



CRITICAL INSIGHTS
RESEARCH FOR PRECISE PRAGMATIC DIRECTION

Cape Elizabeth Public Opinion Survey

Summary Report

Prepared for:
Town of Cape Elizabeth

December 2005

Focus Groups • Surveys • Public Opinion Polling

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Introduction



Background and Purpose

- The overall goal of this research effort is to assess the attitudes of a representative group of citizens regarding the experience of living in the Town of Cape Elizabeth, as well as to gauge their preferences and priorities regarding the amenities and services provided by the Town.
- This effort is designed to address the priorities, demands and expectations of the citizenry and, subsequently, use the information to guide decision-making by the Town Council and associated governing bodies.
- This research effort addresses the requirements set forth by the Town of Cape Elizabeth, using a methodology which will highlight the perspective of the citizenry and provide a baseline measurement against which future efforts can be benchmarked.



Research Objectives

- This research effort was designed to obtain information from residents of the Town of Cape Elizabeth in order to assess and evaluate their attitudes toward and usage of amenities and services that are currently being provided by the Town.
 - The end-goal of the research was to provide actionable insights and recommendations that will assist and inform the Town of Cape Elizabeth in effective and responsive planning for community services and amenities.
- Specifically, the Town of Cape Elizabeth was seeking to accomplish the following informational goals:
 1. To assess the attitudes and preferences of residents towards the Town, and the services and amenities it provides;
 2. To evaluate residents' expectations and community values;
 3. To evaluate “quality of life” issues such as health, safety, and “livability” dimensions;
 4. To analyze the willingness of residents to pay for improvements to community services through increased taxes; and
 5. To develop a prioritization of the desire for various community services, particularly in light of cost considerations.



Respondent Qualifications

- A number of eligibility criteria were employed in screening potential respondents to the survey.
- Specifically, all respondents were required to fulfill the following selection criteria:
 - Must have been a resident of Cape Elizabeth for at least six months;
 - Must not be a member (or have any close relative who is a member) of the following groups: Town Council, Comprehensive Plan Committee or School Board of Cape Elizabeth; and
 - Must not be employed (or have any close relative who is employed) at a market research firm, advertising agency, or in the field of journalism.



Methodological Overview

Number of respondents	Dates Research Conducted	Error Margin		Refusal Rate	Length of Interview
		90%	95%		
303	November 5-14, 2005	4.6%	5.7%	7.4%	18 minutes

- The survey instrument was developed by Critical Insights in collaboration with the Comprehensive Plan Committee of the Town of Cape Elizabeth.
- Interviews were conducted by telephone from the Critical Insights Information Center employing our thirty-station computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system.
- Fifteen percent of all interviews were verified with callbacks within 24 hours of the actual interview.
- Refusal rates were only 7% overall, indicating that the sample was not tainted by non-response error.



Analytical Framework

To explore any differences of opinion among the various subgroups of the overall sample, data was analyzed according to the following audience segments:

Category	Subgroup	n	%
Tenure Living in Cape Elizabeth	5 years or less	60	20%
	6 to 10 years	56	19
	11 or more years	187	62
Age	44 years old and younger	71	23
	45 to 64 years old	148	49
	65 years old and older	81	27
Living Quarters	Own	280	92
	Rent	21	7



Analytical Framework

Category	Subgroup	n	%
Presence of Children in Home	None	181	60%
	One or more children	122	40
Employment Status	Employed	191	63
	Not employed	112	37
Education	Less than college degree	70	23
	College degree and higher	226	75
Annual Household Income	Less than \$79K	122	40
	\$80K to \$149K	83	27
	\$150K or more	48	16
Gender	Male	103	34
	Female	200	66



Research Results



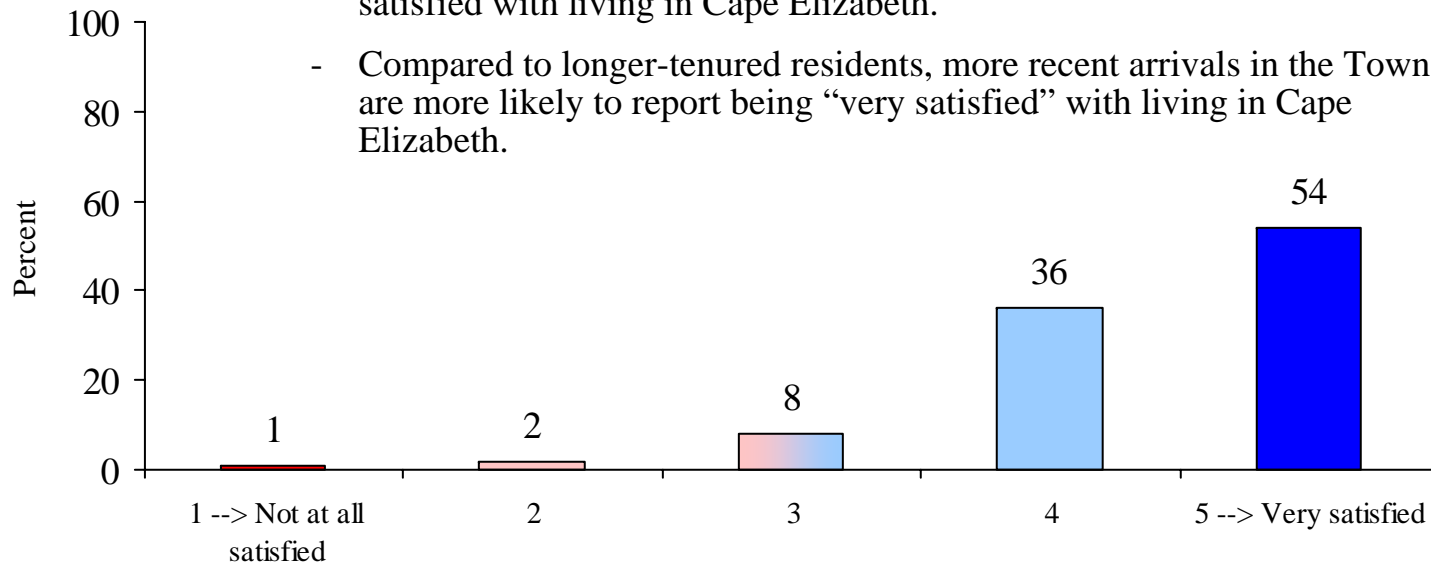
*Satisfaction with
Living in Cape Elizabeth*



Overall Satisfaction with Living in Cape Elizabeth

Overall, how satisfied are you with living in Cape Elizabeth?

