

# REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES SURVEY

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Conducted for  
The Capitol Region Council of Governments

by



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Capitol Region Council of Governments commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut (CSRA) to conduct a survey regarding regional planning issues, targeting both land use and transportation. CSRA simultaneously conducted surveys in three municipalities, Hartford, West Hartford, and Suffield. These three communities serve as representative examples of urban, suburban, and rural places, respectively.

The central purpose of the surveys was to determine the attitudes of the population of each area regarding issues related to the development of their communities and the surrounding region. Specifically, the impact and location of development within the region was examined, and residents were asked to report their attitudes about the potential ramifications of suburban sprawl, as well as their preferences for growth-related public policies, funding, and tools.

Trained CSRA staff conducted telephone interviews with residents in Hartford, West Hartford, and Suffield. A total of 1209 interviews were completed, with 403 in Hartford, 402 in West Hartford, and 404 in Suffield between November 15, 2000 and December 4, 2000. The sampling error for each of the samples containing approximately 400 cases is  $\pm 5\%$  and larger in comparisons between subgroups. A complete methodology can be found at the end of this report.

Significant findings:

### Allowing growth, preserving community

- **Clear majorities in the three communities think that it is either very important or somewhat important to control suburban sprawl.**
- **Strong support exists for a municipal tax-sharing program.** Eighty percent in Hartford and about seventy percent in West Hartford and Suffield support a plan that would lead to tax sharing on major development projects.
- **Over 70% in each town think it is important that the region has a mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities.**
- **Over 60% of Hartford residents, 76% of West Hartford, and 72% of Suffield residents favor limiting the amount of farmland that can be turned into commercial or housing development.**
- **Over 80% from each community support requiring that new commercial development fit with community character.**
- **Nearly 20% of Suffield residents say that overpopulation and rapid development are problems facing their community.** Only 3% of West Hartford residents and 2% of Hartford residents agree that overpopulation and rapid development are serious problems.
- **Residents of Suffield are more likely to support protecting their area's open space and retaining their environment.** Residents of West Hartford and Hartford, while still supporting measures to protect against over-development and sprawl, are less likely to be strongly supportive of these measures than are residents of Suffield.

## A strong regional center and central city

- **Large majorities in Hartford (91%), West Hartford (89%), and Suffield (82%) think that it is important that Hartford prospers as a vital, central city.**
- **Solid majorities (over 60% in each community) support state government giving funding priority to road, water, and sewer projects in already developed areas rather than in undeveloped areas.**
- **A public policy that would direct most growth to the region's center, such as Hartford and surrounding towns and away from rural areas was supported in Suffield by 65% and in both Hartford and West Hartford by 75%. Support was even higher (over 80% in each town) when asked about directing regional job growth to existing job centers such as downtown Hartford, Bradley International Airport, and regional malls.**

## Transit and transportation options

- **Support for the proposed bus rapid transportation system is strong across the three communities.** Nearly nine in ten Hartford residents, 83% of West Hartford residents, and 77% of Suffield residents support a new bus rapid transportation system. About 10 percent in Hartford and West Hartford oppose the proposed system, along with 17% of Suffield residents.
- **A small majority supports spending more taxpayer money on improving public transportation rather than on building new roads.**
- **Majorities in the three communities rate the public transportation system negatively.** Residents of Suffield are the least likely to rate the public transportation system positively, with only 14% calling it excellent or good.
- **Majorities in Hartford and West Hartford rate the road and highway systems negatively.** Suffield residents are more positive, with half of Suffield residents saying that the road and highway system is fair or poor, as compared to half who rate them excellent or good.
- **Over 60% in each community say that encouraging the use of alternative transportation options, such as walking, biking, and transit are good or excellent reasons for growth polices to limit sprawl.**

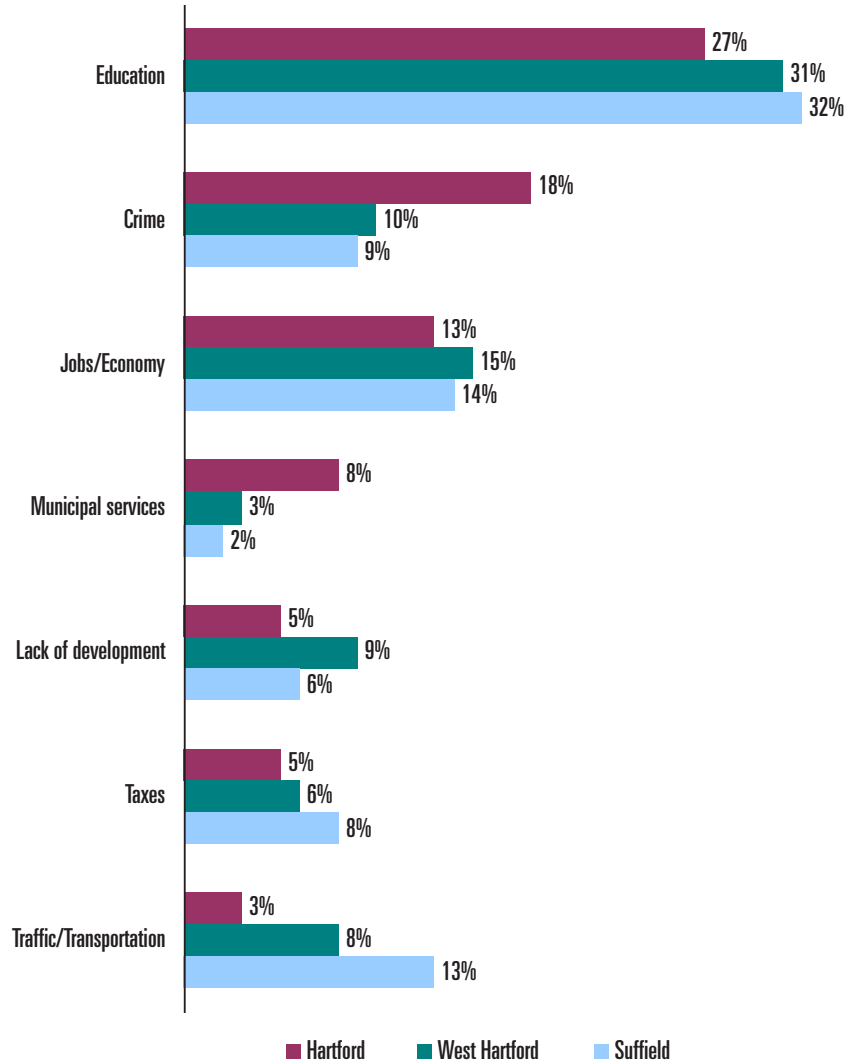
## Housing options

- **Majorities in the three communities support requiring all new housing developments to include a percentage of homes for moderate and low-income families.** Nearly nine out of ten Hartford residents, two-thirds of West Hartford residents, and 65% of Suffield residents support requiring moderate- and low-income housing in new developments.
- **Strong majorities in all three towns (86% in Hartford, 81% in West Hartford, and 65% in Suffield) agree that more places where people can walk, rather than drive, from their home to shops, work, and recreation are needed.**

## ISSUES FACING THE COMMUNITY

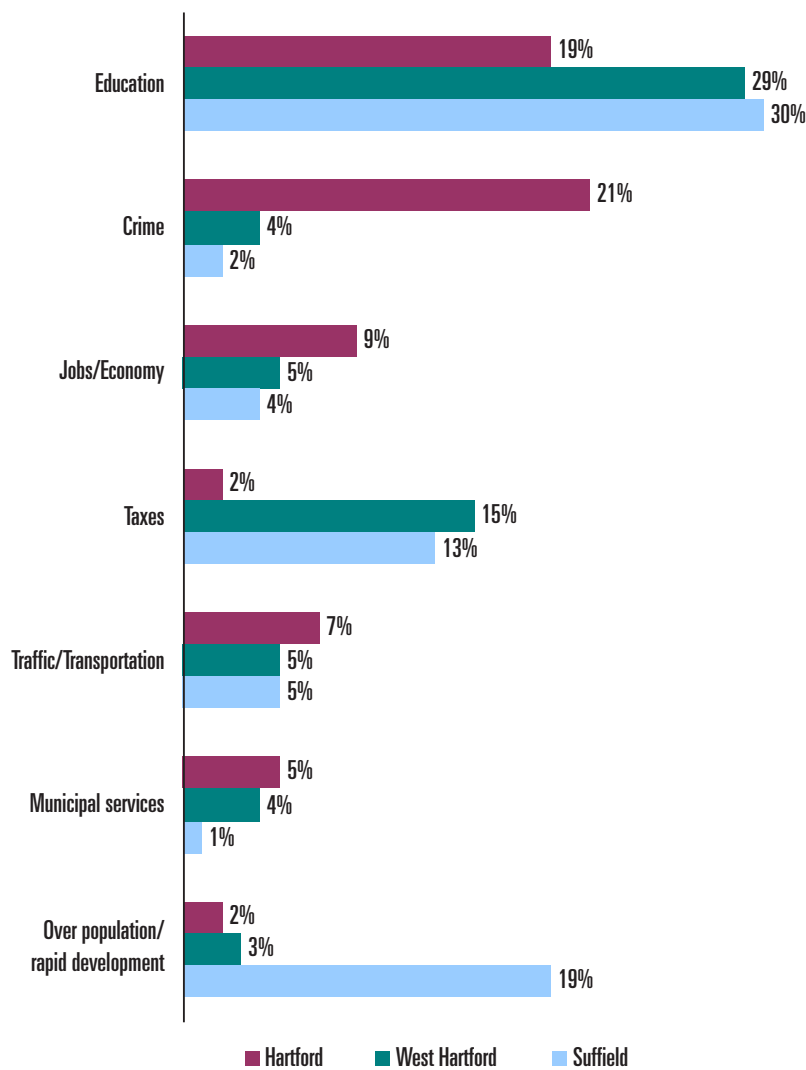
First, residents were asked to name the most important issues facing the Hartford region. Overall, education is considered to be the most important issue facing the region, with 27% of Hartford residents, 31% of West Hartford residents, and 32% of Suffield residents naming it as the most important. Jobs/economy are important to 13% of Hartford residents, 15% of West Hartford residents, and 14% of Suffield residents. Crime was also cited, though more Hartford residents cite crime (18%) than West Hartford residents (10%) and Suffield residents (9%). While no specific development issue rated in the top three, in aggregate development issues like the pace of development and traffic/transportation issues were cited by a significant number of respondents. In addition, municipal services are more of an issue to Hartford residents (8%) than to West Hartford (3%) and Suffield (2%) residents. Traffic and transportation issues are more important to residents of West Hartford (8%) and Suffield (13%) than they are to Hartford residents (3%).

### What are the most important issues facing the Hartford region?



Next, residents were asked about the most important issues facing their own local community. Here again, education receives the top nod from all three communities. Nineteen percent of Hartford residents, 29% of West Hartford residents, and 30% of Suffield residents cite education as one of the most important issues facing the community. After education though, there was some variation among the three communities. Taxes are the second most important issue in West Hartford (15%) and Suffield (13%). However, only two percent of Hartford residents feel that taxes are one of the most important issues. In addition, crime is considered to be an important issue by 21% of the residents of Hartford, while only 4% of West Hartford and 2% of Suffield residents feel the same. Nineteen percent of residents in Suffield report that overpopulation and rapid development are serious problems facing their community, contrasted with residents of West Hartford (3%) and residents of Hartford (2%).

