COUNTY OF MINBURN — STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY

What we heard

Survey window: May–June 2026

This report presents the final results from the County of Minburn Strategic Planning Survey.

Prepared by Spencer Morley Consulting

June 2026

Executive summary

This report presents final results from the County of Minburn Strategic Planning Survey. The survey was open from May to June 2026 and closed on June 15, 2026. In total, 104 residents completed the survey (n=104). This report covers all ten sections of survey findings and is intended to inform the County's strategic plan development.

Top findings

1. Roads and rural infrastructure are the County's dominant near-term mandate.

Road maintenance and infrastructure is the single most-selected strategic plan focus area, chosen by 62.5 per cent of respondents (Figure 3.1), and the highest-rated priority of any item tested, with 96.2 per cent rating it important or very important (Figure 3.2). The same theme recurs as the top open-text priority for rural and hamlet support (17.6 per cent of Q17 responses, Figure 6.1) and is tied for first in open-text responses submitted for Council's consideration (19.5 per cent of Q27 responses, Figure 10.1). Across closed and open questions alike, no other issue commands this level of consistent, cross-cutting support.

2. Agricultural land protection is strongly supported, and most residents feel the County currently strikes the right balance — though a vocal minority disagrees.

70.9 per cent of respondents rate protecting agricultural land as important or very important (Figure 5.1), and 59.6 per cent feel the County is currently balancing agricultural protection and development adequately or very well, a net positive of +41.3 (Figure 5.3). At the same time, 18.3 per cent feel the balance is being struck poorly, and the open-text elaborations behind this minority view cluster around soil health and erosion, industrial development impacts, and renewable energy siting on agricultural land (Figure 5.2). The strategic plan would treat the current land-use balance as a baseline to maintain, while using these specific concerns to guide refinements.

3. More awareness is needed on County programs and activities.

Where residents are aware of County programs, satisfaction is high: among those with a substantive view, 77.9 per cent rate community organizations and non-profits positively (net +55.9, Figure 6.2). Yet 77.9 per cent of respondents — 81 of 104 — report they do not access or are not aware of the County's Family and Community Support Services program (Figure 6.3), and 26.0 per cent say they are simply not aware of community organizations at all (Figure 6.2). This same pattern extends to governance: 37.9 per cent of respondents feel not very informed or not at all informed about County activities (Figure 7.2), and 44.7 per cent are neutral on whether they are satisfied with opportunities to provide input (Figure 7.3). The gap to close is one of reach and visibility, not program quality.

Executive summary (continued)

4. Residents are deeply rooted and largely positive about the County's future, creating a strong foundation for the strategic plan.

91.3 per cent of respondents — 95 of 104 — plan to remain in the County (net +88.5, Figure 9.1), the strongest result of any survey question. 66.3 per cent would likely or very likely recommend the County as a place to live (net +60.4, Figure 9.2). When asked what would attract more people and businesses, the leading theme by a wide margin is recreation, sports, and community gathering facilities (19.7 per cent of Q25 responses, Figure 9.3) — a concrete, actionable lever consistent with the household composition described in Figure 1.5.

5. Communication channels are split three ways, with no single channel reaching a majority.

Website (50.0 per cent), Facebook (47.1 per cent), and email (43.3 per cent) form a near three-way tie as preferred communication channels (Figure 8.1), while 24.0 per cent still prefer the local newspaper and 23.1 per cent mailed communications. This matters directly: communication, consultation, and transparency is the third most-cited theme in residents' open responses (14.3 per cent of Q27 responses, Figure 10.1), and 8.7 per cent named communications as a strategic plan focus area in its own right (Figure 3.1). A rollout plan for the strategic plan itself is the natural first test of a multi-channel approach.

Potential Wins

1. Road maintenance and rural infrastructure appear an important priority, consistent with both the highest importance rating (96.2 per cent) and the most-selected focus area (62.5 per cent) in the survey.
2. Maintaining the current agricultural land protection framework as the strategic plan's land-use baseline, while reviewing the soil health, industrial development, and renewable energy should be discussed as part of ongoing land-use policy work.
3. Develop a multi-channel communication plan — at minimum the website, Facebook, and email — to accompany the strategic plan's rollout, explicitly targeting the 37.9 per cent of residents who feel under-informed and the awareness gaps identified for the Family and Community Support Services program and community organizations generally.
4. Economic development and diversification should be a key area for consideration.
5. Review opportunities for recreational development.

Methodology

This report presents final results from the County of Minburn Strategic Planning Survey. The survey was open from May through June 2026 and closed on June 15, 2026. A total of 104 residents completed the survey (n=104). All figures, percentages, and findings in this report reflect the complete final dataset.

The survey was distributed to residents of the County of Minburn and completed anonymously online. No personally identifying information was collected, and individual responses cannot be traced back to respondents.

Consistent with standard practice for resident surveys, findings based on fewer than 10 respondents are not reported on a standalone basis. Where this threshold applies — for example, the Lavoy area breakdown in Section 1 (n=6) — findings are presented as directional only.

Data in this report is presented as collected and has not been weighted to match the County's demographic profile. Section 1 describes the composition of the sample, including areas where it differs from the County's broader population, such as the under-representation of residents under 35.

Report structure

Sections 1 through 3 describe who responded and the priorities they identified. Sections 4 through 6 examine areas of more contested or nuanced opinion: economic development, environment and land use, and community and social services. Section 7 presents the County's governance trust index. Sections 8 through 10 address communication preferences, residents' future outlook, and the open message respondents chose to share with Council.

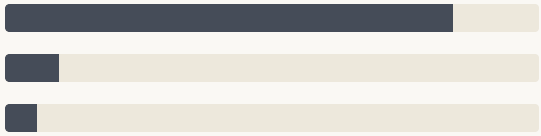
> *Economic development and diversification should be a key area for consideration.*

Section 1 — Who responded

A profile of the 104 residents who took part in the survey, and how this sample compares with the County's broader population.

FIGURE 1.1

Where respondents live

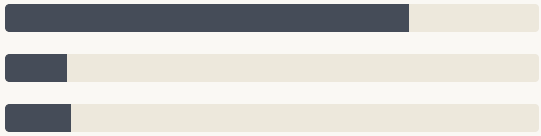


The Lavoy area breakdown (6 responses) falls below the 10-response reporting threshold and is presented as directional only.

