned findings, the Commission came up with recommendations that members felt would address the concerns surfaced through the survey. These recommendations are as follows:

- The Board of Selectmen should adopt a formal proclamation declaring a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as a community priority so that the official stance of the town is made public.
- The Board of Selectmen should institute a permanent voluntary Human Rights and Equity Commission to continue the work on diversity, equity and inclusion and aid in the monitoring and implementing of these recommendations and others that may follow.
- The Town should implement formal, regular, diversity, equity and inclusion training for all Town Employees, elected officials and volunteers serving on a permanent Town Committee or Commission. Such training will provide individuals with the knowledge and skillsets to respond appropriately when discriminatory and unacceptable behaviors or comments are made in public settings to ensure that no one feels excluded due to their in-group identities.
- The Town of Bolton should make increasing affordable housing a top priority. This would increase Bolton accessibility to new, diverse residents while ensuring it remains a viable place to live for our current residents and hopefully reduce what is expected to be an ongoing decline in Bolton's population.
- The Town should take further action to assess how Bolton is ensuring the rights of Bolton's residents with disabilities are being met. These details were outside of the scope of this survey but the negative response from this population suggests more must be done to ensure Bolton is accessible and can be enjoyed by people with disabilities.
- The Town should be deliberate about providing opportunities for Bolton residents to engage with one another on the topics of diversity, equity and inclusion to increase awareness and empathy through the building of relationships.

The full details of the results, analysis and findings can be found in the full Commission Report that follows and will be posted on the Town of Bolton's website along with the survey data at <https://town.boltonct.org/>.

Bolton Diversity Commission

In January of 2021, the Bolton Board of Selectman unanimously voted to create a Diversity Commission (The Commission) to advise and assist the Board with issues of diversity and inclusion that may arise within the town government and community-at-large, see Resolution, [Attachment A](#). The Commission was formed with the intent to ensure that the Town of Bolton is welcoming to all current and future residents, students, businesses and employees. In November 2021 the commission held their first meeting. In March 2022 the Diversity Commission released two surveys to the public (one for school aged youth and one for adults) to assess the status of diversity and inclusion issues in town. The commission made it a priority to conduct this community assessment and collect input on the topic from a group of those who live, learn and work in Bolton. The survey was completely confidential and open to the public for two months. This report covers the results and analysis of the adult survey ([Attachment C](#)).

Methodology

The Diversity Commission formed a two-person sub-committee to work on the creation of the survey for presentation to the broader Commission. It was developed over a period of three months and was presented to the Board of Selectmen at their March 2022 Regular meeting. The Board of Selectman approved the survey and the distribution plan with changes as discussed during the meeting.

Survey Development

Early on in its formation the Bolton Diversity Commission agreed to a set of working definitions for some key terms related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to allow the members of the commission to utilize a common language and increase understanding between members, [Attachment B](#). Included in this list were the terms Diversity and Equity. The Commission defined the two terms as follows:

DIVERSITY– the condition of having or being composed of differing elements, including an infinite range of individual unique characteristics, identities and experiences such as race, gender, ideology, religion, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, socioeconomic status, educational background, geographic location, marital and parental status and more.

EQUITY – the absence of avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically. The achievement of equal OUTCOMES, which may require the unequal provision of resources or opportunity to address imbalances created by systems of oppression.

As such, the Commission utilized this inclusive definition of Diversity when creating the Diversity Survey and sought to include questions that would identify if there were inequitable outcomes and experiences occurring in town.

The subcommittee began by doing research into existing surveys created or used by municipalities and city governments to assess diversity, equity and inclusion issues within their local communities. Many resources identified were targeted to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts within the workspace and were not always compatible with the efforts of The Commission. Ultimately, five DEI survey resources were utilized as inspiration for the development of the Town of Bolton Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey. These five resources were as follows:

1. The City of Melrose Massachusetts Diversity, Equity &, Inclusion survey 2021
2. The Springfield, MO Inclusion survey 2020
3. The West Des Moines Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Survey 2019
4. The Methuen, MA, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey 2021
5. Polco Community Equity and Inclusion Survey

In some instances questions from these various tools were used verbatim in the Bolton DEI survey, in other instances the questions were adapted by the Commission to better reflect the needs in Bolton. Attempts were made to make the language of the survey as inclusive as possible.

The final survey contained a mix of Likert scale, multiple choice and open ended questions in an effort to collect both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. Respondents were also asked a variety of multiple choice, drop down questions related to their demographics and their personal identities. All questions were voluntary and thus not answered by every respondent. Additionally, many of these questions included an option to choose “other” and to type in a response of their choosing. These answers are included in the Results section of this report.

All respondents were asked to enter their zip code and to respond to a question which asked about their affiliation with the Town of Bolton. The Commission made the decision not to use a service that would verify the identity of each respondent as it was deemed that would serve as an increased barrier to participation. Alternatively, these questions were utilized to identify invalid respondents with no connection to Bolton, Connecticut.

Survey Distribution

The survey was available in hardcopy format and online. The online version of the survey was created using Google Forms, which is a free resource, making the survey accessible to anyone with the link. The link to the online survey was shared via the Town of Bolton website and Facebook page and shared to other town pages and groups on social media. Reminders about the survey were re-shared every two weeks on social media during the two-month response collection phase. Additionally, the link was shared twice through the emailed Bolton Bulletin, and flyers with a QR code to access the survey were posted at local businesses. Hardcopies were distributed to the Town Hall, Senior Center, and Library.

Survey Limitations

The Commission acknowledges that due to the method of distribution which required respondents to choose to answer the survey questions there is a self-selection bias. This means that ultimately, there may be something that separates those that chose to respond to the survey, from those that opted not to respond to the survey such as having stronger feelings about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, either positive, or negative. Additionally, upon analysis of the survey and review of results, it became apparent that some populations were inadvertently left out of Questions 5 or 7 which impeded the ability of the Commission to assess how welcoming and how discriminatory Bolton and its residents are for various populations. This included those who identified with a minority sexual orientation, those without secondary education, those with other than English as a preferred language, and those with lower incomes. As further detailed below, while the Commission had hoped that the survey respondents would reflect the overall population of Bolton, several populations are over-represented including 35-44 year olds, females, those with higher educational attainment, those with a disability and those with a left-leaning political ideology.

Survey Analysis

The survey collected voluntary demographic and descriptor data from respondents. This allowed the survey responses to be analyzed by groups of people who identified similarly.

When considering which demographic questions to ask and what to analyze consideration was given to group identities which belong to protected classes. According to State of Connecticut law, discrimination is illegal across four different types of transactions: housing, employment, credit and the full and equal enjoyment of goods, services or facilities, for the following classes: age, ancestry, color, learning disability, marital status, intellectual disability, national origin, physical disability, mental disability, race, religious creed, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation and status as a veteran. Additional protected classes for housing transactions include: lawful source of income, use of a service animal, and familial status. For employment transactions, those with a prior legal / criminal history may also be protected.² While the survey was not necessarily assessing Bolton’s performance around these four transaction types it did directly and indirectly allude to housing, employment and enjoyment of services and spaces, making these categorizations appropriate jumping off points for the analysis of survey results.

² <https://portal.ct.gov/CHRO/Complaint-Process/Complaint-Process/Who-is-Protected#:~:text=Age%2C%20ancestry%2C%20color%2C%20learning,and%20status%20as%20a%20veteran.>

Binary Factors

For the purpose of analysis, most of the identifiers were turned into binary factors by grouping responses together. The method for creating these binary factors is detailed below.

Military Participation

Respondents were asked “Are/Were you a member of the U.S. Armed Forces?” with the response options of: I have not been in the military, Active Military, Reservist, ROTC and Veteran. For the purposes of analysis a Military Participation factor was created. Those who responded “I have not been in the Military,” who left the answer blank, or filled in “other,” were listed as “No” for Military Participation. All other responses were categorized as “Yes.”

BIPOC

Respondents were asked “What is your racial/ethnic identity? (Choose all that apply.)” with the response options of: Spanish, Hispanic, or Latin(o)(a)(x), Arabic or Middle Eastern, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander, Black or African American, White. For the purposes of analysis a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) factor was created. Respondents who checked off only “White,” who left the answer blank or filled in “other,” were given a BIPOC response of “No.” All other responses were categorized as “Yes.”

Post-Secondary Education

Respondents were asked “What is your highest completed level of education?” with the response options of: some high school, high school graduate or GED, Some College/ Technical Degree/ Associates Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, Master’s Degree, Doctoral or Professional Degree. For the purposes of analysis a Post-Secondary Education factor was created. Respondents who checked off “some high school” or “High School Graduate or GED,” or who left the answer blank or filled in “other,” were given a Post- Secondary Education response of “No.” All other responses were categorized as “Yes.”

Minority Sexual Orientation

Respondents were asked “Which term best describes your sexual orientation?” with the response options of: Asexual, Bisexual, Gay/Lesbian/Heterosexual, Pansexual, Queer, Questioning, and Other. For the purposes of analysis a Minority Sexual Orientation factor was created. Respondents who checked off “Heterosexual,” or who left the answer blank or filled in “other,” were given a Minority Sexual Orientation response of “No.” All other responses were categorized as “Yes.”

Minority Gender Identify

Respondents were asked “What is your gender identity?” with the response options of: Male, Female, Transgender, Questioning, Gender Non-conforming or Non-Binary, and Other. For the purposes of analysis a Minority Gender Identity factor was created. Respondents who checked off “Male” or “Female” or who left the answer blank or filled in “other,” were given a Minority Gender Identity response of “No.” All other responses were categorized as “Yes.”

Other

Other questions were asked as Binary questions in the survey lending themselves to simple analysis. These questions included:

- **Disabling Condition:** Do you have a physical, mental, or emotional condition that impacts and/or shapes your participation in work and society? Yes or No
- **English Preference:** English your first/preferred language? Yes Or No
- **Immigrant:** Which best describes your country of origin? My country of Origin is the USA or I am originally from another country.

Non-Binary Factors

Some demographic and descriptor questions either did not easily lend themselves to binary factors or required more nuanced analysis and therefore were left as they were or consolidated into fewer groupings. This includes the following factors.

Political Affiliation

Respondents were asked “How would you characterize your political views?” with the response options of: Far Left, Liberal, Moderate, Conservative, Far Right, Undecided, and Other. For the purposes of analysis a Political Affiliation factor was created. Respondents who checked off “Far Left” or “Liberal” were grouped into “Left leaning.” Those who responded “Conservative” or “Far Right” were grouped into “Right Leaning.” Those who responded “Moderate” were left as “Moderate.” Those who responded “undecided” were left as “undecided” while “other” and blanks were grouped as “unknown.”

Other

Other questions where responses were utilized for analysis with more than one option include the following:

- **Income Bracket:** Roughly what Area Median Income range does your annual household income fall into?
 - Below 30% of the AMI (< \$22K for an individual or \$31K for a family of 4)
 - Between 30-50% of the AMI (\$22K-\$36.5K for an individual, \$31K-\$52K for a family of 4)
 - Between 50-80% of the AMI (\$36.5K-\$56K for an individual, \$52K - \$80K for a family of 4)
 - Between 80-120% of the AMI (\$56K-\$84K for an individual, or \$80k-\$120K for a family of 4)
 - Greater than 120% of the AMI (>\$84K for an individual, or >\$120K for a family of 4)
- **Age:** Which category reflects your age group?
 - 18-24
 - 24-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-64
 - 65-74
 - 75+
- **Religion:** What is your religious or spiritual identity?
 - Agnostic/ Atheist,
 - Buddhist,
 - Christian,
 - Hindu,
 - Jewish,
 - Muslim,
 - Sikh,
 - Spiritual but no religious affiliation,
 - No affiliation,
 - Other
- **Bolton Affiliation:** Please let us know which of the following applies to you.
 - I am a current resident of Bolton, CT.
 - I currently work in Bolton, CT but am not a resident.
 - I am a prior resident of Bolton, CT.
 - I previously worked in Bolton, CT.
 - I was a previous student in Bolton, CT.
 - None of the above.

Results

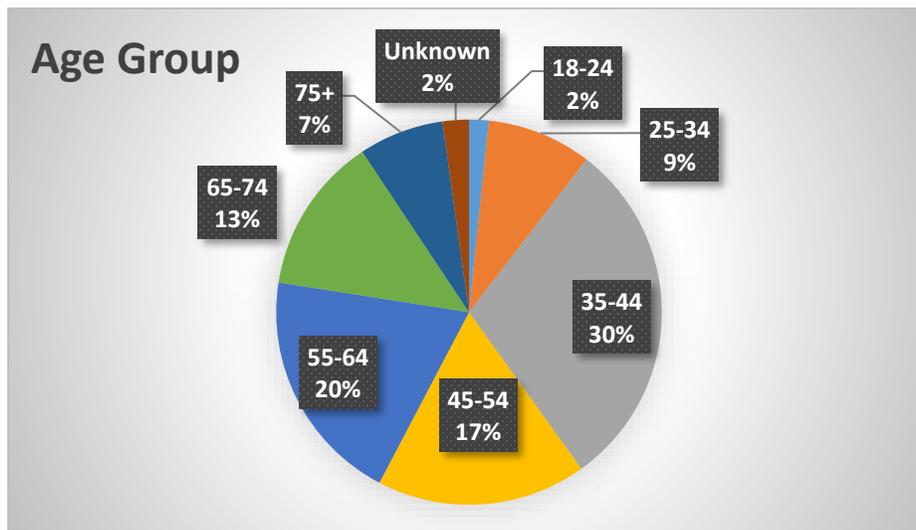
Demographics of Respondents and Comparison to Overall Town Population

Overall 182 responses were received, four of which were completed via hardcopy and the remainder of which were collected via the Google Forms survey online. Of the 182 responses, 162 were from people that are current residents of Bolton, CT. According to the 2020 census Bolton has an estimated 4,902 residents, about 3,991 of whom are adults who may have responded to this survey. With 162 surveys by residents this represents a 4.1% response rate.

For the purposes of the comparisons to Bolton demographics below, responses from all 182 surveys are taken into consideration despite the fact that 20 respondents do not currently live in town.

Age Group

Below is a chart that shows the reported age range of all 182 respondents. Four respondents (2%) did not respond to this question and are indicated as unknown below.



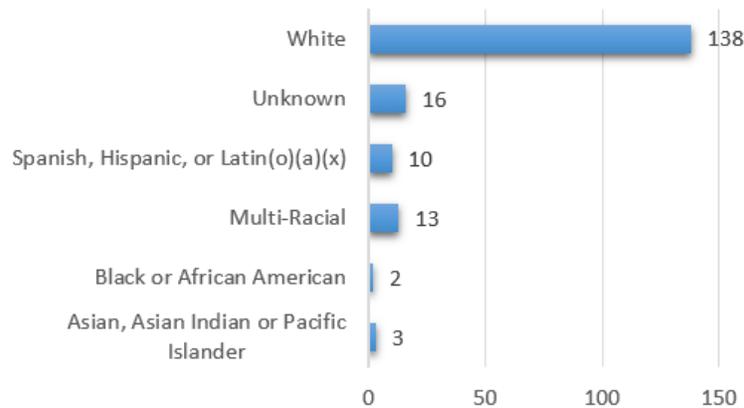
Compared to 2020 Census data from Bolton, CT, the survey respondents were more likely to be 35-44 and much less likely to be 18-24 than the population of Bolton. Other age ranges are not too far off from their distribution among Bolton adults.

Age	Survey Respondents	2020 Census
18-24	2%	12.5%
25-34	9%	7.8%
35-44	30%	16.1%
45-54	18%	19.0%
55-64	20%	19.6%
65-74	13%	15.8%
75+	7%	9.1%
Unknown	2%	0

Race / Ethnicity

The chart below outlines the Race and Ethnicity of respondents based on the Simple Race category outlined above.

Respondent by Race/Ethnicity



Compared to the composition of Bolton residents, the survey respondents (excluding those who did not identify a race or chose to enter an “other” response that could not be categorized) are slightly more likely to identify as black, indigenous or person of color. This may be expected given the nature of the survey and its focus on diversity and equity.

