Dunstable Town Center Visioning Survey

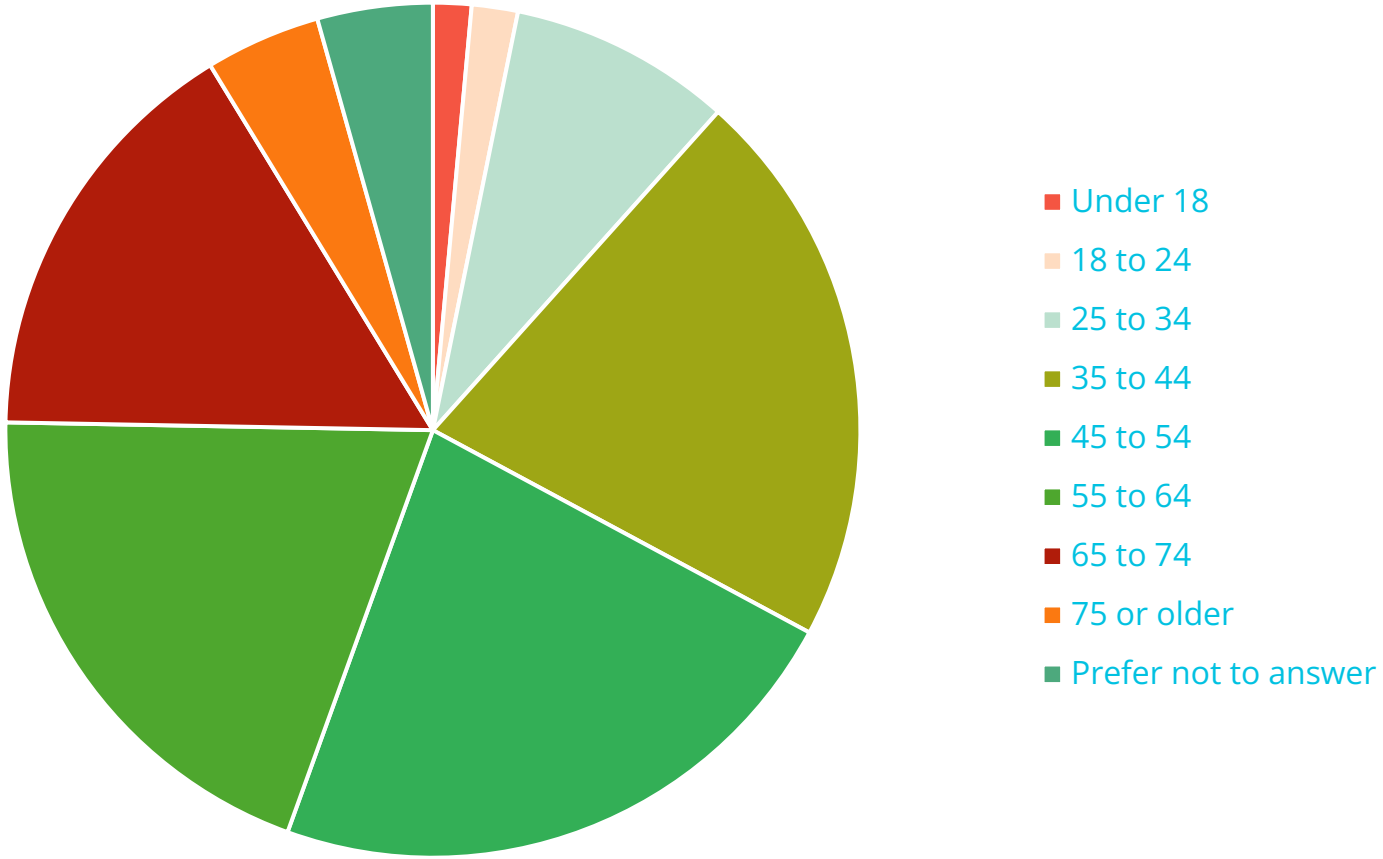
Open August 15th – September 19th

NORTHERN MIDDLESEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

SERVING THE REGION SINCE 1963

DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONS

1. What is your age?

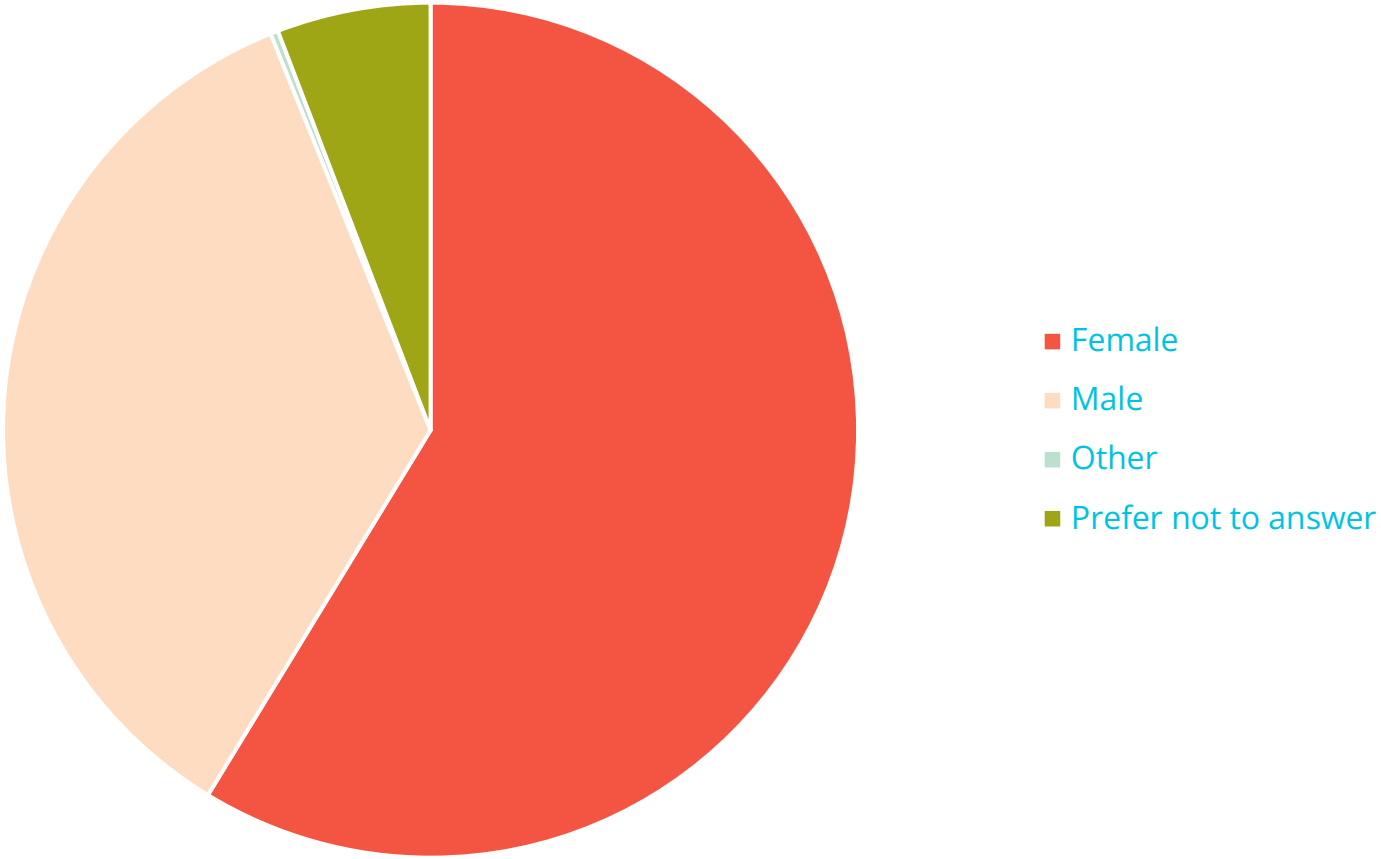


63.66% of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 64

11 responders were under the age of 25, with 5 under 18

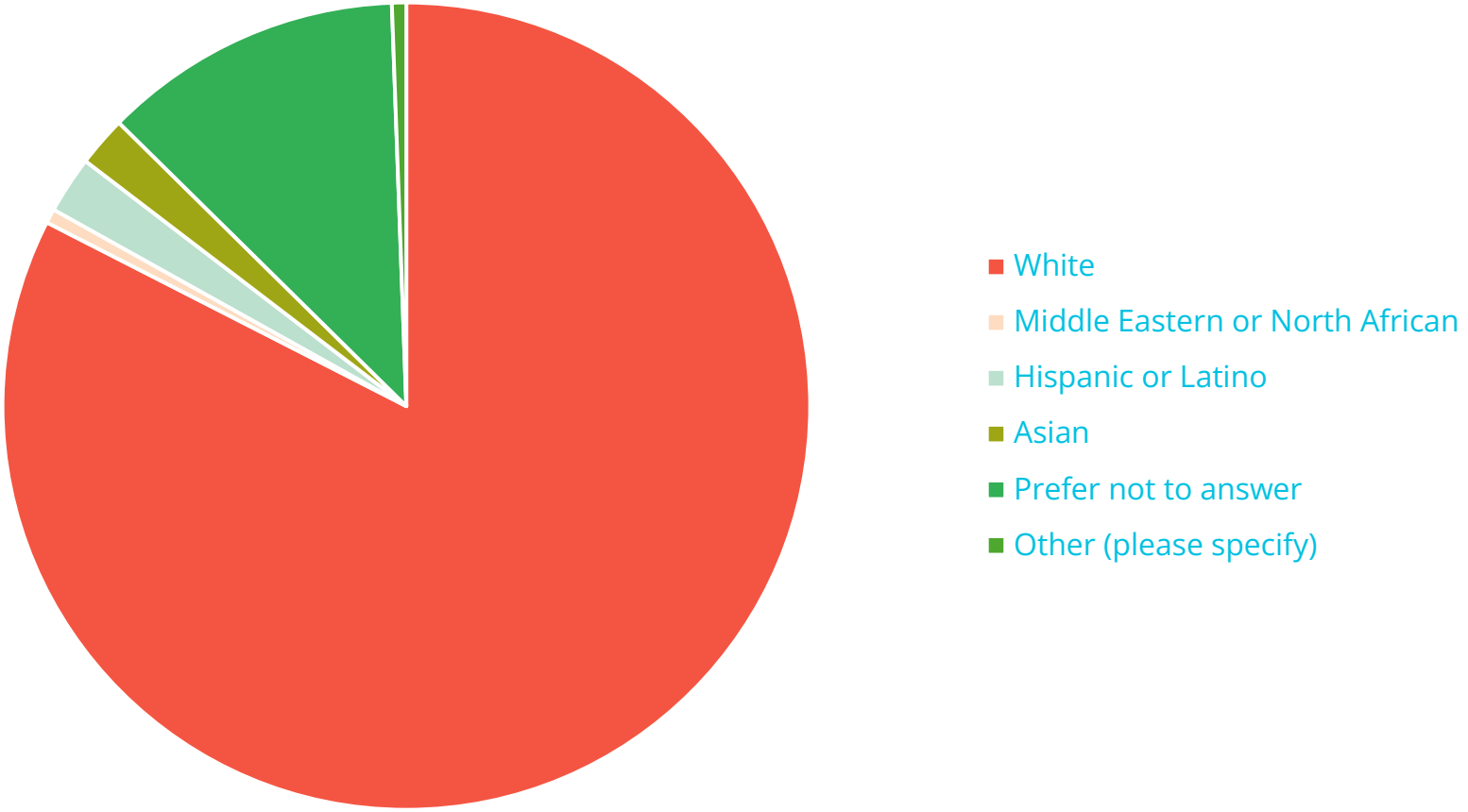
Only 15 respondents preferred not to answer

2. What is your gender?



58% of respondents were female

3. Which of the following best describes you? (Check all that apply)



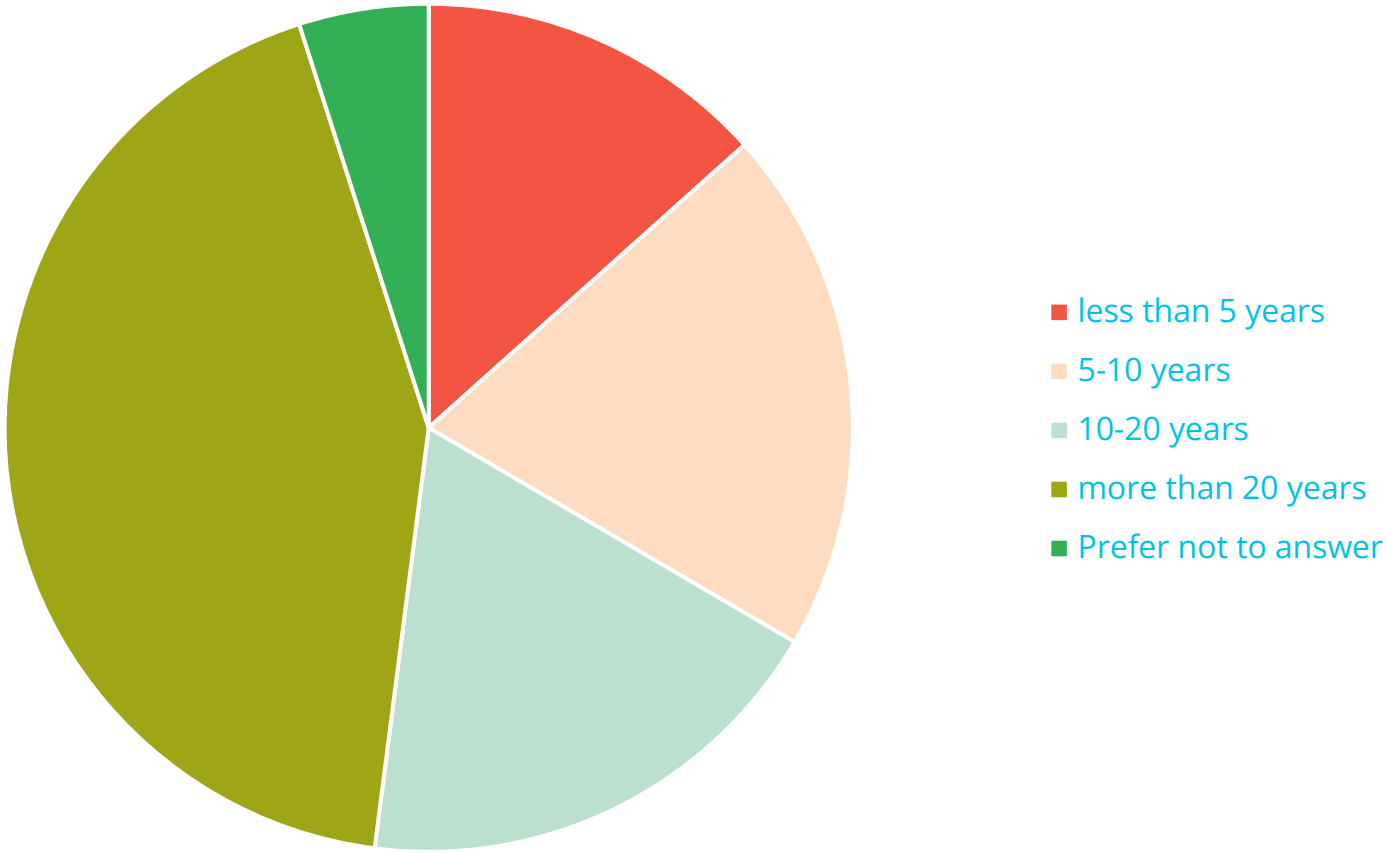
84% of respondents identified as white

12% chose not to identify their race or ethnicity

Notably, no respondents identified as Black or African American

One respondent identified themselves as South-East Asian

4. How long have you lived in Dunstable?

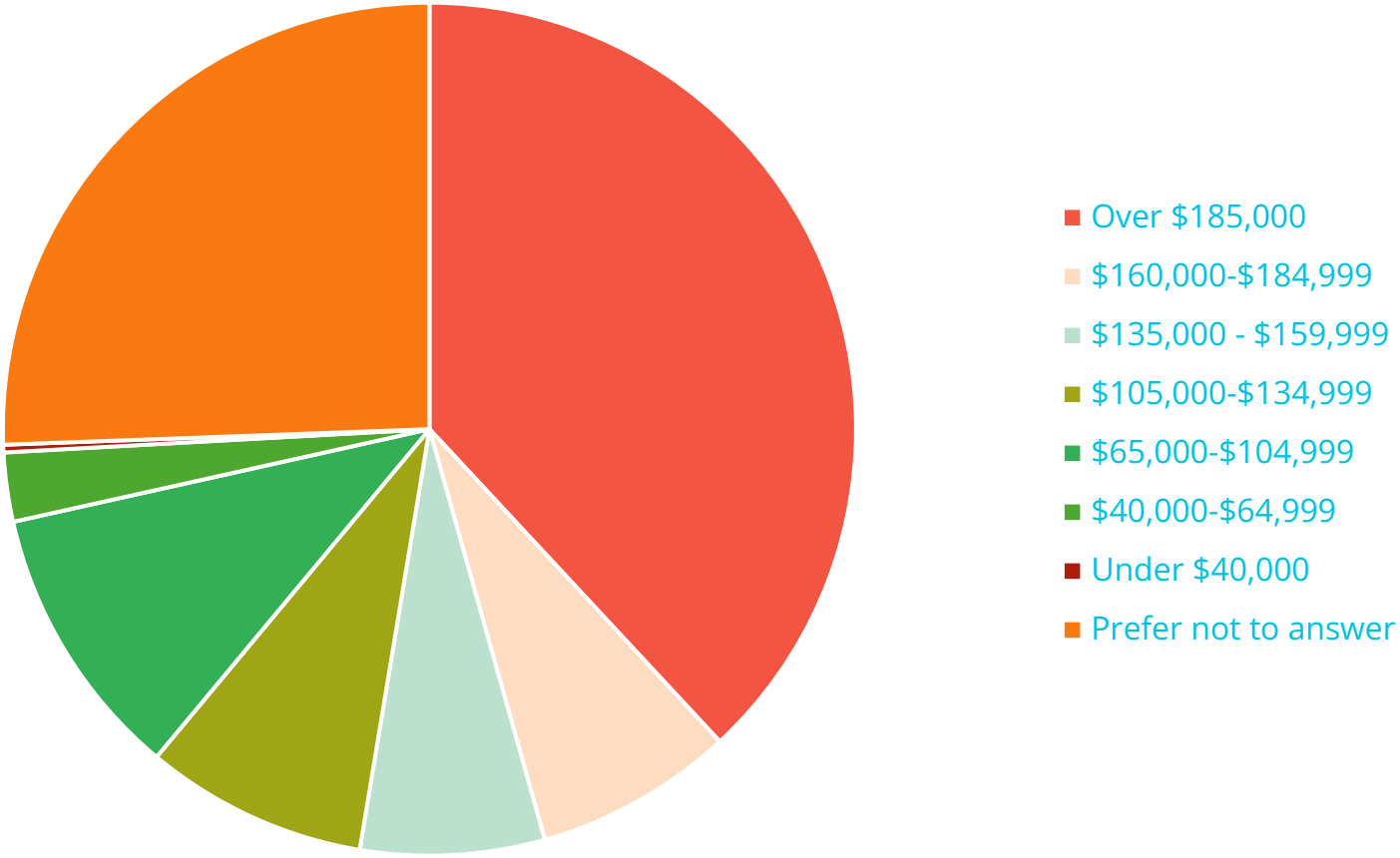


The majority (61%) of Dunstable respondents have lived there for at least 10 years

- 43% have lived in the town for 20+ years

While 5% of respondents chose not to answer, this leaves 34% of respondents as newcomers to the town (<10 years).

5. What is your annual household income? (Check one)



25% of respondents chose not to disclose their household income

38% of respondents report an income over $185,000

10 respondents report a household income less than $65k/yr, with 1 reporting under $40k/yr

CORE QUESTIONS

6. What do you enjoy about Town Center?

New England character and community (105 responses)

*225 answers, 119 skipped

"Wonderful gathering place and source of endless family memories, wholesomeness, and town government in a friendly setting."

"Our town center has that great small-town vibe that is gone in a lot of towns nearby."

"I enjoy the New England look of buildings that have been preserved and cared for over the years. Some date back to early Dunstable and others reflect times of growth and change."

"I love the times when it is used as a community gathering space."

"I love the agricultural feel of this town, This is exactly why I moved here, the town respects preserving land."

"The summer concerts on the common and other activities on the common. Jinglefest has been a welcome addition in December."

6. What do you enjoy about Town Center?

Aesthetics of natural beauty and architectural design (45 responses)

*225 answers, 119 skipped

"I love how beautiful our Town Center is. I love driving by Crystal Farm (where I learned to ride as a kid!) and the cows at the dairy farm. I love how neat and tidy everything is. I'm lucky enough to live in town and teach at Swallow Union, so I love driving by and seeing our elementary school as well."

"I like the Town Center just as it is. Dunstable's greatest asset is the Town's rural character, open space, and protected, natural areas."

"I sincerely appreciate how quaint & well-maintained. The Union Building reno looks amazing. We have all things close (townhall, school, FD, PD, library) I am very excited there are sidewalks & a few businesses including West Auto, Farmhouse Cafe, & gift shops."

6. What do you enjoy about Town Center?

Local businesses (36 responses)

*225 answers, 119 skipped

“Love the new wine and spirits store Mirabelle. Seeing this along with the books and gift store and farmhouse is starting to look like the quaint downtown Dunstable needs! Hope to see more little shops and such.”

“Having the Farmhouse Cafe in town, Wickham & Willoughby to visit on the weekends, and I'm excited for the new wine store!”

“The small businesses (West's, Farmhouse Cafe, and now Mirabelle) and the Town Common as a great gathering area.”

6. What do you enjoy about Town Center?

Needs improvement (22 responses)

*225 answers, 119 skipped

"When there are town events around the school it can be nice, but in general I find the town center to lack a lot of good qualities."

