

BOOTHBAY REGION

Community Survey

Summary of Results

October 6–31, 2025

Boothbay & Boothbay Harbor, Maine

Rural Infrastructure Strengths Evaluation (RISE) Process



About This Survey

The Boothbay Region Community Survey was released on **October 6, 2025** and closed on **October 31, 2025**. It was designed to capture community perspectives on local assets in Boothbay and Boothbay Harbor and to help identify those assets. The survey was disseminated via publicly posted flyers across the two towns, newspaper press releases, and digitally via direct outreach to community groups and neighborhood associations.

The survey received **199 responses**. Respondents could enter a raffle for one of fifteen \$50 gift cards to a local business of their choice in Lincoln County.

120

Year-Round Residents

60% of respondents

85

Errand-Focused Visitors

43% of respondents

77

Workers

39% of respondents

44

Leisure Visitors

22% of respondents

27

Part-Time Residents

14%

23

Non-Resident Property Owners

12%

8

Business Owners

4%

NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This was a voluntary response survey — not a randomized sample. Self-selection bias is present. Findings reflect perspectives of engaged community members, not everyone. Results will be combined with other RISE process activities.

0 Who Responded — Demographic Profile

51%

Age 65+

102 / 199

56%

2-Person Households

No children

84%

Hold 4-Year Degree+

vs 50.4% (2023 US Census estimate)

90%+

White Non-Hispanic

English-speaking

Median Household Income

\$105,000 – \$134,999

~2× the community's 2023 MHI of \$58,949 (US Census)

Missing Voices

Zero student responses. Critical perspectives absent from renters, young families, working-class residents, and seasonal employees.

50% of respondents hold multiple community affiliations — a sign of deep community integration.

