

# Results of the Town of Seward Comprehensive Plan Survey

## Overview and Highlights

The Town of Seward is in the process of creating its first Comprehensive Plan to guide growth and development while also promoting the health, safety and overall welfare of its residents, landowners and other resources. A 15-minute, 42-question survey was created by the Planning Board acting as the Comprehensive Plan Committee with assistance from the Town Board and County Office of Community Development Services (OCDS) staff over the spring and summer of 2017 to gather as much community input as possible. The final version was mailed to all Town residents and landowners, 1,636 in total, in late September of 2017. The survey was also available to be completed online. A total of 376 surveys were returned in autumn for a response rate of 23.0%. Of the 376 surveys returned, 34 were entered online and 342 hard copies were mailed to County OCDS and entered by OCDS staff.

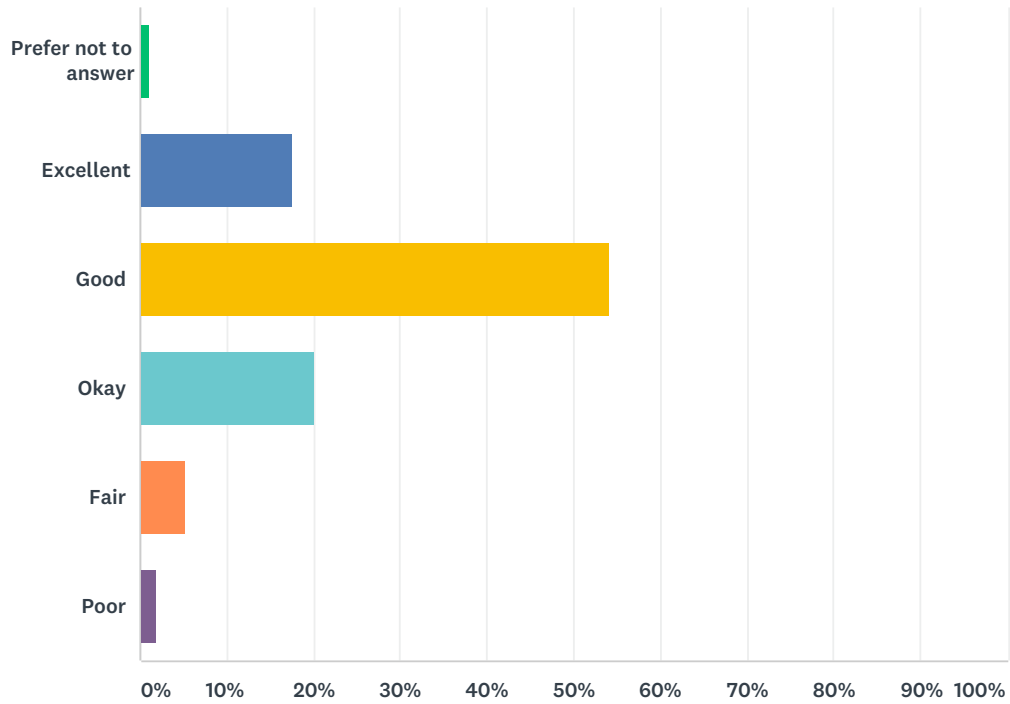
Some highlights of the survey results:

- Q1: 54.2% of responses indicated good and 17.6% indicated excellent quality of life; 20.1% okay, 1.9% fair and 5.2% poor.
- Q2: 37.8% have neutral opinions regarding the effectiveness of current land use controls; 30.8% think they are effective and 14.4% say they are ineffective.
- Q29: 84.1% were from full-time residents.
- Q38: 78.8% were from residents of more than 10 years.
- Q31: 54.9% age 56+ and 30.6% 36-55 years old.
- Q3: 67.5% indicate support for land use management techniques to preserve farmland.
- Q6: 72.6% indicated that there are sites in Town worth protecting. There is a variety of opinions on which sites should be protected.
- Q10: 88.3% are generally in support of solar energy collectors in Town.
- Q11: 36.9% would support utility-scale solar (solar farms) in Town if there was a law regulating construction/operation; 12.2% would not support solar farms anywhere in Town.
- Q12: 64.2% indicated that they would not support hydrofracking anywhere in the Town.
- Q13: 51.3% said that the topic of hydrofracking is very important and another 15.7% said it's important; many indicated a willingness to move out of Town if hydrofracking were to take place in Seward.
- Q14: 39.0% would support having cell towers anywhere in Town; 9.3% would not support their construction anywhere in Town.
- Q17: 64.2% consider internet access very important and another 17.7% call it important.
- Q18: 31.4% rated the internet quality as good; 23.3% okay; 14.6% each for excellent and poor.
- Q4: 33.3% list affordable house/property as a reason why they live in Seward.
- Q5: 22.0% indicate that housing costs would make them move if they were to rise.
- Q9: 56.1% indicated that low-density housing with each having their own open space is desirable.
- Q34: 90.3% of responses were from people living in a single-family house/building.
- Q42: 61.3% strongly agree and 33.4% agree that the Town of Seward is and should remain "a place where people can safely raise families".

Please continue reading for the full results of the Comprehensive Plan Survey.

## Q1 Please rate the overall quality of life in the Town of Seward:

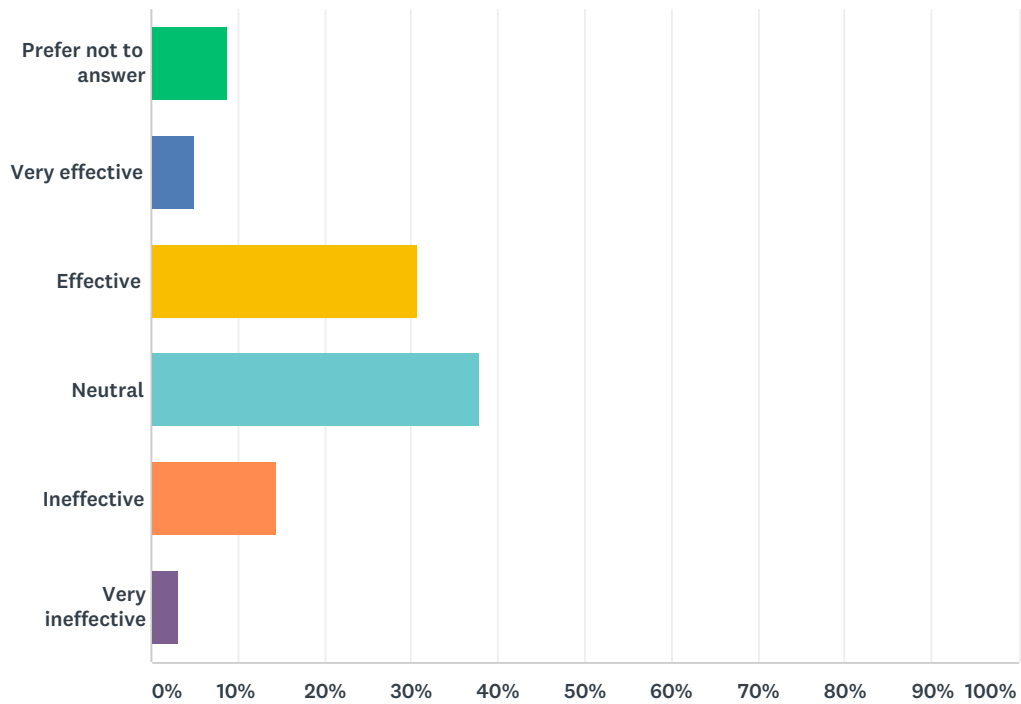
Answered: 369 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Prefer not to answer	1.08%	4
Excellent	17.62%	65
Good	54.20%	200
Okay	20.05%	74
Fair	5.15%	19
Poor	1.90%	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>369</b>

## Q2 How effective do you think the Town's current land use laws are at meeting the needs of the community?

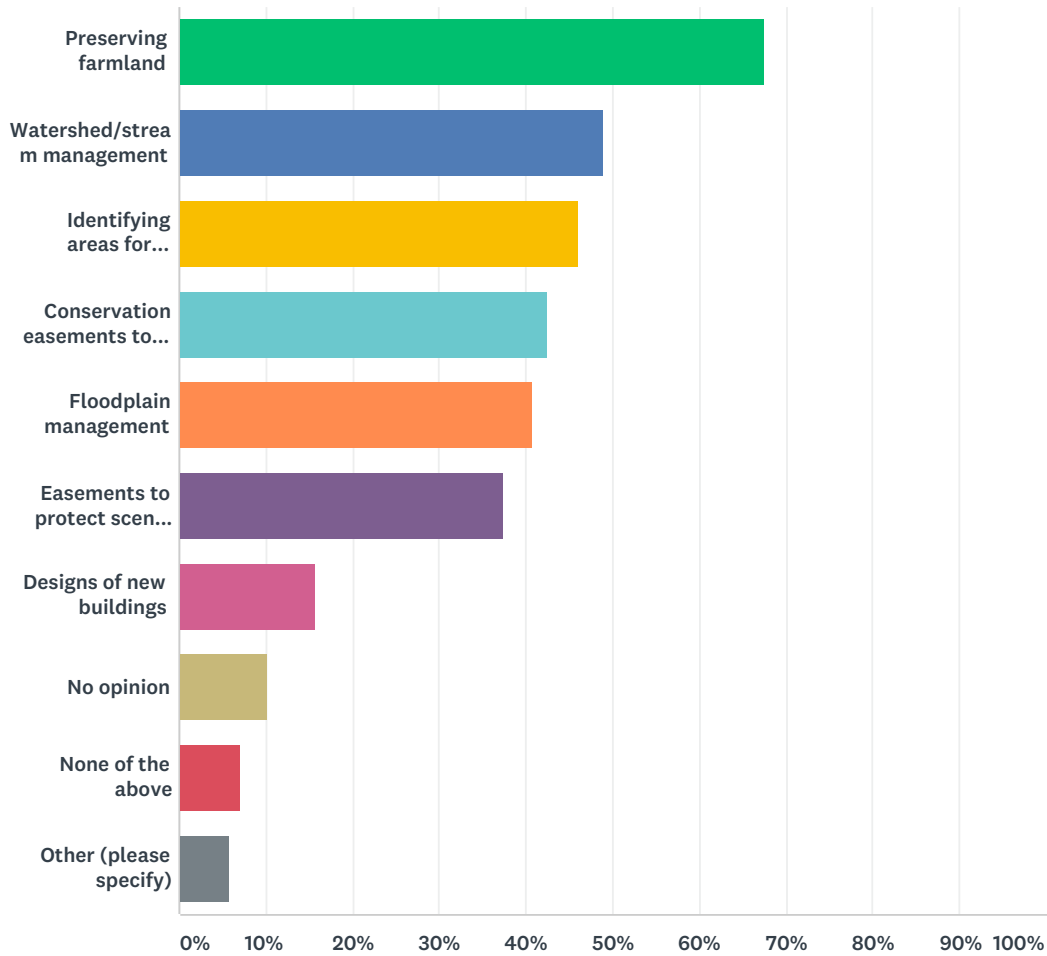
Answered: 360 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Prefer not to answer	8.89%	32
Very effective	5.00%	18
Effective	30.83%	111
Neutral	37.78%	136
Ineffective	14.44%	52
Very ineffective	3.06%	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>360</b>

### Q3 Do you support use of any of the following land use management techniques? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 363 Skipped: 13

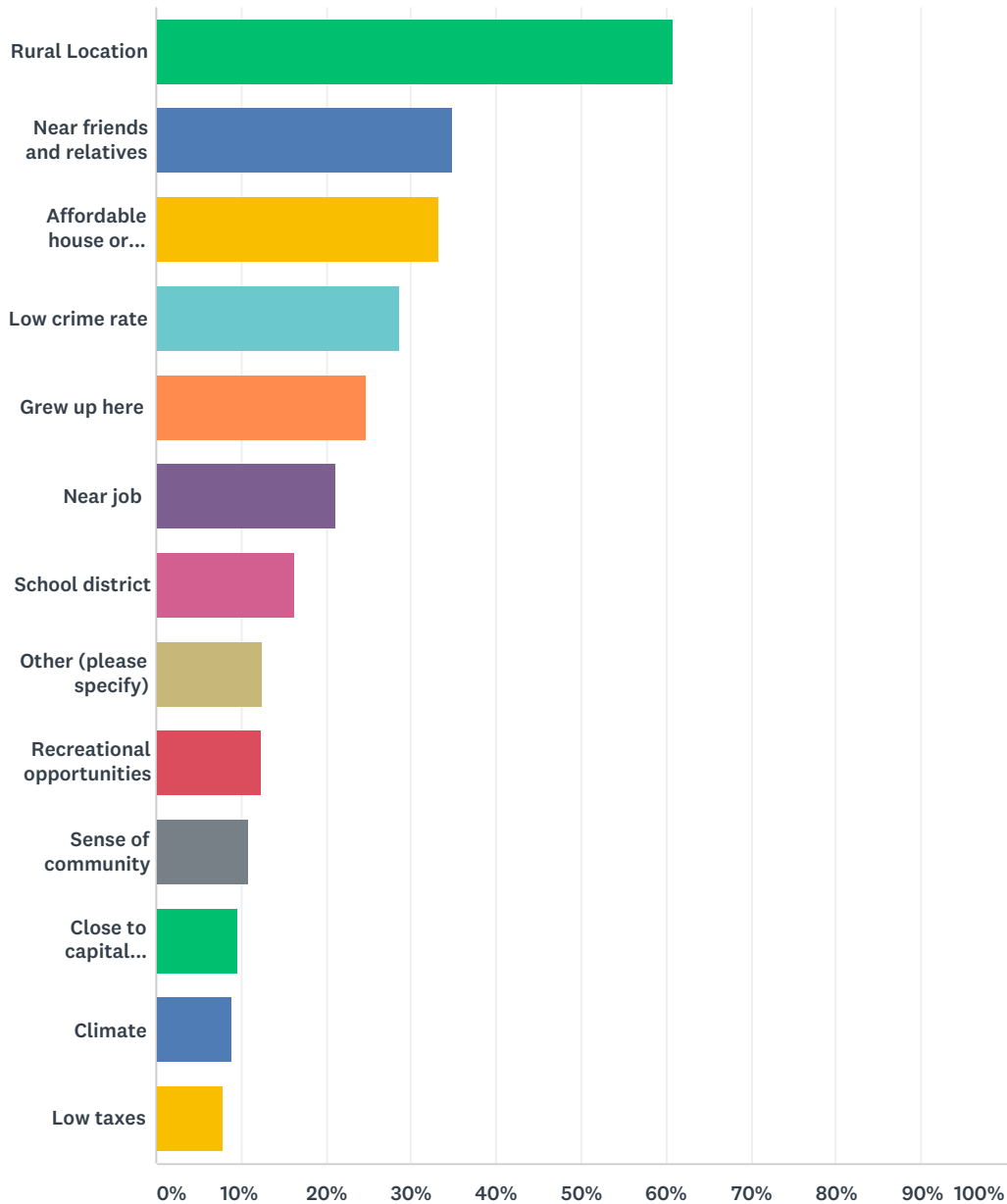


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Preserving farmland	67.49%	245
Watershed/stream management	49.04%	178
Identifying areas for conservation (cultural, historical, environmental, etc.)	46.01%	167
Conservation easements to protect land development	42.42%	154
Floodplain management	40.77%	148
Easements to protect scenic views	37.47%	136
Designs of new buildings	15.70%	57
No opinion	10.19%	37
None of the above	7.16%	26
Other (please specify)	5.79%	21

Total Respondents: 363

## Q4 Why do you live in Seward? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 366 Skipped: 10



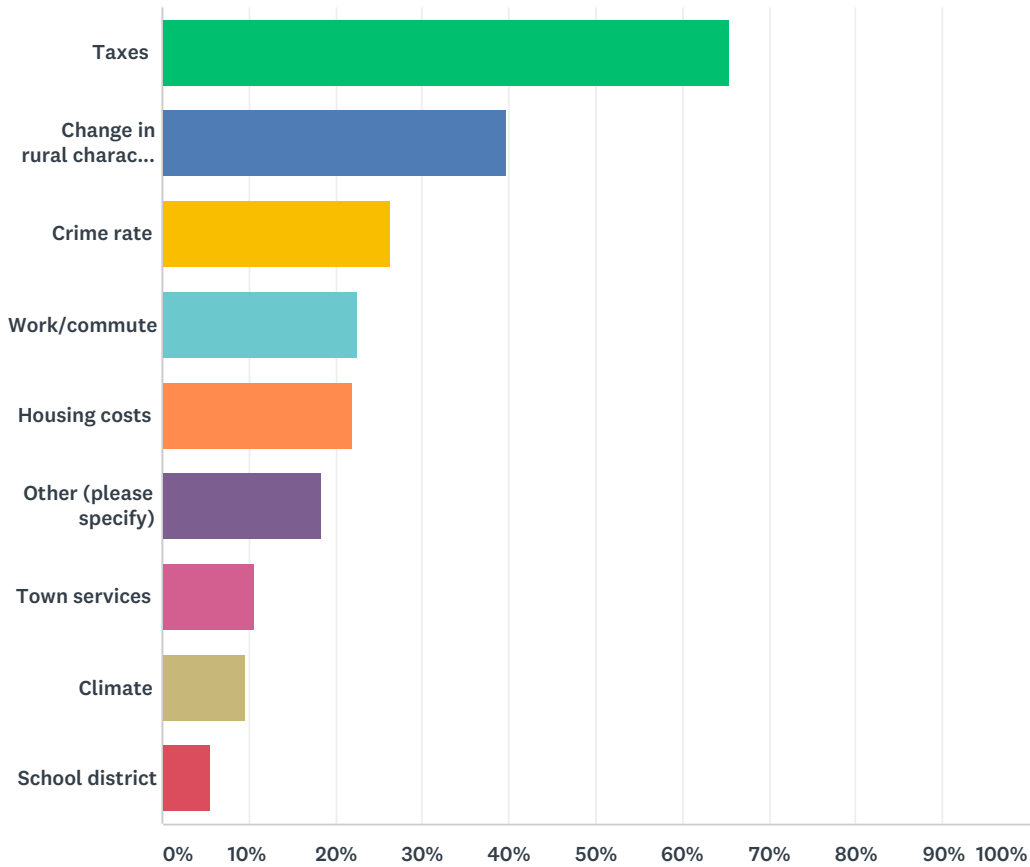
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rural Location	60.93%	223
Near friends and relatives	34.97%	128
Affordable house or property	33.33%	122
Low crime rate	28.69%	105
Grew up here	24.59%	90
Near job	21.04%	77

## Town of Seward Comprehensive Plan - Anonymous Survey

School district	16.39%	60
Other (please specify)	12.57%	46
Recreational opportunities	12.30%	45
Sense of community	10.93%	40
Close to capital district	9.56%	35
Climate	9.02%	33
Low taxes	7.92%	29
Total Respondents: 366		

### Q5 What would make you move from Seward? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 354 Skipped: 22

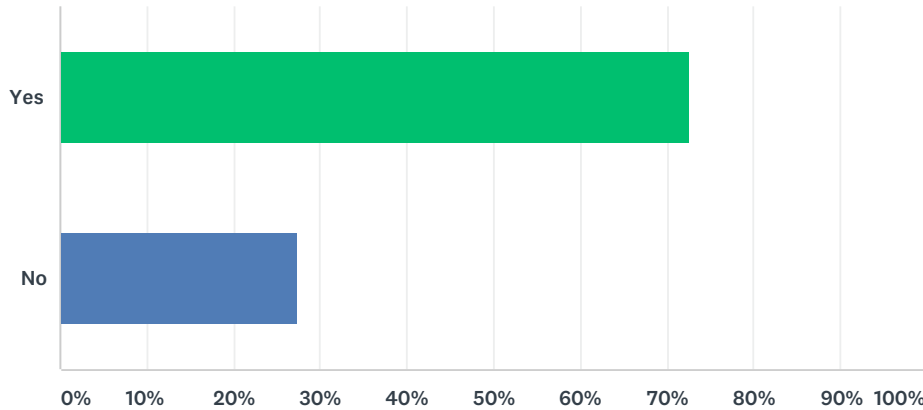


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Taxes	65.54%	232
Change in rural character [reduction therein]	39.83%	141
Crime rate	26.27%	93
Work/commute	22.60%	80
Housing costs	22.03%	78
Other (please specify)	18.36%	65
Town services	10.73%	38
Climate	9.60%	34
School district	5.65%	20
Total Respondents: 354		



Q6 Are there historic sites, natural or unique environmental areas, scenic views, or specific roads or areas in the Town of Seward which should be protected? (i.e. cemeteries, churches, farmlands, forests, viewsheds, wetlands, waterbodies, etc.)

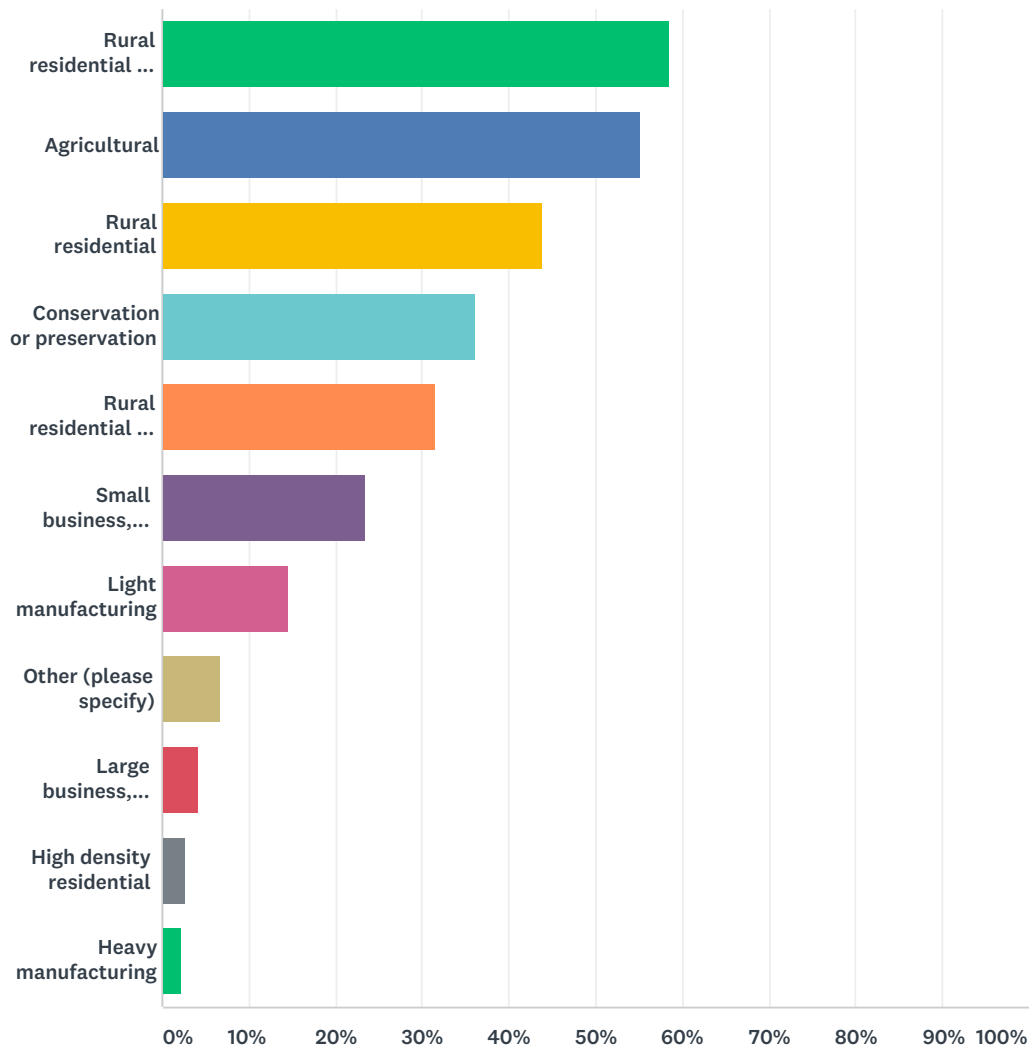
Answered: 307 Skipped: 69



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.64%	223
No	27.36%	84
TOTAL		307

## Q7 How would you like the land in your immediate Seward neighborhood developed? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 360 Skipped: 16



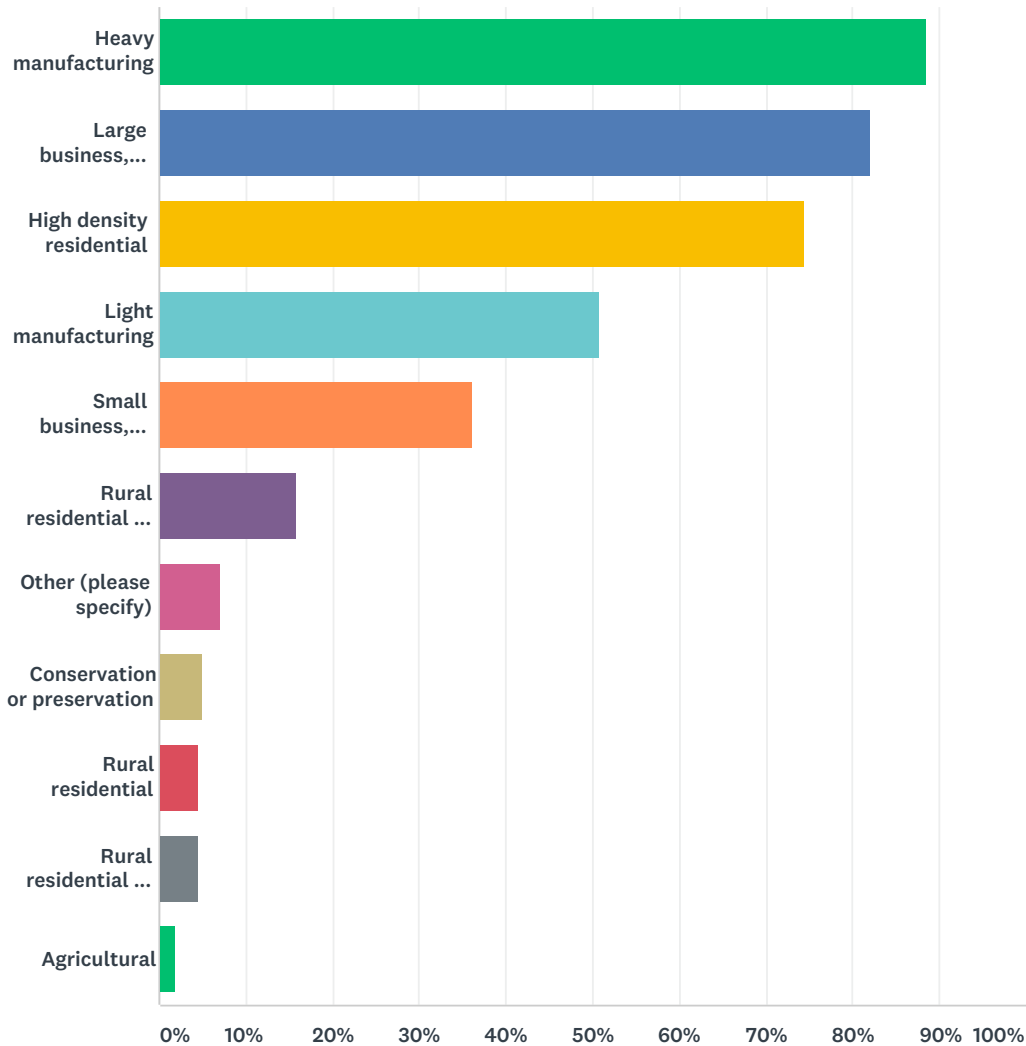
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rural residential and agricultural	58.61%	211
Agricultural	55.28%	199
Rural residential	43.89%	158
Conservation or preservation	36.11%	130
Rural residential and small business	31.67%	114
Small business, commercial, and retail	23.33%	84
Light manufacturing	14.72%	53
Other (please specify)	6.67%	24
Large business, commercial, or retail use	4.17%	15

## Town of Seward Comprehensive Plan - Anonymous Survey

High density residential	2.78%	10
Heavy manufacturing	2.22%	8
Total Respondents: 360		

### Q8 I would NOT like to see the land in my immediate neighborhood developed as \_\_\_\_? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 354 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Heavy manufacturing	88.42%	313
Large business, commercial, or retail use	81.92%	290
High density residential	74.58%	264
Light manufacturing	50.85%	180
Small business, commercial, and retail	36.16%	128
Rural residential and small business	15.82%	56
Other (please specify)	7.06%	25
Conservation or preservation	5.08%	18
Rural residential	4.52%	16

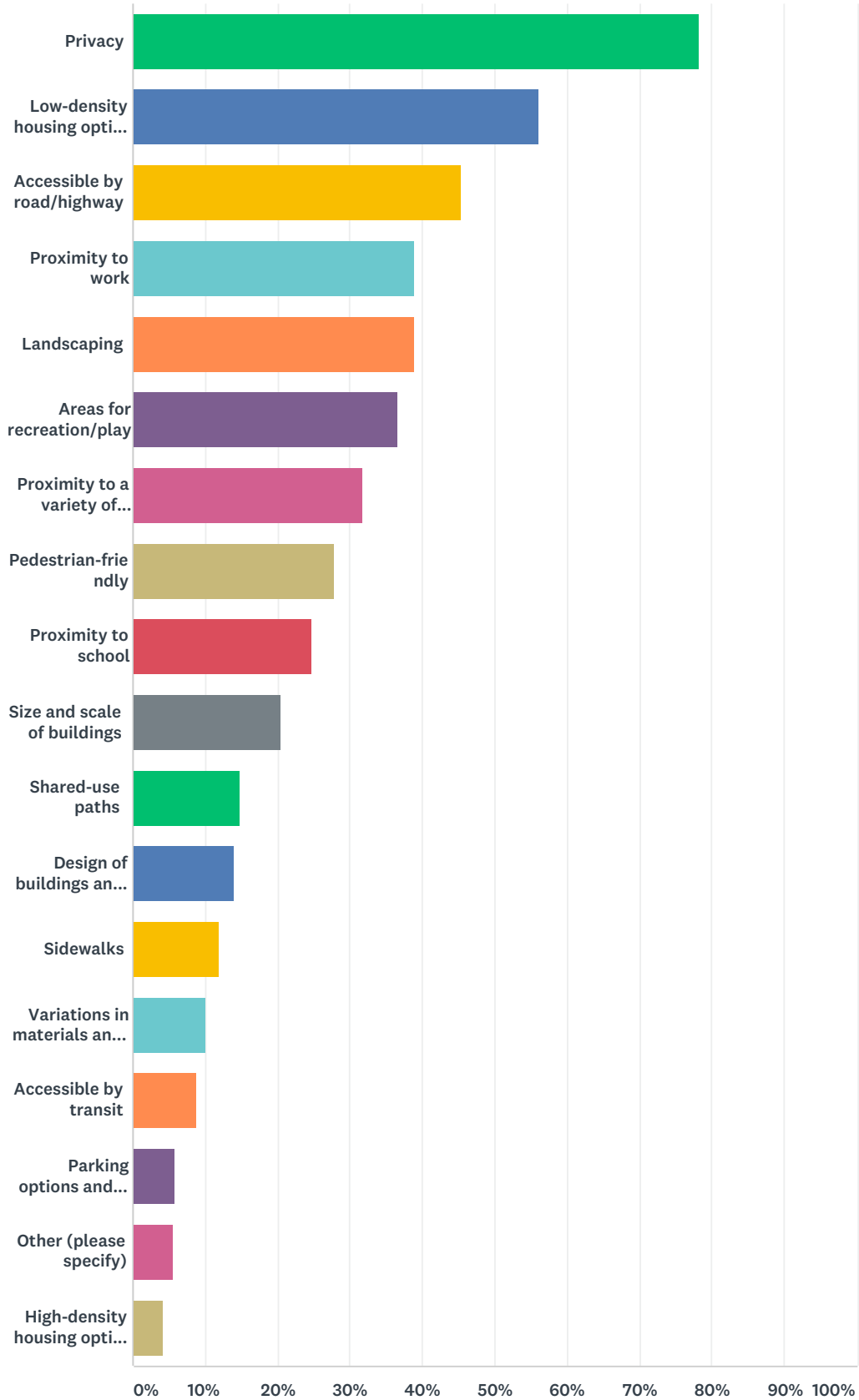
## Town of Seward Comprehensive Plan - Anonymous Survey

Rural residential and agricultural	4.52%	16
Agricultural	1.98%	7
Total Respondents: 354		

**Q9 What attributes make a residential community appealing to you?  
(Check all that apply)**

Answered: 355 Skipped: 21

## Town of Seward Comprehensive Plan - Anonymous Survey



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Privacy	78.31%	278

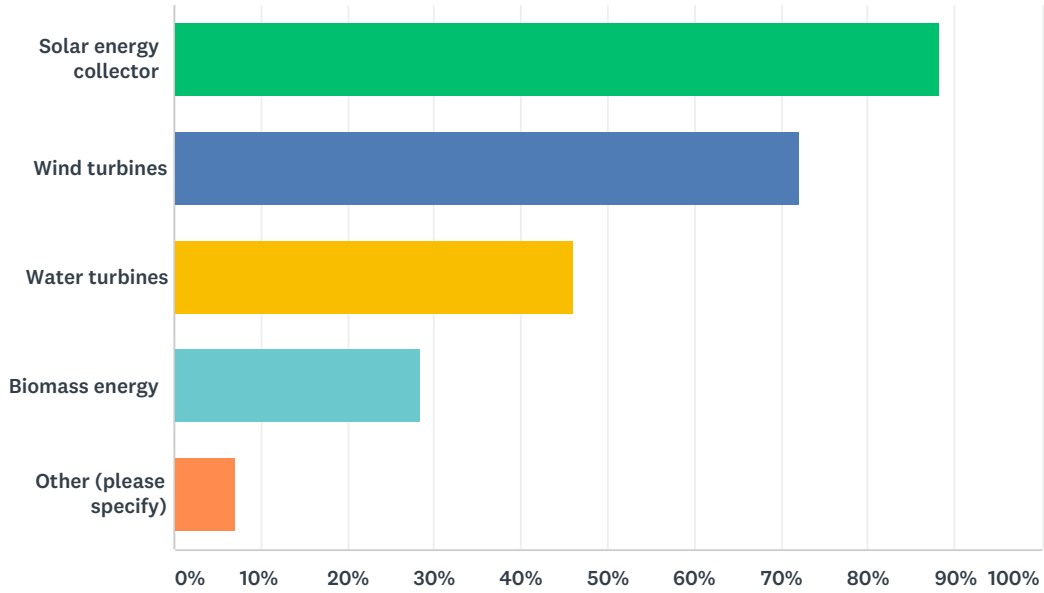
## Town of Seward Comprehensive Plan - Anonymous Survey

Low-density housing options with each having their own open space	56.06%	199
Accessible by road/highway	45.35%	161
Proximity to work	38.87%	138
Landscaping	38.87%	138
Areas for recreation/play	36.62%	130
Proximity to a variety of businesses	31.83%	113
Pedestrian-friendly	27.89%	99
Proximity to school	24.79%	88
Size and scale of buildings	20.56%	73
Shared-use paths	14.93%	53
Design of buildings and overall site	14.08%	50
Sidewalks	11.83%	42
Variations in materials and elevations	10.14%	36
Accessible by transit	8.73%	31
Parking options and general circulation	5.92%	21
Other (please specify)	5.63%	20
High-density housing options with common open space shared by residents	4.23%	15
Total Respondents: 355		



### Q10 Are you in favor of any of the following alternative sources of energy? (Check all that apply)

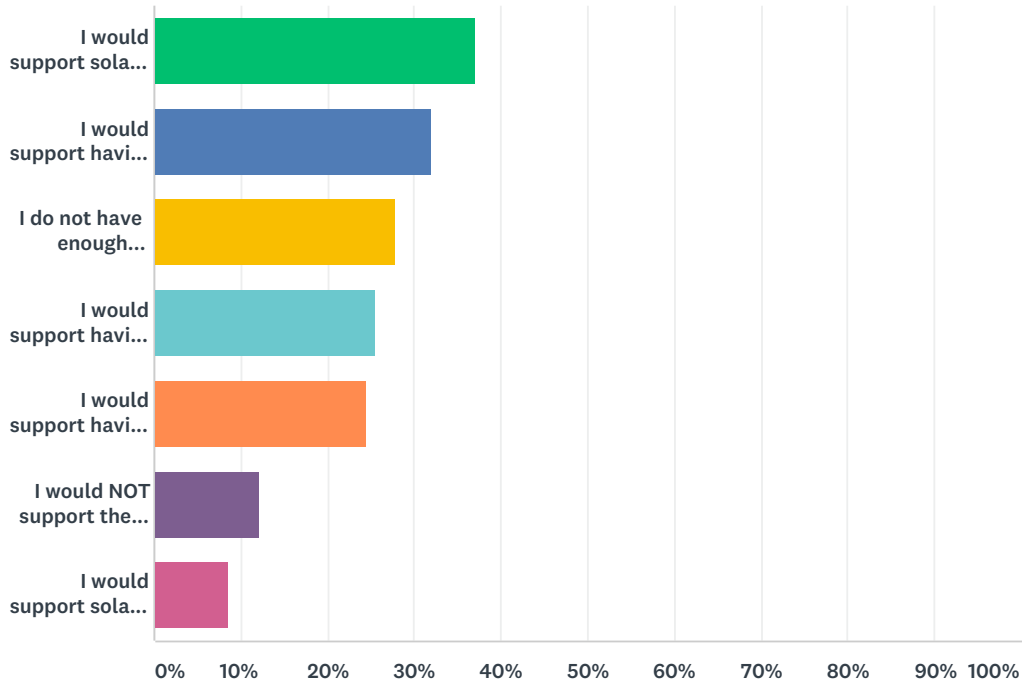
Answered: 326 Skipped: 50



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solar energy collector	88.34%	288
Wind turbines	72.09%	235
Water turbines	46.01%	150
Biomass energy	28.53%	93
Other (please specify)	7.06%	23
Total Respondents: 326		

### Q11 Please indicate your thoughts about the development of Utility-Scale Solar Energy Systems, a.k.a. Solar Farms, in Seward: (Check all that apply)

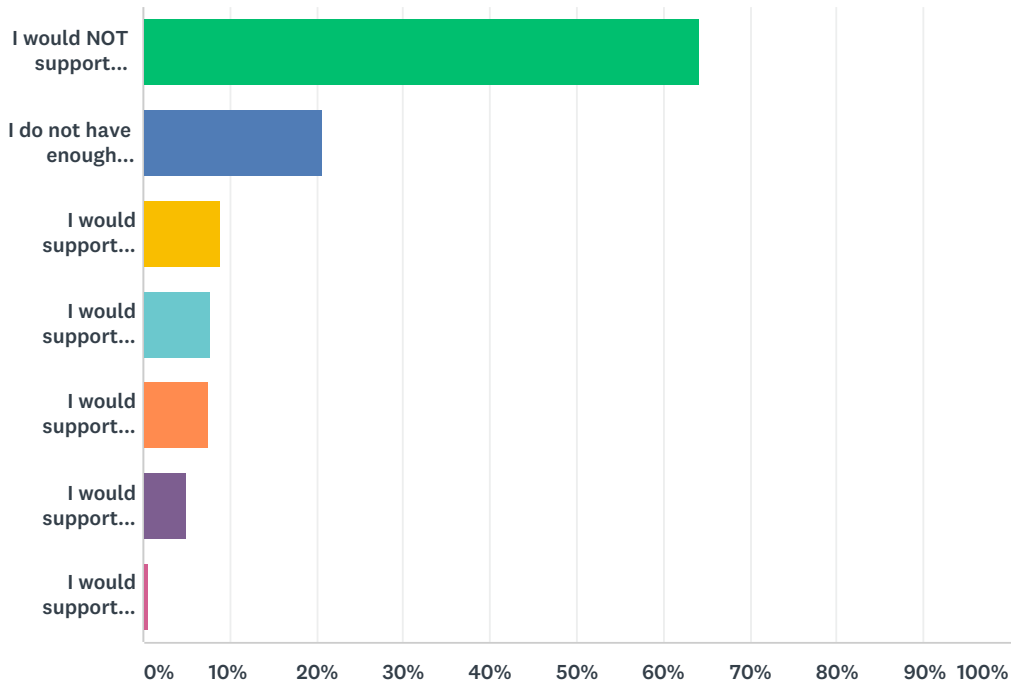
Answered: 360 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I would support solar farms if there was a law regulating their construction and operation	36.94%	133
I would support having solar farms anywhere in the Town	31.94%	115
I do not have enough information	27.78%	100
I would support having solar farms on neighboring property	25.56%	92
I would support having a solar farm on my property	24.44%	88
I would NOT support the construction of solar farms anywhere in the Town	12.22%	44
I would support solar farms only if you can't see them from my home	8.61%	31
Total Respondents: 360		

### Q12 Please indicate your thoughts about the use of high-volume hydrofracking, a.k.a. fracking, in Seward: (Check all that apply)

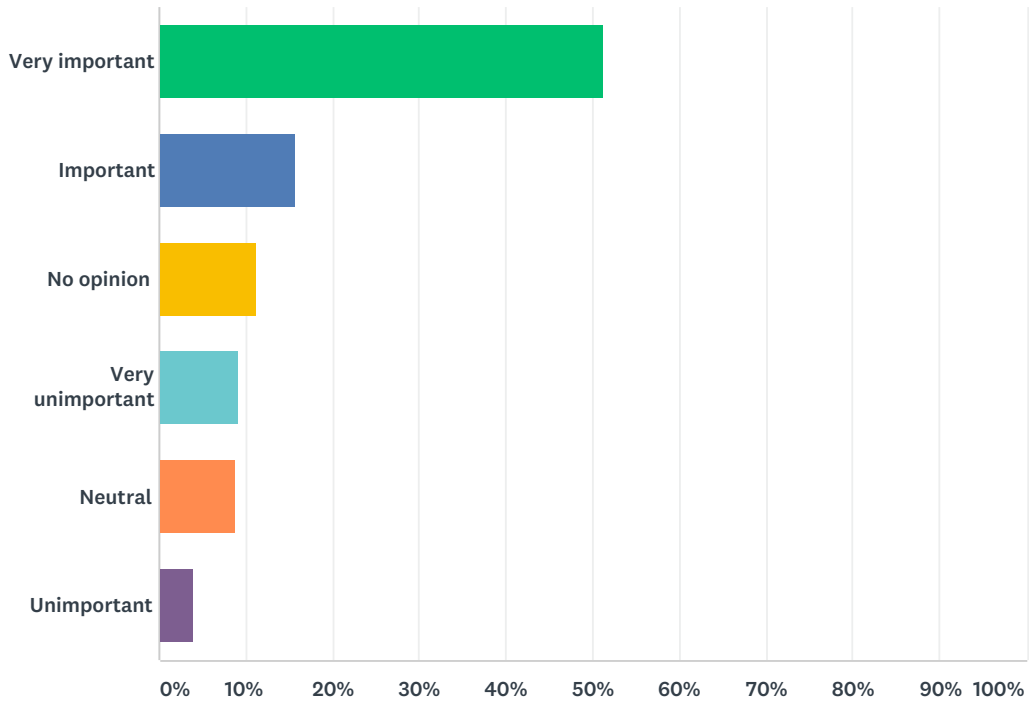
Answered: 363 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I would NOT support fracking anywhere in the Town	64.19%	233
I do not have enough information	20.66%	75
I would support fracking on my property	9.09%	33
I would support fracking anywhere in the Town	7.71%	28
I would support fracking if there was a law regulating the practice in Town	7.44%	27
I would support fracking on neighboring property	4.96%	18
I would support fracking only if you can't see it from my home	0.55%	2
Total Respondents: 363		

### Q13 How important of an issue is high-volume hydrofracking development, a.k.a. fracking, for the Town of Seward? (Check one)

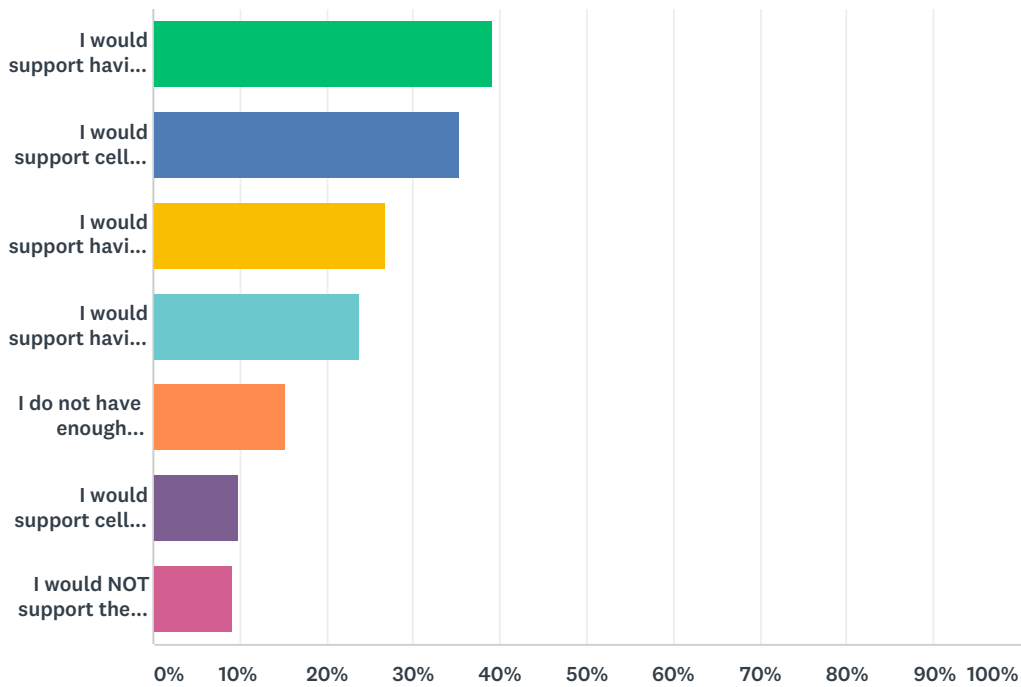
Answered: 357 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	51.26%	183
Important	15.69%	56
No opinion	11.20%	40
Very unimportant	9.24%	33
Neutral	8.68%	31
Unimportant	3.92%	14
Total Respondents: 357		

### Q14 Please indicate your thoughts about the development of cell towers in Seward: (Check all that apply)

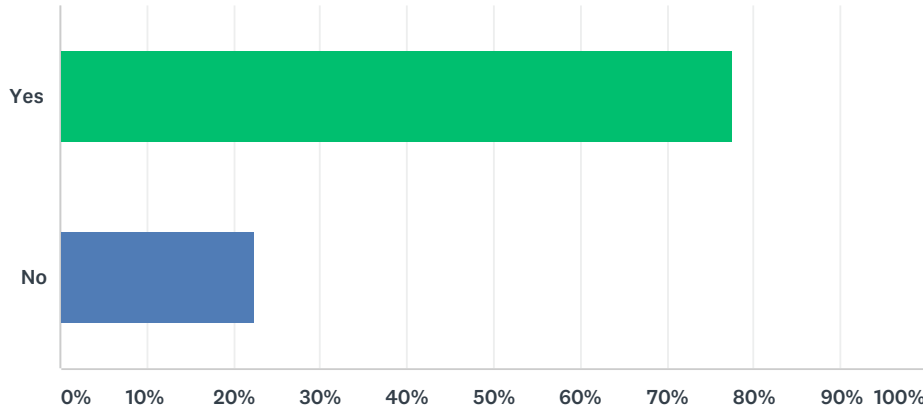
Answered: 356 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I would support having cell towers anywhere in the Town	39.04%	139
I would support cell towers if there was a local law regulating them	35.39%	126
I would support having a cell tower on my property	26.69%	95
I would support having a cell tower on neighboring property	23.88%	85
I do not have enough information	15.17%	54
I would support cell towers only if you can't see them from my home	9.83%	35
I would NOT support the construction of cell towers anywhere in the Town	9.27%	33
Total Respondents: 356		

### Q15 Do you currently have internet service? (Check one)

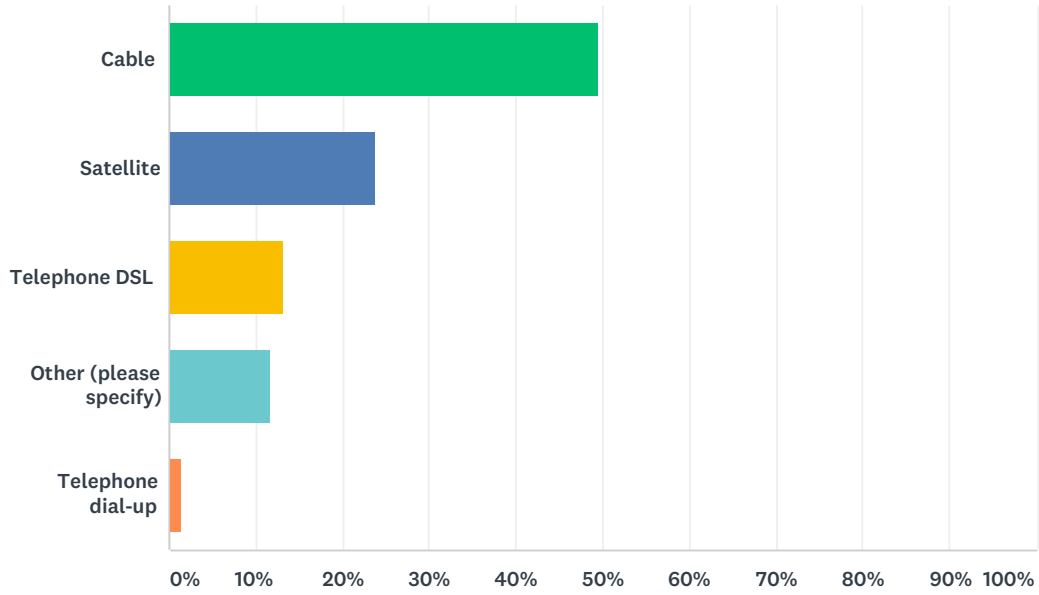
Answered: 356 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	77.53%	276
No	22.47%	80
TOTAL		356

### Q16 If Yes, what is the source of your service? (Check one)

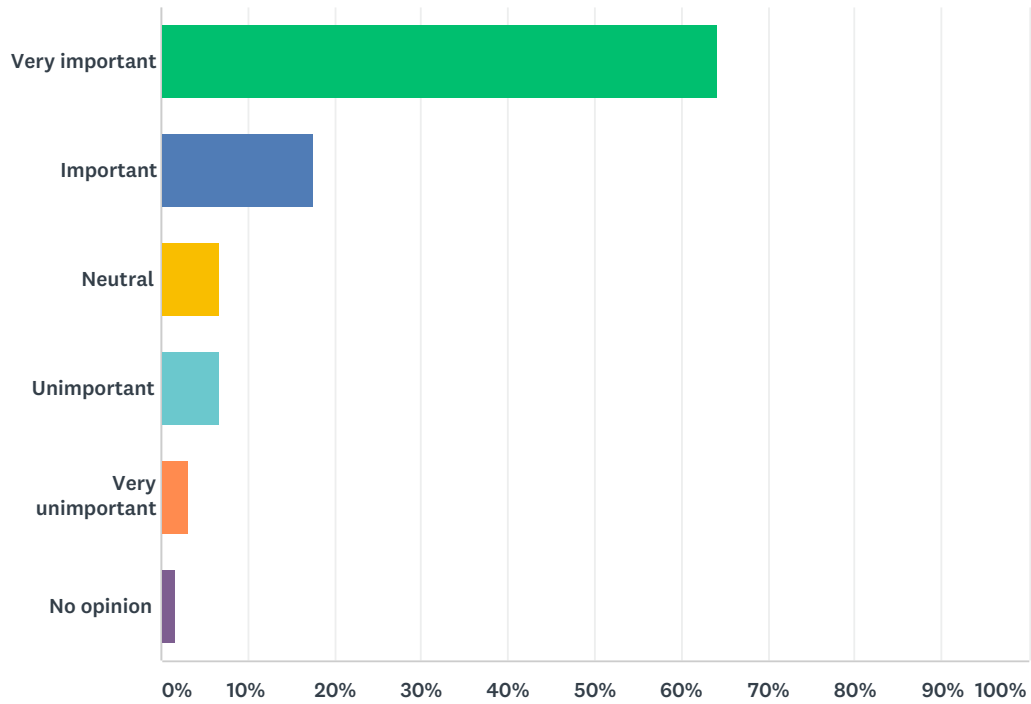
Answered: 280 Skipped: 96



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Cable	49.64%	139
Satellite	23.93%	67
Telephone DSL	13.21%	37
Other (please specify)	11.79%	33
Telephone dial-up	1.43%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>280</b>

## Q17 How important is internet service to you?

Answered: 357 Skipped: 19

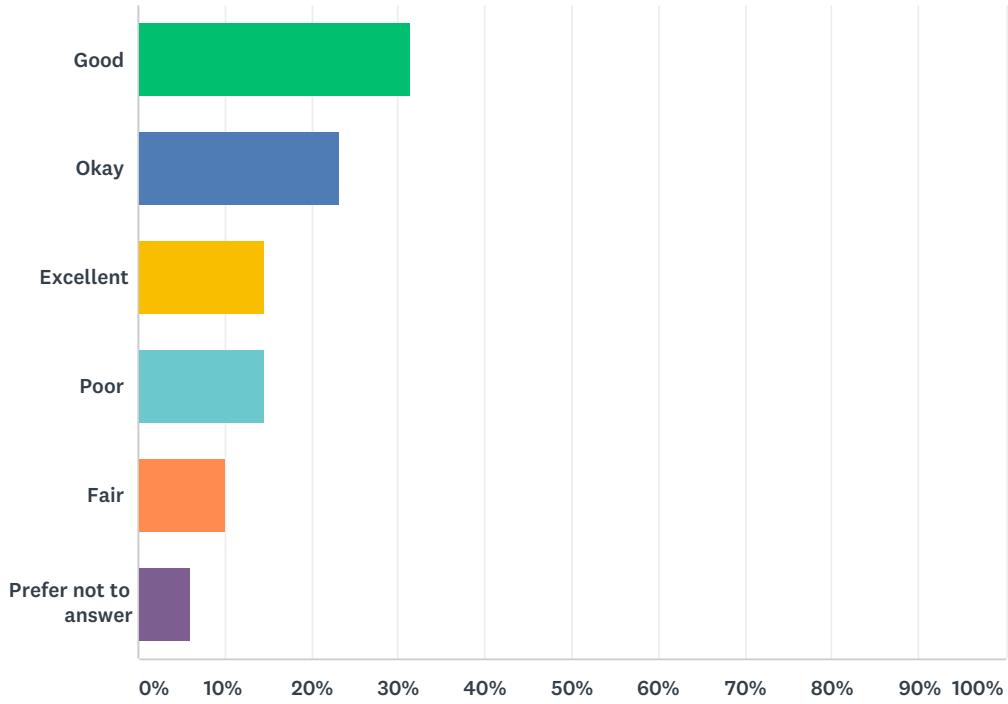


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	64.15%	229
Important	17.65%	63
Neutral	6.72%	24
Unimportant	6.72%	24
Very unimportant	3.08%	11
No opinion	1.68%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>357</b>



### Q18 Please rate the overall quality of your internet service:

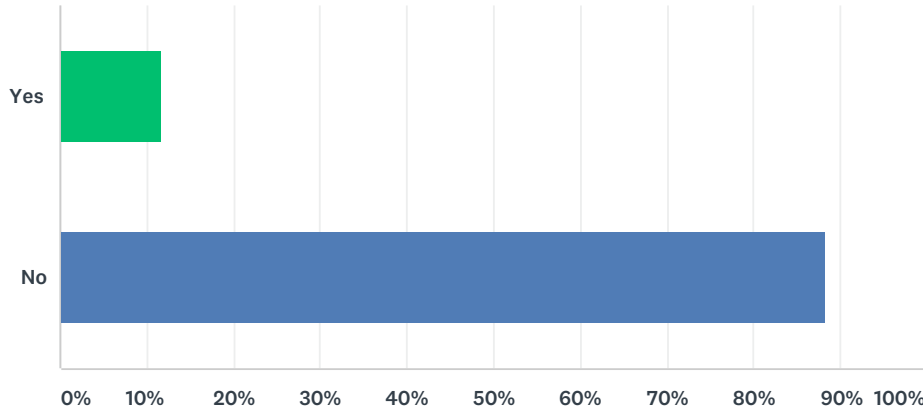
Answered: 309 Skipped: 67



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Good	31.39%	97
Okay	23.30%	72
Excellent	14.56%	45
Poor	14.56%	45
Fair	10.03%	31
Prefer not to answer	6.15%	19
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>309</b>

### Q19 Do you own or operate a business in Seward?

Answered: 352 Skipped: 24



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	11.65%	41
No	88.35%	311
TOTAL		352

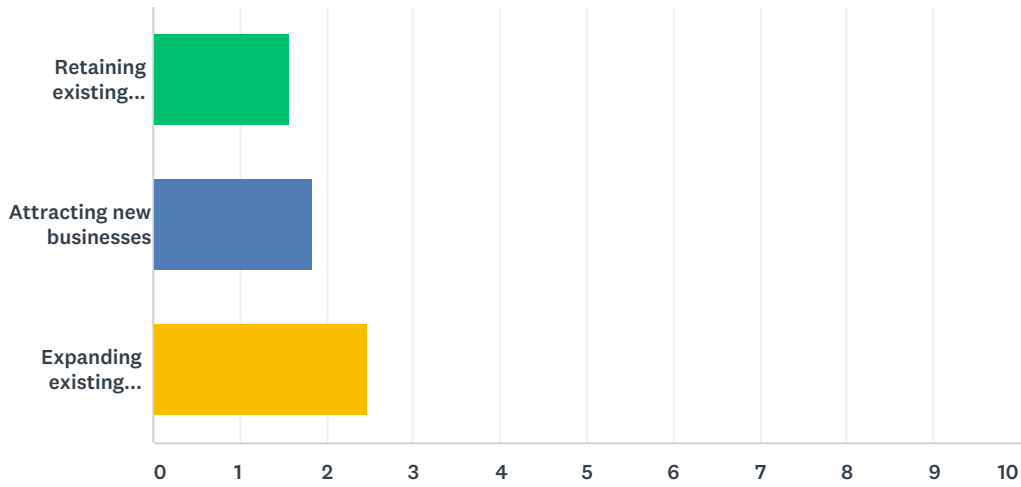
**Q20 If yes, how many people are currently employed at your business in Seward? (Fill in the appropriate number for each category and please include yourself)**

Answered: 33 Skipped: 343

<b>ANSWER CHOICES</b>	<b>RESPONSES</b>	
Employed full-time	75.76%	25
Employed part-time	33.33%	11

## Q21 Please rank the following economic issues facing Seward from 1-3 with 1 as your highest priority:

Answered: 278 Skipped: 98

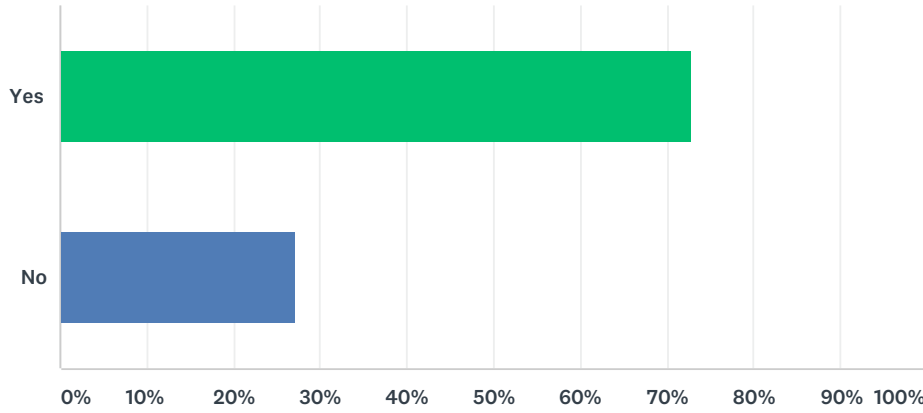


ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
Retaining existing business	2	404	257
Attracting new businesses	2	471	255
Expanding existing businesses	2	590	238
Total Respondents: 278			

BASIC STATISTICS					
	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEDIAN	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Retaining existing business	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.57	0.70
Attracting new businesses	1.00	3.00	2.00	1.85	0.88
Expanding existing businesses	1.00	3.00	3.00	2.48	0.59

### Q22 Would you like to have more businesses in the Town of Seward?

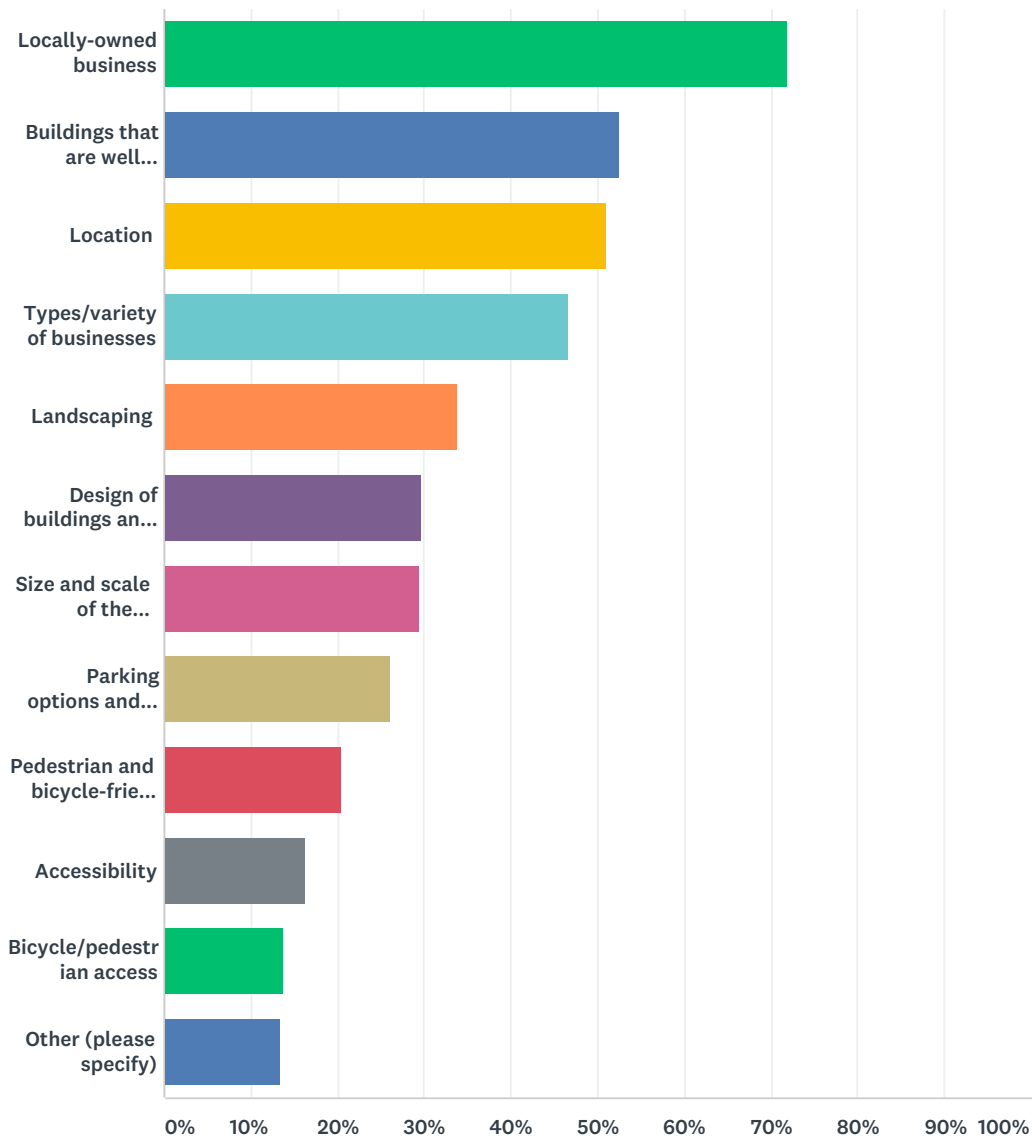
Answered: 321 Skipped: 55



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.90%	234
No	27.10%	87
TOTAL		321

## Q23 What attributes make commercial development appealing to you? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 306 Skipped: 70



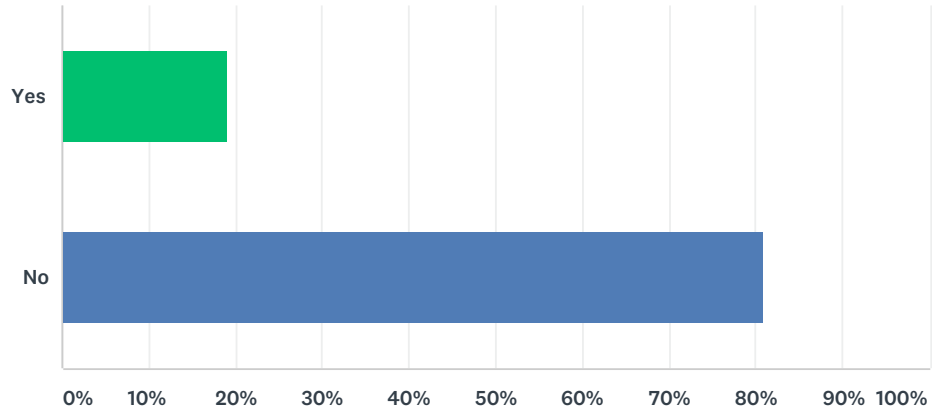
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Locally-owned business	71.90%	220
Buildings that are well maintained	52.61%	161
Location	50.98%	156
Types/variety of businesses	46.73%	143
Landscaping	33.99%	104
Design of buildings and overall site	29.74%	91
Size and scale of the buildings	29.41%	90

## Town of Seward Comprehensive Plan - Anonymous Survey

Parking options and general circulation	26.14%	80
Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly	20.59%	63
Accessibility	16.34%	50
Bicycle/pedestrian access	13.73%	42
Other (please specify)	13.40%	41
Total Respondents: 306		

## Q24 Are you farming in Seward?

Answered: 353 Skipped: 23

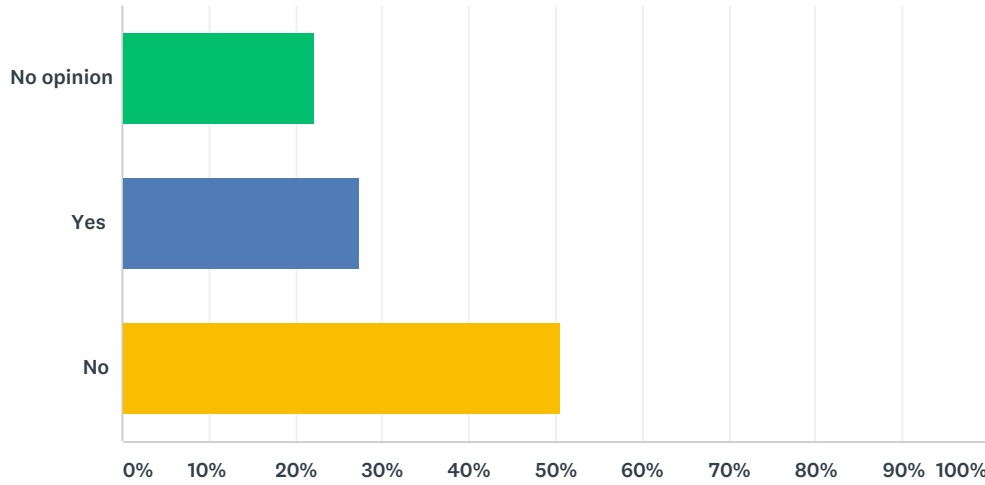


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	18.98%	67
No	81.02%	286
TOTAL		353



## Q25 Would you support building a new facility for the Town Clerk and Court on property owned by the Town while DPW continues to use the highway garage facility on Lowe Road?

Answered: 344 Skipped: 32



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No opinion	22.09%	76
Yes	27.33%	94
No	50.58%	174
TOTAL		344

**Q26 What are your main concerns about potential development in the Town of Seward? (i.e. loss of farmland, reduction in rural character, increased crime rate, increase in town services required, taxes, etc.)**

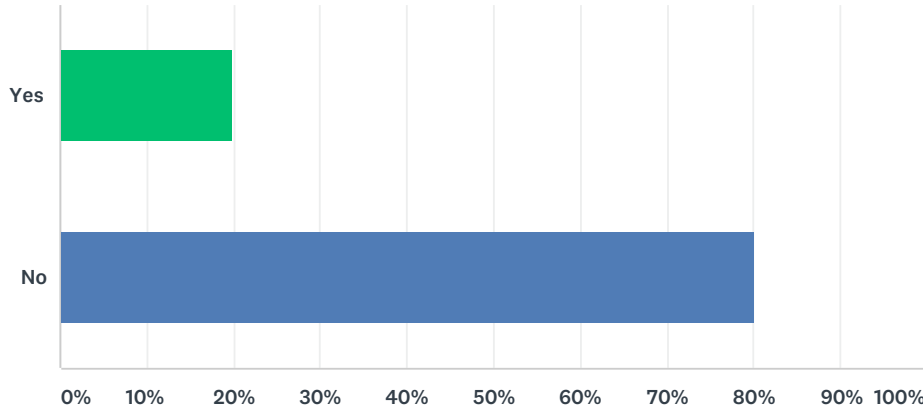
Answered: 292 Skipped: 84

Q26 What are your main concerns about potential development in the Town of Seward? (i.e. loss of farmland, reduction in rural character, increased crime rate, increase in town services required, taxes, etc.)

Farm Residential Business Losing Increase Water  
Reduction in Rural Character  
Mentioned Taxes Property  
Loss of Farmland Noise Development  
Listed in the Question Land Atmosphere Roads

## Q27 Are you concerned about a lack of residential development in the Town of Seward?

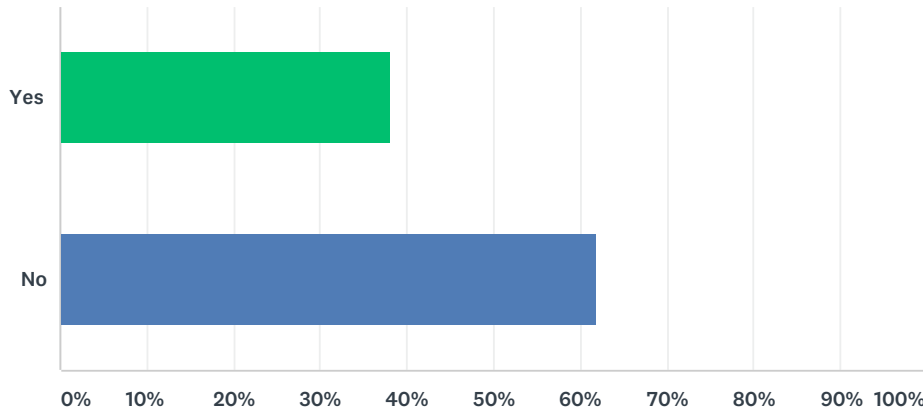
Answered: 342 Skipped: 34



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	19.88%	68
No	80.12%	274
TOTAL		342

## Q28 Are you concerned about a lack of business development in the Town of Seward?

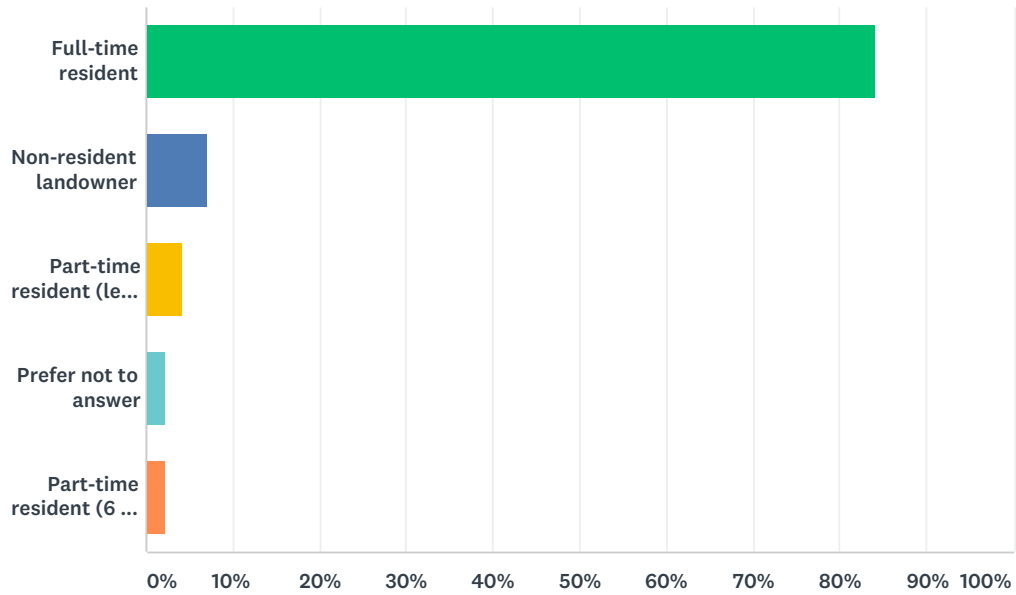
Answered: 334 Skipped: 42



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	38.02%	127
No	61.98%	207
TOTAL		334

## Q29 I am a \_\_\_\_\_

Answered: 353 Skipped: 23

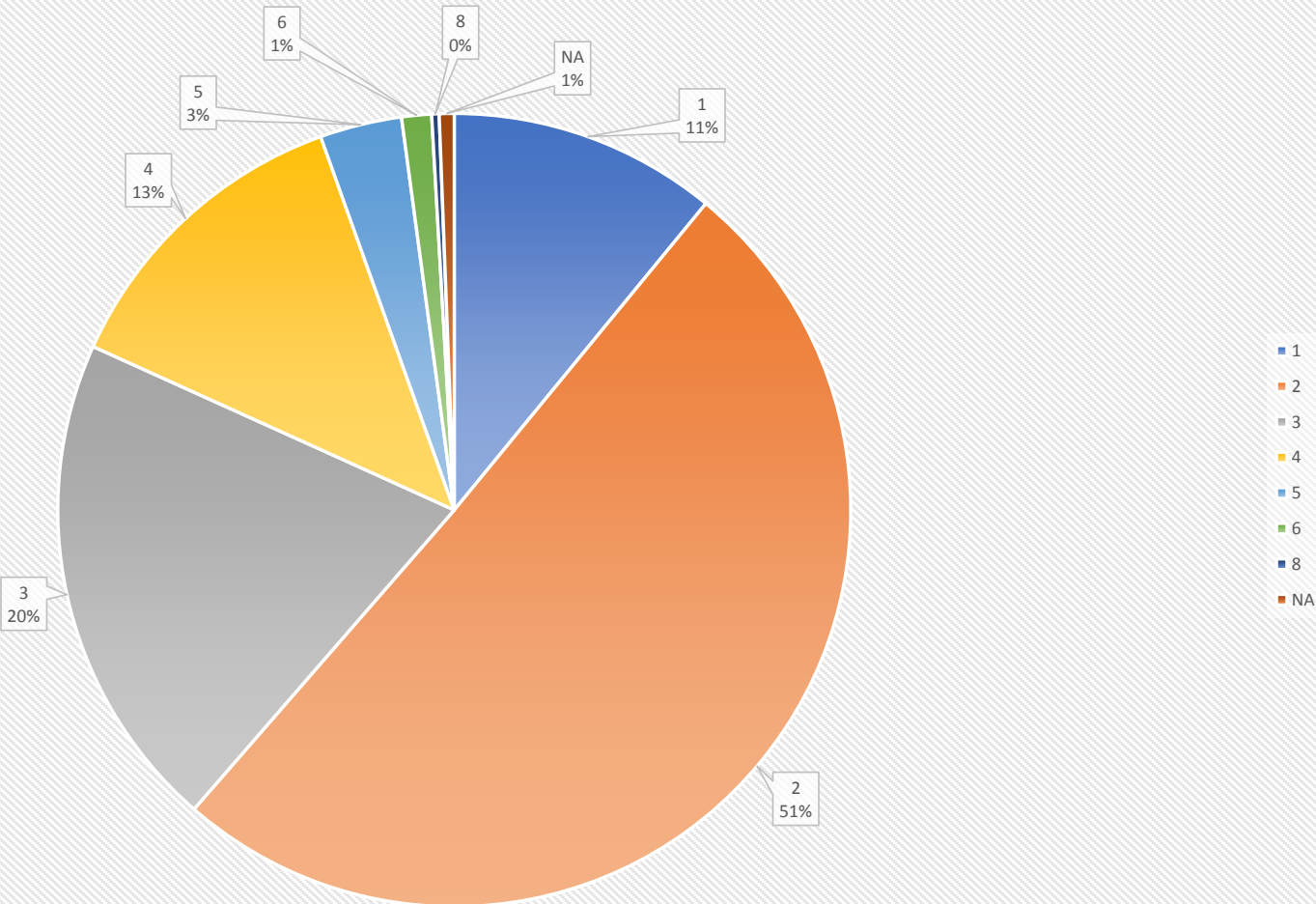


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Full-time resident	84.14%	297
Non-resident landowner	7.08%	25
Part-time resident (less than 6 months a year)	4.25%	15
Prefer not to answer	2.27%	8
Part-time resident (6 or more months a year)	2.27%	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>353</b>

## Q30 How many people live in your household?

Answered: 329 Skipped: 47

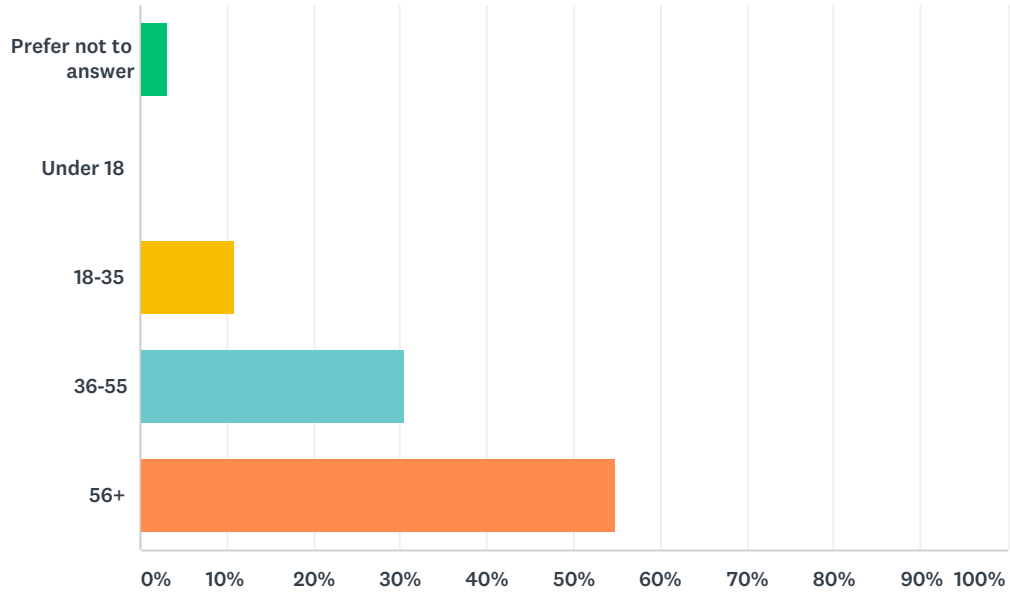
Q30: How many people live in your household?





### Q31 Which age bracket do you belong to?

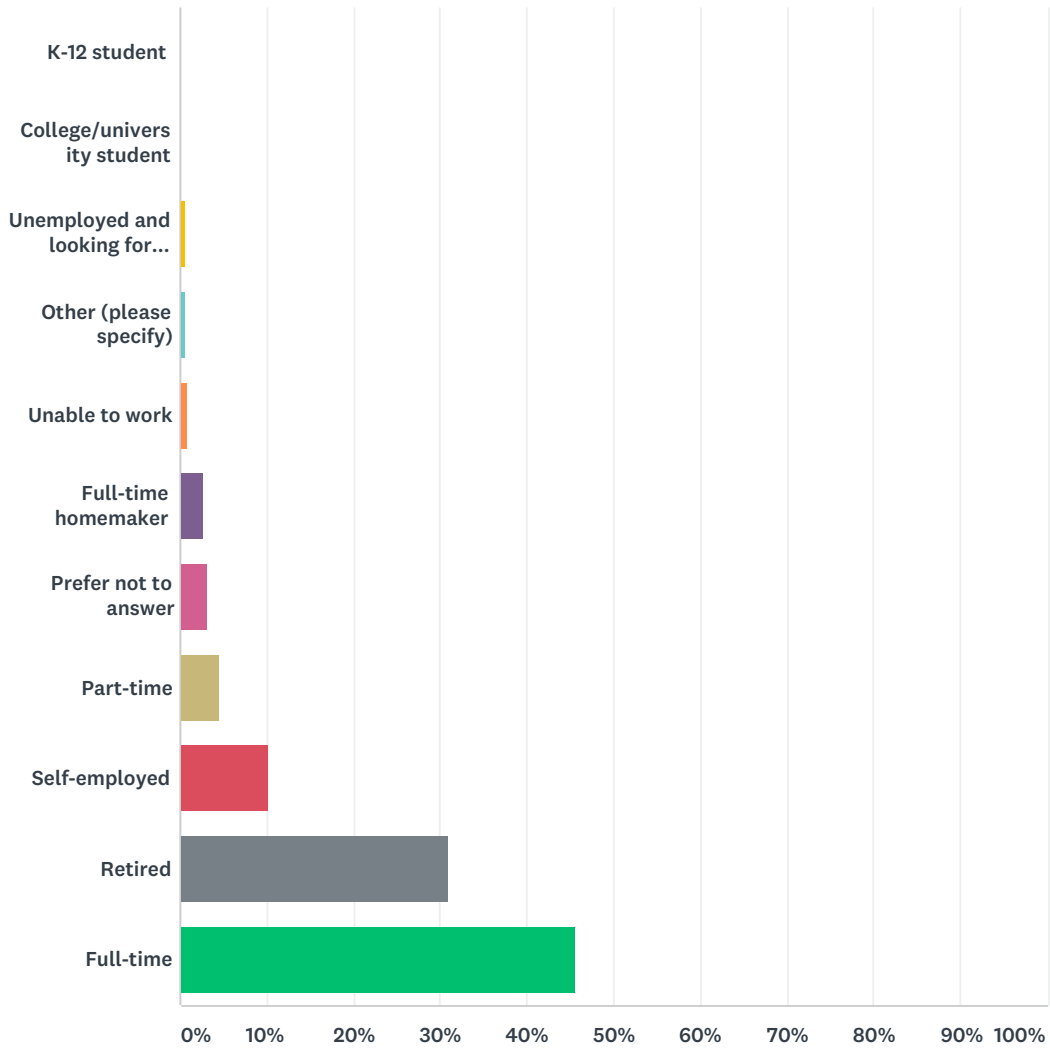
Answered: 346 Skipped: 30



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Prefer not to answer	3.18%	11
Under 18	0.29%	1
18-35	10.98%	38
36-55	30.64%	106
56+	54.91%	190
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>346</b>

### Q32 Current employment status:

Answered: 342 Skipped: 34



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
K-12 student	0.29%	1
College/university student	0.29%	1
Unemployed and looking for work	0.58%	2
Other (please specify)	0.58%	2
Unable to work	0.88%	3
Full-time homemaker	2.63%	9
Prefer not to answer	3.22%	11
Part-time	4.68%	16
Self-employed	10.23%	35
Retired	30.99%	106

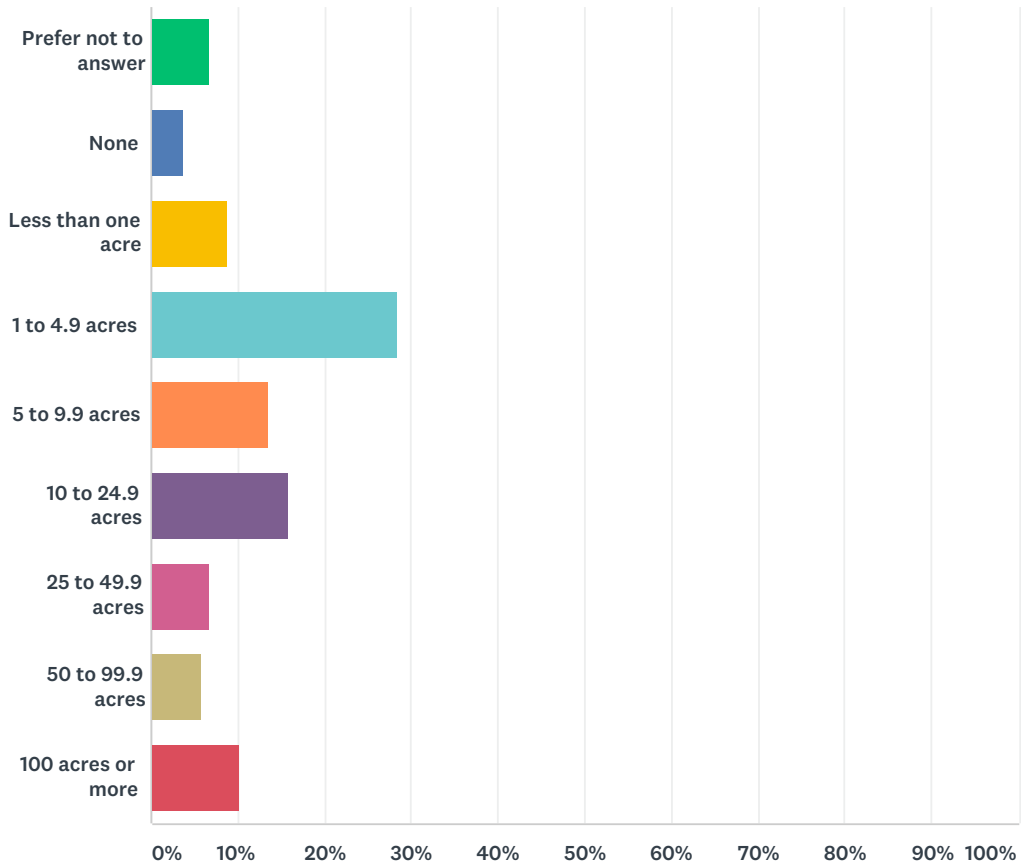
## Town of Seward Comprehensive Plan - Anonymous Survey

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Full-time	45.61%	156
TOTAL		342

### Q33 How much property do you own in the Town of Seward? (Check One)

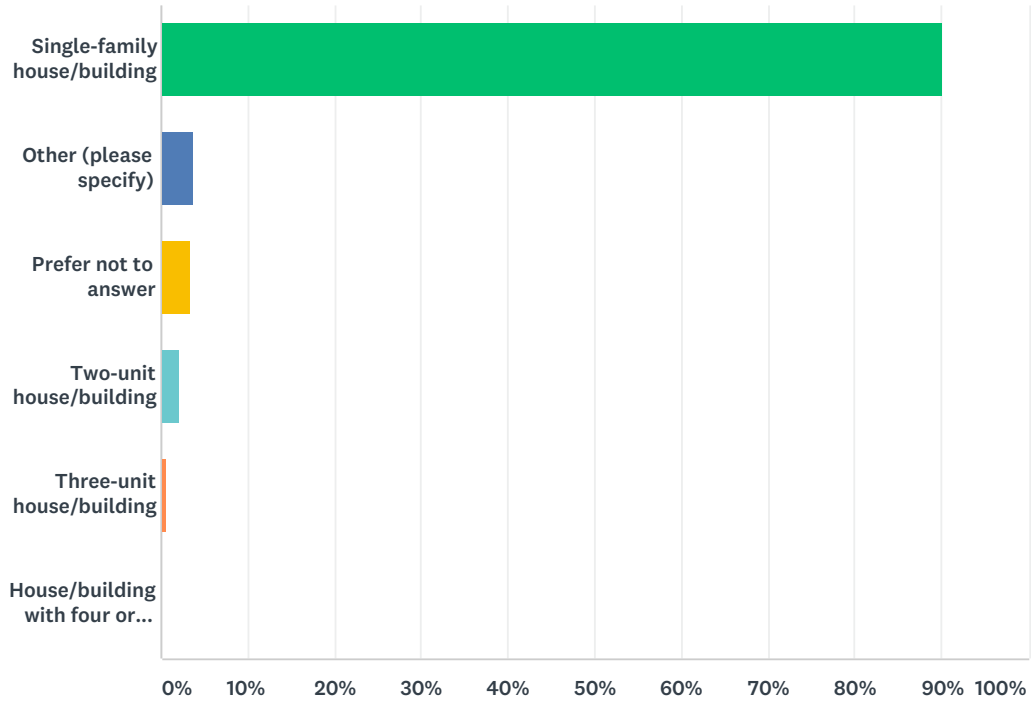
Answered: 354 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Prefer not to answer	6.78%	24
None	3.67%	13
Less than one acre	8.76%	31
1 to 4.9 acres	28.53%	101
5 to 9.9 acres	13.56%	48
10 to 24.9 acres	15.82%	56
25 to 49.9 acres	6.78%	24
50 to 99.9 acres	5.93%	21
100 acres or more	10.17%	36
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>354</b>

### Q34 What type of structure is your home?

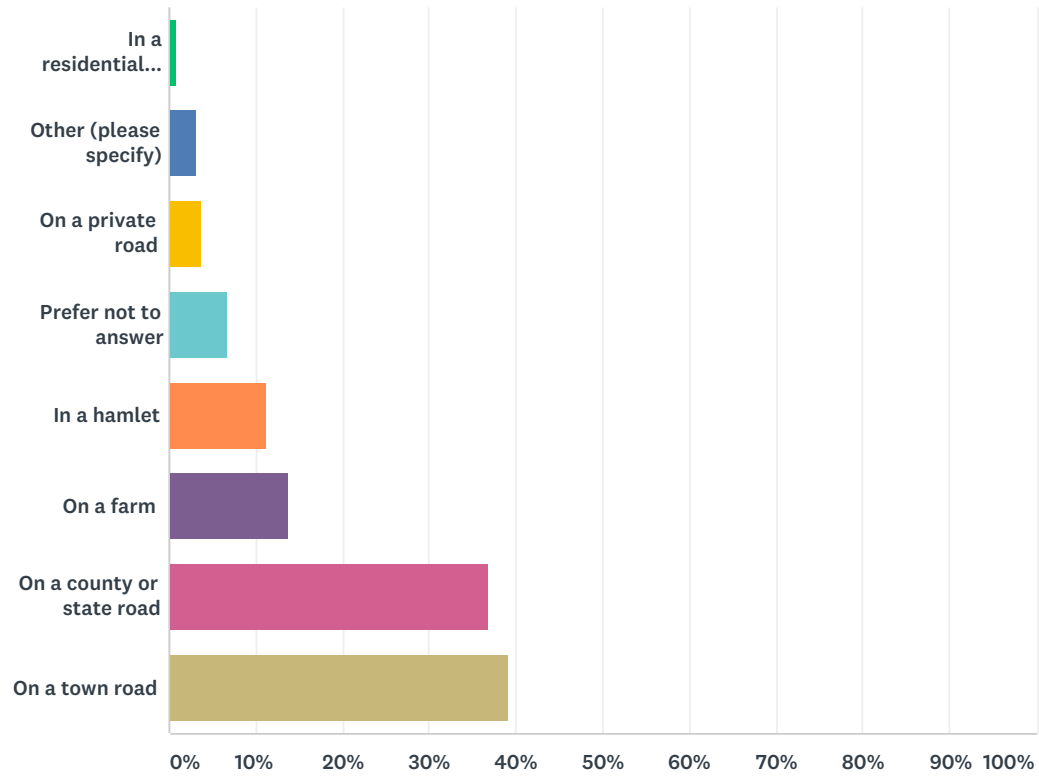
Answered: 349 Skipped: 27



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single-family house/building	90.26%	315
Other (please specify)	3.72%	13
Prefer not to answer	3.44%	12
Two-unit house/building	2.01%	7
Three-unit house/building	0.57%	2
House/building with four or more units	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>349</b>

### Q35 Where in Seward do you live? (Check all that apply)

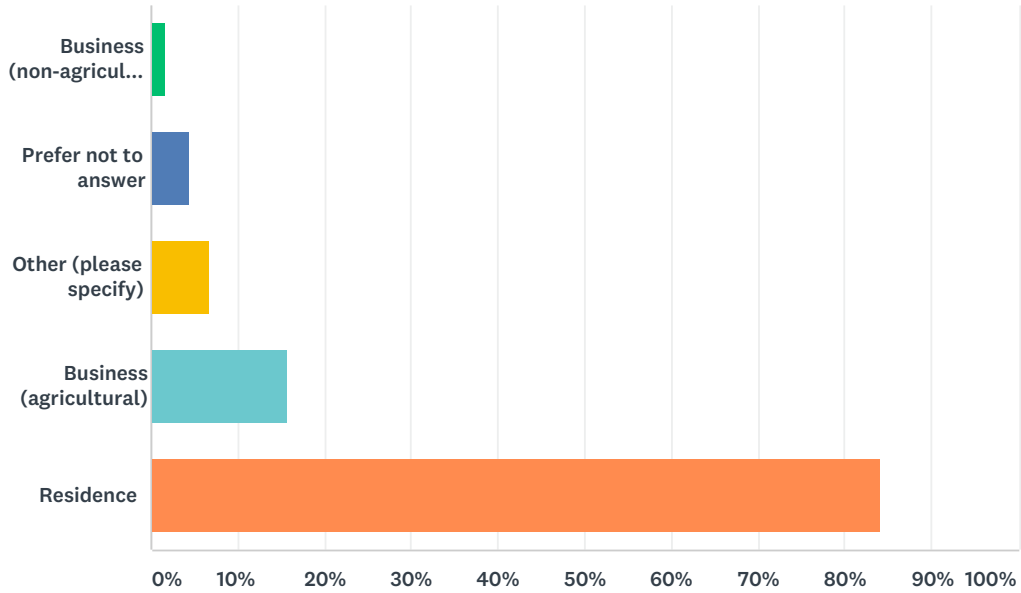
Answered: 347 Skipped: 29



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
In a residential park	0.86% 3
Other (please specify)	3.17% 11
On a private road	3.75% 13
Prefer not to answer	6.63% 23
In a hamlet	11.24% 39
On a farm	13.83% 48
On a county or state road	36.89% 128
On a town road	39.19% 136
Total Respondents: 347	

### Q36 How do you use your property in Seward? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 345 Skipped: 31



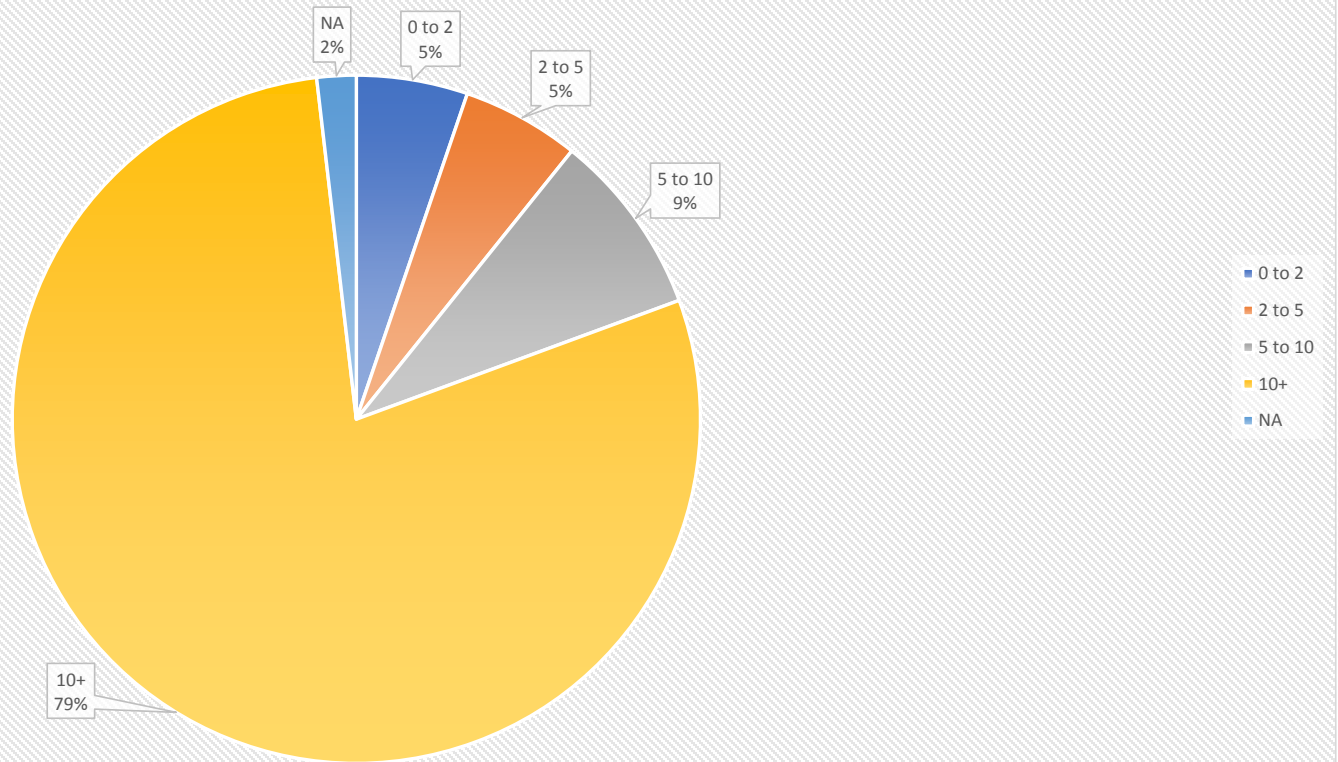
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business (non-agricultural)	1.74%	6
Prefer not to answer	4.35%	15
Other (please specify)	6.67%	23
Business (agricultural)	15.65%	54
Residence	84.06%	290
Total Respondents: 345		

**Q37 How long have you lived in Seward? Please answer with the number of years that you have lived in Seward and/or the year that you began living in Seward.**

Answered: 325 Skipped: 51

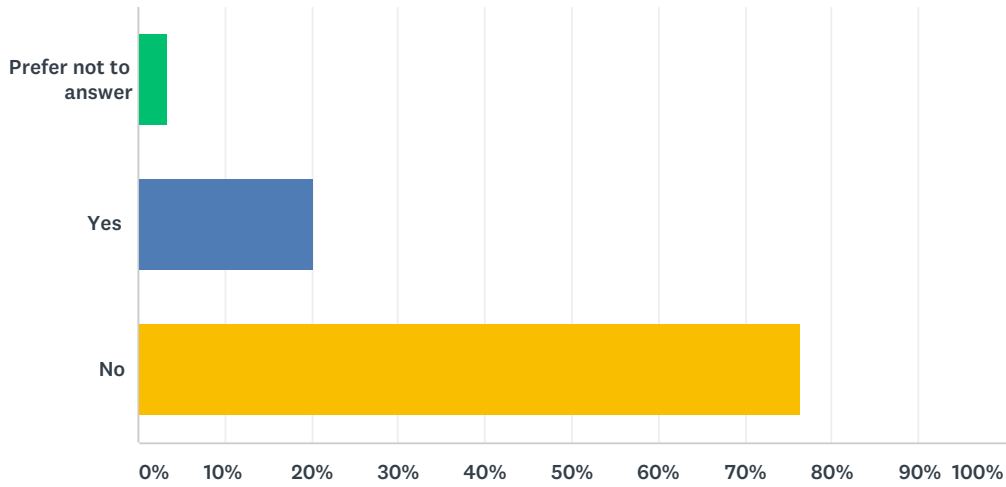


Q37: How many years have you lived in Seward?



### Q38 Other than your residence, do you own property in Seward? (Check One)

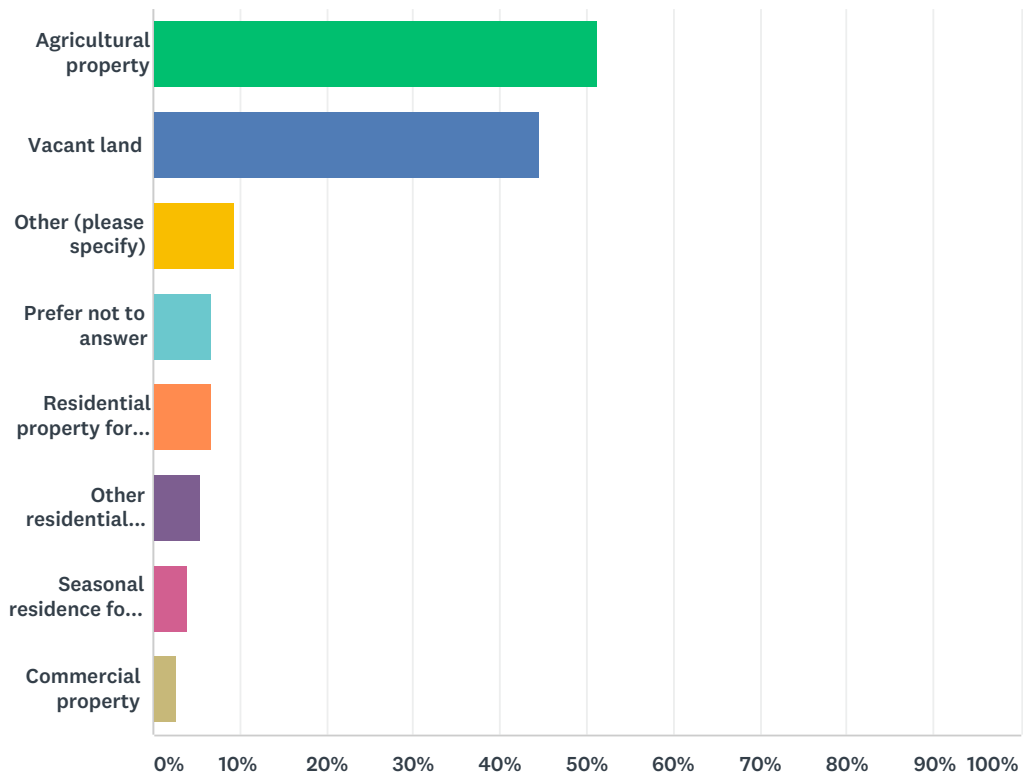
Answered: 351 Skipped: 25



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Prefer not to answer	3.42%	12
Yes	20.23%	71
No	76.35%	268
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>351</b>

### Q39 If you answered "yes" to Q38, please check all that apply to other properties you own:

Answered: 74 Skipped: 302



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agricultural property	51.35%	38
Vacant land	44.59%	33
Other (please specify)	9.46%	7
Prefer not to answer	6.76%	5
Residential property for rent by others	6.76%	5
Other residential property	5.41%	4
Seasonal residence for myself	4.05%	3
Commercial property	2.70%	2
Total Respondents: 74		

## Q40 What is your biggest concern about the future of Seward?

Answered: 264 Skipped: 112

Q40 What is your biggest concern about the future of Seward?

Business People Leaving Rural Character Spending  
 Services Grow Town Over-development  
 Development Land Taxes Fracking  
 Growth Commercial Loss Live Farmland  
Preservation Property Young Roads

## Q41 What would you change in Seward?

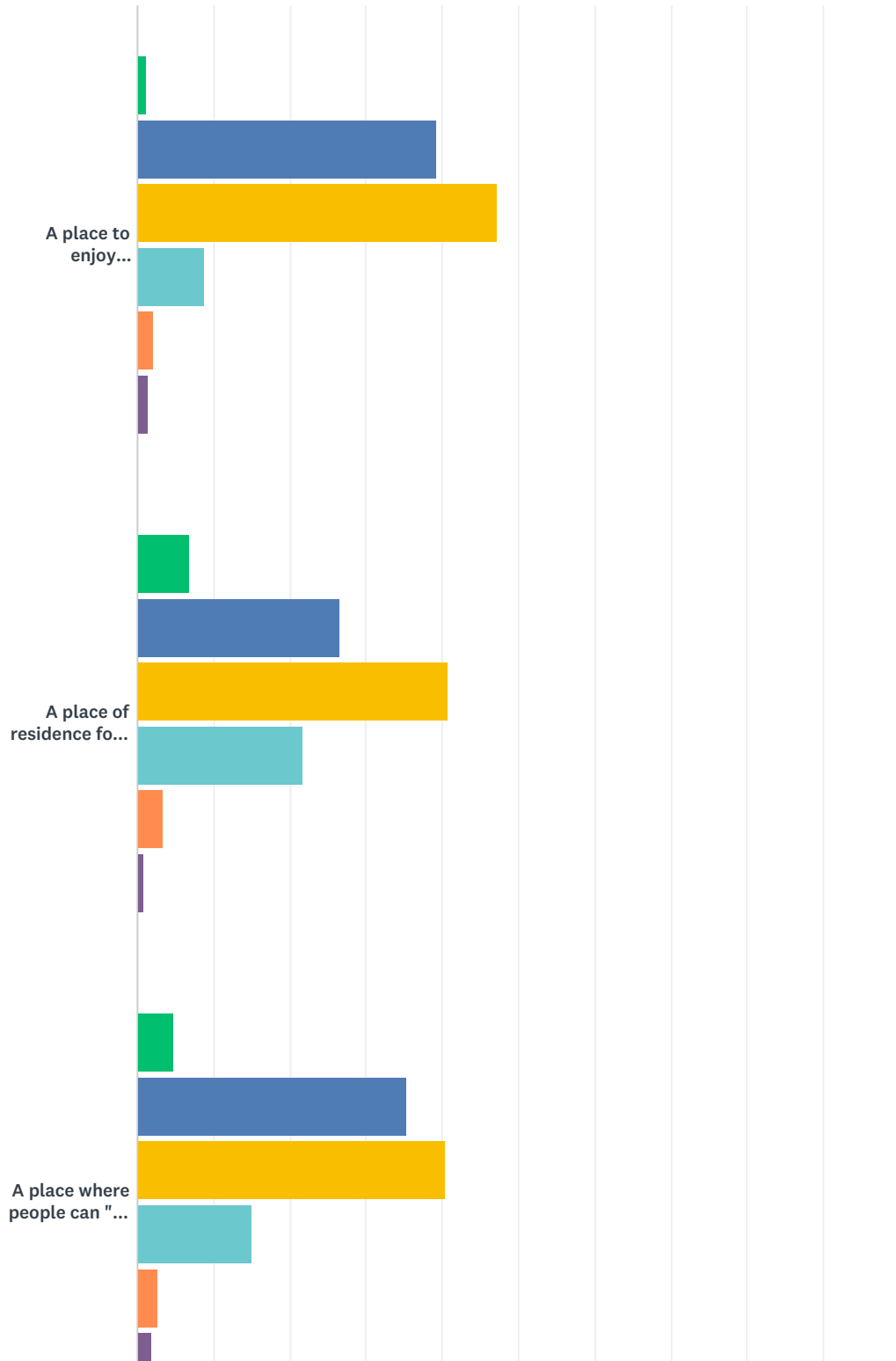
Answered: 236 Skipped: 140

Q41 What would you change in Seward?

Speed  
 Limit      Stop Government Farms Laws Turn Land  
 Community Event Internet Plowing Town Future  
 Business Dept Taxes Dorloo Roads  
 Gas Station Property Open Space Development  
 Install Sidewalks and Street Lights Building Inspector Live  
 Walking Water Nice

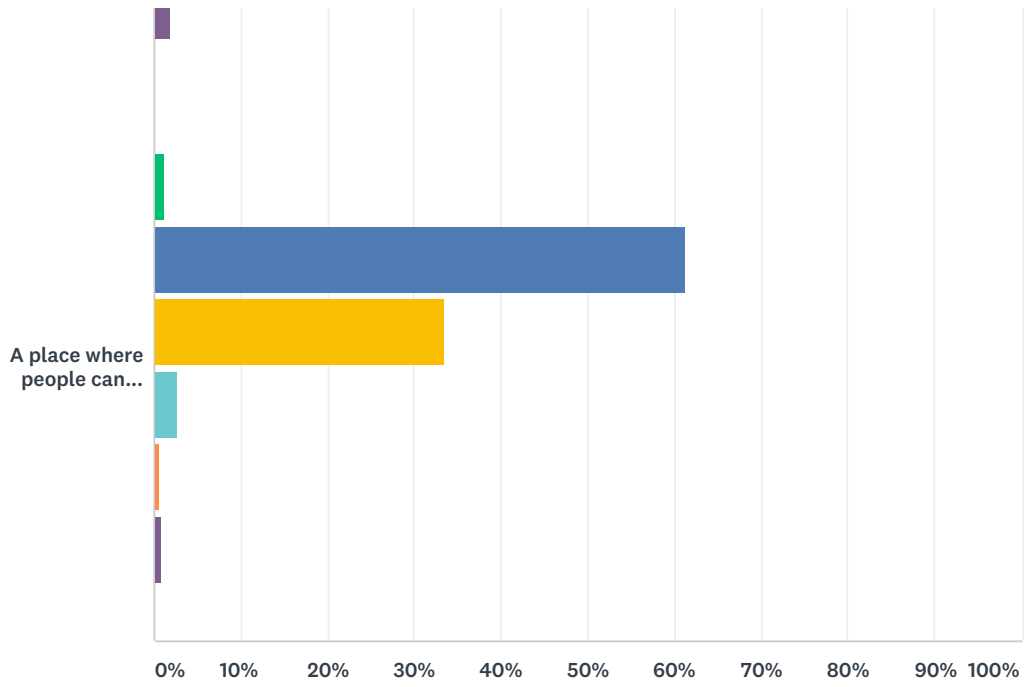
Q42 Different people have different ideas about what a community should be. We'd like to know what you think. Please let us know how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about what the Town of Seward should be. (Check one response for each option)

Answered: 344 Skipped: 32





## Town of Seward Comprehensive Plan - Anonymous Survey



■ No Opinion   
 ■ Strongly Agree   
 ■ Agree   
 ■ Neutral   
 ■ Disagree  
■ Strongly Disagree

	NO OPINION	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
A place to enjoy retirement	1.18% 4	39.23% 133	47.20% 160	8.85% 30	2.06% 7	1.47% 5	339	1.29
A place of residence for people who work elsewhere	6.85% 23	26.49% 89	40.77% 137	21.73% 73	3.27% 11	0.89% 3	336	1.03
A place where people can "get away from it all"	4.75% 16	35.31% 119	40.36% 136	15.13% 51	2.67% 9	1.78% 6	337	1.10
A place where people can safely raise families	1.16% 4	61.34% 211	33.43% 115	2.62% 9	0.58% 2	0.87% 3	344	1.26