

LUMO Audit Stakeholder Survey Feedback



Survey Overview

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- 7 planning staff and related departments
- 5 administrators
- 5 planning board members
- 1 Advisory Board member
- 1 Board of Adjustment member
- 4 Town Council members

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

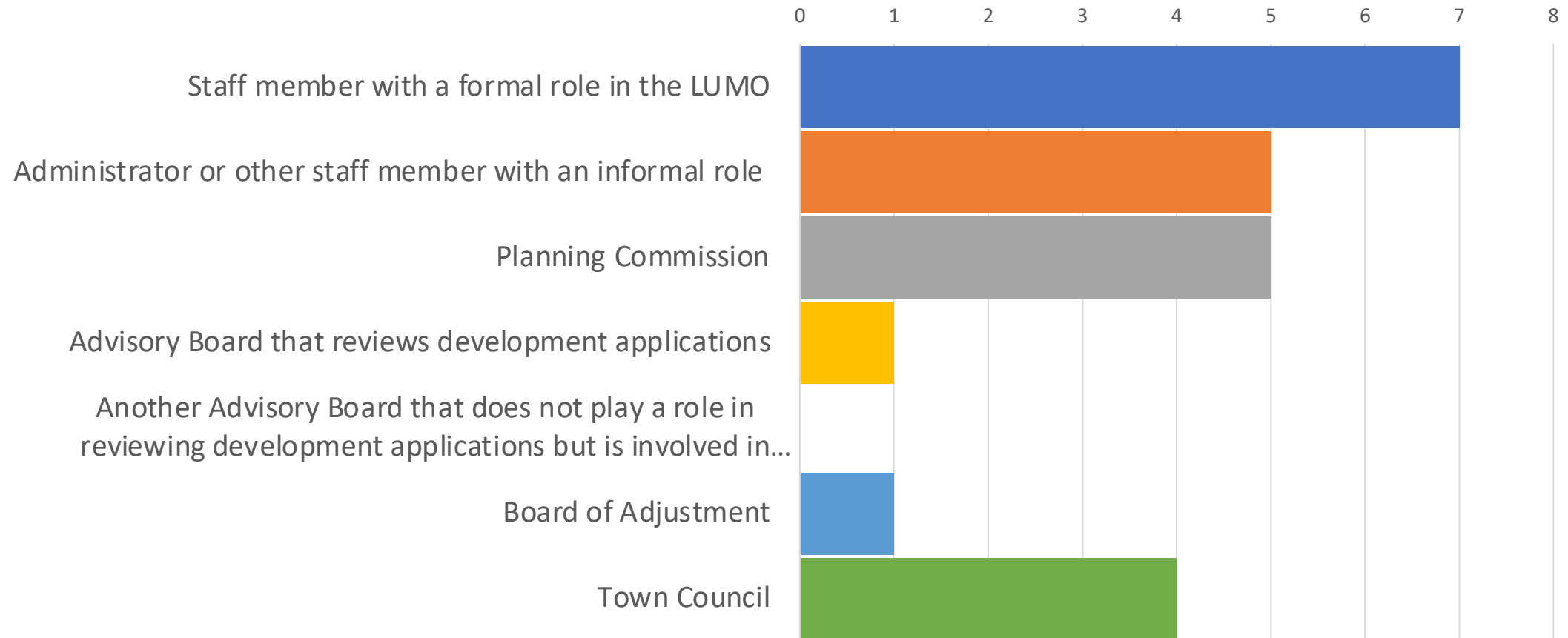
- 24 total
- 3 residents
- 2 design professionals
- 7 builders
- 6 community/interest group members
- 3 small business owners
- 3 other (downtown partnership, affordable housing developer, informed resident)



INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES

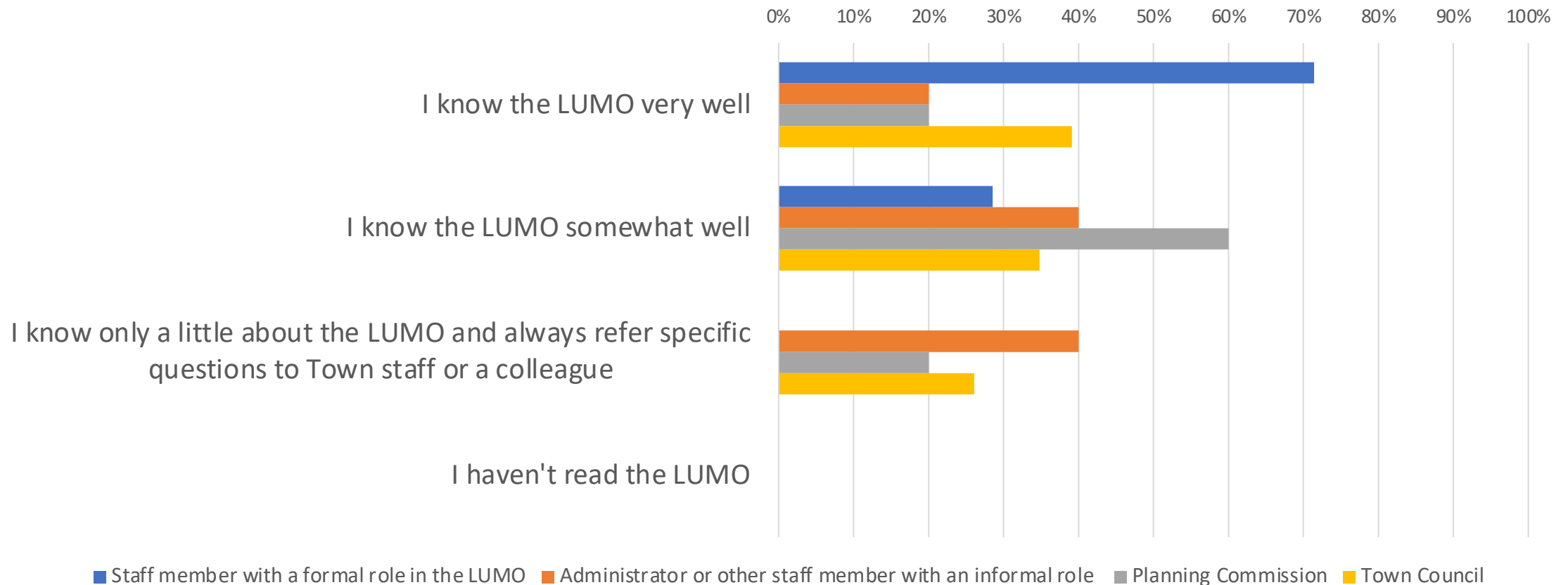
Chapel Hill Land Use Management
Ordinance Audit

Q1. Which of the following best describes your role interacting with the LUMO? If more than one applies, please choose the role that most frequently applies to you in dealing with the LUMO.



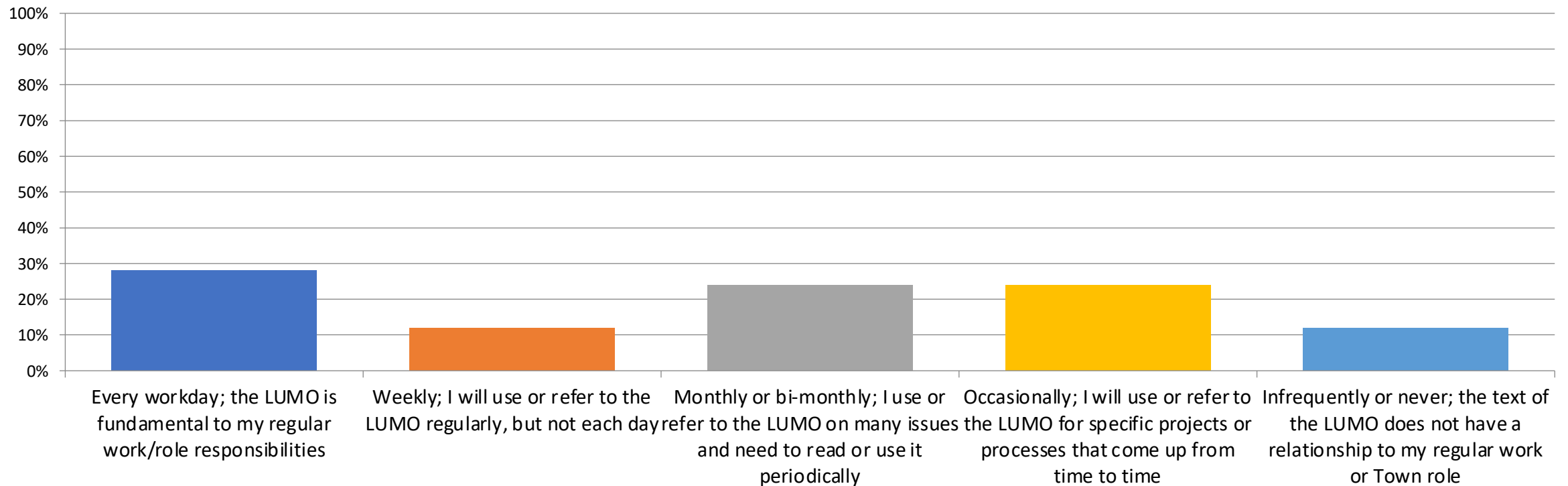
23/25 answered

Q2. Which statement best describes your knowledge of the CONTENT in the LUMO--the specific requirements or standards written in the text, or at least the parts you use most often?



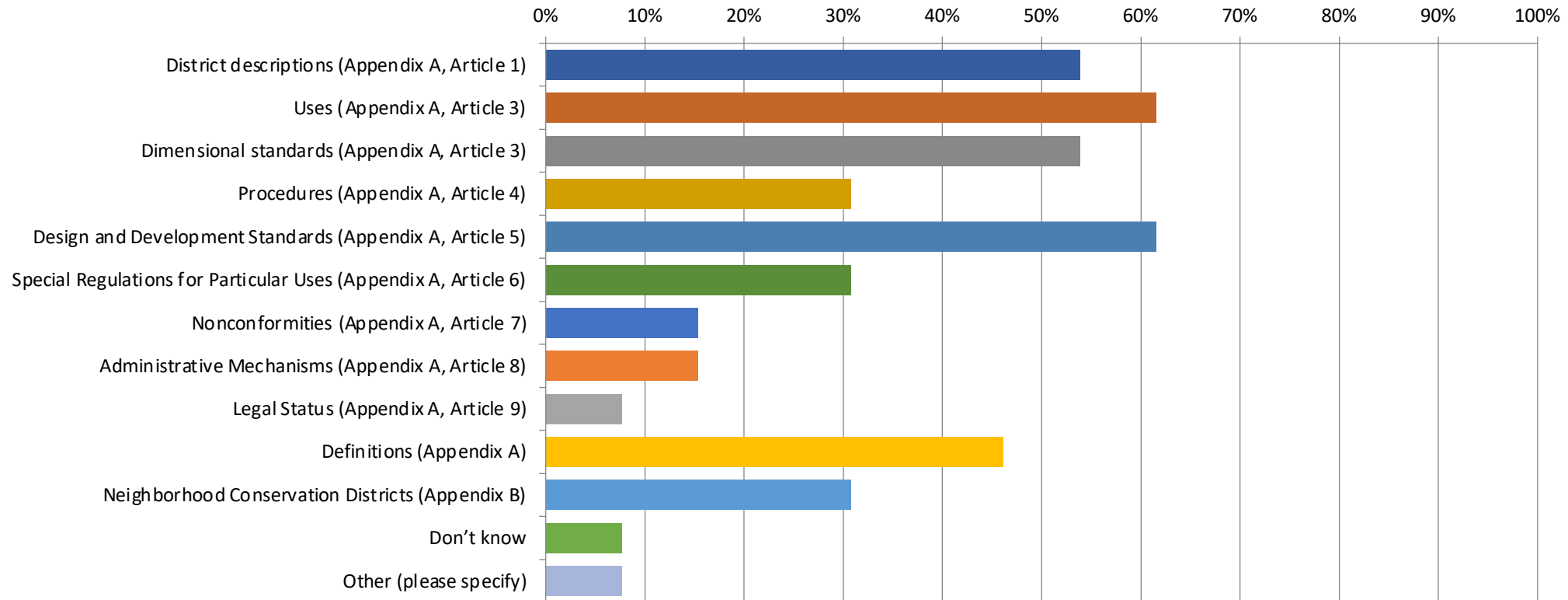
23/25 answered

Q3. How often would you say you use or refer to any part of the text of the LUMO, whether that involves standards, requirements, or processes?
Please choose the answer that best applies.



25/25 answered

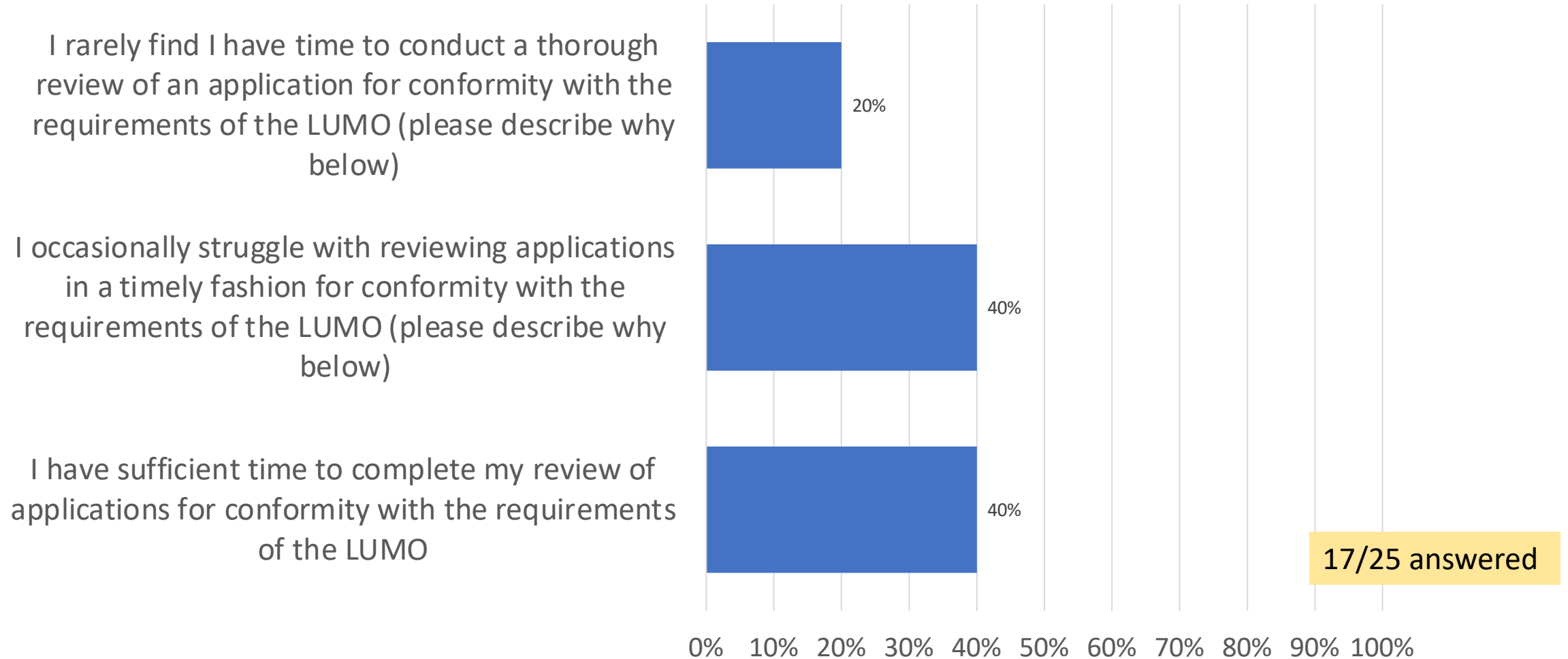
Q4. If you answered "every workday" or "weekly," please tell us which parts of the LUMO, you most often use.



Other: To clarify, LUMO standards are in our Council packets almost every week, but I don't go look them up myself. (1 response)

13/25 answered

Q5. If you are a member of **Town staff** charged with the administration or enforcement of the LUMO, please choose the answer you feel best reflects your current workload and capacity.



Q6. If you answered you "occasionally struggle" or "rarely have time" to the question above (the second and third choices), please tell us why.

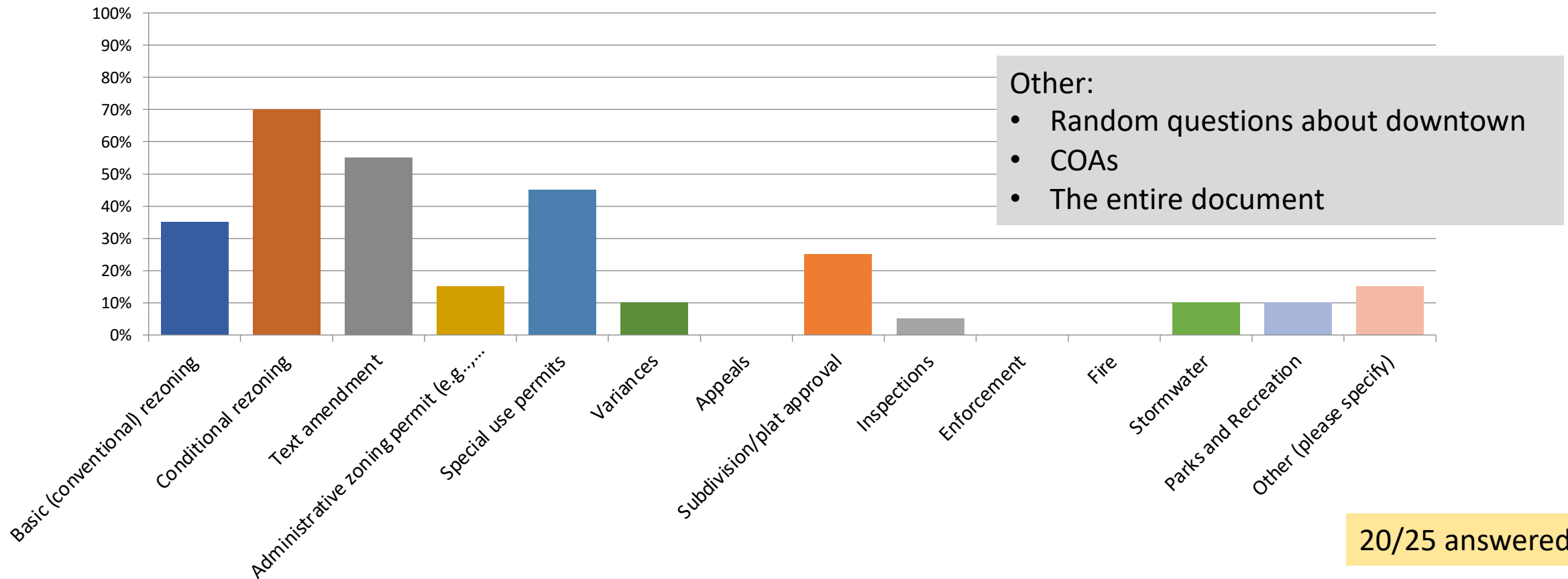
- ...internal practices may be different than procedures in the LUMO. I may have questions on how to apply LUMO standards that are unclear as written, and take time to get answered. And because the LUMO isn't as clear as it needs to be it feels like I've discussed the same question(s) over and over.
- Some of the wording in the LUMO makes interpretation super vague...
- The LUMO is very detailed and it takes time to go through each section to determine compliance.
- There is not sufficient staff capacity or clarity in the process to handle the level of expectations from Council, the community, or organizational leadership.
- Applications and other duties outpace and staff's capacity.

Note: Three answers did not address the question and are not reflected above.

8/25 answered

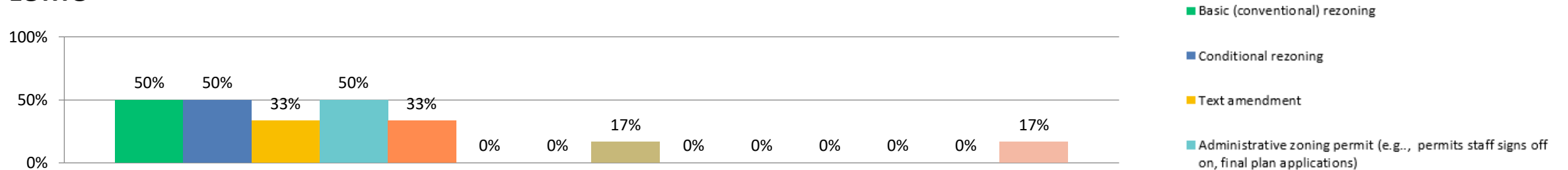
Q7. What permits or processes regulated by the LUMO do you work with most often?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS

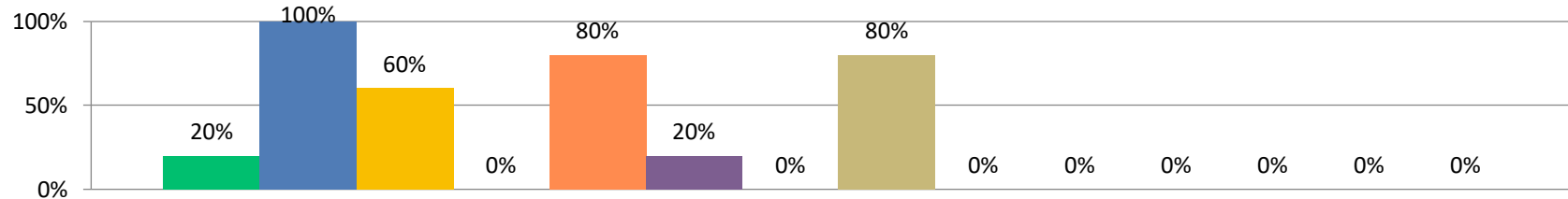


Q7. What permits or processes regulated by the LUMO do you work with most often?

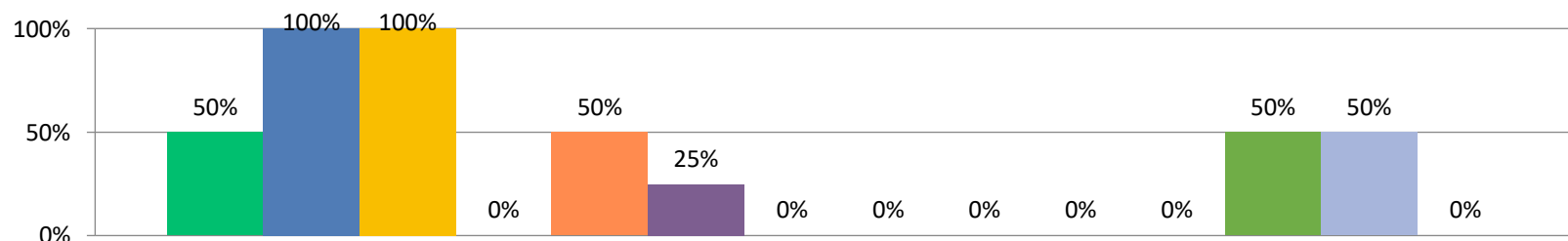
I am a staff member with a formal role in reviewing or approving applications and changes as specified in the LUMO



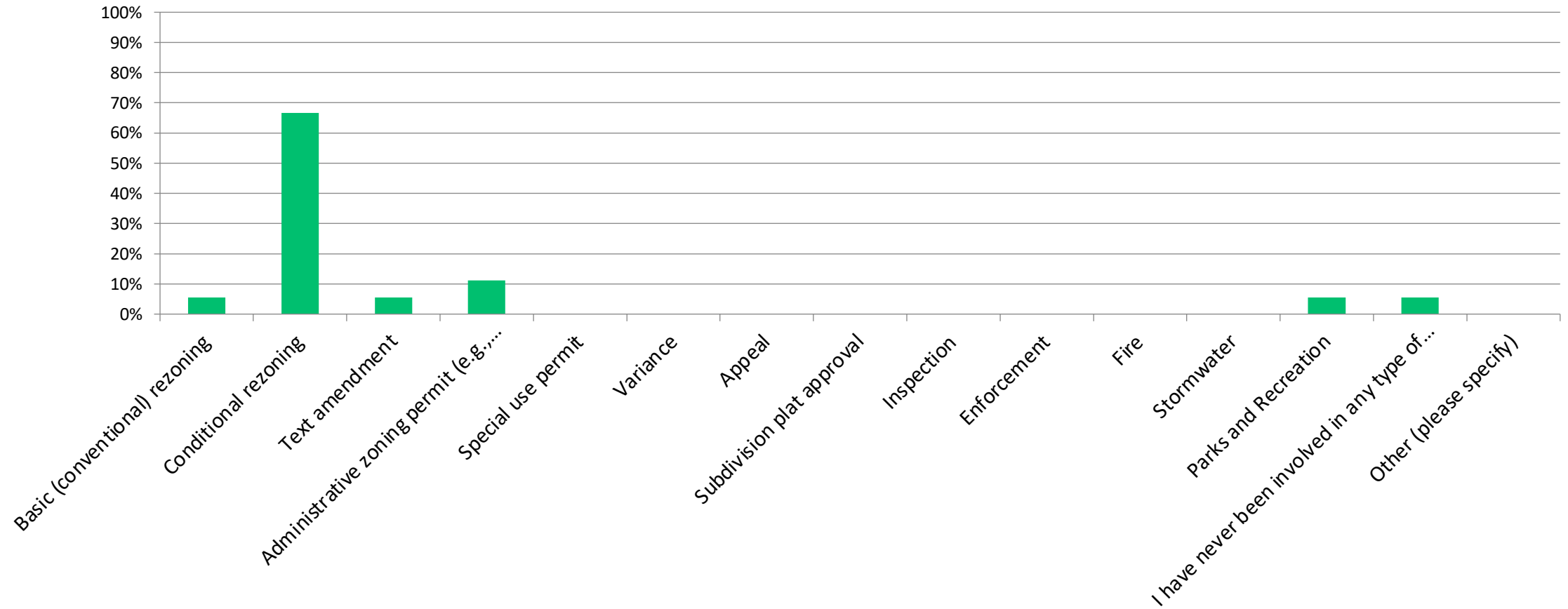
I am a member of the Planning Commission



I am a member of the Town Council



Q8. What is the most recent specific LUMO permit or application in which you were involved?

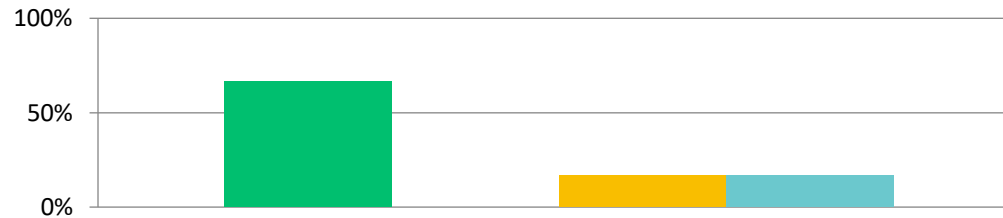


Note: There were no “other” responses.

18/25 answered

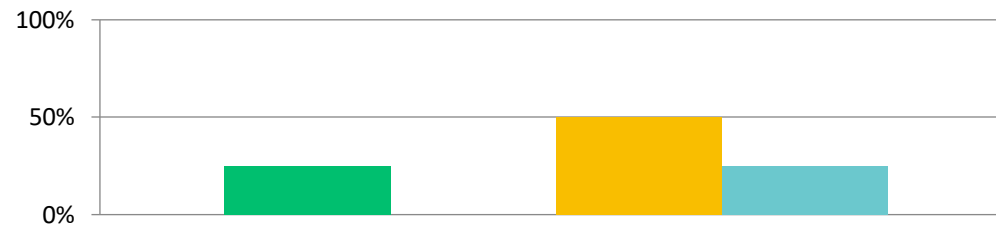
Q10. Thinking about the most recent specific request or action you were involved with that has reached a conclusion, what is your opinion of the amount of time it took?

I am a staff member with a formal role in reviewing or approving applications and changes as specified in the LUMO



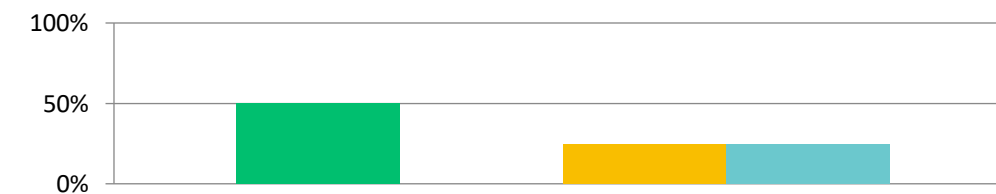
- Need more info upfront
- Debating hypotheticals
- Cumbersome process

I am a member of the Planning Commission



- Too many reviews

I am a member of the Town Council

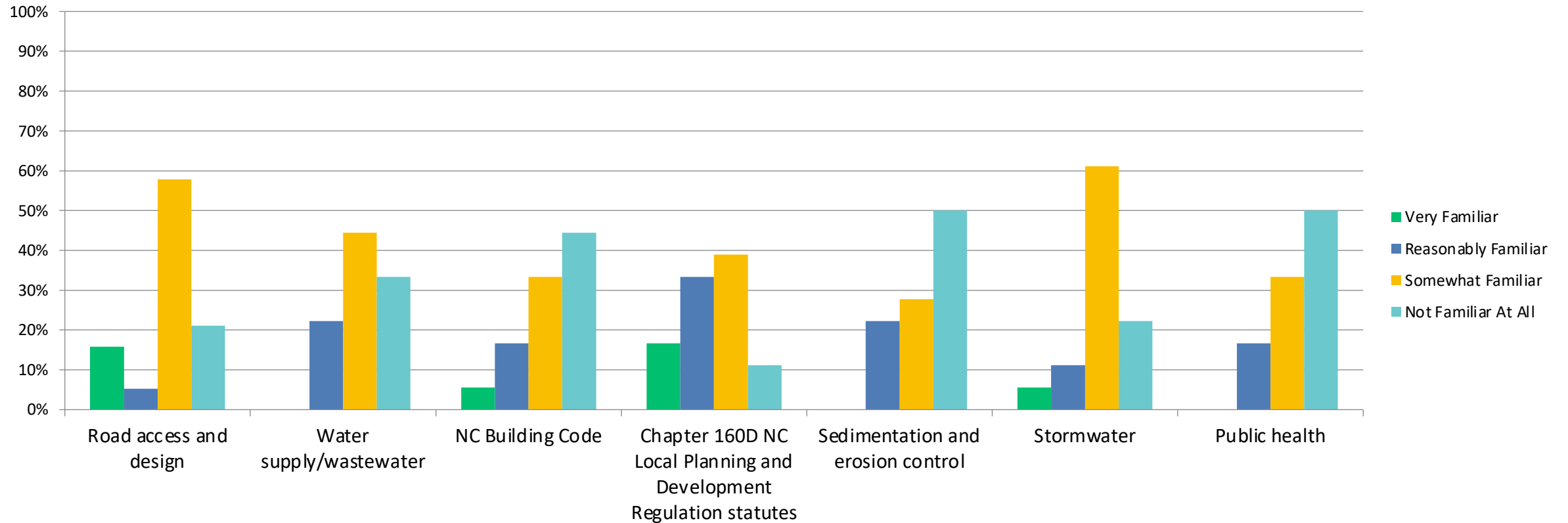


- Process too long; outcomes not good
- Process is broken; culture against growth/development

19/25 answered Q10
11/25 answered Q11

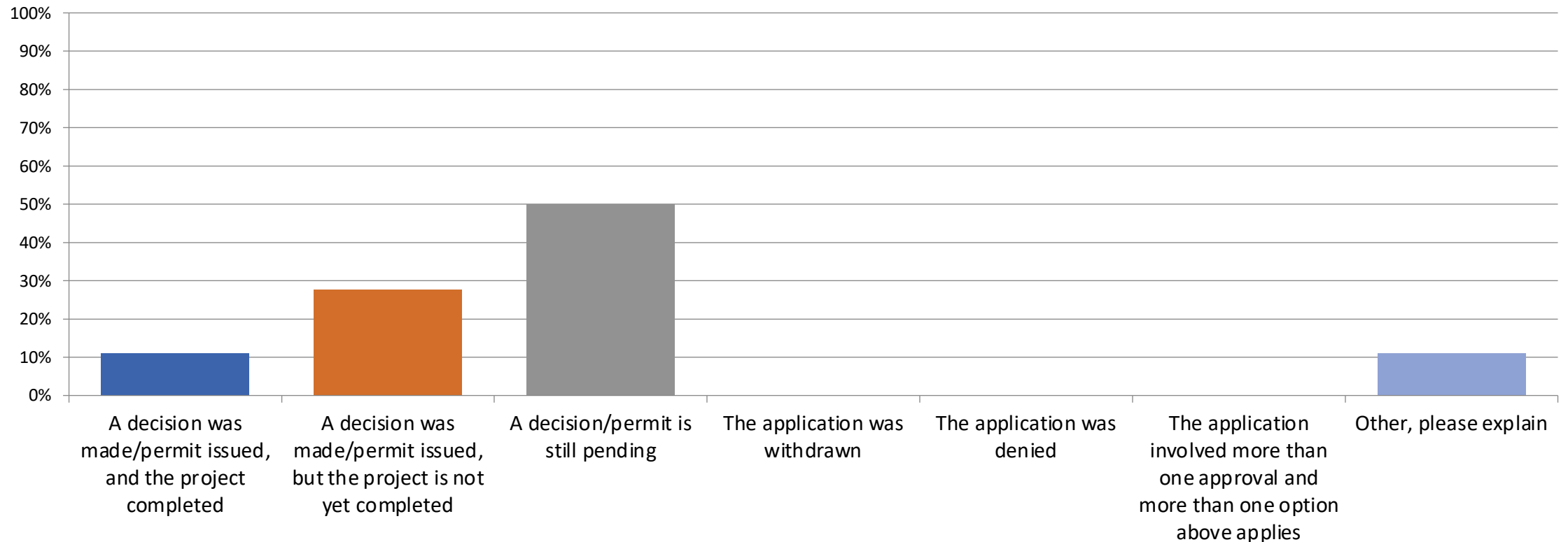
- The decision took too long
- The decision was reached too quickly
- The decision took an appropriate amount of time based on the request
- Not sure/ don't know

Q12. How familiar are you with the content and process of other, related regulations that apply to Chapel Hill? Please check the answer that best applies to each item.



19/25 answered

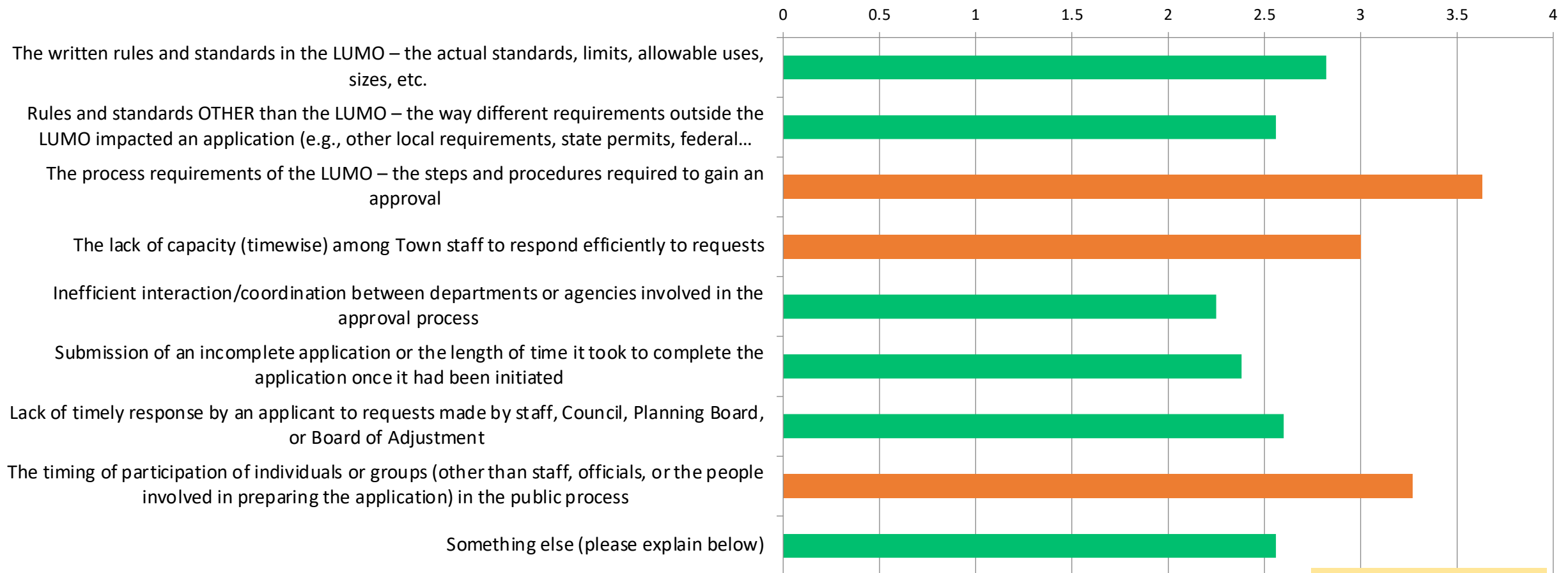
Q9. Thinking about the most recent specific zoning permit or application you were involved in, what was the outcome? (Check the most appropriate answer.)



Note: There were no “other” responses.

18/25 answered

Q13: In your experience, how much influence do the following factors have on delays or the length of time required for a decision by the Town? (Weighted average)



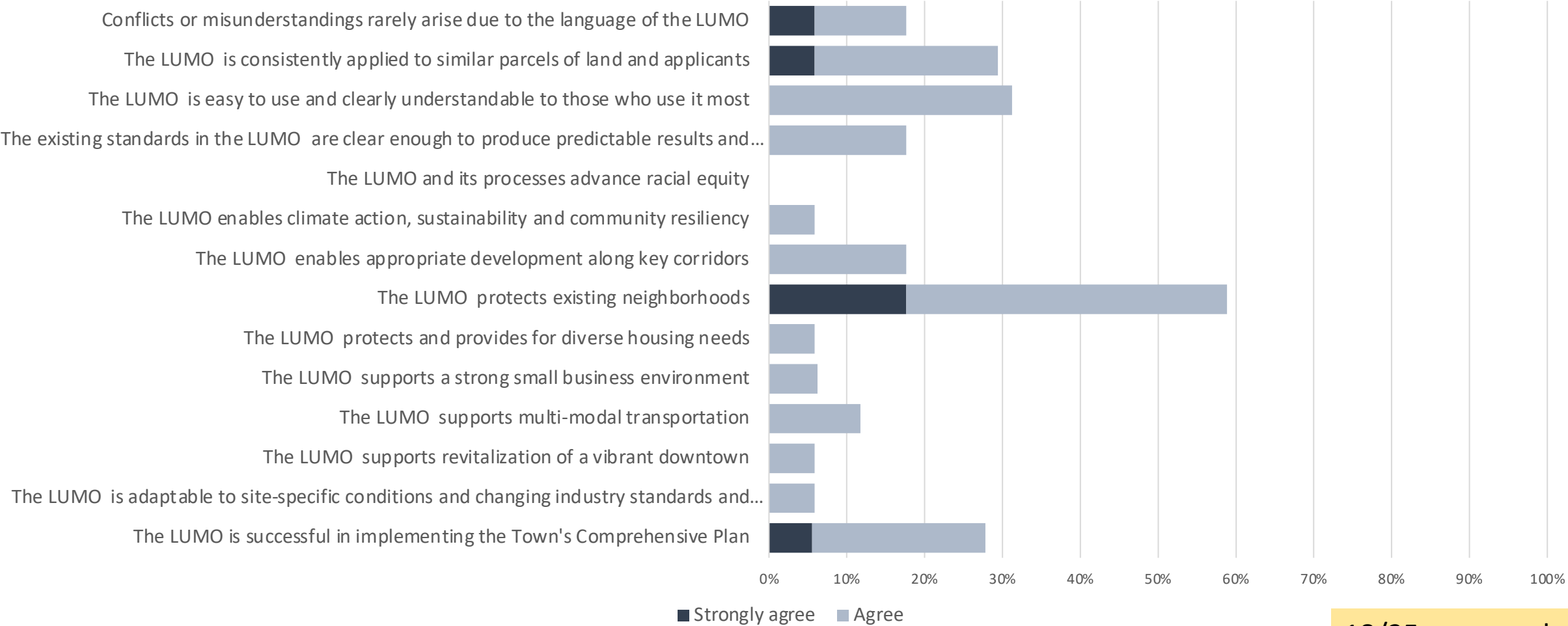
17/25 answered

Q13. Responses to “Something else.”

- The LUMO was written with time consuming processes in order to slow the pace of development. This is clearly unwarranted.
- As a Council Member I have less knowledge about these issues, but they all seem related to time and none to quality; we need both.
- Advisory board process. Availability of time for hearings on Council agendas.
- Repeatedly, the comments that take the longest to resolve are related to storm water regulations.
- Inefficient interaction between public, advisory boards, applicants, and staff. Lack of timely action by advisory boards and Council. Additional "practices" that are outside the scope of the LUMO but have been added on overtime and now expected to complete as part of the process (i.e. courtesy noticing, public information meetings, advisory board review/approval in some instances).
- As few as 10-20 homeowners can convince council to throw any planning process out the window or to change the process to take 9 years instead of, say, 3 months.

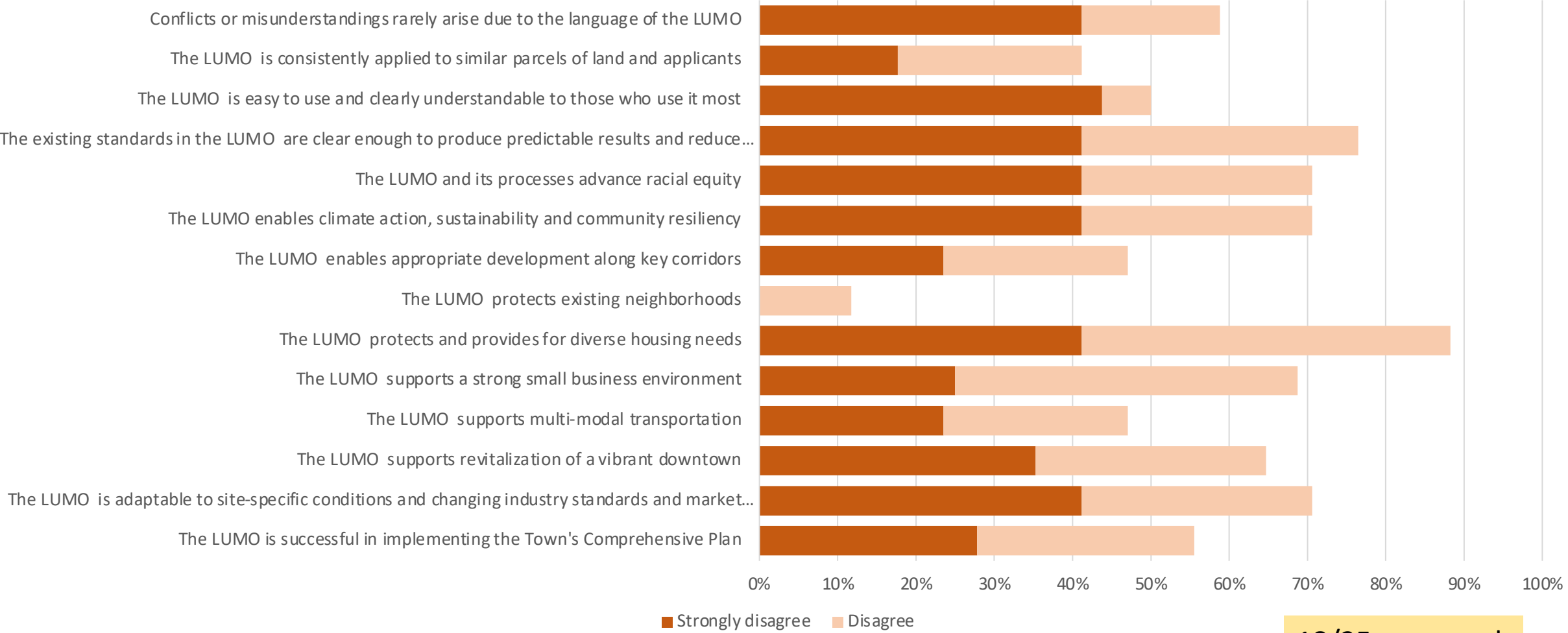
Note: Six comments total.

Q14: How strongly do you agree with the following statements:



18/25 answered

Q14: How strongly do you disagree with the following statements:



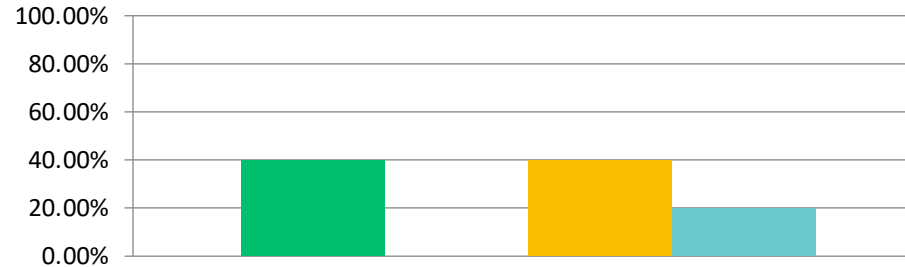
18/25 answered

Q15: The LUMO represents:

17/25 answered Q15
6/25 answered Q16

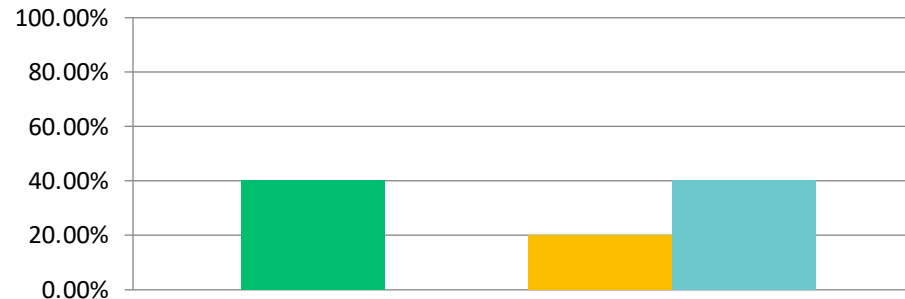
- An appropriate level of regulation by the Town
- Too little regulation by the Town
- Too much regulation by the Town
- Other, please explain

I am a staff member with a formal role in reviewing or approving applications and changes as specified in the LUMO



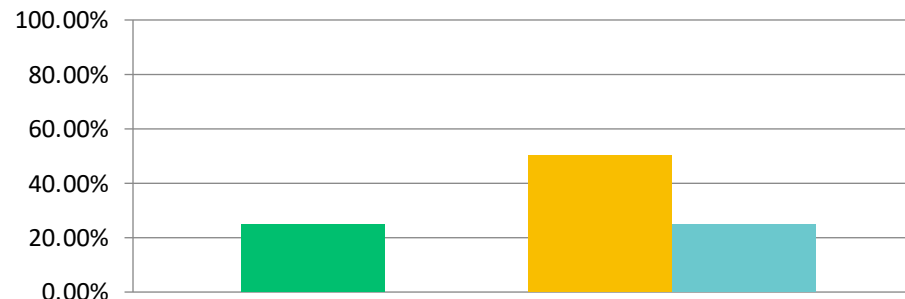
- Other: LUMO is outdated
- Too many regulations to remember
- Results are unaffordable luxury
- Everything is negotiable

I am a member of the Planning Commission



- Other: Too much and too little
- Other: A vehicle for wealth preservation for homeowners/landowners
- Focus on the past; outdated regulations
- Need more by-right

I am a member of the Town Council



- Other: Some standards need more detail; other areas are overregulated (amount of TC involvement)
- Unnecessary process but provides predictability and guidance
- Too many projects need TC approval

Q17: Please list the section or topic in the LUMO that, in your experience, causes the most conflicts or misunderstandings and explain why. (Excerpts)

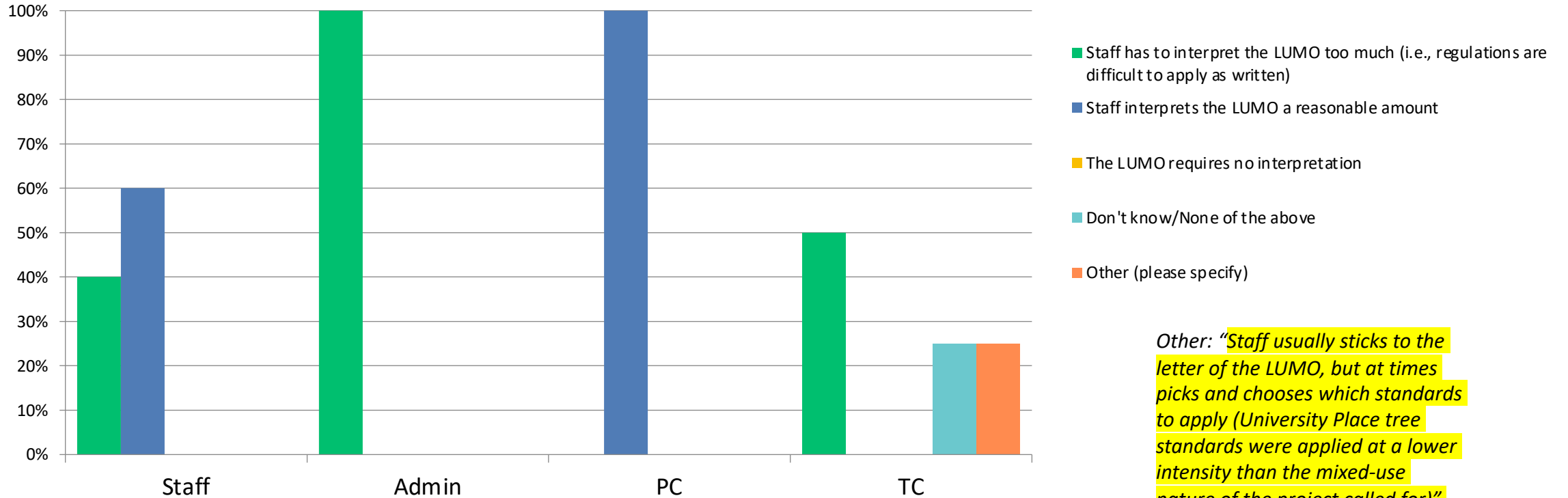
Staff

- Appendix B Definitions
- Uses (how they are defined and lack of guidance on nonconformities)
- Language involving RCD and stormwater overlap
- Land disturbance and the 20/40 rule about reoccurring land disturbance

Planning Commission

- The practice of basing conditional rezoning applications on the general use district closest to the applicant's ideal set of restrictions
- The Land Use Map
- The LUMO is inconsistent with the Town's climate action goals and response, housing access and ownership, and mobility

Q18: In your experience with the LUMO, how often does the Town Staff make interpretations?



Other: "Staff usually sticks to the letter of the LUMO, but at times picks and chooses which standards to apply (University Place tree standards were applied at a lower intensity than the mixed-use nature of the project called for)" (Town Council)

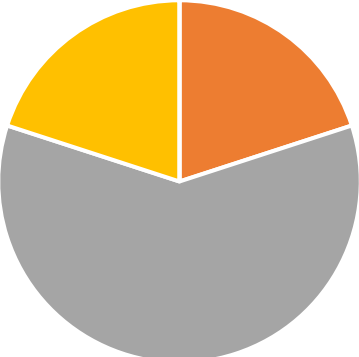
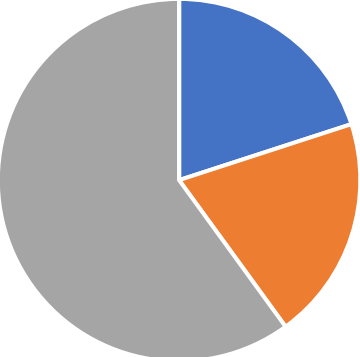
Q19: How important are the following roles of the LUMO?

Staff

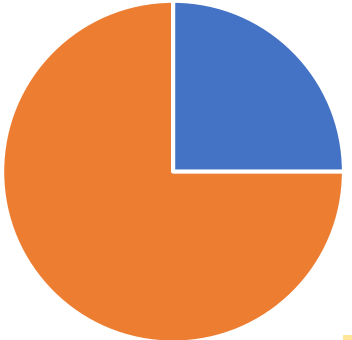
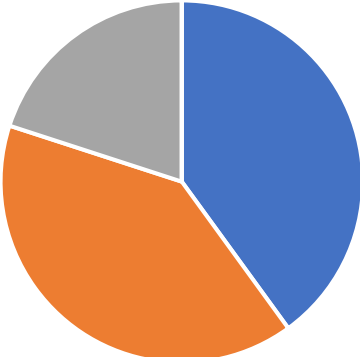
Planning Commission

Town Council

To protect property rights



To enable people to build housing and businesses that serve the needs of the community



17/25 answered

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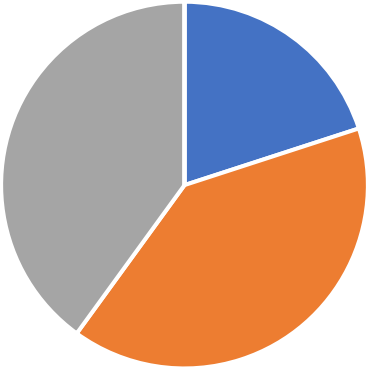
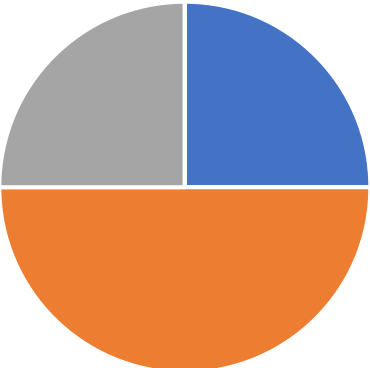
Planning Commission

Town Council

To protect the land, air, and water from damage or pollution



To protect future residents (those who will move here or who are yet unborn)



17/25 answered

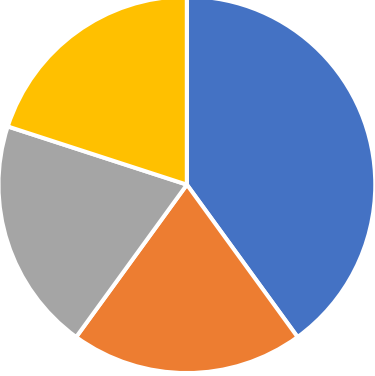
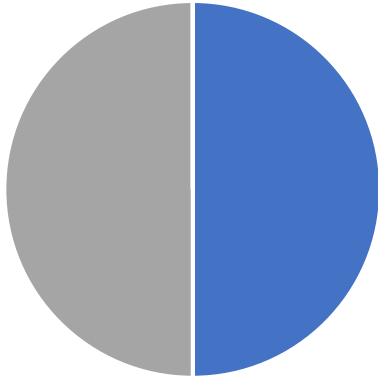
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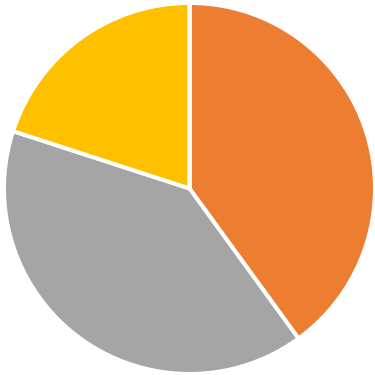
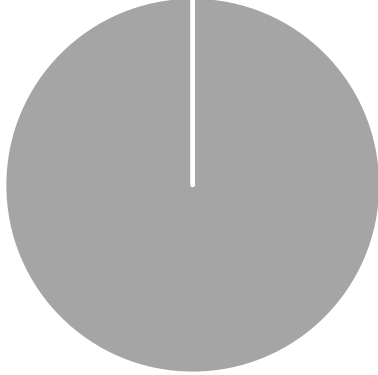
Planning Commission

Town Council

To provide the community with a way to influence development and change



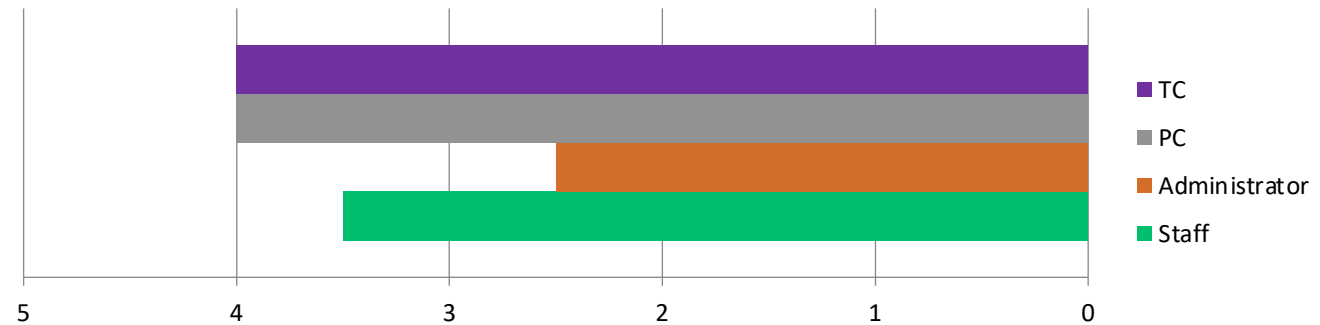
To support a strong business environment



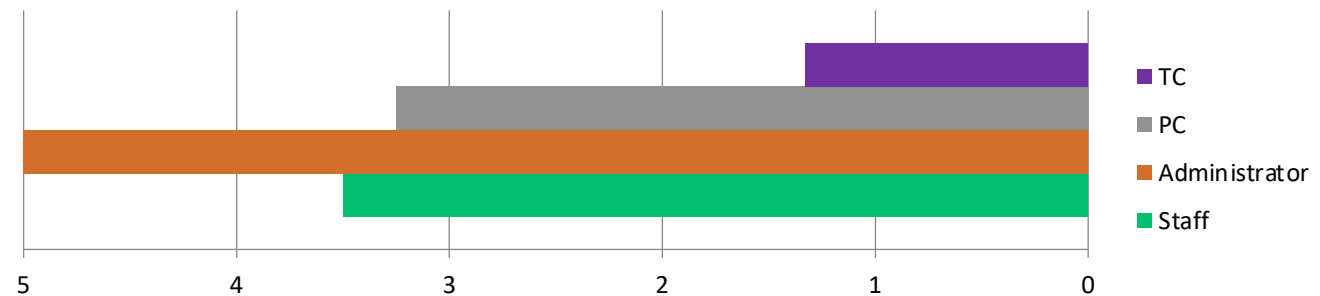
17/25 answered

Q20: How would you rank the value of the following when it comes to regulating land development, use, and buildings (weighted average where 1 is most important and 5 is least important)

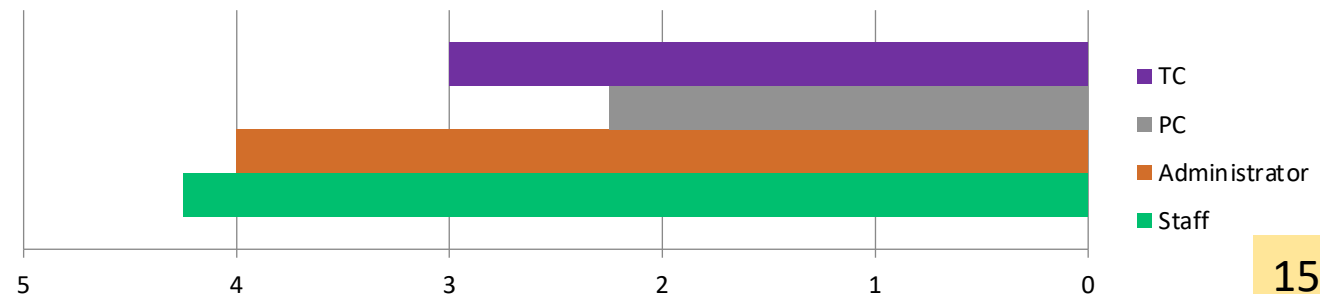
Predictability – I want to know what will be approved or not in the process



Consistency – I want to know that I am treated the same as everyone else



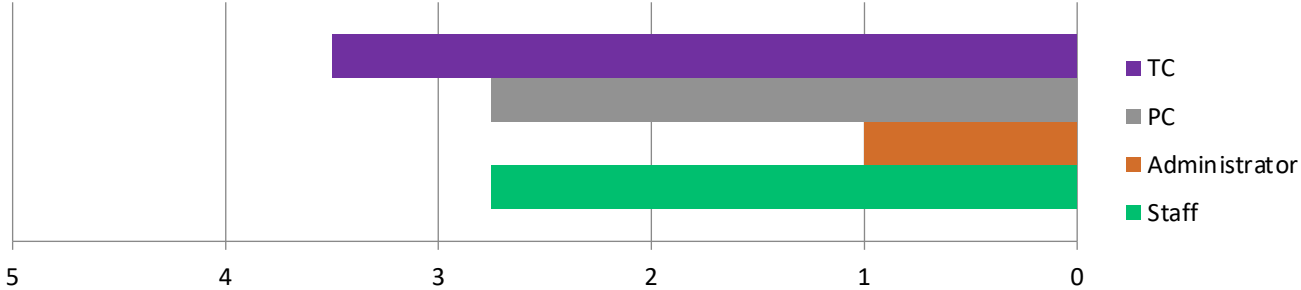
Clarity – I need to be able to understand written regulations and what I have to do to comply or request a change



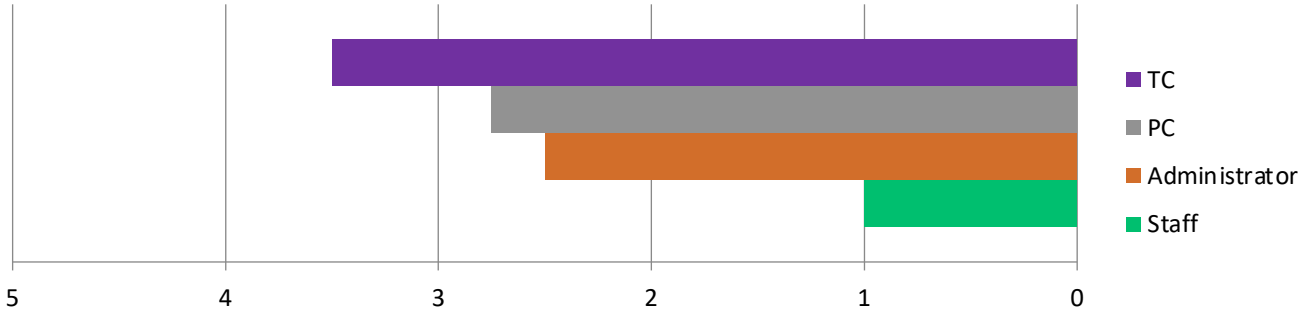
15/25 answered

Q20: How would you rank the value of the following when it comes to regulating land development, use, and buildings (weighted average where 1 is most important and 5 is least important)

Efficiency – I want the process to work quickly

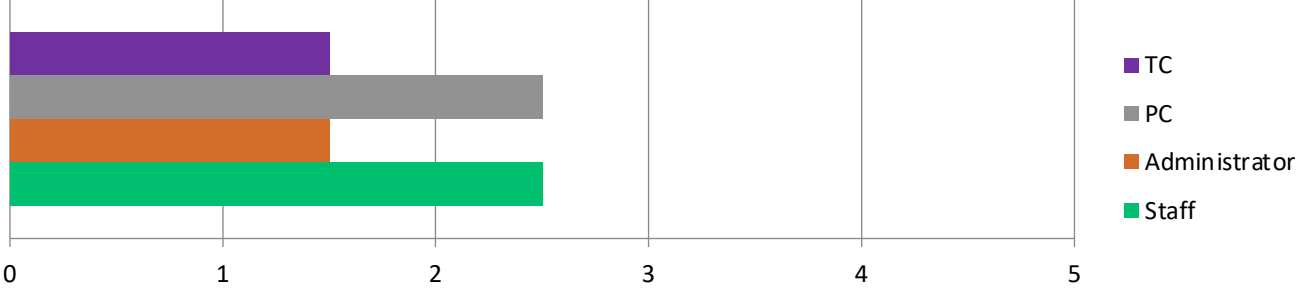


Community support – I want to know that the people of Chapel Hill will be satisfied with what happens

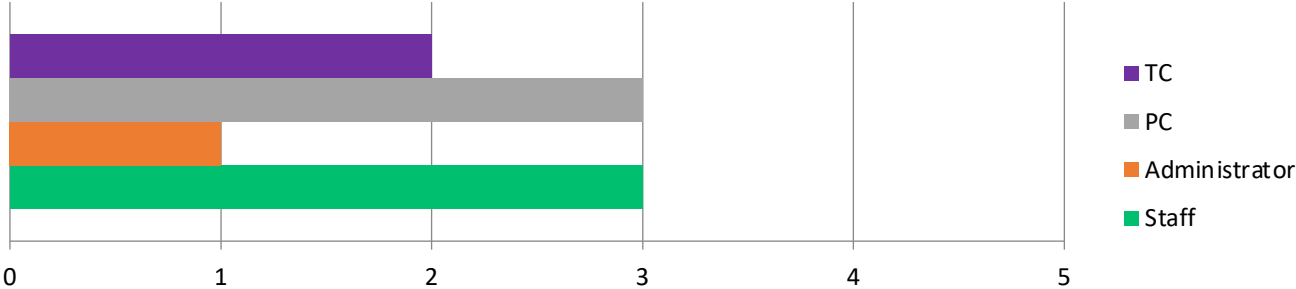


Q21: How would you rate the LUMO on the following factors? (Weighted average where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent)

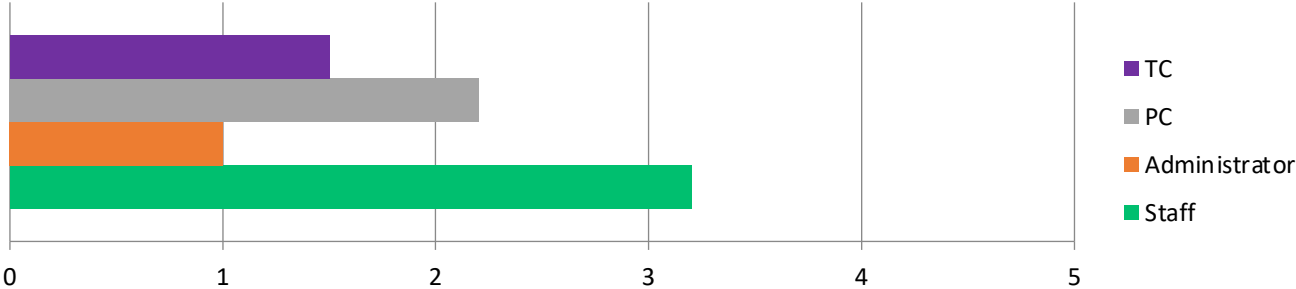
Predictability



Consistency

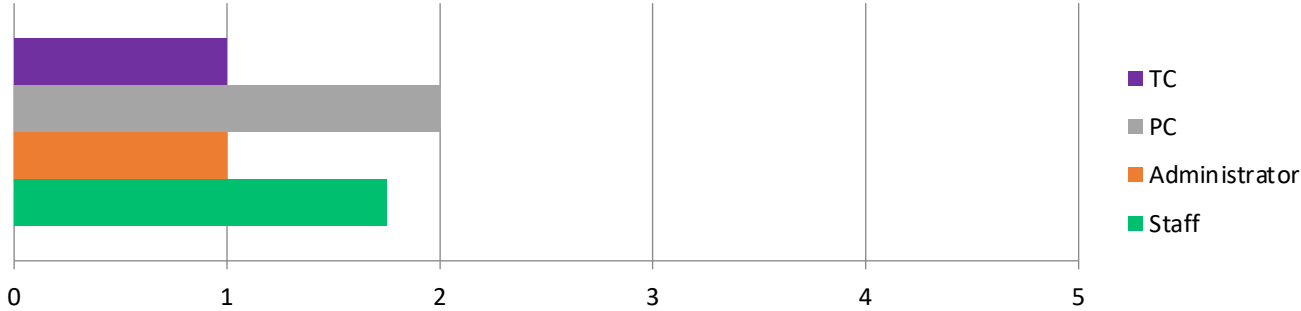


Clarity

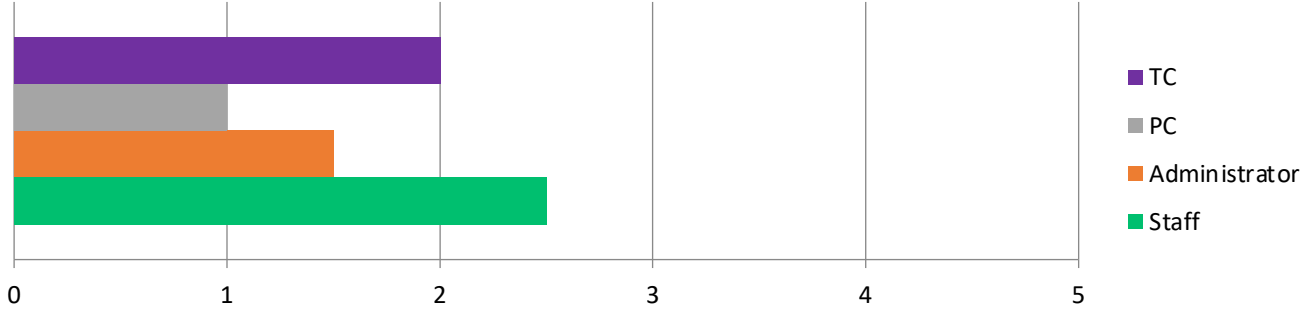


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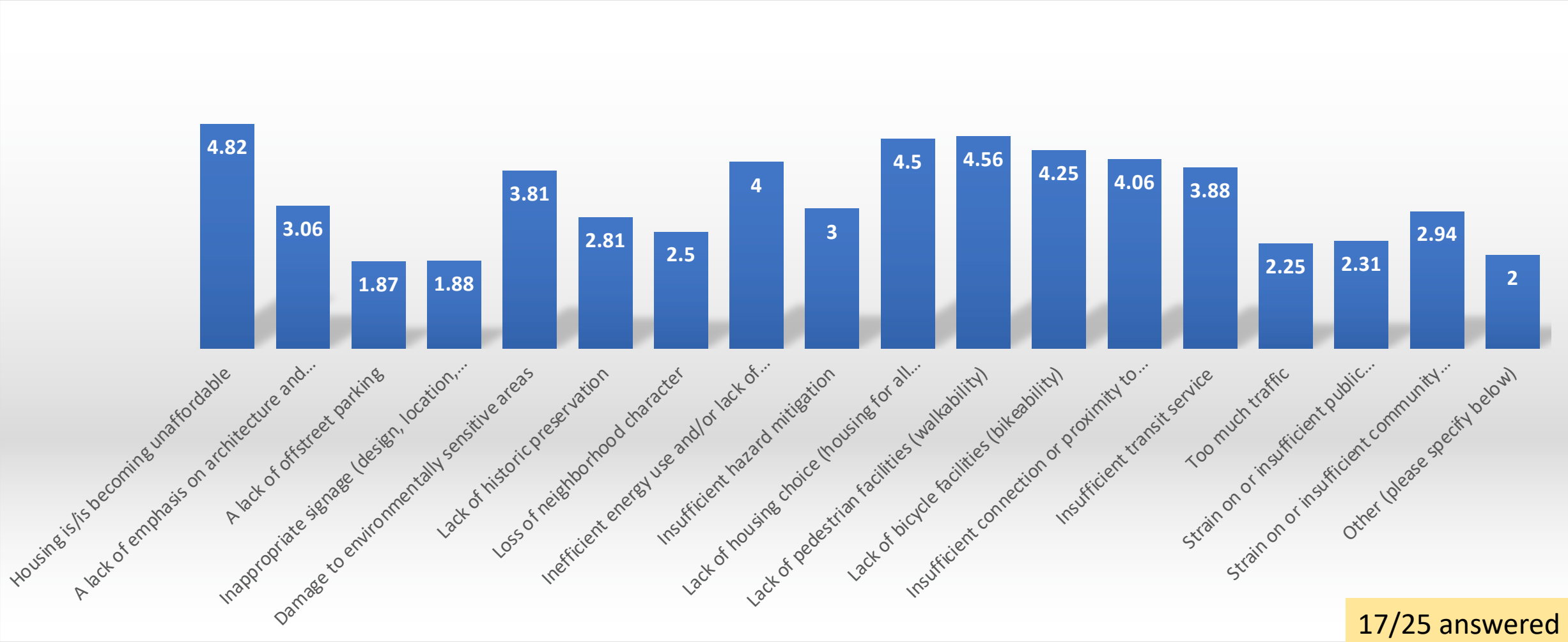
Efficiency



Community support



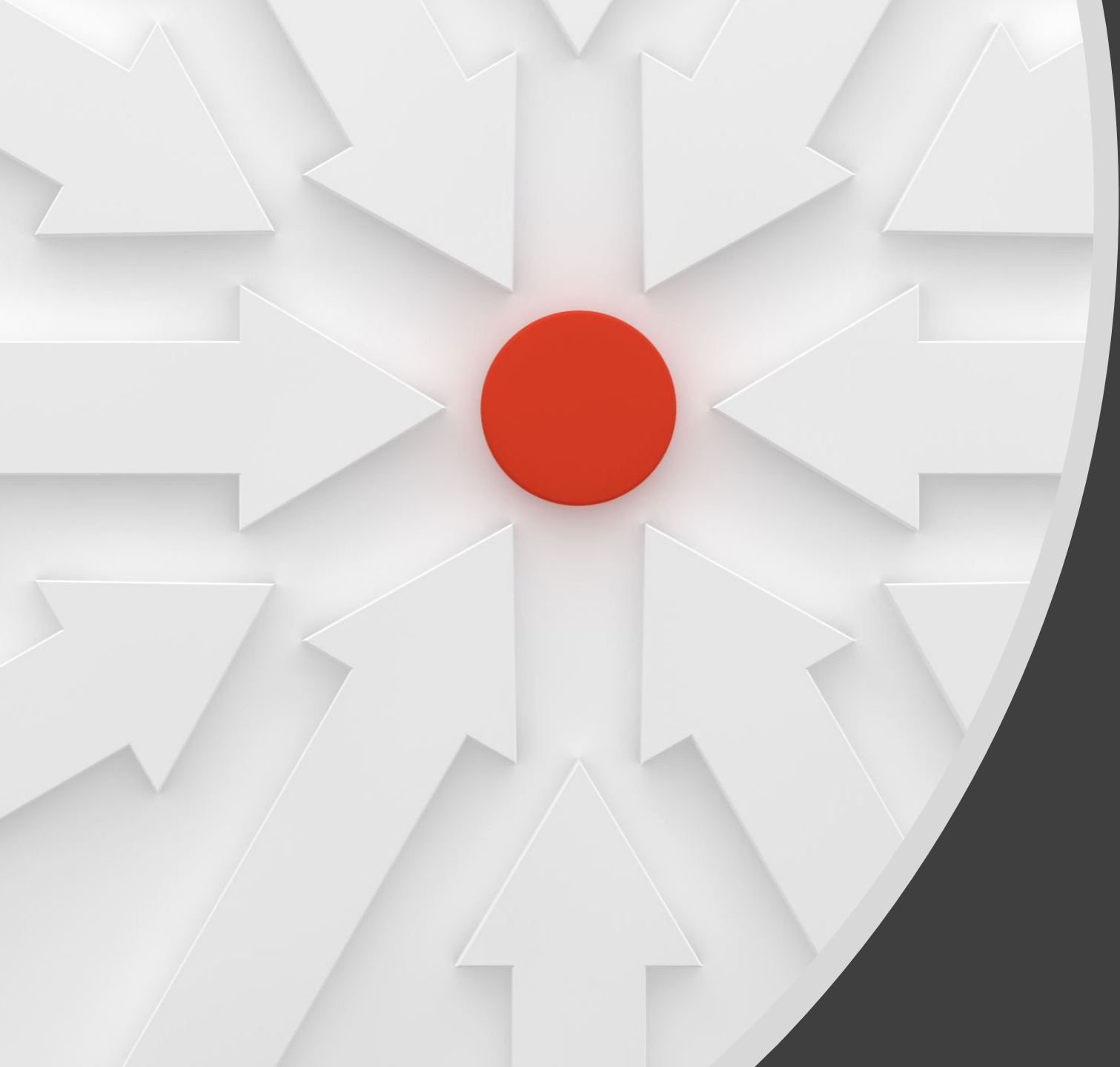
Q22: Rate your concern for the following planning issues related to future development in Chapel Hill where 5 is very concerned and 1 is not concerned at all. (All respondents; weighted average)



17/25 answered

Q23: Do you have any other thoughts or suggestions for improvement of the LUMO?

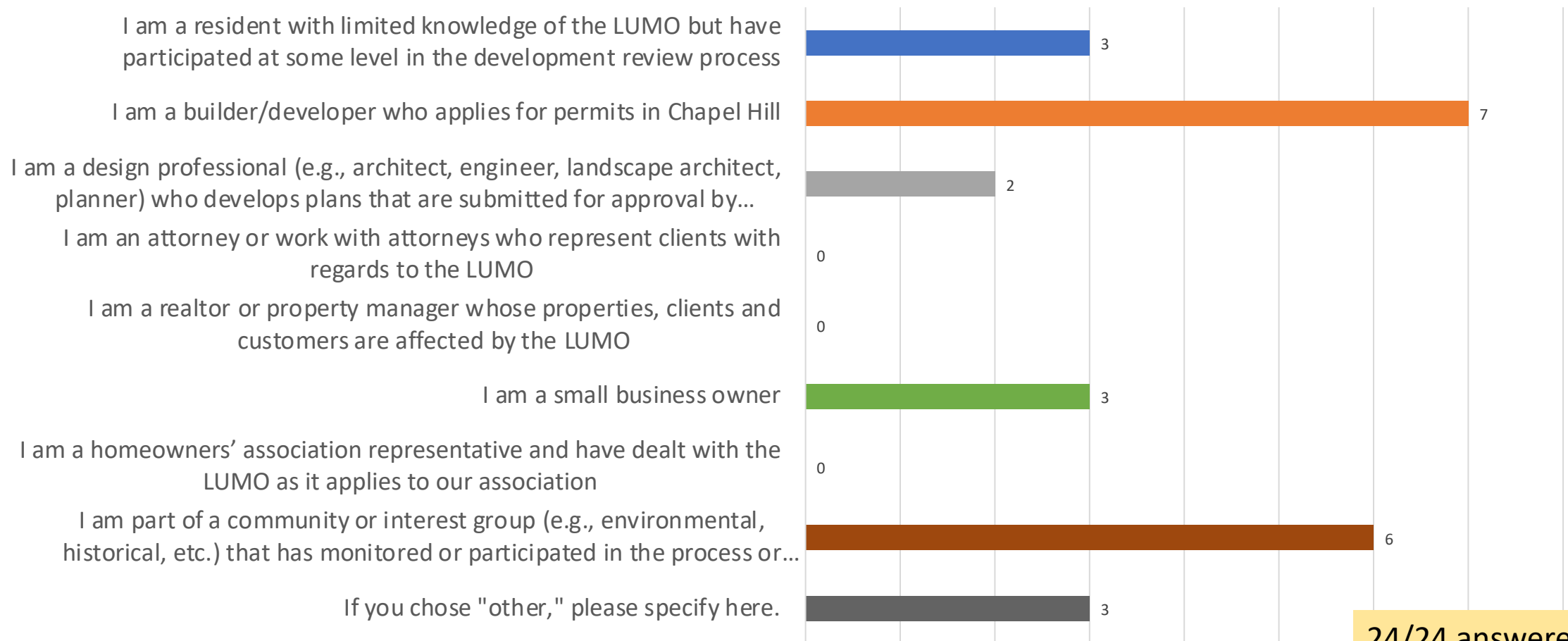
- None
- “...the LUMO comes across as being written with good intentions, but it is very much a "pay to play" affluent set of codes. While there are plenty of sections in the LUMO that focus on protecting the environment, avoiding pollution, protecting individual interests (which it should), most of the LUMO is only applicable to those who can afford to try and challenge it...”
- “... I find the LUMO byzantine. In general, it's poorly drafted and very difficult to navigate. It reads like an accumulation of provisions that have never been rationalized or revised holistically. In addition, many of its provisions no longer reflect the Town's professed values...”
- “It needs to be completely rewritten”
- “The LUMO should be reflective of the vision of the community and the Council. What do we want for the future and then operationalize it in the LUMO. This has to get down to the level of street typologies and design guidelines paired with the LUMO so they work together to get us what we want; if a developer will give us what we want, they should sail through the process; if they won't, then things will get more complicated”
- “I refer to the LUMO a lot and can mostly find the sections I want, though better keywords and search functions would help. Definition section could use improvement (for example, we don't define the difference between "commercial" and "residential," which recently had implications for the amount of impervious surface an all-residential apartment complex could have). We need to make it so the LUMO supports more administrative decision-making at a staff level”



EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES

Chapel Hill Land Use Management
Ordinance Audit

Q1. Which of the following best describes your role interacting with the LUMO? If more than one applies, please choose the role that most frequently applies to you in dealing with the LUMO.

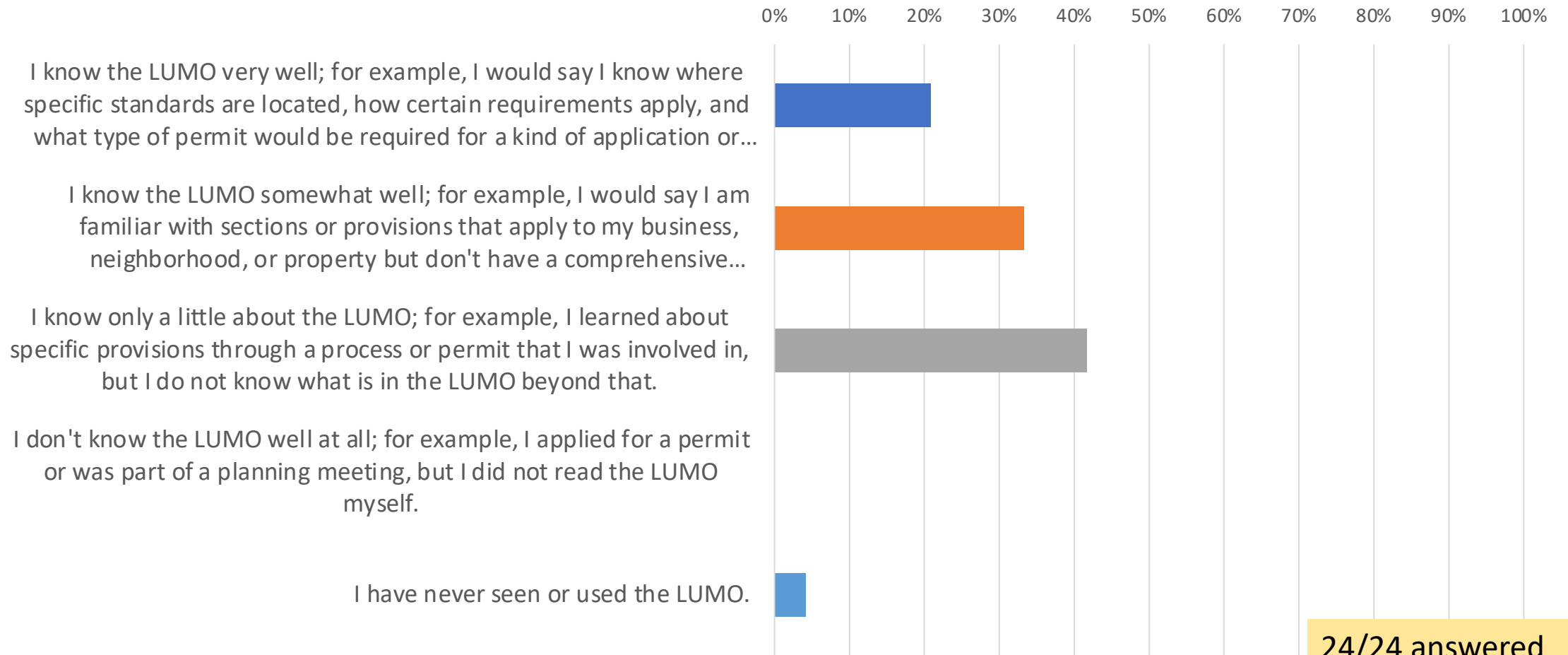


24/24 answered

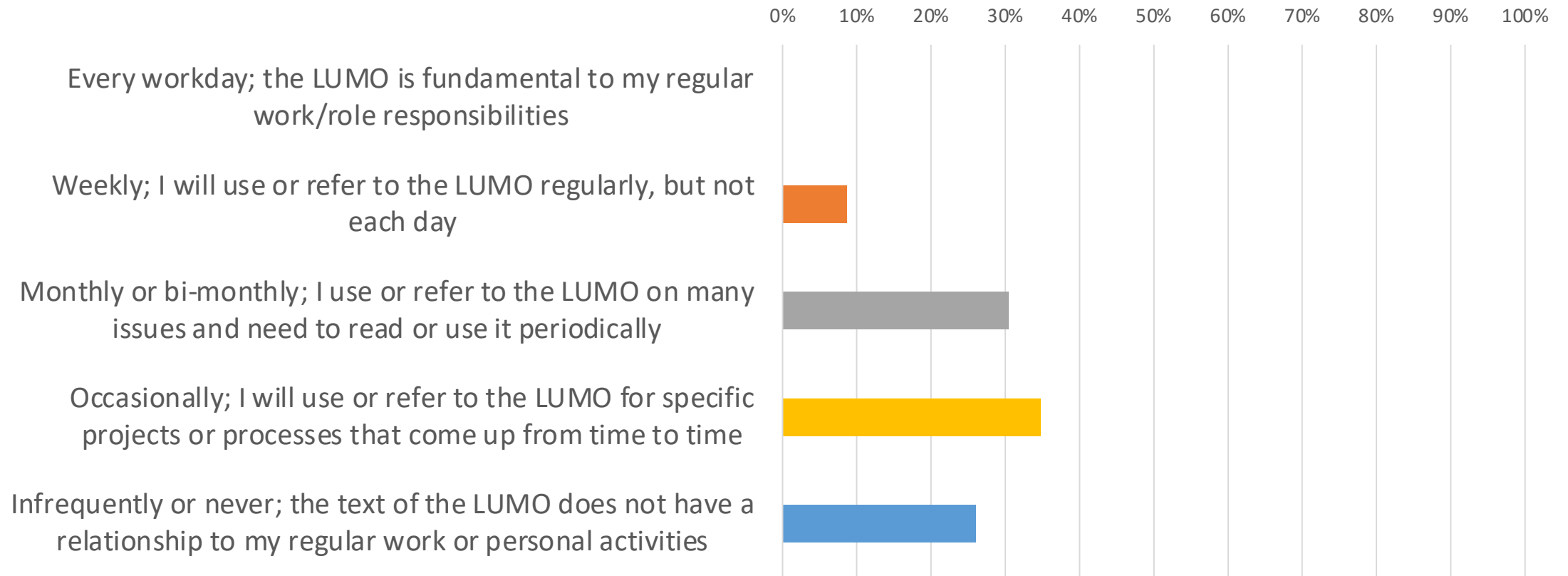
Q2. As briefly as possible, please tell us in which neighborhood or area of Chapel Hill you live and which neighborhood or area you most frequently work (or own a business)

- McCauley District
- N. Chatham
- Raleigh (2 responses)
- Old Forest Creek
- Kings Mill—Morgan Creek
- Colony Woods
- Mel Oaks
- Mt. Carmel Church Road
- Meadowmont
- I do not live in Chapel Hill
- Downtown Carrboro
- Coker Hills West
- The suburban hellscape part
- Bingham Township
- East 54
- Westwood
- Heritage Hills (southern Orange Co.)

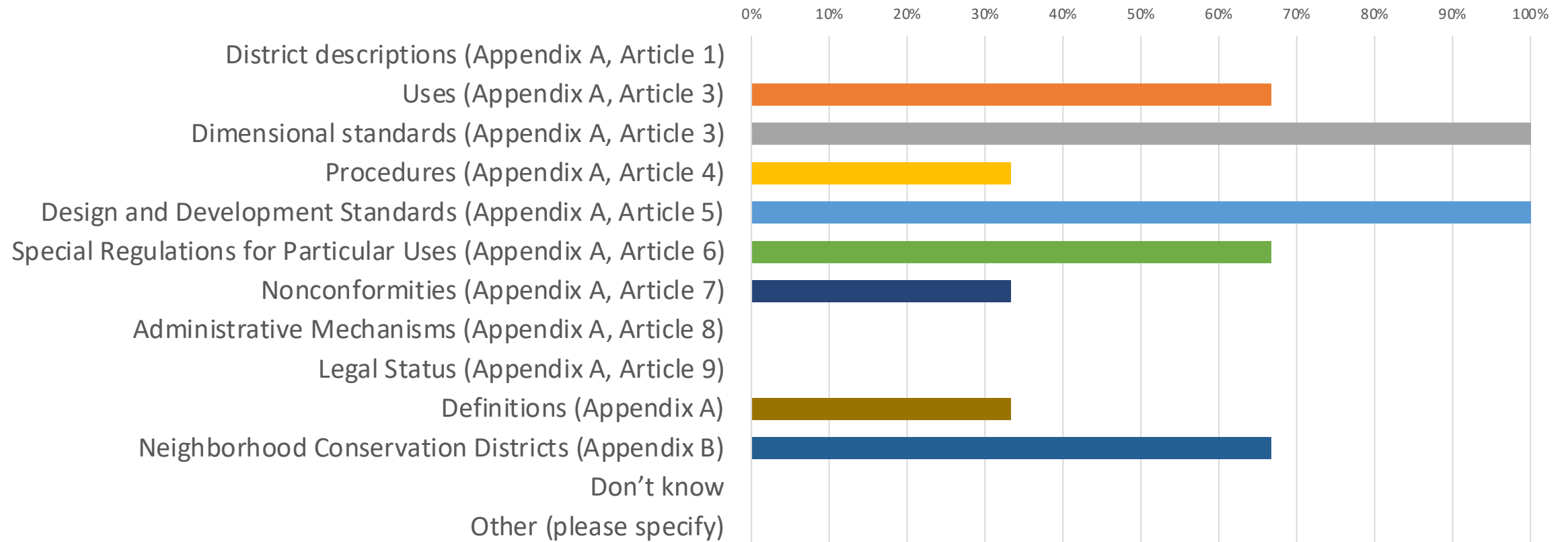
Q3. Which statement best describes your knowledge of the CONTENT in the LUMO--the specific requirements or standards written in the text, or at least the parts you use most often?



Q4. How often would you say you use or refer to any part of the text of the LUMO, whether that involves standards, requirements, or processes?

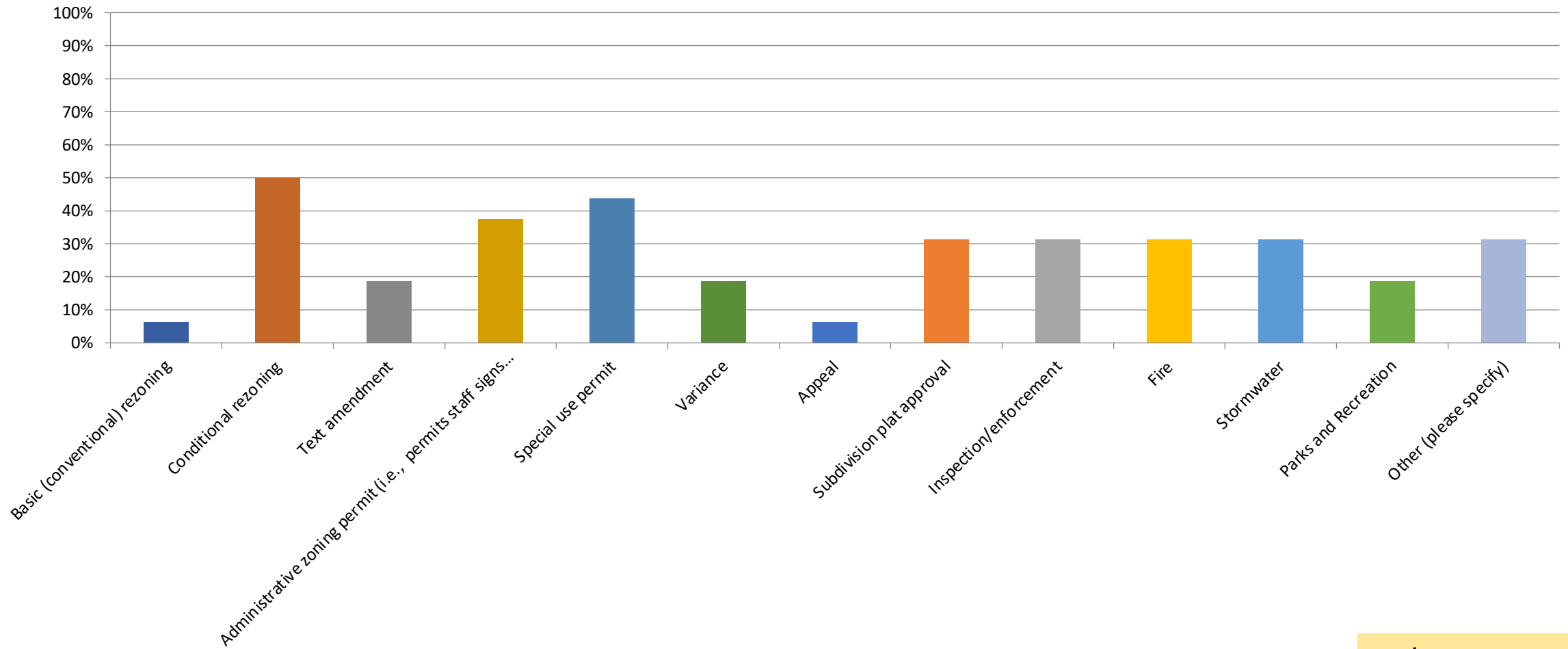


Q5. If you answered "every workday" or "weekly," please tell us which parts of the LUMO, you most often use.



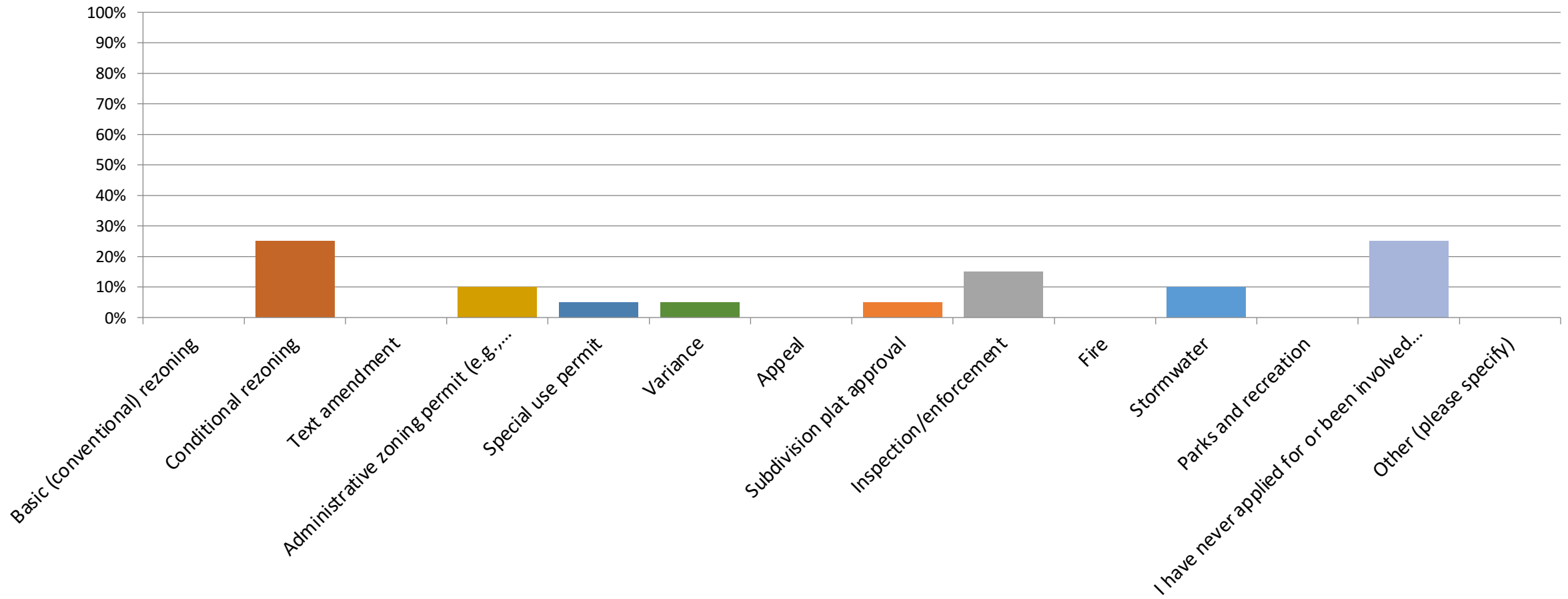
21/24 answered

Q6. What permits or processes regulated by the LUMO have you applied for or obtained in the past?



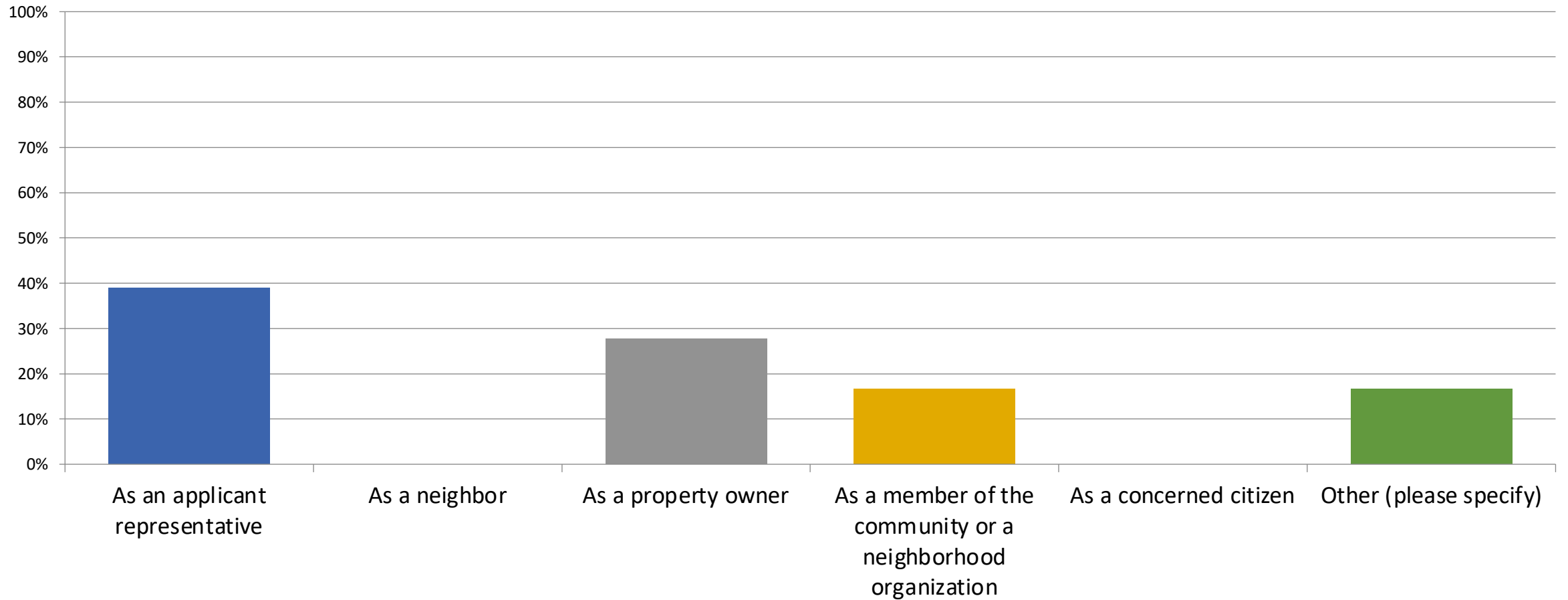
16/24 answered

Q7. What is the most recent specific LUMO permit or application in which you were involved?



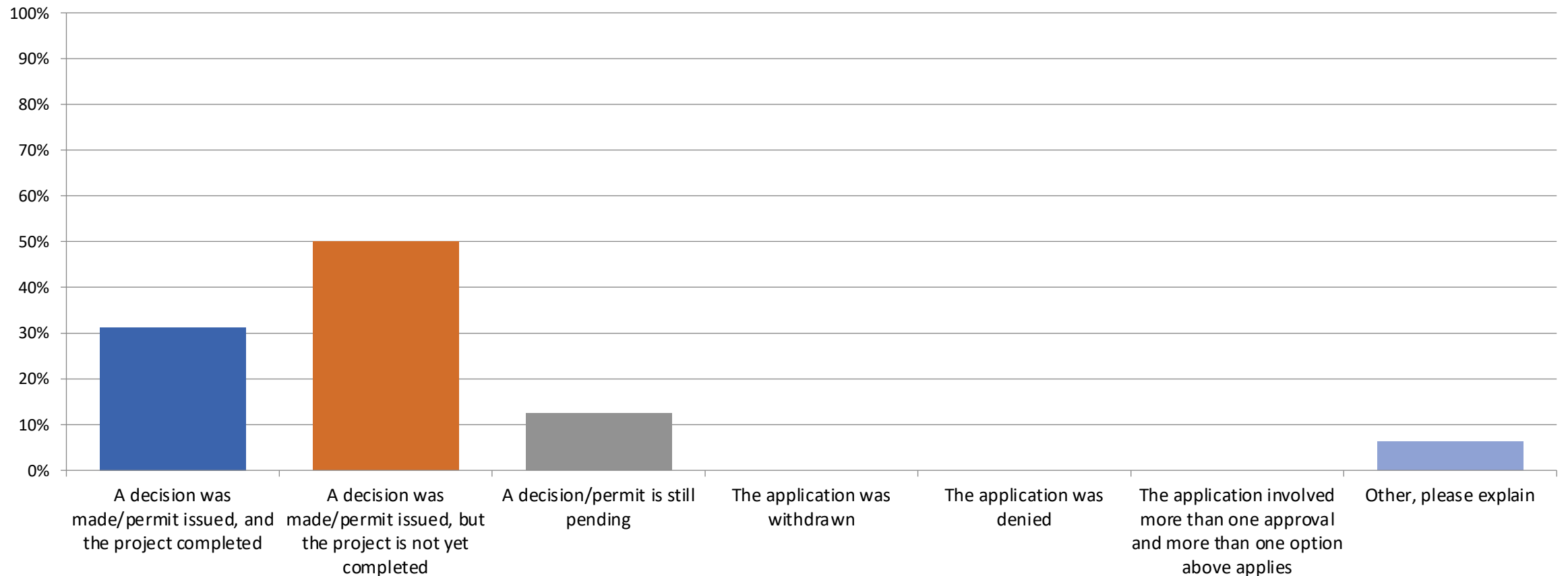
20/24 answered

Q8. How were you involved in the application?



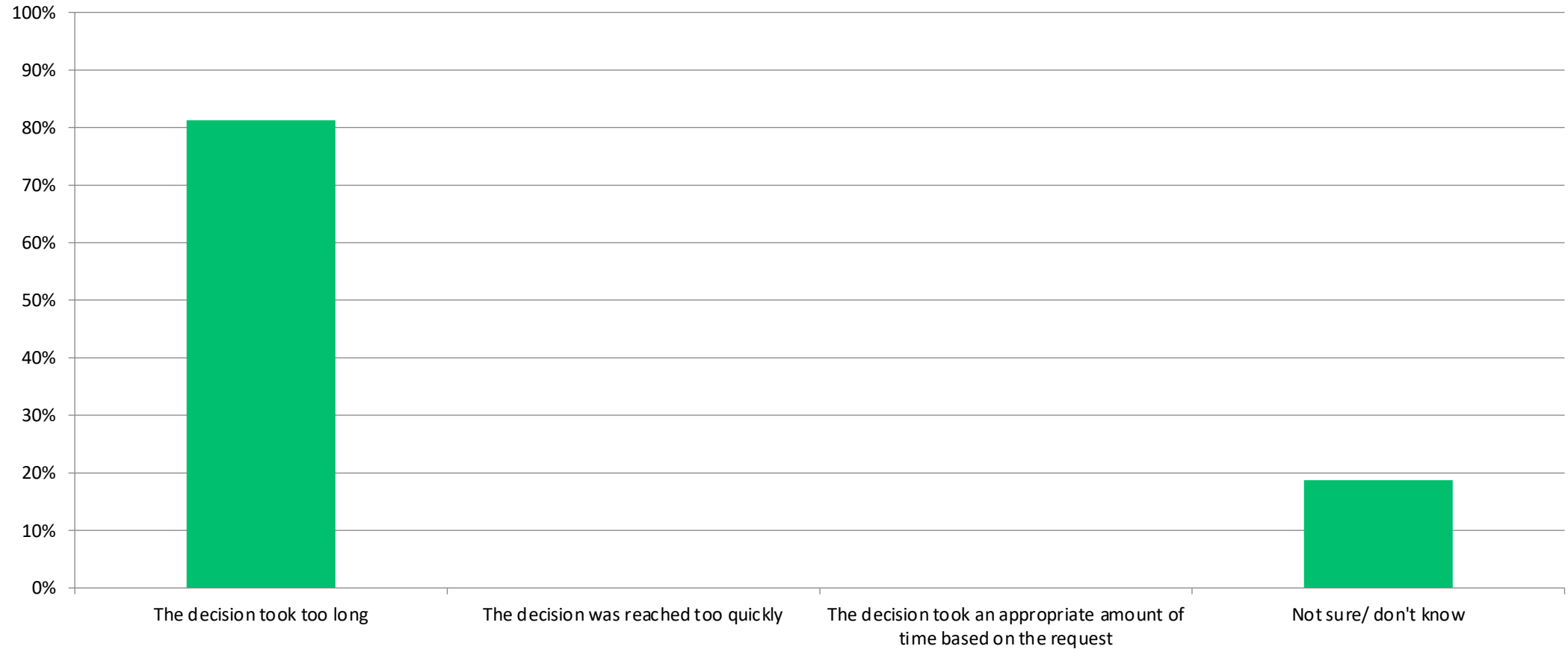
18/24 answered

Q9. Thinking about the most recent specific zoning permit or application you submitted, what was the outcome? (Check the most appropriate answer.)



16/24 answered

Q10. Thinking about the most recent specific request or action you were involved with that has reached a conclusion, what is your opinion of the amount of time it took

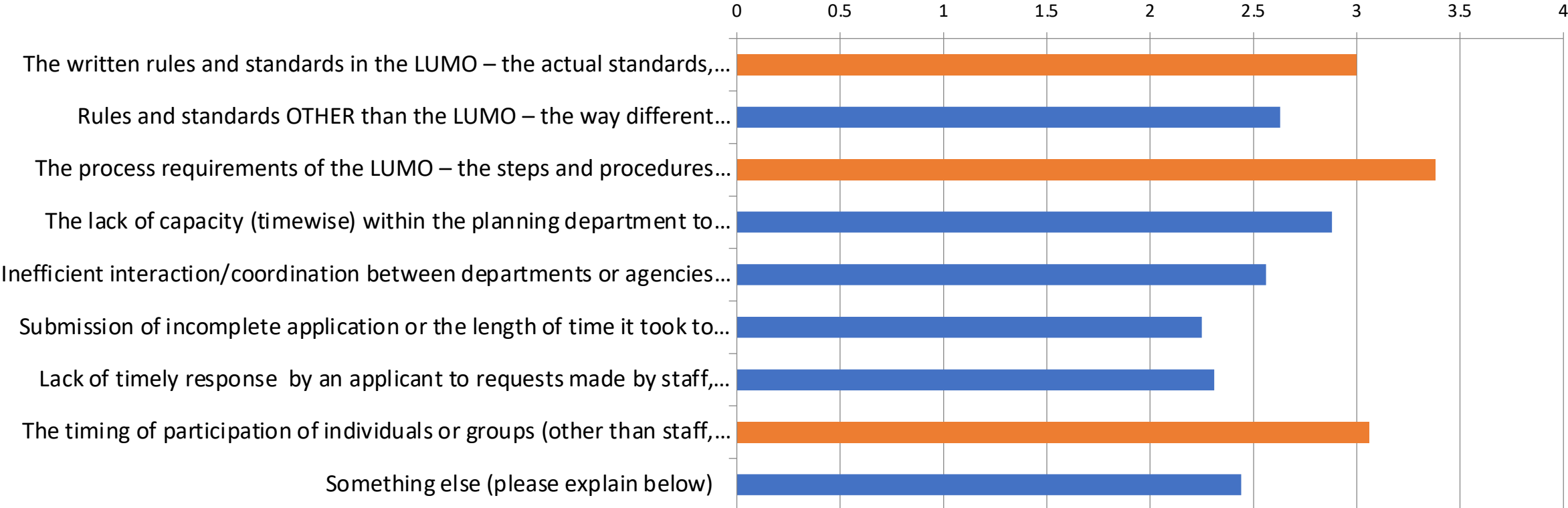


16/24 answered

Q11. If you answered "The decision took too long" or "The decision was reached too quickly," please explain. (Excerpts/paraphrases)

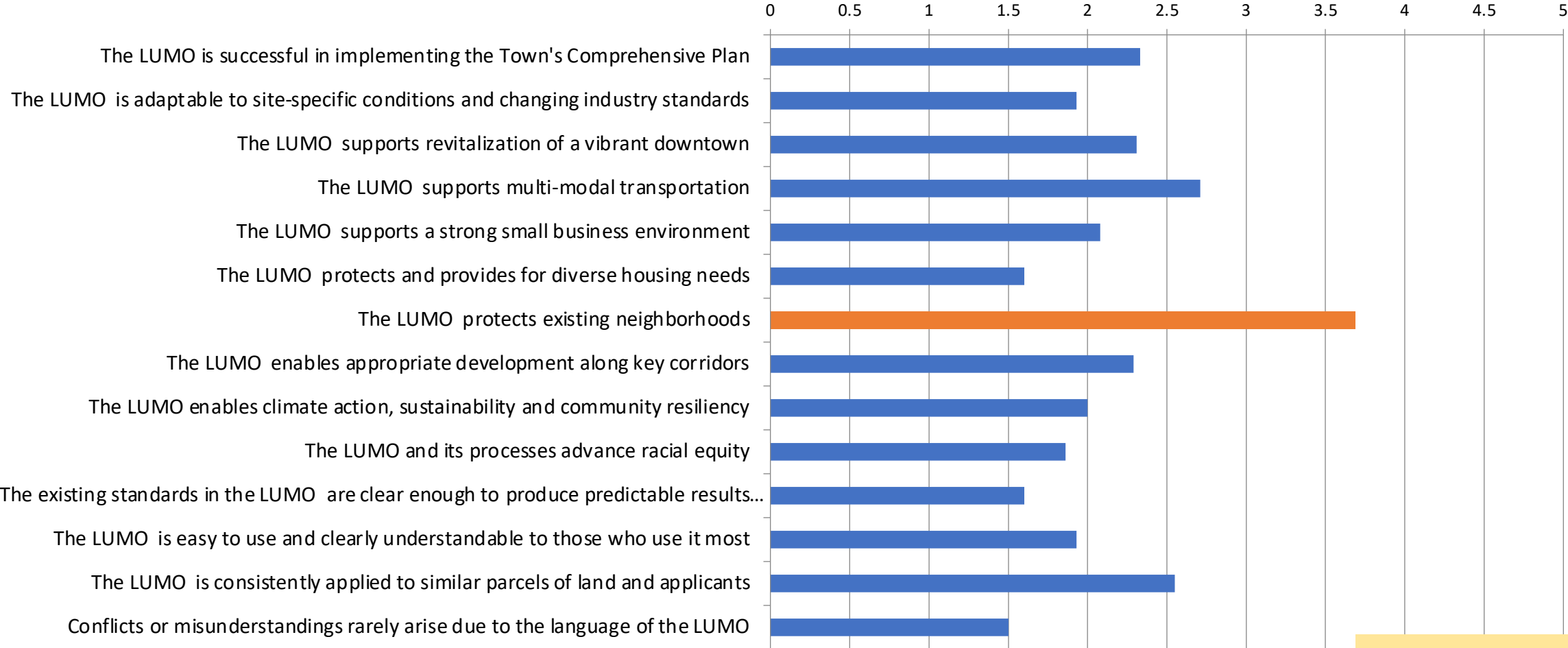
- Staff seemed to over-complicate the request
- More meetings and more boards than I have encountered anywhere else
- Too many advisory boards, too much administrative time on staff review between revisions
- Too many linear steps
- Too many commissions/boards overstepping prescribed authority
- Neighbors without standing being allowed to intentionally slow/drag out the process with unsubstantiated concerns
- Requiring Special Use Permits (that often take literally years) for things that other municipalities allow by right or allow via a rezoning
- Concept review should be much more abbreviated, and should not have to go before review boards
- Decisions often are over-deliberated
- There is too much time - and no clear expectations on the amount of time - between submittals, staff feedback, and approval
- Inconsistent and contradictory feedback from different departments, advisory boards, and council

Q12: In your experience, how much influence do the following factors have on delays or the length of time required for a decision by the Town? (weighted average where 4 is significant impact and 1 is not sure/don't know)



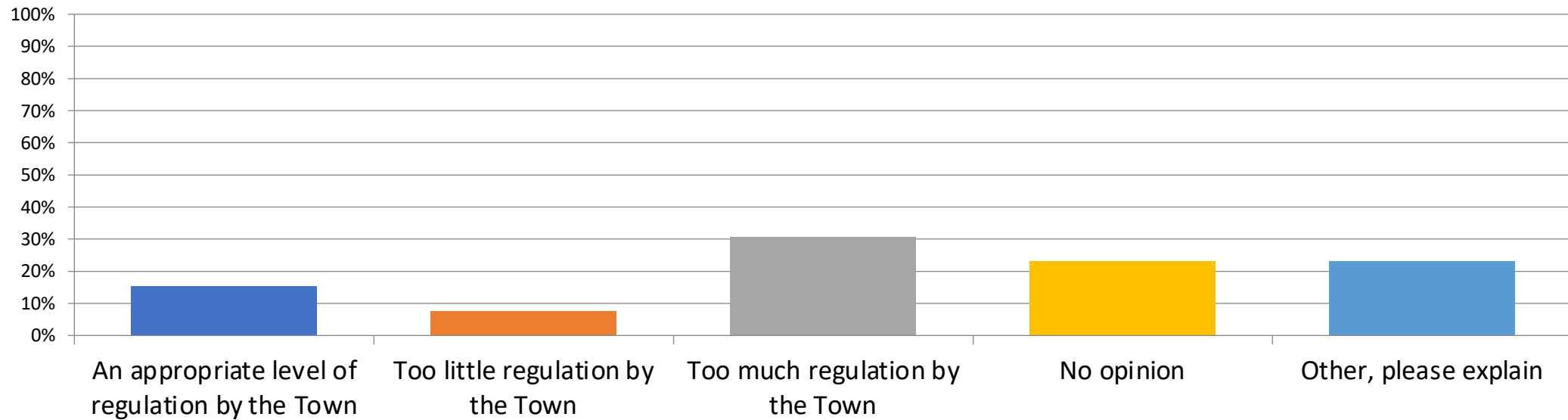
16/24 answered

Q13: How strongly do you agree with the following statements? (weighted average where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree)



15/24 answered

Q14: The LUMO represents:



Explanations for choosing *Other*:

- “I think the entire development process is too big and confusing, but I'm unsure what to blame on disagreements between inspectors and plan review, the fact council reviews any plan over 20,000SF, the low ability to develop without having to get a special use permit or zoning variance. All of these things together are too much regulation that is confusing and not predictable.”
- “The question is not whether there is enough or too much regulation, but what is regulated. We should have slightly more regulation of form, but less regulation of uses and density.”
- “If process and timelines were clear and adhered to, the LUMO would be a better regulatory document. Developers are happy to follow the rules, but when they are subjective, inconsistently applied, and the process is slow, the documents ability to regulate/manage the growth of our community is diminished.”

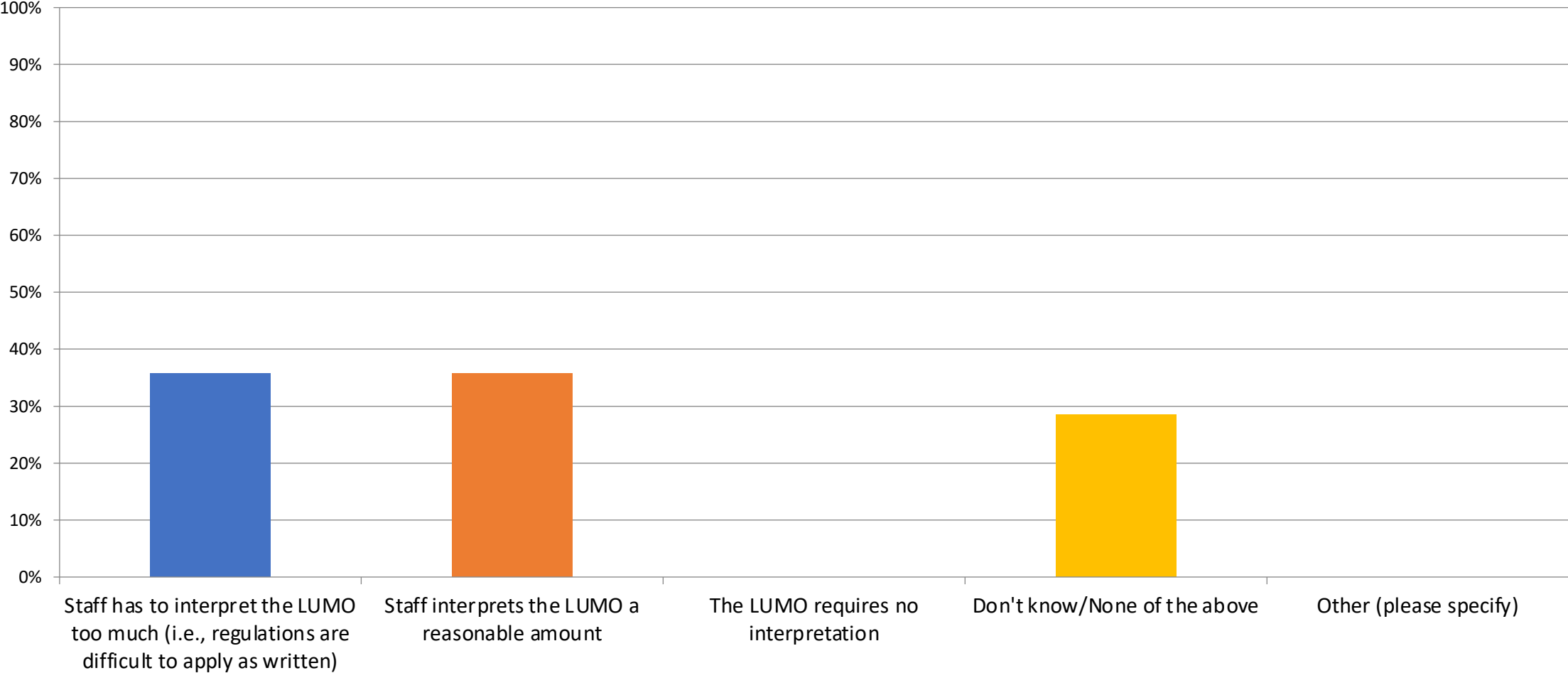
Q15. If you responded "too much" or "too little" regulation, please briefly explain and tell us which LUMO regulations go too far or not far enough. (Actual statements)

- I think the entire development process is too big and confusing, but I'm unsure what to blame on disagreements between inspectors and plan review, the fact council reviews any plan over 20,000SF, the low ability to develop without having to get a special use permit or zoning variance. All of these things together are too much regulation that is confusing and not predictable.
- The LUMO is very much a NIMBY document that makes it overly difficult to build the most environmentally friendly, dense developments in a cost efficient way.
- Again - the very low trigger for requiring intensive, expensive and time consuming processes like SUPs means simple things like building additions or basic, garden style apartment buildings take way too long and are way too expensive. More needs to be allowed by-right. Things like the Community Design Commission add time and design expense to projects for no tangible value to the Town. At this point they can't even deny a project but they can delay it to death. That is over-regulation.
- Right now, staff and Council pick and choose what they want and don't want applied from the LUMO, and set their own standards aside from the LUMO. We are requested to meet standards that don't meet code (parking reductions, increased stormwater regulations, increased or decreased buffers, affordable housing for rental products).
- The LUMO is too much regulation from the Town, and the length of time to get projects approved adds to the cost for everyone. Too much emphasis is put on protecting existing neighborhoods to an extent that has made this community stagnant and too expensive to live in.

Q16: Please list the section or topic in the LUMO that, in your experience, causes the most conflicts or misunderstandings and explain why.
(Excerpts/paraphrases)

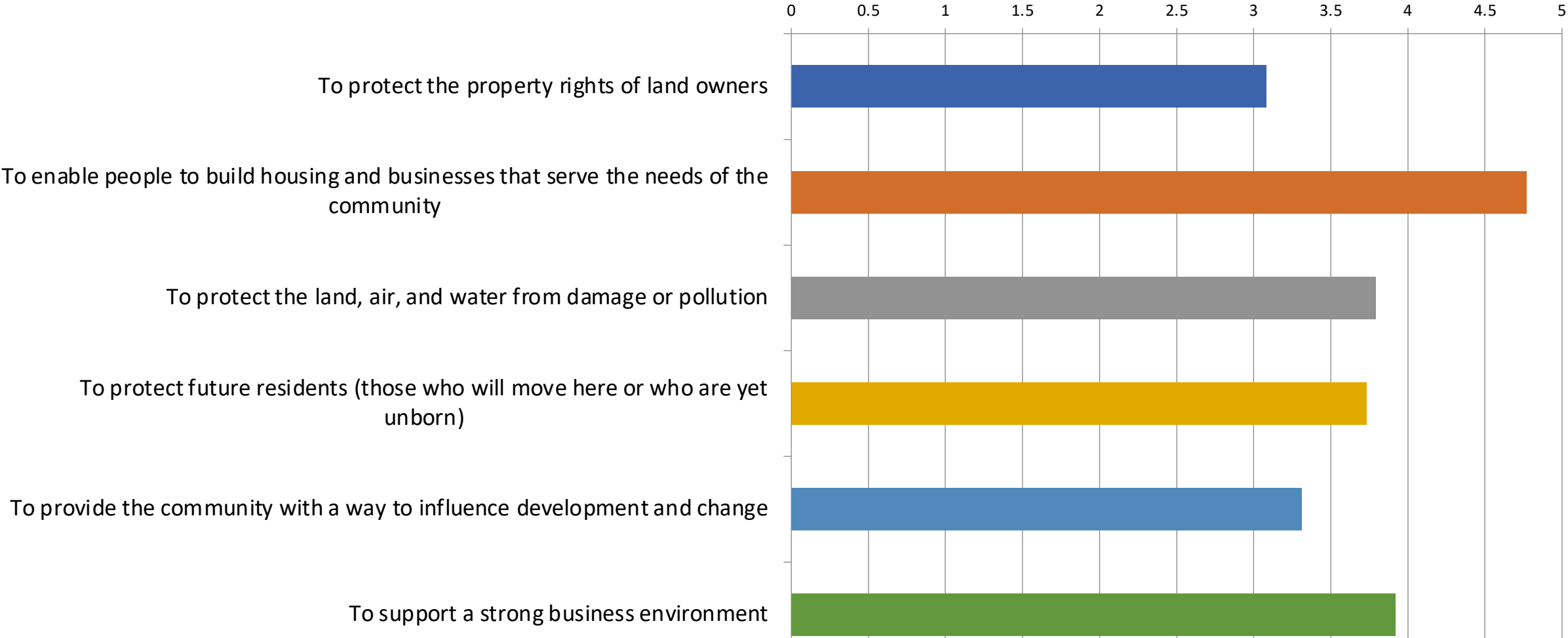
- Some of the future planning maps and the timing (or length of time) it takes to update
- Poor definitions
- Stormwater management
- Dimensional standards (density, floor area ratio, setbacks)
- Inclusionary zoning
- Zoning districts
- Setbacks and lot minimums
- Rezoning
- Special use permits

Q17: In your experience with the LUMO, how often does the Town Staff make interpretations?



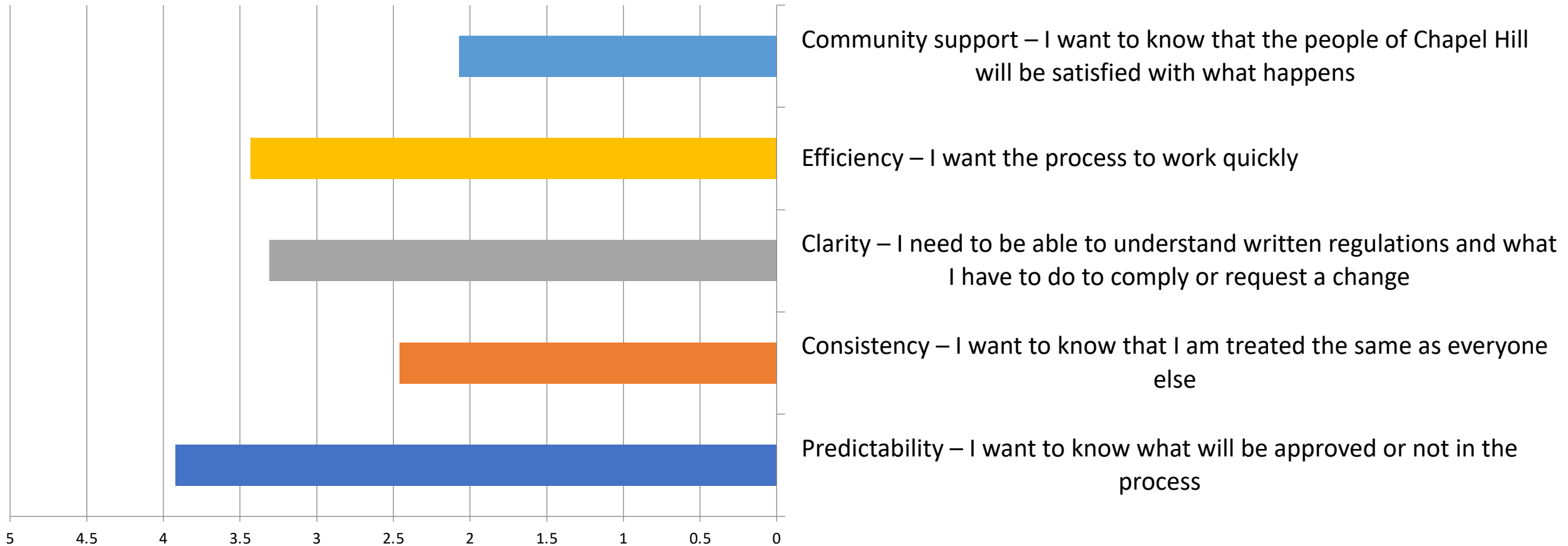
14/24 answered

Q18: How important are the following roles of the LUMO? (weighted average where 5 is extremely important and 1 is not important at all)



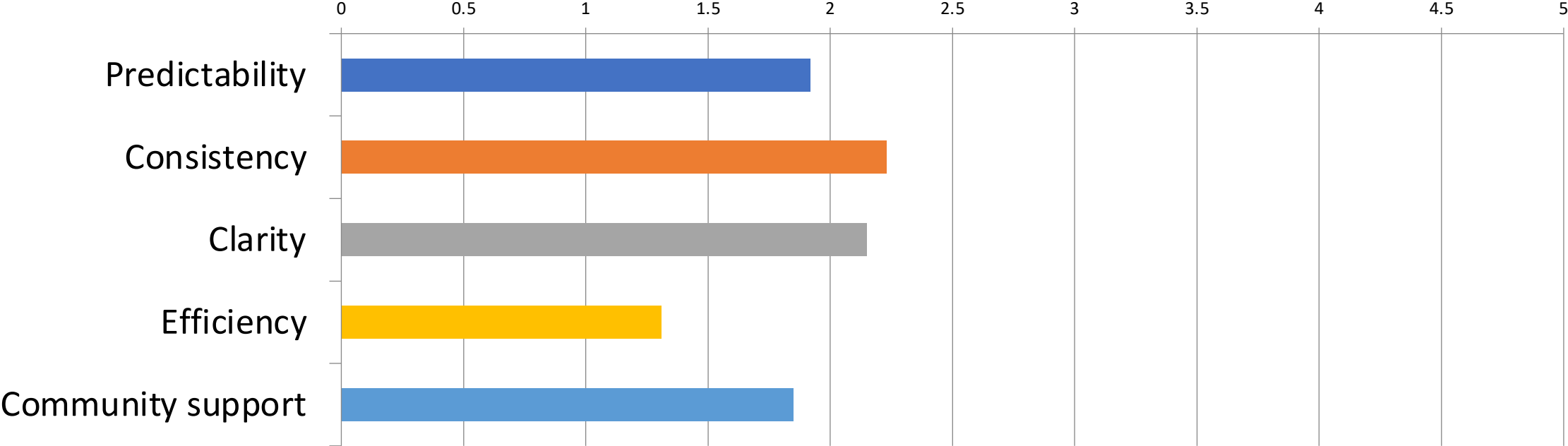
14/24 answered

Q19: How would you rank the value of the following when it comes to regulating land development, use, and buildings (weighted average where 1 is most important and 5 is least important)

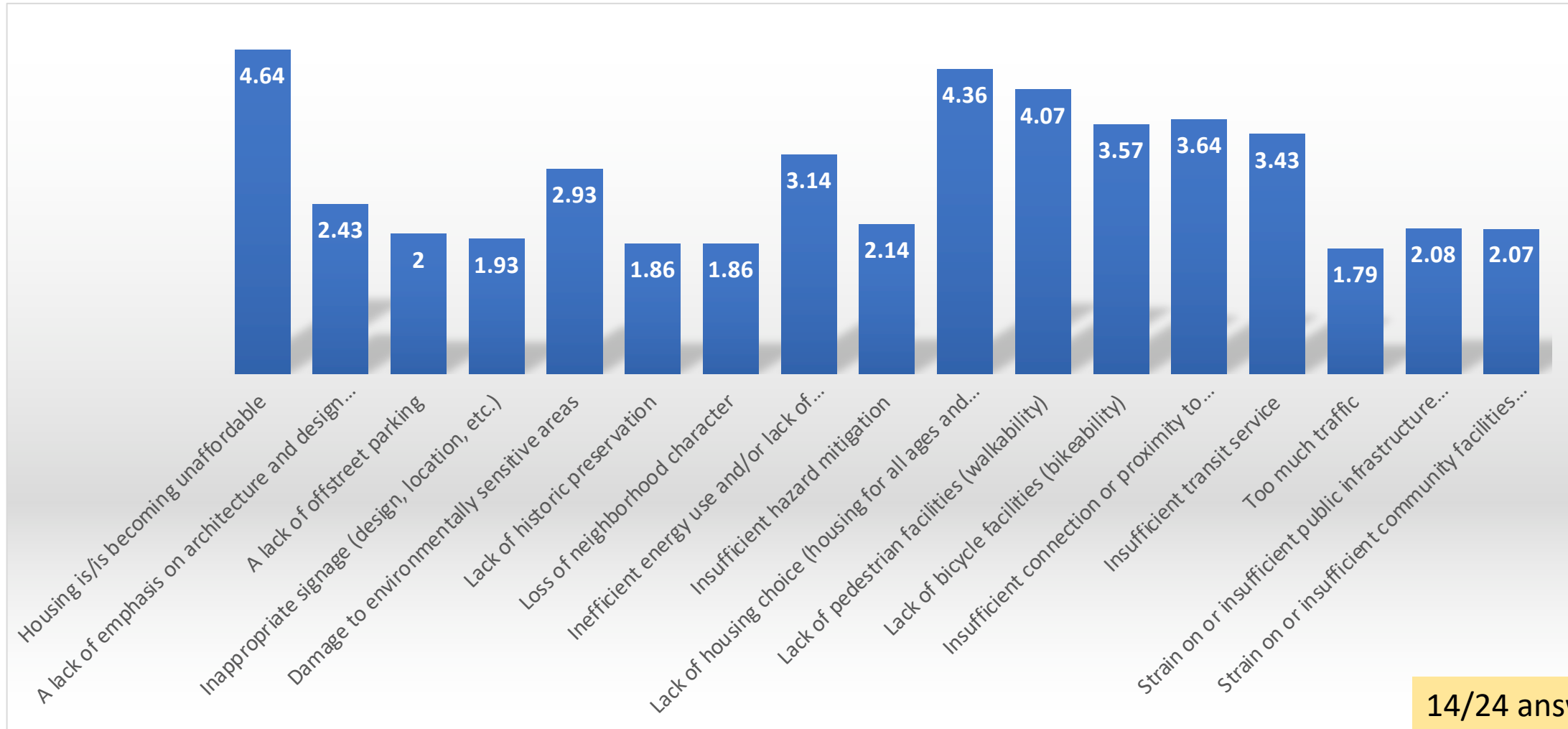


14/24 answered

Q20: How would you rank the LUMO on the same code characteristics?
(weighted average where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent)



Q21: Rate your concern for the following planning issues related to future development in Chapel Hill where 5 is very concerned and 1 is not concerned at all. (weighted average)



Q22: Do you have any other thoughts or suggestions for improvement of the LUMO?

- More predictability for developers
- “...eliminate single-family zoning and create by right development for denser uses in appropriate corridors...”
- **SPEED THIS BABY UP!**
- “Chapel Hill wants more housing, more affordable housing, denser development and the LUMO struggles to deliver those...”
- “Make it easier, cheaper, faster and more predictable to build dense housing!”
- “...redefine zoning districts so that one could do a straight rezoning and hit the marks of the comprehensive plan without having to write out a long list of conditions/modifications...”
- “...allow diverse types of housing infill everywhere.”
- “...make as much development by right as possible”