

Bethlehem Open Space and Farmland Conservation Survey Results

Fall 2018

Open Space and Farmland Conservation Survey

www.surveymonkey.com/r/openspacesurvey

Also find the survey at: www.townofbethlehem.org, Open Space Planning page.
(Or, fill out a paper survey at Town Hall or Bethlehem Library.)

Have your phone?

Take the survey now!
Point the phone's camera
at the image below and
the survey link will pop up,
ready for your response!



What do YOU
think?

Please take our 5-minute survey
online by September 30th!
Thank you for your valued input!

Questions?

Contact Bethlehem's Open Space
Coordinator:

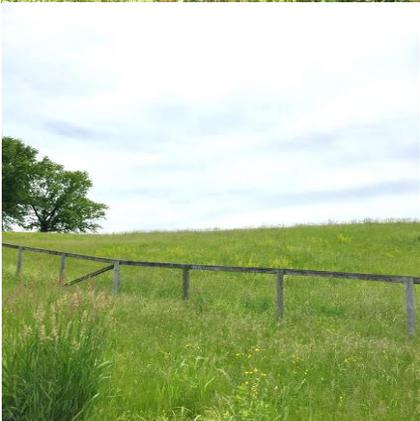
Karen Shaw: 518-439-4955
x 1106

kshaw@townofbethlehem.org

Bethlehem Town Hall
445 Delaware Avenue, Delmar,
NY 12054



www.townofbethlehem.org



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Survey Goals and Promotion:

- ▶ Goal #1: Explore residents opinions on whether or not open space and farmland conservation is important to them and why.
- ▶ Goal #2: Remind residents that undeveloped lands are not necessarily going to stay that way.
- ▶ Survey promotion: More than 14,000 households reached with Park Playbook; more than 4,000 people notified through social media; 2,500 reached through Town E-newsletter; displays at Town Hall, library, Five Rivers; articles in Times Union and Spotlight.
- ▶ 1504 responses



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Survey development:

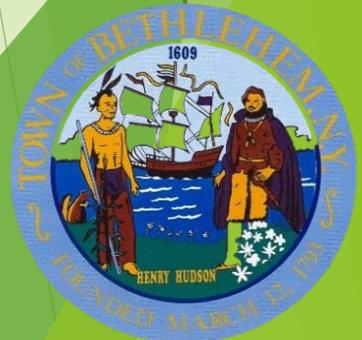
- ▶ A survey is one common tool that is used to gain a better understanding of the opinions of a large group of people.
- ▶ Survey conducted was a non-probability sampling technique, which is valid for exploratory research
- ▶ Survey was created through research of survey examples from other regional towns, including New Scotland, New Paltz, Pleasant Valley, Clifton Park, and our own past surveys in Bethlehem.
- ▶ Past surveys in town include Comprehensive Plan survey (2004), the Bethlehem 20/20 Committee survey (2009), the Transfer Station survey (2012), the Deer and Ticks survey (2014), and the Parks Master Plan survey (2015), to name a few.



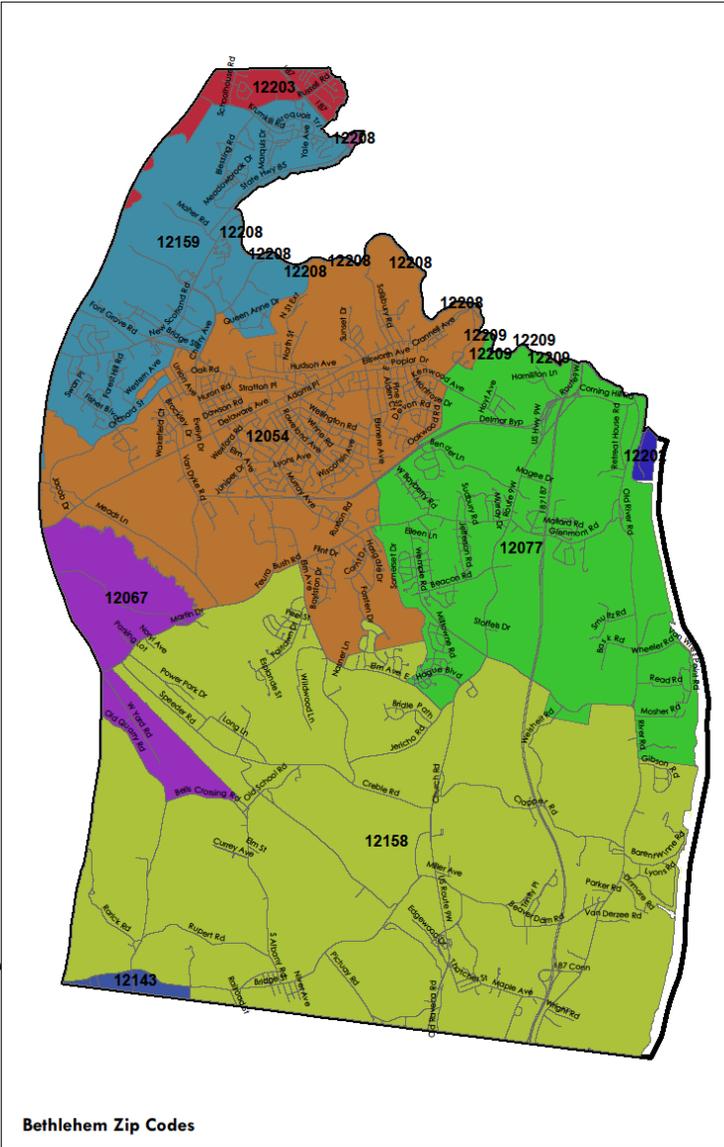
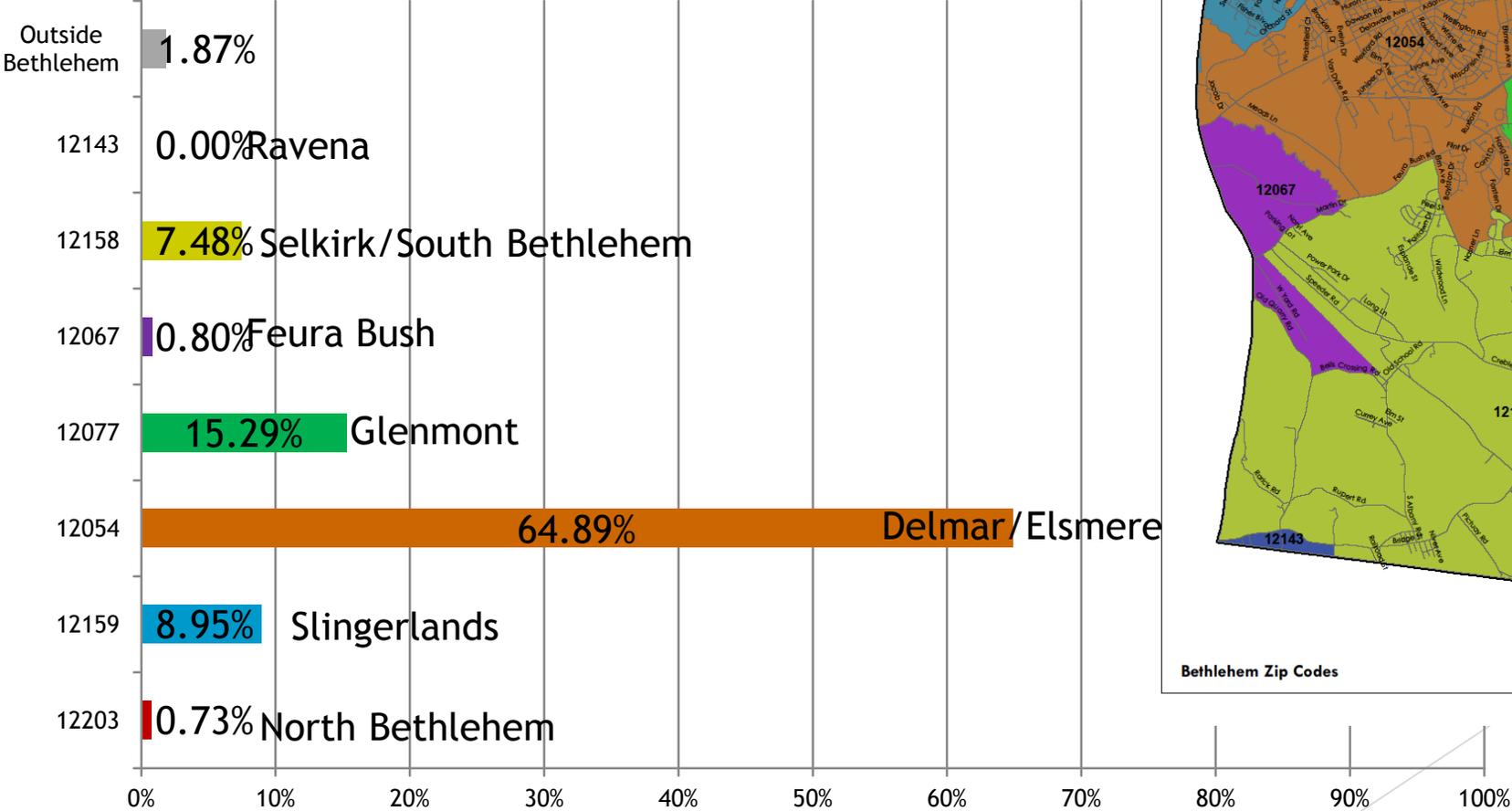
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Survey Development and Response Rate:

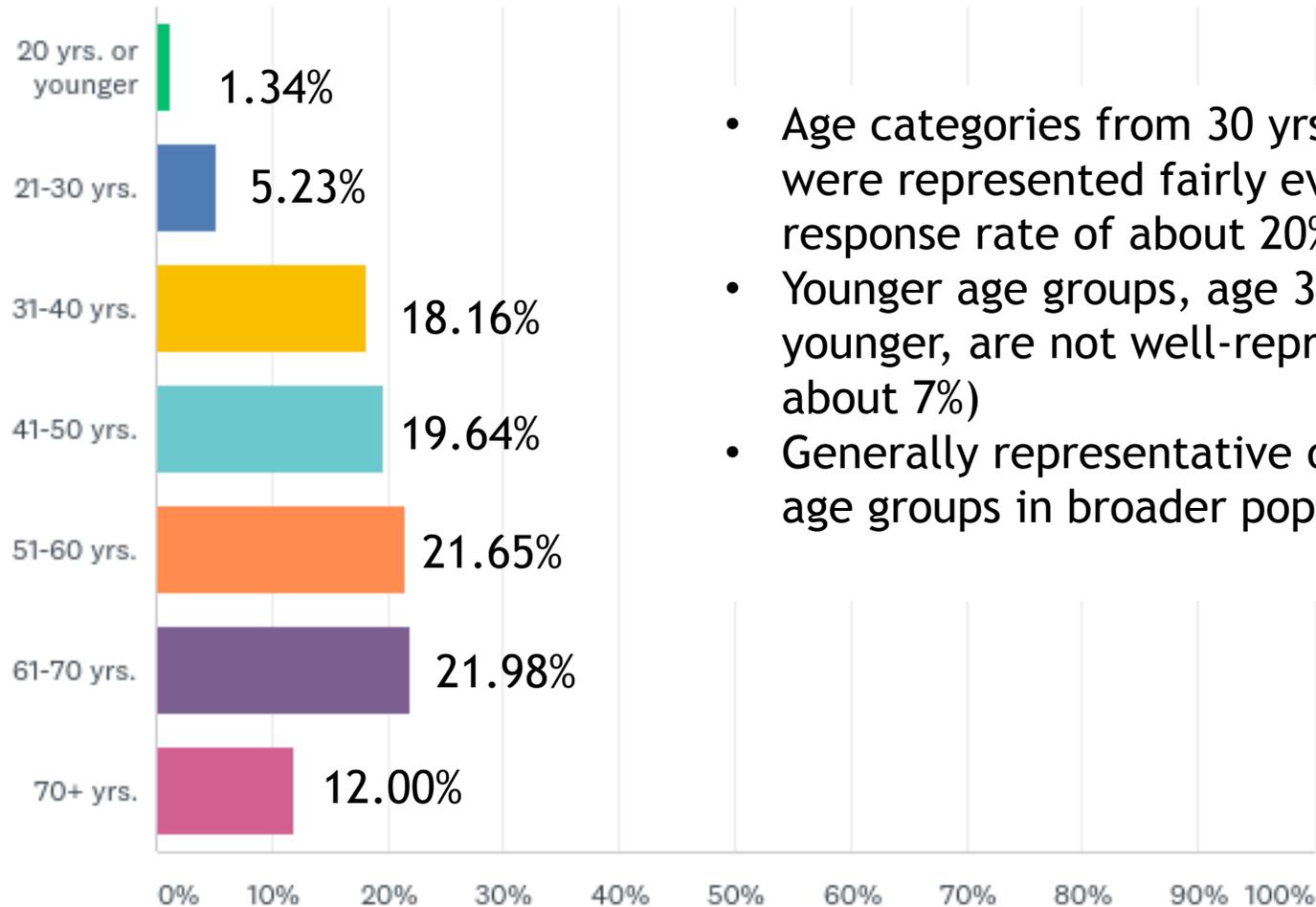
- ▶ Questions were developed through research of survey examples from other regional towns and were reviewed by Bethlehem's CERB and professionals at Policy Research Associates.
- ▶ Intent was to look for general trends and patterns in survey responses - assess whether or not we have a common ground of interest.
- ▶ Survey results represent the opinions of those who chose to participate.
- ▶ Collected 1,504 responses online and on paper over two months.



Q1: Where in Bethlehem do you live or own land? (indicated by zip code)



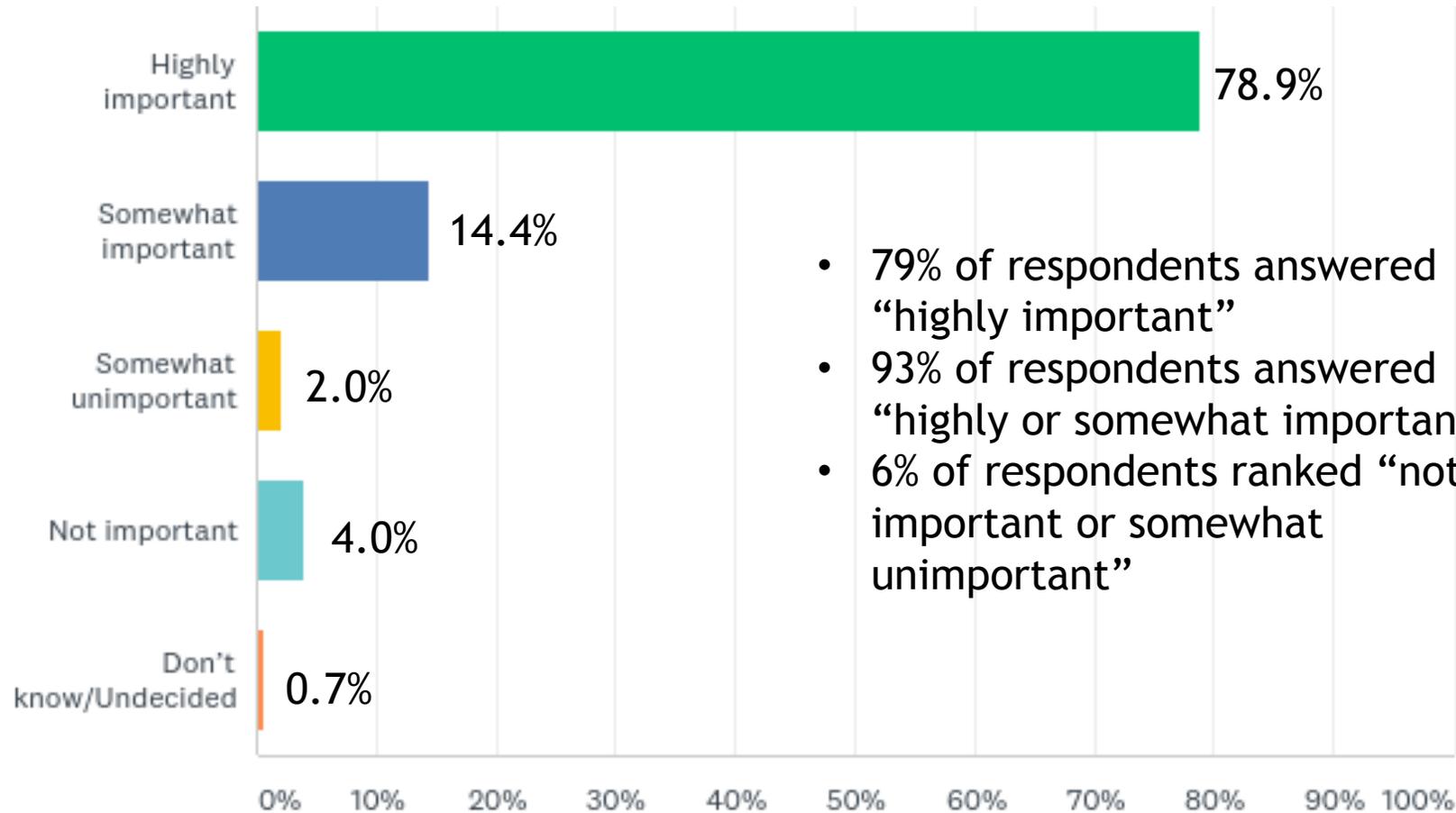
Q2: How old are you?



