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# Growth Management Program Survey

FOCUS GROUP 3

PRIORITIZE TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE NEEDS TO  
PREPARE  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLANS

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# Growth Management Program Survey

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## Virtual Focus Group Meetings - Schedule and Purposes

Three meetings will present who responded and, in each meeting, ~1/3 of the survey results

**Meeting purposes:** determine how the survey input and the facilitated conversation (Jo D. Saffeir) can direct the Growth Management Program to:

- **IMPROVE** the preparation of Comprehensive Plans and the State Review Process  
November 8 from noon to 2 PM
  - **SUPPORT** implementation of Comprehensive Plans  
November 13 from 4-6 PM
  - **PRIORITIZE** the Technical Assistance Resources to prepare & implement Comprehensive Plans  
November 14 from noon to 2 PM
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# Growth Management is Complex – So was this survey!

Each of questions 1 through 13 has 5 or 6 parts.

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- Questions 1 and 2 ask for input on ACTIONS to encourage growth in growth areas.
- Questions 3 and 4 seek input on BARRIERS to achieve this growth.
- Questions 5 and 6 ask about STRATEGIES to IMPLEMENT the goal of directing growth.
- Questions 7, 8, and 9 ask for input on improving and streamlining the preparation of Comprehensive Plans.
- Questions 10, 11, 12, 18, and 19 seek input on the support needed to prepare & implement Comprehensive Plans.
- Questions 13-17 ask for input on revising the Growth Management Statute and supporting housing development.
- Questions 20-23 ask for input on the utility of the Comprehensive Plan review process.
- Questions 24-31 ask who answered the survey and if they are interested in a follow-up discussion.

MANY thoughtful written comments are summarized in the StoryMap; all comments are provided verbatim on a linked page

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# How can survey input direct the program to:

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- Improve the preparation of Comp Plans and the State Review Process
    - Questions 1,7,8,9,20,21,22,23 - Focus Group # 1
  - Support implementation of Comprehensive Plans - Focus Group #2
    - Questions 3,4,5,6,13,14,15,16,17
  - Prioritize the technical assistance needs to prepare and implement Comprehensive Plans - Focus Group #3 - TODAY
    - Questions 2,10,11,12,18,19
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# StoryMap of Survey Results – navigation

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[Maine Growth Management Program Survey Results](#)

Comments are summarized first at right in the StoryMap

Actual #s of responses provided in bar charts


Percentages pro/con summarized in pie charts


To open/close the individual comments use the + and x symbols


Upper right corner symbol  opens a new page to see comments and all charts.

Hover to see detail.

Refresh page! Deep data dive hack.



See  [all individual comments](#)

See  [all individual comments](#)

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# How can survey input direct the program to:

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## Prioritize the technical assistance needs to prepare Comprehensive Plans

- Questions 2,10,11,12,18,19
- Slide presentation - **1/2 hour**

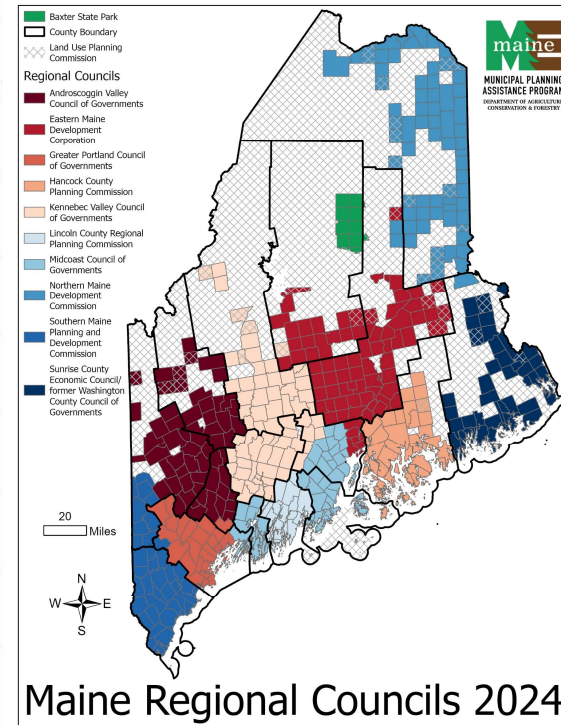
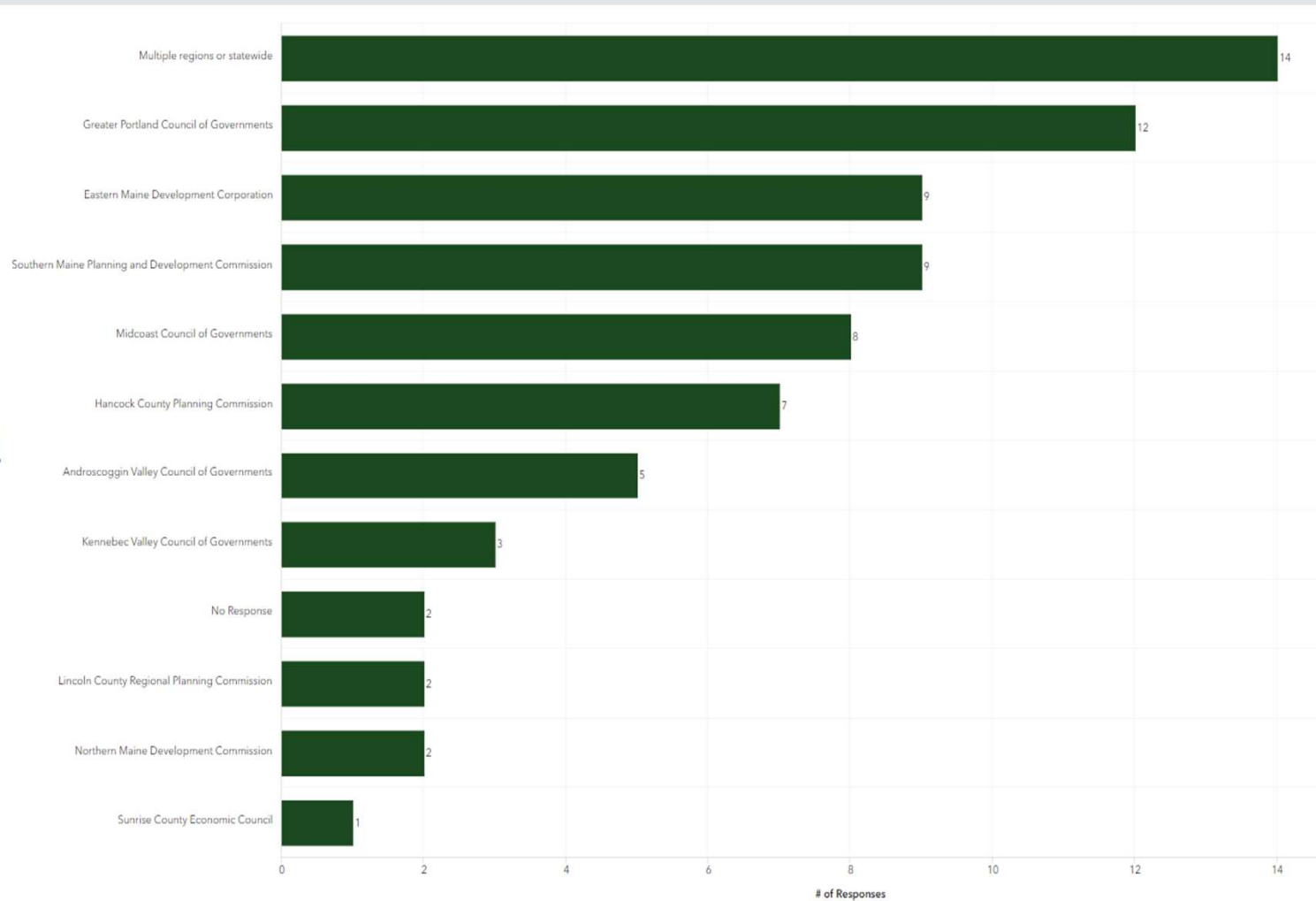
Discussion (~1 hour) with a question:

