

An Envision Tonawanda Report

Envision Tonawanda, a group of City of Tonawanda residents, were concerned about the nature and timing of development proposals in the city as well as a lack of public input into the process. So, earlier this year, Envision Tonawanda held a public meeting and printed, distributed (with assistance from the Tonawanda Senior Center and the Erie County Public Library in the city) and tabulated surveys. Also, surveys (with additional questions) were published online and promoted via social media.

After several weeks the results were collected. No restrictions were put on the ideas, many which already were proposed or had been discussed in the public square. Responses were collected from all Wards and opportunities existed to add ideas which were not specified on the printed surveys.

This report will be given to elected officials and members of the steering committee working on the city's masterplan.

Envision Tonawanda

The respondents

From the online survey, there were 239 responses from City of Tonawanda residents and 10 responses from non-residents. *(one respondent skipped the question)*

41 respondents lived in Ward 1

47 respondents lived in Ward 2

37 respondents lived in Ward 3

59 respondents lived in Ward 4

65 respondents selected “Not Sure” with regards to Ward residence.

There were 50 printed surveys completed

8 from Ward 1

9 from Ward 2

8 from Ward 3

25 from Ward 4

Survey Results

Part 1 – City Hall Complex

Part 2 – East Niagara St.

Part 3 – Ives Pond

Part 4 – Veterans Park

Part 5 – Spaulding

Part 6 – Clint Small Stadium / Young Street
/Housing

Appendix A: – Respondent Comments

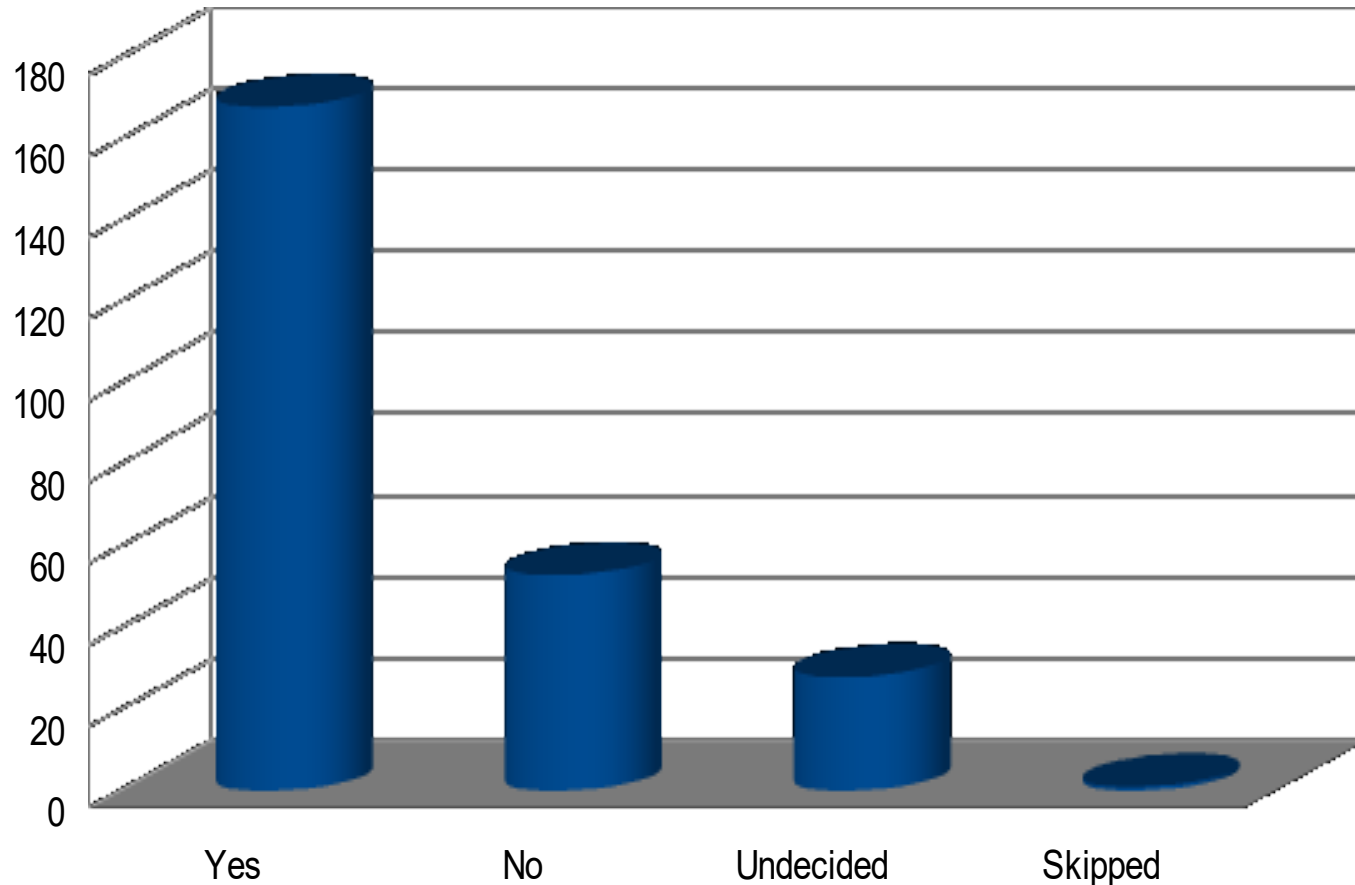
The background features a complex, abstract pattern of thin, overlapping lines in red and blue. These lines form a grid-like structure that appears to be a 3D wireframe of a building or architectural space, viewed from an angle. The lines are more densely packed in some areas and more sparse in others, creating a sense of depth and perspective. The overall effect is a modern, technical, and architectural aesthetic.

Part 1

City Hall Complex

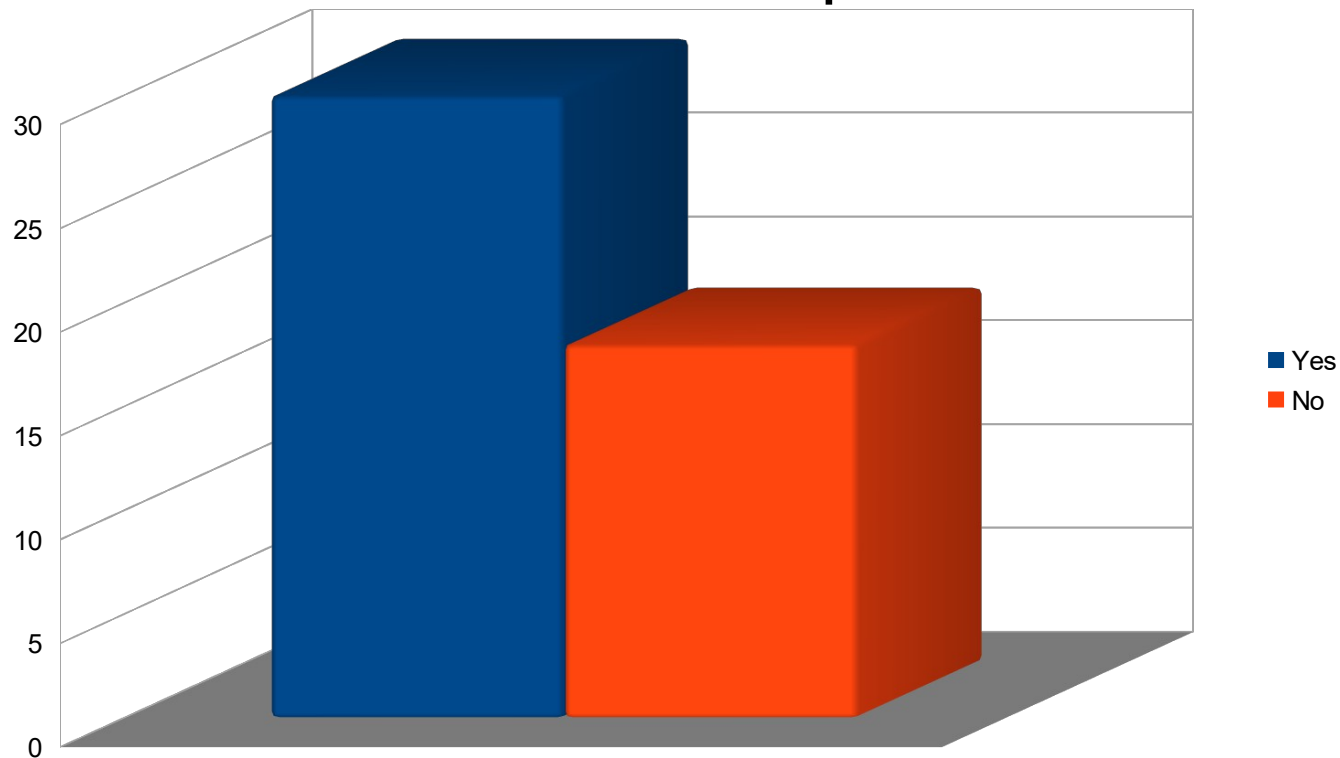
Online Survey – City Hall

- Would you support a proposal to move the City Hall complex, off of Niagara Street, to another location so that area of the waterfront can be made available for development?

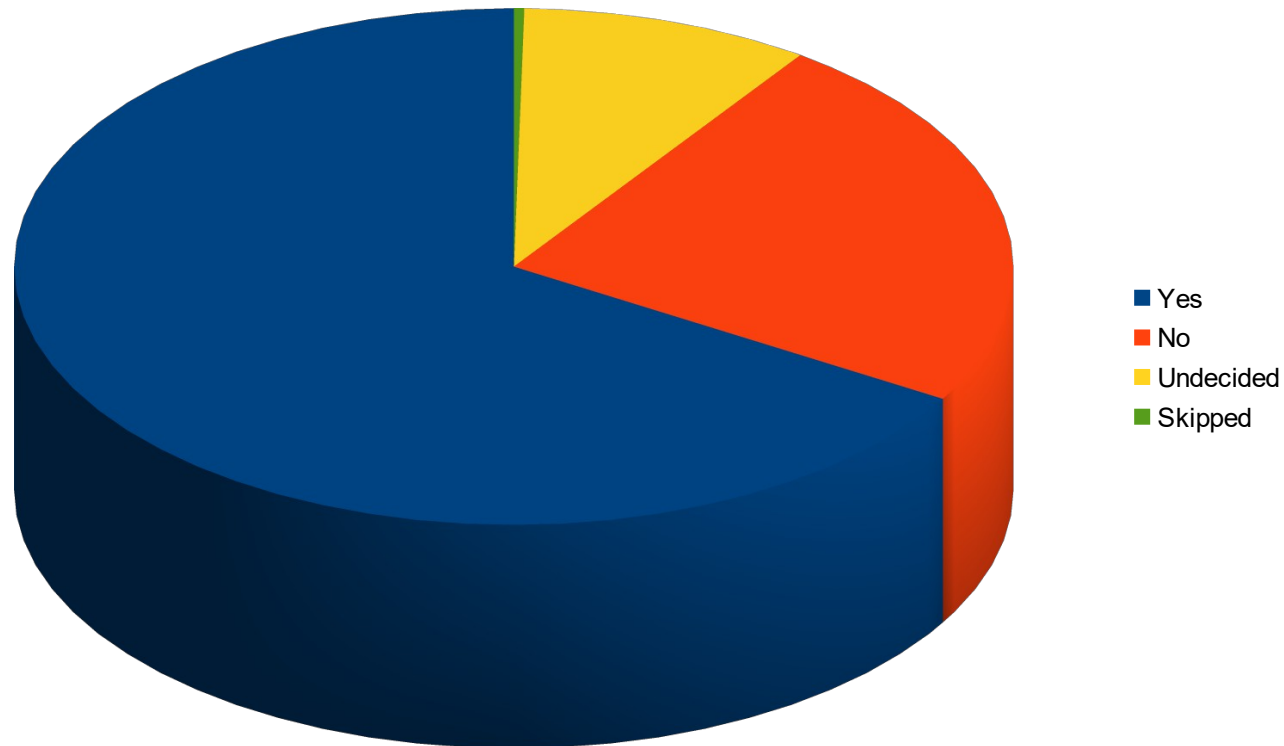


Printed Survey – City Hall

- Would you support a proposal to move the City Hall complex off Niagara St. to another location (such as the former Spaulding Complex or former Clint Small Stadium – Main and Roosevelt streets) area so that area of the waterfront can be redeveloped?

