Community Survey Report

TOWN OF NAGS HEAD

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Community Survey

- The Town conducted a community survey starting in July of 2023 which concluded in September

- Surveys were mailed to 3,000 randomly selected residents and property owners

- The survey was also offered online to those who were not part of the random sample

- In total, the Town received 1,136 completed surveys

- The response rate for the random sample was 36%

Community Survey

Goal

To provide property owners and residents the opportunity to rate the quality of life in the Town of Hags Head, as well as the quality of service delivery and overall performance of the Nags Head government. The survey also collected feedback on what is working well and what is not, as well as citizen views on priorities related to projects or issues facing the Town.

The survey results will serve as a resource to analyze future policy, program, and budgetary initiatives

Community Survey

Topics

- Direction of the Town
- Government Performance
- Preservation of Nags Head
- Problems and Priorities
- Recreation
- Department Performance (Police, Fire, Ocean Rescue, Planning, Sanitation)
- Water Management (Stormwater, Water Quality)
- Traffic and Transportation
- Housing
- Regulating Development
- Shoreline Management
- Demographics

Community Survey

Town of Nags Head

Question Format

3. Below is a list of community attributes and functions. Please indicate the importance of each attribute/function towards the preservation and enhancement of Nags Head and how successful you feel the community has performed with respect to each attribute or function.

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Preserving landscapes/vegetation	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Maintaining recreational water quality	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Preserving dark night skies	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Providing public beach accesses	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Maintaining community appearance	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Providing parks/recreation areas	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Providing events/cultural activities	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Preserving Nags Head character	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Providing sidewalks/paths	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Enforcing codes	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Regulating development/controlling density	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Maintaining beautiful beaches	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Promoting business/economy	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Managing stormwater	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

7. Please rate your customer service experience with the department you most recently had contact with:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No opinion
Courtesy	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Timeliness of response	1	2	3	4	5
Overall impression	1	2	3	4	5

Community Survey

Report Outline

- Executive Summary
- Survey Administration
- Survey Findings
- Appendix A: Respondent Characteristics
- Appendix B: Complete Set of Survey Responses
- Appendix C: Verbatim Responses
- Appendix D: Survey Results by Respondent Characteristics
- Appendix E: Survey Results from Open Participation vs. Address-Based Outreach
- Appendix F: Verbatim Responses for the Open Participation Survey
- Appendix G: Survey Methodology
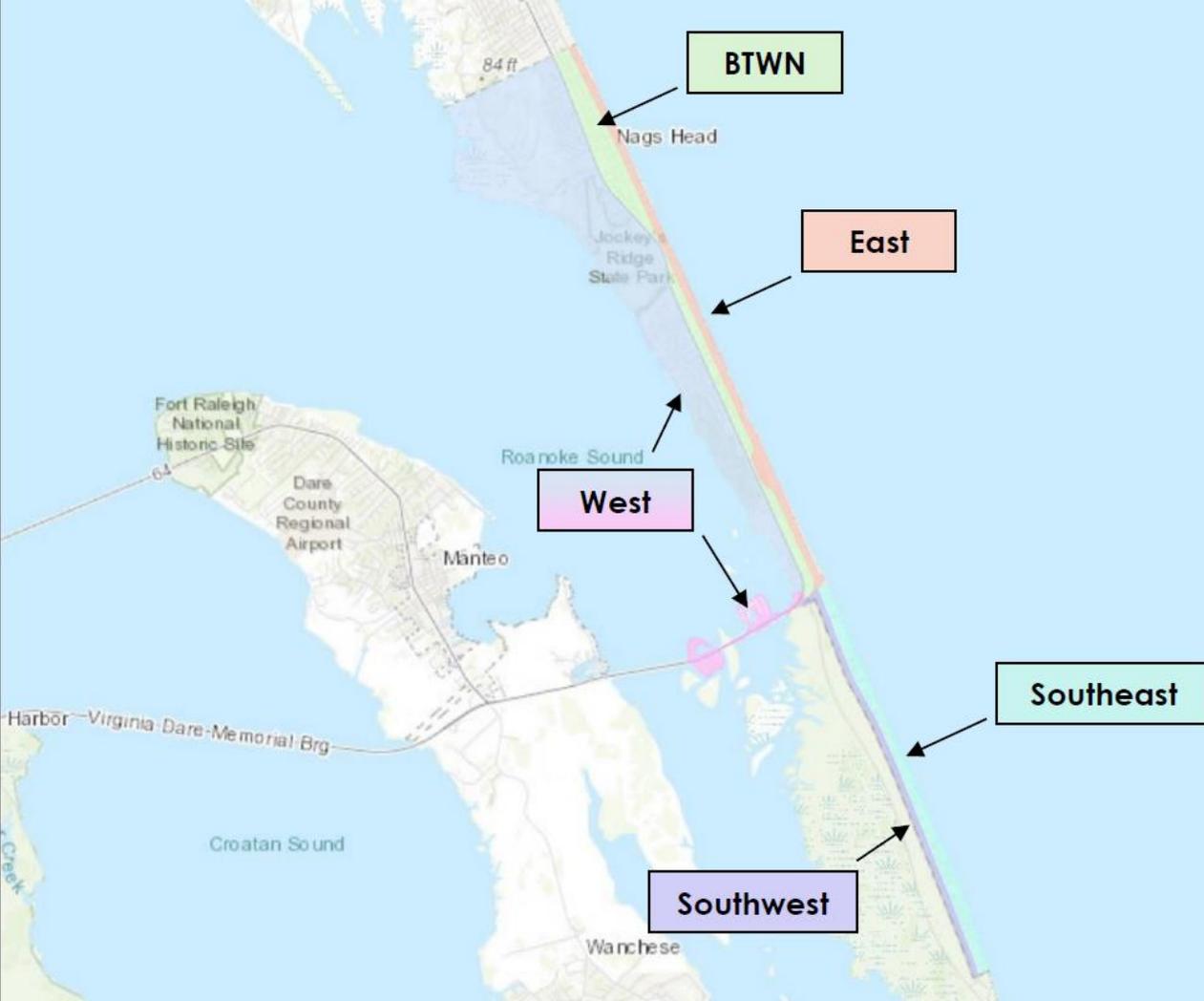- Appendix H: Survey Materials

Community Survey

Respondent Characteristics

- Length of Residency/Ownership
- Housing Type
- Resident Status (Year-round renter, Year-round owner, Non-resident property owner, etc.)
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Age
- Gender
- Geographic Area

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Responses are broken down by resident characteristics (Appendix D)

Community Survey

Survey Findings

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Table 226: Survey Response Rates by Geographic Area

	BTWN	West	East	South East	South West	Overall
Total sample used	635	1,357	345	431	232	3,000
NE=Not eligible	0	0	0	0	0	0
E= Eligible	635	1,357	345	431	232	3,000
I=Complete Interviews	240	491	109	144	90	1,074
Response rate:	38%	36%	32%	33%	39%	36%

Community Survey Results

Figure 1: Nags Head Government Performance

Please rate the following aspects of Nags Head government performance:

■ Excellent ■ Good

	Excellent	Good	Total
The quality of the services provided by Nags Head	30%	60%	90%
The ease of accessing the services of Nags Head	29%	57%	86%
The overall direction Nags Head is moving	20%	62%	82%
Communicating events, issues, and programs	29%	46%	75%
Providing opportunities for community engagement and involvement	26%	44%	70%
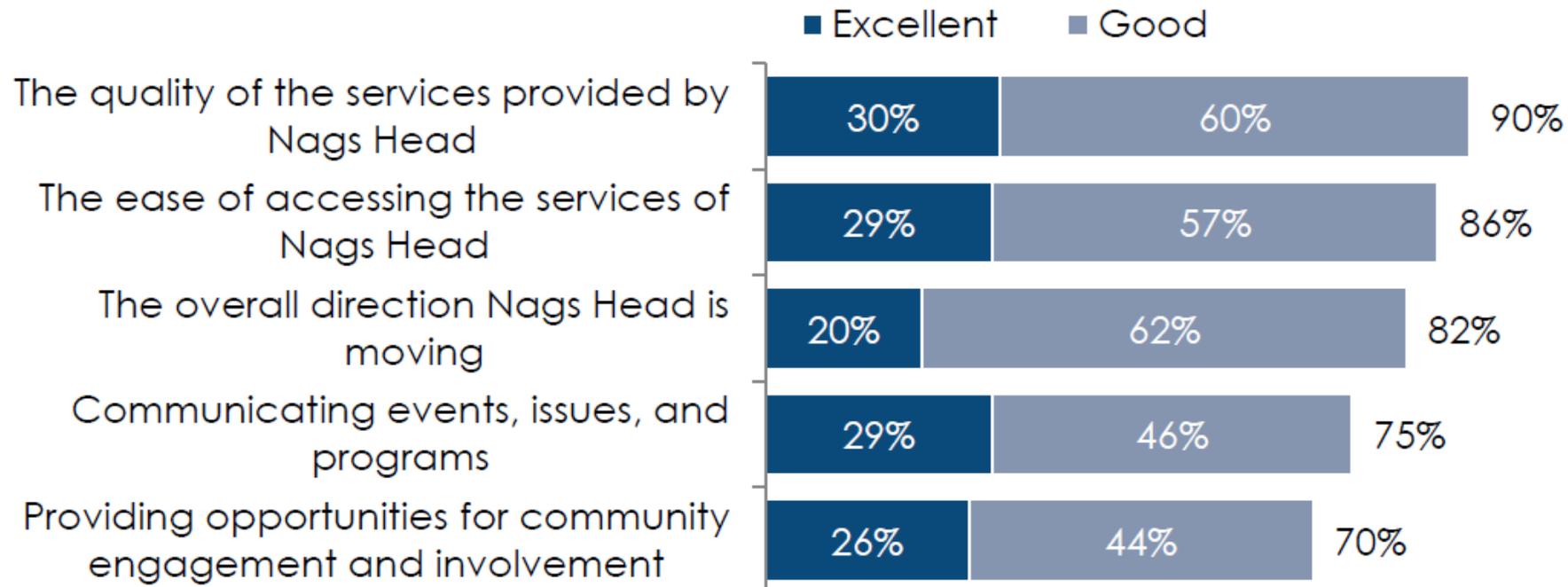
Survey Findings

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Community Survey Results

Table 8: Question 1 – Including No Opinion Responses

Please rate the following aspects of Nags Head government performance.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		No Opinion		Total	
The overall direction Nags Head is moving	18%	N=191	57%	N=609	14%	N=149	3%	N=29	8%	N=88	100%	N=1066
The quality of the services provided by Nags Head	28%	N=302	58%	N=616	9%	N=100	0%	N=4	4%	N=40	100%	N=1063
The ease of accessing the services of Nags Head	27%	N=285	53%	N=553	12%	N=123	1%	N=13	7%	N=75	100%	N=1049
Communicating events, issues, and programs	27%	N=289	42%	N=449	17%	N=178	6%	N=68	7%	N=78	100%	N=1062
Providing opportunities for community engagement and involvement	21%	N=227	37%	N=389	21%	N=224	4%	N=46	16%	N=174	100%	N=1060

Table 9: Question 1 - Excluding No Opinion Responses

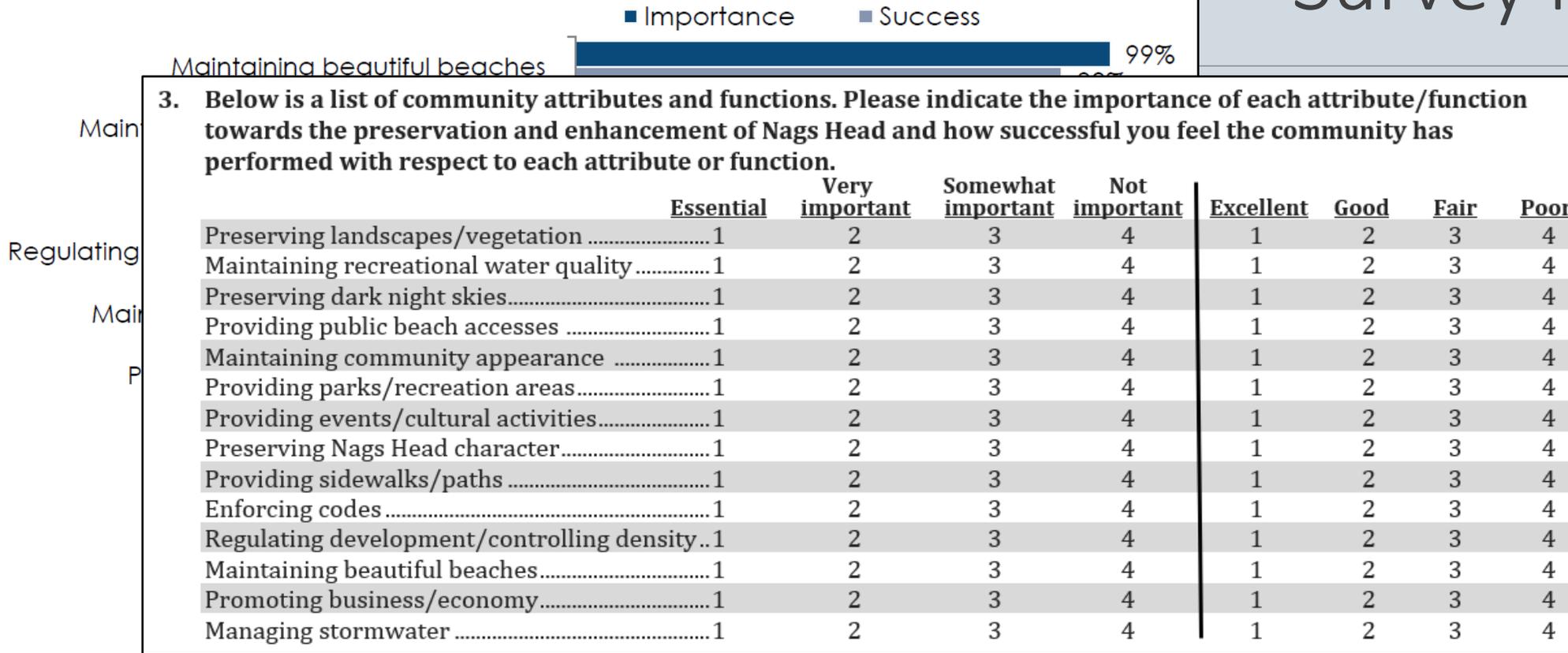| Please rate the following aspects of Nags Head government performance.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
The overall direction Nags Head is moving	20%	N=191	62%	N=609	15%	N=149	3%	N=29	100%	N=978
The quality of the services provided by Nags Head	30%	N=302	60%	N=616	10%	N=100	0%	N=4	100%	N=1023
The ease of accessing the services of Nags Head	29%	N=285	57%	N=553	13%	N=123	1%	N=13	100%	N=973
Communicating events, issues, and programs	29%	N=289	46%	N=449	18%	N=178	7%	N=68	100%	N=985
Providing opportunities for community engagement and involvement	26%	N=227	44%	N=389	25%	N=224	5%	N=46	100%	N=886

Survey Results Format

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Figure 7: Importance and Success of Functions towards Nags Head's Enhancement

Please indicate the importance of each attribute/function towards the preservation and enhancement of Nags Head and how successful you feel the community has performed with respect to each attribute or function.

■ Importance   ■ Success

Maintaining beautiful beaches 99%
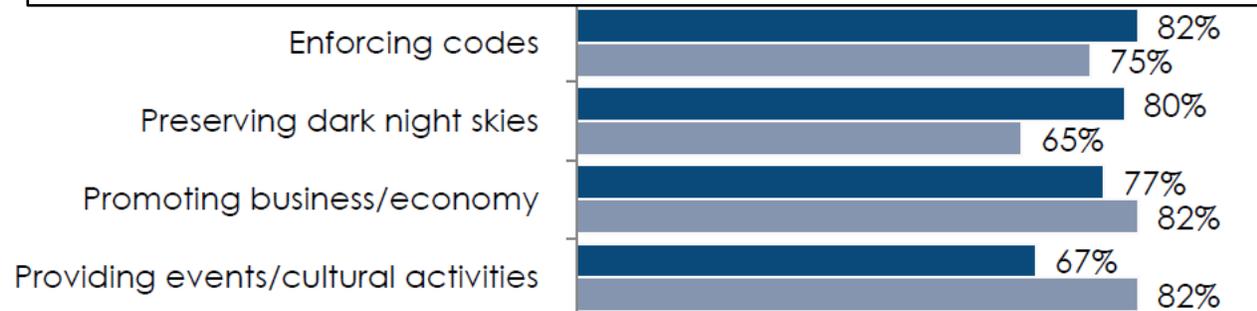
3. Below is a list of community attributes and functions. Please indicate the importance of each attribute/function towards the preservation and enhancement of Nags Head and how successful you feel the community has performed with respect to each attribute or function.

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Preserving landscapes/vegetation	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Maintaining recreational water quality	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Preserving dark night skies	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Providing public beach accesses	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Maintaining community appearance	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Providing parks/recreation areas	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Providing events/cultural activities	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Preserving Nags Head character	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Providing sidewalks/paths	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Enforcing codes	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Regulating development/controlling density	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Maintaining beautiful beaches	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Promoting business/economy	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Managing stormwater	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Enforcing codes — 82% / 75%

Preserving dark night skies — 80% / 65%

Promoting business/economy — 77% / 82%

Providing events/cultural activities — 67% / 82%

Percent essential or very important and excellent or good

Community Survey Results

Survey Findings

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Figure 8: Comparison of Importance and Success Ratings

Community Survey Results
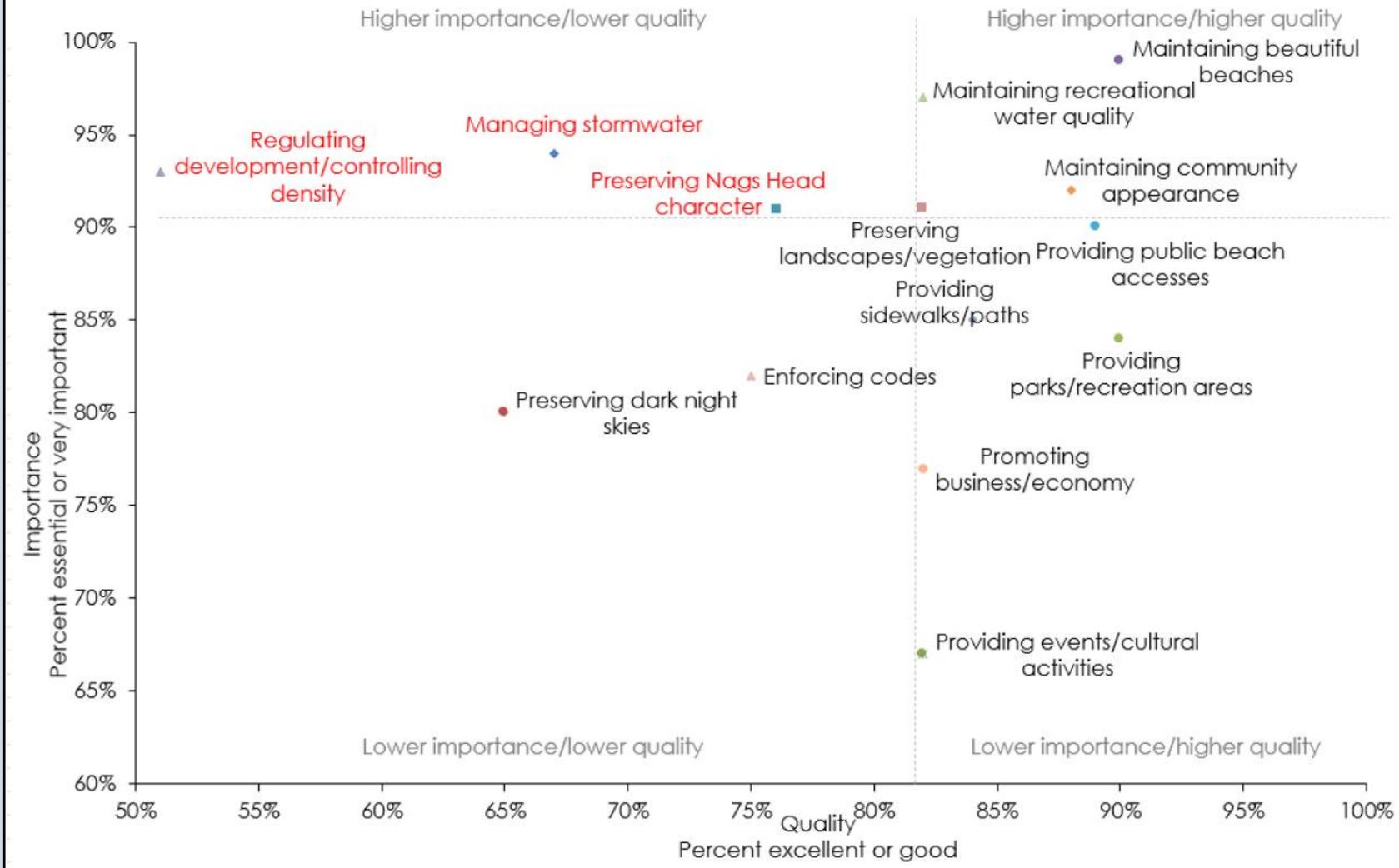
Survey
Findings

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Figure 10: Priorities for the next Two Years

How much of a priority, if at all, should each of the following be for Nags Head to address in the next two years?

■ High priority   ■ Medium priority

Priority	High priority	Medium priority	Total
Continuing shoreline management efforts	79%	19%	98%
Monitoring/improving water quality	71%	27%	98%
Improving drainage	65%	33%	98%
Preserving open space/protecting natural resources	72%	25%	97%
Traffic safety	71%	26%	97%
Maintaining/improving wastewater infrastructure	63%	34%	97%
Keeping the tax rate low	63%	32%	95%
Maintaining and improving roads and infrastructure	53%	40%	93%
Enhancing Nags Head sidewalks /paths	35%	52%	87%
Providing/incentivizing workforce housing	48%	38%	86%
Providing more recreation opportunities /facilities	17%	55%	72%
Increasing arts and cultural opportunities	12%	50%	62%

Community Survey Results

Survey Findings

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Community Survey Results

Reason for Contacting the Town

Ask a question	44%
Schedule or access a service	21%
Report an issue	14%
Pull building permit	12%

Department Contacted

Permit/Code Enforcement	37%
Sanitation	35%
Water	34%
Finance/Administration	19%
Police	17%
Fire	10%
Parks/Buildings and Grounds	9%
Other	15%

Impression of Staff (Excellent + Good)

Courtesy	96%
Knowledge	94%
Timeliness	91%
Responsiveness	91%
Overall Impression	90%

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Community Survey Results

Figure 15: Performance of the Police Department

Please rate how well you think the Nags Head Police Department is doing at each of the following:

■ Excellent   ■ Good

	Excellent	Good	Total
Responding quickly to citizens' calls for service	53%	40%	93%
Caring about the well-being of the people they deal with	43%	47%	90%
Making the community feel safe	38%	51%	89%
Preventing crime	34%	54%	88%
Working with neighbors to solve neighborhood problems	38%	46%	84%
Effectively solving crimes	31%	50%	81%
Traffic enforcement	30%	47%	77%

Note: More than 30% of respondents answered "don't know" when asked to rate "Effectively solving crimes", "Working with neighbors to solve neighborhood problems" and "Responding quickly to citizens' calls for service".
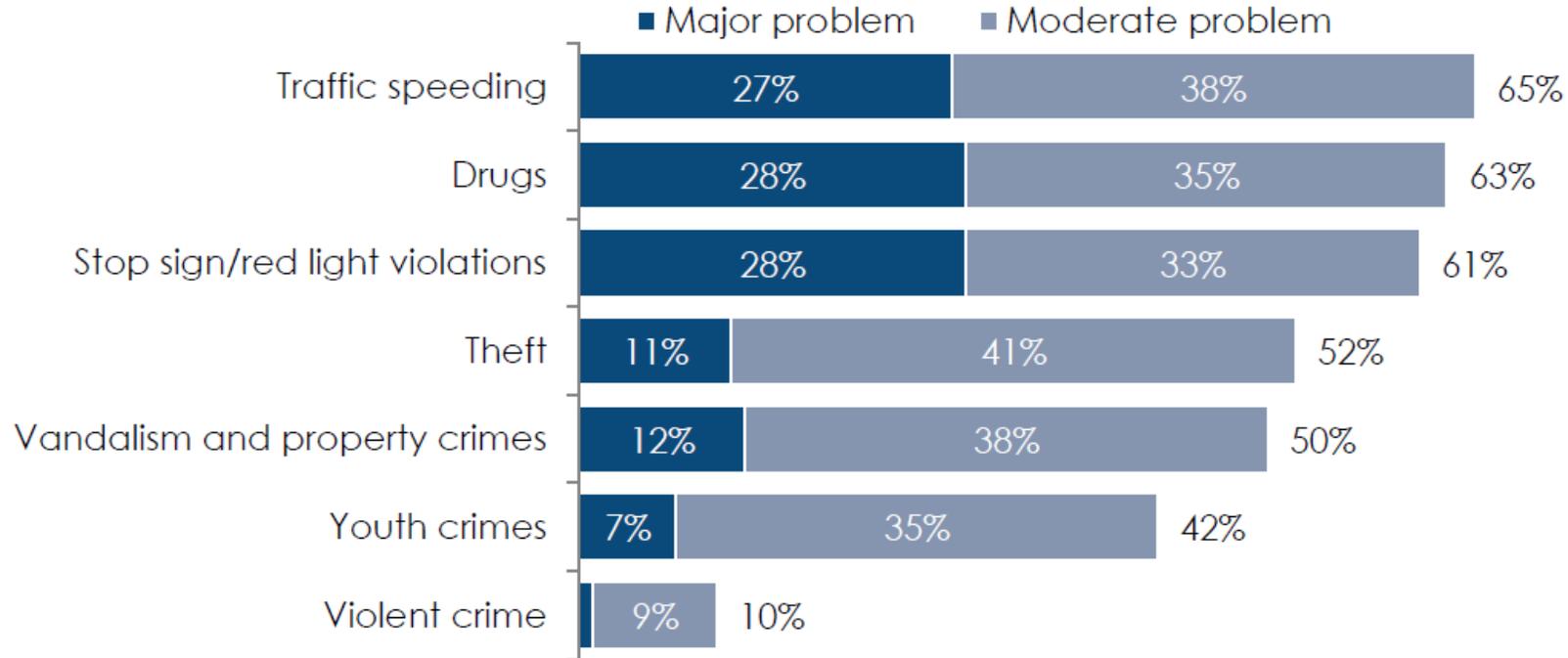
Survey Findings

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Figure 17: Safety Problems

Please rate how much of a problem, if at all, you feel each of the following is in the Town of Nags Head.

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem

	Major problem	Moderate problem	Total
Traffic speeding	27%	38%	65%
Drugs	28%	35%	63%
Stop sign/red light violations	28%	33%	61%
Theft	11%	41%	52%
Vandalism and property crimes	12%	38%	50%
Youth crimes	7%	35%	42%
Violent crime		9%	10%

Note: More than 30% of respondents answered "don't know" when asked to rate "Violent crime", "Drugs" and "Youth crimes".

Survey Findings

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Community Survey Results

Figure 19: Impression of the Fire Department

Please rate the Nags Head Fire Department on the following:

■ Excellent   ■ Good

	Excellent	Good	Total
Compassionate in their interactions	73%	26%	99%
Overall impression of fire department professionalism	71%	28%	99%
Level of responsiveness	76%	22%	98%
Timeliness of handling situations	72%	26%	98%
Trust and confidence	72%	26%	98%

Note: More than 30% of respondents answered "don't know" when asked to rate each of the items.
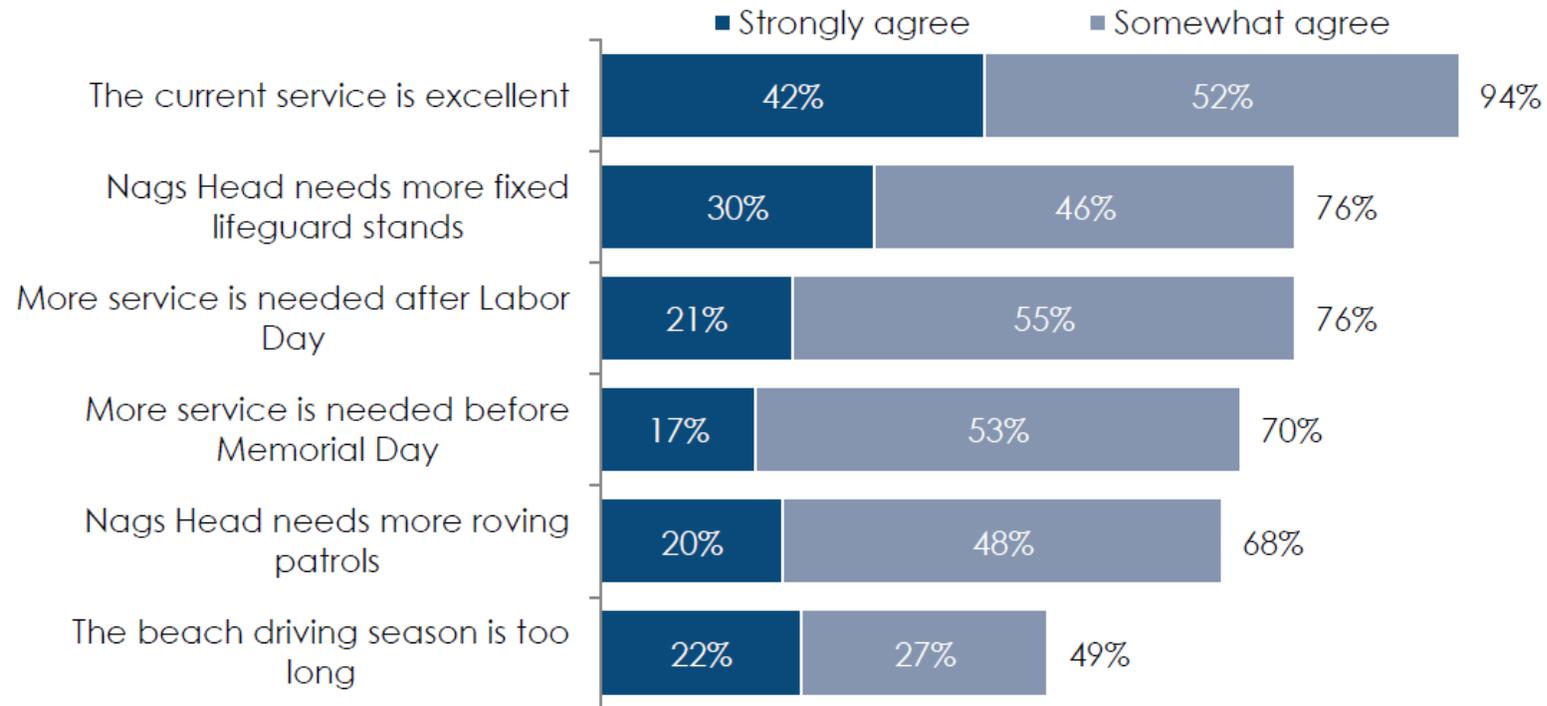
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Community Survey Results

Figure 21: Ocean Rescue Evaluation

Regarding Nags Head Ocean Rescue, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following:

■ Strongly agree   ■ Somewhat agree

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Total
The current service is excellent	42%	52%	94%
Nags Head needs more fixed lifeguard stands	30%	46%	76%
More service is needed after Labor Day	21%	55%	76%
More service is needed before Memorial Day	17%	53%	70%
Nags Head needs more roving patrols	20%	48%	68%
The beach driving season is too long	22%	27%	49%

Note: 32% of respondents answered "don't know" when asked to rate "The beach driving season is too long".

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Figure 22: Sanitation Services Evaluation

Please rate each of the following related to Nags Head sanitation services:
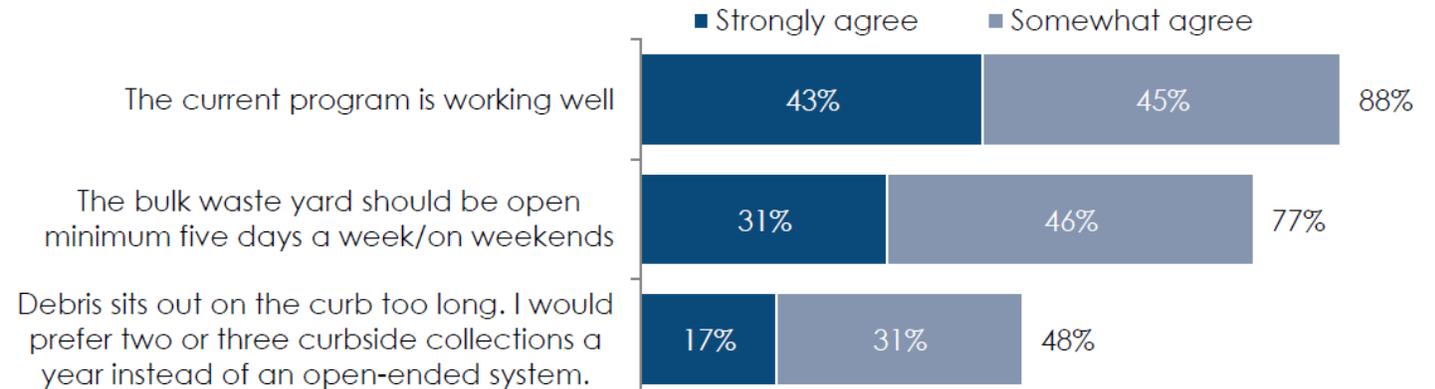
■ Excellent   ■ Good

	Excellent	Good	Total
Overall quality of trash service	57%	38%	95%
Community cleanliness	36%	49%	85%
Overall quality of recycling service	32%	29%	61%

Figure 23: Bulk Waste Services Evaluation

The Town offers curbside bulk waste services from October 1 to April 30. From May 1 to September 30, the Town has a bulk waste yard where large items and vegetative debris can be taken. Please indicate your opinion:
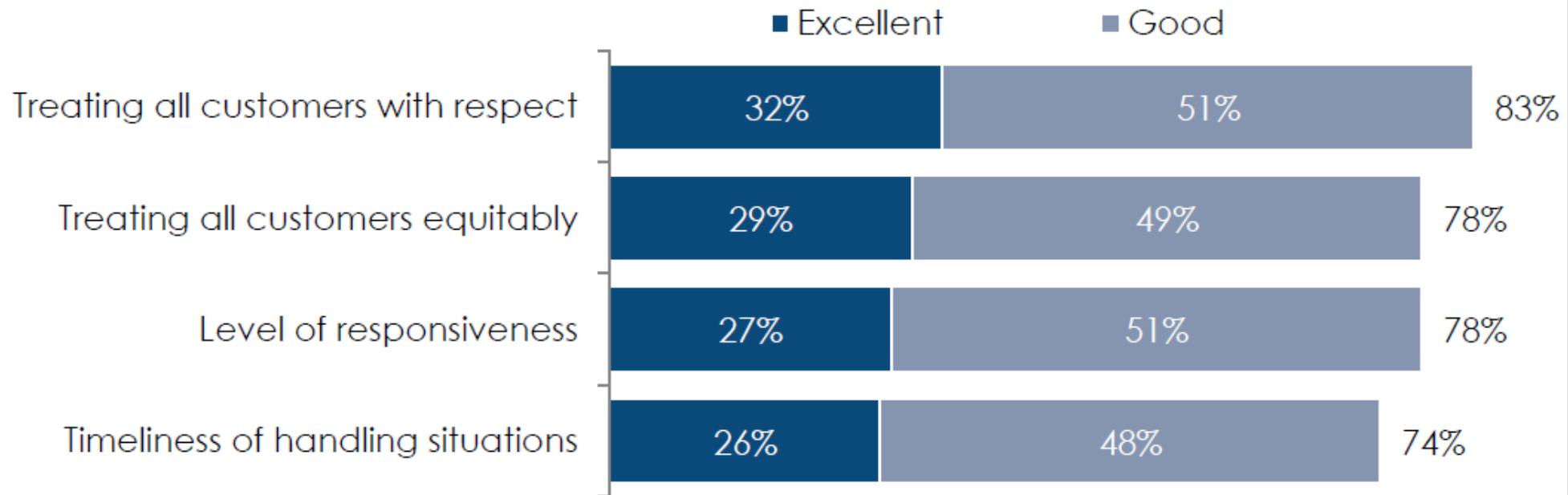
■ Strongly agree   ■ Somewhat agree

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Total
The current program is working well	43%	45%	88%
The bulk waste yard should be open minimum five days a week/on weekends	31%	46%	77%
Debris sits out on the curb too long. I would prefer two or three curbside collections a year instead of an open-ended system.	17%	31%	48%

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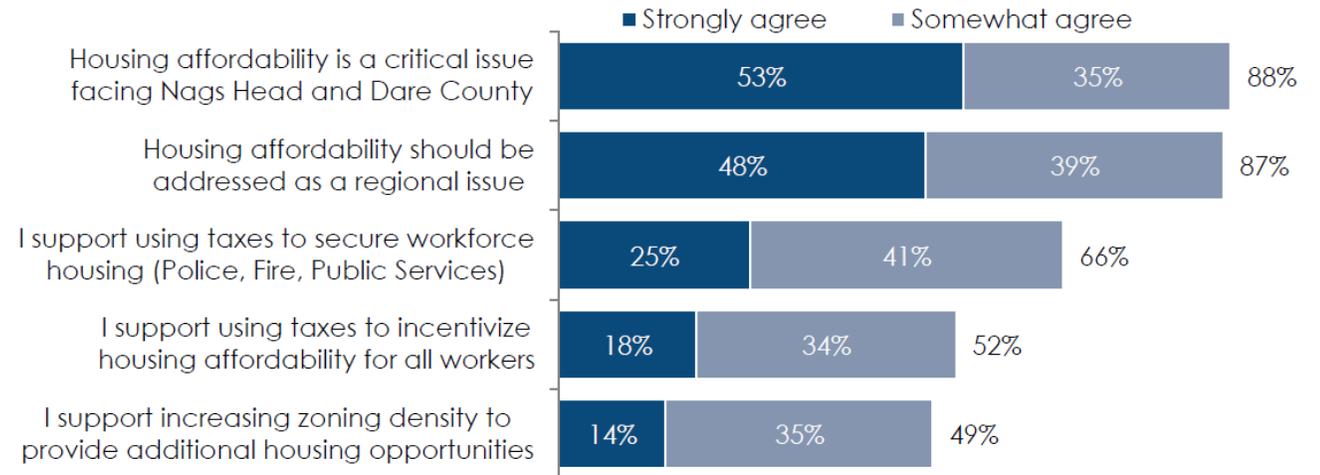

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Figure 31: Housing Affordability

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Total
Housing affordability is a critical issue facing Nags Head and Dare County	53%	35%	88%
Housing affordability should be addressed as a regional issue	48%	39%	87%
I support using taxes to secure workforce housing (Police, Fire, Public Services)	25%	41%	66%
I support using taxes to incentivize housing affordability for all workers	18%	34%	52%
I support increasing zoning density to provide additional housing opportunities	14%	35%	49%

Asked about where or how housing density could be increased, nearly half of respondents said they did not think housing density should be increased. Almost the same proportion said they would only support density increases if deed restrictions were in place for long-term or workforce housing.

Figure 32: Housing Density

Increasing housing opportunities could mean increasing density (e.g. allowing more opportunities for duplexes/ground floor enclosures/accessory dwelling units). Where or how do you think housing density can/should increase? Mark all that apply.

Response	Percent
I would only support increases in density if deed restrictions are in place for long-term or workforce housing	45%
In areas that allow greater density currently	30%
In all areas of Nags Head	9%
In areas east of US 158	5%
I don't think housing density should increase	44%

Percent of respondents

Figure 33: Development Types for Nags Head
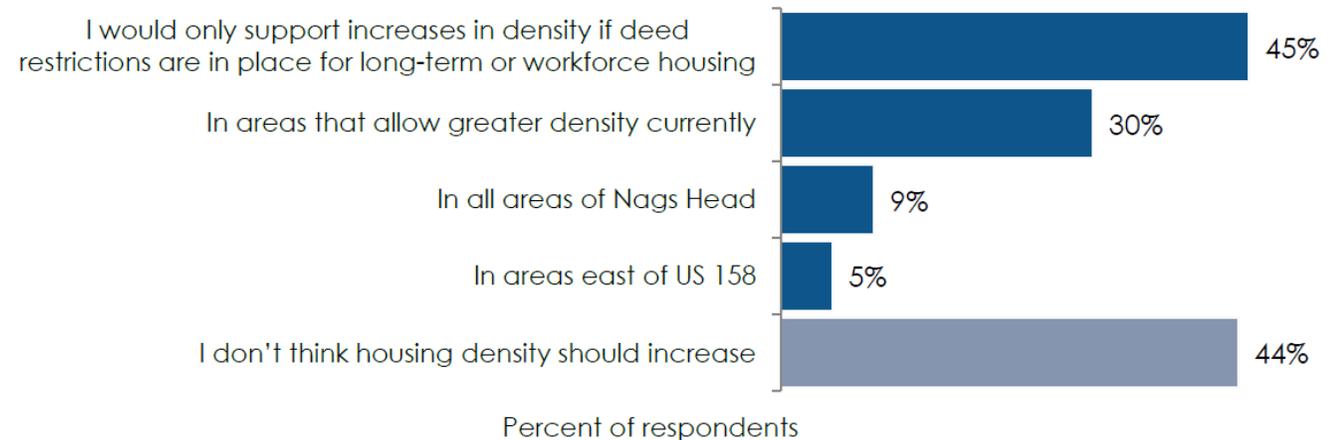
Community Survey Results

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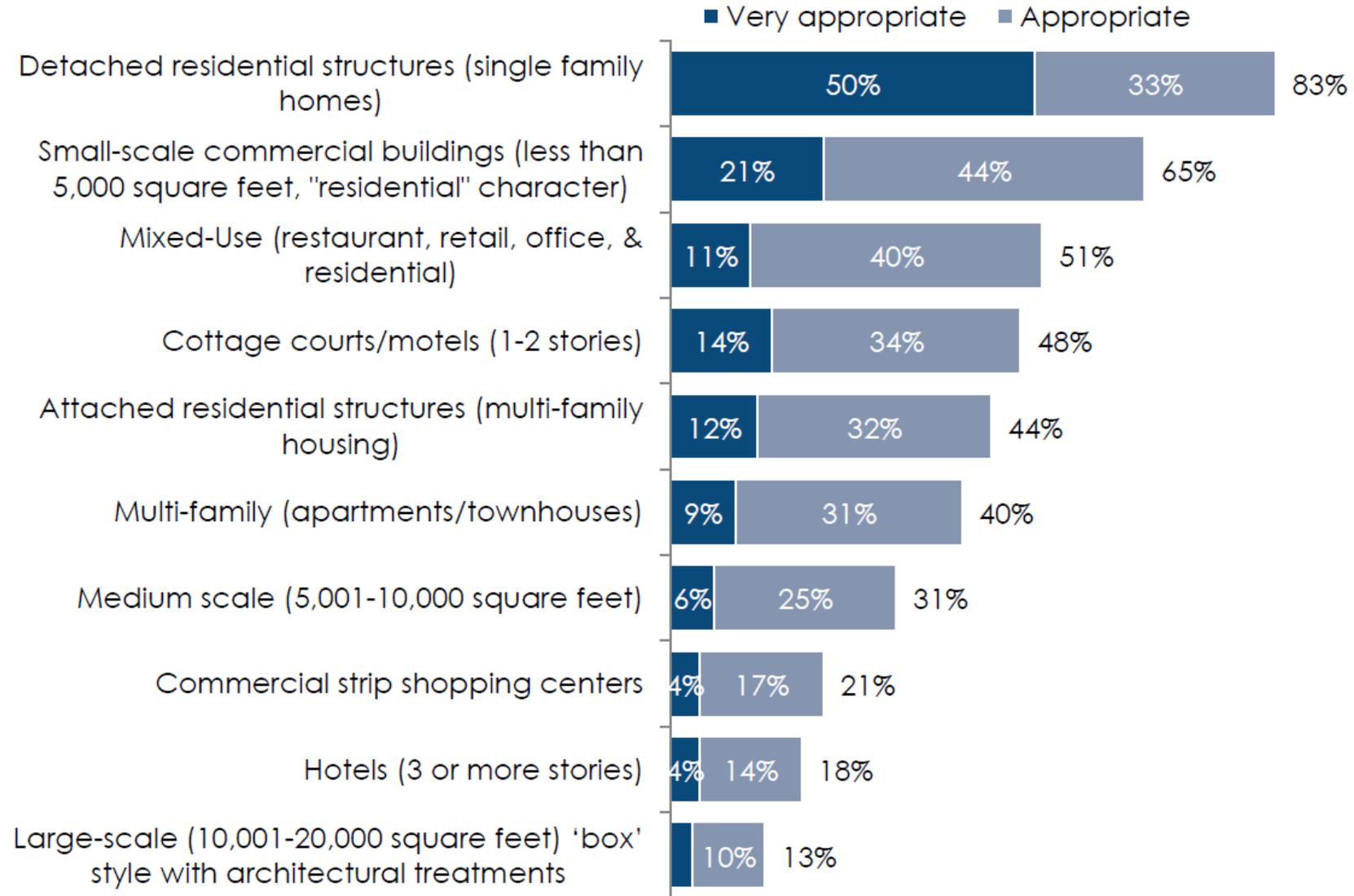
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Figure 34: Height Limits

Currently the height limit for residential and most commercial structures is 42 feet, which allows for three stories. The Town has a hotel overlay district (west of NC 12, south of the Village at Nags Head to Whalebone Junction) where hotels of up to 60 feet are allowed. What's your opinion?

■ Too high   ■ About right   ■ Too low

The 42-foot height limit for residential and commercial is... — 19% | 80% | 1%

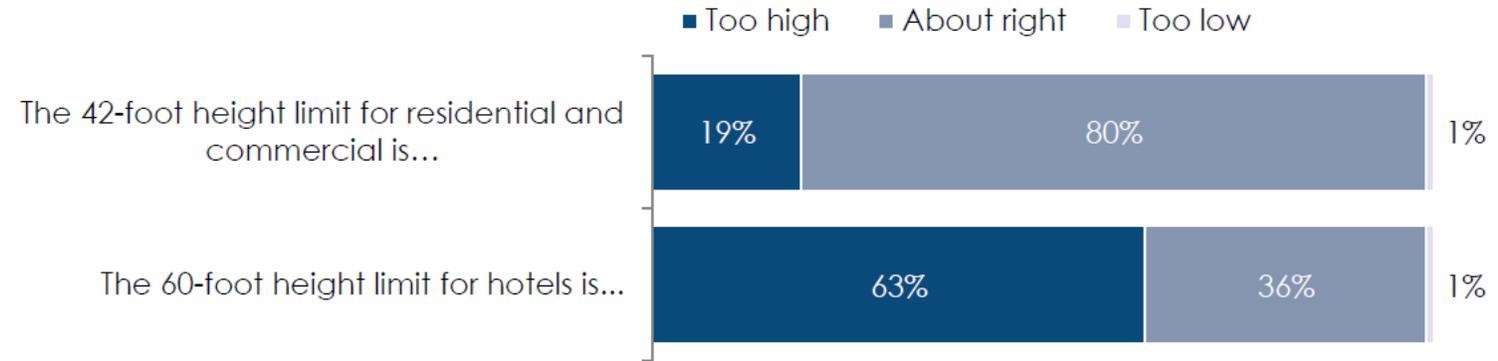The 60-foot height limit for hotels is... — 63% | 36% | 1%

Figure 35: Building Heights and Town's Character

Do you agree or disagree that maintaining low building heights is an important factor in preserving the character of Nags Head?
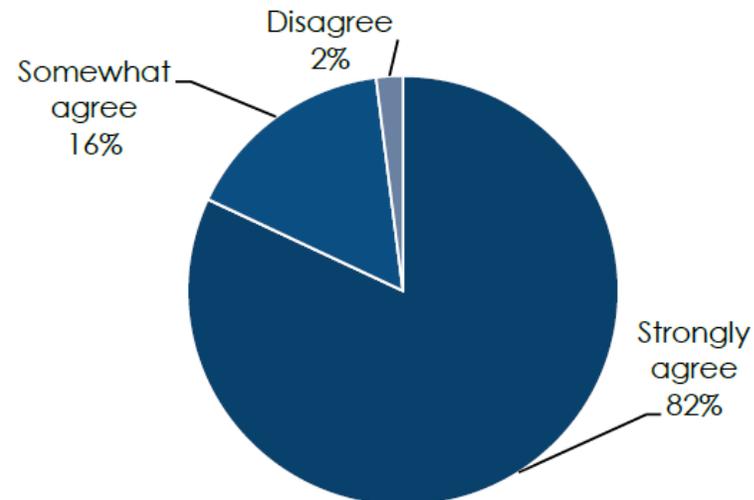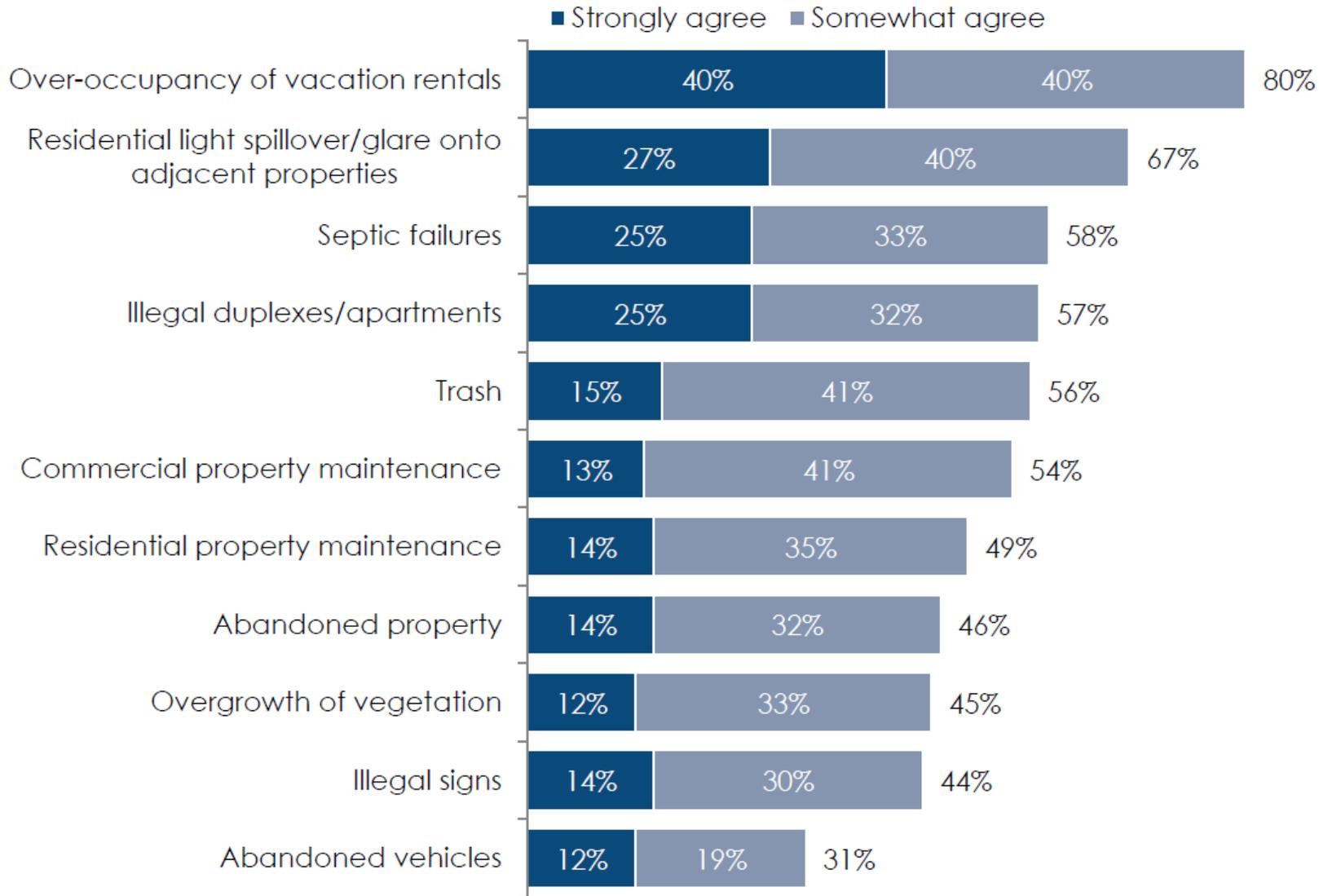
Disagree 2%
Somewhat agree 16%
Strongly agree 82%

Figure 9: Main Problems

Please agree or disagree if the following issues are a problem in Nags Head.

■ Strongly agree   ■ Somewhat agree

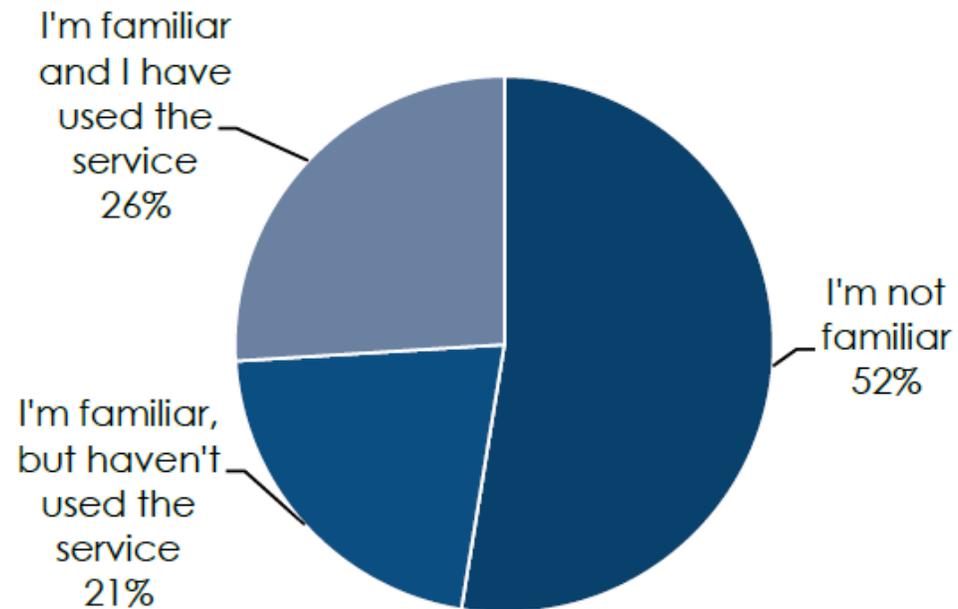| Issue	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Total
Over-occupancy of vacation rentals	40%	40%	80%
Residential light spillover/glare onto adjacent properties	27%	40%	67%
Septic failures	25%	33%	58%
Illegal duplexes/apartments	25%	32%	57%
Trash	15%	41%	56%
Commercial property maintenance	13%	41%	54%
Residential property maintenance	14%	35%	49%
Abandoned property	14%	32%	46%
Overgrowth of vegetation	12%	33%	45%
Illegal signs	14%	30%	44%
Abandoned vehicles	12%	19%	31%

Note: More than 30% of respondents answered "don't know" when asked to rate "Septic failures", "Illegal signs", "Illegal duplexes/apartments" and "Abandoned vehicles".

Community Survey Results

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Figure 25: Usage of the Town's Septic Health Initiative

Are you familiar with the Town's Septic Health Initiative? If so, have you used this service?

I'm familiar and I have used the service 26%

I'm not familiar 52%

I'm familiar, but haven't used the service 21%

Community Survey Results

Figure 26: Soundside Conservation

I would be willing to pay higher taxes or fees for…

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Total
Protection of soundside shoreline	24%	43%	67%
Soundside recreational areas	9%	30%	39%
Soundside access areas	10%	28%	38%

Figure 27: Water Quality

The Town monitors surface and ground water quality as a part of the Septic Health Initiative. Based on your perception of water quality in Nags Head, please rate the water quality for the following categories.

- Excellent
- Good

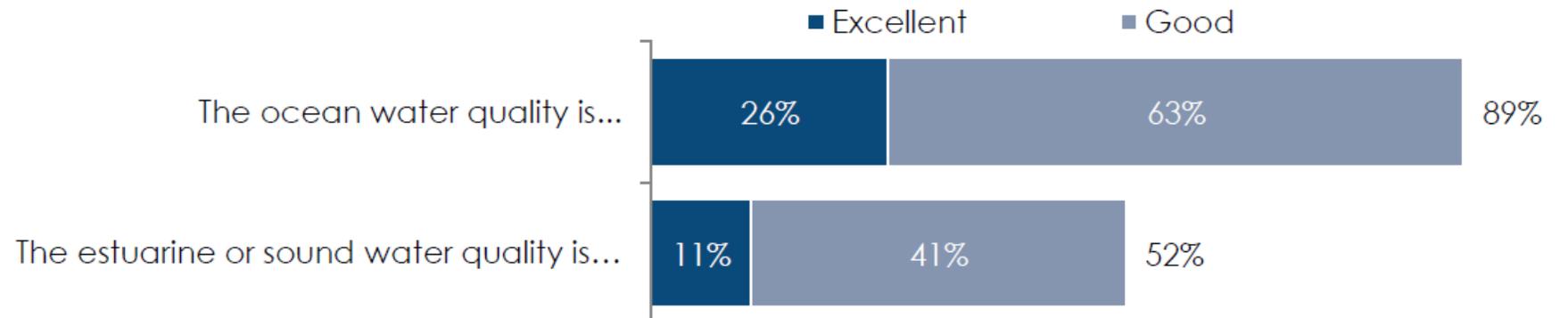|	Excellent	Good	Total
The ocean water quality is…	26%	63%	89%
The estuarine or sound water quality is…	11%	41%	52%

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Figure 28: Traffic and Transportation Priorities

How important, if at all, is it to address each of the following to improve traffic and transportation issues?

■ Essential   ■ Very important

Priority	Essential	Very important	Total
Improve signal timing	32%	37%	69%
Enhance pedestrian crossings at traffic signals or mid-block	32%	34%	66%
Expanding sidewalks/walkway systems	26%	29%	55%
Improve or add turn lanes	18%	34%	52%
Enhance neighborhood safety through traffic calming measures	23%	25%	48%
Provide public transportation	13%	17%	30%
Widen landscape buffers along the edge of roadways	10%	20%	30%
Add new traffic signals on main roads	12%	16%	28%
Create gateway/arrival features as you enter the community	7%	15%	22%
Install landscaped medians	9%	12%	21%

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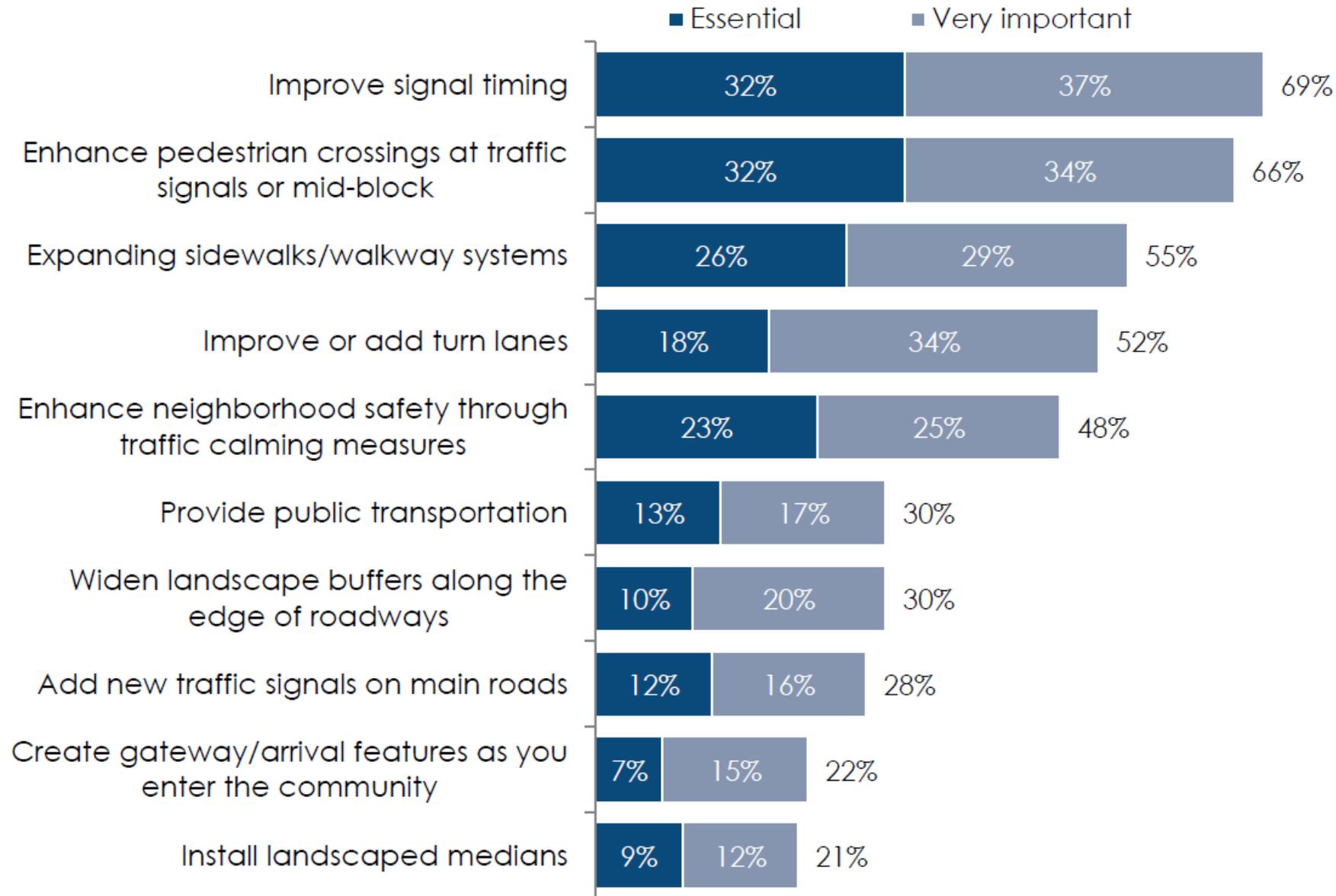Community Survey Results
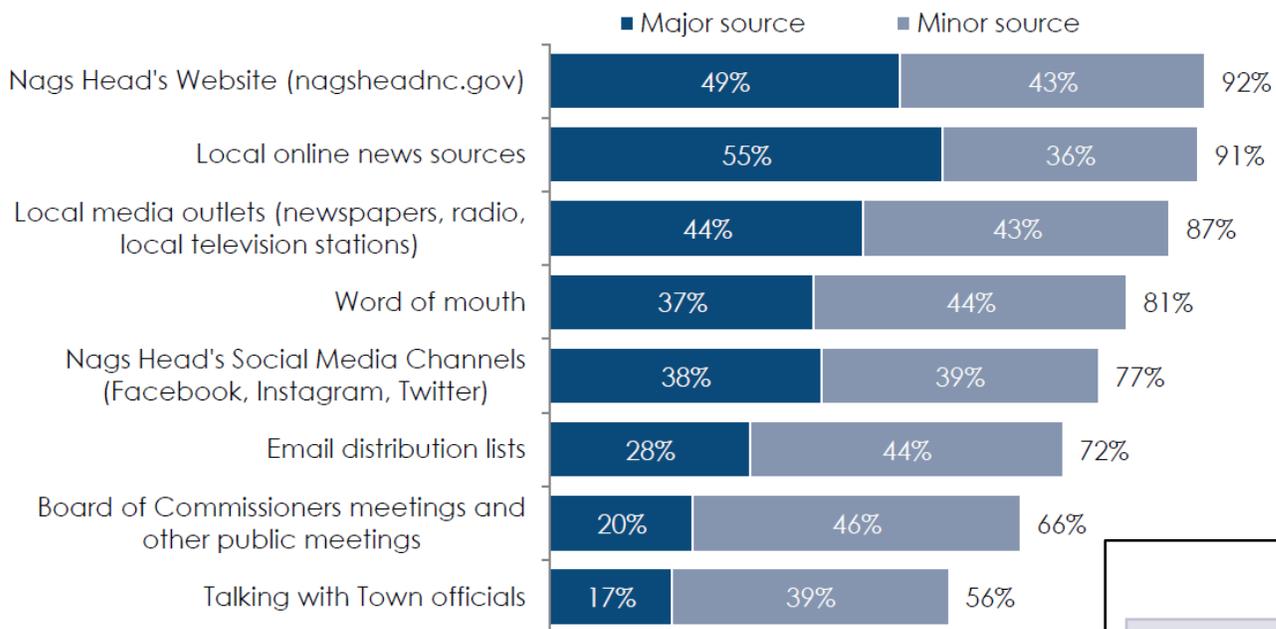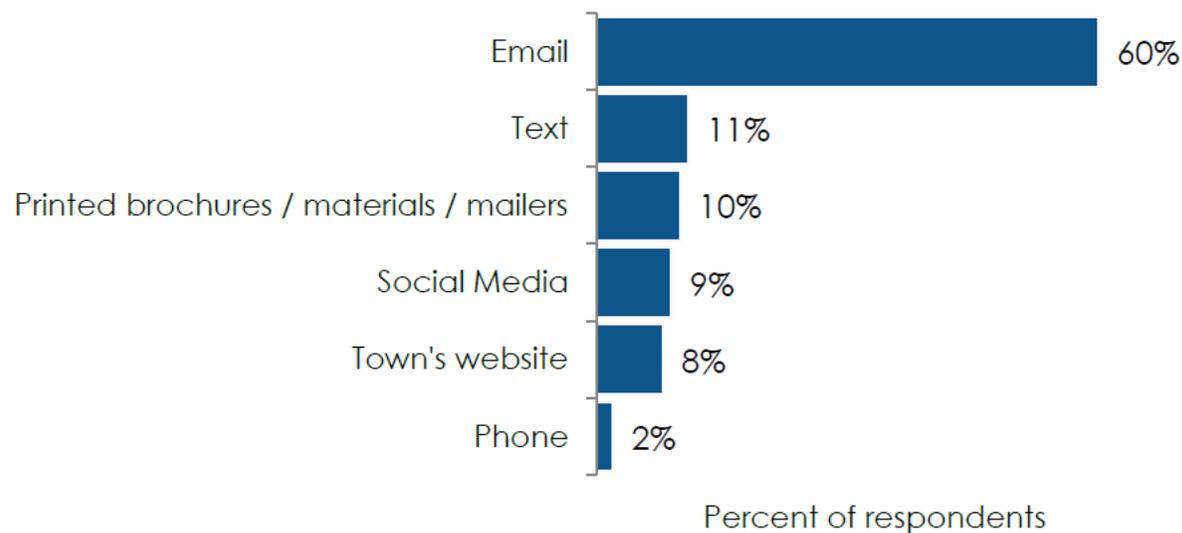
Survey Findings

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Figure 36: Sources of Information

How much of a source, if at all, do you consider each of the following to be for news and information about Nags Head:

- Major source / Minor source

Source	Major source	Minor source	Total
Nags Head's Website (nagsheadnc.gov)	49%	43%	92%
Local online news sources	55%	36%	91%
Local media outlets (newspapers, radio, local television stations)	44%	43%	87%
Word of mouth	37%	44%	81%
Nags Head's Social Media Channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	38%	39%	77%
Email distribution lists	28%	44%	72%
Board of Commissioners meetings and other public meetings	20%	46%	66%
Talking with Town officials	17%	39%	56%

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Figure 37: Preferred Channel of Communication with the Town

What is your most preferred method of receiving communication from the Town of Nags Head? (Select only one.)

Method	Percent
Email	60%
Text	11%
Printed brochures / materials / mailers	10%
Social Media	9%
Town's website	8%
Phone	2%

Percent of respondents

Community Survey Results

Verbatim Responses to the Open-Ended Question (Appendix C pages 62-88)

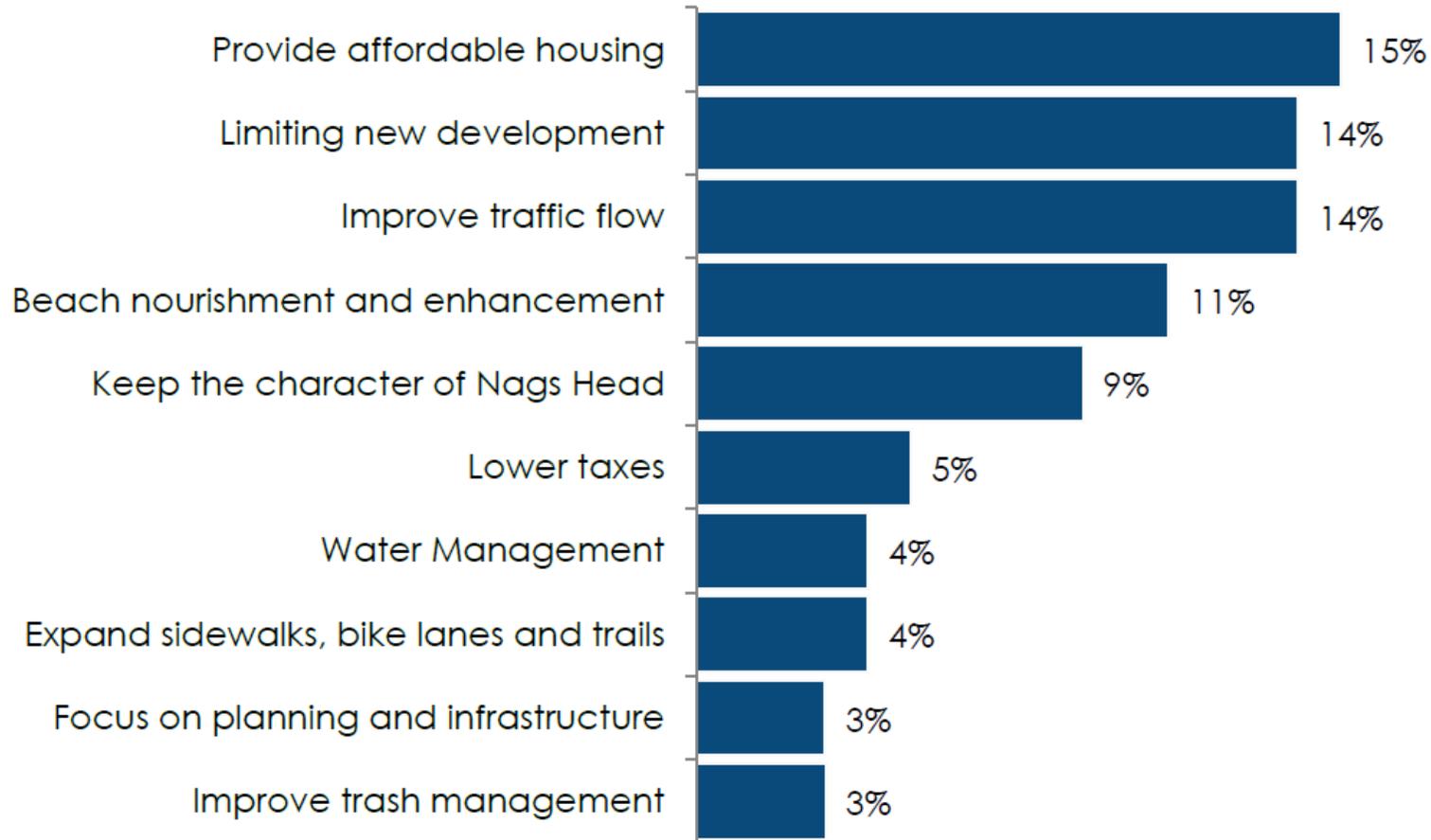*What is the single most important change or improvement to suggest to the Town of Nags Head?*
- Affordable Housing
- Beach Nourishment and Enhancement/Access
- Traffic Flow/Safety
- Recreation/Preserve Green Space
- Limiting/Controlling Development/Maintain Nags Head Character
- Sidewalks, Bike Lanes and Trails
- Water Management (stormwater/water quality)
- Eco-Friendly
- Lower Taxes
- Improve Trash Management
- Infrastructure
- Control Vacation Rentals

Survey Findings

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Figure 11: Suggested improvements for Nags Head

What is the single most important change or improvement to suggest to the Town of Nags Head?:

Category	Percentage
Provide affordable housing	15%
Limiting new development	14%
Improve traffic flow	14%
Beach nourishment and enhancement	11%
Keep the character of Nags Head	9%
Lower taxes	5%
Water Management	4%
Expand sidewalks, bike lanes and trails	4%
Focus on planning and infrastructure	3%
Improve trash management	3%

* Only the most frequently cited categories are shown in this chart. The full set of classified responses can be found in *Appendix B: Complete Set of Survey Responses* and *Appendix C: Verbatim Responses.*

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What's next?

- Strategic Planning Retreat
- Strategic Plan Development
- Budget/CIP
- Future Policy, Program, Budget Considerations

TOWN OF NAGS HEAD