Race	% of Respondents by Race Category	% of Bolton Residents by Race Category
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	2%	3%
Black or African American	1%	1%
Multi-Racial	8%	2%
Spanish, Hispanic, or Latin(o)(a)(x)	6%	6%
White	83%	88%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Language Spoken in the Home

Respondents were asked to choose whether English was their first/preferred language. Four (4) of the survey respondents did not answer this question. Of the remaining 178 respondents, five (5) indicated that English was not their first/preferred language. When compared to Language Spoken at Home in the 2020 census data for Bolton residents, survey respondents were more likely to have English as their first/preferred/spoken language than the overall population of Bolton. The questions in the survey and the census were asked differently and this must be taken into consideration when making the comparison below. According to the Census data, those who spoke languages other than English in the home includes Spanish (2.6%), Indo-European languages (8.1%) and Asian and Pacific Islander Languages (.2%).

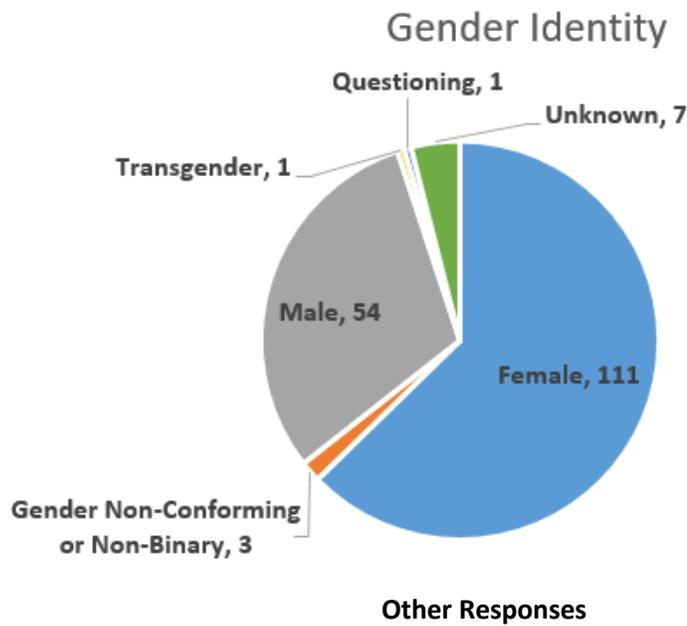
Language	% of Respondents by English as First/Preferred language	% of Bolton Residents By Language Spoken At Home
English / (English Only for Census)	97%	89.1%
Other Language	3%	10.9%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Native and Foreign Born

Survey respondents were asked whether their country of origin was the United States of America or another country. Six (6) respondents did not answer this question. Of the remaining 176 respondents, 12 (7%) indicated being foreign-born while 164 (93%) were born in the United States. This is comparable to the town as a whole with 8% reporting to be foreign-born in Census data.

Gender Identity

Below is a chart that shows the reported gender identity of 177 respondents. Seven (7) respondents did not answer this question and are indicated as unknown below. The remaining five (5) respondents chose “other” and specified their own response as listed below.



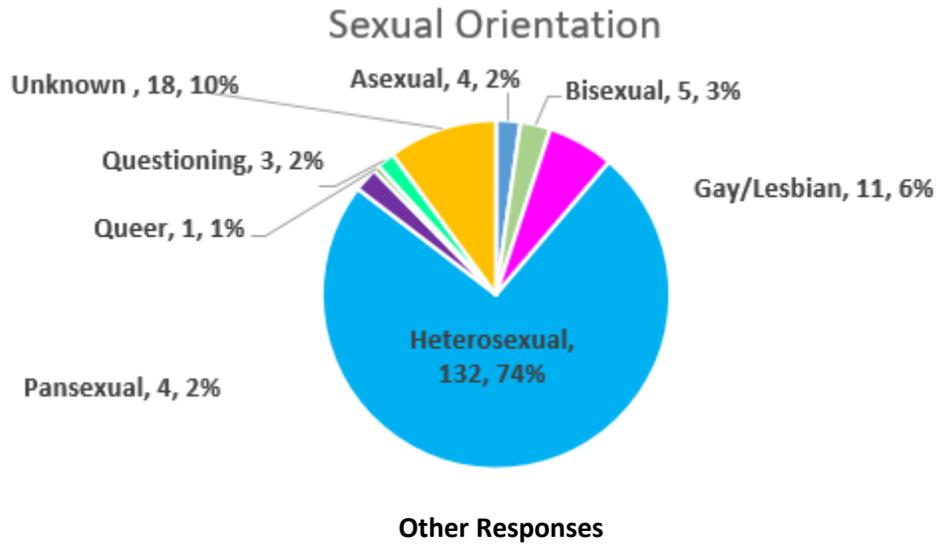
"None of your business because it should make zero difference to you."
"This is a stupid question which accepts a widespread falsehood."
"You have no right to ask, nor should it matter."
"There's only Male and female"
"Not Sure"

The Census asks respondents to choose their sex, not their gender identity. Therefore when comparing the two, this difference should be taken into consideration. Excluding respondents who answered the Gender Identity question with anything other than Male or Female the comparison to the overall population of Bolton according to the 2020 census is below. Survey respondents were much more likely to identify as Female than the overall population of Bolton.

Gender Identity/Sex	% of Respondents by Gender Identity	% of Bolton Residents by Sex
Male	32.7%	48.1%
Female	67.3%	51.9%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Sexual Orientation

Below is a chart that shows the reported Sexual Orientation of 178 respondents. Eighteen (18) respondents did not answer this question and are indicated as unknown below. The remaining four (4) respondents chose “other” and specified their own response as listed below. This data is not available on the Census site, so comparisons to the general town population are unavailable.



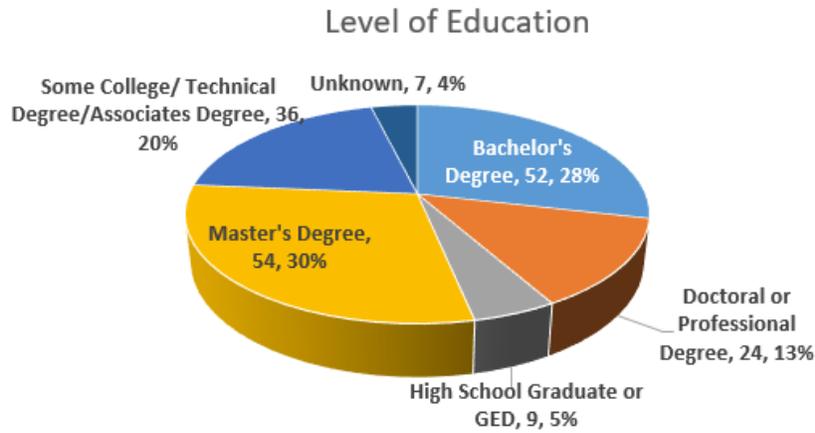
“Refuse to answer due to privacy...”
“Six out of the seven choices above are disorientations.”
“None of your business because it should make zero difference to you”
“Not important”

Military Status

Survey respondents were asked to identify their military status from a list of five options including no military service, active military, reserves and veterans. Eight (8) respondents did not answer this question. Of the remaining 174 respondents 14 indicated military involvement with 11 of those being veterans. While the Census data does not indicate an active or reserve military status it does ask about veteran status with 9.4% of residents being veterans compared to 6.3% of survey respondents. Therefore, veterans were slightly underrepresented amongst survey respondents than within the town as a whole.

Education Level

Below is a graph that shows the reported education level of all 182 respondents. When compared the overall population of Bolton, survey respondents were more likely to have attained a higher level of education. Due to the Census responses available for Education Level, some categories were combined to allow for this comparison and “unknown” responses were excluded with percentages being recalculated.



Education Level	% of Respondents by Edu. Level	% of Bolton Residents by Edu Level
High school or equivalent degree	5%	27.5%
Some college/ technical degree /Associates degree	21%	23.4%
Bachelor’s Degree	30%	23.9%
Graduate or Professional Degree	45%	20.8%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Household Income

Respondents were asked to estimate where their households fell with regard to the Area Median Income when provided with the earnings range for a household of one person and a household of four people. Fifteen (15) respondents did not answer this question. The responses of the remaining 167 are below. There is no comparable data from the census, however, the median family income in Bolton is listed as \$133,029 which is in line with the majority of survey respondents indicating they are over 120% of the AMI or \$120K for a family of four.

Row Labels	% of Respondents
Below 30% of the AMI (< \$22K for an individual or \$31K for a family of 4)	2.99%
Between 30-50% of the AMI (\$22K-\$36.5K for an individual, \$31K-\$52K for a family of 4)	4.19%
Between 50-80% of the AMI (\$36.5K-\$56K for an individual, \$52K - \$80K for a family of 4)	14.37%
Between 80-120% of the AMI (\$56K-\$84K for an individual, or \$80k-\$120K for a family of 4)	27.54%
Greater than 120% of the AMI (>\$84K for an individual, or >\$120K for a family of 4)	50.90%
Grand Total	100.00%

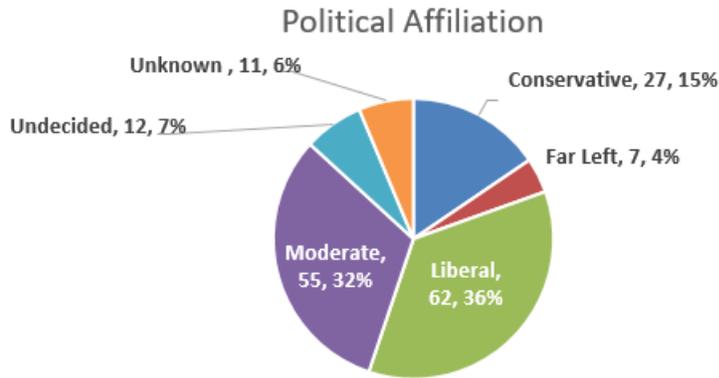
Conditions that Impact Participation/ Disabling Condition

Respondents were asked if they identified as having a physical, mental or emotional condition that impacts/shapes their participation in work and society. Wording for this question was intentionally chosen so that the connotation was not negative as the word “Disability” indicates. Six (6) respondents did not answer this question. Of the remaining 176 respondents 28 (16%) responded “Yes.” According to the Census, about 10.3% of Bolton residents live with a disability

such as hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care and independent living difficulty. Therefore, survey respondents with a condition that impacts their participation were over represented compared to the overall town. As the Census does not specifically mention emotional/behavioral conditions, the Census data could be an underrepresentation of the town’s total population living with a condition that impacts their participation in society.

Political Views

Below is a chart that shows the reported political views of 174 respondents. Eleven (11) respondents did not answer this question and are indicated as unknown below. The remaining eight (8) respondents chose “other” and specified their own response as listed below.



Other Responses

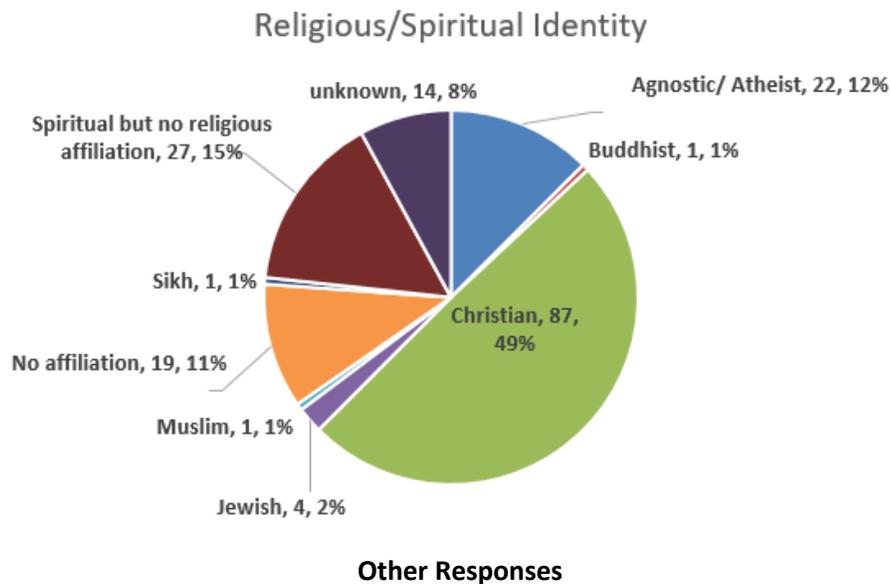
“Bull Moose Party”
“Depending on what we are voting on”
“Informed, principled, and rational. In current parlance, a racist bigot.”
“Liberal conservative”
“Moderately Libertarian”
“None of your business because it should make zero difference to you”
“Once again, you decide to focus on labels. Not very inclusive, is it?”
“this is why you are making issues”

This data is not available on the Census site, so comparisons to the general town population are unavailable. However, voter registration from March of 2021 had the following breakdown suggesting that the survey respondents were more likely to be liberal/ left leaning in their political ideologies compared to the average Bolton resident.

Party	Number	Percentage
Democrat	1129	30.5%
Republican	988	26.7%
Unaffiliated	1522	41.1%
Other	66	1.8%
Total	3705	1

Religion/ Spiritual Identity

Below is a chart that shows the reported religious/spiritual identity of 176 respondents. Fourteen (14) respondents did not answer this question and are indicated as unknown below. The remaining eight (6) respondents chose “other” and specified their own response as listed below. Census data is not available for religious or spiritual identities, therefore no comparison to the Bolton general population can be made.



“Unitarian Universalist” (3)
“Pagan”
“None of your business because it should make zero difference to you”
“I don't belong to any organized religion. I'm a devout Catholic.”

Bolton Affiliation

Survey respondents were asked to choose their affiliation to Bolton from a set of mutually exclusive options. As this question was used to validate responses, an “other” option was not provided. All 182 respondents chose an answer from the list provided. Results are below.

Bolton Affiliation	Count	Rate
I am a current resident of Bolton, CT	162	89.01%
I am a prior resident of Bolton, CT.	9	4.95%
I currently work in Bolton, CT but am not a resident.	2	1.10%
I previously worked in Bolton, CT.	2	1.10%
I was a previous student in Bolton, CT.	7	3.85%
None of the above.	0	0.00%
Grand Total	182	100.00%

Likert Scale Questions

Results of the survey were analyzed by assigning weights to each response as outlined below. Additionally, responses were assigned a favorability rating as outlined below. Respondents who chose “Don’t Know” or left the question blank were removed from the weighted and favorability rating scores. The number and percentage of respondents who responded to each question with other than a “Don’t know” or “blank” response are indicated below for each question. The more respondents who answered the question, the more valid and representative the response is.

Questions 1-5 – Rating the Town

For questions 1- 5, responses were weighted as follows Poor =1, Fair = 2, Good = 3, Excellent = 4 and Don't Know = 0 (which was excluded). Then the average score across all respondents who answered the question was obtained. Average scores of 1-2.5 indicate an unfavorable response with scores closer to 0 being the least favorable. Average scores of 2.5- 4 indicate a more favorable response, with scores closer to 4 being the most favorable. This allowed responses to be viewed on a scale. Additionally responses were grouped with Good and Excellent indicating a "Favorable" response and Poor or Fair, indicating "unfavorable responses. This allowed for a binary grouping of each response.

