



Each year, the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) surveys its membership to identify issues for further discussion, set legislative and funding priorities and to set strategic goals for the organization. The survey was distributed on-line with access for non-members through the Council’s website, rural.maryland.gov, and at in-person events around the State.

The Council asked five basic questions on issues impacting agriculture, infrastructure, economic development, community development and health. The Council also requested input on additional issues. Respondents have the option of offering additional comments or commentary.

The Council conducted the survey during the summer of 2022, distributing the survey in July with responses due in August. A total of 321 responses were received by the deadline.

Highest Responses

Maintaining existing businesses and recruiting new employers with good paying jobs received the most responses at 179 responses, almost 62% of respondents.

Keeping and making farming profitable was the top response under agriculture at 127 responses, 41% of respondents.

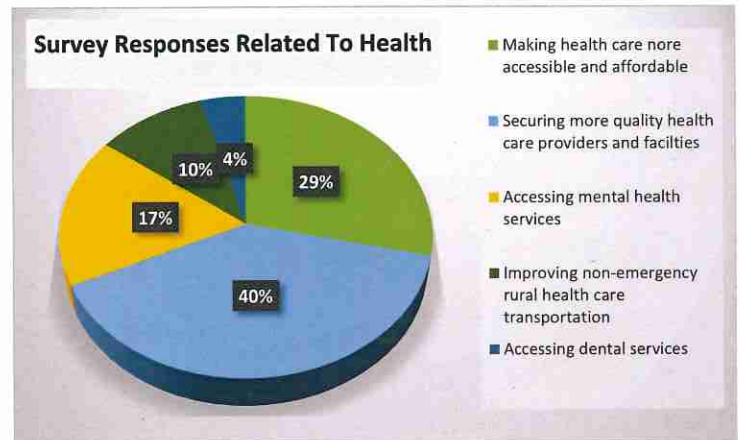
For community development, **address issues related to aging rural population and senior citizens** received the third most responses at 125 responses, 43% of respondents.

Encouraging providers to install last mile broadband received 115 responses, 37%.

For health, **securing more quality health care providers and facilities** received 110 responses, 40%.

Additional Responses

Responders were asked two additional questions which they could write in their own responses, those questions were “Were there any additional priorities mentioned above that you feel are important?” and “Were there any additional priorities not mentioned above that you feel are important?”



“Encourage local produce and farmer’s markets. I also enjoy seeing how technology has been making farming more efficient. I believe Tech and AG go hand in hand.”

“Preserve the landscape, waterways and the historic built environment in general. Impact of climate change on inland resources is a concern.”

“I basically cannot start a business where I live, because my internet is unreliable.”

“Rural economic development requires: Low cost energy, access to quality water supply, access to market centers and rail facilities, adequate market facilities within reasonable distance.”

-2022 Rural Issues Survey written comments

Additional Responses Continued

The written responses were categorized into 16 different categories to fit the concerns of the respondents. Some responses contained several issues and were added to each section in portions while other responses pertained to more than one category and were placed in the two categories that they matched. A total of 191 additional written responses were received.

Agriculture responses focused on preservation of land and landscapes, development of agriculture including agriculture education and promoting smart growth policies. Targeted industry sector development should include hemp and alpacas. Agritourism and value added agriculture remain important priorities. *41 written responses received.*

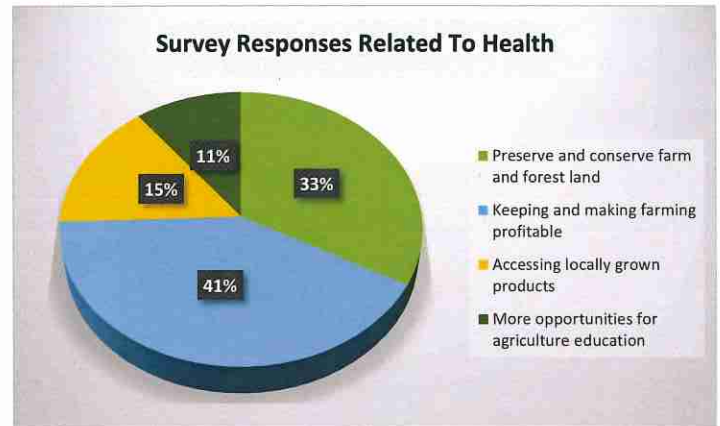
Affordable Housing responses included focusing on interagency coordination and discouraging sprawl. Encourage regional planning and planning for new growth and development. Identify model for homeownership in rural communities. *17 written responses received.*

Infrastructure and Broadband remain the top priority for respondents. Encouraging last mile installation as well as cellular coverage. *12 written responses were received.*

Transportation and support for public transportation *6 written responses received.*

Workforce Development *7 written responses.*

Additional issues of concern: renewable energy (wind turbines, wood energy and anerobic digestors), education, opioids, lowering taxes including agriculture use assessment, term limits, diversity and minority outreach, racism, and crime.



“Engaging in regional cooperation in planning for new growth and development in rural areas. Securing more financial resources for roads, water and wastewater facilities and public transit. Responding to poverty and providing assistance to low-income families. Making health care more accessible and affordable.”

“Aging in place in rural communities making homes safer and more accessible for residents, providing transportation for them as well as connectivity.”

“Protect farmland from industrial solar facility development.”

“Food security, manufacturing, workforce development and funding.”

-2022 Rural Issues Survey written comments