

# GRAND ISLE COMMUNITY PLANNING SURVEY 2023

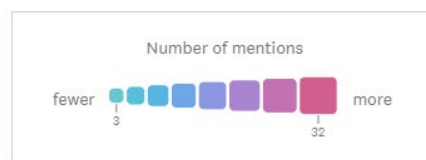
## Survey Response Summary

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### Overview

The Grand Isle Community Planning Survey received 162 responses. Over 95% of respondents have a primary residence in the town. Forty percent of respondents are 65 years or older, while only 25% are under 45. Residents love living in Grand Isle because it is a small, rural community with beautiful scenery and access to Lake Champlain. When asked if they could change one thing (Q3), many respondents said they would like to see a more established town center with small businesses and more public access to Lake Champlain. Most residents support a municipal town center with outdoor space for community events and space for indoor activities for all ages; however, there were several comments that the Municipal Town Center should not try to replace or repeat what is available at the Donaldson Rd Rec Park. Residents support more walking/biking trails and also improvements to make it safer to walk and bike along roads. Respondents also had plenty of ideas for the old library building, most commonly for Historical Society use. Although most respondents were excited to propose new ideas, spending transparency was a major concern for some. Many emphasized the importance of cost efficiency and Selectboard accountability.

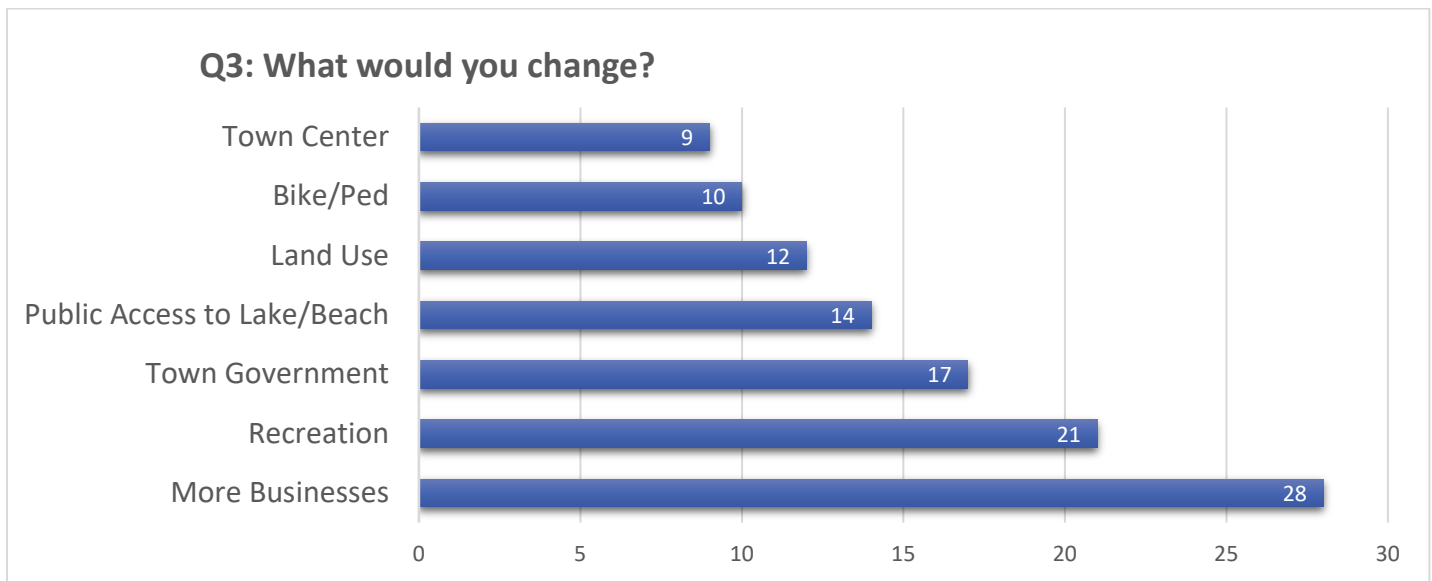
### Q1: What do you like the most about living in Grand Isle?



### Q2: What do you like the least about living in Grand Isle?

\*This question is similar to question 3 and therefore garnered similar responses, so I've skipped this question for brevity.

### Q3: If you could change one thing about Grand Isle, what would it be?



#### More Businesses (18.79%)

- “Bring in retail, services. Pharmacy, bigger grocery, more coffee shops, basic goods store, hair salon, etc... we shouldn’t have to drive 30-40 minutes off the island to access basic services.”
- “Find way to increase businesses to allow for more jobs here in Town and places for residents to gather.”

#### Recreation (14.09%) and more specifically, public access to Lake Champlain (9.4%)

- “Build a town center and green, fitness, senior teen centers. Create places and add trails and bike paths.”
- “Have an area that can be made available for all uses, meetings, birthdays, social events at small charge to local residents.”

#### Town Government (11.41%)

- “Eliminate the general mood of contention among the Select Board members so as to help us make thoughtful and timely decisions.”
- “Local government transparency.”

#### Land Use (8.05%)

- “Return to more open spaces and hayfields, with less development.”
- “Decrease rate of development, increase public access to the lake.”

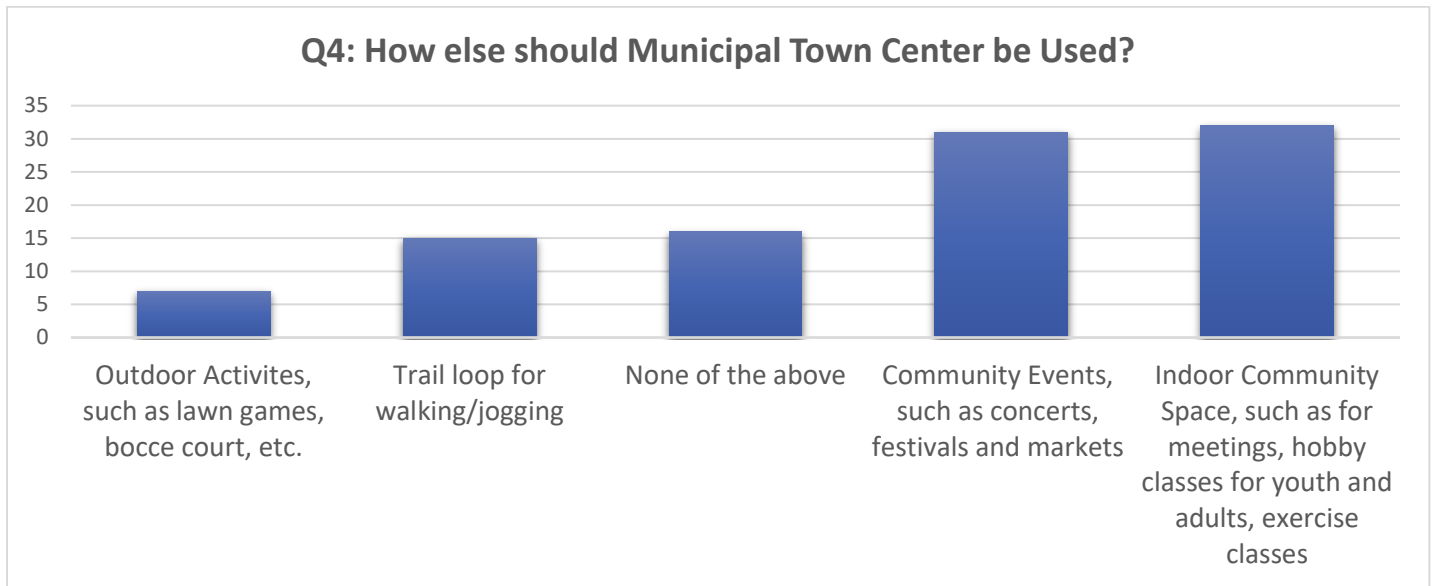
#### Bike/Pedestrian Infrastructure (6.71%)

- “I would improve accessibility for pedestrian traffic, particularly near the school, to the town office and library, to Emmon’s and beyond.”
- “We do NOT want bike tours and bike events on East Shore North. The road has many turns and spots with safety concerns. We pay for cars, trailers, ATV’s, snowmobiles but they do not pay.”

