
Charter Commission Feedback Survey

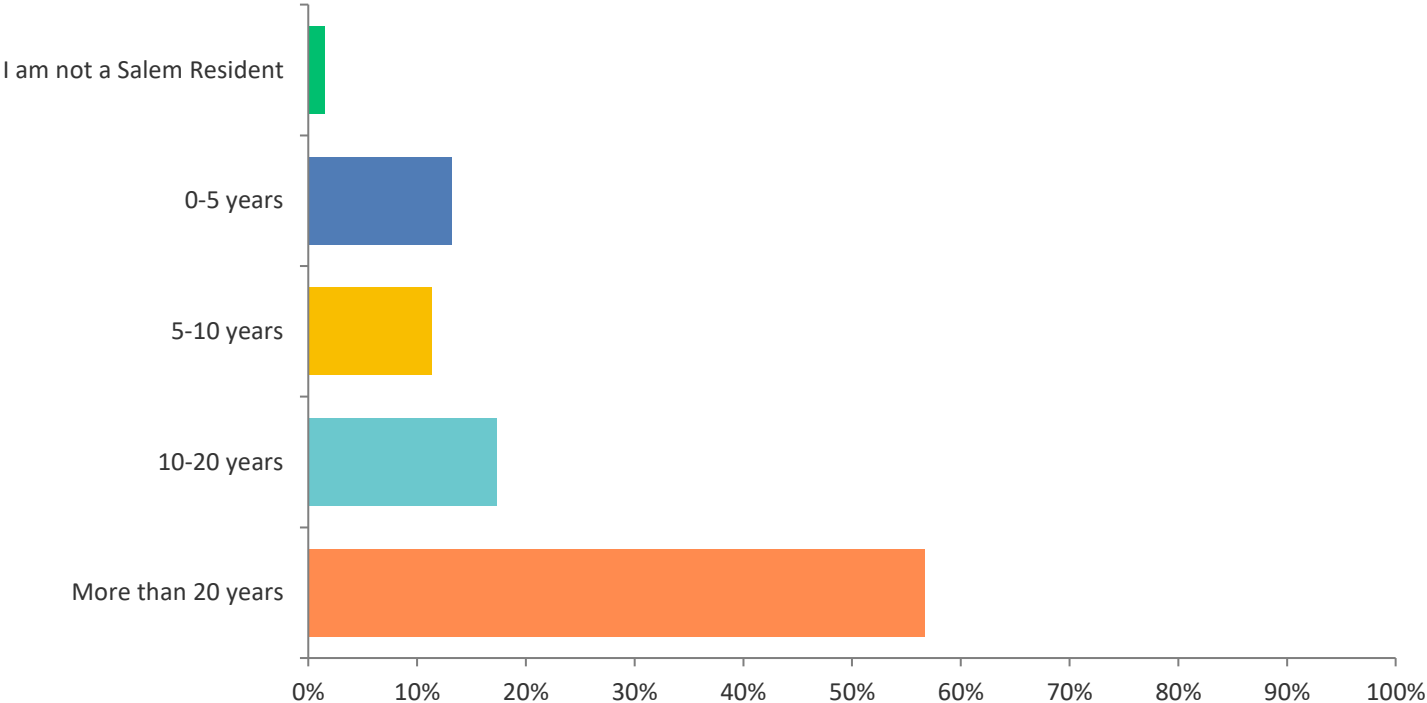
Monday, June 20, 2022

Summary

- There were 741 responses
- Completion rate was 59%
- Average time 4:26
- Most responses came in on 6/9 and 6/10, with a spike on 6/14

Q1: How long have you been a Salem resident?

Answered: 739 Skipped: 2



Q1: How long have you been a Salem resident?

Answered: 739 Skipped: 2

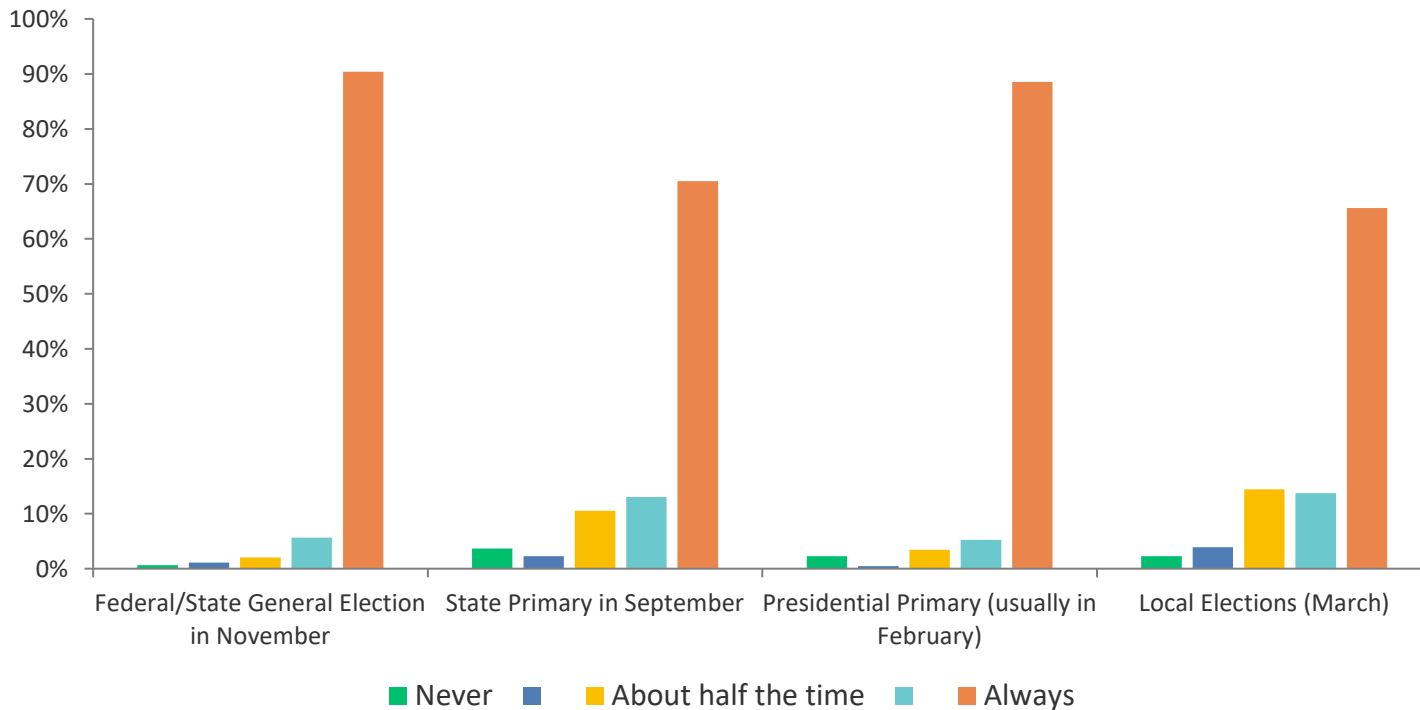
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am not a Salem Resident	1.49%	11
0-5 years	13.13%	97
5-10 years	11.37%	84
10-20 years	17.32%	128
More than 20 years	56.70%	419
TOTAL		739

Notes on Question 1

- 11 Responses for “not a Salem resident”
- Those respondents were not permitted to complete the survey
- Upon further reflection, it would have perhaps been better to combine this with an age question after all.