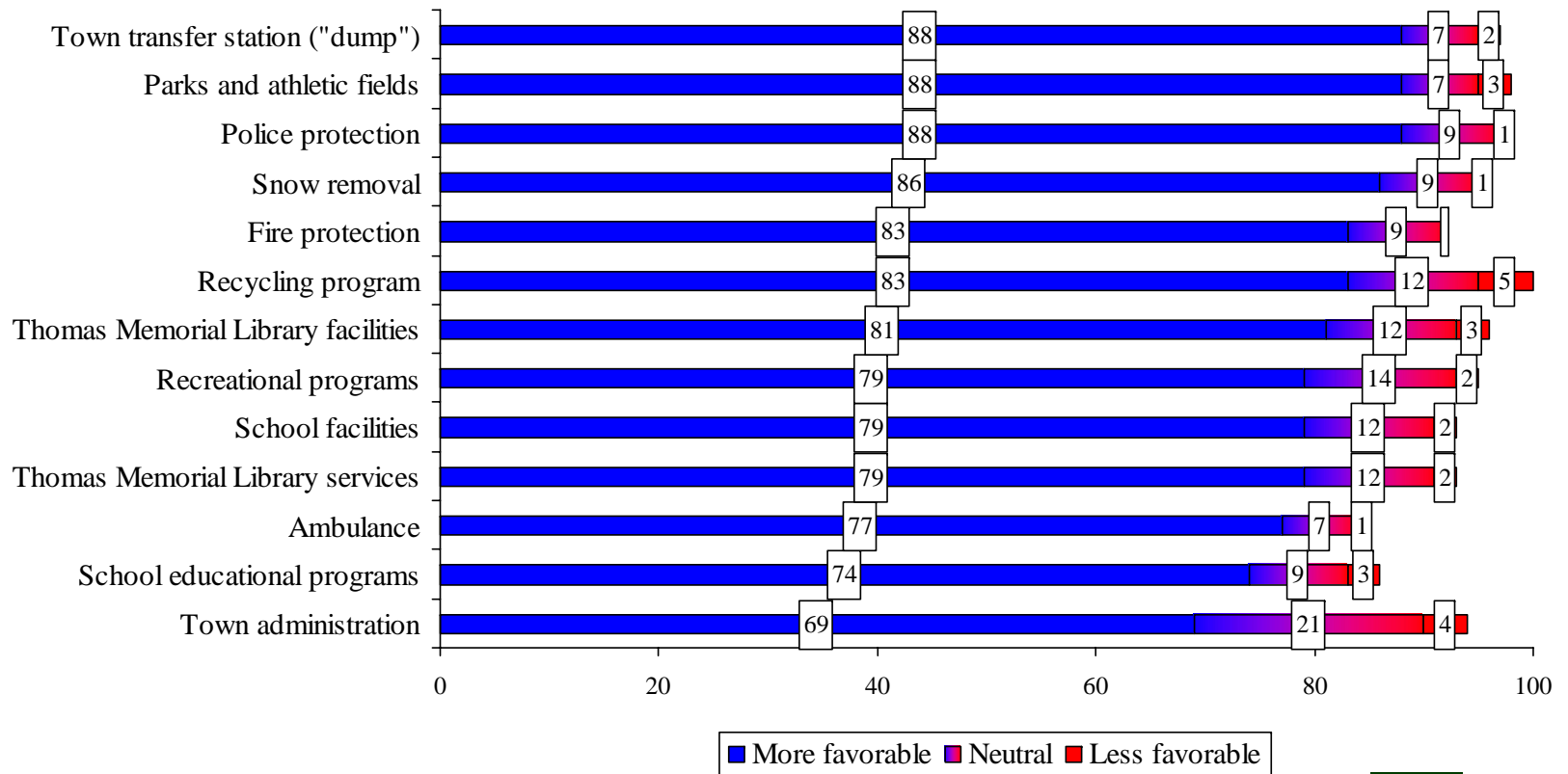
- Fully 9-in-10 residents of Cape Elizabeth claim to be satisfied with living in Cape Elizabeth, with over half being very satisfied. Very few respondents (3%) indicated that they are dissatisfied with living in the Town.
 - Residents younger than 44 years of age are substantially more likely to be satisfied with living in Cape Elizabeth.
 - Compared to longer-tenured residents, more recent arrivals in the Town are more likely to report being “very satisfied” with living in Cape Elizabeth.





Assessment of Community Services: More Favorably-Viewed Services

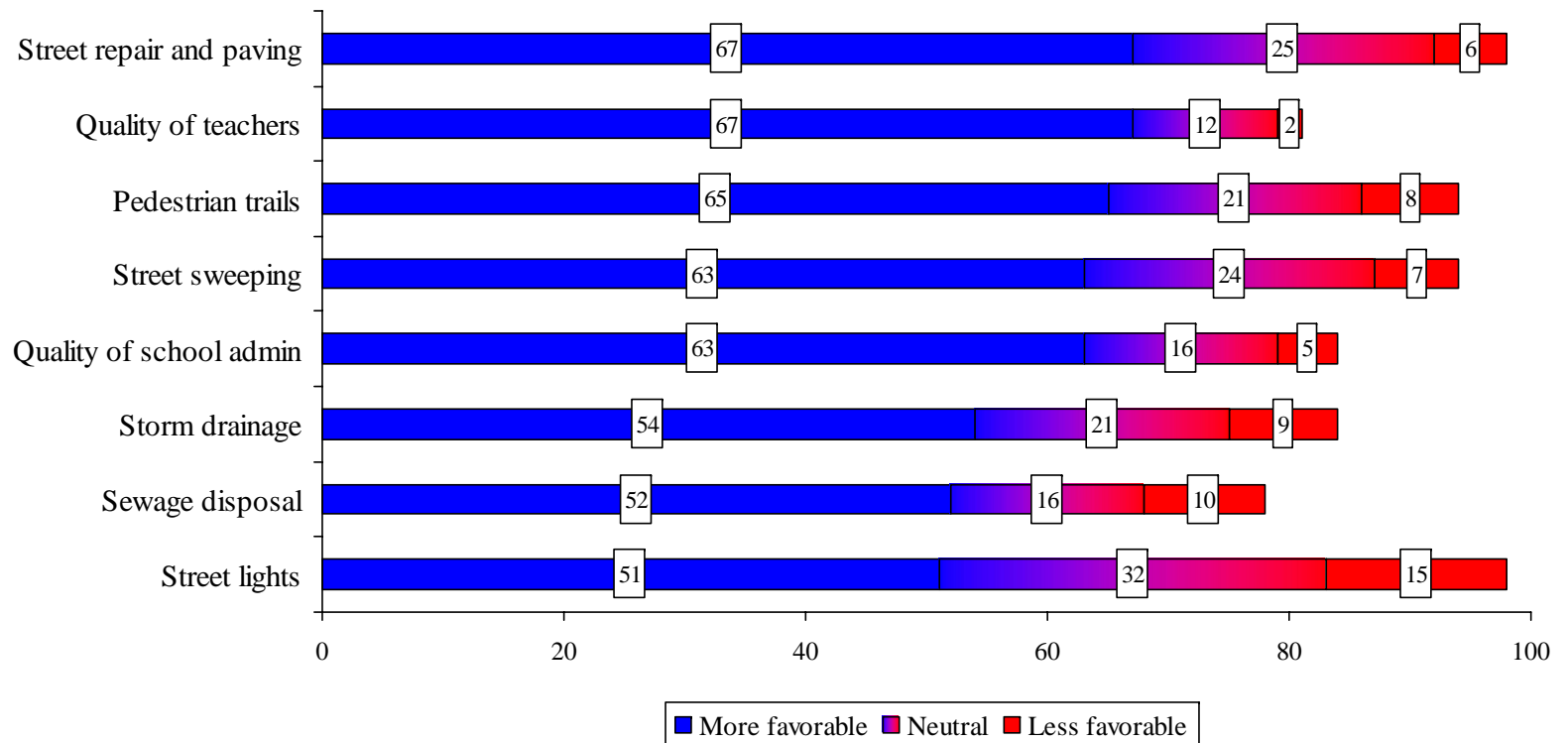
Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "poor" and 5 means "excellent," please rate the following community facilities and services.





Assessment of Community Services: Services With Moderate Favorability

Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “poor” and 5 means “excellent,” please rate the following community facilities and services.





Summary Observations on Community Facilities & Services

- Overall, a strong majority of respondents provided a highly favorable assessment for the majority of facilities and services provided by Cape Elizabeth that were included in the research.
 - Notably, close to 9-in-10 Cape Elizabeth residents who responded to the poll provided favorable ratings for the Town's transfer station, parks and athletic fields, police protection and snow removal services, respectively.
 - Longer tenured residents (11+ years) were more likely than were more recent arrivals to provide higher ratings in several key services, including the Town's transfer station, police and fire protection, the library facilities, ambulance services, school programs and the quality of teachers.
 - Compared to their younger counterparts, older Cape Elizabeth residents tended to express higher levels of favorability toward public safety and protection services, such as fire and police protection, as well as ambulance services.
 - However, several of the services and facilities under investigation in the research received comparatively lower levels of positive feedback, with only about half of the residents polled expressing a favorable opinion toward the storm drainage system, sewage disposal and the street lights in Cape Elizabeth.



Preserving Cape Elizabeth's “Rural Character”

*Often we make references to “preserving the rural character of the Town.” When thinking about preserving the rural character of Cape Elizabeth, what does that statement mean to you? **

- When presented with this open-ended item, more than one-third of respondents stated that preserving rural character meant conserving/preserving open or green space within the Town.
- Another one-third of residents stated that preserving rural character meant limiting development within the Town.
- Notably, almost 1-in-5 residents polled indicated that the preservation and support of local farms is what is meant by preserving the rural character of Cape Elizabeth.

Perceived Meaning	n=303
Conserving open / “green” space	36%
Limiting commercial development	33
Protecting/supporting local farms	19
Limiting residential development	17
Free public access to land/outdoor recreation opportunities (includes Fort Williams)	15

* Multiple responses accepted. The remaining responses can be found in the Detailed Tabulations.

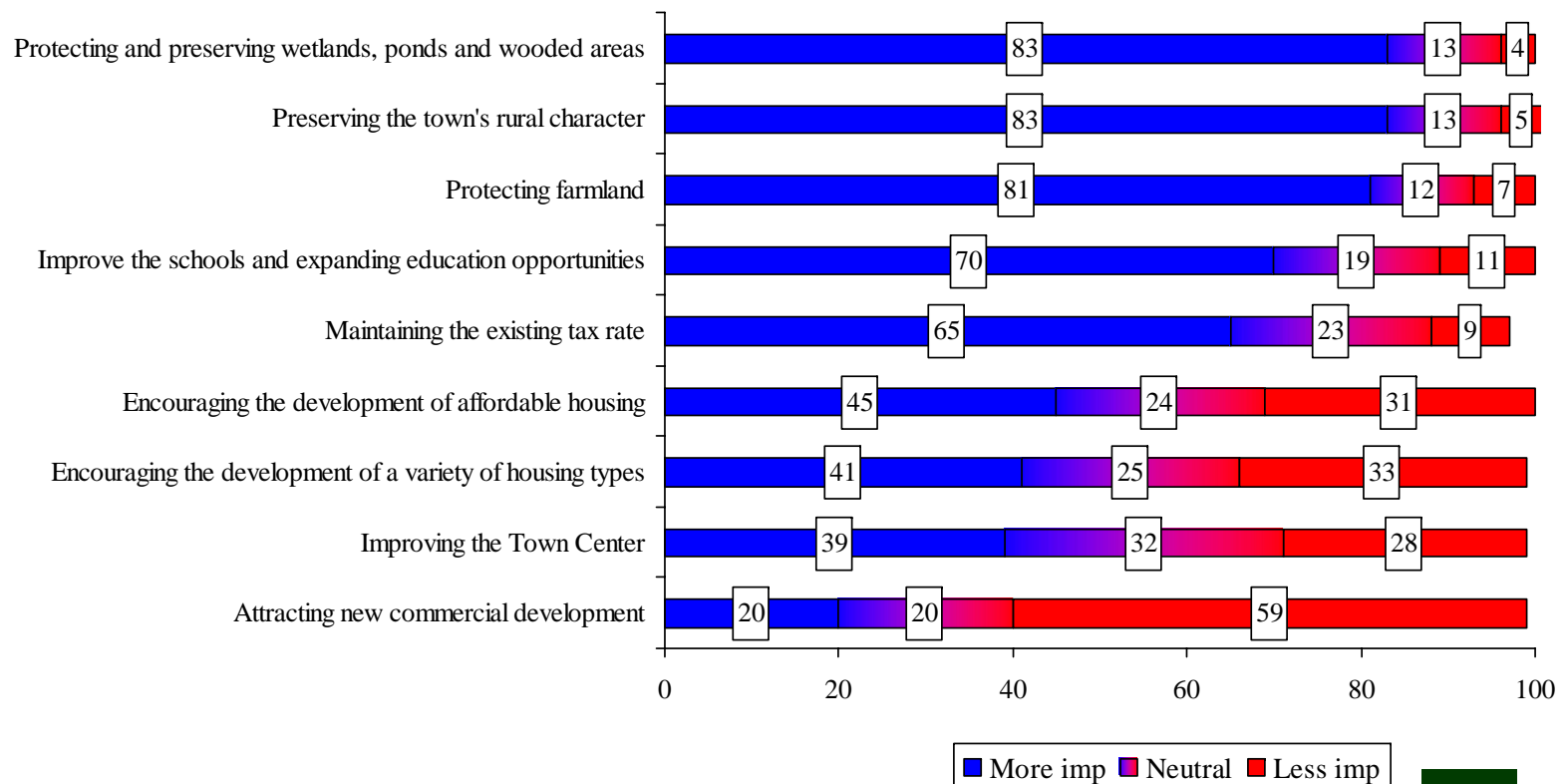


Importance of Community Attributes & Goals



Perceived Importance of Potential Cape Elizabeth Goals

Listed below are some potential goals for the Town of Cape Elizabeth over the next 5 to 10 years. Please rate each of the goals in terms of their importance to you, where 1 means “not at all important” and 5 means “very important.”