- Age categories from 30 yrs. - 70 yrs. were represented fairly evenly with a response rate of about 20% each
- Younger age groups, age 30 and younger, are not well-represented (only about 7%)
- Generally representative of the Town's age groups in broader population



Q3: How important is it to you that open space and farmland, in general, be conserved in Bethlehem?

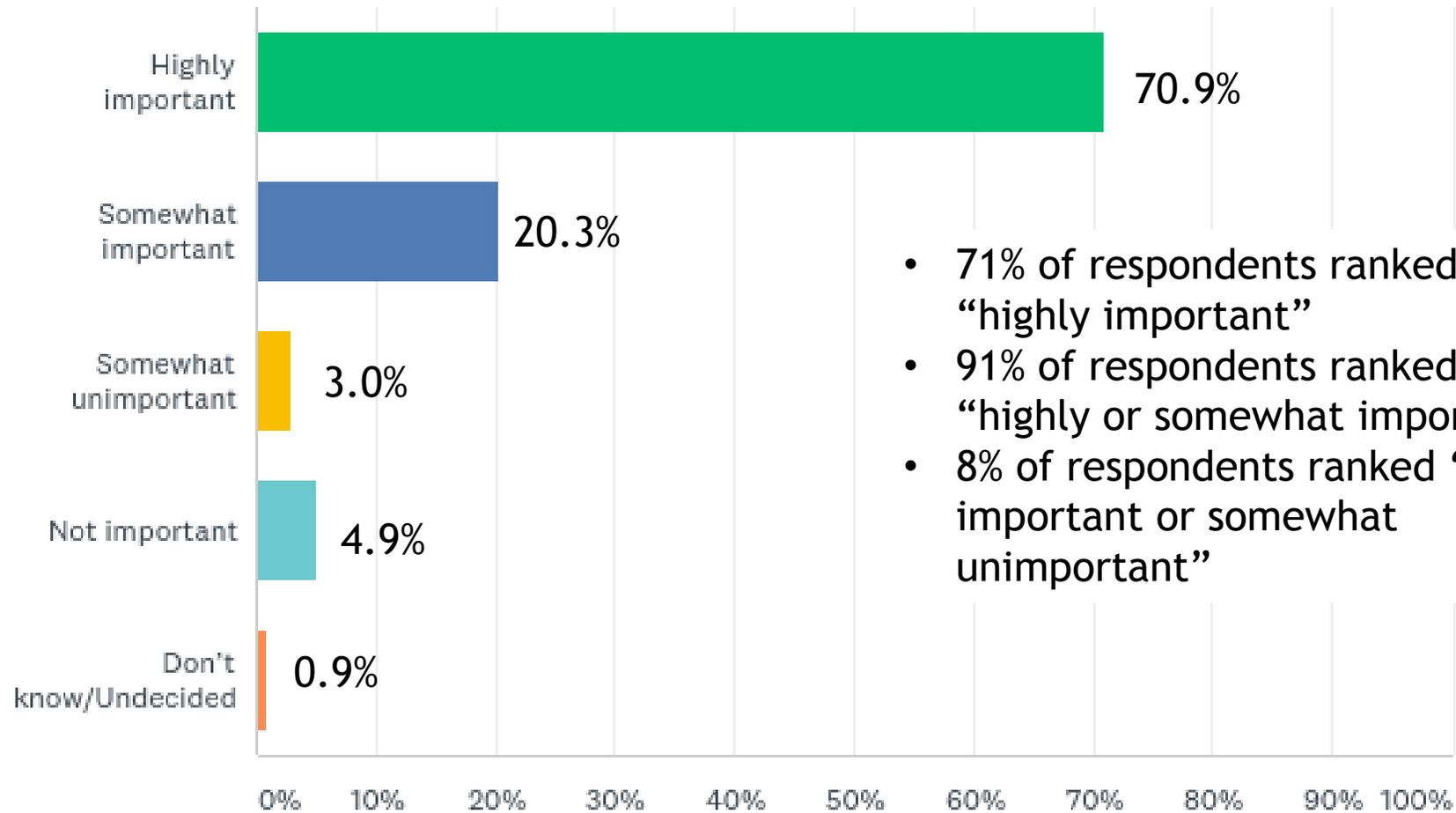


- 79% of respondents answered “highly important”
- 93% of respondents answered “highly or somewhat important”
- 6% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

Answered: 1,499
Skipped: 5



Q4: How important is the conservation of farmland for local food and consumables (such as vegetables, fruits, dairy, honey, wool, forestry, livestock, feed/hay, etc).

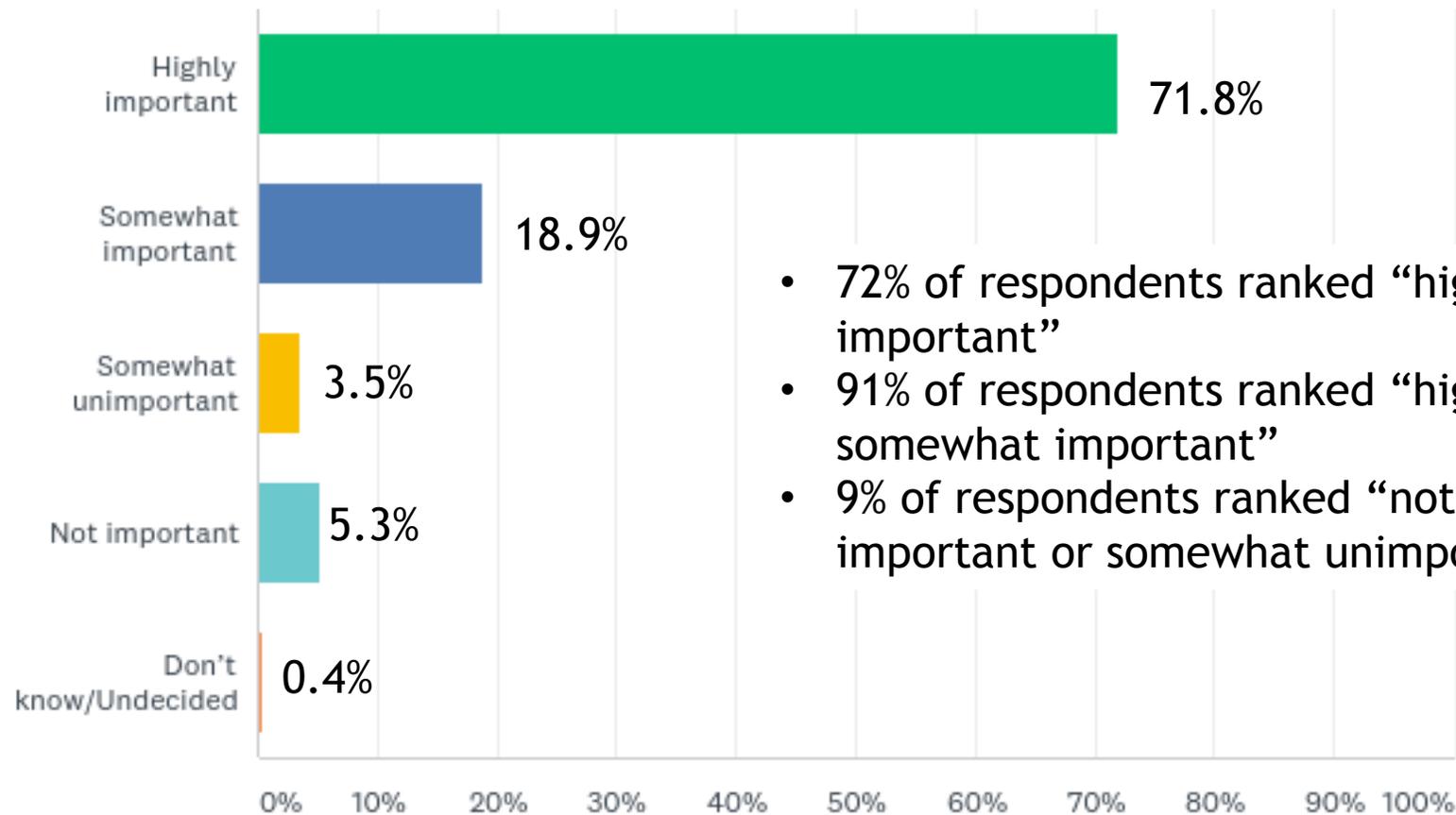


- 71% of respondents ranked “highly important”
- 91% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat important”
- 8% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

▶ Answered: 1,500
Skipped: 4



Q5: How important is the conservation of open space for parkland, including more walking and biking trails for public use?

