



# **ADVANCECT**

## **CONNECTICUT**

# **Deep River Resident and Business Survey Results**

Presented to: Town of Deep River

October 2022



# ADVANCECT

ABOUT US >>>

AdvanceCT works to build a place where business, government, higher education and non-profits come together to implement high impact and inclusive economic development solutions to advance the overall competitiveness of Connecticut.

We are a private nonprofit economic development organization that drives job creation and new capital investment in Connecticut through business attraction, retention, and expansion, in close cooperation with state, regional, and local partners.



# About the Survey

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Survey conducted  
Feb to June, 2022

438 responses\*

412 residents

64 business owners

Of the 64 business owners,  
61 were also residents

\*If respondents were neither a resident nor business owner in Deep River, the survey terminated.

## PURPOSE

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The Deep River Resident and Business survey was designed to better understand the community's preferences around economic development, so decision makers can create goals aligned with the community's priorities.

## SURVEY RECIPIENTS

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Survey was intended to be taken by residents of Deep River and those who own a business located in Deep River. If respondents answered "no" to both questions, the survey was terminated.

## OUTREACH

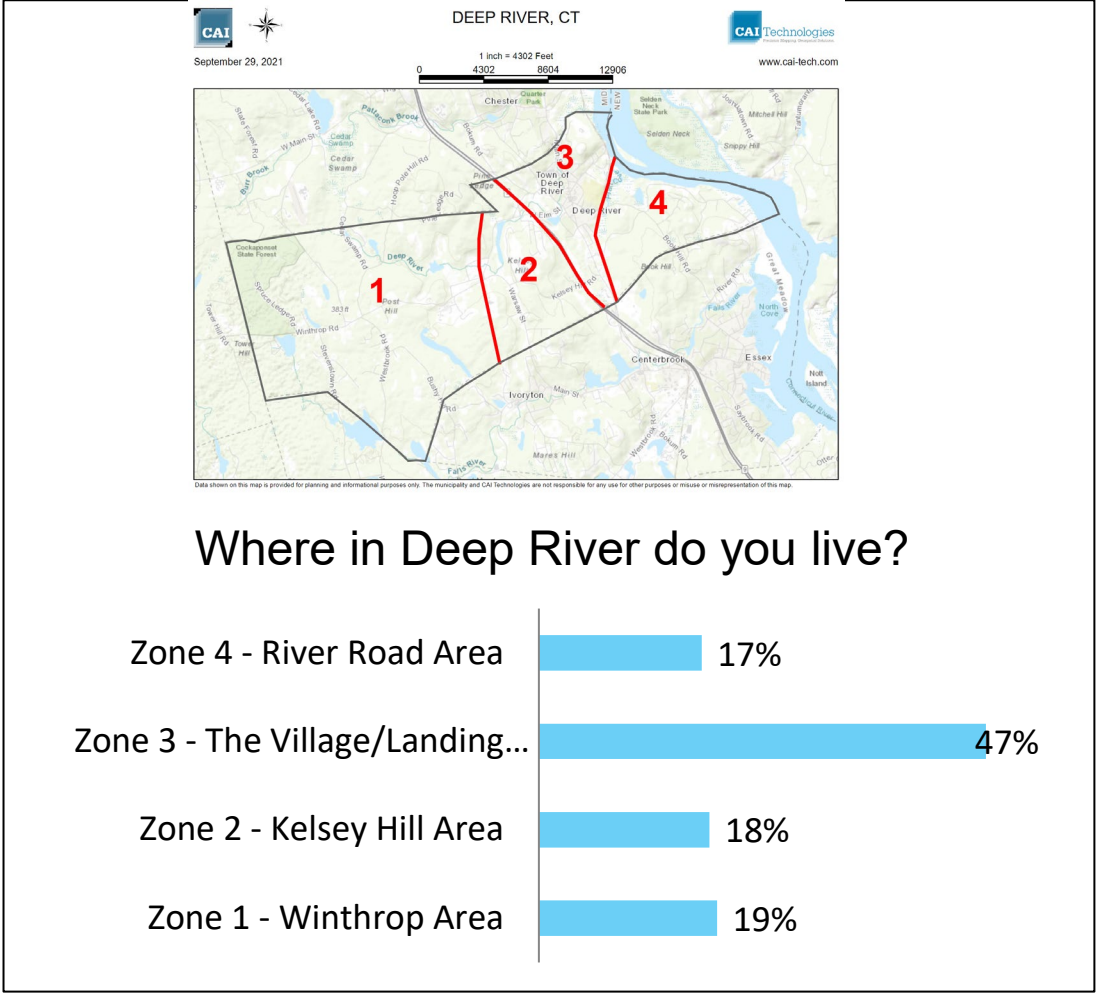
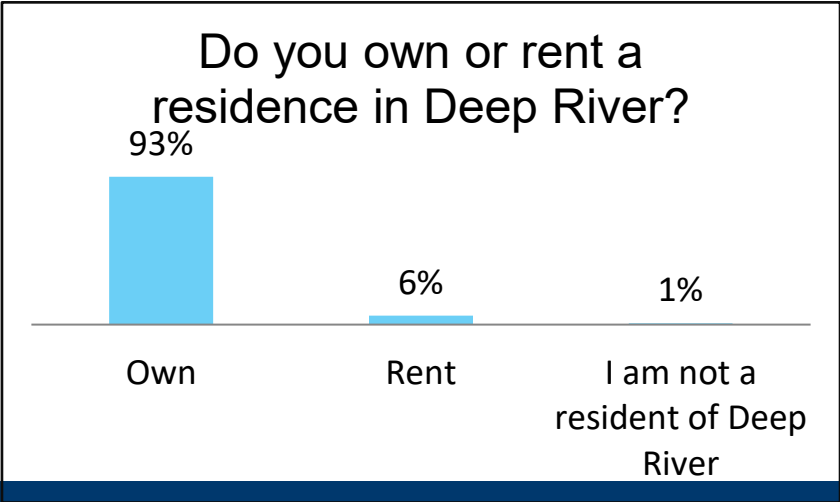
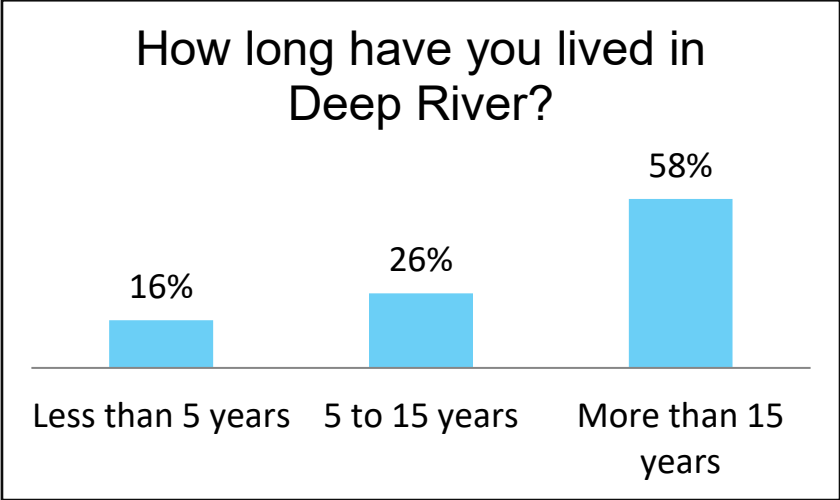
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The survey link was distributed through the following channels:

- Town of Deep River website
- Deep River EDC website
- The Valley Courier
- Facebook and social media

# RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

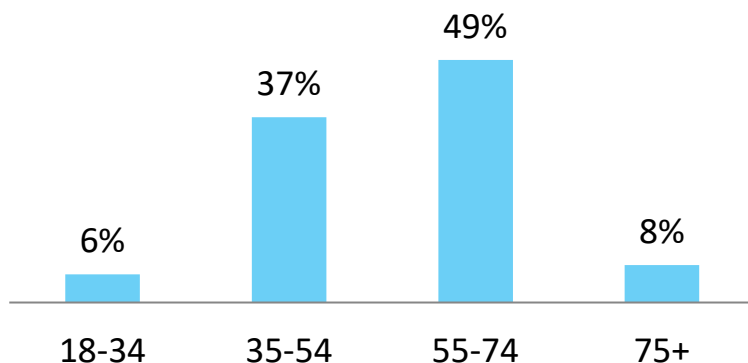
# Respondent Demographics



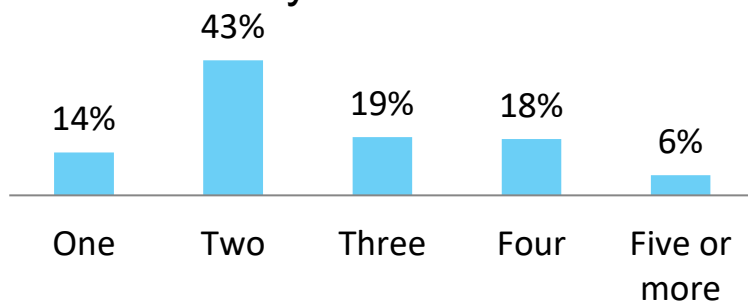
Note: Homeowners represented 93% of respondents, but are only 70% of Deep River's households.  
Source for population estimates: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-year estimates, 2020.

## Respondent Demographics

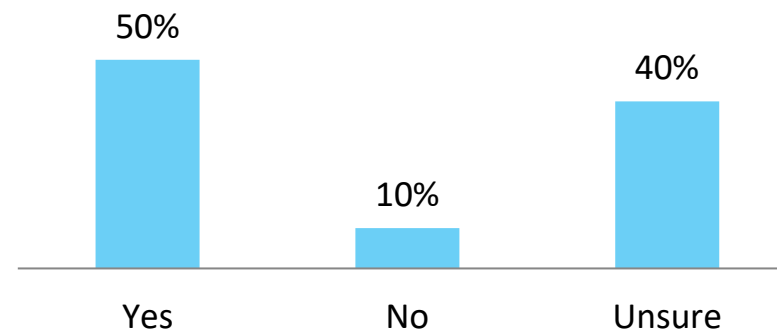
What is your age bracket?



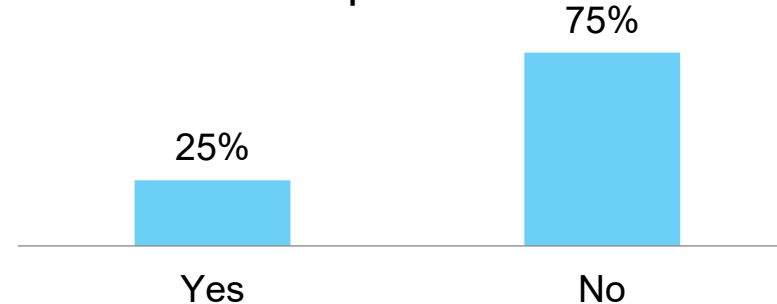
How many people live in your household, including yourself?