Source: Q1, n=99

FIGURE 1.2

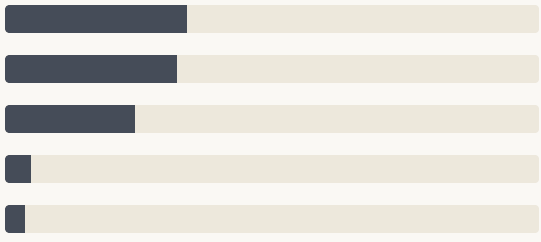
How long respondents have lived in the County



Source: Q3, n=103

FIGURE 1.3

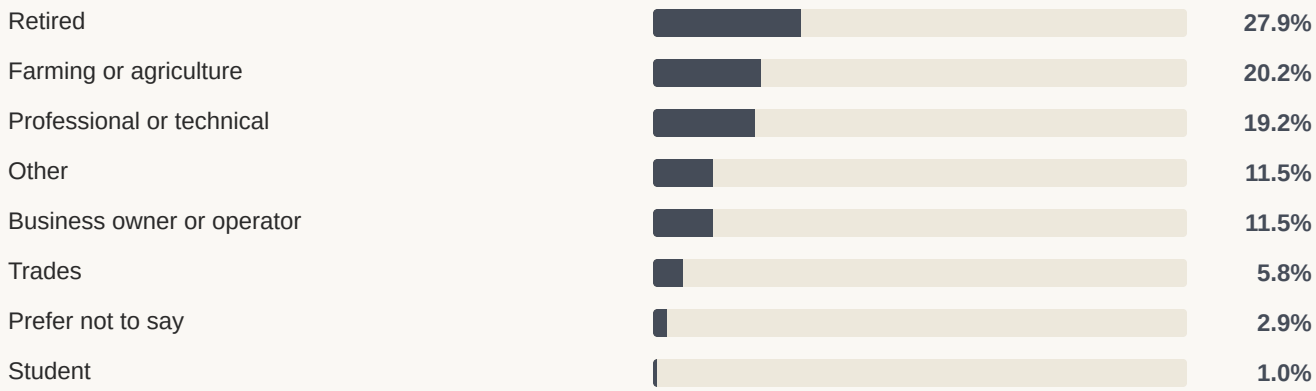
Age of respondents



Source: Q5, n=102

FIGURE 1.4

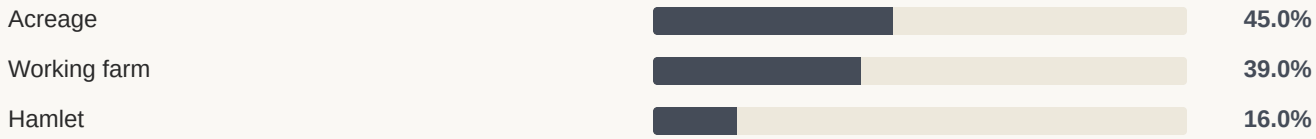
Occupation of respondents



Source: Q6, n=104

FIGURE 1.5

Household type



Source: Q4, n=100

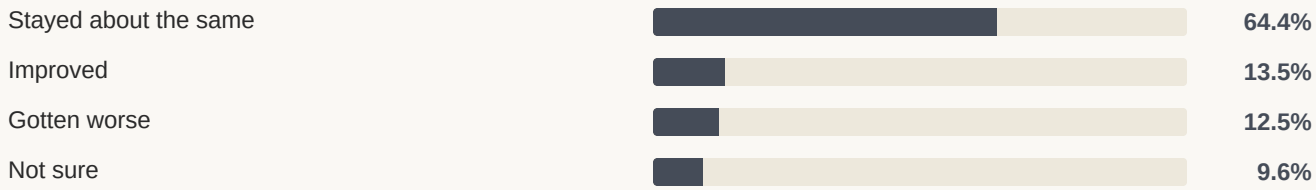
Taken together, the sample skews toward long-tenured, rural, and older residents: 75.7 per cent have lived in the County more than 15 years, 83.8 per cent live in a rural area outside a hamlet, and residents aged 50 and over make up 66.7 per cent of respondents, against an estimated under-30 share in the County's population of approximately 17 per cent — a group represented by only a small fraction of respondents. The Lavoy area breakdown in Figure 1.1 (n=6) falls below the 10-response reporting threshold and should be read as directional only. Findings throughout this report, particularly those touching on future outlook and communication preferences, should be read with this demographic profile in mind.

Section 2 — Quality of life

How respondents' quality of life has changed since living in the County, and what they value most about living here.

FIGURE 2.1

Change in quality of life

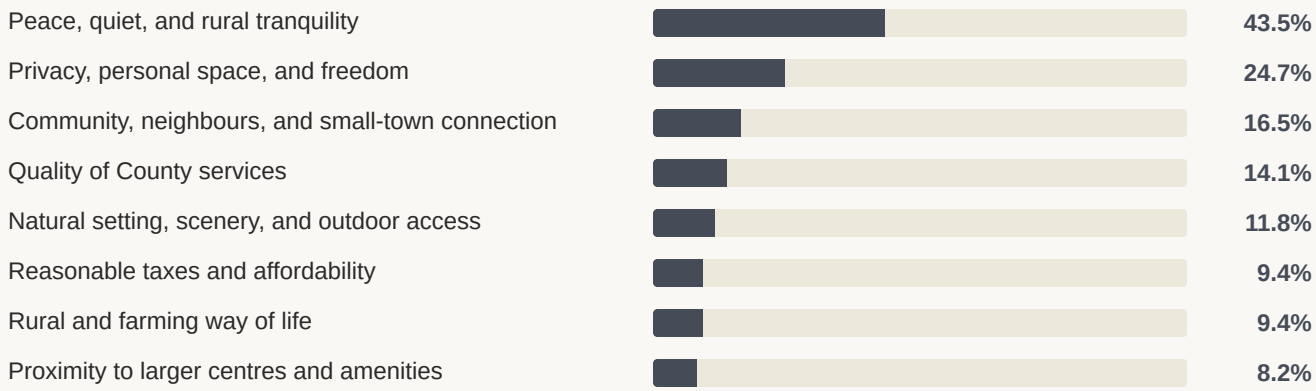


Source: Q7, n=104

All 104 respondents rated how their quality of life has changed since living in the County. The dominant result is stability rather than change: 64.4 per cent (67 of 104) reported that their quality of life has stayed about the same. A further 13.5 per cent (14 of 104) reported improvement and 12.5 per cent (13 of 104) reported decline, producing a net score of +1.0. For a strategic plan that will be read as a signal of direction, this is a meaningful finding in itself: the prevailing experience among respondents is one of continuity, and the plan's framing should reflect stewardship of conditions residents already value rather than implying that current conditions require significant correction.

FIGURE 2.2

What residents value most about living in the County



Open-ended responses (Q8) were grouped into recurring themes; because individual responses often touched on more than one theme, percentages sum to more than 100 per cent.

Source: Q8, n=85

> *"I enjoy peace and quiet, away from the city, that's it."*
>
> — Open-text response, Q8. Representative of the peace, quiet, and rural tranquility theme (37 responses, 44% of Q8 submissions).

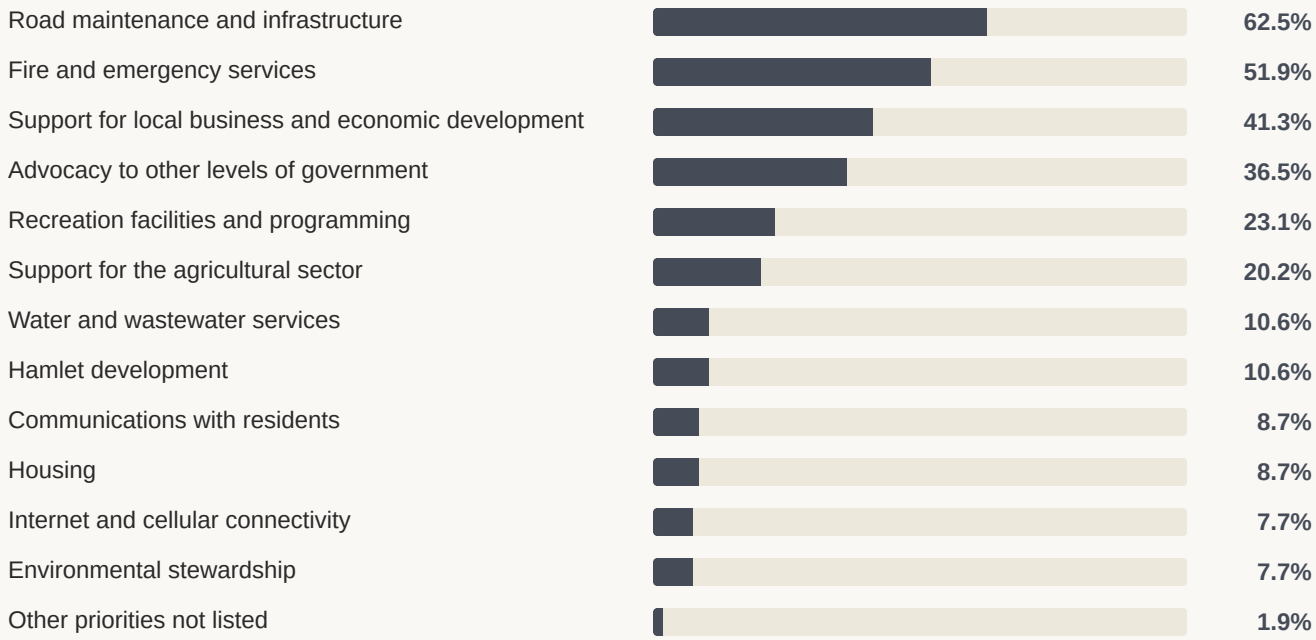
Read together, Figures 2.1 and 2.2 tell a consistent story. The stability most respondents report in their quality of life (Figure 2.1) is grounded in qualities — quiet, privacy, a sense of community, and a rural way of life — that change slowly and are sensitive to disruption. This is a useful frame for the development and land-use findings in Sections 4 and 5: residents are not asking the County to change course, but they will notice, and may react to, anything that visibly erodes the qualities identified here.

Section 3 — Setting priorities

The focus areas respondents identified for the strategic plan, and the importance they assigned to specific service areas when asked separately.

FIGURE 3.1

Top focus areas for the strategic plan



Respondents could select multiple focus areas, so percentages do not sum to 100 per cent.

Source: Q10, n=104

All 104 respondents selected the focus areas they would most like to see addressed in the strategic plan, choosing as many as applied. Road maintenance and infrastructure was the most frequently selected focus area — by a clear margin the single most-selected item. Fire and emergency services followed, and then support for local business and economic development.

62.5% OF RESPONDENTS SELECTED ROAD MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE AS A STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS AREA — THE SINGLE MOST-SELECTED PRIORITY IN THE SURVEY

FIGURE 3.2

Importance of specific service areas



Share of respondents rating each service area "important" or "very important" on a five-point scale.

Source: Q9, n=97–104 depending on item

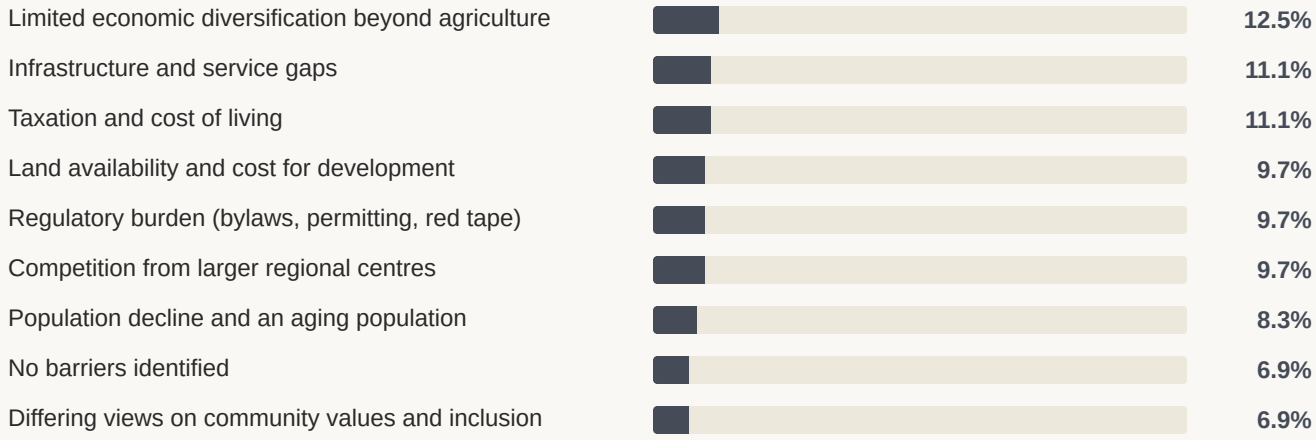
Taken together, Figures 3.1 and 3.2 point to the same conclusion from two different directions. Roads and rural infrastructure are, without qualification, the dominant near-term mandate emerging from this survey: nearly all respondents rate road infrastructure as important, and it is also the item most frequently chosen as a top focus area when respondents are asked to prioritize among competing options. Fire and emergency services, business and economic development support, advocacy, and recreation form a clear second tier of priorities, each selected or rated highly by roughly a third to four-fifths of respondents, but none approaches the near-universal emphasis placed on roads.

Section 4 — Economic development

Barriers respondents see to business activity in the County, the opportunities they identify, and their views on the County's "Buy a Lot for a Loonie" program.

FIGURE 4.1

Barriers to business and economic activity



Open-ended responses (Q11) were grouped into recurring themes; because individual responses often touched on more than one theme, percentages sum to more than 100 per cent.

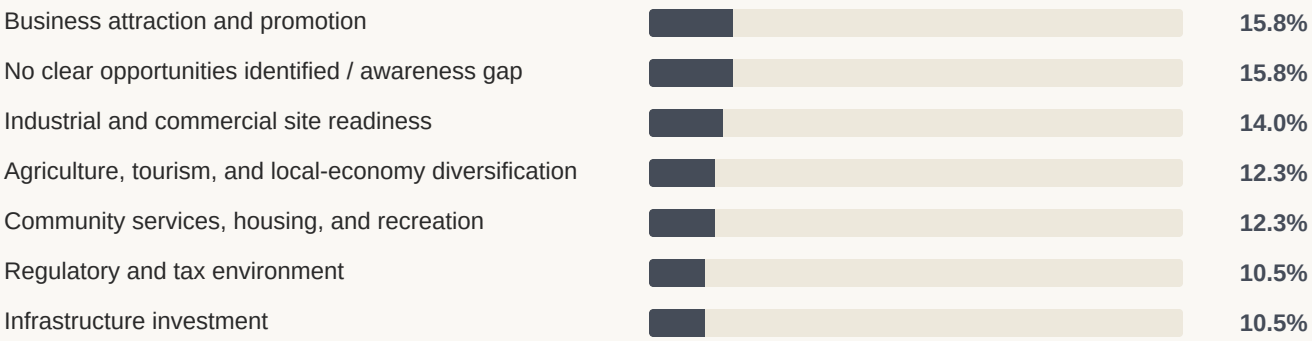
Source: Q11, n=72

Seventy-two respondents answered an open-ended question about barriers to business and economic activity in the County. The most frequently cited barrier was limited economic diversification beyond agriculture. Land availability and cost, regulatory burden, infrastructure and service gaps, and taxation and cost of living were each raised by a similar share of respondents, followed by competition from larger regional centres, and population decline and an aging population.

> *"The county focuses only on agriculture and basically vilifies any other business."*
>
> — Open-text response, Q11. Representative of the limited economic diversification theme (9 responses, 13% of Q11 submissions).

FIGURE 4.2

Opportunities for economic development



Open-ended responses (Q12) were grouped into recurring themes; because individual responses often touched on more than one theme, percentages sum to more than 100 per cent.

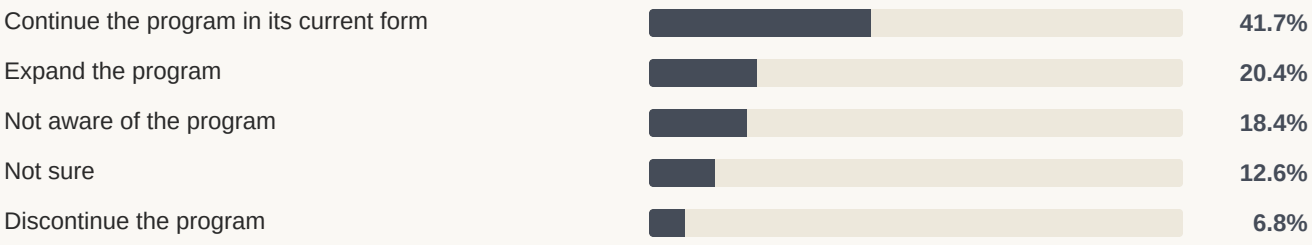
Source: Q12, n=57

Fifty-seven respondents identified opportunities for economic development in the County. Business attraction and promotion, and a lack of clear opportunities (or an awareness gap about opportunities that already exist), were tied as the most frequently cited opportunities, followed closely by industrial and commercial site readiness. Diversification into agriculture-related tourism, and investment in community services, housing, and recreation, were each raised by a similar share, followed by the regulatory and tax environment, and infrastructure investment.

> *"Highlighting country living/attracting acreage dwellers, encouraging cottage industry type businesses, making the county the place to live and work."*
>
> — Open-text response, Q12. Representative of the business attraction and promotion theme (9 responses, 16% of Q12 submissions).

FIGURE 4.3

Views on the "Buy a Lot for a Loonie" program



Source: Q13, n=103

One hundred and three respondents indicated their preferred direction for the County's "Buy a Lot for a Loonie" program. The largest share supported continuing the program in its current form, and a further share supported expanding it — together, 62.1 per cent favour continuing or expanding the program. A substantial share reported they were not aware of the program, and a smaller share were not sure of their view. A small minority supported discontinuing the program.

81.6%

OF RESPONDENTS HAD ENOUGH FAMILIARITY WITH THE "BUY A LOT FOR A LOONIE" PROGRAM TO EXPRESS A VIEW ON ITS DIRECTION. AMONG THOSE AWARE OF THE PROGRAM, 76.2 PER CENT EXPRESSED A POSITIVE VIEW (CONTINUE OR EXPAND) AGAINST 8.3 PER CENT EXPRESSING A NEGATIVE VIEW — A NET SCORE OF +67.9

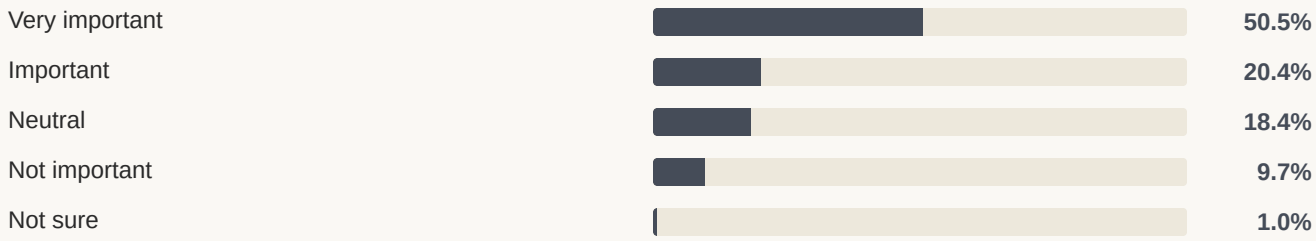
Read together, this section describes a respondent base that sees the County's economy as narrowly dependent on agriculture (Figure 4.1), but that also identifies concrete steps the County could take to broaden it — business attraction, site readiness, and tourism built around the agricultural sector itself (Figure 4.2). Existing County initiatives in this space already enjoy strong support among those familiar with them (Figure 4.3); the main gap is awareness rather than opposition, which points toward communications as much as program design.

Section 5 — Environment and land use

Respondents' views on protecting agricultural land, the environmental concerns they associate with development, and how well they feel the County currently balances these considerations.

FIGURE 5.1

Importance of protecting agricultural land



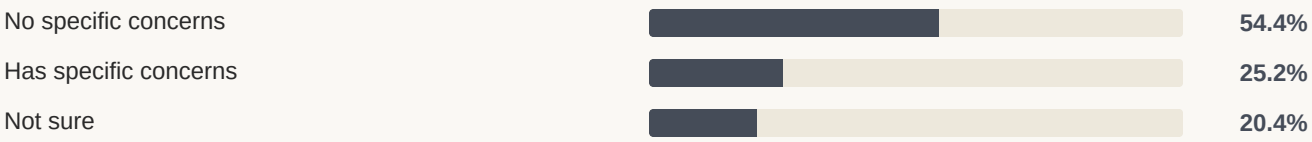
Source: Q14, n=103

One hundred and three respondents rated the importance of protecting agricultural land from non-agricultural development. Just under half, 50.5 per cent (52 of 103), rated this as very important, and a further 20.4 per cent (21 of 103) rated it as important — together, 70.9 per cent rate agricultural land protection as important or very important. Smaller shares were neutral (18.4 per cent, 19 of 103) or considered it not important (9.7 per cent, 10 of 103), with one respondent (1.0 per cent) not sure.

