



City of Neenah
Committee of the Whole and Plan Commission
Joint Meeting Agenda Zoning Code Re-Write Agenda
Wednesday, September 2, 2026 at 4:00 PM
Neenah City Hall – 211 Walnut Street
Council Chambers

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
 - A. Committee of the Whole
 - B. Plan Commission
- III. Public Appearances
 - A. Speakers should give their name and residential address and are allowed five minutes to speak on any topic.
- IV. Workshop
 - A. Zoning Code Re-Write Presentation – Brad Schmidt (City of Neenah) and Benjamin Rohr (Vandewalle and Associates)
- V. Adjournment
 - A. Committee of the Whole
 - B. Plan Commission

Notice: Pursuant to the requirements of Wis. Stats. Sec. 19.84 (Open Meeting Notice Law), a majority of the Neenah Common Council may be present at this meeting. Common Council members may be present to gather information about a subject on which they have decision-making responsibility. This may constitute a meeting of the Neenah Common Council and must be noticed as such. The Council will not take any formal action at this meeting.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the City of Neenah will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. If you need assistance, or reasonable accommodation in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the Clerk's Office (920) 886-6100 or e-mail clerk@neenahwi.gov at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting or event to request an accommodation.

City of Neenah Zoning and Sign Ordinance Evaluation

Key Issues and Recommendations

August 2026

Executive Summary

The City of Neenah last comprehensively rewrote its Zoning Ordinance in the 1970s. While the ordinance has been amended numerous times over the years to address various changes, the result is a patchwork of regulations that is outdated in many respects, difficult to administer, and not fully aligned with modern planning and development practices.

The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan (2024), along with several other long-range planning documents, identifies updates to the Zoning Ordinance as a key implementation strategy for achieving the community's land use, housing, redevelopment, and economic development goals. As one of the City's primary implementation tools, zoning plays a critical role in shaping future growth and development.

The primary objectives of this rewrite are to implement the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans, modernize the ordinance, improve its organization and usability, increase flexibility, and provide a more predictable process for property owners, developers, and City staff.

To inform the rewrite, Vandewalle & Associates completed a comprehensive review of the City's Comprehensive Plan, other relevant planning documents, the existing Zoning and Sign Ordinances, and the official zoning map. Project input was also gathered through meetings with City staff, stakeholders, the Steering Committee, a public workshop, and an online community survey. Together, this information was utilized to create the following list of overarching issues to be addressed during the rewrite. Each is explored in more depth throughout the document.

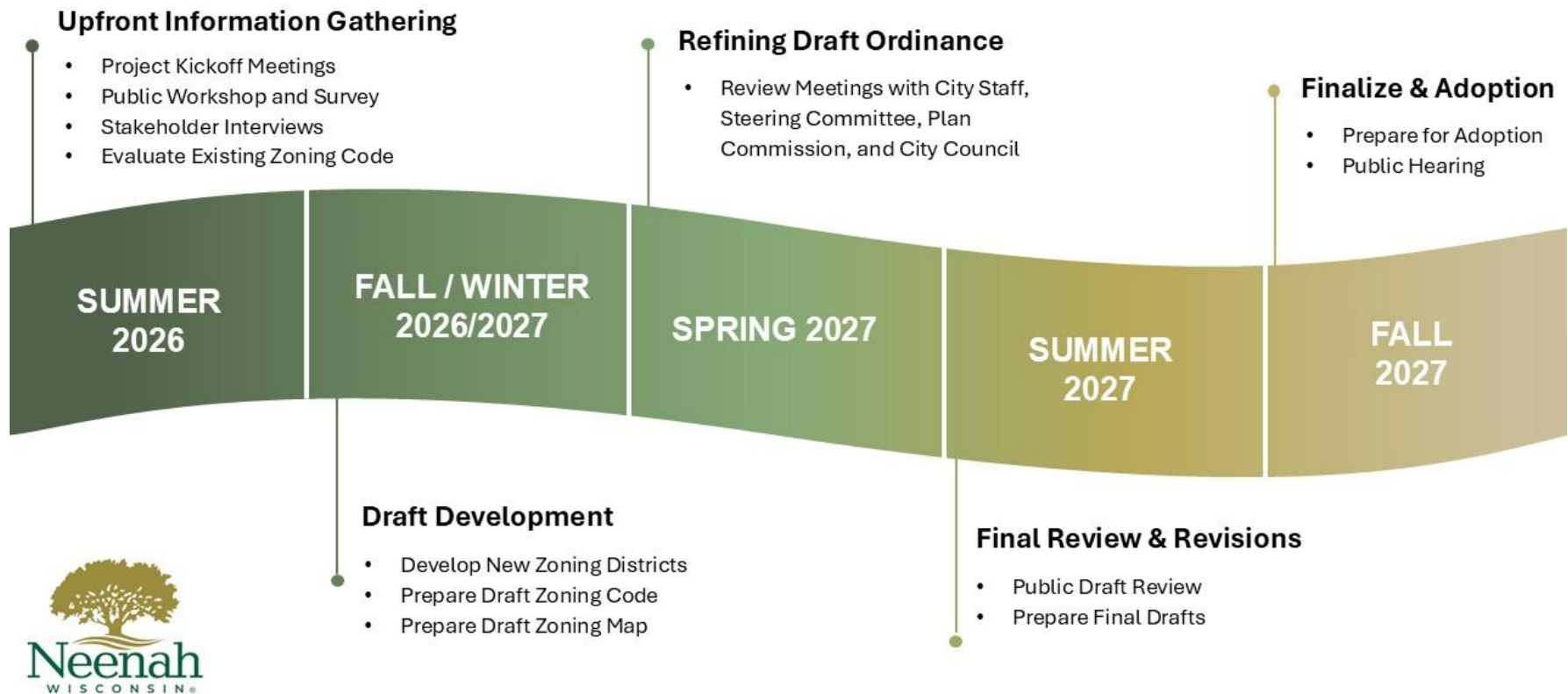
Issues Summary

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| 1. Modernize Land Uses and Create a Hybrid Zoning Code | 6. Establish Building Design and Landscaping Standards |
| 2. Improve Ordinance Organization and Administration | 7. Expand Housing Opportunities |
| 3. Update Definitions to Improve Clarity and Consistency | 8. Reform Parking Standards |
| 4. Develop New Zoning Districts | 9. Align Ordinance with State & Federal Regulations |
| 5. Promote Infill Development and Redevelopment | 10. Overhaul the Sign Ordinance |

Project Timeline

City staff and the Steering Committee will oversee the process and assist in the development of the new ordinances. Six meetings with the Project Steering Committee are planned throughout the process to review, discuss, and solicit direction on different elements of the project. Each will be designed as working sessions and open to the public.

The project kicked off in the summer of 2026 and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2027. The overarching project tasks and timelines are listed below:



Issue 1: Modernize Land Uses and Create a Hybrid Zoning Code

The City's zoning districts and land use regulations need to be modernized to better reflect contemporary development patterns, emerging business types, and changing community needs. The current ordinance relies primarily on traditional Euclidean zoning, which separates land uses into rigid categories. While this approach has historically been effective at separating incompatible uses, it provides limited flexibility and does not always support the City's long-term goals.

The ordinance rewrite presents an opportunity to modernize this structure while maintaining its overall familiarity and predictability. Rather than abandoning conventional zoning, the updated framework would introduce a hybrid approach that continues to organize land uses by district but places greater emphasis on building form, site design, compatibility, and performance-based standards. This shift allows the ordinance to regulate how development functions within the community, not just how it is classified.

A key component of this modernization is the consolidation and update of land use classifications. Similar and related uses would be grouped into broader, more flexible categories, such as combining individual retail uses like bookstores, shoe stores, and china and glassware stores under an “Indoor Sales” category with clear use standards applied at the category level.

This approach reduces unnecessary complexity by consolidating use classifications, updating the ordinance to address current and emerging land uses such as electric vehicle charging stations, community gardens, and data centers, and establishing clear use-specific standards that allow more uses by right while maintaining appropriate safeguards. The result is a more flexible ordinance that can better accommodate evolving development trends without frequent amendments.

It is also recommended that the City's bulk dimensional standards be modernized by shifting from regulations based primarily on units per lot or minimum lot size to standards that place greater emphasis on the form and scale of development. Rather than relying solely on density limits, the

Four Approaches to Zoning

1. Euclidean (Land Use) Zoning

Organizes development by separating land uses (residential, commercial, industrial) into distinct districts with standardized dimensional requirements such as setbacks, lot size, and building height.

2. Performance (Community Character) Zoning

Focuses on the overall character and intensity of development rather than specific land uses, allowing compatible uses to coexist while managing density, scale, and environmental impacts.

3. Form-Based (Building and Public Realm Design) Zoning

Prioritizes building design, streetscapes, and the public realm over land use. Development is guided by predictable urban design standards that create attractive, walkable places.

4. Hybrid Zoning (Recommended)

Combines the strengths of Euclidean, Performance, and Form-Based zoning to create a flexible, user-friendly code. A hybrid approach supports mixed-use development, preserves community character, provides predictable design outcomes, and maintains local decision-making authority.

updated code would use tools such as building setbacks, height, massing, lot coverage, and building placement to shape development outcomes. This approach provides greater flexibility in how projects are designed while ensuring new development remains compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. By focusing on the physical form of development instead of rigid dimensional requirements, the ordinance becomes more predictable, easier to administer, and better equipped to accommodate a broader range of housing types and evolving development patterns without compromising community character or long-term planning goals.

Issue 2: Improve Ordinance Organization and Administration

It is recommended that the new Zoning Ordinance be reorganized into eleven articles, as outlined in the accompanying text box. The proposed structure organizes regulations into a logical, intuitive format that reflects how residents, developers, property owners, and City staff navigate and administer the ordinance. Related topics have been consolidated into dedicated articles to improve usability and reduce the need to search throughout the ordinance. For example, all site development performance standards, including access and visibility requirements, off-street parking and loading, exterior lighting, and exterior storage and screening, are contained within a single article and organized in the same general sequence that a site plan is prepared and reviewed.

As part of the reorganization, the ordinance should clearly define the approval process for every zoning-related application and permit. Each procedure should identify the required submittal materials, review authority, approval criteria, decision timelines, and appeal process. For example, the site plan review process should distinguish between minor improvements, such as small building additions or site modifications, and larger development projects, with review requirements that are proportional to the project's scale and complexity. The goal is to find a balance between staff-level approvals and the need for Plan Commission approvals.

Although detailed procedural requirements can increase the overall length of the ordinance, they provide significant benefits by improving transparency, creating more predictable review processes, reducing incomplete applications, and promoting consistent decision-making. A well-organized, user-friendly ordinance will reduce administrative time, improve efficiency for applicants and staff, and provide greater certainty throughout the development review process.

To improve usability, the updated ordinance will incorporate graphics, tables, flowcharts, and diagrams throughout the document where they are most helpful, rather than relying solely on text. Dimensional standards, table of permitted uses, parking requirements, landscaping, and

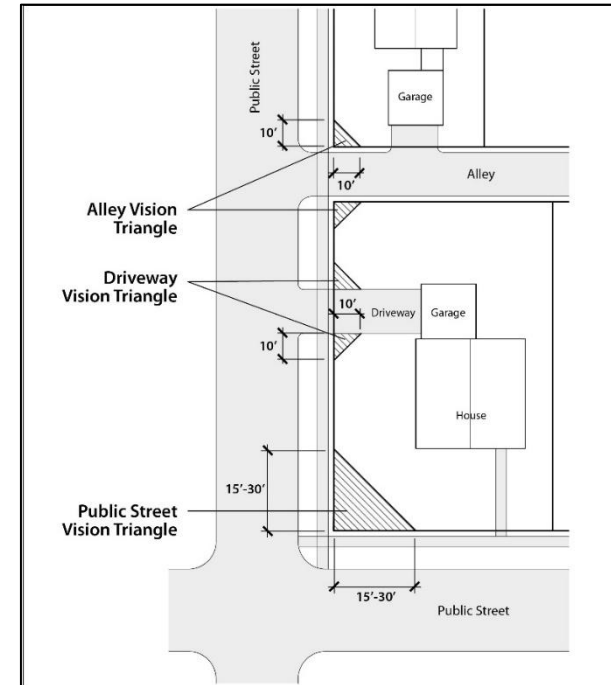
Proposed Zoning Code Reorganization

- Article 1: Introduction
- Article 2: Establishment of Zoning Districts
- Article 3: Land Use Regulations
- Article 4: Bulk Regulations
- Article 5: Nonconforming Situations
- Article 6: Performance Standards
- Article 7: Exterior Building Design Standards
- Article 8: Landscaping Requirements
- Article 9: Sign Ordinance
- Article 10: Administration and Procedures
- Article 11: Definitions

development standards will be presented in clear visual formats that allow users to quickly locate and understand applicable requirements. These visual tools reduce ambiguity, minimize the need for interpretation, and make the ordinance more intuitive and accessible for staff, developers, and residents alike, resulting in a more efficient and user-friendly code.

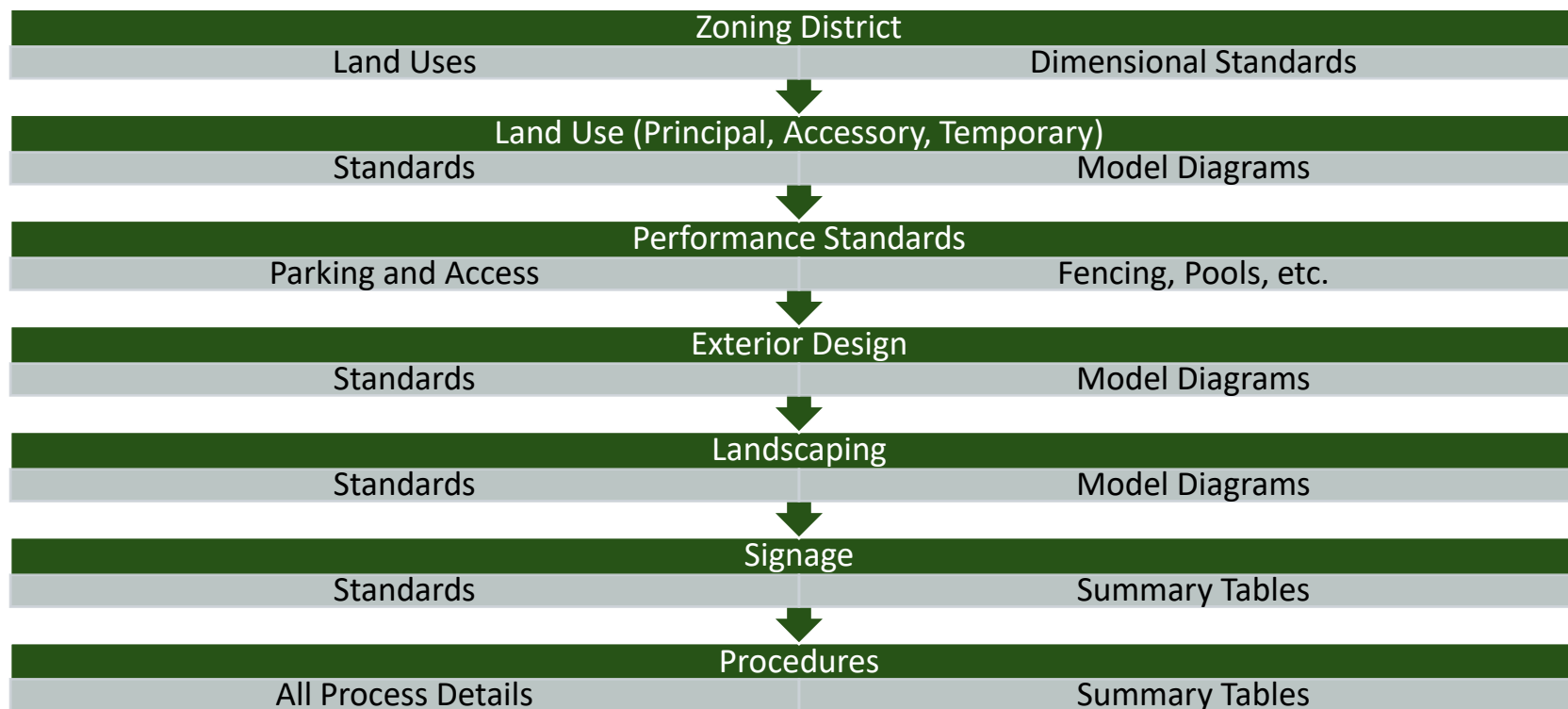
Additional recommendations include:

- Identify and remedy all inconsistent requirements.
- Increase flexibility for administrative adjustments.
- Creation of a garage floor area ratio for residential zones.
- Incorporate clear enforcement standards and procedures.
- Creating strong intent and purpose statements.
- Adding fence regulations into the zoning code.
- Clarifying home occupation requirements.
- Creation of broader land use categories.
- Remove all provisions that do not pertain to zoning and relocate them to the proper section of City ordinances.
- Update the Appeals process to provide clear procedures and review standards.
- Add modern land use types to accommodate uses such as data centers, electric vehicle charging stations, community gardens, etc.
- Create a unified table of land uses to indicate what's permitted by-right, by conditional use, or not permitted in each zoning district.
- Create a defined list of accessory land uses for each zoning district that can be used in combination with principal land uses on permitted lots, such as incidental uses, off-street parking, short-term residential rentals, etc. This same approach could be utilized for Temporary Land Uses.
- Publish how-to guides that cover common issues residents may encounter, such as fencing, signs, accessory buildings, and ADUs requirements.



Below, in Figure 1, is a proposed approach to how requirements can be collocated together and organized in a typical order of development procedural steps within the new Zoning Ordinance, including accompanying text and illustrative versions of each requirement to improve user-friendliness.

Figure 1: Project Review Components



Issue 3: Update Definitions to Improve Clarity and Consistency

We recommend relocating the Definitions to a new Article, where existing definitions can be expanded, new definitions can be added, and all defined terms can be consolidated into a centralized, user-friendly reference section. The existing definitions provide a solid foundation; however, a thorough review should be undertaken to improve clarity, incorporate objective and easily applied metrics where appropriate, and update terminology to reflect current planning practices and legal standards.

For example, the definition of "family" should be reviewed and revised to recognize common, legally recognized household living arrangements that may not be adequately addressed under the current ordinance. At the same time, the definition should maintain clear distinctions between single-household living arrangements and uses such as boarding or rooming houses, where occupancy and operational characteristics differ.

Well-crafted definitions are essential to the consistent administration and enforcement of zoning regulations. Although some degree of professional judgment will always be necessary, clear definitions and objective, measurable standards reduce ambiguity and minimize subjective interpretation. This, in turn, promotes fair and equitable application of the ordinance while reducing the need for case-by-case interpretations that may unintentionally establish inconsistent precedents.

Issue 4: Develop New Zoning Districts

As part of the ordinance update, the City should evaluate the creation of new zoning districts for parks and open space, institutional and government uses, mixed-use development, missing middle residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors, downtown and downtown transition areas, and varying levels of industrial intensity. Dedicated districts for these uses can provide more appropriate use regulations and development standards, improving the organization and usability of the ordinance.

The development of new zoning districts also presents an opportunity to reduce reliance on Special Use Permits by allowing compatible uses by right where appropriate and tailoring district standards to address operational and development characteristics. Moving forward, the City can rely more strategically on the zoning map amendment process, rather than special use approvals, to guide the location and intensity of certain uses. This approach provides greater predictability for applicants while allowing the City to maintain stronger control over land use decisions through the legislative zoning process. By establishing clear district standards, the City can better ensure compatibility with surrounding development and long-term community goals while reducing reliance on a special use process that is more limited under Wisconsin Act 67.

As part of this effort, a comprehensive parcel-by-parcel review of the zoning map will be conducted to refine district boundaries, correct existing mapping inconsistencies, and ensure zoning reflects both existing conditions and planned land use patterns. Updating the zoning map does not necessarily mean existing properties must change; instead, the ordinance should include clear nonconforming use and structure provisions that allow existing development to continue while providing opportunities for reinvestment, maintenance, and reasonable improvements. Addressing these situations early will create a smoother transition, reduce uncertainty for property owners, and ensure the new ordinance supports both legal consistency and community reinvestment. Even in cases where regulations remain similar, reorganizing and renaming zoning districts will help distinguish the updated ordinance from the existing code and create a more intuitive framework for residents, developers, and staff to understand and administer.