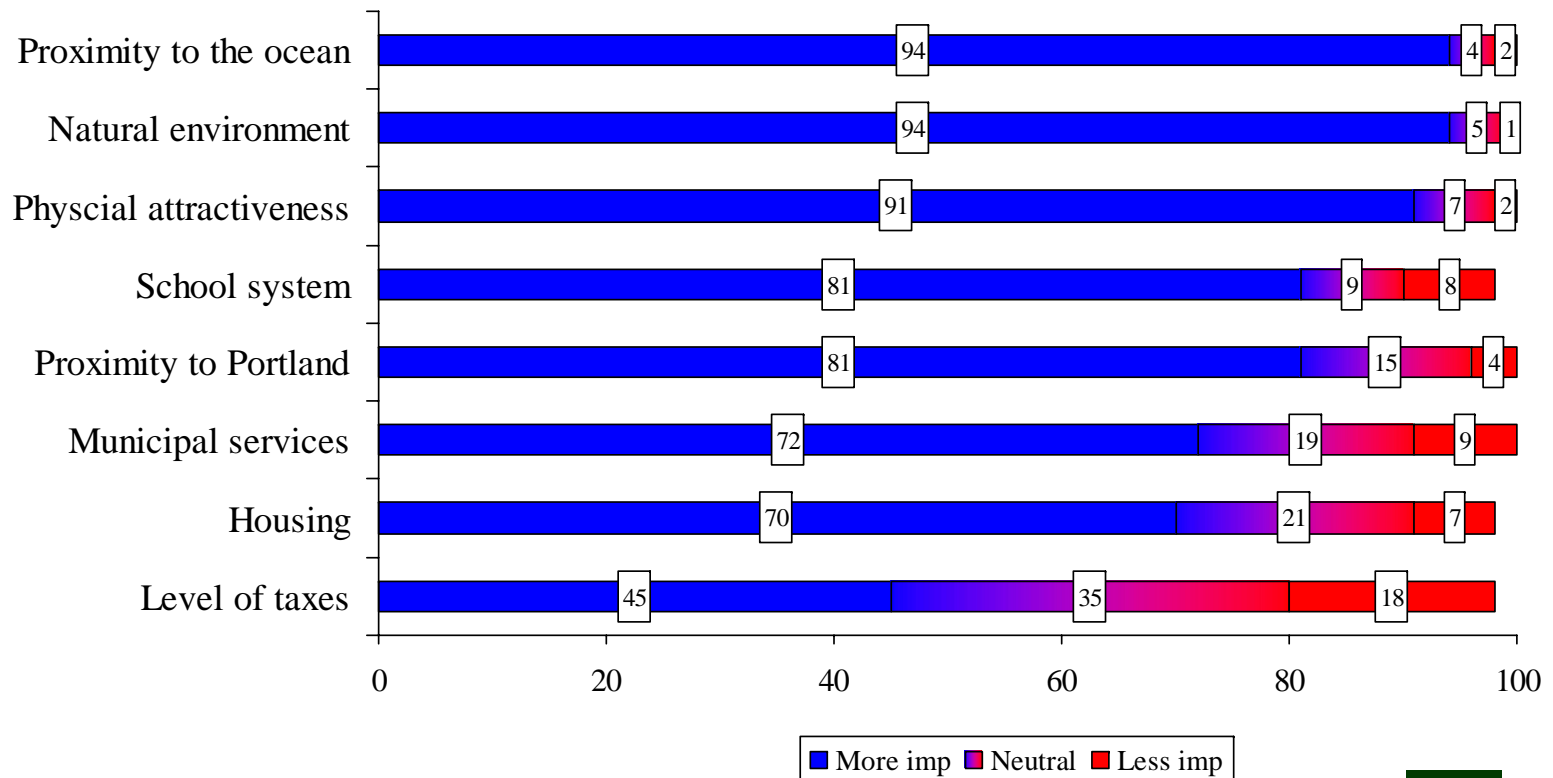
Summary Observations on Community Goals

- Consistent with aforementioned narrative feedback concerning preserving the Town's "rural character," more than 8-in-10 residents indicated that the following areas are important 5- to 10-year goals for the Town:
 - Protecting and preserving wetlands, ponds and wooded areas
 - Preserving the town's rural character
 - Protecting farmland
 - Generally, while seen as key goals among all demographic groups, more recent arrivals tended to place the most importance on each of the above issues.
- A second tier of goals – in terms of stated importance – included improving the schools and expanding education opportunities and maintaining the existing tax rate, respectively.
- Areas deemed to be of lesser importance (cited as important by less than half of residents polled) included:
 - Encouraging the development of affordable housing
 - Encouraging the development of a variety of housing types
 - Improving the Town Center; and (especially)
 - Attracting commercial development
 - Newer residents in particular appeared to eschew increased commercial development.



Perceived Importance of Cape Elizabeth ‘Benefits’

Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “not at all important” and 5 means “very important,” please rate the following factors that could be considered benefits of living in Cape Elizabeth.





Summary Observations on “Benefits” of Living in Cape Elizabeth

- More than 9-in-10 residents who responded to the poll considered several of the physical characteristics of the Town to be the greatest benefits of living in Cape Elizabeth.
 - Specifically, living near the ocean, the overall natural environment, and the physical attractiveness of the Town were noted by the vast majority of residents as important benefits.
 - The natural environment of the Town resonated particularly among residents with a household income greater than \$150,000.
- It is also important to note that more than 7-in-10 respondents stated that the community’s proximity to Portland, the school system, municipal services and housing are key benefits of living in Cape Elizabeth.
 - Not surprisingly, the Cape Elizabeth school system was cited more frequently by respondents younger than 44 and with children in their household.
 - Housing was noted as a more salient benefit by a substantially greater proportion of elderly residents (older than 65) than by their younger counterparts.
- While 45% did cite it as an important benefit, it was not surprising that taxation was the only area that was not considered by a majority of residents polled to be a particular “benefit” of living in Cape Elizabeth.

