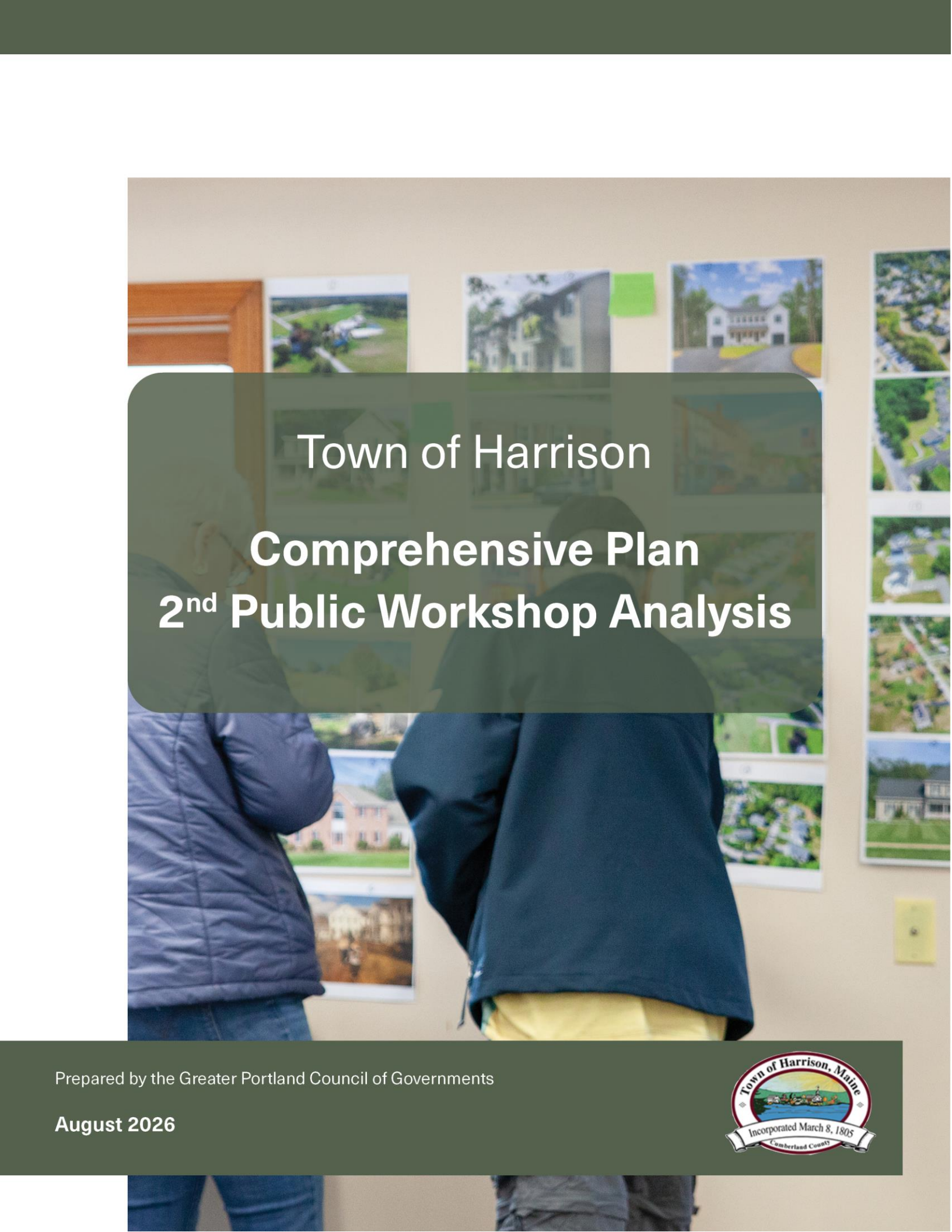




Town of Harrison Comprehensive Plan 2nd Public Workshop Analysis

Prepared by the Greater Portland Council of Governments

August 2026



Comprehensive Plan Charrette Analysis

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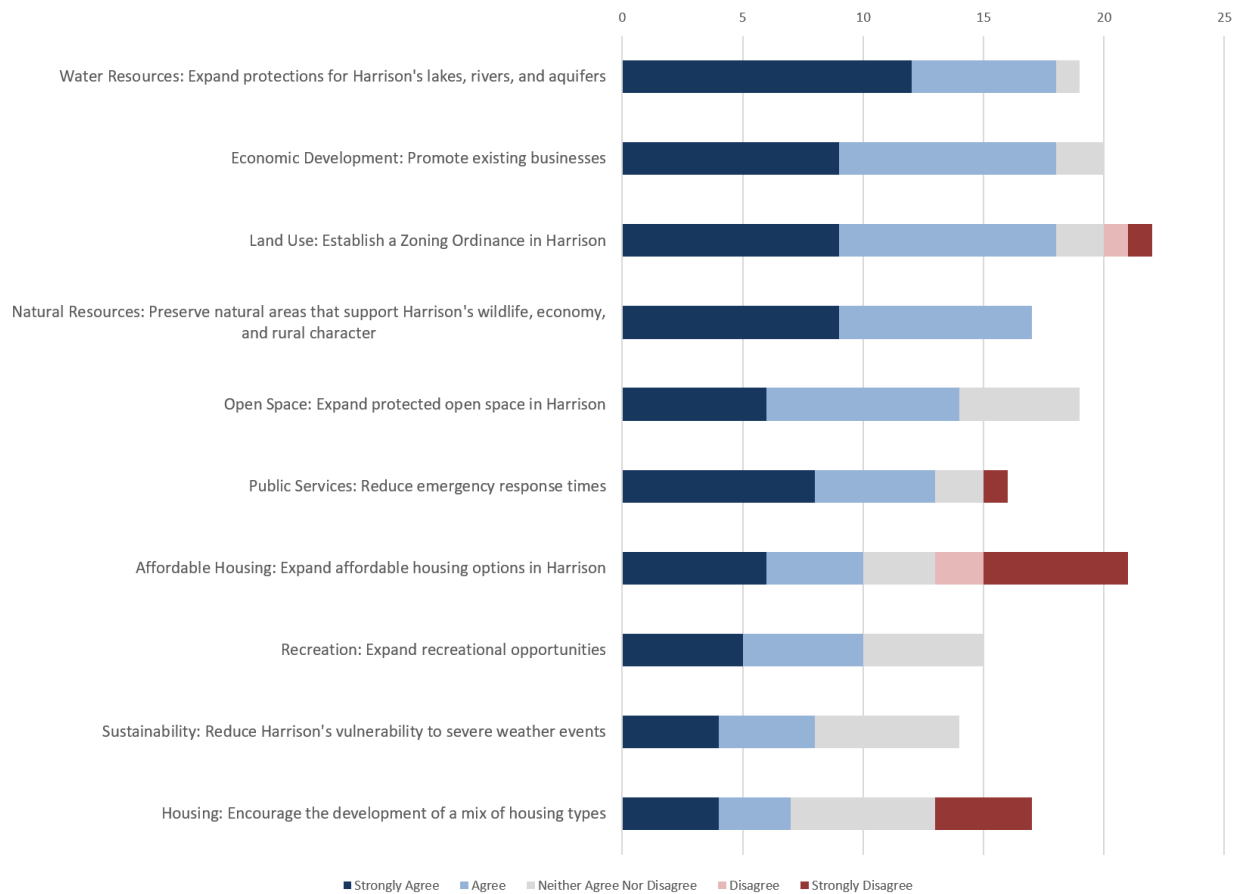
Introduction

The second community workshop for the Harrison Comprehensive Plan took place on June 24, 2026 at the Ronald St. John Community Center and aimed to receive input from the community on draft goals and strategies for the Comprehensive Plan. A total of 10 community members attended the event in person and 7 participated online afterwards using a Mentimeter survey. Due to the participation rate, results described in this report may not be representative of the attitudes and opinions of Harrison residents overall. Participants responded to goals and strategies related to housing, affordable housing, land use, economic development, public services, recreation, natural resources, open space, water resources, and sustainability. This report will compare the relative ranking of goals and then describe participant feedback on each subject area.

Comprehensive Plan Charrette Analysis

Goals

Participants rated goals on various subjects on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. They showed the most support for expanding protections for lakes, rivers and aquifers (18 agree or strongly agree); promoting existing businesses (18 agree or strongly agree); establishing a zoning ordinance (18 agree or strongly agree); and preserving natural areas that support Harrison's wildlife, economy, and rural character (17 agree or strongly agree). Participants expressed the least support for encouraging the development of a mix of housing types (7 agree or strongly agree, 4 strongly disagree) and reducing vulnerability to severe weather events (8 agree or strongly agree). The most controversial goal was expanding affordable housing options, which 10 participants supported and 8 were opposed to.



Housing

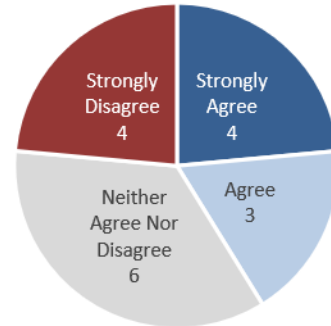
The housing goal to encourage development of a mix of housing types had the least amount of support among the proposed goals, with 8 participants supporting the goal of encouraging the development of a mix of housing types and 4 participants opposed.