70.9% OF RESPONDENTS RATE PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LAND FROM NON-AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AS IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT

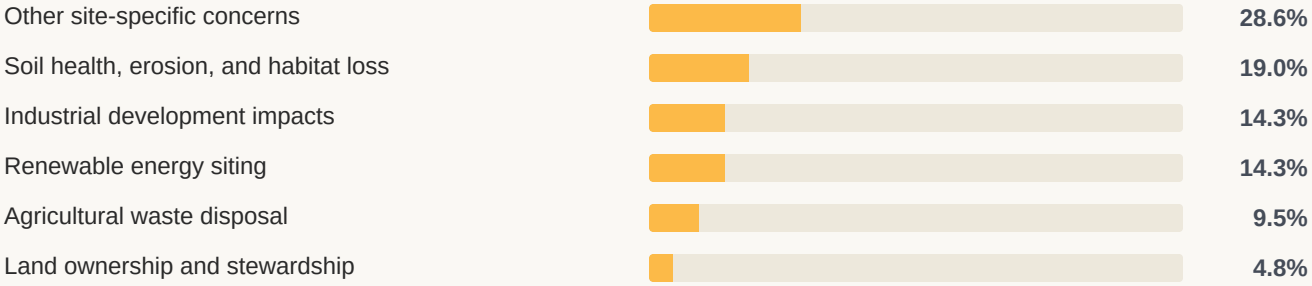
FIGURE 5.2

Environmental concerns related to development



Source: Q15, n=103

Of 103 respondents, just over half — 54.4 per cent (56 of 103) — indicated they did not have specific environmental concerns related to development in the County, while 25.2 per cent (26 of 103) indicated they did, and 20.4 per cent (21 of 103) were not sure. Of the respondents who indicated a concern, 21 provided further detail, which was grouped into six themes:



Detail themes among the 21 respondents who elaborated on their environmental concern (Q15 Detail).

> *"The loss of mineral content due to continuous farming practices that basically are mining the essential trace minerals from the land. Loss of wildlife habitat due to its removal on marginal land."*
>
> — Open-text response, Q15 Detail. Representative of the soil health, erosion, and habitat loss theme (4 responses, 19% of Q15 Detail submissions).

FIGURE 5.3

How well the County currently balances agricultural protection and development



Source: Q16, n=104

All 104 respondents rated how well the County currently balances protecting agricultural land with allowing development. The largest share, 42.3 per cent (44 of 104), felt the County strikes this balance adequately, and a further 17.3 per cent (18 of 104) felt it does so very well — together, 59.6 per cent hold a positive view of the current balance. A smaller but notable share, 18.3 per cent (19 of 104), felt the balance is struck poorly, and 22.1 per cent (23 of 104) were not sure. This produces a net score of +41.3.

NOTE TO COUNCIL

A majority of respondents (59.6 per cent) feel the County currently strikes an adequate or better balance between protecting agricultural land and allowing development, and this majority coexists with a strong, broadly shared view that agricultural land protection itself is important (70.9 per cent rate it important or very important). Read together, these results do not describe a population divided between competing priorities; they describe a population that, for the most part, sees the current approach as working and wants it preserved as development pressure increases. At the same time, a vocal minority — 18.3 per cent — feels the current balance is struck poorly, and the concerns raised in Figure 5.2 (soil health, erosion, habitat loss, and the cumulative effects of industrial and renewable energy development on agricultural land) point to where that dissatisfaction concentrates. The strategic plan's land-use direction should be framed as maintaining and reinforcing the current balance — particularly safeguards relevant to the concerns above — rather than as resolving an unresolved policy conflict.

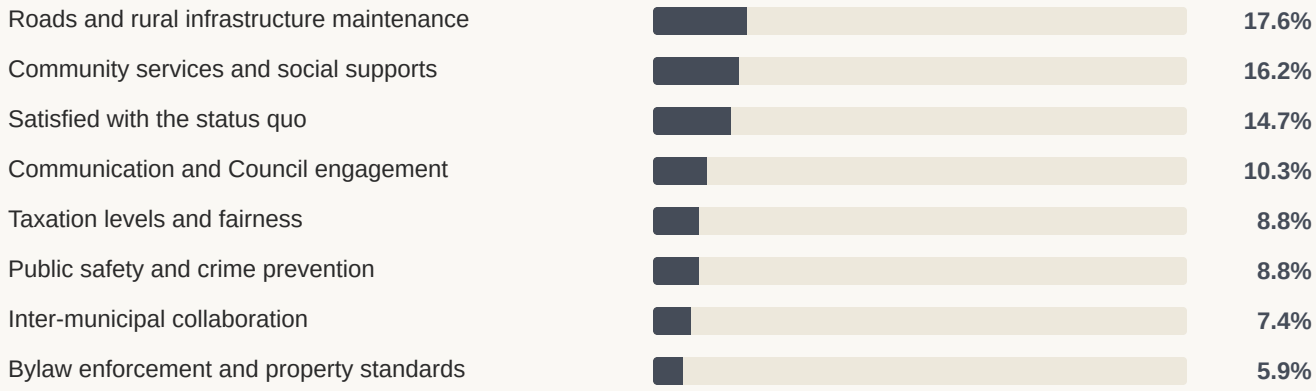
Read alongside Section 2, this section reinforces a consistent theme: respondents are broadly satisfied with how things are managed in the County today, but that satisfaction is conditional on the qualities they value — including the agricultural landscape — being actively protected as development proceeds. The environmental concerns raised in Figure 5.2, while held by a minority, identify specific pressures that the County's land-use policies should continue to address.

Section 6 — Community and social services

What residents identified as the most important areas of support for rural areas and hamlet communities, how well community organizations are perceived to serve residents, and awareness of the County's Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program.

FIGURE 6.1

Priorities for supporting rural areas and hamlet communities



Open-ended responses (Q17) were grouped into eight recurring themes; remaining responses fell into smaller or miscellaneous categories not shown individually.

Source: Q17, n=68

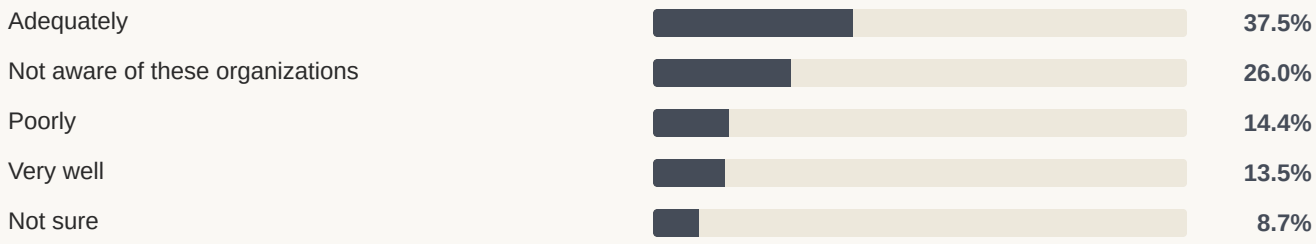
Sixty-eight respondents elaborated, in their own words, on what the County could do to better support rural areas and hamlet communities. The most frequently raised theme was roads and rural infrastructure maintenance — covering roads, water and sewer, garbage collection, and connectivity. Community services and social supports for seniors, youth, and recreation followed closely, and a notable share indicated they were satisfied with the status quo and did not identify a clear support need. Smaller shares raised communication and Council engagement, taxation levels and fairness, public safety and crime prevention, inter-municipal collaboration with towns and villages, and bylaw enforcement and property standards.

> *"I think the County should prioritize improving rural road maintenance and infrastructure, as well as expanding reliable high-speed internet access. Good roads are essential for safety, agriculture, and day-to-day travel, while strong internet connectivity is increasingly necessary for work, education, business, and accessing services."*
>
> — Open-text response, Q17. Representative of the roads and rural infrastructure maintenance theme (12 responses, 18% of Q17 submissions).

Roads surface here for the second time in this report — Section 3 already established roads as the County's leading focus area by a wide margin (Figure 3.1). Their reappearance in this open-ended question, framed specifically around rural and hamlet support, reinforces rather than duplicates that finding: road and infrastructure quality is not only the most commonly selected priority overall, but also the first thing residents reach for when asked, unprompted, what rural support should look like.

FIGURE 6.2

Perceived quality of community organizations and non-profits



Source: Q18, n=104

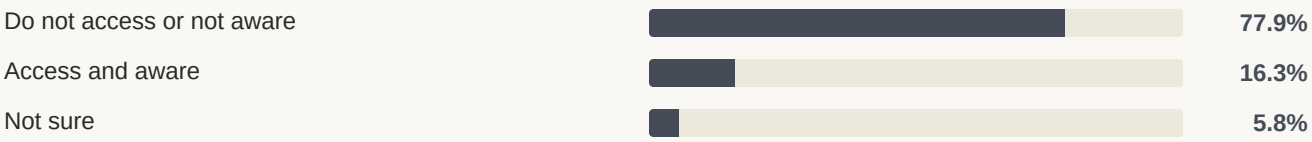
Of the 104 respondents, 37.5 per cent (39 of 104) felt that community organizations and non-profits serve County residents adequately, and 13.5 per cent (14 of 104) felt they do so very well — together, 51.0 per cent hold a positive view. A further 14.4 per cent (15 of 104) felt they do so poorly. Notably, 26.0 per cent (27 of 104) indicated they were not aware of these organizations, and 8.7 per cent (9 of 104) were not sure.

+55.9

NET SCORE AMONG THE 68 RESPONDENTS WHO OFFERED A SUBSTANTIVE VIEW OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND NON-PROFITS (EXCLUDING "NOT AWARE" AND "NOT SURE") — 77.9 PER CENT RATED THEM ADEQUATELY OR VERY WELL

FIGURE 6.3

Awareness of Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)



Source: Q19, n=104

77.9% OF RESPONDENTS (81 OF 104) REPORT THAT THEY DO NOT ACCESS OR ARE NOT AWARE OF THE COUNTY'S FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (FCSS) PROGRAM — THE LARGEST AWARENESS GAP OF ANY PROGRAM-LEVEL QUESTION IN THE SURVEY

This awareness gap echoes the 26.0 per cent of respondents in Figure 6.2 who were not aware of community organizations more broadly — together, these two figures point to an awareness and outreach gap that sits well behind the underlying quality of the services themselves. Read together, this section suggests that the County's community-services infrastructure — non-profits, community organizations, and FCSS — is rated favourably by residents who know about it, but that knowledge, not satisfaction, is the binding constraint. Section 7 returns to this theme from a different angle, examining how informed residents feel about County activities and decisions more broadly.

Section 7 — Governance and trust

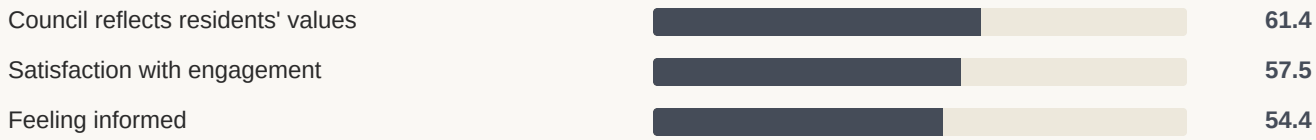
Respondents' overall trust in County governance, how informed they feel about County activities and decisions, and their satisfaction with opportunities to provide input.

56.5

OUT OF 100 — THE COUNTY'S OVERALL GOVERNANCE TRUST INDEX, A COMPOSITE OF HOW INFORMED RESIDENTS FEEL, WHETHER THEY FEEL COUNCIL REFLECTS THEIR VALUES, AND THEIR SATISFACTION WITH ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FIGURE 7.1

Governance trust index — component scores



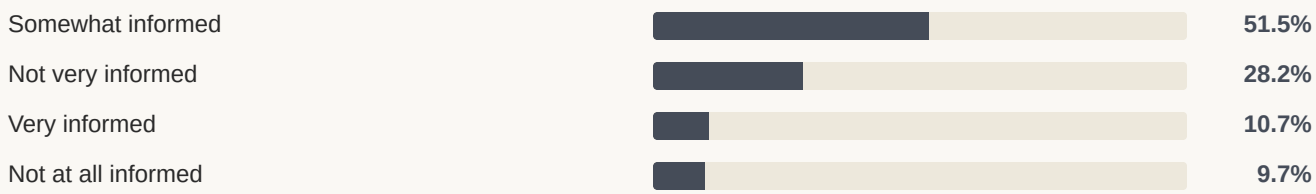
Each component is scored on a 0–100 index; the overall governance trust index of 56.5 is the composite of these three components.

Source: Q20–Q22, n=103

The County's overall governance trust index stands at 56.5 out of 100, modestly above the midpoint. Council reflecting residents' values is the strongest of the three components; feeling informed is the weakest, and is examined in more detail below.

FIGURE 7.2

How informed residents feel about County activities and decisions



Source: Q20, n=103

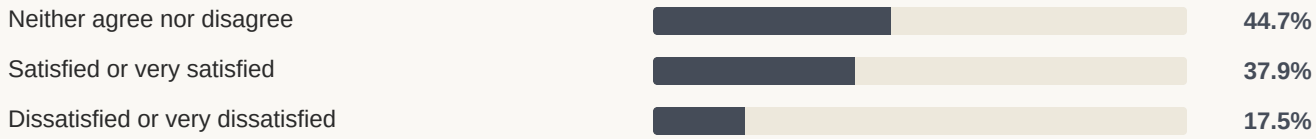
Of 103 respondents, 51.5 per cent (53 of 103) felt somewhat informed about County activities and decisions, and 10.7 per cent (11 of 103) felt very informed — a combined 62.1 per cent reporting some degree of being informed. While a majority of residents report feeling at least somewhat informed, a sizeable minority do not, and this gap is the weakest point in an otherwise modestly positive governance picture.

37.9% OF RESPONDENTS (39 OF 103) FEEL NOT VERY INFORMED (28.2 PER CENT) OR NOT AT ALL INFORMED (9.7 PER CENT) ABOUT COUNTY ACTIVITIES AND DECISIONS.

> *"It seems the County always caters to the most wealthy residents, not all people are treated the same — acreage owners, farmers, oil field operators."*
>
> — Open-text response, Q21 Detail. Representative of the perceived favouritism toward agricultural interests theme (6 responses, 16% of Q21 Detail submissions).

FIGURE 7.3

Satisfaction with opportunities to provide input



Source: Q22, n=103

On engagement specifically, 37.9 per cent of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with opportunities to provide input to the County, against 17.5 per cent dissatisfied or very dissatisfied — a net score of +20.4. The largest single group, however, was neutral: 44.7 per cent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that they were satisfied with engagement opportunities. This level of neutrality is itself notable — for a substantial share of residents, engagement opportunities have not yet registered strongly enough, in either direction, to form a clear view.

Among those who elaborated on governance and fairness in their own words (Q21 Detail, n=37), the most common theme was transparency, consultation, and communication (21.6 per cent, 8 of 37), followed by perceived favouritism toward agricultural interests over other residents (16.2 per cent, 6 of 37) and taxation fairness and governance cost-effectiveness (also 16.2 per cent, 6 of 37). A further theme — consistency of bylaw enforcement — was raised by 8.1 per cent (3 of 37).

