







Bolton EDC Survey

January/February, 2011

Background

-  Bolton's Economic Development Committee was formed to provide Bolton with recommendations and guidance for the future economic development of the town.
-  In addition to holding a series of public forums to gather input from the town, they wanted to reach out to the entire community for input.
-  It was decided to conduct an online survey to solicit input on a variety of high-level topics to help guide their work.

How the Study was Done

-  An invitation to the survey was mailed with the annual town census which goes to all households in Bolton.
-  The survey was available either online or by hard copies made available at the Town Hall, the Senior Center, and the Bolton Public Library.
-  The survey was available for completion from the beginning of January until the middle of February.

Contents of the Survey

- Questions were asked about:
 - Type of economic development desired
 - Possible locations for economic development
 - Economic development along Main Street in the center of town
 - Reaction to a possible village overlay around Rtes.. 117 and 495
 - Questions about business development and the impact on property taxes

Bolton's Response

- 547 people responded to the survey, representing 779 adults.
- Of those who started the survey, 95%+ completed it.
- 239 respondents wrote open-ended responses to further clarify their opinions




Data Weighting

- 🌐 Respondent ages were fairly representative of the town, except that those between the ages of 18 and 44 were underrepresented
- 🌐 Data used in the final analysis are NOT weighted by age as a trial weighting did not change the results in any significant way.
- 🌐 Data ARE weighted to represent total individuals as roughly $\frac{1}{3}$ of respondents answered for all adults in their household. These respondents were weighted according to the the number of adults in their household and those who answered for only themselves were given a weight of one.

Summary of Results

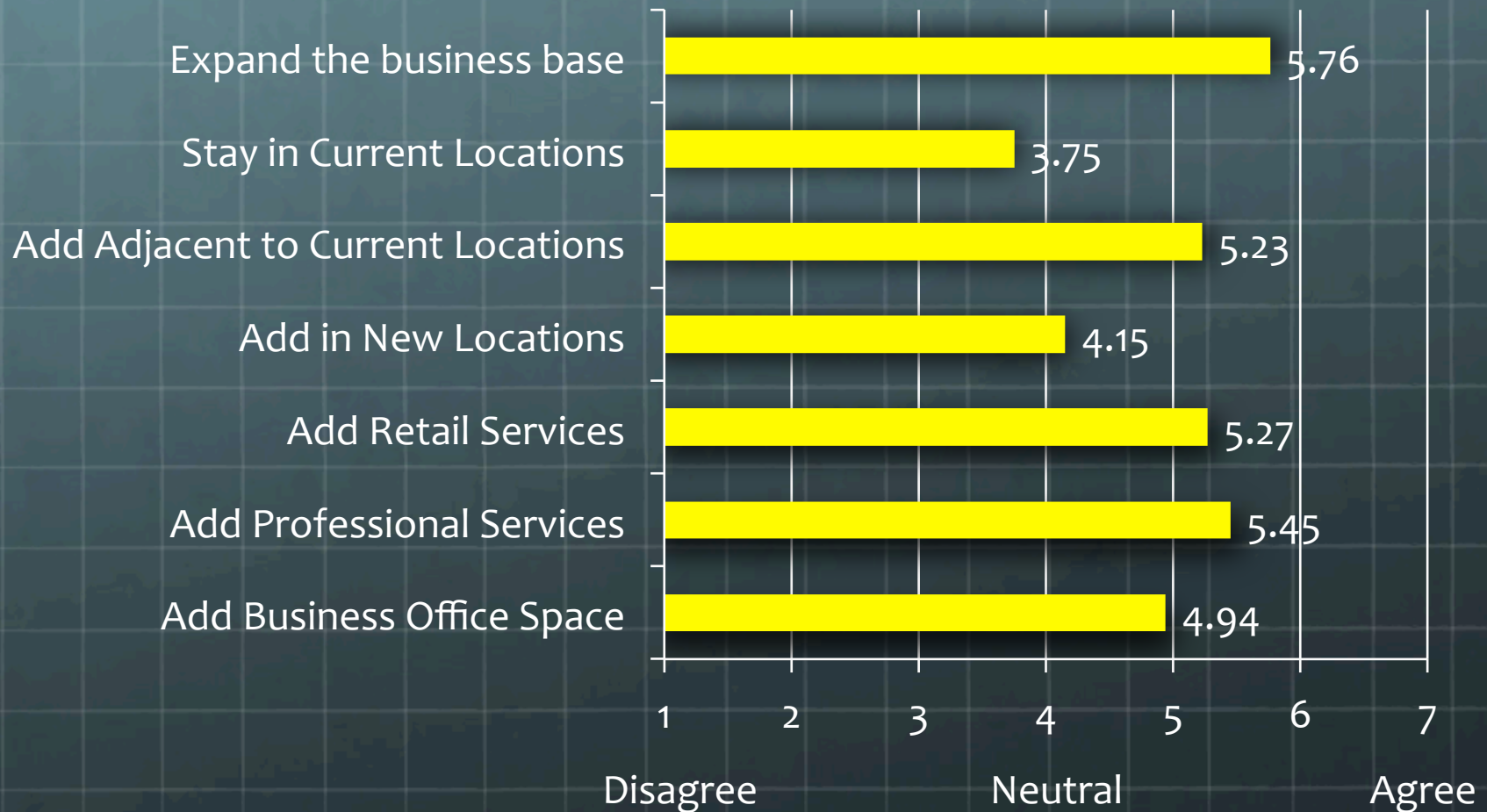
- 🌐 There is a strong wish for the committee to work to fill the current empty business space in town.
- 🌐 Overall support for additional economic development is mixed.
- 🌐 Most people would prefer no major retail development in the center of town along Main Street – preferring either none at all or only small retail shops.

