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WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP

5777 Vinton Road • P.O. Box 159 • Williamsburg, MI 49690
(231) 267-5141 • FAX (231) 267-9020

Presented by:

EPIC ▪ MRA

4710 W. Saginaw Hwy.
Suite 2C
Lansing, MI 48917

517.886.0860
info@epicmra.com
www.epicmra.com

Survey on Short-Term Rentals

August 2026

Methodology

- Live operator telephone interviews were obtained from 100 residents of Whitewater Township, with 78 percent of all interviews conducted via cell phone. This initial survey, intended as a “control group,” was conducted from June 9th through June 15th, 2026.

- An online survey, with identical questions as the instrument to gather responses from the live operator telephone interviews, was conducted from June 17th through July 14th, 2026, with 475 residents participating in the survey.

Methodology

- Upon conclusion of the data collection phase of both survey methodologies, duplicate responses were removed from the resulting data sets, and all data sets were then combined, resulting in a total of 563 total unique responses, carrying a margin of error of ±4.0 points for the study.

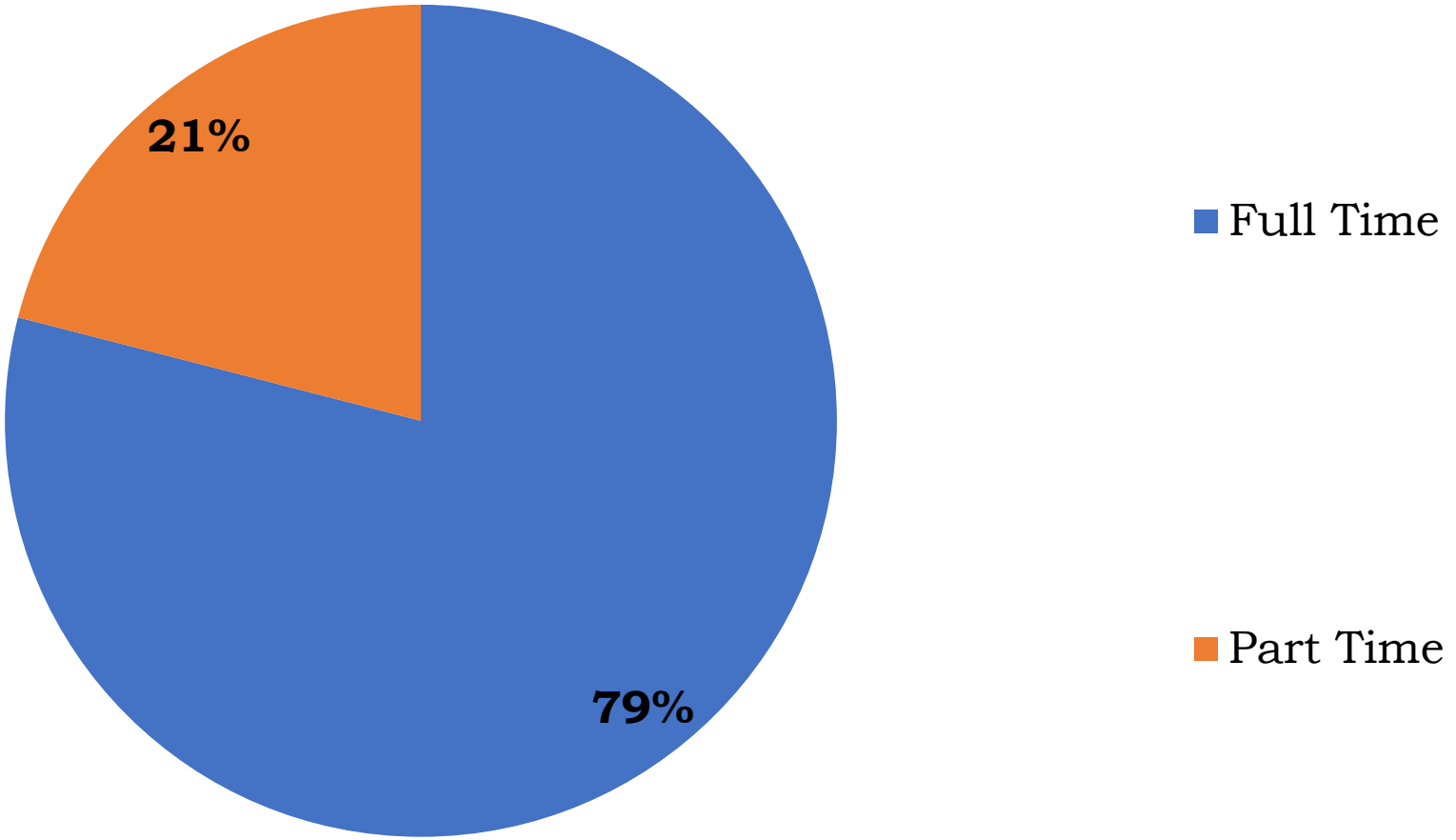
- Using a response of 50% as an example, with repeated sampling, it is very likely (95 out of every 100 times), that the percentage for the entire population would fall between 46.0 percent and 54.0 percent, hence 50 percent ±4.0 points.

Methodology

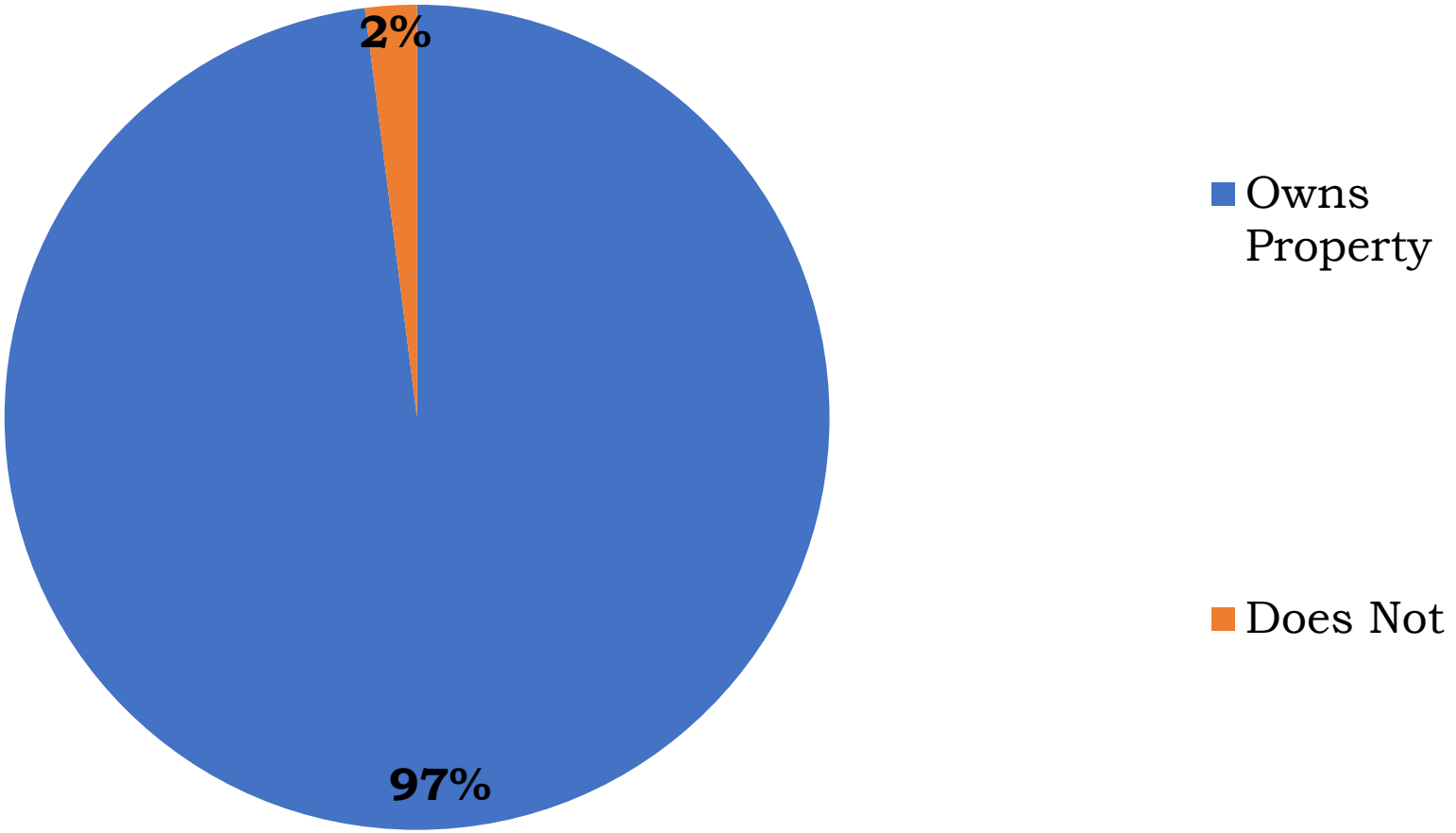
- Question sets presented in a series throughout the survey were presented in a rotated fashion to eliminate any potential for presentation bias.

- Every respondent was asked (or had the opportunity to answer) each question.

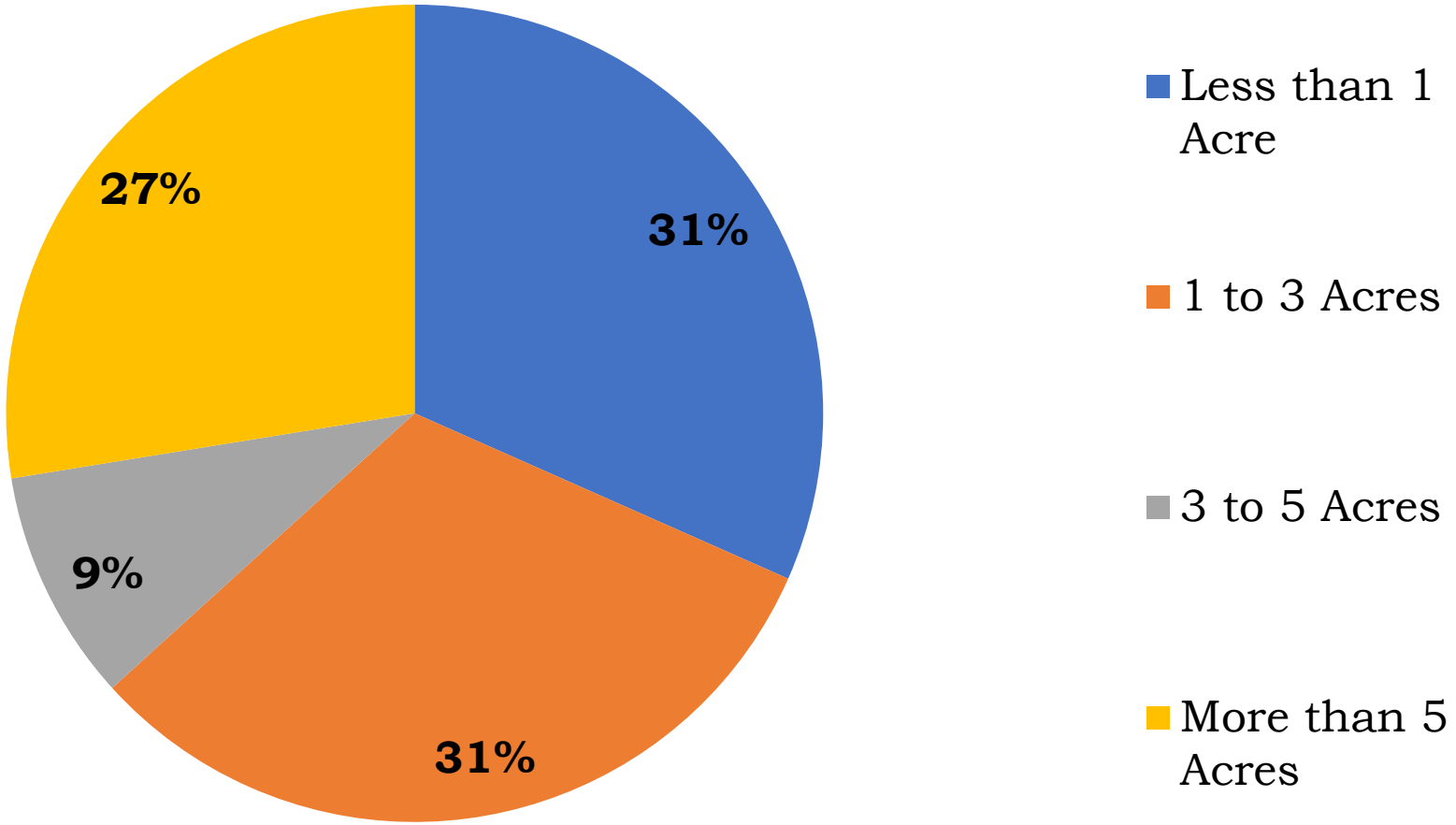
Residency (Q.1)



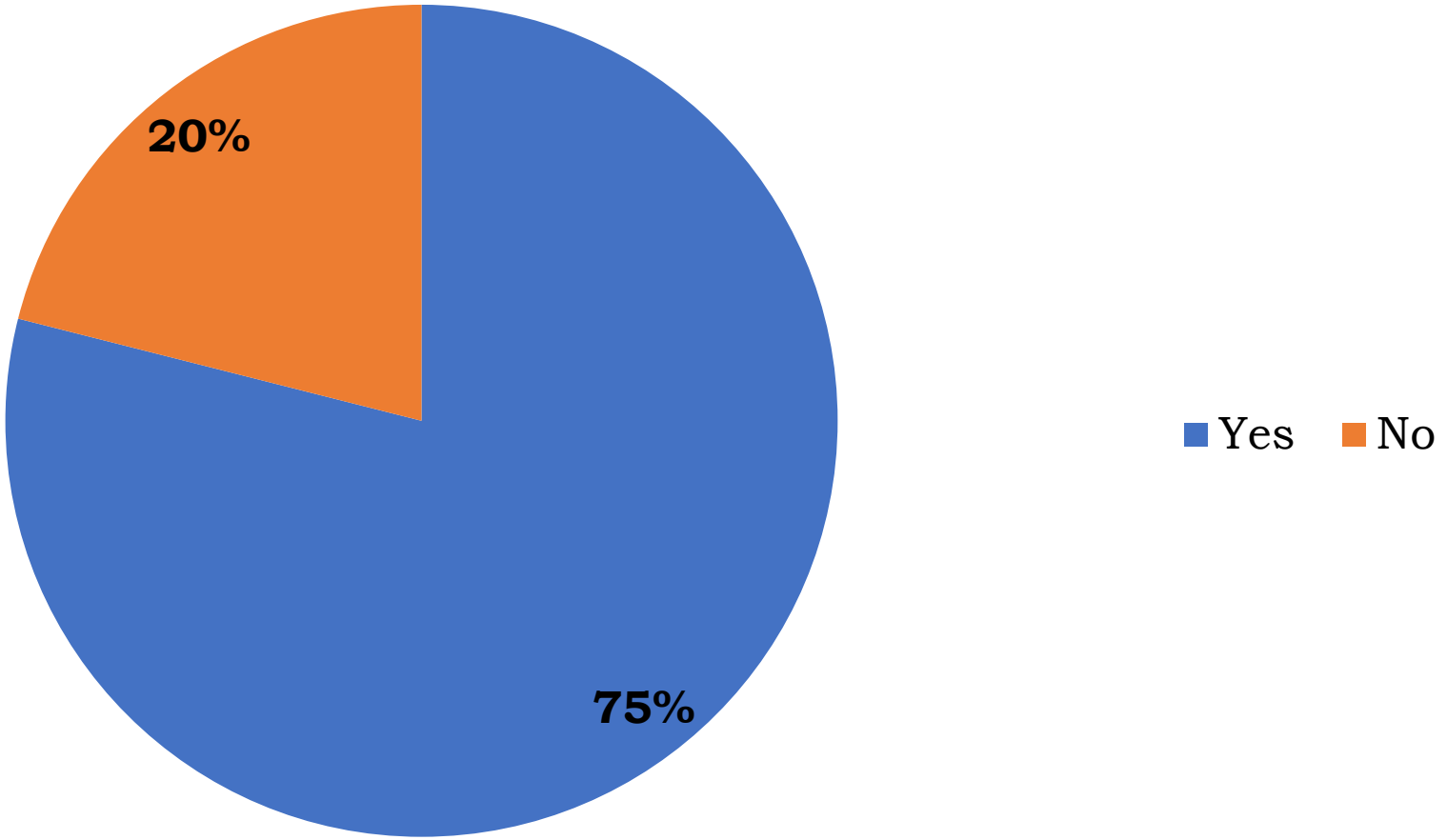
Property Ownership (Q.2)



Property Size (Q.3)



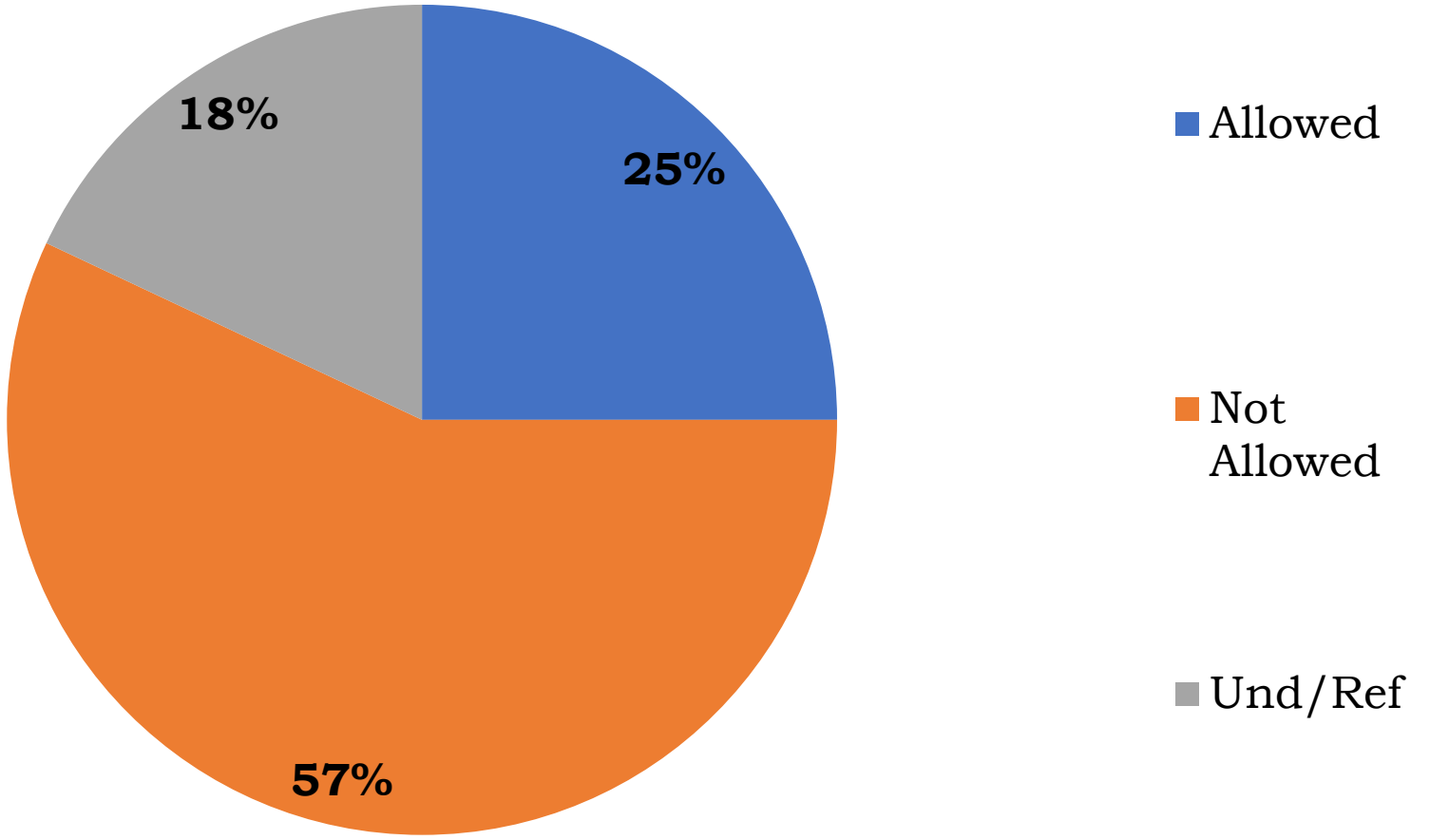
Registered to Vote (Q.4)



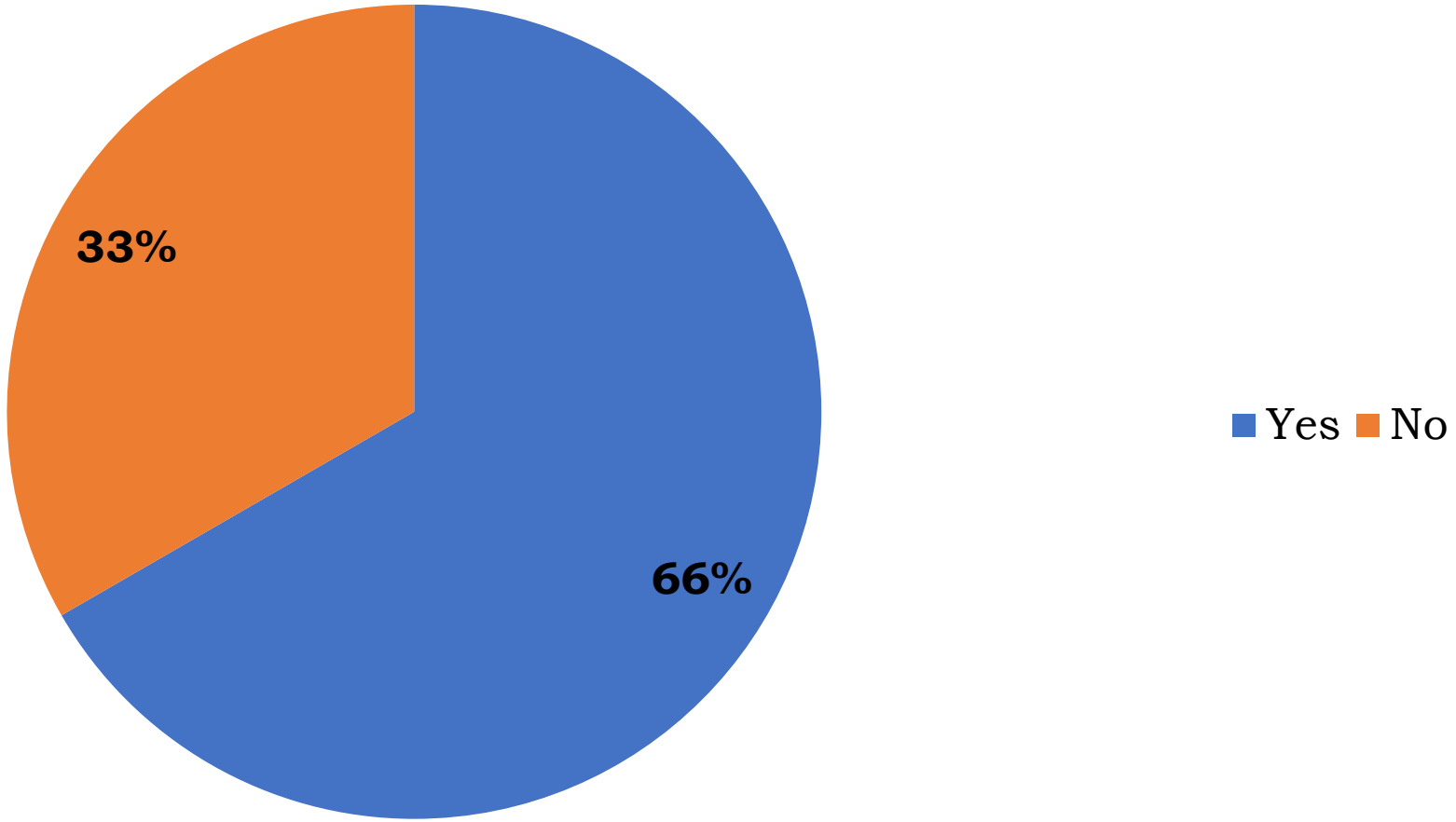
Short-Term Rentals Allowed (Q.5)

Respondents were informed: “short-term rentals, are generally defined as privately owned residences, properties, and grounds, such as those listed on AirBnB.com and VRBO.com, for guests to use for less than 30 days.”

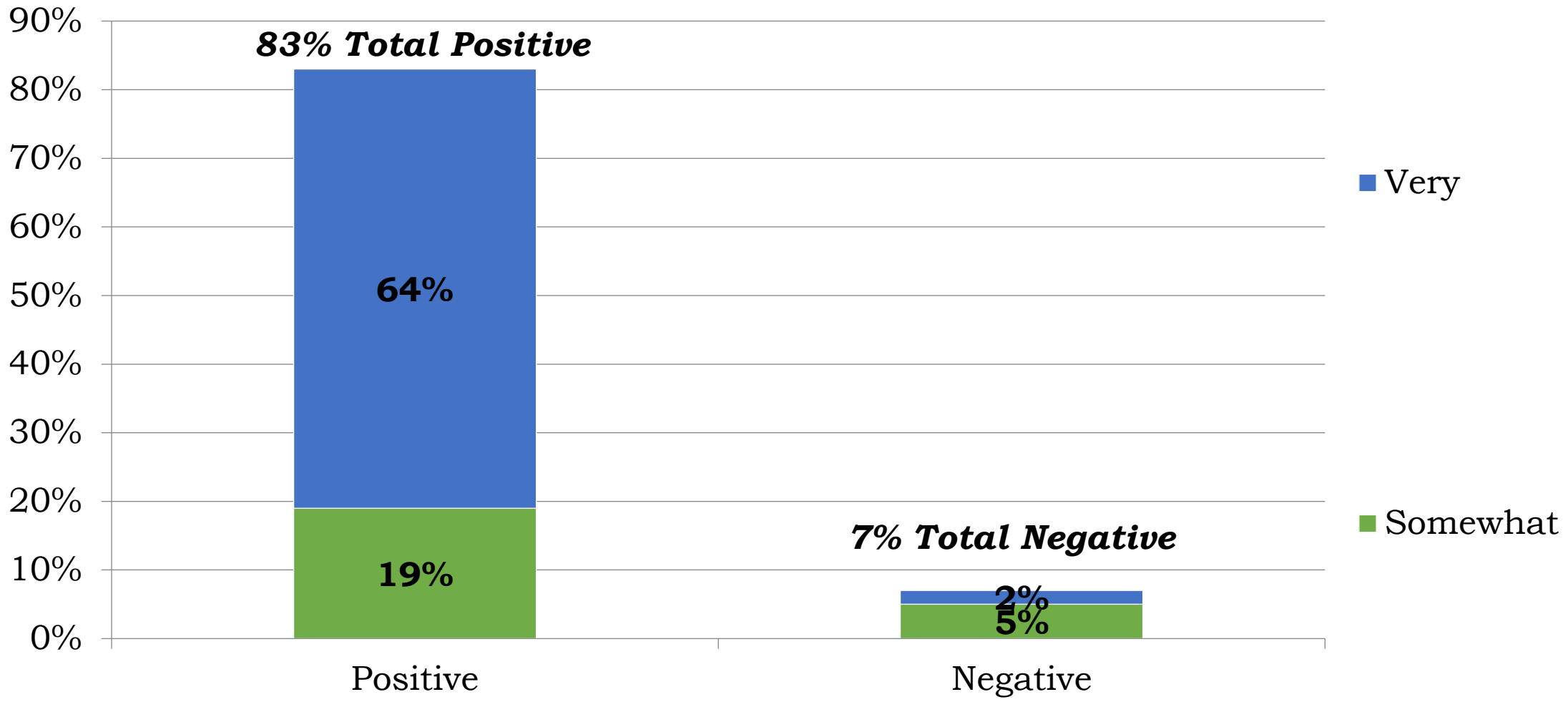
Respondents were asked: “Based on your understanding, does Whitewater Township currently allow short-term rentals?”



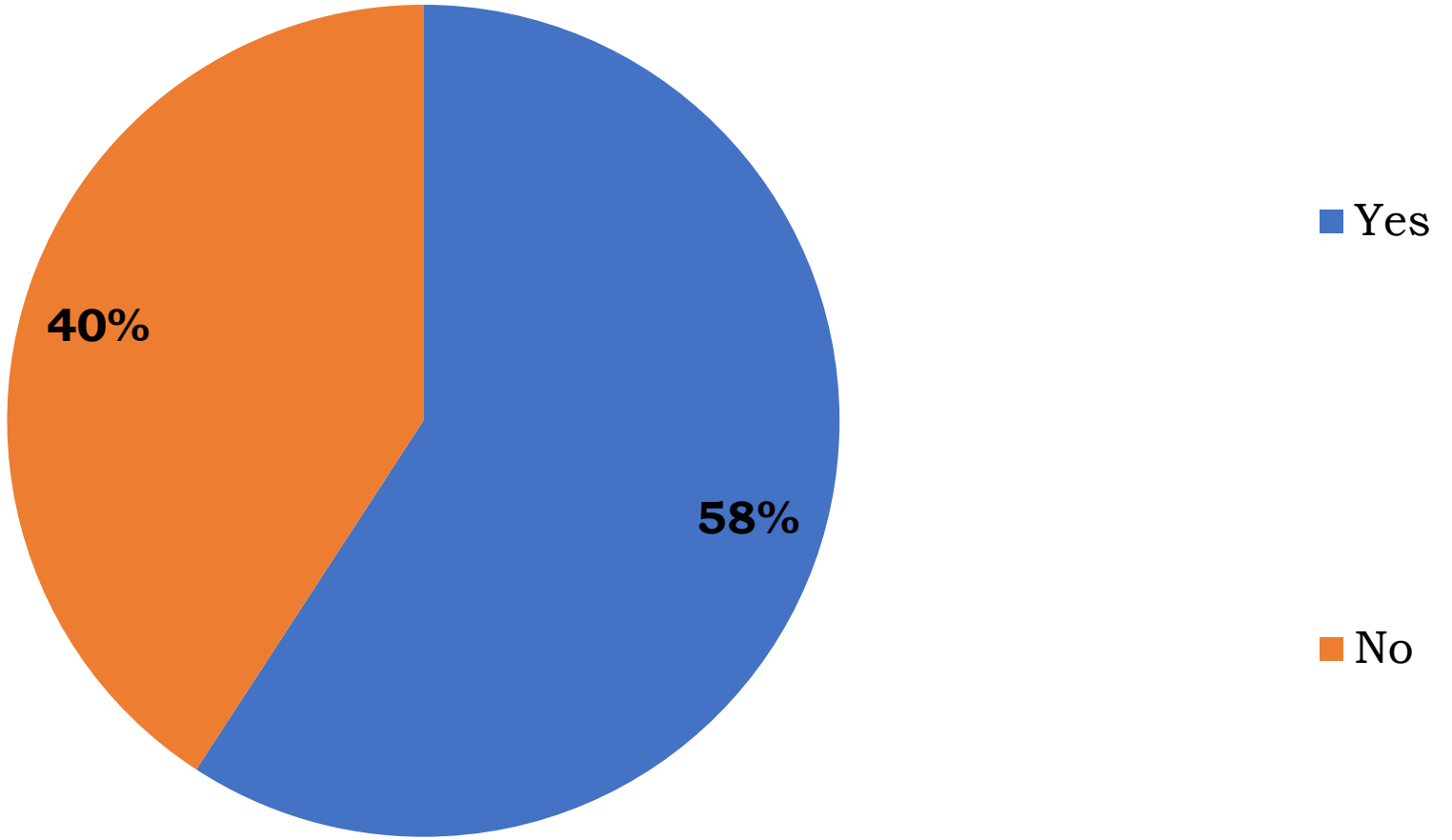
Personal Use of Short-Term Rentals (Q.6)



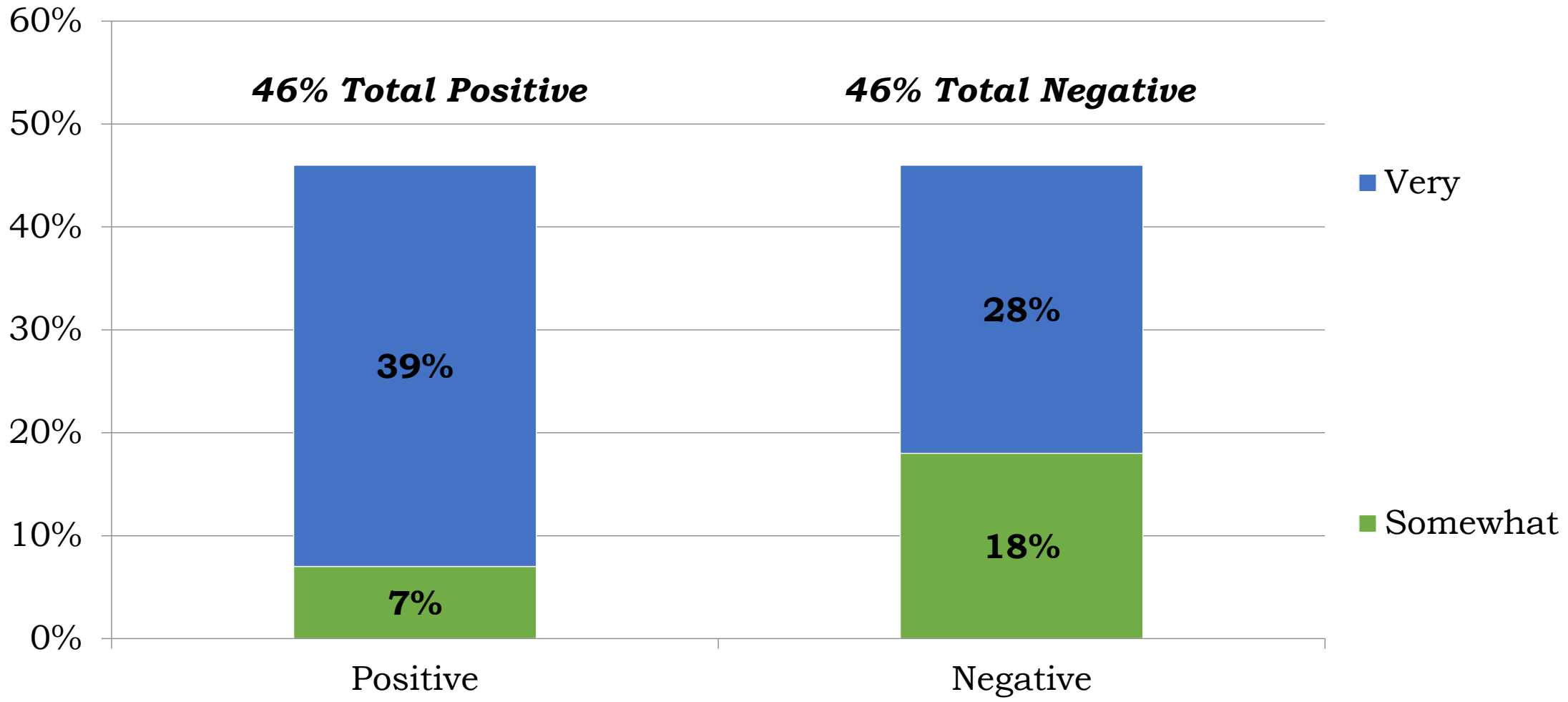
Personal Experience Using STRs (Q.7)



Lived Near/Next To STRs (Q.8)



