
Train Horn Survey

Results | January 2026

City of Missoula

**PUBLIC WORKS
& MOBILITY**



PROJECT BACKGROUND

TRAIN HORN NOISE /RAILROAD QUIET ZONE PROJECT

The City of Missoula has been working to reduce train horn noise and its impact on residents and businesses in the Lower Rattlesnake and Heart of Missoula neighborhoods. We've identified two viable Federal Rail Administration (FRA)–approved options:

- Wayside horns at Madison/Greenough.
- New gate arms at Taylor Street to reduce community noise while maintaining safety.

The total project cost is estimated at \$921,000. The Missoula Redevelopment Agency has previously committed \$200,000. We're exploring forming a Special Improvement District (SID) to fill the funding gap.

ACTIONS TAKEN



Engage with Stakeholders

Assemble a working group of community stakeholders, City Council representation, and PWM staff to understand the local impacts and determine next steps.



Survey Property Owners

Conduct a survey to understand the impact and gauge property owner interest in creating/paying an SID. The online survey launched Nov. 10, print surveys hit mailboxes on Nov. 12. Survey closed Dec. 5, 2025.



Assess Survey Results

Online and print survey results were compiled from Dec. 8 to Jan. 2. Results were then analyzed.



Present Findings & Recommendations

The survey findings are captured in the following slides.

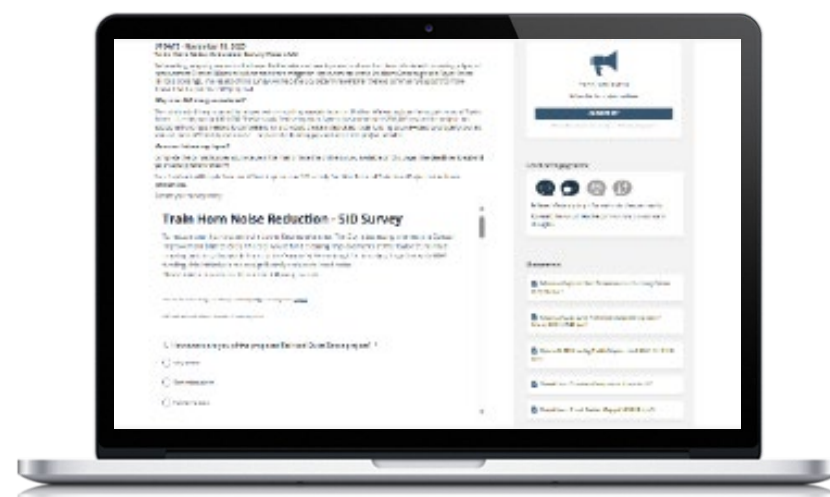
TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

POST SURVEY | INITIAL REPORT & FINDINGS

Following the survey launch, local media coverage, Notify Me emails, and ongoing comms efforts, the number of **engaged visitors to the Engage Missoula web page increased from 4 to 275** (Oct. 29- Dec. 8).

274

Online Surveys Completed
Goal: 160 of 803 emails sent



484

Print Surveys Returned
Goal: 291 of 1,455 survey mailed



2,258 Surveys Sent
(Mail & Email)



3 Calls
3 Emails
7 Engage Comments
4 Media Stories



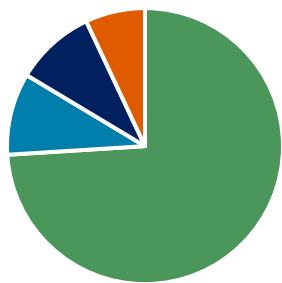
758 Total Responses
33.57% Total Response Rate
(NOTE: Our Minimum Response Rate Goal Was 20%)

NOTE: While we received a total of 758 online and print survey submissions from individuals, some questions received multiple responses, and some print questions were left unanswered by respondents. This accounts for instances where the “Combined” total differs from the survey submission total of 758.

TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

DIGITAL SURVEY RESULTS | CONDUCTED NOV 10 – DEC 5, 2025

INITIAL SID SURVEY AREA:
Lower Rattlesnake and Heart of Missoula



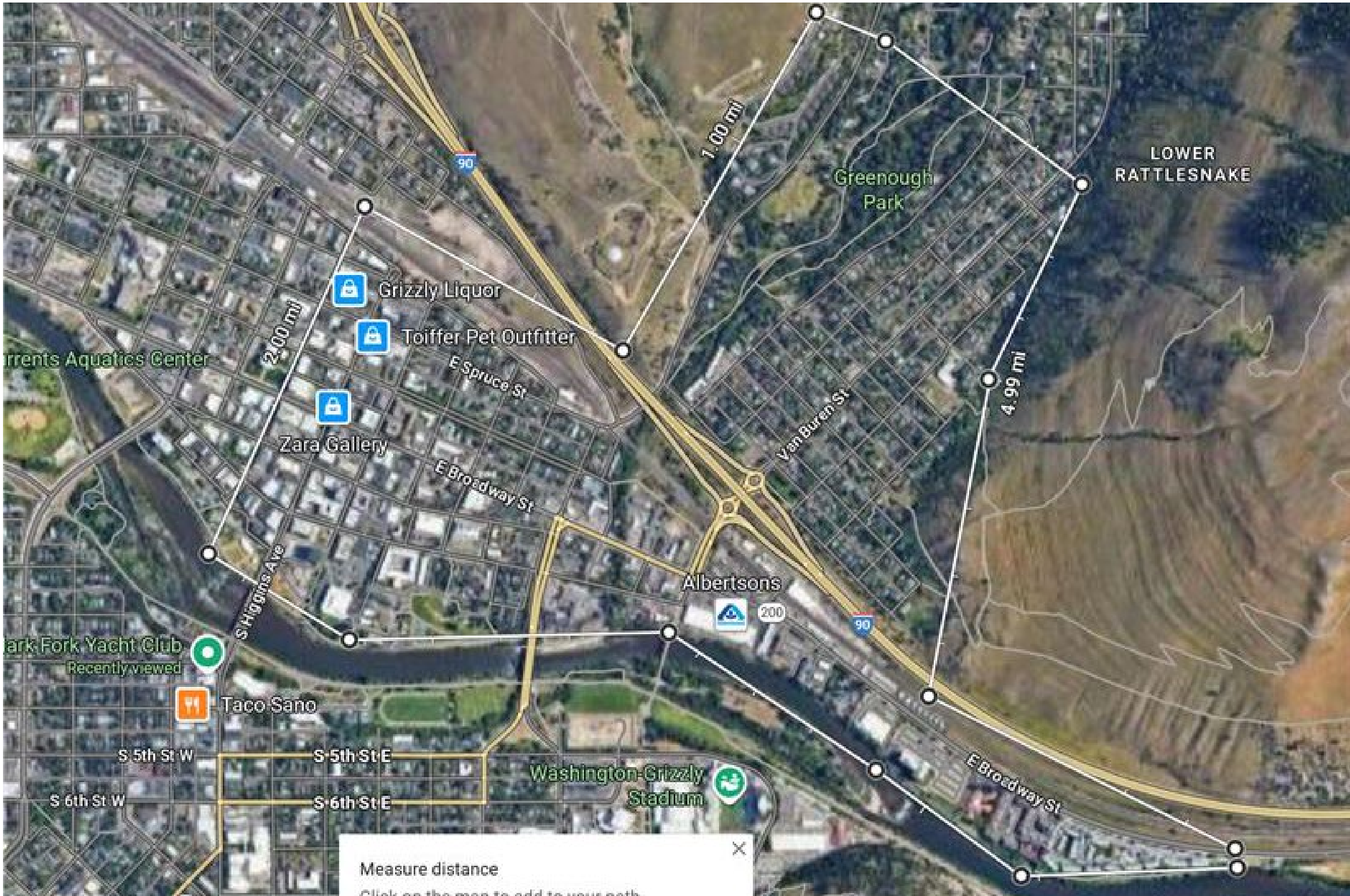
Who Responded

74.0% Residential Property Owners
(Includes Landlords)

9.6% Business Property Owners

9.4% Renters
(Business or Residential)

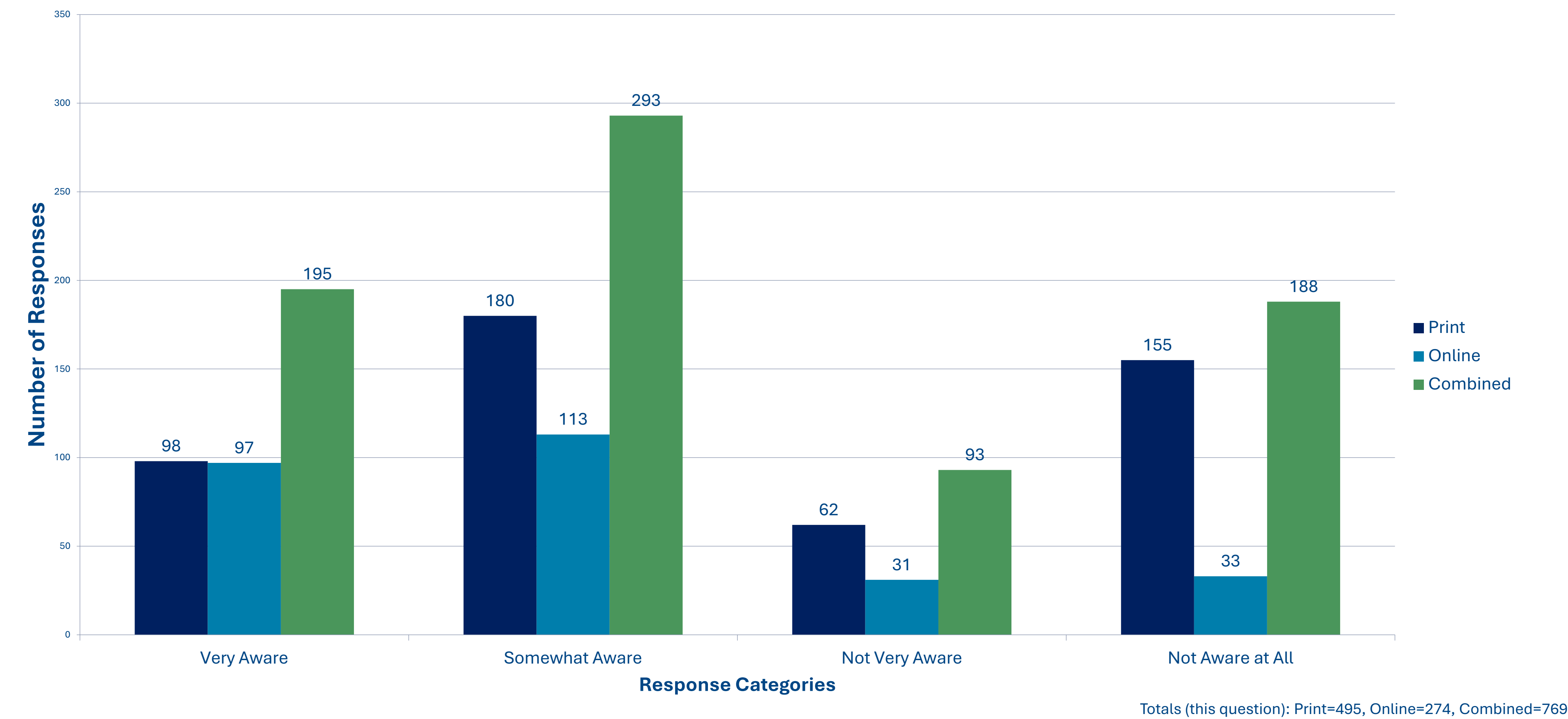
7.0% Other
(visitors, guests, or frequent users of services or outdoor recreation)



TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

DIGITAL SURVEY RESULTS | CONDUCTED NOV 10 – DEC 5, 2025

QUESTION 1:
How aware are you of the proposed Railroad Quiet Zones project?



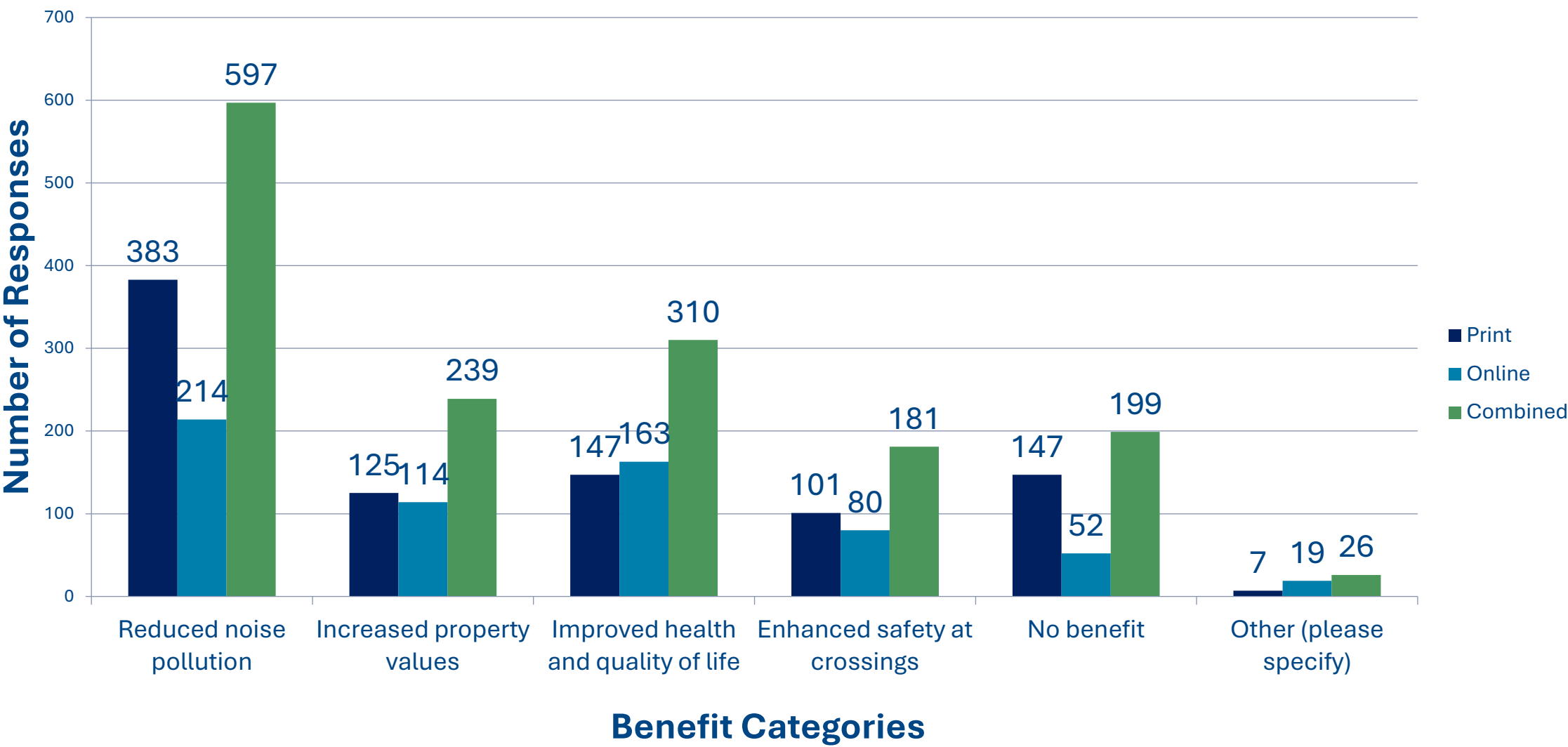
TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

DIGITAL SURVEY RESULTS | CONDUCTED NOV 10 – DEC 5, 2025

Top 3 Perceived Benefits

Reduced Noise Pollution, Increase Property Value, Health/Quality of Life

QUESTION 4:
What benefits do you believe the Railroad Quiet Zone project will bring to the community? (Select all that apply).



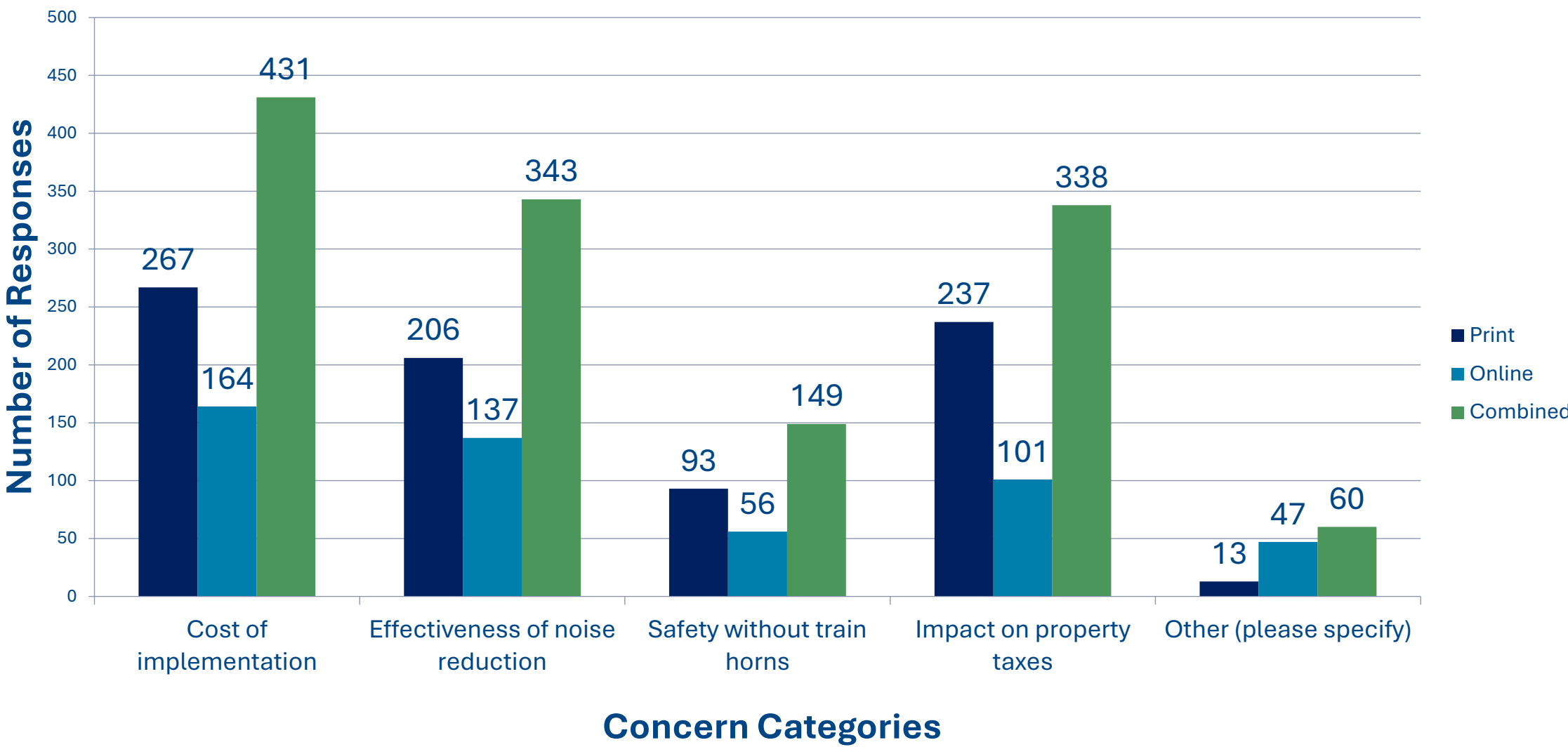
Totals (this question): Print=910, Online=642, Combined=1552

**Responses marked “other” include:
Better sleep, Improve Environment, Reduced Impacts to Wildlife and Residents*

Top 3 Concerns

Cost, Effectiveness, Impact on Property Taxes

QUESTION 5:
What concerns do you have about the Railroad Quiet Zone project? (Select all that apply).

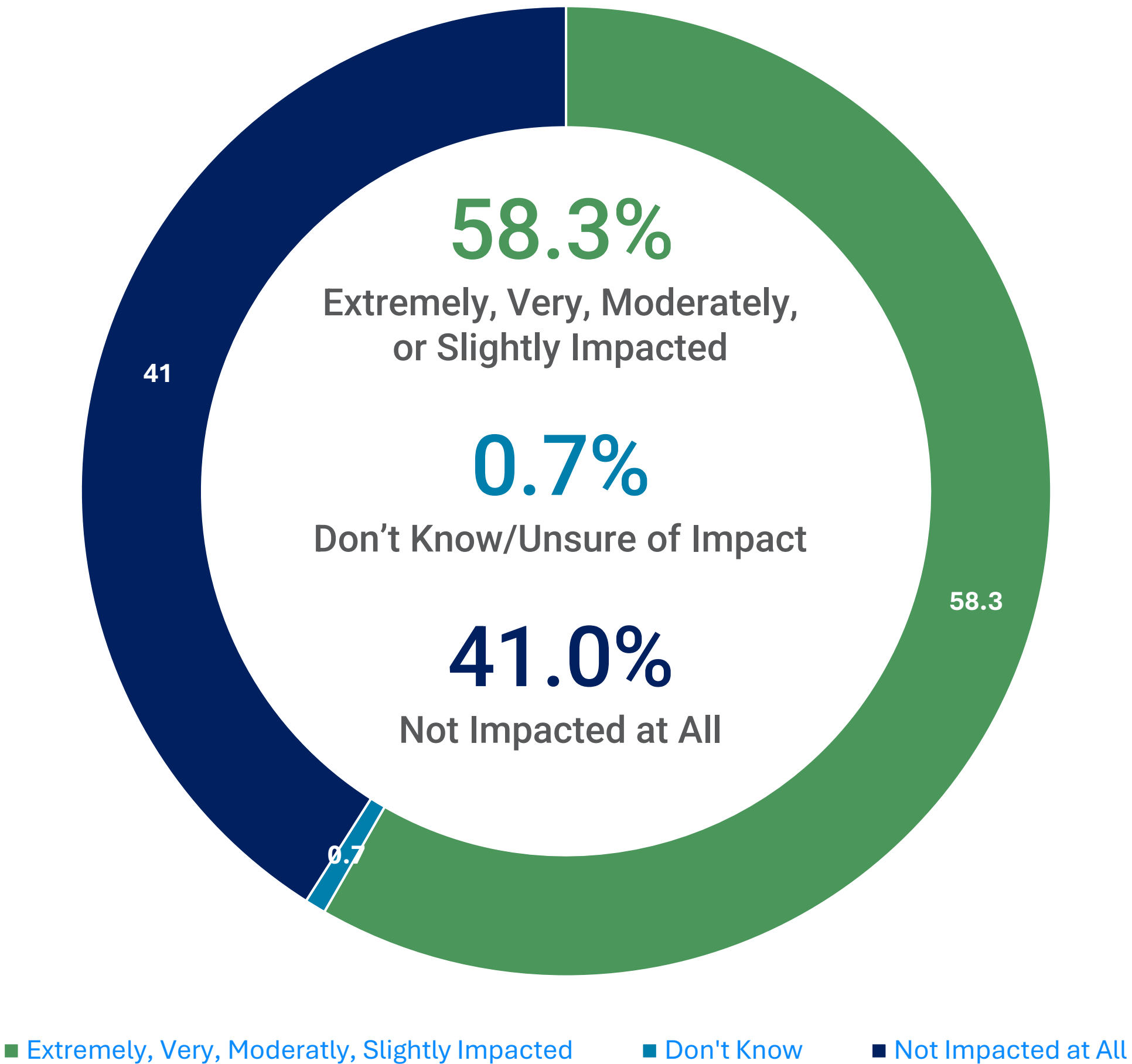


Totals (this question): Print=816, Online=505, Combined=1321

**Responses marked “other” Include:
Ongoing Fees for Owners, Delays Making Sound Worse, Loss of Rail Road Town Identity, Loss of Train Horns for Those Who Like It, Safety, Belief That Residents Shouldn’t Pay for This Project*

TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

DIGITAL SURVEY RESULTS | CONDUCTED NOV 10 – DEC 5, 2025



58.3%

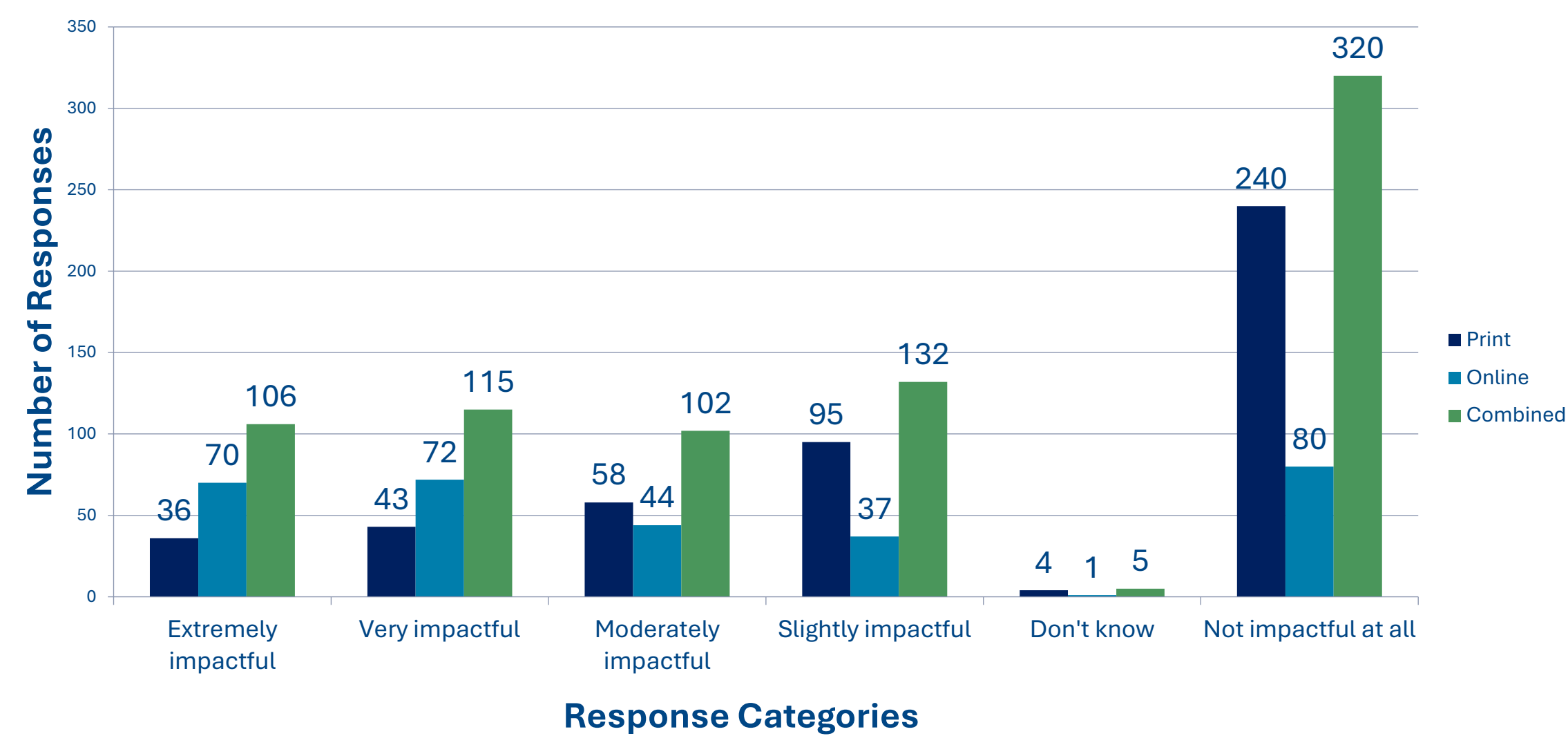
In Favor of Resolving Train
Horn Noise Issue

Interpreting “in favor of resolving” as respondents who said train noise is **Extremely/Very/Moderately/Slightly impactful** to daily life/business (Q2), excluding “Not impactful at all” and “Don’t know”.

TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

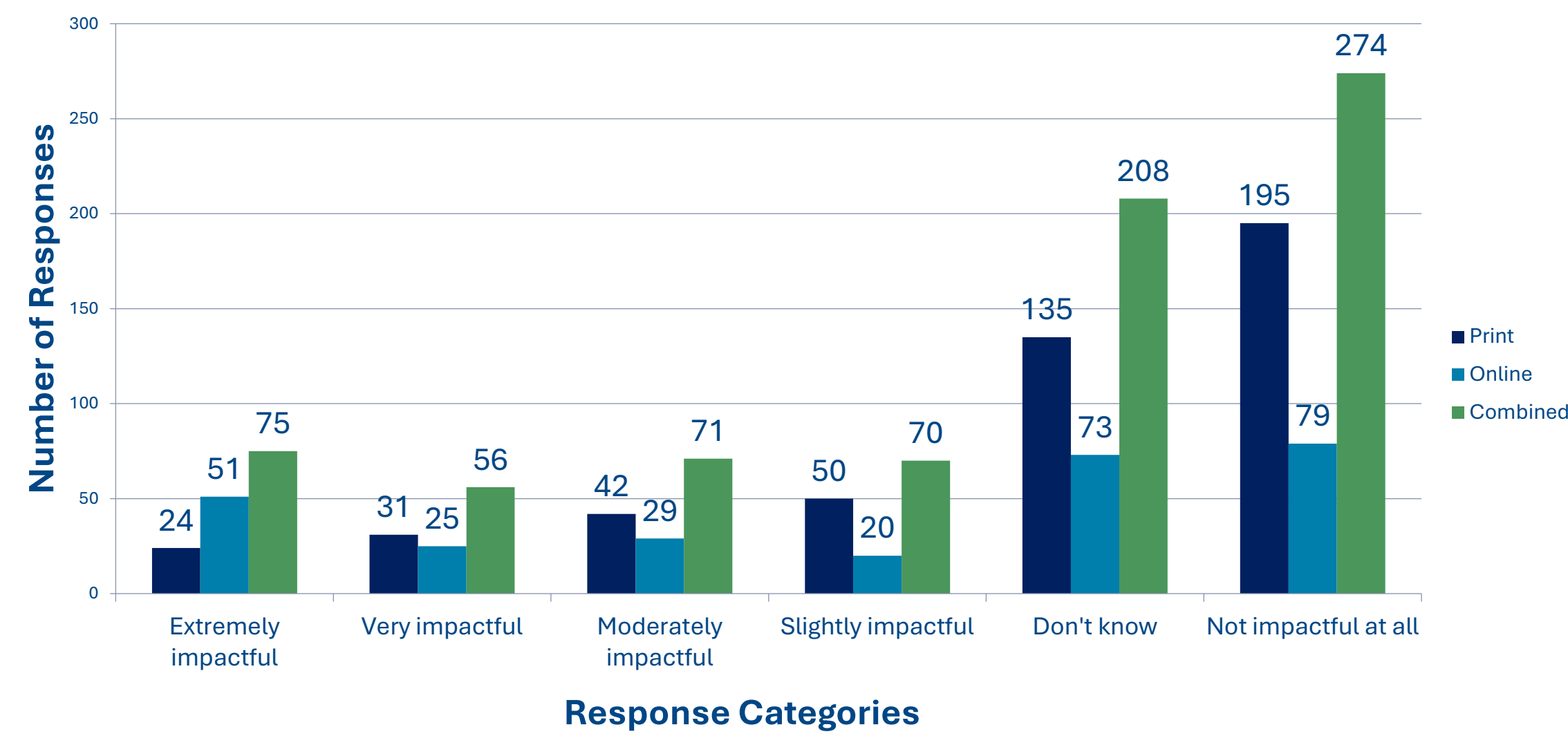
DIGITAL SURVEY RESULTS | CONDUCTED NOV 10 – DEC 5, 2025

QUESTION 2:
How much does train noise currently impact your daily life or business operations?