Are you planning to retire in Deep River?



Do you have children who currently attend or who plan to attend Deep River schools?



Note: Residents ages 18-34 are 19% of Deep River's adult population, but only represented 6% of survey respondents. Conversely, residents ages 55-74 are 33% of Deep River's adult population, but represented 49% of respondents. Source for population estimates: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-year estimates, 2020.

# RESIDENT RESPONSES

(The following questions were only asked of the 412 survey respondents who indicated they live in Deep River)

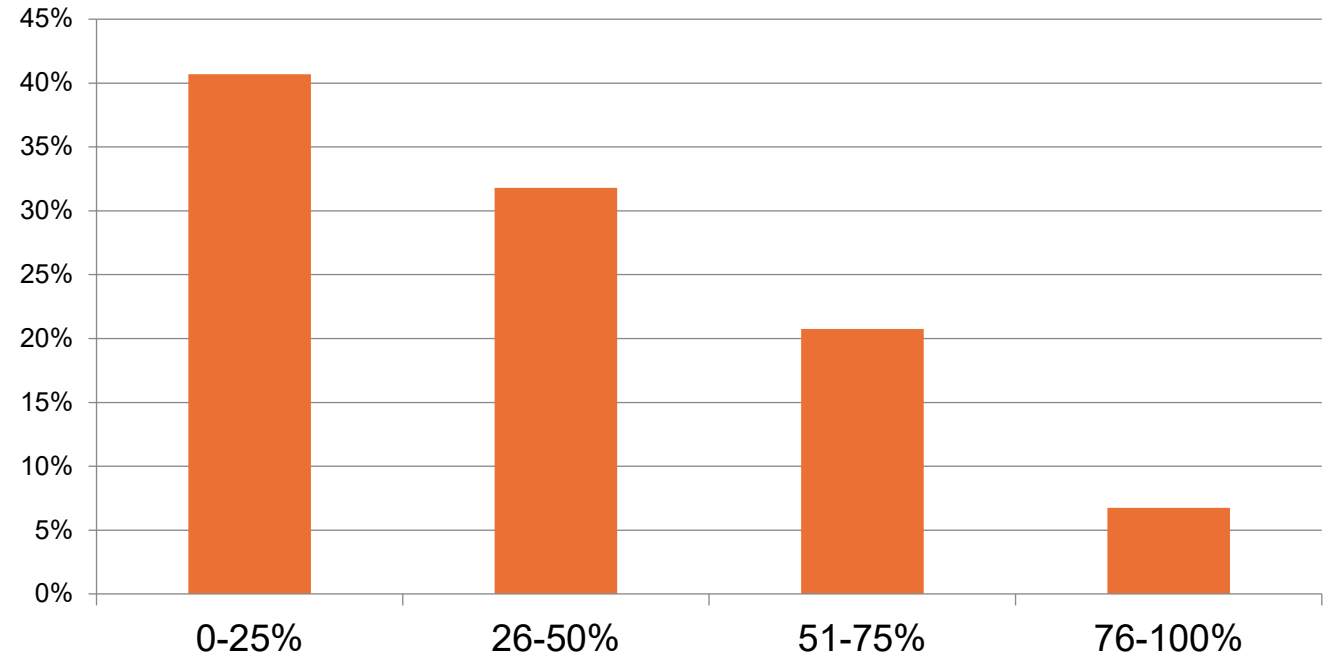
## Most Shop Outside of Deep River

**28% of respondents do more than half of their shopping in Deep River**

\*By demographic group:

- Respondents from the Village/Landing were more likely to shop in Deep River (31% did more than half of shopping in town)
- Respondents from Winthrop were more likely to shop out of town (22% did more than half of shopping in town)
- Older respondents (55-74) were more likely to shop in Deep River (32% did more than half of shopping in town)
- Younger respondents (35-54) were less likely to shop in Deep River (21% did more than half of shopping in town).

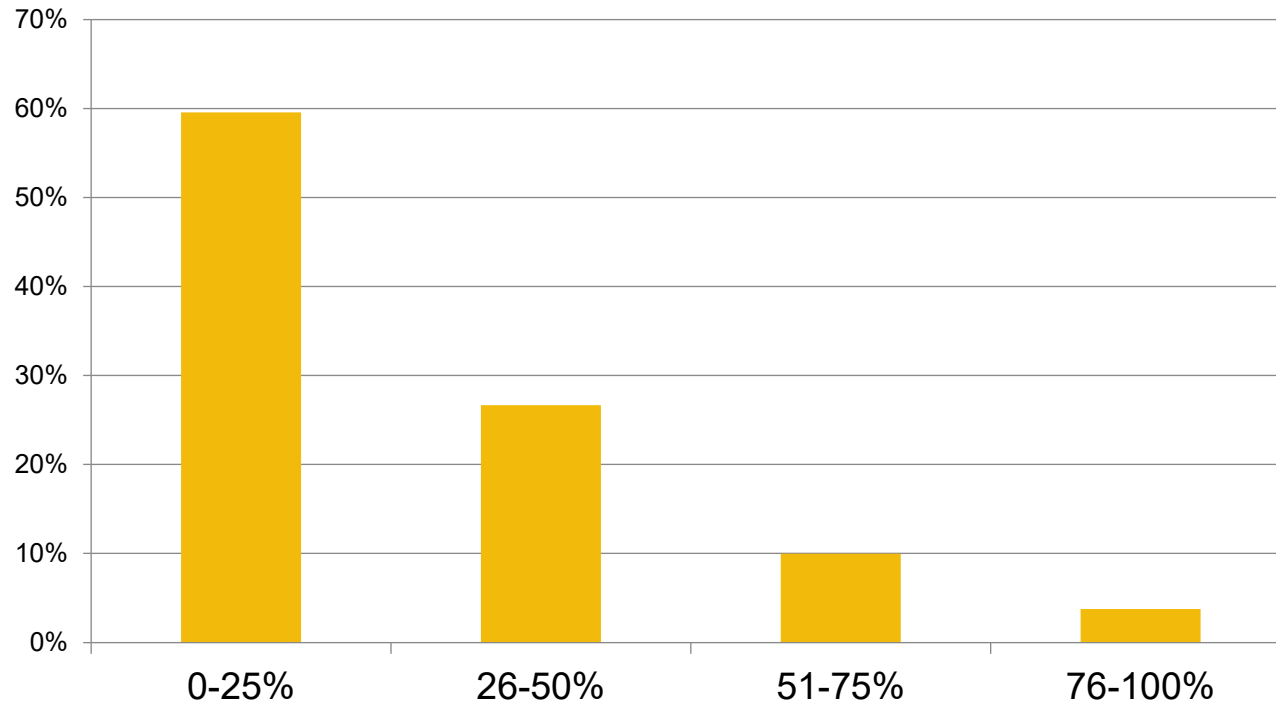
What percentage of your in-store shopping takes place in Deep River?



\* Throughout this presentation, differences identified between demographic groups represent statistically significant variations in the responses from those groups.



What percentage of your dining out takes place in Deep River?



## Most Dine Outside of Deep River

**86% of respondents do less than half of dining out in Deep River**

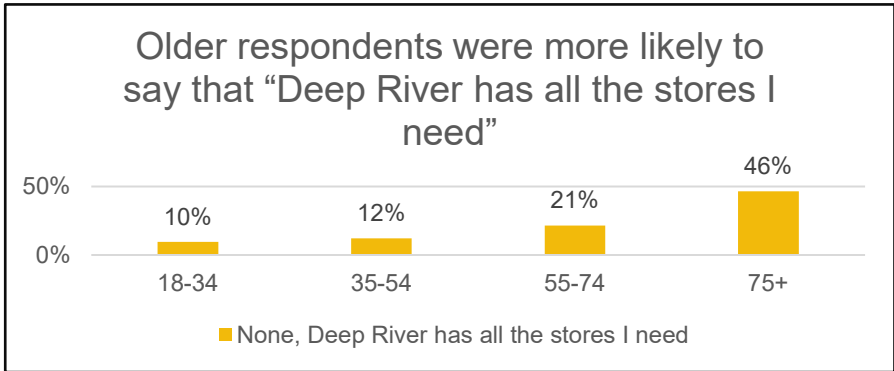
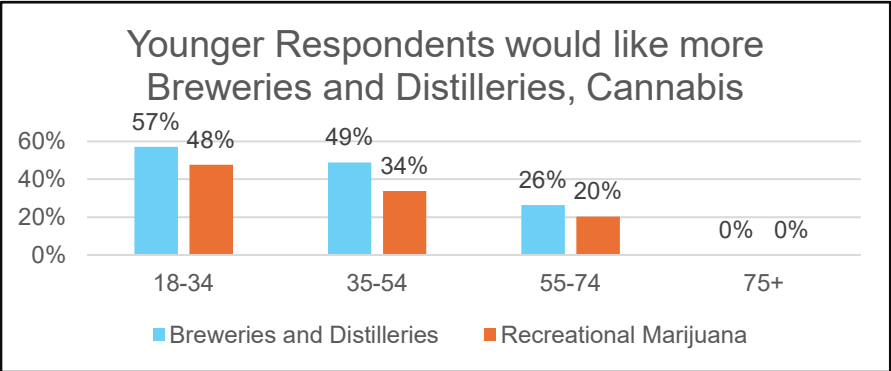
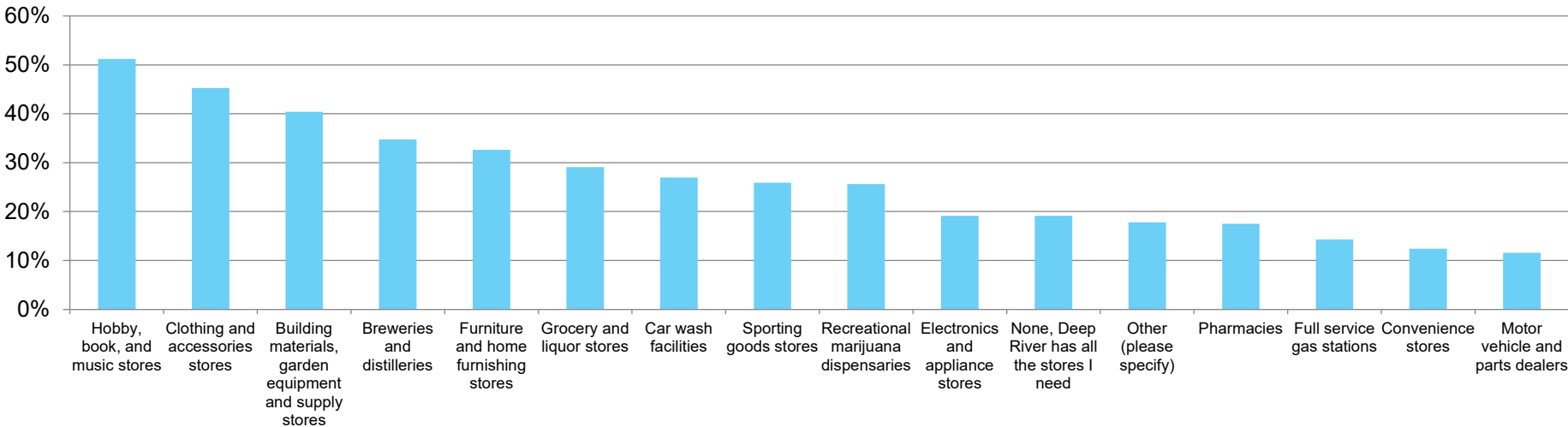
60% do less than a quarter of their dining out in Deep River

# 81% Support Additional Businesses in Deep River

## Most requested:

- **Hobby, book and music stores (51%)**
- **Clothing and accessories (45%)**
- **Building material, garden equipment and supply stores (40%)**
- **Breweries and distilleries (35%)**
- **Furniture and home furnishings (33%)**

What type of additional businesses would you support in Deep River? Select all that apply.



