

West Hartford Town Study

Survey Results

October 2002

Conducted by:



I. Executive Summary

The Town of West Hartford commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut (CSRA) to conduct a survey of residents to evaluate tax and budget issues relating to town services and education. In the survey, town services include police services, fire services, public libraries, public schools, and the physical appearance of the community. A key education issue explored in the survey is the issue of increased public school enrollment. A total of 401 town residents, ages 18 and over, were interviewed between September 25, 2002 and September 29, 2002 for this study.

The following are highlights of survey findings:

West Hartford Issues

- The survey finds one in three residents (33%) stating education and schools as the most important issue facing West Hartford. One in four residents (25%) feel taxes is the most important issue.

Ratings of Town Services

- West Hartford town services receive high ratings with between 88% and 95% rating services as either excellent or good, with the appearance of the community rating the highest.

Funding Priorities and Tax Increases

- Residents rate public schools as the highest funding priority, followed by the local police, fire services, public libraries, and the physical appearance of the community.
- Most residents (71%) say that the West Hartford local government correctly prioritizes tax dollar spending all or most of the time.
- The survey asked how likely West Hartford residents would be to vote for an increase in annual taxes (6% of what the average household pays each year for the service) to maintain specific services at the current level of quality. Most residents are at least somewhat likely to support the specified tax increases for all town services mentioned.
- Residents were asked to consider an increase in taxes for town services overall. A majority (56%) are willing to pay between a 6% and 10% increase in taxes. Forty-one percent say that they would vote “yes” for a 10% increase to maintain these services at their current level, 5% would vote “yes” to an 8% increase, and another 10% would vote “yes” to a 6% increase.

Education Issues

- More than nine in ten residents (92%) say that it is very or somewhat important to develop or maintain West Hartford’s reputation for quality public schools. An almost equal number (90%) believe that the number of children in each class is a very or somewhat important issue.

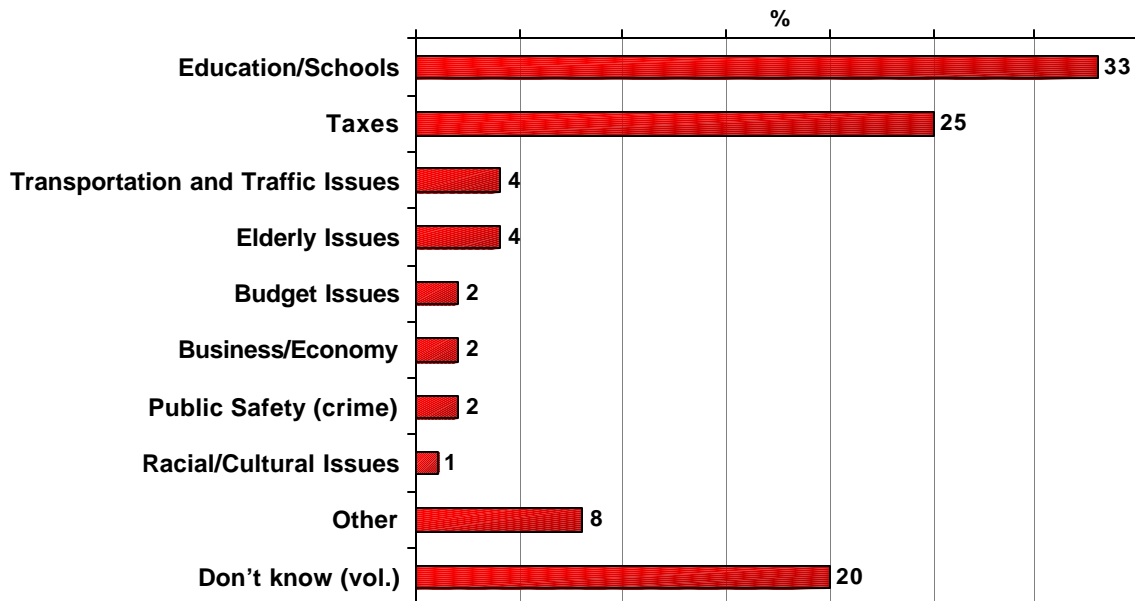
- The survey finds that slightly more than one in two residents (53%) support building a new middle school to help address the increase in student enrollment. Half of residents (50%) support adding portable classrooms to the existing middle school.
- Residents were asked to consider an increase in taxes in order to keep West Hartford public schools at their current quality level. A majority (52%) are willing to pay between an 8% and 10% tax increase for public schools. Forty-six say that they would vote “yes” for a 10% increase and 6% say that they would support an 8% increase to maintain quality in public education.
- Residents openly offer a variety of options if it were necessary to reduce funding to one aspect of West Hartford public schools. Sports and athletics top the list with 14% mentioning this option, followed by administration (7%), salaries and benefits (7%), and extra services like gifted education, special education, lunch programs, electives, shop, etc. (7%).
- When given the choice between reduced funding to town services or public schools, 65% of residents opt for reduced funding to town services.

II. West Hartford Issues

Residents rate education as the most important issues facing West Hartford, followed by the issues of taxes.

When asked openly about the most important issue facing West Hartford, 33% of residents state issues relating to education and schools. Another 25% say that taxes are the most important issue facing the town. Other issues include transportation and traffic (4%), elderly issues (4%), town budget (2%), business and the economy (2%), and public safety (2%). One in five respondents (20%) did not offer an opinion on this question.

What would you say is the MOST important issue facing West Hartford? (ASK OPEN-ENDED)



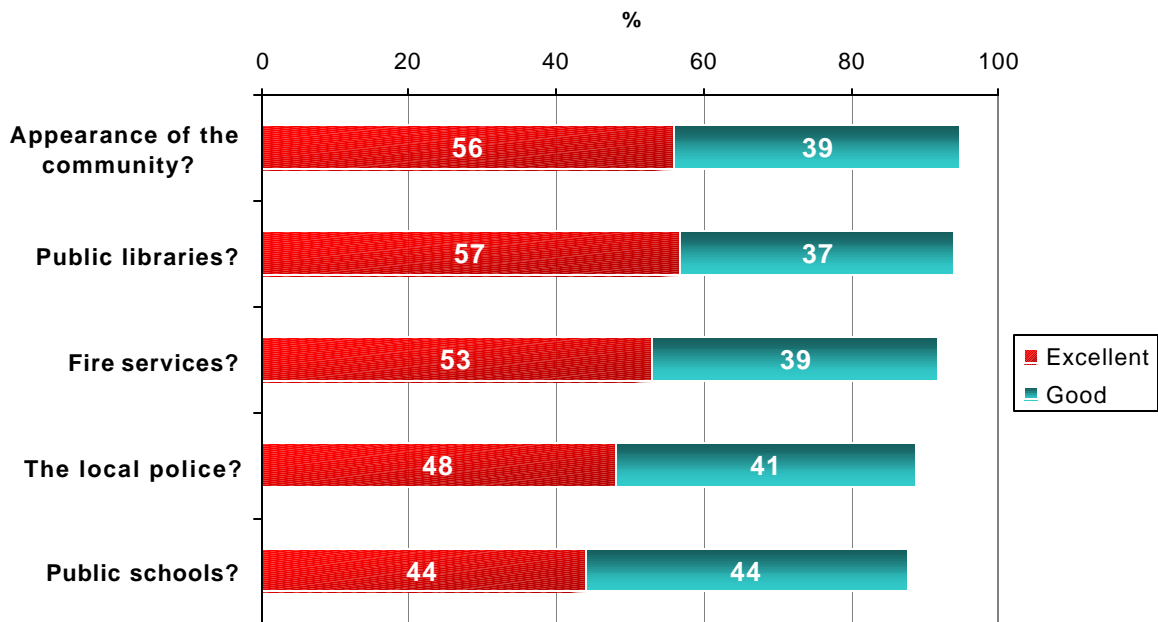
Residents who have school-age children are more likely to mention education and schools as the most important issue facing West Hartford, as compared to those who do not have school-age children (54% vs. 27% respectively). Women in West Hartford are also more likely to mention education and schools (37% as compared to 27% of men). Furthermore, those earning more than \$75,000 per year (39% as compared to 24% of those earning less than \$75,000 per year) and those residents who own their own home (36% as compared to 20% of renters) are also most likely to mention education and schools as the most important issue facing West Hartford.

