

Survey Results

Vision Statement & Goals Survey

BOYLSTON MASTER PLAN

Prepared by:

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission



Thank you to all the residents who took the time to complete the second Master Plan survey! Feedback from the community provides helpful insight as CMRPC and the Master Plan Steering Committee build this plan for Boylston. Your responses and comments are extremely valued.

Total Number of Responses: **214**

Dates Available: **September 17, 2021 - November 26, 2021**

"The residents of Boylston envision our town as a place where..."

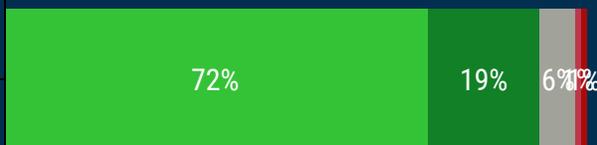
2021 Boylston Master Plan

● Strongly Agree
 ● Somewhat Agree
 ● Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ● Somewhat Disagree
 ● Strongly Disagree

"...the natural landscapes, open spaces, and the rich history of our community are proactively preserved and protected..."



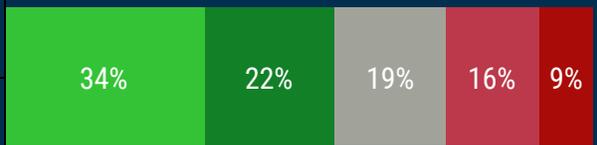
"...the children of our community are provided high-quality educational opportunities..."



"...there is strategic economic development managed by type, location, and scope in harmony with our community's heritage..."



"...diversity of housing types is available for people of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels..."



"...social and recreational opportunities are available to residents of all ages..."



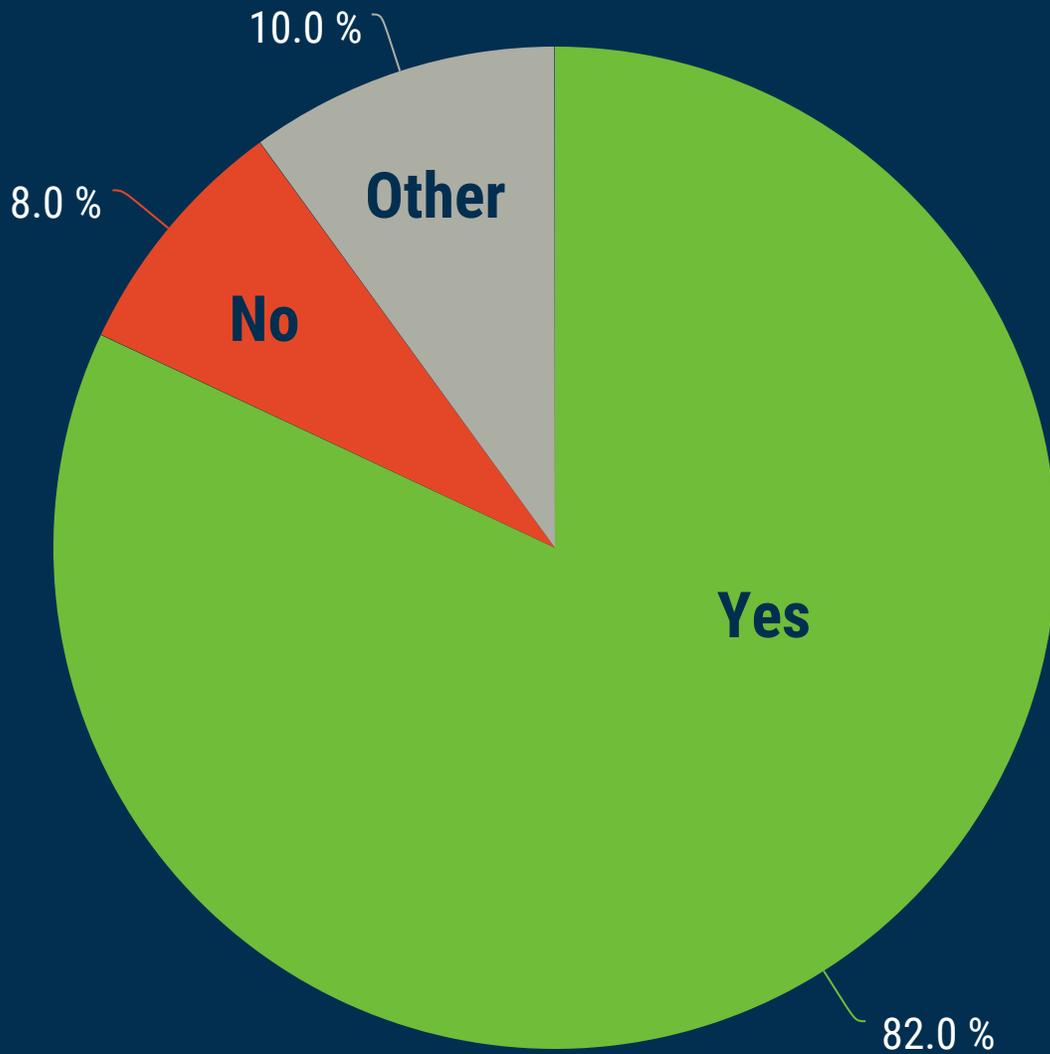
"...government is open, cooperative, and responsive to the ideas and concerns of residents..."



Respondents: 213

Does the Vision Statement reflect the direction you want Boylston to go over the next 10-20 years?

2021
Boylston Master Plan



Respondents: 209

Comments on the Vision Statement

Written input from survey respondents

"I strongly appreciate Boylston and its independence. It has resulted in great electric, great roads, and responsive police and fire."

"There is no specific mention of our senior population and their needs. Nearly 25% of our residents are seniors and that number is sure to rise... There is a great need for a Senior Center. Seniors collectively pay much more in taxes than they receive in services from the town."