Figure 2: Potential New Zoning Districts

Existing Zoning District	Potential New Zoning District
Single Family Residential (R-1)	Single Family Residential-1 (SR-1)
New	Single Family Residential-2 (SR-2)
Two Family Residential (R-2)	Mixed Residential-1 (MR-1)
Multifamily Residential (M-1)	Mixed Residential-2 (MR-2)
Multifamily Residential (M-2)	
New	Mixed Residential-3 (MR-3)
New	Mobile Home-1 (MH-1)
New	Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU)
General Commercial (C-1)	Corridor Mixed Use (CMU)
New	Regional Mixed Use (RMU)
Central Commercial (C-2)	Downtown Mixed Use (DMU)
New	Institutional (INST)
Community Health (CH)	Medical Campus (MC)
Planned Business Center (I-1)	Light Industrial (LI)
General Industrial (I-2)	Heavy Industrial (HI)
Planned Development (PDD)	Planned Unit Development (PUD)
New	Agriculture (AG)
New	Conservancy (CON)
New	Parks and Recreation (PR)
New	Intensive Outdoor Activity (IOA)

Issue 5: Promote Infill Development and Redevelopment

The City of Neenah has limited opportunity for outward growth due to its established boundaries, mature development pattern, and surrounding physical constraints (Lake Winnebago, Little Lake Butte des Morts and the Fox River). Because of these geographic and development constraints, Neenah's future growth strategy should focus on redevelopment and infill that maximizes the potential of existing neighborhoods, commercial areas, and underutilized properties. Traditional zoning codes often create barriers for reinvestment by applying standards designed for new development on vacant land. These barriers can make it difficult to reuse existing buildings, develop smaller lots, expand older structures, or adapt properties to changing needs.

Based on public feedback from the workshop and survey, there was support for allowing neighborhood-serving commercial businesses within residential areas. This indicates that residents are generally receptive to small-scale commercial uses—such as neighborhood cafes, small retail shops, or personal service businesses—that provide convenient access to everyday goods and services.

The zoning rewrite can provide an opportunity to encourage reinvestment by:

- Making all existing lots, structures, and sites legal conforming.
- Providing opportunities for greater use of existing properties through reduced bulk dimensional standards.
- Allowing reasonable expansion, reconstruction, and modification of existing buildings.
- Applying new building form and frontage standards primarily when significant redevelopment occurs, rather than for minor improvements.
- Providing opportunities for mixed-use land uses to occur on the same lot.

"Zoning that addresses the modification, retrofitting, reuse, and redevelopment of existing buildings has a much better chance of closing the absolute gap in housing supply in many communities."

Source: Donald Elliott, "Better Zoning for Reuse and Redevelopment," Zoning Practice, American Planning Association, June 2026.

Issue 6: Establish Building Design and Landscaping Standards

The City's existing zoning code includes landscaping requirements but does not establish building design standards. To date, Neenah has benefited from high-quality development despite the absence of formal design standards. However, relying solely on developer discretion provides little assurance that future projects will meet the community's expectations. Without clear, objective standards, the City has limited ability to guide building materials, architectural quality, façade design, and how new development relates to adjacent properties and the public realm.

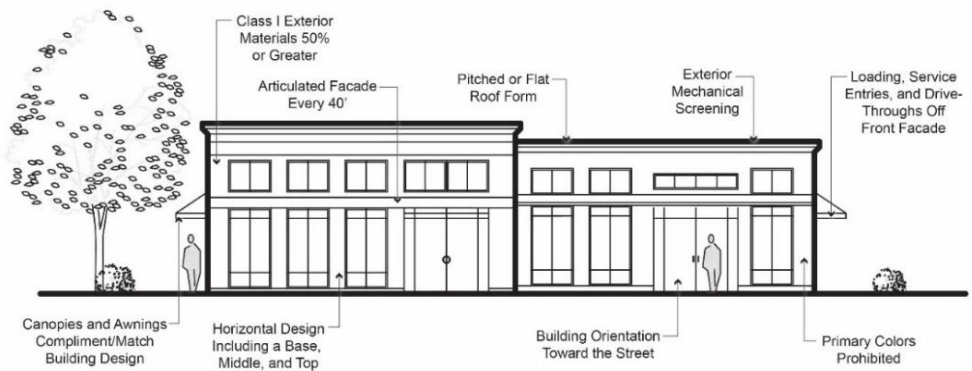
The public workshop and survey feedback indicated support for multi-family, community corridor, and downtown design standards. Respondents also expressed preference to pedestrian-oriented site design and screening standards between different uses.

It is recommended that the zoning code include design standards tailored to different development types, such as multifamily, commercial, industrial, downtown, and mixed-use projects. Many Wisconsin communities have successfully implemented this approach to improve the quality and consistency of new development while providing developers with clear and predictable expectations. Alternatively, the City could establish overlay design districts for defined areas within the community where additional design guidance is warranted.

Design standards should focus on objective, measurable criteria that are easy to administer and consistently apply. Standards addressing building materials, façade articulation, transparency, entrances, rooflines, and pedestrian-oriented design can improve the quality of development while still allowing flexibility in architectural style and creativity. This is especially important in Downtown Neenah, where the area's architecture, walkability, and unique sense of place are among the City's greatest assets. Thoughtfully crafted downtown design standards can help preserve and strengthen this character while ensuring that future redevelopment complements the existing built environment.

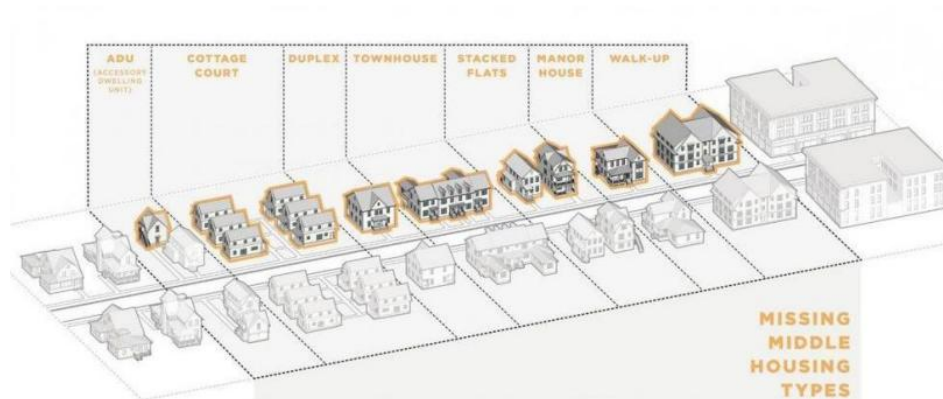
The zoning code rewrite also presents an opportunity to consider how public art should be incorporated into new development. This could be addressed through zoning standards, a separate public art ordinance, or an administrative review process that encourages artwork in key public spaces and redevelopment projects.

Finally, the City's existing landscaping regulations provide a solid foundation. However, the standards could be modernized to offer greater flexibility and improve design outcomes. One approach is to adopt a point-based landscaping system, where requirements are established by zoning district and site area, such as street frontages, building foundations, parking lots, and buffers, while allowing property owners to choose from a variety of plant materials that meet established point values. This approach encourages higher-quality landscaping, increases flexibility in site design, and simplifies the review and administration of landscaping requirements.



Issue 7: Expand Housing Opportunities

The City's 2025 Housing Study and Needs Assessment highlights a clear need to expand housing options, reduce regulatory barriers, and better align zoning with current and future housing demand. This was further supported by the public input gathered through the public workshop and survey. While the existing residential zoning framework has historically supported traditional development patterns, it offers limited flexibility for evolving housing types and changing household needs. Rather than relying primarily on strict unit counts and conventional density limits, the updated framework can place greater emphasis on building scale, form, and neighborhood compatibility. This shift allows the City to better accommodate a wider range of housing types, including two-family homes, missing middle housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and in-family suites, while maintaining appropriate standards for integration within existing neighborhoods.



Source: Neenah Housing Study and Needs Assessment

This modernization may also include reorganizing residential zoning districts into clearer low-, medium-, and higher-density categories, each with more defined expectations for the types of housing they are intended to support. Compatibility would be managed through form- and site-based standards rather than solely through use restrictions, creating more predictable outcomes while allowing greater flexibility in housing design and placement. In addition to expanding housing types, creating mixed-use zoning districts that allow residential development in appropriate nonresidential areas, including commercial corridors and downtown, would help establish a more adaptable and responsive framework for expanding housing opportunities. Figure 3 provides a summary of the existing housing types and densities currently permitted within the City.

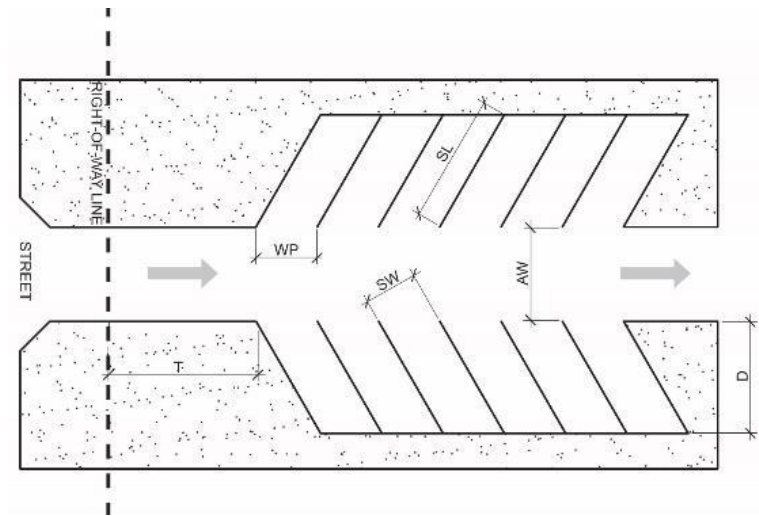
Figure 3: Existing Residential Uses Permitted in Neenah

	Single-family dwelling	Two-family dwellings	3 Units	4 or more units	Mixed Use Building
R-1	Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
R-2	Allowed	Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
M-1	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed w/Site Plan	Not Allowed
M-2	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed w/Site Plan	Not Allowed
C-1	Allowed if built before June 1, 2025	Allowed if built before June 1, 2025	Allowed w/Site Plan	Allowed w/Site Plan	Allowed w/Site Plan
C-2	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Allowed	Allowed as accessory
I-1	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
I-2	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
CH	Allowed	Allowed	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional

Issue 8: Reform Parking Standards

The City's current off-street parking regulations are limited in scope and present a significant opportunity for modernization. The existing ordinance relies on specific classifications of land uses, assigning individual parking requirements to narrowly defined uses. While this approach provides detailed standards, it reduces flexibility, increases administrative complexity, and may not adequately address emerging or evolving land uses. Consolidating similar uses into broader categories and establishing parking requirements based on comparable parking demand would simplify ordinance administration while improving its long-term adaptability.

It is also recommended that existing minimum parking requirements be adjusted to accurately reflect current parking demand. Overestimating parking needs often results in oversized, underutilized parking lots that increase development costs, limit redevelopment opportunities, and consume land that could otherwise accommodate buildings, open space, landscaping, or other site amenities. Parking standards should be adjusted using current demand



data and, where appropriate, alternative metrics such as building occupancy or the number of employees during the largest work shift. For example, the existing requirement for supermarkets and retail establishments is one parking space per 200 square feet of floor area, which could be reduced to one space per 400 square feet to more accurately reflect actual parking needs.

In addition to updating minimum parking requirements, the ordinance could incorporate greater flexibility through modern parking strategies such as parking maximums, allowing shared parking arrangements by right where adjacent uses have complementary peak demand periods, and permitting phased parking construction so additional parking is added only as demand warrants. These approaches can right-size parking supplies, reduce unnecessary impervious surfaces, lower development costs, and encourage more efficient land use.

The public workshop and survey feedback indicated support for multi-modal transportation connectivity standards, maximum parking ratios, on-site bicycle parking minimums, and reduced overall parking minimums.

Beyond parking quantity, the ordinance provides limited guidance on parking lot design and functionality. Additional standards addressing parking lot layout, internal circulation, driveway design and access, maintenance, loading areas, and pedestrian accommodations would improve site design, reduce traffic conflicts, and enhance safety for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Bicycle and pedestrian connection standards and minimum bicycle parking standards could also be incorporated into these new requirements to ensure safe access to and from each property and implement the Comprehensive Plan's Transportation goals and recommendations.

Issue 9: Align Ordinance with State and Federal Regulations

Over the past 50 years, the ordinance has been adapted to reflect state and federal law changes. However, this project presents an opportunity to remedy any existing situation where the ordinance may have become noncompliant. Neenah has been faced with multiple legal challenges in recent years related to existing ordinance provisions and has worked to address each following those cases. The ordinance rewrite aims to bring the entire code into compliance with state and federal laws to avoid future legal challenges. This will include a particular focus on short-term rentals, housing, conditional uses, content-based signage standards, community living arrangements, nonconforming structures, telecommunication uses, alternative energy production, and more. Additionally, the new Zoning Ordinance will provide references to applicable state and federal provisions to improve law-compliant administration,

Truth in Planning (Wisconsin Act 173)

Enacted in April 2026, the law requires greater consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations. It establishes new requirements for Comprehensive Plans, residential density standards, and development review procedures. The zoning code rewrite will incorporate these requirements by updating the review procedures, timelines, and decision-making criteria to ensure compliance with state law while maintaining local control where possible.

application, and enforcement. Finally, during this process, there may be instances of newly established case law or statutory changes. The overarching goal of the project will be to work with staff to integrate best practices and address these situations by finding legally compliant solutions for evolving topics.

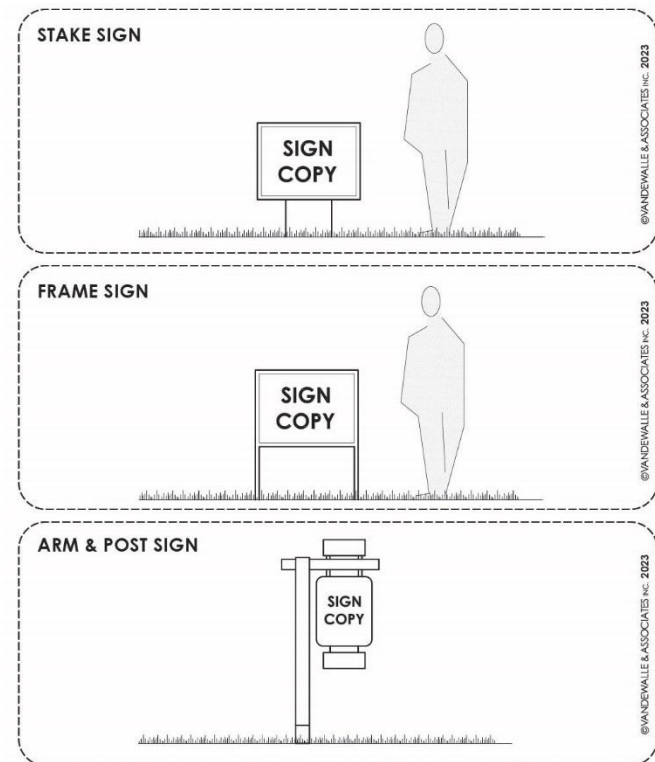
Issue 10: Overhaul the Sign Ordinance

The City's sign regulations should undergo a comprehensive overhaul to create a cohesive regulatory framework that aligns with current legal standards, community design goals, and modern communication practices. The existing sign provisions need to be reorganized to identify outdated requirements, eliminate conflicts, improve consistency, and integrate sign standards directly into the overall zoning ordinance. A primary focus of the overhaul will be ensuring compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015), which established that sign regulations must be content-neutral. The City can establish new sign categories and names to remove content-based terms like “Garage Sale Sign” and instead use terms that reflect the structural components of the sign types like Board, Banner, Arm and Post, Stake, etc.

The new sign standards can also be consolidated into easy-to-use tables that summarize dimensional requirements, location standards, and approval procedures by zoning district. Incorporating graphics and diagrams will improve usability by helping property owners, applicants, staff, and decision-makers understand applicable requirements and reduce interpretation challenges. Additionally, the sign ordinance rewrite can address and modernize sign permit approval procedures and standards related to off-premise, electronic message, pedestrian, sandwich board signs, and more.

Conclusion

In total, the goal of the rewrite project will be to remedy these overarching issues and reflect solutions to each within the new ordinance and map. Throughout the process, the Steering Committee will be provided with policy decisions related to each of these issues to determine the best fit and customized solution for Neenah.



City of Neenah Zoning and Sign Ordinance Evaluation

Appendix August 2026

Comprehensive Plan Summary

In a modern planning-zoning relationship, the Comprehensive Plan is designed to be implemented, in part, through zoning and land division control. The Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan guides land use decision-making in the City and contains the Future Land Use map. Per state statutes, the new Zoning Ordinance and Map will be developed to be consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan's Implementation Plan identified the following action items that relate to zoning:

- Increase the amount of residential living space in or near the downtown.
- Promote the conversion of underutilized properties for residential and/or mixed uses, if feasible.
- Create a zoning district for neighborhood-level commercial uses.
- Develop zoning districts appropriate for different lot sizes and smaller houses.
- Develop standards that buffer commercial and residential uses and allow both to prosper.
- Establish progressive resource protection standards that new neighborhood developments should follow, to ensure that natural features function to both enhance the value of adjoining property and continue their environmental purpose.
- Protect the historic character of the downtown area by adopting historical preservation design standards to enhance and preserve the historical significance of the Central Business District.
- Consider new emerging trends in housing, such as tiny houses, granny flats, and cohousing.
- Add a requirement that developers work with the City to provide diversity in the selection of trees.
- Strengthen and redevelop existing commercial corridors.
- Encourage new development to occur in areas already served or adjacent to existing development.
- Review and update the City's sign code to account for signage that is compatible with the district it's located in and for the use of the property.
- Review local ordinances to determine restrictions that would prohibit murals and other art forms.
- Identify regulations that would support community gardens throughout the City.

Other Plan Summary

To help inform the zoning ordinance rewrite, staff reviewed the City's adopted long-range planning documents to identify recommendations that could be implemented, in whole or in part, through updates to the zoning ordinance. Although each plan focuses on a different aspect of the community, many include implementation strategies that are connected to modernizing zoning regulations, streamlining development standards, or removing regulatory barriers. The following is a summary of those recommendations and how they relate to the current code rewrite effort.

Neenah Housing Study and Needs Assessment

- Middle density formats needed – ADUs, missing middle, reduced parking requirements, senior housing
- Create a small lot single-family district
- Reduce minimum lot sizes and widths
- Remove minimum dwelling widths
- Reduce side setbacks and remove aggregate minimums
- Design standards for bulk related to mixed housing formats in SF areas
- Increase flexibility for administrative adjustments
- Permit existing SF homes in commercial districts (remove nonconforming)
- Streamline review and approval processes
- Review and modify parking requirements

Neenah Next Downtown Reimagined

- Review and simplify development regulations to reduce complexity and improve predictability for developers.
- Streamline the development approval process by creating a clearer, more efficient permitting and review process.
- Update zoning regulations to allow for a greater variety of housing types.

- Encourage development of "missing middle" housing, including medium-density housing options such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings.
- Revise zoning standards to better accommodate infill development on small or irregularly shaped lots.
- Ensure zoning and development codes support the creation of affordable housing rather than inadvertently restricting it.

South Commercial Street Corridor Plan

- Increase the maximum building height to four stories.
- Reduce the required 10-foot building frontage strip adjacent to the public right-of-way.
- Increase the maximum allowable lot coverage to encourage infill development and improve walkability.
- Create a Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District designed for older commercial corridors and smaller lots.
- Reduce front yard setback requirements to allow buildings to be located closer to the street.
- Reduce minimum off-street parking requirements to facilitate redevelopment.
- Relax frontage strip requirements to provide greater site design flexibility.
- Modify zoning regulations to better accommodate smaller lots through reduced setbacks and parking requirements.
- Encourage buildings to be located at the front of lots with parking to the side or rear.
- Provide greater flexibility for parking, including shared parking agreements and alternative methods of meeting parking requirements.
- Support façade improvements, outdoor seating, landscaping, signage, and public art through zoning code changes.

Waterfront Design and Development Master Plan

- Promote mixed-use redevelopment by encouraging new office, retail, entertainment, and residential uses near the waterfront.
- Encourage mixed-use buildings with residential units located above ground-floor retail or office uses within three blocks of the waterfront.
- Orient new development toward Commercial Street to reinforce an active, pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
- Increase opportunities for outdoor dining and sidewalk activity along Wisconsin Avenue to strengthen the pedestrian environment.

City Staff Meetings

Multiple staff kickoff meetings occurred between April and July 2026. A summary of those discussions is provided below:

Key priorities for this project include:

- Streamline regulations and review procedures
- Improve accessibility and ease of understanding
- Address state and federal law changes
- Match zoning standards to fit existing development
- Integrate feedback from the community and engagement activities
- Implement adopted City plans.

Key issues that need to be addressed with this project include:

- Modernize land uses and reduce special uses
- Alignment and consistency with federal and state laws
- Reorganization of documents with graphics, charts, and tables
- Create new zoning districts and potential overlay districts
- Permit mixed-use buildings
- Address non-conforming situations
- Create design standards
- Provide greater housing flexibility

- Address landscaping standards
- Combine zoning and sign code ordinance

On May 18, 2026, Vandewalle & Associates staff participated in an all-day Project Kick-Off Event for the zoning and sign code rewrite. The event included a full agenda of activities designed to introduce the project, gather input, identify key issues and opportunities, and help guide the code update process. Below is a summary of each event and the feedback received.

All City Staff Kick-off Meeting

In the morning, a meeting was held with Community Development staff who work with the Zoning and Sign Code on a daily basis, including its administration, interpretation, and implementation. The meeting included an introduction to the project and a facilitated discussion to gather staff insight on key issues, challenges, and priorities to consider during the code update process. A summary of the discussion is provided below:

The existing zoning code needs updates to improve clarity, consistency, flexibility, and enforceability. Key areas of focus include:

- Expanding and refining zoning districts
- Reducing reliance on interpretations and special permits
- Strengthening definitions and intent statements
- Creating clearer standards for development, property maintenance, parking, structures, lighting, fences, signs, and home occupations.
- Updates should also include improved graphics, tables, and user-friendly guidance.
- The new code should provide stronger legal defensibility, address emerging issues such as ADUs, manufactured homes, short-term rentals, and changing development patterns, while creating consistent standards that better reflect community goals and regional practices.

City Tour

Following the all-staff meeting, a tour of the city was taken. The tour provided an opportunity to observe existing conditions, development patterns, and areas of opportunity throughout the community. It also helped identify potential zoning issues and inform future recommendations.

Development Opportunities/Existing Conditions

- Recently constructed townhomes on Doty Island are a successful housing model that could be replicated elsewhere in the community.
- Opportunities exist for additional mixed residential development along 5th Street and redevelopment along 1st Street and Commercial Street.
- Commercial Street was identified as a key corridor for future mixed-use and redevelopment opportunities.
- Mallard Farms was cited as a successful Planned Development District (PDD) project.
- The CH District, which was established to implement the hospital master plan, remains an important zoning tool and should be retained.
- Provide greater flexibility in height standards along Cecil Street.
- Continue balancing redevelopment opportunities with protection of the historic downtown character.

Potential Zoning Map Amendments

- Rezone Walmart from Industrial to Commercial.
- Evaluate Green Bay Road (from the northern municipal boundary to the interstate interchange) for mixed-use or residential zoning.
- Consider mixed-use zoning along Main Street between the interstate and downtown.
- Rezone select C-1 areas surrounding downtown to Downtown zoning.
- Redevelopment opportunities exist along Commercial Street.

- Continue supporting industrial expansion along North Commercial Street and Tyler Street.
- Rezone office and corporate properties between Harrison Street and the interstate from Industrial to Commercial.

Stakeholder Listening Sessions

In the afternoon stakeholder listening sessions were conducted to gather input from key community partners who regularly interact with the Zoning and Sign Code. Three sessions were held, with a total of eight participants representing a range of perspectives. Stakeholders were organized into three groups based on their area of involvement: Commercial/Industrial, Residential, and Groups/Associations. A summary of the discussion is below.

Commercial/Industrial

- The current ordinance is viewed positively for allowing flexibility and collaboration through the review process.
- Stakeholders appreciate opportunities for discussion and a balanced approach when standards require some give-and-take.
- Neenah staff are recognized as approachable, responsive, and willing to work with applicants to find solutions.
- Key improvement areas include streamlining approval timelines, clarifying standards, and updating industrial regulations to better support operational needs.
- Future code updates should focus on practical flexibility, efficient site design, truck access and circulation, expansion opportunities, and simplifying requirements while maintaining appropriate development standards.
- Create a code that is easier to navigate and better aligned with how businesses operate while continuing to support the community's growth and improvement.

Residential

- Neenah is viewed as a good community to work with and develop in; however, infrastructure and utility extension requirements have impacted the ability to pursue new single-family residential development compared to surrounding communities.
- Current single-family development is primarily focused on larger lots, with smaller lot options and alternative housing types being more challenging to achieve without additional infrastructure support or flexibility.
- Developers identified the need for clearer subdivision and street policies, including expectations for road completion, developer responsibilities, erosion control, and timing of City acceptance.
- Sidewalk requirements were identified as an area for additional discussion, with interest in more flexible approaches such as trails, one-sided sidewalks, or phased installation.
- Infrastructure costs, street policies, and sidewalk requirements may be limiting factors for future single-family growth, highlighting the need for a more proactive approach to supporting residential development.

Groups and Associations

- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of using visuals, examples, and illustrations throughout the zoning code rewrite process to help the community understand proposed changes and decisions.
- Maintaining and enhancing a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented downtown is a priority, including supporting outdoor gathering spaces, flexible sign standards, improved connectivity, and opportunities for mixed-use development.
- Neenah's unique character as a small community with big-city amenities is valued; however, housing availability and affordability remain key concerns. Expanding housing options is viewed as important for supporting residents, schools, and workforce needs.

- Zoning can play a role in addressing workforce challenges by supporting additional housing opportunities, infill development, redevelopment, and infrastructure that can accommodate business growth.
- Future code updates should encourage diverse housing types, distributed housing density, neighborhood-scale commercial opportunities, and more flexible development standards while aligning with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Additional considerations include streamlining PUD and special use processes, exploring ADU opportunities, supporting mixed-use corridors, and creating clearer pathways for redevelopment and community growth.

Steering Committee

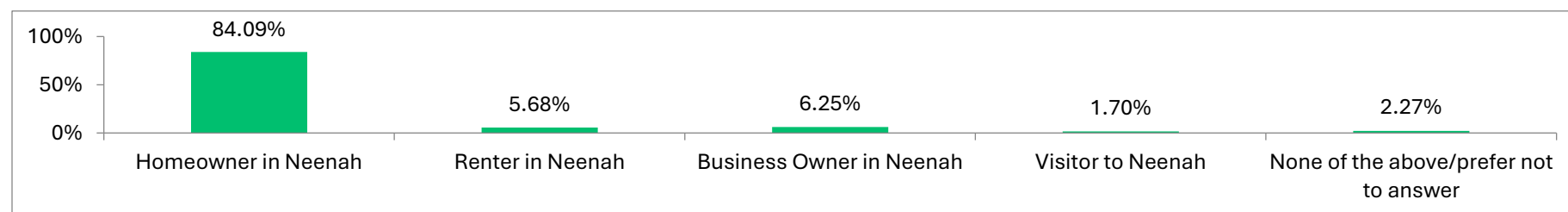
In the evening, the first Steering Committee meeting was held. The meeting included a brief presentation introducing the project, outlining the purpose and role of the Steering Committee, and reviewing the project schedule. Discussion topics were provided as a reference to help guide and facilitate conversation throughout the meeting. A summary of the discussion is below.

- The community has benefited from a flexible zoning approach, strong review processes, and tools such as the CH District and PUD process, which have supported quality development.
- The zoning rewrite should maintain this flexibility while establishing clearer standards, improving consistency, and reducing reliance on interpretation.
- Key areas for improvement include code usability, design standards, housing options, parking, landscaping, buffering, building orientation, lighting, temporary uses, outdoor storage, and pedestrian connectivity.
- The updated code should continue supporting efficient development while addressing long-term community goals and expectations.

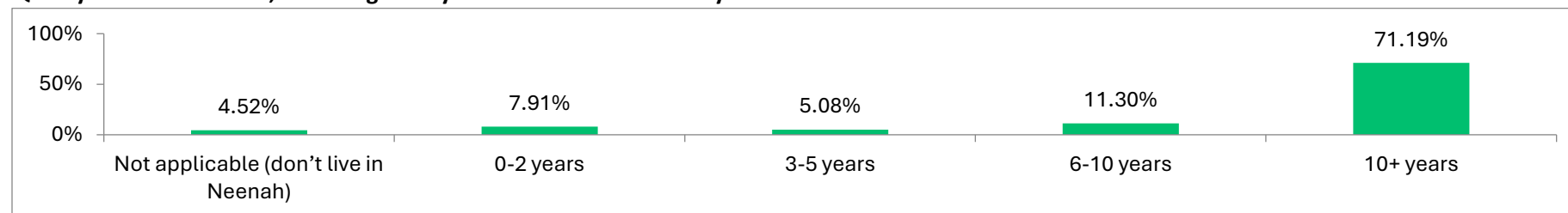
Public Workshop and Survey

On June 15, 2026 a public workshop was held in the Neenah City Hall Lobby. Approximately 16 people were in attendance. The event featured a short presentation providing background on the project and its proposed timeline along with an interactive open house where participants circulated among display boards featuring maps, photographs, and discussion questions. Attendees used sticker dots to vote on issues, express preferences, and provide feedback on potential recommendations. In addition to the in-person opportunity, an online survey was provided between June 16 through July 15 to gather further input. The online survey received a total of 178 responses. The combined results of those public input opportunities are listed below. Due to the large number of written responses, narrative questions were summarized. The images of the workshop posters included at the end of this document represent only the feedback collected during the in-person workshop.

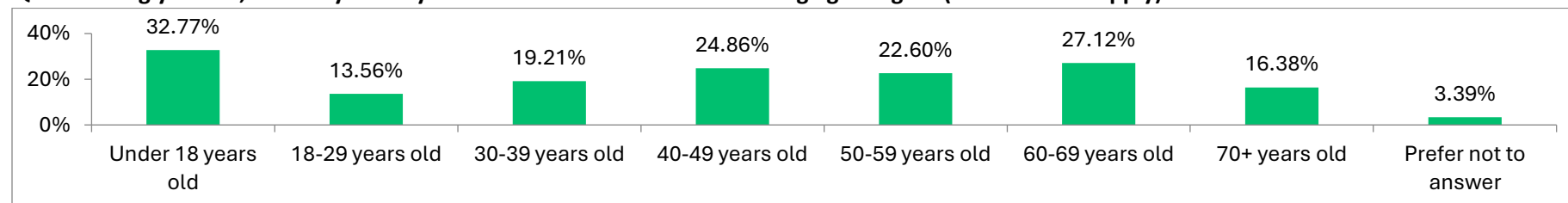
Q1: Please select the statement that best describes you.



Q2: If you live in Neenah, how long have you lived in the community?



Q3: Including yourself, does anyone in your household fall into the following age ranges? (select all that apply)



Q4: Of the single-family home designs below, please rank each image by preference (1 = most preferred, 6 = least preferred)



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



OPTION 3



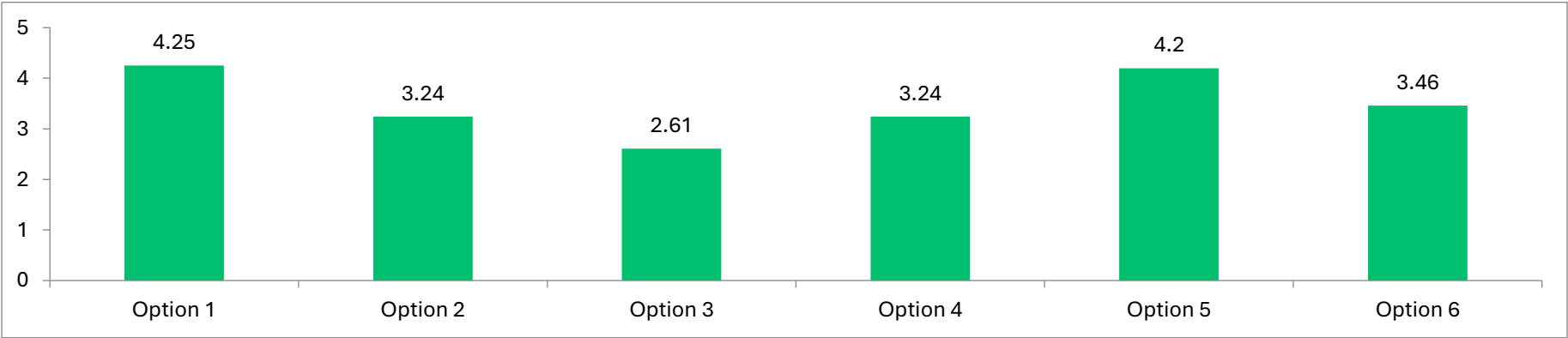
OPTION 4



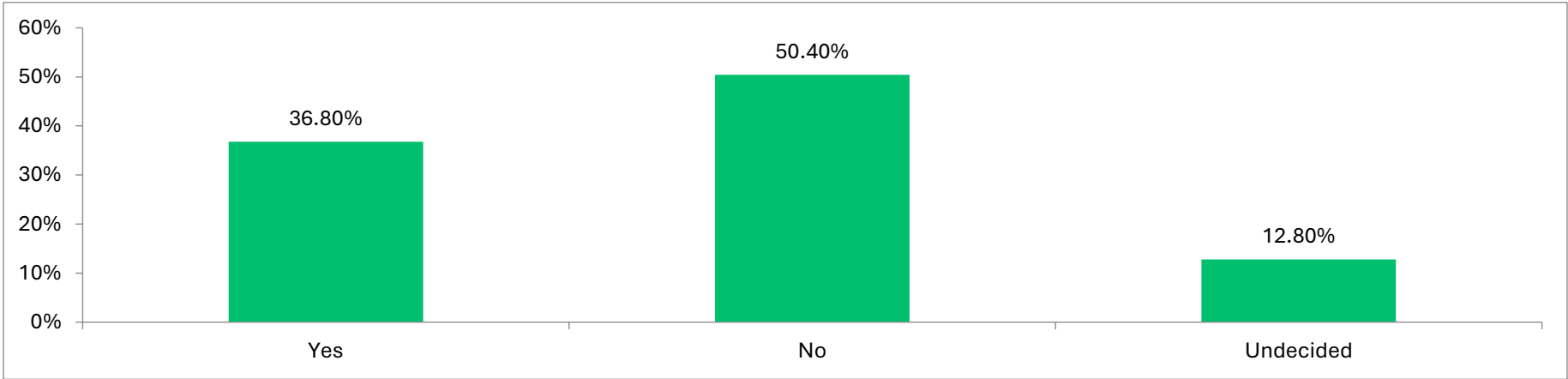
OPTION 5



OPTION 6



Q5: Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for single-family homes (such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, etc.)?



Q6: Of the two-family home designs below, please rank each image by preference (1 = most preferred, 6 = least preferred)



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



OPTION 3



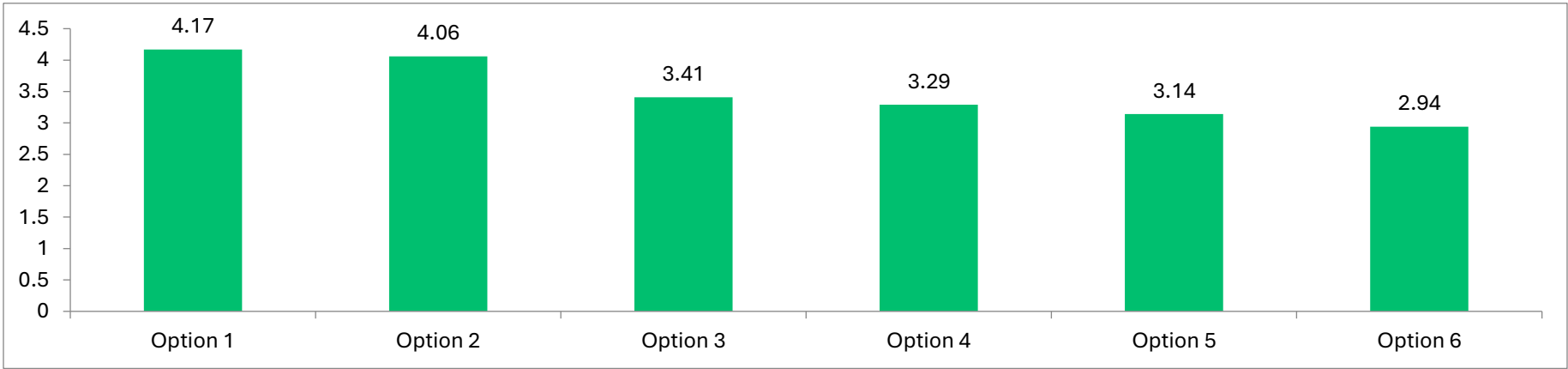
OPTION 4



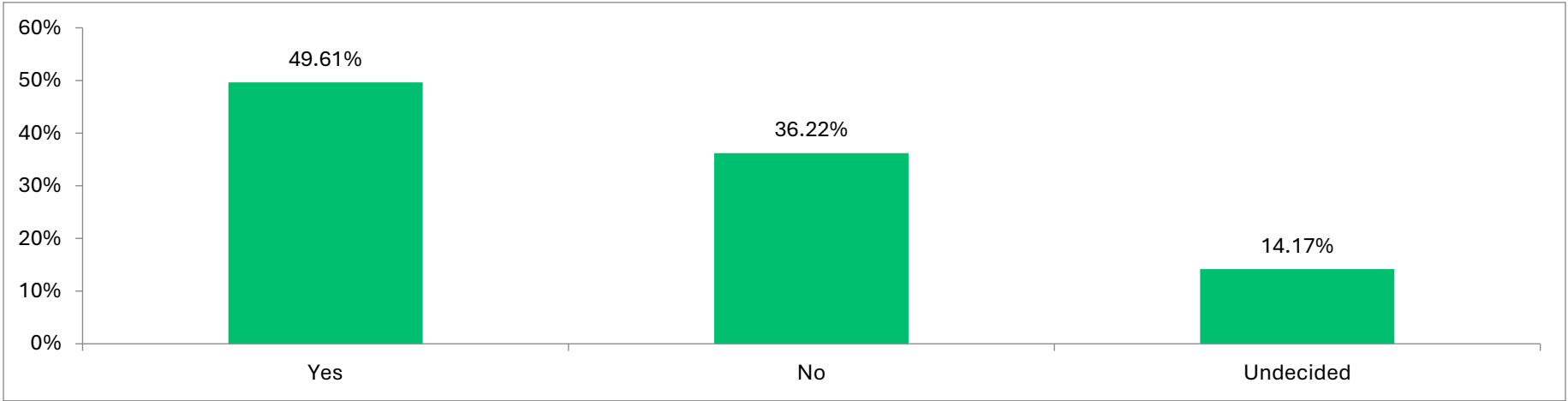
OPTION 5



OPTION 6



Q7: Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for two-family homes (such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, etc.)?