1) Please rate Bolton on each of the following	Avg Rating	% Favorable Response	# Responses	% Responses
Making all residents feel welcome	2.49	49.7%	167	91.76%
Attracting people from diverse backgrounds to live, work or own businesses in Bolton	1.95	31.17%	154	84.62%
Valuing and demonstrating respect for residents from diverse backgrounds	2.37	45.1%	153	84.07%
Treating all residents fairly	2.5	52.20%	159	87.36%
Providing a safe and secure environment for residents of all backgrounds	2.52	54.72%	159	87.36%
Providing equal employment opportunities to residents of all backgrounds	2.54	51.49%	101	55.49%
Providing equal access to housing for residents of all backgrounds	2.27	40.00%	135	74.18%
Welcoming residents from all backgrounds to participate in local government and community decision-making	2.47	48.03%	152	83.52%
Creating awareness of Bolton's diversity	2.08	32.26%	155	85.16%
Offering gathering places for diverse groups to get together	2.04	32.39%	142	78.02%

2) Please rate the Bolton TOWN GOVERNMENT on each of the following	Avg Rating	% Favorable Response	# Responses	% Responses
Creating a community welcoming to residents of all backgrounds	2.45	47.02%	151	82.97%
Treating all residents with respect	2.61	55.77%	156	85.71%
Treating all residents fairly	2.58	55.03%	149	81.87%
Providing opportunities for residents with different opinions to voice their concerns	2.52	52.83%	159	87.36%
Providing translated materials on the Town website and through Town departments	2.43	48.94%	94	51.65%
Ensuring the town is well-designed for individuals with differing abilities to get around freely, and participate fully in the community.	2.41	46.40%	125	68.68%

3) Please rate the Bolton SCHOOL SYSTEM on each of the following	Avg Rating	% Favorable Response	# Responses	% Responses
Creating a community welcoming to residents of all backgrounds	2.61	56.12%	139	76.37%
Treating all residents with respect	2.60	56.93%	137	75.27%
Treating all residents fairly	2.58	56.52%	138	75.82%
Providing opportunities for residents with different opinions to voice their concerns	2.57	56.92%	130	71.43%
Providing translated materials on the Town website and through Town departments	2.43	50.00%	82	45.05%

4) Please rate the Bolton LAW ENFORCEMENT on each of the following	Avg Rating	% Favorable Response	# Responses	% Responses
Creating a community welcoming to residents of all backgrounds	2.74	60.95%	105	57.69%
Treating all residents with respect	2.77	64.86%	111	60.99%
Treating all residents fairly	2.79	65.45%	110	60.44%

5) Please rate how the Bolton community does with ensuring the following groups of people feel welcome in Bolton.	Avg Rating	% Favorable Response	# Responses	% Responses
People with differing abilities (physical, intellectual, developmental, neurodiverse, emotional, behavioral)	2.43	48.00%	125	68.68%
People who identify as transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming.	2.24	39.64%	111	60.99%
People who identify as male	3.21	81.95%	133	73.08%
People who identify as female	2.96	73.13%	134	73.63%
People who identify as belonging to a minority/marginalized race/ethnicity (i.e. Black, Asian, Indigenous, Arabic, Latin(o)(a)(x), etc.)	2.40	47.29%	129	70.88%
People whose first language is not English	2.39	45.38%	119	65.38%
People who are not U.S. citizens	2.38	44.04%	109	59.89%
People of non-Christian faiths	2.59	52.59%	116	63.74%
People who are veterans or military personnel	3.18	82.84%	134	73.63%
People who are older	3.03	78.52%	149	81.87%
People who are younger	2.79	63.70%	135	74.18%
People who have lower income levels	2.29	40.31	129	70.88%

Question 6 – Personal Experience

Question 6 asked respondents to choose the response that matched their view for seven different statements about the respondent’s personal experiences. The scale ranged from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) with Don’t Know rated as neutral (3). For this question responses of Strongly Agree and Agree were rated as “Favorable,” while Strongly Disagree and Disagree were rated as “Unfavorable.” For question 6, respondents who answered “Don’t Know” were included in the weighted analysis but not included in the favorability rating. Respondents who did not answer were excluded from the formulas.

6) Please choose the answer that matches your view:	Avg Rating	% Favorable Response	# Responses	% Responses
I can be my full, authentic self in Bolton.	3.49	71.43%	179	98.35%
I am likely to recommend living in Bolton to a friend or family member who asks	3.49	72.48%	180	98.90%
I can raise issues about unfair treatment without fear of consequences	3.11	55.63%	180	98.90%
I feel a sense of belonging in Bolton.	3.42	68.67%	179	98.35%
I encourage people in Bolton to share their unique perspectives and experiences related to their background	3.81	83.44%	179	98.35%
I frequently ask a person from a different group (race/ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) about how my behavior has impacted them.	2.85	43.64%	175	96.15%
I frequently interact with people from other backgrounds in Bolton	3.32	61.87%	177	97.25%

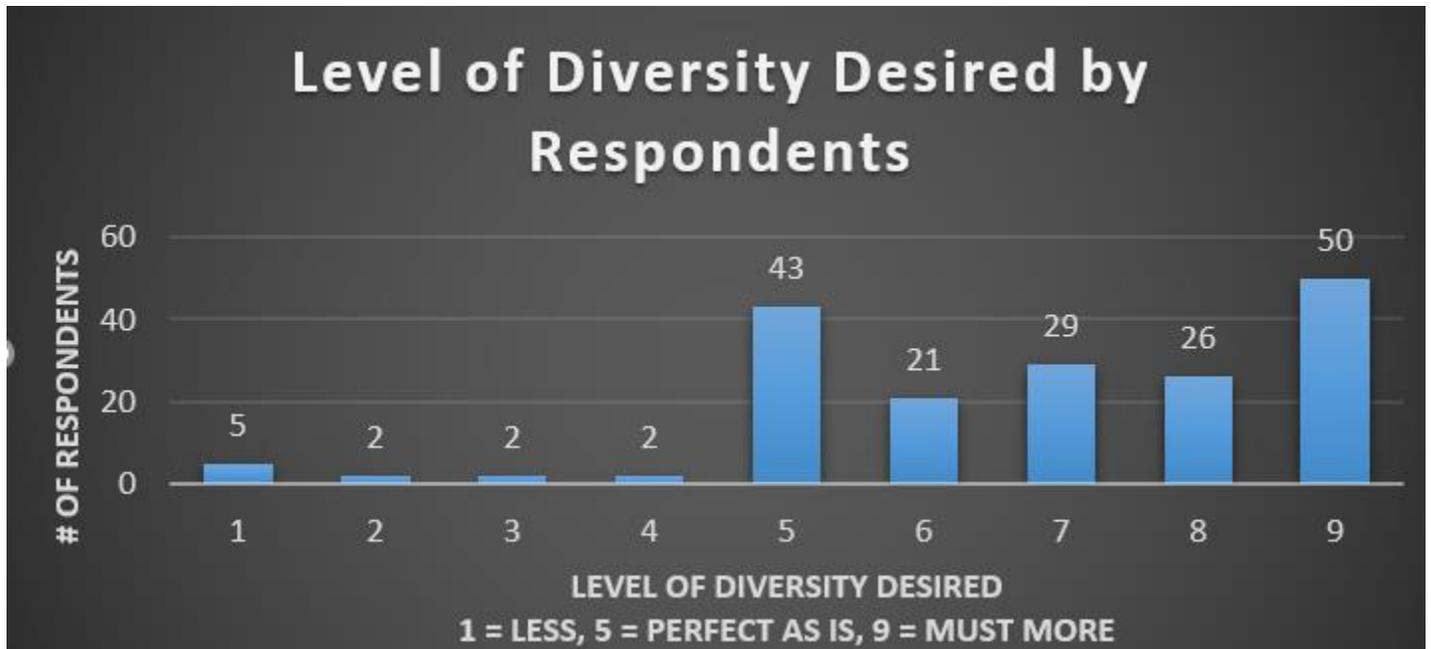
Question 7 – Experience of Discrimination

Question 7 asked respondents if they had experienced discrimination in Bolton in the last 5 years based on different identities they might associate themselves with. As not all respondents associate with all of the below identities response rates for this question varied greatly, as such the data below indicates the number of respondents who indicated they had been discriminated against based on the identified factor.

7) To what extent, if at all, have YOU personally experienced discrimination based on each of the following in the Town of Bolton in the past 5 years?	# Of Respondents who said “Yes”
Age	18
Gender Identity	12
Race/s	21
National Origin (Birth Country)	14
Religion	17
Political Affiliation	85
Differing Physical Ability	16
Differing Intellectual/Developmental Ability	19
Differing Emotional/Behavioral Ability	22
Sexual Orientation	20

Question 8 – Diversity level

Question 8 asked people the following “Please choose a number on the scale based on how much diversity YOU feel Bolton should have, with (1) being much less, (9) being much more and (5) being you think Bolton's diversity level is perfect just as it is.” Of the 182 total respondents 180 answered this question. Below are the results. The average desired level of diversity on a scale of 1-9 was 6.8 indicating that most respondents felt that more diversity is needed in Bolton.



Narrative Questions³

Responses to narrative questions were reviewed and grouped into categories with other similar responses or “themes.” The narrative questions and resultant themes for each are outlined below. Themes are listed in order starting with the theme that had the most responses, to the least. In each instance, not every response lent itself to categorization and thus were not included in the grouping of responses into themes.

Question 9 - Strengths

Respondents were asked to “Please describe a couple of Bolton’s strengths with respect to diversity, equity or inclusion.” Of the 182 respondents, 92, or 50%, provided a response to this prompt. Through the analysis of these responses six (6) different themes emerged as outlined below.

Bolton’s welcoming to all as a strength

Just over a quarter of responses (25), the majority, fell into this category. There was a sentiment that Bolton is a welcoming community that most are supportive of all other people regardless of their identities, or that the majority of people support diversity, equity and inclusion.

- *“I believe the community has a strong base of welcoming, supportive, and driven individuals that are ensuring [diversity equity and inclusion] are a reality for Bolton.”*
- *“Everyone is cared about by the residents. Great diversity and good people.”*
- *“When given the opportunity to explore and engage in our limited diversity most of the town embraces it especially on a neighborhood level.”*

³ All quotations included from surveys were copied directly as they were written by survey respondents with any spelling or grammar issues that may have existed.

- *“Feel that most people I know in Bolton respect all people regardless of background, genuinely care and are willing to lend a helping hand when necessary.”*

Bolton Schools and Town Services as strengths

Another good number (18) of responses were focused on how the school system and some town services are strengths for Bolton. Some of the comments simply mention the services/ schools while others were more detailed in drawing the linkage to DEI.

- *“The library, recreation, senior center and social services department do a good job with respect to equity and inclusion.”*
- *“The school system works hard to educate and integrate across all backgrounds and can be a safe place for students of different backgrounds.”*
- *“My children went through the school system, and I believe that students with diverse backgrounds were treated fairly and with respect. There is a significant amount of volunteer opportunities to join boards, such as a new group focused on diversity. Also, The Bolton Women's Club, along with children's scouting and sports opportunities have been inclusive.”*

Unable to identify any strengths

Fourteen (14) respondents were unable to come up with any strengths that Bolton has related to DEI. A few respondents indicated being “*unsure*” about strengths which could indicate a negative attitude towards Bolton performance around DEI or could indicate a lack of familiarity presenting them from identifying strengths. Other respondents were more clearly intended as an indictment of Bolton as it relates to DEI.

- *“None, there is no diversity, equity, or inclusion in the town”*
- *“Unfortunately I don't see any strengths in this area and have personal experiences to back up my feelings”*
- *“Nothing honestly. They've tried recently but it feels forced and not genuine.”*

The Commission, this survey and the BLM Protest as strengths

On the opposite side of the spectrum, about an equal number of participants, eleven (11), identified the Commission, survey and such actions like the BLM protest as steps in the right direction.

- *“This survey is promising in that it is bringing these issues to light and hopefully start conversations about how to make Bolton a better place to live and work for all minorities.”*
- *“The Town saw fit to create a Diversity Commission. It does seem like racial/ethnic diversity is growing in town and we have more diversity than some of our other rural neighboring towns.”*
- *“Hosted a blm rally in spring 2020, making a DEI committee”*
- *“Willingness to improve, this survey speaks for itself and current town leadership.”*

Bolton’s lack of attention to DEI as a strength

Nine (9) of the responses fell into this category. These responses indicated that it is harmful and divisive to focus on elements of diversity, equity and inclusion. A few examples of these responses are below:

- *“I think this survey, and the time our representatives are spending on these non-issues, are a complete waste of time.”*
- *“That we don't propagate the evils of DEI. That we don't subscribe to the racist, hateful, and the divisiveness of CRT. That we believe in strong family values.”*
- *“Bolton is welcoming to all people. I feel that this commission is creating (or helping) racial feelings.”*
- *“The biggest strengths are we do not judge people on their skin color, sex, orientation or other discriminatory labels as this survey suggests should be done.”*

An inability to identify strengths because of the lack of Diversity in Bolton

A handful of respondents, similar to the above, didn’t identify strengths but rather drew attention to what they feel is Bolton’s lack of diversity.

- *“The town is exceptionally non-diverse, though I don’t know if it is intentionally this way or just inertia.”*
“Diversity and equity are not attributes I readily identified with the town after moving here. The lack of diversity seems to

have been a factor in choosing to live here for some of the people I have met. For families with a child or children with disabilities, under current school administration, there seems to have been an outsized focus on minimizing costs. Equity?"

- *"Bolton strength is keeping itself segregating from anyone who isn't cis gendered, heterosexual, and white." [Interpreted as sarcasm]*

Question 10 - Challenges

Respondents were asked to "Please describe a couple of Bolton's challenges with respect to diversity, equity, or inclusion." About 60%, or 109, participants provided a response to this question. Eight (8) themes were identified amongst these responses.

Prejudice/ Discrimination/ Intolerance

Just under a quarter of respondents spoke about a general feel of prejudice, discrimination, bias and intolerance that is felt around town broadly, displayed on social media platforms or perceived to be held by certain people or departments.

- *"Everybody on every committee from the school board the Townhall everywhere you go it's all white people. And the racism is rampant."*
- *"I have heard racial slurs directed at my Muslim neighbors and was upset by this. I have heard of racism in the schools from students toward other students."*
- *Prejudicial attitudes regarding age, race, religion, income status and political affiliation have been freely demonstrated in municipal settings.*
- *"Many members of the town have conservative and traditional values that conflict with true diversity equity and inclusion. There is little tolerance for political and social values that don't match the norm. When people speak up in town around issues related to racism or diversity, they are often ridiculed or insulted on social media."*

Simply, we do not have nor explore ways to improve our town's diversity. I also believe there is a preconditioned adversity in not doing so. Sadly, we have members in the community who have demonstrated aversion to it. If a person of color is seen driving or even walking down our streets comments are made simply because someone thinks they do not belong.

Some community members think diversifying means bringing in lower income housing and crime which is the ultimate in discrimination and not the reality. The implicit bias in our community is so disheartening.

Although we truly are a welcoming community when we come to know one another there is so much that neighbors and the town need to learn - which should come from the BIPOC community not the white town managers. In addition, families of color and of various backgrounds seeking to purchase a home do not see themselves as welcome or identified here and ultimately decide to move to a community more welcoming which I can personally attest to after a friend decided to purchase in Manchester rather than Bolton. In regards to inclusion, there a few people in our community to "include" due to our lack of diversity so that word does not relate to Bolton currently."

Lack of Diversity

Just under 20% of respondents (21) identify lack of diversity as a challenge Bolton faces as it relates to DEI. Some respondents used this a jumping off point to make suggestions for improvements:

"More diverse leaders, teachers, fire fighters, etc would go a long way towards encouraging more diversity in Bolton."

Others were not optimistic about the diversity or future of diversity in Bolton.

- *"There is no sense of culture or diversity. What is Bolton's identity? People don't think of Bolton of being diverse. Why would they? Bolton is white."*
- *"The town is primarily white and I don't feel it is very welcoming and appealing to other groups."*
- *"When we moved here one of the big turn offs for us were the diversity numbers in town. We loved the town, the house we bought, the highly rated schools. But we were worried about raising our kids in a town that just doesn't reflect the actual diversity of the country."*

Lack of Affordability/ Affordable Housing

Just over 15% of respondents mentioned the cost of living/ housing/ lack of rentals as a challenge when it comes to Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

- *"Affordable housing for lower income families to have the opportunity to move here, increase the diversity in the Town office and school staffing"*
- *"The cost of living and taxes have a huge impact on who lives here. There is also no jobs available in Bolton because Bolton is not a business friendly town. It is nothing more than a bedroom community for people who work elsewhere."*
- *"Affordable housing for the disabled"*
- *"There are few places for low income to rent and work. Those that offer apartments are very discriminating. It's not a very friendly place for parents or single parents to rent."*

Aversion to change/ "old school" mentality

Ten (10), or 9%, of responses fell into a category in which they indicated that they feel many in Bolton see any change as negative because they want to keep the town the way it has been or was. As such these respondents feel this mentality is a barrier to DEI efforts in town.

- *"Older residents who have lived here for quite a while can be not as welcoming to new ideas around the town. It's a very well this is how we did it 40 years ago mentality at times."*
- *"Collectively strong resistance to change. People in town who speak and act like it is "their town" and others living here don't matter as much. There is an undercurrent of bigotry with some people who live here."*
- *"If you weren't born or raised here, you are told you don't matter!"*
- *"I see/hear a lot of "how it used to be" talk from the older longtime Bolton residents."*
- *"Comments focused on "not wanting to change our town" also create a hostile environment for someone from an "oppressed minority" who may be looking to move to town, who will see that the town is not open to change, i.e. bringing in people who are different."*

The DEI Commission/ DEI work as the challenge

Ten (10) participants provided a response that indicated that the efforts around DEI, including the commission and the survey, were unwelcome and part of the problem.

- *"Shove this PC crap that the dems/progressives R shoving down our throats & let me live in peace, I earned all of what I have & I will not pander nor cater to the perpetually aggrieved 13%"*
- *"Any challenges in Bolton come from small and loud fringe elements parroting social media talking points that most people do not care about, nor do they want their tax dollars addressing. Bolton has enough issues with lack of tax revenue and businesses. Wasting time addressing non-existent equality issues is yet another way to waste our tax dollars."*
- *"Relating to your Commission! This Commission appears to have an agenda which doesn't benefit the citizens of Bolton! I feel very sad to realize people on this commission dislike the town of Bolton so much."*
- *"I personally think we over compensate for many individuals with diversity I have seen many things at the school where the good of one has outweighed the good of many with respect to diversity issues"*

School failure to serve people with disabilities/differences as a challenge (9)

Nine (9) participants specifically mentioned the schools system and treatment towards students or parents with disabilities or who are perceived as different as being a challenge for Bolton.

- *"If your child is different in any way, you should move. Parents are not accepting of children with disabilities; they are bullied relentlessly and the parents are shunned. I've applied in the past to board positions, no response. I don't feel welcome in this town at all, and the only thing we participate in here is the land trust (they are welcoming)."*
- *"now that my children are getting older I'm noticing the school system doesn't necessarily operate based on what's best for students, but what they feel they want to deal with. They seem to sweep sexual harassment between students under the rug quickly, and with little discipline for the offender. They push back on parents looking for student related services like 504 plans, for kids who have legitimate diagnosed disabilities. The more people I speak with, the more I'm finding that the district is more interested in pushing parents to not have a 504, but to just accept that the school will make Accommodations for students on a more informal basis. I find this strange and concerning."*
- *"The entire town but especially the School System has HUGE issues in this department. Whether race issues or learning disabilities or physical ailments. I have stacks of information and documents as well as personal accounts from not just myself but other Bolton families to support my statements."*

Town Employees or Services as a challenge (5)

A smaller number of respondents, five (5), mentioned town employees and the town and school system as the challenges to DEI. Responses indicated feelings of not being heard but did not speak specifically to the relationship between their concerns and diversity, equity and inclusion.

- *“The town and school system does not give much weight when it comes to residents concerns. The first time I have seen it take the public's opinions seriously is when they opened up the school Covid mask policy, and it was a first step to listening to your constituents.”*
- *“Some Town employees, including some teachers and school administrators, and some residents can be very cliquey. Many town employees are downright rude and seem easily overwhelmed and bothered if they have to speak to someone or explain something. Town employees generally not polite or overly helpful either. Same is true of many elected officials. If a resident is not part of the ‘clique’ they can be ignored or minimized by other residents, town and school employees.”*

No challenges identified

Another small group of five (5) participants indicated that they could not think of any challenges that Bolton had with respect to DEI. Most were brief with the longest being as follows:

“I do not see any challenges. People of different diversity or equity have all of the same rights and access as everyone else.”

Question 11 – Negative Experiences

Respondents were asked to “If you have ever experienced any of the following in the Town of Bolton we invite you to please share information about your experience: 1) barriers to fully participating in the Bolton community, 2) personally felt you were not valued based on one or more of your identities, 3) experienced or witnessed an incident of hostility or discrimination.” About 35%, or 63, participants provided a response to this question. Six (6) themes were identified among these responses.

No Negative Experiences

Just over a quarter (17) respondents indicated that they have not had a negative experience in Bolton based on how they identify. Most responses were brief “no” or “nope.” Other responses expressed more of an attitude of shock at the question:

- *“No! I have experienced non! if you feel that BOLton is so bad, why are you still here!”*
- *“No! Never!”*

While other responses indicated a gratitude for the fact that they hadn't:

- *“Thankfully, no experiences.”*

Experiences of broad and specific discrimination or differential treatment

Just over 20% of participants, 14, indicated having experienced or witnessed discrimination or mistreatment in Bolton as a result of their or someone else's identities, or the experience of “bullying.” Such responses included:

- *“I have been regularly called a dyke by town residents. I have also been called a whore, a bitch, a cunt, a faggot, and many other slurs.”*
- *“Unfortunately all three. Being Jewish, gay and having mixed kids we've seen it all, from a young age to adulthood.”*
- *“I no longer live in bolton but i grew up there and went to Bolton public schools until the age of 18. I constantly was made fun of for being a larger latina and also being adopted, and was always the source of blame for disruptions in class even when it wasn't me. I am now 30 years old and I still deal with the traumas of hating my identity, and have done immense personal work on unlearning and decolonizing my indoctrinated mindset.”*
- *“While once a member on one of the town boards and discussing town development, another member made a statement of keeping “those people” out of our town. Since all participants were white, I assumed that he must have assumed everyone else shared his position. While there are many people here that are welcoming to other people regardless of differences, in my many years living here I have seen enough others who would concur with this man.”*

Negative experiences with town services or participation in town

Six (6) responses were grouped together as being related to access to participation in town services and town decision making. These respondents did not mention specific identities but rather indicated that they felt barriers existed to inclusive participation within the town.

- *"The school administration and board of education create barriers to exclude diversity of thought. Board of education meeting dates are not publicized, community input is obliged only as a formality."*
- *"Town staff, with very few exceptions, treat residents rudely, and get away with it. There is not a welcome feel, but a judgmental one."*
- *"I try to buy a business in town and the zoning elect men told me as soon as I got it I'll have to fix and update many things on the construction making the business out of my budget. I saw other people (white skin) getting the place and never did any of those updates (like septic system)."*

Negative experience related to a disability

As with the prior question, a small number (5) of respondents opted to share very specific experiences they have had with town services where they were discriminated against or mistreated based on some type of disability.

- *"We are a family with same sex parents. Even question 5 of this survey ignored this experience. School activities and town rec activities have been spaces for discriminatory comments- very regularly. Our child with emotional disabilities went through a horrific experience because of those identities."*
- *"...when my oldest child was in 2nd grade and called the "N" word all the way through school..."*
- *"I live with a disability and there are often handicap accessibility issues. Lack of accessible parking, building access etc. I am made to call ahead and make special plans instead of just being able to go to a early exsible building. I couldn't wear a mask because of my disability and I was told I couldn't access town hall without one."*
- *"A state trooper once threatened to put my 11 year old son (who is Latino) in handcuffs. My son was in crisis and needed transport to the hospital via ambulance. He was afraid and covering his head with his shirt which prompted the threat from the state trooper. When I explained to the trooper that my son has PTSD from past experiences with police, he sternly replied 'well that wasn't me!'"*

Negative experiences related to social media

There were five (5) respondents who echoed negative sentiments from prior questions related to social media. While they do not speak to specific incidents of discrimination or mistreatment, they do indicate a sense that some of the people that use some of the social media platforms are "not kind" and contain "hostility and vitriol" which serves as a poor reflection on the town.

- *"If the bolton FB groups existed before I moved to this town, I probably would have reconsidered. Especially the" absolutely everything Bolton" group. It's full of a bunch of rude, whining, so called adults, insulting anyone and everyone who doesn't agree with them on every issue. I understand this is a bigger societal issue with social media in general, but it sometimes feels like much of boltons direction is decided by angry residents on FB. Lots of hostility and discrimination towards other residents happening in that group."*
- *"Lately the Absolutely Everything Bolton page has become more and more hostile to anyone who doesn't agree with the moderator and a few others. Anyone who does speak up gets ridiculed and put down. We need a neutral place to go and talk with each other without fearing an attack by other residents."*

Other forms of discrimination

There were other participants, four or fewer in each group, who identified feeling discriminated against based on another identity. These included political ideology, and spiritual identity. While others mentioned that they did not want to respond, or choose not to identify themselves as belonging to one group or another in public for fear of retaliation.

Question 12 – Positive Experiences

Respondents were asked to "We invite you to please share any positive/uplifting experiences you have had in Bolton related to diversity, equity and inclusion." Just under 30% or 53, participants provided a response to this question. Four (4) generalized categories of responses were identified.

Bolton is a welcoming community

Reminiscent of responses to a prior question, a strong majority of the answers to this question (28% or 20) were related to Bolton, its services and its residents being generally welcoming. Several of the responses specifically mention the school system:

- *“My 6th grader just told me about a classmate who just came out as transgender and it was like a non-issue!”*
- *“My partner and I have always felt accepted and welcome by the school community”*

While others were positively mentioned events or groups throughout the town such as the “Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Family Day Activities.” And “Library book group.”

Still others were more specific about feeling welcomed, while identifying with a population that would be considered minority or marginalized:

- *“family members with differing mental abilities have been welcomed and included in many activities”*
- *“I have seen both Parks and Rec and Bolton Soccer Club work to make sure that income is not a barrier to children’s participation in their activities and provide funding for those who cannot otherwise afford to participate.”*
- *“We just moved to Bolton from new Britain as a mixed family, half Latinx and felt very welcomed”*

No positive experiences

Thirteen (13) participants chose to respond to the question but indicated they had no positive experiences related to DEI in Bolton. As with prior questions with this type of response many were short “None” or “I can’t think of any” but a couple appear to indicate that their negative experiences have clearly overshadowed anything that might be considered positive on this topic:

- *“The day our last child graduated from Bolton Public Schools was uplifting.”*
- *“In 40 years living here I’ve never experienced any”*

Diversity Commission, Survey and Black Lives Matter protest as positive experiences

Some respondents (7) indicated that the work of the commission and the BLM protest in 2020 were demonstrating a move towards having positive experiences.

- *“The BLM Rally on the green was a great demonstration of people in Bolton standing up for what is right. Unfortunately is just figurative and the hard part is figuring out what can be done to actually improve things. There are generally nice people in town and I have been able to interact with people from diverse backgrounds by getting involved in town activities despite not having children in the school system and COVID largely shutting things down.”*
- *“Black lives matters protest and some neighbors posting signs around inclusion made me feel less alone.”*
- *“The Black Lives Matter event in 2020 at the gazebo was one the most powerful, uplifting and insightful experiences I had regarding diversity/equity/inclusion in Bolton. So many voices never heard and so many experiences never shared were given light. These should be our leaders in guiding Bolton to understanding the equity and inclusion disparity. I also look to our trails system which is slowly gaining in diversity.”*

A negative opinion towards this work and the survey

A small group of five (5) respondents used this questions to share their negative opinion of DEI work and the survey itself.

- *“I don’t see why the town, school, or town government would feel the need to solely reach out to just a select group of individuals because of their diversity. Everyone is afforded the same exact things in this town regardless of their diversity status.”*
- *“None, I do not base my experiences on skin color, sex, orientation or other discriminatory labels as this survey suggests should be done.”*

Question 13- Suggestions for Improvements

The final narrative questions invited respondents to “please provide suggestions you may have for how Bolton can be a stronger, more inclusive community and/or to provide a more welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds.”

Just under 38%, or 69, participants provided a response to this question. Five (5) generalized categories of responses were identified.

Suggestions related to town services

The largest category of responses, from 17 participants, were focused on board and specific improvements the town could make to create a more welcoming community for all.

About a quarter of these responses were focused on increasing the diversity of town and school personnel such as: *“Hire teachers whom are non-white. Include non heteronormative sex education to students. Teach LGBTQIA+ history in school.”*

Five of the responses specifically mentioned the cost of living and affordable housing such as *“Get more apartments low income housing”* or *“Build low income housing”* or *“Lower our taxes so folks in the medium income can afford to buy here.”*

Other responses were focused on how aspects of diversity could be incorporated thoughtfully and deliberately:

- *“Diversity needs to be included in all aspects of town government, especially in discussions of future growth in terms of housing, transportation, employment as well as school curriculums. Since we have limited diversity within the town, opportunities to expand awareness via guest lecturers, presentations, programs, school field trips and participation in events in other towns, educational programs, competitions etc. should be considered and built into both town and school budgets.”*
- *“Looking at, assessing, and better understanding of the resources and services that people of non-white middle/upper middle class professionals might want or need within their community (for example transportation needs for children or parents outside of school, flexible childcare, housing opportunities outside of standalone homes or better affordability for standalone homes, healthcare needs, job starter programs, etc).”*

Two participants provide very specific tangible steps that the town could take to be more welcoming and inclusive which bear consideration:

- *“As a mom with an infant, it would be more inclusive to have a baby changing table in community spaces such as the Bolton library restroom. Totally understand if there is no space though! :)”*
- *“Gender neutral bathrooms”*

More opportunities for engagement and socializing together

Just over 20% (14) of responses fell in to a category that indicated a desire to see more opportunities to meet and build relationships with our neighbors in Bolton. These ranged from suggestions focused on DEI:

- *“Maybe concerts or events that celebrate diverse music, culture, ideas...”* or
- *“Schedule monthly web diversity meetings with each group i.e. LGBTQ, Veterans, etc. and invite guest speakers”*

To broader ideas with the goal of just bringing people together such as:

- *“casual gathering activities - town green concerts with specific attention to inviting out of towners, specific target groups”* and
- *“We need a safe place to gather, have a coffee and meet each other. The only way to get a more welcoming environment is to get to know more that just our few near neighbors.”*

Most of these responses seemed to suggest that if only we had the opportunity to get to know each other (in person) we might be able to overcome some of the differences and the gaps between us. However, one respondent after suggesting a safe place to discuss DEI ended by saying *“However, I am frankly worried about retribution in this town for those of us who speak up.”*

Call out Prejudice and Systemic Oppressions

A smaller number of responses (8) were focused on naming and calling out prejudices that exist in the community and seemed to indicate that we cannot move forward without first confronting the issue.

- *“Far too many people in Town do not acknowledge that systemic and institutionalized racism exists. They view it as purely interpersonal prejudice and therefore feel that being “colorblind” and “treating others as I would like to be treated” is a*

sufficient remedy to racism when it is not. The same can be said of the other forms of oppression, sexism, heterosexism, etc. Statements such as these devalue, and delegitimize the experiences of people who identify with an oppressed minority. These kinds of microaggressions, and others, should be called out and used as teachable moments when they occur and should not be acceptable.”

- *“White people need to do more work. Do more reading and learning about the histories of systemic racism and how the entire town benefits from it. White people need to stop centering the issues around their feelings and learn what being inclusive truly is.”*
- *“Call out racist, derogatory, unaccepting, hurtful behaviors without exception, and without bias.”*

Stop the Diversity Commission and focusing on DEI

As with the other narrative questions a small group of individuals (7) expressed an opinion that focusing on identities does more harm than good and is somehow incongruent with small town life. Similarly there seems to be a belief that to suggest Bolton may have issues with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is to say that Bolton is “bad” in some way.