"Particularly concerned with equitable housing opportunities. It would be nice if people could afford to live in the town they work in."

"I feel that the town should view the "rich history of the community" and the "community's heritage" from a 21st century prospective of cultural awareness and have an inclusive approach to preserving and protecting the town's history and heritage narratives."

"Maintaining natural, open space and recreation areas is as important as it is to bring more diversity, people of difference economic and social statuses to our small community"

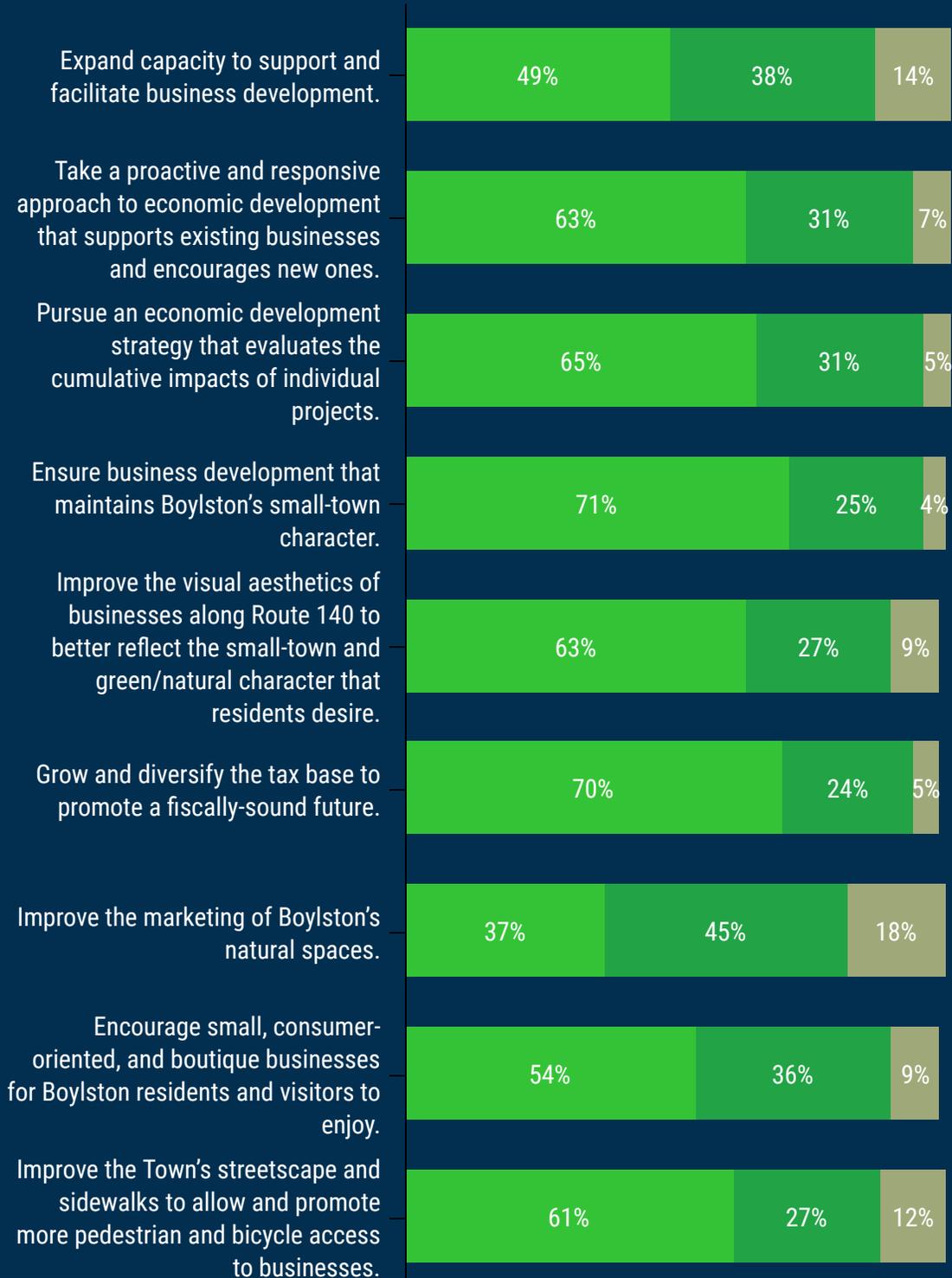
"I hope that the development is strategic. It feels as though some development is just happening without much regard for aesthetics, traffic, and natural habitats."

"There is little to no effort put in to providing spaces and activities for teenagers."

Economic Development Preliminary Goals

2021 Boylston Master Plan

● Very relevant to Boylston's future ● Somewhat relevant to Boylston's future ● Not at all relevant to Boylston's future



Respondents: 194

Comments on Economic Development Goals

Written input from survey respondents

“Marketing of Boylston’s natural spaces is a tough one. Kind of false advertising when you look at how much green space has been taken up by over-development..”

“We have an amazing school system. I would like to see more done at our town parks to give the children places to go and be together with their friends and family outside of school. Our beautiful parks should be a focus for bringing the community together.”

“Rt 140 could look like a quintessential New England village; currently looks very industrial and not inviting. I’d love to see boutique shops and possibly a grocery store like a Trader Joe’s or something with a Trader Joe’s feel.”

“Maintaining the “residential character” results in a greater part of the tax burden falling on the home owners through higher taxes. We need to remove some of that burden or we will become a town only for people with higher incomes and seniors living on a pension won’t be able to stay in their homes.”

“Sidewalks by the school would be welcome as well as a safer road. Some kind of traffic pedestrian light or milled road area before the crosswalk by Calliope Theater would be great. Milled roads on Cross Street before the stop sign for Central Street and at the end of French Drive might prevent some accidents..”