There were similar amounts of support for the light and moderate housing strategies. Eight participants supported both tasking a municipal committee to study potential

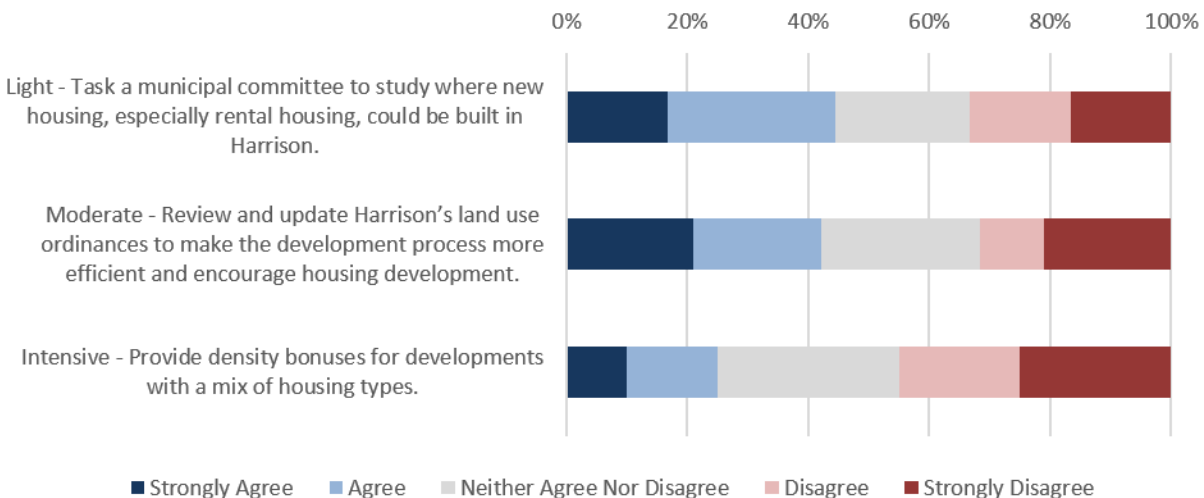
locations for new housing and also reviewing and updating land use ordinances to streamline the development process and encourage development, likely corresponding with the 8 participants supporting the overall goal.

There was less support for the intensive strategy, with 5 participants expressing support for providing density bonuses for developments with a mix of housing types, and 9 participants opposed. Participants provided additional comments about the importance of affordable and workforce housing (3), the need to inventory vacant and seasonal homes (1), a desire for more rental opportunities (1), and a desire for Harrison to remain as it currently is (1).

Goal: Encourage the development of a mix of housing types



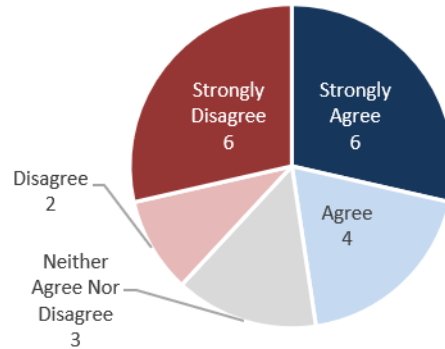
Housing Strategies



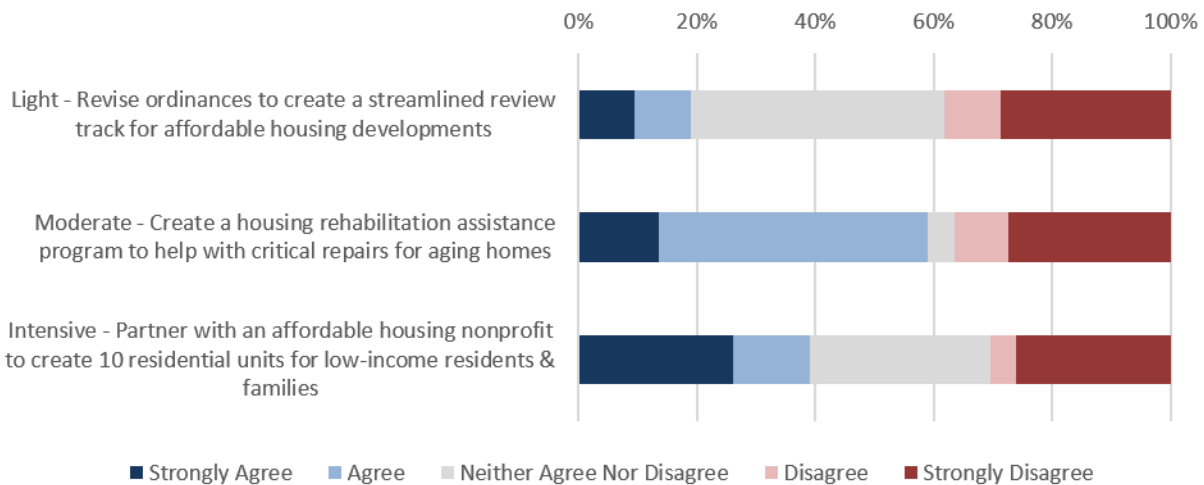
Affordable Housing

Affordable housing was the most controversial goal, with 10 participants supporting expansion of affordable housing in Harrison and 8 participants opposed. There was the most support for the moderate strategy, with 13 participants supporting a housing rehabilitation assistance program and 8 opposed. There was moderate support for the intensive strategy: 9 participants supported partnering with a nonprofit to create 10 low-income residential units, while 8 were opposed. There was the least amount of support for the light strategy: 4 participants supported revising ordinances to create a streamlined review track for affordable housing developments and 8 opposed. Participants provided additional comments about the need for a market study to see what housing residents would like (2), the need for affordable housing for the elderly (1), and the desire for affordable housing to occur in 3-4 clusters around the town (1).