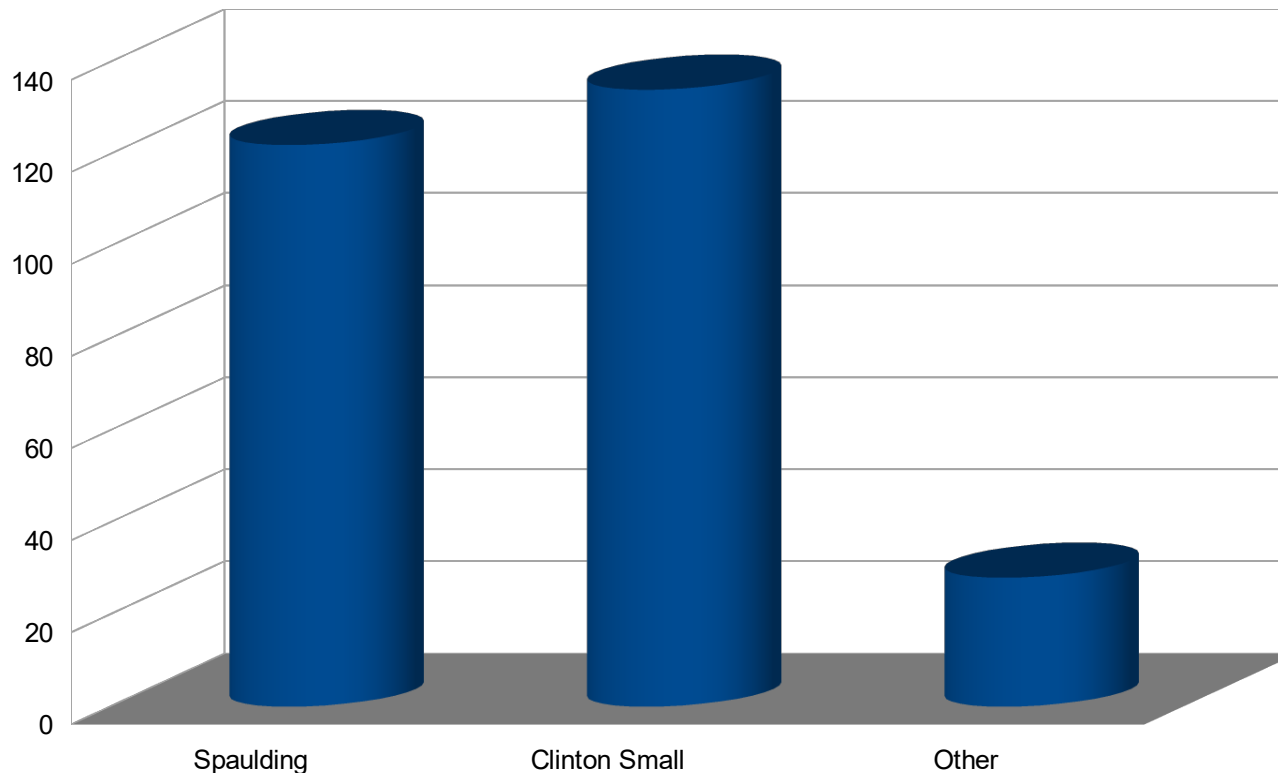


- Combining the two surveys... **67 percent of respondents would support a proposal to move the City Hall complex off Niagara St.;** 24 percent are opposed and 9 percent are undecided.



City Hall – relocation (Online Survey)

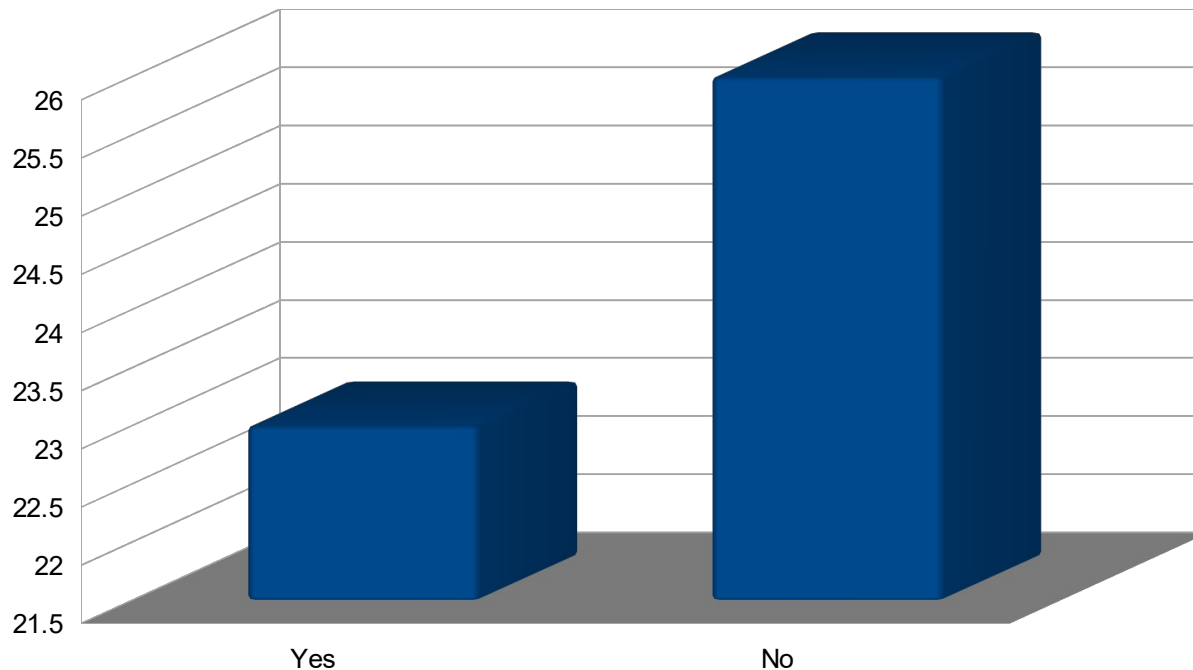
- Would you support the relocation of City Hall to one of these sites, bringing together the City Hall offices, court, police, fire and/or public works building, to make one centrally located public safety building?



City Hall – relocation (Printed Survey)

- At the former Spaulding Complex (Wheeler and Hackett streets) would you support relocating City Hall, police, fire, courts and public works in one new complex?

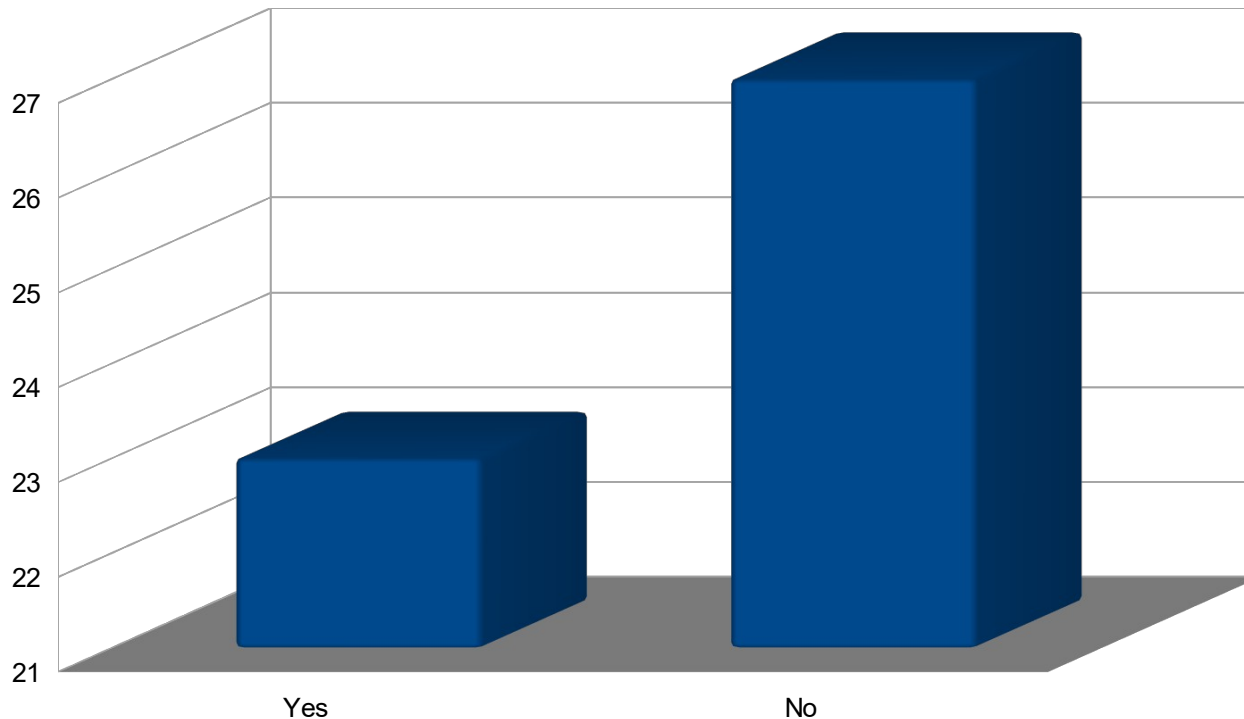
46% Yes **53% No**

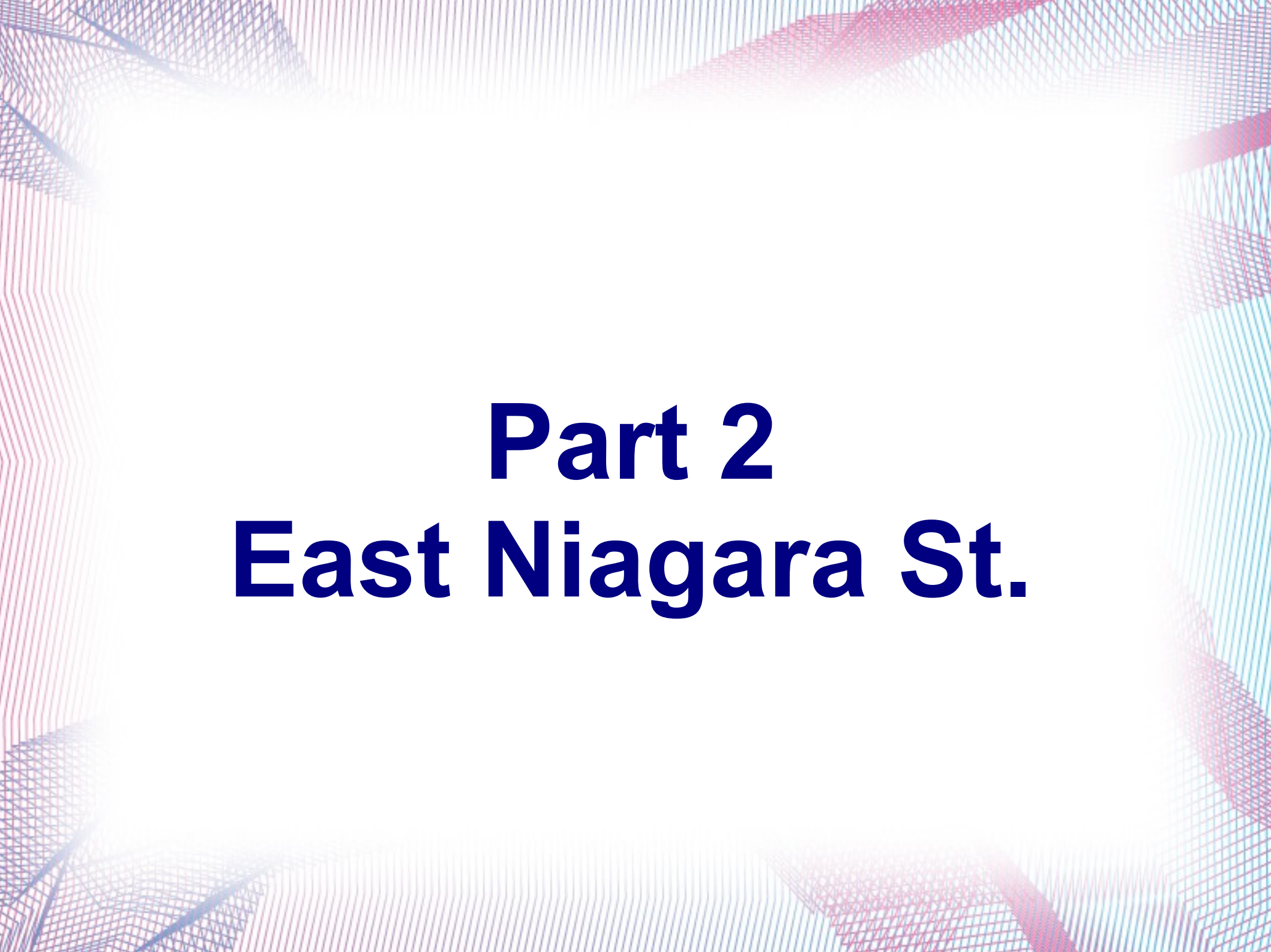


City Hall – relocation (Printed Survey)

- Would you support a relocated City Hall at the former Clint Small Stadium area?

46% Yes, 54% No





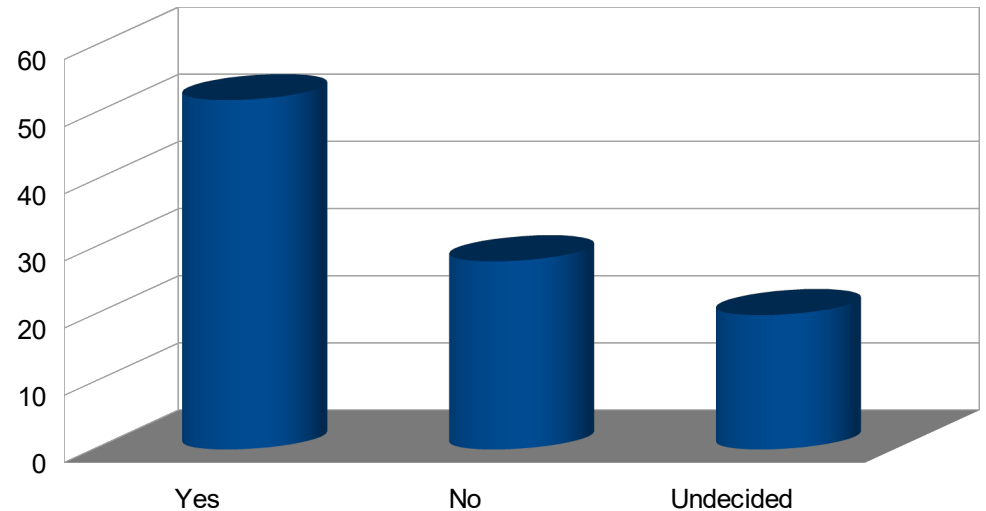
Part 2
East Niagara St.

East Niagara Street (Online Survey)

- If given the opportunity to relocate the Tonawanda Football Clinic and softball fields, on East Niagara Street, to the Little League Drive / Veteran's Park area, would you support this?

52% Yes, 28% No

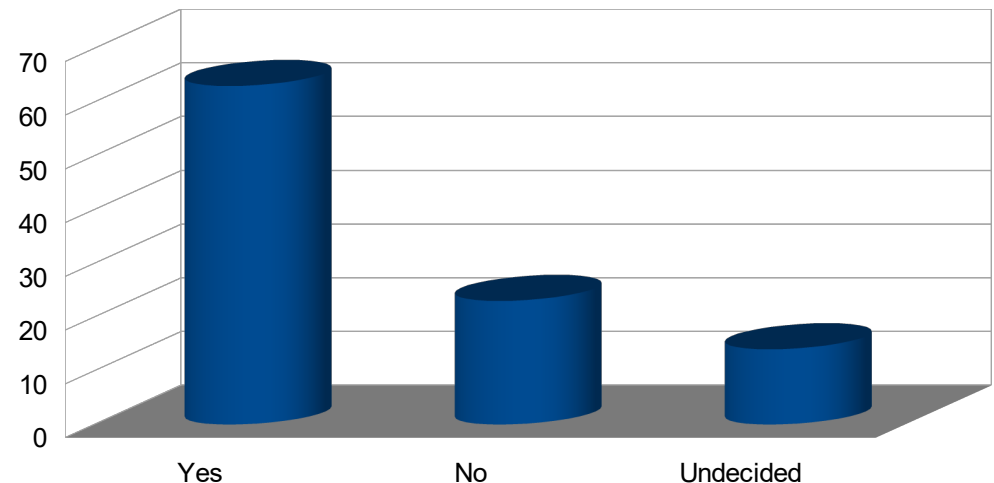
20% Undecided



- Would you support the development of houses on the East Niagara Street property (app.11 acres)?

63% Yes, 23 % No

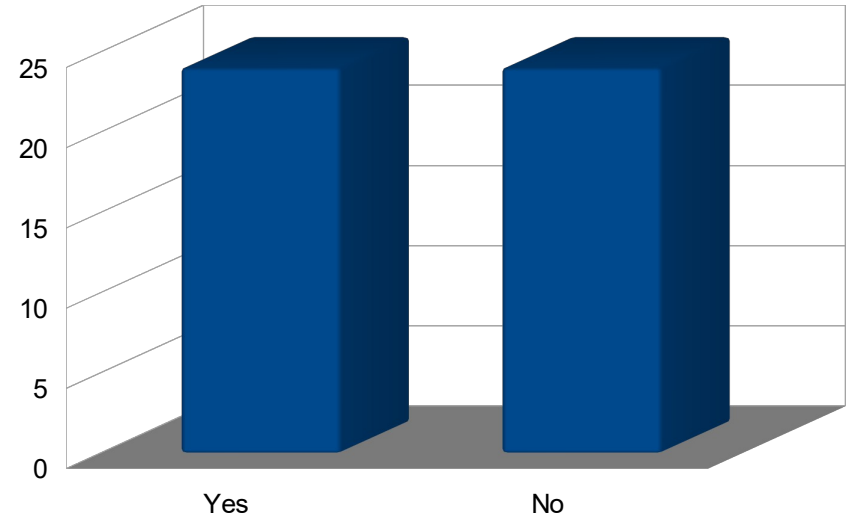
14% Undecided



East Niagara Street (Printed Survey)

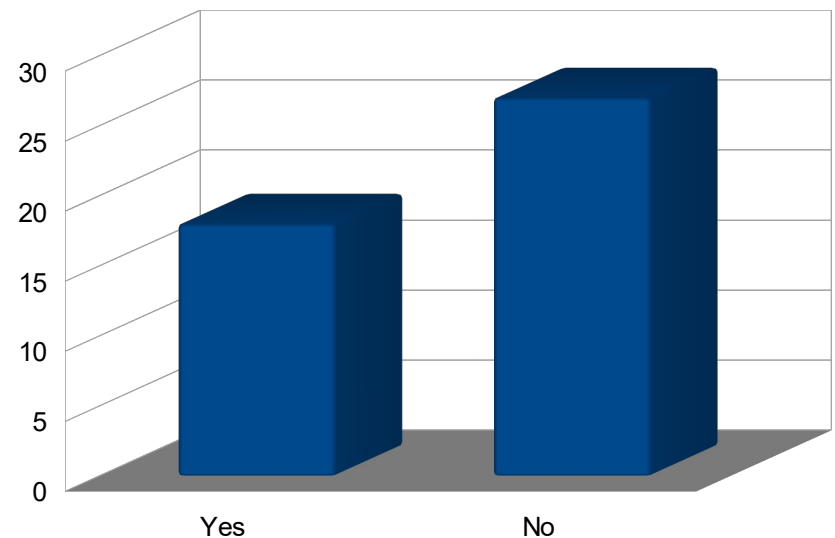
- Would you support relocating the Tonawanda Football Clinic and softball fields on East Niagara Street for a potential 11-acre residential development?

50% Yes, 50% No



- Or, a recreational development?

40% Yes, 60 % No



The background features a complex, abstract pattern of thin, overlapping lines in red and blue. These lines form a series of interconnected, slightly offset rectangular and polygonal shapes, creating a 3D wireframe effect. The lines are most dense and vibrant in the corners and fade towards the center, which is a plain white space.

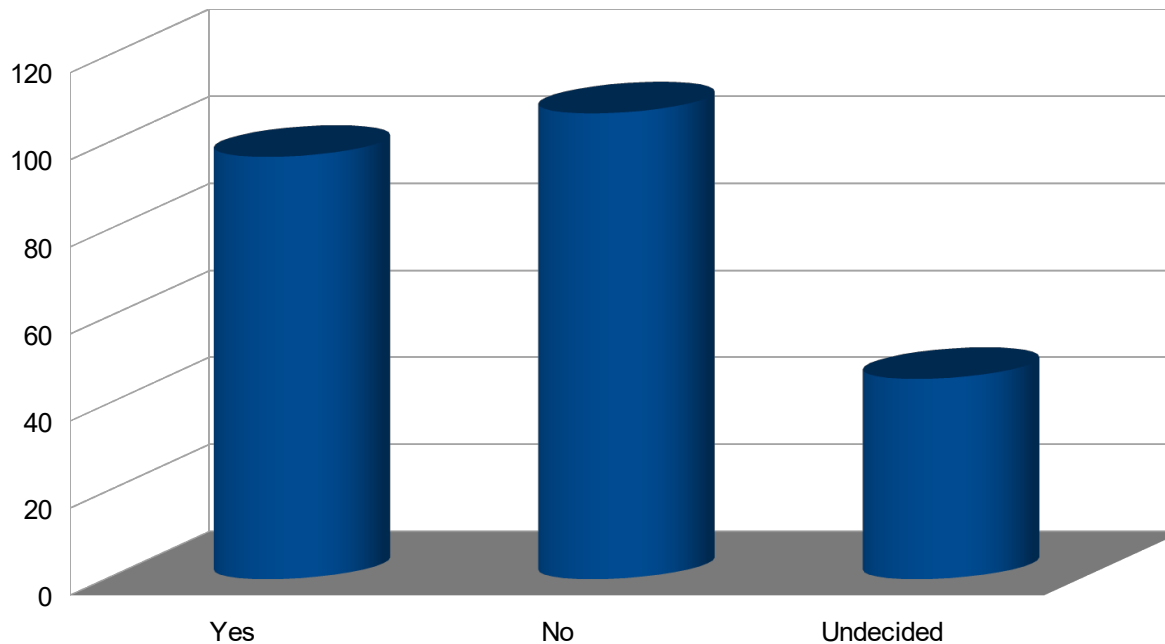
Part 3

Ives Pond

Ives Pond area (Online Survey)

- If given the opportunity to swap land at Ives Pond (app.20 acres) and relocate the soccer fields, Tonawanda American Little League, tennis courts, etc., to the Little League Drive/Veteran's Park area, would you support this?