Q8: Of the multi-family home designs below, please rank each image by preference (1 = most preferred, 6 = least preferred)



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



OPTION 3



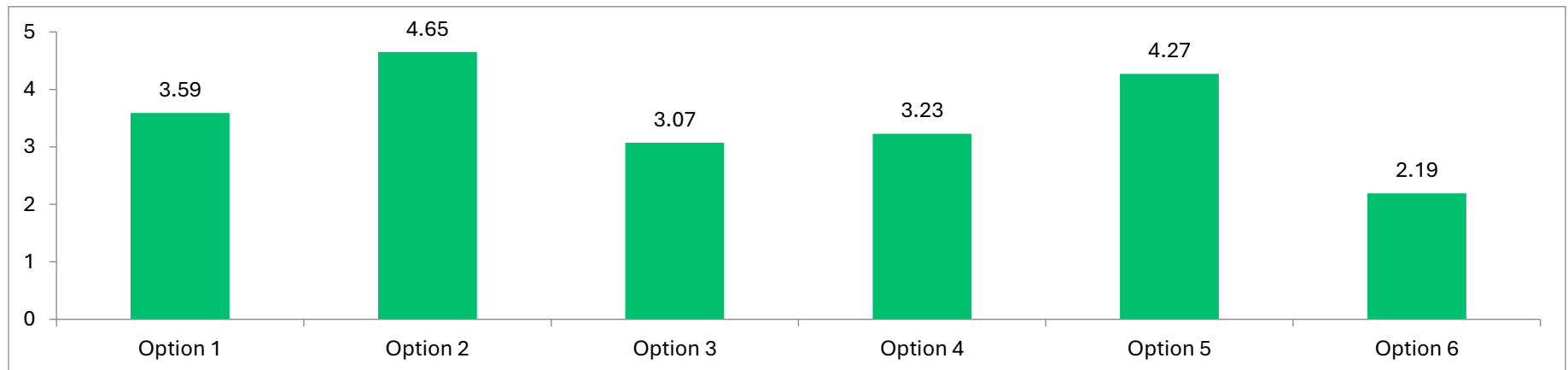
OPTION 4



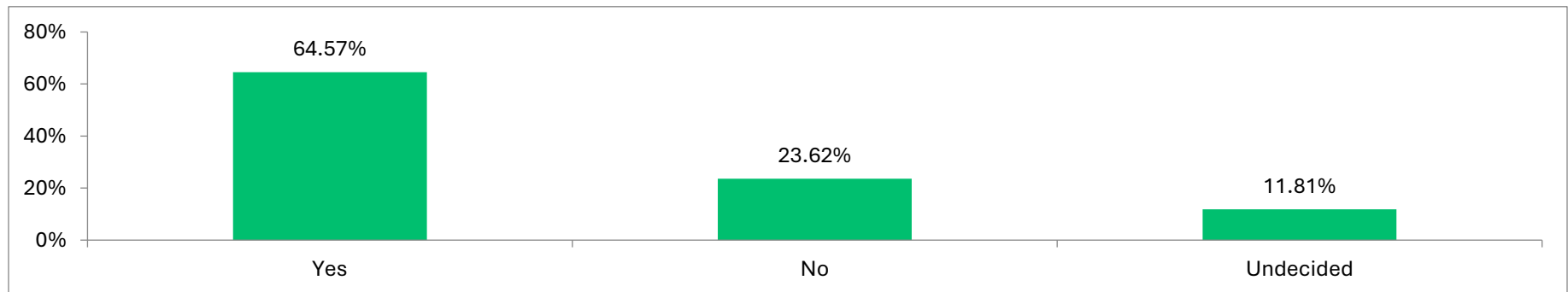
OPTION 5



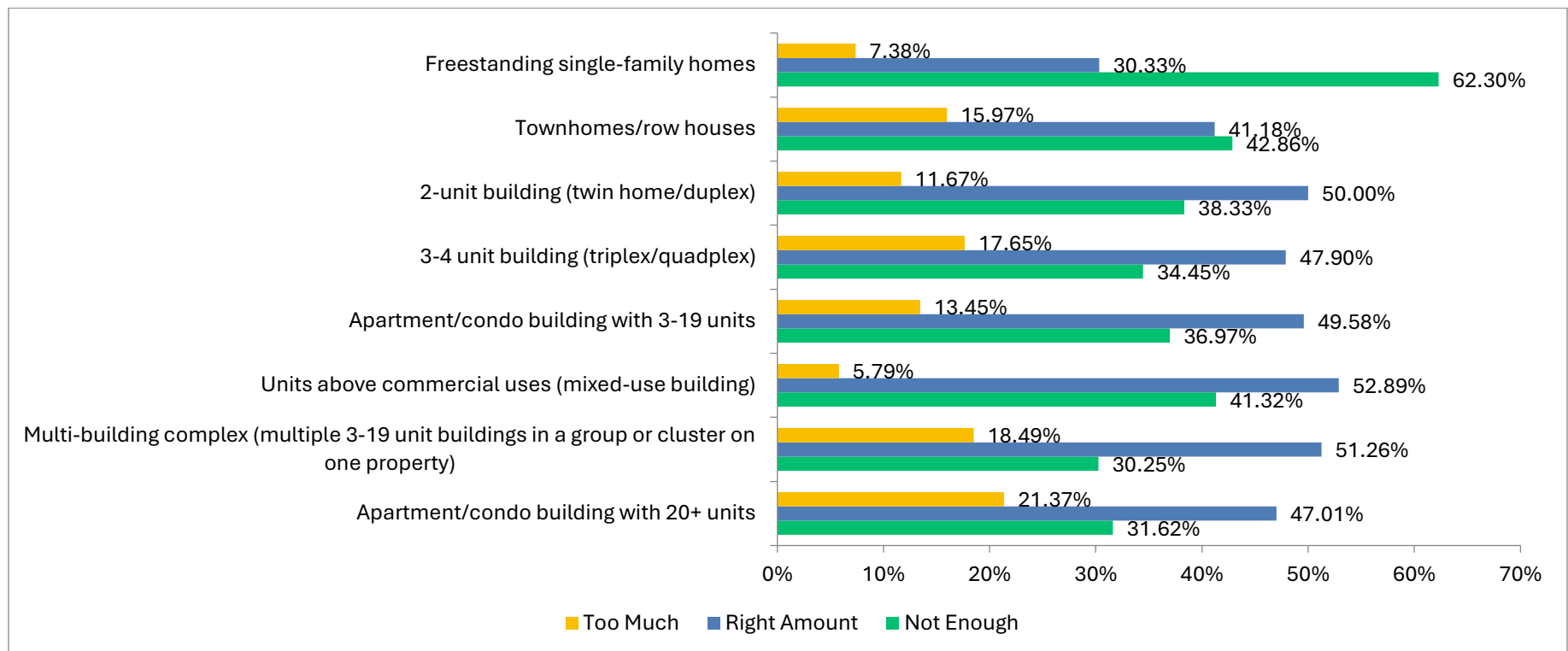
OPTION 6



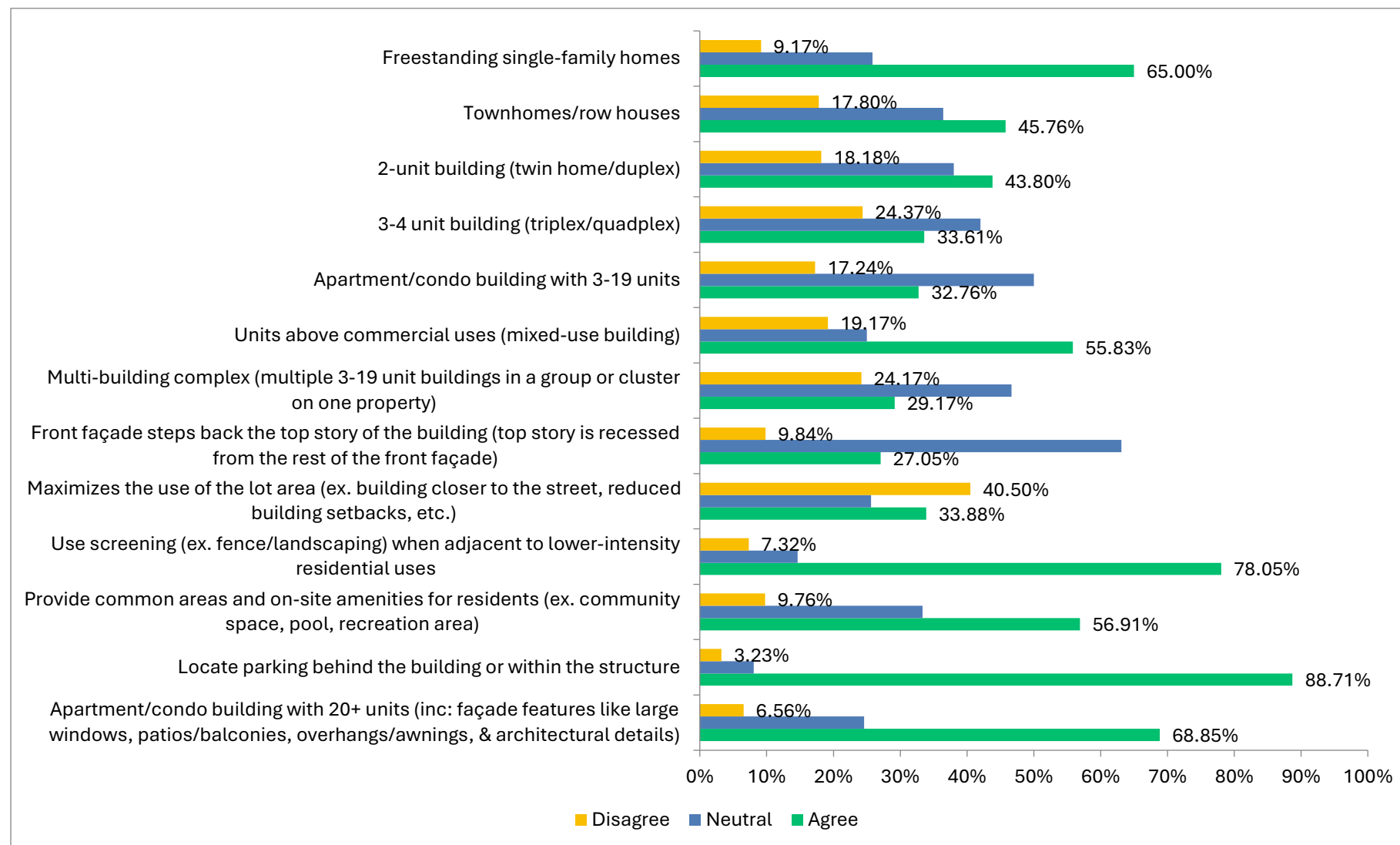
Q9: Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for multi-family homes (such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, etc.)?



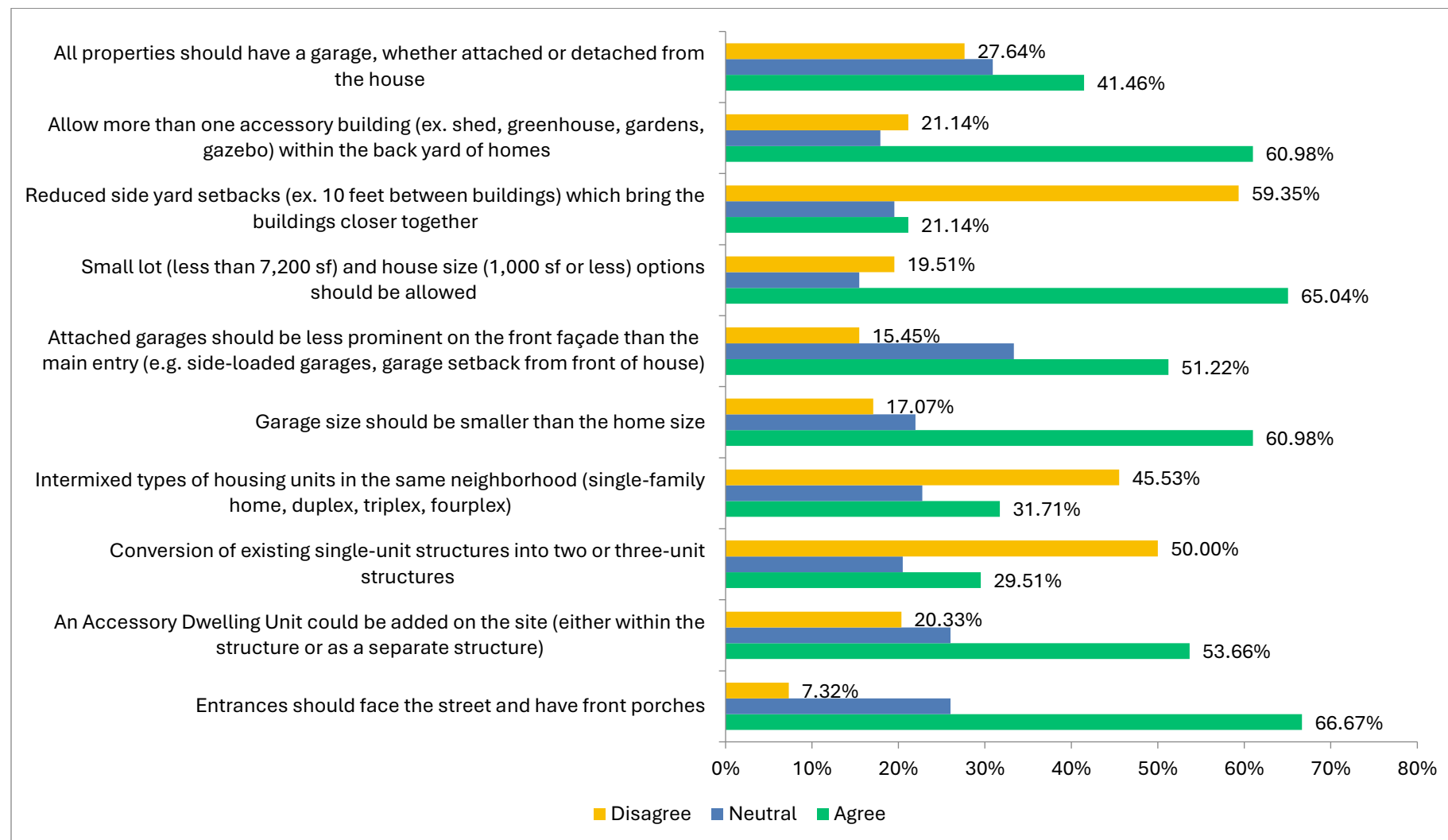
Q10: In your opinion, does Neenah need more of the housing options listed below?



Q11: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding new large (20+ unit) residential multi-family buildings?



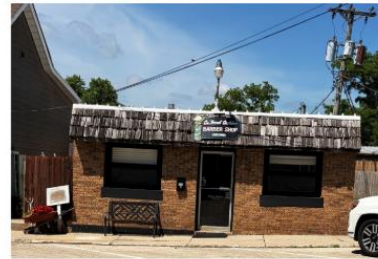
Q12: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding lower-density residential buildings (single-family home, duplex, triplex, fourplex, etc.)?



Q13: Of the neighborhood commercial building designs below, please rank each image by preference (1 = most preferred, 6 = least preferred)



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



OPTION 3



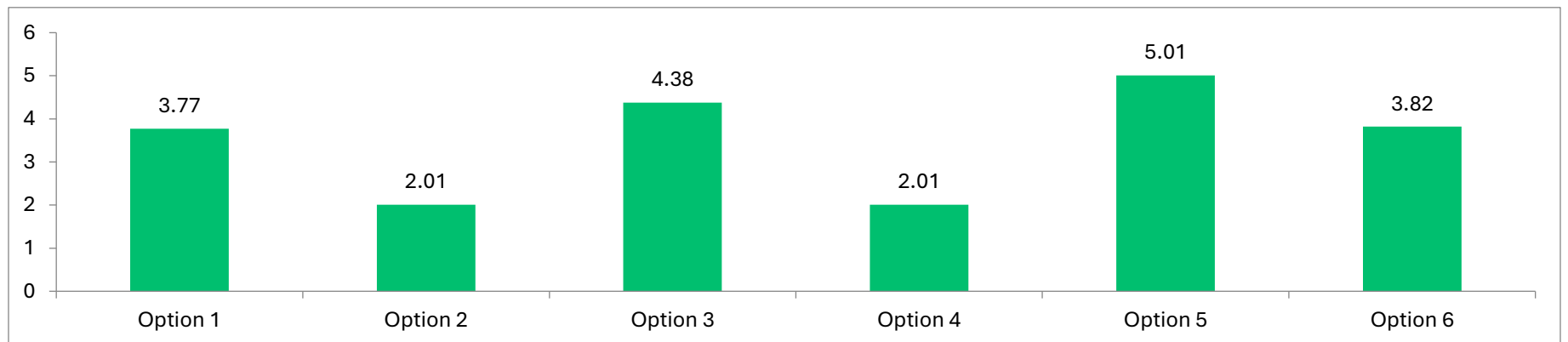
OPTION 4



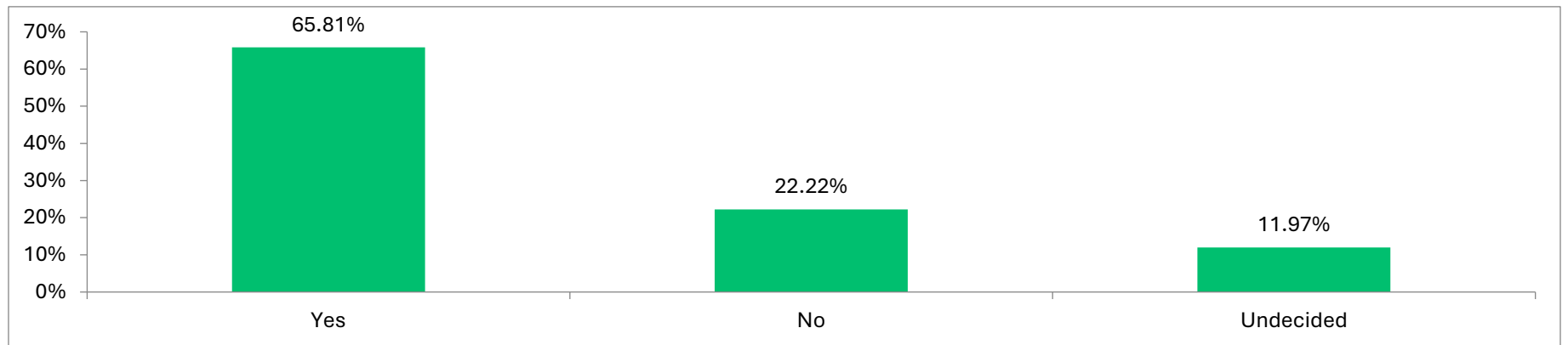
OPTION 5



OPTION 6



Q14: Should the City consider providing opportunities for neighborhood-serving businesses to be located adjacent to residential neighborhoods?



Q15: Of the commercial and mixed-use building designs below, please rank each image by preference (1 = most preferred, 6 = least preferred)



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



OPTION 3



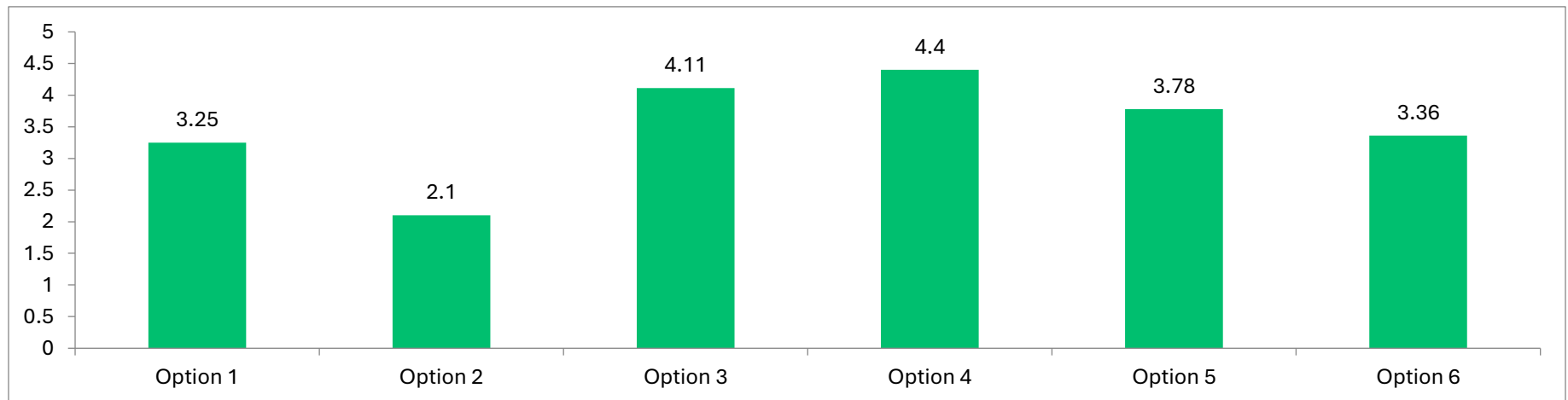
OPTION 4



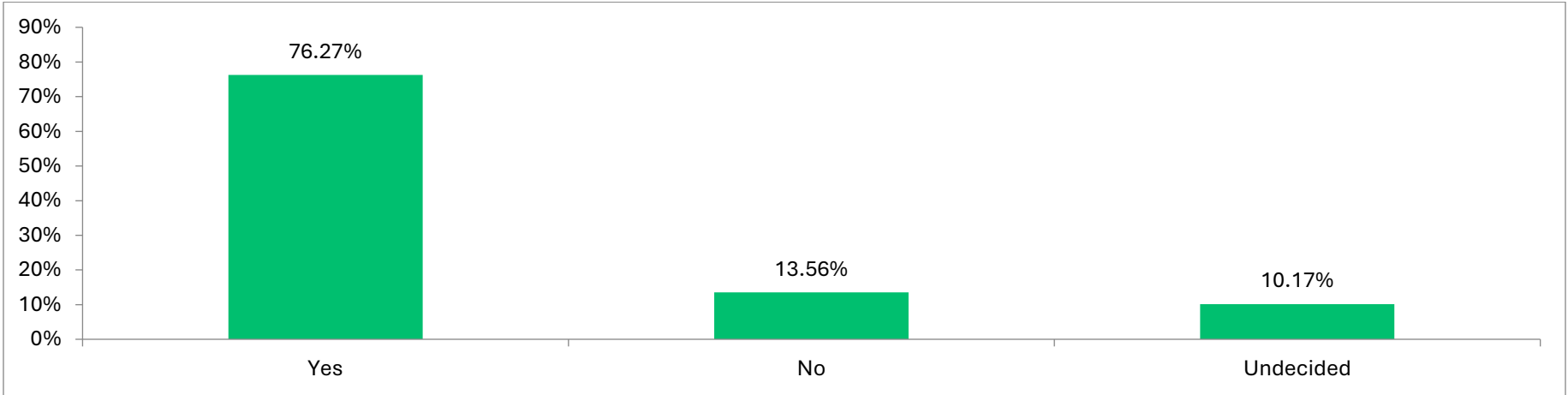
OPTION 5



OPTION 6



Q16: Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for community corridors (such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, orientation toward the street, etc.)?