Goal: Expand affordable housing options in Harrison

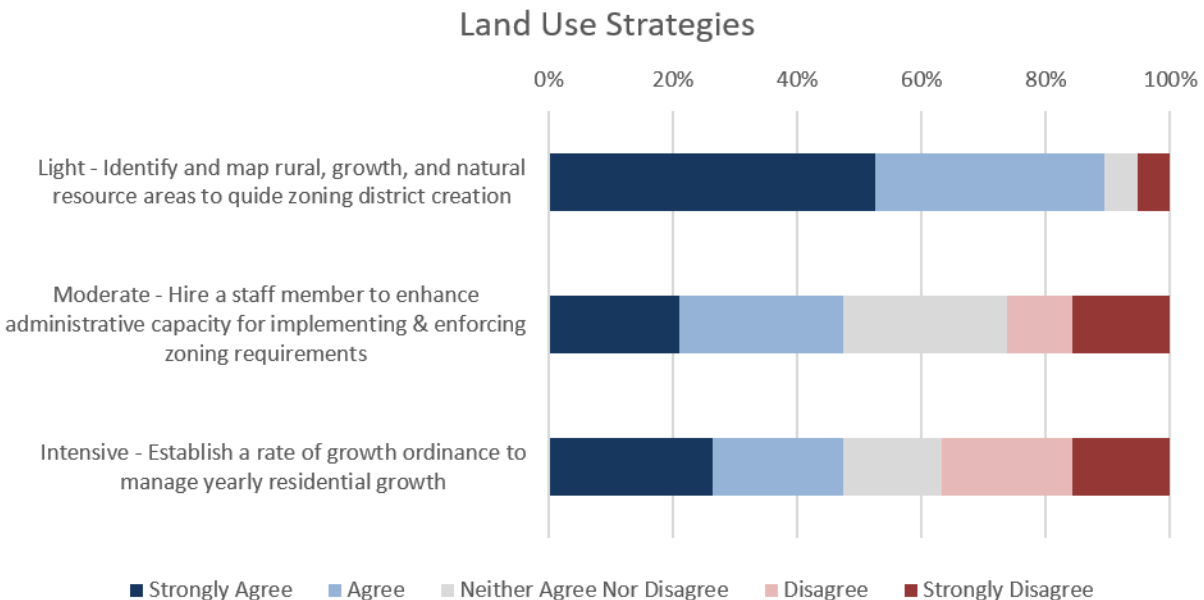
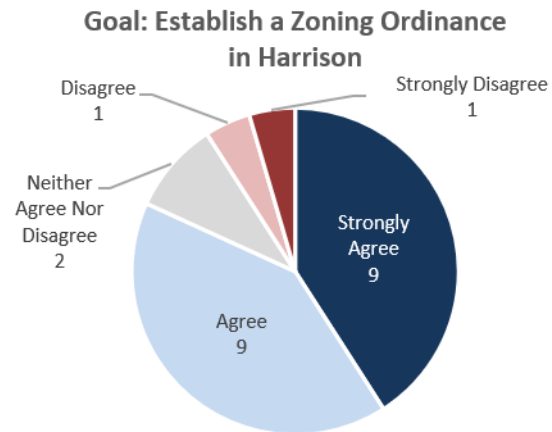


Affordable Housing Strategies



Land Use

The land use goal had high support, with 18 participants supporting the establishment of a Zoning Ordinance, and only 2 participants opposing. The light strategy was the most supported, with 17 participants supporting the identification and mapping of rural, growth, and natural resource areas to guide zoning district creation and only 1 participant opposing. The moderate and intensive strategies had slightly less support. Nine participants supported the moderate strategy of hiring a staff manager to enhance capacity for implementation and enforcement of zoning requirements, while 5 were opposed. Nine participants also supported the intensive strategy of establishing a rate of growth ordinance to manage annual residential growth, however there was more opposition to this strategy with 7 participants opposing. Participants provided additional comments on the importance of using zoning to reduce runoff and environmental impacts (1), and the importance of protected areas (1).

