

OFFICE OF THE
FIRST SELECTMAN

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William F. Brennan
First Selectman

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Second Selectman

Richard F. Creeth

Harold E. Clark

Ted W. Hoffstatter

TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 16, 2011
MEETING ROOM B, WILTON TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: First Selectman William Brennan, Selectman Susan Bruschi, Selectman Richard Creeth, Selectman Hal Clark, Selectman Ted Hoffstatter

GUESTS: Sandy Dennies, Steve Schole, Tom Thurkettle, Marv Berenblum, Bill Weber, Gail Haller, Pat Linsky, Phil Richards, Ann Richards, Janet Johnson, Jan Andras

OTHERS: Joan Lownds (Bulletin), Tom Evans (Villager)

First Selectmen Brennan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

A. Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Mr. Creeth, the consent agenda was unanimously approved as follows:

Minutes

- Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting of 5/2/11

Gifts

- Donation of \$100 to the Senior Center by Aurelia Treiber
- Donation of \$800 to the March-April Senior Newsletter by Wilton Meadows
- Donation of \$400 to the May-June Senior Newsletter by Wilton Meadows

Each contributor was thanked for their donations.

B. Discussion and/or Action

1. Senior Survey

Mr. Brennan stated that the BOS had initiated a survey of seniors in Wilton in order to get a grater insight into how to retain seniors in

the community. The survey questions were designed by NESC and reviewed by the BOS before being mailed to 3,150 households with at least one resident age 55 or older. Mr. Marv Berenblum of the National Executive Service Corps. then introduced the team members who worked on this project – Bill Weber, Gail Haller and Pat Linsky. Mr. Weber gave a powerpoint presentation summarizing the results of the survey (attached to original minutes). The full report with all data is available on the town website and in the First Selectman's office.

2. Stay-At-Home in Wilton Initiative - Presentation

Mr. Phil Richards, President of Stay-at-Home in Wilton, advised that this program began one year ago to help seniors stay in their own homes. Volunteers help to provide transportation, upkeep of property and relief from isolation and loneliness. Ms. Janet Johnson is Executive Coordinator and Mr. Ken Dartley is VP. For info, residents can call 203-423-3225 or check the website at www.stayathomeinwilton.org. The Selectmen thanked Mr. Richards and all those volunteers involved with this wonderful program. Mr. Brennan stated that the BOS are very supportive of this initiative and that we would invite the leadership group back in a few months to give additional publicity to the program.

3. Yankee Gas – Status of activity

Mr. Mike Collins of Yankee Gas advised that 10 years ago, Yankee Gas had looked at whether the expense of extending the gas line further into Wilton could be justified. Now, there is an opportunity to look at this again in response to an interest by the Town and the fact that there will be open trenches from the intersection of Wolfpit and Route 7 going north through the village center. This trenching project could make the installation of the gas line much less costly. Tom Thurkettle has been working with the Yankee Gas engineers on the plans. Yankee Gas has been very cooperative and hopefully, an installment agreement can be put together and signed by the end of the month.

4. Economic Development

As an initial step of developing a Wilton economic development initiative, First Selectman Brennan had copies of economic development plans from other towns in the state. Each of the Selectmen will take one of these towns' plans to look over and possibly contact those involved to get an idea of how well their plan has been working. This should be finished within the next 4-6 weeks.

5. Miscellaneous Other Business

Recycling – Complaints have been made by several residents about the haulers co-mingling recyclables with the solid waste when it is picked up at their homes. It was pointed out that the Town issues permits to the private haulers, requiring insurance coverage, but there is no contractual relationship between the haulers or the Town. Residents should speak directly to their haulers when this is observed, letting them know that they expect them to comply with the Town's Recycling Ordinance.

Lead Poisoning Prevention – Public Health Director Steve Schole is requesting approval to receive a grant from the State Center for Disease Control to purchase equipment (computer) that would help make information available to the Health Department and to help in providing education regarding lead poisoning. Mr. Clark moved to approve the acceptance of a grant in the amount of \$5,002 for a Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Program. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

C. Public Comment: None present

D. Reports

1. First Selectman's Report -

Bald Hill Bridge – A public information meeting was held with residents of Bald Hill Road that included a presentation by five engineers from Dewberry. A website will be set up to help keep residents informed throughout the bridge replacement process.

Security – Last week, Detective Scott Cyr presented safety training sessions for town employees. Det. Cyr has had FBI training.

2. Selectmen Reports

Ms. Bruschi: No report

Mr. Hoffstatter: Distributed copies of the Trackside lease which need to be re-written.

Mr. Clark: No report

Mr. Creeth: No report

E. Adjournment: Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Jan Andras, Recording Secretary

UNDERSTANDING THE PERSPECTIVE OF WILTON'S SENIOR RESIDENTS

Results of the Recent Survey of
Senior Wiltonians

Town of Wilton Board of Selectmen
16 May 2011

Survey Results

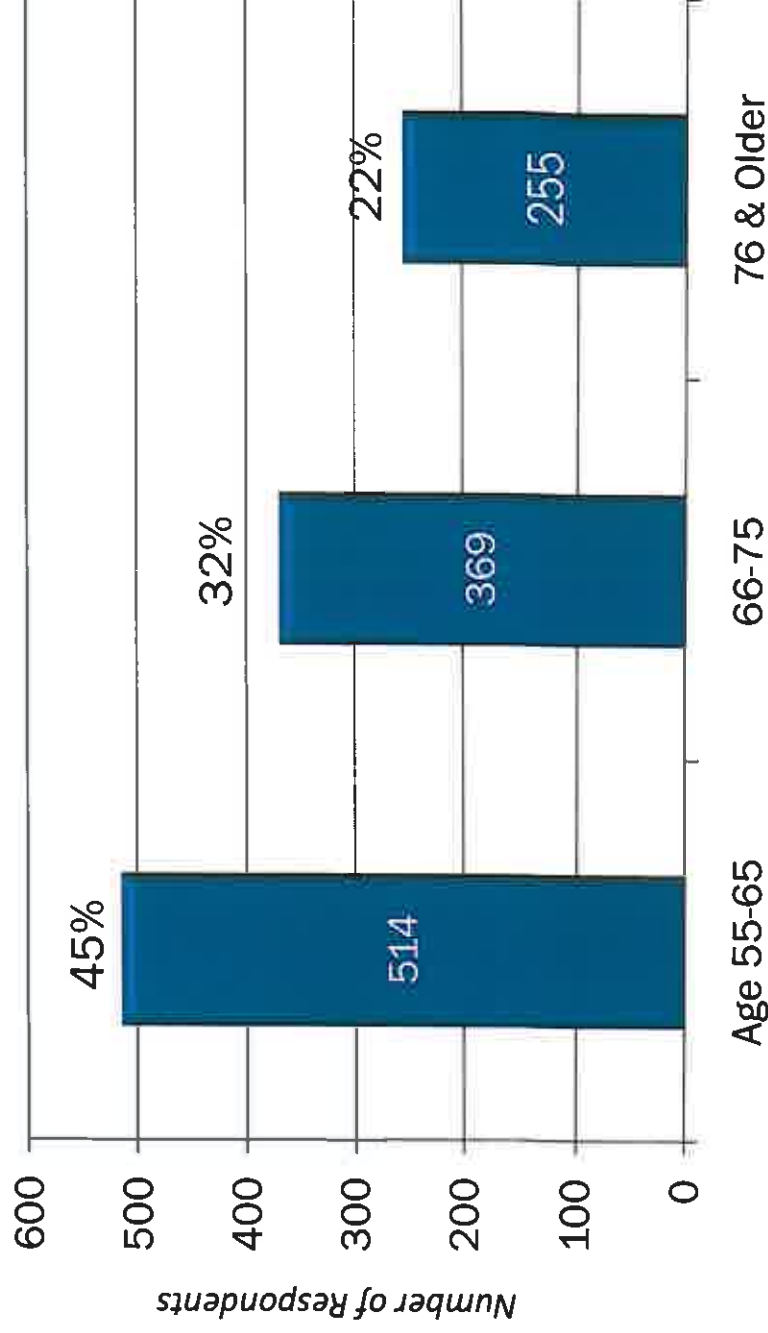
1. Who Responded?
2. What Did They Say?
3. Strategic Options?

1. Who Responded?

- Survey (26 questions) took place during January/February 2011.
- Target population was 3,132 Wilton households containing at least one resident age 55 or older.
- 1,152 households responded.
- Response rate of about 37%.

1. Who Responded?

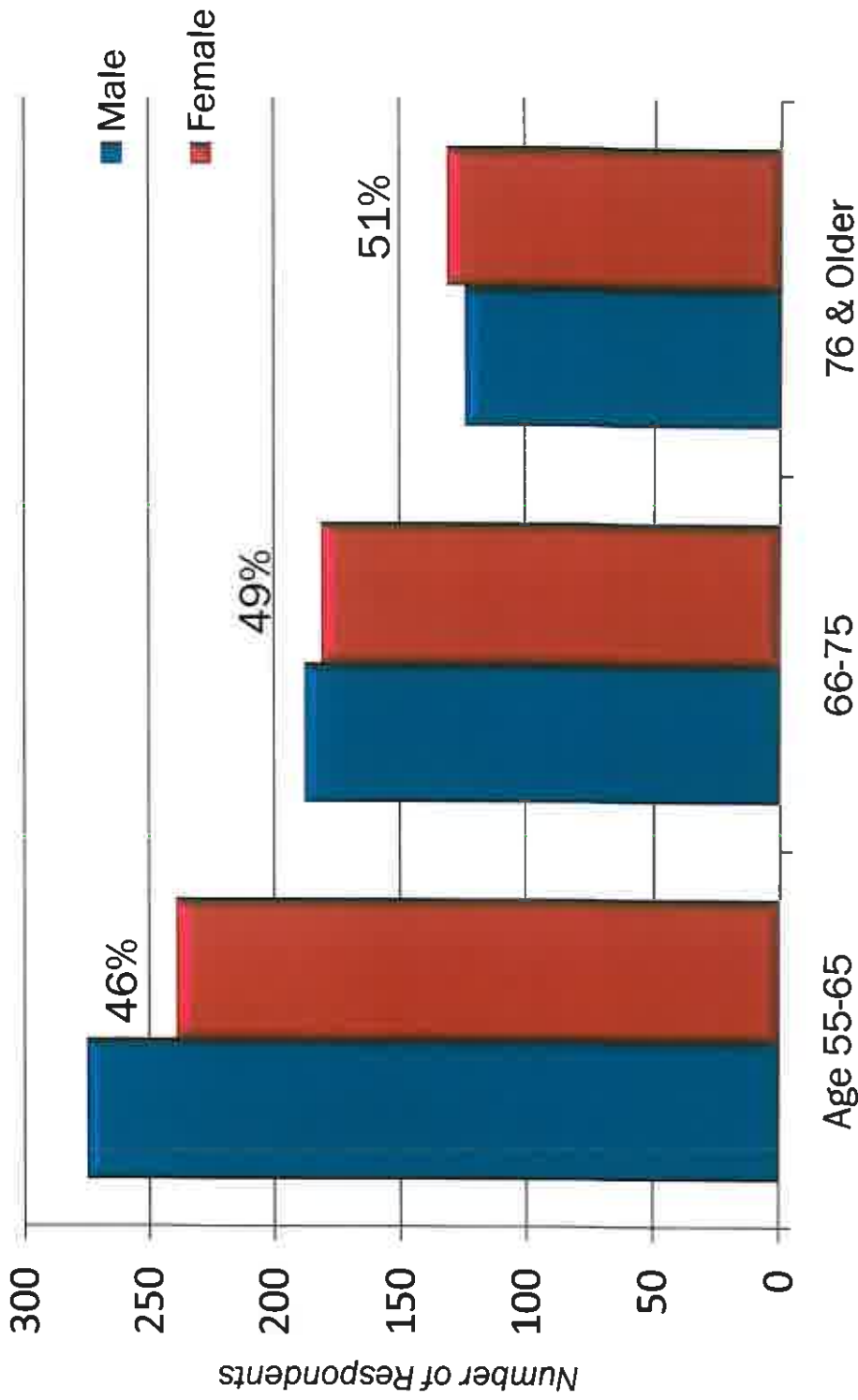
While the majority of respondents are in the 55-65 age cohort, 22% of them are age 76 or older...