> *"Keep in touch with your residents. Respectful and honest communication is so very valuable. To date that has always been so important to us."*
>
> — Open-text response, Q27. Representative of the communication, consultation, and transparency theme (11 responses, 14% of Q27 submissions).

NOTE TO COUNCIL

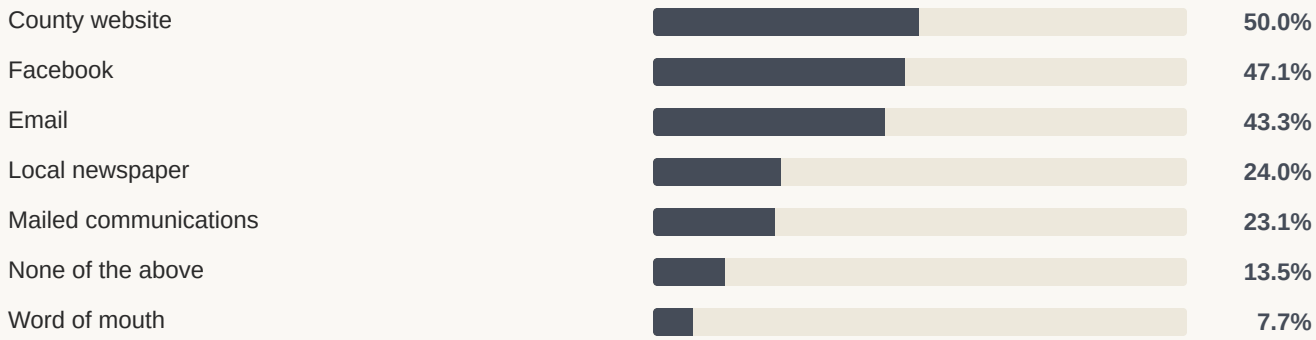
The governance trust index sits modestly above the midpoint (56.5 of 100), and a majority of residents feel at least somewhat informed (62.1 per cent) and report some degree of satisfaction with engagement (37.9 per cent positive against 17.5 per cent negative). The two figures that stand out, however, are the 37.9 per cent who feel under-informed about County activities and decisions, and the 44.7 per cent who are neutral on engagement satisfaction — neither a vote of confidence nor a vote of no confidence. Together, these two gaps describe an opportunity rather than a deficit: residents are not disengaged or distrustful in the aggregate, but a substantial share have not yet formed a strong view of how the County communicates and seeks their input. Closing the awareness gap identified in Section 6 (community organizations and FCSS) and the information gap identified here may be addressable through the same set of communication improvements — a connection Section 8 returns to when it turns to preferred communication channels.

Section 8 — Staying connected

How residents currently prefer to receive information from the County, and what this means for the communication strategy that should accompany the strategic plan's rollout.

FIGURE 8.1

Preferred communication channels



Respondents could select more than one preferred channel; percentages do not sum to 100.

Source: Q23, n=104

The County's website was the most commonly selected channel, at 50.0 per cent (52 of 104), narrowly ahead of Facebook at 47.1 per cent (49 of 104), with email close behind at 43.3 per cent (45 of 104). The local newspaper was selected by 24.0 per cent (25 of 104) and mailed communications by 23.1 per cent (24 of 104). A smaller share, 13.5 per cent (14 of 104), selected none of the listed channels, and 7.7 per cent (8 of 104) selected word of mouth.

Website, Facebook, and email form a near three-way tie at the top of residents' preferred communication channels, with no single channel commanding a majority. This is a meaningfully different picture than a single dominant channel would suggest: a communications strategy built around any one of these three in isolation would miss a substantial share of residents who rely primarily on one of the other two.

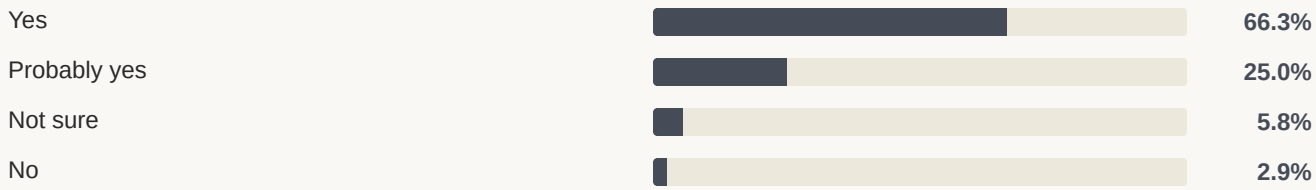
In the open-ended responses on rural and hamlet support (Figure 6.1), 10.3 per cent (7 of 68) of respondents raised communication, responsiveness, and Council engagement as a priority area — consistent with the channel-preference picture above and with Section 7's finding that 37.9 per cent of residents feel under-informed about County activities.

Section 9 — Future outlook

Whether residents plan to remain in the County, whether they would recommend it to others, and what they identified as the kinds of investments or changes that would attract more people and businesses.

FIGURE 9.1

Plans to remain in the County



Source: Q24, n=104

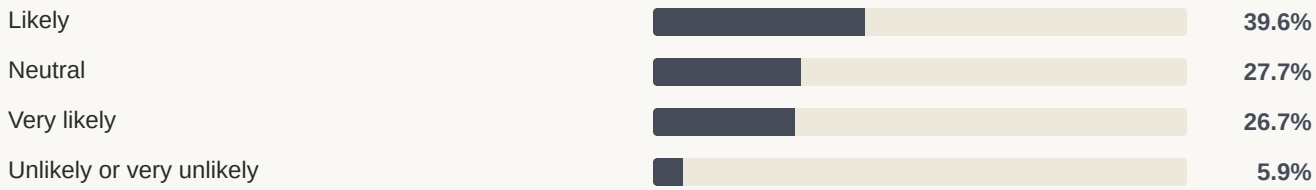
Of 104 respondents, 66.3 per cent (69 of 104) said they plan to remain in the County, and a further 25.0 per cent (26 of 104) said probably yes. Only 2.9 per cent (3 of 104) indicated they do not plan to remain, with 5.8 per cent (6 of 104) not sure.