- General reactions/any surprises?
- Did the survey questions or our conclusions miss anything?

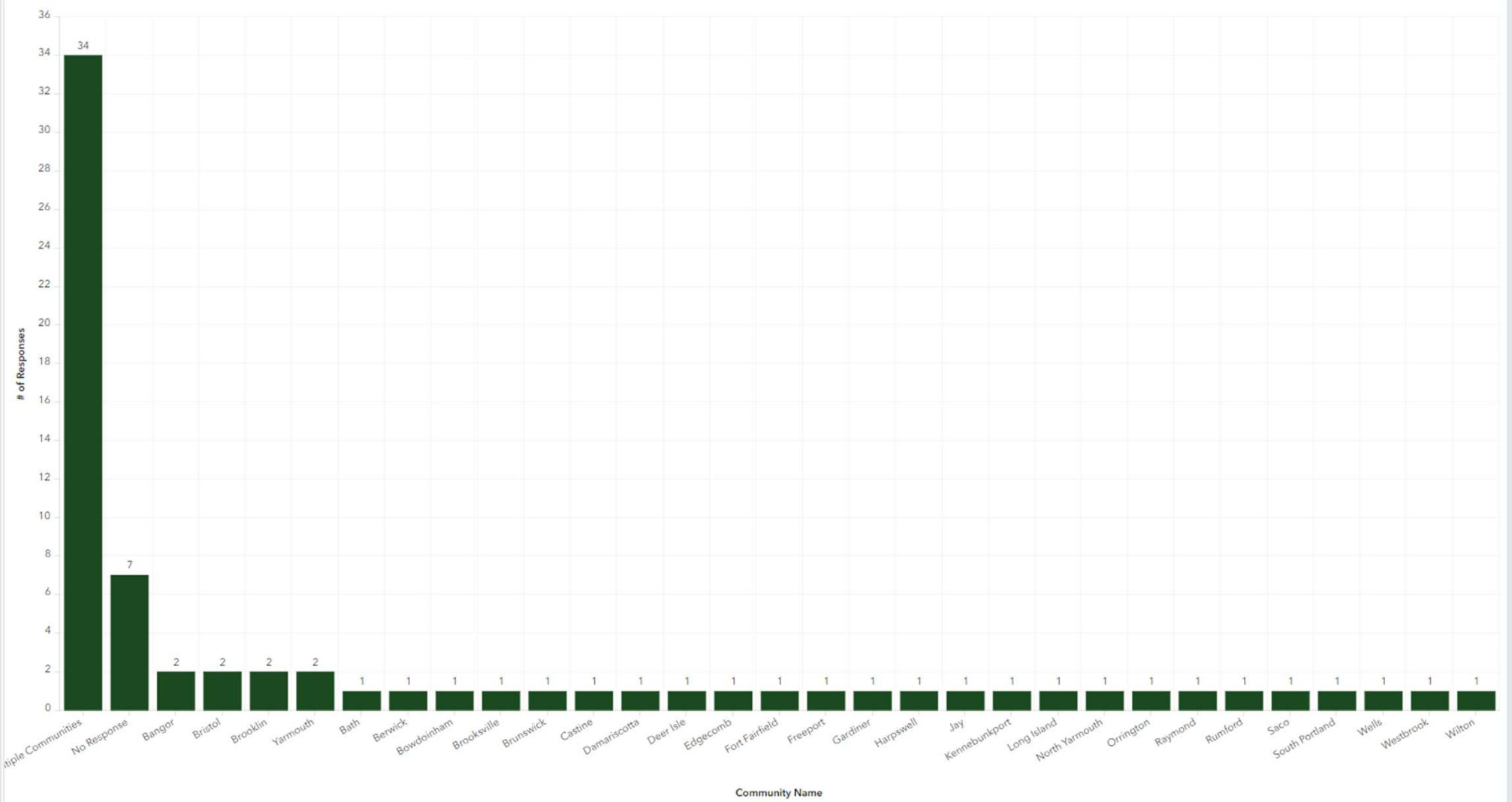
Priorities for program direction (~1/2 hour)

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# With what region do you most closely associate?