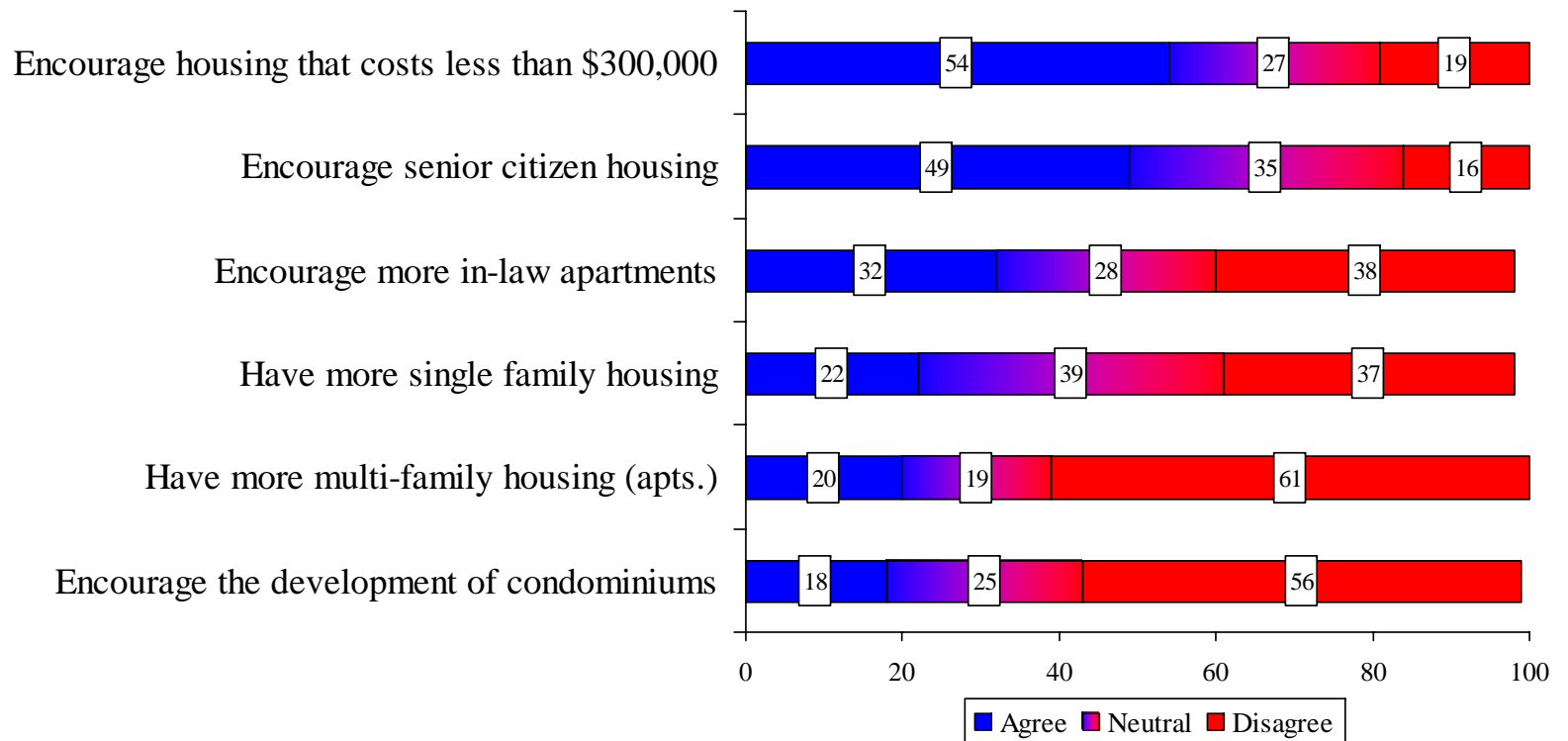


Housing Options in Cape Elizabeth



Perspectives on Town's Approach to Housing Options

Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree,” please indicate your opinion regarding what direction the Town should take. The Town of Cape Elizabeth should...





Perspectives on Town's Approach to Housing Options

- Overall, response was mixed concerning most of the housing options presented in the poll.
- Approximately half of the Cape Elizabeth residents who took part in the poll agreed that the Town should encourage housing in Cape Elizabeth that costs less than \$300,000 and that more senior housing should be encouraged.
 - The option for more housing under \$300,000 resonated particularly well among longer-term residents (6 years or more), those with less than a college education, residents with a household income of less than \$80,000 per year, and female respondents.
 - Not surprisingly, older residents (45+ years of age) expressed a preference for more senior housing, as did less highly-educated residents.
- Only about 1-in-5 respondents stated that condominium development should be encouraged, or that there should be more multi-family housing units in Cape Elizabeth.
 - By contrast, over half of residents polled disagreed with each of these proposals.
 - While still low overall, a slightly higher proportion (approximately 21%) of respondents older than 45 years of age agree that there should be more condominium development encouraged in Cape Elizabeth.

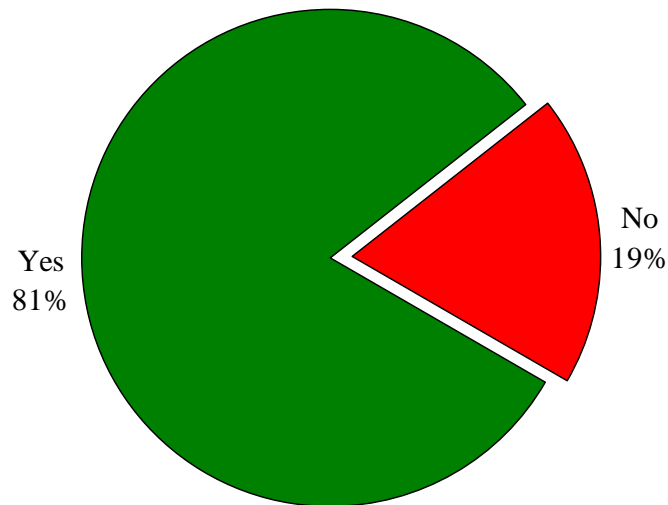


Access to Natural Resources



Perspectives on Public Water Access

Do you feel that there is sufficient public access to the coast, ponds and streams in Cape Elizabeth?



*Where would you improve legal public access?**

Improvements	Total Answering "No" n=57	Total Sample n=303
Beaches/waterfront	40%	8%
Great Pond	16	3
Kettle Cove	11	2
Crescent Beach	9	2
Trundy Point	9	2
Fort Williams	7	1

* Based on respondents who indicated that there is not enough public access. Multiple responses accepted. The remaining responses can be found in the Detailed Tabulations.



Perspectives on Public Water Access

- Only about 1-in-5 residents polled in this research effort reported that there is insufficient public access to the water in Cape Elizabeth.
- Among the respondents who indicated that there is not sufficient access, fully 4-in-10 indicated that they would like better access to the beaches or waterfront.
 - While the absolute number of respondents citing this item is low overall, it is worth noting that nearly half of the long-term residents of Cape Elizabeth (11+ years) stated that they would like increased access to the beaches and waterfront.

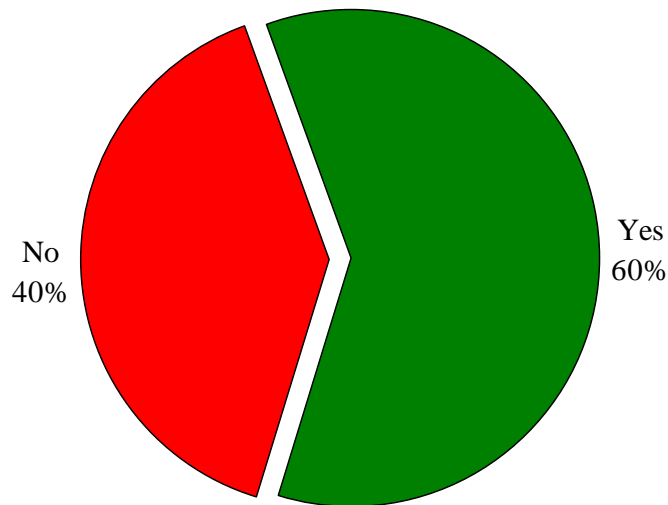


Transportation and Roadways



Perceptions of Dangerous Roads & Intersections

Do you feel that there are any dangerous sections of road or intersections in the Town that need improvement?



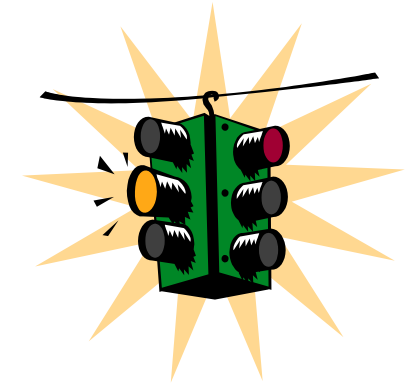
*Please indicate the location of the section of roads or intersection(s), by street name. **

Intersection	Total Answering n=179	Total Sample n=303
Route 77, Shore Road, and Scott Dyer Road	64%	38%
Route 77 and High School entrance	47	28
Route 77 and Spurwink Avenue	7	4
Route 77 and Fowler Road	3	2
Route 77 and Mitchell Road	3	2

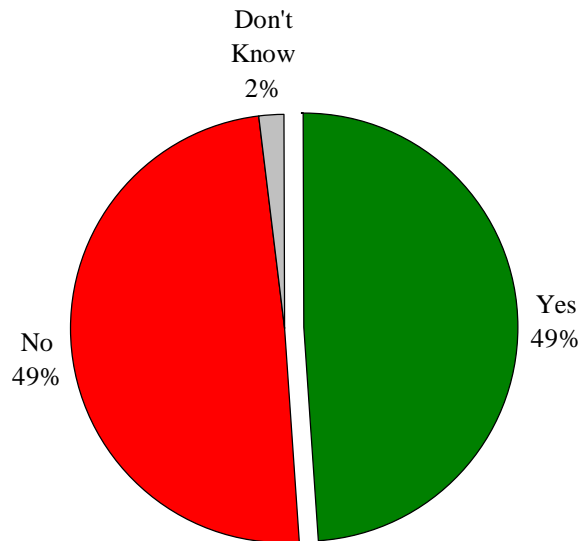
* Based on respondents who indicated that there are dangerous sections of road or intersections in the Town. Multiple responses accepted. The remaining responses can be found in the Detailed Tabulations.