100%

Business owners hold multiple roles

8 of 8

57%

Workers also run errands in town

44 of 77

86%

Leisure visitors also run errands

38 of 44

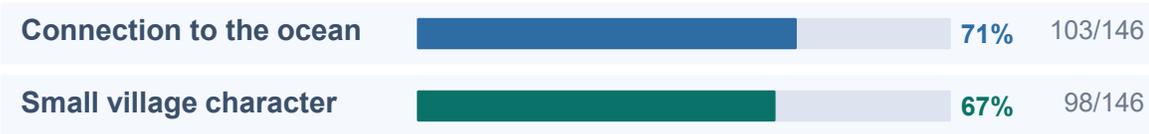
100%

Non-resident property owners hold multiple roles

23 of 23

1 Strong Roots & Significant Investment in Place

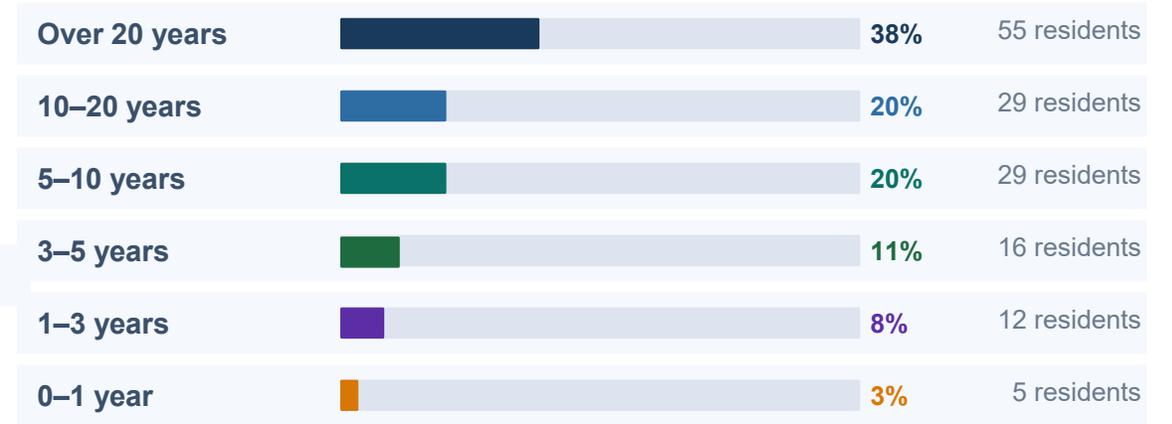
Why Residents Choose to Live Here



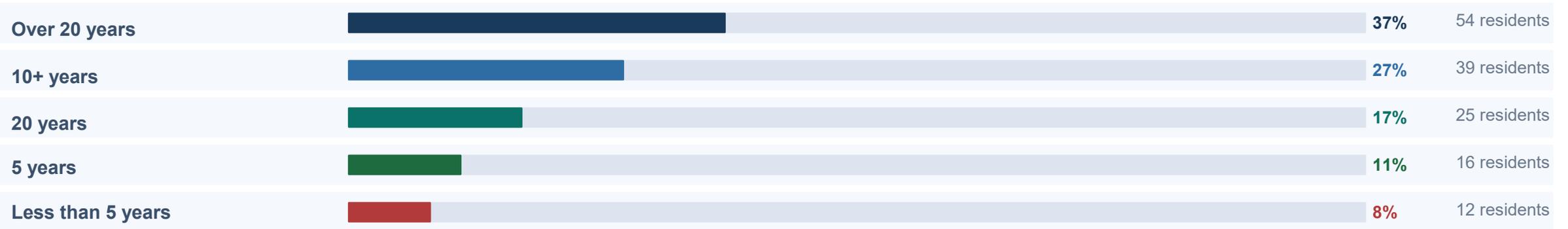
Why Non-Resident Owners Buy Here



Length of Residency



Plans to Remain in Boothbay & Boothbay Harbor



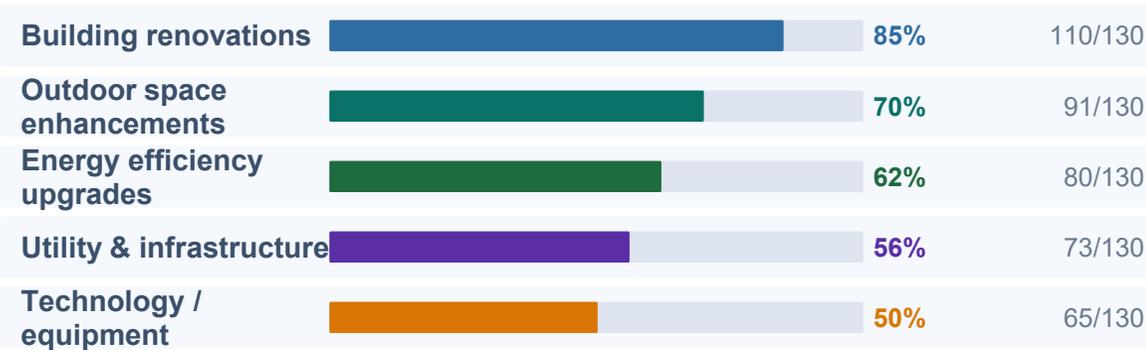
KEY FINDING

Most common reason residents cited for a potential move: Need for Assisted Living (64/146) — reinforcing the significance of the community's aging population.

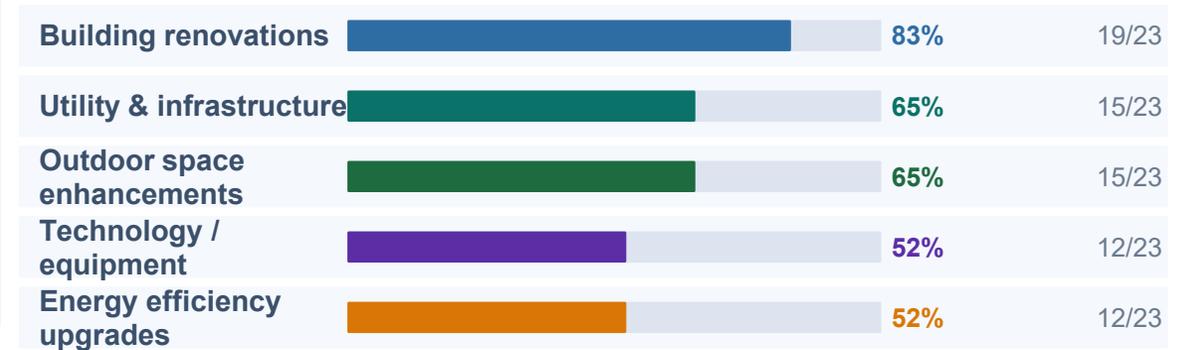
2 Homeownership & Property Improvements



Most Common Improvements — Homeowners



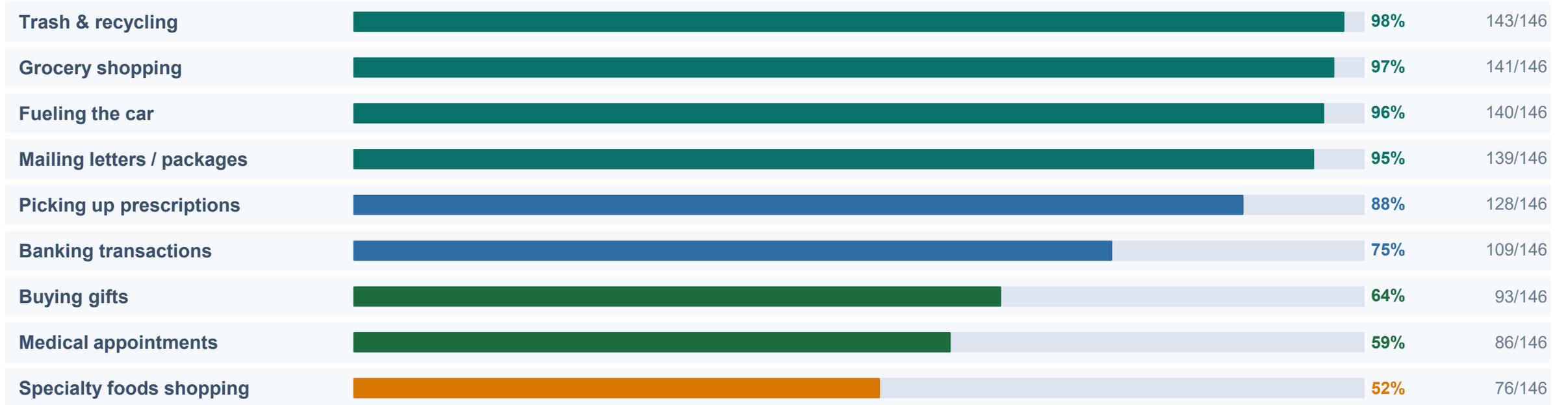
Most Common Improvements — Non-Resident Property Owners



Most common investment amount: **\$100,000 – \$499,999** for both homeowners (46/125) and non-resident property owners (12/22). **~70% of homeowners and ~87% of non-resident property owners** plan additional future improvements.

3 Strong Local Spending with Critical Availability Gaps

Errands Completed Locally by Residents (n=146)



WHY RESIDENTS LEAVE TOWN

Primary reason residents leave for errands: no local establishments providing those services (108/146 residents; 126/199 all respondents). Non-resident workers most commonly cite more convenient options outside the community. Damariscotta frequently mentioned as a competing destination.

4 A Highly Mobile Workforce

81%

Work Full-Time
62 / 77

19%

Work Part-Time
15 / 77

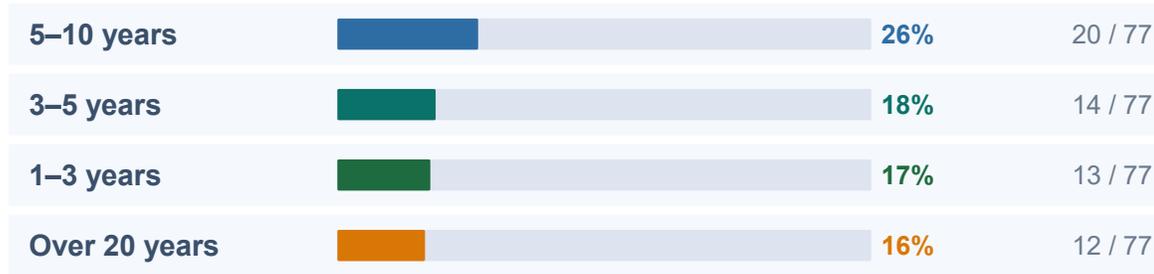
77%

Hold One Job Only
59 / 77

23%

Hold Multiple Jobs
18 / 77

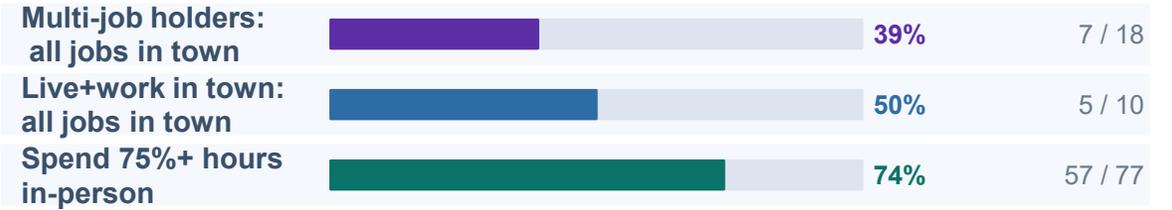
Years Working in the Community



NEW WORKER PATTERN

71% of workers employed in Boothbay/Boothbay Harbor for less than a year (5 of 7) work part-time — suggesting new workers may start in part-time roles, or that securing full-time work initially is challenging.

Commuting & Job Location



Commute Sentiment — Non-Residents Workers Only

Overall (n = 41)	51% positive	49% negative
Full-time job holders (n = 35)	46% positive	54% negative
Part-time job holders (n = 6)	100% positive	0% negative

5 Jobs That Fulfill but Don't Always Pay the Bills

91%

Find Work Meaningful
70 / 77 workers

83%

Positive Work-Life Balance
64 / 77

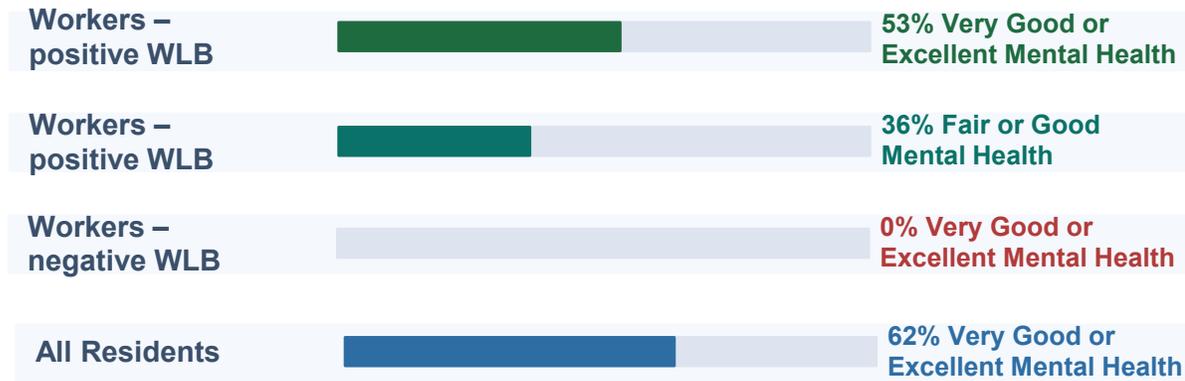
57%

Career Advancement Opportunities (All Workers)
44 / 77

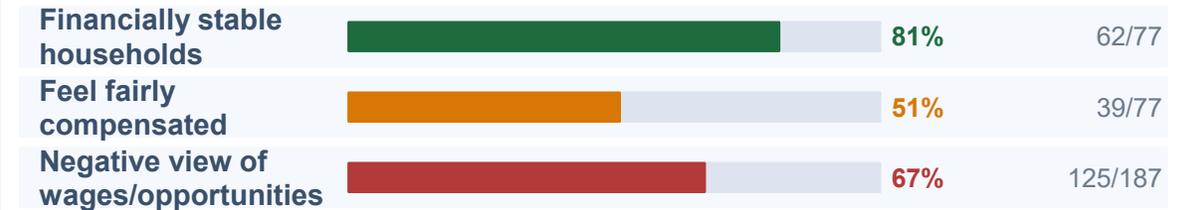
53%

Career Advancement Opportunities (Part-Time Workers)
8 / 15

Workers' Mental Health & Work-Life Balance (WLB)



Compensation & Financial Stability



Top barriers to financial stability amongst workers (n = 15 financially unstable workers):

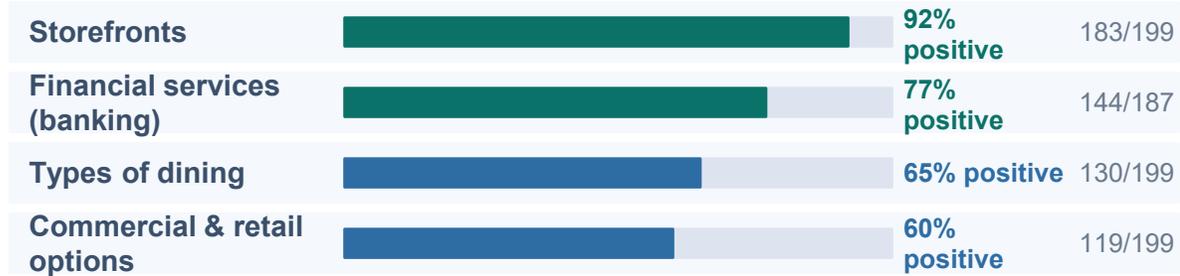
- Full-time pay doesn't cover expenses (7 responses)
- Rent or mortgage too high (6 responses)
- Property taxes / food prices / heating too expensive (4 responses each)