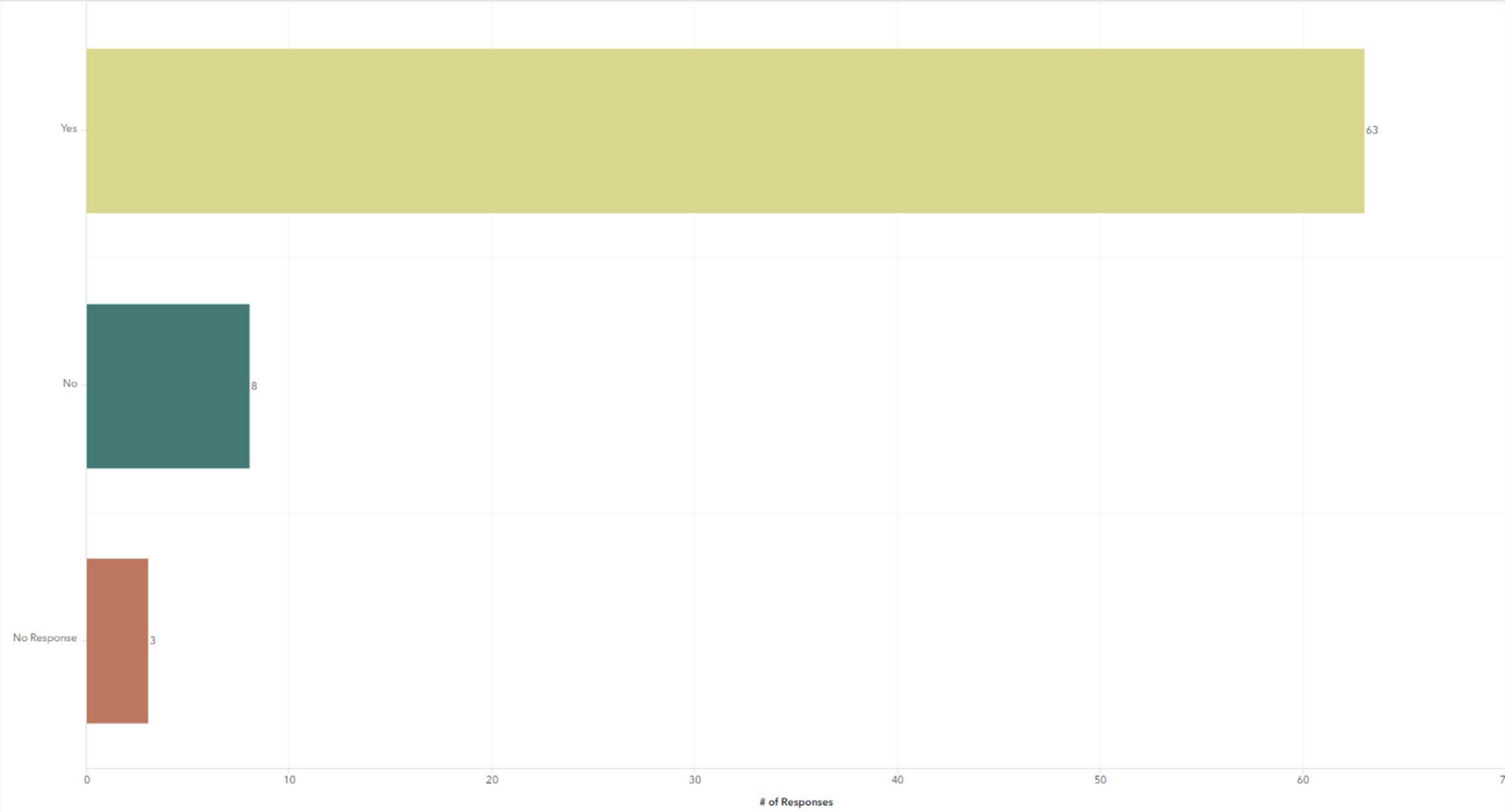


# With what city/town do you most closely associate?

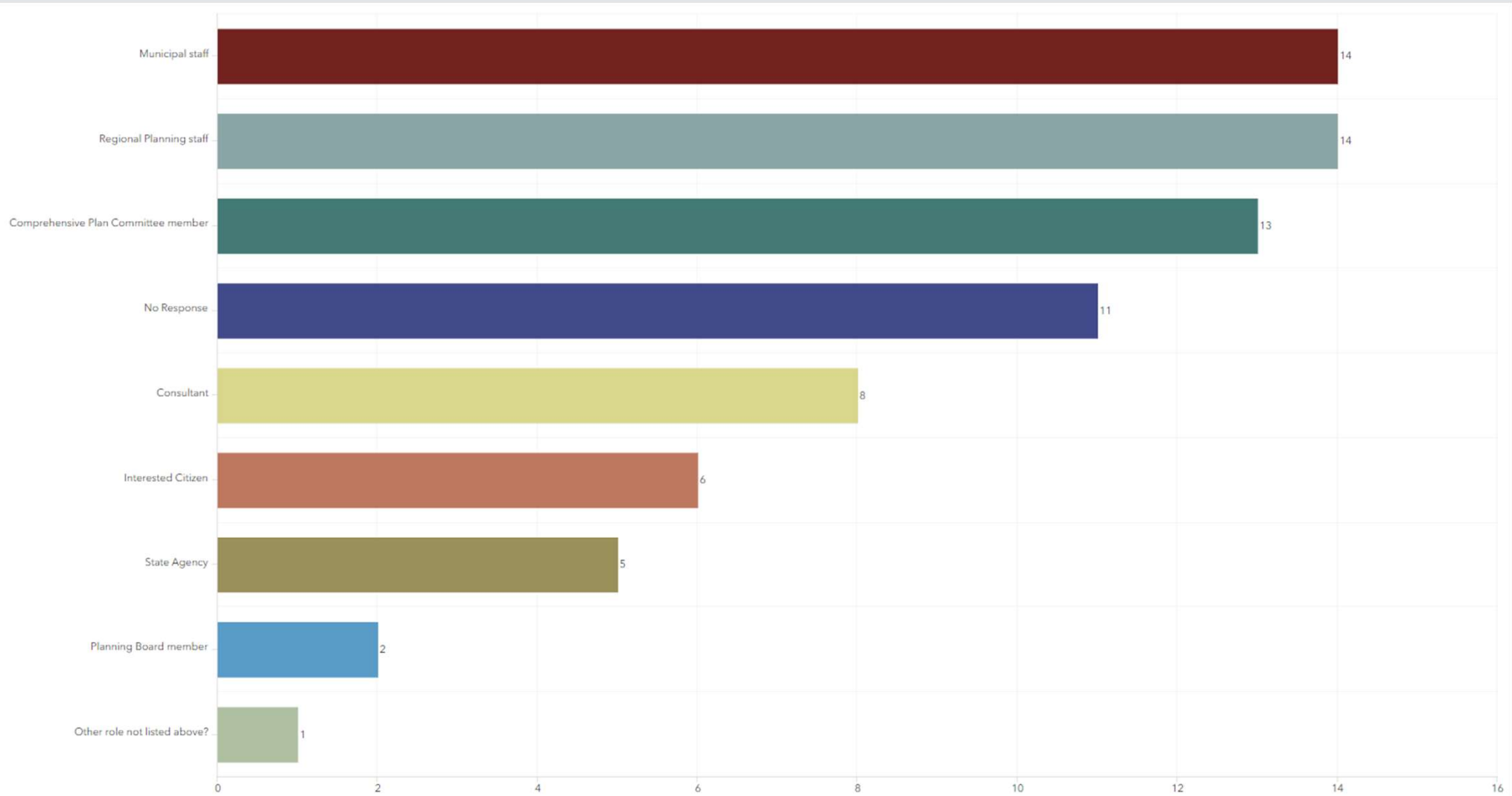




# Have you participated in the drafting or review of a Comp Plan since 2012?



# What was your role in the Comp Plan process?

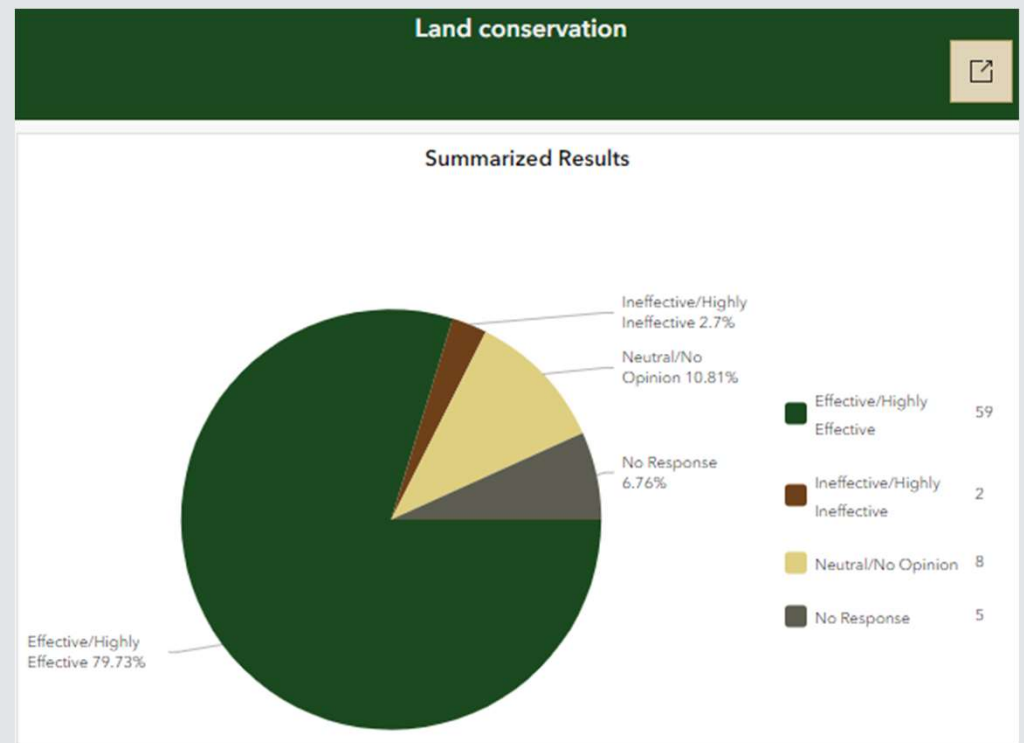


## # 2 – Effectiveness of ACTIONS direct growth away from habitats, agricultural land, working forestland, working waterfronts, high risk environments, etc.

Identify the effectiveness of the following ACTIONS to direct growth away from habitats, agricultural land, working forestland, working waterfronts, high risk environments, etc.

- **LAND CONSERVATION**

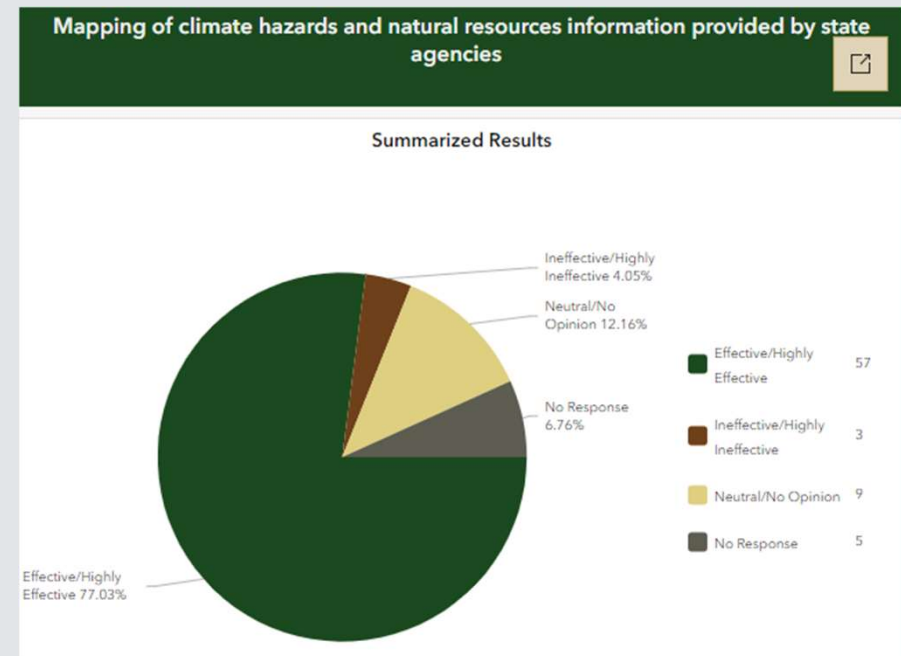
- Conservation education/outreach
- Mapping of climate hazards and natural resources information provided by state agencies
- Comments from state agencies during consistency reviews
- Current use taxation (tree growth etc.)



## # 2 – Effectiveness of ACTIONS direct growth away from habitats, agricultural land, working forestland, working waterfronts, high risk environments, etc.

Identify the effectiveness of the following ACTIONS to direct growth away from habitats, agricultural land, working forestland, working waterfronts, high risk environments, etc.

- Land conservation
- Conservation education/outreach
- **MAPPING OF CLIMATE HAZARDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION PROVIDED BY STATE AGENCIES**
- Comments from state agencies during consistency reviews
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## # 2 – Effectiveness of ACTIONS direct growth away from habitats, agricultural land, working forestland, working waterfronts, high risk environments, etc.

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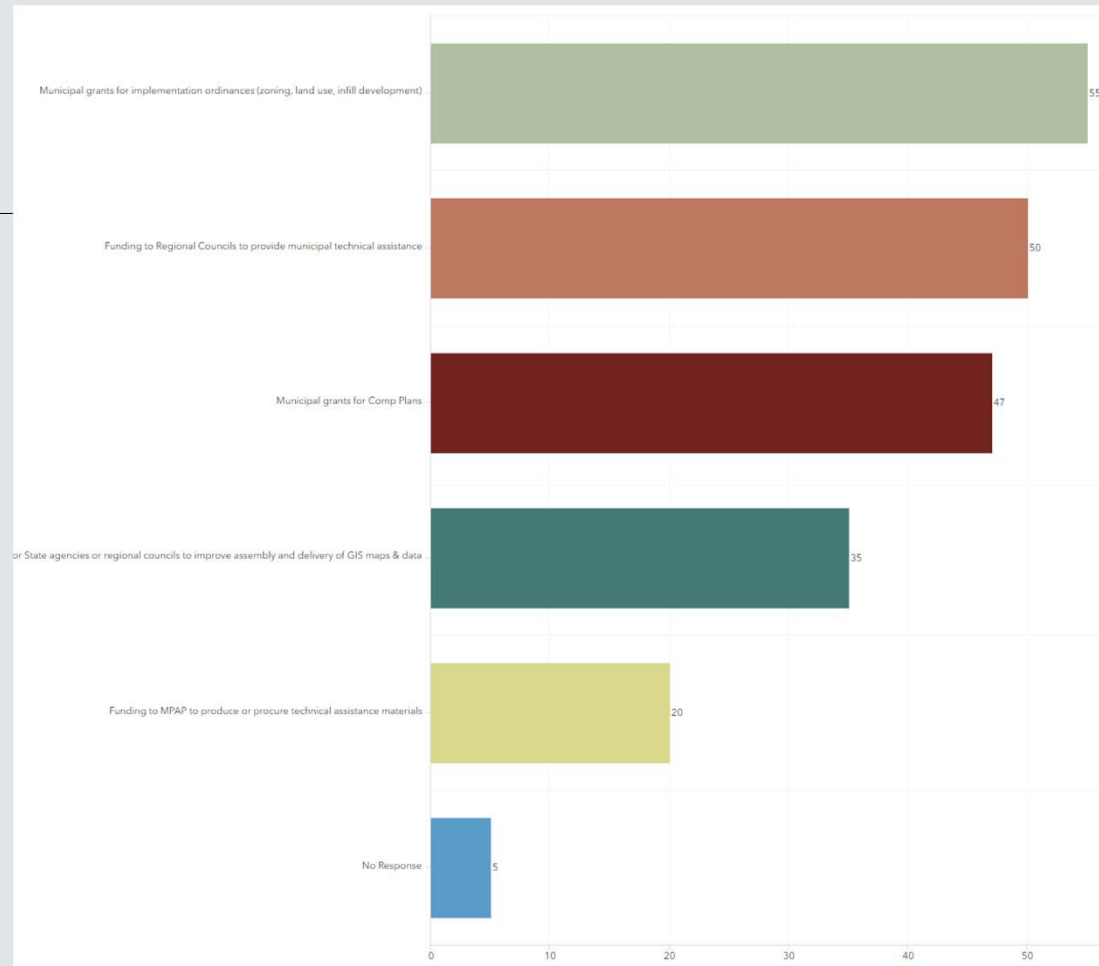
### COMMENTS

- Current use taxation concerns
  - Exploited by wealthy landowners
  - Difficult to enforce
  - Examine CU for affordable housing
  - Working waterfronts are distinct (growth areas)
- Stronger zoning
  - Farmland, critical habitats
  - Overlays, coordinated cluster subdivisions
- State Review utility mixed
  - Helpful but too late
  - Tone deaf to local needs
- Financial incentives for conservation
- Land conservation is most effective, but directing growth to growth areas essential for success
- Septic technology/viability on marginal land

### CONCLUSIONS

- Examine/reform current use programs, consider application to support affordable housing
- Develop - stronger - model zoning ordinances to limit development in sensitive areas
  - Overlays for resource protection (farmland, habitat)
  - Buffer areas that restrict development
  - Growth boundaries; limit water/sewer extensions
  - Coordinating open space in adjoining subdivisions
  - Alternative septic systems on marginal, i.e. non-farmland
- Strong public engagement
- State input earlier in the plan development process
- Financial incentives for conservation

## #10 - Choose three of the following types to encourage growth and development in locally designated Growth Areas



Meeting 3 -Prioritize Technical Assistance needs to prepare & implement Comp Plans

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# #10 - Financial needs to encourage orderly growth and development

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## COMMENTS

- Support the Municipal Planning Assistance Program (MPAP) to develop resources
  - Update 15-20 yr old manuals
  - Help towns adapt models to lower cost of hiring consultants
  - GIS mapping support at Regional Councils (not just MEGIS/OIT)
  - Develop, provide data for towns/reduce local burden
- Support Regional Councils to support towns with no/limited staff
  - Caveat: match \$\$ requirements with member dues creates perception of local interests override
- Direct \$\$ support to developers, \$\$ for planning is a waste
- Digital parcel maps still not available in many small towns

## CONCLUSIONS:

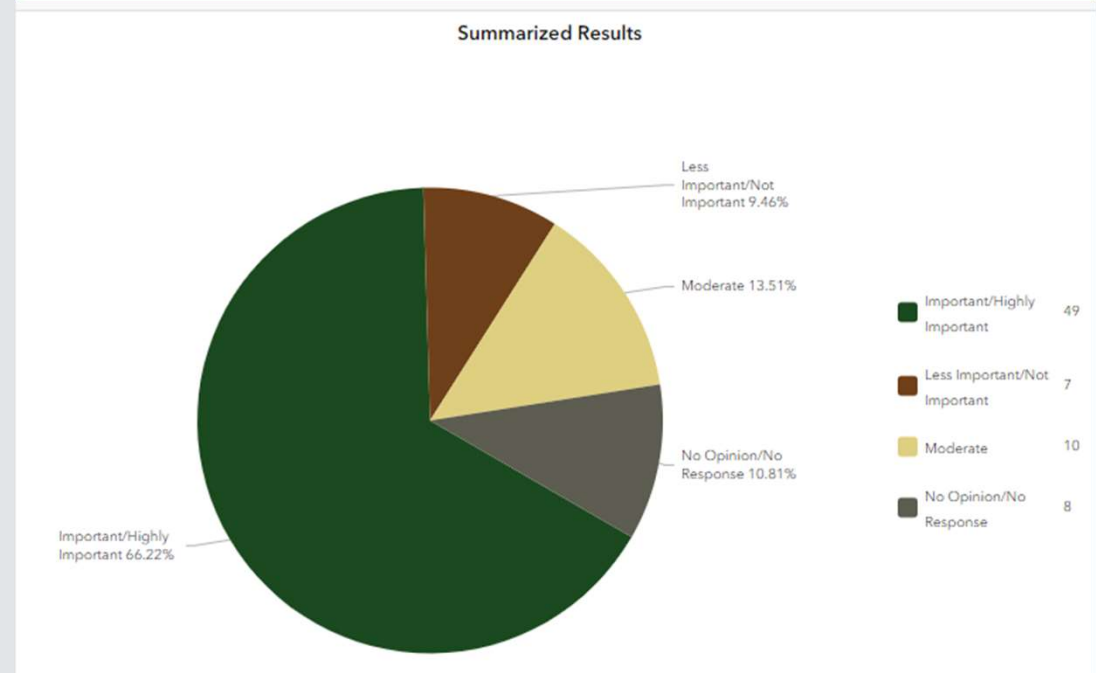
- MPAP focus:
  - update TA resources and models
  - Reduce data requirements; assemble/package data for towns
  - Support access to GIS resources
  - Digital parcel mapping
- Support Regional Councils
- Prioritize TA – all rated very high

# #11 –TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OR GUIDANCE MATERIALS.

## Growth and Rural Areas/Placetypes descriptions, standards, requirements to create Future Land Use Plans/Maps

Indicate the importance of the following TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OR GUIDANCE MATERIALS for planning.

- **GROWTH AND RURAL AREAS/PLACETYPES DESCRIPTIONS, STANDARDS, REQUIREMENTS TO CREATE FUTURE LAND USE PLANS/MAPS**
- Model climate vulnerability assessments and climate action plans
- Better identification of inland hazards (flooding, fire, wind, etc.)
- Infill development planning tools and incentives
- Community engagement strategies



