

TOWN OF TOPSFIELD COMMUNITY CONVERSATION



Update on the Old Highway Garage

September 15, 2022

INTRODUCTIONS AND MEETING GOALS

- Team
 - Kevin Harutunian, Topsfield Town Administrator
 - Glenn Gibbs, Town of Topsfield Consultant and Former Ipswich Planner
- Goals
 - Provide updates on general Economic Development efforts
 - Updates on the Old Highway Garage Request For Proposal (RFP) and next steps
 - Obtain Feedback

TOWN GOAL: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- What is a Town Goal?
- Community is supportive of strategic investments
- Why is Economic Development a Town Goal
 - To create amenities and placemaking for our residents and visitors
 - Budgetarily new growth
 - Build on the community's reputation and celebrate all Topsfield has to offer
- Why is Topsfield attractive for investment?

WHY TOPSFIELD IS ATTRACTIVE FOR INVESTMENT

- **Location**
 - Centrally Located in Essex County/Traffic Counts
 - Access
 - Rt. 1, Rt. 95, Rt. 97
 - Less than 20 miles to Boston, less than 20 miles to New Hampshire
- **Populations**
 - 6,569 Topsfield Residents (2020)
 - 70,000 people live in adjacent communities
 - 245,000+ people live in communities adjacent to those immediately adjacent to Topsfield
 - 798,689 people live in Essex County (2020)
- **Median Incomes**
 - Topsfield: \$144,258
 - Avg. adjacent communities: \$129,421
 - Essex County: \$82,225
- **Demographics**
 - Avg. Age is 43.2 years old
 - Highly Educated
 - 98% residents have High School Diploma
 - 67% residents have at least a Bachelor's Degree

WHY TOPSFIELD IS ATTRACTIVE FOR INVESTMENT

- Topsfield Fair / Events
- Support
 - Creativity, Communication, Persistence and Passion
 - Stream lined processes and direct line of communication with decision makers
 - Our commitment to partnerships

SOME RECENT TOPSFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

- December 2019 MAPC Study – Downtown Revitalization
 - Vision: “A welcoming downtown village where Topsfield residents and visitors of all ages can live, work, gather and shop”
 - Goals: Attract new businesses, increase customer base, enhance the look of the downtown, increase events and expand town capabilities and resources to achieve goals
- Creation of the Project Review Team
- Creation of the Economic Community Development Committee and TCP
- Beatification: Downtown Lights, flowers, solar bench
- Events and Placemaking
- Branding and Messaging
 - New Website and Social Media

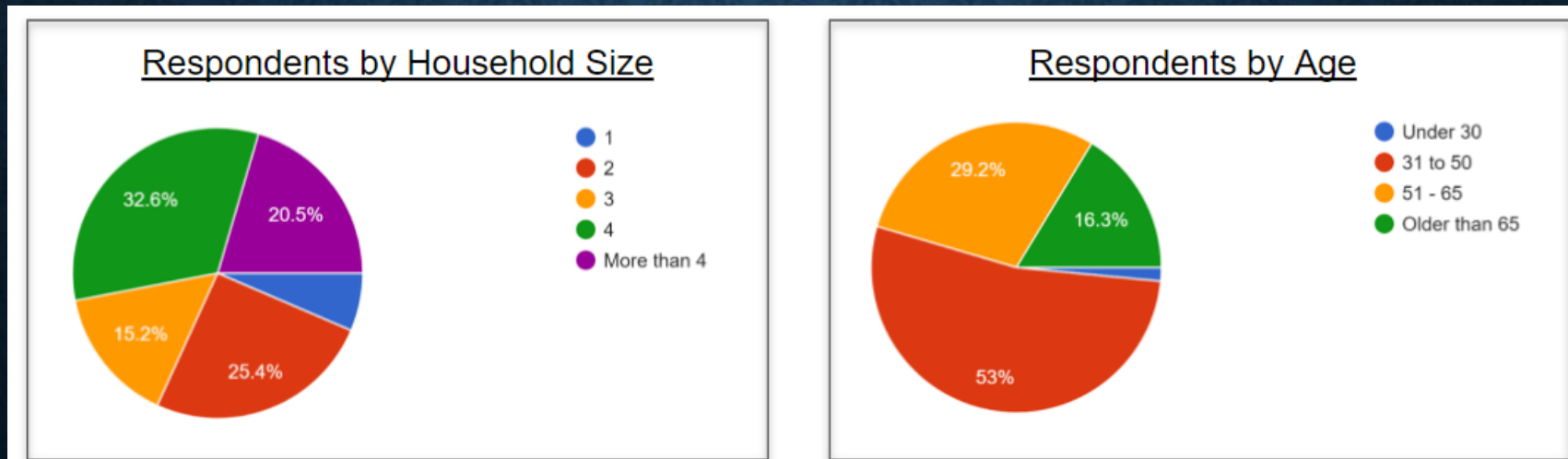
SOME RECENT TOPSFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