PART-TIME WORKERS & FINANCIAL STABILITY

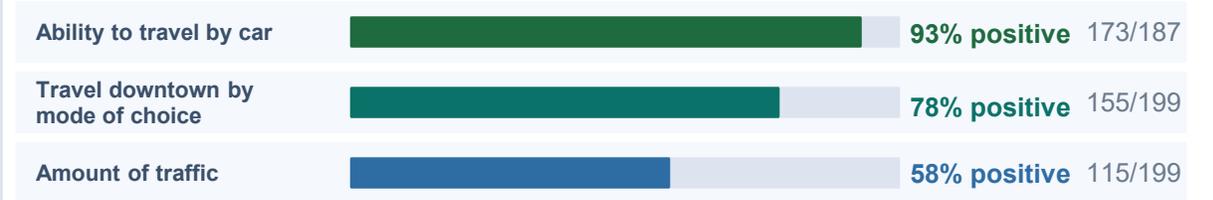
All 15 part-time workers report financial stability, with 93% reporting income of \$90,000 or above.

6 What's Working: Safety, Cleanliness & Natural Beauty

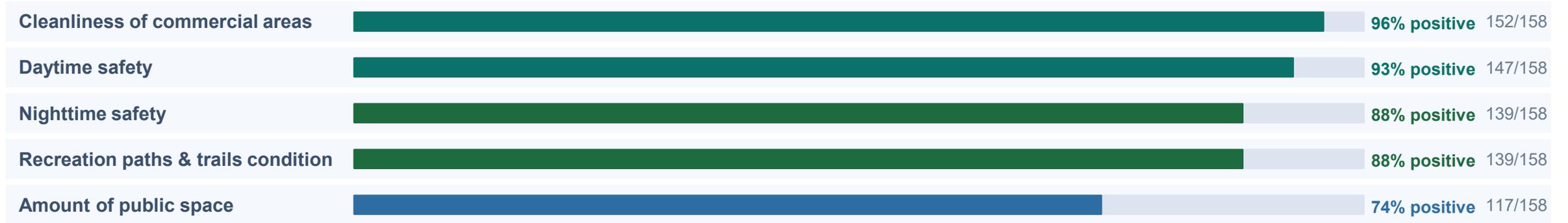
Business Environment



Transportation



Public Space & Safety (n=158 residents & visitors)



Natural Resource Protection (n=158)



7 What's Not Working: Bikes, Parking & Paychecks



Employment & Wages

- 70% of residents negative
- 56% of non-resident workers negative
- 67% combined negative view

Parking

- 65% of residents negative
- 73% of non-resident workers negative
- Two out of five brick-and-mortar businesses have at least one parking spot per employee.
- One out of five brick-and-mortar businesses have more patron parking than patrons they can serve at one time.

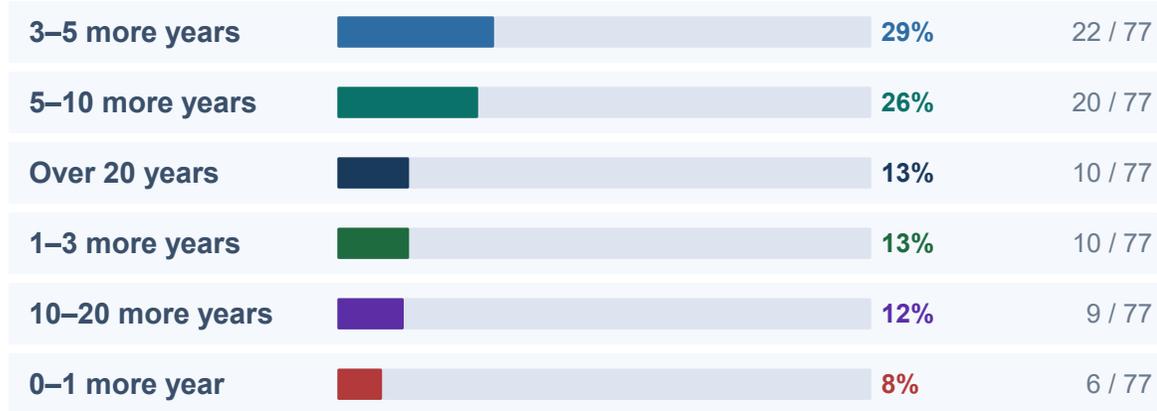
Bicycle Infrastructure

- 65% of residents negative
- 66% of non-resident workers negative
- Consistent across groups

