

Chapter 2

COMMUNITY INPUT

I. INTRODUCTION

The Planning Board solicited input to the Master Plan from the taxpayers and residents of Hebron through:

- A Community-wide Open Meeting;
- The *Hebron Master Plan Community Survey* which was sent to all property tax payers, both resident and nonresident;
- Two focus groups – one of senior citizens, one of parents of school-age children – to identify any special concerns of these groups and to articulate a vision of Hebron ten years from now.

II. COMMUNITY-WIDE OPEN MEETING

The Planning Board held a community-wide open meeting on September 13, 2001. The full minutes of the meeting are in Appendix A.

Nancy Johnson, Facilitator from the Lakes Region Planning Commission explained the purpose of a master plan, quoting from *The New Hampshire Planning and Land Use Regulation* manual section RSA674:2:I-II:

”The purpose of the master plan is to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning board, to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection”.

“ The master plan shall be a set of statements and land use and development principles for the municipality with such accompanying maps, diagrams, charts, and descriptions as to give legal standing to the implementation ordinances and other measures of the planning board. Each section of the master plan shall be consistent with the others in its implementation of the vision section. ...”.

Ms Johnson explained that the Master Plan is a legal document and would provide a legal defense if zoning ordinances were challenged in court. People attending the meeting were asked to comment on a) what they liked about Hebron, b) what they disliked about Hebron, and c) what important issues would have to be faced by the Town in the future. The views expressed were used as a starting point in developing the *Hebron Master Plan Community Survey*.

The stated goals in the *1985 Hebron Master Plan* were then discussed and found to be generally pertinent to Hebron today with the few exceptions noted in the minutes of the meeting (see Appendix A). The recommendations of the *1985 Master Plan* were not presented or discussed, but are listed below because they are a logical extension of the goals.

1985 Hebron Master Plan Goals

1. Promote a well-balanced land use pattern capable of meeting present and future community needs in an efficient, environmentally sound, economical, equitable and aesthetically pleasing manner.
2. Preserve and enhance the natural shorefront advantages of Newfound Lake, establishing policies that serve to protect this water resource from degradation.
3. Guide growth at a moderate rate consistent with the Town's ability to absorb it, with minimal adverse affect on the Town's resources and services.
4. Ensure adequate housing for all residents in a healthful, safe, convenient and attractive living environment.
5. Provide quality community facilities and services including road maintenance and improvements, which will most efficiently meet the needs of the Town.
6. Encourage the preservation of individual and collective historic resources so that Hebron's heritage can be carried forward.
7. Encourage modest, selected growth and diversification of those economic activities that will provide employment opportunities, while preserving the rural qualities that are the primary basis for the Town's overall economy.
8. Provide a variety of recreational activities and opportunities for all age groups in accordance with current and projected needs of the community.
9. Provide improvement and upgrading of existing roads which will provide efficient, safe and pleasant movement of people and good within the Town, while maintaining the scenic character of the Town's rural roads.

1985 Master Plan Recommendations

1. The Town should continue local land use regulations which will help retain its small-town rural residential character. According to the Community Survey, both year-round and seasonal residents would prefer to see Hebron remain as a quiet, peaceful rural residential community. Local land use regulations should reflect this desire.
2. In reviewing development proposals, particularly during site plan review, consider scenic views and vistas. An adjustment, many times very small in the site plan could prevent the obstruction of an important scenic view.
3. Consider requiring a setback of 125 feet for septic system leach fields from Newfound Lake. Studies have indicated that septic system effluent can travel distances greater than the State's 75-foot setback requirement, particularly depending upon soil and slope conditions. A 125-foot setback is considered reasonable to prevent water pollution.
4. The conversion of large single-family homes, cottage colonies or cabins to condominium ownership or uses of greater intensity throughout the Lakes Region have posed health and safety issues relative to on-site water and sewer systems. It is recommended that communities adapt regulations regarding conversions of a dwelling from seasonal to a more intensified year-round use. Units being converted to condominiums or other similar use should usually be considered a change in use, and should always be reviewed with respect to density, water and sewer systems, parking and access, impact on water bodies and other health and safety issues.
5. Hebron should guide its future growth and development to close proximity of its existing road system rather than the more hilly and distant outlying areas of the town. The town will maintain open space in areas that are less suitable for development purposes, as well as minimize new road mileage for future maintenance and minimize travel distances for fire, police, rescue and highway departments.
6. Encourage cluster housing as a development option which will provide a developer the flexibility to design a site plan which will (a) locate buildings on the best soils; (b) provide more open space for recreation and natural beauty; (c) design a more efficient roadway and utility pattern; (d) maximize the benefit of scenic views or natural site amenities such as vegetative buffers, solar space or waterfront areas; and (e) minimize road maintenance and help prevent strip development.
7. Encourage landowners to seek technical forestry expertise to develop a forest management plan for any area which will be logged. The professional forester can help the landowner develop a plan which will avoid environmental problems and ensure a long-term sustained yield. He can also inform the landowner about the quantity and market value of his forest lands and, in some cases, prevent loggers from taking advantage of uninformed landowners.

8. Maintain and strengthen regulation measures to protect steep slopes, wetlands and floodplains in Hebron, Each of these, steep slopes, wetlands and floodplains are classified as "critical resources," and should be protected from development. Slopes exceeding 25% will, if developed, pose serious erosion, sewage disposal and visual problems; development occurring in flood hazard areas pose risks to structures and residents located within the floodplain boundaries.

9. The Town and its citizens should encourage the protection, preservation, enhancement and renovation of buildings of architectural and historical significance.

10. Continue the inventory of historic structures and sites within the community. The historic resource inventory included in this report should be expanded so that eventually all historical resources will be inventoried. The work already accomplished provides a base for future efforts.

III. HEBRON MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Planning Board formed a subcommittee of Hebron residents who devised a survey instrument, the *Hebron Master Plan Community Survey*. The Subcommittee used the input gathered at the community-wide open meeting as a starting point in designing the questions, and also drew on questions used in the 1985 Master Plan process as well as the experience of other towns in the Lakes Region.

The survey questionnaire (see Appendix B) was mailed out to all Hebron taxpayers, both resident and nonresident, in early 2003. Two hundred and twenty four questionnaires were returned - a response rate of approximately 34%. Detailed tabulations can be found in the report, *Responses to the Hebron Master Plan Questionnaire 2003*, written by Ralph Larson and available at Town Hall.

The remaining part of this section is devoted to charts and graphs derived from the data tabulations. Please note that all the numbers and percentages in the charts and graphs are based only on responses to the question - missing values for a question were not included in the analysis.

A. Who Responded to the Questionnaire?

Figures 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3 give a profile of the respondents in terms of age, permanent residence, and how long they have owned property in Hebron. Many of the opinion data items are broken down by “resident/nonresident”, but none are correlated by age or by how long the respondent owned property in Hebron.

B. Questions Concerned with Living in Hebron?

Figures 2-4 through 2-6 show how the respondents feel, in general, about living in Hebron: the best things, things that could be improved, the most serious problems, and their reactions to given statements about the Town.

C. Questions Concerned with Future Growth and Development

Figures 2-7 through 2-12 show how the respondents feel about population growth, housing development, open spaces, and spaces for recreation.

AGE OF THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED
IN THE SURVEY

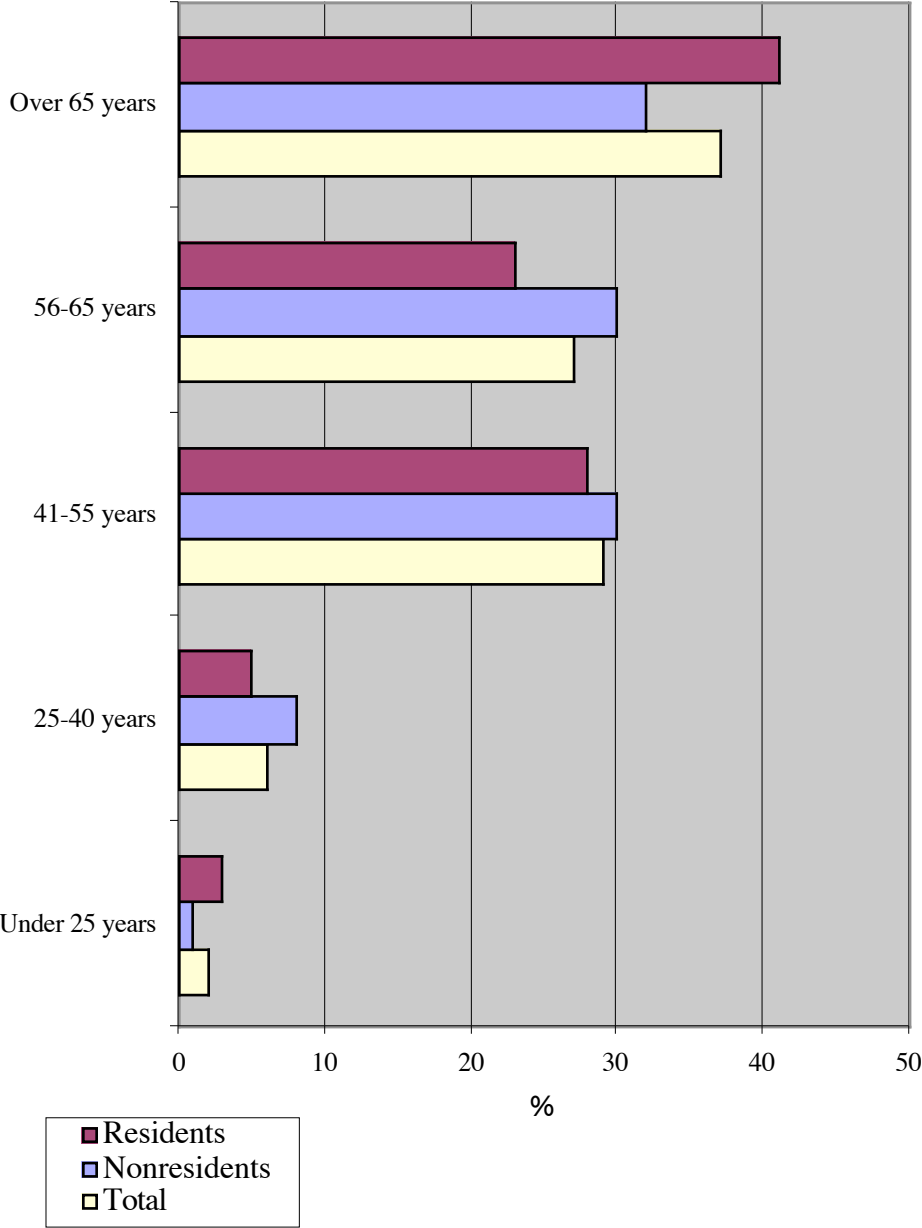


Figure 2-1

HOW LONG HAVE YOU OWNED PROPERTY IN HEBRON?

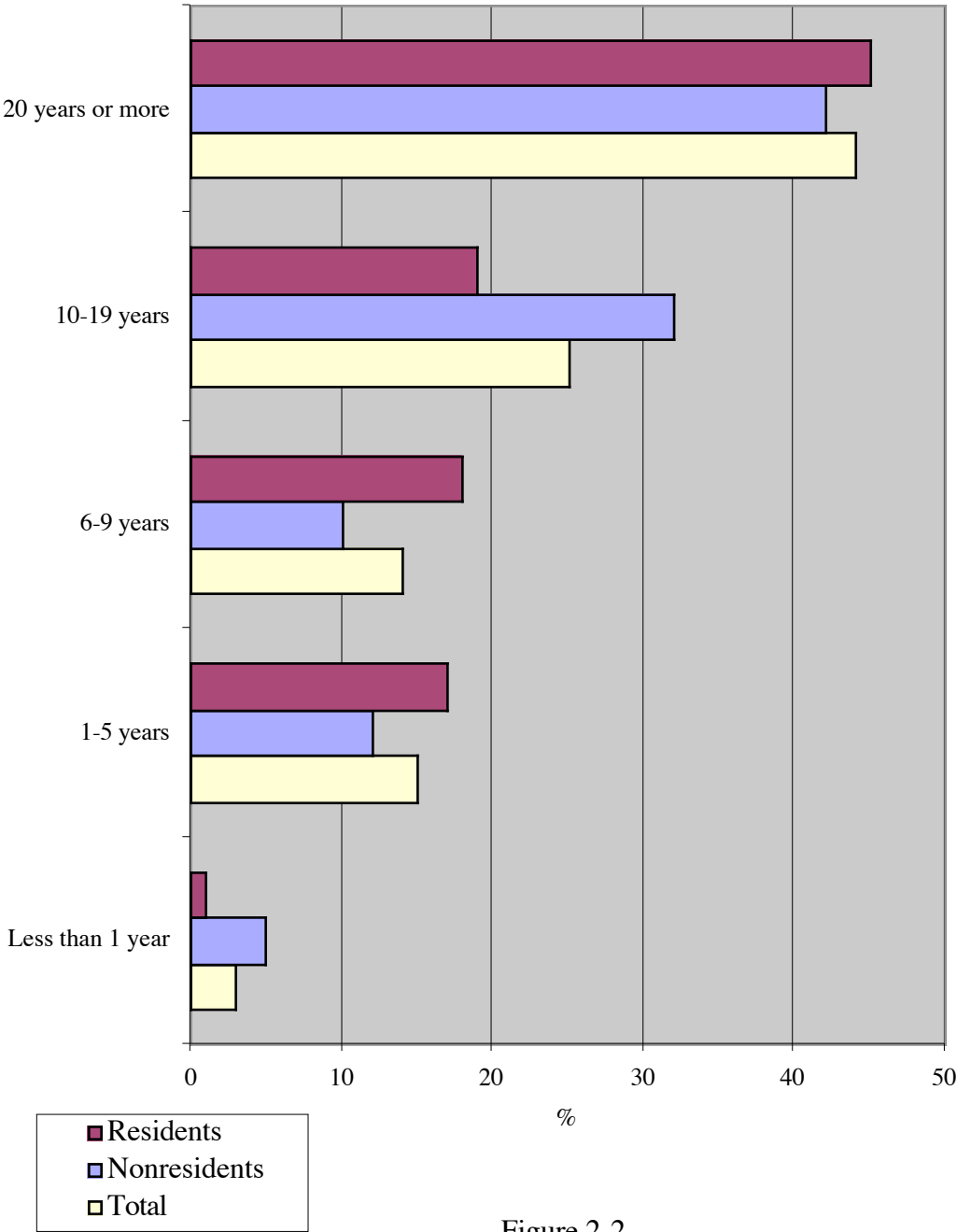


Figure 2-2

WHERE IS YOUR PERMANENT RESIDENCE?

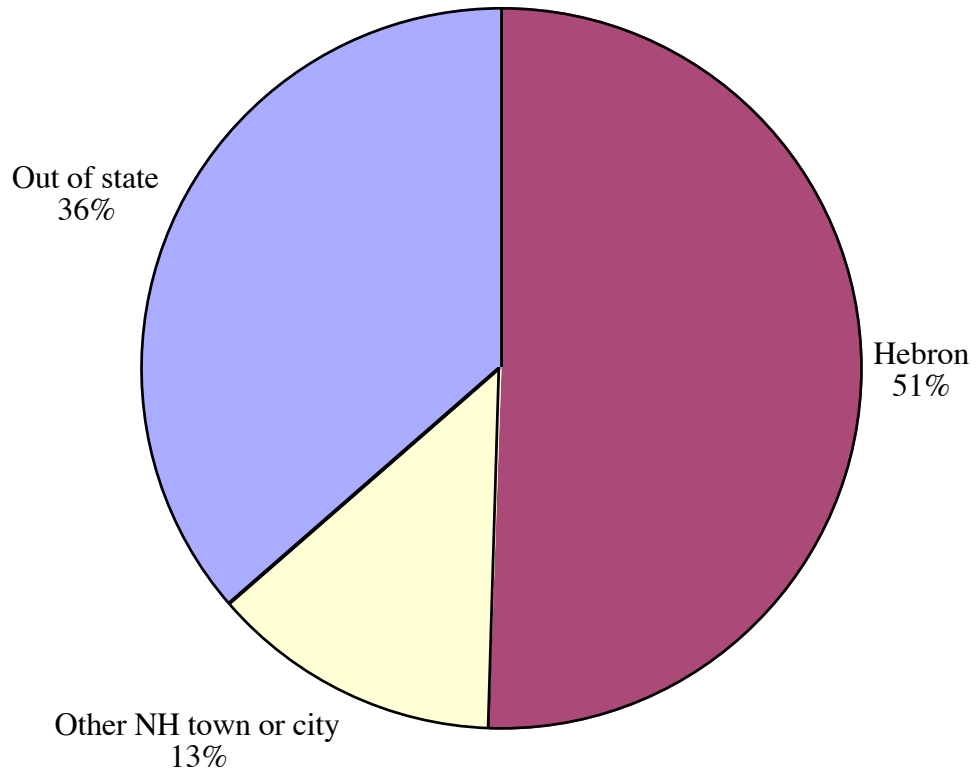


Figure 2-3

BEST THING ABOUT LIVING IN HEBRON

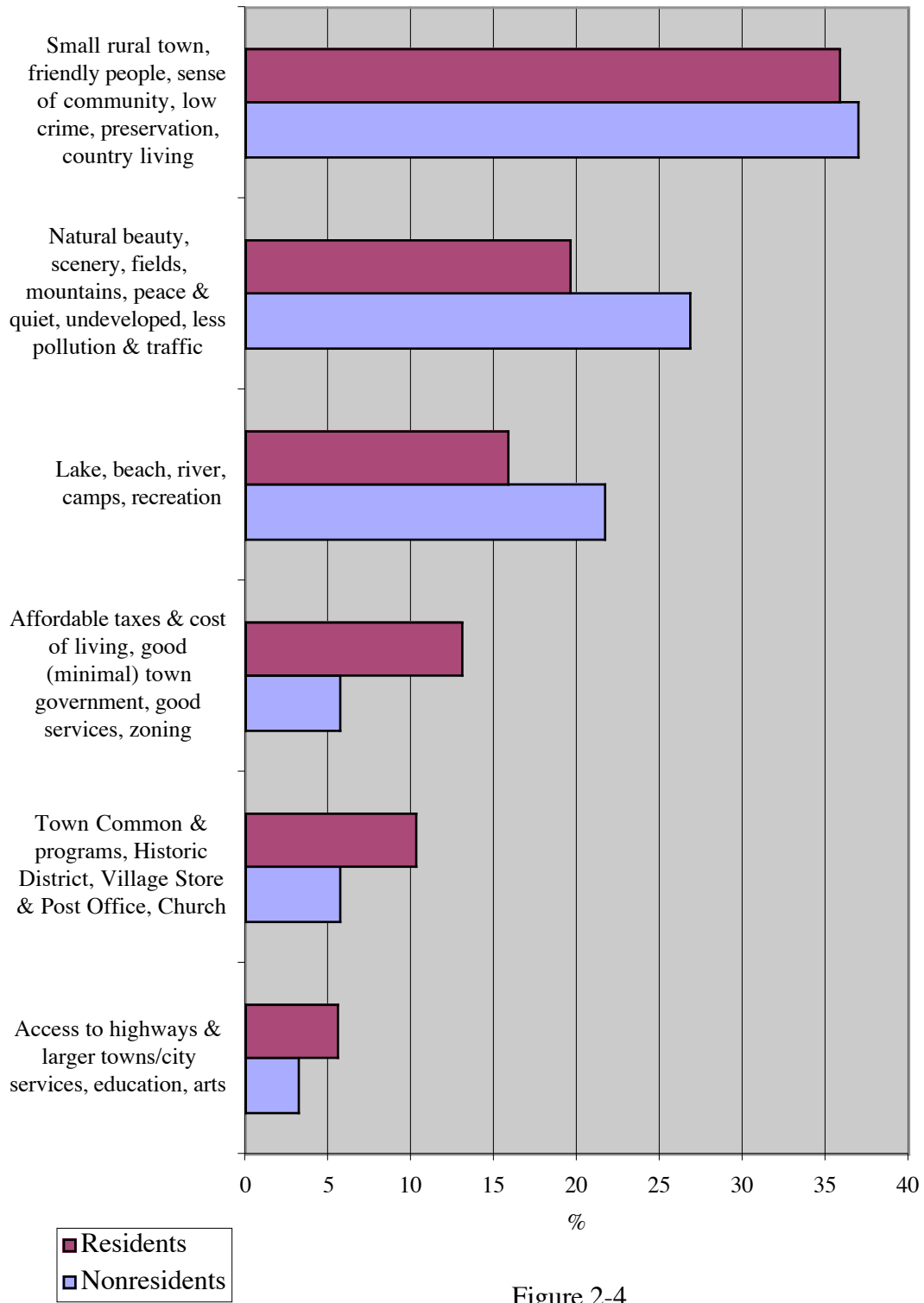


Figure 2-4

TO IMPROVE LIVING IN HEBRON

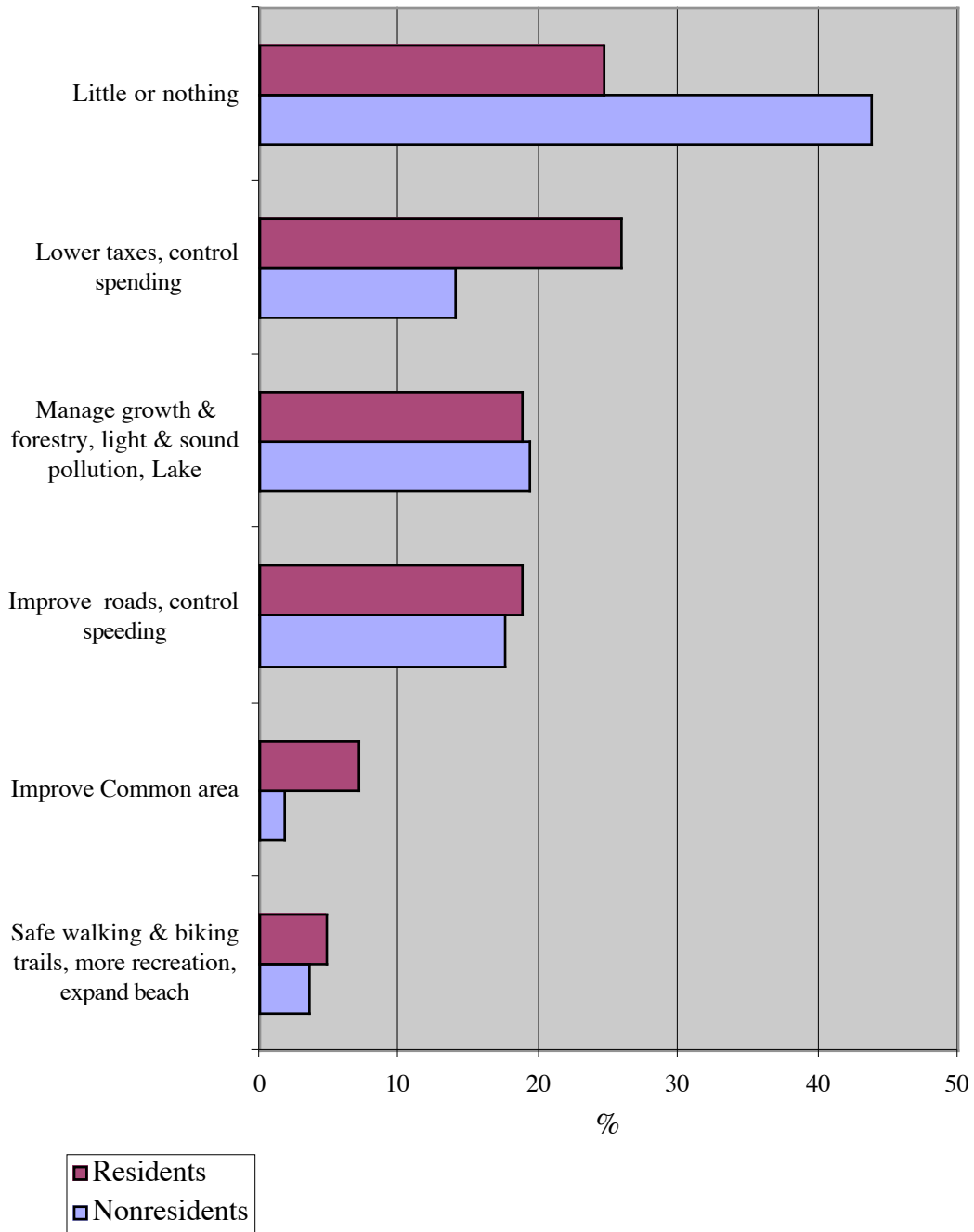


Figure 2-5

MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM IN HEBRON

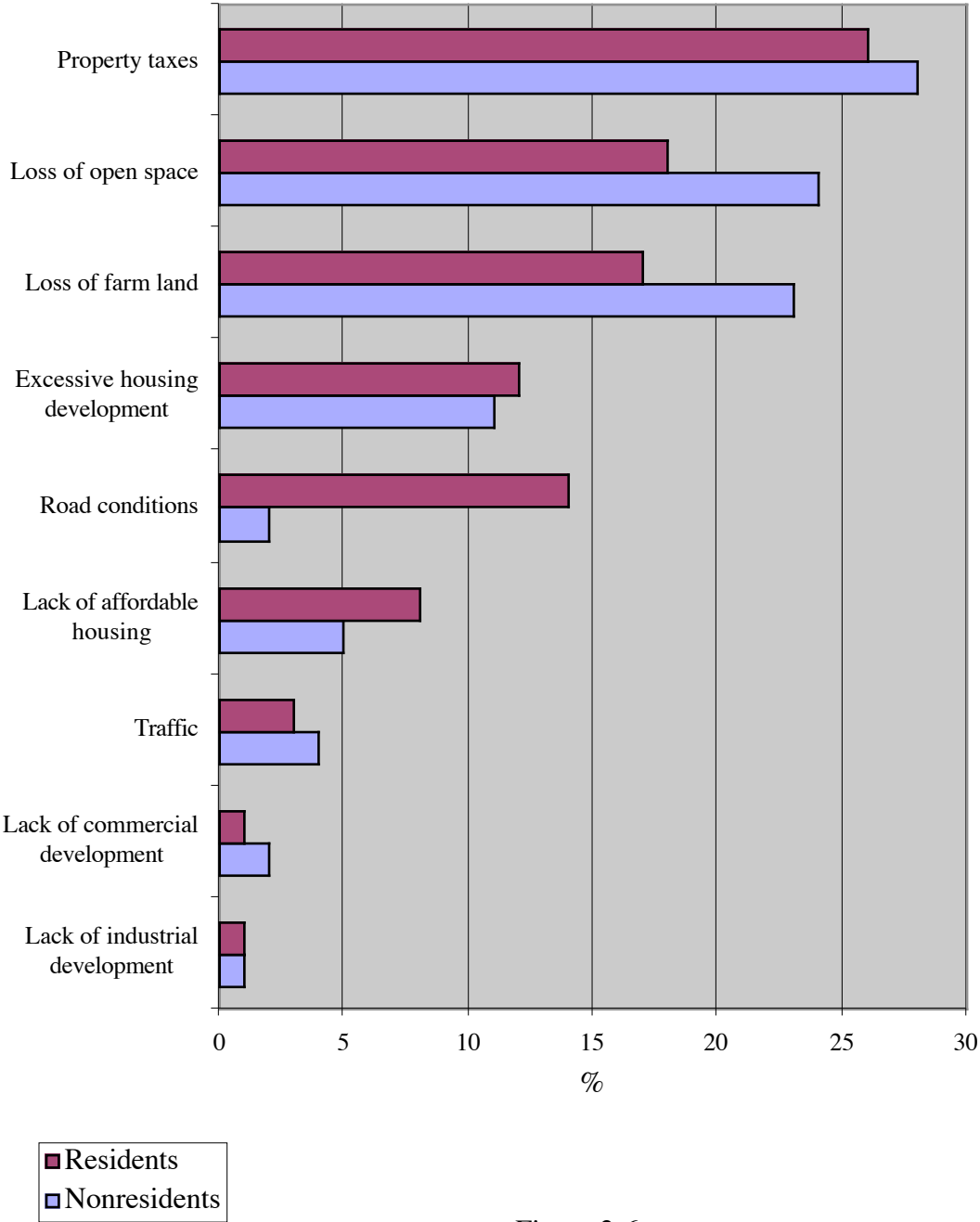
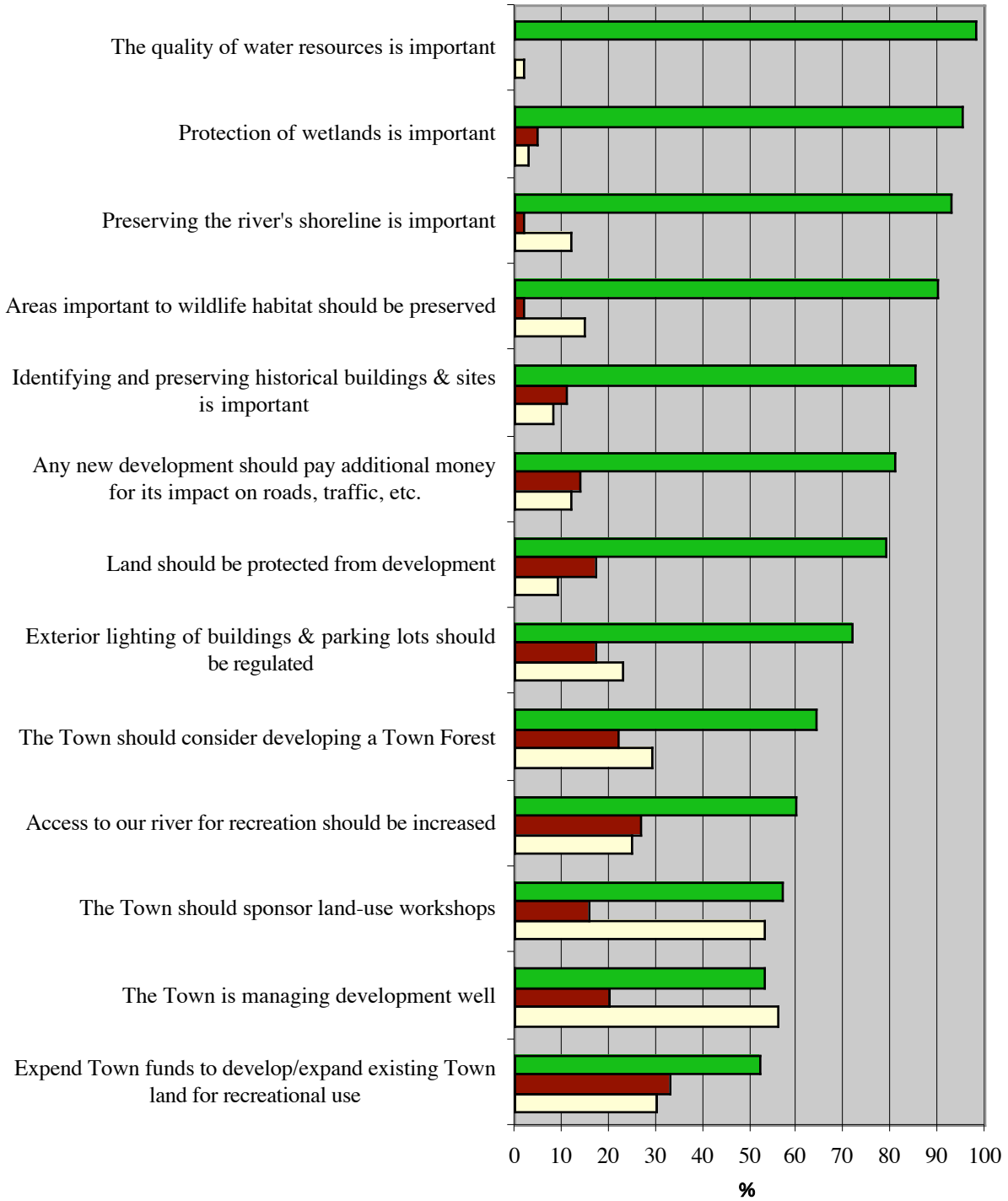


Figure 2-6

DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?



■ Agree strongly - Agree
■ Disagree - Strongly Disagree
■ Don't Know

Note: Only statements with over 50% agreement are included

Figure 2-7

DESIRABLE RESIDENT POPULATION IN TEN YEARS

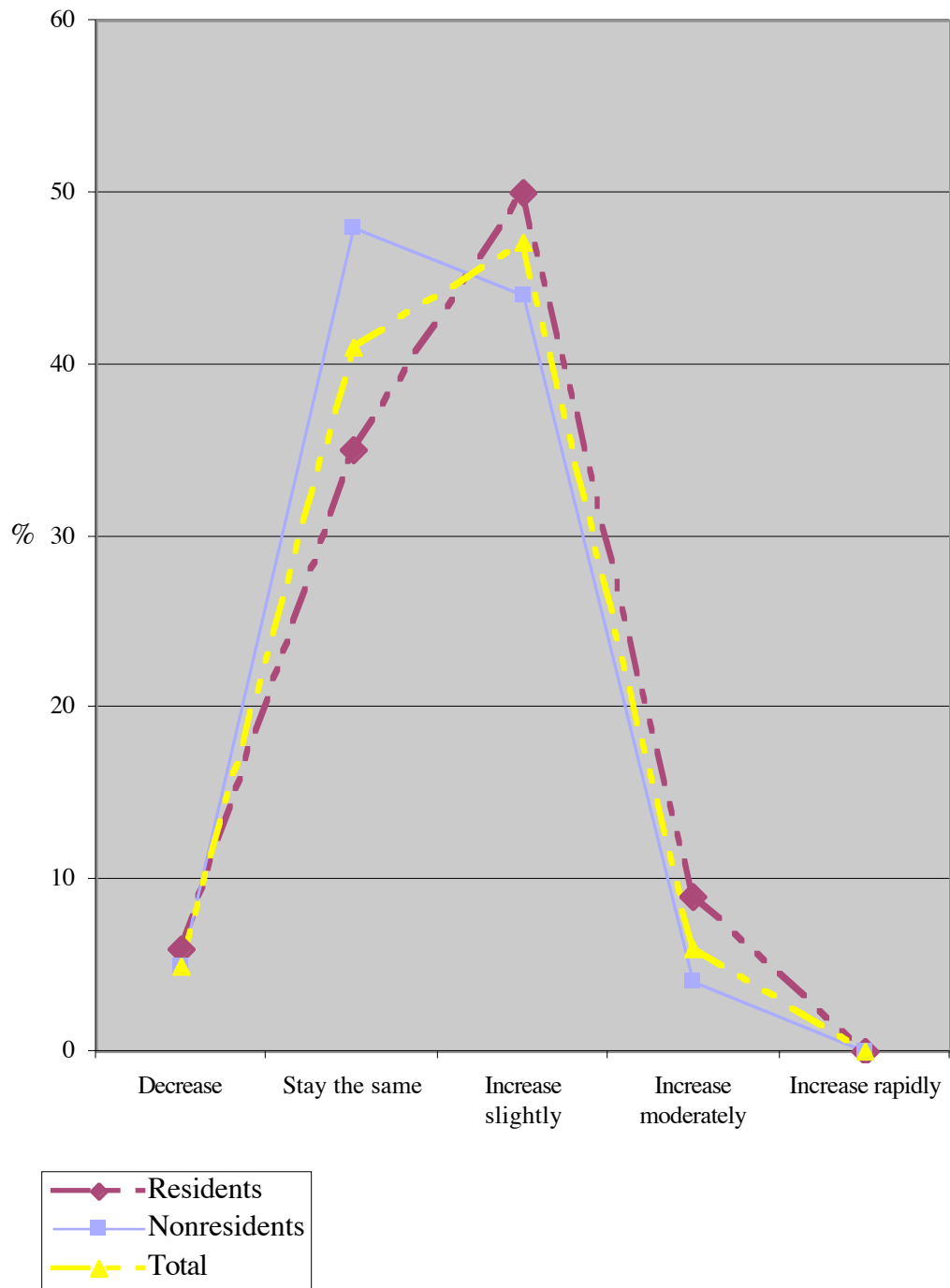


Figure 2-8

WHICH TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED IN HEBRON?

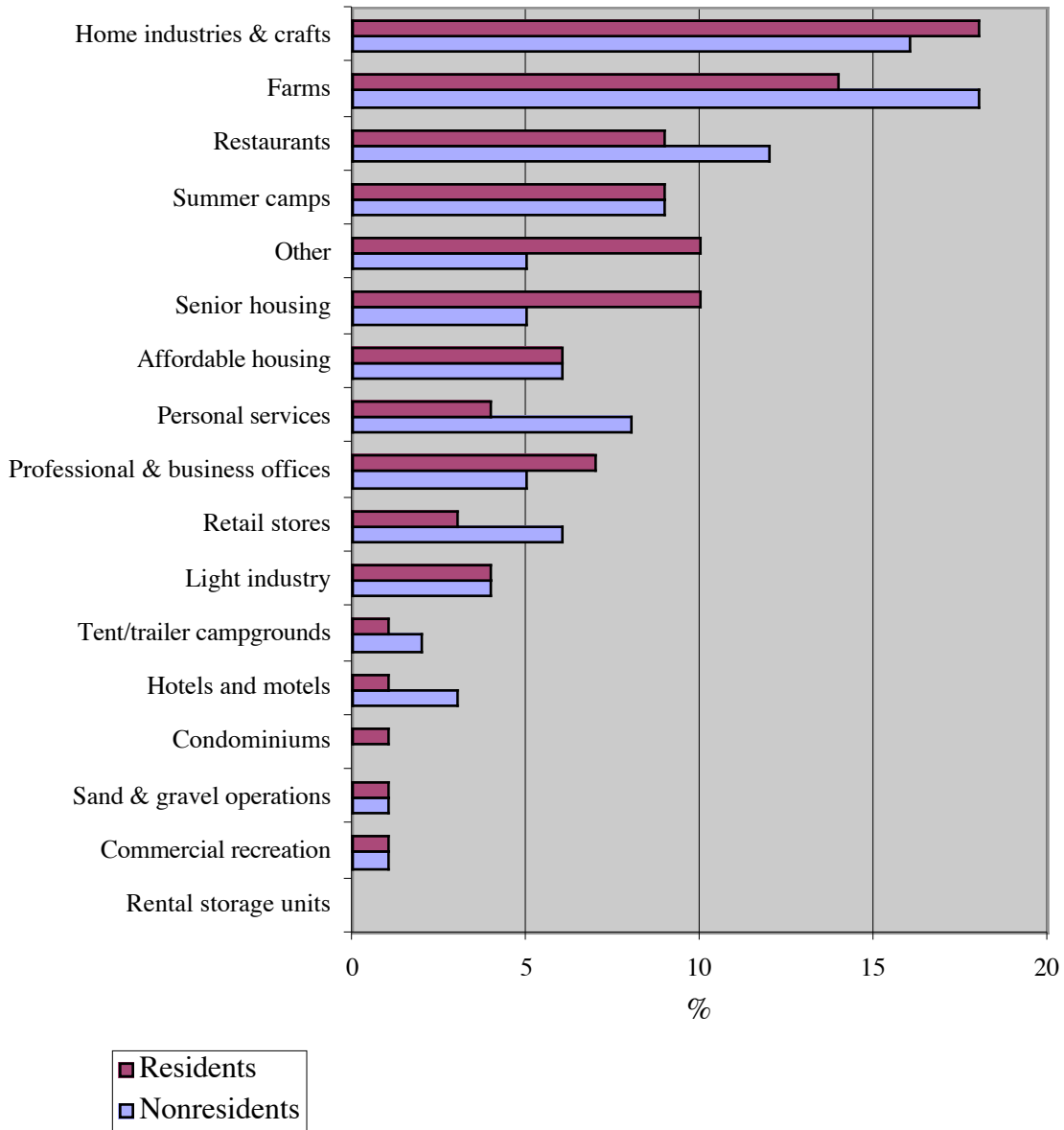


Figure 2-9

DESIRABLE USE OF UNDEVELOPED LAND OWNED BY TOWN

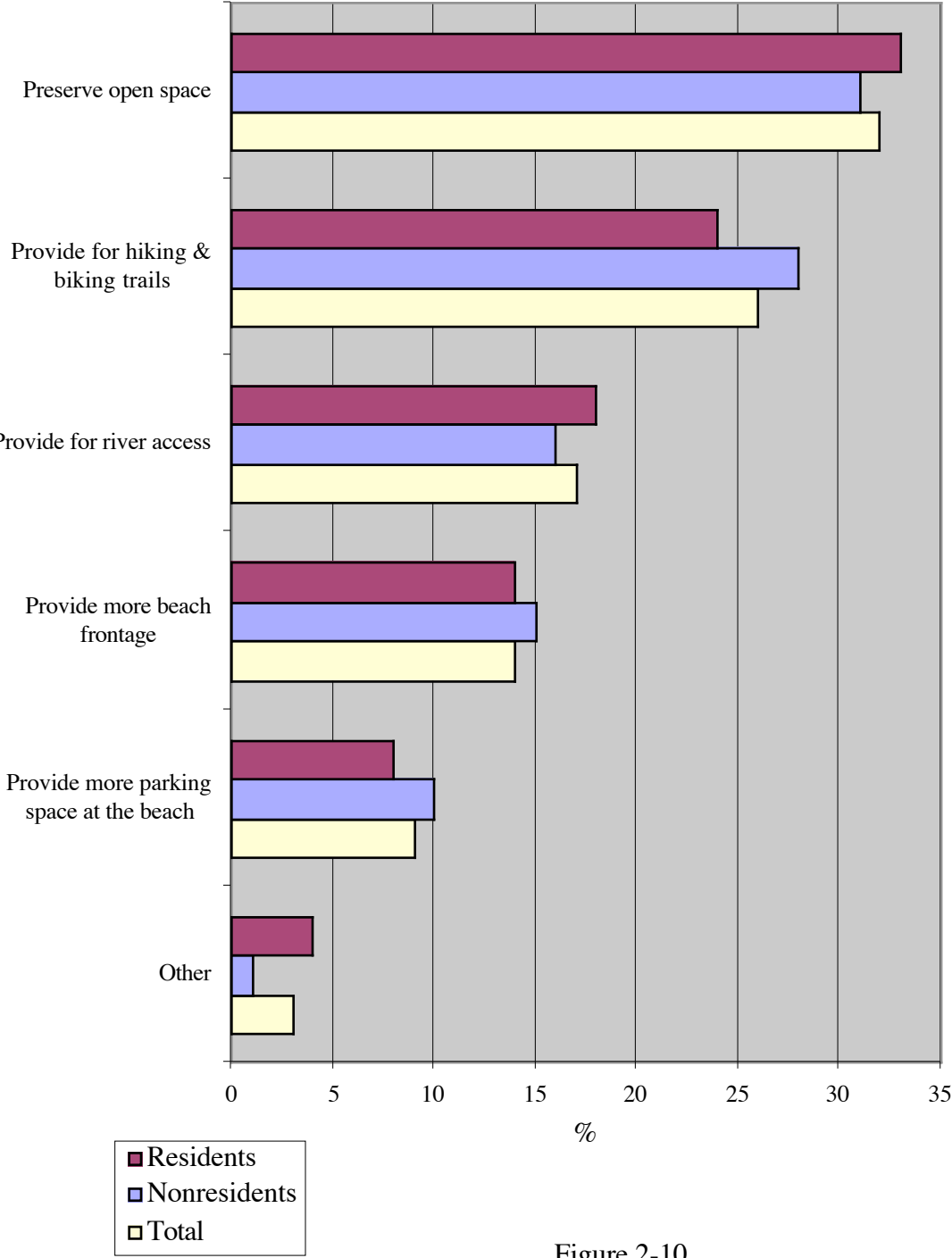


Figure 2-10

TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE & PROVIDE RECREATION

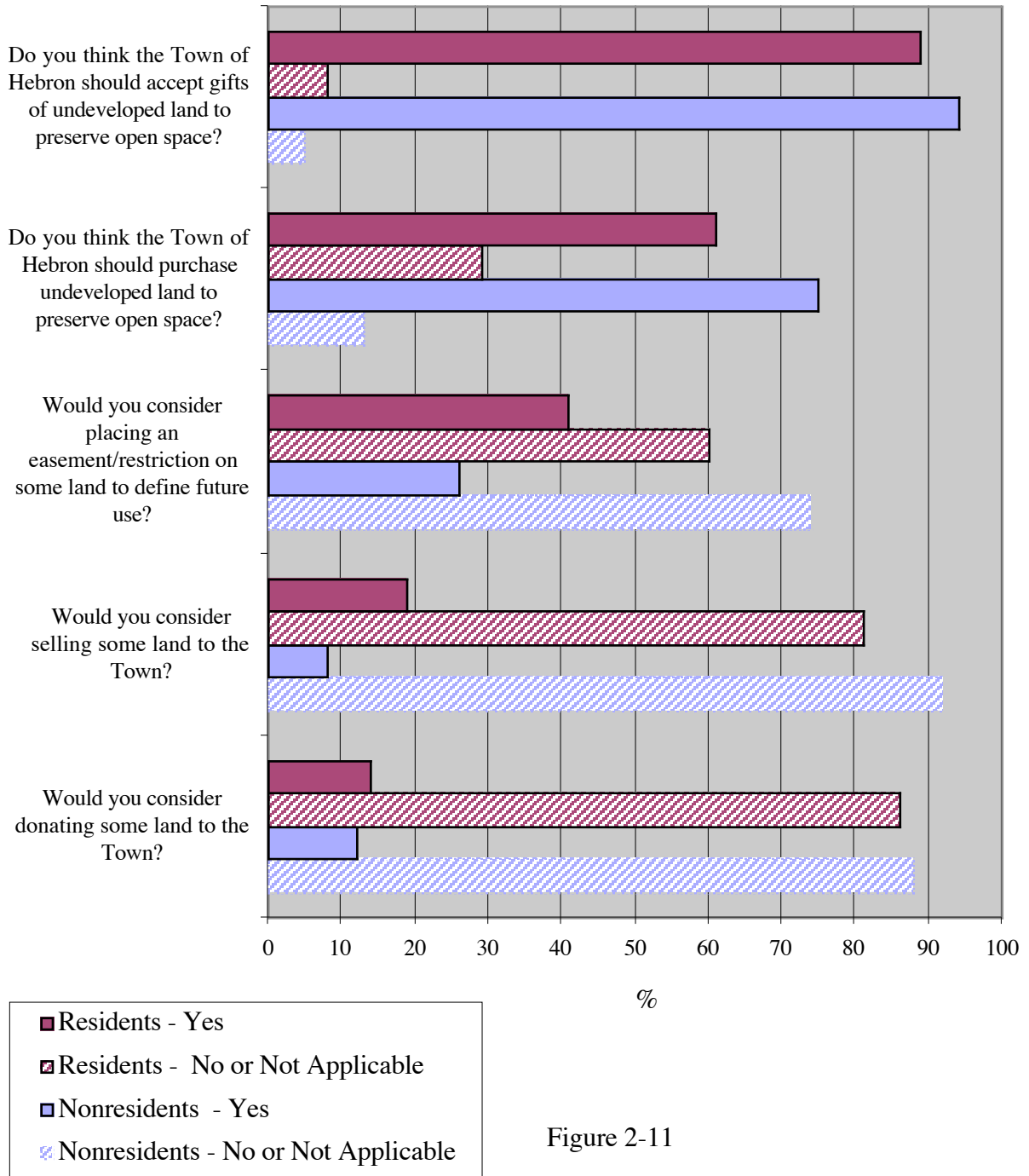


Figure 2-11

SATISFIED WITH ZONING DISTRICTS?

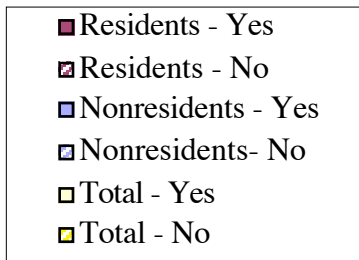
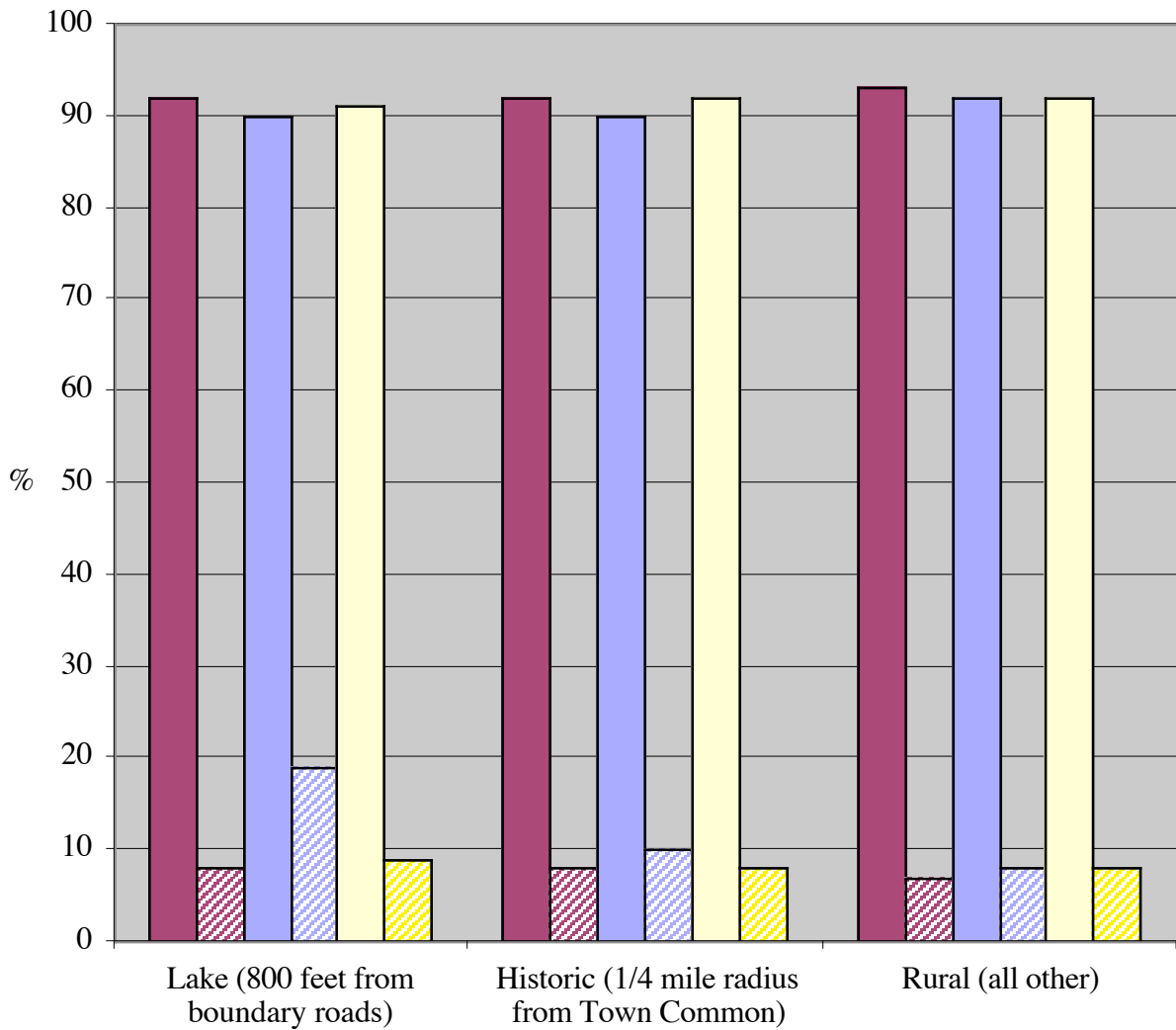


Figure 2-12

IV. FOCUS GROUPS

The two largest demographic groups in Hebron are retirees and parents of school-age children. Responses to the *Hebron Master Plan Community Survey* were not correlated by age, so the charts and graphs in this chapter do not give a sense of any special concerns of these demographic groups. To remedy this problem, two focus groups were formed during the summer and fall of 2004. The members of each group were provided with copies of the charts and graphs contained in Chapters 1 and 2 of this document. They were asked to pull from these data, and from their own experience as members of the Hebron community, a vision of the Hebron they would like to see in ten years. Each focus group then held one meeting in which the vision statements of the individual members were melded by consensus into a vision statement for the group.

The vision statements of the two focus groups were remarkably similar, showing clear consensus on housing, development, the environment, business and industry, roads, the Historic District, and fiscal responsibility. The vision of the retirement-age group specifically mentioned housing for the elderly, a community hall, and handicapped accessibility to public buildings. The vision of the parents of school-age children included quality education, improving the Hebron Library, and creating more family and individual recreation facilities such as a playground, volleyball courts, picnic tables, and safe walking, jogging, and bicycle paths.

A composite of the two vision statements appears in the introductory pages of this document. The specific recommendations contained in the Master Plan are inspired by, and logically follow from, the vision statements of the focus groups as informed by the data gathered in the *Hebron Master Plan Community Survey*. We trust that their collective vision will provide sound guidance to the Town of Hebron and its Planning Board over the next decade and beyond.