

Isanti County Survey Results

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The community survey allows for engagement at the early stages of the planning process. The intent of the survey is to gather initial public feedback on likes, dislikes, and hopes for Isanti County. The survey was disseminated via an online engagement tool. Additionally, physical survey copies were made available for distribution.

Survey questions inquired on current opportunities and challenges for Isanti County, as well as desires and concerns for the future of the County. Participants were also given the opportunity to share demographic information; the demographic results are included at the end of this document. The survey questions touched on each of the six plan elements:

Land Use	Natural Resources	Transportation	Economic Development	Recreation	Intergovernmental Cooperation
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The survey consisted of 39 questions and was available from April 17 to May 30, with a total of approximately 333 responses.

Overall themes from the survey responses included the following topics: maintaining a rural community feel, growth and new development, a community center, taxes and affordability, and preserving farming and agriculture.

The term “**rural**” was used throughout many responses. This is a term that can have many definitions or contexts including: open space or larger acreage, small town / “country” feeling community, and less dense / less development.

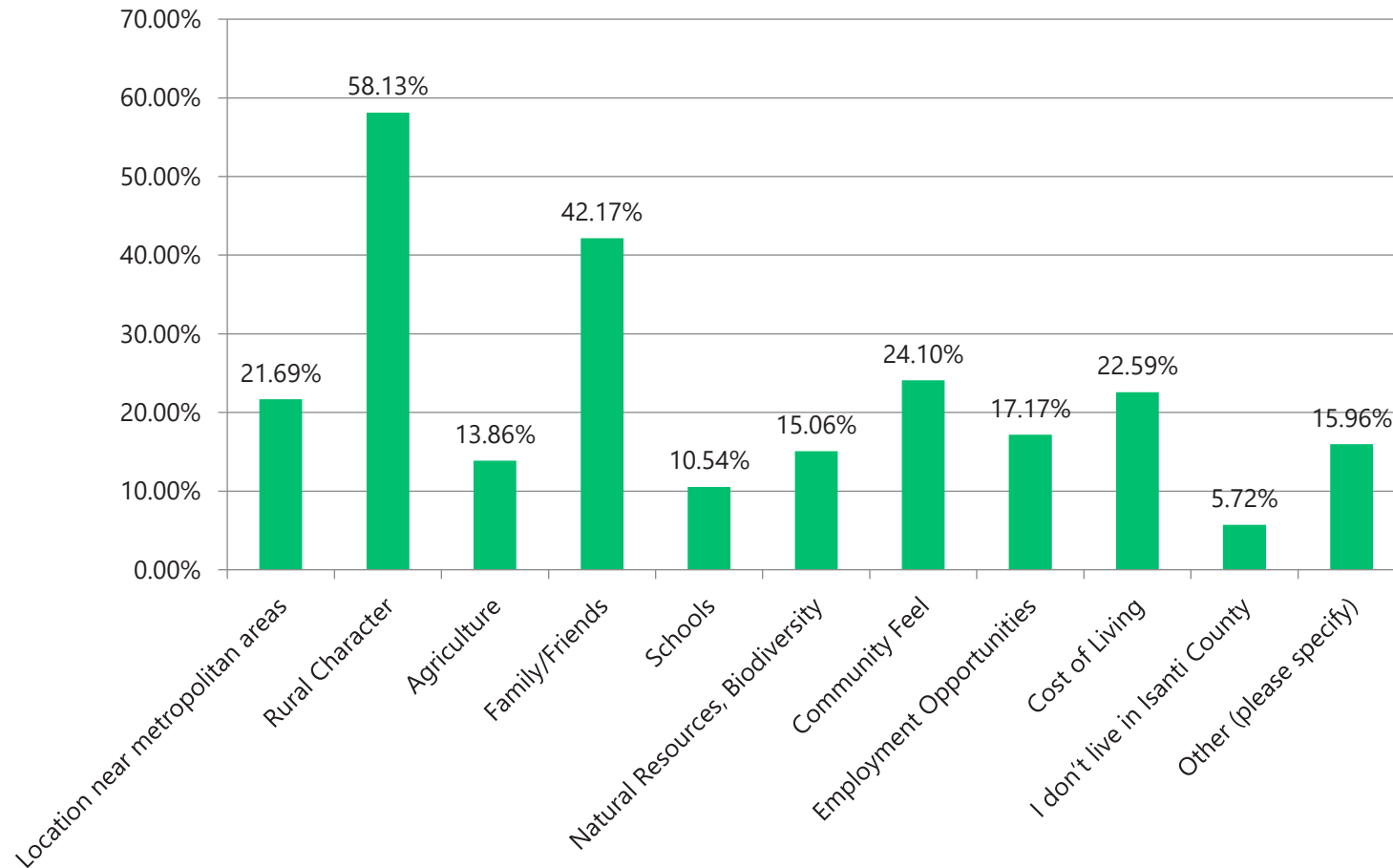
Recurring themes from the survey:

- The desire to maintain a “**small town**”, **rural** feel.
- Concerns for **new development and growth**.
- The desire for a **community center**.
- Concerns for the increasing **cost of living and taxes**.
- Emphasis on preserving and supporting existing and future **farming** and **agriculture**.

SURVEY RESPONSES AND DATA

QUESTION 1) WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO LIVE IN ISANTI COUNTY? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

Many respondents noted they chose to live in Isanti County because of the rural character, or family/ friends. Other responses noted recreation and natural resources, and the family-friendly feel of the community.



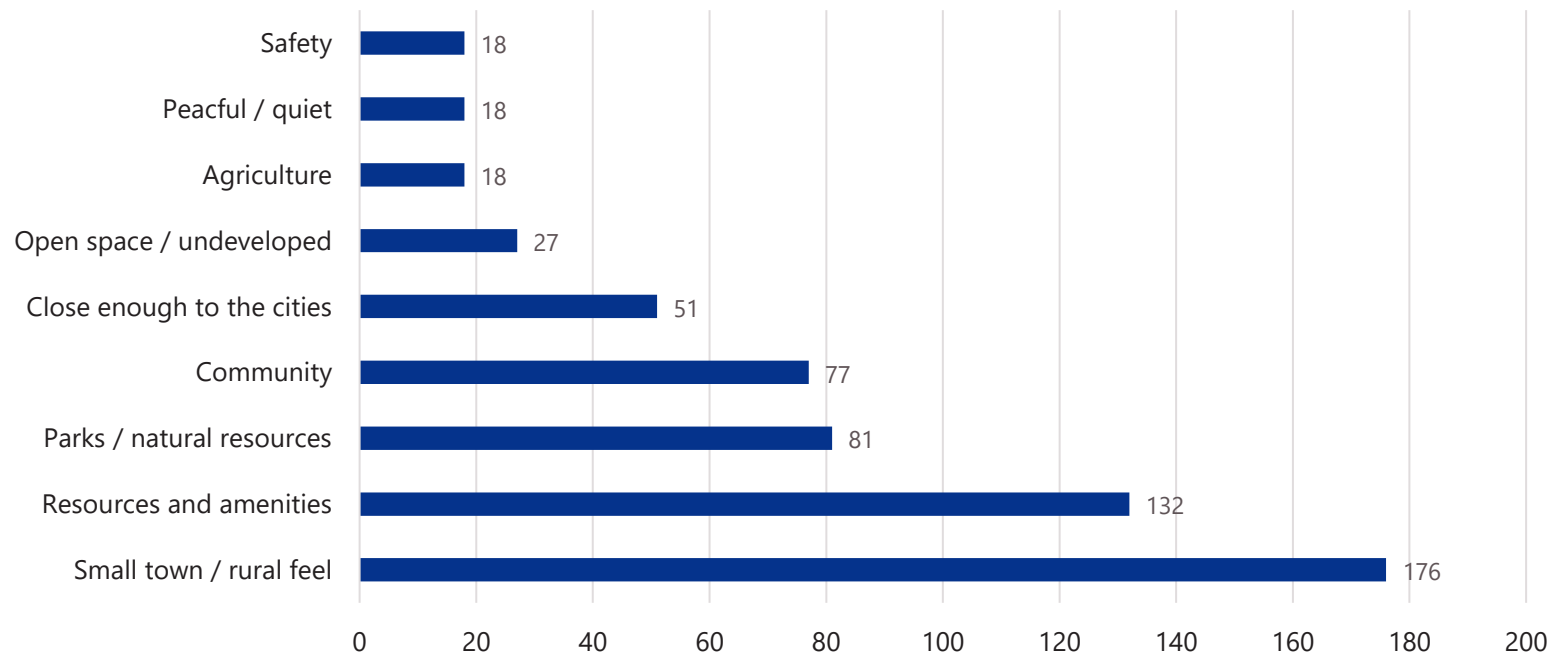
QUESTION 2) WHAT ARE THE TWO THINGS YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT ISANTI COUNTY?

This question was an open comment box with the opportunity to list the two things respondents liked most. The top themes that emerged across responses are identified in the graph below.

The most common response was that people liked the small town or rural feel of Isanti County. This included responses that mentioned a “country-feel”.

The second most common response was about resources and amenities, most commonly referring to retail (or “big box stores”), including the food co-op and restaurants.

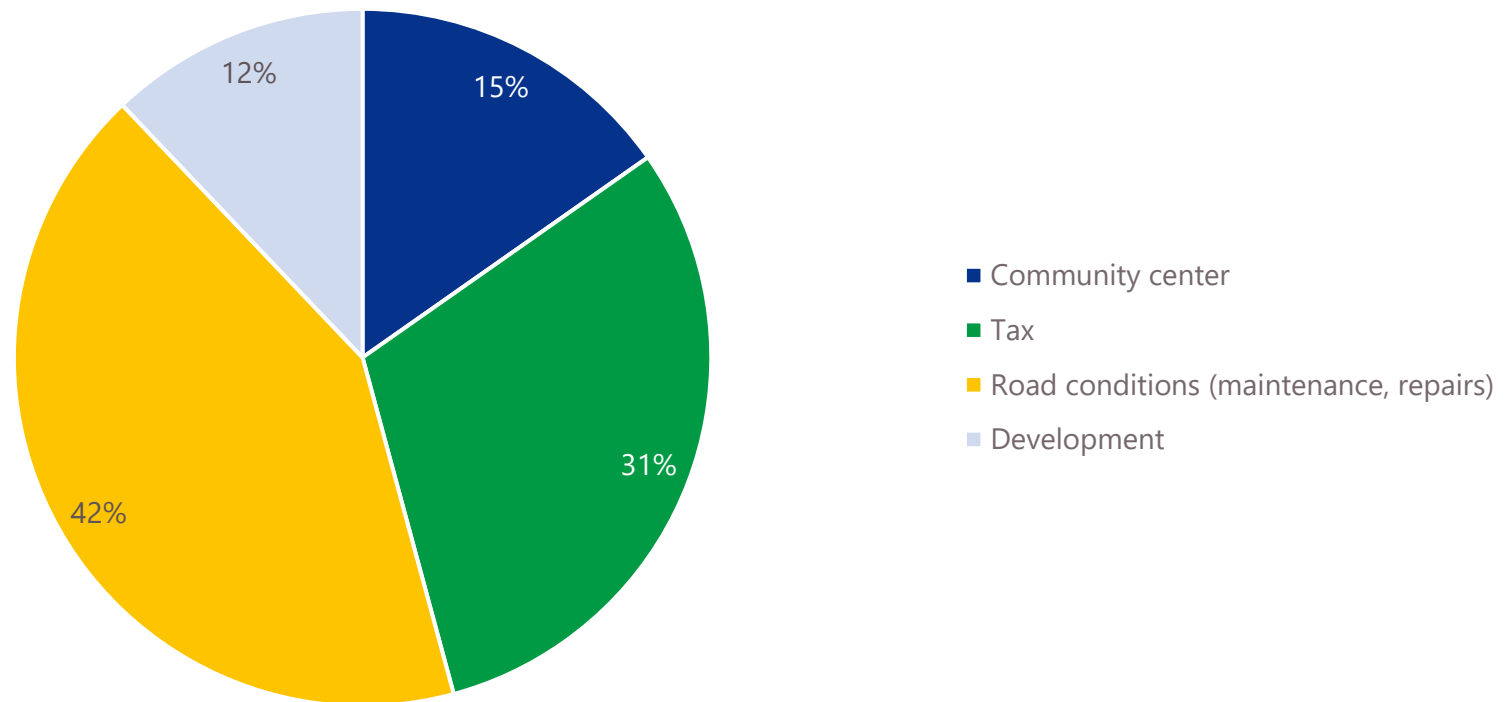
The third most common response was in appreciation for the parks and natural resources in the County, for example: county parks, wildlife areas, and outdoor activities like kayaking.



QUESTION 3) WHAT ARE TWO THINGS YOU WOULD CHANGE THAT WOULD IMPROVE DAY-TO-DAY LIFE IN ISANTI COUNTY?

This question was an open comment box with the opportunity to list the two things respondents would change to improve day-to-day life. The top themes that emerged across responses are identified in the graph below.

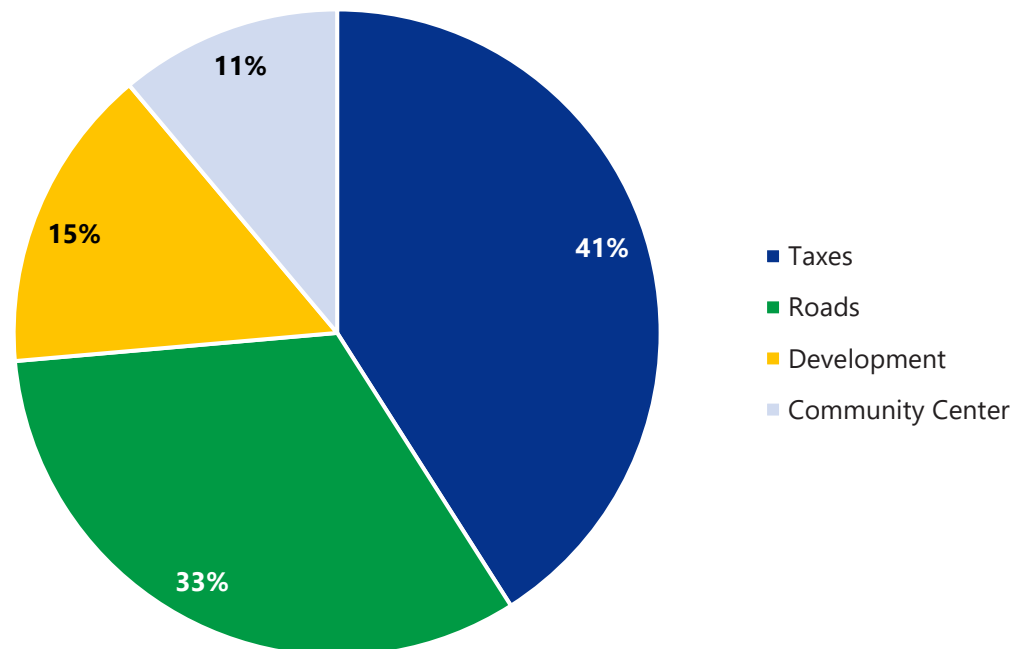
Approximately 42% of responses indicated that they would change the road maintenance and improve road conditions. 31% indicated that they would like to decrease taxes (specifically property taxes).



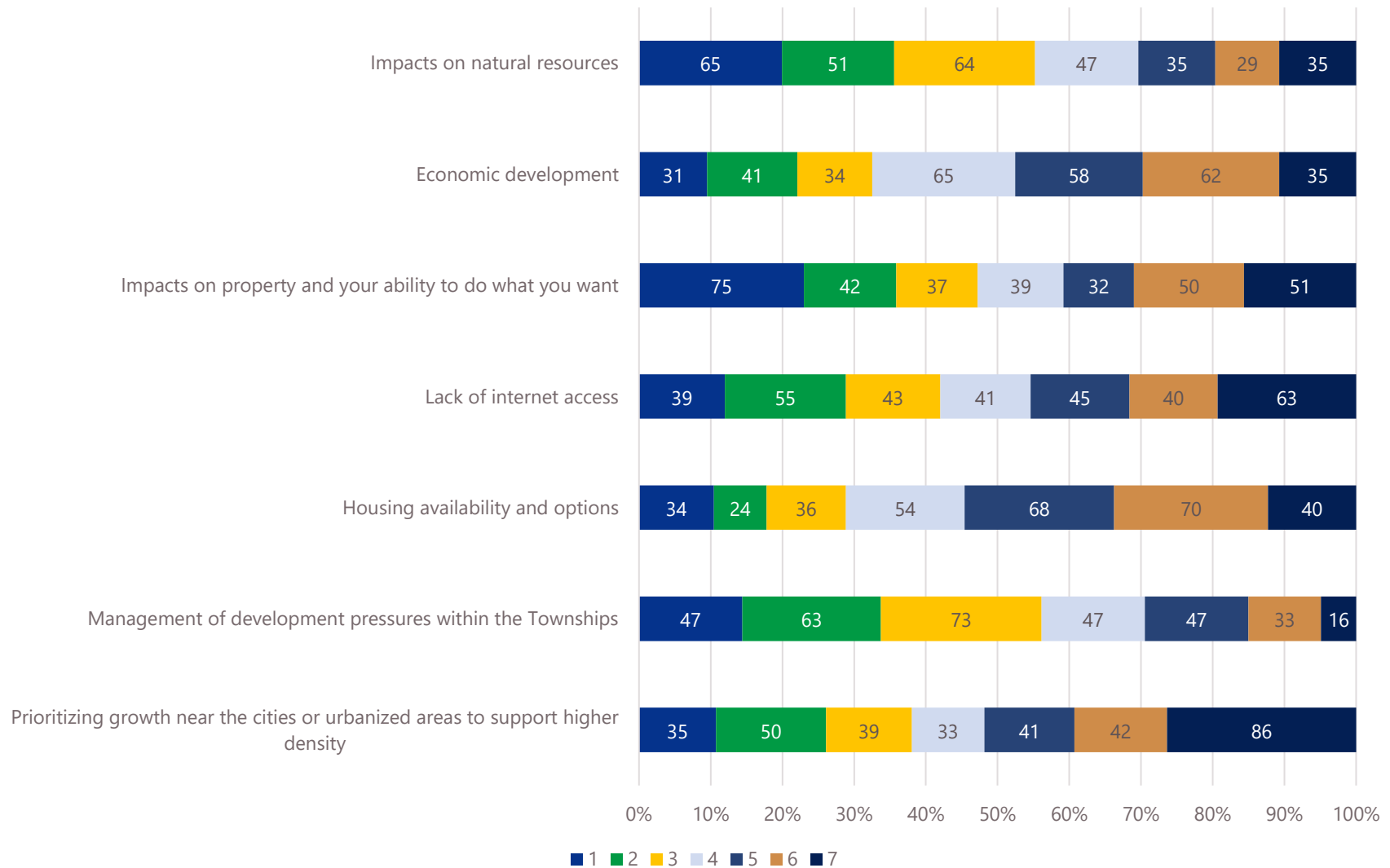
QUESTION 4) WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE THAT ISANTI COUNTY RESIDENTS WILL FACE OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

This question included an open comment box for respondents to identify the biggest challenge they perceived.

Like to Question 3, responses focused on roadway maintenance, lowering taxes, monitoring / decreasing development, and the need for a community center.

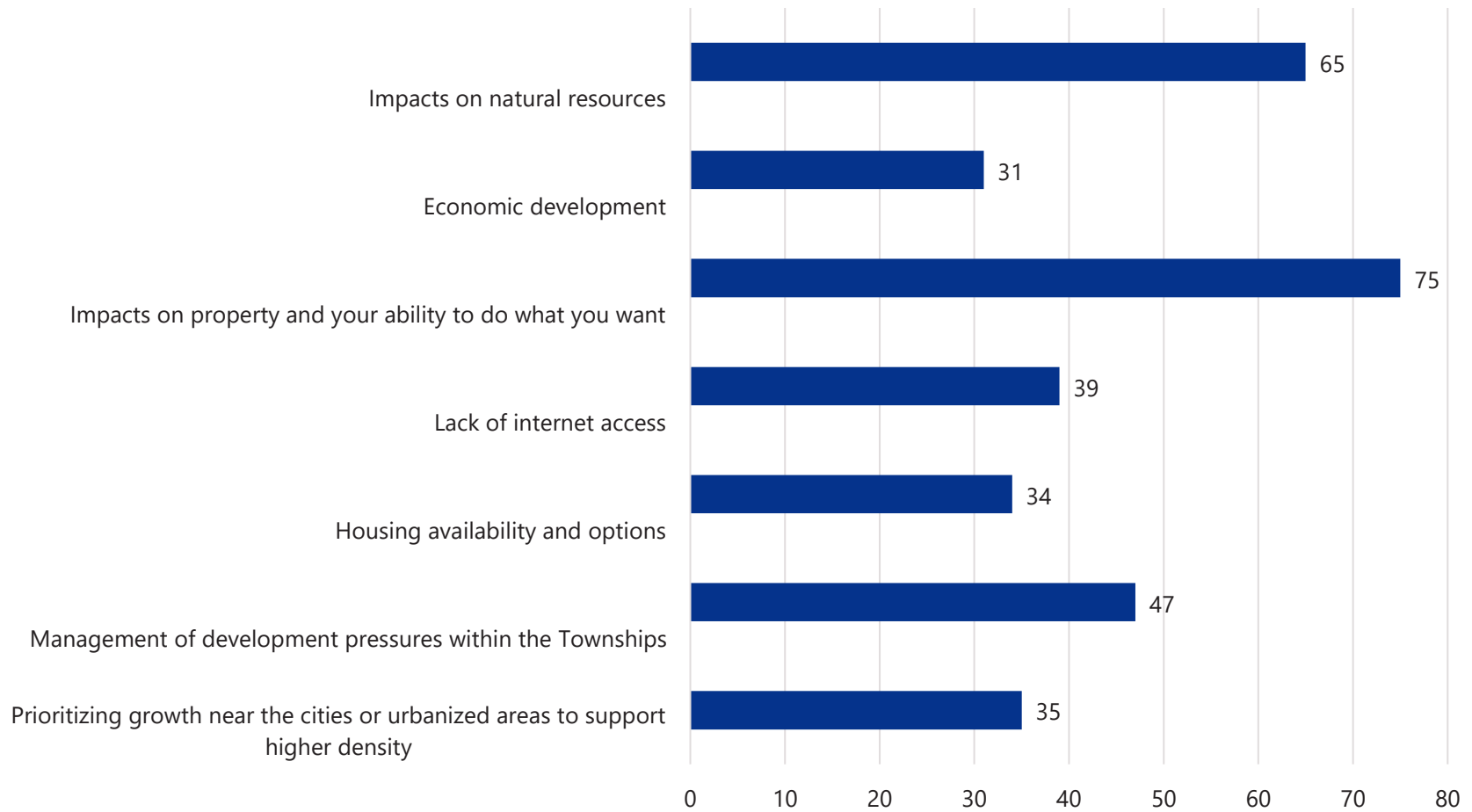


QUESTION 5) WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CHALLENGES SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED FOR THE FUTURE OF ISANTI COUNTY? (PRIORITIZE THE CHALLENGES FROM 1 – MOST IMPORTANT TO 7 – LEAST IMPORTANT)



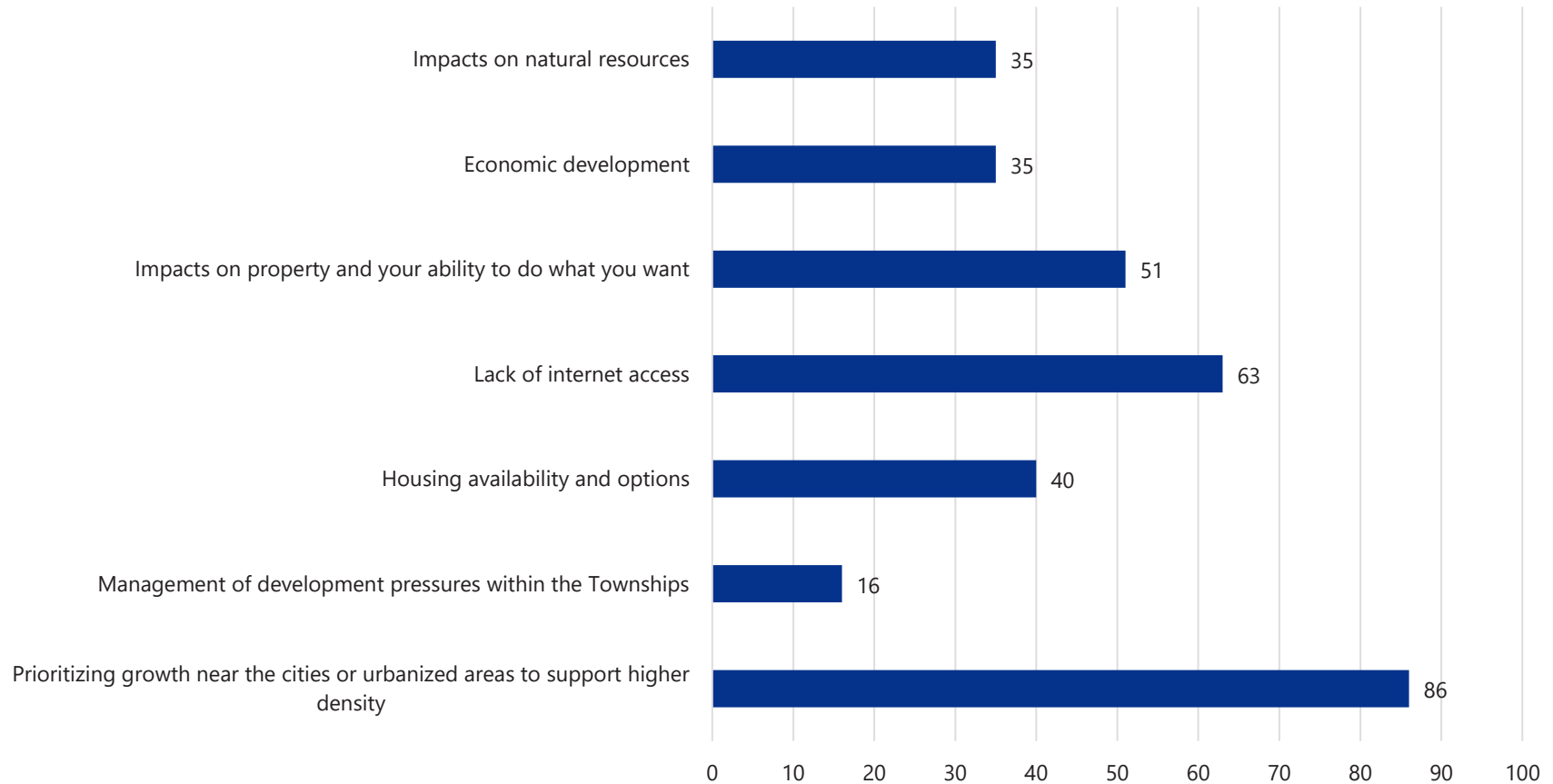
Highest Priority

The highest priority identified for the future of Isanti County was impacts on natural resources. The second highest priority identified was impacts on natural resources.

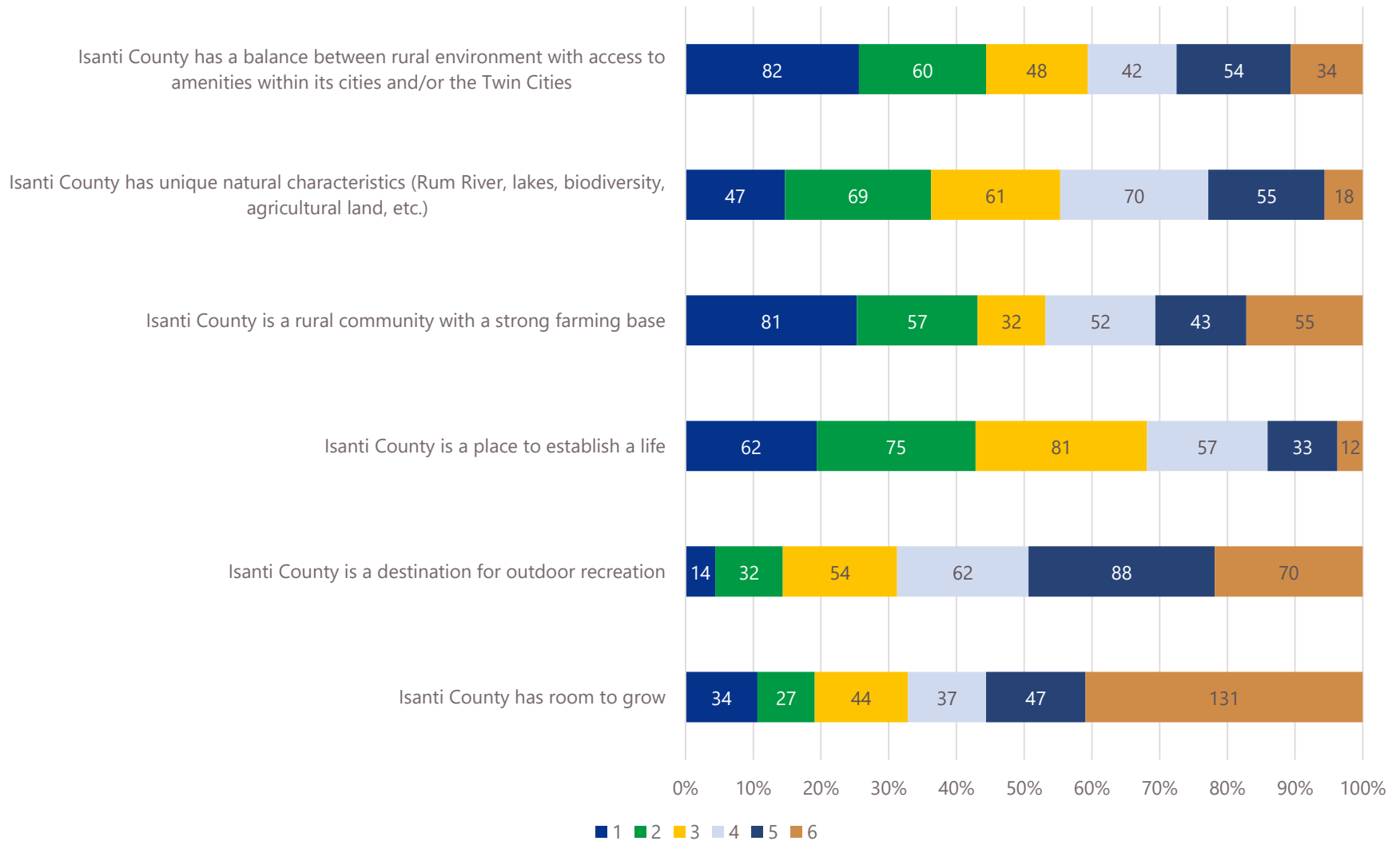


Lowest Priority

The lowest priority identified for the future of Isanti County was prioritizing growth near the cities or urbanized areas to support higher density. The second lowest priority identified was lack of internet access.



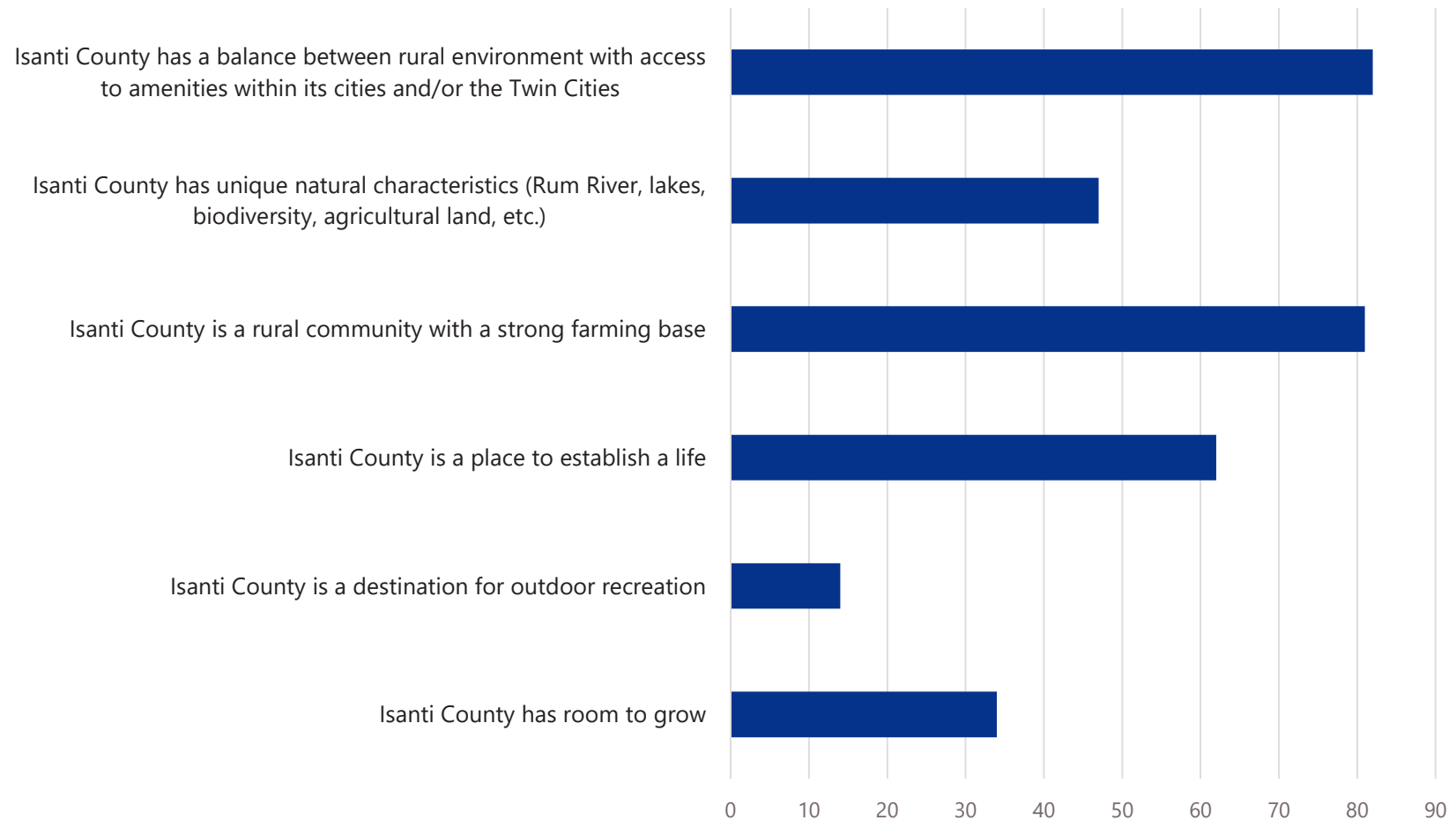
QUESTION 6) ISANTI COUNTY CAN BE DESCRIBED IN MANY WAYS. PRIORITIZE THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT BEST REFLECT THE IDENTITY OF ISANTI COUNTY. (PRIORITIZE FROM 1 – MOST REFLECTIVE TO 6 – LEAST REFLECTIVE)



Most Reflective

The description that was chosen as the most reflective was “Isanti County has a balance between rural environment with access to amenities within its cities and/or the Twin Cities.”

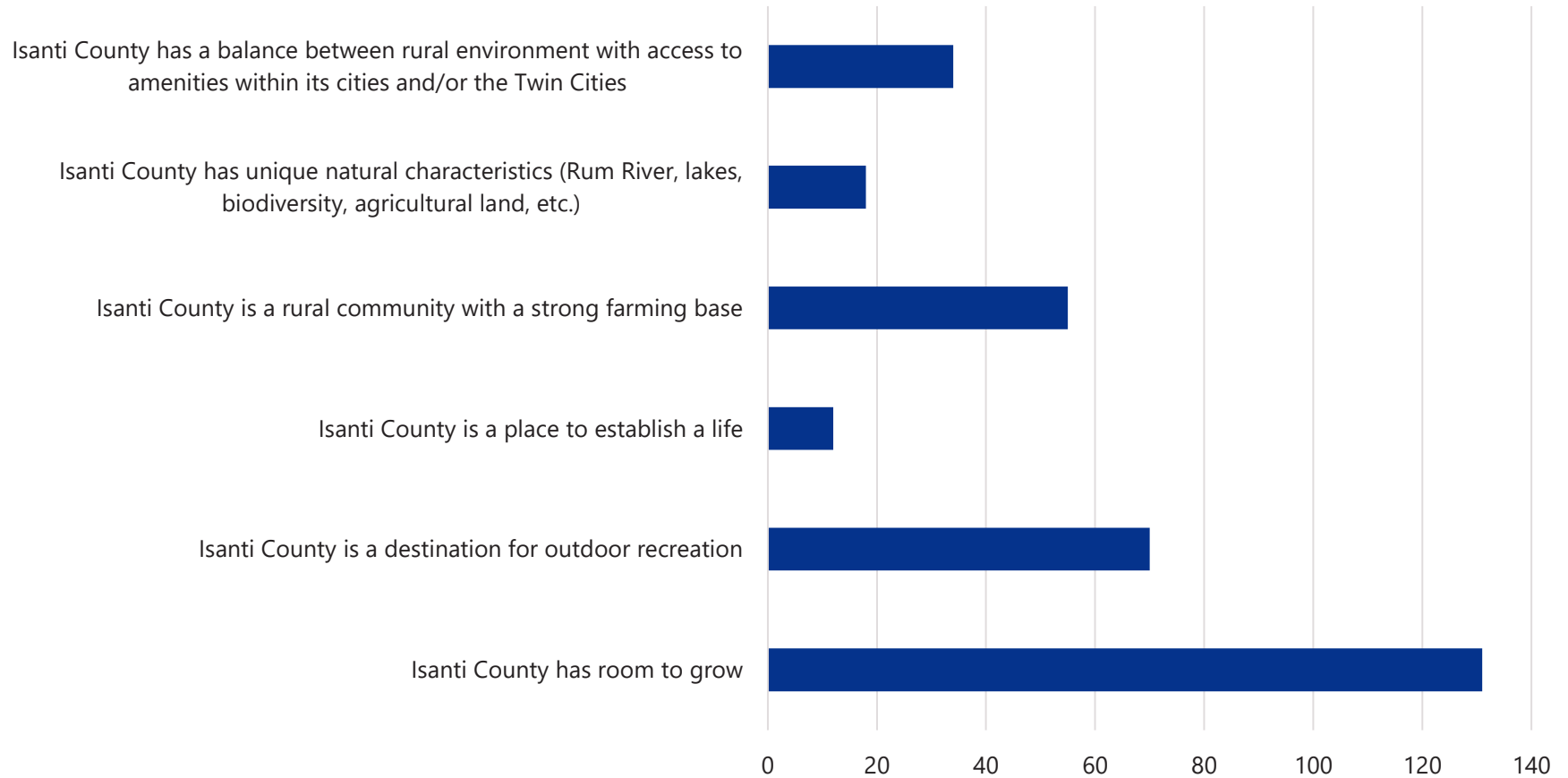
The second most reflective description was “Isanti County is a rural community with a strong farming base.”



Least Reflective

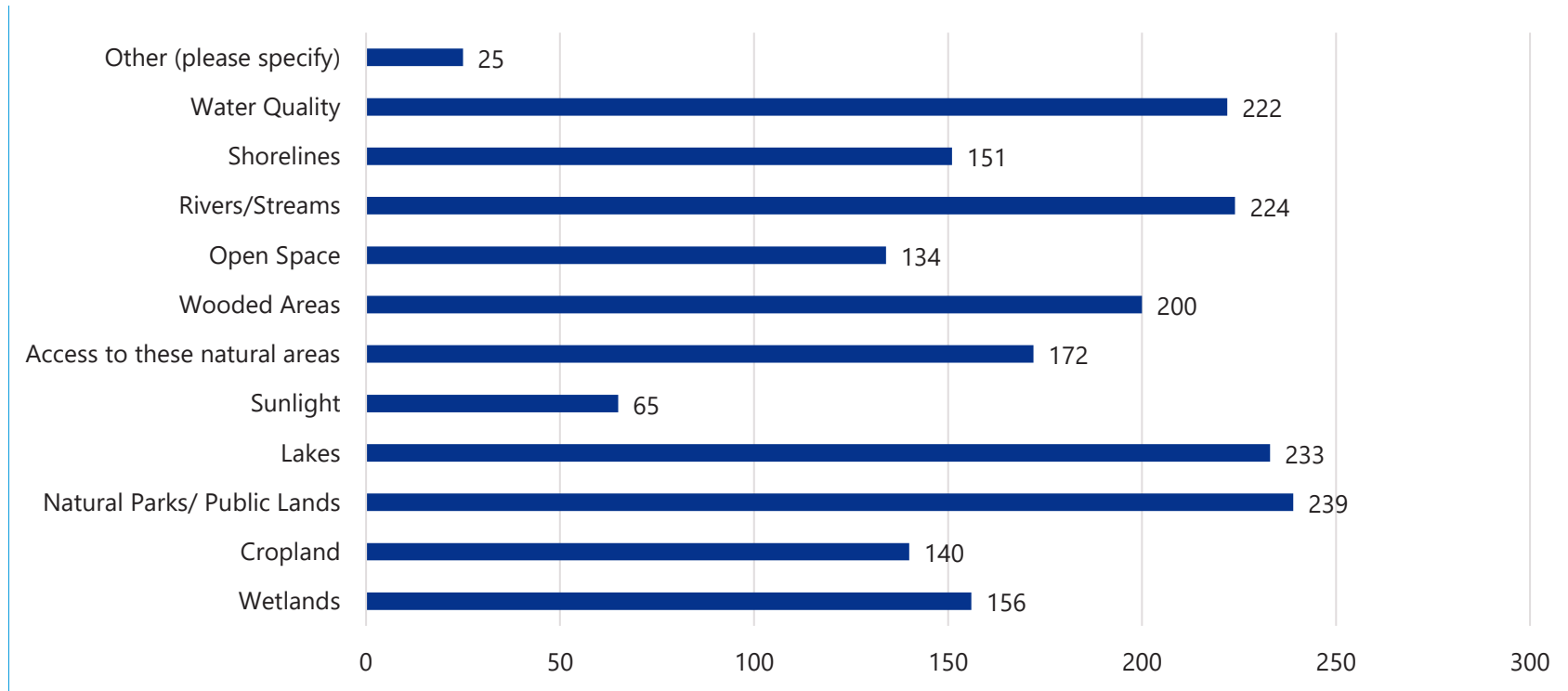
The description that was chosen as the least reflective was "Isanti County has room to grow."

The second most reflective description was "Isanti County is a destination for outdoor recreation."



QUESTION 7) WHICH NATURAL RESOURCE OR HABITATS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED, PROTECTED OR ENHANCED THROUGHOUT ISANTI COUNTY? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

The top choices included natural parks / public lands (73%), lakes (71%), rivers/ streams (68%), and water quality (68%).



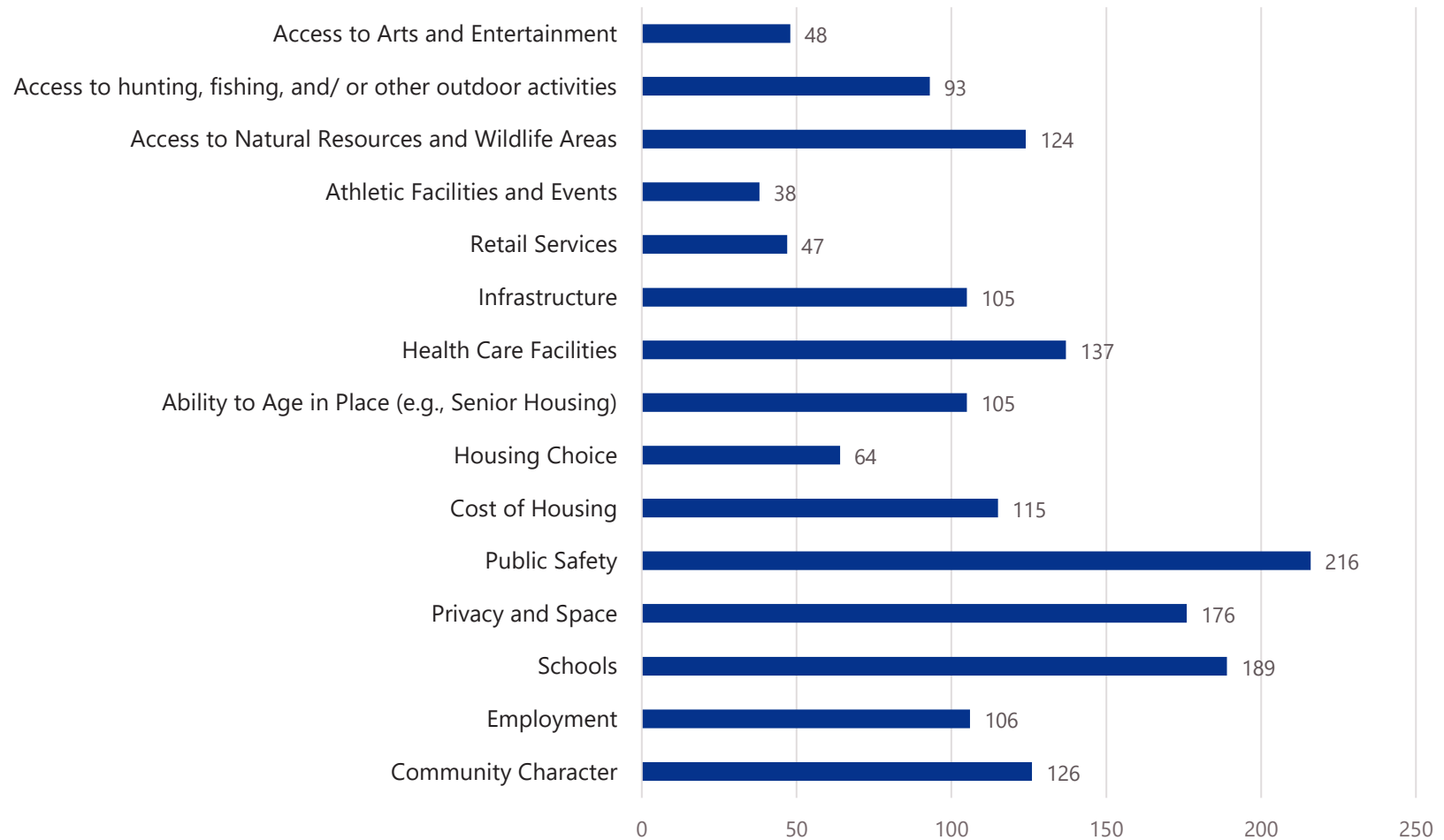
Write-in responses included the following:

- Dark night skies (reducing light pollution)
- Public beaches
- Wind power
- Sunlight

QUESTION 8) HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES TO YOU ON A SCALE OF VERY IMPORTANT TO NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL?

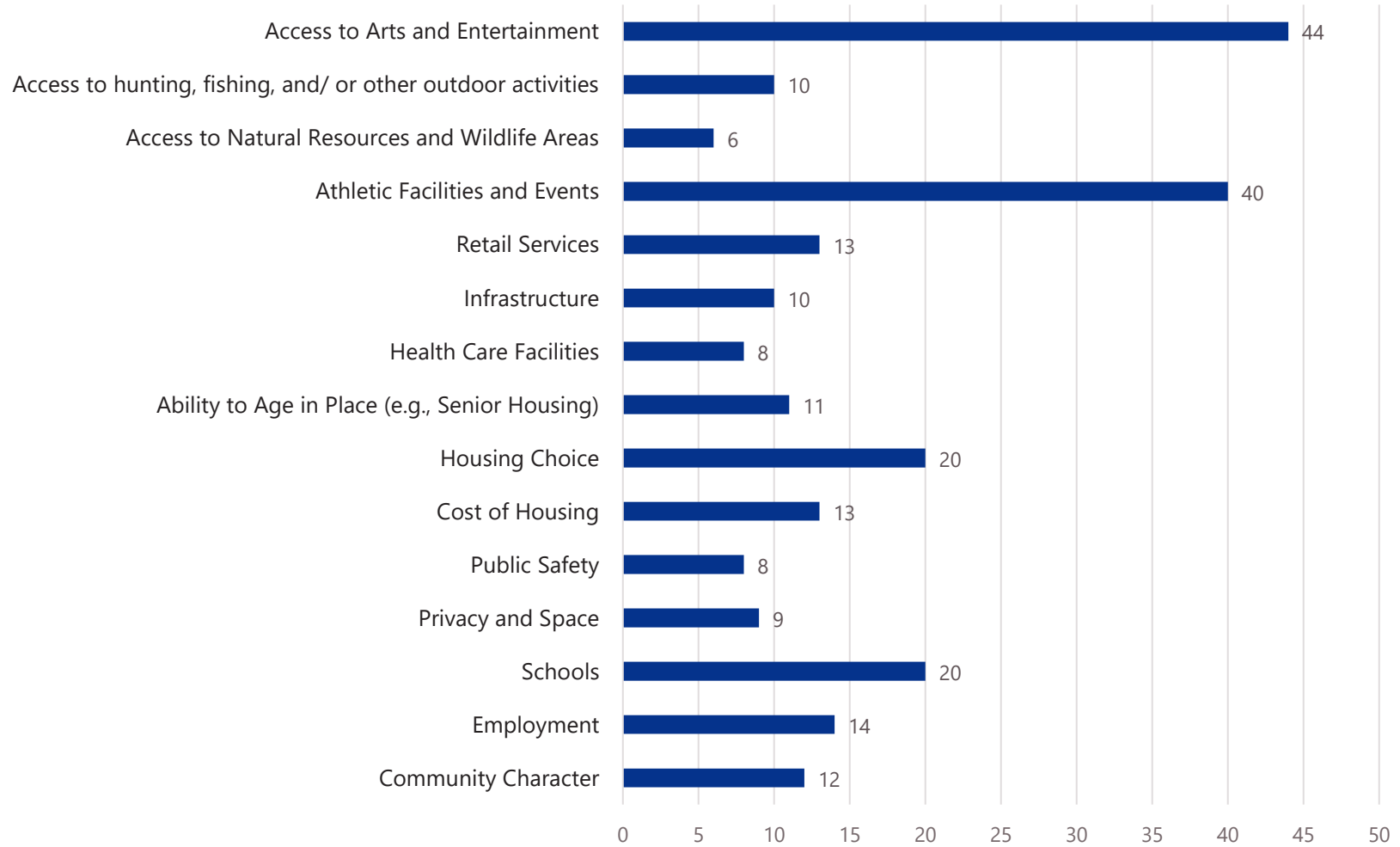
Most Important

The most important resource was public safety. Other top resources included schools and privacy and space.



Least Important

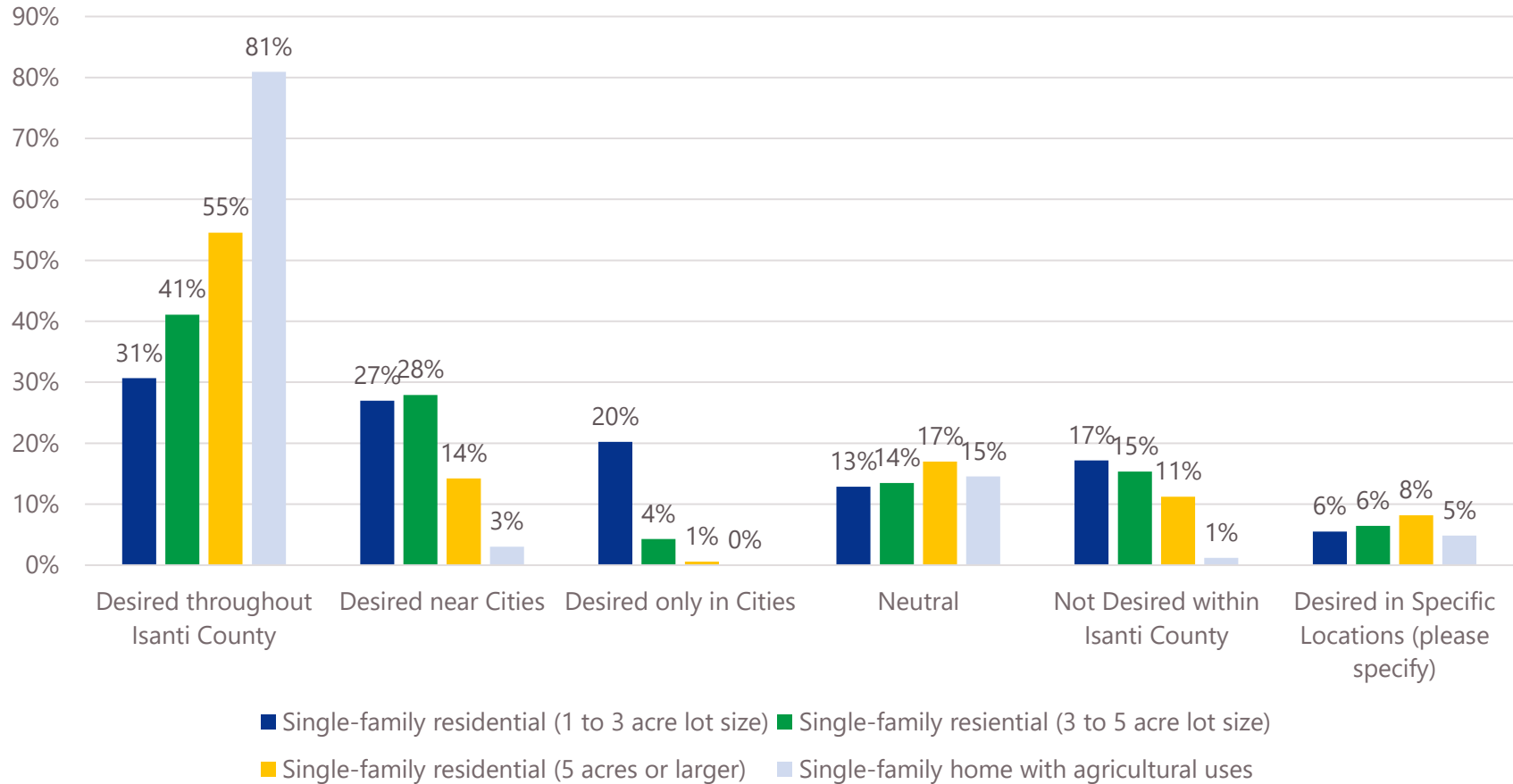
The least important resources were access to arts and entertainment, and athletic facilities and events.



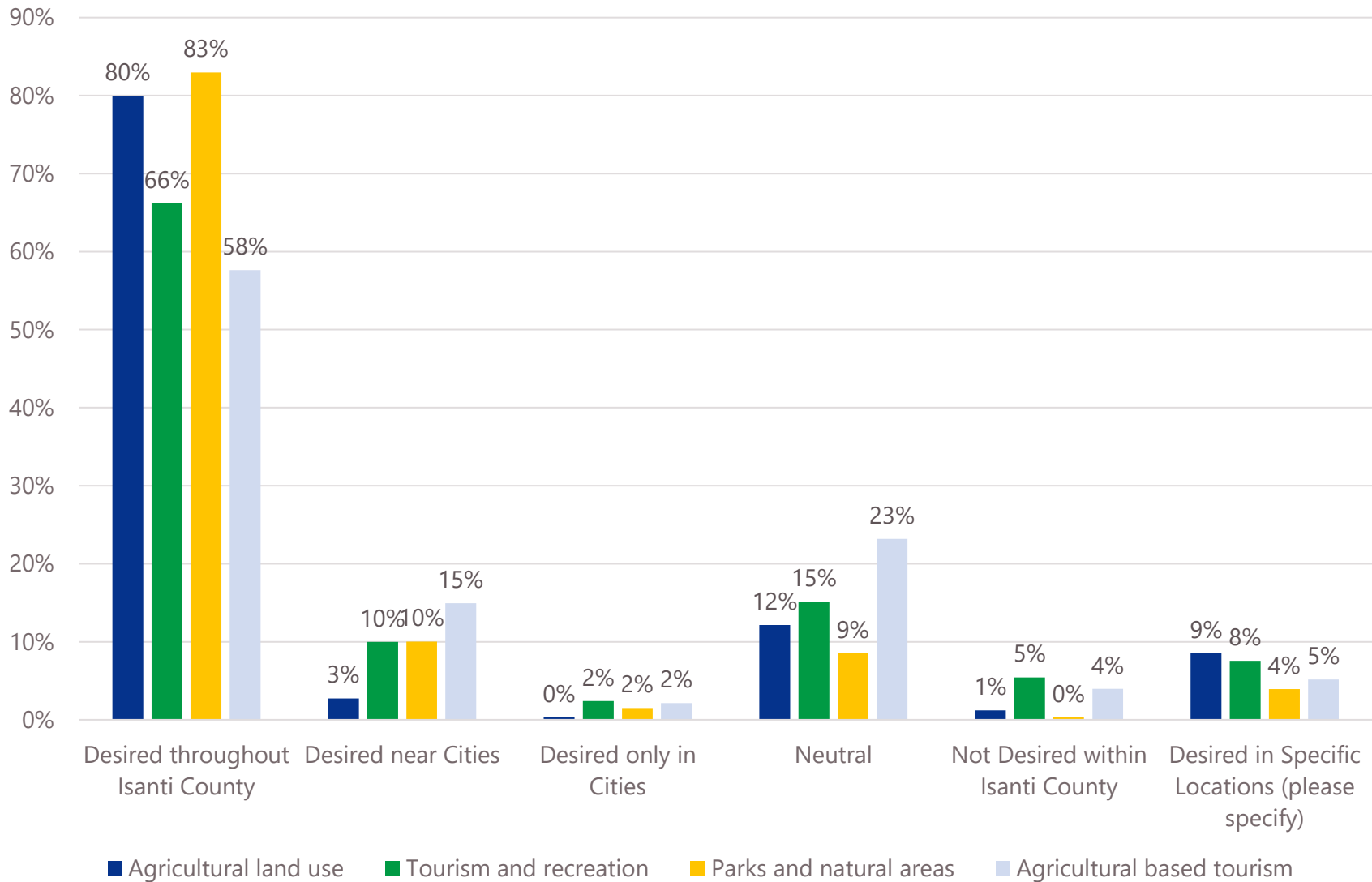
LAND USE QUESTIONS:

The next set of questions were created to gain an understanding of the types of development supported in the county and the general location. The three following tables combine the results for the residential, agricultural/open space, and commercial/industrial development into combined graphs. The following pages then detail the results for each specific question.

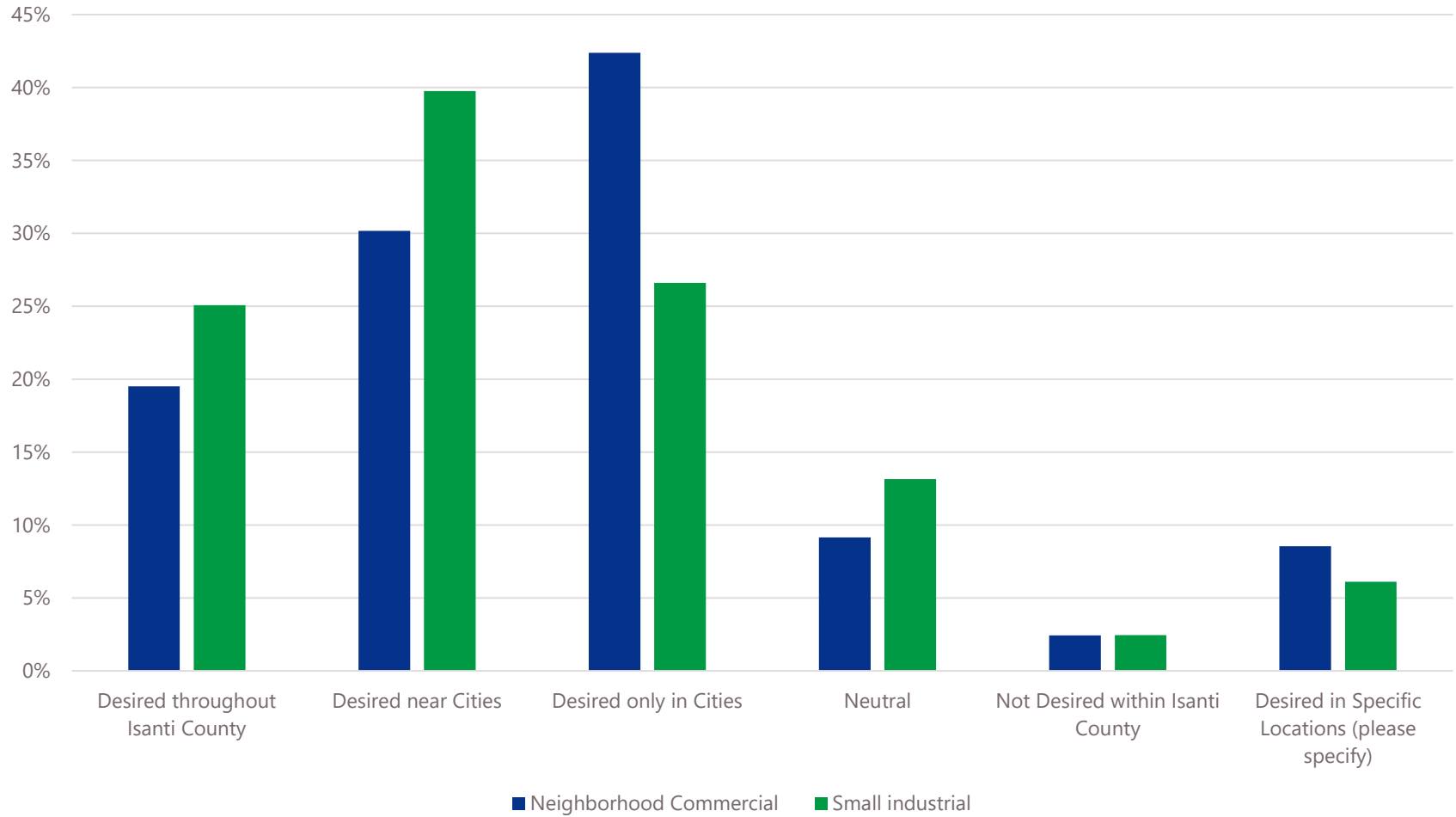
Residential Land Uses



Agricultural/Open Space Uses

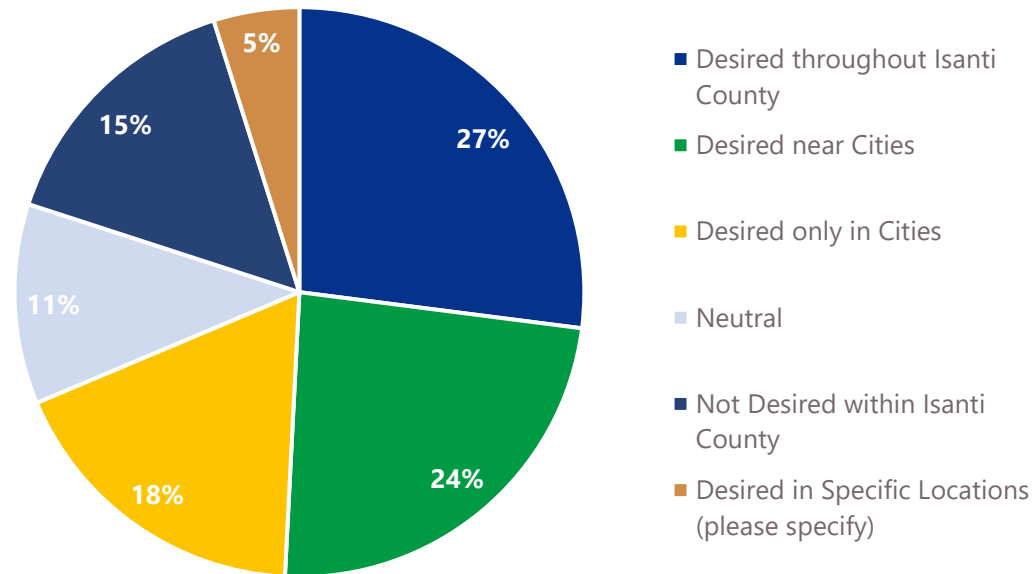


Commercial/Industrial Uses



QUESTION 9) WHERE SHOULD SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (1 TO 3 ACRE LOT SIZE) DEVELOPMENT OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see single-family residential (1 to 3 acre lot size) throughout the county (27%), and near cities (24%).

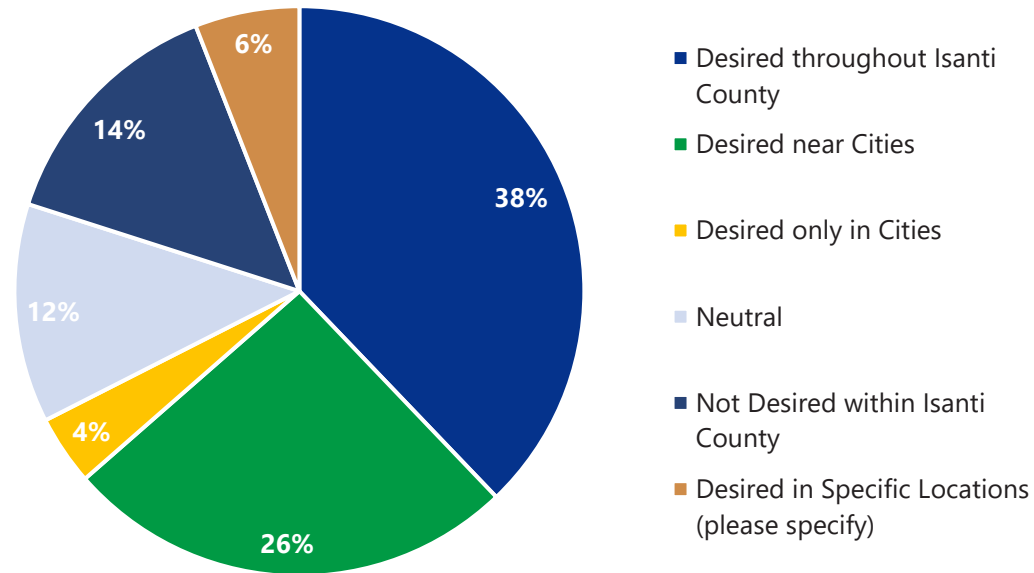


Write-in responses included the desire to see single-family residential (1 to 3 acre lot size)

- Near primary traffic routes
- A few miles outside of city limits
- In already developed areas / not in rural areas

QUESTION 10) WHERE SHOULD SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (3 TO 5 ACRE LOT SIZE) DEVELOPMENT OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see single-family residential (3 to 5 acre lot size) throughout the county (38%), and near cities (26%).

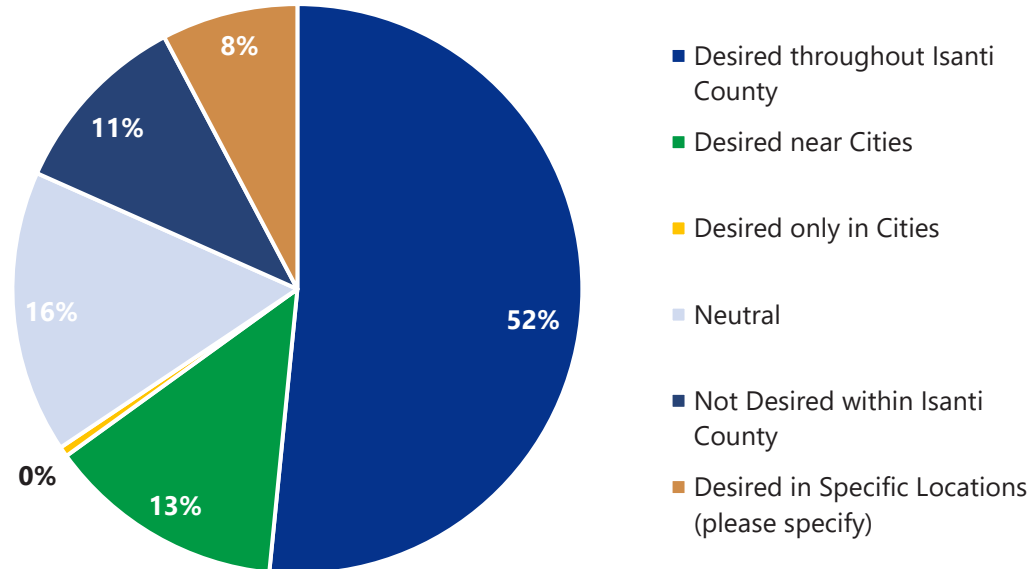


Write-in responses included the desire to see single-family residential (3 to 5 acre lot size)...

- A few miles outside of city limits / near city limits
- Within areas already developed
- Rural areas

QUESTION 11) WHERE SHOULD SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (5 ACRE OR LARGER LOT SIZE) DEVELOPMENT OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see single-family residential (5 acre or larger lot size) throughout the county (52%).

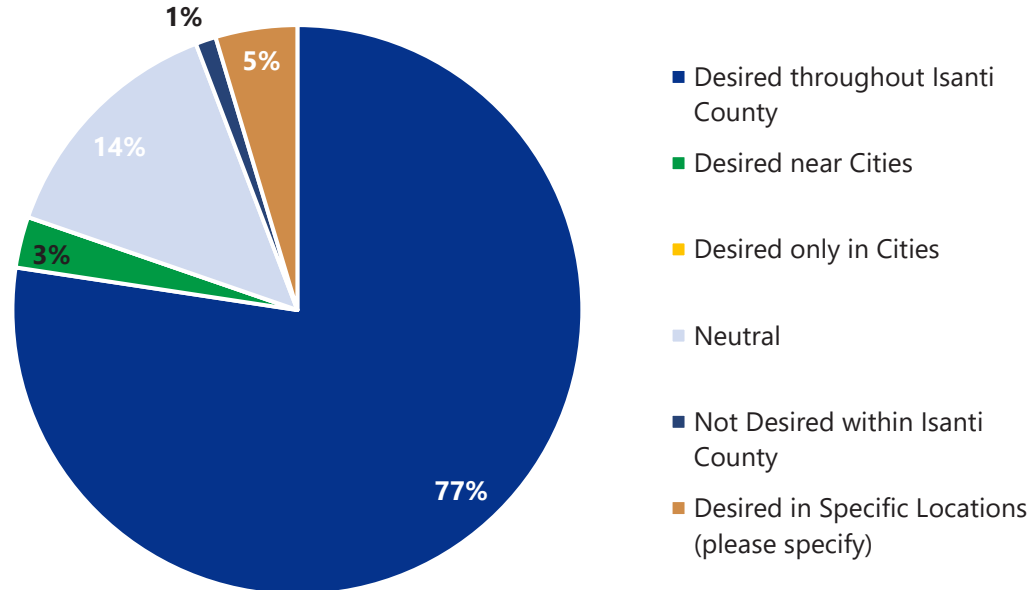


Write-in responses included the desire to see single-family residential (5 acre or larger) lot size) in...

- Rural areas / in the country
- In clusters / in communities

QUESTION 12) WHERE SHOULD FAMILY FARMS (SINGLE-FAMILY HOME WITH AGRICULTURAL USES – CROPS AND/OR ANIMALS) DEVELOPMENT OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see single-family homes with agricultural uses throughout the county (77%).

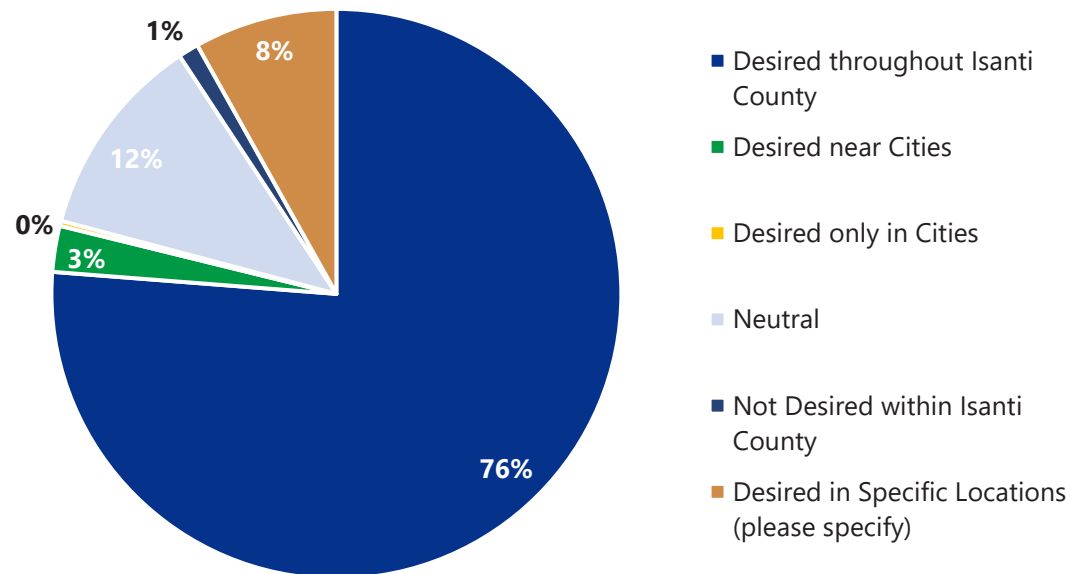


Write-in responses included the desire to see single-family homes with agricultural uses in...

- Rural areas
- Outside city limits

QUESTION 13) WHERE SHOULD AGRICULTURAL LAND USE OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see agricultural land use throughout the county (76%).

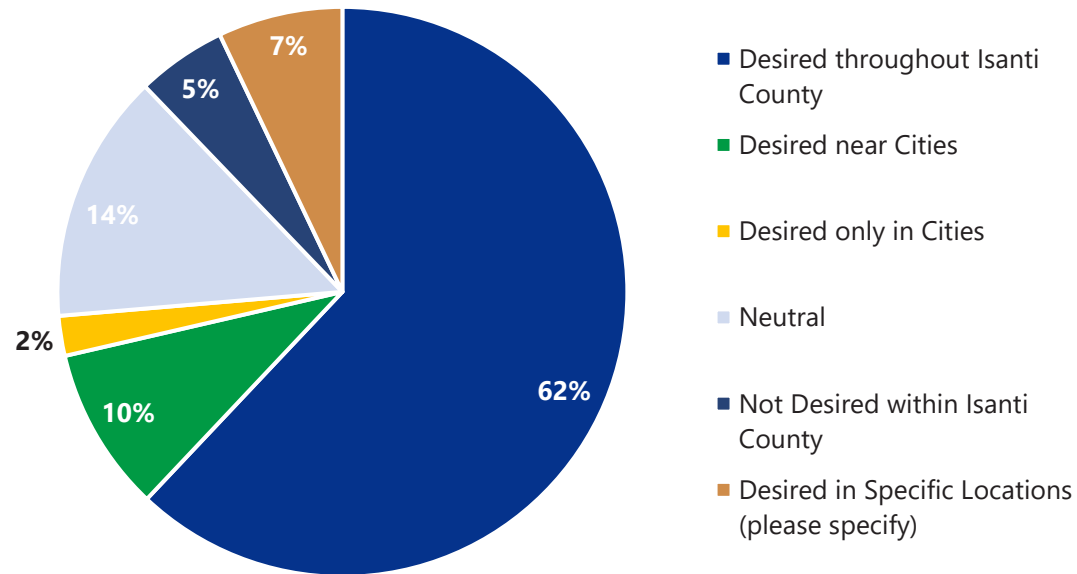


Write-in responses included the desire to see agricultural land use...

- Not in cities
- In townships
- In rural areas / in the country

QUESTION 14) WHERE SHOULD TOURISM AND RECREATION OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see tourism and recreation throughout the county (62%).

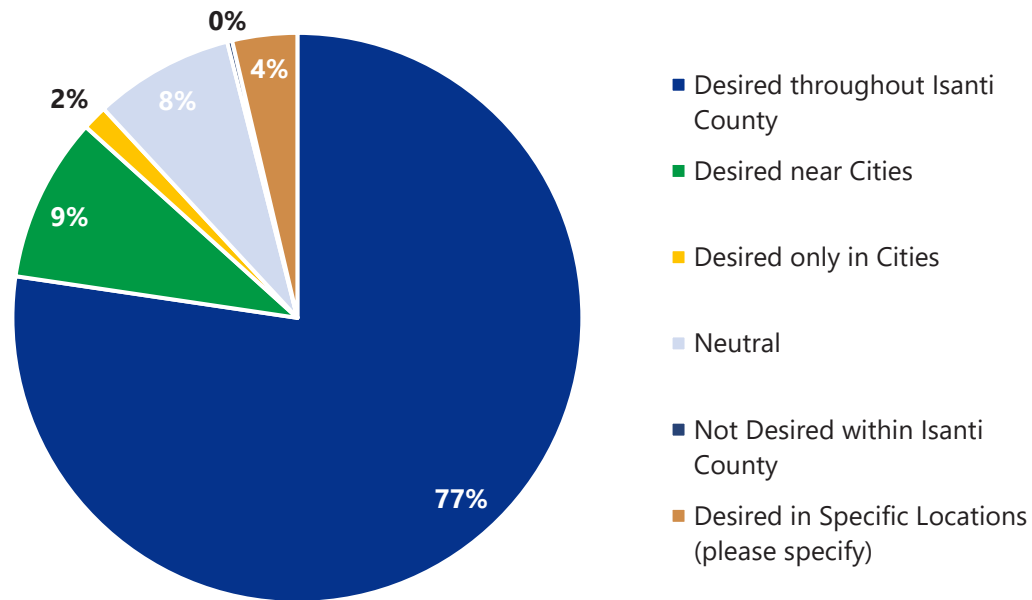


Write-in responses included the desire to see tourism and recreation in...

- Parks
- Along lakes and rivers

QUESTION 15) WHERE SHOULD PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see parks and natural resources throughout the county (62%).

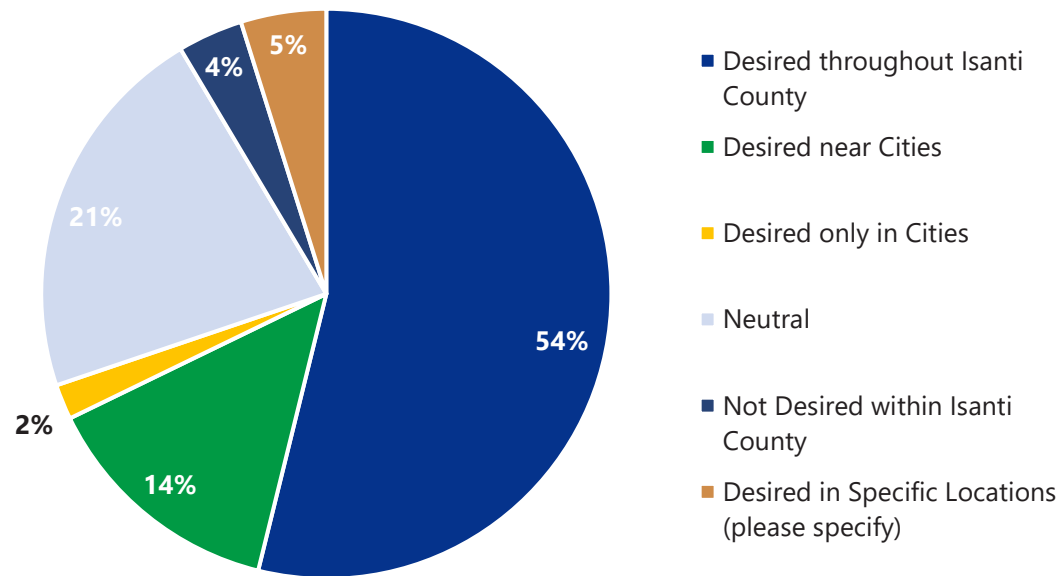


Write-in responses included the desire to see parks and natural resources in...

- Where easily reached, safe, maintained

QUESTION 16) WHERE SHOULD AGRICULTURAL BASED TOURISM OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see agricultural based tourism throughout the county (54%).

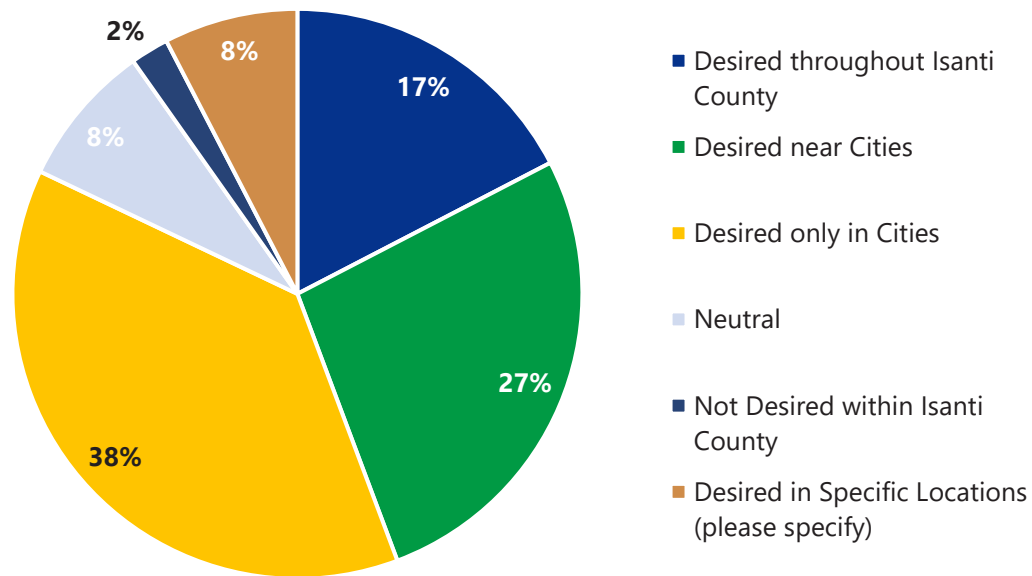


Write-in responses included the desire to see agricultural based tourism...

- Where feasible and profitable
- In sparsely populated areas
- Where easily accessed

QUESTION 17) WHERE SHOULD NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see neighborhood commercial development only in cities (38%).

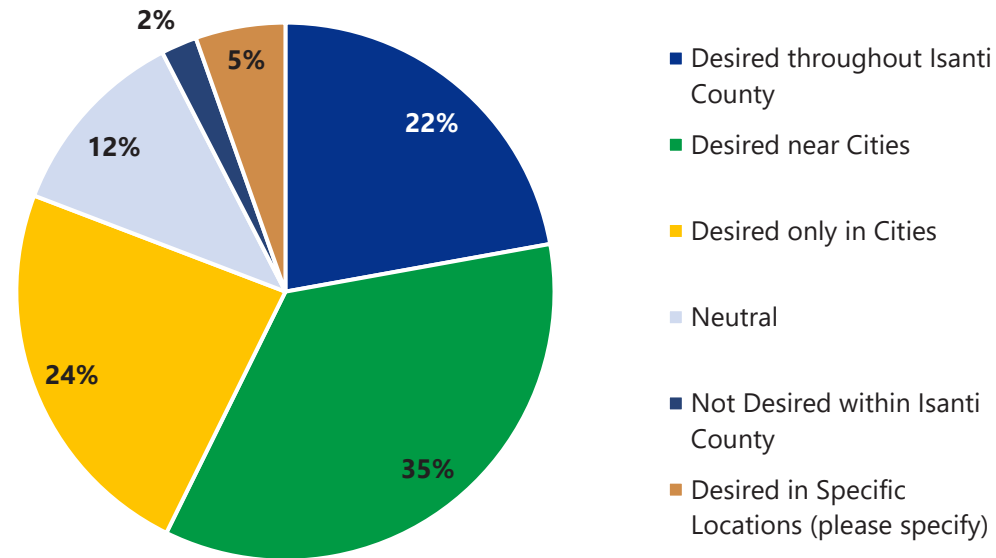


Write-in responses included the desire to see neighborhood commercial development...

- In cities and townships
- At major crossroads

QUESTION 18) WHERE SHOULD SMALL INDUSTRIAL USE DEVELOPMENT OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see small industrial use development near cities (35%).

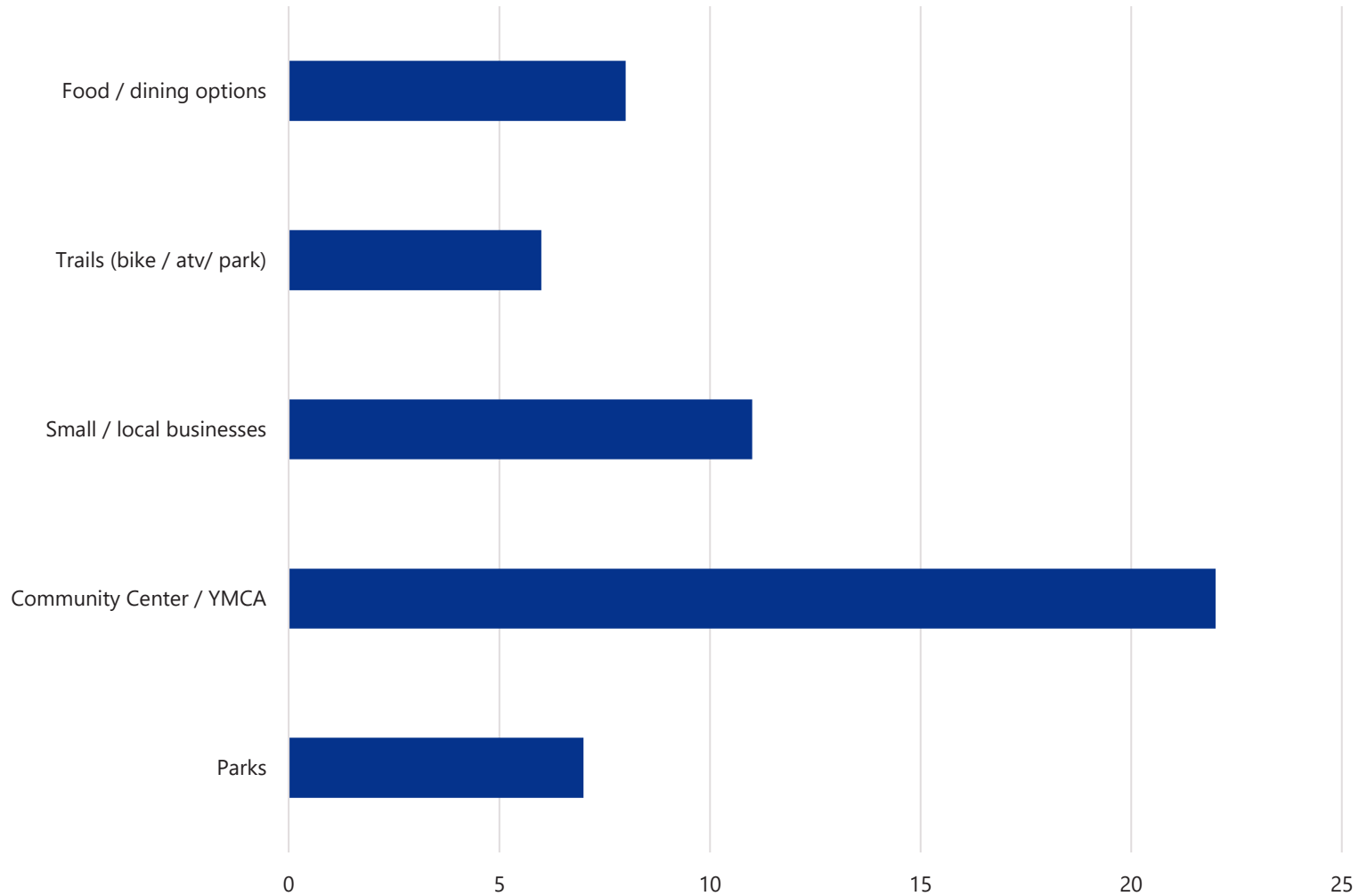


Write-in responses included the desire to see small industrial use development...

- In established business areas (i.e. Bradford, Dalbo)
- According to traffic patterns
- Not near waterways

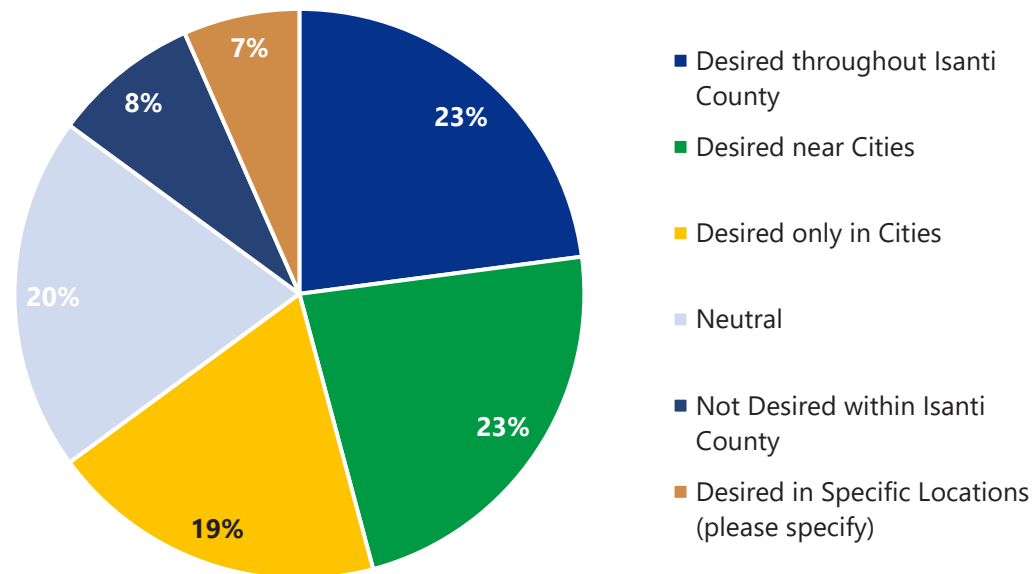
QUESTION 19) WHAT OTHER TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

The top responses had the desire to see the following types of development:



QUESTION 20) WHERE SHOULD OTHER DEVELOPMENT OCCUR IN ISANTI COUNTY?

Most responses desired other development to occur throughout the county (23%) or near cities (23%).

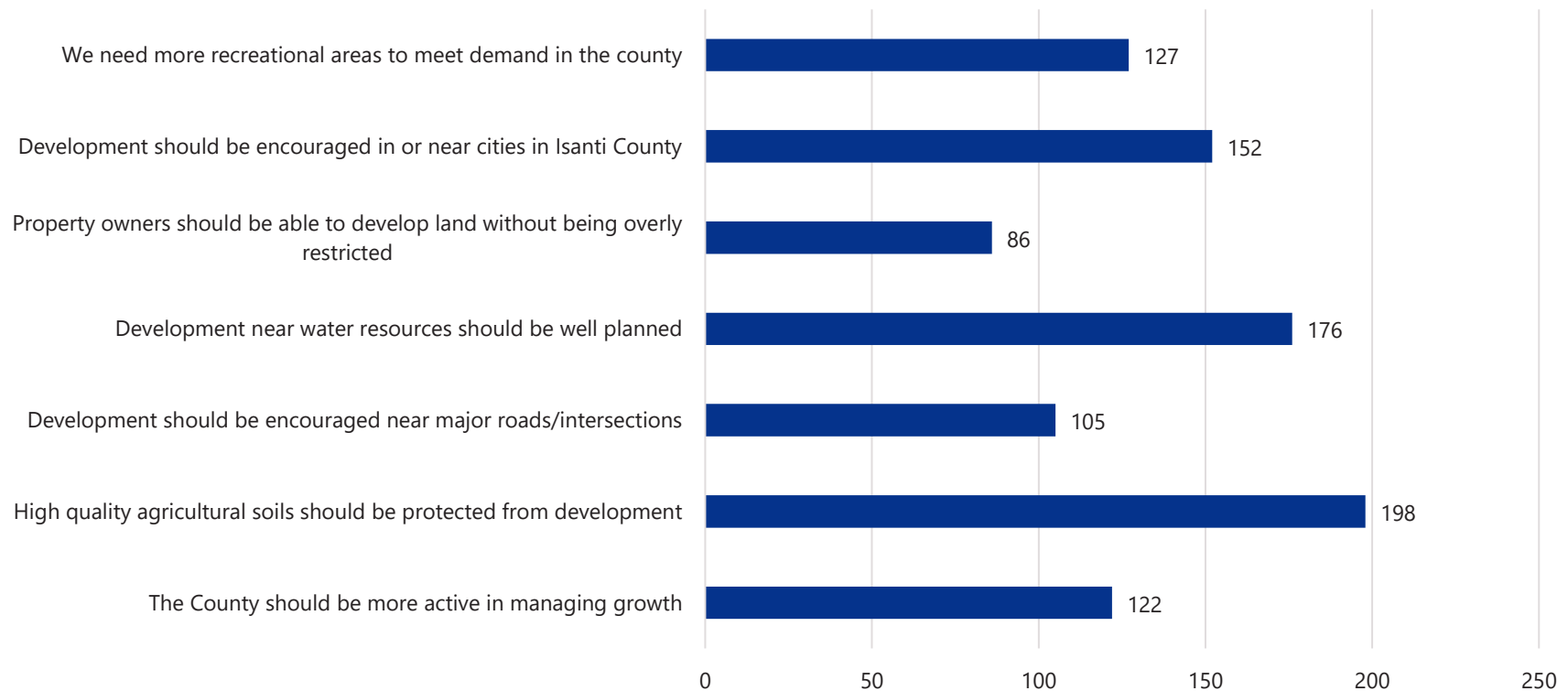


Write-in responses included the desire to see other development...

- In industrial parks
- Adjacent to major highways
- (Depends on the type of development)
- That will still maintain the rural feel

QUESTION 21) WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN ISANTI COUNTY? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

Most responses thought that high quality agricultural soils should be protected from development, and development near water resources should be well planned.



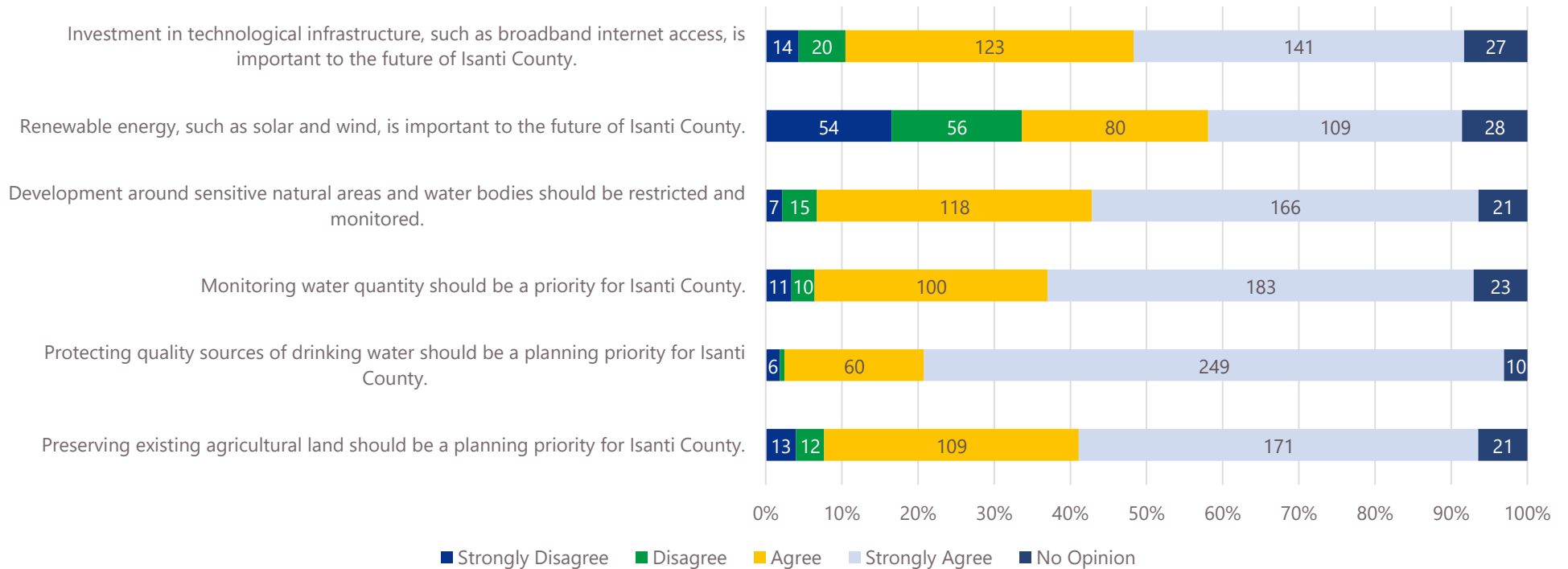
QUESTION 22) RATE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

Respondents rated the following statements (strongly disagree to strongly agree):

- Preserving existing agricultural land should be a planning priority for Isanti County.
- Protecting quality sources of drinking water should be a planning priority for Isanti County.
- Monitoring water quantity should be a priority for Isanti County.
- Development around sensitive natural areas and water bodies should be restricted and monitored.
- Renewable energy, such as solar and wind, is important to the future of Isanti County.
- Investment in technological infrastructure, such as broadband internet access, is important to the future of Isanti County.

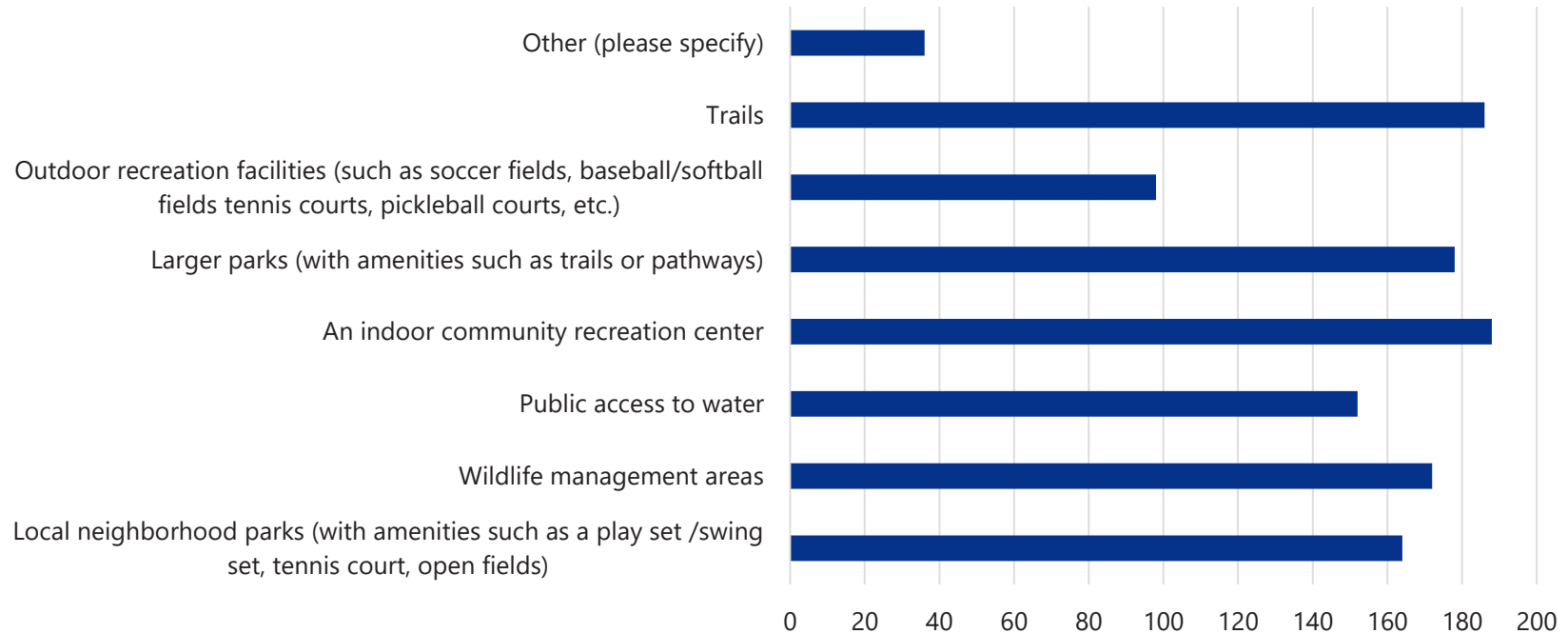
The top rated response was "Protecting quality sources of drinking water should be a planning priority for Isanti County."

The lowest rated response was "Renewable energy, such as solar and wind, is important to the future of Isanti County."



QUESTION 23) WHAT RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD EXPAND IN ISANTI COUNTY? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

Top responses included trails, an indoor community recreation center, and larger parks (with amenities such as trails or pathways).



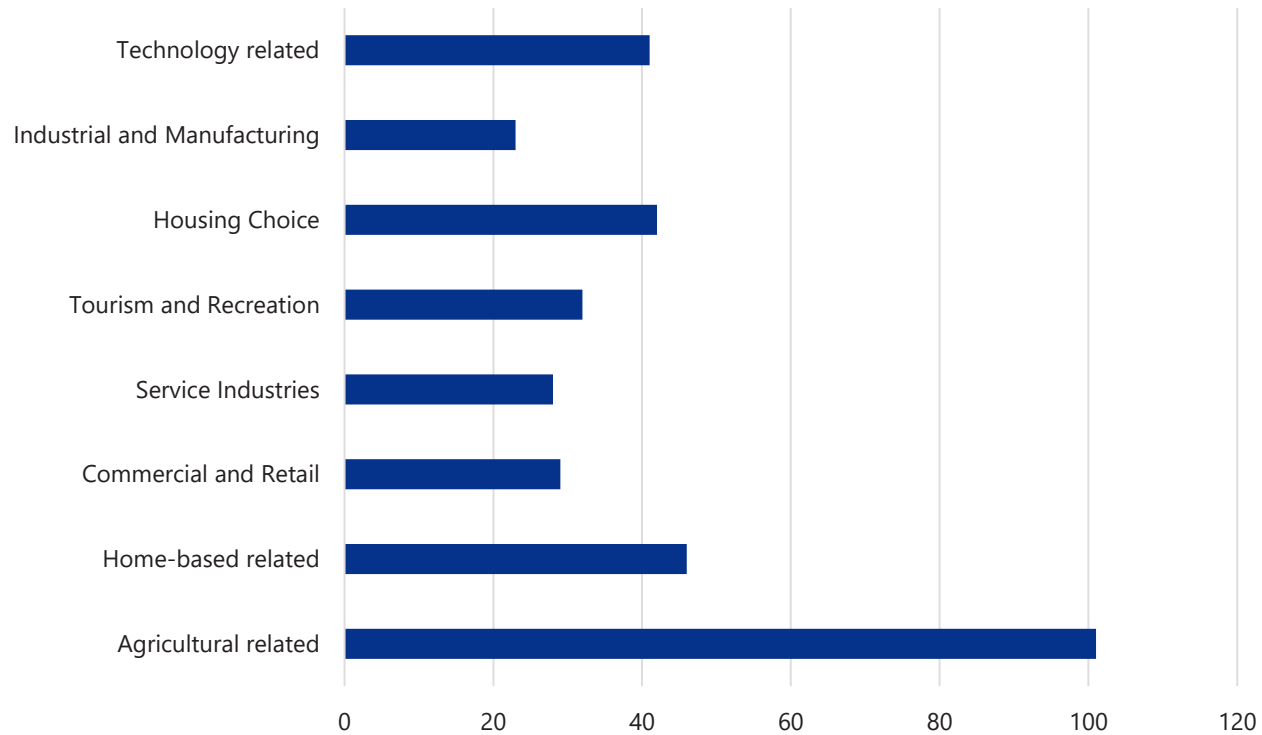
Write-in responses included the following:

- Beaches
- A dog park
- Parks accessible for kids with disabilities
- Bike trails

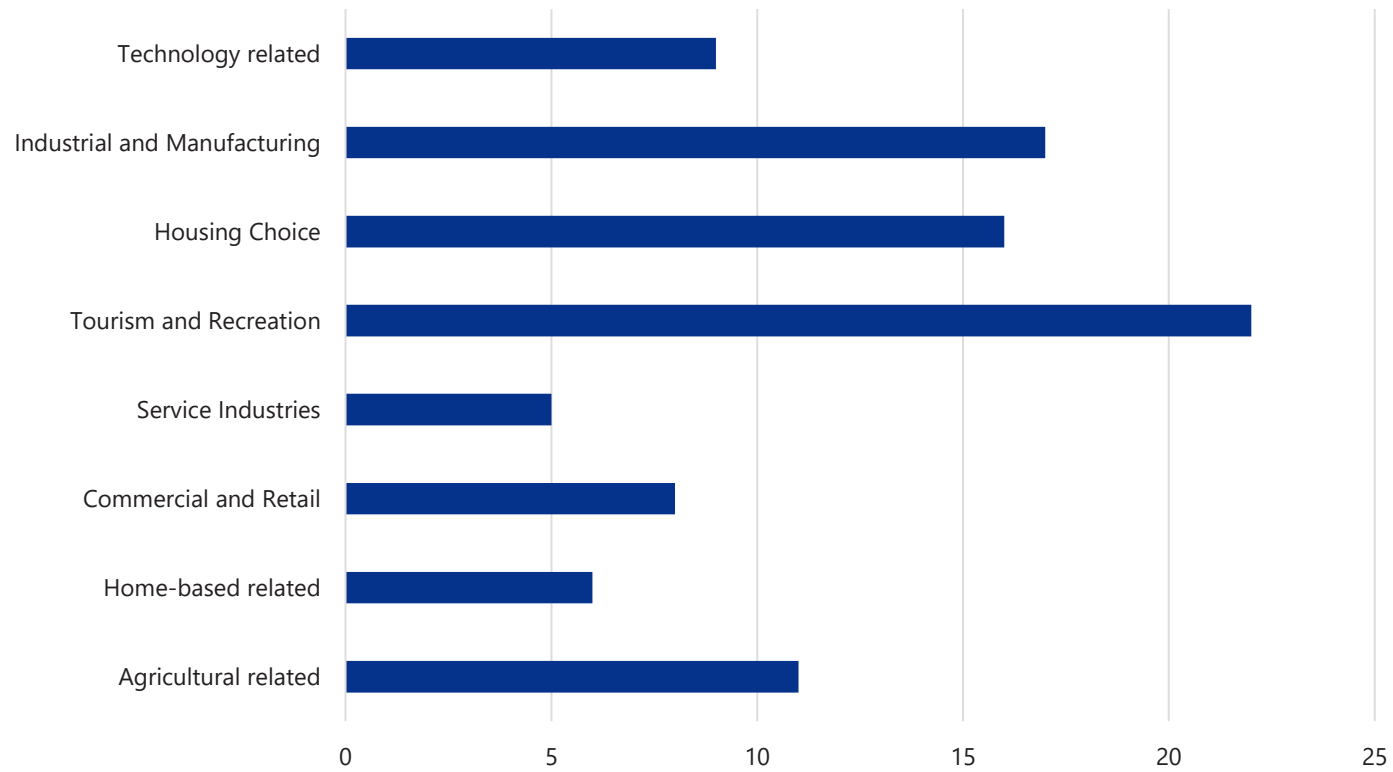
QUESTION 24) HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES TO YOU ON A SCALE OF VERY IMPORTANT TO NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL?

The top response for “very important” was agricultural related resources. The top response for “very unimportant” was tourism and recreation.

“Very Important” Ranked Resources

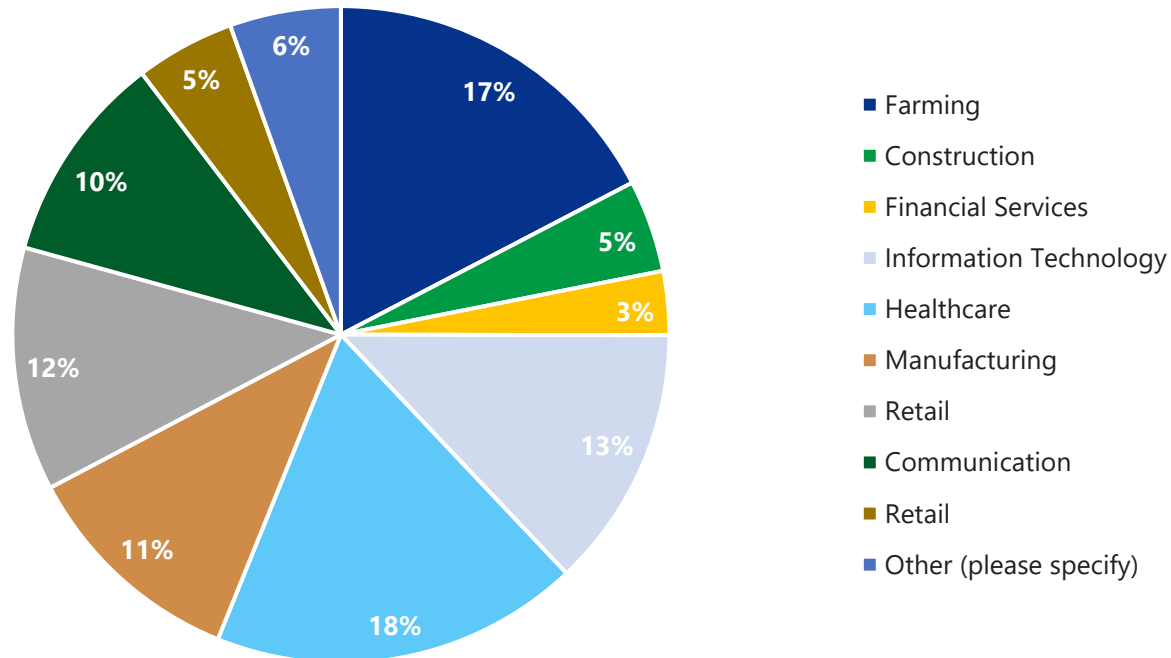


“Very Unimportant” Ranked Resources



QUESTION 25) WHAT SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY SHOULD ISANTI COUNTY EXPAND OR DEVELOP?

The top responses included healthcare (18%) and farming (17%).

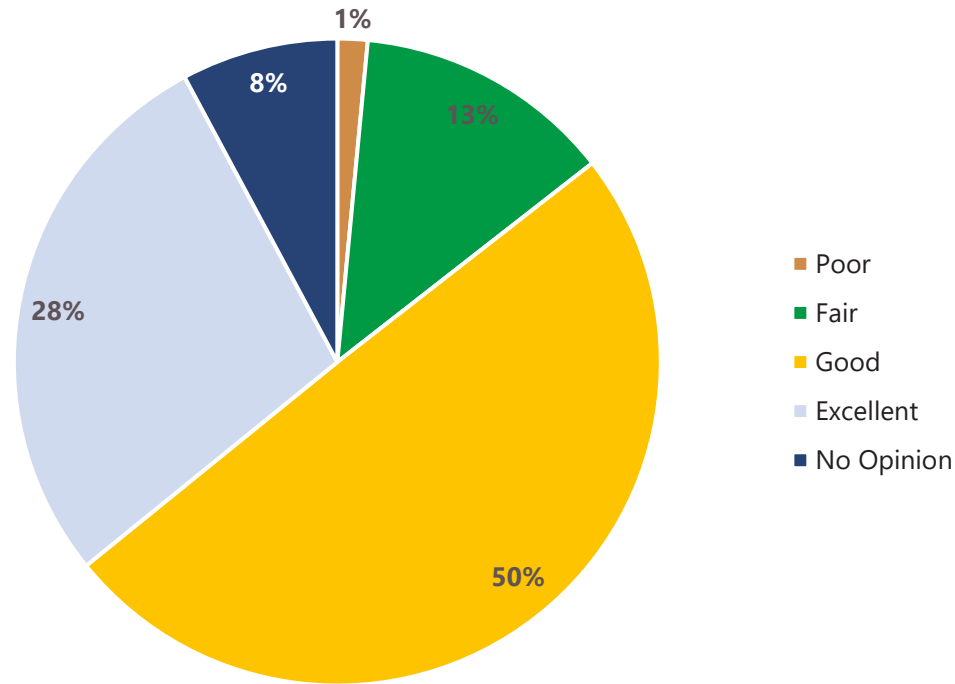


Write-in responses included the following:

- Restaurants (not fast food)
- Solar / wind energy
- Elderly care
- Education
- Internet
- Organic / sustainable farming

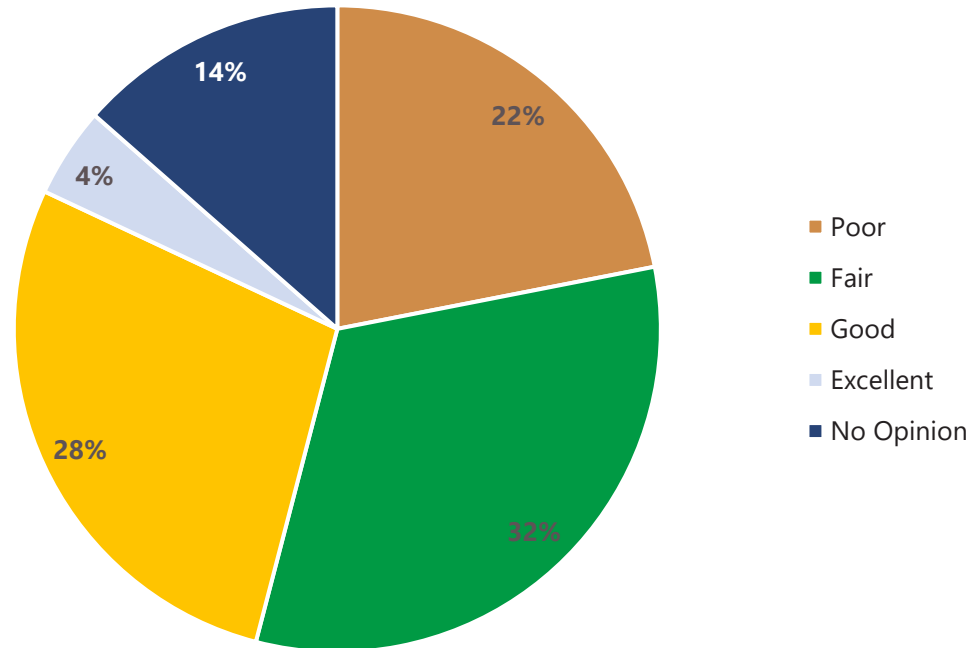
QUESTION 26) PLEASE RATE HOW EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY ISANTI COUNTY PROVIDES ESSENTIAL SERVICE (E.G., SHERIFF)

The majority of respondents rated "good" or "excellent" for effectively and efficiently providing essential service.



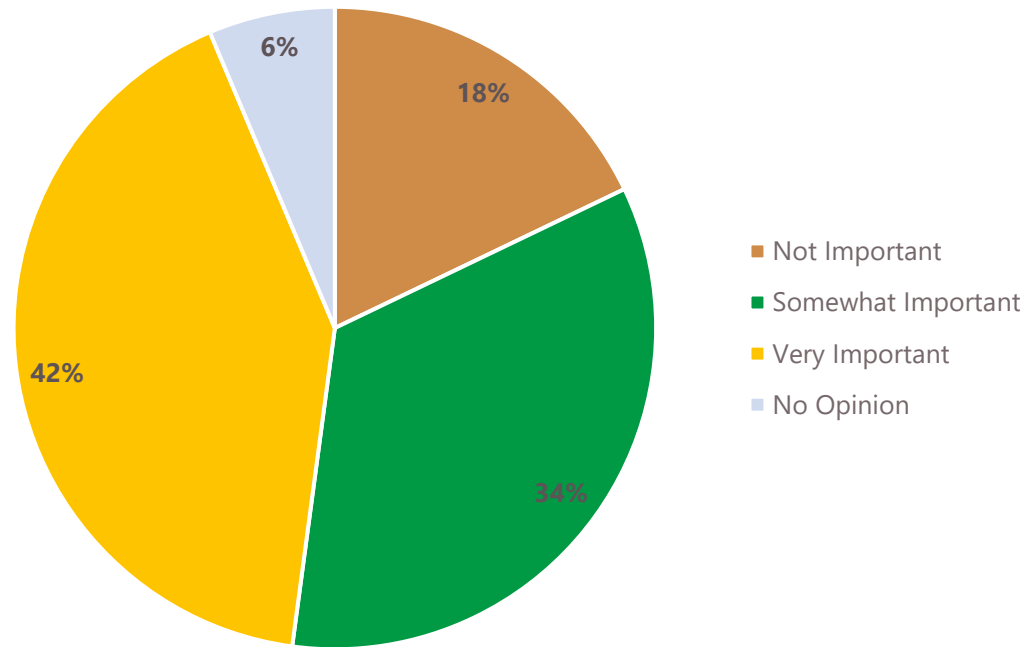
QUESTION 27) HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE COUNTY'S EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK?

Most responses noted the existing transportation network was "fair" (32%) or "good" (28%).



QUESTION 28) HOW IMPORTANT IS INCREASING ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION (TRANSIT SERVICES, BIKING, WALKING, ETC.) TO THE FUTURE OF ISANTI COUNTY?

Most noted "very important" (42%) or "somewhat important" (34%).



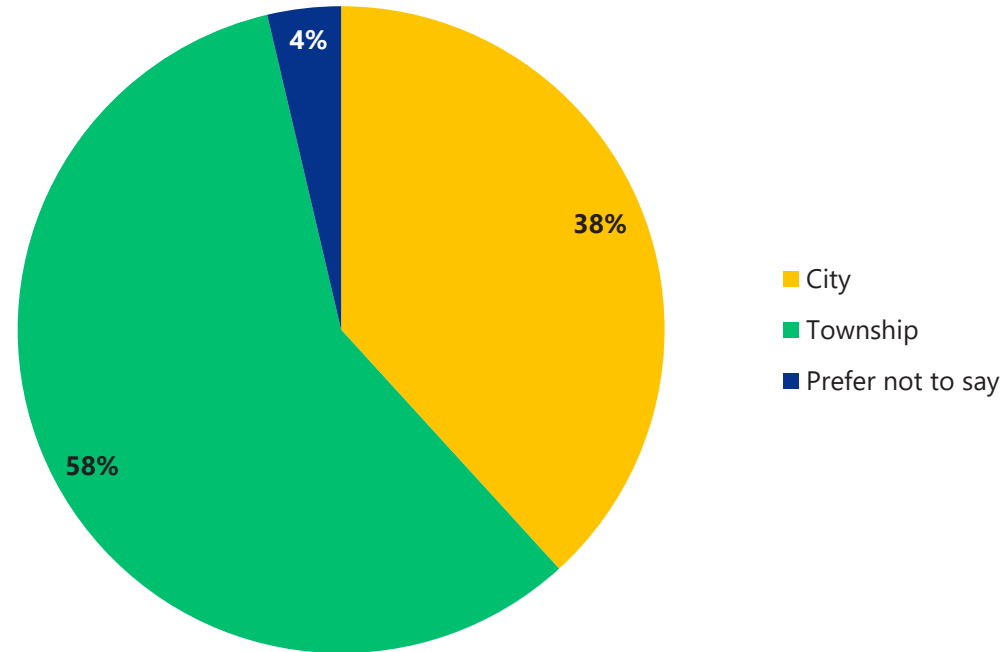
QUESTION 29) PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS OR COMMENTS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF ISANTI COUNTY.

Most comments fell under the following themes:

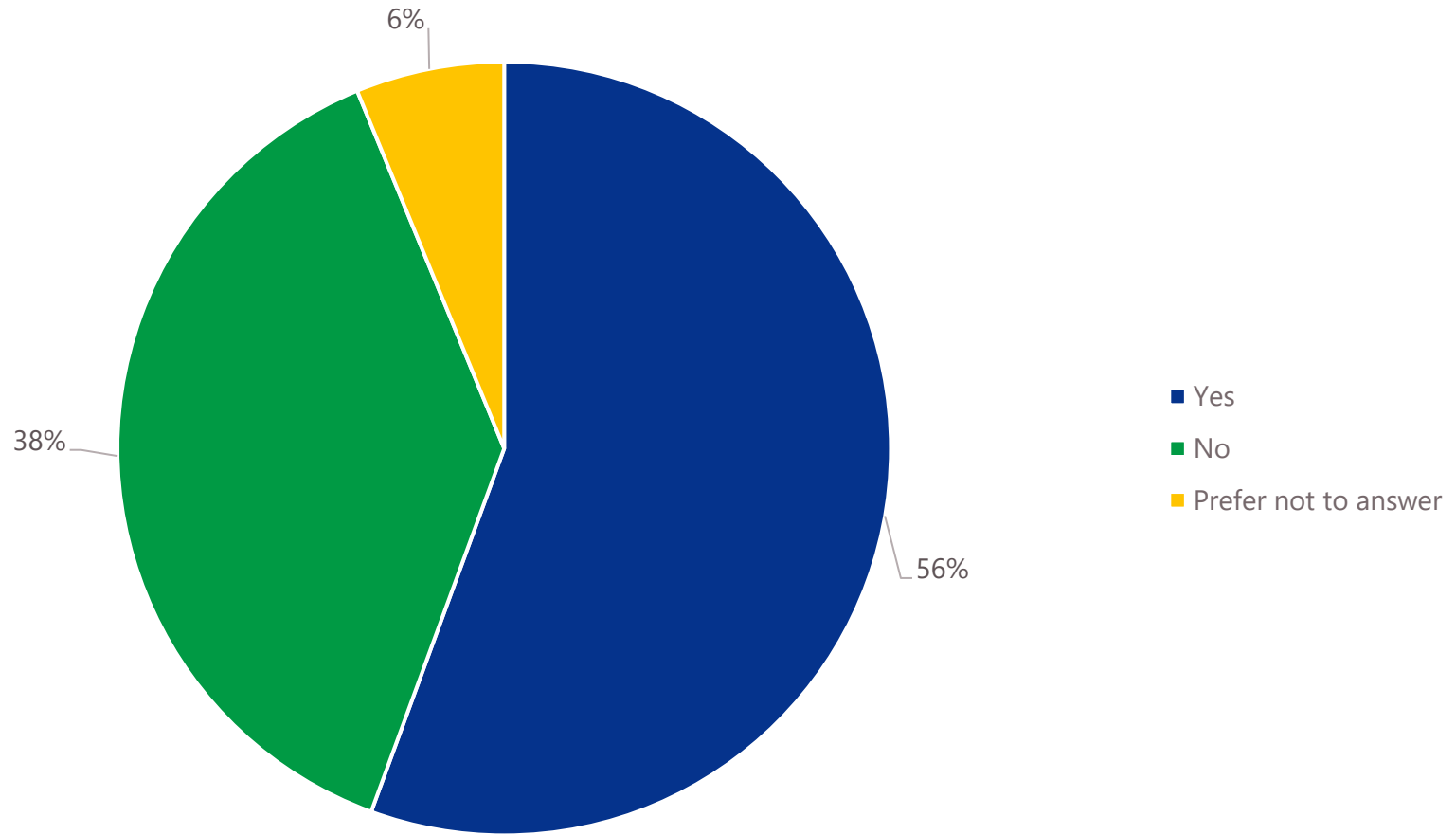
- An urge to slow development in the county, or to be more intentional with development.
 - On the other hand, develop appropriately for the population and projected population growth.
- Similarly, it is a common desire throughout the survey for the county to maintain a small town, rural feel.
- Desire to preserve the farming / agriculture base.
- Expressing a need for a community center / YMCA.
- Strengthen the education system.
- Concerns with the increasing cost of living / high taxes (specifically property taxes).

DEMOGRAPHICS

QUESTION 30) DO YOU LIVE IN A CITY OR TOWNSHIP?

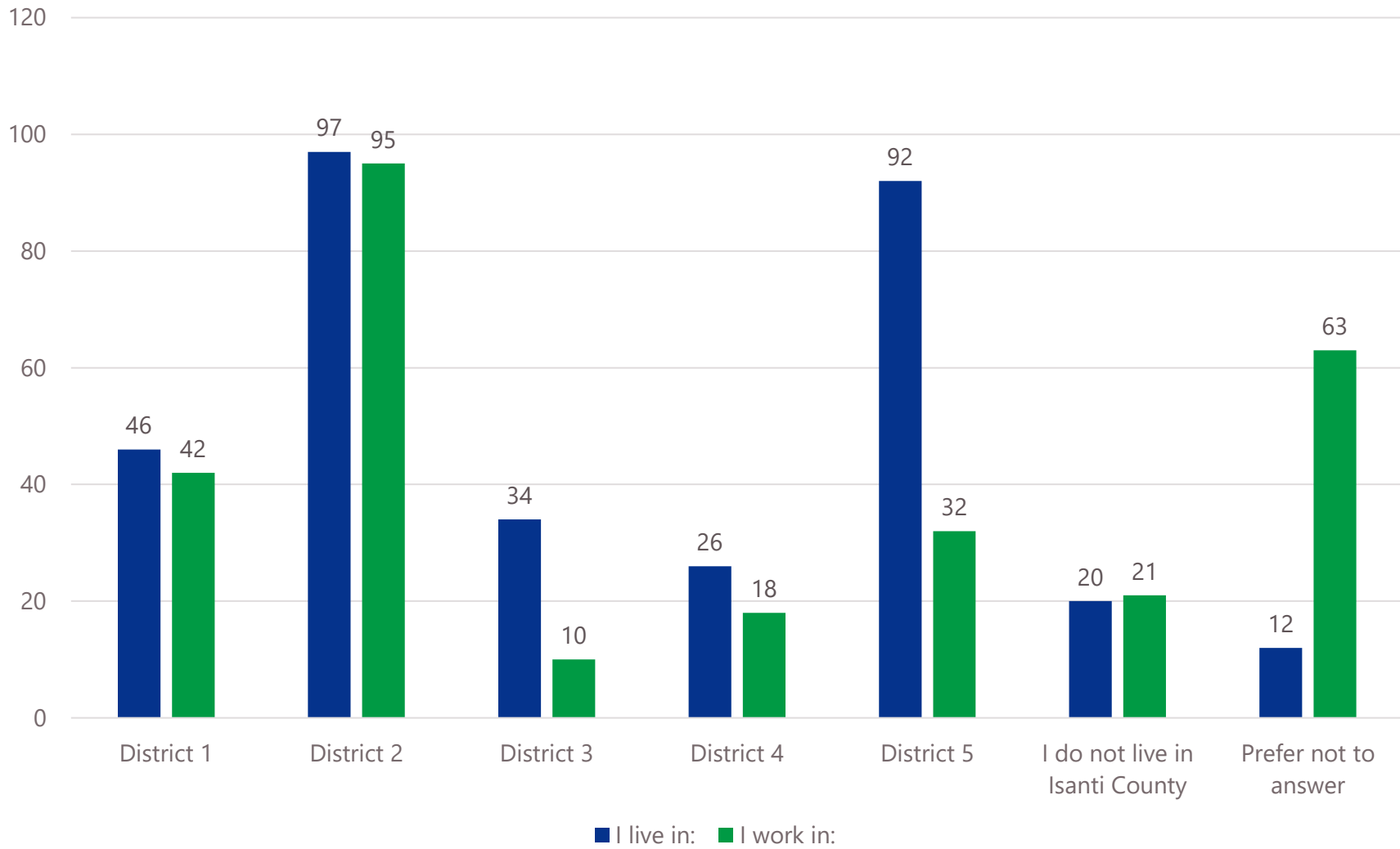


QUESTION 31) DO YOU WORK IN ISANTI COUNTY?

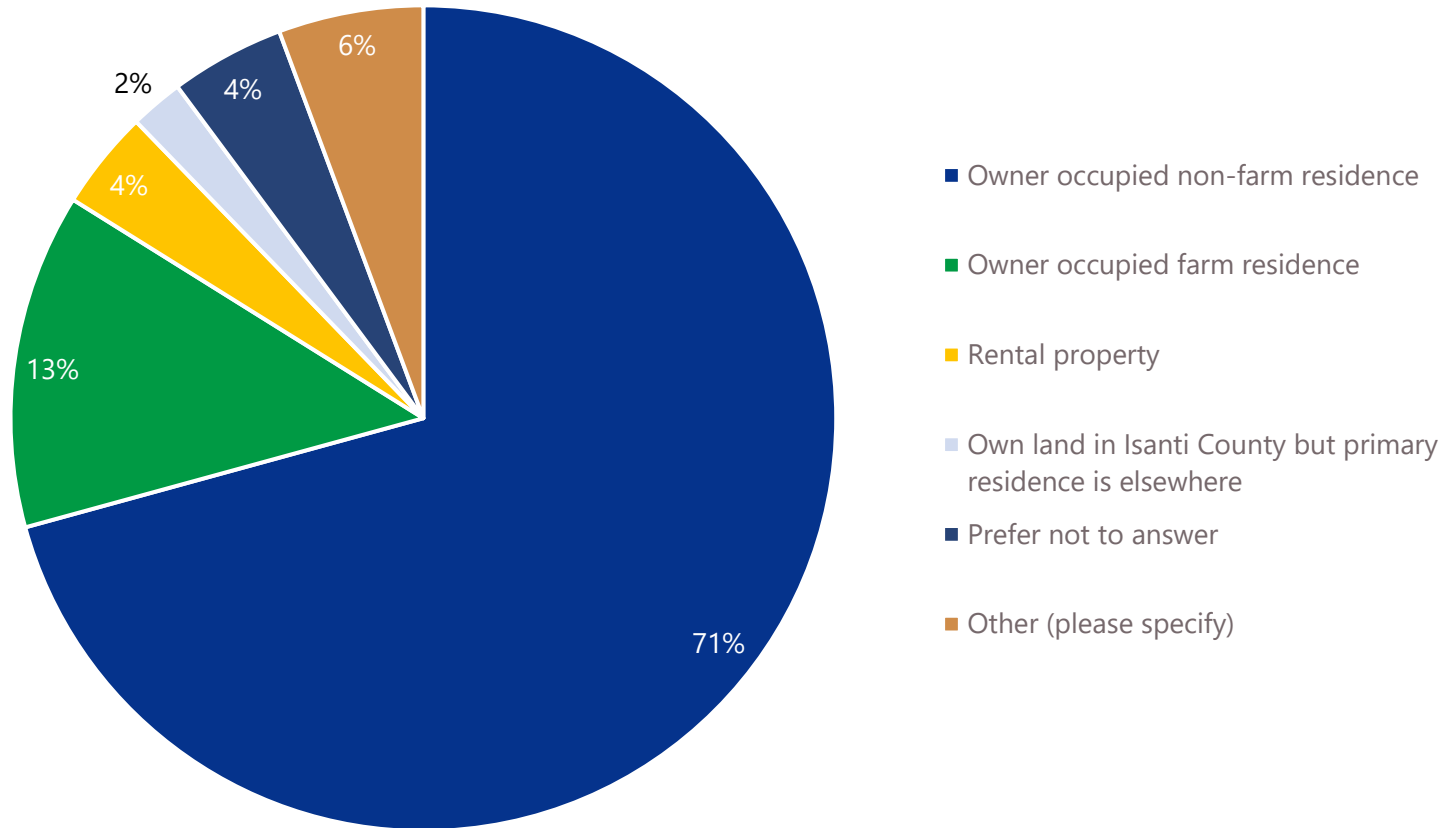


QUESTION 32) WHICH AREA OF ISANTI COUNTY DO YOU LIVE IN?

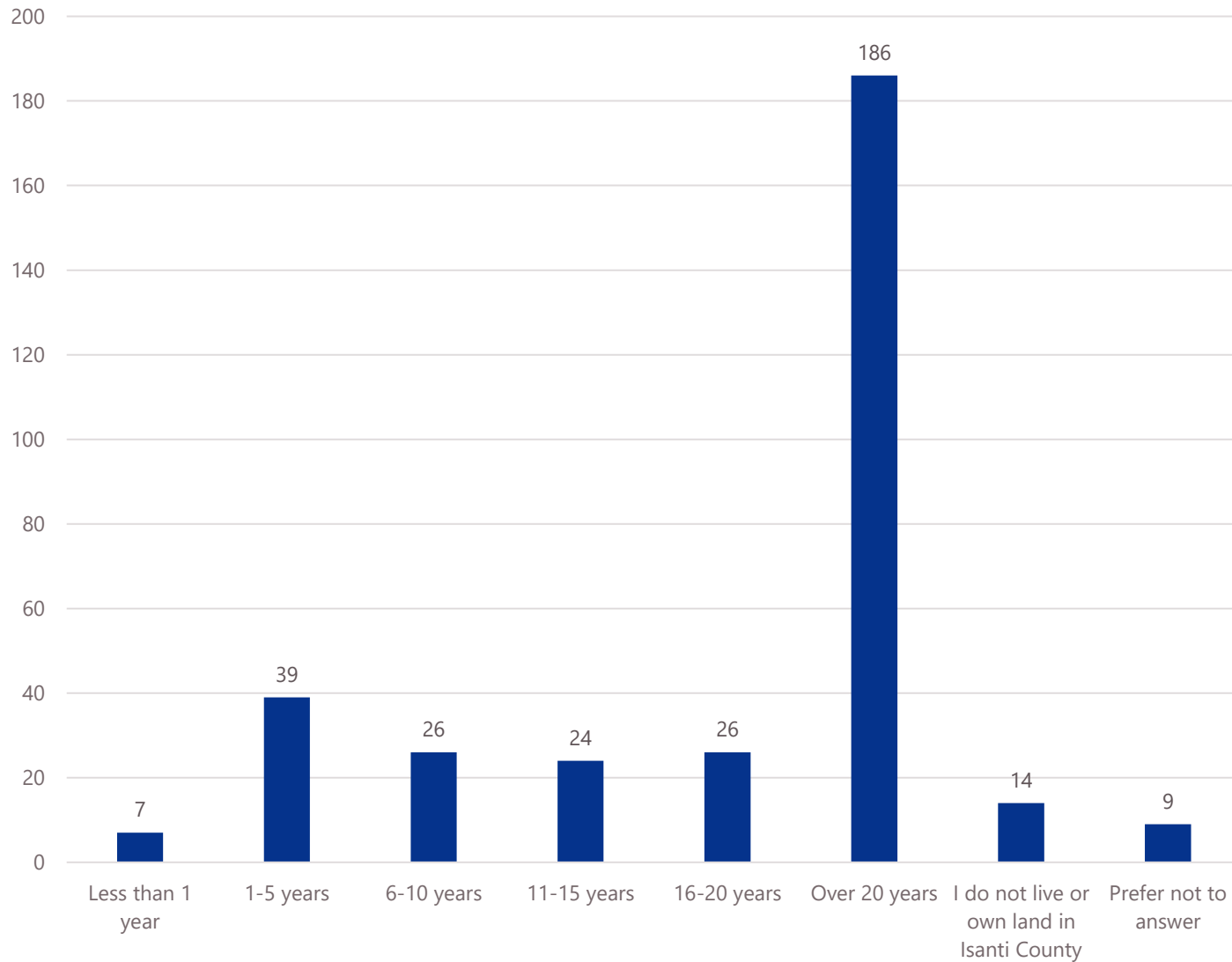
QUESTION 33) WHICH AREA OF ISANTI COUNTY DO YOU WORK IN?



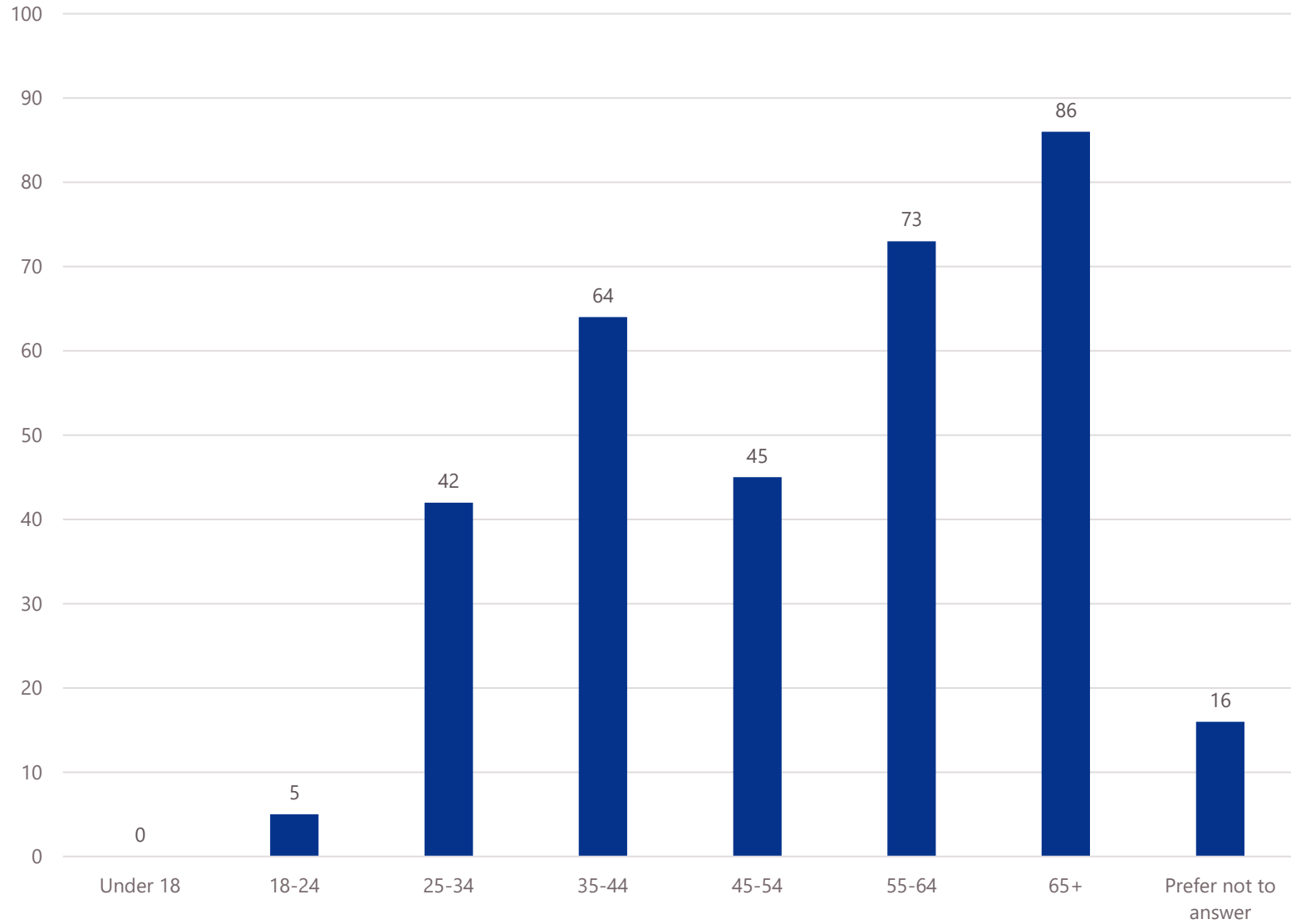
QUESTION 34) WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PRIMARY PLACE OF RESIDENCE IN ISANTI COUNTY?



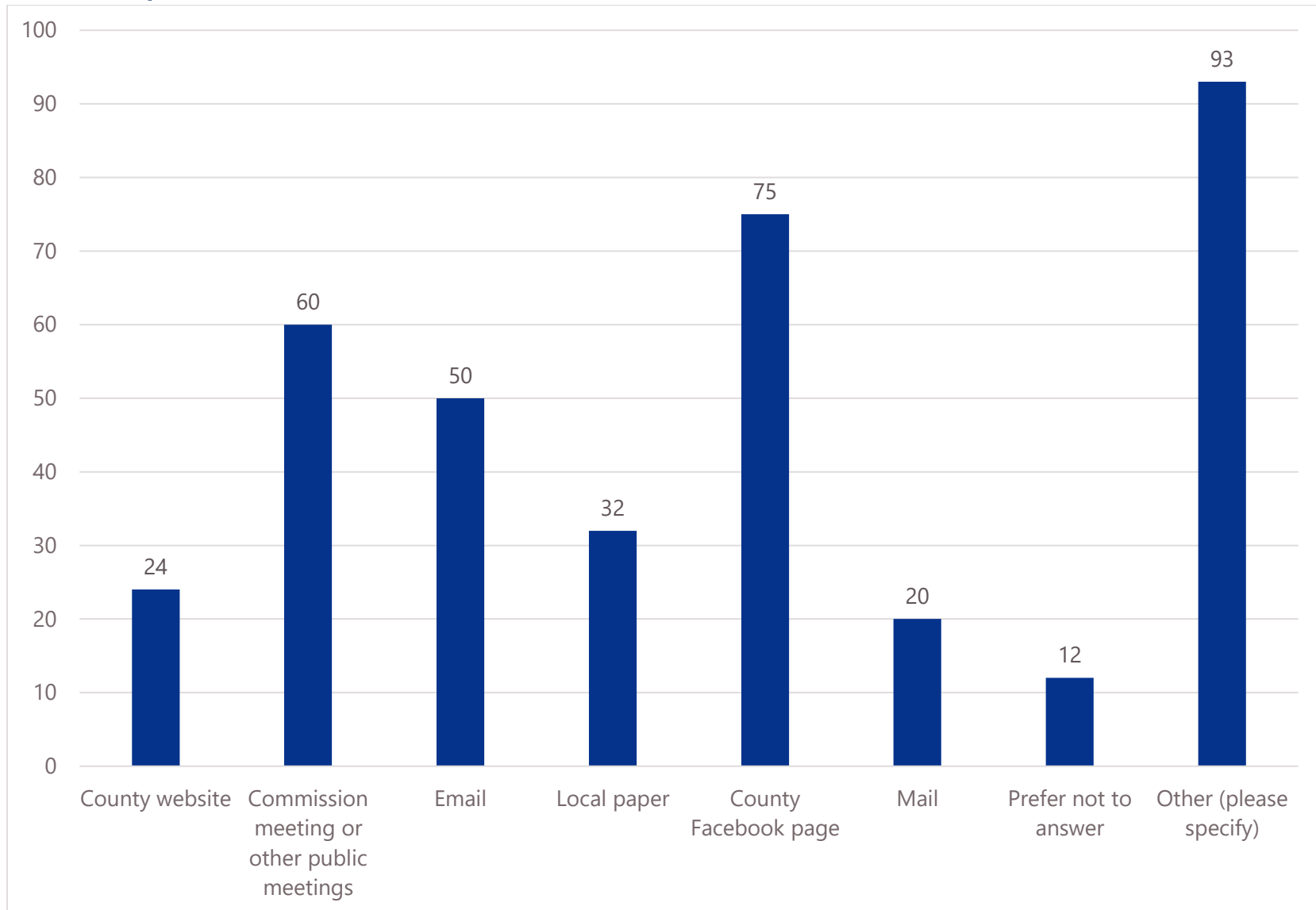
QUESTION 35) HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED OR OWNED LAND IN ISANTI COUNTY?



QUESTION 36) WHAT IS YOUR AGE?



QUESTION 37) HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE SURVEY?



QUESTION 38) HOW DO YOU PREFER TO LEARN INFORMATION ABOUT GOVERNMENT PROJECTS? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

