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Next 15 Minutes

- What impact has the recession had upon rural economies nationally
- What can be done to support rural areas in responding to recession and in taking advantage of recovery
- Some responses to recession in rural areas
 - What's next



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The Importance of Market Towns

- 1627 settlements
- 11.1 million people
- A quarter of the population
- A 5.3% increase between 2001-2006.
- Twice as fast as the rate of growth of larger towns and cities



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The Research

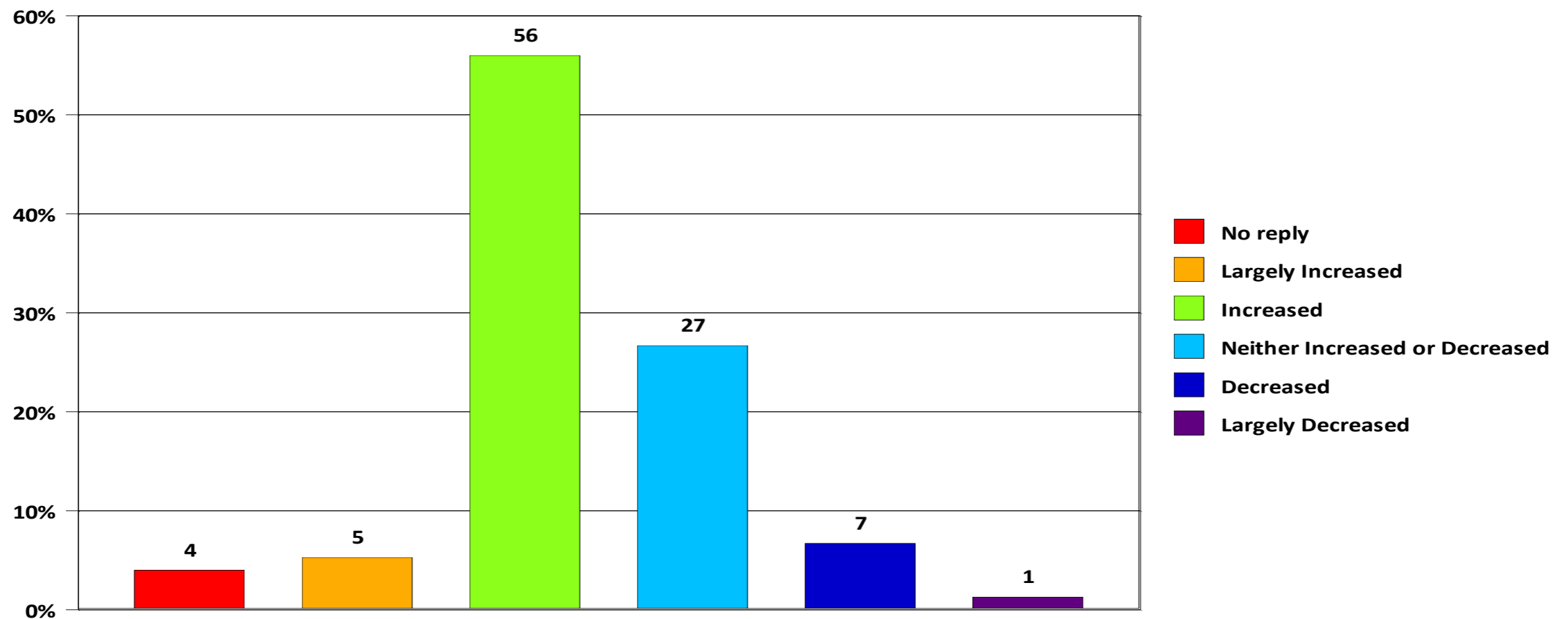


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The National Picture- Increased Unemployment

Over the last 6 months have unemployment levels in your town

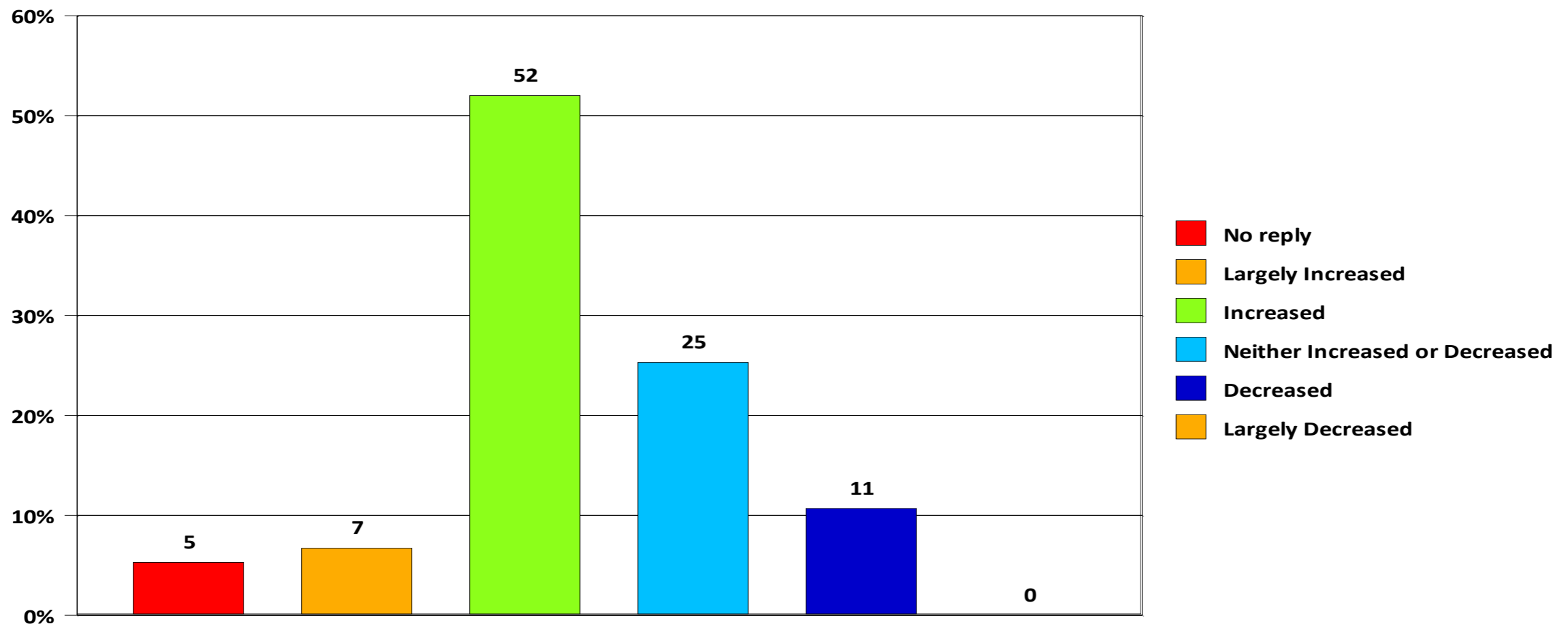


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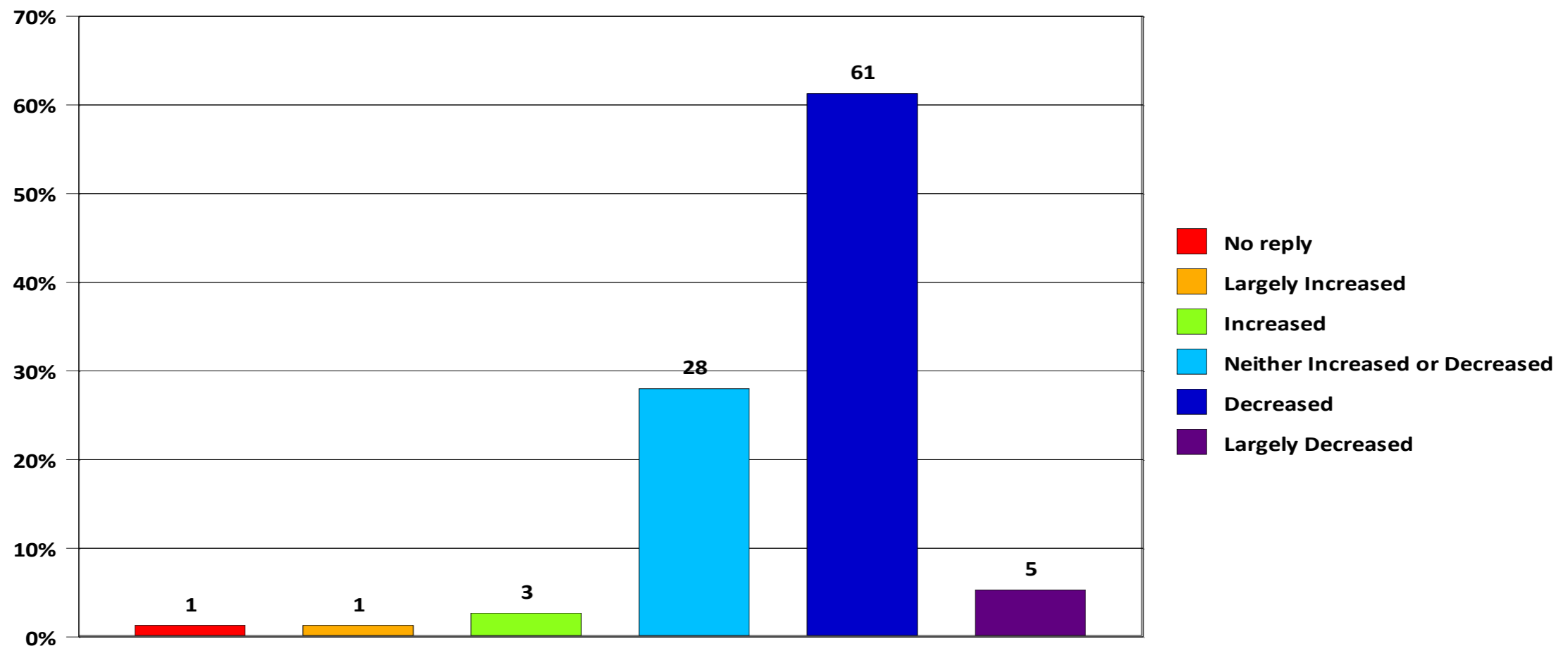
The National Picture- More Vacant Units

Over the last 6 months has the number of vacant business units your town.....



The National Picture- Declining House Prices

Over the last 6 months have the house prices in your town...

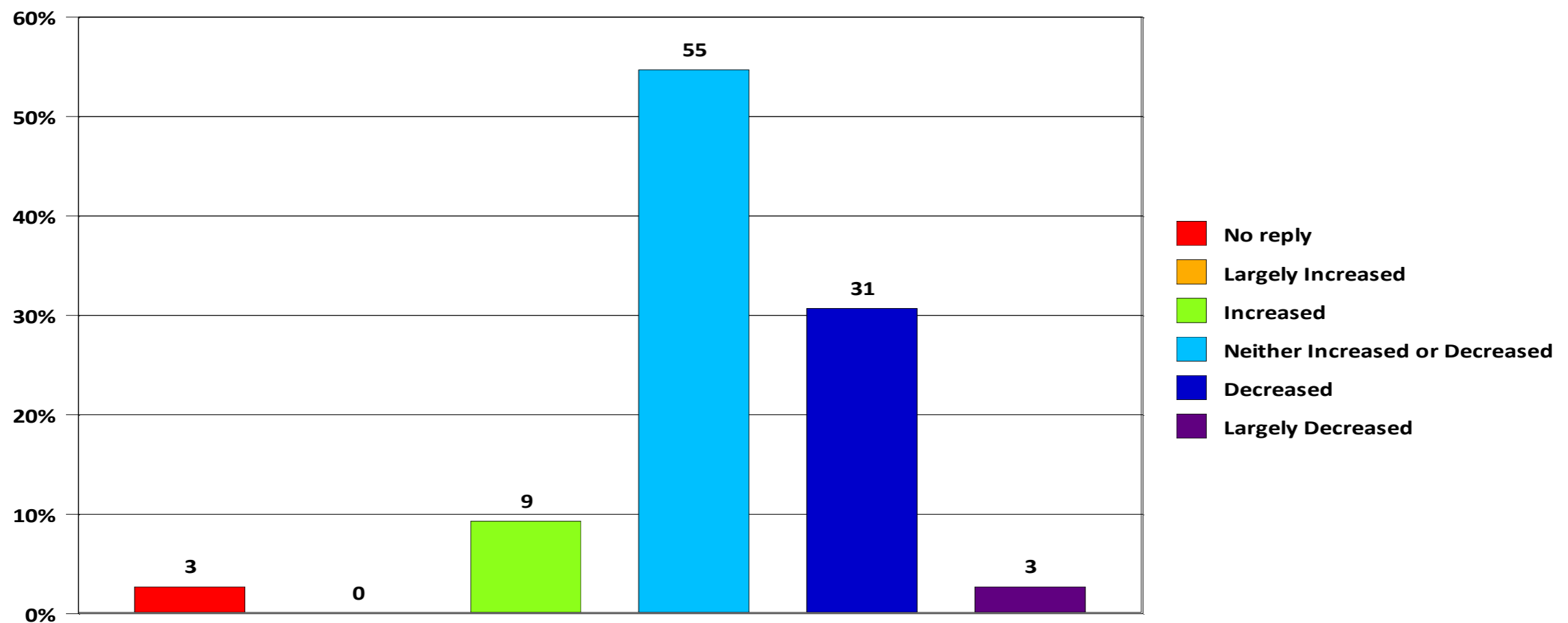


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The National Picture- Footfall Counts

Over the last 6 months has the 'footfall' in your town centre.....



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Increased Activities

- 63% of towns taking action
- 68% Development of/ Increased Town Centre Initiatives
- 66% Increased Community Partnership Activity
- 49% Accessed Increased Local Authority Support
 - Support for Independent Retailers
 - Physical Improvements
 - Investing in Marketing and Tourism



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National Help- Bringing down the barriers

- Increased support from Local Authorities/ Central Government
- Inherent rural issues and lack of understanding around challenges facing market towns
 - Maintaining and Increasing Funding
 - Cooperation of Landlords
 - Reducing Business Rates
 - Devolving the power



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Case Study- Towcester



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Summary

- Economic downturn evidenced
- Issues which have effected Market Towns sharpened
 - Confidence remains high!!! 60% of towns
 - Blind Faith!

"Having lived in the town for 33 years we have seen it grow and develop no matter what the financial climate has been. Being part of the partnership team we know how the Town ticks...! We have strong aspirations for the future developments."



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Summary

- Location

"It is a major tourist destination and due to the value of the Euro and Dollar we expect many UK residents to remain in the country this year and hopefully will see an increase in visitors from Europe and the US."



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Summary

•Activity

"we have a fantastic community spirit many clubs societies and we all pull together"

"We have a strong community organisation for the first time which is proactive and determined to help its own. People and organisations in the town are responding to requests for help."

'The most positive aspect is that the local stakeholders - town council, community partnership, health providers, traders, and tourism outlets, who do not always see eye to eye, all pull together in times of crisis such as these to look for the best way forward and go for it.' (March 2009)



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Summary

- Location and Activity

"We have a unique mix of independent and national retailers that are attractive to shoppers and bring people into the town. The local Chamber of trade is working in partnership with businesses and other agencies to develop initiatives that will support the town and endeavour to place the town on a sound footing once the downturn is over."



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Summary

- Actions can be taken- but some inertia
- Currently actions concentrating on retail and increasing footfall
- Opportunities for Long Term Planning



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What Next

- Read the Report on
- <http://towns.org.uk/files/markettownsrcessionreport.pdf>
- Next Steps



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