- *“Stop focusing on sexual identity, orientation, gender, and race and let people live their lives the way they see fit. There isn't much appeal to a small rural town if we decide to act like these issues are a major element of Bolton life.”*
- *“I don't believe that the town should spend time and resources on this activity. If people want to move to and live in Bolton, then they can at their own choice. We shouldn't have to have a committee that encourages special treatment just because someone has a diverse status.”*
- *“I feel that Bolton is fine - very upsetting questions. Very negative”*

Other smaller themes

Other themes arose that had fewer responses. These included 1) those who had no suggestions for improvements, 2) those who felt having the Diversity Commission was a way to make the town more welcoming and 3) those who seemed to have a fatalistic approach identifying the problem but with no solutions such as:

- *“I don't know where to start. The problem is systemic; it has been here for at least 30 years (since I moved here). The people here have been taught that to live here is to be 'special'. Problem is it is ingrained in the parents, and taught to the children by the parents. It appears that students are accepting of LGBTQ+ folks, but special ed children are still vilified and mistreated by parents, teachers, and students.”*

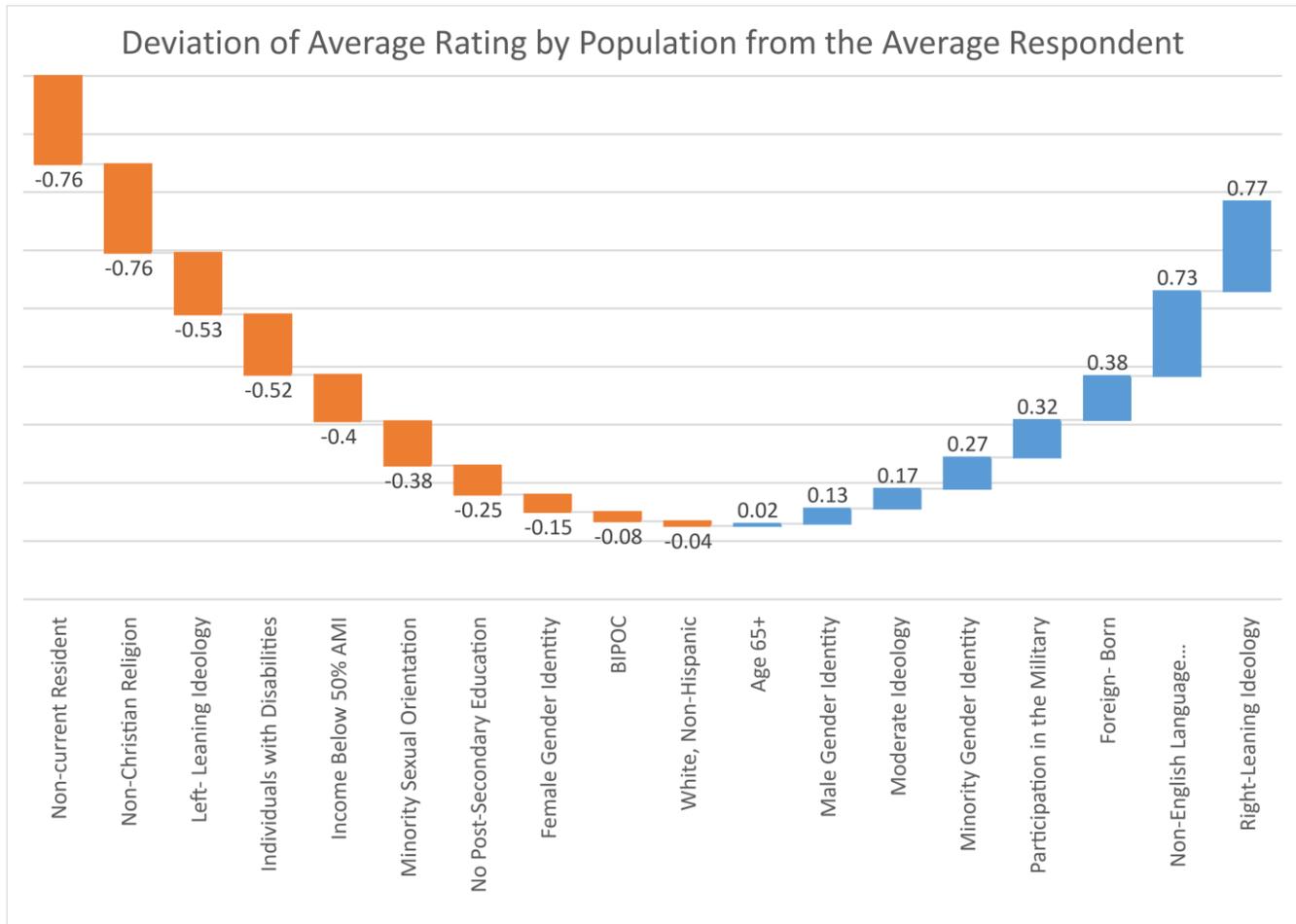
Analysis by Group Identifiers

An analysis was conducted comparing the responses of those who identified with one or more of the groups/factors outlined in the Survey Analysis section above, to the responses of the overall respondent pool. This involved calculating the Average Ratings and the Favorability Percentages for each question by population (i.e. those that identified as 65+, or female, etc. and comparing it to the Average Ratings and Favorability Percentages of the overall respondent pool. Each population analyzed had a different number of respondents (n) who identified with that population as outlined in the table below. Generally speaking, the larger the “n,” the more valid the results, meaning that they are more likely to represent the feelings and/or experiences of people that identify with that subpopulation as a whole. The Commission looked for populations with larger differences in Average Ratings and Favorability Percentages, in either direction, as these suggest a greater divergence from the attitudes of the overall respondent pool. This analysis is impacted by the underlying assumptions of the survey which include self-selection bias of respondents as well as the groups that are over-represented amongst survey responses compared to Bolton, CT’s general population as outlined in the Demographics results section above.

Population Identifier	“n” Total Number of Individuals in the Population
BIPOC	29
White (Non-Hispanic / Non-Latin(o)(a)(x))	138
Individuals with Disabilities / Differing Ability Levels	28
Minority Gender Identity	5
Female Gender Identity	111
Male Gender Identity	54
Minority Sexual Orientation	28
No Post-Secondary Education	9
Other than English Language Preference	5
Foreign- Born	12
Household Estimated Income Below 50% AMI	12
Age 65+	37
Participation in the Military	14
Left- Leaning Ideology	69
Right-Leaning Ideology	27
Moderate Ideology	55
Non-Christian Religion	11
Bolton Affiliation (Non-current Resident)	20

Where populations had Average Ratings and Favorability Percentages that were not that far from the overall respondent pool, The Commission interpreted these populations as having views that largely aligned with the overall respondent pool. Populations with higher Average Ratings and/or higher Favorability Percentages on questions had more positive attitudes to questions than the overall respondent pool. Populations with lower Average Ratings and/or lower Favorability Percentages had more negative attitudes than the overall respondent pool.

Below is a graph that shows the average deviation of the Average Rating for each question by subpopulation from the Average Rating of the overall respondent pool. As a very broad general statement, those populations with Positive deviation from the average respondent responded more favorably to questions and those with Negative deviation from the average response, had less favorable views than the average respondent.



From left to right, aside from categories that were grouped for comparison's sake, a more nuanced analysis of these populations are detailed below.

Non-Christian Religious Affiliation (n=11)

There were 11 respondents who identified with a religion that is not a mainstream Christian religion. This group reported markedly less favorable responses to most questions with an average Rating that was .76 less than the average respondents. This large deviation from the average rating was consistent across all of the questions. Of particular notice is the incredibly low Favorability Percentages for this population. For questions that are assessing the town (and not the respondent) the highest Favorability Percentage is 30% with an average of 10% favorability and nine of the sub questions in the survey receiving a 0% Favorability Percentage- meaning that none of the 11 respondents chose a favorable response to those questions. Just under 64% of these individuals reported experiencing discrimination in Bolton in the last five (5) years based on their religion. This is the highest rate of discrimination out of any of the sub-populations assessed in this survey.

Non-Current Residents (n=20)

Those respondents who identified as prior residents, prior students, or prior/current employees who are not residents had significantly less favorable attitudes than the average respondent for all questions asked. It is likely the self-selection bias played a significant role in the negative responses for this population, as those who chose to respond to the survey likely had "something to say." However, as the goal is to be welcoming to all, these perspectives are important for the

Town of Bolton to understand as it may provide insight into why some families ultimately opt to leave Bolton. Of these 20 individuals, five (5) identify as having a minority Sexual Orientation, six (6) would be categorized as BIPOC, two (2) have no post-secondary education, 12 identify as having left-leaning ideologies, two (2) identify as below 50% of the AMI and seven (7) identify as having a disability.

The strongest negative attitudes are observed for the questions around the Bolton School System with Favorability Percentages all 20% and below. This population also has a strong negative response to the experiential questions in Question 6 related to being their authentic self, recommending the town, and feeling a sense of belonging in Bolton, as well as having very poor opinions on how welcoming Bolton is to populations that would be considered “minority.” As highlighted further below these respondents also felt that Bolton should have more diversity with an average desired diversity level of 7.55 out of 9.

Individuals with Disabilities / Differing Ability Levels (n=28)

Individuals who identified as having a disability (having a physical, mental or emotional condition that impacts or shapes their participation in work or society) appear to have a markedly more negative attitude about how the Town of Bolton is performing overall with regard to DEI issues.

For questions 1-4 and all of their sub-questions, those with a disability had an Average Rating score of .52 less than the average respondent with Favorability Percentages as low as 14% to a high of 41%. In particular, the negative attitude increased for question three regarding the Bolton School System with the average rating at 1.85 compared to the overall respondent pool’s score of 2.56. Similarly, all but one of the bullets in question 1 (rating Bolton overall) received average scores of under 2 from respondents with a disability. Notably, six (6) of these 28 respondents also identify as being prior residents or students in Bolton, who also demonstrate a largely negative attitude towards DEI topics in Bolton (as highlighted further below). This negative opinion of Bolton as it relates to DEI issues and feeling welcomed is further illustrated in the responses to the narrative questions as previously outlined above.

Just under 54% of respondents with a disability indicated that they have personally experienced discrimination based on having a different physical, intellectual, developmental, emotional, or behavioral ability in the past five (5) years. And only 18% of respondents with a disability gave a favorable response to how well Bolton does with ensuring people with differing abilities are welcomed in Bolton.

While self-selection bias likely played a role in which individuals with disabilities chose to respond to this survey, it should be concerning that so many of these individuals have had such negative experiences / treatment in the Town of Bolton.

Income Level (n=12)

Those reporting estimated household income of less than 50% of the area median income (n=12) responded less favorably to all questions than the average respondent. The average difference in the Average Rating for this population was .40 less than the average respondents, similar to those that identified with a Minority Sexual Orientation. The largest deviation in Average Ratings for this population appears for the Town Government and School System questions. As with the other minority sub-populations identified, deviations from the average are more significant for the experiential questions in Question 6 related to being their authentic self, recommending the town, raising issues about unfair treatment without fear of consequences and feeling a sense of belonging in Bolton. Less than 19% of individuals with a household income below 50% of the AMI responded favorably to Bolton being welcoming to people who have lower income levels.

Minority Sexual Orientation (n=28)

Individuals that were categorized as identifying with a minority sexual orientation saw a definite trend in the less favorable direction for all survey questions when compared to the average respondent. While the trend toward the negative was not quite as large as it was for those with disabilities, the average difference in the Average Rating for this population was .38 less than the average respondents. The most marked differences between this population and the average respondent are for the School System questions and Law Enforcement questions, though around 50% of this

population responded to the law enforcement questions, suggesting those that responded may have had a selection bias towards answering those specific questions.

Similar to the BIPOC population and those with Disabilities, those with a Minority Sexual Orientation responded less favorably to the experiential questions around being their authentic self, recommending the town, raising issues about unfair treatment without fear of consequences and feeling a sense of belonging in Bolton. 48% of respondents in this category indicated an experience of discrimination based on sexual orientation in Bolton in the last five (5) years.

Education Level (n=9)

Respondents who reported having No Post-Secondary Education (n=9) tended to respond less favorably to most questions. Once again, this was particularly true for the experiential questions in Question 6 related to being their authentic self, recommending the town, raising issues about unfair treatment without fear of consequences and feeling a sense of belonging in Bolton.

Though only 3-4 of these nine respondents chose to answer the two questions around the provision of translated materials by the Town and the School System, these individuals responded much less favorably to these two questions than the average respondent with differences of -.78 and -.93 on the Average Rating and differences of -16% and -25% on the Favorability Percentages respectively, when compared to the average respondent. None of these 3 -4 respondents identify as having a language preference other than English. Though purely speculative, this may suggest that reading level of materials may be as important as the language in which materials are written.

BIPOC (n=29)

Respondents who fit into the BIPOC population had responses that did not greatly diverge from the overall respondent pool, or respondents who identified as White –Non Hispanic for questions related to overall rating of Bolton, Town Government, Law Enforcement and the School System. Average ratings on these questions did lean slightly more negative than the overall response pool for the majority of these questions ranging from .04 to .21 less in their Average Rating than the overall response pool. Notably however, BIPOC individuals rated the following questions more favorably than the average respondent

- 1) Attracting people from diverse backgrounds to live, work or own businesses in Bolton
- 2) Providing equal access to housing for residents of all backgrounds
- 3) Creating awareness of Bolton's diversity

The BIPOC community saw a larger negative divergence from the average score for the following questions, though they remain largely favorable overall. On the other hand, White Non-Hispanic individuals scored more positively than the average respondent.

	Average respondent	BIPOC	White, Non-Hispanic
I can be my full, authentic self in Bolton.	3.49 & 71% favorable	3.18 & 61% favorable	3.53 & 74% favorable
I am likely to recommend living in Bolton to a friend or family member who asks	3.49 %&72% favorable	2.93 & 48% favorable	3.60 & 79% favorable
I feel a sense of belonging in Bolton.	3.42 & 69% favorable	2.97 & 52% favorable	3.51 and 73% favorable

Also 53% of BIPOC respondents indicated that they have personally experienced discrimination based on Race in the past five (5) years.

This suggests that while BIPOC respondents had overall positive feelings towards Bolton, there is still room for improvement when it comes to inclusivity of BIPOC individuals in our town.

Aged 65 and Older (n=37)

Individuals who identified as being 65 years of age or older tended to have responses that mostly aligned with the average respondent. Differences between the Average Rating for older adults compared to the general response pool tended to be .2 or less and swung in both less (overall town, Town Government and Law Enforcement) and more favorable (school system and experiential questions) directions. Just over 16% of older adult respondents indicated being discriminated against based on age in the last five (5) years in Bolton and 78% indicated a favorable response to older people being welcomed in Bolton. This suggests that Bolton may be doing well in terms of serving and treatment of older adults in our community.

Gender Identity

While the number of respondents who identified with a Minority Gender Identity (n=5) was small, the general response from this population leaned more positive than the average survey respondent, except as it related to questions around Law Enforcement.

60% of respondents in this category responded favorably to Bolton being welcoming to people who identify as transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming and less than half, or 40%, of the respondents indicating having experienced discrimination in Bolton based on their gender identity.

The 111 Female respondents skewed slightly more negatively in their responses than the average respondent while the 54 Male respondents skewed slightly more positively in their attitudes for most questions with almost equal differences from the average in either direction. Nine (9) or just under 9% of female respondents indicated being discriminated against based on gender identity compared to one (1) or just under 2% of Male respondents. Both populations felt overwhelmingly welcomed in Bolton.

Military Participation (n=14)

Those who were categorized as having some form of military participation tended to rate Bolton more positively on almost all of the questions compared to the average respondent. The average difference in the Average Rating for this population was .32 more than the average respondents. 75% of those with Military Participation responded favorably to Veterans or Military Personnel being welcomed in Bolton.

