

Weare Community Survey

Prepared by:

Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission



In 2017, the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) held a community forum at the Weare Public Library as a part of SNHPC's Becoming Age-Friendly Program. The program, funded through the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, AARP NH, and NH DOT, allowed SNHPC to hold conversations in fourteen Southern NH communities; speaking with residents, municipal staff, and other stakeholders about the needs of both older adults and millennials in their communities. SNHPC developed Community Assessments for each community, highlighting opportunities and barriers to making each community welcoming for all ages.

In the fall of 2018, SNHPC began working with Weare to take the next step, and help the town begin planning for the needs of all ages. A group of residents, led by the Town Librarian, saw the need to update the town's Master Plan, a visioning document that will help guide the development of the town for the next ten years.

The Master Plan Update Committee worked with SNHPC to develop a resident survey, covering local issues such as connectivity, economic development, housing, recreation and engagement, and transportation. The survey was open from January 28 through March 11, 2019. It was available online, and postcards with a link to the survey were placed around town (pictured below). By the end of the survey, 383 Weare residents provided valuable insight, experiences, and visions for their community, which will be used to shape the town's Master Plan.

The following pages summarize the results from the survey.

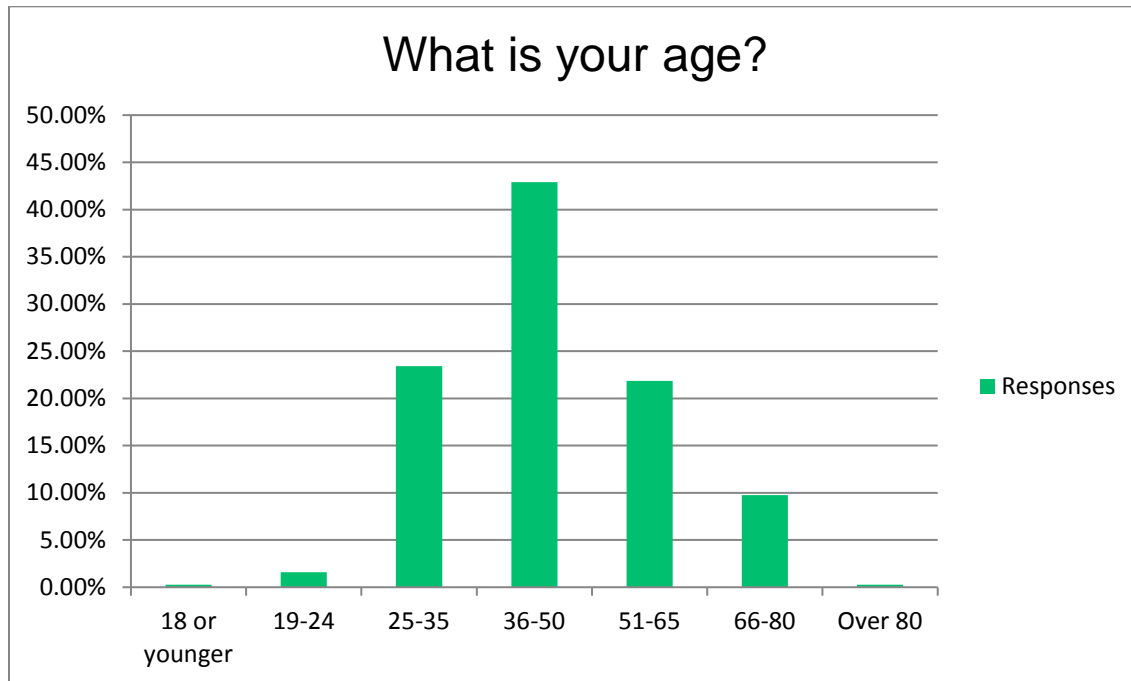


Postcard developed as part of the outreach effort to get the word out about the Master Plan Survey

Question 1: What is your age?

Of the 380 participants who answered this question:

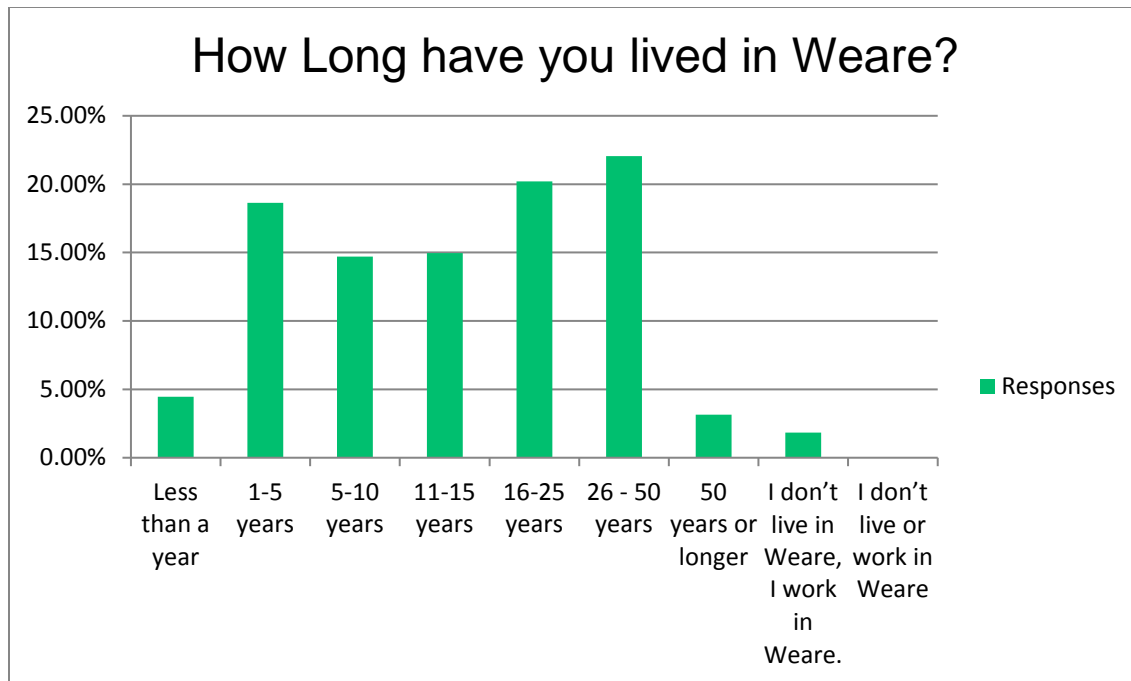
- 163 (42.8%) are between 36-50 years old
- 89 (23.4%) are between 25-35 years old
- 83 (21.8%) are between 51-65 years old
- 37 (9.7%) are between 66-80 years old
- 6 (1.5%) are between 19-24 years old
- 1 (.26%) is 18 years old or younger; and
- 1 (.26%) is 80 years old or older



Question 2: How long have you lived in Weare?

Of the 381 participants who answered this question:

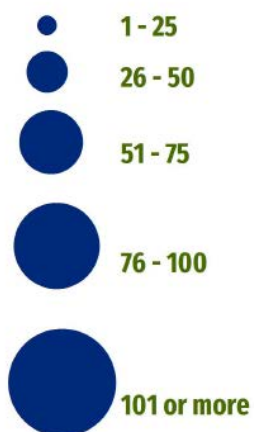
- 84 (22%) have lived in Weare for 26-50 years
- 77 (22.2%) have lived in Weare for 16-25 years
- 71 (18.6%) have lived in Weare for 1-5 years
- 57 (14.9%) have lived in Weare for 11-15 years
- 56 (14.7%) have lived in Weare for 5-10 years
- 17 (4.4%) have lived in Weare for less than a year
- 12 (3.1%) have lived in Weare for 50 years or longer; and
- 7 (1.8%) don't live in Weare, but work in Weare



Question 3: About where in town do you live?

The following figure reflects the responses for Question 3. 271 (72.8%) respondents live in either North or South Weare.

Weare Survey Responses

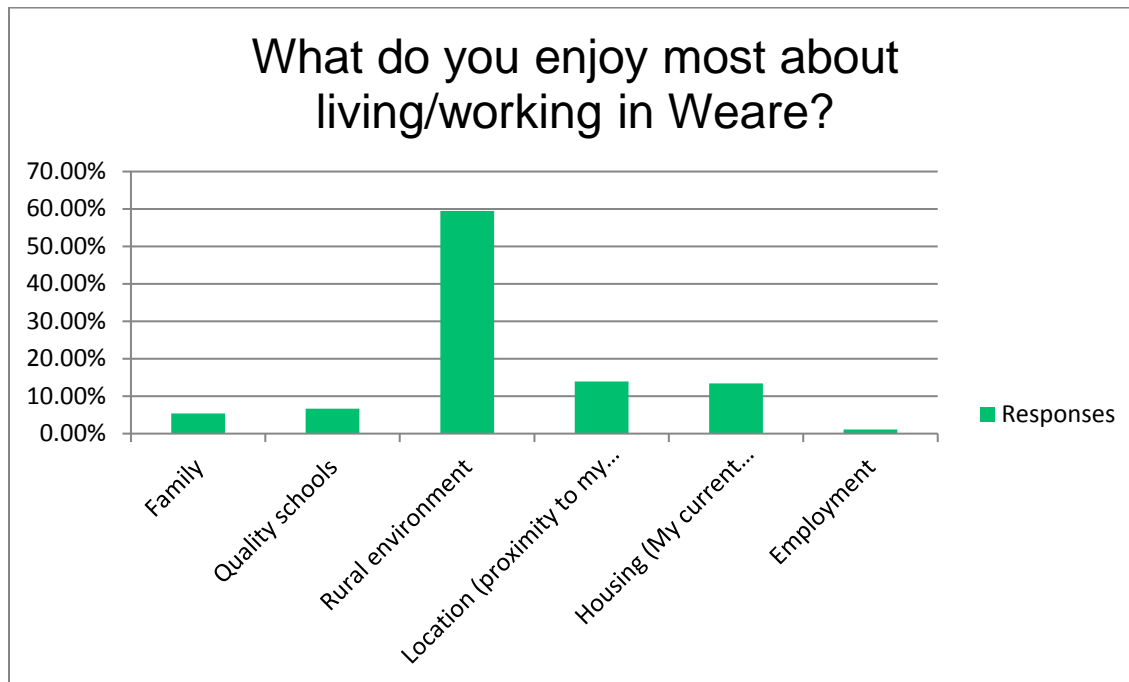


Created by SNHPC, 2019.

Question 4: What do you enjoy most about living/working in Weare?

Of the 373 participants who answered this question they enjoy the following:

- 234 (60%) Weare's rural environment
- 54 (14%) the location
- 50 (13%) their housing
- 25 (7%) the quality schools
- 20 (5%) having their family in Weare
- 4 (1%) working in Weare

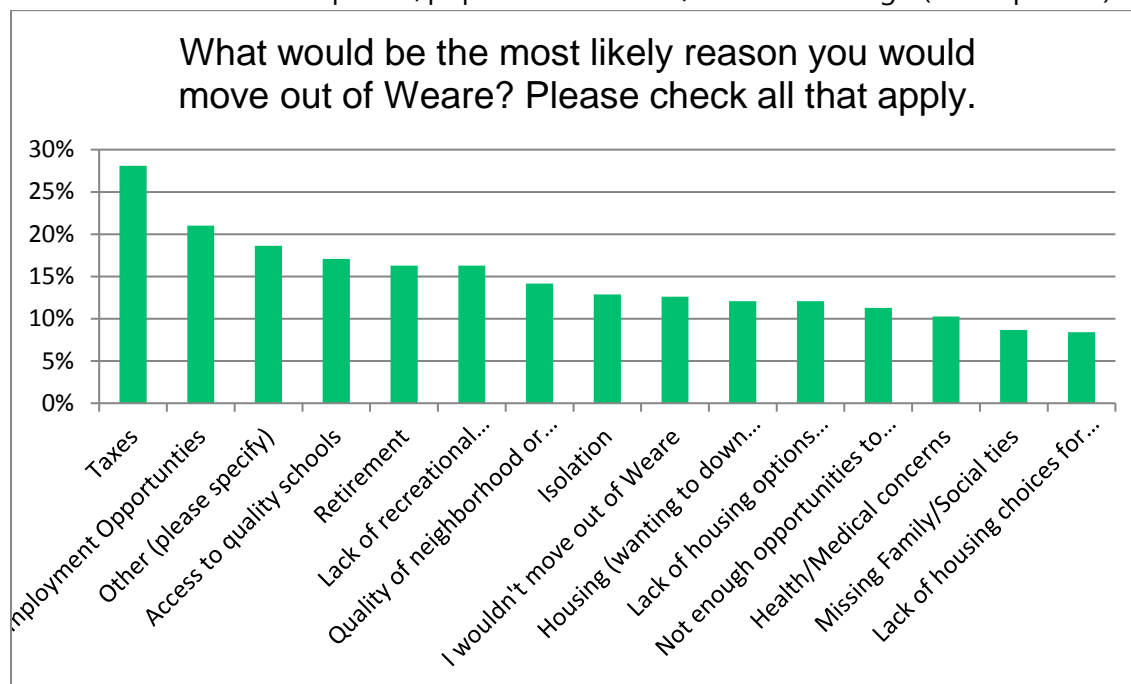


	Themes: Written-in Comments ("other" field) (<i>What do you enjoy most about living/ working in Weare?</i>)	# of times mentioned
1.	Rural environment	12
2.	Community	9
3.	Low Taxes	3
4.	Location	3
5.	Other (nothing, misc.)	4

Question 5: What would be the most likely reason you would move out of Weare?

When asked about the most likely reason they'd move out of Weare, respondents' top answers were Taxes (28%), Employment Opportunities (21%), and Other (19%), and Access to Quality Schools (17%). Note that respondents could choose multiple answers. Among the 71 Other responses, three main issues/themes emerged:

- Distance from/lack of amenities, e.g. groceries, restaurants, convenience stores, etc. (~21 responses)
- Tax-related issues, lack of support for schools, lack of financial responsibility, etc. (~13 responses)
- Too much development/population increase/not rural enough (~9 responses)



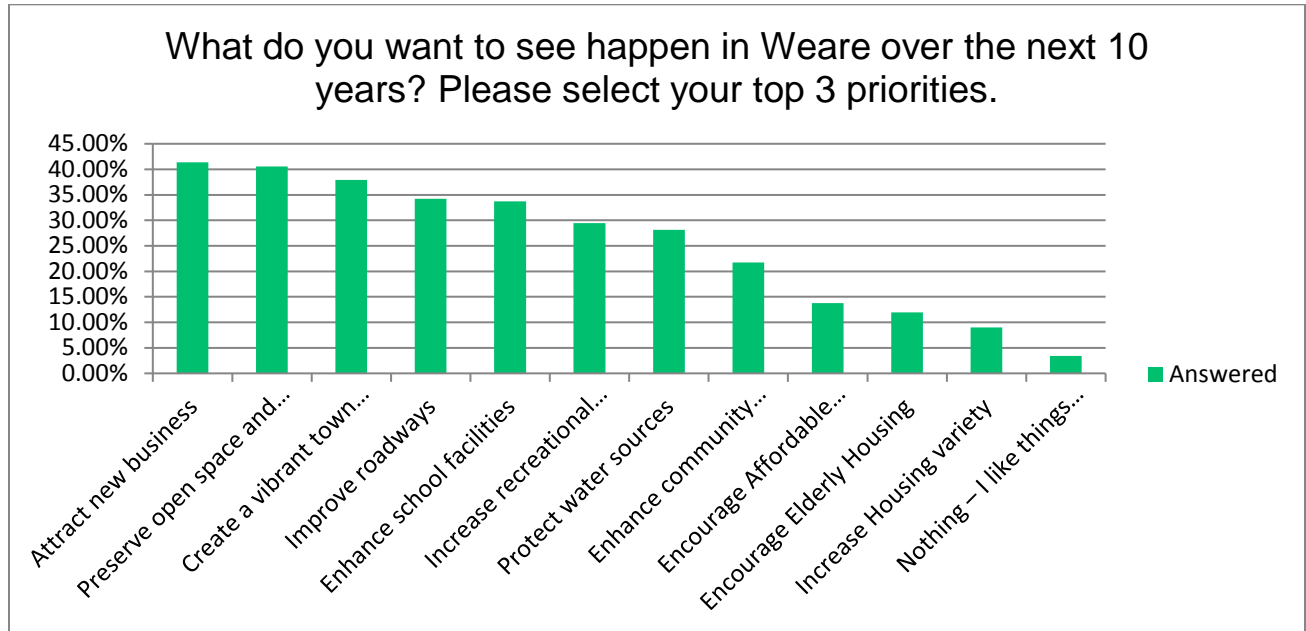
Many of the other "Other" responses dealt with local issues such as "too much gunfire", "obnoxious neighbors", "too many rednecks", and "lack of transportation".

Question 6: What do you want to see happen in Weare over the next 10 years? Please select your top 3 priorities.

There was a total of 377 responses to this question. Note that respondents were able to choose their top three priorities.

- 157 (13%) attracting new businesses
- 155 (13%) preserving open space and agricultural lands
- 144 (12%) creating a vibrant town center
- 133 (11%) improving roadways
- 130 (11%) enhancing school facilities
- 113 (10%) increasing recreational and engagement opportunities
- 106 (9%) protecting water sources

- 83 (7%) enhancing community facilities (Town Office, Library, etc.)
- 52 (4%) encourage affordable housing
- 45 (4%) encourage elderly housing
- 34 (3%) increasing housing variety
- 15 (1%) feel that there is nothing to improve