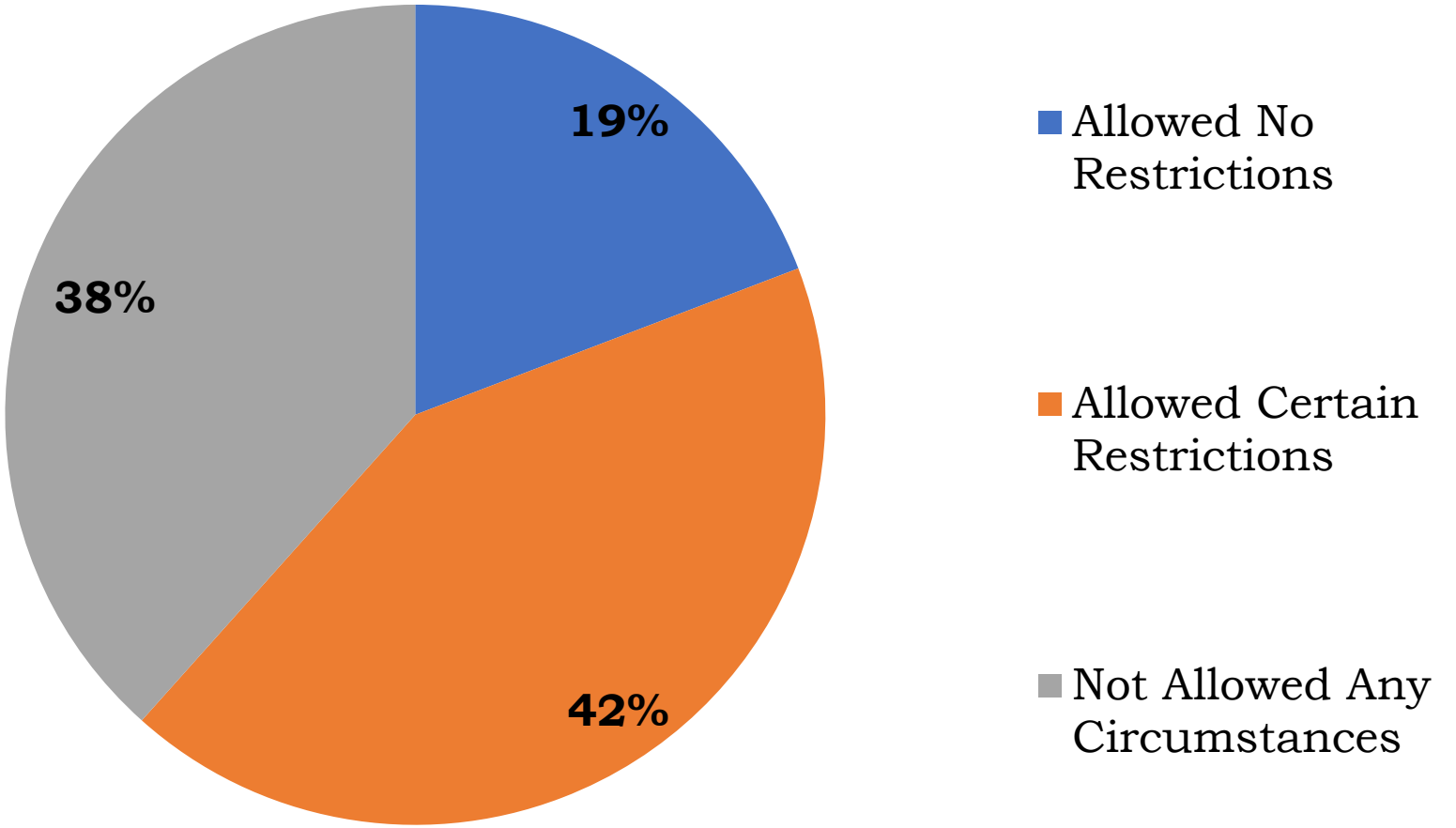
Personal Experience Neighboring STRs (Q.9)



Should STRs Be Allowed – First Ask (Q.10)

Respondents were informed: “short-term rentals are NOT currently allowed in Whitewater Township.”

Respondents were asked: “Which of the following best describes your opinion of short-term rentals in Whitewater Township?”



Ranking Concerns

- Respondents were read a list of some of the *concerns* of allowing short-term rentals that some residents have mentioned.
- For each, respondents were asked to indicate if each is a very serious concern, a somewhat serious concern, only a minor concern, or no concern at all for you when it comes to allowing short-term rentals in Whitewater Township.
- Ranked from most to least “total concern”, the results were:

Ranking Concerns (Q.11 – Q.15)

- Responsible management and accountability of the property.
  (66% *total* concern – 46% "very serious")
- Enforcement of existing and/or new ordinances.
  (61% *total* concern – 41% "very serious")
- Impact on the neighborhood and/or cohesion of the community.
  (58% *total* concern – 42% "very serious")
- Impact on housing availability and the housing market.
  (51% *total* concern – 34% "very serious")
- Overcrowding of parking/and or the home.
  (49% *total* concern – 28% "very serious")

Current Neighbor Concerns (Q.16)

Respondents were asked if they currently have any of those same with their current neighbors.

39%	No; none
14%	Enforcement of existing and/or new ordinances
14%	Impact on the neighborhood and/or cohesion of the community
14%	Responsible management and accountability of the property
9%	Impact on housing availability and the housing market
8%	Overcrowding of parking and the home

Ranking Benefits

- Respondents were read a list of some of the *benefits* of allowing short-term rentals that some residents have mentioned.
- For each, respondents were asked to indicate if each is a major benefit, somewhat of a benefit, only a minor benefit, or no benefit at all when it comes to allowing short-term rentals in Whitewater Township.
- Ranked from most to least “total benefit”, the results were:

Ranking Benefits (Q.17 – Q.22)

- Protecting the property rights of property owners.
(58% *total* benefit – 41% "major benefit")
- Supporting local businesses.
(56% *total* benefit – 38% "major benefit")
- Supporting local property owners.
(52% *total* benefit – 35% "major benefit")
- Improving the upkeep of Township properties.
(45% *total* benefit – 30% "major benefit")
- Attracting businesses to the area.
(43% *total* benefit – 28% "major benefit")
- Exposing Whitewater Township to new people.
(41% *total* benefit – 23% "major benefit")

Zoning Districts

- Respondents were informed that some residents have proposed allowing short-term rentals in certain zoning districts within Whitewater Township.

- Respondents were read a list of zoning districts and asked if they would support or oppose allowing short-term rentals in each of the areas.

- Respondents were further asked to describe the level of their support or opposition as “very” or “somewhat”.

- Ranked from most to least “total support”, the results were:

Zoning Districts (Q.23 – Q.28)

- Commercial areas.
(72% *total* support – 39% "strongly support")
- Industrial areas.
(61% *total* support – 31% "strongly support")
- Recreational areas (generally south of M-72).
(55% *total* support – 35% "strongly support")
- Agricultural areas.
(55% *total* support – 34% "strongly support")
- Residential areas on the shoreline and waterways.
(50% *total* support – 32% "strongly support")
- Other residential areas/subdivisions.
(48% *total* support – 30% "strongly support")

Regulations and Requirements

- Respondents were presented with a list of regulations and requirements that are often enforced on short-term rentals.

- Respondents were asked to put aside their personal feelings about allowing short-term rentals in Whitewater Township and asked to indicate if they think each regulation or requirement is very important, somewhat important, only a little important, or not important at all.

- Ranked from most to least “total important”, the results were:

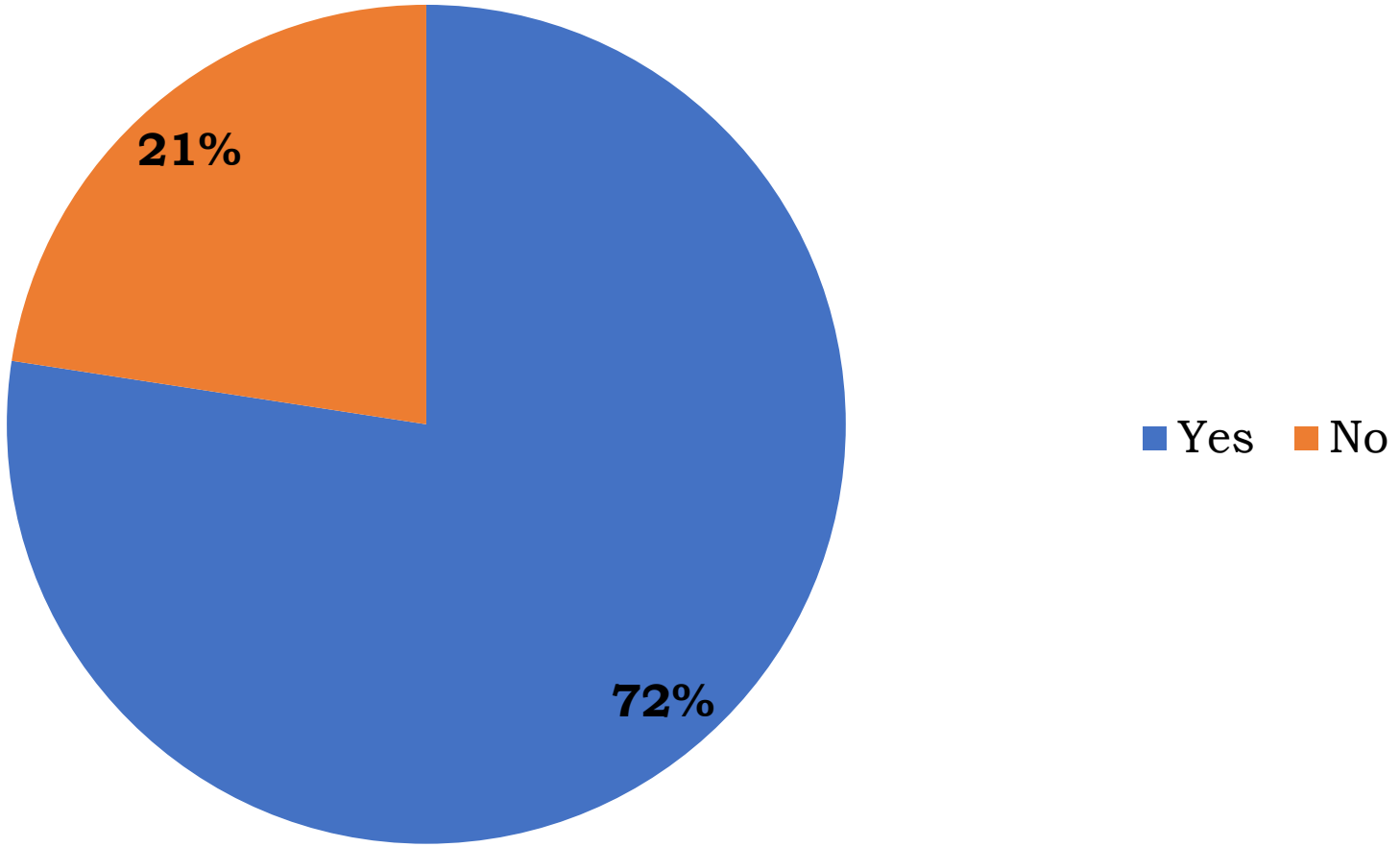
Regulations and Requirements (Q.29 – Q.36)

- Limiting the number of people allowed in a short-term rental based on the number of bedrooms available in the rental.
  (80% *total* important – 64% "very important")
- Regular building and fire inspections.
  (74% *total* important – 55% "very important")
- Established fines for non-compliance.
  (72% *total* important – 57% "very important")
- Whitewater Township registration.
  (68% *total* important – 52% "very important")

Regulations and Requirements (Q.29 – Q.36)

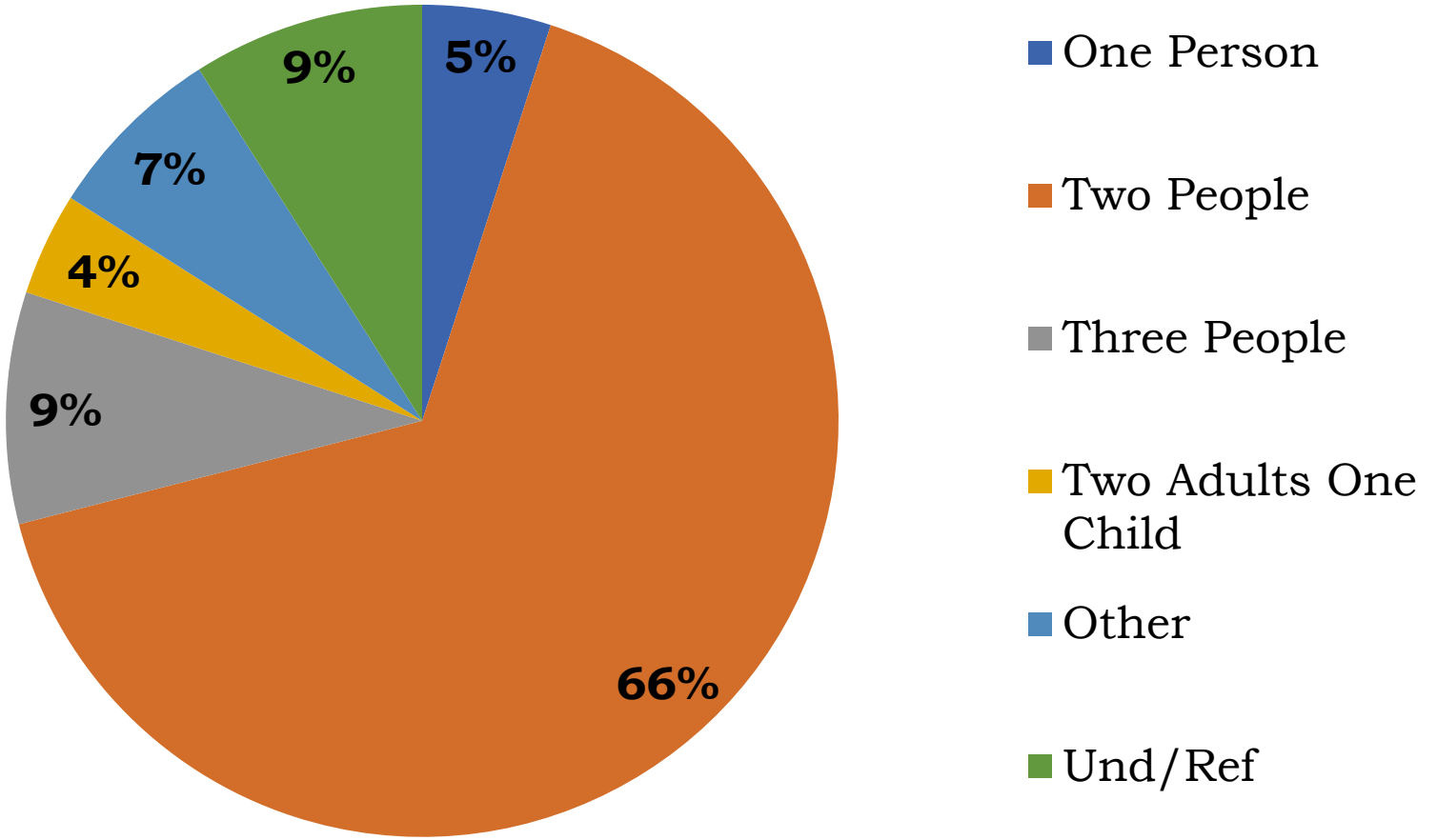
- Maintaining a local property manager.
  (67% *total* important – 51% "very important")
- Yearly fees to support code enforcement.
  (64% *total* important – 45% "very important")
- Regular septic system inspections.
  (63% *total* important – 47% "very important")
- Limits on the number of days allowed.
  (56% *total* important – 40% "very important")