Foreign Born (n=12)

Aside from the questions related specifically to Law Enforcement, respondents who identified as Foreign-Born had an Average Rating markedly more favorable than the average respondent. While the responses for Law Enforcement were less favorable than the average, two of the three questions still received a 56% Favorability Percentage. While not synonymous with being born-outside of the country, of these respondents, 67% indicated a favorable response to Bolton being welcome to individuals who are not U.S. Citizens and less than half, or 33% of this respondents reported being discriminated on in Bolton in the last five (5) years based on their National Origin

Other than English Preference (n=5)

Individuals who responded that English is not their first/ preferred language responded more favorably to all questions than the average respondent. While only four of them responded to the translation of materials on the Town website and departments and only one responded to the translation of materials for the School System, the Favorability Percentages were 75% and 100% respectively. Of the four respondents who answered about how welcoming Bolton is to people whose first language is not English, 100% had a favorable response.

Political Ideology

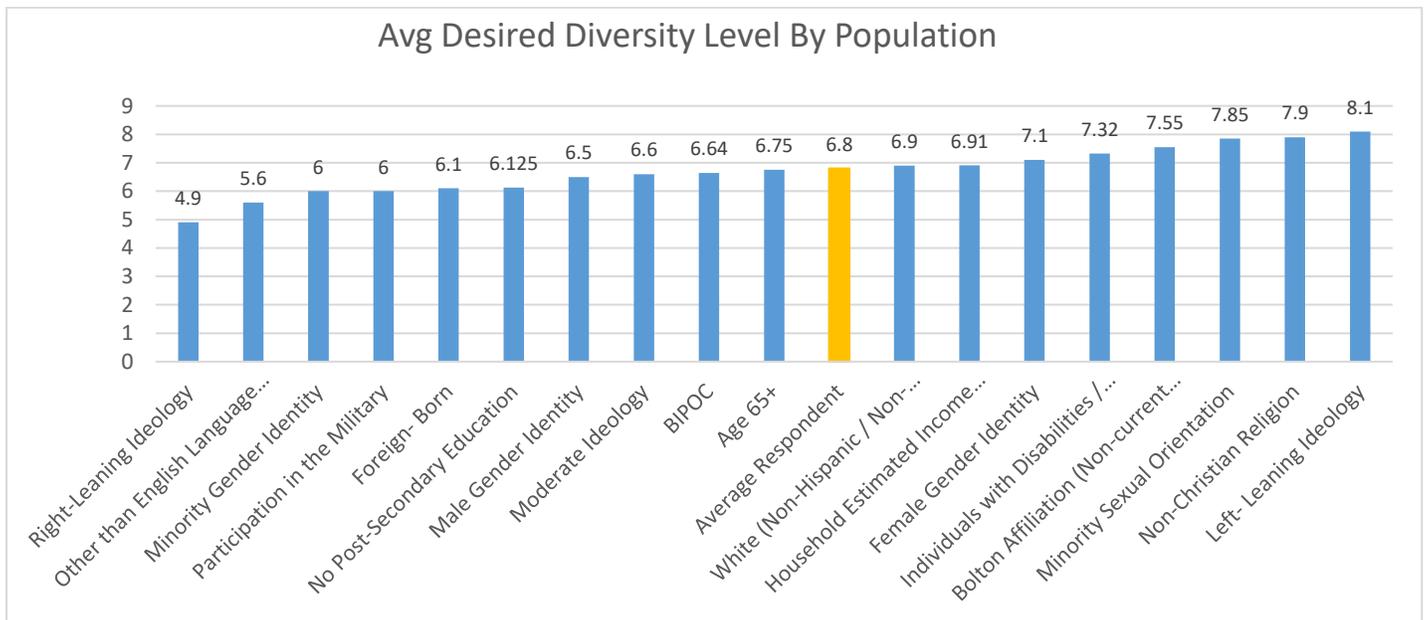
As indicated by the Average Rating Chart above and the Diversity Level Chart below, the Political Ideology of a respondent had a strong impact on how far from the average response someone might be - with Right-leaning individuals tending to respond much more favorably than the average, left-leaning individuals tending to respond much less favorably than the average and with moderate individuals trending much more to the middle of the group, though slightly more favorably than the average respondent. While this survey does not assess for correlation, these results may suggest that Political Ideology is one of the most predictive factors in Bolton for how people feel about and experience

issues related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion regardless of their other identities. This potential finding has an impact on suggestions for how to improve the current climate around DEI in Bolton moving forward.

Right-leaning individuals had Favorability Percentages of over 70% for all questions about the Town while left-leaning individuals had Favorability Percentages below 40% for all questions. While these two populations do differ greatly from the average around the experiential questions under Question 6 related to being their authentic self, recommending the town, and feeling a sense of belonging in Bolton, they do not have the greatest variance from the average ratings compared to other populations. This suggests that while people’s attitudes and thoughts are largely impacted by their political ideologies, the actual experiences of people in town may be impacted more by their other identities and less by their ideologies.

Desired Diversity Level by Population

The Commission also looked at the Desired Diversity Level by Population compared to each other and to the overall average response of 6.8. Recall the options for this question were on a scale of 1-9 with (1) being much less, (9) being much more and (5) being Bolton's diversity level is perfect just as it is. Of note is that only one population, those with a right leaning ideology, thought the town should have slightly less diversity than it currently has. All other populations analyzed felt that Bolton would be better with increased diversity.



Findings

In looking at the results of the survey and the above analysis as detailed above several themes emerged that are worth elevating and that were utilized to inform the Committee Recommendations below.

Respondents were torn about whether Bolton is welcoming

Many respondents indicated that Bolton is welcoming or may not quite be there but is desirous of being welcoming. This was echoed as a theme throughout many of the narrative responses and around 50% of respondents rated “making all residents feel welcome” and “creating a community welcoming to residents of all backgrounds” favorably. There were comments that indicated that whatever the perception may be of the town at large, that on a micro level with neighbors and friends, people were kind and welcoming and willing to help each other when it matters.

However, there were some specific groups of respondents that had very low Favorability Percentages, in the 20s and 30s, to these same two questions including those with disabilities, those that identify with a minority sexual orientation,

those with lower incomes, with no post-secondary education, non-current residents, those with non-Christian religions, and those with left-leaning ideologies.

This suggests that if Bolton is to truly be a town that is welcoming to all, there is work to be done.

Some people feel that diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are unnecessary and unwelcome in Bolton

Across most of the narrative responses there was the small, but strong voice throughout the survey expressing the ideas that there is no need to “change” Bolton and that diversity, equity and inclusion efforts create division rather than solving issues that might exist. This group indicated that they believe the recent DEI efforts are promoting an ideology that something is “wrong” with Bolton and that those who are proponents of such efforts do not like Bolton.

Those with Non- Christian religions rated Bolton unfavorably

In terms of a protected classes that demonstrated a strong negative response to the survey, those with Non- Christian Religions stand out. In addition to Non- Residents and Left Leaning individuals. this group had Average Ratings and Favorability Ratings that were the furthest from the average respondent in the negative direction. Due to the consistency of this negative response across all questions, and how far they diverged from the average respondent, the Commission felt that it should be elevated as a finding in the survey that might warrant further exploration. There were limited comments in the narrative questions specifically addressing the topic of religion and therefore there is little to help us understand what contributed to the poor ratings from individuals in this subgroup.

Sense of mistreatment for people with disabilities

The idea that those with disabilities have experienced forms of discrimination and mistreatment arose both as a theme in the narrative questions but also bore out in how much lower on average the Favorability Percentages and Average Rating Scores was for those who identified with having disabilities. While other sub-populations also had scores that rated Bolton more negatively than the average respondent (left leaning individuals, those with non-Christian relations and non-residents) very few narrative responses about specific experiences were related to these group identities. More than half of respondents with a disability reported an experience of discrimination based on their disability in Bolton within the last five years.

When it comes to those with disabilities, Bolton has a legal obligation to ensure it is open, accessible and accommodating to the needs of these individuals. The American’s with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, government, public spaces, commercial entities, transportation and telecommunications. The individuals with Disabilities Education Act “requires public schools to make available to all eligible children with disabilities a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs.”⁴ In addition to the moral reasons why it is important to Bolton be welcoming to those with disabilities, to protect the town from the liability that comes from not meeting these requirements, Bolton may want to make improvements as it relates to residents and students with disabilities.

Reduced Sense of Belonging among Minority Populations in Bolton

While not all minority populations analyzed had Favorability Percentages and Average Rating Scores that diverged greatly from the average respondents for most questions on the survey, minority groups DID diverge more significantly from the average respondent as it related to the experience questions that were part of Question 6. These questions included:

- I can be my full, authentic self in Bolton
- I am likely to recommend living in Bolton to a friend or family member who asks
- I can raise issues about unfair treatment without fear of consequences

⁴ A Guide to Disability Rights Laws: <https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm#anchor65310>

- I feel a sense of belonging in Bolton.

Individuals who were categorized as one of the following sub-populations: from lower income households, BIPOC, Minority Sexual Orientation, Minority Gender, without Post-Secondary Education, and Non-Christian but religious, had lower Favorability Percentages and Average Rating scores for these questions, even when they had more positive responses to other questions or had even more negative responses to these questions than other questions. While not true across all minority populations, this trend may suggest that regardless of their perceptions about how welcoming Bolton is or tries to be, that on some level those who identify with the above mentioned minority groups, do not quite feel as welcomed, or as much a part of the community as those in the majority may.

Difference in Rating From Avg Respondent						
	BIPOC	Disability	Sexual Orientation	No Post 2nd Edu.	Low Income	Non-Christian Religion
Avg Rating Q 1-5	-0.07	-0.56	-0.41	-0.21	-0.34	-0.85
Authentic Self	-0.31	-0.79	-0.56	-0.71	-0.99	-1.22
Recommend Bolton	-0.56	-0.6	-0.53	-0.38	-0.74	-0.58
Raise issues w/o fear	-0.18	-0.82	-0.25	-0.55	-1.1	-1.1
Sense of Belonging	-0.45	-0.35	-0.42	-0.64	-0.5	-1.06

Affordability and Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing is a theme that arose in multiple places throughout the survey. The Average Rating for the question “Please rate Bolton on each of the following: Providing equal access to housing for residents of all backgrounds” was 2.27 which falls into the negative range of Fair to Poor. The majority of the sub populations analyzed also had Favorability Percentages for this questions below 50%, some well below 50%. It also arose as a theme in the responses to Question 10, regarding challenges, and Question 13, regarding suggestions for improvements. The argument is that lack of affordable housing, and/or combined with the high cost of living in Bolton through things like high taxes, the need to own a car due to lack of public transportation, and proximity to basic needs like food, jobs and healthcare close by, as well as the type of housing stock largely single family homes on larger properties, and zoning laws means that we are making Bolton inaccessible to a large portion of the population.

Opportunities to Interact and to Celebrate Diversity

Another overarching theme that came through is that Bolton does not do enough of “Create awareness of Bolton’s Diversity” or “Offering gathering places for diverse groups to get together.” These questions had Average Ratings of 2.08 and 2.04 respectively and Favorability Percentages of just over 32%. However “I frequently interact with people from other backgrounds in Bolton” saw a larger percentage of individuals in agreement with the statement around 62%. This suggests that at the micro level people may be engaging with diverse groups of people but that perhaps these opportunities are not as easy to find as they could be or are not promoted at the Town level with a focus being given to highlighting and celebrating the diversity groups.

There were varying opinions on whether or not Bolton is Diverse with some who felt it is and others who are adamant it is not. However, the majority of respondents to the survey felt that Bolton needs more diversity, with an average rating of 6.8 on a scale of 1-9, with five being we are perfect as we are. From a Racial Diversity perspective, Bolton’s Diversity Index (the chance that two people chose at random will be of a different race) was 25% in 2020, up from 13% in 2010

but still below the State Diversity Index of 56%.⁵ While we don't define diversity by race alone, many do interpret the word diversity in this manner. Therefore, for those living in town for extending periods of time this 12% increase in the last 10 years could be contributing to their opinion that Bolton is diverse, and diverse enough, while the fact that we are well below the state level, is likely contributing to the opinions of others who feel that there is a need for more. Either way, it highlights the need to educate and inform the community about these facts and trends.

Additionally, respondents seemed to feel that interacting with others in Town, in person, and not on social media, would improve the climate around diversity, equity and inclusion issues. This was mentioned in a variety of narrative responses both in terms of identifying strengths of the town, *"When given the opportunity to explore and engage in our limited diversity most of the town embraces it especially on a neighborhood level"* and when asked to provide suggestions for improvement, 20% of responses fell into this category.

Commission Recommendations

The Bolton Diversity, Equity and Inclusion survey sought to identify the pulse in the community around the topic of DEI and to determine if the town has any "diversity issues". While the survey analysis did not allow for the identification of statistically significant findings, it did provide some insight into some of the sentiments around diversity, equity and inclusion as well as bringing light to some of the experiences survey respondents have had that have been impacted by the ways in which they identify or are perceived by others. It did highlight that there are some segments of the Bolton population that have not felt welcomed in Bolton and that some populations seem to feel less of a sense of "belonging" in Bolton than others.

It was clear from the responses to the narrative questions, and some of the written "other" responses to the demographic questions that not everyone in Bolton is on board with efforts undertaken by the Town and the Commission to focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in town. Some of these negative attitudes may stem from a lack of understanding about why these issues are important to many Bolton residents. Some indicate feeling that to focus on Diversity is to draw division between people when we might be better served by focusing on our commonalities. However this "color blind" approach is dismissive and disrespectful to the experiences of people who identify with a minority group who have suffered or experienced differential treatment as a result of their belonging to such a group, as was clear from the analysis of this survey.

There is a perception that those on the Commission believe there are problems with Bolton and dislike the town, and additional sentiments that diversity is somehow incongruent with the "small town" character of Bolton.

It is important for the Commission and the Town government to understand that some individuals in Bolton will never be convinced that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are important goals for the Town to pursue. There are, however, others, who may be convinced of their importance by reading the responses to this survey from some of their friends and neighbors or through some of the following suggested actions that can be taken by the Town.

Formal Proclamation by the Town

To solidify its commitment to being a Town that is welcoming to all and to combat the negative messages that are circulated via social media platforms among other places, the Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen formally adopt a proclamation declaring a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as a community priority, see [Attachment D](#). While largely performative, in combination with the below actions, such a proclamation demonstrates to current and potential future residents that the negative undercurrents do not represent the opinions and stance of the broader Town which strives to be caring and inclusive.

Establish Permanent Commission

⁵ How Diverse is Connecticut? <https://www.ctdata.org/blog/diversity-in-connecticut-is-increasing>

In order to monitor progress towards improving Bolton's image as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion, to elevate any emerging issues that may arise, as well as to assist in the implementation of the below recommendation, the Diversity Commission recommends that the Bolton Board of Selectman institute a permanent voluntary Human Rights and Equity Commission. The Commission recommends that this permanent Commission be modeled off of the current Commissions Charter but with more autonomy to act on its own while still serving to advise the Board of Selectmen. The goal for the composition of this Human Rights and Equity Commission should be to recruit a diverse pool of volunteers that represent the various minority and majority populations that reside in Bolton.

This Commission should be provided a line item in the Annual Budget in order to implement such recommendations as outlined below that the Board of Selectman sets as goals to achieve.

Formal Training and Education

The Commission recommends that the Town invest in the provision of robust, diversity, equity and inclusion training on no-less than a bi-annual basis for all Town Employees, elected officials and volunteers serving on a permanent Town Committee or Commission. As the public face of the Town, it is important for all of these individuals to be aware of the definitions and importance of diversity, equity and inclusion, and to act in accordance with morals imperatives outlined in the above-mentioned and attached Proclamation. Such training will provide such employees, elected officials and volunteers with the skillsets to respond appropriately when discriminatory and unacceptable behaviors or comments are made in public settings to ensure that no one feels excluded due to their in-group identities. It will protect the Town from liability and position the town to be more inclusive, hopefully encouraging more participation from residents in many of these volunteer positions which at times are challenging to fill. The Human Rights and Equity Commission would assist the Town in the development and solicitation for such a bi-annual curriculum. Such training topics might include: defining diversity, equity and inclusion and their importance, unconscious bias, micro-aggressions, intentional inclusion, bystander training, legal obligations and more, with a focus not on guilt and blame but on respecting the experiences of all, especially marginalized populations whose voices are often minimized.

