



# FAIRFAX 2017 TOWN SURVEY RESULTS

Total Responses: 258

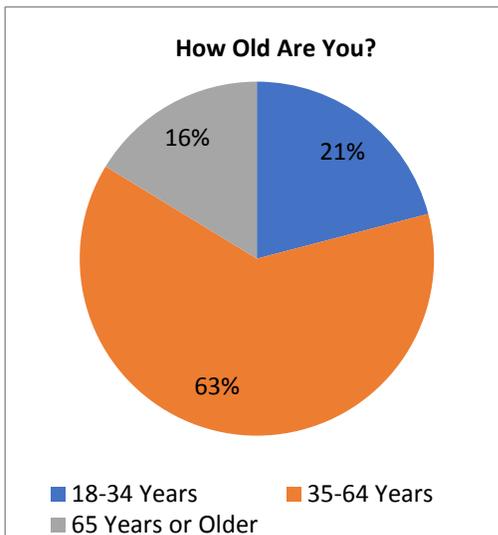
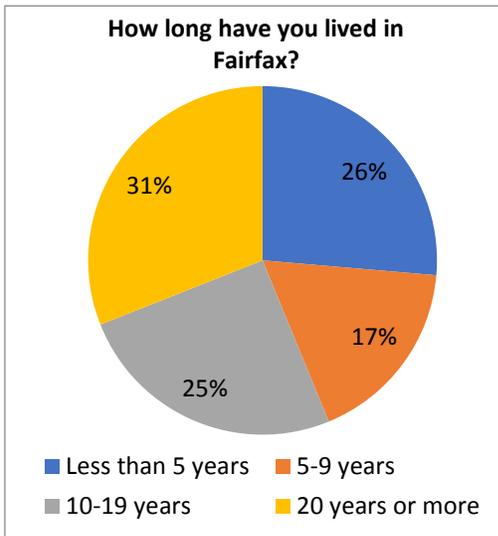
Survey period - 1 month

Survey questions - 18

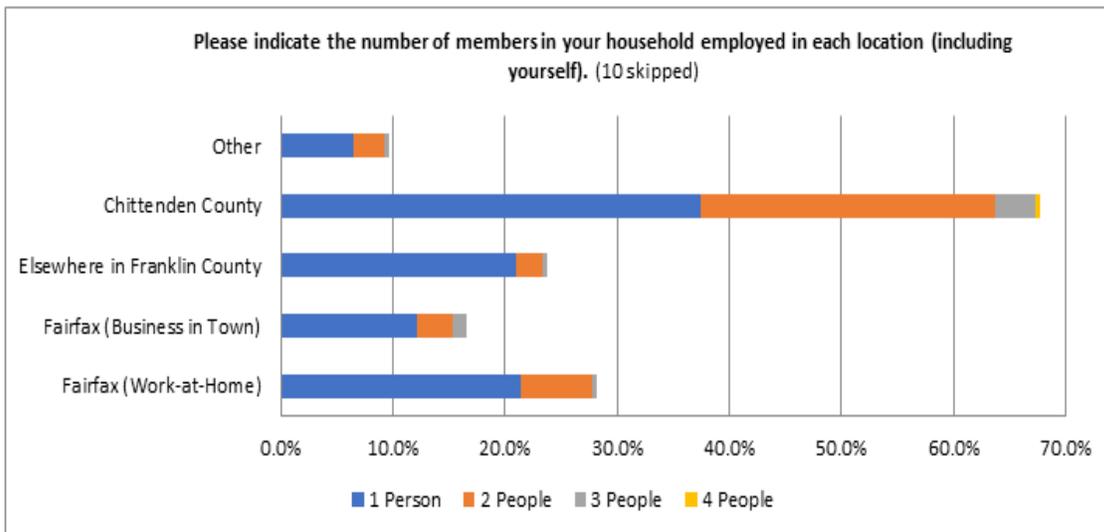
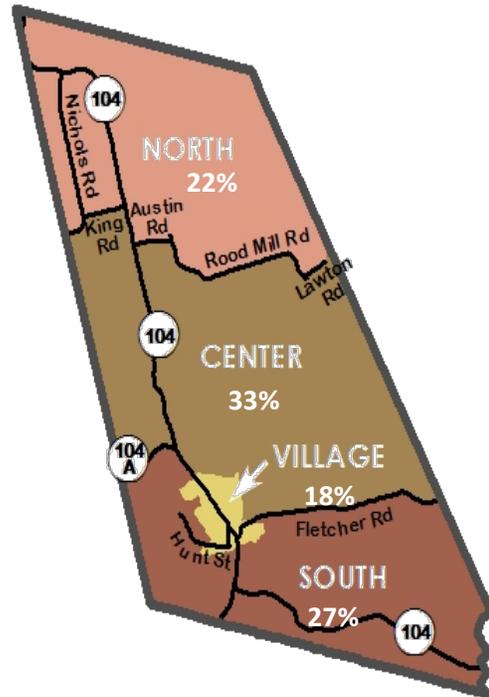
Town of Fairfax, Vermont  
Prepared by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission

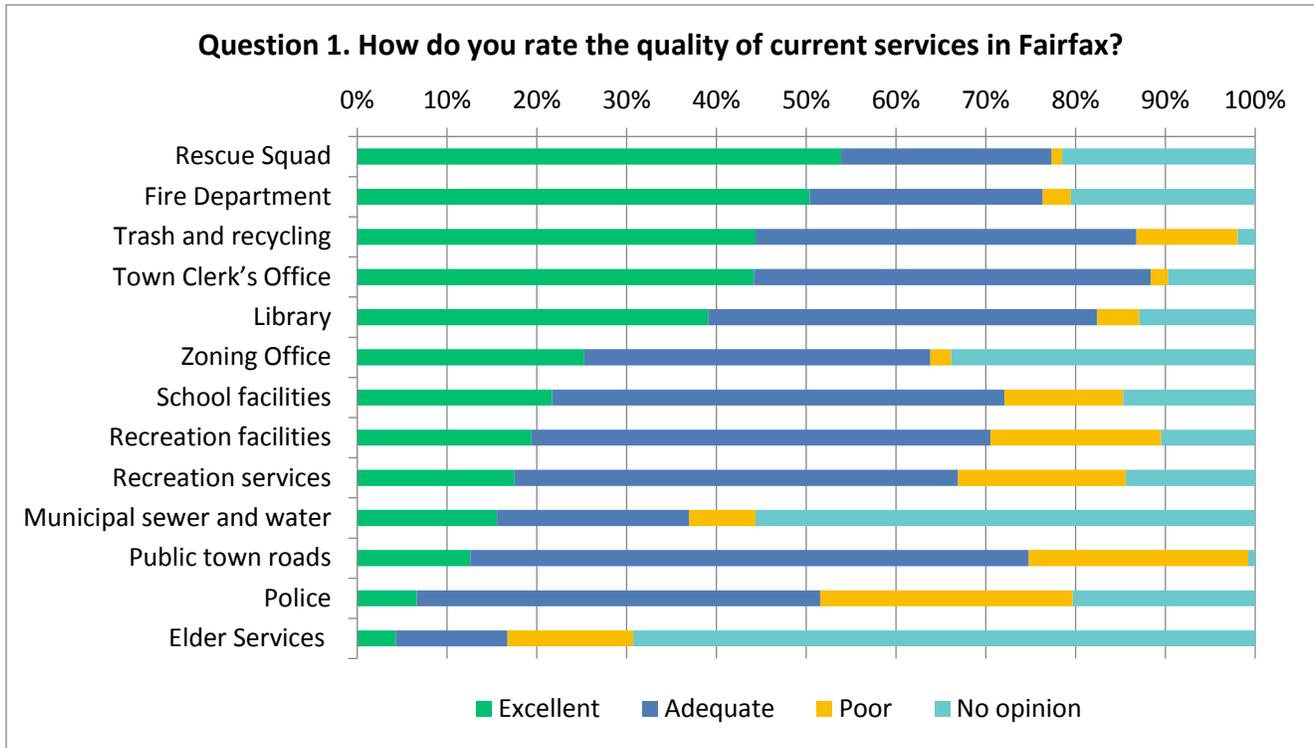
# 2017 Fairfax Town Survey

## Demographics of Survey Respondents



**Where in Fairfax do you reside? (3 skipped)**



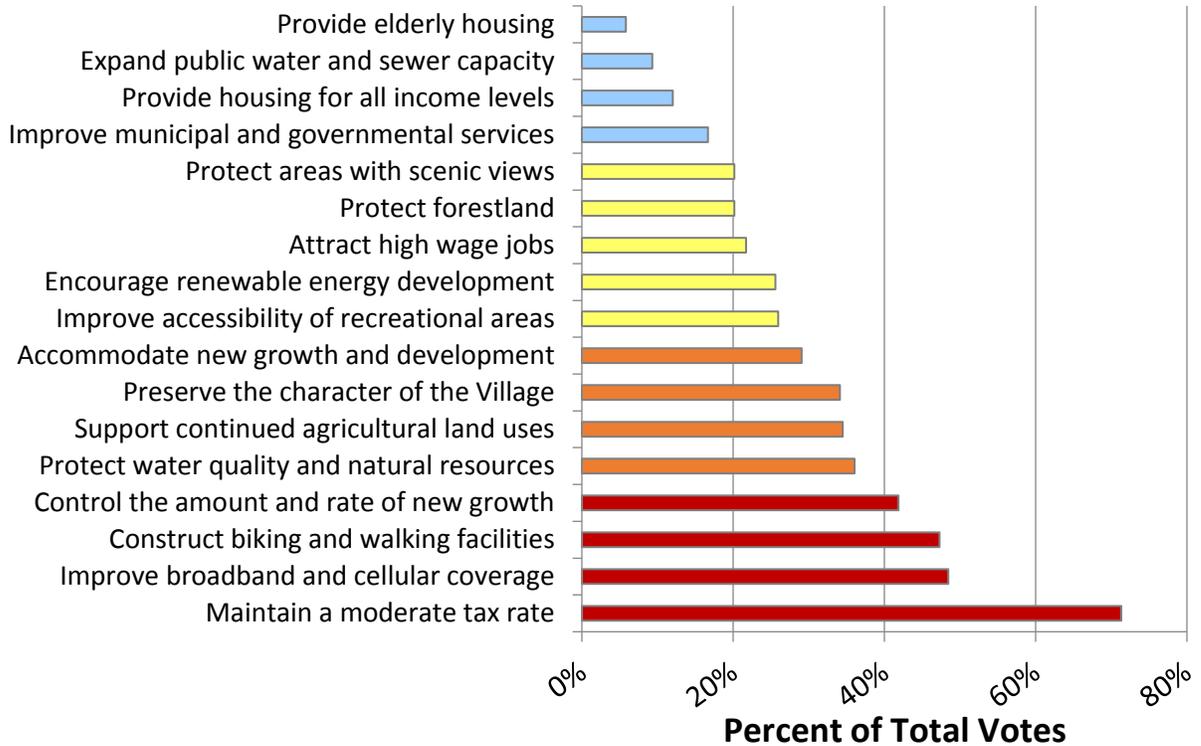


Most services were rated as adequate and the majority had no opinion on elder services or municipal sewer and water. An excellent rating was given to the Rescue Squad, Fire Department, Trash and Recycling, and Town Clerks Office. *The following are themes from 62 comments provided related to Question 1:*

- Emergency Services (Fire/Rescue/Police) – Expansion of police coverage beyond speed limit enforcement
- Trash and recycling – Concern over cost increased in contract; would like tier based system to link cost to amount used as well as option to pay more for service directly to house
- Town Roads – Would like transparency on paving schedule (commented currently done in small patches) and additional efforts on maintenance of dirt roads (potholes, ditches filled in, dead trees a hazard)
- School Facilities – Facilities need to be updated; Improve drop-off and pick-up flow and provide crossing guard for those walking to school
- Recreation Facilities – Would like to see more walking/nature trails, community center, park bench by playground, dog park.
- Recreation Services – More opportunities for all ages; free and more varied options
- Municipal Sewer and Water – Need to expand
- Elder Services – Potential to develop a senior volunteer ride service like Hinesburg (Hinesburg Rides – a community transportation program run by local volunteers under the Hinesburg Community Resource Center; partnering with GMT)
- Sidewalks/Crosswalks – Need pedestrian facilities along Buck Hollow Road, Huntsville Road, Route 104, School Street. Crosswalks need to be repainted by school
- Commercial Development – Needed to provide jobs and local marketplace.

- Internet – Faster, more reliable service offerings

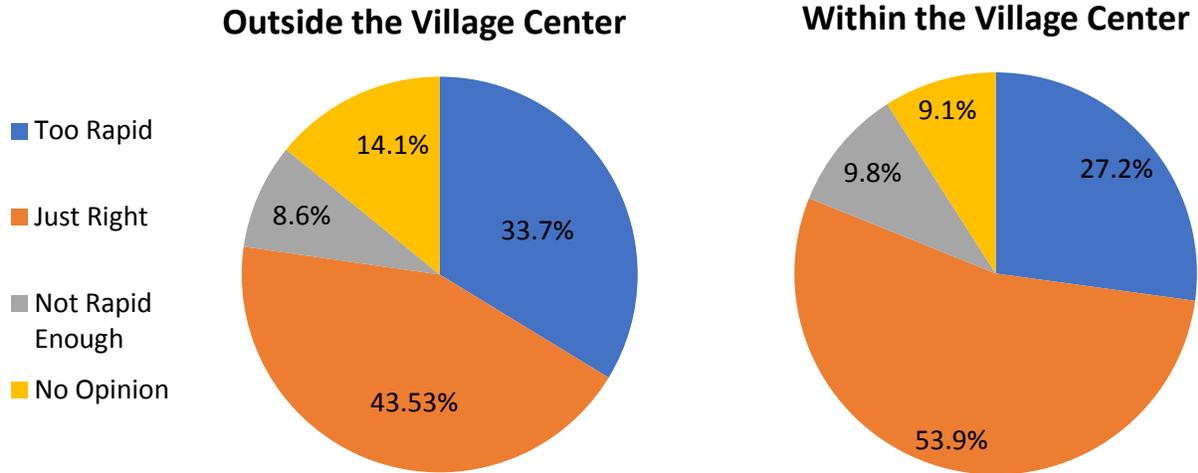
**Question 2. If Fairfax could address only five of the following planning objectives during the next eight (8) years, which five would you choose?**



**Top 7 Planning Objectives that had the most votes regardless of position ranked (1st-5th)**

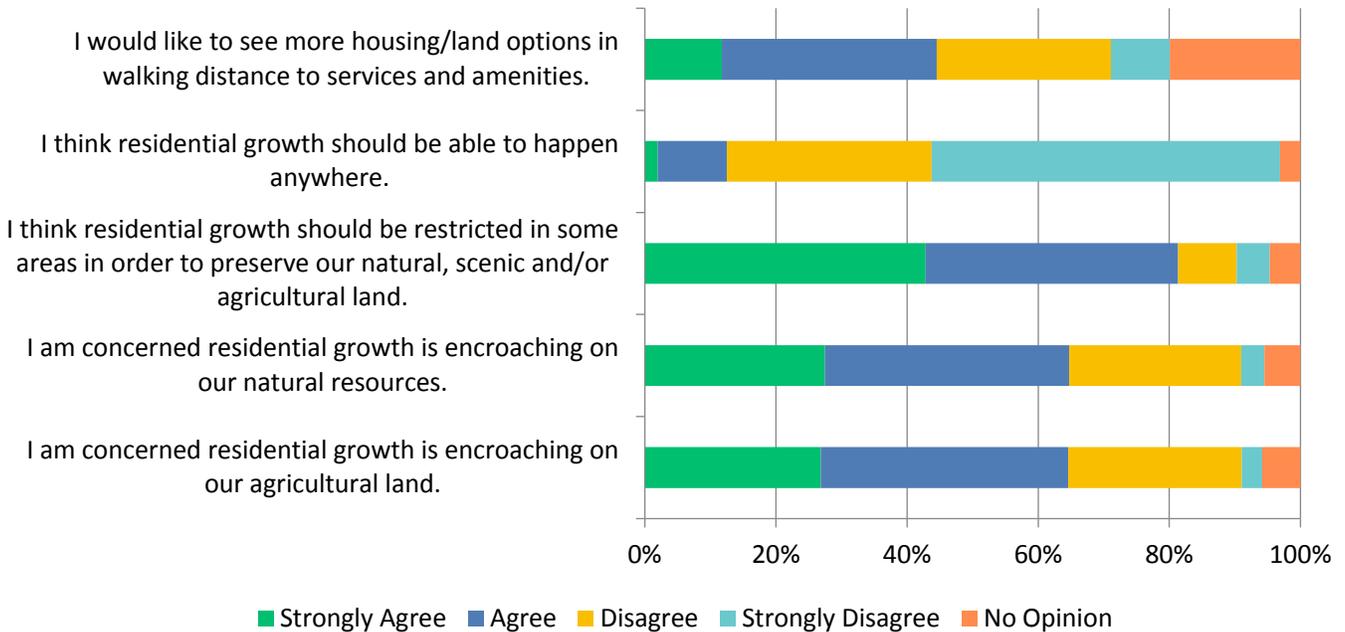
1. Maintain a moderate tax rate (184)
2. Improve broadband and cellular coverage (125)
3. Construct biking and walking facilities (paths or trails) (122)
4. Control the amount and rate of new growth (108)
5. Protect water quality and natural resources (93)
6. Support continued agricultural land uses (89)
7. Preserve the character of the Village (88)

**Question 3.** For this question, the Village Center is defined as Minor's Country Store to Nan's Mobile. How do you feel the rate of RESIDENTIAL development in Fairfax has been? (255 Respondents)



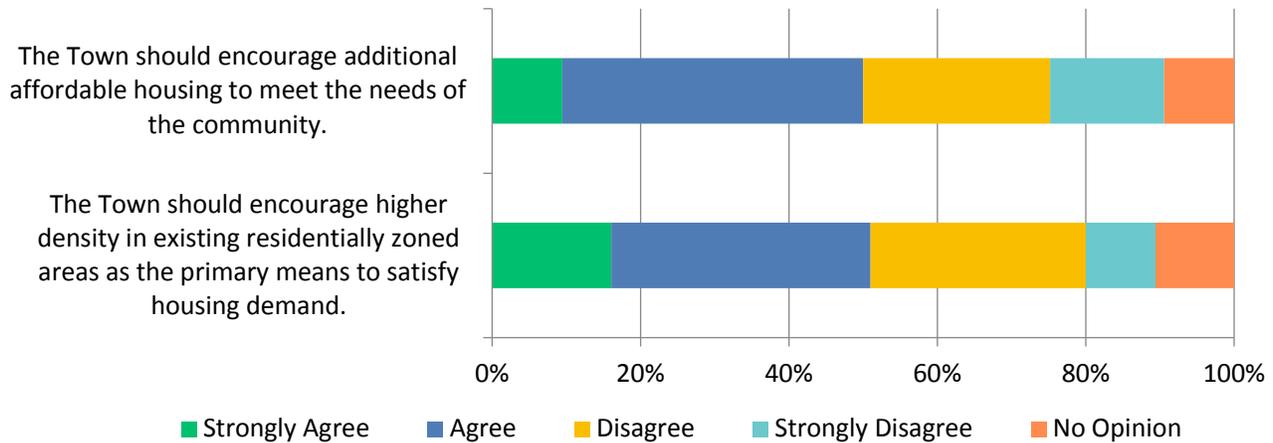
**Question 4.** In many places in Vermont and elsewhere, the 'rural landscape' has become a suburban one. Residential development is happening at the same density across the majority of a municipality, regardless of other historic, cultural or natural features in the landscape. Please indicate your opinion regarding RESIDENTIAL growth. (257 Respondents)

Please indicate your opinion regarding RESIDENTIAL growth.



**Question 5.** Please indicate your opinion regarding RESIDENTIAL growth. (257 Respondents)

Please indicate your opinion regarding RESIDENTIAL development.

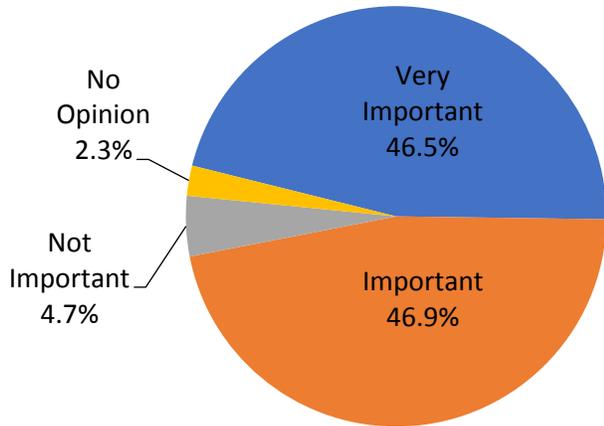


*\*Residentially zoned areas are defined as the Growth Center, Mixed Use, and Residential Zoning Districts*

*The following are themes from 58 comments related to residential development (Questions 4 and 5):*

- 
- Plan and control growth
  - Strong interest in maintaining rural character by preserving open space (scenic views and agricultural land)
  - Importance of sidewalk/paths within village and connections to outside village
  - Strong interest regarding the aesthetics of housing developments; desire for new development to visually meld with the form of historic structures in the community. Specific mention was made to that of multifamily dwellings.
  - Concentrate multi-family housing options in and near village districts
  - Balance new growth with the ability to make improvements to existing infrastructure; additional growth in rural districts impacting traffic on roadways.
  - Ensure existing housing stock is maintained
  - Do not want Fairfax to turn into Chittenden County (referring to higher density housing)
  - Perception that affordable housing equates to clustered multiunit homes and this is not a fit for a rural community
-

**Question 6. How important is local agriculture to you? (258 Respondents)**



**Question 7. If you responded that local agriculture is very important or important to you, why? (Check all that apply) (240 Respondents)**



Agriculture is part of the regional economy  
**78%**



Availability of fresh local food  
**74%**

Agriculture maintains the town's rural character  
**74%**

Other  
**10%**

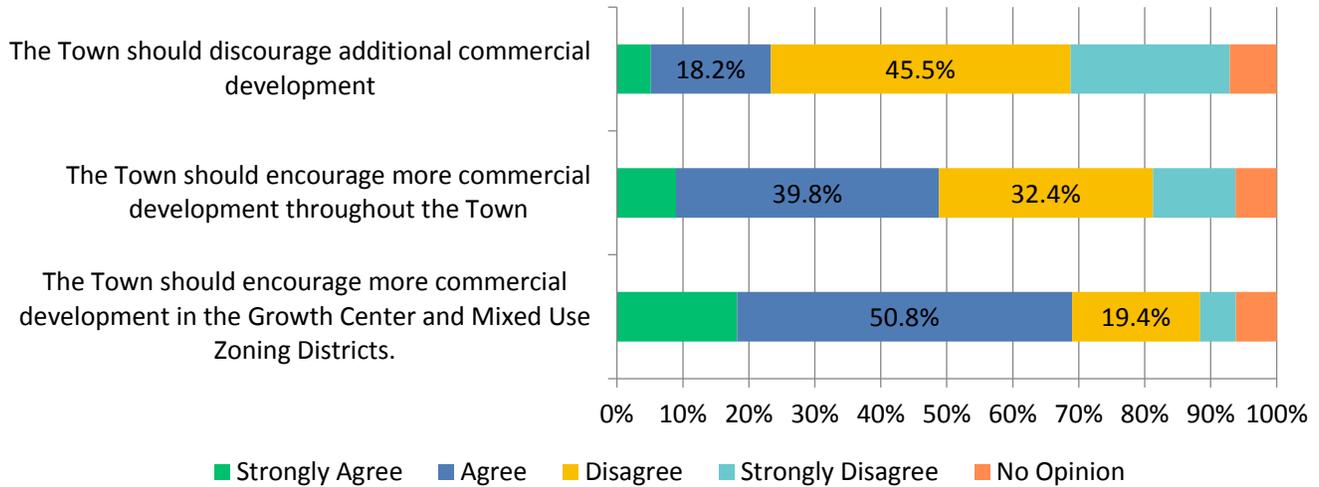
Agriculture preserves open space  
**70%**

*The following are themes from 17 comments regarding local agriculture (Question 6):*

- Many noted that the number of farms and amount of farmland has decreased
- Opinions range from the presence of farmland defines the feel of the Town to those saying ample farmland is available in VT and they would like to see residential and commercial growth
- Conditions of agriculture have changed and the Plan needs to reflect that
- Interest in maintaining small farm operations to provide locally grown produce

**Question 8. Please indicate your opinion regarding COMMERCIAL development. (258 Respondents)**

Please indicate your opinion regarding COMMERCIAL development.

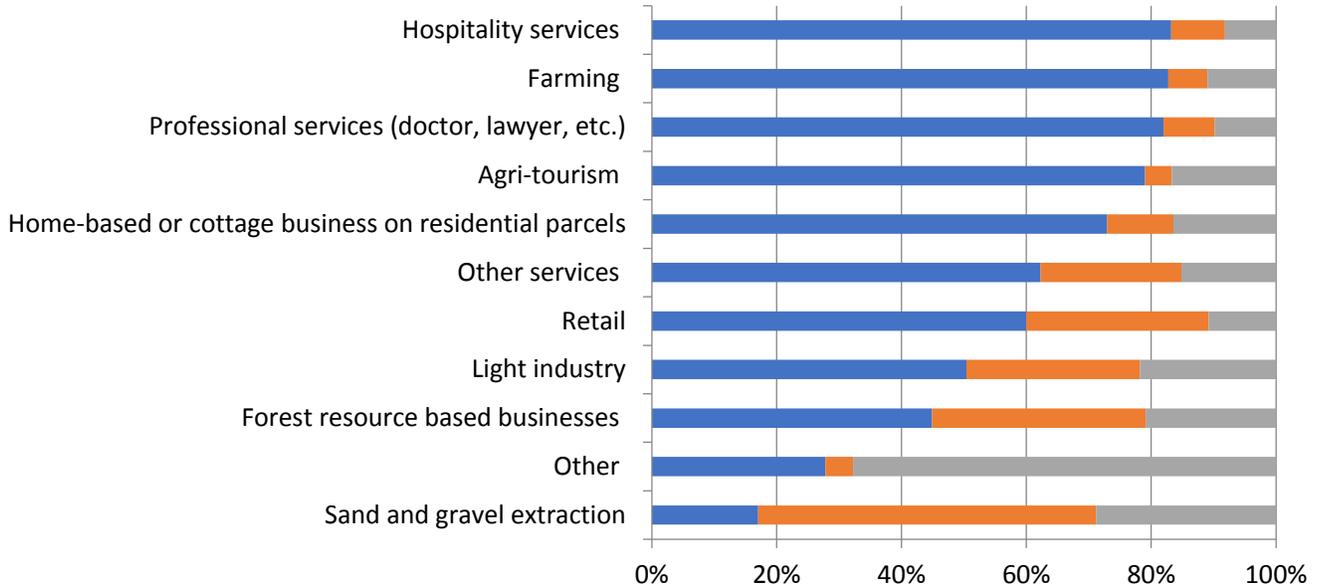


*The following are themes from 41 comments regarding commercial development (Question 8):*

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- Helps tax base but ensure keep small town feel
  - Encourage small family owned business, not large corporations
  - Interest in more services but acknowledge proximity to communities like St. Albans fills this need with the population and infrastructure to support it
  - Need infrastructure improvements in growth center
  - Potential for a focused center in North Fairfax
-

**Question 9. Which types of economic development would you like to see Fairfax encourage? (257 Respondents)**

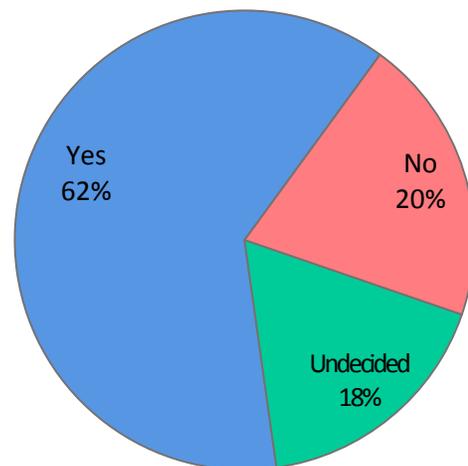


**Hospitality** services (restaurant, bed & breakfast, etc.)      Encourage      Discourage      No Opinion  
**Farming** (dairy, crop, diversification for value-added products, etc.)  
**Agri-tourism** (agriculturally based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm)  
**Other** services (gas station, dry cleaner, florist, repair shop, etc.)  
**Forest** resource based businesses (wood products manufacturing, mills, etc.)

*The following are themes from 49 comments regarding economic development (Question 9):*

- 
- Would like to see new services such as coffee shop, music venue, grocery, etc
  - Improvements to high speed internet to support telecommuting and small business
- 

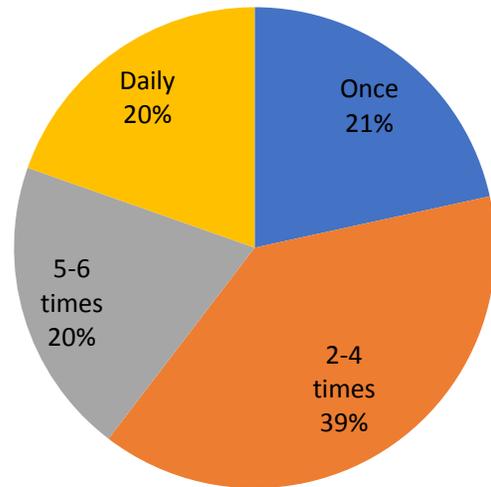
**Question 10. Should the Town invest in additional or improved infrastructure (e.g., roads, sidewalks, water, sewer, etc.) to attract businesses? (257 Respondents)**



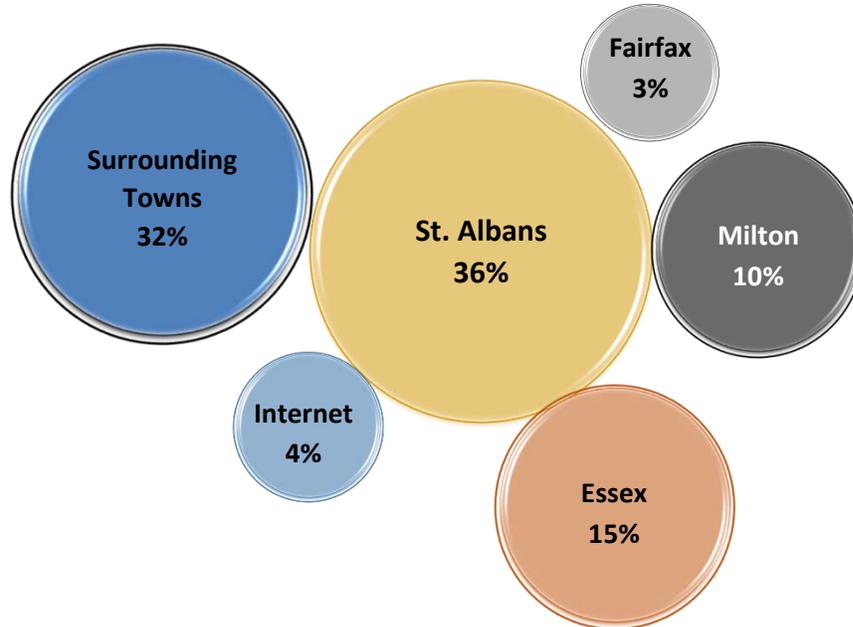
The following are themes from 91 comments regarding infrastructure improvements not already covered in prior question (Question 10):

- 
- Priority areas for investment: Roads, sidewalks, crosswalks, & high-speed internet
  - Mixed views on the expansion of water and sewer in the village
-

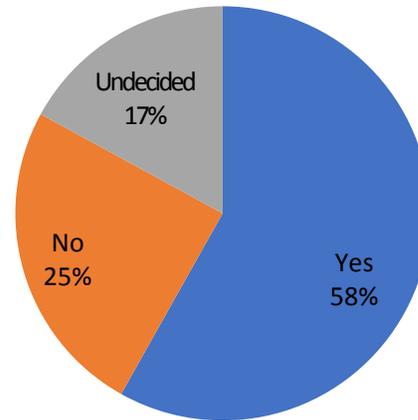
**Question 11. How often are you a patron at a business in the Village per week?** For this question, the Village Center is defined as Minor's Country Store to Nan's Mobile. (255 Respondents)



**Question 12. Where do you conduct most of your retail shopping (grocery, clothes, toiletries, etc.)?** (251 Respondents)



**Question 13. Should the Town invest in traffic-calming infrastructure (e.g., wayfinding signage in Village, street trees, new crosswalks, etc.) to slow traffic and increase traveler safety in the village areas? (258 Respondents)**



*The following are themes from 46 comments regarding traffic-calming infrastructure improvements (Question 13):*

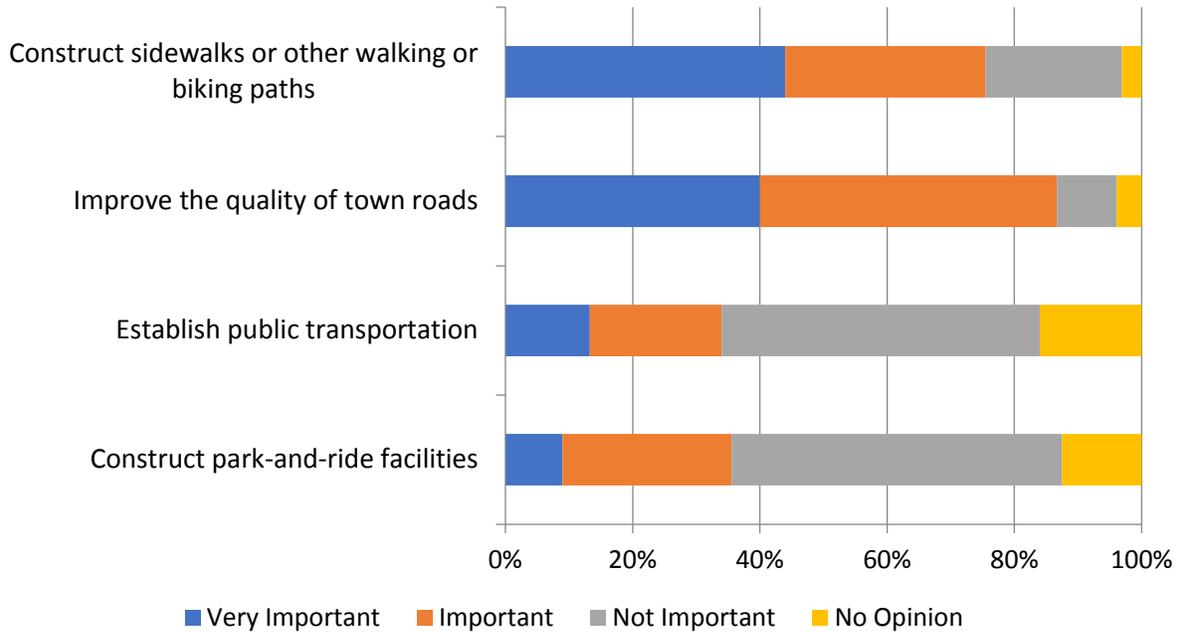
- 
- Promote street trees, crosswalks, and sidewalks
  - Concern that proposals would create issues for snow removal/plowing
  - Perceive speeding on rural roads in Town more of an issue
  - Would want to see statistics that it is an issue (speeding in village areas); If not a high rate of incidence then spend efforts to expand paths and other infrastructure
  - Important to be pedestrian friendly; support kids walking to school and residents using paths
  - Support depends on affordability of solution
  - Chicken and egg – first need to build desire to be in village, then work on improvements
  - Would support these actions if village was expanding to allow for more development (residential and commercial)
- 

Respondents identified the following areas of concern related to traveler safety:

- 
- North Village along Route 104
    - Exiting Nan's Mobil parking and Foothills Bakery
    - South bound turns from Buck Hollow Road or Huntsville Road to Main Street
    - Fletcher Road and River Road

*It was noted a thoughtful solution is needed to address safety at the intersection with the blinking light and trying to add in a crossing in this areas; simply adding more signage could create issues.*
  - South Village section of 104
    - From Erica's to Post Office
    - Intersection with 128
  - Intersection of 104 and 104A
-

**Question 14. Please indicate the level of importance of each transportation-related action.**  
(258 Respondents)



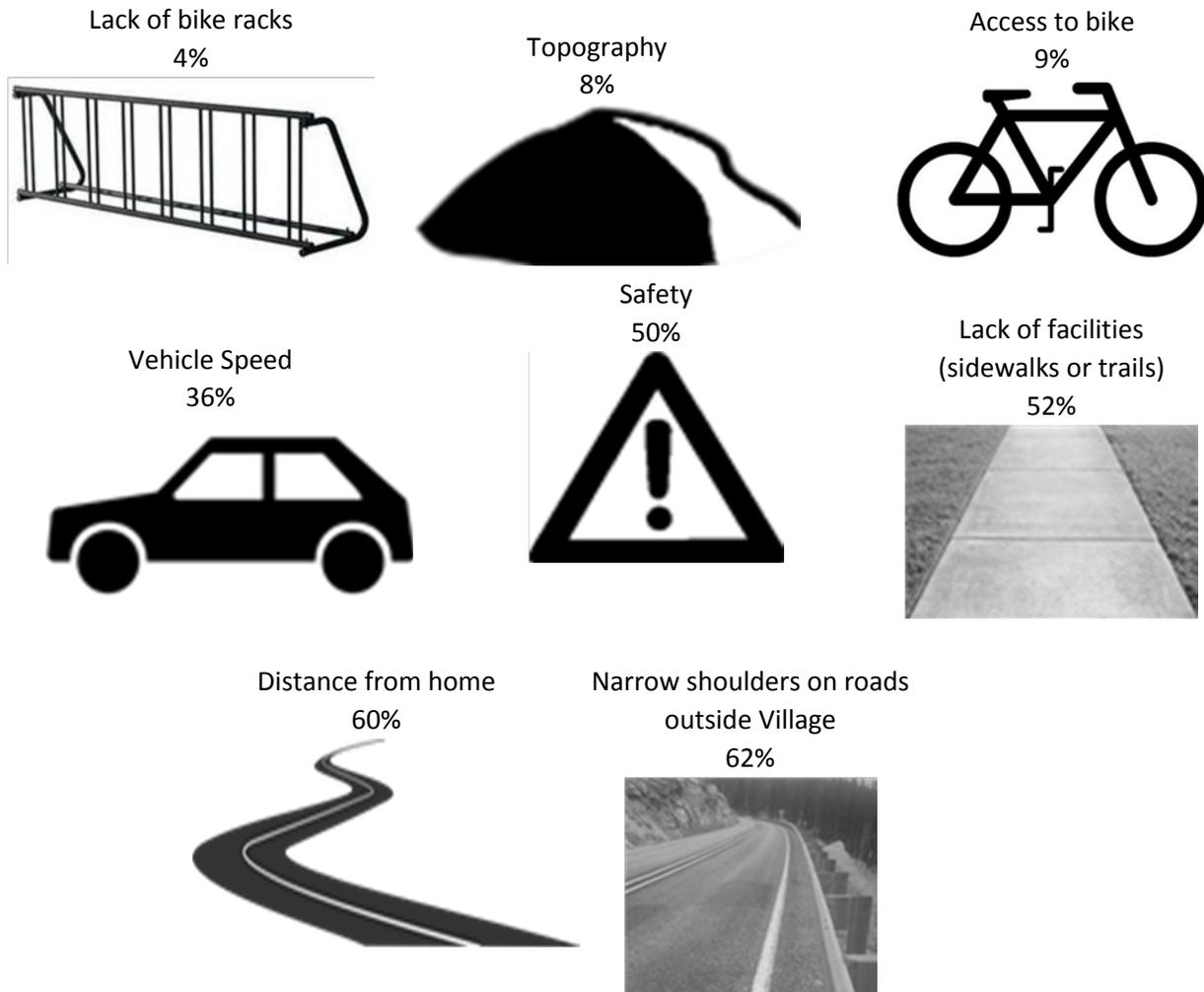
*The following are themes from 21 comments regarding traffic-calming infrastructure improvements (Question 14):*

- Many felt town roads should be prioritized over sidewalks and paths
- Public transportation not a priority given the Town's population
- Perceive the park and ride facility in Georgia at the Interstate is sufficient; it was noted there was a local lot across from Union Bank that is no longer in existence

**Question 15. Do you walk or bike in the Village?** (256 Respondents)

Yes	<b>39.45%</b>
No	<b>60.55%</b>

**Question 16. If you do not walk or bike in the Village, what keeps you from doing so? Check all that apply.** (174 Respondents)

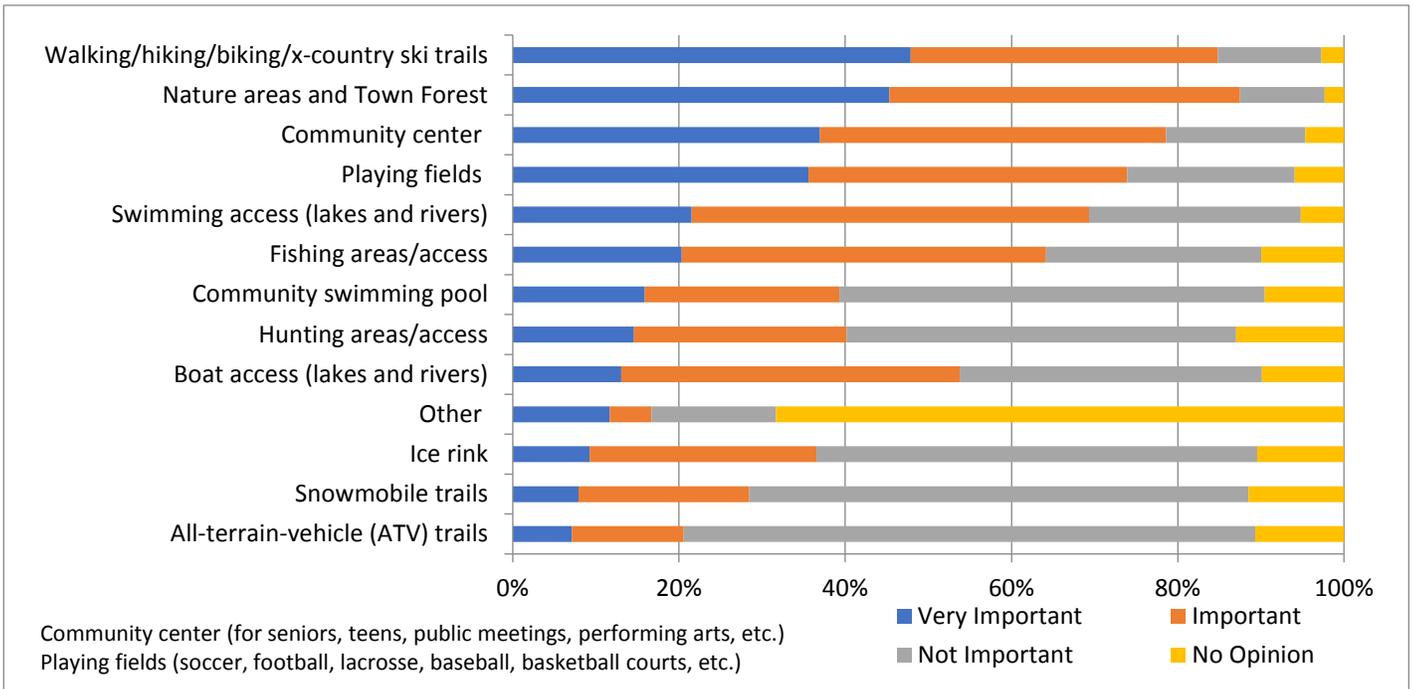


*The following are themes from 41 comments regarding walking and biking (Question 16):*

- 
- Noted preference for biking on country roads vs cost of infrastructure in Village
  - One respondent noted that the use of a wheelchair in the village would be problematic
  - Several respondents stated the lack of commercial destinations in the Village reduce their desire to bike there
-

## 2017 Fairfax Town Survey

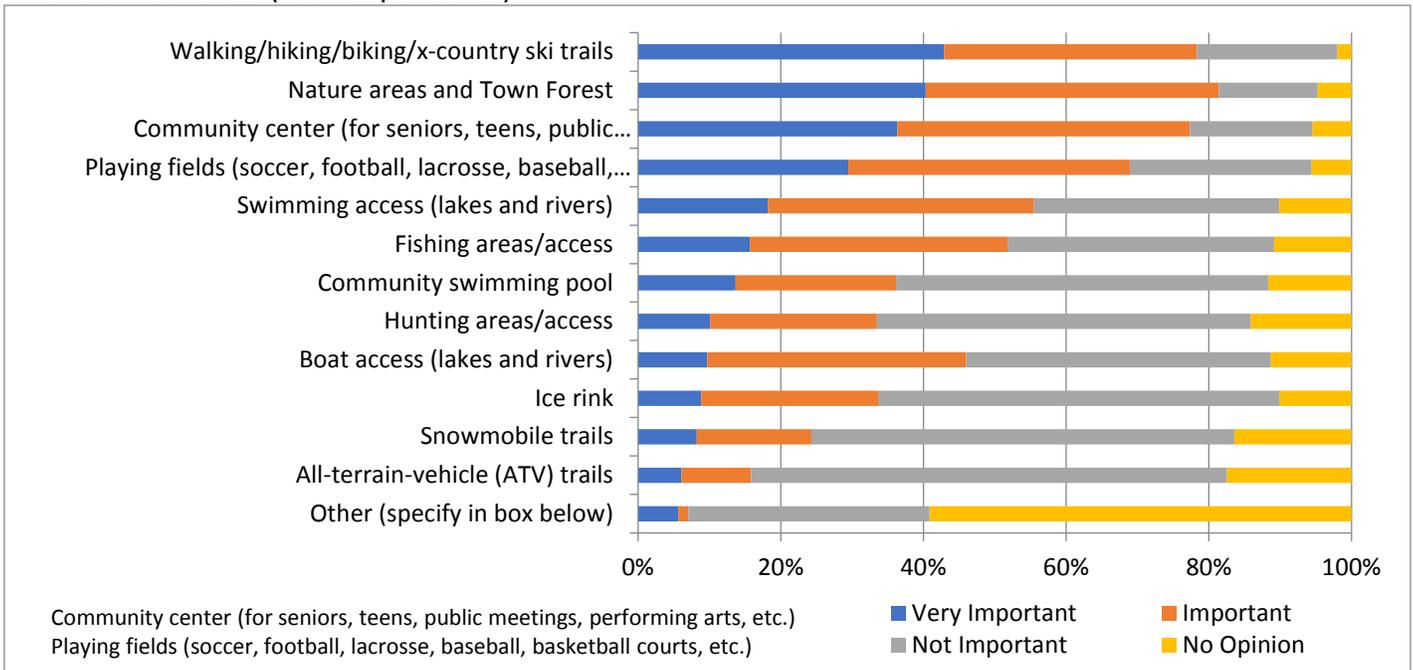
### Question 17. Which types of recreational land or facilities are important to you and/or the community? (258 Respondents)



The following are themes from 39 comments regarding recreation land/facilities/improvements (Question 17 and 18):

- Mountain biking
- Dog Park
- Noted Town Forest/100 Acre Woods as places where improvements could be made (parking and wet trails)
- Several respondents felt that many of these amenities should be funded by private investment or residents should utilize these facilities in the adjacent communities

### Question 18. Should the town support efforts to improve availability of the following recreational land or facilities? (258 Respondents)



*The following themes of additional comments provided by 81 respondents that are not addressed in earlier comments:* *are*

- Better broadband access for those that have options to telecommute but can't because of spotty service or slow bandwidth
- Enhance the village to encourage tourism
- Direct and control growth. A larger population means more services and in the end higher taxes. For example, at what population point will the Town need paid police or fire services?
- Request the Town be more active on Front Porch Forum to share news and information

A theme throughout the survey is the competing opinions for the vision of the Town. Should Fairfax grow and provide more services locally or remain more rural with limited services and future growth.

- Some feel concern that Fairfax is losing its rural character as a result of development. A respondent stated, "That's why we moved to the country, to be in the country. Not with city amenities".
- Others feel that there are ways that additional development could create more of a community center and destination. Respondents likened Fairfax to being able to follow the likes of other Vermont communities such as Hinesburg.
- Many respondents noted that close proximity to adjacent towns provide services Fairfax does not and that improving the walkability of the village with sidewalks would be a fruitful enhancement for the existing village and sense of community.