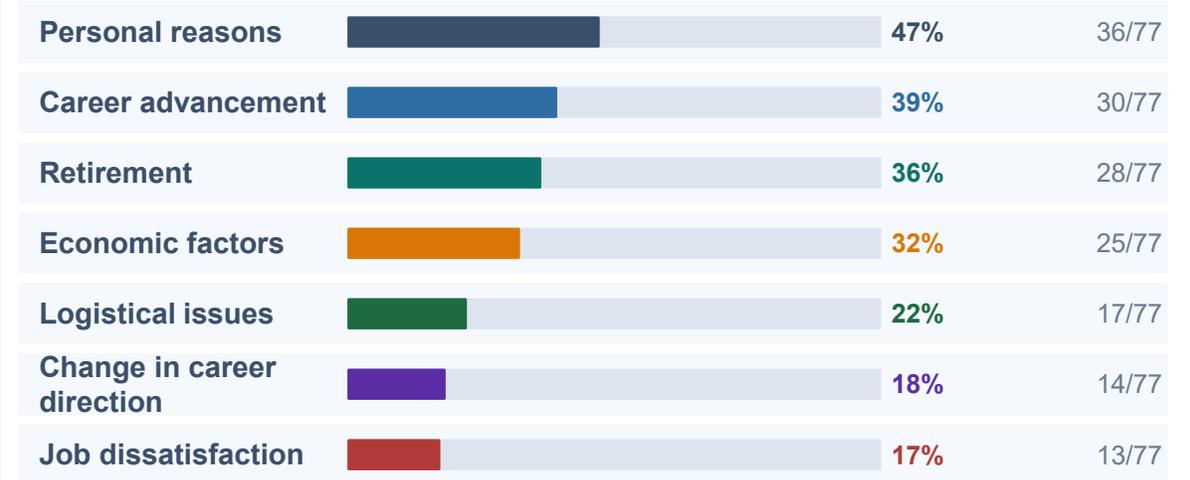
KEY FINDING
 Critical infrastructure gaps in bicycle access and parking, combined with concerns about employment quality, create significant barriers to economic vitality and worker retention.

8 Workers' Future Plans & Top Industries

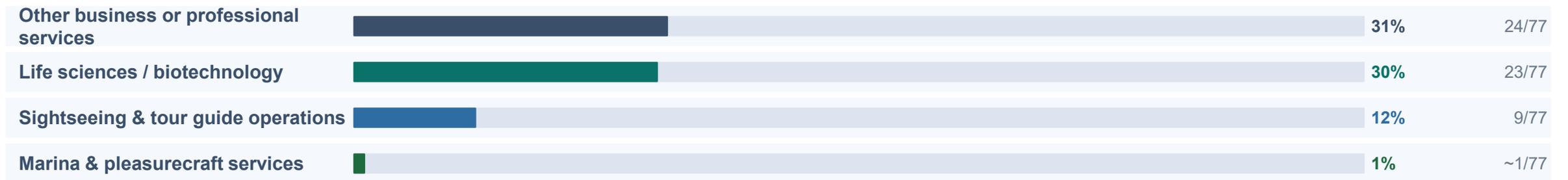
How Long Workers Plan to Stay



Why Workers Might Leave



Top Industries Employing Workers



NOTABLE GAP

No workers indicated employment in Boothbay and Boothbay Harbor's heritage industries — fishing, deep-sea and coastal shipping, ship and boat building and repair, or port operations.

9 Non-Resident Property Ownership & Business Profiles

Non-Resident Property Ownership (n=23)



100% residential primary use. 52% purchased before 2010 (>15 yrs ago). 22% own vacant properties.

Business Profiles (n=8 Business Owners)



Top Business Priorities & Challenges

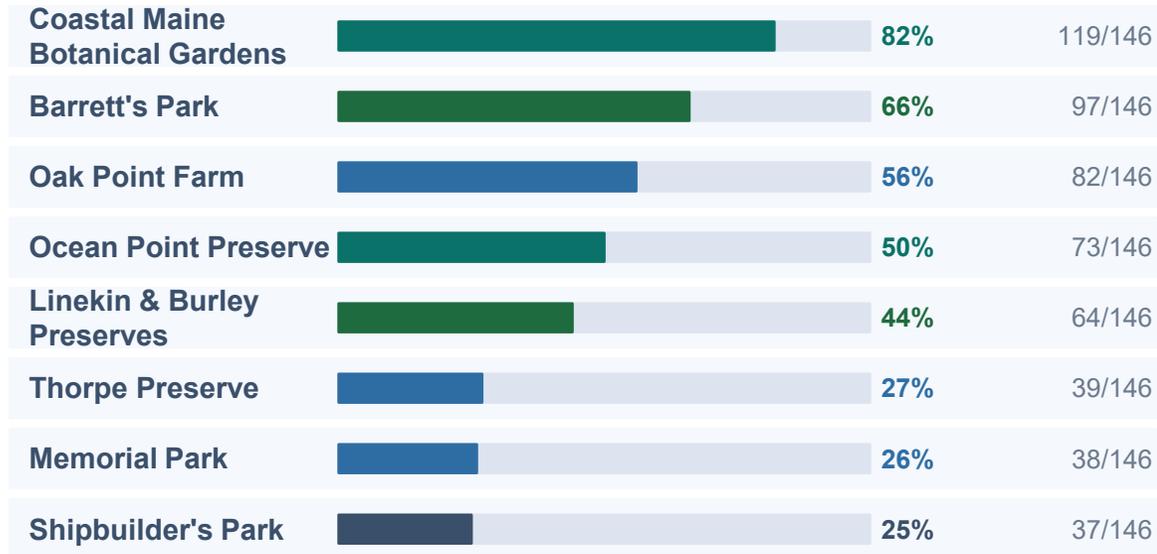


SUCCESSION RISK

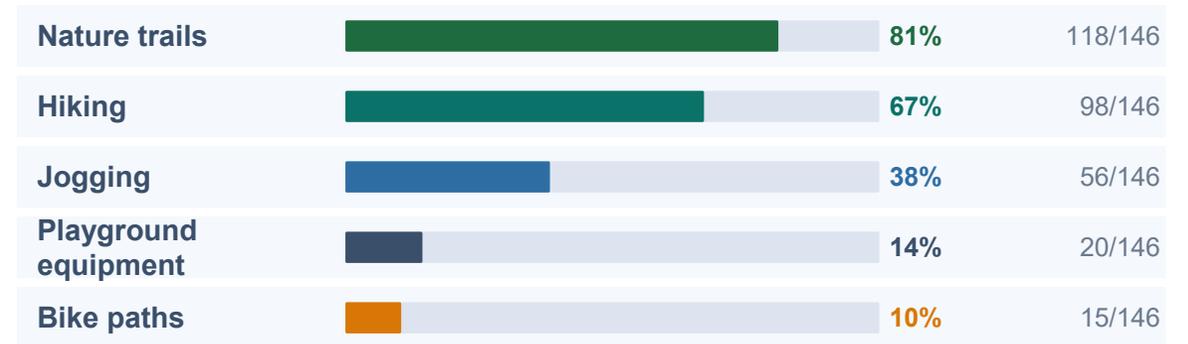
5 of 8 business owners have no succession plan, risking institutional knowledge and economic continuity.

10 Parks as Community Anchors, Led by the Botanical Gardens

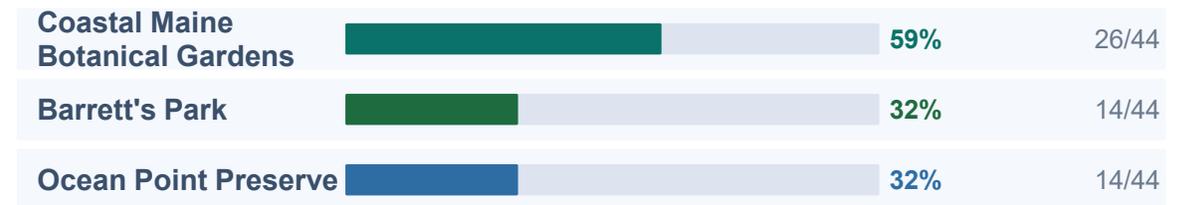
Most Popular Parks — Residents (n=146)



Primary Park Uses — Residents



Most Popular Parks — Non-Resident Visitors (n=44)



ADDITIONAL PARKS NAMED BY RESIDENTS

33 residents named 10 additional parks not on the survey: Porter Preserve, Ovens Mouth Preserve, Knickerbocker Lake, Colby Preserve, Gregory Preserve, Schmid Preserve, Dodge Preserve, and more.