Make Affordable Housing a Priority

The Commission recommends that the Town of Bolton needs to make increasing affordable housing in Bolton a priority. To meet the requirements of Connecticut General Statutes, the Town of Bolton has created a Five-Year affordable housing plan with the goal of increasing the number of deed-restricted affordable housing units in Town. Thus the Diversity Commission recommends that the Town prioritizes monitoring the progress towards implementation of the recommendations in the Affordable Housing Plan. This should be done by ensuring the plan is discussed at a minimum, of twice annually by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and that educational forums are provided to Residents about what is included in the plan, and what affordable housing means so that there is less resistance from town residents to the development of affordable housing in town. This is something that the Permanent Human Rights and Equity Commission could assist with. If Bolton, does not make an effort to increase affordable housing volitionally, the town risks having outsiders come in to define what this looks like in our town. In addition to hopefully making Bolton more accessible to diverse populations, the Affordable Housing Plan acknowledged that "Without new developments and with an aging and declining tax base, it may become increasingly difficult to maintain current services and programs or establish new initiatives with a stagnant tax base and declining population." In order to maintain the way of life that Bolton residents hold dear, while increasing affordability, the creation of affordable housing is a necessity and thus should be a top priority for Bolton.

Improving Accessibility and Treatment of Individuals with Disabilities

The Commission recommends that due to the strong negative response from individuals with a disability to this survey, that further action should be taken to further identify how Bolton is and is not meeting the needs of those in town living with disabling conditions. This might include a full scale accessibility assessment of all Town buildings and properties to ensure people with disabilities can partake in equal enjoyment, and the creation of a plan to make improvements following the assessment. It might also include increased training on the needs of and how to respond to individuals

with disabilities, including but not limited to mental health first aid. Such a training could be part of the DEI training suggested above. Continuation of and creating more awareness for the offerings of the Social Emotional Department within the school system may also make improvements in the experience of those young persons with disabling conditions living in Town.

Opportunities for Engagement

The Commission recommends that the town of Bolton offer more opportunities, formal and informal, to engage with each other around the topics of Diversity Equity and inclusion. Such efforts could be spearheaded by the Human Rights and Equity Commission and may include a book club focused on books written by authors of minority representations or that cover topics related diversity, equity and inclusion. This would provide an intentional setting to discuss DEI where the focus is on a book and people's participation and the extent of their participation is completely voluntary and non-threatening.

Other such efforts might include events at which Bolton residents have the opportunity to highlight and celebrate the diversity that exists in Bolton and our surrounding communities such as a Juneteenth Celebration, honoring women's history month, Hispanic heritage month and others. These events can be standalone or more of an effort can be made to incorporate cultural elements into long standing Bolton event such as Family Day, Winter Fest, the Summer Concert Series and more.

In addition, Bolton should hold facilitated dialogues, at intervals focused on issues of diversity where residents have the opportunity to interact with each other and get to know one another on an individual basis as opposed to just as representatives of a group identity. Holding these conversations would serve several purposes. It would provide a safe space to share experiences, positive and negative, in an environment that promotes respect, and understanding. Simultaneously it would allow for a means to surface issues or challenges in the town in an ongoing way instead of waiting for a survey, so that they can be addressed quickly in real time. It would also help create empathy and therefore prevent or ameliorate hostility between residents who may identify differently and have varying experiences due to these identities but who can come to an understanding based on their shared humanity.

Such above mentioned opportunities for increased engagement, education and dialogue would be the purview of the Human Rights and Diversity Commission. Through open and regular dialogue residents of Bolton can come to understand that by seeking to elevate and celebrate topics of diversity, equity and inclusion, the goal is not to critique the town of Bolton but rather to come together to make it the best that it can be for everyone who currently lives here and those that may choose to live here in the future.

Attachment A – Resolution

**Resolution or the Creation of an
Ad Hoc Commission
On Diversity & Inclusion**

Unanimously Adopted January 5, 2021

Whereas a number of residents of the Town of Bolton have called for the creation of a commission to address issues of diversity and inclusion; and

Whereas national events in 2020 brought issues of systemic racism and bigotry to the forefront of the minds of all and was the cause of a demonstration in support of diversity and inclusion being held in Bolton; and

Whereas the Board of Selectmen recognizes that the Town can do more to address issues of diversity and inclusion in town; and

Whereas the Town recognizes that it may not fully aware of all issues of diversity and inclusion that may arise within Bolton in any given year and may require resident help in input in order to be able to address issues as they arise; and

Whereas the Board of Selectmen’s Subcommittee on Finance & Administration recommended at their meeting on December 21, 2020, that an ad hoc Commission on Diversity & Inclusion be created in order to better address issues of diversity and inclusion that may arise within the town government and the community-at-large; therefore it be

Resolved that the Bolton Board of Selectmen; under the authority of Section 5.1, subsection C.2 of the Town Charter; creates a temporary (“ad hoc”) Commission on Diversity & Inclusion, which shall consist of up to 15 members as are appointed to it by the Board, who shall be empaneled for a term of one year following the first meeting of the Commission, and which shall be empowered to create its own agenda as it seeks to address issues pertaining to town government and community diversity and inclusion with the caveat that it shall be an advisory body reporting to the Board of Selectmen.

Attachment B – Working Definitions

Bolton Diversity Commission

Working Definitions

Purpose: The intent of these working definitions is to allow the members of the Bolton Diversity Commission to utilize a common language and increase the level of understanding between members. The working definitions set the frame work for what the committee believes these words to mean.

1. **DIVERSITY**– the condition of having or being composed of differing elements, including an infinite range of individual unique characteristics, identities and experiences such as race, gender, ideology, religion, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, socioeconomic status, educational background, geographic location, marital and parental status and more.
2. **INTERSECTIONALITY** – the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, age etc. as they apply to an individual or group, that create overlapping and interdependent systems of lived experience and identity. (For example, one’s gender identity may impact one’s experience/treatment of their racial identity and vice versa).
3. **PREJUDICE**- A preconceived feeling or opinion (usually negative) about someone based on that person’s perceived group membership (e.g. race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) that is not based on actual experience or reason and may be learned through socialization..
 - a. *Clarifying points:* Types of prejudice include ageism, homophobia, sexism, racism, xenophobia, ableism, classism, etc.
4. **BIAS** - an inclination for or against a person, idea or thing, or place
5. **IMPLICIT/UNCONCIOUS BIAS** – an inclination for or against a person, idea or thing that a person is not consciously aware of.
 - a. *Clarifying points:* Everyone has them. Typically learned through the process of socialization or a previous isolated experience.
6. **DISCRIMINATION** – behavior or actions, usually negative, towards an individual or group of people on the basis of a group identity, such as race, gender, social class, etc., resulting in different treatment between groups.
 - a. *Clarifying Points:* It is typically the result of prejudice/bias/implicit bias.
7. **OPPRESSION**- a combination of prejudice and institutional power (such as patterns of behavior, policies or practices) that creates a system that regularly and severely discriminates against or disadvantages some groups and benefits other groups.
8. **MICROAGGRESSION** – everyday interactions or behaviors, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate some sort of negative bias or attitudes towards historically marginalized groups.
 - a. *Clarifying Points:* Examples include- following a black person around a store, commenting on how well someone who is perceived to not be white speaks English, etc.
9. **EQUALITY** – each individual or group of individuals receiving or having access to the same resources or opportunities,
10. **EQUITY** – the absence of avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically. The achievement of equal OUTCOMES, which may require the unequal provision of resources or opportunity to address imbalances created by systems of oppression.

Attachment C - Survey

Bolton, CT - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Community Survey (18 Years of Age and Older)

The Bolton Board of Selectmen recently authorized the creation of a Diversity Commission. We are conducting a survey about your experiences in our local community. The purpose of this study is to gather information from people who currently live, work or have lived, worked and gone to school in our community to help us identify strengths and challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion. Each person should only submit one survey, though each individual in a household may submit their own survey. Please check out this link <https://forms.gle/v79D6EDW1StLjKJU7> or those in middle school and high school who would like to contribute their thoughts.

We recognize that we're asking a lot of demographics questions -- this is both to make sure we hear from a diverse group of people, as well as to understand differences in experience. All questions on this survey are entirely voluntary, but we are asking you to please help us by providing this critical information so that we can fully understand survey results.

Your answers will be completely confidential and survey results will be reported in aggregate form only and made available to the public via the town website. Please note that at the end of this survey you have the OPTION to provide your personal information if you would like to be contacted by a Diversity Commission member to be more involved or share further information with us. An alternative way of reaching out to us is also provided. This survey should take you about 10-15 minutes to complete.

Sincerely,

Bolton Diversity Commission

2) Please rate Bolton on each of the following	Poor	Fair	Don't Know	Good	Excellent
Making all residents feel welcome	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Attracting people from diverse backgrounds to live, work or own businesses in Bolton	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Valuing and demonstrating respect for residents from diverse backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Treating all residents fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providing a safe and secure environment for residents of all backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providing equal employment opportunities to residents of all backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providing equal access to housing for residents of all backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Welcoming residents from all backgrounds to participate in local government and community decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Creating awareness of Bolton's diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Offering gathering places for diverse groups to get together	<input type="checkbox"/>				

2) Please rate the Bolton TOWN GOVERNMENT on each of the following	Poor	Fair	Don't Know	Good	Excellent
Creating a community welcoming to residents of all backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Treating all residents with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Treating all residents fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providing opportunities for residents with different opinions to voice their concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providing translated materials on the Town website and through Town departments	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Ensuring the town is well-designed for individuals with differing abilities to get around freely, and participate fully in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

3) Please rate the Bolton SCHOOL SYSTEM on each of the following	Poor	Fair	Don't Know	Good	Excellent
Creating a community welcoming to residents of all backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Treating all residents with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Treating all residents fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providing opportunities for residents with different opinions to voice their concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providing translated materials on the Town website and through Town departments	<input type="checkbox"/>				

4) Please rate the Bolton LAW ENFORCEMENT on each of the following	Poor	Fair	Don't Know	Good	Excellent
Creating a community welcoming to residents of all backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Treating all residents with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Treating all residents fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>				

5) Please rate how the Bolton community does with ensuring the following groups of people feel welcome in Bolton.	Poor	Fair	Don't Know	Good	Excellent
People with differing abilities (physical, intellectual, developmental, neurodiverse, emotional, behavioral)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People who identify as transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People who identify as male	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People who identify as female	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People who identify as belonging to a minority/marginalized race/ ethnicity (i.e. Black, Asian, Indigenous, Arabic, Latin(o)(a)(x), etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People whose first language is not English	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People who are not U.S. citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People of non-Christian faiths	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People who are veterans or military personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People who are older	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People who are younger	<input type="checkbox"/>				
People who have lower income levels	<input type="checkbox"/>				

6) Please choose the answer that matches your view:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can be my full, authentic self in Bolton.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I am likely to recommend living in Bolton to a friend or family member who asks	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I can raise issues about unfair treatment without fear of consequences	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I feel a sense of belonging in Bolton.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I encourage people in Bolton to share their unique perspectives and experiences related to their background	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I frequently ask a person from a different group (race/ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) about how my behavior has impacted them.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I frequently interact with people from other backgrounds in Bolton	<input type="checkbox"/>				

7) To what extent, if at all, have YOU personally experienced discrimination based on each of the following in the Town of Bolton in the past 5 years?	Yes	No	Don't Know
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender Identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Origin (Birth Country)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Political Affiliation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Differing Physical Ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Differing Intellectual/Developmental Ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Differing Emotional/Behavioral Ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8) Please choose a number on the scale based on how much diversity YOU feel Bolton should have, with (1) being much less, (9) being much more and (5) being you think Bolton's diversity level is perfect just as it is.										
Much Less Diversity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Much More Diversity
	<input type="checkbox"/>									

9) Please describe a couple of Bolton's strengths with respect to diversity, equity, or inclusion.

10) Please describe a couple of Bolton's challenges with respect to diversity, equity, or inclusion.

11) If you have ever experienced any of the following in the Town of Bolton we invite you to please share information about your experience: 1) barriers to fully participating in the Bolton community, 2) personally felt you were not valued based on one or more of your identities, 3) experienced or witnessed an incident of hostility or discrimination

12) We invite you to please share any positive/uplifting experiences you have had in Bolton related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

13) We invite you to please provide suggestions you may have for how Bolton can be a stronger more inclusive community and/or to provide a more welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds.

Demographic Questions

The following questions will ask you about how you identify yourself and will be used to ensure that we receive survey responses from a diverse pool of residents.

14) Which category reflects your age group?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+

15) What is your racial/ ethnic identity? (Choose all that apply)

- Spanish, Hispanic, or Latin(o)(a)(x)
- Arabic or Middle Eastern
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White
- Other

16) Is English your first/preferred language?

- Yes
- No

17) Which best describes your country of origin?

- My country of origin is the USA
- I am originally from another country

18) What is your gender identity?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Questioning
- Gender Non-Conforming or Non-Binary
- Other

19) Which term best describes your sexual orientation?

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay/Lesbian
- Heterosexual
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Other

20) Are/Were you a member of the U.S. Armed forces?

- I have not been in the military
- Active Military
- Reservist
- ROTC
- Veteran

21) What is your highest completed level of education?

- Some High School
- High School Graduate or GED
- Some College/ Technical Degree/Associates Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral or Professional Degree

22) Roughly what Area Median Income range does your annual household income fall into?

- Below 30% of the AMI (< \$22K for an individual or \$31K for a family of 4)
- Between 30-50% of the AMI (\$22K-\$36.5K for an individual, \$31K-\$52K for a family of 4)
- Between 50-80% of the AMI (\$36.5K-\$56K for an individual, \$52K - \$80K for a family of 4)
- Between 80-120% of the AMI (\$56K-\$84K for an individual, or \$80k-\$120K for a family of 4)
- Greater than 120% of the AMI (>\$84K for an individual, or >\$120K for a family of 4)

23) Do you have a physical, mental, or emotional condition that impacts and/or shapes your participation in work and society?

- Yes
- No

24) How would you characterize your political views?

- Far Left
- Liberal
- Moderate
- Conservative
- Far Right
- Undecided
- Other

25) What is your religious or spiritual identity?

- Agnostic/ Atheist
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Spiritual but no religious affiliation
- No affiliation
- Other

26) Do you have any other comments or suggestions you would like to share?

27) If you would like to be contacted to share more information about your experiences in Bolton please put your name and contact information (phone or email) below. If you want to be contacted but do not wish to have your identity associated with these survey results, you may email the Bolton Diversity Commission chair at AmandaDGordon@gmail.com.

28) What is your current 5 digit zip code? _____

29) Please let us know which of the following applies to you.

- I am a current resident of Bolton, CT
- I currently work in Bolton, CT but am not a resident.
- I am a prior resident of Bolton, CT.
- I previously worked in Bolton, CT.
- I was a previous student in Bolton, CT.
- None of the above.

30) If a prior resident, student or employee in Bolton, how long ago did you live, work or go to school in Bolton?

- Within the last 2 years
- 3- 5 years ago
- 5-10 years ago
- 10-15 years ago
- 15-25 years ago
- More than 25 years ago

Attachment D -Proclamation

Proclamation of the Town of Bolton, Connecticut

A proclamation declaring a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as a community priority.