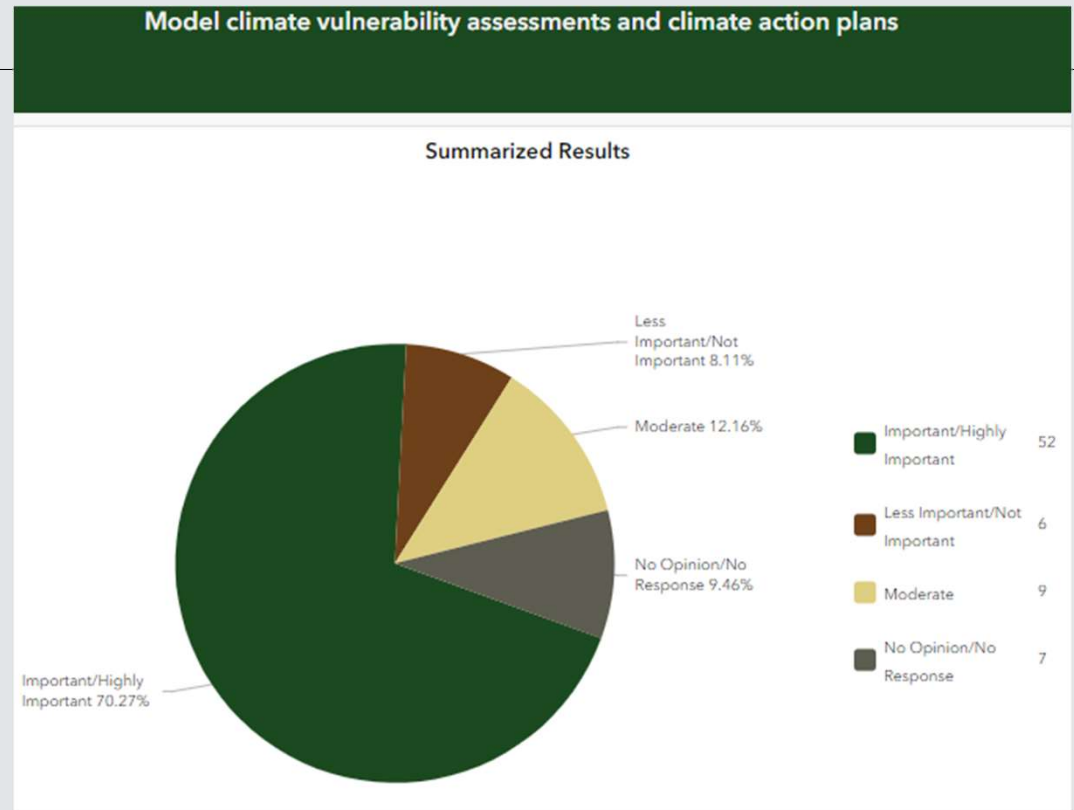
Meeting 3 -Prioritize Technical Assistance needs to prepare Comp Plans



# #11 –TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OR GUIDANCE MATERIALS.

Indicate the importance of the following TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OR GUIDANCE MATERIALS for planning.

- Growth and Rural Areas/Placetypes descriptions, standards, requirements to create Future Land Use Plans/Maps
- **MODEL CLIMATE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND CLIMATE ACTION PLANS**
- Better identification of inland hazards (flooding, fire, wind, etc.)
- Infill development planning tools and incentives
- Community engagement strategies



Meeting 3 -Prioritize Technical Assistance needs to prepare Comp Plans

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# #11 – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OR GUIDANCE MATERIALS.

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## COMMENTS

- Community engagement essential for “buy-in”
  - Benefits of directing growth on infrastructure costs, farmland protection, strengthened community
- Update Comp Planning Manual
  - Simplified guidance chapter by chapter
  - Analyses of fiscal impacts of development types
- Access to GIS information and model ordinances
- Tools development
  - Farmland inventory methods
  - Infrastructure capacity analysis
  - Affordable housing models
  - Regional coordination strategies

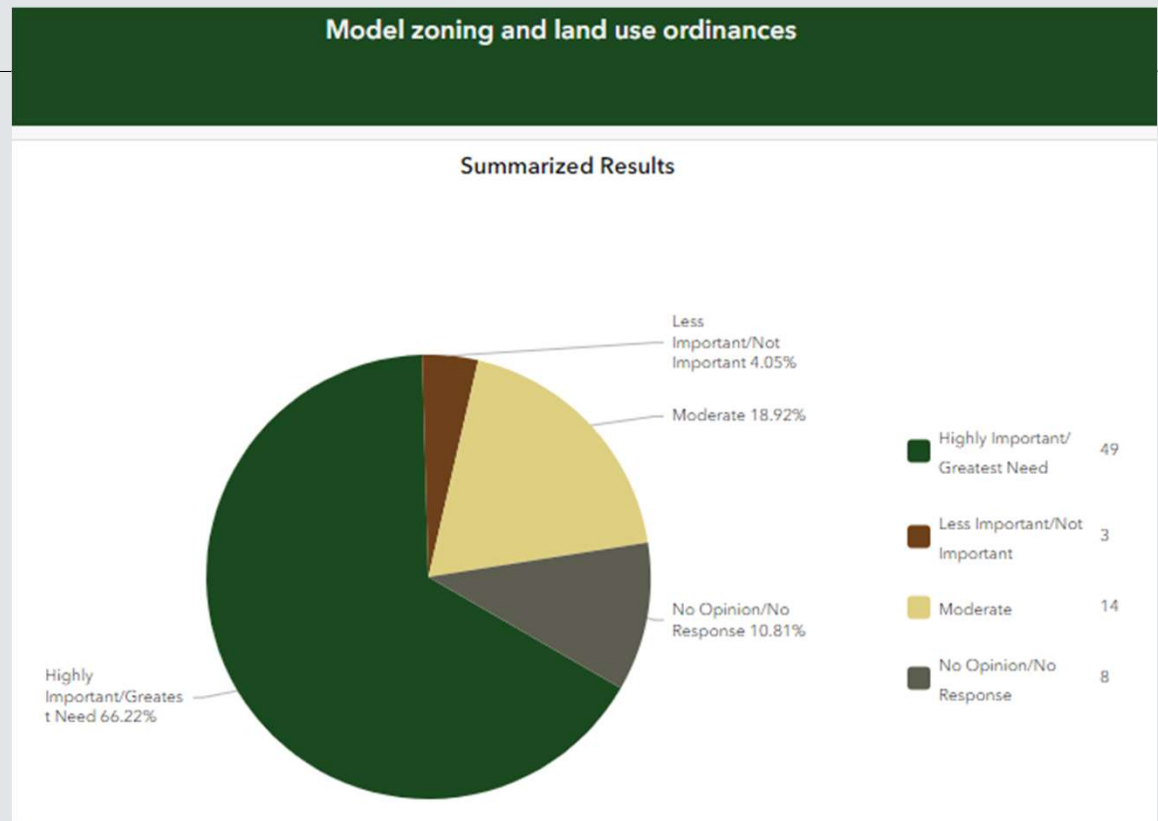
## CONCLUSIONS:

- Guidance/training in community engagement
- Updated manuals with tangible tools for implementation
- Facilitate access to GIS tools/data
  - Basic data access (parcel mapping)
  - All user capacities

## #12 – Importance/needs to IMPLEMENT the Future Land Use Plan

Indicate the importance of the following TO IMPLEMENT the Future Land Use Plan of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Model cluster subdivision ordinance
- **MODEL ZONING AND LAND USE ORDINANCES**
- Model site plan review ordinances
- Coordination among state agencies to fund implementation
- Land use law education
- Model Capital Investment Plans

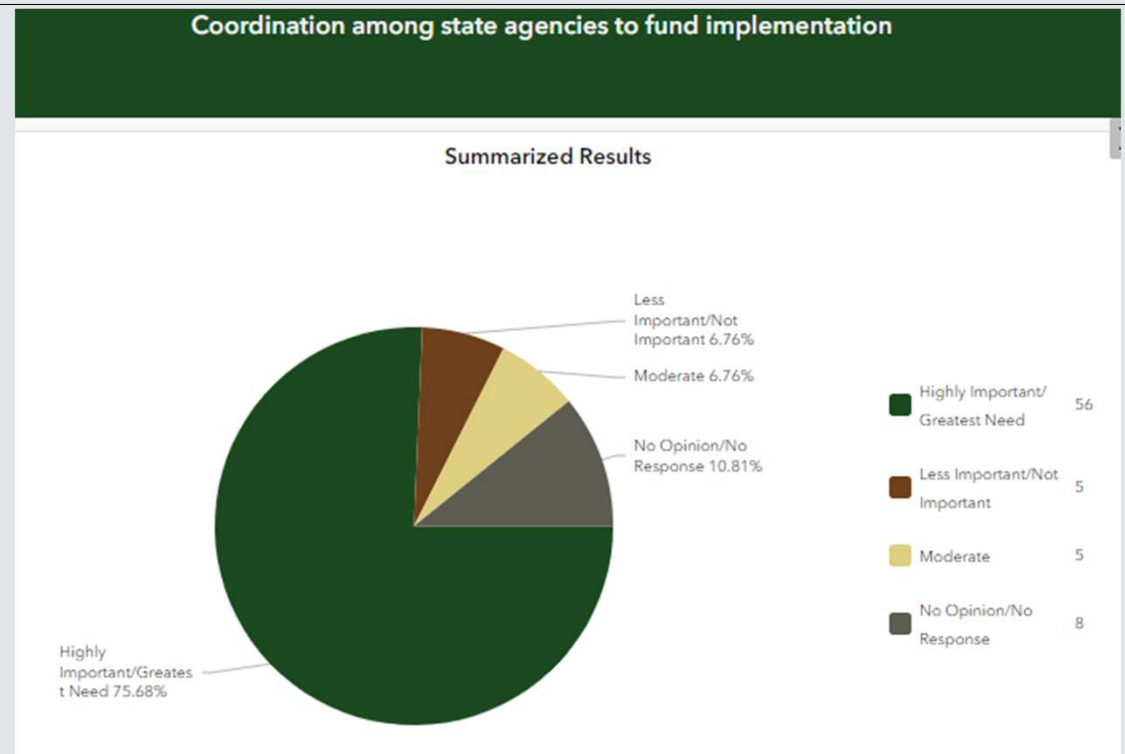


Meeting 3 -Prioritize Technical Assistance needs to prepare & implement Comp Plans

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- Model cluster subdivision ordinance
- Model zoning and land use ordinances
- Model site plan review ordinances
- **COORDINATION AMONG STATE AGENCIES TO FUND IMPLEMENTATION**
- Land use law education
- Model Capital Investment Plans



Meeting 3 -Prioritize Technical Assistance needs to prepare & implement Comp Plans

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## #12 – Importance/needs to IMPLEMENT the Future Land Use Plan

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### COMMENTS

- Guidance & practical/customizable application is critical
  - Financial implications of growth planning
  - Diverse models (some want more accessible term)
- Specific tools needed:
  - Systems to monitor progress
  - Farmland protection strategies
  - Zoning is critical
  - Models for improving infrastructure
- Frameworks for collaboration
  - inter-municipal agreements for shared growth, regional issues

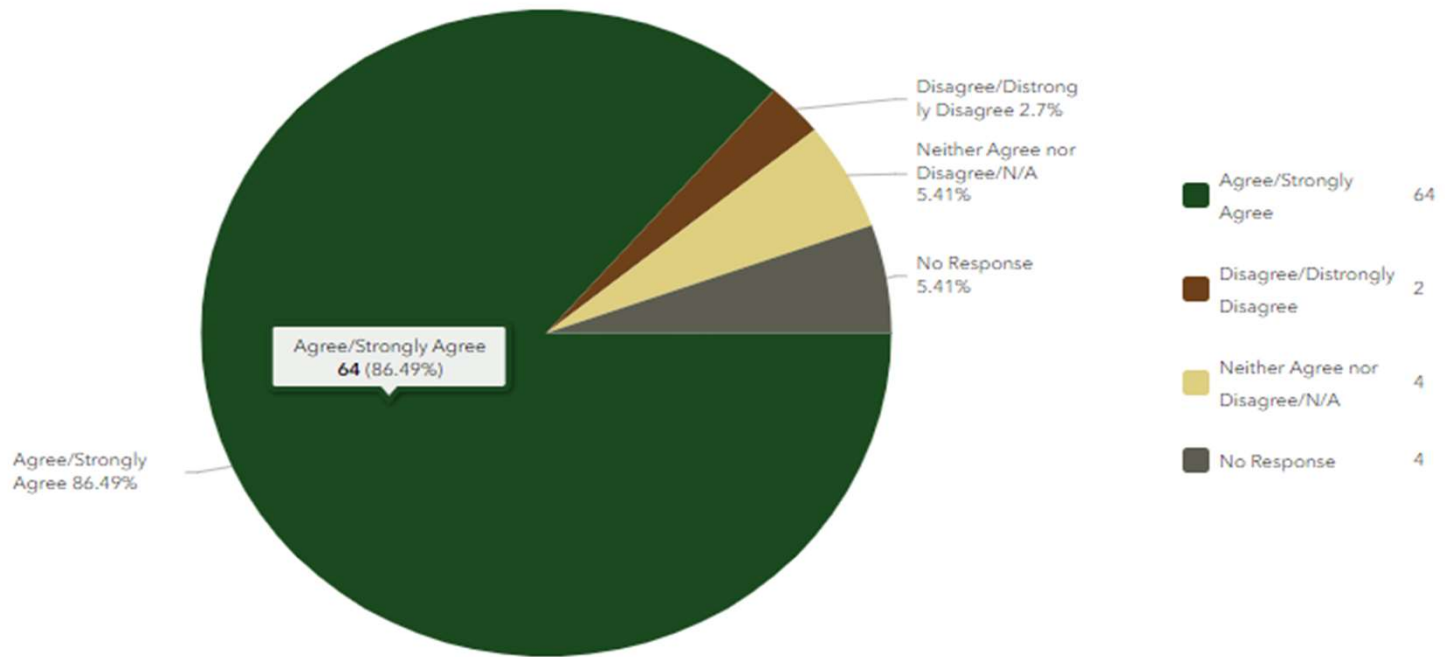
### CONCLUSIONS:

- Make guidance and models customizable
- Communicate benefits in terms of dollar impacts
- Models for collaboration

The state should establish a dedicated funding source for local and regional planning and plan implementation.