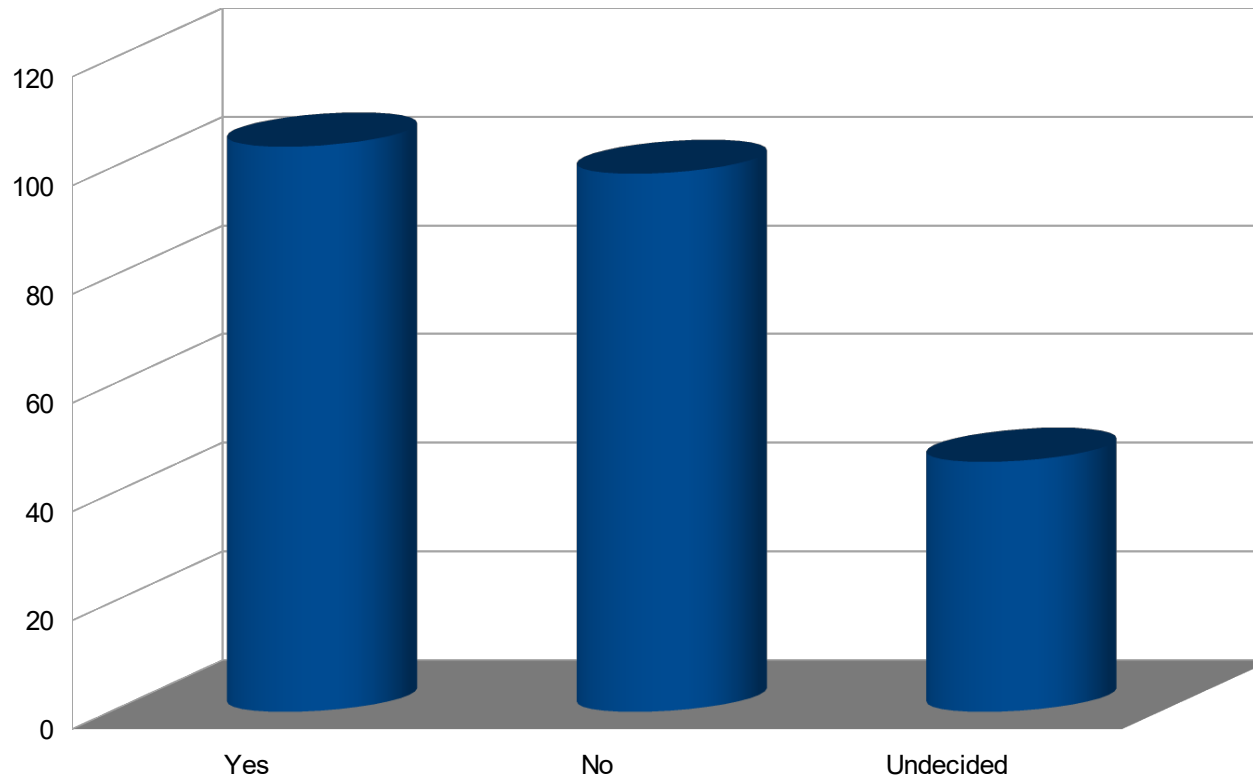
39% Yes, 43% No, 18% Undecided



Ives Pond area (Online Survey)

- Would you support the construction of homes at the Ives Pond location?

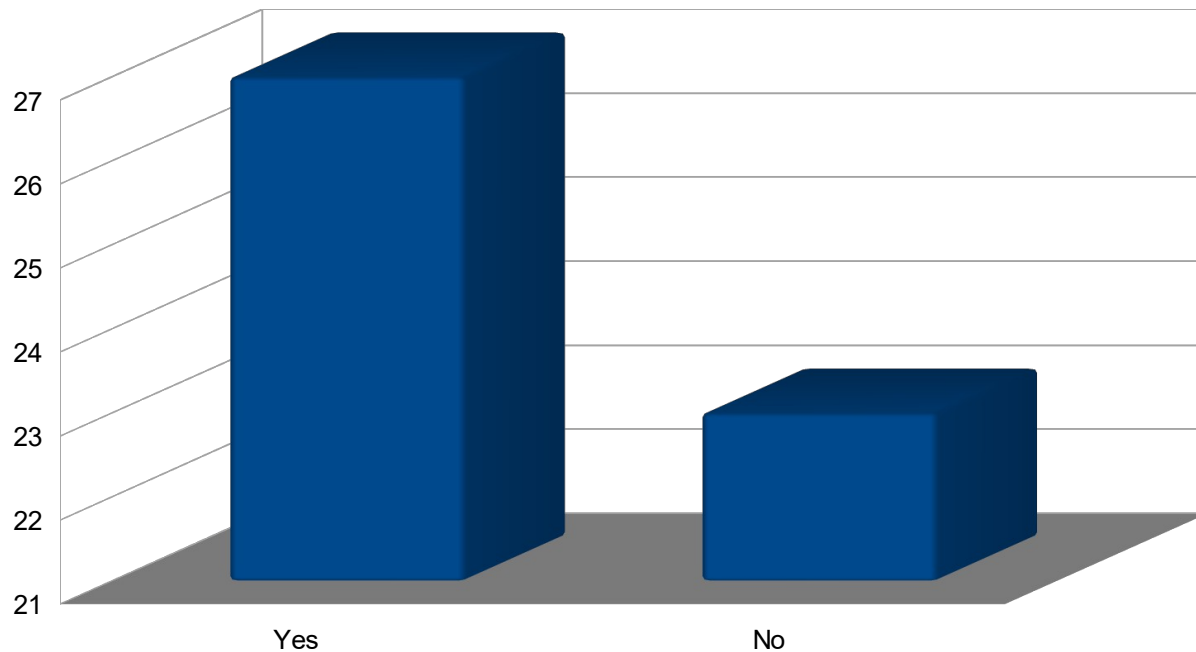
42% Yes, 40% No, 18% Undecided

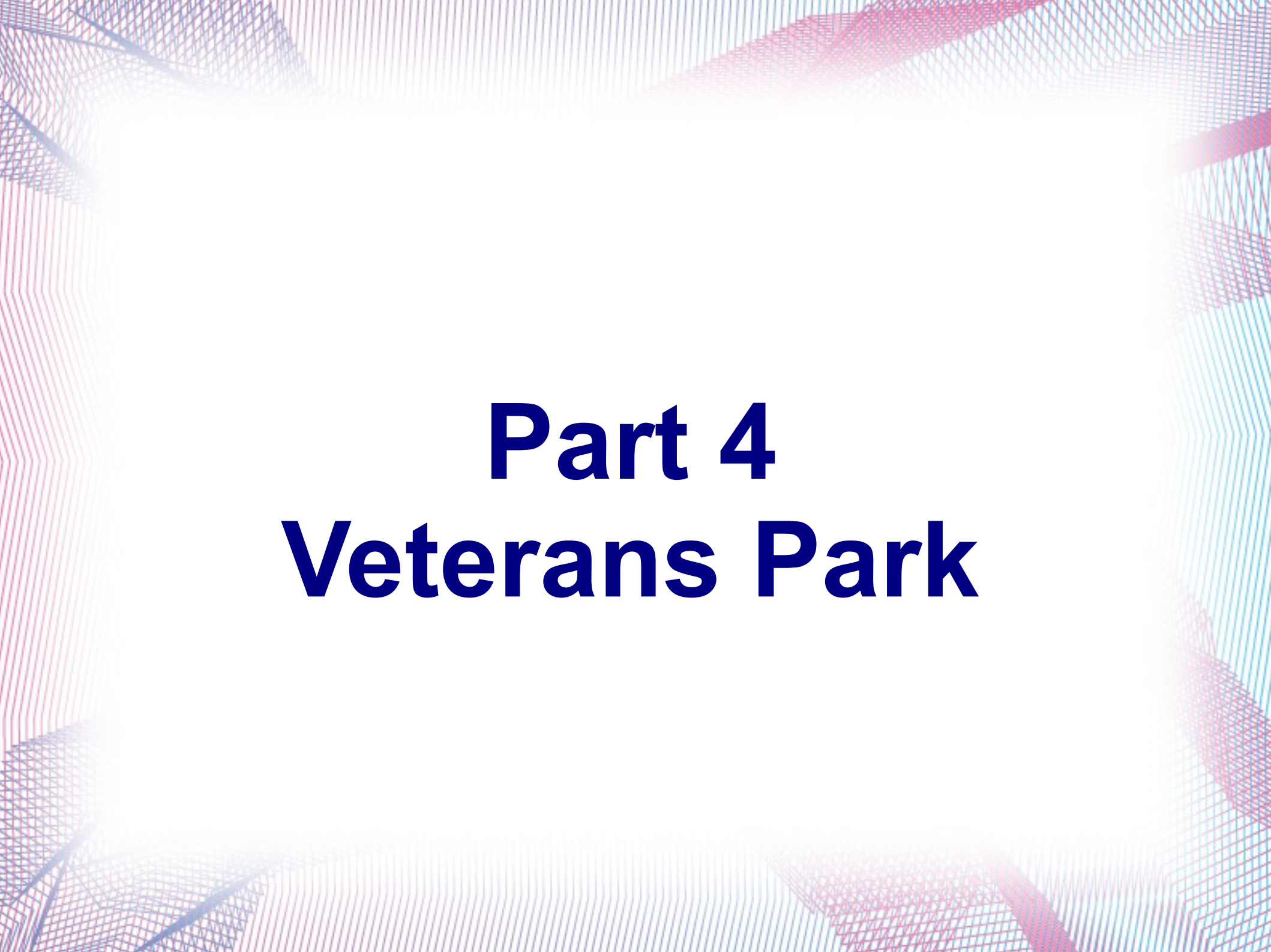


Ives Pond area (Printed Survey)

- Would you support residential development at the 21-acre Ives Pond area (State & Maldiner streets) with the Tonawanda American Little League relocating to the Veteran's Park/Little League Drive area?

54% Yes, 46% No



The background features a complex, abstract pattern of thin, overlapping lines in red and blue. These lines form a series of interconnected, slightly offset rectangular and square shapes, creating a 3D wireframe effect. The lines are most dense and vibrant in the corners and fade towards the center, which is a plain white space where the text is located.

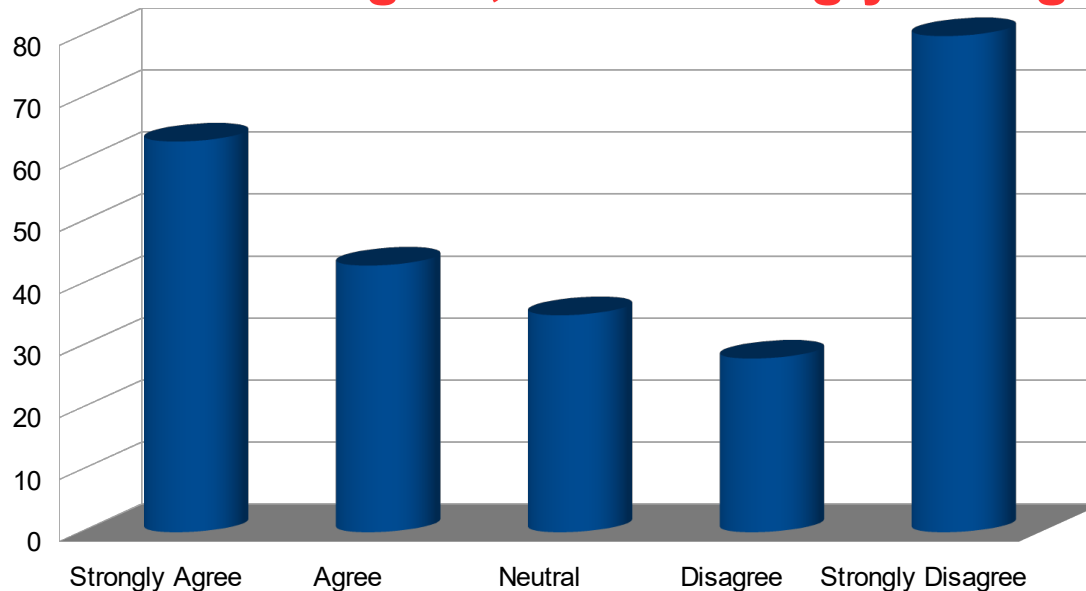
Part 4

Veterans Park

Veterans Park (Online Survey)

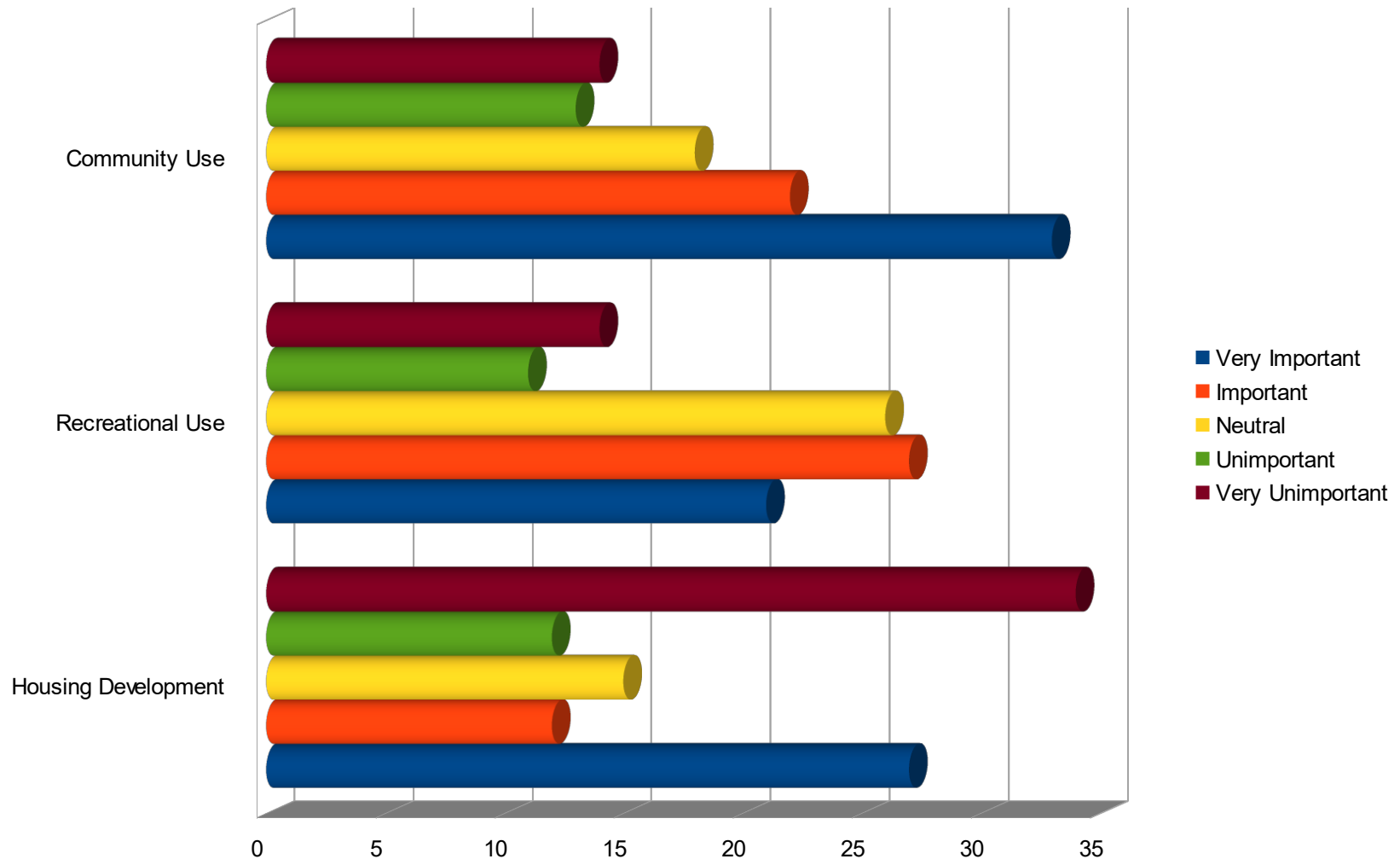
- Two builders have submitted plans for the development of Little League Drive and Veteran's Park. One plan projects the building of 72 villa-style homes valued at \$250,00 and up. This development would rely on "condo status" being granted and the homes being taxed at only 65% of their value. The second plan looks to build 46 one and two-story style homes valued at \$250,00 and up and would be taxed at 100% of their value. Each development could add between \$190,00 and \$200,000, annually, to the city tax base, once filled to capacity. Please indicate whether or not you agree with the city's decision to develop this parcel of land for housing:

**25%-Strongly Agree, 17%-Agree, 14%-Neutral
11%-Disagree, 32%-Strongly Disagree**



Veterans Park (Online Survey)

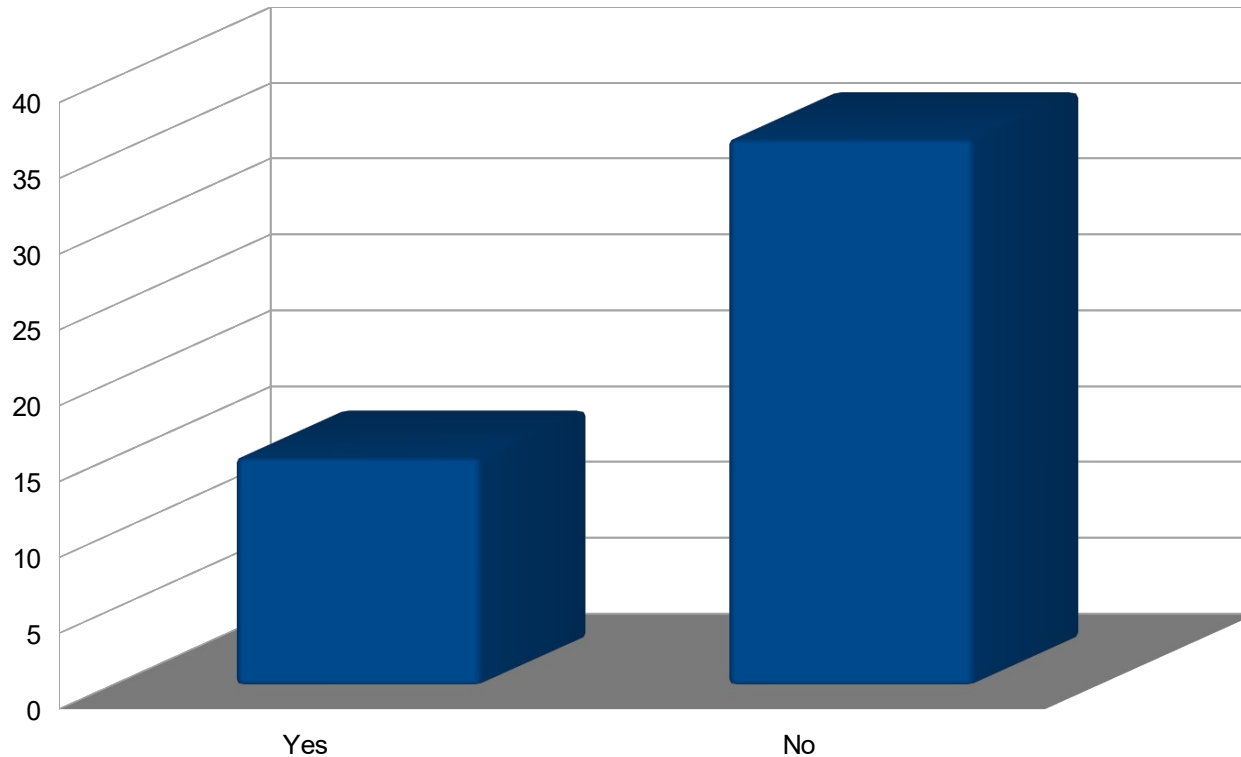
- Please indicate your feelings of importance on developing the 14 acres of land, known as Little League Drive and Veteran's Park.



Veterans Park (Printed Survey)

- Would you support a residential development at Veteran's Park/Little League Drive?

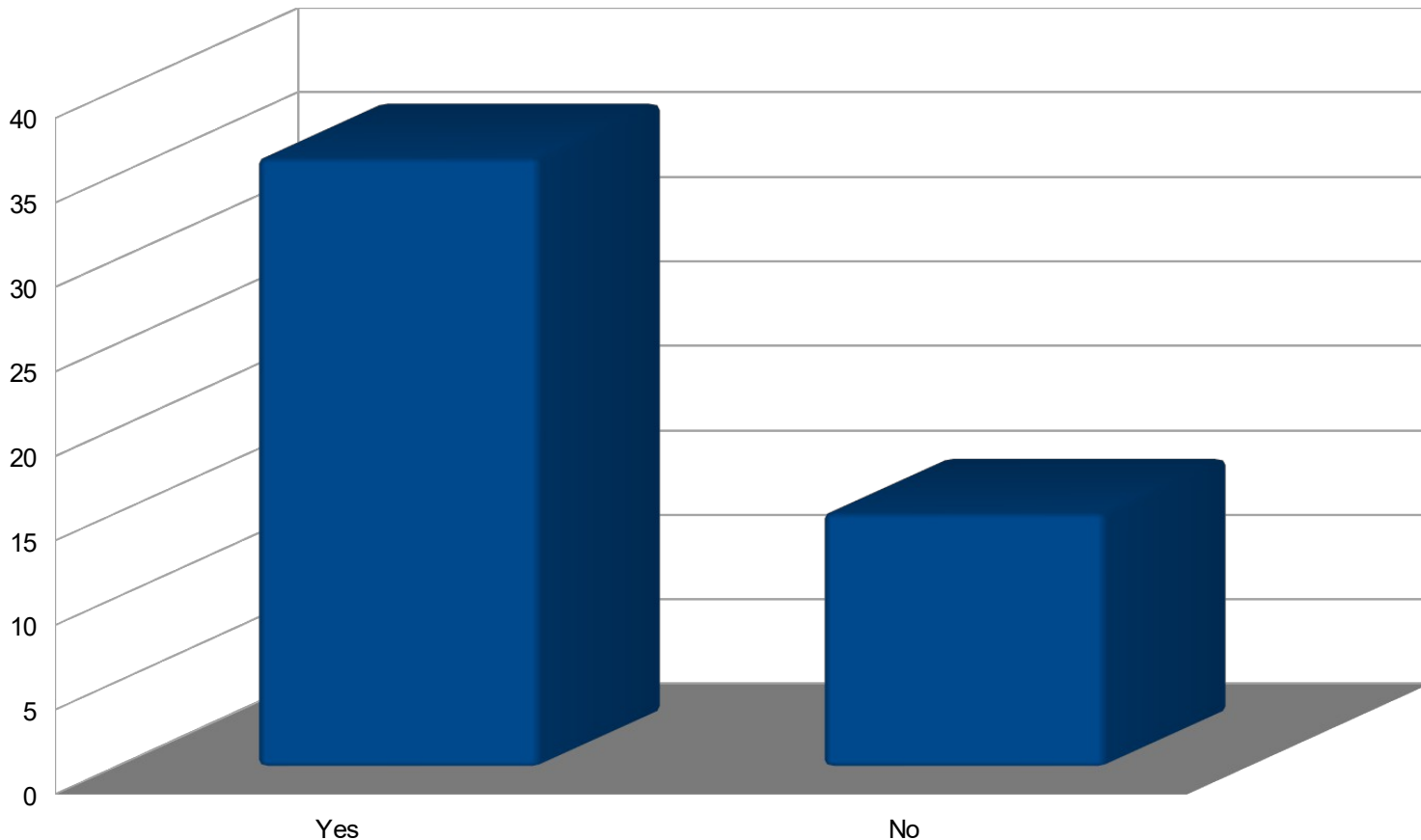
29% Yes, 71% No

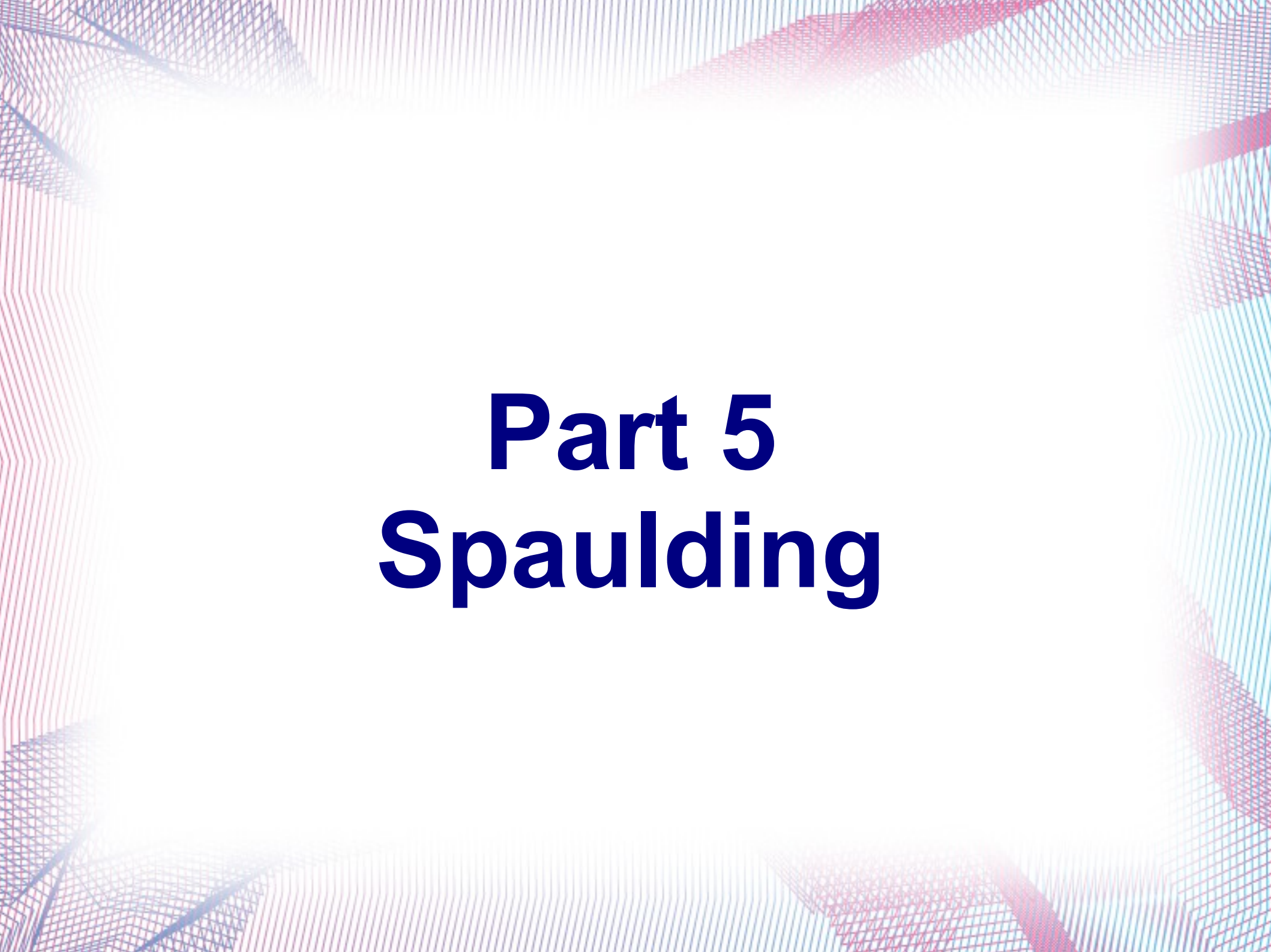


Veterans Park (Printed Survey)

- Would you support expanded sports/recreational facilities at Veteran's Park/Little League Drive?

71% Yes, 29% No



The background features a complex, abstract pattern of overlapping wireframe structures. These structures are composed of thin, parallel lines in shades of red and blue, creating a sense of depth and movement. The lines are arranged in a way that suggests a 3D grid or a series of interconnected planes, with some areas appearing more prominent than others. The overall effect is a dynamic and modern aesthetic.

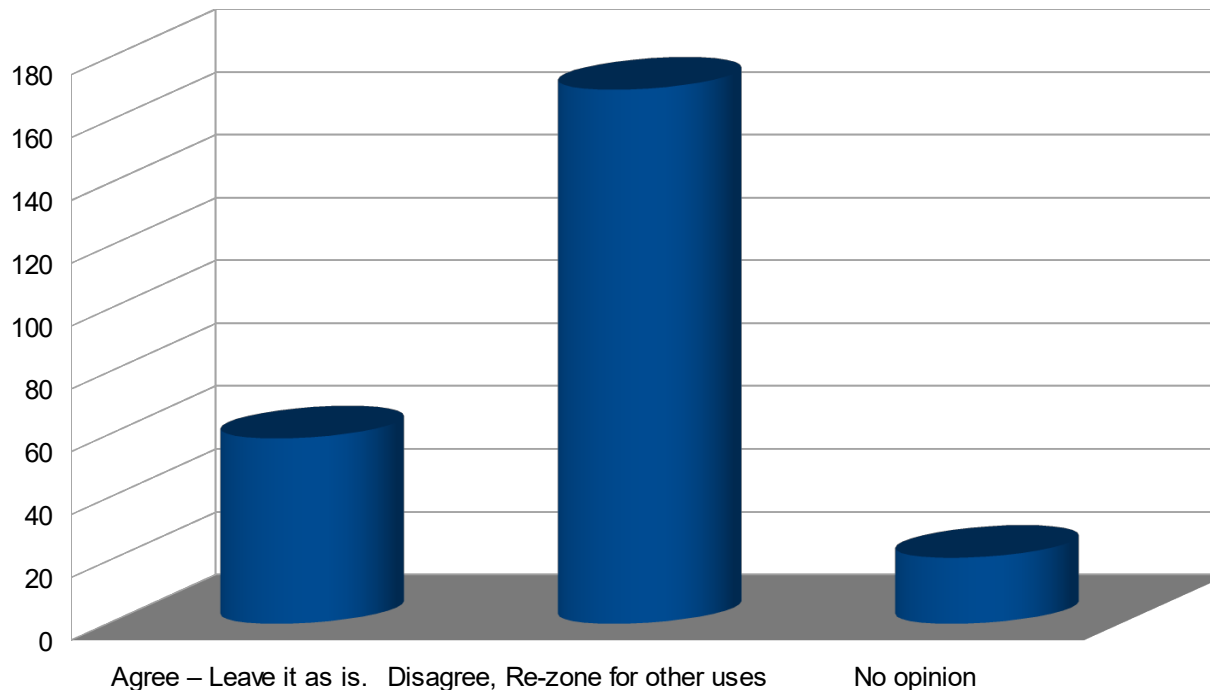
Part 5

Spaulding

Online Survey – Spaulding site

- The next several questions have to do with the 42 acres of available land at the former Spaulding Composites site, on Wheeler Street. The current footprint, approximately 42 acres, has been zoned as "Mixed use" for office and light industrial. Do you agree with this designation or would you like to see it rezoned for other uses such as recreational, restaurant, etc.?

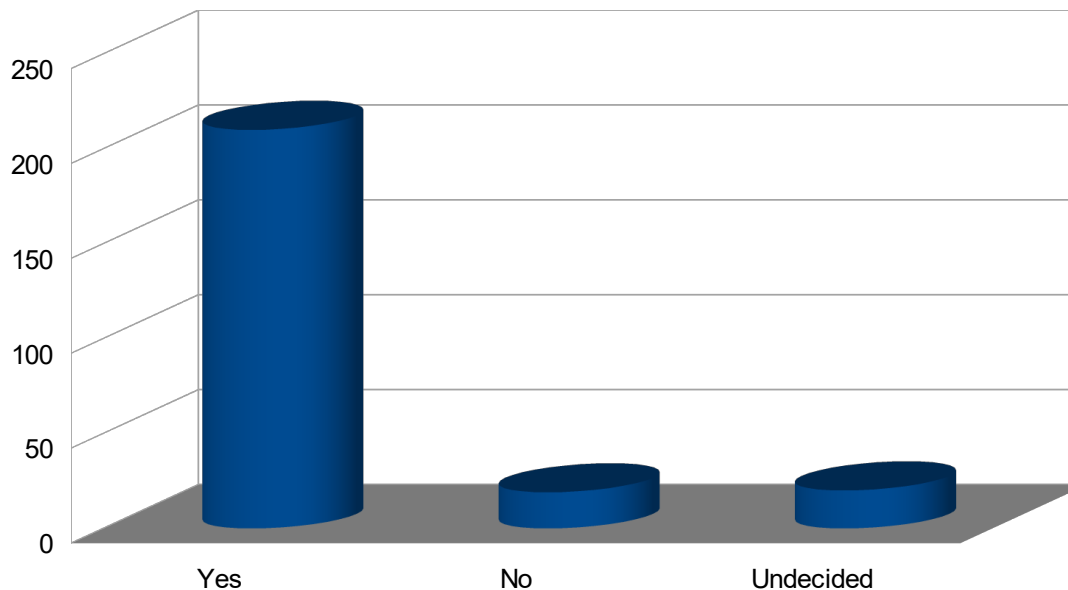
24% Agree, 68% Disagree, 8% No opinion



Online Survey – Spaulding site

- In 2007, a company pitched the idea of building a multiuse arena on this site. The facility would have been used for ice hockey, conventions, concerts, trade shows, etc. and had the ability to draw in over 100,000 visitors per year to the city. Unfortunately, the company and hockey rights owners backed out due to time constraints, as the property could not be remediated and ready in a suitable timeframe for them. This project could have had an economic impact, favoring the city, in the millions of dollars per year. Would you support a similar project, if all parties were still interested in the site?

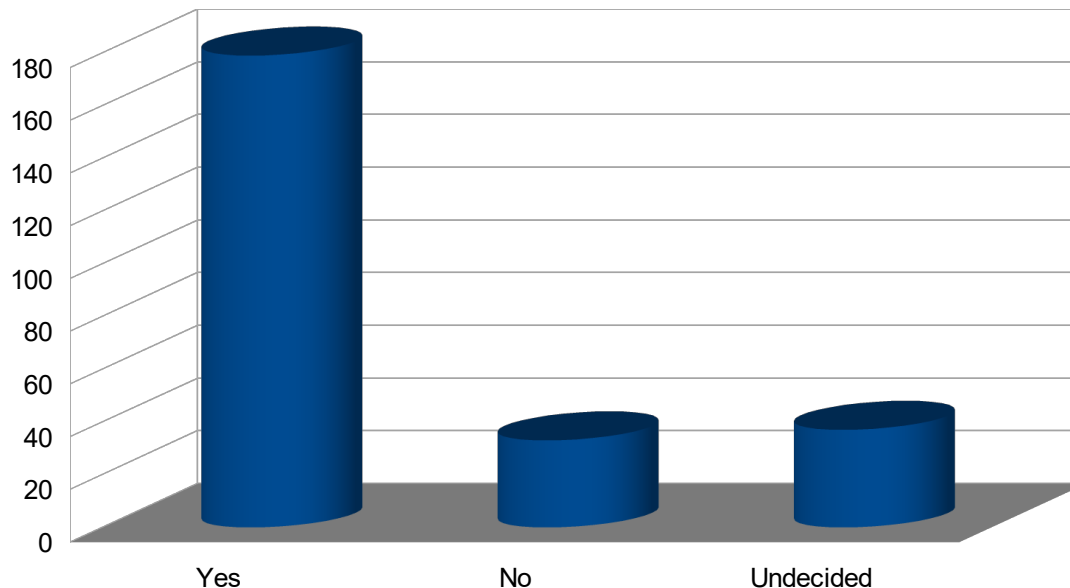
83% Yes, 8% No, 8% Undecided



Online Survey – Spaulding site

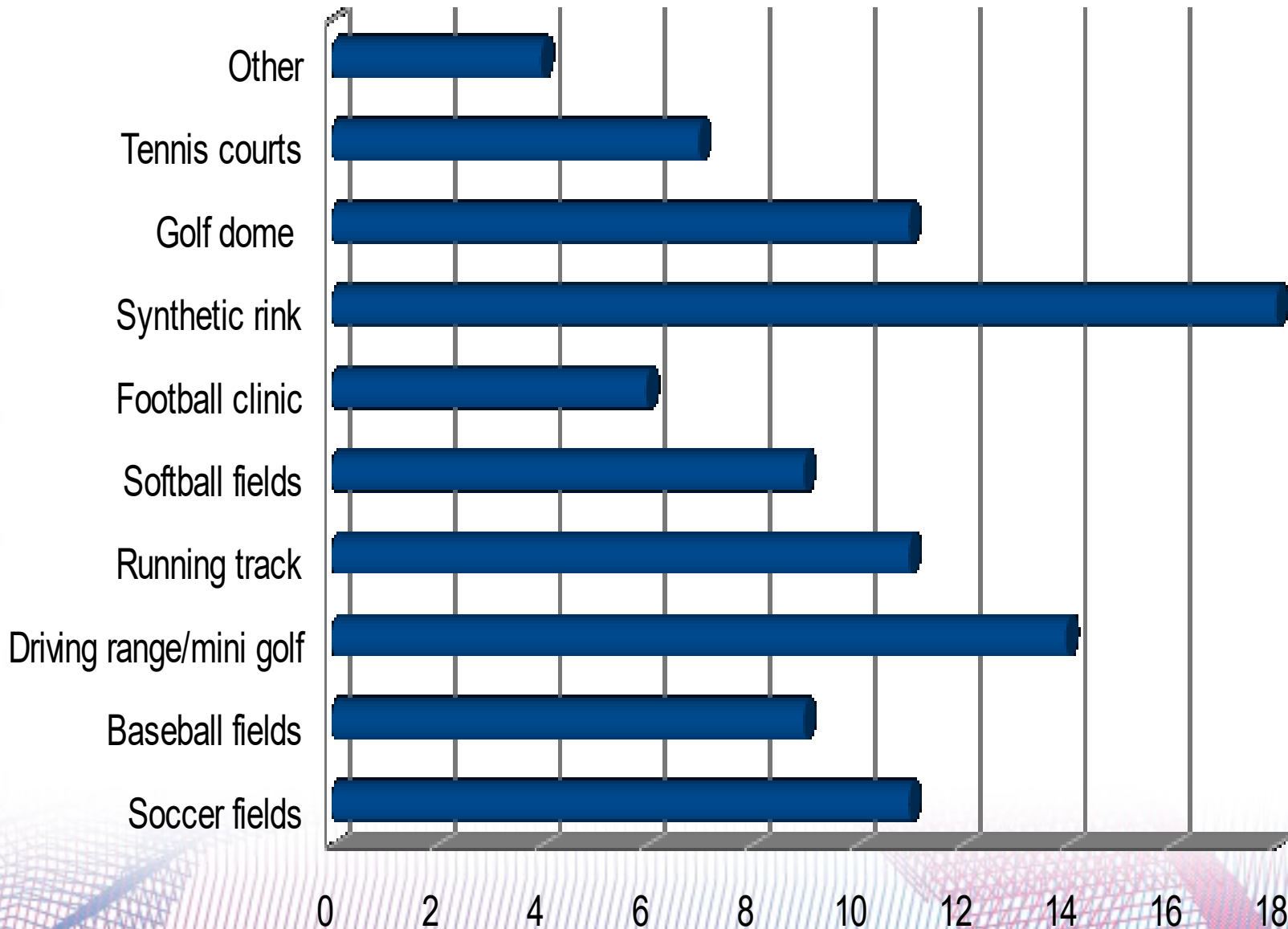
- "Destination" type businesses seem to make great anchor tenants, fulfilling the belief that these businesses will attract other businesses to build around them. Two such companies are Splitsville, a unique bowling and dining experience and TopGolf, an entertainment and event venue with fun point scoring golf for it's guests. With the city's close proximity to the I-290, guests from Canada, Pennsylvania and Ohio would have easy access to this site. Would you support the city's pursuit of a "destination" type business similar to these types of companies?

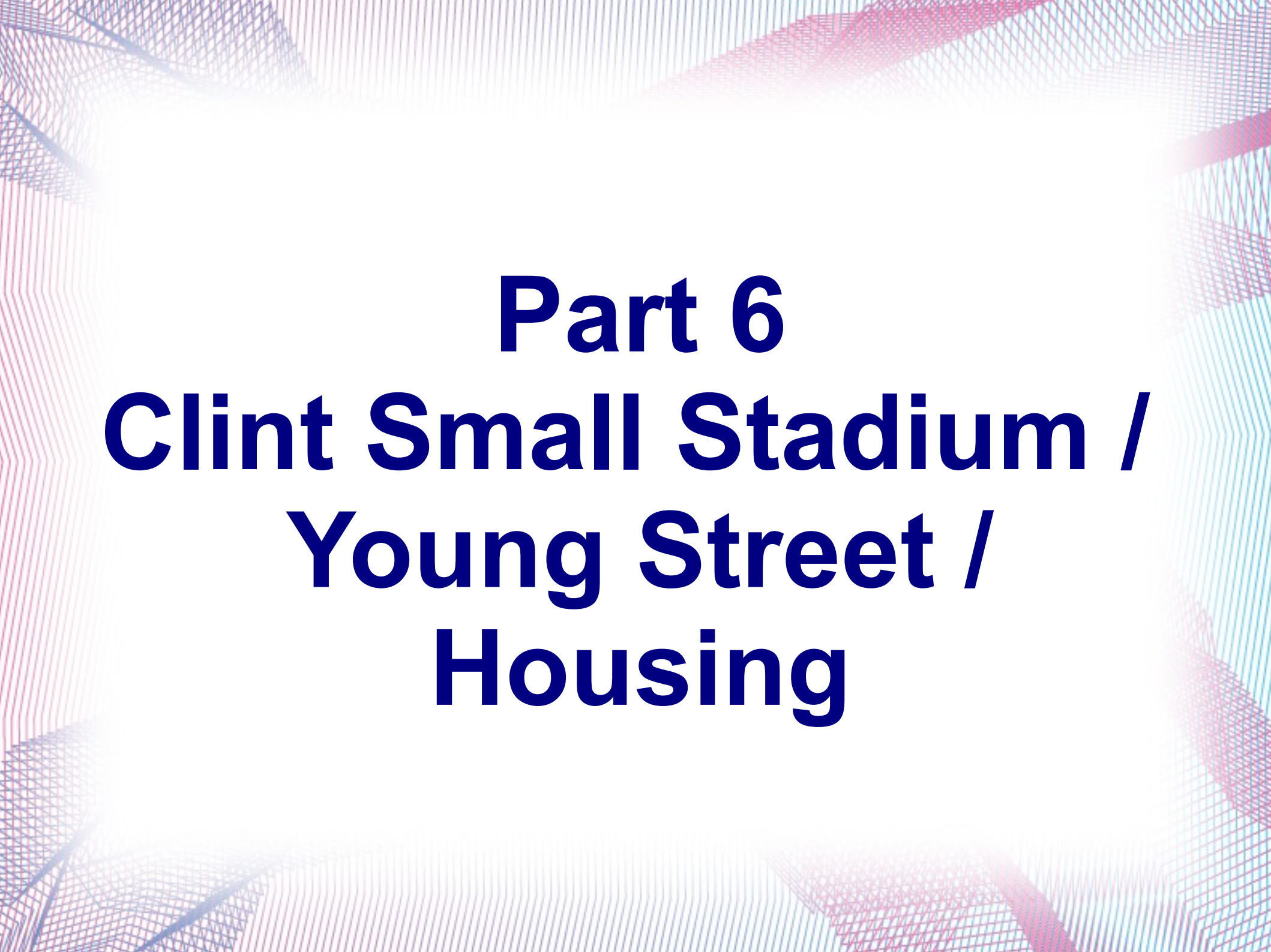
72% Yes, 13% No, 15% Undecided



Online Survey – Spaulding site

(you may choose more than one answer)



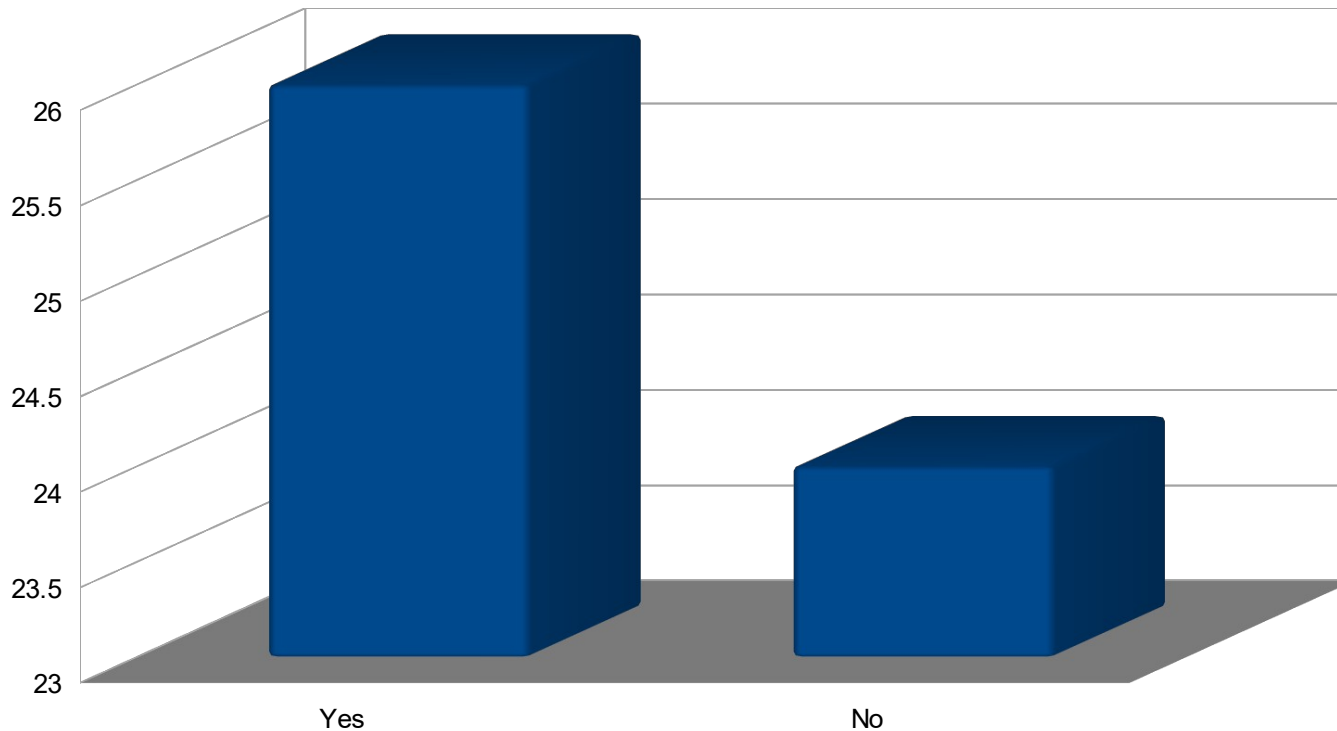


Part 6
Clint Small Stadium /
Young Street /
Housing

Clinton Small Stadium (Printed Survey)

- Would you support villas, patio homes or townhouses at the former Clint Small Stadium area?

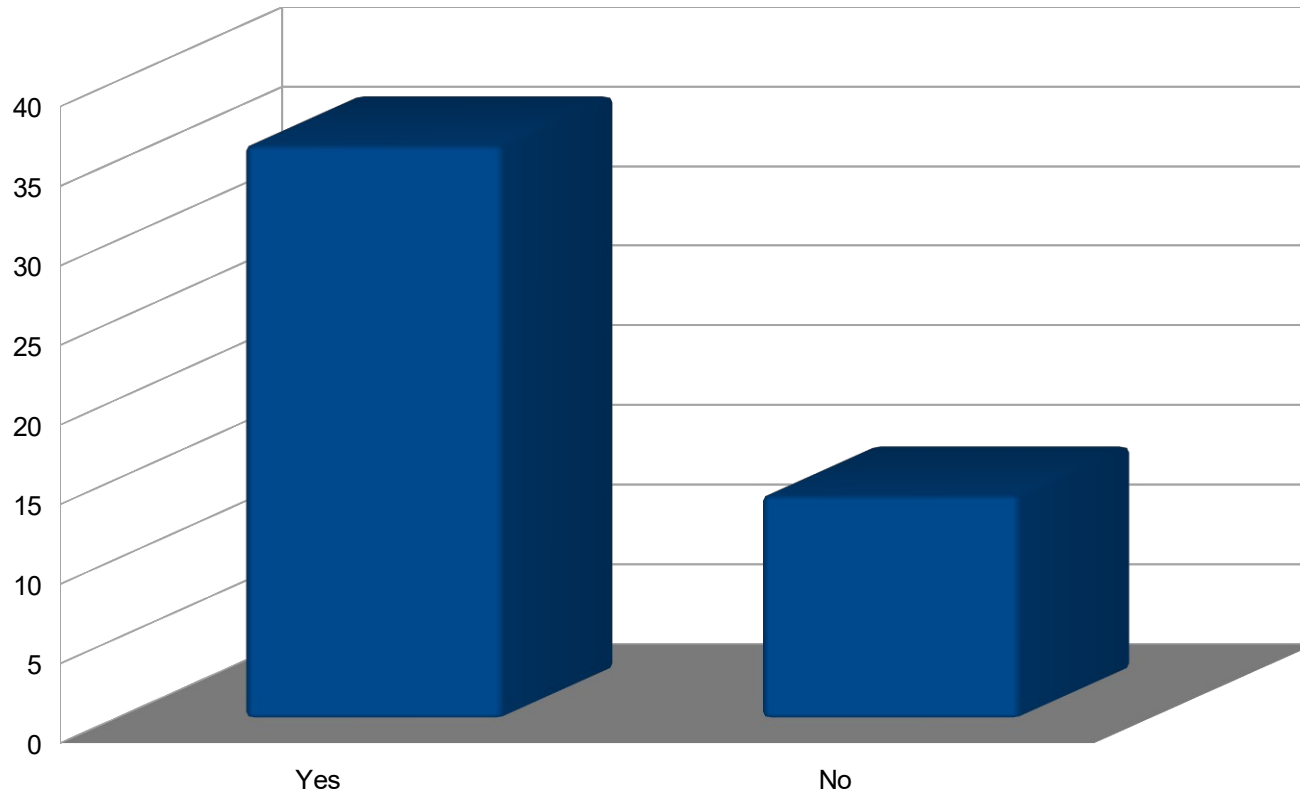
52% Yes, 48% No



Young Street (Printed Survey)