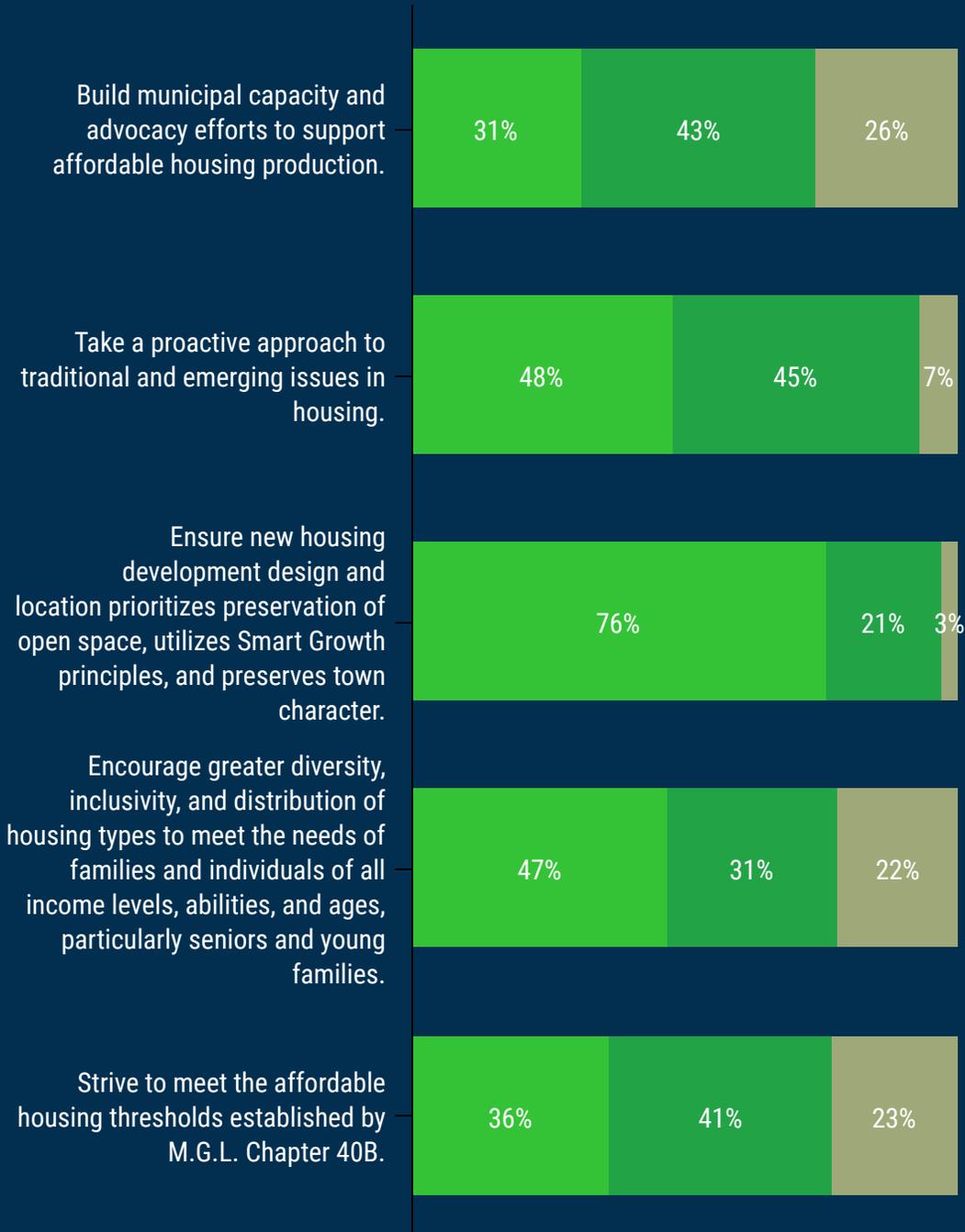
“It’s very hard to ride a bike/walk in Boylston and in some places it’s down right dangerous. More sidewalks or safe open space is needed.”

“Sidewalks and avoiding chain retailers should be major priorities for the town.”

Population and Housing Preliminary Goals

2021 Boylston Master Plan

● Very relevant to Boylston's future ● Somewhat relevant to Boylston's future ● Not at all relevant to Boylston's future



Respondents: 188

Comments on Population & Housing Goals

Written input from survey respondents

“Suggest re-zoning all of 140 for commercial development only, eliminating the large housing and apartment complexes which have been mistakenly allowed..”

“I would like to see a pause on aggressive housing in the town for a bit.”

“Boylston is in desperate need for more 40B options.”

“Are we able to receive exemptions from the state in regards to affordable housing developments due to the land area consumed by the Wachusett Reservoir?”

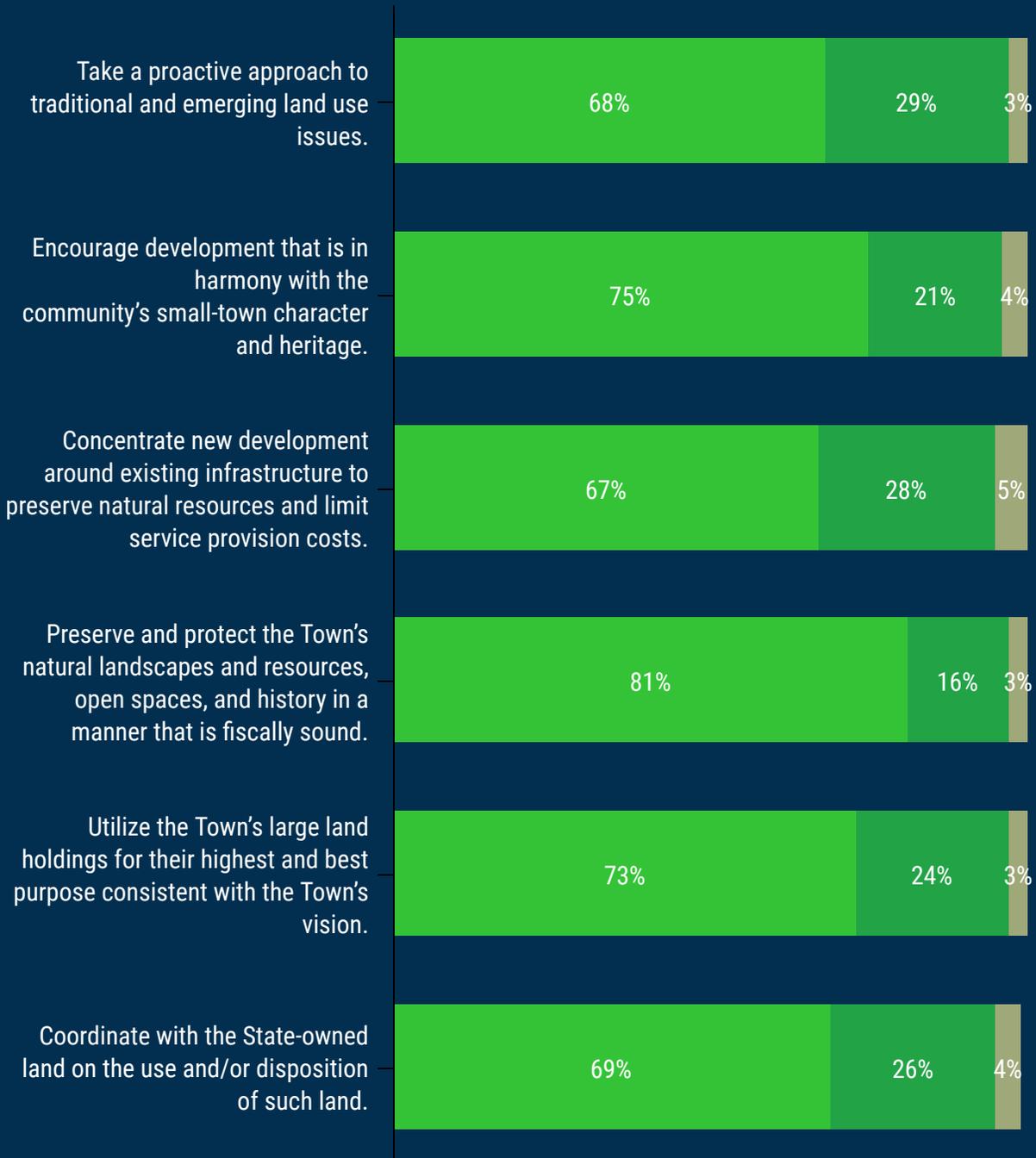
“Single family housing would be great, no condos, no mansions.”

“I think most important is to build and be open to housing diversity that will balance to limitations to our school limits. Tahanto relatively new, and would be concerned if we developed too much housing that would require another school in 5-10 yrs.”

Land Use Preliminary Goals

2021 Boylston Master Plan

● Very relevant to Boylston's future ● Somewhat relevant to Boylston's future ● Not at all relevant to Boylston's future



Respondents: 183

Comments on Land Use Goals

Written input from survey respondents

"We need more compensation from the state for the land taken to build the Wachusett reservoir. Our best potential industrial and business land (Sawyers Mills) was taken. Other land owned by the former MDC had greatly limited development and we should be well compensated for our loss."

"The phrase "highest and best purpose" worries me, because too often that is interpreted as devaluing open land, forests, and the like. For some people, unless that property is generating income, it is wasted. We need to value what our land contributes to clean air and water, mitigation of global warming, support for pollinators, and the diversity of plant and animal life."

"Use town land holdings to develop solar energy, and address other climate change issues."

"I'm thankful for past town folks for preserving Hillside, and think we need to focus on upgrades and continue on making it a place for all folks to come for diverse activities."

"I agree with using the towns large land ownings; except for the lions football field at the intersection of 140 and 70. That should stay as the Lions Football field. This field provides opportunities for so many families in Boylston, Berlin and West Boylston. This is a staple in our community."

"We need a designated Senior Center where the COA Coordinator and Assistant will have adequate office space. Also a better place to garage the COA van. A senior center where exercise programs can be facilitated. "

Open Space and Recreation Preliminary Goals

2021
Boylston Master Plan

● Very relevant to Boylston's future ● Somewhat relevant to Boylston's future ● Not at all relevant to Boylston's future

Be proactive about continuing to enhance and preserve Boylston's town character and small, New England town feel.



Preserve and protect Boylston's open spaces, including water bodies, woodlands, farms, and parks.



Maintain, add, and enhance recreational facilities and programs as needed.



Regulate and guide development to be consistent with town character, and to protect open space and natural resources.



Respondents: 182

Comments on Open Space & Recreation Goals

Written input from survey respondents

"I miss not having tennis courts. Used to be 2 locations, now none. Wish Tahanto had them for kids.."

"Preserving the natural beauty of the town that has drawn residents here to stay is important."

"Focus on what we HAVE. "

"We need bike lanes, docks for kayaks, more trails"

"We moved here for the abundance of open land. And while I realize there will always be growth, I appreciate living in a town where there is not a house or business on every open piece of land."