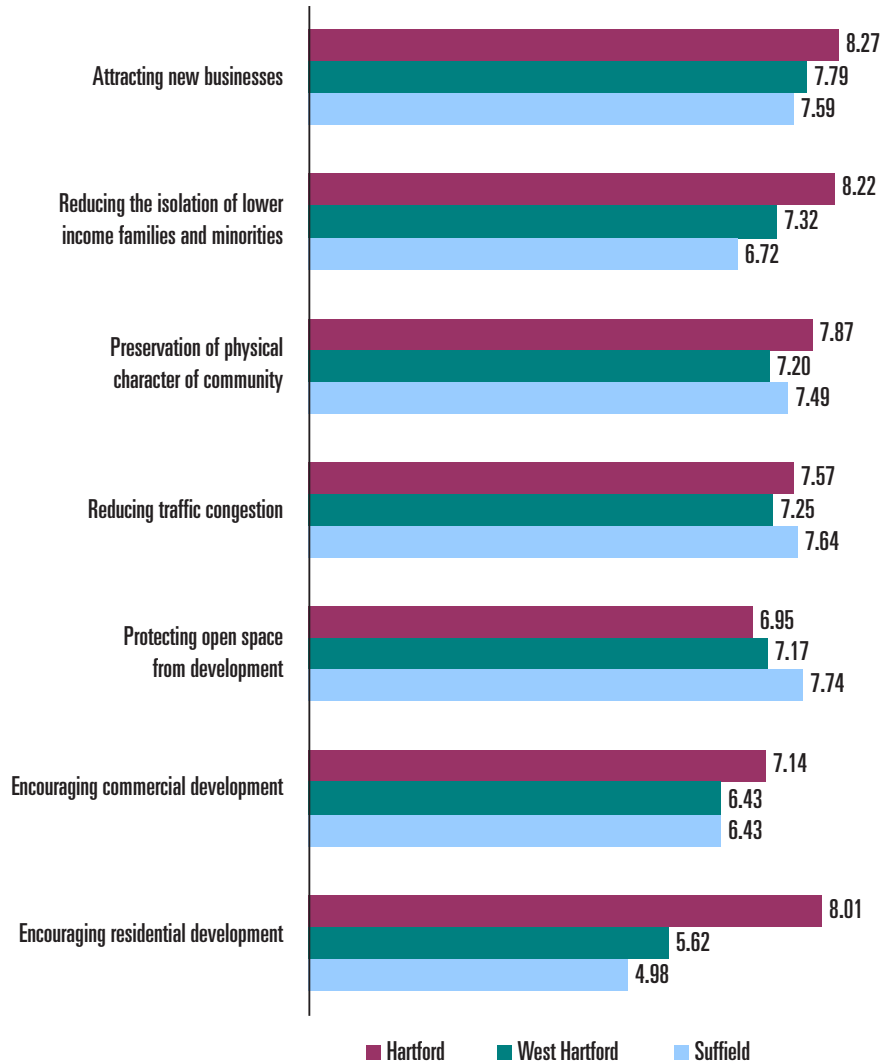
**What are the most important issues facing your local community?**



Several issues that will be facing the greater Hartford region over the next five years were then presented. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of the different issues on a scale of one to ten. The mean responses are reported here. First, respondents were asked about a few staple issues such as education, crime, and taxes. Then they were asked about some more specific local issues such as commercial development in the area and reducing the isolation of lower income families and minorities in the region. **The first set of issues serves as a gauge by which we can measure the other issues, thereby gaining an understanding of how certain issues specific to the Hartford region compare to larger issues.**

Education again receives the top nod, with a mean score of 9.54 among Hartford residents, 9.06 among West Hartford residents, and 9.07 among Suffield residents. Taxes (7.83 in Hartford, 7.21 in West Hartford, and 7.63 in Suffield) and crime (8.92 in Hartford, 8.16 in West Hartford, and 8.19 in Suffield) also garnered high scores in the three regions. The issue of creating jobs registers different levels of importance among residents of the three towns. While creating new jobs is an extremely important issue to Hartford residents (9.03), it is a slightly less important issue to residents in West Hartford (7.97) and in Suffield (7.77). When it comes to the more specific issues in the region, residents in the city of Hartford place more importance on encouraging commercial development (7.14 in Hartford, 6.43 in West Hartford, and 6.43 in Suffield) and encouraging residential development (8.01 in Hartford, 5.62 in West Hartford, and 4.98 in Suffield) than do residents of West Hartford and Suffield. Reducing the isolation of lower income families and minorities is also more important to Hartford residents (8.22) than West Hartford (7.32) and Suffield (6.72) residents. General issues, including education and taxes were asked to provide a point of comparison with specific development issues. General issues, as a rule, poll higher than specific issues.

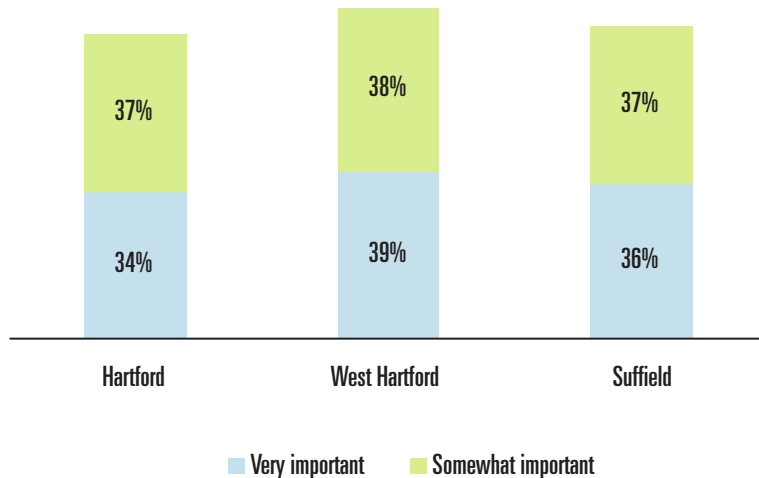
Here are some issues the greater Hartford region will be facing over the next five years. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning not important at all and 10 meaning extremely important, please tell me how important it is for us to address each of the following. Mean scores are shown.



## DEVELOPMENT IN THE HARTFORD REGION

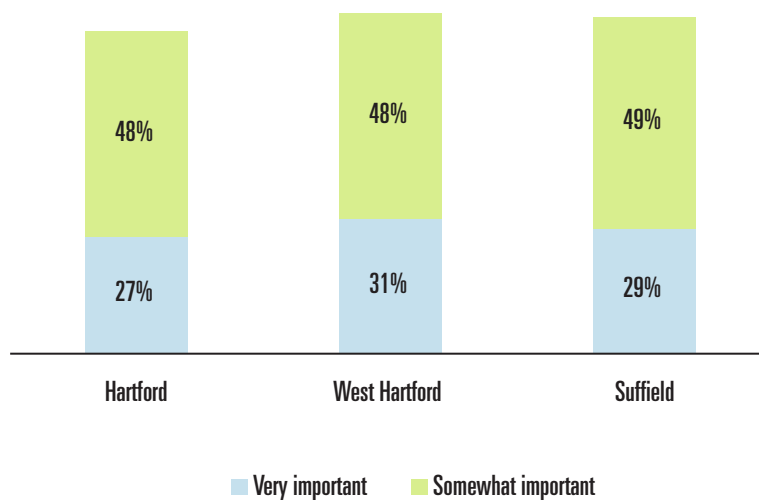
Several questions, designed to determine how residents feel about the style of their own community and surrounding communities, were presented. Majorities in the three areas feel that it is important that the region where they live has a mix of rural, suburban, and urban areas. Seventy-one percent of Hartford residents, 77% of West Hartford residents, and 73% of Suffield residents feel that it is either very or somewhat important to have a mixture of rural, suburban, and urban areas in their region.

### Region you live in has a mix of rural, suburban, and urban communities?



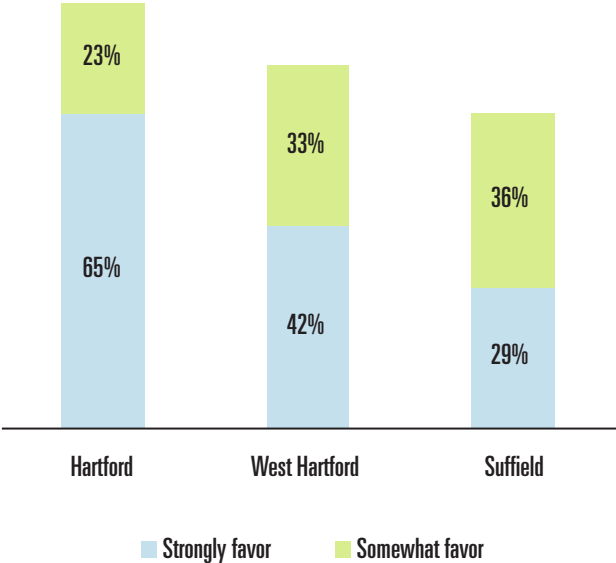
When it comes to the growth and preservation of towns and communities other than the ones they live in, residents of all three areas say this is important to them. Seventy-five percent of Hartford residents, 79% of West Hartford residents, and 78% of Suffield residents say that growth and preservation in other towns is either very important or somewhat important to them.

### Matters of growth and preservation in towns other than your own?



Residents of all three areas favor the notion that all new housing developments built in Connecticut should include a percentage of homes for moderate and low-income families. Residents of Hartford are the most supportive of the measure, with 88% strongly or somewhat favoring it. In addition, 75% of West Hartford residents and 65% of Suffield residents either strongly or somewhat favor this measure.

**Requiring that all new housing developments built in Connecticut include a percentage of homes for moderate and low-income families.**



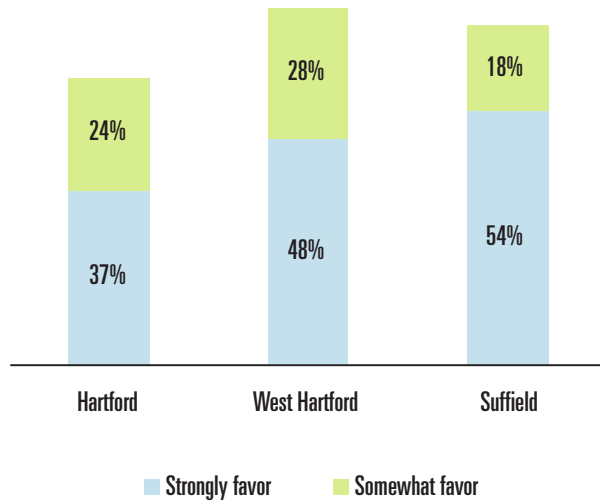
When asked how important it is that Hartford prospers as a vital and central city for the region, residents of Hartford are most likely to think that it is important. Nine out of ten residents there (91%) call it either very or somewhat important. Strong majorities in the other communities feel the same (89% of West Hartford and 82% of Suffield).

**Hartford prospers as a vital and central city for the region?**



When asked how they feel about the idea to limit the amount of farmland that can be used for commercial or housing development, residents of the three communities differ in the strength of their support. Strong majorities in all three communities favor the measure (76% in West Hartford, 72% in Suffield, and 61% in Hartford). While residents of the more rural Suffield are more likely to strongly favor it (54%).

**Placing limits on the amount of farmland that can be turned into commercial/housing development in Connecticut.**

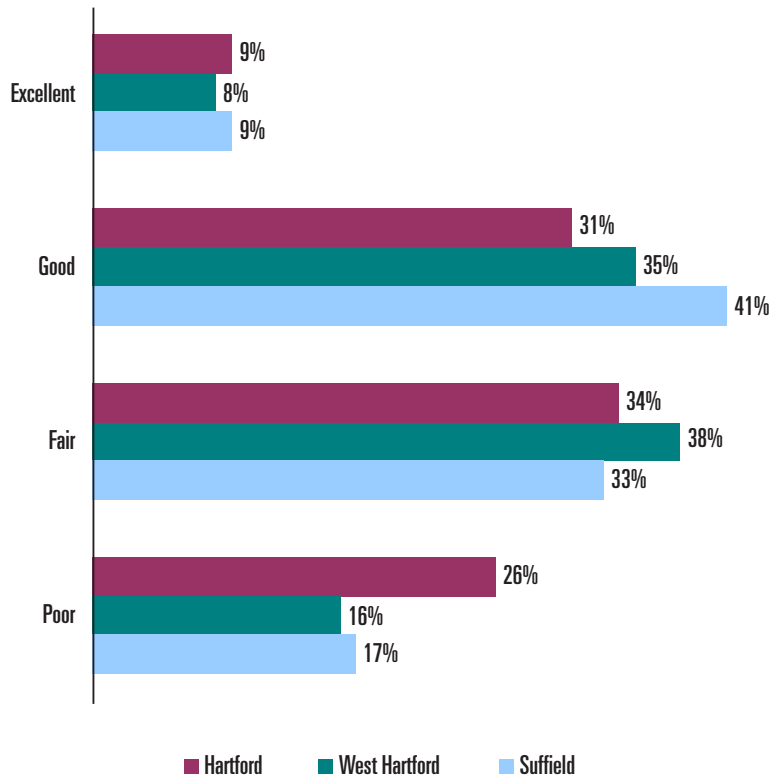


# THE HARTFORD REGION'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Residents were next asked to rate the quality of various aspects of the transportation system in the Hartford region.

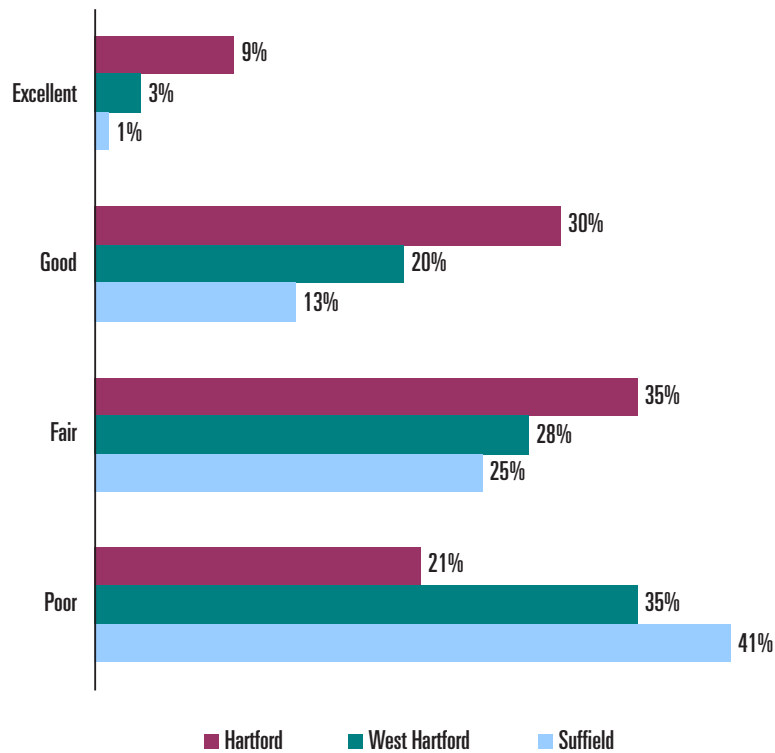
When asked to rate the road and highway system of the region, residents of the three areas are split. Residents of Suffield are divided with half calling the roads excellent or good and the other half calling them fair or poor. A slight majority in West Hartford call the roads fair or poor (54%), with 43% calling them excellent or good. Finally, 60% of Hartford residents rate the roads as being in fair or poor condition, and 40% call them excellent or good.

## The road and highway systems?



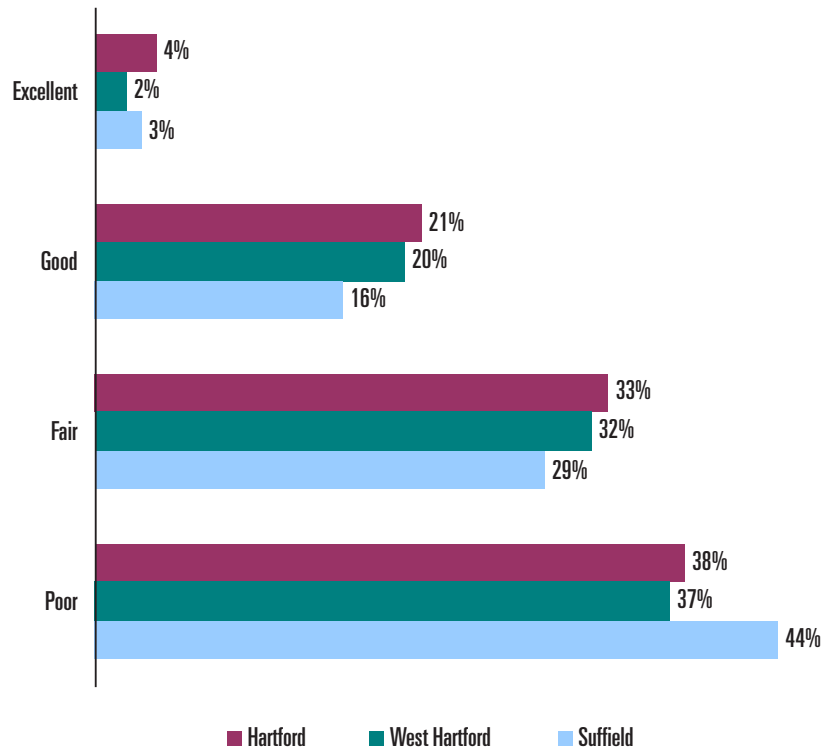
Majorities in the three areas rate the public transportation system in the area negatively. Fifty-six percent of Hartford residents, 63% of West Hartford residents, and 66% of Suffield residents give the transportation system a rating of fair or poor. While 39% of Hartford residents rate it positively, calling it either excellent or good, only 23% of West Hartford and 14% of Suffield residents respond in kind.

**The public transportation system?**



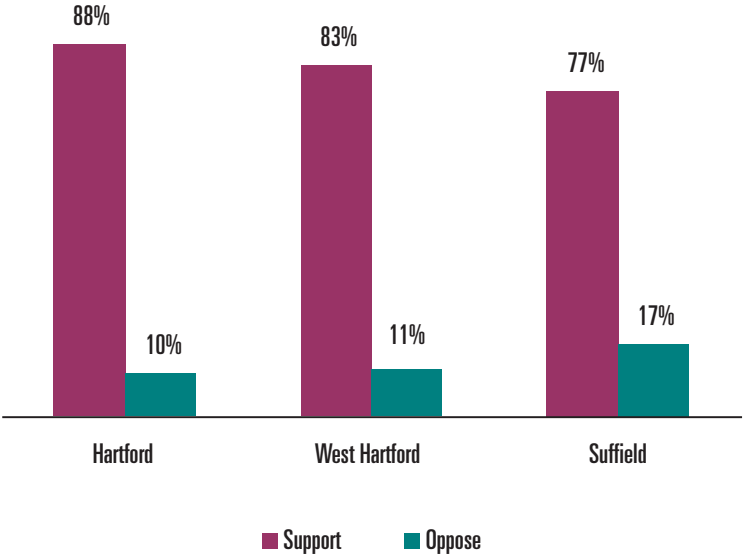
Again, clear majorities rate the transportation system used by bicyclists and pedestrians negatively. Seventy-one percent of Hartford residents, 69% of West Hartford residents, and 73% of Suffield residents rate the transportation system used by cyclists and pedestrians as either fair or poor. A quarter of Hartford residents, along with 22% of West Hartford residents, and 19% of Suffield residents give the system a rating of excellent or good.

**The transportation system when it comes to use by bicyclists and pedestrians?**



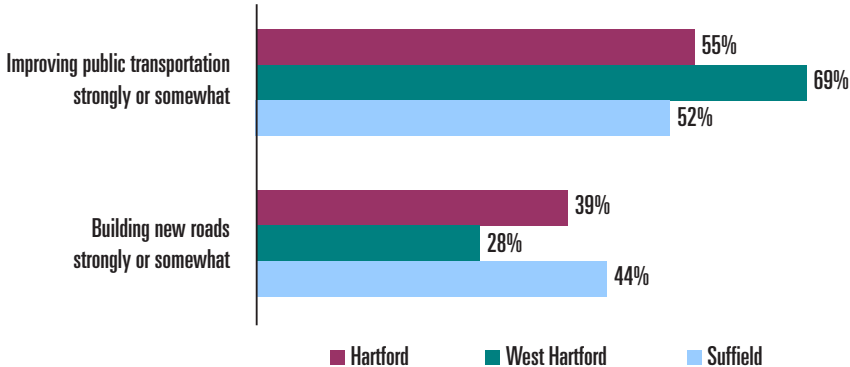
Residents were told of a proposal for a bus rapid transportation system in the region that would run on a dedicated pathway. The proposed system would have station buildings along the route, along with frequently running buses with extended hours. Strong majorities in the three areas support this proposal (88% in Hartford, 83% in West Hartford, and 77% in Suffield). Ten percent in Hartford oppose the measure, along with 11% in West Hartford and 17% in Suffield.

**As you may know, there is a proposal that would create a new system of rapid transit in our region. This system would run on a pathway only for buses and have station buildings. The buses would run frequently and have extended hours. Would you support or oppose this type of transportation investment in the region?**



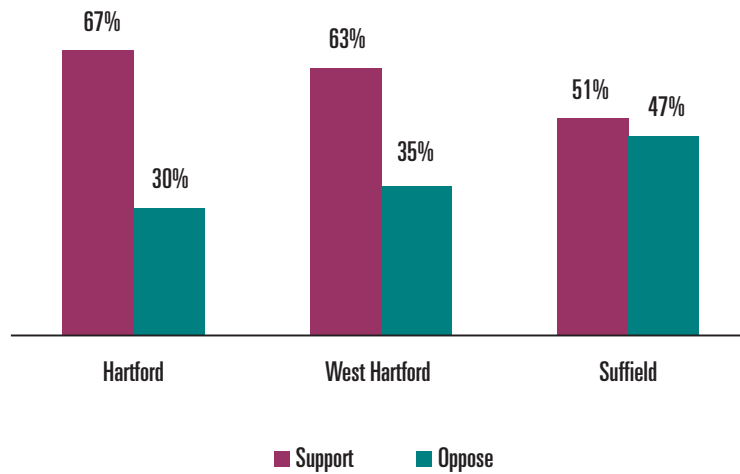
Next, respondents were asked if they support spending taxpayer money on building new roads, or instead using taxpayer money to improve the public transportation system. Majorities in all three areas are more likely support the improvement of the public transportation system. Not surprisingly, Suffield residents are slightly more likely to support spending money to build new roads (44%), compared to 39% of Hartford residents and 28% of West Hartford residents.

**Which do you support more for state government: spending more taxpayer money on improving public transportation, including trains and busses; or spending more taxpayer money on building new roads?**



Sixty-seven percent of Hartford residents, 63% of West Hartford residents, and 51% of Suffield residents support a measure to increase the sales tax by a half a cent to improve the region's public transportation system. However, it is important to keep in mind that this survey took place prior to the most recent economic downturn and the full impact of this downturn is yet to be exhibited. Clearly, Suffield (47%) residents are more likely to oppose such a measure than are residents of both Hartford (30%) and West Hartford (35%).

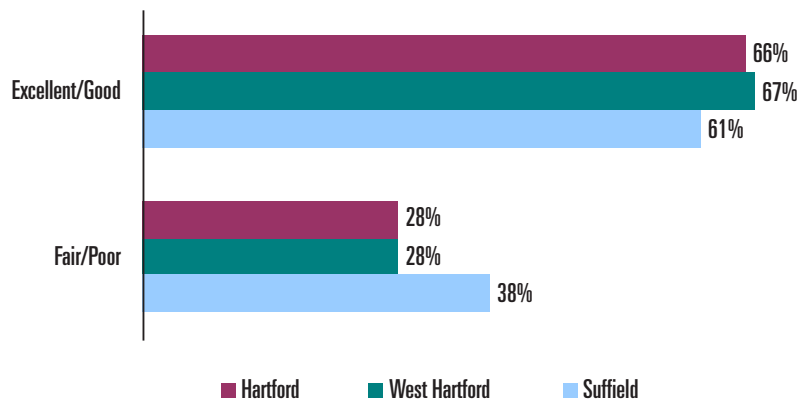
**A half a cent sales tax increase dedicated to improving the region's public transportation system.**



## POLICIES AND TOOLS TO GUIDE GROWTH

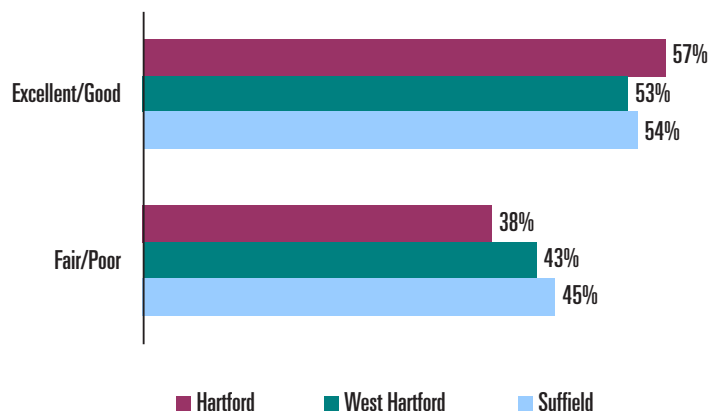
Respondents were asked to consider a series of possible reasons for changing development policies to control suburban sprawl. Residents in the three areas feel that “establishing growth policies to limit suburban sprawl would encourage people to use alternative transportation” is a good reason to change development policies. Sixty-six percent of Hartford residents, 67% of West Hartford residents, and 61% of Suffield residents think that this idea is an excellent or good reason to change policy. Residents in Suffield are the most likely to think that the idea is not a good reason to change policy, with 38% of respondents calling the idea fair or poor.

**Establishing growth policies that limit “suburban sprawl” would encourage the use of alternative transportation options, such as walking, biking, or public transportation use.**



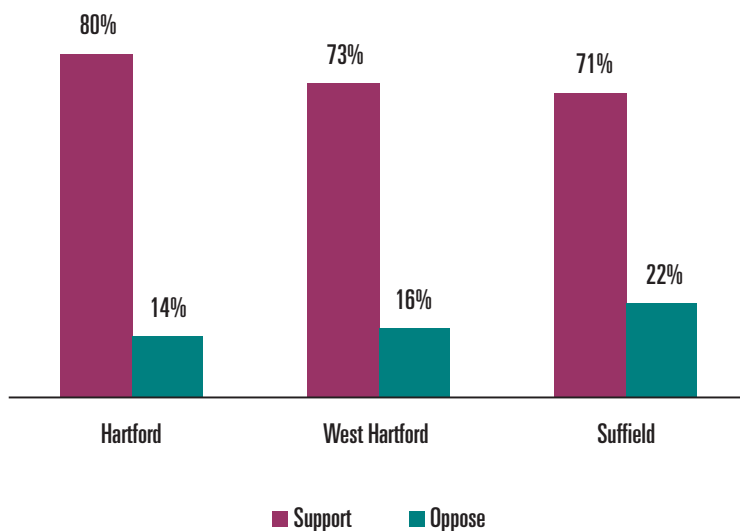
Next, residents were asked if they believe that establishing growth policies that limit sprawl would provide a greater sense of community. Here, small majorities in all three areas believe that the idea is an excellent or good reason to alter development policies. Fifty-seven percent of Hartford residents, 53% of West Hartford residents, and 54% of Suffield residents call the idea an excellent or good reason to control sprawl.

**Establishing growth polices that limit “suburban sprawl” will provide a greater sense of community.**



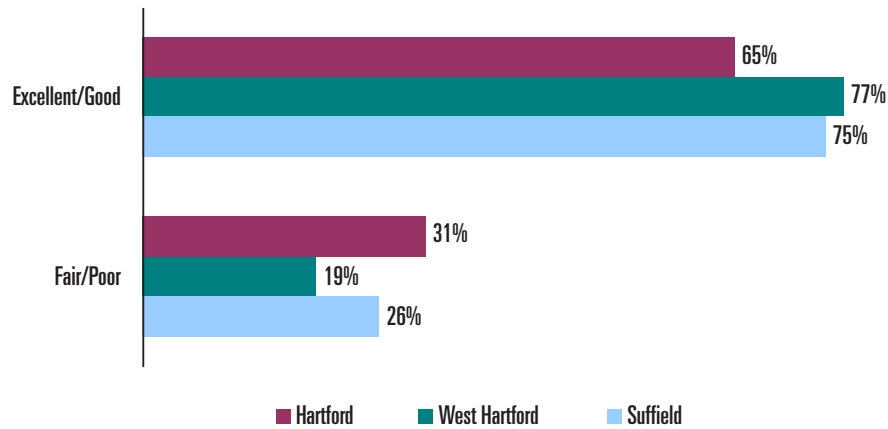
A measure that would allow for regional tax-sharing on major new developments is also generally supported by Hartford area residents. The measure would mean that each town would not have to seek new development in order to increase their local tax base. Hartford residents are most likely to support the idea (80%), along with seventy-three percent of West Hartford residents, and 71% of Suffield residents.

**Your town participating in municipal tax sharing on major development projects where the impacts of the project would also be felt by surrounding areas so that each town does not need to seek new development to increase its local tax base?**



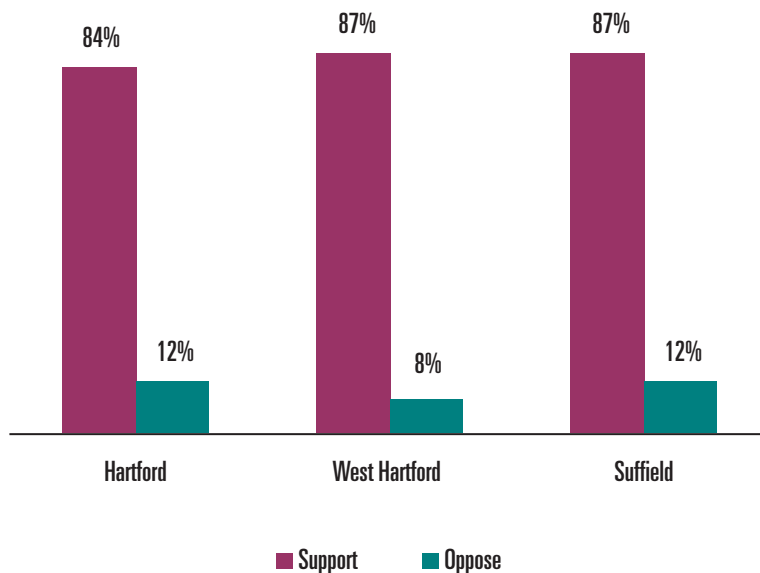
Citizens of the Hartford region seem to be concerned about the effect that suburban sprawl would have on the environment. When asked if they believe that controlling sprawl would protect the environment is a good reason to change policy, substantial majorities in Hartford (65%), West Hartford (77%) and Suffield (75%) say they feel that it is an excellent or good reason.

**Establishing growth polices that control “suburban sprawl” will protect the environment.**



Residents were also presented with the possibility of requiring that new commercial development fit with the character of the community. Strong majorities of residents in all three areas support the measure. In fact, 84% of Hartford residents, 87% of West Hartford residents, and 87% of Suffield residents support a measure that would require new business to fit the existing character of the community.

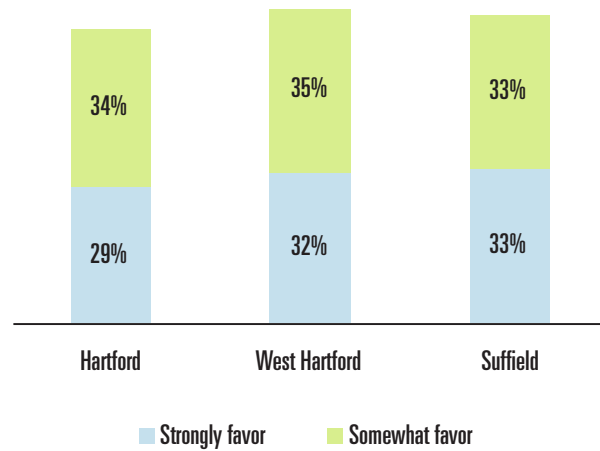
**Requiring that new commercial development fit with the character of the community?**



Residents were presented with the idea of reducing property taxes for homeowners in Connecticut by increasing the income and sales taxes in the state. In an unusual finding, majorities of residents in West Hartford (58%) and Suffield (63%) oppose the idea of increasing income and sales taxes in exchange for lower property taxes. This is in contrast to residents of Hartford, where a majority (55%) favor the increased income and sales tax in exchange for lower property taxes.

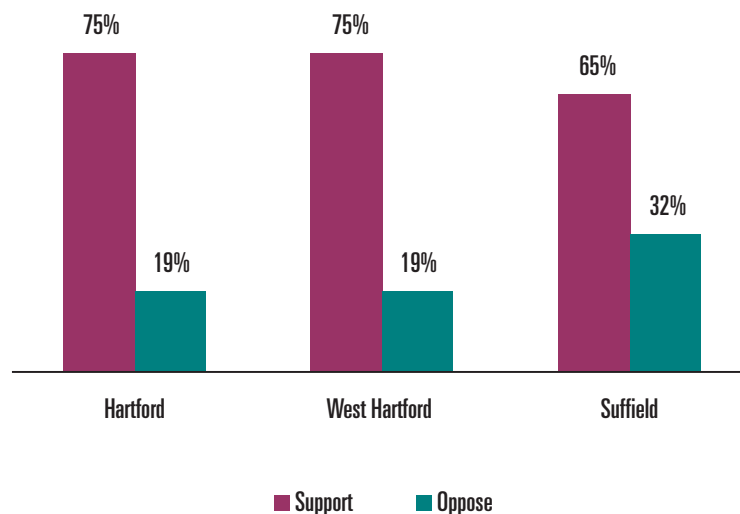
Next, residents were asked their opinion on government funding for road, water, and sewer projects. Residents were asked if they preferred that funding for these projects be prioritized to already developed areas of the region instead of for projects in undeveloped areas. Here, residents of the three areas concur, with about two-thirds in each area favoring projects for already developed areas (63% in Hartford, 67% in West Hartford, and 66% in Suffield), and about a quarter to three-in-ten in each area opposing the idea (30% in Hartford, 24% in West Hartford, and 24% in Suffield).

**Having state government give funding priority to road, water and sewers projects in already developed areas of the region rather than in undeveloped areas.**



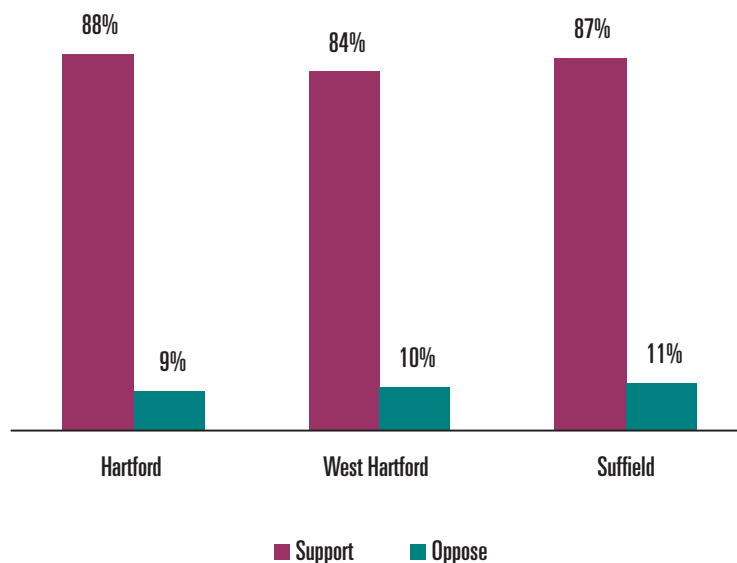
Most of the residents in the three areas support a public policy measure that would direct most growth to the region’s centers, such as Hartford and its surrounding towns, and away from outer rural areas. Seventy-five percent of the residents of both Hartford and West Hartford and 65% of Suffield residents support such a policy.

**A public policy that would direct most growth to the region’s center, such as Hartford and surrounding towns, and away from outer rural areas.**



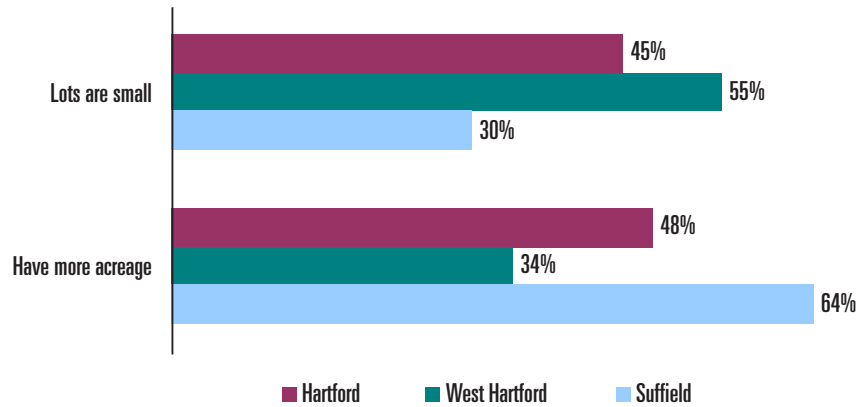
Residents overwhelmingly support a measure that would focus major job growth in existing job centers like downtown Hartford, Bradley International Airport, and the regional malls. Eighty-eight percent of Hartford residents, 84% of West Hartford residents, and 87% of Suffield residents either strongly or somewhat support such a measure.

**Focusing major regional job growth activity around existing job centers such as downtown Hartford, Bradley International Airport, and regional malls.**



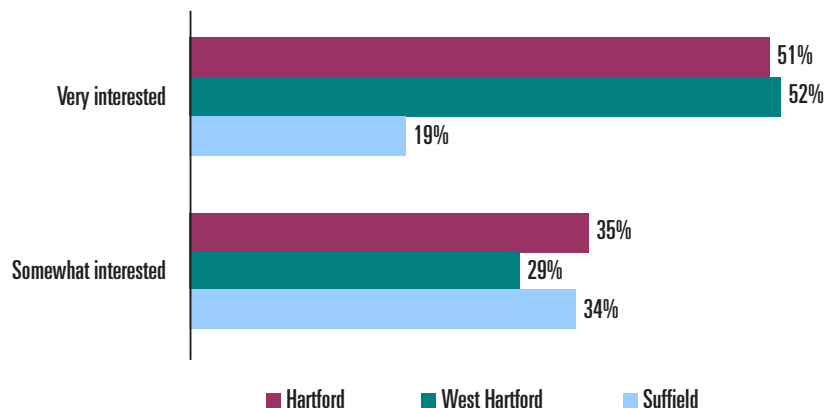
When asked if they prefer to live in an area where residential lots are small but there is more open space, or if they prefer to have houses with more acreage and less surrounding open space, residents of the three areas register somewhat different opinions. Hartford residents are evenly split over this idea, with 45% preferring smaller lots and 48% preferring more acreage. A small majority of West Hartford residents prefer small lots (55%), with 34% preferring more acreage. Finally, a majority of Suffield residents (64%) prefer more acreage while a minority (30%) prefer smaller lots.

**In thinking about what type of residential place you want to live in, would you prefer to live where residential lots are small and there is more open space or to have a house with more acreage and your neighbors are farther away but there is less open space.**



Similarly, residents of all three areas were asked if they would be interested in living in a neighborhood where the lots are smaller, but where the homes are in walking distance to stores and playgrounds. Just over half of Hartford (51%) and West Hartford (52%) residents are very interested. In contrast, only 19% of Suffield residents say that they are very interested in living in such a neighborhood, and an additional 34% are somewhat interested.

**Many older neighborhoods have smaller lots but the homes are within walking distance to stores and playgrounds. Would say you would be very interested, somewhat interested, not too interested or not at all interested in living in this type of neighborhood?**

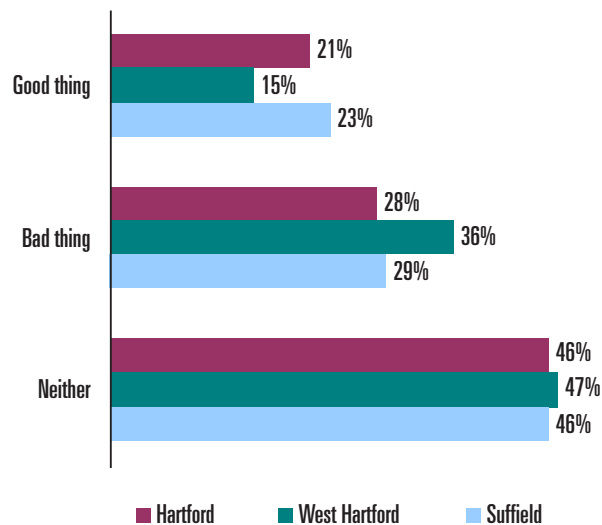


## VIEWS ON SUBURBAN SPRAWL

Suburban sprawl is the term used to refer to new developments built on land that was farmland or open space. It results in the increased use of automobile travel due to the fact that things are more widely spaced out. Residents of the greater Hartford area are facing the issue along with residents of communities throughout the nation.

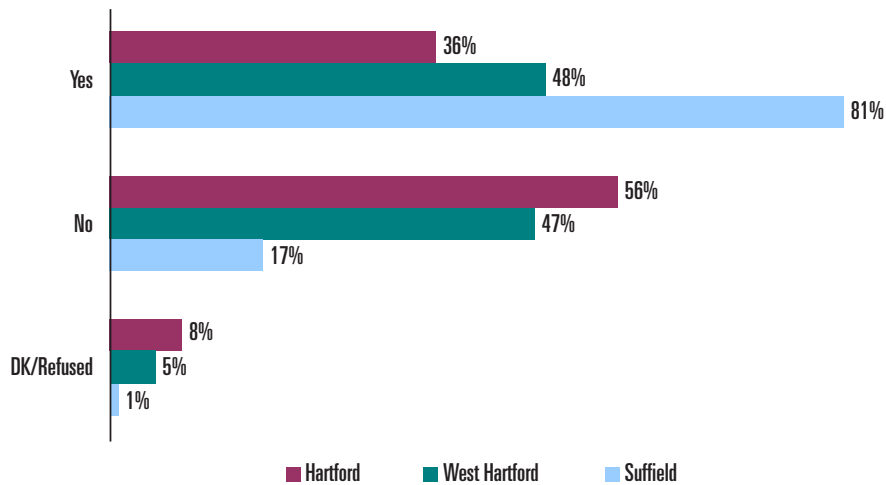
Residents in all three communities do not have strong attitudes when it comes to suburban sprawl, with many residents in all areas saying that it is neither a good or bad thing. West Hartford residents are less likely to deem suburban sprawl a good thing (15%) than residents of Hartford (21%) and Suffield (23%). In addition, residents of West Hartford are more likely to think that suburban sprawl is a bad thing (36%) than are residents of Hartford (28%) and Suffield (29%). These results show that “suburban sprawl” is not considered innately positive or negative, but rather respondents view the specific effects as either positive or negative.

**The term “suburban sprawl” refers to new development generally built on land that was farmland or open space that is spread out and requires people to use their cars to get to most places. In your opinion, is “suburban sprawl” a good thing, a bad thing, or neither?**

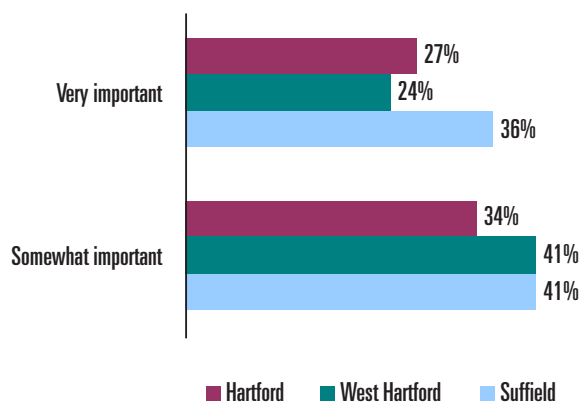


Place of residence appears to have an impact when residents were asked if they believe that suburban sprawl is happening in the area where they live. Hartford residents are the least likely to think that suburban sprawl is happening in their area, with 36% responding yes. This is compared to nearly half of West Hartford residents who believe that suburban sprawl is happening in their community (48%), and eight in ten (81%) Suffield residents who think that suburban sprawl is affecting their community. It is not all that surprising then that residents of Suffield are more likely to support controlling suburban sprawl, with 77% calling it either very important or somewhat important. Sixty-one percent of Hartford residents and 65% of West Hartford residents concur.

**Would you say “suburban sprawl” is happening in the area of Connecticut in which you live?**

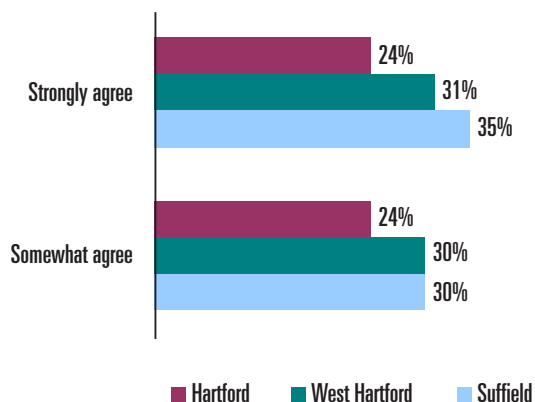


**Compared to other issues you are concerned about, how important is controlling “suburban sprawl” in Connecticut to you personally: very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?**



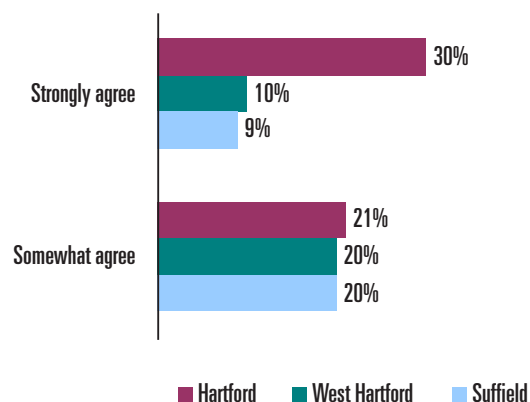
Respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with several statements concerning suburban sprawl. First, respondents were asked if they would be in favor of controlling suburban sprawl despite the fact that a measure such as this would mean that people would have fewer places to live due to decreased development. Hartford residents are the least likely to agree that fewer places to live is an acceptable trade-off for controlling sprawl (48% agree somewhat or strongly). West Hartford and Suffield residents, on the other hand, are more likely to accept the notion that they might have fewer places to live if sprawl were to be controlled. Sixty-one percent of West Hartford residents agree with the statement somewhat or strongly, as do 65% of Suffield residents.

**I would favor controlling “suburban sprawl”, even if it meant there were fewer places where new homes could be built and therefore fewer choices of where I could live.**



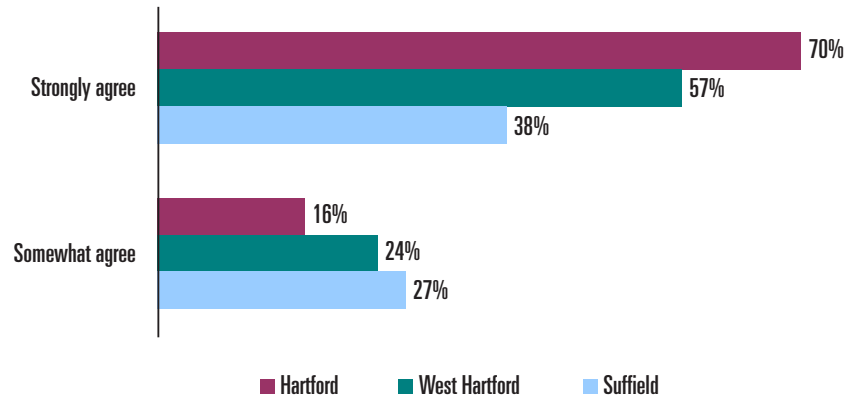
In addition, few residents agree that there is plenty of open space in Connecticut, so the state can afford to lose some to new housing developments. Suffield and West Hartford residents are unlikely to agree that Connecticut could afford to lose some of its open land to housing developments (29% in Suffield and 30% in West Hartford). A slight majority in Hartford (51%) thinks that Connecticut could afford to lose some open land to new housing developments.

**We have plenty of open space, so we can afford to lose some to new housing developments.**



Majorities in all three communities agree that the region needs more places where people can walk from their homes to recreational activities, shops, and offices. Hartford residents are most likely to agree strongly or somewhat with this idea (86%), along with 81% of West Hartford residents and 65% of Suffield residents. This again suggests that residents of Hartford want increased development, built in places that are easily accessible. This sentiment is echoed among most residents of West Hartford. In Suffield, a majority (65%) supports development that allows people to walk to recreation, shops, and offices.

**We need more places where people can walk from their homes to recreation, shops and stores and offices instead of having to drive.**



Respondents were also presented with several reasons some people give for allowing suburban sprawl. One reason people give is it gives people greater choices of where to live. A slight majority of Suffield residents think that giving people greater choice of where to live is an excellent or good reason for allowing sprawl (54%). Forty-seven percent of West Hartford residents respond in kind, as do 57% of Hartford residents.

**It gives people greater choices of where to live.**



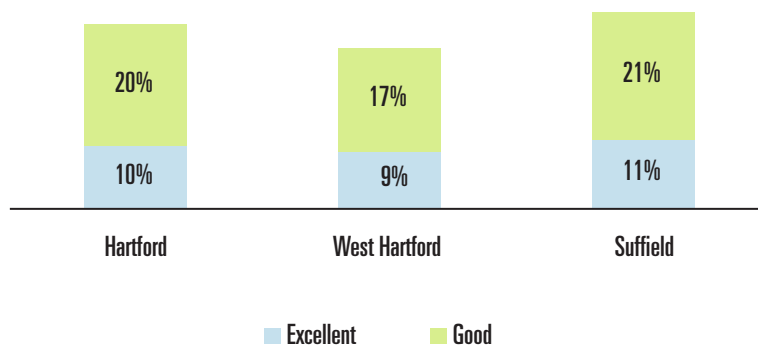
When asked to rate another reason, the idea “suburban sprawl enables people to get closer to nature,” a minority of respondents in each of the three communities believes this is an excellent or good reason for allowing sprawl. Forty-five percent of Hartford residents call the idea an excellent or good reason to allow suburban sprawl. Thirty-two percent of West Hartford residents and 40% of Suffield residents say the same.

**It enables people to get closer to nature.**



Finally, respondents were asked whether or not they think that controlling suburban sprawl would require too much government interference in their lives and is therefore a reason to allow suburban sprawl. Clear majorities in all three areas believe that this idea is a fair or poor reason for allowing suburban sprawl to continue (65% in Hartford, 70% in West Hartford, and 64% in Suffield). West Hartford residents are the least likely to think that the possibility of increased government intervention is a excellent or good reason to allow sprawl (26%), while 30% of Hartford residents and 32% of Suffield residents think so.

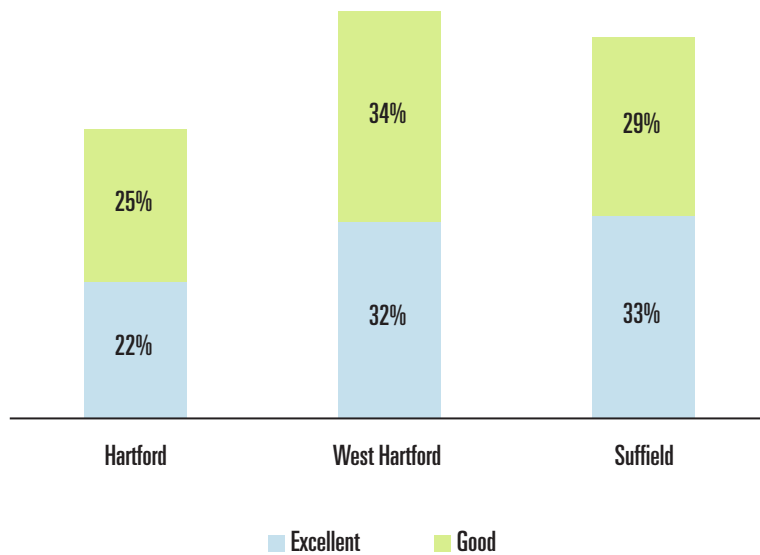
**Controlling “suburban sprawl” will require too much government interference in our lives.**



Residents were presented with a series of reasons why suburban sprawl should **not** be allowed, and asked to state whether they believe each is an excellent, good, fair, or poor reason to prohibit suburban sprawl.

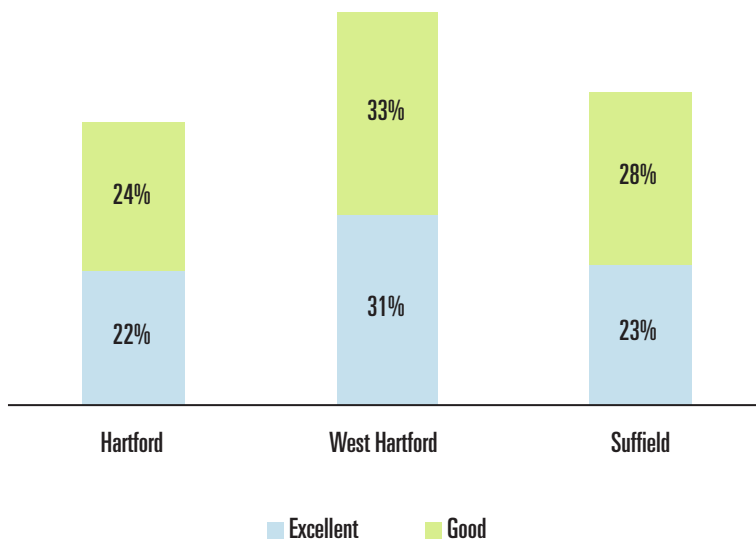
Majorities in both West Hartford (66%) and Suffield (62%) feel that the idea that suburban sprawl eliminates Connecticut's open space is an excellent or good reason for not allowing it. Hartford residents, on the other hand, are split when presented with this idea. Forty-seven percent of residents call the idea an excellent or good reason to not allow suburban sprawl, while 50% of residents think that it is a fair or poor reason.

**It eliminates Connecticut's open space.**



Residents of West Hartford are most likely to be concerned with the fact that suburban sprawl creates more traffic congestion. Sixty-four percent of residents in West Hartford called the idea an excellent or good reason to control sprawl. A slight majority in Suffield (51%), and almost half of Hartford residents (46%) also call the reason an excellent or good one.

**It creates more traffic congestion.**



In addition, residents in the three areas feel that the idea that taxpayer costs increase as a result of sprawl is a good reason to control it. Forty-five percent in Hartford, 49% in West Hartford, and 47% in Suffield call the idea either an excellent or good reason to control sprawl.

**It means higher taxpayer costs as communities must pay for new services.**



Residents of Hartford are slightly less likely to think that suburban sprawl should be controlled because it hurts established suburbs and cities by encouraging people to abandon them. While 41% of Suffield residents and 42% of West Hartford residents call the idea an excellent or good reason to control sprawl, fewer (36%) Hartford residents feel the same.

**It hurts established suburbs and cities by encouraging people to abandon them.**



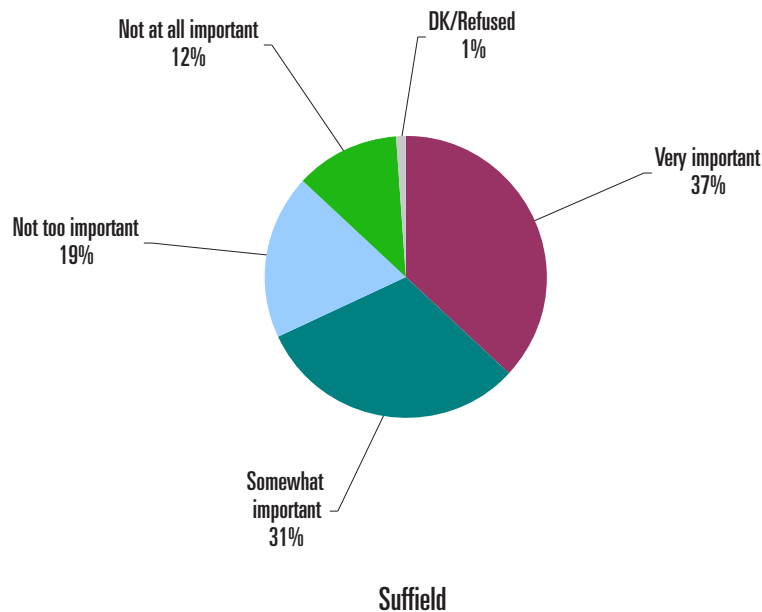
## SPECIFIC TOWN ISSUES

The survey also contained several questions that are specific to each of the municipalities that were studied. Suffield residents were asked a series of six questions dealing with issues facing their town. In addition, West Hartford residents were asked four questions specific to their area and Hartford residents were asked three questions addressing Hartford issues.

### Suffield

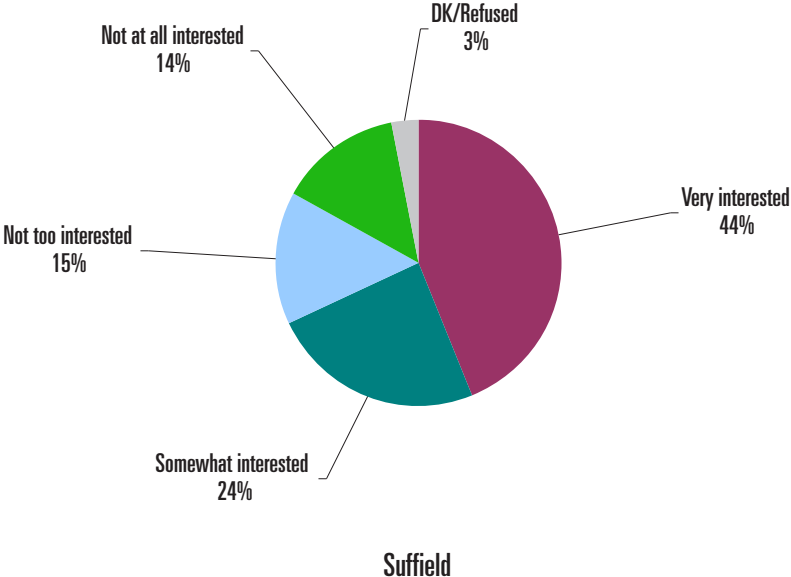
It is clear that reducing the volume of traffic flowing through the town center is an important issue to residents of Suffield. More than two-thirds (68%) of Suffield residents believe that reducing the amount of traffic that travels through the town center along Route 75 is an important issue. Only about three-in-ten say that reducing the traffic flow through the town is not too important (19%) or not at all important (12%) to them.

**Reducing the amount of traffic that travels through the town center along Route 75? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to you?**



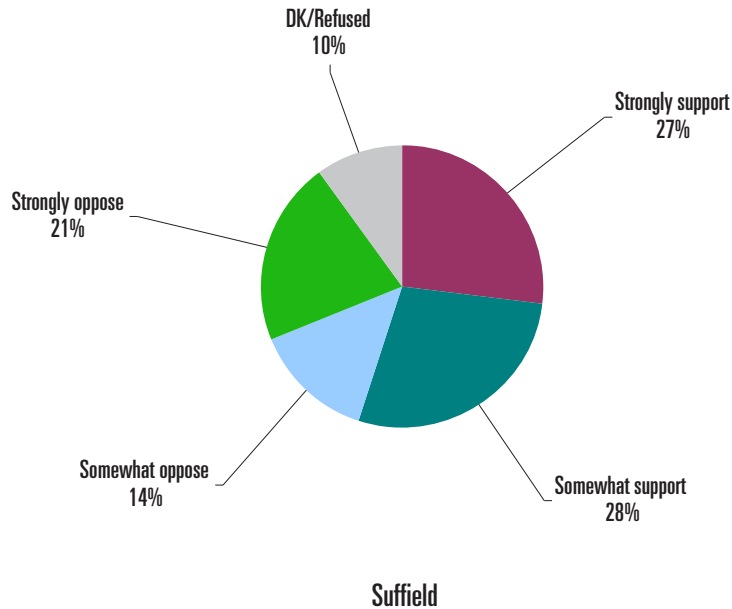
When respondents were asked about their interest in constructing a road to divert airport traffic away from the town center, 44% say they are very interested in this idea. In addition, another quarter (24%) say that they are somewhat interested in this idea, while 15% are not too interested. Only 14% of Suffield residents say that they are not at all interested in this idea.

**Constructing a road to divert airport traffic away from the town center?**



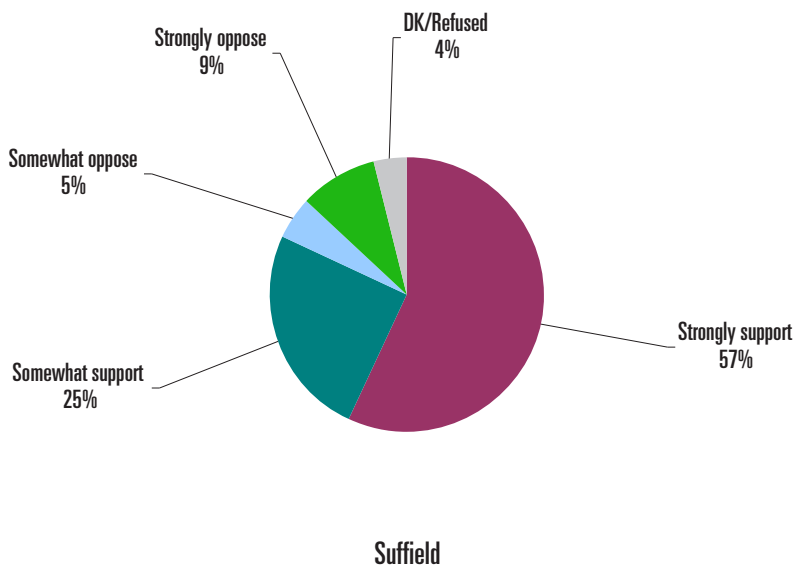
When it comes to the issue of new development, Suffield residents are somewhat split as to whether they would rather the development be built like small villages or in the usual subdivisions. A slight majority (55%) would prefer the small village plan rather than the traditional subdivisions. Just over a third of the residents (35%) oppose the small village plan and 10% are unsure.

**Would you support or oppose encouraging some of the new development in Suffield be built like small villages rather than the usual subdivisions?**



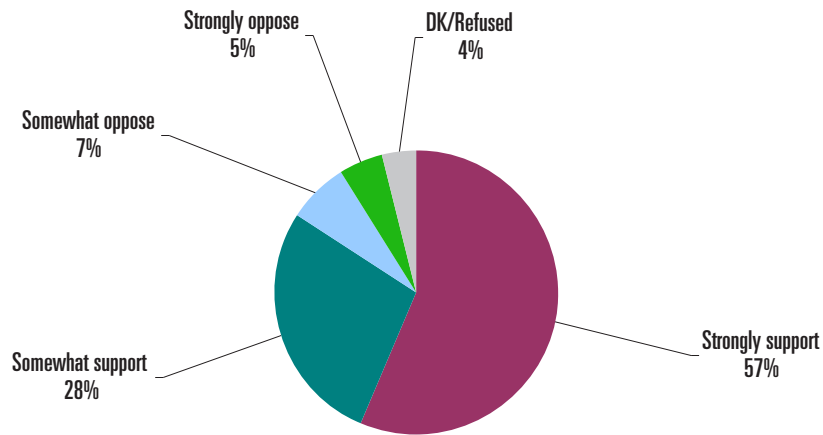
Suffield residents overwhelmingly support having sidewalks built in new subdivisions. In fact, 82% either strongly (57%) or somewhat (25%) support building sidewalks in the new subdivisions. Only 14% of the town's residents are opposed to the building of sidewalks.

**Would you support or oppose having sidewalks built in new subdivisions?**



The vast majority (88%) of Suffield residents say they would support efforts to coordinate airport-related business development and share tax revenue among Windsor, Suffield, Windsor Locks, and East Granby (the towns in which the airport is located). Fifty-seven percent of Suffield residents would strongly support such efforts and another 28% would somewhat support them. Only 12% of residents are opposed to this idea.

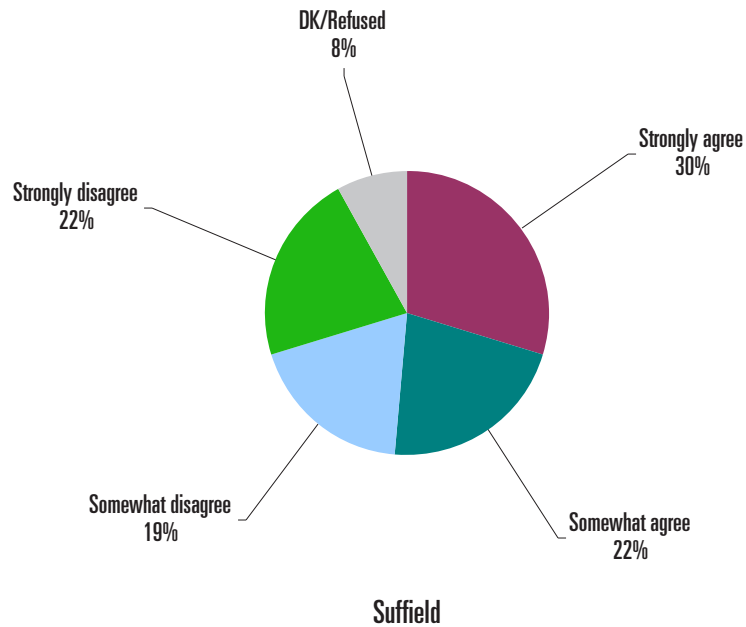
**As you know, Bradley airport is located in four towns: Windsor, Suffield, Windsor Locks, and East Granby. Would you support or oppose efforts to coordinate airport-related business development and share tax revenue between these four towns?**



Suffield

Residents of the town of Suffield were then asked to anticipate what effect, if any, certain improvements to the town center would have on its commercial viability. Asked whether they agree or disagree that Suffield town center would be a better commercial area if there were cross walks, decorative lighting, and parking lots located behind rather than in front of stores, just over half agree (strongly - 30% and somewhat - 22%). On the other hand, a substantial minority (31%) disagrees that such improvements will make Suffield town center a better commercial area.

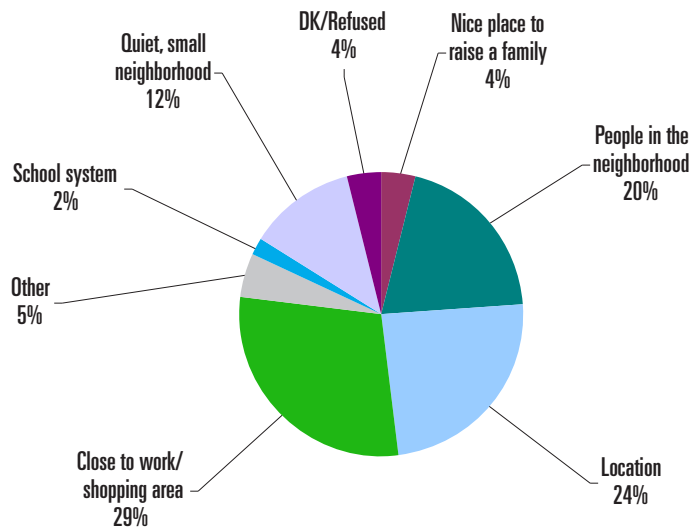
**Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement. Suffield town center would be a better commercial area if there were cross walks, decorative lighting, and parking lots located behind rather than in front of stores.**



## West Hartford

When West Hartford residents were asked to name what they like best about the neighborhood they live in, the location and the neighbors were at the top of the list. About three-in-ten (29%) respondents say that being close to their work and to the shopping areas is what they like best about their neighborhood. Similarly, another quarter (24%) say that the location in general is the best thing, while 20% say that it is the people who make the neighborhood appealing. Being a quiet, small neighborhood was the best thing for 12% of the respondents, and being a nice place to raise a family (4%) and the schools (2%) were also mentioned.

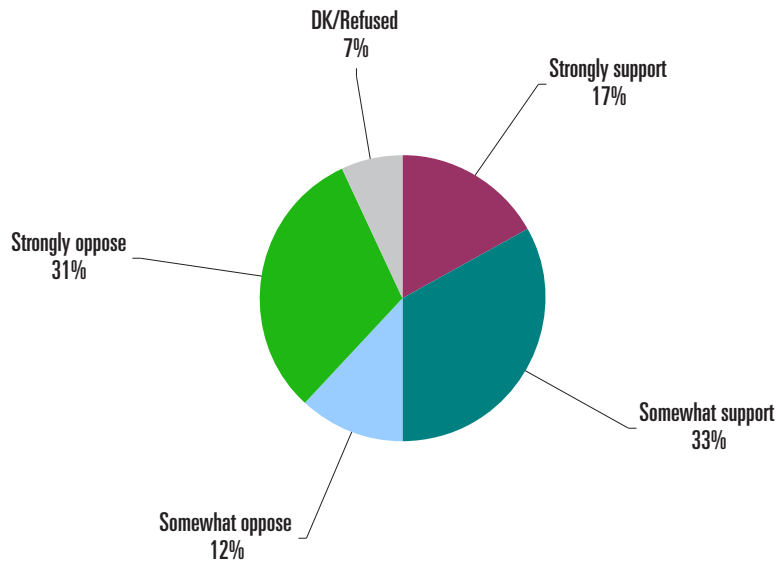
### Overall, what do you like best about the neighborhood you live in?



West Hartford

Overall, half of the West Hartford respondents say they support building additional condos or apartments within walking distance to the West Hartford Center. While a third (33%) somewhat support this idea, about half as many (17%) strongly support it. Forty-three percent of respondents are opposed to this idea, 31% of them strongly and 12% somewhat.

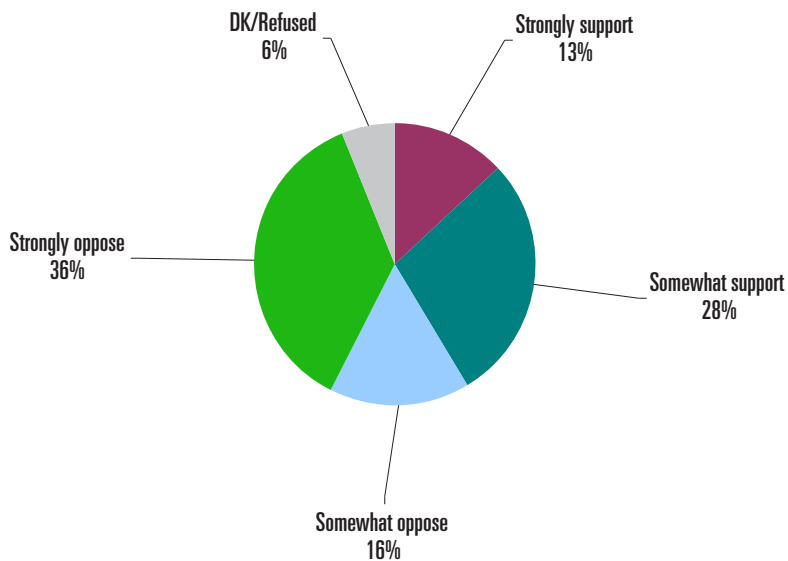
**In general, do you support or oppose building additional condos or apartments within walking distance to the West Hartford Center?**



**West Hartford**

Next, West Hartford residents were asked how they feel about allowing three to five story buildings in the West Hartford Center. Just over half (52%) of the town's residents are opposed to this, 16% are somewhat opposed and 36% are strongly opposed. Four-in-ten (41%) residents do support allowing the buildings; 13% strongly support this idea and 28% somewhat support it.

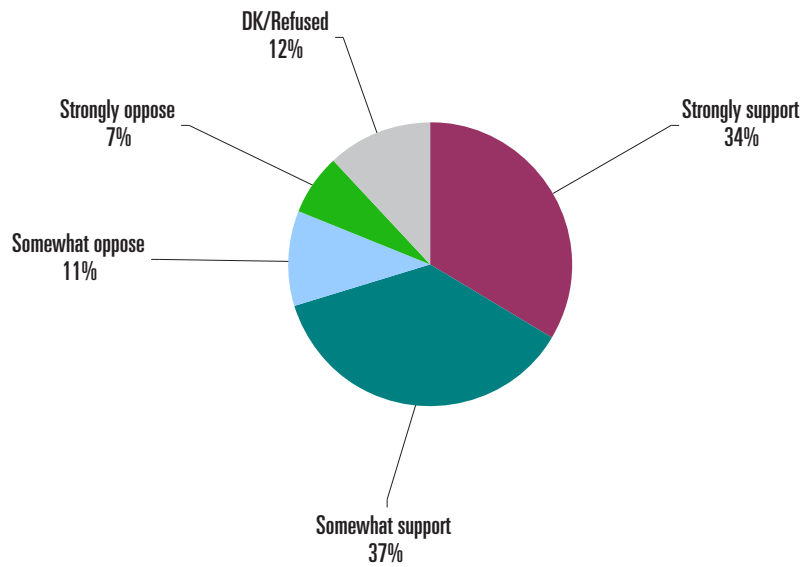
**In general, do you support or oppose allowing three to five story buildings in the West Hartford Center?**



**West Hartford**

Finally, the residents of West Hartford were asked about the proposal for a new rapid bus transportation system. As one route would go through Elmwood, residents were asked how they would feel about the town directing development around this transit line rather than to other areas in town. The residents are generally supportive of directing the development in this way, with 34% saying they would strongly support and 37% saying they would somewhat support this development focus. Fewer than two-in-ten respondents would oppose this development focus.

**As previously mentioned, there is a proposal for a new rapid bus transportation system. One route would go through Elmwood. Would you support or oppose the town directing development around this transit line rather than to other areas in town?**

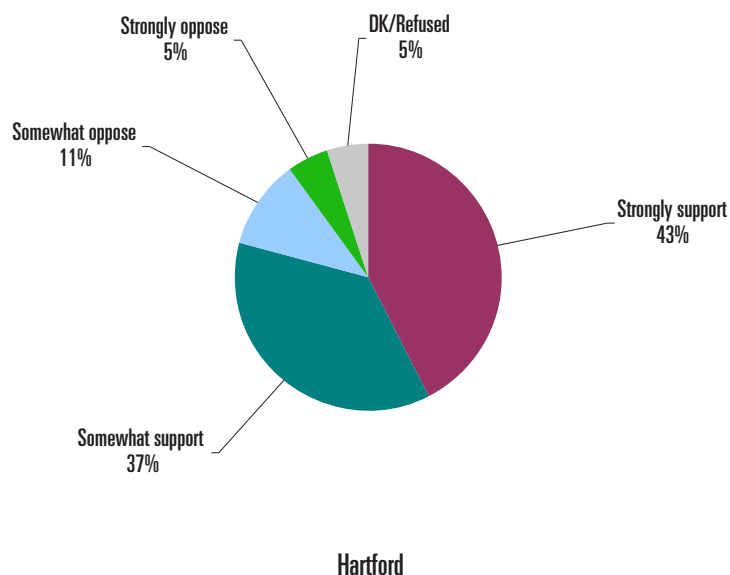


West Hartford

## Hartford

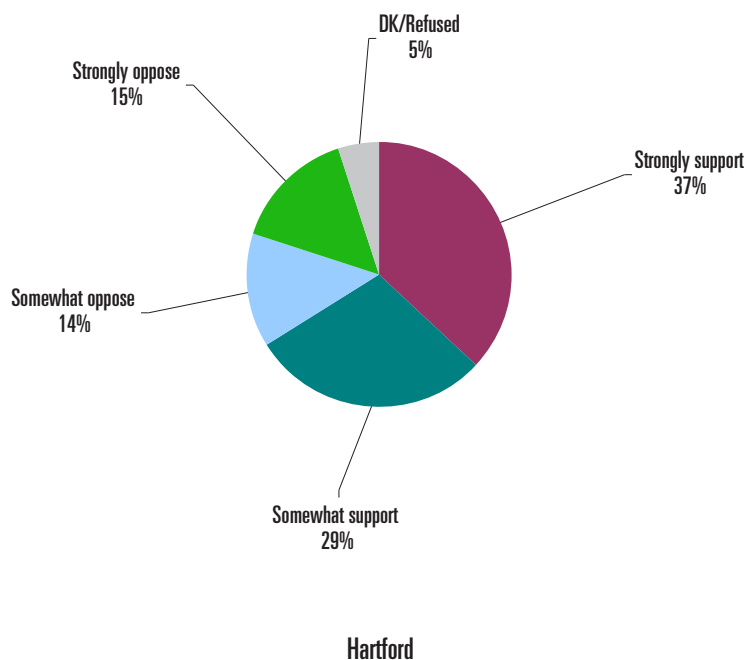
Hartford residents overwhelmingly support the idea of concentrating development along major public transportation routes. In fact, 80% of Hartford residents either strongly (43%) or somewhat (37%) support this idea.

### Concentrating development along major public transportation routes rather than in other areas?



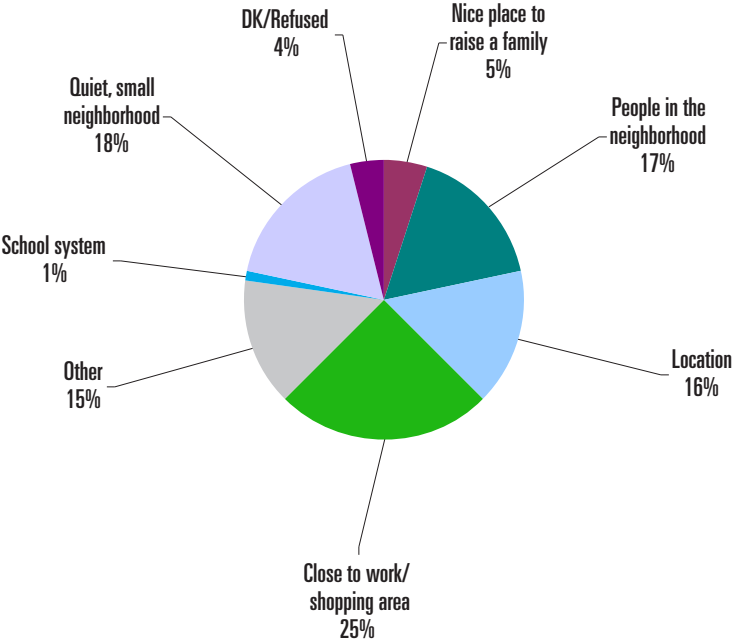
Additionally, Hartford residents also support the city requiring new development to reflect the urban character of the city by placing buildings close to the street and encouraging bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Two-thirds (66%) of residents support the city imposing this requirement, while 29% oppose the idea.

### The city should require new development to reflect the urban character of the city by placing buildings close to the street and encouraging bicycle and pedestrian traffic?



Finally, like West Hartford residents, Hartford residents were asked what they like best about the neighborhood in which they live. A quarter (25%) of respondents say that being close to work and shopping areas is the best thing about living in Hartford. Living in a quiet, small neighborhood was the best thing for 18% of Hartford respondents, while the people in the neighborhood were the best thing for 17% of respondents. Another 16% of respondents say the best thing about living in Hartford is the location.

**Overall, what do you like best about the neighborhood in which you live?**



Hartford

## METHODOLOGY

The Capitol Region Council of Governments commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut (CSRA) to conduct a survey of residents of three towns or cities within the region of Hartford, Connecticut. For the purposes of this survey, the municipalities included were the city of Hartford and the towns of West Hartford and Suffield. Three separate random-digit-dial (RDD) samples were generated from households in each of the three towns. Results are based on a total of 1209 telephone interviews with residents of the Hartford region. Spanish speaking interviewers were available throughout the field time to conduct interviews as necessary. The breakdown of interviews is as follows: 403 interviews were conducted with residents of the city of Hartford, 402 interviews were conducted with residents of the town of West Hartford, and 404 interviews were conducted with residents of the town of Suffield. The interviews were conducted by trained interviewers from the CSRA research facility in Storrs, Connecticut between November 15 and December 4, 2000. The sampling error for each of the samples containing approximately 400 cases is  $\pm 5$  percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. This means that if the survey was repeated an infinite number of times, in 95% of the cases the results would be within five percentage points in either direction from the percentages reported here. Of course, sampling error is only one possible source of error, but CSRA has also attempted to minimize other possible sources of error in this survey.