



TOWN OF
WENHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

2020 Residential Satisfaction Study
- Presentation -



Report of Findings

April 7, 2020

Table of Contents

SECTION ONE
Project Overview

SECTION TWO
Key Study Findings

SECTION THREE
Considerations



Project Overview

- GreatBlue Research was commissioned by the Town of Wenham, MA (hereinafter, “Wenham” or “the town”) to conduct comprehensive research among its residents to gather feedback regarding town programs, services and priorities.
- The primary goals of this research study were to investigate reasons for living in Wenham, understand current perceptions of the town, and gain insight into residents’ desired priorities for town spending.
- In order to service these research goals, GreatBlue employed both telephone and digital methodologies to conduct surveys among a random sampling of Wenham residents.
- The outcome of this research will enable the Town of Wenham leaders to a) clearly understand the key drivers for residency, b) uncover residents’ current perceptions of the town and, c) identify priorities for town spending that align with residents’ preferences.



Areas of Investigation

The Town of Wenham Residential Satisfaction Study leveraged a quantitative research methodology to address the following areas of investigation:

- Overall quality of life in Wenham
- Likelihood to recommend Wenham as a place to live
- Reasons for living in Wenham
- Satisfaction with various town services
- Preferred priorities for town spending
- Awareness of opportunities to become more involved with the town
- Preferred methods of communication with the town
- Perceived value of living in Wenham for taxes paid and services received
- Awareness and perceptions of structural budget deficit
- Demographic profiles of respondents

Research Methodology Snapshot

| | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Methodology Telephone & Online | No. of Completes 464 (289 phone + 175 online) | No. of Questions 49* | Time Compensation None | Sample Procured residential phone records & URL link on Wenham's website |
| Target Wenham Residents | Quality Assurance Dual-level** | Margin of Error +/- 4.21% | Confidence Level 95% | Research Dates February 17- March 6 |

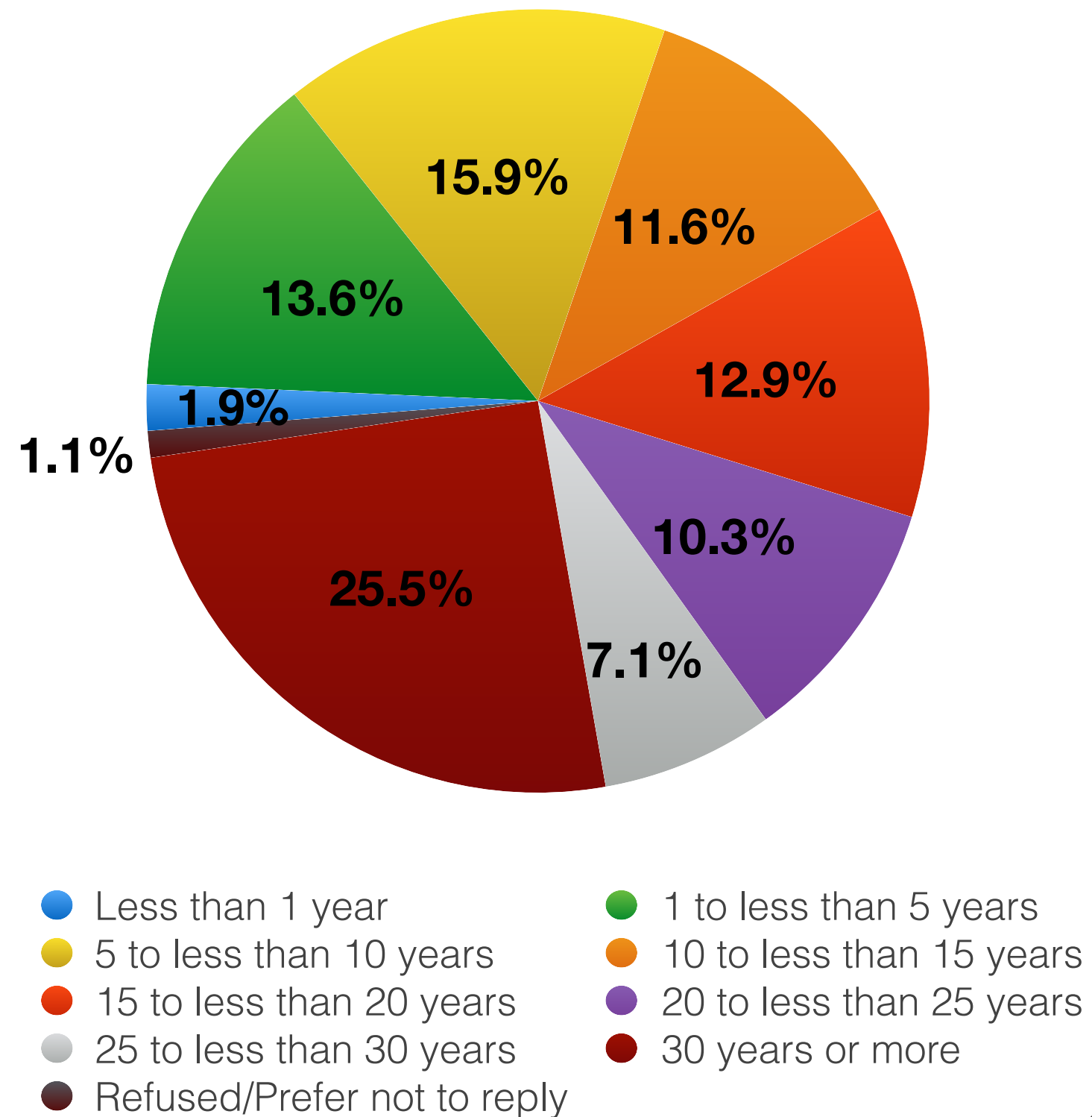
* This represents the total possible number of questions; not all respondents will answer all questions based on skip patterns and other instrument bias.

** Supervisory personnel, in addition to computer-aided interviewing platform, ensure the integrity of the data is accurate.

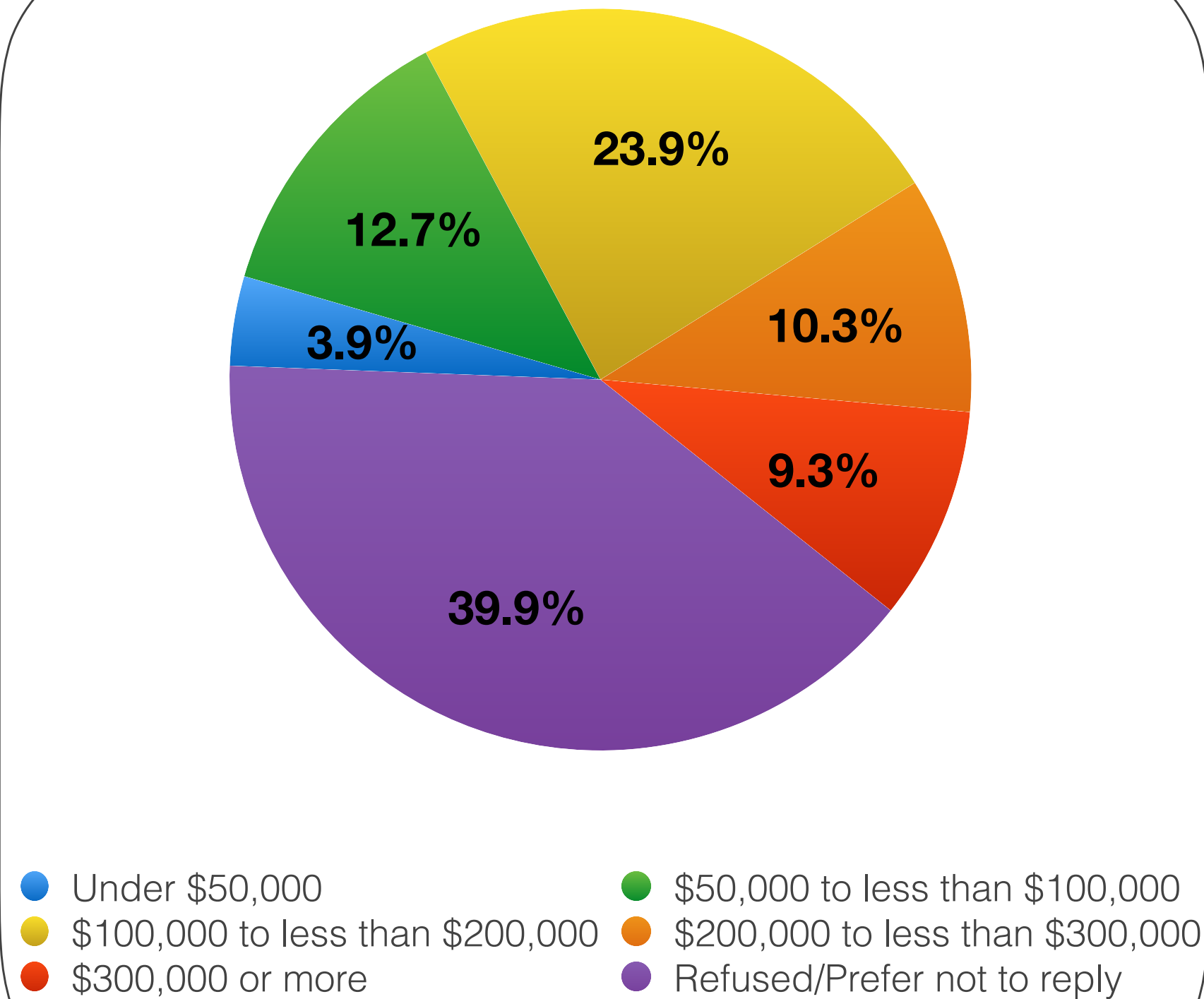
Respondent Snapshot

This slide quantifies select data points to provide context for this research study. The data is not meant to be statistically significant, rather to provide an empirical view into the demographic profile of the survey respondents.

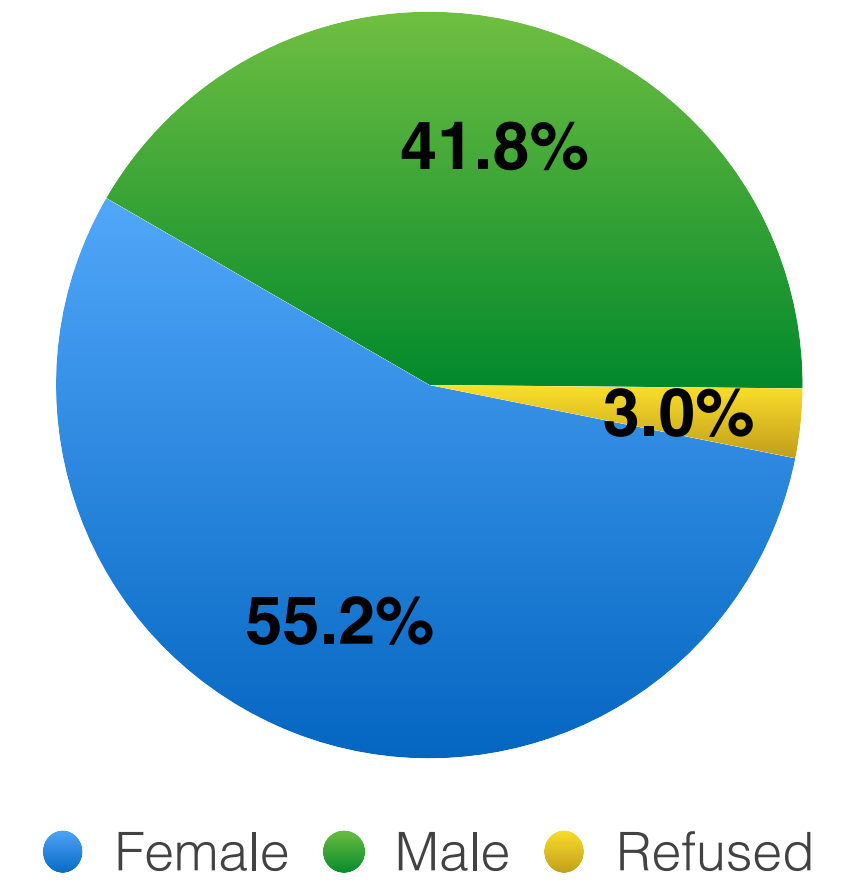
Length of time living in Wenham



Income



Gender



Age

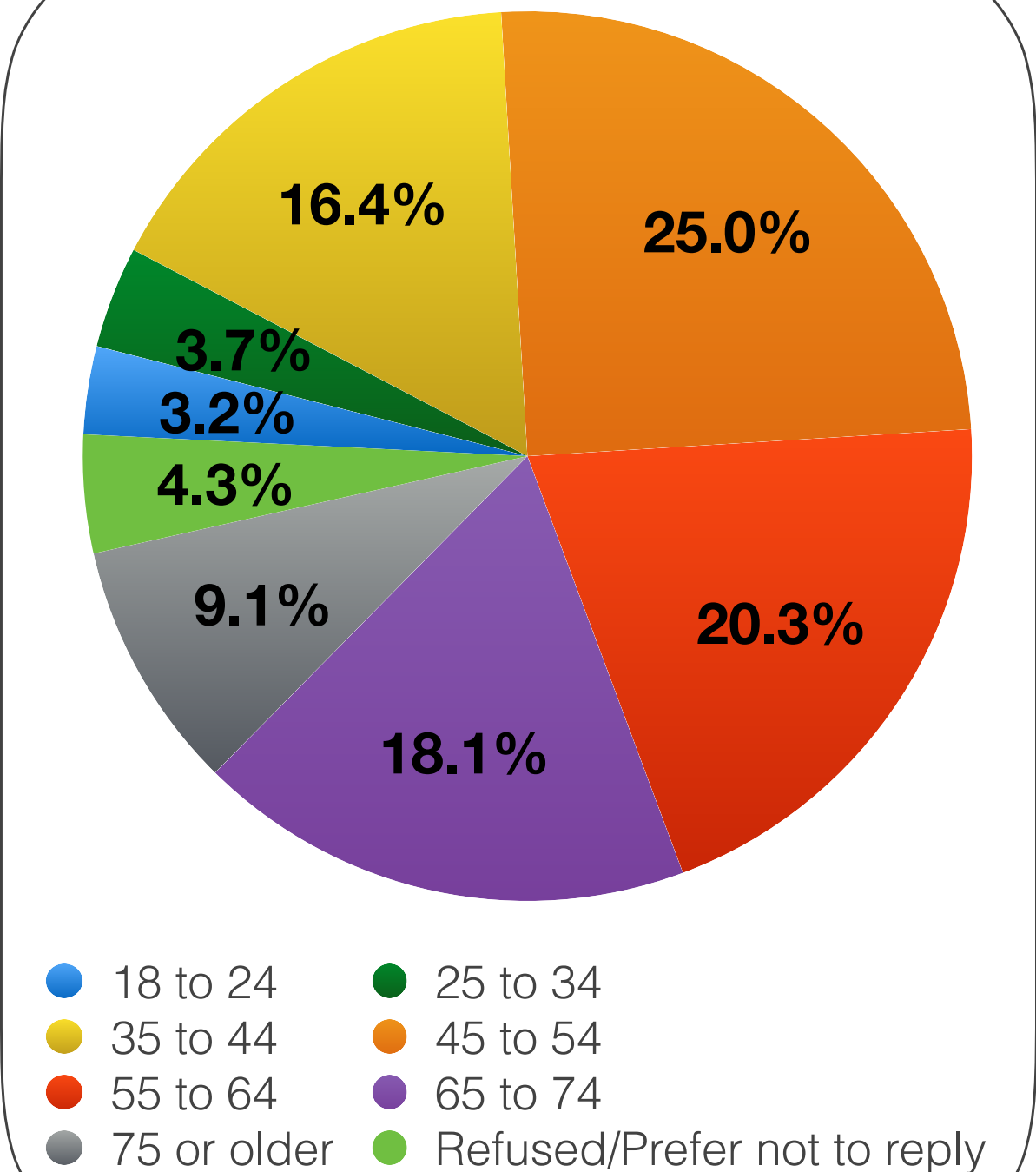


Table of Contents

SECTION ONE
Project Overview

SECTION TWO
Key Study Findings

SECTION THREE
Considerations

71.5%

would still purchase
at an increased
price point

8.9%

5.4%

2.8%

0.0%

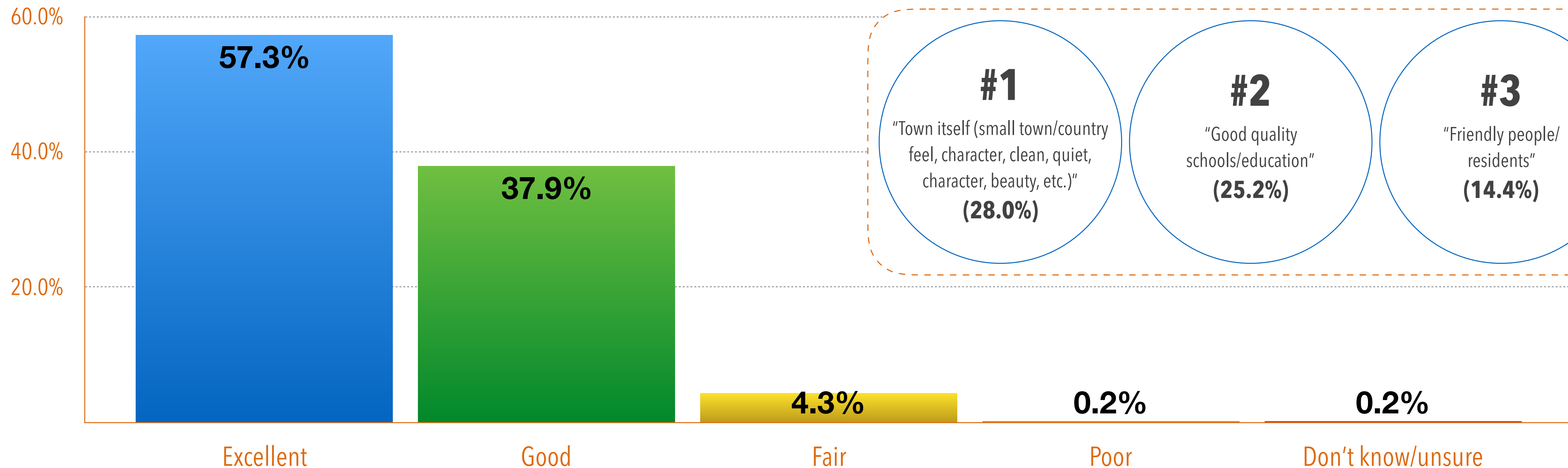
Negative Impact

Boomers

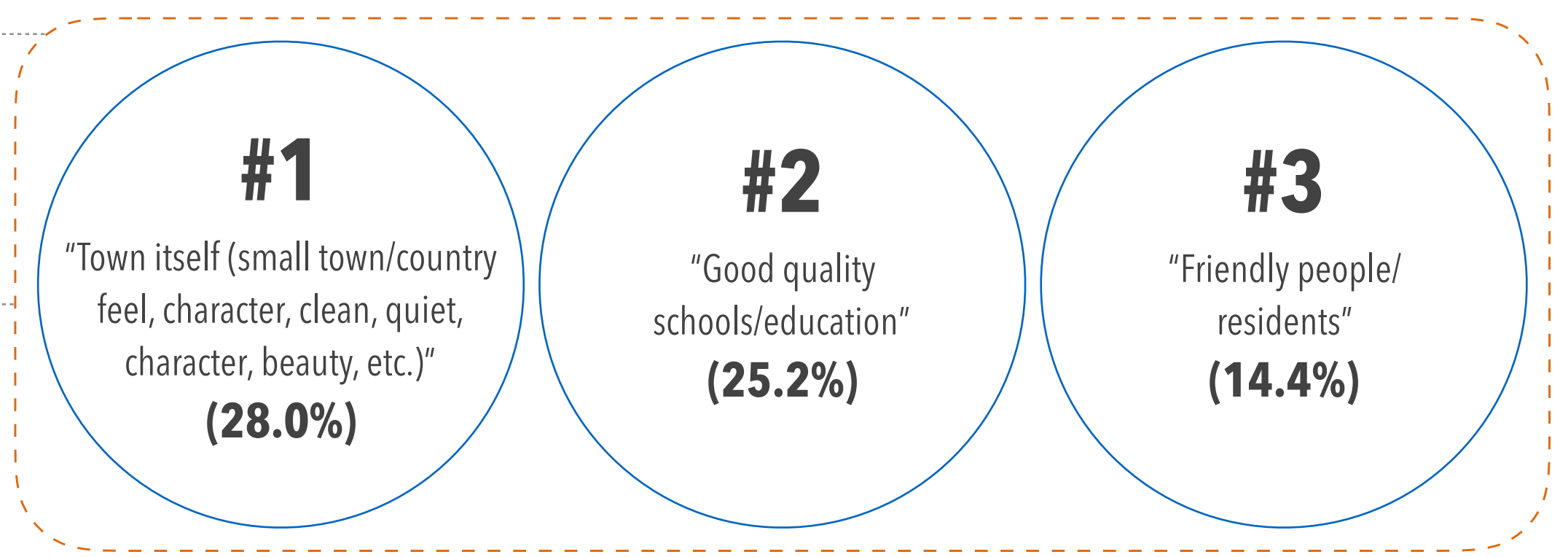
Wenham Provides Good Quality of Life

More than one-half of surveyed residents (57.3%) rated the overall quality of life in the town as “excellent,” and another 37.9% of respondents rated the overall quality of life as “good.” Additionally, top reasons cited among residents for what most strongly impacts quality of life in Wenham included the “town itself (small town/country feel, character, clean, quiet, character, beauty, etc.)” (28.0%), the “good quality schools/education” (25.2%), and the “friendly people/residents” (14.4%).

Q How would you rate the overall quality of life in Wenham?

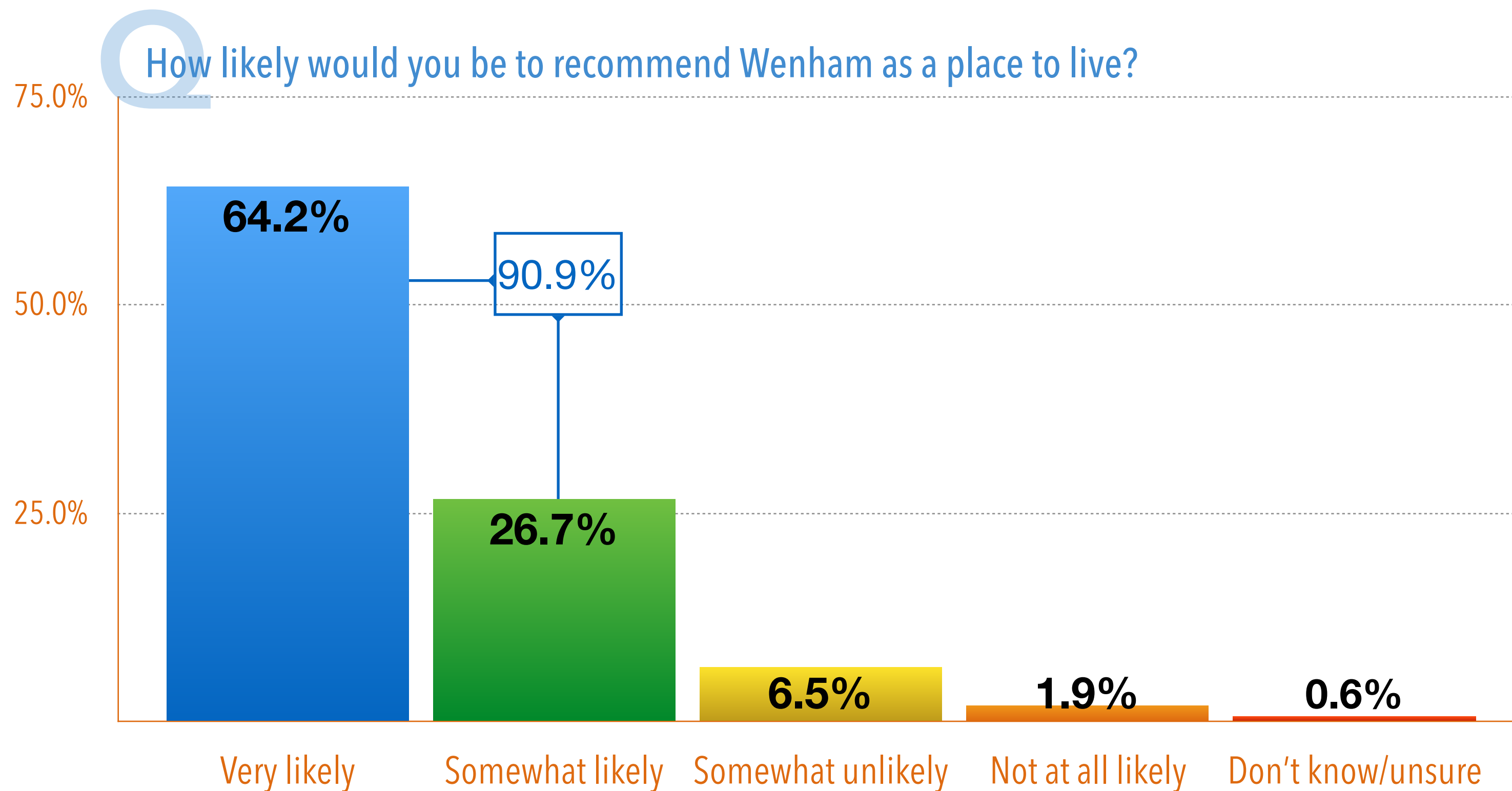


Q What, in your opinion, most strongly impacts quality of life in Wenham?

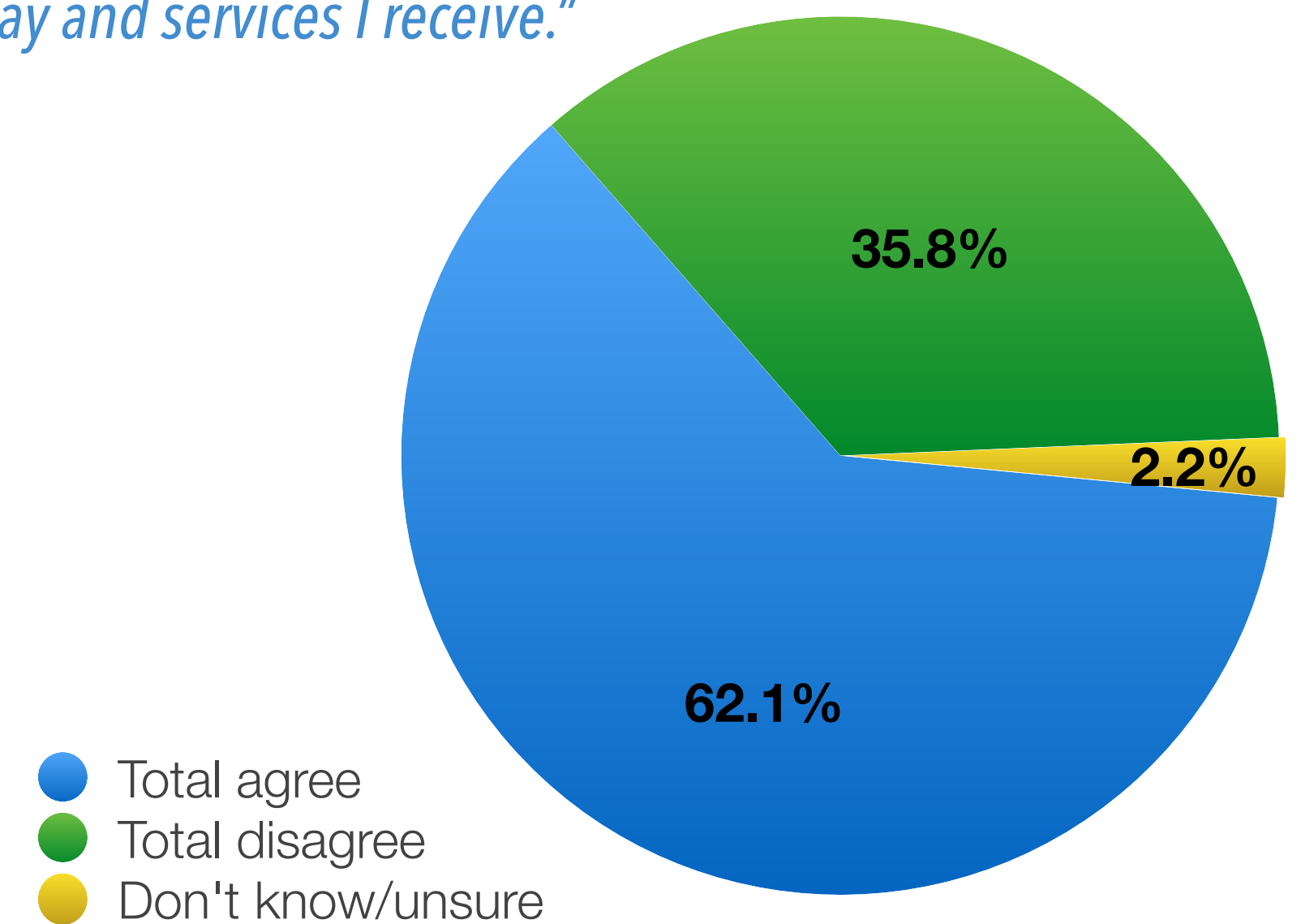


Likely to Recommend Living in Wenham

Slightly more than nine out of ten of surveyed residents (90.9%) reported being “likely” (“very” or “somewhat”) to recommend Wenham as a place to live. A low frequency of respondents (8.4%) reported being “not likely” (“somewhat” or “not at all”). Further, more than six out of ten residents “strongly agree” (15.9%) or “somewhat agree” (46.1%) with the statement: “Wenham is a good value for the taxes I pay and services I receive.”



Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Wenham is a good value for the taxes I pay and services I receive.”

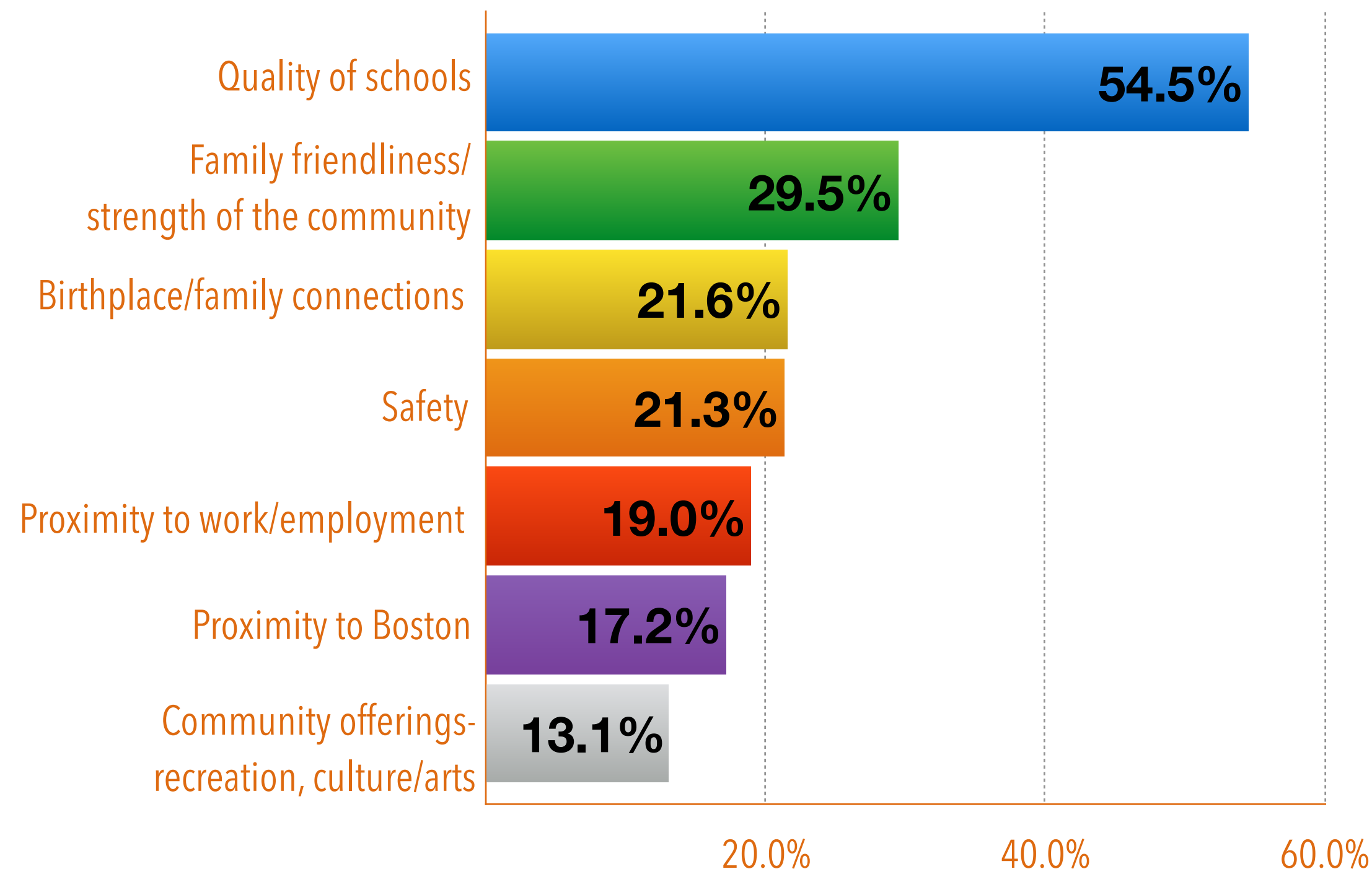


Primary Reasons for Living in Wenham

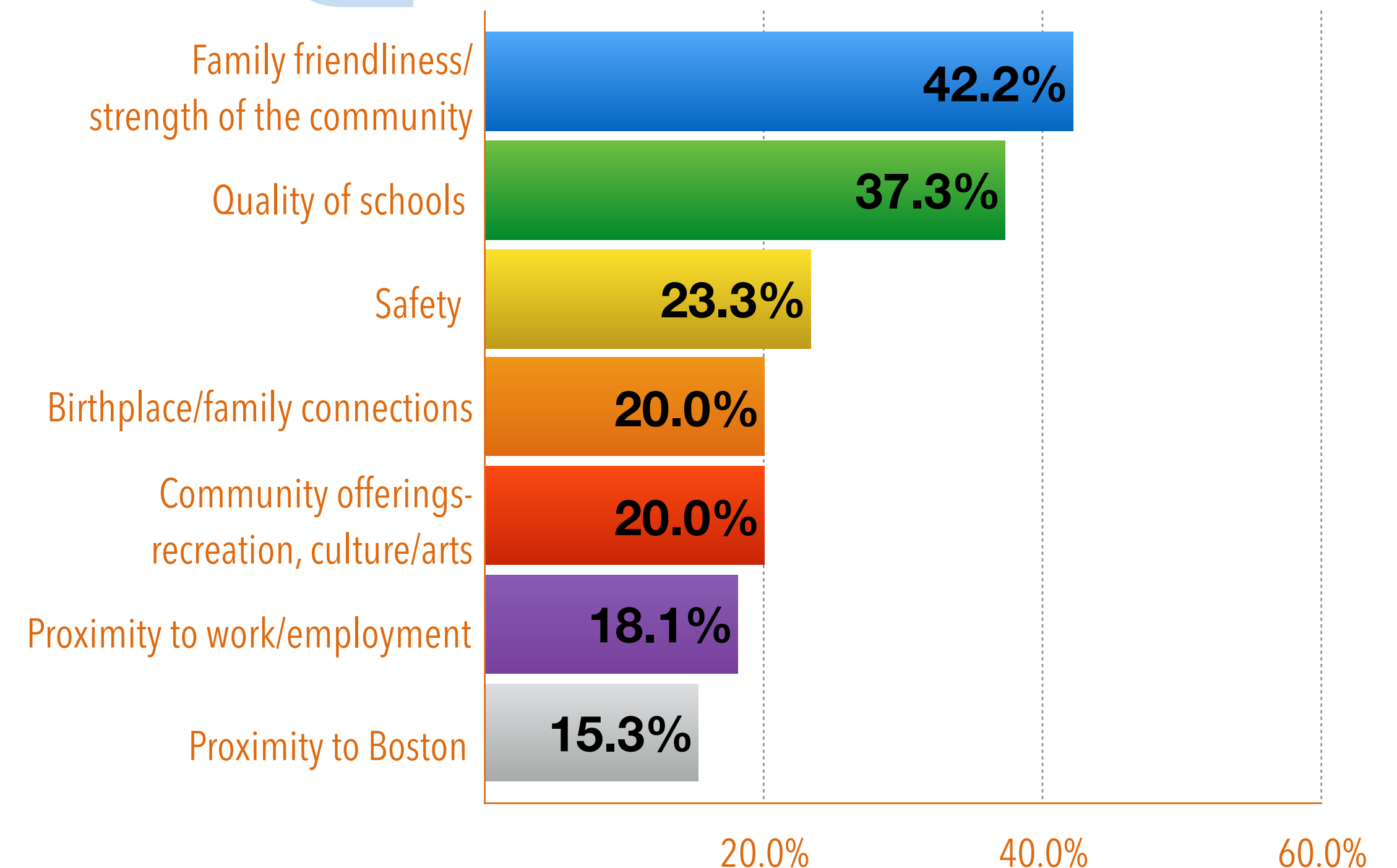
Over one-half of surveyed residents (54.5%) reported “quality of schools” as one of the primary reasons they chose to live in Wenham, followed by “family friendliness/strength of the community” (29.5%) and “birthplace/family connections” (21.6%). Consistent with the top reasons for choosing to live in Wenham, “family friendliness/strength of the community” (42.2%) and “quality of schools” (37.3%) were also top reasons residents decided to continue to live in Wenham, followed by 23.3% who reported “safety.”



What are the primary reasons why you initially chose to live in Wenham?



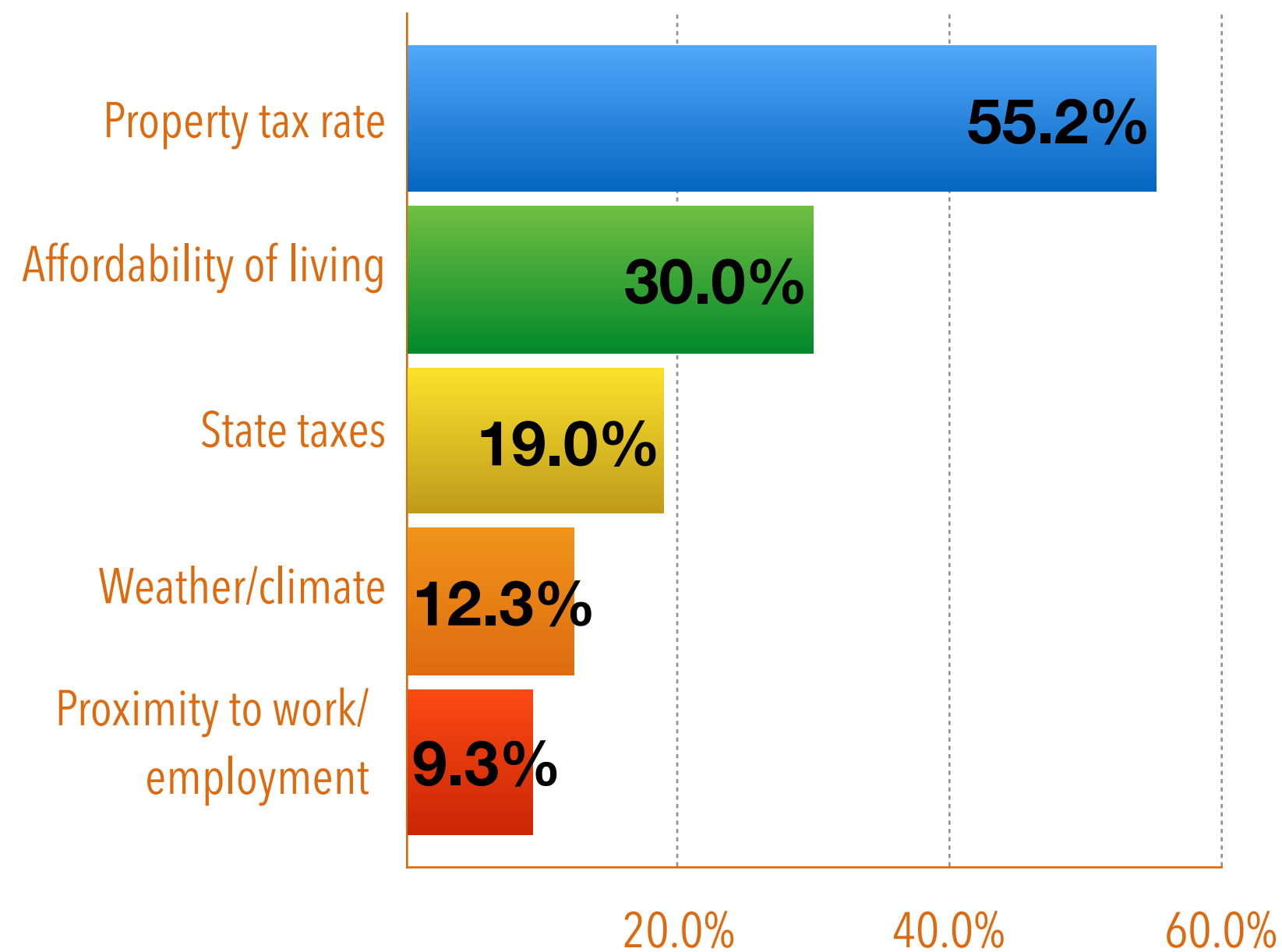
Why have you decided to continue to live in Wenham?



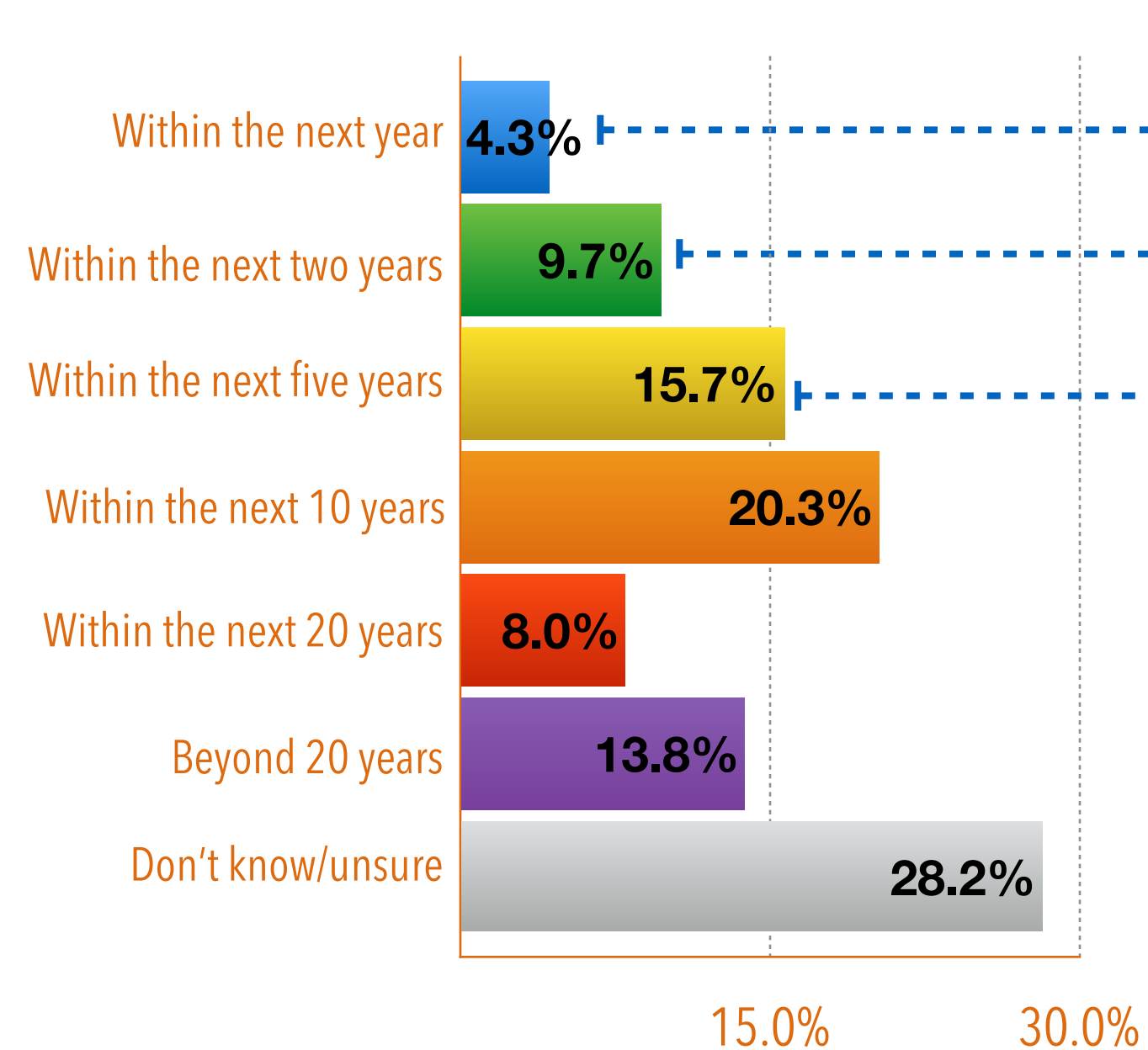
Taxes/Affordability of Living Cause Some to Move

The highest frequencies of surveyed residents reported the “property tax rate” (55.2%) in Wenham would cause them to move to another town or state, followed by “affordability of living” (30.0%), and “state taxes” (19.0%). Further, of those respondents who reported they expect to move out of their current home within the next five years, over two-thirds (71.7%) reported being more likely to move out of Wenham, while 19.6% reported being likely to stay in Wenham.

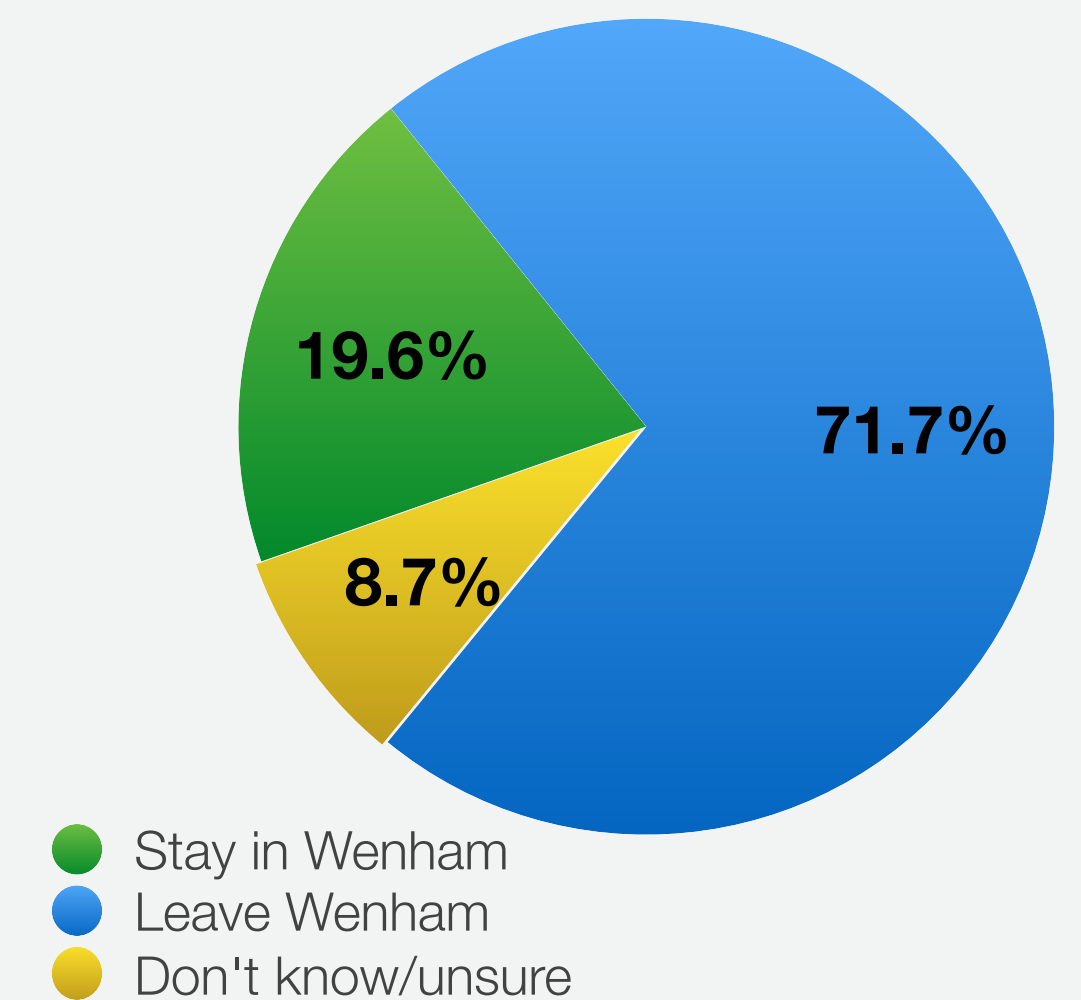
What would cause you to move from Wenham to another town or state?



Do you think you will move out of your current home...



Are you more likely to stay in Wenham or move out of Wenham?



High Satisfaction with Town Services

Over four-fifths of surveyed residents reported being “satisfied” (“very” or “somewhat”) with all town services listed. The highest frequencies of residents reported being “satisfied” with Wenham’s “library services” (99.1%), “fire services” (97.7%), and “police services” (96.9%). However, 17.2% reported being “dissatisfied” (“very” or “somewhat”) with “planning and zoning services,” and another 14.1% reported being “dissatisfied” with Wenham's “school system.”

| Q How satisfied are you with the Town of Wenham’s ability to serve its residents in these areas... <small>(w/o “don’t know” responses)</small> | Total Satisfied | Total Dissatisfied |
|--|--|---|
| | <small>(“very” + “somewhat” satisfied)</small> | <small>(“very” + “somewhat” dissatisfied)</small> |
| Library services | 99.1% | 1.0% |
| Fire services | 97.7% | 2.2% |
| Police services | 96.9% | 3.1% |
| Town Hall services | 95.5% | 4.5% |
| Parks and Open Space | 94.9% | 5.1% |
| Recreation services | 94.5% | 5.5% |
| Senior services | 93.6% | 6.4% |
| Social services | 92.8% | 7.1% |
| Town website | 91.3% | 8.7% |
| Public Works & Road Maintenance | 89.6% | 10.3% |
| School system | 85.9% | 14.1% |
| Planning and zoning services | 82.8% | 17.2% |

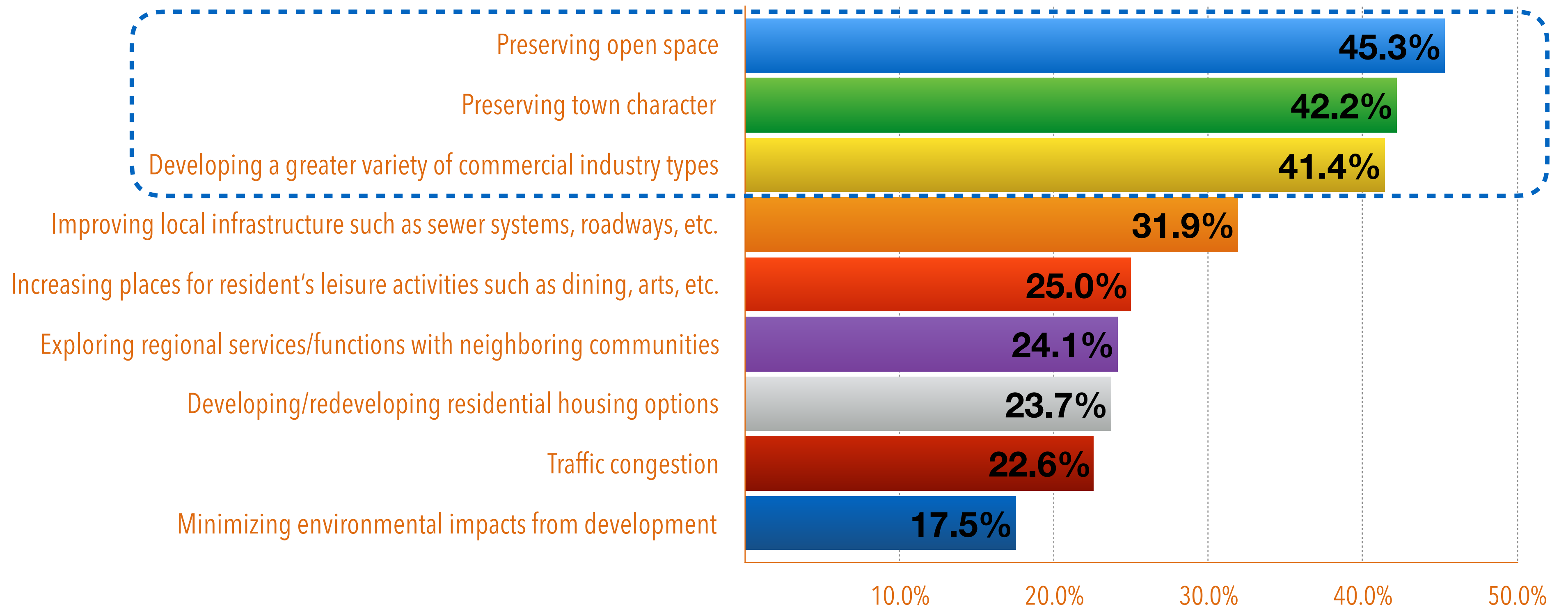
Q You mentioned you were dissatisfied with one or more of the town services listed above. Could you please explain why?

- “School System is mismanaged/inefficient (budget, resources, etc.)”
(12.6%)
- “Poorly maintained roads/sidewalks”
(6.6%)
- “Lack of recreation services/activities/ community events”
(6.0%)

Open Space, Town Character & Variety of Commercial Development Top Priorities

High frequencies of surveyed residents reported “preserving open space” (45.3%), “preserving town character” (42.2%), and “developing a greater variety of commercial industry types” (41.4%) should be top priorities for Wenham.

Thinking about overall issues facing Wenham, please tell me which of the following, in your opinion, should be the top three (3) priorities for the town?

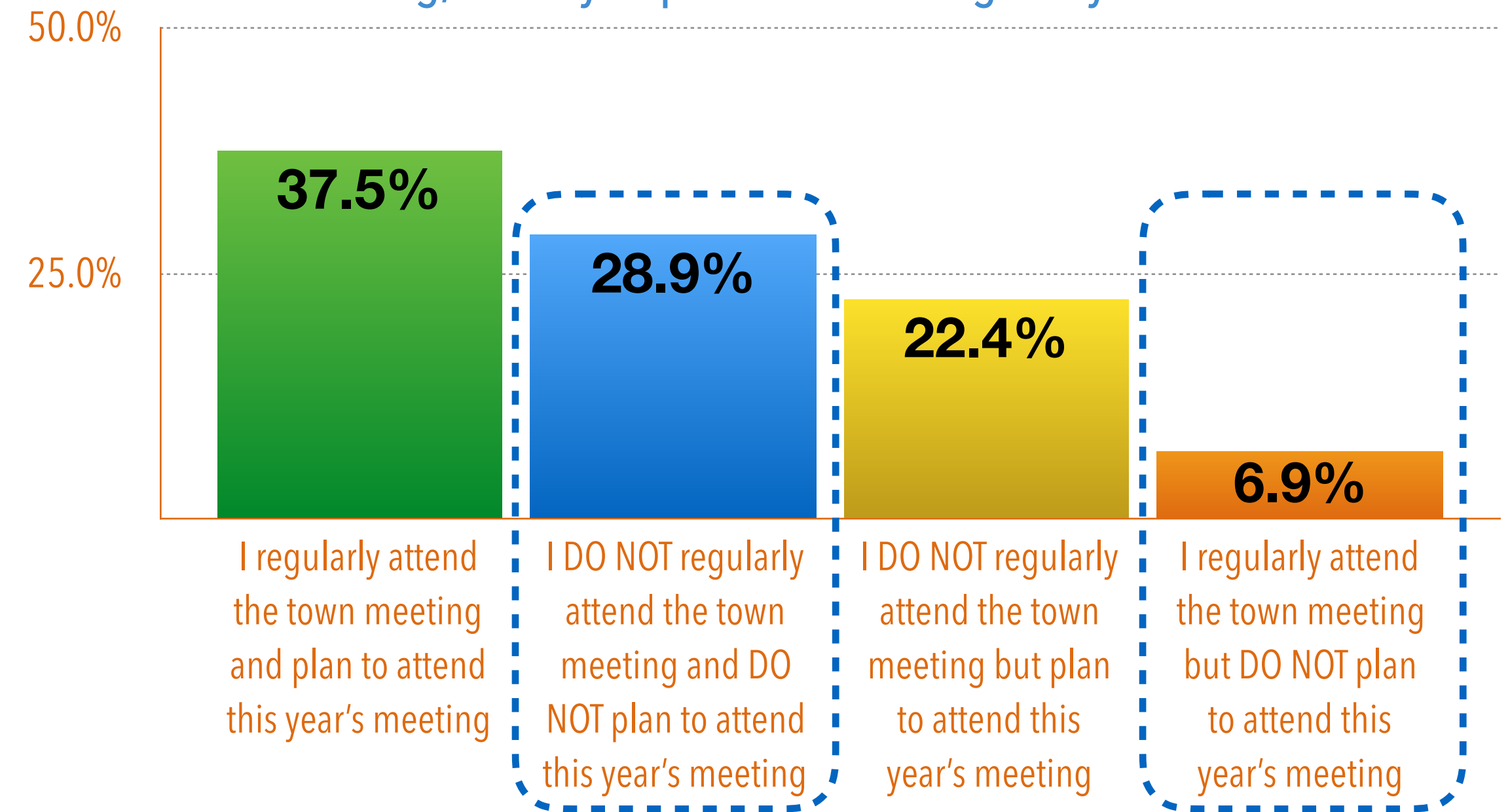


Annual Town Meeting Attendance

Over one-third of surveyed residents reported they “regularly attend the town meeting and plan to attend this year’s meeting” (37.5%), and another 22.4% “do not regularly attend but plan on attending this year’s meeting.”

Of the 35.8% who do not plan to attend this year’s meeting, 13.4% reported “improving communication/ advertising (dates, agenda, issues, variety of channels, etc.)” would make it easier for them to get involved.

Please tell me if you regularly attend the annual Wenham town meeting, and if you plan on attending this year.



What could the Town of Wenham do to make it easier for you to get involved with the Town?

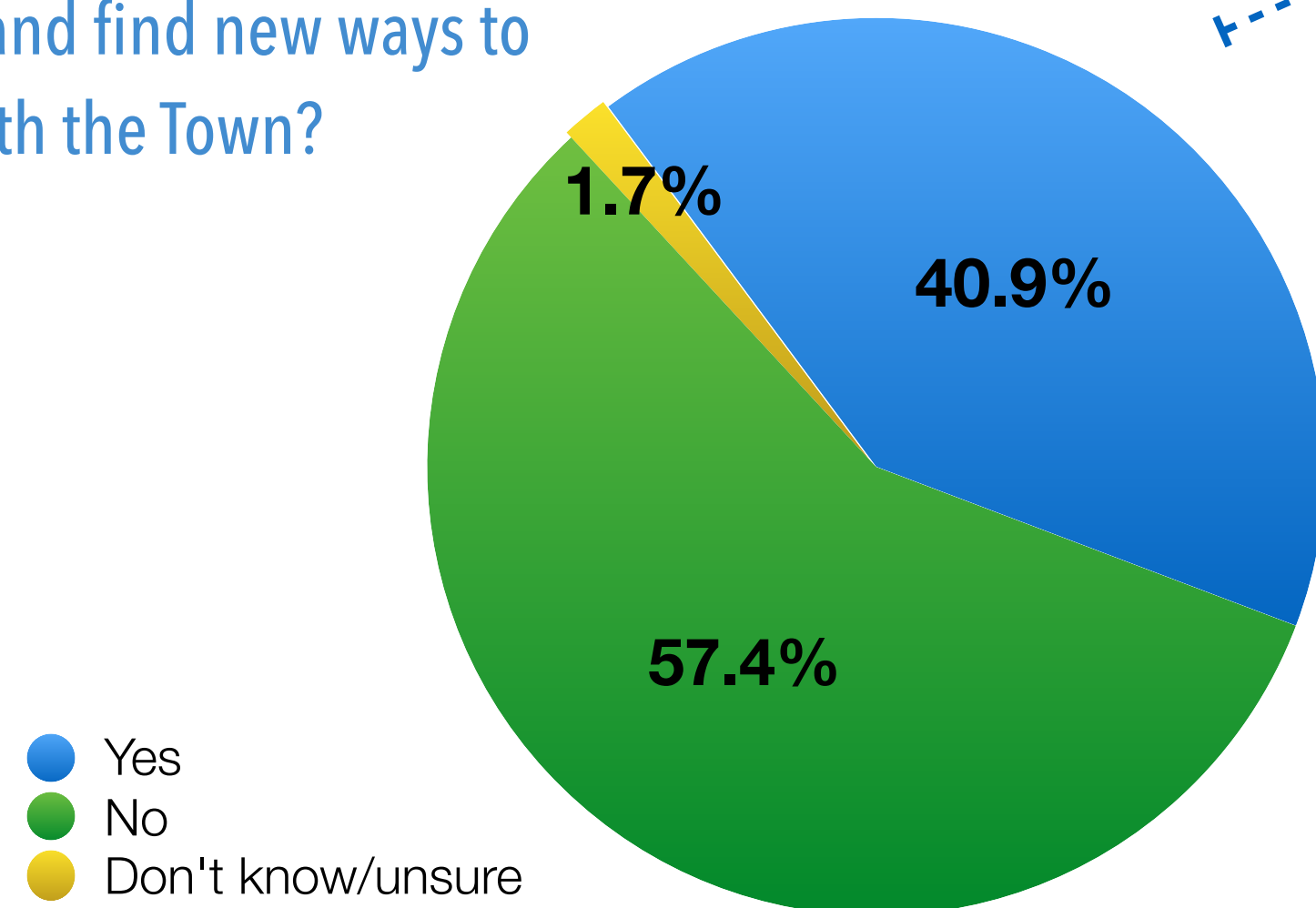
13.4%

“Improve communication/ advertising (dates, agenda, issues, variety of channels, etc.)”

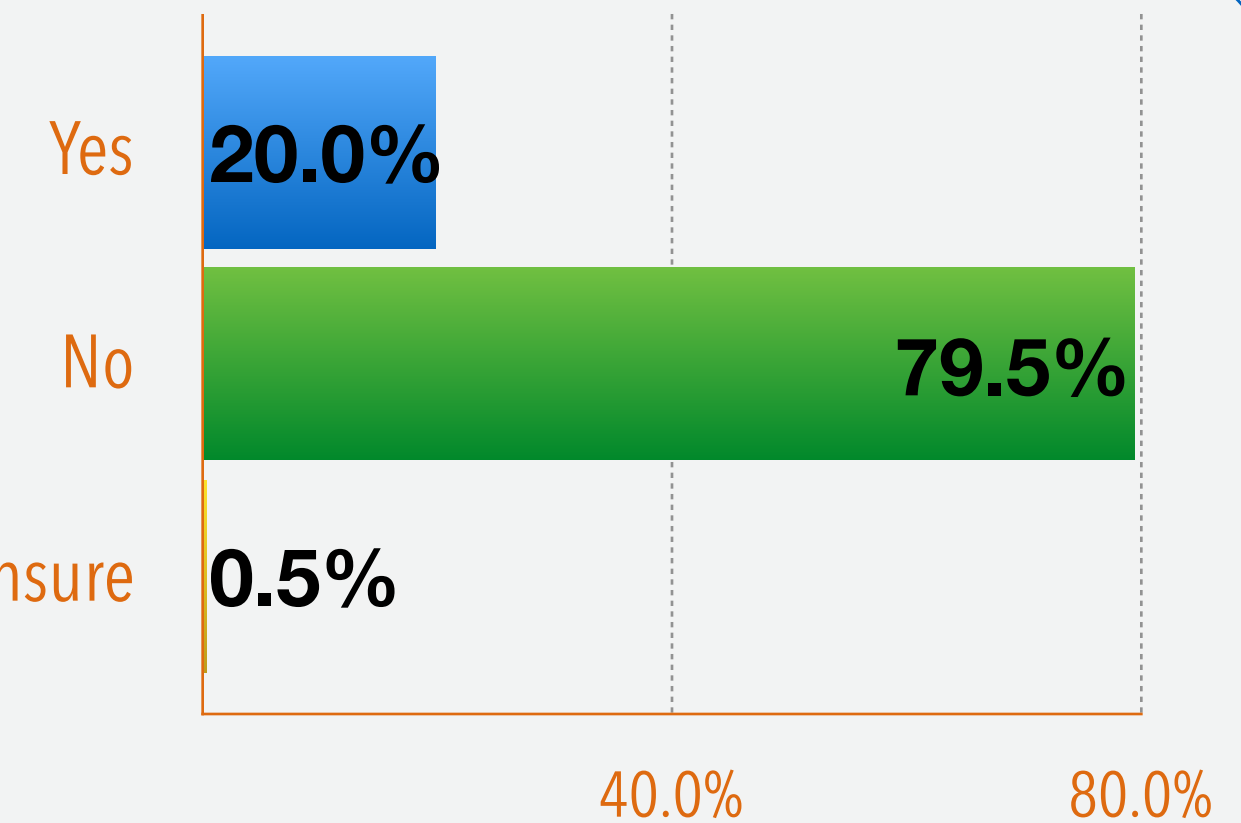
Majority Unaware of Citizens Leadership Academy

Of the 40.9% of respondents who indicated they were aware of the Citizens Leadership Academy, the strong majority (79.5%) reported they have not attended the program in the past. The highest frequency of those who have not attended Citizens Leadership Academy reported “providing more information/improving communication” (17.4%) would make them more likely to attend.

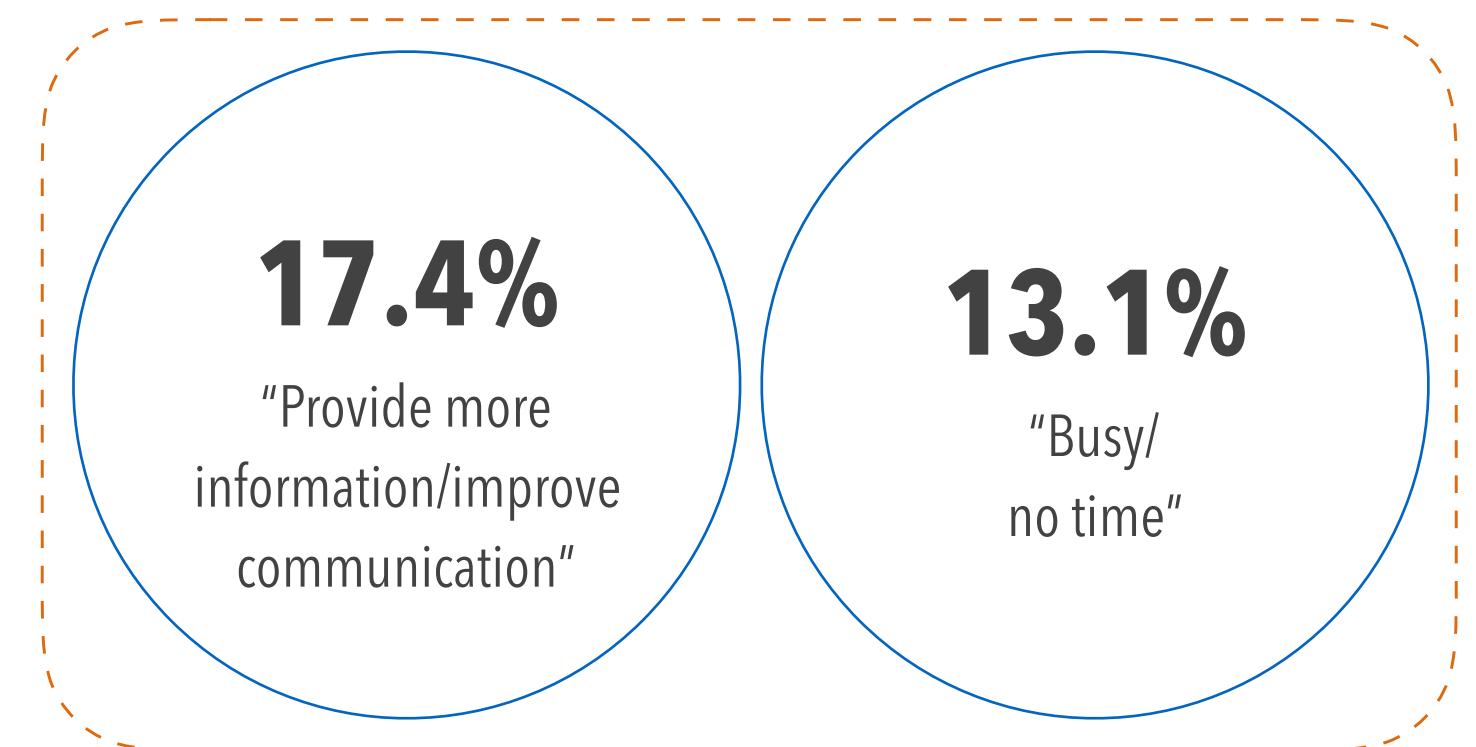
Are you aware that the Town of Wenham offers a free program to all Wenham residents over the age of 18 called the “Citizens Leadership Academy,” where you can learn about department functions and services, tour facilities, meet town staff and ask questions, and find new ways to get involved with the Town?



Have you attended the Citizens Leadership Academy in the past?



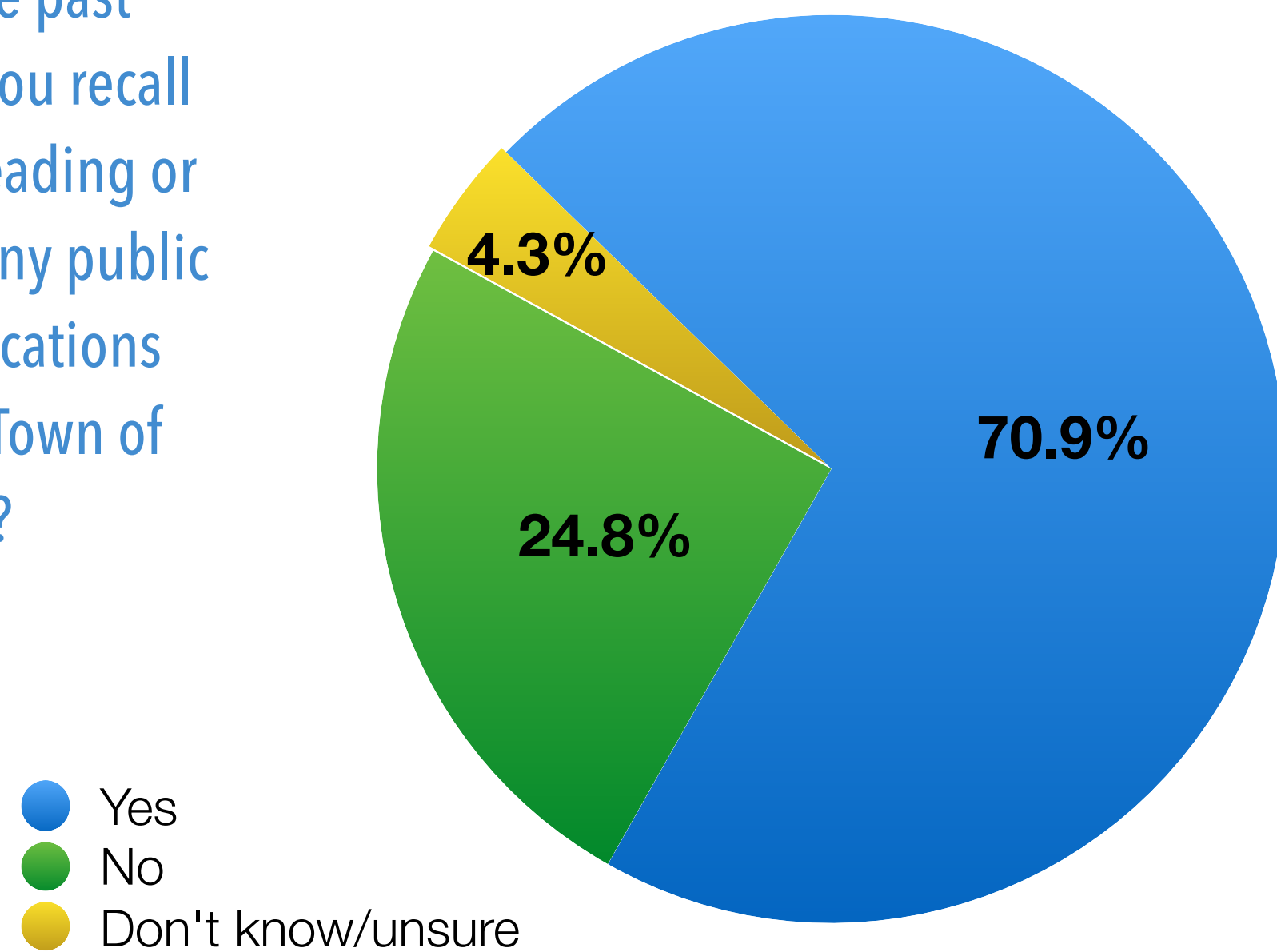
What would make you more likely to attend the Citizens Leadership Academy in the future?



High Recall of Public Communications from Wenham

Over two-thirds of respondents reported they recalled seeing, reading, or hearing public communications from the town within the past year. Residents most frequently reported reading, seeing, or hearing these communications via the “Town Website” (42.2%), in the “mail” (41.0%), or via “social media (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)” (37.7%).

Q Within the past year, do you recall seeing, reading or hearing any public communications from the Town of Wenham?



Q Where did you read, see or hear public communications from the Town.

| | % |
|---|-------|
| Town Website | 42.2% |
| Mail | 41.0% |
| Social Media (YouTube, FB, Twitter, etc.) | 37.7% |
| Local newspaper | 27.7% |
| Email | 21.6% |
| Sandwich board outside Town Hall | 15.5% |
| Forum/public meeting | 13.4% |

Email & Website Preferred Methods of Communication

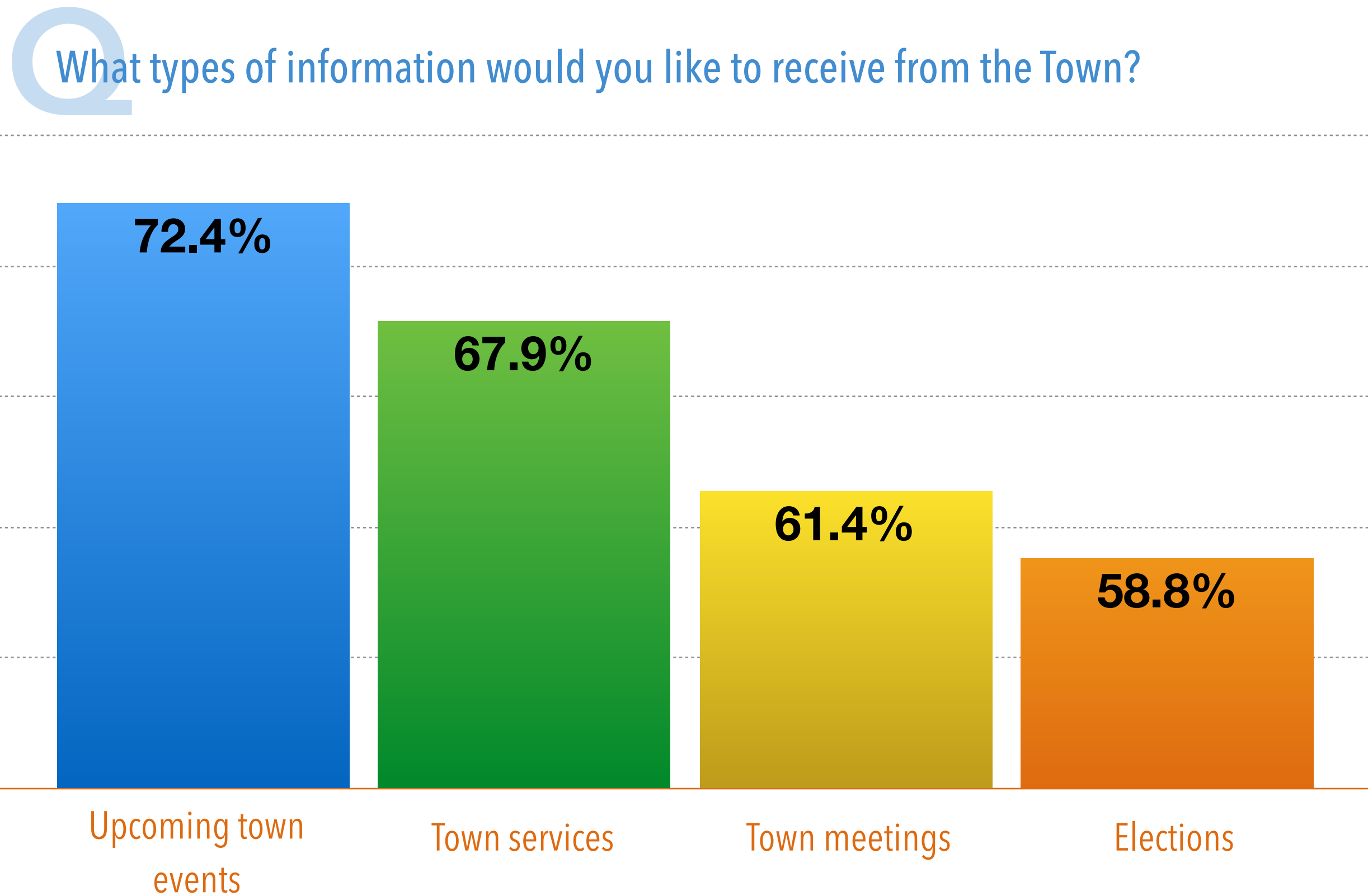
Resident's preferred methods of receiving information varied slightly from where they currently look for information. While 48.3% reported currently receiving information on day to day issues via the "town's website," a lower frequency (27.2%) reported they prefer to receive information this way. Additionally, while only 12.5% reported currently receiving information on day to day issues via "email," a higher frequency (27.2%) reported they would prefer to receive information this way.

Similarly, a higher frequency of respondents reported they currently get information on budget/long term plans via the "town's website" when compared to those who prefer to receive the information this way, where as they would prefer to receive this information via "email" (31.7%).

| Where do you currently look for information/how would you prefer to get information about ... | Day to Day Issues | | Budget/Long Term Plans | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| | Current | Preferred | Current | Preferred |
| Town Website | 48.3% | 27.2% | 42.5% | 25.2% |
| Email | 12.5% | 27.2% | 8.0% | 31.7% |
| Social Media (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) | 38.1% | 15.9% | 19.6% | 7.8% |
| Local newspaper | 22.0% | 11.0% | 16.4% | 7.1% |
| Mail | 10.6% | 9.1% | 15.3% | 13.4% |
| Forum/public meeting | 6.0% | 1.3% | 15.3% | 5.2% |

Content & Frequency of Communications

Over one-half of respondents reported they would like to receive information from the town on “upcoming town events,” (72.4%) “town services,” (67.9%), “town meetings” (61.4%), and “elections” (58.8%). Further, the highest frequency of respondents would like to receive communications from the Town “once per month” (46.1%). Additionally, it is important to note that nearly one-quarter reported the desire to receive communications from the town “weekly” (24.1%),



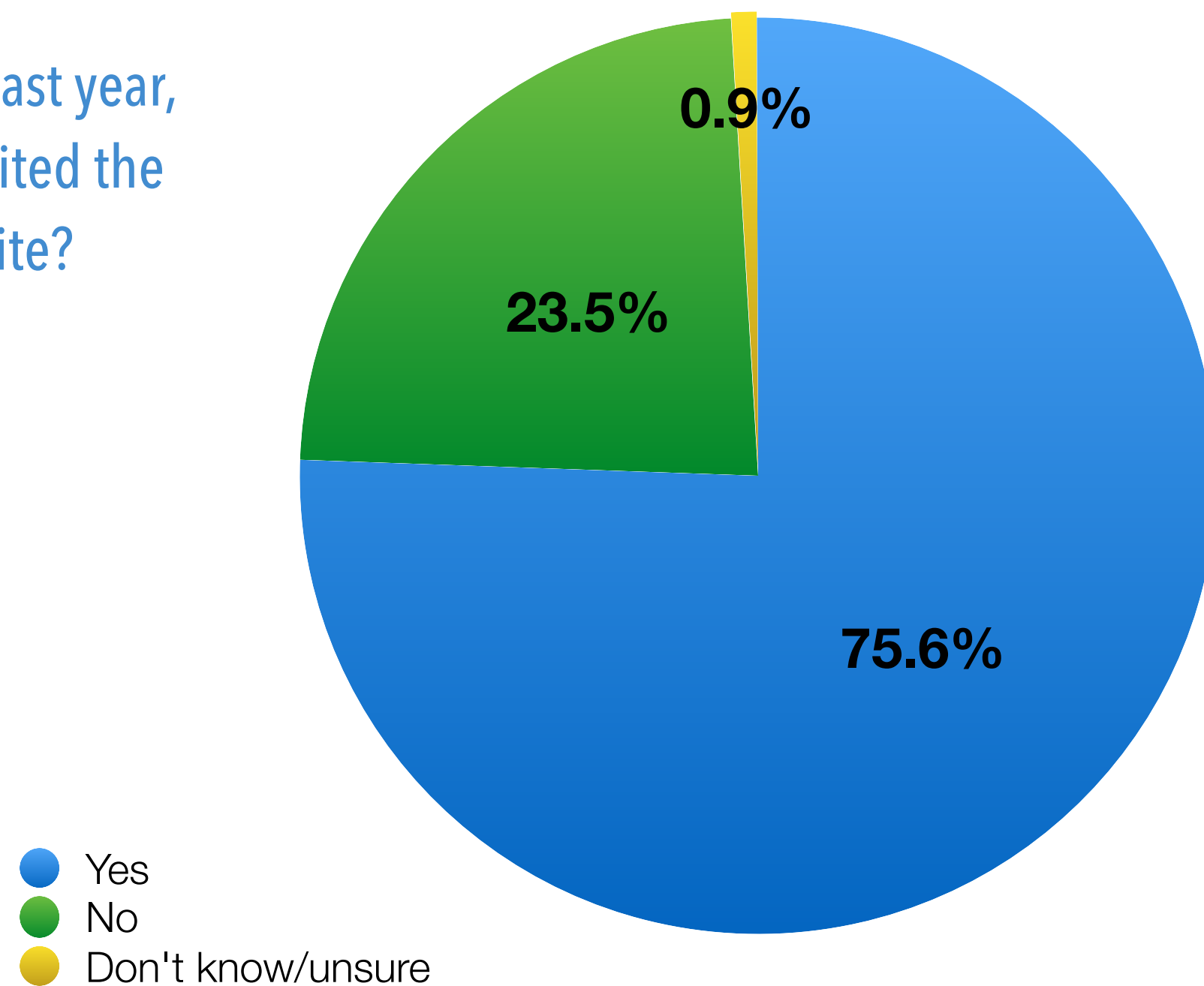
Q How often would you like to receive communications from the Town?

| Frequency | % |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Once per month | 46.1% |
| Weekly | 24.1% |
| Once per quarter | 9.1% |
| Every other month | 5.4% |
| As needed | 2.8% |
| Never | 2.4% |
| Once every six months | 1.7% |
| Once per year | 1.7% |
| Depends on the situation | 1.3% |
| Daily | 0.2% |
| Don't know/unsure | 5.2% |

Majority Visit Town Website

Three-quarters of surveyed residents (75.6%) reported having visited the town's website within the past year. The highest frequency of those residents went to the website for “general information about the town” (45.3%), “important documents (such as annual town reports, Town by-laws, financial documents, board of selectmen meetings, town meeting agendas/minutes)” (26.2%), and the “meeting calendar” (25.9%).

Q Within the past year, have you visited the town's website?

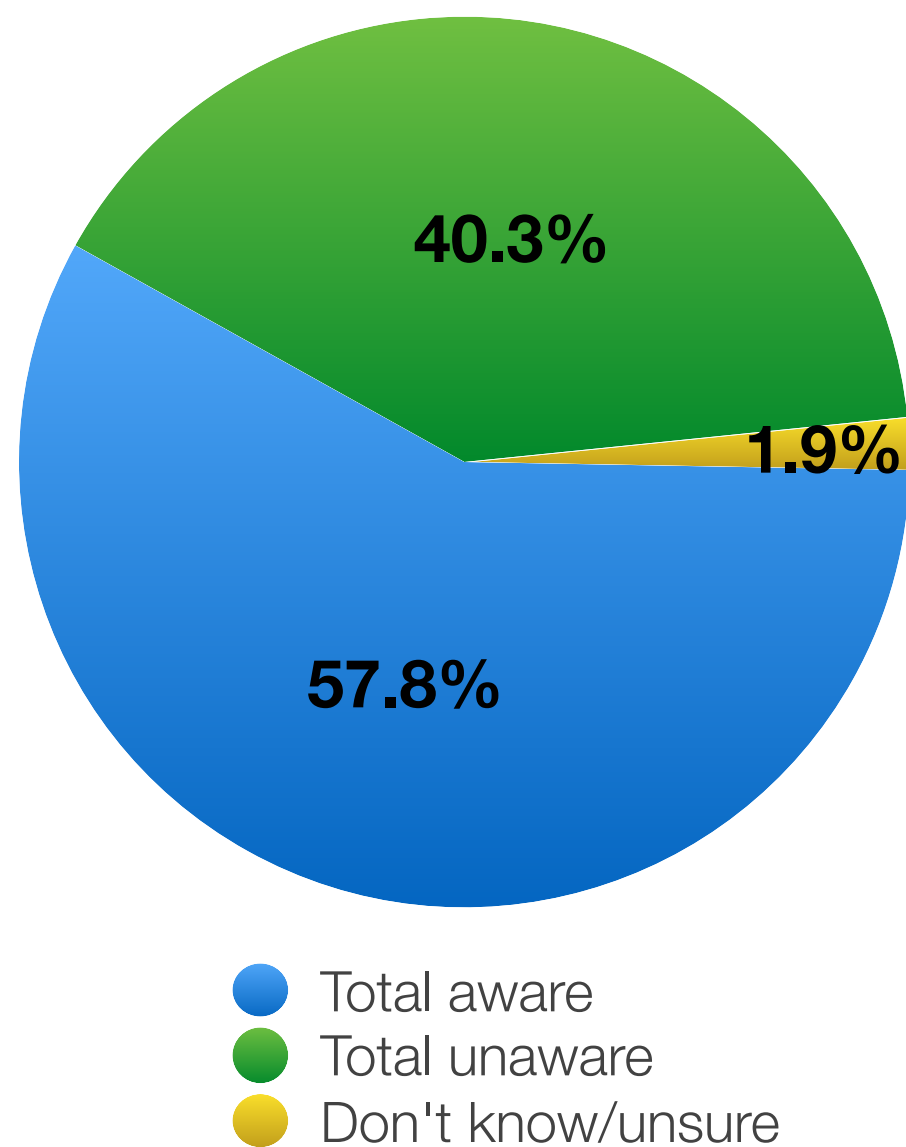


| What information did you go to the town's website for? | % |
|---|-------|
| General information about the town | 45.3% |
| Important documents (such as annual town reports, Town by-laws, financial documents, board of selectmen meetings, town meeting agendas/minutes) | 26.2% |
| Meeting calendar | 25.9% |
| Upcoming events | 23.9% |
| Recent news | 23.1% |
| To pay local taxes | 21.1% |
| Posted agendas | 18.2% |
| Town budget information (annual report) | 17.7% |
| Trash services/garbage collection | 14.8% |
| To sign up for Emergency Notifications | 6.0% |
| Permits/licenses/birth certificates/etc. | 5.4% |
| Job and volunteer opportunities | 5.1% |

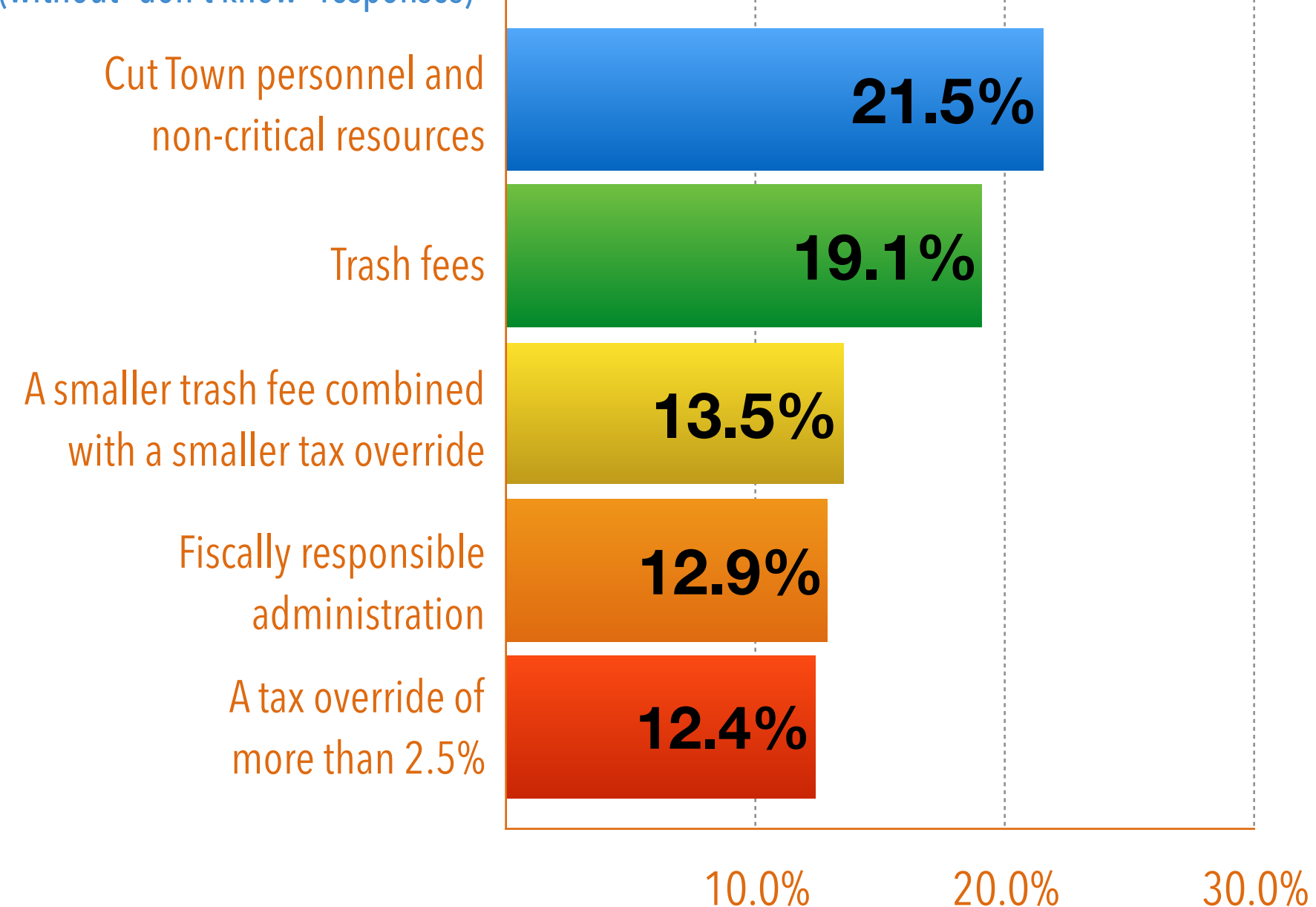
Majority Aware of Structural Deficit

While the majority of respondents were either “very” (36.0%) or “somewhat” (21.8%) aware that Wenham is experiencing a structural deficit, two-fifths were either “not very” (12.5%), or “not at all” (27.8%) aware. 21.5% of residents believe Wenham should “cut town personnel and non-critical resources,” 19.1% believe Wenham should implement “trash fees” (19.1%), and 13.5% believe the town should implement “a smaller trash fee combined with a smaller tax override” to eliminate the structural deficit. Additionally, nearly one-quarter of respondents (23.5%) reported being willing to pay \$20 to less than \$30 per quarter” in trash fees.

Q Prior to today's survey, please tell me how aware you were that the Town of Wenham experiencing a structural deficit, meaning that the Town's expenses increase more than the Town's revenue on an annual basis.



Q In your opinion, which of the following should the Town implement to eliminate the structural deficit? (without "don't know" responses)



Q What amount would you be willing to pay per quarter in trash fees?

| Amount | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| \$20 to less than \$30 per quarter | 23.5% |
| \$30 to less than \$40 per quarter | 7.5% |
| \$40 to less than \$50 per quarter | 7.8% |
| More than \$50 per quarter | 5.2% |
| None | 38.6% |
| Unsure | 17.5% |

Table of Contents

SECTION ONE
Project Overview

SECTION TWO
Key Study Findings

SECTION THREE
Considerations



Considerations

- ④ **Increase community-wide events and activities.** The highest frequency of residents indicated they have decided to continue living in Wenham for the family friendliness and the strength of the community. Preserving town character was also rated as a top priority by over two-fifths of respondents. Wenham leaders should take advantage of the strong sense of town pride among residents and unite the community through offering more town-wide events and activities. It may be helpful to ask residents via social media or a digital survey what types of family-friendly events they may be interested in attending.
- ④ **Utilize resident's preferred communication methods.** Resident's preferred communication methods for day to day issues include "email," the "town website," and "social media." For information on budget and long term plans, residents prefer "email," and the "town website," in addition to "mail." Wenham leaders should increase use of these methods for communications to residents on a regular basis, as the highest frequency of respondents reported a desire to receive information from the town once per month. It may be helpful to compile a resident email list and communicate via email once per month with information about town events, meetings, budget and planning issues. Wenham leaders should also continue and potentially increase use of social media pages, ensuring residents are aware it is a convenient place to find information.
 - Leaders should also prioritize the Town's website, as three-quarters of residents surveyed reported they have visited the website in the past year. The town should evaluate the usability, graphic appeal, and content, as it is important for residents to be able to easily find information they are looking for, such as general town information, important documents, and meeting calendars.
- ④ **Focus on commercial development.** Developing a greater variety of commercial industry types and increasing places for resident's leisure activities such as dining, arts, etc. were top priorities reported among surveyed residents. Additionally, the highest rate of dissatisfaction for town services was recorded for the planning and zoning department. Incorporating smaller shops or considering the development of a compact, walkable downtown area will allow for the desired small town feel while providing a greater variety of commercial offerings for town residents.

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