#### Town Center (6.04%)

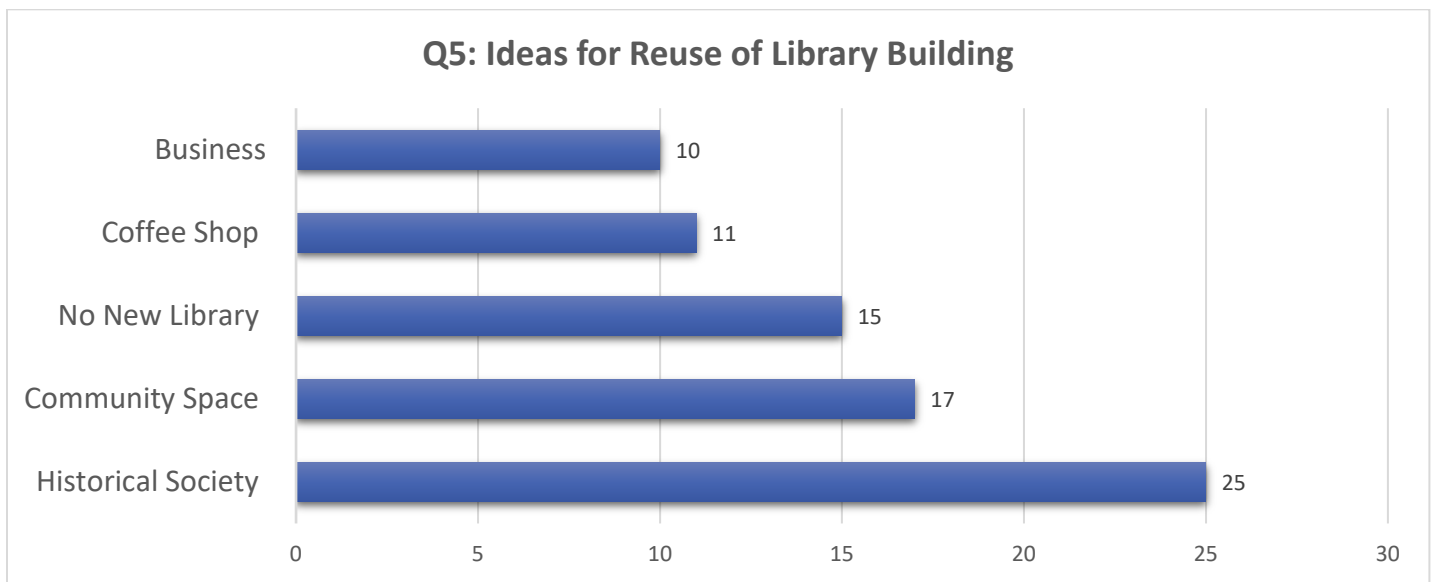
- “I would build a small-town center with sidewalks and potted and a few shops.”
- “Creating a visible town center on route 2 with traffic calming, easy access to business, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes.”

**Q4: In addition to a Library and Town Offices, how would you like to see the Municipal Town Center Property be used? Check all that apply.**



\*Unfortunately, participants were not able to select multiple options. Many used the “Other (please specify)” option to indicate they would have selected all if possible. Out of the 50 respondents who selected “Other (please specify), over 50% said “All of the Above.”

**Q5: When the town builds a new library, what are your ideas for what could be done with the old building?**



**Historical Society (19.69%)**

- “The space might be good for historical items to be displayed and maybe as small meeting place for historical events.”

- “The building is only roughly 800 square feet. Possibly allow the historical society to take over and create a museum or allow for community members to rent for events such as bday parties, multi-level marketing pitches, bridal/baby showers.”

**Community Space (13.39%)**

- “Indoor Community Space, such as for meetings, hobby classes for youth and adults, exercise classes...childcare.”
- “Space for community events and classes.”

**No New Library (11.81%)**

- “I don't think we need a new library. We should consolidate with So. Hero.”
- “Leave library alone as is. We do not need a new one.”

