

This report summarizes the results of the Town of Southern Shores Citizen Survey conducted as part of the public outreach component of the Town Code Update Project. The Town Code is a legal document that contains all of the general and permanent legislation that governs Southern Shores. The Town is updating the Town Code to correct conflicting and ambiguous language in the document as well as to address changes in state law and federal legal precedent. In addition, the document text is being reorganized and illustrated to make it more user-friendly and easier to understand. The purpose for the project and this survey is to improve the Town Code so that it better meets the needs of the community.

The survey included a total of 23 questions and was administered via the internet from December 18, 2015 through January 31, 2016 (45 days). Paper copies were available for those who preferred to write their answers. The Town notified residents and property owners about the survey through its on-line newsletter and the mailing of a postcard to every mailing address in the Town. A total of 932 responses were received (including six paper responses).

Since the survey was intended for Town residents and property owners, it included a question asking respondents to list their street address. Of the 932 responses, 137 did not include any information on their street address, and as a result, these 137 responses were excluded from the tabulated totals presented in this report. Therefore, the survey results presented here are based on a total of 795 responses. The responses from the 137 who chose not to list their street address is included in the raw data, which can be obtained through the project website (but street addresses and IP addresses have been redacted to protect privacy).

It is important to note that this report is intended only to summarize the data collected. This report does not include any analysis or conclusions based on the responses. The survey results will be discussed in a public forum and then presented to the Town Council. Analysis and conclusion about the results will be a part of these discussions, and the results of these discussions will be described in the next project deliverable, the Code Diagnosis. It is not the intent of this project to infer the will of all Town residents and property owners from the results

of this survey. The Town Council is the group who will ultimately decide how these results should be used to guide the Town Code Update Project.

The majority of the questions on the survey included a basic statement about an issue related to the Town Code or relevant issue of concern to Town residents. It then asked respondents if they agreed or did not agree with the statement. There was also an option for respondents to indicate that they did not care about the issue. Each question also included a place for a respondent to provide any additional written comment or question related to the statement or issue. There were a total of 2,772 written comments provided. The summary results of each question indicate the number of comments received, their general nature, and a brief selection of the comments associated with the question. The appendix to this report includes a full listing of the written comments, organized by question number.

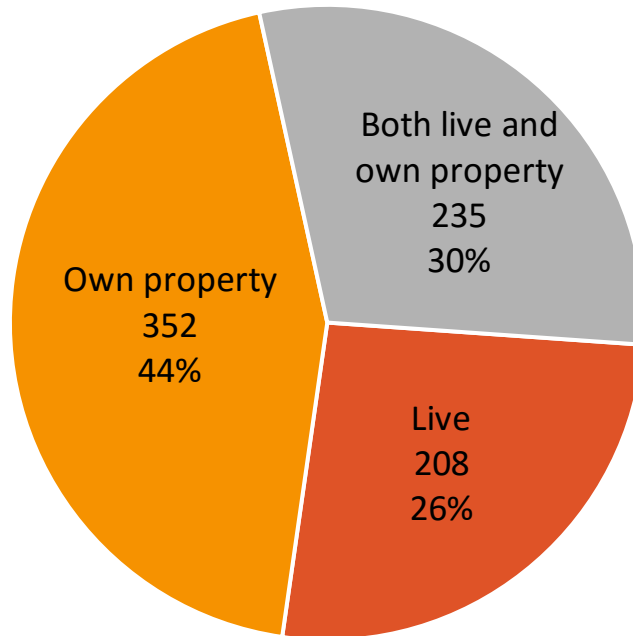
The final two questions were asked in an open-ended format that gave respondents the option to type any answer into a text box or to leave the question blank.

In order to report the responses to these questions, the consulting team coded the responses into general categories. If a response contained multiple ideas, the response was coded multiple times. For example, if in answer to Question 22 (see below), a respondent wrote, "*Rules need to be more clear – no legalese – and sent out in email or in a pamphlet to all property owners,*" then that response would be counted in each of the three Clear Language Generally, Print Publications or Mailed Printed Material, and Online Publications or Email Communication categories.

The two open ended questions include a series of observations about the comments provided. Many of these comments are very interesting and readers are encouraged to take the time to review these written comments.

Question 1: Please click all that apply:

- I live in Southern Shores.
- I am a property owner in Southern Shores.
- I do not live or own property in Southern Shores.



795 total responses

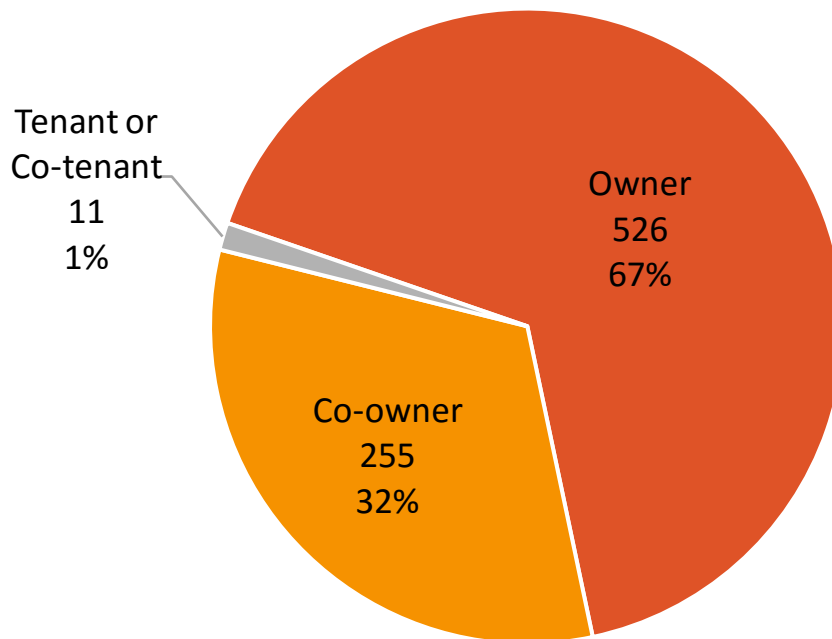
30% of respondents both live and own property in Southern Shores.

26% of respondents live in Southern Shores.

44% of respondents own property in Southern Shores.

Question 2: Please enter the street address of your residence or property here.*

- Owner
- Co-owner
- Tenant
- Co-Tenant



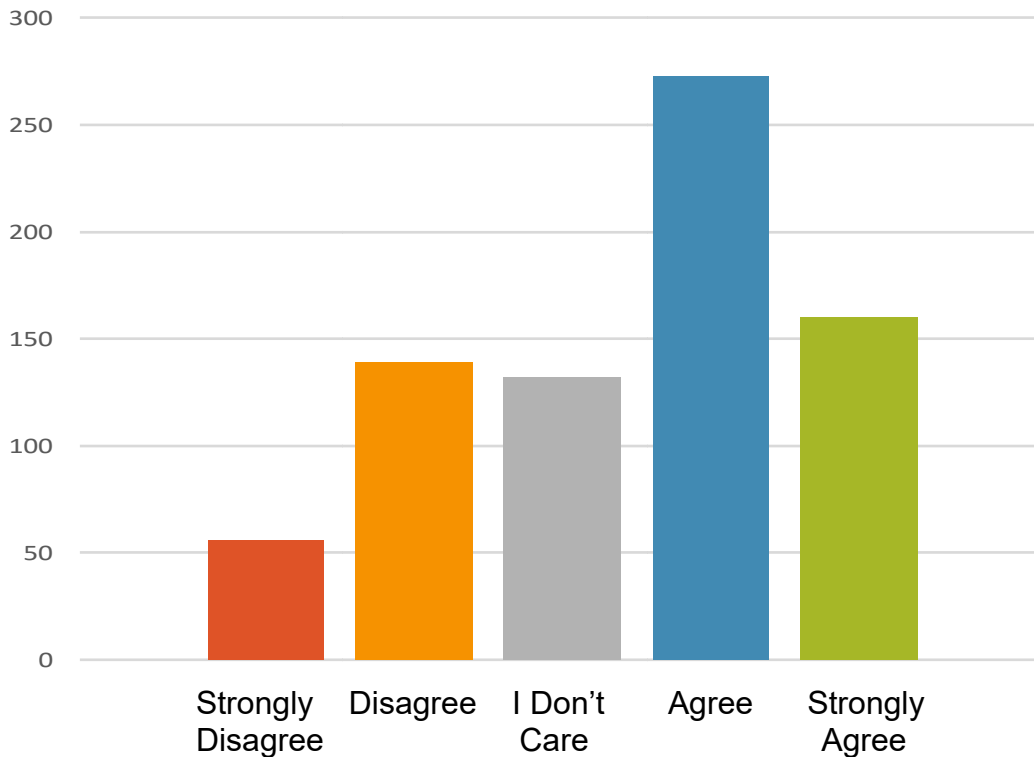
792 total responses

99% of respondents own or co-own property in Southern Shores

1% of respondents are tenants or co-tenants in Southern Shores

*Street address data has been excluded from the raw data provided in the appendix of this report.

Question 3: The Town Code should increase its regulation of excess light or “light pollution” from exterior residential light fixtures.



26%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

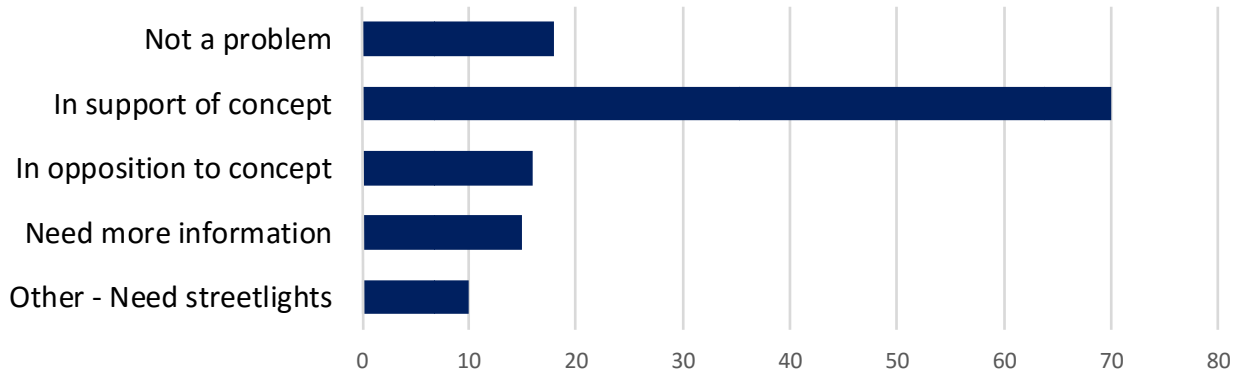
57%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

760 total responses

Section 36-166 of the Town Code contains the exterior lighting provisions for all forms of development. The standards limit the amount of light “spillover” from one residential use to another at one footcandle at the lot line dividing two lots. A footcandle is a measurement of light intensity. One footcandle is the equivalent of the light output from a standard candle (like a birthday cake candle) measured one foot away. While the Town Code includes a limit on the amount of light spillover from one lot to another, it does not address directional limitations (like requiring floodlights to be pointed down), or shielding of the source of illumination from off-site view. These kinds of standards are more effective at controlling glare and could be included as part of a Town Code update.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 3.

Question 3: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 129 comments on Question 3 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“Agree especially in areas where lights affect the sea turtles and other animals.”

“Connect lights to motion sensors at a minimum.”

“Night sky is a beautiful sight on a clear, dark night. Visibility has been impacted by lights in the [past] several years.”

“If stronger regulations are required, I'm all for them. I do, however, wish the town would make more effort to make homeowners aware of the current regulations.”

“Many beach communities have been doing this for some time. ... One of the key reasons I bought property here was for a dark night sky.”

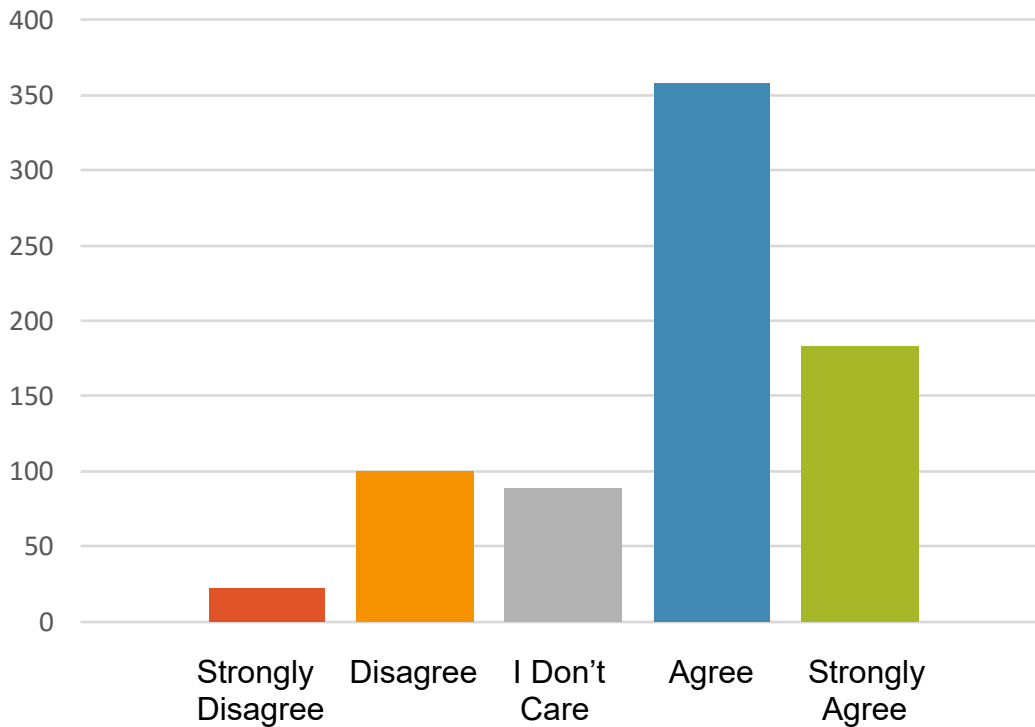
“Because there are few if any street lights, residential exterior lighting for security reasons is very important.”

“I'm not aware of any significant problems currently posed by residential lighting, and don't see the need for additional regulation.”

“This should not prevent residences from having motion activated security lighting.”

“Lack of light on residential streets is far more troubling for those of us who go out at night.”

Question 4: The Town Code should increase its regulation of noise from private homes or vacation rentals.



16%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

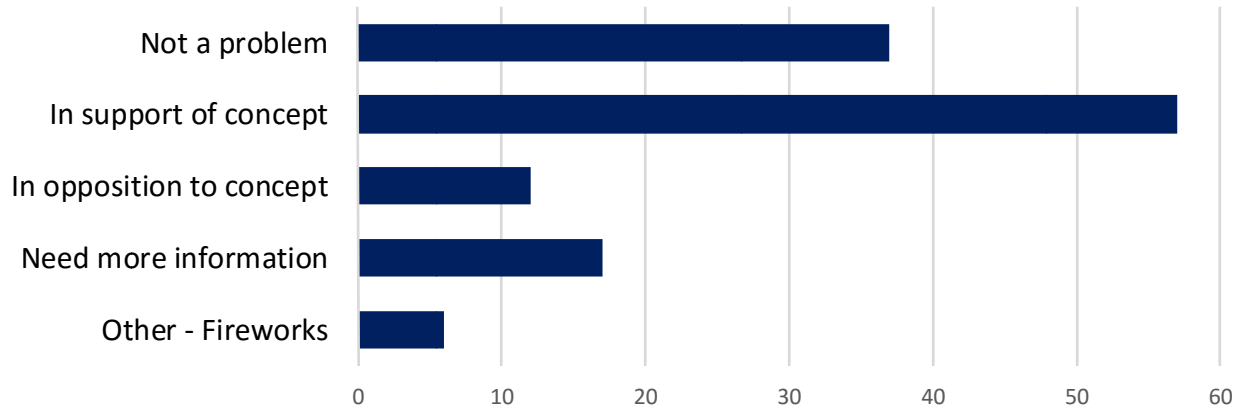
72%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

751 total responses

Section 22-3 of the Town Code sets out the standards related to prohibited noise. The standards identify a range of noise types that are prohibited (including radios, stereos, etc.) and provides some limits on the hours of operation or noise-creating activities for some forms of use. However, the standards do not specify time limits, duration, or decibel levels (steady state or spiking) related to the kinds of noises associated with private homes or vacation rentals (loud music (recorded or live), yelling, and multiple on-going conversations). Standards that set out allowable hours, steady state decibel levels, and duration limitations could help address conflicts between typical residential occupancy and vacation rental or private party uses. The standards would also benefit from increased clarity on the intent of the standards with respect to the protection of peace and quiet for residential areas. Effective standards do not prohibit the kinds of sounds associated with vacation rentals or private parties, rather they attempt to limit the timing and intensity of allowable noise.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 4.

Question 4: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 129 comments on Question 4 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“Have never had a problem with this and not aware of the regulation in place now.”

“I did not buy property to live in a "party" neighborhood. I chose Southern Shores because it was supposed to be residential and quiet.”

“As a residential community we have certain expectations. Unregulated party noise, loud music and excessive dog barking detract from our residential enjoyment.”

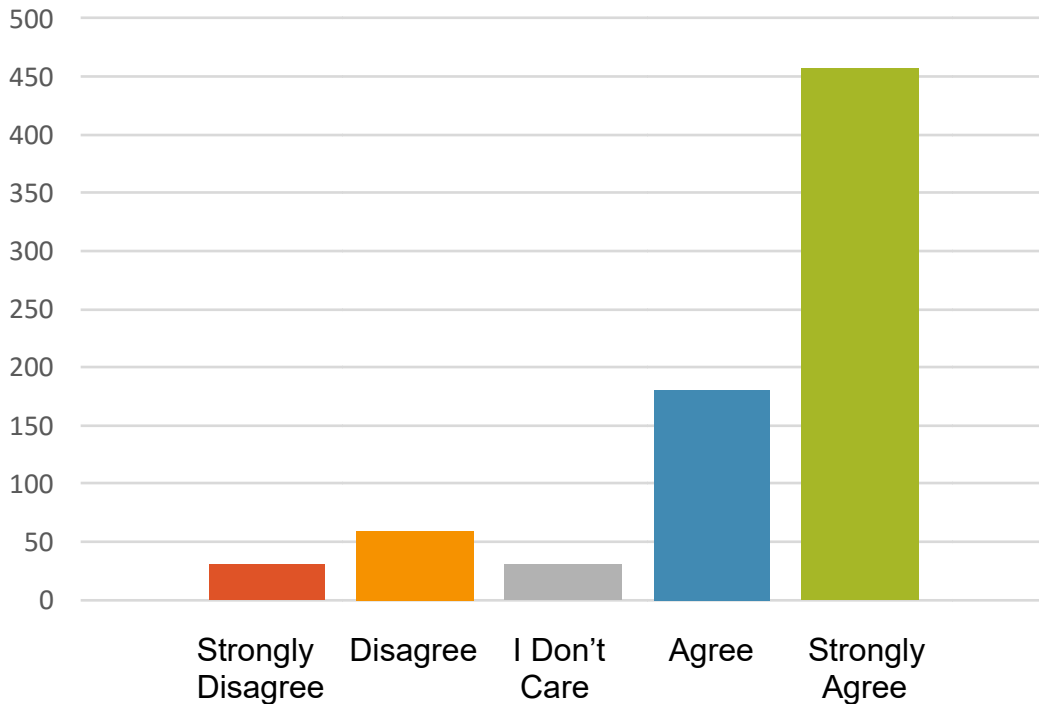
“This is only a problem with fireworks.”

“Based on the times we've visited and on the time we've lived here, noise does not seem to be a concern. Individual concerns should be handled through proper channels, and not as a "regulated" scenario.”

“Need to adopt a more adequate and enforceable one.”

“This idea has to be dealt with carefully. Remember that the area is a vacation spot and some outdoors "noise" is a necessity.”

Question 5: The Town Code should regulate the size of new homes to prevent new residential structures that are drastically larger than their neighbors' homes.



12%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

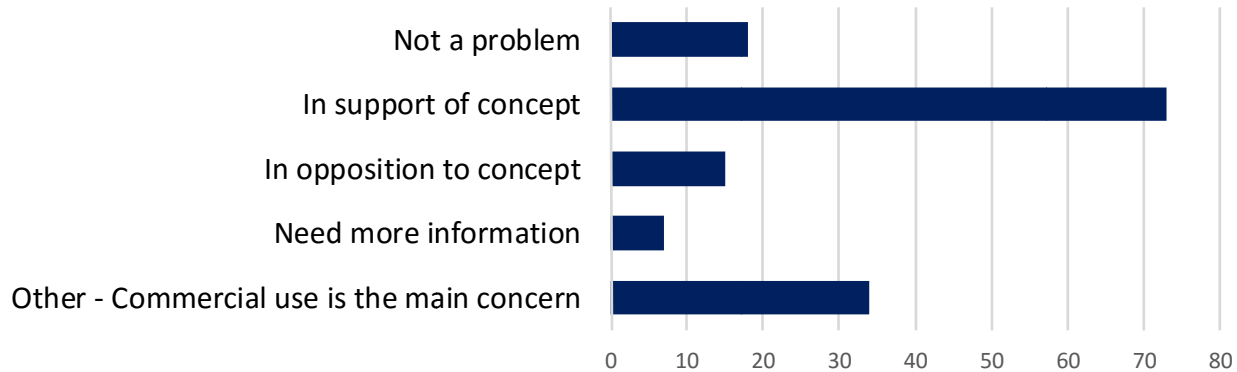
84%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

759 total responses

Sections 36-202.b; 36-204.b; and 36-205.b of the Town Code set out provisions limiting the number of bedrooms and allowable septic tank capacity for single-family detached homes in the RS-1, RS-10, and R-1 zoning districts, respectively (these are the districts where single-family homes are intended as the predominate use). The current standards limit the maximum number of bedrooms to 7, and the septic tank system capacity to an occupancy limit of 14 people. Recent changes in state law prohibit local governments from regulating on the basis of room function, thus invalidating the current code's bedroom limitation provisions. Any provisions related to regulation on the type or number of rooms must be removed. Regardless of the changes in state law, neither of the Town Code's two current provisions address compatibility between existing and new residential structures. Some communities use maximum square-footage thresholds in combination with lot sizes as a means to promote compatibility, and this approach could be one pursued as part of the Town Code update.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 5.

Question 5: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 147 comments on Question 5 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“As long as the home meets the set-back and other current lot requirements, the homeowner ought to be able to build what they want.”

“The entire character of a neighborhood can be violated when huge party houses (semi-hotels) are allowed to be built among normal size houses.”

“The zoning ordinance should also define "event houses" (based on occupancy or number of bedrooms + baths) as businesses and regulate them out of residential-zoned areas.”

“I do care but not about size. I care about large homes being constructed specifically for event/commercial purposes within our residentially zoned area. Height restrictions and lot coverage allowances should remain as they now stand.”

“You should be allowed to build whatever you want. We've suffered this in respect to losing some of our ocean views over the years, but I would never want government dictating how large a home we or anyone else can build.”

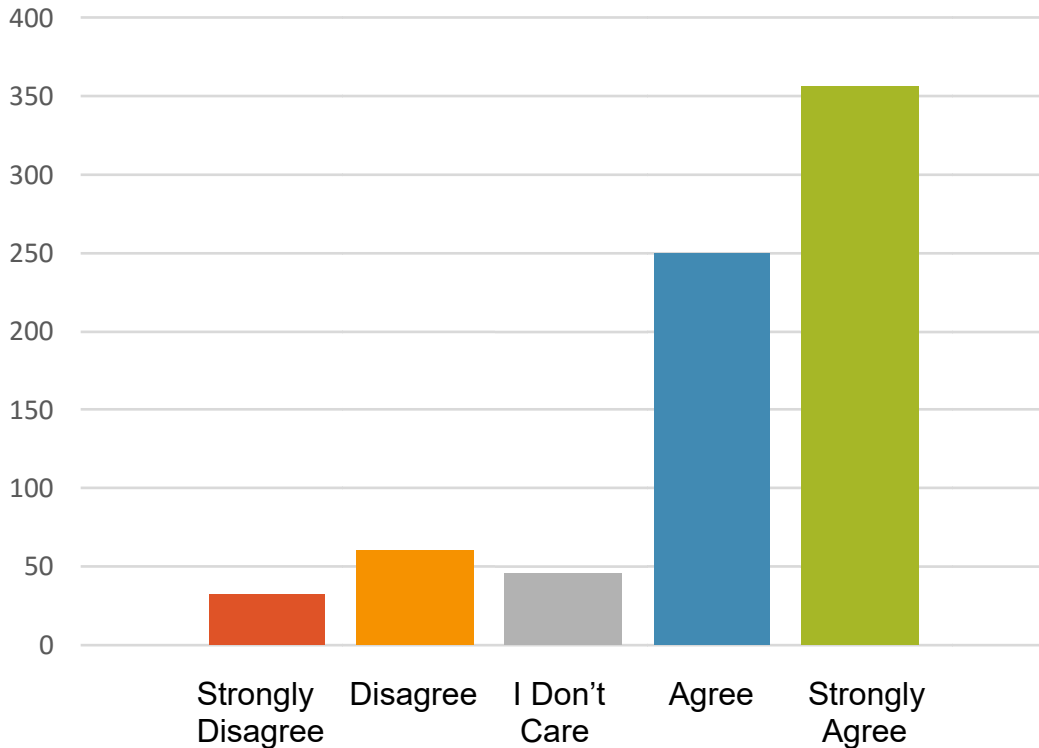
“I am fairly shocked at the size of some of the new homes (and multiple additional structures), and THE CLOSENESS TO THE PROPERTY LINE. Perhaps that closeness is of more concern than house size itself.”

The current ordinance should continue limiting the number of bedrooms to 7.”

“Don't regulate. Remember, large homes equals more revenue.”

“This is KEY to preserving the image and atmosphere of Southern Shores.”

Question 6: The Town Code should reduce the potential maximum number of occupants in proposed new homes.



12%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

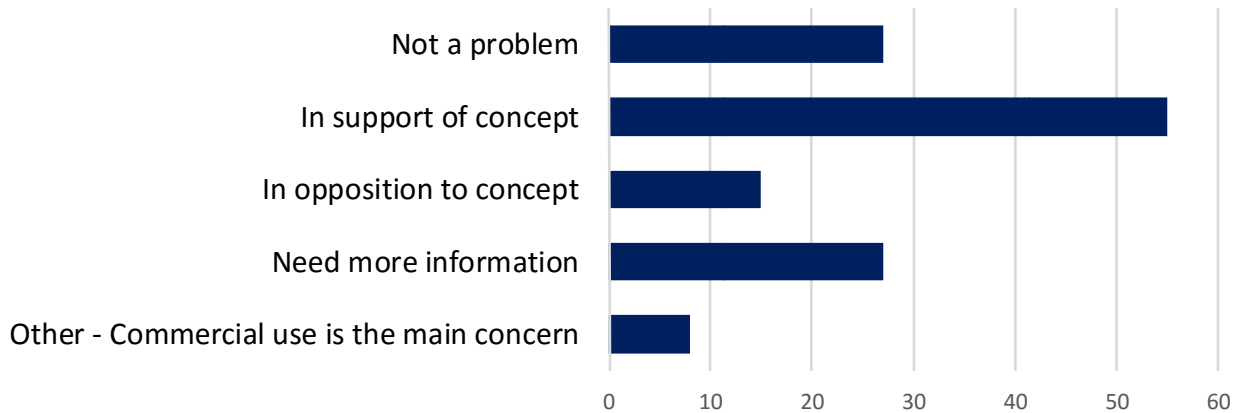
81%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

744 total responses

As mentioned in the prior question, Sections 36-202.b; 36-204.b; and 36-205.b of the Town Code set out provisions limiting maximum allowable occupancy of up to 14 people in a single-family detached residence in the RS-1, RS-10, and R-1 zoning districts, respectively (these are the districts where single-family homes are intended as the predominate use). As drafted, the Town Code relies on septic system capacity as one of the primary limiting factors on allowable occupancy. However, septic system functionality, particularly over time, depends on the ability of the drainage field and substrate to take up the nutrients that are deposited. Lot size, impervious coverage, and depth to the mean water table are all factors that influence the ability of a septic system to function, and should also be factored in considering allowable occupancy. Areas with smaller lots and higher lot coverages will produce more effluent per unit of land area than will less densely developed areas. Occupancy limits could be adjusted to recognize higher potential occupancies (and concomitant effluent levels) per unit of land area as a means of better protecting water quality.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 6.

Question 6: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 132 comments on Question 6 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“We agree with what is now currently in place, however, it is not enforced.”

“The criteria for maximum number of occupants should coincide with total square footage and septic capacity.”

“This was a proposed ordinance that failed to pass. This would be very difficult to enforce.”

“Neither the beach, infrastructure, septic systems, or residential nature of the town can tolerate masses of people and the traffic and noise they bring. There ARE already places on the OBX who cater to these crowds. We do NOT NEED TO BE ONE OF THEM.”

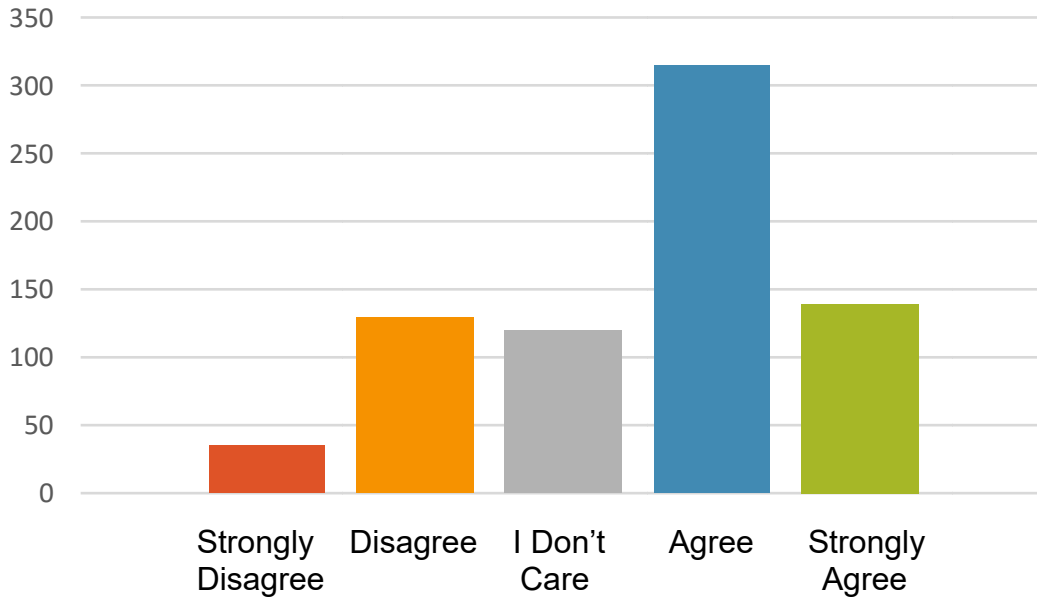
“The number of occupants should be a function of the capacity of the septic system so as not to damage the environment. The size of the septic system should be a function of the size of the lot.”

“The current occupancy limit of 14 persons should be adequate to house most families & their guests and accommodate rental groups. The limit should not be raised to accommodate larger groups due to infrastructure, fire, noise, trash and safety concerns.”

“This is not the towns place to arbitrarily place limits on occupancy. The town illegally did that once and has been overruled by the state. I am a strong proponent of individual property rights and feel that they should not be tampered with in the interest of "ambiance!"

“There should be some threshold for occupants or bedrooms at which a property is no longer considered a residence but is considered a commercial property and is governed by commercial zoning regulations.

Question 7: The Town Code should increase its regulation of stormwater runoff from private property that flows into streets.



22%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

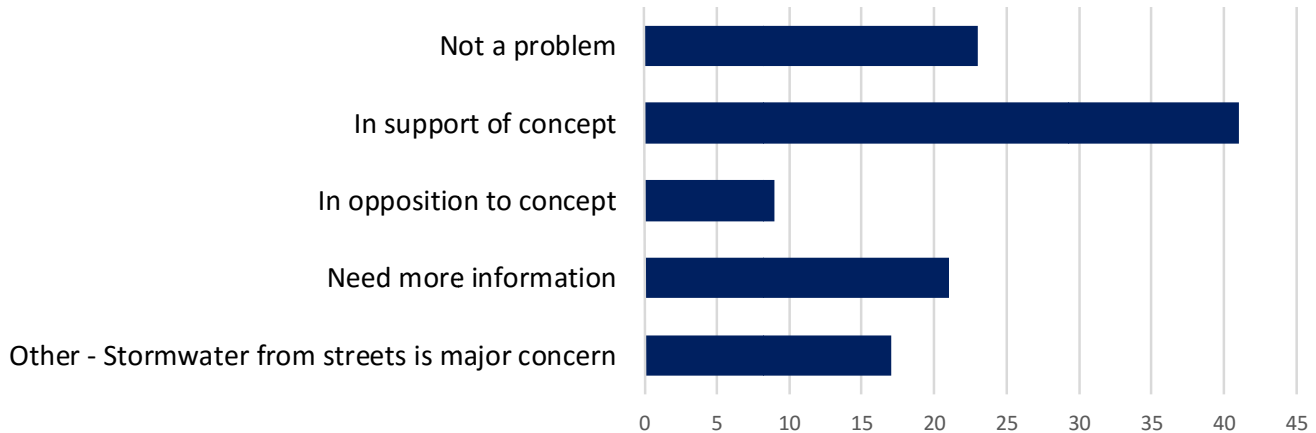
62%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

737 total responses

Section 36-171 of the Town Code sets out the regulations pertaining to stormwater management. The regulations require applicants for new development to submit a plan that indicates how the site will retain all the stormwater generated by a rainfall event of up to 1.5 inches. Unfortunately, the Town Code does not specify any of the allowable or prohibited techniques for achieving the minimum level of retention. It does not indicate what is or is not required with respect to stormwater that falls in excess of a 1.5 inch rainfall event. There is no guidance with respect to requirements for how captured stormwater may be released into an adjacent public right-of-way. These kinds of provisions are important for protecting the Town's investment in infrastructure and for helping avoid pooling of stormwater on public streets. It is typical for development regulations to limit the rate of flow of stormwater from an on-site retention facility into public lands like streets, greenways, environmentally sensitive areas or sidewalks.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 7.

Question 7: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 111 comments on Question 7 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“Enforce the existing ordinances.”

“The Town code should never address something so trivial. It is my property, please do not remove my rights to do as I please on my property.”

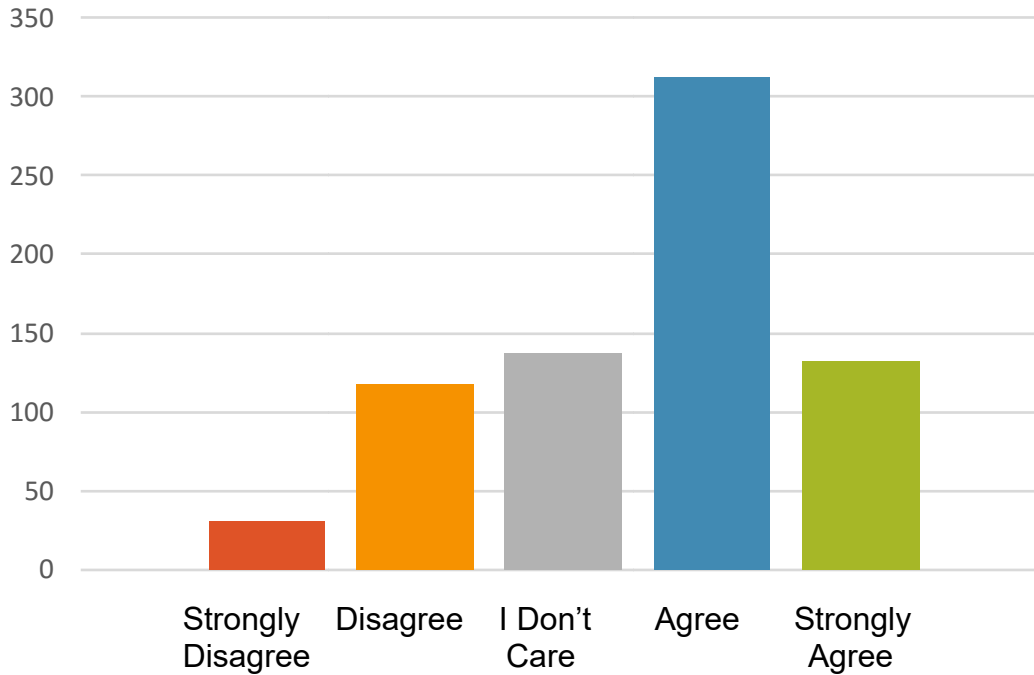
“Is this actually a problem? Doesn't most of the stormwater soak into the sand? Where it is a problem, like the south end of Ocean Boulevard, can't that problem be dealt with without a Town wide regulation?”

“I think storm water management is an important issue but not sure how additional regulation to keep it off the street can be achieved. The water has to go somewhere and without storm drains what options are left for property owners?”

“With no Southern Shores storm water drainage system, this places the total burden on the property owners.”

“Control the amount of fill brought in; restrict the non-permeable surface percentage for a lot; restrict the number of cars allowed.”

Question 8: The Town Code should increase its regulation of stormwater runoff that flows between private yards from one property to another.



20%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

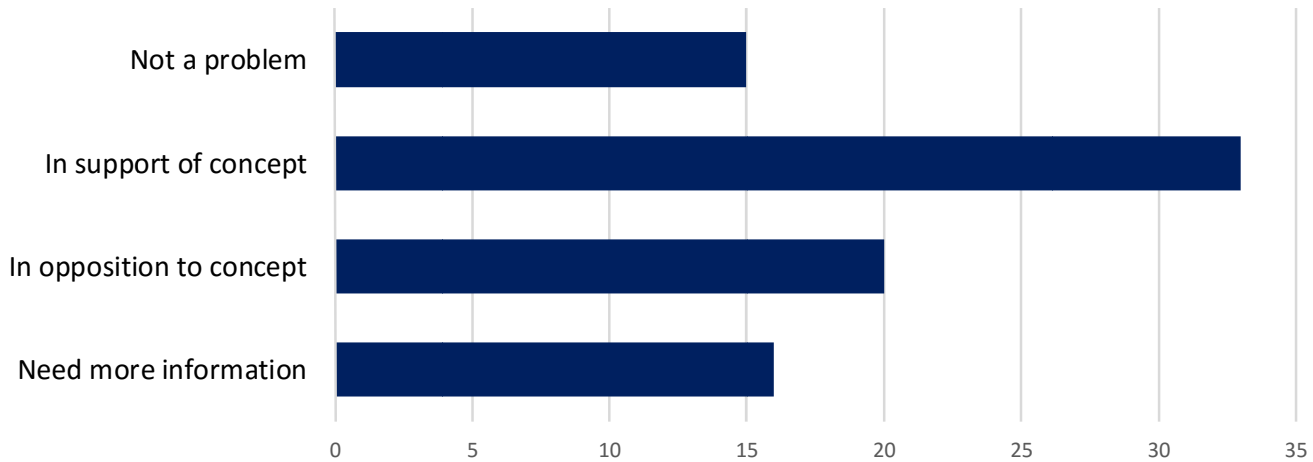
61%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

728 total responses

Section 36-171 of the Town Code sets out the regulations pertaining to stormwater management. The regulations require applicants for new development to submit a plan that indicates how the site will retain all the stormwater generated by a rainfall event of up to 1.5 inches. The section authorizes Town officials to include permit requirements which limit the damage or disturbance of adjacent land, but is silent on the range of activities or stormwater management techniques that could lead to damage or accelerated off-site flow. Many modern codes establish a range of acceptable and preferred management practices for stormwater. Some communities include these provisions in an outside stormwater management manual. As ground water tables rise, the minimum separation distances between septic drains and the water table will also rise creating an increased need for filling. This filling could result in increased prevalence of lot-to-lot nuisance flooding if there are no guidelines or requirements in place.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 8.

Question 8: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 95 comments on Question 8 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“This is not a problem for us at all but it seems to make sense to solve this problem with a regulation.”

“This would be impossible to enforce. However, perhaps they could offer advice, consultation, etc. on how this could best be done. Again, rain barrels, rain gardens, etc. that cost relatively little and do a lot.”

“If a problem exists, homeowners should try to work it out either individually, or through the existing legal channels.”

“Where possible require storm water infiltration along property boundaries.

Require the 'contributing' property to accommodate at least half of the infrastructure & the receiving property to accommodate the other half.”

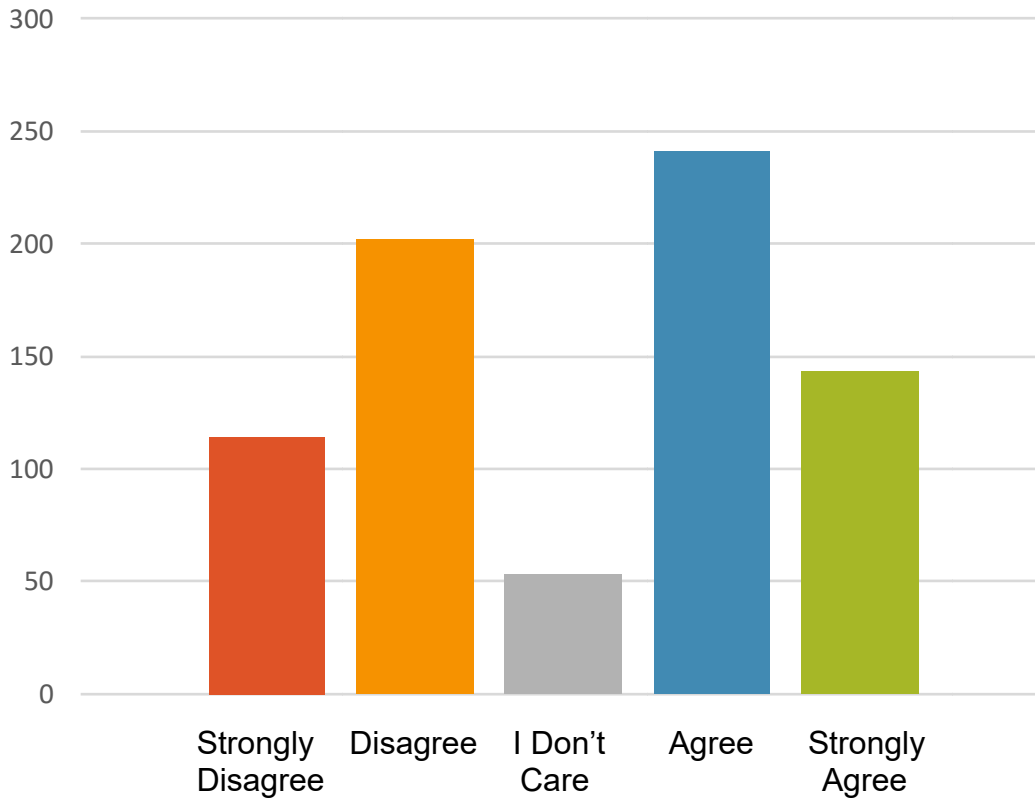
“This is a matter to be settled between the affected owners. It does not require the intrusion of government.”

“No increased fill for elevation... too harmful for runoff as well as hurting neighbors’ views.”

“What we have can be used now to prevent that. The Town just lets neighbors build up their lots to accommodate that lots building without regard to the neighbor's next to the construction.”

“How would regulation be done?”

Question 9: The Town Code should regulate tree removal as part of construction on private property.



42%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

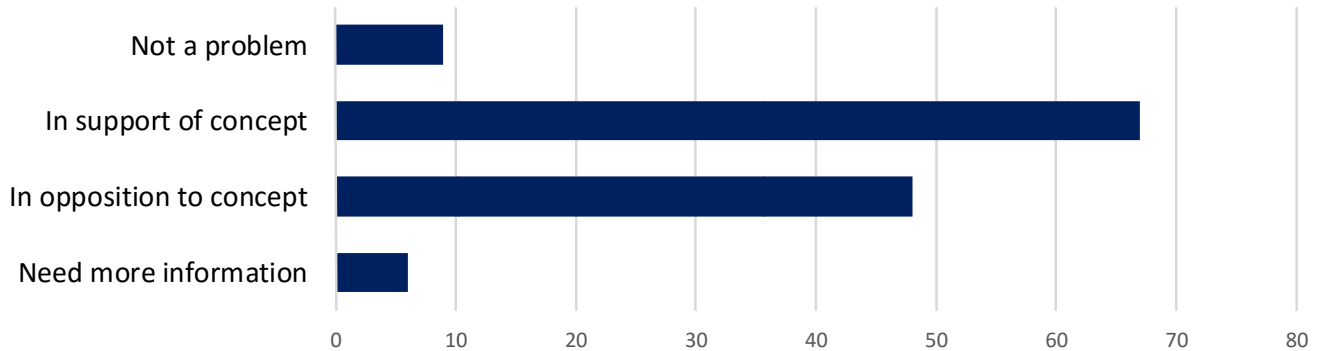
51%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

753 total responses

Section 28-4 of the Town Code deals with the retention and removal of trees from the public right-of-way, but does not address tree protection or preservation on private property. There is a wide spectrum of tree protection provisions in local government regulations, from none at all to incentive-based approaches, to requirements for preservation of existing trees. Only a very few communities include standards requiring retention of existing trees on single-family residential lots after construction. However, it is common for coastal communities to include incentives for retention of existing trees during construction. These kinds of incentives help reduce the costs of compliance with landscaping requirements. Existing trees provide superior noise attenuation, shade, and habitat over immature landscaping material installed as part of construction. One possibility the Town might consider is the inclusion of incentives for tree retention in the form of accelerated credit towards landscaping requirements for developments that retain a portion of the existing tree cover.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 9.

Question 9: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 130 comments on Question 9 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“While I would prefer that homeowners do not clear cut their property, I don’t see the problem as significant enough to devote resources to additional regulation. Would suggest instead some voluntary guidelines and information sharing on the benefits of maintaining natural terrain.”

“This would create too much regulation. There are many reasons why people building here want to take down trees. ... HOA’s are in place for matters like this. The Town does not need to regulate trees.”

“Homeowners should be allowed to take down existing trees but when they do they should be required to plant new ones to help absorb excess water run off as appropriate for the area.”

“Although I strongly dislike clear-cutting of lots, I don’t agree with unilaterally altering one’s property rights. A clear definition of the “problem” being addressed is called for.”

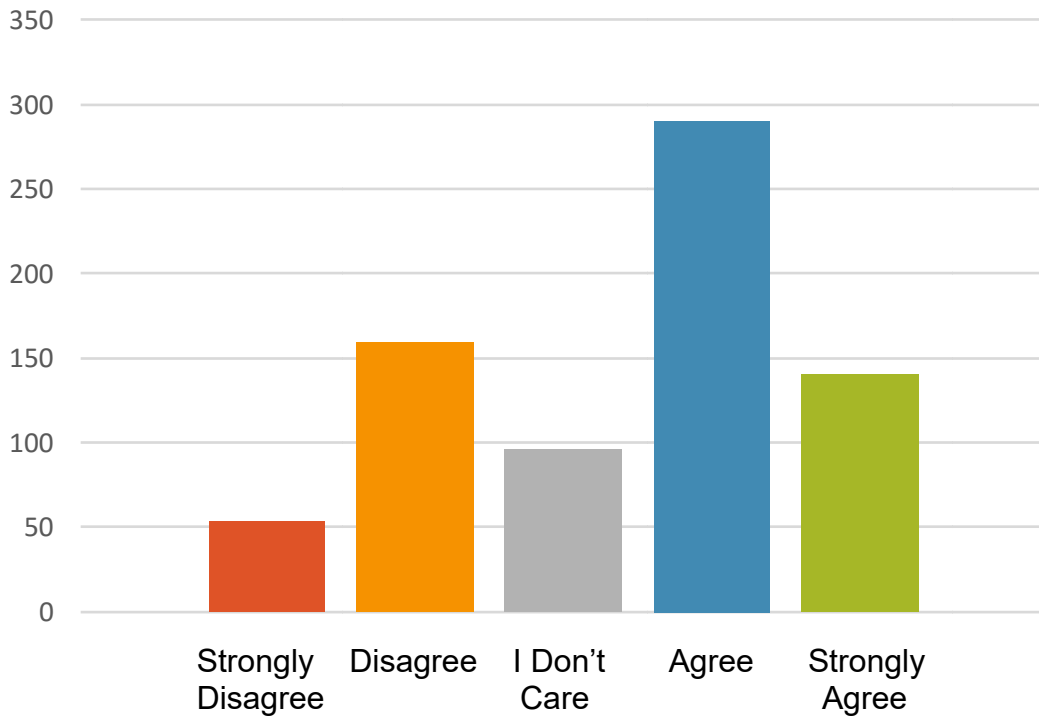
“I can’t believe this is even a question. Again, key words-private property.”

“Part of maintaining the stability of the Outer Banks includes the vegetation to manage the movement and loss of sand. The root systems help hold everything together. Removal of vegetation should be limited to ONLY what is absolutely necessary.”

“Minimize clear cutting for new construction. Property owners should be able to keep their property safe and trimmed without a permit though. Perhaps a permit if more than 2 large trees are involved.”

“Some regulation would be beneficial, however, the SSCA regulates this, and I am concerned about duplication and inconsistencies.”

Question 10: The Town Code should regulate, or have regulations intended to address, deer overpopulation.



29%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

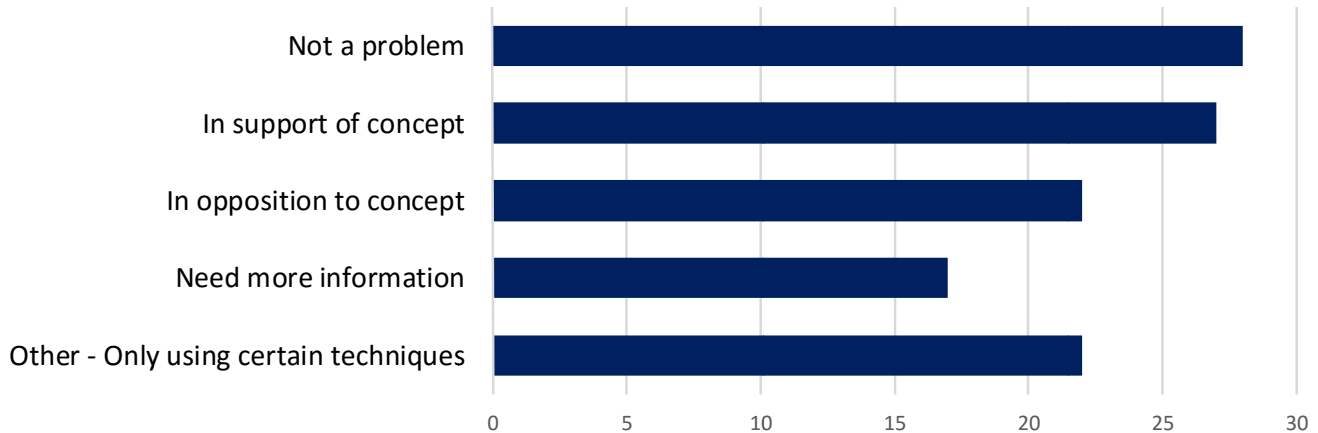
58%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

738 total responses

Chapter 4 of the Town Code deals with animals. Section 4-26 of the Town Code prohibits trapping of domestic or wild animals except by the Police Department or other police-approved agency. Several communities include provisions allowing abbreviated low-risk hunting seasons and techniques (like bow hunting) in their local ordinances. Section 22-4 of the Town Code prohibits the discharge of firearms except under limited circumstances unrelated to hunting. There are also other less invasive alternatives like increased allowance for deer fencing, revision of plant materials lists to exclude vegetation that are eaten by deer, or the use of immunofertility agents that interrupt breeding success.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 10.

Question 10: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 116 comments on Question 10 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“The Town doesn't need to write an ordinance to protect us from the deer overpopulation. We can have removal of them without regulation.”

“Our small town has many deer, while a few are attractive, many destroy plants and landscaping, and, spread deer ticks.”

“Remove them all. Any day now someone is going to get killed hitting on at night. Also, they destroy landscaping and gardens.”

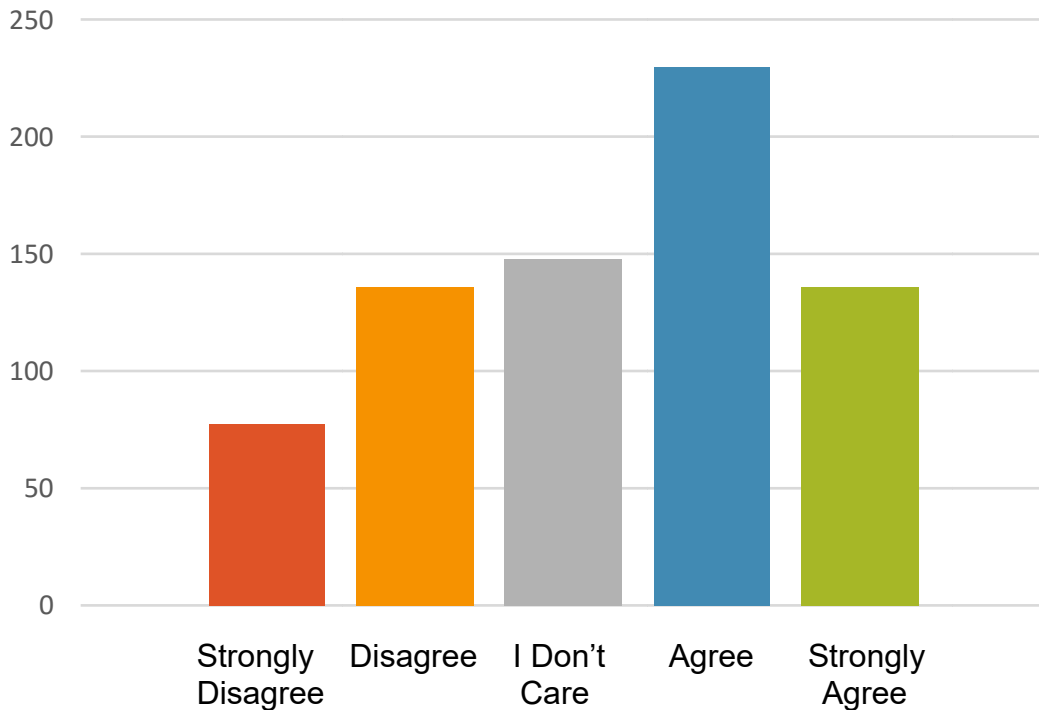
“The deer are out of hand. There certainly should be controls on winter feeding of the herd.”

“The critters were here first so live with them. I garden in the beach/deer zone. I simply avoid the things they like. It works pretty well. This ain't suburban NJ.”

“This answer is critically dependent upon how overpopulation is defined. If it is determined by wildlife experts based upon the health of the deer population, it is a concern. If it is based upon too many hostas being eaten, I am skeptical.”

“You mean kill God's creatures? They were here first. Maybe one week of bow and arrow for food only.”

Question 11: The Town Code should remove obstacles to better cellular phone coverage within the Town.



29%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

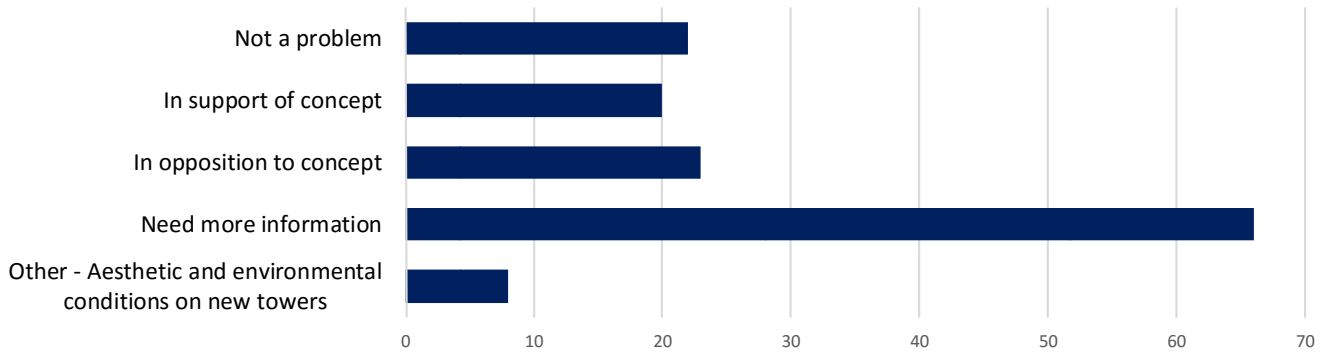
50%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

727 total responses

Section 36-175 of the Town Code sets out the standards for wireless telecommunications sites and towers, which are comprised of towers and the location of wireless telecommunications equipment on existing towers or other features like water tanks. While allowing these kinds of uses, the standards also include aspects like minimum separation requirements of a ½ mile for “tall” facilities (towers) and 250 feet for “short” facilities and collocated equipment. Tall facilities and stealth structures are limited to a monopole (a single vertical pole) configuration. The standards require setbacks equal to the height of the tower in most cases (though this can be reduced for stealth facilities) and when an engineer certifies that a falling tower will remain within a specified fall zone distance. The standards require applicants to final for an annual renewal permit to operate wireless facilities. The standards are not clear with respect to the appropriate review procedure for new facilities, particularly short, stealth, and collocated facilities, which could be permitted by-right in most areas. In addition, the separation standards could be relaxed, and the requirements for annual permit renewals removed as a means of reducing operating costs and encouraging better coverage through more facilities.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 11.

Question 11: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 142 comments on Question 11 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“With the construction of the new cell tower, I'm not aware of any significant problems with cell coverage and don't see this as a major issue at this time.”

“Cell service that actually works inside all houses in Southern Shores is important.”

“I have virtually no signal most of the time despite the new tower. Many people now have only cell phones and need reliable service.”

“I agree only if the aesthetic of the town takes precedence over the alterations for phone coverage.”

“We are a peaceful, single family residential area. We do not have to promote better cellular coverage.”

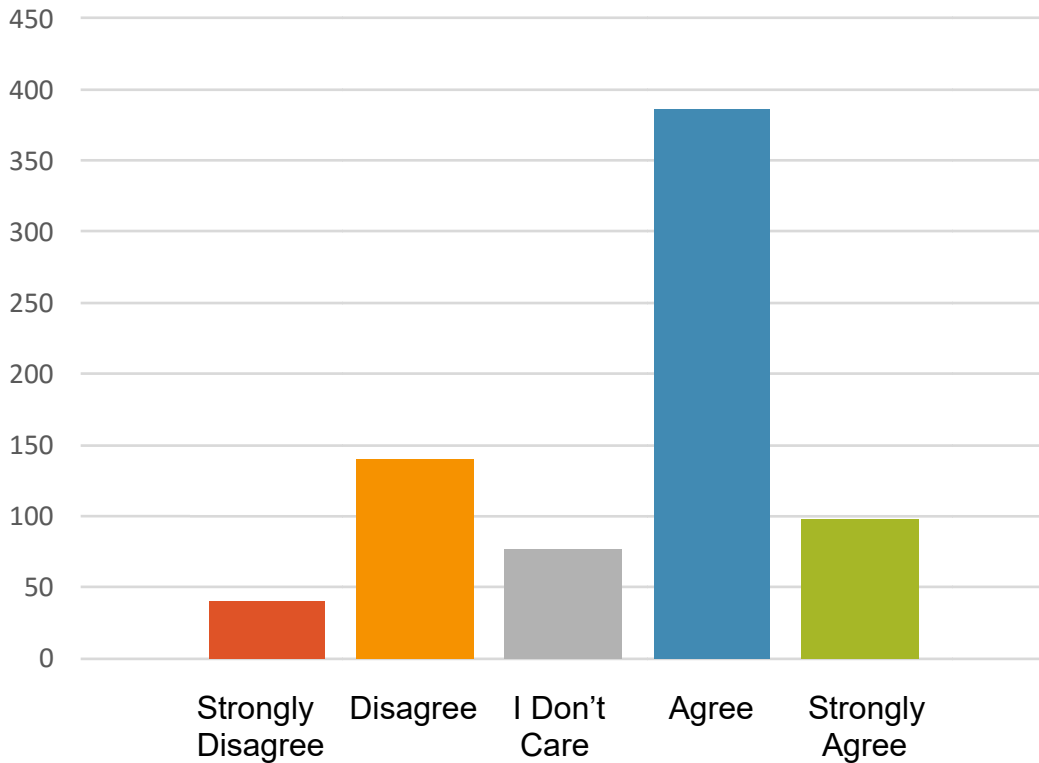
“The obstacles should be removed but only if the placement of the equipment and towers are placed in [aesthetically] pleasing ways.”

“Use cellular primarily and currently have unsatisfactory coverage.”

“Don't want excessive phone towers throughout community becoming an horizon eye sore.”

“What "obstacles" are we talking about? Trees?? Oversized homes? Or just restrictive town regulations?”

Question 12: The Town Code should include new nuisance requirements to promote better upkeep and maintenance of existing homes where private covenants do not exist.



24%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

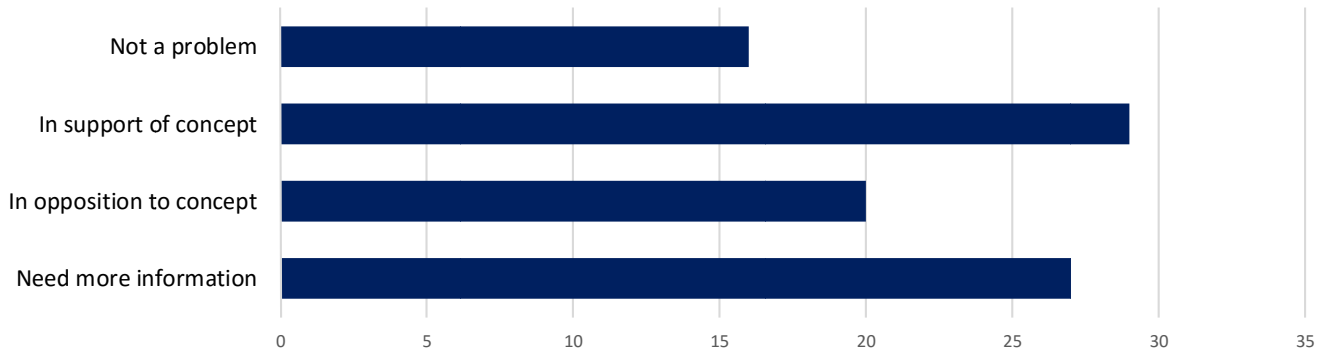
65%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

740 total responses

Many town codes include a set of minimum housing provisions to ensure that homes and grounds are properly maintained in a safe and habitable condition. These kinds of regulations are particularly important in communities where some of the housing stock is held primarily for rental purposes (since homeowners may not visit the property on a regular basis). Even more important are provisions that limit the accumulation of debris outdoors that can become airborne during high wind events. While Section 6-2 of the Town Code establishes the authority to conduct code enforcement activities and Section 36-173.e requires maintenance of required landscaping, the current Town Code does not include minimum housing standards, minimum maintenance requirements for principal dwellings, standards for limiting the accumulation of debris on lots, and no provisions requiring control of overgrown vegetation (like weeds). The Town Code could be supplemented with these kinds of standards.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 12.

Question 12: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 92 comments on Question 12 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“I believe that current code provides sufficient leverage to ensure responsible owners take care of their property.”

“During my seventeen years living in Southern Shores I have noted many nuisance properties that simply dragged down the entire neighborhood. We are not thinking of garden gnomes but rather overgrown properties with industrial equipment in sight, cars up on blocks, etc.”

“Sometimes those regulations go overboard or too subjective. This is America, you can only hope people take pride in [their] homes and neighborhood.”

“Any municipal efforts to regulate upkeep of private property should be focused on public health, safety and welfare issues, NOT aesthetics. The Town should be able to tell someone to remove a dangerous tree condition, for example, but not what type of landscaping to install or what color the house should/should not be.”

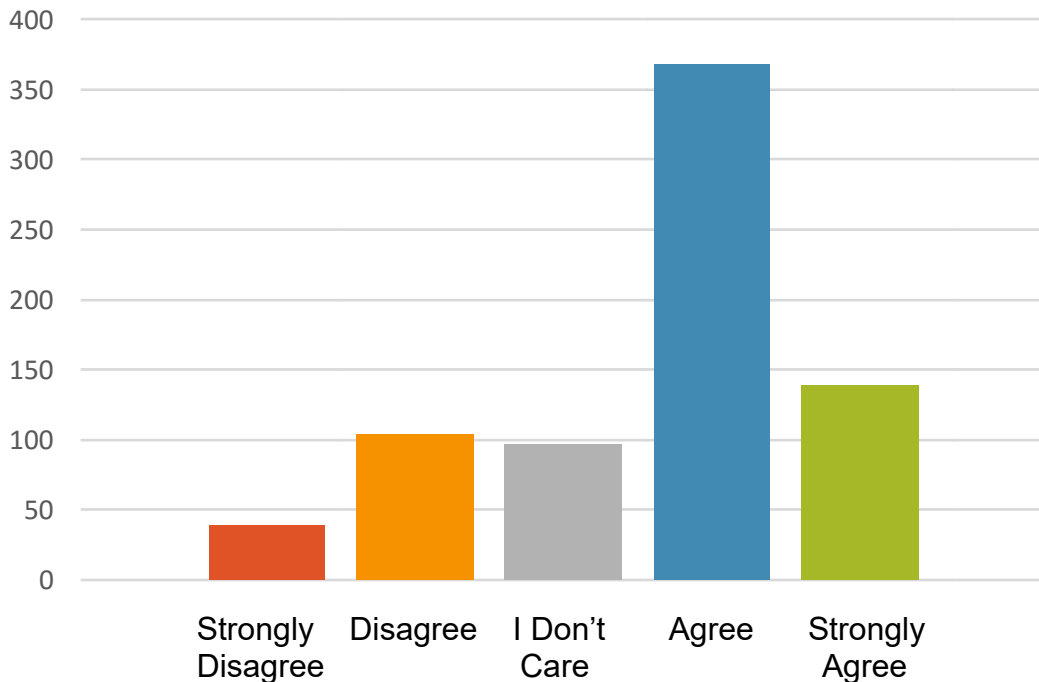
“We just need to enforce what we have.”

“This suggests there have been problems. I would like more information.”

“Only for the worse properties, i.e. junk items in the front yard. However, most homeowners are good citizens. Don't allow Southern Shores to become a, complaining community backed up by a code that would allow every little distraction become an irritation to a peaceful community.”

“Property values are important to all homeowners; homes that fall into disrepair impact the community.”

Question 13: The Town Code should regulate design standards for new or updated commercial development (example: requiring a particular aesthetic, such as pitched roofs or preferred building materials on a commercial building.)



19%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

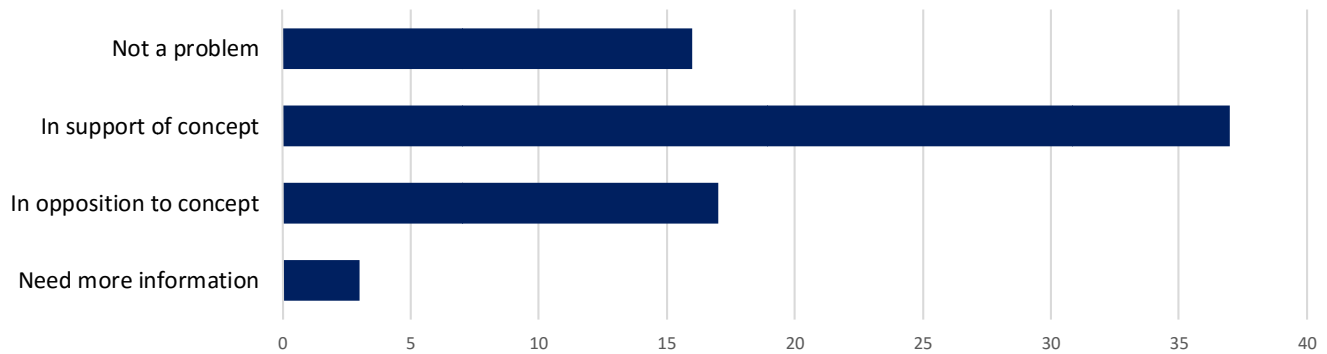
68%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

746 total responses

Some communities include minimum design standards for commercial development to establish a minimum level of design quality and promote compatibility with nearby lower intensity forms of development like single-family homes. Commercial design standards are very common in coastal communities. The current Town Code includes no codified design standards for commercial development and design-related aspects of new development are the result of negotiation between the Town and an applicant.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 13.

Question 13: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 73 comments on Question 13 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“There is very little commercial property in Southern Shores and most residents do not live and can not see commercial property from their homes. anyone that would respond yes to this question would lot want someone else to tell them how to build their house.”

“As long as the design standards are not a significant deterrent to desired commercial development, I am in favor of such regulation.”

“This is not Santa Fe! Regulate for safety reasons only.”

“Southern Shores has been developed over a period of decades, with a wide variety of styles, sizes, architectures, etc. To try to regulate this now is completely unnecessary.”

“Additional visual design standards will only increase the cost to own and operate a business.”

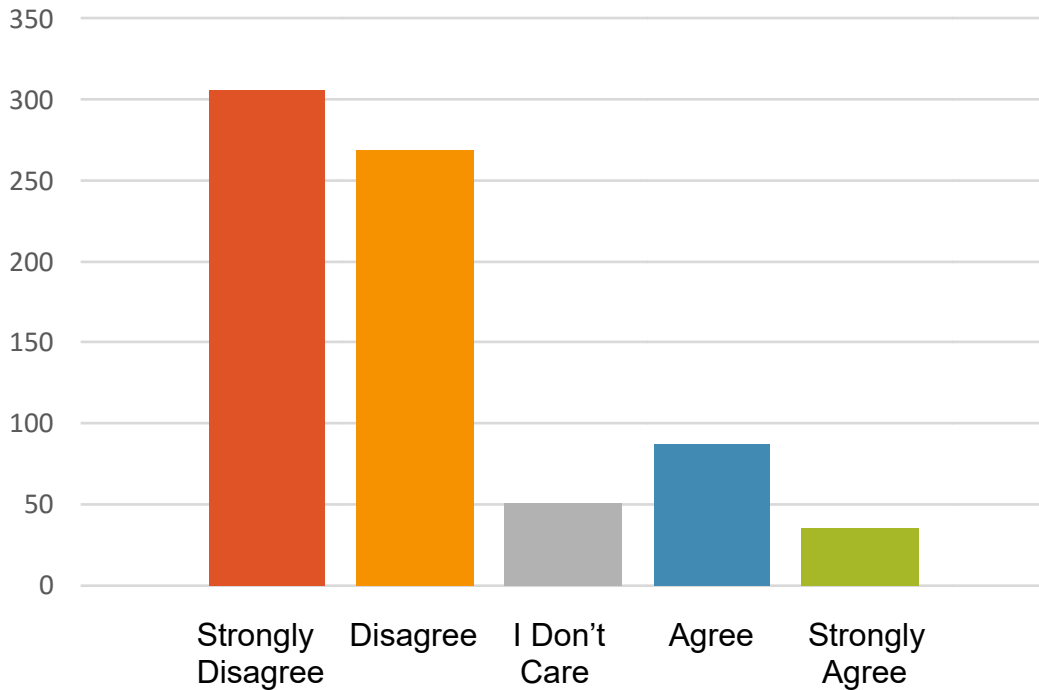
“There should be some (minimal) regulation that requires commercial enterprises to comport with town aesthetics.”

“Including landscaping, sidewalks, and street access design.

“Yes, we're getting more and more businesses, and some such as that brick building that houses a mattress shop and smoothie shop and some other businesses is truly ugly. It doesn't require a lot of extra expense to make buildings aesthetically pleasing...”

“These requirements are important. Southern Shores is the gateway to the Outerbanks.”

Question 14: The Town Code should increase the allowable residential building height.



77%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

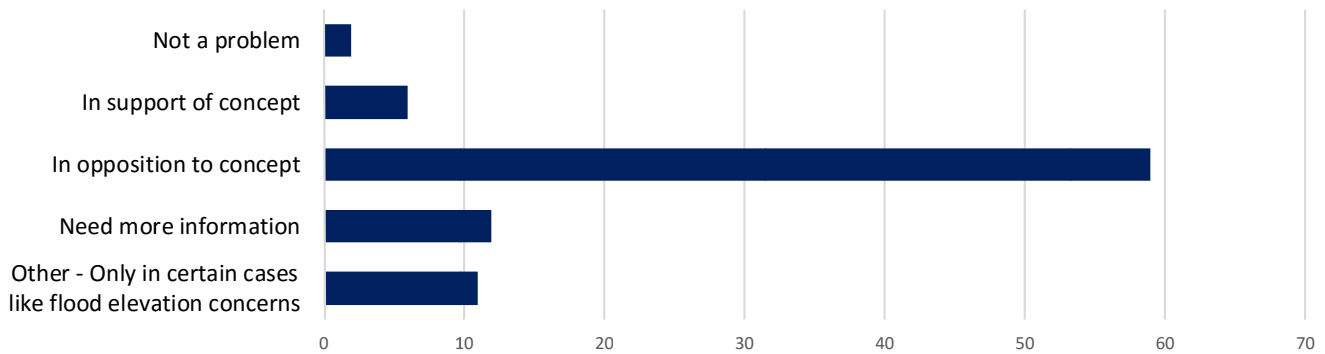
16%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

748 total responses

Article 7 of Chapter 36 of the Town Code sets out the maximum building heights for different uses by zoning district. Height standards comprise two different metrics: the height from the average ground elevation to the highest top plate, and the maximum height as measured from the lowest elevation on the site to the top of the tallest part of the structure. Most uses in town (except for country clubs, churches, and schools) have a maximum wall plate height of 26 feet and a maximum overall height of 35 feet. Base flood elevation, or the elevation below which habitable structures are prohibited is also a factor. The Town requires the floorboards of habitable area to be at least two feet above the base flood elevation (referred to as “freeboard”). This is done to ensure safety and to maintain low flood insurance rates. The issue for consideration is that the building code requires walls with a minimum height of seven feet, and the combination of the Town’s technique of measuring height to the top plate, the use of an average ground elevation, and the two foot freeboard requirement results in structures that have low ceilings or the inability to accommodate a second story while maintaining the minimum freeboard requirement. There may be options in changing the height measurement rules to allow greater flexibility in wall heights while still maintaining the freeboard and maximum overall height limits, or extending the ability of the BOA to consider minor deviations in height as is allowed for nonresidential buildings in Section 36-98 of the Town Code.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 14.

Question 14: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 90 comments on Question 14 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“Increasing height will only lead to more “commercial” development in residential neighborhoods. We went from 35 to 40. Too high of heights may significantly increase wind insurance for all.”

“I really feel how it is calculated is not fair. When I built I had to use the lowest point of all corners. This is not fair to owners [whose] lots have varying topography. We should use an average.”

“I would like it to be tall enough to add as small observation cupola or deck.”

“Keep it as it is. We have always thought of Southern Shores as a family residential area. No huge buildings especially along the ocean front.”

“Views are what many individuals desire when purchasing property. Height restrictions help to maintain this aspect.”

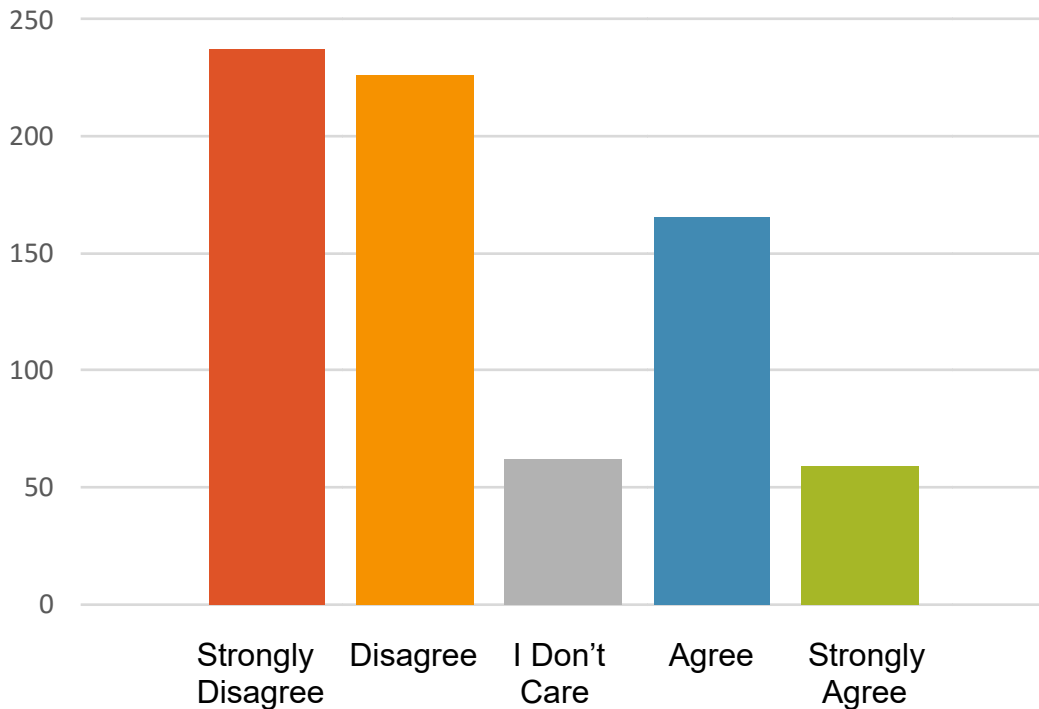
“I do not support this. Additional height is not necessary for single family residential construction.”

“The current regulation is adequate. Part of the beauty of Southern Shores is sharing the view with as many residents as possible. Vacationers and residents alike enjoy having a view. Houses do NOT need to be any taller than currently allowed.”

“Would like to hear a discussion on this issue.”

“One of the OBX attractions is the skyline is not full of multilevel buildings...”

Question 15: The Town Code should increase the maximum allowable amount of lot coverage for single-family homes (how much of a piece of property may be covered by buildings or other structures like swimming pools, garages, and driveways).



62%
 of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

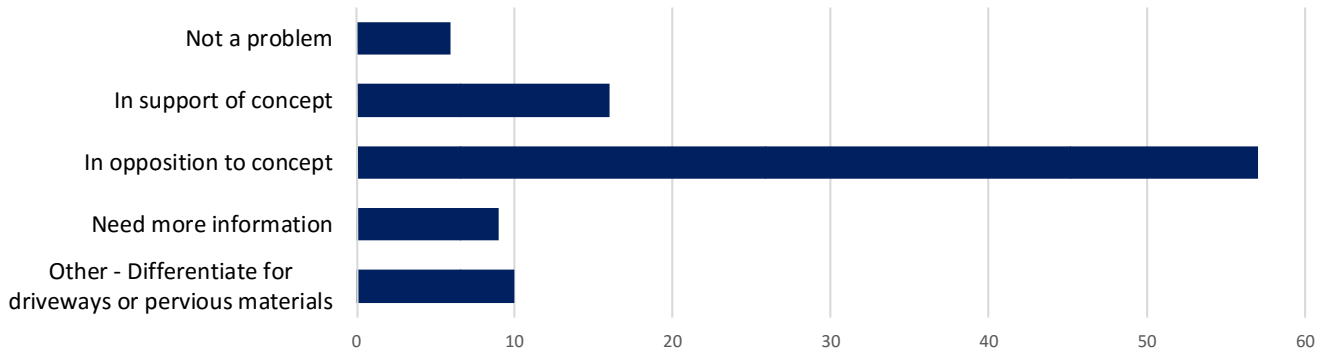
30%
 of respondents agree or strongly agree

749 total responses

Lot coverage is the area of an individual lot that is covered by an impervious surface. Lot coverage limitations are used to ensure the ability of stormwater uptake and as a means of limiting erosion on surrounding lots resulting from runoff coming from an over-built lot that cannot absorb stormwater. Article 7 of Chapter 36 of the Town Code sets out the zoning district standards which cap the lot coverage limits for residential uses at 30 percent of the lot area. The lot coverage definition lists impervious surfaces, including decks, parking areas, driveways, and accessways. Recent changes to state law indicate that gravel is to be treated as a pervious surface, and such parking and accessways comprised of gravel are not to be treated as impervious. There is also room for discussion about how decks may be constructed to increase their capacity to channel stormwater to the ground, and as such diminish their treatment as impervious surfaces.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 15.

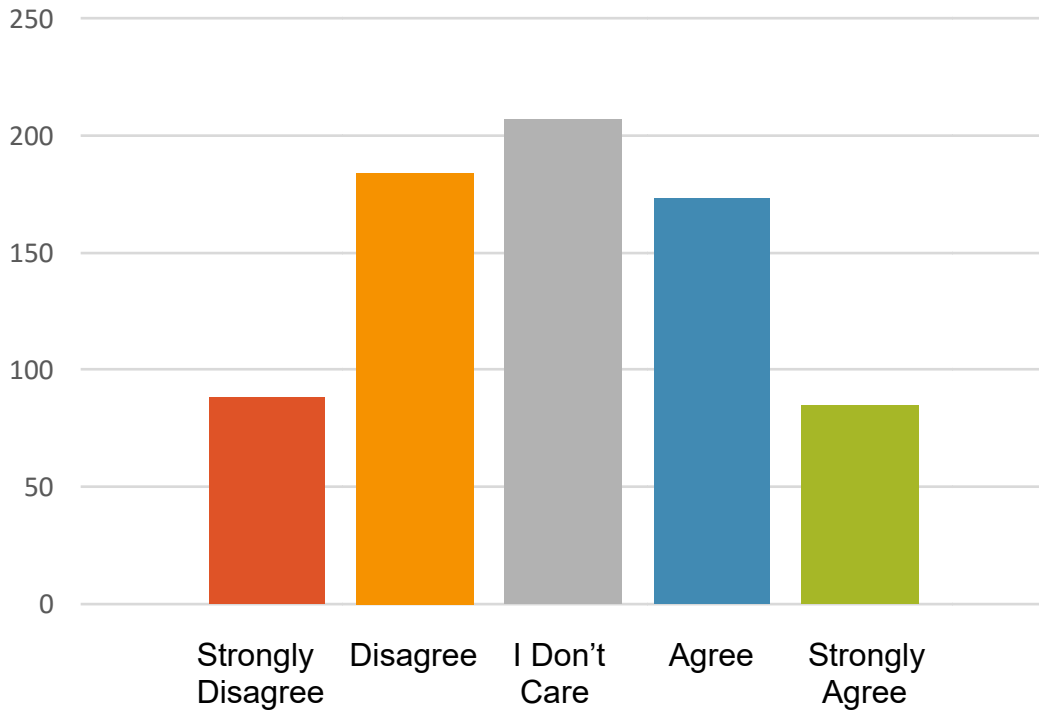
Question 15: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 98 comments on Question 15 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>“Enforce the existing code...numerous new homes have exceeded the % allowed with no repercussions.”</p> | <p>“It’s like playing tetris on our property just to find the correct place to put an outdoor shed, with the current limitations.”</p> | <p>“This is a way to protect the environment and to prohibit over-building.”</p> |
| <p>“Lot coverage should not be increased because it will contribute to increased stormwater runoff. Not good for the environment.”</p> | <p>“I disagree that we should increase it but would like to revisit what is considered lot coverage. Porous gravel driveways (e.g. pea gravel, porous pavers, etc) or deck overhangs where the deck is well above the ground and there is uncovered earth beneath it should not be considered coverage.”</p> | <p>“Currently everything counts as lot coverage. If an owner uses gravel as landscaping, that counts as coverage. Keeping lot coverage the same but giving coverage credit to encourage the use of porous concrete and gravel would be a good change.”</p> |
| <p>“Although we have sometimes chafed under the lot coverage restrictions, they do protect from unwelcome overbuilding and from SS becoming just shoulder to shoulder dwellings.”</p> | | |

Question 16: The Town Code should regulate preservation of flat roof homes.



37%
of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

35%
of respondents agree or strongly agree

737 total responses

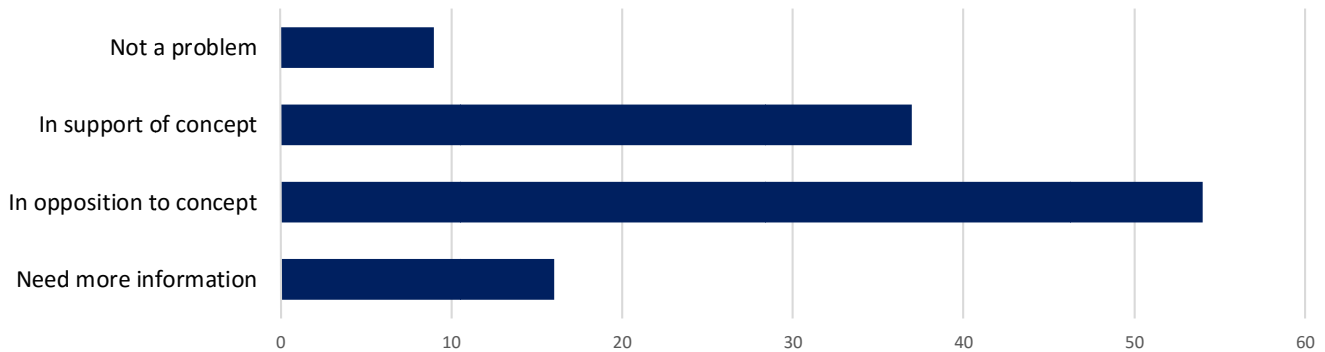
Flat-roof homes are one of the primary housing styles of the earliest housing built or moved to the area. Because of their age, condition, or small size, many of these homes are demolished to make way for newer larger homes, most with gabled or hip roofs. The Town Code could include incentives for retention of these structures (when located outside of the base flood elevation) by allowing them as guest homes on larger lots, allowing increased maximum heights for new homes built in accordance with the flat-roof vernacular, or through elevated lot coverage limitations to allow such homes to remain after an additional home is constructed.



Example flat-roofed dwelling vernacular.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 16.

Question 16: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 116 comments on Question 16 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“Not the Town's business. Homeowners and historic preservationists have that responsibility.”

“Educate, encourage, offer incentives to restore.”

“The issue here is whether the majority of residents wish to preserve examples of the history of this area. This is a subject for a serious and open public discourse rather than a single survey question.”

“These are historic homes and a regulation to preserve them is most appropriate.”

“Don't know anything about the arguments.”

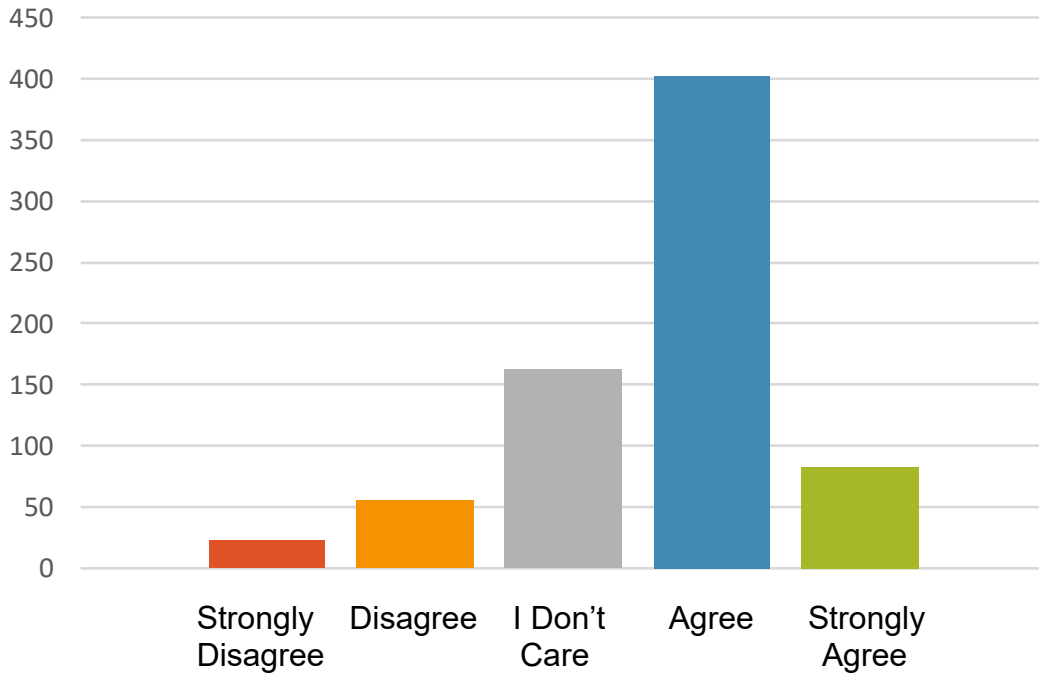
“I DO care. I would like to know what the owners of flat-top houses think.”

“We should provide tax incentives to keep our history.”

“As much as I love the flat tops, Town should not be able to tell owner they cannot tear down their house and build a new one.”

“I'd prefer to keep these homes but again, stay out of property rights.”

Question 17: The Town Code should remove obstacles to moving homes away from the advancing high tide line on deeper oceanfront lots.



11%
 of respondents disagree or strongly disagree

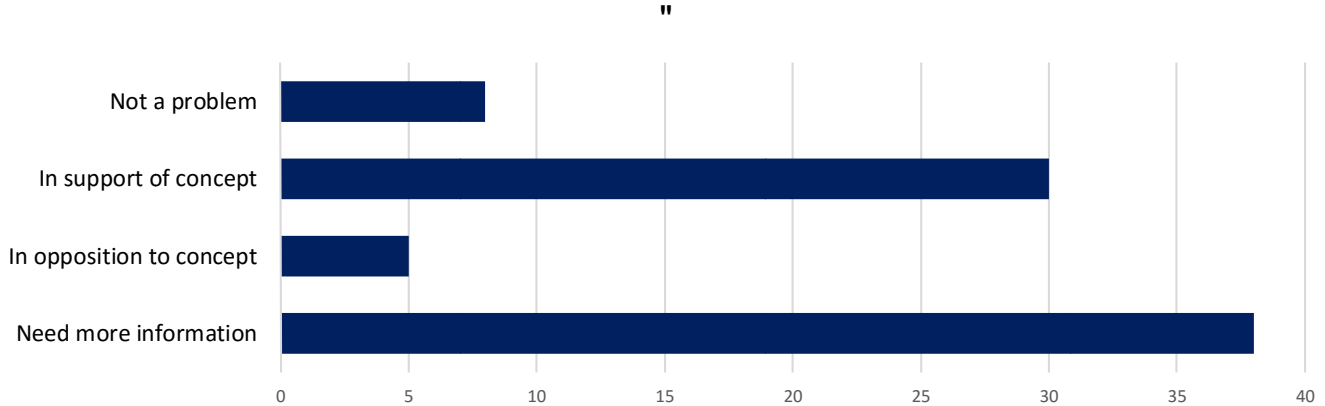
67%
 of respondents agree or strongly agree

724 total responses

Article 16 of Chapter 36 of the Town Code sets out the provisions related to reconstruction following a hurricane, and indicates that the Town will likely pass a moratorium immediately following a storm event and then sequence building permit approvals for homes damaged in minor and major ways. The Town Code could be revised to allow relocation of a lawfully established and conforming home with minor or major damage without having to wait for a moratorium to be lifted. Or, the standards could be revised to permit relocations before other forms of reconstruction. Front yard setbacks could be reduced from 25 feet to 20 feet. Incentives could also be included in the form of increased lot coverage for new homes or reconstruction of homes farther from the dune line than prior dwellings existing on the same lot.

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 17.

Question 17: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 81 comments on Question 17 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“As long as set backs, environmental concerns, and other code issues are complied with.”

“Just like they do in Nags Head. If you have a deep lot, you should be able to move the house out of the advancing tides.”

“Provided lot coverage and setback codes are enforced.”

“I DO care, but I am not familiar with the pros and cons of this suggestion.”

“The town should stay out it the state does enough.”

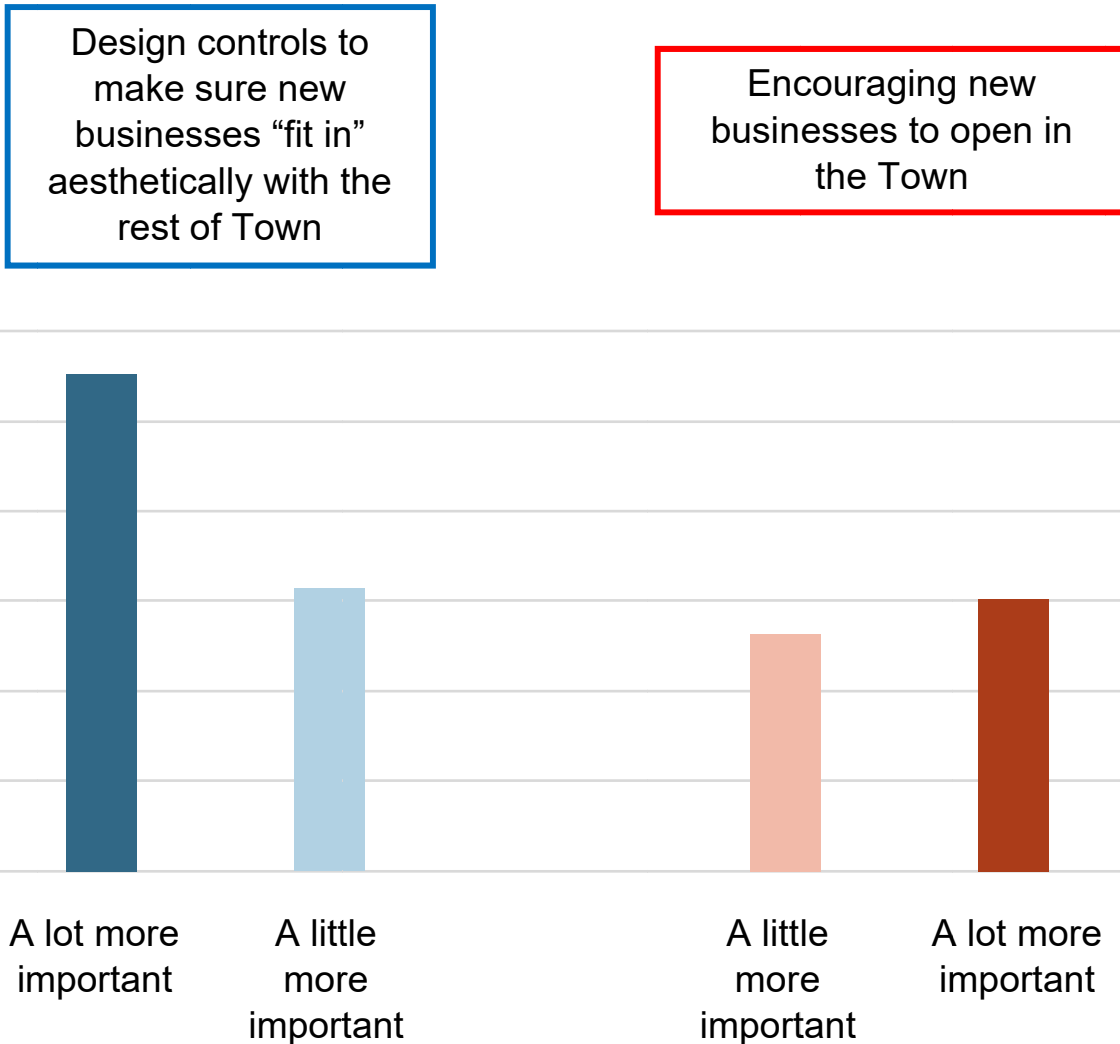
“No. My family bought an oceanfront house understanding it may not be there in a decade. They chose to buy there.”

“Strategies for addressing the advancing high tide line should be the subject of an open public discourse. This is not something that can or should be decided based on a single survey question. If retreat is the strategy that the town / county adopts it needs to be debated in open forums and property owners need to accept the consequences.

“If a homeowner can afford this and CAMA allows it, why would we want to make this difficult?”

“If by obstacles you mean set backs for the frontage, I disagree. The land was bought knowing the tide would move and to now argue that the houses are hindered is hypocritical. Otherwise the push will continue until houses are up against the road.”

Question 18: Which is more important for the Town Code to address?



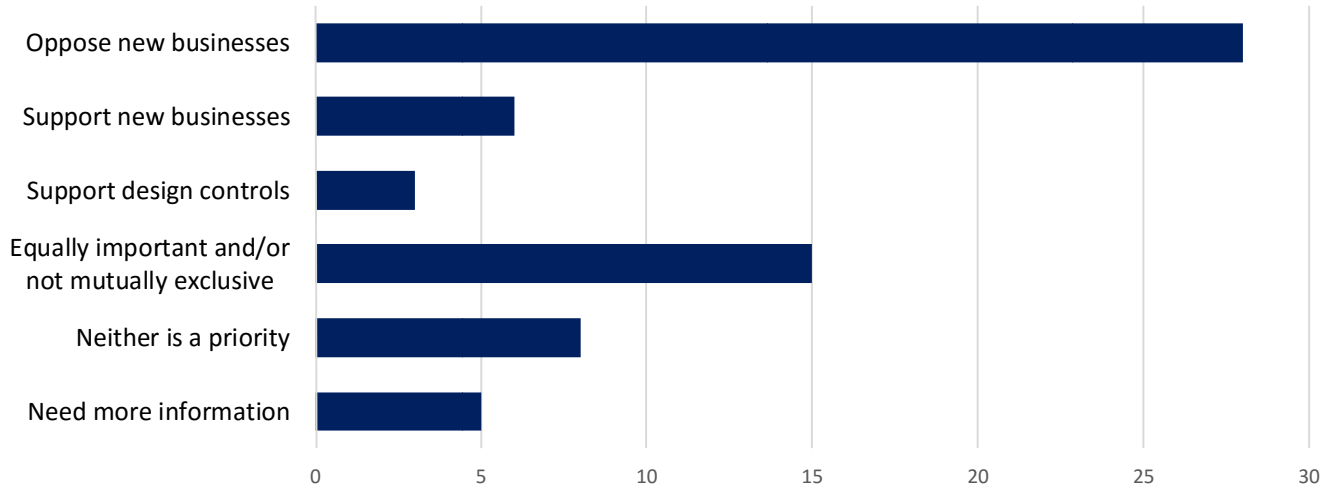
60%
of respondents say that design controls are more important.

40%
of respondents say that encouraging new businesses is more important.

716 total responses

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 18.

Question 18: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 65 comments on Question 18 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“This is a tough one. I think having new small businesses is very important to the Town. I do not think new "box stores" is a good idea. No matter what the business, the actual structure is also part of what makes for a pleasant and prosperous community. These two statements should be addressed together.”

“We definitely need more businesses in SS!”

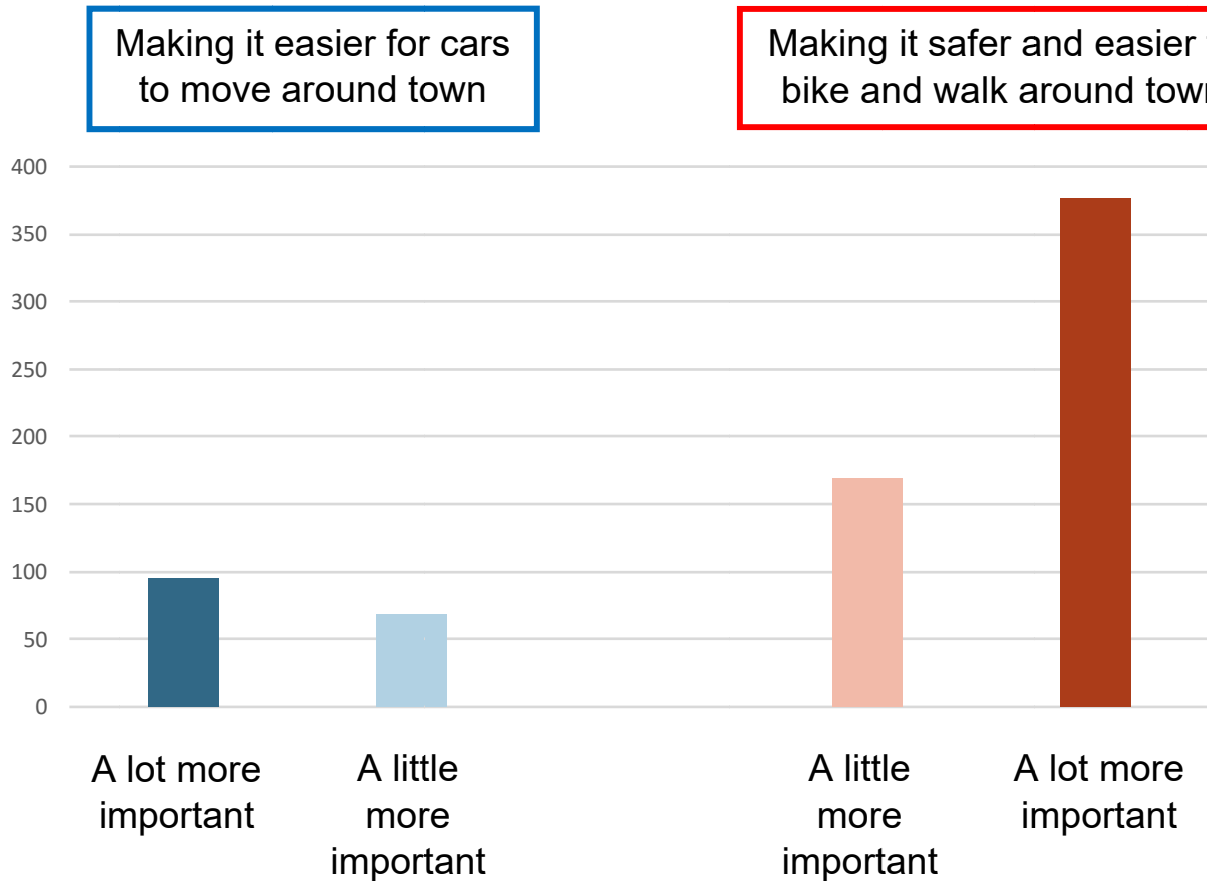
“We are not isolated. Businesses supply our needs in other OBX towns. No need to have them here.”

“I do not think either of these are important. I have no interest in controlling aesthetical elements for commercial or residential construction (however would like to see 100% rental in our current commercial areas), but DO NOT WANT to enlarge the current commercial district.”

“I would not like to see our town continue to allow Businesses. It was decided in the 60's that SS would remain residential and family oriented.”

“There are not that many commercial areas left for development. This fact makes it more critical to have the remaining commercial areas maximize recognized quality building.”

Question 19: Which is more important for the Town Code to address?



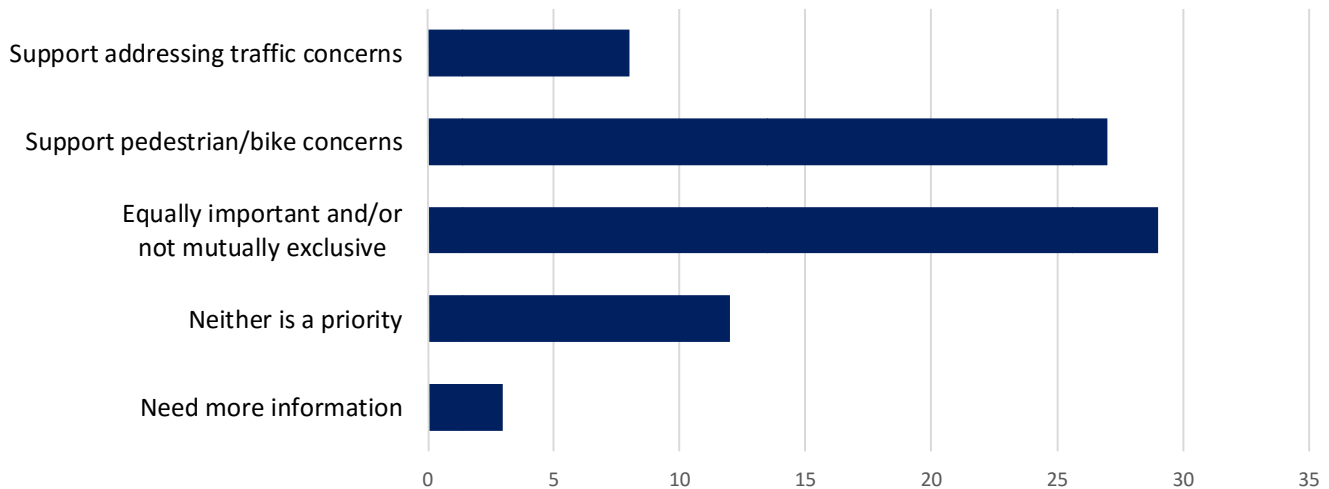
23%
of respondents say that easing traffic is more important.

77%
of respondents say that safety for pedestrians and bikers is more important.

708 total responses

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 19.

Question 19: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 79 comments on Question 19 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“Golf cart usage on residential streets(35 mph or less) should be considered as a way to reduce auto traffic. Licensing of approved carts would offer additional revenue source and reduce the pressure on parking space availability at dunes cross overs and town/association public areas.”

“I would actually like to hinder cars from moving around town. Too many vacationers cutting through neighborhoods can result from making driving easier, which inherently makes it less safe to walk or bike (have to cross the street).”

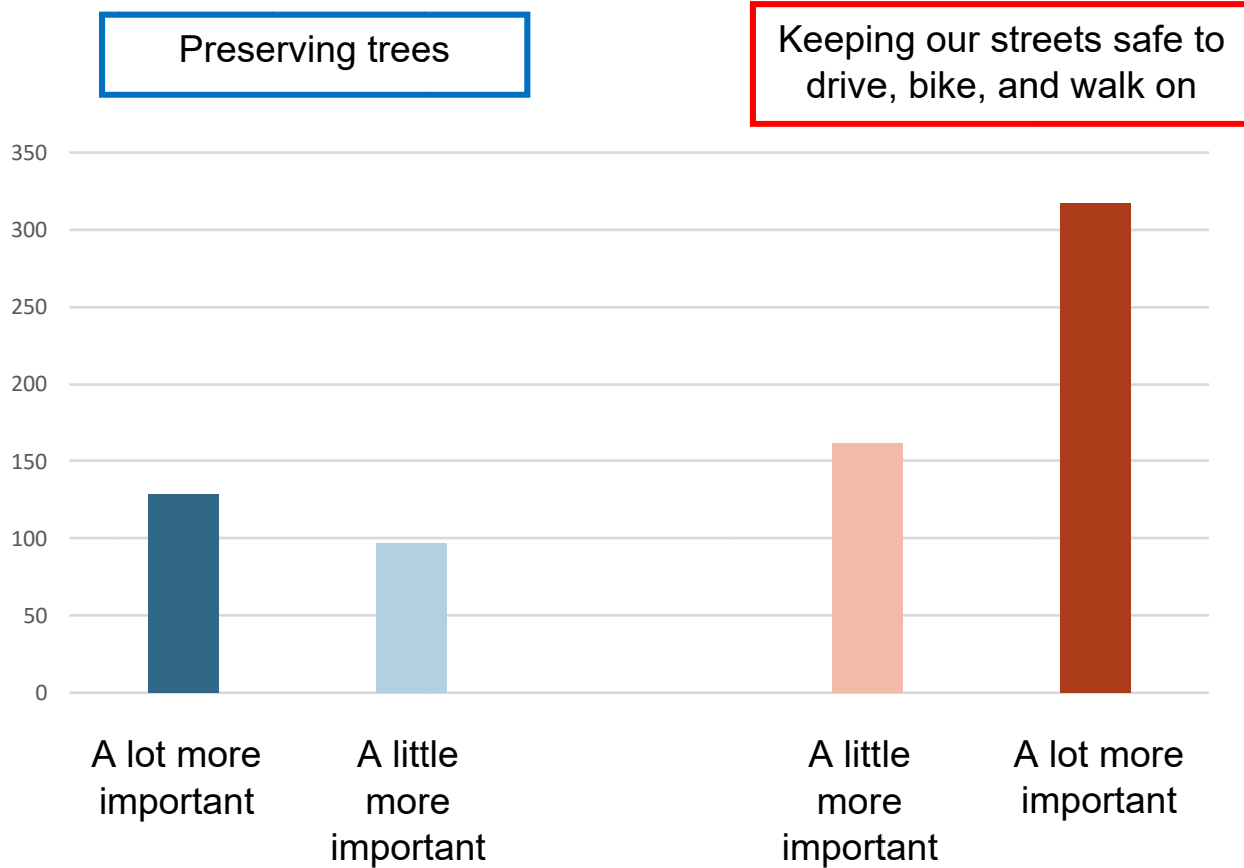
“Neither. I do not want the Town code to address any of the issues! When they put these rules in places to rarely do what they are intended to do. Hidden issues ALWAYS! Keep the code simple and let the free market works itself out.”

“Time to block off roads to minimize cut through traffic.”

“Don't widen the streets unless you put in a dedicated bike lane!”

“Hard to say on this one. I like to walk and want to be able to do so in more sections that now have no sidewalks and lots of traffic. On the other hand, I need to drive to get to most anything so I don't want to make it so I can't easily do so or have to dodge traffic-calming humps that give total priority to walkers and bikers.”

Question 20: Which is more important for the Town Code to address?



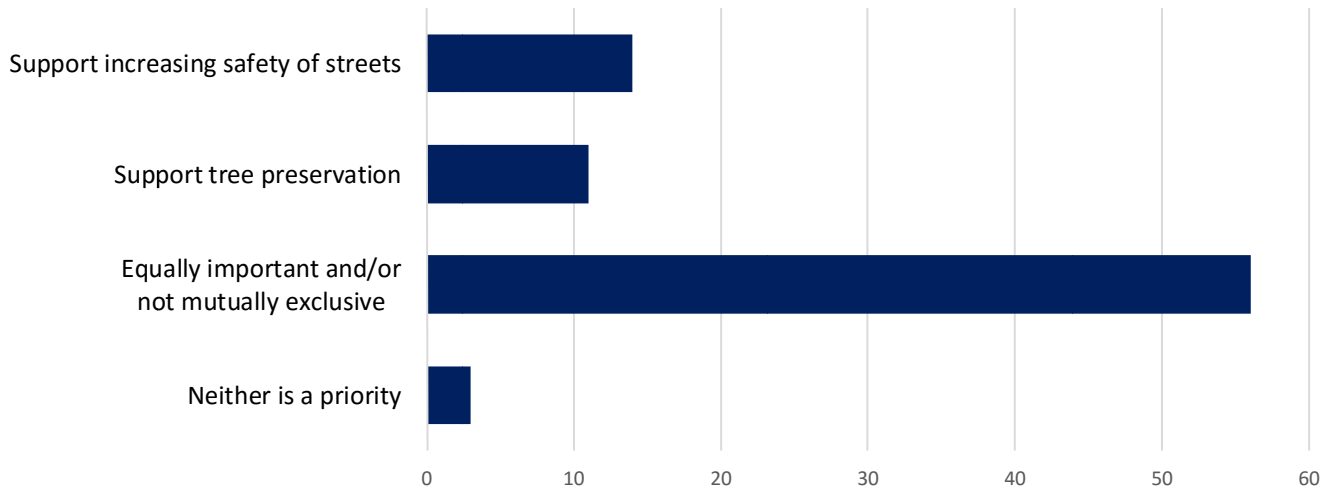
32%
of respondents say that preserving trees is important.

68%
of respondents say that keeping streets safe is more important.

705 total responses

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 20.

Question 20: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 87 comments on Question 20 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“A tough question. I almost said preserve trees, but I walk my dog on Duck Rd and sometimes don't feel safe when the road is full of tired, frustrated drivers.”

“Along Duck Road - trees are a significant screen for the homes along Duck Rd. Care must be used to balance bikes and pedestrian safety against preserving trees.”

“At all costs, the aesthetic produced by the unique environment should be preserved at all costs.”

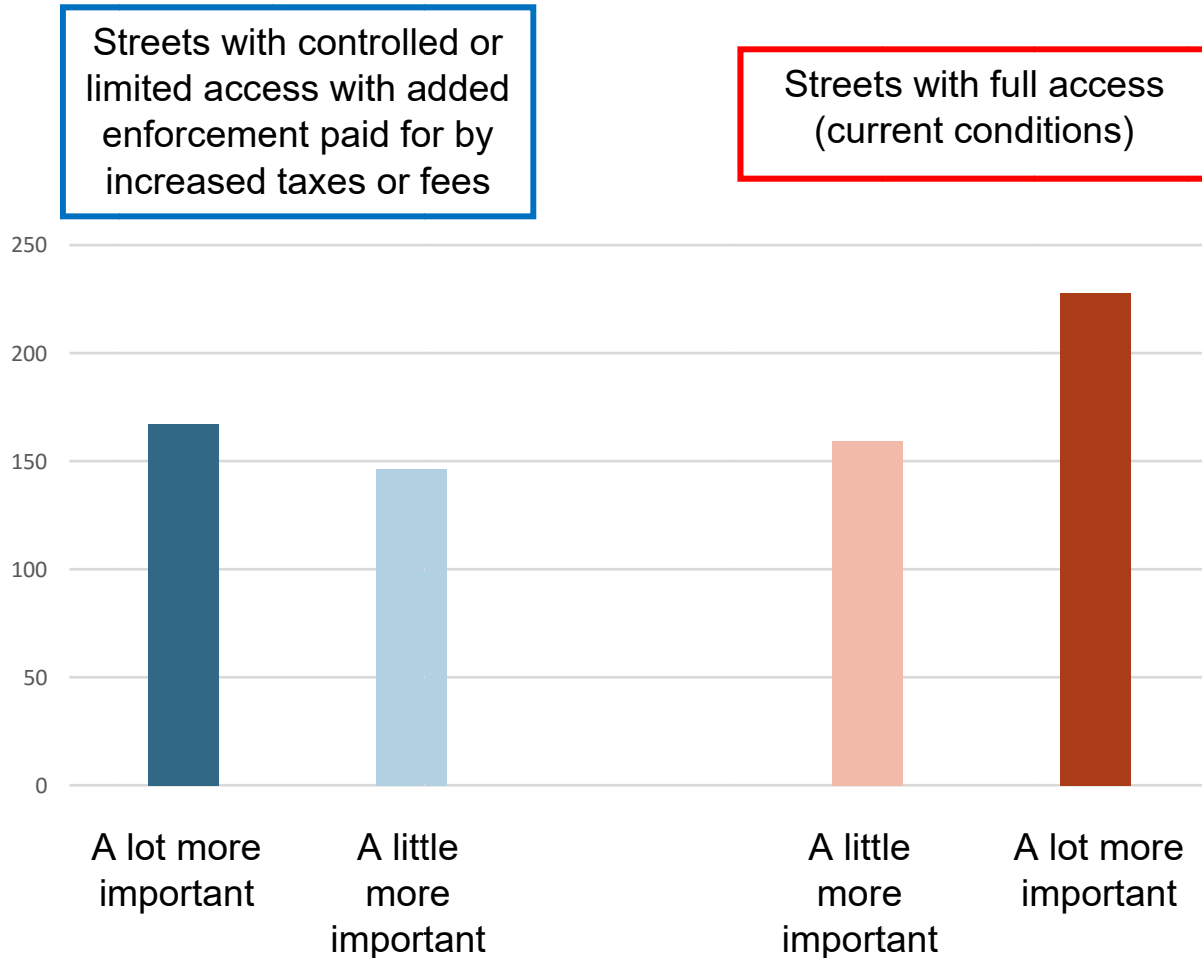
“I love the trees, but their roots are growing into the streets, which make it more dangerous with the cars, bikers and walkers on Dogwood N,S and East.”

“You will never be able to replace the trees that are part of the unique maritime forest in Southern Shores. Don't pave paradise.”

“No brainer... the only trees that are being cut down are on town right of way...only the vocal, small number of people who have no vision or foresight see a problem with the way we are repairing our streets now. We all love trees but safety of residents is more imp. and a towns responsibility.”

“Only those trees that are causing a safety issue should be taken down.”

Question 21: Which is more important for the Town Code to address?



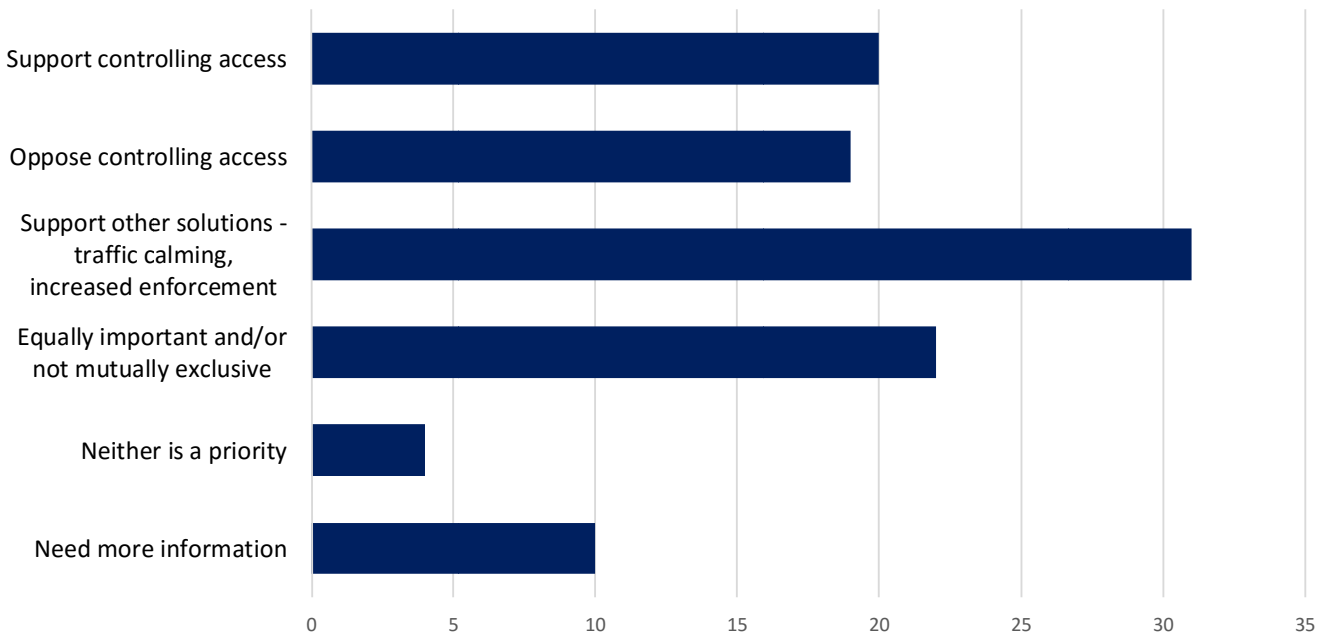
45%
of respondents say that controlled access to streets is more important.

55%
of respondents say that keeping full access is more important.

700 total responses

In addition to indicating whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with a survey question, there was a space for respondents to provide a written comment. The information below summarizes the written comments received for Question 21.

Question 21: Number of Comments by Type



The full text of the 116 comments on Question 21 is available in the appendix of this report. A selection of the comments appears below.

“The traffic is horrible, we all know this, so cutting off access will only make the traffic worse on 12-N. We need the bridge for the Northern Beaches to cut down on some of the 12-N traffic.”

“I do not want to live in a town with closed streets, guard houses, no trespassing signs, etc. We have to deal with the traffic issue during the summer because we are a resort town in a resort county...”

“I’m not buying the increased taxes here. Basically we are talking about Dogwood in front of Duck Woods. All other problems (like Sea Oats) derive from this passage. I would think it would take no more than one officer if we decided to police it.”

“It’s not a gated community...”
 “How about just enforcing speed limits, etc.”

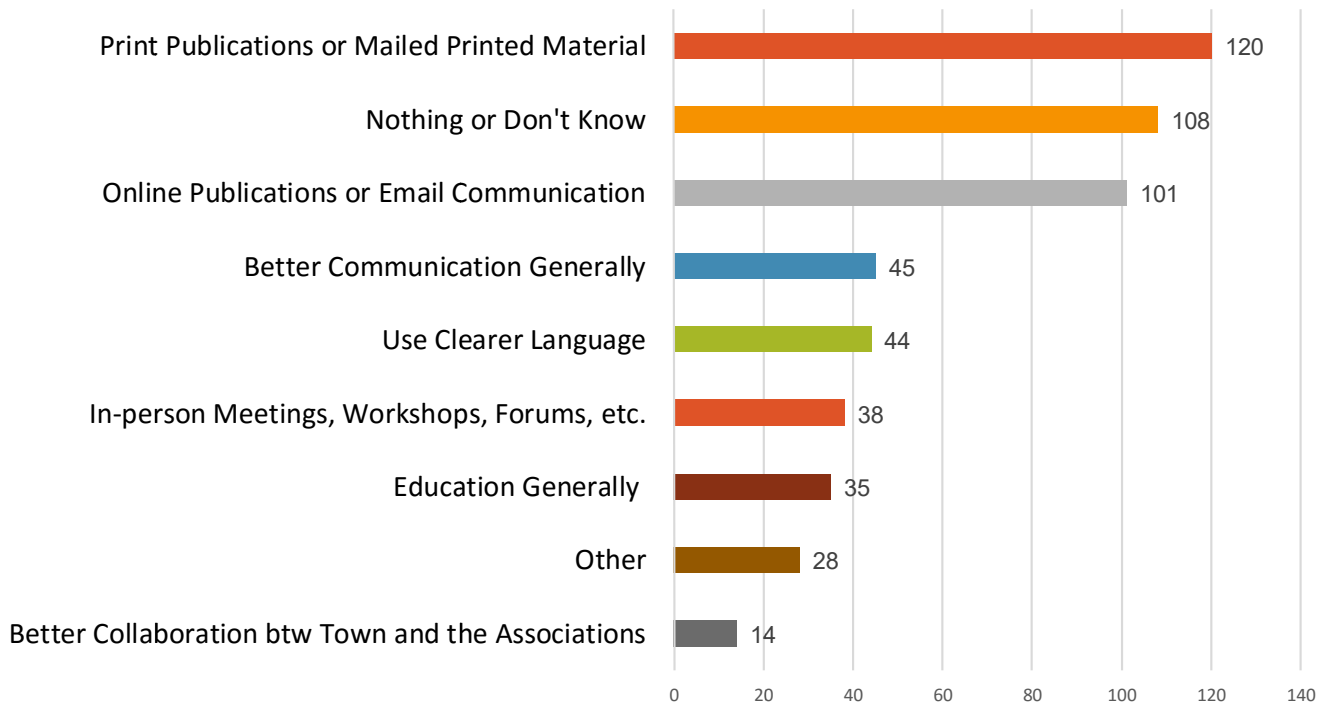
“Gladly pay more for safer, limited access streets.”

“Put a toll on the dogwood bridge to pay for road improvement.”

“As one who lives on one of these cut-through streets, I’ve petitioned for years that the town add traffic calming devices to our street to help curb excessive speeding. Please consider such devices in your planning.”

Question 22: What should be done to help citizens better understand the differences between Town government rules versus private association (SSCA, CPOA, etc.) rules?

Question 22: Number of Comments by Type



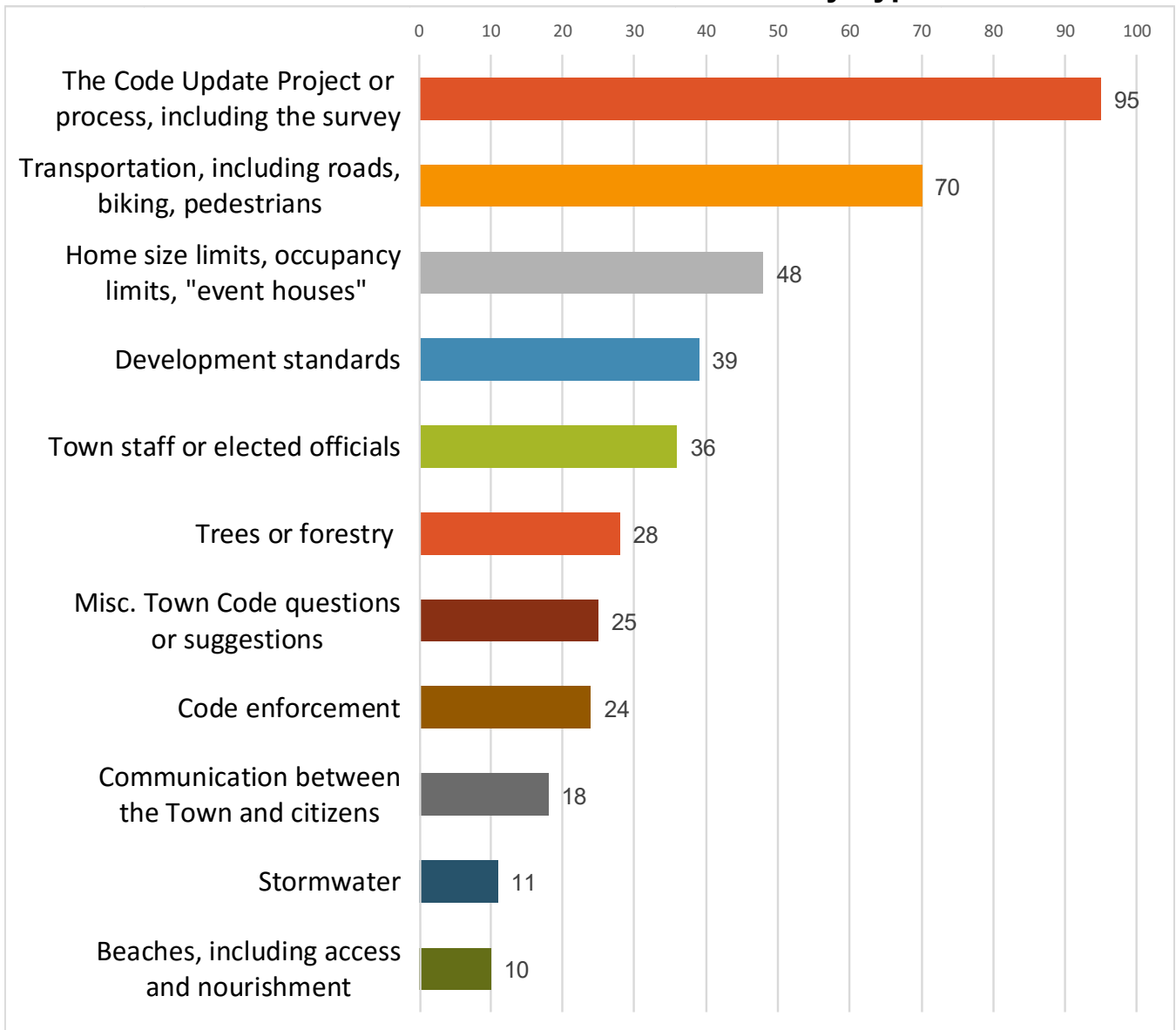
422 total responses

OBSERVATIONS:

- Several people brought up differences between resident and visitor levels of understanding, and the need for the town and associations to work more closely with rental agencies to educate renters.
- Many people suggested that rules be kept in a central location, such as on one webpage or in one handbook in both digital and hardcopy format.
- Many people asked for comparison summary tables of responsibilities and powers of the various associations and the Town for easy reference.
- Several respondents said that the town and the associations need to better collaborate to educate citizens and to ensure clarity and consistency of rules and their enforcement.
- Some suggested creative solutions, such as:
 - Small, in-home “peer education” sessions;
 - Kitchen magnets, especially for rental homes; and
 - New and improved informational documents, like a parking map for tourists that explains when and where they are allowed to park.

Question 23: Please list any other issues, thoughts, or concerns about the Town Code you would like to share in the box below.

Question 23: Number of Comments by Type



322 total responses

OBSERVATIONS:

- In addition to the 11 categories of comments shown in the chart above, which each received ten or more comments, there were 11 additional categories which each received more than one but fewer than ten comments. They were:
 - Public safety;
 - Exterior lighting;
 - Cell tower, cell coverage;
 - Economic development;
 - Parks and recreation;
 - Dogs, including leash laws;
 - Noise;
 - Parking;
 - Environmental regulations, including alternative energy;
 - Wildlife and stray animals; and
 - Differences between full-time and part-time resident concerns.
- Many respondents used this space to voice concern about the survey or the Town Code Update process generally. Chief concerns included poor survey design and misleading project intent.
- Others used the space to voice their vision or hopes for the project and for the Town as a whole. Common themes included keeping Southern Shores a primarily residential, naturally beautiful, and family-oriented town.
- Many people voiced concern not for the contents of the Town Code, but its enforcement, and called on the Town to better enforce both the existing and updated code.
- Some respondents added concerns related to the Town Code that were not covered elsewhere in the survey. These included:
 - Dune preservation;
 - Beach renourishment;
 - Beach access;
 - Street cleaning;
 - Enforcement of trash can placement in residential areas;
 - Business permitting;
 - Maximum pier length; and
 - Cemetery upkeep.

Appendix

The following pages list the written comments received by question. Comments are listed in tabular format and are un-edited. The table below summarizes the number of comments by question.

Question #	Number of Comments	Question #	Number of Comments
3	129	14	90
4	129	15	98
5	147	16	116
6	132	17	81
7	111	18	65
8	95	19	79
9	130	20	87
10	116	21	116
11	142	22	422
12	92	23	322
13	73	total	2,772