Growth Management Program Survey

Growth Management Program Survey

Virtual Focus Group Meetings – Schedule and Purposes

Three meetings will present who responded and, in each meeting, ~1/3 of the survey results

Meeting purposes: determine how the survey input and the facilitated conversation (Jo D. Saffeir) can direct the Growth Management Program to:

- IMPROVE the preparation of Comprehensive Plans and the State Review Process
  November 8 from noon to 2 PM
- SUPPORT implementation of Comprehensive Plans
  November 13 from 4-6 PM
- PRIORITIZE the most important Technical Assistance Resources to prepare Comprehensive Plans
  November 14 from noon to 2 PM

Growth Management is Complex – So was this survey!

Each of questions 1 through 13 has 5 or 6 parts.

- Questions 1 and 2 ask for input on ACTIONS to encourage growth in growth areas.

- Questions 3 and 4 seek input on BARRIERS to achieve this growth.

- Questions 5 and 6 ask about STRATEGIES to IMPLEMENT the goal of directing growth.

- Questions 7, 8, and 9 ask for input on improving and streamlining the preparation of Comprehensive Plans.

- Questions 10, 11, 12, 18, and 19 seek input on the support needed to prepare Comprehensive Plans.

- Questions 13-17 ask for input on revising the Growth Management Statute and supporting housing development.

- Questions 20-23 ask for input on the utility of the Comprehensive Plan review process.

- Questions 24-31 ask who answered the survey and if they are interested in a follow-up discussion.

MANY thoughtful written comments are summarized in the StoryMap; all comments are provided verbatim on a linked page

How can survey input direct the program to:

- Improve the preparation of Comp Plans and the State Review Process
  - Questions 1,7,8,9,20,21,22,23 - today

- Support implementation of Comprehensive Plans – Focus Group #2
  - Questions 3,4,5,6,13,14,15,16,17

- Prioritize the technical assistance needs to prepare Comprehensive Plans – Focus Group #3
  - Questions 2,10,11,12,18,19

StoryMap of Survey Results – navigation

[Maine Growth Management Program Survey Results](#)

Comments are summarized first at right in the StoryMap

Actual #s of responses provided in bar charts

Percentages pro/con summarized in pie charts

To open/close the individual comments use the + and x symbols

See ⊕ all individual comments

See ⊗ all individual comments

Upper right corner symbol ⧉ opens a new page to see comments and all charts.

How can survey input direct the program to:

- **Improve the** preparation of Comprehensive Plans and the State Review Process
  - Questions 1,7,8,9,20,21,22,23
  - Slide presentation - 1/2 hour

Discussion (~1 hour) with a question:

- Has the survey or our conclusions missed anything?

Priorities for program direction (~1/2 hour)

With what region do you most closely associate?

Maine Regional Councils 2024
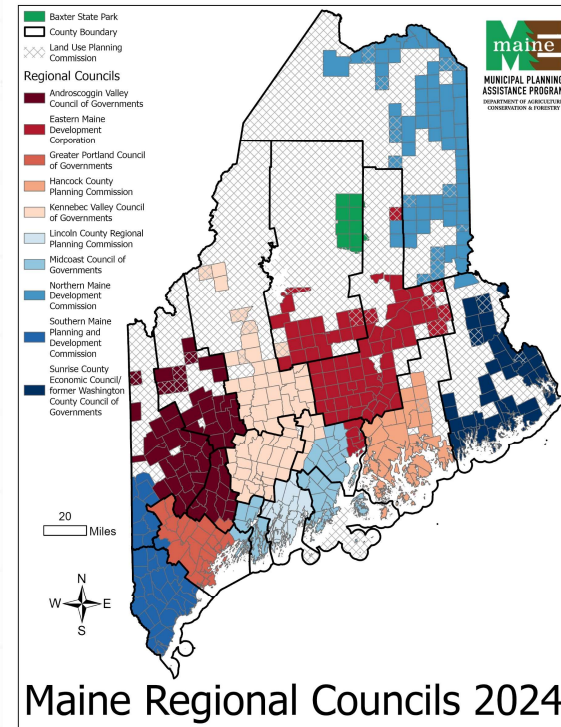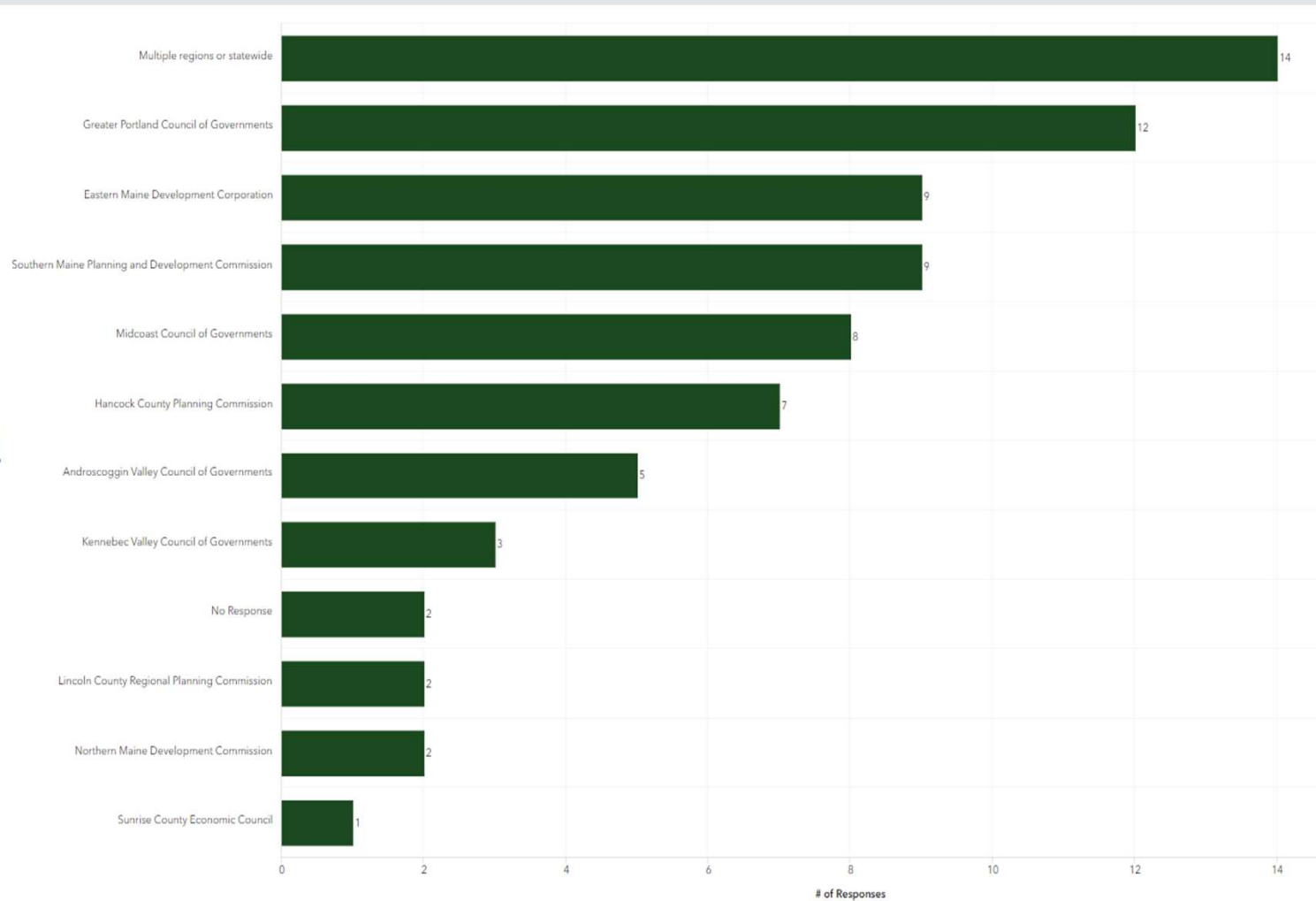
With what city/town do you most closely associate?

