



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING: COMMUNITY INPUT SURVEY RESULTS



Mansfield Town Council Meeting
September 13, 2021



SURVEY OBJECTIVES

- Promote public engagement in the ARPA planning process
- Convey to residents significance/uniqueness of ARPA funding
- Help the Town Council and staff gauge public support for various potential ARPA-funded projects, programs, and/or initiatives



Your place to grow

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) - Community Input Survey

1. Brief Overview

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) - a recently enacted wide-ranging \$1.9 trillion federal relief package - provides support to State, local, and Tribal governments in responding to the impact of COVID-19 and efforts to minimize the impacts of COVID-19 in their communities. Because ARPA provides a substantial infusion of resources, Mansfield has a unique opportunity to rebuild a stronger, more economically vibrant, and equitable community.

These funds may be used:

- To respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;
- To respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers;
- For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19 public health emergency; and
- To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

Mansfield's allocation of ARPA funding is approximately \$7.5 million. The Town Council and staff are seeking input from community members to get a better sense of how the public would like to see these funds invested to maximize the positive impact on our Town. This survey represents our first step in this important process. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey and provide us your valued thoughts and perspectives.



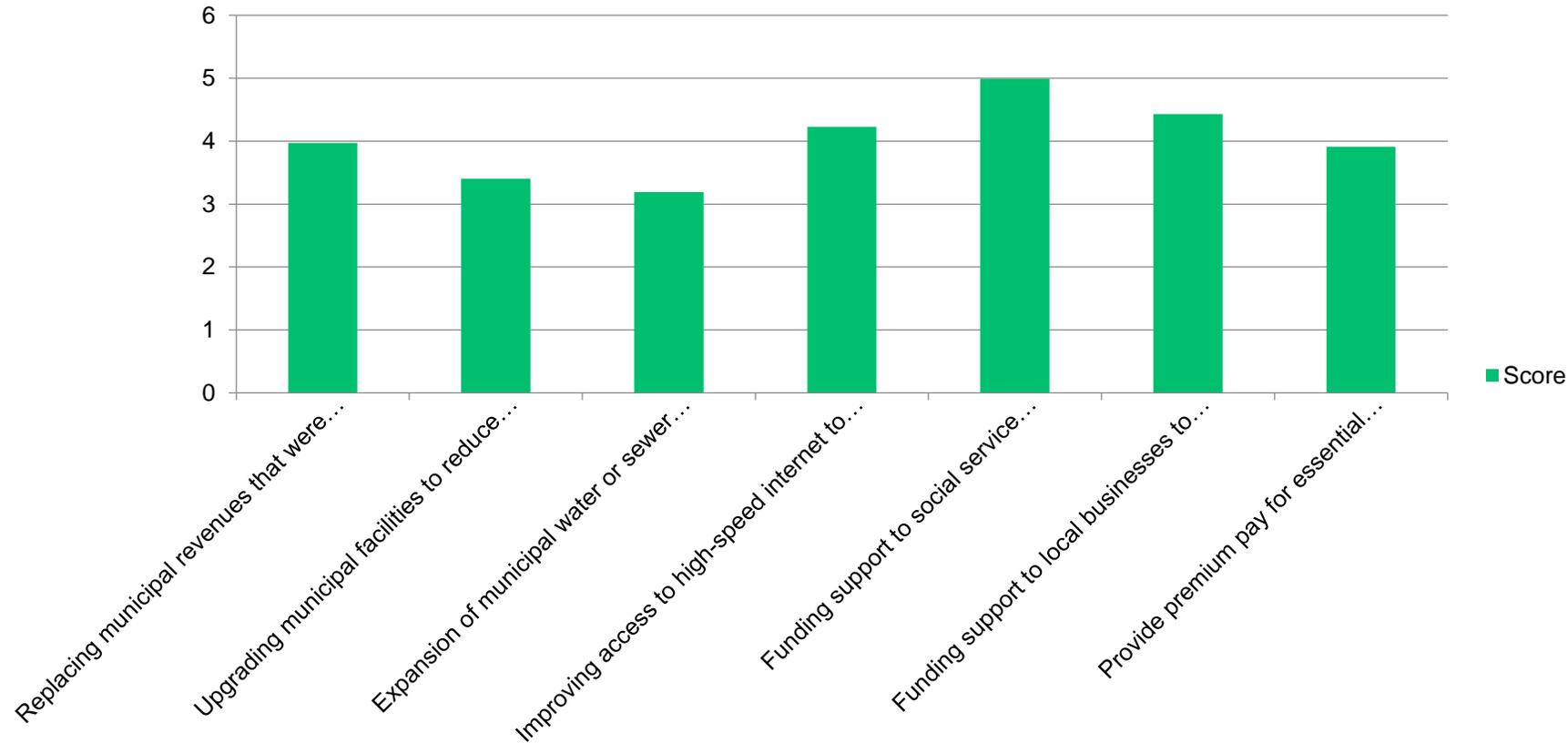
SURVEY METHODS & DATA

- 17 Questions
 - Combination of rank choice, Likert scale (with comment boxes), multiple choice, and open-ended questions
 - The final five questions were demographic in nature to help us understand the composition of the respondents
- SurveyMonkey served as the platform
- Survey was open for approximately four weeks (closing on August 27) and its availability was communicated via a variety of means on a weekly basis
- Total responses = 389
- Survey Q1 (the only question that used rank choice options) presented issues for trying to complete the survey on a smart phone, and would have necessitated that a participant use a different device or proceed to the remaining questions without accurately ranking the choices in accordance with their actual preferences.



SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 1

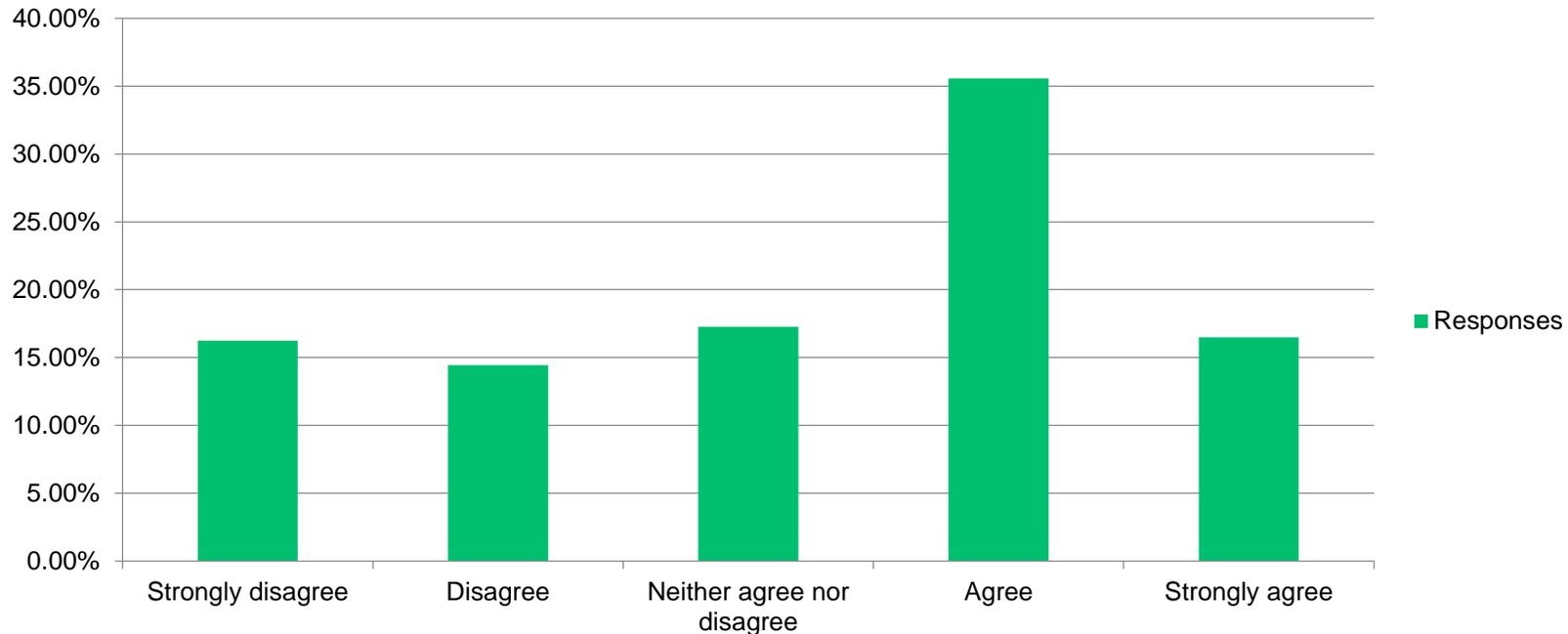
Q1: Please rank the following potential eligible uses of ARPA funds in order of importance where the top item is the highest priority use and the bottom item is lowest priority use.





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 2

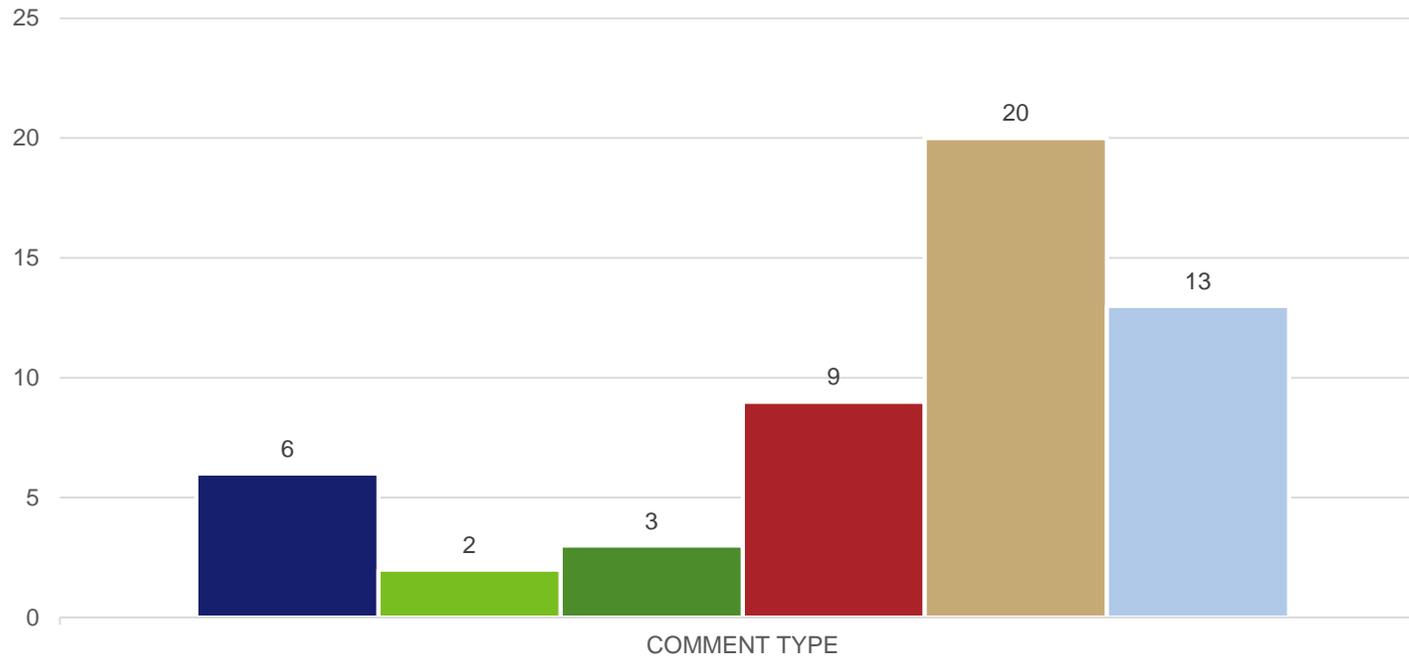
Q2: Replacing municipal revenues that were reduced/foregone as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (example: membership dues at the Mansfield Community Center experienced significant decline over the past 18 months due to the pandemic)





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 2 COMMENTS SUMMARY

Q2: Municipal Revenue Replacement

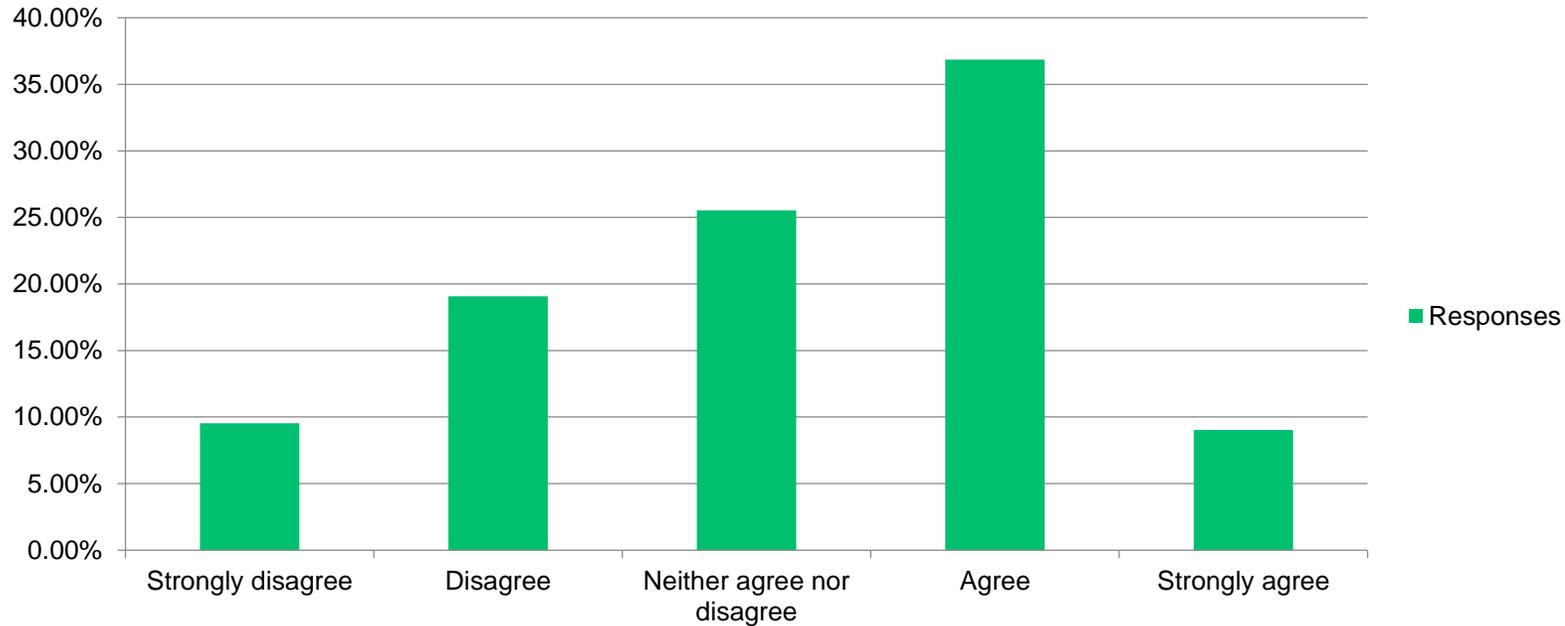


- Identification of other funding priorities (parks, debt reduction, roads, etc.)
- Difficulties accessing and interpreting on-line survey
- Low Priority to replace municipal revenues
- General Support for replacing municipal revenues
- Opposition to using funds to subsidize MCC
- General Support for the MCC



SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 3

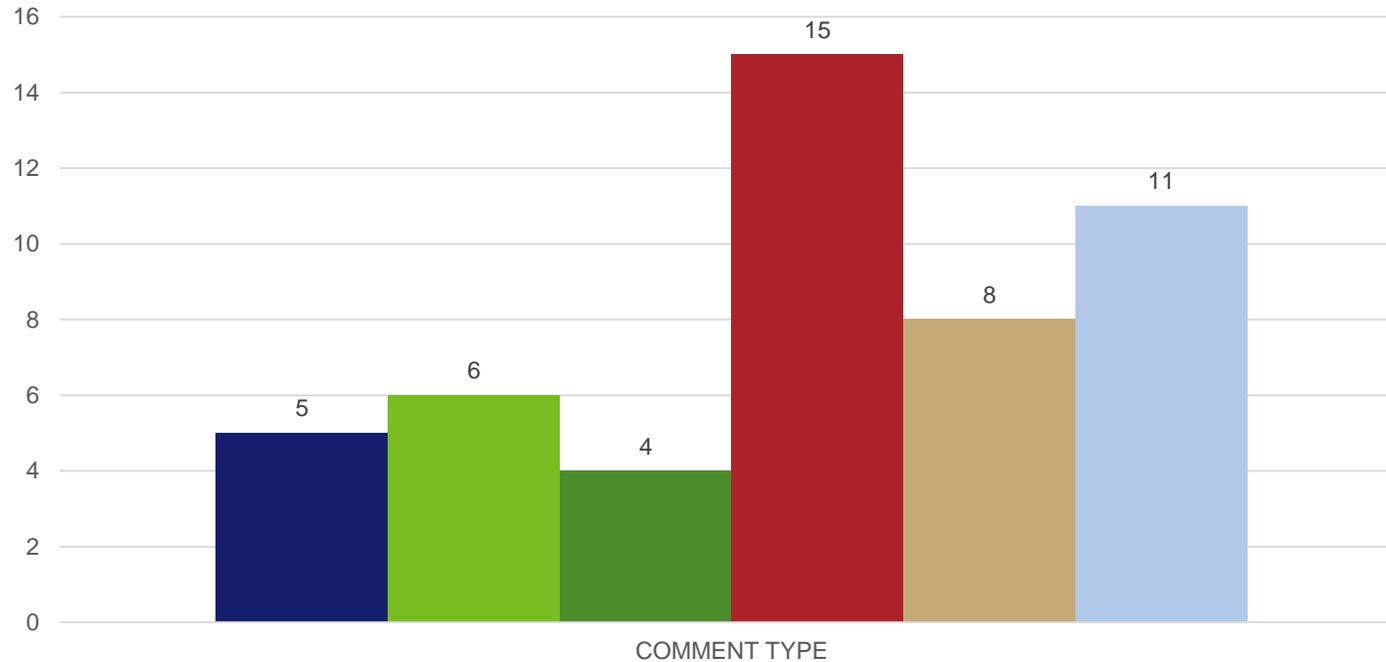
Q3: Upgrading municipal facilities to reduce potential visitor/employee exposure to COVID-19 or other public health concern in the future (example: alterations to the layouts of interior/office spaces and upgrades to air handling/purification systems)





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 3 COMMENTS SUMMARY

Q3: Public Facility Improvements

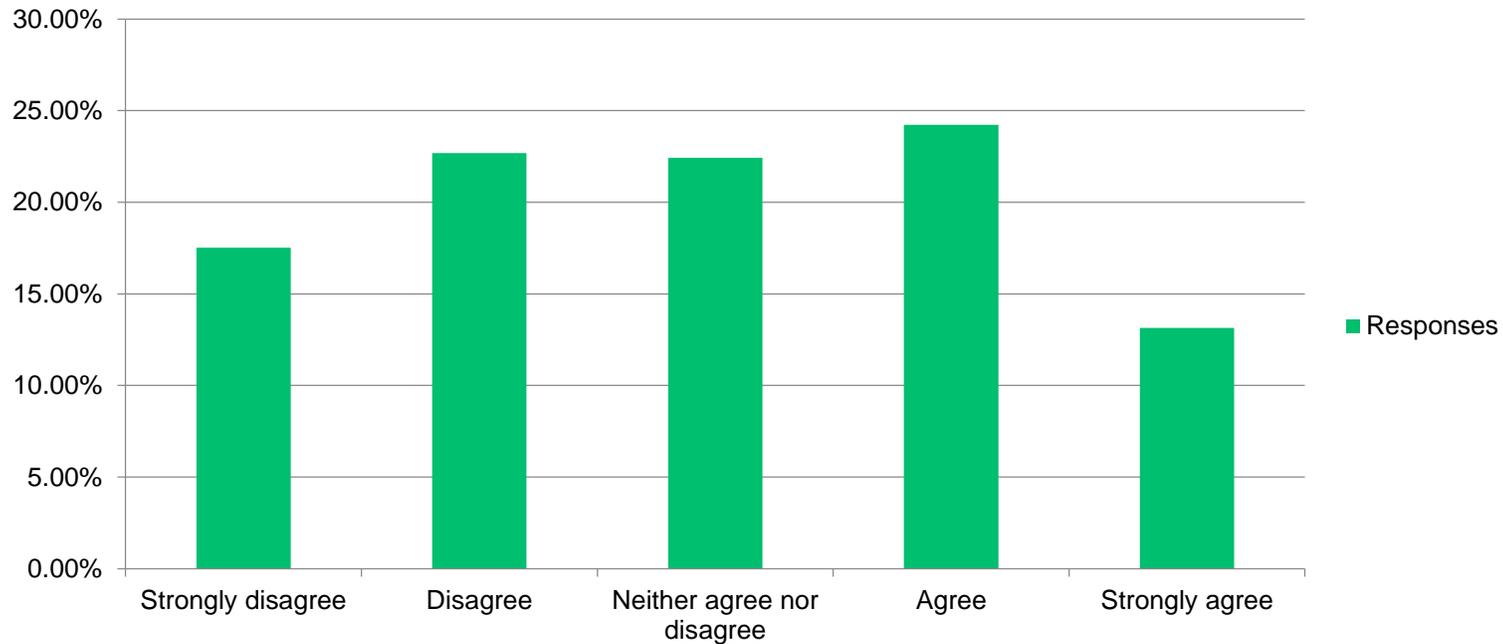


- Support for HVAC Upgrades
- Support for low cost options to promote public safety
- Unsure if benefit outweighs cost
- General Support for Improvements & Specific Recommendations for what should be included
- Prioritize Schools & Buildings that Serve Large Numbers of People
- General Opposition



SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 4

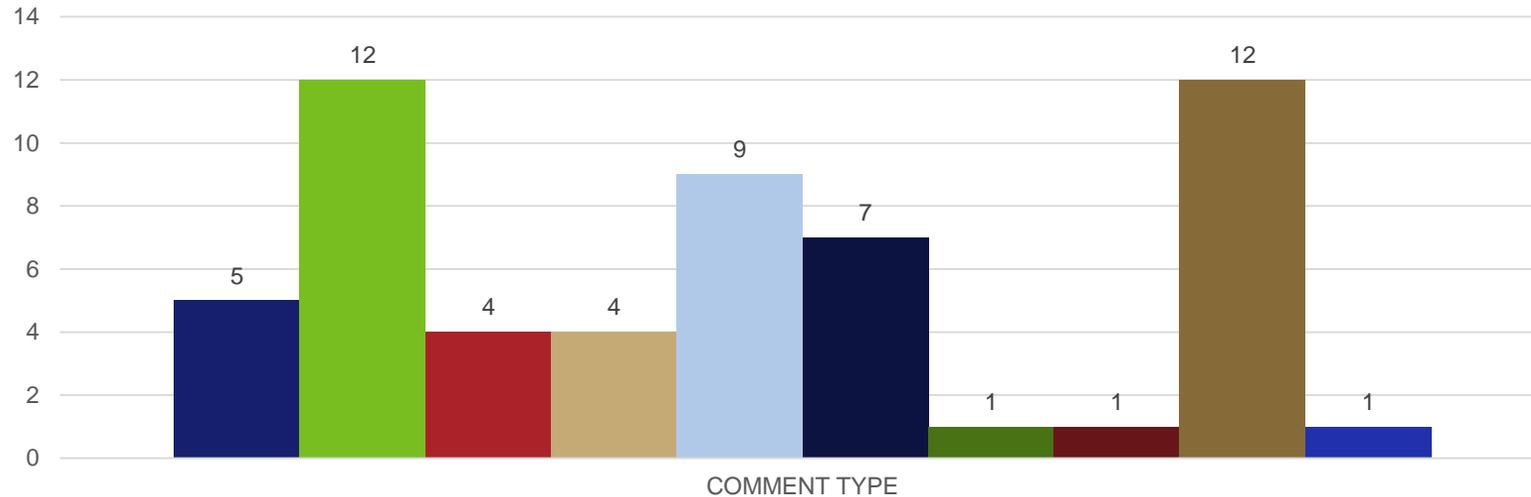
Q4: Expansion of municipal water or sewer system infrastructure/service (example: construction of additional water or sewer mains to serve additional residential or commercial customers)





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 4 COMMENTS SUMMARY

Q4: Expansion of Municipal Water/Sewer Infrastructure

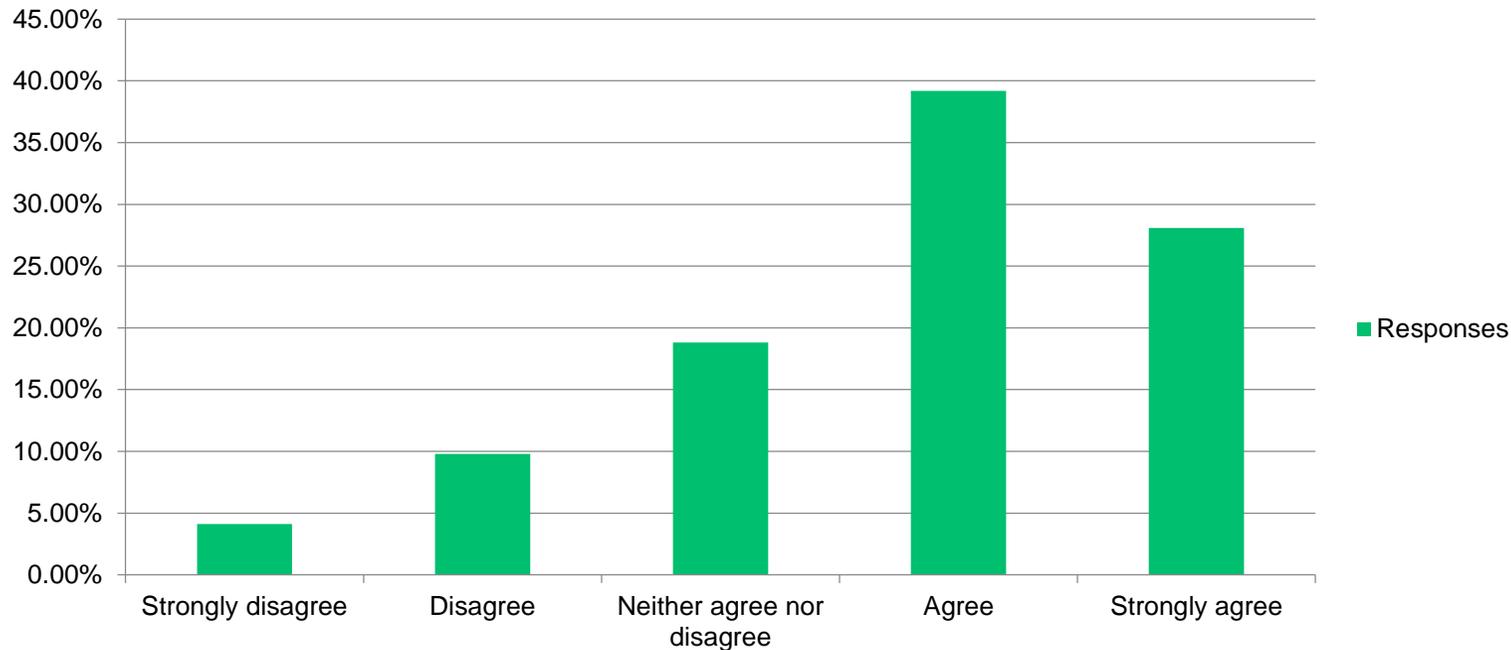


- General Support
- General Opposition and/or Not Needed
- Low Priority
- Should explore other funding sources as this is not related to COVID-19
- Concerned that infrastructure improvements will incentivize unwanted growth
- Does Not Benefit Whole Community
- Needs more information
- Support for Focus on Commercial Areas
- Concern with UConn Influence/ Interference/ Impact on Decisions and Infrastructure Usage
- Concern with Increasing Utility Costs



SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 5

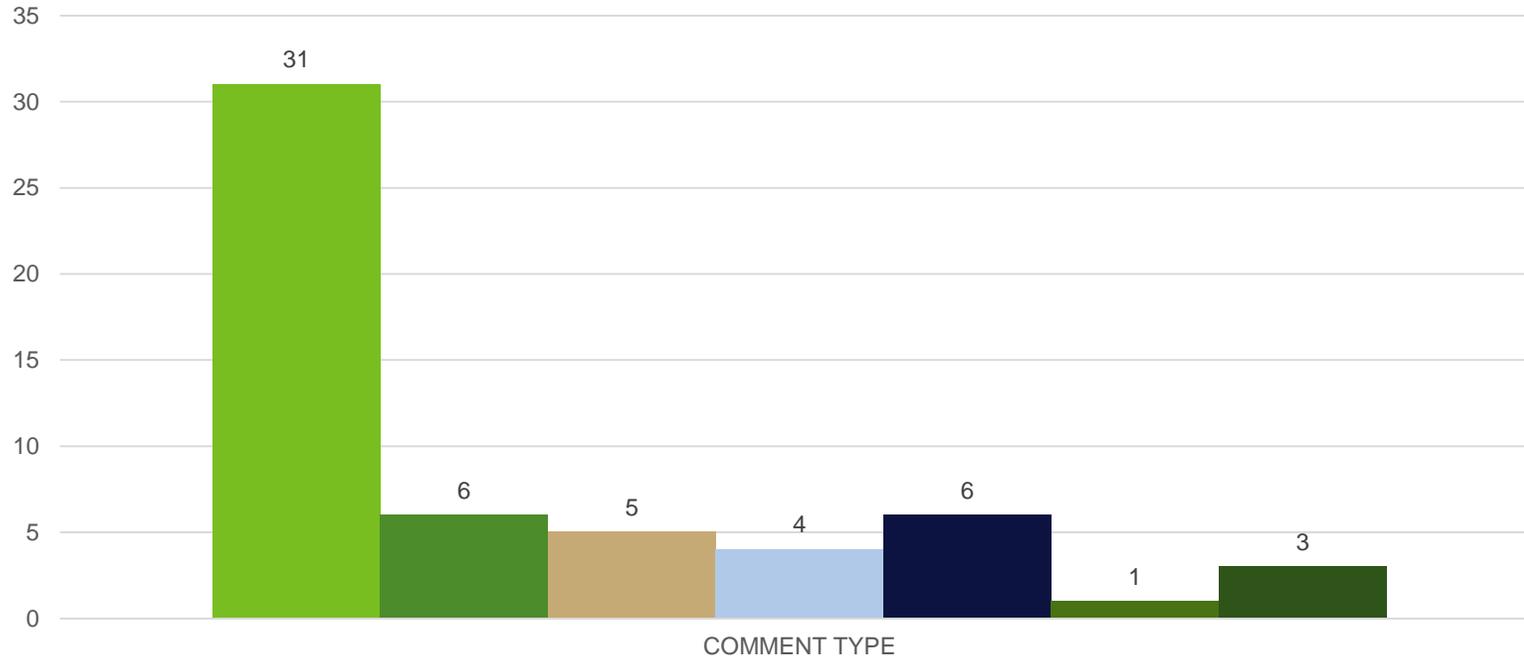
Q5: Improving access to high-speed internet to reach presently under-served locations and populations in our community (example: installation of a more expansive network of public Wi-Fi hotspots throughout Town)





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 5 COMMENTS SUMMARY

Q5: Improving Access to High-Speed Internet

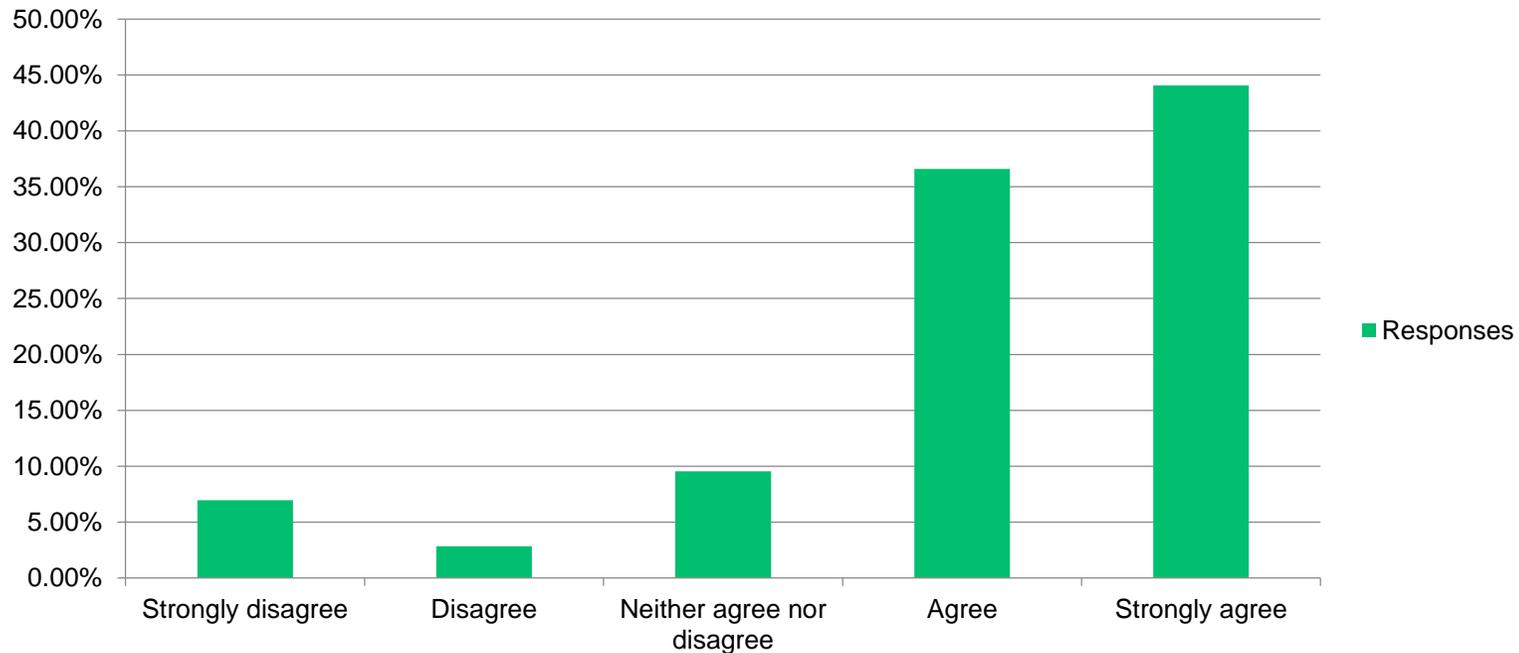


- Support for improving access to high-speed internet/Ideas
- Priority access for school children
- Low priority or other priorities for use of funding identified.
- Need for competition in internet service providers (Issues with current cable/internet provider in Mansfield)
- Unsure of need
- Generally opposed
- Concerned that improvements would only benefit Downtown Storrs/UConn



SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 6

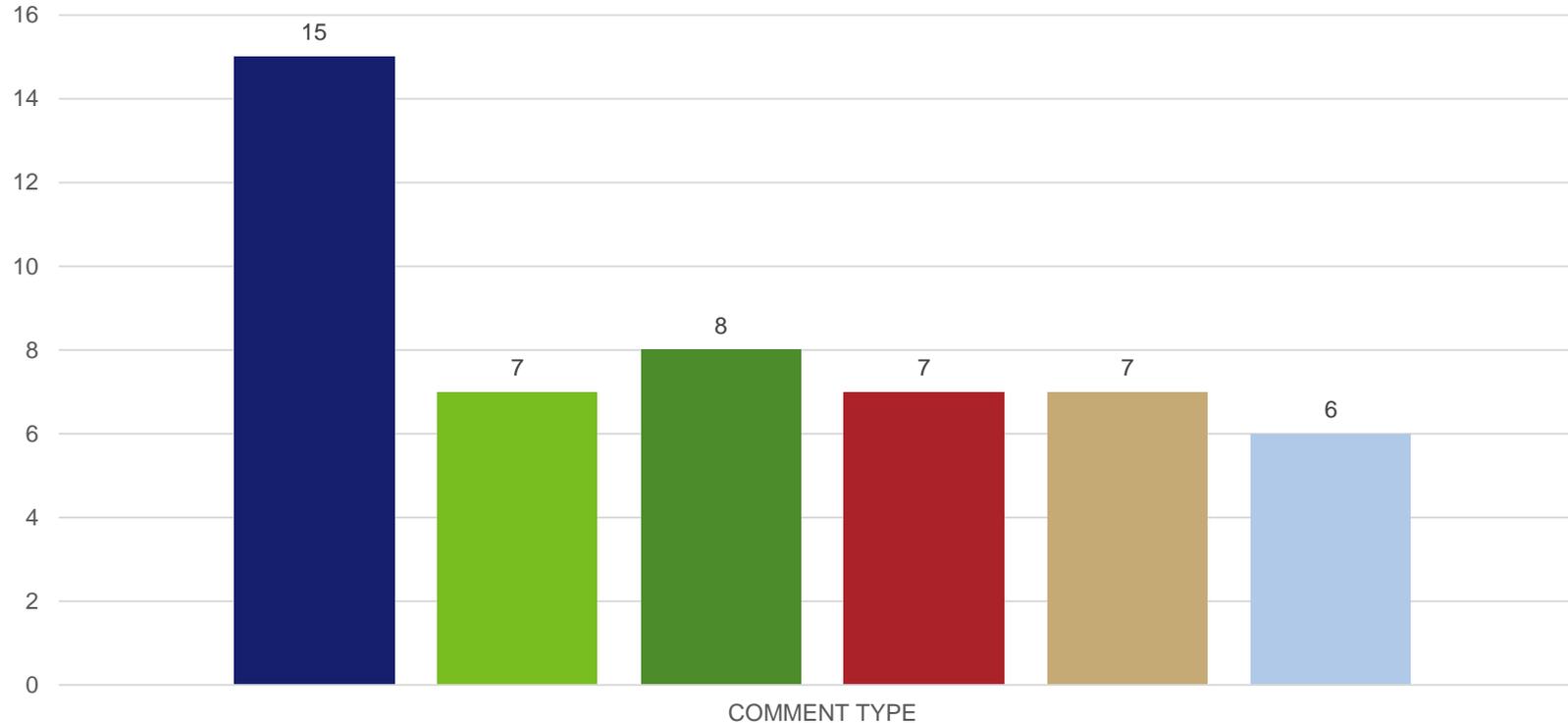
Q6: Funding support to social service organizations that provide assistance to vulnerable populations in the community (example: additional funding to promote existing/new mental health clinics)





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 6 COMMENTS SUMMARY

Q6: Funding Support to Social Service Organizations

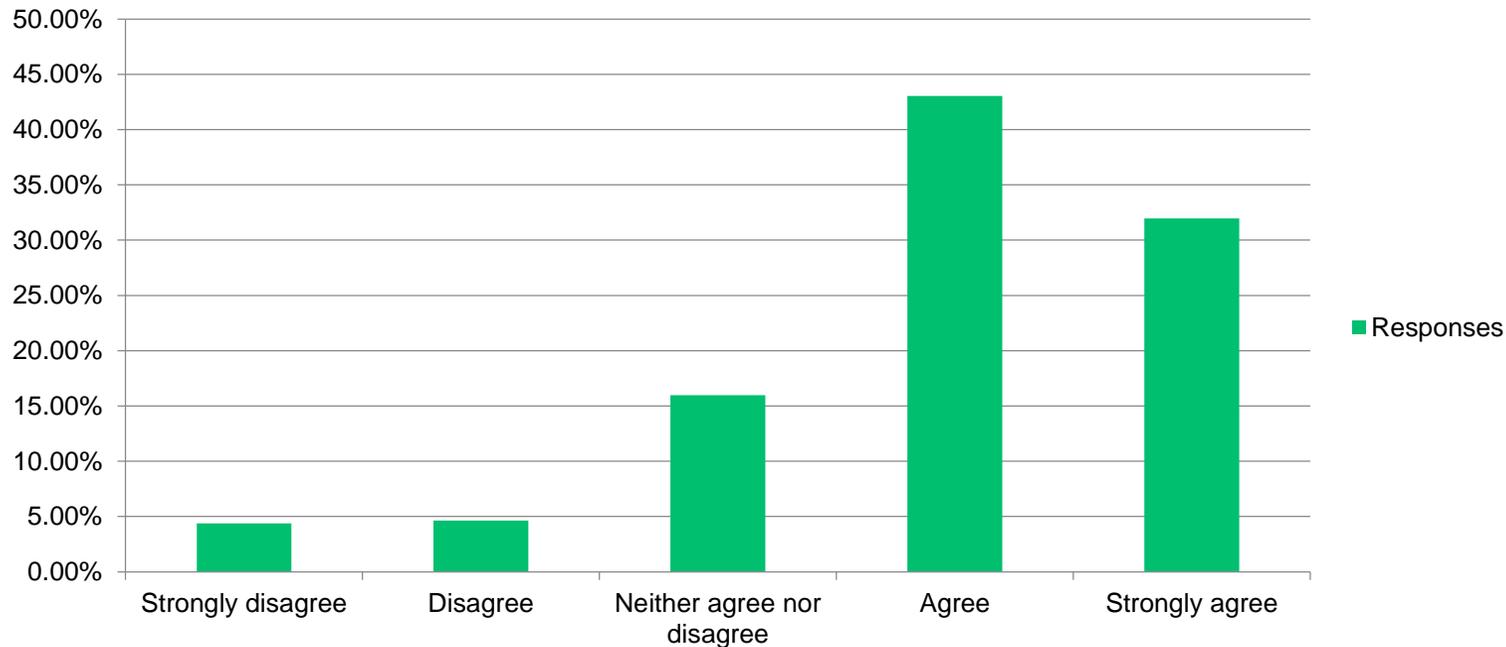


- High Priority
- Funds should not be used for this activity
- Focus on improving mental health services, both municipal and private
- Focus on improving municipal social services, not private organizations
- Suggestions related to implementation and prioritization
- Suggestions for other types of community/resident assistance programs that could be supported with ARPA funding.



SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 7

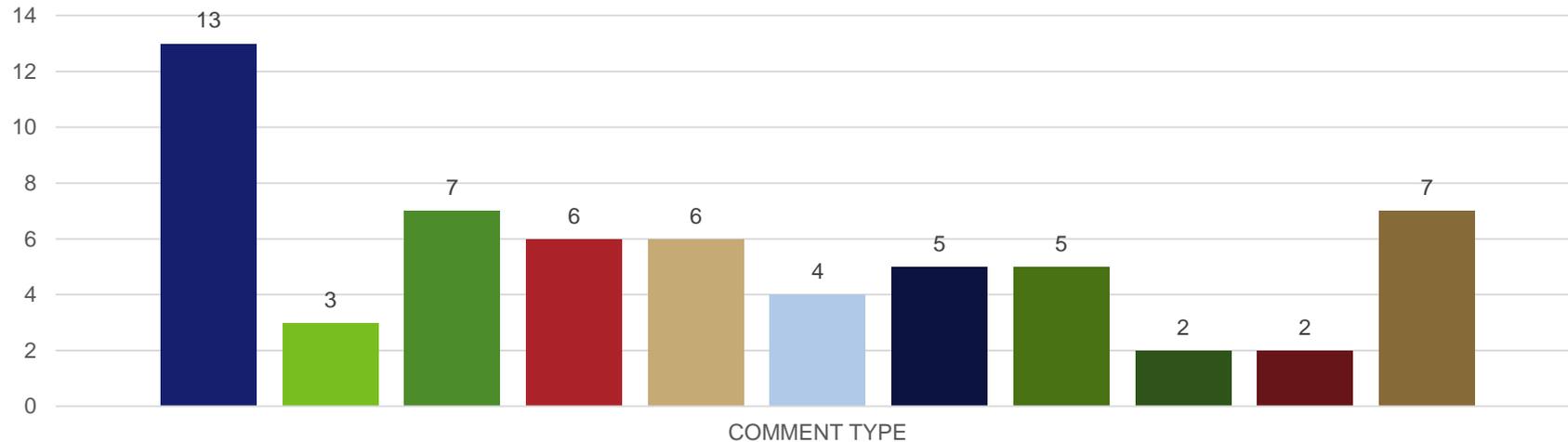
Q7: Funding support to local businesses to promote/stimulate economic development (example: grants to local businesses that experienced marked revenue losses due to the pandemic)





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 7 COMMENTS SUMMARY

Q7: Funding to Support Local Business/Economic Development

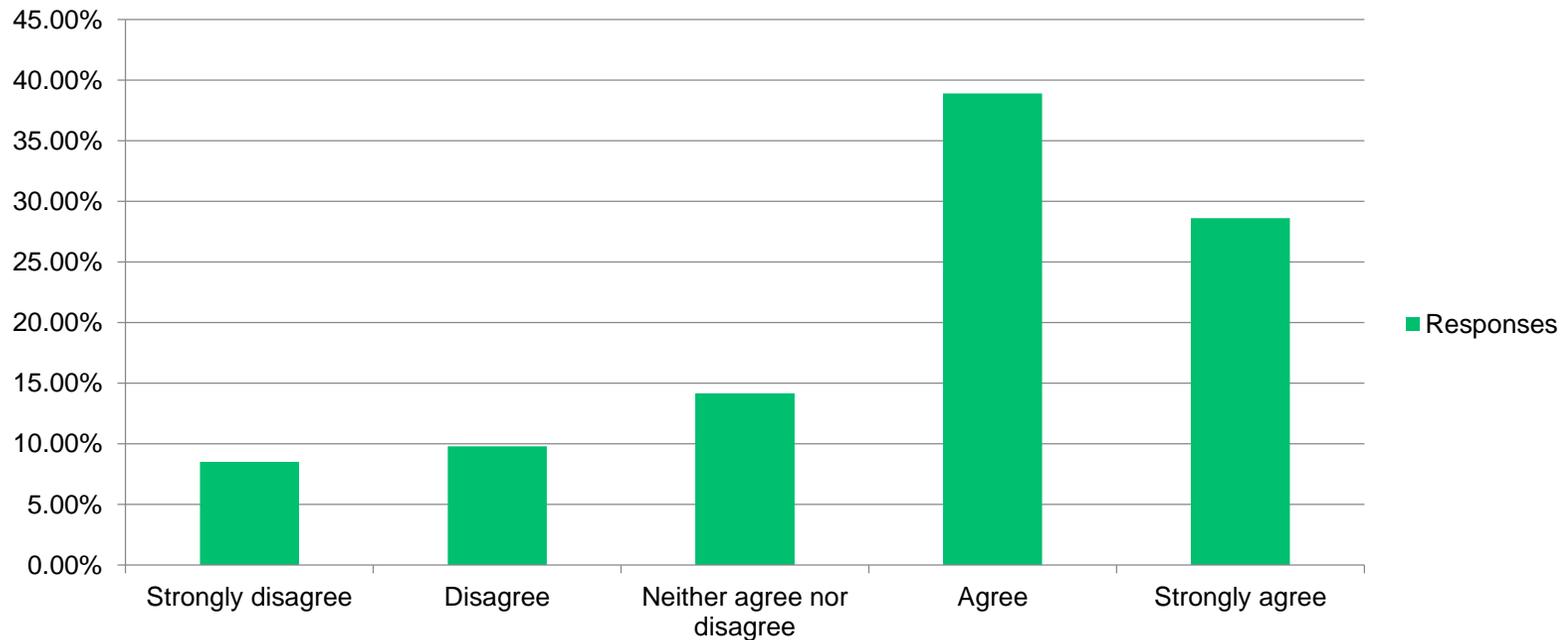


- High Priority
- Lower Priority
- Funds should not be used to assist businesses
- Focus on small local businesses (not national chains/franchises)
- Focus efforts on tax and rent relief.
- Need to increase safety/resiliency as pandemic persists.
- Suggestions on how to use funding to grow local businesses and economy
- Suggestions for non-business related projects.
- Need more information to provide constructive feedback
- UConn should do more to support local businesses/ economy.
- Suggestions on implementation, identifying priorities for funding, and equitable disbursement of funds.



SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 8

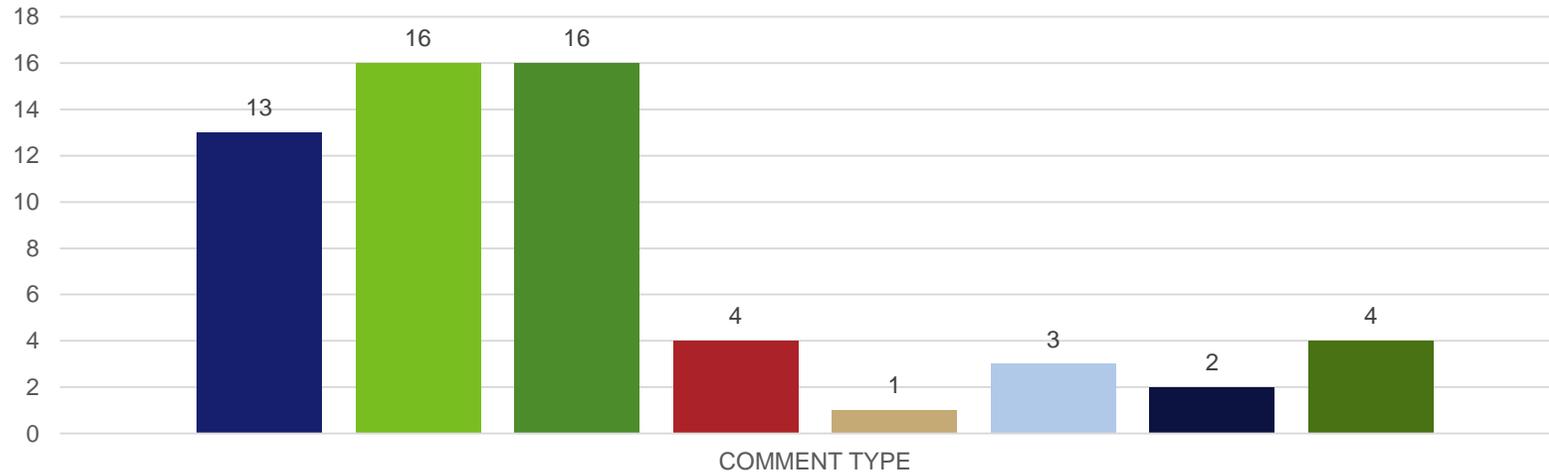
Q8: Providing premium pay for essential workers, including certain categories of municipal employees, who have risked personal exposure to COVID-19 in the course of serving the public (example: many types of employees, such as transfer station attendants,





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 8 COMMENTS SUMMARY

Q8: Premium Pay for Essential Workers

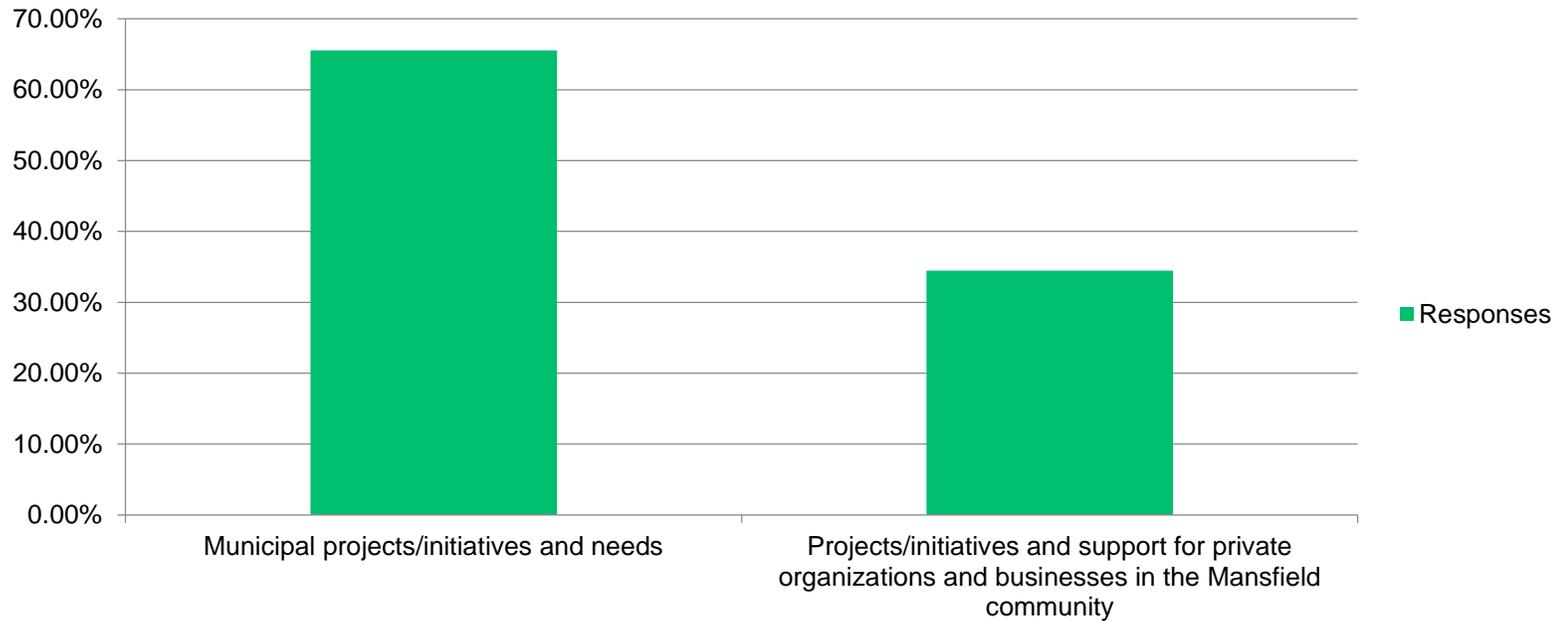


- General Support
- General Opposition
- Identification of specific departments/types of work that should be eligible; including teachers & EHHD staff
- Expand to include non-town employed essential workers
- Concern with creating on-going expenses
- Questions on implementation
- Identification of other priorities
- General comments regarding fair/livable wages and benefits



SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 9

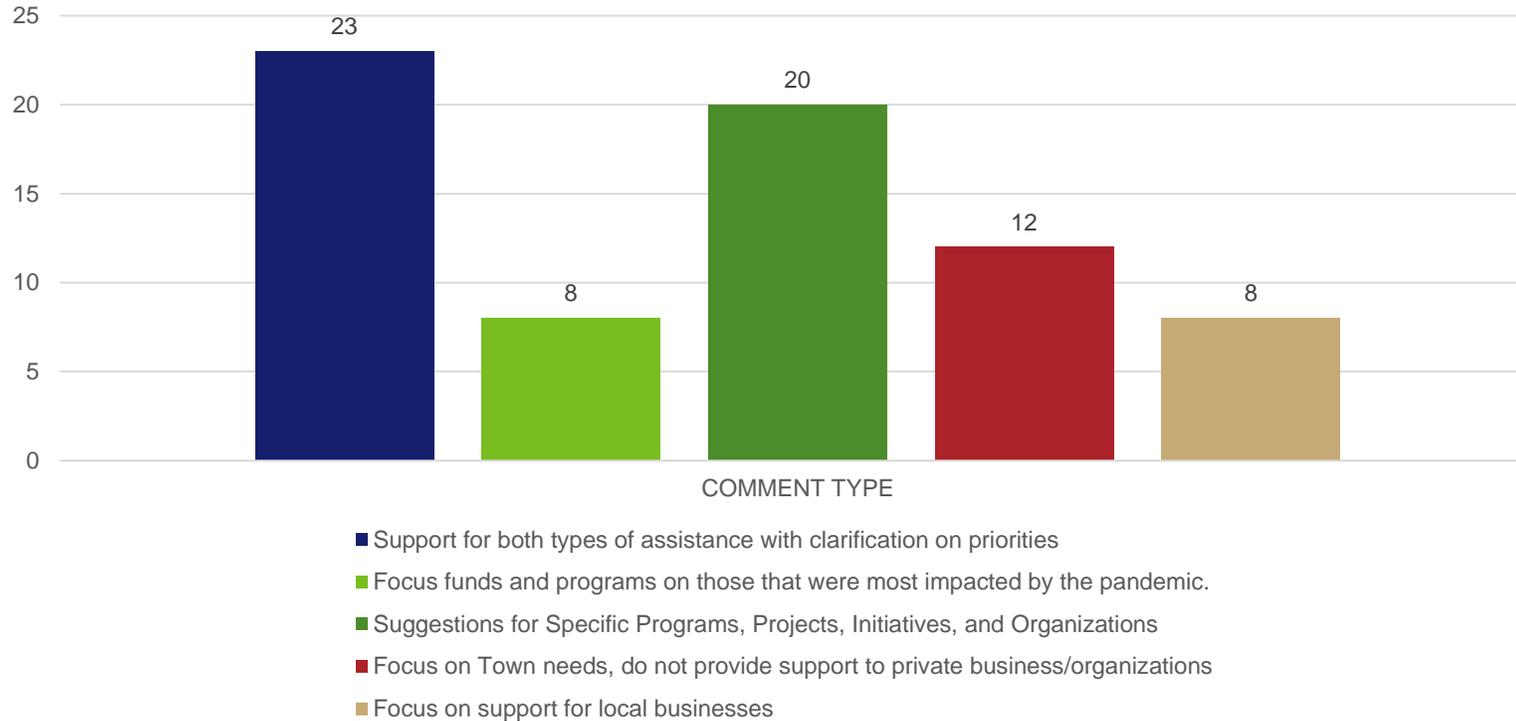
Q9: Do you generally feel that it is more important for the Town to use its ARPA allocation to fund municipal projects/initiatives and needs or projects/initiatives and support for private organizations and businesses in the Mansfield community?





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 9 COMMENTS SUMMARY

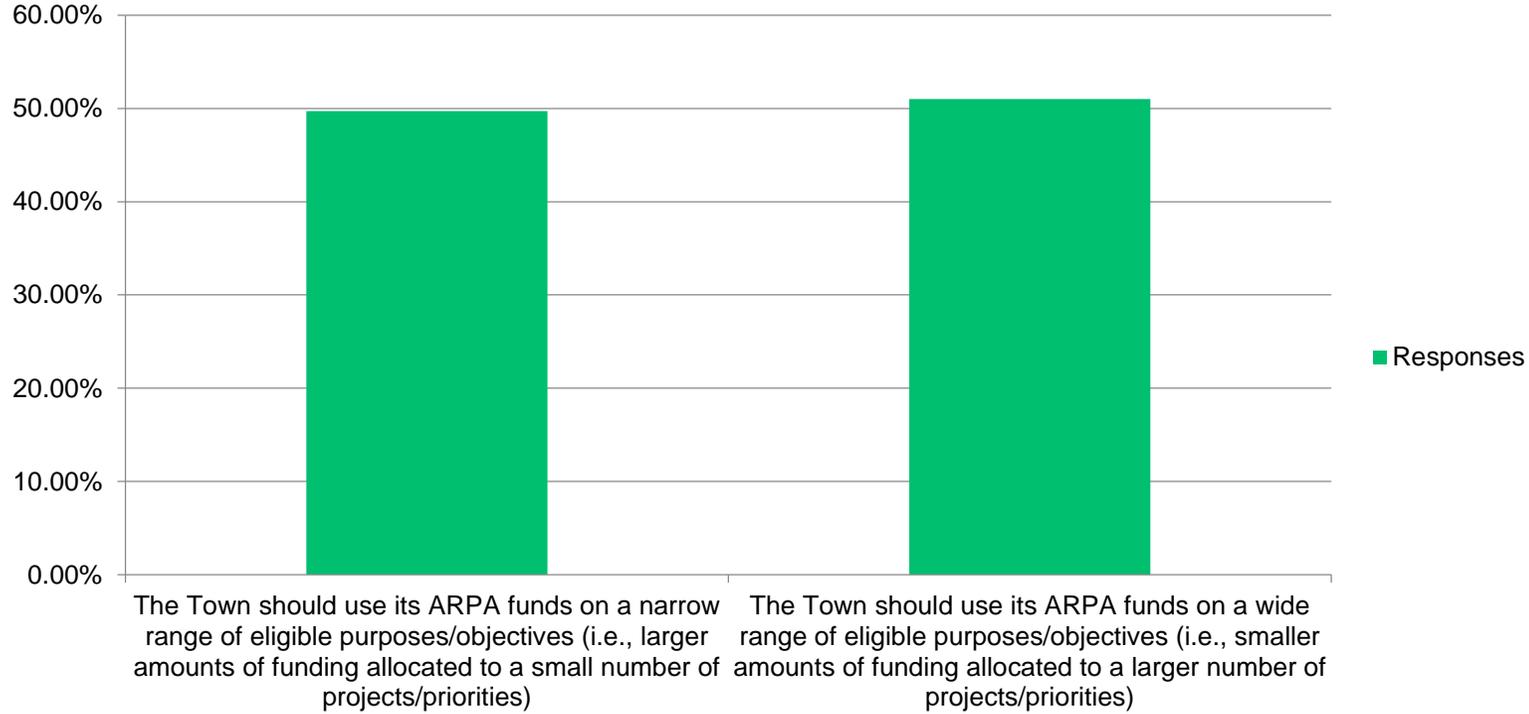
Q9: Use of Funding (Municipal or Private Assistance)





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 10

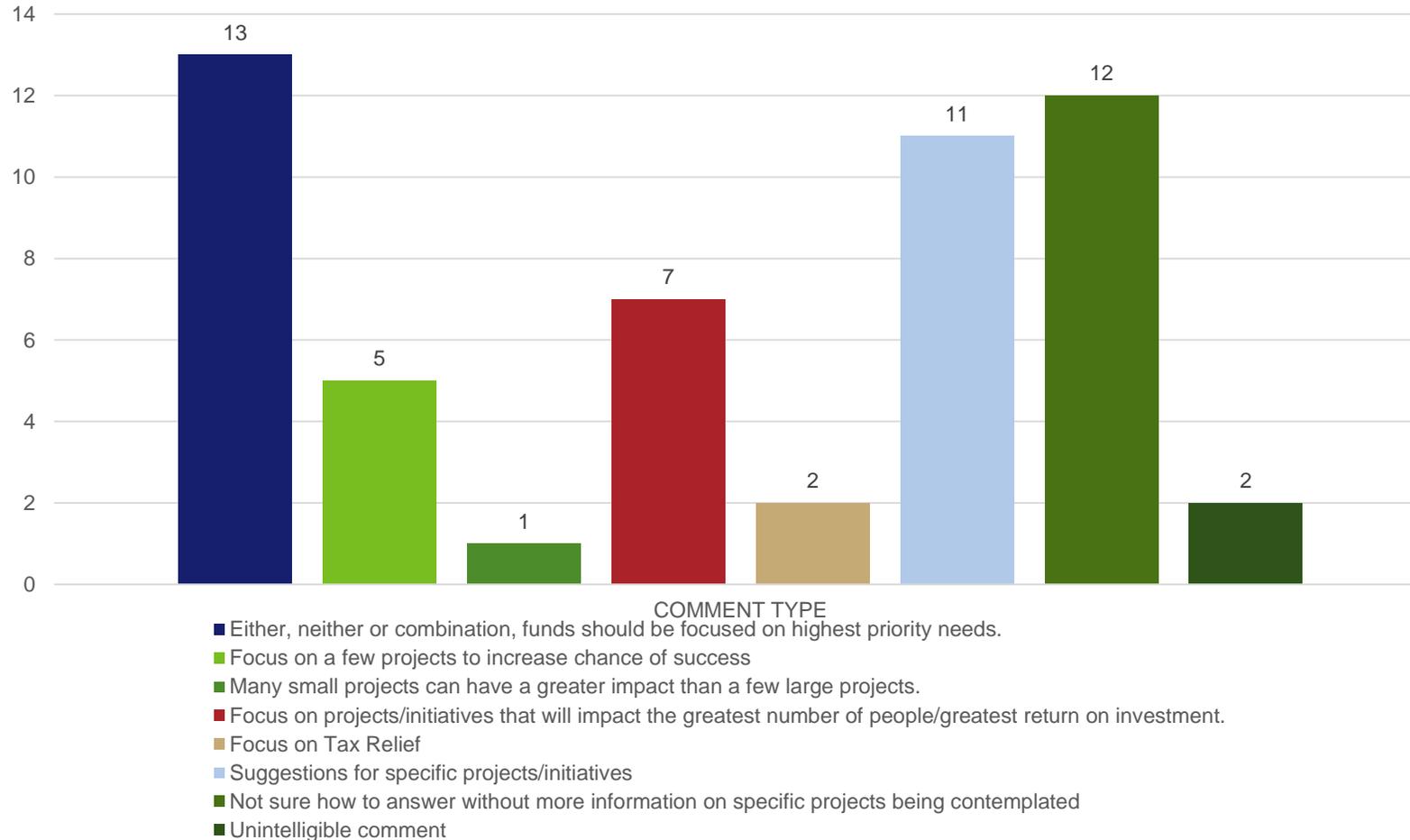
Q10: Which of the following best describes your preference with respect to how municipal ARPA funding should be apportioned (check only one):





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 10 COMMENTS SUMMARY

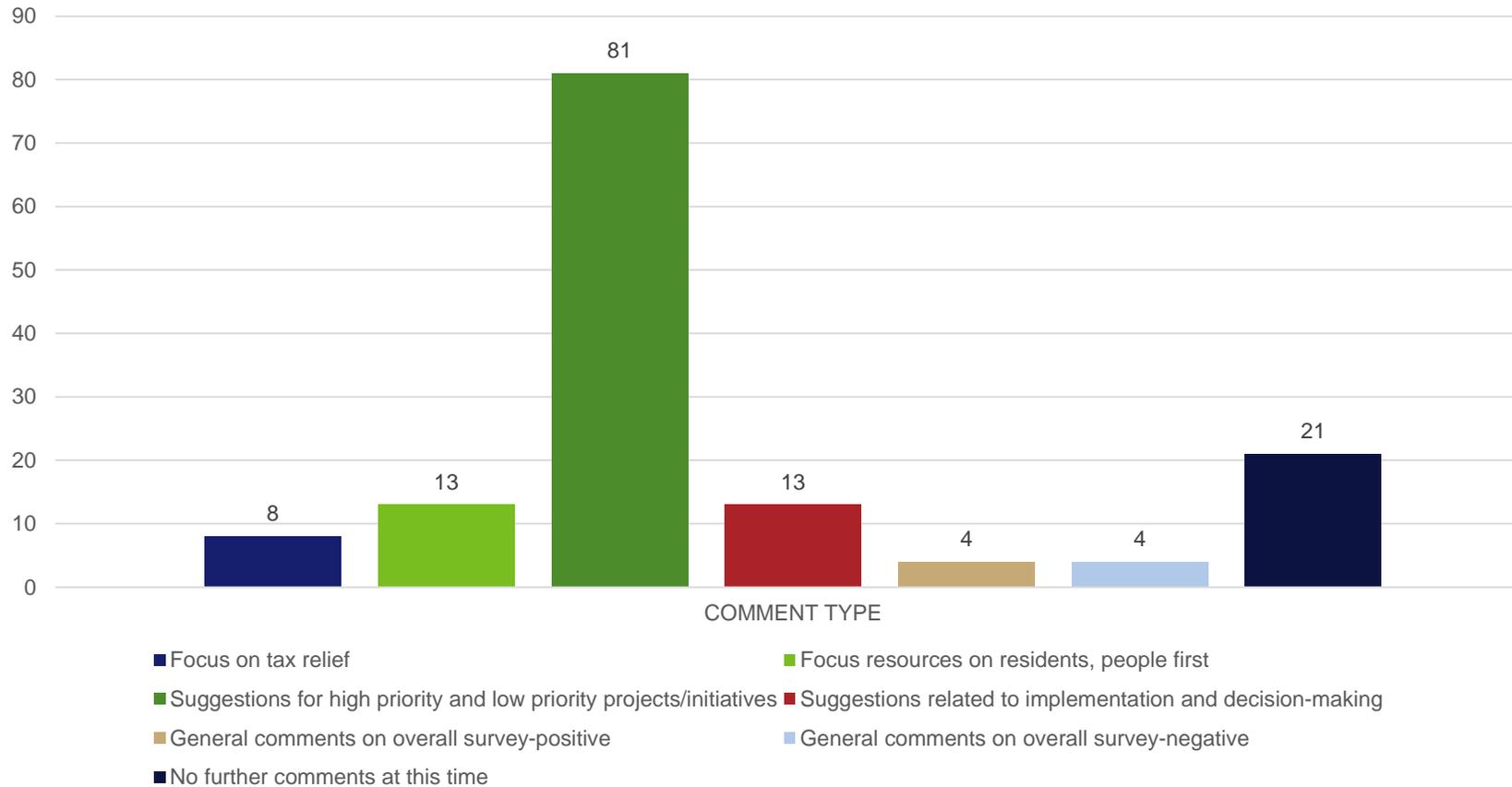
Q10: Few Large Projects or Many Small Projects





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 11

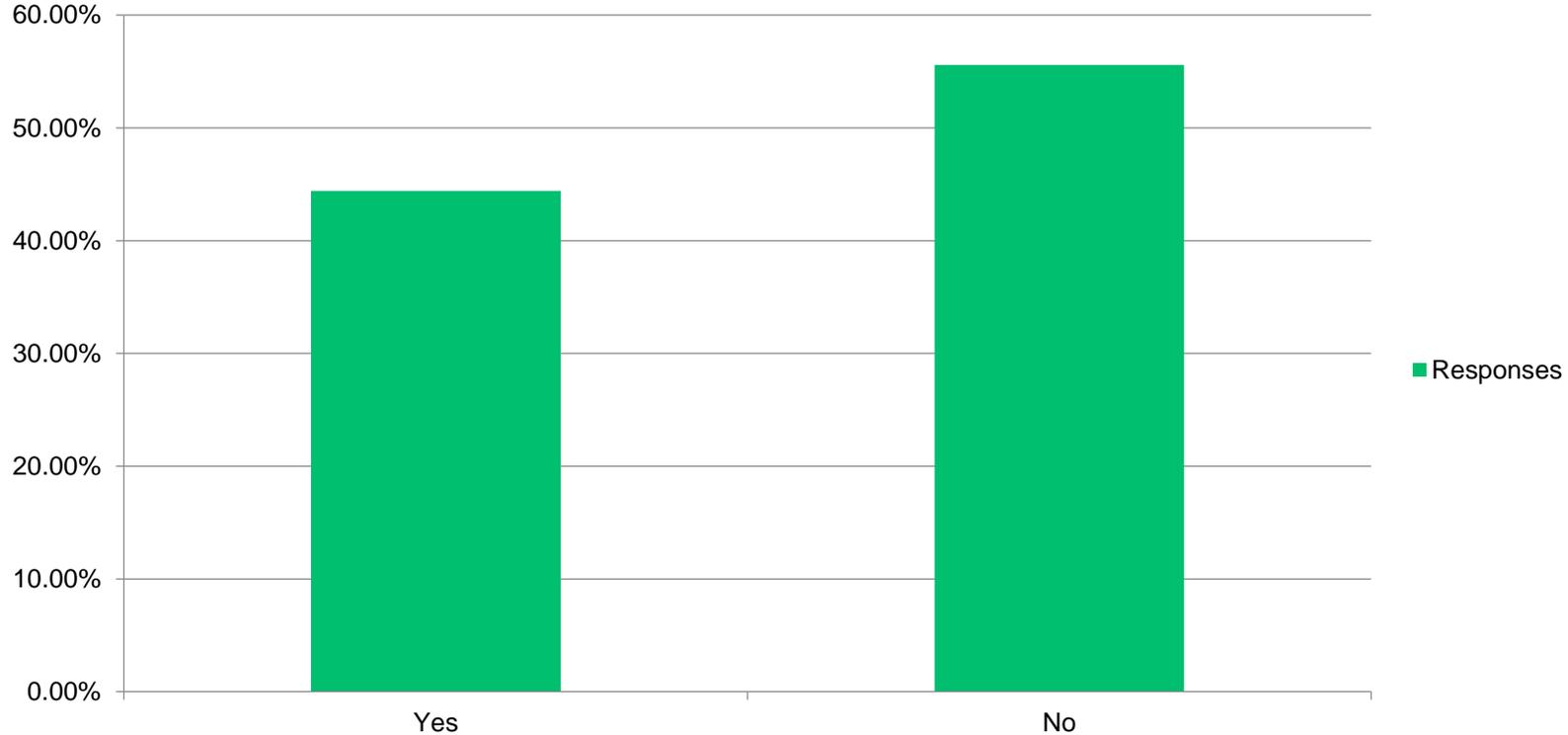
Q11: Please provide any other feedback you have regarding how the Town of Mansfield should use its ARPA funding allocation





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 12

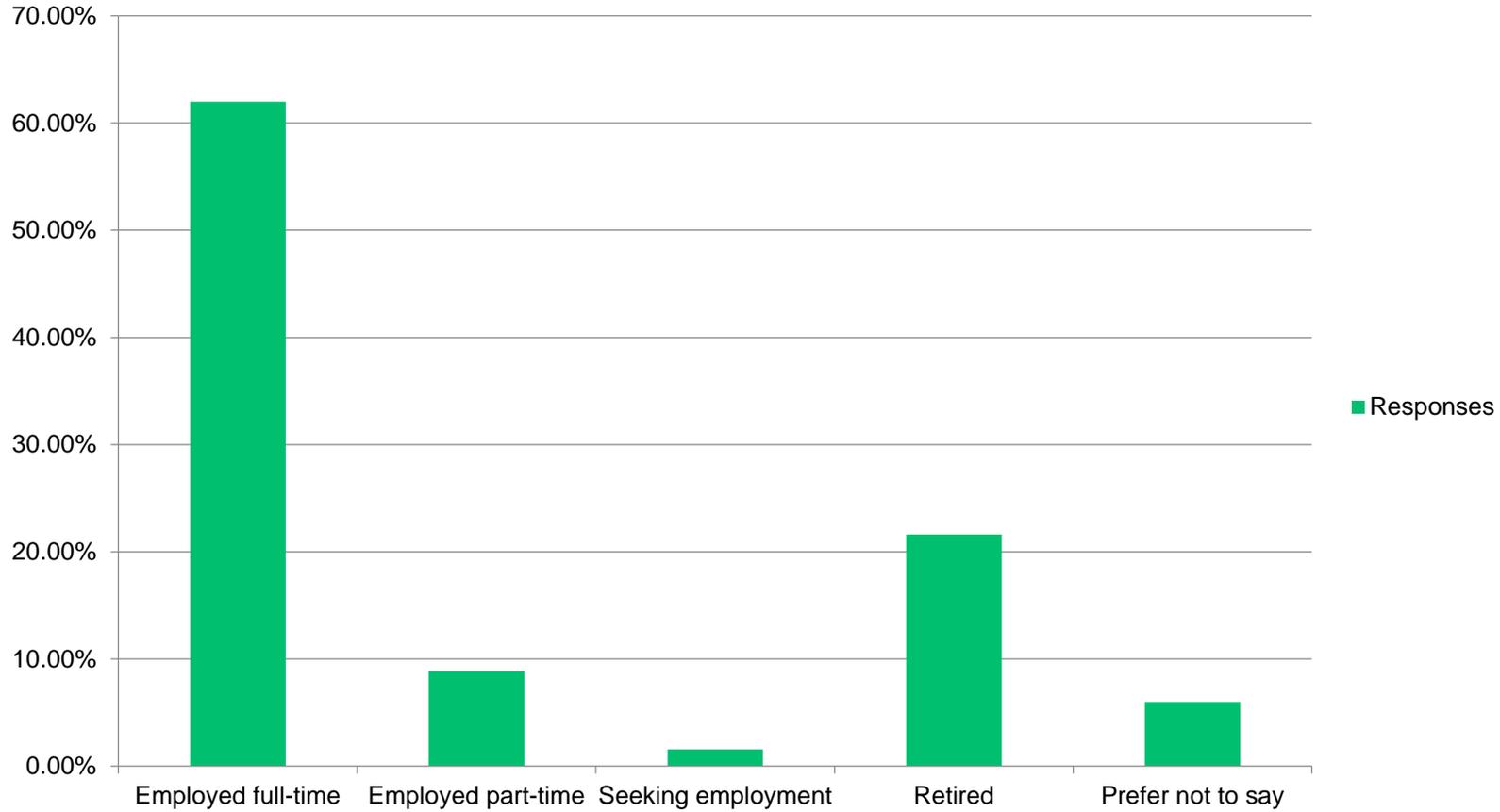
Q12: Would you be interested in participating in future community forums about how ARPA funds will be invested in our community?





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 13

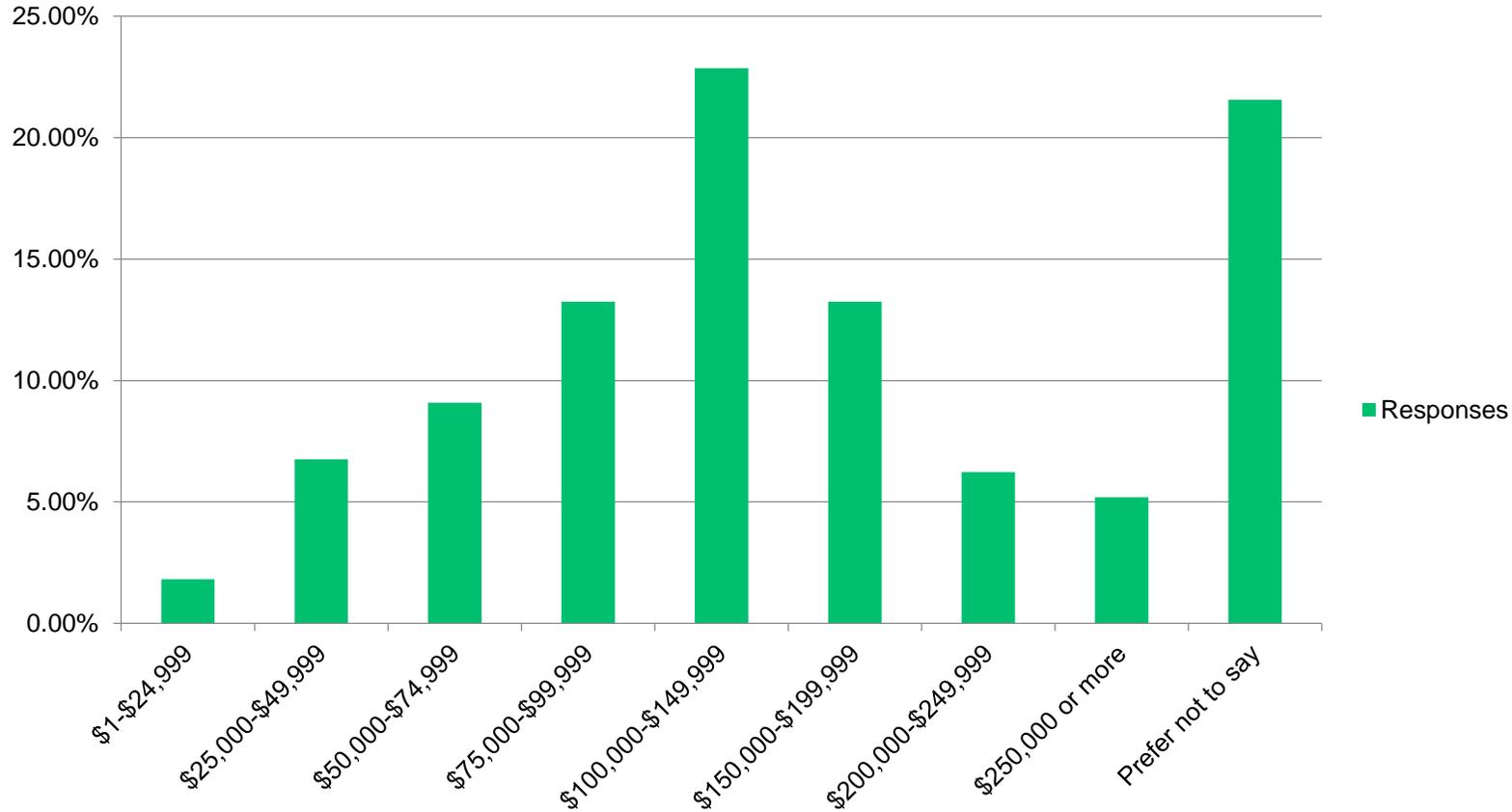
Q13: What is your present employment status?





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 14

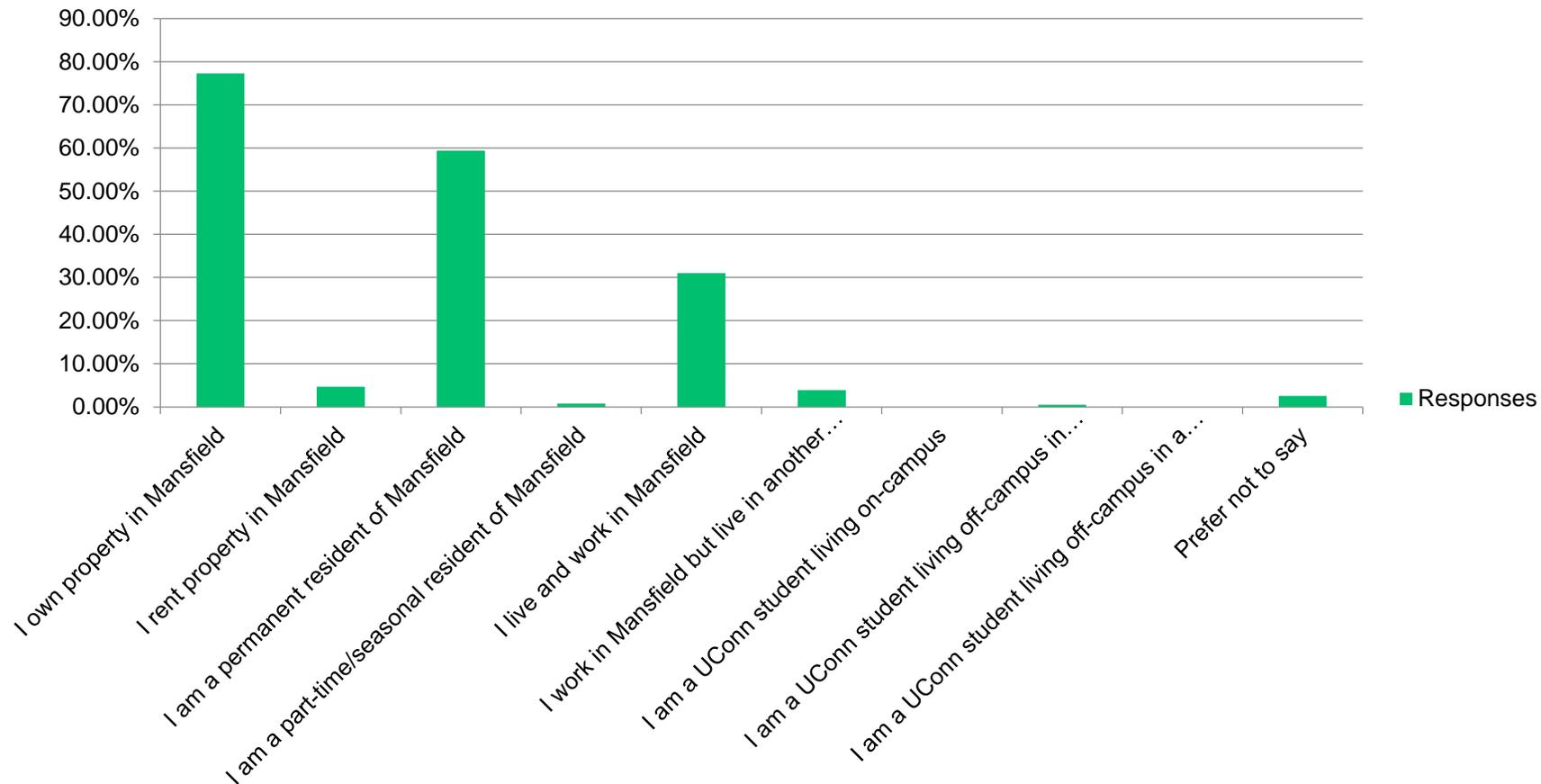
Q14: What is your approximate annual household income?





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 15

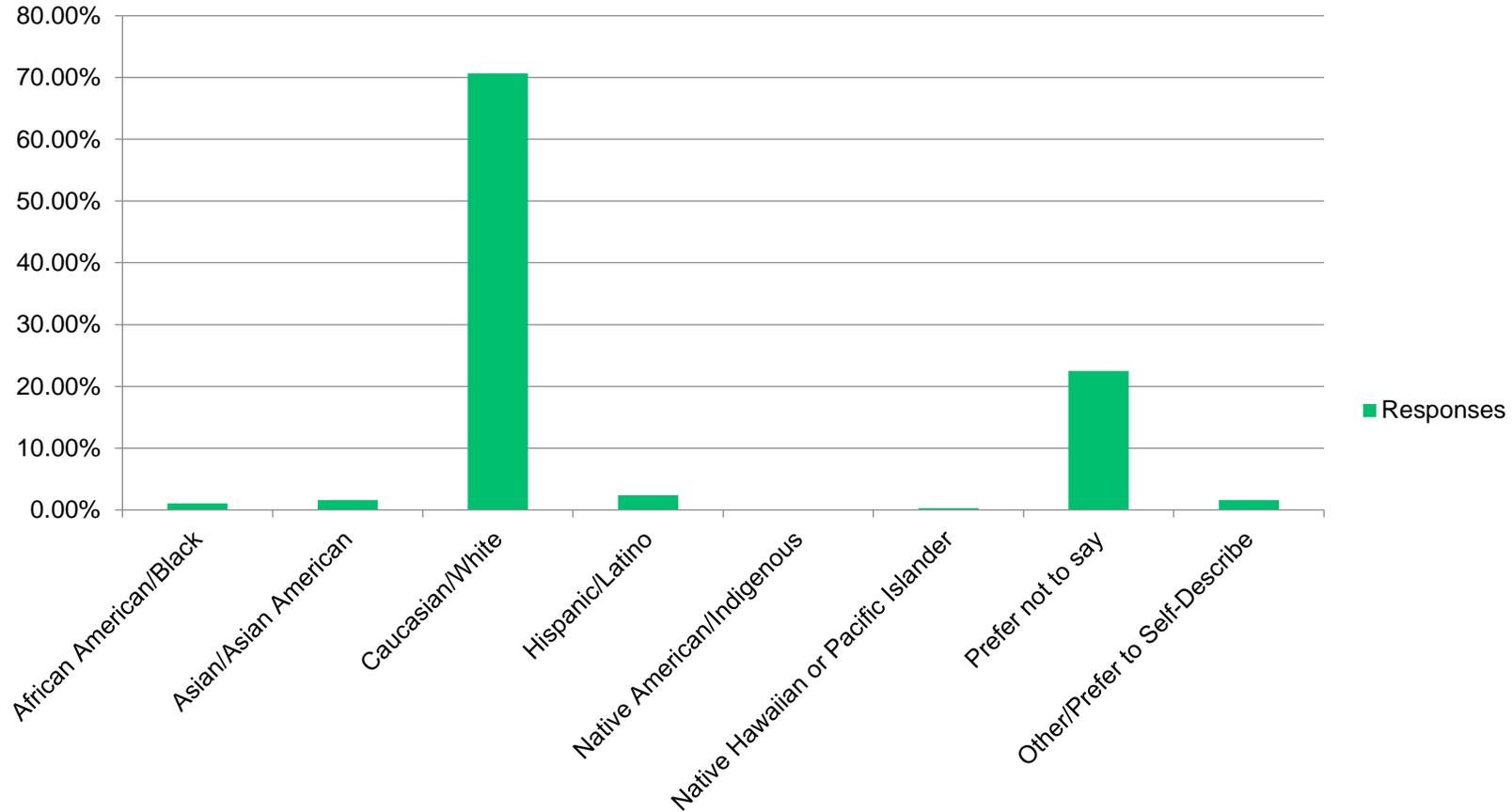
Q15: Tell us about your Mansfield residency status.
(check all that apply)





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 16

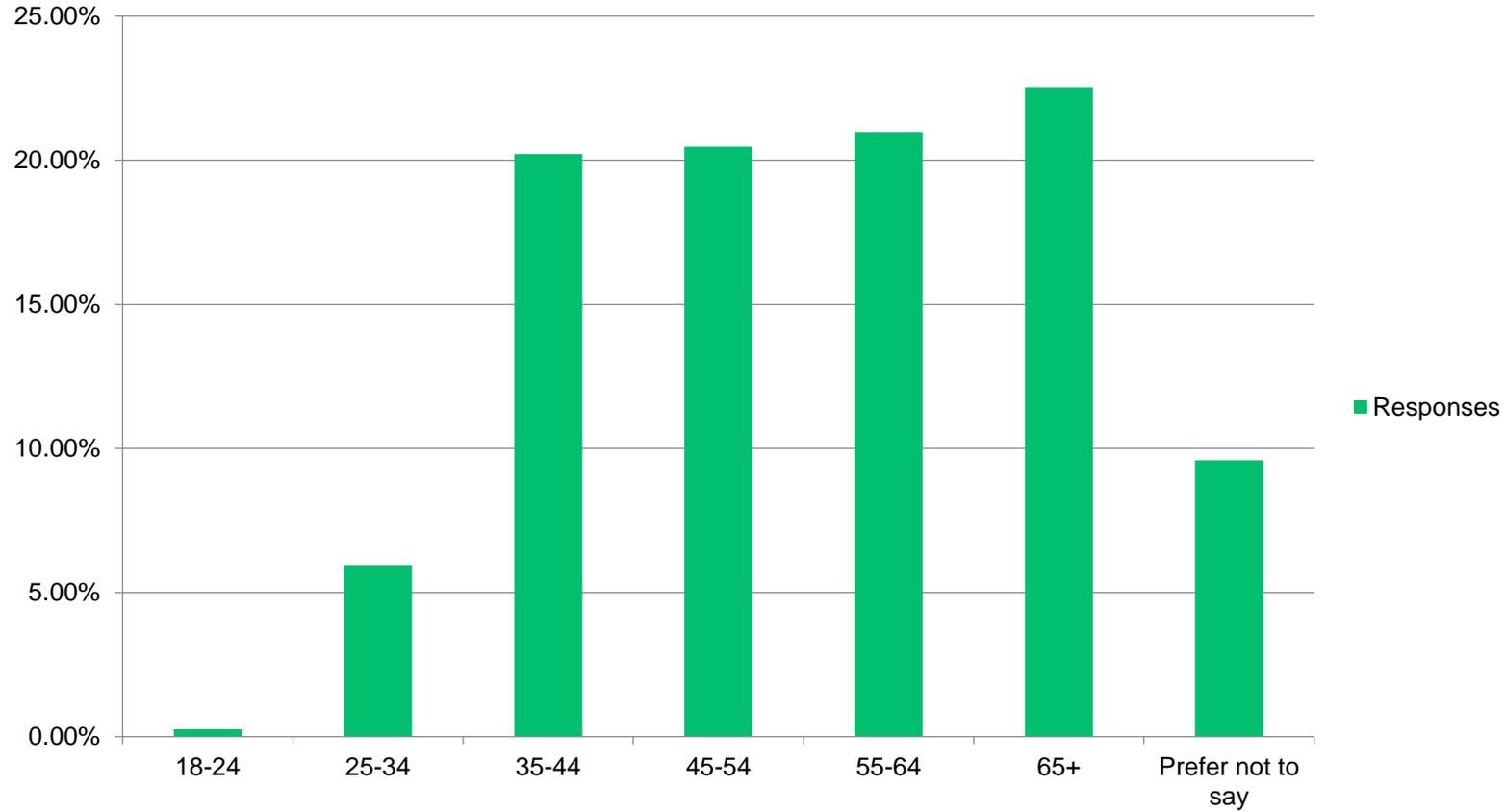
Q16: Please specify your ethnicity.





SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 17

Q17: What is your age?





SURVEY SUMMARY: OBSERVATIONS & TAKEAWAYS

- Total number of responses (389) is reasonably robust for a survey of this type, but...
- Many indications that the *sample is not particularly representative* and the views expressed may therefore not be consistent with Mansfield's resident population as a whole (must be mindful of these factors when drawing inferences), but...
- Responses show that there is *public support (albeit variable) for all seven ARPA eligible use categories* (nothing should be entirely ruled out based on survey results), and...
- Respondents were evenly *split between dedicating larger amounts of \$ for a smaller # of uses vs. dedicating smaller amounts of \$ for a larger # of uses*, and...
- Results suggest there is *strong support for using ARPA funds to provide funding support to external organizations* (i.e., social service orgs and local businesses), but...
- This is contradicted by the data (Q19) showing a strong preference for ARPA funds being invested in *municipal projects/initiatives* vs. private organizations (2:1 margin), so...
- There is still need for further thoughtful deliberation and *confronting tradeoffs*



SURVEY SUMMARY: NEXT STEPS

- Consider organizing community forums (focus groups) to explore funding possibilities and themes emerging from the survey in greater detail [late-September/early-October]
- Department heads will reevaluate their earlier proposals and contemplate revising their recommendations based on community input [early-/mid-October]
- Town Manager will make official recommendations to Town Council [late-October]
- Town Council will deliberate and make final ARPA funding decisions [November]



A NOTE OF APPRECIATION...

The preparation of the online survey and subsequent analysis of response data was a true team effort. Members of the Town Council and department heads provided valuable feedback to that helped ensure that the survey was structured effectively, and Linda Painter (Director of Planning and Zoning) – with help from Sara-Ann Chaine (Town Clerk) – played a critical role with data analysis.

THANK YOU!