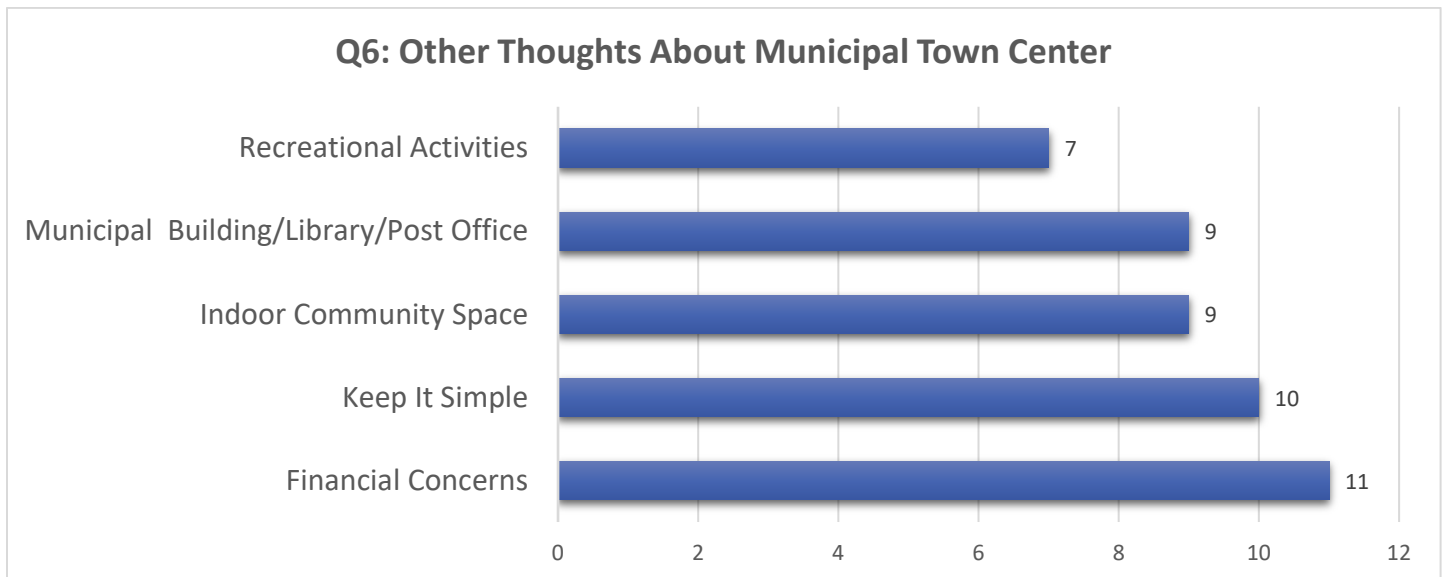
**Coffee Shop (8.66%)**

- “Coffee shop and bakery!”
- “Would love a coffee shop / bookstore in town”

**Business (7.87%)**

- “Rent to a local business, too small for community needs.’
- “It can be an incubator space for new businesses or become a coffee house or community information center.”

**Q6: Is there anything else you would like to tell the Planning Commission about the vision for the Municipal Town Center Property?**



**Financial Concerns (11.11%)**

- “Don't get too fancy and expansive (i.e., keep it simple so as not to get too costly and not a tax burden into the future)”
- “It should be designed to minimize long-term maintenance costs. Do it right from the start.”

**Keep It Simple (10.1%)**

- “Make efficient not flashy and over the top. We are small and quaint. The facility needs to resemble our town, not a big city.”

- “I'd like to see it's space and building simple design keeping with the historic vision of the town. In other words, don't create a space that is totally out of character with the rest of the town.”

**Indoor Community Space (9.09%)**

- “Keep the youth in mind! They are the ones who will use the space the most! Our community is in desperate need for gym space and every club/organization/team is constantly fighting over gym time at the school! Keep the community in mind! Why don't we have a fall festival? Christmas dances to raise money with the fire dept? I am what Islanders call a transplant and where I come from the Fire Dept would put on BIG dances 2-4 times a year to raise money! DJ's, drinks, food, and it would be a huge event! \$\$\$ raised and it was a huge event our community would look forward too. Valentine's dances, summer BBQ, Fall chili fest, & their Christmas party. Grand Isle doesn't do ANYTHING! If the planning commission isn't planning on bringing the community together then forget the building and just put in a dog park.”
- “A community greenhouse could provide produce for the food shelf, experience/learning opportunity for those interested in getting into farming/gardening, and an opportunity to provide horticultural therapy to perhaps those involved with CIDER, at-risk students, those recovering from trauma, and those battling depression (especially during the winter months)”

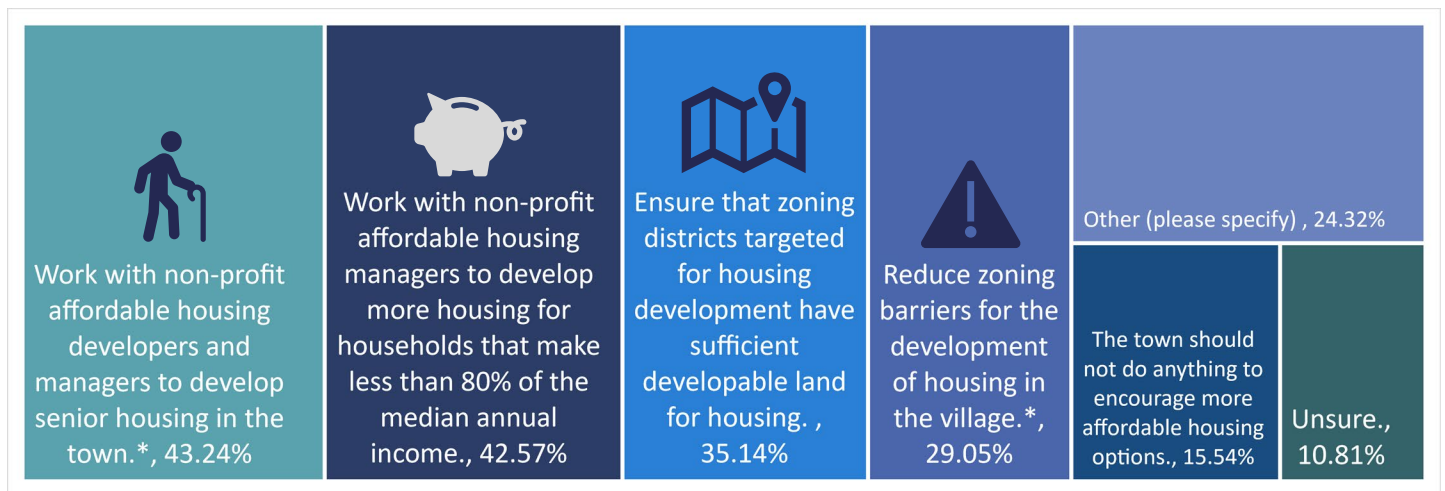
**Municipal Building/Library/Post Office (9.09%)**

- “Could current town hall be repurposed as a library? It seems to be bigger and brighter than the current one. The current library has long outlived its usefulness and if I had to choose one project it would be a library.”
- “I think the reimagining of the post office is highest priority.”

**Recreational Activities (7.07%)**

- “It should be designed as a place to welcome and engage the community in recreational activities.”
- “Really liked the hockey/pickleball/special event proposal”

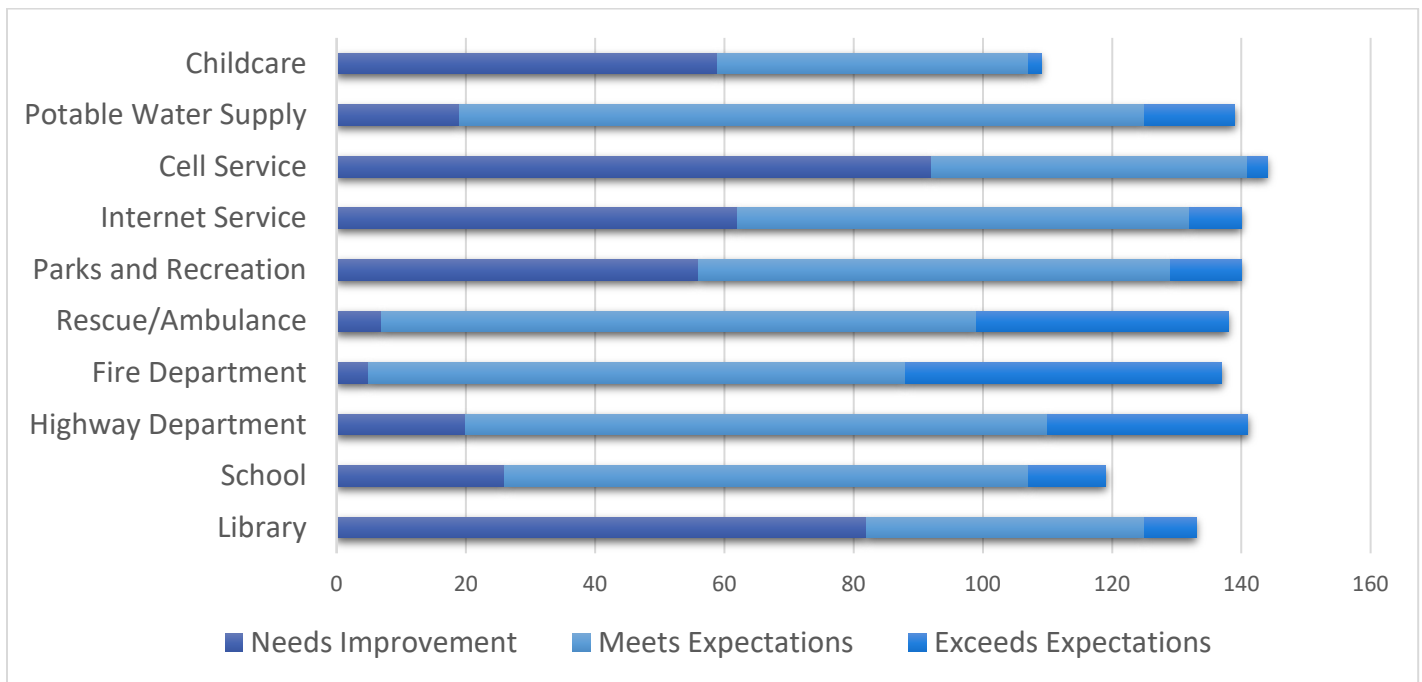
Q7: A third of the town’s households are cost-burdened by housing (meaning that more than 30% of annual household income is spent on housing). What should the town do to encourage more affordable housing options in the town?