Have you participated in the drafting or review of a Comp Plan since 2012?

What was your role in the Comp Plan process?

1 – Effectiveness of ACTIONS to encourage growth and development in locally designated Growth Areas

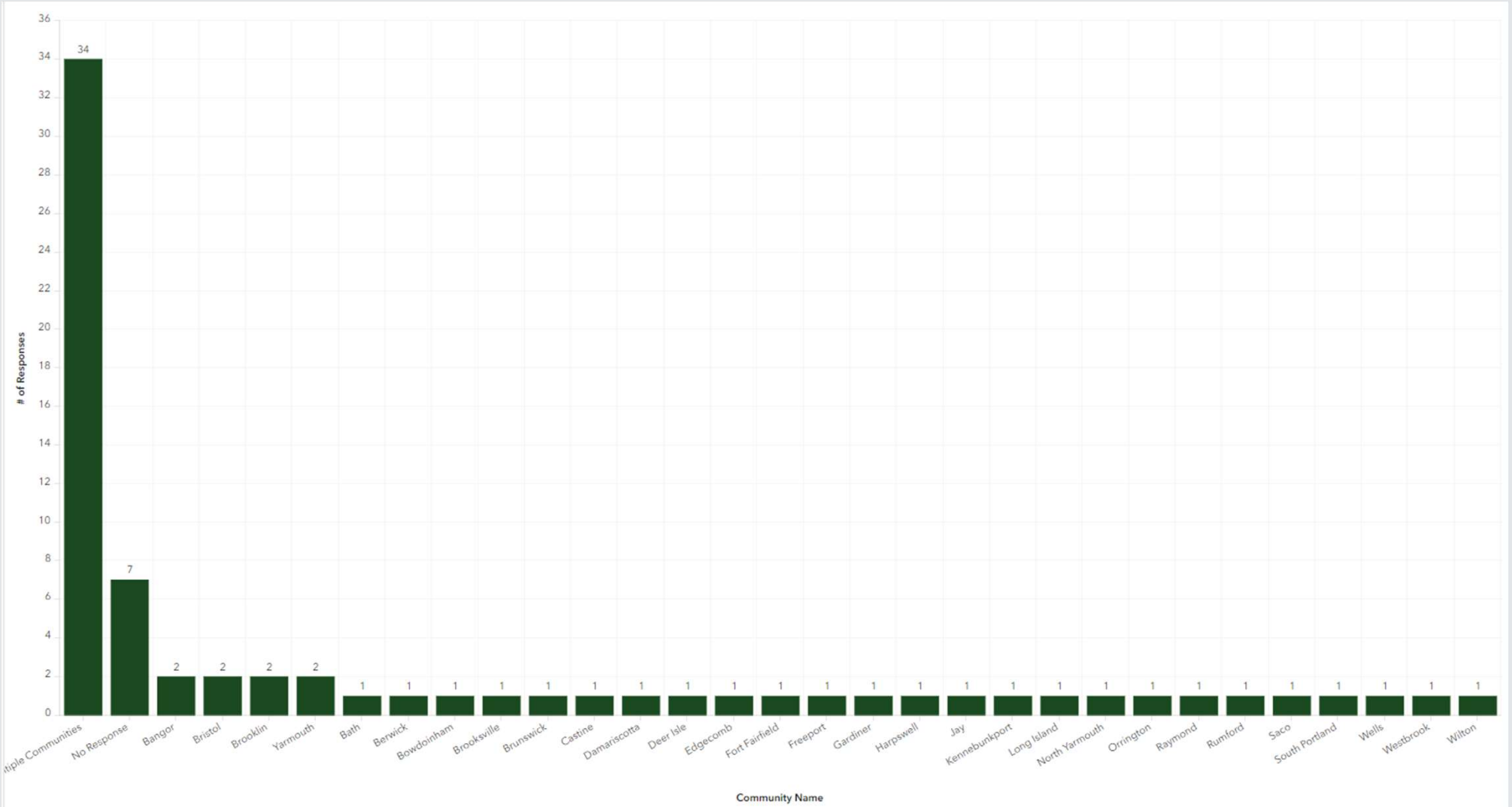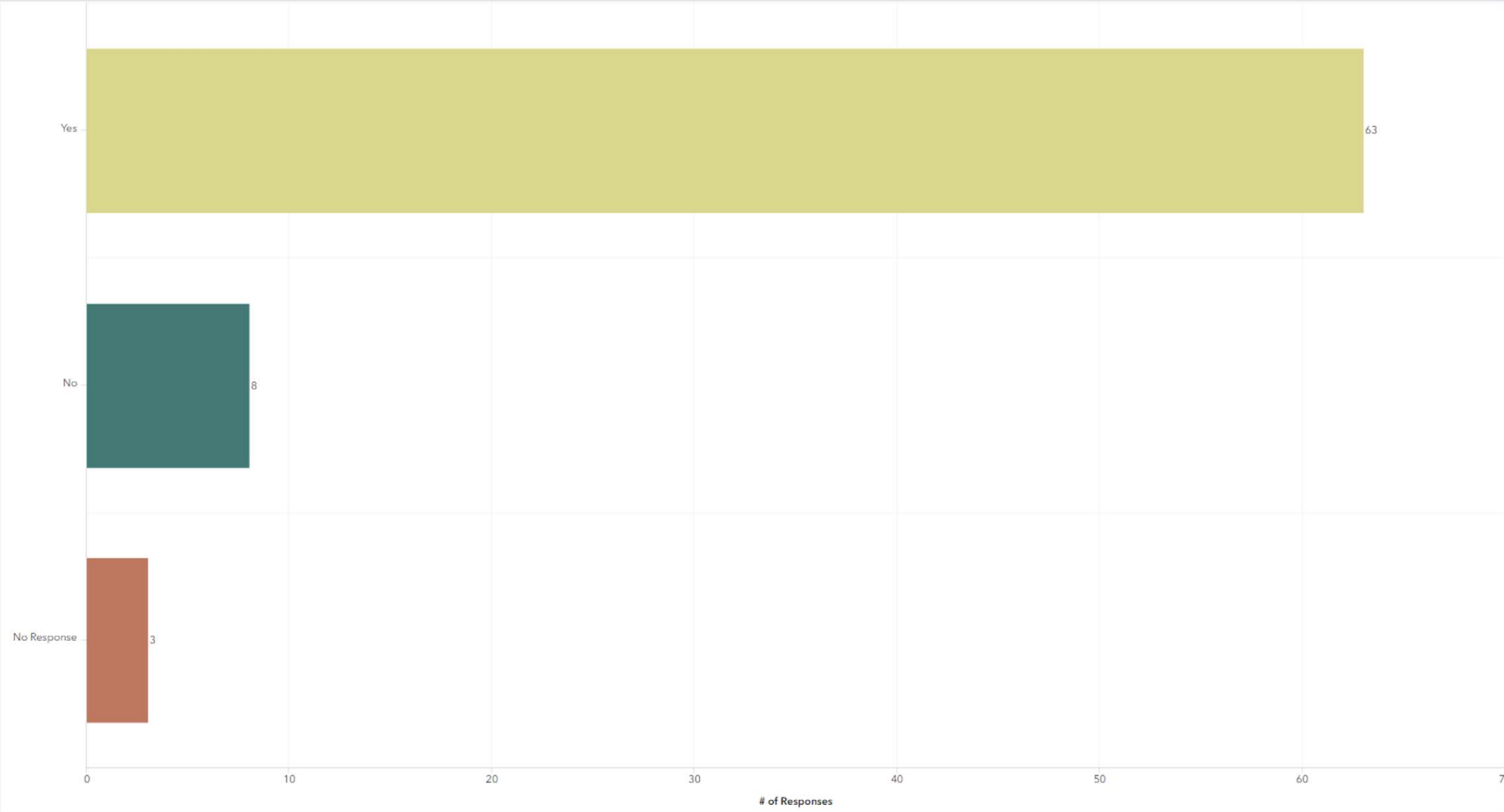**Identify the effectiveness of the following ACTIONS to encourage growth and development in locally designated Growth Areas.**