Perceived Need for Additional Traffic Lights



Do you think that there is a need for additional traffic lights in Cape Elizabeth?



*Where do you think the additional traffic lights should be installed? **

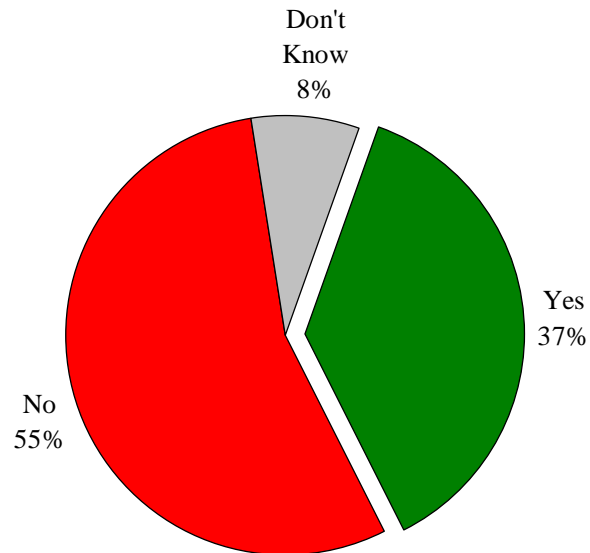
Intersection	Total Answering "Yes" n=149	Total Sample n=303
Route 77, Shore Road, and Scott Dyer Road	64%	32%
Route 77 and High School entrance	46	23
Households w/ children	61	30
Households w/out children	36	18

* Based on respondents who indicated that there are dangerous sections of road or intersections in the Town. Multiple responses accepted. The remaining responses can be found in the Detailed Tabulations.



Perceptions of Necessary Road Improvements and Repairs

Are there any sections of roads that need improvement or repair?



Road	Total Answering "Yes" n=111	Total Sample n=303
Spurwink Road	54%	20%
Shore Road	14	5
Mitchell Road	9	3
Sawyer Road	5	2
Fowler Road	2	1
Other	23	8

* Based on respondents who indicated that there are dangerous sections of road or intersections in the Town. The remaining responses can be found in the Verbatim Report.



Summary Observations on Transportation and Roadway Issues

- Among the fully 6-in-10 residents who stated that there are dangerous intersections in Cape Elizabeth, nearly two-thirds listed the confluence of Rte. 77, Shore Rd. and Scott Dyer Rd.
 - This intersection was named even more frequently by residents who do not work outside the home, residents with less than a college education and residents without children in the household.
- Additionally, nearly half of respondents cited the Rte. 77 and high school entrance as a dangerous intersection.
 - This intersection was cited most often by respondents with children, college educated respondents and higher income (>\$80,000/year) households.



Summary Observations on Transportation and Roadway Issues

- Respondents to the poll are evenly split (49% for, 49% against) in their opinion of whether there is a need for additional traffic lights in Cape Elizabeth.
 - Corresponding to the item asking whether there are any dangerous intersections in Cape Elizabeth, those who do feel additional lights are necessary most often cited the Rte. 77/Shore Rd./Scott Dyer Rd intersection (64%) and the Rte. 77/high school entrance intersection (46%) as the intersections requiring regulatory traffic lights.
 - Respondents with children in the household are more likely to cite the intersection of Rte. 77 and the high school entrance as needing a traffic light.
- While a majority of respondents stated that there were not any sections of road that require improvements or repair, among respondents who felt there were, and who did name a section of road, a majority of the comments (54%) concerned Spurwink Road.

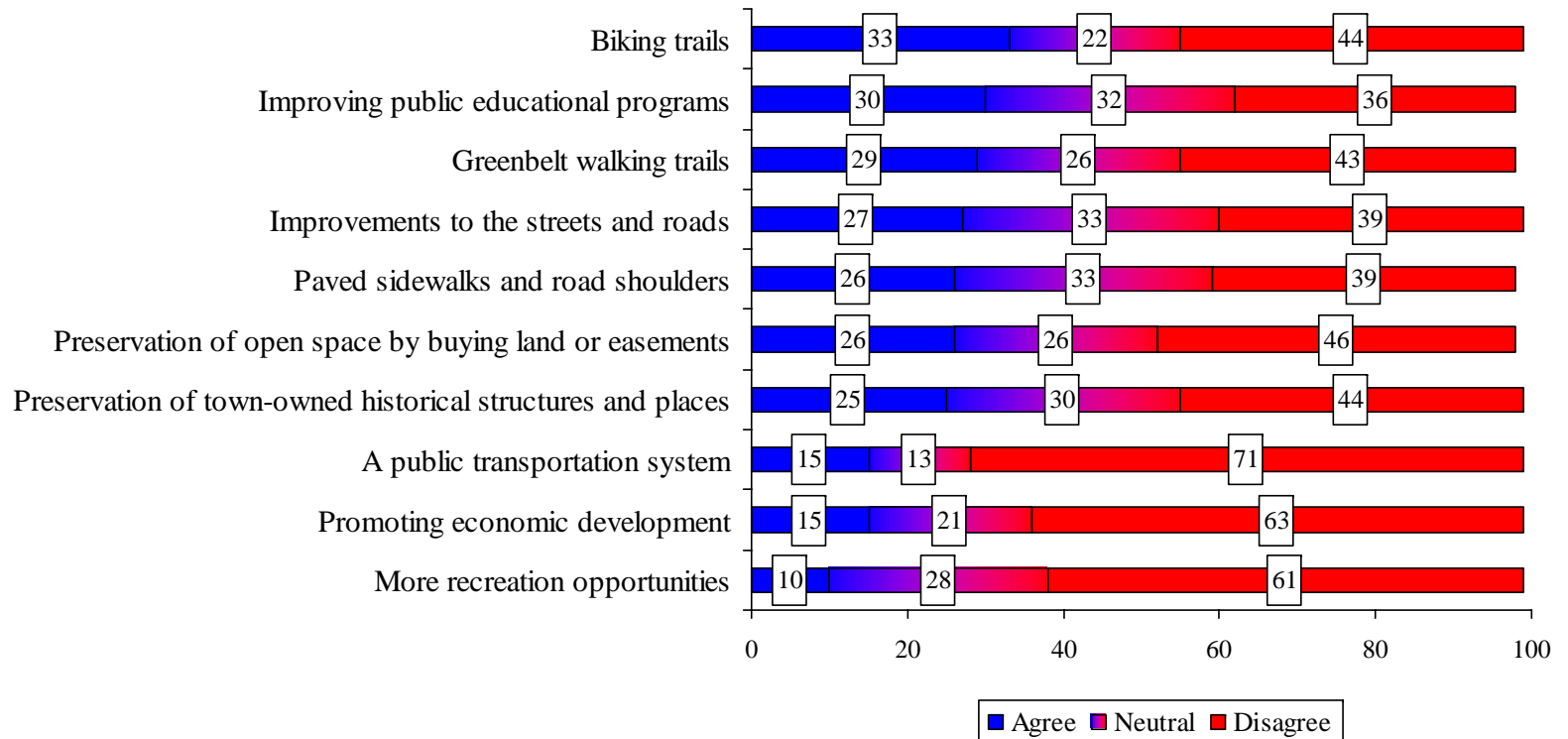


Taxes



Level of Support for Intended Purposes of Increased Taxes

Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “strongly disagree” and 5 meaning “strongly agree,” please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. The Town of Cape Elizabeth should increase taxes for...





