

HOUSTON GALVESTON REGIONAL PLAN

OUR
REGION VISION FUTURE



Alternatives Survey Results



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What choices should we make when planning for the future of our region?



Forecasts by the Houston-Galveston Area Council predict that by the year 2040, our region will:

- Grow by 3.5 million people
- Gain 1.9 million jobs
- Become a "majority minority" population

For this survey, please consider three possible futures for the region. Each represents one of the top three areas residents indicated were important during a survey conducted in early 2012 - **Less Time on the Road**, **Greener Region**, **Competitive Workforce**. As a baseline when thinking about these three alternative futures, please consider the **Current Course**, or what the future may look like if we don't make any changes to our current growth, environmental and educational trends.



2040 Current Course

- Existing trends continue
- No major policy changes
- Most of growth occurs outside of existing towns and cities
- Traffic congestion increases
- Large amount of natural areas lost to development
- Education concerns not addressed, leading to a less competitive workforce



2040 Alternative Future: Less Time on the Road

- Reduction in travel times, costs
- Most of growth occurs in existing places
- More jobs and housing located closer together
- Some new housing is smaller sized, in walkable areas
- More investment in sidewalks, bikeways, public transportation
- Better air quality



2040 Alternative Future: Greener Region

- Air and water quality improved
- Development reduced in flood and storm surge vulnerable areas
- Best natural areas preserved
- New businesses, workers, tourists attracted by natural areas
- Greener practices adopted by local governments



2040 Alternative Future: Competitive Workforce

- Increase in education attainment of residents
- Community factors, such as poverty and crime, addressed
- Highly skilled workforce
- Competitive economic region
- Good jobs and job training opportunities



Current Course



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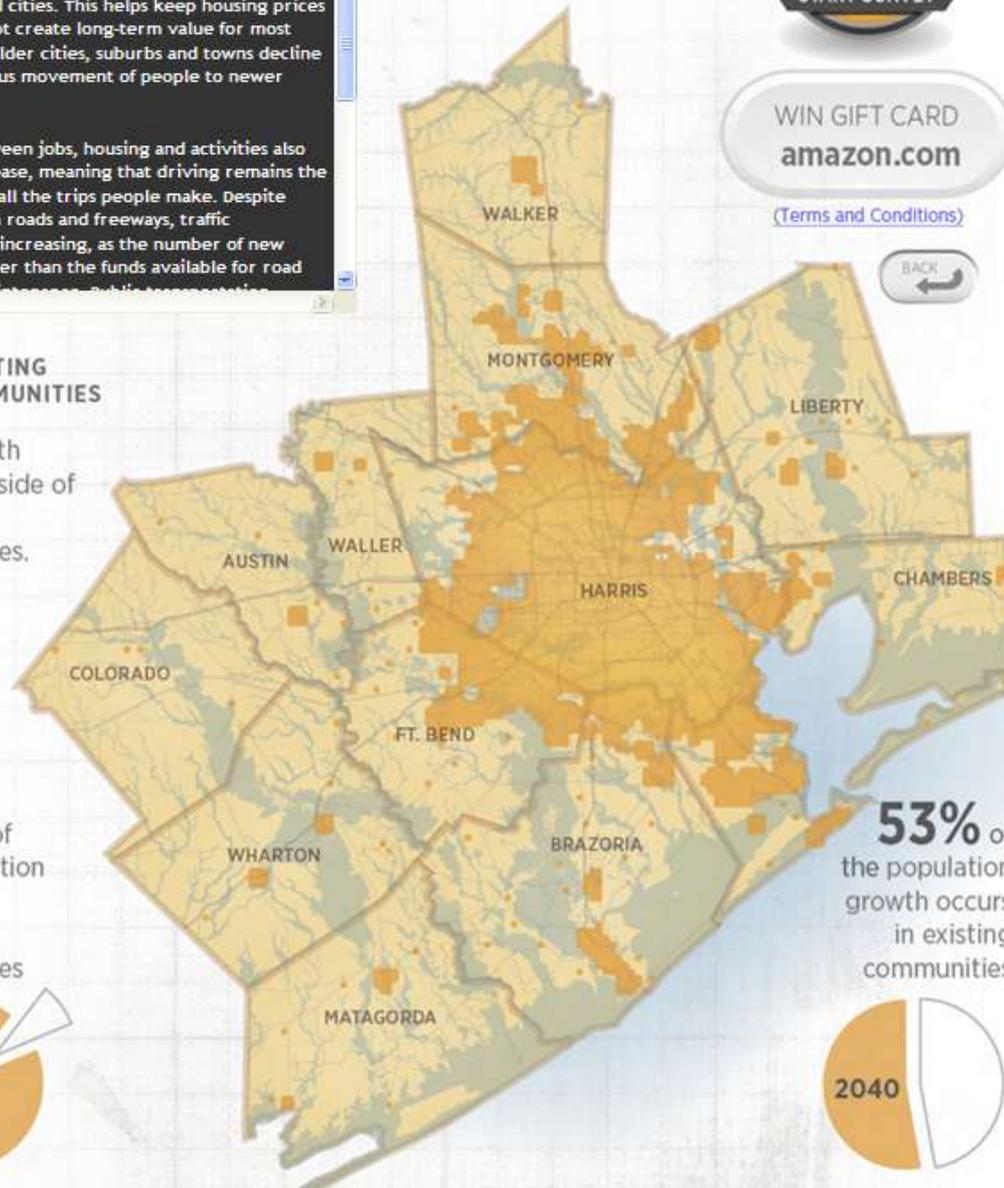
In this alternative, most of the growth occurs outside existing towns and cities. This helps keep housing prices down, but does not create long-term value for most homeowners, as older cities, suburbs and towns decline with the continuous movement of people to newer communities.

The distance between jobs, housing and activities also continues to increase, meaning that driving remains the option for almost all the trips people make. Despite major upgrades in roads and freeways, traffic congestion keeps increasing, as the number of new drivers grows faster than the funds available for road expansion and maintenance. Public transportation

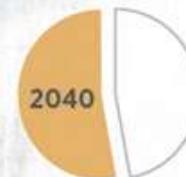
 EXISTING COMMUNITIES

Most growth occurs outside of existing communities.

92% of the population lives in existing communities



53% of the population growth occurs in existing communities



Less Time on the Road



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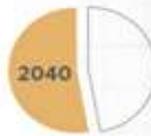
In this alternative, most of growth takes place in cities and towns—particularly in activity centers and other areas where housing, jobs and activities are located closer together. New development strengthens the local tax base in these places, enabling them to improve maintenance and services without raising taxes.

Transportation strategies are less focused on widening freeways and major roads and more on public transportation—buses, light rail and commuter rail—and improvements to sidewalks and bikeways. Local plans, codes and incentives are

EXISTING COMMUNITIES

This alternative promotes more growth in existing communities where infrastructure and services already exist.

53% of the population growth occurs in existing communities



2040
CURRENT COURSE

76% of the population growth occurs in existing communities



2040
LESS TIME ON THE ROAD ALTERNATIVE

Rural



Traditional downtowns can accommodate residential above retail while maintaining their character.

Suburban

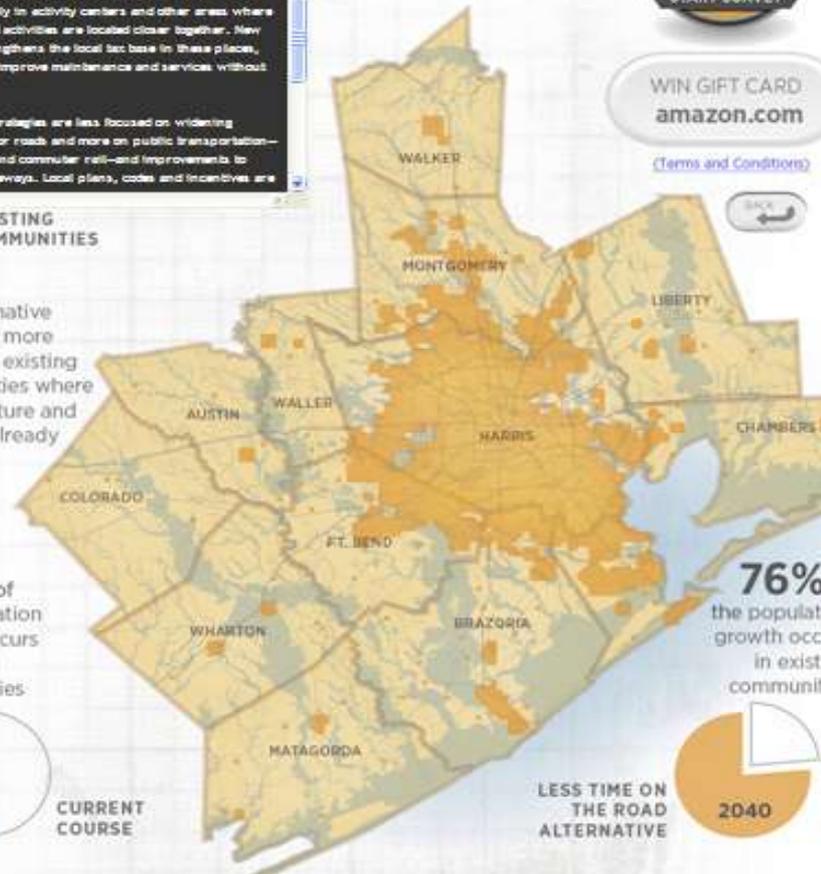


New or redeveloping suburban areas can create vibrant districts with 3-5 story buildings mixing housing and retail.

Urban



Urban areas can be both job and housing centers, accommodating growth while creating areas to live, work, learn and play.



Greener Region

In this alternative, the region has made a major effort to preserve its best natural areas—wetlands, forêts, prairies and shorelines—and to reduce air and water pollution. Suburban growth trends continue, with the exception that development is greatly reduced in those areas most vulnerable to flooding and hurricane storm surge—which are also some of the region's best wildlife habitat.

Public and private funds are used to preserve many prime natural areas and provide access to residents and visitors for outdoor recreation. These efforts increase the quality of life for residents and enhance the region's ability to recruit new business and skilled workers and to attract tourists.

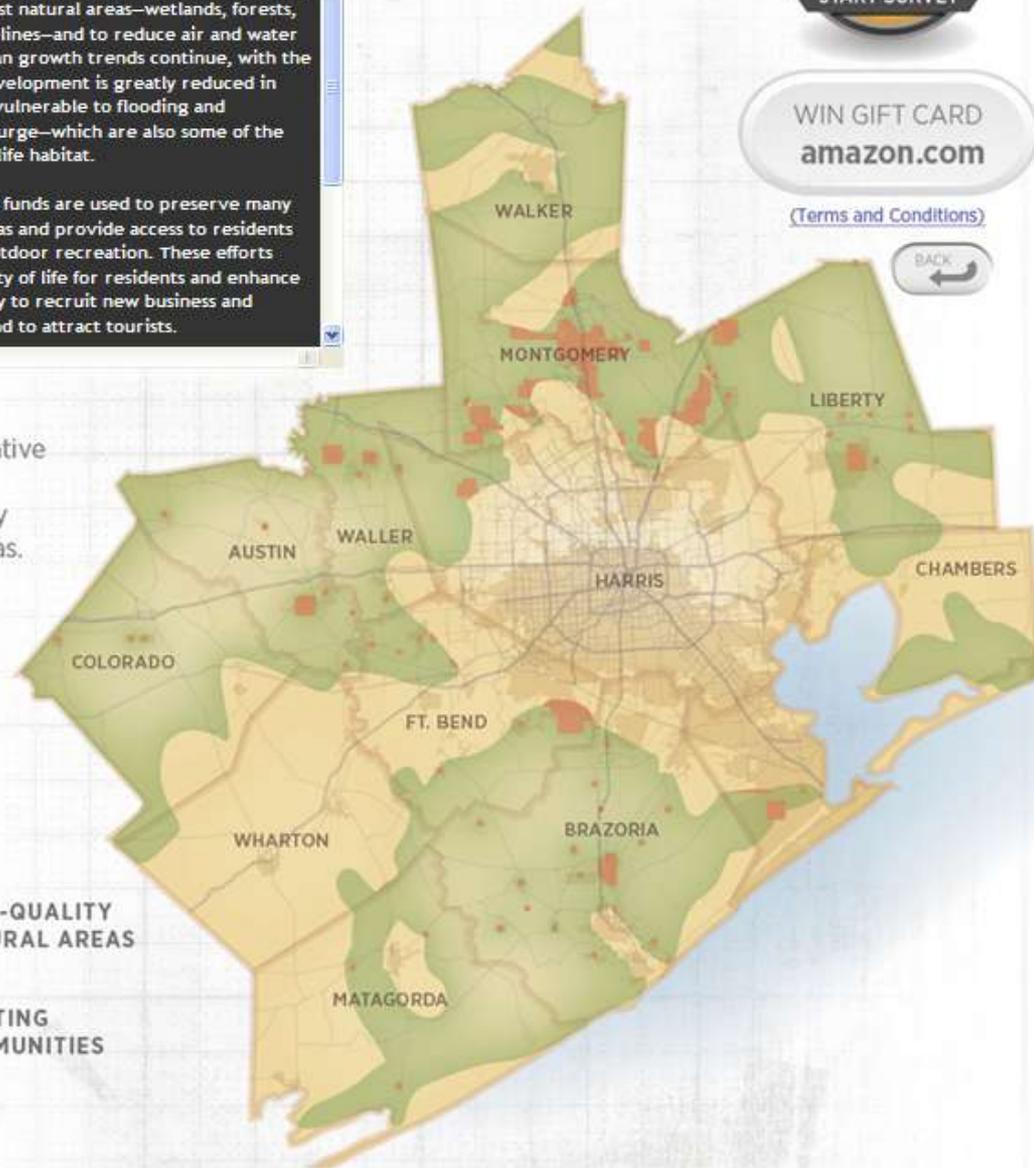


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This alternative preserves high-quality natural areas.

-  HIGH-QUALITY NATURAL AREAS
-  EXISTING COMMUNITIES



Competitive Workforce

In this alternative, the region makes a major effort to increase the educational achievement of its residents. Improving high school graduation rates, particularly in low-income communities where dropout rates are high, becomes a priority. The focus is not only on improving schools, but also addressing community factors such as poverty, crime, and substandard housing that can negatively affect educational outcomes.

These efforts are coordinated with increased educational enrichment, including pre-school, after-school tutoring and mentoring, and English-language skills programs. Additionally, improved opportunities for vocational training, adult education, and counseling and support for small business owners are provided throughout the region.



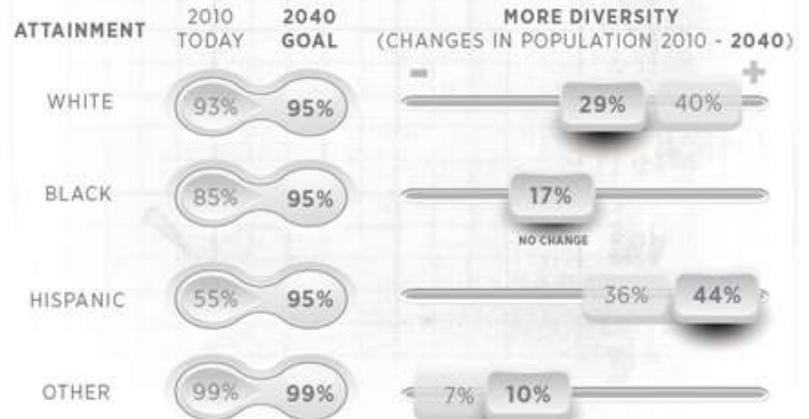
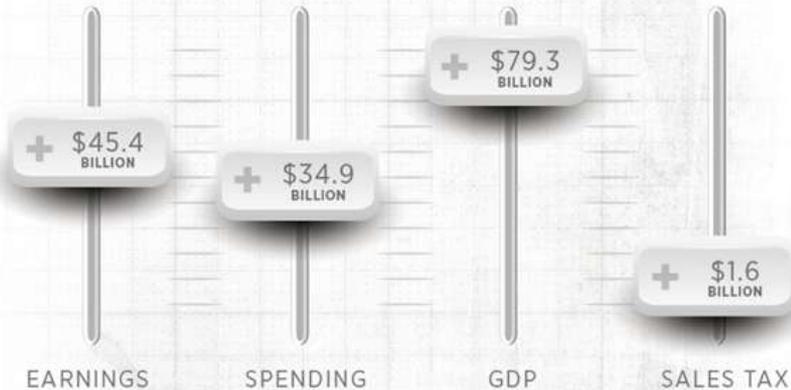
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MORE
QUALITY
JOBS

BENEFITS TO MORE EDUCATION



Alternatives Outreach



Take the
survey in
English

Conteste la
encuesta en
español

Làm thăm
dò bằng
tiếng Việt

한국어로
설문조사를
실시하십시오

填写问卷

填寫問卷

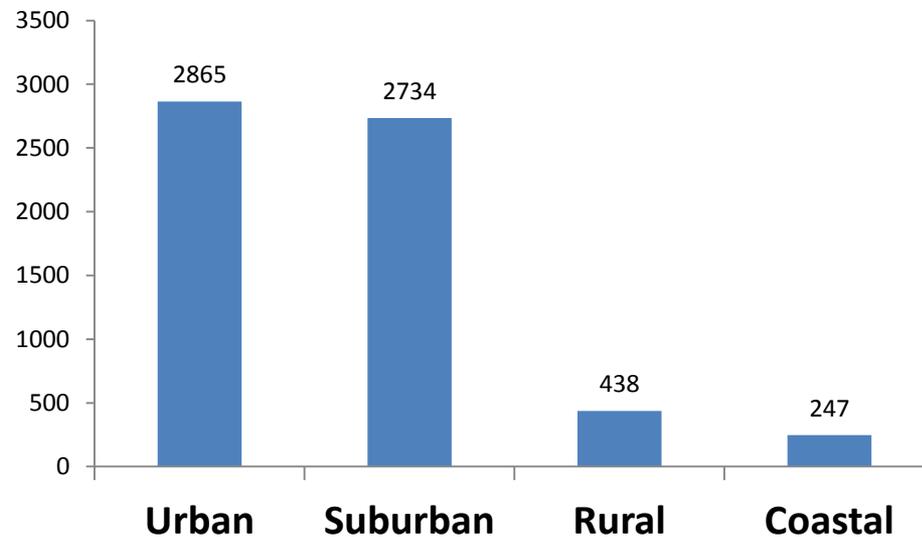
Outreach

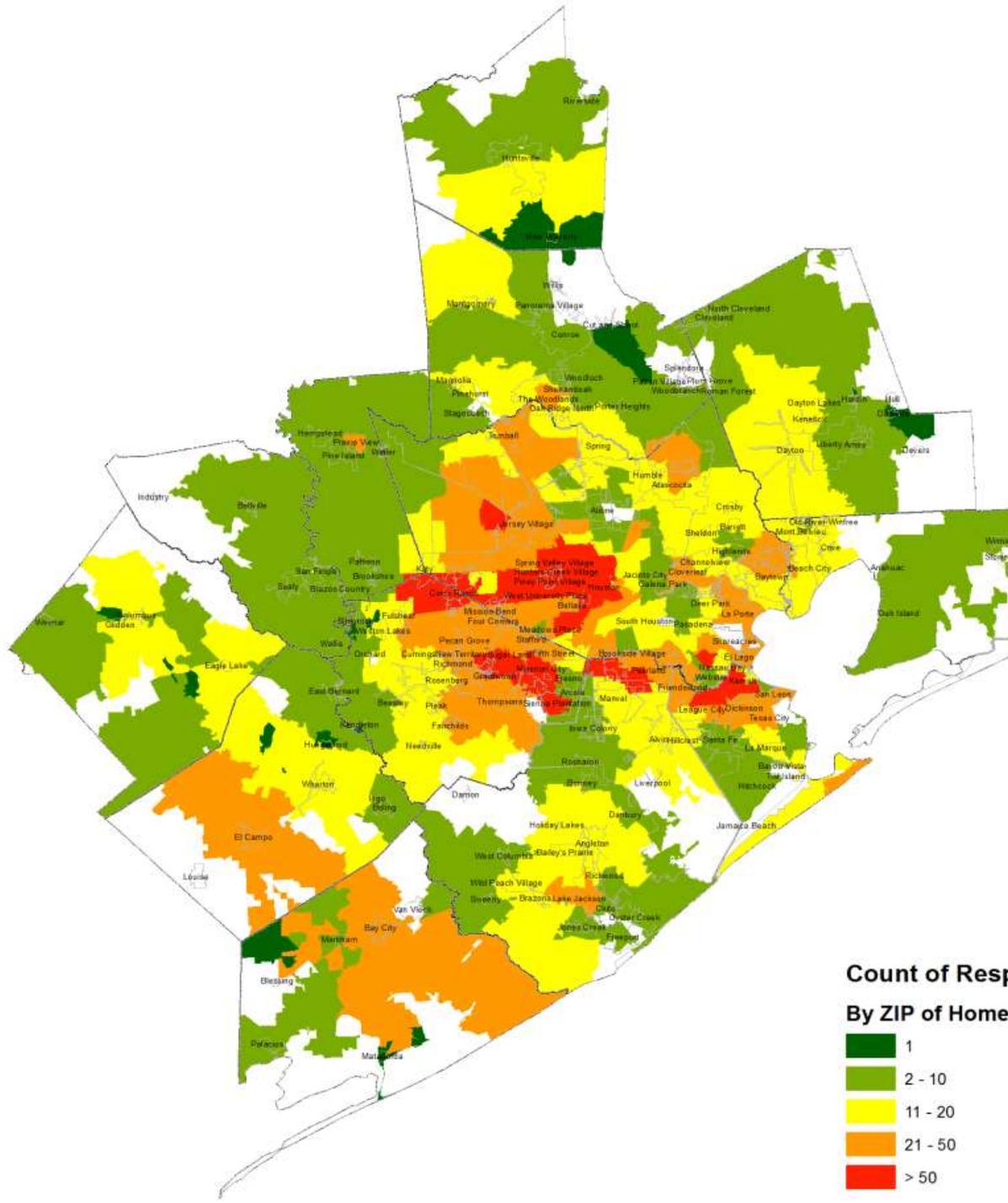
Survey Distribution Methods:

- On-line
- E-blasts
- Targeted presentations to business, professional, and community groups
- Community meetings in underrepresented areas
- iPad surveys
- Kiosks

Geographic Summary

Total Survey Responses: 6,253

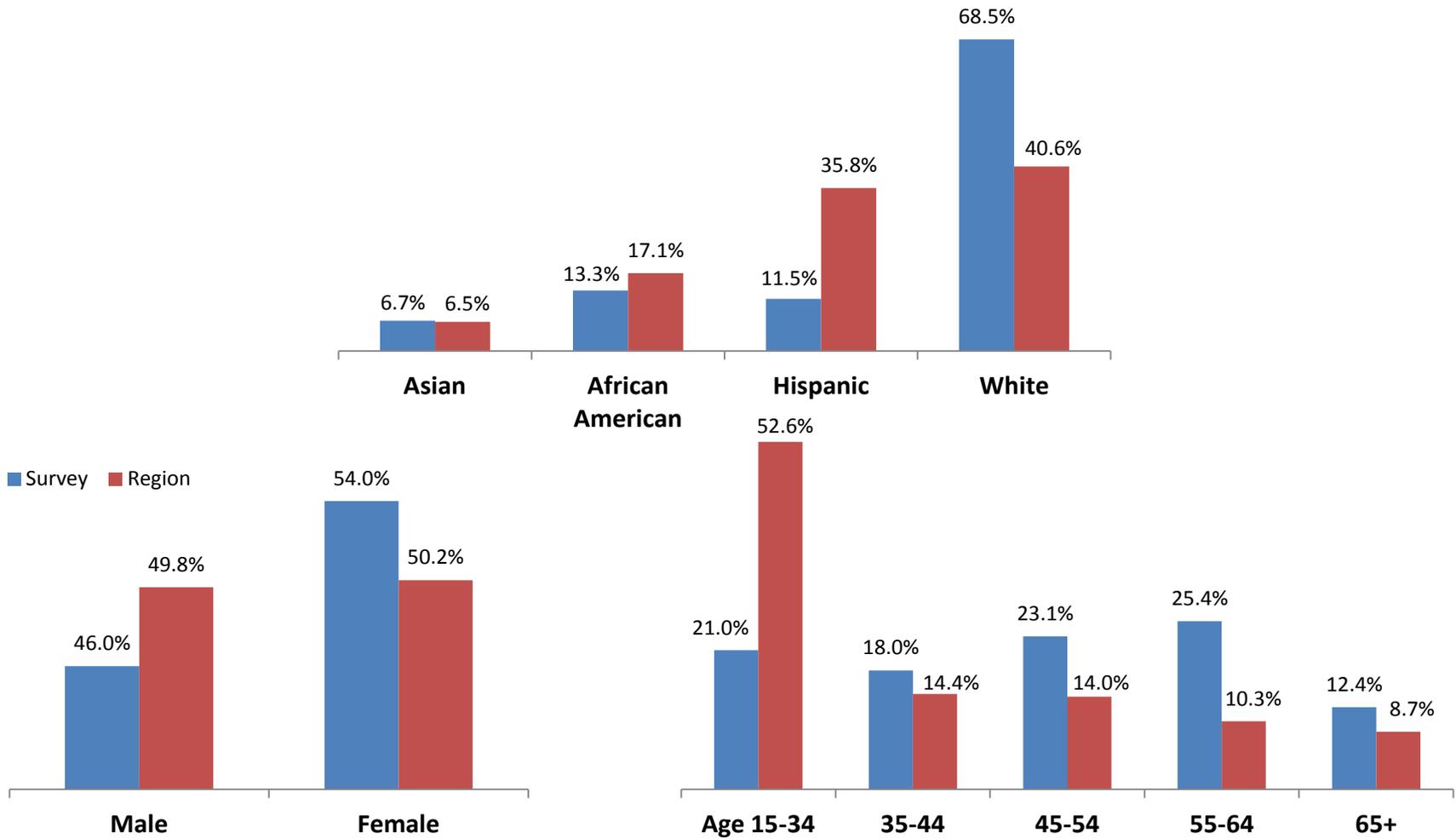




**Count of Respondents
By ZIP of Home**

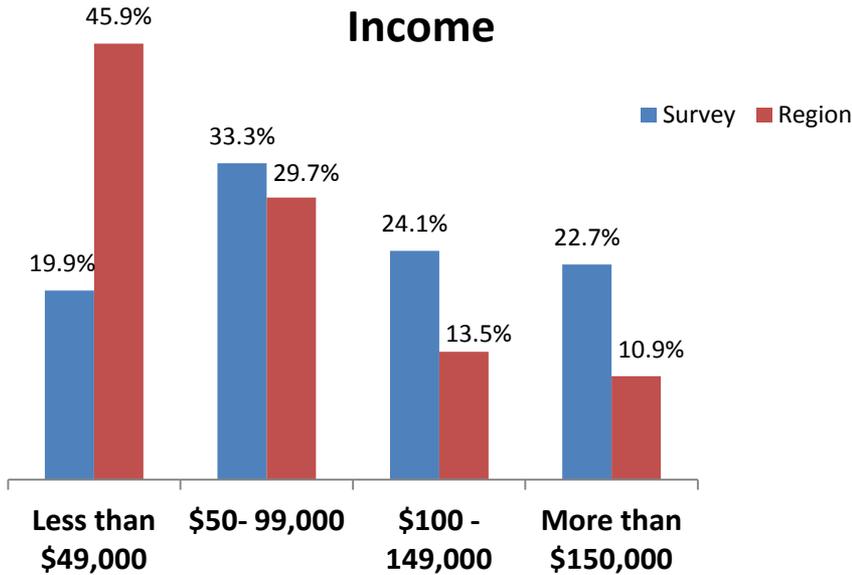
- 1
- 2 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 50
- > 50

Demographic Summary

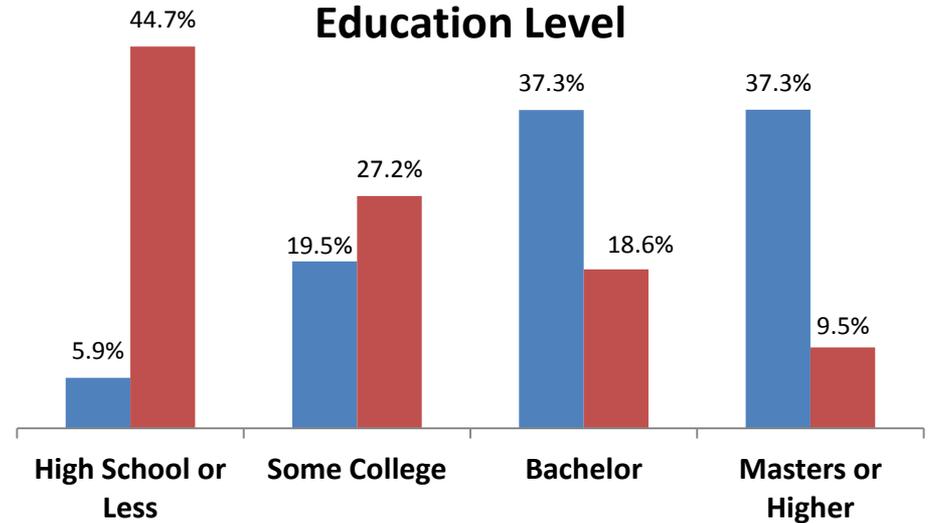


Demographic Summary

Income

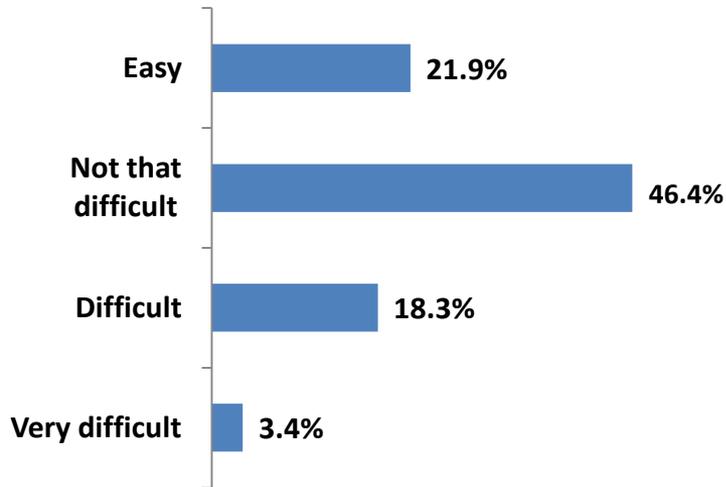


Education Level

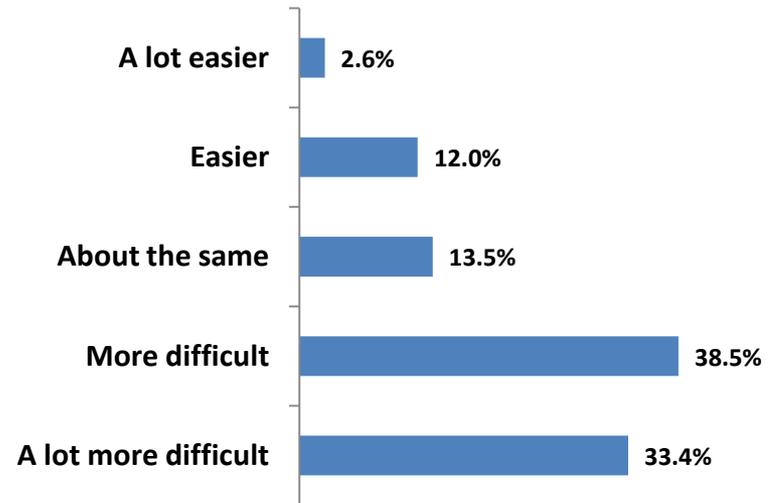


Less Time on the Road

From where you live, how difficult/easy is it for you to get to the places you want to go?

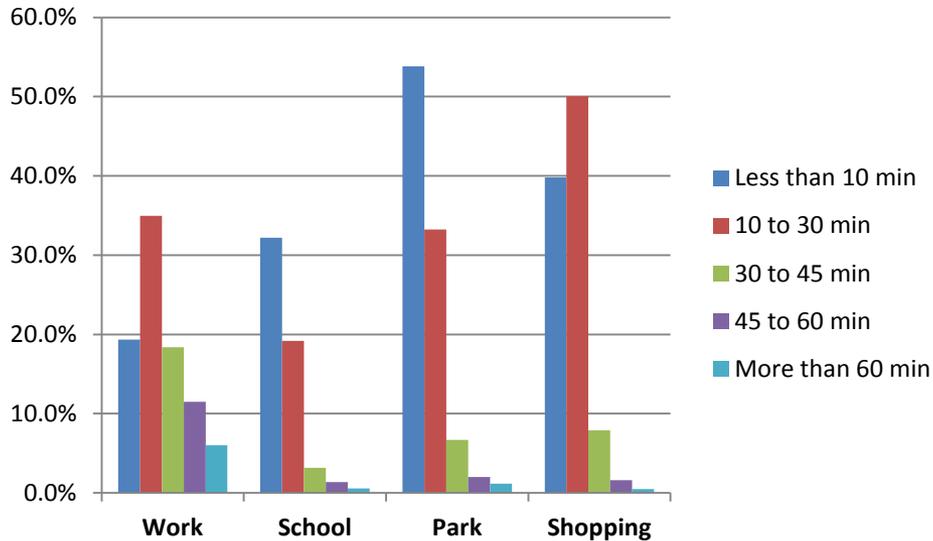


Do you think it will be easier or more difficult in the year 2040 for people to reach the places they want to go than it is today?

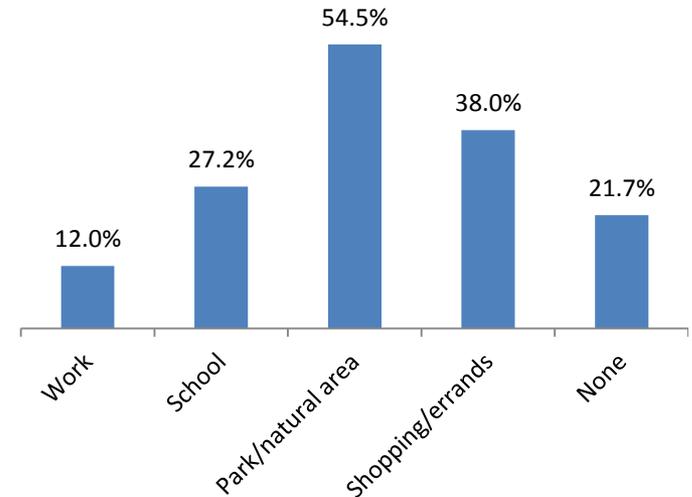


Less Time on the Road

From where you live, how much time does it usually take for you to reach the following destinations?

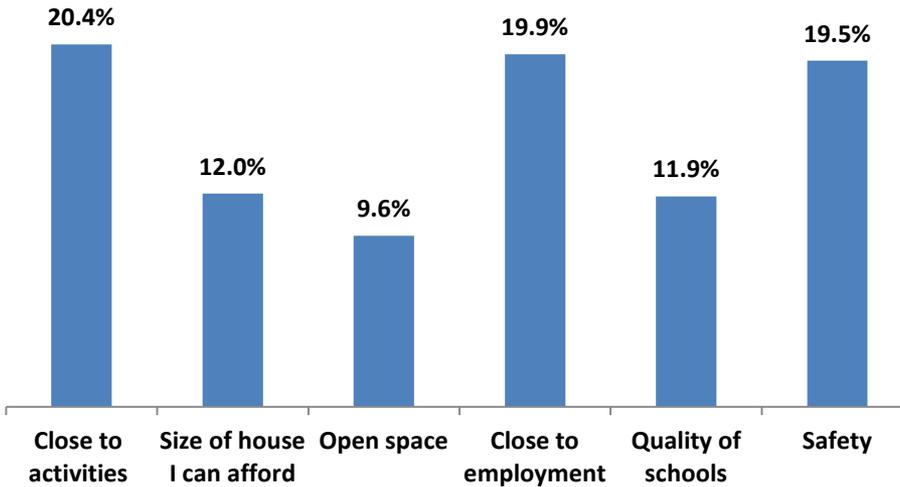


From where you live, which of the following could you reach in 10 minutes or less comfortably by bicycling or walking?

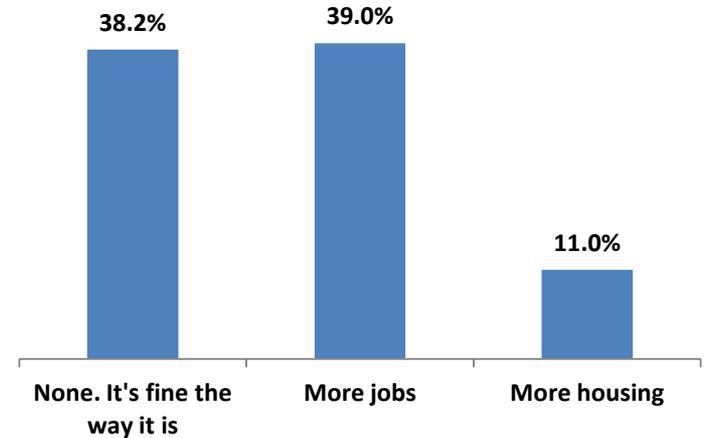


Less Time on the Road

If you could live anywhere in the region, which of the following would be the most important factor in your decision?

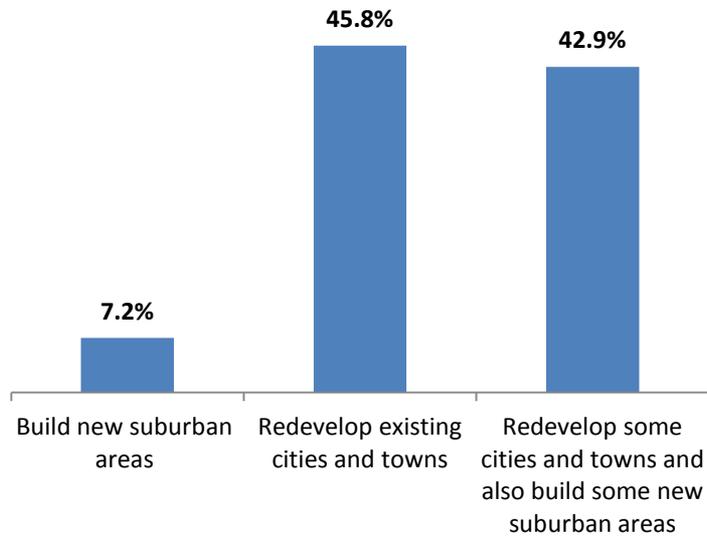


As our region continues to grow, which of the following would you like to see in the area where you live?

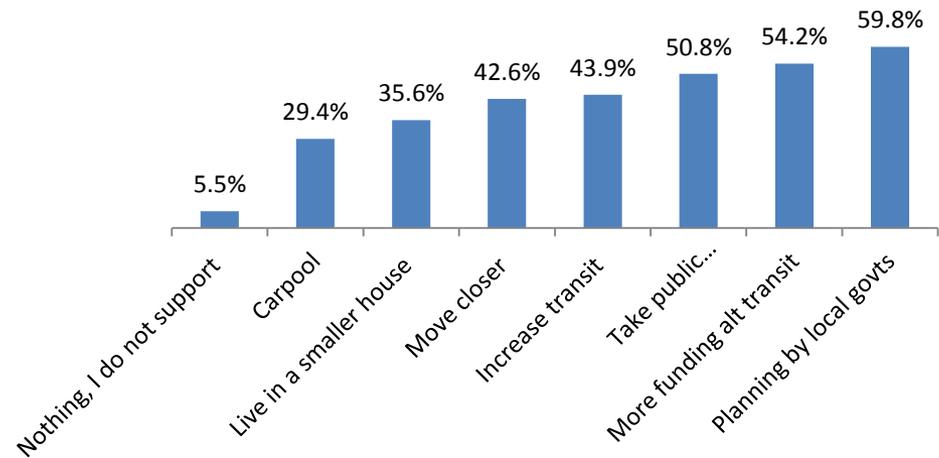


Less Time on the Road

What is the best way to accommodate future growth?

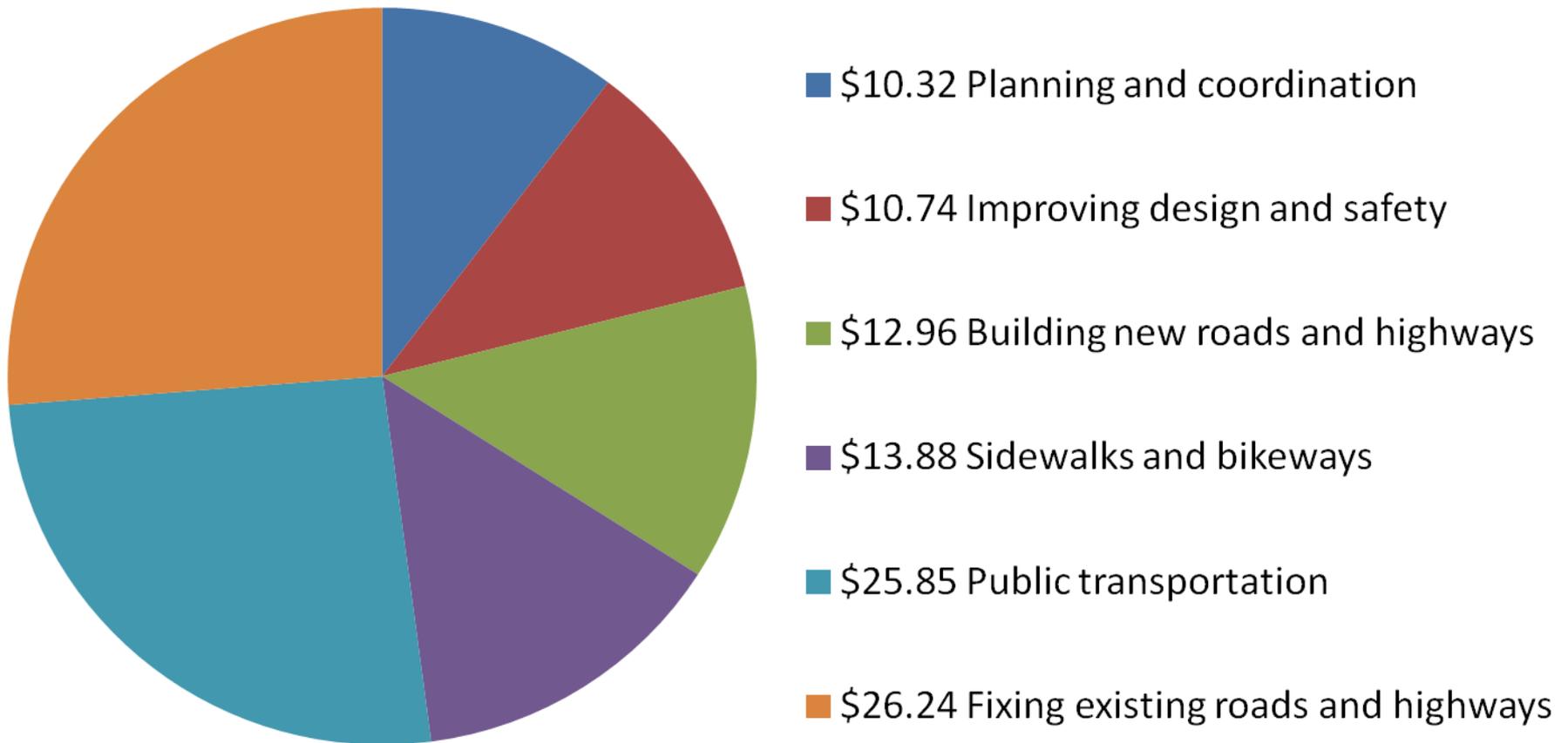


What would you support to make this alternative a reality?



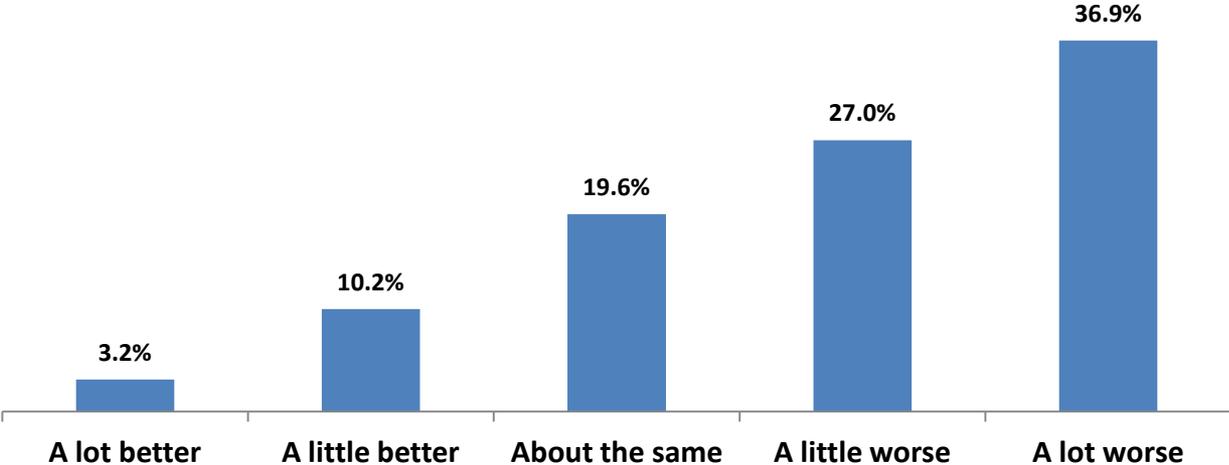
Less Time on the Road

How the region would spend \$100 to improve the region's transportation system



Greener Region

How do you think the quality of the region's air, water and natural areas will be in the year 2040 compared to today?

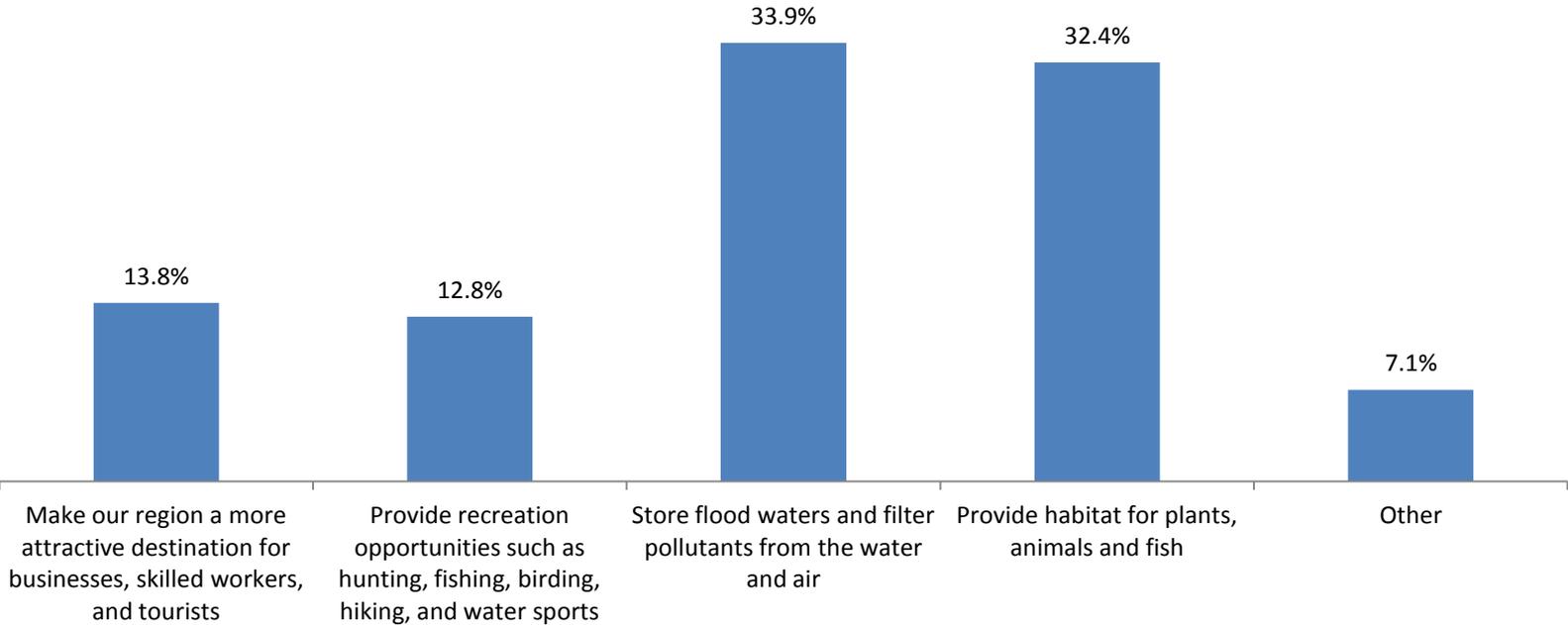


As we grow, steps should be taken to preserve our region's wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines.

95% AGREE

Greener Region

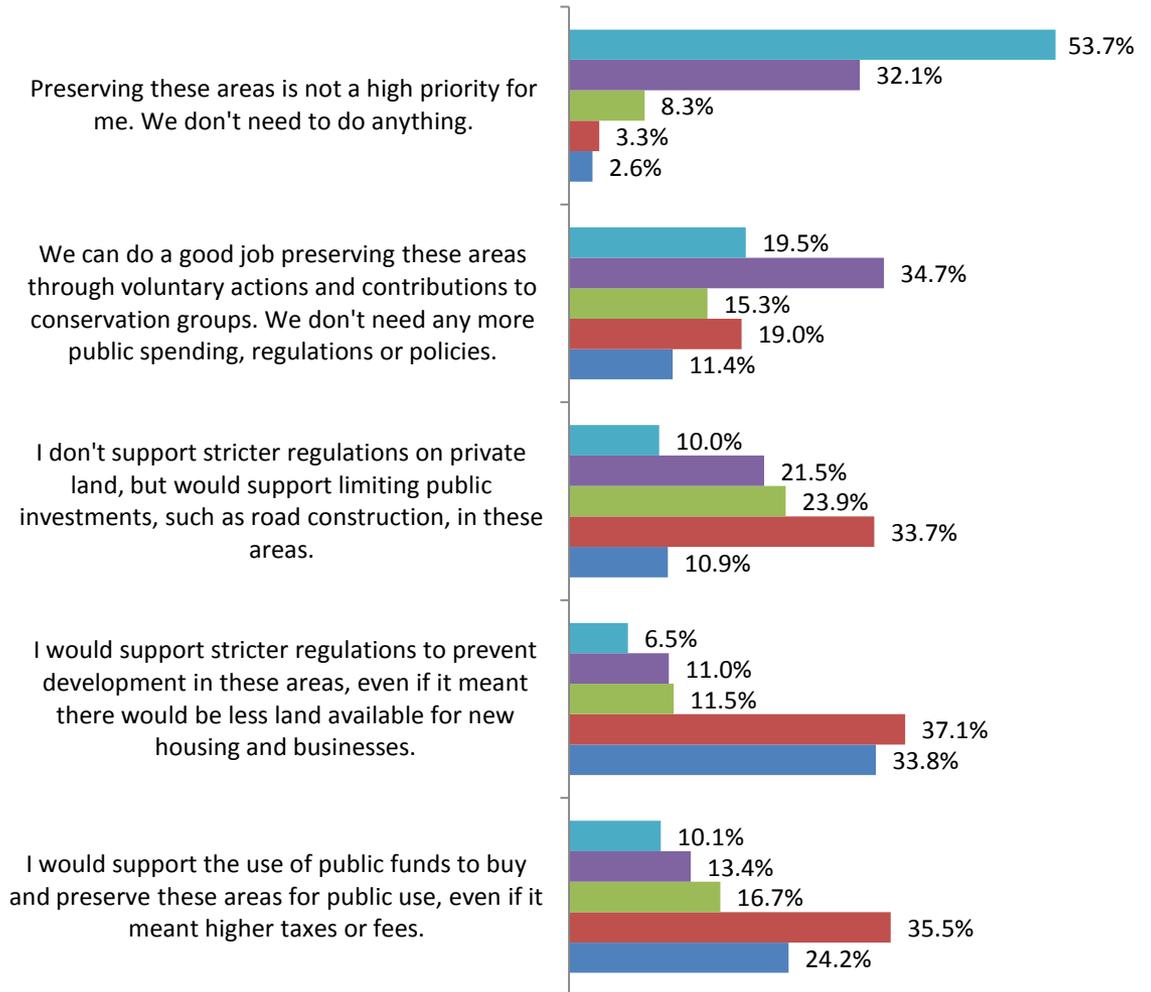
What is the most important reason to step up efforts to preserve our region's wetlands, forests and prairies?



Greener Region

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements about strategies for preserving the region's wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines.

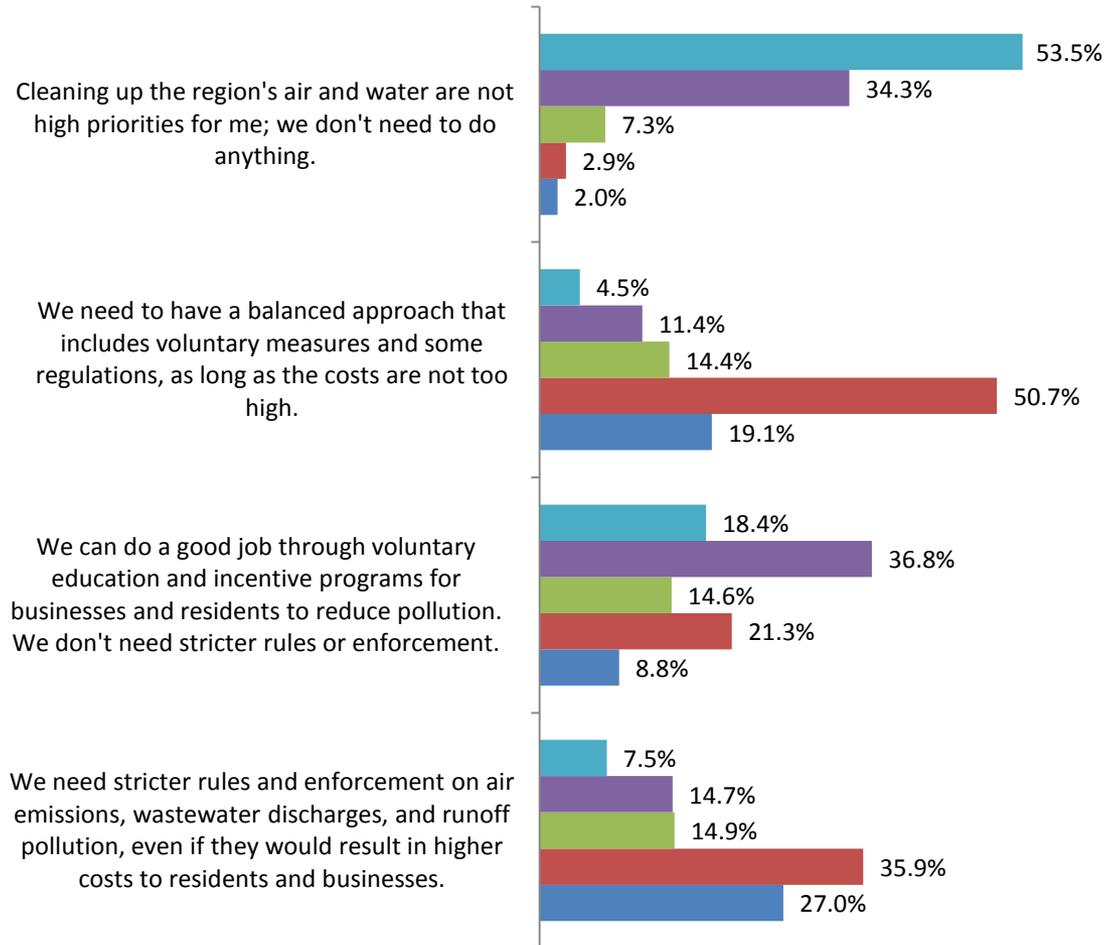
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree



Greener Region

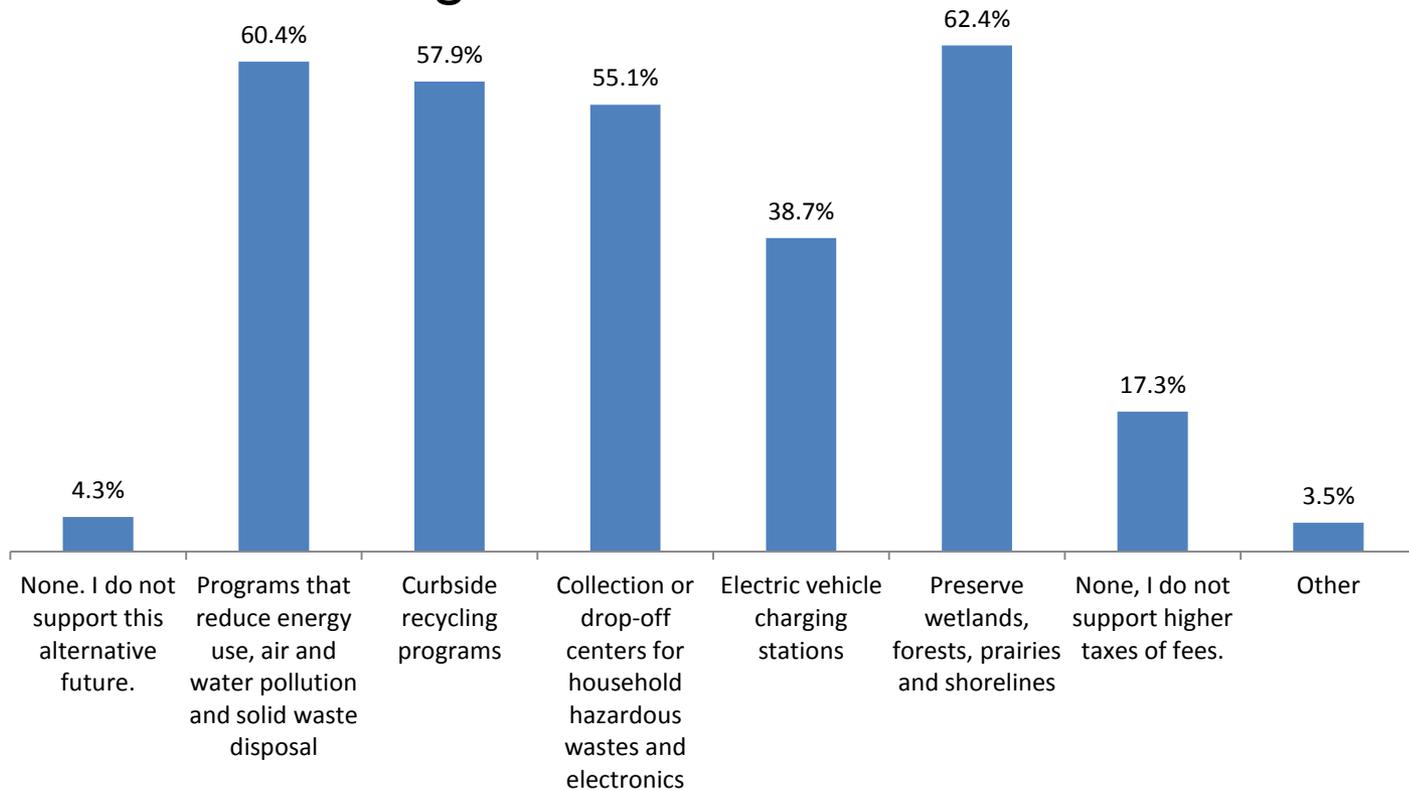
Rate your level of agreement with the following strategies for cleaning up our region's air and water.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree



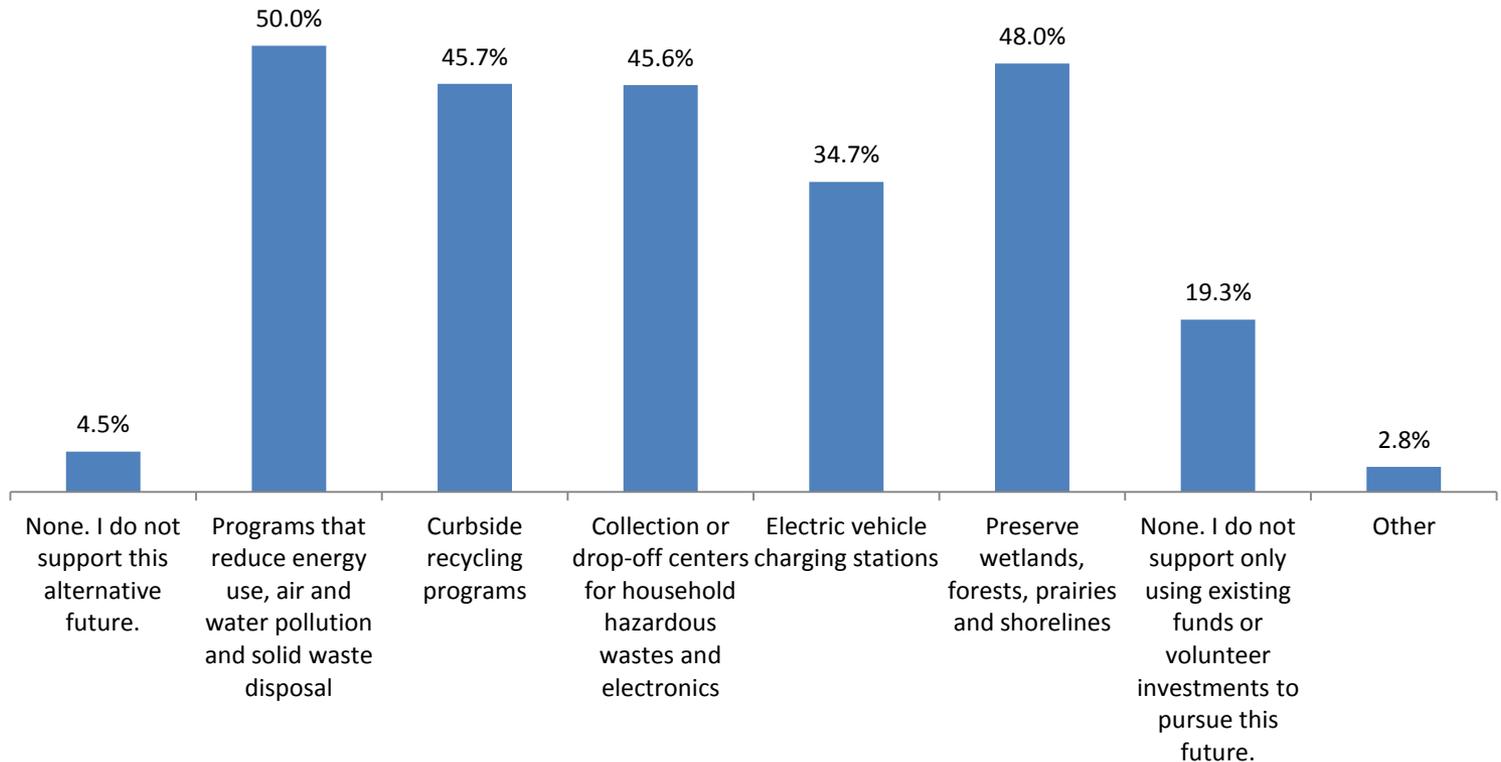
Greener Region

What would you support to make this alternative a reality even if it meant higher taxes or fees?



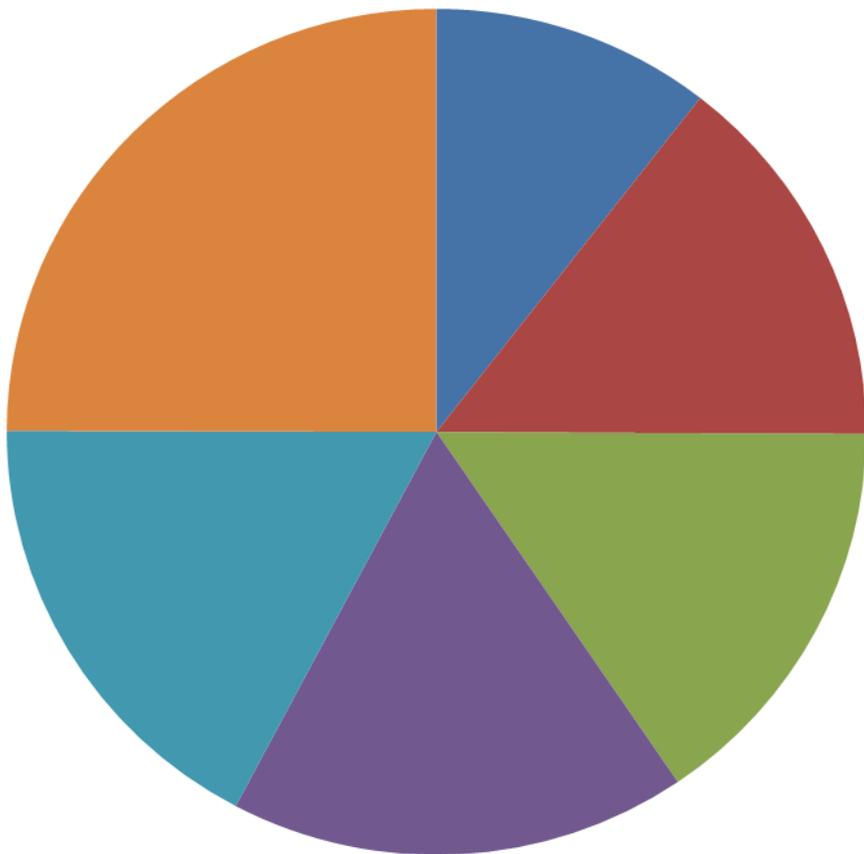
Greener Region

What would you support to make this alternative a reality using existing funds or through volunteer investments?



Greener Region

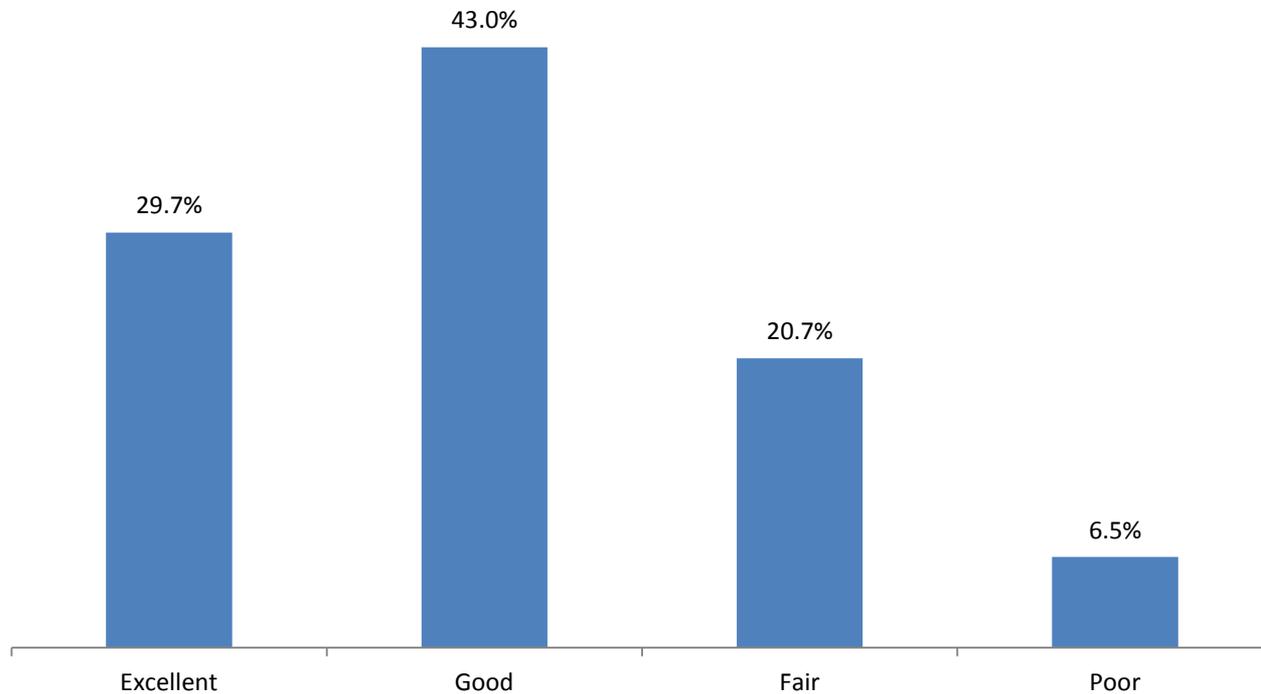
How the region would spend \$100 to improve the environment



- \$10.53 Education about the environment
- \$14.55 Weatherizing homes to improve energy efficiency
- \$15.42 Air quality initiatives (telecommuting, engine replacement, etc.)
- \$17.25 Water quality planning
- \$17.30 Expanding recycling programs and centers
- \$24.96 Conserving wetlands, prairies, forests (purchasing land)

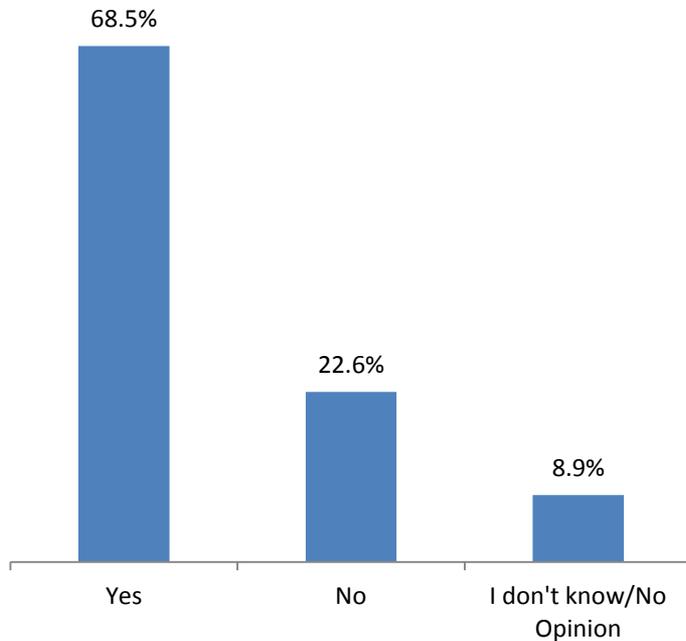
Competitive Workforce

I think the opportunities for getting a good education in my community are:

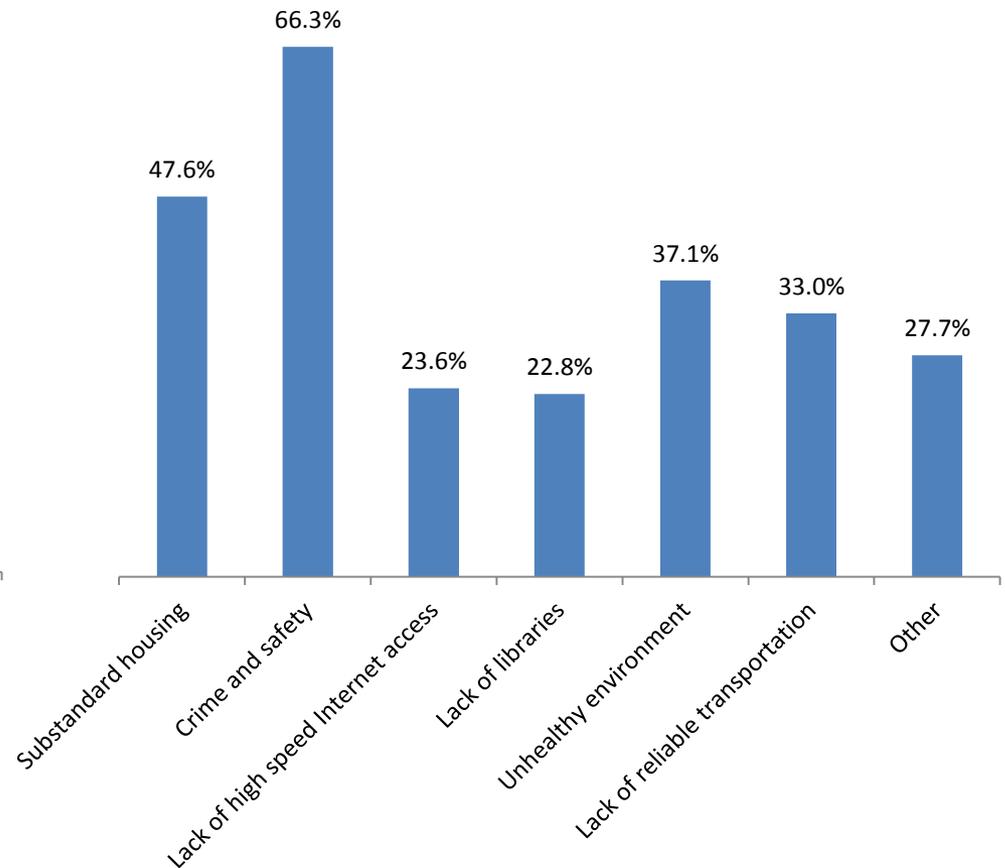


Competitive Workforce

Are there factors in your community besides the quality of schools that make it a poor environment for getting a good education?

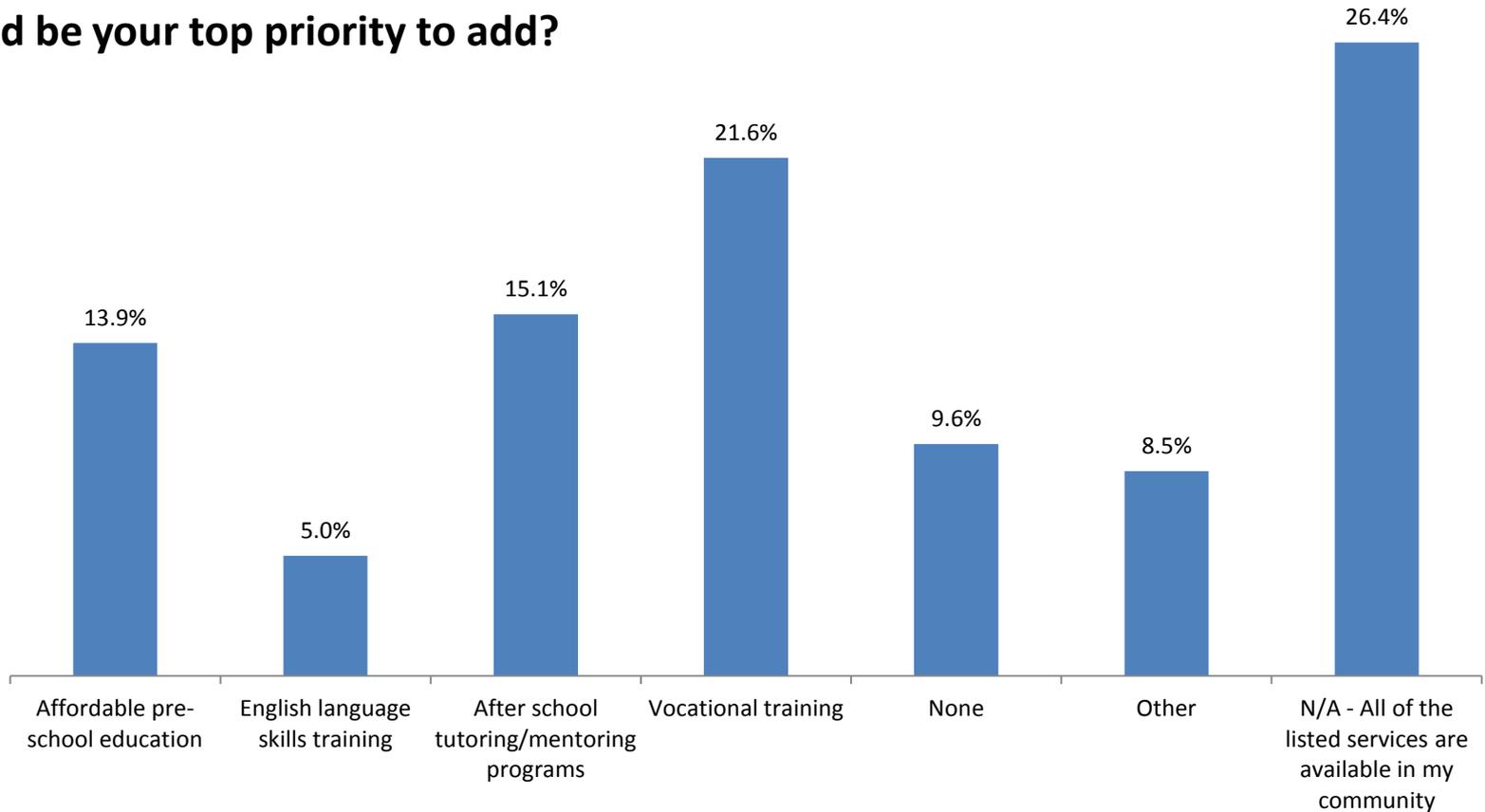


Which factors in your community (besides the quality of the schools) make it a poor environment for getting a good education?



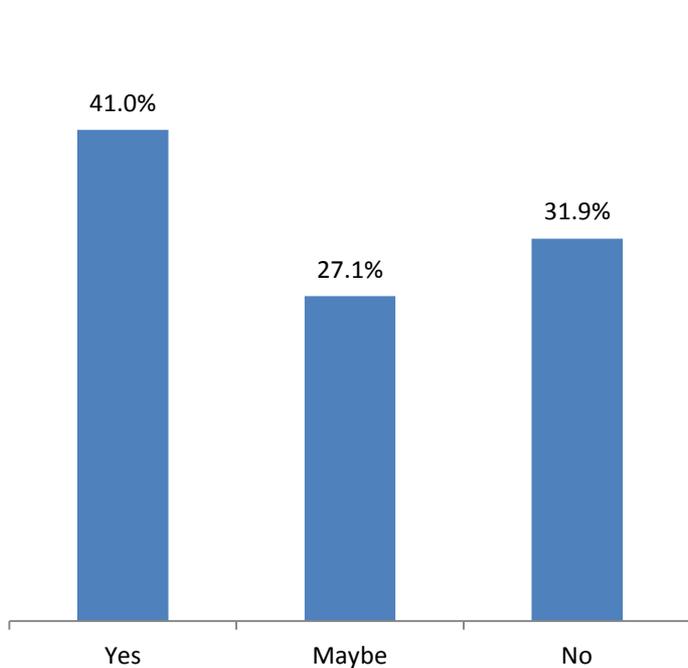
Competitive Workforce

Of the following services not currently available in your community, which would be your top priority to add?

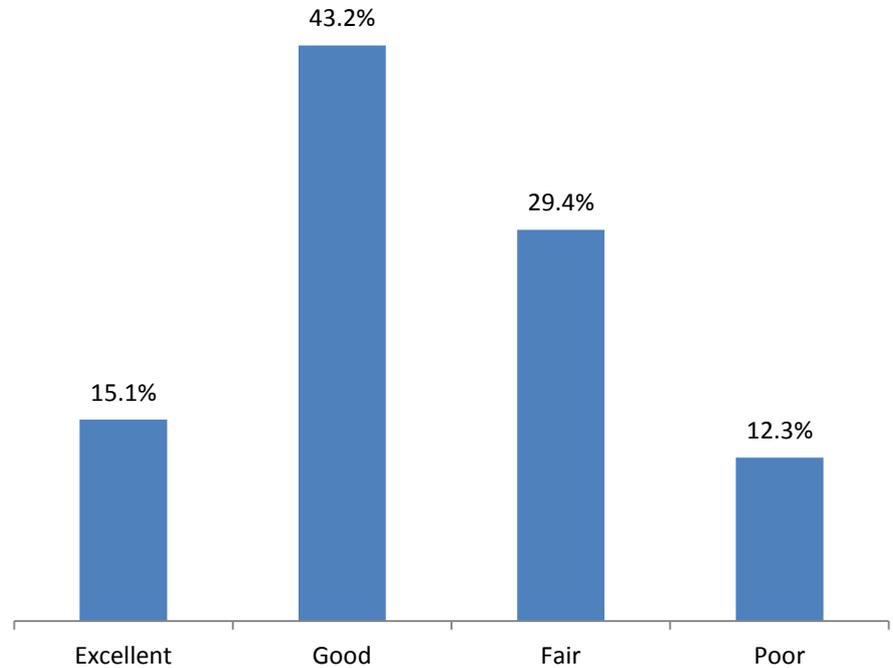


Competitive Workforce

Do you have an interest in learning a new skill that will improve your job prospects and earning potential?

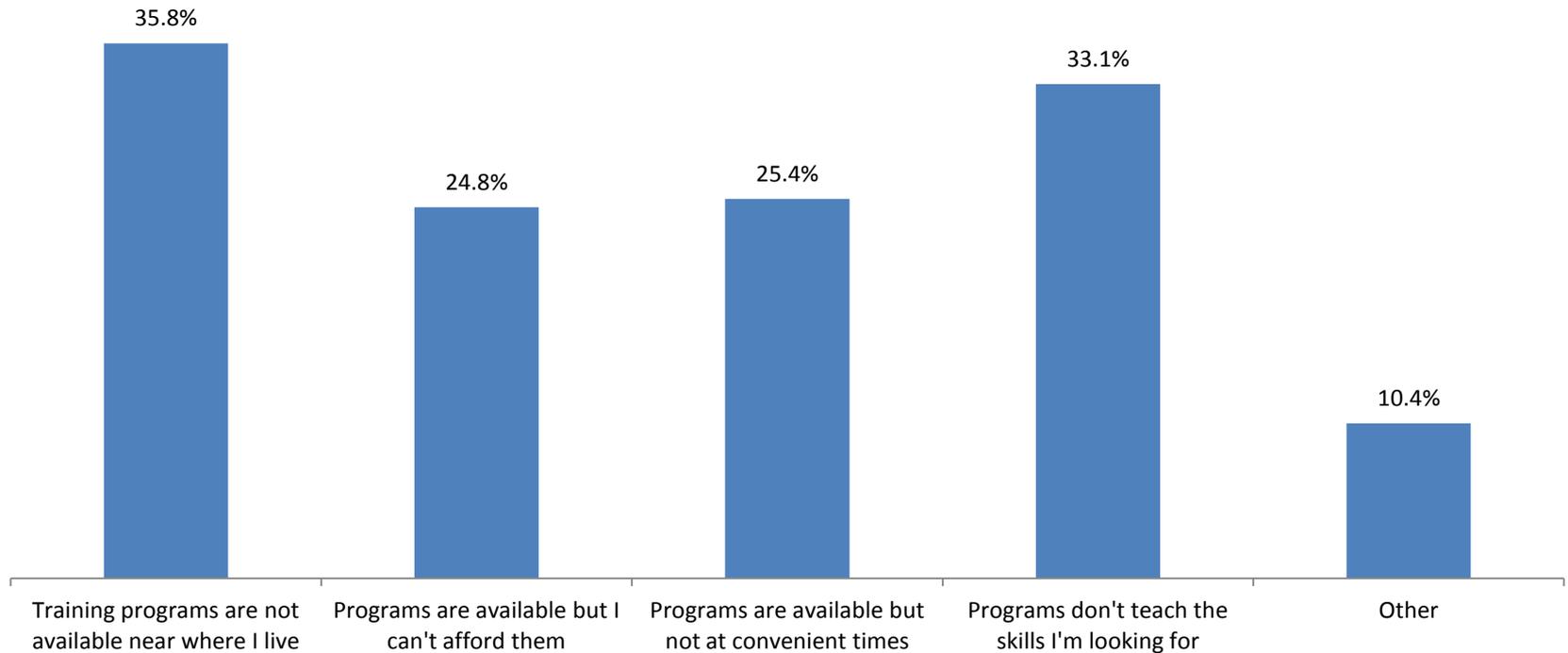


How would you rate the opportunities for learning new job skills where you live?



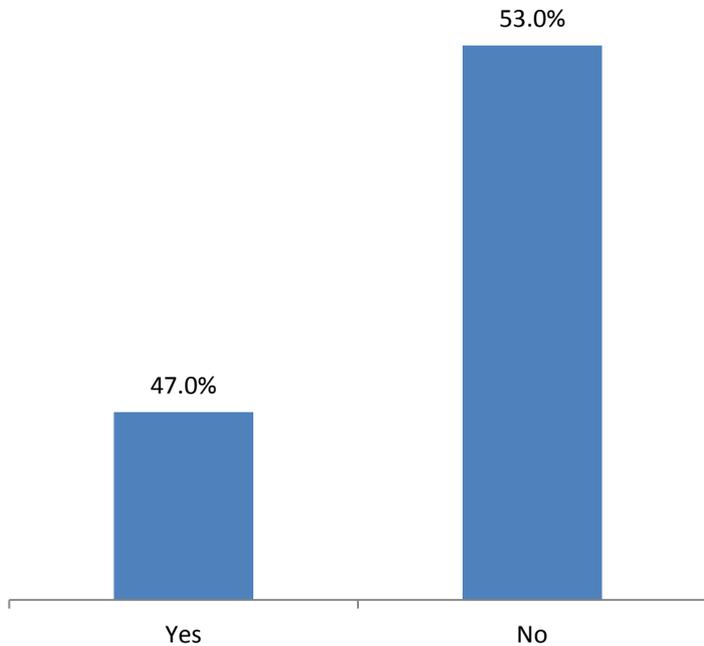
Competitive Workforce

Why do you think your opportunities for learning new job skills are fair or poor?

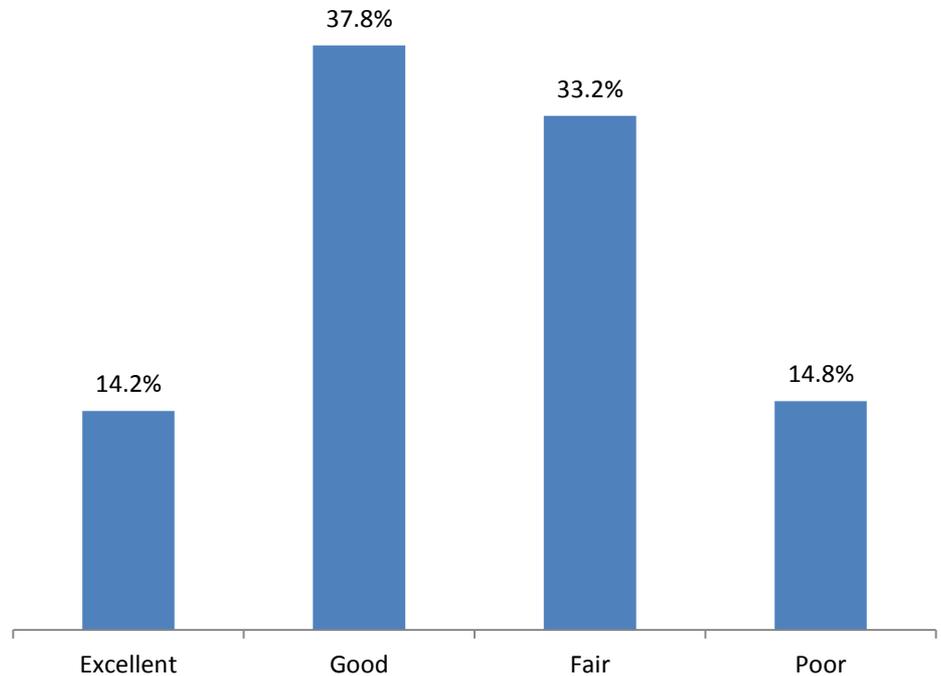


Competitive Workforce

Do you currently have or have you considered starting a small business?

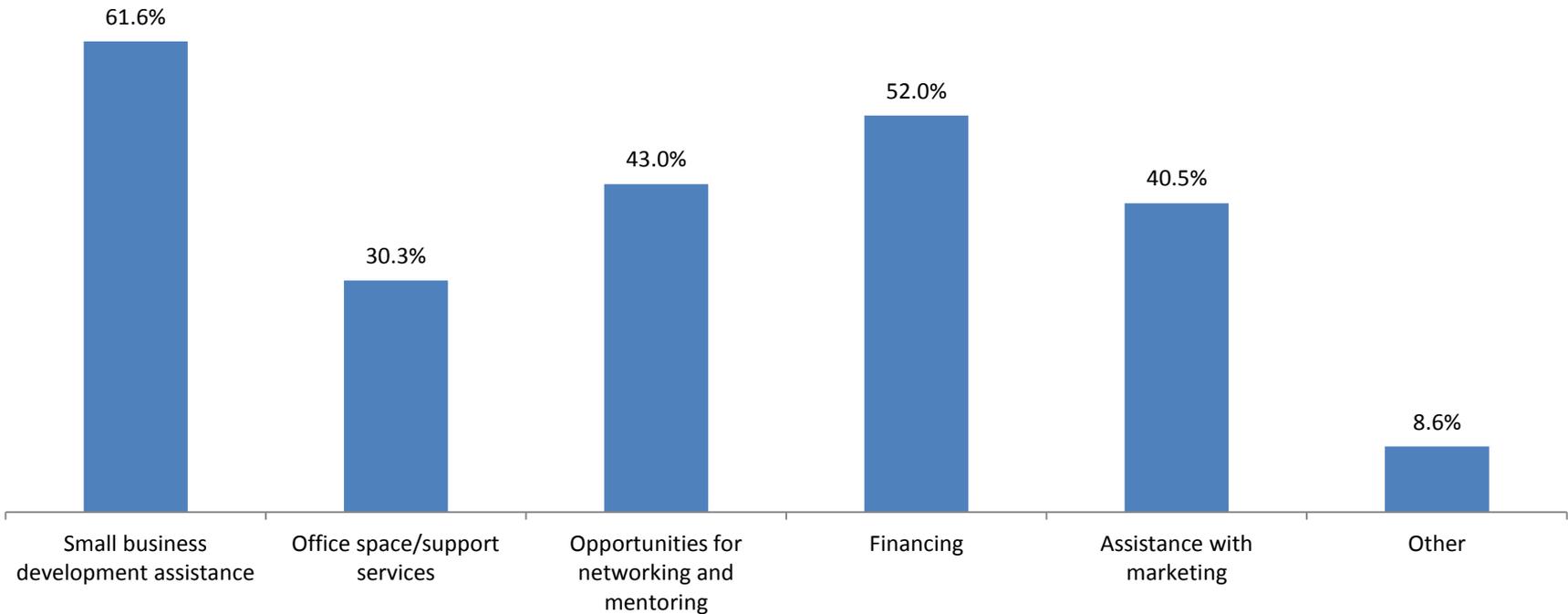


How would you rate the opportunities available where you live to get training and support to make your business successful?



Competitive Workforce

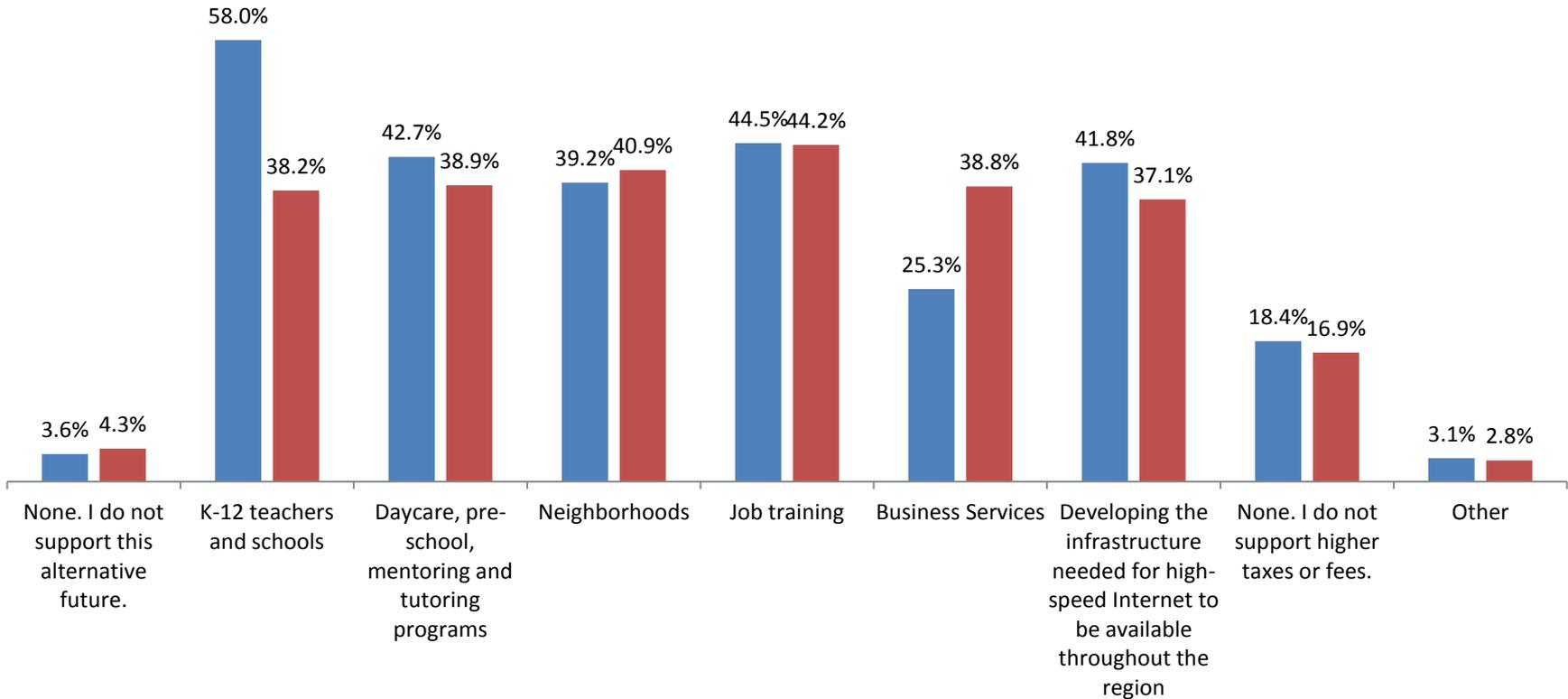
What improvements would you like to see in the opportunities available to get training and support to make your small business successful?



Competitive Workforce

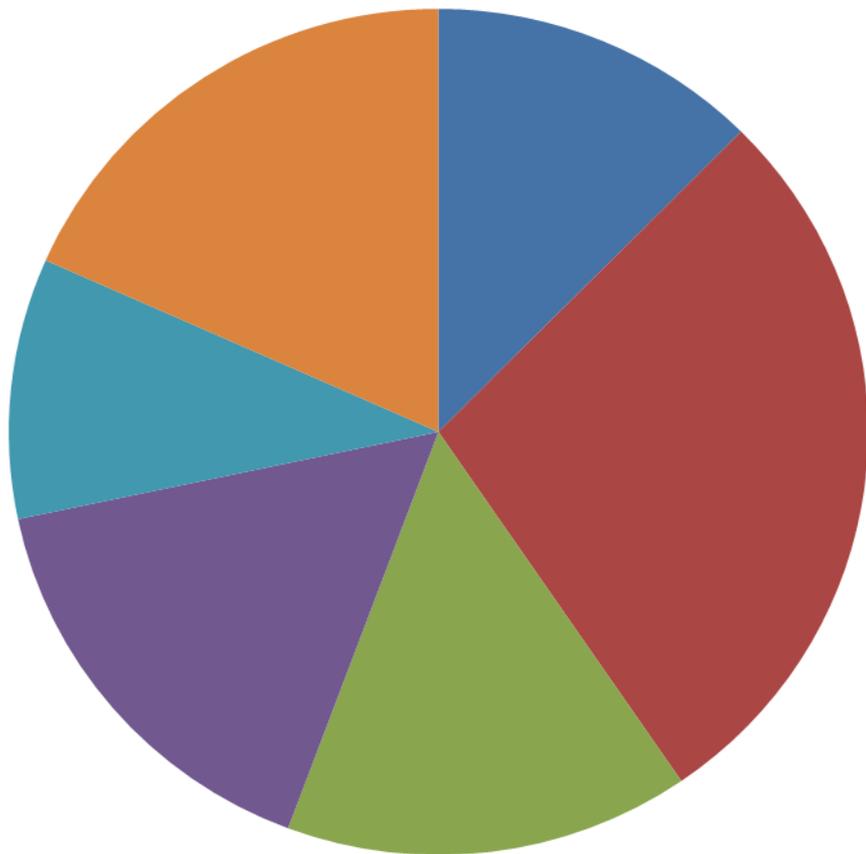
■ What would you support, even if it means paying higher taxes or fees?

■ What would you support, only if it was accomplished using existing funds or through volunteer investments?



Competitive Workforce

How the region would spend \$100 to improve the region's community factors that impact education and training opportunities?



- \$12.45 Improving housing conditions
- \$27.98 Improving safety/crime
- \$15.27 Libraries and community centers
- \$16.00 Educational enrichment programs
- \$9.94 Improving Internet access
- \$18.36 Improving transportation access

Analysis of Variations

- Crosstabs run for all demographic/geographic respondent categories
- Of 4,000 possible comparisons, about 300 had statistically significant differences

Significant Variations

As our region continues to grow, which of the following would you like to see in the area where you live?

(Choices: more jobs, more housing, more retail, None, it's fine the way it is).

Choice: None. It's fine the way it is

African American	Asian	Hispanic	White
16%	20%	27%	37%

Significant Variations

As our region continues to grow, which of the following would you like to see in the area where you live?

(Choices: None. It's fine the way it is, More jobs, More housing and More retail)

Choice: None. It's fine the way it is

Under 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and older
21%	30%	37%	36%	46%

Significant Variations

If you could live anywhere in the region, which of the following would be the most important factor in your decision?

(Choices: Close to activities (walking/bicycling distance), Size of house I can afford, Open space, Close to employment, Quality of schools, Safety and Other)

Choice: Open Space

Rural	Suburban	Urban
33%	11%	5%

Choice: Close to Activities

Rural	Suburban	Urban
5%	13%	31%

Significant Variations

If you could live anywhere in the region, which of the following would be the most important factor in your decision?

(Choices: Close to activities (walking/bicycling distance), Size of house I can afford, Open space, Close to employment, Quality of schools, Safety and Other)

Choice: Close to activities (walking/bicycling distance)

Under 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and older
33%	16%	16%	18%	21%

Significant Variations

If you could live anywhere in the region, which of the following would be the most important factor in your decision?

(Choices: Close to activities (walking/bicycling distance), Size of house I can afford, Open space, Close to employment, Quality of schools, Safety and Other)

Choice: Quality of schools

Under 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and older
12%	25%	13%	5%	4%

Significant Variations

By the year 2040, our region will need to build new housing, shops, and workplaces for more than 3.5 million additional residents. Which would be the best way to accommodate that growth?

(Choices: Build new suburban, Redevelop existing cities, Redevelop some cities and towns and build new suburban areas and No opinion/I don't know)

Choice: Redevelop existing cities and towns to build the new housing and shops where streets and city services already exist

Rural	Suburban	Urban
35%	39%	55%

Significant Variations

From where you live, how much time does it usually take for you to reach the following destinations?:Park/natural area

(Choices: Less than 10 minutes, 10 - 30 minutes, 30 - 45 minutes, 45 to 60 minutes, More than 60 minutes and I don't go there)

Choice: Less than 10 minutes

Below \$50K	Above \$50K
45%	64%

Significant Variations

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements about strategies for preserving the region's wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines. I would support the use of public funds to buy and preserve these areas for public use, even if it meant higher taxes or fees.

(Choices: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree)

Choice: Strongly agree

Rural	Suburban	Urban
13%	20%	29%

Significant Variations

Rate your level of agreement with the following strategies for cleaning up our region's air and water. We need stricter rules and enforcement on air emissions, wastewater discharges, and runoff pollution, even if they would result in higher costs to residents and businesses.

(Choices: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree)

Choice: Strongly agree

Rural	Suburban	Urban
13%	22%	34%

Significant Variations

How would you rate the opportunities for learning new job skills where you live?

(Choices: Excellent, Good, Fair and Poor)

Choice: Good

Rural	Suburban	Urban
28%	44%	45%

Significant Variations

If you said fair or poor, why?

(Choices: Training programs are not available near where I live, Programs are available but I can't afford them, Programs are available but not at convenient times, Programs don't teach the skills I'm looking for and Other)

Choice: Training programs are not available near where I live

Rural	Suburban	Urban
43%	27%	25%

Significant Variations

Do you have an interest in learning a new skill that will improve your job prospects and earning potential?

(Choices: Yes, Maybe and No)

Choice: Yes

African American	Asian	Hispanic	White
61%	63%	63%	34%

Significant Variations

Are there factors in your community besides the quality of the schools that make it a poor environment for getting a good education?

(Choices: Yes, No and I don't know/No Opinion)

Choice: Yes

African American	Asian	Hispanic	White
86%	61%	83%	61%

Significant Variations

Are there factors in your community besides the quality of the schools that make it a poor environment for getting a good education?

(Choices: Yes, No and I don't know/No Opinion)

Choice: No

Below \$50K	Above \$150K
10%	34%

Significant Variations

Are there factors in your community besides the quality of the schools that make it a poor environment for getting a good education?

(Choices: Yes, No and I don't know/No Opinion)

Choice: Yes

African American	Asian	Hispanic	White
86%	61%	83%	61%

Significant Variations

How would you rate the opportunities available where you live to get training and support to make your business successful?

(Choices: Excellent, Good, Fair and Poor)

Choice: Poor

Below \$50K	Above \$150K
28%	8%

Significant Variations

Do you have an interest in learning a new skill that will improve your job prospects and earning potential?

(Choices: Yes, Maybe and No)

Choice: Yes

Below \$50K	Between \$50K to \$150K	Above \$150K
59%	37%	28%

What Can We Learn?

Less Time on the Road

- Not a burning issue today, but a future concern.
- Support for planning.
- Support for balanced investments.
- Demographic, geographic differences.
- People concerned about density?
- Influence of school districts overstated?

What Can We Learn?

Greener Region

- Strong support for conservation and environmental stewardship, least variation.
- Conserving natural areas had highest support.
- Support for public expenditures and regulations, skepticism about entirely voluntary approaches.
- Rural attitudes differ significantly.

What Can We Learn?

Competitive Workforce

- Majority satisfied with training opportunities, but satisfaction lowest in rural areas.
- More non-whites, lower income people interested in learning new skills.
- Community factors perceived as detrimental to learning environment, particularly among non-whites.
- Support for public investments in K-12 education and training programs.