Q2: With 1 representing “Never” and 5 representing “Always” please rate how often you vote in the following elections.

Answered: 439 Skipped: 302



Q2: With 1 representing “Never” and 5 representing “Always” please rate how often you vote in the following elections.

Answered: 439 Skipped: 302

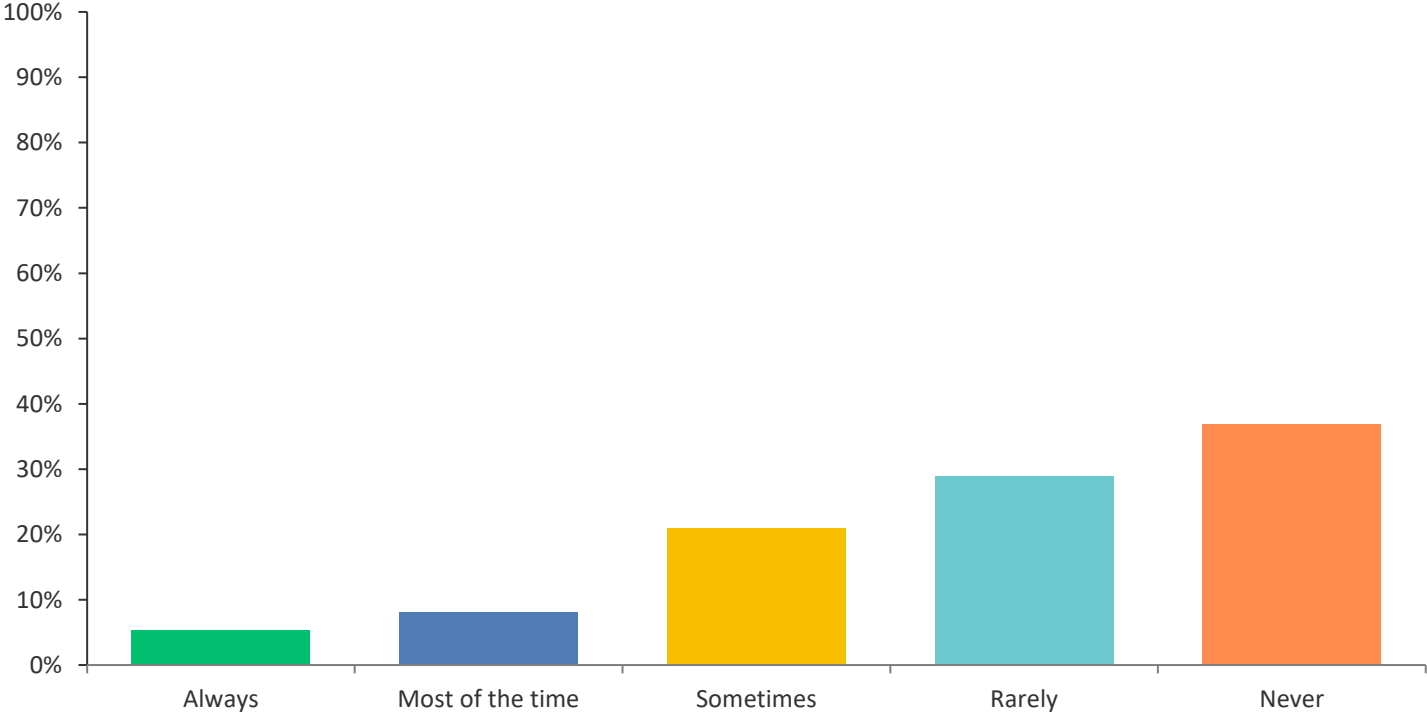
	NEVER		ABOUT HALF THE TIME		ALWAYS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Federal/State General Election in November	0.68% 3	1.14% 5	2.05% 9	5.69% 25	90.43% 397	439	4.84
State Primary in September	3.66% 16	2.29% 10	10.53% 46	13.04% 57	70.48% 308	437	4.44
Presidential Primary (usually in February)	2.29% 10	0.46% 2	3.43% 15	5.26% 23	88.56% 387	437	4.77
Local Elections (March)	2.29% 10	3.90% 17	14.45% 63	13.76% 60	65.60% 286	436	4.36

Notes on Question 2

- Not unexpected
- Survey is self selecting at this stage.
- If you're engaged enough to find and take survey, you're probably already engaged in local government

Q3: Do you attend the Deliberative Session for Town elections?

Answered: 439 Skipped: 302



Q3: Do you attend the Deliberative Session for Town elections?