Limiting Maximum People Allowed (Q.37)



Maximum Occupancy Per Bedroom (Q.38)

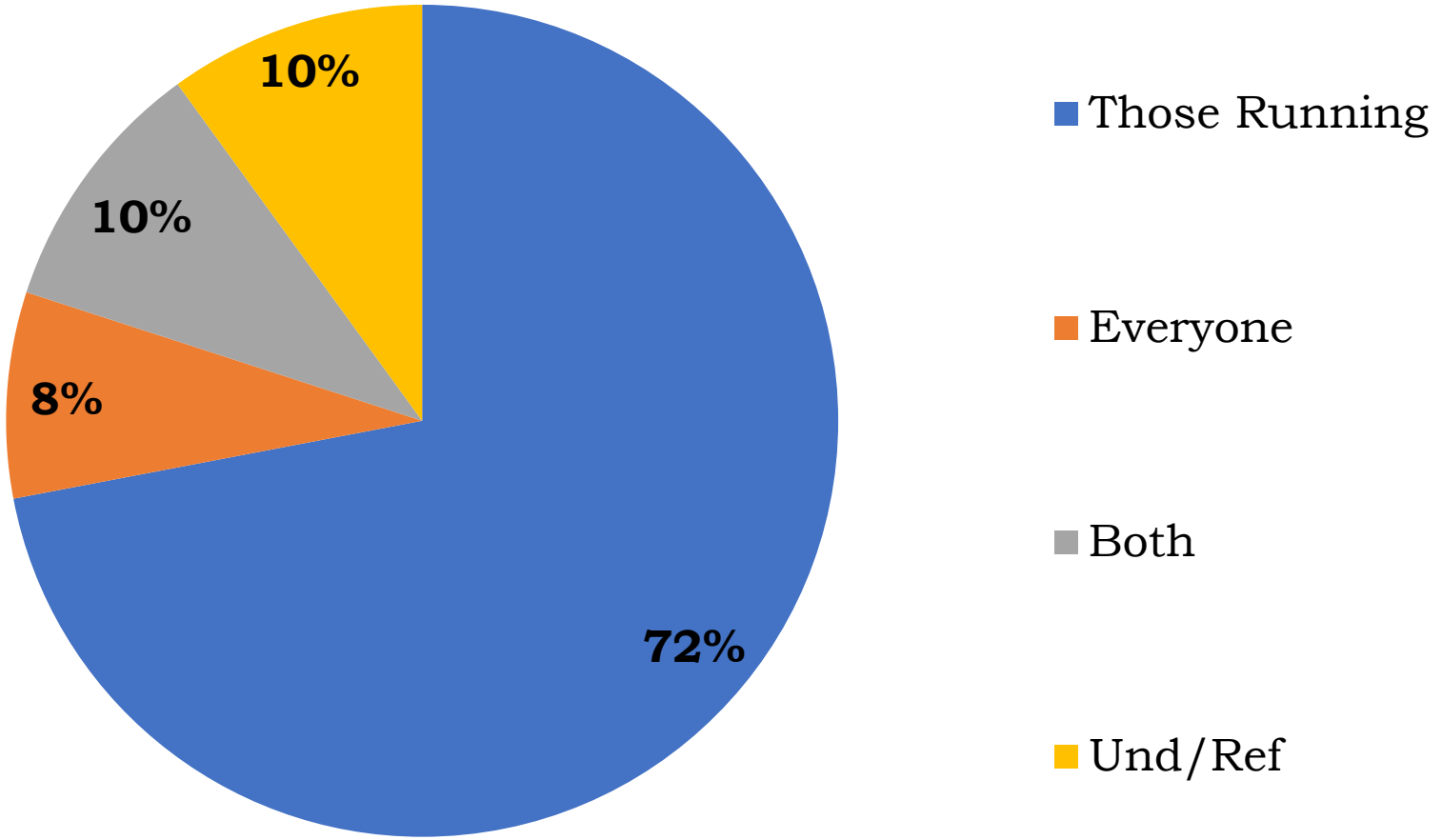
Respondents who supported limiting the number of people allowed in a short-term rental (401 of the 563 survey participants were asked: "What do you think should be the maximum occupancy limit *per bedroom*?"



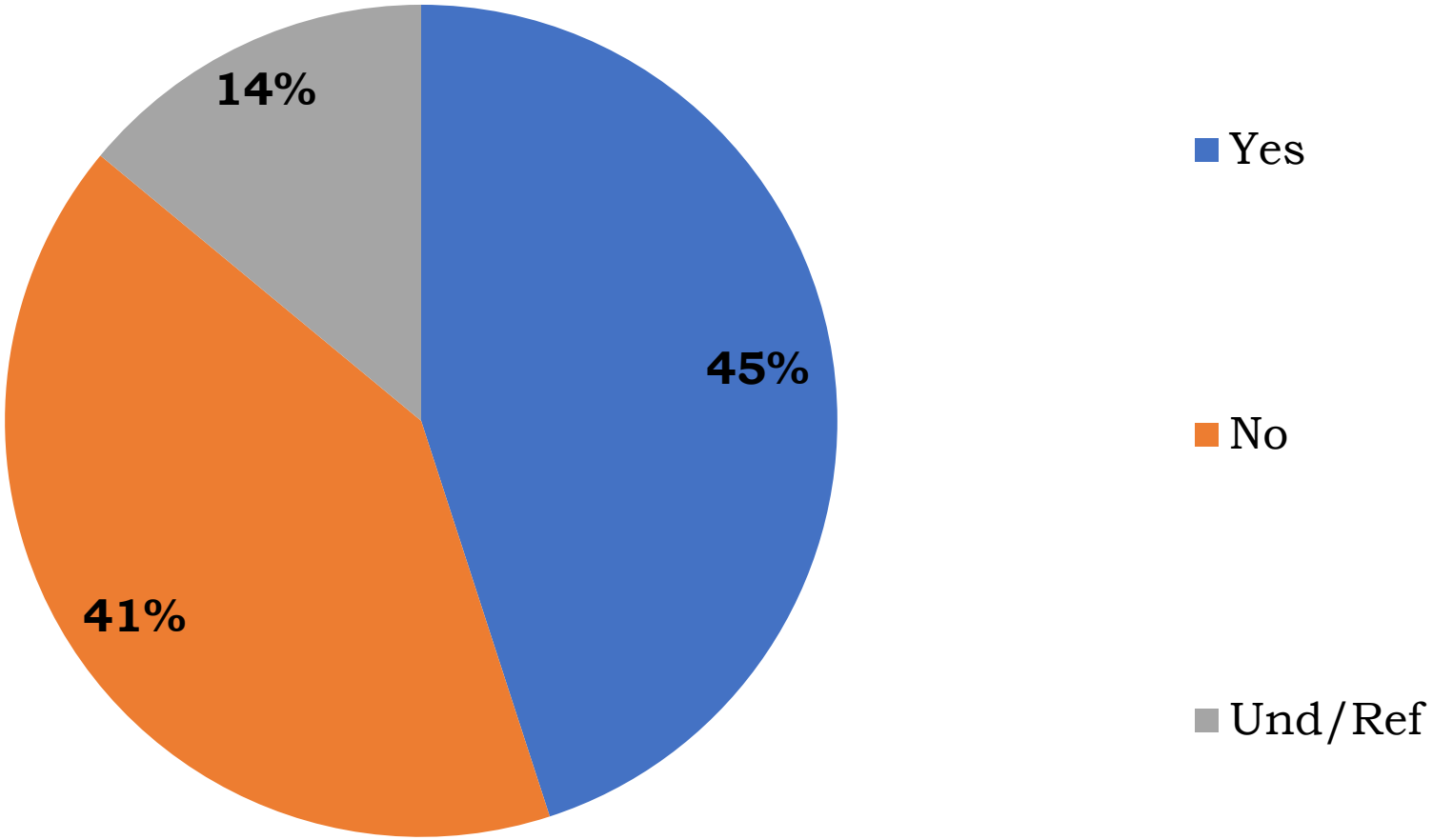
STRs Associated Costs (Q.39)

All respondents were told: "In order to enforce rules and restrictions for short term rentals, Whitewater Township would face additional administrative costs associated with the enforcement of those regulations."

They were then asked: "should all administrative costs of short-term rental regulation be shared by those running short term rentals or by the entire population of Whitewater Township?"

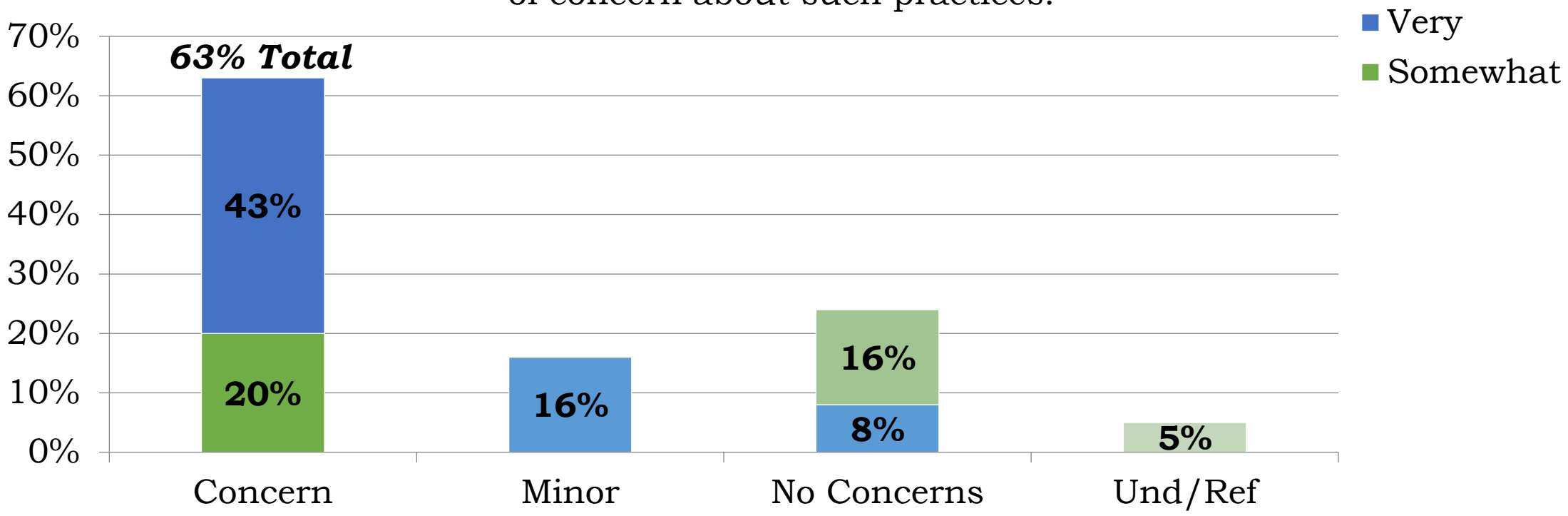


STRs Limited to Primary Residences (Q.40)