National Executive Service Corps.

1. Who Responded?

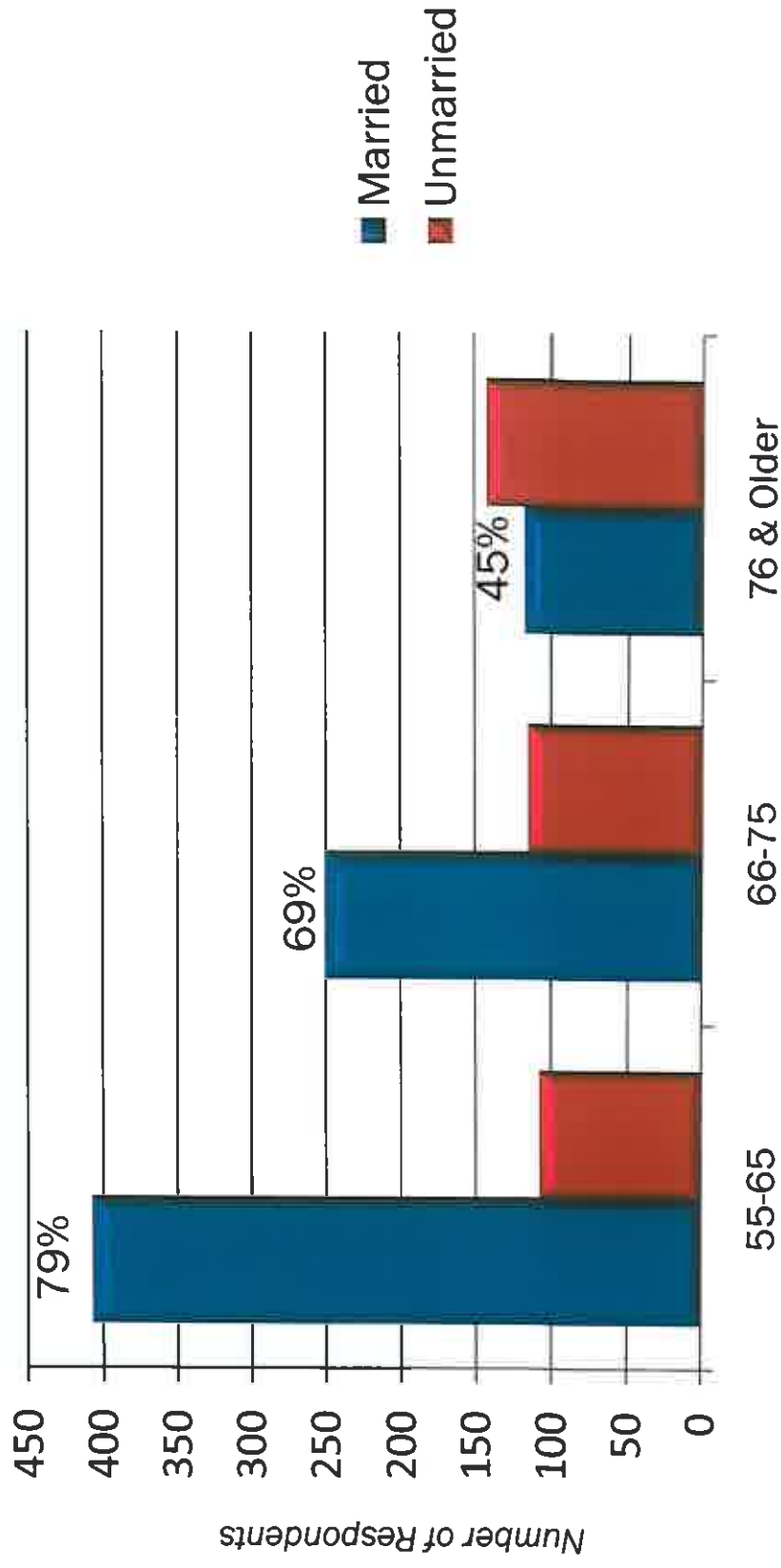
With advancing age, the percentage of women within each age group increases...



National Executive Service Corps.

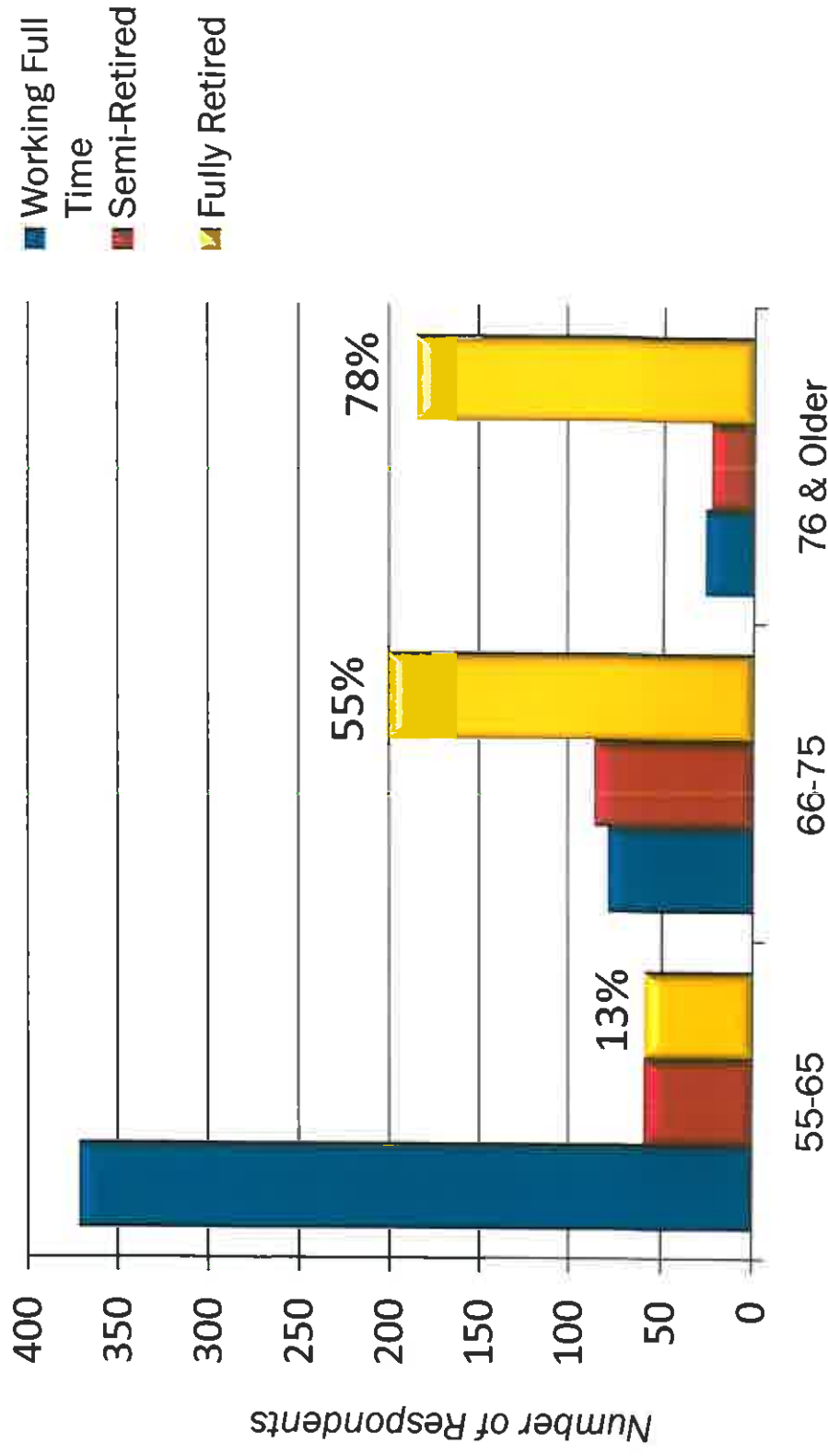
1. Who Responded?

The proportion of married seniors declines with advancing age, from about 80% down to about 45% in later years...



1. Who Responded?

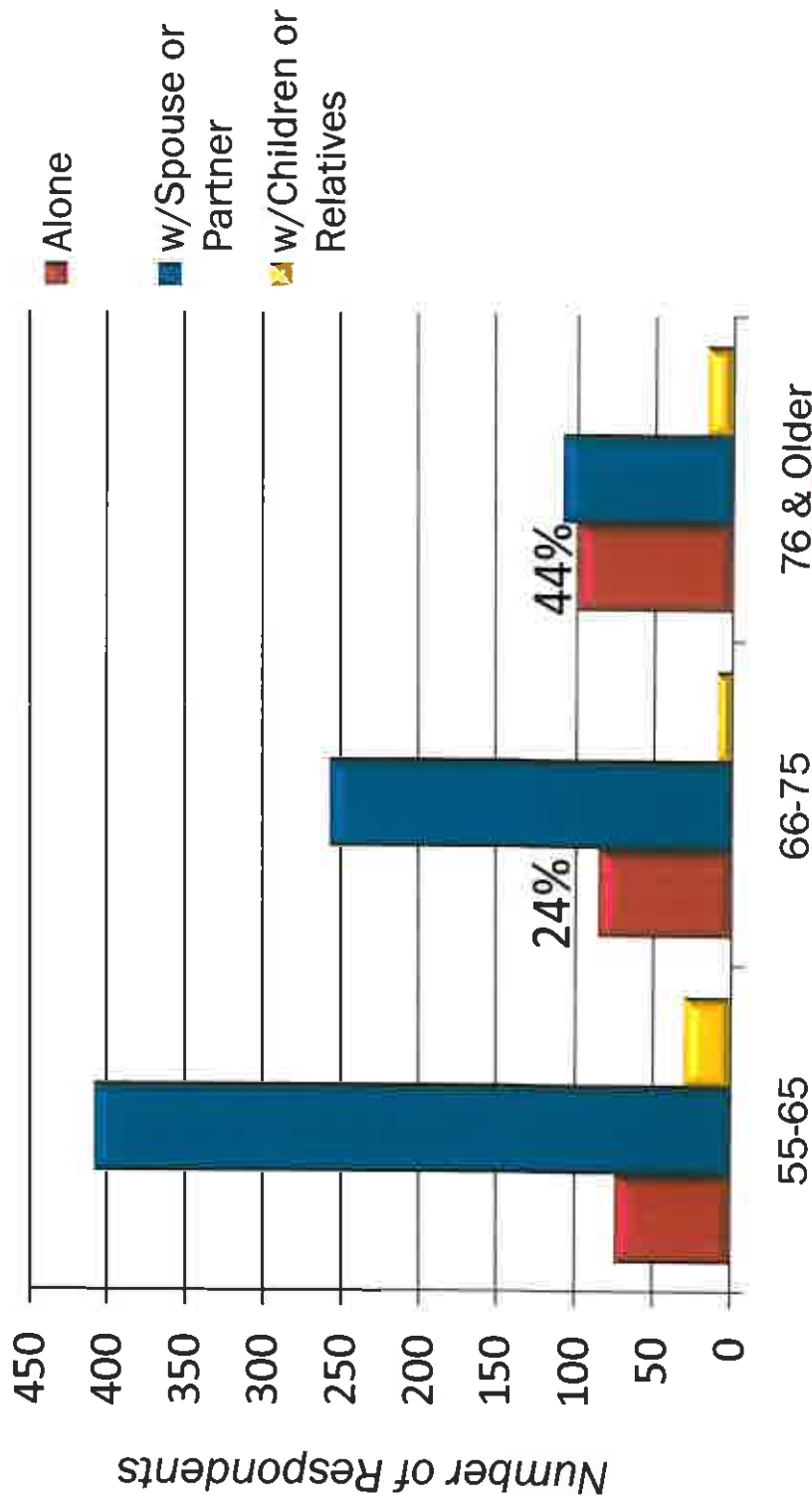
By age 75, over half of these seniors are retired, increasing to almost 80% in later years . . .



National Executive Service Corps.

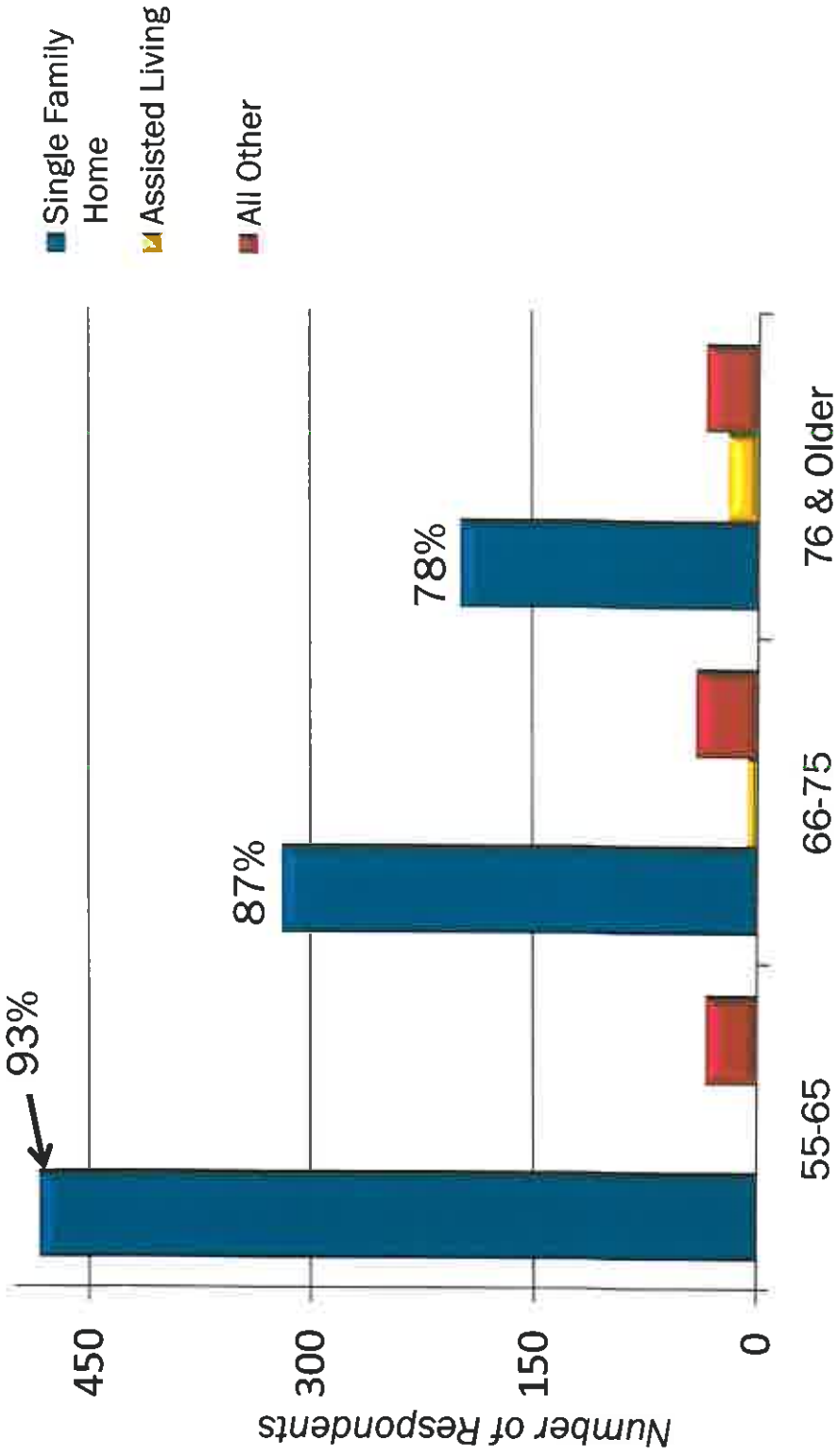
1. Who Responded?

With advancing age, the proportion of seniors living alone increases significantly, from about 24% in the middle group to about 44% in later years . . .



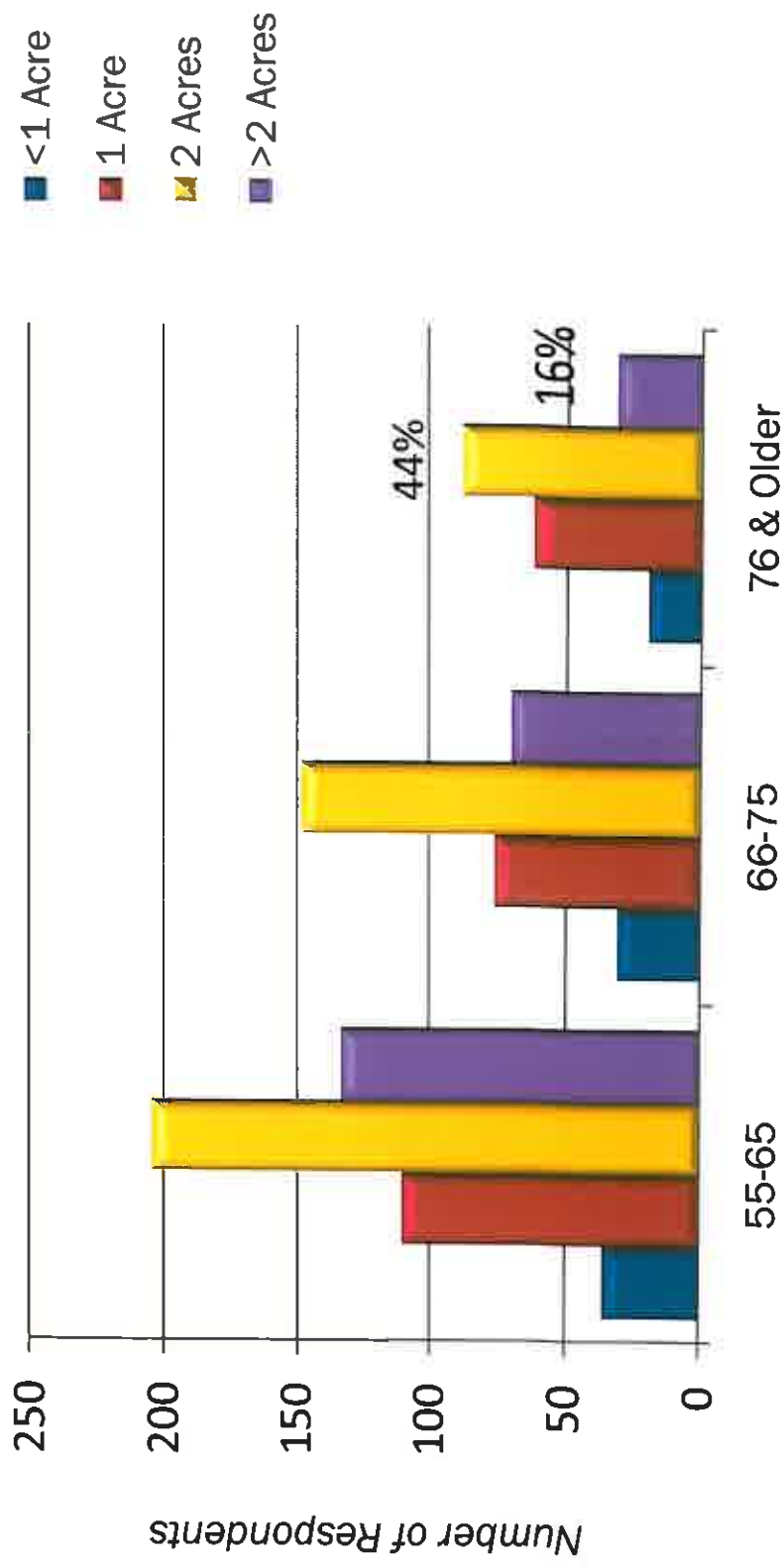
1. Who Responded?

Well over three-quarters of seniors age 76 and over live in single family homes . . .



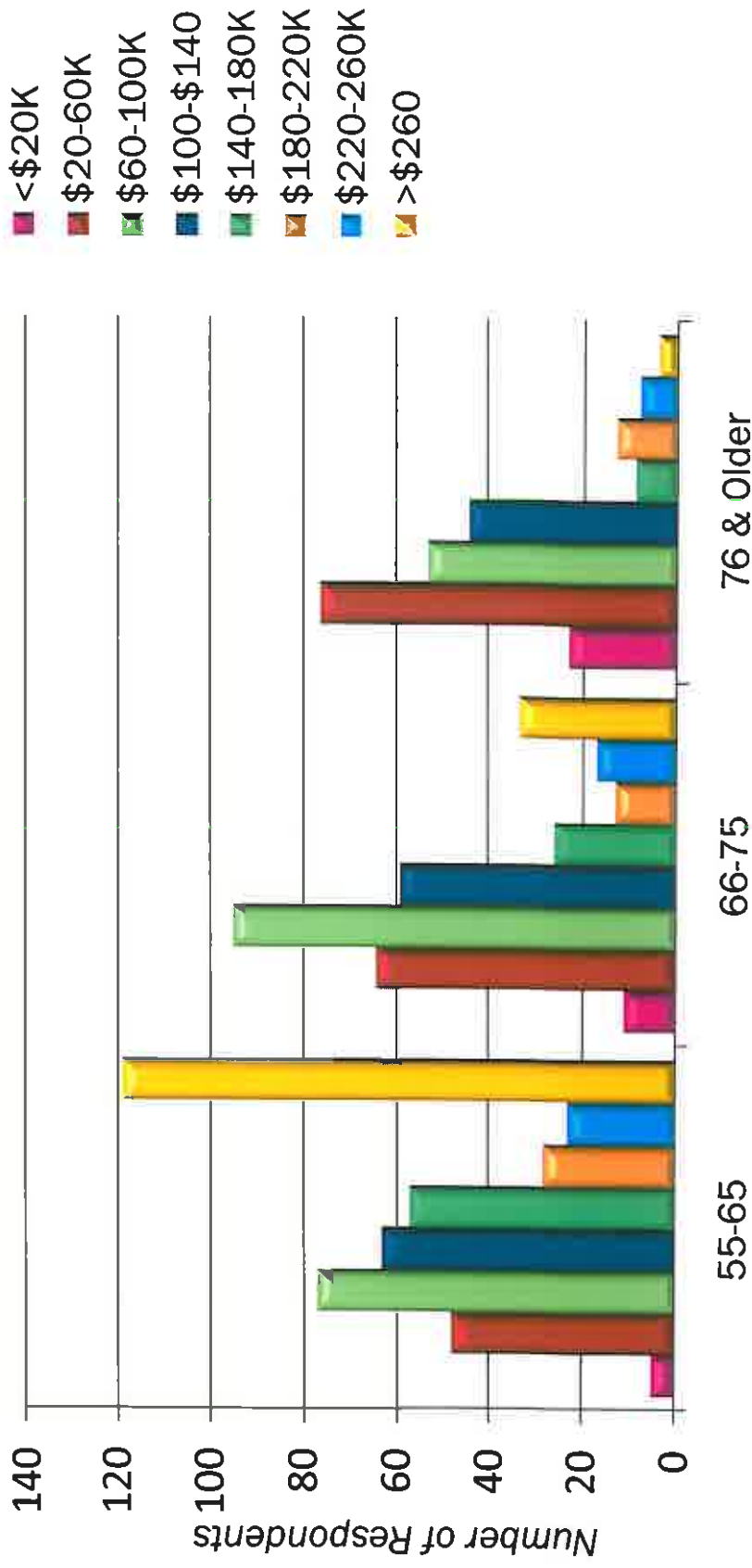
1. Who Responded?

... and 60% of those seniors age 76 and older are still living on property of 2 acres or more.



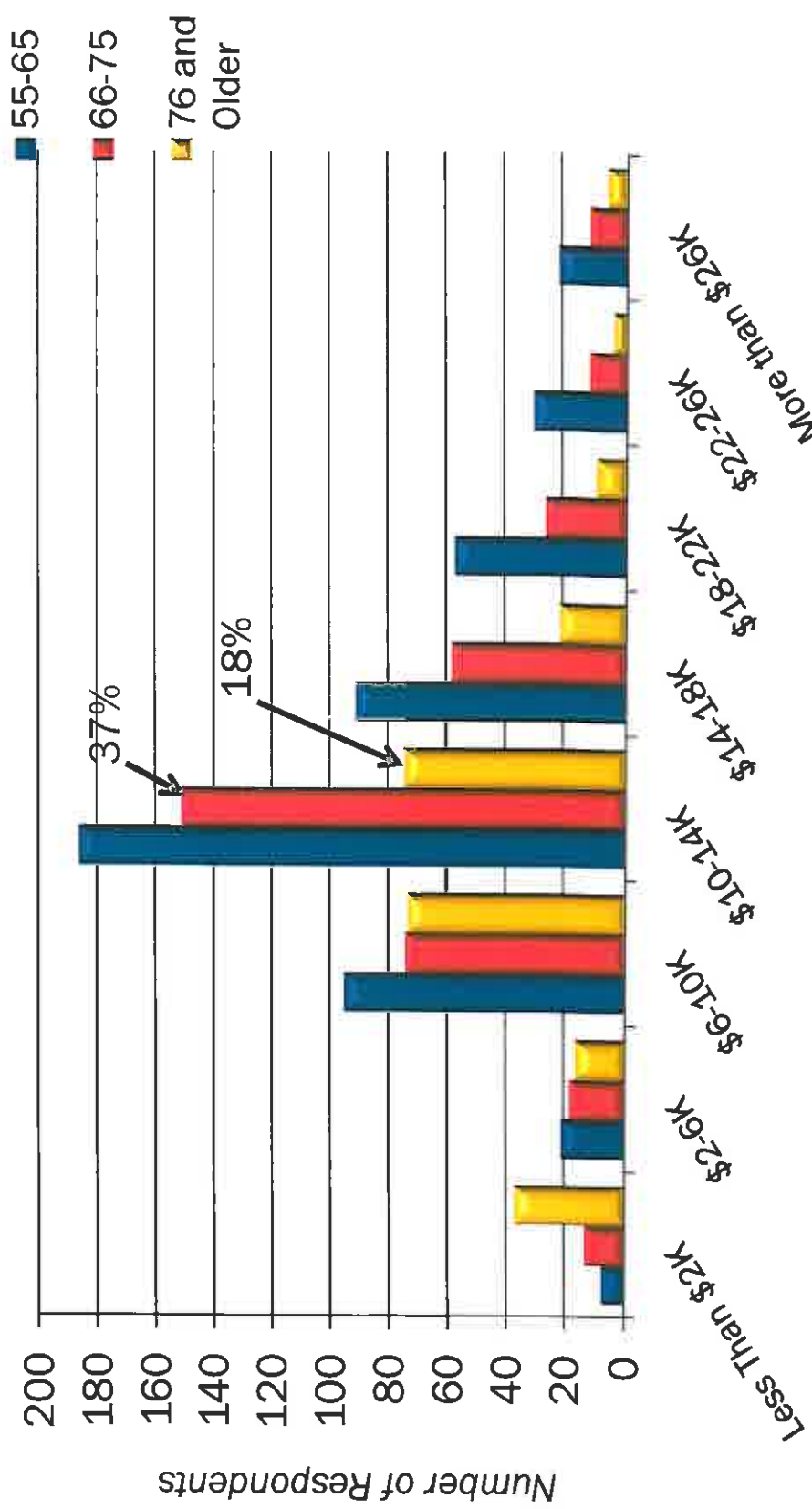
1. Who Responded?

As a general matter, relatively high income diminishes markedly with advancing age while the proportion of relatively lower income increases . . .



1. Who Responded?

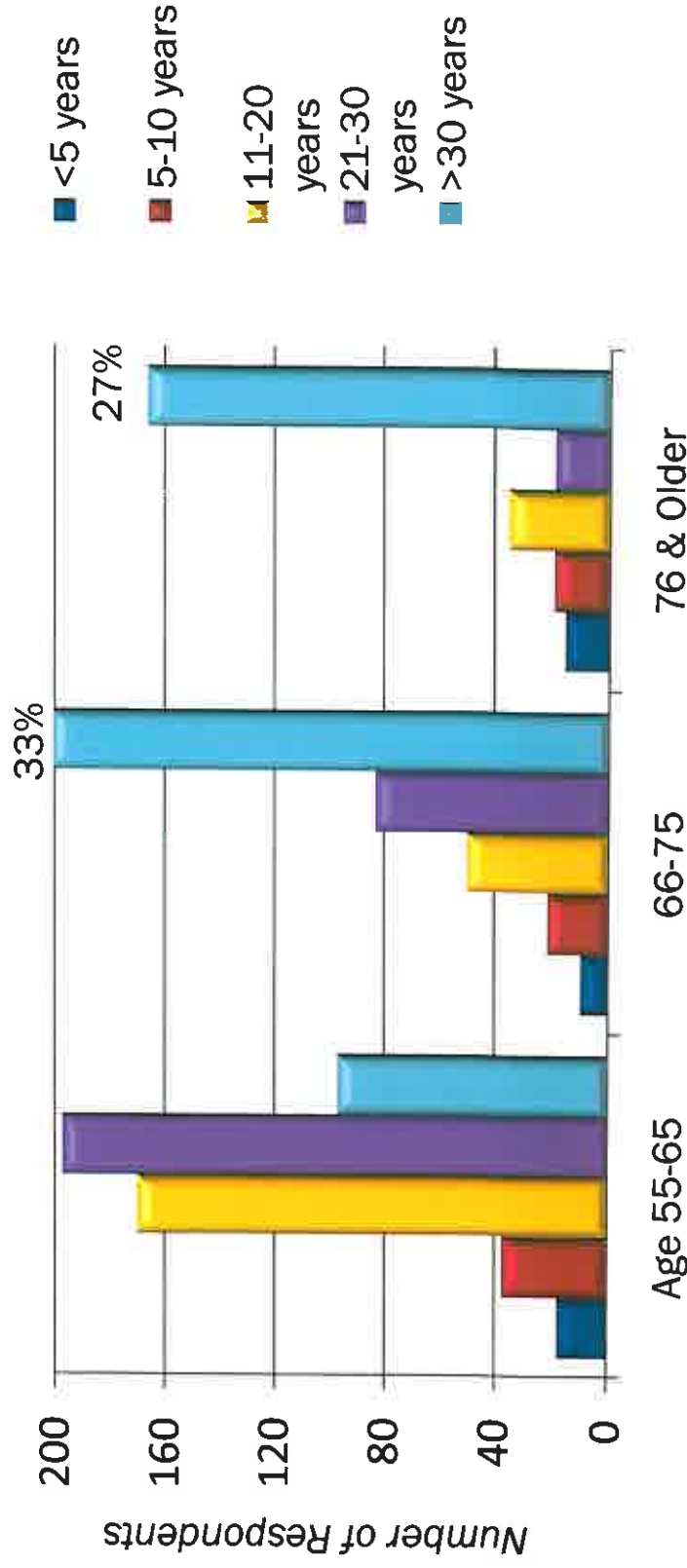
Over a third of respondents pay property tax in the \$10-14K range, and 55% of those taxpayers are age 66 and older . . .



National Executive Service Corps.

1. Who Responded?

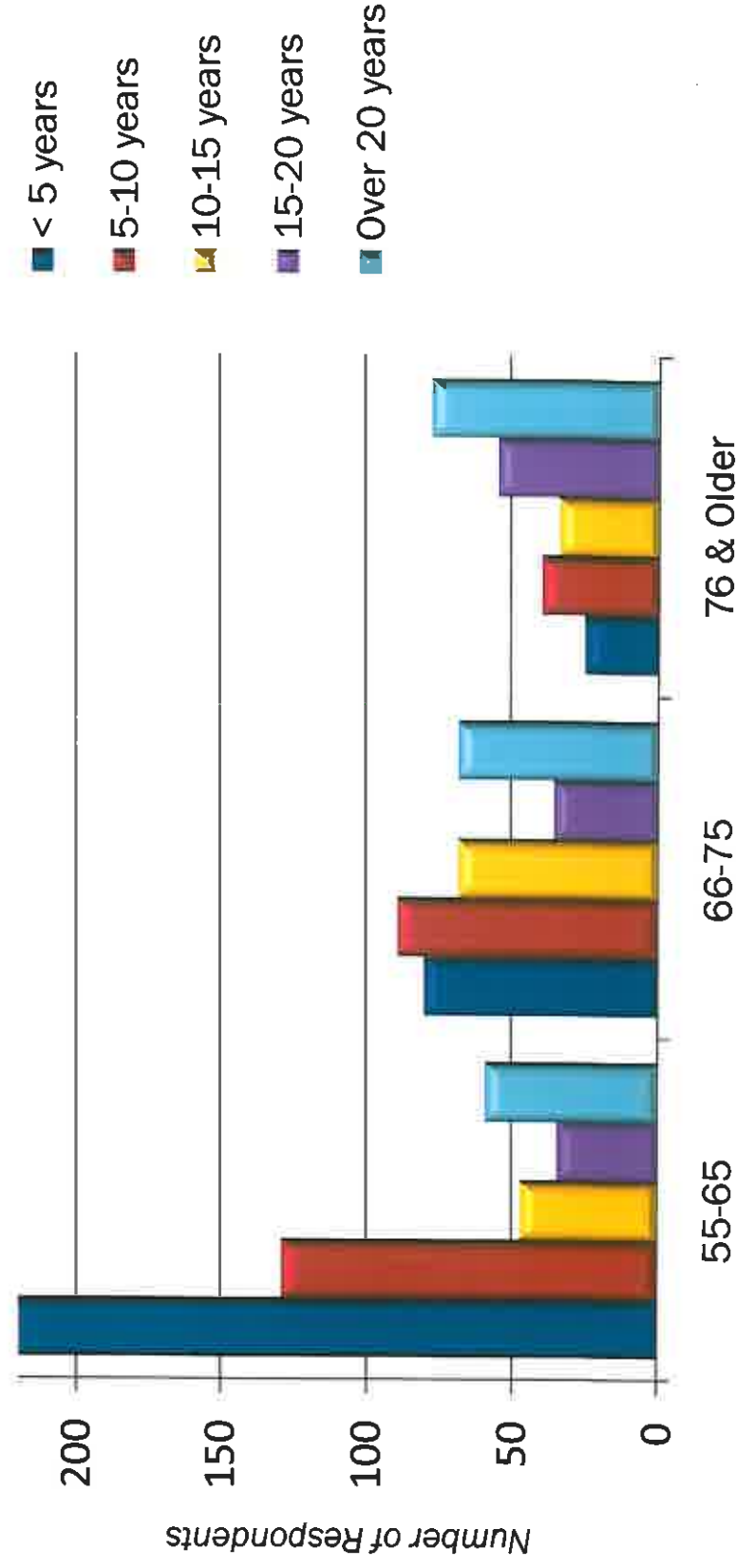
About a quarter of these respondents have lived in Wilton for 21-30 years and 60% of those over the age of 66 have lived in Town for 30 years or more . . .



National Executive Service Corps.

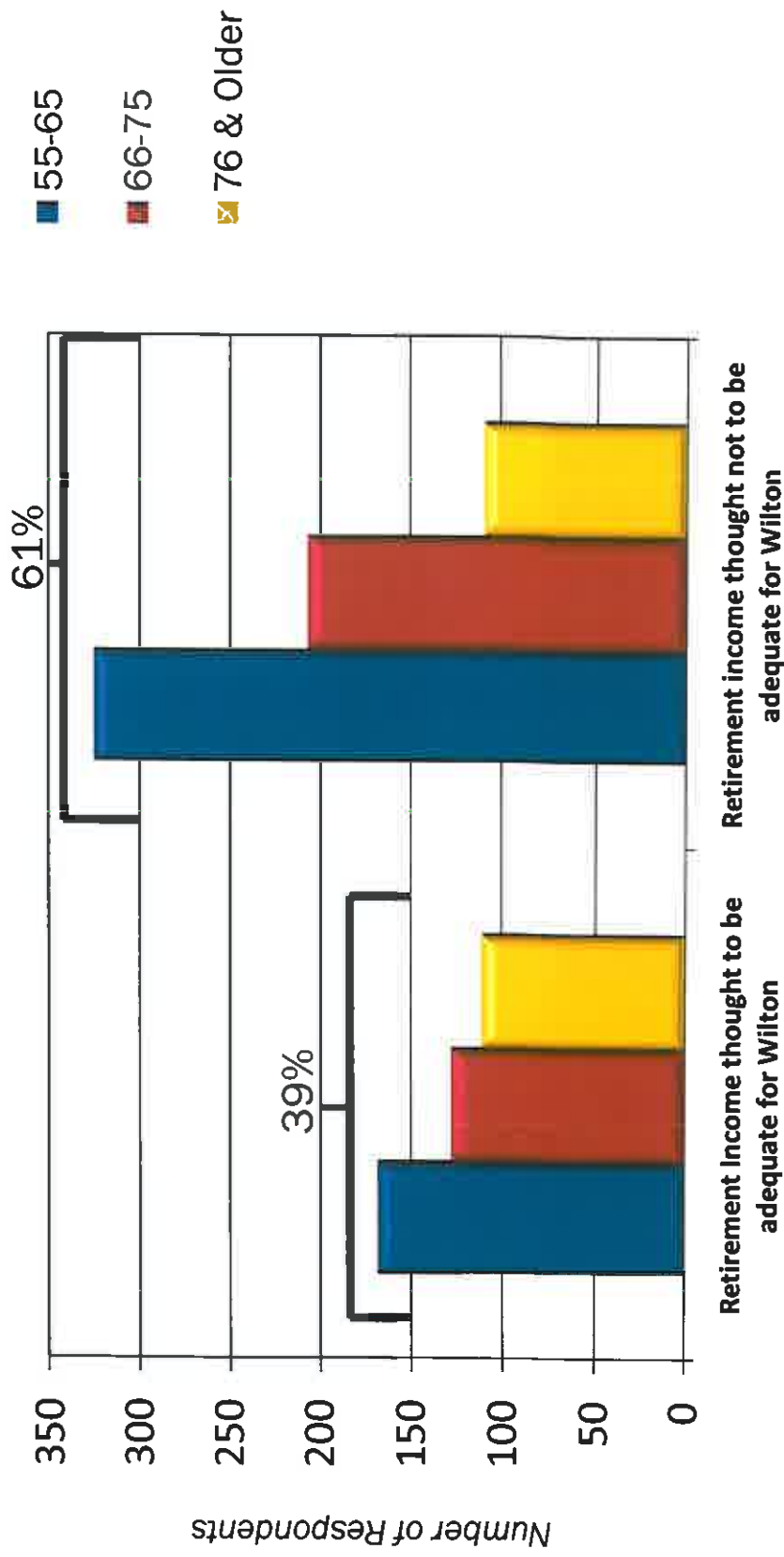
1. Who Responded?

Over 30% of these respondents (327 of 1,062) say they have been thinking about their retirement for 15 years or more . . .



1. Who Responded?

... and about 60% of these respondents expect that their projected income in retirement will not be adequate to allow them to live in Wilton.



National Executive Service Corps.

1. Who Responded?

Survey Validity

Based on 1,152 survey responses (37%), the characteristics presented here are thought to be a fair representation of the characteristics of Wilton's entire senior population.

2. What Did They Say?

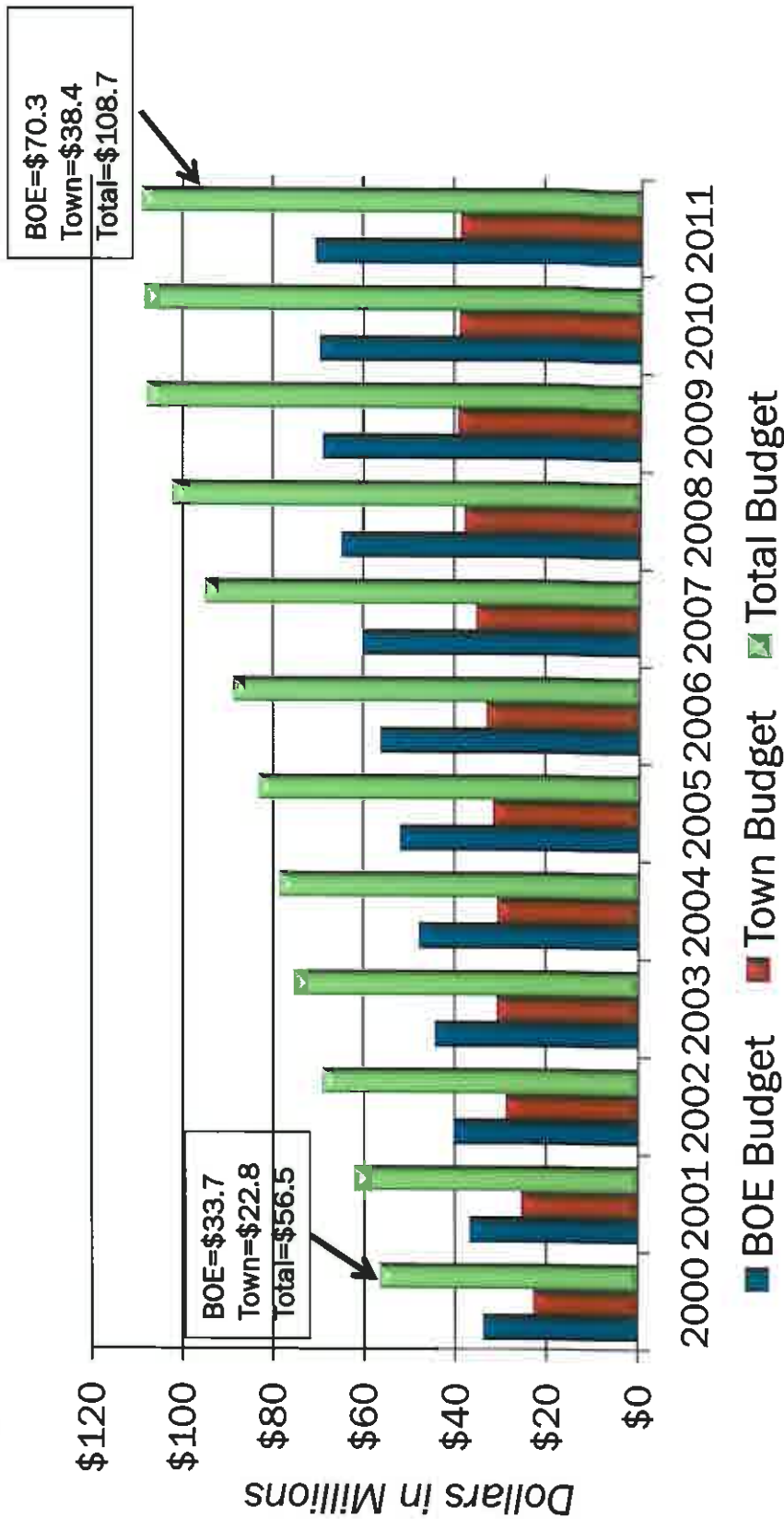
The core finding from the survey is that senior Wiltonians are concerned about the relationship between their cost of living (COL) in Wilton and their corresponding quality of life (QOL).



National Executive Service Corps.