Summarized Results

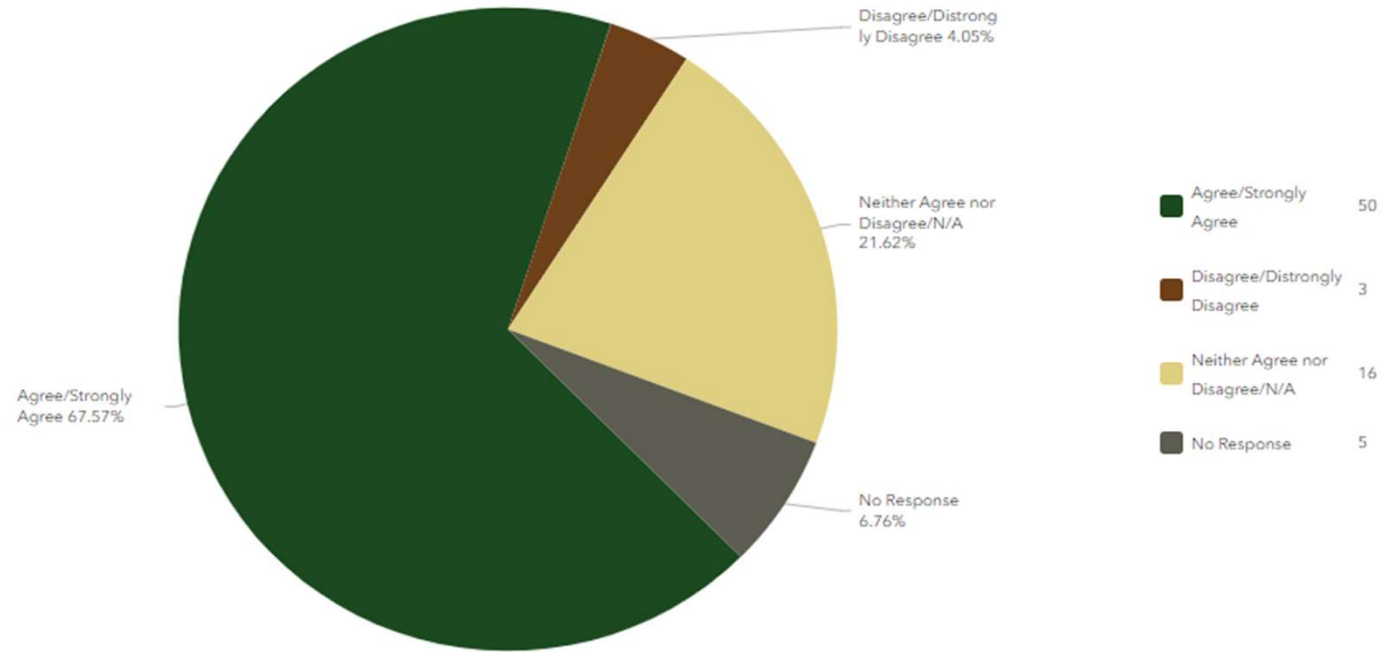
#18



The state should establish a planning advisory committee to advise MPAP on the development of rules, technical assistance needs, and Growth Management Program review.

#19

Summarized Results



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# #18 & 19 – Community Financial Support and an Advisory Council

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## COMMENTS

- Strong agreement with local and regional \$\$
  - GMLaw enacted in 1988, lack of dedicated funding has hindered effectiveness ever since
  - \$\$ crucial; towns can't afford cost of consultants
  - Prioritize state/regional resources on maps/data - allow towns to focus on future planning
- Support for advisory committee:
  - Skepticism/distrust of state government
  - Include local/regional planners
  - Integrate diverse perspectives
- Primary focus: update law, rules, guidance

## CONCLUSIONS:

- Request/secure dedicated funding for local/regional planning and implementation
- Prioritize efficient data delivery to allow focus on future at local level
- Broadly inclusive advice/input
- Focus on updating rules



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# How can survey input direct the program to:

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- Prioritize the technical assistance needs to prepare Comprehensive Plans

- Questions 2,10,11,12,18,19

Discussion (~1 hour) with the question:

- General reactions/any surprises?
- Did the survey questions or our conclusions miss anything?

Priorities for program direction (~1/2 hour)

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## CONCLUSIONS:

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# Summary of Focus Group 1 Input

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## General reactions

- Need a catalog of survey and engagement examples
- Frustration in medium/larger communities - not simply choosing "N/A" for requirements; want guidance on whether the most critical issues were addressed successfully
- Code Enforcement is critical for implementation but generally divorced from planning
- State formerly collaborated with MMA on CEO training, need to revisit/reinstate
- State reps ask: should they provide better guidance on how to use the data at the outset - strong concurrence with this idea; symposium

## Missing Items

- CEOs have different perspectives than planners; need to engage them
- Technology for smaller, alternative, affordable septic systems
- Better guidance on how to assemble local data
- Regional Councils need training assistance from MPAP, especially new staff
- Guidance/clarity on using American Community Survey data in rural areas, given the large margins of error

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Meeting 1 -Improve the preparation of Comp Plans and the State Review Process

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# Summary of Focus Group 2 Input

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## General reactions

- Many issues that must be addressed at the local level; Regional Councils can help small towns; TA needs to support municipal planners
- MUBEC and Code Enforcement is difficult; need state models of administrative procedures
- Need to start education on civil service sooner – high school
- CEOs wear far too many hats (need support)
- Flexible standards are needed, yes, but also CLEARER standards (Shoreland zoning is difficult to interpret)

## Missing Items

- Local opposition is huge barrier; conclusions do not address it
- Need good rural examples/models
- Facilitate peer-to-peer (town to town) learning/sharing
- Some towns don't want growth



# Here are the priorities identified in the survey and discussion – Is anything missing?

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1. Develop – stronger - model zoning ordinances to limit development in sensitive areas and support growth in serviced areas
  - A. Overlays for resource protection (farmland, habitat)
  - B. Buffer areas that restrict development
  - C. Growth boundaries; limit water/sewer extensions
  - D. Coordinating open space in adjoining subdivisions

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- E. Alternative septic systems on marginal, i.e. non-farmland
- F. Models for promoting smart growth and housing in growth areas
2. Update/create TA resources and models to provide guidance that enables local adoption and has tangible tools for implementation
  - A. Visioning
  - B. Site plan review, design, livability, infill
  - C. Comp Plan manual – defining growth and rural areas; place types
  - D. Case studies
  - E. Opt-in standards, a suite of strategies
  - F. Model climate vulnerability assessments, climate action plans
  - G. Help navigating/aligning state and federal agency requirements to get projects DONE
3. Provide Training
  - A. Focus GIS access training for all user capacities
  - B. Code Enforcement land use training
  - C. Community engagement – e.g. a catalog of survey and engagement examples, facilitation; CP Committee structure; benefits of planning, mixed-use development
  - D. Use of American Community Survey data (given large margins of error)
  - E. To local and regional planners
  - F. Understand development from the homeowner’s and the developer’s perspective; enabling, not inadvertently impeding; adding units at small scale



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# THANK YOU!

Recordings and PowerPoint presentations for 3 Focus groups are available  
[Maine Growth Management Program Survey Results](#)

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