Answered: 439 Skipped: 302

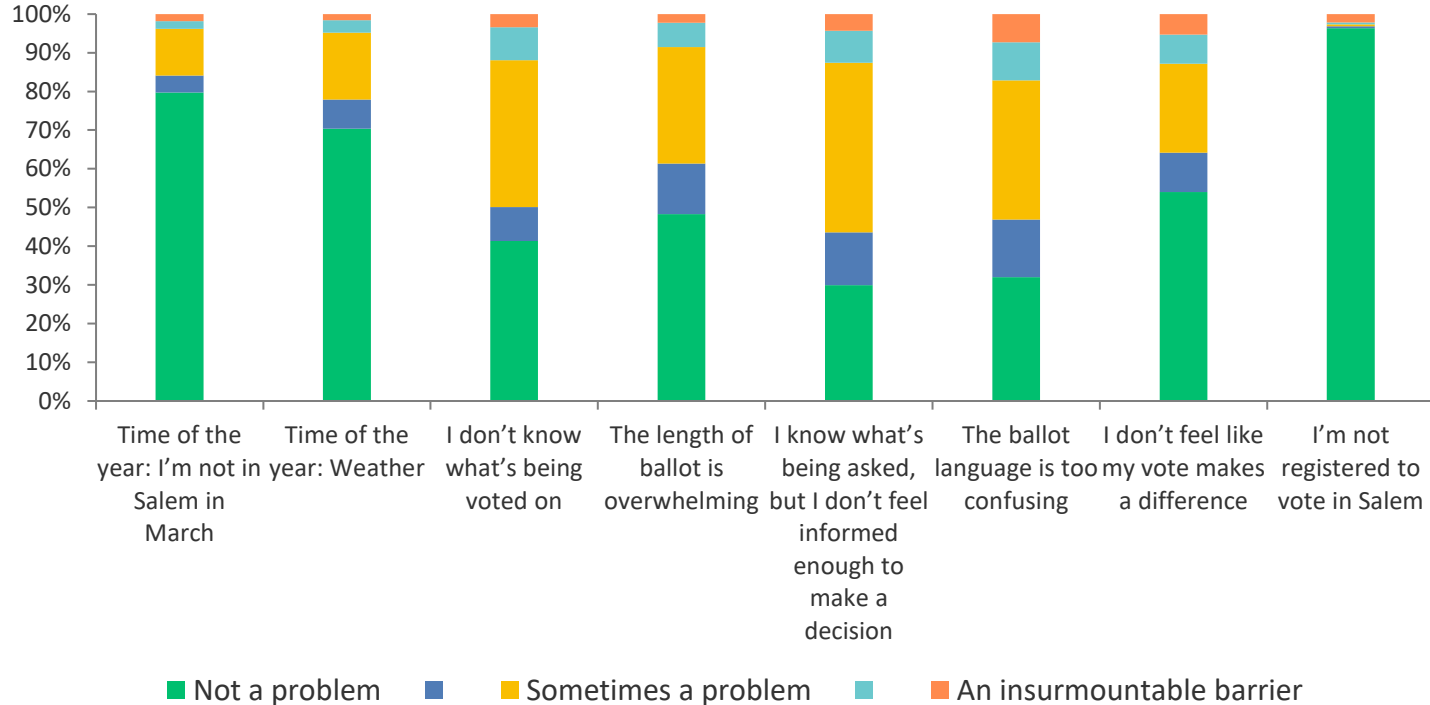
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	5.24%	23
Most of the time	7.97%	35
Sometimes	20.96%	92
Rarely	28.93%	127
Never	36.90%	162
TOTAL		439

Notes on Question 3

- This question is suggestive that deliberative session has perhaps outgrown its usefulness.
- Even a majority of the most active civic participants don't go.

Q4: Consider the following statements. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “Not a problem” and 5 being “An insurmountable barrier”, rate how much of a barrier each of these things pose to your participation in local March elections

Answered: 439 Skipped: 302



Q4: Consider the following statements. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “Not a problem” and 5 being “An insurmountable barrier”, rate how much of a barrier each of these things pose to your participation in local March elections

Answered: 439 Skipped: 302

	NOT A PROBLEM		SOMETIMES A PROBLEM		AN INSURMOUNTABLE BARRIER	TOTAL
Time of the year: I’m not in Salem in March	79.73% 350	4.33% 19	12.07% 53	2.05% 9	1.82% 8	439
Time of the year: Weather	70.34% 306	7.59% 33	17.24% 75	3.22% 14	1.61% 7	435
I don’t know what’s being voted on	41.38% 180	8.74% 38	37.93% 165	8.51% 37	3.45% 15	435
The length of ballot is overwhelming	48.28% 210	13.10% 57	30.11% 131	6.21% 27	2.30% 10	435
I know what’s being asked, but I don’t feel informed enough to make a decision	29.91% 131	13.70% 60	43.84% 192	8.22% 36	4.34% 19	438
The ballot language is too confusing	32.04% 140	14.87% 65	35.93% 157	9.84% 43	7.32% 32	437
I don’t feel like my vote makes a difference	54.02% 235	10.11% 44	22.99% 100	7.59% 33	5.29% 23	435
I’m not registered to vote in Salem	96.31% 392	0.49% 2	0.49% 2	0.49% 2	2.21% 9	407

Q5: Are there any other issues you feel are a barrier to voting in March elections?

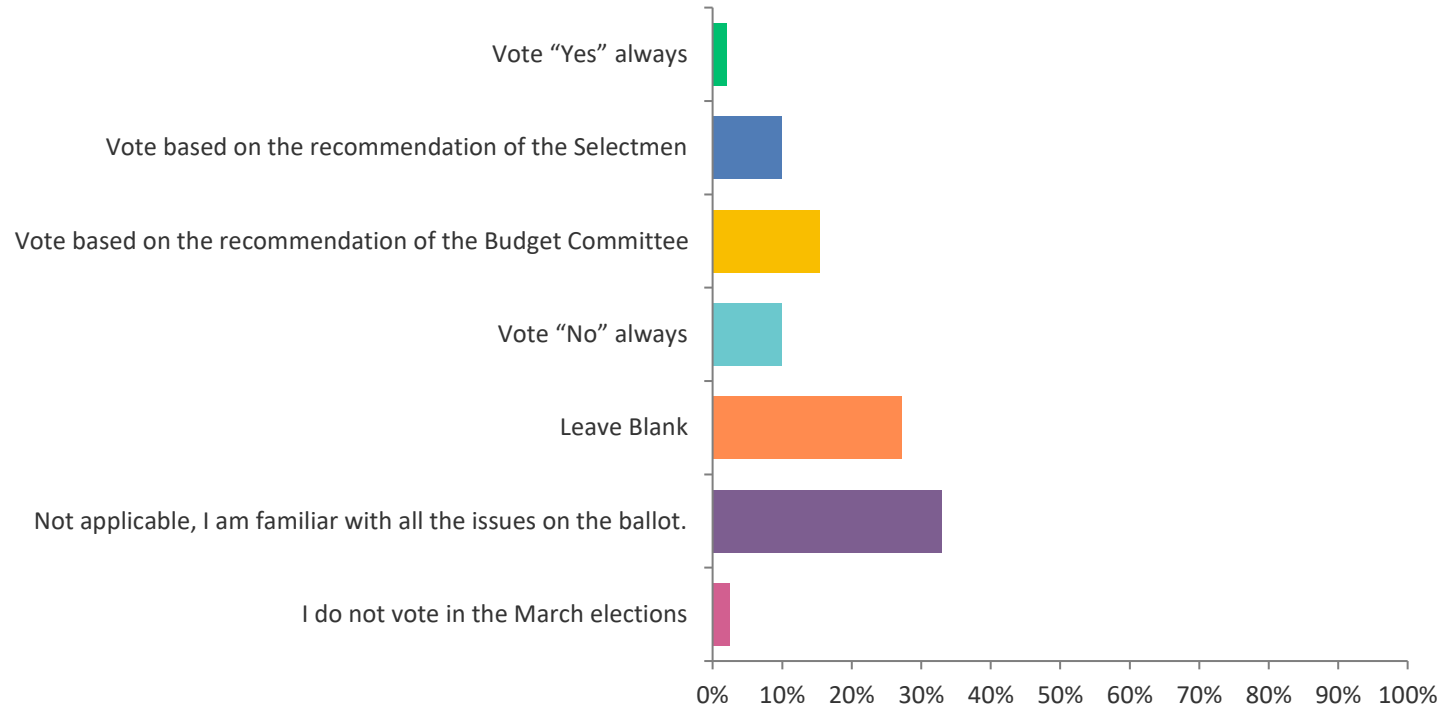
Answered: 149 Skipped: 592

Q5 Are there any other issues you feel are a barrier to voting in March elections?

always voted days understand register voters problem think enough longer candidates
word makes communicating need going March hours voters way ballot
town needs work later election day vote ballot questions
time make informed decision people better town one Salem
meetings S will None allow issues biggest questions see barriers don t information
local elections many

Q6: If you do vote in local elections, and you come to a warrant article you do not understand, do you:

Answered: 434 Skipped: 307



Q6: If you do vote in local elections, and you come to a warrant article you do not understand, do you:

Answered: 434 Skipped: 307

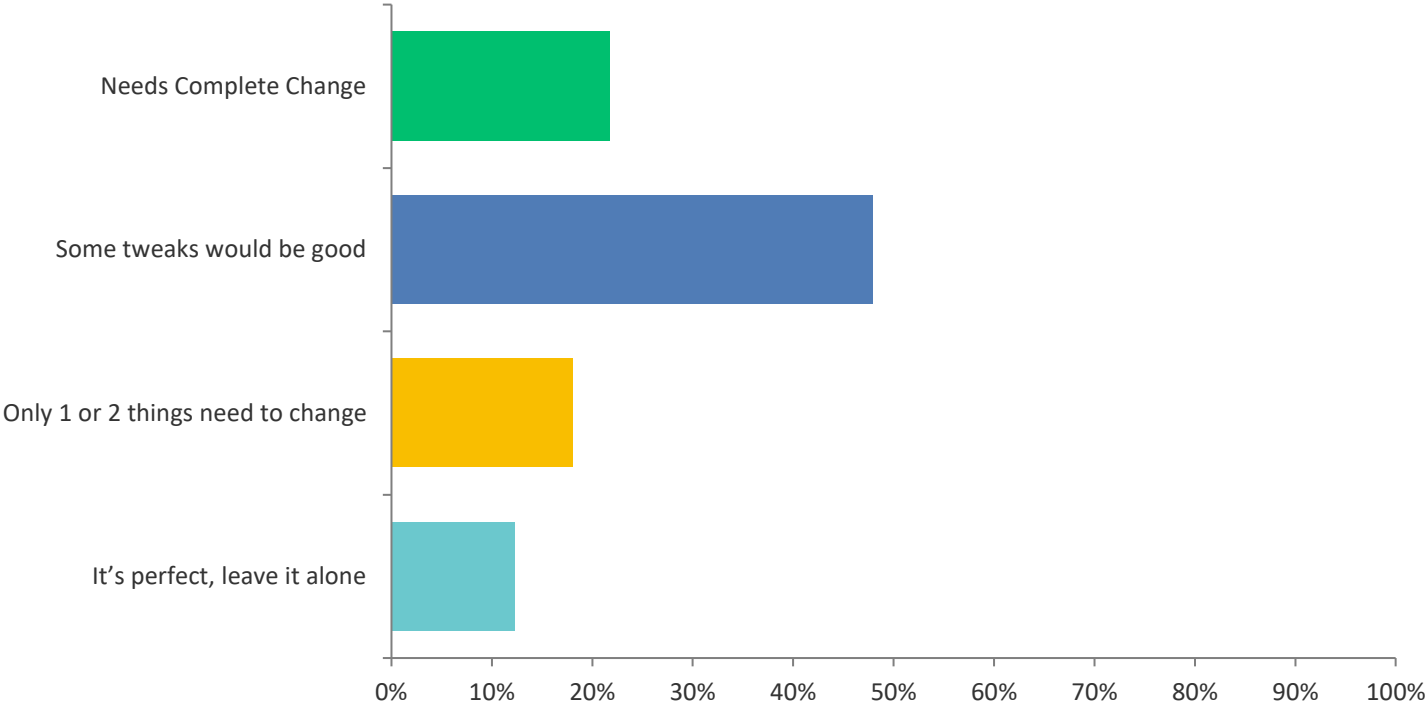
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Vote "Yes" always	2.07%	9
Vote based on the recommendation of the Selectmen	9.91%	43
Vote based on the recommendation of the Budget Committee	15.44%	67
Vote "No" always	9.91%	43
Leave Blank	27.19%	118
Not applicable, I am familiar with all the issues on the ballot.	32.95%	143
I do not vote in the March elections	2.53%	11
TOTAL		434

Notes on Question 6

- Thinking back to the question regarding attendance at Deliberative Session...many people do not go, yet a majority of responses indicate they are familiar with the warrant.

Q7: What do you think of the current form of government?

Answered: 432 Skipped: 309



Q7: What do you think of the current form of government?

Answered: 432 Skipped: 309

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Needs Complete Change	21.76%	94
Some tweaks would be good	47.92%	207
Only 1 or 2 things need to change	18.06%	78
It's perfect, leave it alone	12.27%	53
TOTAL		432

Q8 What is your greatest concern about potentially changing the town's system of government:

Answered: 280 Skipped: 461

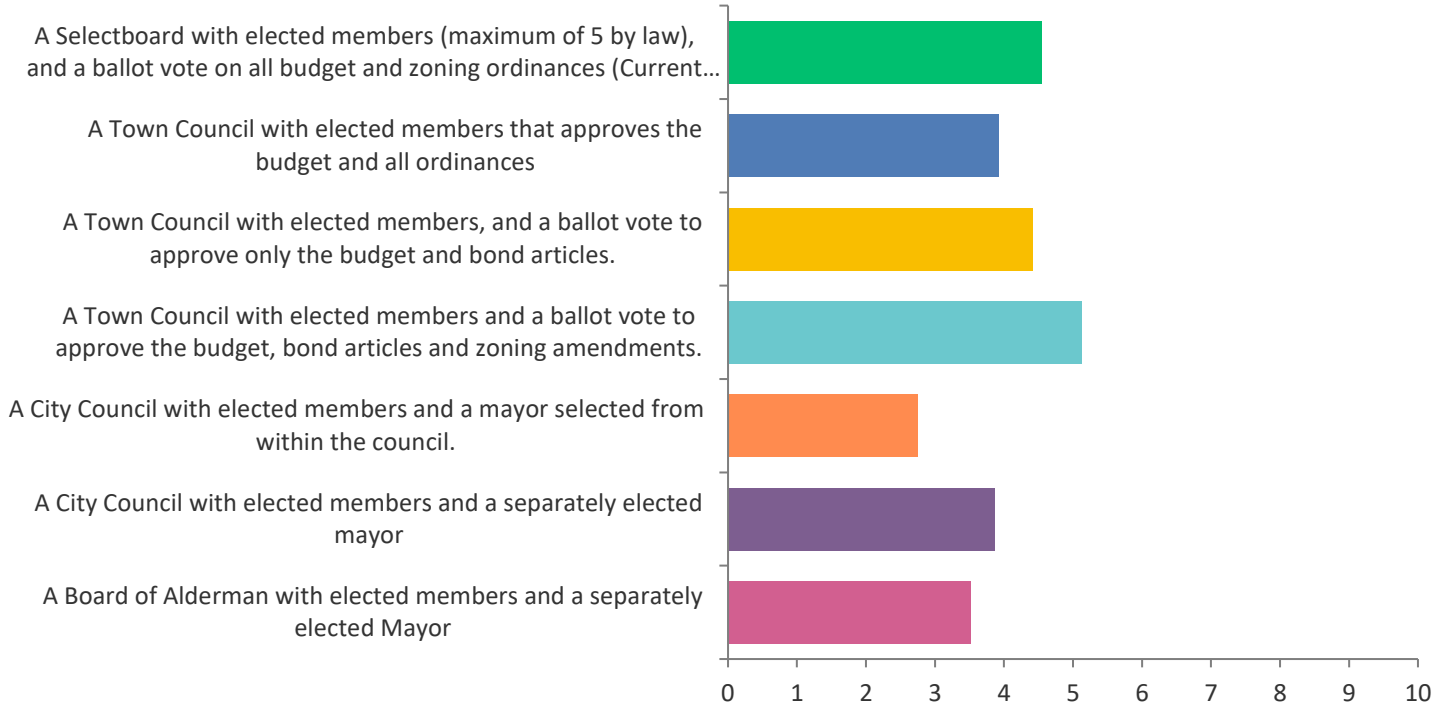
political elected voice running feel present Keep understand left well board
form government will become city much power worse less control state term limits
works city government citizens interests take council don t Loss control expanding
think us government None form government Losing decisions
input voters positions want making decisions tax much voting go
Salem offices need new people one town Also
change right will enough concerns way residents
city form government power s make community city issues become
agenda corruption moving less representation give cost mayor approved big
represent better decisions made long system government many will increase things
don t know town manager school Higher taxes Bos process lived may broken allow
might Lack officials spending selectmen

Notes on Question 7

- A broad consensus (>80%) believes that at least *some* change is necessary
- Further data suggest that while there is some variance in *what* needs to change, this suggests that there is support for the adoption of a new charter
- Many want us to do things that are not permitted: term limits, electing town manager, etc.
- Further data suggest that the closer we hew to the current system, the more likely it will be supported by a broad spectrum.

Q9: The Ranking Question(RAW DATA)

Answered: 420 Skipped: 321



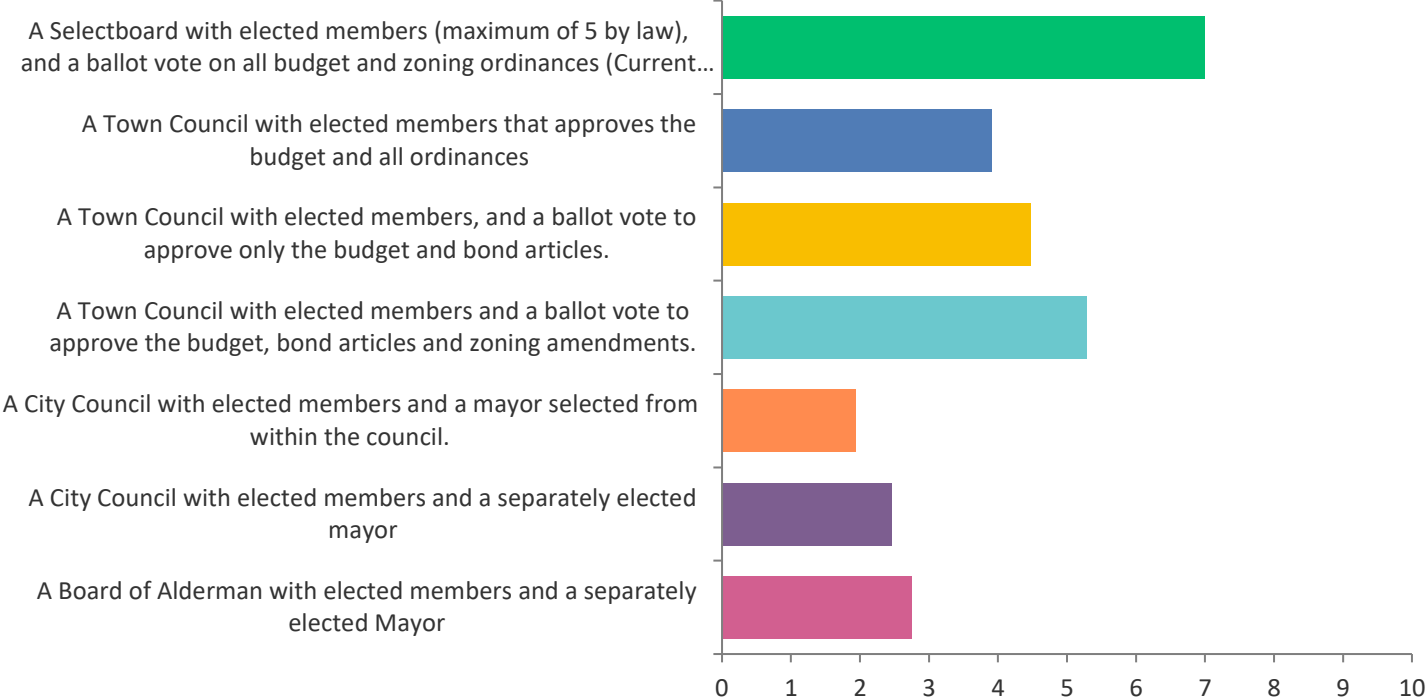
Q9: Ranking Question (FULL RAW)

Answered: 420 Skipped: 321

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Current System	31.31% 124	15.40% 61	8.33% 33	10.61% 42	8.08% 32	8.08% 32	18.18% 72	396	4.54
Derry Model	7.33% 28	13.09% 50	15.18% 58	27.23% 104	12.57% 48	15.18% 58	9.42% 36	382	3.92
Newmarket Model	9.40% 36	13.84% 53	33.68% 129	16.97% 65	10.44% 40	8.62% 33	7.05% 27	383	4.41
Budget/Bonds/Zoning	25.32% 99	27.11% 106	14.32% 56	13.81% 54	9.46% 37	6.91% 27	3.07% 12	391	5.12
Weak City/Council Mayor	4.99% 19	6.82% 26	7.87% 30	7.61% 29	15.49% 59	25.72% 98	31.50% 120	381	2.75
Weak City/Elected Mayor	20.26% 77	10.0% 38	8.16% 31	9.47% 36	16.84% 64	20.26% 77	15.00% 57	380	3.87
Strong City	7.35% 28	13.39% 51	10.50% 40	11.55% 44	24.93% 95	13.39% 51	18.90% 72	381	3.51

