

CONCORD COMMUNITY SURVEY 2014



Town of Concord Municipal Plan



Main Street looking north, circa 1870. Bouchard House is on the right.



Main Street today. Concord's new Town Office is on the right.

**Adopted
September 17, 2009**

BACKGROUND:

Concord's last Town Plan was adopted in September of 2009. A community survey undertaken in 2007 had informed the direction of the Town Plan.

In early 2014 the Concord Planning Commission embarked on the process of updating the Town Plan.

The first step taken by the Planning Commission was to design a new survey, aimed at gathering community input on a variety of issues in Town.



Thank you for assisting with the update of the Town of Concord Municipal Plan update by participating in this survey by March 31, 2014!

The Town of Concord was recently awarded a Municipal Planning Grant by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development in order to update the Town Plan. The Concord Town Plan was last updated in September of 2009, and is due to expire in September of 2014. The Town Plan assesses the Town's resources, identifies needs, presents a vision for the future of the Town, and identifies ways of achieving this vision. The Planning Commission has developed the following survey in order to gather input from the community regarding the adequacy of existing facilities, resources that are important to Town residents, and additional facilities or developments that would benefit the community. Please take the time to answer all questions as completely as possible. Every adult (18+) in the household is encouraged to respond. The responses to this survey will provide important guidance to the Planning Commission as they prepare revisions to the Town Plan. Thank you for participating!

General Information							
Is Concord your primary residence?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>				
Do you own or rent your home?	Own <input type="checkbox"/>		Rent <input type="checkbox"/>				
Are you retired?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>				
Do you own a business located in Concord?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>				
Do you work in...	Concord <input type="checkbox"/>	Lyndonville <input type="checkbox"/>	St. Johnsbury <input type="checkbox"/>	Littleton <input type="checkbox"/>	Lancaster <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Town <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
How many people are in your household, including yourself?	One <input type="checkbox"/>		Two <input type="checkbox"/>	Three <input type="checkbox"/>	Four or More <input type="checkbox"/>		
How many children under the age of 18 are in your household?	One <input type="checkbox"/>		Two <input type="checkbox"/>	Three <input type="checkbox"/>	Four or More <input type="checkbox"/>		
How many people in your household, including yourself, are over the age of 60?	One <input type="checkbox"/>		Two <input type="checkbox"/>	Three <input type="checkbox"/>	Four or More <input type="checkbox"/>		
Have you visited the new Town of Concord website at www.concordvt.us ?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>				
Are you willing to share your e-mail address for future correspondence?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	E-Mail Address:				

WHAT WE DID:

Surveys were distributed in hard copy to residents and also made available online.

- 168 responses received
- 18% response rate
- 98% of respondents named Concord as their primary place of residence.

Gathered information on:

- Household size and makeup
- Shopping habits
- Place of work

Asked residents to assess:

- Services and facilities in Town
- Types of businesses/services needed
- Level of importance of planning issues in Village and Town

Concord Demographics*

- **71% of housing is owner-occupied, 29% is renter-occupied**
- **27% of households have school-aged children**
- **30% of households have one or more people 65 years and over**
- **35% of population 16 years and older not in labor force**
- **Average household size: 2.3**

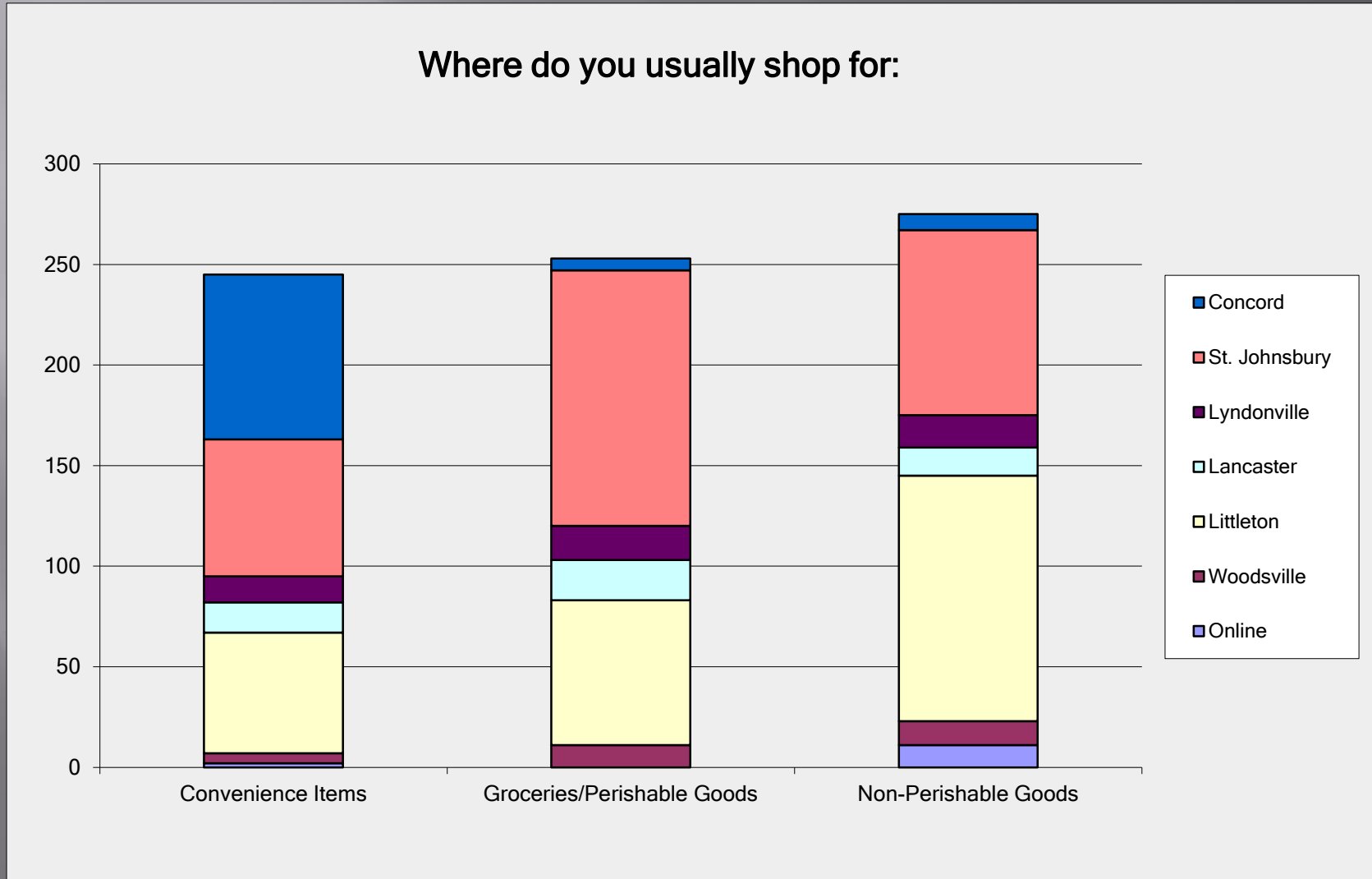
***as per the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimates**

WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY?

- **90% of respondents owned their home, 10% rented their home**
- **19% of respondents had school-aged children at home**
- **55% of respondents had at least one member of their household over the age of 60**
- **45% of respondents were retired**
- **51% of respondents were from 2-person households**

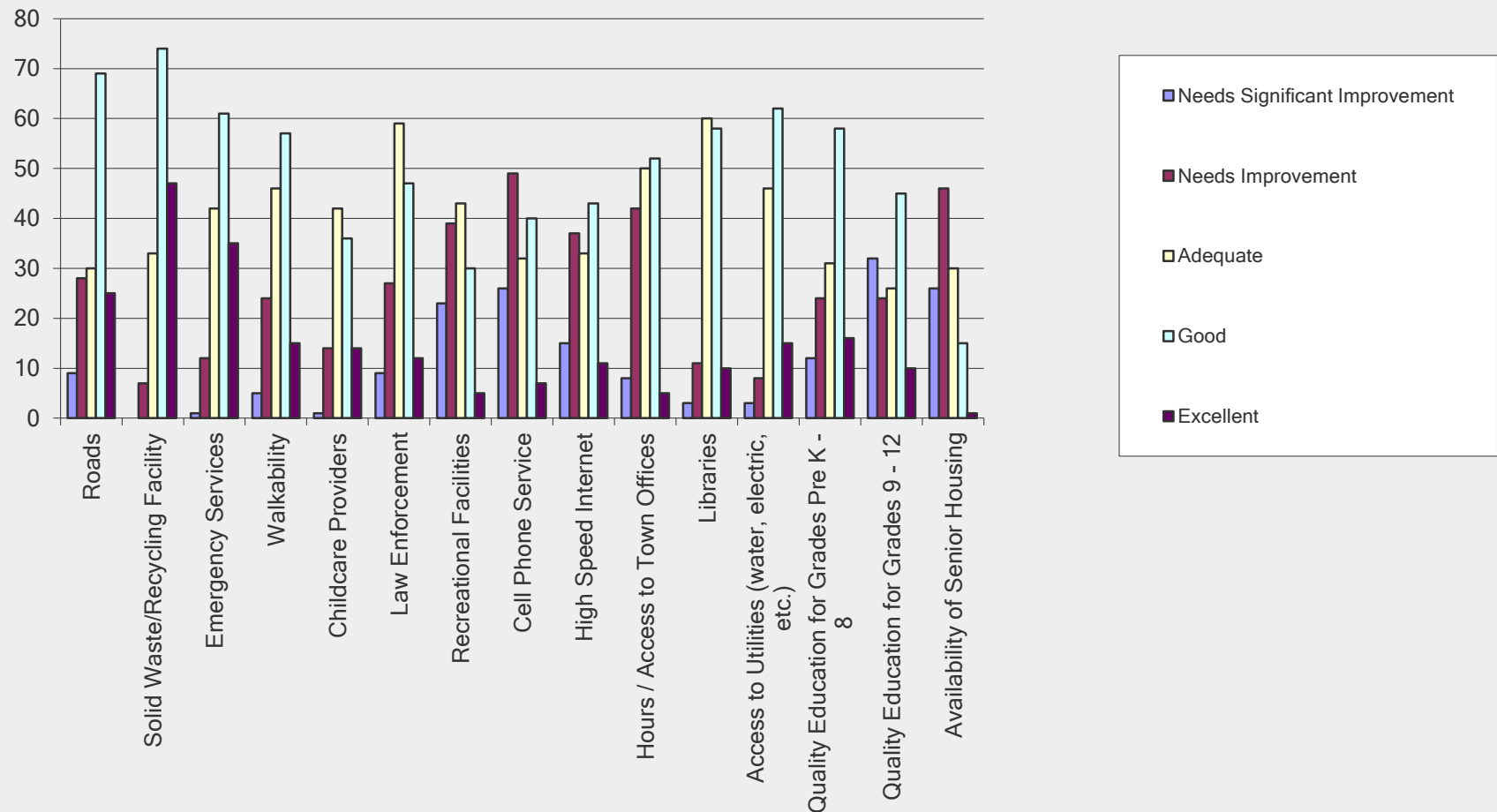
WHAT WE LEARNED...

St. Johnsbury and Littleton are the main shopping areas for residents, although Concord provides shopping opportunities for “convenience” items.



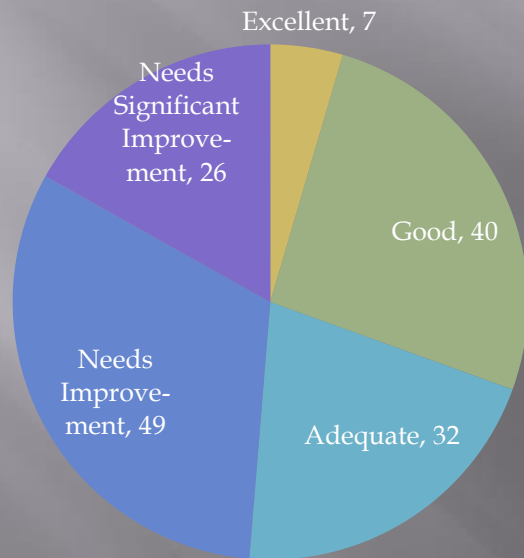
Residents rated 15 different facilities and services in Concord:

Please rate the adequacy of services and facilities available in the Town of Concord:

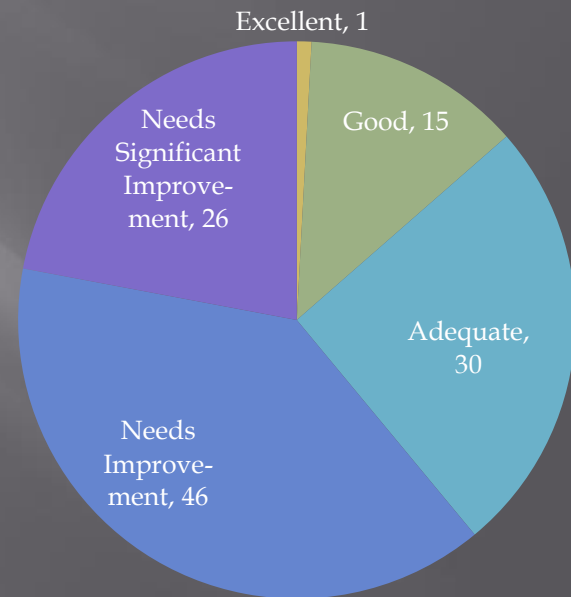


The top 2 areas identified as needing improvement were:

Cell Phone Service



Availability of Senior Housing



The next highest areas identified as needing improvement:

Recreational Facilities

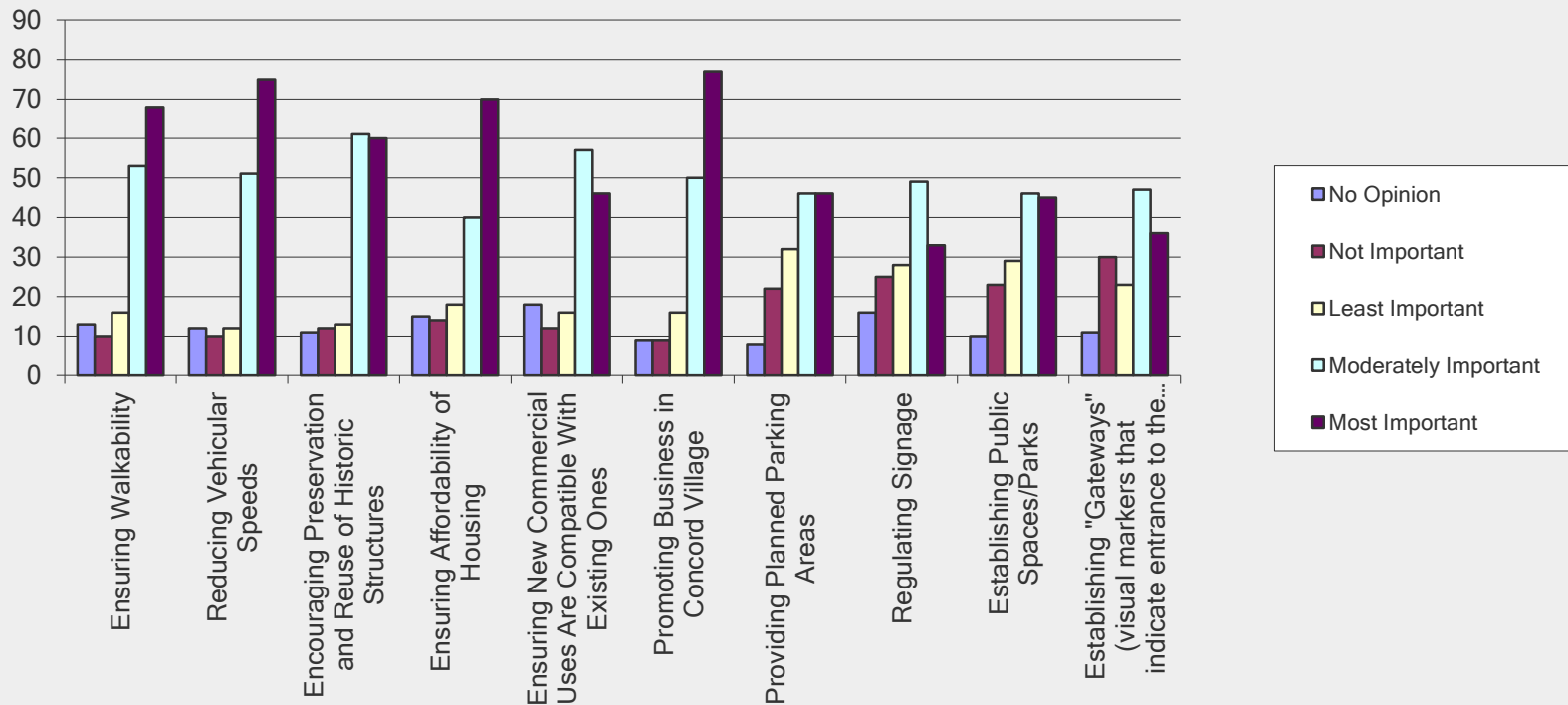
Quality education for Grades 9 – 12

High speed internet

Village Center Planning

Residents rated by level of importance 10 different planning issues in Concord Village:

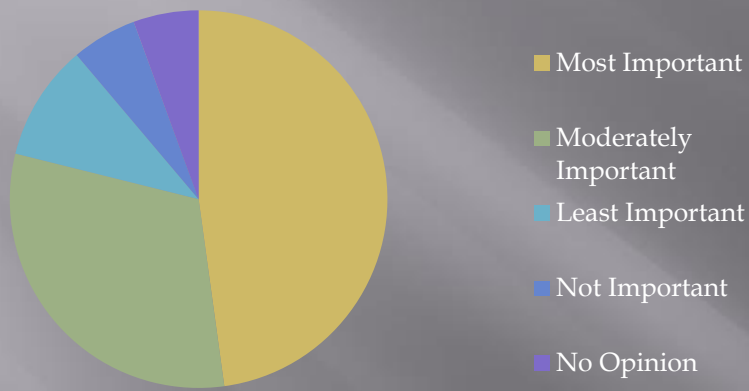
Past community surveys in Concord have indicated that "special planning attention" should be given to village centers. Please rate the level of importance of the following aspects of planning for Concord Village:



Although ALL issues were identified as important, the top 4 were:

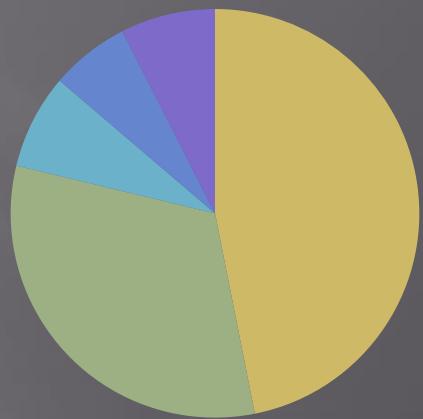
#1

Promoting Business in
Concord Village



#2

Reducing Vehicular Speeds in
Concord Village



#3

Encouraging Preservation and
Reuse of Historic Structures in
Concord Village



#4

Ensuring Walkability in Concord
Village



When asked to identify the value of five approaches to local business development, respondents found that all approaches had value. They were ranked as follows:

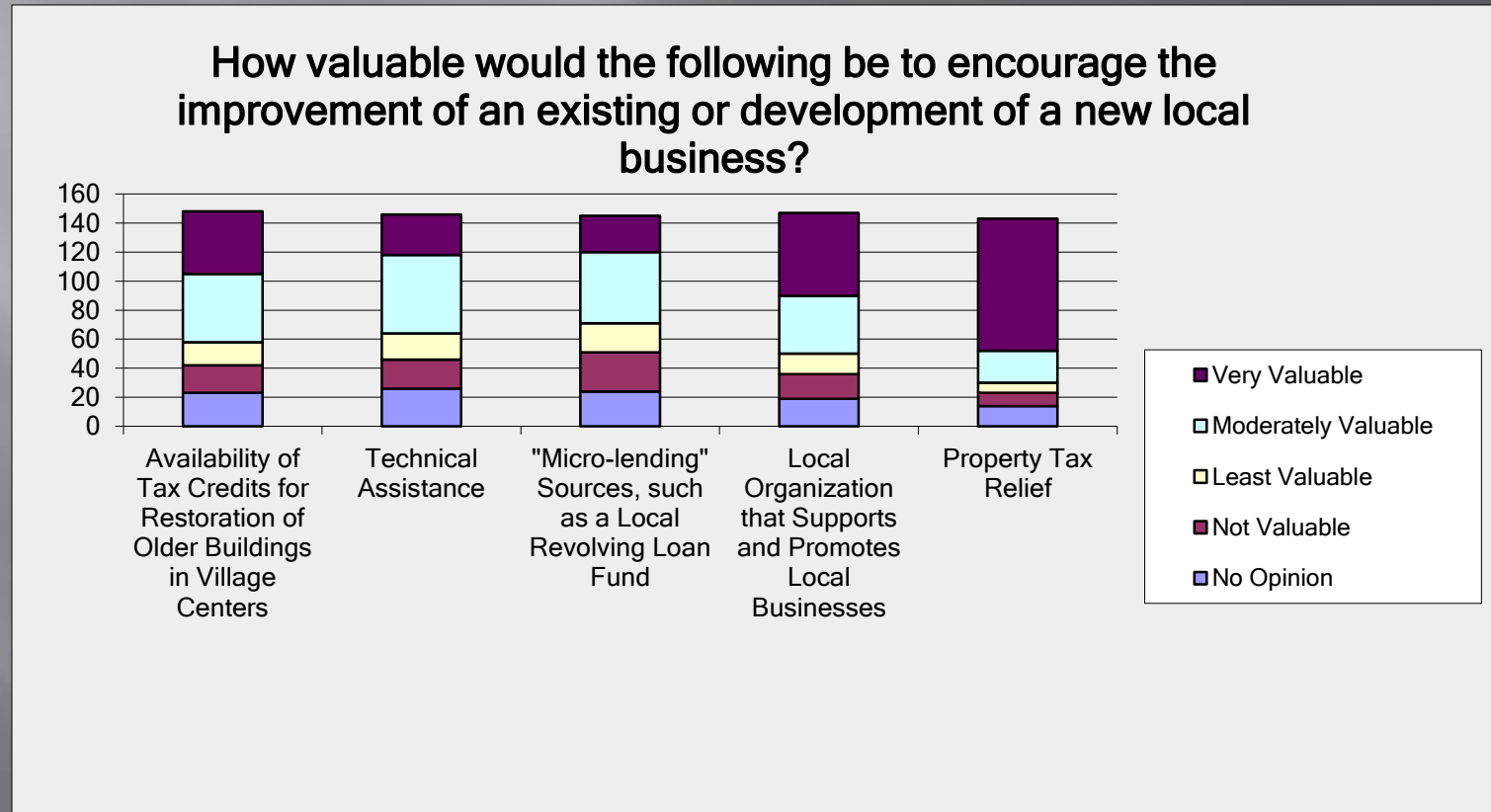
#1 Property tax relief

#2 Local organization that supports and promotes local businesses

#3 Availability of tax credits for restoration of older buildings

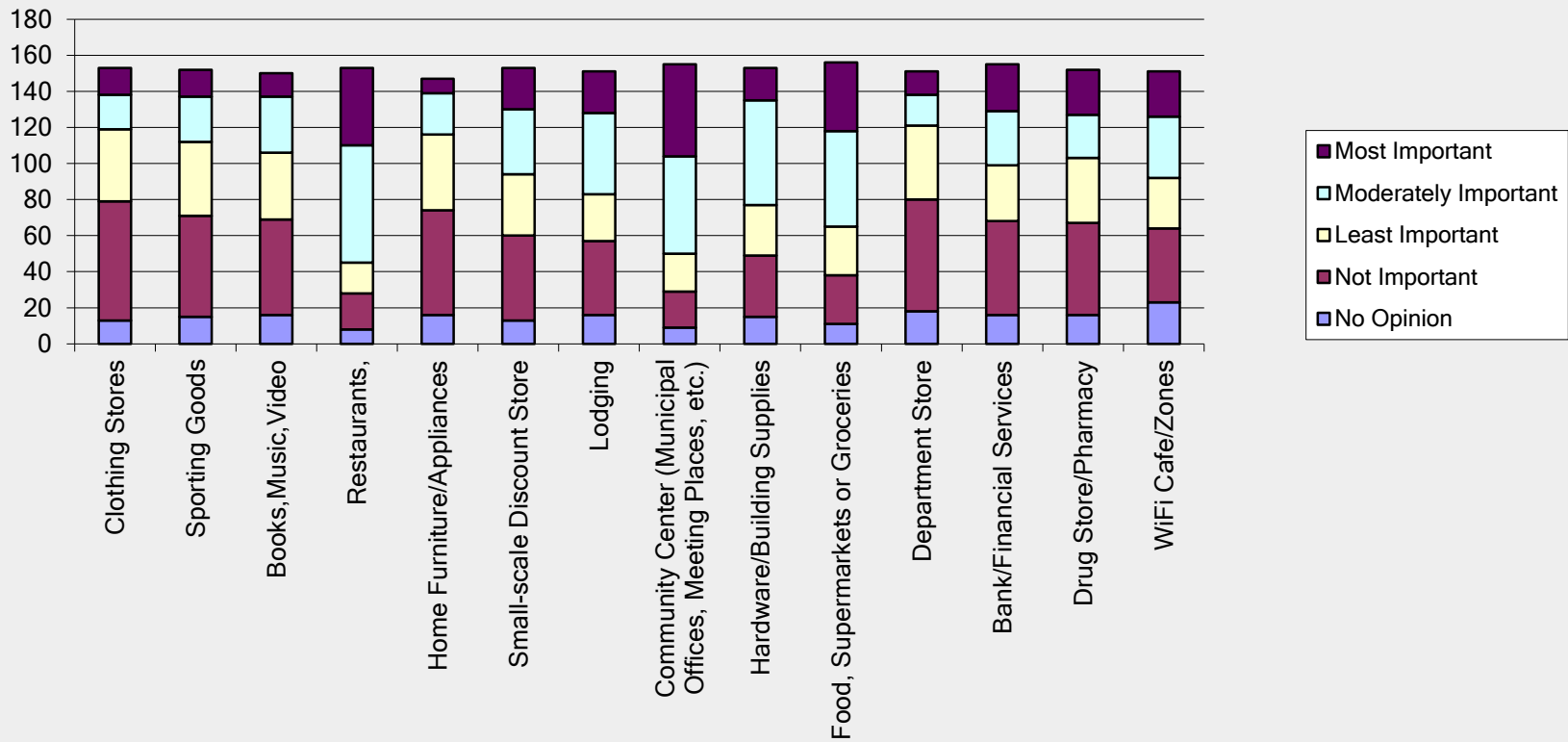
#4 Technical assistance

#5 Micro-lending sources, such as a local revolving loan fund



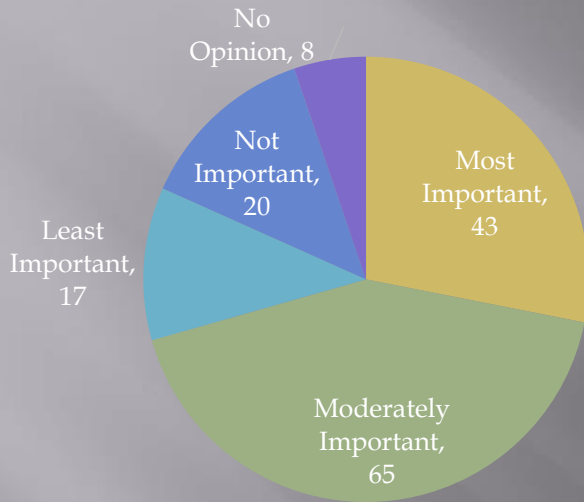
Out of a choice of 14 potential businesses and services that could locate in Concord Village, residents identified the most desirable uses:

Regarding potential uses in Concord Village, please rate the desirability of the following types of businesses or services:

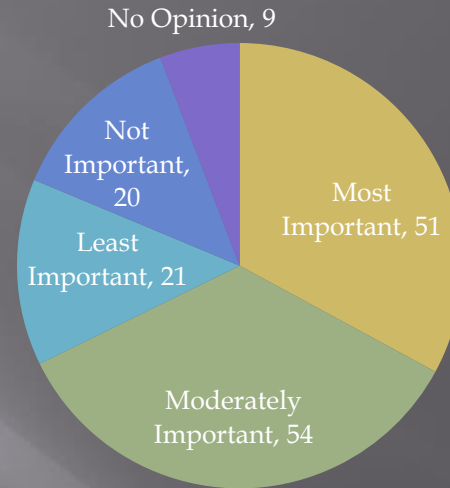


The top 3 were:

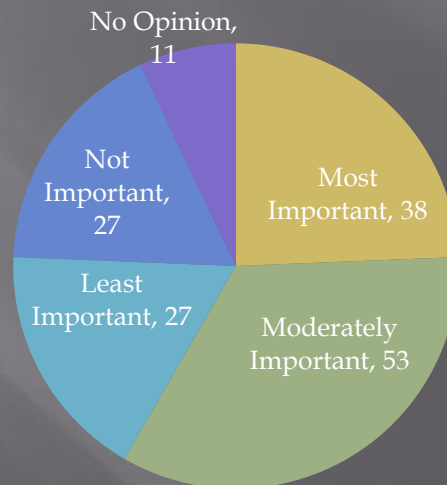
#1 Restaurants



#2 Community Center (Municipal Offices, Meeting Places, etc.)



#3 Food, Supermarkets or Groceries

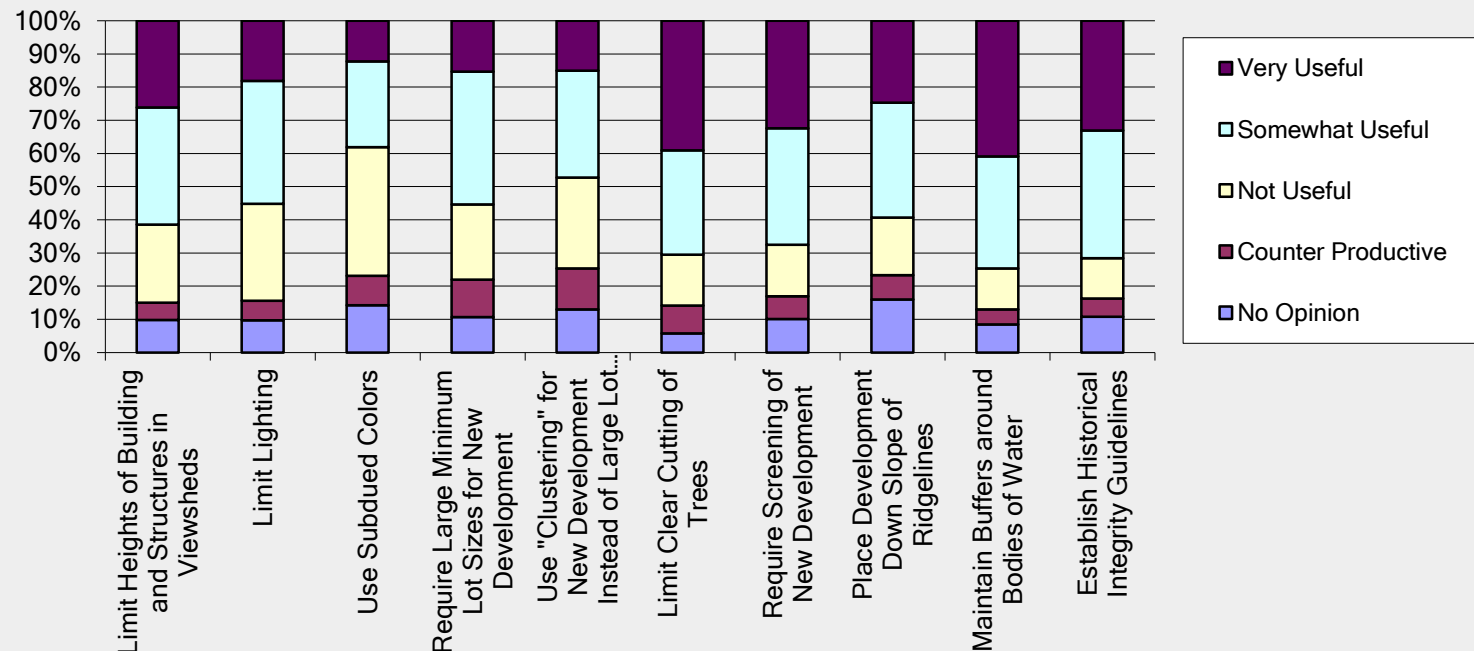


Scenic and Historic Resources

Respondents identified the top three ways to preserve scenic and historic resources as:

- Limit the clear cutting of trees
- Maintain buffers around bodies of water
- Establish historical integrity guidelines

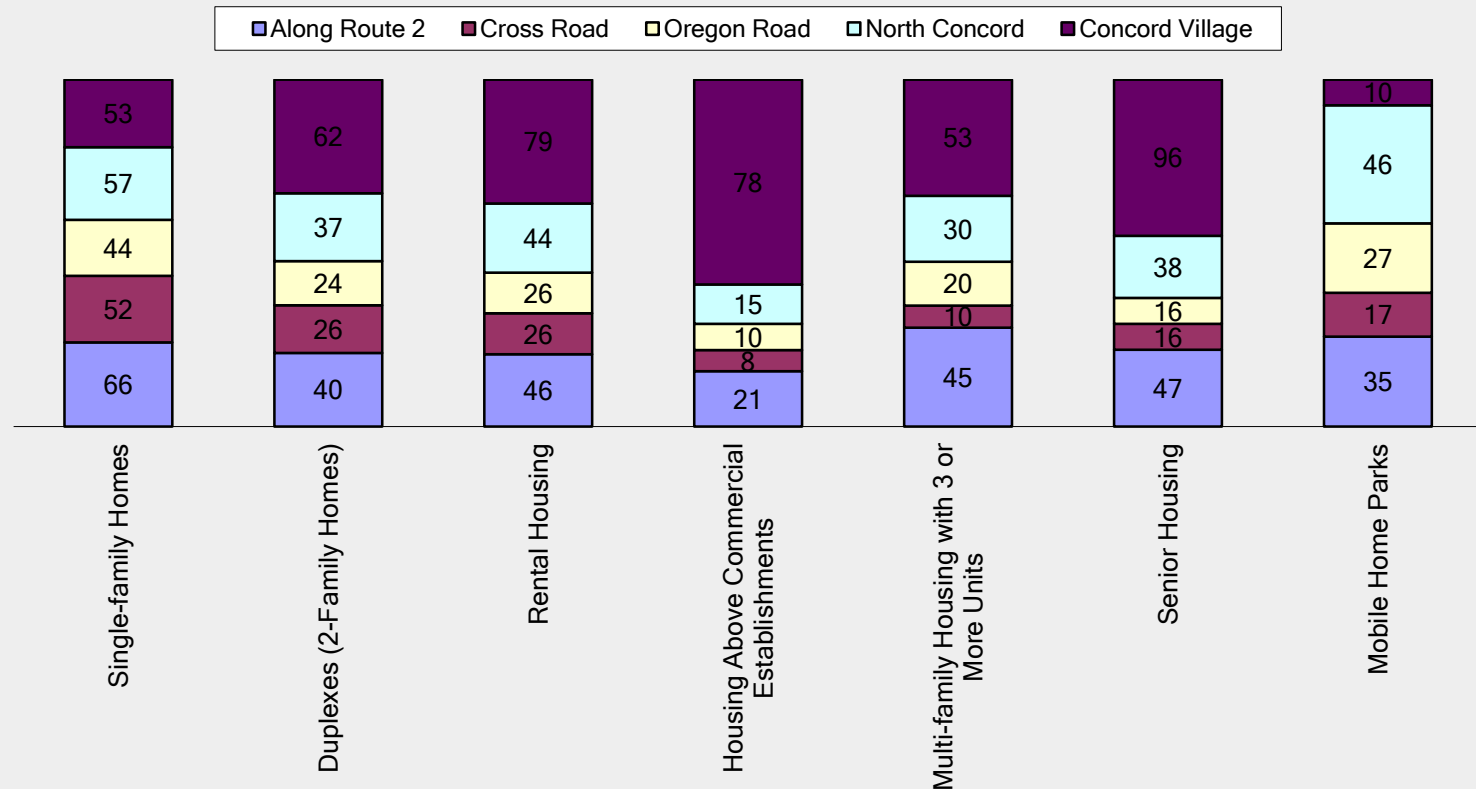
Ninety-four percent of survey respondents in the first Municipal Plan stated that Concord should preserve its scenic spots and historic structures. Please rate how you think preservation of scenic and historic resources should occur:



Respondents were given a choice of 7 types of affordable housing and 5 locations in Town, and asked to identify appropriate places for various types.

- Senior housing was the affordable housing category with the greatest response rate.
- Concord Village was the preferred location for most types of affordable housing.

Past surveys of Town residents have indicated the need for affordable housing for young families and seniors. Please indicate where affordable housing should be encouraged:



Survey Question #18 asked for input on determining the top 5 planning priorities in Concord.

79 people responded, and chose as the top 5 planning priorities :

#1 Roads and Bridges

#2 Quality of Education for Grades PreK-8

#3 Quality of Education for Grades 9-12

#4 High Speed Internet

#5 Business Growth

Survey question #19 was open ended and invited respondents to identify other top planning priorities in Concord.

54 people provided comments.

The most frequently occurring comment (16 comments) recommended the closing of the Concord High School.

The last survey question asked respondents to identify the qualities they wanted Concord to be known for. 68 people responded.

Responses were varied. Common themes focused on a **strong sense of community** (20 comments) and **scenic and recreational qualities** (20 comments).

“Beautiful countryside and landscape”

“Sociability, sharing”

“Fabulous views”

“Quaint village”

“Historical integrity”

“Strong historical value”

“Cooperative spirit”

“Friendly, welcoming”

“Recreation destination”

“Vibrant Community”

Economic Development

Top Three approaches to local business development as ranked by question #14 in survey:

#1 Property tax relief

Example: City of Newport Industrial and Commercial Tax Stabilization Policy

- Sets forth criteria and eligibility for tax stabilization to further the goals of the town; for example: “creates new jobs” “improves aesthetics or eliminates blight on exterior of an existing structure”
- Outlines City Council’s process of making determination, including a scoring system that looks at both short and long-term impacts

#2 Local organization that supports and promotes local businesses

- Local Chamber of Commerce (examples in region: Barton, East Burke, Island Pond, Lyndonville)
- “Publicity fund” established in accordance with 24 VSA, section 2744 to advertise the “scenic beauties and municipal advantages” of Concord.

#3 Availability of tax credits for restoration of older buildings

Village Center Designation (examples in Barton, Island Pond, East and West Burke, Lyndon)

- Incentive program, not regulatory
- A variety of State tax credits are available for income-producing properties. Non-profits can also make use of the tax credits
- Credits can be sold to banks and insurance companies:
 - 10% State historic tax credit – can be added to the 20% Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit
 - 25% façade credit up to \$25,000
 - 50% technology credit up to \$30,000
 - 50% credit for code work (sprinkler system, elevators, etc.)

Village Center Designation was explored in July of 2011 as a way to foster economic development and maintain the character of Concord's village area.

A preliminary boundary of a "Village Center" was outlined by community members at a planning work session in 2011:



Next Steps:

Form work committees to provide focused input on priority planning issues, and help identify strategies to achieve goals.

- Transportation
- Utilities/Facilities
- Recreation
- Historic/Scenic resources
- Education
- Energy
- Housing
- Economic development
- Flood Resilience