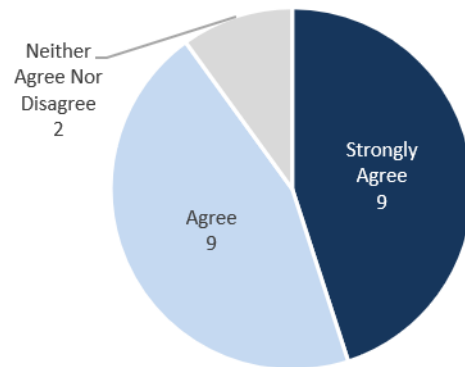


Economic Development

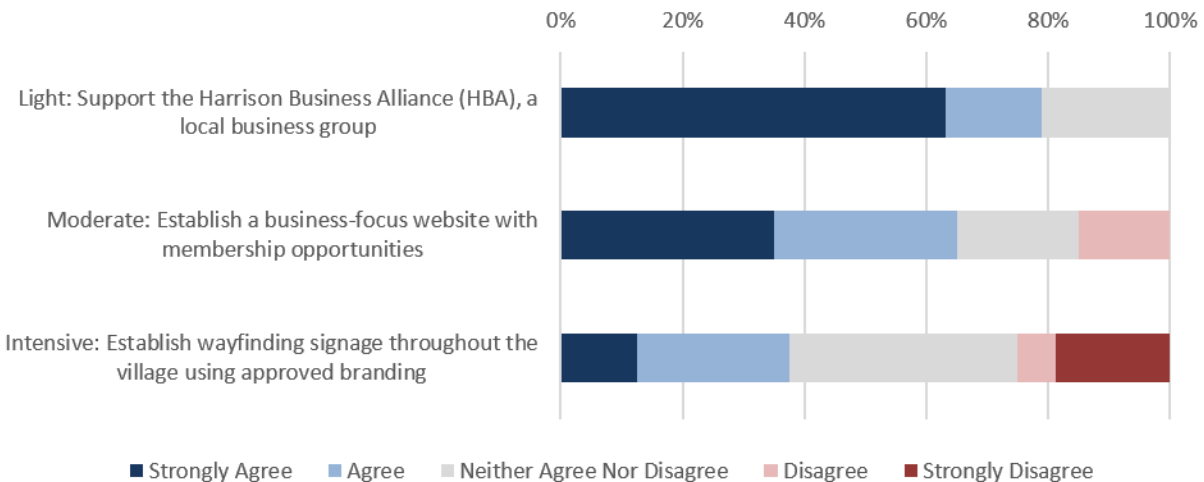
The economic development goal had significant support, with 18 participants supporting the goal of promoting existing businesses and none opposing. Participants most strongly supported the light strategy, with 15 participants expressing support for providing support for the Harrison Business Alliance and none opposing. There was slightly less support for the moderate strategy.

Thirteen participants supported the establishment of a business-focus website with membership opportunities and 3 were opposed. The intensive strategy was the least supported, with 6 participants supporting the establishment of wayfinding signage and 4 opposed. Participants provided additional comments on RADR development (7), the development of a growth area along the Route 117 corridor (1), and the need to improve the code enforcement and planning processes (1).

