



CRITICAL INSIGHTS
RESEARCH FOR PRECISE PRAGMATIC DIRECTION

Resident Survey of Attitudes Toward Open Space

Summary Report of Findings

Prepared for:
The Town of Cape Elizabeth

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Focus Groups • Surveys • Public Opinion Polling

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Introduction & Methodology



Background

- The Future Open Space Planning Committee of the Town of Cape Elizabeth was charged with assessing the attitudes, preferences and perspectives of the citizenry regarding open space issues and priorities. As a component of this effort, the FOSP Committee retained Critical Insights to conduct a benchmark population-based research effort regarding open space planning issues.
- The overall goal of this research effort was to assess the attitudes and perspectives of a representative group of citizens regarding open space planning issues, as well as to gauge their preferences and priorities regarding open space funding mechanisms.
- It is of particular relevance that this effort yields a profile of these priorities, demands and expectations that is statistically projectable to the citizenry as a whole, in that results will be used to guide decision-making by the Town's FOSP Committee and associated governing entities.



Informational Objectives

- The overall objective of the research is to assess and evaluate current attitudes towards zoning land use, development and preservation as well as documenting preference for funding mechanisms, and provide insight into the demands and preferences of various subgroups of the resident population.
- Specific objectives include the following:
 - Gauge perspectives on growth and assess concerns and sensitivities related to the historical and projected growth of the Town;
 - Analyze the willingness and tolerance of citizens to fund open space preservation through various sources of funding;
 - Develop a sense of the priorities and underlying values for open space, particularly in light of prevailing economic and cost-level considerations; and
 - Provide actionable insights and recommendations that will assist and inform the Town in effective and responsive planning.



Methodological Overview

Number of respondents	Dates Research Conducted	Error Margin		Refusal Rate	Length of Interview
		90%	95%		
400	May 3rd to 20th, 2012	+/- 4.1	+/- 4.9	8%	15 minutes

- The survey instrument for the study was developed by Critical Insights in collaboration with the FOSP Committee of the Town of Cape Elizabeth.
- Interviews were conducted by telephone with adults in the Town of Cape Elizabeth from the Critical Insights Information Center using the company's thirty-station computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system.
- To assure accurate data capture and quality, a proportion of interviews was verified with callbacks within 24 hours of the actual interview.
- Initial refusal rates were 8% overall, indicating a high level of engagement in the topic area and an indication that the sample was not tainted by non-response error.
- Data were statistically balanced according to relevant gender and age dimensions to be reflective of the demographic make-up of the Town of Cape Elizabeth; a summary of the demographic profile of the sample appears at the end of this report.
 - The results presented in this report are based on statistically weighted data.



Respondent Qualifications

Sample selection was accomplished through randomly selecting respondents from lists provided by a computer-generated random digit dialing (RDD) method sourced from the Town of Cape Elizabeth zip code; In addition, 10% of the final sample reflected “cell phone-only” households.

In order to qualify for inclusion in the survey, a respondent must:

1. Be at least 18 years old;
2. Reside in the Town of Cape Elizabeth; and
3. Not be employed or have any affiliation with the Town Council, Future Open Space Committee or School Board of Cape Elizabeth, a market research firm, the media or an advertising agency.



Report of Findings



*Satisfaction with
Living in Cape Elizabeth*



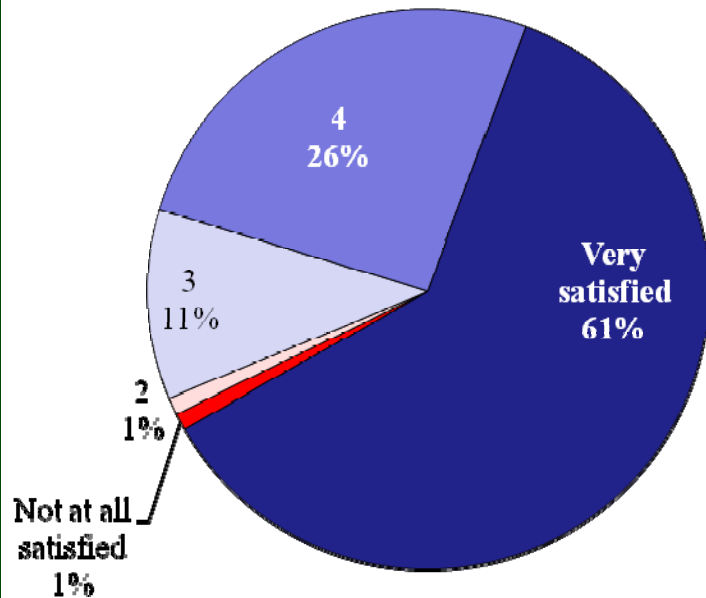
Satisfaction with Living in Cape Elizabeth

- When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with living in the Town of Cape Elizabeth, nearly 9-in-10 residents polled (87%) indicate that they are at least somewhat satisfied.
- Indeed, a strong majority (6-in-10) are “very satisfied” with living in the Town.
 - Satisfaction is highest among residents in the mid-range household income categories (\$50,000-\$100,000), with fully three-fourths “very satisfied.”
- Satisfaction is most closely associated with the quality of life in Cape Elizabeth – that it’s a good place to raise a family as well as the school system.

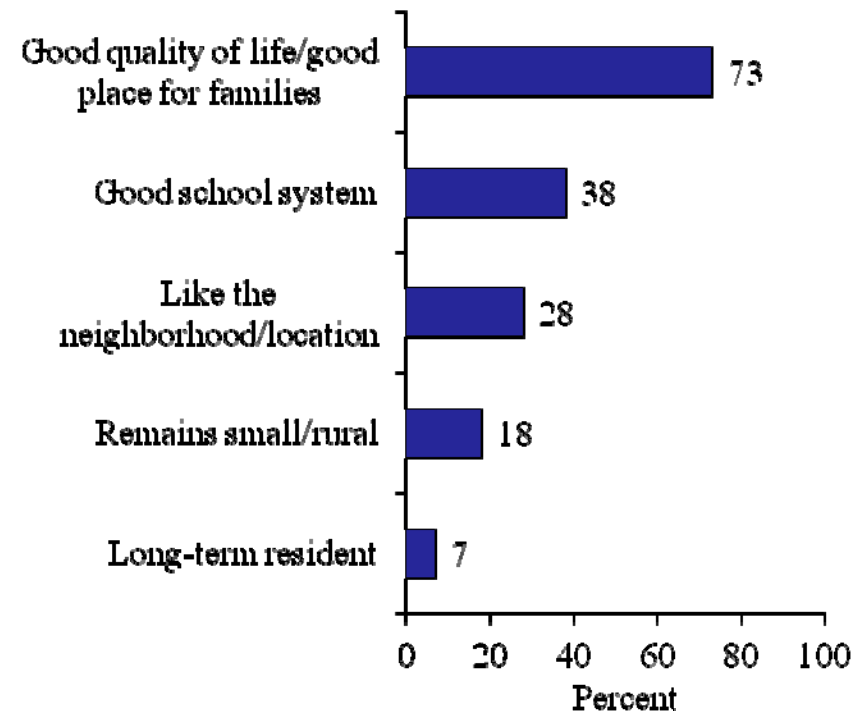


Satisfaction with Living in Cape Elizabeth

Overall, how satisfied are you with living in Cape Elizabeth? Please use a five-point scale where a 1 means “not at all satisfied” and a 5 means “very satisfied.”