Q9: People who ranked Selectboard #1 (Other Choices breakdown)

Answered: 124 Skipped: 0



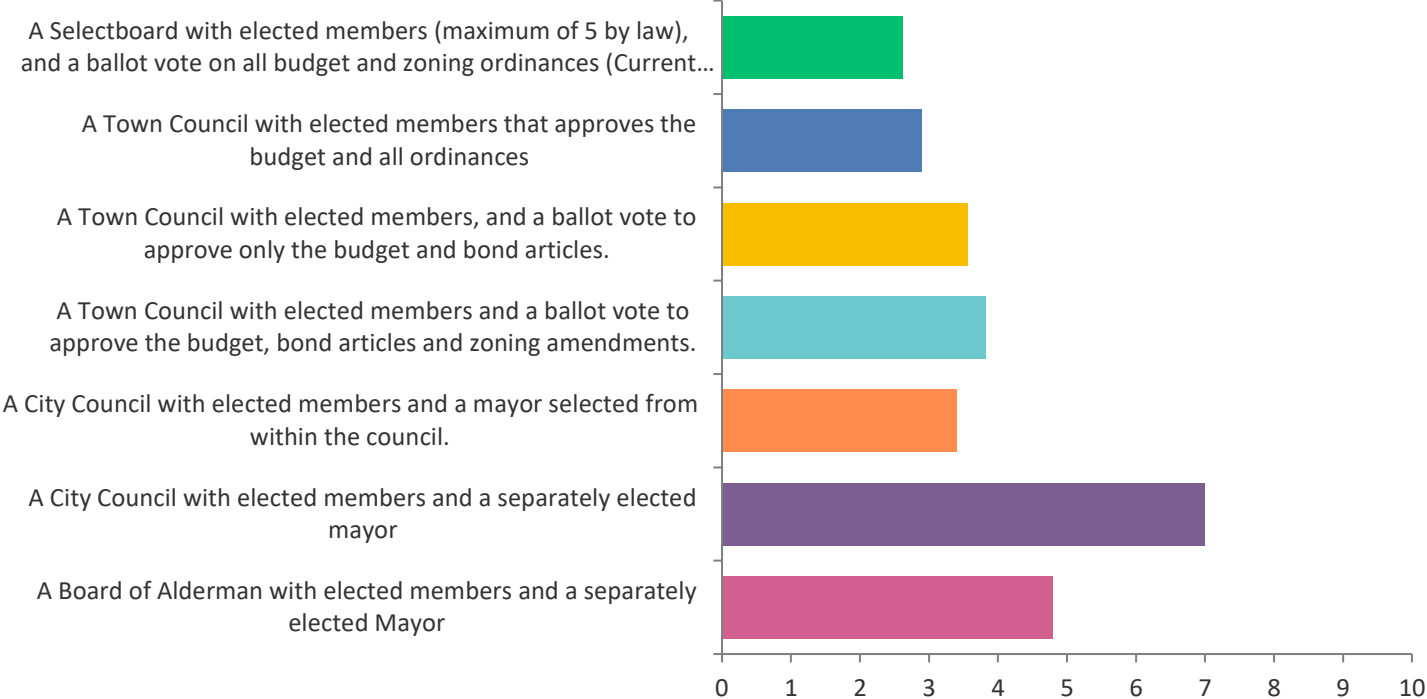
Q9: People who ranked Selectboard #1 (Other Choices breakdown)

Answered: 124 Skipped: 0

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Derry Model	0% 0	10.38% 11	16.04% 17	48.11% 51	9.43% 10	10.38% 11	5.66% 6	106	3.90
Newmarket	0% 0	11.93% 13	55.96% 61	13.76% 15	7.34% 8	7.34% 8	3.67% 4	109	4.47
Budget/Bond/Zoning	0% 0	64.86% 72	15.32% 17	9.91% 11	4.50% 5	3.60% 4	1.80% 2	111	5.28
Weak City/Council Mayor	0% 0	1.87% 2	1.87% 2	5.61% 6	18.69% 20	23.36% 25	48.60% 52	107	1.94
Weak City/Elected Mayor	0% 0	2.78% 3	4.63% 5	11.11% 12	22.22% 24	36.11% 39	23.15% 25	108	2.46
Strong City	0% 0	6.48% 7	3.70% 4	11.11% 12	37.04% 40	19.44% 21	22.22% 24	108	2.74

Q9: City Council/Elected Mayor First Choice

Answered: 77 Skipped: 0



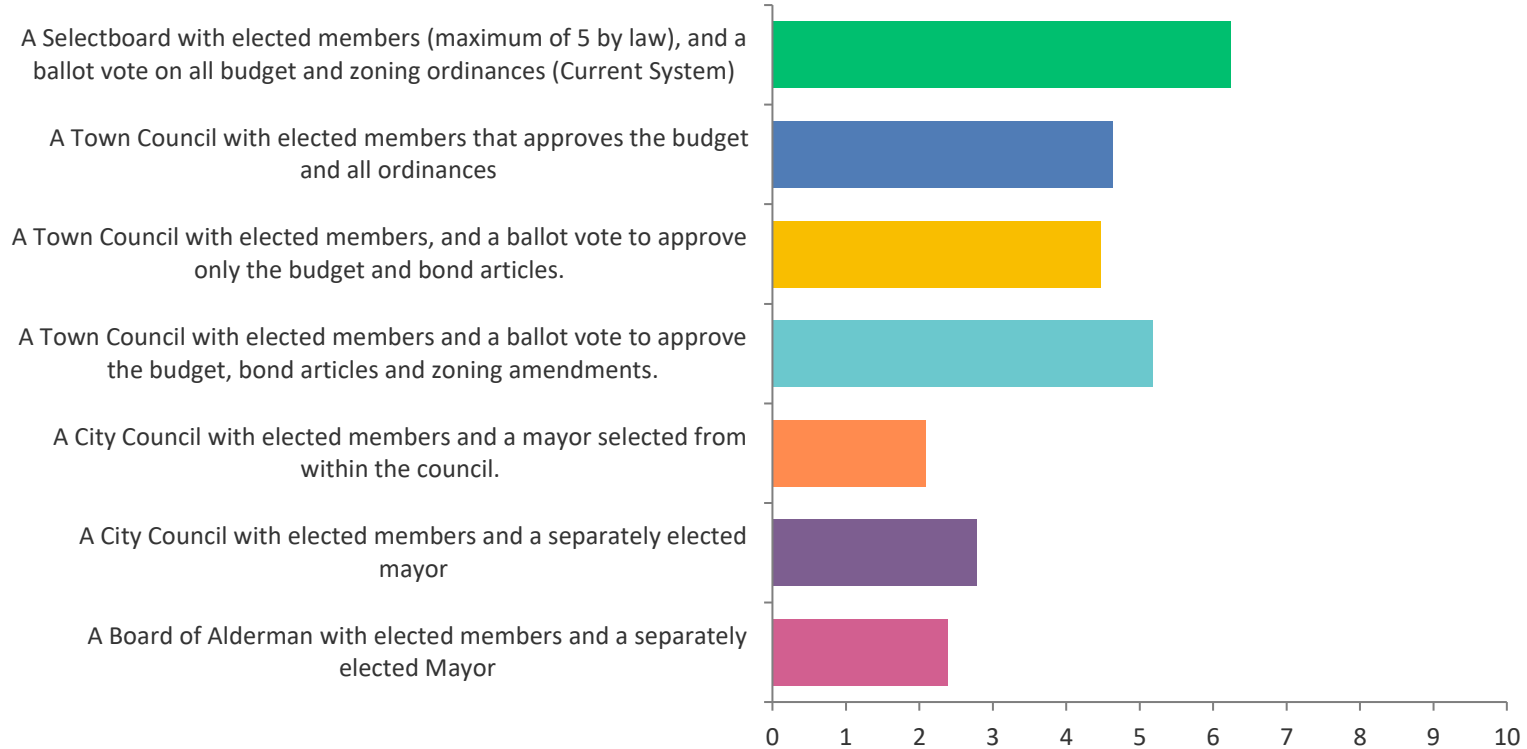
Q9: City Council/Elected Mayor First Choice

Answered: 77 Skipped: 0

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Current System	0% 0	8.33% 6	9.72% 7	13.89% 10	12.50% 9	13.89% 10	41.67% 30	72	2.61
Derry Model	0% 0	5.63% 4	12.68% 9	15.49% 11	19.72% 14	25.35% 18	21.13% 15	71	2.90
Newmarket Model	0% 0	5.48% 4	23.29% 17	21.92% 16	28.77% 21	12.33% 9	8.22% 6	73	3.56
Budget/Bond/Zoning	0% 0	10.96% 8	20.55% 15	31.51% 23	17.81% 13	15.07% 11	4.11% 3	73	3.82
Weak City/Council Mayor	0% 0	21.92% 16	17.81% 13	6.85% 5	8.22% 6	21.92% 16	23.29% 17	73	3.40
Strong City	0% 0	49.32% 36	19.18% 14	8.22% 6	10.96% 8	9.59% 7	2.74% 2	73	4.79

Q9: People who said “It’s Perfect, Don’t Change”

Answered: 52 Skipped: 1



Q9: People who said “It’s Perfect, Don’t Change”

Answered: 52 Skipped: 1

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Current System	68.63% 35	13.73% 7	3.92% 2	5.88% 3	3.92% 2	1.96% 1	1.96% 1	51	6.24
Derry Model	13.04% 6	8.70% 4	28.26% 13	36.96% 17	6.52% 3	4.35% 2	2.17% 1	46	4.63
Newmarket Model	2.27% 1	15.91% 7	43.18% 19	20.45% 9	6.82% 3	6.82% 3	4.55% 2	44	4.48
Budget/Bond/Zoning	13.33% 6	46.67% 21	8.89% 4	13.33% 6	11.11% 5	6.67% 3	0% 0	45	5.18
Weak City/Council Mayor	2.17% 1	4.35% 2	4.35% 2	4.35% 2	8.70% 4	26.09% 12	50.0% 23	46	2.09
Weak City/Elected Mayor	4.65% 2	2.33% 1	4.65% 2	9.30% 4	30.23% 13	32.56% 14	16.28% 7	43	2.79
Strong City	0% 0	4.55% 2	2.27% 1	6.82% 3	31.82% 14	22.73% 10	31.82% 14	44	2.39

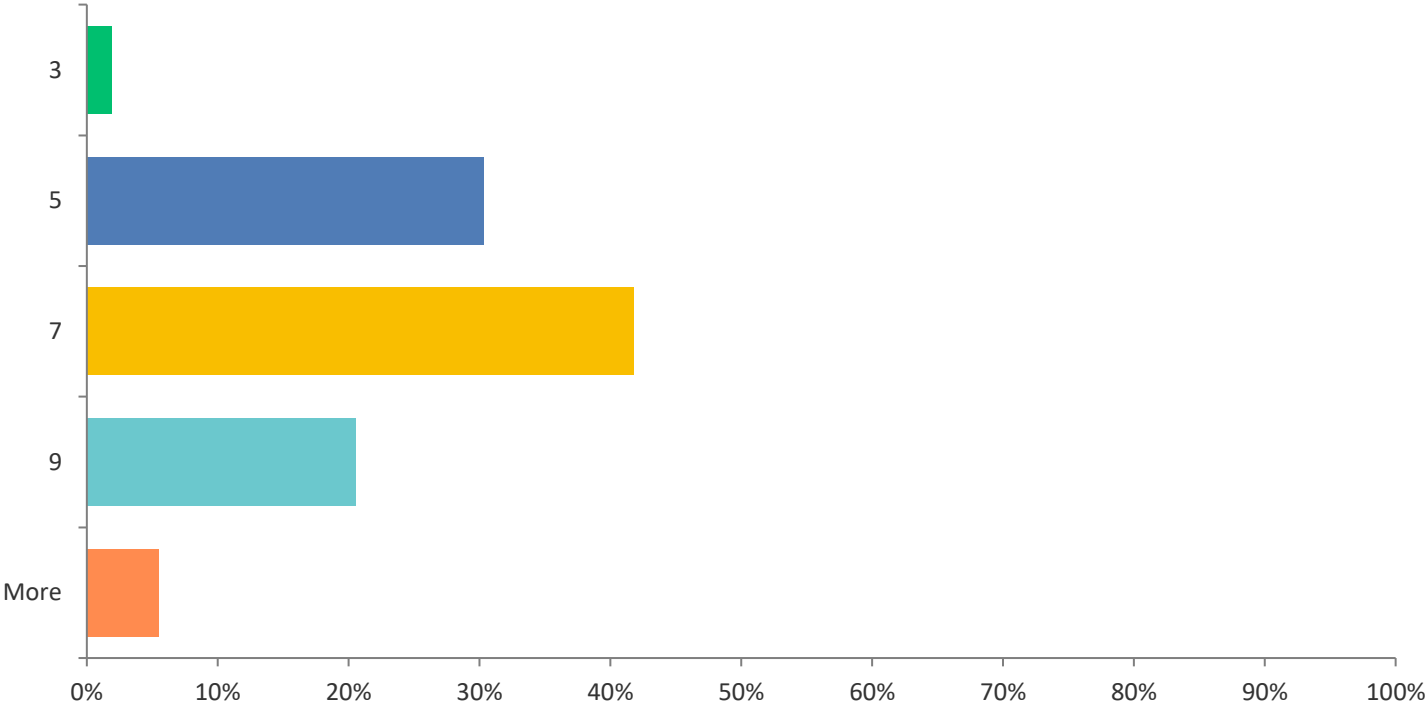
Q10 Could you provide some information on why you chose to rank them that way:

Answered: 226 Skipped: 515

allows taxpayers will order within feel town meeting one say input interest
vote budget bonds much able vote gives takes items s run meet make things
citizens community current opinion prefer city form government control
elected mayor keep years form government Looking
town council always voters understand residents much power
better well want elections city work need become city
people people vote town want mayor Salem manager
vote choices government issues mayor selected
current system ballot think possible elected pay
town manager need mayor council elected officials power big
change decisions don t less believe committee see transparency small approval
way decision making options current form ranked don t want selectmen sure members
separate city council rather voice board large BOS also many

Q11: How many representatives do you feel Salem needs in its governing body?