Goal: Promote existing businesses

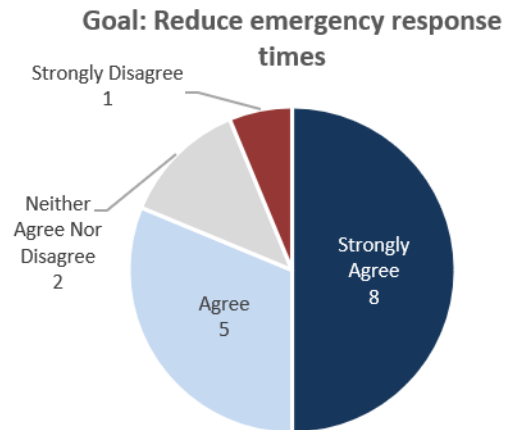


Economic Development Strategies

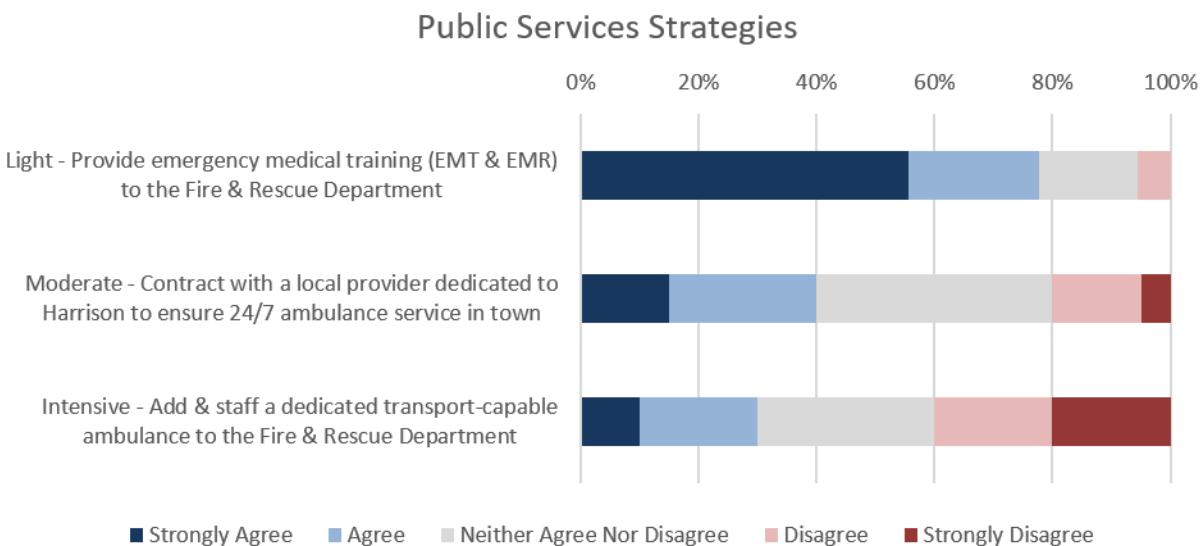


Public Services

There was general support expressed for the public service goal of reducing emergency response times, although only 16 participants responded. Out of these 16, 13 supported reducing emergency response times and only one participant opposed. There was the most support for the light strategy, with 14 participants supporting providing EMT & EMR training to the Fire & Rescue Department, and 1 participant opposing. There was moderate support for the moderate strategy. Eight participants supported contracting a local provider to ensure 24/7 ambulance service, and 4 were opposed. There was the least amount of support for the intensive strategy, with 6 participants supporting the addition of a dedicated transport-capable ambulance to the Fire & Rescue Department, and 8 participants opposed. Participants provided additional comments about using the county deputies (7), a desire for public transportation in Harrison with the acknowledgement that this was previously tried and unsuccessful (1), and _____*.



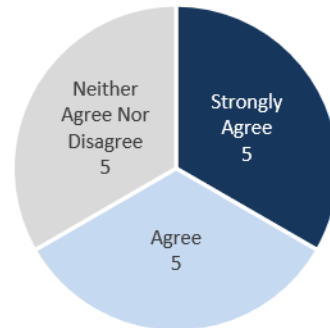
*what does “constables --> new system” mean?



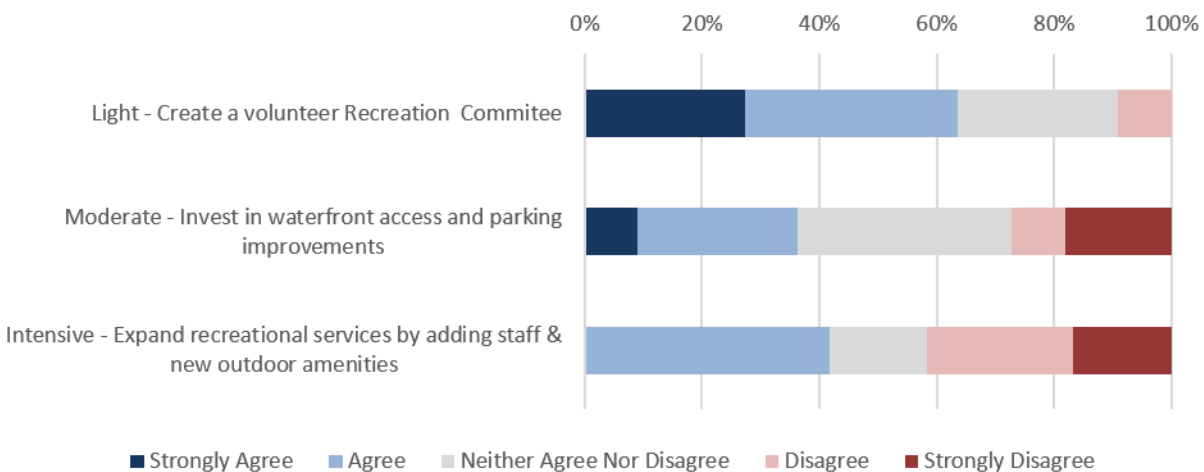
Recreation

While the overall response rate to recreation related questions was low (15 participants), those who responded were largely supportive of the goal of expanding recreational opportunities, with 10 participants expressing support and none expressing opposition. There was the most support for the light strategy, with 7 participants supporting the creation of a volunteer Recreation Committee and only 1 participant opposing. The moderate strategy was the least supported, with only 4 participants supporting investment in waterfront access and parking improvements and 3 participants opposing. The intensive strategy was the most controversial, with 5 participants supporting and 5 opposing the expansion of recreational services by adding staff and new outdoor amenities. It is important to note that relatively few participants responded to recreation related questions, indicating a lack of priority compared to other areas. Participants provided additional comments expressing a desire for additional recreational facilities, in particular indoor facilities (3); better use of existing facilities like Deer Trees and RADR (2); and more recreational opportunities geared towards seniors (1).

Goal: Expand recreational opportunities



Recreation Strategies

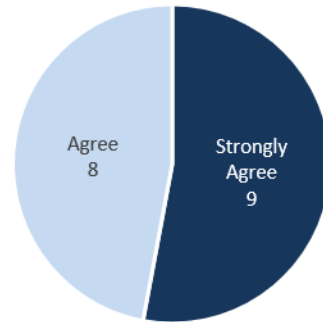


Natural Resources

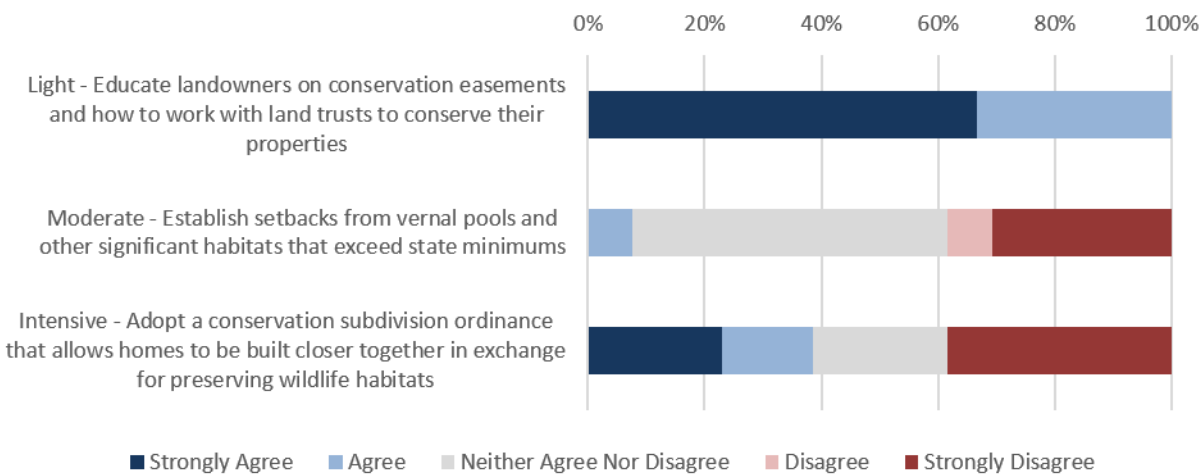
There was strong support for the natural resource goal of preserving natural areas that support Harrison's wildlife, economy, and rural character. All 17 participants that responded to this question expressed support for the goal.

There was very strong support for the light strategy, with 12 participants supporting educating landowners about conservation easements and none opposing. The moderate strategy had very limited support, with 5 participants opposing and only one participant supporting the establishment of vernal pool/significant habitat setbacks that exceed state minimums. The intensive strategy was controversial, with 5 participants supporting and 5 opposing the adoption of a conservation subdivision ordinance. One participant provided an additional comment on the need for better tax incentives for land trusts.

Goal: Preserve natural areas that support Harrison's wildlife, economy, and rural character



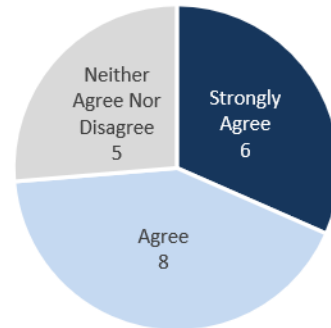
Natural Resource Strategies



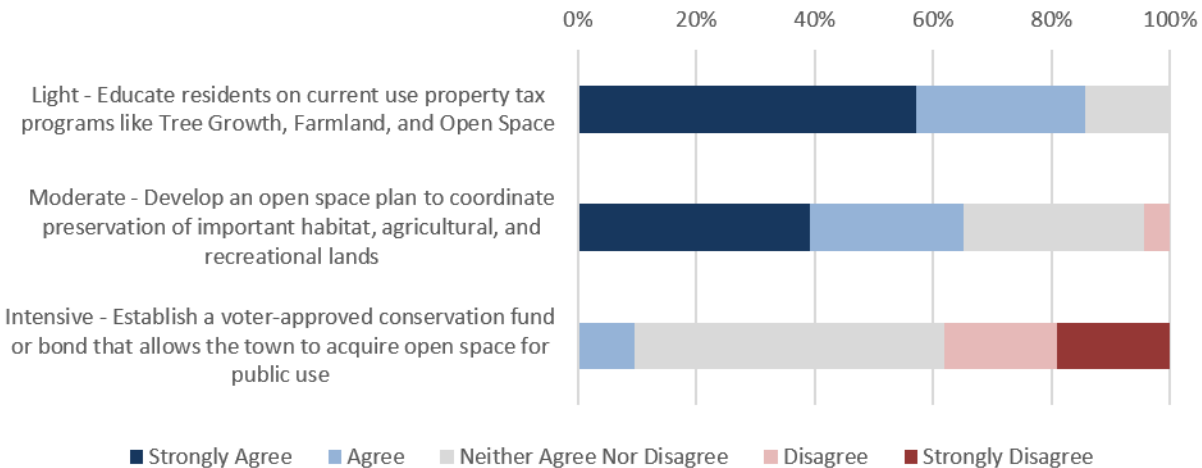
Open Space

There was strong support from participants for the open space goal. Out of the 19 participants that responded to this question, 14 expressed support for expansion of protected open space, and none were opposed. There was strong support for both the light and moderate strategies. Eighteen participants supported and no participants were opposed to educating residents on current use property tax programs like Tree Growth, Farmland, and Open Space. Fifteen participants supported the development of an open space plan and only one participant was opposed. There was little support for the intensive strategy, with only 2 participants supporting the establishment of a town conservation fund/bond and 8 participants opposed. A notably high 11 participants were neutral on this strategy. Participants provided additional comments on the need to better manage RADR (2), to ensure contiguous open space (2), to make open space more accessible particularly for older residents (1) and to create mountain biking trails (1).

Goal: Expand protected open space in Harrison

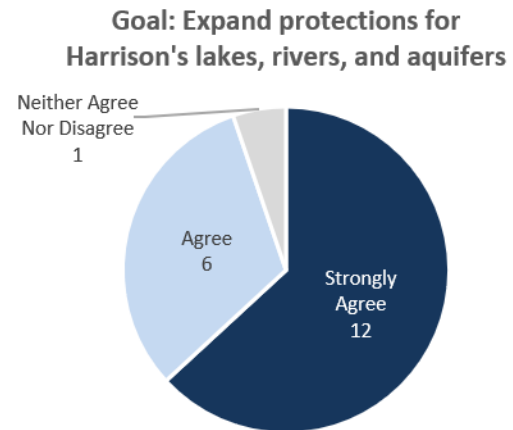


Open Space Strategies

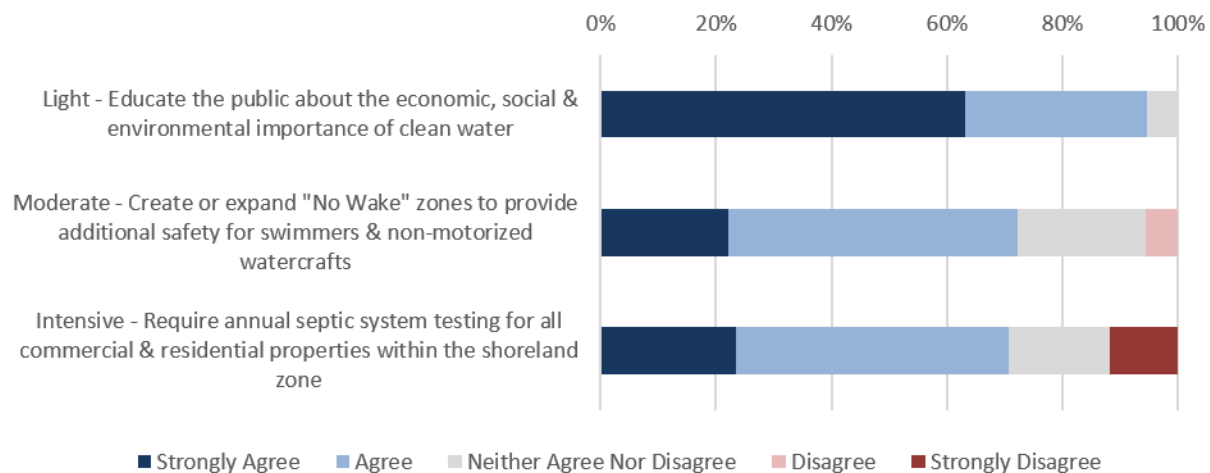


Water Resources

Participants were very supportive of the water resource goal, with 18 of the 19 participants who responded expressing support for expansion of protections of lakes, rivers, and aquifers, and none opposing. There was very high support for all water resource strategies. The highest support was for the light strategy, with 18 participants supporting and none opposing public education on the importance of clean water. The moderate strategy also had strong support, with 13 participants supporting and only 1 opposing the creation/expansion of "no wake" zones. There was also strong support for the intensive strategy, with 12 participants supporting and 2 participants opposing required annual septic system testing for properties within the shoreland zone. Participants provided additional comments about a desire for a public septic system (2), a public water system (1), and a strategy of banning motors of over 10 horsepower on waterbodies under 150 acres (1).



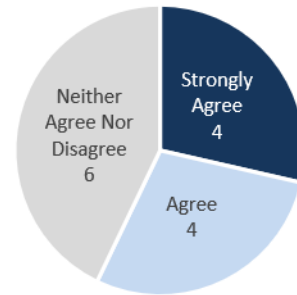
Water Resources Strategies



Sustainability

While the response rate to sustainability questions was the lowest out of any category, the participants who did respond were supportive of the goal to reduce vulnerability to severe weather events. Eight participants expressed support for the sustainability goal, and none were opposed. There was the most support for the light strategy, with 14 participants supporting a vulnerability assessment to assess environmental risks and no participants opposing. There was moderate support for the moderate strategy, with 6 participants supporting, none opposing, and 7 remaining neutral on the establishment of a program to help residents reduce expenses by improving resiliency of their homes or businesses. There was the least support for the intensive strategy, with 4 participants supporting and 4 opposing incentives for clean energy businesses. Participants provided additional comments expressing desire for community gardens (1), electric vehicle chargers (1), and public transportation between Harrison and Bridgton (1).

Goal: Reduce Harrison's vulnerability to severe weather events



Sustainability Strategies