- **State consistency reviews of Comp Plans**

- Guidance for defining growth and rural placetypes

- Financial incentives to support development in Growth Areas

- Land conservation

- Current use taxation (tree growth etc.)

State consistency reviews of Comp Plans

Summarized Results

Effective/Highly Effective	39	(Effective/Highly Effective 52.7%)
Ineffective/Highly Ineffective	14	(Ineffective/Highly Ineffective 18.92%)
Neutral/No Opinion	17	(Neutral/No Opinion 22.97%)
No Response	4	(No Response 5.41%)

1 – Effectiveness of ACTIONS to encourage growth and development in locally designated Growth Areas

Identify the effectiveness of the following ACTIONS to encourage growth and development in locally designated Growth Areas.

- State consistency reviews of Comp Plans

- **Guidance for defining growth and rural placetypes**

- Financial incentives to support development in Growth Areas

- Land conservation

- Current use taxation (tree growth etc.)

Guidance for defining growth and rural placetypes

Summarized Results

Ineffective/Highly Ineffective 13.51%

Effective/Highly Effective 52.7%

Neutral/No Opinion 27.03%

No Response 6.76%

Effective/Highly Effective	39
Ineffective/Highly Ineffective	10
Neutral/No Opinion	20
No Response	5

1 – Effectiveness of ACTIONS to encourage growth and development in locally designated Growth Areas

Related input from comments

- Reduce the inventory burden/increase flexibility for small communities while retaining data-informed decision-making

- Improve efficiency, many issues best addressed at the regional level

- Provide support for implementation - $ and TA

- Stress integration of climate and hazard mitigation

- Public engagement – vital but challenging, need more state guidance in the planning process

- Political disagreement can derail/complicate the planning process

1 – Effectiveness of ACTIONS to encourage growth and development in locally designated Growth Areas

