



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2016063

DATE: 30 November 2015

RE: Amherst Police Survey Results

A recent survey of the residents of Amherst on the future of policing in Amherst shows, overall, that residents are satisfied with the policing being provided by the Amherst Police Department and feel safe in all areas of town.

The survey also provided data on perception of crime levels, the appropriate number of police officers, resource allocation and service providers.

“We were very pleased to see that the Amherst Police Department enjoys the confidence of a significantly high number of Amherstonians,” Mayor Robert Small said after the results were released. “For example,” he continued, “86% of respondents were either completely or mostly satisfied with the level of services provided by Amherst Police Department.”

Police Commission Chair, Councillor Lisa Emery added “The Commission is very pleased with the results as well. This data will be a key piece of information in our ongoing review of policing.”

The Town engaged Corporate Research Associates, Inc. (CRA) of Halifax to carry out the survey. CRA Chairman and CEO, Don Mills, presented the results at a special meeting of Council at 6:00 PM today.

A copy of Mr. Mills’ presentation is attached.

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Town of Amherst
Future of Policing Research Study
Presentation

November 2015

Prepared by:



Introduction



- **Random fifteen (15) minute telephone survey**
- **Residents of Town of Amherst**
- **18+ years of age**



- **300 completes**
- **+ 5.6 margin of error**

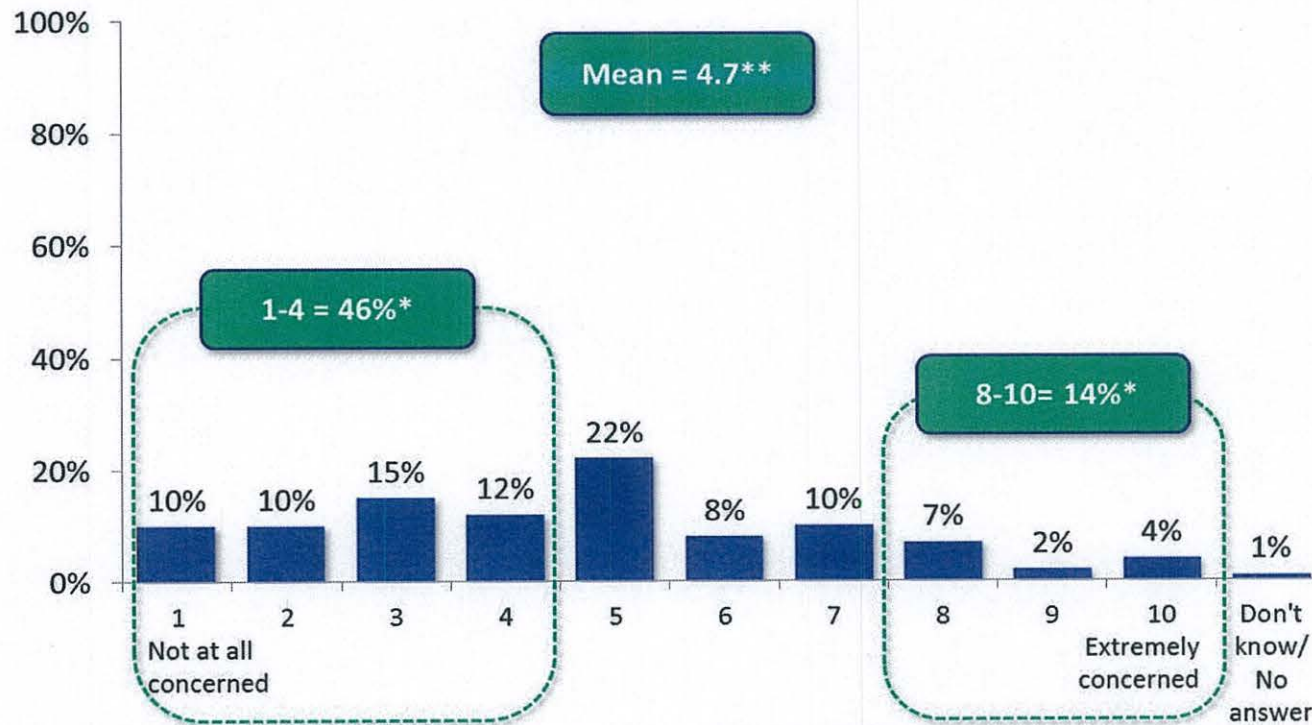


- **Data collected October 5-20, 2015**

Residents express minimal concern about the level of crime in the Town of Amherst.

Concern About the Level of Crime in Amherst

Rating on 10-pt Scale: 1=Not at all concerned, 10=Extremely concerned



Q.7: Using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'not at all concerned' and 10 is 'extremely concerned', overall, how concerned are you personally about the level of crime in the Town of Amherst? (n=300)

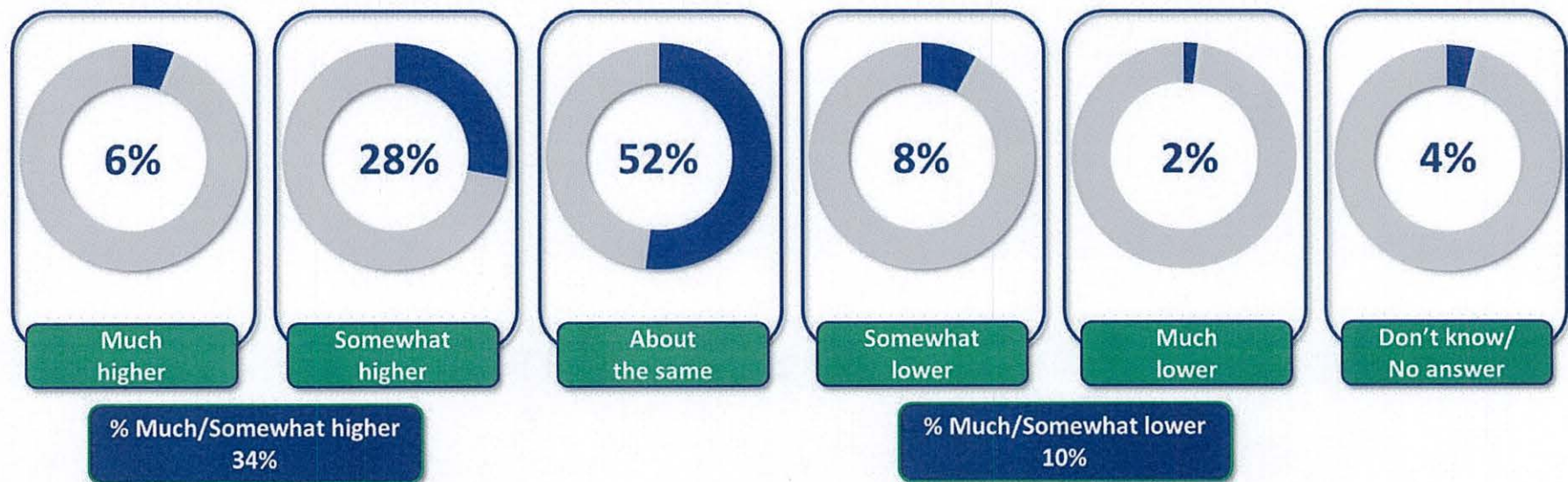
**Responses of Don't know/No answer have been excluded from the mean.

*Due to rounding

Crime

Although most residents perceive the current level of crime in the Town of Amherst to be the same as a year ago, findings show a net increase in perceived crime levels.

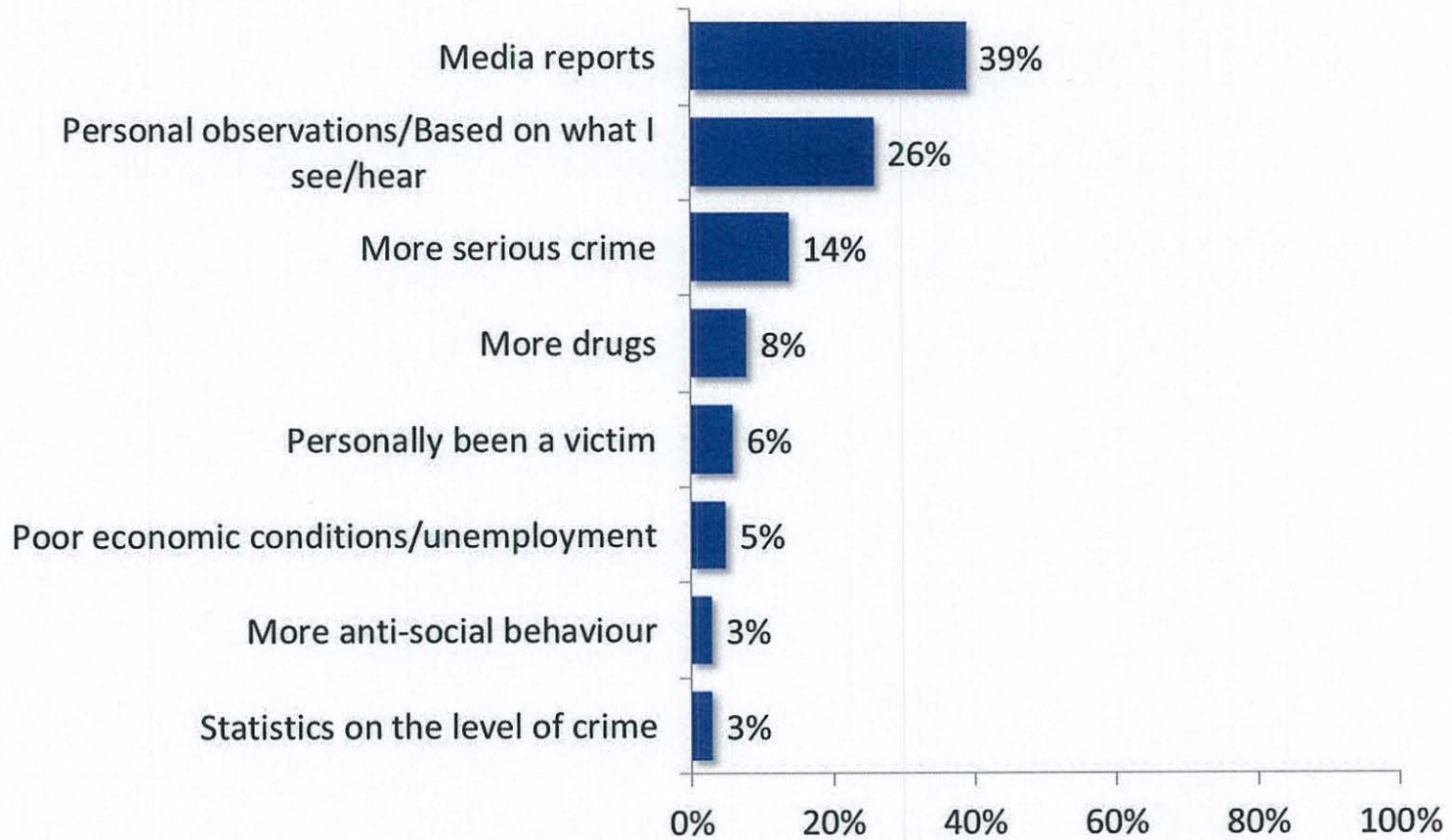
Level of Crime in Amherst Today Compared with Five Years Ago



Q.8: Compared with five years ago, would you say the level of crime in the Town of Amherst today is now: (n=300)

Reasons for Saying Crime is Higher

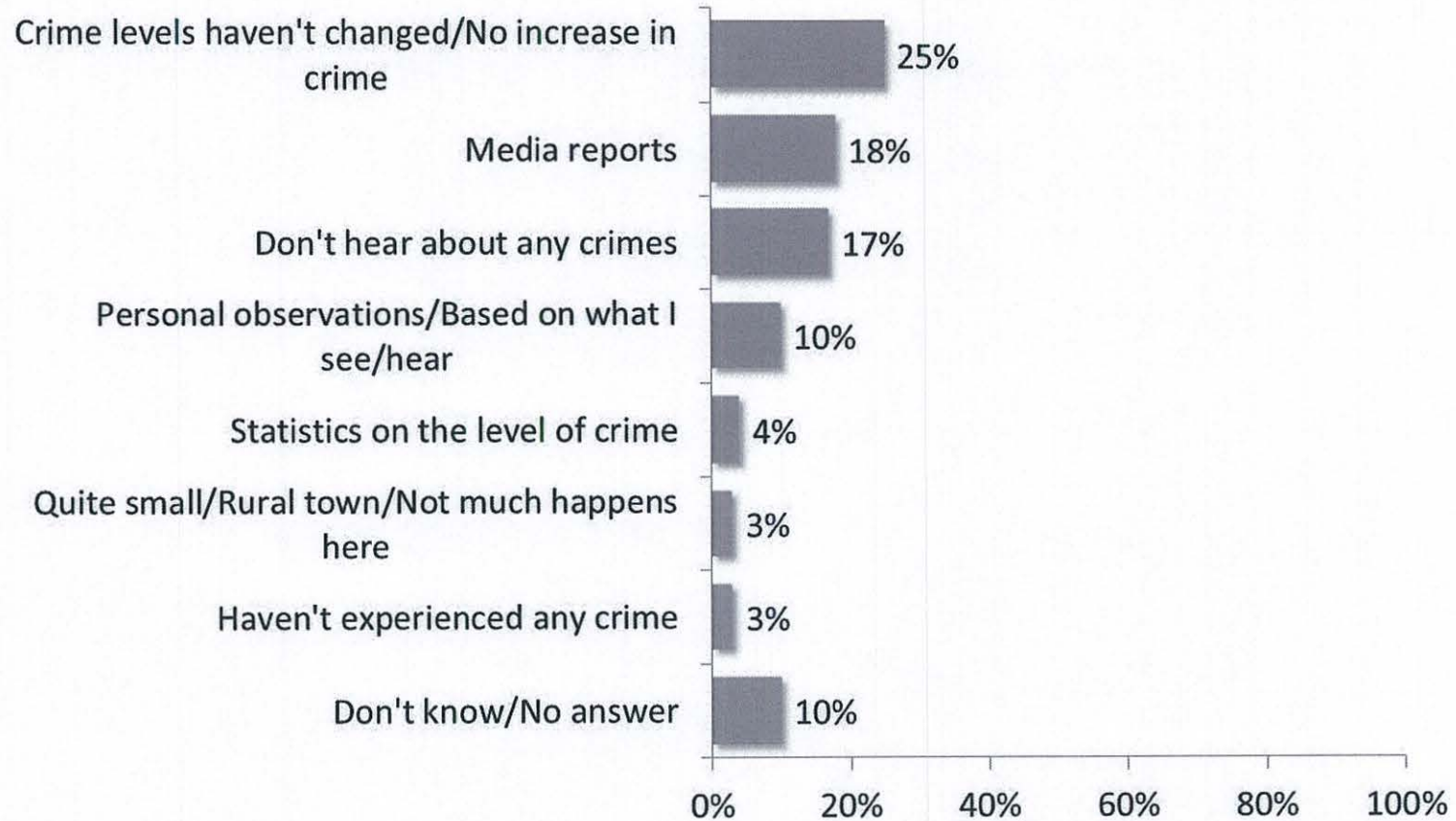
Aided Top Mentions Among Those Who Answered 'Much' or 'Somewhat higher' in Q.8



Q.9: [IF Q.8 = 'MUCH' OR 'SOMEWHAT HIGHER'] Why do you say that? (n=101)

Reasons for Saying Crime is About the Same

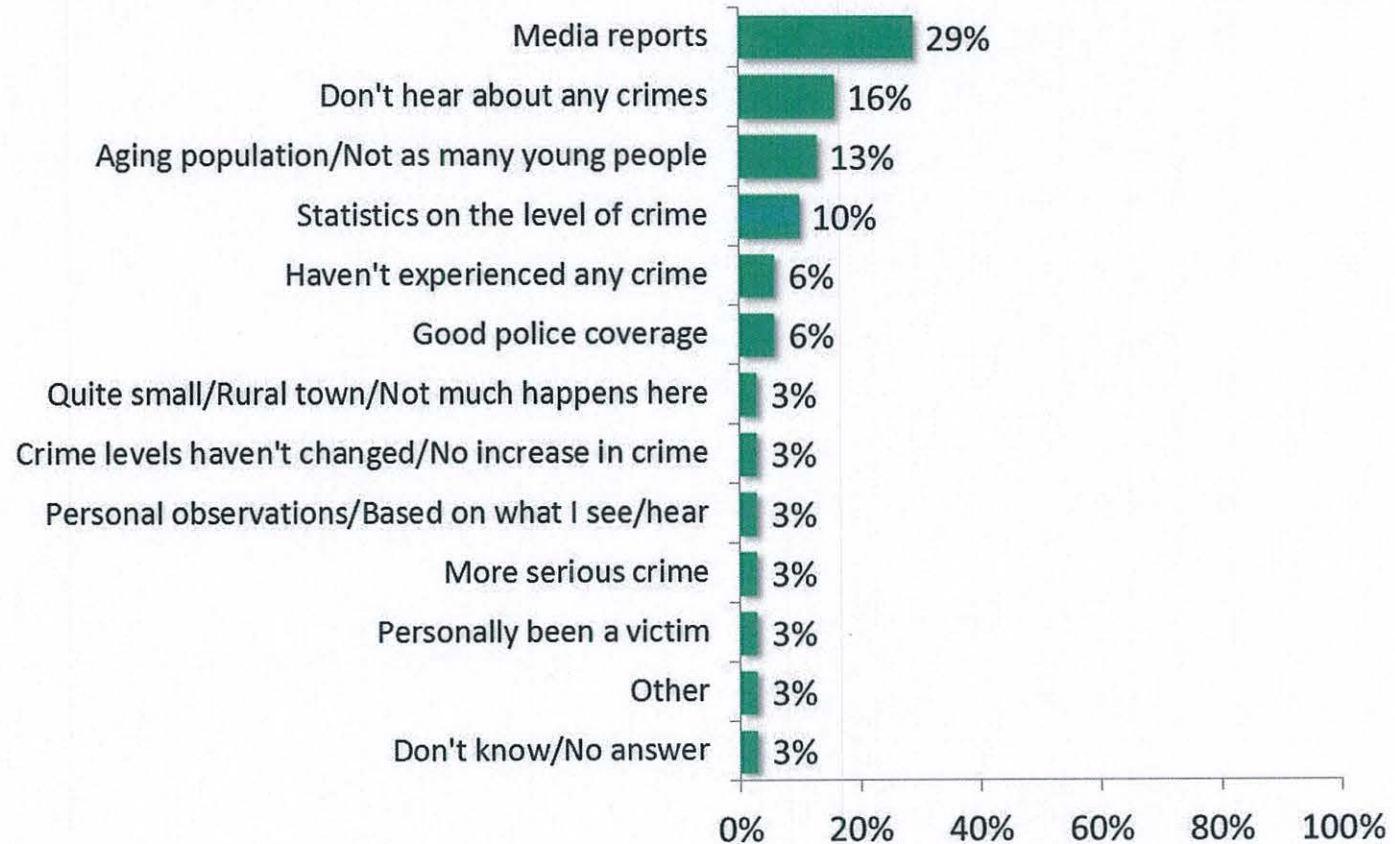
Aided Top Mentions Among Those Who Answered 'About the Same' in Q.8



Q.9: [IF Q.8 = 'ABOUT THE SAME'] Why do you say that? (n=157)

Reasons for Saying Crime is Lower

Aided Total Mentions Among Those Who Answered 'Somewhat' or 'Much lower' in Q.8

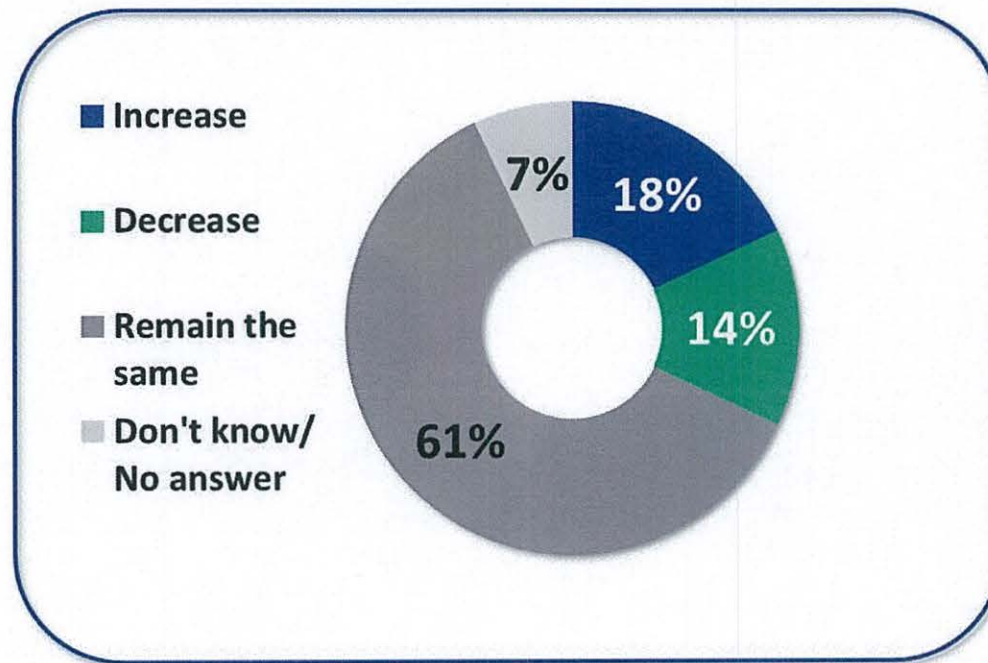


Q.9: [IF Q.8 = 'SOMEWHAT' OR 'MUCH LOWER'] Why do you say that? (n=31)*

*Caution: Small sample size

For the most part, Amherst residents do not anticipate a change in the level of crime over the next year.

Opinion of Level of Crime Over the Next Year

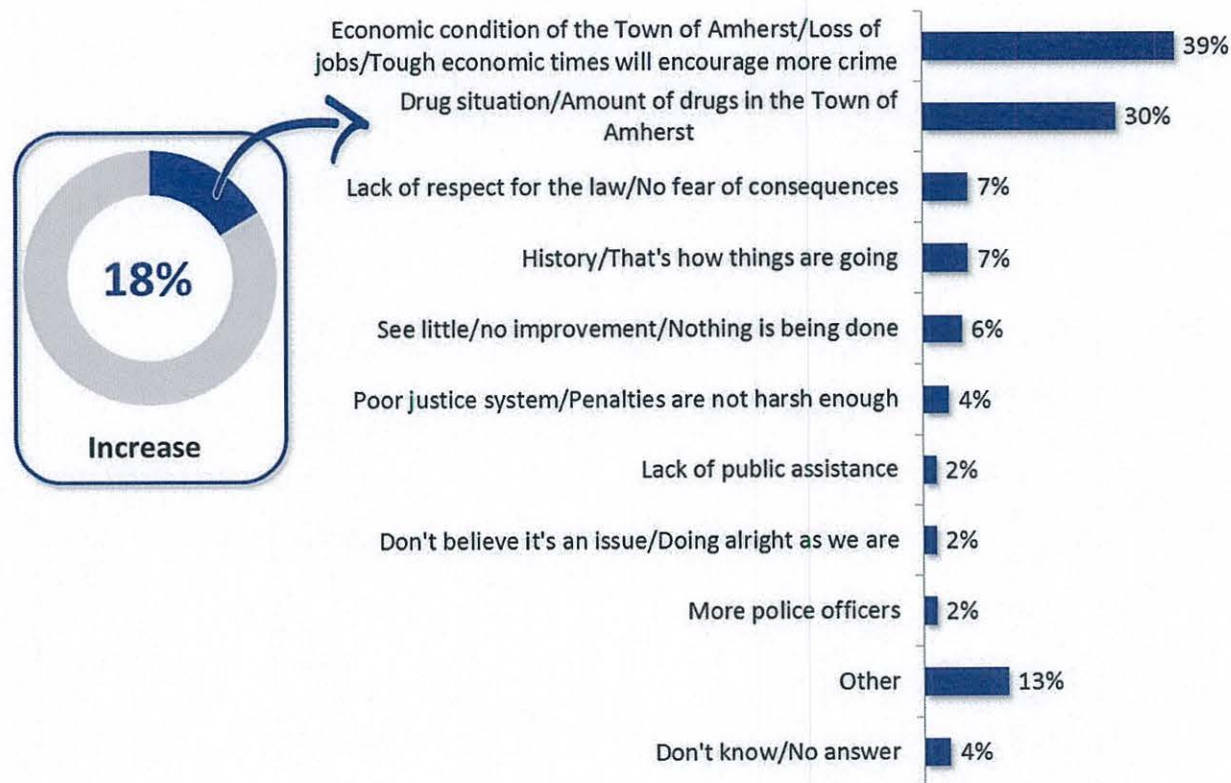


Q.10: Over the next year, do you think the level of crime in the Town of Amherst will:
(n=300)

An anticipated increase in crime is primarily driven by current economic conditions and the prevalence of drugs in the Town.

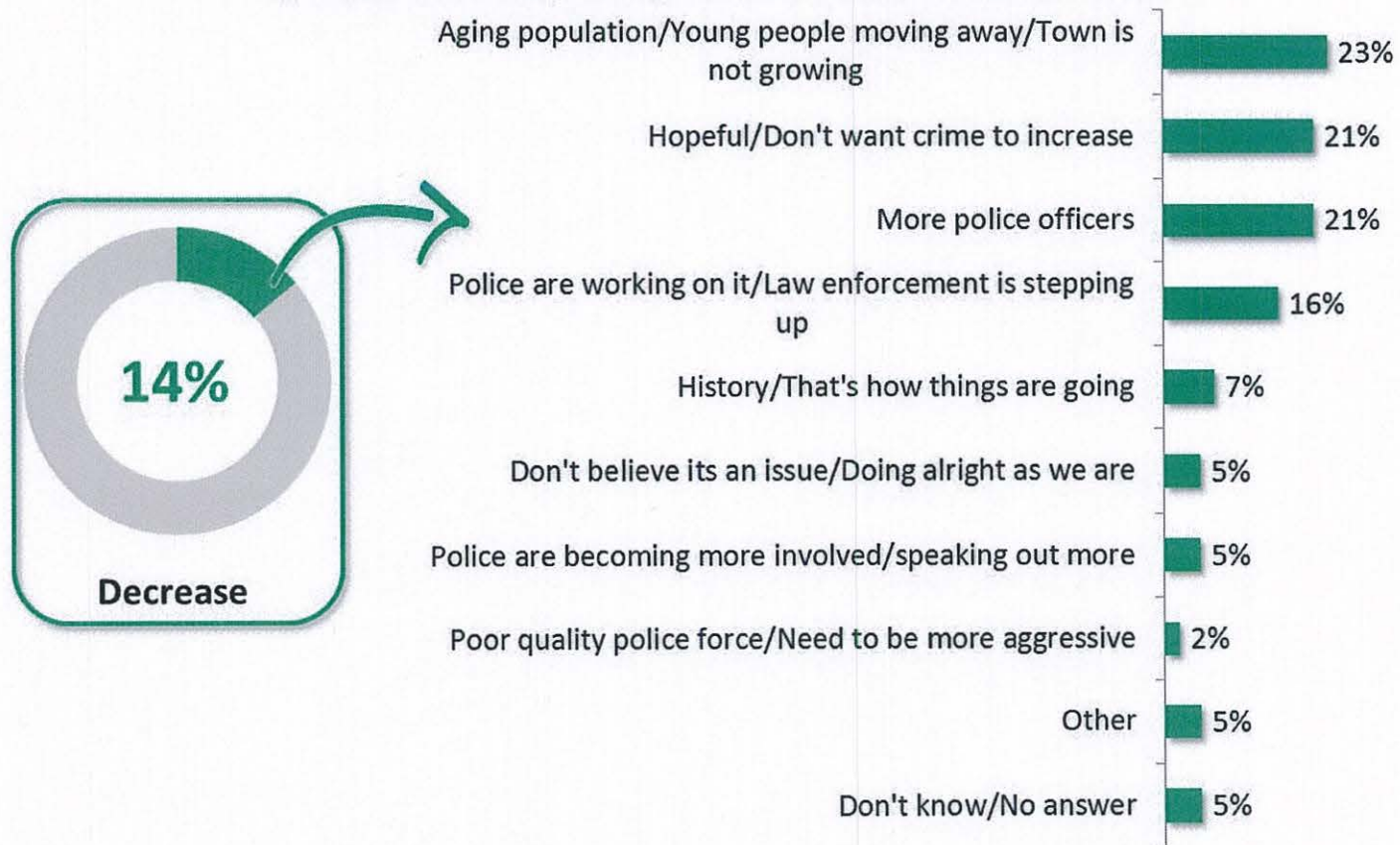
Reasons You Believe Crime Will Increase Over the Next Year

Total Aided Mentions, Among Those Who Said 'Increase' in Q.10



Reasons You Believe Crime Will Decrease Over the Next Year

Top Aided Mentions, Among Those Who Said 'Decrease' in Q.10



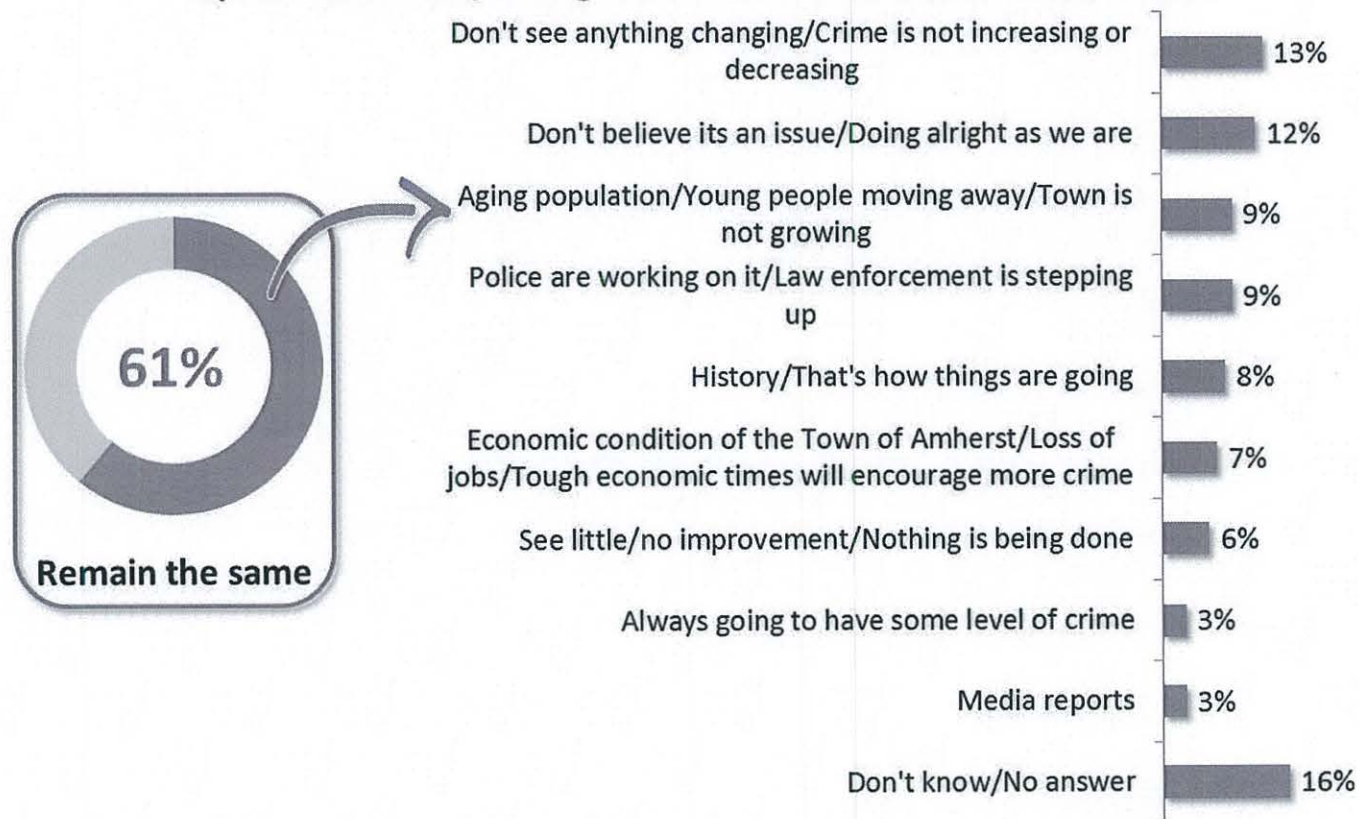
Q.10: Over the next year, do you think the level of crime in the Town of Amherst will: (n=300)

Q.11: [IF Q.10 = 'DECREASE' Why do you say that? (n=43)*

**Caution: Small sample size.*

Reasons You Believe Crime Will Remain the Same Over the Next Year

Top Aided Mentions, Among Those Who Said 'Remain the Same' in Q.10



Q.10: Over the next year, do you think the level of crime in the Town of Amherst will: (n=300)

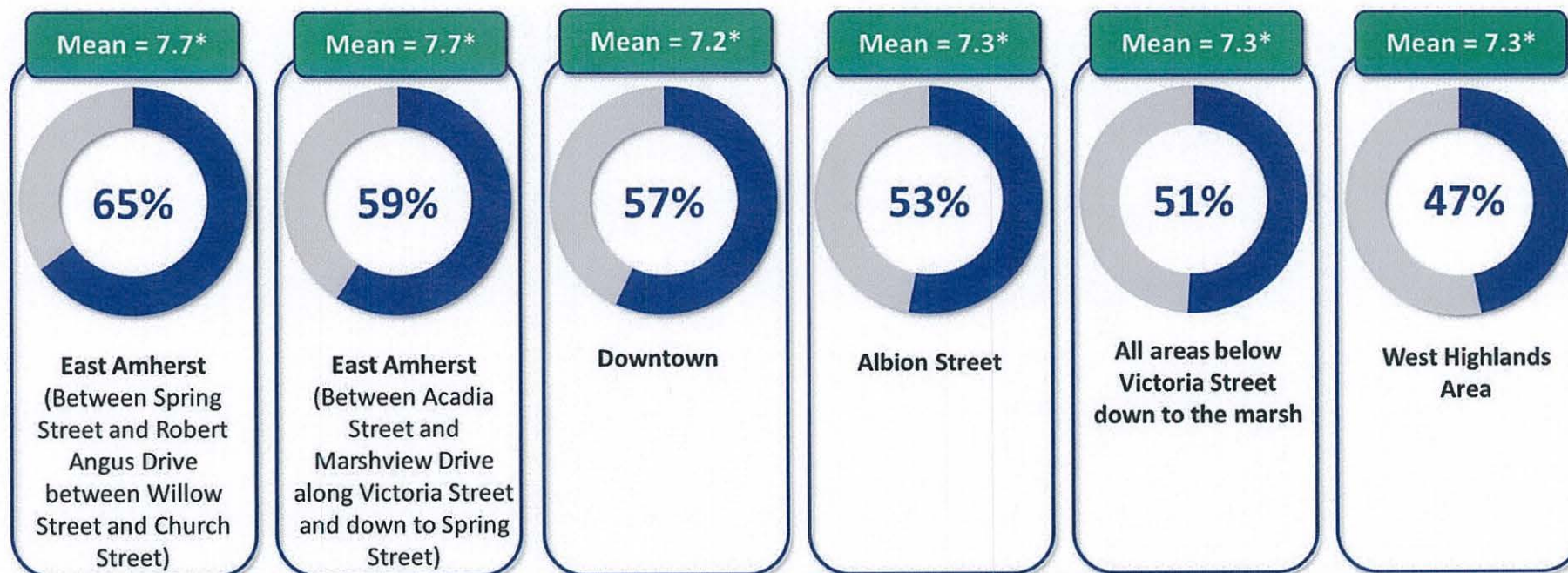
Q.11: [IF Q.10 = 'REMAIN THE SAME' Why do you say that? (n=182)

Feeling safe in Amherst

Residents feel generally safe throughout the Town of Amherst.

Feelings of Safety in Areas of Amherst

Top 3 Box on a Scale of 1-10
1=Not at all safe, 10=Extremely safe



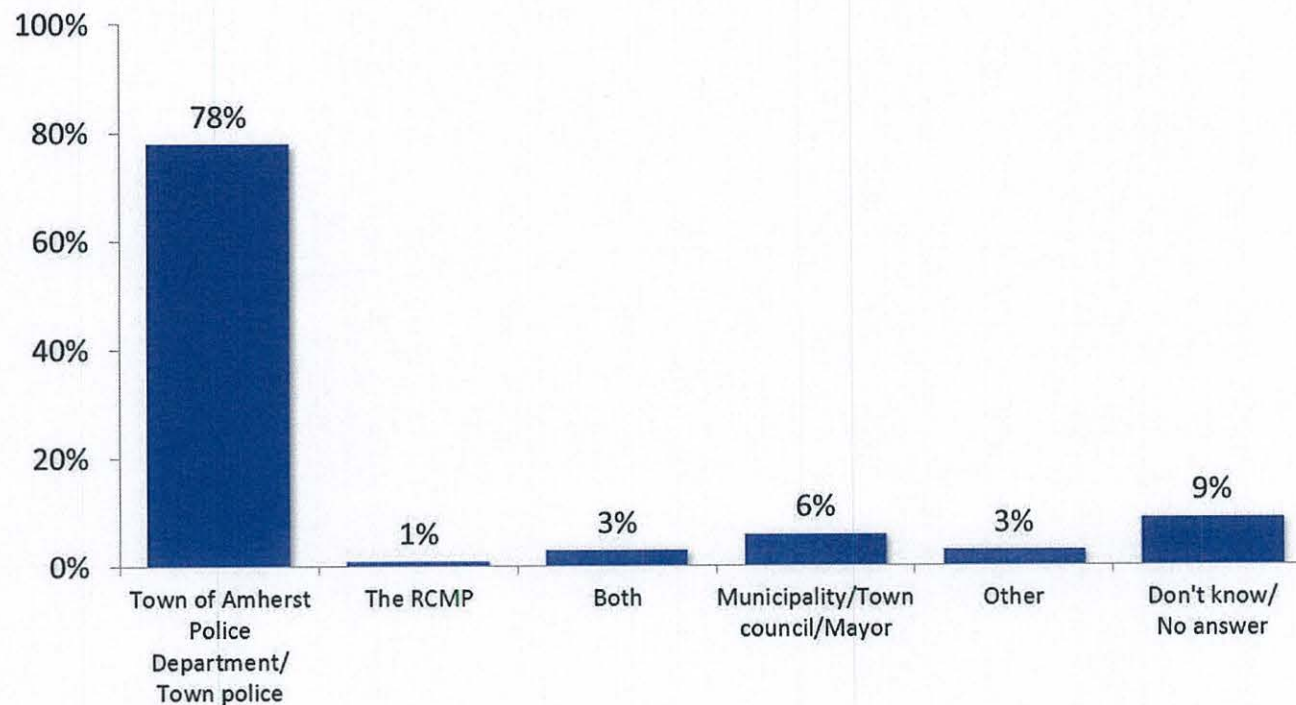
Q.12a-f: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all safe and 10 is extremely safe, how safe do you feel in the following areas of the Town of Amherst? (n=300)

*Responses of Don't know/No answer have been excluded from the mean.

Policing services responsibility

The vast majority of residents are aware that the Town of Amherst Police Department is responsible for providing policing services.

Who is Currently Responsible for Providing Policing Services for the Town of Amherst

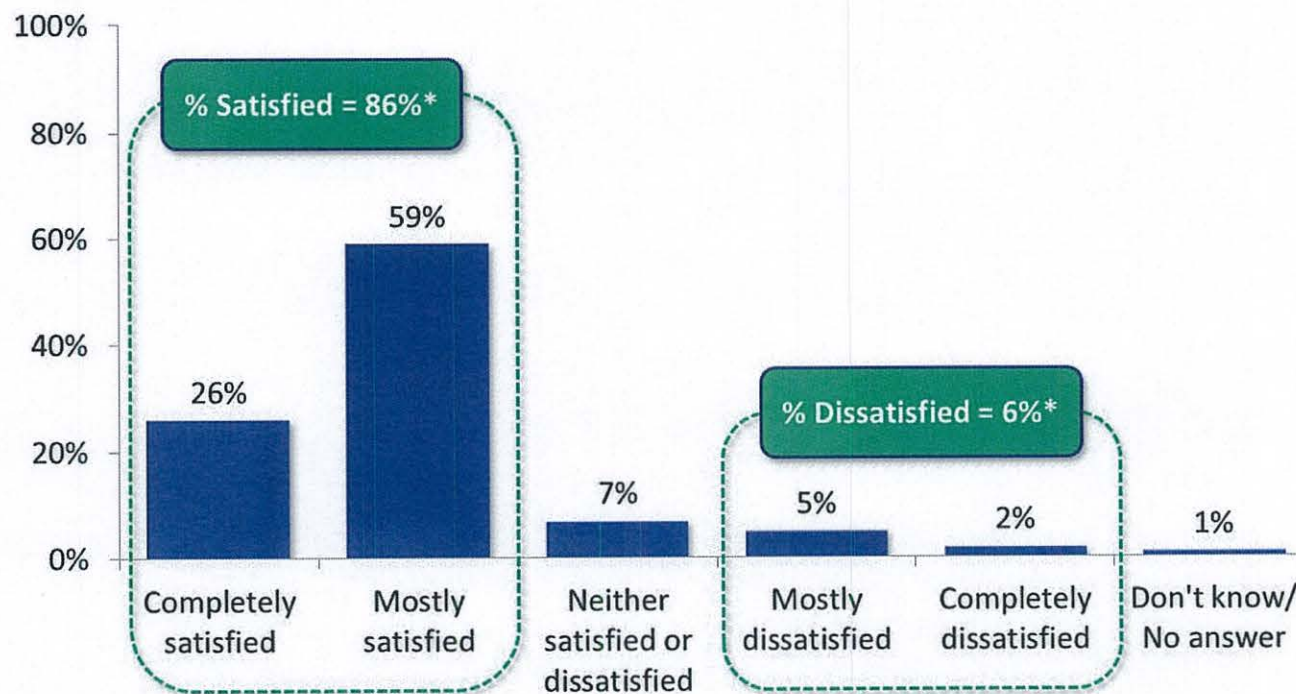


Q.13: To the best of your knowledge, who is currently responsible for providing policing services for the Town of Amherst?
(n=300)

Satisfaction with police services

The vast majority of residents are satisfied with the level of police services provided by the Town of Amherst Police Department.

Satisfaction with Level of Service Provided by the Town of Amherst Police Department



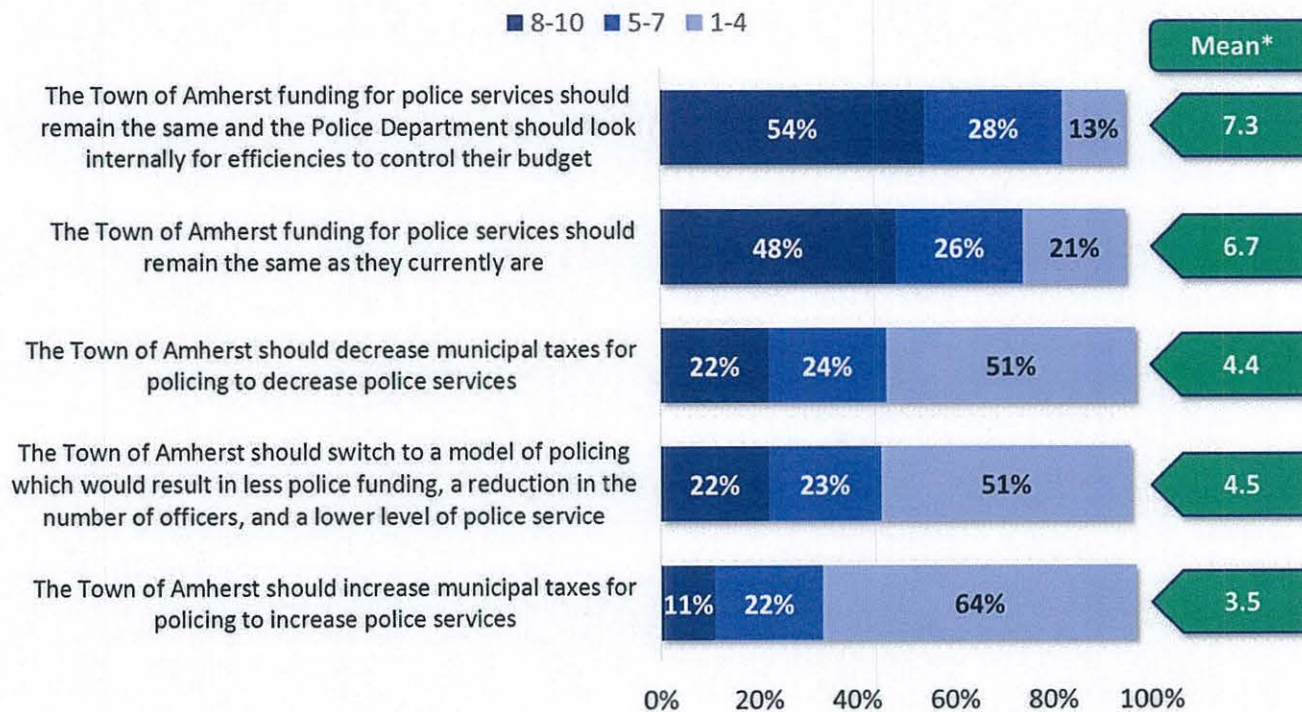
Q.14: The Town of Amherst Police Department is currently responsible for police services in the Town of Amherst. Overall, are you completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, neither satisfied or dissatisfied, mostly dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with the level of service provided by the Town of Amherst Police Department? (n=300) **Due to rounding.*

Funding police services

Residents are most likely to agree that the Town of Amherst funding for police services should remain the same and that the Police Department should look internally for efficiencies to control their budget.

Opinion of Statements About Policing Costs

Rating on a 10-pt Scale 10=Completely agree, 1=Completely disagree



Q.15a-e: Policing costs in the Town of Amherst are currently funded through municipal taxes, provincial grants, and revenues generated through the police department. Approximately \$4 million, representing 23% of the total municipal budget, is spent on policing. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'Completely Disagree' and 10 is 'Completely Agree', to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (n=300)

*Responses of Don't know/No answer have been excluded from the mean.

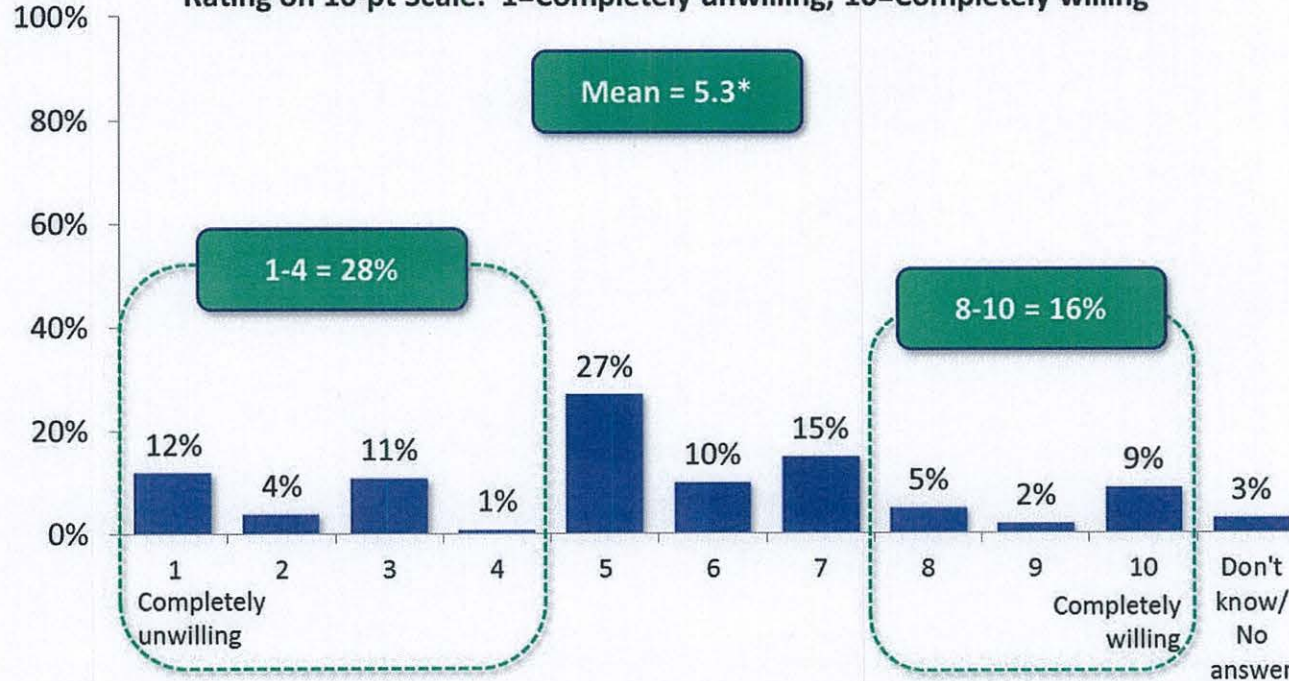
Willingness to pay more taxes to increase police funding

Residents are not overly receptive to paying more in municipal taxes to increase police service.

Willingness to Pay More in Municipal Taxes so the Town of Amherst Can Spend More on Policing

Among Those Who Answered 5 or Greater in Q.15a

Rating on 10-pt Scale: 1=Completely unwilling, 10=Completely willing



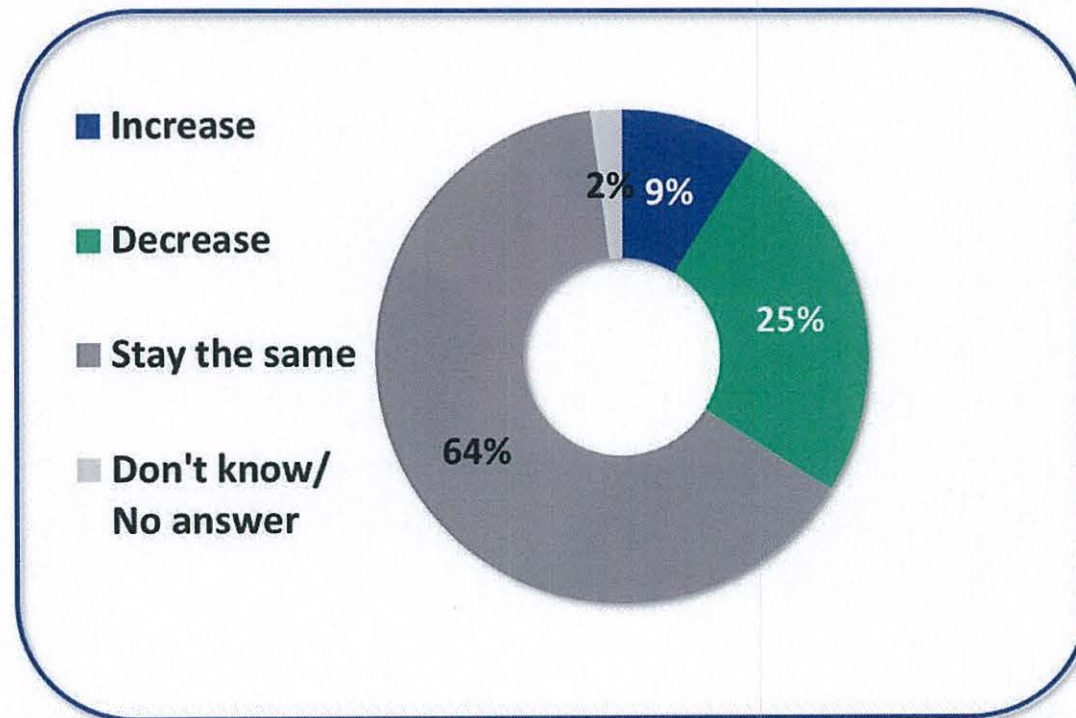
Q.16: [IF Q.15A \geq 5] On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'Completely unwilling' and 10 is 'completely willing', how willing are you to pay more in municipal taxes so the Town of Amherst can spend more on policing? (n=99)

*Responses of Don't know/No answer have been excluded from the mean.

Number of police officers

The majority of residents think the number of police officers in the Town of Amherst should stay the same.

Opinion of the Number of Police Officers in Amherst in 2016



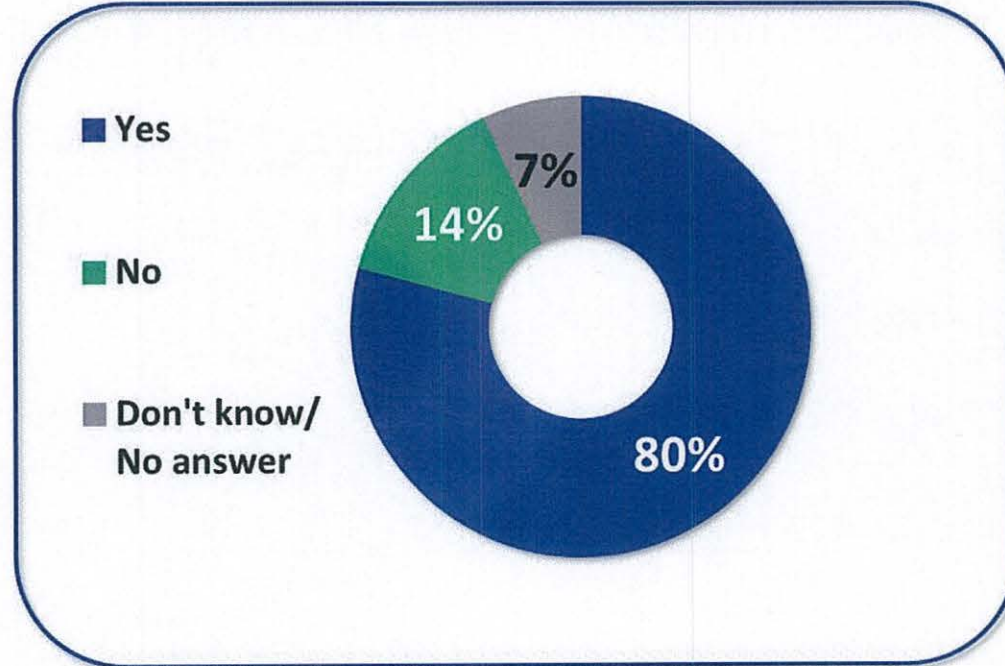
Q.17: Currently the Town of Amherst Police Department has 25 police officers. In 2016, should the number of police officers in the Town of Amherst: (n=300)

Decrease number of police officers

A strong majority continues to support a decrease in the number of police officers, after understanding the funding model.

Should Be a Decrease in the Number of Police Officers

Among Those Who Said 'Decrease' in Q.17



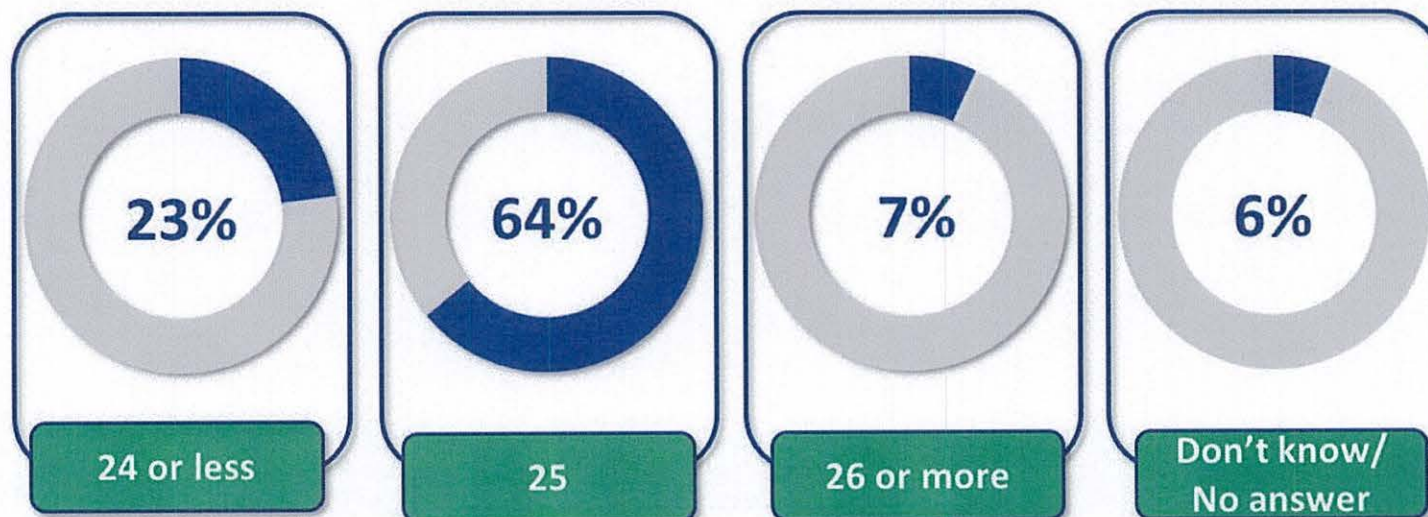
Q.19: [IF Q.17 = 'DECREASE'] The Province of Nova Scotia currently funds three police officer positions in the Town of Amherst – two Street Crime Officers and a School Resource/Youth Officer. For every police officer position eliminated by the Police Department, one of the positions funded by the Province would be eliminated. Do you still think there should be a decrease in the number of police officers? (n=74)

Ideal number of police officers

While the majority of residents think the number of police officers in the Town of Amherst should stay the same, on average residents think there should be 23 police officers in the town.

Number of Police Officers Amherst Should Have

Mean = 23.1*



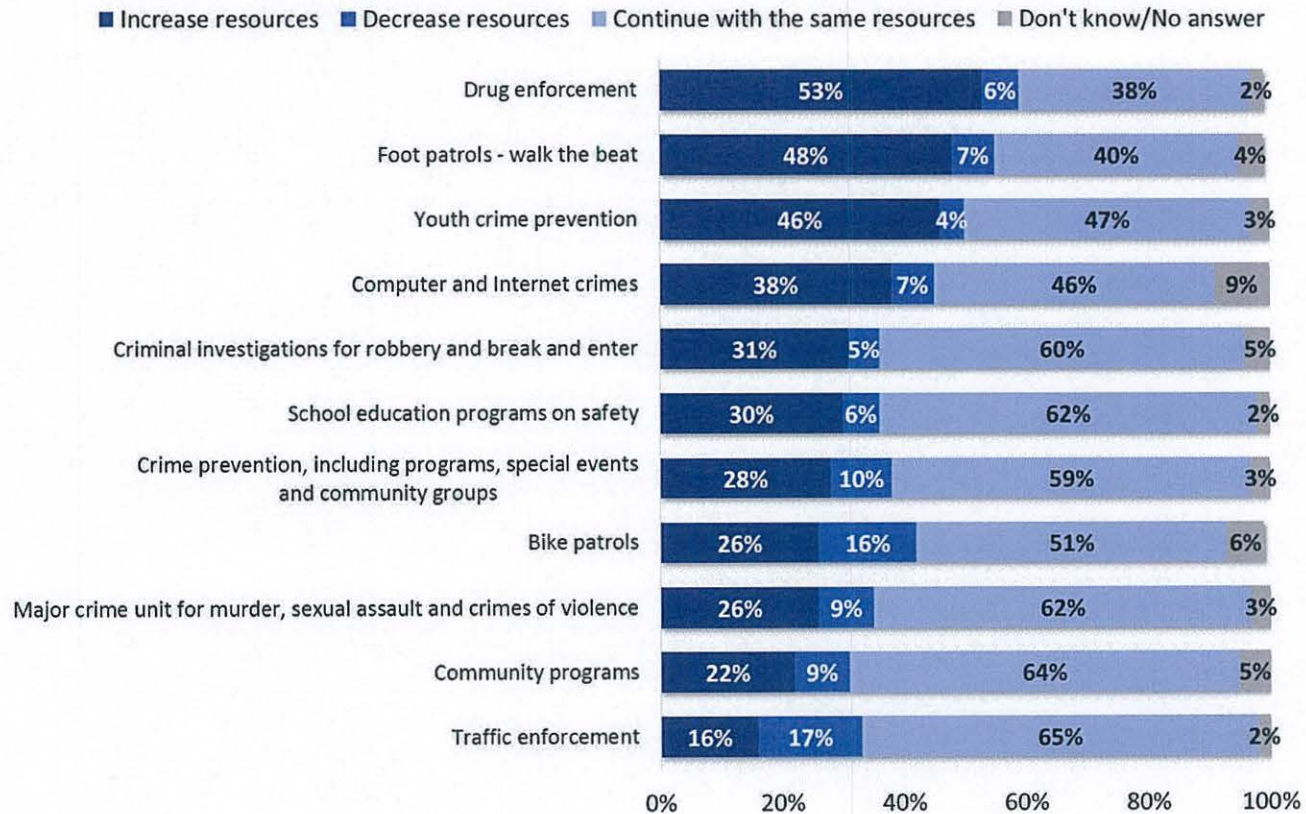
Q.18: In your opinion, how many police officers should the Town of Amherst have? (n=300)

*Responses of Don't know/No answer have been excluded from the mean.

Resources to provide police services

While residents believe adequate resources are in place for general policing services in the Town, there is a perception that resources for some services like drug enforcement should be increased.

Opinion of Resources for Services Provided by Police Department

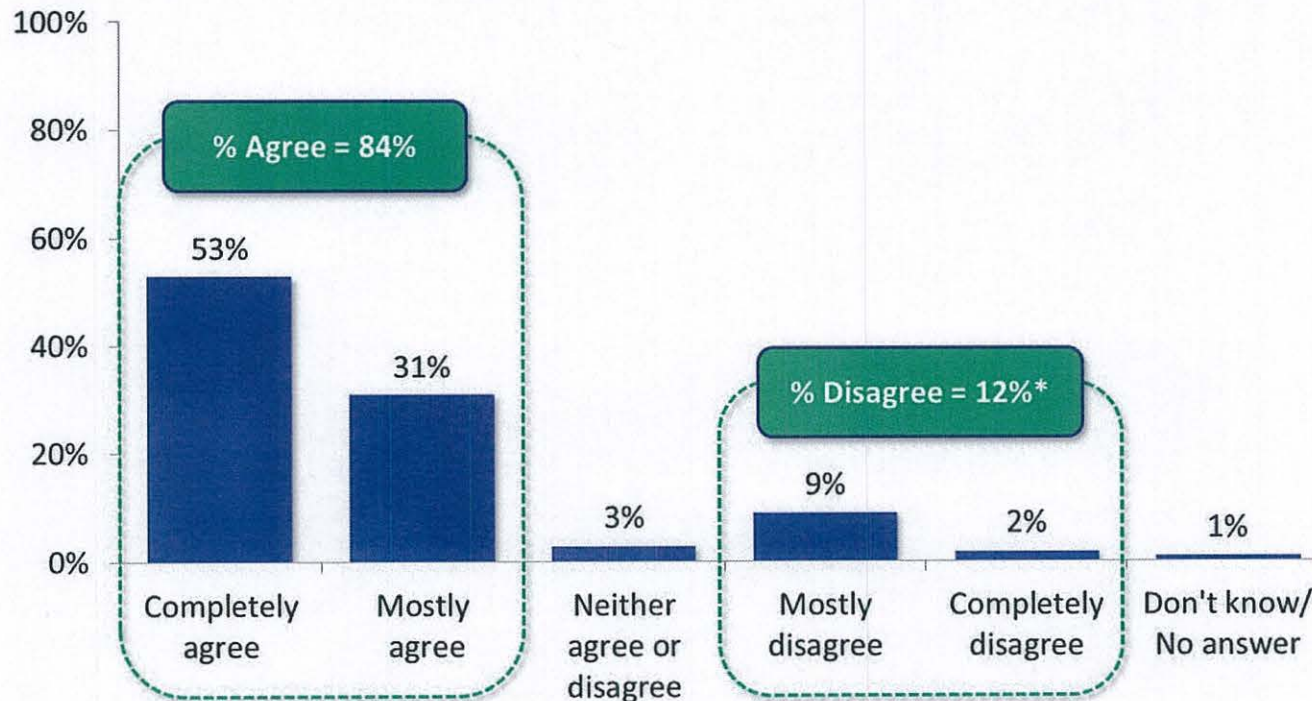


Q.20a-k: The Town of Amherst Police Department provides a variety of different services. For each of the following services, do you think that the Department should increase resources, including personnel time and funding, decrease resources, or continue with the same resources? (n=300)

Officers on duty 24/7

Residents are in favour of continuing to have officers on duty 24/7.

Amherst Should Continue to Have Officers on Duty 24/7



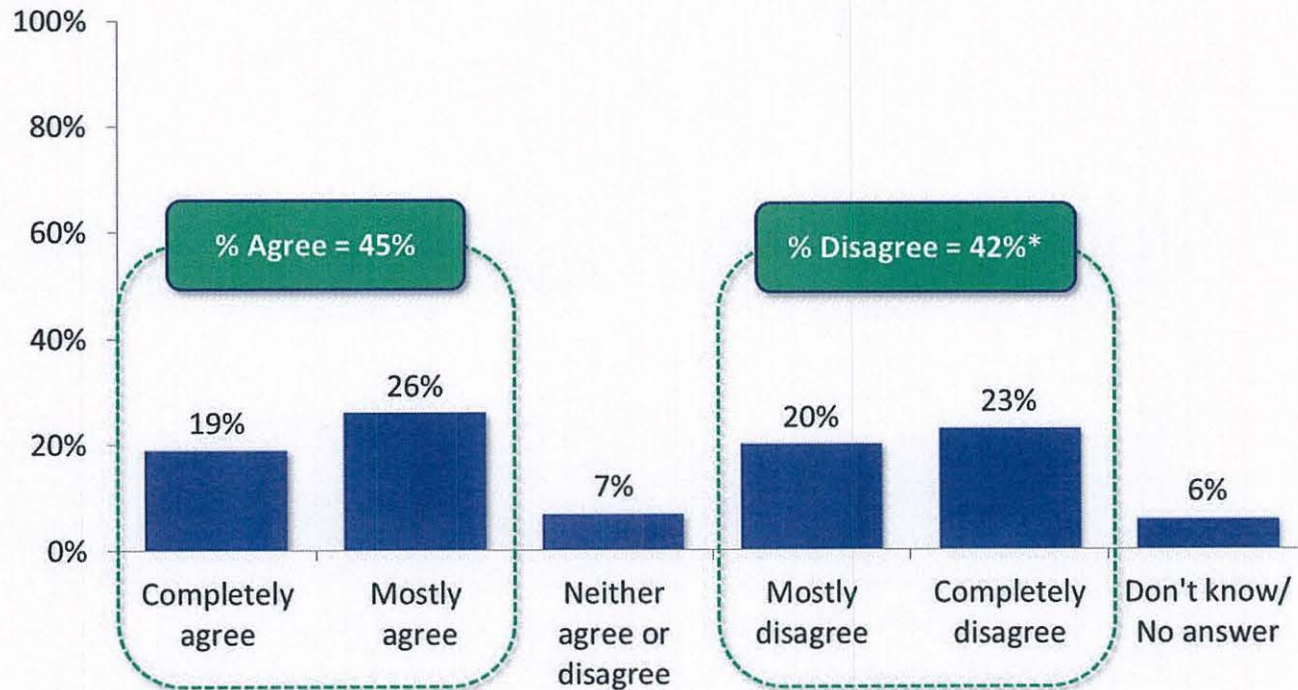
Q.21: Do you completely agree, mostly agree, neither agree or disagree, mostly disagree or completely disagree that the Town of Amherst should continue to have officers on duty 24 hours per day, 7 days per week? (n=300)

*Due to rounding.

Policing options in Amherst

There is mixed opinion on whether or not other policing options should be considered for the Town.

Amherst Should Consider Other Options for Providing Policing



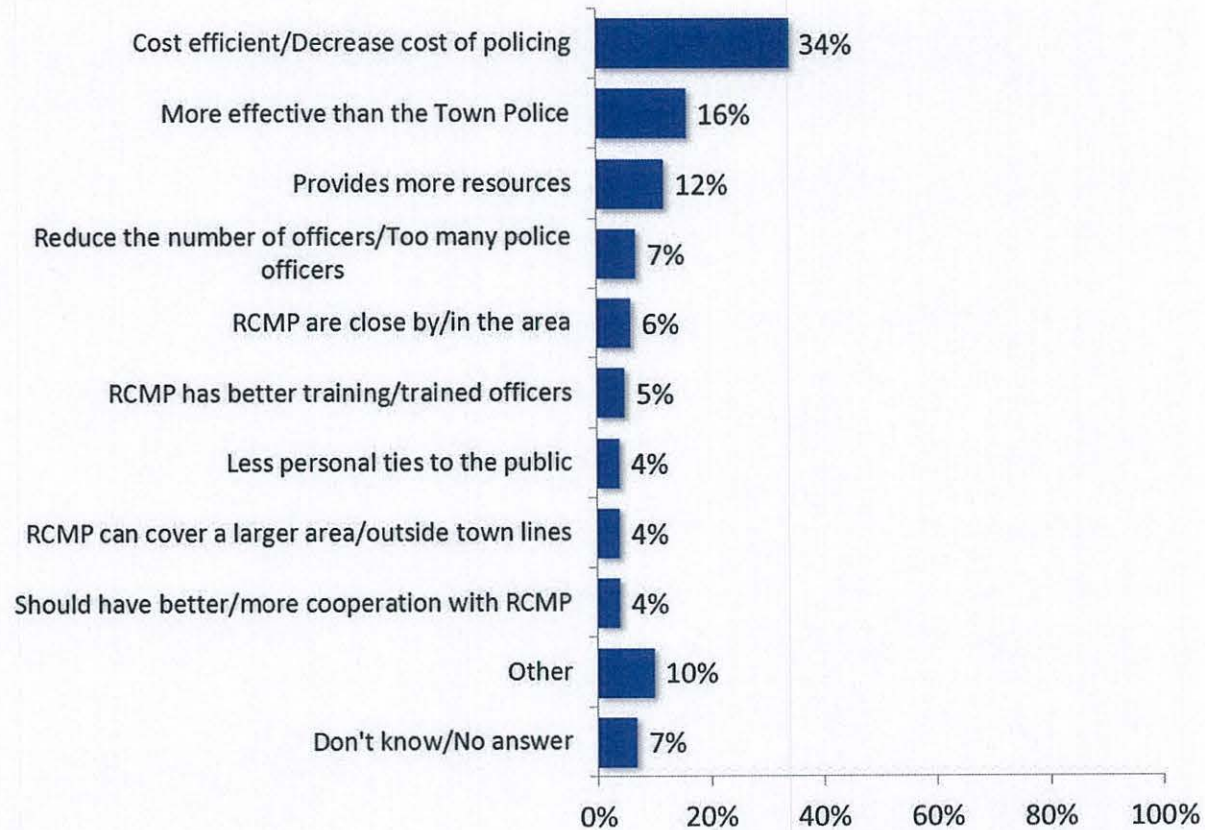
Q.22: Do you completely agree, mostly agree, neither agree or disagree, mostly disagree or completely disagree that the Town of Amherst should consider other options for providing policing in the Town of Amherst, such as the RCMP or an integrated Town/RCMP option? (n=300)

*Due to rounding.

Other policing options

Reasons Amherst Should Consider Other Policing Options

Total Unaided Mentions Among Those Who Answered 'Mostly agree' or 'Completely agree' in Q.22

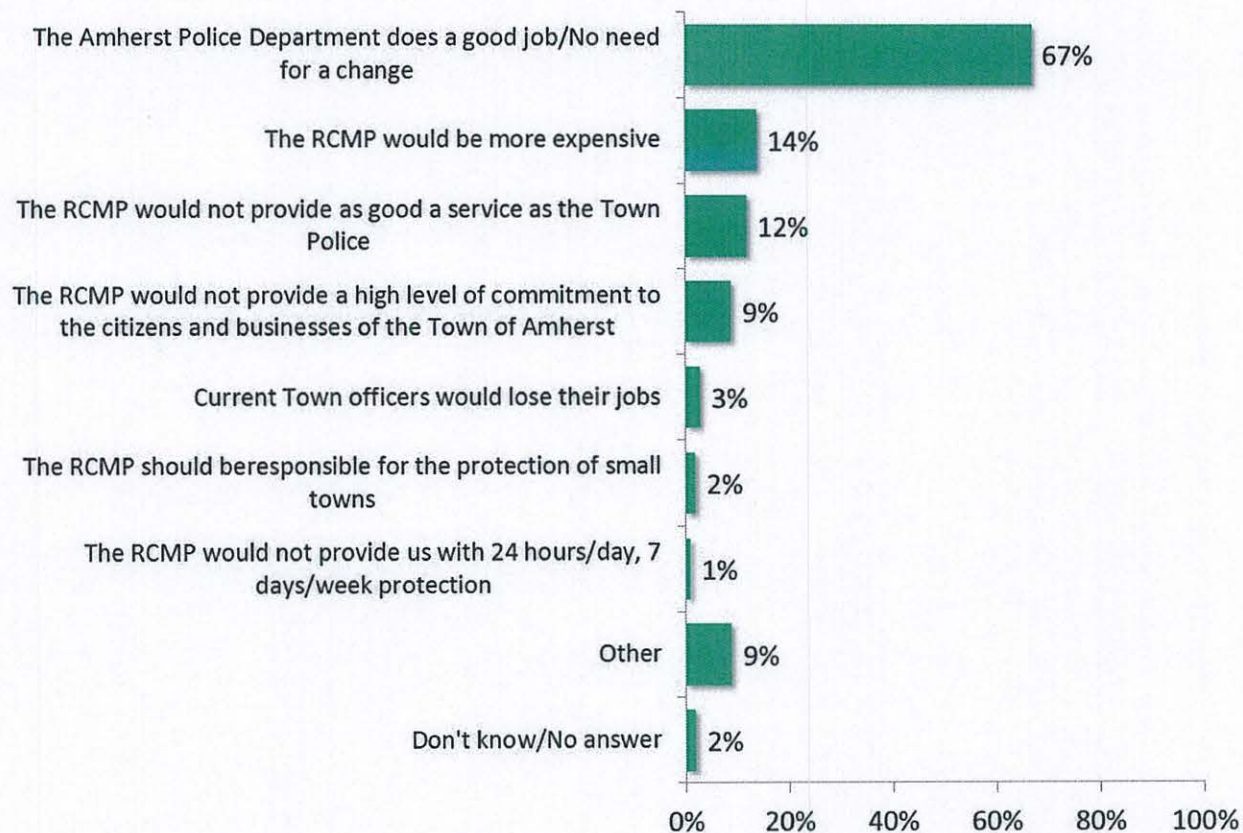


Q.23: [IF Q.22 = 'MOSTLY AGREE' OR 'COMPLETELY AGREE'] Why do you believe that the Town of Amherst should consider other policing options? Any other reasons? (n=134)

Other policing options

Reasons Amherst Should Not Consider Other Policing Options

Total Mentions Among Those Who Answered 'Mostly disagree' or 'Completely disagree' in Q.22

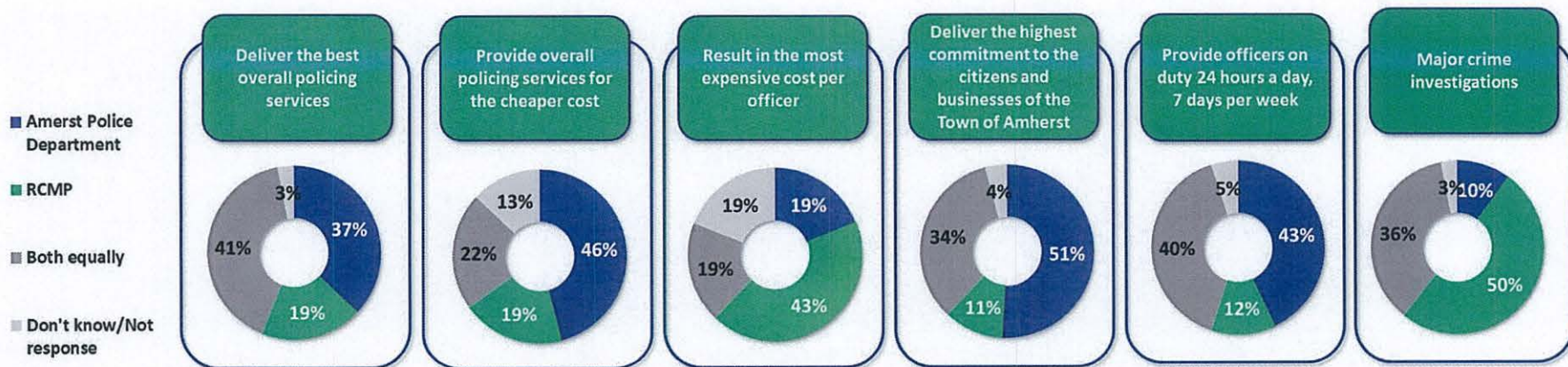


Q.24: [IF Q.22 = 'MOSTLY AGREE' OR 'COMPLETELY AGREE'] Why do you believe that the Town of Amherst should consider other policing options? Any other reasons? (n=127)

Delivering a superior service

The Amherst Police Department is deemed to provide a more cost effective police service, while the RCMP is seen as more proficient at conducting major crime investigations.

Who Would Deliver the Most Superior Service

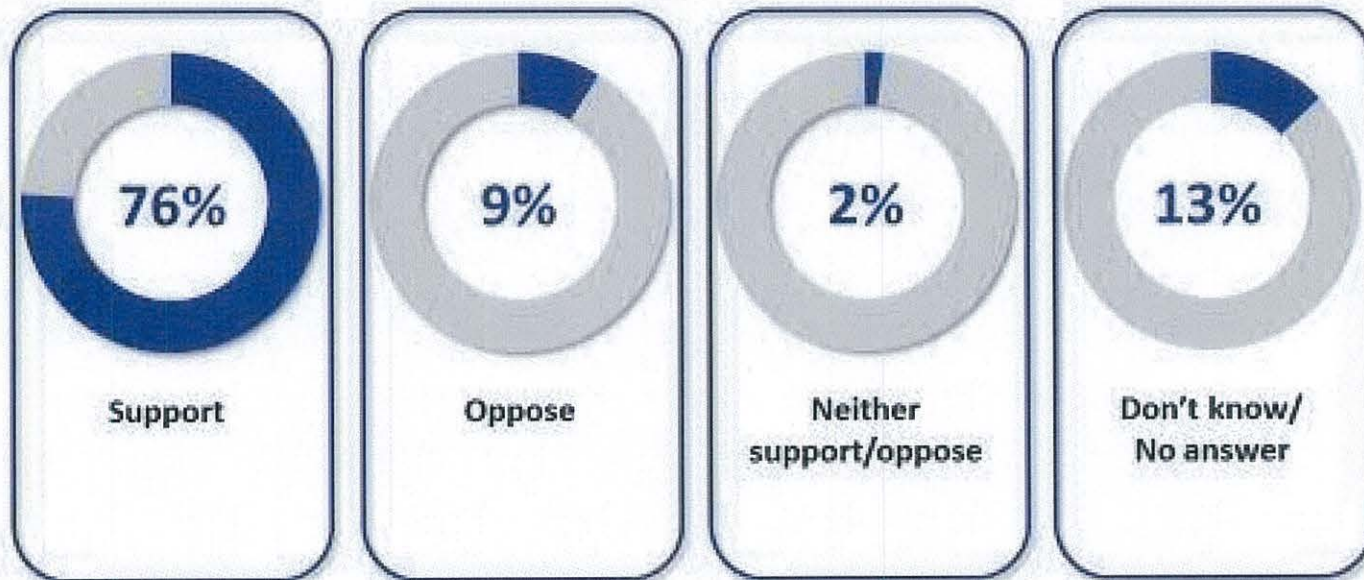


Q.25a-f: Now I would like you to think of the Amherst Police Department in comparison to the RCMP when it comes to delivery of services to the citizens and businesses of the Town of Amherst. Based on what you know today, which policing service do you believe would deliver the most superior service, on each of the following elements for the people of the Town of Amherst. Please answer each question with Amherst Police Department, RCMP or both equally. (n=300)

Support/Opposition for municipal structure discussion

There is strong support for an evidence-based discussion on municipal structure.

Opinion of Municipal Units in Cumberland County Participating in a Discussion on Municipal Structure

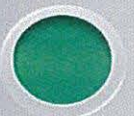


Q.26: And one final question. There has been some discussion regarding municipal structure in Cumberland County. Do you personally support or oppose having ALL municipal units in Cumberland County, including the Town of Amherst, participate in an evidence-based discussion on municipal structure? (n=300)

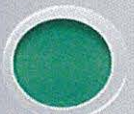
Recommendations



Communicate survey findings to residents



Consider operating under an integrated policing model



Communicate crime statistics on a regular basis



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