11 Civic Engagement & The Volunteer Paradox

64%

Aware of
Engagement Opportunities
94/146

78%

Want to Give
Feedback to Leaders
114/146

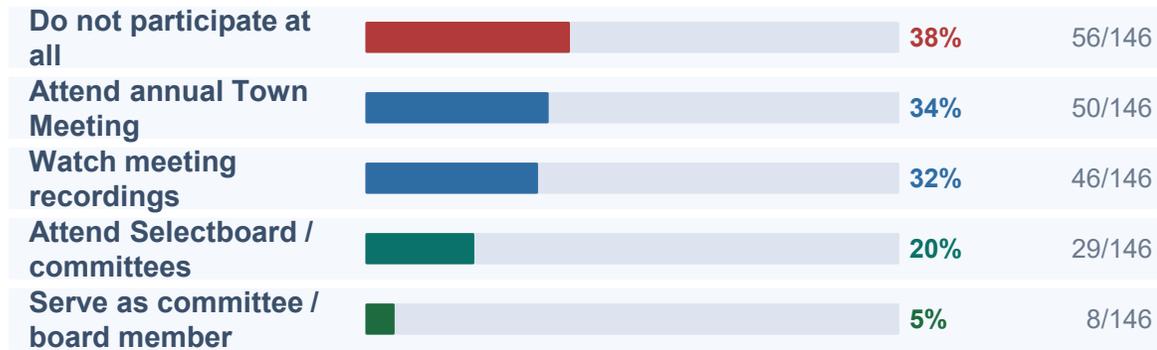
60%

Not Excited About
Current Changes
87/146

44%

Trust Community Plans Serve
Residents' Interests
vs 44% disagree

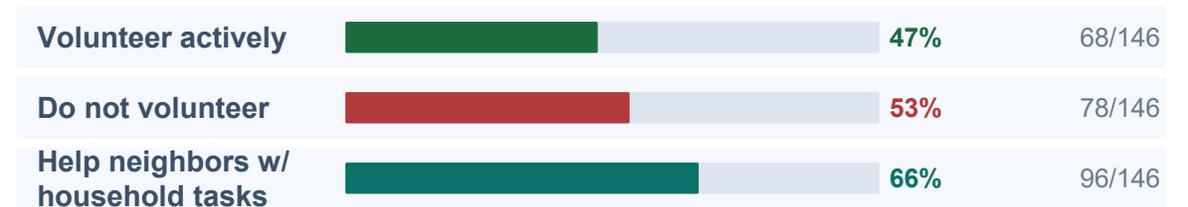
Town Government Participation



Top Information Sources by Group

Residents	Newspaper 85%, Facebook 55%, Chamber 38%
Business Owners	Newspaper 75%, Chamber 63%
Workers	Chamber 41%, Facebook 41%, Newspaper 32%
Visitors	Newspaper 69%, Chamber 30%, Facebook 23%

Volunteerism — The Paradox



Top resident skills offered:

- Cooking & culinary arts (25)
- Digital literacy & computer skills (24)
- DIY & home improvement (23)

12 Cultural Identity Rooted in Maritime Heritage, But Personal Connection Waning

Maritime Industries

Fishing, lobstering, shipbuilding, and boatbuilding — core to community identity though personal connection is waning.

Community Events

Windjammer Days, Fisherman's Festival, lighted boat parade, July 4th fireworks, Gardens Aglow, Farmers Market.

Cultural Venues

Opera House, historical museums, YArts — spaces for arts, heritage, and community gathering.

Natural Resources

Lighthouses, islands (especially Burnt Island), land trust trails, and deep connection to the sea.

80%

No Historic Structure on Property

117/146

51%

No Family History Records

75/146

20%

Have Historic Structure on Property

29/146

HISTORICAL INDUSTRIES

Residents also highlighted ice harvesting, canning factories, and farming as part of the community's heritage. The area is also widely recognized as a summer destination and vacation spot — central to its regional identity.

CONCLUSION

Next Steps

These findings will be combined with other RISE process activities to inform development of economic strategies for Boothbay and Boothbay Harbor.

Design and Facilitate Workforce Focus Group

Bring together 5-8 individuals who work in Boothbay or Boothbay Harbor to add context to the survey results focused on worker priorities and challenges

Finalize Downtown Boothbay Harbor Parking Inventory

Summarize key information on parking amenities in Boothbay Harbor's downtown, including locations, rates, ownership, public access, and number of spaces

Implementation Support

Create final report that catalogs the RISE process and outcomes and provide discrete technical assistance on an immediate action item for Boothbay and Boothbay Harbor's selected economic development strategy

Schedule and Send Invitations for Strategy Development Working Sessions

Three working sessions with relevant town staff and regional industry experts to identify and prioritize the most promising opportunities for local economic development based on alignment of community strengths and municipal resources.