

City of Bristol Zoning Regulations Update

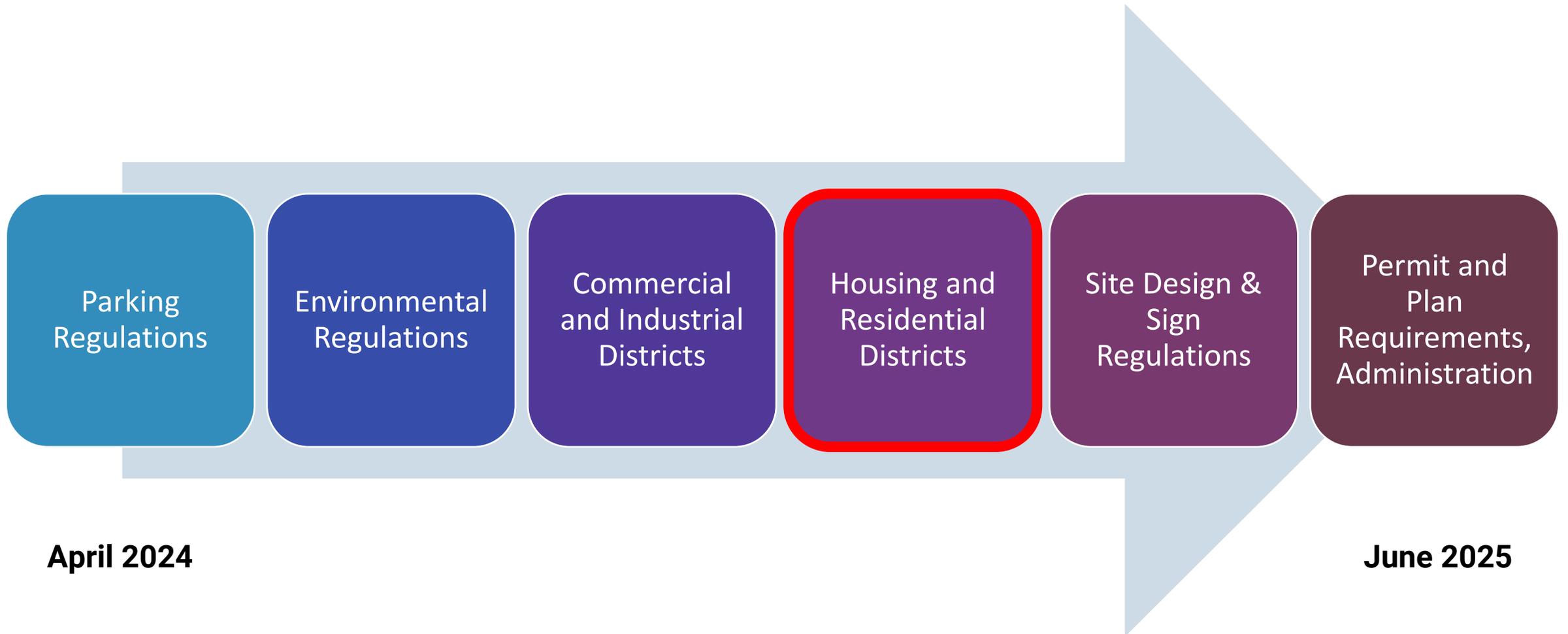
Zoning Commission Meeting 3/6/25



Agenda

1. Review of zoning update schedule
2. Review and discussion of survey results
3. Review of recommended cannabis regulations
4. Review of BD zone permit requirements
5. Review of recommended residential zone amendments
6. Next steps

Phase 3: Work Sequence

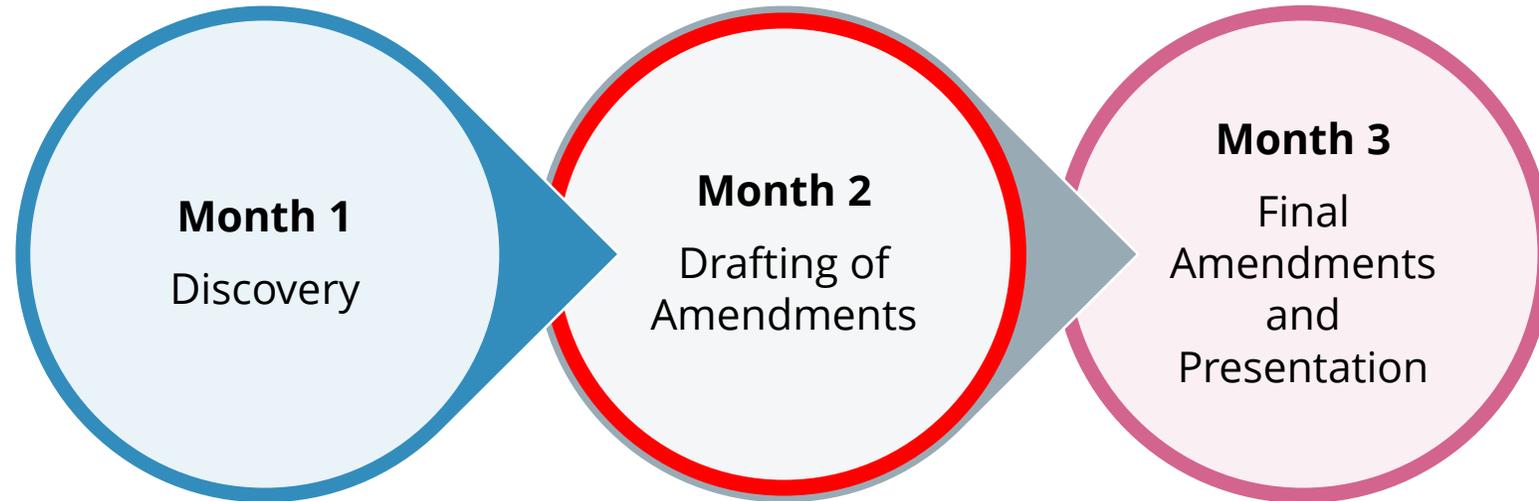


April 2024

June 2025

Phase 3: Work Cycles

Residential Zone Regulations



Phase 3 Schedule

Bristol Phase 3 Schedule		December '24					January '25				February '25				March '25					April '25				May '25				June '25				
		Week of:	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23
Commercial, Industrial, and Mixed-Use Districts and Uses (Task 3.1, 3.2, 3.6)	Commission Meetings																															
	Discovery																															
	Drafting																															
	Public Virtual Presentation																															
Housing and Residential Districts and Uses (Task 3.3)	Commission Meetings																															
	Discovery (Begin in Nov.)																															
	Drafting																															
	Public Virtual Presentation																															
Site Design including Buffer Requirements, Lighting, and Sign Regulations (Task 3.5)	Commission Meetings																															
	Discovery																															
	Drafting																															
	Public Virtual Presentation																															
Permit and Plan Requirements, Proc, & Admin. Items (Task 3.1)	Commission Meetings																															
	Discovery																															
	Drafting																															
	Public Virtual Presentation																															
Final Public Hearing(s) For Adoption																																

We are here



Online Survey

We have 366 responses thus far

What are *your* thoughts on land use and development in Bristol?

The City of Bristol is in the process of updating its zoning regulations to better manage growth and development across the City. The goals of this effort include simplifying the regulations, better supporting development in commercial districts, and supporting the development of housing that is appropriate to the City's residential areas.

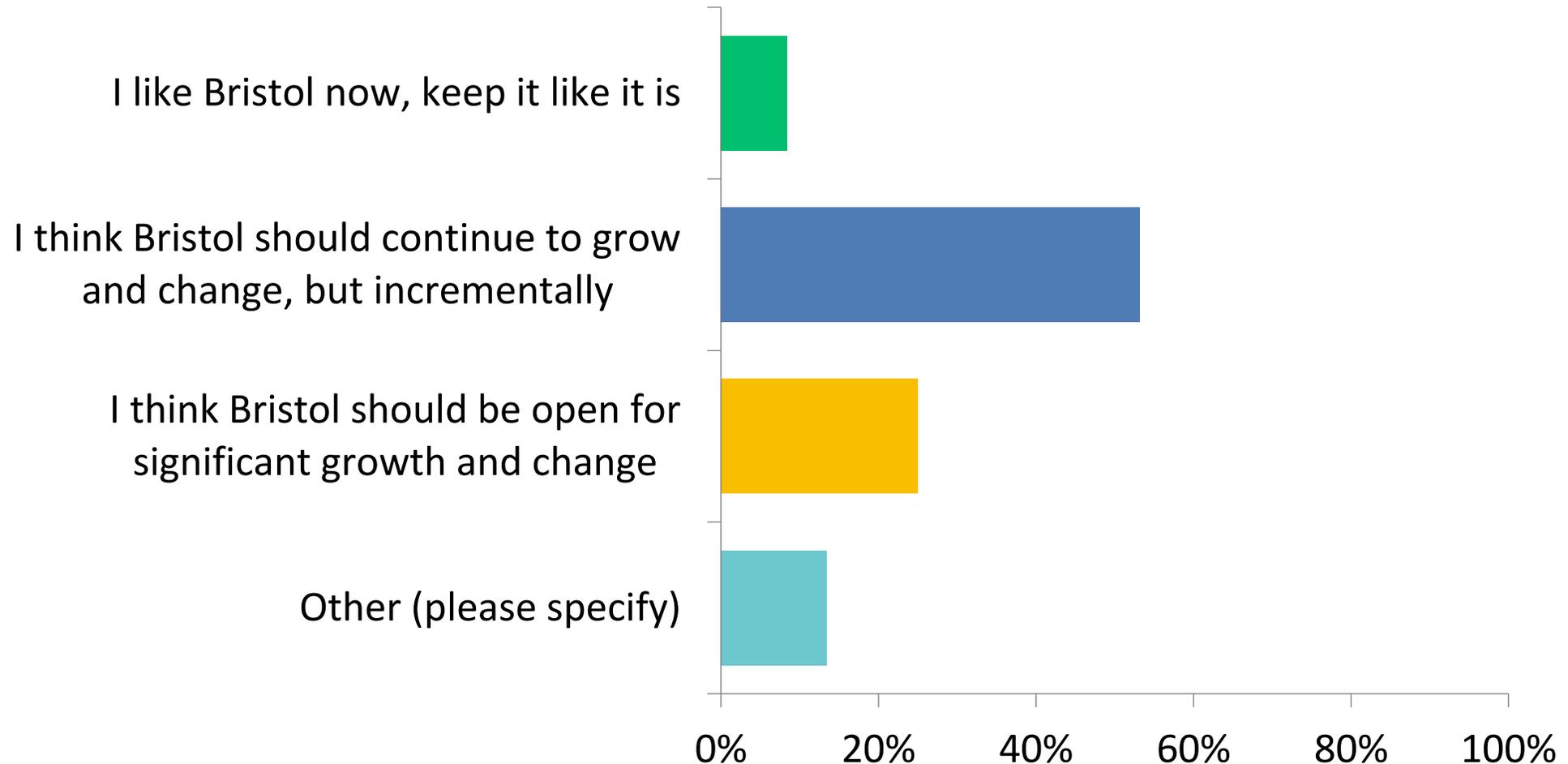
Please participate in the survey below to share your thoughts.