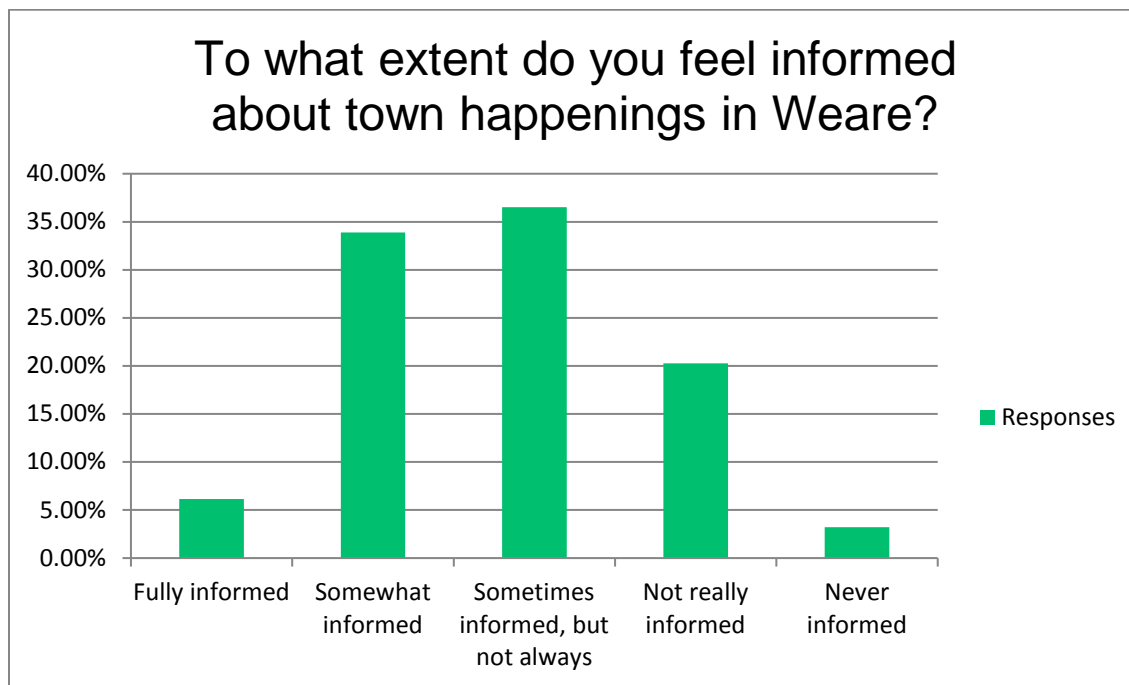


	Themes: Written-in Comments ("other" field) (What do you want to see happen in Weare over the next 10 years?)	# of times mentioned
1.	Grocery Store/ Pharmacy	10
2.	Lower taxes	6
3.	Improve roadways	4
4.	Enhance school facilities	3
5.	Diversify political make up of town	2
6.	Increase recreational and engagement opportunities	2
7.	Nothing- I like things the way they are	2
8.	Preserve open space and agricultural lands	2
9.	Attract new business	1
10.	Create a vibrant town center	1
11.	Enhance community facilities (Town Office, Library, etc.)	1
12.	Other (energy independence, 24/7 Fire, misc.)	5

Question 7: To what extent do you feel informed about town happenings in Weare?

Of the 375 participants who answered this question:

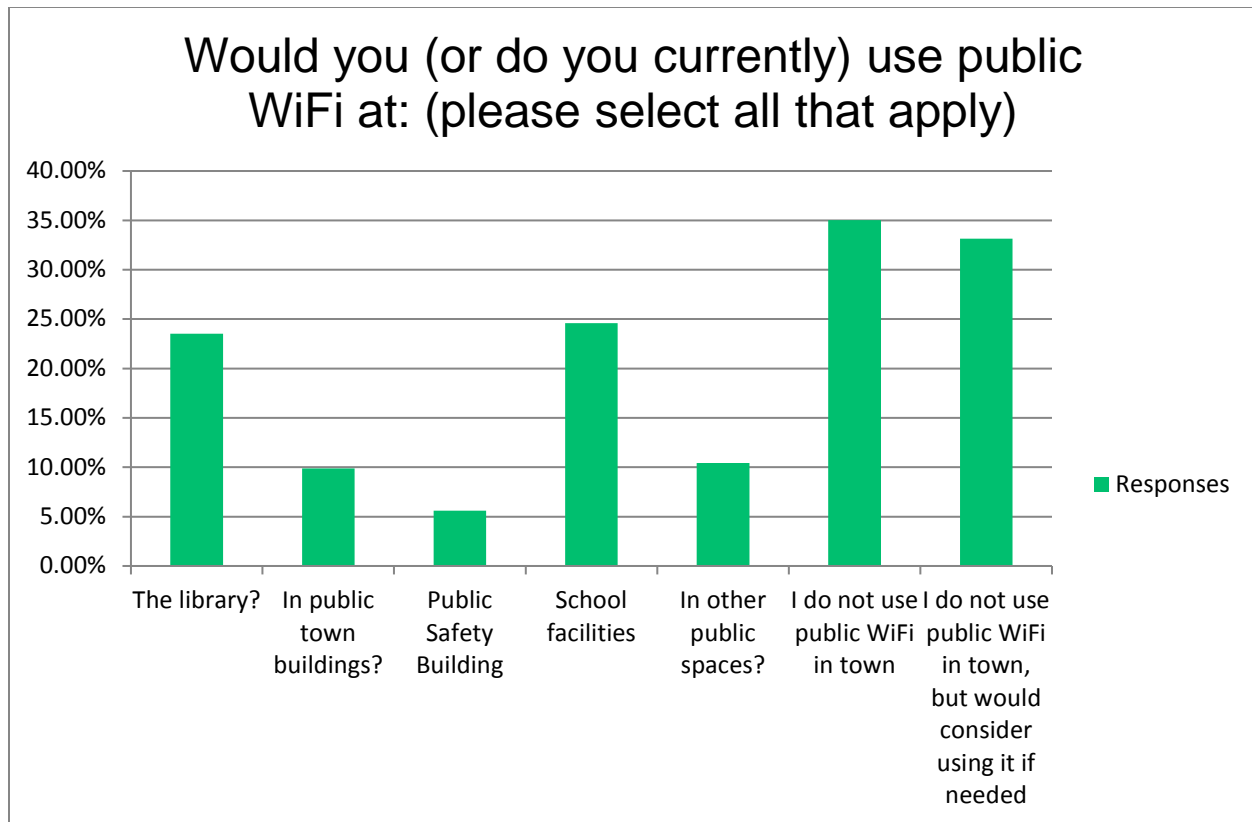
- 137 (36.5%) feel sometimes informed, but not always
- 127 (33.8%) feel somewhat informed
- 76 (20.2%) feel not really informed
- 23 (6.1%) feel fully informed; and
- 12 (3.2%) feel never informed.



Question 8: Would you (or do you currently use public WiFi at: (please select all that apply)

Note that respondents could choose multiple answers. Of the 374 participants who answered this question:

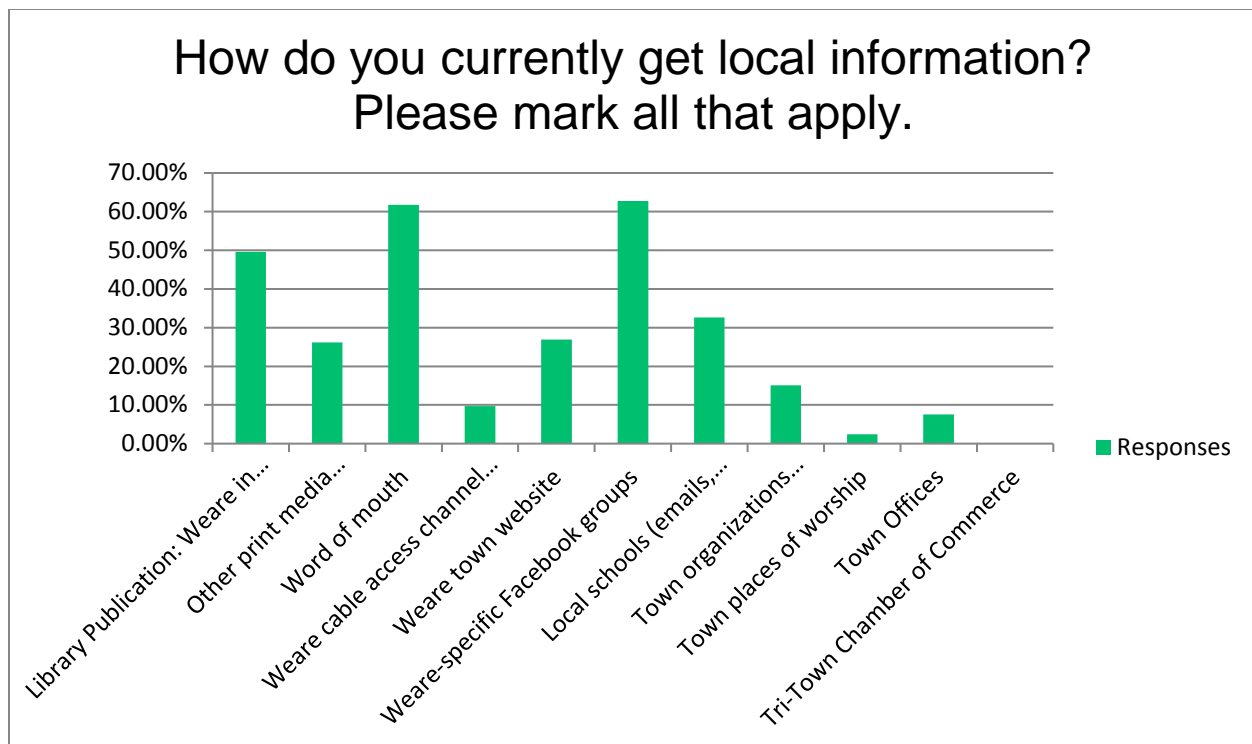
- 131 (35%) do not use public WiFi in town
- 124 (33.1%) do not use public WiFi in town, but would consider using it if needed
- 92 (24.6%) use public WiFi at school facilities
- 88 (23.5%) use public WiFi at the library
- 39 (10.4%) use public WiFi at other public spaces
- 37 (9.8%) use public WiFi in town buildings
- 21 (5.6%) use public WiFi in the Public Safety Building



Question 9: How do you currently get local information? Please mark all that apply.

Note that respondents could choose multiple answers. Of the 371 participants who answered this question receive their information from:

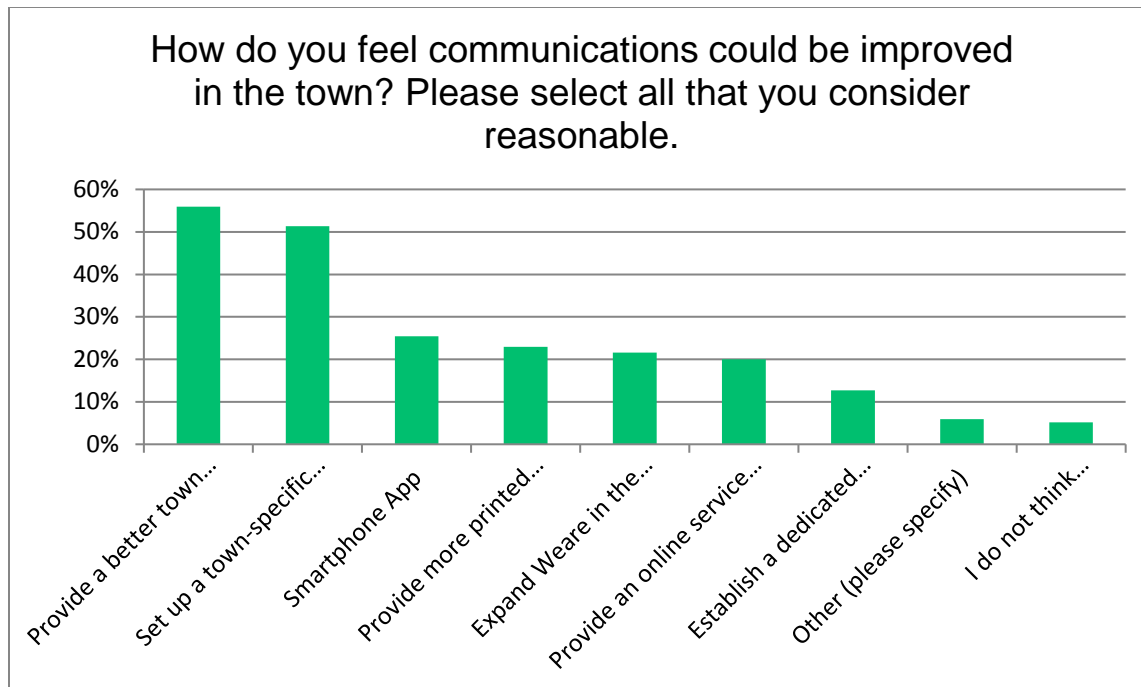
- 233 (62.8%) Weare-specific Facebook groups
- 229 (61.7%) Word of Mouth
- 184 (49.6%) the Library Publication, *Weare in the World*
- 121 (32.6%) local schools (emails, websites, mailers, etc.)
- 100 (26.9%) the Weare town website
- 97 (26.1%) other print media (newspapers, emails, meetings, etc.)
- 56 (15%) town organizations (newsletters, emails, meetings, etc.)
- 36 (9.7%) the Weare cable access channel (Channel 6)
- 28 (7.5%) from Town Offices
- 9 (2.4%) the Tri-Town Chamber of Commerce



Question 10: How do you feel communications could be improved in the town? Please select all that you consider reasonable.

When asked about how communications could be improved in town, the top answers by far dealt with digital media. Note that respondents could choose multiple answers.

- 207 of 370 respondents (56%) chose “provide a better town website”
- 190 of 370 respondents (51%) chose “set up a town-specific Facebook site”
- 94 respondents (25%) chose “smartphone app”



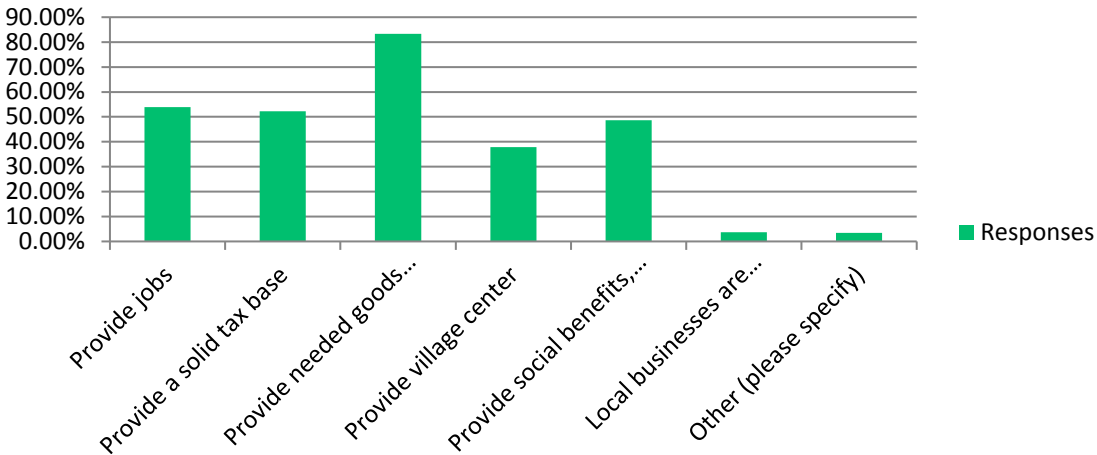
The 21 “Other” responses were quite varied, though several mentioned email newsletters, keeping existing websites updated, and the need for improved local access television.

Question 11: How are local businesses important to you and your family? Please check all that apply.

354 people answered this question, note that respondents could choose multiple answers. People valued the following aspects of local businesses.

- 295 (29%) needed goods and services
- 191 (19%) providing jobs
- 186 (19%) a solid tax base
- 174 (17%) social benefits
- 135 (13%) a village center
- 13 (1%) do not value local businesses

How are local businesses important to you and your family? Please check all that apply.



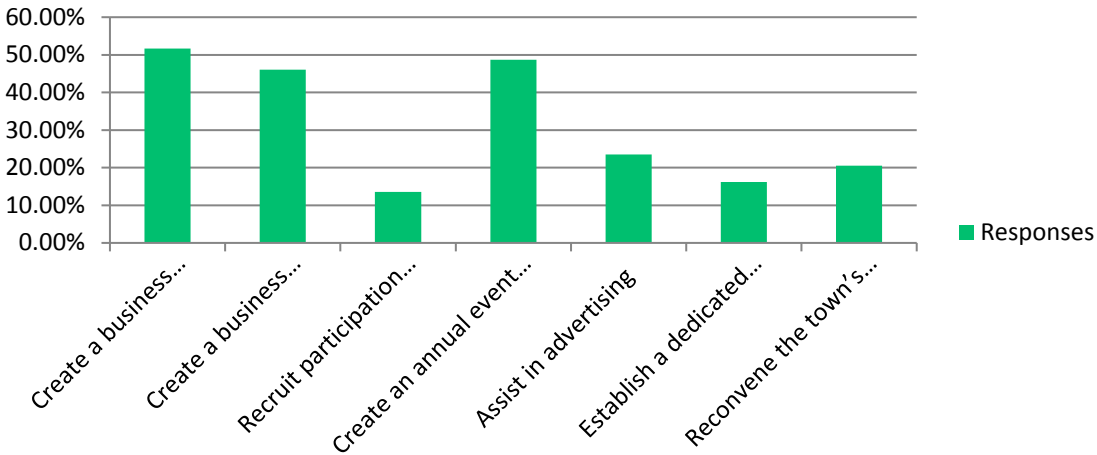
	Themes: Written-in Comments ("other" field) (How are local businesses important to you and your family?)	# of times mentioned
1.	Provide social benefits	2
2.	Saves trips outside of town	2
3.	Provide Village center	1
4.	Provide a solid tax base	1
5.	Other not understandable able, does not understand question	6

Question 12: How might the Town better support existing business in Weare? Please check all that apply.

302 people answered this question. Note respondents could choose multiple options. The following are themes of what survey respondents felt would support existing businesses.

- 159 (23%) create a business directory that identifies existing businesses
- 149 (21%) create an annual event that promotes Weare businesses such as a business fair
- 139 (20%) create a business association to help support and promote Weare businesses
- 71 (10%) assist in advertising
- 62 (9%) reconvene the town's Economic Development Committee
- 49 (7%) establish a dedicated town-supported business Development Specialist
- 41 (6%) recruit participation on the Tri-County Chamber of Commerce

How might the Town better support existing businesses in Weare? Please check all that apply.



	Themes: Written-in Comments ("other" field) (How might the Town better support existing businesses in Weare?)	# of times mentioned
1.	More Perceptive Planning Board/ Zoning Ordinances	13
2.	Social media/ Online presence	4
3.	Involvement with town/ community	4
4.	Create a business directory that identifies existing businesses	3
5.	Create an annual event that promotes Weare businesses such as a business fair	2
6.	Nothing	2
7.	Infrastructure	1
8.	Other (not understandable, does not answer question)	6

Question 13: What businesses would you like to see more of in the Town of Weare? Please check all that apply.

353 people answered this question. Please note respondents could choose more than one option.

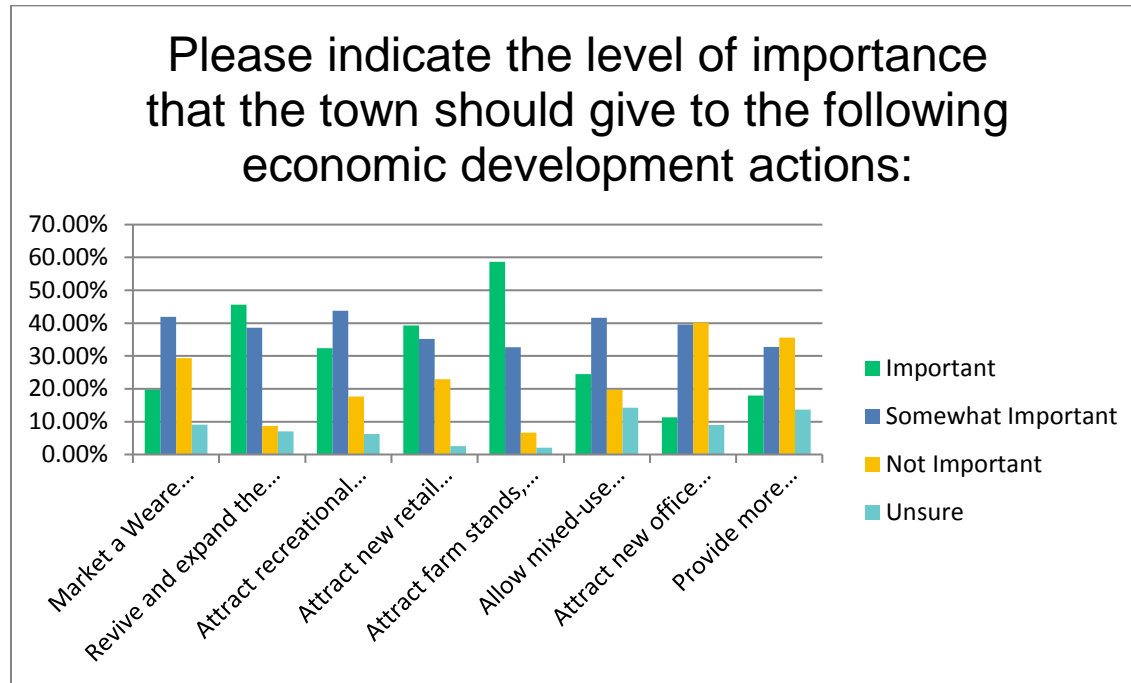
- 220 (12%) Farm stands and Agricultural products and services
- 210 (12%) grocery store
- 193 (11%) restaurants and bars
- 174 (10%) pharmacy
- 159 (9%) coffee shops
- 126 (7%) recreation/ entertainment services
- 101 (6%) healthcare services
- 82 (5%) gym/ fitness

- 59 (3%) pet supplies/ services
- 56 (3%) light industrial/ manufacturing
- 48 (3%) boutiques
- 44 (2%) dry cleaner/ laundry service
- 44 (2%) high-tech industry office space
- 45 (3%) gas stations
- 38 (2%) general office space
- 36 (2%) hardware/ landscaping supplies
- 35 (2%) childcare
- 32 (2%) banks
- 19 (1%) electronics/ IT services
- 18 (1%) vehicle maintenance and repair
- 8 (<1%) auto sales/ boat sales
- 5 (<1%) real estate services

	Themes: Written-in Comments (“other” field) (Q13: <i>What businesses would you like to see more of in the Town of Weare?</i>)	# of mentions
1.	Recreation and Entertainment Services	5
2.	Restaurants/Bars	3
3.	Coffee Shops	3
4.	Department Store	3
5.	Spa/Salon	3
6.	Pharmacy	2
7.	Gas Stations	2
8.	Healthcare Services	1
9.	Pet Supplies and services	1
10.	Light industrial/Manufacturing	1
11.	Electronics/IT services	1
12.	Fast Food	1
13.	other, senior center senior housing	3

Question 14: Please indicate the level of importance that the town should give to the following economic development actions:

Of the 357 responses to this question, 203 (58.6%) felt that 'Attracting Farm Stands and other Agriculture Businesses' was the most important economic development action the town could take, followed by 'Revive and expand the role of the Weare Economic Development Commission' (45.6%), and 'Attract new retail' (39.2%).



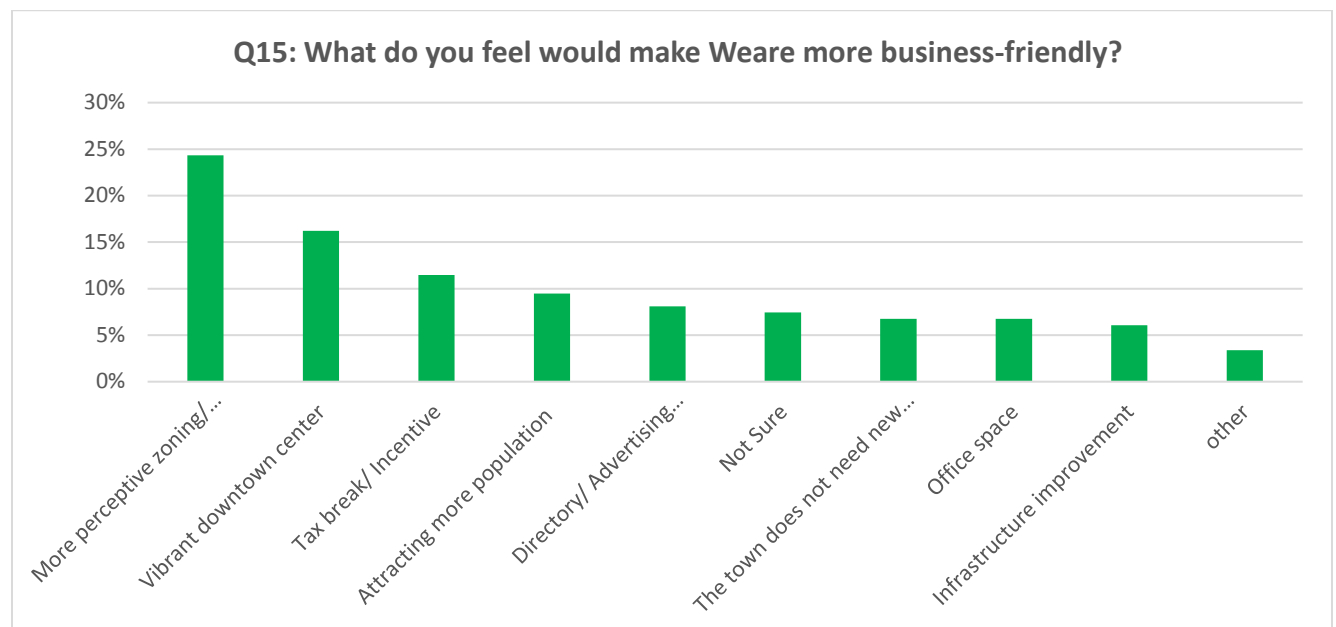
	Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Unsure	
	Percent	Response	Percent	Response	Percent	Response	Percent	Response
Market a Weare "brand" and enhance aesthetic value of commercial properties along main roads to correspond to the Weare brand	19.66%	69	41.88%	147	29.34%	103	9.12%	32
Revive and expand the role of the Weare Economic Development Commission to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses to town	45.63%	162	38.59%	137	8.73%	31	7.04%	25
Attract recreational uses and businesses to become a magnet for sports and recreation	32.39%	114	43.75%	154	17.61%	62	6.25%	22

Attract new retail development	39.26%	137	35.24%	123	22.92%	80	2.58%	9
Attract farm stands, agricultural businesses	58.67%	203	32.66%	113	6.65%	23	2.02%	7
Allow mixed-use development (combination of commercial and residential uses)	24.50%	86	41.60%	146	19.66%	69	14.25%	50
Attract new office development	11.34%	39	39.53%	136	40.12%	138	9.01%	31
Provide more commercial and industrial zones for future development	17.95%	63	32.76%	115	35.61%	125	13.68%	48

Question 15: What do you feel would make Weare more business-friendly?

148 people answered this question. This was an open-ended question; below are themes of all the responses.

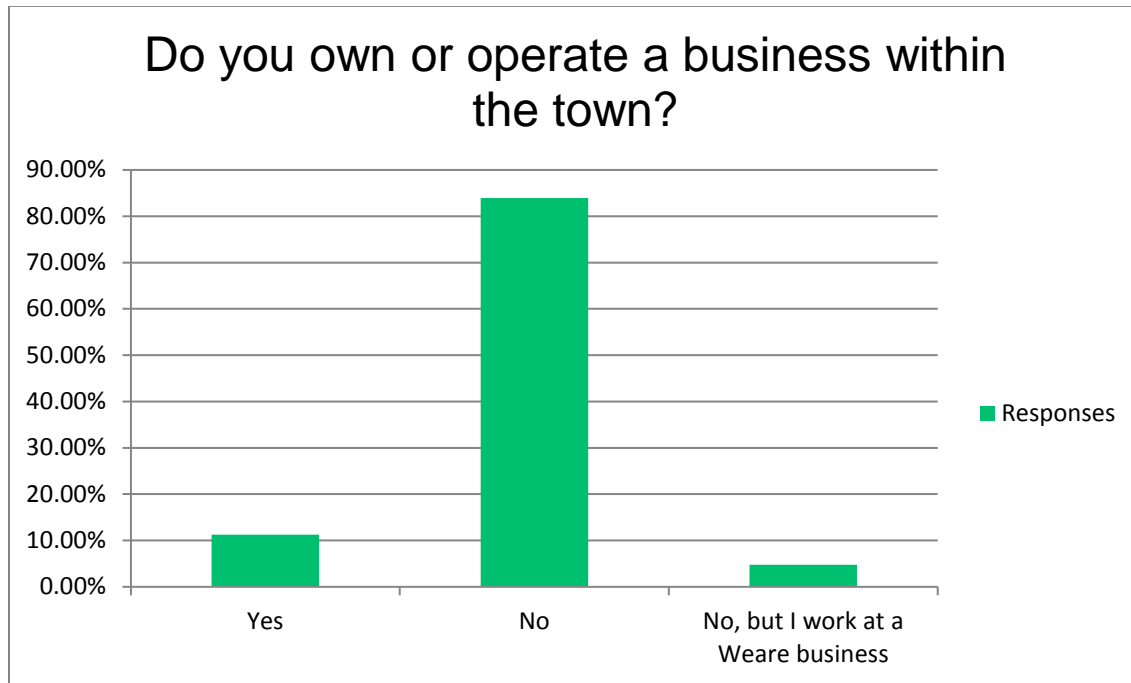
- 36 people (24%) more perceptive zoning/ planning
- 24 people (16%) vibrant downtown center
- 17 people (11%) tax break/ incentive
- 14 people (9%) attracting more population
- 12 people (8%) directory/ advertising opportunities
- 11 people (7%) not sure
- 10 people (7%) the town does not need new businesses
- 10 people (7%) office space
- 9 people (6%) infrastructure improvement
- 5 people (3%) other



Question 16: Do you own or operate a business within the town?

Of the 355 participants who answered this question

- 298 (83.9%) do not own or operate a business within the town
- 40 (11.2%) do own or operate a business within the town; and
- 17 (4.7%) do not own or operate a business but do work in a Weare business.
-



Question 17: What does the Town do well to support your business?

23 people answered this open response question.

- 3 people wrote that community events helped to support their business
- 2 people wrote that they felt the town provided general support
- 18 people wrote that the town does nothing to support their business
- 2 other comments were not applicable to the question

Question 18: How could the Town better support your business?

32 people answered this open response question.

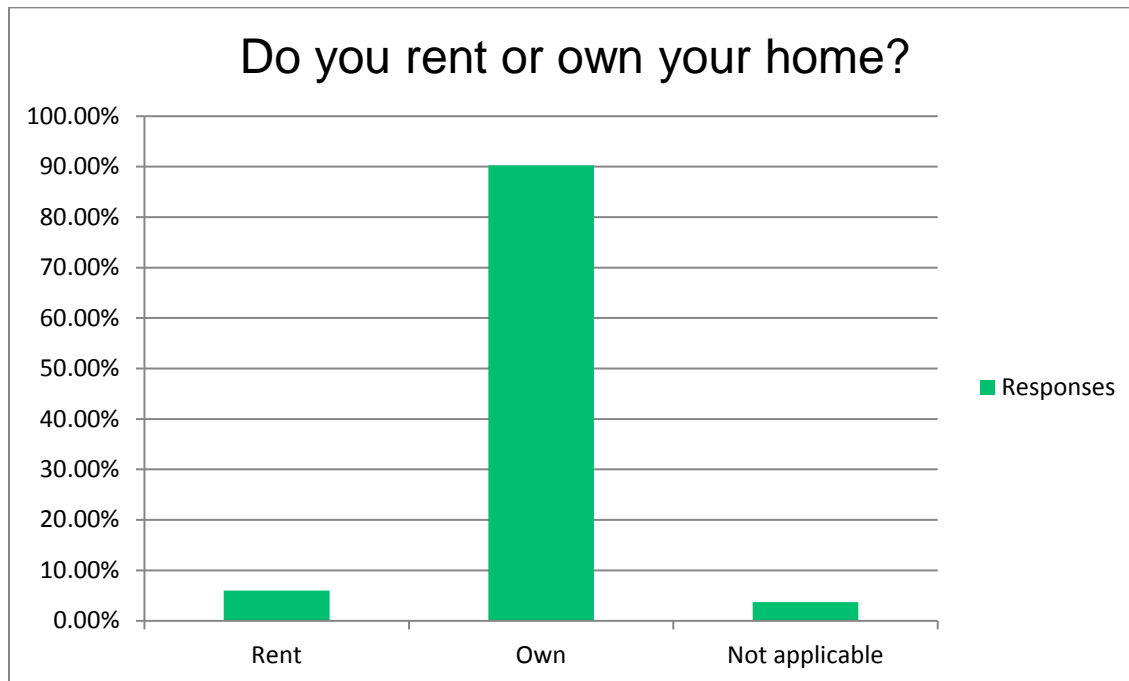
- 5 people wrote Business directory/ advertising
- 5 people wrote infrastructure improvements
- 3 people wrote Less restrictive zoning
- 3 people wrote professional network/ event
- 4 people wrote not sure

- 5 people wrote N/A
- 6 people wrote other comments (not understandable, misc.)

Question 19: Do you rent or own your home?

Of the 350 participants answered this question:

- 316 (90.2%) own their home
- 21 (6%) rent their home; and
- 13 (3.7%) selected Not Applicable



Question 20: What type of housing do you live in?

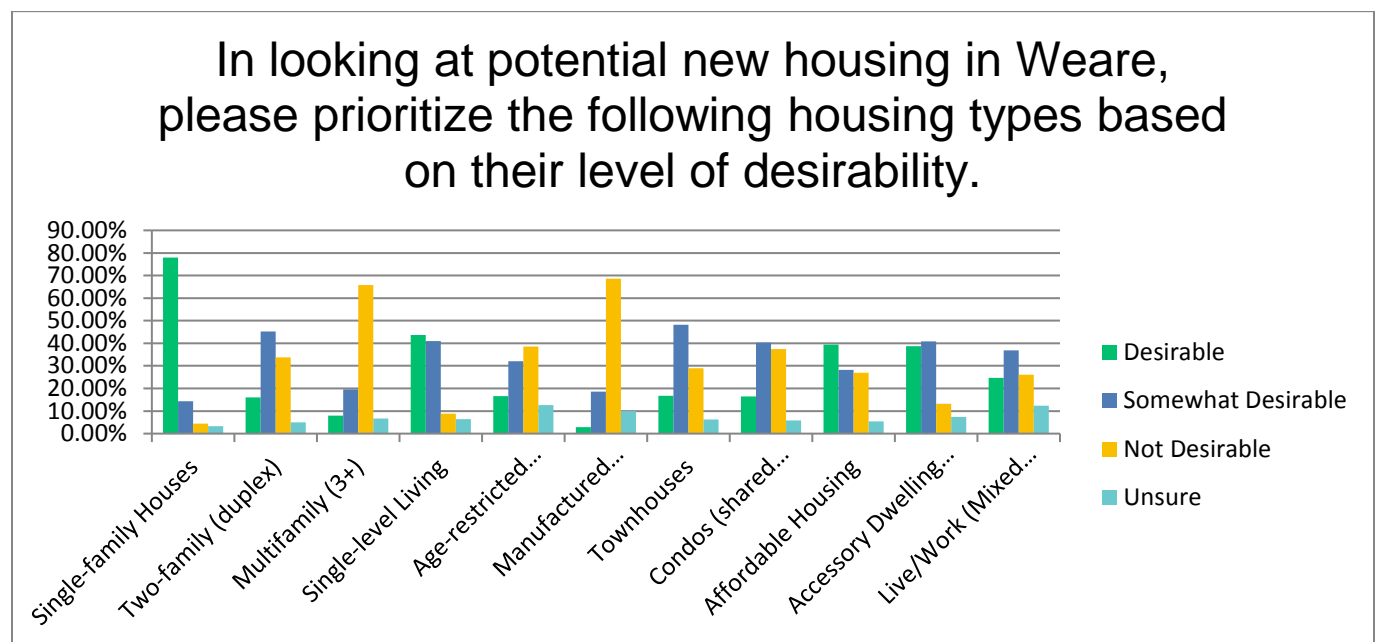
Of the 342 participants who answered this question:

- 206 (60.2%) small single-family (under 2500 sq. ft.)
- 115 (33.6%) large single-family (over 2500 sq. ft.)
- 13 (3.8%) multi-family or apartments; and
- 8 (2.3%) subsidized housing
- 4 participants wrote in that they live in a condo

Question 21: In looking at potential new housing in Weare, please prioritize the following housing types based on their level of desirability.

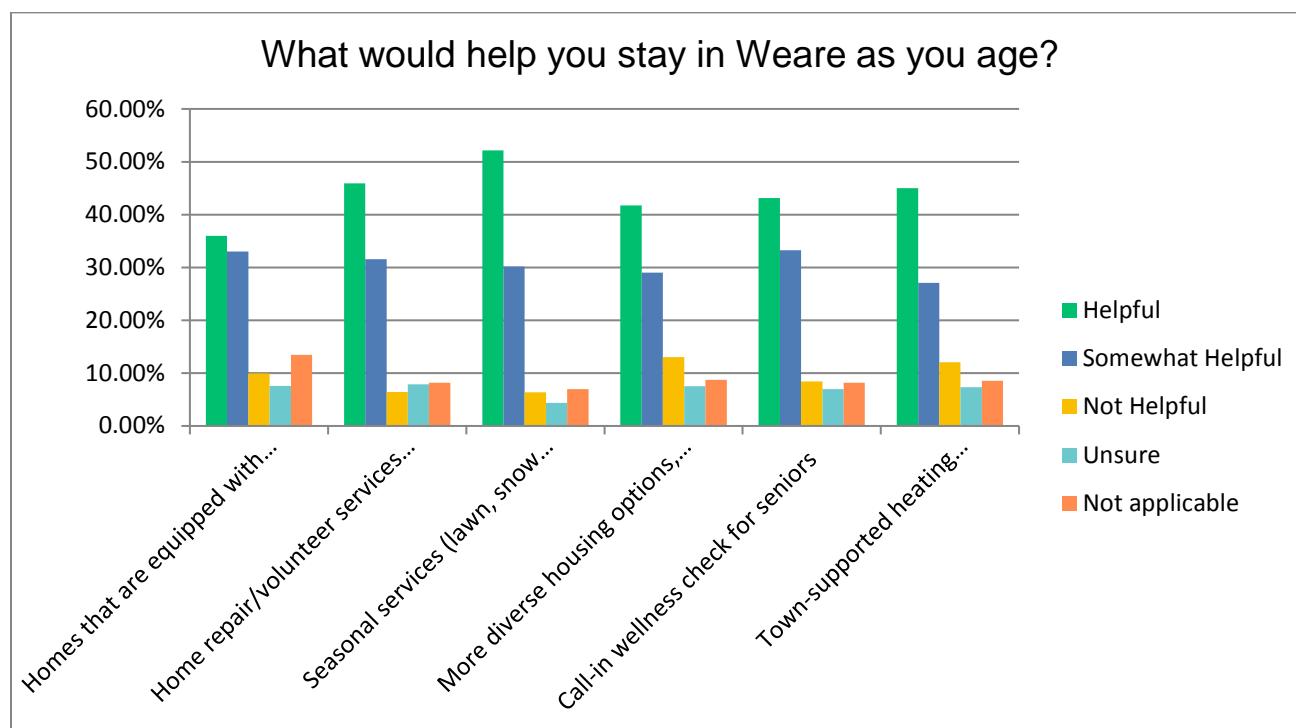
343 participants answered this question. Participants overwhelmingly (77.9%) prioritized single-family homes as the most desirable housing type, followed by single-level living (43.7%).