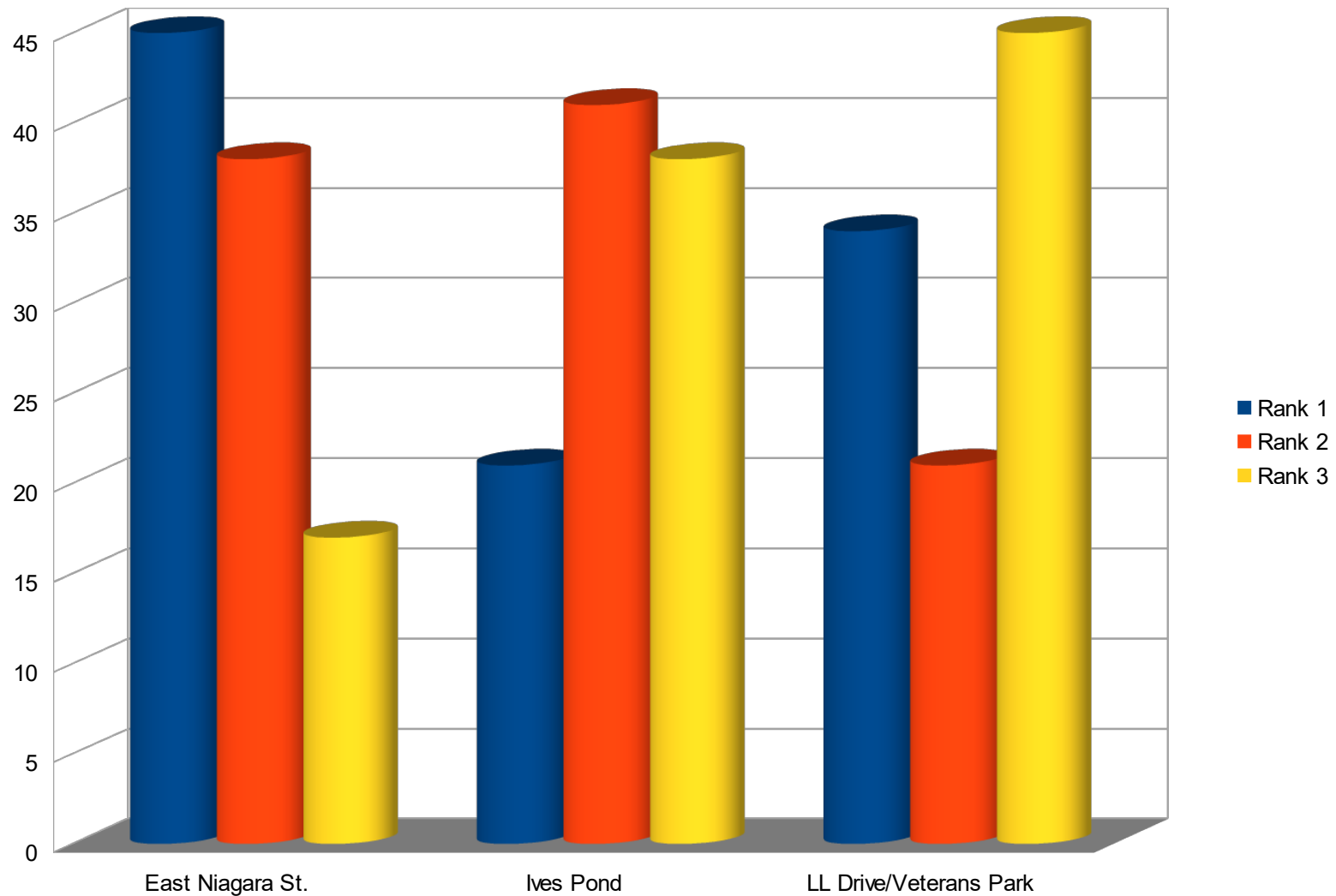
- Would you support bars and restaurants in a redeveloped section of Young St. between Main and Delaware?

72% Yes, 28% No



Housing (Online Survey)

- Please rank where you believe housing would be more beneficial to the city? Rank 1 – 2 – 3 (reported in percentages)



Online Comments ...

Regarding the question of moving City Hall:

- No change!
- sure
- CITY HALL IS FINE WHERE IT NOW IS!!!!!!
- Waste of money
- Area away from railroad due to dangerous cargo. It needs to be near center of city for response time
- "Downtown" block containing old Post 264 building, within Main, Broad, Seymour and Adam St. for city hall, court & police. DPW to Spaulding or to Wales Ave. No need to move Fire Dept.
- Leave it as it is
- Undecided
- No I would not support this
- Lets not make change for the sake of making change it took Buffalo 50 years to start returning their waterfront to the people WHY DEVELOP OURS ??? If we can get federal Homeland Security to pay for it then go ahead

Online Comments ...

Regarding developing Little League Drive for other uses:

- Sports complex, add all sporting venues to be centrally located
- Small stage for plays/musical events that would not negatively effect the neighborhood (noise level).....
- No
- Leave it alone
- None of the above would generate additional income needed by the city and would actually cost taxpayers more then we pay now
- Splash pad/water playground
- Homes
- Sports or public use only. Infrastructure too costly. Locate houses in other areas with existing infrastructure, ie., Mullen school, Riverview school, Ives, East Niagara. Come on use some common sense. BOE has plans to centralize schools. Look into it please. Once you sell off a park its gone for generations!
- No houses. If we were concerned about tax revenue we would not have given Highland School to People Inc. for low income, no tax revenue housing. BOE plan to move Riverview and Mullen to high school campus. Let's continue be stupid and offer it to People Inc. also and give up our park land that is not replaceable. Common sense please!!!!
- Its already awesome leave it alone focus on Spalding Park before destroying something that can't be replaced

Online Comments ...

Regarding recreational and other uses for land at Spaulding Park:

- My concern with athletic fields is how well was the clean up of the soil? That land was pretty toxic from the Spaulding plant. Not so sure if I would want kids playing sports on this ground.
- No
- Can be simple shuffle board or pickle ball courts modeling off the Larkin district in Buffalo
- Houses
- Undecided
- This would be the ideal use for a multi purpose recreation area. It is easy to get to and not in an area where there are houses already built 'on top' of the existing area.
- We need jobs, most of the above options will actually increase cost to the city
- Someone that will pay taxes
- What would be our unique draw? Don't spend a lot of money on a resource that is already abundant in the WNY area
- Waterpark, water pad.

Comments on Printed Surveys ...

1st Ward Comments:

- Passive recreation at Little League Drive, plant trees, etc. No homes—same for Clint Small.

2nd Ward Comments:

- Leave Ives alone! Leave Vet's Park alone! Can't we leave parks and green spaces alone? As it is, the city cuts down too many trees every year!
- This is a mute question (Question #6) since soil testing has limited use of Clint Small. After site is cleaned rated for athletic use, move athletics there.
- (Question #8) Only if you're building a parking ramp so they have a place to park.
- (Question #9) Move them to Clint Small.
- (Question #10) Not feasible with the clean up needed.
- Repair the infrastructure first—the sidewalks, streets & sewer systems then have the grandiose projects.
- Relocate Ton. Football Clinic to former Clint Small Stadium.
- Leave the city the way it is. You could have city hall, fire dept., rec dept., parks dept., and DPW all in one location. Kibler School.
- Look ahead. Also, leave Ives Pond alone. I skated there 70 years ago. Why ruin everything. Get something going in our downtown district.
- I believe that our roads & highways have to be resurfaced. Also the area behind our restaurant (Touch of Italy) is becoming a dump.
- It looks terrible-someone even threw old tires in there.

Comments ...

3rd Ward Comments:

- The Spaulding Complex area is a residential section so residential development should take place there. I don't think city hall needs to be relocated! The present location is perfect!
- Upscale "empty nest" appropriate housing—condos, patio homes. Thanks! Great ideas!
- I attended the meeting last week & some of the land spots appear to not be able to be developed due to issues with the land, contamination or wetlands. Since the city is short of funds & don't approve of moving city hall. It would cost way too much & from what people were saying at the meeting, the land underneath city hall may not be too easily developed.
- While most communities are looking for more green space, Tonawanda officials want to sell our last green space, for what? More tax base? At what expense? More police, firemen to serve more people. Let's make Tonawanda more green. Look for ways to enhance what is so good for our Tonawanda. I think our officials don't realize how unique what we have left—GREEN SPACE— PLEASE!
- Build up downtown before any construction project is started. Tonawanda needs more income before any construction can be done. Have Farmer's Market at Spaulding site. Build affordable Senior Apartments, non-smoking, no pets on a bus line.
- I would like to see a more cohesive downtown. Redevelopment of Young St. would be a good start.

Comments ...

4th Ward Comments:

- I like city hall at Clinton Stadium area and hockey rinks or aquatic center at Spaulding site. Hotel at city hall site. Thank you for your effort! I miss the Tonawanda News!
- Vets Park/Little League Drive needs to be developed for residential only, not recreational.
- Do something!! NO Downtown! There is nothing here for people to come to—just the river.
- 1. Some kind of rotary for traffic flow at Burger King & Walgreen area. 2. Relocation of parking for Smoke on the Water.
- Farmer's market at Vet's Park. Leave greenspace at Vet's Park.
- I would like to see the city hall, police dept. etc. relocated to the Veteran's Park Little League Drive site. This would free up the waterfront property and also prevent any new homes or athletics at Little League Drive preventing more traffic to Adam St.. We residents on Adam have already suffered enough with the stadium complex being built behind us.
- Sculpture park/bike path, walk, meadow and activity offered every 2 months at Little League. Niagara On The Lake like hotel/hotel restaurant on waterfront.
- We do not need a restroom behind the towers, we need parking space.
- Veterans Park is such a beautiful family-type park, it does not need to become and expanded recreation facility. Because it is part of a residential area, the traffic and noise pollution would be too great.
- The city should give the school district the 4 acres it wants.

Comments ...

4th Ward Comments - continued:

- Repair sidewalks. Update older homes.
- Move city hall to old Clint Small. Move football clinic on East Niagara and Ives Pond to Spaulding Complex. Housing only at Little League Drive, East Niagara St., and Ives Pond. Also water front. Move Niagara Hose Fire Dept. to headquarters on William St.. Put housing on Niagara Hose property. Privatize housing complex on Hinds & Gibson Sts., or demolish for better housing.
- Publicize and/or seek grants for homeowners to improve properties to increase tax base & help homeowners. Increase marketing with new ideas for using the Niawanda Park Pavilion. Evaluate yearly need for current number of elementary schools.
- Legally and in common sense speaking, how was it possible that the right turning lane on Young Street at Smoke on the Water was taken away and given or sold(?) to them? It caused added congestion and possibilities of multiple accidents for 7-10 parking spaces.
- We see daily cars making illegal turns out of their establishment. For several months they had their propane cooker parked near that area which could have caused extensive damage and lives if someone had served or slid right into it. How the fire department and police totally ignored it is beyond intelligence. During winter plowing the snow from this so called parking area was pushed onto the sidewalk and again was ignored. Whose pockets are being lined? How are the mayor, council, police and fire department turning a blind eye to this injustice, danger and illegal activities? In writing this, I only wonder if it will actually be read or is it possible to actually get a reply.

Thank you

We appreciate the time you took to participate in these online and printed surveys. Our goal was to seek out new ideas and get a sense of where you would like to see your city go, or grow!

Stay involved. Help shape our future.