OTHER comments

- Flexibility and local definitions
- Incentives to promote growth near services
- Clear guidance on benefits (engagement & education)
- Comp Plan/Zoning consistency (state review/incentives)
- Infrastructure $$ in growth areas
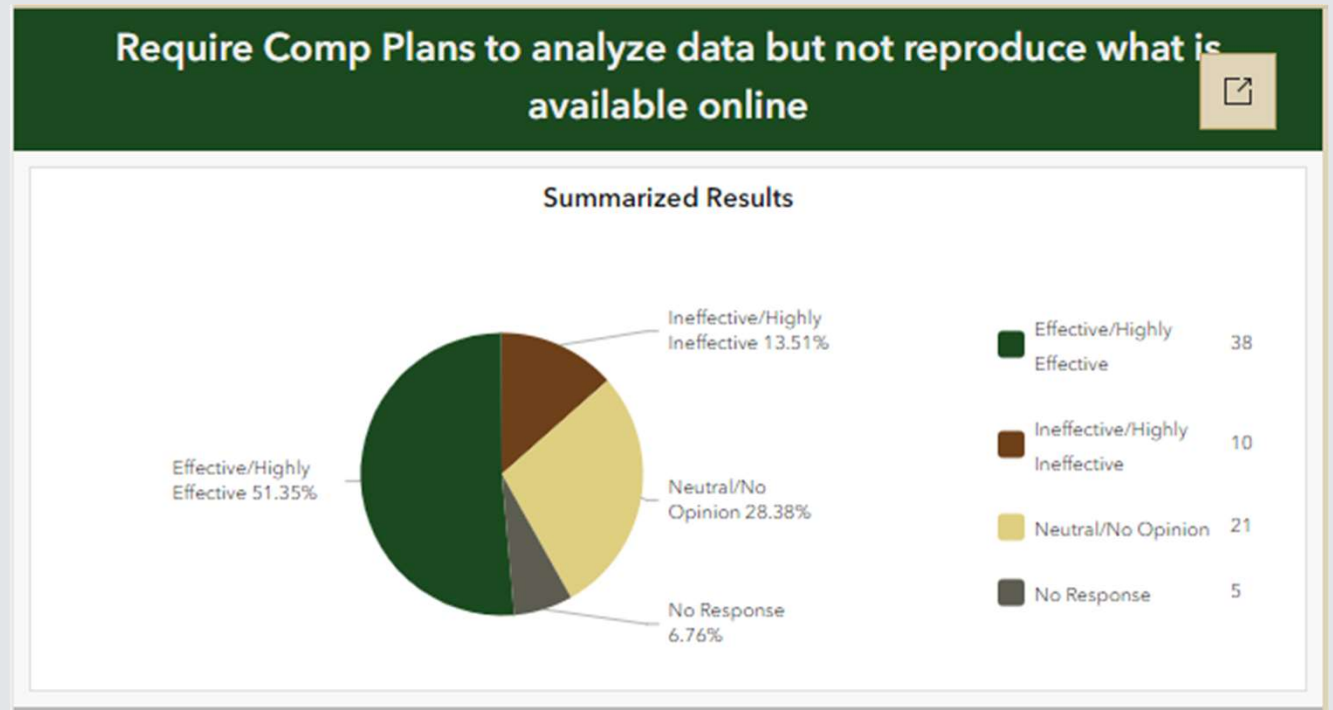- Removing barriers to growth

Conclusions

- Flexibility
  - Definitions, requirements, unique needs of small communities
- Clear(er) guidance from state
  - Benefits of planning,
  - Defining growth and rural areas / place types
  - Integration of hazard mitigation & Comp Planning
  - Public engagement processes
  - Comp Plan/Zoning consistency
- Infrastructure investment to foster efficient development

#7 - Effectiveness of reducing inventory requirements to address "one size fits all" issue

Indicate the effectiveness of reducing Comp Plan inventory requirements particularly to address the "one size fits all" concern in small communities

- **REQUIRE COMP PLANS TO ANALYZE DATA BUT NOT REPRODUCE WHAT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE**

- Prioritize and reduce data requirements for all Comp Plans

- For communities below a certain population size, consolidate most inventory requirements into a regional context chapter

- For communities below a certain population, reference regional plans to substitute for Comp Plan elements except land use

Require Comp Plans to analyze data but not reproduce what is available online

Summarized Results

Ineffective/Highly Ineffective 13.51%

Neutral/No Opinion 28.38%

No Response 6.76%

Effective/Highly Effective 51.35%

Effective/Highly Effective	38
Ineffective/Highly Ineffective	10
Neutral/No Opinion	21
No Response	5

#7 - Effectiveness of reducing inventory requirements to address "one size fits all" issue

Indicate the effectiveness of reducing Comp Plan inventory requirements particularly to address the "one size fits all" concern in small communities

- Require Comp Plans to analyze data but not reproduce what is available online

- **PRIORITIZE AND REDUCE DATA REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COMP PLANS**

- For communities below a certain population size, consolidate most inventory requirements into a regional context chapter