"Our one restaurant has highly limited hours and retail is sparse."

Other responses (19 responses) – *focus on mobility*

"There needs to be more sidewalks to connect businesses and roads."

"Great central location."

"Walking paths with art along the way, the path would weave around the center, showcasing town and other key buildings/homes."

"The new sidewalks. With they had extended it to the Dunkin Donuts."

7. Where are there opportunities for improvements in Town Center?

More local businesses, restaurants, or shops that aesthetically fit in with the Town's design aesthetic (101 responses)

*225 answers, 119 skipped

"Allowing for more small businesses, such as a permanent farm and produce store (like the store at Lull Farm), maybe a bank with an ATM, and heaven forbid an actual restaurant or two. Stores need to be useful and needed vs starting with boutique shops."

"More small businesses as per the Town Center District Bylaw - commercial on the first floor, an apartment or two on the second floor."

"Expand or adjust the very limiting criteria for business startups that stay within established aesthetic guidelines of the Master Plan. Remove outdated ideals and update zoning bylaws and permitting processes and train decision makers involved in approving such actions to enable these businesses to come to Dunstable."

"Business that are done tastefully but allow growth that will share the tax load so residents can afford to stay in town."

"Shopping - like a downtown Concord with small businesses - not a Dunkin or dry cleaners, etc."

7. Where are there opportunities for improvements in Town Center?

*225 answers, 119 skipped

Expanded sidewalks, walkability, pedestrian/bicycle safety, and trails (78 responses, 77 positive, one asking for the removal of existing sidewalks)

"Extend the sidewalks so the town center becomes walkable. We live on [street close to Town Center] and have to drive to the summer concerts because it's too dangerous to walk with our young kids. Would love to be able to walk to the post office and library as well. Our child goes to Swallow Union and we currently don't think it's safe for [them] to walk there, even though it's definitely close enough.

"Wooded trails would be a wonderful addition."

"Getting from one location to another via walking/biking, safely. Presently it is a one-stop downtown, e.g. you would go to the one store or restaurant as needed; unlikely to browse or spend time downtown."

"This town needs to have access so people can move around and walk. I live in the town center, it is dangerous to walk to town hall, dangerous to walk to the Cafe, dangerous to walk to the library, impossible to walk to the General store. The Town NEEDS SIDEWALKS!"

"I think the 113 work from the center to Westford St was well done and shows that sidewalks are a most positive addition. I would like to see the extended from the center to the Library and also out Pleasant St to Pond St. In the future I hope they may go even farther, allowing residents in the MUD to walk to the Center."

7. Where are there opportunities for improvements in Town Center?

Traffic calming, signals, roadway redesign with safety in mind (44 responses)

*225 answers, 119 skipped

"The center is currently defined by 113, a commuter through road. Add traffic calming measures on either end of the center. Add a good bike lane. The car lanes are very wide, plenty of room for a bike lane. Put a small roundabout in the center for Pleasant, Main, High, and the drive to the church and school. Then we won't have big backups and police for even small events. Add sidewalks and cross walks."

"Road safety!!!! The center does not include a school zone. There are no sidewalks West of the town hall. There is limited shoulders."

"The traffic pattern between Main St and Pleasant St is terrible and could really use improvement; signage indicating required use of turn signals approaching the intersection, a rotary, a light, something."

"Recognize that Dunstable is a "pass through" village. It is a shortcut to Route 3 and by-passes the traffic congestion of South Nashua and Groton center for commuter traffic both morning and night. Improvements would include slowing traffic down in the district by the use of "rumble strips" but not stop lights."

7. Where are there opportunities for improvements in Town Center?

Additional community facilities or public spaces (42 responses)

*225 answers, 119 skipped

"Make use of the Swallow Union school building"

"I would love to see a gathering place for younger people. A tavern, game store, extended library hours, simply some place open on the evenings to spend time away from home & work."

"A need for a community center for many groups to meet."

"More open access areas with benches and areas for community gatherings"

"Needs more space for public activities and gatherings"

7. Where are there opportunities for improvements in Town Center?

*225 answers, 119 skipped

Other responses:

- Beautification / green space (24 responses)
- Other/general (include “N/A” responses) (20 responses)
- Town facilities/services (15 responses)
- Preservation or no change (15 responses)
- Parking (11 responses)

8. If a property in the study area became available for development, what would you like to see happen with it?

*227 answers, 117 skipped

Commercial use for generating local business (57 responses)

"If it were to become a specialty retail store, I would hope they use the home on the property. I prefer the use of the home/barn as with Wickham and Willoughby and the new specialty liquor store Mirabelle."

"A small storefront with maybe a bank, hardware store and pharmacy. Something that makes sense to serve the local community."

"Some sort of public facing commercial development would be great. It could be food based (there is no where to get dinner in Dunstable) or could be service based (like a gym). Anything customer facing to help draw some more activity to the town center."

Restaurant, with a preference for farm-to-table (43 responses)

"A restaurant open for dinner hours would be my first wish."

"A restaurant that serves dinner with outdoor seating during the summer. Or perhaps an ice cream shop."

8. If a property in the study area became available for development, what would you like to see happen with it?

*227 answers, 117 skipped

Preserve open space for public use (23 responses)

"Either use it to provide access to other recreational areas or leave it be in its historic or natural state."

"This is difficult. I think creation of a mountain bike trail or better utilization of fields would be easiest. Development of property requires meeting challenging regulations that most of the properties will have difficulty with."

Community and/or senior center (17 responses)

"Perhaps something similar to Prescott center in Groton, where classes of all sorts are offered."

"[We have a] need for a community center that could be used for seniors, group meetings, scouts, etc. (with a kitchen)."

8. If a property in the study area became available for development, what would you like to see happen with it?

*227 answers, 117 skipped

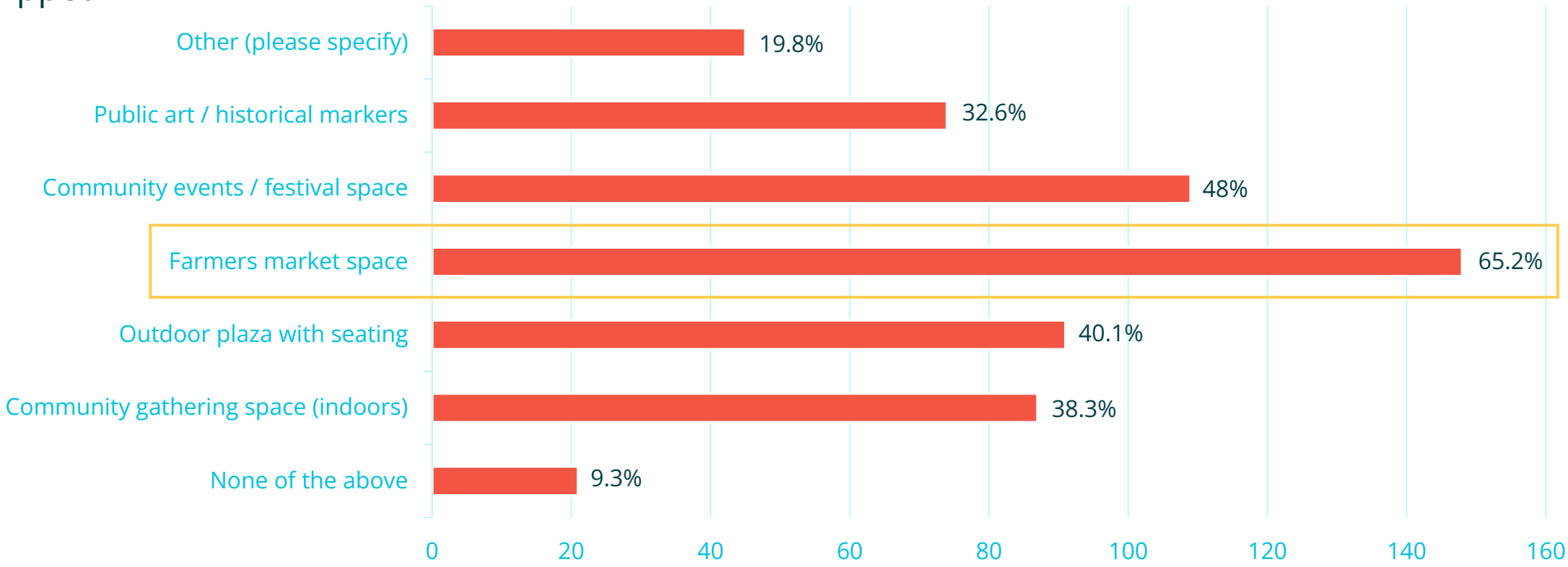
Other uses

- No development, leave as is (19)
- Mixed-use, housing on top of business (17)
- Blank (11)
- Not sure/question unclear (9)
- Use for multi-modal mobility connections (8)

Additional comments (22)

9. Community & Civic Amenities (select all that apply)

*227 answers,
117 skipped



9. Community & Civic Amenities OTHER

Food/ commercial establishments	Senior Amenities	Sidewalks, shared-use paths	Dunstable Recreation Center	Amenities exist, space needs to be fostered better	No change
9	3	5	3	9	7

Coffee shops, small shops, fine dining recommended

Senior center with kitchen, event space, classroom space and resource center

Accessible outdoor spaces with shared use paths, recreation for both athletics and community gathering space (eg: community center)

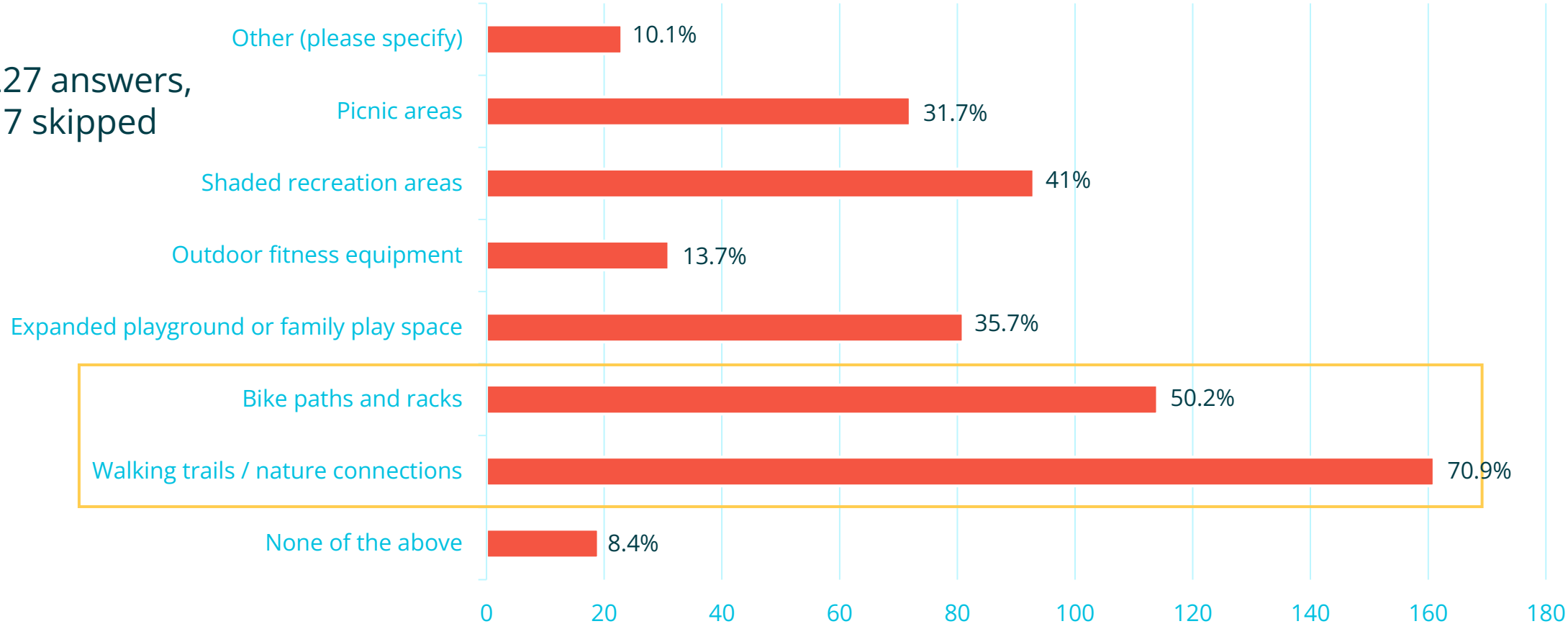
Suggestions to use Union School building to host community gatherings, artist spaces, etc.

Lack of parking in Town Center

Either said no problems in Town Center, already the center of civic life, or visioning should only focus on revenue, not community.

10. Recreational & Open Space Amenities (select all that apply)

*227 answers,
117 skipped



10. Recreational & Open Space Amenities - OTHER

Walking path, accessible trails, sidewalks	Dog park	Sports & recreation amenities	Amenities exist, space needs to be fostered better	No changes
4	1	7	6	1

Sidewalks and small trail loops to serve as a “destination to meet up with friends and enjoy the outdoors.”

Classified as walking trails/nature connections

Spaces for safe cycling, practicing soccer/tennis/volleyball, public pool, splash park

Rehabilitation of Larter Field (just outside of study area)