*Why do you say that?
(SATISFIED WITH LIVING IN CAPE ELIZABETH)*



Base: Respondents satisfied with living in Cape Elizabeth (4 or 5 on a 5-point rating scale): n=350



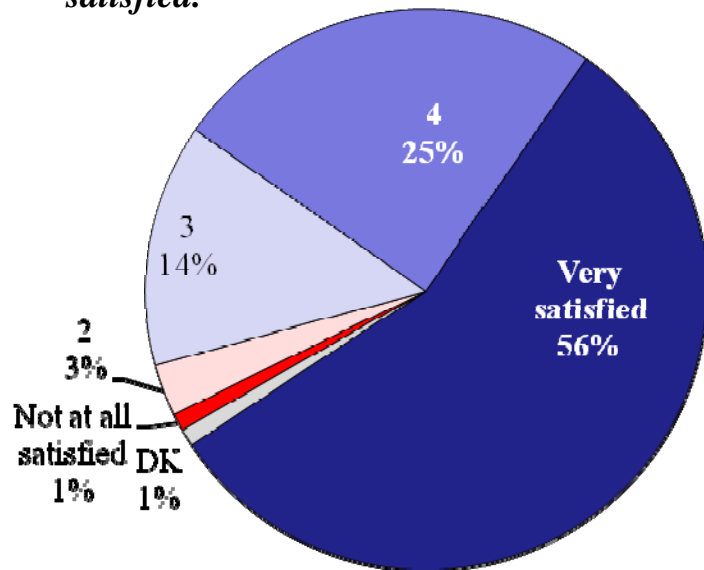
Satisfaction with the Amount of Open Space in Cape Elizabeth

- In terms of respondents' views on the amount of open space in Cape Elizabeth, 8-in-10 residents polled are satisfied (56% “very satisfied”), with few (4%) dissatisfied.
 - Satisfaction with the amount of open space in Cape Elizabeth is highest among newer Town residents (10 years or less), with almost two-thirds (65%) “very satisfied.”
- The most commonly given reasons for being satisfied with the amount of open space in Cape Elizabeth surround the trails, beaches and parks that are available to residents.



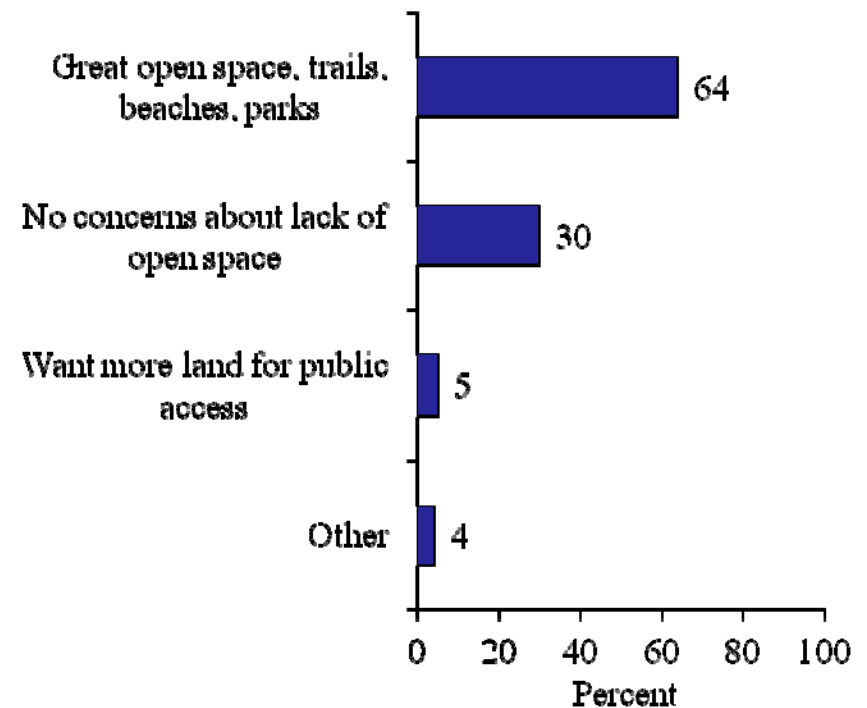
Satisfaction with the Amount of Open Space in Cape Elizabeth

And overall, how satisfied are you with the amount of open space in Cape Elizabeth? Please use a five-point scale where a 1 means “not at all satisfied” and a 5 means “very satisfied.”



Why do you say that?

(SATISFIED WITH THE AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACE)



Base: Respondents satisfied with the amount of open space in Cape Elizabeth (4 or 5 on a 5-point rating scale): n=325

