

Community Engagement on the Future of Healthcare in Port Colborne

Council Meeting
March 25, 2025



PORT COLBORNE

Background

Council: December 3, 2024

- Presentation from Niagara Health
- Request for \$6.2-million contribution to the South Niagara Hospital (furniture, fixtures)
- Proposed agreement between City, Niagara Health and Lockview Medical Group
- Council directed public engagement

Council: January 28, 2025

- Proposed engagement plan outlined
- Launched January 29, 2025
- Today is a mid-point check in
- Results and feedback gathered as of March 10, 2025

Reminder: Engagement Plan Goals & Objectives



Inform the community

Ensure the community has clear, transparent, and accessible information about the proposed partnership.



Gather feedback

Provide residents with a wide range of in-person and virtual channels so they can freely share their thoughts and ideas.



Promote inclusion

Actively involve diverse community voices to facilitate conversations and representation from often underrepresented groups.



Identify concerns and opportunities

Review feedback to highlight areas of alignment and identify potential improvements or alternatives to the proposal.



Ensure transparency

Provide the community with access to the feedback collected to demonstrate how this information informs Council's decision-making.

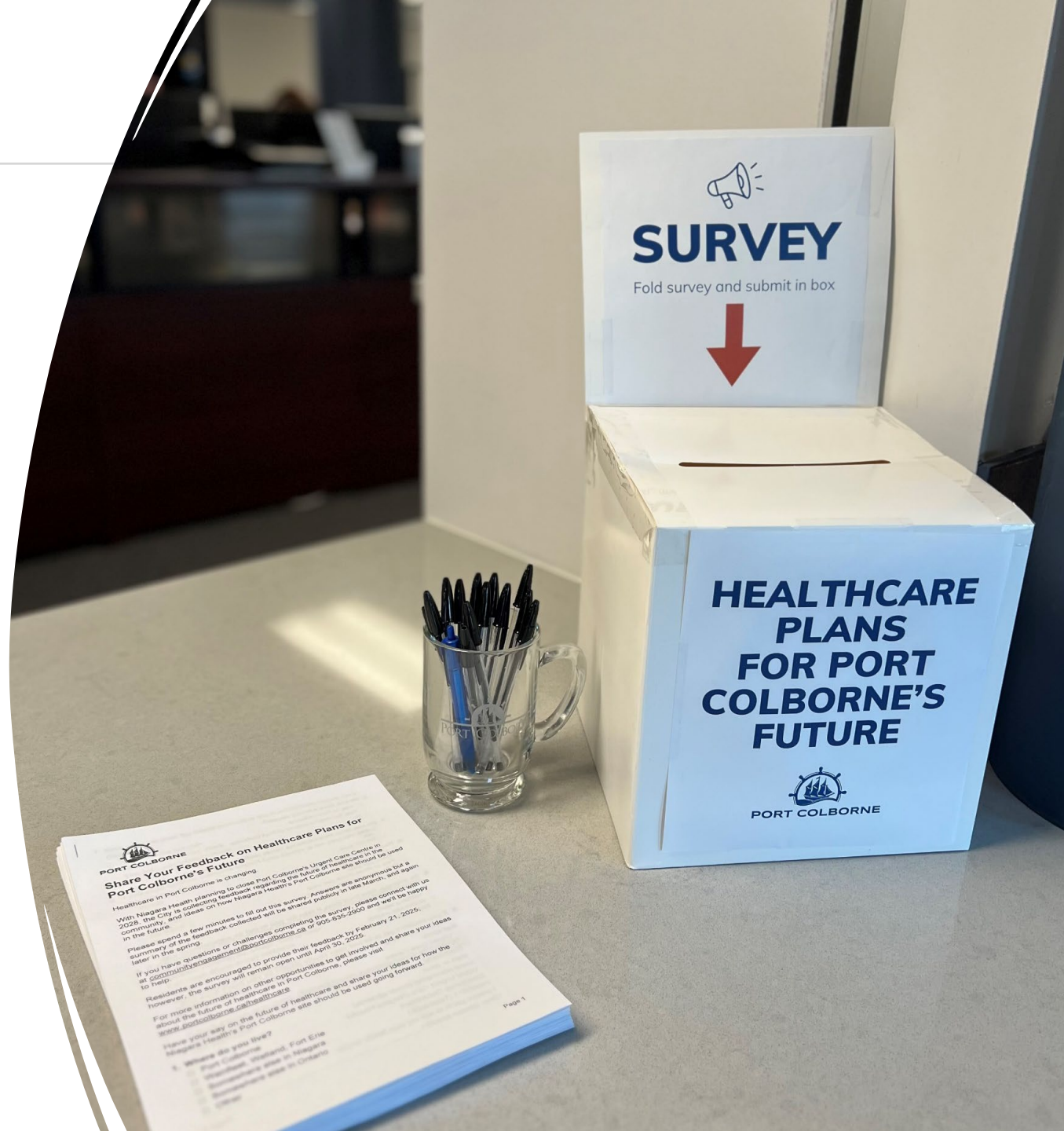


Community Engagement Activities

1. Online survey
2. Paper survey
3. In-person open houses
4. In-person town hall
5. Virtual town hall
6. Pop-up engagement opportunities
7. **Upcoming:** Meetings with various City committees and working groups

Survey Quick Stats

- Between January 29 – March 10
- **1,863** people completed the survey
 - **1,612** online surveys completed
 - **251** on paper surveys received
 - More continue to come in – April 30 deadline
- **11,271** open-field comments
- Average time to complete:
16 minutes (online survey)
- Estimated completion rate:
64% (online survey)



Open House Quick Stats

- February 19 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- February 20 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Vale Health & Wellness Centre
- Total of 87 participants
- Information and interactive stations to gather feedback



Town Halls Quick Stats

- **In-Person Town Hall:**
 - February 24 at Lighthouse Theatre
 - Hosted by independent moderator
 - Panel Q&A
 - 58 attendees
 - 38 viewers on the livestream;
7,400+ livestream views since
March 10
- **Virtual Town Hall:**
 - February 21
 - Hosted by independent moderator
 - Panel Q&A
 - 22 attendees



Pop-up Engagements & Focused Meetings

- **Pop-Up Engagements**

- February 10-14
- Pharmacies and grocery stores
- Promoted the survey
- iPad for residents who wanted to complete the survey on-site

- **City Committees & Working Groups**

- In-depth engagement sessions
 - Seniors Advisory Committee
 - Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee
 - Social Determinants of Health Committee
- Meetings set for March and April
- Special focus on youth group

Recommendations & Next Steps

- That Council establish a **Healthcare Advisory Committee** to ensure residents have adequate access to, and knowledge of, healthcare services in the City of Port Colborne
- That Council approve the Healthcare Advisory Committee **Terms of Reference**
- That Council direct the Healthcare Advisory Committee to propose a draft **Healthcare Services Strategy** by the end of 2025
- That Council approve the motion regarding **Provincial Healthcare Advocacy** as outlined in the letter
- That Council direct staff to **forward the petition** regarding the Port Colborne Hospital and Urgent Care Centre received at the March 11, 2025 Council meeting to the Ontario Minister of Health.

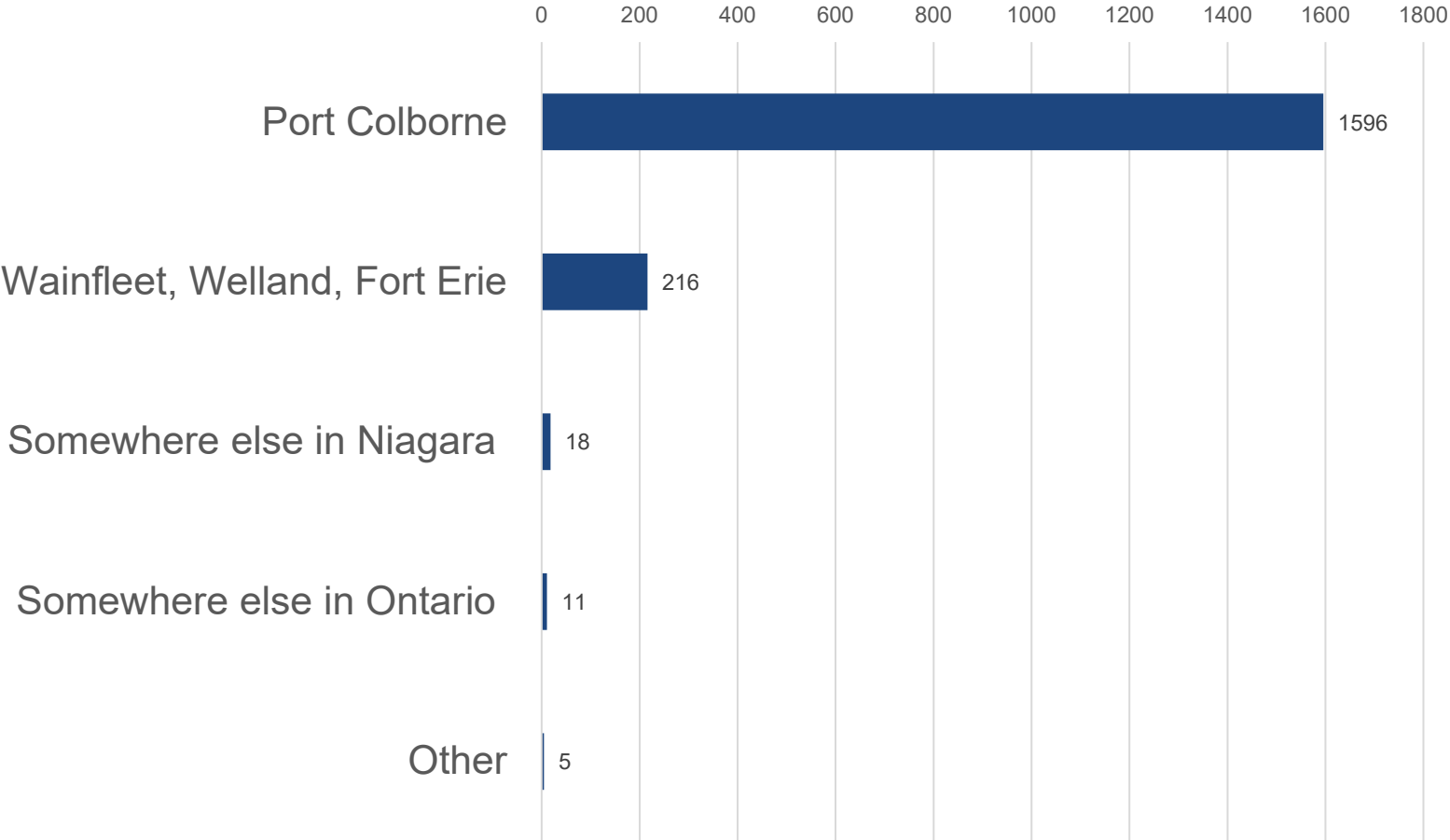
Summary of Engagement Results to Date

January 29 – March 10, 2025



Who We Heard From

Q1. Where do you live?

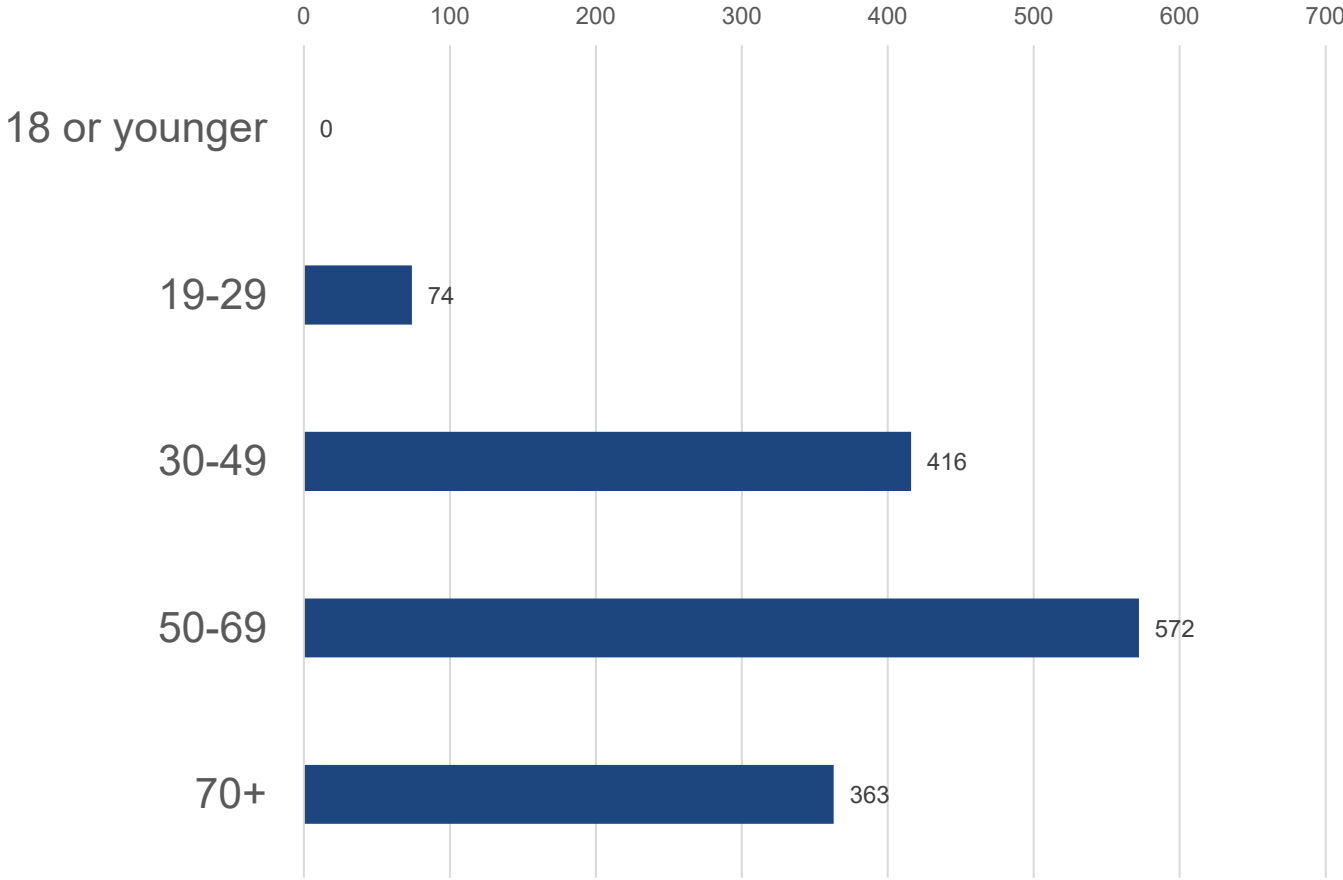


86% of respondents reported they live in Port Colborne.

98% of respondents reported they live in either Port Colborne, Wainfleet, Welland or Fort Erie.

Who We Heard From

Q31. Please select your age range

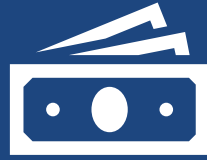


	Survey Respondents Ages	Ages in Port Colborne (StatsCan)
18 or younger	0%	18%
19-29	5%	10%
30-49	29%	21%
50-69	40%	32%
70+	26%	19%

What We Heard: Themes & Notable Comments



**Closure of the
Port Colborne
Urgent Care
Centre**



**Local share
contribution
to Niagara
Health**



**Family
Doctors in
Port
Colborne**



**Healthcare
services in
Port
Colborne**



**Proposal from
Lockview
Medical
Group**



**Development
at the Niagara
Health Port
Colborne site**



**Primary care
development
in Port
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**Establishing a
Healthcare
Advisory
Committee**

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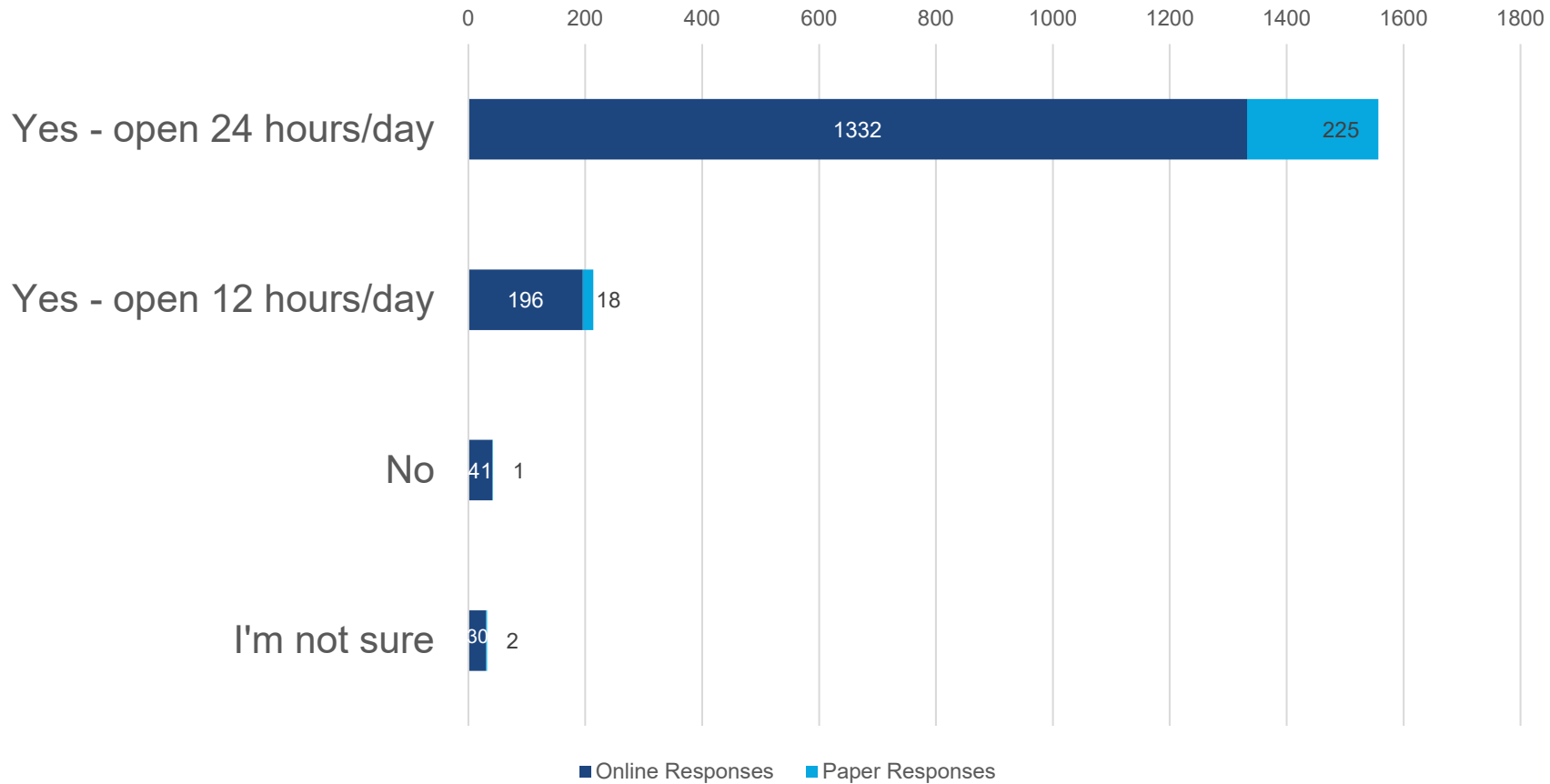
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Closure of the Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre

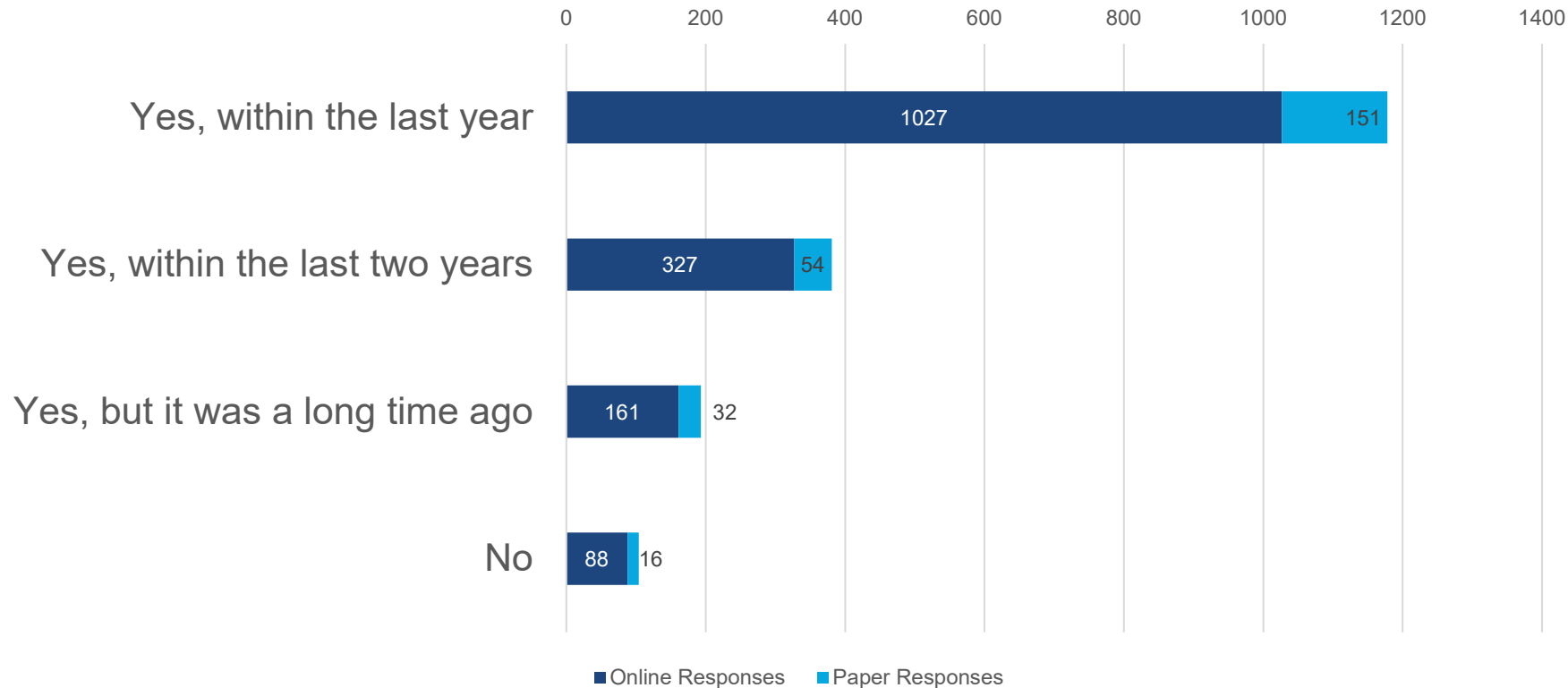
Q11. Do you think Port Colborne requires an Urgent Care Centre?



84% of respondents reported they thought Port Colborne requires an Urgent Care Centre open 24 hours per day.

Closure of the Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre

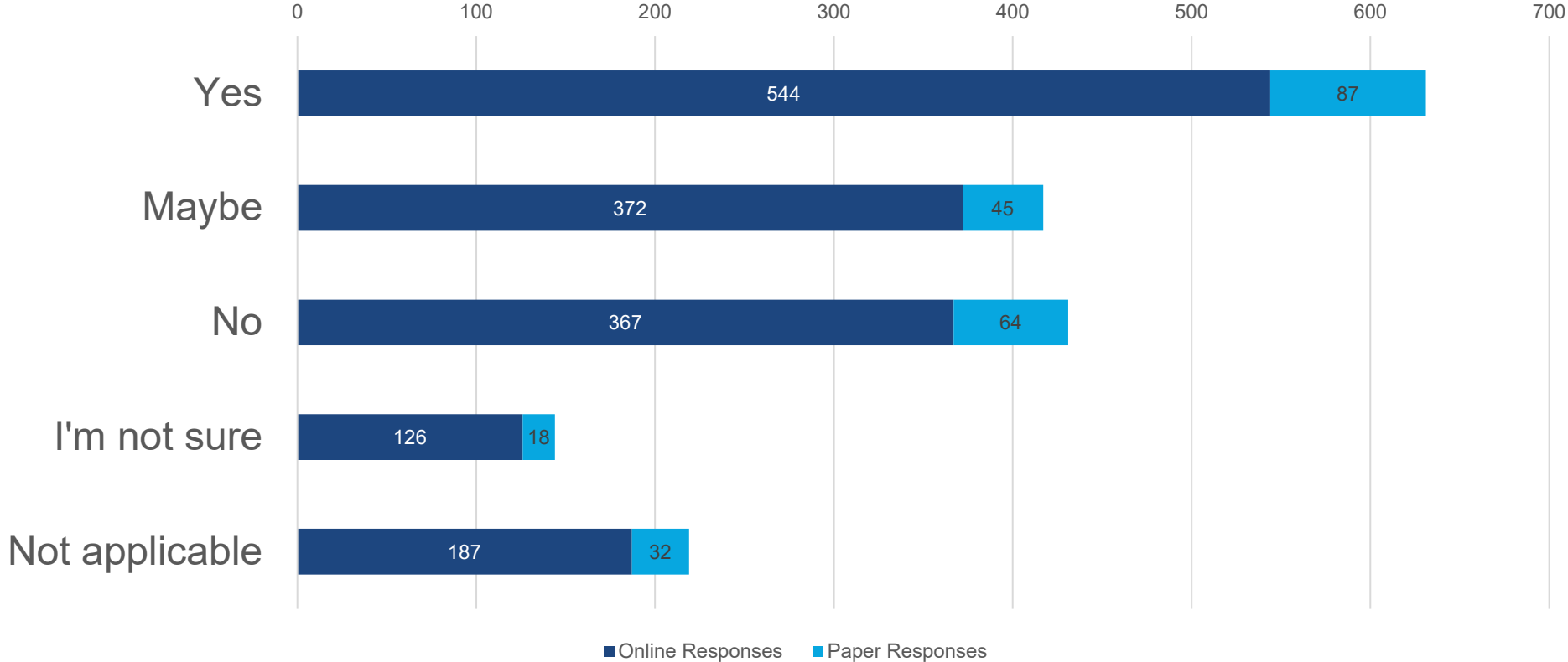
Q7. Have you ever used the health services at the Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre?



64% of respondents reported that they had used health services at the Port Colborne Urgent Care within the last year.

Closure of the Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre

Q13. As a Port Colborne tax payer, would you be willing to accept an increase to your property taxes to fund an Urgent Care Centre in Port Colborne?



34% of respondents reported they would support an increase to their property taxes to fund an Urgent Care Centre in Port Colborne.

23% reported they would maybe support a tax increase.

23% reported they would not support an increase.

8% reported they were not sure.

Closure of the Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre

Travel & Distance

Many respondents emphasized the importance of local access to healthcare, citing difficulty travelling to distant hospitals. This is especially concerning for seniors and other vulnerable populations.

Emergency Dept. Wait Times

Extended wait times in Emergency Departments are a concern, with some fearing that increased strain may lead to long delays or a decline in the quality of care.

Community Growth

Some respondents noted with Port Colborne experiencing / expecting population growth, the closure of the UCC does not make good sense.

Emotional Impacts & Anxiety

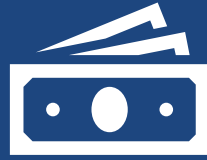
The closure of the UCC would cause anxiety and fear among residents, particularly those with chronic health conditions or young children. The lack of local healthcare options is seen as a threat.



What We Heard: Themes & Notable Comments



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Local share contribution to Niagara Health

Financial Burden

Respondents expressed concerns about the financial burden this places on residents, especially seniors. They feel they are already taxed heavily and cannot afford additional contributions.

Geographical Concerns

Some respondents highlighted the distance to the hospital, noting it's not actually in South Niagara. Given the distance, the hospital will not adequately serve their needs.

Conditional Support

Some respondents are willing to support the request if certain conditions are met, such as ensuring that the urgent care centres in Port Colborne and Fort Erie remain open.

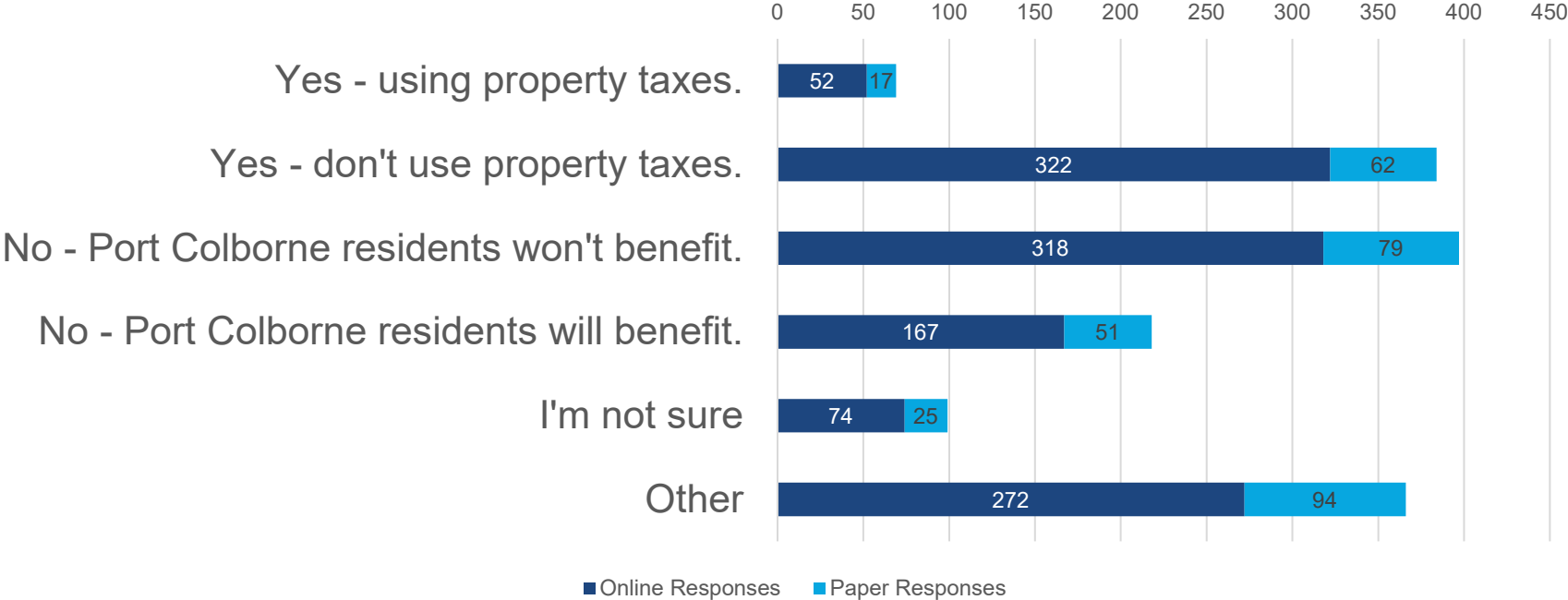
Equity and Fairness

Respondents noted the per-capita approach used by Niagara Health uses outdated data, placing an undue hardship on communities who have not seen as much growth since the last census.



Local share contribution to Niagara Health

Q16. The amount of money each municipality is asked to contribute depends on its population. Port Colborne has been asked to contribute \$6.2 million. Do you think we should?

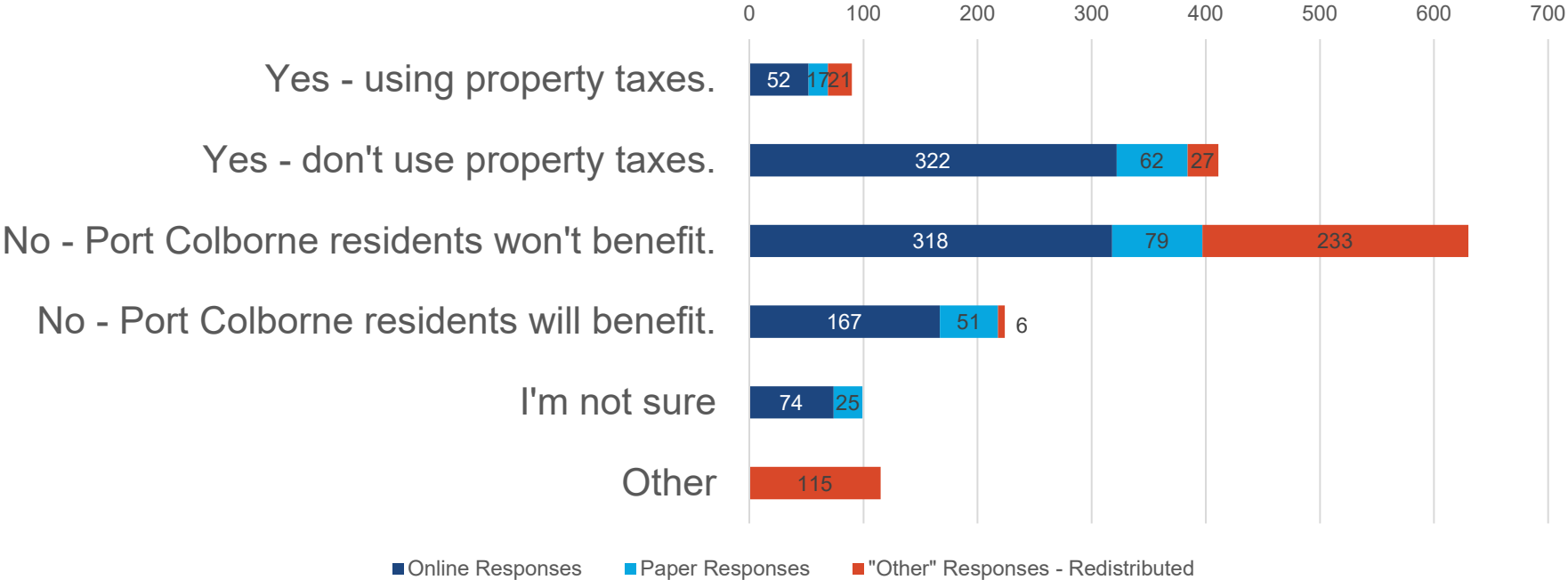


366 suggestions were provided in the “other” category.

287 of those supported one of the options available in the question.

Local share contribution to Niagara Health

Q16. The amount of money each municipality is asked to contribute depends on its population. Port Colborne has been asked to contribute \$6.2 million. Do you think we should?



With the redistribution of responses in the “other” category, the responses indicate opposition to the idea of Port Colborne contributing \$6.2 million to the new hospital.

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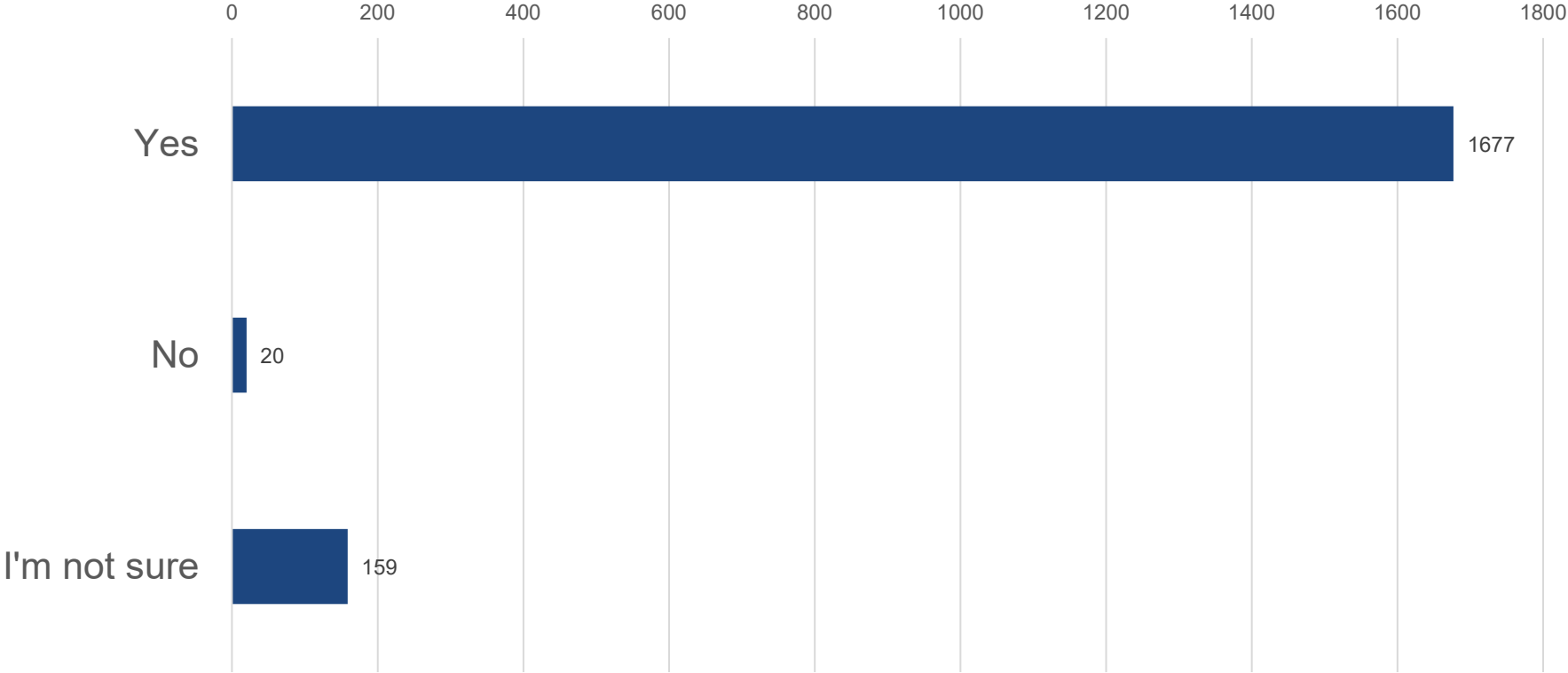
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Family doctors in Port Colborne

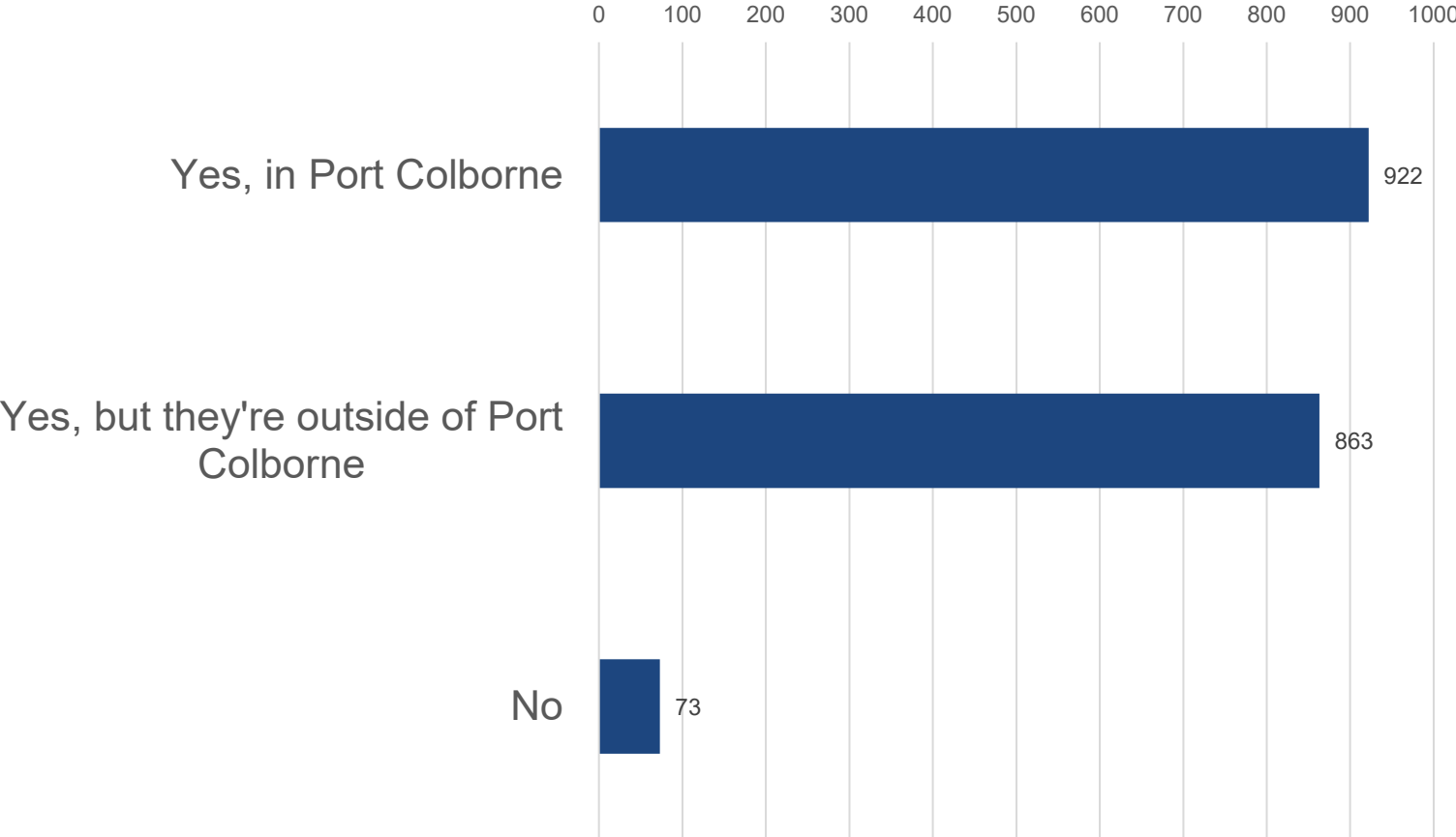
Q3. Do you think Port Colborne needs more family doctors?



90% of respondents reported they thought Port Colborne needed more family doctors.

Family doctors in Port Colborne

Q2: Do you have a family doctor?

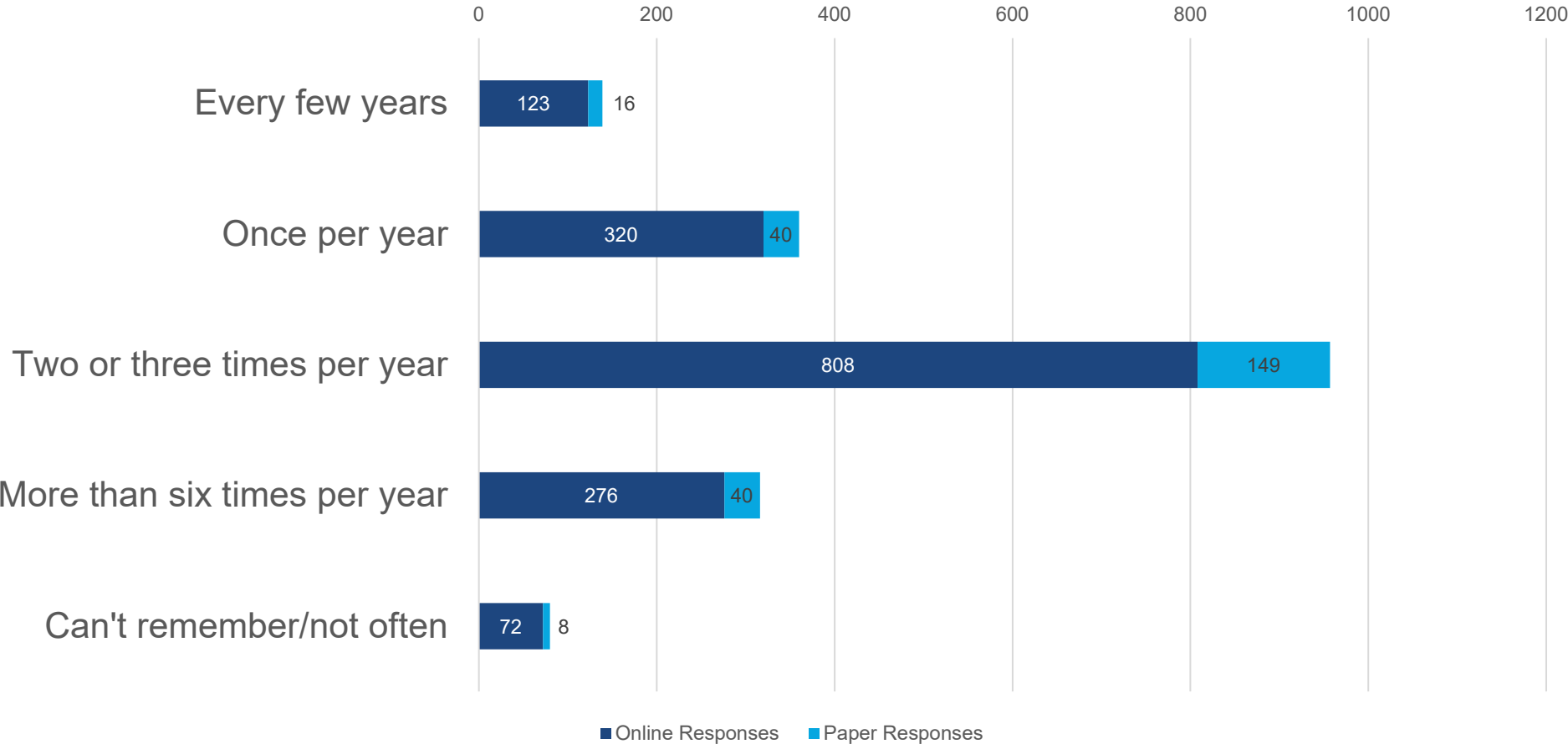


50% of respondents reported they had a family doctor in Port Colborne.

46% of respondents reported their family doctor was located outside Port Colborne.

Family doctors in Port Colborne

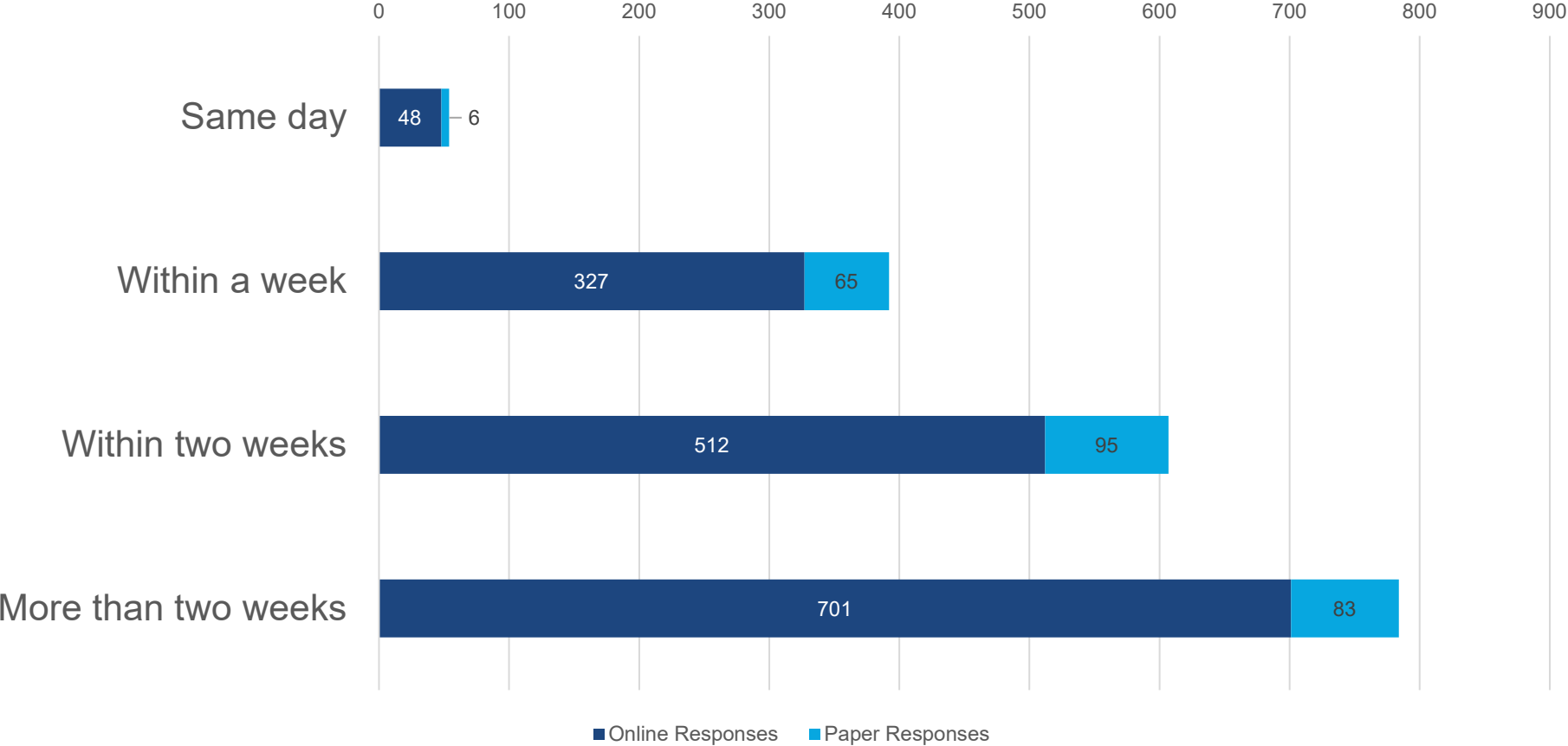
Q4. How often do you see your family doctor?



52% of respondents reported they see their family doctor two or three times per year.

Family doctors in Port Colborne

Q5: On average, how long does it take for you to get an appointment with your family doctor?



43% of respondents reported that it takes them more than two weeks to get an appointment with their family doctor.

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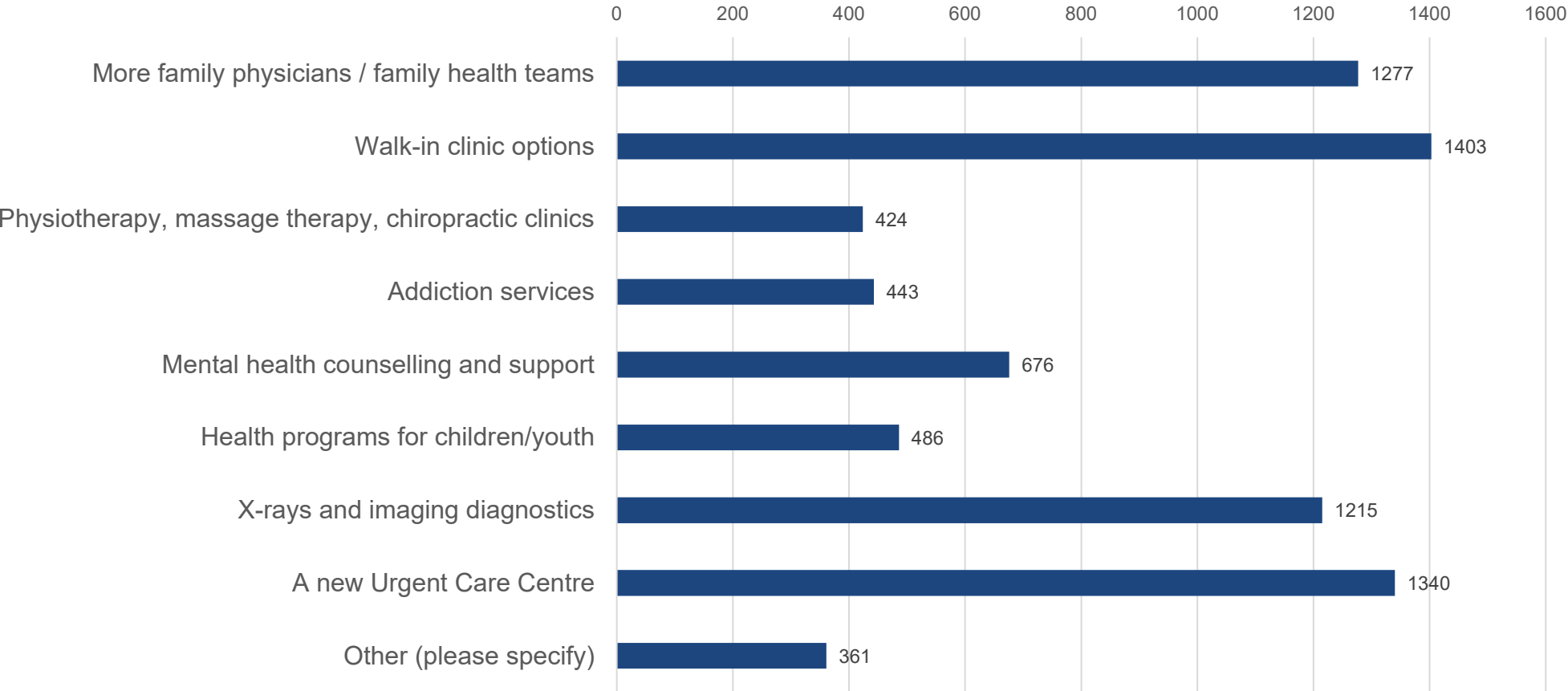
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Healthcare services in Port Colborne

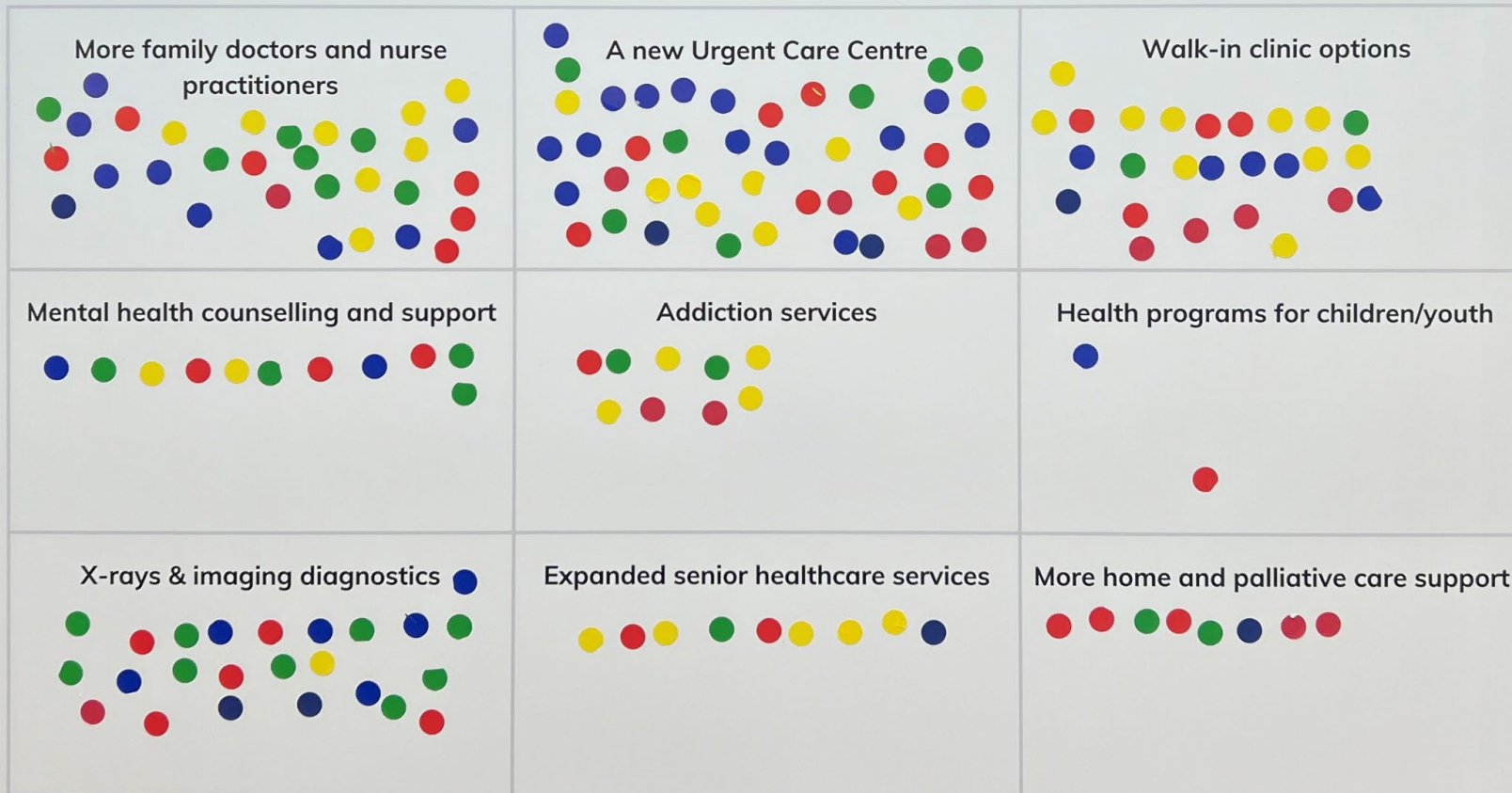
Q14. When the Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre closes, do you think Port Colborne requires more healthcare options? What options would be most beneficial to you and your family? Select all that apply.



Respondents supported a variety of healthcare options being available in Port Colborne, including more family physicians and family health teams, more walk-in clinics, more diagnostics, and a new Urgent Care Centre.

What healthcare services should be prioritized in Port Colborne?

select your top four priorities



Healthcare services in Port Colborne

Comprehensive Healthcare Services

Respondents highlighted the need for a variety of healthcare services, including walk-in clinics, diagnostic imaging (X-rays, MRIs, ultrasounds), and emergency care.

Support for Expanded Services

There was support for incorporating more nurse practitioners, social workers, and mental health services to provide comprehensive care.

Community Health Programs

Respondents expressed a desire for more community health programs, including seniors care, palliative care, hospice, and home care support.

Growing Population

Awareness of Port Colborne's growing population and future need for healthcare resources.



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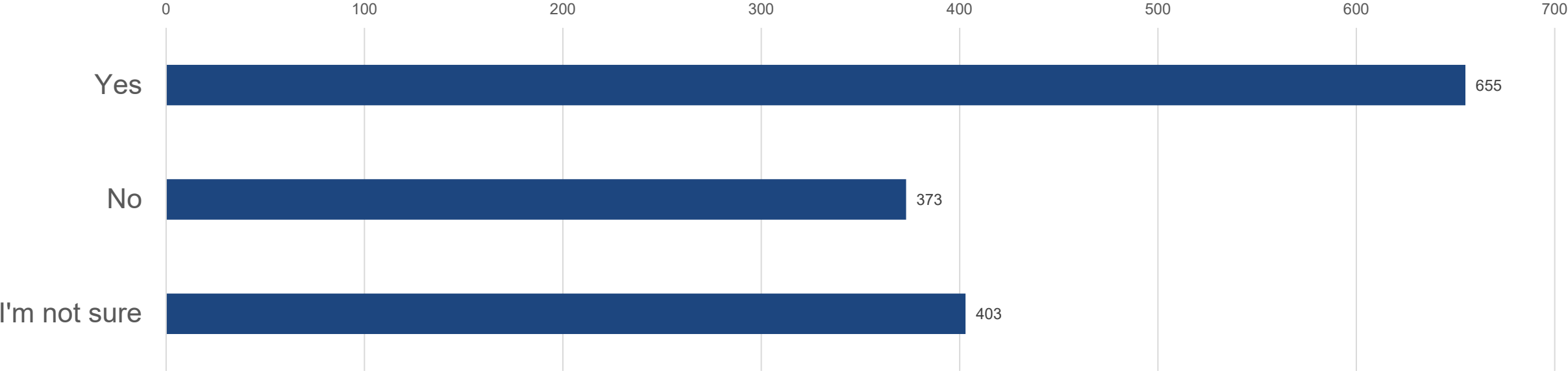
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Proposal from Lockview Medical Group

Q18: Do you think the proposal could benefit Port Colborne residents?



About 46% of question respondents thought the proposal from Lockview Medical Group could benefit Port Colborne residents.

About 28% of question respondents said they weren't sure if the proposal could benefit Port Colborne residents.



Proposal from Lockview Medical Group

Accessibility to Healthcare

Many respondents support the proposal because it would provide local healthcare services, reducing the need to travel out of town for medical appointments.

Economic Benefits

Some respondents believe that the proposal would create jobs and stimulate the local economy. The development of the medical centre is also seen as a way to minimize costs and avoid tax increases.

Improved Healthcare Services

Supporters mention that the proposal would bring enhanced healthcare services, such as diagnostic services and treatments.

Need for More Information

Several respondents feel that there is not enough tangible information being shared about the proposal. They request more details about the terms of the sale, the involvement of developers, and the specific benefits for the community.



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**Development
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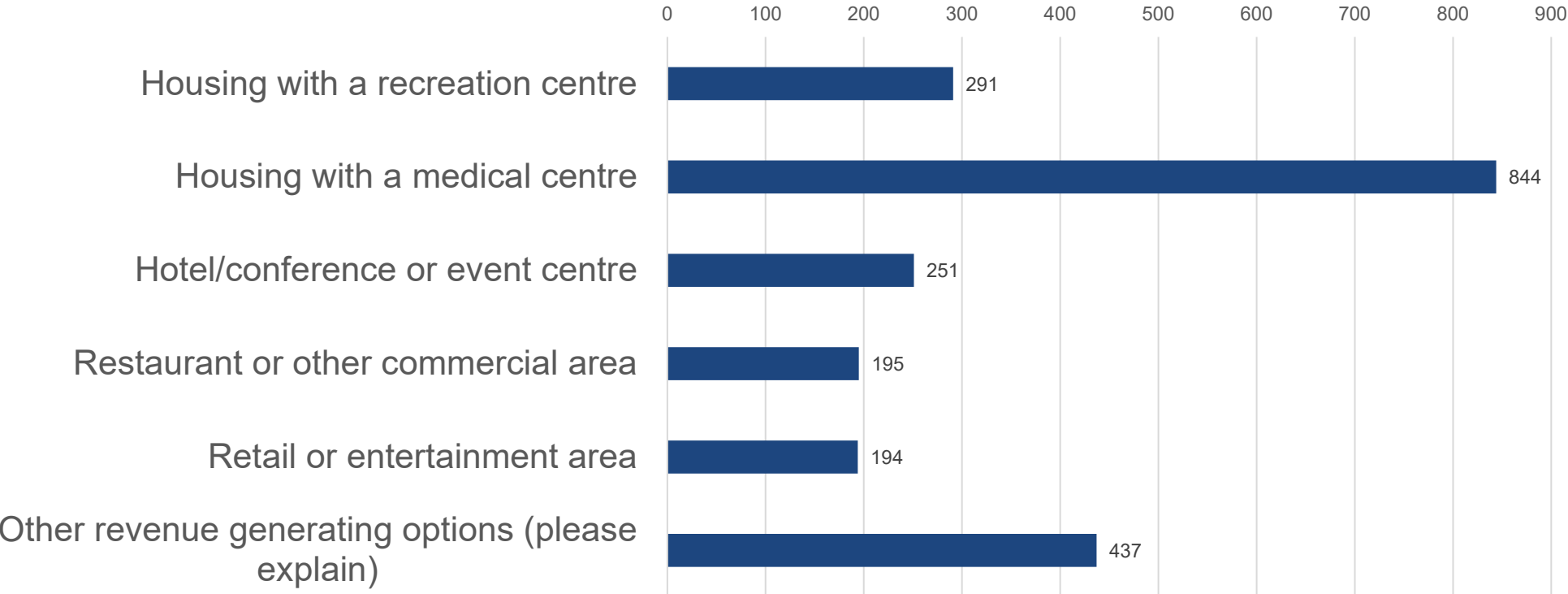
Primary care
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Development at the Niagara Health Port Colborne site

Q24: What uses of the property could help generate revenue to fund the contribution to Niagara Health and be appropriate for the future of the site on Sugarloaf Street? (select all that apply)



86% of question respondents supported pursuing a housing development with a medical centre.

47% of total survey respondents skipped this question.

Development at the Niagara Health Port Colborne site

General Support

Many respondents expressed support for the project, considering it a good or great idea. Some believe it could generate income for the City and wanted the property back under City ownership.

Concerns About Funding

Many respondents were worried about the financial implications, including the cost of the project and the potential for increased taxes.

Concerns About Infrastructure

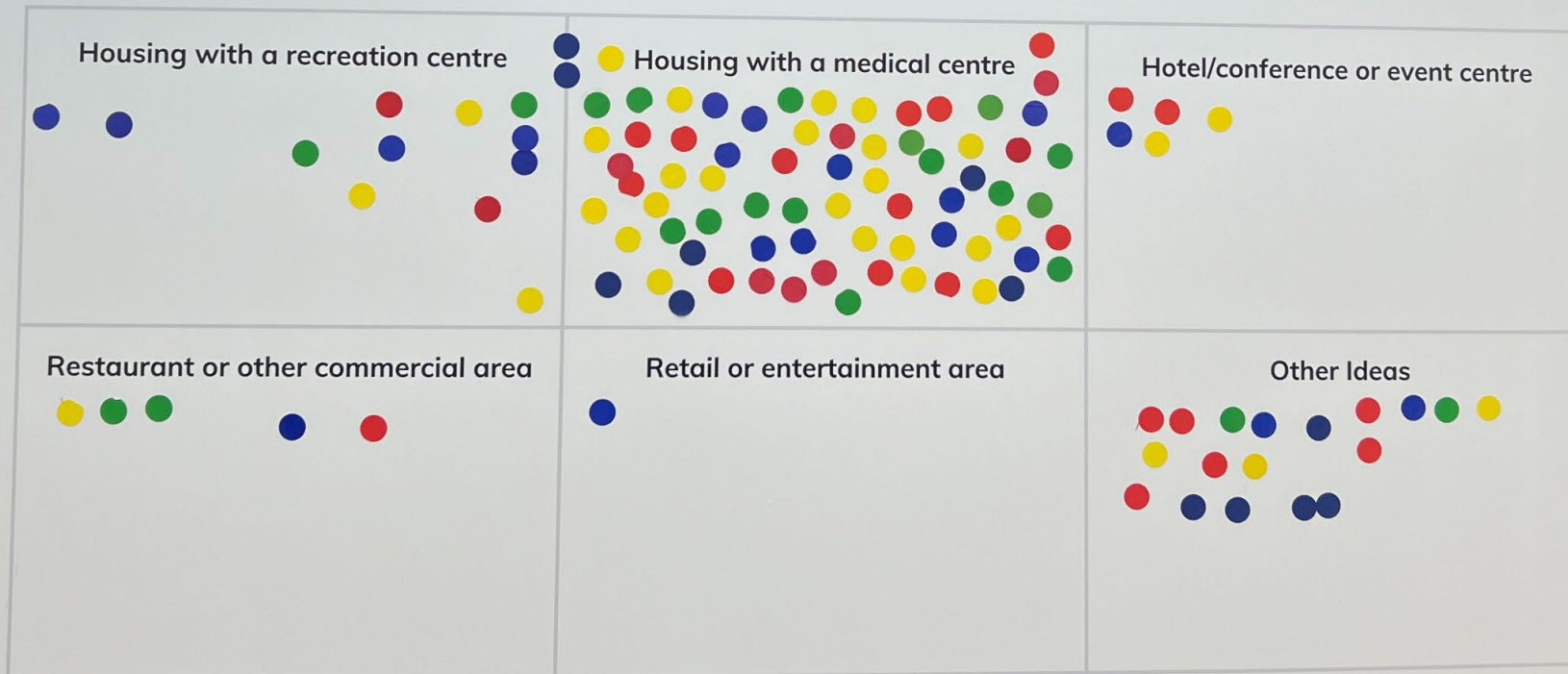
Respondents questioned whether the City's current infrastructure could support the new development. Issues raised included the capacity of grocery stores, restaurants, parking, and other amenities.

Concerns About Affordability

There were concerns about the affordability of the new housing, with some respondents emphasizing the need for affordable housing rather than luxury developments.

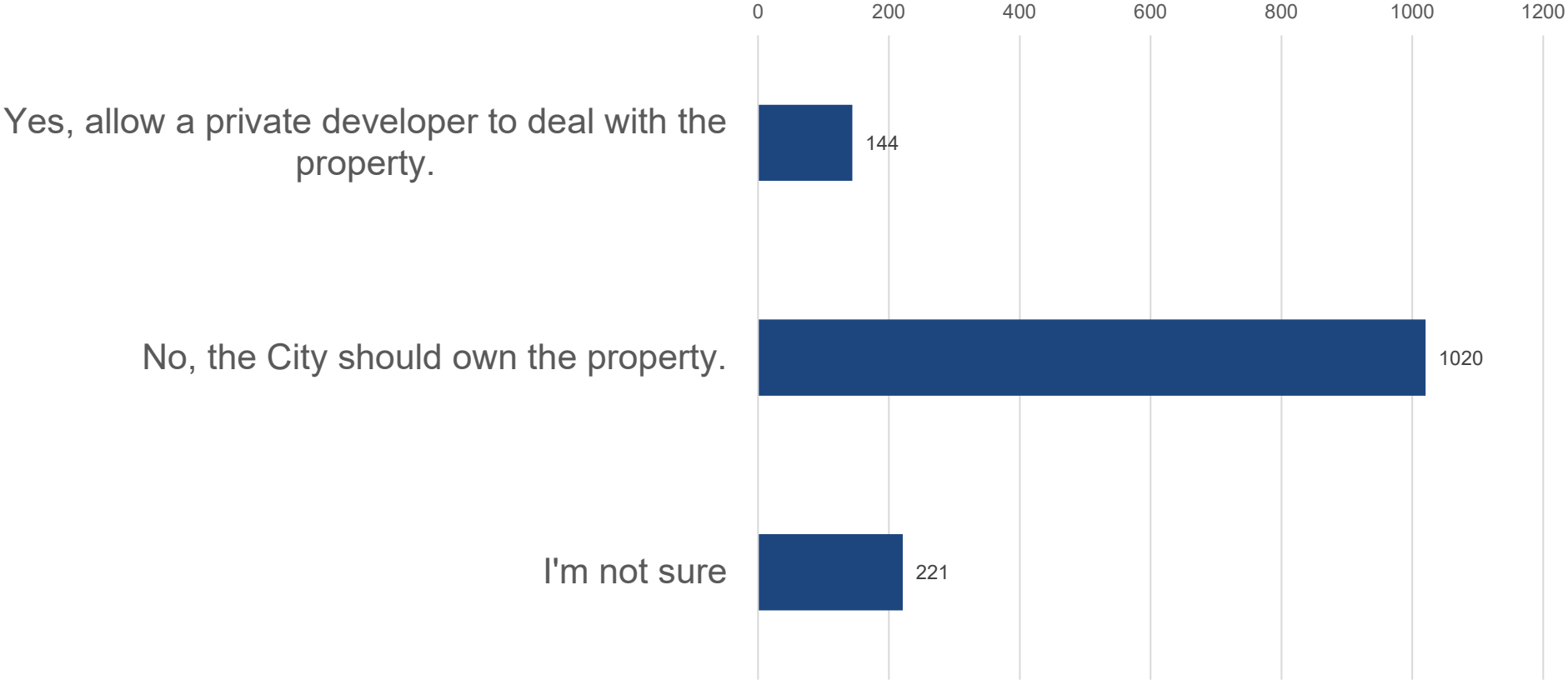
If the City purchased the hospital property from Niagara Health, how should it be used after 2028?

select your top four priorities



Development at the Niagara Health Port Colborne site

Q25: Would you support Niagara Health selling the site to a private developer?



74% of respondents thought the City should own the property, instead of selling it to a private developer.

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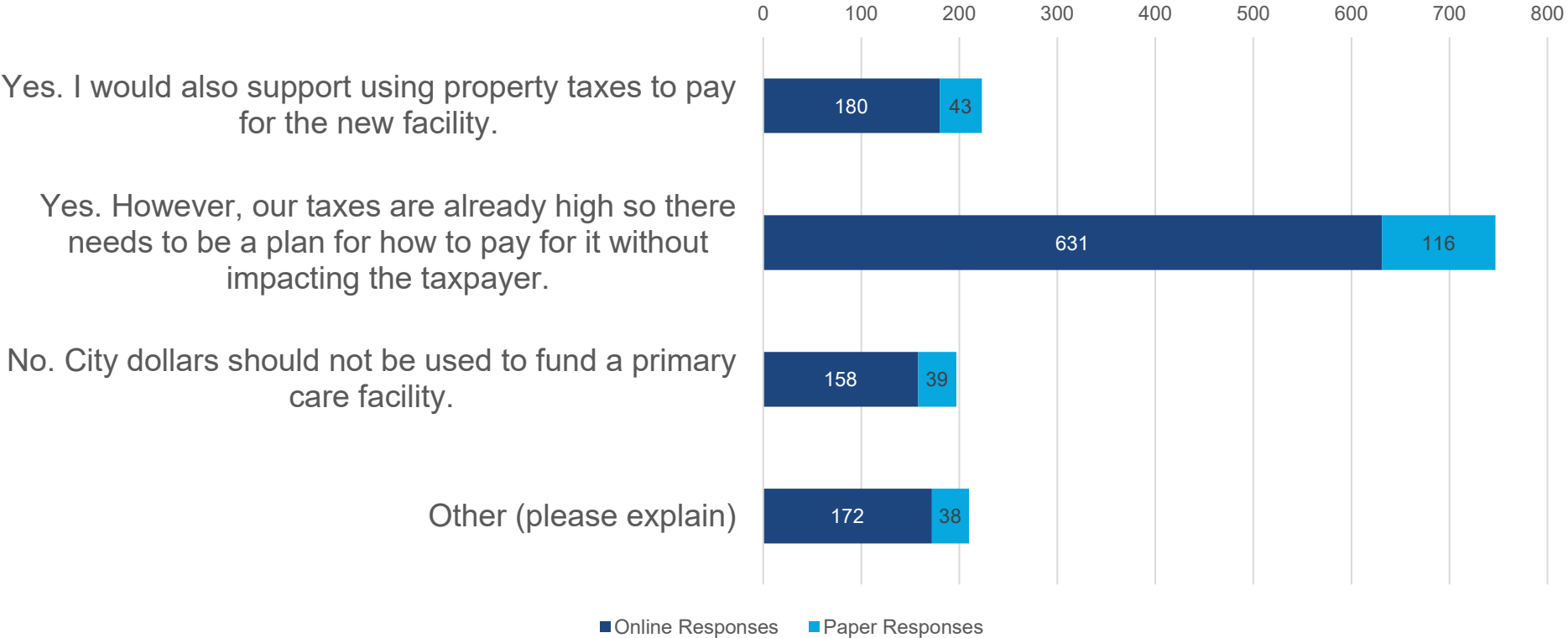
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Primary care development in Port Colborne

Q26: Would you support the City pursuing the construction of a new primary care facility somewhere else in Port Colborne?

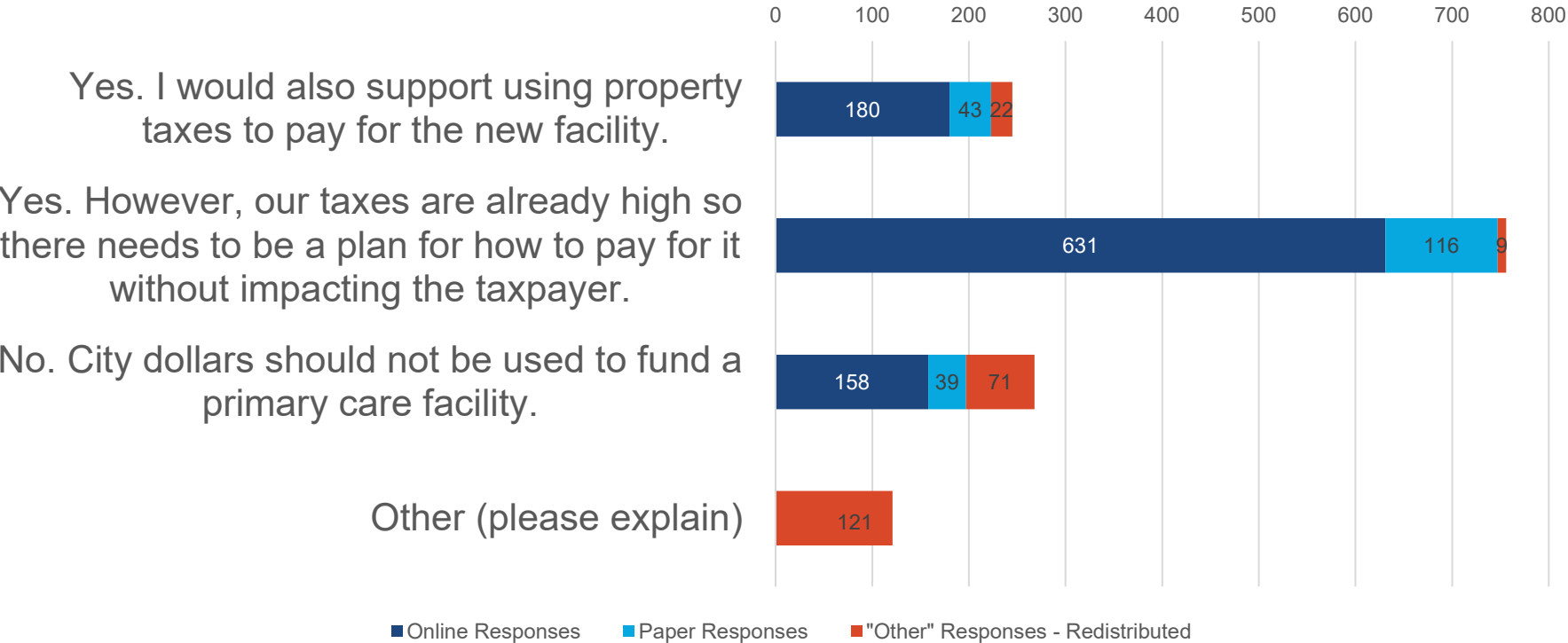


210 suggestions were provided in the “other” category.

102 of those supported one of the options available in the question.

Primary care development in Port Colborne

Q26: Would you support the City pursuing the construction of a new primary care facility somewhere else in Port Colborne?



56% of respondents supported the idea of the City pursuing the construction of a primary care facility somewhere else in Port Colborne, with a funding strategy that does not impact the taxpayer.

18% of respondents supported the idea of the City pursuing the construction of a primary care facility somewhere else in Port Colborne using funds from property taxes.

Primary care development in Port Colborne

Support for a New Facility

Respondents who supported a new facility in a different location often highlighted the need for better healthcare services and were willing to consider new construction if it meant improved access to care.

Opposition to New Facility

Primary concerns were related to the financial implications, preferring to see existing facilities upgraded rather than new ones built.

Conditional Support

Many respondents were open to the idea but wanted assurances about funding and the inclusion of essential services like urgent care.

Concerns About Funding

Funding was a major concern, with many respondents insisting that the province or federal government should bear the cost rather than local taxpayers.



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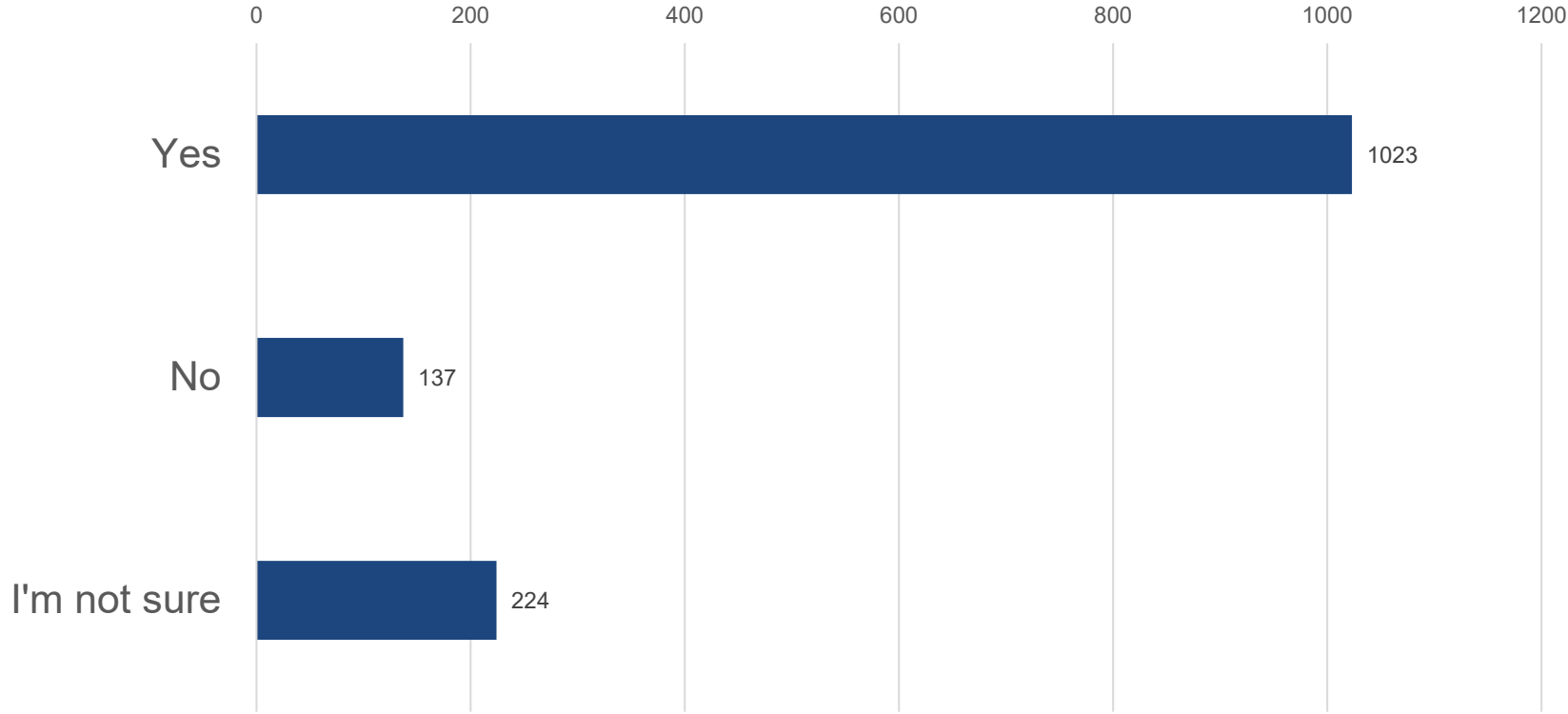
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Establishing a Healthcare Advisory Committee

Q27. Do you think Council should formally establish a committee to advise on healthcare issues in Port Colborne?



74% of respondents supported the establishment of a committee to advise on healthcare issues in Port Colborne

Establishing a Healthcare Advisory Committee

General Support

Respondents thought a committee would provide a platform for diverse voices and would ensure residents' needs are considered.

Representation & Transparency

Respondents want a transparent committee that includes a diverse group of people, including residents, healthcare professionals, and local leaders. The committee should publish key points from meetings and avoid closed-door sessions.

Community Involvement

The importance of involving the community in decision-making processes was emphasized. Residents should have a say, and their input should be valued.

Skepticism & Concerns

Some residents thought the committee could be a waste of resources, noting it may not be positioned to make change at the local government level.



Recommendations & Next Steps

- That Council establish a **Healthcare Advisory Committee** to ensure residents have adequate access to, and knowledge of, healthcare services in the City of Port Colborne
- That Council approve the Healthcare Advisory Committee **Terms of Reference**
- That Council direct the Healthcare Advisory Committee to propose a draft **Healthcare Services Strategy** by the end of 2025
- That Council approve the motion regarding **Provincial Healthcare Advocacy** as outlined in the letter
- That Council direct staff to **forward the petition** regarding the Port Colborne Hospital and Urgent Care Centre received at the March 11, 2025 Council meeting to the Ontario Minister of Health.

Proposed Mandate & Composition of the Committee

Proposed Mandate

- Ensure residents of Port Colborne have access to healthcare and associated community and healthcare services that are required within the community

Proposed Composition

- 5 voting members appointed from the public at large, with different perspectives
- Mayor + 2 Council members (non-voting)

Committee Support (non-voting)

- CAO
- City staff as required
- Healthcare professionals, as invited

Key Deliverables

- Develop and recommend to Council a comprehensive and evidence-based, and attainable, **healthcare services strategy** (draft by end of 2025), including:
 - Further consider feedback collected as part of ongoing public engagement
 - Recommend what/if any additional public engagement activities should be pursued
 - Consider and recommend the most appropriate next steps for the proposal from Lockview Medical Group

Questions?

