

# Maine Community Energy Redevelopment Program (MECERP): Town of Wiscasset

## Summary of Public Survey Responses

January 2025

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## OVERVIEW

The public survey was conducted from October 2024 to January 2025 to collect community input on the development vision and priorities for the Birch Point and Old Ferry Road development sites. The survey received 143 responses.

### MECERP Wiscasset Scope and Timeline:



**143**  
Total Responses

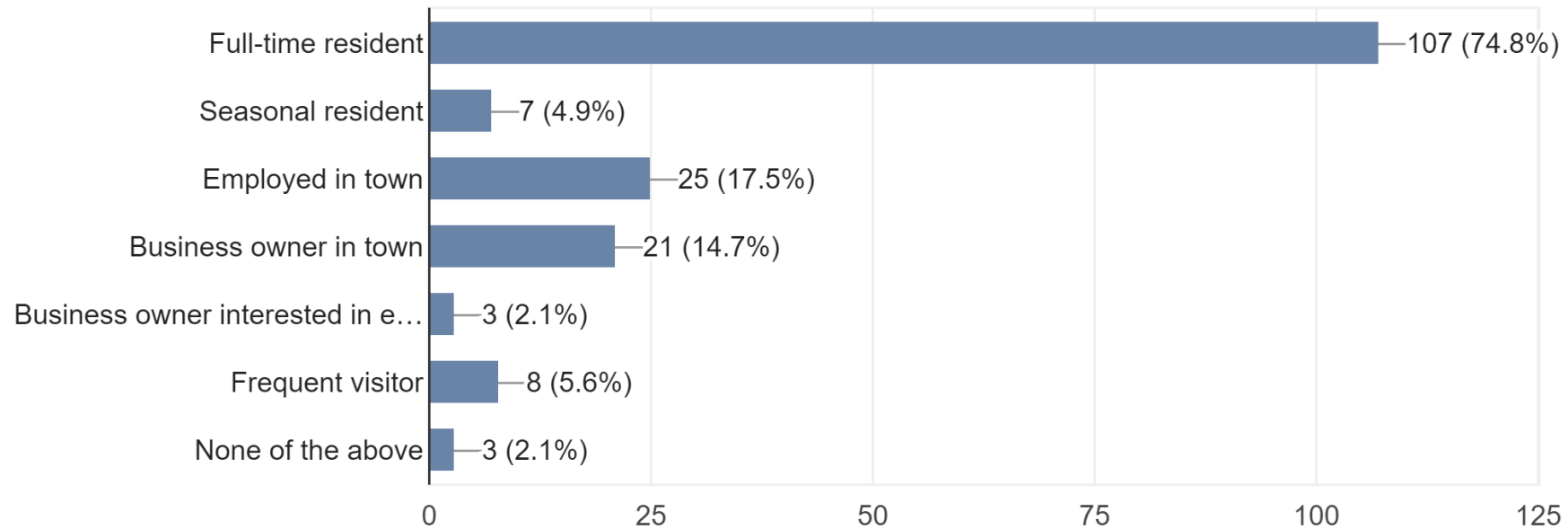
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## AFFILIATION WITH WISCASSET

75% of survey respondents were full-time residents of Wiscasset.

### Question

What is your affiliation with the town of Wiscasset?

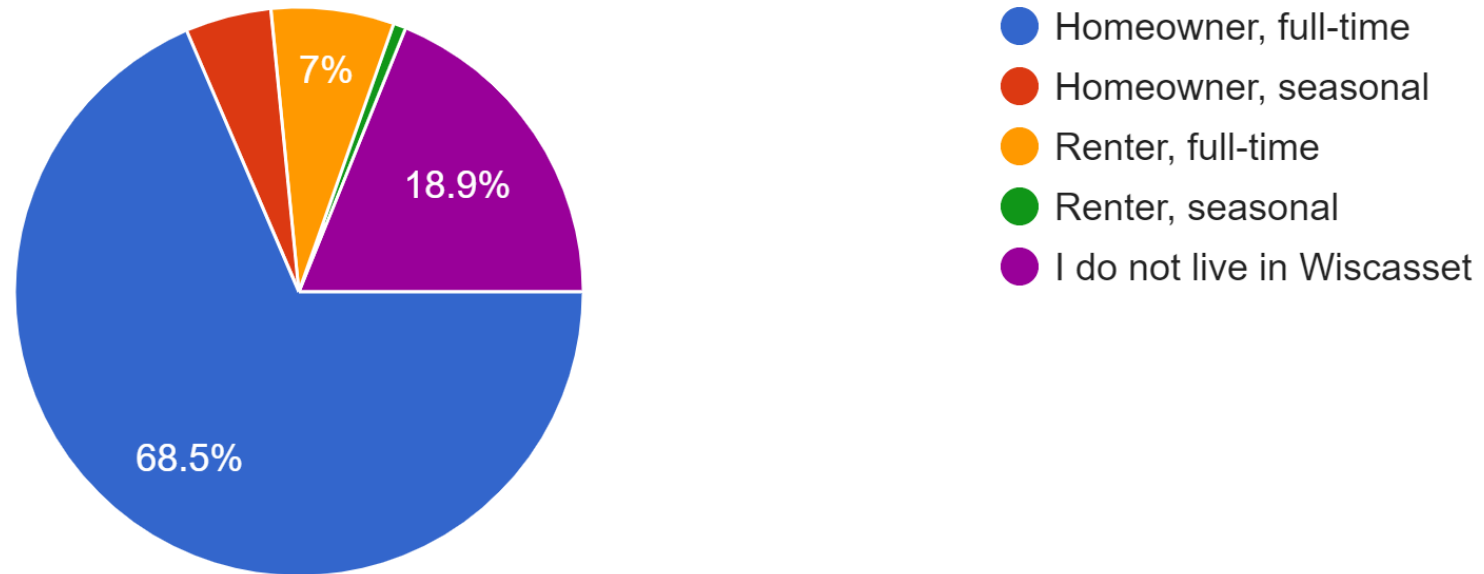


## HOUSING TENURE

The majority of survey respondents were full-time homeowners in Wiscasset.

### Question

If you are a resident of Wiscasset, what is your housing status?



## COMMERCIAL NEEDS IN WISCASSET

Culture & entertainment, outdoor recreation, and retail were the most common responses among survey respondents when prompted about what was lacking in Wiscasset.

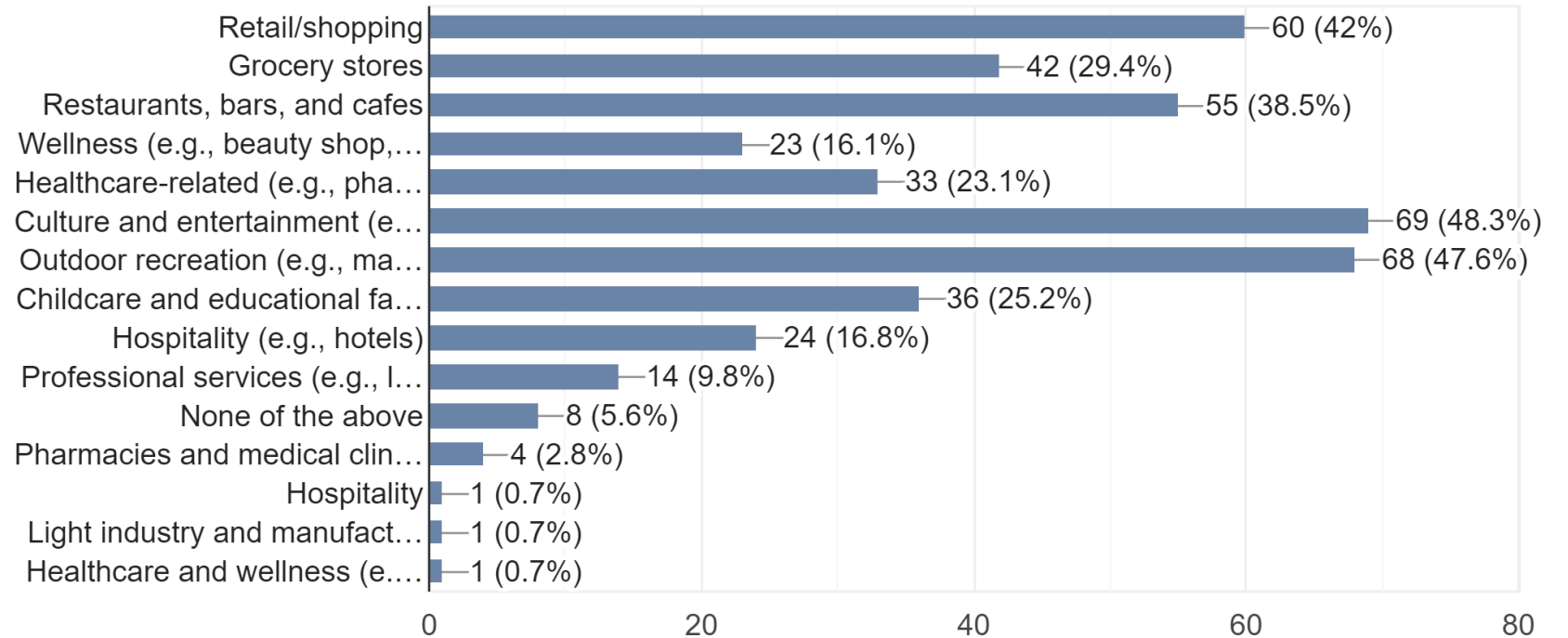
### Question

What types of businesses are currently lacking or would contribute most to quality of life in Wiscasset?

**48%**  
Culture &  
Entertainment

**48%**  
Outdoor Recreation

**42%**  
Retail/Shopping



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## COMMERCIAL NEEDS IN WISCASSET: COMMENTS

Survey respondents elaborated on their answers to the previous question about the types of businesses needed in town to improve the quality of life. Below are select anecdotes.

***ADD PARK & boardwalk!!!***

***Wiscasset is a small community with a small customer base. Many businesses open then fail and close. Our only strip mall has open space and other businesses are for sale.***

***There are very few opportunities around for active, healthy social settings.***

***I don't want any more business in Wiscasset. I like it sleepy the way it is.***

***Higher density housing first - then the businesses will follow***

***Retail shops that are more affordable and practical***

***Electricity generation, energy storage, associated businesses like hydrogen production, data center***

## BUSINESS ADVANTAGES IN WISCASSET

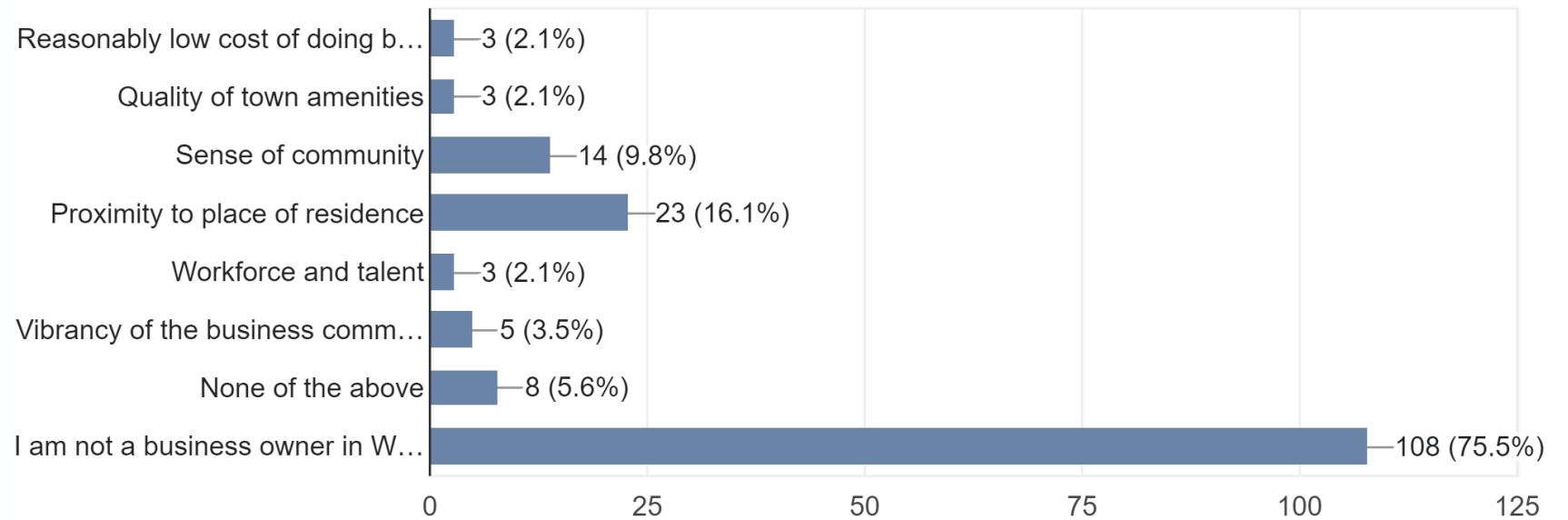
Business owners indicated that their choice to locate in Wiscasset was most influenced by the proximity to residents and Wiscasset's sense of community.

### Question

If you are a business owner in Wiscasset, what made you choose Wiscasset as your business location?

**16%**  
Proximity to place  
of residents

**10%**  
Sense of  
community



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## **BUSINESS ADVANTAGES IN WISCASSET: COMMENTS**

Survey respondents elaborated on their answers to the previous question about why they chose to locate their businesses in Wiscasset, if applicable. Below are select anecdotes.

*I chose to build my business in this town because I saw it as a place where my presence as a business could make a difference and create high-paying, high-quality jobs as well as foster a sense of community. That's why I chose to be a founder and chairman of the board for Wiscasset's fledgling Chamber of Commerce in years past.*

*While I am no longer a business owner (we converted to a non-profit), when we initially started Maine Tasting Center we chose Wiscasset because of its central location and it seemed like there was a lot of opportunity for new businesses/organizations (i.e. the market wasn't already saturated and it seemed like there was a lot of room for all different kinds of new businesses)*

*I own and have owned rental property within the town of Wiscasset. Affordable rents are hard to come by.*

*I run a service-based business that's remote in nature, so it's not specific to the town of Wiscasset.*



## BUSINESS CHALLENGES IN WISCASSET

Business owners indicated that housing affordability was the greatest challenge facing Wiscasset's business community today.

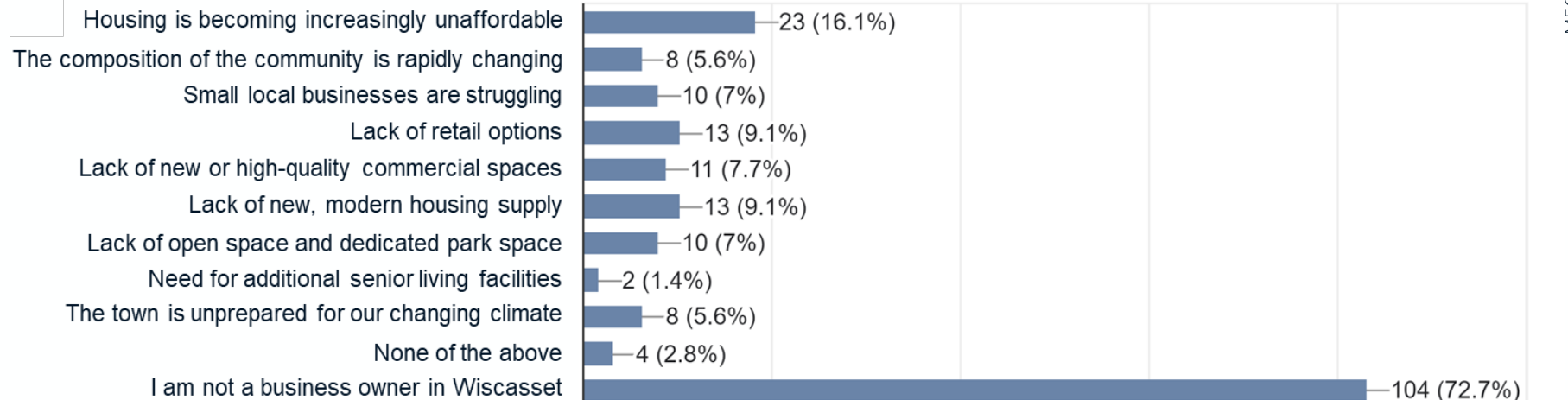
### Question

If you are a business owner in Wiscasset, what are the most critical issues facing Wiscasset today?

**16%**  
Housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable

**9%**  
Lack of retail options

**9%**  
Lack of new, modern housing supply



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## BUSINESS CHALLENGES IN WISCASSET: COMMENTS

Business owners elaborated on their answers to the previous question about the greatest challenges facing Wiscasset today. Below are select anecdotes.

*Wiscasset's core retail center, the village, is currently very thin on retail options and other amenities. I'd like to see the town be more pro active in requiring landlords to maintain their properties, i.e. Wawenok and Rundlett, and make use of available retail/office/studio space. Every available space in the village should be put to good use. I'd also like to see the town be more pro-active in encouraging needed businesses to locate in Wiscasset center, e.g. year-round, full-service bakery/coffee shop, fully-stocked mini-grocery store. These would serve local residents as well as visitors.*

*Historic buildings like The Ledges should not be allowed to sit on the market, or stay neglected, for years! Whatever the town must do to make these properties, especially The Ledges, attractive to potential buyers, the town should step up and pay the price. I have had SO MANY conversations with local residents, including contractors, about the potential of The Ledges. Letting it deteriorate further is unconscionable!*

*Wastewater treatment plant relocation. Lack of housing.*

## BUSINESS CHALLENGES IN WISCASSET: COMMENTS CONTINUED

Below are additional select responses from business owners about the greatest challenges of doing business in Wiscasset today.

*Complex and slow permitting process/red tape*

*Difficulty of hiring and retaining workforce*

*Lack of childcare support*

*Slow traffic on Route 1, lack of parking*

*Lack of diversity and young population*

*Cost of doing business, high taxes, insufficient business incentives*

*Poor conditions of downtown buildings and infrastructure*

*Seasonal fluctuation and reliance on tourism creates financial difficulties for small businesses*

*Lack of affordable housing for workers*

*Note: Responses have been summarized for ease of reading.*

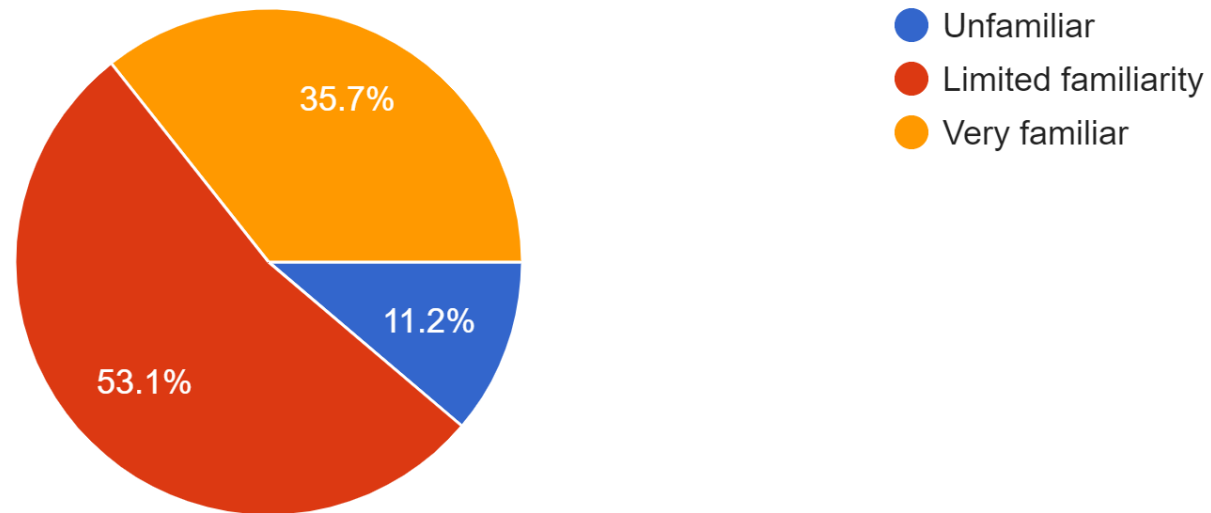
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## BIRCH POINT: SITE FAMILIARITY

Survey respondents were generally familiar with the Birch Point development site,.

### Question

How would you rate your general level of familiarity with the current condition and history of the BIRCH POINT site?

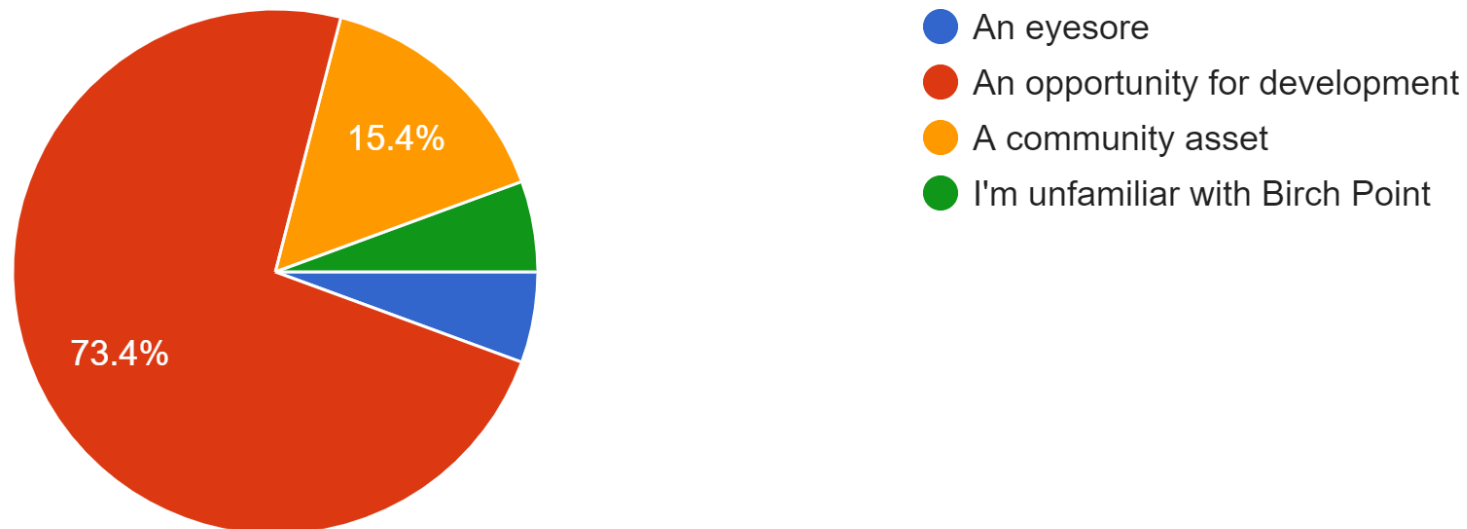


## BIRCH POINT: PERCEPTIONS

Survey respondents most often said that they saw the Birch Point site as an opportunity for development.

### Question

How do you currently perceive the BIRCH POINT site?



## BIRCH POINT: DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The three most popular types of development for the Birch Point site included a new marina, public access to the waterfront, and additional retail/restaurants.

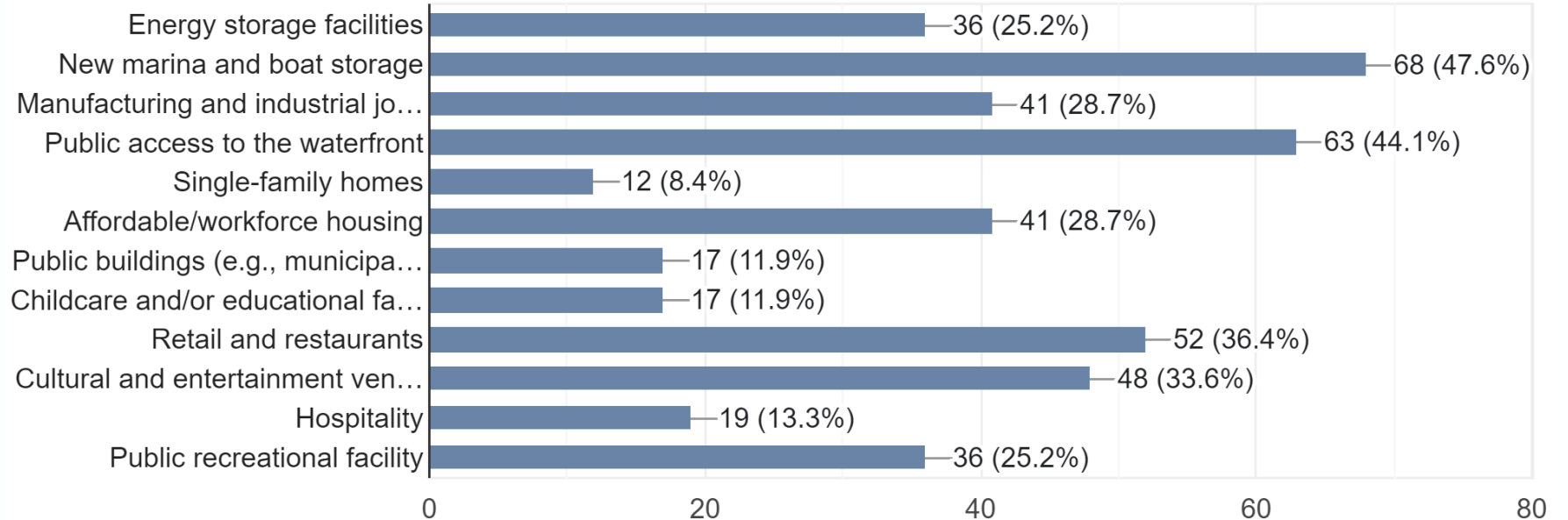
### Question

If the **BIRCH POINT** site were to be redeveloped, what would you like to see included in the development?

**48%**  
New marina/boat storage

**44%**  
Public access to the waterfront

**36%**  
Retail and restaurants



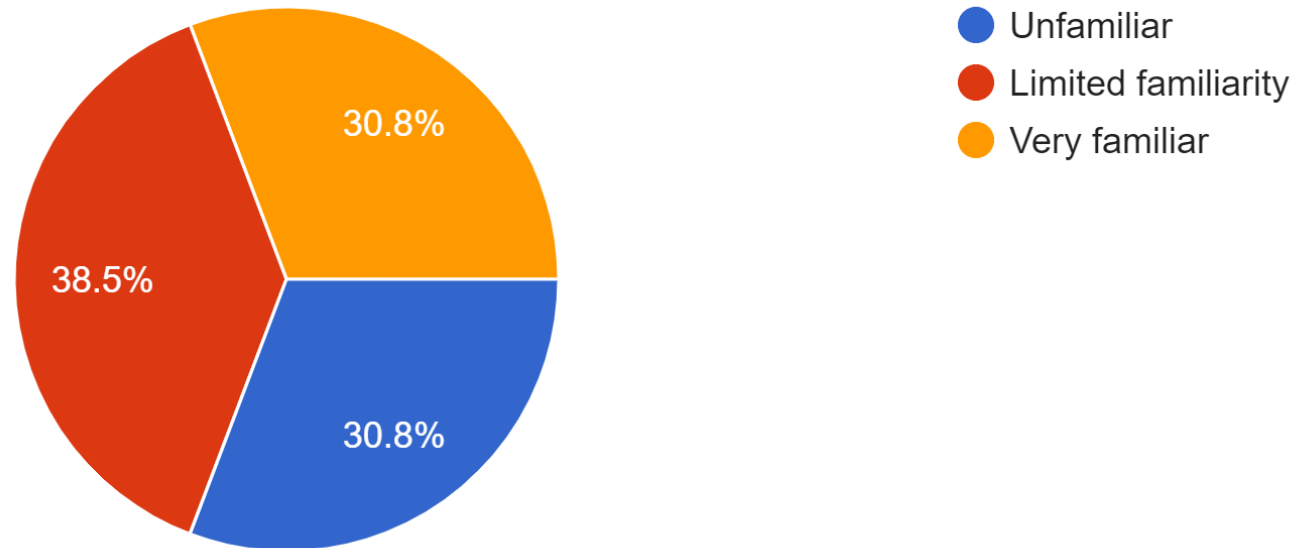
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## OLD FERRY ROAD: FAMILIARITY

Survey respondents were generally less familiar with Old Ferry Road than Birch Point.

### Question

How would you rate your general level of familiarity with the current condition and history of the OLD FERRY ROAD site?



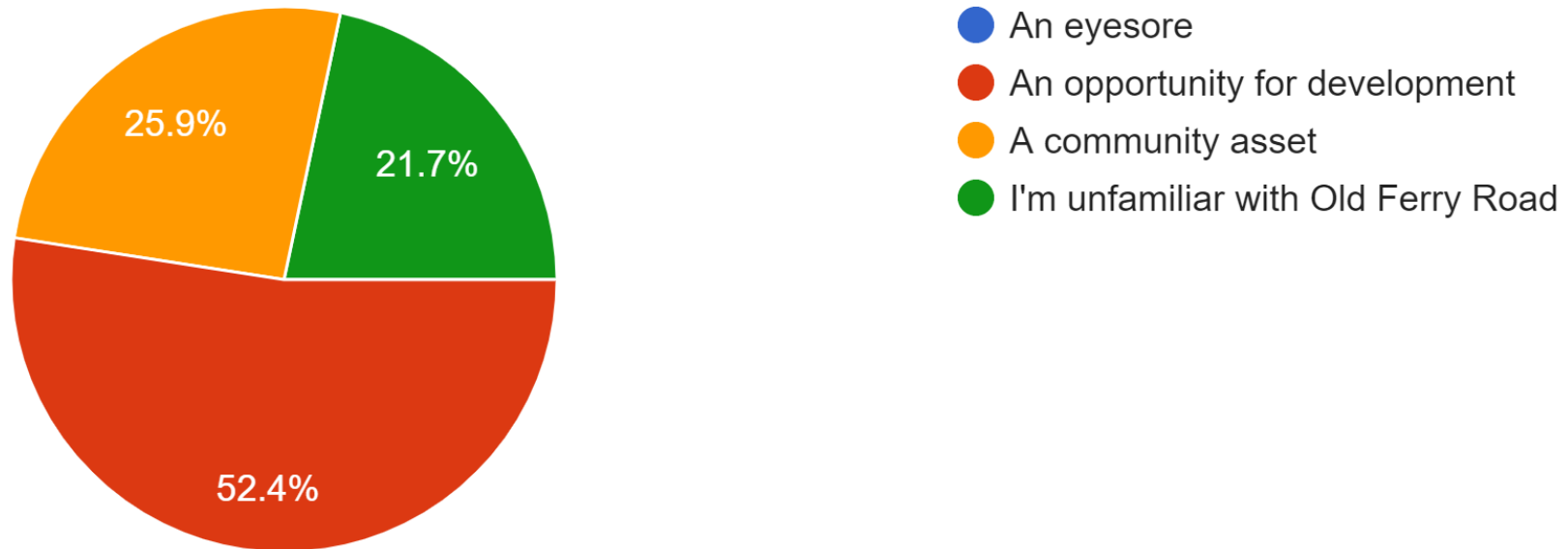
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## OLD FERRY ROAD: PERCEPTIONS

The majority of survey respondents also perceive Old Ferry Road as an opportunity for development.

### Question

How do you currently perceive the OLD FERRY ROAD site?





## OLD FERRY ROAD: DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The three most popular types of development for the Old Ferry Road site included new affordable housing, public recreation facilities, and waterfront access.

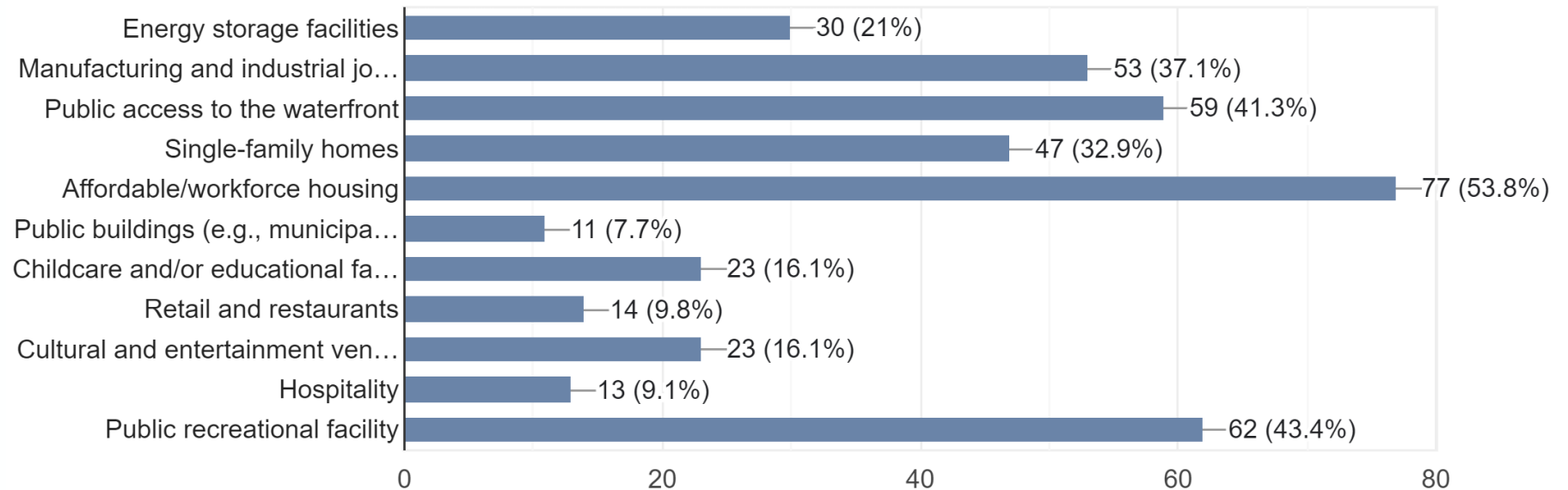
### Question

If the OLD FERRY ROAD site were to be redeveloped, what would you like to see included in the development?

**54%**  
Affordable/workforce  
housing

**43%**  
Public recreational  
facility

**41%**  
Public access to the  
waterfront



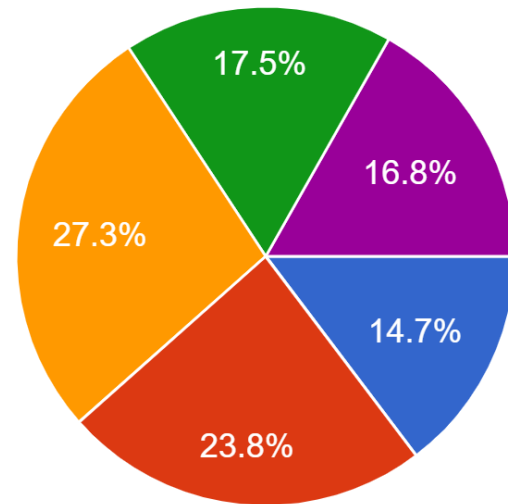
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## BIRCH POINT & OLD FERRY ROAD

Across both sites, survey respondents wanted to see new development create opportunities for employment, housing, as well as other priorities.

### Question

In your opinion, which of the following is most important to make Birch Point and Old Ferry Road sites feel welcoming and inclusive for the Wiscasset community?



- Public spaces for community gatherings, sports, or other activities
- Affordable housing options
- Employment and business opportunities
- Accessibility via roads, sidewalks, and bike trails
- A new park and trail system

## BIRCH POINT & OLD FERRY ROAD

In terms of new public spaces and parks, survey respondents indicated that riverfront access & water-based activities were the top priority.

### Question

In your opinion, which of the following are the most important features of public spaces and parks that you would like to see at either site?

**74%**

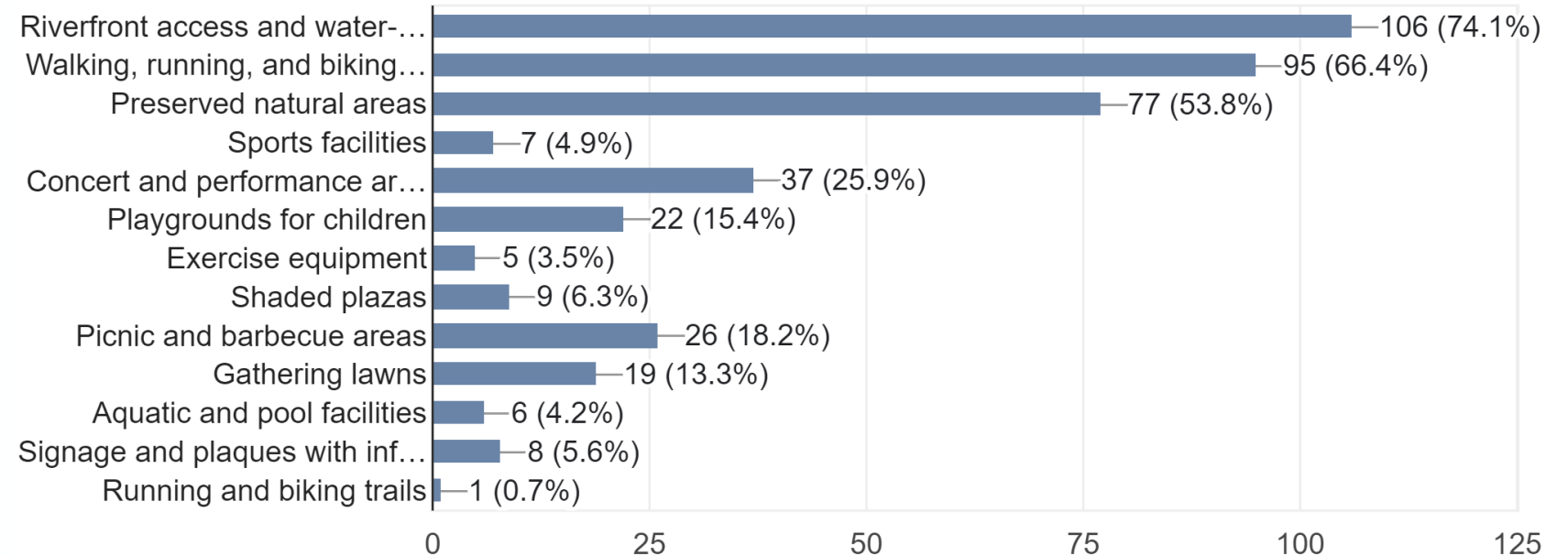
**Riverfront access and water-based activities**

**66%**

**Walking, running, and biking trails**

**54%**

**Preserved natural areas**



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## BIRCH POINT & OLD FERRY ROAD

Below are additional select responses from respondents about the challenges preventing Wiscasset from benefiting from development on Birch Point and Old Ferry Road sites.

<b>Question</b>	
<b>What challenges do you think could prevent Wiscasset's community from benefiting from development on these two sites?</b>	
<i>Development costs/financial barriers</i>	<i>Destroying natural habitat</i>
<i>Lack of vision or plan</i>	<i>Fear of increased property taxes</i>
<i>Slow process; lack of resources</i>	<i>Clean up and remediation of the two sites</i>
<i>Climate change/flooding risks</i>	<i>Residents being opposed to change; old school mentality</i>
<i>Lack of affordable housing</i>	<i>The difficulty of accessing the two sites</i>
<i>Finding the right business partners to invest in these project</i>	<i>Lack of consensus among community members</i>

Note: Responses have been summarized for ease of reading.

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