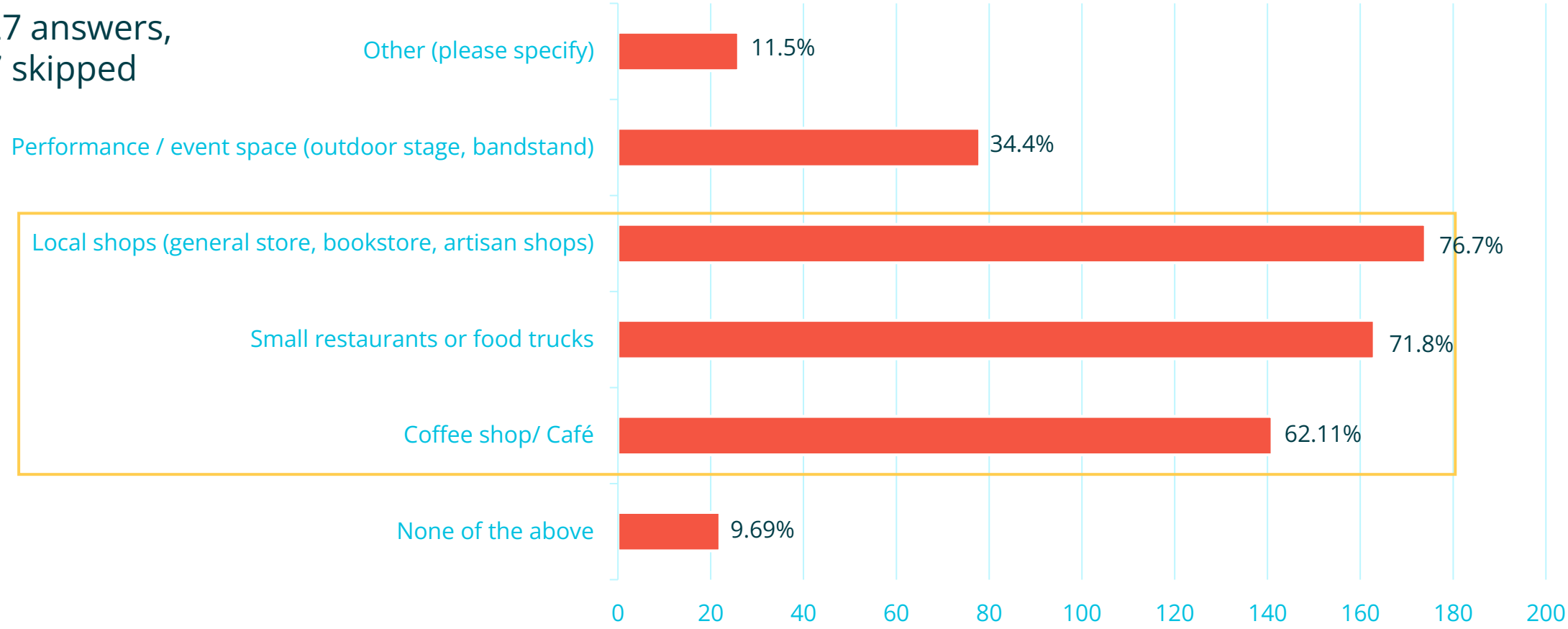
Keep the Masapoag ramp open year-round/longer

Active policing of dirt bikers & ATVs in conservation areas

Town has too much open space already

11. Cultural & Social Amenities (Select all that apply)

*227 answers,
117 skipped



11. Cultural & Social Amenities OTHER

Senior Amenities	Dinner options	Specialized businesses	Walking tour of historical features/ amenities	Indoor community space	Amenities exist, space needs to be fostered better	No change
2	9	3	1	3	3	4

Senior center

Pub, tavern, options open for dinner

Ice cream shop, convenience store

Medical/Doctor's office

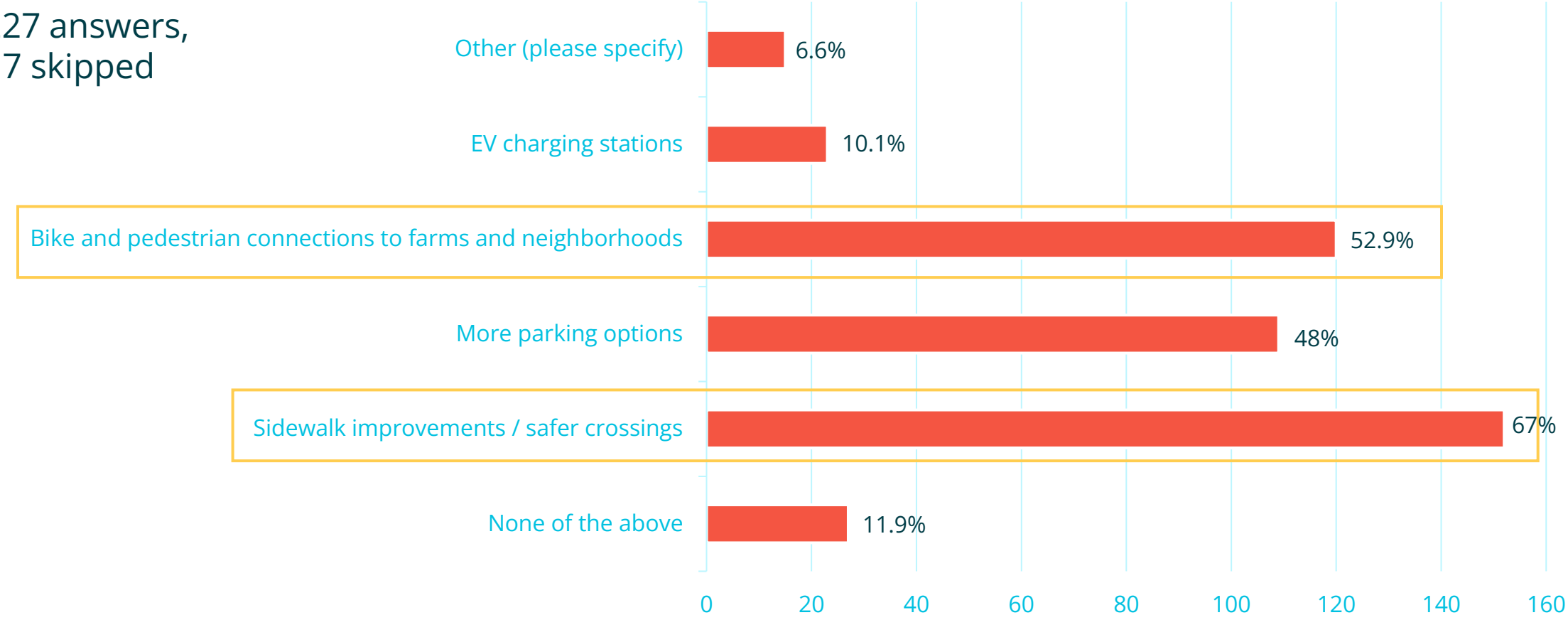
Space for artists to teach their classes, alleviate pressure from Library

Library renovation

Enjoy the current options, need to be able to walk from one to another safely.

12. Mobility & Accessibility Improvements (select all that apply)

*227 answers,
117 skipped



12. Mobility & Accessibility Improvements - OTHER

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons	More parking if more development	Main St/ Pleasant St Redesign	Rail trail connection	Sidewalk to Library
1	4	1	2	1

Suggested at Town Hall crosswalk & new crossings

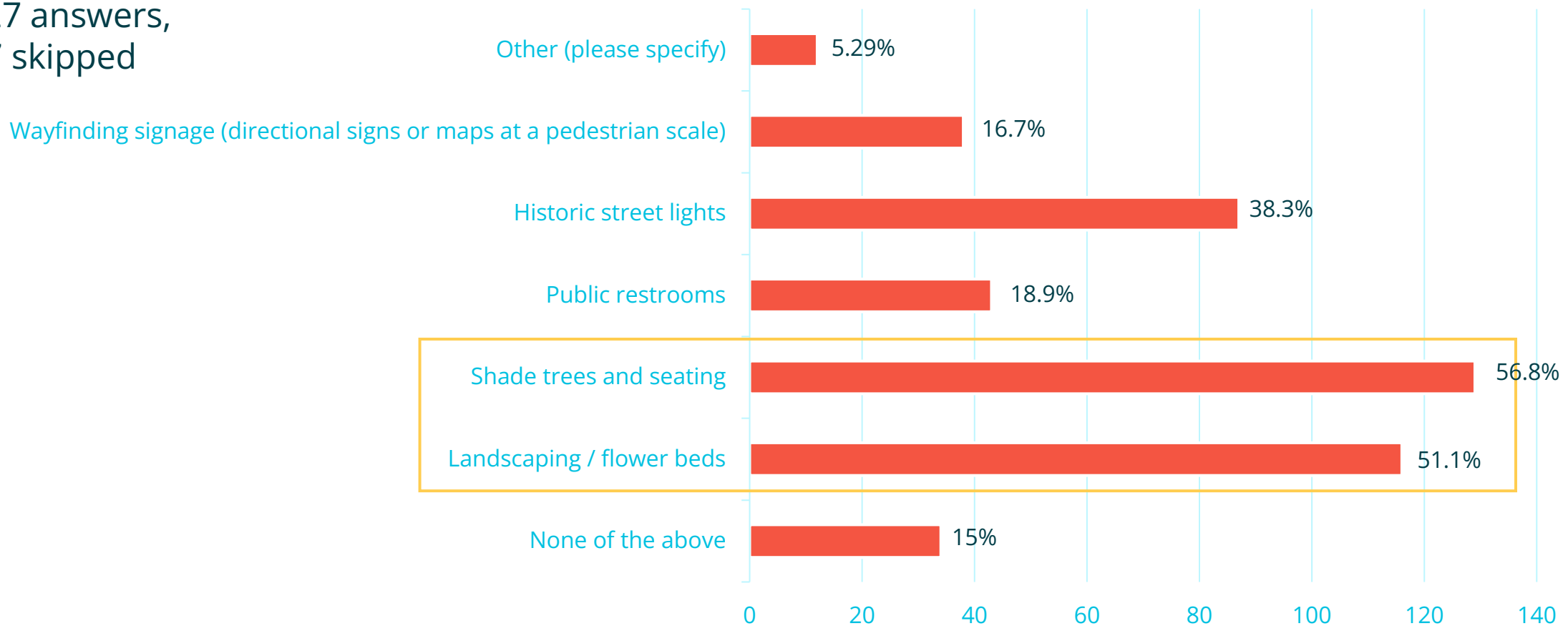
Preferably off-road, “not ugly”

Traffic safety

Expansion of bike/ped network across towns

13. Beautification & Comfort Amenities (Select all that apply)

*227 answers,
117 skipped



13. Beautification & Comfort Amenities - OTHER

Already beautiful	Clear signage for drivers	Traffic calming	Maintenance plan	Public art & gardens
1	3	3	1	2

Classically New England

Overall redesign of the Main St/Pleasant St intersection
- Clear signage
- Traffic calming

Additional signage work at Groton and Hall St

Establish clear plans to maintain beautification and comfort amenities

14. If there are any other improvements you would like to see that were not mentioned, please note them.

Safety and mobility improvements (11 responses)

*43 answers, 301 skipped

"Traffic in the center is continuing to be a problem. A rotary that incorporates the historic nature of the center should be an item of discussion. Please, no traffic lights at Pleasant and Main Street."

"The intersection at Pleasant St /Main St would be best served by an improvement as well. It is hard to turn left due to visibility. It can also take a long time to get a chance to turn."

"Walking loop/bike path that would connect the library to other places in the center of town. The walking loop at Larter is great for exercise, but it's a little boring in that it's just a circle. I envision a loop downtown weaving between properties so its a little more like a nature walk, while providing walkable access to the businesses we have in town."

"Sidewalks & shoulders wide enough to bike, Consider more visible turtle crossing signage or a temporary speed bump during egg laying & hatching season, there are always dead turtles hit by cars at the wetland crossing on 113 between the [P]ost [O]ffice & [G]roton street, conservation areas!"

14. If there are any other improvements you would like to see that were not mentioned, please note them.

Municipal administration (8 responses)

*43 answers, 301 skipped

"Expanded hours. Right now things that bring people in to town have such limited hours, like the library being closed during the hours most kids aren't in school or people are home from work. I love our park area but there isn't anything else there so I only go for one thing, unlike when we lived in other towns where everything connects."

"Any appropriate historical/memorial markers."

"Guidelines for property maintenance in the center."

14. If there are any other improvements you would like to see that were not mentioned, please note them.

*43 answers, 301 skipped

Other comments

- No change to Town Center (8 responses)
- General survey construction feedback (6)
- Commercial additions to town center (4)
- Community building (3)
- Outdoor recreation desires (3)
  - *Larter playground renovations*
  - *Landscaping at McCloon barn*
  - *Pet-friendly areas*

CROSS-TABULATION

Of respondents,

58% were under 55 years old
42% were over 55 years old

35% have lived in Dunstable less than 10 yrs
65% have lived in Dunstable more than 10 yrs

39% report a household income less than $160k/yr
61% report a household income greater than $160k/yr

9. Community & Civic Amenities (select all that apply)

High support for a farmers' market space (could/should be multipurpose, e.g., also serve as a venue for community events, public plaza, or other outdoor gathering space)

Of respondents that self-reported their age, residency time in Dunstable, and household income:

	Age		Residency		Income	
	Under 55	55+	Less than 10 yrs	More than 10 yrs	Less than $160k/yr	More than $160k/yr
Public art / historical markers	27%	40%	30%	34%	33%	34%
Community events / festival space	49%	48%	59%	43%	44%	51%
Farmers market space	66%	68%	76%	61%	61%	70%
Outdoor plaza with seating	41%	41%	42%	39%	39%	43%
Community gathering space (indoors)	40%	37%	44%	37%	41%	36%
None of the above	9%	7%	4%	11%	9%	7%

10. Recreational & Open Space Amenities (select all that apply)

Significant support for multimodal improvements: sidewalks, bike/ped connections, and trails

Of respondents that self-reported their age, residency time in Dunstable, and household income:

	Age		Residency		Income	
	Under 55	55+	Less than 10 yrs	More than 10 yrs	Less than $160k/yr	More than $160k/yr
Picnic areas	34%	29%	37%	30%	39%	30%
Shaded recreation areas	45%	36%	46%	39%	42%	40%
Outdoor fitness equipment	16%	11%	15%	12%	9%	16%
Expanded playground or family play space	47%	24%	57%	25%	29%	44%
Bike paths and racks	53%	47%	61%	44%	48%	52%
Walking trails / nature connections	71%	71%	71%	71%	74%	68%
None of the above	7%	9%	4%	11%	9%	6%

11. Cultural & Social Amenities (Select all that apply)

Highest support for additional cultural and social amenities, specifically local shops, small restaurants, and coffee shops/cafes.

Of respondents that self-reported their age, residency time in Dunstable, and household income:

	Age		Residency		Income	
	Under 55	55+	Less than 10 yrs	More than 10 yrs	Less than $160k/yr	More than $160k/yr
Performance / event space (outdoor stage, bandstand)	33%	38%	42%	31%	35%	35%
Local Shops (general store, bookstore, artisan shops)	80%	74%	89%	70%	73%	83%
Small restaurants or food trucks	80%	63%	86%	65%	59%	82%
Coffee shop / Café	67%	59%	68%	59%	64%	67%
None of the above	7%	10%	3%	13%	9%	7%

12. Mobility & Accessibility Improvements (select all that apply)

Significant support for multimodal improvements: sidewalks, bike/ped connections, and trails

Of respondents that self-reported their age, residency time in Dunstable, and household income.

	Age		Residency		Income	
	Under 55	55+	Less than 10 yrs	More than 10 yrs	Less than $160k/yr	More than $160k/yr
EV Charging stations	15%	5%	14%	7%	11%	14%
Bike and pedestrian connections to farms and neighborhoods	55%	52%	63%	48%	42%	60%
More parking options	48%	50%	51%	47%	45%	46%
Sidewalk improvements / safer crossings	78%	55%	87%	56%	56%	79%
None of the above	9%	13%	1%	17%	11%	10%

13. Beautification & Comfort Amenities (Select all that apply)

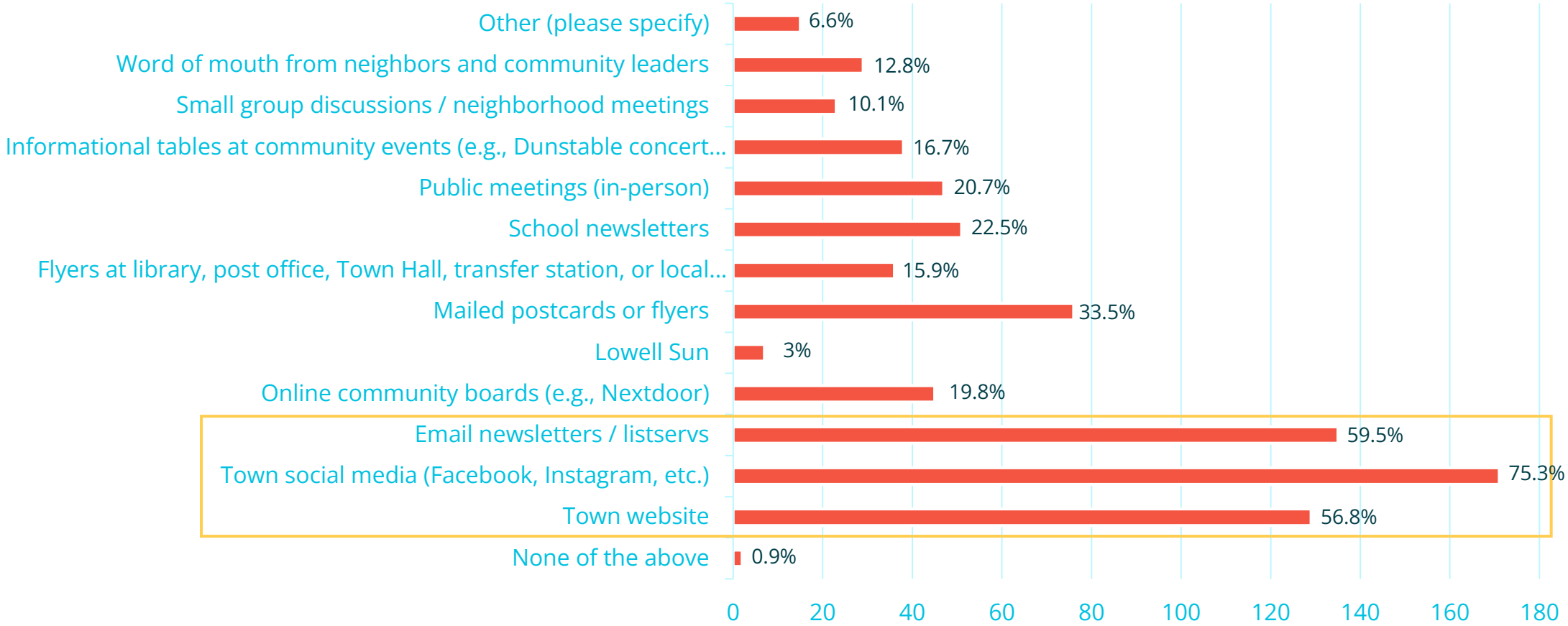
Of respondents that self-reported their age, Dunstable, and household income:

Generally, streetscape beautification and placemaking assets were welcomed by respondents.

	Age		Residency		Income	
	Under 55	55+	Less than 10 yrs	More than 10 yrs	Less than $160k/yr	More than $160k/yr
Wayfinding signage	15%	20%	15%	18%	20%	15%
Historic streetlights	39%	40%	42%	36%	29%	41%
Public restrooms	19%	20%	20%	18%	21%	18%
Shade trees and seating	60%	54%	57%	56%	61%	57%
Landscaping / flower beds	51%	50%	51%	51%	55%	47%
None of the above	15%	15%	14%	15%	12%	17%

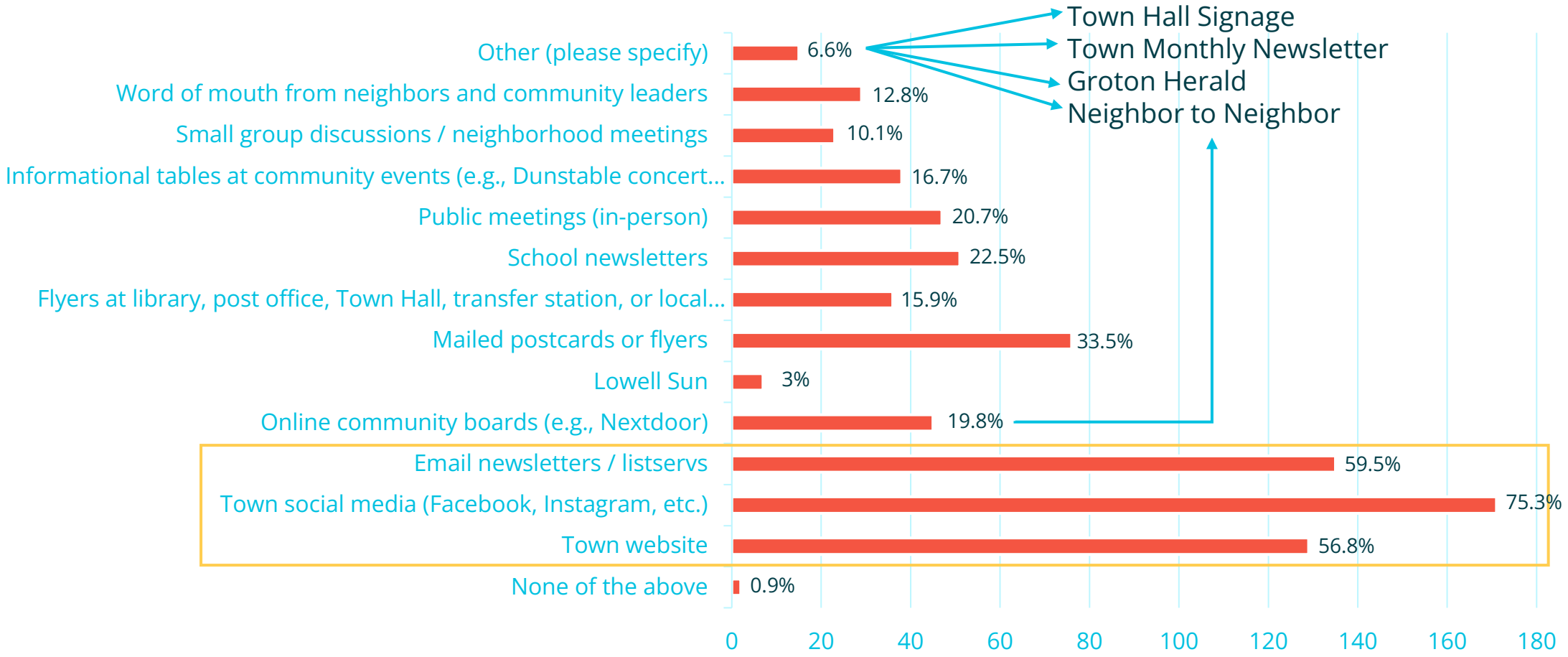
COMMUNICATION

15. What are the most effective ways to communicate information about this project to the Dunstable Community? (Select all that apply)



*227 answers,
117 skipped

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*227 answers,
117 skipped



NORTHERN MIDDLESEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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