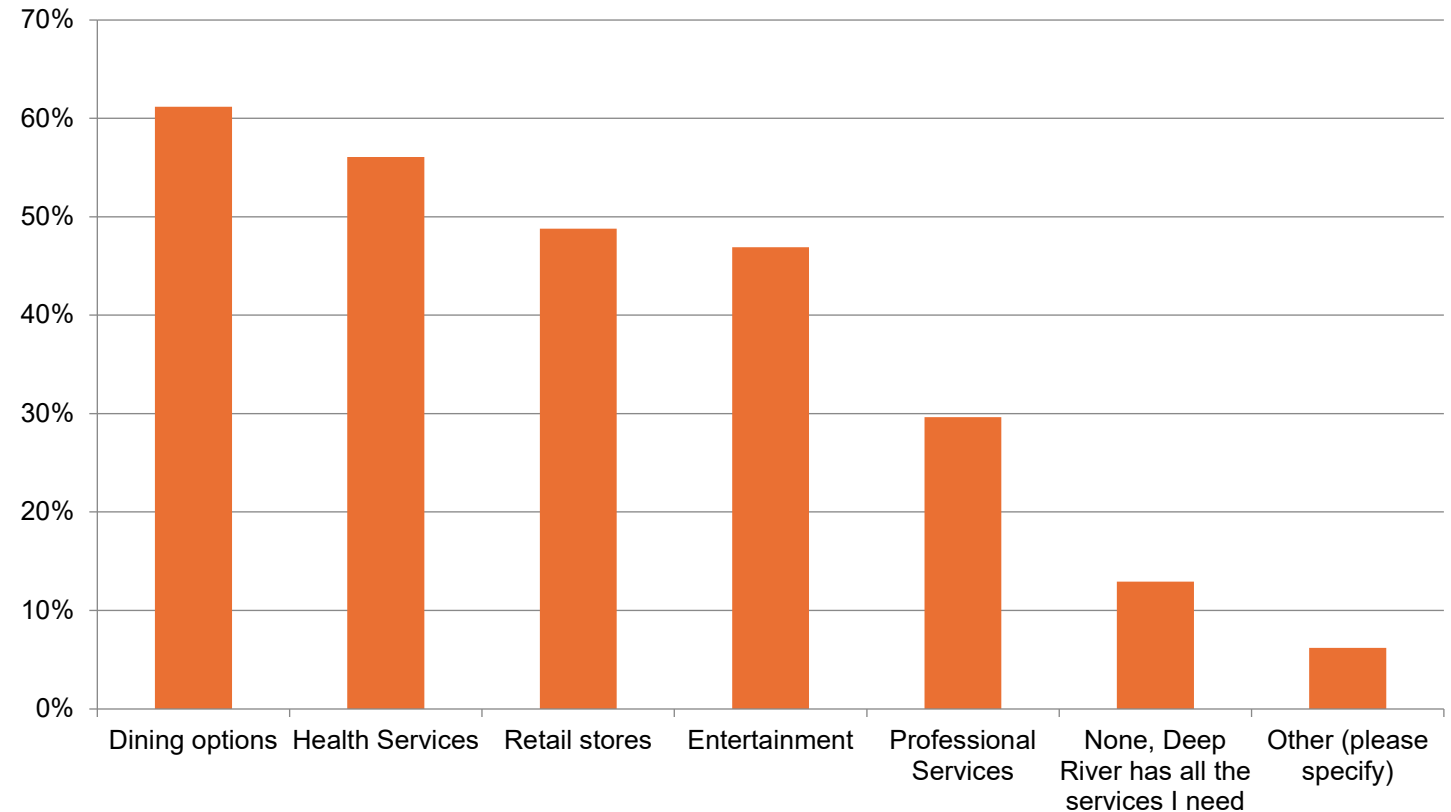
## Shopping and Services Desired in Deep River

**87% of respondents shop or use services in neighboring towns that they would prefer to have in Deep River**

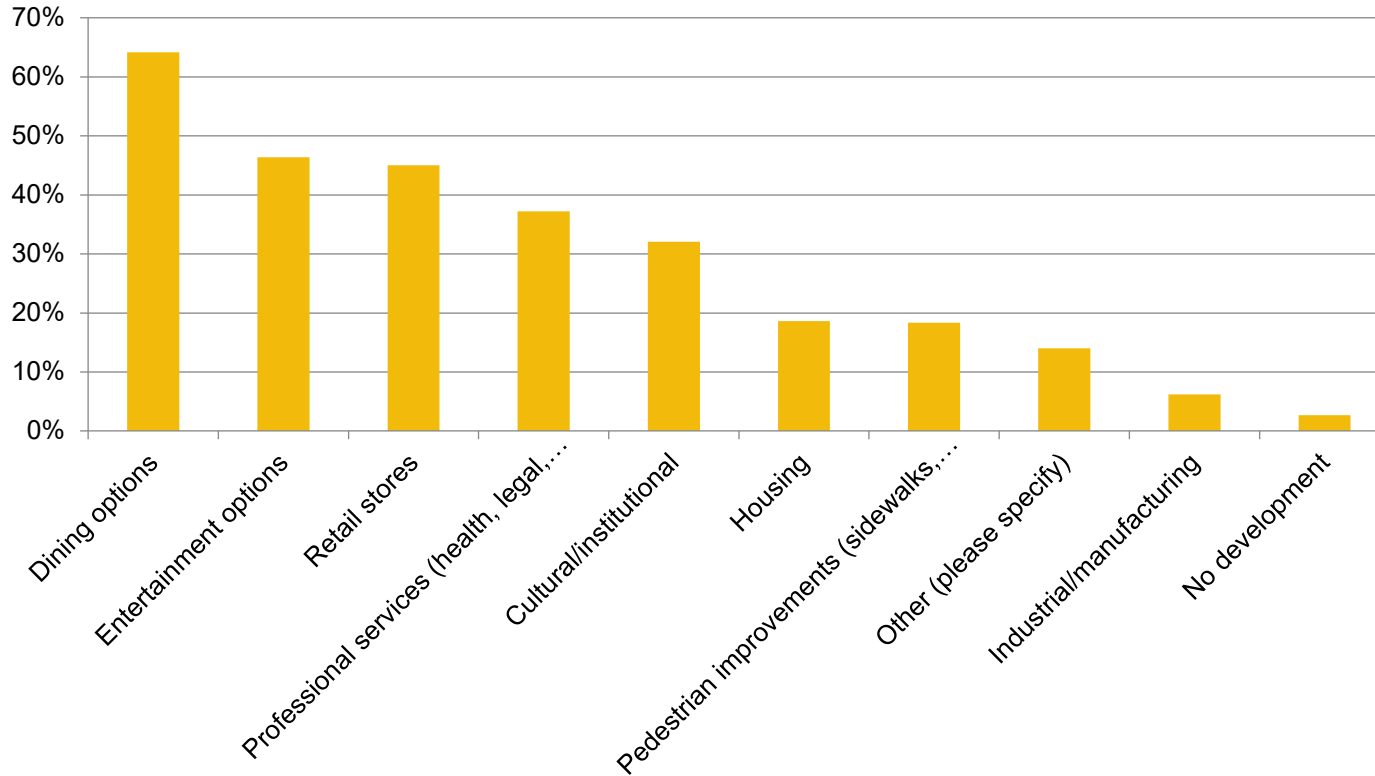
Most common responses:

- Dining options (61%)
- Health services (56%)
- Retail (49%)
- Entertainment (47%)
- Professional services (30%)

What shopping or services require you to use neighboring towns that you would prefer to have provided in Deep River?



What type of development would you like to see in the former Citizens Bank property? Select all that apply.

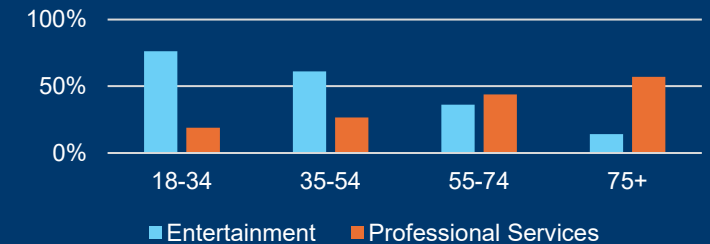


## 97% Support Development at Citizens Bank Property

**Respondents want dining (64%), entertainment (46%), retail (45%), professional services (37%), and cultural/institutional (32%) development**

By demographic group:

- Younger respondents would like more entertainment options; older respondents would prefer professional services