Summary: Cont.

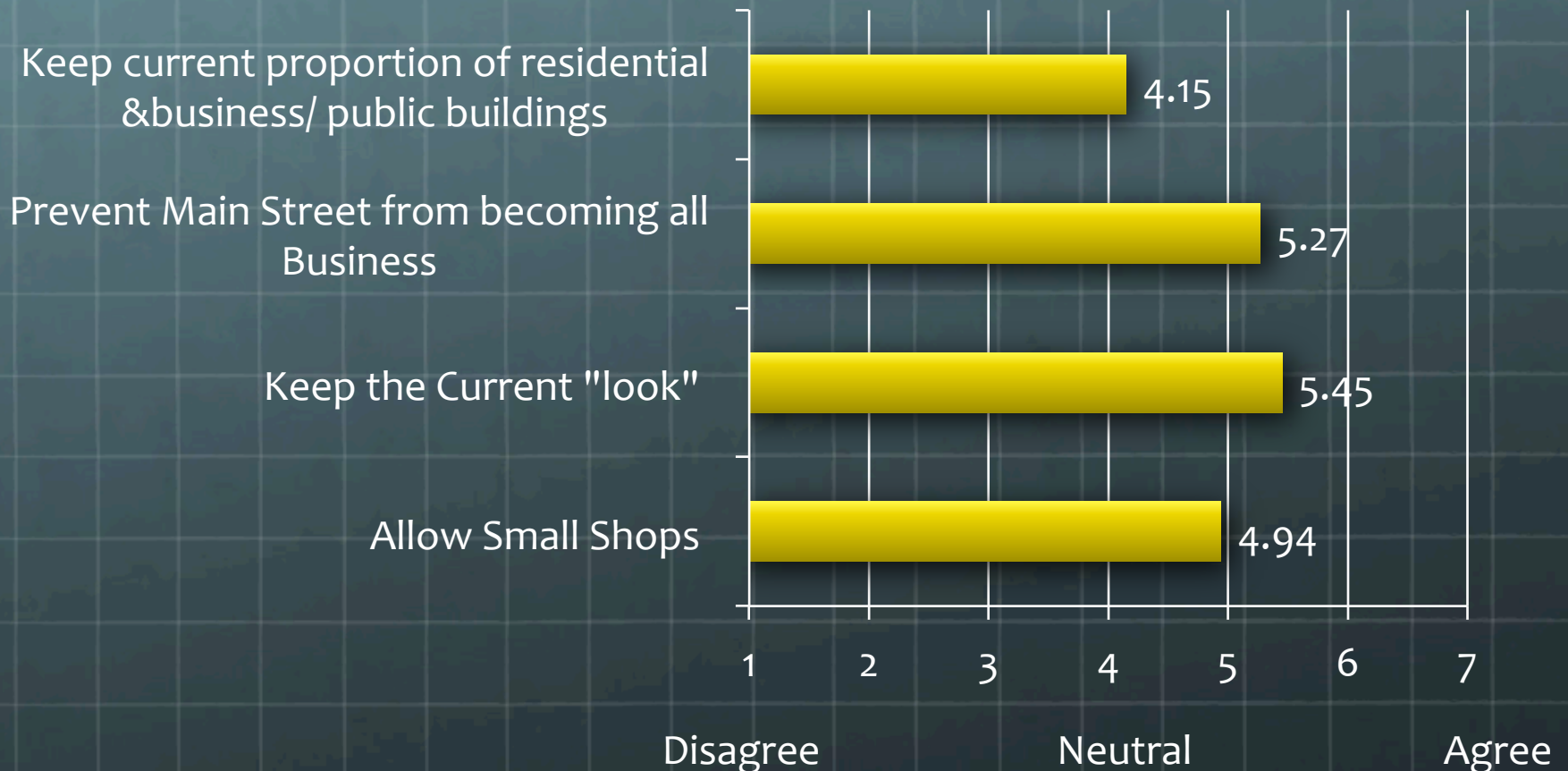
-  There is strong support for a village overlay in the 495 area – with some reservations about what the guidelines will be.
-  People are not clear as to whether further business will help mitigate property taxes or not – they want actual data. Those who are most opposed to additional business are most likely to believe it won't help with taxes.
-  There is confusion about the role of the Economic Development Committee.

Detailed Findings

While there is Clear Support for Additional Business, Where and What is more Controversial