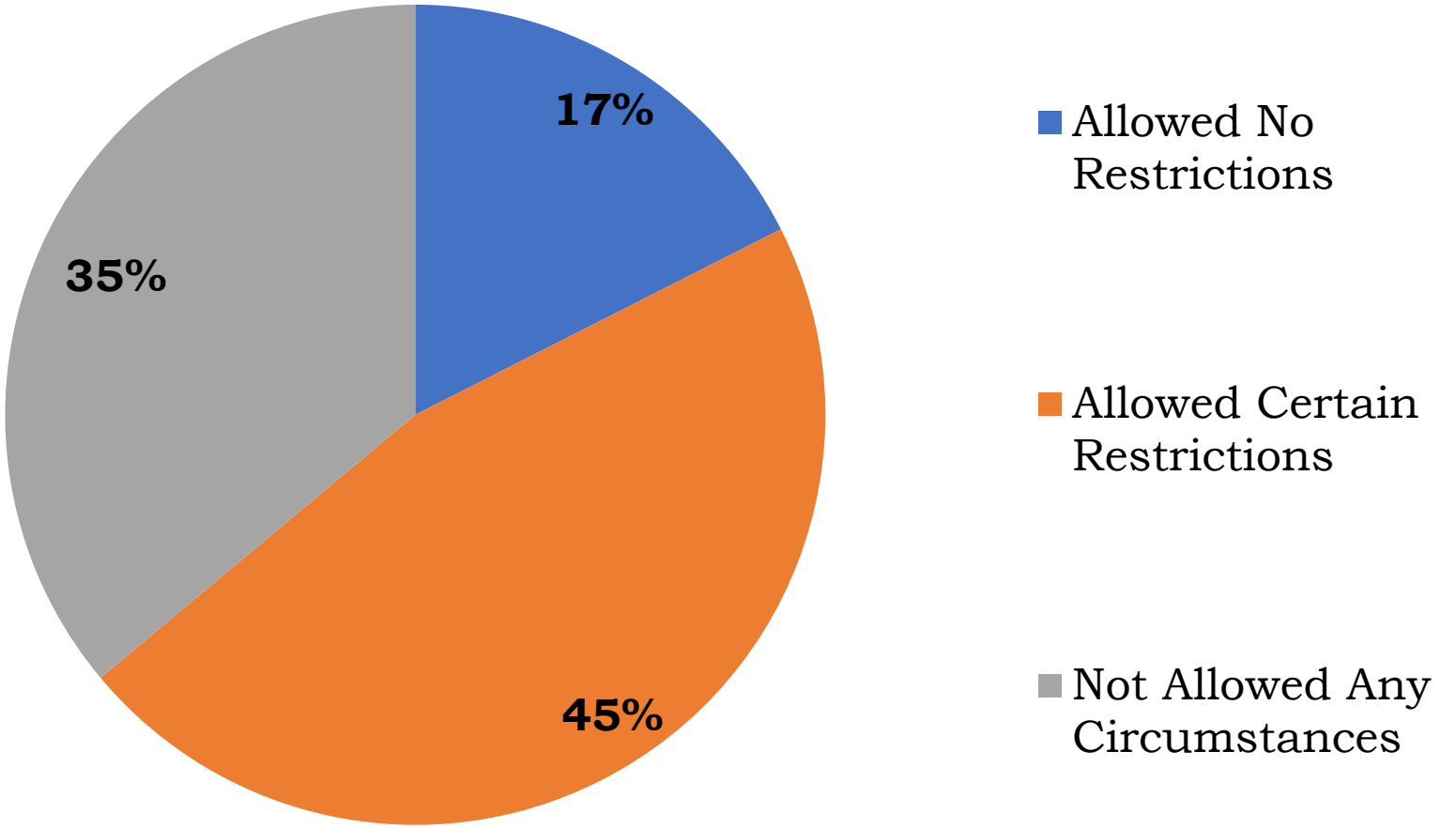
STR Investment Concerns (Q.41)

Respondents were told: “In some tourist areas, homes are purchased by outside corporations or investment entities for the sole purpose of creating short term rentals. Some have voiced concerns about this practice, including the lack of actual residents with community ties, and increased home prices.” Respondents were asked to indicate their level of concern about such practices.



Should STRs Be Allowed – Final Ask (Q.42)

Respondents were asked: “After thinking about some of the potential benefits and drawbacks to short term rentals, let me ask you a final time - which of the following best describes your opinion of short-term rentals in Whitewater Township?”



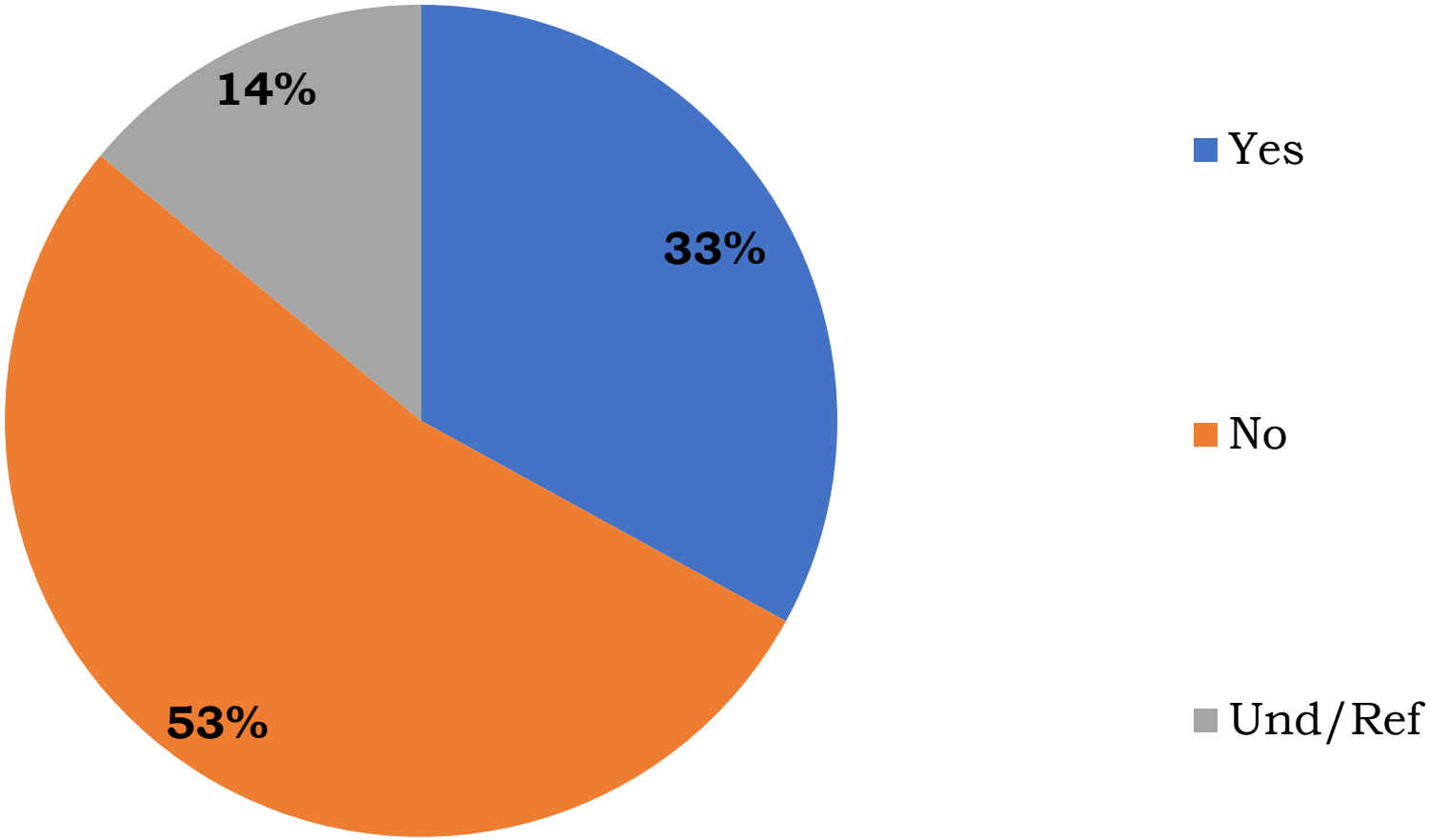
Main Reason for Support of STRs (Q.43)

Respondents in favor of short-term rentals in Whitewater Township *in any form* were asked to describe the main reason why in their own

36%	**Property owner rights**
29%	Property owner revenue
7%	Business revenue
4%	Lack of hotels – Alternative to hotels
14%	Other (***3% or less each***)
10%	Undecided/Refused

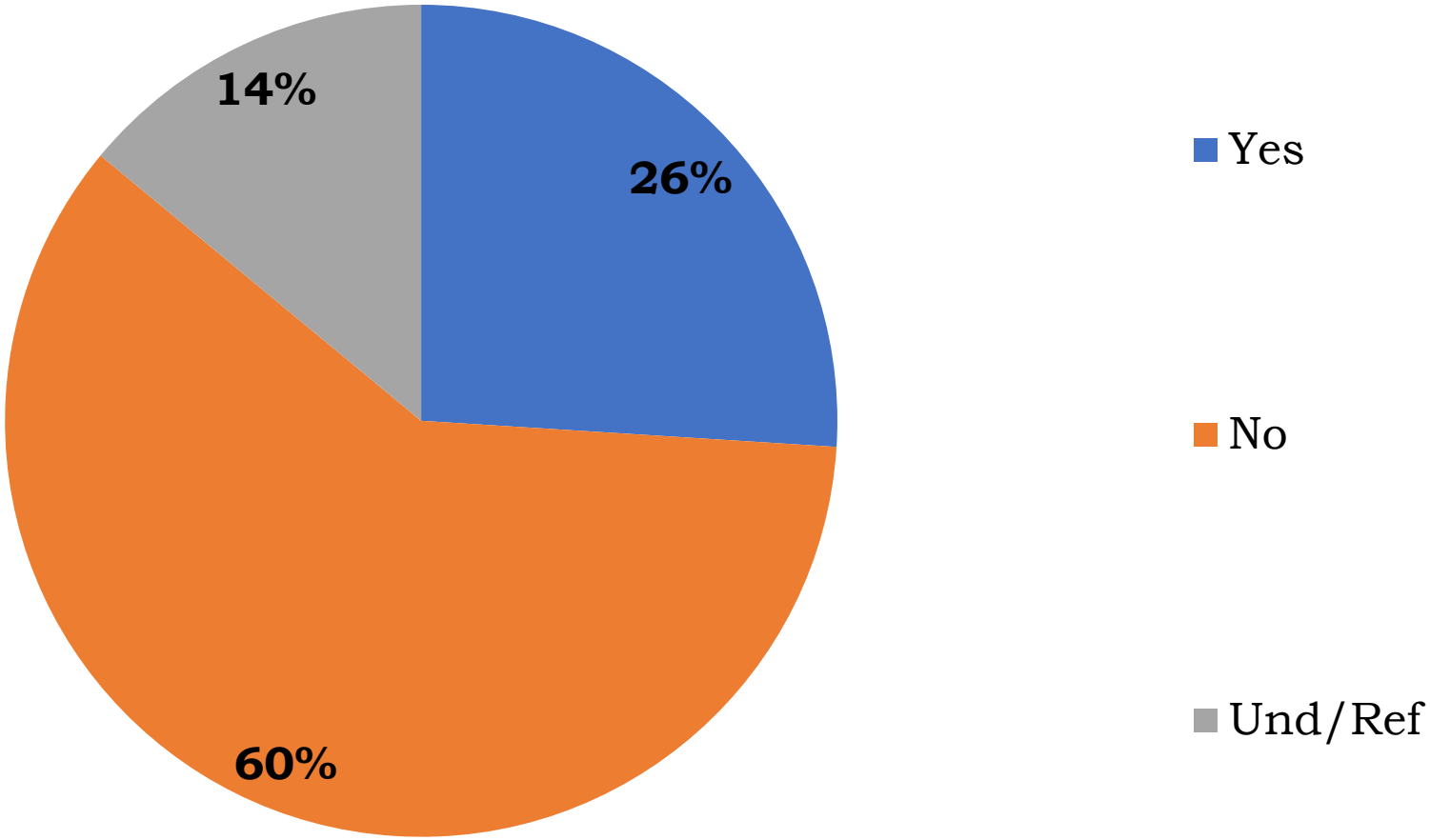
Limit on the Number of STRs Allowed (Q.44)

Respondents in favor of short-term rentals were asked: “Do you think there should be a limit on the total number of short-term rentals allowed in Whitewater Township?”



Minimum Distance Between STRs (Q.45)

Respondents in favor of short-term rentals were asked: “Do you think there should be a minimum distance between one short term rental and another to avoid a concentration of such units in a small area?”