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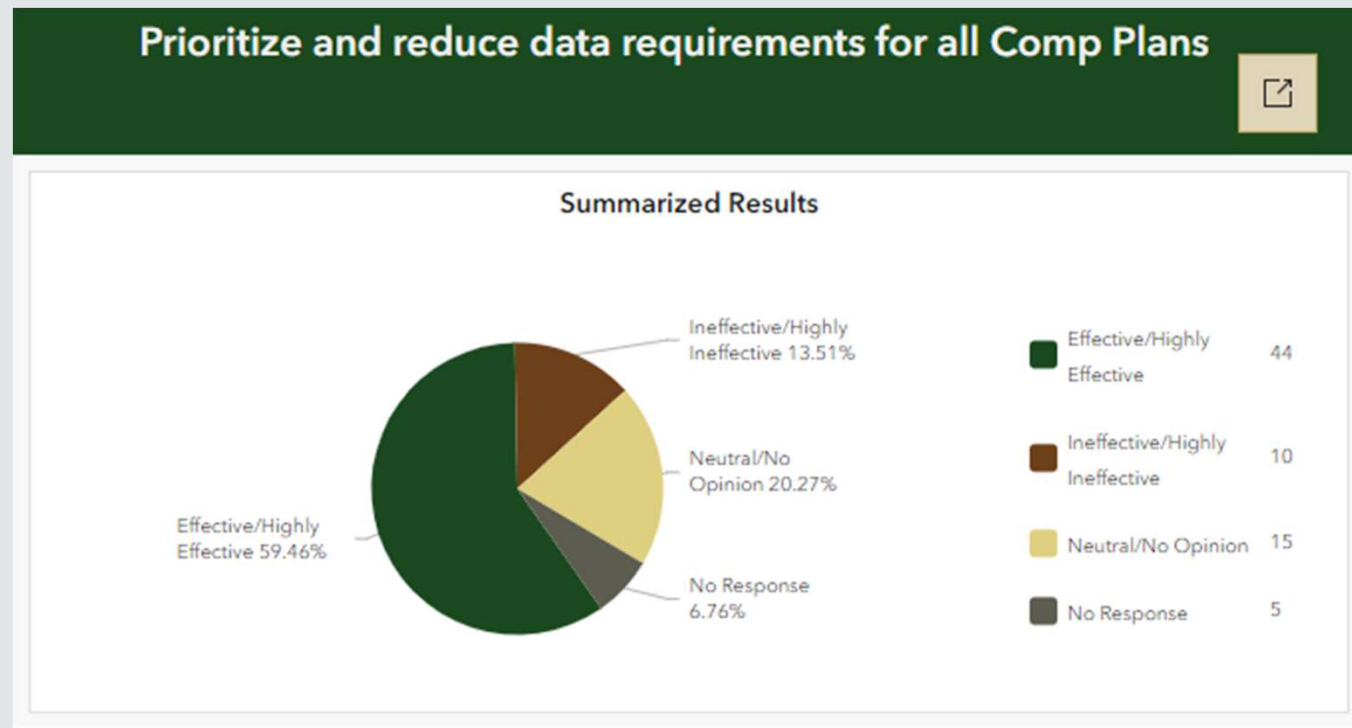

Prioritize and reduce data requirements for all Comp Plans

Summarized Results

Ineffective/Highly Ineffective 13.51%

Neutral/No Opinion 20.27%

Effective/Highly Effective 59.46%

No Response 6.76%

Effective/Highly Effective	44
Ineffective/Highly Ineffective	10
Neutral/No Opinion	15
No Response	5

#7 - Effectiveness of reducing inventory requirements to address "one size fits all" issue

Related input from comments

- Tailor Comp Plan requirements based on:
  - Population size, municipal valuation
  - Community capacity (staff, budget)
  - Proximity to major service centers
  - Available essential services (water/sewer)
- Regional collaboration & plans
- Account for seasonal population change
- State provision: standard data

Conclusions:

- For smaller, less resourced towns:
  - Flexibility
  - state support
  - regional efficiency
- Very helpful threshold ideas

#8 – Effectiveness of integrating natural hazard mitigation/community resilience planning with growth management

Identify the effectiveness of INTEGRATING NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION/COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLANNING with growth management.

- **INCORPORATE EXISTING CLIMATE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS INTO THE DESIGNATION OF GROWTH AREAS**
  - For towns not enrolled in the CRP use the self-assessment tool to set climate action goals
  - Incorporate county/local emergency management plans in Comp Plan strategies
  - Mapping and visualization of natural hazard risks when developing Future Land Use Map
  - Joint community engagement for CRP and Growth Management

Incorporate existing climate vulnerability assessments into the designation of Growth Areas

Summarized Results

Ineffective/Highly Ineffective 5.41%

Neutral/No Opinion 21.62%

No Response 6.76%

Effective/Highly Effective 66.22%

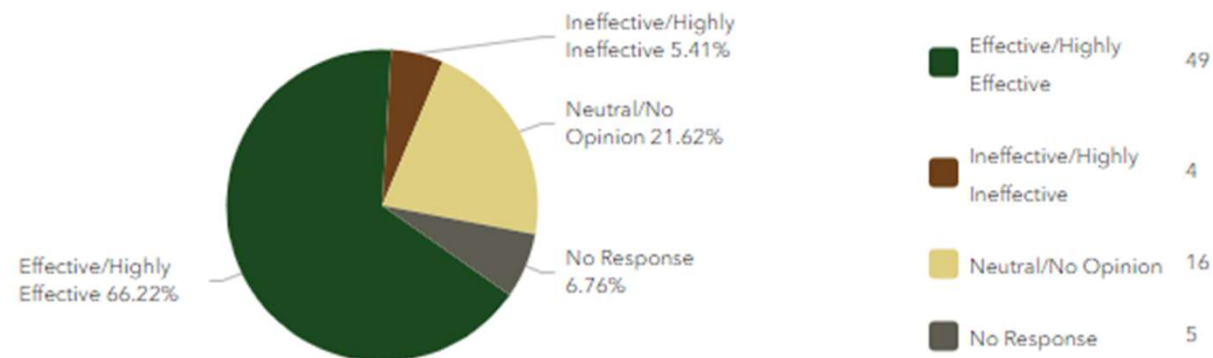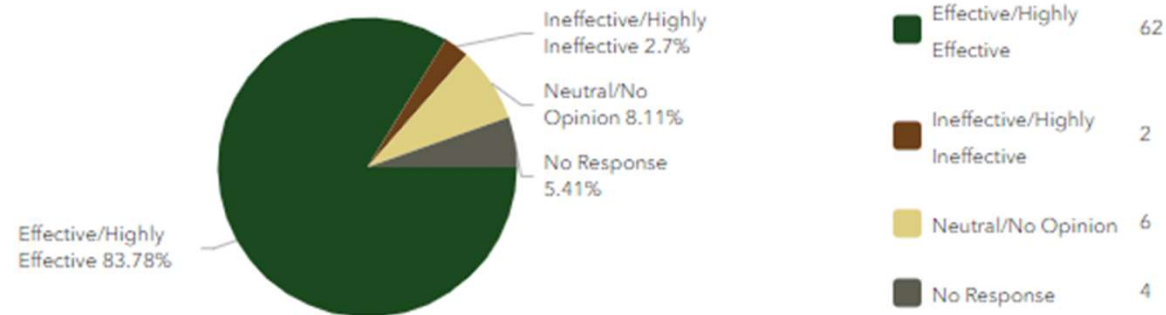|	
Effective/Highly Effective	49
Ineffective/Highly Ineffective	4
Neutral/No Opinion	16
No Response	5

#8 – Effectiveness of integrating natural hazard mitigation/community resilience planning with growth management

Identify the effectiveness of INTEGRATING NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION/COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLANNING with growth management.

- Incorporate existing climate vulnerability assessments into the designation of Growth Areas
- For towns not enrolled in the CRP use the self-assessment tool to set climate action goals
- Incorporate county/local emergency management plans in Comp Plan strategies
- **MAPPING AND VISUALIZATION OF NATURAL HAZARD RISKS WHEN DEVELOPING FUTURE LAND USE MAP**
- Joint community engagement for CRP and Growth Management

Mapping and visualization of natural hazard risks when developing Future Land Use Map

Summarized Results

Ineffective/Highly Ineffective 2.7%

Neutral/No Opinion 8.11%

No Response 5.41%

Effective/Highly Effective 83.78%

Effective/Highly Effective	62
Ineffective/Highly Ineffective	2
Neutral/No Opinion	6
No Response	4

#8 – Effectiveness of integrating natural hazard mitigation/community resilience planning with growth management

Related input from comments

- Resilience as a core element in Comp Plan

- Inclusion of risk analysis; allow towns to determine their risk tolerance

- Simplify integration with state and regional support

- Coordinate but don't overwhelm
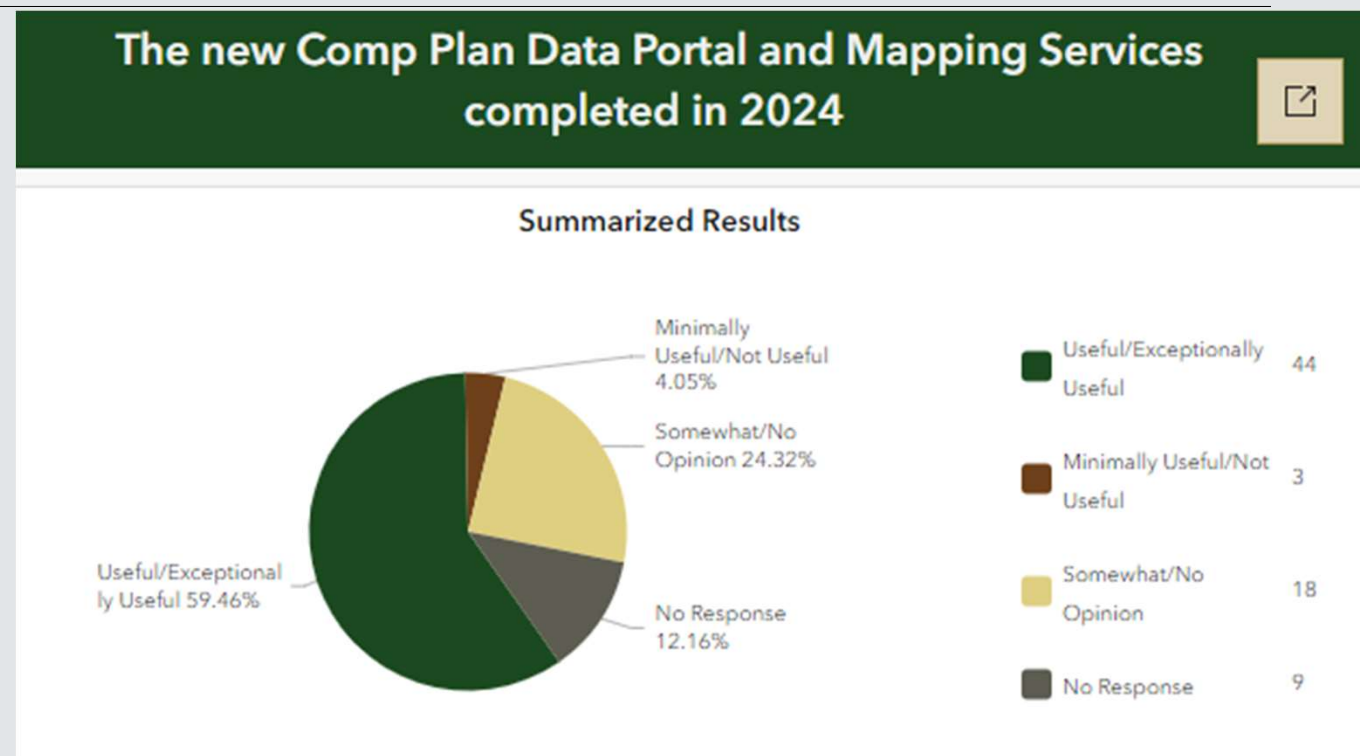
- Financial and technical support

Conclusions:

- Balance state-provided data and guidance with local flexibility to integrate hazard/resilience planning with Comp Planning

- Regional support
  - Data and analysis
  - Engagement and training

- Collaboration and $$ sharing

#9 – Usefulness of sources of information to prepare Comp Plans

Indicate the usefulness of the following sources of information and data to prepare a Comp Plan.

- The data packages delivered to communities in zip files (pre-2024)

- **THE NEW COMP PLAN DATA PORTAL AND MAPPING SERVICES COMPLETED IN 2024**

- The new Municipal, Regional, & Statewide Plans portal developed in 2024

The new Comp Plan Data Portal and Mapping Services completed in 2024

Summarized Results

Useful/Exceptionally Useful	44
Minimally Useful/Not Useful	3
Somewhat/No Opinion	18
No Response	9

Minimally Useful/Not Useful 4.05%

Somewhat/No Opinion 24.32%

Useful/Exceptionally Useful 59.46%

No Response 12.16%

#9 – Usefulness of sources of information to prepare Comp Plans

Related input from comments

- Data portal appreciated; issues remain:
  - Data quality and access
  - User support needed
  - Challenging to integrate into Comp Plans
  - Older data format issues
- Training and Support needed
- Statewide digital parcel and zoning maps!

Conclusions:

- Address continuing cumbersome zip file data delivery from some departments
- Proactive guidance and training
- Address: insufficient local data relevance

#20 –State Review input identified missing elements?

The state's review of our plan identified important information, recommendations, or strategies that were not considered by our planning committee and/or were missing from our plan.

Summarized Results

Disagree/Distrongly Disagree 12.16%

Agree/Strongly Agree 31.08%

Neither Agree nor Disagree/N/A 50%

No Response 6.76%

Agree/Strongly Agree — 23
Disagree/Distrongly Disagree — 9
Neither Agree nor Disagree/N/A — 37
No Response — 5
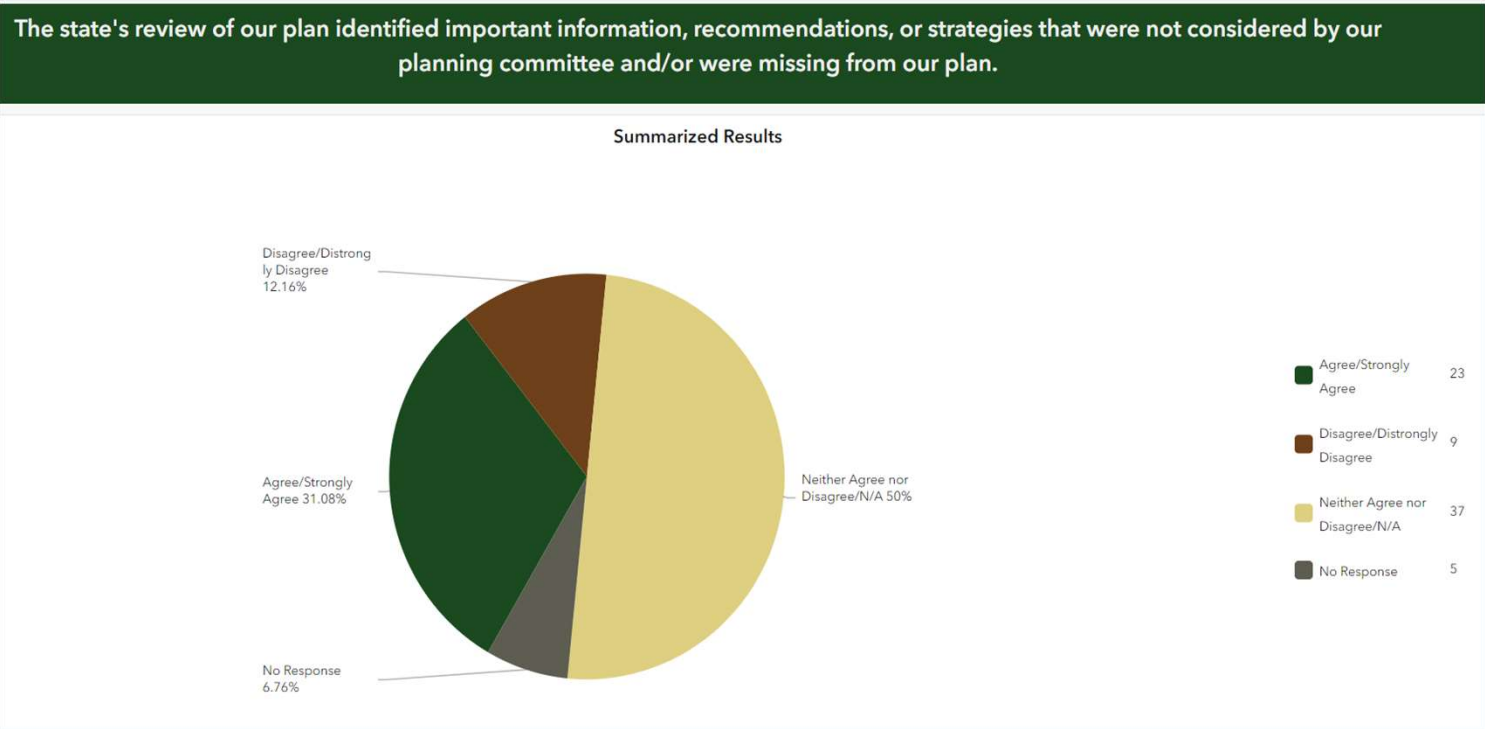
Meeting 1 -**Improve the** preparation of Comp Plans and the State Review Process
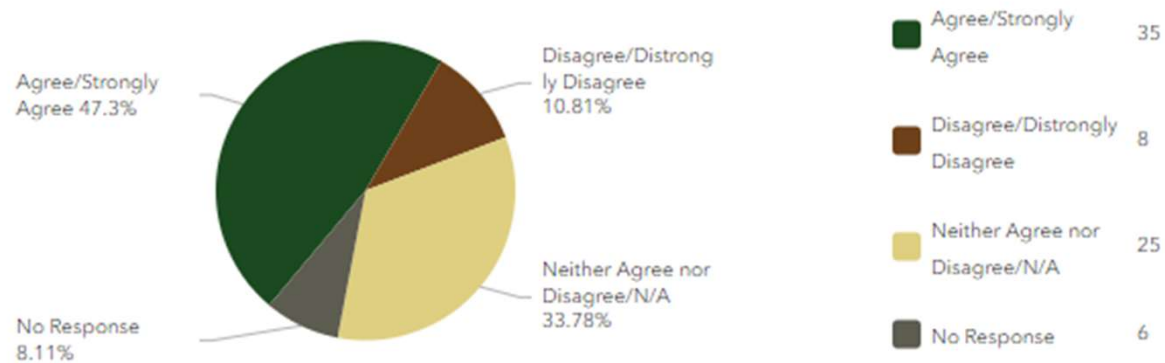
#21 – State comments improved the plan?

The comments and recommendations provided by state agencies during the review process were useful and incorporating these comments into our plan improved the overall quality and relevance of our plan.

Summarized Results

Agree/Strongly Agree 41.89%

Neither Agree nor Disagree/N/A 44.59%

Disagree/Strongly Disagree 5.41%

No Response 8.11%

Agree/Strongly Agree	31
Neither Agree nor Disagree/N/A	33
No Response	6
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	4
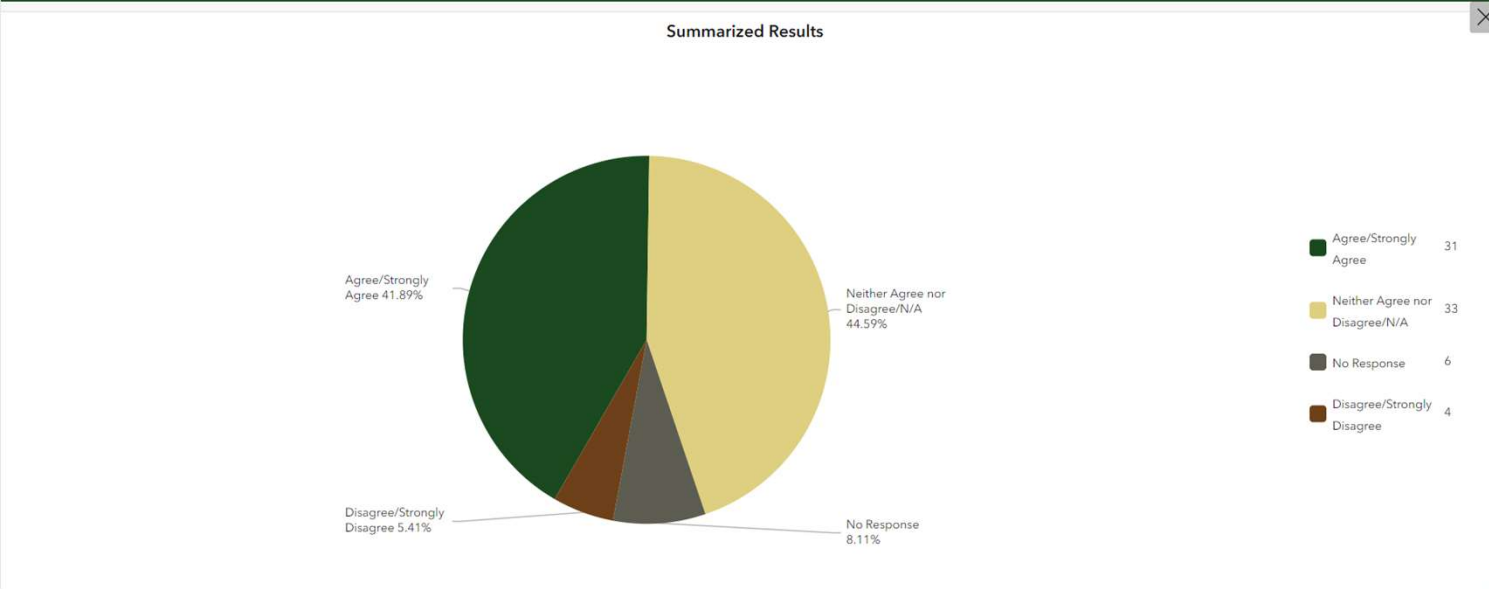
#22 – State Review enabled adoption?

#23 – Consistent Comp Plan helped qualify for funding?

Having our plan deemed consistent by the state helped our community qualify for state funding to implement our plan.

Summarized Results

Agree/Strongly Agree		29
Disagree/Distrongly Disagree		5
Neither Agree nor Disagree/N/A		32
No Response		8

Agree/Strongly Agree 39.19%

Disagree/Distrong ly Disagree 6.76%

Neither Agree nor Disagree/N/A 43.24%

No Response 10.81%

#20-23 – State's process for review of Comp Plans for consistency with the Law

Related input from comments

- Current requirements for achieving consistency overly burdensome
- General support for State review process, but:
  - Streamline for smaller towns
  - Reduce extensive data collection
  - Need clearer, actionable feedback
  - Guidance on expectations at outset
- Disproportionate on technical compliance vs. actionable planning
- Plans approved despite containing false data

Conclusions:

- Improve support & communication
- Clear, actionable feedback
- Better TA and initial guidance
- Reduce data collection

Meeting 1 -**Improve the** preparation of Comp Plans and the State Review Process

How can survey input direct the program to:

- **Improve the** preparation of Comprehensive Plans and the State Review Process
  - Questions 1,7,8,9,20,21,22,23
  - Slide presentation -1/2 hour

Discussion (~1 hour) with the question:

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Priorities for program direction (~1/2 hour)

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OTHER comments

- Flexibility and local definitions
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Meeting 1 - **Improve the** preparation of Comp Plans and the State Review Process

Please use the #s beside the items below to indicate your 3 highest priorities for direction to the Municipal Planning Assistance Program
virtual participants – in the chat   in-person participants – on paper

1. Comprehensive plan effectiveness is data driven
2. Comprehensive planning educates residents about their community
3. Code enforcement is detached from comprehensive planning - impacts implementation of comprehensive plans and consistency with ordinances. We need to re-establish CEO land use training program.
4. Limitations of municipal infrastructure capacity as obstacle to supporting new growth and development (wastewater treatment technology)
5. Data
   a. Reduce inventory requirements for small towns – planning fatigue, what to do with all that data, what local data is feasible to collect
   b. Use data to support community issues rather than figuring out how to use the data provided by the state
   c. What data is needed to help develop solutions to local issues
   d. Is unreasonable to ask communities to do deep dive into all the data once every ten years. Topical discussions – one per year- utilizing the data by topic, more conversation so isn't as overwhelming
   e. MPAP guidance about what data is available, how to use data tools, how to use data in comp plans, how to collect local data, what data should/shouldn't be included
6. Integration of resilience in comp planning
   a. concern about volunteer burnout
   b. use existing Hazard Mitigation Plans as starting point for this integration
7. Economy section of comprehensive plans is the most difficult
8. State review comments come too late in the process and aren't as valuable to communities as could be if introduced earlier
9. Technical compliance vs actionable plans
10. State agencies aren't reviewing comprehensive plans before awarding grant funds – need to go back to complying with statute

Meeting 1 - **Improve the** preparation of Comp Plans and the State Review Process

THANK YOU!

NEXT:

November 13 from 4–6 PM

FOCUS GROUP 2

SUPPORTING COMP PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION