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MEMORANDUM

TO: Highland Township Planning Commission

FROM: Megan A. Masson-Minock, AICP, Principal

DATE: October 12, 2023

RE: Master Plan Draft

Please find attached a draft of the Master Plan. At this point, a draft of all chapters has been done, except for the Implementation Chapter. As part of your review, please note implementation steps you feel should be included. After meeting with you, we will make revisions for your review and approval to begin the state-mandated approval process below:

- Recommendation by the Planning Commission of a draft plan to the Township Board.
- Township Board approval to release the e draft for distribution to neighboring communities.
- A 63-day review period by neighboring communities and Oakland County.
- Planning Commission review of comments received.
- A Planning Commission public hearing.
- Planning Commission recommendation to the Township Board.
- Approval by the Township Board, who adopts the Master Plan.

We look forward to discussing the Master Plan with you at an upcoming meeting! Thank you for your contributions to the Master Plan.



OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN
2024 MASTER PLAN UPDATE

DRAFT FOR REVIEW

April 2024



Acknowledgements

Planning & Zoning Department

Elizabeth “Beth” Corwin, P.E., AICP, Planning and Development Director

Lisa G. Burkhart, AICP, Zoning Administrator

Kariline P. Littlebear, Zoning Administrator

Planning Commission

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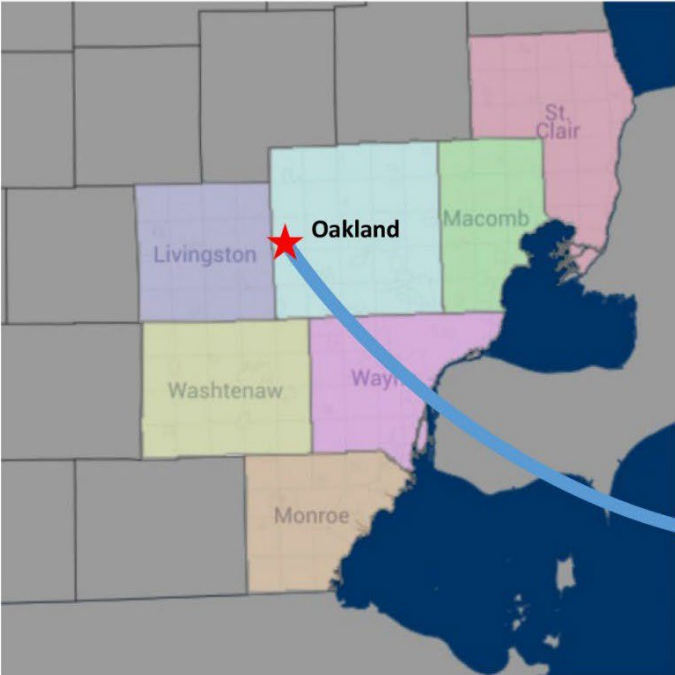
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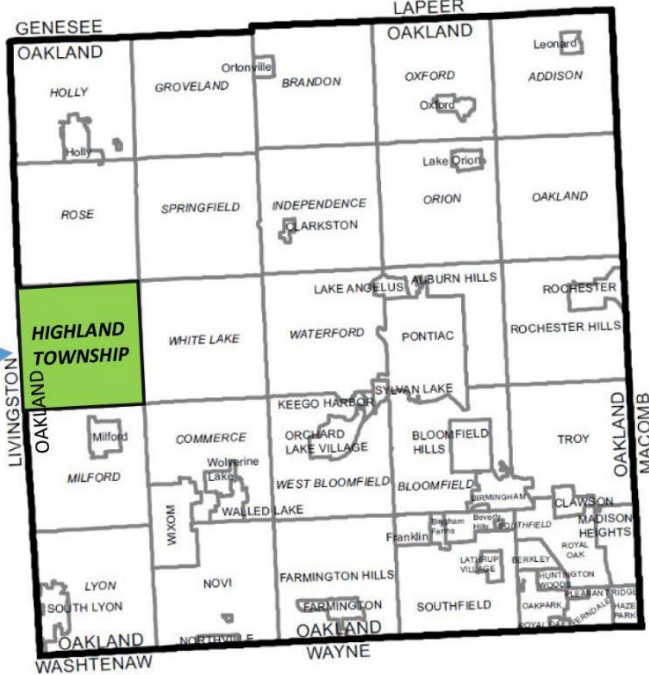
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Map 1: Regional Setting



Southeast Michigan



Introduction

Planning in the Township

Planning is a process that involves the conscious selection of policy choices relating to land use, development, delivery of services, enhancement of community character, and maintenance of a quality of life which meets the expectations of Township residents. The purpose of the Master Plan is to identify the goals, policies, programs, and strategies which the Township and its residents wish to pursue. The Master Plan has involved a thorough investigation of past trends, current conditions, and alternative futures for the Township. The overall process has been structured to allow for broad participation, expression of new ideas, and creation of new concepts that will carry the Highland Township well into the 21st century.

It is the responsibility of the Township Board and Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a Master Plan on behalf of the Township. Highland Township derives its authority to prepare a Master Plan from the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008. The Act requires that at least every five years, the Planning Commission should review the Plan and determine whether amendments may be necessary.

An important prerequisite to community planning is to develop a common understanding of the current state of the Township as well as anticipated trends. Information gathered through this process is critical to the accurate projection of future needs and development patterns and the formulation of goals, policies, and strategies.

The Township has maintained an up-to-date Master Plan with reviews of the 2000 Master Plan, a 2013 consolidated Master Land Use Plan Map and a series of micro-area analysis updates over the years. The latest micro-area analysis was completed in 2018.

The six (6) micro-area analysis are included in the appendices of this Master Plan and where applicable on the Plans Future Land Use Map.

A number of studies have been conducted to evaluate existing and future

conditions in Highland Township and update previous planning efforts. The format of this plan first discusses existing conditions and projected trends, the point from which planning begins.

Regional Setting

Highland Township is located in west central Oakland County, Michigan and is approximately 36 square miles in area. The Township is bordered by Milford Township to the south, Rose Township to the north, White Lake Township to the east and Hartland Township (Livingston County) to the west.

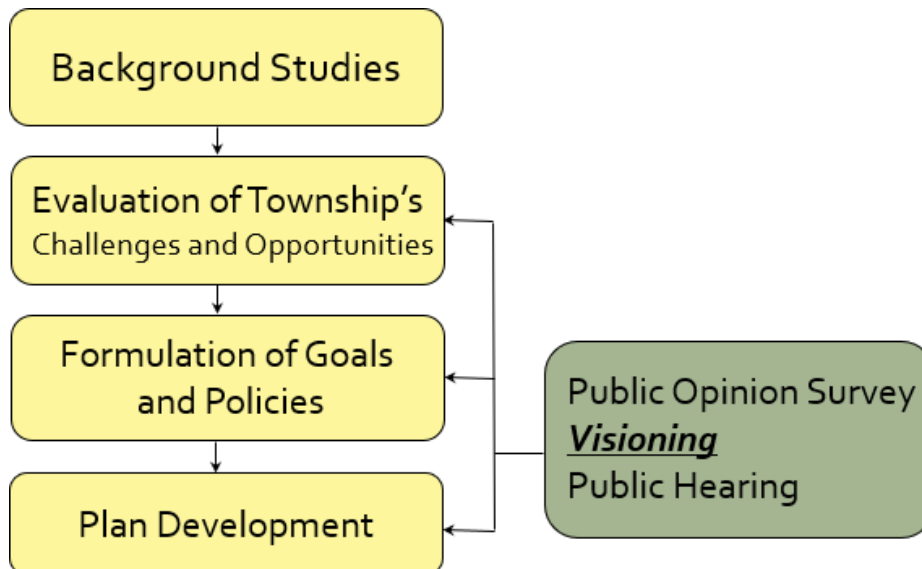
Considering Highland's proximity to US-23 (via M-59) the Township has maintained a rural character by practicing educated land use management techniques and being officially recognized by the state government as Michigan's first designated equestrian community. According to data provided by SEMCOG, in 2015 over 75% of land use in Highland Township is residential, agricultural, or open space.

Master Plan Purpose and Process

The purpose of a Master Plan is to establish a broad framework of goals, and within that, a plan of action that is well suited to the community's wants and needs. As the crux of the Master Plan, the Goals and Policies chapter is informed by research, an analysis of the existing landscape, and most importantly, feedback from the community. The following goals and policies are also supported by other documents cited in the appendix of this plan.

Early in the planning process, the community was asked to describe the Township's strengths, its challenges, and its vision for the future. From this comprehensive discussion, the Planning Commission has identified goals-- general statements that define the character of and direct land use preservation and development. For each, goal, this chapter recommends a set of policies—a plan describing how the goals can be put into action. With the understanding that a community is organically ever-changing, the broadest statements in this Master Plan—its vision and goals--are the most resolute. The policy framework does not commit the Township to any recommendation. Rather, policies represent the Township's commitment to achieving its goals by creating a path for action. The Township can review its progress and build upon the following recommendations and/or correct its course of action while remaining steadfast to its goals.

Figure X.



Creating a Vision

A three-phase process was used to create vision for Highland Township. Each phase is described in more detail below.

Phase 1 of Public Engagement – The Survey

Prior to the May 18th Visioning Session, the Township invited a randomized sampling of residents to complete a survey that was mailed to select households. The survey received 417 responses. Of note, 82% of respondents were satisfied with access to goods and services, with a similar majority wanting to limit commercial development to strategic locations such as the Livingston/Milford Road area. When asked which new service the Township should prioritize, the most common response was “pedestrian/bike paths.” The second most common response was “improving local roads.” Overall, most respondents expressed that Highland Township is a safe, quiet, family-friendly place with rural charm.

Phase 2 of Public Engagement- The Visioning Session

The Visioning Session was hosted by the Planning Commission. It began with a presentation on the purpose of a master plan and the importance of public engagement. Then, participants went to the event’s four “stations,” described below.

Stations

Each station used posters to highlight a topic that is applicable to land use and will most likely affect Highland Township during the next five to ten years. These four topics are: Residential Development, Transportation and Infrastructure, Natural Features, and Business. Following introductions, the attendees divided themselves into four groups, which rotated through each station. The goal of this format was to stimulate group conversation, while allowing every attendee an equal opportunity to comment on each topic. Throughout the evening, Planning Commissioners facilitated discussions at each station and transcribed participants’ comments onto large sheets of paper. Images of each poster are in the appendix.

Voting

After spending about twenty minutes at each station, participants “voted” for comments that held the most importance to them by placing stickers next to the comments that were handwritten on large sheets of paper.

Conclusion

The prevailing sentiment of the evening was to preserve the rural character of Highland Township. Participants voiced opposition to small residential lots and multi-family dwellings. Though regional housing shortages and market trends tend toward new housing development, participants wanted to avoid the addition of suburban housing and large commercial footprints, to remain distinct from neighboring communities, and to preserve the Township character.

Some participants contemplated how to grow strategically. For example, participants discussed the aging population and the need for affordable assisted living facilities. Some discussed how business development might be concentrated in major transportation corridors and how the town center should attract smaller businesses. Participants who desired improvements largely focused their comments on transportation and infrastructure. For example, participants suggested the development of non-motorized pathways, while high speed internet and sewer expansion were popular but contested propositions.

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**GOALS AND POLICIES:
THE PRESERVATION, DEVELOPMENT,
AND SUCCESS OF HIGHLAND
TOWNSHIP**

Goals and Policies: The Preservation, Development, and Success of Highland Township

Goals and subsequent policies form the basis upon which more detailed decisions can be made. Several of the following policy recommendations are supported by the white paper titled, “Agricultural Uses in Highland Township: Preserving Rural Character by Expanding Economic Opportunities.” This paper was published in April 2018 and will be included in the appendix of this Master Plan.

Goal 1:

Maintain the rural, historic character of Highland Township while supporting contemporary necessities/requisites by managing growth, preserving natural resources, and upholding agricultural land use.

Policies

1. Support small- and large-scale farming and agricultural uses.
2. Establish a utility service district to Limit expectations of where future sanitary sewer service and water would be extended by public investment and where it would not.
3. Implement design guidelines that incorporate natural, historic, or community-oriented features in non-residential districts.
4. Preserve agricultural and open space views along the road corridors that contain visually prominent rural open spaces. The corridors containing visually prominent rural open spaces were identified in the 2000-2020 Master Plan: *The Economic Viability of Agricultural Lands*, January 2019.
5. Encourage residents with property in natural environments to work with a land conservancy to establish an easement to protect the land from future development.
6. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to implement design guidelines that serve to maintain or promote natural, historic, or community-oriented elements in non-residential districts.
7. Consider the use of special zoning districts or overlay zoning districts (i.e., regional corridor district and/or neighborhood corridor district). Promote a small-town or rural image at the Township’s core intersections by considering additional standards for elements such as landscaping, streetscape, sidewalk furniture, lighting, architecture, and/or signage.

8. Encourage the long-term protection of farmland resources. Create a Solar Zoning Ordinance through which the Township can specify desired regulations, such as those regarding soil quality, groundcover, and decommissioning.

Goal 2:

Advocate for the enhancement and preservation of natural features and a healthy ecosystem within and surrounding the Township. Protect environmentally sensitive areas. Maintain the quality of greenways, waterways, and open space. Promote healthy freshwater ecosystems and reduce harmful runoff.

Policies

1. Amend the Landscape section of the Zoning Ordinance to include measurable, quantitative standards for greenbelt development.
2. Provide education for residents and business owners, especially those who own farmland or land with natural features. Access relevant information from the Huron River Water Council and/or the statewide departments such as MDARD, or MEGLE.
3. Maintain restrictions to the area of impervious surfaces in all districts, as the majority of the Township land is in one of three creek sheds.
4. Maintain the existing Wellhead Protection Program, as recommended by EGLE's drinking water and environmental health division.
5. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to minimize erosion and nutrient runoff by requiring a 25-foot wide non-mowed, vegetative strip along bodies of water, especially where land is used for agricultural production. Establish the percentage of waterfront property that should utilize such a buffer, per parcel.
6. Encourage Farmers to plant cover crops or perennial species to prevent periods of bare ground on farm fields when the soil (and the soil and nutrients it contains) are most susceptible to erosion and loss into waterways.
7. Protect the Township's air quality.
 - a. Limit high intensity industrial uses.
 - b. Review building filtration standards. Amend the standards as needed to promote consistent and quality air filtration in all living/work/recreational spaces.
 - c. In an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, allow the planning commission to request an air quality protection plan for proposed developments.

- d. Prohibit the burning of plastics and other hazardous materials, unless done so in a regulated manner, for some reasonable purpose.
- 8. Additional considerations for natural features.
 - a. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to regulate the intensity of LED lighting to help maintain rural dark skies.

Goal 3:

Maintain the integrity of housing by promoting accessibility to people of different ages, physical abilities, and socio-economic status, while maintaining the Township's rural and historic character.

Policies

- 1. Explore allowing detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs), especially considering the improved quality and supply of prefabricated ADUs for sale.
- 2. Explore allowing mixed residential/commercial uses, to a limited scale, in select districts such as local commercial and Highland Station.
 - a. Residential areas should be separated from high density commercial and industrial areas by functional elements such as open space, parkland, landscaped streets, or other buffer elements. This strategy is not meant to preclude thoughtfully executed mixed-use projects wherein residential and commercial elements are combined.
 - b. Promote accessible, affordable housing opportunities for Highland's senior citizens at appropriate locations in the Township. Maintain proximity to parks, walking paths, and public facilities when determining appropriate locations. Promoting affordable senior housing should include the following strategies:
 - i. Offer incentives for the development of senior housing in the Township, such as density bonuses in PUD developments where units for seniors are proposed.
 - ii. Encourage public/private partnerships for senior housing in the Township, to increase its affordability.
 - iii. Consider expanding municipal sewer lines to locations planned for senior housing.
 - c. Establish architectural standards and style guidelines that support Township character, for future multi-family developments, including senior housing and attached single-family, within reason.

- d. Require thoughtful placement of open space in future developments where density is also greater, to maintain Township character by maintaining green spaces along major thoroughfares and between developments.
- e. Consider attached single-family residential, where appropriate.

Goal 4:

Remain distinct from neighboring communities by maintaining identity as a reprieve from suburban sprawl and a regional destination for parks.

Policies

1. Limit new commercial development to that of a local, neighborhood scale and intensity, except along M-59.
2. Honor the Township's historic horseback riding tradition as central to the Township character.
3. Consider establishing a Park District or Resource Conservation District in the Zoning Ordinance.

Goal 5:

Provide the high-quality public facilities and services while maintaining an affordable rate for residents and business owners throughout Highland Charter Township.

Policies

1. Provide high-quality public facilities and services while maintaining an affordable rate for residents and business owners throughout Highland Charter Township.
2. Continue to cluster Township and other public facilities and maintain a vibrant presence in the Highland Station District.
3. Continue to partner with Huron Valley School District and the Highland DDA to utilize existing green spaces and parking lots to facilitate public events such as festivals, Farmer's Markets, and other opportunities for residents to gather.
4. Maintain the quality, efficiency, and safety of existing infrastructure.

5. Consult this Master Plan when drafting the yearly Capital Improvements Plan.
6. Support partner organizations such as the FOHRA (Friends of Highland Recreation Area), Six Rivers Land Conservancy, Community Sharing, and the Highland/White Lake Business Association in their ongoing endeavor to recruit and celebrate volunteers.
7. Consult with the Township's planning consultant and the Parks & Recreation Plan to identify public grants for enhancements to parks and other public facilities.
8. Participate in regional and statewide efforts to expand broadband availability.
9. Assist neighborhoods in exploring options to maintain and improve their streets and drainage systems.

Goal 6:

Expand the pedestrian, non-motorized pathway system in a manner consistent with the Township's desired character.

Policies

1. Prioritize mobility and transportation as a capital improvement and public service during the life span of this plan.
2. Develop and enhance pedestrian and other non-motorized circulation between parks, public facilities, and along select corridors. Refer to the *Highland Township Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2021-2025*, adopted in January 2021, and the *Charter Township of Highland Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan*, adopted July 11, 2012.
3. Establish standards that provide adequate pathway width, shade from the sun or other elements, and pathway maintenance to keep pathway users healthy and safe.
4. Refer to the Township survey and Visioning Session when implementing pathway development, as a reminder of public support. Continue to involve residents and other stakeholders in the planning stages of pathway enhancements or expansions.
5. Provide sidewalks on both sides of the street in all new developments.
6. Partner with Milford Charter Township to establish a non-motorized bike path between downtown Milford and Downtown Highland.
7. Give special attention to creating an accessible, barrier-free environment using crosswalks and ramps, and other universal design standards.

Goal 7:

Promote limited commercial development by aggregating commercial uses to the Township's central corridors, supporting agricultural commercial development, and/or supporting small-scale enterprises.

Policies

1. Create an environment appealing to businesses that service residents and attract visitors, with an emphasis on the service industries, such as barbers/salons, dining and hospitality.
2. Review existing sub-area plans and determine which elements still support the community vision. Create an actionable timeline for actions consistent with that vision.
3. Coordinate with the DDA to implement the 2003 DDA Plan, to cooperate with future plans, and to activate the Highland Station area.
4. Explore agricultural uses such as outdoor markets, wedding venues, etc.
5. Review ordinances for opportunities to accommodate home based industry while maintaining safety, wellbeing, and peace of neighboring residents.

Goal 8:

Promote the limited development of industrial uses in appropriate areas of the Township that generate little or no environmental impact.

Policies

1. Consider requiring environmental impact studies when new industrial uses and/or industrial improvements are proposed.
2. Encourage Low Development Impact standards and alternative designs for stormwater retention that work also to preserve green space and provide visually pleasing buffers to surrounding areas.

Summary of Policies that Propose Changes to the Zoning Ordinance

1. Amendments to Agricultural Residential Zoning District:

- a. Consider parsing the map to re-establish zones specifically aligned with agricultural commerce and home-based industry as distinct from large lot.
- b. Residential and hobby farming.

- c. Establish an agricultural commercial and tourism category in the Zoning Ordinance for future uses such as outdoor markets, wedding venues, seasonal events, etc.
- d. Amend regulations relative to large scale solar utilities to address issues regarding soil quality, groundcover, and decommissioning.
- e. Add 'Agricultural processing and food storage' as special land use.
- f. Address tasting rooms for vineyards, distilleries, or micro-breweries on farm operations.
- g. Develop regulations to permit agricultural commercial kitchens as a special land use.

2. Amendments to Corridor Areas

- a. Promote a small-town image at the Township's core intersections by considering additional standards for landscaping, sidewalk furniture, lighting, and/or signage, expressed special districts or through a zoning overlay district (i.e., regional corridor or neighborhood corridor district).
- b. Require more beautification standards in the office district.
- c. Allow mixed residential/commercial use in the local business district.
- d. Allow mobile food establishments.
- e. Specifically allow craft production, clothing production, or food production (less than 2,500 square feet).
- f. Specifically allow microbrewer/small distiller/small wine maker (less than 2,500 square feet) in local business area/ industrial area (currently allows "processing and packaging of beverages."
- g. Implement design guidelines that incorporate natural, historic, or community-oriented features in non-residential districts.

3. Amendments to Industrial Manufacturing and Research & Technology & Research

- a. Review setback requirements where land abuts a non-similar use or a public right of way, increasing where appropriate.
- b. Encourage Low Impact Development methods in design of stormwater controls.

4. Changes to Zoning Map

- a. Establish an institutional or public facility district.

- b.** Evaluate whether a PUD ordinance will benefit the Township's goals.
- c.** Consider establishing a Park District or Resource Conservation District in the Zoning Ordinance.

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FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan defines the framework for the future growth of Highland Township. It begins with a general description of the desired pattern of development for the community and follows with a description of the future land use categories as illustrated on the future land use map at the end of this chapter.

The future land use map is not a zoning map, but rather a generalized guide to the desired future land use patterns within the Township. Generally, the future land use categories follow established boundaries such as roads, rivers, etc.

In the course of preparing the plan, several factors were considered: Existing development patterns, demographic trends, regional influences, natural resource conditions, and road patterns. In addition to these factors, the plan considered the comments and opinions gathered during the community-wide survey and public input as well as numerous meetings with the Township Planning Commission. To this extent, it reflects general policy toward development and redevelopment within the Township.

Land Use Plan Categories

Agricultural

Description: This land classification category prioritizes the preservation of agricultural activities and supports small-scale agriculture. This classification is designed to offer residents the opportunity to live in a low-density environment, promoting rural lifestyle while maintaining the agricultural character of the area.

Appropriate Uses: Farm operations, residential cluster developments, single-family detached dwellings, and child and foster care homes. With special consideration, adult day care and centers and homes, group child care homes, child care centers, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, agri-tourism including event venues, equestrian centers, golf courses, parks and recreation facilities, institutional uses, kennels, large veterinary clinics, mineral extraction and wireless communication facilities.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Agricultural & Rural Residential (ARR)

Large Lot Single Family Residential

Description: This land classification category places a strong emphasis on preserving natural features and maintaining a balance between urbanization and environmental sensitivity. This classification allows for spacious living while safeguarding wetland, woodland, slopes, and other environmentally and visually sensitive areas. These residential areas have been strategically located to facilitate the preservation of these features with an aim to utilize common open space area to preserve the environment. Small-scale agriculture, such as hobby farms, are encouraged in these areas.

Appropriate Uses: Farm operations, residential cluster developments, single-family detached dwellings on lots three acres or larger, and child and foster care homes. With special consideration, adult day care and centers and homes, group child care homes, child care centers, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, agri-tourism including event venues, equestrian centers, golf courses, parks and recreation facilities, institutional uses, kennels, large veterinary clinics, mineral extraction and wireless communication facilities.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Agricultural & Rural Residential (ARR)

Medium Lot Single Family Residential (1.5 to 3 acre minimum lot size)

Description: This land classification category is located strategically in the central core of the township. This core is purposefully surrounded by lower-density land use categories, including the Agricultural and Large Lot Residential category. This concentration of Medium Lot Residential areas in the central core of the Township is a deliberate planning approach meant to accommodate anticipated future households.

Appropriate Uses: Single-family detached dwellings on lots 1.5 to 3 acres, residential cluster developments, and child and foster care homes. With special consideration, adult day care and centers and homes, group child care homes, child care centers, bed and breakfasts, parks and recreation facilities, and small-scale institutional uses.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Single-family Residential - 3 acres (R-3), and Single-family Residential - 1.5 acres (R-1.5)

Small Lot Single Family Residential

Description: This land classification category is comprised of historical small lot settlements around the lakes and other developments within the Township. The associated zoning regulations are designed to preserve the long-established development patterns in the Township. This land use category is restricted to what is currently allowed, meaning no additional parcels can be added, unless through land division and combination. The Township is committed to maintaining the character of historical settlements and promoting controlled growth within this residential district.

Appropriate Uses: Single-family detached dwellings on lots less than 1.5 acres, residential cluster developments, and child and foster care homes. With special consideration, adult day care and centers and homes, group child care homes, child care centers, bed and breakfasts, parks and recreation facilities, small-scale institutional uses, and boat launching facilities for residential development or private clubs.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Lake and Village Residential (LV)

Multiple Family Residential

Description: This land classification category is intended to provide for multiple dwelling units, single-family attached dwellings (townhouses and row houses) and duplexes at a density consistent with available infrastructure and land capacities, while providing a variety of housing options other than a detached single-family home. This district is located primarily in areas with optimal amenities and accessibility, ensuring they become valuable assets to the community. By strategically planning these developments adjacent to major thoroughfares, residents have convenient access to the Highland Recreation Area and are in close proximity to major commercial centers.

Appropriate Uses: Multiple-family dwellings, single-family attached dwellings, community buildings, foster care facilities and family child care homes. With special consideration, adult day care and group child care homes, bed and breakfasts, senior housing, hospitals and small-scale institutions.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Multiple-Family Residential (RM)

Manufactured Housing Community

Description: This land classification category is thoughtfully located within the township in a manner that promotes harmonious integration of housing types that differ from the predominant single-family homes. This category allows more options to meet the housing needs of the community while positively contributing to the overall character.

Appropriate Uses: Manufactured housing developments and incidental uses, foster care homes and facilities, and family child care homes.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Manufacture Home Park (MH)

Office and Low Intensity Commercial

Description: This land classification category is to provide suitable locations for businesses that rely on outdoor space to support their services or sales. Duplexes and single-family attached residential uses would also be appropriate for this land classification. These low-impact properties could transition to higher density or higher intensity uses in the future, should utility services become available. The goal is to create suitable environments for uses that align with the community's vision. The community's goal is to locate these zones in areas that promote access to essential services while also minimizing the impact on surrounding areas. Integrating a balance of professional and commercial spaces with residential uses that contributes positively to the Township's economic landscape without compromising the low-intensity character is the primary goal.

Appropriate Uses: Office, training centers, veterinary clinics or hospitals, senior housing, duplexes, and single-family attached dwellings. With special consideration, bed and breakfasts, child-care facilities, amusement establishments, fitness facilities, personal services, restaurants, retail shops, pet day care, banquet facilities, drive-through facilities, gas stations, outdoor private recreation, hospitals, small-scale institutions, and wireless communication facilities.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Office Service (OS), Local Commercial (C-1)

Highland Station

Description: This land classification category highlights the quaint hamlet that boasts historic charm including residential dwellings that date back over a century. Highland Station's character is intricately woven into its landscape, architecture, walkability, and close-knit neighborhoods, creating a cherished community with a timeless appeal. Influenced by its railroad origins, newer commercial developments align with major thoroughfares, yet the area maintains a distinctive character defined by natural surroundings and a commitment to simplicity and environmental stewardship. Future designs should preserve and build upon these defining features to uphold the essence of Highland Station.

Appropriate Uses: Single-family homes, duplexes, multiple-family buildings and single-family attached dwelling up to eight (8) dwelling units, bed and breakfasts, family child care homes, adult and child foster care facilities, offices for lower-intensity occupations, financial institutions, personal service, fitness facilities, retail shops, restaurants and food-related activities not to exceed three thousand (3,000) square feet or smaller, and municipal parks, playgrounds and other community facilities. With special consideration, amusement establishments, small-scale institutions, and medical offices and clinics.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Highland Station (HS)

General Commercial

Description: This land use category serves several primary objectives including stimulating the Township's commercial sector and enhancing its tax base while simultaneously offering convenient access to a variety of commercial services in close proximity to population concentrations within the township. In order to promote an organized and cohesive commercial landscape, the zoning in this area intends to curb the spread of scattered strip commercial development. In doing this, the goal is to enhance traffic safety and to elevate the overall visual appeal of existing commercial development. As General Commercial areas cover 255 acres in the Township, they are a large contributor to the overall economic vitality and visual aesthetics of the community.

Appropriate Uses: Office, training centers, veterinary clinics or hospitals, child-care facilities, amusement establishments, fitness facilities, personal services, restaurants, general retail, movie theaters, banquet facilities, institutions, drive-through facilities, gas stations, vehicle sales, oil change facilities, car washes, shooting and archery ranges. With special consideration, bed and breakfasts, hospitals, vehicle repair, adult day care centers, adult regulated uses, outdoor private recreation, lodging, and kennels.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: General Commercial (GC)

Transition From Commercial

Description: This land classification category is designated to properties that would lie at the edge of existing and planned residential areas but might be burdened with site design constraints that render the properties as less desirable for single family residential development. Due to the inaccessibility of municipal sewer and water services, these areas should be developed with minimal investments in infrastructure and hardscape such as paved parking areas and would be limited to uses that are by nature limited in intensity through seasonal constraints or that generate significantly less traffic than comparison retail. Suitable uses for this category include outdoor storage or inventory, provided appropriate landscape buffers and screening techniques are used in areas adjacent to residential or planned residential areas.

Appropriate Uses: Outdoor storage, warehousing, landscaping businesses, contractor's yards.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Office Service (OS), Local Commercial (C-1)

Industrial

Description: This land use classification is planned to bolster the existing centralized industrial development pattern, fostering economic diversification, and expanding both the tax and employment base. The district is able to accommodate a wide spectrum of industrial activities, from light to heavy manufacturing, utilizing the requirements of a special land use approval for operations with external effects that are felt by surrounding areas. To successfully meet the future economic needs of the Township, a balanced and forward-looking approach to industrial development is essential.

Appropriate Uses: Offices, data processing and computer centers, computer design and development, indoor shooting and archery ranges, printing and publishing, research and design, engineering and testing facilities, vocational training schools and technical training facilities, warehousing, wireless communications facilities, automotive, heavy equipment, commercial vehicles repairs, light manufacturing , machine shops, outdoor storage, contractors' yards, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and self-storage. With special consideration, airports, airstrips and heliports, central dry cleaning plants, crematoriums, garbage and recycling transfer stations or incineration, heavy industrial manufacturing, and salvage yards.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Technology and Research (TR) and Industrial Manufacturing (IM)

Institutional

Description: This land use classification includes public institutions and other related facilities that are located adjacent to major thoroughfares. To ensure compatibility with the bordering residential properties, these uses are subject to specific regulations, such as screening guidelines. The establishment of Institutional uses requires a Traffic Management Plan, and all activities should predominantly take place within fully enclosed buildings to minimize external impacts. For large- scale institutions, stringent conditions are imposed to mitigate potential negative effects on single-family residential areas, including specific frontage and setback requirements, traffic control measures, and limitations on outside noise. These regulations collectively aim to strike a balance between accommodating Institutional uses and preserving the residential character of the community in accordance with the Township's Mater Plan.

Appropriate Uses: Small scale and large scale institutions.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: For small-scale institutions, Single-family Residential - 3 acres (R-3), Single-family Residential - 1.5 acres (R-1.5), Lake and Village Residential (LV), Multiple-Family Residential (RM), Office Service (OS), Local Commercial (C-1), Highland Station (HS). For all types of institutions, General Commercial (GC)

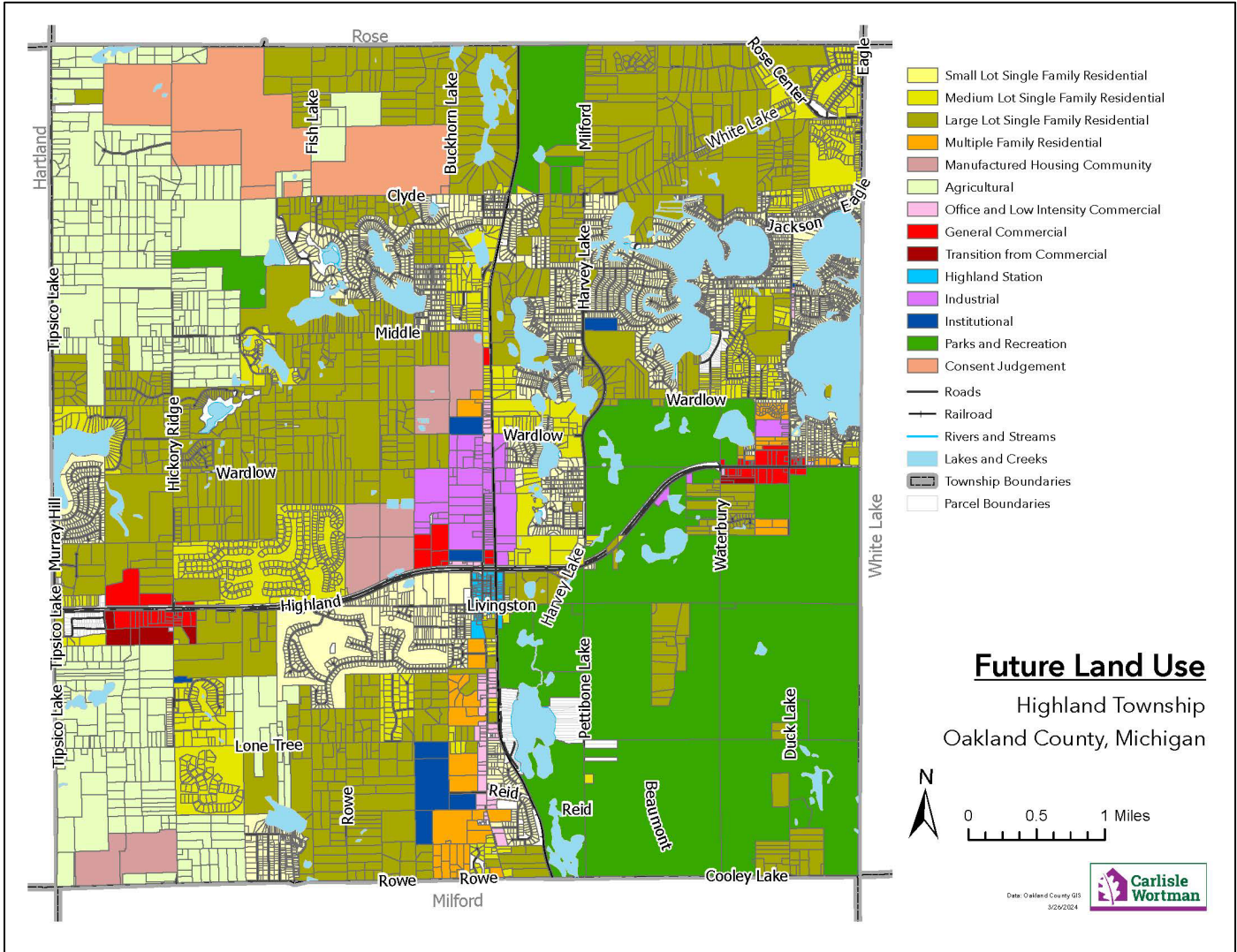
Parks and Recreation

Description: This land use category prioritizes significant open space and recreation areas, which include 17.1 percent of the township. Nearly 16 percent of this dedicated space is part of the expansive Highland Recreation Area. Notable additions, including the expansion of Highland Charter Township Community Park, underscore the township's commitment to providing ample green spaces and recreational assets for the community's enjoyment and well-being.

Appropriate Uses: Parks, recreation areas, playgrounds

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Single-family Residential - 3 acres (R-3), Single-family Residential - 1.5 acres (R-1.5), Lake and Village Residential (LV), Multiple-Family Residential (RM), Office Service (OS), Local Commercial (C-1), Highland Station (HS)

Map 2: Future Land Use Map



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BACKGROUND STUDIES

Background Studies

Previous Plans and Studies

Highland Township adopted the previous Master Plan, *Highland Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2000-2020*, on July 6, 2000. Since the adoption, as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended, the document received periodic reviews, and amendments to maps and content.

The Township conducted analyses of the M-59 (Highland Road) and Hickory Ridge Road corridor in 2001 and again in 2018, both focusing on commercial land use:

- The 2001 West Highland Micro-Area Analysis involved parcels located within one-half (1/2) mile on the north and south side of M-59, beginning at the western Township boundary at Tipsico Lake Road and running east to a point approximately one half 1/2 mile east of Hickory Ridge Road. Additionally, consideration of the parcels east of Hickory Ridge Road were included in the analysis to demonstrate development trends along M-59.
- The 2018 West Highland Micro-Area Analysis involved an area more concentrated than the 2001 study area: all parcels with frontage on the south side of M-59, within one half (1/2) mile east and west of intersection of M-59 and Hickory Ridge Road. Additionally, parcels with frontage on the east and west side of Hickory Ridge Road within one quarter (1/4) south from the intersection of M-59 and Hickory Ridge Road were included.

In 2006, the Township conducted a similar review of the area immediately north of M-59 along North Hickory Road; however, this plan -- Hickory Ridge Micro-Area Analysis -- focused on residential land uses.

Each of the previous planning efforts, among others mentioned below, were evaluated, and referenced, where appropriate, in this Master Plan update. Other studies included are:

1. Historic Highland Station Design Guidelines (2008)
2. Highland Station Master Plan (2008)
3. Charter Township of Highland Recreation Plan (2016)

Population and Housing

To compare population and housing figures from 1990 through 2020, information was collected from the U.S. Census and Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). As a means of comparison, population and housing data was also collected for nine (9) adjacent communities and Oakland County as a whole. According to U.S. Census data, the population increases of Highland Township are one of the lowest when compared to the surrounding communities, and nearly 5% lower than Oakland County. Similarly, Highland's housing unit increase was lower than those of the surrounding communities and Oakland County.

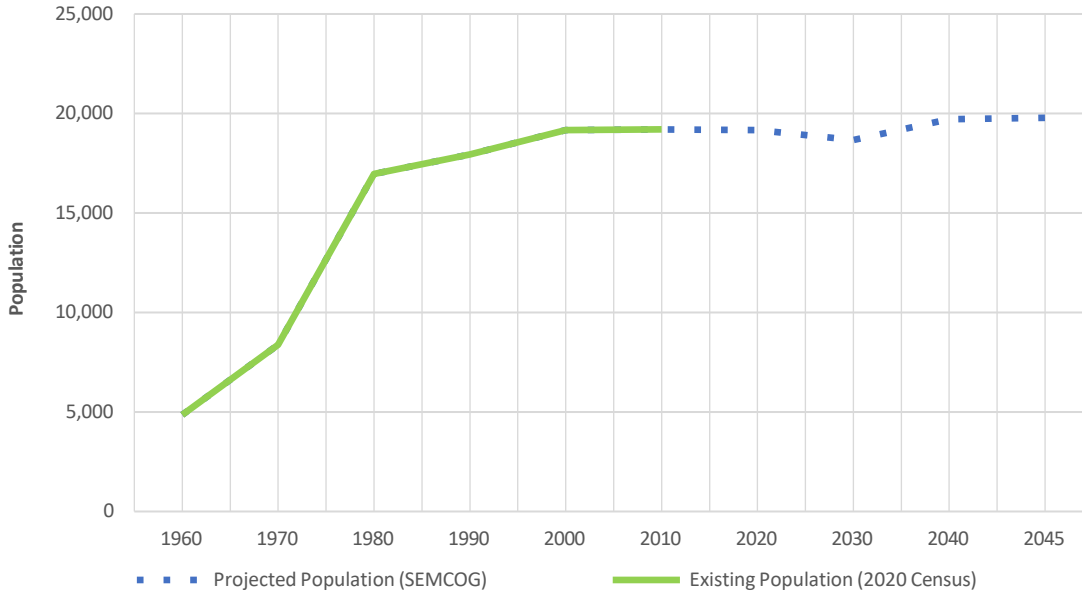
Trends

Population and housing growth in Highland Township, and surrounding communities, was moderate over the past few decades. This gradual increase reflects the continuing trend of suburbanization among Oakland County's population.

Population – **Table 1** depicts population trends between 1990 and 2020 and a forecasted population for 2030 and 2040. Figure 2 shows the same data from 1990 to a 2045 projection by SEMCOG. Per the U.S. Census Bureau, Highland Township grew 0.17% between 2000 and 2010 and decreased -0.16% between 2010 and 2020. Comparatively, White Lake Township experienced a 6.38% population increase between 2000 and 2010 and 3.1% between 2010 and 2020. Over the past two decades, the Township grew 2.86%, or 2,090 persons, whereas Oakland County saw a 6.7% increase in population, during this same period.

Forecasts for Highland's population growth predict that the population will decrease 1%, in the next decade. The small increase of Highland Township's growth from 2000-2010 and slight projected population increase by 2030 is due to the increasing number of young residents migrating away from the Township (which also results in lower births), and deaths in the Baby Boomer generation. As demonstrated in **Table 1**, the projected population in 2045 is estimated to be 19,782 persons

Figure 2. – Highland Township Population Trends and Projections, 1960-2045



Source: SEMCOG Community Profiles and U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1. – Population Trends, 1990-2020 and 2040 Forecast

COMMUNITY	US Census			Projections		Percent Change		
	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	'00 – '10	'10 – '20	'20 – '40
Highland Township	19,169	19,202	19,172	19,782	19,718	0.17%	-0.16%	0.02%
Rose Township	6,210	6,250	6,188	5,667	5,810	0.64%	-1.00%	-0.35%
Springfield Township	13,338	13,940	14,703	14,183	14,568	4.51%	5.50%	10.23%
White Lake Township	28,219	30,019	30,950	31,578	32,236	6.38%	3.10%	9.68%
Commerce Township	30,349	35,874	38,514	40,690	41,869	18.20%	7.40%	19.50%
Village of Milford	6,272	6,175	6,520	6,864	6,948	-1.55%	5.60%	3.57%
Milford Township	8,999	9,561	10,570	11,050	11,177	6.25%	10.60%	14.06%
Brighton Township	17,673	17,791	19,144	21,405	21,723	0.67%	7.60%	6.77%
Hartland Township	10,996	14,663	15,256	18,470	19,408	33.35%	4.00%	21.95%
Tyrone Township	8,459	10,020	11,986	11,400	12,384	18.45%	19.60%	28.48%
Oakland County	1,194,156	1,202,362	1,274,395	1,253,185	1,314,016	0.69%	6.00%	6.11%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SEMCOG 2045 Forecast

Housing – Per the 2020 U.S. Census, the number of housing units in Highland Township rose 4.49% from 2010 (see Table 2). This increase is less than the 8.24% increase for all of Oakland County.

Table 2. – Housing Unit Trends, 2000-2020

COMMUNITY	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	2020	% Change 2010-2020
Highland Township	7,179	7,688	7.09%	7,897	2.72%
Rose Township	2,277	2,485	9.13%	2,521	1.45%
Springfield Township	4,794	5,363	11.87%	5,645	5.26%
White Lake Township	10,616	12,214	15.05%	12,776	4.60%
Commerce Township	12,924	13,967	8.07%	15,235	9.08%
Village of Milford	2,491	2,777	11.48%	2,985	7.49%
Milford Township	5,650	3,708	-34.37%	4,057	9.41%
Brighton Township	6,177	6,765	9.52%	7,210	6.58%
Hartland Township	3,908	5,442	39.25%	5,813	6.82%
Tyrone Township	3,020	3,770	24.83%	4,450	18.04%
Oakland County	492,006	527,255	7.16%	554,403	5.15%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Per the U.S. Census, the average Highland Township household contained 2.70 persons per occupied housing unit (not per total housing units) in 2010; this number fell slightly to 2.57 in 2020 (see **Table 3**). All surrounding communities also experienced a decline in household size. Like Highland Township, their household size remained higher than Oakland County as a whole.

Table 3. – Household Size and Occupied Housing Units, 2000-2020

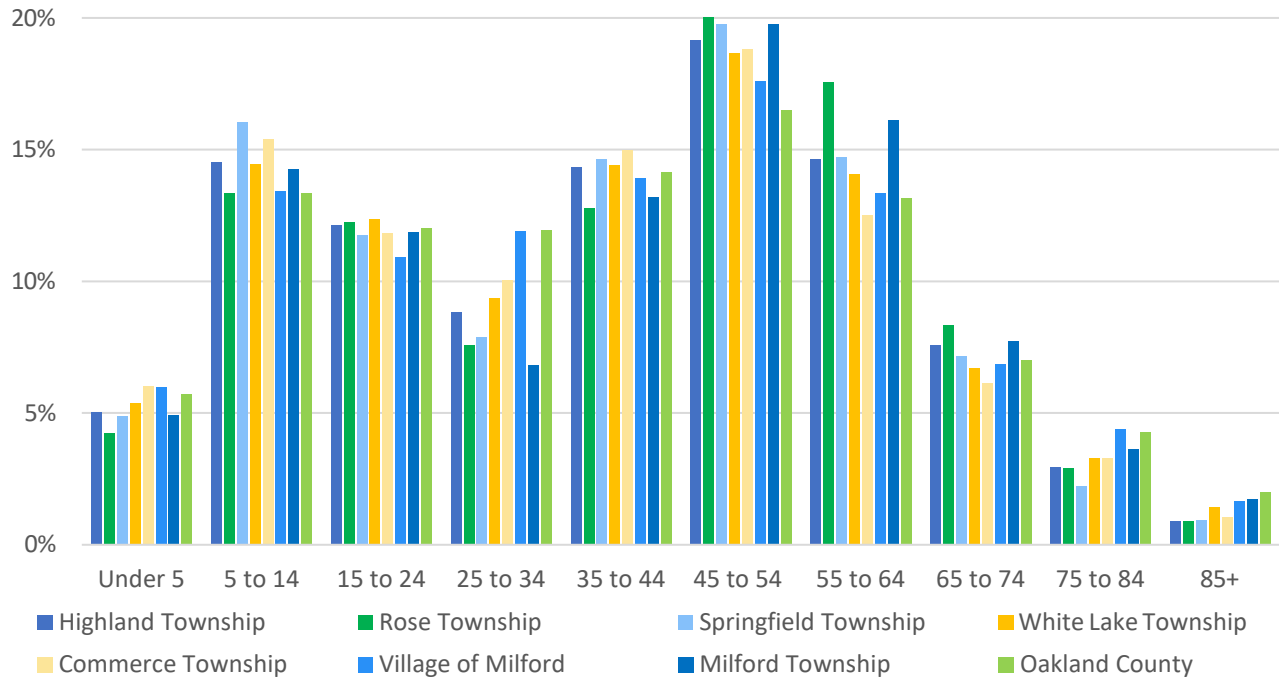
COMMUNITY	2000		2010		2020	
	Persons Per Housing Unit	Occupied Housing Units	Persons Per Housing Unit	Occupied Housing Units	Persons Per Housing Unit	Occupied Housing Units
Highland Township	2.82	6,786	2.70	7,125	2.57	7,455
Rose Township	2.90	2,144	2.75	2,272	2.63	2,342
Springfield Township	2.89	4,619	2.79	5,005	2.70	5,420
White Lake Township	2.80	10,092	2.67	11,262	2.55	12,089
Commerce Township	2.45	12,379	2.71	13,967	2.63	14,616
Village of Milford	2.58	2,427	2.39	2,589	2.26	2,834
Milford Township	1.65	5,470	2.76	3,422	2.67	3,914
Brighton Township	2.97	5,950	2.77	6,415	2.74	6,966
Hartland Township	2.98	3,696	2.84	5,154	2.77	5,496
Tyrone Township	2.94	2,882	2.84	3,528	2.84	4,206
Oakland County	2.53	471,115	2.46	483,698	2.40	524,047

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Characteristics

Population – Population characteristics play an important role in determining both the Township's development potential and future needs. **Figure 2** depicts the 2020 population of Highland Township compared to the surrounding Townships and Oakland County. Age composition is an important characteristic, as noted in **Table 4**.

Figure 2. – Percent of Population by Age, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 4. – Age Group Comparison, 2020

Age Group	Highland Township		Oakland County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	1,005	5.02%	68,056	5.43%
5 to 9	946	4.72%	69,881	5.58%
10 to 14	1,343	6.70%	78,350	6.25%
15 to 19	1,458	7.28%	77,732	6.20%
20 to 24	853	4.26%	74,902	5.98%
25 to 29	855	4.27%	83,314	6.65%
30 to 34	876	4.37%	79,697	6.36%
35 to 39	1,118	5.58%	80,204	6.40%
40 to 44	1,116	5.57%	76,695	6.12%
45 to 49	1,610	8.04%	88,385	7.05%
50 to 54	1,914	9.56%	91,845	7.33%
55 to 59	1,934	9.66%	93,850	7.49%
60 to 64	1,466	7.32%	85,222	6.80%
65 to 69	1,484	7.41%	69,057	5.51%
70 to 74	851	4.25%	52,039	4.15%
75 to 79	497	2.48%	34,643	2.76%
80 to 84	377	1.88%	22,478	1.79%
85+	328	1.64%	26,835	2.14%
TOTAL	20,031	100%	1,253,185	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The Township's age composition is described below:

Preschool: A total of 5.02% of the Township's population is below the age of five (5) years; this is a lower percentage than Oakland County (5.4%) as a whole.

School-Age Children: In 2020, nearly 19% of Highland Township's population was between five (5) and nineteen (19) years old, representing the second-largest cohort. This number is expected to increase within the near future in response to the aging of the children of "baby boom" parents.

Family-Forming: Persons between the ages of 20 and 34 constitute the group known as the family-formers. Family-formers represent 12.9% of the population (2,584 persons) in Highland Township. This group is expected to fuel the increase in preschoolers in the upcoming years. This is also the group that can be expected to spend the largest amount of money in the community for household items, food, clothing, etc.

Mature Families: The second largest proportion of the Township's population is between the ages of 35 and 54. This group will tend to have children within the Highland Township educational system and will be concerned with the quality of education available. Currently, this group represents approximately 28.75% of the population.

Mature Adults: Today, the population of Oakland County (and the nation as a whole) is typically characterized as aging, but Highland Township has comparatively fewer people aged 55 or older. The group between 55 and 69 years of age is commonly referred to as the "empty nesters;" they are parents whose children have left the household. Approximately 31.71% of the Township's population is within the 55 to 69-year-old age cohort and is the largest proportion in Highland Township. Combined with the aging of the mature families group, the mature adults group has become an overwhelming majority. To ensure that this population is enticed to remain within the community, the placement of dependent housing near recreation and shopping areas is encouraged.

Seniors: 10.25% (2,053 persons) of Township residents are over 69 years old. This is just below the County proportion of 10.84%. However, this percentage can be expected to increase.

Housing – Housing characteristics indicate that growth in the Township's housing stock has exceeded general population growth (see **Table 5**). While population decreased by

0.16% from 2010 to 2020, the number of housing units increased by 2.72%. Housing unit characteristics are described below.

Age of Housing: As of 2020, approximately 43.1% of residential structures within the Township were less than 30 years old, whereas the remaining 56.9% were more than 30 years old.

Owner-Occupancy: The Highland Township has a high percentage of owner-occupied housing. Per Census data, 84.73% of the Township's housing stock was owner-occupied and 7.8% renter-occupied in 2020. This compares with Oakland County at 66.4% owner-occupancy and 27.1% renter-occupancy.

Table 5. – Characteristics of Occupied Housing Units

2020		Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
COMMUNITY	Total Occupied Housing Units	Total	Percent of Total	Total	Percent of Total
Highland Township	8,141	6,898	84.73%	635	7.80%
Rose Township	2,618	2,340	89.38%	110	4.20%
Springfield Township	5,554	4,766	85.81%	534	9.61%
White Lake Township	12,349	10,386	84.10%	1,283	10.39%
Commerce Township	14,929	12,842	86.02%	1,407	9.42%
Village of Milford	2,853	1,946	68.21%	727	25.48%
Milford Township	4,087	3,338	81.67%	524	12.82%
Brighton Township	6,874	6,394	93.02%	311	4.52%
Hartland Township	5,542	4,414	79.65%	912	16.46%
Tyrone Township	3,964	3,252	82.04%	485	12.24%
Oakland Co.	539,742	358,384	66.40%	146,201	27.09%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Economic Characteristics

This analysis of the local economy includes an evaluation of the existing tax base and employment sectors. This data should be used to develop a long- range plan for commercial and industrial use of land compatible with other land uses.

Township economic policies should also foster and encourage sound employment opportunities for the local population, improve the Township tax base, and coordinate the overall physical development of the Township.

Tax Base

Per the 2021 Oakland County Equalization Report, the Township’s tax base is predominately residential, with 91.24% of the 2021 real property valuations stemming from residential properties. This represents a 0.38% increase from 2015, where 90.86% of real property valuations came from residential properties and a 4.85% increase from 2010, where 86.39% of real property valuations came from residential properties. The continuing increase in the strength of residential property valuations is significant considering the low percentages reported during the housing market collapse between 2008 and 2010.

Since 2010, real property valuations stemming from commercial and industrial properties experienced a decrease; however, in 2015 both the commercial and industrial valuation slowed significantly. In 2021, the Township experienced a 53.68% increase in total property taxes since 2010. SEV trends are denoted in **Table 7**, below.

Table 7. - Comparative Real SEV for Highland Township, 2010-2021

Classification	Total Real SEV			% Of Total		
	2010	2015	2021	2010	2015	2021
Agriculture	\$3,059,770	\$3,550,690	\$4,524,380	0.42%	0.45%	0.41%
Commercial	\$76,162,700	\$58,955,040	\$78,884,500	10.55%	7.55%	7.11%
Industrial	\$19,088,580	\$8,836,380	\$13,837,120	2.64%	1.13%	1.25%
Residential	\$623,865,280	\$709,220,910	\$1,012,587,930	86.39%	90.86%	91.24%
TOTAL	\$722,176,330	\$780,563,020	\$1,109,833,930	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Oakland County Equalization Reports, 2010-2021

Table 8, below, reveals additional SEV related data. The table depicts a comparison of SEV data to neighboring communities.

Table 8. – Real SEV Comparison, 2021

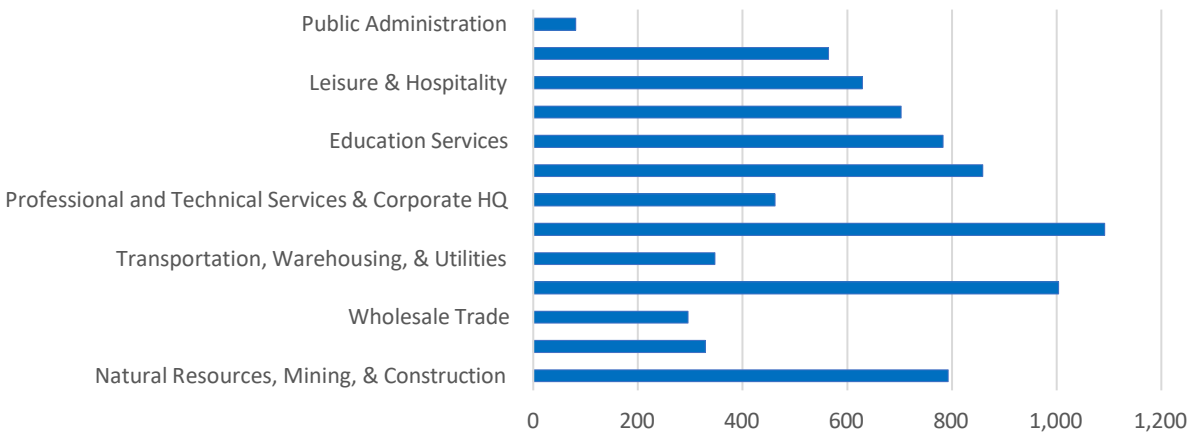
Community	Total Real SEV	% OF COUNTY
Highland Township	\$1,109,833,930	1.37%
Rose Township	\$367,510,620	0.45%
Springfield Township	\$863,939,740	1.07%
White Lake Township	\$1,696,539,220	2.09%
Commerce Township	\$2,906,861,410	3.59%
Village of Milford	\$402,309,610	0.50%
Milford Township	\$1,216,424,940	1.50%
Oakland County	\$81,062,991,752	-

Source: Oakland County Equalization Report, 2021

Employment

The labor force in Highland Township is a mix of “blue collar” and “white collar” workers, with a majority in information and financial activities, retail trade, or administrative, support, & waste services. Although the Township is predominantly a bedroom community whose residents work elsewhere, it is not without a significant local employment base. **Figure 3**, below, shows Employment by Industry Sector in Highland Township.

Figure 3. – Employment by Industry Sector, 2020



Source: SEMCOG Community Profile

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources

The natural features discussed below are illustrated on the Natural Features Map (**Map 3**).

Geology, Groundwater, Topography and Soils

The Highland area is characterized by glacial geology typical of much of southeastern Michigan, with glacial outwash sand and gravel occurring along glacial end moraines. Given the permeability of these geological circumstances, the numerous waterbodies, and the wetland areas, much of the Township provides valuable groundwater recharge functions.

The glacial geology of the area has resulted in topography that ranges from nearly level to gently rolling. The rolling topography of the Township allows for beautiful backdrops and scenic vistas. Areas with significant topographical relief are often prone to destabilization and soil erosion when developed.

Lakes

Highland Township has nearly two dozen lakes within its boundaries. These lakes have attracted residents to the area for both desirable residential settings and water-based active and passive recreation. The lakes cover approximately 1,682 acres, or 7.2 percent of the Township's land area. The two largest lakes, in the northeast quadrant of the township, are White Lake and Duck Lake. A large percentage of the waterfront property is platted and developed with relatively dense single-family developments (2 units per acre or greater).

Wetlands

Wetlands are lowland areas characterized by constant or intermittent inundation, hydric soils, and specific vegetation types. They are often found in association with other water features, such as lakes, ponds, or streams, but can also exist on their own in depressions. Wetlands serve a wide variety of purposes, such as wildlife habitat, flood control, water filtration, groundwater recharge, and scenic and recreation uses. These natural features are scattered throughout the Township; however, the largest wetland area is throughout the Highland State Recreation Area.

Woodlands and Tree Rows

Woodlands and densely vegetated areas provide wildlife habitat areas, recreational value, and substantial contributions to the scenery of the Township. Significant woodlands exist in the southernmost portions of the Township, as well as the east-central and north-central areas.

Much of this wooded area exists in combination with wetlands and remains intact today because they are of little agricultural or extractive use. Like the wetland areas, these natural features area concentrated in the southeast corner of the township in Highland State Recreation Area.

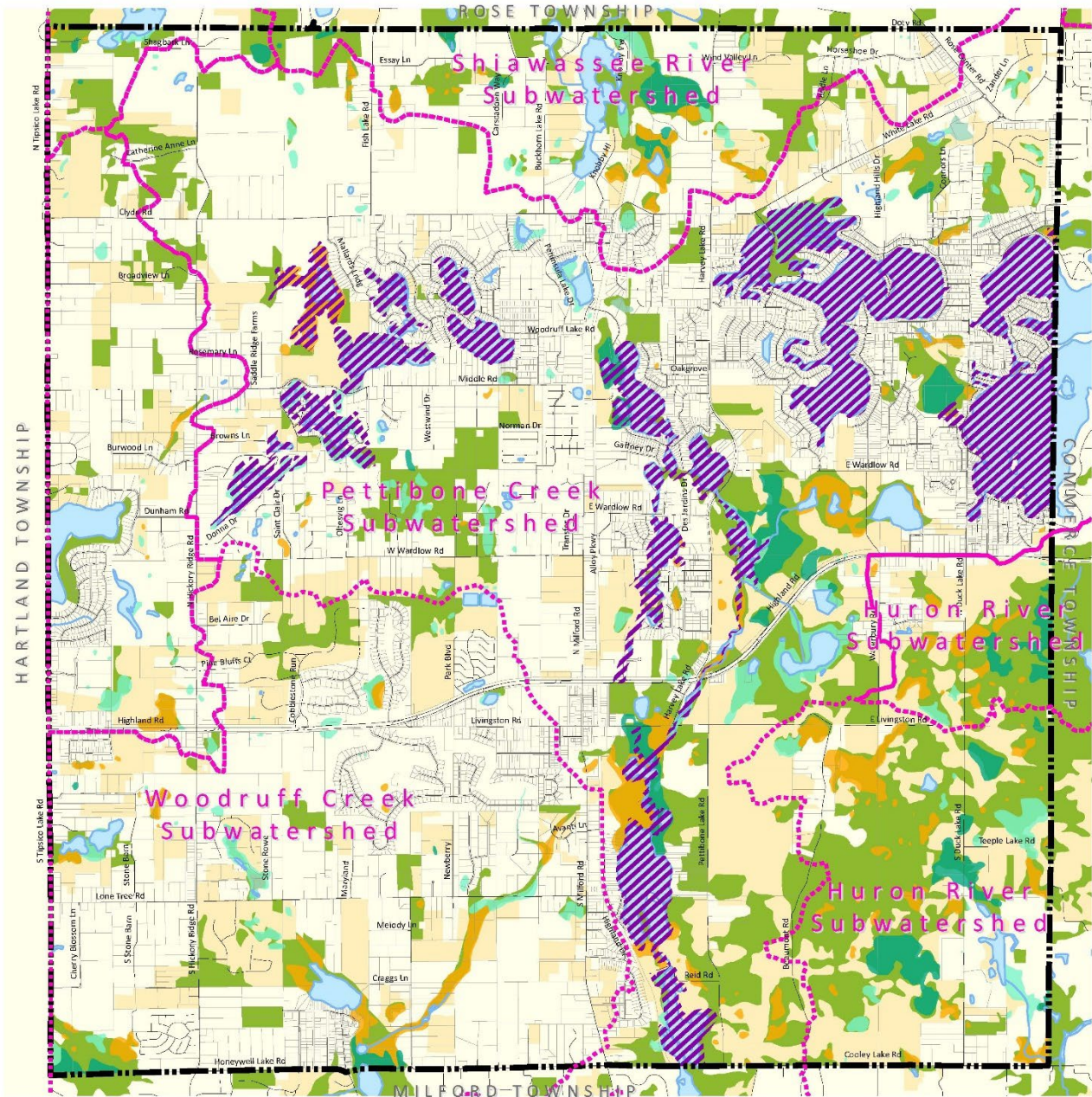
Michigan Natural Features Inventory

The Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) maintains a continuously updated information base, the only comprehensive, single source of data on Michigan's endangered, threatened, or special concern plant and animal species, natural communities, and other natural features. MNFI has responsibility for inventorying and tracking the State's rarest species and exceptional examples of the whole array of natural communities. MNFI also provides information to resource managers for many types of permit applications regarding these elements of diversity.

In 2004, the Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services Department worked with MNFI to identify potential conservation/natural areas within the County. The conclusions of the study were the identification of high, medium, and low-ranking areas within each municipality. These rankings are based upon a set of criteria that include size, core area, stream corridor, landscape connectivity, restorability, and element occurrence.

Based upon the study, Highland Township has two (2) large areas identified as priority one conservation areas (highest ranking), with numerous smaller areas ranked as priority two and priority three. The priority one ranked areas are located mostly in the southeast quadrant of the Township, comprising of the Highland State Recreational Area. These and other natural resources and their linkages should be considered for preservation through land use controls and conservation development alternatives.

Map 3: Natural Features Map



- Grassland
- Forested Upland
- Scrub-Shrub
- Forested Wetland
- Emergent Wetland
- Aquatic Bed

- Open Water
- Rivers & Streams
- Floodplain
- Watershed Subbasins

NATURAL FEATURES

Highland Township
Oakland County



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Source: State of Michigan

Carlisle | Wortman Associates
May 2022

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TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Transportation and Traffic

As recognized in the West Highland and Hickory Ridge Micro-Area analyses, the relationship between land use and transportation is a critical element of land use planning. Roads provide the access necessary to land uses and are an important determinant of community character. Residential streets need to provide safety and interest, and slow down through-traffic movements. Major thoroughfares, however, must be able to transport vehicles through an area with as little interference as possible.

From a planning perspective, this Master Plan must take into consideration the impacts that the transportation network has on land uses and development patterns, and vice versa. Therefore, future planning must include:

- Improving the connectivity of the road network;
- Improving safety for all modes of travel, including non-motorized transportation;
- Providing mobility and access through transportation choices; and
- Incorporating environmental considerations into decision making.

While road jurisdiction within the Township falls under the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC), the transportation element of this Master Plan is still useful in a variety of ways. This section promotes a better understanding of the strong relationship between transportation and land development patterns.

Roadway Classification and Responsibility

Roadway classifications are used to group streets and highways into classes, or systems, according to the character of traffic service they are intended to provide. Administrative jurisdictions identify roads in terms of governmental responsibility for construction and maintenance. Roadway classifications are also used to determine eligibility for state funding and federal aid. The RCOC utilizes a distinct classification system, while MDOT utilizes the federally used National Functional Classification (NFC) system.

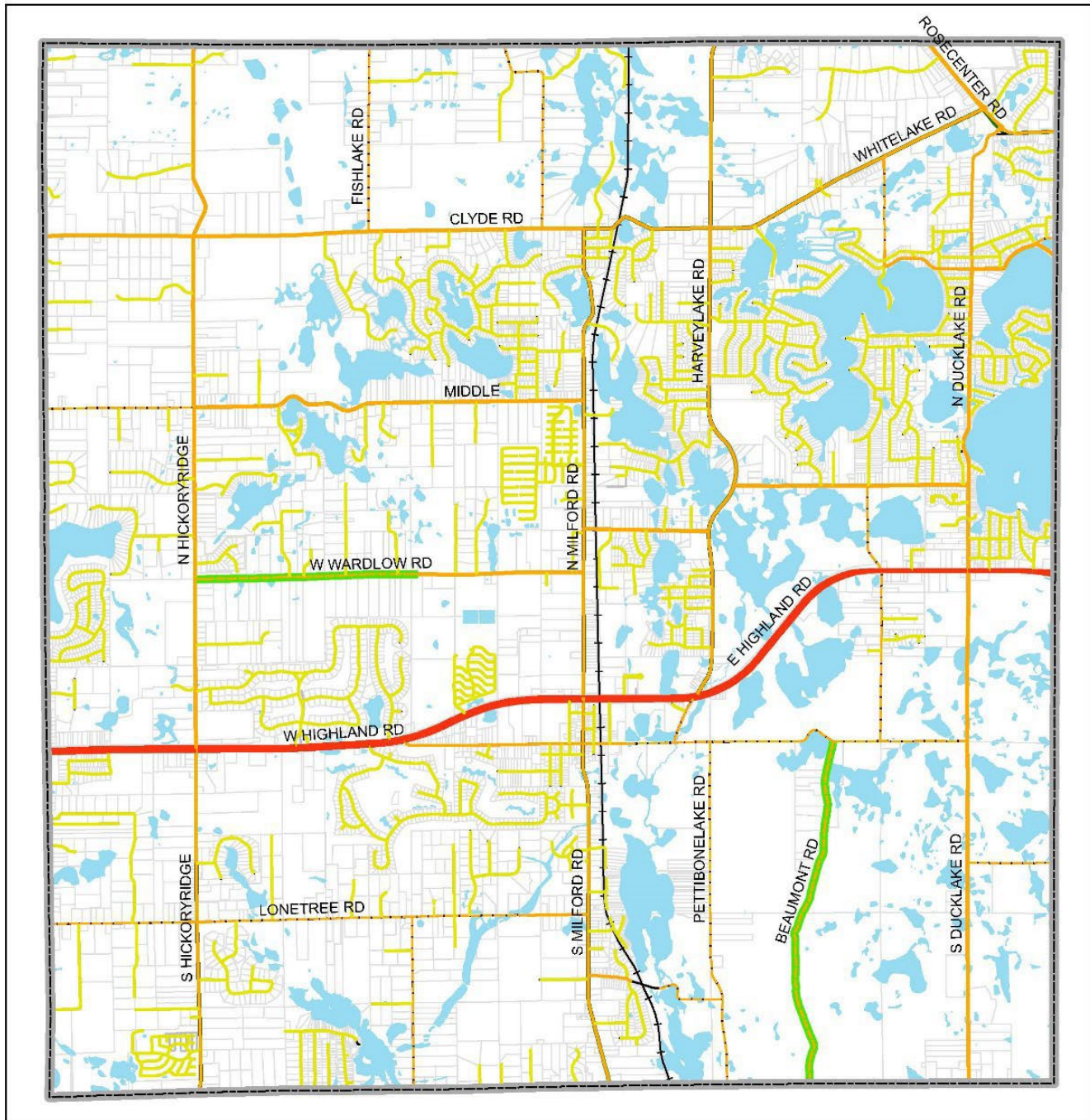
County Classifications

Act 51 of the Public Acts of 1951, as amended, tasks county road commissions with classifying county primary and local roads. The classifications developed by the county road commissions are subject to Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) approval. Roads designated as primary roads must be of the greatest importance, while local roads provide for intra-community travel. The determination of a primary or local road is based on traffic volumes, primary generators of traffic served, and other factors. **Map 4** illustrates the county classification system.

Currently, two (2) roads within the Township are classified as “natural beauty” roads; 1.20 miles Wardlow, designated July 16, 1992, and 2.0 miles of Beaumont Road, designated

July 24, 2003. These roads are designated as part of the Natural Beauty Roads Act, Act 150 of 1970. The goal of the Natural Beauty Roads Act is to identify and preserve designated roads in a natural, essentially undisturbed condition. Widening, mowing, spraying, and other maintenance or improvement activities may be restricted on these roads.

MAP 4 – COUNTY ROAD CLASSIFICATION MAP

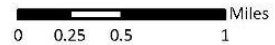


Legend

- State, Paved
- Major, Paved
- - - Major, Gravel
- Minor, Paved
- - - Minor, Gravel
- Natural Beauty Road

County Road Classification

Highland Township
Oakland County



Carlisle/Wortman Associates
May, 2022
Source: Oakland County GIS



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National Functional Classification

Map 5 on the following page depicts the hierarchy of transportation routes within the Township based upon the National Functional Classification (NFC) system. NFC is a transportation planning tool which has been used by federal, state, and local transportation agencies since the late 1960's. The NFC designation determines whether a road is eligible for federal funds, either as part of the National Highway System, or through the Surface Transportation Program. NFC classifications include:

Principal Arterials: Principal arterials are at the top of the NFC hierarchy. The primary function of these roadways is to carry relatively long distance, through-travel movements. Examples include interstates and other freeways, as well as state routes between larger cities.

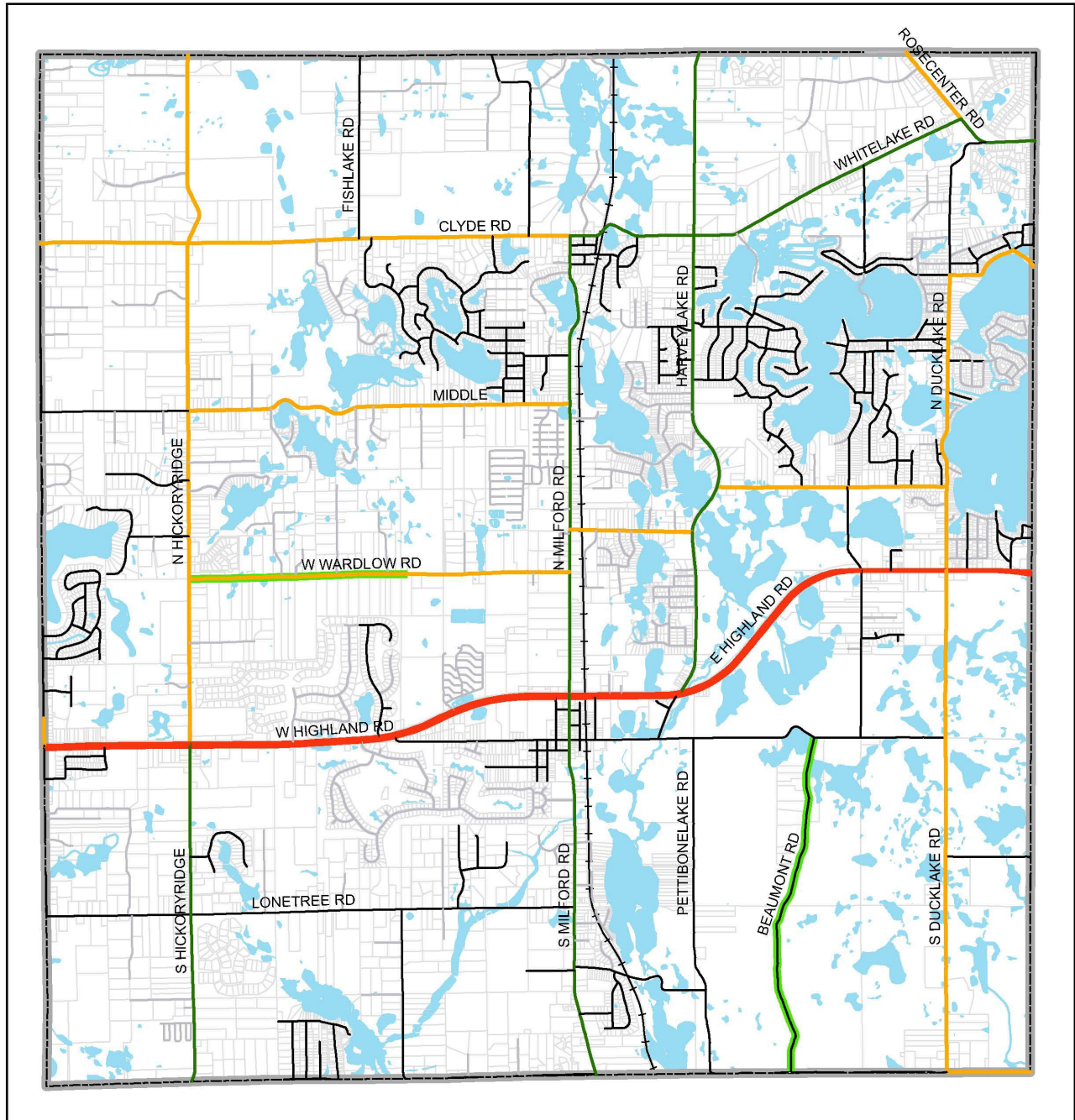
Minor Arterials: Minor arterials tend to accommodate slightly shorter trips than principal arterials. There is some emphasis on land access common to providing for intra-community travel via local bus routes, but generally do not penetrate neighborhoods.

Major Collectors: Major collectors provide access to and mobility within residential, commercial, and industrial areas and connect local roads to arterials. Major collectors generally carry more traffic than minor collectors.

Minor Collectors: Minor collectors also provide access to and between varying land uses, but generally have less traffic than major collectors.

Local Roads: Local roads provide access to individual properties within the Township and typically have moderate to low speeds. Most roads within the Township are classified as local roads.

MAP 5 – NATIONAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP

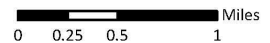


Legend

- State Route
- Major Collector
- Minor Arterial
- Local Road
- Non-Certified
- Natural Beauty Road

National Functional Classification (NFC)

Highland Township
 Oakland County



Carlisle/Wortman Associates
 May, 2022

Source: Oakland County GIS/MDOT



Traffic and Crash Counts

Traffic Counts

SEMCOG periodically conducts traffic studies to monitor and evaluate traffic volumes throughout Southeast Michigan. Counts taken within Highland Township are provided in [Table 9](#). Traffic counts are measured in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), which is the total volume of vehicle traffic of a road for a year divided by 365 days. Table 9 lists the Township's most heavily traveled roads in 2018.

Table 9. – Traffic Counts – 2020

Road	Direction	Limits/Location	AADT
Highland (M-59)	Two-Way	Duck Lake to Ormond	29,900
Highland (M-59)	Eastbound	Tipsico Lake to Hickory Ridge	15,000*
Milford	Two-Way	Reid to Lone Tree	14,250
Milford	Two-Way	Rowe to Reid	14,140
Highland (M-59)	Westbound	Tipsico Lake to Hickory Ridge	14,090*
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Highland to Wardlow	13,530
Milford	Two-Way	Livingston to Highland	12,810
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Lone Tree to Highland	12,700
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Honeywell Lake to Lone Tree	12,620
Milford	Two-Way	Highland to Wardlow	10,910
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Livingston to Highland	10,340
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Cooley Lake to Teeple Lake	10,160
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Teeple Lake to Livingston	10,080
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Highland to Wardlow	7,900
Milford	Northbound	South of Lone Tree	7,410
Milford	Southbound	North of Lone Tree	7,390
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Wardlow to Middle	7,020
Wardlow	Two-Way	Waterbury to Duck Lake	6,660
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Wardlow to Jackson Blvd	6,440
Hickory Ridge	Southbound	North of Lone Tree	6,430
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Middle to Clyde	6,190
Milford	Two-Way	Wardlow to Middle	6,190
Hickory Ridge	Northbound	South of Lone Tree	6,180
Wardlow	Two-Way	Harvey Lake to Waterbury	6,040
Harvey Lake	Two-Way	Wardlow to White Lake	5,980
Milford	Northbound	South of Wardlow E Leg	5,620
Duck Lake - North Leg	Southbound	North of Cooley Lk	5,140
Milford	Southbound	North of Wardlow E Leg	4,420

Source: SEMCOG

As demonstrated in the table, most traffic in the Township moves in a north-south direction and increases volume nearer to the M-59 corridor. In comparison to the volume of north-south traffic, there is less east-west travel in the Township, mainly on Clyde and Wardlow.

High-Crash Intersections

Table 10 indicates the intersections with the greatest number of recorded crashes within the Township. The top crash locations all involve Highland Road.

Table 10. - High-Crash Intersections, 2016-2020

Local Rank	County Rank	Intersection	Annual Average 2016 - 2020
1	89	Highland Rd E @ Duck Lake Rd N	24.6
2	273	Highland Rd W @ Hickory Ridge Rd	14.2
3	338	Highland Rd E @ Milford Rd N	12.6
4	368	Highland Rd E @ Harvey Lake Rd	12
5	382	Highland Rd E @ Milford Rd N	11.8
6	414	Highland Rd W @ Hickory Ridge Rd N	11.2

Source: SEMCOG

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COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community Facilities and Services

Library

The Highland Public Library, administered by a six (6) member Board elected by Township residents, is located at 444 Beach Farm Circle. In addition to the vast selection of available books, films, videos, and computer programs offered onsite, the Highland Public Library participates in the statewide MLibraryCard program. This program provides a wider selection of available material through 99 reciprocal member libraries of The Library Network, and other MLibraryCard libraries. Community meetings rooms and study rooms are also available for residents of Highland Township.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

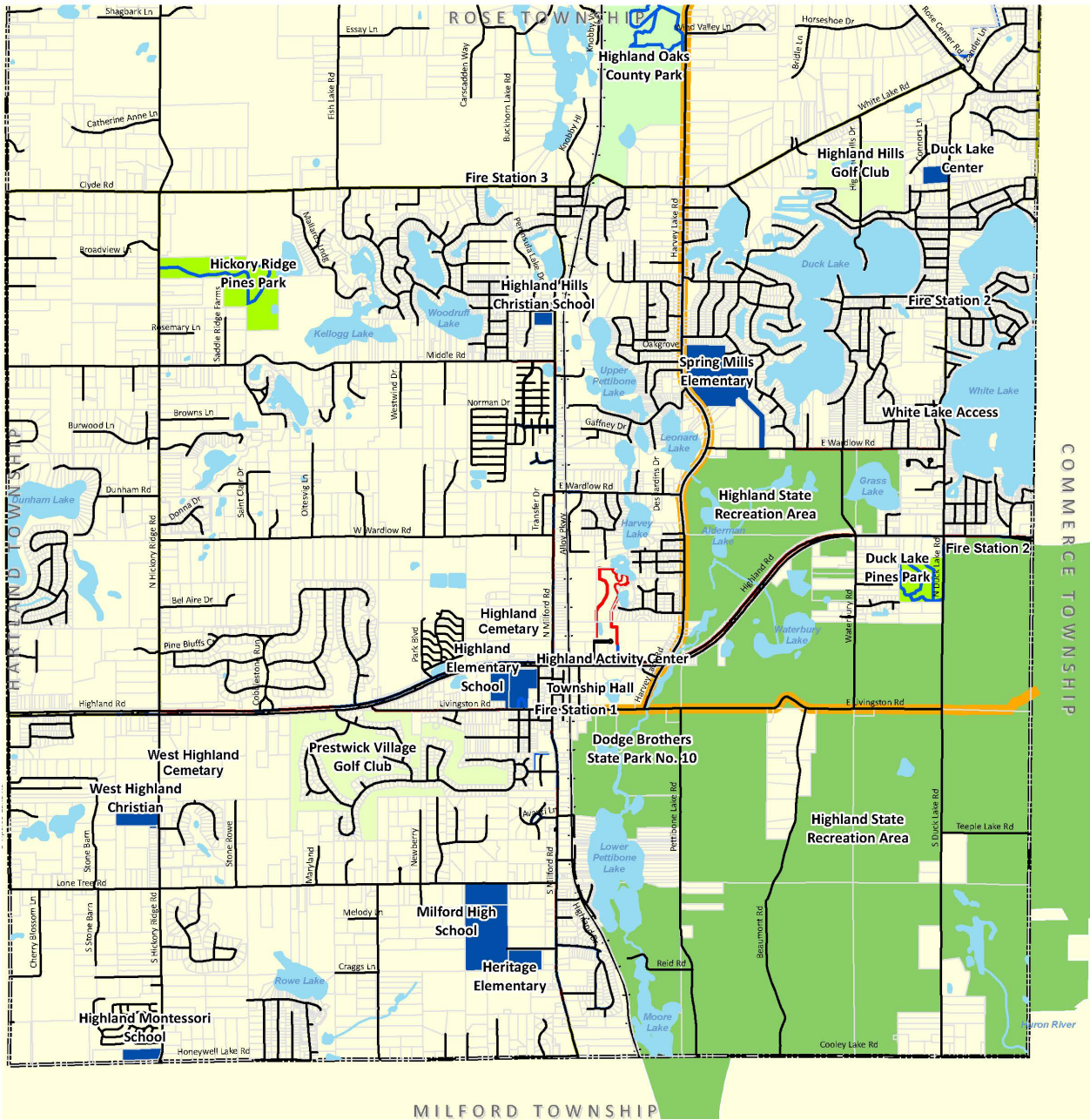
Existing parks and recreational facilities for Highland Township are inventoried on the following pages in **Table 12**; and **Map 6**, Community Facilities.

Table 12. - Recreation Facilities Inventory

Facility	Acres	Amenities/Attractions
Hickory Ridge Pines Park	105	Sports fields, picnic shelters, concession building, fitness and paved trails, and access to Murry Lake.
Duck Lane Pines Park	40	Sports fields and courts, picnic shelters, in-line, and ice skating, play structures, and concession building.
Veterans Park	1	Soldiers' monument, U.S., State, and MIA/POW flags, sidewalk, historical marker, kiosk, and movable stage.
Highland Station Park	< 1	Historic railroad station, sidewalk, and landscaping.
Downey Lake Pines Park	36	Wetlands, natural areas and trails, and lake frontage.

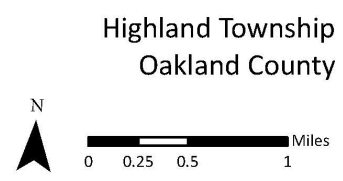
Source: Charter Township of Highland Recreation Master Plan, 2016 -2020

MAP 6 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES MAP



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Township Park
- County Park
- State Park
- Privately-owned Park
- Educational Facility
- Natural Beauty Road
- Oakland County Pathway Concept Under Consideration
- Township Non-Motorized Pathways Existing
- Planned (1-5 years Priority)
- Planned (5-10 years Priority)



Carlisle/Wortman Associates
March 02, 2020
Source: Oakland County GIS

The Charter Township of Highland Recreation Master Plan, adopted in 2021, guides future parks and recreation planning and management efforts within the Township. The Recreation Master Plan is the official document used by the Township Parks and Recreation Committee and the Township Board to guide decisions regarding the community's recreation facilities and programs. The Plan considers existing facilities within the Village and Township and documents the demand for additional improved park facilities and recreation program. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan has goals and objectives as well as a specific action and implementation plan.



Other Recreational Facilities

In addition to the municipal facilities noted above, there are numerous private recreational facilities within the Township. These private facilities include golf courses, a garden club, camps, and equestrian facilities. There are also recreational amenities located within the public-school campuses and within the residential developments of the community. These facilities comprise a large portion of the Township and complement the public facilities provided by the Township. The uses and opportunities available within these facilities will be evaluated as part of the land use plan for the Township.

Regional Trails

Highland Township continues to coordinate with Oakland County on county-wide projects. Highland Township has accepted Oakland County's Pathway Concept from the Oakland County Trails Master Plan. The County pathway concept highlights Harvey Lake Road, from E. Livingston Road north to Highland Oaks County Park and E. Livingston Road from Milford Road east to the White Lake Township line, Highland Township has included both concepts into Highland's Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan. The E. Livingston Road pathway, identified as a second phase project by the MNDR that would also connect to the newly proposed MDNR north-south, regional multi-use trail, in White Lake Township. Highland Township is also in line with the

Regional Trails and Greenways Vision produced by the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan's Green Ways Initiative.

Water System

Aside from private wells, the Highland Township water system is supplied through eight (8) wells drawing groundwater from glacial material. These eight (8) wells, one 6-inch, one 8-inch, five 12-inch and one 16-inch, provide the pumping capacity for this well water supply system. White Eagle subdivision is provided this natural resource by its own two (2) well water supplied system.

To protect this system, Highland Township follows a Wellhead Protection (WHP) program by planning and managing the system to prevent contamination of public water supply wells by controlling or managing all potential sources of contamination within a designated area surrounding the well or well field. The dark green on **Map 7** is represent wellhead protection areas.

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EXISTING LAND USE

Existing Land Use

A basic element in master planning is the consideration of existing land use types and patterns. Land use data from the Township, County, and SEMCOG were inventoried. The result of this inventory is presented on **Map 8** while the classifications used in compiling the inventory data is provided below.

Classifications

The Existing Land Use Map (**Map 8**) inventories the following land use categories.

Agriculture – This classification applies to all land use areas used for crops and permanent pastureland. In addition, this group includes such agricultural activities as horse breeding farms, green houses, and similar types of specialized activities.

Single-Family Residential – This classification includes areas containing single-family dwelling units and accessory structures.

Multiple-Family Residential – This category includes two-family (duplex), apartments and multi-plex type of units where two or more separate residential units occupy a single building on a lot.

Mobile Homes – This category identifies planned mobile home parks and any concentration of two or more individual mobile home units, including related accessory buildings.

Commercial/Office – This category includes areas where professional and business offices are found. Retail sales and service businesses are also placed in the commercial/office category.

Industrial – This category includes uses with or without buildings where materials are processed, fabricated, assembled, or manufactured, or where equipment, materials, or wastes are stored out-of-doors.

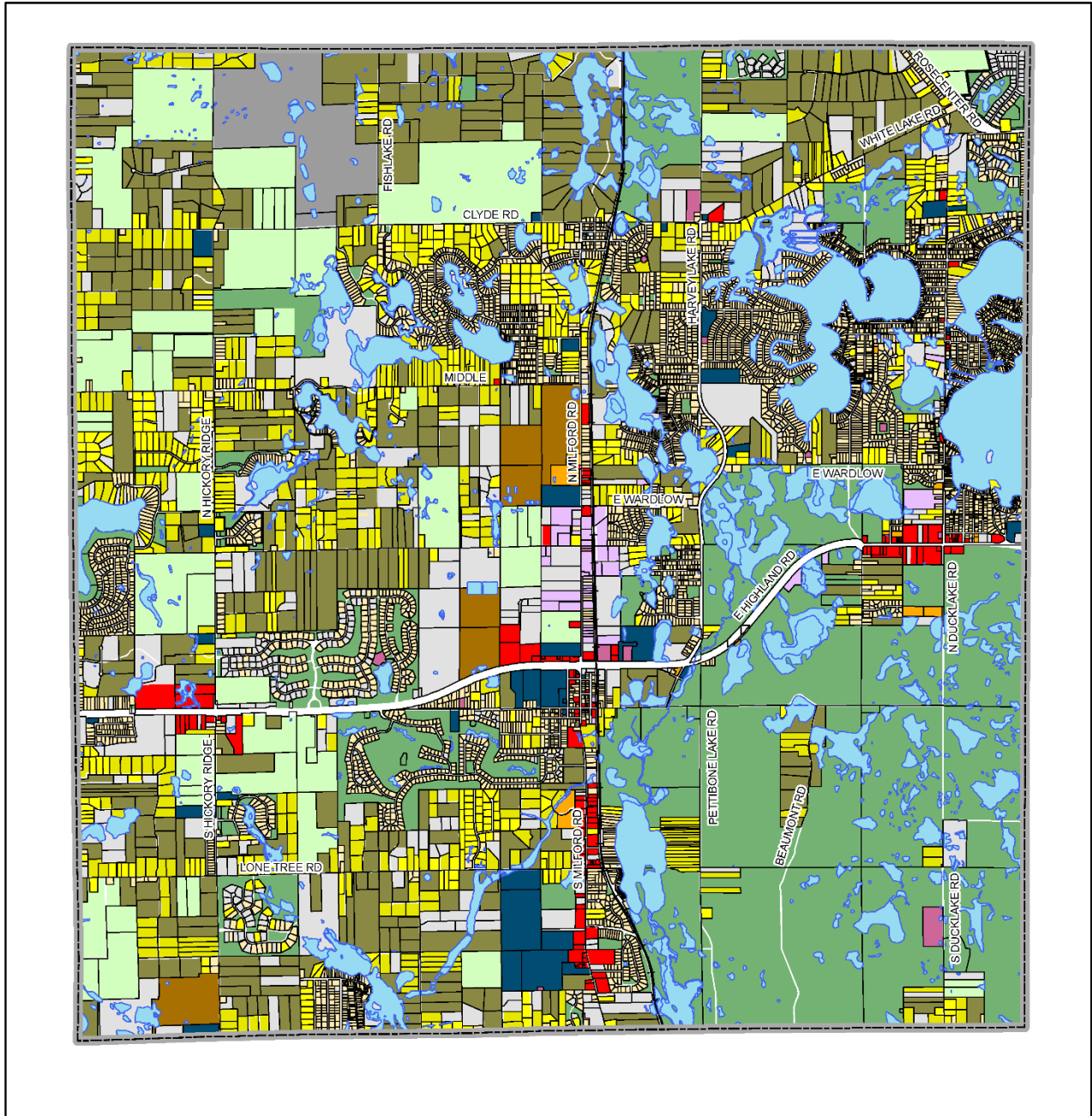
Governmental/Institutional – This category includes areas and facilities such as public schools, libraries, and government buildings are considered public uses. Institutional uses include churches, private schools, hospitals, private

cemeteries, utility sites and similar institutional uses, and others.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space – This category includes lands for which the primary purpose is outdoor recreation or natural area conservation. This classification is split into public and private recreation, and includes public or private-owned parks, golf courses, or areas of which the primary purpose is preservation and conservation of undeveloped natural areas.

Transportation, Utility and Communications – This category includes improved land containing above or below-ground utility or communication facilities, including transmission lines, booster and transformer stations, county drains, detention/retention basins, and railroad yards.

MAP 8 – EXISTING LAND USE MAP



Land Use		Single Family Residential		<p>Existing Land Use Highland Township Oakland County</p> <p>N</p> <p>0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles</p> <p>Source: Oakland County GIS</p>
Recreation/Conservation	Mobile Home Park	Less than 1.5 Acres		
Agricultural	Public/Institutional	1.5 - 2.99 Acres		
Commercial/Office	Extractive	3 - 4.99 Acres		
Industrial	Utility/Communication	5+ Acres		
Multiple Family	Vacant			

Carlisle | Wortman Associates

May 2022

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Patterns

The acreage contained within each of the existing land use classifications is noted in **Table 13** along with the resulting changes since 2001. Oakland County completes a county-wide existing land use inventory every year based on several factors, including recorded deeds, plats, tax maps, surveys, assessing records, and other public records. The table generalizes the types of land uses found within the Township, along with the approximate break down by use category.

Table 13. - Generalized Land Uses, 2001, 2010, 2015, and 2021

Use Category	Acreage				Percent Change
	2001	2010	2015	2021	2010-2021
Agricultural	2,219	2,030	2,089	2,045	0.73%
Single Family	8,708	8,850	8,762	9,194	3.74%
Mobile Home/Multiple Family	423	425	362	421	-8.33%
Commercial/Office	229	270	272	313	13.74%
Public/Institutional	381	386	384	387	0.26%
Industrial	144	133	136	145	
Recreation/Conservation	4,632	5,218	5,216	5,216	-0.04%
Water	1,679	1,685	1,685	1,687	0.12%
Transportation, Utility, and Communication	53	52	52	53	1.89%
Vacant	3,240	2,234	2,309	1,803	-23.90%
Extractive	518	397	396	396	-0.25%
Right-of-Way	928	1,473	1,488	1,490	-1.52%
Total	23,152	23,153	23,154	23,156	-

Source: 2001-2021 Oakland County Land Use

Trends

The following land use trends have been observed since 2001. These trends have been adapted from those made within the previously adopted 2012 Master Plan:

Vacant – 44% of the vacant land in 2001 has been consumed, primarily for recreation/conservation and road right-of-way uses. The remaining vacant land is scattered throughout the Township; however, the majority can be found west of Milford Road.

Agriculture – In 2001, agricultural land accounted for 9.6% of all land in the Township. By 2021, farmed agricultural land has reduced to just under 9%. The remaining farmland, predominantly within the northwest quadrant, has the potential to remain undisturbed to preserve the rural character of the township.

Single Family – While the numbers show a positive and negative fluctuation, single family residential has remained consistent by occupying approximately 39.7% of the land use between 2001 and 2021. During this timeframe, single family residential increased by 5.5%, or 486 acres.

Mobile Home/Multiple Family – In 2015, mobile home use occupied 1.3% of the Township, this statistic remained relatively consistent and has increased to 1.6% in 2021. However, a significant reduction of 16.8% occurred between 2010 and 2015. The existing mobile homes in use are sited near the center of the Township. In addition, multiple-family land area calculations experienced a 15.8% increase between 2001 and 2005 and remained static until a 7.6% decrease between 2015 and 2021. Despite this growth, in 2018 land dedicated to multiple family uses accounted for 0.2% of total Township land area.

Commercial/Office – These areas consist of a mix of general, medical, and business service offices, restaurants, food and drug stores, personal services, and a variety of general retail stores. The majority of commercial and office uses are scattered along the M-59 corridor with the greatest concentration located south on S. Milford Road. Between 2001 and 2005, the Township experienced a 15% increase in commercial/office land area coverage then leveled off until an additional 15% increase between 2015 and 2021. Since 2001, commercial and office land use has increased 36%.

Industrial – As illustrated in **Table 13**, the Township’s industrial land area increased by 6.6% between 2015 and 2021. The existing industrial uses are located on N. Milford Road, near the M-59 corridor. Despite the increase, industrial land use occupies only 0.6% of total Township land area.

Public/Institutional – This land use has remained constant and relatively unchanged since 2001. Comprising of schools, religious institutions, and civic facilities, 1.67% of total Township land area is dedicated to public and institutional use. Since 2001, a 1.67% increase in public/institutional land has occurred.

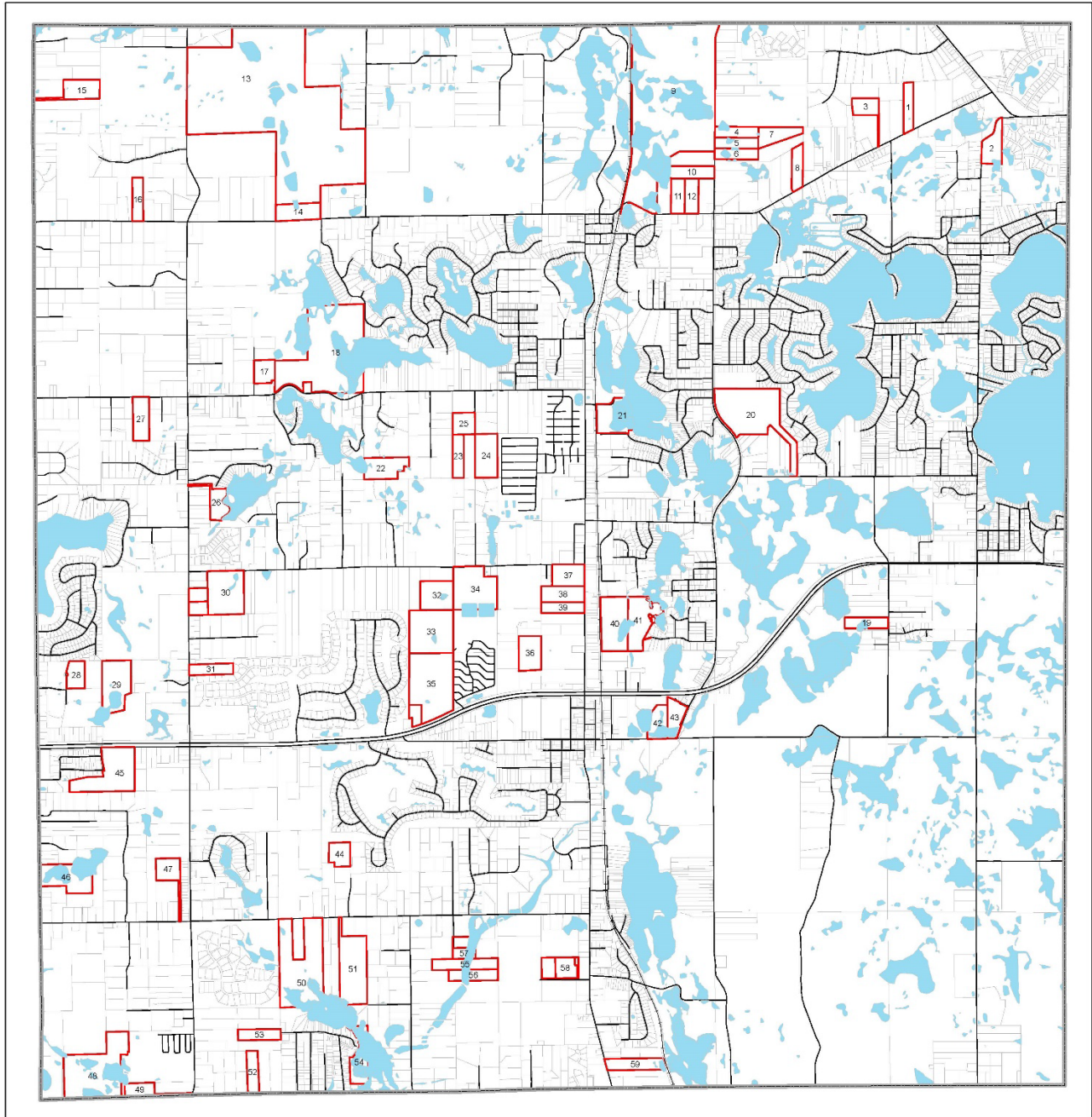
Recreation and Conservation – Since 2015, recreation and conservation land area has remained unchanged. This can be attributed to the existing facilities or single-family residential development. Many of the recreation and conservation areas are associated with, or near, the lakes within the eastern half of the Township. The largest recreation and conservation area is the Highland State Recreation Area. Since 2001, recreational/conservation has increased 12% and now accounts for 22% or 5,216 acres of Township land.

Vacant & Transitional Lands

An analysis of vacant and transitional lands – those lands which are either unused currently, or whose current use is unlikely to continue indefinitely – is valuable in determining where land use change is most likely to occur. The Vacant and Transitional Lands map represents an inventory of large properties that are either vacant or are likely to convert to other uses in the coming years (see **Map 9**). The Map also includes private recreation areas which have the potential to be sold and developed for non-recreational uses.

Highland Township contains 396 acres of land used for extractive purposes. Once this area is no longer used for mineral extraction, it is likely to transition to a new land use (i.e., single-family residential).

MAP 9 – VACANT AND TRANSITIONAL LANDS MAP



Vacant & Transitional Land
Highland Township
Oakland County

Legend



-  Vacant & Transitional Land > 9 Acres
-  Parcels 2020



Table 14. - Vacant and Transitional Lands Index

Map ID	Use	Acres
1.	Vacant	18.4
2.	Vacant	26.4
3.	Vacant	18.8
4.	Vacant	18.5
5.	Vacant	18.5
6.	Vacant	18.5
7.	Vacant	24.2
8.	Vacant	18.8
9.	Vacant	488.8
10.	Vacant	24.8
11.	Vacant	18.7
12.	Vacant	18.7
13.	Extractive	739.8
14.	Vacant	28.8
15.	Vacant	29.6
16.	Vacant	18.5
17.	Vacant	18.5
18.	Vacant	223.4
19.	Recreation / Open Space	18.4
20.	Recreation / Open Space	118.5
21.	Vacant	65.1
22.	Vacant	33.4
23.	Vacant	19.0
24.	Vacant	38.3
25.	Vacant	18.9
26.	Vacant	21.8
27.	Vacant	27.7
28.	Vacant	18.7
29.	Vacant	54.3
30.	Recreation / Open Space	10.0
30.	Recreation / Open Space	10.1
30.	Vacant	61.7
31.	Vacant	18.6
32.	Vacant	37.4

Map ID	Use	Acres
33.	Vacant	74.1
34.	Vacant	68.5
35.	Vacant	9.3
35.	Vacant	104.9
36.	Vacant	30.0
37.	Vacant	27.8
38.	Vacant	26.6
39.	Vacant	18.5
40.	Vacant	56.9
41.	Vacant	48.8
42.	Vacant	24.2
43.	Vacant	21.9
44.	Vacant	19.0
45.	Vacant	73.6
46.	Vacant	52.2
47.	Vacant	24.1
48.	Vacant	116.9
49.	Vacant	18.6
50.	Vacant	132.2
51.	Vacant	74.8
52.	Vacant	19.0
53.	Vacant	17.9
54.	Vacant	33.5
55.	Vacant	28.3
56.	Vacant	21.4
57.	Vacant	9.7
57.	Vacant	9.7
58.	Vacant	11.1
58.	Vacant	17.0
58.	Vacant	1.8
59.	Vacant	26.3

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IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation

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APPENDIX



Carlisle | Wortman
ASSOCIATES, INC.

117 NORTH FIRST STREET SUITE 70 ANN ARBOR, MI 48104 734.662.2200 734.662.1935 FAX

MEMORANDUM

TO: Highland Township Planning Commission

FROM: Douglas J. Lewan, AICP, Planning Consultant
Anna Wysocki, Community Planner

DATE: June 8, 2023

RE: Master Plan Visioning Session

Executive Summary

The Highland Township Planning Commission hosted a Master Plan Visioning Session on Thursday, May 18, 2023, during a regular meeting conducted at Township Hall. As the second phase of the public engagement process, the Visioning Session invited residents to describe their goals for Township development through an in-person forum. Sixty-three people attended and almost all stayed for the duration of the event, from 6-9 PM, marking the event as a success.

Phase 1 – The Survey

Prior to the May 18th Visioning Session, the Township invited residents to complete a multiple-choice survey that was published to highlandtwp.net. Typically, online surveys achieve a broader response compared to other methods of gathering public feedback, as was the case here. The survey received 417 responses, the results of which are available in a separate report compiled by Sogolytics. Those interested in the survey results can contact the Township. By hosting a live event in addition to the survey, the planning commission provided different points of access for residents and stakeholders to voice their opinions. In doing this, the planning commission is working to create an authentic framework for the Master Plan, with buy-in and consensus from Township citizens.

Phase 2 - The Visioning Session

The Visioning Session was designed by Carlisle Wortman & Associates (CWA), the planning consultation firm hired by the Township, and was hosted by the planning commission. Mr. Doug Lewan, the Township Planning Consultant, was supported by Ms. Anna Wysocki, also of CWA. To kick off the session, Mr. Lewan presented on the purpose of a master plan and the importance of public engagement. He then dismissed participants to the event's four "stations," where attendees held lively discussions. To close the evening,

*Benjamin R. Carlisle, President Douglas J. Lewan, Executive Vice President John L. Enos, Vice President
David Scurto, Principal Sally M. Elmiger, Principal R. Donald Wortman, Principal
Paul Montagno, Principal, Megan Masson-Minock, Principal, Laura Kreps, Senior Associate
Richard K. Carlisle, Past President/Senior Principal*

Mr. Lewan thanked everyone for their participation and the planning commission formally adjourned the meeting.

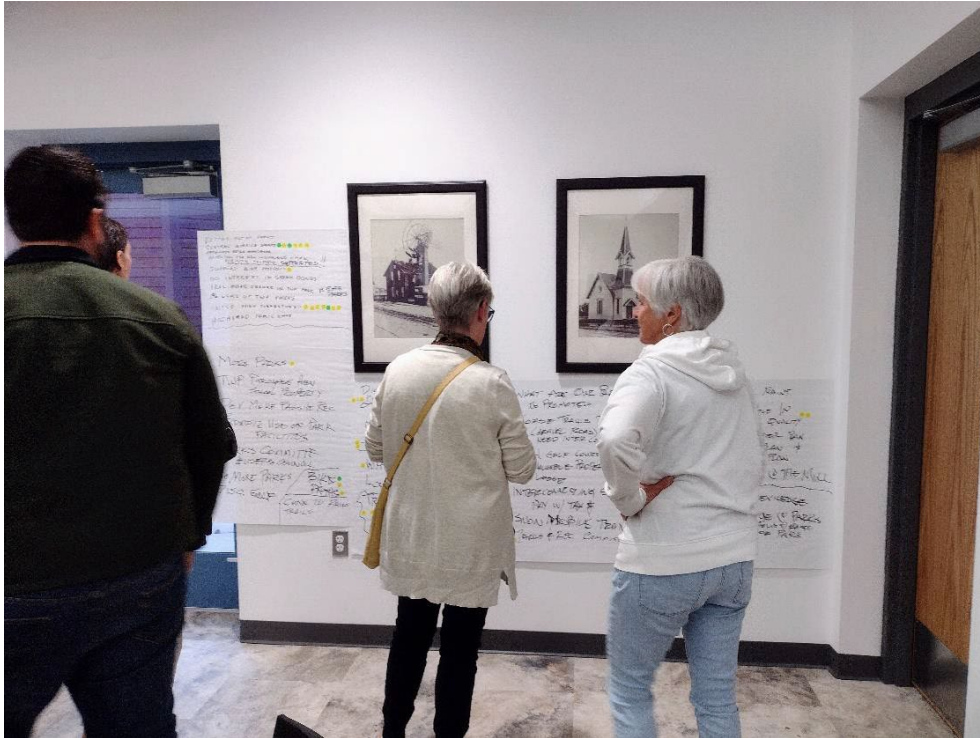
Stations

With assistance from the planning commission, CWA created four stations for the session. Each station used posters to highlight a topic that is applicable to land use and will most likely affect Highland Township during the next five to ten years. These four topics are: Residential Development, Transportation and Infrastructure, Natural Features, and Business. Following introductions, the attendees divided themselves into four groups, which rotated through each station. The goal of this format was to stimulate group conversation, while allowing every attendee an equal opportunity to comment on each topic. Throughout the evening, two planning commissioners remained at each station to facilitate discussion and to transcribe participants' comments onto large sheets of paper. Images of each poster are copied at the end of this report.



Voting

After spending about twenty minutes at each station, participants “voted” for comments that held the most importance to them by placing stickers next to the comments that were handwritten on large sheets of paper. Each participant was given twelve stickers. Each comment is now tallied at the end of this report, under “Stations” and “Results.”

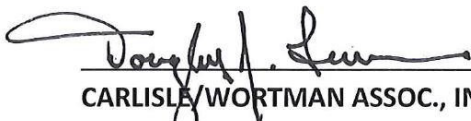



Conclusion

The desire to preserve the rural character of Highland was the prevailing sentiment of the evening. Participants voiced opposition to small residential lots and any multi-family dwellings. Though regional housing shortages and market trends tend toward suburban development, participants wanted to avoid the development of suburban housing and large commercial footprints to remain distinct from neighboring communities and to preserve the Township character.

Some participants contemplated how to grow strategically. For example, participants discussed the aging population and the need for affordable assisted living facilities. Some discussed how business development might be concentrated to major transportation corridors and how the town center should attract smaller businesses. Participants who desired improvements largely focused their comments on transportation and infrastructure. For example, participants suggested the development of non-motorized pathways, while high speed internet and sewer expansion were popular but contested propositions. Comments that were transcribed by each station's facilitators are recorded below.

Sincerely:


CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.
Douglas J. Lewan, AICP
Executive Vice President


CARLISLE WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.
Anna Wysocki
Community Planner

Station: Residential Development

Highland Township Residential Development

- Recent trends indicate the following:

One-Family Residential currently makes up the largest percentage of housing stock.
Less than 1% of housing stock is renter-occupied.
The total number of housing units increased by 360 between 2010 and 2020.
The average Median Housing value between 2016 and 2020 was \$239,500 (a decrease from 2010).
The average Median Gross Rent between 2016 and 2020 steadily decreased, to \$939.
Total number of households increased between 2010 and 2020 by 330.
Households with seniors have increased by 50% between 2010 and 2020.
By 2045, households with children are expected to decrease by 13%.
By 2045, households with seniors are expected to increase by 132%.

Housing Units by Type
American Community Survey, 2020

Housing Type	Percentage
Single Unit	~85%
Multi-unit	~10%
Mobile Homes and Other	~5%

Master Plan Update 2023

Residential Development and Growth

What are your thoughts about the different types of housing in the Township?

What types of housing does the Township not have?

What is the vision for lot sizes and character of housing?

What should be considered for senior housing?

What should be considered for accessory dwellings?

Are there areas of the Township that are of particular concern regarding new residential development?



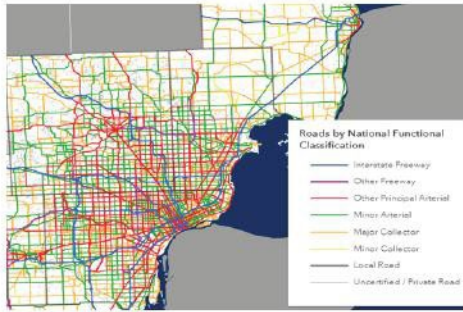
Results: Residential Development

Comment	No. of Stickers- Votes of Support
Why does Highland need to grow—that reduces open space.	3
Tiny homes—privately owned—more affordable	6
Open spaces, green space in subdivisions	4
Condos-younger population	1
Mixed-use—downtown—commercial with residential	1
Developers - “look elsewhere”	4
Cost of housing—seniors—co-ops—lower rent	5
Need info—statistics—percent of different types of housing	0
Keep Highland Rural.	14
No multi-housing development	6
Standard of living—not urbanized	0
Protect wells—water quality	8
Keep Highland the same as it is now.	6
Housing for seniors—cost—affordable	0
Need walkable community	0
Developers: 10 acre minimum	19
Increase lot size—especially around lakes	9
Bike paths—walkways	9
Dog parks	0
Accessory dwelling units	3
Home businesses—taxes?	1
Limit new subdivision development	4
Do not want to look like White Lake or Howell	1
Decrease taxes	1
No short term and/or long-term rentals/ protect against Airbnb’s	4
Lack of commercial (temporary) rentals, hotels, motels	0
Keep current lot size—less dense based on area	11
Gravel pit—what development planned when they leave	0
Cluster developments	0

Station: Transportation & Infrastructure


Highland Township *Transportation & Traffic*

- Highland comprises about 36 square miles located between Dunham Lake (west) and White Lake (east), with M-59 bisecting the Township area.
- Public roads within the Township are maintained by the Oakland County Road Commission and designed and constructed in accordance with a national functional road classification system. This system determines eligibility for federal aid.
- A map provided by SEMCOG is shown below, depicting traffic volume by road:



Roads by National Functional Classification

- Interstate Freeway
- Other Freeway
- Other Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Road
- Unimproved / Private Road



Master Plan Update 2023

Transportation and Infrastructure

What road improvements should be prioritized?

How do transportation issues impact your daily activities as a driver, bicyclist, or pedestrian?

What could be done to improve these issues?

What roads or issues should be considered when new development is proposed?

Where would you like to see pathways?

Should the Township consider building a sewer system?



Results: Transportation & Infrastructure

Comment:	No. of Stickers - Votes of Support
1. Building design standards	9
2. No round-abouts	5
3. Dog Parks	0
4. Park Connections/Pathway	11
5. Road legal golf carts	3
6. No 5G Towers	4
7. Water quality testing	3
8. Move powerlines underground.	9
9. Limited sewers for business development	11
10. Better stormwater management	0
11. Longtree Road: Pave	3
12. Duck Lake Road: pave north end	3
13. Davista Drive: Pave	1
14. Bike path near roads	7
15. Traffic congestion	4
16. White Lake Road: Needs speed limit between Havey Lake	2
17. Maintain existing roads	6
18. Sidewalk to Milford High and beyond	25
19. Cell towers: Make better looking (“Trees”)	1
20. Sidewalks at existing developments	3
21. Sewers -No	24
22. Change road to match speed limits	5
23. Senior ride-share	1
24. Alternative way to maintain roads	9*
25. Milford DWP maintain Highland	0*
26. Speed bump, “slow down”	0
27. Sewers- Yes	21
28. Water mains	8
29. Traffic speed	3

Comments (Continued)	No. of Votes (Continued)
30. Public transit expansion	0
31. Township help with subdivision roads	14
32. Pathway trail system	10
33. E.V. charging	14
34. High speed internet	20

*The placement of stickers made it unclear as to whether votes were for “alternative way to maintain roads” or “Milford DWP maintain Highland.”

Station: Natural Features

Highland Township

Parks and Natural Features

In addition to the Highland State Recreation Area, Highland residents have access to many parks and preserves including: Duck Lake Pines Park, Downey Lake Park, Hickory Ridge Pines Park, and Highland Oaks County Park

Land Cover in Highland Township

Category	Percentage
Trees	43.5%
Open Space	37.5%
Water	8.5%
Other	1.2%

■ Trees ■ Open Space ■ Water ■ Other

The Friends of Highland Recreation Area (FOHRA) is a volunteer organization that has been leading local parks development since 2007.

Township Development goals include connecting Highland Station to the Oakland County Trails System.

Master Plan Update 2023

Natural Features

What is your vision for preservation of the natural environment?

What areas or natural features should be preserved?

Are natural resources and the natural environment a Township priority?

Should the mitigation of carbon emissions and the impacts of climate change be considered in the Master Plan?

Highland Township
Warm inside. Great outdoors.

Results: Natural Features

Comment	No. of Stickers
1. More parks	1
2. Township purchase ABN school property	1
3. Interest in Amer (?) Agg property?	0
4. Water recreation public park	2
5. 50% okay with millage to buy rec' land	0
6. Path access to Highland Oaks	3
7. General support for green technology	0
8. Keep population density low	2
9. Better trail & pathway maintenance	2
10. Township take a role in groundwater quality	2
11. Recreation space use Master Plan & Use Plan & Access Plan	1
12. Finish Chill at the Mill	4
13. State land a privilege	0
14. Dog poop issue at parks—solve with bags	1
15. Need township dog park	2
16. What are our parks—not promoted	1
17. Horse trails disappeared (interconnecting gravel road)	3
18. H.H. Golf Course is valuable property—don't loose	5
19. Interconnecting sidewalk—pay with taxes	0
20. Snow mobile trails	0
21. Parks & Rec committee	1
22. Disc/frisbee golf	0
23. Pickleball court & other planned uses	6
24. Milford Road bike path	1
25. Zero mitigation (reference to carbon emissions/climate change slide of introductory slideshow)	9
26. Why no tree ordinance	1

Comment (Continued)	No. of Stickers (Continued)
27. Landowner sold off topsoil	0
28. Trails to connect to session 3 100%	7
29. Develop more passive recreation.	0
30. Promote use of park facilities	0
31. Parks committee & users council	1
32. No more parks	0
33. Support Bike paths	11
34. (C---?) to rails trails	0
35. Better management of parks	0
36. Control invasive species	6
37. No interest in green bonds	0
38. Feel more secure in Township park vs. State parks	0
39. Percent usage of Township parks	0
40. Inter-park connections	11
41. Highland trail maps	1

Station: Business

Highland Township

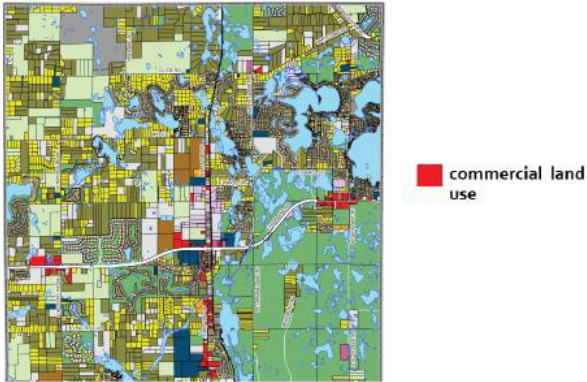
Business

The majority of businesses are located along M-59 and Milford Rd.

Types of nonresidential development can include:

Retail
Office
Industrial
Hotels, Hospitality
Medical
Residential
Mixed -Use

There was a 17% decrease in commercial land use from 2015 to 2020.



Master Plan Update 2023

Business

What types of development would you like to see more of? Less of?

In what areas would you like to see commercial growth?

Provide examples or ideas of how new development can be compatible with the Township's character.

Provide examples of nonresidential development that you would like to see in the Township over the next 10 to 20 years.

Highland Township
Warm inside. Great outdoors.

Results: Business

Comment	No. of Stickers- Votes of Support
1. Be appealing to families.	0
2. Keep rural areas.	9
3. Make sure buildings look and have more continuity.	4
4. More trees/street scape	5
5. Soften/more green scape in front of businesses.	2
6. Less commercial growth.	2
7. No hotel.	2
8. Better commercial in Historic District.	4
9. No short-term rental	3
10. Let White Lake and Hartland keep expanding, not Highland.	3
11. New good dining!	0
12. Southeast corner M-59 Milford development	2
13. More farmers markets/ small markets.	3
14. More coffee shops & restaurants, but not a chain	1
15. No big box. We are fine driving to White Lake/ Don't want big box store.	8
16. Keep Agg Zoning areas/ maintain rural areas	8
17. Better medical care area/ more medical and healthcare.	5
18. Increase commercial development on M-59 (brings in outside money)	13
19. Responses to above comment: We don't want to be White Lake. We love the rural corridors.	0
20. Biggest impact from bringing big box stores is water and sewer, which we don't want.	1
21. Expansion of small business along Milford Road corridor.	0
22. Keep things more tight for elderly to do things	1
23. More agricultural business/ keep Highland rural/ promote agriculture.	12
24. I don't want to see our farmland turned into suburbia.	4
25. Pro dispensary	0
26. Anti dispensary	3

Comment (Continued)	No. of Votes (Continued)
27. Define downtown a little better.	6
28. Confine business to downtown and Duck Lake and M-59.	2
29. Food trucks? —Little food truck area.	2
30. No sewers.	12
31. Township buy old middle school property—It would be a good downtown center.	10
32. Pathway to library area.	0
33. Less crowded, keep small town charm.	1
34. Farm based business (agriculture based, more organic).	6
35. Racetrack/ recreation vehicles.	5
36. Maintain township character by minimizing residential and commercial development.	5
37. Home based business	3

Comments Recorded Privately on Notecards

Residential

1. No multiple residential development.
2. 10-acre minimum acre requirement for new developments.
3. More development and more residents does not equate to progress.
4. Keep Highland rural.
6. Don't let crowded housing community or sr. ctr. Housing complexes sprawl out away from community center districts (i.e., Duck Lk/M59).
7. The senior housing community is certainly a need we will be dealing with. However, watch the density and proximity to other businesses and services.

Community Character

1. Unique: It's rural equestrian open space community on the outskirts of Waterford/Novi/Commerce etc.
2. Keep It dark night sky!
3. Keep it rural/residential – Large Ag Lots
4. Keep development to Highland Stn & Duck Lk intersections.
5. Don't give up the equestrian heritage.
6. Vision: Maintain rural/open space feel!!! Large lot with big setbacks!

Infrastructure

1. A community sewer system would be good to preserve the small lake communities—aging septics degrade the water quality.
2. Carbon mitigation is not as important. Electrification can be integrated into planning but not a driving priority. Do not want to see wind/solar development. Does not fit our character.

Natural Features

1. Definitely a priority.
2. Areas/Features(?) Preserve: Equestrian access. Connect Highland Station District to Highland Rec with a natural corridor.
3. Protect night sky.

Business

1. Development: Small independent businesses, community bases, service & institutional.
Less: Large retail, strip storefronts, chain type operations.
2. Areas of Commercial growth: Limit to M59/Duck Lake as it is already populated. Do not expand down M59 west. Not interested in White Lake/Waterford Business Corridor.
3. Compatible Character: Low rise, small parking (heat island). Limit parking lot lighting or put all on motion control sensor. Brick/ wood façade. Limit flashy “metal” or architectural panel. Do not overlight or uplight anything.

Comments Recorded Privately on Notecards

Other

1. Better communication to residents about meetings and/or agendas. Citywide notifications.
2. Not our job to regulate neighbor legal interests(?) regarding PEOPLE. Nuisance ordinance yes, noise, weeds, etc. Not people.
3. Not our job or position to regulate business.
4. How does it (?) now? With the existing ordinance and fire codes (?).
5. Nuisance prevention not our business. Nuisance ordinances.
6. Housing affordability?
6. Not all Ordinances should be equal (?) all of OHIO.

Visioning Session Comments

-Photos-

Residential Development and Growth

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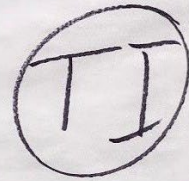
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ALT. WAY TO MAINTAIN RDS
MILFORD DWP MAINTAIN HIGHWAY
SPEED BUMP "SLOW DOWN"

~~SEWERS~~ - YES
WATER MAINS

TRAFFIC SPEED



PUBLIC TRANSIT - EXPANSION
TOWNSHIP HELP W/ SUBDIVISION
ROADS


~~TRAIL SY~~

PATHWAY TRAIL SYSTEM

E.V. CHARGING
INTERNET - HI SPEED

PAVE ~~LONG~~ TREE ROAD

DUCK LAKE ROAD - PAVE NORTH

DAVISTA DRIVE - PAVE  END

• BIKE PATH NEAR ROADS

• TRAFFIC CONGESTION

SPEED LIMIT WHITE LAKE RD ^{BETWEEN} HAVEY LAKE

MAINTAIN EXISTING ROAD

SIDEWALK TO MILFORD HIGH ^E BEYOND

• CELL TOWERS - BETTER LOOKING
SIDEWALKS AT EXIST. ^{"TREES"} DEVELOP

SEWERS - NO

CHANGE ROAD TO MATCH SPEED
SENIOR RIDE SHARE. LIMITS

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BUSINESS

- * MAINTAINING RURAL AREA'S
- * LESS commercial growth / LESS RESIDENTIAL
- * LESS Crowded Keep SMALL TOWN CHARM
- * FARM BASED BIZ (Agg BASED)
MORE ORGANIC
- * Home BASED BIZ

* core Farmers Markets.

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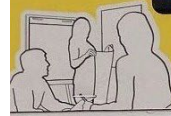
and M.59

food truck area

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BETTER MGT OF PARKS

CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES

PATHWAYS BETTER MAINTAINED

POTENTIAL FOR NEW W. HIGHLAND PARKS

ROBINSON PROPERTY SUPPORTED !!

SUPPORT BIKE PATHS

NO INTEREST IN GREEN BONDS

FEEL MORE SECURE IN TWP PARK VS STATE PARK

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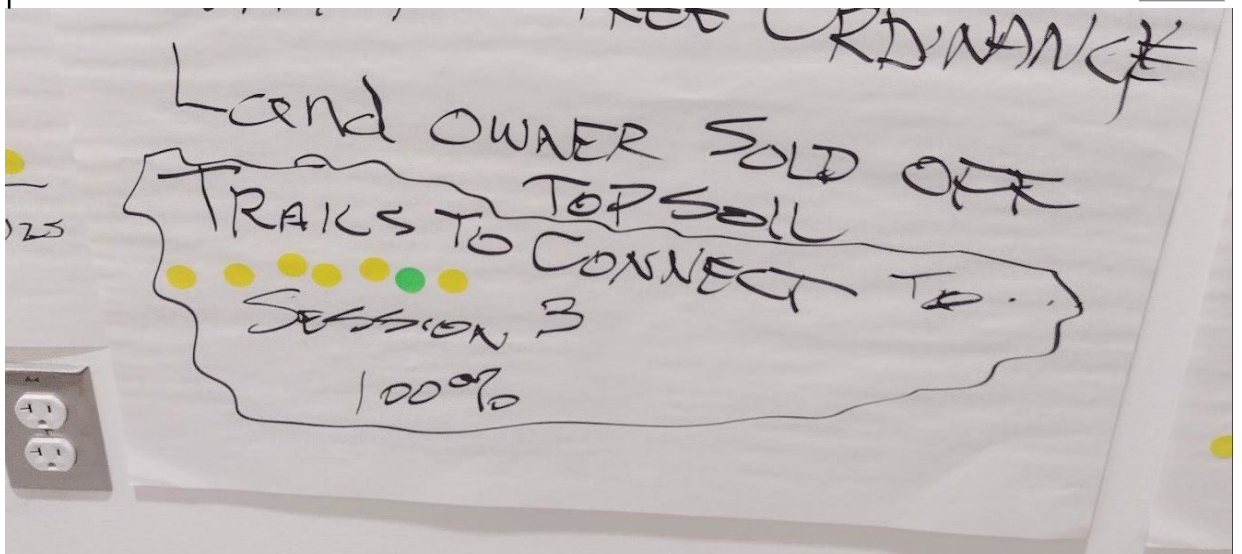
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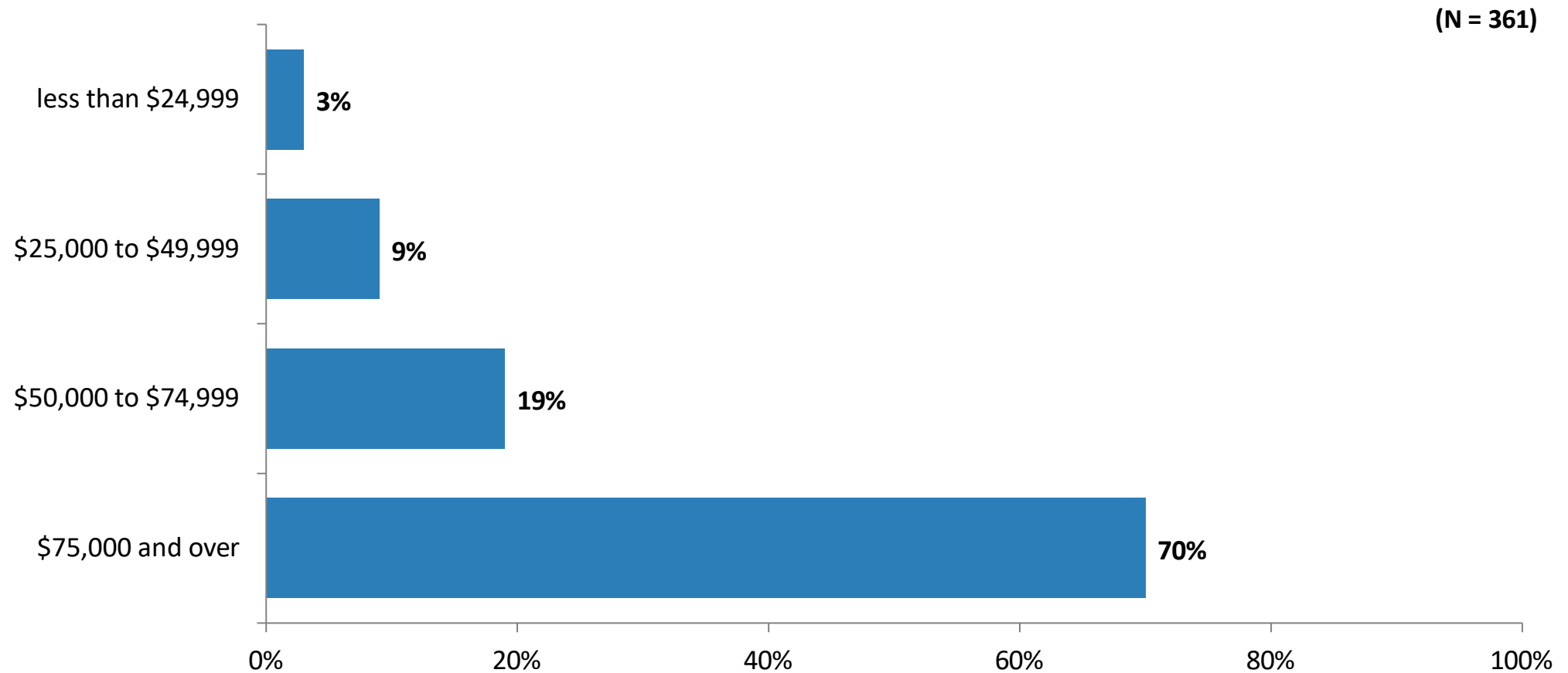
Compiled Data

Results and Analysis

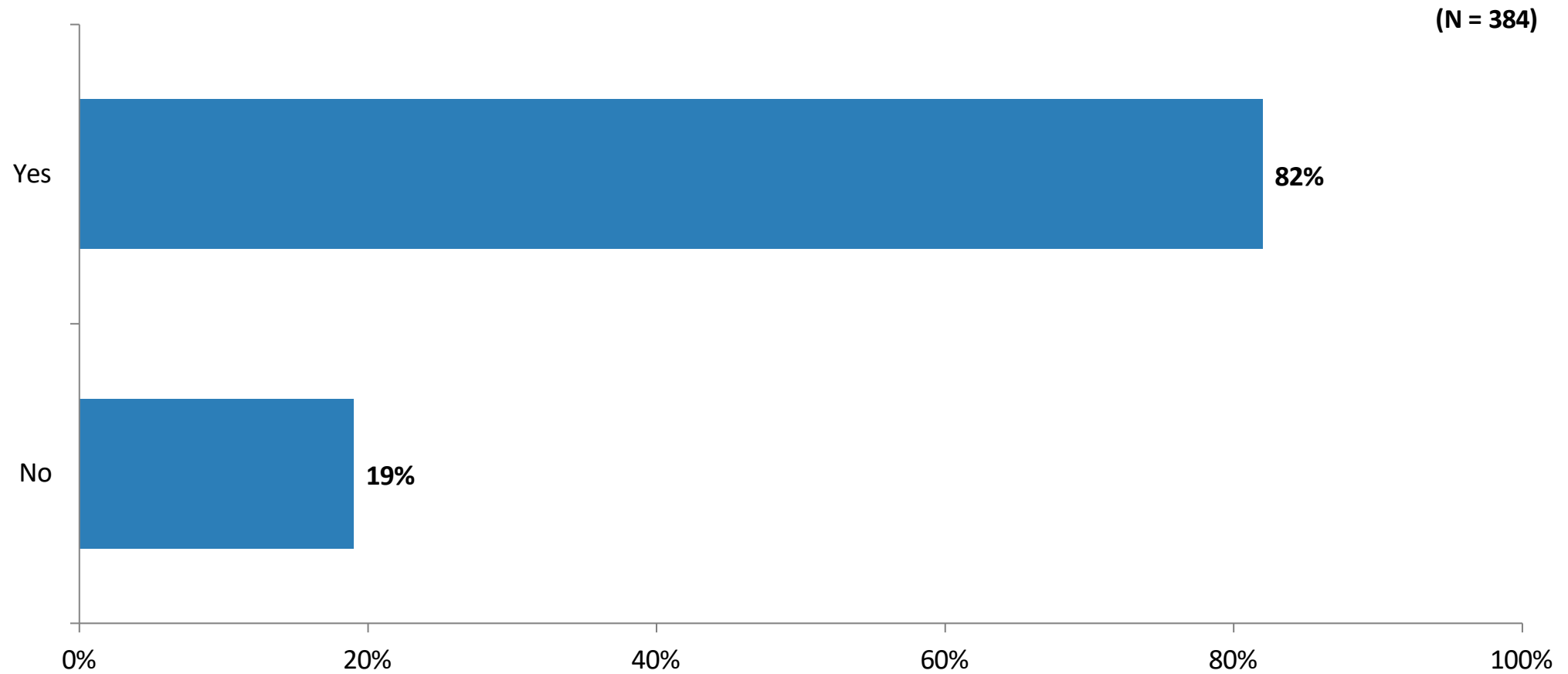
Highland Township Opinion Survey

Below is the compiled data from the survey, extrapolated from 417 participants.

Please check the line that best approximates your household's pre-tax income.



Are you satisfied with the variety (location) of the goods and services listed in the previous question?



What are the three best projects that have been started in Highland in the last ten years?

When reviewing the results of resident's favorite projects in the Township, the Fire Stations received the most votes, followed by Community Sharing, the library and adjacent park, and updated municipal buildings.

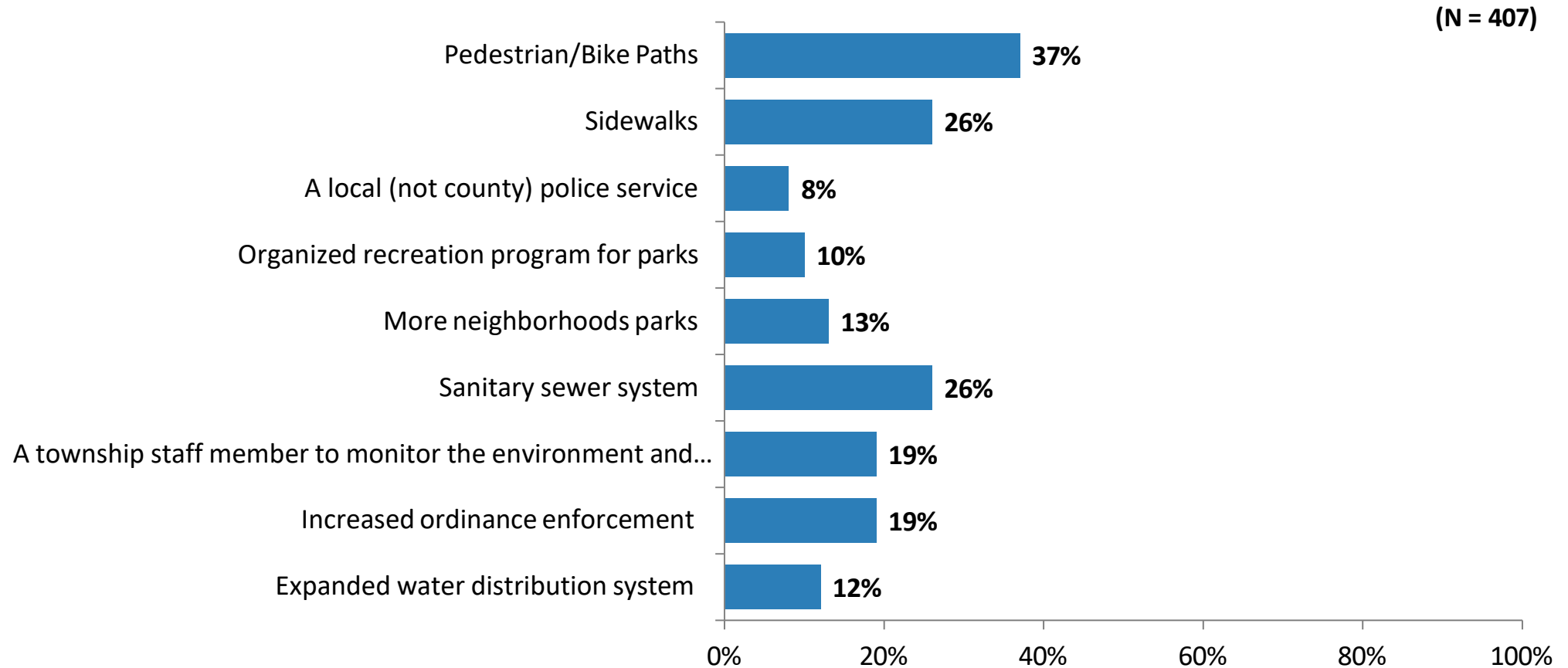
Which new development, if any, adds to Highland Township's sense of community?

Many residents felt the same buildings/places cited in the previous question significantly add to the “sense of community” in the township. In addition, residents noted the increased number of community events and festivals (Chill at the Mill, 4th of July Fireworks, etc.), the farmer’s market, formation of Township DDA, and the beautification along Milford Road contribute to their overall enjoyment within the township.

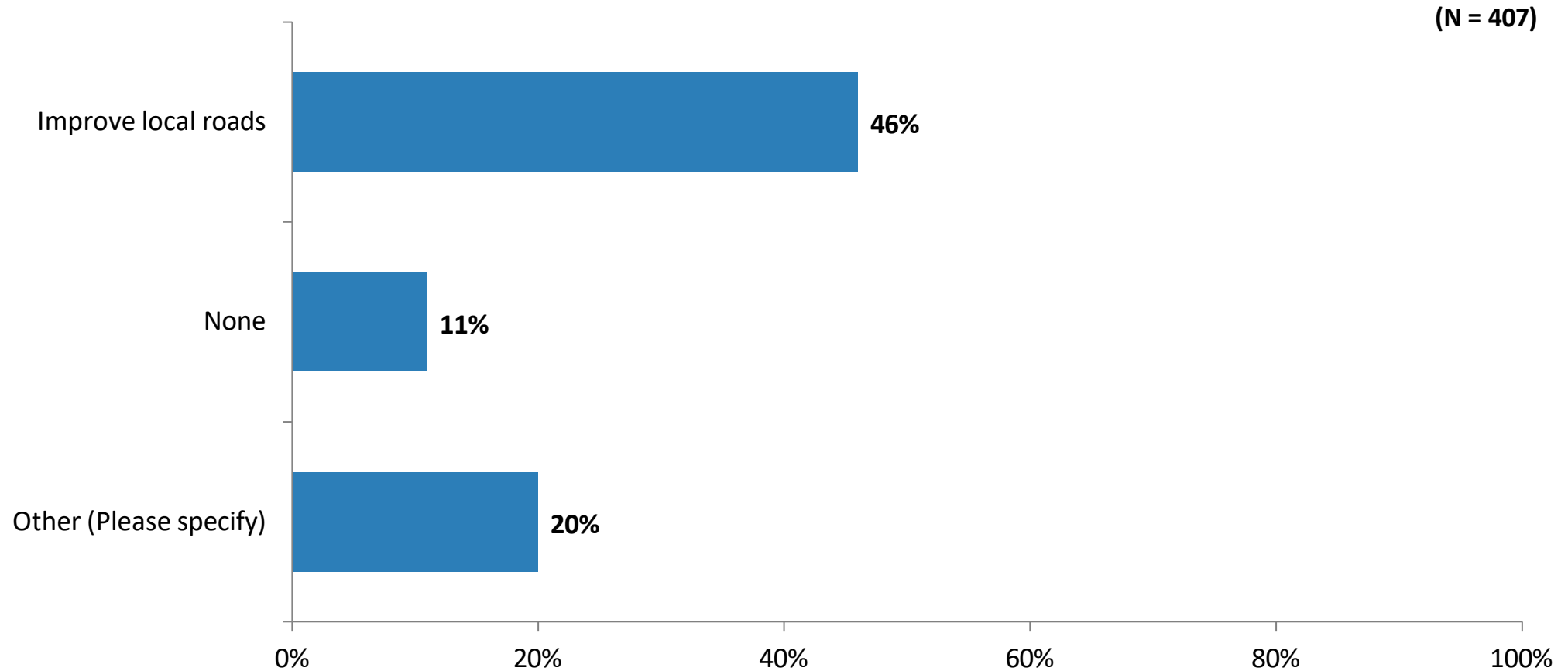
In your own words, describe what Highland means to you.

The majority of township residents' who took the survey feel the township is a safe, quiet, family-friendly place with rural charm (a place to escape the bustle of a city), yet still has all the amenities for daily life either within or just outside the Township. The words most often associated with Highland Township were "Community" (85), "Home" (73), "Rural" (75), "Safe"(43), "Quiet" (42), "Small Town"(33), and "Peaceful" (21).

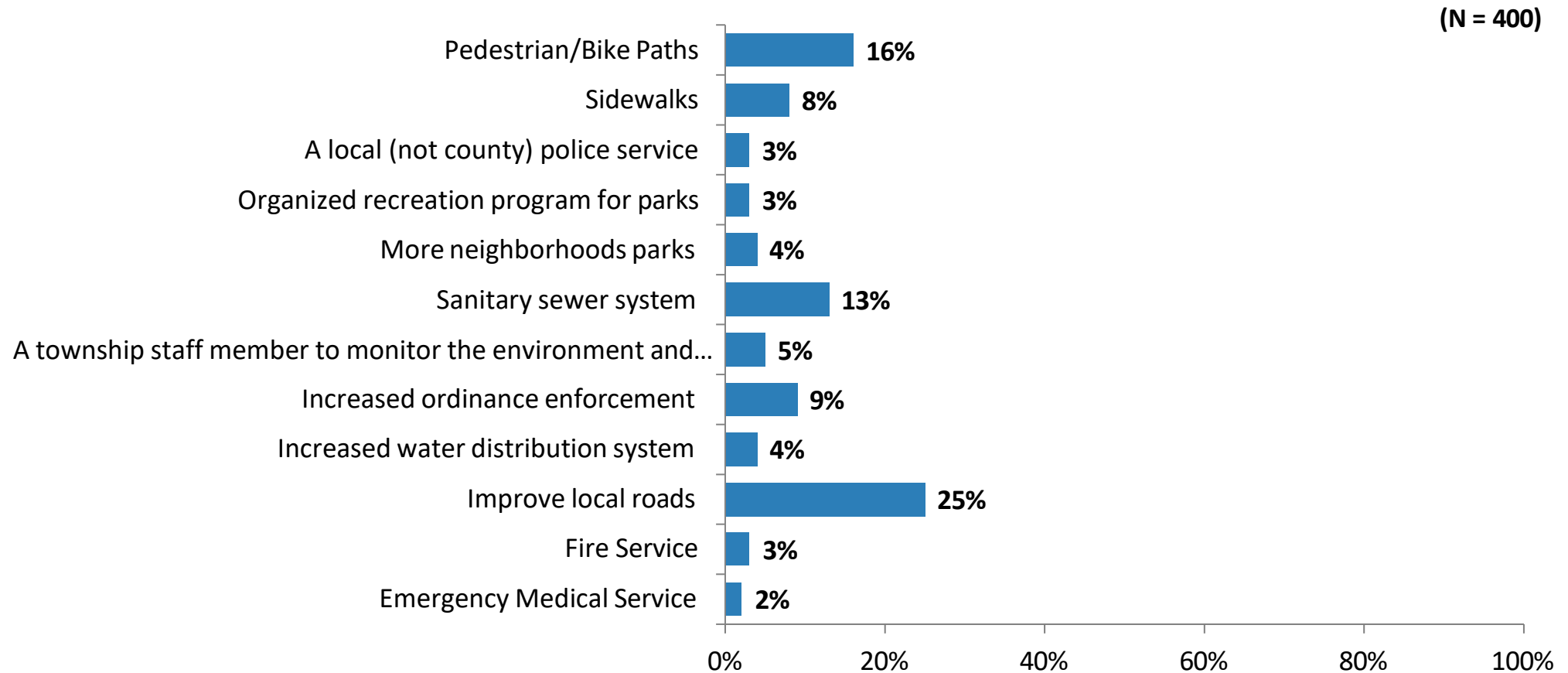
Which of the following additional services do you think are needed in Highland Township? (Check all that apply)



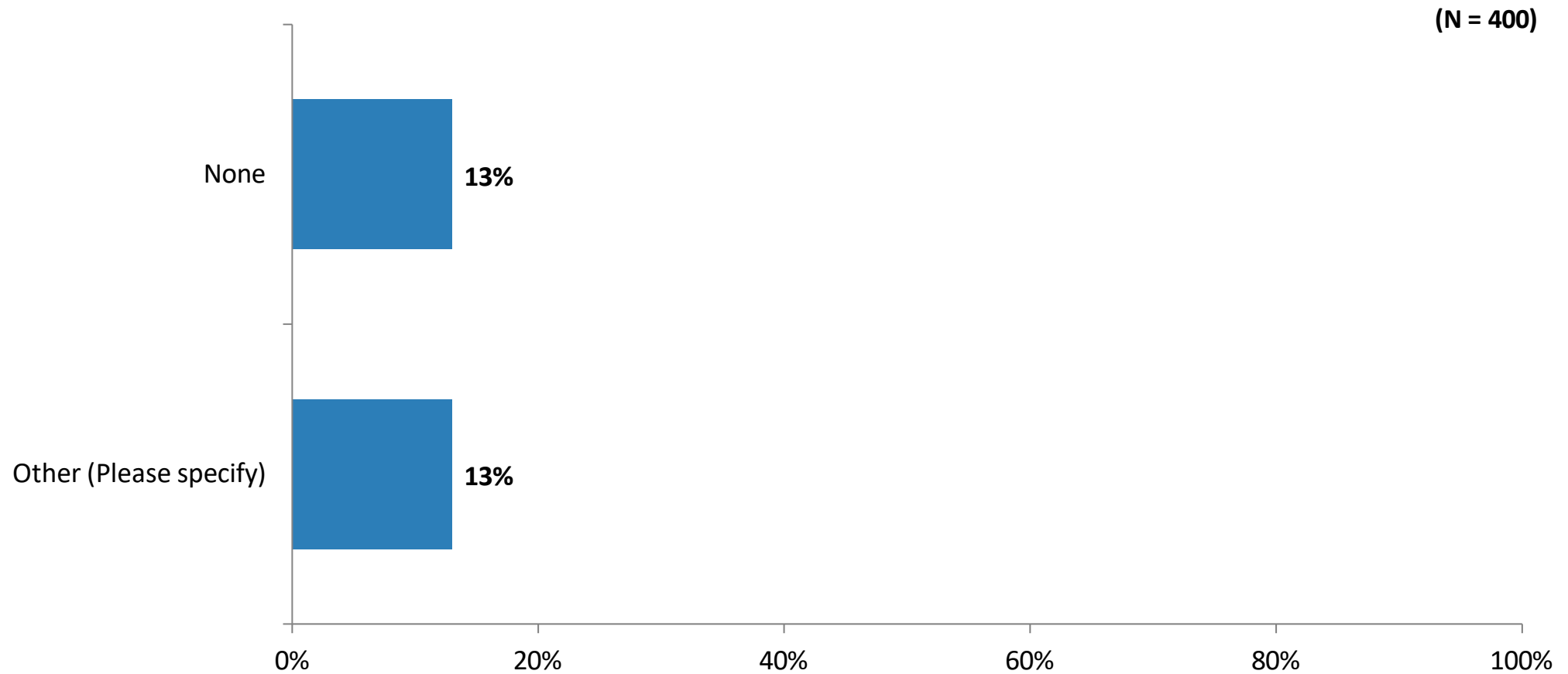
Which of the following additional services do you think are needed in Highland Township? (Check all that apply) (Continued)



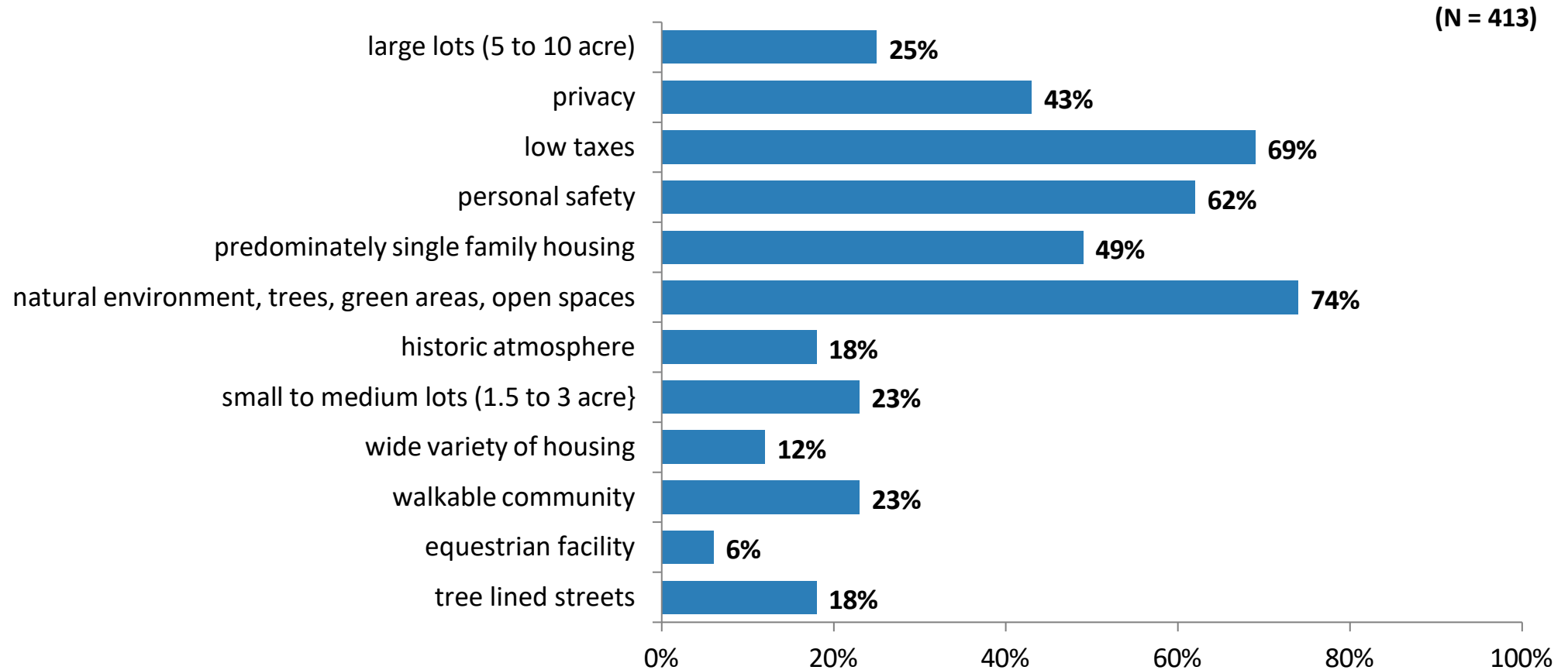
Choose the number ONE item you feel most needs to be created or expanded in the Township.



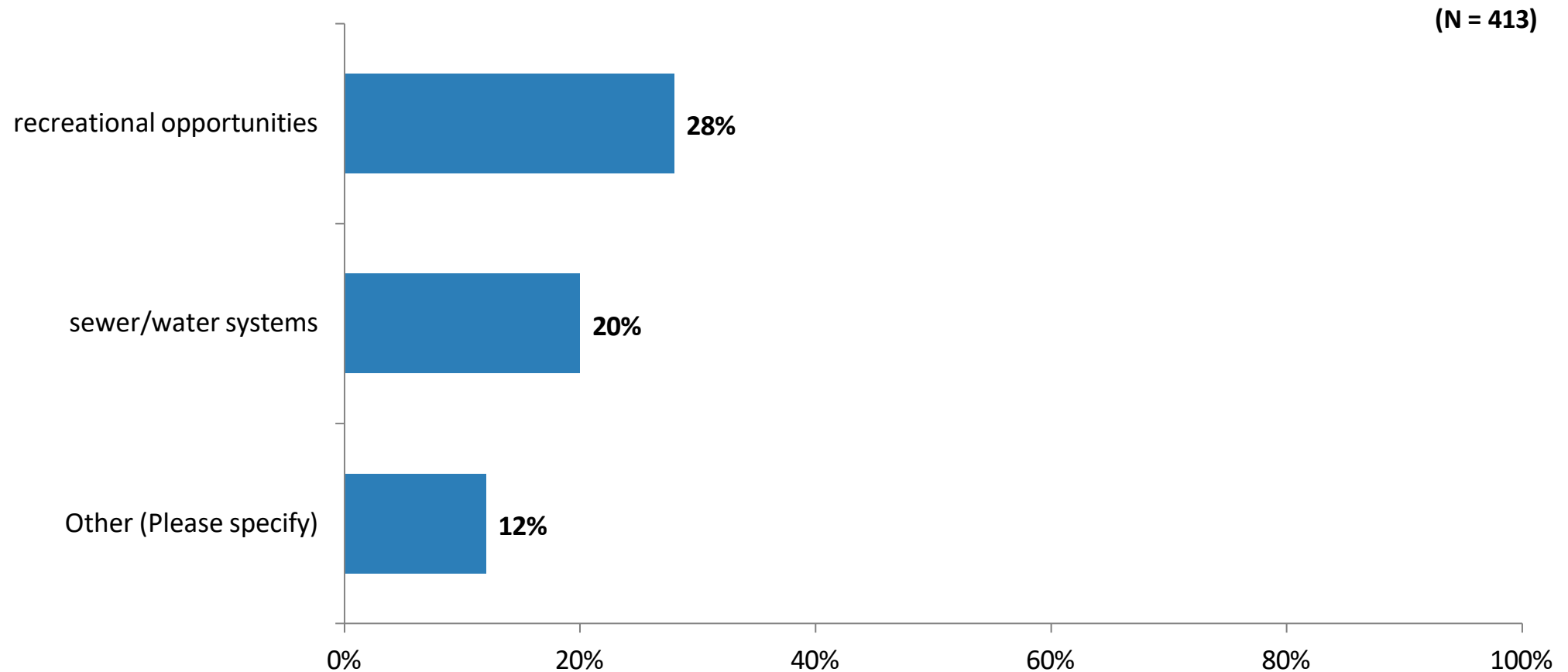
Choose the number ONE item you feel most needs to be created or expanded in the Township. (Continued)



What aspects of Highland Township are most important to you. The following list suggests some features which can contribute to the quality of life in Highland Township. Please select the FIVE MOST IMPORTANT features.



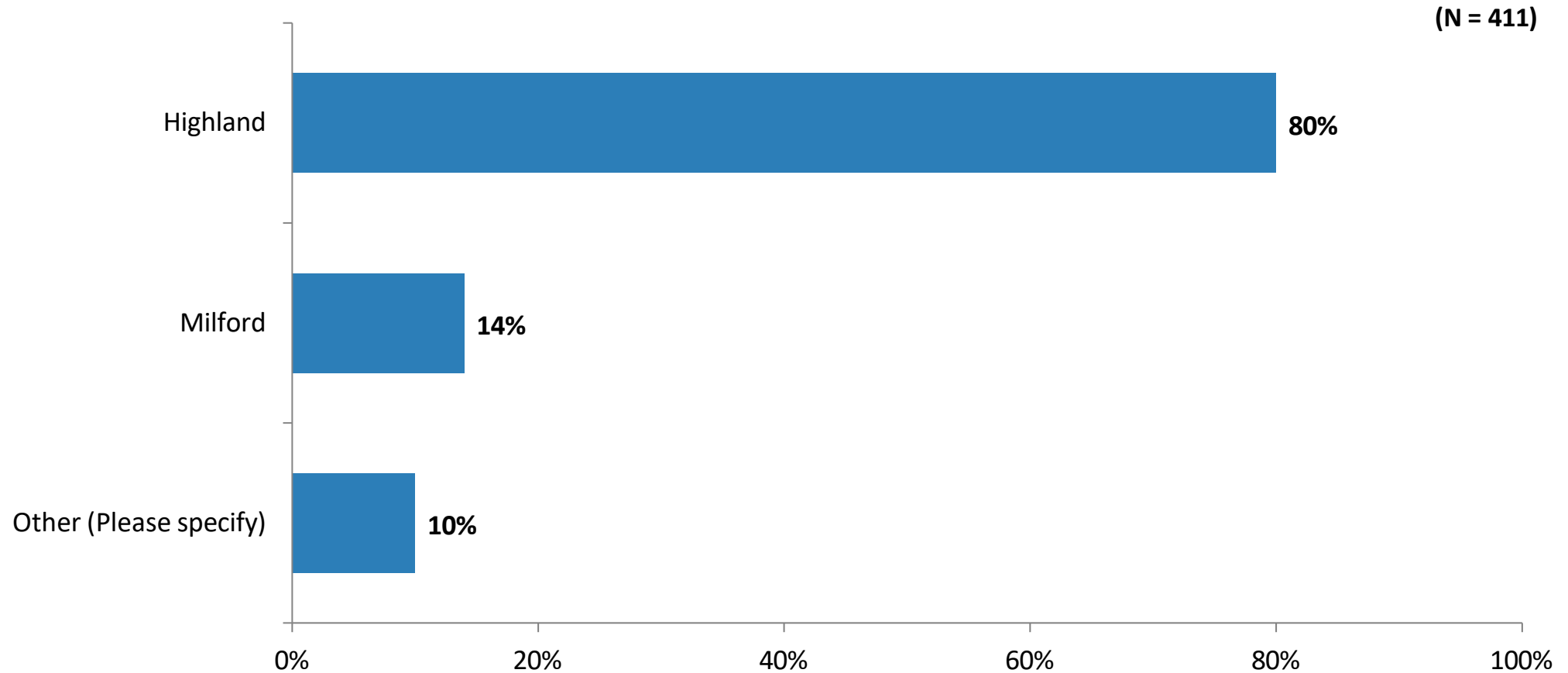
What aspects of Highland Township are most important to you. The following list suggests some features which can contribute to the quality of life in Highland Township. Please select the FIVE MOST IMPORTANT features. (Continued)



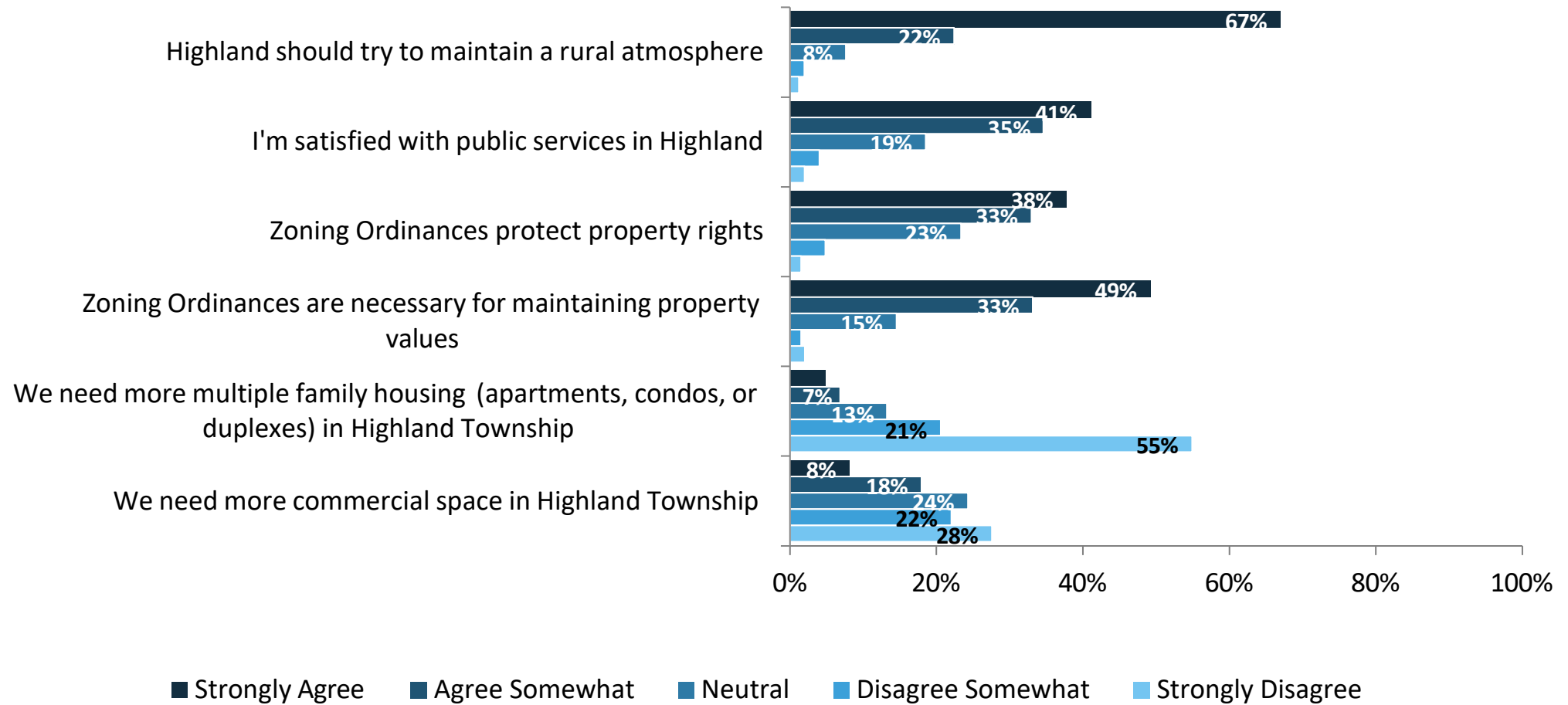
If you answered Highland has an identifiable Center, where is it?

An overwhelming majority of survey respondents felt the center of the township was within a 3-mile radius of the Township Hall on John Road, in the area of Livingston and Milford Road, followed by Highland and Milford Road, and Duck Lake and Milford Road.

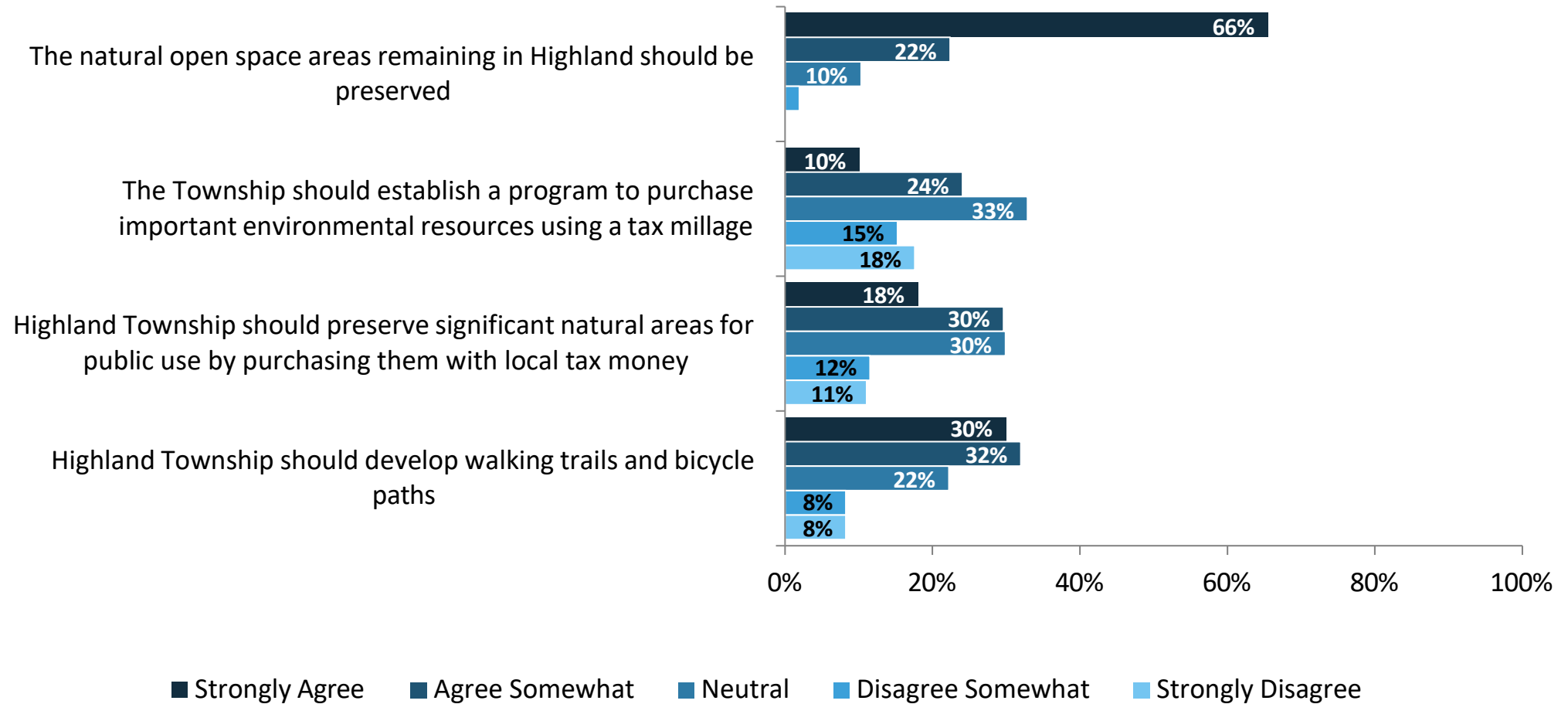
When asked "Where are you from?" How do you respond?



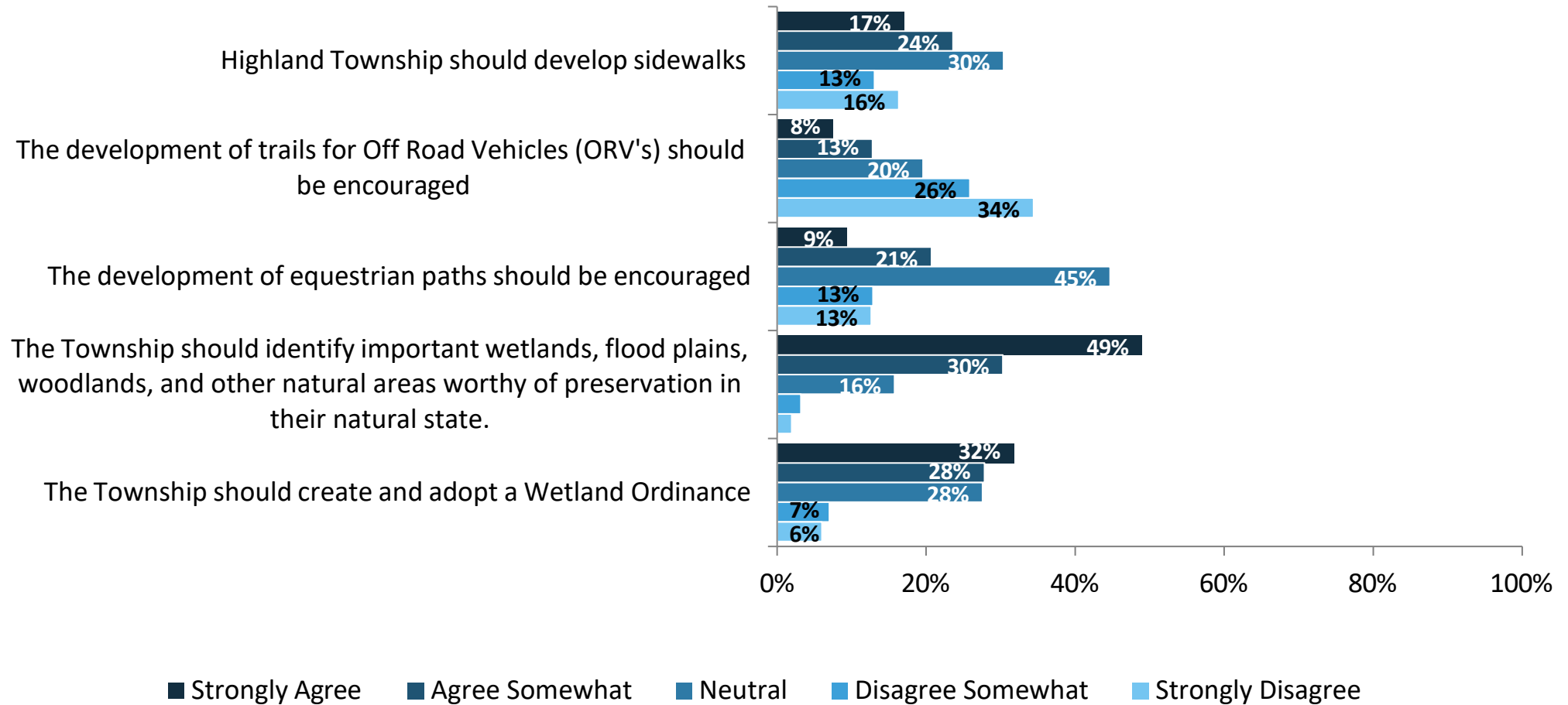
The following statements represent a range of opinions about planning related objectives and the means to achieve them. Please indicate for each statement how strongly you agree or disagree.



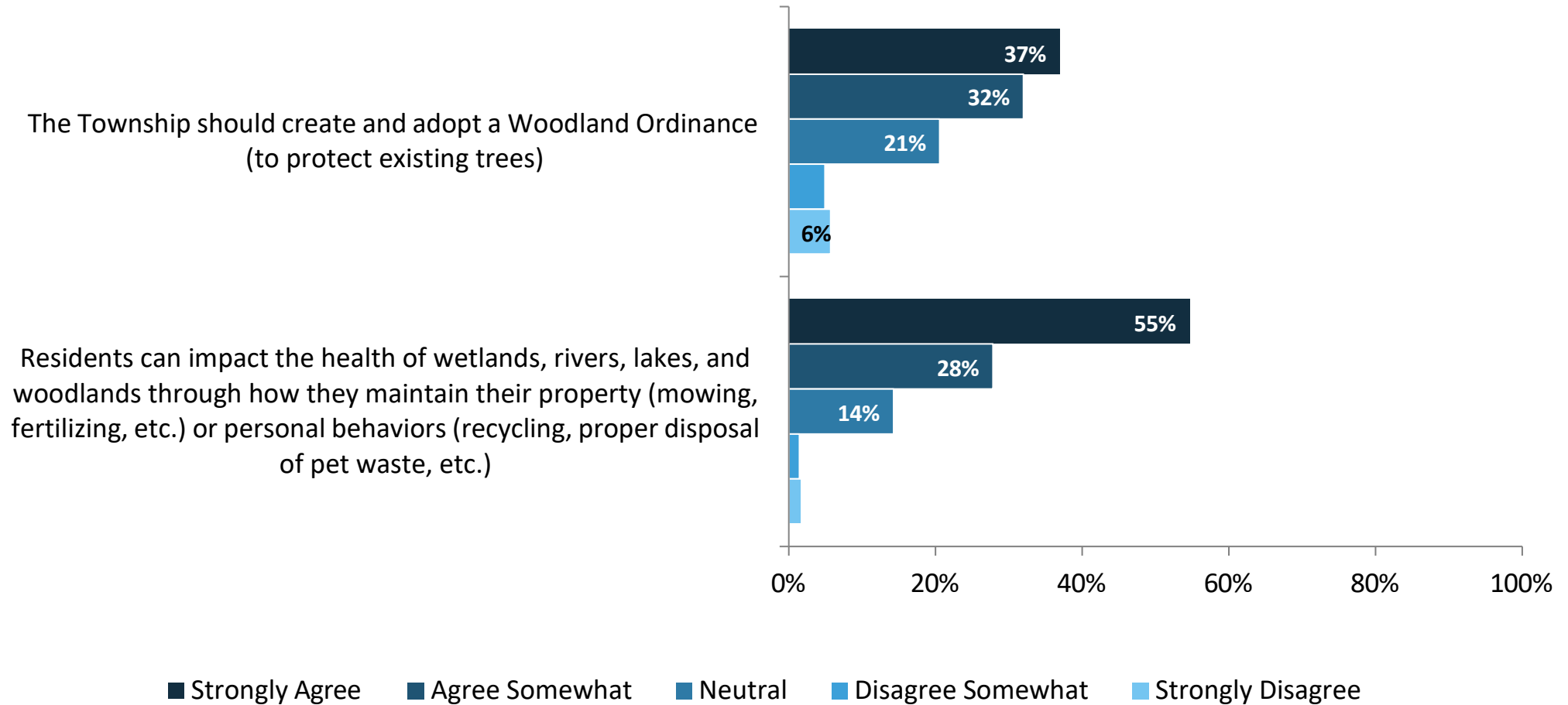
The following statements represent a range of opinions about planning related objectives and the means to achieve them. Please indicate for each statement how strongly you agree or disagree. (Continued)



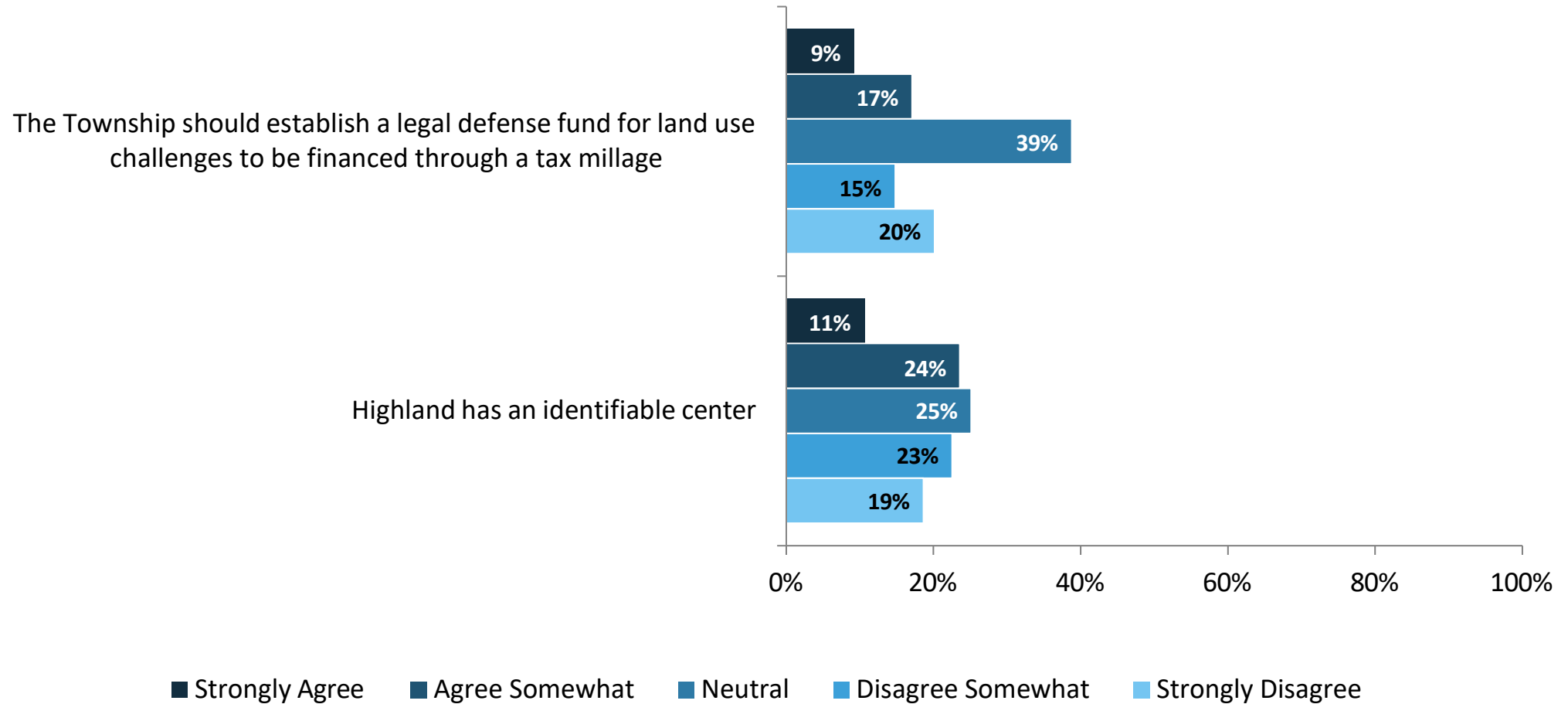
The following statements represent a range of opinions about planning related objectives and the means to achieve them. Please indicate for each statement how strongly you agree or disagree. (Continued)



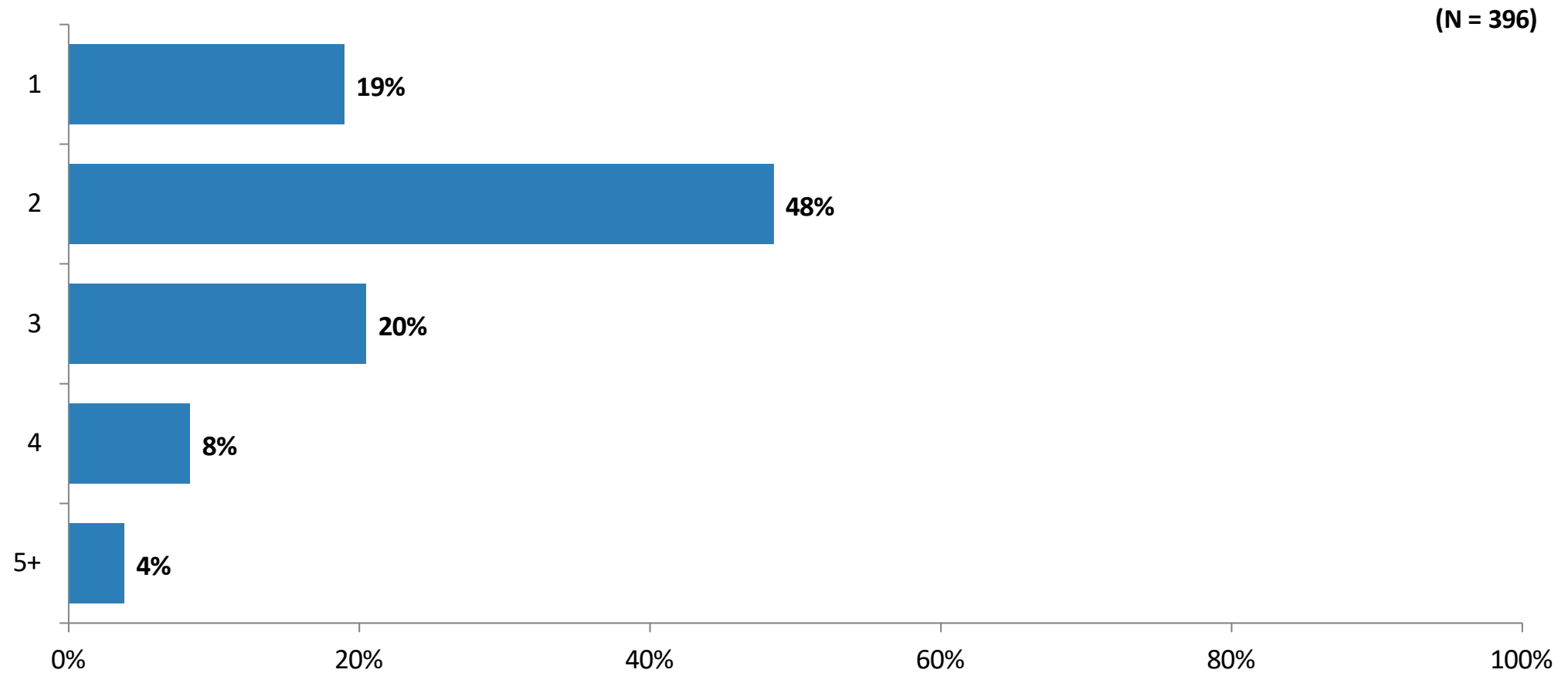
The following statements represent a range of opinions about planning related objectives and the means to achieve them. Please indicate for each statement how strongly you agree or disagree. (Continued)



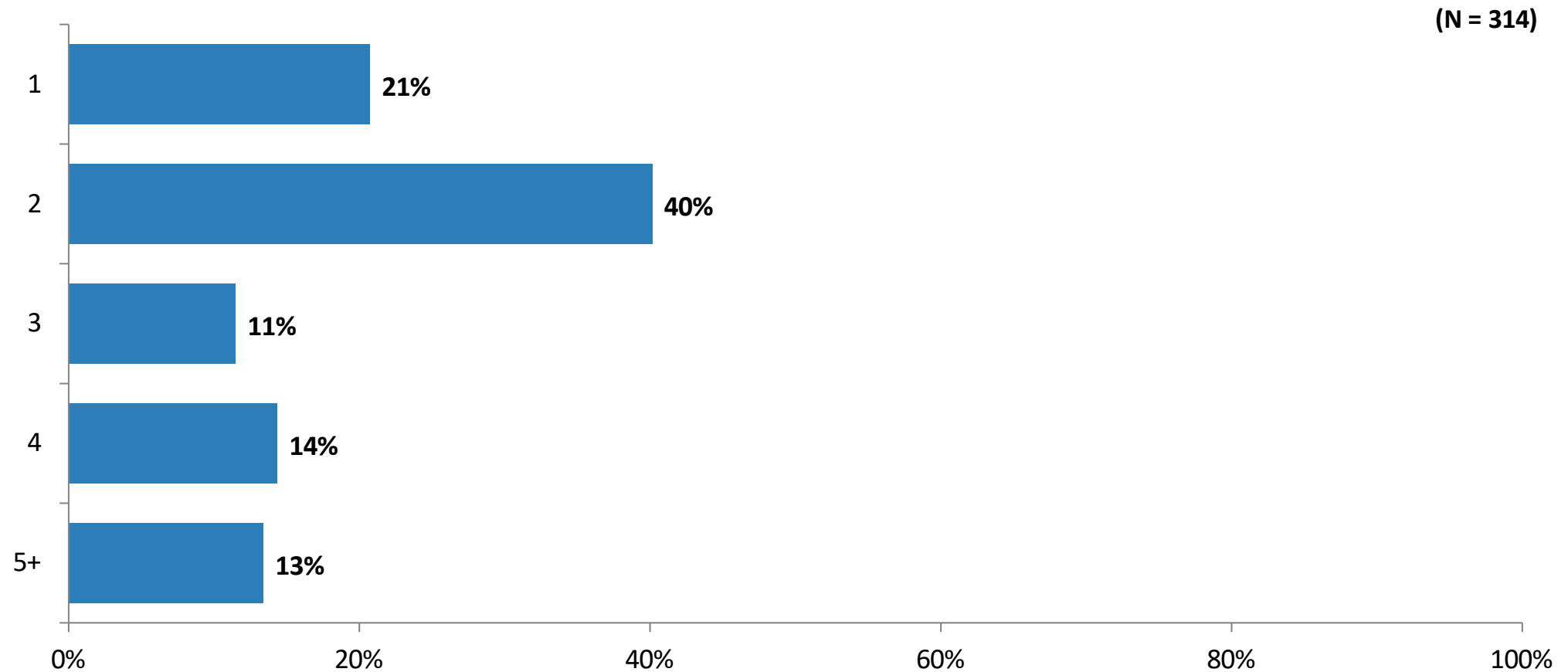
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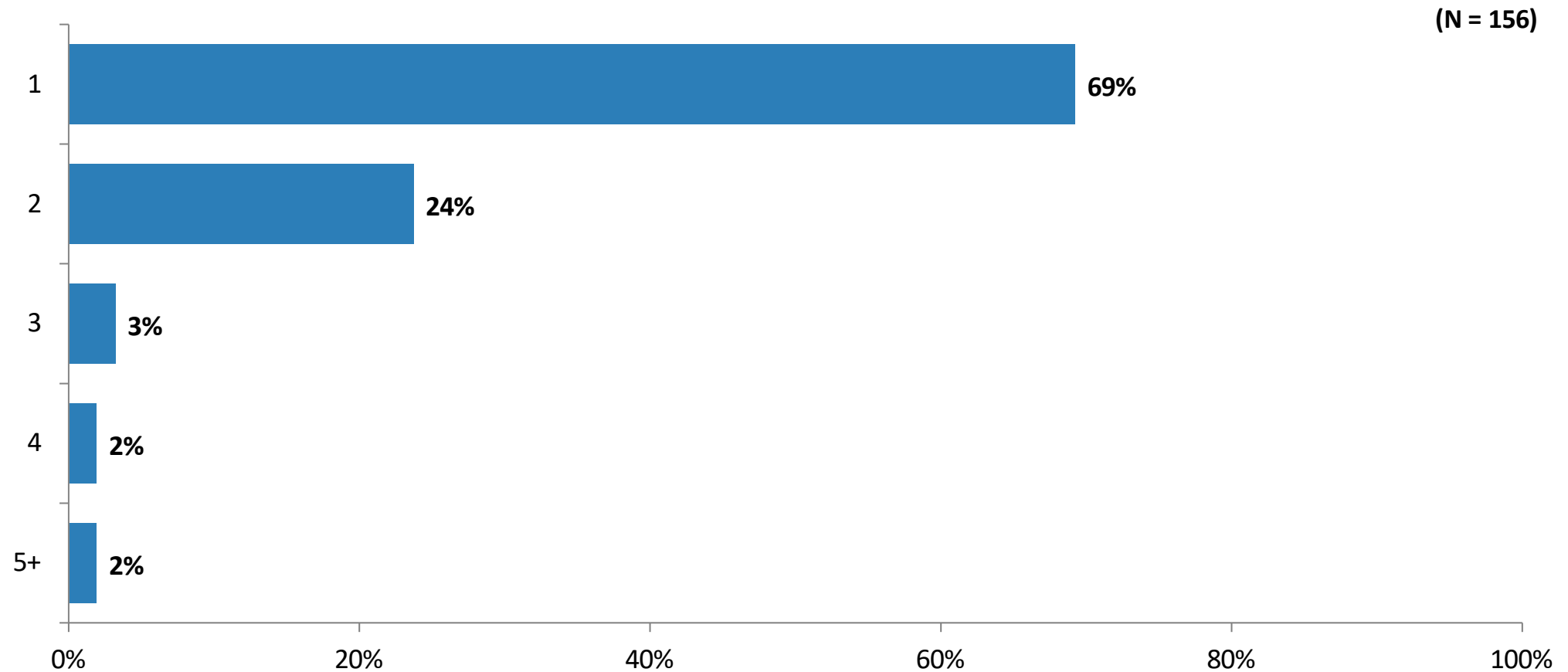
How many of the following does your household own?: Automobiles



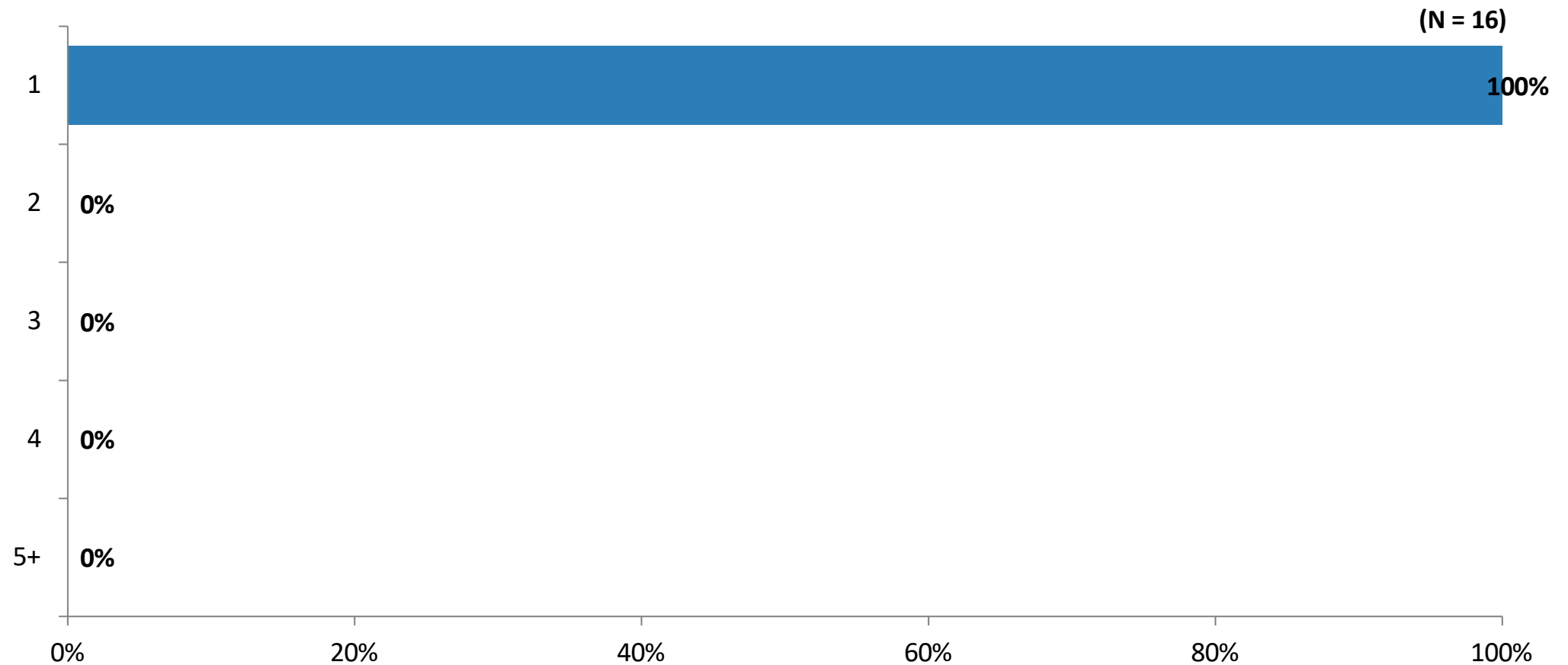
How many of the following does your household own?: Bicycles



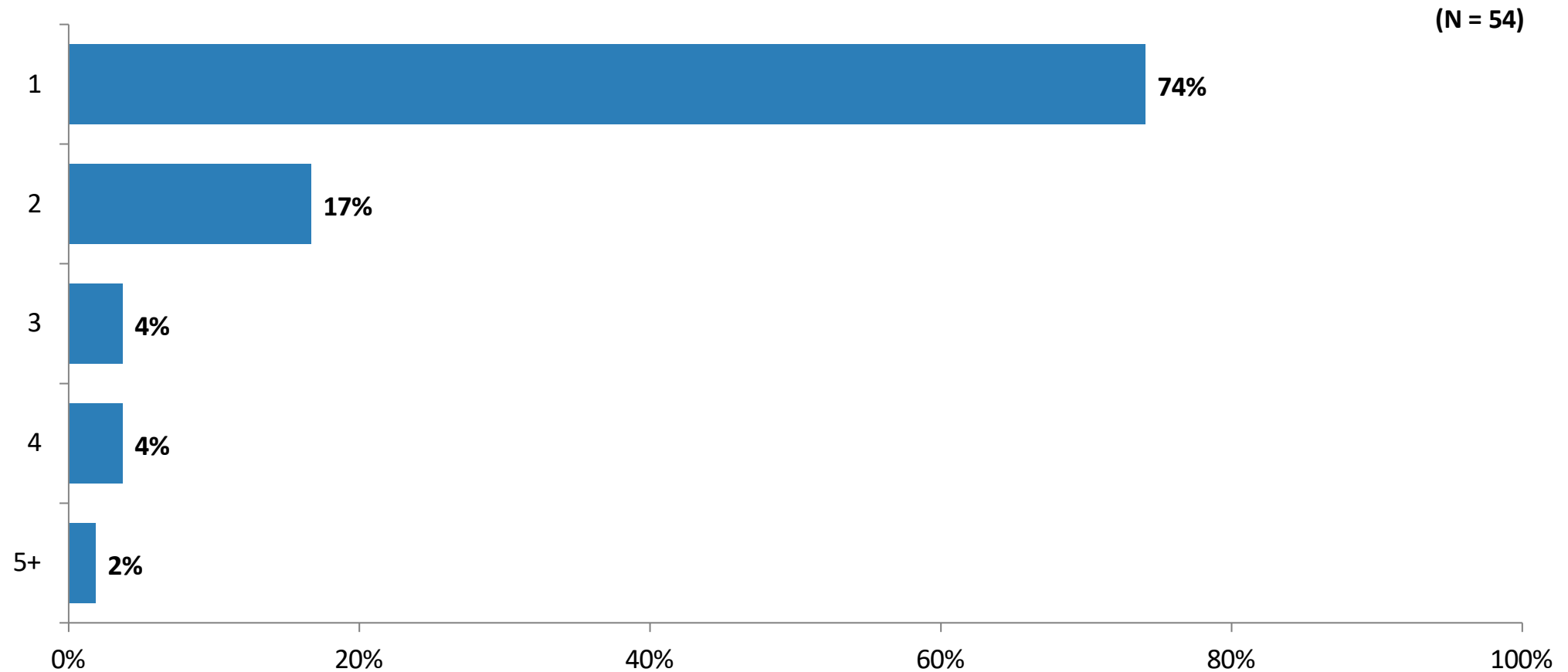
How many of the following does your household own?: Boats



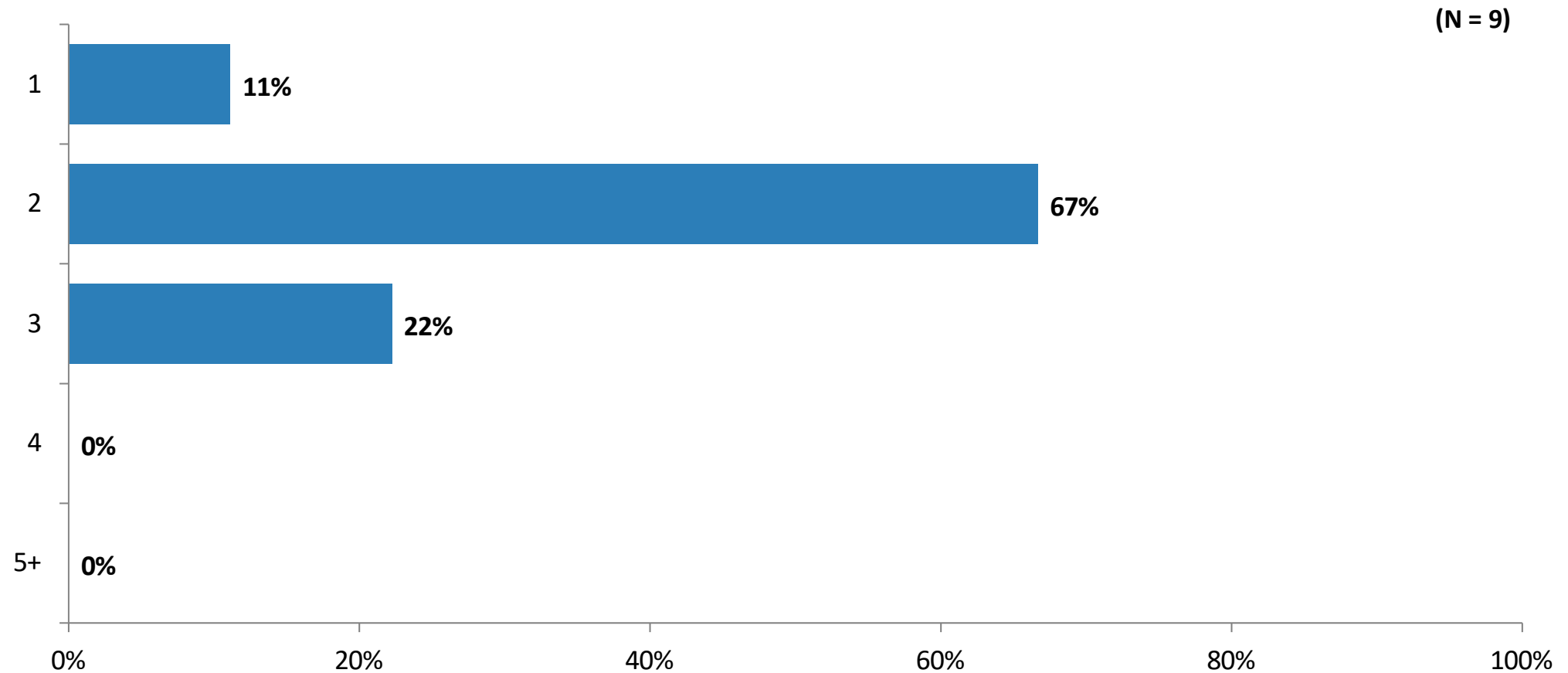
How many of the following does your household own?: Motor-homes



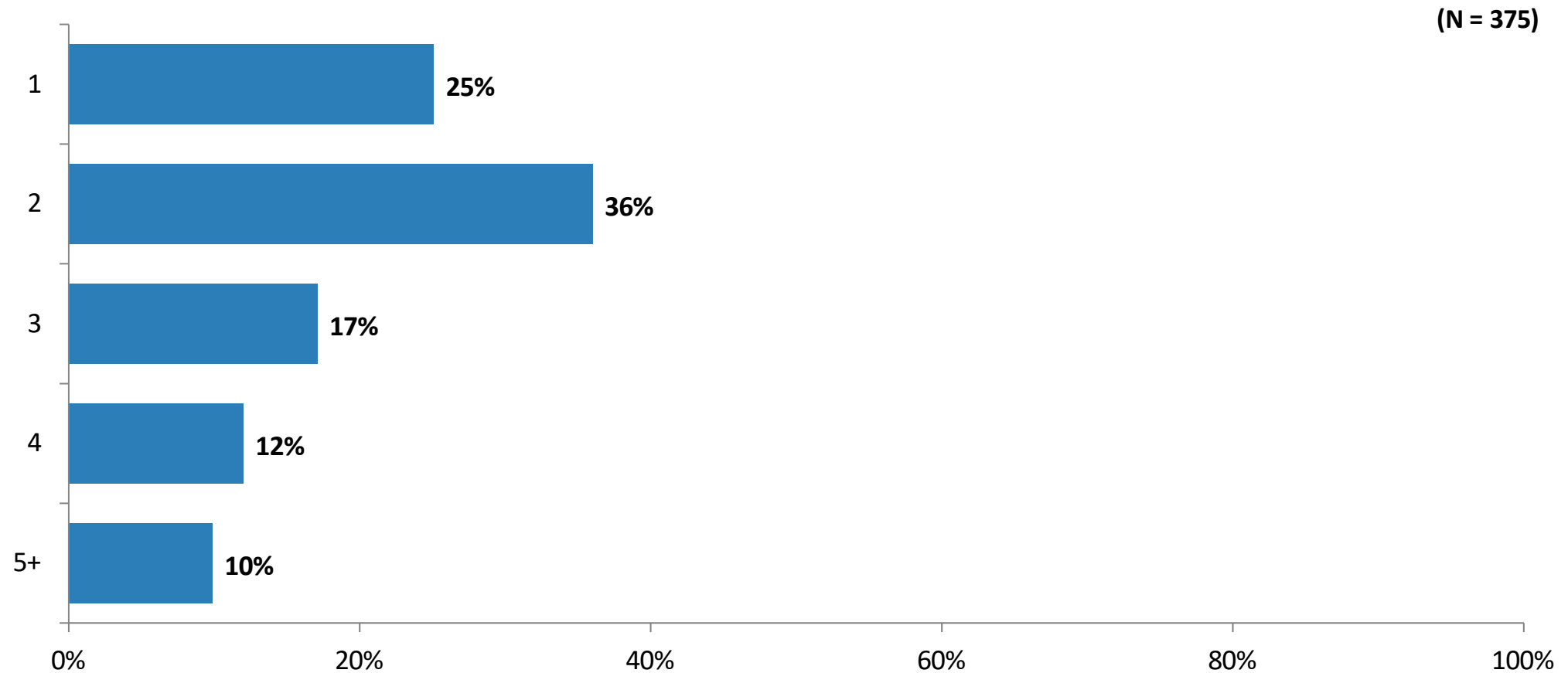
How many of the following does your household own?: Other RV's



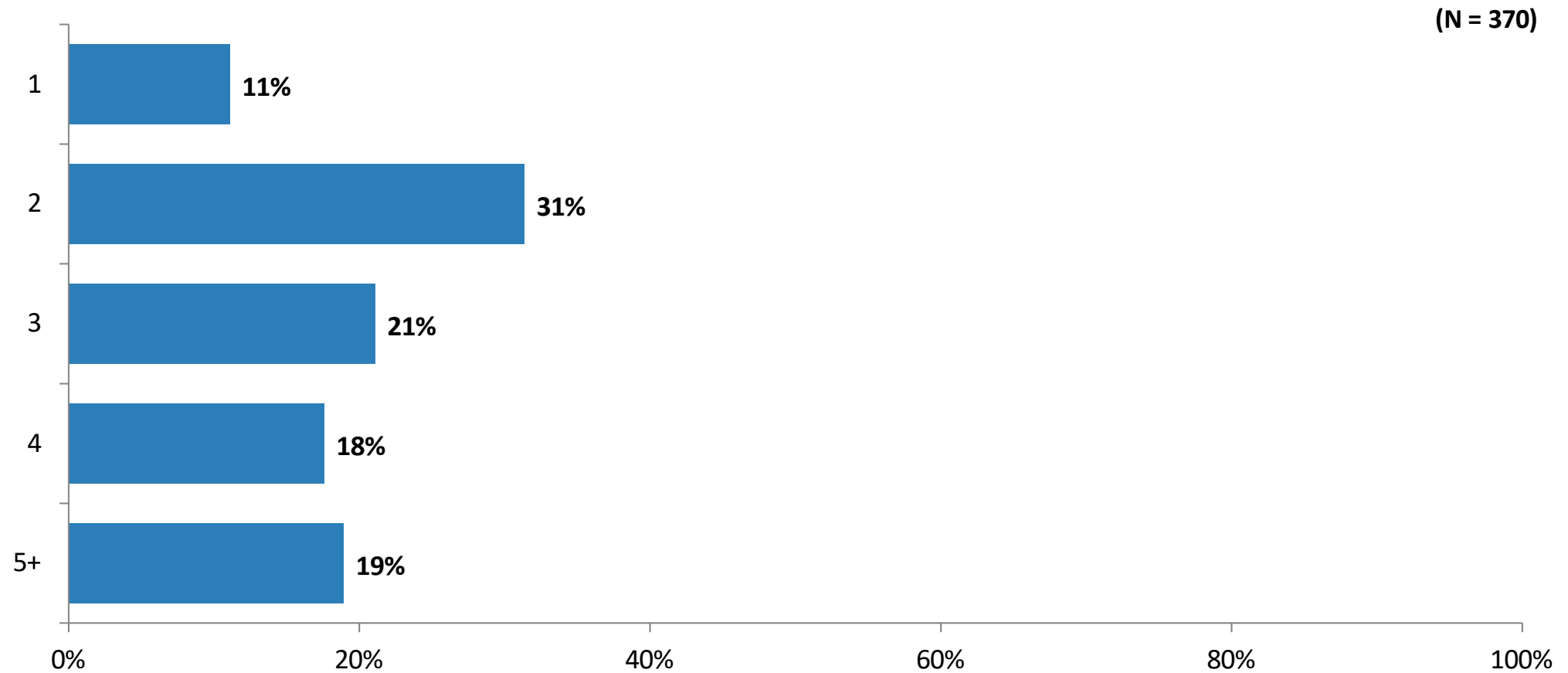
How many of the following does your household own?: Horses



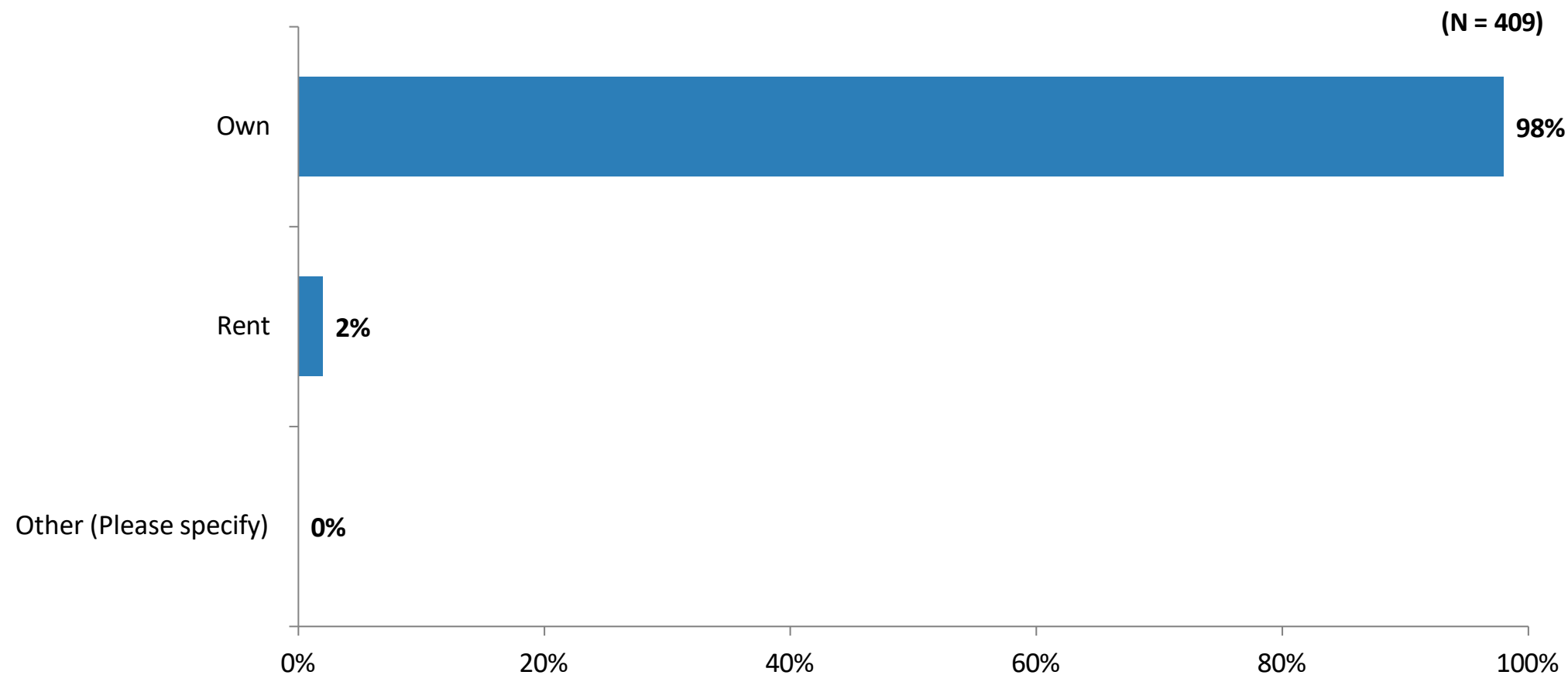
How many of the following does your household own?: Computers (desktops/laptops)



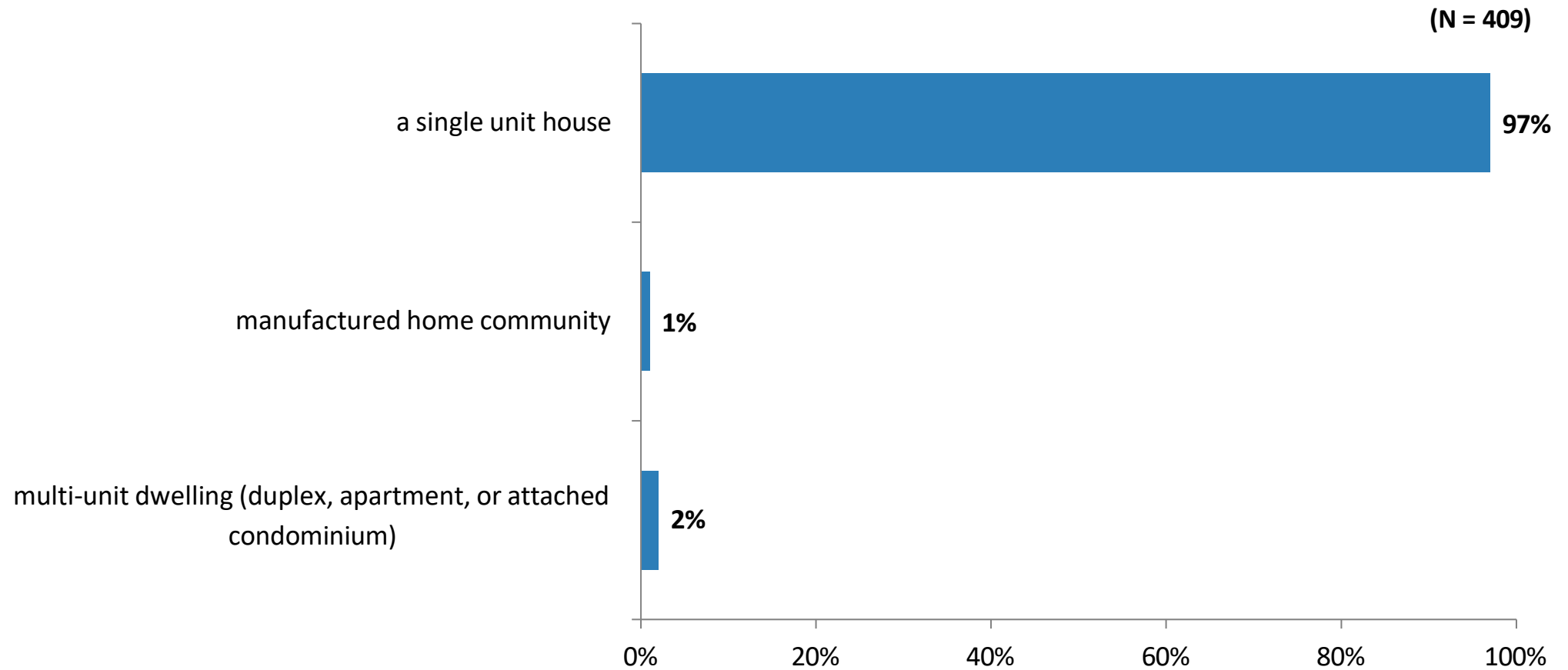
How many of the following does your household own?: Mobile Computing Devices (tablets/smart-phones)



Do you own or rent your present residence?

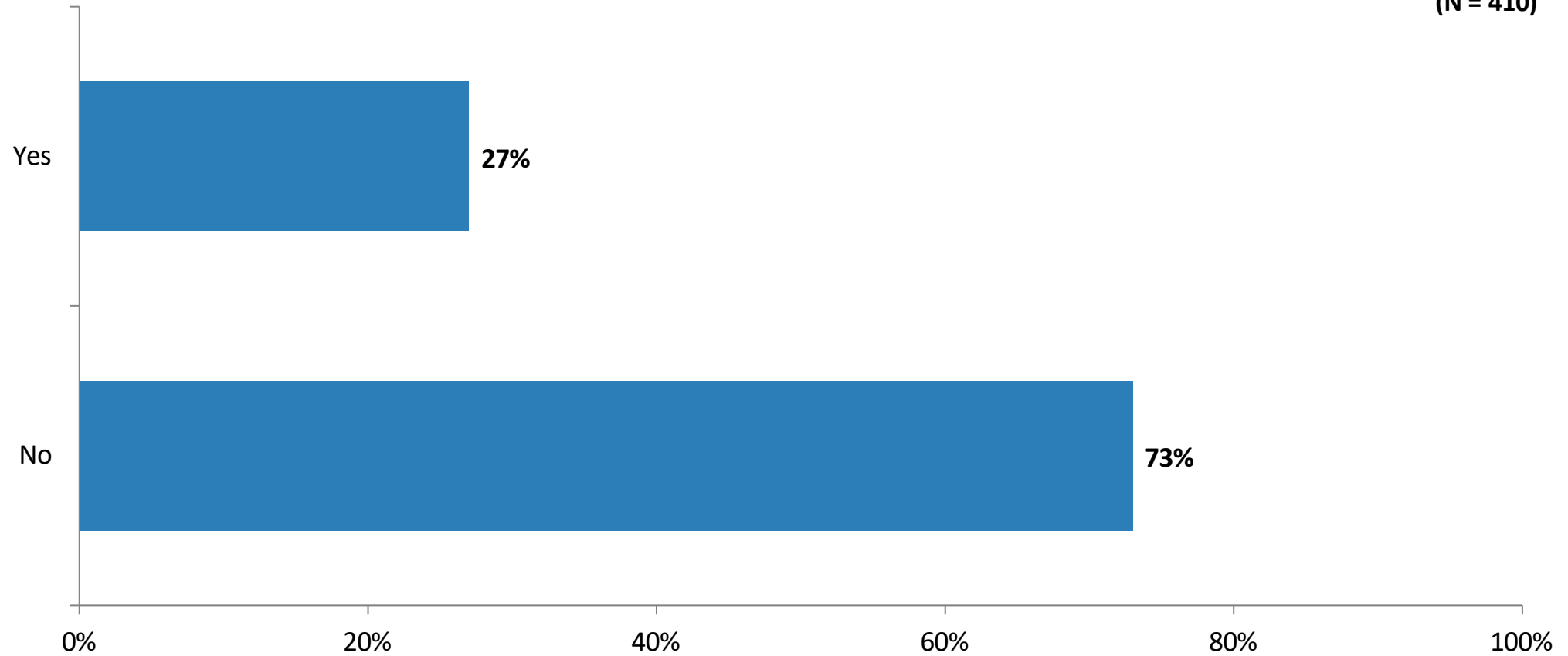


Do you live in a...



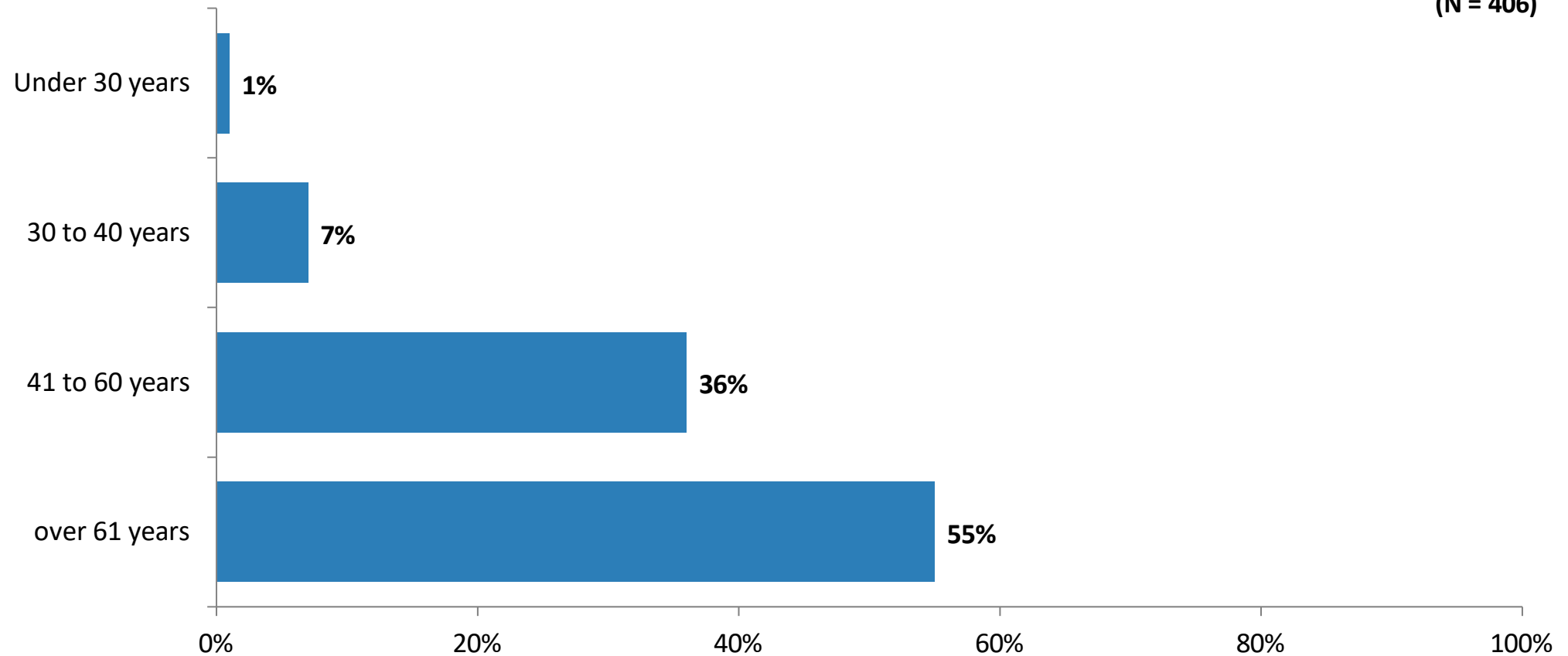
Is your home on a lake?

(N = 410)



What age group are you in?

(N = 406)

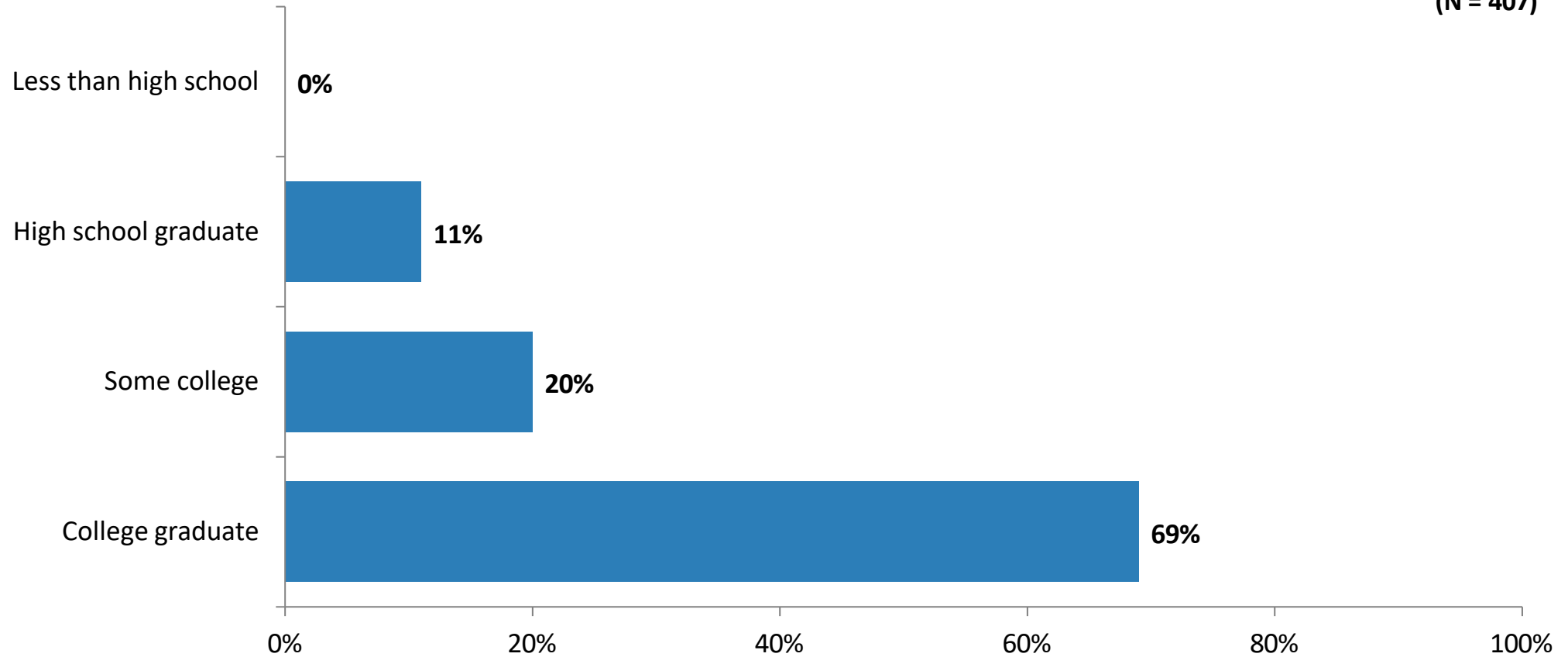


What is your household size? ___ persons

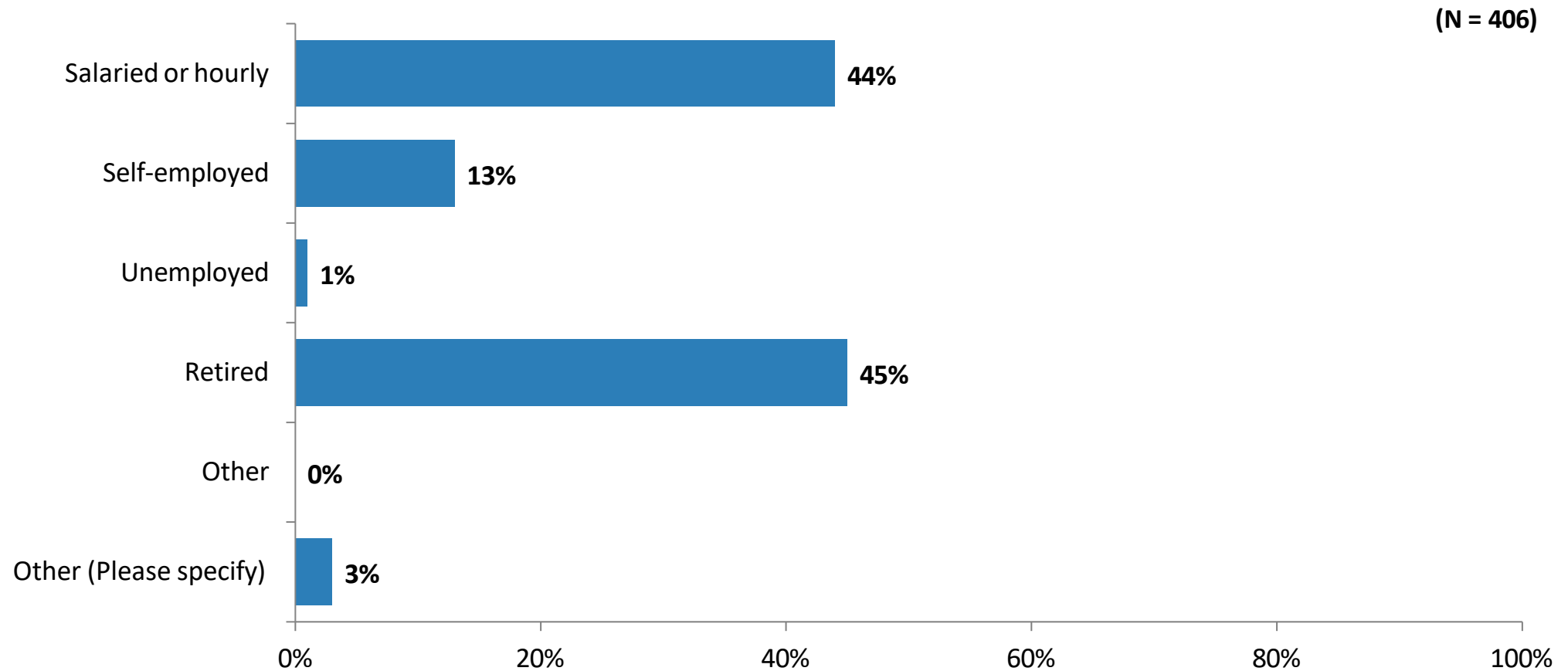
There are almost 4 times the number of 2-person households in the township compared to any other group with 201 respondents. The next common household type was 4-person with 59 respondents, followed by 1-person with 57 respondents.

Check the box to indicate the highest level of education attained by the head of the household.

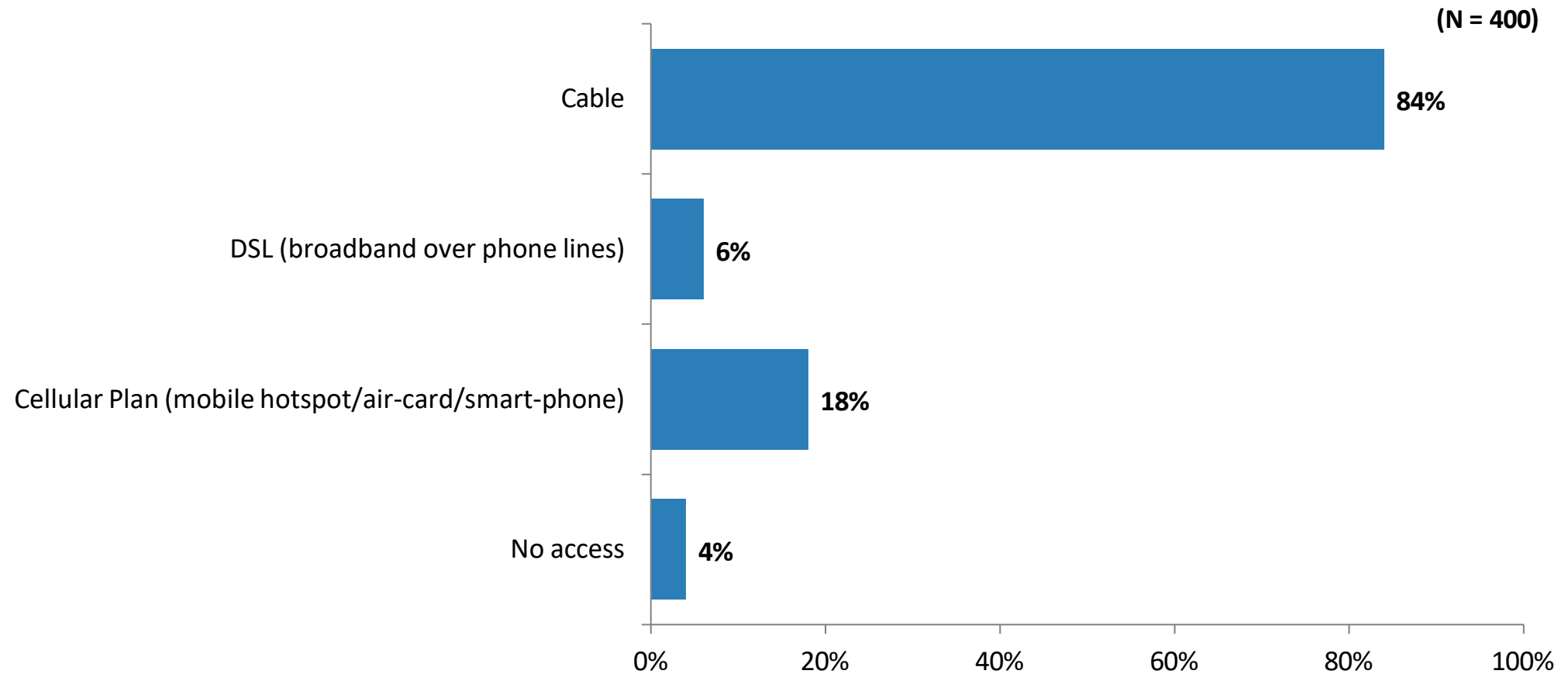
(N = 407)



Are you currently...



How do you access the internet at home?

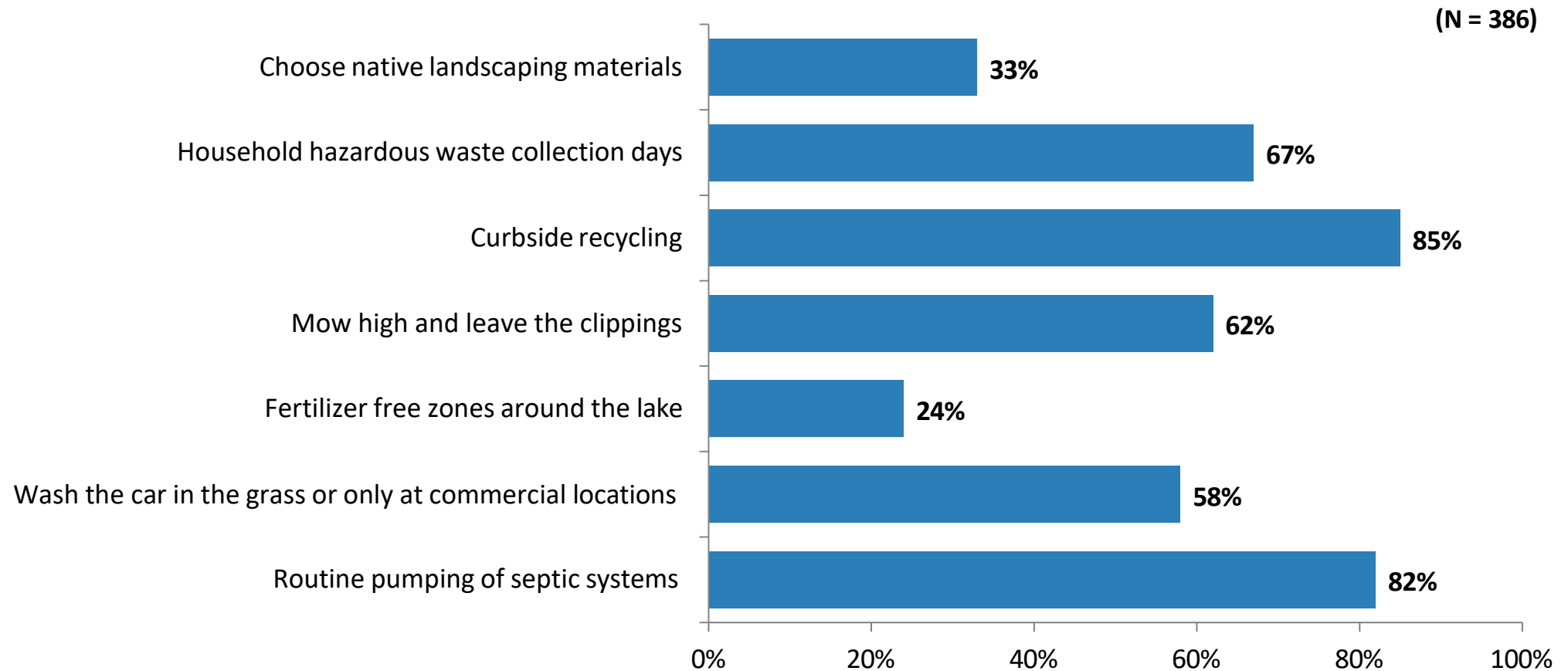


What are the top three things Highland's Land Use Policy should AVOID?

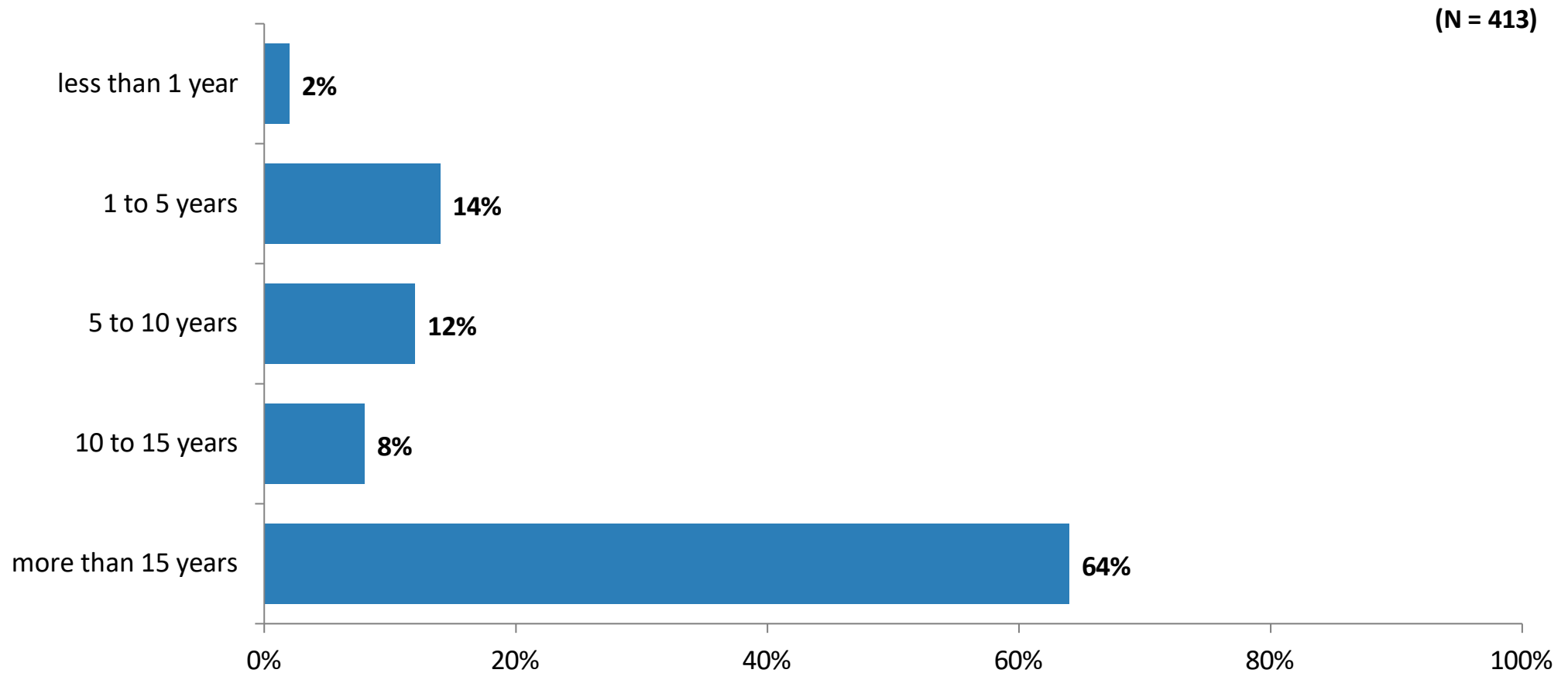
The survey data showed many residents enjoy the rural feel of the township would like to see commercial development be limited to strategic locations (such as the Livingston/Milford Road area), In addition, many residents voiced concern about development that impacts the environment (clear cutting, water pollution, etc.). This includes strip malls, big box stores, and reducing natural resources and existing open space.

In addition, many respondents cited industrial development (such as landfills, gravel mines, etc.), high density housing (apartments and manufactured housing), and large sprawling homes/neighborhoods as being a high concern.

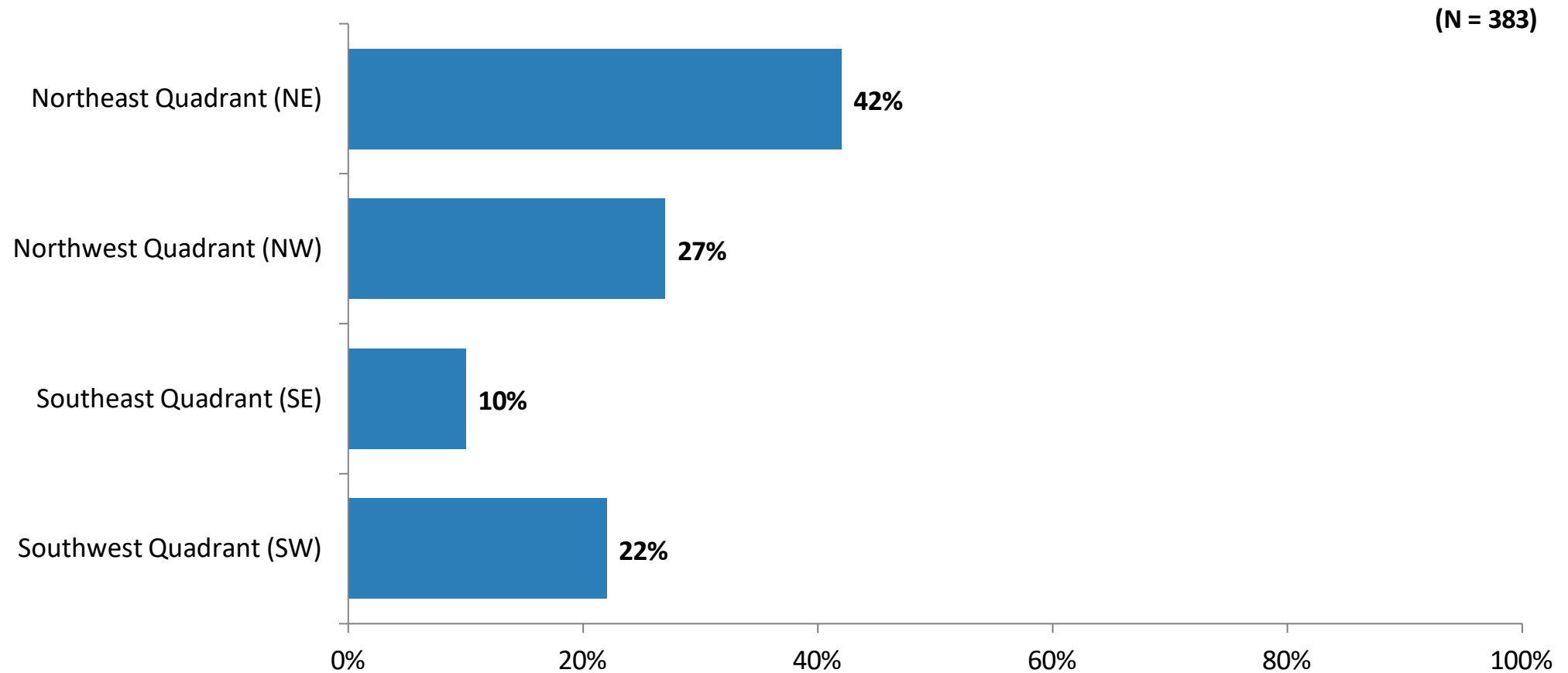
**Do you participate in any of the following as a result of public education messages about watershed health?
(Check all that apply)**



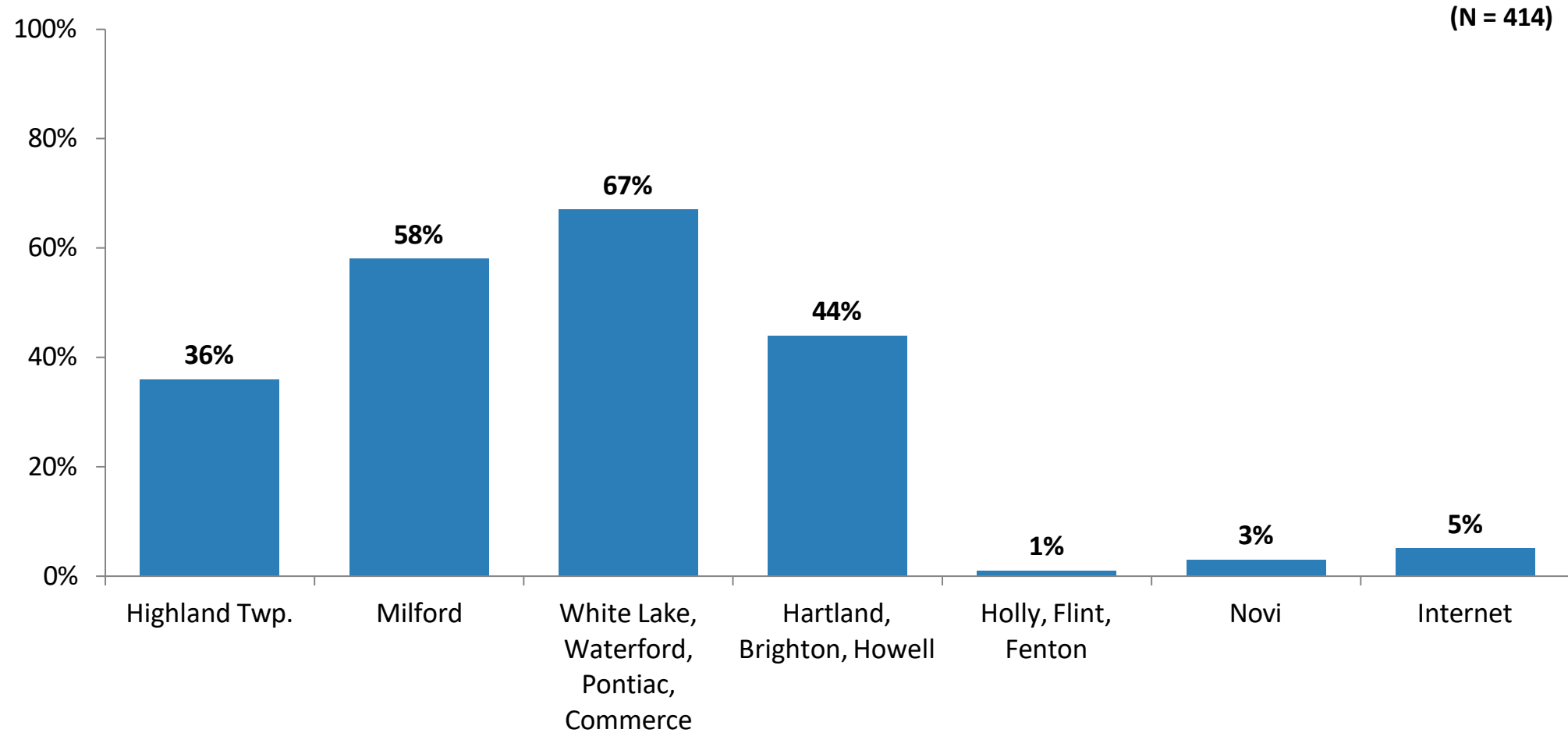
How many years have you lived in Highland?



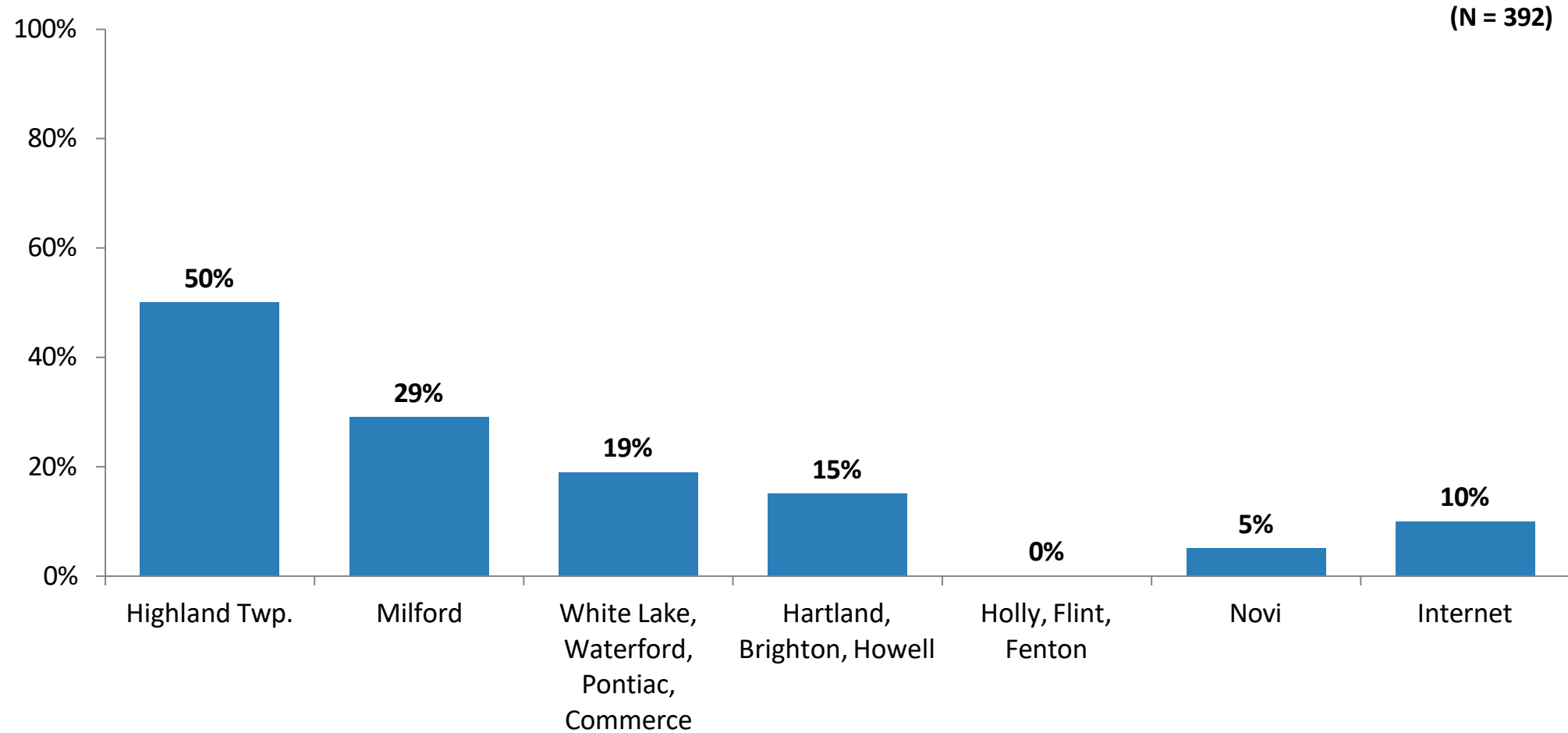
Where do you live?



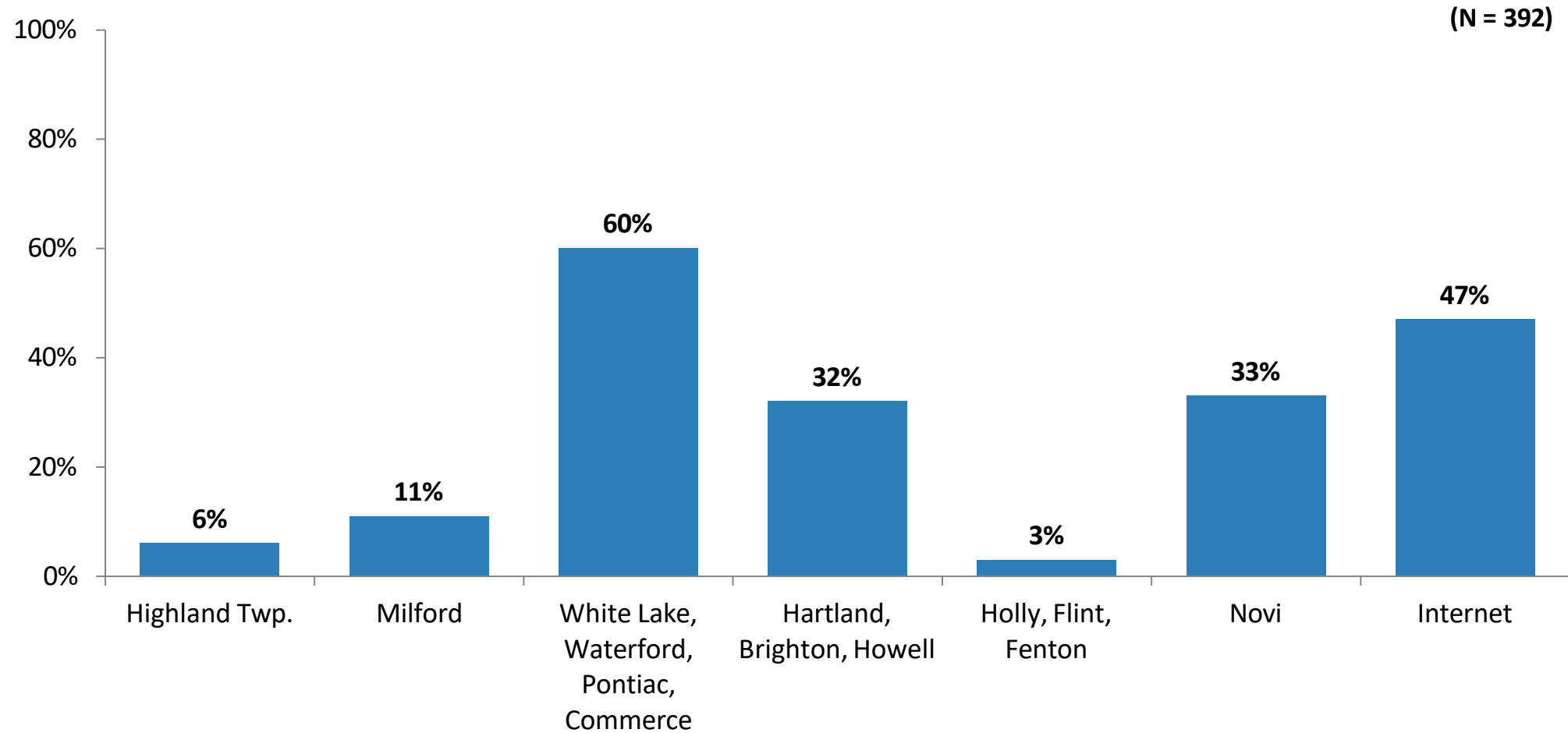
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Groceries



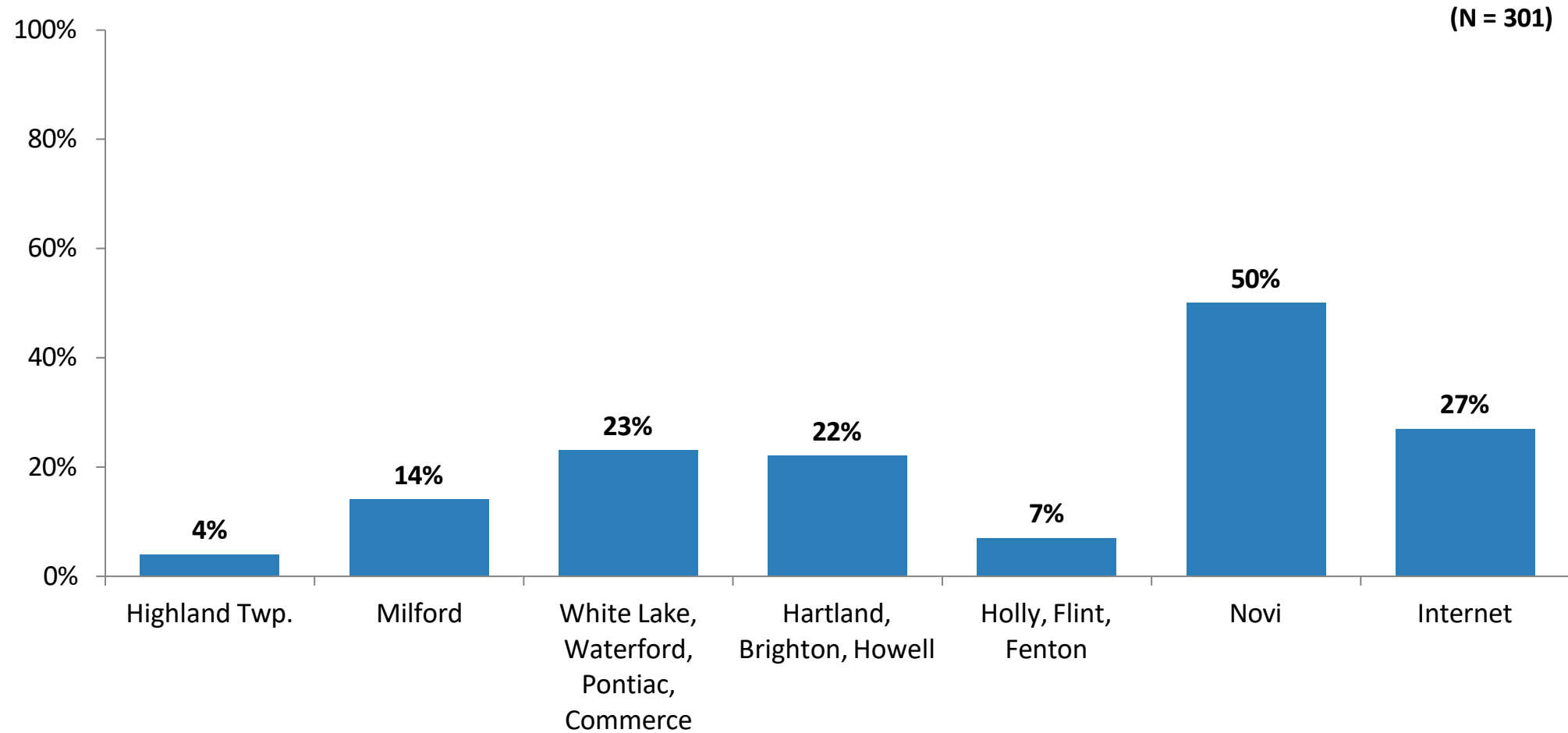
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Medicine



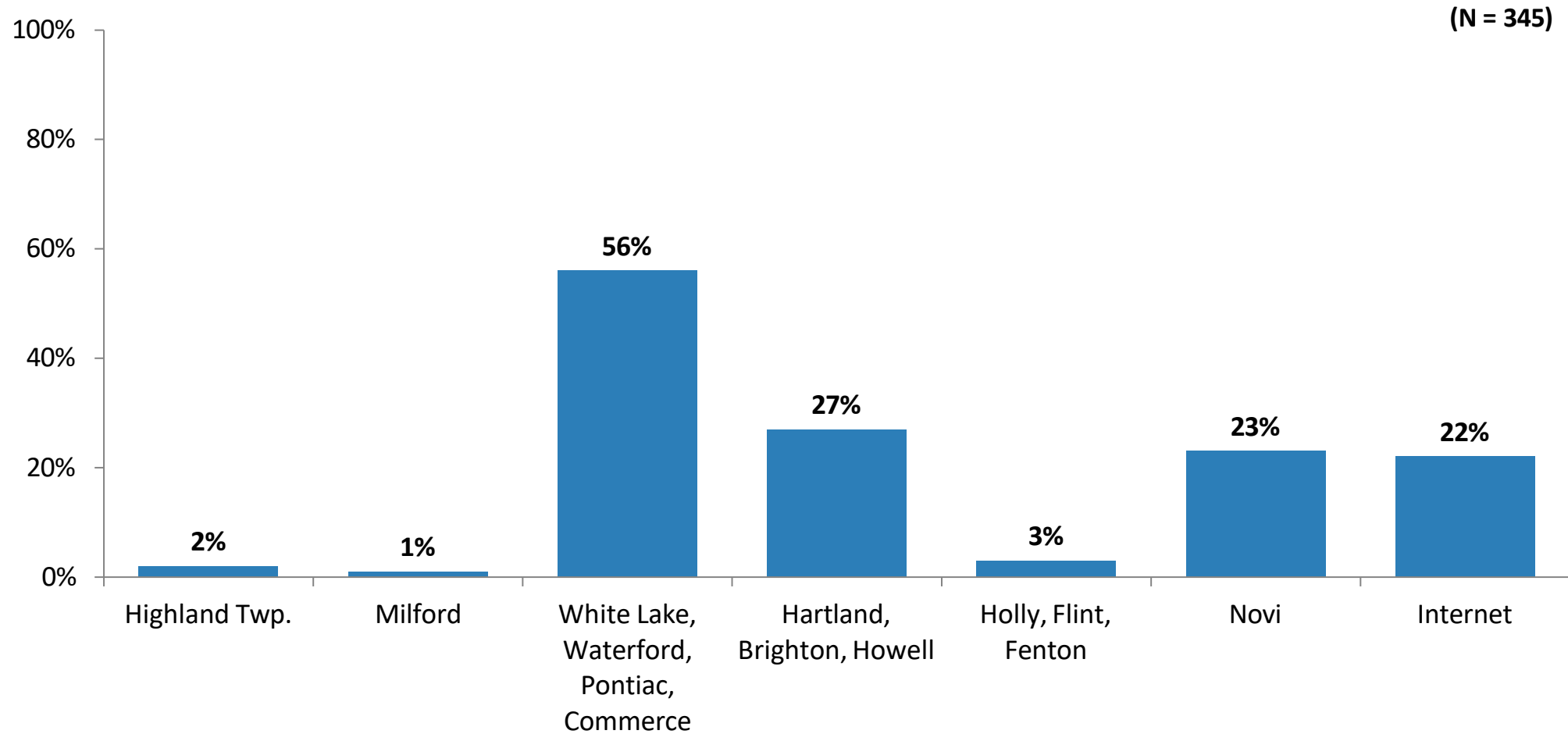
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Clothing



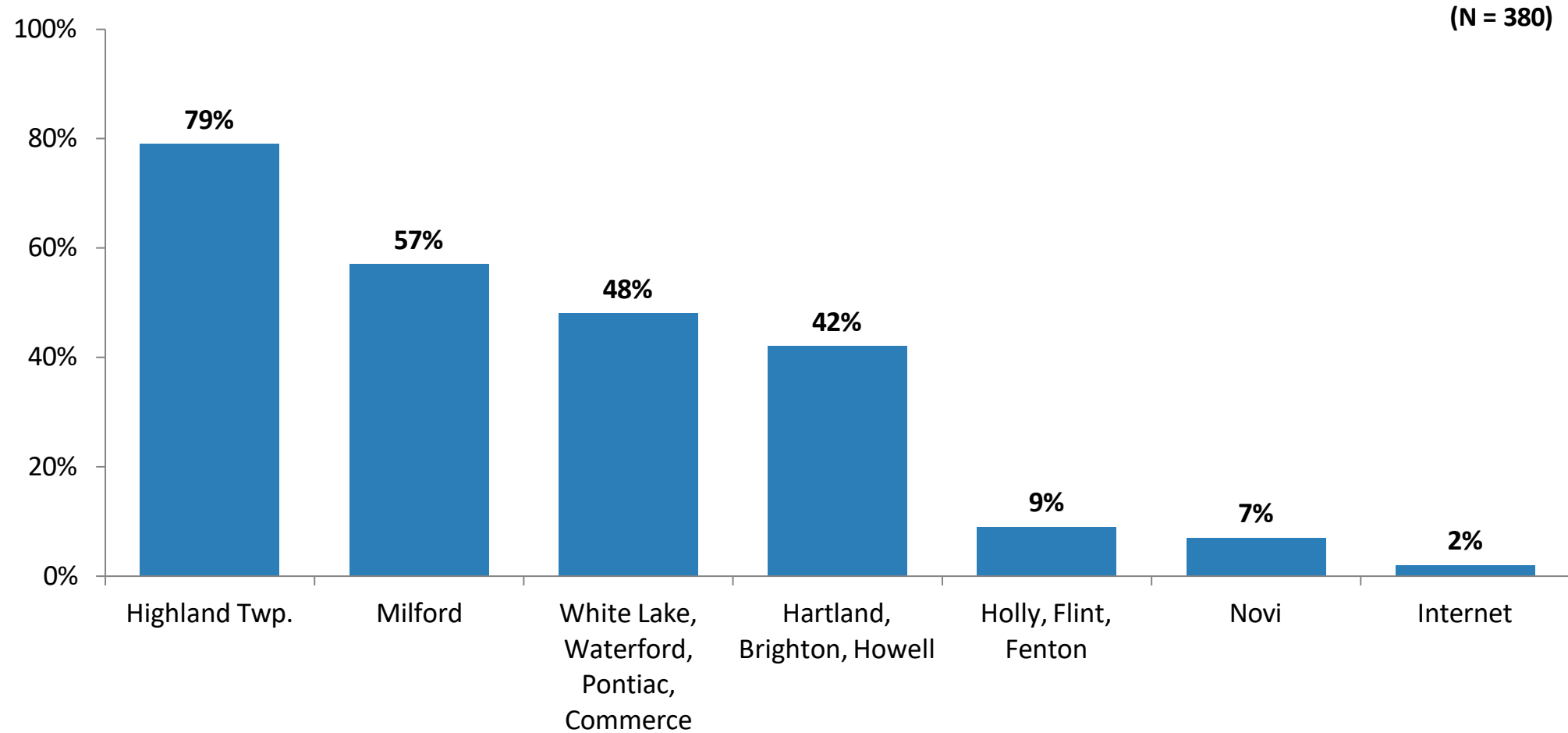
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Furniture



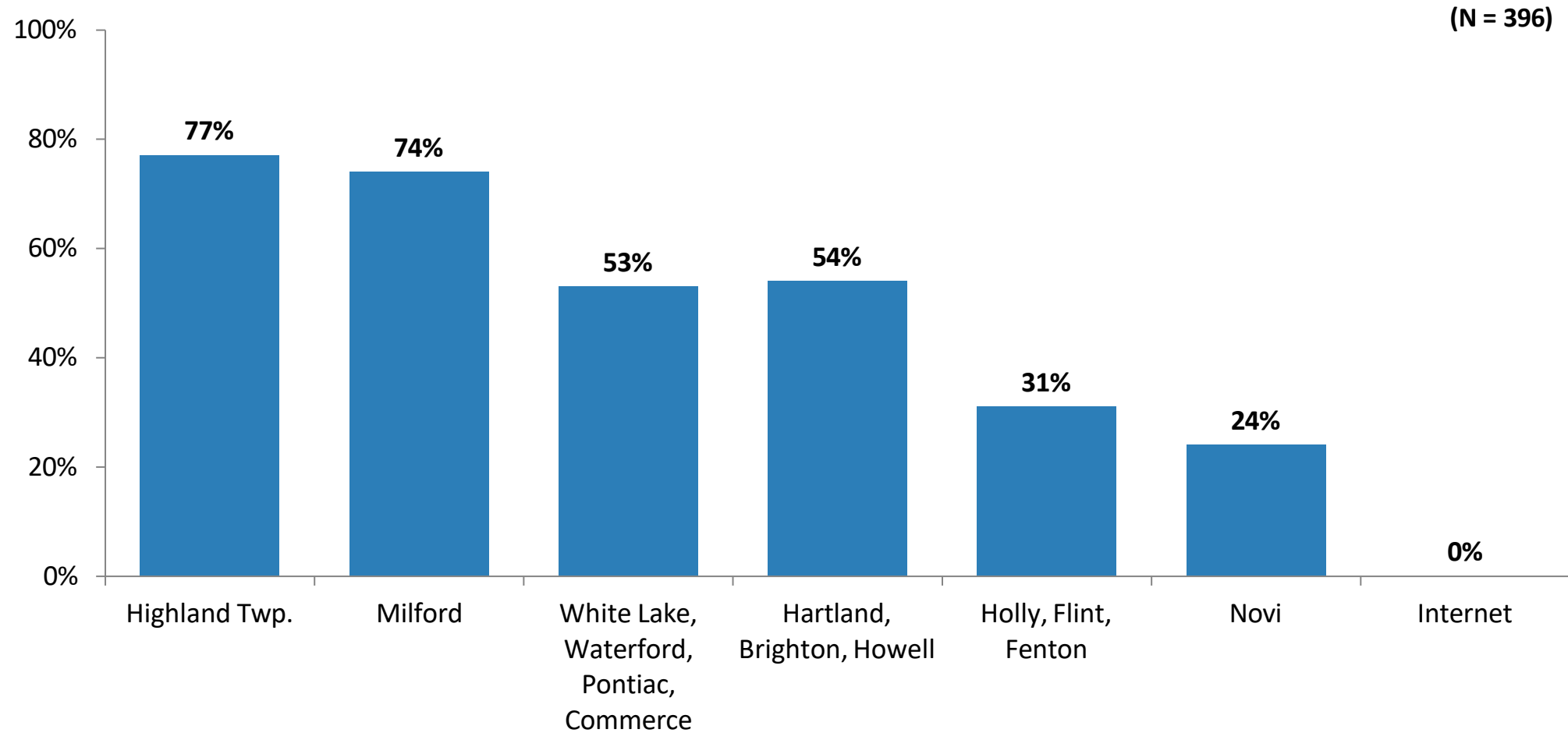
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Appliances



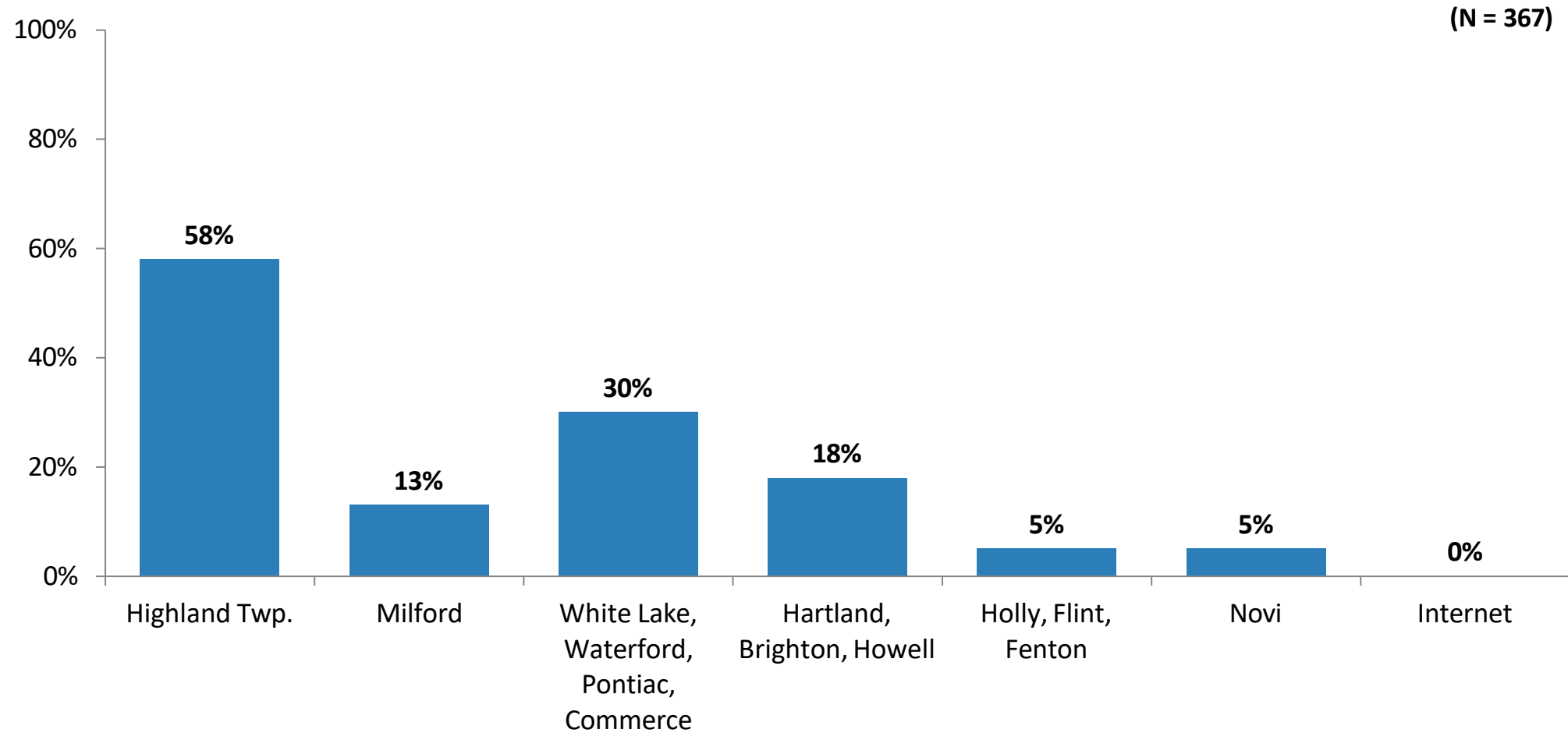
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Take-out/Fast Food



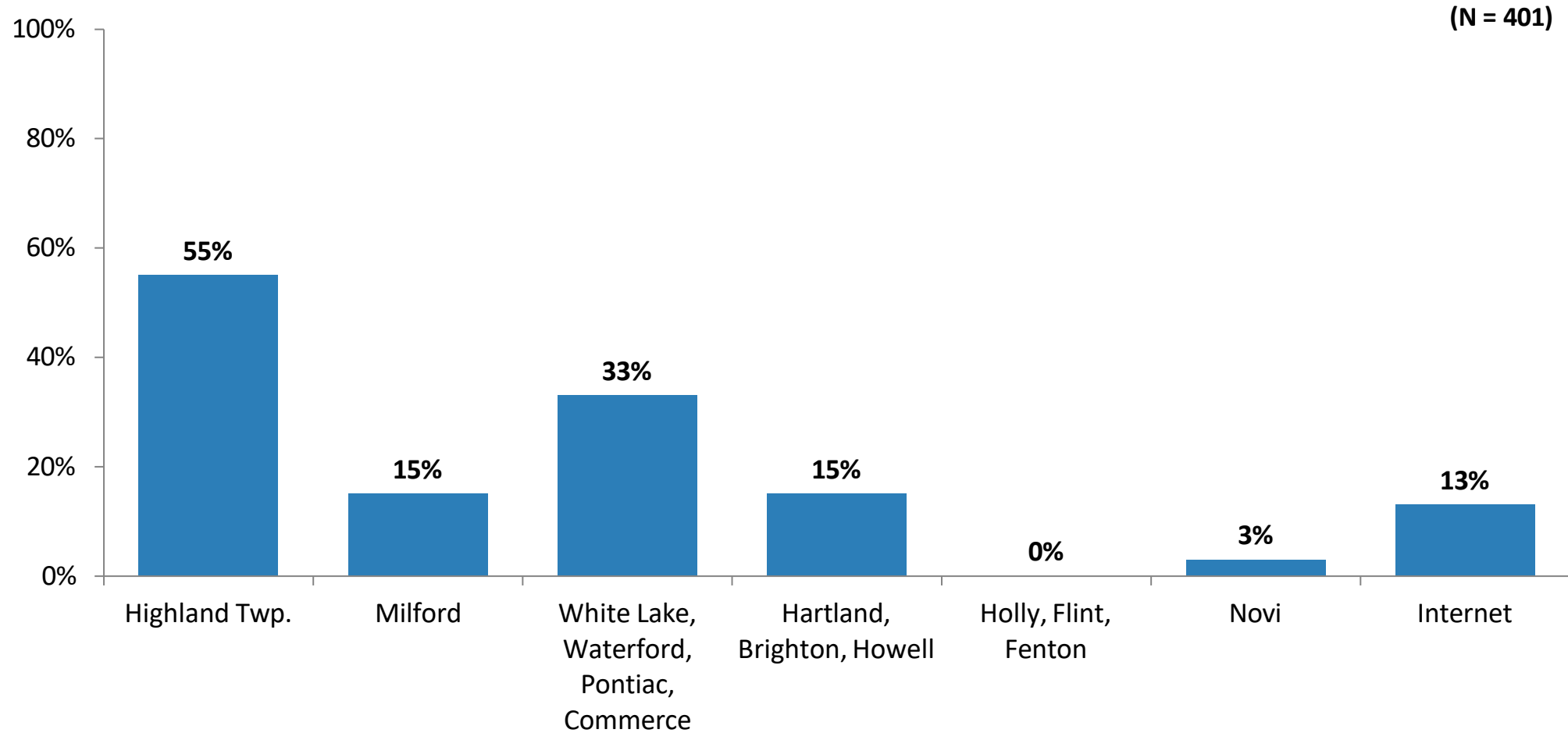
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Sit Down Dining



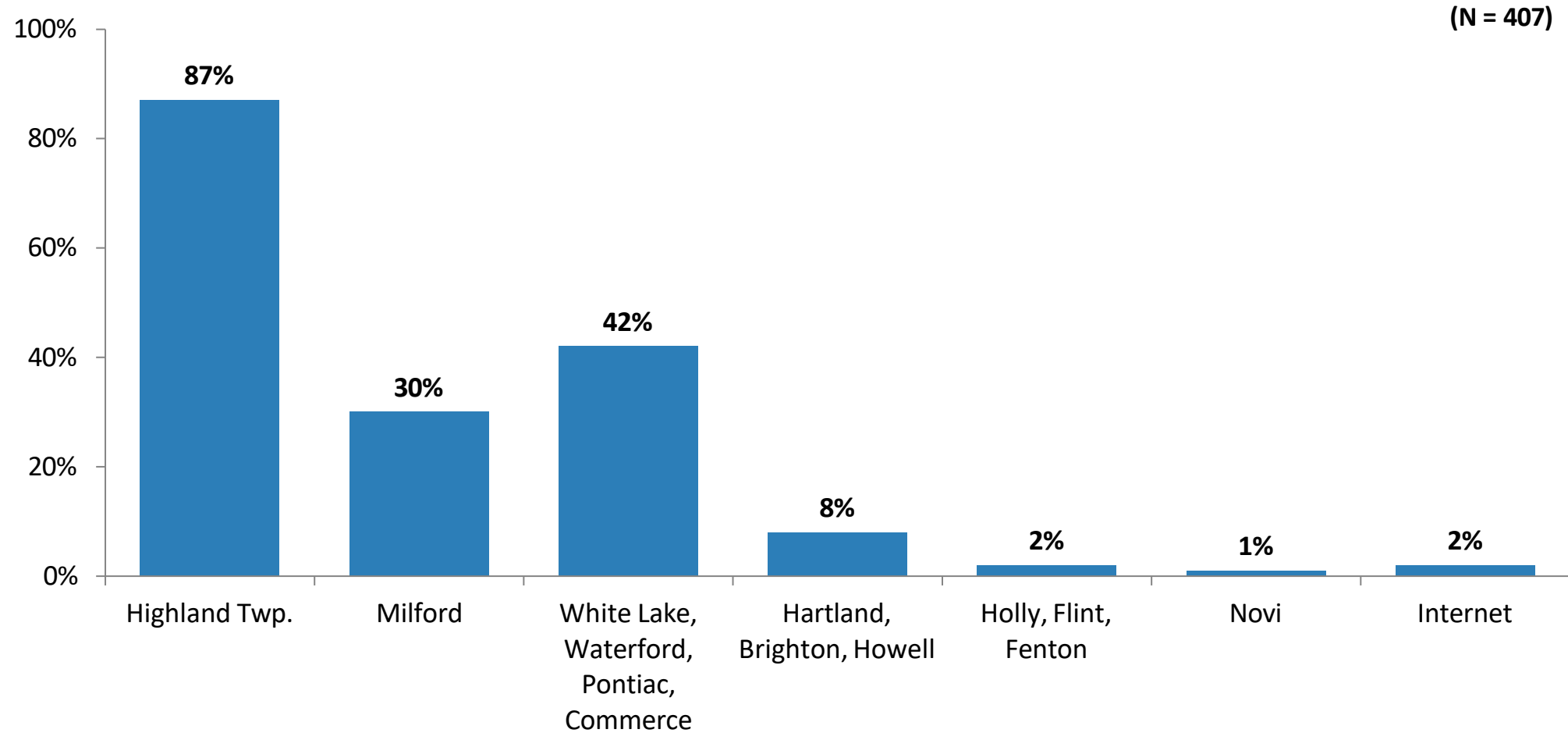
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Auto Services



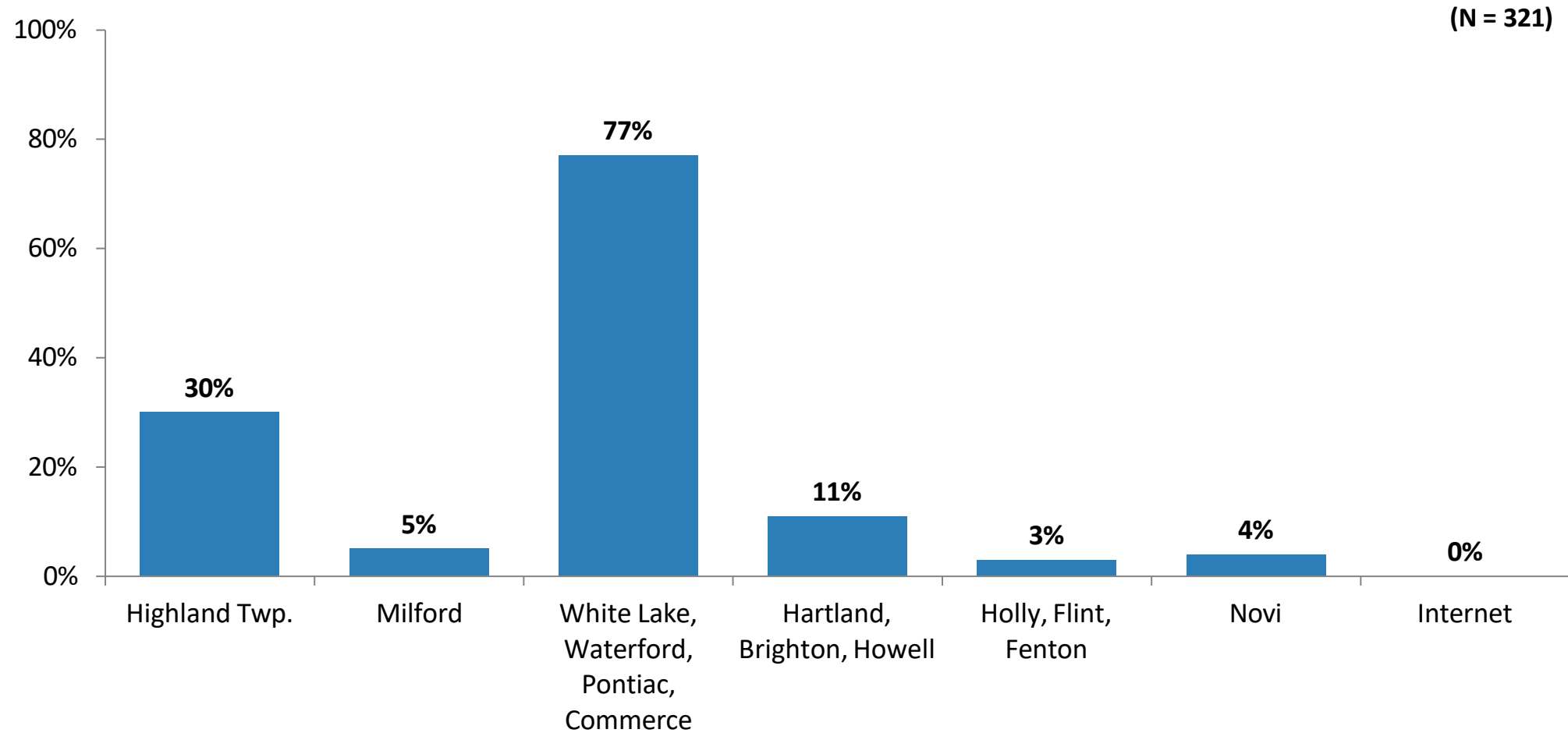
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Banking



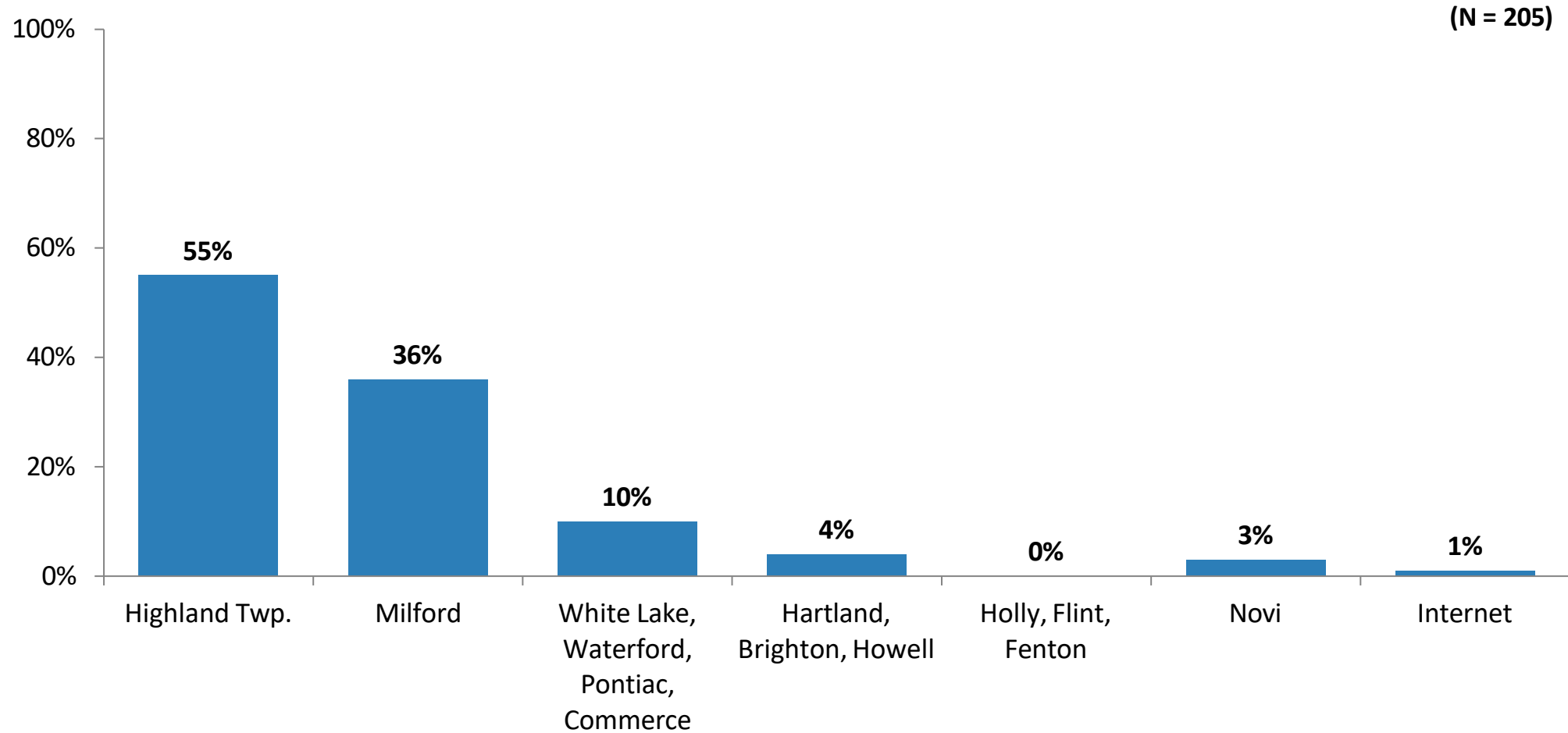
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Hardware



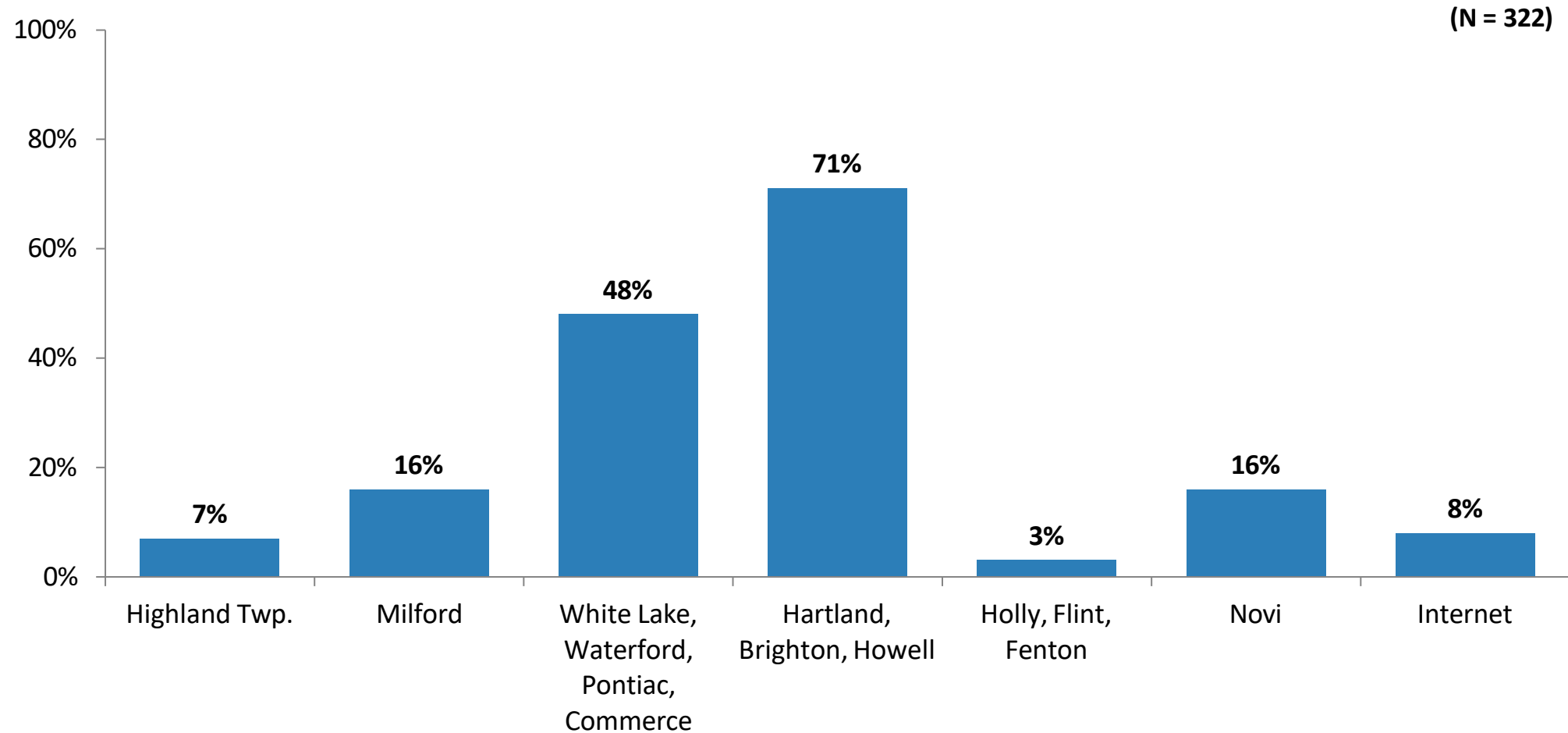
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Lumber



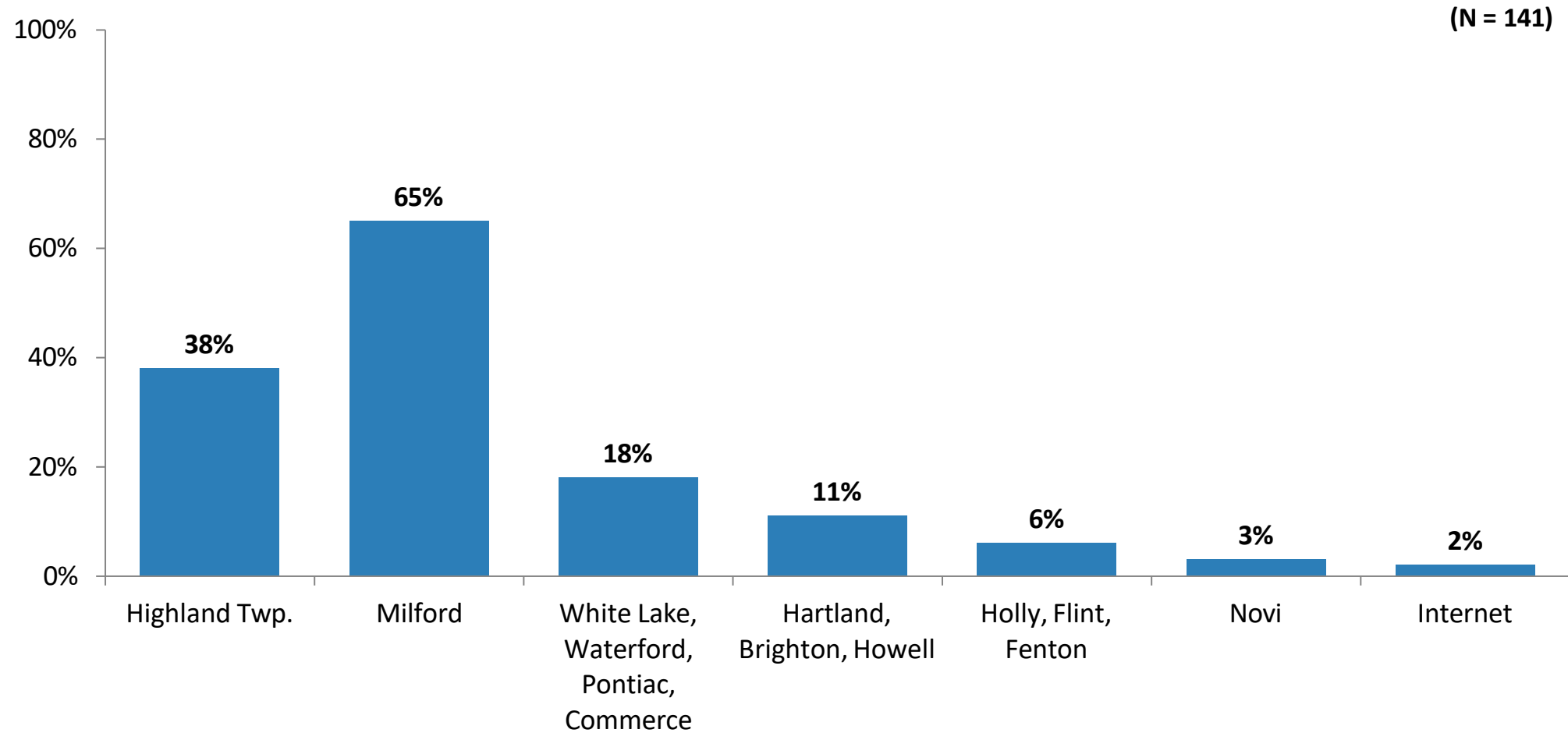
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Dry Cleaning



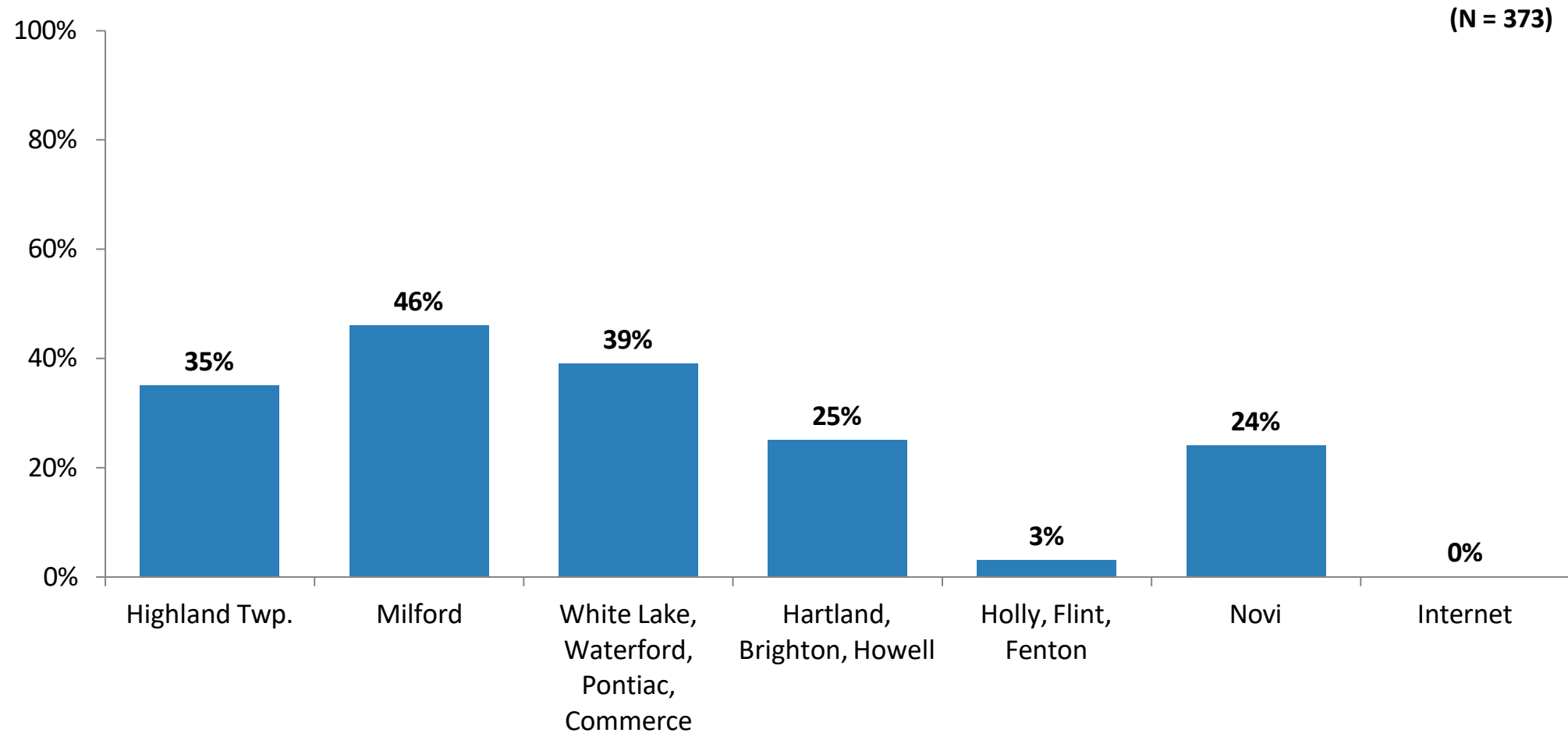
Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Entertainment (Movies, Plays, etc.)



Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.: Concerts



Please indicate where you go for the following services. Multiple answers are possible.:
Medical/Doctor/Dentist



Other (please specify product or service and location you normally shop for that)

Many residents travel to areas outside of the Township to visit concerts/entertainment, big box stores, purchase specialty items, receive medical/dental services, and to do their banking.