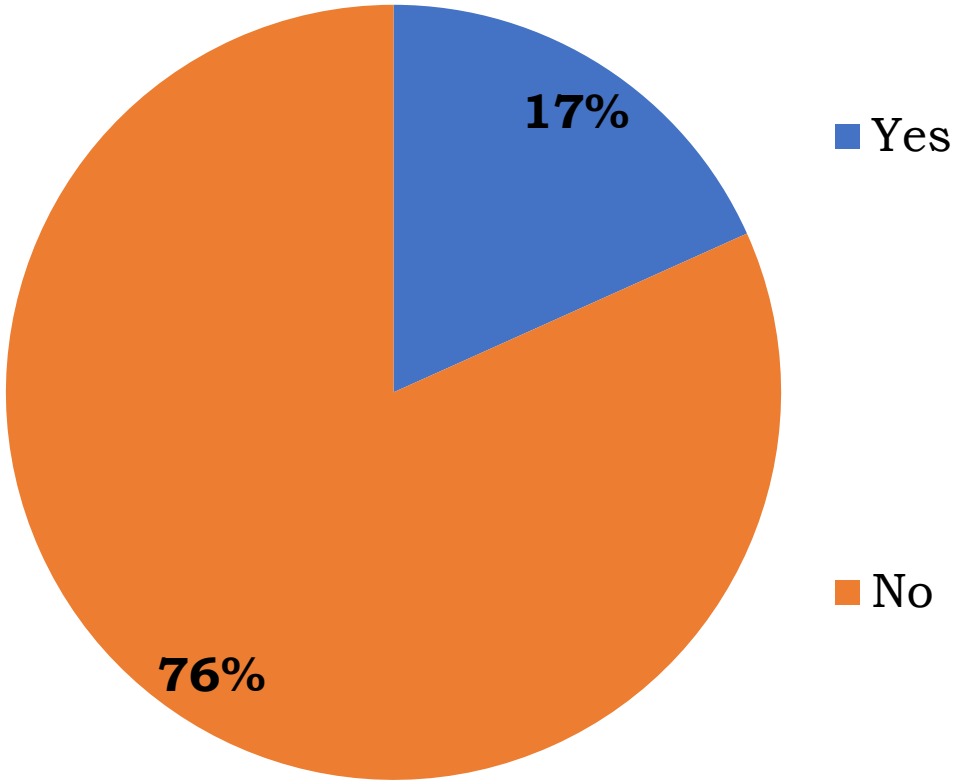
Main Reason to Oppose STRs (Q.46)

Respondents opposed to short-term rentals in Whitewater Township were asked to describe the main reason why in their own words.

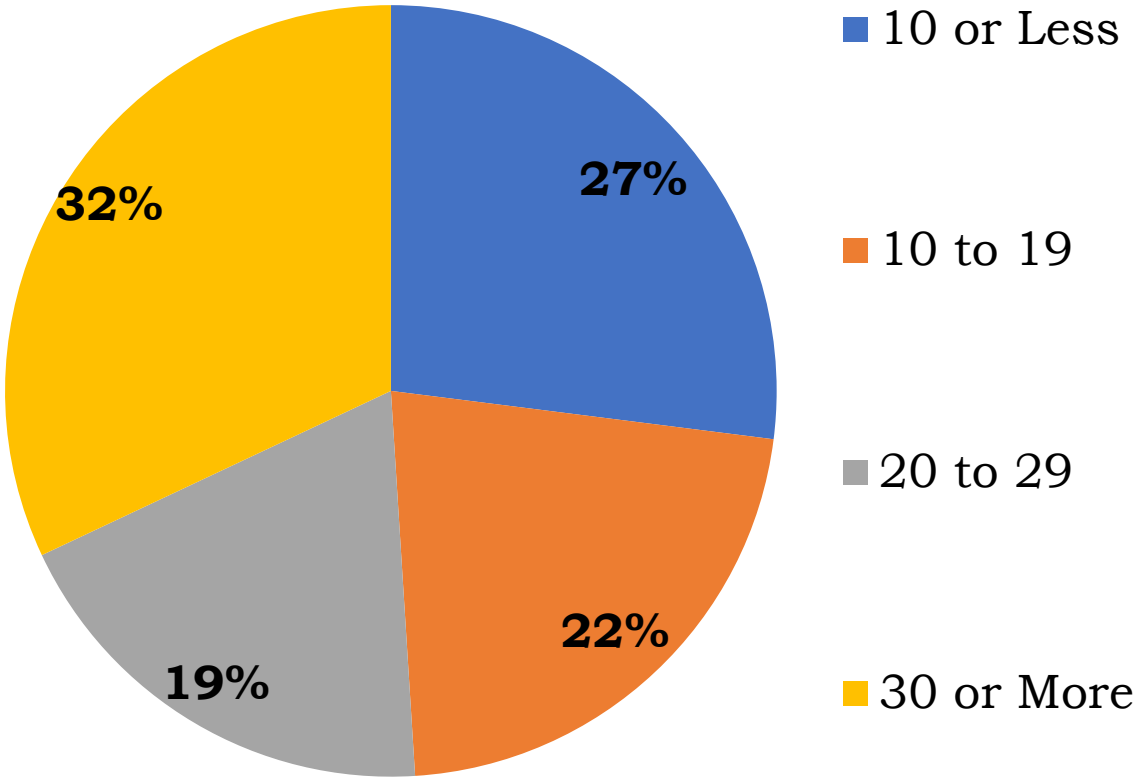
26%	**Noise – Lack of privacy**
21%	Community cohesion – Negative impact on neighborhoods
9%	Lack of regulation/enforcement
8%	Property disrepair – Trash
6%	Should be restricted to commercial areas only
30%	Other (***4% or less each***)

Demographics

Has Children



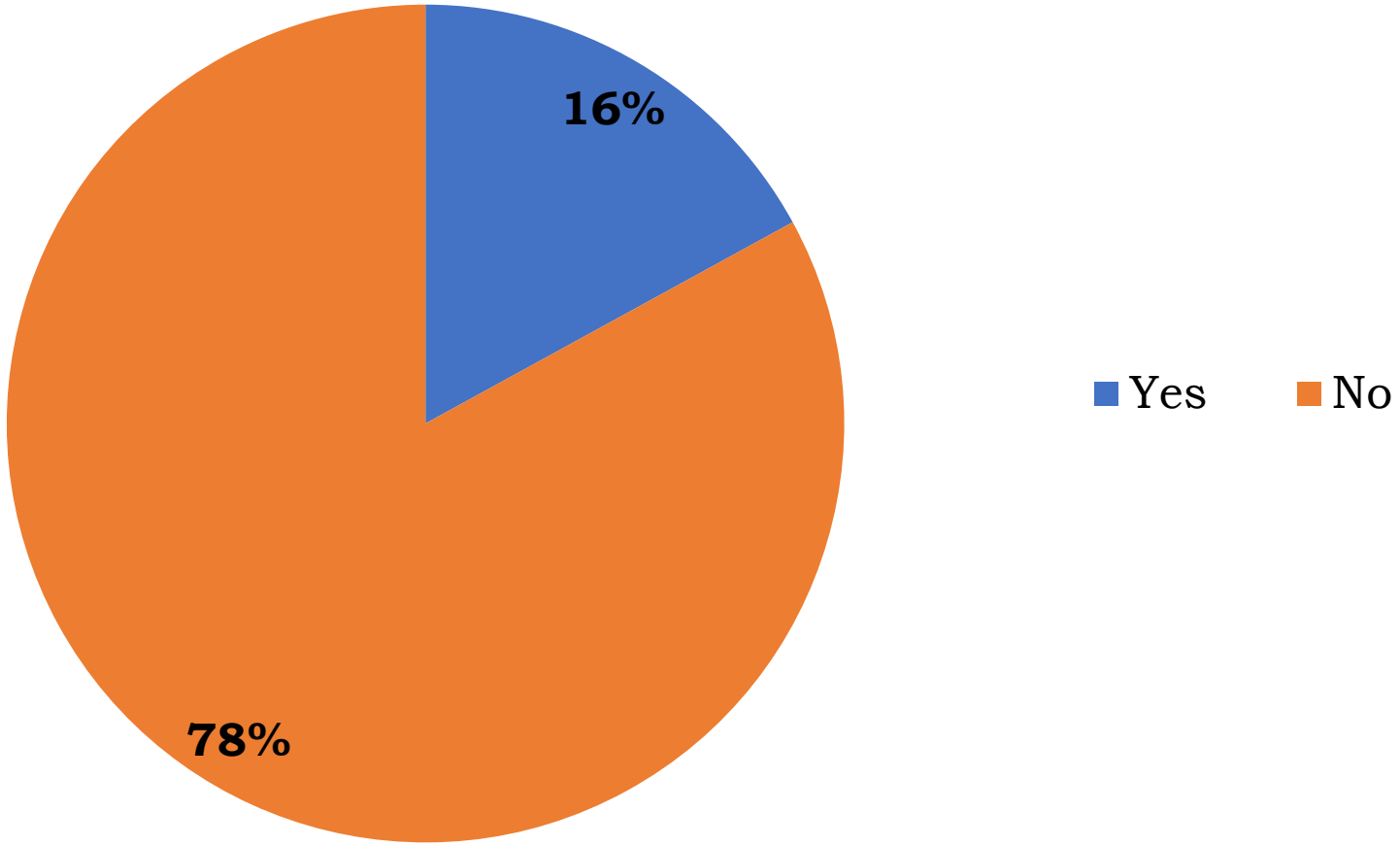
Years Reside



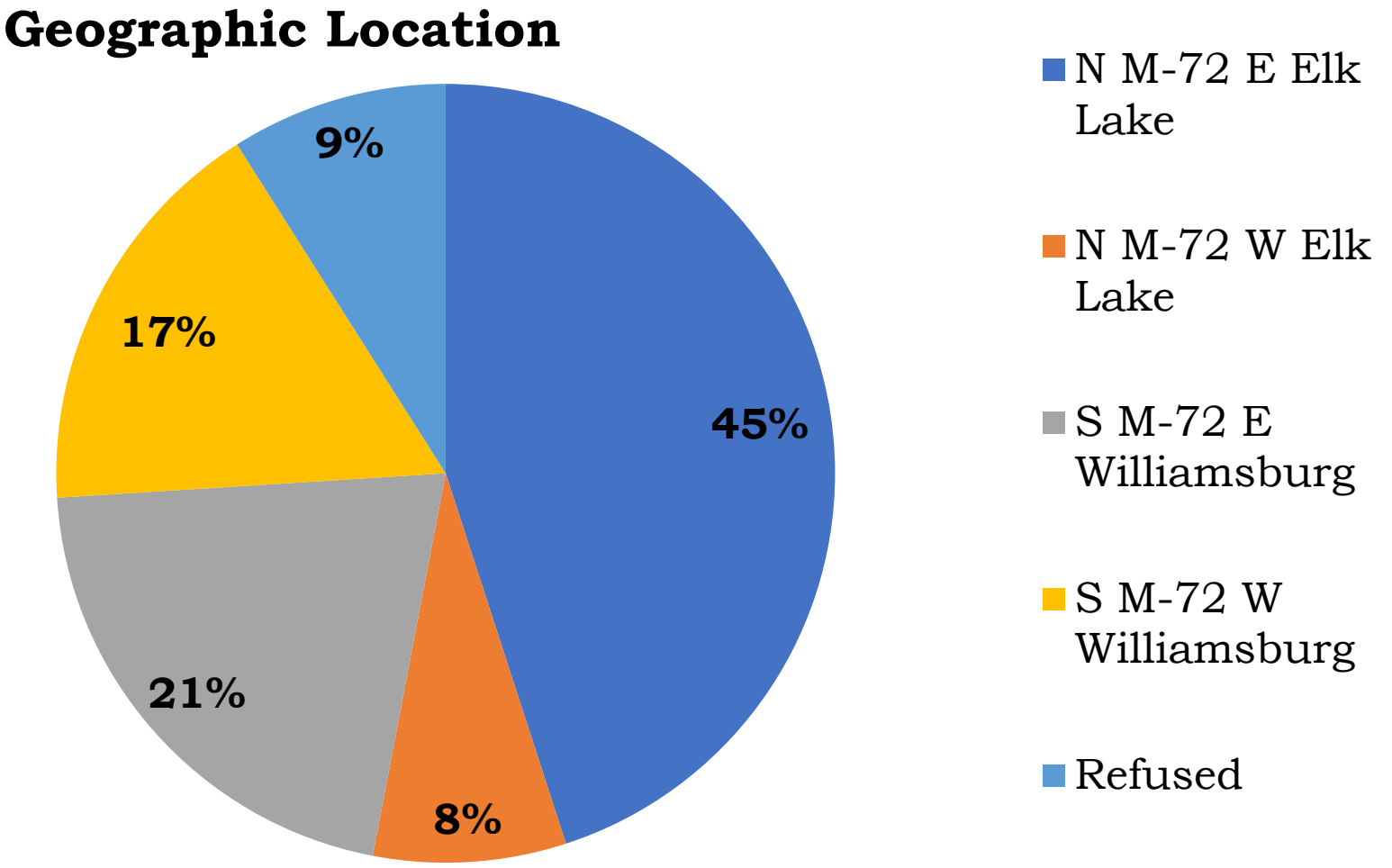
Mean: 22.611 Median: 20.0

Demographics, cont.

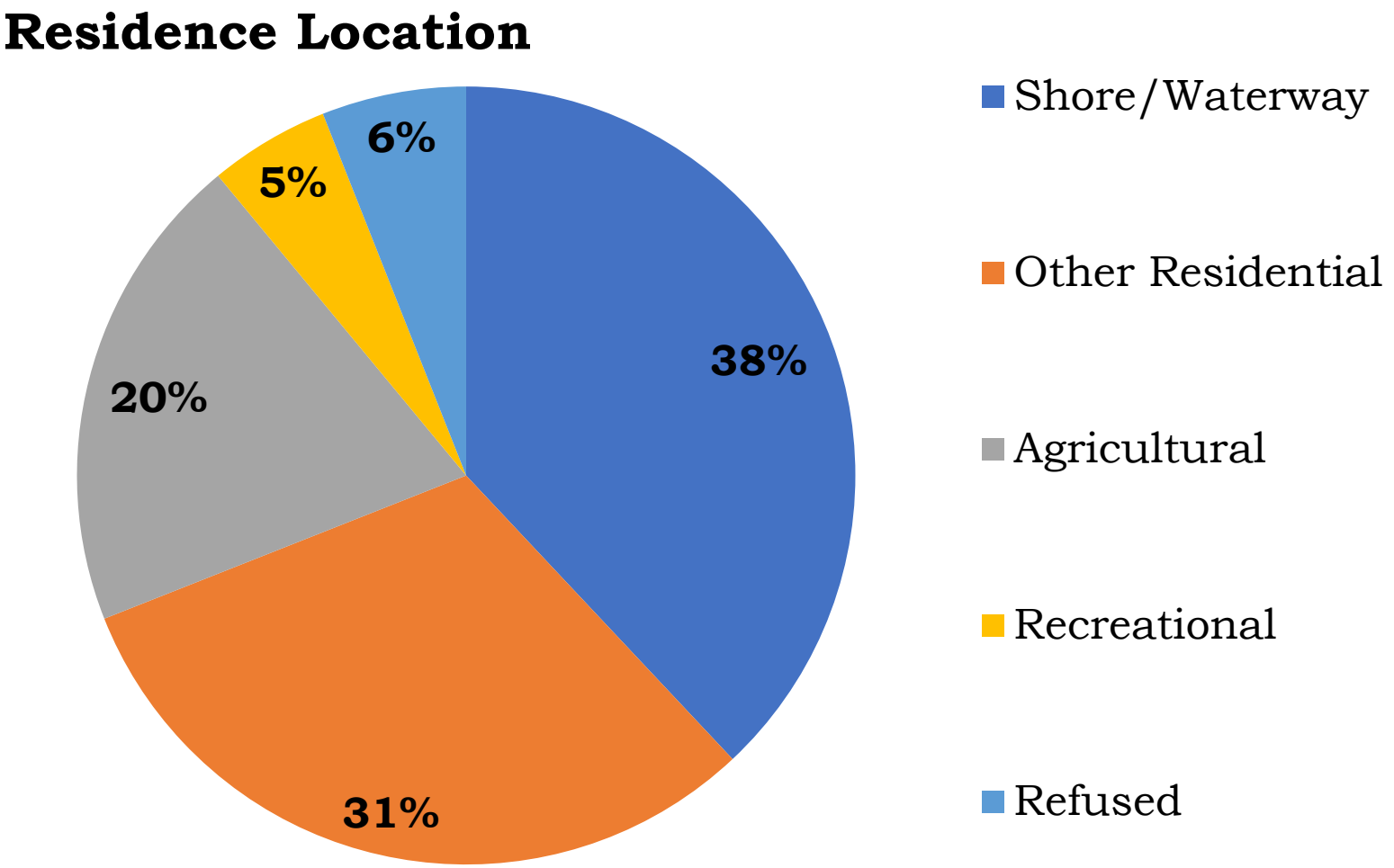
Own/Operate a Business



Demographics, cont.

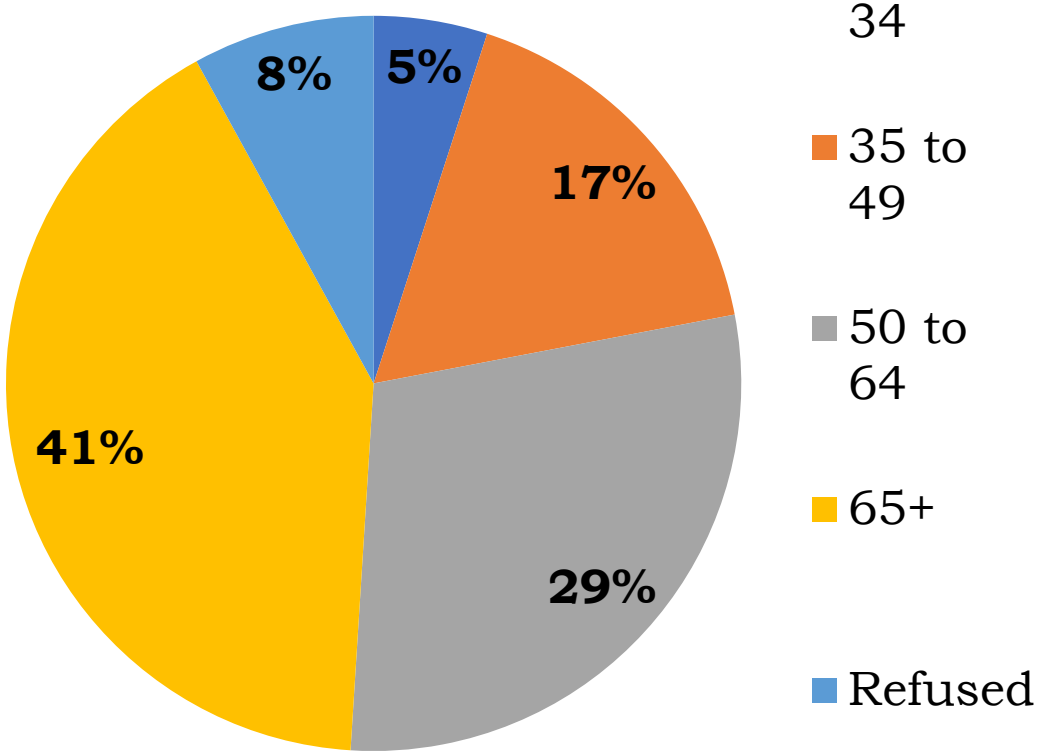


Demographics, cont.

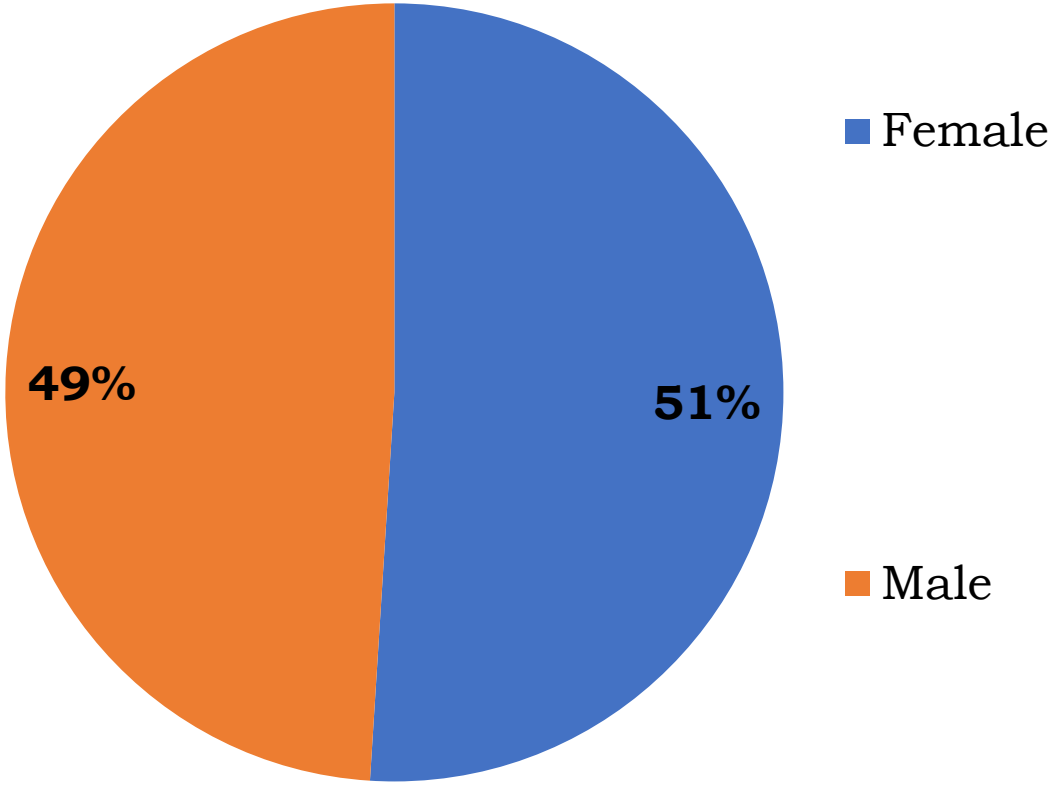


Demographics, cont.

Age



Gender



Important Takeaways

- Two thirds of all respondents report having personally used a short-term rental in the past, with a solid majority having had positive prior experiences when using them (83% positive in total – 64% “very positive”) among those who have used them before.

- However, residents who have lived next to, or nearby, short term rentals (58% of all survey participants) are evenly divided in the description of their experiences, with 46% reporting a positive overall experience (39% “very positive”) and an identical 46% reporting a negative overall experience (28% “very negative”) when they were a neighbor to a short-term rental property.

Important Takeaways

- One quarter of all respondents stated – incorrectly – that Whitewater Township currently allows short term rentals.

- When informed that short term rentals are not currently allowed in the Township and asked to describe their opinions on potentially allowing them in the future, a 19% minority of respondents said, “allowed with no restrictions,” 42% said, “allowed with certain restrictions,” with 38% of respondents saying that short term rentals “should not be allowed under any circumstances.”

Important Takeaways

- After hearing, and offering opinions on, a myriad of questions that described potential concerns about and benefits of allowing short term rentals in the Township, various zoning districts in which short term rentals could be allowed, and regulations and requirements that are often enforced on short term rentals, little change emerged in resident opinion on the topic.

- A 17% minority of respondents said, “allowed with no restrictions” (down 2 points), 45% said, “allowed with certain restrictions” (up 3 points), with 35% of respondents saying that short term rentals “should not be allowed under any circumstances” (down 3 points).

Important Takeaways

- Regardless of their respective views on whether or not to allow short term rentals in the Township, respondent concerns centered around management, accountability, and upkeep of rental properties; ordinance enforcement; cohesion of the neighborhood/community; prohibiting corporate or investment groups from purchasing homes with the sole intent of creating short term rentals; and limiting occupancy levels to two persons per bedroom - with a strong majority of respondents (72%) stating the belief that those running short term rentals should be solely responsible for any administrative costs associated with so doing.

- It is noted that the three top-ranked responses mentioned regarding concerns about current neighbors are the same three top-ranked concerns about allowing short term rentals in Whitewater Township.

Important Takeaways

- Perceived potential benefits of allowing short term rentals in the township primarily centered around the property rights of owners, supporting local business and resident revenue, and improving the upkeep and appearance of Township properties.

- Taken together, a nearly 6-in-10 majority of residents support allowing short term rentals in Whitewater Township *in some form*, with over 4-in-10 supporting them *only with restrictions*, only 2-in-10 supporting them *with no restrictions*, and just under 4-in-10 residents remaining opposed to short term rentals *in any form*.

Important Takeaways

- Ultimately, should a short-term rental ordinance be created by the Township that would allow short term rentals, it would be advisable that the top resident concerns be reflected in the rules, regulations, and restrictions that are placed upon them, and those be effectually enforced by the township - with short term rental property owners bearing any associated costs of doing so.

Thank You!

Questions?