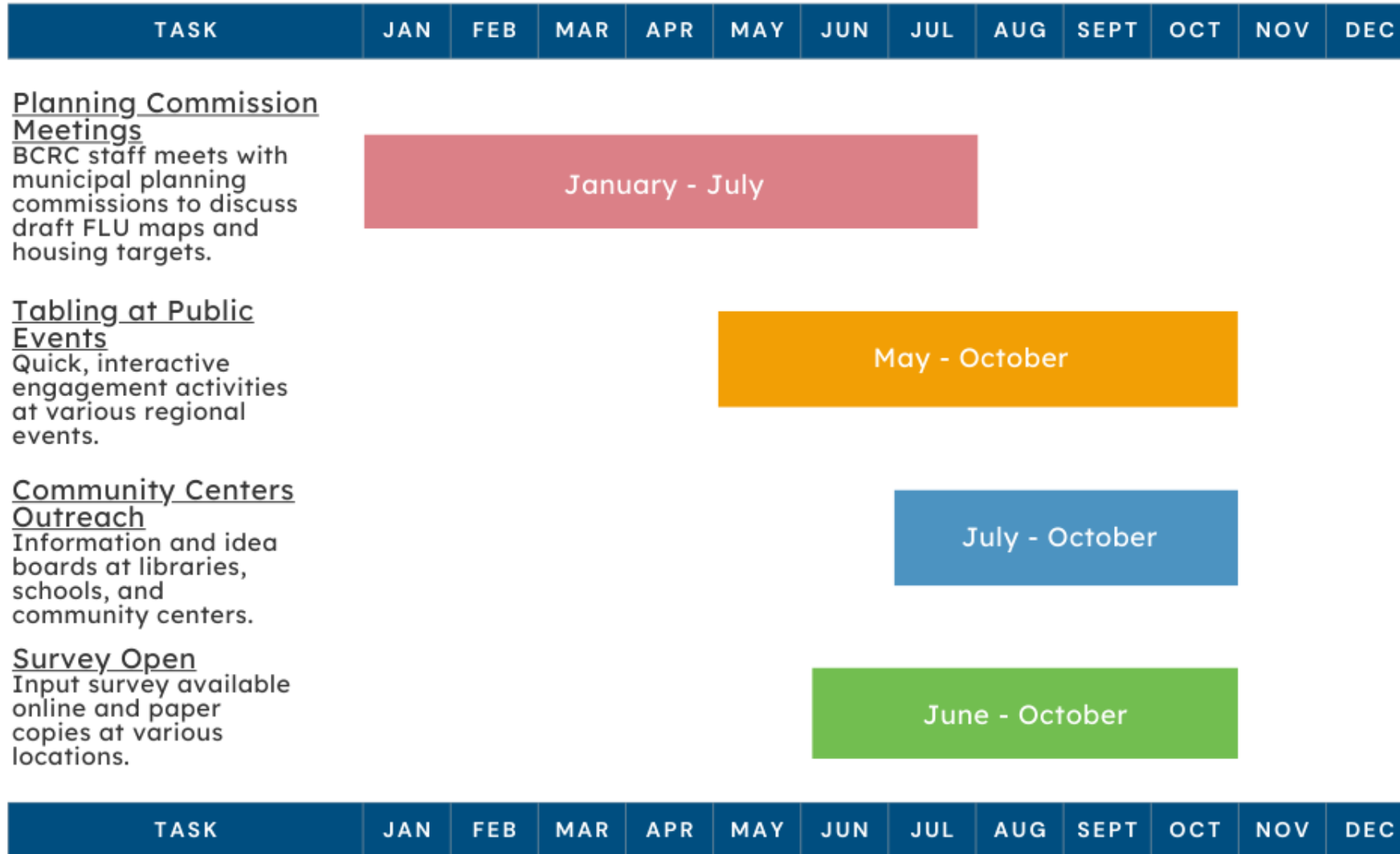


# 2026 Bennington Regional Plan

## Public Engagement Overview



# BENNINGTON REGIONAL PLAN 2025 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



# Engagement by the Numbers

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335 people engaged at public events

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101 survey responses

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27 Municipal planning commission meetings

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14 focus group participants

---

7 public events

---

5 Select Board meetings

---

4 idea poster locations

---

2 focus groups



## Getting the Word Out...

- [Dedicated Regional Plan webpage](#)
- [Local TV announcement](#)
- [Local newspaper article](#)
- Social media (Facebook, Front Porch Forum)
- Local listservs
- Physical flyers posted throughout the region
- Direct outreach to community groups

# Public Events

- Stamford Resilience Fair
- Coffee Hour at the Sheldon Store
- Manchester Street Fest
- Celebrate Pownal Day
- Norman's Attic Fall Fest
- North Bennington Village Block Party
- Harvest Fest



# Focus Groups

- Southwest Tech students
- Bennington County Multicultural Community Center staff and clients
  - Outreach materials translated into Dari and Spanish

## برنامه منطقه‌ای چیست؟

یکی از ۱۱ کمیسیون برنامه‌ریزی منطقه‌ای در سطح ایالت است. ما به ۱۷ شهرداری در این منطقه کمک می‌کنیم و همچنین مسئول توسعه یک طرح منطقه‌ای هر ۸ سال هستیم. یک نقشه منطقه‌ای راهنمایی است که اهداف، اولویت‌ها و اقداماتی را مشخص می‌کند که جوامع پایدار، پررونق و با کیفیت بالا برای ساکنان منطقه ترویج می‌کند. نقشه منطقه‌ای

### بخش‌های ضروری پلان منطقه‌ای

- سیاست‌های راهنما منابع طبیعی
- انرژی
- ترانسپورتیشن
- مسکن
- توسعه اقتصادی
- مقاومت در برابر سیلاب
- نقشه‌ی استفاده‌های آینده از زمین
- اجرای طرح

یک نقشه منطقه‌ای راهنمایی است که اهداف، اولویت‌ها و اقداماتی را مشخص می‌کند که جوامع پایدار و پر رونق و کیفیت بالای زندگی برای ساکنان منطقه را ترویج می‌کند. نقشه منطقه‌ای یک دیدگاه مشترک از آینده است و با ایده‌های شما شکل می‌گیرد! این نقشه همچنین باید چندین الزامات دولتی را برآورده کند.

### رنامه زمانی طرح منطقه ای ۲۰۲۶

مشارکت جامعه: می - اکتبر ۲۰۲۵  
طرح را تدوین کنید: سپتامبر ۲۰۲۵ - آوریل ۲۰۲۶  
فرایند فرزندخواندگی: اپریل - جولای 2026  
برنامه توسط شورای بازنگری استفاده زمین تأیید شد: آگوست - نوامبر 2026

# Idea Posters




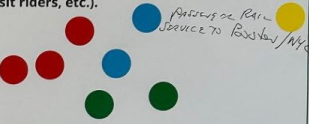






- Unveiled at July 2024 BCRC commission meeting
- Locations:
  - BCMCC
  - JG McCullough Free Library
  - Martha Canfield Memorial Library
  - Solomon Wright Public Library

POWAL

## BENNINGTON REGIONAL PLAN

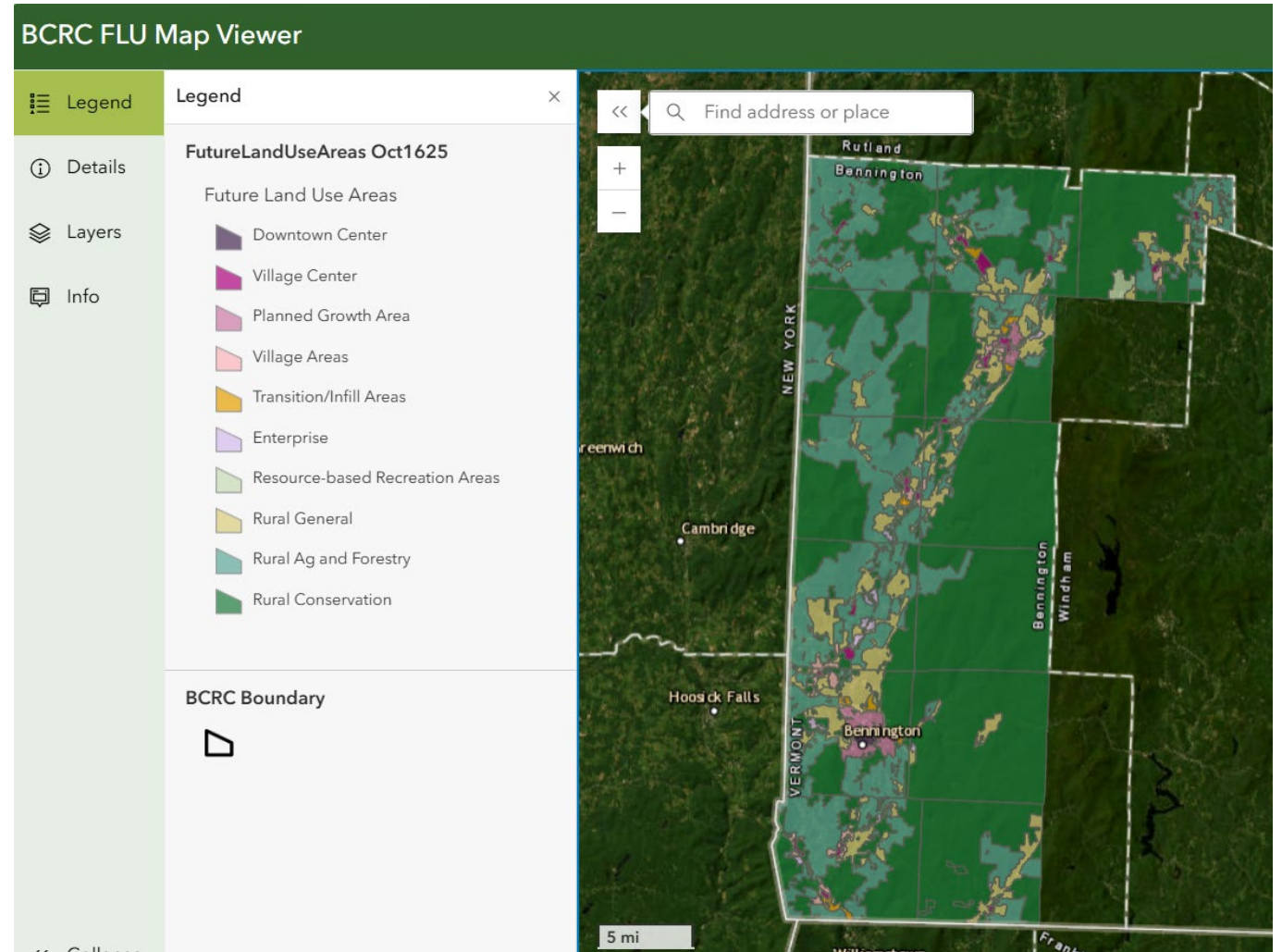
BCRC

What do you want the region to look like in the future? Choose your top 3 priorities.

<p>Compact downtown and village centers surrounded by rural countryside.</p> 	<p>Strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities.</p> 
<p>Safe, high-quality, and affordable housing for all Vermonters.</p> 	<p>Safe, convenient, energy efficient transportation systems for all users (including bicyclists, pedestrians, drivers, transit riders, etc.).</p> <p><i>Partners on Rail Service to Boston/NY</i></p> 
<p>Protected and preserved natural, scenic, and historic resources.</p> 	<p>Clean air and water, healthy forests, and abundant wildlife.</p> 
<p>Increased renewable energy and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.</p> 	<p>Abundant recreational opportunities for everyone.</p> 
<p>Strong agricultural &amp; forest industries.</p> 	<p>Improved access to educational opportunities, childcare, and public safety.</p> 

# Municipal Meetings

- Introduce Act 181 and the sections relevant to municipalities
- Develop and refine the regional Future Land Use Map
- Discuss new tiered system of Act 250 jurisdiction



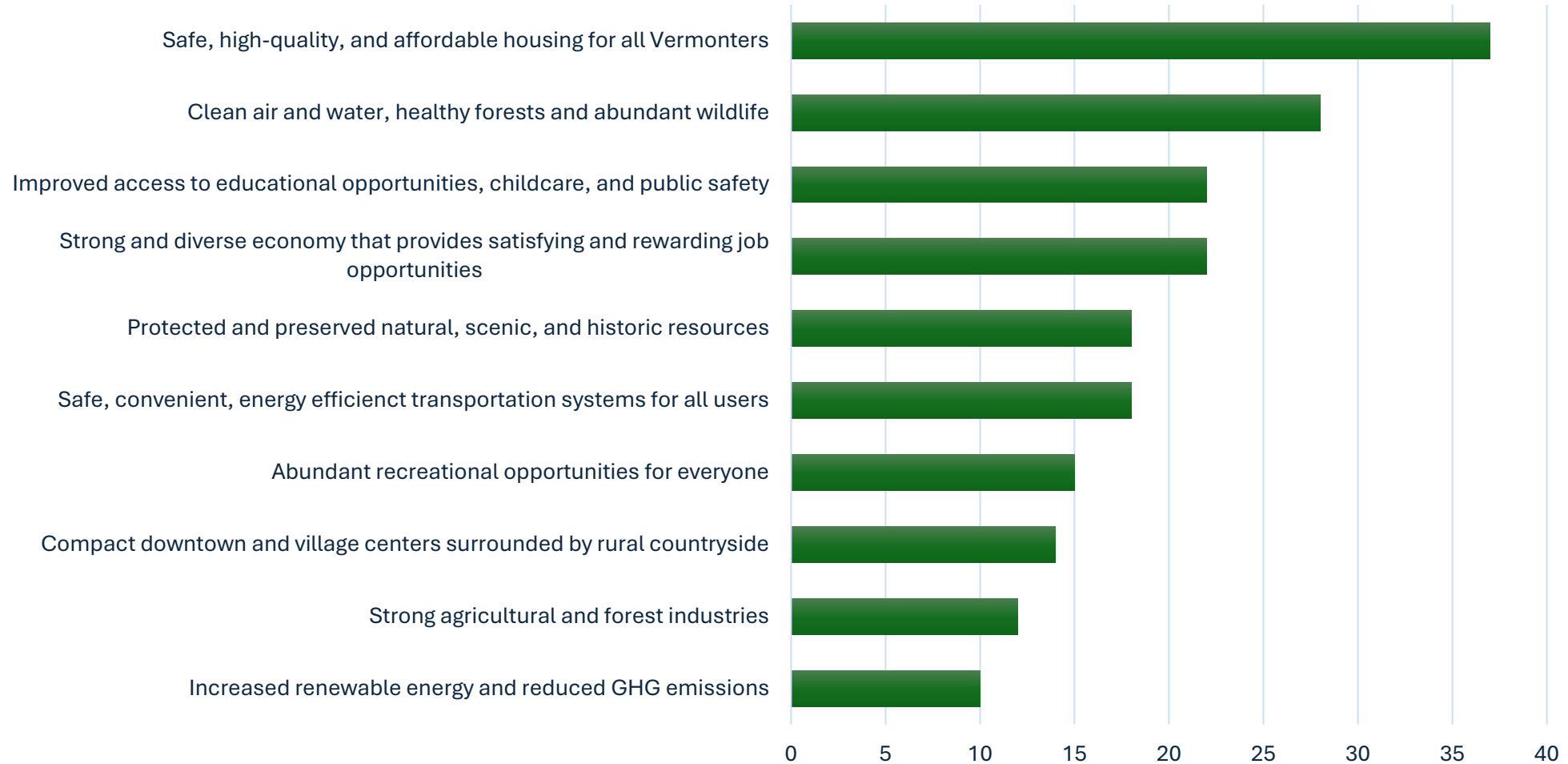
# Engagement Results & Themes

Public Events, Focus Groups & Idea Posters



# Dot Voting Results

## Most Important Priorities for the Region



# What We Heard: Themes

Community  
Life

Recreation &  
Wellbeing

Infrastructure  
& Mobility

Local  
Economy

Education &  
Services

Housing

Food &  
Farming

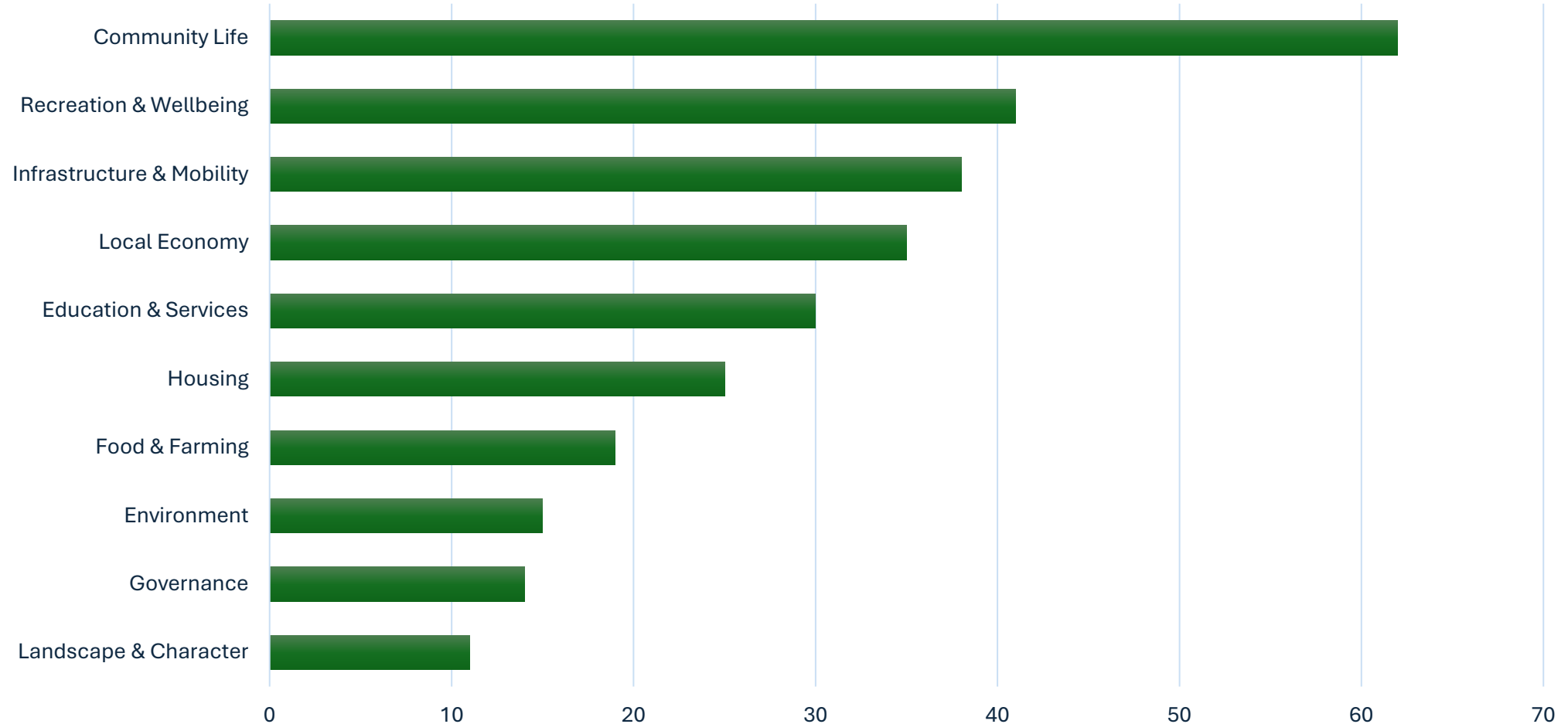
Environment

Governance

Landscape &  
Character

# Frequency of Themes

Top Response Themes



# What We Heard: Direct Quotes

## Values

- “Breathtaking scenery, historic architecture.” (*Bennington*)
- “Quiet, peaceful, and strong community.” (*Rupert*)
- “We are all a big family.” (*North Bennington*)
- “Growth opportunities for local businesses.” (*Manchester*)
- “Solid community groups, get involved!” (*Pownal*)
- “Small town feel.” (*Arlington*)

## Challenges

- “Amenities for attracting young people.” (*Arlington*)
- “Limited options for people who don’t drive.” (*Pownal*)
- “Affordability and housing.” (*Manchester*)
- “Shrinking/aging population.” (*North Bennington*)
- “Future of rural schools.” (*Rupert*)
- “Nothing to keep young people here after school.” (*Bennington*)



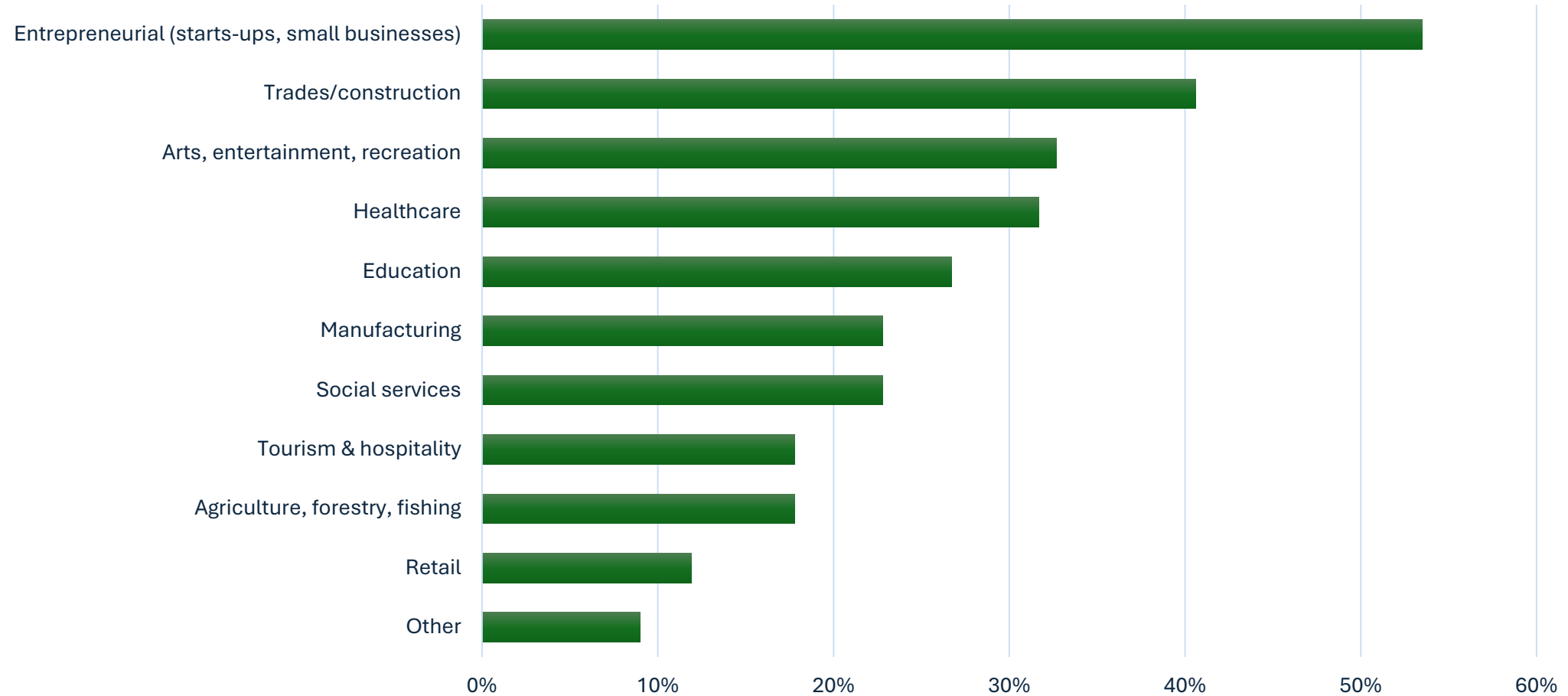
# Survey Results

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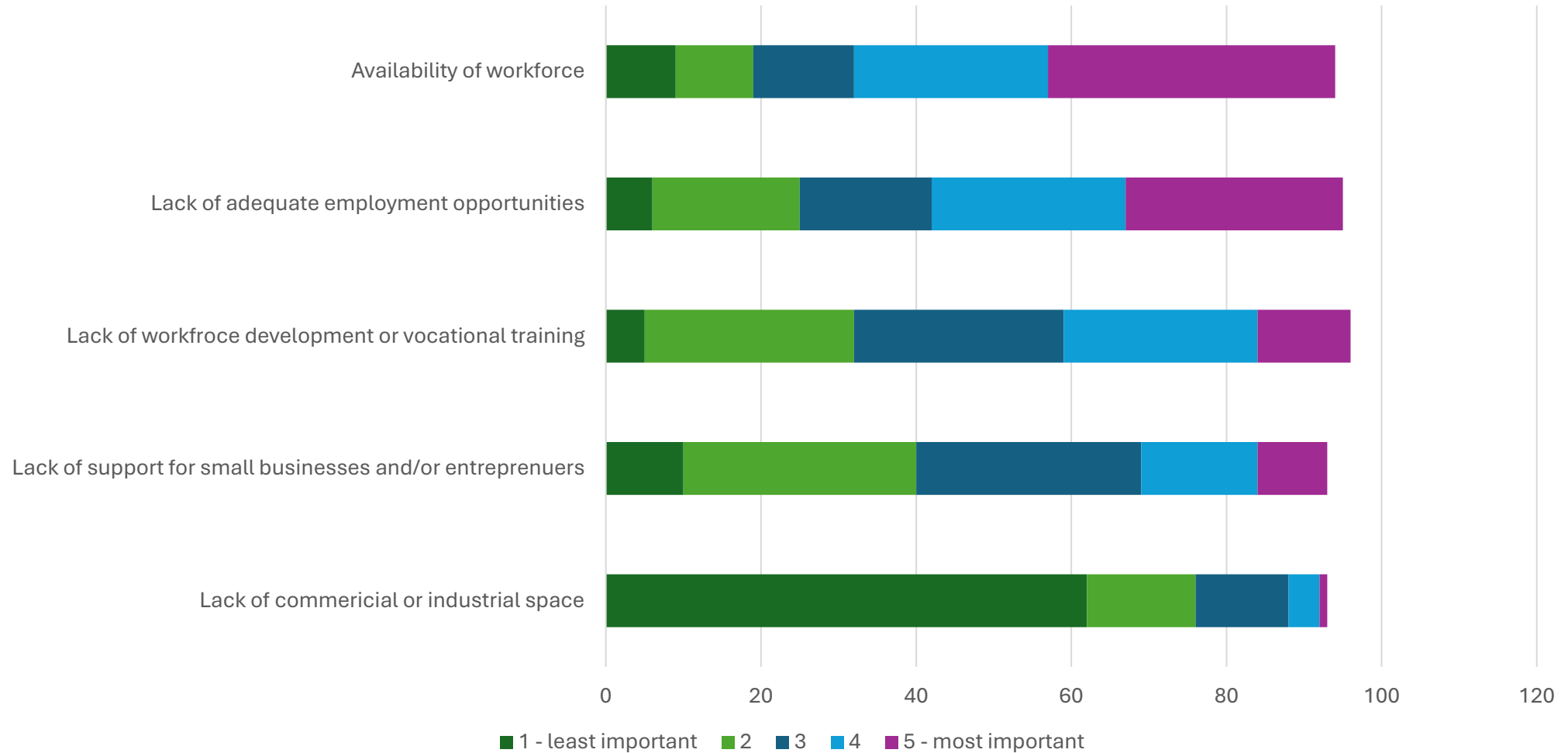
# Economic Development

## Which Types of Jobs Do You Want to See More of in the Region?

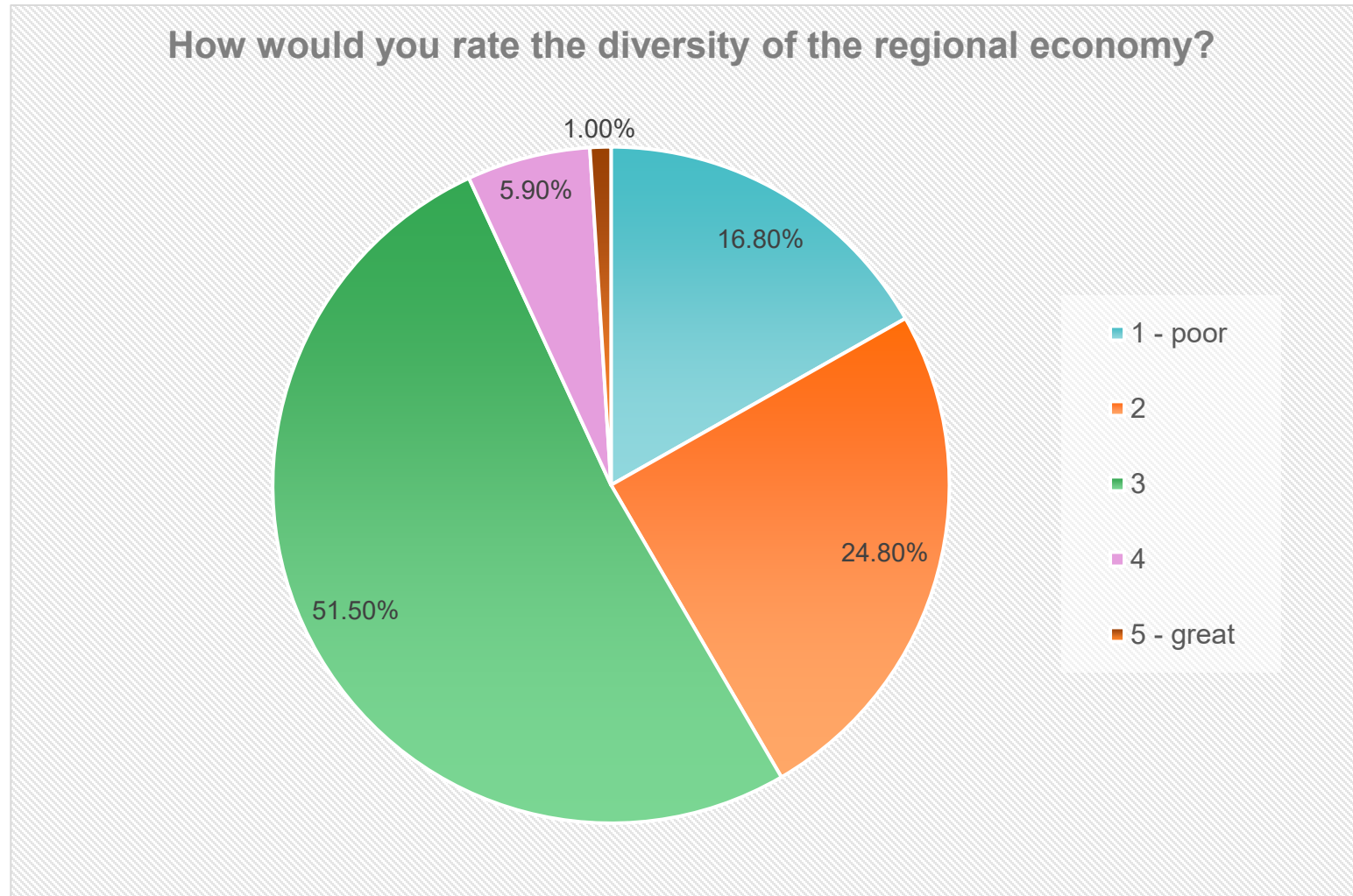


# Economic Development

Economic Development Challenges

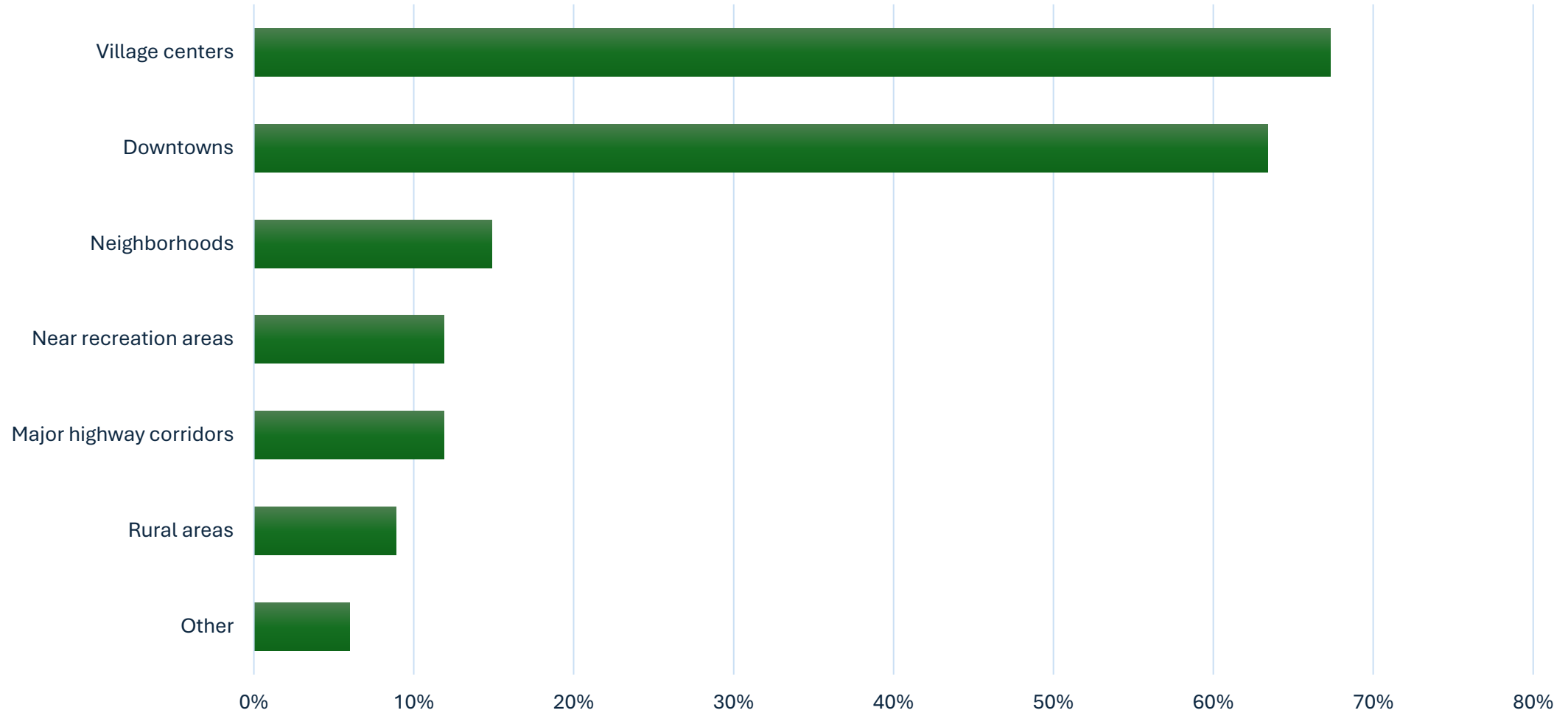


# Economic Development

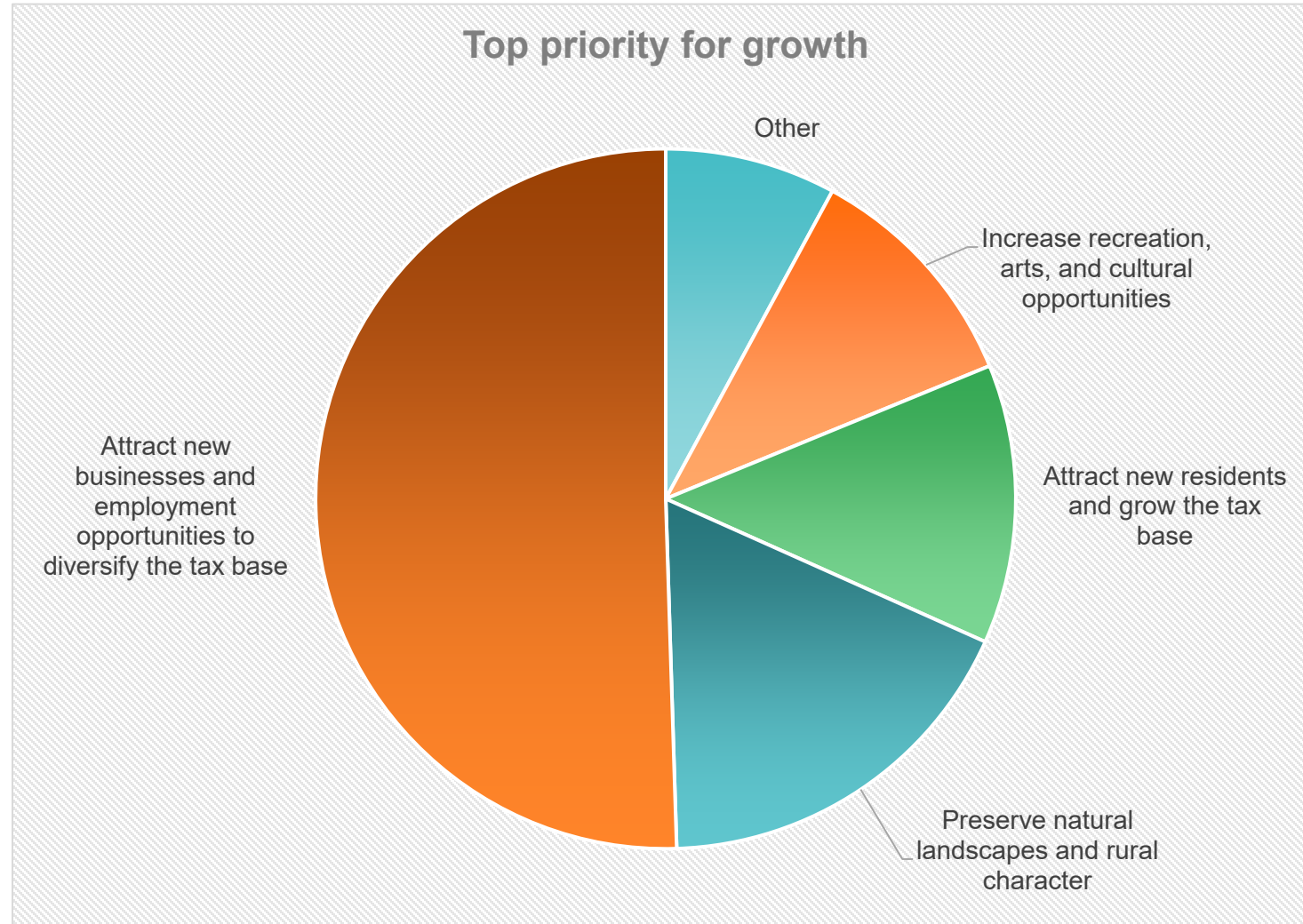


# Land Use

Where are the best places for our communities to grow?

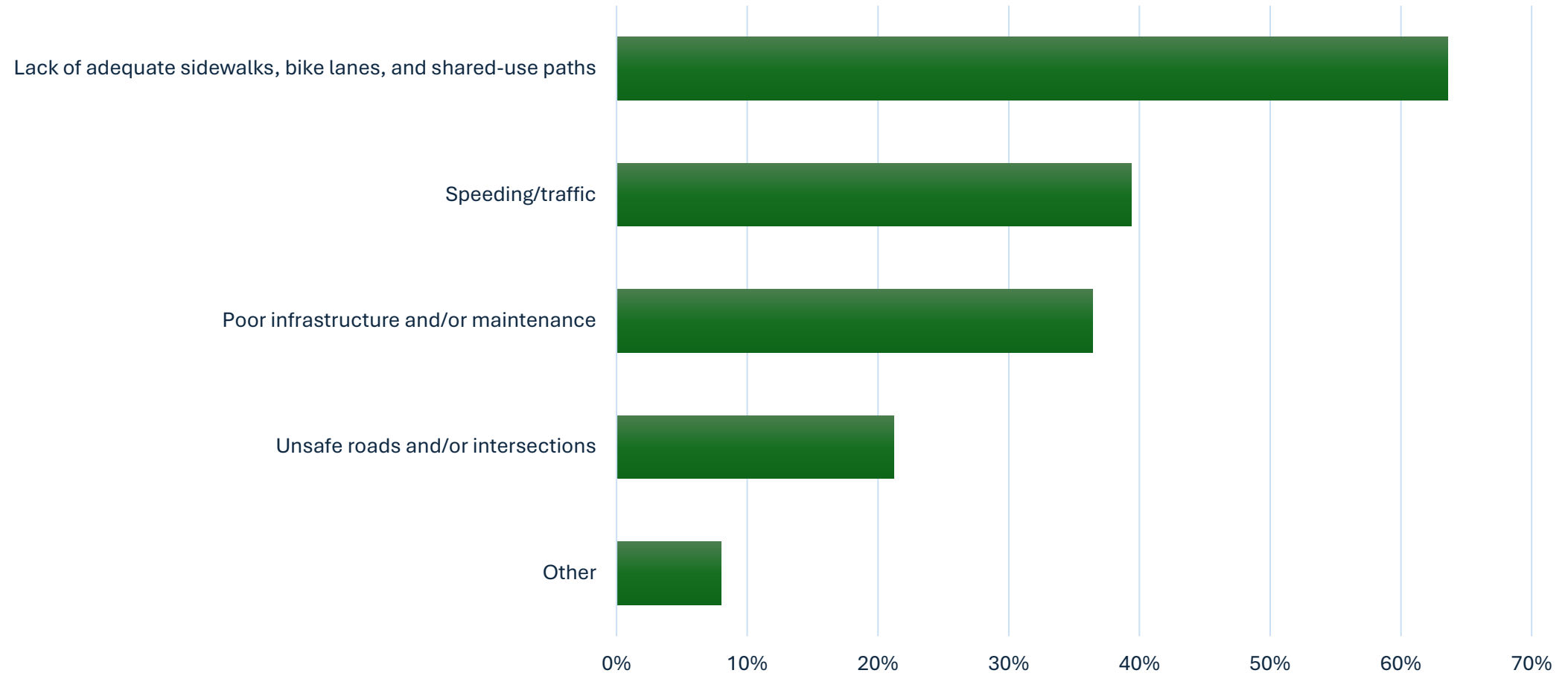


# Land Use



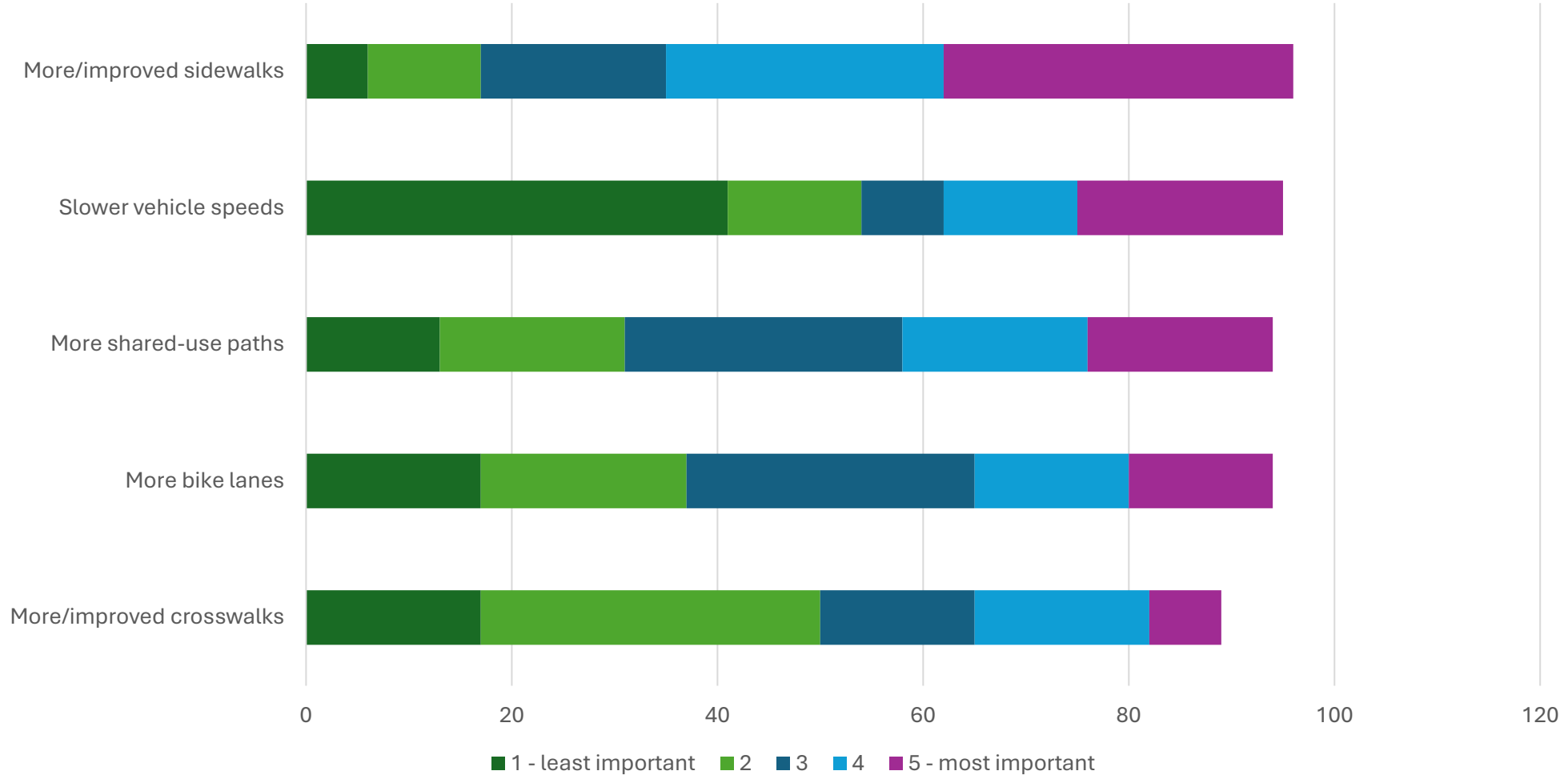
# Transportation

## Greatest Transportation Safety Concerns

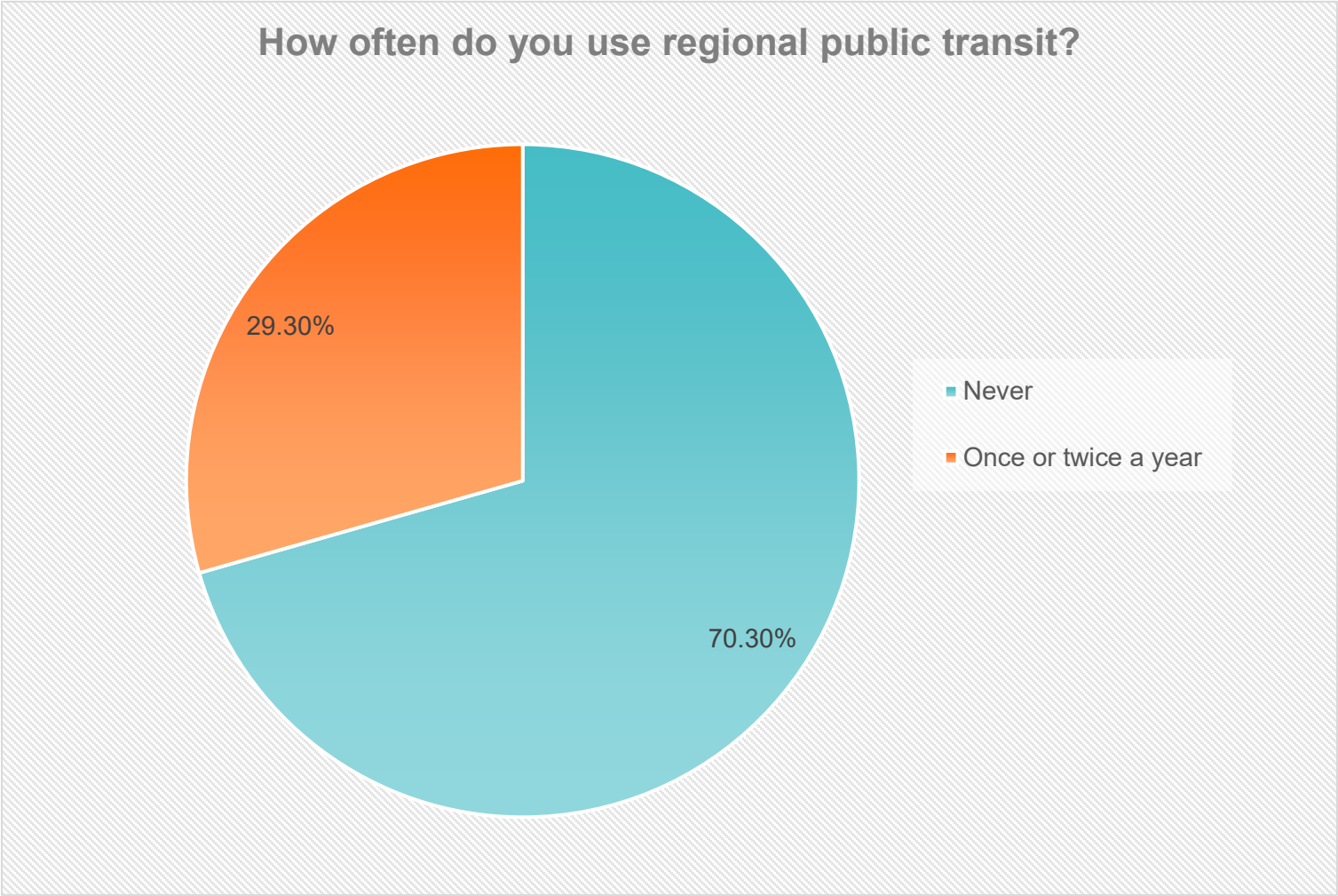


# Transportation

Importance of Walking/Biking Improvements

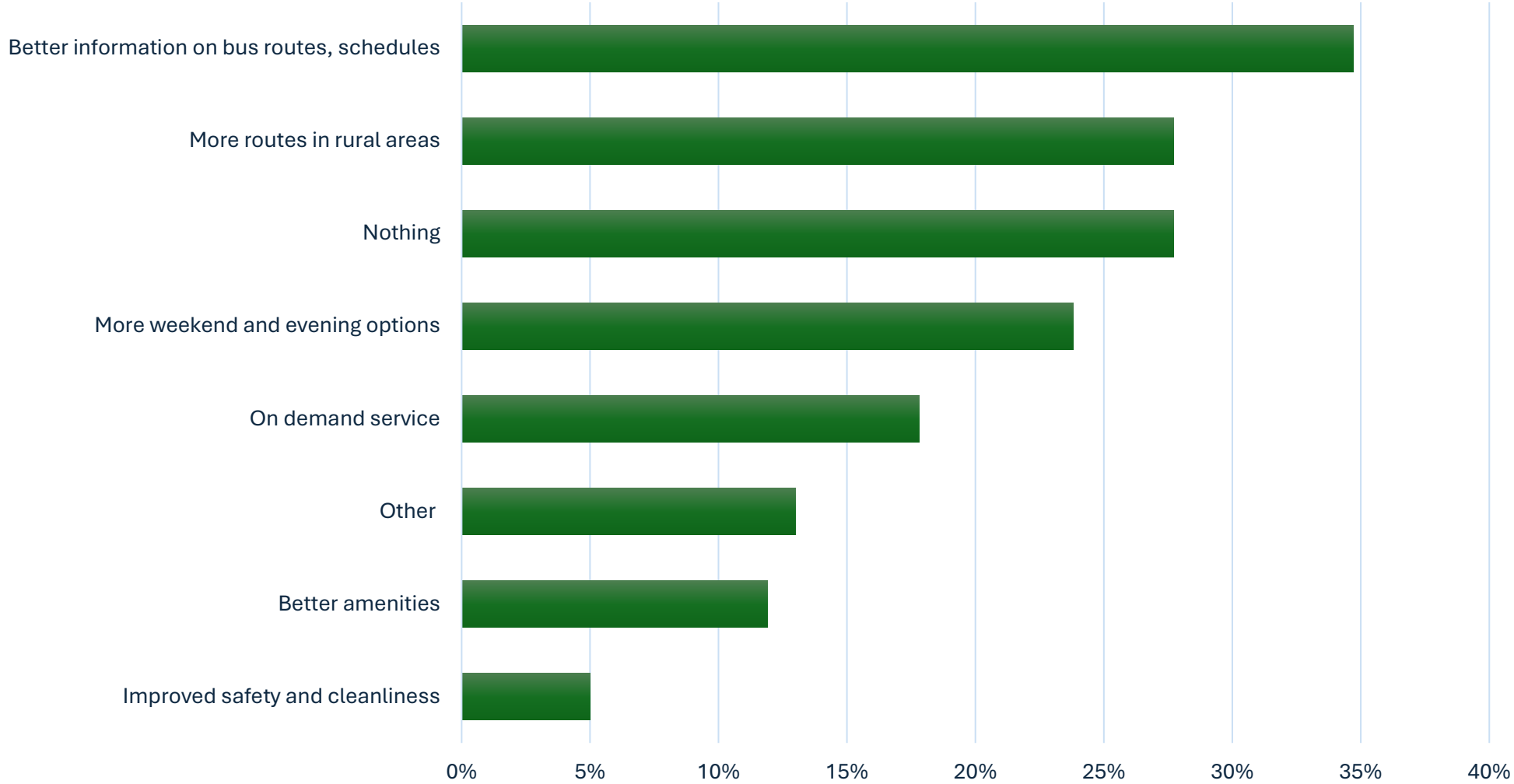


# Transportation



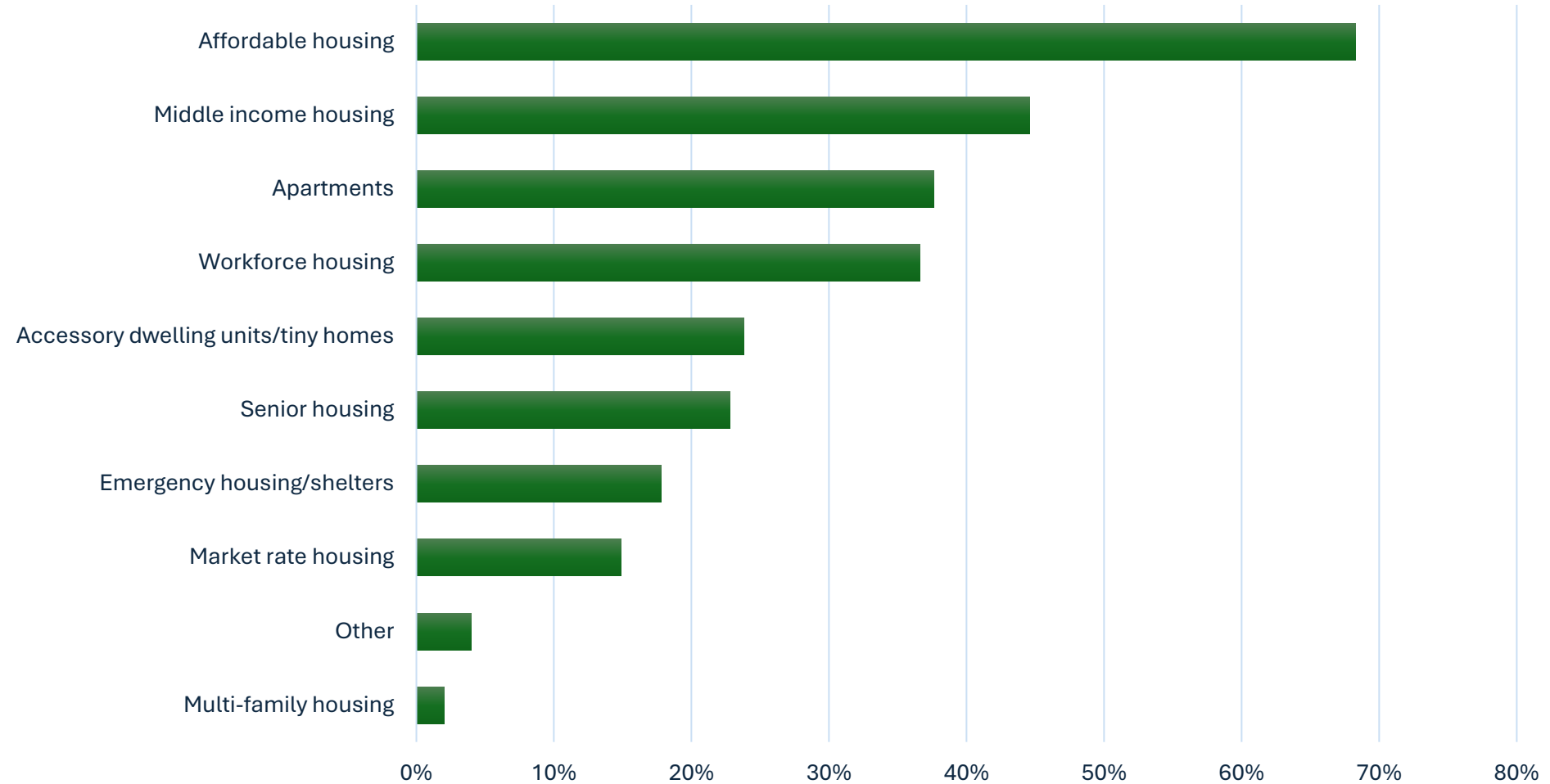
# Transportation

What would make you more likely to use public transit?



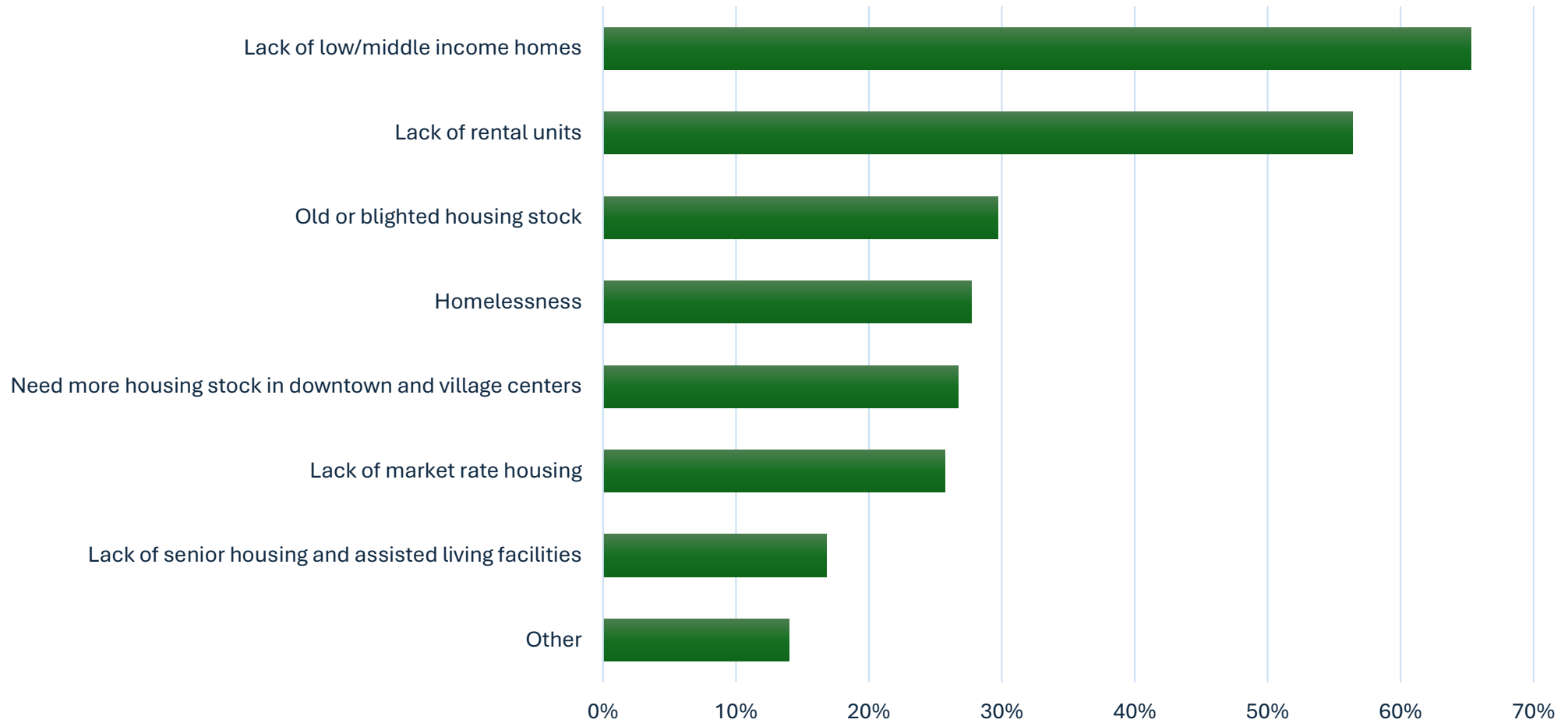
# Housing

**What types of housing are most needed in the region?**



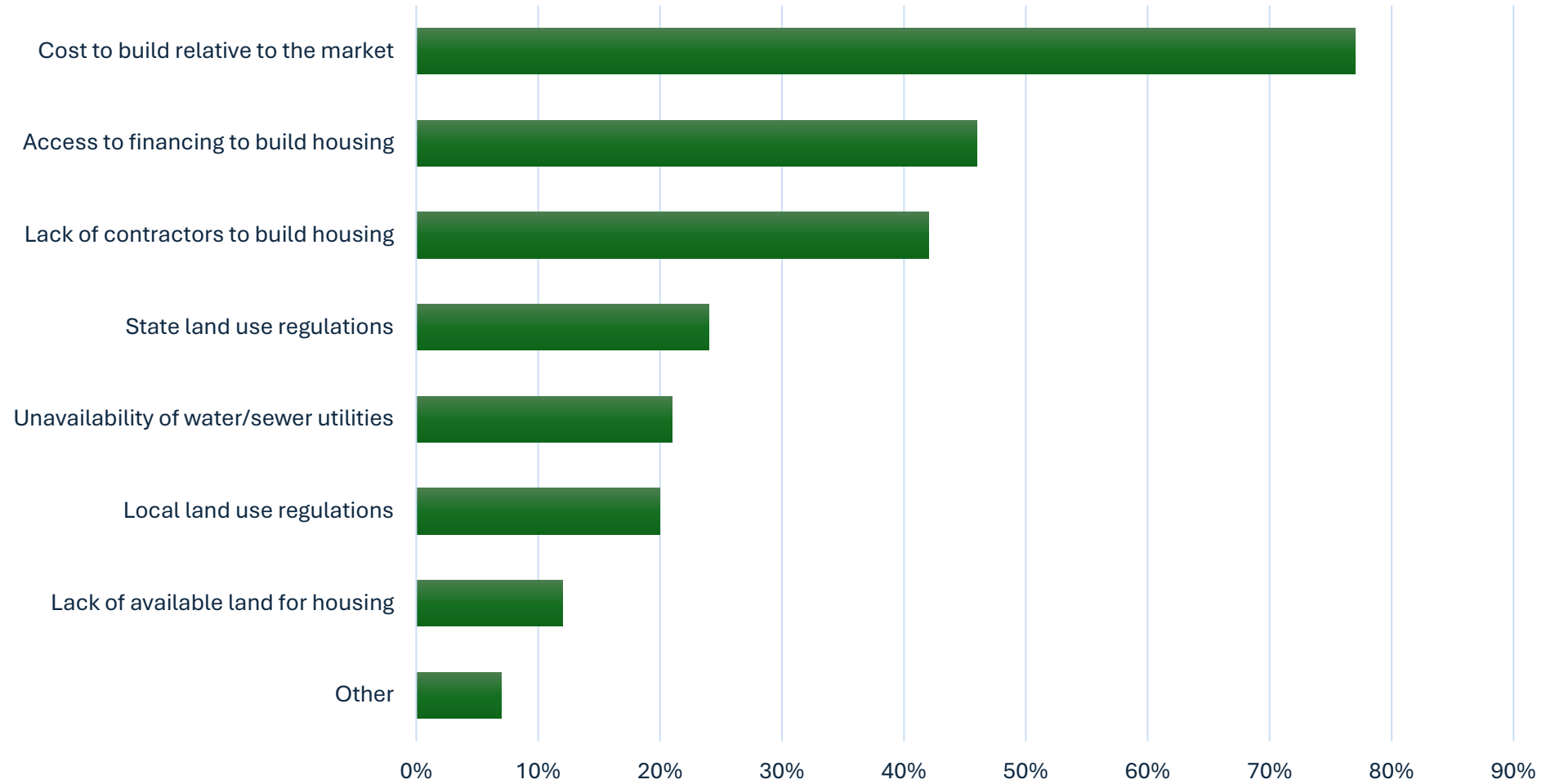
# Housing

## Biggest Housing Challenges in the Region



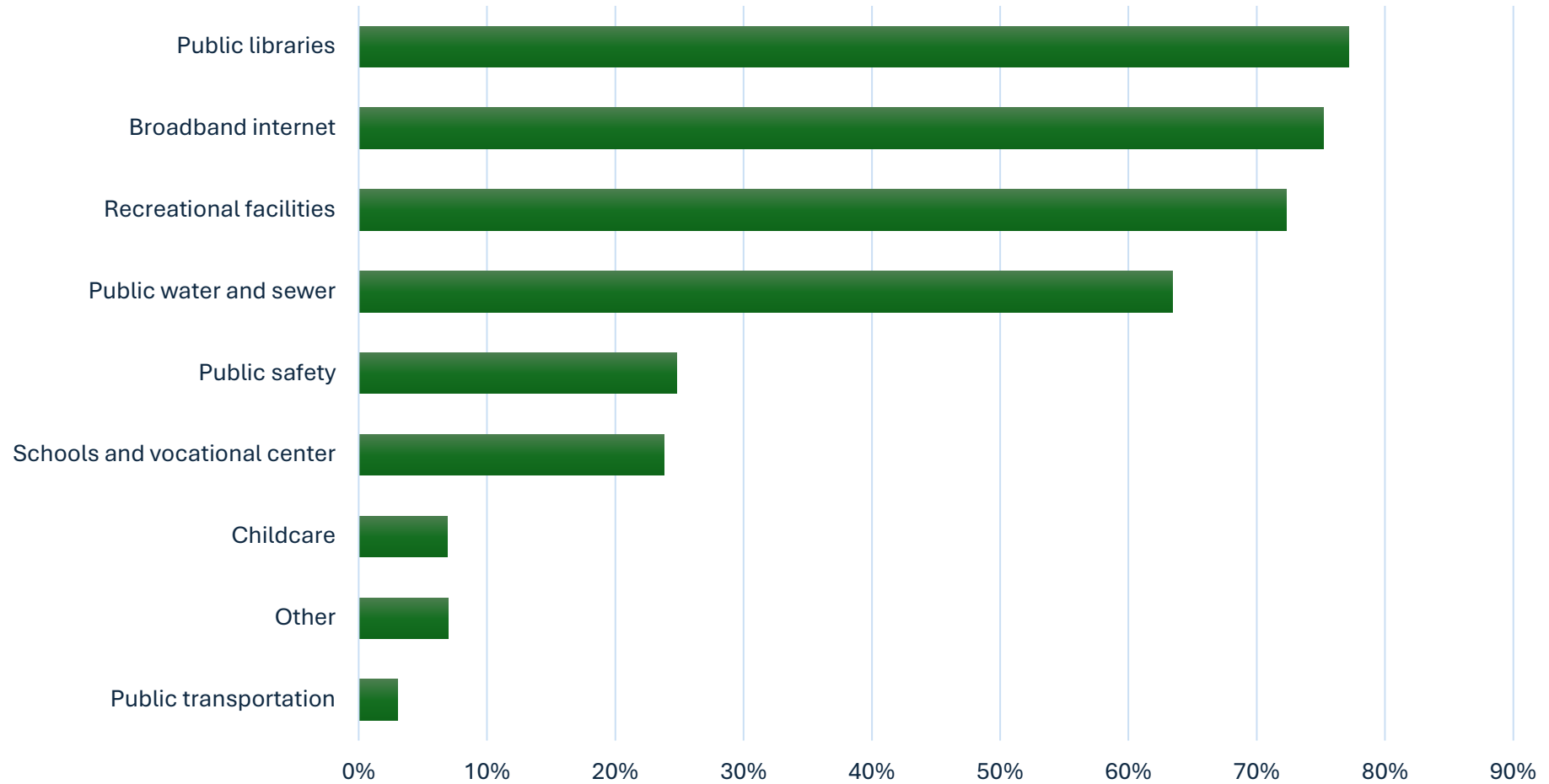
# Housing

## Barriers to Housing Growth in the Region

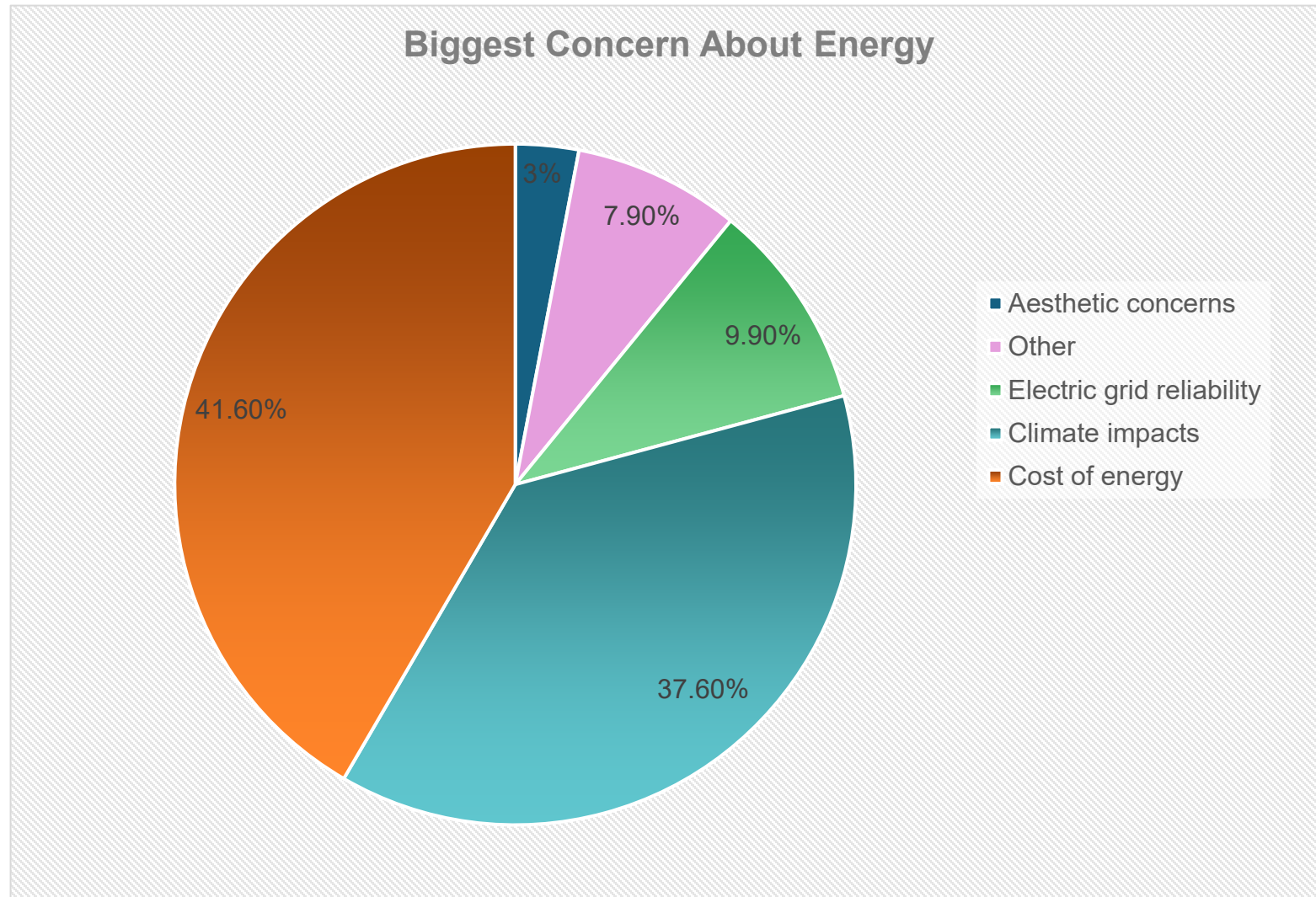


# Public Facilities & Services

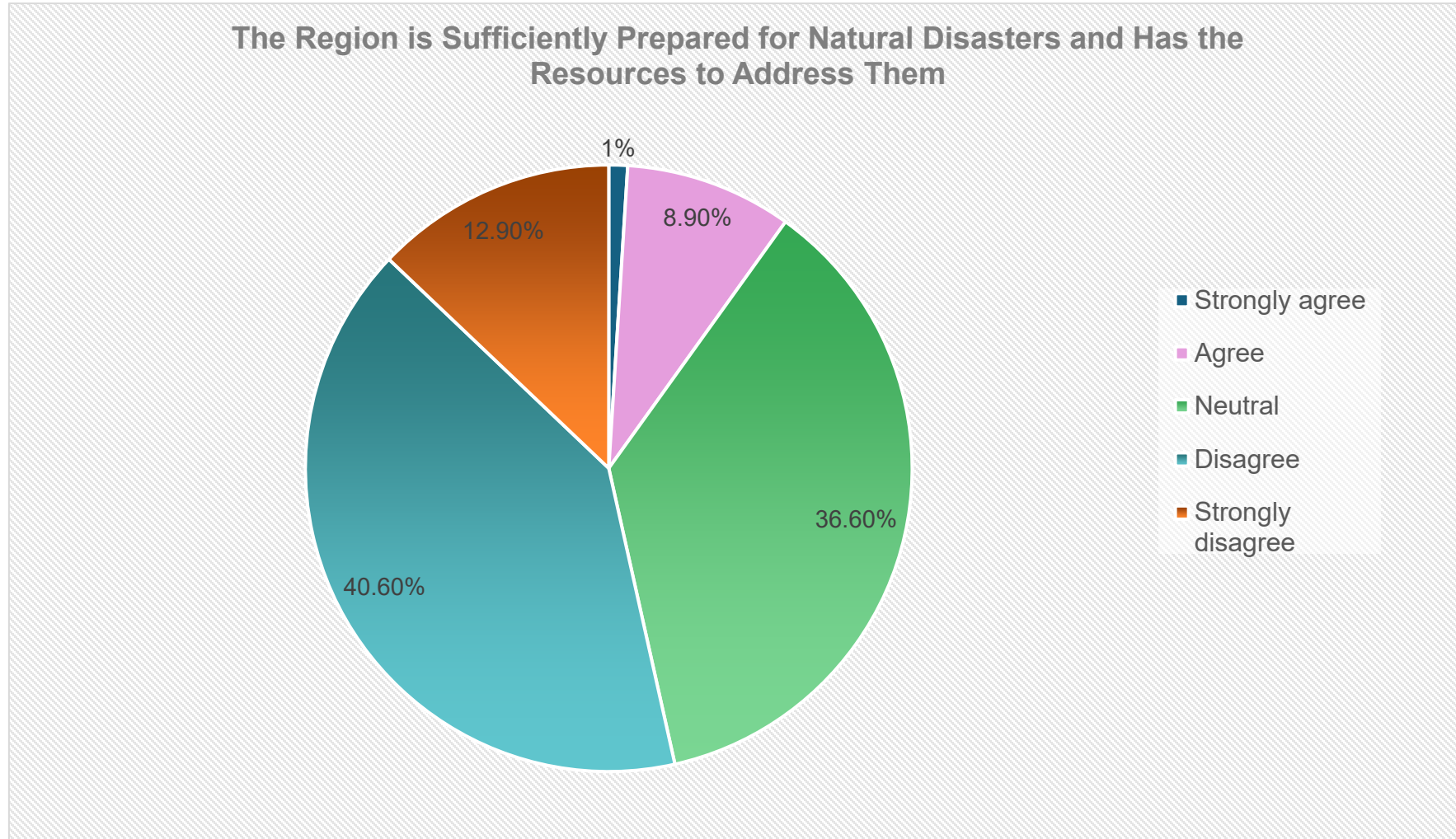
What public services do you regularly use?



# Energy & Resilience



# Energy & Resilience



Open-ended  
Responses:  
What natural  
resources do you  
value in the  
region?

The region's mountains, rivers, forests,  
lakes, and scenic views

Access to outdoor recreation assets such  
as hiking trails and bike paths

Green Mountain National Forest

The Battenkill River

Local parks

Open-ended  
Responses:  
What cultural,  
historic, and  
recreational  
resources do you  
value?

Bennington Battle Monument

Bennington Museum

Historic architecture

Local theaters, arts centers, and  
libraries

# Open-ended Responses: Greatest strengths of the region

Sense of community, neighborly support during crises

Community spaces and events

Natural beauty

Rural character

Small-town feel

Access to outdoor recreation

Proximity to major cities such as Albany, NYC, and Boston

# Open-ended Responses: Greatest challenges of the region

Housing affordability and availability

Economic stagnation – lack of jobs, low wages,  
limited growth

Resistance to change

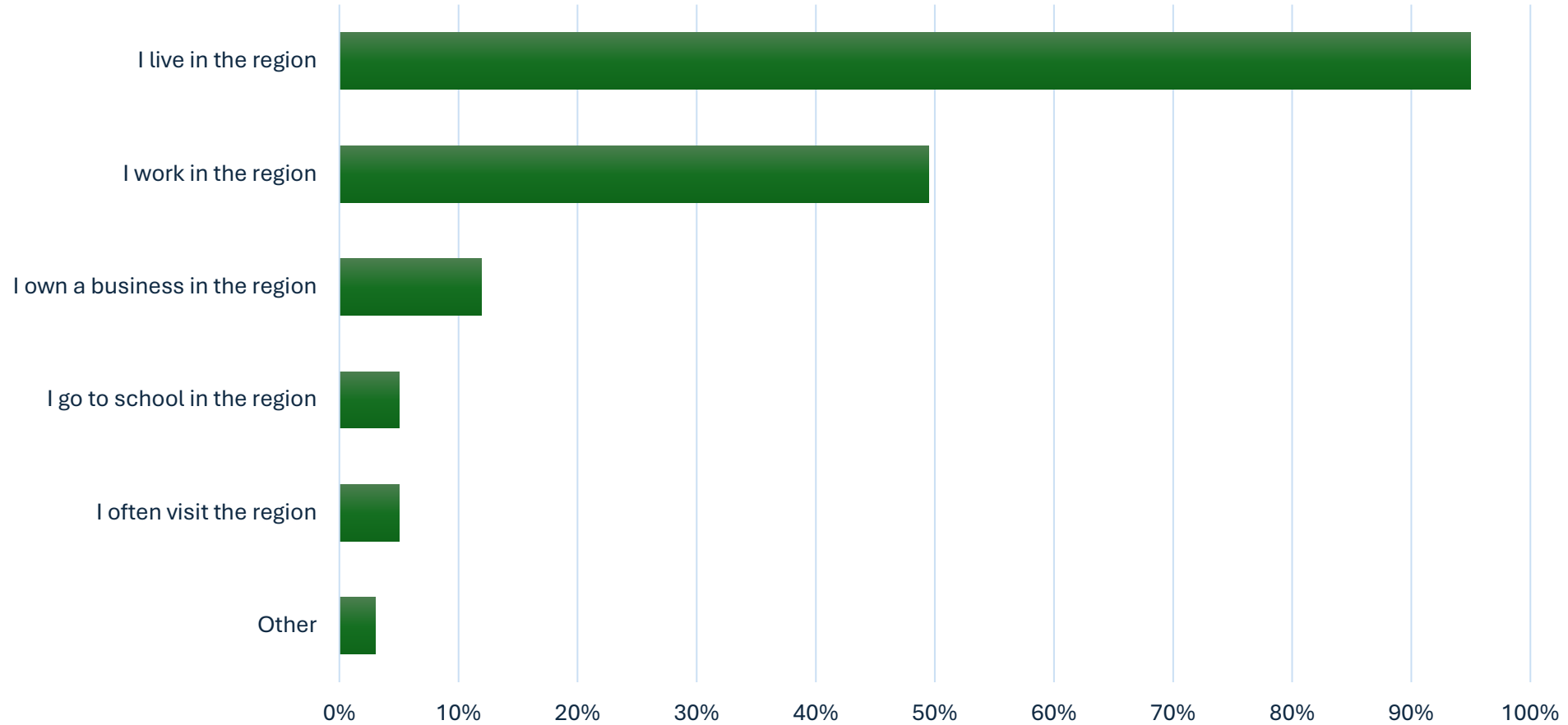
Poverty, homelessness, and drug use

Access to healthcare

Access to public services

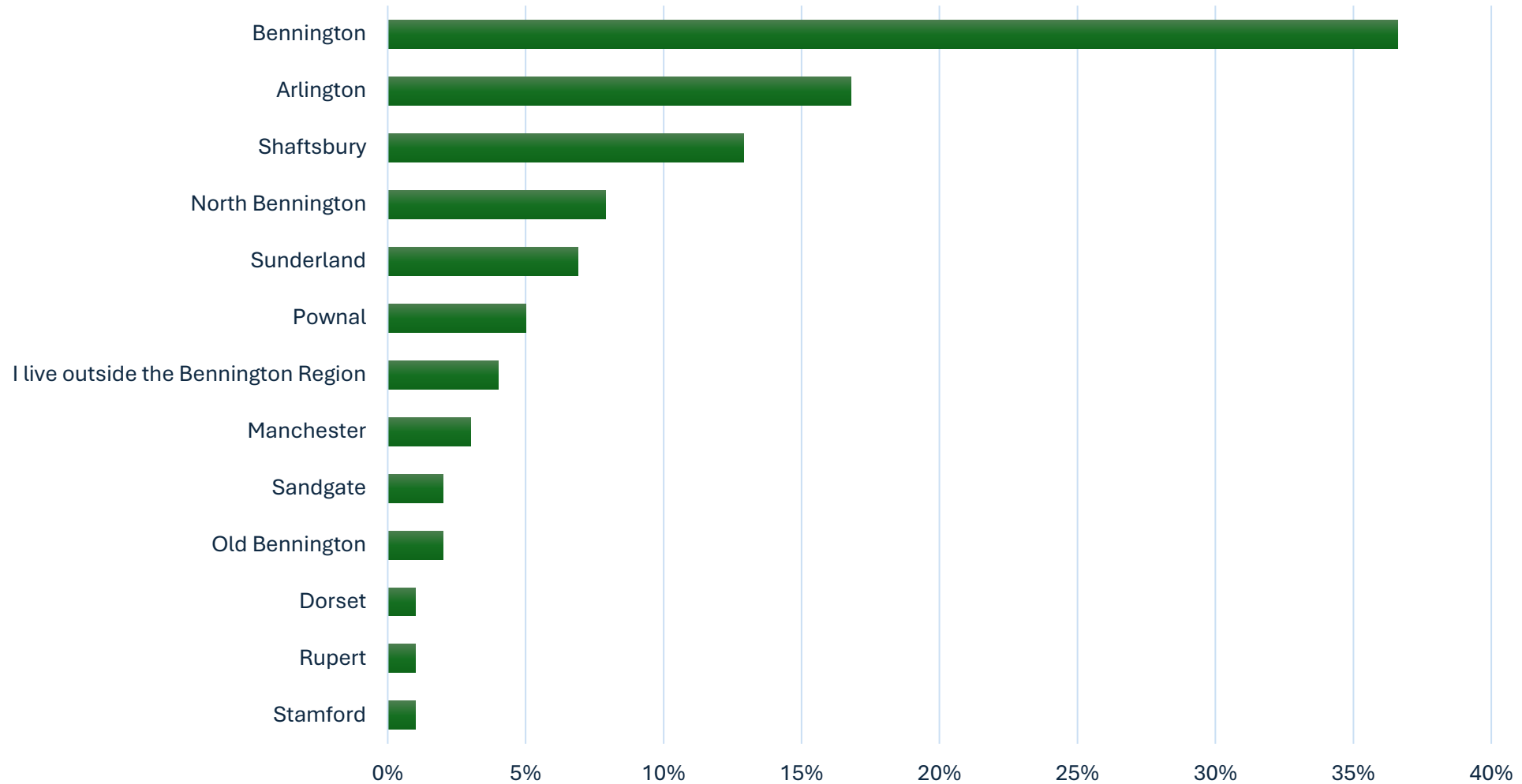
# Demographics

## Relationship to the Region



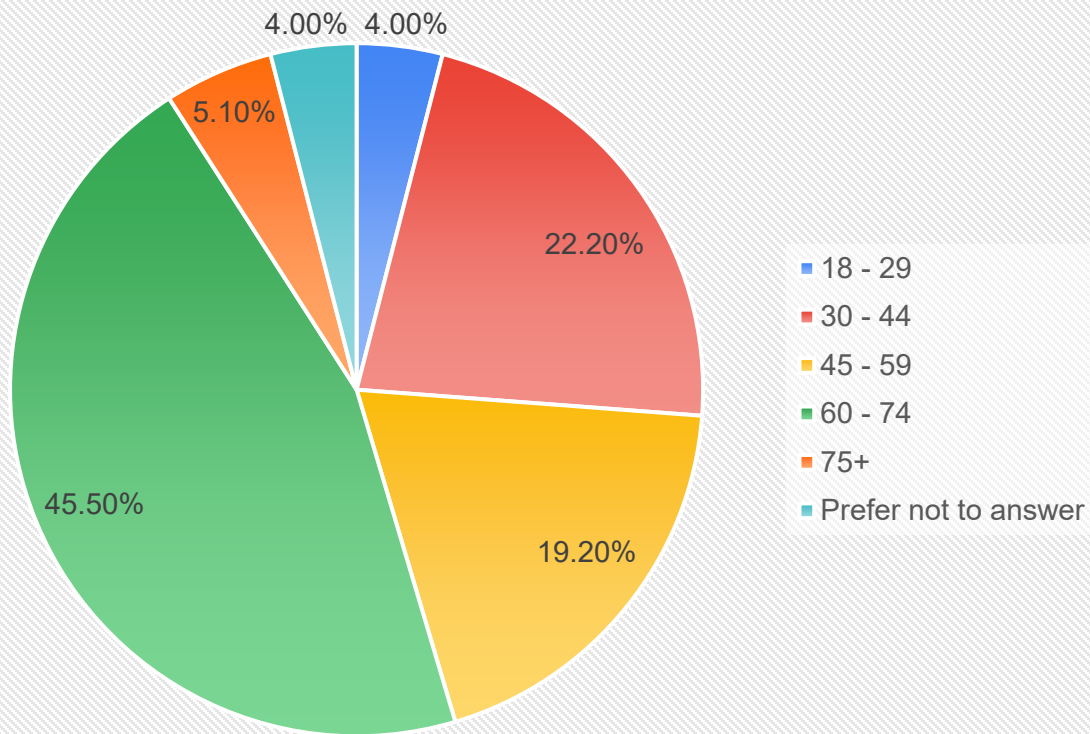
# Demographics

## Which Municipality Do You Live in?

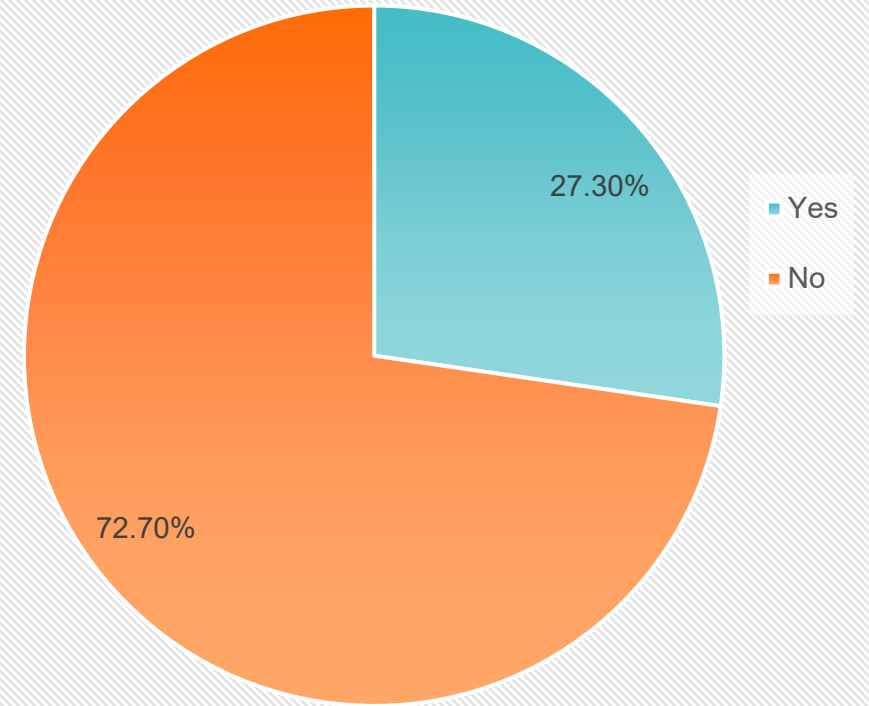


# Demographics

## How old are you?



## Did You Grow Up in the Region?



# Other Demographic Statistics

- 84% homeowners
- 11% renters
- Race
  - 84% White
  - 9.2% preferred not to answer
- Gender
  - 53.1% Women
  - 35.7% Men
  - 3% Non-binary
  - 8% preferred not to answer
- Good income distribution – largest category was \$100K - \$149K (24%)



# What's Next?

- Update/draft new sections of the Regional Plan
- Working sessions with Regional Plan Advisory Committee
- Submit draft plan to the LURB in April
- Summer/Fall: Public hearings and adoption