	Desirable		Somewhat Desirable		Not Desirable		Unsure	
	Percent	Response	Percent	Response	Percent	Response	Percent	Response
Single-family Houses	77.91%	261	14.33%	48	4.48%	15	3.28%	11
Two-family (duplex)	16.10%	52	45.20%	146	33.75%	109	4.95%	16
Multifamily (3+)	8.01%	25	19.55%	61	65.71%	205	6.73%	21
Single-level Living	43.73%	143	40.98%	134	8.87%	29	6.42%	21
Age-restricted housing	16.67%	54	32.10%	104	38.58%	125	12.65%	41
Manufactured (Mobile) Homes	2.80%	9	18.63%	60	68.63%	221	9.94%	32
Townhouses	16.77%	54	48.14%	155	28.88%	93	6.21%	20
Condos (shared amenities)	16.41%	53	40.25%	130	37.46%	121	5.88%	19
Affordable Housing	39.39%	130	28.18%	93	26.97%	89	5.45%	18
Accessory Dwelling Units (In-law apartments, converted garages, etc.)	38.65%	126	40.80%	133	13.19%	43	7.36%	24
Live/Work (Mixed Use/Commercial and Residential Use)	24.62%	80	36.92%	120	26.15%	85	12.31%	40



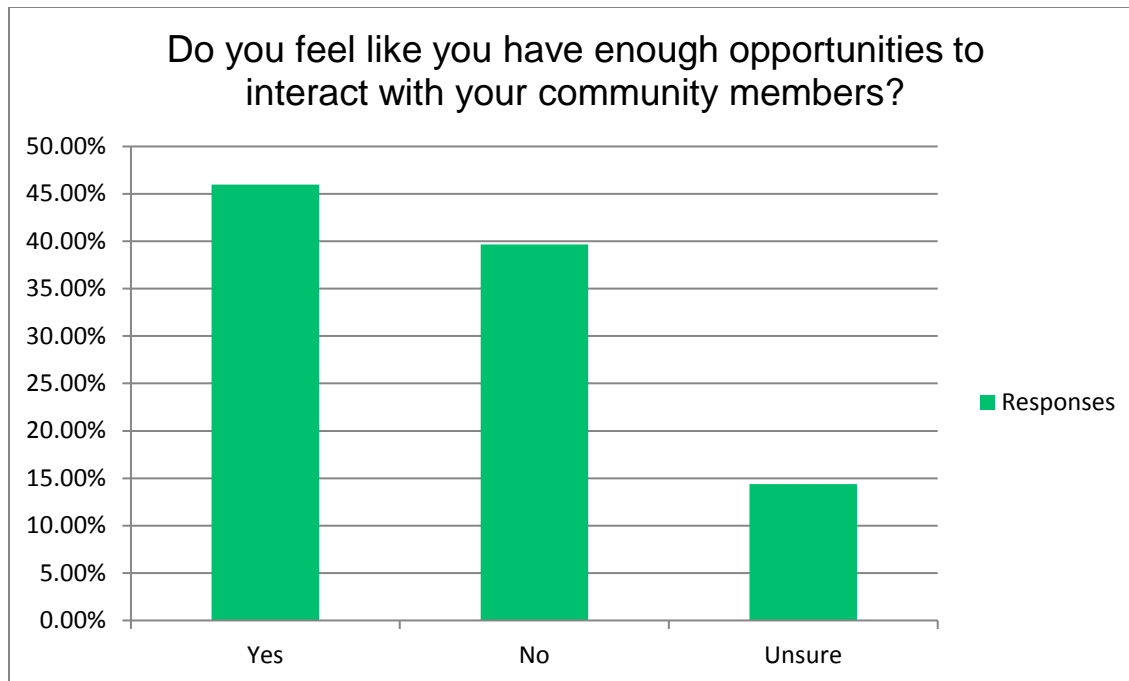
Question 22: What would help you stay in Weare as you age?

Of the 348 participants who answered this question, 180 (52.17%) said “seasonal services (lawn, snow removal) for elderly and/or immobile residents” would help them stay in Weare as they age. The next most selected option was “home repair/volunteer services to assist low-income and/or elderly households” (45.9%), followed by “town-supported heating assistance program” (45%), and “Call-in wellness checks for seniors” (43.1%).



Question 23: Do you feel like you have enough opportunities to interact with your community members?

Of the 348 participants who answered this question, 160 (45.9%) do feel like they have enough opportunities to interact with their community members, 138 (39.6%) did not feel like they have enough opportunities, and 50 (14.3%) were unsure.



Question 24: How do you interact with your community members? Please select all that apply.

Note that respondents could choose multiple answers. Of the 347 participants who answered this question they stated they interact with their community through:

- 157 (45.2%) the schools
- 141 (40.6%) their neighborhood
- 128 (36.8%) online
- 125 (36%) town organizations
- 55 (15.8%) their employment/business
- 45 (12.9%) do not interact with their community members; and
- 23 (6.6%) their place of worship.

There were 46 responses in the “other” category. The themes from those responses are summarized below:

	Themes: Written-in Comments (“other” field) (Q24: How do you interact with your community members?)	# of times mentioned
1.	Town events, clubs, committees	15
2.	Library	8
3.	Friends & Family	7
4.	Sporting events, kids sports programs	5
5.	Kids, daycares	2

Question 25: What are some reasons you may not interact sufficiently with your community members? Please select all that apply.

Note that respondents could choose multiple answers. Of the 298 participants who answered this question:

- 161 (54%) do not think there is not enough to do in town
- 110 (36.9%) do not know people
- 106 (35.5%) chose not to
- 25 (8.3%) just moved to town
- 4 (1.3%) cannot interact sufficiently due to their health; and
- 2 (.67%) do not have transportation.

There were 31 responses in the “other” category. The themes from those responses are summarized below:

	Themes: Written-in Comments (“other” field) (Q25: What are some reasons you may not interact sufficiently with your community members?)	# of times mentioned
1.	No social/recreational opportunities for people to meet, especially for adults once kids are out of school system	7
2.	Too busy	6
3.	Don’t know when events are happening, no communication or advertising	5
4.	I choose not to/have no issue	4
5.	Physical/rural nature of the town	4
6.	People are unkind, rude, cliquey/I have no friends	4

Question 26: What recreation facilities do you use & how often?

Of the 346 participants who answered this question, the majority use the library the most often, followed by Town Hall, trails, and Lake Horace.

	Consistently		Sometimes		Seasonally		Never	
	Percent	Response	Percent	Response	Percent	Response	Percent	Response
Lake Horace	24.78%	84	27.73%	94	23.60%	80	23.89%	81
Trails	16.12%	54	42.09%	141	19.10%	64	22.69%	76
Ballfields	15.69%	51	20.92%	68	12.62%	41	50.77%	165
Town Library	29.45%	101	41.69%	143	5.25%	18	23.62%	81
Town Hall	5.01%	17	54.57%	185	11.80%	40	28.61%	97
Osbourne Hall	0.60%	2	11.71%	39	5.11%	17	82.58%	275
Town Office building	7.99%	27	48.52%	164	11.24%	38	32.25%	109
Schools (other than children attending)	14.97%	50	27.54%	92	7.49%	25	50.00%	167

Tennis courts	1.20%	4	5.71%	19	6.91%	23	86.19%	287
Bolton Field Playground	12.28%	41	26.35%	88	12.57%	42	48.80%	163
White Birch Senior Center in Henniker	0.90%	3	3.01%	10	0.60%	2	95.48%	317
YMCA in Goffstown	12.31%	41	16.22%	54	3.90%	13	67.57%	225
Historic Society Stone Memorial Building Museum	1.51%	5	15.36%	51	9.04%	30	74.10%	246
Churches	7.03%	23	11.31%	37	1.53%	5	80.12%	262

Question 27: What recreation and social opportunities would you like to see in town?

163 participants answered this open-ended question. Their responses are summarized in the table below:

	Themes: Written-in Comments (Q27: What recreation and social opportunities would you like to see in town?)	# of times mentioned
1.	Town-wide events, activities and gatherings	59
2.	More facilities and opportunities for outdoor recreation; maintained trails with maps and markings, better fields, courts, etc. public pool, adult and kids sports leagues, group outdoor activities etc.	53
4.	Community center, senior center, youth center, rec center	19
3.	Amenities; coffee shops, grocery stores, arcades, bowling alleys, restaurants, gyms etc.	14
5.	Other; more funding for library, better historical society hours, more opportunities for kids	6
6.	Unsure	6

Question 28: What could be done to encourage your recreation within Weare? Please mark all that apply.