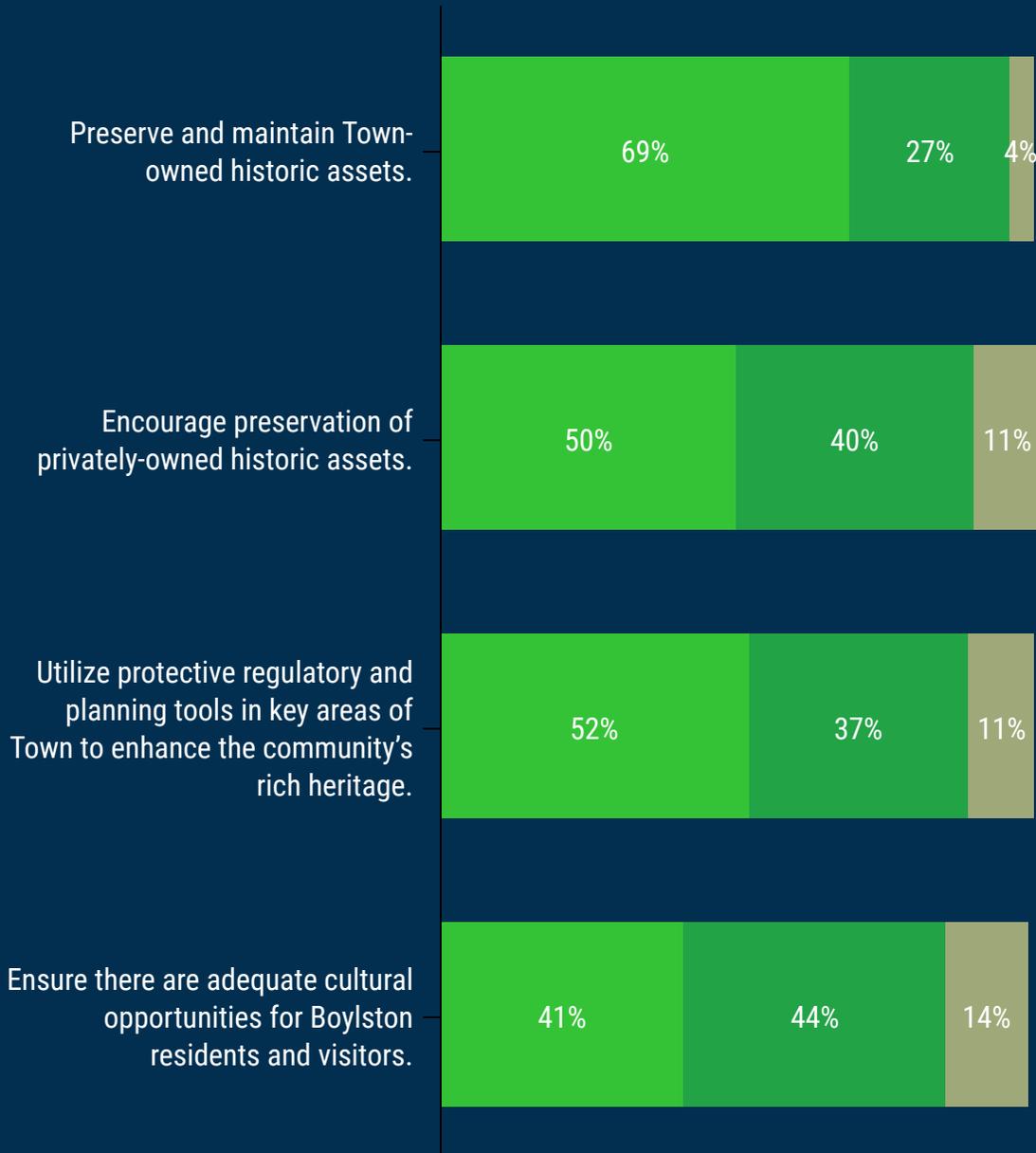
"Regarding recreational facilities, The Town House "Senior Center" is a disgrace. There is little or no participation because it is old and depressing and disrespects the intelligent active older adults in this community . The Town would be best served with an intergenerational Community Center that is vibrant. No need for more soccer/lacrosse fields. Better utilization and planning of what already exists."

"Engaging recreational activities with the town's water bodies, woodlands, farms, and parks is essential."

Cultural and Historic Resources Preliminary Goals

2021 Boylston Master Plan

● Very relevant to Boylston's future ● Somewhat relevant to Boylston's future ● Not at all relevant to Boylston's future



Respondents: 181

Comments on Cultural & Historic Resources Goals

Written input from survey respondents

"Cultural and historic means different things to different people. I'm all for funding the Gough House history, if at the same time make a place for all diverse walks of life feel welcomed, contemplation, to create a place for to feel welcomed in our community.

Maybe a deep history of the town before 17 & 1800's. More art, reading, meetings/classes opportunities."

"There are adequate cultural opportunities in Worcester beyond anything a small town could ever afford."

"Lack of residence event participation speaks volumes."

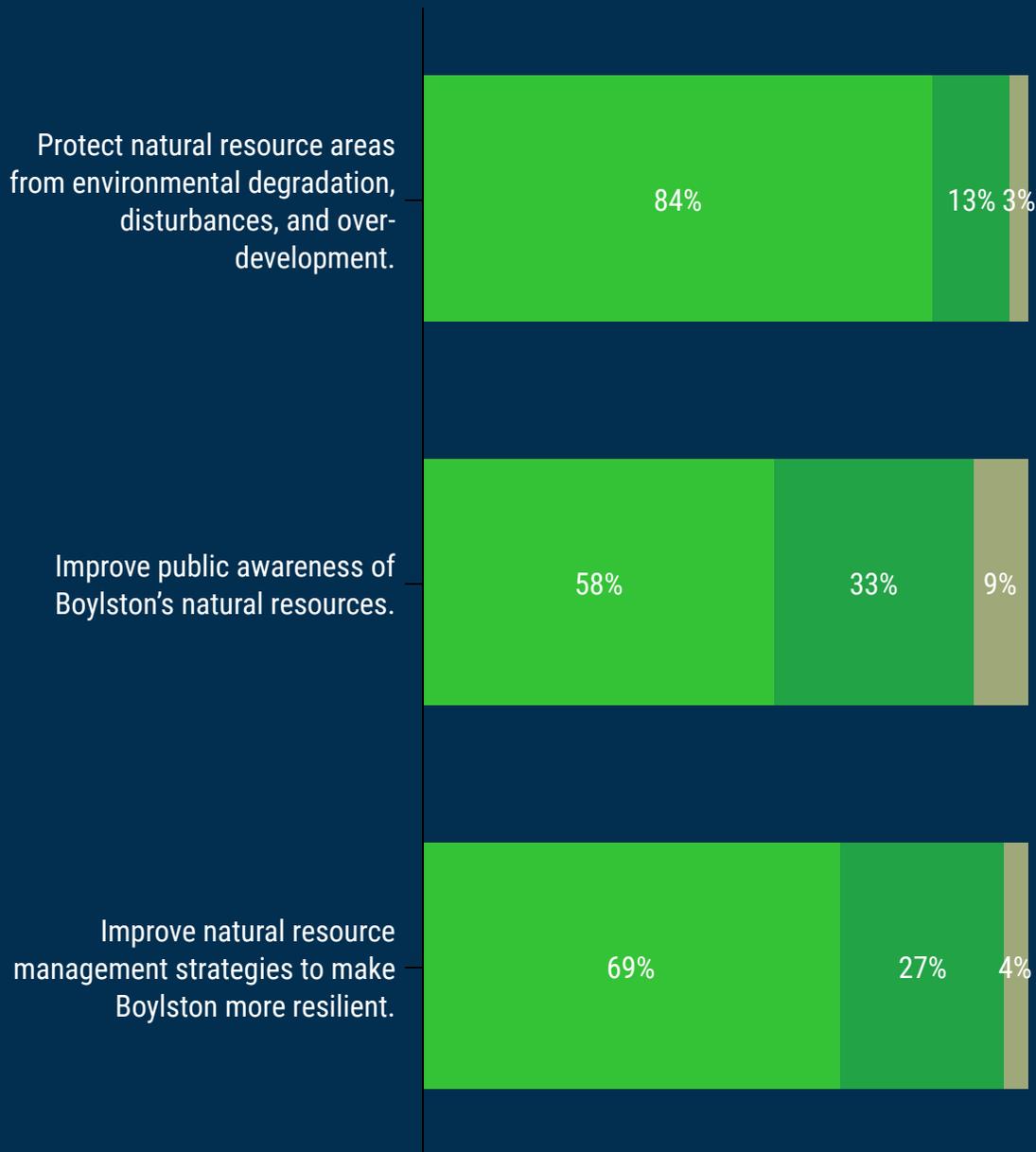
"Please consider creating heritage weeks to engage visitors and residents in the town's history."

"Preserving privately owned historic assets is admirable but not urgent. Finances should go into more basic needs."

Natural Resources Preliminary Goals

2021 Boylston Master Plan

● Very relevant to Boylston's future ● Somewhat relevant to Boylston's future ● Not at all relevant to Boylston's future



Respondents: 180

Comments on Natural Resources Goals

Written input from survey respondents

"This is our biggest differentiator and value, and enables our 'small town' culture."

"Over-development in this town is a serious issue that is degrading the value of this town. People are already moving out. I assume new schools will be needed once all the planned apartments go in. "

"Maps of resources should be distributed to residents."

"My impression is that most of Boylston's natural resources (or access to them) are privately owned and are unavailable to the average resident. For instance the Rocky Pond boat ramp is a disaster and it is clear the residents are not interested in improving access in order to keep access to themselves."

Fresh clean water is one of the things we take for granted. So any development that even comes close to altering that is not worth the tax benefit. More proactive messaging for littering. Tired of cleaning up every year due to people still littering. Rather help with town flower/tree plantings. I'm all for a town trash/litter tax on the liquor/coffee businesses, or stiff fines/cameras to curb it. open to suggestions."

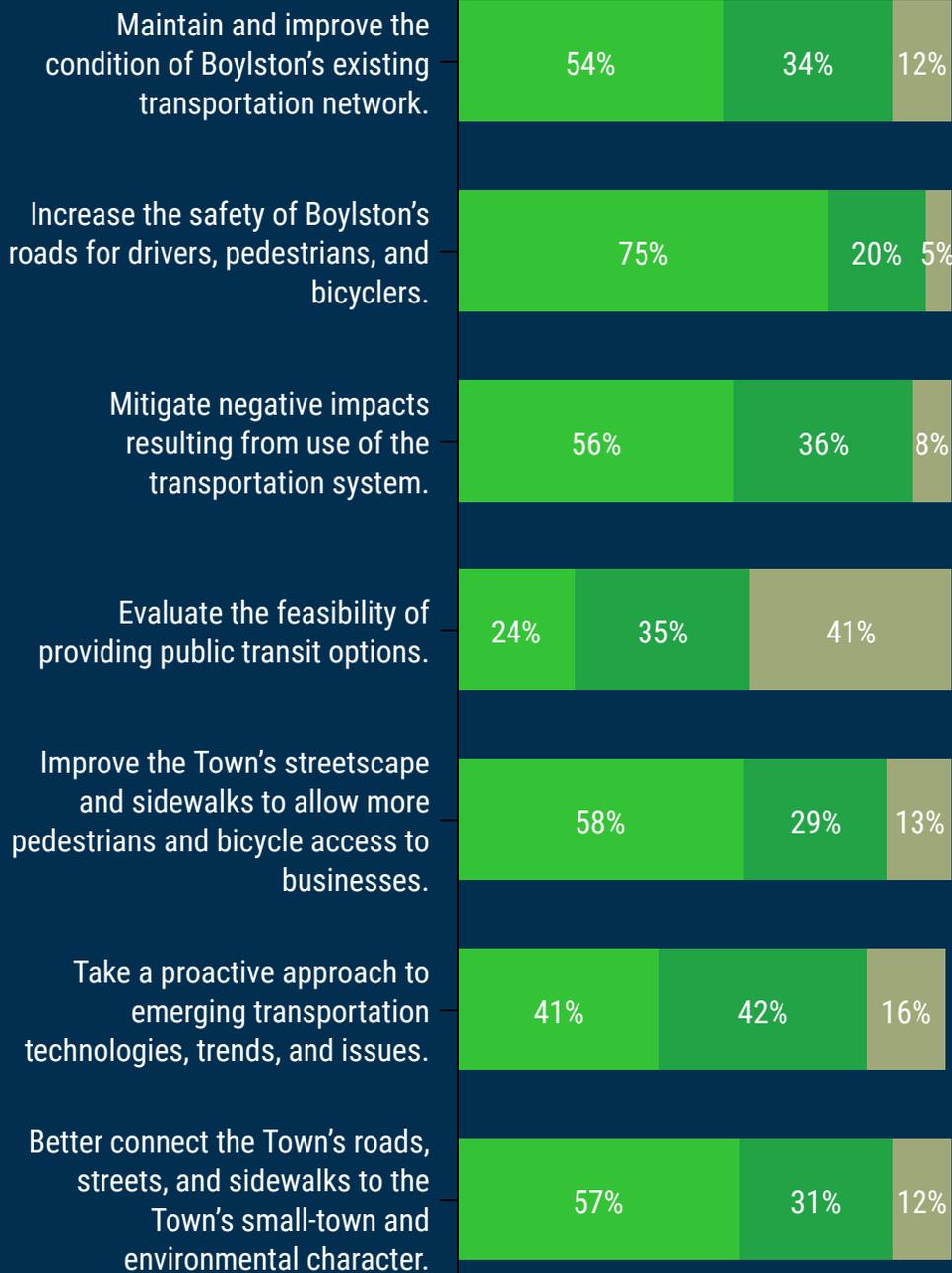
"This is one of the best assets of the town."

"Concentrate effort on what we HAVE 1st."

Transportation and Circulation Preliminary Goals

2021 Boylston Master Plan

● Very relevant to Boylston's future ● Somewhat relevant to Boylston's future ● Not at all relevant to Boylston's future



Respondents: 179

Comments on Transportation & Circulation Goals

Written input from survey respondents

"Boylston is a beautiful rural community, however despite its small town feel the roads are fast and dangerous to bike and walk on."

"The town definitely needs sidewalks especially near the library because its not safe the way it is now."

"Our population and business demographics don't warrant a public transit in our town; but maybe to surrounding towns? A bus stop in Morningdale by Worcester city bus near Colliapi theatre ? To take residents to Lincoln plaza to shop or to take residents to UMASS medical on Plantation St in Worcester? Once a week?"

"Sidewalks are limited, often end abruptly, and are in poor condition. Ensuring safer pedestrian access near parks and popular public buildings would be useful and increase public safety."

"Boylston destinations are only drivable. It does not promote the "small town character" so frequently mentioned in this survey. The lack of sidewalks or walkable business area only promotes a bedroom community that has access to the highway. The exception would be the Morningdale neighborhood."

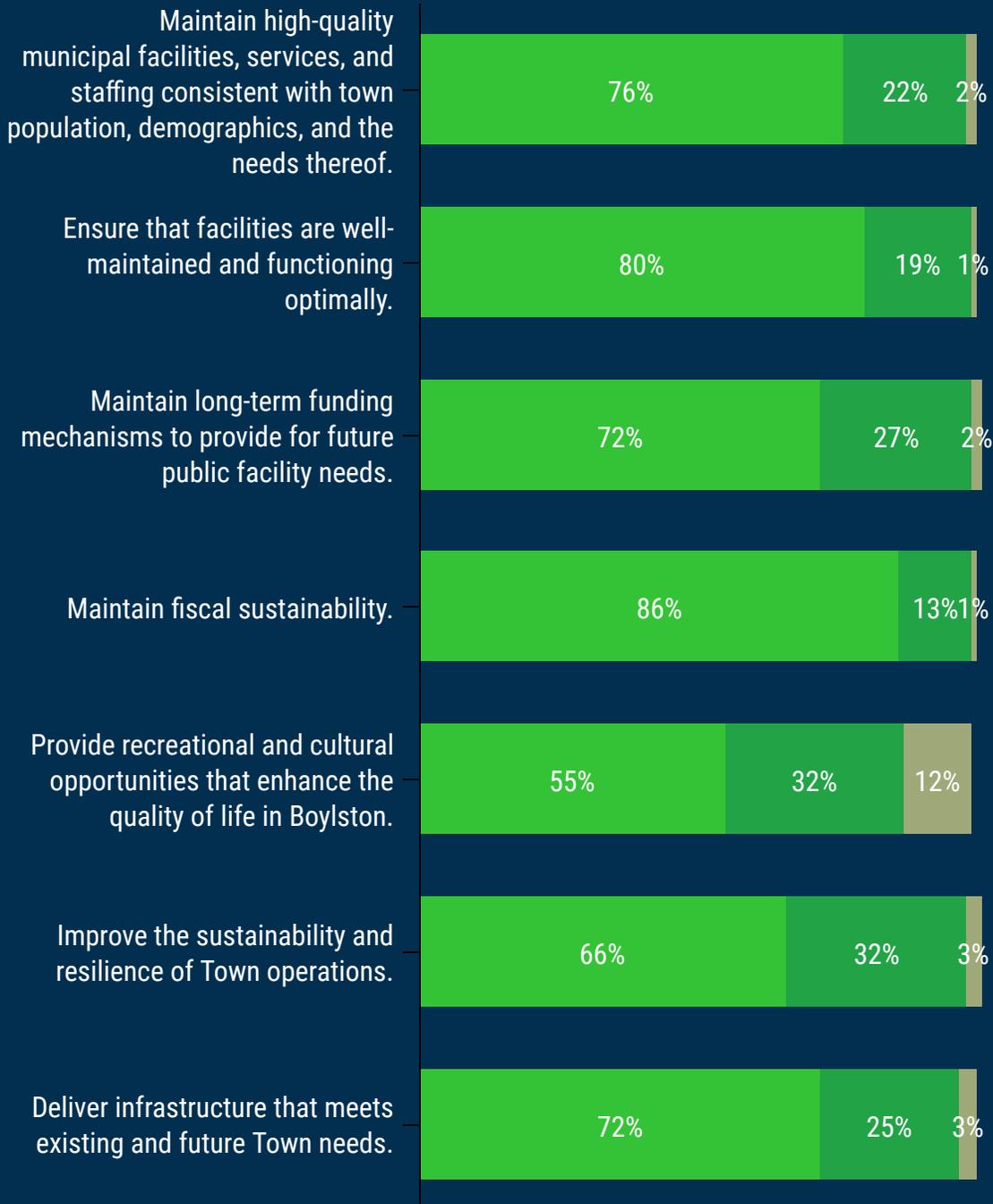
"Nothing is 'pedestrian friendly' in this town. What does this mean, how would it look? I'd still have to drive to get there..."

"Connecting public transportation with surrounding towns and cities would be necessary. Also, would you consider creating at least a few days a week where the historic center of the town is pedestrian-only while identifying places for cars to park and access that part of town?"

Facilities and Public Services Preliminary Goals

2021 Boylston Master Plan

● Very relevant to Boylston's future ● Somewhat relevant to Boylston's future ● Not at all relevant to Boylston's future



Respondents: 177

Comments on Facilities & Public Services Goals

Written input from survey respondents

“Really need town wide water and sewer. Many residents agree the private are very salty. The hard water is damaging the existing houses.”

“Hillside needs to have public restroom facilities with running water.”

“Expand the hours at the town hall so that citizens and builders can get needed information and permits more easily. Increase the required hours worked to be considered full time and eligible for benefits. That would be possible if the town hall were open 5 days instead of 4 and hours of operation increased.”

“Would like to see a sewage system to replace the septic systems in town.”

“A Senior Center is needed!!!! It appears that the senior population of our town has been forgotten!!!”

“These all need to be in concert with not pricing current residents out of the town due to excessive property taxation.”

“Parks and Rec has really upped their game in the last couple of years. Wonderful for families. We could also use more 55 plus recreation which is different from the older more vulnerable population who need a different kind of recreation as well.”

“The fire station and police station need to be replaced. The PD has no lockup, or garage for police cruisers. The fire station is infested with rodents and was never built to hold today's vehicles. ”

General Comments

Written input from survey respondents

"I'm sure that we can keep the landscape of Boylston attractive and also create more small businesses to help with economic growth."

"Please, please, do NOT raise our property taxes any further!"

"Thanks to all for doing the survey and those that give time to our town. We all need to stop and take a moment to be thankful for what we have and not take it for granted, and help make the town, state, country and world a better place for our kids and next generations of kids. Climate change is real and impacts will continue. We need to keep that in mind with whatever we do. Every little bit helps! Thanks"

"Maintenance of all parks and equipment needs to be addressed. Some equipment is old and broken. Grounds at times are not kept and discourage use. Contact for Road issues on town site need to be updated."

"Boylston needs more single family housing similar to compass pointe for families that is affordable and not overpriced like Barnard Hill"

"It is unrealistic to think Boylston won't grow. I believe that the Town needs to try to balance growth while maintaining its friendly, quaint feel. Maintaining town buildings and providing services is a must. The town has to have growth in order to do those things."

"Growth is inevitable. Planning is needed to maintain the town's positive assets."

"Proactively address climate change issues in planning for energy use and production, building, transportation, etc. Issues that come up repeatedly on the Boylston residents' Facebook page are water main breaks, need for broadband internet alternatives, and waste removal."

General Comments

Written input from survey respondents

“We need more handicap accessibility in Boylston. We need to do far more for seniors. We need a senior center built on flat terrain.”

“The families with children are what make this town great. Families come to Boylston for great schools and the small town charm. Let’s focus on that and continuing to attract more families to town.”

“ It is essential to concentrate and expand industrial development (needed for job growth and economic/fiscal growth) along the 140 route. This will provide the town with some sustained revenue while protecting its characters in most neighborhoods. Furthermore, encouraging small boutiques and local stores in the historic center will enhance the small-town feeling. Finally, Boylston's charm and distinction are the green spaces and its small-town character. Any development plans should keep that in mind and engage the younger generations and residents in related activities to ensure their preservation.”

“Great work in pushing this forward. Please don't come up with a generic plan that sounds like any other town around here - that will cause it to be put on the shelf and forgotten.”

“Need more business growth and less housing growth in town. Need look of 140 to be improved to attract businesses. Right now 140 looks so run down. Also need to preserve open space for recreation.”

“My hope is that maintaining “small town character and heritage” will be appropriately balanced with a stronger commitment to embracing diversity and growth. This goes beyond formal planning and development, and includes a closer look at inclusivity, equality and cultural competence”

“The quickest action to improve the town and its prospects is to clean up and modernize the 140 stretch. The easiest way to start the beautification process is to require consistency with business signage, enforce cleanliness standards regarding empty lots, etc. (We purposely tell people new to the area to come through Church Street into town to avoid the embarrassment of them seeing the 140 corridor first).”