Observations on Support for Intended Purposes of Increased Taxes

- Across-the-board, no more than one-third of the Cape Elizabeth residents polled indicated that taxes should be increased for any of the items under investigation.
 - The highest levels of support were for biking trails, public education programs and greenbelt walking trails.
 - Only about 1-in-10 respondents expressed support for increasing taxes for recreation, and only 1-in-8 expresses support for promoting economic development, or public transportation.
- Opposition to increasing taxes was highest for the funding of a public transportation system in Cape Elizabeth, with fully 7-in-10 stating that they disagree with increasing taxes to fund this type of project.
 - Opposition to increased taxes to fund a public transportation system was highest among male respondents, with more than 8-in-10 (82%) expressing opposition.



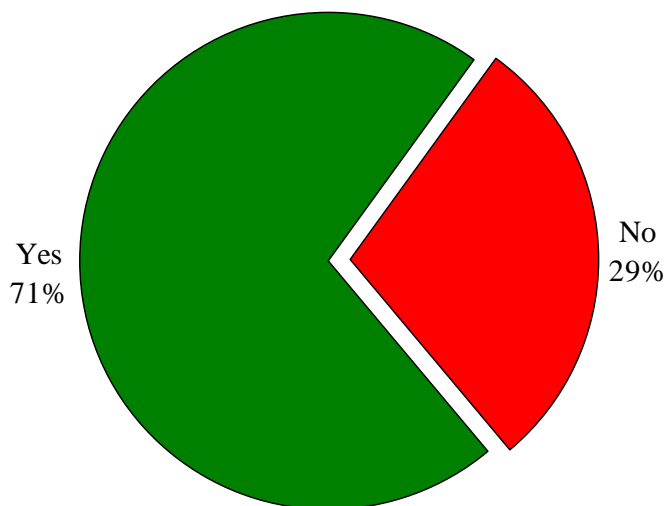
*Perceived Necessary Improvements
to Cape Elizabeth*



Perceived Adequacy of Service/Retail Establishments



Do you feel that Cape Elizabeth has adequate service and retail establishments?



*What types of services or retail establishments would benefit the community? **

Establishment	Total Answering "No" n=87	Total Sample n=303
Restaurant or locally owned coffee shop	66%	19%
Locally owned retail shops/boutiques	32	9
Hardware store	23	7
Grocery store	17	5

* Based on respondents who indicated that the Town does not have adequate service and retail establishments. Multiple responses accepted. The remaining responses can be found in the Detailed Tabulations.



Observations on Adequacy of Service/Retail Establishments

- Only about 3-in-10 respondents reported that they do not think Cape Elizabeth currently has adequate service and retail establishments, while fully 7-in-10 respondents stated that the Town has enough of these types of establishments.
 - Support for this item differed little among the subgroups under investigation.
- Among the 3-in-10 respondents who indicated that there are not enough service and retail establishments in the Town, about one-third cited restaurants (35%), locally owned retail shops (32%), or locally owned coffee shops (31%) as desirable retail/service additions.
 - Support for more restaurants was highest among respondents with children and female respondents.
 - Endorsement of an increased presence for retail/boutique shops was greatest among residents who are likely retirees (i.e. respondents older than 65 years of age, respondents who do not presently work outside the home).
 - Support for more coffee shops was highest among respondents with children and with respondents in the \$80,000-\$149,000 income range.



Perceptions on Needed Improvements to the Town Center

*What public improvements or additions do you think would be most important to the Town Center? **

- Interestingly, when asked what improvements they would suggest for the Town Center, the most common response given by fully 3-in-10 respondents was that there are no improvements or modifications needed.

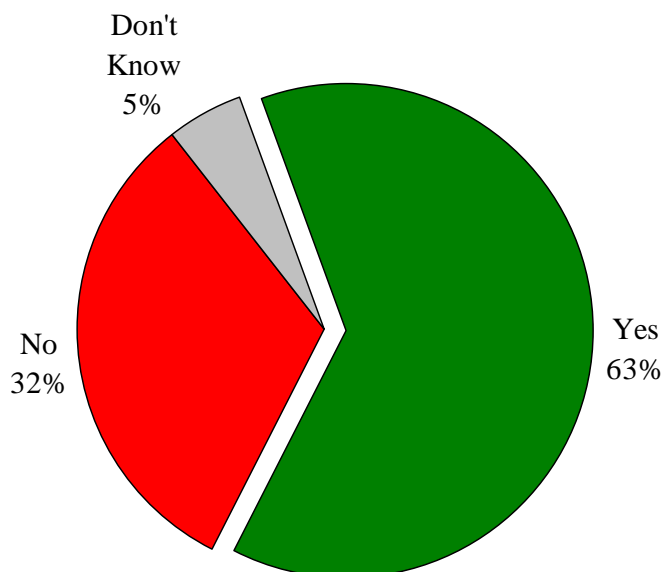
Improvement	n=303
Satisfied – no improvements or additions needed	30%
Create village atmosphere (landscaping, remodel buildings)	10
Retail shops/boutiques (locally owned)	7
Restaurant	7
Coffee shop (locally owned)	6
Bike lanes/sidewalks	6
Park	6
Traffic light at Route 77, Shore Road and Dyer Road	6

* Multiple responses accepted. The remaining responses can be found in the Detailed Tabulations.



Regional Collaboration with Other Communities

Some towns have found that they can reduce costs by providing services on a regional basis, rather than town-by-town. In your opinion, should the Town of Cape Elizabeth consider regionalizing by cooperating with other municipalities in providing services?



* Based on respondents who indicated that the Town should provide services in collaboration with other communities. Multiple responses accepted. The remaining responses can be found in the Detailed Tabulations.

*What, if any, services should Cape Elizabeth provide in collaboration with other communities? **

Services	Total Answering "Yes" n=190	Total Sample n=303
Fire and rescue	49%	31%
Police department	39	24
Public works (trash removal, recycling, road maintenance)	29	18
911 emergency response	12	8
Schools/school administration	12	8
Purchasing of municipal supplies	10	6
Public transportation	10	5



Regional Collaboration with Other Communities

- More than 6-in-10 residents (63%) indicated that the Town of Cape Elizabeth should collaborate with other communities for municipal service delivery.
 - About one-third of residents (32%) stated that Cape Elizabeth should not, or does not need to, collaborate with other communities to regionalize services.
- Among the residents who indicated that the Town should collaborate with other communities in delivering municipal services, nearly half listed fire and rescue as services that could potentially be delivered in Cape Elizabeth on a regional basis.
- Another 4-in-10 cited the police department and another 3-in-10 reported that public works functions, such as trash removal, could be regionalized.
- Overall, most respondents suggested the regionalization of services that are inclusive of public safety (fire, police, 911 dispatch), suggesting that residents are amenable to collaborating with other communities on these key services that contribute to a community's sense of security and well-being.