Q17: Of the downtown building designs below, please rank each image by preference (1 = most preferred, 6 = least preferred)



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



OPTION 3



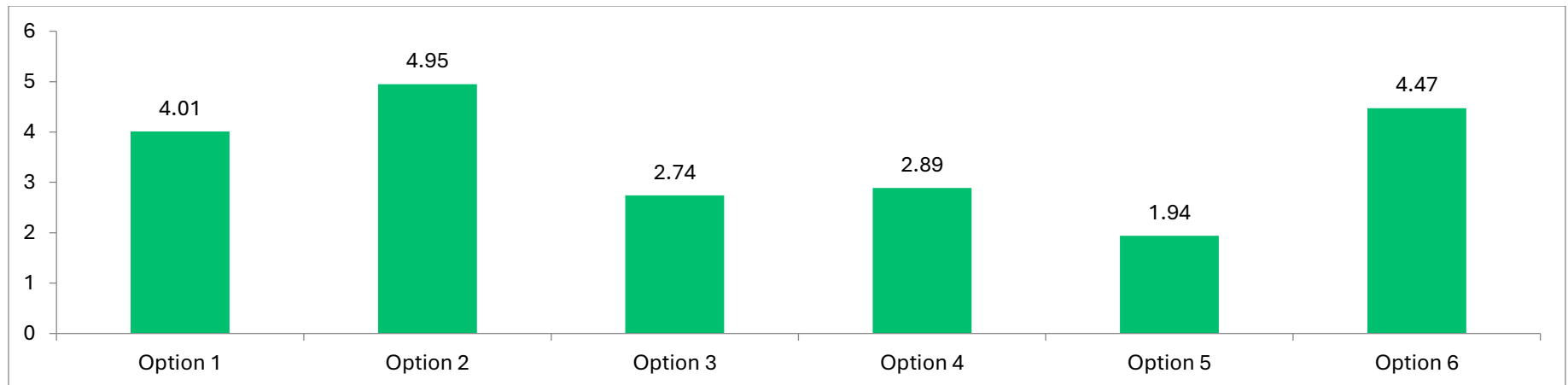
OPTION 4



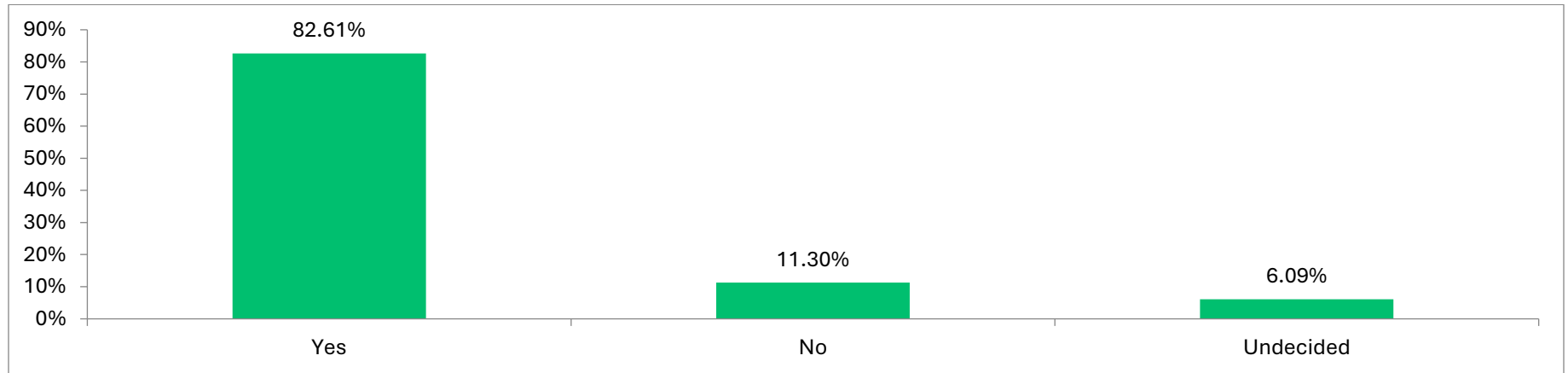
OPTION 5



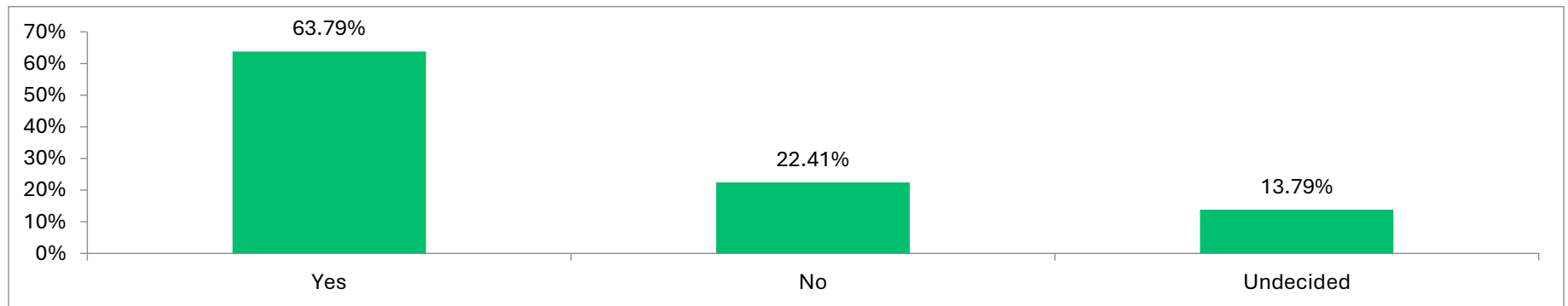
OPTION 6



Q18: Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for downtown (such as storefronts, high-quality materials, façade articulation, etc.)?



Q19: Should the City consider allowing only active commercial uses on the ground floor within the downtown area (ex. no residential, no office, etc.)?



Q20: New buildings in the following locations should be limited to how many stories?



Downtown



**S. Commercial St
(Cecil to Alcott)**



Green Bay Rd / Winneconne Ave



I-41 (Green Bay Rd)

**I-41 (North of
Bell/Breezewood)**



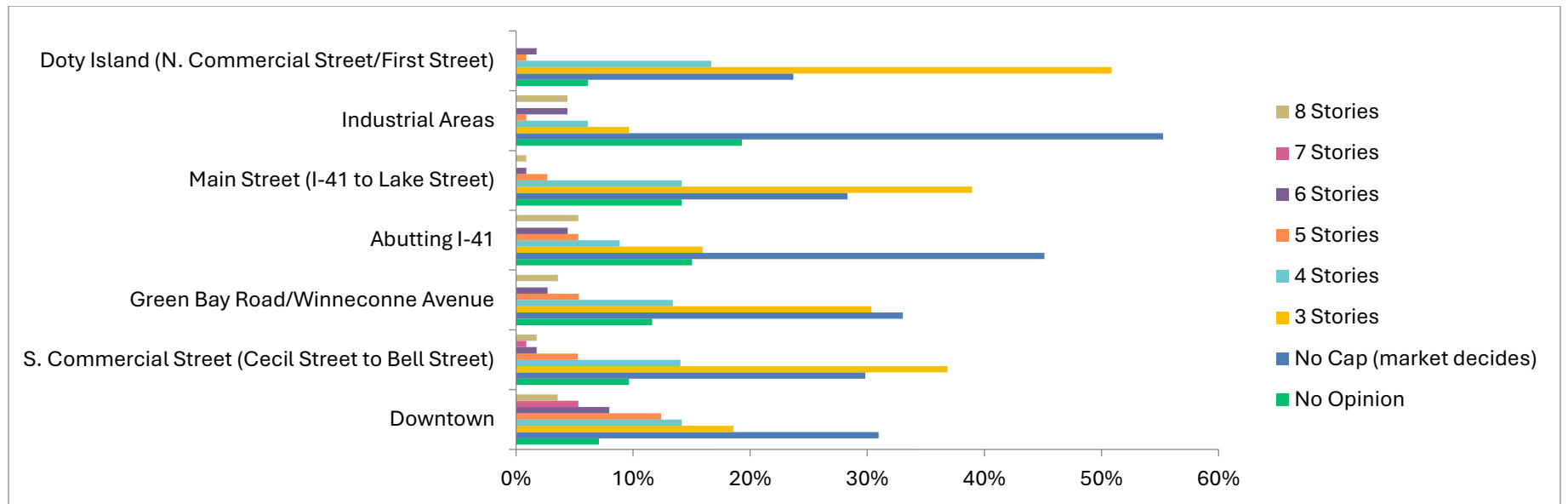
Main Street

Industrial Areas

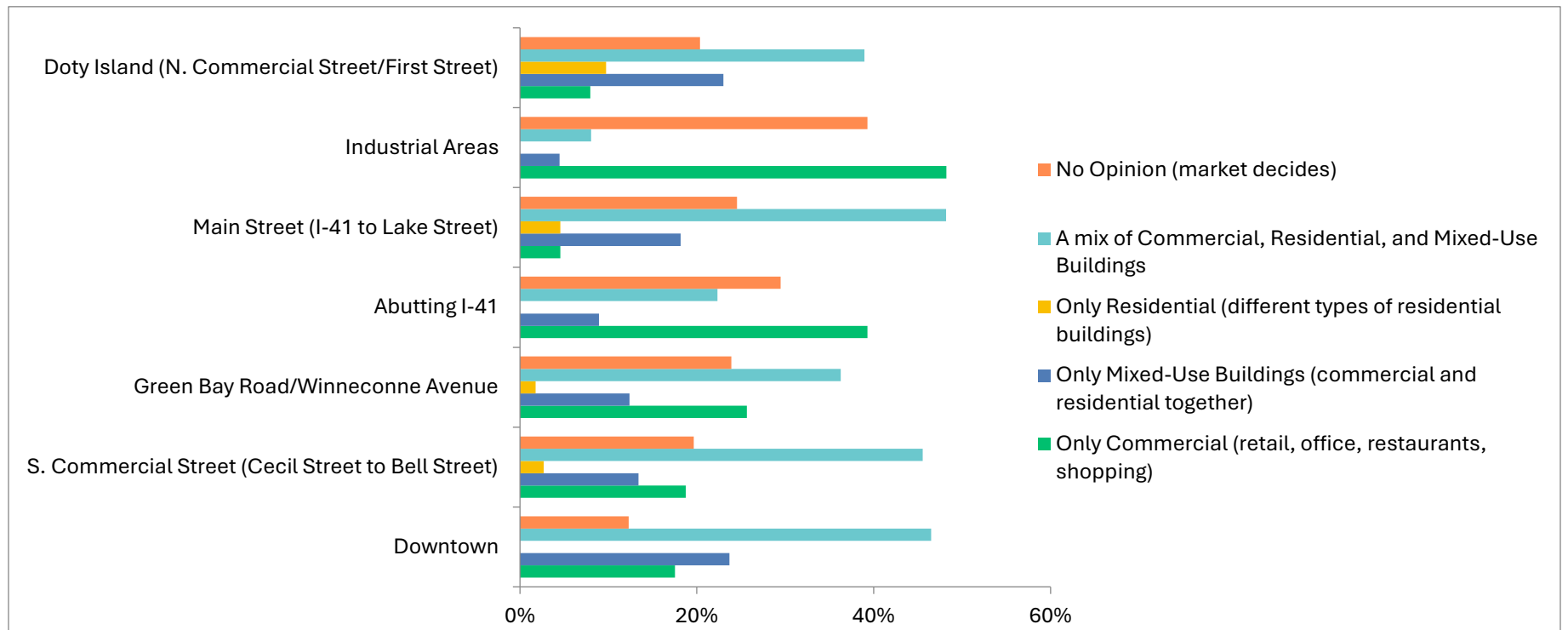


Doty Island





Q21: Which types of land uses should be permitted in the following locations?



Q22: Of the industrial building designs below, please rank each image by preference (1 = most preferred, 6 = least preferred)



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



OPTION 3



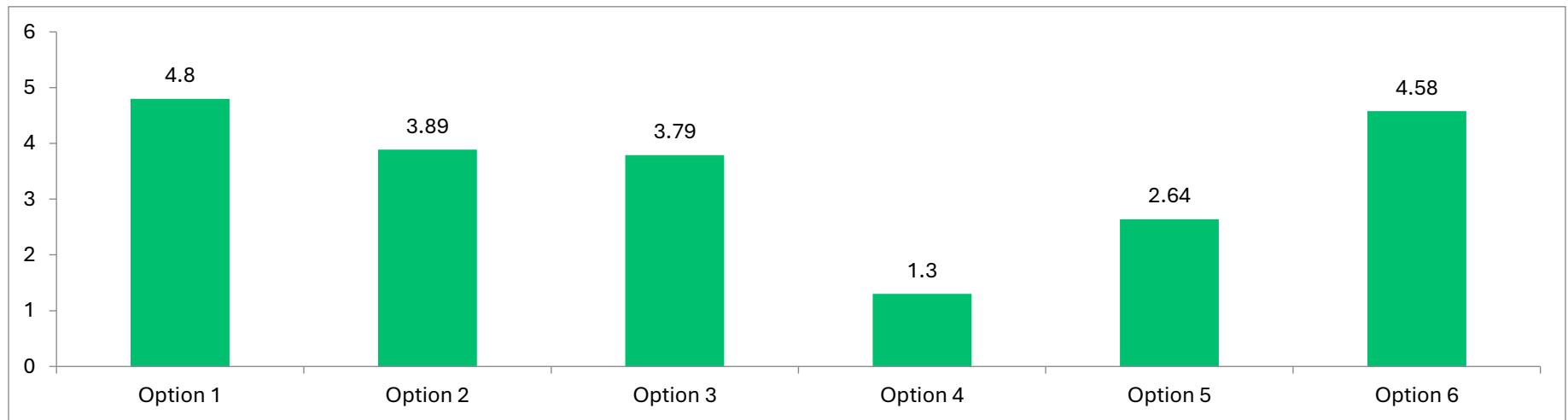
OPTION 4



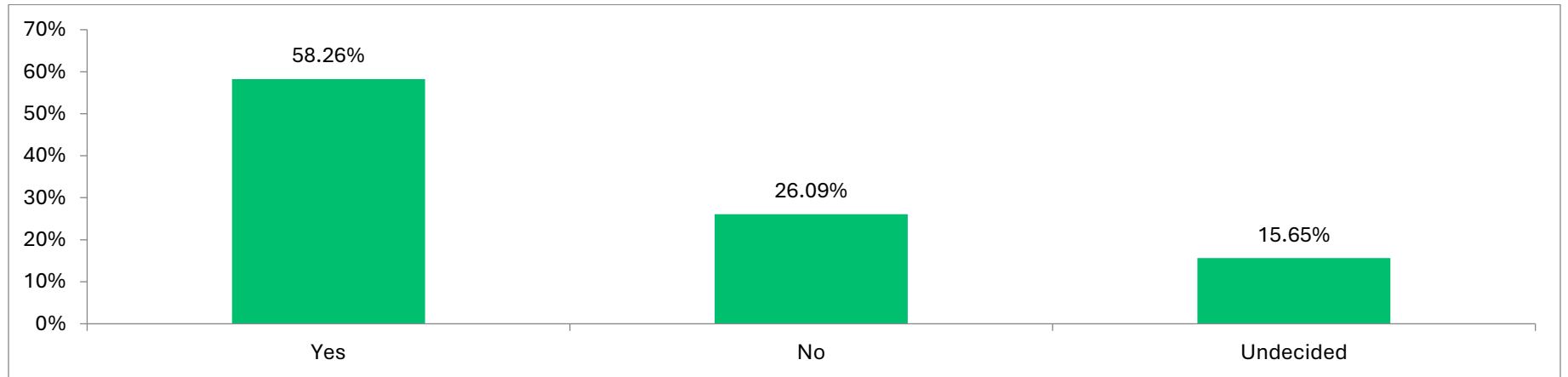
OPTION 5



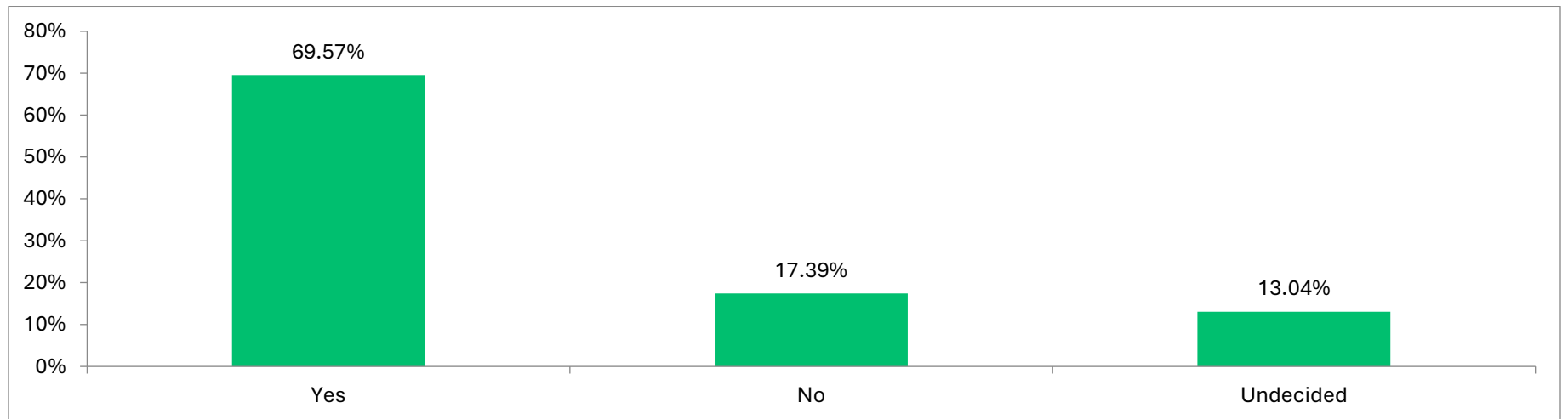
OPTION 6



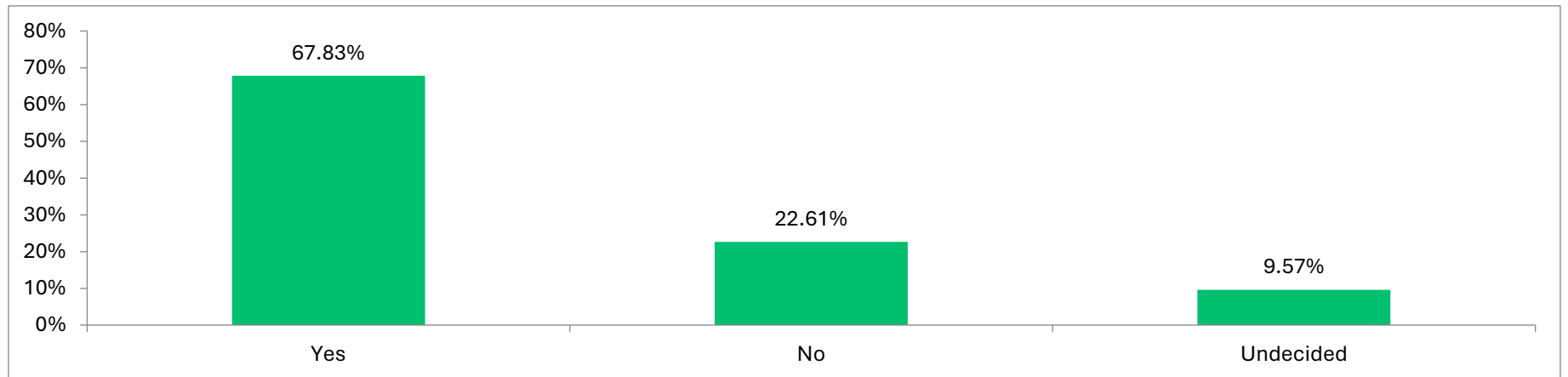
Q23: Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for industrial buildings (such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, etc.)?



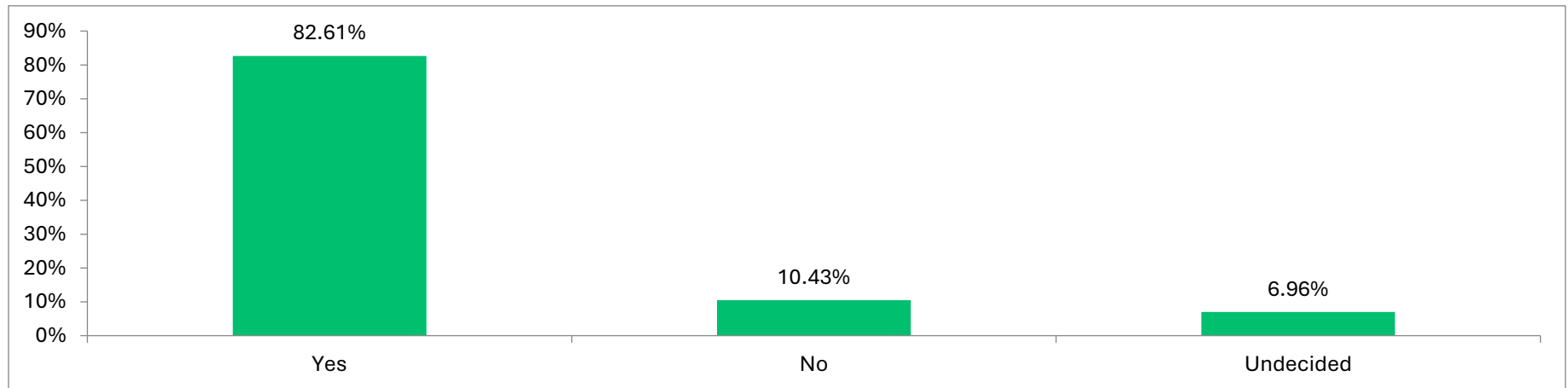
Q24: Should the City continue to allow pylon signs along business corridors (S. Commercial Street, Main Street, Green Bay Road, Winneconne Avenue)?



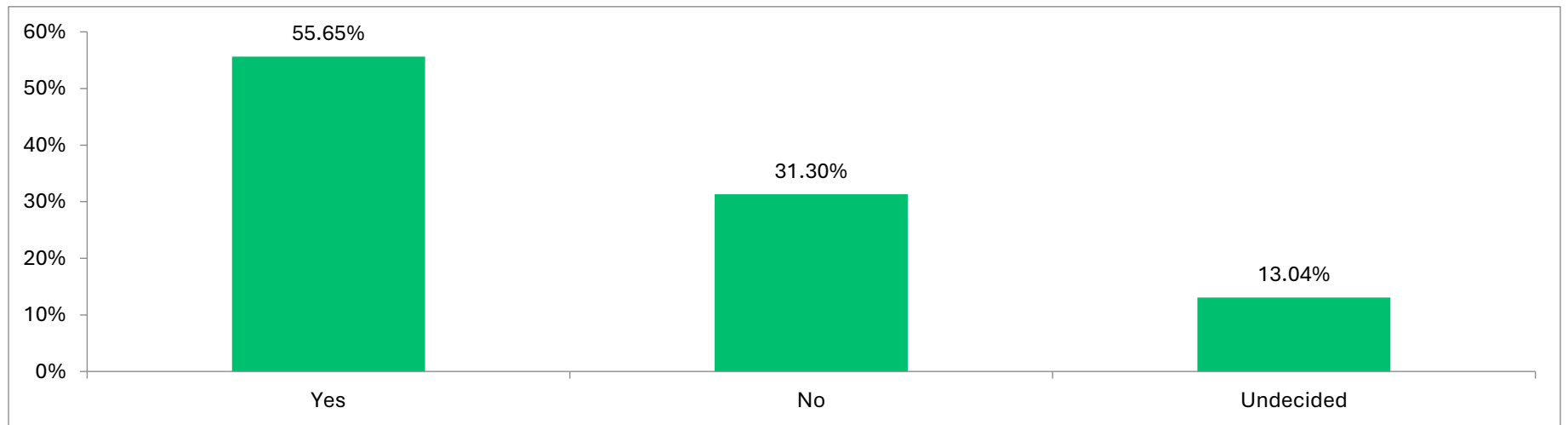
Q25: Should the City continue to allow electronic message signs?



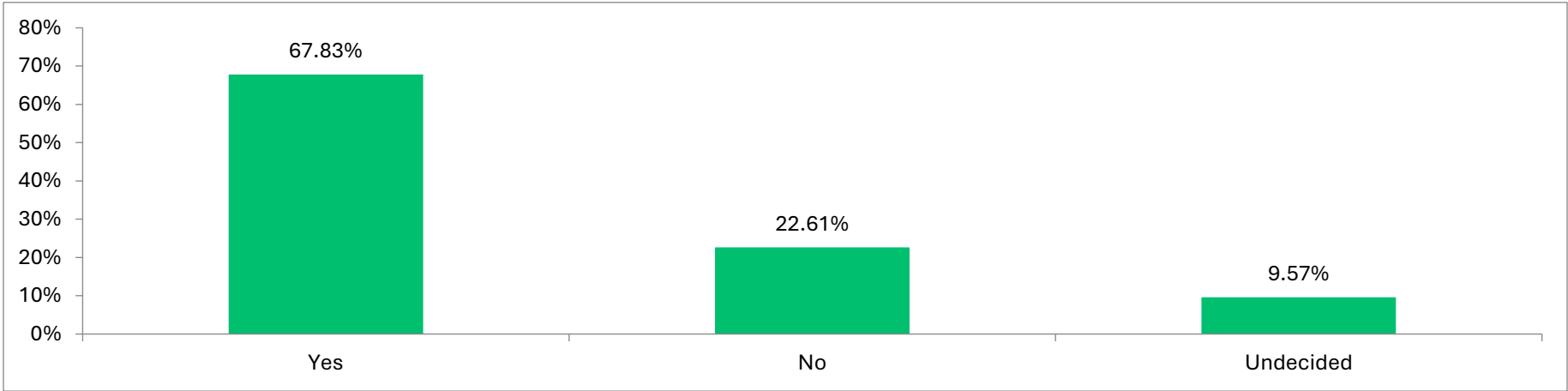
Q26: Should the City limit downtown to only pedestrian-scale signage?



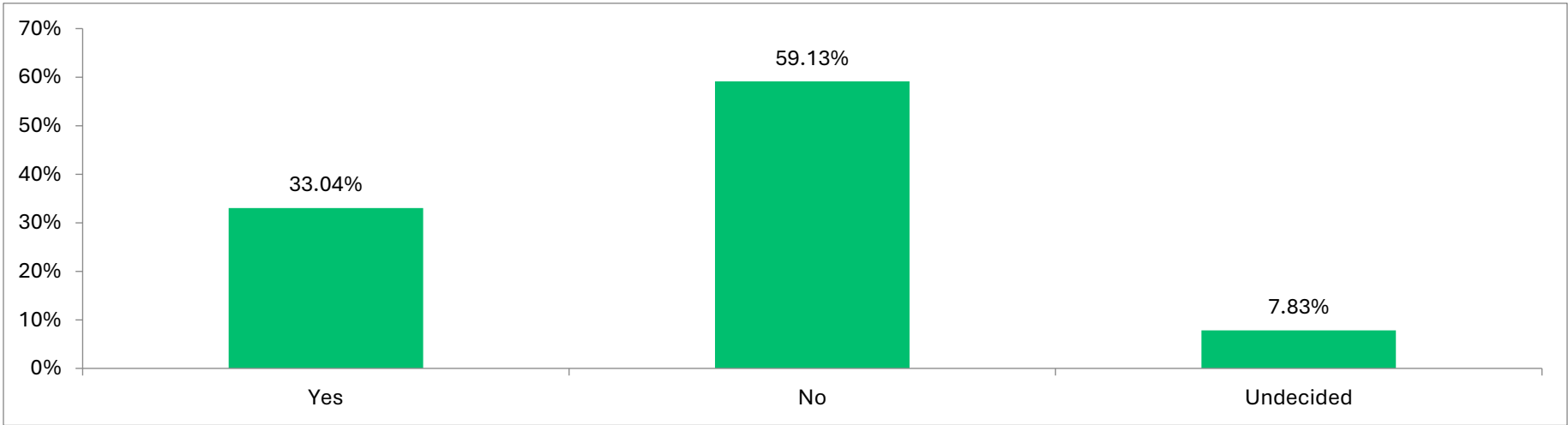
Q27: Should the City continue to allow feather signs and other temporary signage in commercial areas?



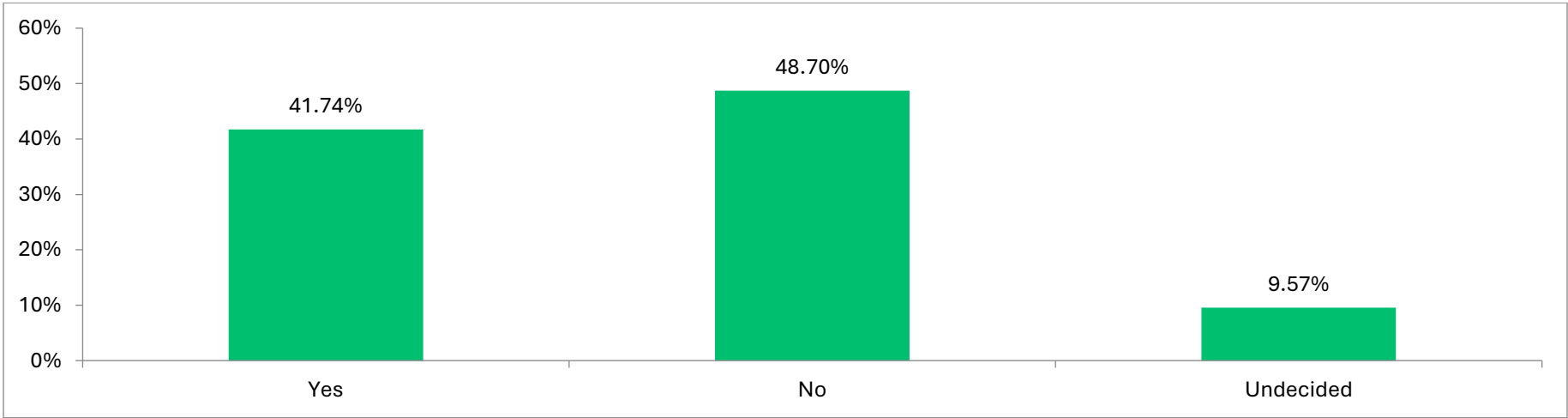
Q28: Should the City limit the number of temporary signs a residential property may have at any one time?



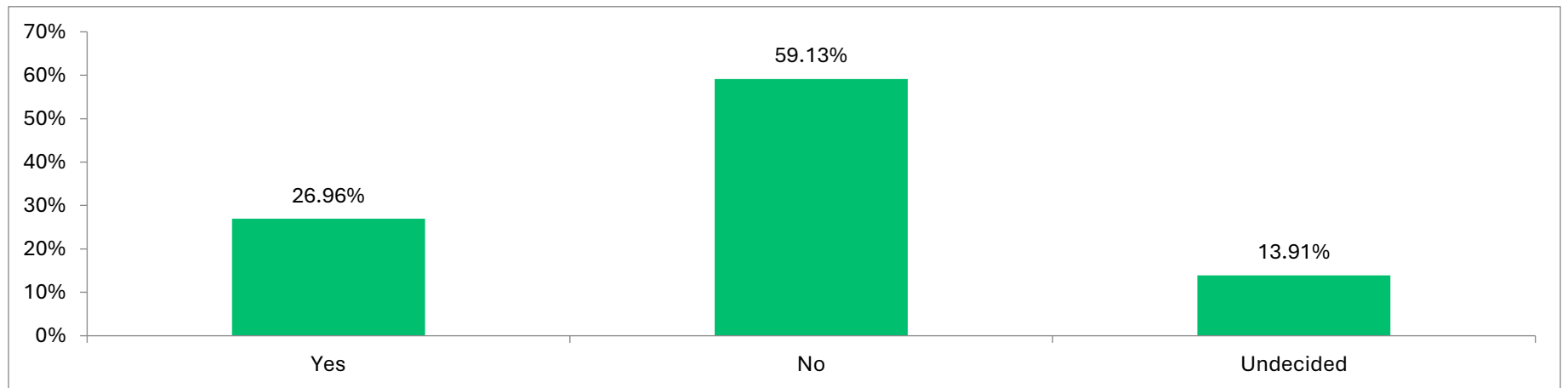
Q29: Should the City limit the types of material a fence can be constructed with in any yard (wood, chain link, wrought iron, vinyl, etc.)?



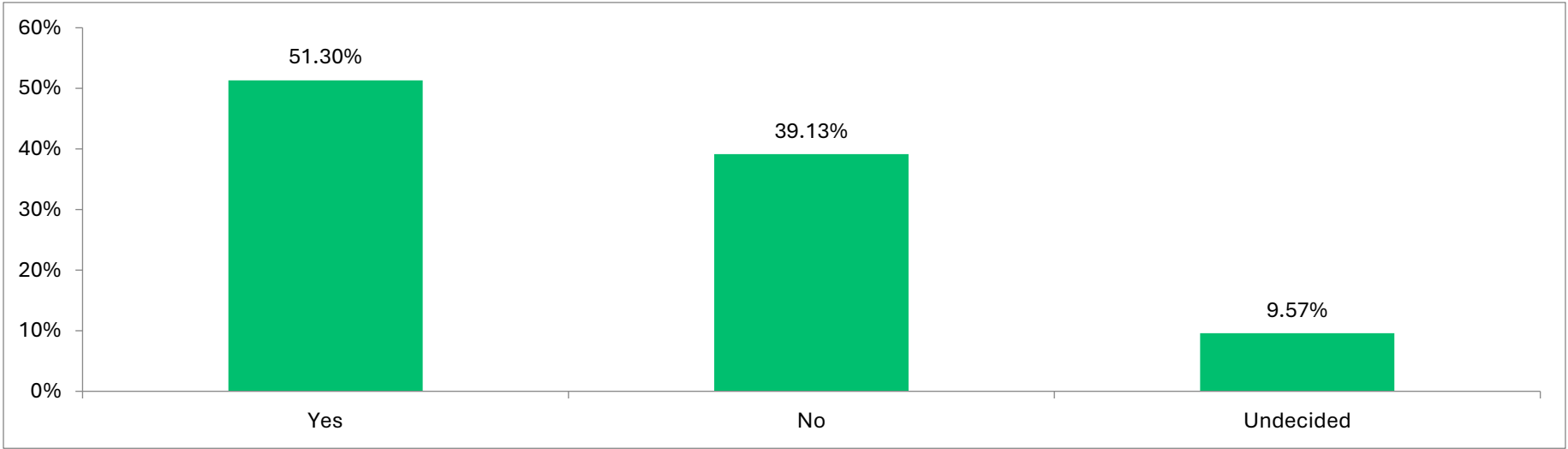
Q30: Should the City continue to allow chain link fences to be constructed within the front yard?



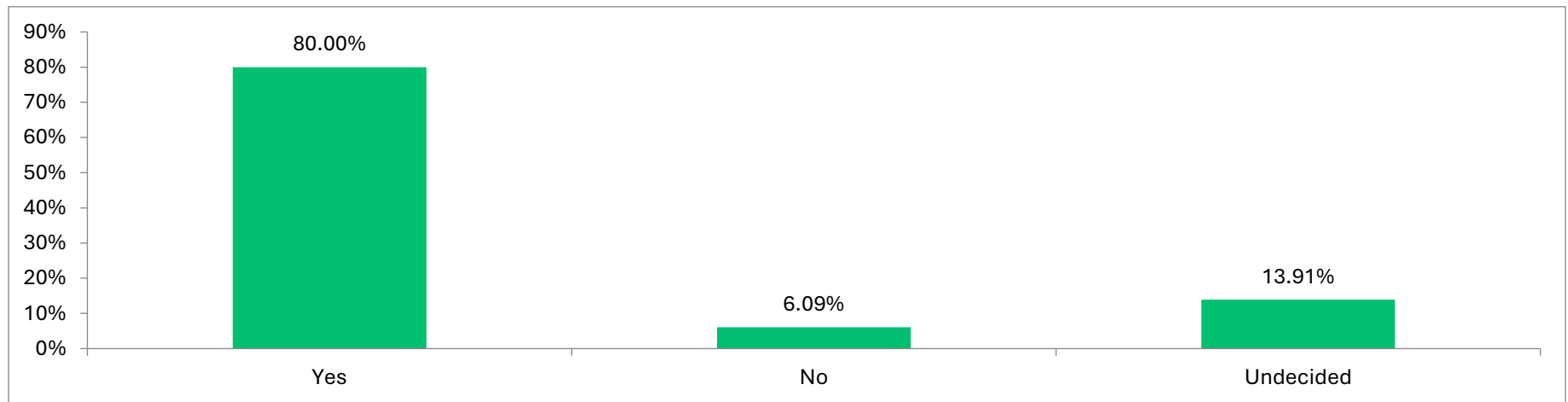
Q31: Should the City allow taller front yard fences (today: limited to 3 feet tall, 4 feet for chain link)?



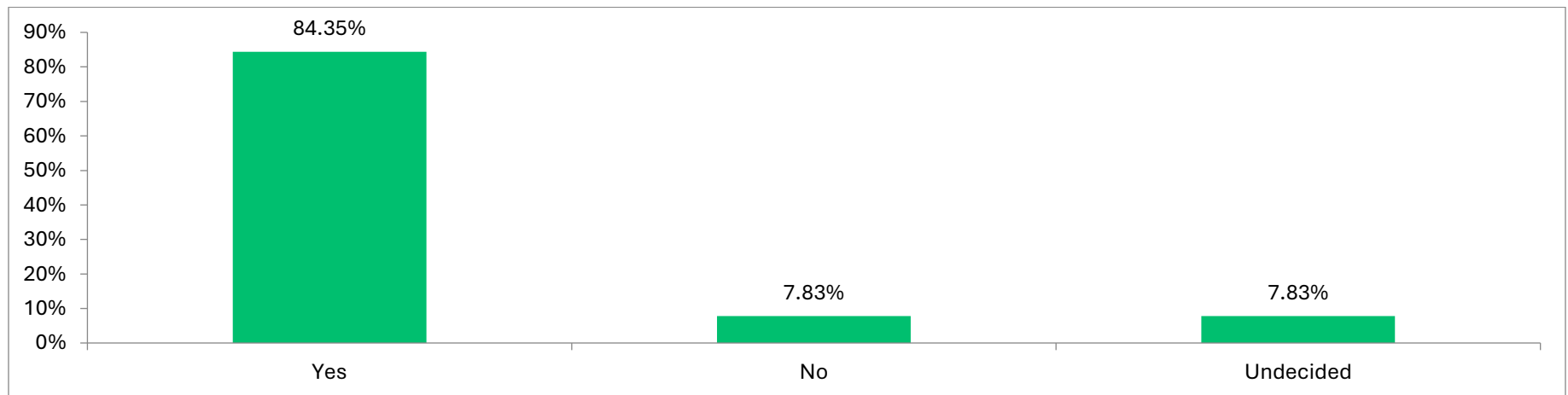
Q32: Should the City allow taller back yard fences (today: limited to 6 feet tall)?



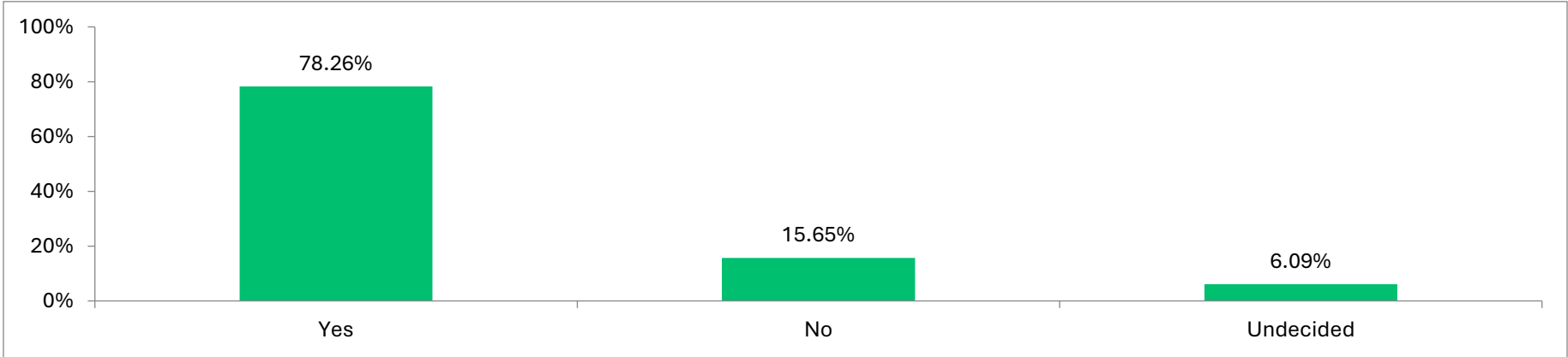
Q33: Should the City continue to require screening between commercial/industrial uses and residential uses?



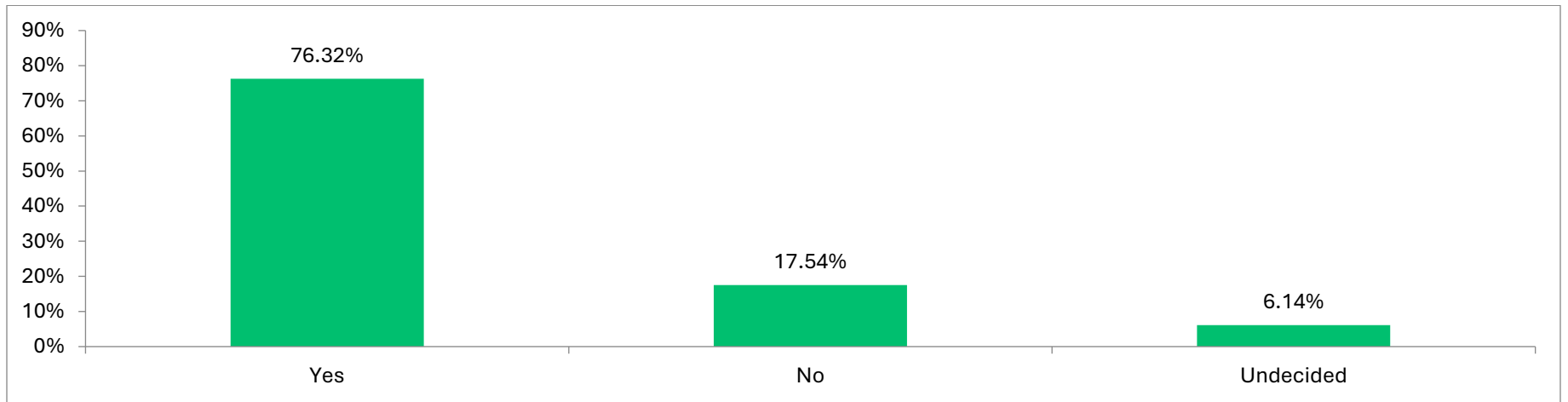
Q34: Should the City continue to require landscaping to be installed along the street frontage for multi-family, commercial, and industrial uses?



Q35: Should the City continue to require landscaping to be installed within parking lots for multi-family, commercial, and industrial uses?



Q36: Should the City consider requiring all outdoor storage areas to be screened (fencing, landscaping, etc.)?



Q37: Of the parking lot designs shown, please rank each image by preference (1 = most preferred, 6 = least preferred)



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



OPTION 3



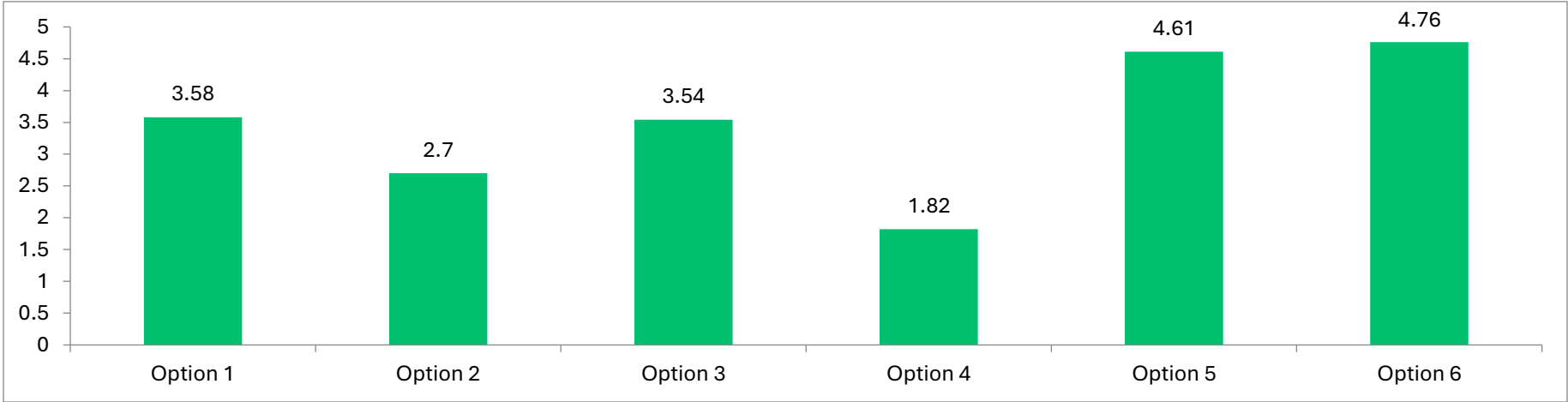
OPTION 4



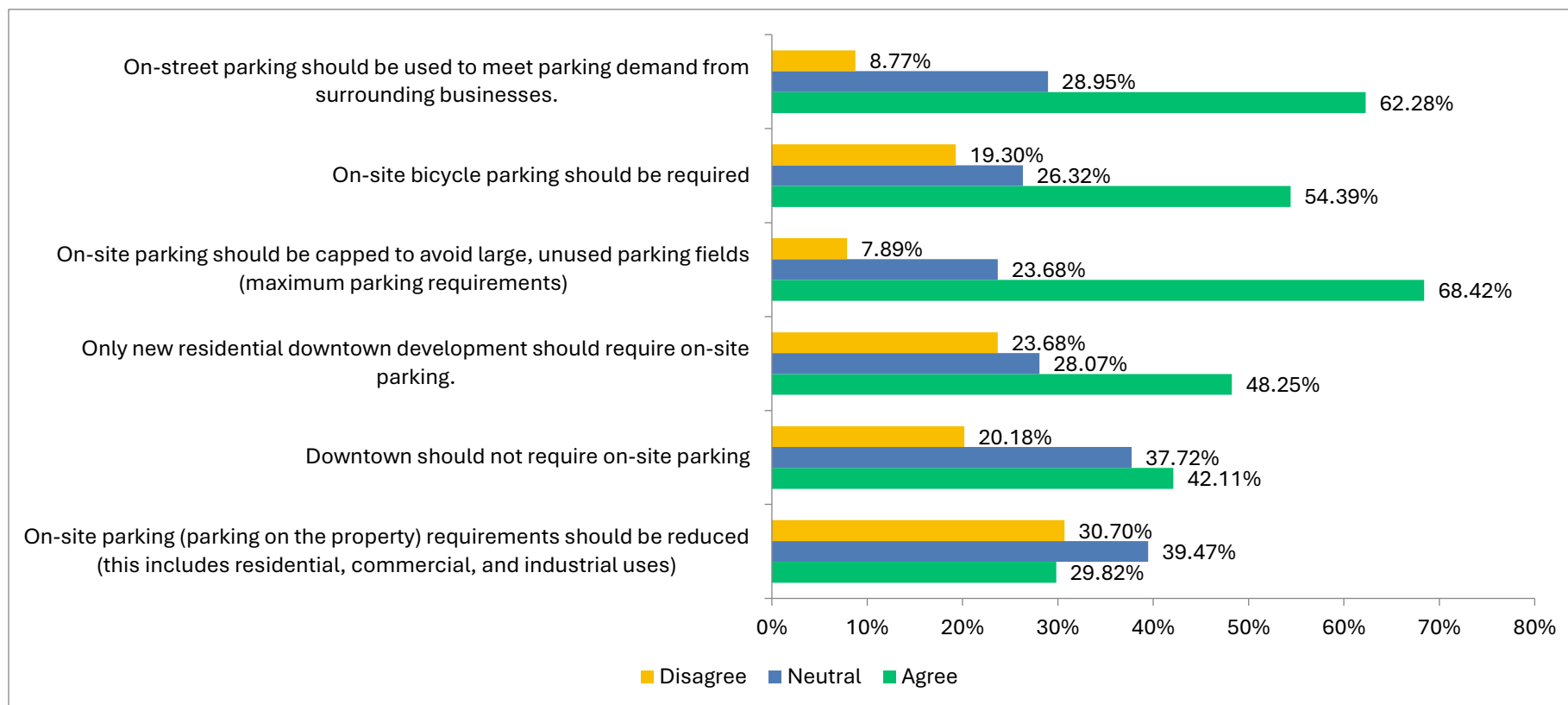
OPTION 5



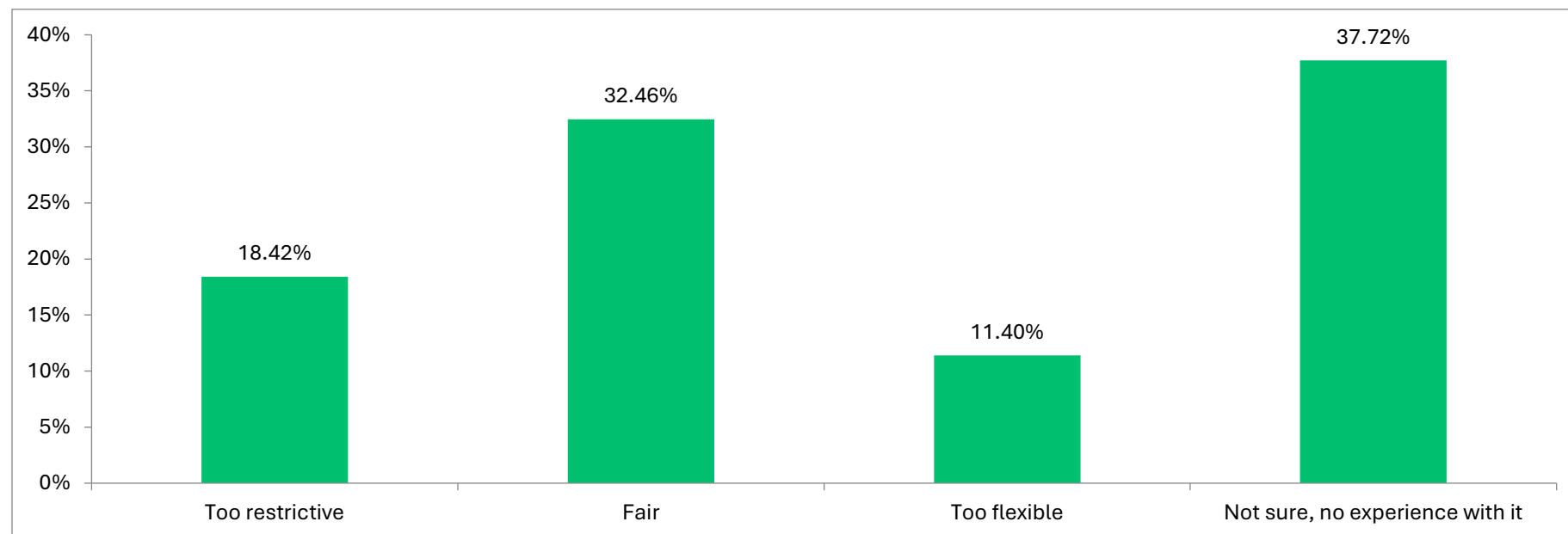
OPTION 6



Q38: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding parking?



Q39: In your opinion, Neenah's Zoning and/or Sign Code is....



Please describe why you selected that answer and if you have any examples that you'd like to share regarding your experiences with the existing ordinances. (fill in the blank)

46 Written Comments Received
Neenah needs to be cleaned as there are too many designs. DT has a good feel but the surrounding areas need help as they are run down with abandoned buildings and low-quality housing.
I haven't lived here long enough to have interacted with the code in any meaningful way other than visually.
I live and work in Neenah. I don't know if there are issues.
People have complained that they can't keep up holiday signs.
Less governance is amenable to all residents
There is too much parking and empty space in many parts of the city from mandatory minimums that needs to be corrected. Also, the sign code limited murals for many years which needs to be updated. Appleton's downtown now feels like it has more character because of the public art
Neenah's zoning code is outdated and currently discourages walkable live/work/play communities.
Seems like people are always complaining about signs. Let them exist unless they are billboards or going overboard.
Too many political signs allowed after the election is over.

I recently had exposure to the Directional Signage restrictions, specifically the 3' max height restriction. Understandably, this makes sense in many cases but a low Directional Sign would have been useless as parking is allowed, masking any benefit to a Directional Sign
Recent Elm St signage issues handled well
Sign code needs to be polished up and zoning for commercial could be tightened up
I am strictly opposed to an increase in residential code enforcement.
Since we got the new mayor, I've been very unhappy with the insane HOA-style regulations. I like when people have crazy yards and put their trash on the side of the road for others to collect as treasure. I've lived in some of the most expensive cities and if Neenah but I moved back here because of the family-centered atmosphere and having so many events that allow children to be included. Increase taxes on businesses. End this ridiculous court case with Walmart. Make Walmart, KC, and other corporations pay their fair share of taxes. Make the city more bikeable and walkable. Stop putting ridiculous restrictions on homeowners. Stop increasing taxes on homeowners. You're killing us.
I do not want to see feather signs, small H-frame signs and A-frames littering the terrace. There are too many now existing and seems to be no enforcement.
Our only negative experience regarding the current zoning code is with the average setback for existing structures. We're in an established neighborhood that has an extremely wide range of setbacks, making the average wildly different from one side of the street to the other, or even block to block. It would be nice to have just the standard 25ft front setback for everyone
The City is far too worried about residential (political) and light commercial signage.
Mandating a garage & hard surface driveways adds cost to new construction homes
We had a very small sign asking neighbors to keep dogs off the lawn. We got a warning.
I will attend the input meeting
Enforcement is not always consistent.
We don't need one-size-fits-all regulation. We have a LOT of regulations that cover the ENTIRE city. WHY? Why not think out of the box and do with the regulations in the same way we do zoning. I've talked with people in Sherrytown who got fined for not meeting some stupid requirement. Why hold Sherrytown to the same standards as E. Wisconsin Ave? The poor guy was in his 70's, he couldn't afford the regulatory adjustment to meet some stupid ordinance. Similarly, and just as a tangible example, maybe a gravel driveway is fine in certain areas. It wouldn't be okay on some streets. We should be more flexible versus saying, "No gravel driveways in all of Neenah" or something like that.
The only zoning I've dealt with was a pool and fence. Both went well. Living across the street from Shattuck, I'm very familiar with the zoning issues with that redevelopment.
very hard to write a one-size-fits-all...city needs to be reasonable as every lot and building is different
Haven't had any problem with it. Seems to be working. Except for tearing down buildings/houses for parking lots.
Generally, I think the ordinance is fair but could use updates to keep up with modern needs and community changes.
I believe the aesthetics of zoning are important, particularly in the Downtown and residential neighborhoods. I believe the zoning commission and the council should have the flexibility to address the community's needs as they change. eg, Since we have very limited space to add housing inventory, we need to allow more density. We need to help builders and developers, not put up unnecessary obstacles and bureaucracy.
I think signs should be limited in the duration they can be up. The don't rezone leave it alone signs were up too long.

In some cases it's too restrictive and other cases too flexible so overall fair is the middle ground. I would like to see more restrictions placed on building appearance in key commercial areas but lighten up what homeowners can and cannot do.
Too many temporary signs are placed in yards
The loss of a quaint downtown, one block remains exclusively original in architecture. Legacy Park is now hidden.
We desperately need more high-density and low-cost housing, as well as mixed-use buildings. In addition, light pollution is a huge problem; some businesses use lights that are fat too bright.
Judging by the current visual state of Neenah, I think Neenah must do a fairly good job with codes. I do think it could be improved to make the area more visually attractive.
Create an appealing aesthetic
My neighbor doesn't take care of their yard or home so a taller fence on the side would be preferred so I didn't have to see their property.
I chose this option because I do not have enough knowledge or experience with Neenah's Zoning and Sign Code to give an informed opinion.
Have not had an issue with ordinances. Have heard stories about "only the rich can afford to live here." There seems to be so much to cater to rich folks that the average person no longer feels welcome. Our elderly family members are stuck in their homes because they cannot afford rent at senior living places and there are no alternatives. Similar for young people just starting out - nothing is affordable for them. Can't affordability be addressed in the codes instead of making everything bigger, taller, and more expensive?
I've never really had any serious problems with Neenah's zoning ordinances.
It's a mix of many ordinances being too restrictive (residential parking, landscaping by road that blocks sightlines when driving, backyard fence height, and lot size) and some being too flexible (all the unsightly yard and holiday decor up for months along Main St, and commercial buildings looking bad with long grass, potholed driveways, etc. such as the old KFC building).
Some areas are in need of updating (neighborhood commercial/office, parking, design requirements in commercial and industrial as examples_ but overall is fair
Perhaps eliminate the awnings downtown (Wisconsin) as they have proven to be too difficult to keep looking nice.
Need smaller lot sizes to permit smaller lower income homes
I think that in places the standards are either unclear or too willy nilly
Living in Europe for many years, your business can be found and succeed without large distracting signs. Make your buildings worth looking at or your product worth buying and that will bring customers. And everyone can use a smart phone to find you. Signs are not needed for businesses besides to just identify the building's entrance.
As a nearby resident, I don't want to see Neenah deteriorate into an over commercialized wasteland of businesses. I also don't like the look of residential properties that are large and too close together. Neenah is known for its small community appeal and we do not want to lose that.

Q40: Please provide any other comments you have regarding the zoning and sign ordinance rewrite (fill in the blank).

40 Written Comments Received
We need to carefully balance the desire for our community to "look nice" with affordability. If we create design requirements for any building type, they should not be overly prescriptive.
Please consider keeping Neenah the community we know and love. We don't need more multi-family dwellings; some of them are not kept up well by the property managers, such as Congress and Cecil - their parking lot and dead trees are an eyesore. Weed management in parking lots and along Commercial Street needs attention.
Less public controversy and politicians do not entirely control and mandate!!!!
I would love to see more of a focus placed on alternate modes of transit (incl. parking minimums being removed) and allowing for neighborhood commercial to spring up. We also need to figure out the identity of each main corridor and how they differ from each other and make this known to developers and residents
Neenah should continue to move towards mixed-use density to promote healthy, walkable communities. Specifically, Neenah should focus on missing middle housing types.
A taller backyard fence would help; I have NO privacy. My neighbor can see right over it because his property is higher
I'd like to see ordinance or ordinance enforcement preventing commercial vehicles regularly parking in zoned residential areas - people who bring their work vehicles home subject the rest of us to a billboard for JoeBob's Plumbing 15 hours a weekday and all weekend - and essentially creates the atmosphere zoning is supposed to avoid. Thank you.
Accessory Dwelling Units should not be allowed to be added to a site. In my opinion, they devalue the quality of the neighborhood.
I support size limits on residential property.
Not regarding the zoning or sign ordinance BUT - where does Neenah stand on Data Centers - this needs to be addressed!!!
Too long!
I see junk signs everywhere, including unauthorized property. Temporary signs are meant to be short term. Recently, a going out of business set of signs was posted in Neenah from New London, then left well after the business closed. Junk.
On another point, property owners have to have standards of care for their property after a building is unoccupied, s.a. KFC, Johnson Shoe Repair, Memorial Florists to name just a few. Dead trees should also be removed within a reasonable amount of time, commercial and residential.
Empty storefronts and care of the property should still be required to keep the grounds looking trim. If not, Subject to sizable fines ex: previous Kentucky Fried Chicken on Winneconne Ave
Get rid of pylon signs- ppl use GPS and will find things without ugly billboards and such
Ultimately, an increase in code regulation needs to fall squarely on large businesses and corporations in the area that do not contribute their weight in taxes to our community. I am repulsed at the continued coddling for these enormous corporations like Walmart and Kimberly Clark. If increases in code enforcement is what this mayoral office is interested in, regulating material types and paint color and landscaping in my private home is a bridge too far. I don't live in an HOA for a reason.

I don't care about signage. I do care about the flocks. Get rid of those. I care about the safety of women and children. Menasha has shown flock hurts women. Our police force cannot be trusted. Stop making all these ridiculous rules on homeowners. In Amsterdam biodiversity of yards was a requirement- go towards those things that make people happy- public transportation, mixed-use buildings, safer healthcare for women (Thedacares rates of killing older women is disproportionately high). Do things that make our city accountable to be better, not just look nice. That's lame and stupid.
Neenah needs more starter houses for new families
Be cautious and realistic with respect to minimum design standards. We don't have the "draw" for new businesses like Appleton, Green Bay, Oak Creek, Madison Suburbs, etc.
Who wrote this survey? Was it a committee/group effort? It seems like the questions will evoke a predetermined set of objections. Poorly written. How much did the city spend for this disaster of a "survey"?
Limit the number if you don't already
I have noticed that residents have been parking their cars in the front yard. This is not a good look for a neighborhood. Large lawn decorations and the volume of lawn decorations should be limited.
As provided in #39 above, I think some of the regulations should be done like zoning, as they need NOT apply to the whole city. Also, as a side note, I do find the overnight parking requirements a godsend. One place I lived in many years ago, someone permanently parked a car in the only parking spot in front of my building --> a Neenah regulation of forcing movement of a car at least every night would have given friends visiting me at least a CHANCE to park in front. Also, I've lived elsewhere, and it's absolutely unsightly having cars lining the streets, bumper-to-bumper. Make sure there's enough parking.
Make sure you have roads, so people don't have to wait years for a road in front of their home.
Keep it classy without chasing away business and developers
Looks like you're trying to do a power grab. Keep your hands off. Less is better. Quit trying to turn our small town into Milwaukee. We don't want crime. You omitted 2 as an option for height of buildings in downtown and along Main St. which would be my preferred option,
The ordinance needs to prioritize single-family residential homes, of which there is a shortage. I would like to see the size of parking lots reduced, AND more push to include trees in parking lots.
Thank you for making the effort to do this! This is a complicated yet important undertaking for the City.
I think flashing lights, large signs, and feather signs should not be allowed. They take away from the street appeal.
No ADU units in Neenah
My single main issue is the restriction on garage/shed construction on a homeowner's property. I have an attached garage on a half-acre residential lot, and I'm limited to a 200 sq foot detached building even though my property could accommodate something larger.
Please do not allow Accessory Dwelling Units or sheds. Please force and remove advertising signs that people put on random corners and rights-of-way. Keep Neenah classy!
The zoning needs to support people first and businesses second.

Please do not start allowing large apartment buildings to be built throughout the city I have called home my whole life. In my opinion, this would harm the hometown character and feel of the city. While apartment buildings may be appropriate near downtown or in business and industrial areas, where they could support local businesses, clear limits should still be placed on how many are allowed and how large they may be.	
All of the property example types do NOT APPEAR TO INCLUDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING. The photos make Neenah look like it is catering to the rich only, and those are the only type of people that are wanted. The code changes also appear to be targeted to the rich-only folks. None of this would help an average homeowner in the city and makes Neenah feel too exclusive and stuck-up to live in.	
It makes no sense to me that a property can have multiple giant decor items like the skeleton and shark on Main Street for as long as they like, when a yard sign needs to be removed after 30 days, or you can be fined for how long you leave your trash can out (but it's never seemingly enforced). I'd like to see more consistency and enforcement with those types of situations, while allowing more flexibility to add housing to our community.	
Good Luck!	
This survey seemed to be leading the responder in a certain direction / biased	
Should be easier to rezone to make more land available for lower-income homes.	
You want to increase the value of the land; invest in the people. If zoning allowed this city to be more walkable, all property values go up, and residents can spend more on wants instead of needs like gas and car upkeep. Neenah is a tiny city compared to the metropolitan area I grew up in and that city could be walked the entire way. And we did it just because every neighborhood had different things to offer. Get rid of all the large box stores with parking lots and put them in neighborhoods with a suitable amount of parking. If Festival was surrounded by homes, then the majority of their customers can just walk. Same goes for the fast food places. Just walk. I'm in my mid 40s and can walk from one end of Neenah and back easily. Just make that walk interesting. People before profit. Do not listen to the businesses or commercial zone owners. They only want what will make them the most money. Invest in people infrastructure, not businesses. Strip malls and box stores have proven to be a failure for society and only a positive for the business owners. Redesign how we put commercial property and you create the new age charm of community.	
Please be careful with the zoning rewrite. We do not want a small group of business owners and landlords to dictate what they want to see our community be. Neenah is a small community and we don't want to be over commercialized, we don't want to be bombarded with advertising, and we want to include nature in our surroundings.	

Station 2: Single-Family Home Designs + Established Design Standards
 Take three DOT STICKERS and place a dot on each of your three preferred building designs
 (You can vote for one design more than once if desired)



Option 1: 1 yellow, 1 orange, 1 blue dot
 Option 2: 0 dots
 Option 3: 1 blue dot
 Option 4: 1 yellow, 1 blue, 1 blue, 1 blue dot
 Option 5: 1 yellow, 1 orange, 1 blue dot
 Option 6: 1 orange dot

Using one DOT STICKER, please indicate your response to the following question
 (Use only ONE sticker for this exercise)

Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for single-family homes?
 (Such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, etc.)

Yes: 1 blue, 1 blue, 1 yellow, 1 blue dot
 No: 1 orange, 1 orange, 1 orange, 1 orange, 1 blue, 1 blue, 1 blue, 1 blue dot
 Undecided: 1 blue, 1 orange dot

Station 2: Two-Family Home Designs + Established Design Standards
 Take three DOT STICKERS and place a dot on each of your three preferred building designs
 (You can vote for one design more than once if desired)



Option 1: 1 blue, 1 blue, 1 orange, 1 blue dot
 Option 2: 1 blue dot
 Option 3: 1 yellow, 1 blue, 1 orange, 1 blue, 1 orange dot
 Option 4: 1 yellow, 1 blue, 1 blue, 1 blue dot
 Option 5: 0 dots
 Option 6: 1 yellow, 1 blue, 1 blue dot

Using one DOT STICKER, please indicate your response to the following question
 (Use only ONE sticker for this exercise)

Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for two-family homes?
 (Such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, etc.)

Yes: 1 orange, 1 blue, 1 blue, 1 blue, 1 blue dot
 No: 1 orange, 1 orange, 1 orange, 1 orange, 1 blue, 1 blue, 1 blue dot
 Undecided: 1 blue dot

Station 2: Multi-Family Home Designs + Established Design Standards

Take three DOT STICKERS and place a dot on each of your three preferred building designs
(You can vote for one design more than once if desired)



Using one DOT STICKER, please indicate your response to the following question
(Use only ONE sticker for this exercise)

Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for multi-family homes?
(Such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, etc.)

Yes	No	Undecided

Station 3: Neighborhood Commercial Designs

Take three DOT STICKERS and place a dot on each of your three preferred building designs
(You can vote for one design more than once if desired)



Using one DOT STICKER, please indicate your response to the following question
(Use only ONE sticker for this exercise)

Should the City consider providing opportunities for neighborhood-serving businesses to be located adjacent to residential neighborhoods?

Yes	No	Undecided

A blue sticky note is attached to the 'Yes' column with the text: "Neighborhood-serving businesses".

Taxes
Pet Licenses
Boat Ramp
Parking Fee
Special A
Water Bill
Parking P
RO

Neenah
WISCONSIN

Take three DOT STICKERS and place a dot on each of your three preferred building designs
(You can vote for one design more than once if desired)



Option 1



Option 2



Option 3



Option 4



Option 5



Option 6

Using one DOT STICKER, please indicate your response to the following question
(Use only ONE sticker for this exercise)

Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for Downtown?
(Such as storefronts, high-quality materials, façade articulation, etc.)

Yes

No

Undecided

It's best to go with the minimum design standards for downtown.

Neenah
WISCONSIN

Station 3: Community Corridor Designs + Established Design Standards

Take three DOT STICKERS and place a dot on each of your three preferred building designs
(You can vote for one design more than once if desired)



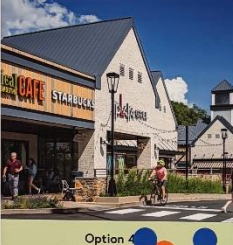
Option 1



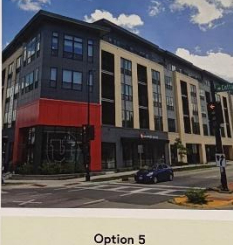
Option 2



Option 3



Option 4



Option 5



Option 6

Using one DOT STICKER, please indicate your response to the following question
(Use only ONE sticker for this exercise)

Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for Community Corridors?
(Such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, orientation toward the street, etc.)

Yes

No

Undecided

Should there be minimum design standards for community corridors?

Station 4: Industrial Designs + Established Design Standards

Take three DOT STICKERS and place a dot on each of your three preferred building designs
(You can vote for one design more than once if desired)

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4

Option 5

Option 6

Using one DOT STICKER, please indicate your response to the following question
(Use only ONE sticker for this exercise)

Should the City consider establishing minimum design standards for industrial?
(Such as high-quality materials, façade articulation, orientation toward the street, etc.)

Yes	No	Undecided
5 dots (3 blue, 2 orange)	2 dots (1 blue, 1 orange)	0 dots

Station 5: Signs

Using DOT STICKERS, please indicate your response to the following question
(Use only ONE sticker per question)

Pylon Sign Examples

Should the City continue to allow pylon signs along business corridors?
(S Commercial St, Main St, Green Bay Rd, Winnecone Ave.)

Yes	No	Undecided
5 dots (3 blue, 2 orange)	0 dots	0 dots

Electronic Message Sign Examples

Should the City continue to allow electronic message signs?

Yes	No	Undecided
5 dots (3 blue, 2 orange)	0 dots	1 dot (blue)

Brightness limitations

Pedestrian-scale Sign Examples

Should the City limit downtown to only pedestrian-scale signage?

Yes	No	Un
1 dot (blue)	4 dots (2 orange, 2 blue)	1 dot (blue)

Presume not to allow them but allow them to be a business sign solution

Feather Signs and Temporary Signage Examples

Should the City continue to allow feather signs and other temporary signage in commercial areas?

Yes	No	Undecided
5 dots (3 blue, 2 orange)	2 dots (1 blue, 1 orange)	1 dot (blue)

Should the City limit the number of temporary signs a residential property may have at any one time?

Yes	No	Undecided
5 dots (3 blue, 2 orange)	2 dots (1 blue, 1 orange)	0 dots

Station 6: Fences + Established Design Standards
 Using DOT STICKERS, please indicate your response to the following question
 (Use only ONE sticker per question)

Fence Material Examples



Should the City limit the types of material a fence can be constructed of within any yard?
 (wood, chain link, wrought iron, vinyl, etc.)

Yes No Undecided

Chain Link Fence Placement Examples



Should the City continue to allow chain link fences to be constructed within the front yard?

Yes No Undecided

Front Yard Fence Height Examples



Should the City allow taller front yard fences?
 (Today, limited to 3 feet tall, 4 feet for chain link)

Yes No Undecided

Back Yard Fence Height Examples



Should the City allow taller back yard fences?
 (Today, limited to 6 feet tall)

Yes No Undecided

Commercial Screening Examples



Should the City continue to require screening between commercial/industrial uses and residential uses?

Yes No Undecided

Street Frontage Landscape Examples



Should the City continue to require landscaping to be installed along the street frontage for multi-family, commercial, and industrial uses?

Yes No Undecided

Parking Lot Landscape Examples



Should the City continue to require landscaping to be installed within parking lots for multi-family, commercial, and industrial uses?

Yes No Undecided

Outdoor Storage Examples



Should the City consider requiring all outdoor storage areas to be screened?
 (fencing, landscaping, etc.)

Yes No Undecided

Station 7: Parking

Take three DOT STICKERS and place a dot on each of your three preferred parking lot designs
(You can vote for one design more than once if desired)



Option 1



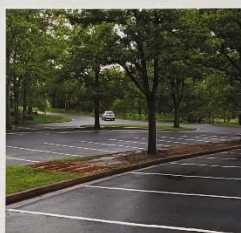
Option 2



Option 3



Option 4



Option 5



Option 6



Using one DOT STICKER, please indicate your response to the following question
(Use only ONE sticker for this exercise)

Should the City consider reducing on-site (parking on the property) minimum parking requirements for residential, commercial, and industrial uses?



No



Undecided

06.15.2026 Workshop Notes

- Landscaping Flexibility -Giving the developer options about meeting the requirements.
- Someone is very against ADUs (the only reason he plans to participate in the project is for this)
- Concerns about setback averaging on Congress St. Code is unclear, and the interpretation “this is how we have always done it”
- Electronic Sign regulations are good
- Currently, do not allow feather temporary signs-Temporary Use Permit (TUP)
- Staff is not interested in having a “zoning permit”
- Staff is potentially interested in a driveway permit and driveway regulations

06.15.2026 Comment Cards

- I think we should allow more chickens in residential yards. Six is fine and won't cause any detrimental harm to neighboring lots or public health.
- Less restrictions = more economic opportunity. Let people start a business in their home without needing to spend money just to appease code.
- Any restrictions on design and aesthetics will make it more difficult for business folks to want to do business here. It will become too expensive and cost-prohibitive.
- What is pedestrian-scale signage? Explain this further. Do we have staff to enforce temporary signs?
- Does PD have concerns with taller fences for enforcement?
- Why would we consider taller fences in the front yard? Provide exceptions if corner or double-frontage lots.
- My concerns are about fences. Having chain link fences in the front of houses in historic districts can look very bad.

Other Submitted Comments

Site development plans

- Clearly define when a site plan is required
- Require site plans to include grading, drainage patterns, culverts, driveways, floodplain impacts, stormwater management, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive features.

Revised site plans

- Clearly define what changes trigger a revised site plan
- Revised site plans should be documented, approved, maintained as part of the public record, and readily available for public inspection
- Significant modifications should require review and approval before construction continues

Inspection and compliance

- Establish inspections at key stages of development
- Clearly identify how compliance with approved plans is verified
- Require confirmation that completed development matches approved plans before final approval is granted
- Clearly identify inspection requirements within the zoning and development review process

Driveways and culverts

- Consider review requirements for new driveways or substantial driveway expansions that affect drainage patterns
- Consider review requirements for culvert installation or modification that alter stormwater flow
- Clearly define permit requirements, review standards, and departmental responsibilities

Stormwater and drainage

- Evaluate cumulative stormwater impacts for grading, filling, driveways, culverts, and other site improvements

- Establish standards when runoff is redirected toward waterways, wetlands, floodplains, or neighboring properties
- Consider filtration, erosion control, and runoff management measures for larger projects

Impervious surface management

- Consider establishing impervious surface standards as part of the zoning code update
- Evaluate the cumulative impact of buildings, driveways, parking areas, patios, compacted gravel surfaces, and hard surfaces
- Consider additional review when a substantial portion of a parcel is converted to impervious surface
- Consider whether different standards should apply to waterfront properties, floodplain areas, shoreland areas, or environmentally sensitive locations
- Require impervious surface calculations to be included on site development plans and updated when plans are modified

Floodplain, shoreland, and environmentally sensitive areas

- Evaluate whether current standards adequately protect waterways, wetlands, and floodplain areas
- Consider additional review for projects involving substantial fill, grading, drainage modifications, or multiple site improvements in the area

Transparency and accountability

- Development records, approved plans, revisions, permits, and inspection records should be easily accessible to the public
- Responsibilities among city departments should be clearly defined and documented

- When significant modifications are made to an approved development plan, there should be clear process for documenting those changes and making revised plans available for public review
- If significant changes are made that could affect drainage, stormwater runoff, floodplain function, waterways, wetlands, access, or neighboring properties, there should be a transparent process allowing affected residents to understand what changes and how those changes were reviewed
- Consider criteria for when significant site modifications warrant notification to adjacent property owners or other affected parties

Coordinated review

- Consider a review process that evaluates the cumulative impacts of a property rather than reviewing individual improvements separately
- Clearly identify who is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of development work together and comply with city regulations

Relationship between residential dwellings and attached garage spec

- Consider whether clearer standards are needed regarding the size and scale of attached garages relative to the principal dwelling
- Consider whether there should be limits on the proportion of a home's footprint, floor area, or building volume devoted to vehicle storage, equipment storage, or garage-related uses
- Evaluate whether current regulations adequately distinguish between a traditional residential garage and structure that functions primarily as a large storage facility while remaining classified as part of a residence
- Consider whether additional review should be required when attached garage space substantially exceeds the living areas of a residence

General recommendations

- Development should be evaluated based on its cumulative impacts, not just individual components reviewed separately
- The updated zoning code should provide clear standards regarding project review, plan revisions, inspections, documentation, transparency, and accountability. Buildings, driveways, culverts, stormwater management systems, impervious surfaces, and other site improvements often work together to affect drainage, water quality, floodplain function, neighboring properties, and community resources. The zoning code should encourage a coordinated review process that considers the project as a whole.

Other Submitted Comments

R-1 Zoning Defined

- R-1 zoning represents a longstanding understanding between the city and its single-family homeowners. Residents selected their neighborhoods and homes based on the protections offered by R-1 zoning.
- R-1 zoning was established to provide adequate setbacks from adjacent properties. It favored green space and preserved the single-family home lot that many residents desire.
- Modifying current zoning to allow ADUs would significantly alter development standards that have served Neenah neighborhoods successfully for generations

Neenah 2025 Housing Study

- The 2025 Housing Study received minimal feedback from the more than 7,000 single-family homeowners in Neenah.
- The study indicates that approximately 350 responses were received through the online survey.
- ADUs would likely provide only a modest increase in available housing units.
- Problems with ADUs in Established Neighborhoods

Impact on Drainage

- Additional roofs, paving, and walkways would increase the runoff coefficient for individual lots.
- This could result in increased runoff to neighboring properties and additional demands on the City's stormwater system
- Neenah is relatively flat and many R-1 subdivisions were designed with runoff coefficients of approximately 0.3. storm sewers in older neighborhoods were designed with minimum slope and capacity.
- The city is already constructing retention basins and making stormwater improvements in some areas because of inadequate capacity in older systems.
- As a former civil engineer for the City of Neenah, I am concerned that a large number of ADUs would only add to these infrastructure demands.

Impact on Natural Lights, Tree Canopies, and Green Space

- Allowing ADUs, including some two-story structures, could block natural light into neighboring yards.
- Homeowners enjoy seeing the sunrise and sunsets, not an ADU.
- Large shade trees and green space associated with traditional R-1 homes would be reduced.
- Established shade trees near lot lines could have their root systems damaged during construction

Privacy and Neighborhood Character

- Reduced setbacks, some as little as five feet from rear lot lines, would allow second-story units to look directly into neighboring yards and windows
- R-1 setbacks were established for a reason
- Residents purchased their homes with the expectation that these standards would remain substantially intact
- Without owner-occupancy requirements, absentee ownership could introduce multi-family characteristics into established R-1 neighborhoods

Parking and Traffic Issues

- Providing additional off-street parking would further increase water runoff
- If parking is allowed on the street, garage collection and snow removal become more difficult
- Children playing or riding bicycles on residential streets would have more parked cars and additional traffic to contend with

Aesthetics

- The appearance of established neighborhoods could be changed permanently
- There is no assurance that future ADUs would always be compatible with the scale and character of existing single-family neighborhoods

Possible Alternatives

- If additional housing opportunities area needed, the City could prioritize higher-density development in areas already planned to accommodate growth.
- These areas may include:
 - Downtown Neenah and redevelopment sites
 - Commercial corridors
 - Existing multi-family districts
 - Underutilized commercial properties
 - Areas where infrastructure and traffic patterns are already designed to support higher density
- This approach would help address housing needs while preserving the character and expectations of established single-family neighborhoods
- Neenah has successfully accommodated different housing types throughout the community. Future growth can continue without fundamentally changing long-established R-1 neighborhoods.

Conclusion

- Neenah's single-family neighborhoods are among the city's greatest assets.
- Before recommending permanent changes to R-1 zoning, I respectfully encourage the City of Neenah Zoning Project Steering Committee to carefully evaluate infrastructure impacts, privacy concerns, neighborhood character, and the expectations of existing homeowners