Totals (this question): Print=476, Online=304, Combined=780

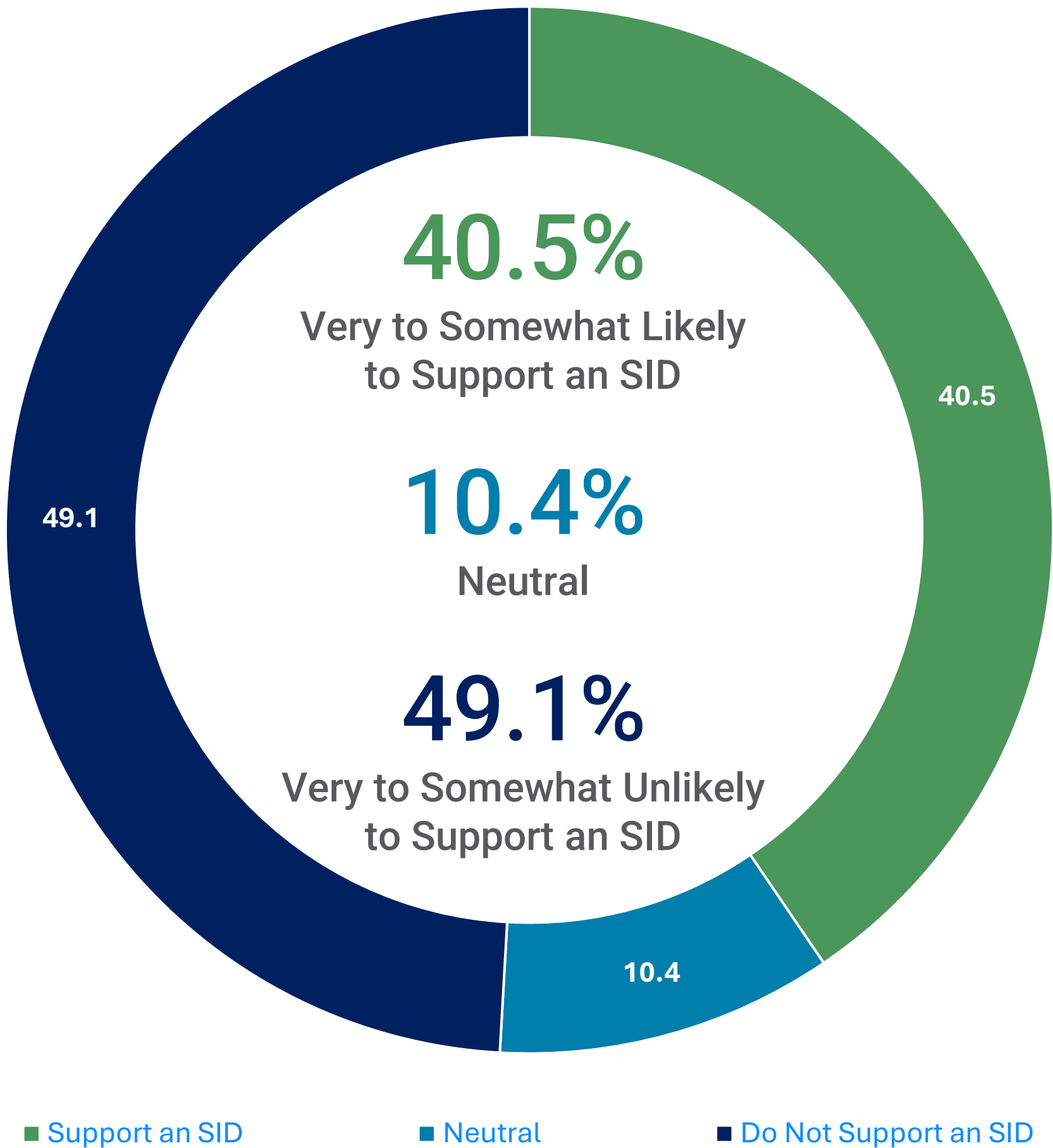
QUESTION 3:
How much does train noise currently impact your property value?



Totals (this question): Print=477, Online=277, Combined=754

TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

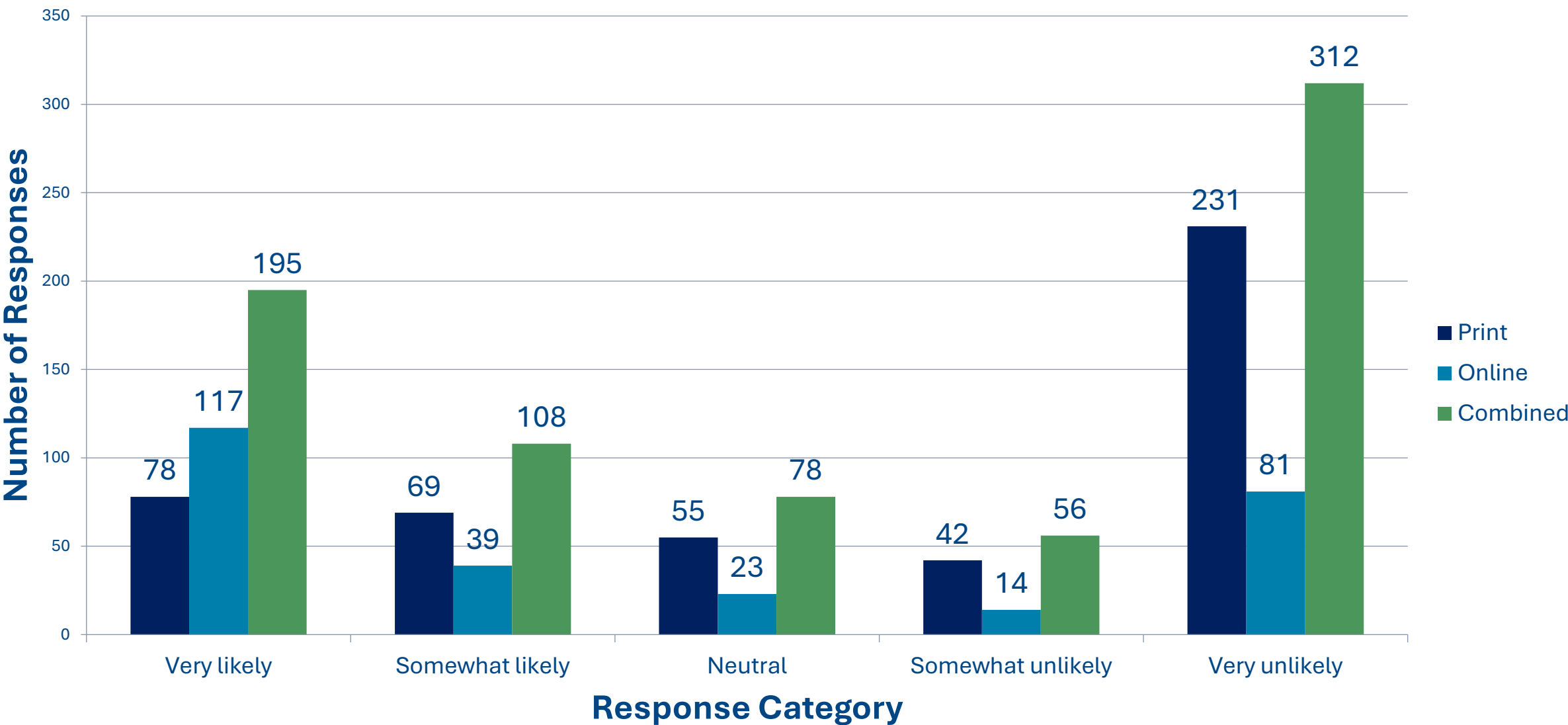
DIGITAL SURVEY RESULTS | CONDUCTED NOV 10 – DEC 5, 2025



40.5%
In Favor of SID

Interpreting “In Favor of SID” as respondents who selected **Very Likely/Somewhat Likely** to (Q6), excluding “Somewhat and Very Unlikely”.
If you include “Neutral” the total is 50.9%.

QUESTION 6:
How likely are you to support an SID for the Railroad Quiet Zone project?



Totals (this question): Print=475, Online=274, Combined=749

TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

DIGITAL SURVEY RESULTS | CONDUCTED NOV 10 – DEC 5, 2025

Residential

44.6%

Of Residents Willing to Pay \$5 to More Than \$20 a Month

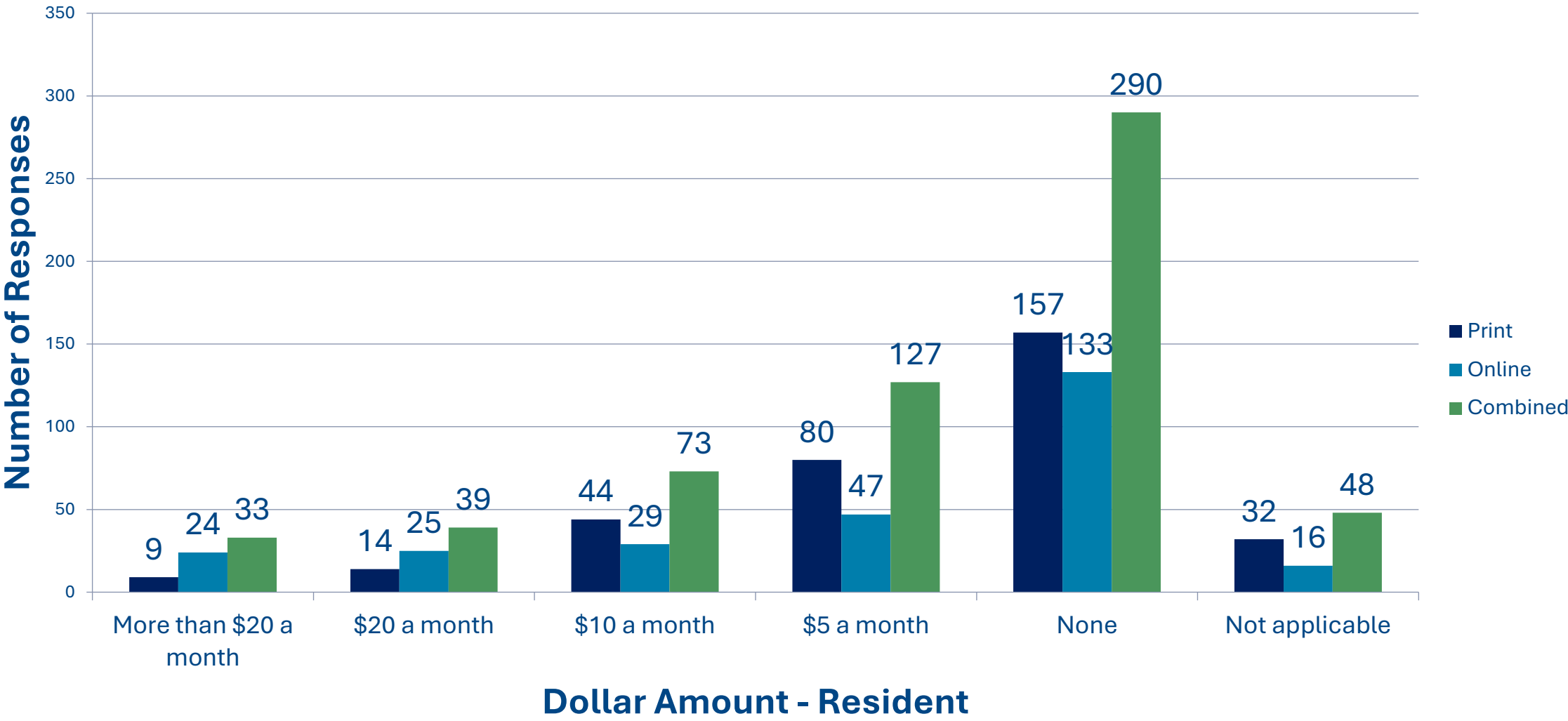
47.5%

Of Residents Unwilling to Pay Any Amount

7.9%

Not Applicable

QUESTION 7:
As a resident, how much would you be willing to pay?



Totals (this question): Print=336, Online=274, Combined=610

Business

11.4%

Of Businesses Willing to Pay \$5 to More Than \$20 a Month

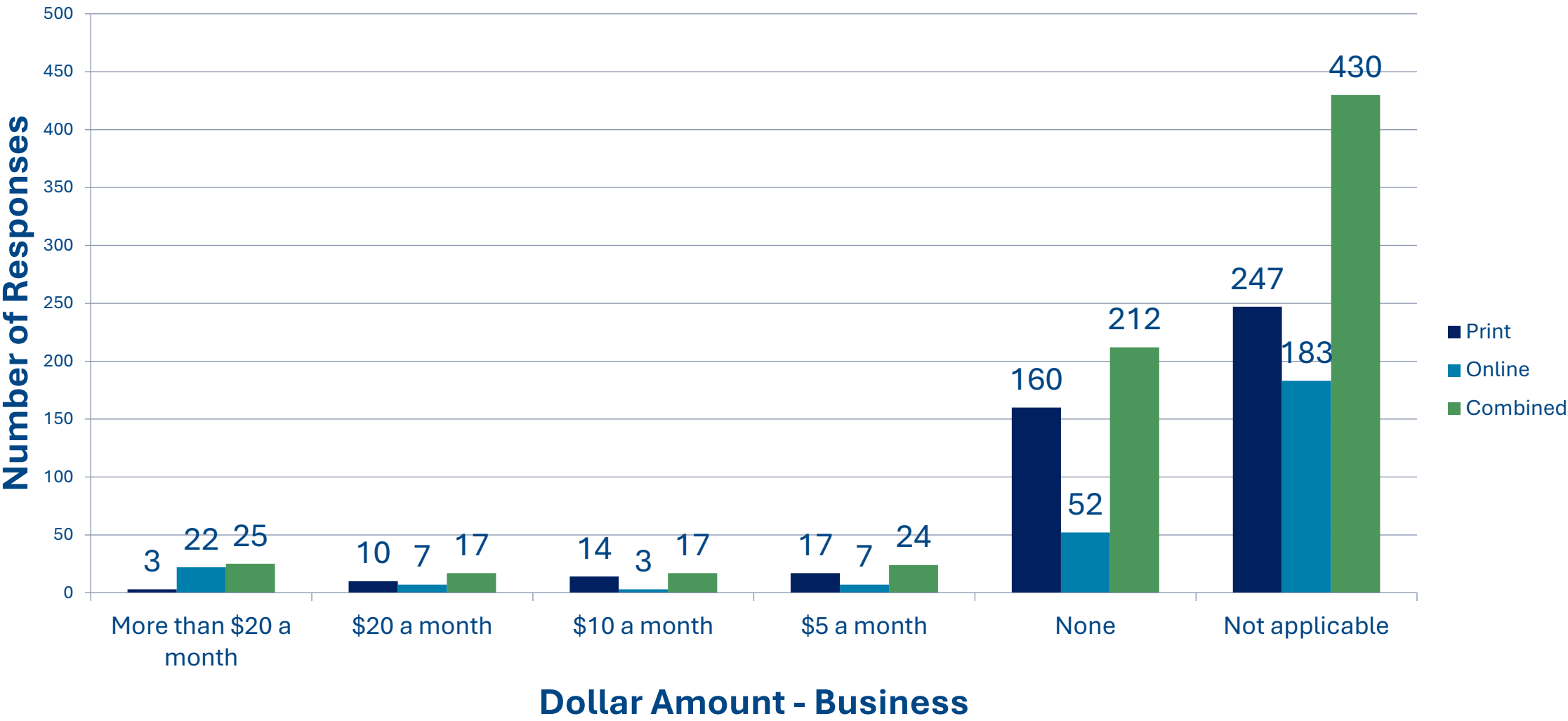
29.3%

Of Businesses Unwilling to Pay Any Amount

59.3%

Not Applicable

QUESTION 8:
As a business, how much would you be willing to pay?



Totals (this question): Print=451, Online=274, Combined=725

TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

DIGITAL SURVEY RESULTS | CONDUCTED NOV 10 – DEC 5, 2025

39.9%

Very to Somewhat Strongly Agree That Businesses Should Pay More

25.4%

Very to Somewhat Strongly Disagree That Businesses Should Pay More

34.7%

Neutral

28.9%

Very to Somewhat Likely to Contribute to a Voluntary Fundraising Campaign

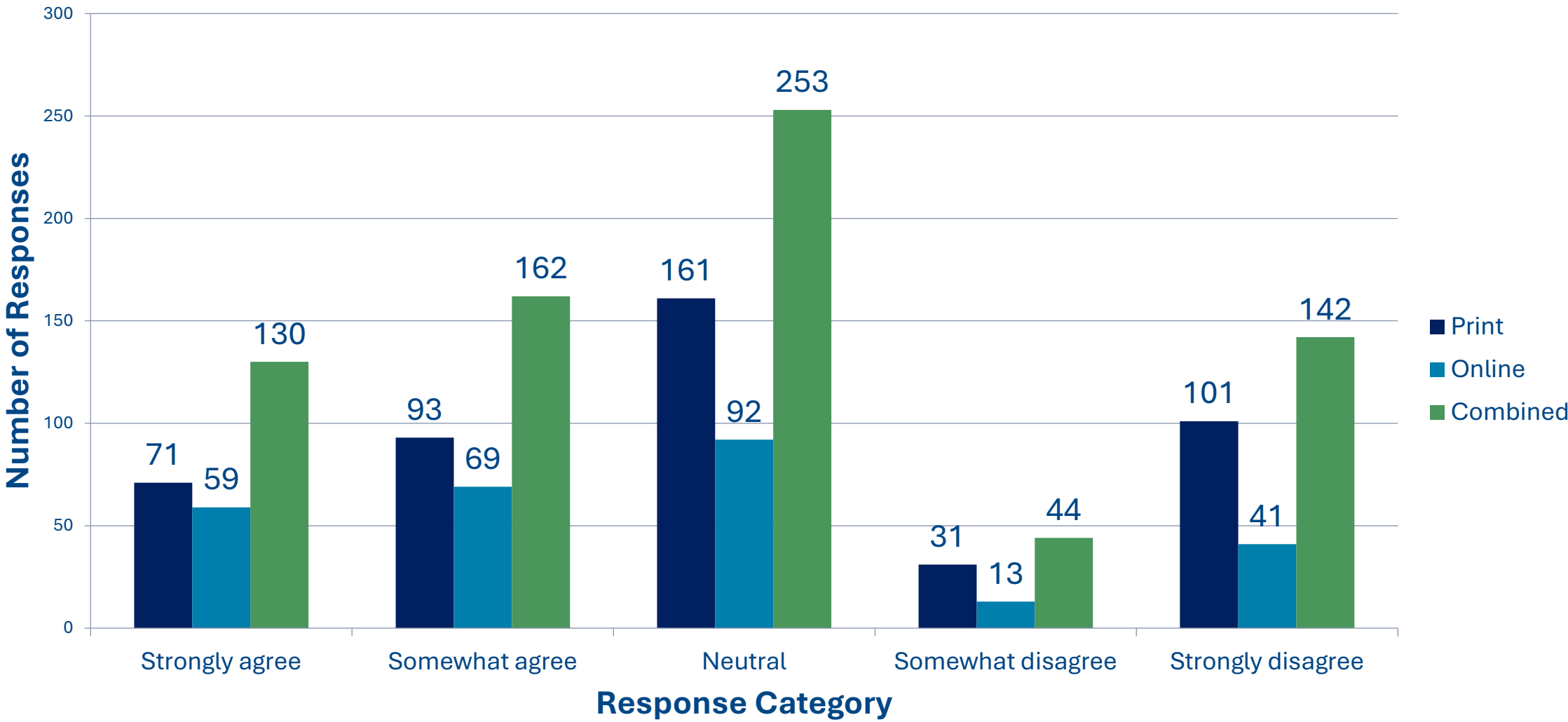
56.8%

Very to Somewhat Likely to Contribute to a Voluntary Fundraising Campaign

14.3%

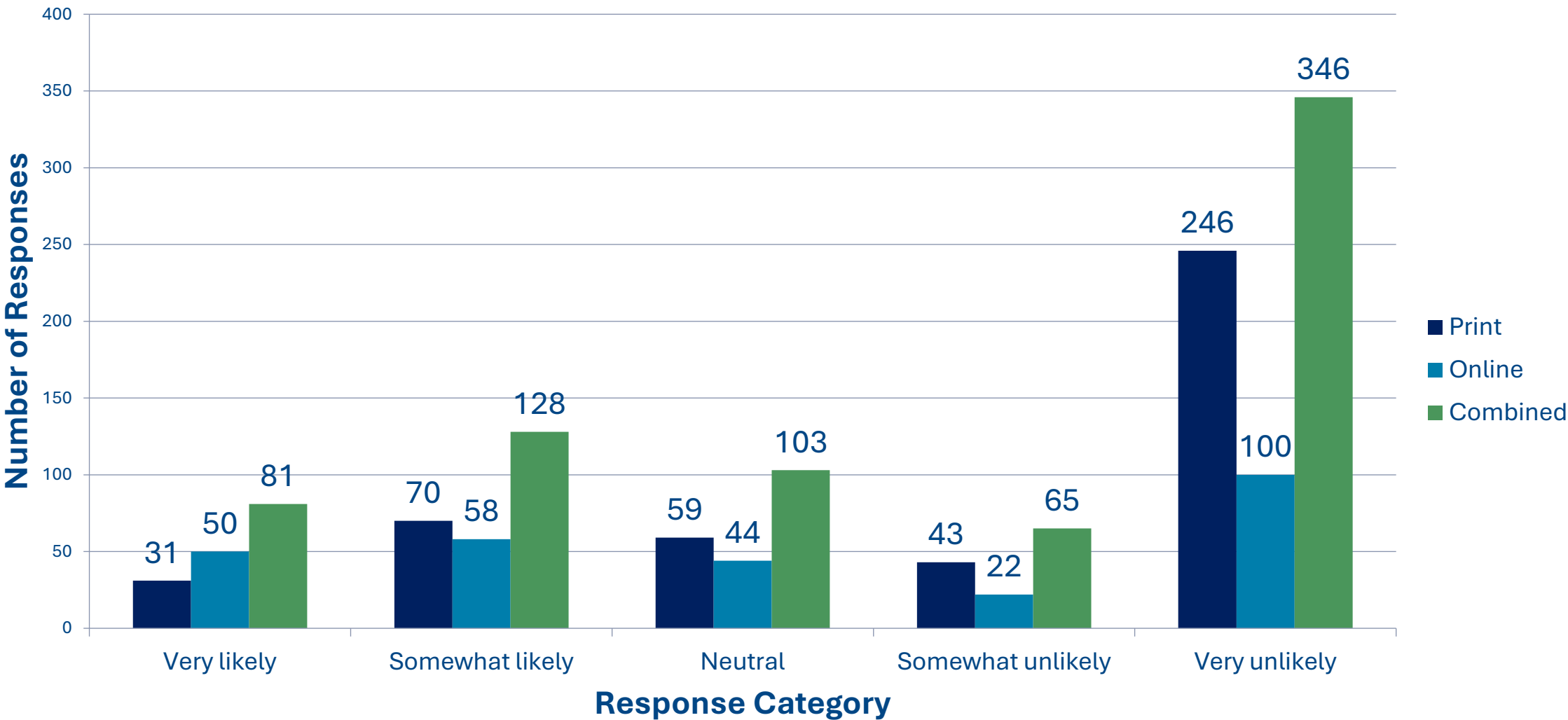
Neutral

QUESTION 9:
Should commercial businesses such as hotels and restaurants pay more?



Totals (this question): Print=457, Online=274, Combined=731

QUESTION 10:
Would you contribute to a voluntary fundraising campaign?

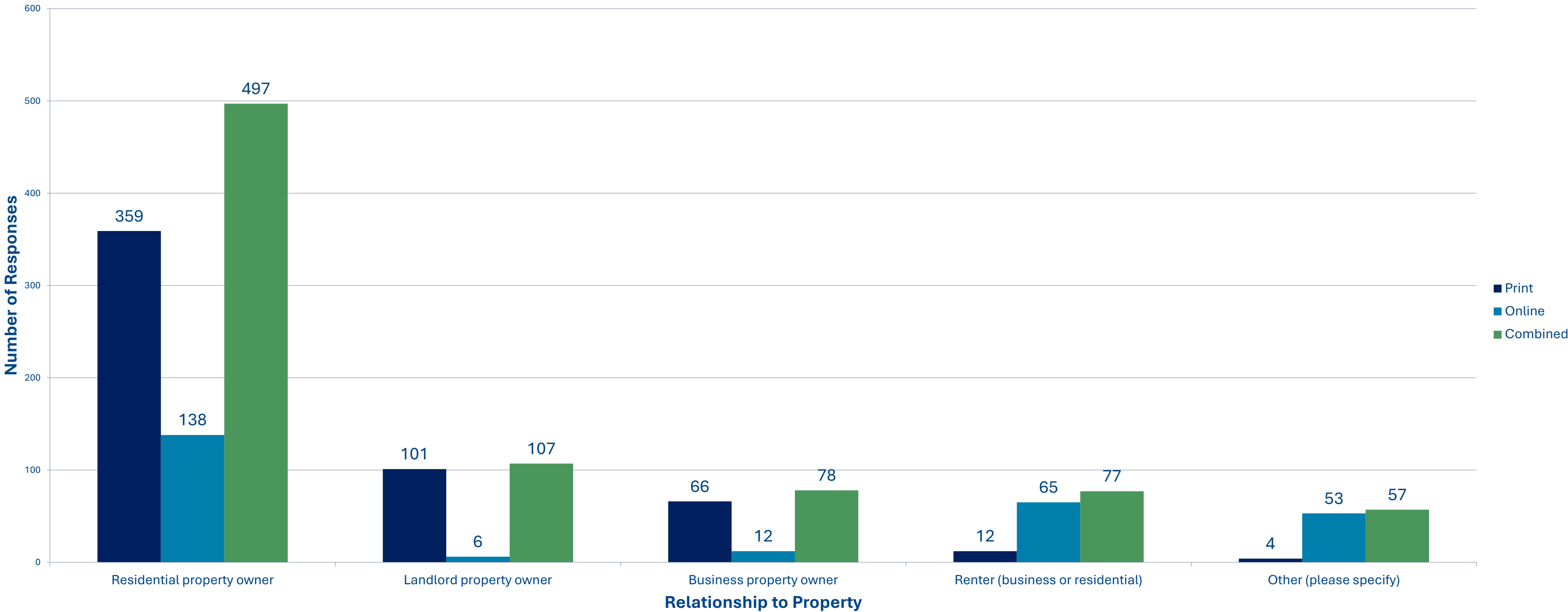


Totals (this question): Print=449, Online=274, Combined=723

TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

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QUESTION 11:
What is your relationship to the property in the Lower Rattlesnake or Heart of Missoula Neighborhoods?



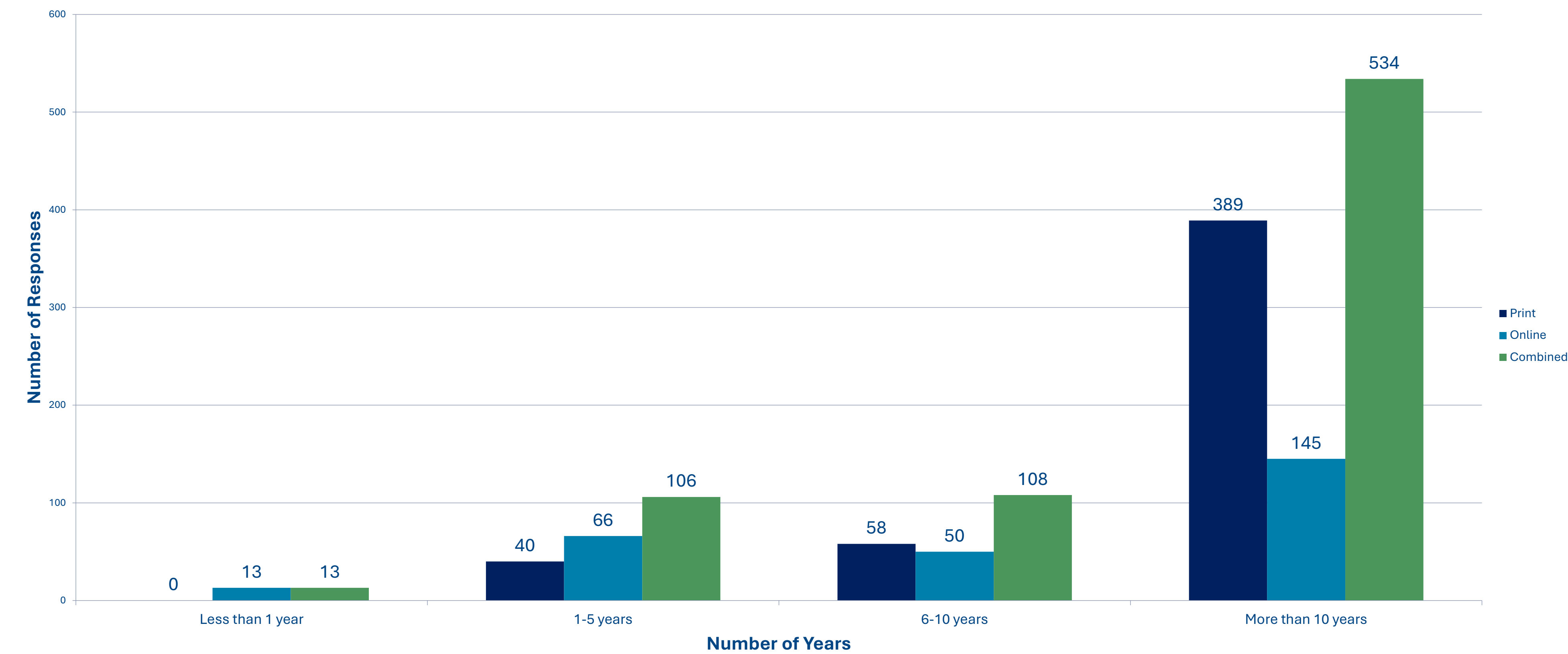
Totals (this question): Print=542, Online=274, Combined=816

**Responses marked “other” mention:
Living outside Lower Rattlesnake/Heart of Missoula (Upper Rattlesnake, UM), business employee, visitor to impacted area, or other comments not directly related to the question.*

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QUESTION 12:
How long have you lived or operated in this area?



Totals (this question): Print=487, Online=274, Combined=761

TRAIN HORN NOISE SURVEY

COMMENTS SUMMARY

Overall, the additional comments show **strong concern about train horn noise**, with most respondents **acknowledging it as a nuisance or quality-of-life issue**, but **significantly less enthusiasm for funding the solution through a new tax or Special Impact District (SID)**.

Sentiment toward **resolving the train horn issue itself is generally positive or neutral**, while sentiment toward **forming an SID is predominantly negative**, with many commenters explicitly opposing new taxes even if they support noise reduction in principle.

Based on language and tone, the comments are estimated to be **~13% positive, ~6% negative, and ~81% neutral**, with neutrality often reflecting conditional support (“fix it, but not with higher taxes”).

Common Themes & Suggestions Identified:

- **Opposition to new taxes / SID funding** (“no more taxes,” “railroad should pay,” “use federal/state funds”).
- **Acknowledgment of train horn noise impacts**, especially on sleep, business operations, and daily life.
- **Preference for alternative funding sources** (railroad companies, grants, federal or state programs).
- **Equity concerns**, noting trains existed before some development and impacts are not evenly shared.
- **Safety considerations**, emphasizing that any solution must not compromise rail or pedestrian safety.



**433 Total Survey
Comments**
(Mail & Email)



**260 Print Survey
Comments**

**173 Online Survey
Comments**



~13% Positive
~6% Negative
~81% Neutral



Thank You

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