Answered: 419 Skipped: 322



Q11: How many representatives do you feel Salem needs in its governing body?

Answered: 419 Skipped: 322

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
3	1.91%	8
5	30.31%	127
7	41.77%	175
9	20.53%	86
More	5.49%	23
TOTAL		419

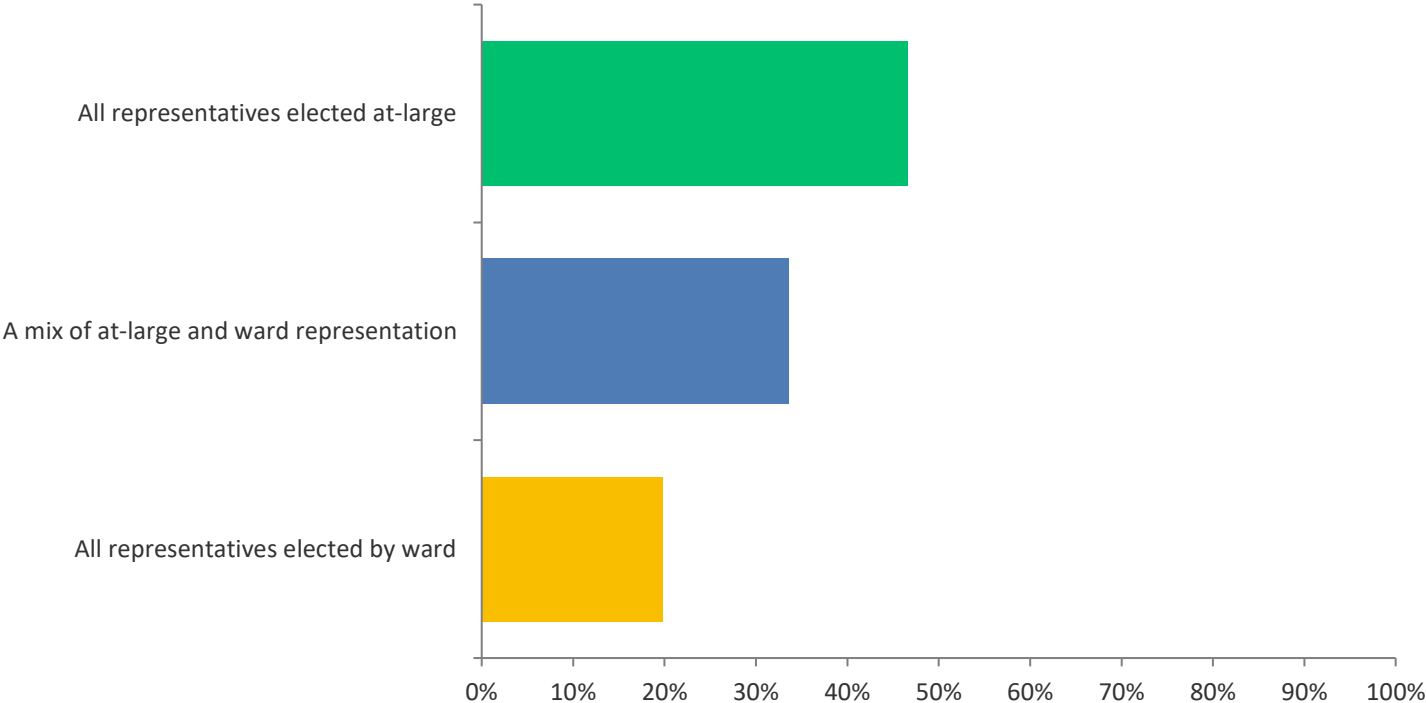
Notes on Question 11

- A clear majority wants to increase the size of the board.
- Even if they prefer the current system

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Current System	24.61% 63	17.58% 45	8.98% 23	11.33% 29	8.20% 21	7.81% 20	21.48% 55	256	4.30
Derry Model	7.45% 19	14.90% 38	15.69% 40	24.31% 62	14.12% 36	15.69% 40	7.84% 20	255	3.99
Newmarket Mode	10.59% 27	14.12% 36	31.37% 80	18.04% 46	10.59% 27	9.02% 23	6.27% 16	255	4.44
Budget/Bond/Zoning	30.0% 78	23.46% 61	12.31% 32	13.85% 36	9.62% 25	7.69% 20	3.08% 8	260	5.15
Weak City/Council Mayor	5.22% 13	6.83% 17	9.64% 24	7.23% 18	15.66% 39	26.10% 65	29.32% 73	249	2.83
Weak City/Elected Mayor	19.76% 50	10.67% 27	9.09% 23	10.28% 26	14.62% 37	21.74% 55	13.83% 35	253	3.90
Strong City	6.37% 16	13.55% 34	10.36% 26	12.35% 31	25.90% 65	11.95% 30	19.52% 49	251	3.48

Q12: Would you prefer to see:

Answered: 423 Skipped: 318



Q12: Would you prefer to see:

Answered: 423 Skipped: 318

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
All representatives elected at-large	46.57%	197
A mix of at-large and ward representation	33.57%	142
All representatives elected by ward	19.86%	84
TOTAL		423

Notes on Question 12

- This could be the thorniest question of all:
 - A slight majority favors some kind of ward/district representation
 - However, it does not appear to be a large enough majority to suggest this would be a change that would be supported at the ballot box by 3/5ths of the voters

Q13 Any other comments for the Charter Commission

Answered: 113 Skipped: 628

things Thank taking time Please Thanks hard work problem charter commission
form government representatives city way commission community keep
positions government really elected possible time town manager
vote Salem city people opinions change ballot town
task Salem need change Thank t good greater residents
one need will work large want Leave Good luck going don t term limits S
city form government Make Town Manager position town government board

Overall Takeaways

- Only 741 responses
 - Self-Selecting
 - Involved already
 - Possibly more than one response per person (multiple devices)
- Even still:
 - Broad consensus for change
 - BUT: Most people like some of the existing structures
 - Desire to retain people's voice through vote