91.3%

OF RESPONDENTS (95 OF 104) PLAN TO REMAIN IN THE COUNTY, FOR A NET SCORE OF +88.5 — THE STRONGEST RESULT OF ANY QUESTION IN THE SURVEY, AND A CLEAR SIGNAL THAT, WHATEVER CONCERNS RESIDENTS RAISED ELSEWHERE IN THIS REPORT, THEY ARE CONCERNS HELD BY PEOPLE WHO INTEND TO STAY

FIGURE 9.2

Likelihood to recommend the County to others



Source: Q26, n=101

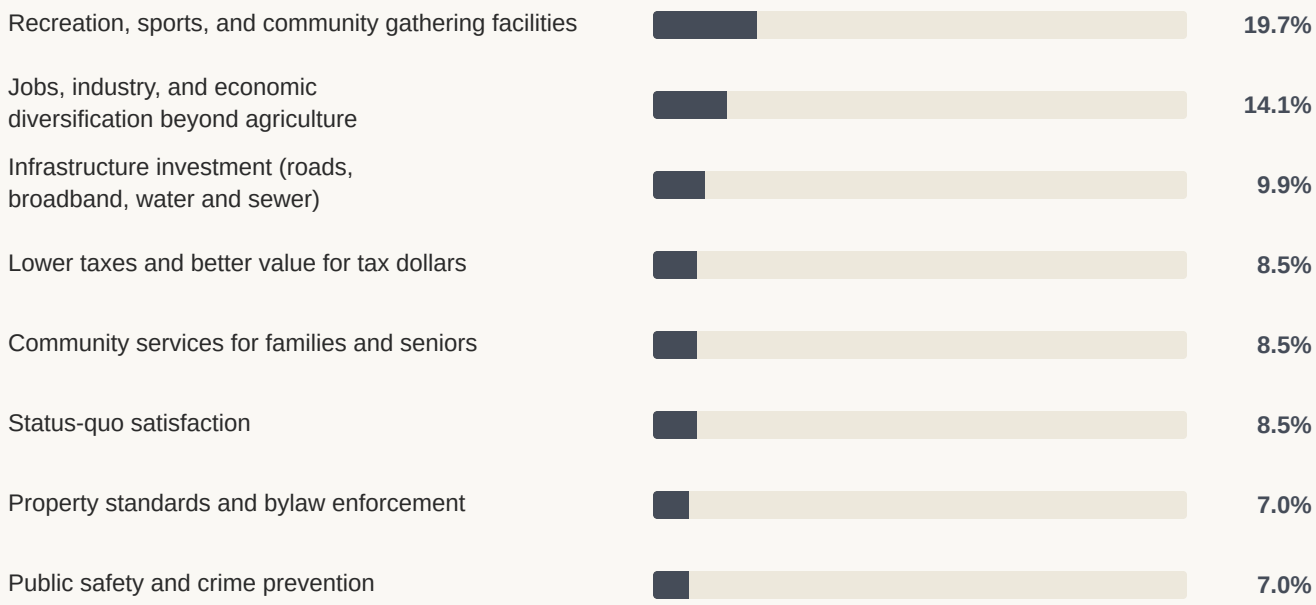
Of 101 respondents, 39.6 per cent (40 of 101) said they were likely to recommend the County to others, and 26.7 per cent (27 of 101) said very likely — a combined 66.3 per cent positive, against 5.9 per cent negative. The remaining 27.7 per cent were neutral.

+60.4

NET SCORE ON LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND THE COUNTY TO OTHERS (66.3 PER CENT POSITIVE AGAINST 5.9 PER CENT NEGATIVE). THE 27.7 PER CENT NEUTRAL SHARE IS WORTH NOTING ON ITS OWN TERMS — OVER A QUARTER OF RESPONDENTS WHO PLAN TO REMAIN AND HAVE NOT FORMED A NEGATIVE VIEW NONETHELESS STOP SHORT OF AN ACTIVE RECOMMENDATION, SUGGESTING ROOM TO CONVERT SATISFIED RESIDENTS INTO ADVOCATES RATHER THAN A GAP TO BE CLOSED THROUGH RETENTION ALONE

FIGURE 9.3

What would attract more people and businesses to the County



Source: Q25, n=71

Seventy-one respondents offered open-ended views on what would attract more people and businesses to the County, grouped into eight themes. The most common, by a wide margin, was recreation, sports, and community gathering facilities, raised by 19.7 per cent (14 of 71). This was followed by jobs, industry, and economic diversification beyond

agriculture (14.1 per cent, 10 of 71), infrastructure investment (9.9 per cent, 7 of 71), and three themes tied at 8.5 per cent (6 of 71 each): lower taxes and better value for tax dollars, community services for families and seniors, and status-quo satisfaction. A further 7.0 per cent (5 of 71) pointed to property standards and bylaw enforcement, and 7.0 per cent (5 of 71) to public safety and crime prevention.

> *"Highlighting what we do have — a bigger social media presence. Maybe encouraging things like interactive farms, zip line parks, walking, sledding, and skiing trails — things we can do without travelling too far."*
>
> — Open-text response, Q25. Representative of the recreation, sports, and community gathering facilities theme (14 responses, 20% of Q25 submissions).

Recreation and community-gathering infrastructure was not among the top focus areas selected in Section 3 (Figure 3.1, where it ranked fifth at 23.1 per cent), but it is the clear leader when residents are asked, in their own words, what would draw new people and businesses to the County. Read alongside Figure 1.5's household-type breakdown — acreage owners (45.0 per cent) and working farms (39.0 per cent) together make up the large majority of the sample — this suggests that recreation and gathering spaces may carry weight as a community-building and attraction tool beyond their ranking as a day-to-day service priority for current residents.

Taken together, the results in this section describe a population that is, by a wide margin, planning to stay (91.3 per cent), broadly willing to recommend the County (66.3 per cent), and able to articulate specific, achievable steps — recreation infrastructure chief among them — that would make the County more attractive to others.

Section 10 — Resident input for Council's consideration

Seventy-seven respondents shared, in their own words, one thing they would want County Council to know.

FIGURE 10.1

Themes raised in messages to Council



Source: Q27, n=77

Two themes were tied for the most common, each raised by 19.5 per cent (15 of 77): fiscal accountability, tax restraint, and spending priorities, and roads, bridges, and infrastructure maintenance. Communication, consultation, and transparency followed at 14.3 per cent (11 of 77). A further 11.7 per cent (9 of 77) offered positive feedback and appreciation for County staff and services. Smaller shares raised economic development, business attraction, and jobs (7.8 per cent, 6 of 77), equitable treatment across resident groups — farmers and non-farmers, hamlets and larger centres (6.5 per cent, 5 of 77), property standards, cleanup, and waste management (5.2 per cent, 4 of 77), and land use, ownership, and stewardship concerns (5.2 per cent, 4 of 77). A residual 13.0 per cent (10 of 77) covered recreation and youth programming, social supports for vulnerable residents, public safety, and a range of other individual perspectives on community values and policy direction, none of which were large enough on their own to report as a standalone theme.

> *"Focus on essential, high-impact services that directly affect residents' daily lives while maintaining fiscal responsibility... keeping taxes as low and sustainable as possible is important for supporting families, attracting new residents, and encouraging local economic growth."*
>
> — Open-text response, Q27. Representative of the fiscal accountability, tax restraint, and spending priorities theme (15 responses, 19% of Q27 submissions).

Together, Sections 1 through 10 describe a County population that is stable, long-tenured, and largely satisfied with day-to-day life (Sections 1–2); that has a clear and strongly held set of priorities, led by roads and infrastructure (Section 3); that sees real opportunity in diversifying the economy beyond agriculture while continuing to support it (Section 4); that places a high value on protecting agricultural land and is largely satisfied with how that balance is currently struck (Section 5); that identifies awareness — of community organizations, of FCSS, and of County activities generally — as a more pressing gap than service quality itself (Sections 6–7); that is reachable through a small number of well-defined communication channels (Section 8); and that, overwhelmingly, intends to stay and is willing to recommend the County to others (Section 9), while offering specific, actionable input on fiscal discipline, communication, and infrastructure as the priorities for the strategic plan to address (Section 10).