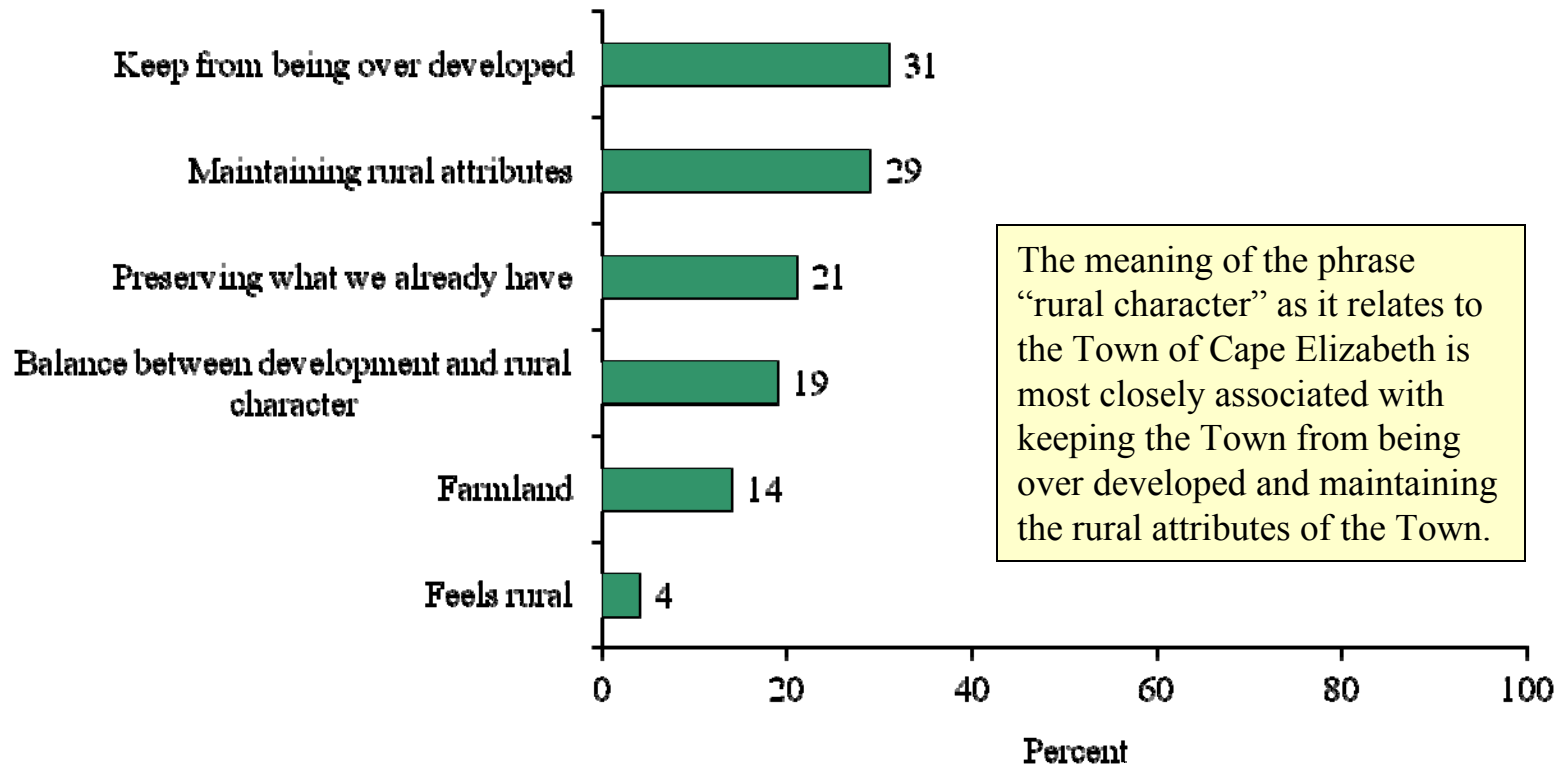


Attitudes Toward Open Space in Cape Elizabeth



Preserving the Rural Character of Cape Elizabeth

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

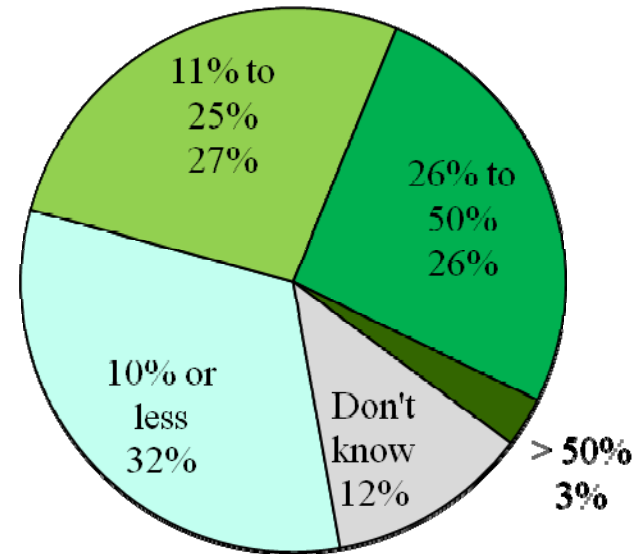




Amount of Legally Protected Open Space in Cape Elizabeth

There are approximately 9,000 acres of land in Cape Elizabeth. Within that footprint, what percentage of land do you think is legally protected open space?

Overall, about a third of the Cape Elizabeth residents surveyed estimate that 10% or less of the land in Cape Elizabeth is legally protected open space. On average, respondents estimate the percentage of protected land at 22%.





Need for More Protected Open Space

- Only about a third of the residents surveyed think that Cape Elizabeth needs to protect more open space, compared to almost 6-in-10 who claim that the Town does not need more open space.
- Among the respondents who would like the Town to have more open space, the most commonly mentioned reasons include wanting to get as much as possible (33%), that it's important for preserving what is already there (25%) and that unprotected land will be subject to development (22%).
- Conversely, nearly all of the respondents who say that there is no need for more protected space indicate that they are satisfied with the amount of open space that is already preserved.



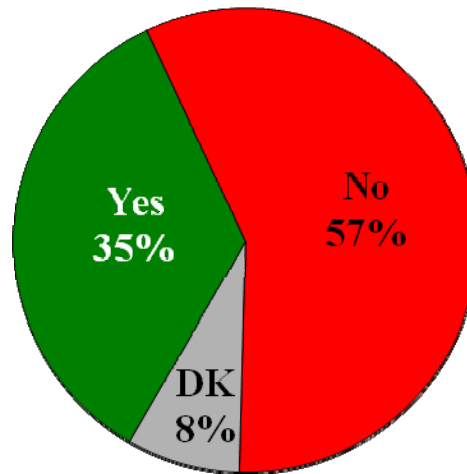
Need for More Protected Open Space

Does Cape Elizabeth need more protected open space for uses such as farms, forests, recreational space, scenic vistas and wildlife habitat?

Why do you say Cape Elizabeth needs more open space?

We want as much as we can get	33%
Important for preserving what we have	25%
Unprotected land will be developed	22%
Open space adds to the value of our community	16%
Farming/farmland is important	12%

Base: Respondents who say Cape Elizabeth needs more open space: n=139



Why do you say Cape Elizabeth does not need more open space?

Satisfied with what we have	94%
Need more development	5%
Taxes go up	3%
Other	2%
Don't know	1%

Base: Respondents who say Cape Elizabeth does not need more open space: n=230



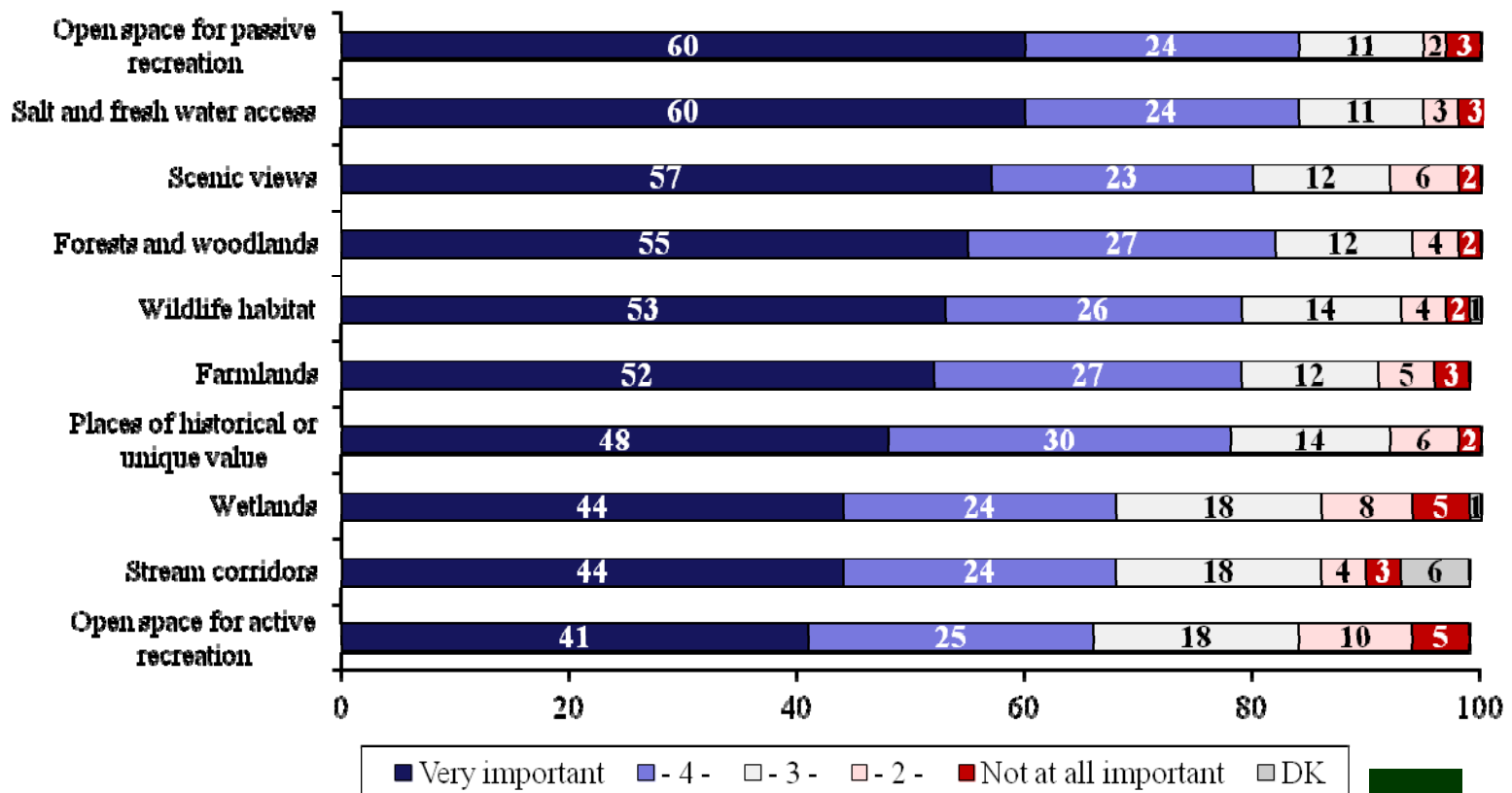
Importance of Protecting Different Types of Land

- Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of protecting several different types of land within the Town.
- Most notably, fully 6-in-10 rate protecting open space for passive recreation (e.g., hiking, walking), salt/fresh water access and scenic viewpoints as “very important.”
 - Still, a majority rate protecting forests/woodlands, wildlife habitat and farmlands as “very important” as well. Almost half (48%) rate places of historical/unique value as “very important.”
- Of somewhat lesser importance to respondents (about 4-in-10 rate “very important”) are preserving wetlands, stream corridors and open space for active recreation (e.g., ball parks, sports fields).



Importance of Protecting Different Types of Land

Using a scale of 1-5 where 1 means “not at all important” and 5 means “very important,” how important is it to you for Cape Elizabeth to protect:





*Views Toward Open Space
Planning and Town Priorities*



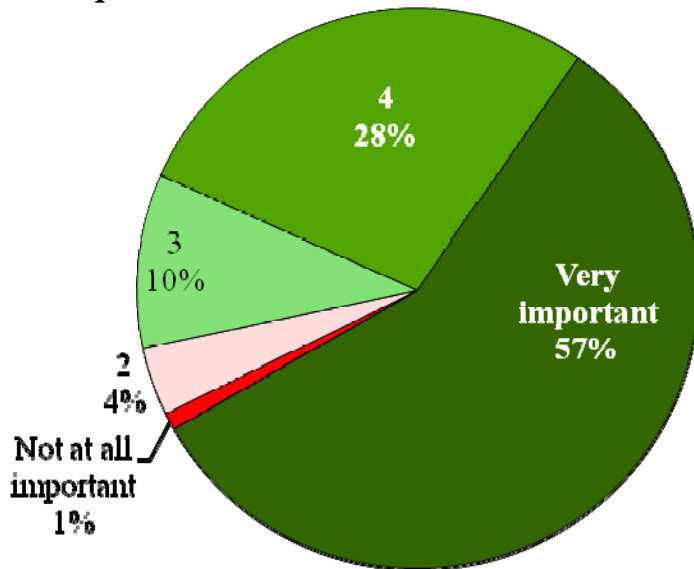
Importance of Plan for Open Space

- It is not surprising that most respondents to the survey think it is at least somewhat important for the Town to have a plan for preserving its open space, with nearly 6-in-10 (57%) stating that it is “very important” to have an open space plan.
 - Again, shorter term residents (10 years or less) are more likely to cite the importance of open space planning.
- Among respondents who view having an open space plan as important, a majority say that it’s needed to preserve what they have, while about 4-in-10 suggest that a plan would provide a framework for future and ongoing direction.

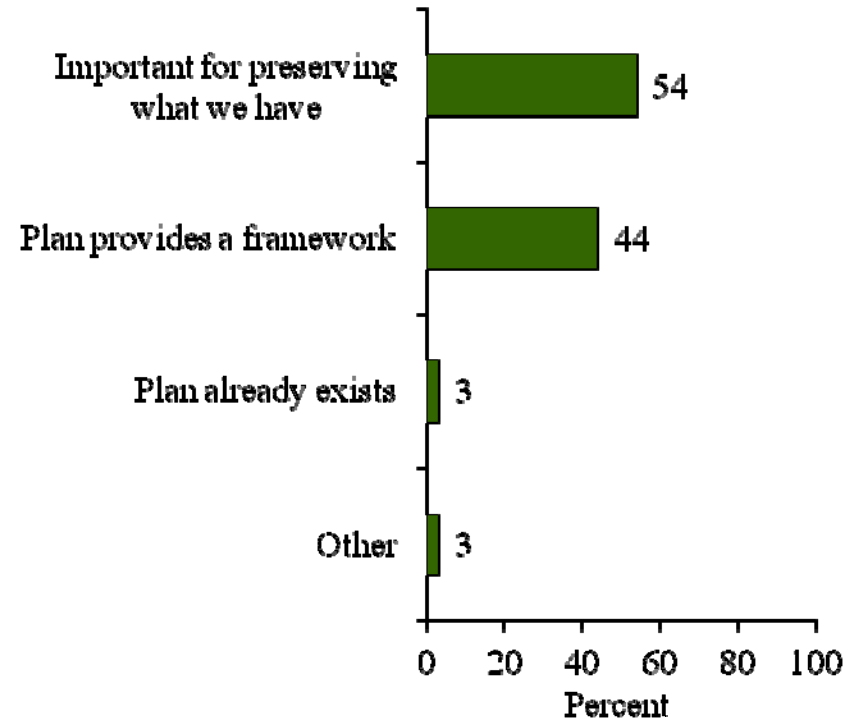


Importance of Plan for Open Space

How important is it to you for Cape Elizabeth to have a plan for preserving its open space which includes farms, forests, recreational space, scenic vistas and wildlife habitat? Please use a five-point scale where a 1 means “not at all important” and a 5 means “very important.”



*Why do you say that?
(IMPORTANT TO HAVE OPEN SPACE PLAN)*



Base: Respondents who say it is important to have an open space plan in Cape Elizabeth (4 or 5 on a 5-point rating scale): n=340



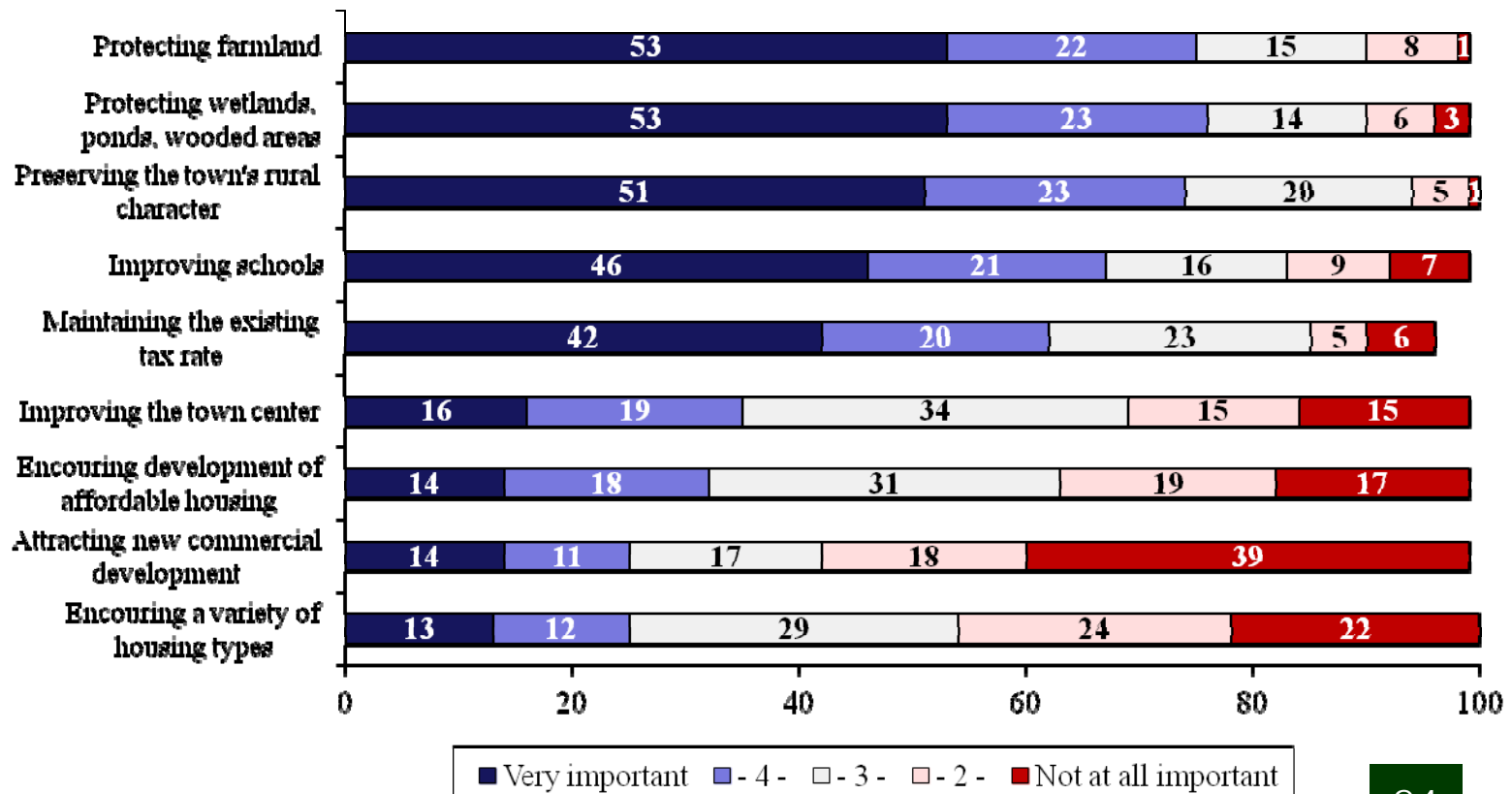
Potential Goals for Cape Elizabeth in the Next 5-10 Years

- When respondents to the survey were asked to rate the importance of a series of goals for the Town over the next 5-10 years, a majority claim that it is “very important” to protect farmlands, wetlands/ponds/wooded areas and preserving the Town’s rural character. Just under half (46%) rate school improvements as “very important” and 4-in-10 cite maintaining the current existing tax rate as “very important.”
 - Women, respondents older than 65 years of age and respondents from the less affluent household income categories (< \$100,000 per year) are much more likely to cite the importance of protecting wetlands/ponds/wooded areas.
 - Not surprisingly, respondents from the lowest household income bracket (< \$50,000 per year) are most likely to state that encouraging affordable housing is important.
- Items of substantially less importance include improving the town center, encouraging affordable housing development, attracting new commercial development and encouraging a variety of housing types.
 - Notably, fully 4-in-10 respondents view the notion of attracting new commercial development as “not at all important.”



Potential Goals for Cape Elizabeth in the Next 5-10 Years

I am going to read some potential goals for the Town of Cape Elizabeth over the next 5-10 years. Please rate each of the goals in their importance to you, where 1 means “not at all important” and 5 means “very important.”





*Solutions for
Preserving Open Space and
Funding Town Projects*



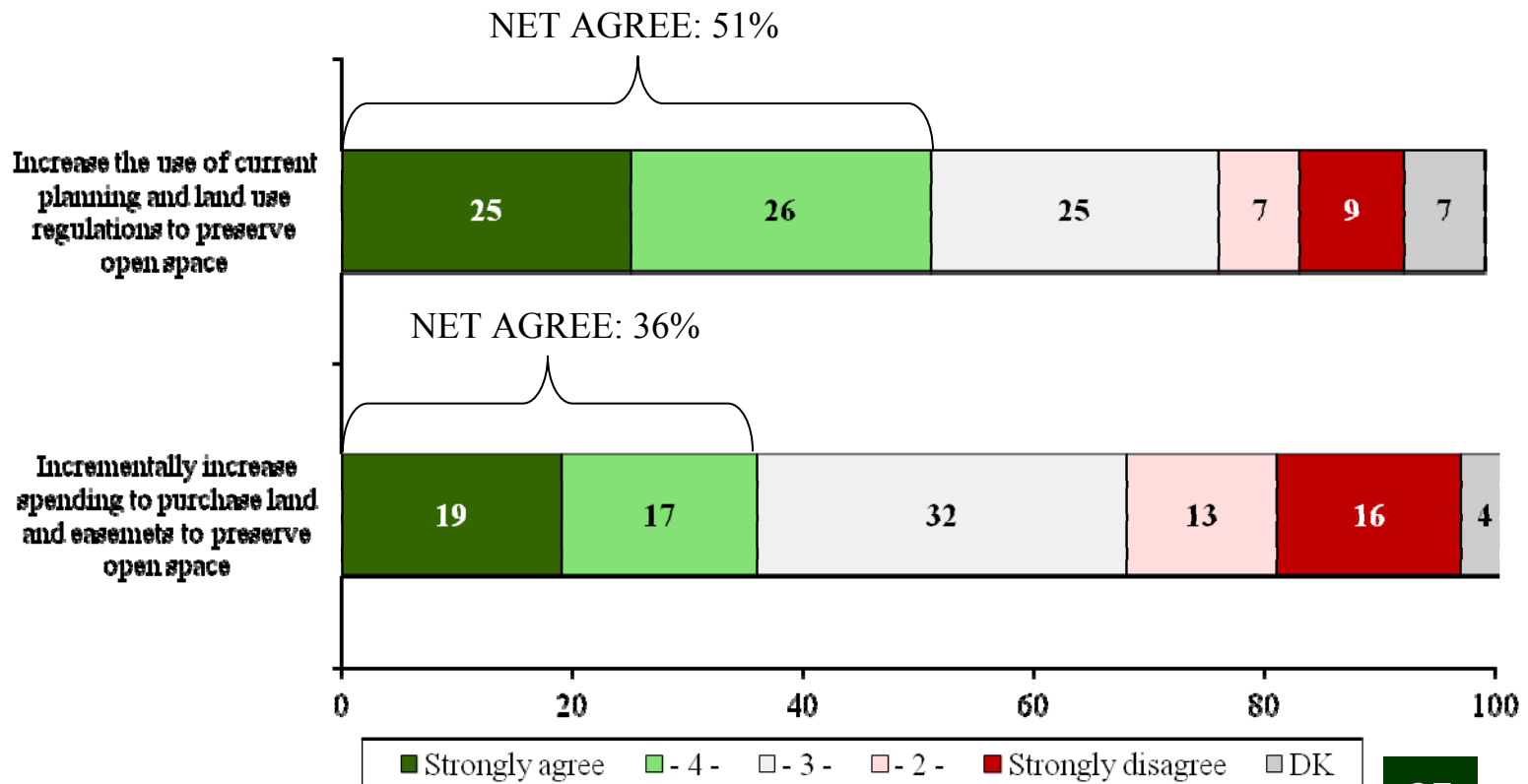
Views Toward Ways of Preserving Open Space

- Overall, about half of the Town residents surveyed agree that in order to preserve open space in Cape Elizabeth, the Town should increase the use of current planning and land use regulations; a quarter are neutral toward this option, while about 1-in-7 disagree.
- Just over a third of Town respondents (36%) agree that the Town should incrementally increase spending to purchase land and easements, though 3-in-10 disagree with this option for preserving open space (and another third are neutral).



Views Toward Ways of Preserving Open Space

Using a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning “strongly disagree” and 5 meaning “strongly agree,” please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In order to preserve open space, the Town of Cape Elizabeth should . . .





Funding of Town Projects

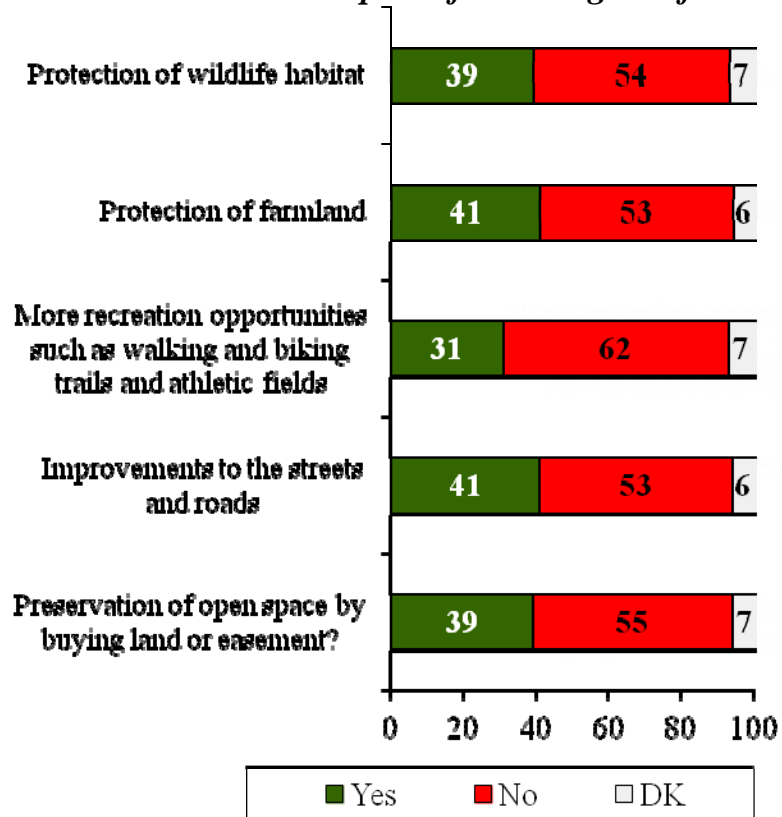
- In order to fund some different town projects, respondents to the survey were asked whether the Town should either move existing dollars from another part of the budget to fund the project, or whether the Town should increase taxes for funding.
- Across all of the projects mentioned on the survey, fewer than half felt that either moving existing dollars or increasing taxes should be considered.
- Respondents were more likely to support moving existing dollars rather than increase taxes, with about 4-in-10 suggesting that moving dollars to support farmland protection, street/road improvements, protection of wildlife habitat and preserving open space is appropriate.
 - Only about 3-in-10 respondents are supportive of raising taxes for any of the Town projects.



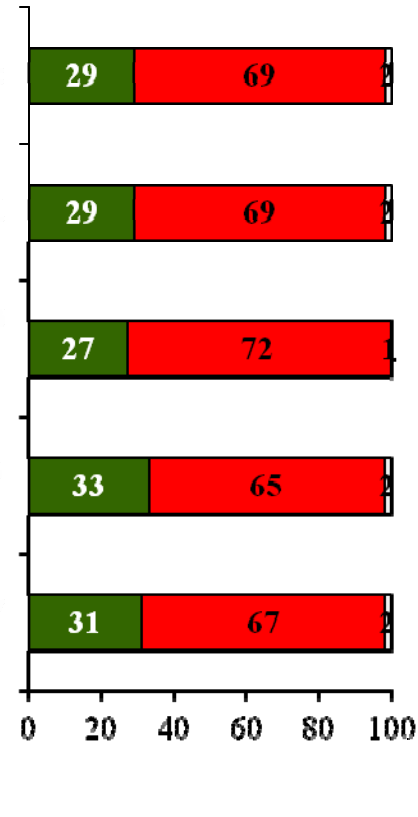
Funding of Town Projects

Should the Town consider . . .

. . . moving existing dollars from another part of the budget to fund:



. . . increasing taxes for:





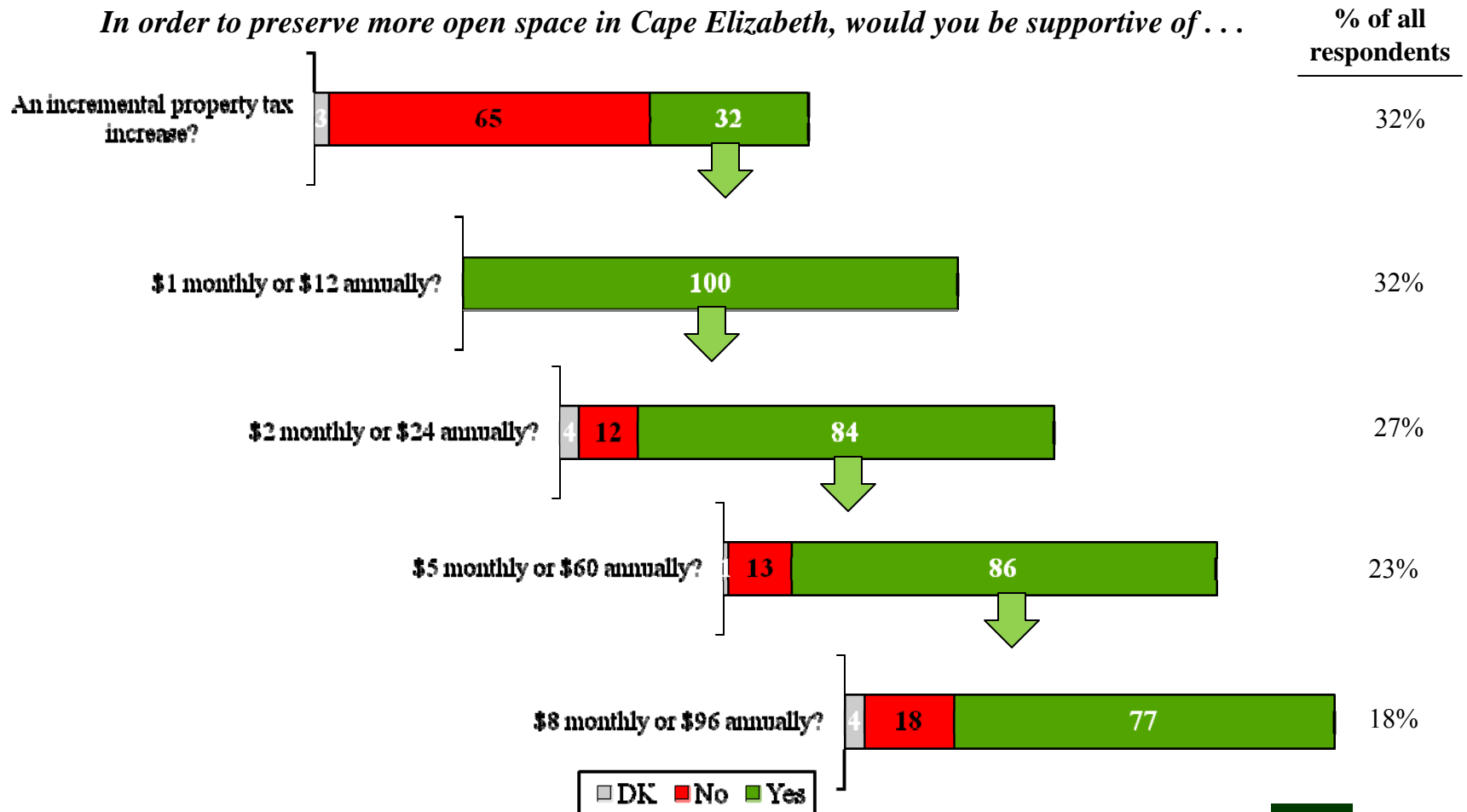
Support for Increased Spending to Preserve Open Space

- Town residents who participated in the survey were asked whether they would be supportive of an incremental property tax increase in order to preserve more open space in the Town and if so, how much of an increase they would be likely to support.
- Notably, about a third of respondents said that they would be supportive of an incremental property tax increase of \$1 per month, or \$12 annually.
- It is also worth considering that among the subset of residents who are willing to support an incremental increase in property taxes (which is most likely to be comprised of respondents between 45 and 64 years of age, women and those with a grad school level education), a majority are willing to pay up to \$8 per month or \$96 annually (which represents about 1-in-5 residents surveyed overall).



Support for Increased Spending to Preserve Open Space

In order to preserve more open space in Cape Elizabeth, would you be supportive of . . .

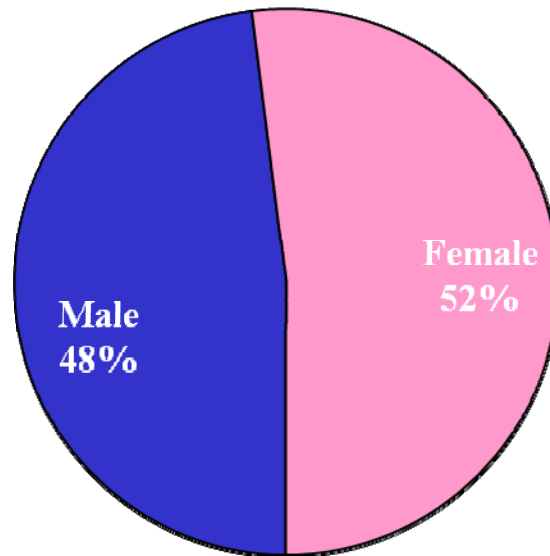




Respondent Profile



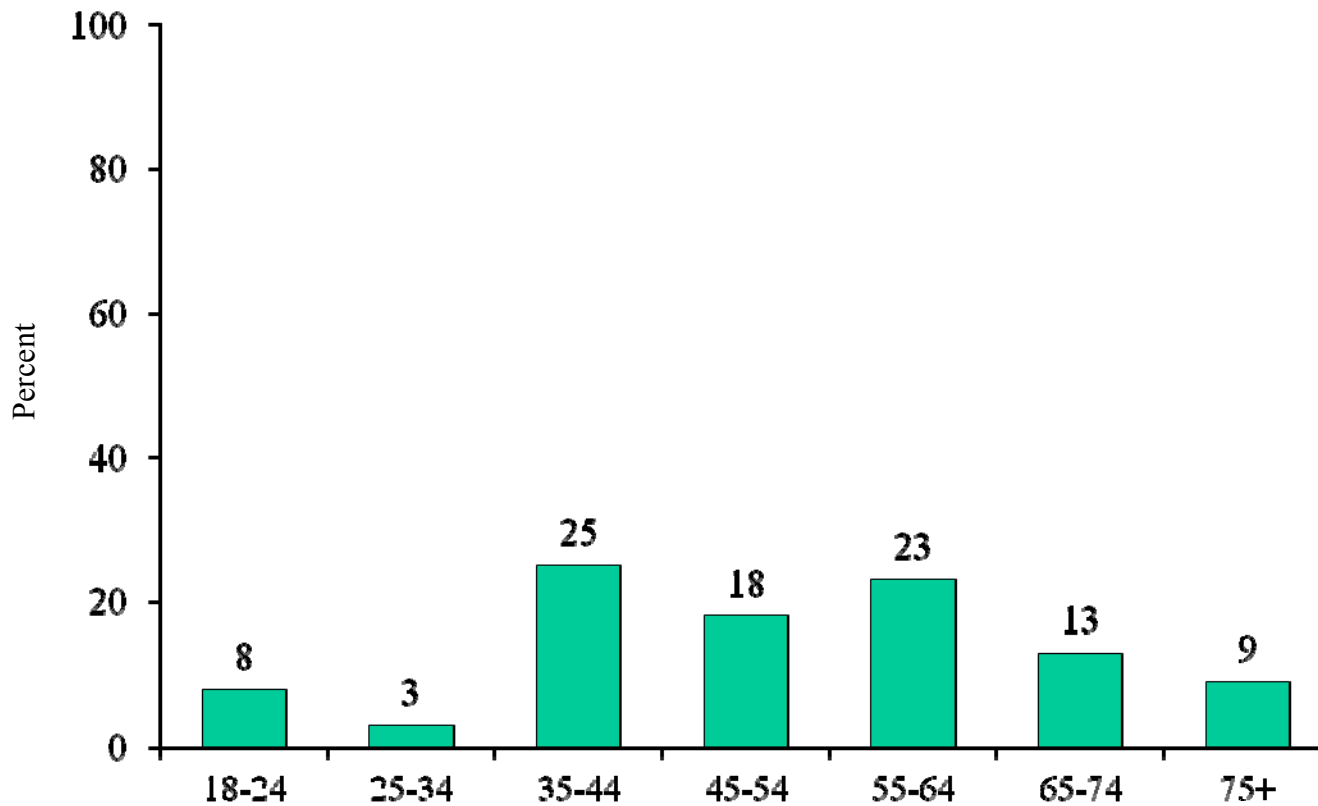
Gender





Age

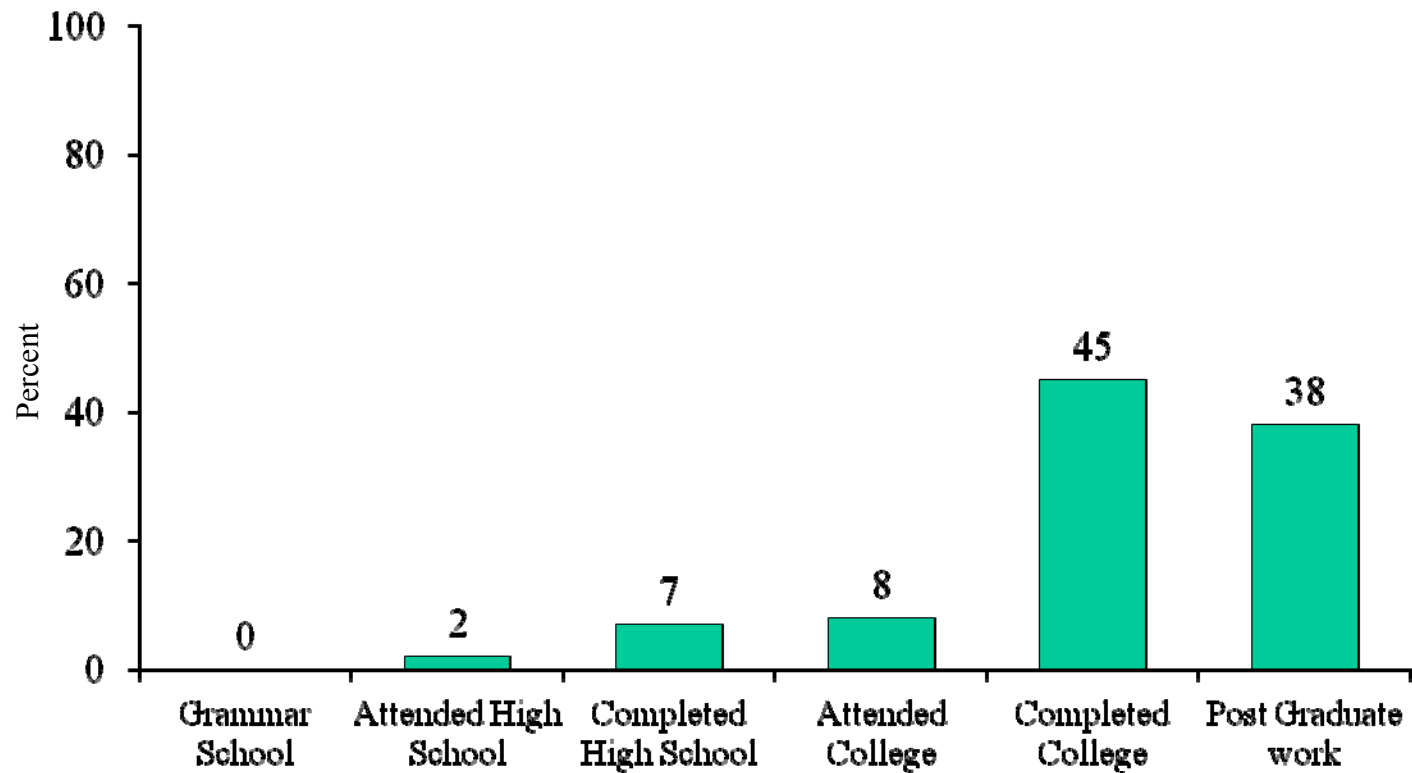
In which of the following age categories do you belong?





Education

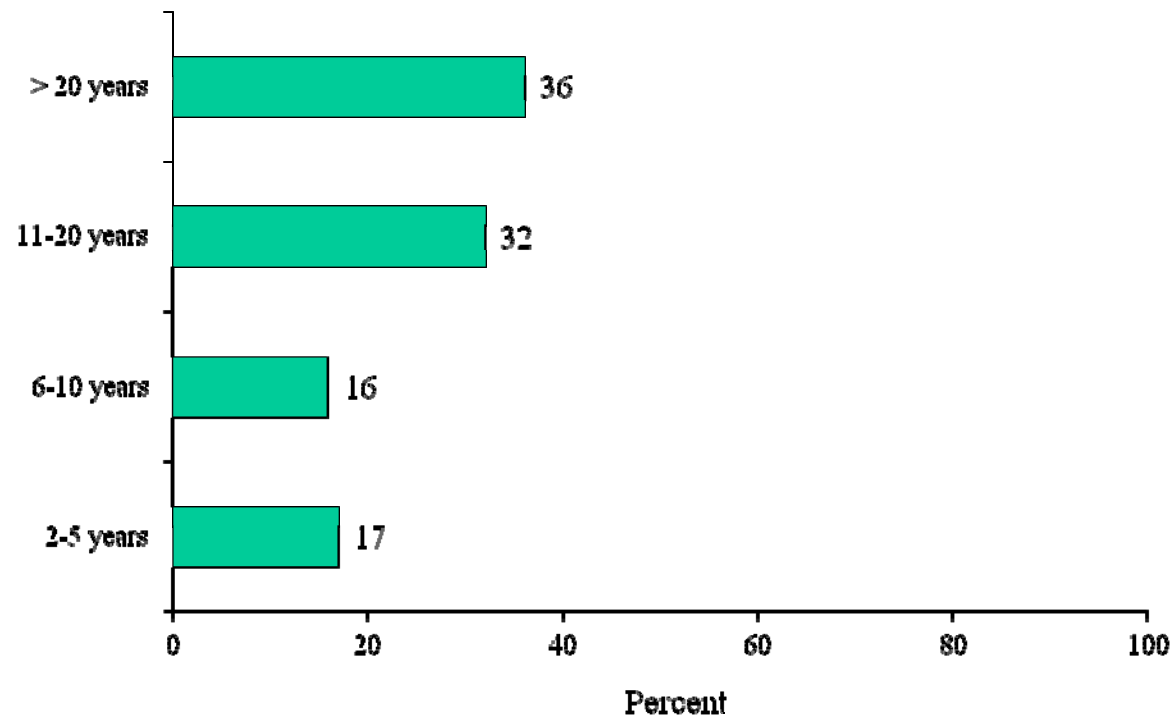
What is the last grade of school you completed?





Years Lived in Cape Elizabeth

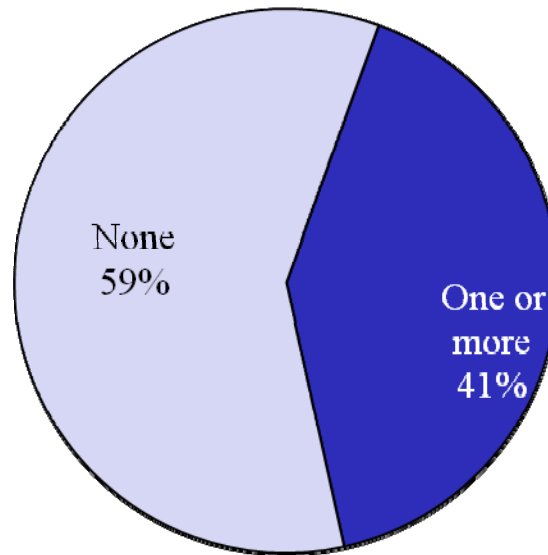
How long have you lived in Cape Elizabeth?





Presence of Children in the Home

How many children under the age of 18 do you have living at home?





Household Income

And finally, what was your total household income before taxes last year?