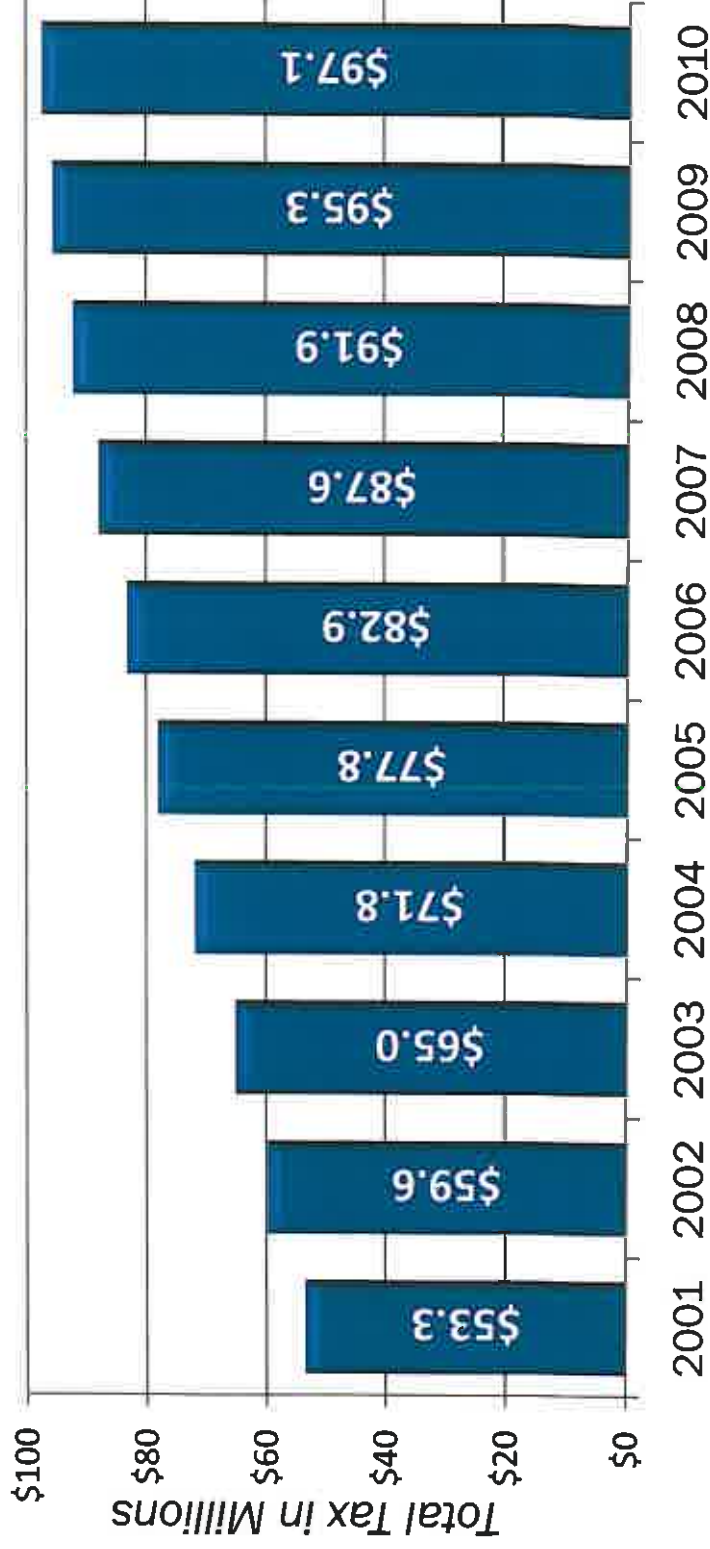
2. What Did They Say?

Since FY 2000, the BOE portion of Wilton's annual budget has increased by about 109% while the "Town" portion has grown by about 69%, resulting in a 92% overall increase ...



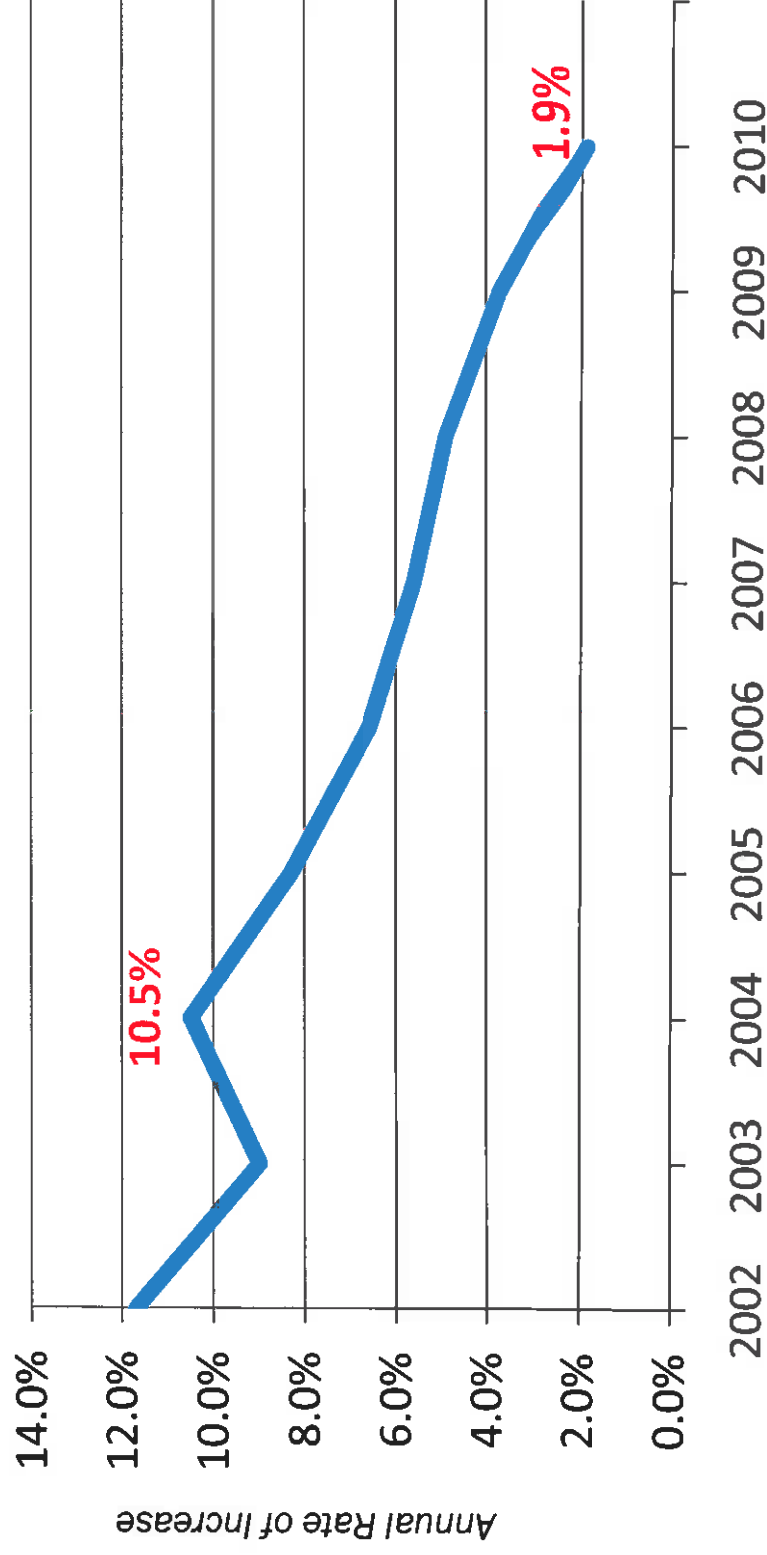
2. What Did They Say?

While taxes collected by Wilton have increased by more than 80% between FY 2001 and FY 2010 . . .



2. What Did They Say?

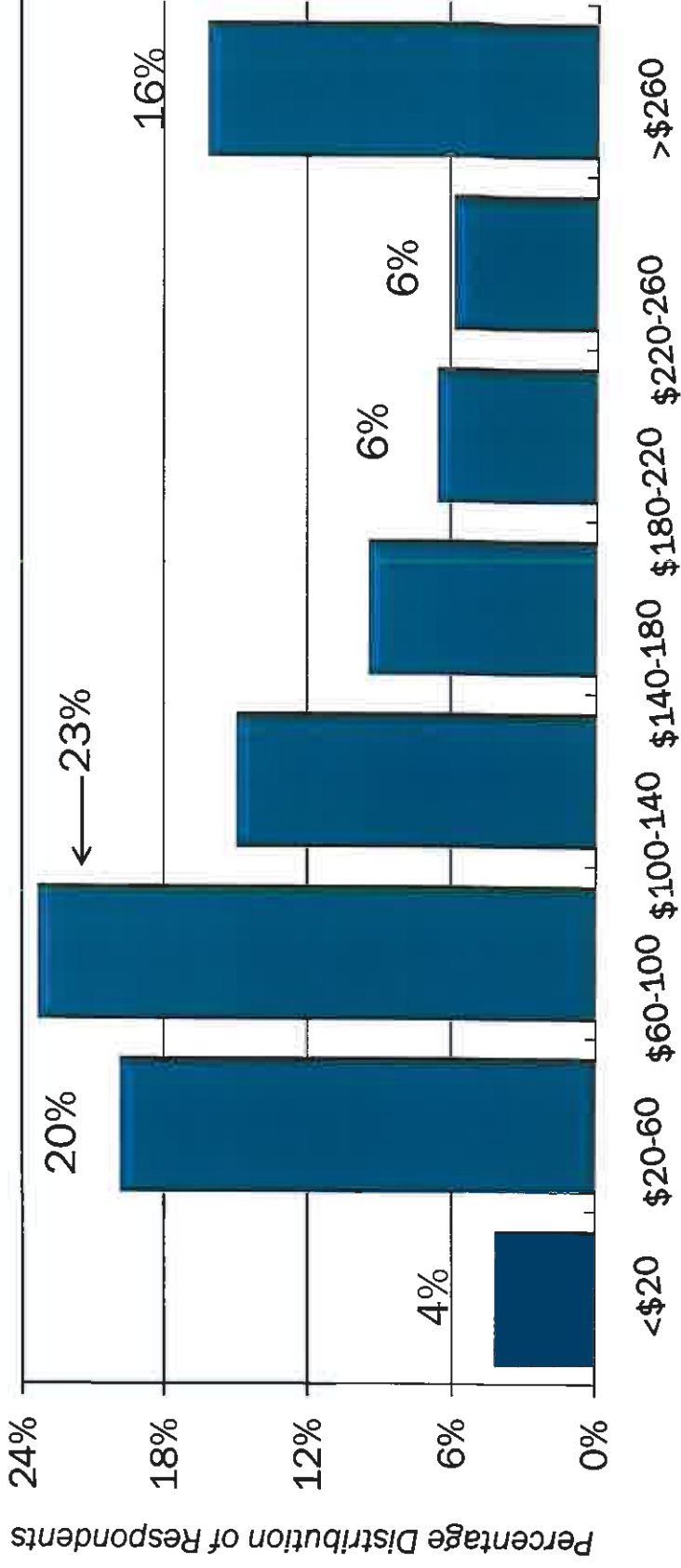
... the annual rate of increase in taxes collected has declined steadily since 2004 (from 10.5% to 1.9%).



National Executive Service Corps.

2. What Did They Say?

While about 30% of these respondent households reported current income of \$180,000 or more, almost half of them reported current income of \$100,000 or less...



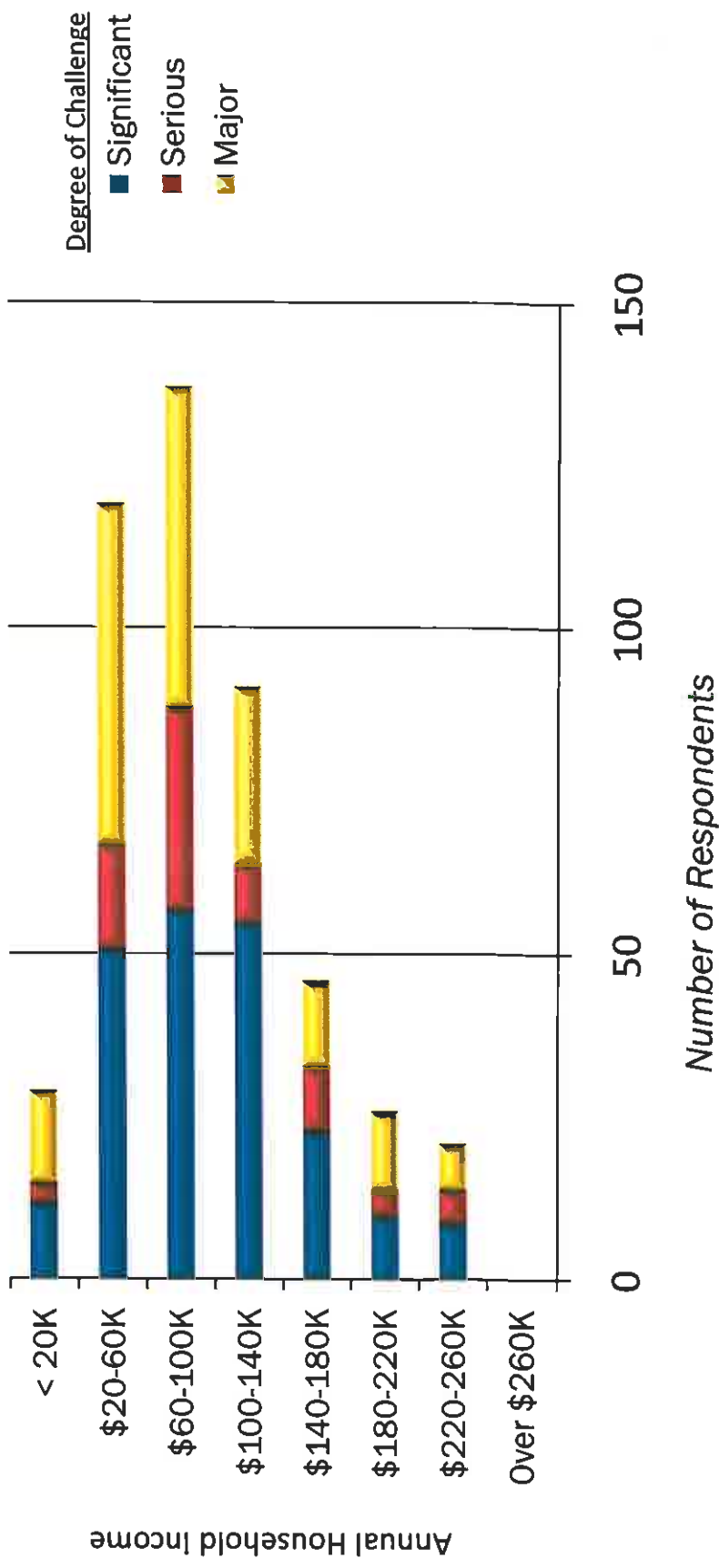
((\$000))



National Executive Service Corps.

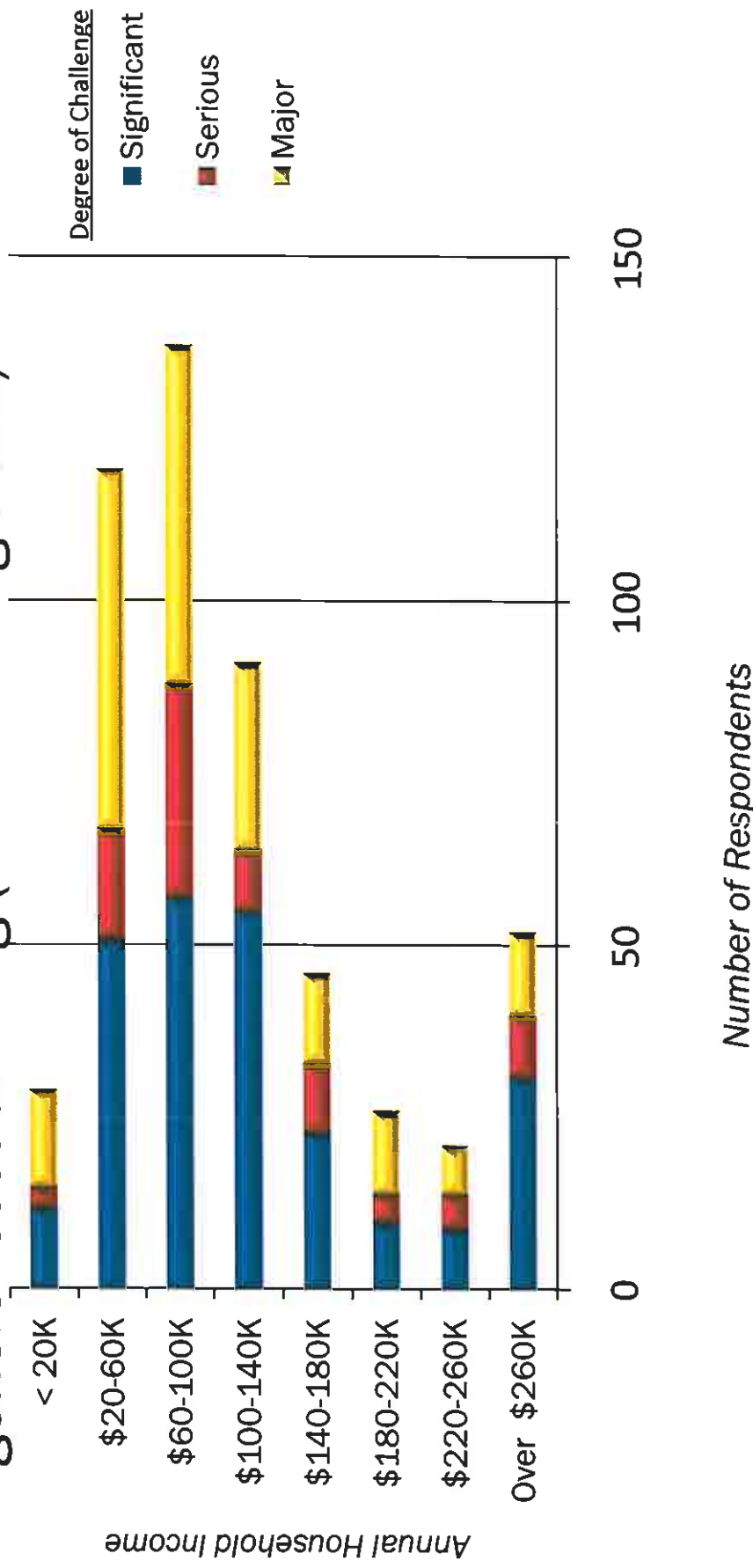
2. What Did They Say?

Respondents in relatively modest income brackets seem quite concerned about the limited availability of affordable, appropriate housing...



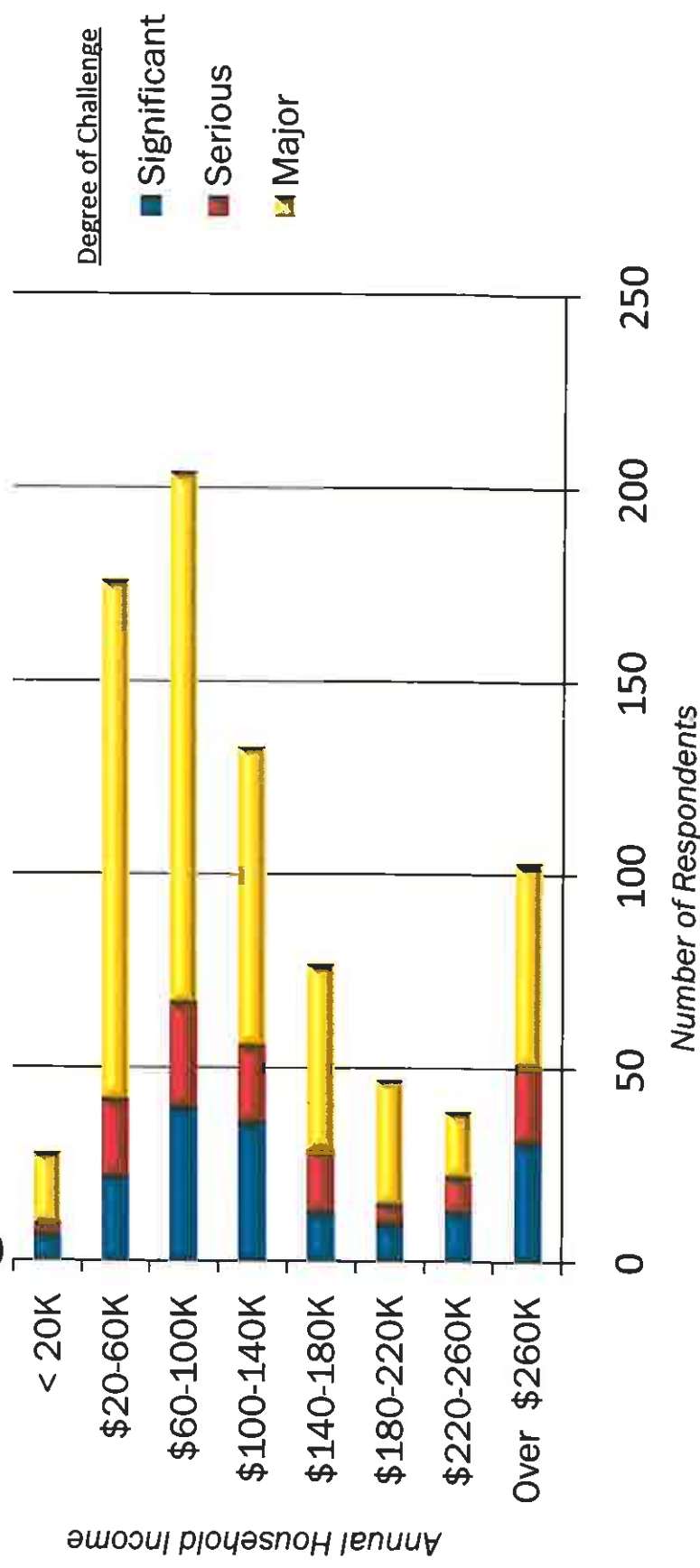
2. What Did They Say?

Similarly, respondents in relatively modest income brackets express considerable concern about the general cost of living (not including taxes) . . .



2. What Did They Say?

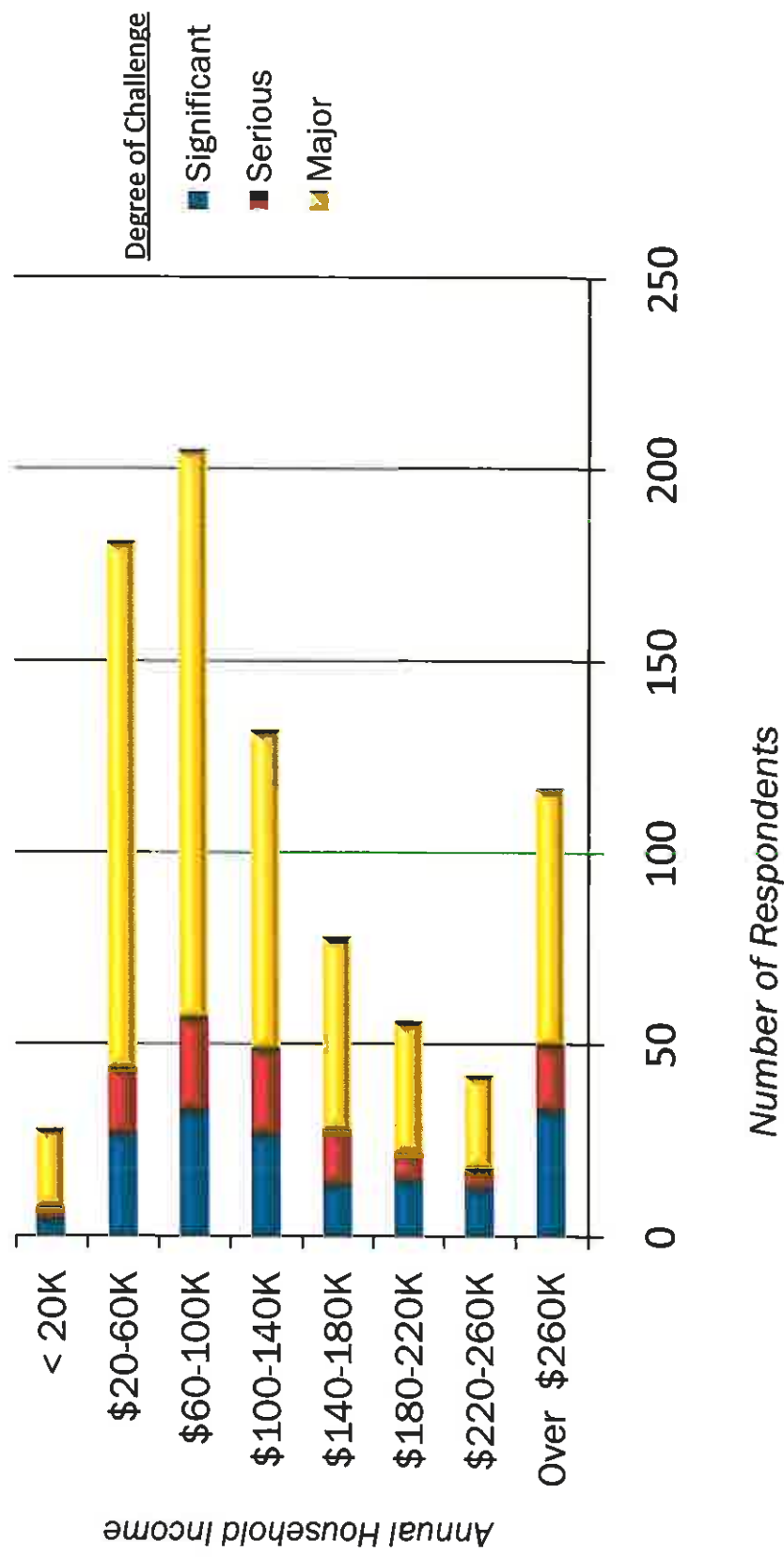
Regarding the overall tax burden (estate, sales, and property), respondents in virtually all income brackets say they are experiencing a major challenge . . .



National Executive Service Corps.

2. What Did They Say?

... and a very high proportion of these respondents say they are seriously concerned about the predictability of future tax levels.



2. What Did They Say?

Of the 1,152 total respondents, 515 submitted pertinent subjective comments.

- 66.3% of those comments characterized the cost of living – and particularly the school budget and property taxes – as too high. (14.8% called specifically for tax relief.)
- 33.4% of those comments concerned quality of life issues, including most prominently the need for a range of age-appropriate and affordable housing, better transportation options, and an increased level of attention by Town government to the needs and interests of seniors.



National Executive Service Corps.

2. What Did They Say?

Regarding the factors driving the leave/stay decision by seniors:

- 53% cited overall COL as the most important factor.
- 47% cited COL as the single most undesirable aspect of Wilton as opposed to other communities they might consider.
- 41% cited relative tax levels as the single over-arching factor in comparing Wilton with other possible destinations.

2. What Did They Say?

Relocation destinations being considered:

- Top 3 destinations are the SE (34.3%), other towns in CT (21.6%) and other NE states (10.2%)
- Top 5 destination states are CT (150), FL (87), NC (44), SC (41) and VA (24).
- Among the 150 respondents who would relocate within CT, 90 would move to other towns within Fairfield County (including 24 to Norwalk).



National Executive Service Corps.

2. What Did They Say?

Some implications if seniors leave Wilton in substantial numbers:

- The social and cultural fabric of Wilton might gradually change.
- Seniors' political influence might shrink further.
- The educational burden on the Town seems likely to increase.

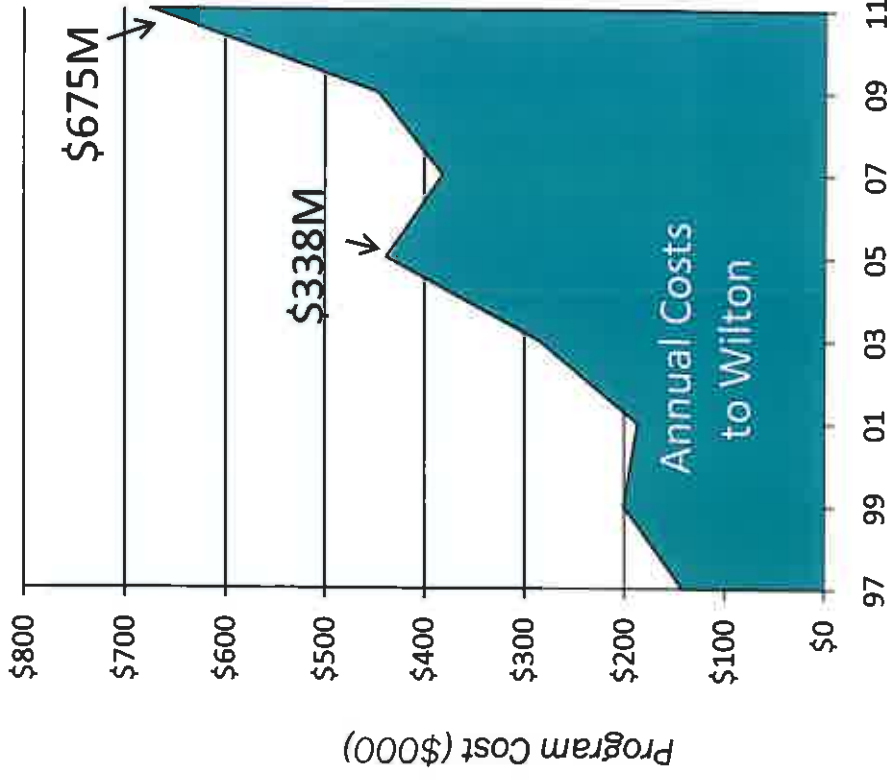
2. What Did They Say?

Some additional Comments and Perceptions

- Tax Relief
- Senior Services and Activities
- Dial-a-Ride
- Visiting Nurse and Hospice
- Housing Options
- “Stay-at-Home in Wilton”

2. What Did They Say?

Since 2008, tax abatement program costs have essentially doubled . . .



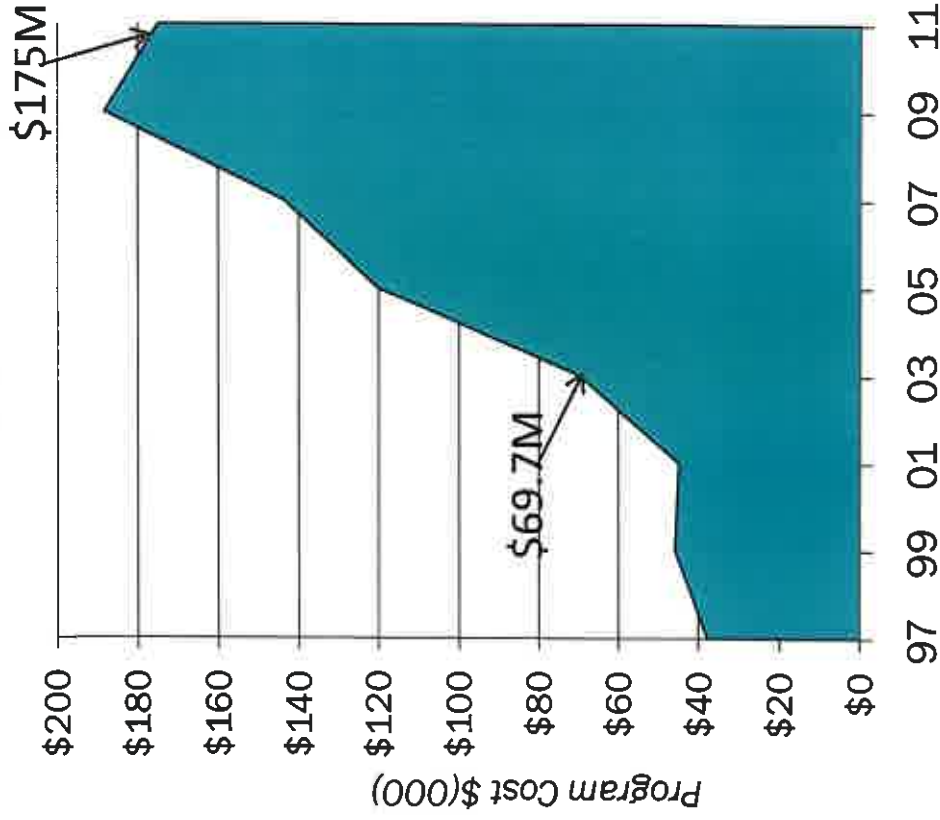
- Participants have increased since 2009 (from 203 to 302).
- Respondents below the survey median income (about \$140K) are reasonably aware of the program.
- But about 80% lower income respondents have never used the program.
- Respondents sense of the quality of the program is mixed.



National Executive Service Corps.

2. What Did They Say?

The value of tax deferrals has increased significantly since 2003 . . .



- Among lower income seniors, program awareness is reasonably high.
- But program utilization is minimal.
- Only half of respondents below median income view the Tax Deferral Program as satisfactory.

2. What Did They Say?

Wilton Senior Center

- Seniors are quite aware of the Senior Services Program, though only 11% of respondents have participated.
- Seniors are well aware of the Senior Activities Program and about 20% of respondents have participated. Over 80% rate the program as adequate or better.

2. What Did They Say?

Dial-a-Ride Program

- Serves a core constituency of about 150 senior and disabled residents (plus 40-50 additional residents of Ogden House).
- Daytime service on weekdays only.
- About 80% of respondents are aware of the program, but 85% say they have never used it and only about 1% say they have used it often.

Visiting Nurse and Hospice (VNH)

- Awareness and use of Town-funded services increase with advancing age.
- Services are highly rated by these respondents, particularly among the below median income respondents.



National Executive Service Corps.

2. What Did They Say?

Housing Options

- The majority of Wilton's housing stock is single family dwellings on relatively large properties.
- Communal facilities providing medical services and support for seniors are available in and around Wilton.
- Most Wilton apartment options are multi-story and not appropriate for seniors.
- Downsizing opportunities are limited and there is evidence of pent-up demand for age-appropriate affordable and attractive residential housing.

3. Strategic Options

Strategy depends on Wilton's collective assumptions about its future.

Options include:

- Maintaining the Status Quo
- Enhancing the Situation of Seniors in Wilton
- Adjusting Wilton's Strategic Priorities