Note that respondents could choose multiple answers. Of the 325 participants who answered this question:

- 200 (61.5%) Add multi-use walk/bike trails
- 165 (50.7%) Improve existing trails
- 159 (48.9%) Have more places to meet and socialize
- 148 (45.5%) Expand the focus of the Parks and Recreation Commission
- 117 (36%) Improve coordination/communication to use school facilities (gym, fields, etc.)
- 111 (34.1%) Open a dog park
- 108 (33.2%) Add community gardens; and

- 75 (2%) Cross country ski trails, snowmobile trails

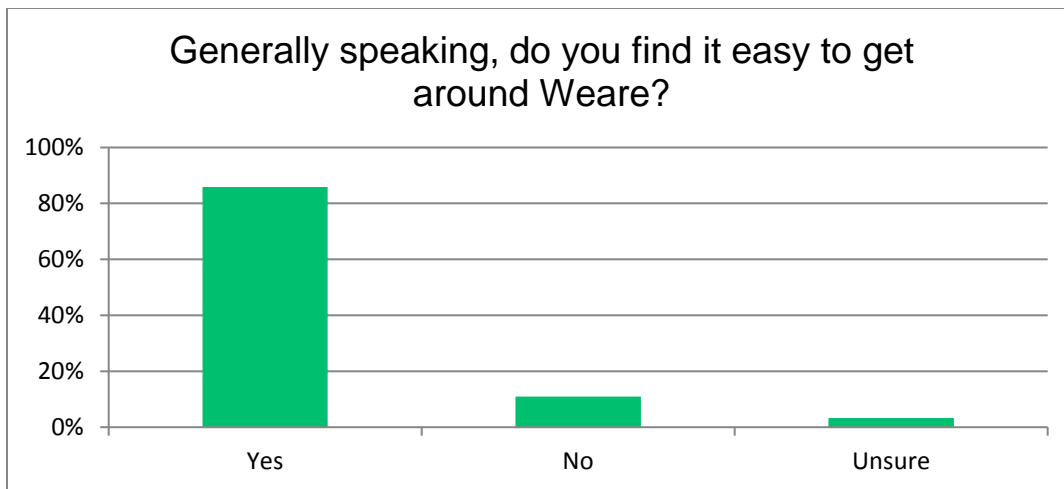
There were 31 responses in the “other” category. The themes from those responses are summarized below:

	Themes: Written-in Comments (“other” field) (Q28: What could be done to encourage your recreation within Weare?)	# of times mentioned
1.	Trail, road, lot, facility etc. maintenance, improvements in upkeep, marking, cleanliness, safety	20
2.	Outreach and communication; more info on what's available, trail maps, town website update, advertising, etc.	9
3.	More activities and activity spaces, community center, dog park, fields for recreation	8

Question 29: Generally speaking, do you find it easy to get around Weare?

Of the 339 participants who answered this question:

- 291 of 339 (86%) said yes
- 37 (11%) said no
- 11 (3%) said unsure



In the 55 comments, three main themes emerged:

- Poor maintenance of existing roads (~12 responses)
- Transportation is easy if you can drive/have a car (~11 responses)
- Lack of sidewalks/difficulty walking & biking (~10 responses)

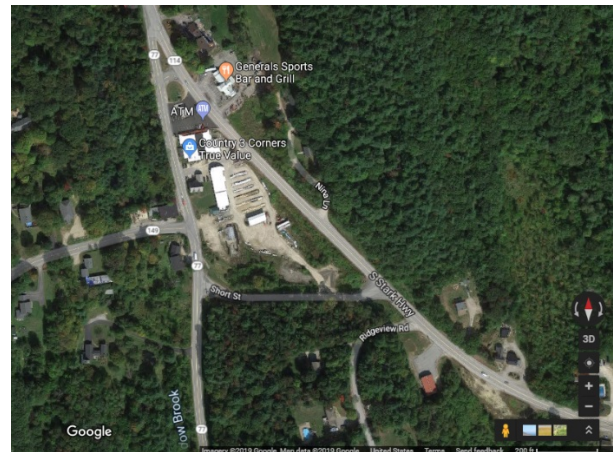
A response that was particularly compelling spoke of transportation in town at a broader level: “Town is so large and spread. That’s not something that can be fixed.”

Question 30: What specific area(s) of Weare do you think most need additional transportation improvements? What types of improvements would you like to see?

134 of 383 (35.0%) of survey takers answered this open-response question. Responses were scattered, but the topic with the most mentions was paving/road maintenance (25+). This was followed by sidewalks/bike paths/walkability (10+), none/no opinion (10+), and bus/public transportation (5+). Note: these values are depicted as inexact due to the vague nature and overlap of many responses.

Question 31: Which roads or intersections in town pose the most serious threat(s) to safety?

193 of 383 (50.4%) of survey takers answered this open-response question. Many intersections were mentioned, but the one that came up most often (over 35 times) was the scissors-style intersection of NH 114/NH 77/Reservoir Rd



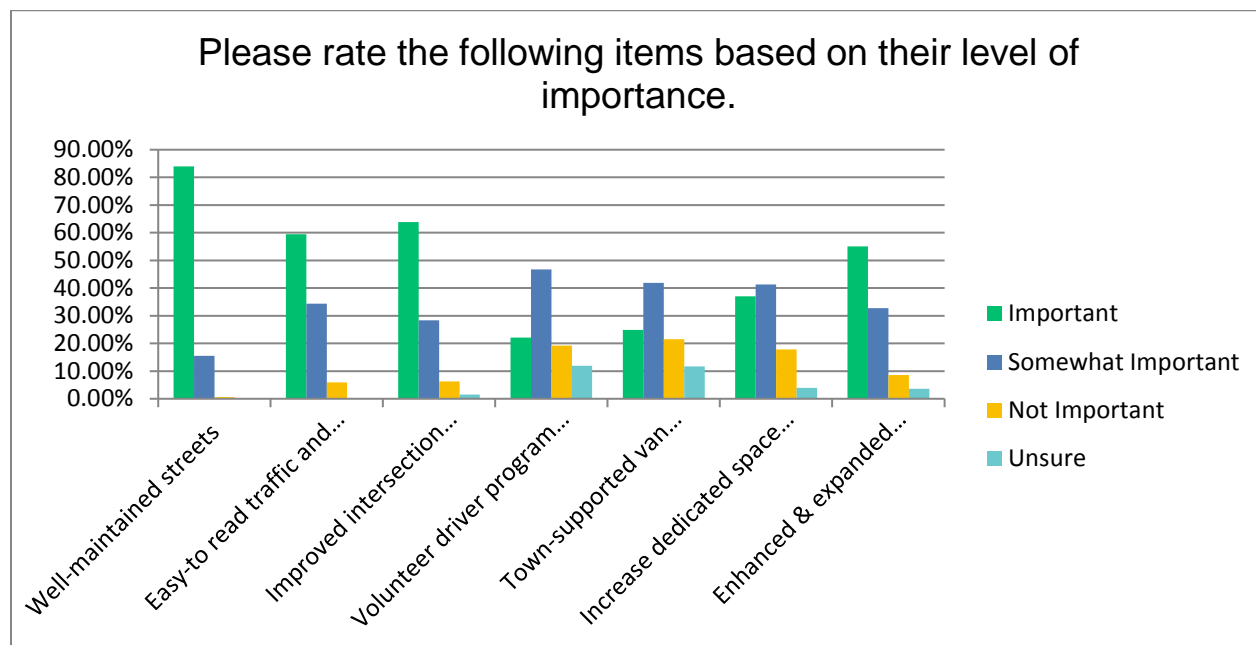
Other intersections mentioned multiple times include that of NH 114/NH 77/NH 149/Short St. (20+ mentions) and NH 114/Flanders Memorial Rd/E Rd (15+ mentions)



Question 32: Please rate the following items based on their level of importance.

When asked about the importance levels of various transportation-related issues, the following number of respondents said these issues were “important” or “somewhat important”. Note that respondents could choose multiple answers.

- Well-maintained streets: 334 of 336 (99.4%)
- Easy-to-read traffic and directional signage: 314 of 335 (93.7%)
- Improved intersection safety: 309 of 335 (92.2%)
- Enhanced & expanded trails for hiking, walking, biking, & riding: 295 of 336 (87.8%)
- Increase dedicated space for pedestrians and bicyclists: 260 of 332 (78.3%)
- Volunteer driver program for residents in need: 230 of 334 (68.9%)
- Town-supported van service for elderly or impaired residents: 223 of 334 (66.8%). 21.6% of respondents said this was “not important”, the highest percentage among the given options.



Question 33: For those who cannot drive or choose not to, would you support the use of taxpayer funds to subsidize any of the following programs? Please select what programs you would support.

When asked “for those who cannot drive or choose not to, would you support the use of taxpayer funds to subsidize any of the following programs?”, 165 survey-takers skipped the question. Of the 218 individuals who did respond:

- 140 (64.2%) chose “organized volunteer driver program”
- 93 (42.7%) chose “call-in shuttle service for seniors or the disabled only”

- 76 (34.9%) chose “coordinated public transportation (service area/hours) within Weare”
- 51 (23.4%) chose “call-in shuttle service”
- There were 26 “other” replies, the majority of which were simply “no” responses. Of these, many were strongly opposed.