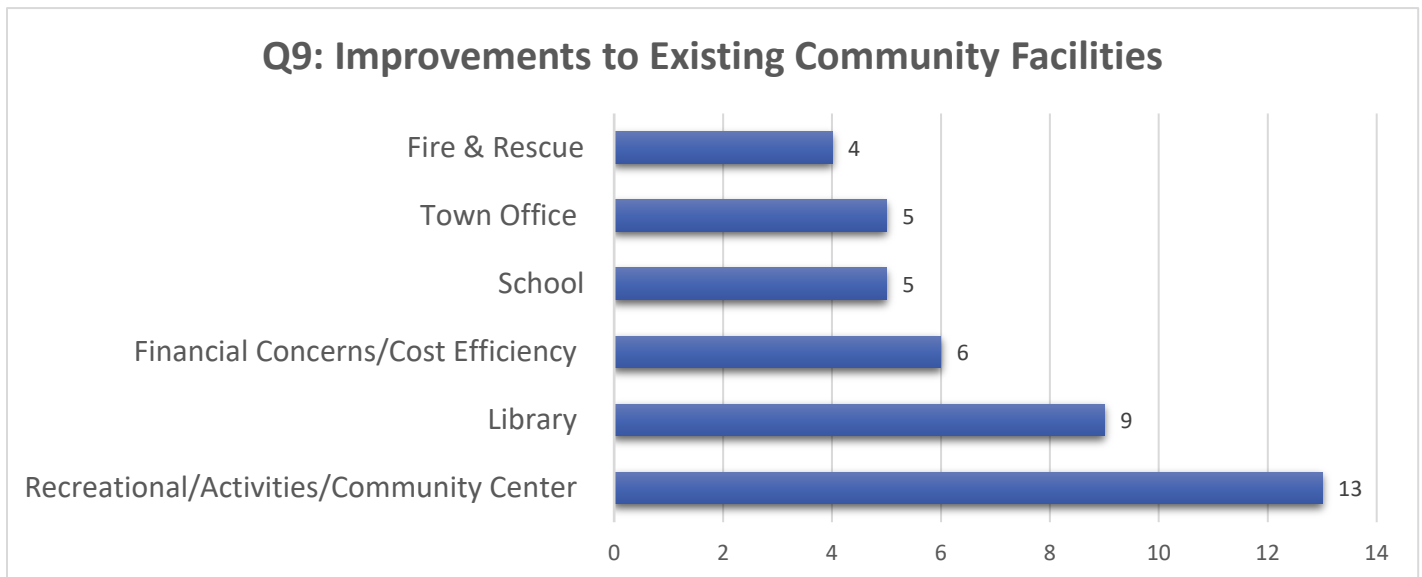
\* Examples of non-profit affordable senior housing developers includes Champlain Housing Trust or Cathedral Square.

\* Examples include minimizing the review process for multi-unit dwellings and reducing minimum lot size.

## Q8: Do the community facilities and services in Grand Isle meet your needs?



## Q9: What improvements would you like to see done to existing community facilities and services?



### Recreation/Activities/Community Center (17.33%)

- “A better or improved place for swimming at the lake.”
- “Grand Isle state park needs to be accessible to day visitors. I would love to otherwise see a place that has beach access for all. More trails as well.”

### Library (12%)

- “In general, the library is a great place to check out books, but there is little room to do much else. I think a larger space would definitely be beneficial for community use and potentially draw more patrons.”
- “Create a library like South Hero, or use the funds elsewhere and have the south Hero library be the joint town library.”

### Financial Concerns/Cost Efficiency (8%)

- “Anything done should be paid by grants not tax dollars”
- “Cost effective preventive maintenance”

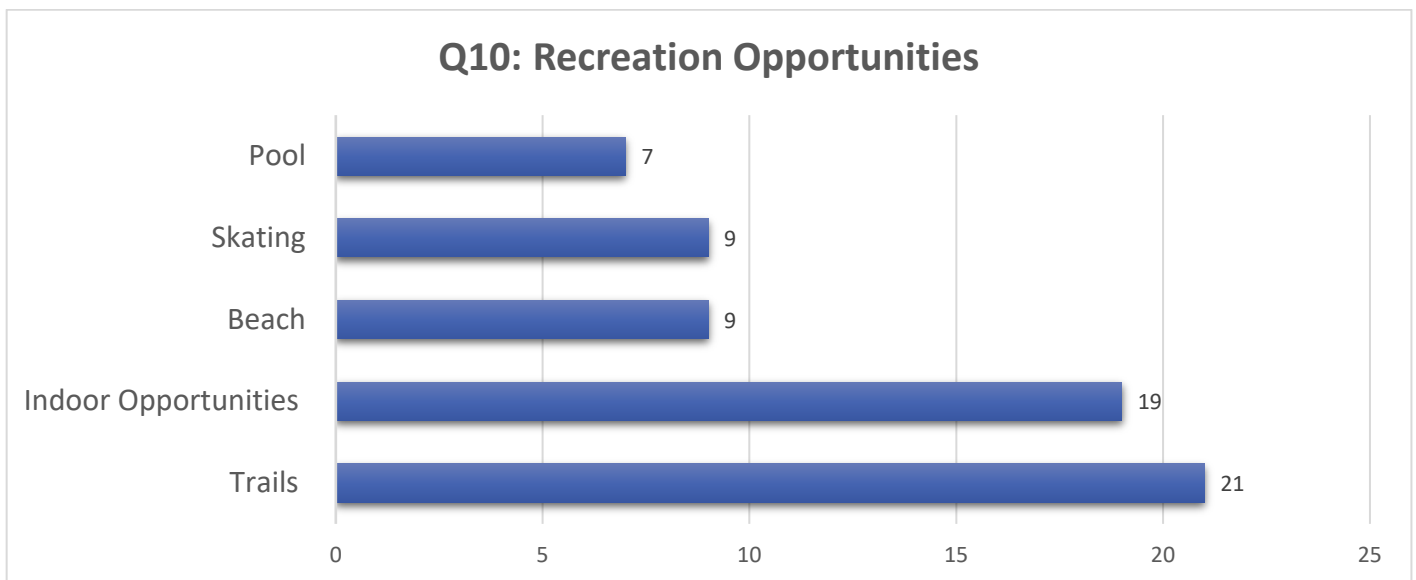
### School (6.67%) & Town Office (6.67%)

- “School does not appear to be maintained as well as it could be.”
- “Updated town office”

### Fire & Rescue (5.33%)

- “Merge Grand Isle Consolidated & Fire District #4, install piping that could support fire hydrants.”
- “Use the money you are talking about for our volunteer Fire and Rescue.”

## Q10: What recreation opportunities would you like to see offered that are not currently offered?



### Trails (21.88%)

- “I would like to see more accessible walking trails. I know there’s a lot of seniors in the community, and I myself have two small children. It would be nice to have a natural path where the children could come and learn all about Vermont’s native species, the watershed here, the unique plants on the islands, the migrating birds. There’s so much rich natural history on the island that it would be really nice to see that celebrated and able to be explored in a natural way for the public.”

- “Open Rail trail for biking, x country skiing”

**Indoor Opportunities (19.79%)**

- “Indoor activities, ping pong table, indoor tennis/pickleball”
- “More play spaces that are inviting/inclusive for children, and that are available year-round.”

**Beach (9.38%)**

- “A public swimming beach!!! or else find a way to get Grand Isle State Park to let local residents swim there. I can't believe we can't even walk on the property....it's a STATE PARK.”
- “A beach that has real parking, stairs and a designated swimming area where boats cannot go”

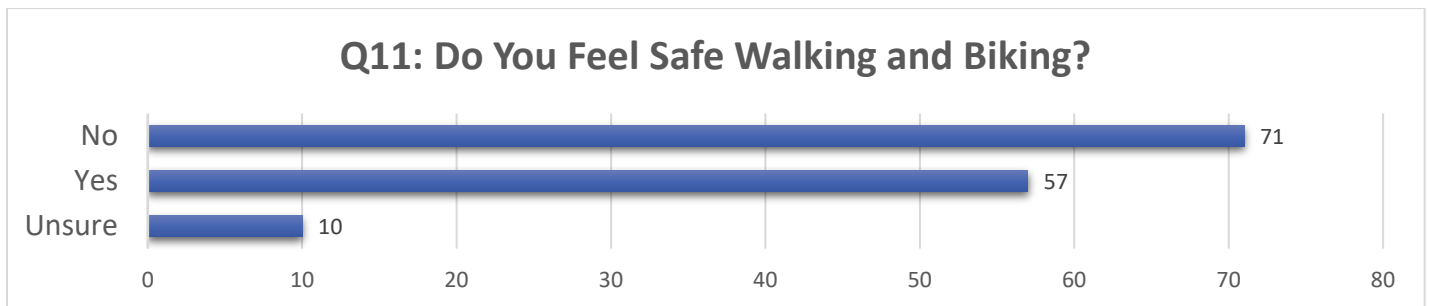
**Skating (9.38%)**

- “I would love a town park maybe an ice-skating rink for locals”
- “Ice skating on climate-controlled ice...”

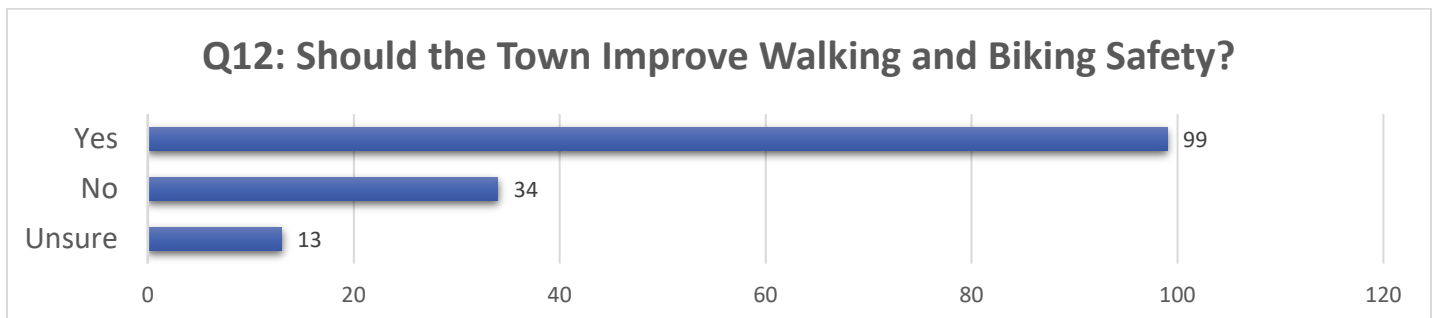
**Pool (7.29%)**

- “I like to swim for fitness and there isn't a good place to do that in the lake.”
- “Community swimming pool”

Q11: When you choose to walk or bike in Grand Isle, do you generally feel safe from traffic in doing so?



Q12: Should Grand Isle make infrastructure improvements to specifically accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists?





Q13: Where is your primary residence? (In order to consider Grand Isle a primary residence you must live here for at least 180 days a year)

95.92% of respondents chose "Grand Isle Town." Six respondents chose out of state locations.

Q14: What is your age?