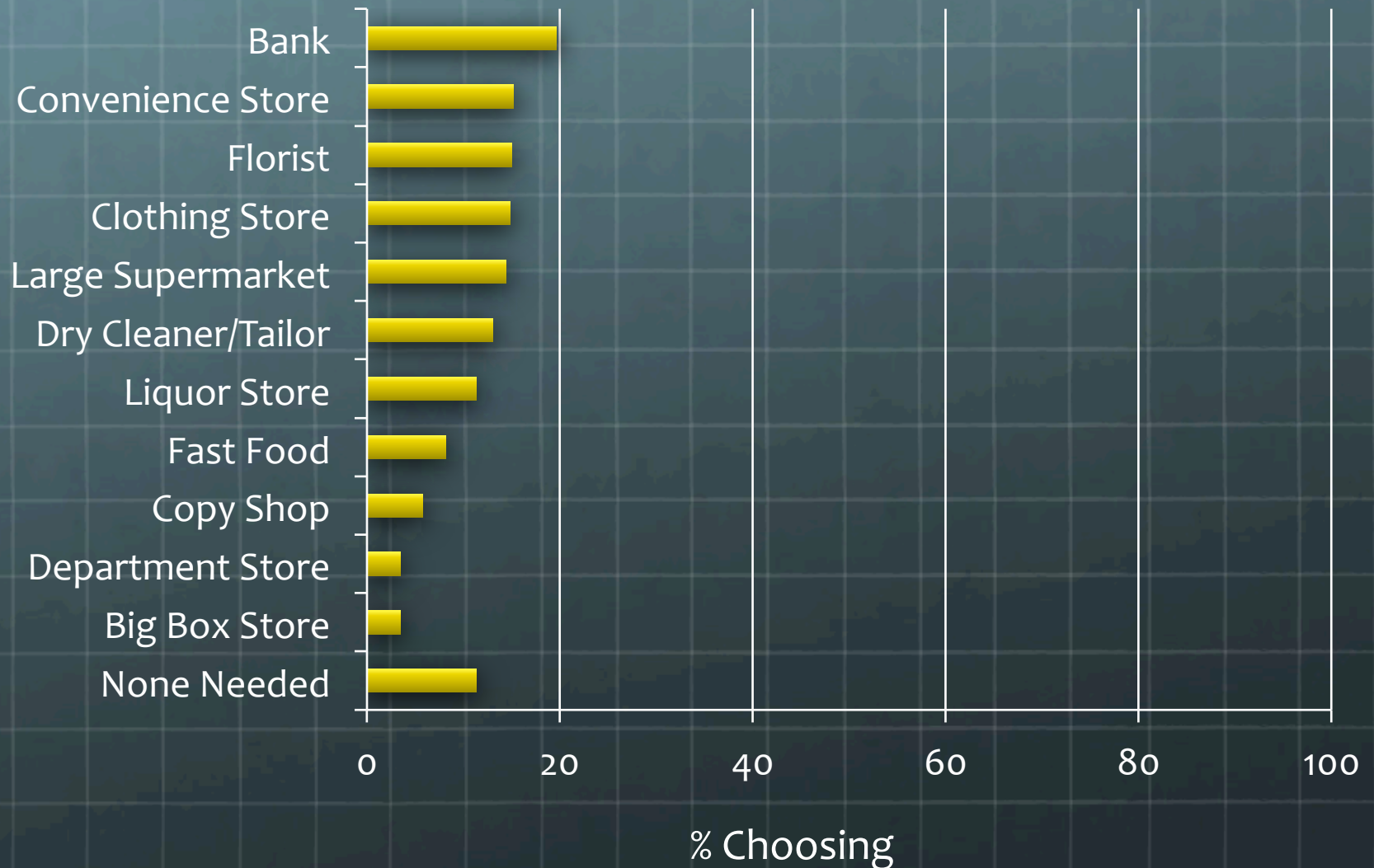
There is Less Agreement about Main Street in the Historic District



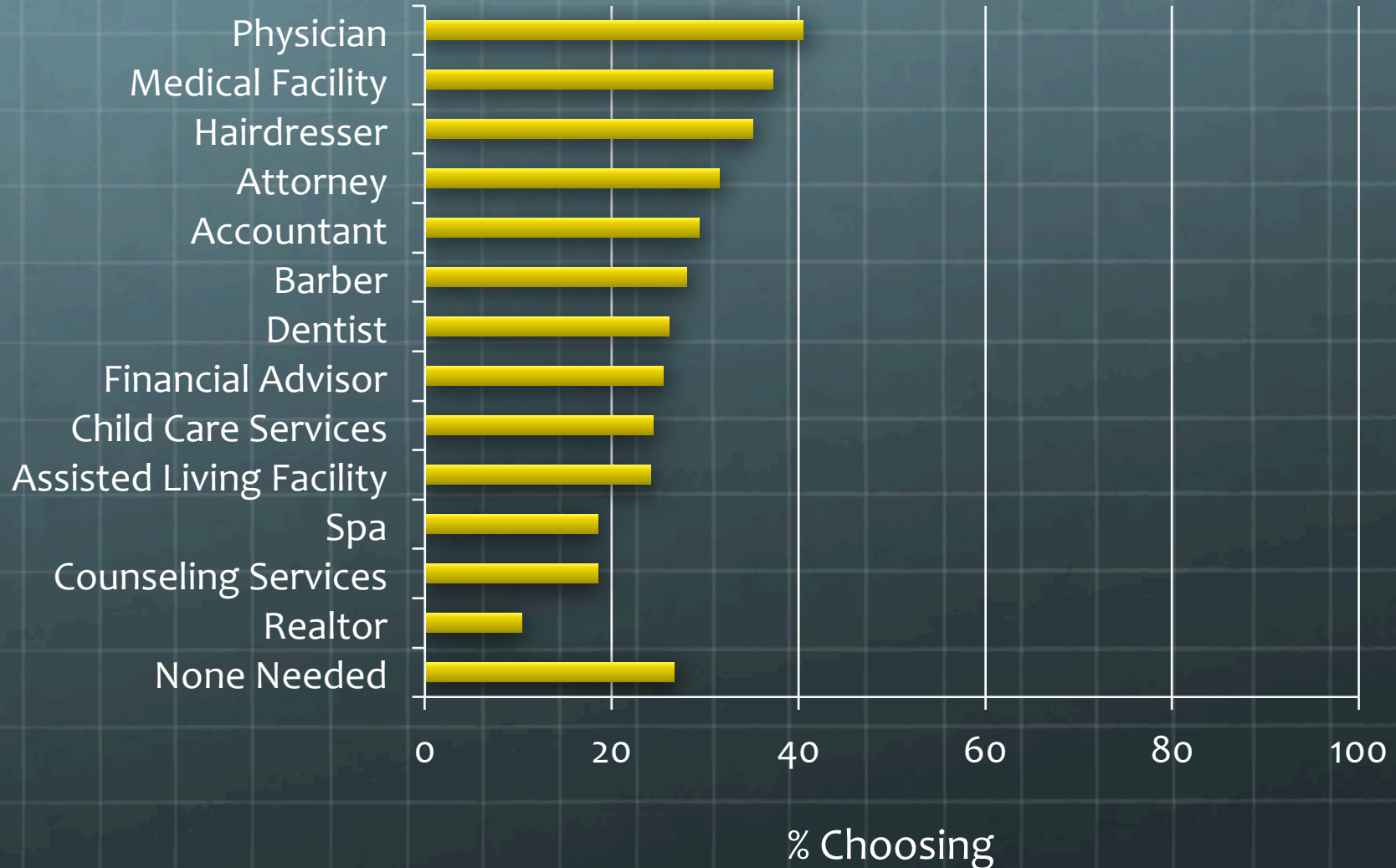
Desirable Retail Services are Mostly Food Related



Other Types are Less Appealing



There Does Not Appear to be Strong Demand for Additional Professional Services



A Village Overlay District in the 495 Area has Strong Support

 83 % Support It

 17% Do Not

Current Opinion About the Impact of Added Business on Taxes is Mixed

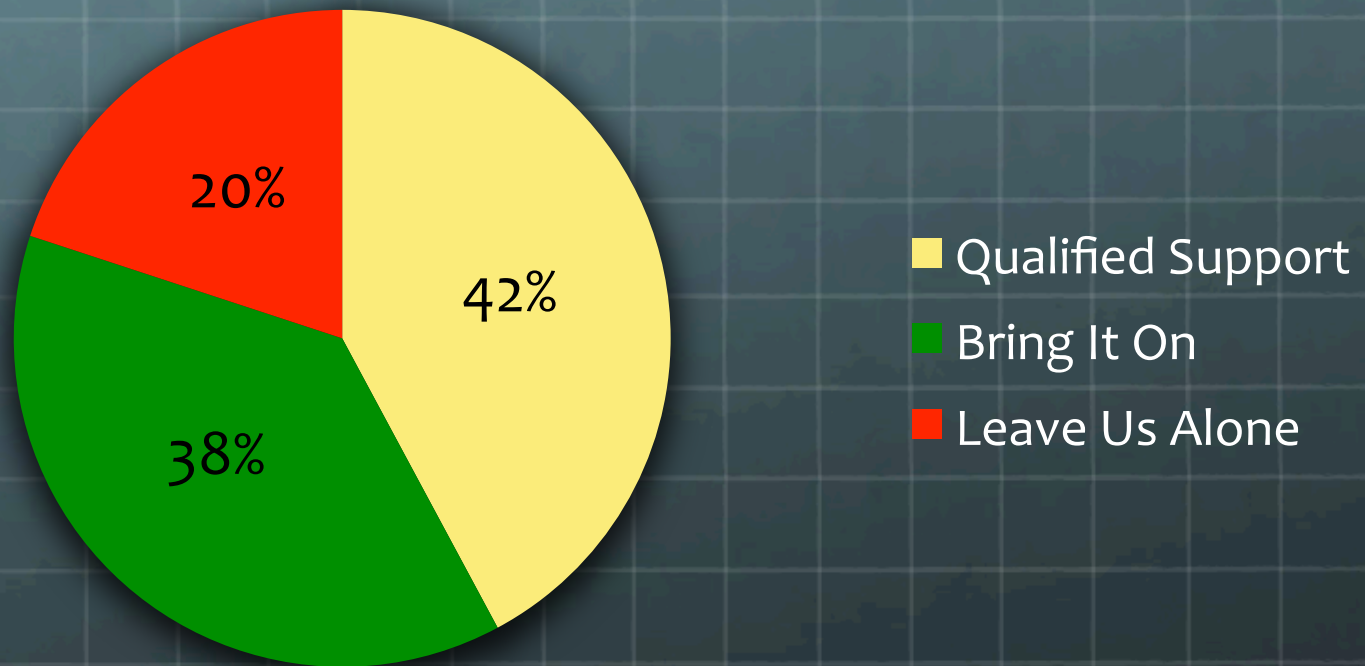
	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Additional business will help lessen residential real estate taxes	67.8	9.9	22.3
The cost of additional services for business will offset any gains in business tax revenues.	25.6	18.4	55.0

Factual data is needed to clarify this issue.

Three Attitudinal Groups Emerged

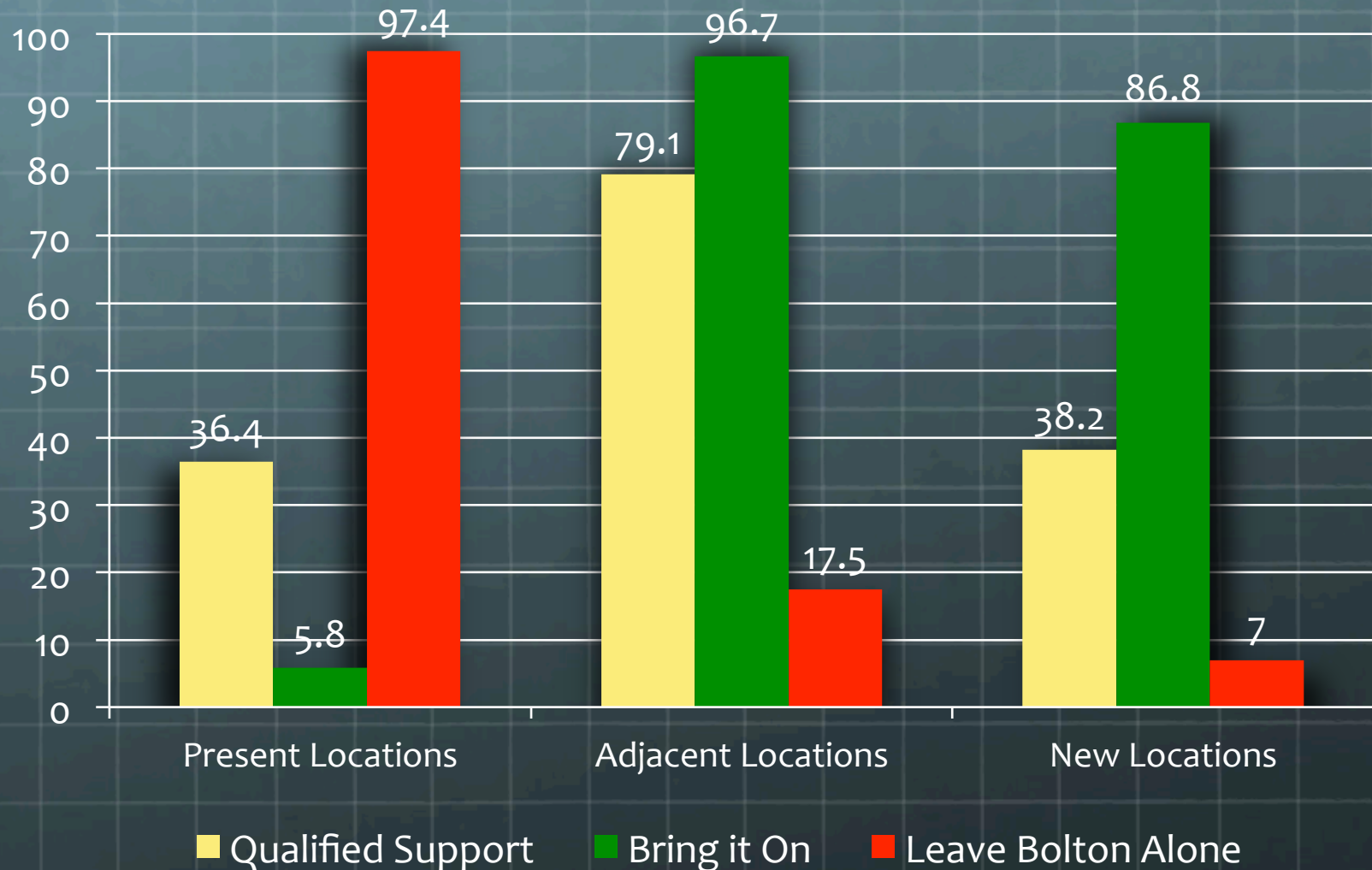
- 🌐 “Bring it On:
 - 🌐 Strongly supportive of additional business in town
- 🌐 “Leave Bolton Alone:
 - 🌐 Quite resistant to any further business development in town
- 🌐 “Qualified Support:
 - 🌐 Supportive, but with significant reservations

The Size of each the Three Groups

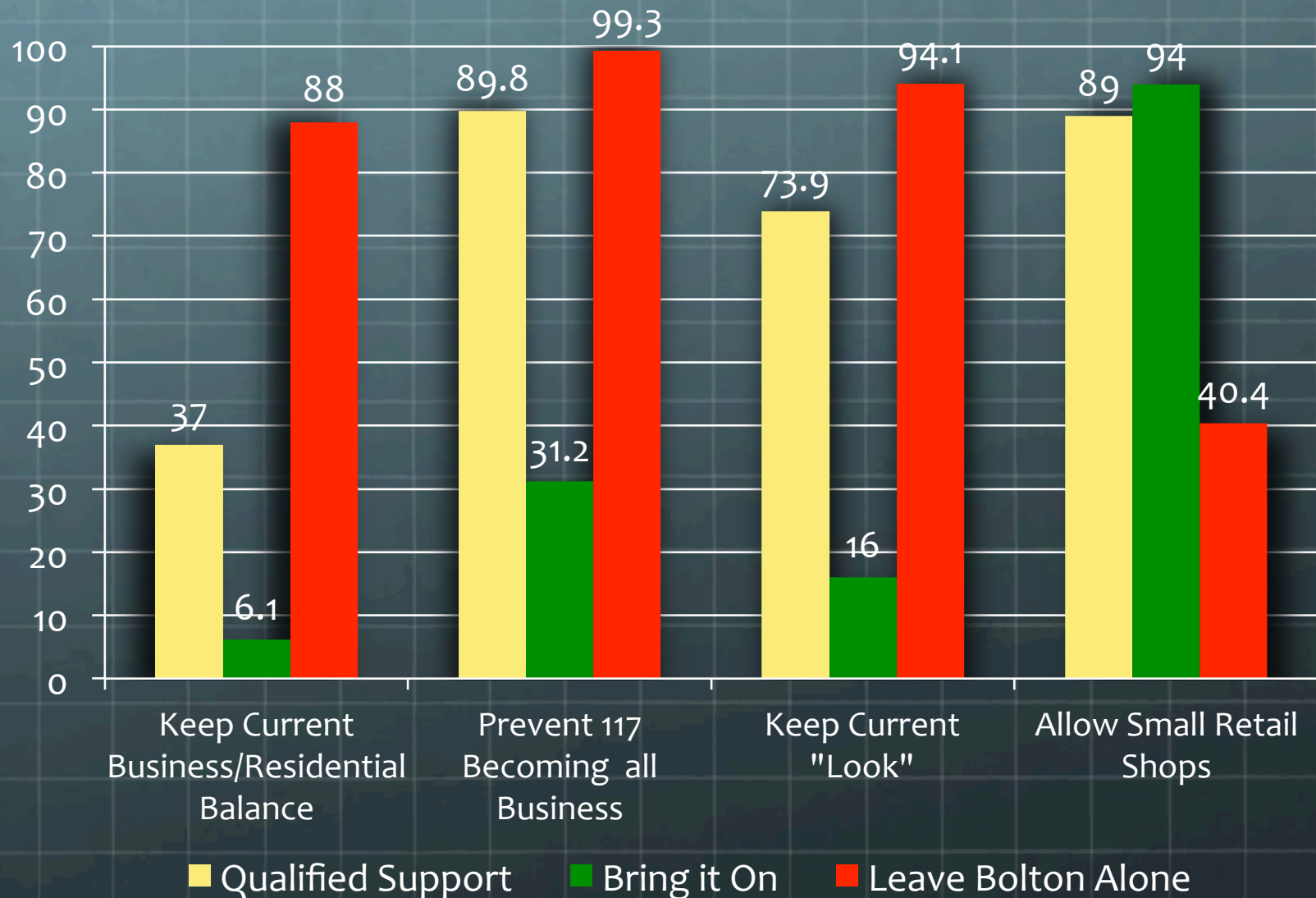


Percent of Respondents

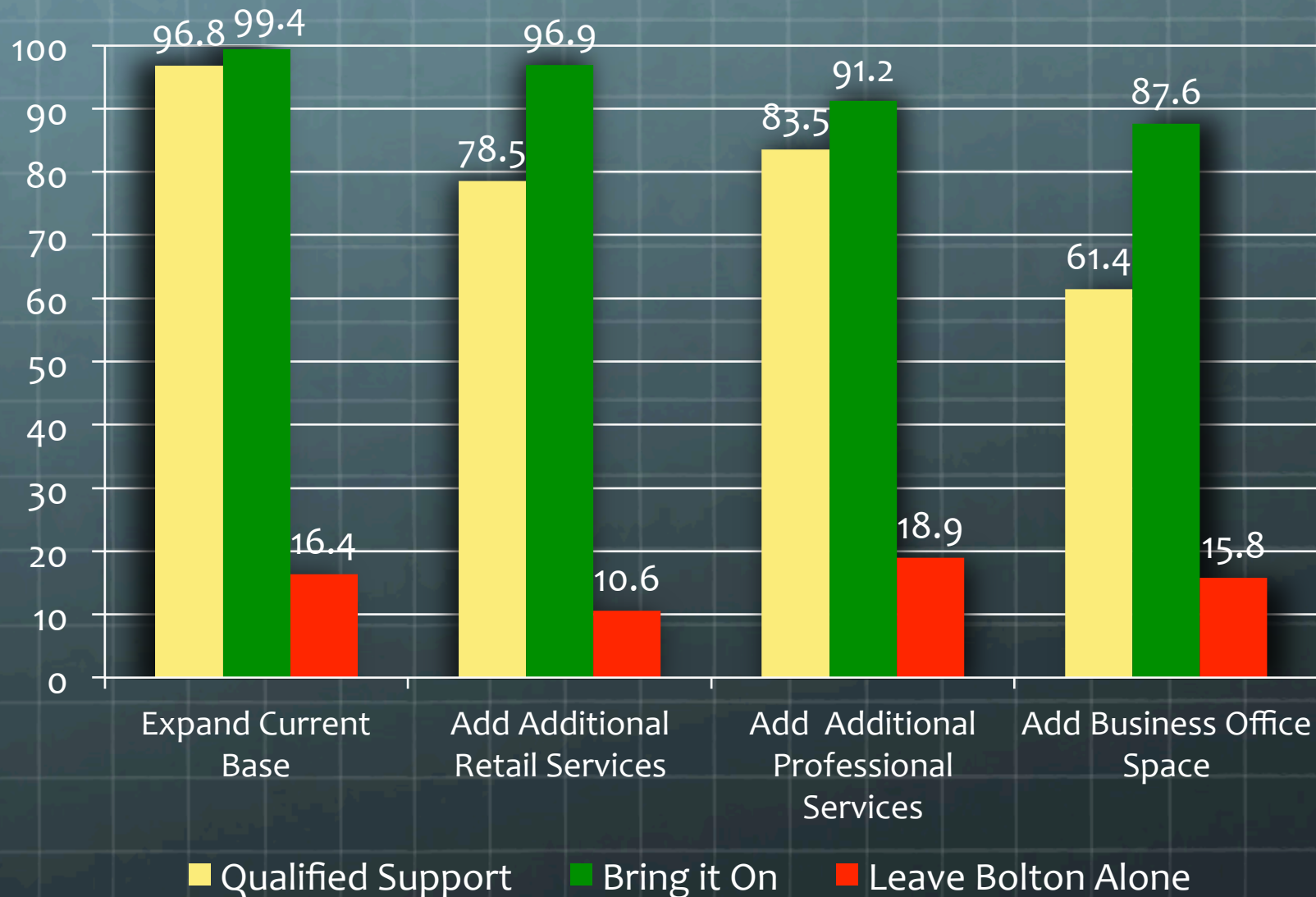
Support by Group for Locations of Business Zoning (% Agreeing)



Group Attitudes Towards Main Street in the Historic District (% Agreeing)



Group Attitudes Towards Expanding Bolton's Business Base (% Agreeing)



The Leave Bolton Alone Group is Less Supportive of the Village Overlay at 495

Do you support a village overlay at 495?	Qualified Support	Bring It On	Leave Bolton Alone
Yes	91.1	91.1	51.4
No	9.0	8.9	48.6

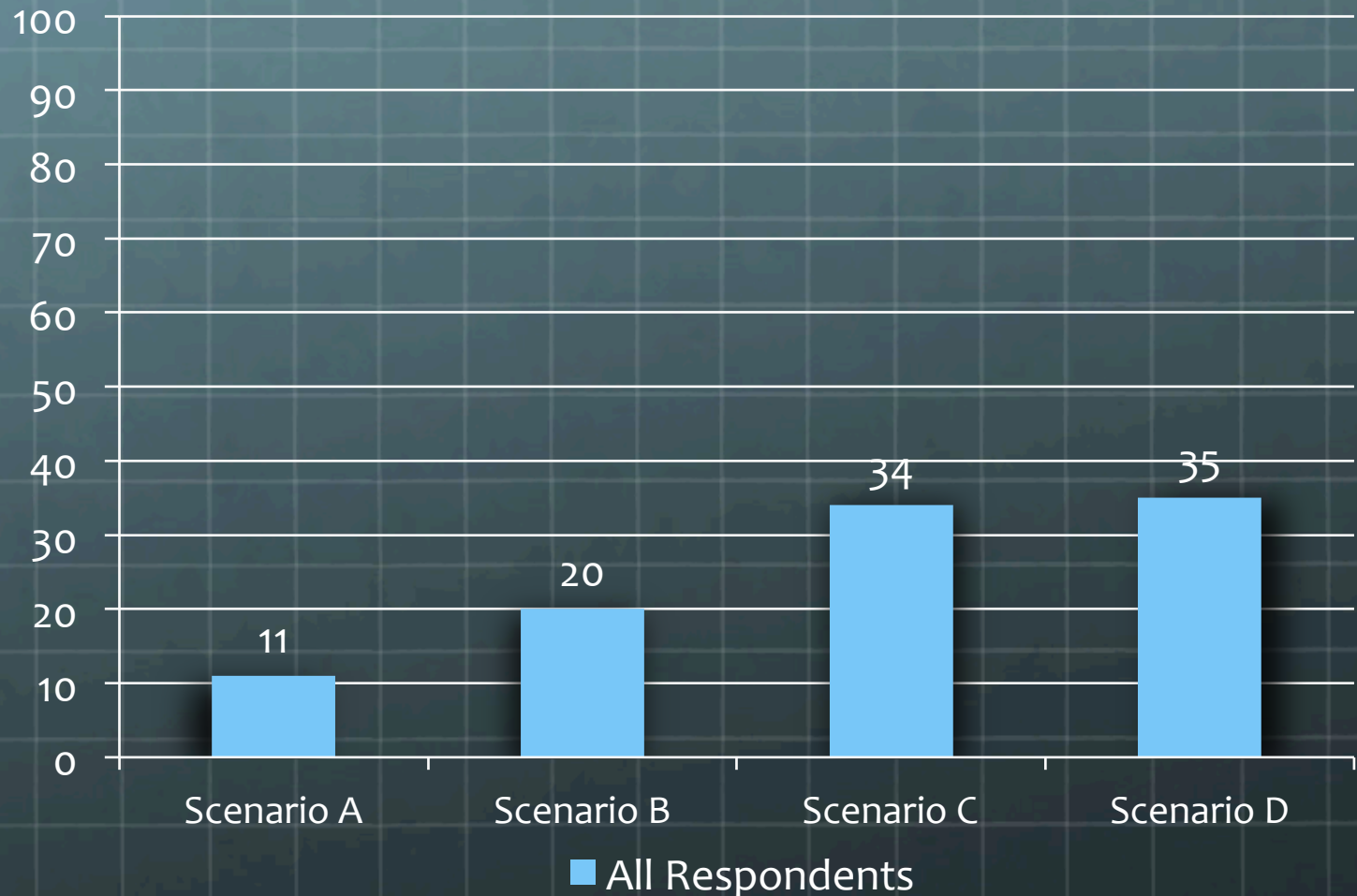
The Leave Bolton Alone Group is More Skeptical about any Tax Benefits from New Business

Mean Agreement (% Agreeing)	Qualified Support	Bring It On	Leave Bolton Alone
Additional Business will help lessen residential real estate taxes	73	92	14
The Cost of Additional Services for Business will Offset any Gains in Business Tax Revenues	19	10	70

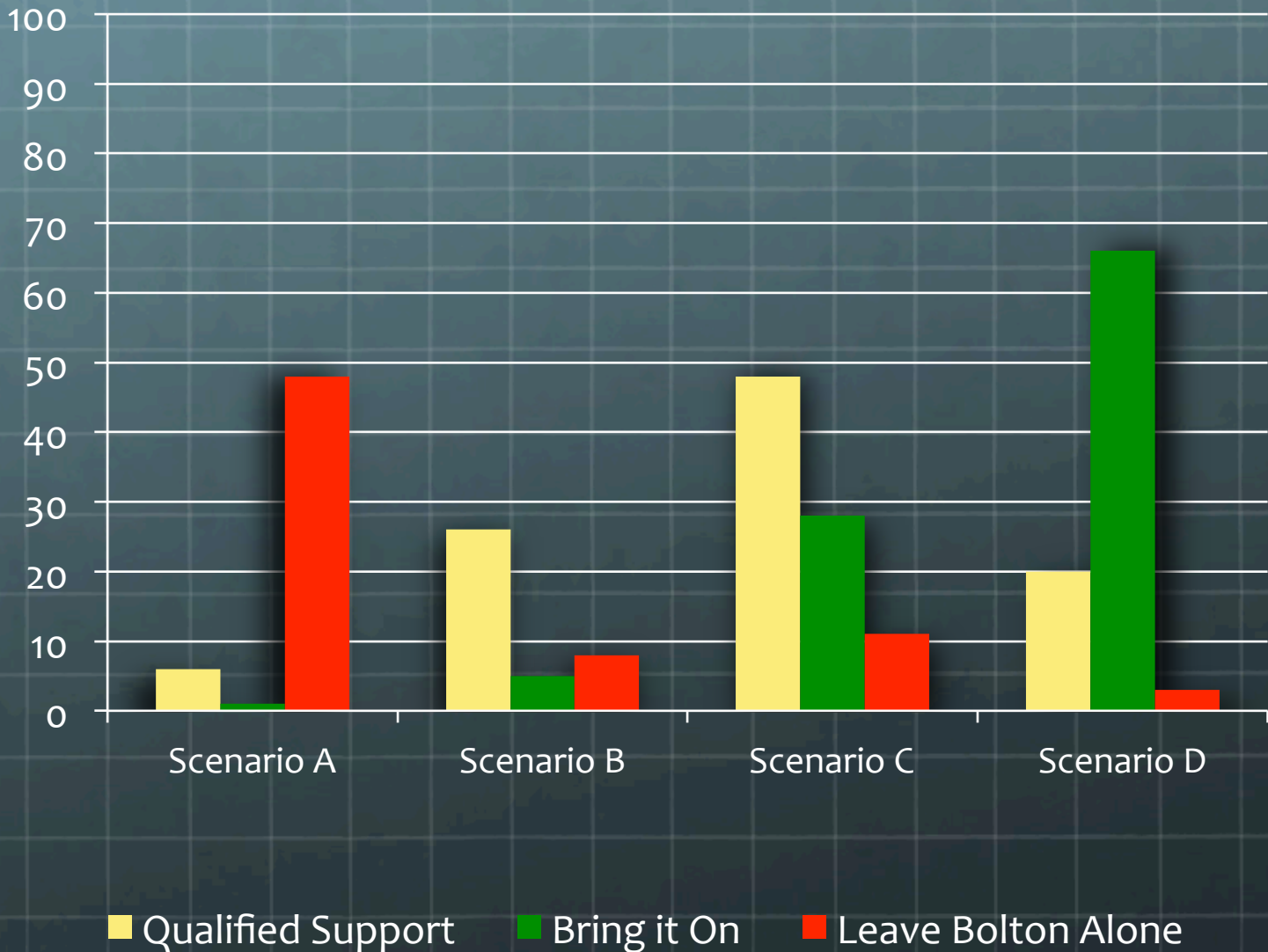
The Hypothetical Scenarios

% Change in:	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D
Business	0	+15	+50	+75
Open Space	0	+1	+3	0
Traffic	+10	+12	+15	+17
Taxes	+28	+26	+21	+18

How 100 Points were Assigned to the Scenarios (by those answering the question: N=680)



How Each Group Assigned 100 Points Across the Scenarios



There are Definite Skews by Group in Length of Residence (% Respondents)

Length of Residence in Bolton	Qualified Support	Bring it On	Leave Bolton Alone
Less than 3 Years	10.9	16.8	7.8
4 – 9 Years	26.9	31.9	15
10- 19 Years	37.2	29.1	35.9
20 Years or More	25	22.1	41.2

Boxed values are significantly different from the other values in the row.

Age Varies by Group Group Also (% Respondents)

Respondent Age Group	Qualified Support	Bring it On	Leave Bolton Alone
18 - 44	26.8	29.1	22.7
45 - 54	33.4	38.9	33.3
55 - 64	30.3	21.1	22.7
65+	9.5	10.9	21.3

Boxed values are significantly different from the other values in the row.

The Leave Bolton Alone Group is Less Likely to have Young Children

Mean Number of Children in the Household	Qualified Support	Bring it On	Leave Bolton Alone
Under 13	1.2	1.1	.7
13 - 17	.5	.6	.4

Boxed values are significantly different from the other values in the row.

To Recap: The Overall Message to the EDC Committee is:

- 🌐 Clarify your mission
- 🌐 Focus first on filling current empty business space
- 🌐 Village overlay at 495 is fine if it “fits” the town
- 🌐 Make no major changes to Main Street in the center of town
- 🌐 Don’t allow any major chains or large retail businesses – especially in the center of town

To Recap: The Overall Message to the EDC Committee is:

- 🌐 Each of the three groups needs to have their concerns addressed in any committee proposals
- 🌐 It's not clear to folks what impact, if any, business development will have on residential real estate taxes
- 🌐 Keep taxes flat: town needs to reign in spending in all areas not just seek additional sources of revenue

The End