Summary Observations



Summary Observations

- Overall, the results of this research effort suggest that the residents of Cape Elizabeth are highly satisfied with living in the Town and view the natural landscape and environment of the Town as important benefits of living in Cape Elizabeth.
 - Importantly, residents see open space, wooded land, and local farms as contributing to the “rural character” of the town and many survey respondents stressed the importance of preserving these facets of the Cape Elizabeth community.
 - Indeed, the preservation of the natural landscape of Cape Elizabeth (e.g. woods, ponds, etc.), the community’s rural character, and its farmland are seen as high priorities for the Town, thus reinforcing the notion that residents of Cape Elizabeth view the natural environment as a key factor in their perceived quality of life.
 - A strong majority of residents feel there is sufficient public access to water in the Town, though some residents would like to see increased public access to the ocean waterfront.



Summary Observations

- Residents appear reluctant to suggest raising taxes for either municipal, recreation or other public works projects.
 - Indeed, when presented with a list of options ranging from concepts such as biking trails to promoting economic development within the Town, no more than one-third of the residents polled indicated that there were any projects deemed appropriate for raising taxes in order to fund.
 - Despite the stated value of the Town’s rural character, only one-quarter of residents agree that taxes should be increased to buy open space parcels or easements.
- Cape Elizabeth residents offered highly favorable ratings for the vast majority of community departments and service providers, ranging from the most positive ratings assigned to the Town’s transfer station and rather mixed ratings assigned to the community’s street lights.
 - While ratings for the dump, police, fire, and snow removal were exceedingly high, when asked to cite services that could be regionalized with other nearby communities, residents most often cited fire/rescue, police, public works, and 911 dispatch.



Summary Observations

- While residents are ambivalent in their satisfaction with the Town's street lights and are evenly split on the need for having additional traffic lights in Cape Elizabeth, feedback from the study suggest that two key intersections may require examination.
 - Respondents who feel that there are problem intersections in Cape Elizabeth overwhelmingly listed the intersection of Scott Dyer Road, Rte. 77 and Shore Road as being dangerous and in need of an additional traffic signal.
 - Another sizeable proportion of residents cited the intersection of Rte. 77 and the high school as being problematic and needing a light.
- Suggestions for improving the town center were highly fragmented, with the most common response being that the town center is not in need of further enhancement. Consistent with this feedback, a strong majority of residents believe the Town currently has an adequate mix of retail and service outlets.
- When queried about the Town's direction for future housing needs, residents of Cape Elizabeth express a desire to have more affordable housing – such as housing that costs less than \$300,000 or senior citizen housing. There is little stated support for encouraging multi-unit housing such as condominiums or apartments, however.

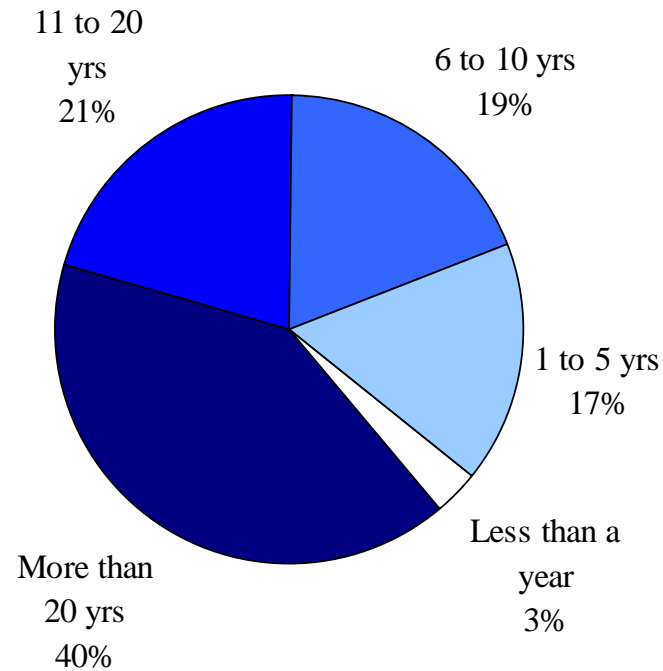


Sample Profile



Tenure in Cape Elizabeth

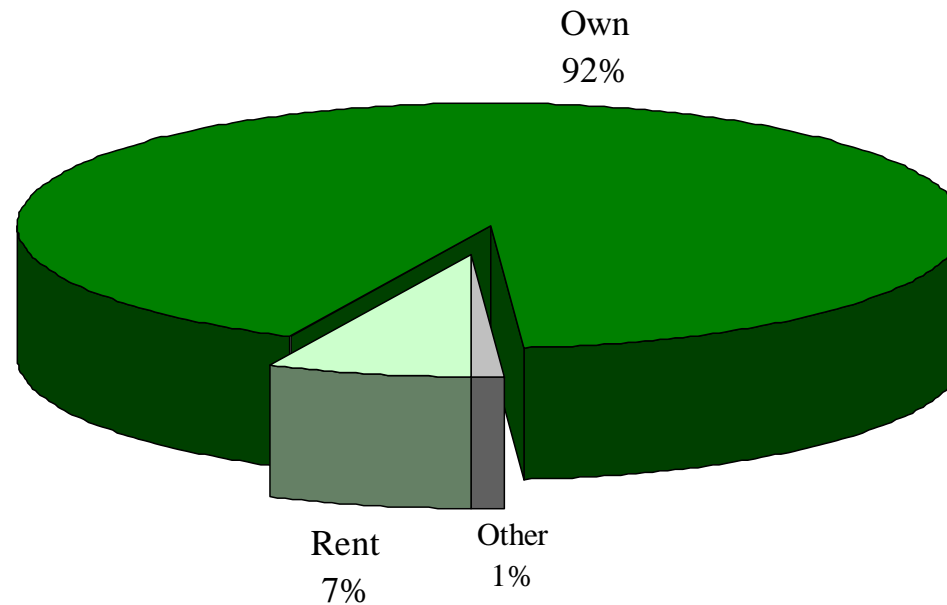
How many years have you lived in Cape Elizabeth?





Current Living Quarters

Do you own or rent your living quarters?





Household Size

How many adults, including yourself, 18 or over, live in your household?	n=303
1 adult (single)	23%
2 adults	63
3 adults	8
4 to 5 adults	5
How many children under the age of 18 live in your household?	n=303
None	60%
1 child	13
2 children	21
3 children	6
4 children	1



Age

What age category do you fall into?	n=303
25 to 34 years old	4%
35 to 44 years old	19
45 to 54 years old	28
55 to 64 years old	21
65 to 74 years old	15
75 years old or over	12



Employment Status

What is your employment status?	n=303
Employed full-time	50%
Employed part-time	13
Homemaker	10
Unemployed	1
Retired	26
Student	^

^ Denotes less than one percent.



Level of Education

What is the highest level of education you have completed?	n=303
Some high school	^
Graduated high school	7%
Technical/vocational/community college	5
Some college	11
Graduated college	40
Graduate school	35
Other	2

^ Denotes less than one percent.



Household Income

To ensure that our sample is representative, which of the following categories best describes your total household income before taxes last year?	n=303
Less than \$40,000	13%
\$40,000 to \$79,999	27
\$80,000 to \$149,999	27
\$150,000 to \$249,999	11
\$250,000 or more	5
Don't know	1
Refused	16



Gender