WHEREAS, the Town of Bolton, endeavors to be a welcoming community that takes pride in its history, and recognizes the contributions that all past, current and future residents make to the town; and

WHEREAS, the town recognizes that residents have much in common with each other; and

WHEREAS, the town also recognizes that residents have differences that sometimes divide us; and

WHEREAS, conduct that inflicts emotional, mental or physical harm against individuals because of their race, ethnicity, place of origin, physical, intellectual or emotional ability, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or religion, has no place in our community and country; and

WHEREAS, the town acknowledges that individuals in the Town of Bolton have suffered from such conduct; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Bolton expressly rejects such conduct and acts

WHEREAS, The Town of Bolton in all its forms of government, boards and commissions, promote respect for all persons; and

WHEREAS, each of us can, and should, promote inclusiveness, celebrate diversity, support all fellow community members, prevent the spread of misinformation, and reject hate and bias in all forms, and which will make Bolton a stronger and healthier community; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, by the Board of Selectmen of Bolton, Connecticut that Bolton is committed to being an inclusive community that rejects stigma and bias against individuals, that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion efforts on all levels to achieve fundamental change, and that urges our members and residents of our community to treat each other with respect and to overcome all expressions of hate and bigotry.



BOLTON DIVERSITY COMMISSION SURVEY ANALAYSIS

October 4, 2022





The Commission

The Bolton Diversity Commission was created in January 2021.

Created because the town "may not fully be aware of issues of diversity and inclusion that may arise within Bolton" and "the Board of Selectmen recognizes that the Town can do more to Address issues of diversity and inclusion in town."

9 Nine member, multi-partisan, diverse commission



The Survey

Methodology

- Created by looking at an altering questions from five other municipal diversity, equity and inclusion surveys

Limitations

- Self -Selection Bias
- Some questions inadvertently left out some subpopulations identities.

Distribution

- Voluntary participation
- Hard copies at Town Hall, Library and Senior Center
- Online Version - Google Form shared via social media and Bolton Bulletin
- Flyers posted at businesses with QR code

Reponses

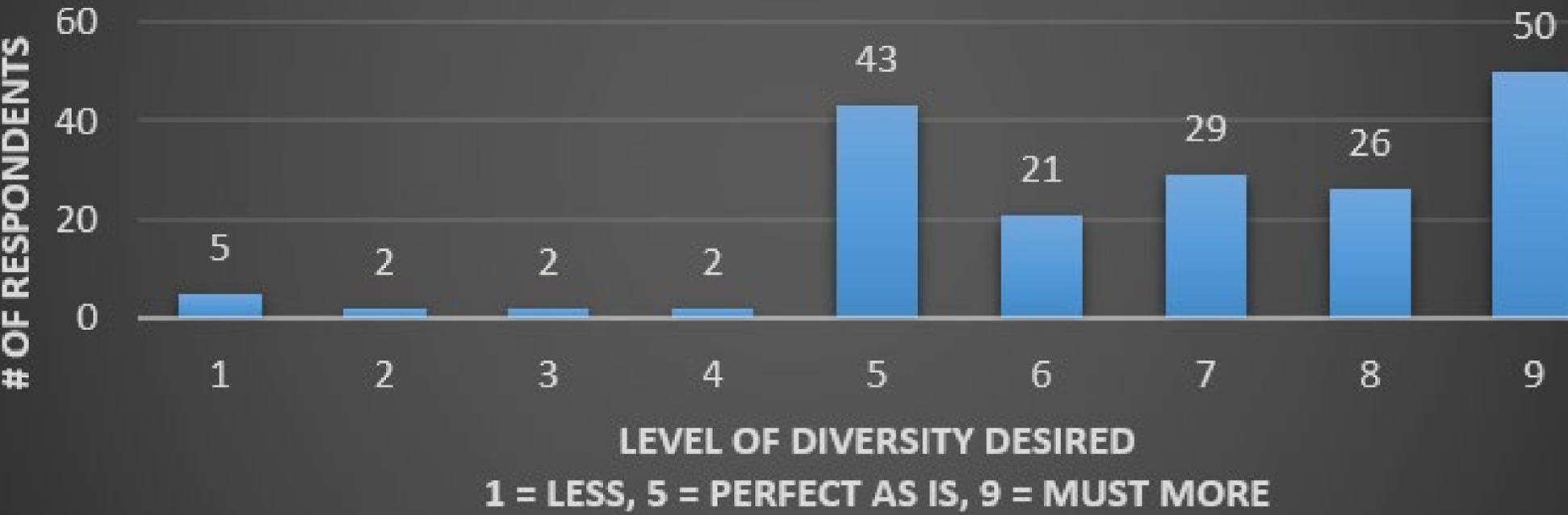
182 or 4.1%

There were 182 survey response. Representing 4,1% of adult aged persons in Bolton.

The folliwng groups were over represented among survey respondents when compared to the composition of the overall town:

- 35-44 year olds
- Females
- those with higher educational attainment
- those with a disabling condition
- those with left - leaning political ideology

Level of Diversity Desired by Respondents

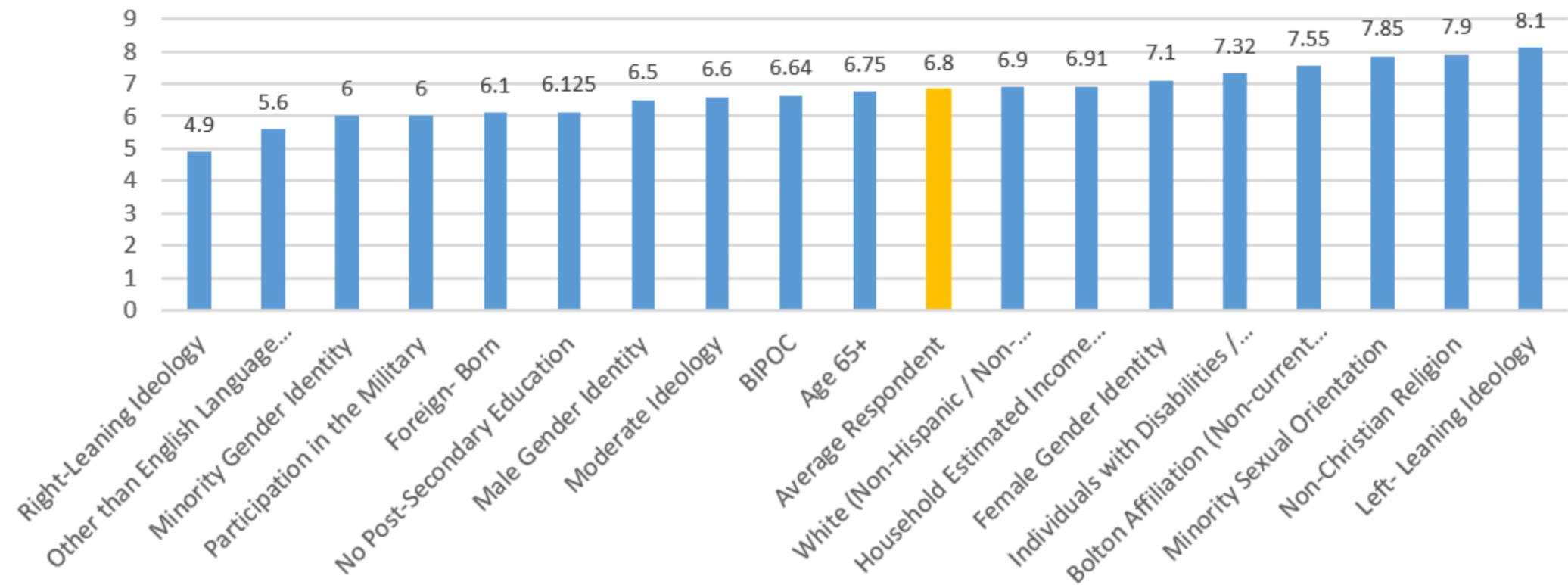


Desired Diversity Level

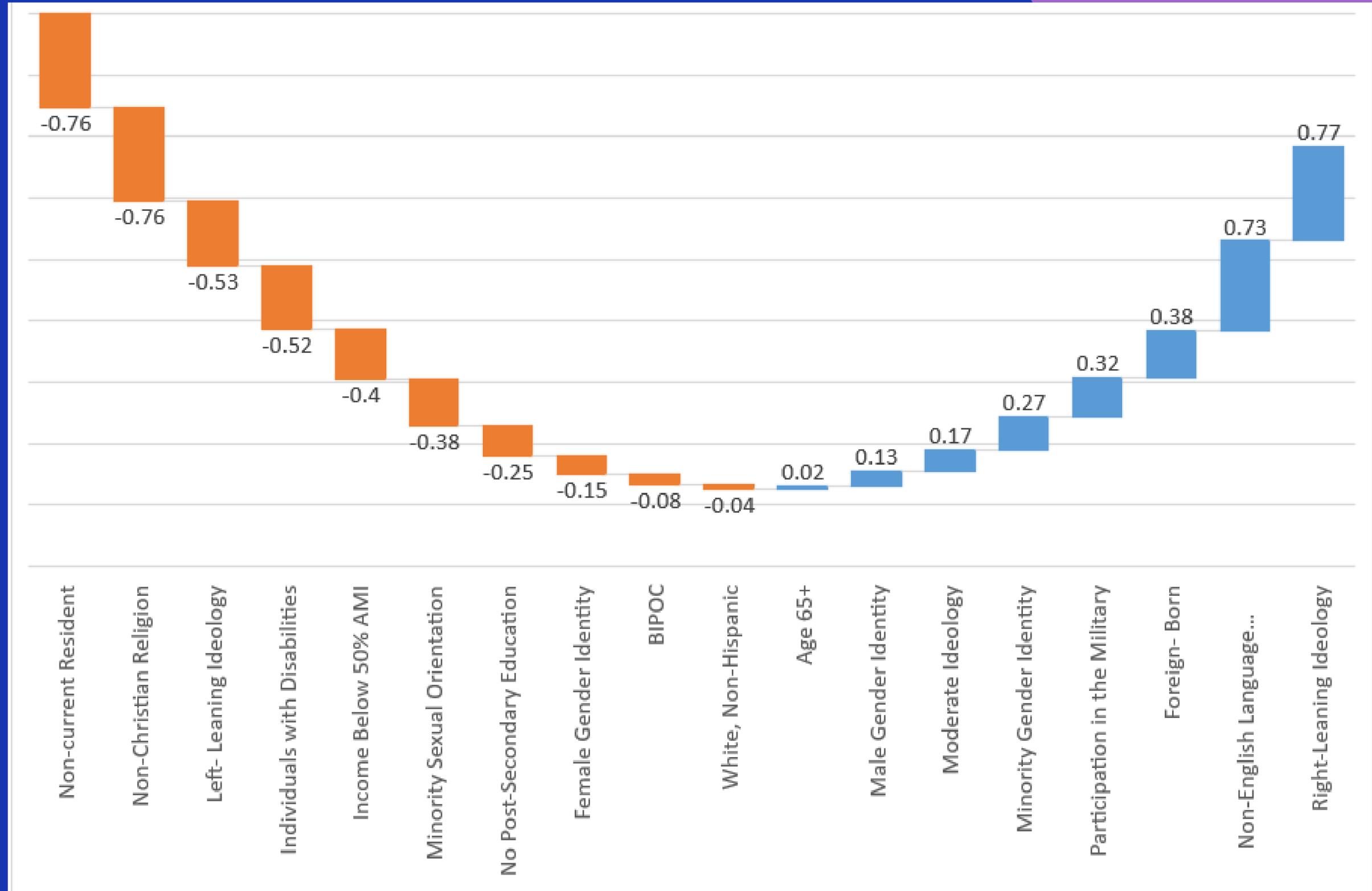
6.8

AVG RESPONSE

Avg Desired Diversity Level By Population



Deviation of Average Rating by Population



A magnifying glass with a black handle and frame is positioned over a blue notepad with horizontal lines. In the background, a bar chart with blue bars is visible on a white grid. The overall theme is research and analysis.

Findings

Following quantitative and qualitative analysis the Commission identified 7 themes to elevate as findings.

- Respondents were torn about whether Bolton is welcoming
- Some people feel that diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are unnecessary and unwelcome in Bolton
- Those with Non - Christian religions rated Bolton unfavorably
- Sense of mistreatment for people with disabilities
- Reduced Sense of Belonging among Minority Populations in Bolton
- Affordability and Affordable Housing
- Opportunities to Interact and to Celebrate Diversity



Torn about Bolton Being Welcoming

- “I believe the community has a strong base of welcoming, supportive, and driven individuals that are ensuring [diversity equity and inclusion] are a reality for Bolton.”
- “While once a member on one of the town boards and discussing town development, another member made a statement of keeping "those people" out of our town. Since all participants were white, I assumed that he must have assumed everyone else shared his position. While there are many people here that are welcoming to other people regardless of differences, in my many years living here I have seen enough others who would concur with this man.”



Affordability and affordable housing

- “Affordable housing for lower income families to have the opportunity to move here, increase the diversity in the Town office and school staffing”
- “Affordable housing for the disabled”
- “There are few places for low income to rent and work. Those that offer apartments are very discriminating. It's not a very friendly place for parents or single parents to rent.”



Some feel DEI Efforts are unnecessary and divisive

- “Shove this PC crap that the dems/progressives R shoving down our throats & let me live in peace, I earned all of what I have & I will not pander nor cater to the perpetually aggrieved 13%”
- “Stop focusing on sexual identity, orientation, gender, and race and let people live their lives the way they see fit. There isn't much appeal to a small rural town if we decide to act like these issues are a major element of Bolton life.”



Opportunities to interact and celebrate diversity

- “We need a safe place to gather, have a coffee and meet each other. The only way to get a more welcoming environment is to get to know more that just our few near neighbors.”
- “Schedule monthly web diversity meetings with each group i.e. LGBTQ, Veterans, etc. and invite guest speakers”



Reduced Sense of belonging among minority populations

Difference in Rating From Avg Respondent						
	BIPOC	Disability	Sexual Orientation	No Post 2nd Edu.	Low Income	Non-Christian Religion
Avg Rating Q 1-5	-0.07	-0.56	-0.41	-0.21	-0.34	-0.85
Authentic Self	-0.31	-0.79	-0.56	-0.71	-0.99	-1.22
Recommend Bolton	-0.56	-0.6	-0.53	-0.38	-0.74	-0.58
Raise issues w/o fear	-0.18	-0.82	-0.25	-0.55	-1.1	-1.1
Sense of Belonging	-0.45	-0.35	-0.42	-0.64	-0.5	-1.06



Those with non-Christian Religions rated Bolton poorly

- Those who fell into a non - Christian religion category had Favorability Percentages between 10-30%
- There Average Rating was .76 less than the general respondent.
- 64% of those with a non - Christian religion report being discriminated against because of their religion



Those with disabling conditions have had negative experiences

- Those with a disabling condition had an Average Rating .52 less than the general respondent.
- 54% of those with a disabling condition report being discriminated against because of their condition in Bolton
- “The entire town but especially the School System has HUGE issues in this department. Whether race issues or learning disabilities or physical ailments. I have stacks of information and documents as well as personal accounts from not just myself but other Bolton families to support my statements.”
- “I live with a disability and there are often handicap accessibility issues. Lack of accessible parking, building access etc. I am made to call ahead and make special plans instead of just being able to go to a early exessible building. I couldn't wear a mask because of my disability and I was told I couldn't access town hall without one.”

Commission Recommendations



1

Board of Selectmen should adopt a formal proclamation declaring a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as a community priority

2

Board of Selectmen should institute a permanent voluntary Human Rights and Equity Commission

3

Town should implement formal, regular, diversity, equity and inclusion training for all Town Employees, elected officials and volunteers serving on a permanent Town Committee or Commission

4

Town of Bolton should make increasing affordable housing a top priority

5

Town should take further action to assess how Bolton is ensuring the rights of Bolton's residents with disabilities are being met

6

The Town should be deliberate about providing opportunities for Bolton residents to engage with one another on the topics of diversity, equity and inclusion to increase awareness and empathy through the building of relationships



Questions or Comments?



For more information or future
questions please contact:

Amanda Gordon
Bolton Diversity Commission Chair
AmandaDGordon86@gmail.com