- Business Retention
- Business Recruitment
 - Zumi's, Perfectly Imperfect Gift Shoppe, Slow River Studio, and more
 - Spring 2022 Business and Development Showcase
- Master Plan
- Grants
- Spring 2022 Community Survey



SPRING 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

- 264 Survey Respondents
- Marketed via Town Website and Social Media
- 95% of Respondents were Topsfield Residents
- Achieved good cross-section of Respondents by household size and age

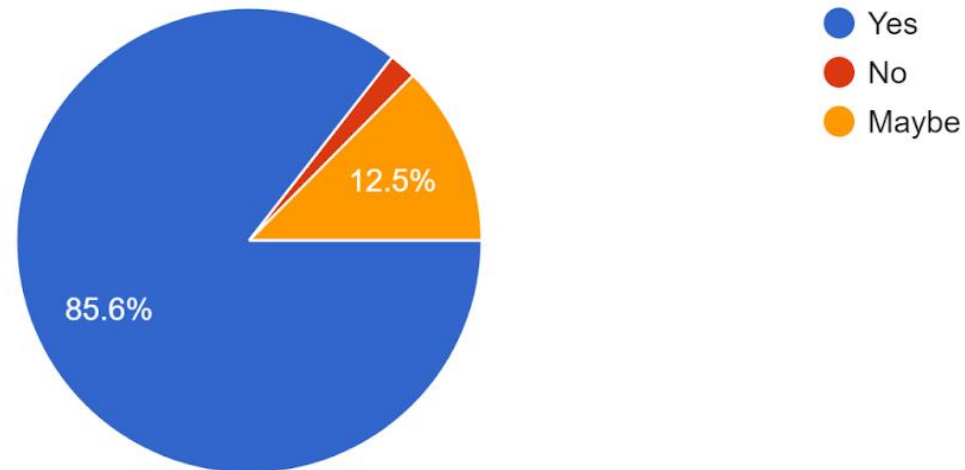


SPRING 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

- Respondents overwhelmingly support increased business activity in Topsfield

Do you want there to be more businesses in Topsfield?

263 responses



SPRING 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

- Respondents support increased business activity in both the Downtown and Route 1, especially for Restaurants and Retail
- 98% responded positively for a full-service restaurant downtown

In what region of town would you like to see increase in business activity by the following types of business?

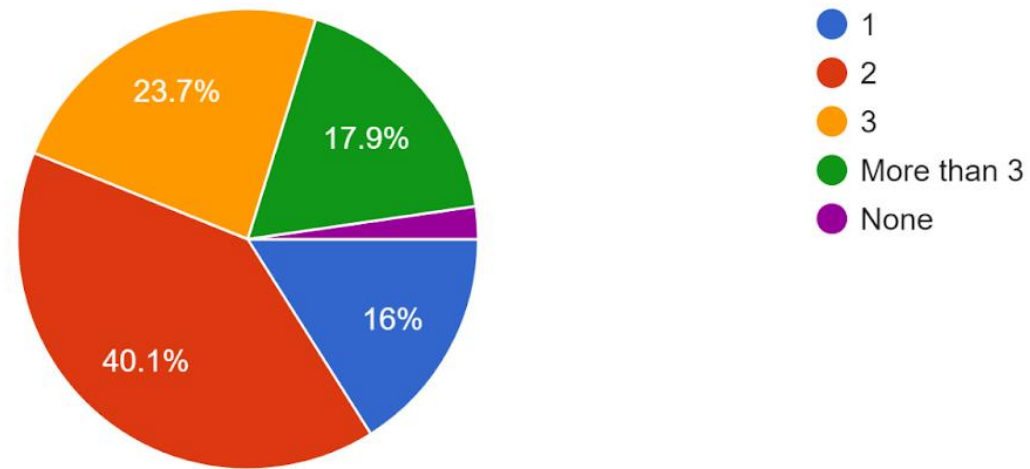


SPRING 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

- Strong desire for Full Service Restaurants in Topsfield

How many full-service wait-staff restaurants do you want to have in Topsfield?

262 responses



SPRING 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

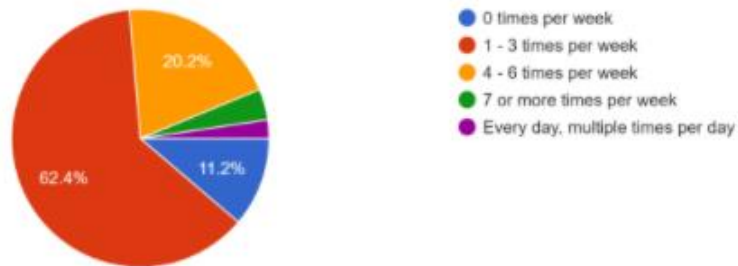
- Market conditions are favorable for Restaurants
 - Low Competition
 - Food Service currently only makes up around 2% of Topsfield Businesses
 - Over 55% of Survey Respondents travel more than 20 minutes to dine out!
 - Strong Potential Customer Base
 - Almost 70% of Survey Respondents dine out 4 or more times a month
 - 57% of Survey Respondents spend more than \$200 dining out each month
 - Low Barriers to Entry
 - Supportive local government
 - Liquor licenses available

SPRING 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

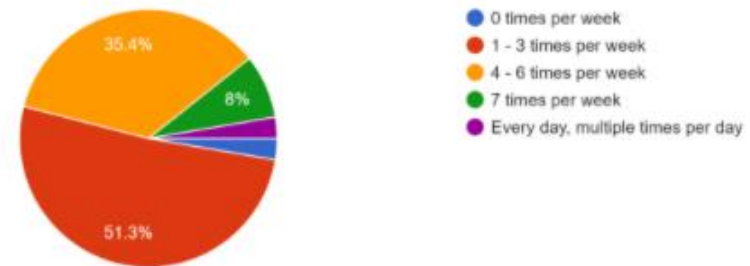
- Shopping habits have changed since the Pandemic: ***More Residents want to shop local***

- Prior to the pandemic: **26.4%** of Respondents patronized Topsfield-based businesses 4 or more times a week
- Post pandemic: **46.1%** of Respondents intend to patronize Topsfield-based businesses 4 or more times a week

Before pandemic, on average, how many times per week did you patronize Topsfield-based businesses?
258 responses



Going forward, assuming a "return to normal" or a stabilized "new normal," on average how many times per week do you intend to patronize Topsfield-based businesses?
263 responses



SPRING 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

“It would be nice to have a restaurant as there appears to be a lot of liquor licenses available and those that would greatly enjoy one have to drive to Rowley or Danvers to enjoy this”

“Restaurants please.”

“There needs to be more business geared toward people hanging out for more than 5 minutes so that people can see each other in town purposefully, but also meet organically while frequenting these businesses.”

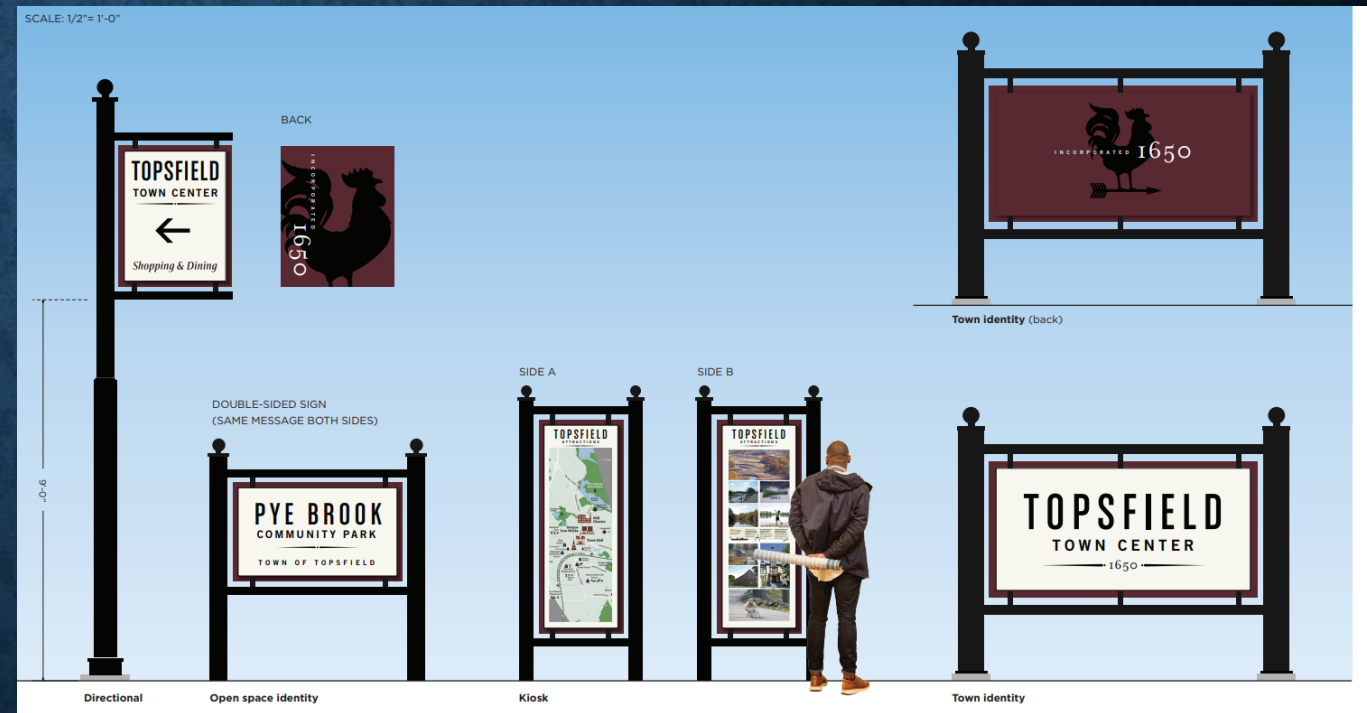
“Please focus on destination restaurants that can pull traffic for downtown. We have enough quick service/fast food and need sit down options. Ideally 1-2 “good” restaurants can serve as anchors for other retail/services downtown.”

“We like consistent good food and a “good pour” of wine. We enjoy to stay local and just get out for a nice meal.”

“Prefer businesses that will provide services for residents of Topsfield and neighboring towns as well as those that can contribute to the tax base in an appropriate manner reflecting the residential character of the town. Mix of businesses should promote walkability downtown (smaller shops, restaurants) as a dining and retail destination, and continued larger businesses (light industrial, chain stores, shopping centers) on the highly trafficked Route 1 corridor.”

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN PROCESS

- Wayfinding Signs Installation
- Infrastructure Improvements on Washington Street
- Music and Up-lighting Downtown
- Additional Place Making
 - Expand Outdoor Dining
 - Create a Pocket Park Downtown
- Master Plan Implementation
- Old Highway Garage RFP



OLD HIGHWAY GARAGE



OLD HIGHWAY GARAGE OPPORTUNITY

- History of the Building
 - Built circa 1941
 - Former Fire Station
 - Former Highway Garage
- Building Description:
 - 57,369 SF lot area
 - 4,610 SF (325 SF Mezz.)
 - High Bays
 - Brick Facade
 - Easily Subdivided
- Current Use
- The Opportunity
 - Centrally located
 - Business Village Zoning
 - Town Controlled
- Other Considerations....
 - Conservation
 - General Environmental
 - Septic

STEPS TAKEN FOR DISPOSITION SO FAR

- Town Officials reviewed the opportunity
- Outreach to Neighbors and Stake Holders
- December 2020 Community Meeting via Zoom
 - Positive response and overall support by the community to activate the space (restaurant)
- Town Meeting 2021
 - Approved to be rezoned into the Business Village District
 - Approved for disposition/sale
- Spring 2022 Business and Development Showcase
 - Interest expressed by the business/development community for the project
- Drafted Request For Proposal (RFP)
- Outreach to Neighbors and Stake Holders
- Community Meeting – September 15, 2022

OLD HIGHWAY GARAGE RFP

- What is a RFP?
- Goals of the RFP
- Specific Considerations in the RFP



NEXT STEPS

- Incorporate Changes (*if necessary*)
- Make Available the RFP
- Advertise RFP on the state's Central Registry
- Selection Committee receives proposals, reviews and makes recommendation to the Select Board
- Approve winning response and enter into a Purchase and Sales

COMMUNITY INPUT....

- We want to hear from you!

Questions:

Kharutunian@topsfield-ma.gov