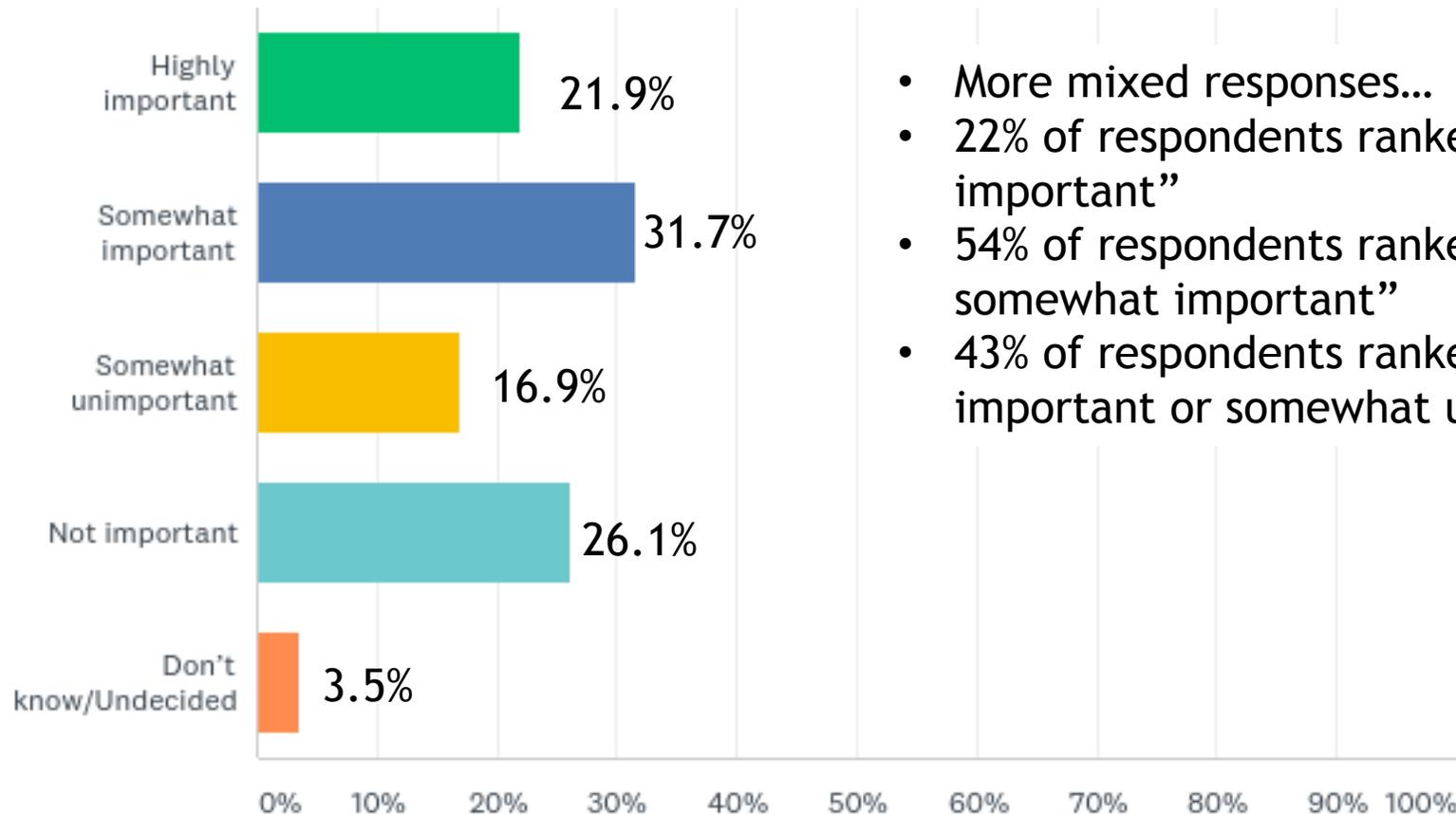


- 72% of respondents ranked “highly important”
- 91% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat important”
- 9% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

▶ Answered: 1,497
Skipped: 7

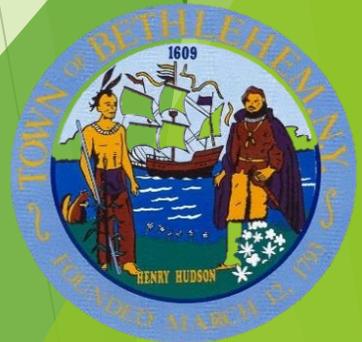


Q6: How important is the conservation of open space for more public access to land for hunting and fishing?

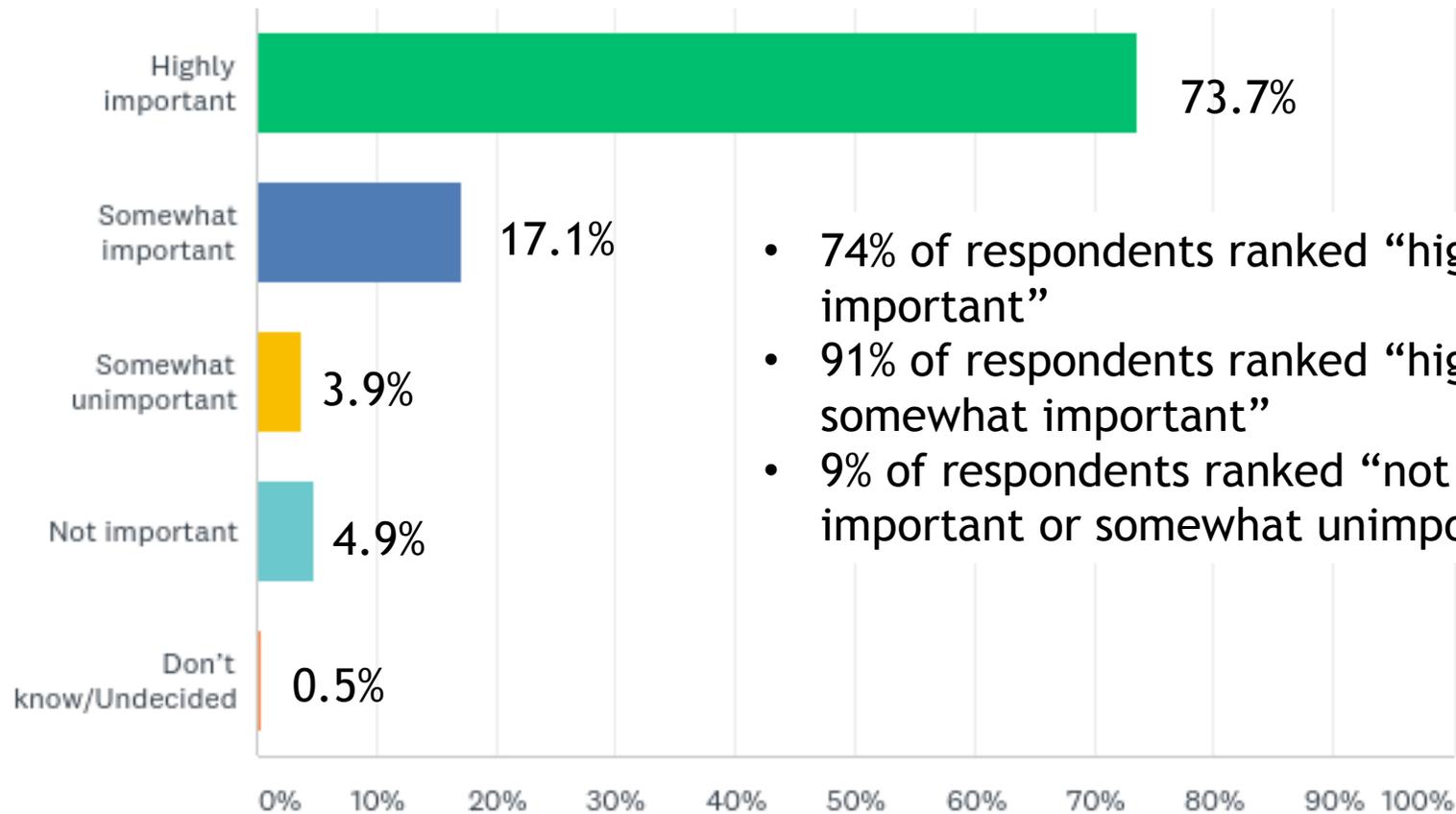


- More mixed responses...
- 22% of respondents ranked “highly important”
- 54% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat important”
- 43% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

▶ Answered: 1,500
Skipped: 4



Q7: How important is the conservation of open space and farmland for protecting community character?

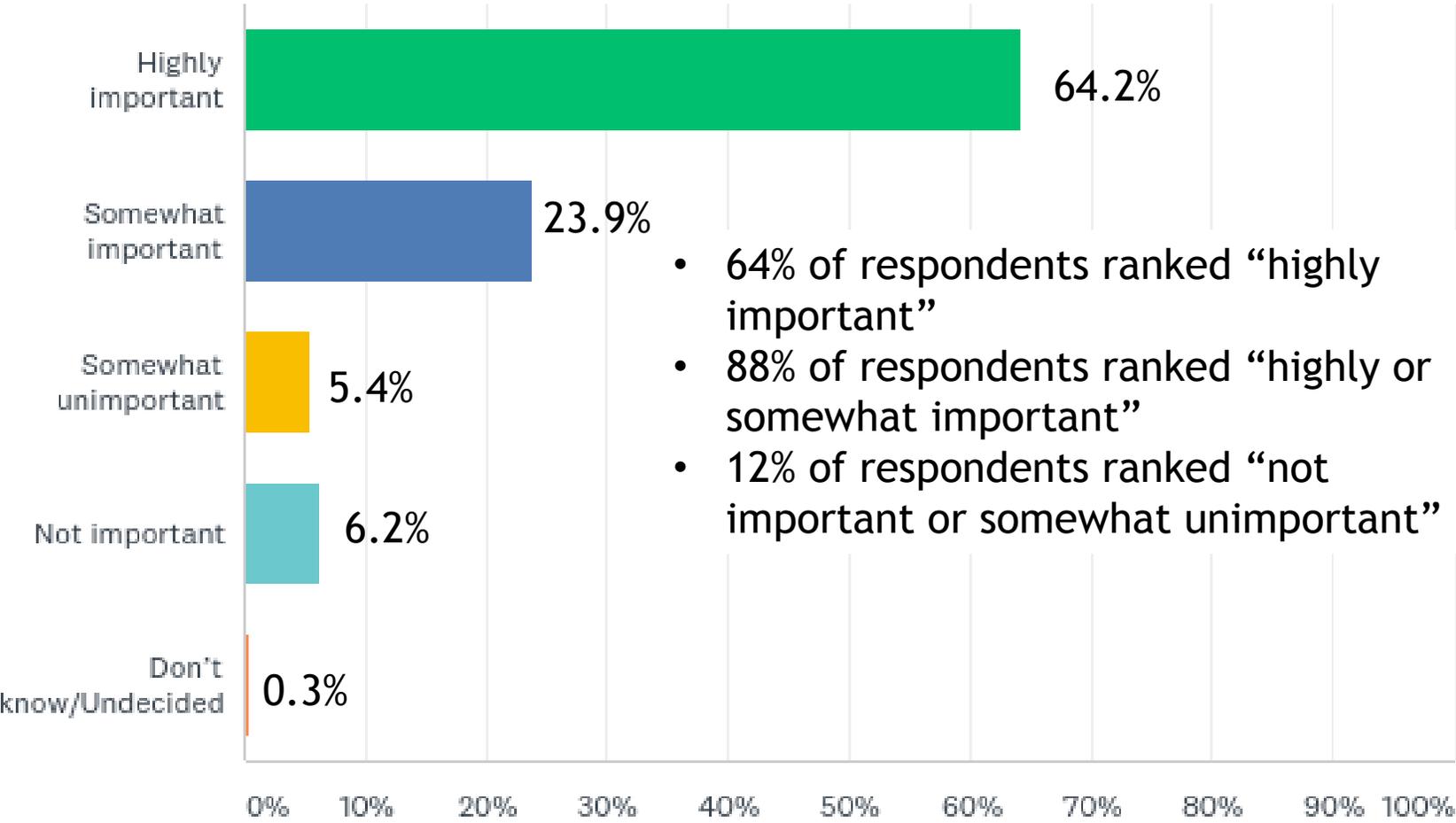


- 74% of respondents ranked “highly important”
- 91% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat important”
- 9% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

▶ Answered: 1,499
Skipped: 5

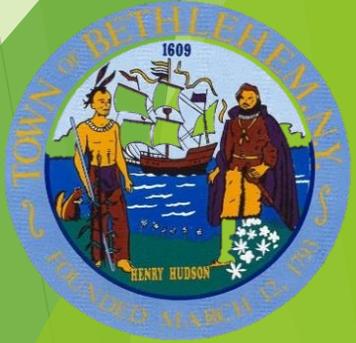


Q8: How important is the conservation of open space and farmland for protecting scenic views?

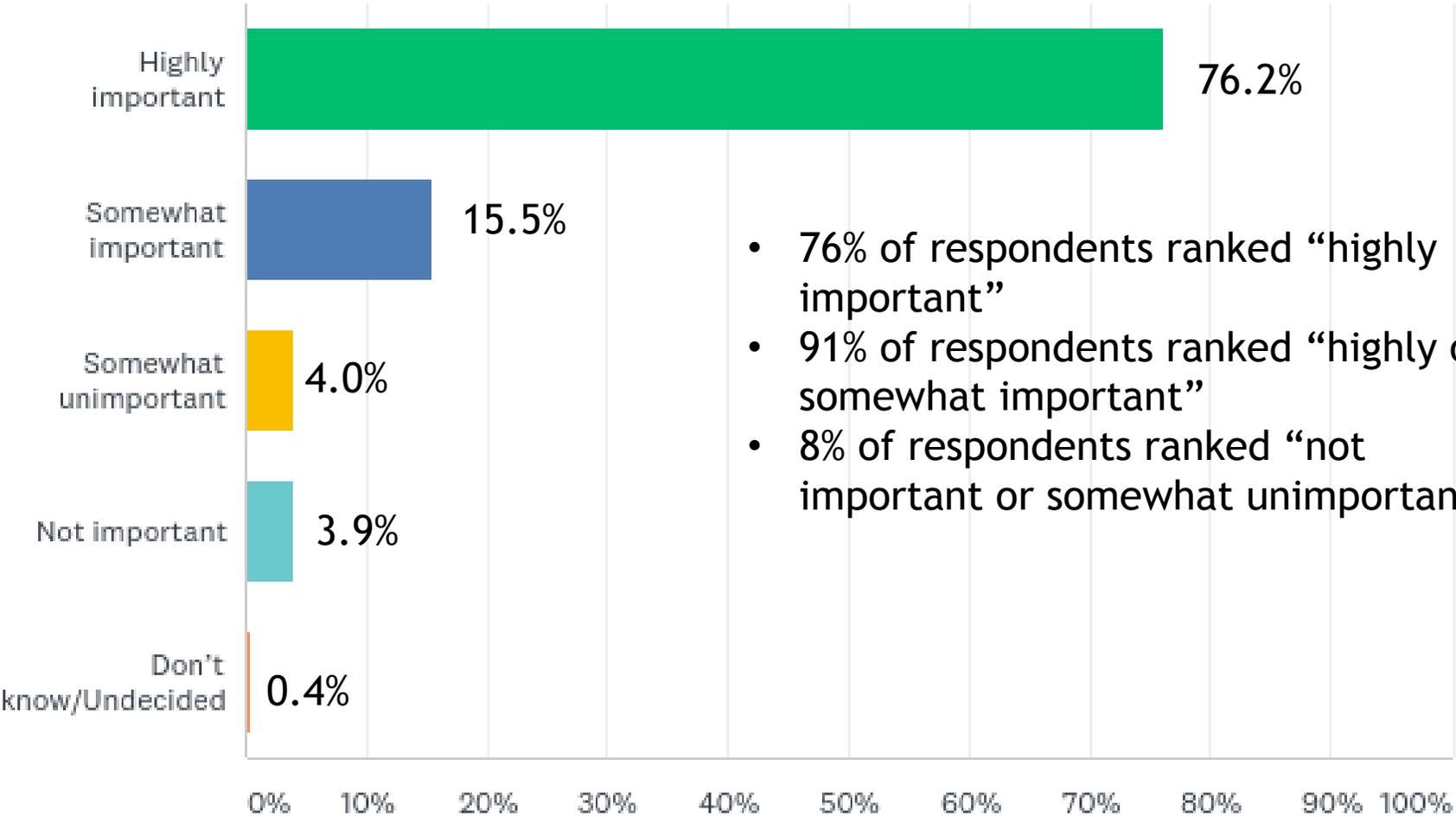


- 64% of respondents ranked “highly important”
- 88% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat important”
- 12% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

Answered: 1,501
Skipped: 3

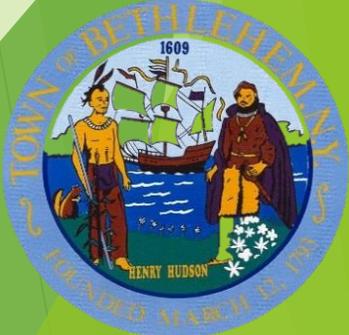


Q9: How important is the conservation of open space and farmland for protecting wildlife habitat?

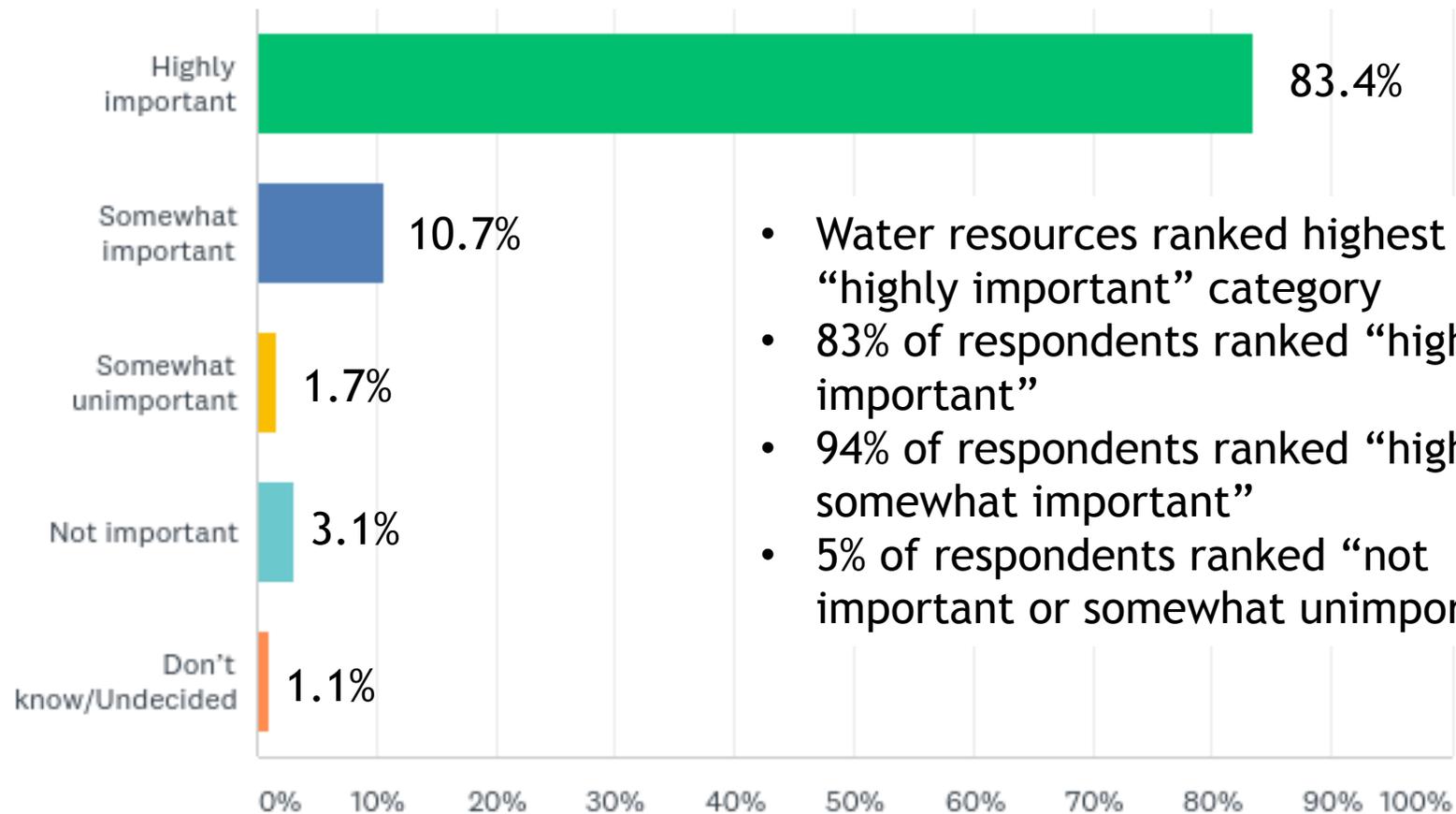


- 76% of respondents ranked “highly important”
- 91% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat important”
- 8% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

Answered: 1,499
Skipped: 5



Q10: How important is it to conserve open space and farmland for water resource protection (streams, wetlands, groundwater, etc.)?

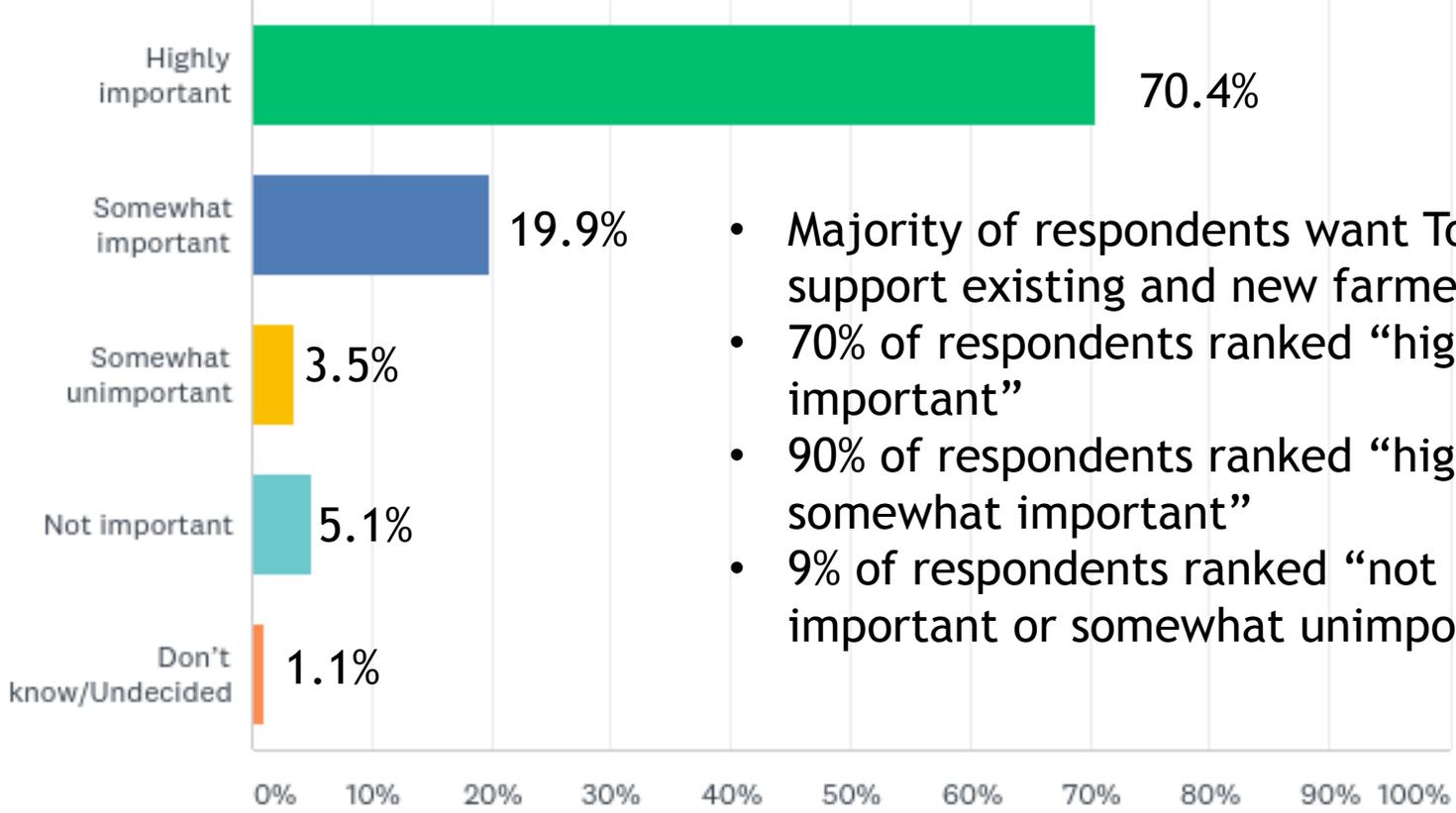


- Water resources ranked highest for “highly important” category
- 83% of respondents ranked “highly important”
- 94% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat important”
- 5% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

Answered: 1,501
Skipped: 3

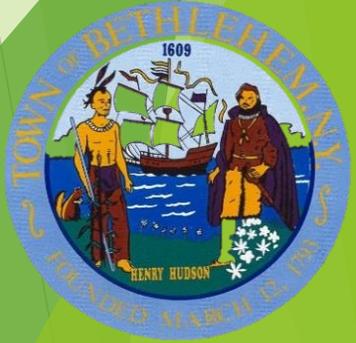


Q11: Over the decades, Bethlehem has seen the conversion of farmland to development. How important is it to you for the Town to support existing farmers, and attract new farmers, to keep land in active farming?

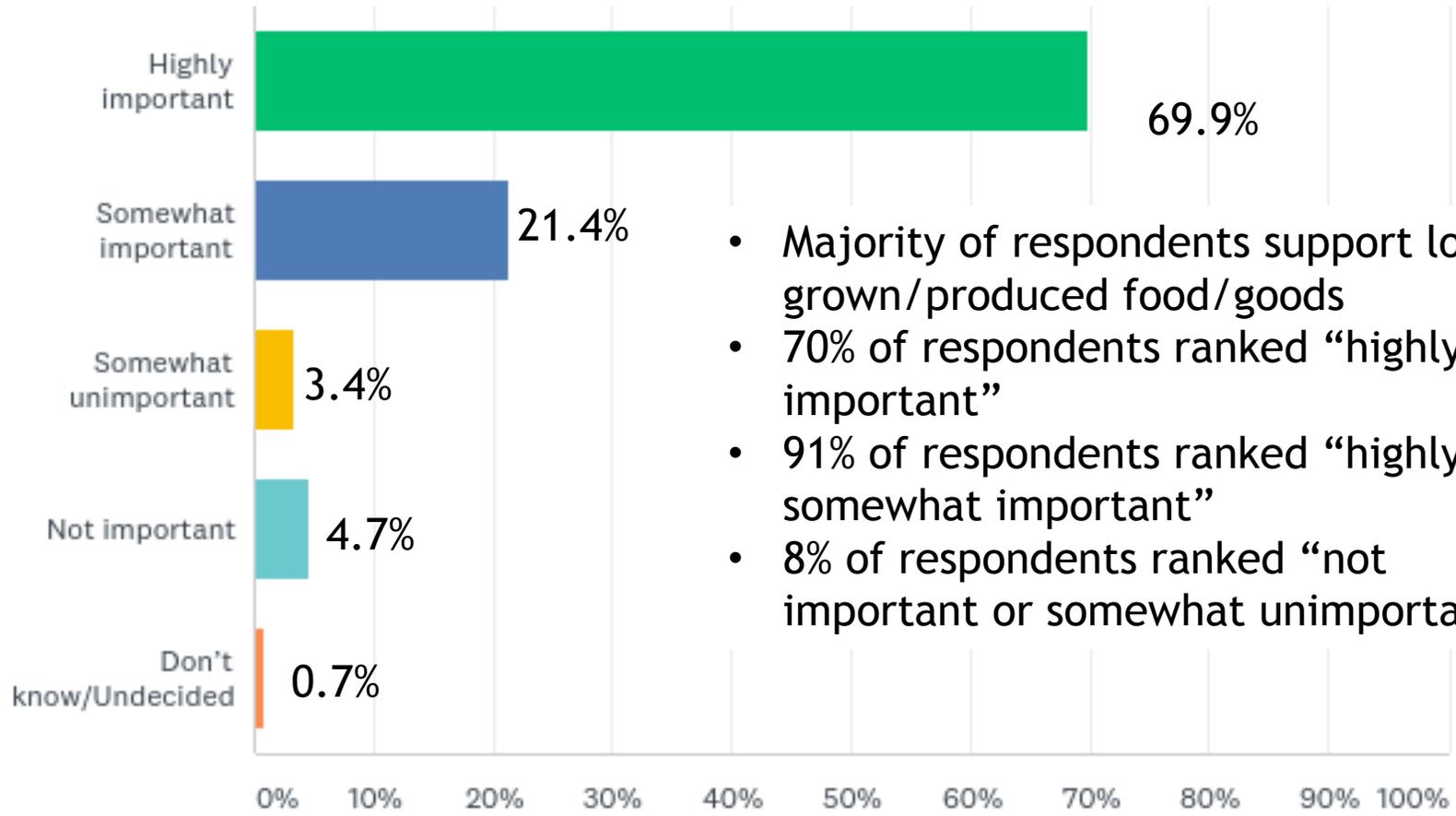


- Majority of respondents want Town to support existing and new farmers
- 70% of respondents ranked “highly important”
- 90% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat important”
- 9% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

Answered: 1,500
Skipped: 4

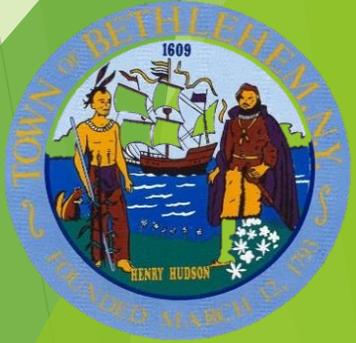


Q12: How important is it for the Town to encourage and support locally grown food and other locally consumable agricultural products (vegetables, fruit, dairy, wool, etc.)?

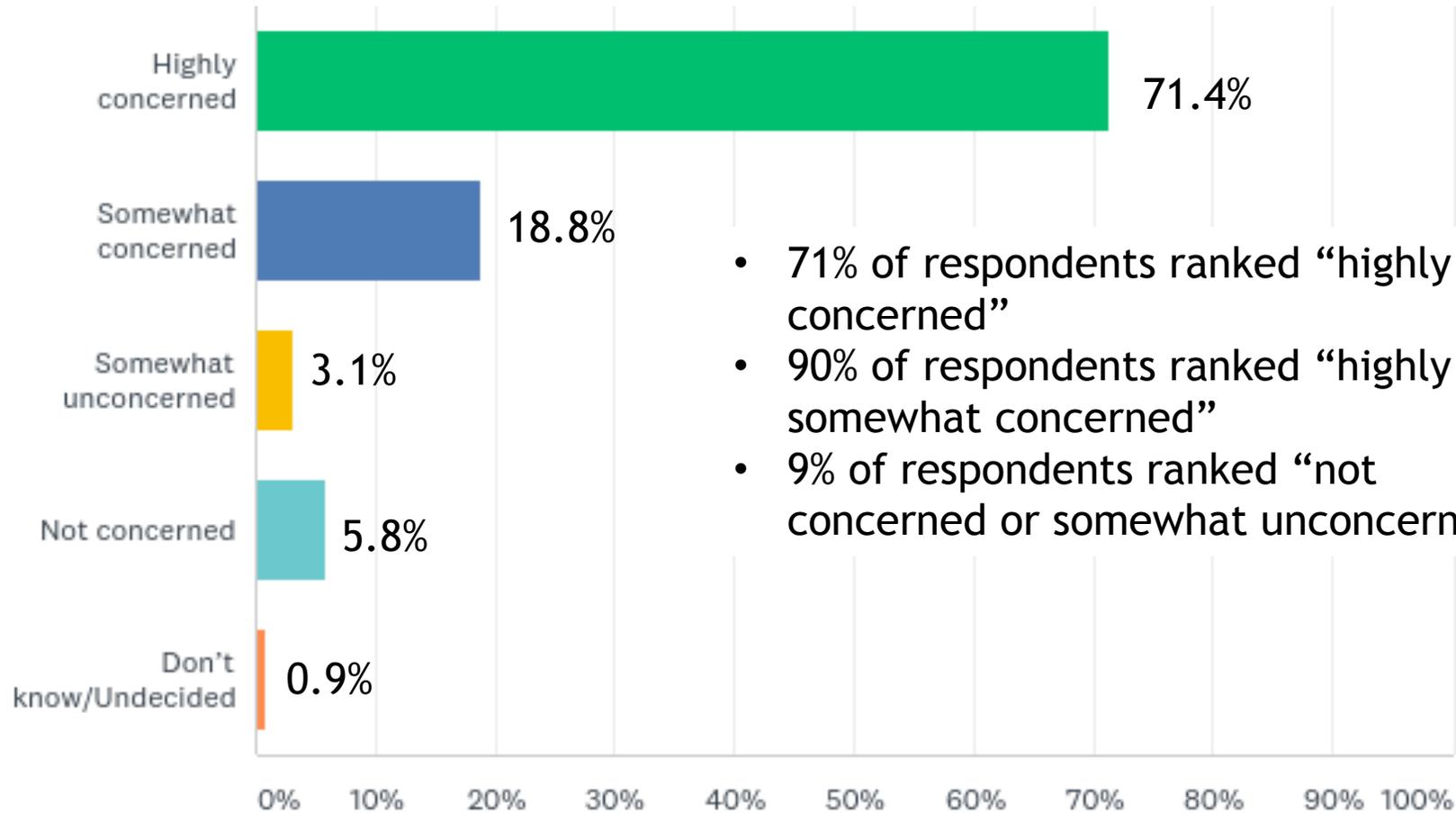


- Majority of respondents support locally grown/produced food/goods
- 70% of respondents ranked “highly important”
- 91% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat important”
- 8% of respondents ranked “not important or somewhat unimportant”

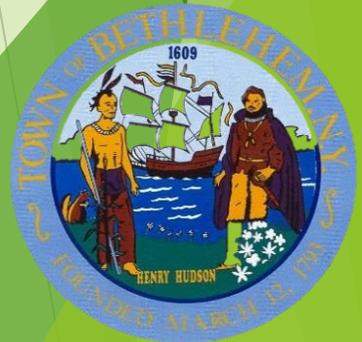
Answered: 1,499
Skipped: 5



Q13: How concerned are you about development in town as it relates to loss of open space and farmland?

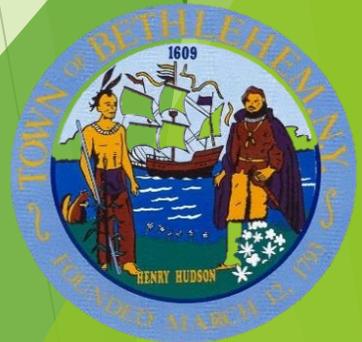


- 71% of respondents ranked “highly concerned”
- 90% of respondents ranked “highly or somewhat concerned”
- 9% of respondents ranked “not concerned or somewhat unconcerned”



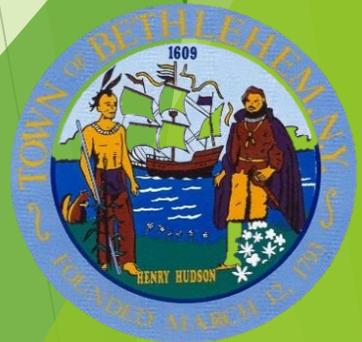
What can we learn from survey results?

- ▶ 93% agreed open space and farmland conservation is highly/somewhat important.
- ▶ How important is the conservation of open space and farmland for _____?



What can we learn from survey results?

Summary findings (Questions 3-13):	Rated “highly important” or “somewhat important” (combined score)
Water resource protection benefits of conservation	94%
Conservation of open space and farmland, in general	93%
Public use, parkland, trails	91%
The conservation of farmland for local food and consumables (vegetables, honey, wool, etc.)	91%
Wildlife habitat benefits	91%
Community character	91%
Support existing farmers, attract new farmers, and keep land in active farming	90%
Concerned about development as cause of loss of open space and farms	90%
Scenic views	88%
Open space for hunting and fishing	54%



Q14: In your opinion, where are places in Bethlehem that are most important to conserve?

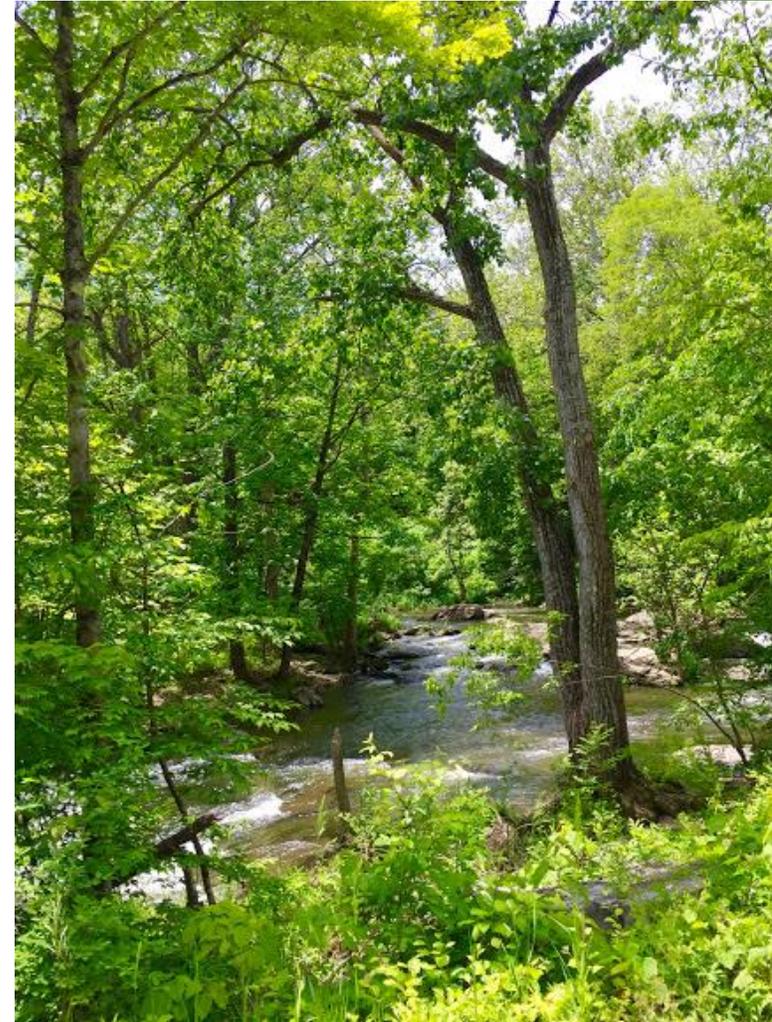
30 locations mentioned 5 times or more:

Farm	418
Farmland	154
Kleinke Farm	143
Glenmont	98
Kenwood Av.	95
Five Rivers, adj. lands	87
Rt. 32/Bypass	84
Wemple Rd.	75
Rail trail, adj. lands	64
Hudson riverfront	58
Meads Ln.	55
Feura Bush Rd.	52
Normanskill	45
Southern part of town	42
Elm Av.	39

Delaware Av.	33
Selkirk	28
Fisher Blvd.	25
Clarksville	21
Orchard St.	19
New Scotland Rd.	18
Bender Ln.	15
Van Dyke Rd.	15
Normanside Country Club	14
Pocket parks	13
River Road/ Rt. 144	12
Rockefeller Rd.	12
Henry Hudson Park	11
Waldenmeier Rd.	9
North St.	8

What can we learn from survey comments?

- ▶ Volume of comments provided suggest respondents are interested in this topic.
- ▶ Provided ideas about where geographically respondents would like to see open space and farmland conserved.
- ▶ Breadth and depth of comments suggest that more education and discussion will be useful.



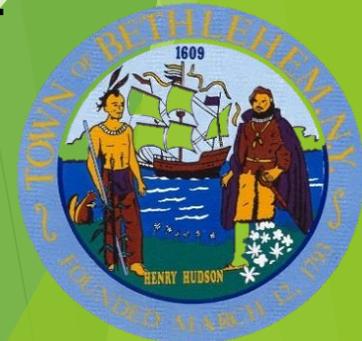
What are some of the current barriers to conserving open space and farmland?

- ▶ Land is expensive and sought after for development.
- ▶ Non-profit land conservancies can't afford to buy land on their own.
- ▶ Farming is increasingly challenging due to loss of regional infrastructure, changing markets, and more.
- ▶ Town has no funding source dedicated to buying land from interested sellers.



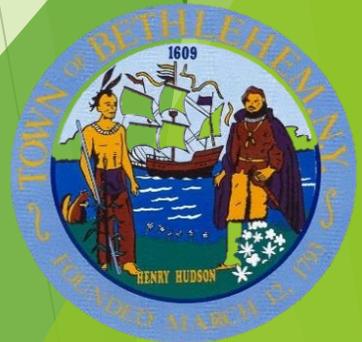
What can the Town do to help conserve open space and farmland?

- ▶ Continue to provide tax relief options with Conservation Easement Exemption program and Agricultural Assessment.
- ▶ Maximize conservation partnerships.
- ▶ Provide education and collaboration through public events, workshops, etc.
- ▶ Help make farmland accessible, affordable for new/beginning farmers to come to town and start successful agricultural businesses.
- ▶ Explore revenue sources for an open space and farmland conservation fund.
- ▶ Provide landowners with a variety of options/choices for receiving fair market value for their land.



Next steps...

- Continue to talk with interested Bethlehem landowners about their needs.
- Continue to collaborate with our conservation partners to support landowners to conserve land while retaining the fair market value of their land.
- Parkland Set Aside Fund: Re-evaluate current parkland fee rate for parkland acquisition.
- Explore fair and equitable methods of securing revenue for an open space and farmland conservation fund, so the Town can play a financial role in non-parkland conservation projects.
- Integrate with current Comprehensive Plan Update process.





Contacts:

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kshaw@townofbethlehem.org / 439-4955 x1106

:

www.townofbethlehem.org

The seal of the Town of Bethlehem, New York, is circular. It features a central illustration of a Native American man on the left and a European man on the right, standing on a boat. The text around the border reads "TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, N.Y." at the top and "FOUNDED 1609" at the bottom. The name "HENRY HUDSON" is written in the center of the seal.