Scan the QR code to take a ten-minute survey or visit:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/bristolzoning



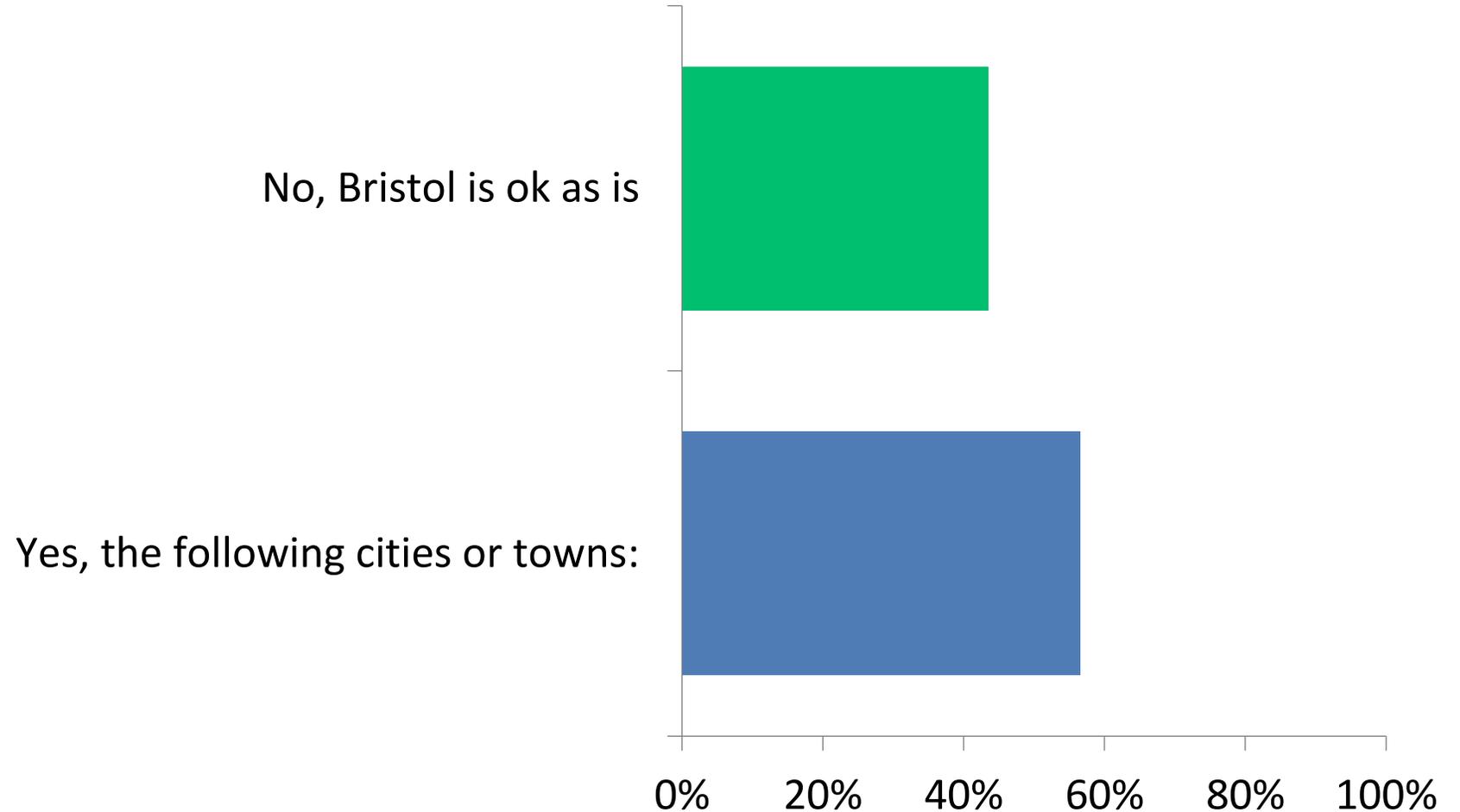
Learn more at:
www.ct-bristol2.civicplus.com/1060/Zoning-Regulations-Rewrite

Q8: Please select the statement that best represents your thoughts about Bristol.



Q11: Is there a town or city in Connecticut that you think Bristol should be more like with respect to land use and development?

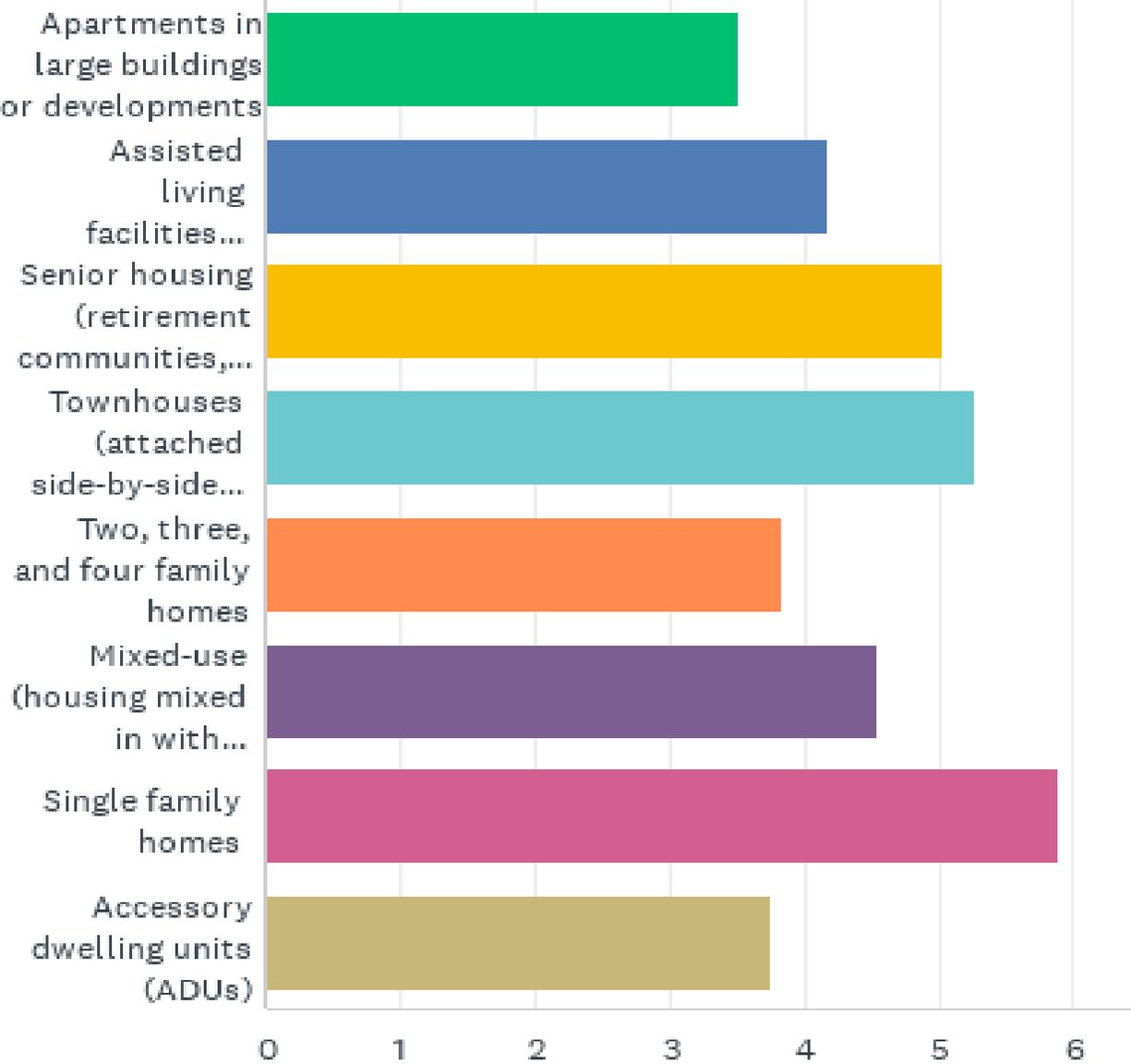
- Farmington
- Berlin
- Burlington
- Cromwell
- Manchester
- Vernon
- West Hartford
- Southington
- Cheshire
- Plainville
- Middletown
- New Britain



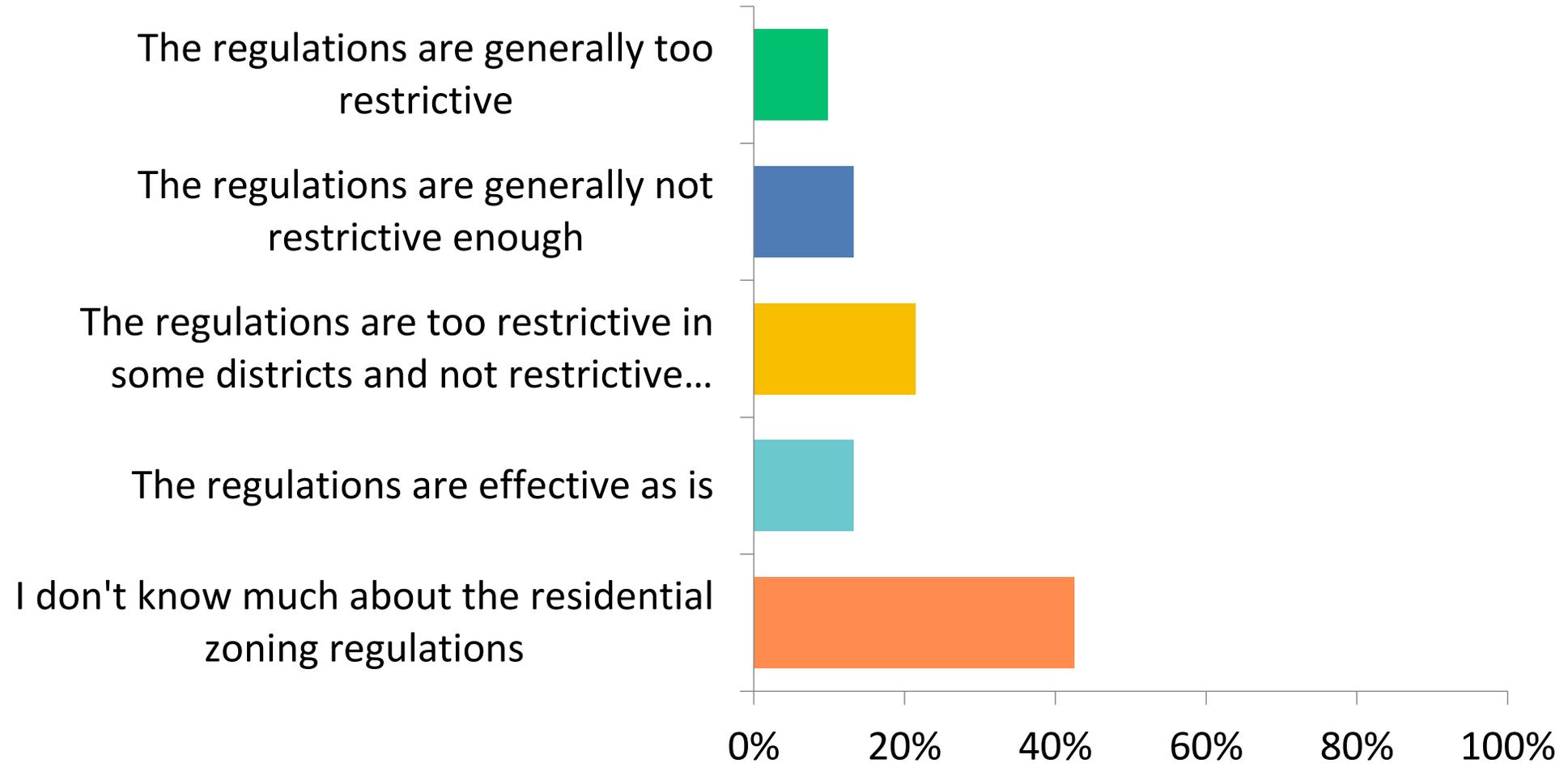
Q12: What type of housing does Bristol need more of?

Also:

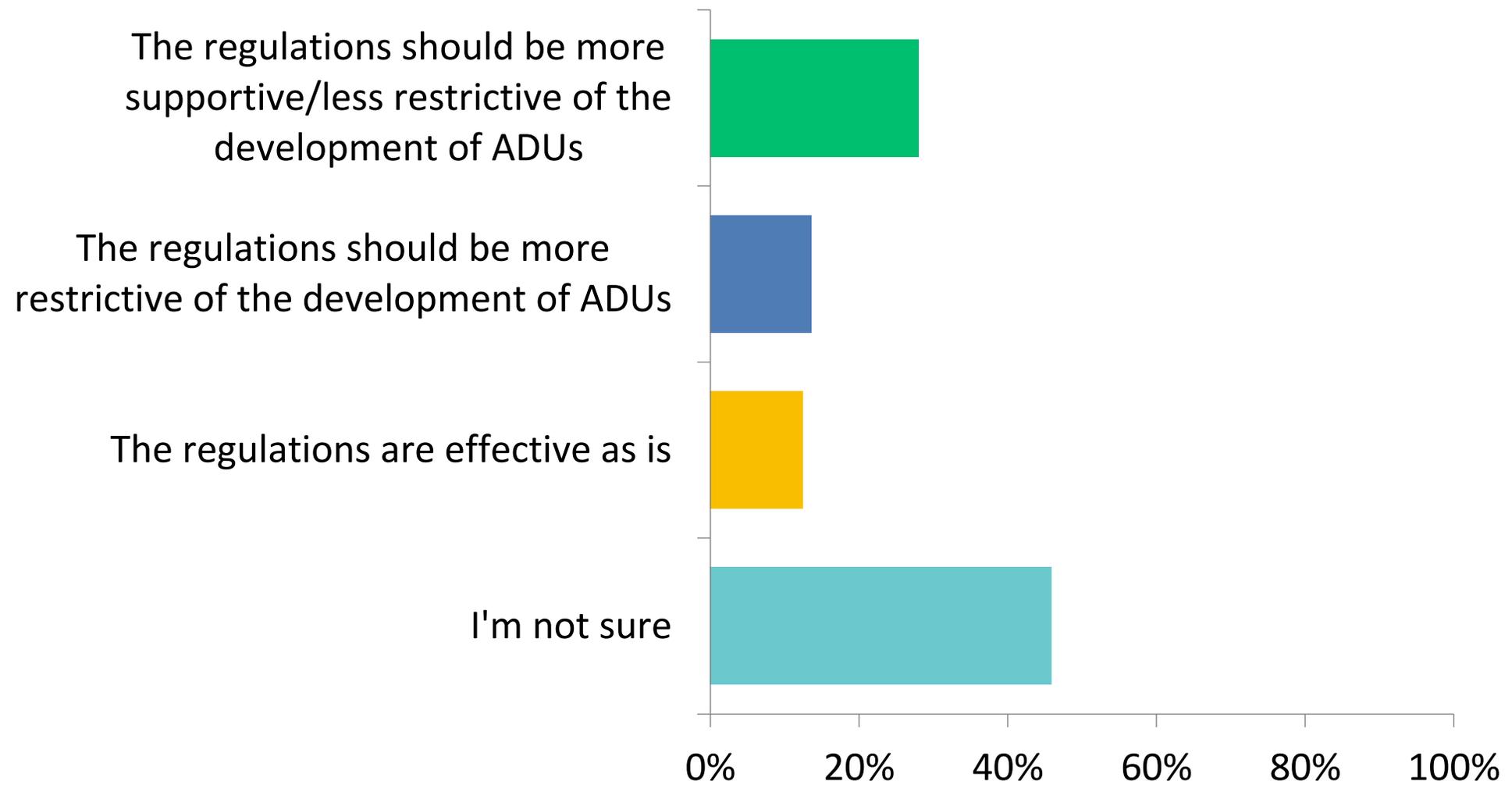
- Affordable Housing
- Homeless Accommodations
- Tiny Homes
- Single Room Occupancy



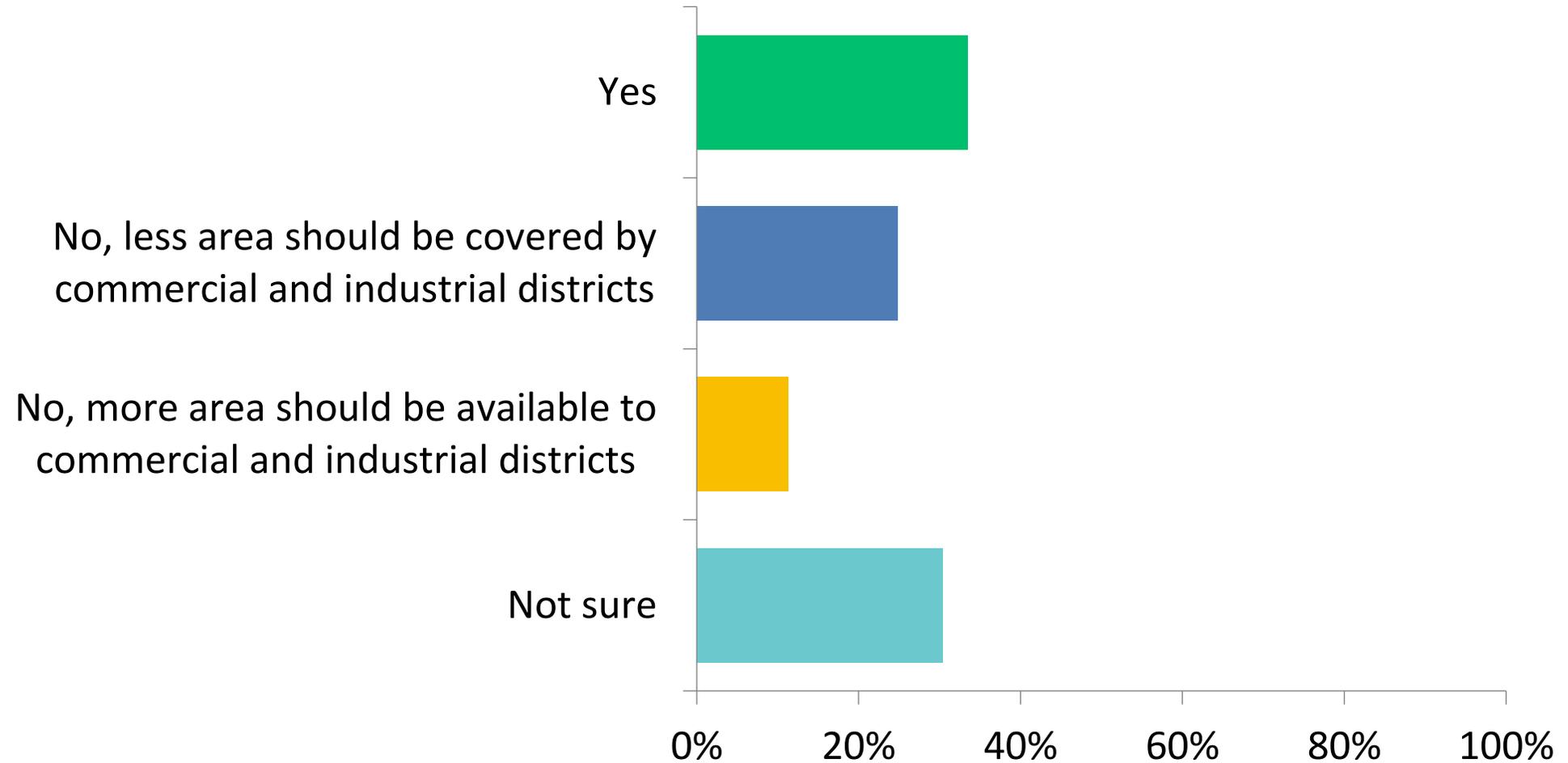
Q14: What are your thoughts on the residential zoning regulations?



Q16: The residential zoning regulations currently allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) but few accessory dwelling units have been constructed in Bristol. What are your thoughts on ADUs and the regulations?

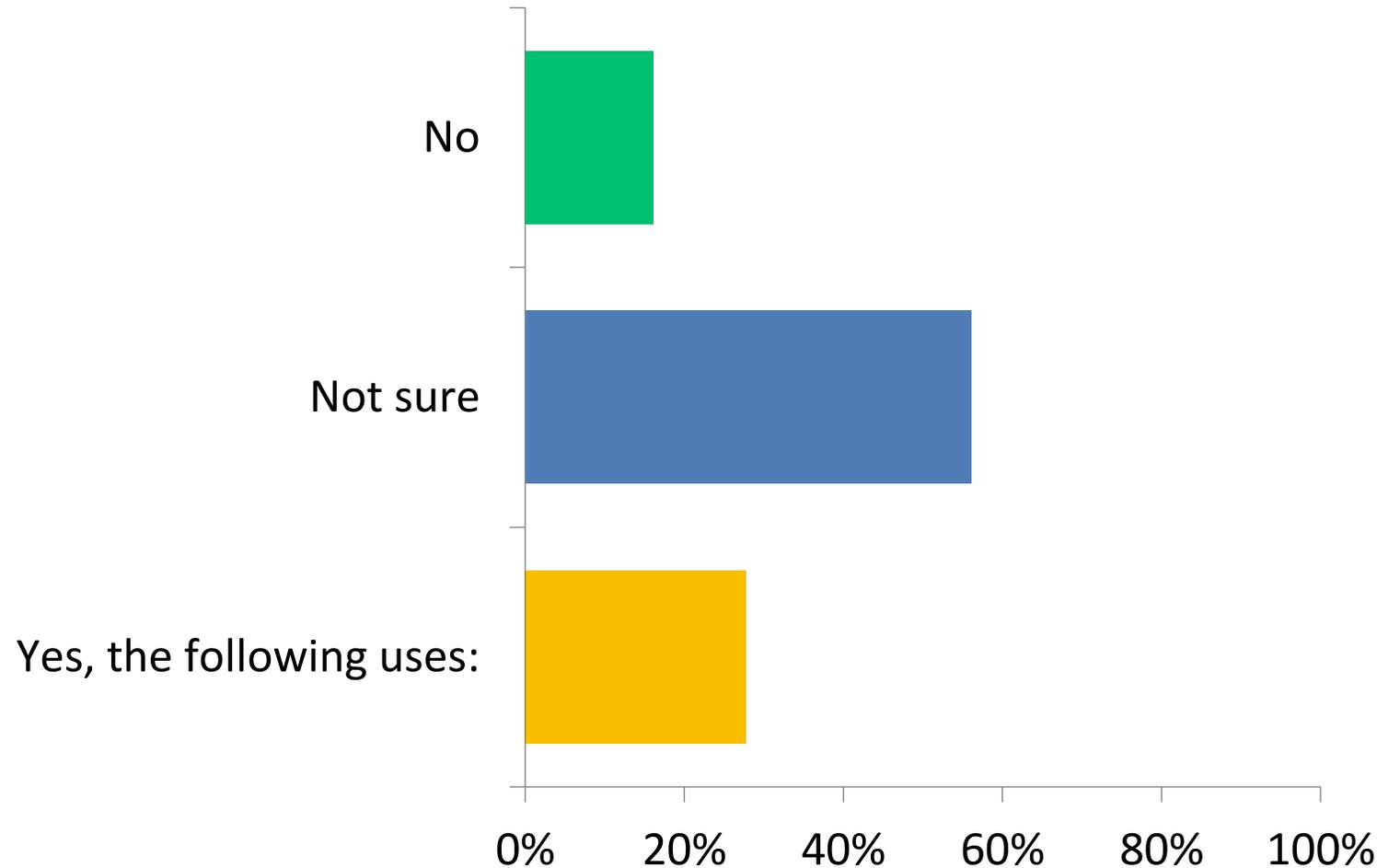


Q18: Are the geographic extents of the City's commercial and industrial zoning districts appropriate?



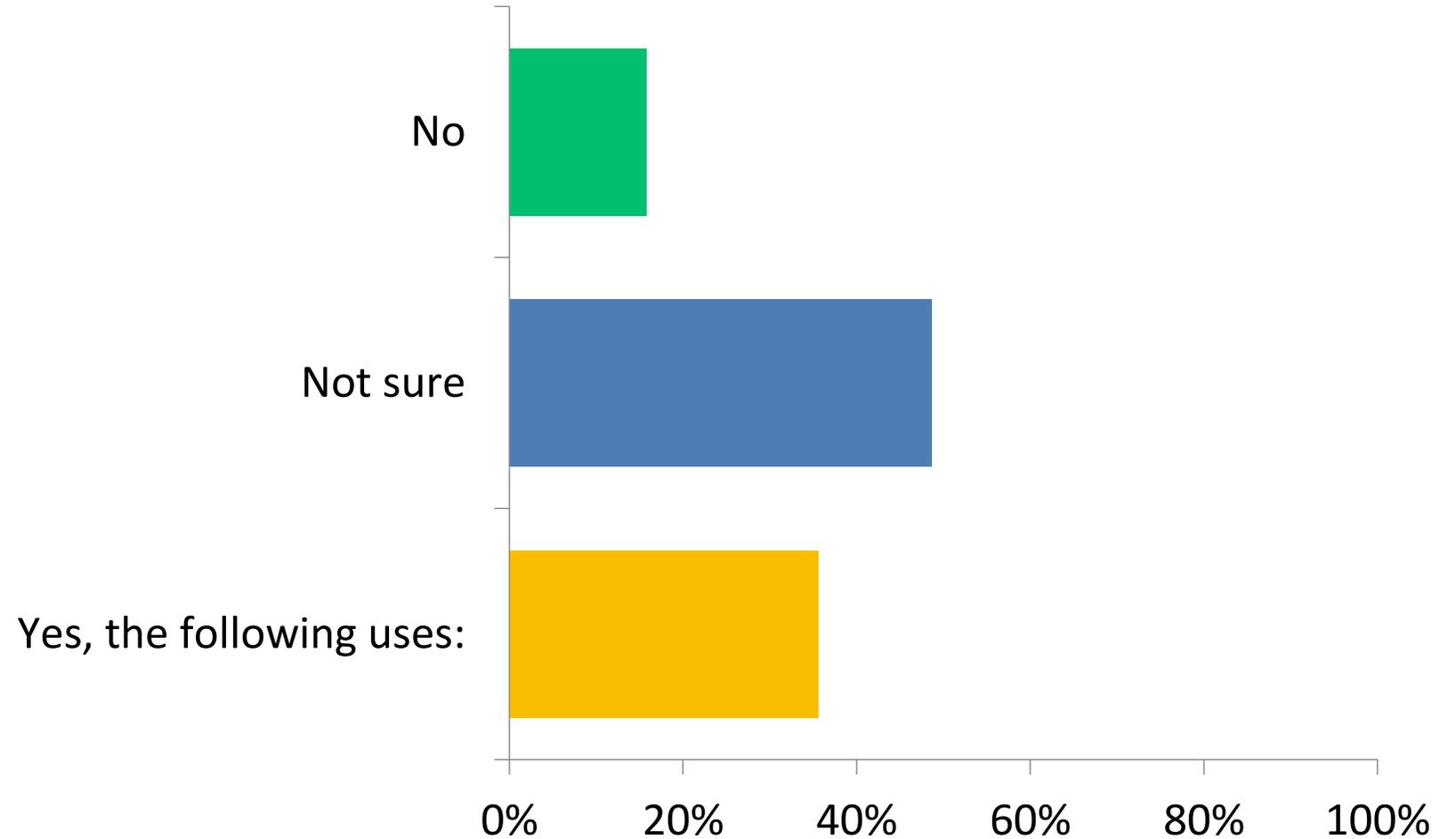
Q19: Are there specific commercial or industrial uses that are currently allowed or that currently exist in Bristol that should be prohibited in the future?

- Waste incineration
- Smoke/vape shops
- Package stores

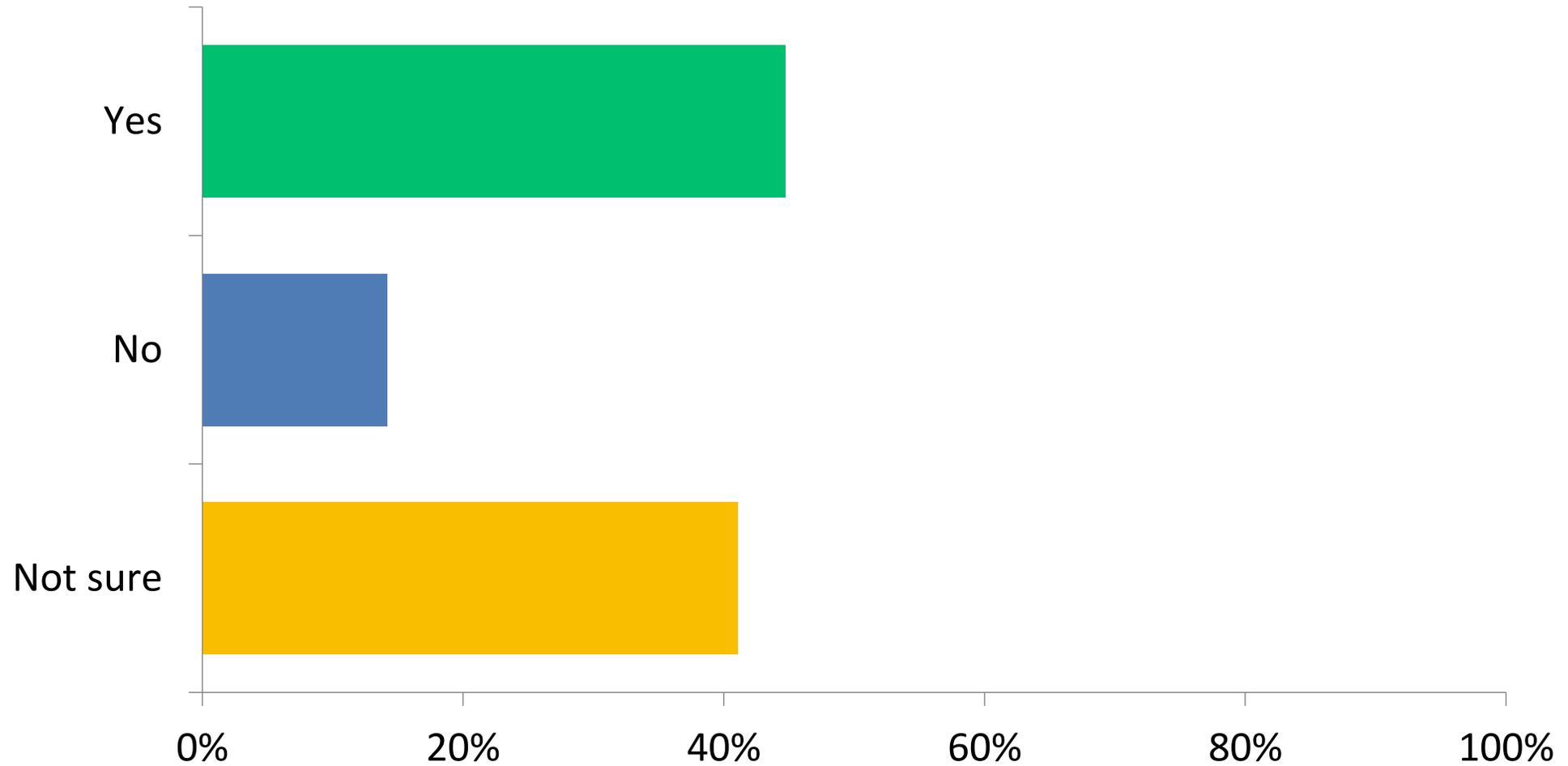


Q20: Are there specific commercial or industrial uses that should be more strictly regulated in Bristol?

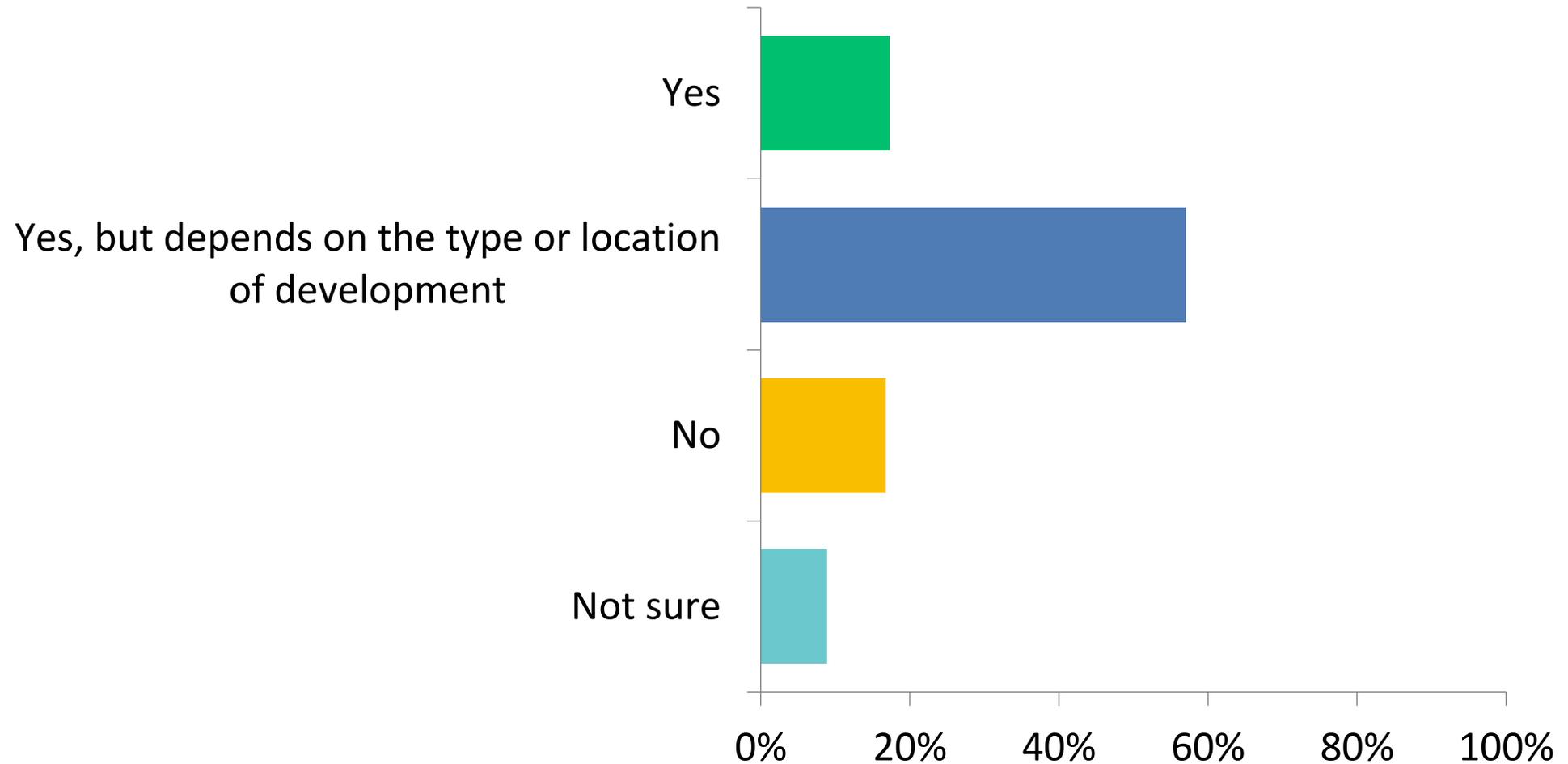
- Waste incineration
- Smoke/vape shops
- Package stores
- Cannabis retailers



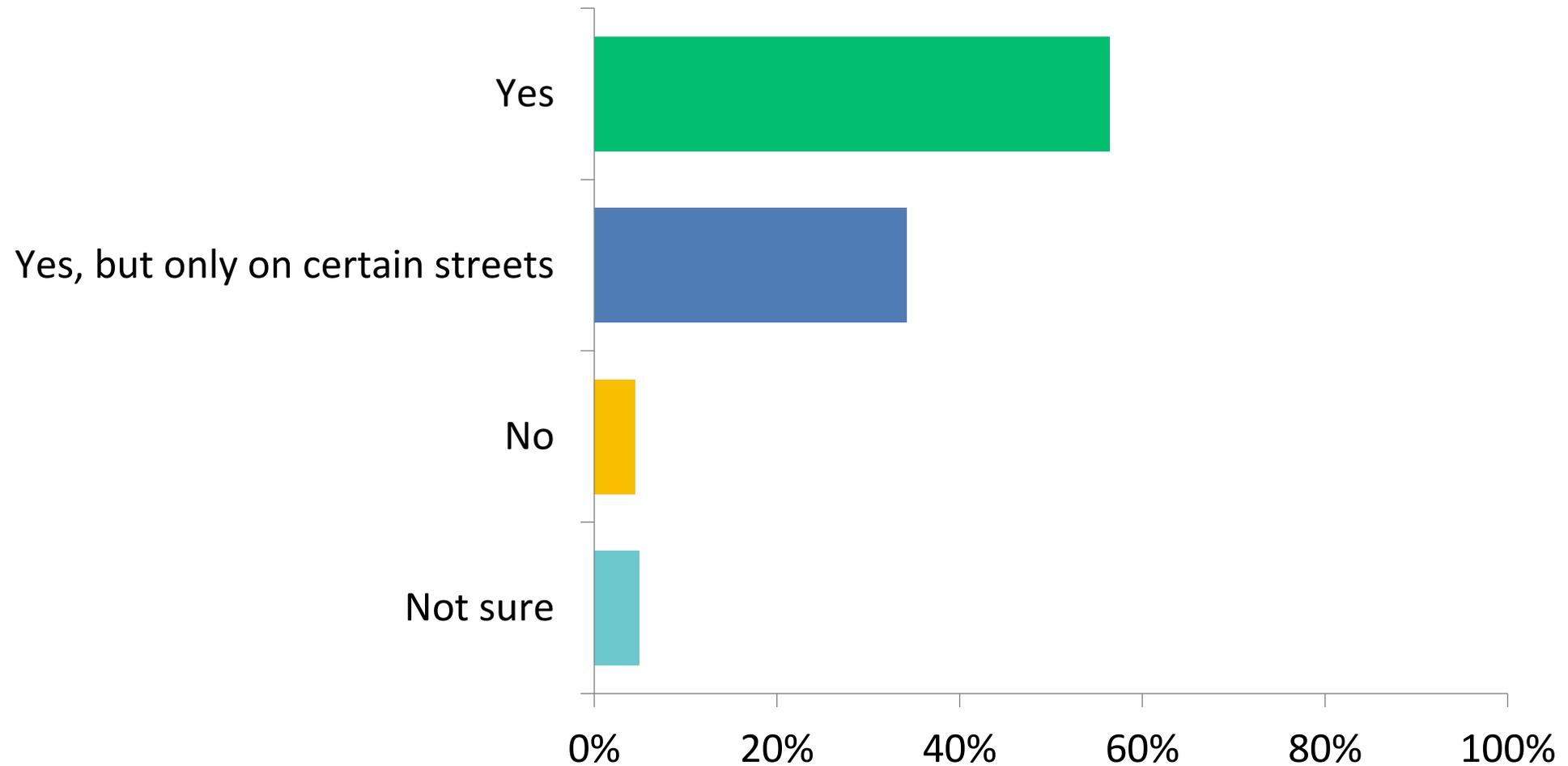
Q24: Is a wide enough range of uses permitted in the Downtown?



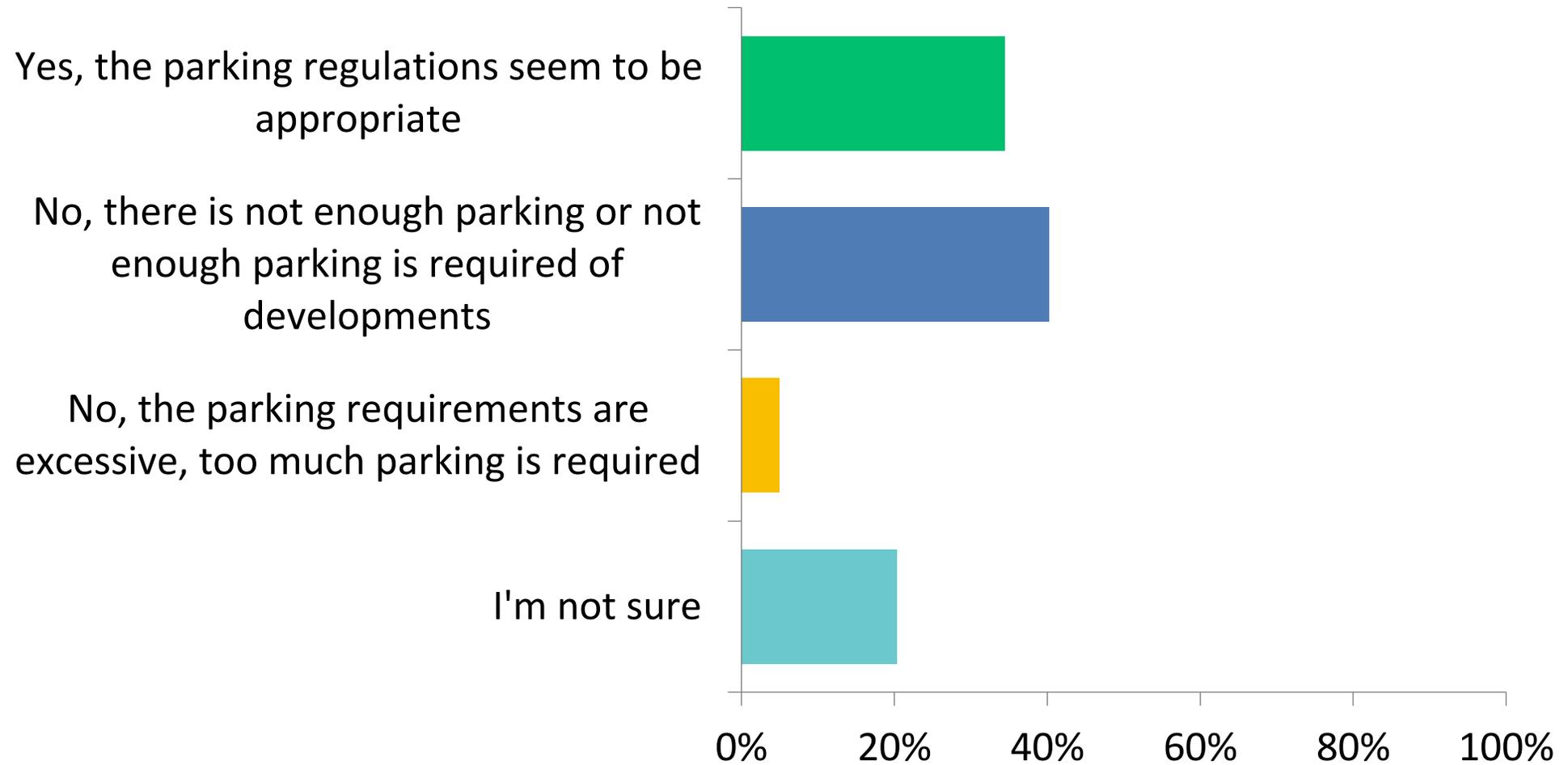
Q25: The zoning regulations currently allow mixed-use residential development types in the Downtown. Should the zoning regulations allow for more residential development in the Downtown?



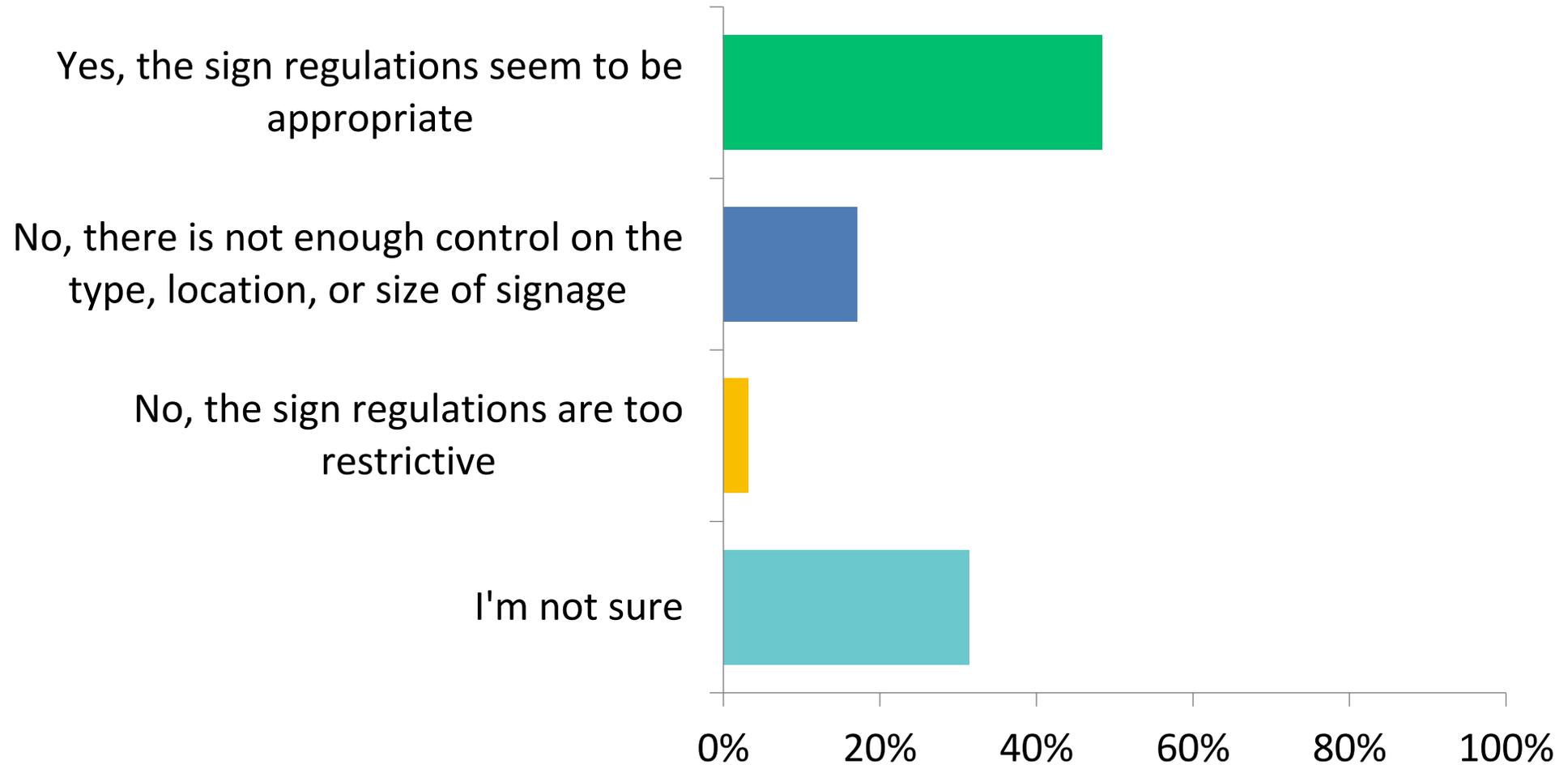
Q26: Should the street-facing first floor of buildings in the Downtown be reserved for commercial uses such as retail, restaurants, services, and offices?



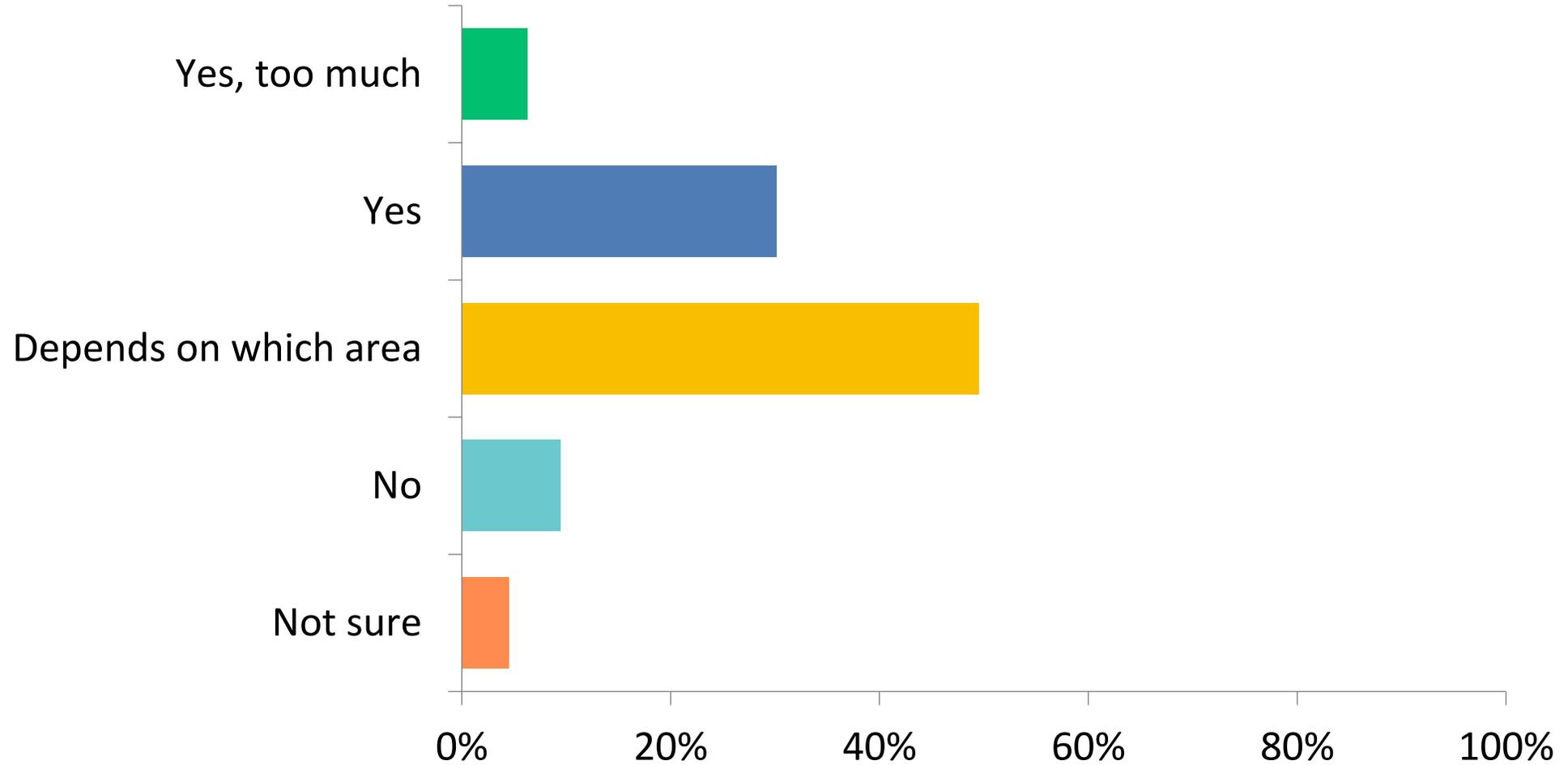
Q27: Is parking adequately regulated in the Downtown?



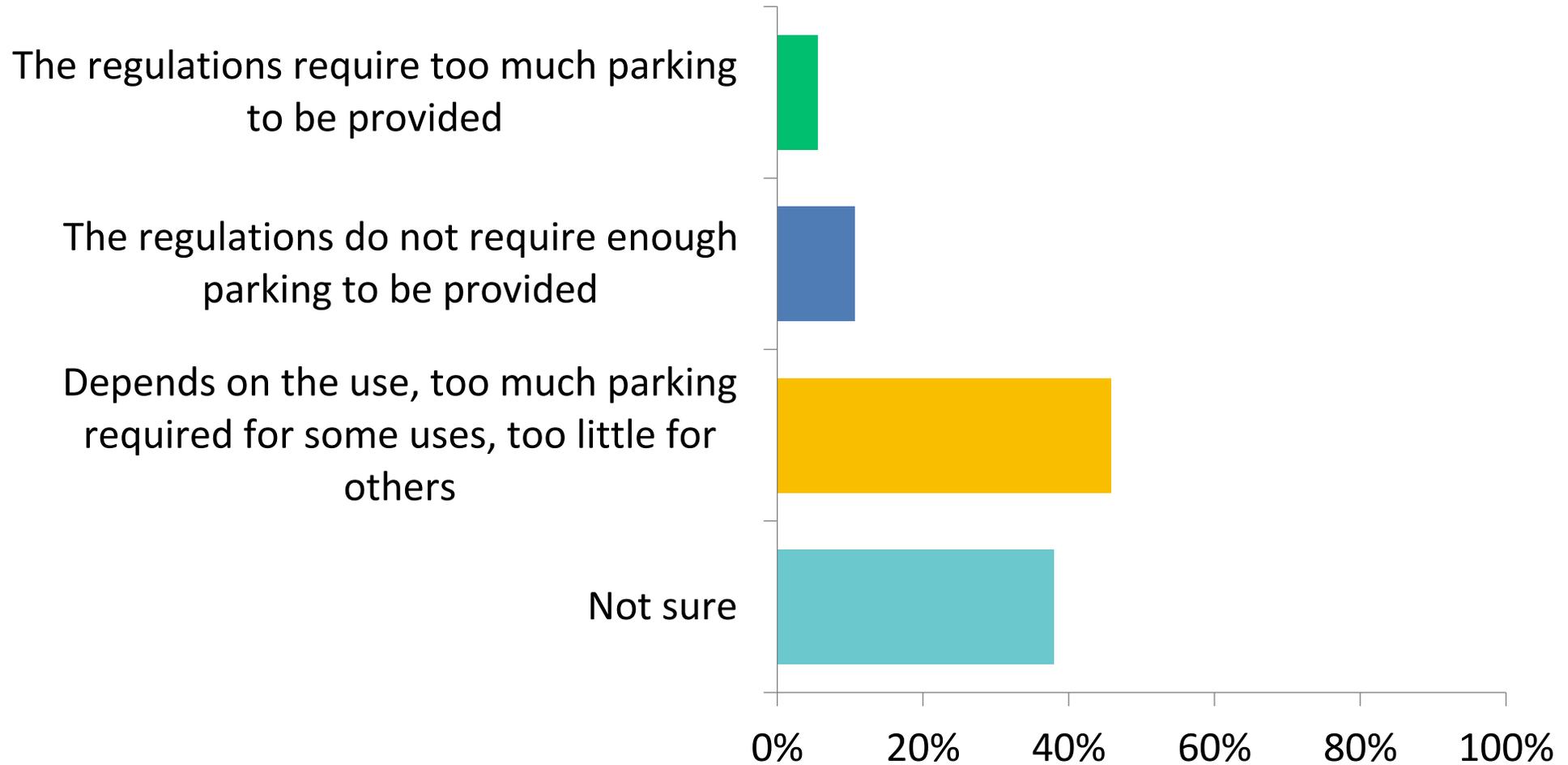
Q28: Is signage adequately regulated in the Downtown?



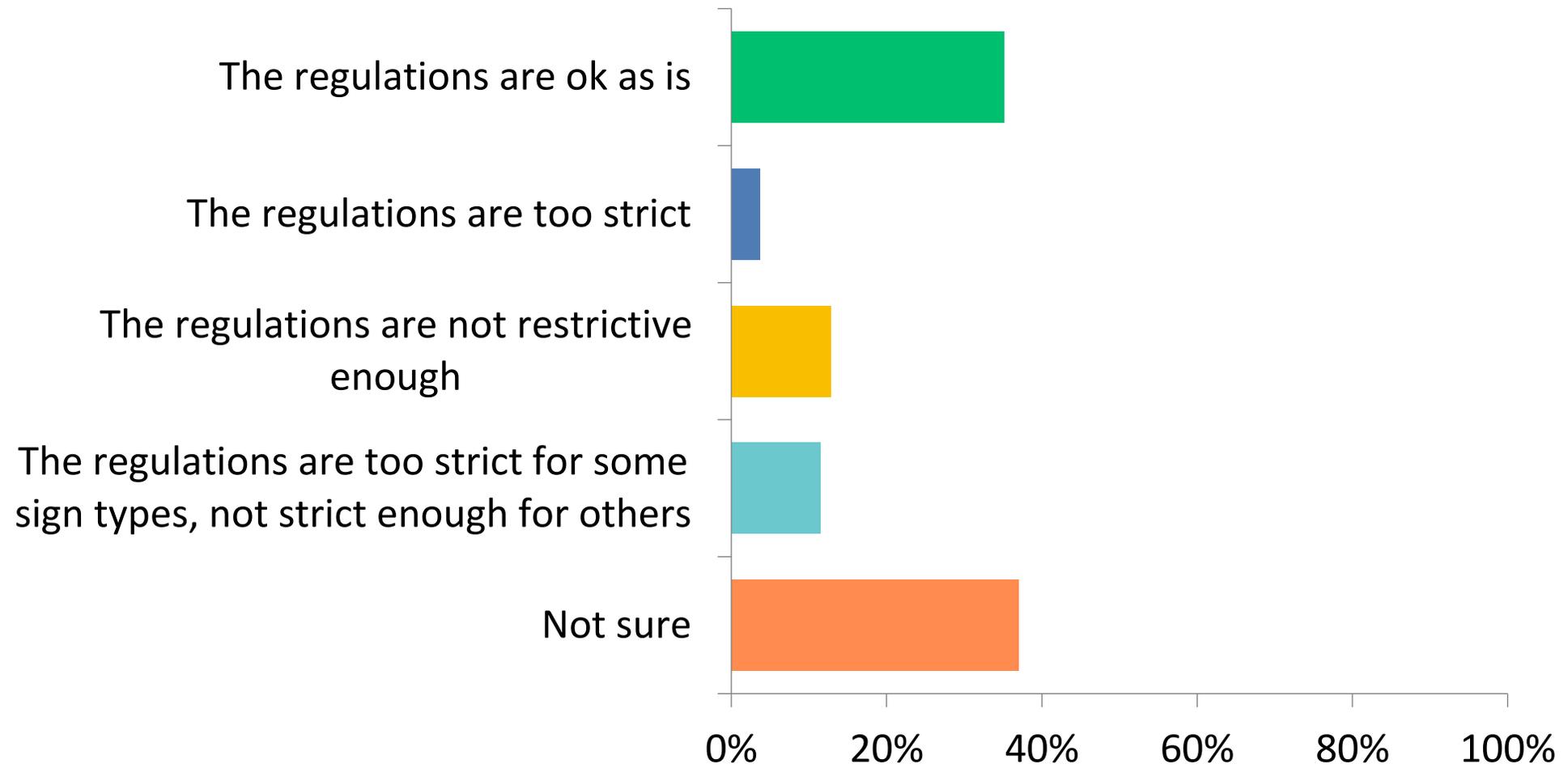
Q30: Is there enough parking in commercial areas across the City?



Q31: What are your thoughts about the amount of parking required for commercial, mixed-use, and multi-unit residential development?

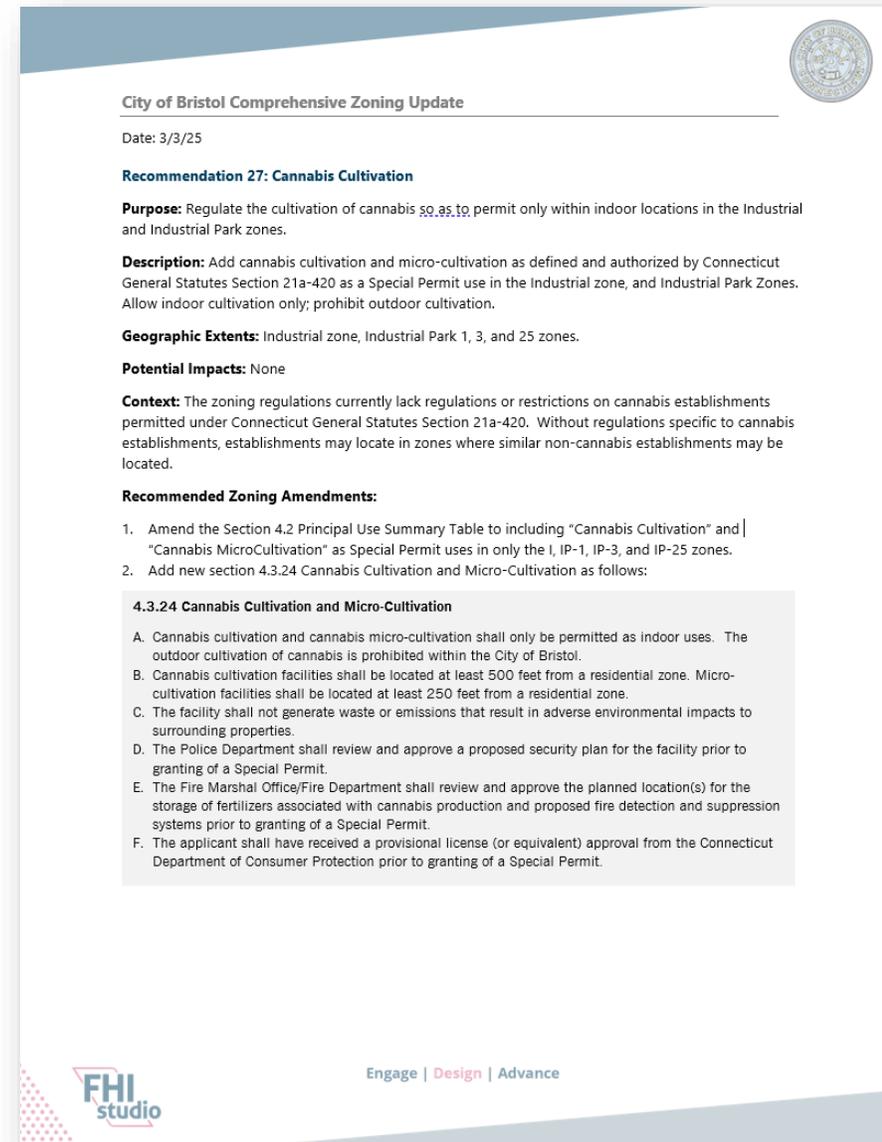


Q32: What are your thoughts on sign regulations in Bristol?



R27: Recommended Cannabis Regulations

- We've drafted Cannabis Regulations that would allow Cannabis Cultivators and Micro-Cultivators to operate indoors in the Industrial and Industrial Park Zones.
- A Special Permit would be required.
- Police and Fire Department sign-offs would be required.
- The facility would need to be located at least 500 feet from a residential zone if a Cultivator and 250 feet from a residential zone if a Micro-Cultivator.



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 3/3/25

Recommendation 27: Cannabis Cultivation

Purpose: Regulate the cultivation of cannabis so as to permit only within indoor locations in the Industrial and Industrial Park zones.

Description: Add cannabis cultivation and micro-cultivation as defined and authorized by Connecticut General Statutes Section 21a-420 as a Special Permit use in the Industrial zone, and Industrial Park Zones. Allow indoor cultivation only; prohibit outdoor cultivation.

Geographic Extents: Industrial zone, Industrial Park 1, 3, and 25 zones.

Potential Impacts: None

Context: The zoning regulations currently lack regulations or restrictions on cannabis establishments permitted under Connecticut General Statutes Section 21a-420. Without regulations specific to cannabis establishments, establishments may locate in zones where similar non-cannabis establishments may be located.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Amend the Section 4.2 Principal Use Summary Table to including "Cannabis Cultivation" and "Cannabis MicroCultivation" as Special Permit uses in only the I, IP-1, IP-3, and IP-25 zones.
2. Add new section 4.3.24 Cannabis Cultivation and Micro-Cultivation as follows:

4.3.24 Cannabis Cultivation and Micro-Cultivation

- A. Cannabis cultivation and cannabis micro-cultivation shall only be permitted as indoor uses. The outdoor cultivation of cannabis is prohibited within the City of Bristol.
- B. Cannabis cultivation facilities shall be located at least 500 feet from a residential zone. Micro-cultivation facilities shall be located at least 250 feet from a residential zone.
- C. The facility shall not generate waste or emissions that result in adverse environmental impacts to surrounding properties.
- D. The Police Department shall review and approve a proposed security plan for the facility prior to granting of a Special Permit.
- E. The Fire Marshal Office/Fire Department shall review and approve the planned location(s) for the storage of fertilizers associated with cannabis production and proposed fire detection and suppression systems prior to granting of a Special Permit.
- F. The applicant shall have received a provisional license (or equivalent) approval from the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection prior to granting of a Special Permit.

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BD Zone Permit Requirements

Use	BD
Adult Day Care Center	ZP
Assisted Living Facility	SP
Bank	ZP
Bar or Club	ZP
Brewpub	ZP
Business or Professional Office	ZP
Child Care Center	ZP
Civic Facility	ZP
Climate Controlled Self-Storage Facility	SP
Commercial Parking Lot or Structure	SP
Community Youth Organization	ZP
Convenience Store	ZP
Cultural Institution	ZP
Drugstore	ZP
Fitness Club	ZP/SP

Use	BD
For Profit School or Studio	ZP
Grocery Store	ZP
Health Care Clinic	ZP
High Technology Business	ZP/SP
Hotel or Motel	SP
Indoor Entertainment Facility	ZP
Indoor Recreation Facility	SP
Kitchen Incubator	ZP
Laundromat	ZP
Live-Work Units	ZP
Medical Office	ZP
Membership Organization	ZP
Microbrewery	ZP
Mixed-Use Development	ZP
Nursing or Convalescent Home	SP

Use	BD
Personal Service Establishment	ZP
Printing Shop	ZP
Public Utility Building or Facility	ZP
Radio or Television Broadcast Facility	ZP
Religious Organization or Institution	ZP
Restaurant, Fast Food	ZP
Restaurant, Sit-Down	ZP
Restaurant, Take Out	ZP
Retail Store	ZP
Social Services Agency or Charitable Institution	ZP
Specialty Food or Beverage Establishment	ZP
Taxicab Service	ZP
Tennis or Racquet Clubs	SP
Unified Downtown Development	SP

Recommended Residential Zone Amendments

- We've prepared five recommended amendments for the commercial and industrial zones (Recommendations 28-32)
- These recommended amendments are based on our discussions at our last meeting.
- As with the other recommended amendments, adoption will be considered at a later date, upon completion of our review of all sections of the regulations.

City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 3/3/25

Recommendation 32: Amend the Unified Residential Regulations of the RM Zone

Purpose: Require a front yard and building orientation consistent with other forms of residential development in the RM zone.

Description: Increase the front yard setback to match the RM zone, require buildings facing the street to be oriented to the street, and remove requirements for barriers in the front yard.

Geographic Extents: RM Zone

Potential Impacts: Will require front yards that are comparable with surrounding development.

Context: The front yard setback and building orientation to the street are primary features in the compatibility of a property with surrounding properties. |

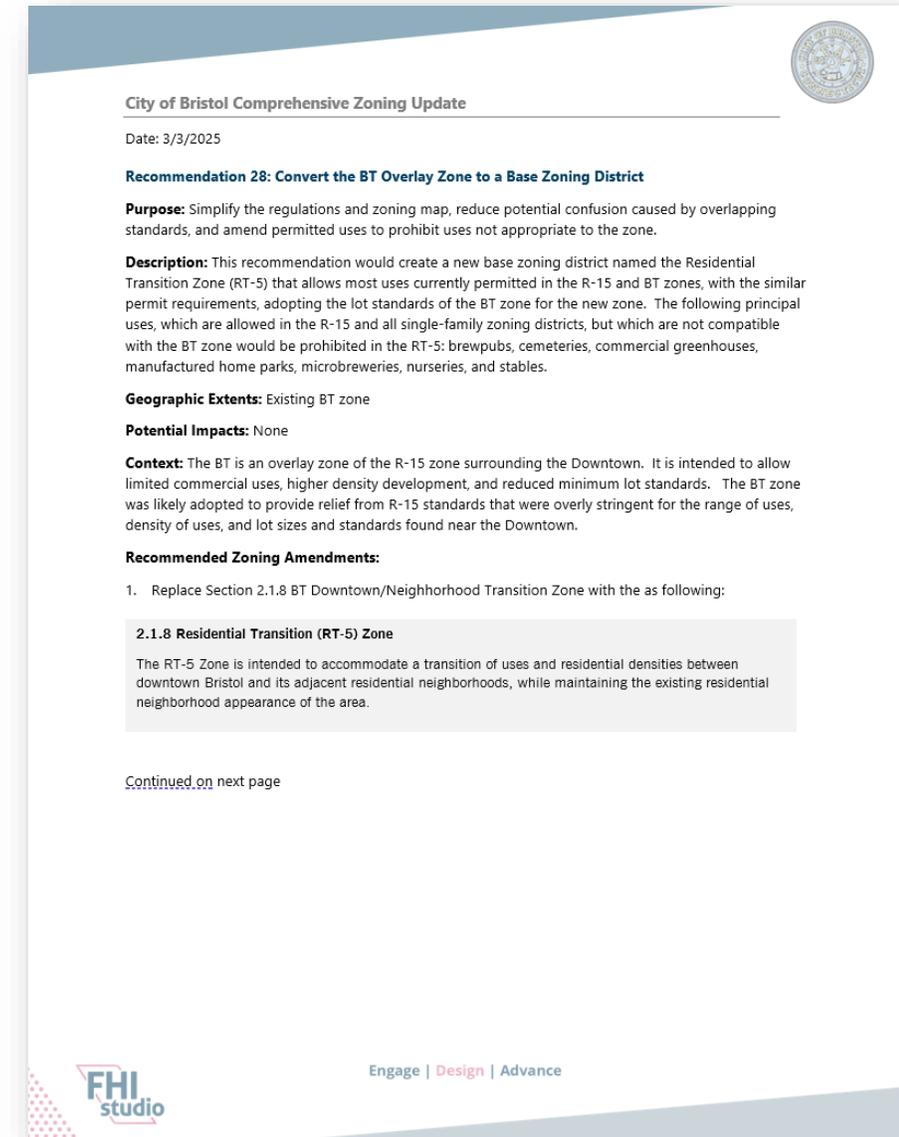
Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Increase the front yard setback (Section 9.2.3.C.1) from a minimum of 6 feet to a minimum of 15 feet to match the standards for the RM zone.
2. Amend Section 9.2.3.F.3 as follows (new text show in red, text to be removed shown in ~~strikethrough~~)
3. Dwelling units facing the street shall be **oriented to the street and the primary entrance to each dwelling unit shall be oriented to the street.** ~~separated from the street by steps, landscaping, fences, porches, or grade changes.~~

R28: New RT-5 Zone

What it does:

- Replaces the BT Overlay of the R-15 with a new base zoning district: Residential Transition 5 (RT-5).
- Uses the BT Bulk, Area, and Height standards.
- Revises permitted uses to eliminate uses that do not currently exist and/or are not appropriate to the zone.



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 3/3/2025

Recommendation 28: Convert the BT Overlay Zone to a Base Zoning District

Purpose: Simplify the regulations and zoning map, reduce potential confusion caused by overlapping standards, and amend permitted uses to prohibit uses not appropriate to the zone.

Description: This recommendation would create a new base zoning district named the Residential Transition Zone (RT-5) that allows most uses currently permitted in the R-15 and BT zones, with the similar permit requirements, adopting the lot standards of the BT zone for the new zone. The following principal uses, which are allowed in the R-15 and all single-family zoning districts, but which are not compatible with the BT zone would be prohibited in the RT-5: brewpubs, cemeteries, commercial greenhouses, manufactured home parks, microbreweries, nurseries, and stables.

Geographic Extents: Existing BT zone

Potential Impacts: None

Context: The BT is an overlay zone of the R-15 zone surrounding the Downtown. It is intended to allow limited commercial uses, higher density development, and reduced minimum lot standards. The BT zone was likely adopted to provide relief from R-15 standards that were overly stringent for the range of uses, density of uses, and lot sizes and standards found near the Downtown.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Replace Section 2.1.8 BT Downtown/Neighborhood Transition Zone with the as following:

2.1.8 Residential Transition (RT-5) Zone

The RT-5 Zone is intended to accommodate a transition of uses and residential densities between downtown Bristol and its adjacent residential neighborhoods, while maintaining the existing residential neighborhood appearance of the area.

[Continued on](#) next page



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R29: Amend A- Multifamily Residential Zone Regulations

What it does:

- Restores unintentionally deleted text from previous version of regulations
- Removes vague affordability requirements
- Allows antennas and parking structures as permitted accessory uses.



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 3/3/25

Recommendation 29: Amend A- Multifamily Residential Zone Regulations

Purpose: Update the regulations for consistency with other residential zones, restore deleted text, remove vague affordability requirements.

Description: Restore unintentionally deleted text from previous version of regulations, remove vague affordability requirements, and allow antennas and parking structures as permitted accessory uses.

Geographic Extents: A Zone

Potential Impacts: None

Context: The A zone is a multifamily base zoning district with standards that are unique to the district.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Amend Section 7.2.1 to add items D and E to restore regulations originally in the 2020 regulations that were unintentionally eliminated from the current regulations as follows:

- C. No common parking area or access aisle shall be located within 20 feet of any window or door of a dwelling unit.
- D. Parking spaces directly behind individual garage entrances shall not be counted as part of the required number of parking spaces.

2. Amend Section 7.2.4 Single-Family Subdivisions to remove Item C as follows (text to be removed in strikethrough text):

- ~~E. At the time of subdivision, the developer shall present to the Planning Commission a program for establishing and maintaining the affordability of the single-family dwellings for a period of at least ten years.~~

3. Amend Section 5.1 Accessory Use Summary Table: Residential Districts to allow within the A Zone Antennae or Communications Structure by Zoning Permit or Special Permit (shown as ZP/SP¹) and Parking Structures by Special Permit (SP).

R30: OSD Zone

What it does:

- Change reference to the OSD zone in Section 2.1.4 as an overlay zone, which it is not, to a floating zone.
- Change references to base zoning districts in Section 9.1 OSD Zone from “underlying” to “existing”.



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 3/3/25

Recommendation 30: Update OSD Zone District Type References

Purpose: Correct reference to the zone type of the OSD zone in its purpose statement and in its regulations.

Description: Change reference of an OSD zone in Section 2.1.4 from an overlay zone, which it is not, to a floating zone. Change references to “underlying zone” which is typically used in reference to an overlay zone to “existing zone”.

Geographic Extents: OSD, not geographic implications

Potential Impacts: None

Context: Overlay zones are fixed to the zoning map and are effective as supplemental regulations to the base zoning district, which is referred to as the underlying zone. Floating zones, of which the OSD is structured as, are intended to replace the base zoning district (existing zone) if approved.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Amend Section 2.1.4 as follows with new text shown in red and text to be removed shown in strikethrough:

2.1.4 OSD Open Space Development Zone

The OSD Open Space Development Zone is a floating zone that an overlay zone of the R-15, R-25 and R-40 zones is intended to accommodate alternative forms of residential development which:

Remaining content to remain as is

2. Amend Section 9 to replace references to the “underlying zone” with the “existing zone”. This includes subsections 9.1.2 through 9.1.5.

R31: Amend the Unified Residential Development/ Mixed-Use Standards of the BT Zone

What it does:

- Reduces permitted density, coverage, and height.



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 3/3/25

Recommendation 31: Amend the Unified Residential Development/Mixed-Use Standards of the BT Zone.

Purpose: Amend bulk, area, and height standards to be more consistent with the development density that is feasible for the district and more consistent across development densities thresholds that are permitted for URD/Mixed-Use developments.

Description: Amend Section 9.3.3 Unified Residential Developments and Mixed-Use Developments and Section 9.3.4 Area, Dimensional, and Amenity Requirements for Unified Residential Developments and Mixed-Use Developments to better align with standards for the BT zone and to be more consistent with development form that is feasible for the district and more consistent across development densities that are permitted.

Geographic Extents: BT Zone

Potential Impacts: Impacts are unlikely as development density is already limited by factors such as off-street parking requirements.

Context: Unified Residential and Mixed-Used Development are permitted in the BT zone at densities that exceed other forms of residential development.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Reduce permitted densities established in Section 9.3.3.B as follows (new text show in red, deleted text in ~~strikethrough~~):
 - A. By Special Permit, the Commission may allow the maximum density of a unified residential development or mixed-use development in the BT zone to be greater than 22 dwelling units per acre, subject to the following provisions:
 1. A project that complies with ~~all~~ of the "Level 1" requirements specified in Section 9.3.4 shall be eligible for a maximum density of ~~22~~ 26 dwelling units per acre.
 2. A project that complies with ~~all~~ of the "Level 2" requirements specified in Section 9.3.4 shall be eligible for a maximum density of ~~36~~ 30 dwelling units per acre.
 3. A project that complies with ~~all~~ of the "Level 3" requirements specified in Section 9.3.4 shall be eligible for a maximum density of ~~40~~ 34 dwelling units per acre.
2. Reduce the maximum building height for Level 3 development in Section 9.3.4 from 45 feet to 40 feet to be consistent with the permitted height in the BT Zone and across other density levels.
3. Reduce the maximum building coverage of Level 2 development from 65% to 60% and Level 3 development from 75% to 70% to provide more consistent increases between density levels.

R31. Unified Residential Developments and Mixed-Use Developments (BT)

Standard	Base Density	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Maximum Density	22	32 26	36 30	40 34
A) Minimum Lot Area (sf)	8,500	10,000	15,000	20,000
B) Minimum Lot Frontage (ft)	50	50	65	85
E) Maximum Building Height (ft)	40	40	40	45 40
F) Maximum Building Coverage (%)	40	50	65 60	75 70

R32: Amend the Unified Residential Regulations of the RM Zone

What it does:

- Increase the front yard setback to match the RM zone (from 6 ft to 15 ft)
- Require buildings facing the street to be oriented to the street
- Remove requirements for barriers in the front yard (fences, walls, grade change)
- Provide off-street parking requirement as established by Section 13 of the Regulations (instead of a flat 2 per dwelling unit)



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 3/3/25

Recommendation 32: Amend the Unified Residential Regulations of the RM Zone

Purpose: Require a front yard and building orientation consistent with other forms of residential development in the RM zone and require off-street parking consistent with unified residential development in other zones.

Description: Increase the front yard setback to match the RM zone, require buildings facing the street to be oriented to the street, remove requirements for barriers in the front yard, and provide off-street parking requirement as established by Section 13 of the Regulations.

Geographic Extents: RM Zone

Potential Impacts: Will require front yards that are comparable with surrounding development.

Context: The front yard setback and building orientation to the street are primary features in the compatibility of a property with surrounding properties.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Increase the front yard setback (Section 9.2.3.C.1) from a minimum of 6 feet to a minimum of 15 feet to match the standards for the RM zone.
2. Remove the parking requirement stipulated in Section 9.2.3.B.6 and instead reference the parking requirements currently in place for unified residential development in Section 13 as follows (new text show in red, text to be removed shown in ~~strikethrough~~):
6. The ~~required-minimum~~ number of off-street parking spaces shall be **provided as required by Section 13 of these Regulations.** ~~2-per-dwelling-unit.~~
3. Amend Section 9.2.3.F.3 as follows (new text show in red, text to be removed shown in ~~strikethrough~~):
3. Dwelling units facing the street shall be **oriented to the street and the primary entrance to each dwelling unit shall be oriented to the street.** ~~separated from the street by steps, landscaping, fences, porches, or grade changes.~~

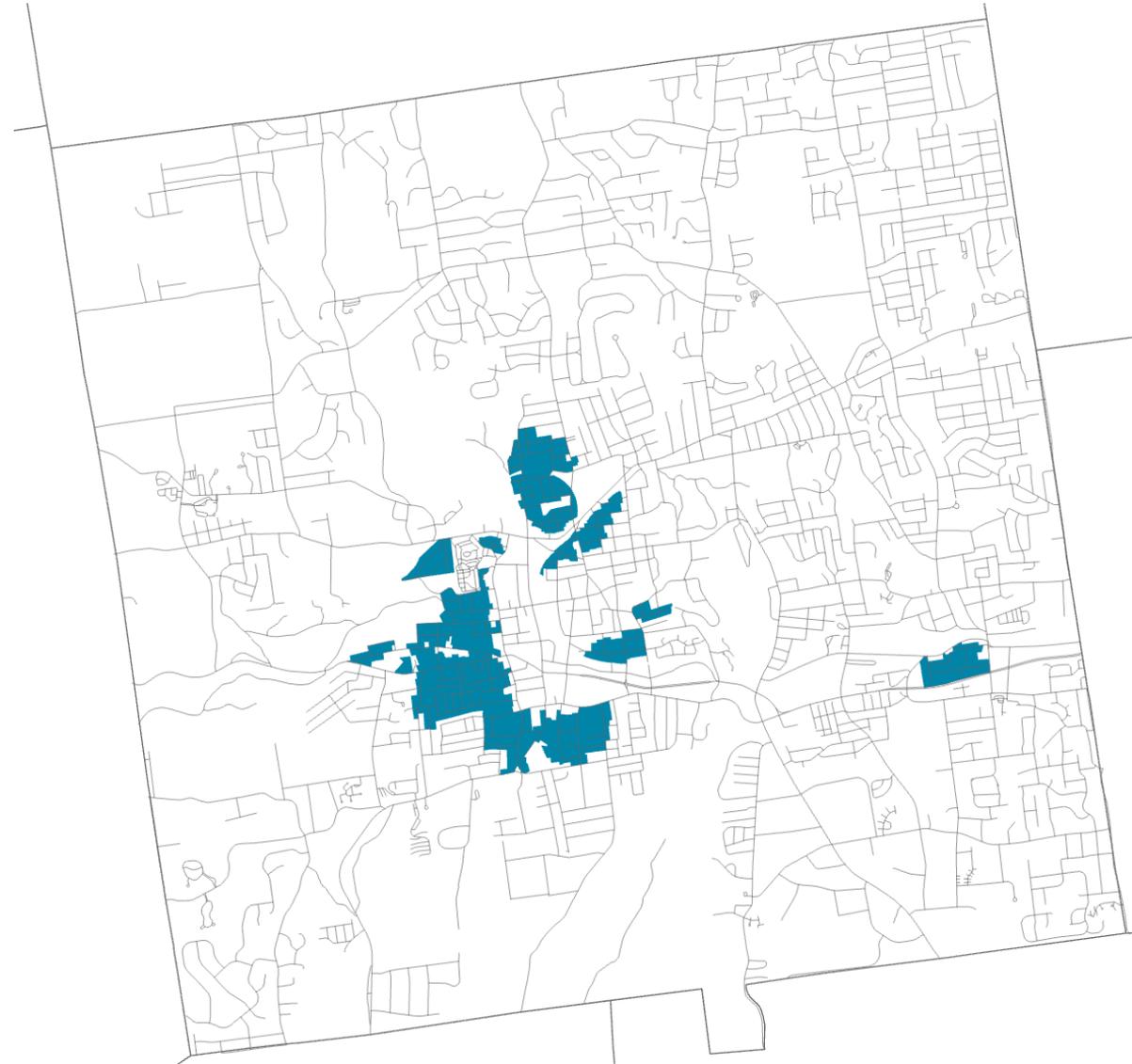
Other Potential Recommendations

- Convert the RM Zone to a Base Zoning District
- Allow ADUs in Accessory Structures

RM Mixed Residential Zone

The RM Mixed Residential Zone is an **overlay zone** of the R-10 and R-15 zones intended to accommodate two- and three-family dwellings.

Convert to a base zoning district? RM-5?



Accessory Dwelling Units

- The regulations require ADUs to be located within the principal dwelling structure.
- Should we maintain this requirement or allow in accessory structures?



Next Steps

- Finalize recommended amendments for residential zones.
- Begin review of site design and signage regulations



Next Meeting

APRIL 2025

Our next meeting is Thursday,
April 3rd at 5:00 pm.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3