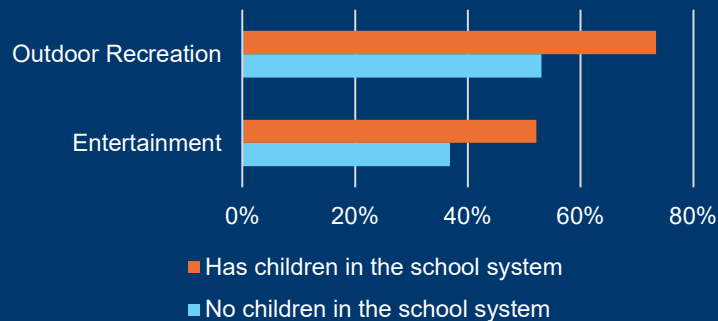


## 90% Support Development at Mount Saint John's

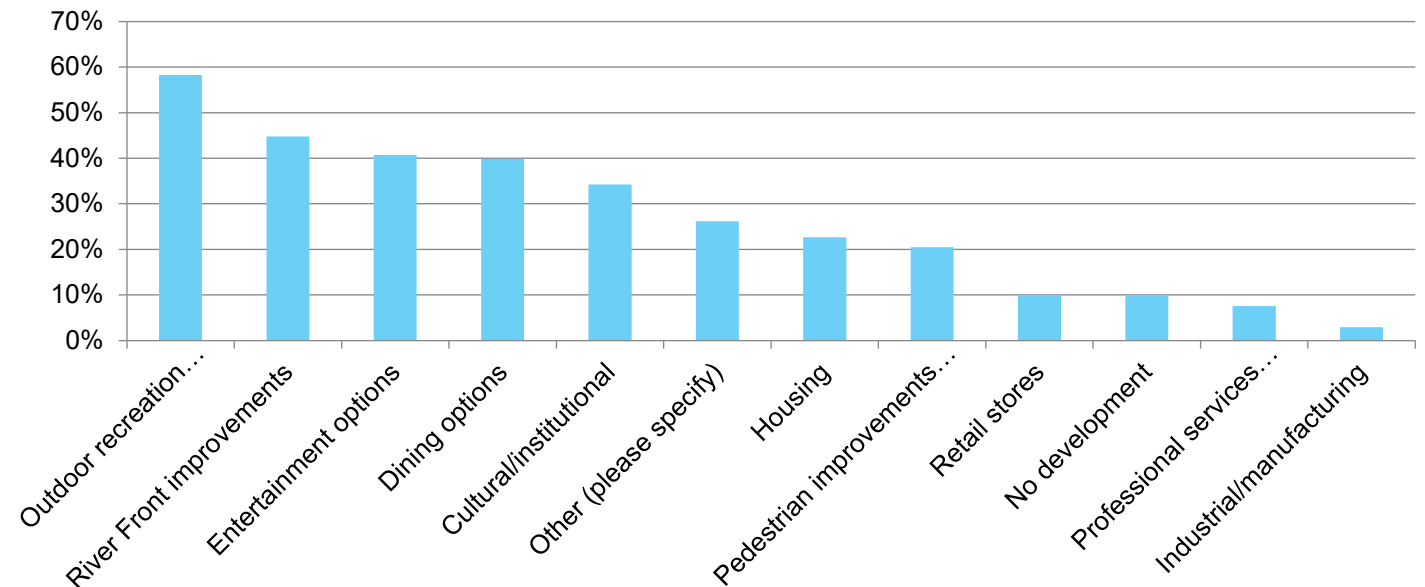
**Outdoor recreation (58%), riverfront improvements (45%), entertainment (41%), dining (40%), and cultural/institutional (34%) were the most common responses**

### By demographic group:

- Respondents with children in the school system more heavily favored entertainment and outdoor recreation compared to those who do not.



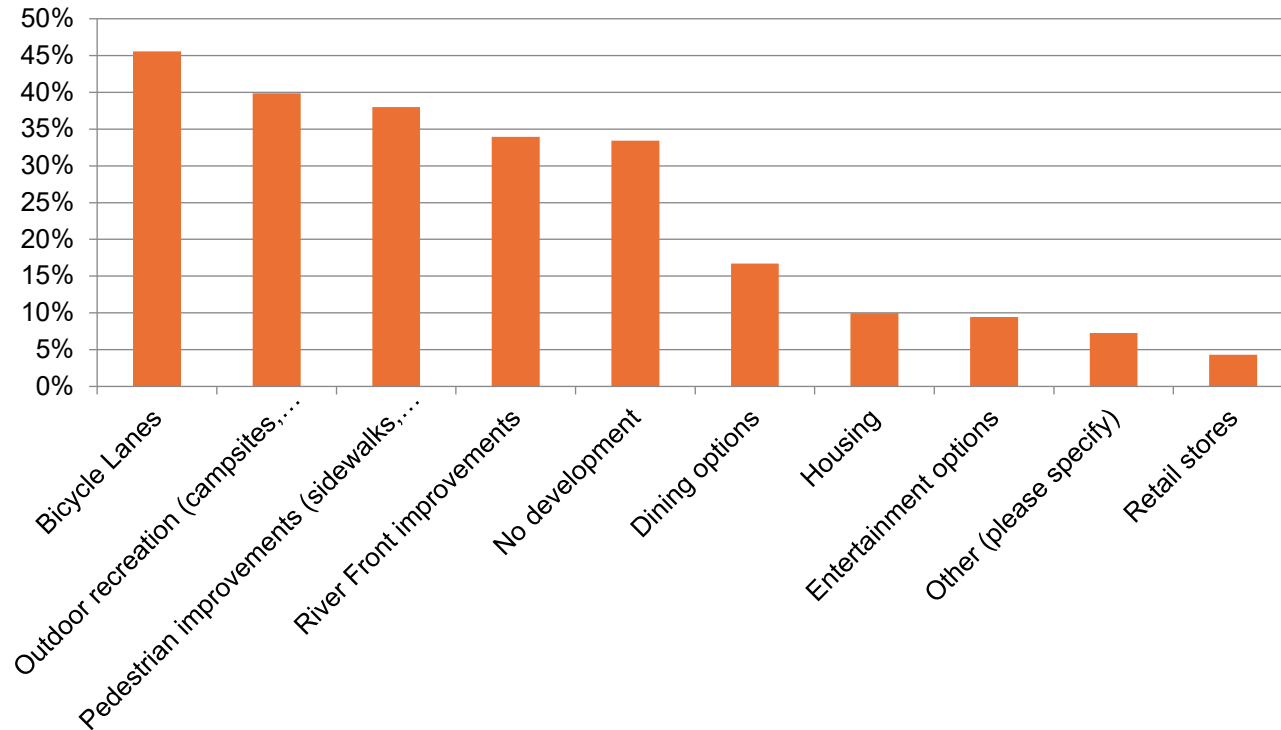
What type of development would you like to see in the Mount Saint John's property? Select all that apply.



Common "other" responses:

- Public park
- Hotel
- Wedding or concert venue

What type of development would you like to see in the River Road vicinity? Select all that apply.



## Outdoor/Recreation Favored at River Road

67% supported some form of development, primarily:

- **Bike lanes (46%)**
- **Outdoor recreation (40%)**
- **Pedestrian improvements (38%)**
- **Riverfront improvements (34%)**

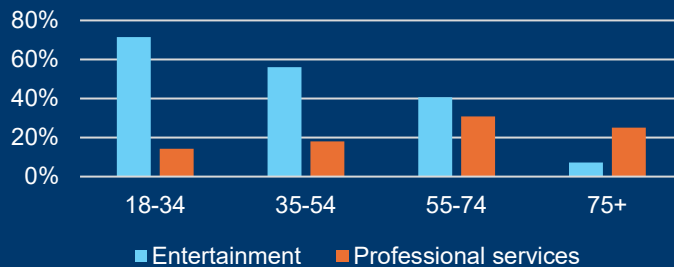
## 85% Support Development on Main Street

### The most common responses were:

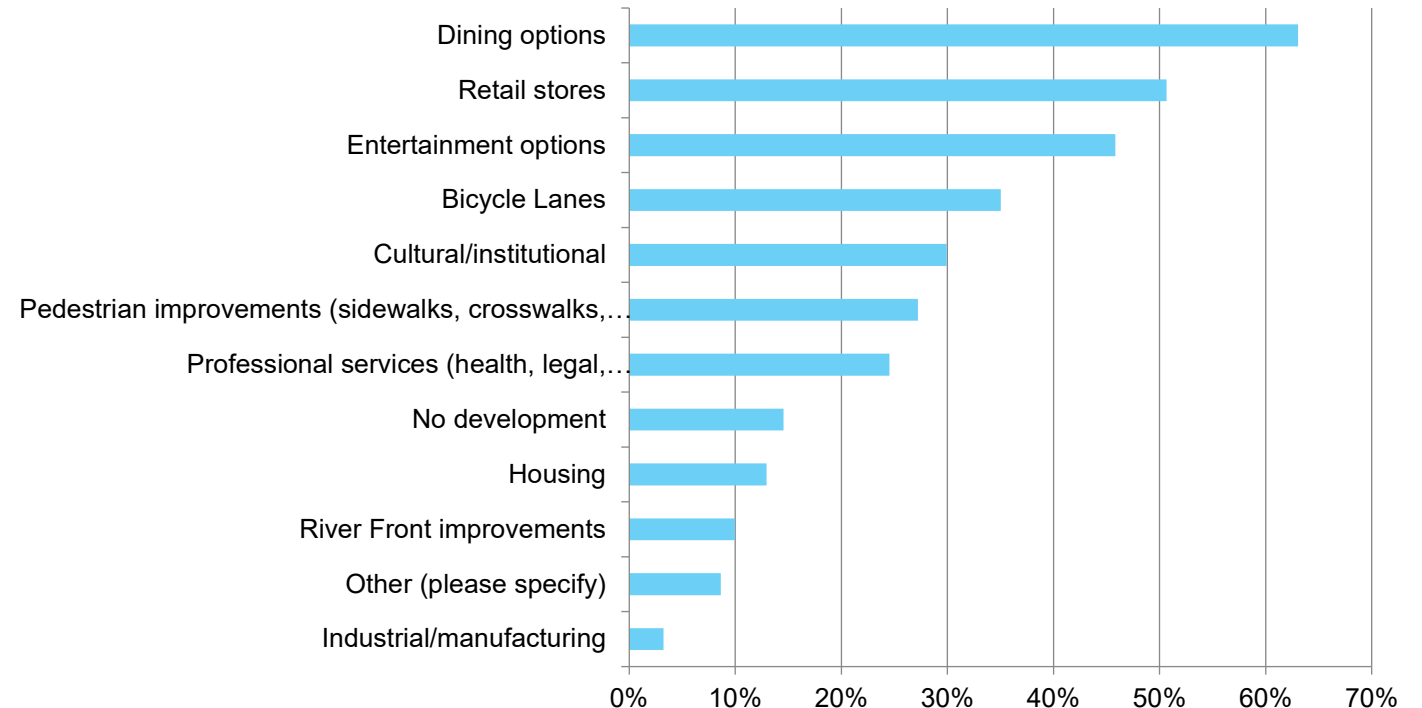
- Dining (63%)
- Retail (51%)
- Entertainment (46%)
- Bicycle lanes (35%)
- Cultural/Institutional (30%)

### By demographic group:

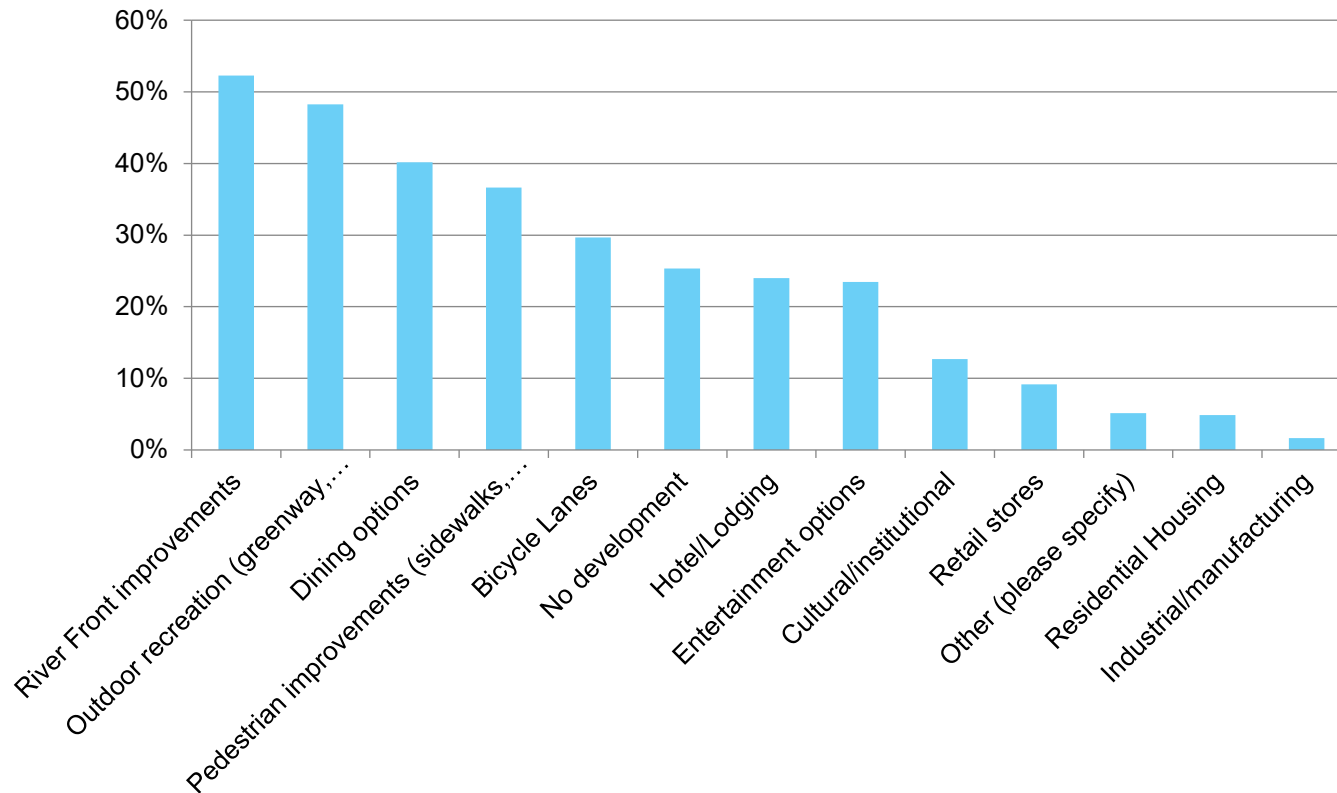
- Entertainment was favored by younger respondents, while older respondents favored professional services



### What type of development would you like to see on Main Street? Select all that apply.



What type of development would you like to see in the Landing/Riverfront Area? Select all that apply.



## 75% Support Amenities in the Landing/Riverfront Area

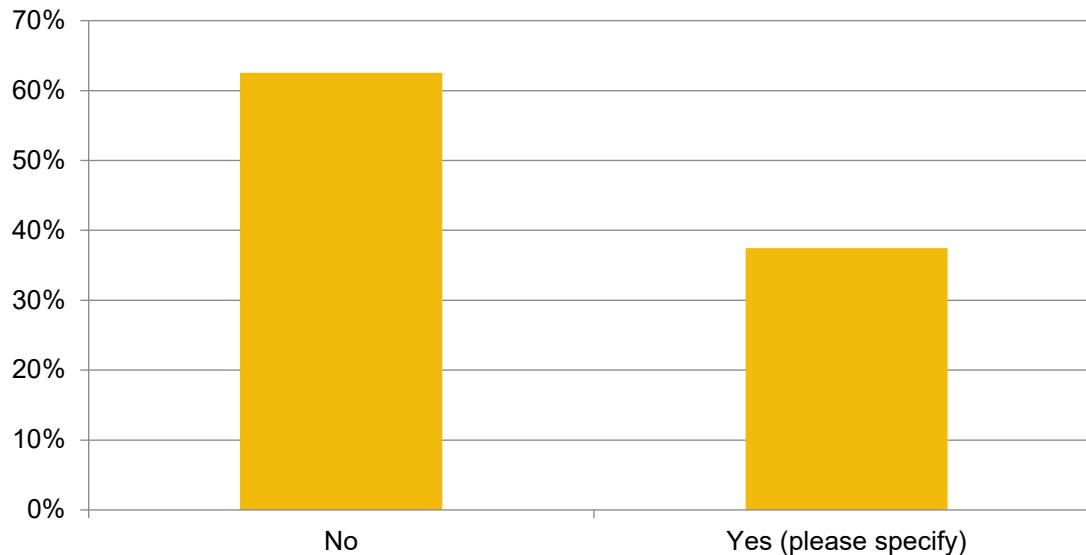
The most common types of development desired include:

- Riverfront improvements (52%)
- Outdoor recreation (48%)
- Dining (40%)
- Pedestrian improvements (37%)
- Bicycle lanes (30%)



## 37% Suggested Other Areas for Development

Are there other areas of Deep River where you would like to see further development? Please specify the area and type of development.



“Yes (please specify)” comments included:

- Main street clean up/North Main St improvements to make it more attractive for visitors
- Additional and better sidewalks
- Athletic facility maintenance and improvements, new athletic facilities like turf fields
- Expanding industrial parks
- Improvements to Plattwood Park area
- Bike lanes on more roads

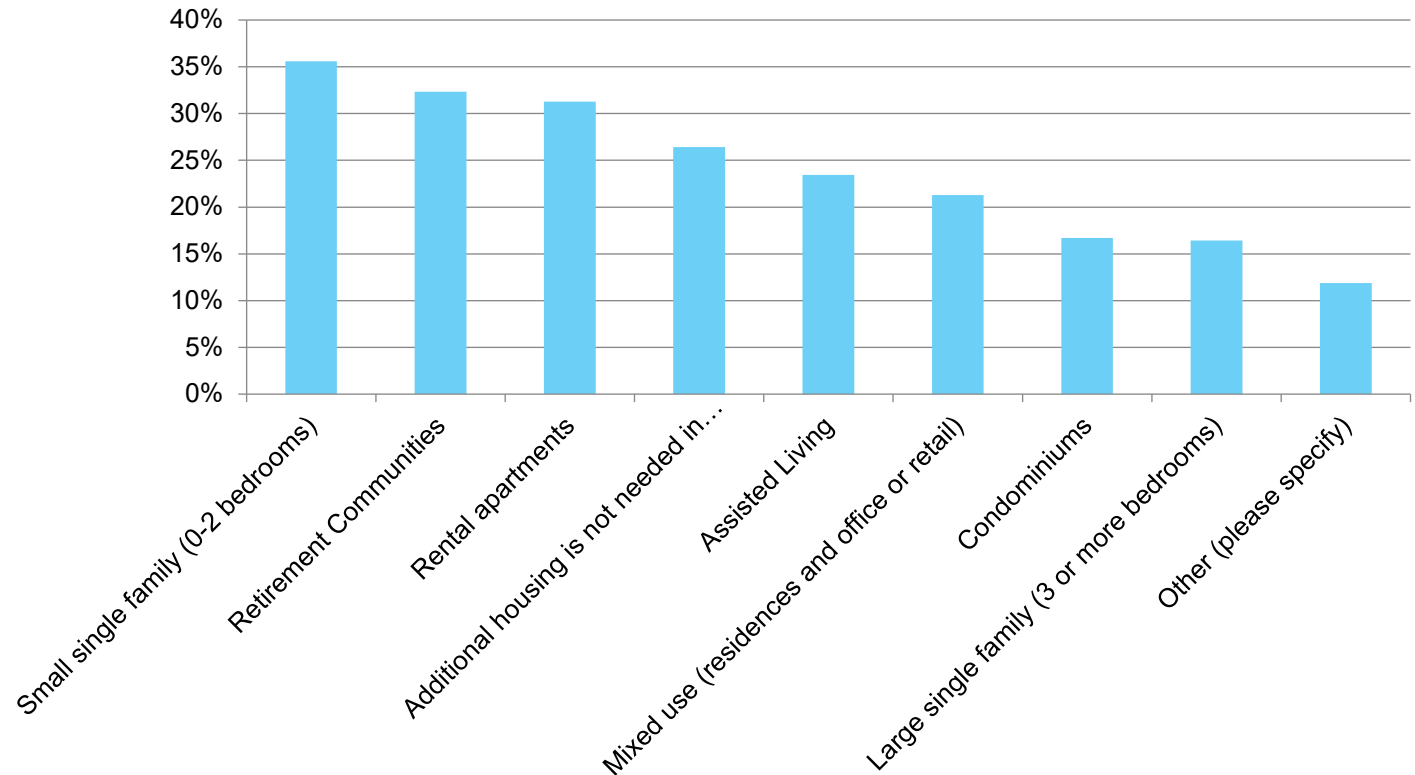
## 74% Think Additional Housing is Needed

**Smaller and more flexible housing arrangements, including small single family homes (36%), retirement communities (32%), and rental apartments (31%) are the most desired**

By demographic group:

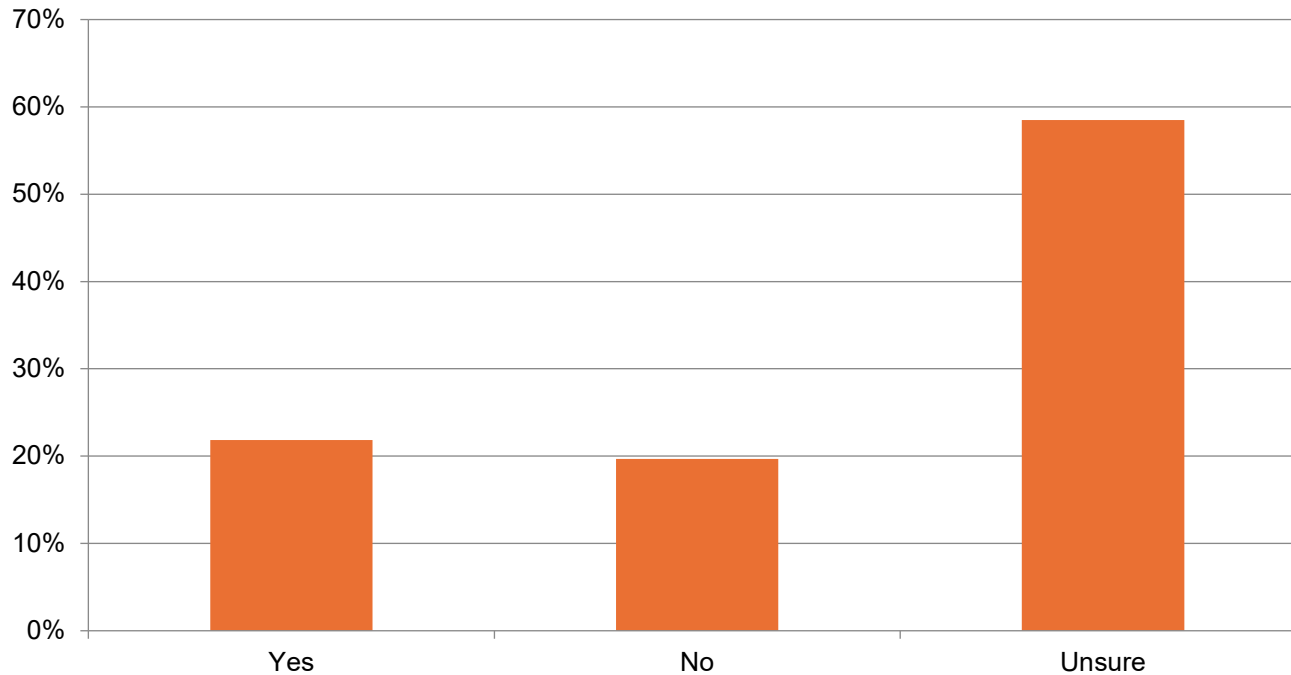
- Most groups indicated more housing was needed for their own group
- 52% of respondents aged 18-34 said more rental apartments were needed.
- 44% of respondents 55 and over said more retirement communities were needed
- 31% of respondents with children indicated more large single-family homes were needed

What kind of additional housing is needed in Deep River, if any? Select all that apply.



Among 44 “Other (please specify)” responses, the most frequently mentioned topic was a desire for more affordable housing. 16 of 34 responses that had a specific recommendation mention a need for more affordable housing or subsidized housing. Two respondents mention the need for less subsidized housing.

Should other zoning changes be considered to support new development within the town?



## Respondents Unsure about Zoning Changes

- The majority of respondents (58%) were unsure if zoning changes should be considered.
- There were no statistically significant differences in responses between groups of respondents

## Residents divided on Taxes

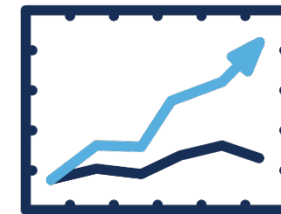
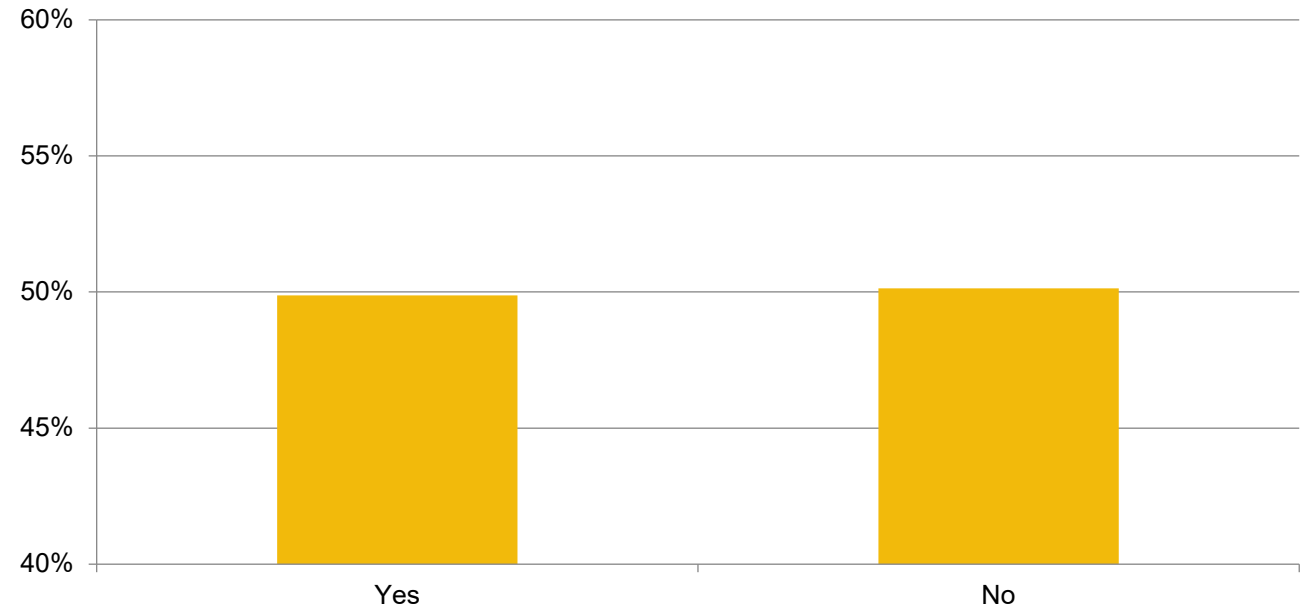
### Are tax rates reasonable?

Respondents had an even split (50-50) between yes and no

By demographic group:

- Village/Landing area respondents (57%) were more likely to say taxes were reasonable
- River Road (62%) and Winthrop (59%) respondents were more likely to say taxes were not reasonable
- Kelsey Hill respondents were split (53% yes - 47% no; not statistically significant)

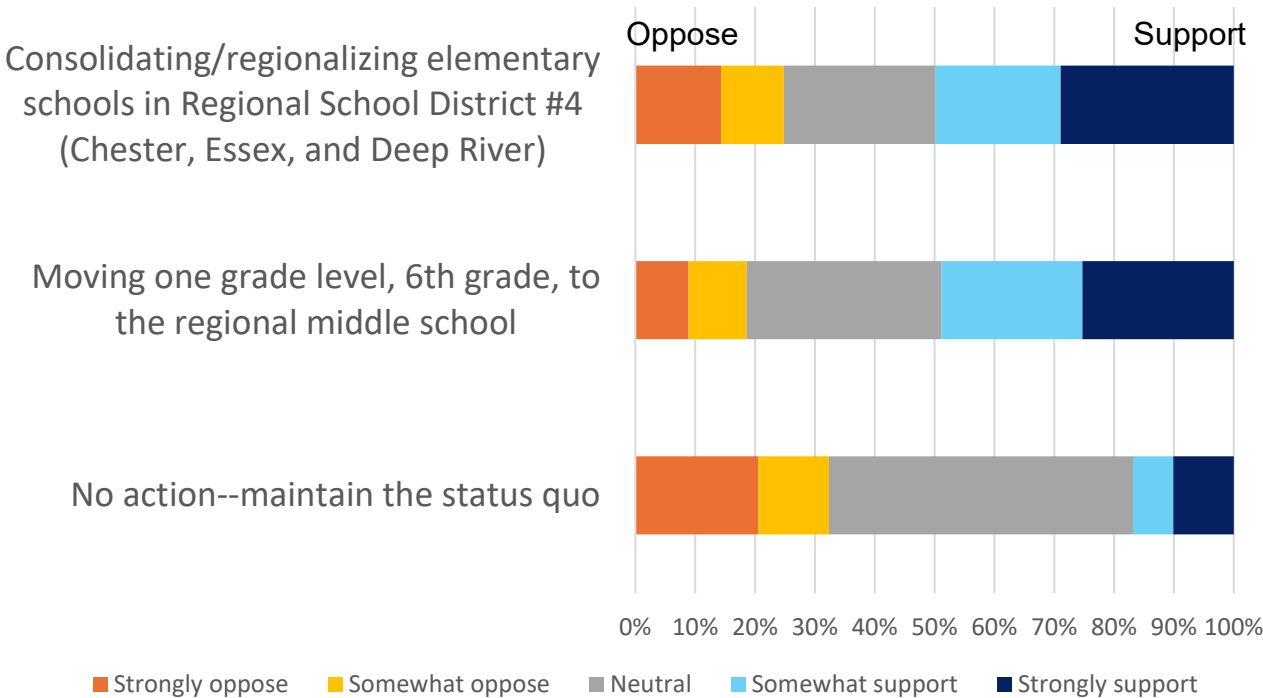
Do you agree with the following statement:  
“Deep River’s tax rate is reasonable, given the level of services the Town provides”?





# Respondents Support Changes to the School System

How do you feel about proposed changes to the structure of the Deep River school system?



\*Respondents without children in the school system were more likely to provide a “neutral” response, so responses among those with children are more polarized than the overall results

Overall, respondents favored:

- Consolidation/regionalization (50% support—25% oppose)
- Moving 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the regional middle school (49% support—18% oppose)

Among respondents with children in the school system\*:

- 58% supported moving 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school, while 21% opposed
- 56% supported consolidation, while 32% opposed

# BUSINESS OWNER RESPONSES

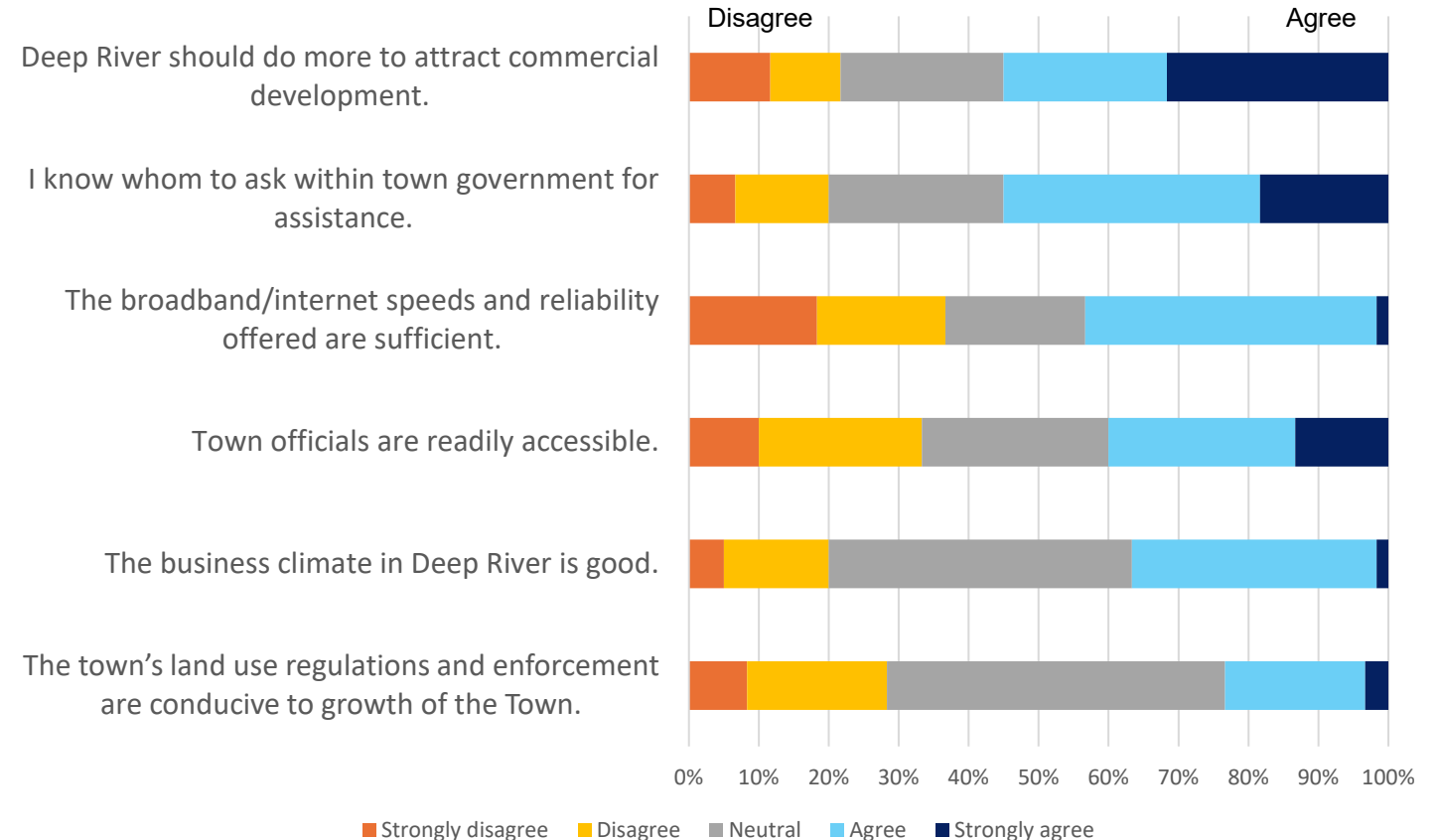
(The following questions were only asked of the 64 survey respondents who indicated they own a business in Deep River)

# Business Climate

**55% of business owners agreed or strongly agreed that Deep River should do more to attract commercial development**

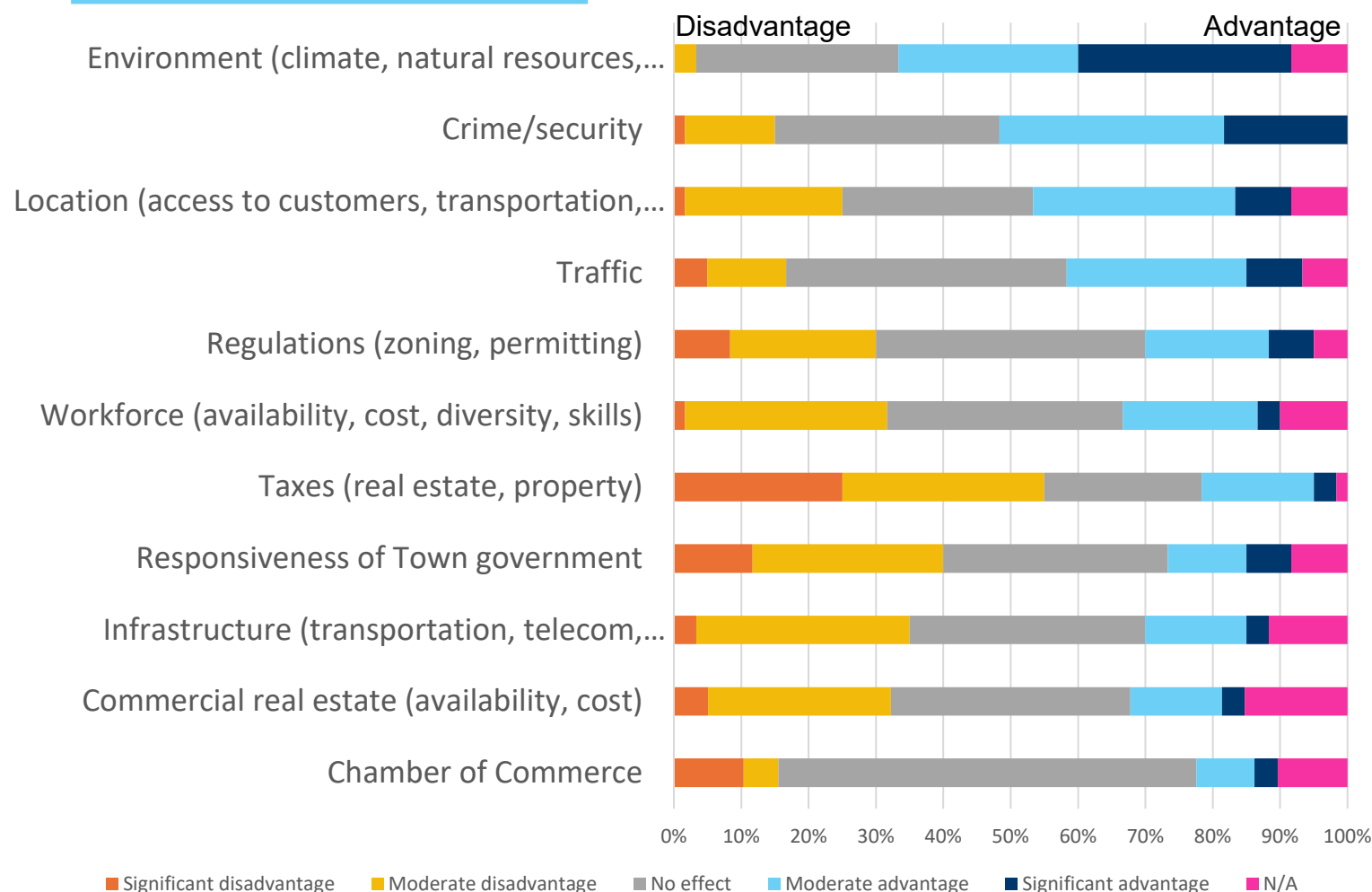
- 55% also said they know where to go for assistance within Town Government
- Respondents had neutral or positive views of the business climate in Deep River overall

Which of these statements do you agree with?



## Advantages and Disadvantages of doing business in Deep River

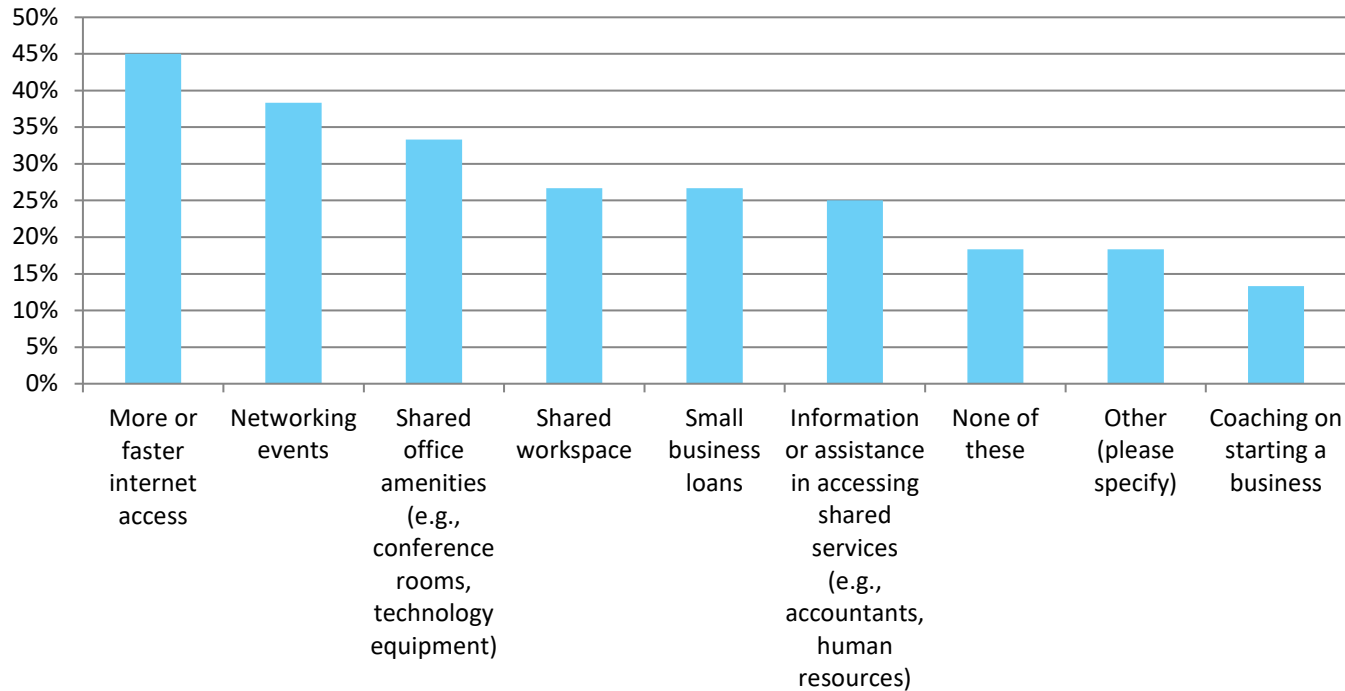
- The most commonly cited advantages were environment (59%) and low crime (51%).
- Location (38%) and traffic (35%) were also viewed as advantages to a lesser degree.
- The most commonly cited disadvantage was taxes (55%).
- Most respondents would stay in Deep River if they expand in the next 5 years (62% yes; 10% no; 28% unsure).



Responses in the chart are listed in order by total number of respondents who indicated the factor was a significant or moderate advantage.



What services should Deep River promote for businesses? Select all that apply.



## 82% Wanted More Services for Businesses

The most common answer was more or faster internet (45%), followed by networking events (38%), and shared office amenities (33%)

# RESIDENT AND BUSINESS OWNER RESPONSES

(The following questions were asked of survey respondents who indicated they either live in Deep River or own a business in Deep River)

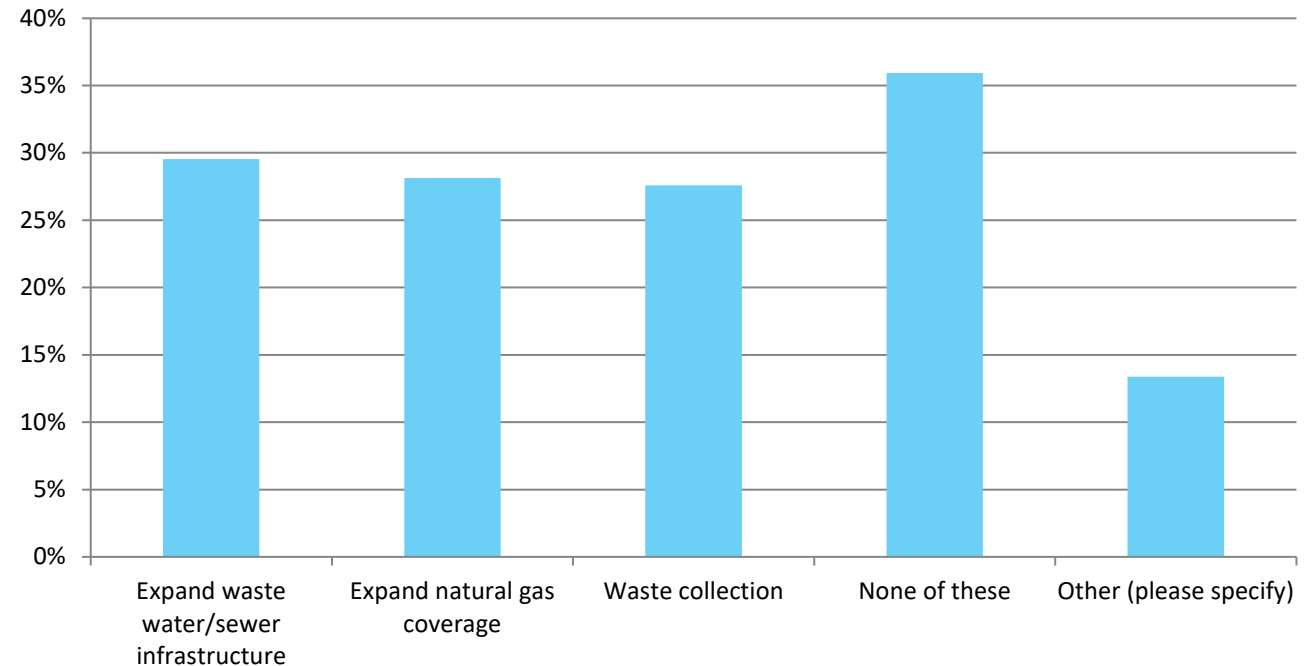
## 64% Support Municipal Services Expansion

The three options presented garnered similar levels of support, but less than a majority (sewer 30%; natural gas 28%; waste collection 28%)

By demographic group:

- Respondents in Kelsey Hill (44%) were more likely to say expand waste water/sewer infrastructure
- Village/Landing respondents (33%) were more likely to say waste collection
- Respondents from Winthrop (48%) were more likely to say none of these services were needed

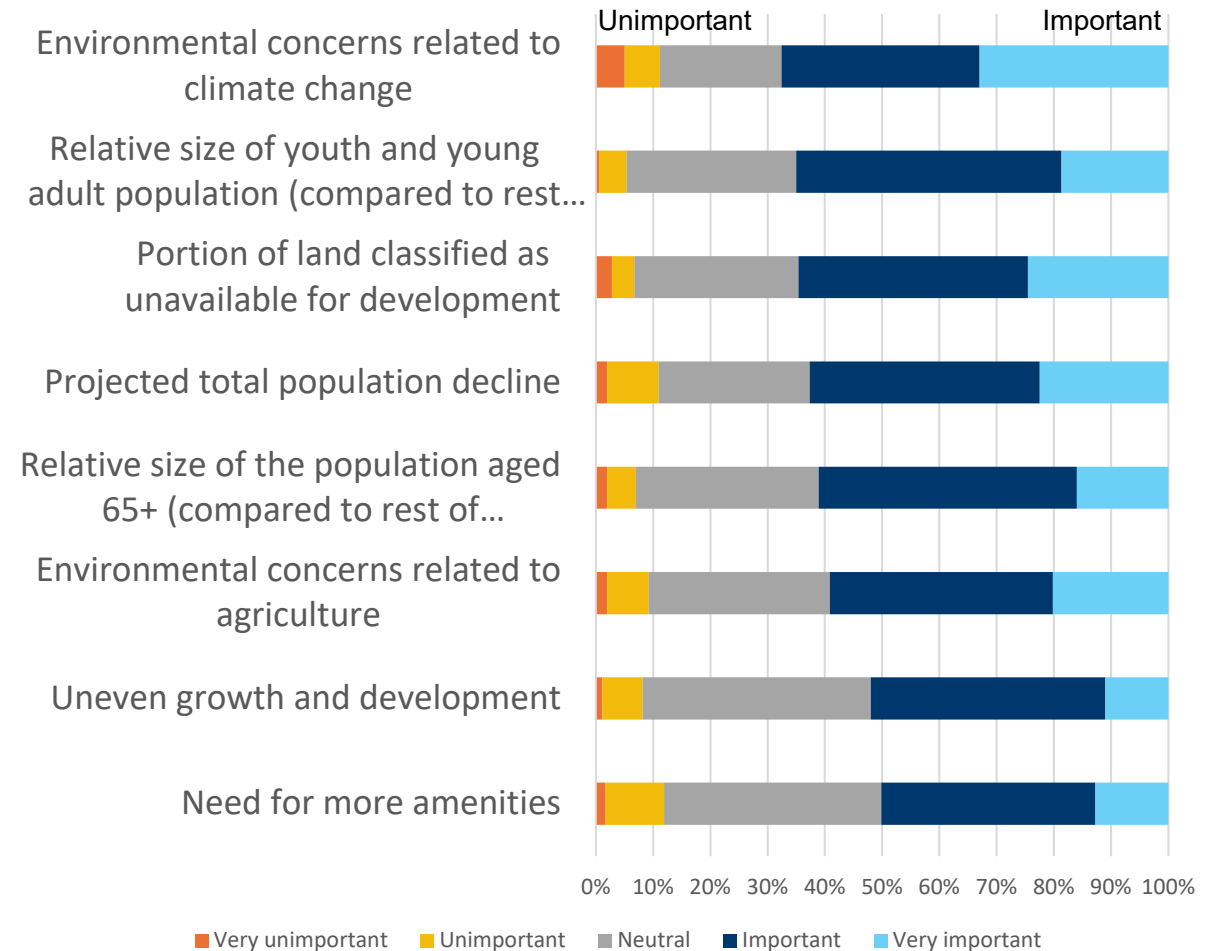
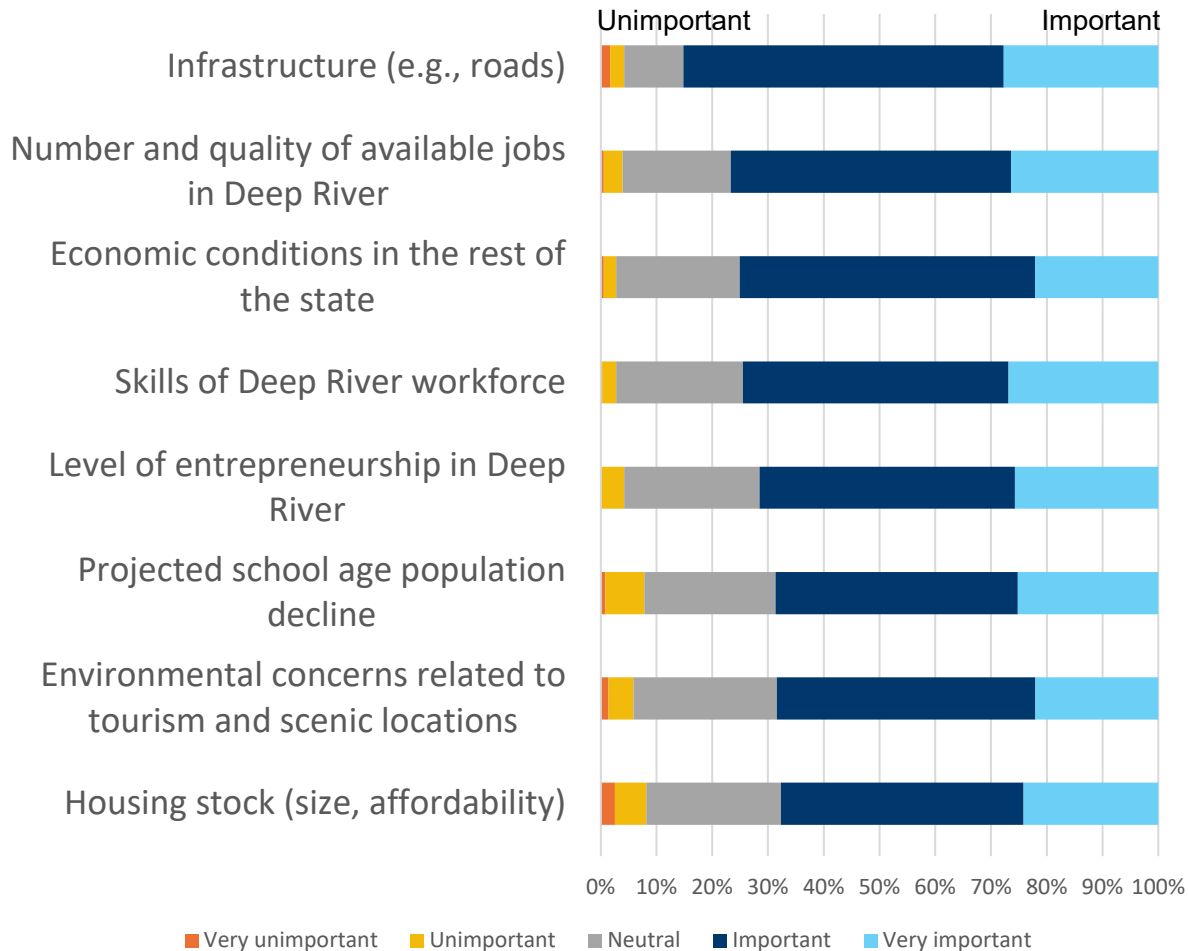
Should Deep River provide additional municipal services? Select all that apply.



Common "Other (please specify)" responses include:

- Compost options for waste pickup
- More charging stations for cars

## Infrastructure, Jobs/Workforce, Economy are most important concerns in the next 10 years



All of the issues listed were rated as important or very important by at least 50% of respondents. The top 5 issues were infrastructure, number and quality of available jobs, skills of the Deep River workforce, economic conditions in the rest of the state, and the level of entrepreneurship in Deep River. Concerns are listed in order by portion of respondents that rated them important or very important.



Common themes among open-ended responses include:

- Maintaining small town feel while encouraging development
- Promote businesses, especially on Main Street/downtown
- More dining and entertainment options
- Senior living facilities
- Family/youth activities





# CHOOSE Connecticut

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**Engage. Retain. Recruit.**

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