III. Ratings of Town Services

A strong majority of residents rate town services as excellent or good.

About nine out of ten residents give specific town services high ratings. Ninety-five percent of residents rate the town's efforts to maintain the *physical appearance of the community* as either excellent (56%) or good (39%). Similarly, 94% of residents rate *public libraries* as excellent or good (57% and 37% respectively) and 92% of residents rate *fire services* as excellent or good (53% and 39% respectively). The *local police* received positive ratings from 89% of residents with 48% rating police services as excellent and 41% rating these services as good. Lastly, 88% of residents rate West Hartford *public schools* as excellent (44%) or good (44%).

Please rate the quality of each service as excellent, good, fair, or poor:



Ninety-seven percent of residents who have school-age children rate West Hartford public schools as either excellent or good. This is significantly higher than those without school-age children (85%).

IV. Funding Priorities and Tax Increases

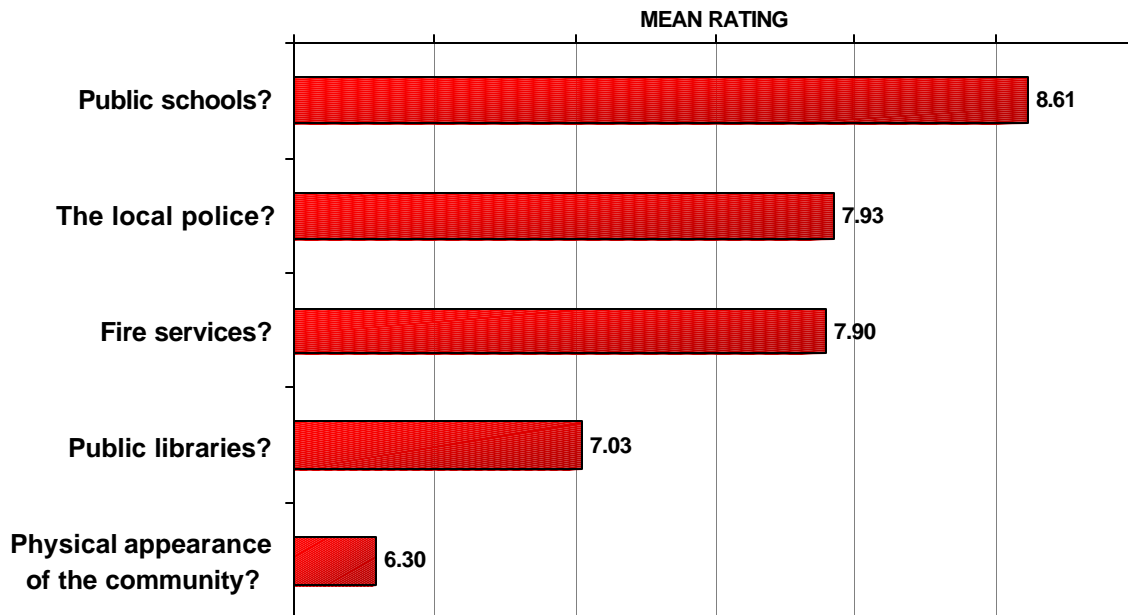
Residents rate public schools the highest funding priority, as compared to other services.

West Hartford residents were asked to rate the funding priority of each town services on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning that the service should not be given priority over any other services and 10 meaning that the service should be given priority over all other services.

Six in ten residents (60%) rate *public schools* as either a 9 or 10 with an overall mean score of 8.61. The local police and fire services receive near equal funding priority ratings. About four in ten residents (41%) rate *police services* as either a 9 or 10 with an overall mean score of 7.93. Similarly, 41% rate *fire services* as either a 9 or 10 with an overall mean score of 7.90.

Public libraries and the maintenance of the *physical appearance of the community* receive overall mean ratings of 7.03 and 6.30 respectively. However, only 24% of residents give public libraries a priority rating of 9 or 10 and even less (15%) give maintenance of the physical appearance of the community a priority rating of 9 or 10.

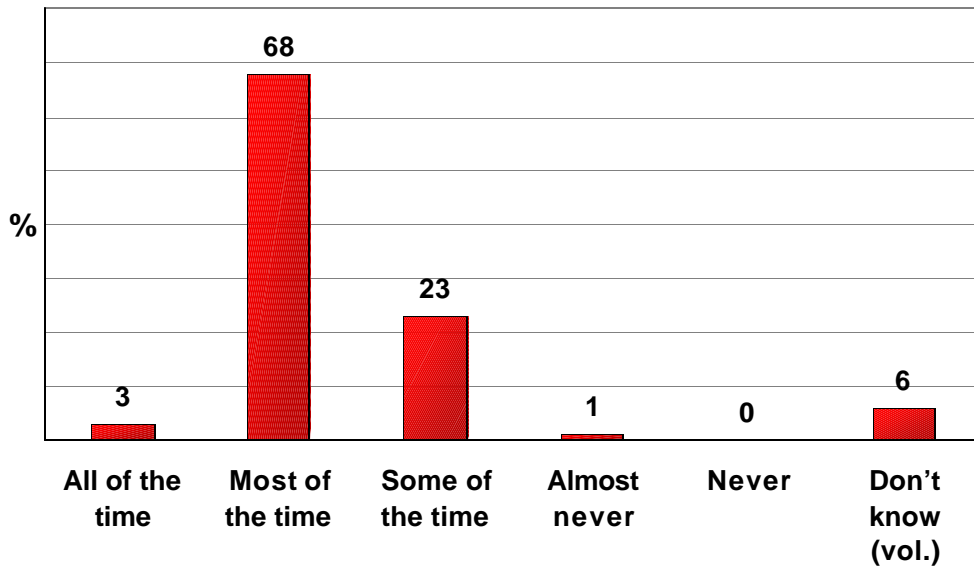
I'm going to read you the list of services again. This time I'd like you to use a scale from 0 to 10 to rate what level of priority you would give the service when it comes to funding the service using your tax dollars. A rating of 0 means that the service should not be given priority over any other service. A rating of 10 means that it should be given priority over all other services:



Residents approve of how West Hartford’s local government sets it priorities for spending tax dollars.

More than seven in ten residents (71%) say that West Hartford’s local government correctly sets its priorities for spending tax dollars all or most of the time. While 3% say that local government correctly set its priorities for spending tax dollars *all* of the time, a full 68% say that local government does so *most* of the time. Twenty-three percent of residents say that priorities are correctly set *some* of the time and only 1% say *almost never*.

When it comes to setting priorities for how to spend tax dollars, would you say West Hartford’s local government sets its priorities correctly all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, almost never, or never?



Women in West Hartford are more likely to say that local government correctly sets its priorities for spending tax dollars, as compared to men (77% of women say local government does so all or most of the time vs. 63% of men that say the same). Additionally, younger residents are more critical of local government priorities when it comes to spending tax dollars. Fifty-eight percent of residents who are 18-39 years old say that local government correctly sets priorities for spending tax dollars all or most of the time, as compared to 75% of residents who are 40-55 years old and 77% of residents who are 56 years and older.

A majority of residents are at least somewhat likely to support tax increases for all town services, with public libraries ranking the highest among services.

West Hartford residents were asked how likely they would be to vote for an increase in annual taxes to maintain specific services at its current level of quality. Residents were given a specific amount, which equaled a 6% increase over the current average household cost per service. They were asked to treat each one as if it were the only tax increase that they were being asked to vote on.

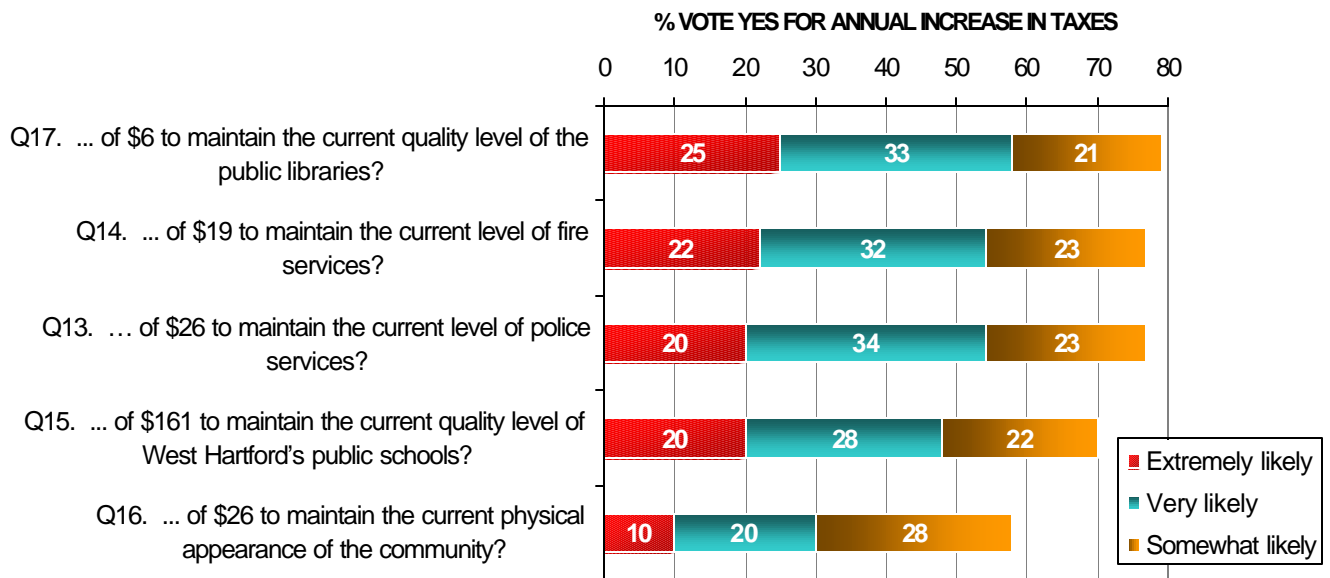
Seventy-nine percent of residents are extremely likely (25%), very likely (33%), or somewhat likely (21%) to vote yes for a \$6 increase in annual taxes to maintain the current quality level of *public libraries*.

Seventy-seven percent of residents are extremely likely (22%), very likely (32%), or somewhat likely (23%) to vote yes for a \$19 increase in annual taxes to maintain the current quality level of *fire services*. Similarly, 77% of residents are extremely likely (20%), very likely (34%), or somewhat likely (23%) to vote yes for a \$26 increase in annual taxes to maintain the current quality level of *police services*.

Seven in ten residents (70%) are extremely likely (20%), very likely (28%), or somewhat likely (22%) to vote yes for a \$161 increase in annual taxes to maintain the current quality level of West Hartford *public schools*.

Fifty-eight percent of residents are extremely likely (10%), very likely (20%), or somewhat likely (28%) to vote yes for a \$26 increase in annual taxes to maintain the current *physical appearance of the community*.

Currently, average West Hartford household pays \$_____ in taxes each year for [specific service]. If you had to vote today, how likely would you be to vote yes for a \$_____ increase in your annual taxes to maintain the current quality level of [this service]? Would you be extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?

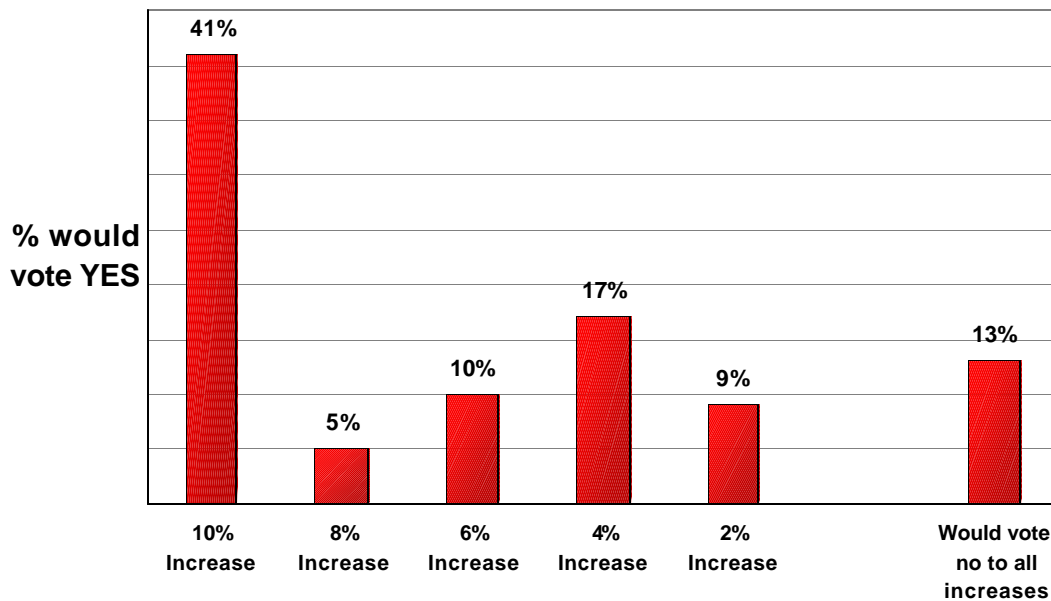


When asked about town services overall, a majority of residents are willing to pay at least a 6% increase in taxes to maintain the current level of town services.

West Hartford residents were asked to think about voting for tax increases to support town services. With the average household paying \$1655 in taxes each year to maintain the current level of town services, 41% of residents say that they would vote “yes” for a 10% increase in annual taxes for town services to maintain these services at their current level. Five percent would vote “yes” to an 8% increase and another 10% would vote “yes” to a 6% increase. Therefore, a majority (56%) would vote “yes” to a 6% to 10% increase in taxes to maintain the current level of town services, with a large portion willing to pay a 10% increase.

Another 17% would vote “yes” to a 4% increase and 9% would vote “yes” to a 2% increase. Therefore, a full 82% would vote “yes” to at least a 2% increase in taxes to maintain the current level of town services. Thirteen percent would vote no to all increases.

The average household pays \$1655 in taxes each year to maintain the current level of town services provided by the Town of West Hartford, but the cost of providing these services will increase. If you had to vote today, would you vote YES or NO to a ____% increase in the annual taxes your household pays for town services in order to maintain these services at their current level?

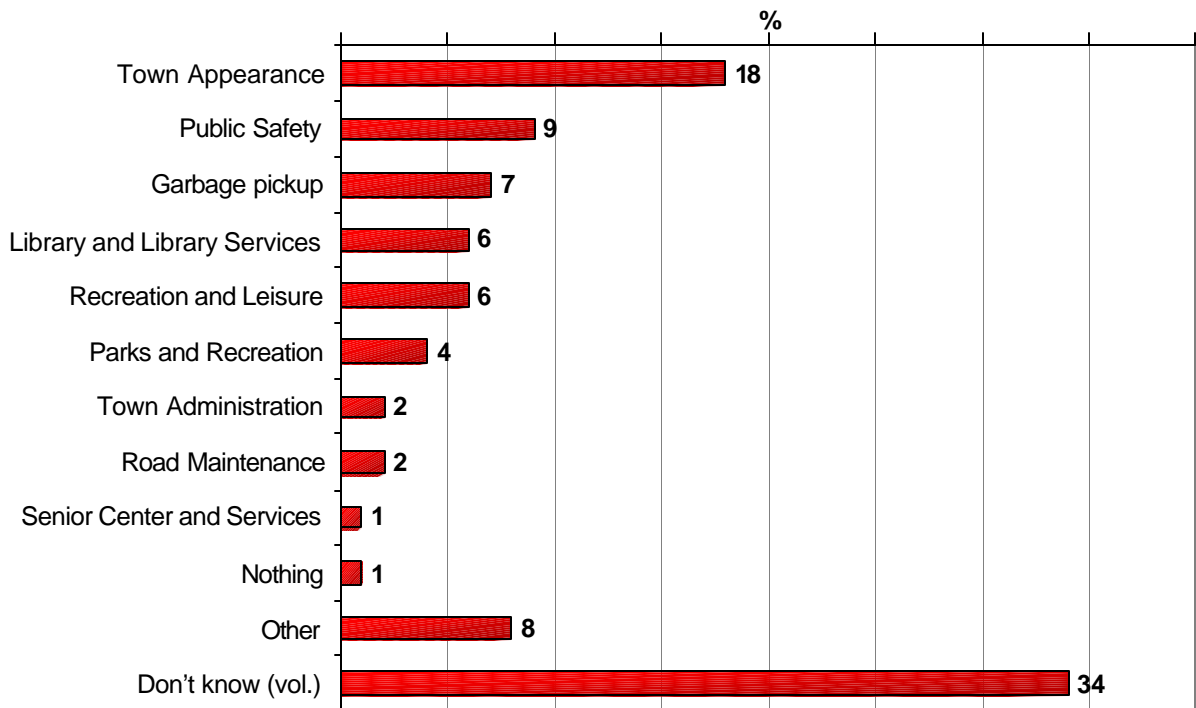


If cuts to town services are necessary, West Hartford residents offer a variety of options with maintaining the town’s appearance topping the list.

Residents were asked to openly respond to where cutbacks should be made in West Hartford’s budget if it were necessary to reduce funding to one town service. Residents offer a variety of responses with 18% saying funding to maintain the town’s appearance and beautification should be reduced. Another 9% prefer cutbacks to public safety services (police and fire), 7% prefer cutbacks to garbage pickup, 6% prefer cutbacks to library services, and 6% opt for cutbacks to recreation and leisure services.

Furthermore, residents favor cuts to parks and recreation services (4%), town administration (2%), road maintenance (2%), and cuts to the senior center (1%). Thirty-four percent do not know where cutbacks to the town’s budget should be made if necessary.

Now think about the possibility of making cutbacks in West Hartford’s budget for the town services it provides. If it were necessary to reduce funding to ONE town service, which ONE would you pick?

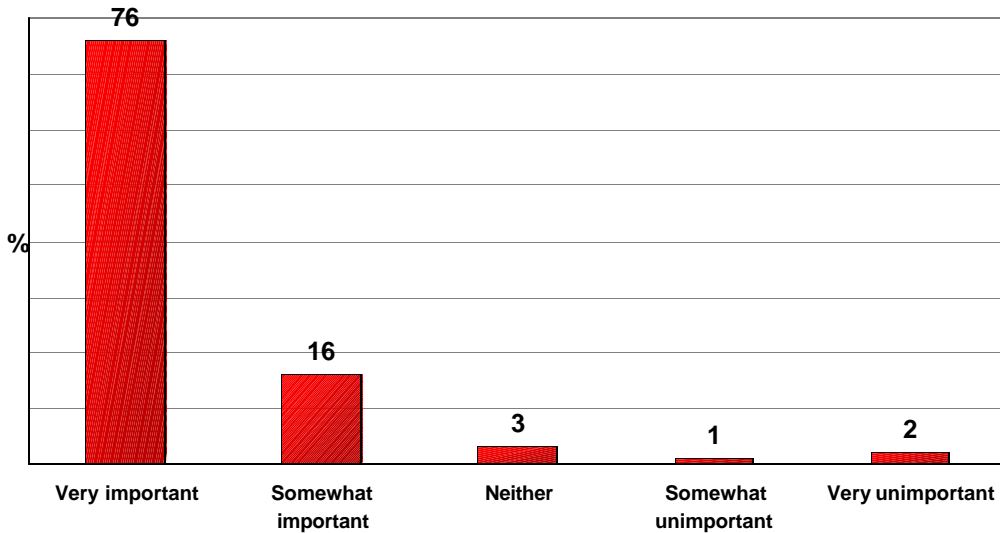


V. Education Issues

Maintaining West Hartford's reputation for having high quality public schools is important to most residents.

About nine out of ten residents (92%) say that it is important to develop or maintain West Hartford's reputation for having high quality public schools. Seventy-six percent of residents believe that this is very important and 16% believe it is somewhat important. Three percent of residents think that it is neither important nor unimportant to maintain a high reputation. Similarly, 3% say that it is unimportant to maintain a high reputation.

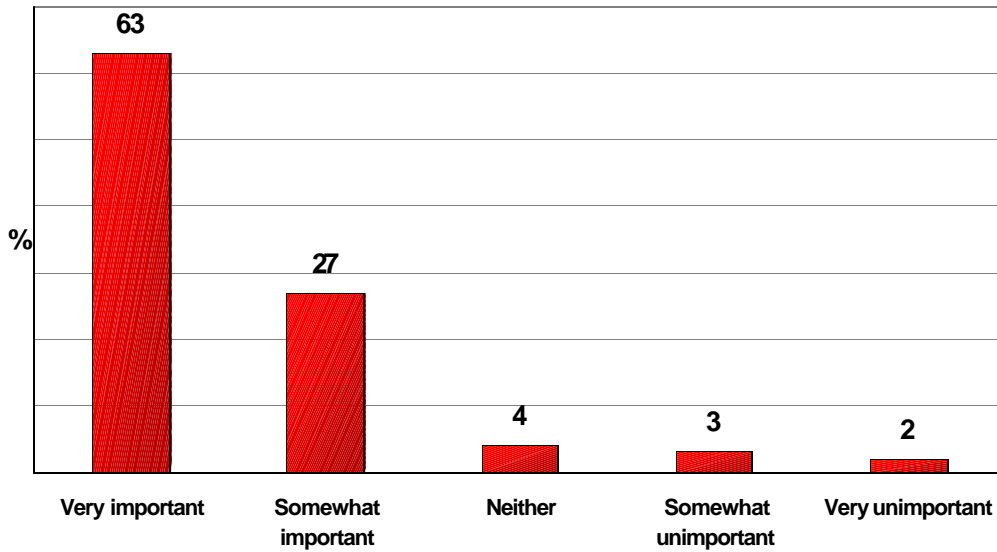
How important is it to you that West Hartford develops or maintains a reputation for having high quality public schools? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor unimportant, somewhat unimportant, or very unimportant?



The number of children in each class is an important issue to residents as well.

Nine out of ten residents believe that the number of children in each class is an important issue. Sixty-three percent of residents say that class size is a very important issue and 27% say that it is somewhat important. Four percent of residents believe that class size is neither important nor unimportant. Three percent say that this issue is unimportant. Three percent say that this issue is unimportant.

How important of an issue is the number of children in each class? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor unimportant, somewhat unimportant, or very unimportant?



Ninety-eight percent of residents with school-age children say that class size is important (73% say very important and 25% say somewhat important). This is a higher percentage than residents who do not have school-age children (88% with 60% saying very important and 28% saying somewhat important).

Building a new middle school receives the most support from residents to help deal with the increases in student enrollment, followed closely by a plan to add portable classrooms to the existing middle schools and expanding core facilities.

West Hartford residents were asked to consider a number of plans to deal with the increases in student enrollment. A majority of residents support two of the plans: building a new middle school and adding portable classrooms to the existing middle school.

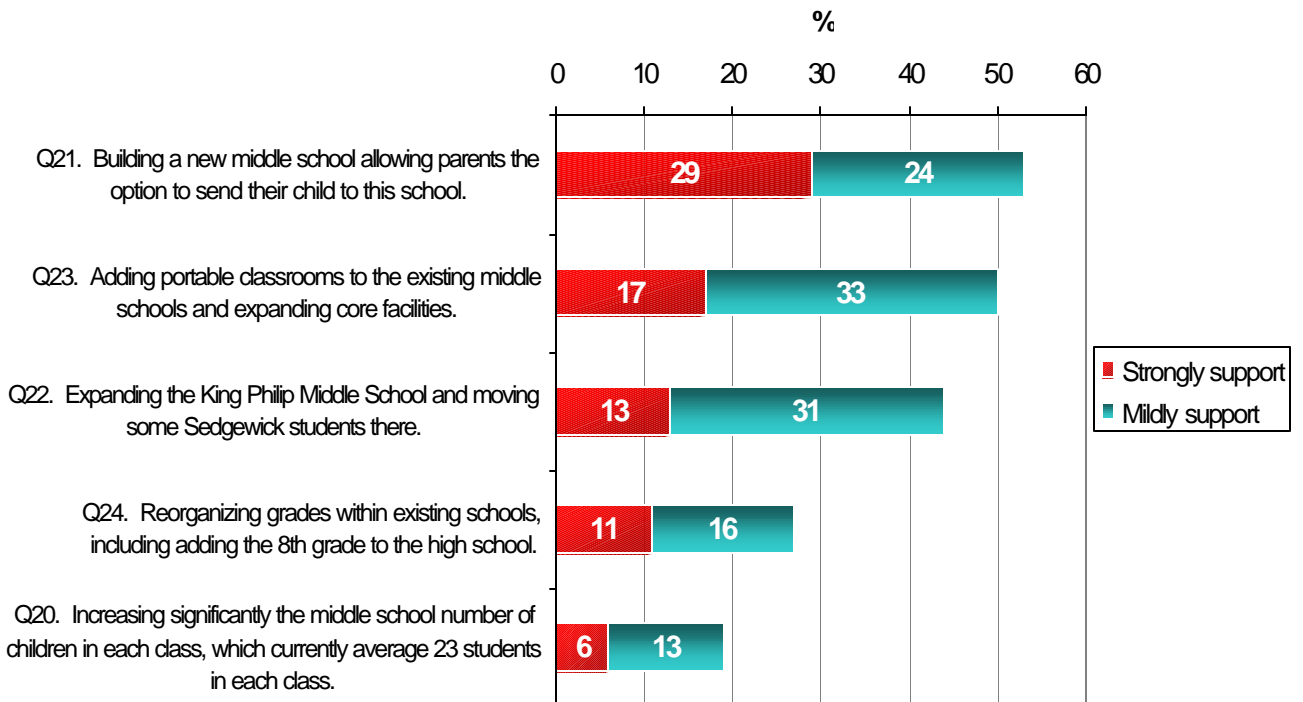
Fifty-three percent either strongly support (29%) or mildly support (24%) building a new middle school allowing parents the option to send their child to this school. Older residents (56 years and older), men, and residents without school-age children are less likely to support this plan than their counterparts in the survey.

Fifty percent of residents either strongly support (17%) or mildly support (33%) adding portable classrooms to the existing middle schools and expanding core facilities.

Forty-four percent of residents either strongly support (13%) or mildly support (31%) expanding the King Philip Middle School and moving some Sedgewick students to King Philip Middle School.

Less residents support reorganizing grades within existing schools, including adding the 8th grade to the high school (27% with 11% strongly supporting and 16% mildly supporting). The least supported plan is increasing significantly the middle school number of children in each class (19% with 6% strongly supporting and 13% mildly supporting).

The Town of West Hartford is considering a number of plans to deal with the increases in student enrollment in West Hartford public schools. I will now read to you a list of these plans and please tell me if you support or oppose each one.

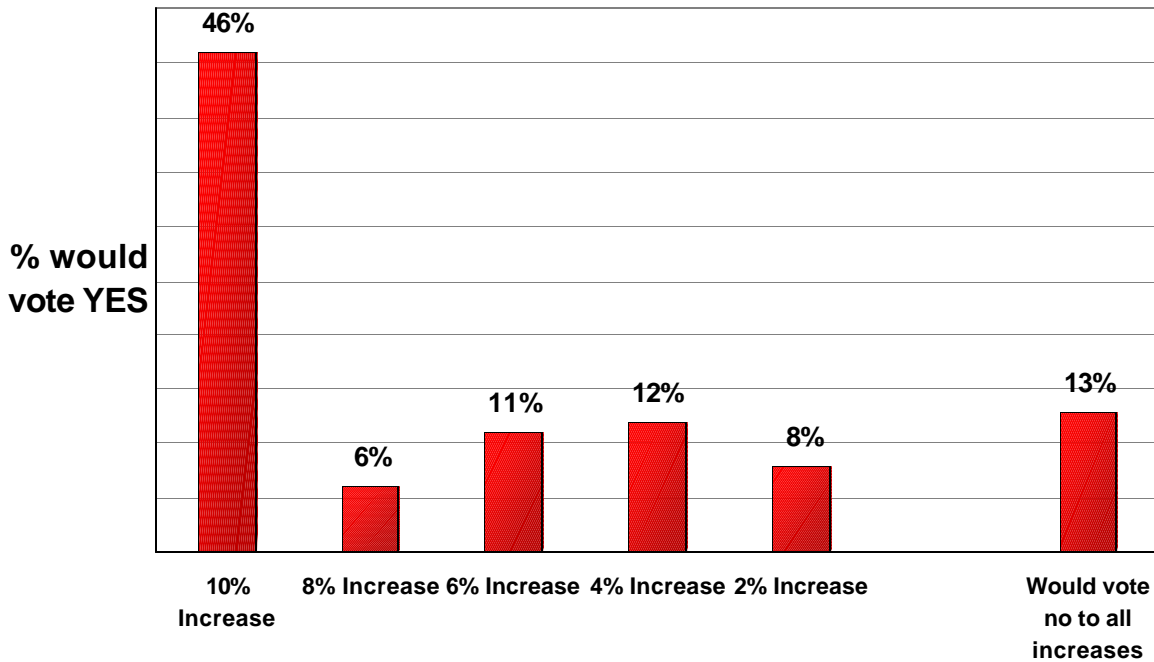


A majority of residents are willing to pay at least an 8% increase in taxes to maintain West Hartford’s reputation for having high quality public schools.

West Hartford residents were asked to think about voting for tax increases to maintain West Hartford’s reputation for having high quality public schools. With the average household paying \$2680 in taxes each year to support the town’s public schools, 46% of residents say that they would vote “yes” for a 10% increase in annual taxes for public schools in order to keep West Hartford public schools at their current quality level and maintain the town’s reputation for having high quality schools. Six percent would vote “yes” to an 8% increase. Therefore, a majority (52%) would vote “yes” to at least an 8% in taxes to maintain the current quality level of West Hartford public schools.

Another 11% would vote “yes” to a 6% increase, 12% would vote “yes” to a 4% increase, and 8% would vote “yes” to a 2% increase. Therefore, a full 83% would vote “yes” to at least a 2% increase in taxes to maintain the current quality level of West Hartford public schools. Thirteen percent would vote no to all increases.

Currently the average West Hartford household pays a total of \$2680 in taxes each year to support the town’s public schools. The overall cost to maintain these schools and, therefore, to maintain West Hartford’s reputation for having high quality public schools, will increase. If you had to vote today, would you vote YES or NO to a ____% increase the annual taxes your household pays for public schools in order to keep West Hartford’s public schools at their current quality level and maintain the town’s reputation for having high quality schools?

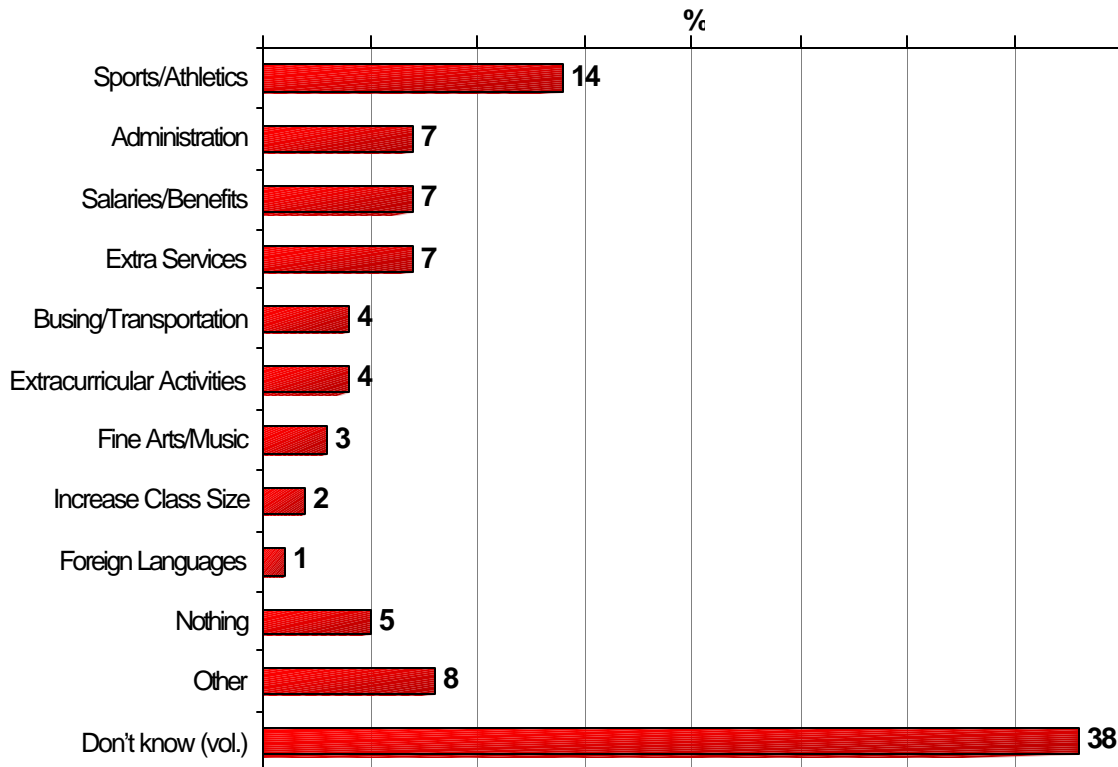


If cuts to education are necessary, West Hartford residents offer a variety of options with sports and athletics topping the list.

Residents were asked to openly respond to where cutbacks should be made in West Hartford’s public school budget if there is not enough money available to maintain the schools current quality level. A variety of options were offered with 14% of residents stating an answer relating to sports and athletic programs. Another 7% prefer cutbacks to the administration, 7% prefer cutbacks to salaries and benefits, and 7% prefer cutbacks to extra services like gifted education, special education, lunch programs, electives, shop, Quest, and field trips.

Furthermore, 4% favor cuts to busing and transportation and 4% favor cuts to extracurricular activities. Other answers include: cuts to fine arts and music (3%), increase class size in lieu of cuts (2%), and cuts to foreign language programs (1%). Almost four in ten residents (38%) do not know where cutbacks should be made if necessary.

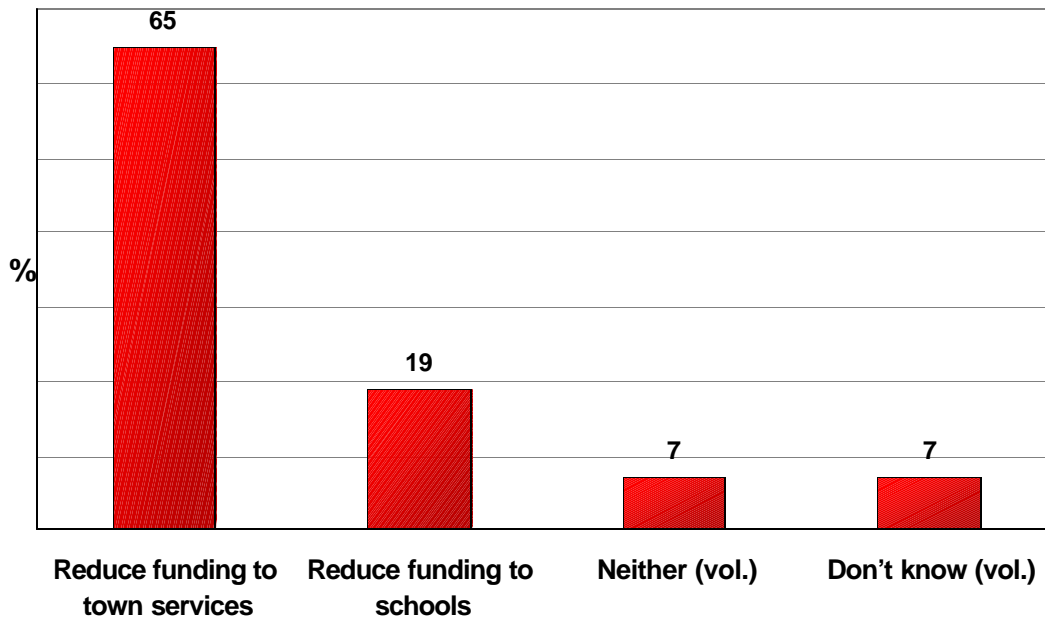
I’d like you to think about your preferences for where cutbacks should be made in West Hartford’s public school budget if there is not enough money available to maintain the schools at their current quality level. If it were necessary to reduce funding to ONE aspect of West Hartford’s public schools, what is the ONE aspect you would pick? (ASK OPEN-ENDED)



Residents prefer reduced funding to town services more than reduced funding to public schools.

Slightly less than two-thirds of residents (65%) would choose to reduce funding to West Hartford’s town services over reduced funding to West Hartford’s public schools. Nineteen percent favor reduced funding to public schools. Although not offered as an option, 7% volunteer an answer of “neither” to which type of funding that would choose to reduce.

If you had to choose between reducing funding to West Hartford’s town services or reducing funding to West Hartford’s public schools, which would you choose?



Although all demographic subgroups favor reduced funding to town services more than reduced funding to public schools, significant differences exist in the strength of preference. For instance, 71% of men in West Hartford favor cuts to town services versus 61% of women that feel the same. Between 75-80% of residents below the age of 56 favor cuts to town services as compared to 53% of residents 56 years and older. Residents who earn \$75,000 per year are more likely to favor cuts to town services than residents who earn less than \$75,000 per year (80% vs. 63% respectively). Lastly, 82% of residents with school-age children favor cuts to town services versus 61% of residents who do not have school-age children.

VI. Methodology

The Town of West Hartford commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut (CSRA) to conduct a survey of town residents. The survey was conducted via telephone from September 25, 2002 to September 29, 2002 by the CSRA interviewers. The survey was conducted with a total of 401 randomly selected respondents from West Hartford. Interviews were conducted at the CSRA's interviewing facility in Storrs, Connecticut, using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system.

The sample telephone numbers for the population were generated through a random-digit-dial telephone methodology to ensure that each possible residential telephone number had an equal probability of selection. The sample error associated with a survey of this size is approximately ± 5 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. This means that there is less than one chance in twenty that the results of a survey of this size would differ by more than 5 percentage points in either direction from the results which would be obtained if all residents of West Hartford had been selected. CSRA attempted to minimize all possible sources of error in this survey.

VII. Annotated Questionnaire

Q1. What would you say is the MOST important issue facing West Hartford?

33%	Education/Schools
25	Taxes
4	Transportation and Traffic Issues
4	Elderly Issues
2	Budget Issues
2	Business/Economy
2	Public Safety (crime)
1	Racial/Cultural Issues
8	Other
20	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

I'm now going to read a list of a few of the services provided in your town. Please rate the quality of each service as excellent, good, fair, or poor. First, how would you rate . . .

Q2. The local police? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?)

48%	Excellent
41	Good
7	Fair
1	Poor
3	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

Q3. Fire services? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?)

53%	Excellent
39	Good
2	Fair
*	Poor
6	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

Q4. Public schools? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?)

44%	Excellent
44	Good
3	Fair
1	Poor
9	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

* Indicates less than .5%

Q5. Physical appearance of the community? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, or poor?)

56%	Excellent
39	Good
5	Fair
1	Poor
1	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

Q6. Public libraries? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?)

57%	Excellent
37	Good
3	Fair
*	Poor
2	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

I'm going to read you the list of services again. This time I'd like you to use a scale from 0 to 10 to rate what level of priority you would give the service when it comes to funding the service using your tax dollars. A rating of 0 means that the service should not be given priority over any other service. A rating of 10 means that it should be given priority over all other services. First, compared to all other services funded with your tax dollars, how would you rate the funding priority of . . .

Q7. The local police? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Compared to other services funded with your tax dollars, how would you rate the funding priority of the police? 0 means the service should not be given priority over any other service and 10 means it should be given priority over all other services.)

1%	Zero (the service should not be given priority over any other service)
1	1
*	2
*	3
1	4
8	5
8	6
12	7
26	8
14	9
27	Ten (the service should be given priority over all other service)
1	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

7.93 Mean Rating

Q8. Fire services? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Compared to other services funded with your tax dollars, how would you rate the funding priority of fire services? 0 means the service should not be given priority over any other service and 10 means it should be given priority over all other services.)

*%	Zero (the service should not be given priority over any other service)
0	1
*	2
2	3
1	4
10	5
8	6
14	7
22	8
16	9
25	Ten (the service should be given priority over all other service)
1	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

7.90 Mean Rating

Q9. Public schools? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Compared to other services funded with your tax dollars, how would you rate the funding priority of the public schools? 0 means the service should not be given priority over any other service and 10 means it should be given priority over all other services.)

1%	Zero (the service should not be given priority over any other service)
0	1
1	2
0	3
*	4
4	5
3	6
8	7
19	8
14	9
46	Ten (the service should be given priority over all other service)
3	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

8.61 Mean Rating

Q10. Physical appearance of the community? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Compared to other services funded with your tax dollars, how would you rate the funding priority of the physical appearance of the community? 0 means the service should not be given priority over any other service and 10 means it should be given priority over all other services.)

5%	Zero (the service should not be given priority over any other service)
1	1
2	2
2	3
8	4
17	5
14	6
13	7
22	8
8	9
7	Ten (the service should be given priority over all other service)
2	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

6.30 Mean Rating

Q11. Public libraries? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Compared to other services funded with your tax dollars, how would you rate the funding priority of public libraries? 0 means the service should not be given priority over any other service and 10 means it should be given priority over all other services.)

1%	Zero (the service should not be given priority over any other service)
1	1
2	2
1	3
4	4
15	5
11	6
18	7
21	8
11	9
13	Ten (the service should be given priority over all other service)
2	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

7.03 Mean Rating

Q12. When it comes to setting priorities for how to spend tax dollars, would you say West Hartford's local government sets its priorities correctly all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, almost never, or never?

3%	All of the time
68	Most of the time
23	Some of the time
1	Almost never
*	Never
6	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

As you may know, local governments sometimes ask people to vote on whether or not there should be tax increases to maintain services. I'm going to read some services and, for each one, ask you how likely you would be to vote "YES" to increase annual taxes to maintain that service at its current level of quality. Please treat each one as if it were the ONLY tax increase you were being asked to vote on. First . . .

Q13. Currently, the average West Hartford household pays \$425 in taxes each year for local police services. If you had to vote today, how likely would you be to vote YES for a \$26 increase in your annual taxes to maintain the current level of police services? Would you be extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?

20%	Extremely likely
34	Very likely
23	Somewhat likely
11	Not too likely
11	Not likely at all
1	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

Q14. Currently, the average West Hartford household pays \$322 in taxes each year for fire services. If you had to vote today, how likely would you be to vote YES for a \$19 increase in your annual taxes to maintain the current level of fire services? Would you be extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?

22%	Extremely likely
32	Very likely
23	Somewhat likely
13	Not too likely
8	Not likely at all
2	Don't know (vol.)
*	Refused (vol.)

Q15. Currently, the average West Hartford household pays \$2680 in taxes each year for public schools. If you had to vote today, how likely would you be to vote YES for a \$161 increase in your annual taxes to maintain the current quality level of West Hartford's public schools? Would you be extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?

20%	Extremely likely
28	Very likely
22	Somewhat likely
13	Not too likely
16	Not likely at all
2	Don't know (vol.)
*	Refused (vol.)

Q16. Currently, the average West Hartford household pays \$425 in taxes each year for maintenance of the physical appearance of the community. If you had to vote today, how likely would you be to vote YES for a \$26 increase in your annual taxes to maintain the current physical appearance of the community? Would you be extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?

10%	Extremely likely
20	Very likely
28	Somewhat likely
19	Not too likely
20	Not likely at all
2	Don't know (vol.)
*	Refused (vol.)

Q17. Currently, the average West Hartford household pays \$99 in taxes each year for public libraries. If you had to vote today, how likely would you be to vote YES for a \$6 increase in your annual taxes to maintain the current quality level of the public libraries? Would you be extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?

25%	Extremely likely
33	Very likely
21	Somewhat likely
10	Not too likely
9	Not likely at all
2	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

Now I'd like to focus more specifically on education.

Q18. How important is it to you that West Hartford develops or maintains a reputation for having high quality public schools? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor unimportant, somewhat unimportant, or very unimportant?

76%	Very important
16	Somewhat important
3	Neither important nor unimportant
1	Somewhat unimportant
2	Very unimportant
*	Don't know (vol.)
1	Refused (vol.)

Q19. How important of an issue is the number of children in each class? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor unimportant, somewhat unimportant, or very unimportant?

63%	Very important
27	Somewhat important
4	Neither important nor unimportant
3	Somewhat unimportant
2	Very unimportant
1	Don't know (vol.)
*	Refused (vol.)

The Town of West Hartford is considering a number of plans to deal with the increases in student enrollment in West Hartford public schools. I will now read to you a list of these plans and please tell me if you support or oppose each one. First . . .

Q20. Increasing significantly the middle school number of children in each class, which currently average 23 students in each class. (PROBE: Do you strongly support, mildly support, neither support nor oppose, mildly oppose, or strongly oppose this plan?)

6%	Strongly support
13	Mildly support
4	Neither support nor oppose
21	Mildly oppose
51	Strongly oppose
4	Don't know (vol.)
1	Refused (vol.)

Q21. Building a new middle school allowing parents the option to send their child to this school. (PROBE: Do you strongly support, mildly support, neither support nor oppose, mildly oppose, or strongly oppose this plan?)

29%	Strongly support
24	Mildly support
9	Neither support nor oppose
17	Mildly oppose
13	Strongly oppose
8	Don't know (vol.)
1	Refused (vol.)

Q22. Expanding the King Philip Middle School and moving some Sedgewick students there. (PROBE: Do you strongly support, mildly support, neither support nor oppose, mildly oppose, or strongly oppose this plan?)

13%	Strongly support
31	Mildly support
13	Neither support nor oppose
12	Mildly oppose
18	Strongly oppose
13	Don't know (vol.)
*	Refused (vol.)

Q23. Adding portable classrooms to the existing middle schools and expanding core facilities. (PROBE: Do you strongly support, mildly support, neither support nor oppose, mildly oppose, or strongly oppose this plan?)

17%	Strongly support
33	Mildly support
5	Neither support nor oppose
18	Mildly oppose
23	Strongly oppose
4	Don't know (vol.)
*	Refused (vol.)

Q24. Reorganizing grades within existing schools, including adding the 8th grade to the high school. (PROBE: Do you strongly support, mildly support, neither support nor oppose, mildly oppose, or strongly oppose this plan?)

11%	Strongly support
16	Mildly support
7	Neither support nor oppose
18	Mildly oppose
42	Strongly oppose
5	Don't know (vol.)
*	Refused (vol.)

Q25. During the school year that ended last spring, did you have any children in grades kindergarten through 12th grade?

22%	Yes	
78	No	SKIP TO IQ28
0	Don't know (vol.)	SKIP TO IQ28
*	Refused (vol.)	SKIP TO IQ28

Q25a. What grades were your children in? (ASK OPEN-ENDED. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.)

60%	Kindergarten through 5 th grade
26%	6 th through 8 th grade
40%	9 th through 12 th grade

Q26. During the school year that ended last spring, did you have any children in West Hartford public schools, or not?

94%	Yes
6	No
0	Don't know (vol.)
0	Refused (vol.)

Q27. During the school year that ended last spring, did you have any children in . . . (READ 1-3. ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY)

3%	Religious or parochial school
7%	Non-religious private school
0%	Home-school
78%	None of the above

Now I want you to think again about voting for tax increases.

Q28. The average household pays \$1655 in taxes each year to maintain the current level of town services provided by the Town of West Hartford, but the cost of providing these services will increase. If you had to vote today, would you vote YES or NO to a 10% increase in the annual taxes your household pays for town services in order to maintain these services at their current level?

IF NO: Would you vote YES or NO to an 8% increase?

IF NO: a 6% increase?

IF NO: a 4% increase?

IF NO: a 2% increase?

41%	10% Increase
5%	8% Increase
10%	6% Increase
17%	4% Increase
9%	2% Increase
13%	Would vote no to all increases
4%	Don't know (vol.)
1%	Refused (vol.)

Q29. Currently the average West Hartford household pays a total of \$2680 in taxes each year to support the town's public schools. The overall cost to maintain these schools and, therefore, to maintain West Hartford's reputation for having high quality public schools, will increase. If you had to vote today, would you vote YES or NO to a 10% increase the annual taxes your household pays for public schools in order to keep West Hartford's public schools at their current quality level and maintain the town's reputation for having high quality schools?

IF NO: Would you vote YES or NO to an 8% increase?

IF NO: a 6% increase?

IF NO: a 4% increase?

IF NO: a 2% increase?

46%	10% Increase
6%	8% Increase
11%	6% Increase
12%	4% Increase
8%	2% Increase
13%	Would vote no to all increases
4%	Don't know (vol.)
1%	Refused (vol.)

Q30. Next I'd like you to think about your preferences for where cutbacks should be made in West Hartford's public school budget if there is not enough money available to maintain the schools at their current quality level. If it were necessary to reduce funding to ONE aspect of West Hartford's public schools, what is the ONE aspect you would pick?

- 14% Sports/Athletics
- 7 Administration
- 7 Salaries/Benefits
- 7 Extra Services (Gifted Ed, Special Ed, Lunch Programs, Electives, Shop, Quest, Field trips)
- 4 Busing/Transportation
- 4 Extracurricular Activities
- 3 Fine Arts/Music
- 2 Increase Class Size
- 1 Foreign Languages
- 5 Nothing
- 8 Other
- 38 Don't know (vol.)
- 1 Refused (vol.)

Q31. Now think about the possibility of making cutbacks in West Hartford's budget for the town services it provides. If it were necessary to reduce funding to ONE town service, which ONE would you pick?

- 18% Town Appearance/Beautification
- 9 Public Safety (police and fire)
- 7 Garbage pickup (including leaf pickup)
- 6 Library and Library Services
- 6 Recreation and Leisure Services
- 4 Parks and Recreation
- 2 Town Administration
- 2 Road Maintenance
- 1 Senior Center and Services
- 1 Nothing
- 8 Other
- 34 Don't know (vol.)
- 3 Refused (vol.)

Q32. If you had to choose between reducing funding to West Hartford's town services or reducing funding to West Hartford's public schools, which would you choose?

- 65% Reduce funding to town services
- 19 Reduce funding to schools
- 7 Neither (vol.)
- 7 Don't know (vol.)
- 3 Refused (vol.)

Q33. I would like you to think for a moment about your relationship to your local government. Please complete the following statement with the phrase that most closely represents that relationship: "My relationship to the town of West Hartford most closely resembles the relationship of . . . (READ TOP 5 CHOICES).

RANDOMIZE RESPONSES

- 23% A customer to a store
- 30 A shareholder to a corporation
- 8 A member to a volunteer organization
- 10 A policy holder to an insurance plan
- 14 A member to a cooperative
- 6 None of these (vol.)
- 7 Don't know (vol.)
- 3 Refused (vol.)

Q34. Where do you USUALLY get your information about what is going on in West Hartford? (READ LIST)

- 10% Television
- 67 Newspaper
- 2 Radio
- 7 Internet
- 6 Friends/Family
- 2 All of the above
- 4 Other (specify)
- * Don't know (vol.)
- 2 Refused (vol.)

We just have a few more questions for classification purposes only.

D1. Are you currently registered to vote?

- 86% Yes
- 11 No
- 1 Don't know (vol.)
- 2 Refused (vol.)

D2. How many years have you lived in West Hartford? (RECORD "0" IF LESS THAN 6 MONTHS. RECORD "1" IF 6 TO 12 MONTHS)

- 41% 10 years or less
- 23 11 to 29 years
- 33 30 years or more
- 1 Don't know (vol.)
- 3 Refused (vol.)

D3. Do you rent or own your current residence?

77%	Own
18	Rent
1	Don't know (vol.)
4	Refused (vol.)

D5. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

16%	One
38	Two
21	Three
17	Four
7	Five
2	Six
0	Seven
1	Eight

D6. How many people living in your household are under the age of 18?

63%	Zero
17	One
14	Two
5	Three
*	Four
0	Five
1	Six

D7. Are you currently married?

62%	Yes
34	No
*	Don't know (vol.)
4	Refused (vol.)

D8. What was the last grade of school that you have completed? (ASK AS OPEN ENDED: DO NOT READ CHOICES)

0%	Grade School or less
1	Some high school
15	High School graduate
12	Some College
34	College Graduate
36	Post Graduate
0	Don't know (vol.)
4	Refused (vol.)

D9. Are you of Hispanic origin?

3%	Yes
94	No
*	Don't know (vol.)
3	Refused (vol.)

D10. What is your race? Are you White, Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, Native American, or some other race?

83%	White
4	Black
3	Asian or Pacific Islander
1	Native American
2	Hispanic
1	Other
0	Don't know (vol.)
7	Refused (vol.)

D11. Income Categories of Respondents

33%	Less than \$75,000
35	\$75,000 or more
6	Don't know (vol.)
27	Refused (vol.)

D12. Age Categories

28%	18-39 years old
29	40-55 years old
34	56 years old and older
*	Don't know (vol.)
9	Refused (vol.)

D14. Gender

44%	Male
56	Female

THANK. That is all the questions I have for you. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation!