

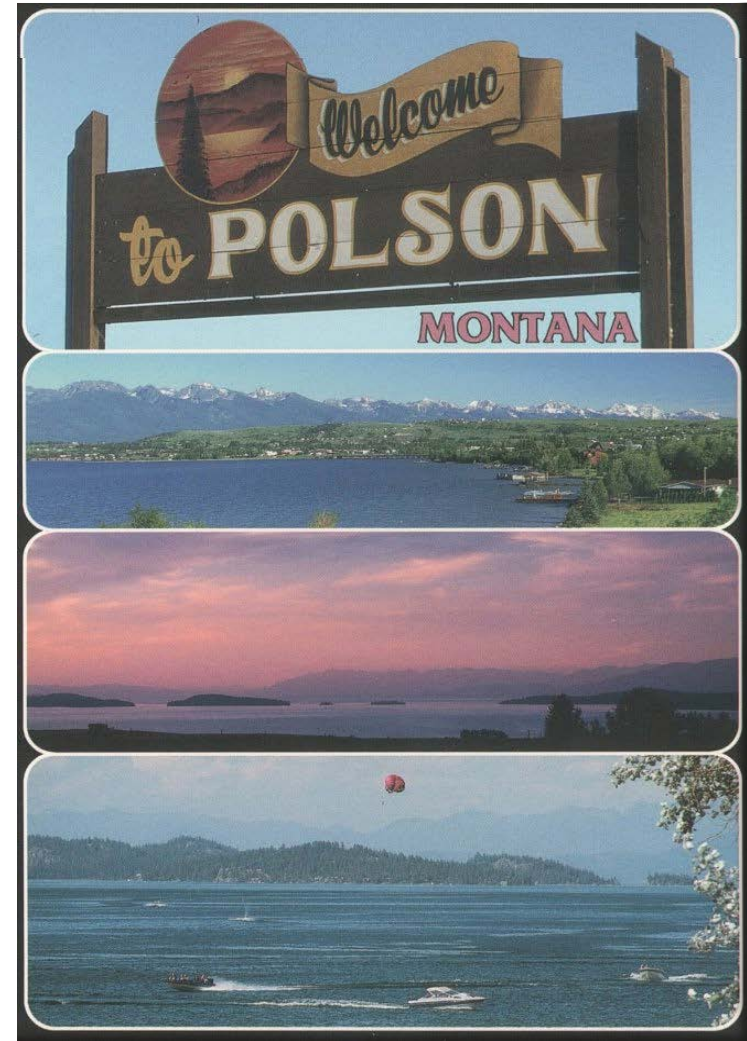
# Envision Polson! Survey

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December 8, 2011



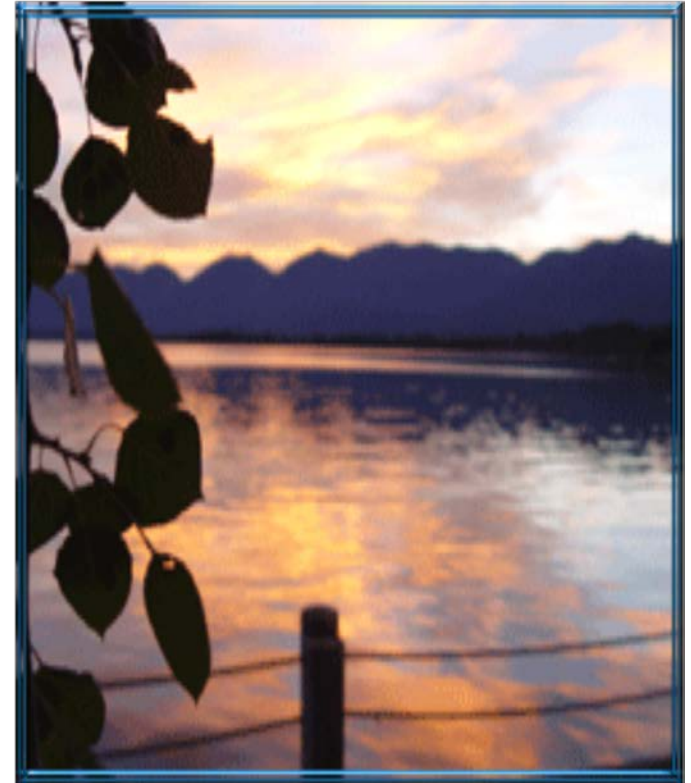
# Survey Overview

- Background
  - It was determined that a survey was needed to ensure that the greater Polson area had an opportunity to express their opinion regarding the Eight Goals and subsequent actions as identified by the steering committee on January 26, 2011.



# Survey Overview

- **Methodology**
  - Utilizing SurveyMonkey's online software service exclusively, survey invitations were posted on various webpages, printed on cards and emailed to identified mailing lists beginning March 12, 2011. The survey was closed October 30 2011. 259 surveys were completed.



# Summary of Findings

- **Caution:** The small sample size achieved by this survey (less 300) is not statistically projectable. In addition, there is evidence in the open-end comments that more than a few people were confused by the questions, and their answers may not reflect their true feelings or match the intention of the questions. Therefore, the data in this report is best used only for general directional purposes.
  - For example, “I gave this (vision) statement a poor rating because I don’t think it is true.”
- The overall survey results indicate that Envision Polson! and its ideas are being positively received and even warmly welcomed in our community.
  - Over 40 people indicated that they would like to be contacted to assist in this endeavor.

## Summary of Findings – *continue* –

- Beautification, Economic Sustainability, Youth, and Unique feature-Flathead Lake were the top ranked goals. Year-round recreation, Health & Well-Being, Leadership & Collaboration, and Tourism were the lowest ranked goals. All of the goals were relatively popular, however:
  - None of the 8 goals received below a 3.7 average on the 8 point scale
  - The 3 highest goals received an average ranking of just slightly over 5
  - The data and the open-end comments suggest that people found it difficult to rank so many items that they felt were nearly equally important
- Citizens expressed opinions about the actions they would most like to see Envision Polson! take:
  - **Economic stability:** Attract new businesses, develop local agriculture, promote winter activities
  - **Leadership & Collaboration:** Build relationships, communicate about and build alliances around Envision Polson!
  - **Tourism:** Attract geotourist, promote Polson, make information available to tourists
  - **Beautification:** Remove blight, upgrade infrastructure, clean up and enhance parks
  - **Unique Feature – Flathead Lake:** Build a lakefront boardwalk, connect and build more trails along the lake and the town
  - **Year-round Recreation:** Connect trails, support existing movements, host a winter carnival
  - **Health & Well-Being:** Develop service projects, develop programs to expose youth to the broader world engage community support of schools and education

# Recommendations

- The Steering Committee should review survey feedback regarding wording of goal statements, then make adjustments to create final goal statements.
- Champions should meet with each Action Committee to review the overall survey results and their detailed results, then sketch out short-term and long-term plans.
  - Guard against redundancy in activities: develop combined sub-committees for actions that are highly shared/related.
- GPCF needs to investigate community values then develop an overall vision based on this survey information and the values information (part of Orton grant if awarded).
- GPCF and Envision Polson! must develop a marketing and communications plan to clarify and grow the Envision Polson! movement.
  - Staffing is likely required. Investigate VISTA and other options. (The Orton grant would solve this issue, if we were to receive it.)

# Recommendations – *continued* –

- People who asked for further contact about Envision Polson! Should be contacted by a member of the Steering Committee to determine a plan for their involvement.
- The Steering Committee should note the open-end comments as they are insights into important, deeply felt “conversations” with citizens. Ideas that were expressed frequently include:
  - The need for a Community Center
  - The opportunity to do something great with the Fairgrounds
  - The need for relationship-building with the Tribes
  - The idea that a lakefront boardwalk and trail system ties in with so many desirable things (tourism, health, culture, a more vibrant downtown, etc.)
  - The belief that our town is not as welcoming or as clean and safe as it should be
  - The concern about our economy and the low standard of living making business development a necessity for Polson
  - The notion that enhancement of lake access and parks is as much for locals as it is for tourism
  - The belief that Polson has a “good old boys club” that runs the city



## Goal One

Polson is a culturally diverse community that balances varied economic opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, the arts and other industries to maintain a year-round sustainable economic base.

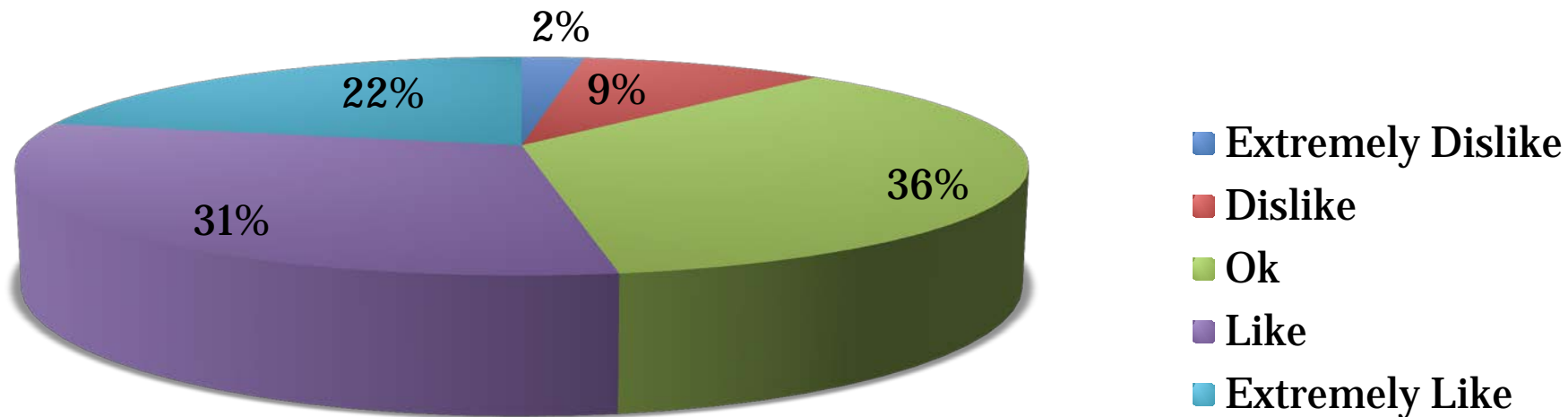
***Quote from Survey: “Needed are businesses that market beyond Polson. This takes an educated business owner. And we need to promote the livability of our small town and its location to entrepreneurs that can locate anywhere.”***



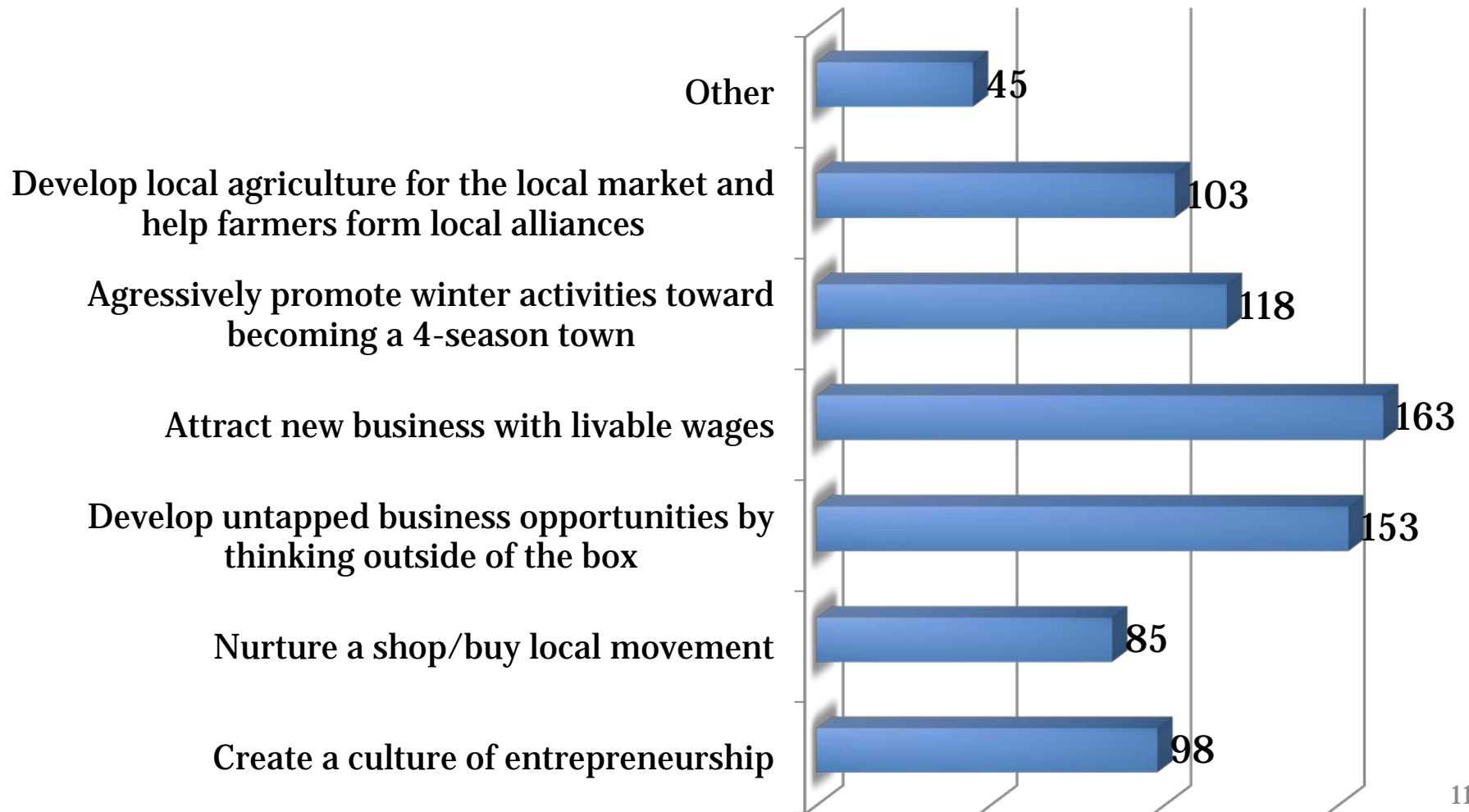
## Summary of Goal One: Acceptance & Top Three Action Items Selected

- **Goal Acceptance**
  - 52.6% of the respondents liked or extremely liked the goal statement.
  - 11.8% of the respondents did not like or extremely disliked this goal statement.
  - 35.7% were okay with the goal statement.
- **Top Three Actions**
  1. Attract new business with livable wages,
  2. Develop local agriculture for the local market and help farmers form alliances, and
  3. Aggressively promote winter activities toward becoming a 4-season town.

**Goal 1: Polson is a culturally diverse community that balances varied economic opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, the arts, and other industries to maintain a year-around sustainable economic base.**



# Goal 1: Action Item Results





## Goal 1 – Economic Sustainability

### Summary of Open End Comments

- There is a desire to support existing businesses, but there is also push back on this due to higher local prices and lack of downtown appeal.
- Many noted that downtown lacks parking for tourists traveling in RVs, and the Polson area in general lacks sufficient accommodations for boaters. Also, a general lack of things for tourists to do was seen as a problem, particularly in non-summer months.
- Attracting new businesses to Polson and helping existing businesses grow are seen as necessary but there is a skeptical attitude about the ability to do this. The track record has not been encouraging. Business concerns tie to concern about struggling families and threats to our citizens' quality of life.



## Goal Two

Polson's governmental and community leaders continually dialogue to create alliances among organizations, and citizens in Polson and the surrounding community, resulting in and strengthening of the entire area.

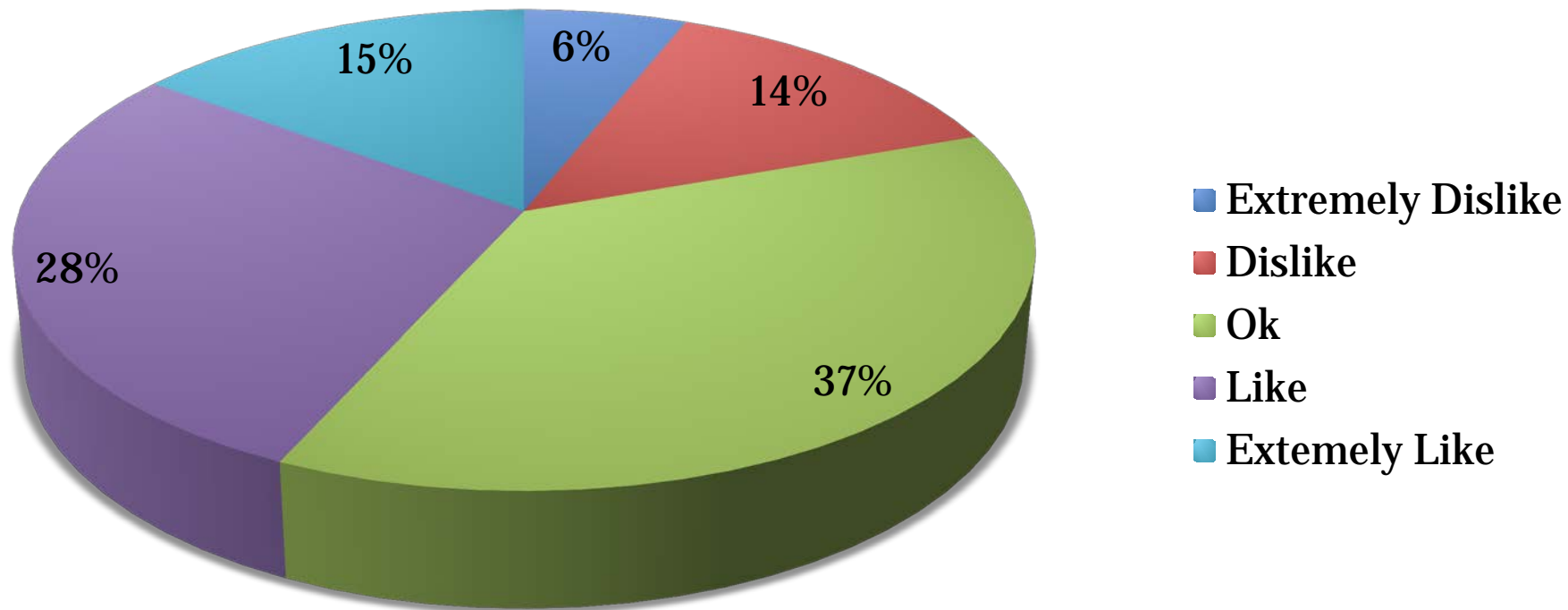
***Quote from Survey: "This is a much needed goal and should be a priority focus. Much potential here is wasted on back-biting and in-fighting."***



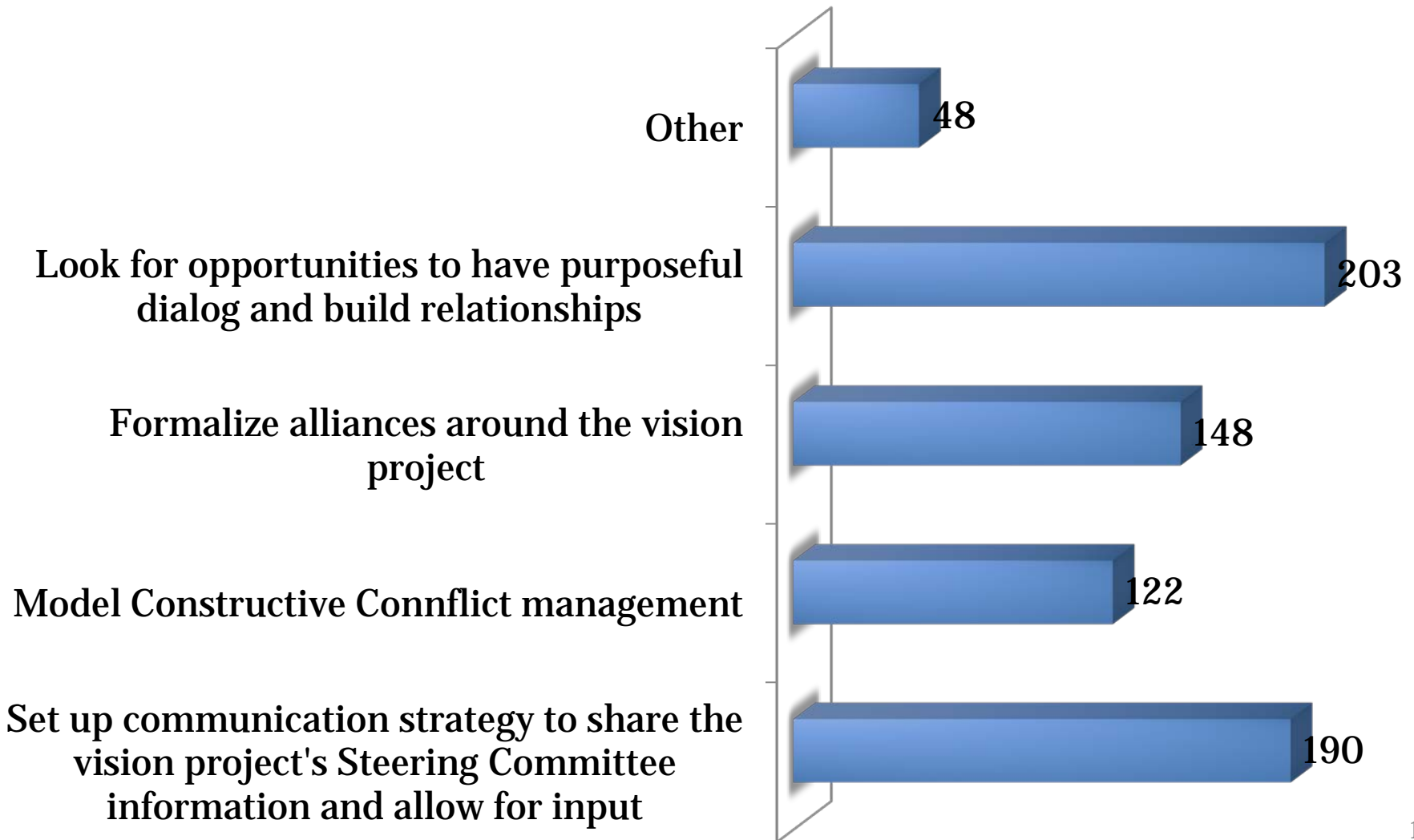
## Summary of Goal Two: Acceptance & Top Three Action Items Selected

- **Goal Acceptance**
  - 43.1% of the respondents liked or extremely liked the goal statement.
  - 19.8% of the respondents did not like or extremely disliked this goal statement.
  - 37.1% were okay with the goal statement.
- **Top Three Actions**
  1. Look for opportunities to have purposeful dialog and build relationships,
  2. Set up a communication strategy to share the vision project's Steering Committee information and also allow for input,
  3. Formalize alliances around the vision project.

**Goal 2: Polson's governmental and community leaders continually dialogue to create alliances among officials, organizations, and citizens in Polson and the surrounding community, resulting in efficiencies, unity, and strengthening of the entire area.**



## Goal 2: Action Item Results





## Goal 2: Leadership & Collaboration

### Summary of Open End Comments

- “Good old boys club” is a prevalent phrase in the comments about governmental leadership in our community. Perceptions of poor communication practices and a lack of collaboration with citizens, businesses, and the Tribes were passionately expressed. Coinciding with this was a frustrated sense of urgency and a plea for less talk and more action.
- More leadership from citizens and from non-governmental entities (like GPCF, Chamber of Commerce, churches, library, schools) is desired.



## Goal Three

Polson is internationally recognized for its authentic natural tourism experience, and as a town where visitors value learning about, experiencing, preserving and sharing local culture, natural beauty and bounty.

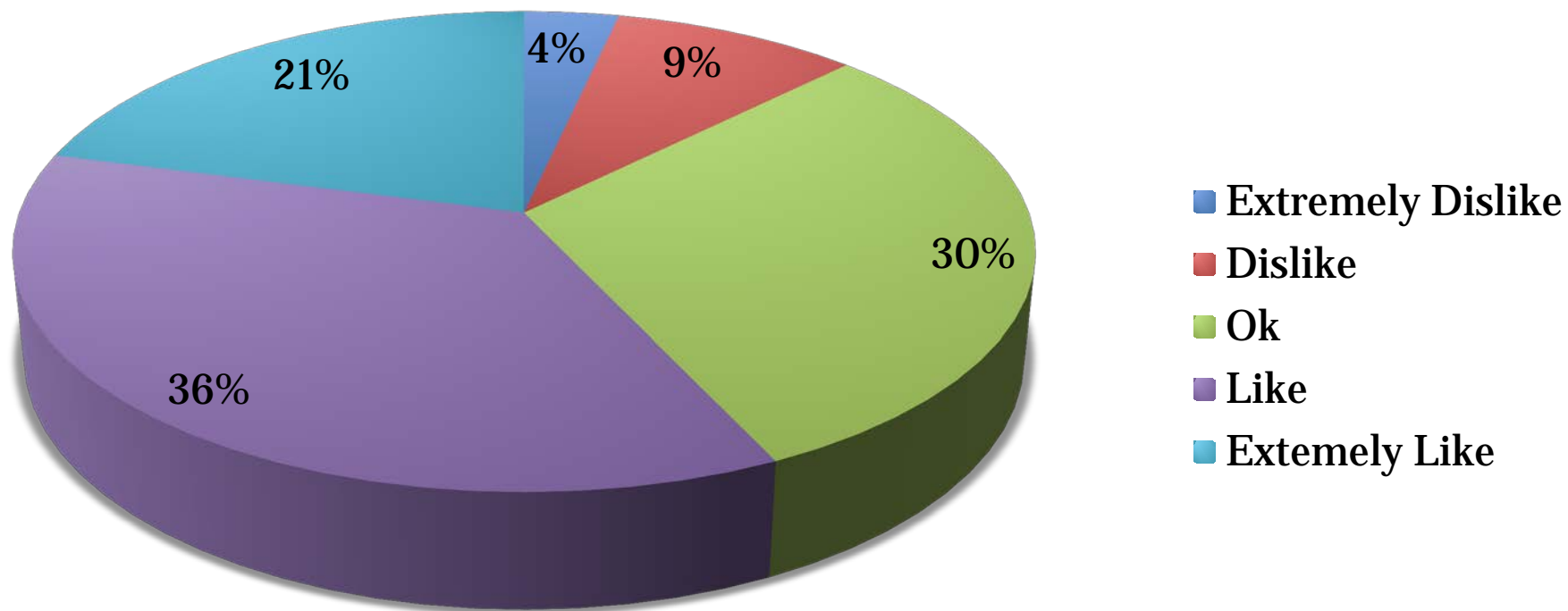
***Quote from Survey: “We talk a lot about promoting Polson and tourism, but constantly do things to drive tourism away.”***



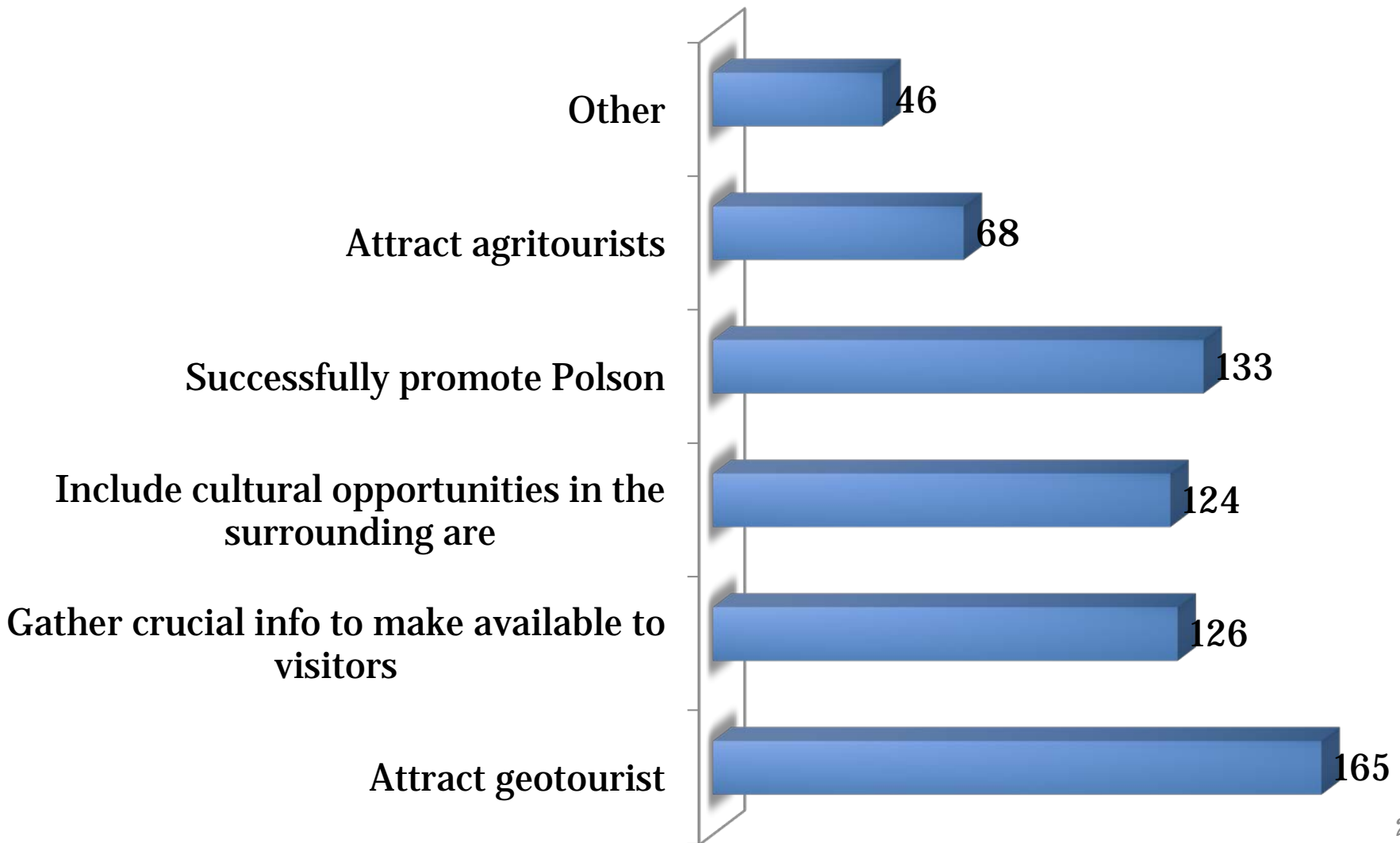
## Summary of Goal Three: Acceptance & Top Three Action Items Selected

- **Goal Acceptance**
  - 57% of the respondents liked or extremely liked the goal statement.
  - 12.6% of the respondents did not like or extremely disliked this goal statement.
  - 30.4% were okay with the goal statement.
- **Top Three Actions**
  1. Attract geotourists (tourists that value scenic getaways and experiencing local culture).
  2. Successfully promote Polson.
  3. Gather crucial information to make available to visitors (maps, permits, etc.).

**Goal 3: Polson is internationally recognized for its authentic natural tourism experience, preserving and sharing local culture, natural beauty and bounty.**



## Goal 3: Action Item Results



## Goal 3: Tourism

### Summary of Open End Comments

- It seemed nearly impossible for most to visualize Polson as being internationally recognized, and – possibly related – it also seemed clear that many people are not aware of geotourism (authentic natural tourism experience).
- There is evidence of some polarized opinions about tourism: many expressed that Polson needs to successfully promote tourism, but some people expressed that they do not value tourism at all.
- Many ideas were given/supported on ways that Polson can better attract tourism in an appropriate way. Including Glacier Park and the Tribes/tribal culture was seen as necessary by some; other focused more on simple things like improving existing businesses operating hours.



## Goal Four

Polson is a welcoming, beautiful, safe, and clean town, and this fuels a strong sense of community pride and unity.

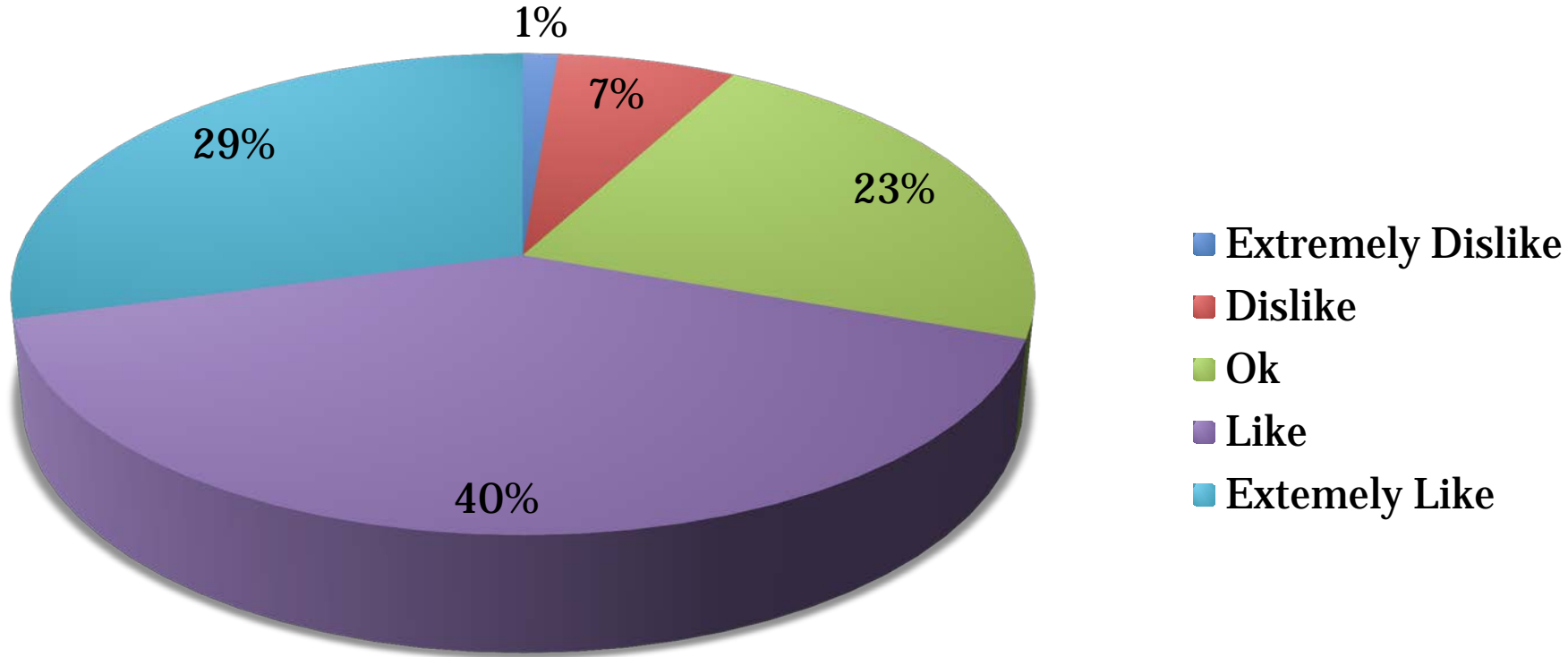
***Quote from Survey: “Much is needed to come anywhere near this vision (welcoming, beautiful, safe and clean), but it is a wonderful goal.”***



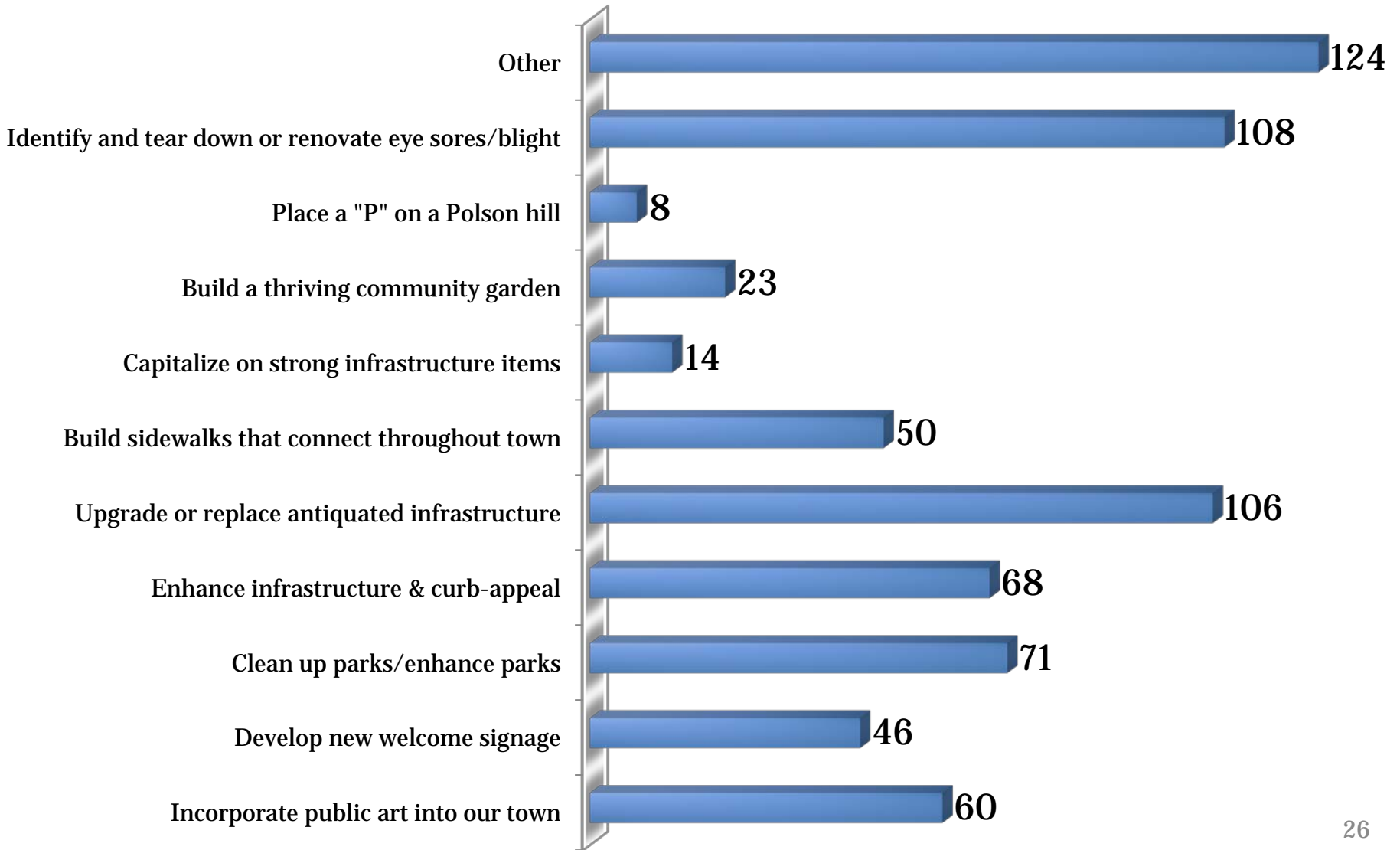
## Summary of Goal Four: Acceptance & Top Three Action Items Selected

- **Goal Acceptance**
  - 69.5% of the respondents liked or extremely liked the goal statement.
  - 7.9% of the respondents did not like or extremely disliked this goal statement.
  - 22.6% were okay with the goal statement.
- **Top Three Actions**
  1. Identify and tear down or renovate eyesores and blight.
  2. Upgrade or replace antiquated infrastructure (streets, etc.).
  3. Clean up and enhance parks.

## Goal 4: Polson is a welcoming, beautiful, safe and clean town, and this fuels a strong sense of community pride.



# Goal 4: Action Item Results





## Goal 4: Beautification

### Summary of Open End Comments

- Welcoming – not so much. Beautiful – mostly. Safe and clean – need work.
- Much mention was made of business decay along Hwy 93, road/infrastructure decay around town, and grubby establishments and litter downtown.
- There is a discontent that laws are not enforced to make Polson more welcoming, beautiful, safe and clean.
- Many people liked many or ALL of the suggested ideas regarding this goal.



## Goal Five

Polson enhances visitors and residents' access to and enjoyment of Flathead Lake, and actively protect the enjoyment of future generations.

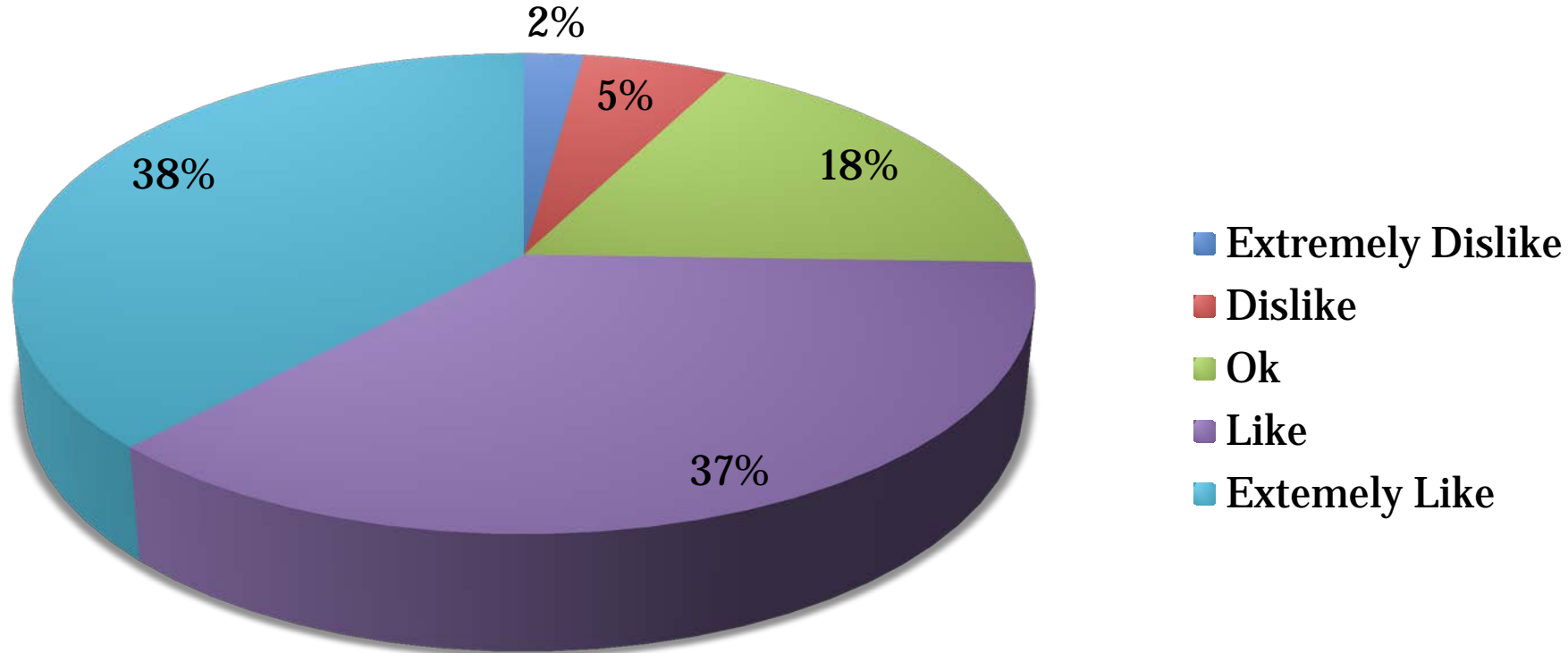
***Quote from Survey: “The action ideas related to this vision are AWESOME. Doing these things (boardwalk, trails, get Hwy 93 off the Lake) will have a huge impact on the overall feel of the town, allow us to become more of a destination for tourists, and make the town more enriching for residents”.***



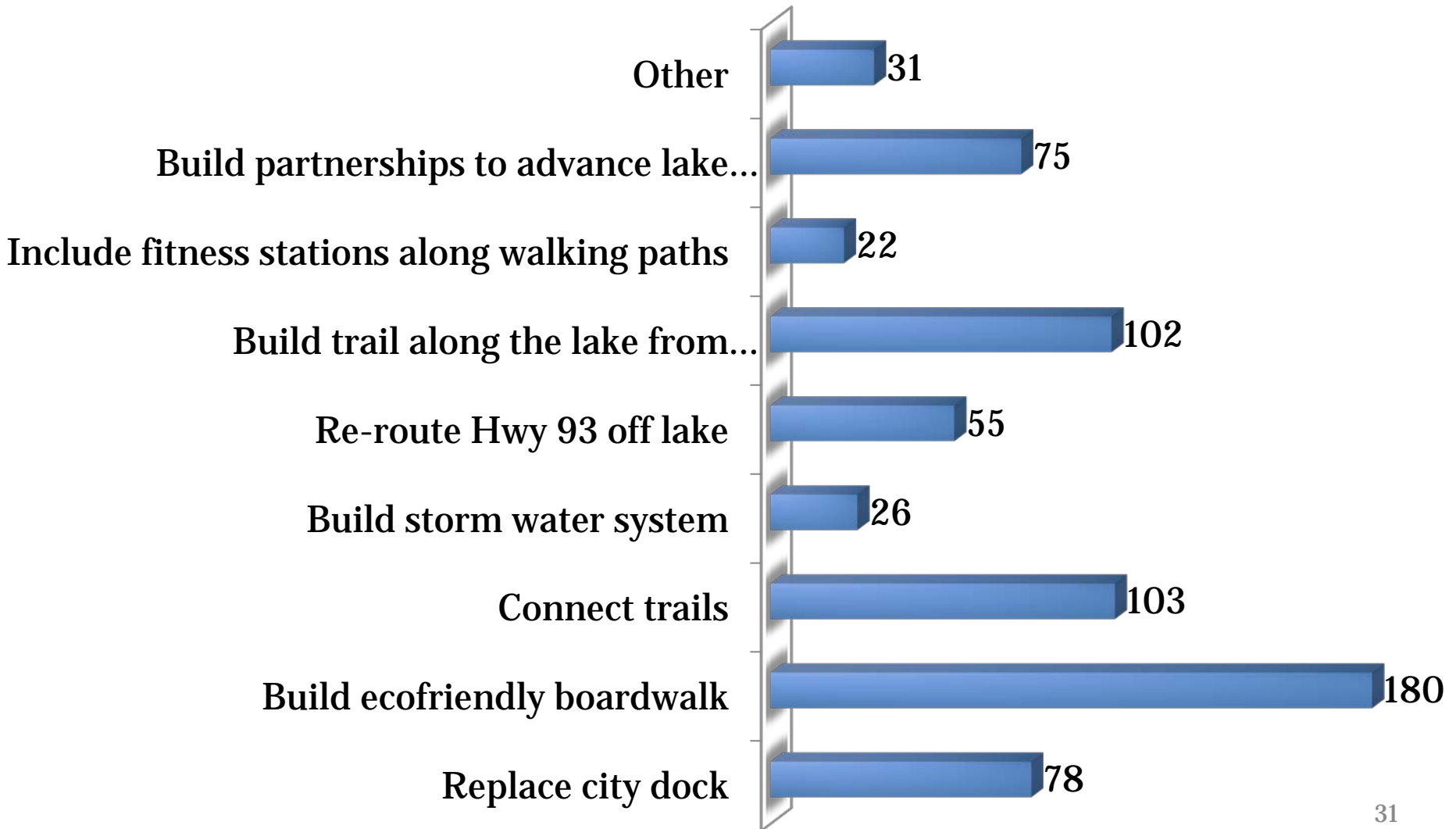
## Summary of Goal Five: Acceptance & Top Three Action Items Selected

- **Goal Acceptance**
  - 74.5% of the respondents liked or extremely liked this goal statement.
  - 7.6% of the respondents did not like or extremely disliked this goal statement.
  - 17.9% were okay with the goal statement.
- **Top Three Actions**
  1. Build an eco-friendly boardwalk along the lake that ties the waterfront to Main Street & features culturally appropriate art and retail (i.e., farmers market, art fair, sculptures, etc.).
  2. Connect trails: Sacajawea Park to Riverside Park, up the stairs and to walking path.
  3. Build a trail along the lake from the KwaTaqNuk to the golf course.

**Goal 5: Polson enhances visitors and residents' access to and enjoyment of Flathead Lake, and actively protects the lake for the enjoyment of future generations.**



# Goal 5: Action Item Results





## **Goal 5: Unique Feature (Flathead Lake)**

### **Summary of Open End Comments**

- **There were many impassioned complaints about the lack of public access, parking, and boat launch facilities, some calling it “unbelievable” and feeling decisions are “made without citizen input, often favoring the wealthy and those in government.”**
- **The Flathead Lakers organization and the Tribes were acknowledged as existing important protectors of the health of our clean-water lake. Even so, ideas for lake education and protection were liked very much because of the feeling that the lake is Polson’s “gem” and is important to residents as well as tourists.**



## Goal Six

Polson offers year-round accessible recreation opportunities for citizens and visitors of all ages and abilities.

***Quote from Survey: “Summer is great. We need something for people to do the rest of the year.”***



## Summary of Goal Six: Acceptance & Top Three Action Items Selected

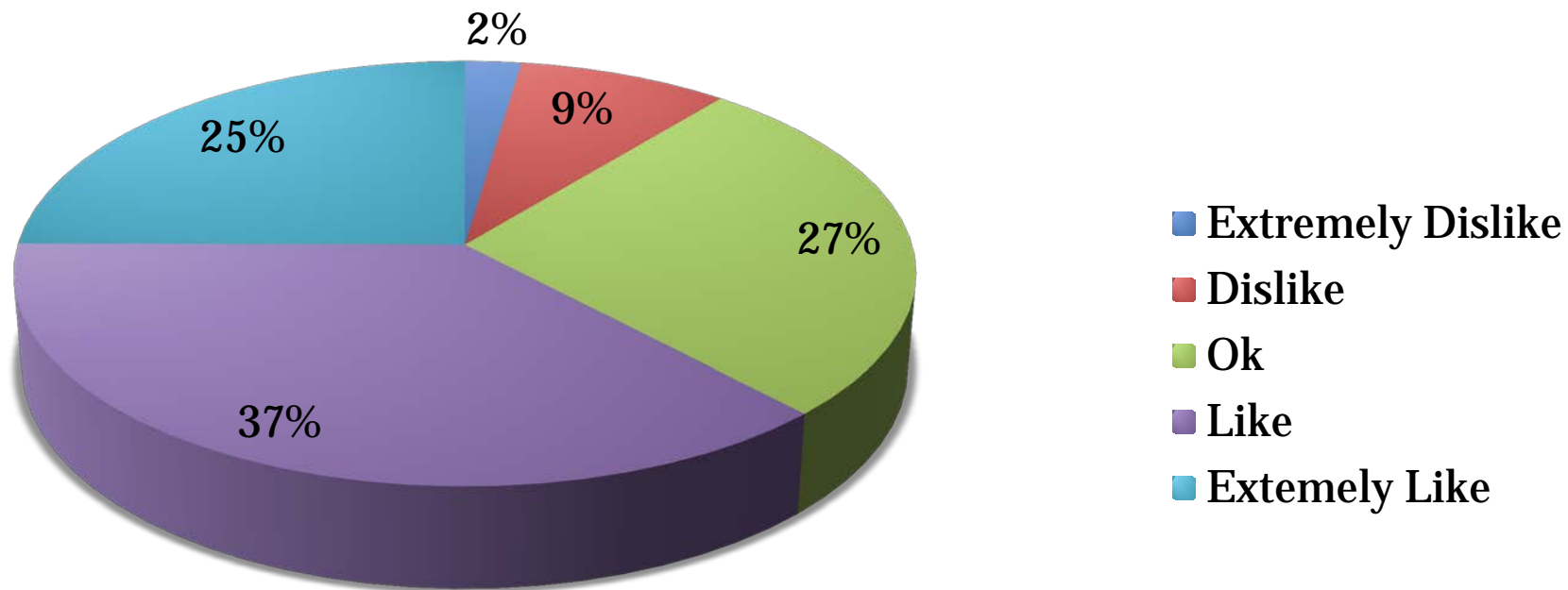
- **Goal Acceptance**

- 62% of the respondents liked or extremely liked this goal statement.
- 10.9% of the respondents did not like or extremely disliked this goal statement.
- 27.1% were okay with the goal statement.

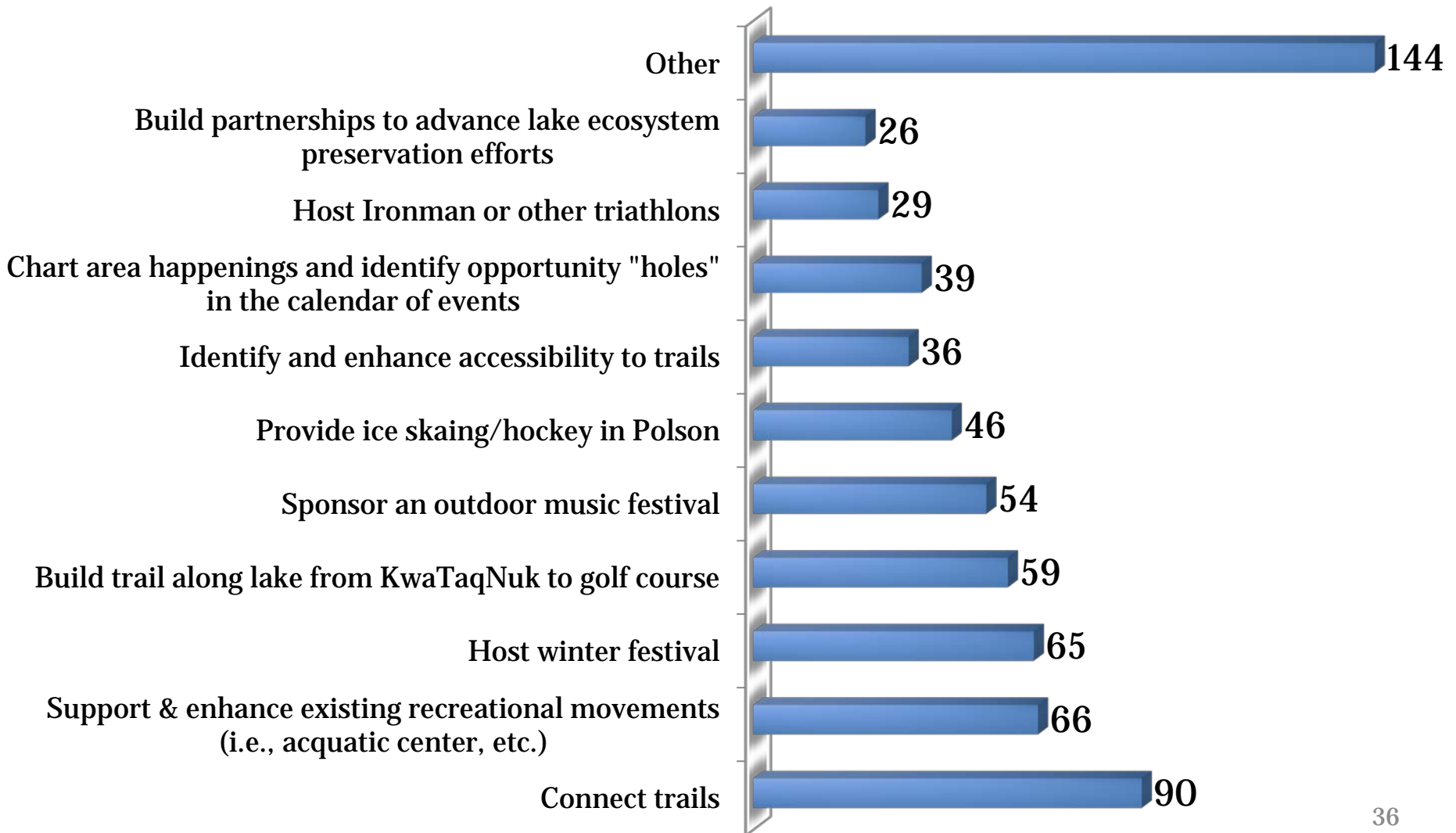
- **Top Three Actions**

1. Connect trails: hiking, walking, biking.
2. Support and enhance existing recreational movements (i.e., aquatic center, etc.).
3. Host a winter festival.

## Goal 6: Polson offers year-around accessible recreation opportunities for citizens and visitors of all ages and abilities.



# Goal 6: Action Item Results





## Goal 6: Year-Round Recreation

### Summary of Open End Comments

- Blacktail Mountain, and the possibility of being a “gateway” to skiing there, was mentioned frequently, access/transportation and communication are seen as lacking.
- Tribal-owned property was suggested as a barrier to many potential activities; however, many people mentioned that they liked many or all of the ideas offered as recreation options.



## Goal Seven

Polson is proactive in ensuring health and well-being for all citizens.

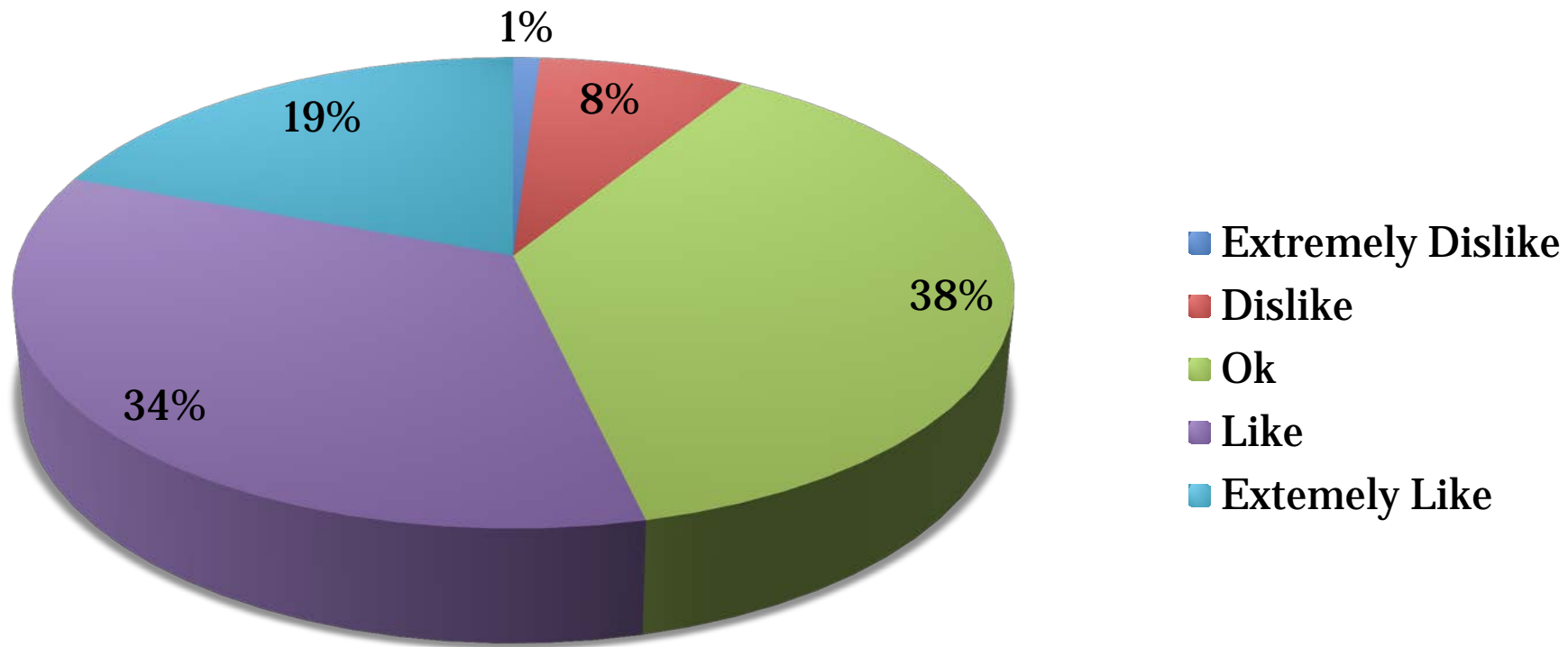
***Quote from Survey: “The Tribes and the town are trying.”***



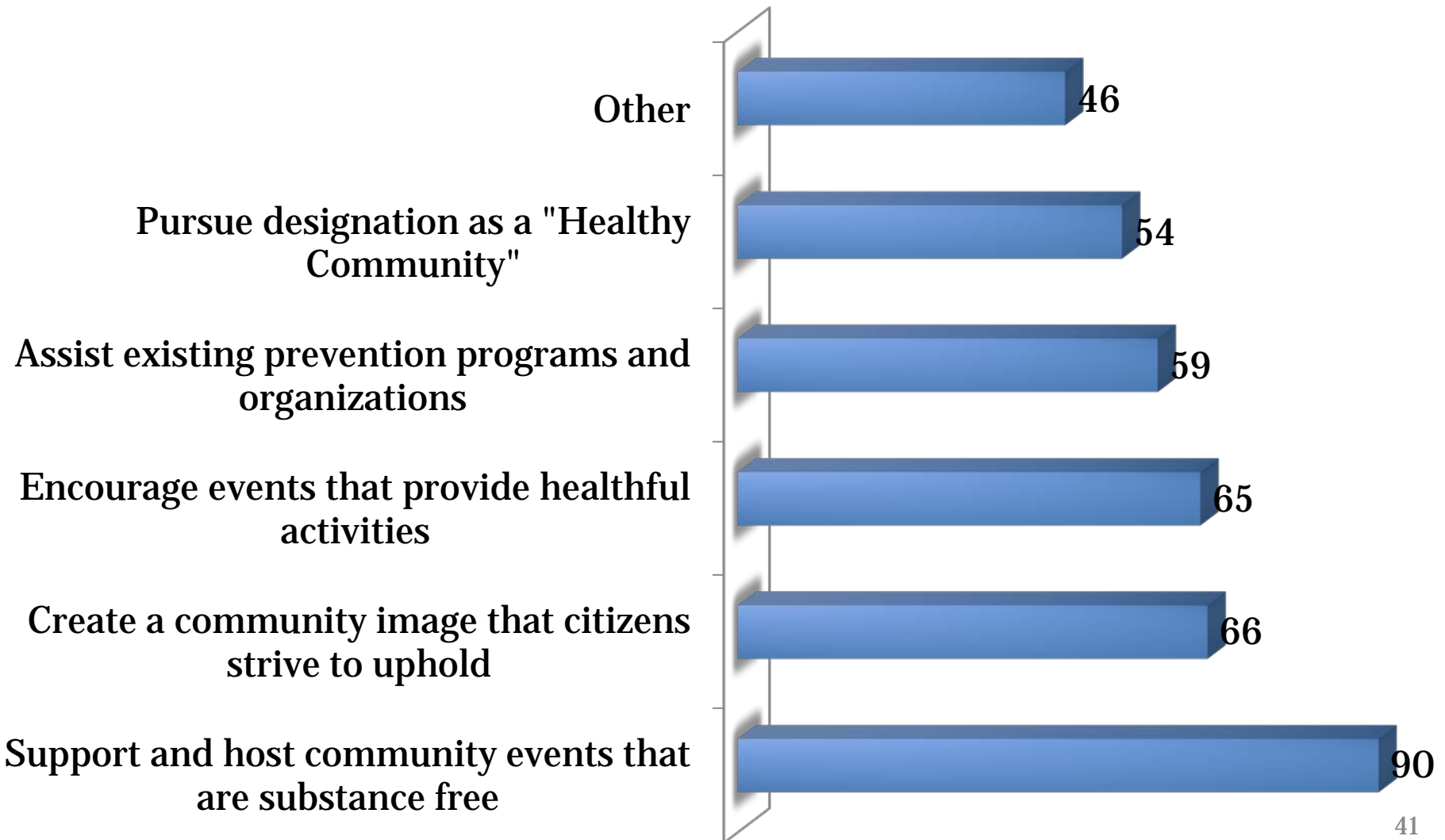
## Summary of Goal Seven: Acceptance & Top Three Action Items Selected

- **Goal Acceptance**
  - 53.7% of the respondents liked or extremely liked this goal statement.
  - 8.7% of the respondents did not like or extremely disliked this goal statement.
  - 37.6% were okay with the goal statement.
- **Top Three Actions**
  1. Encourage events that provide healthful activities.
  2. Pursue designation as a “Healthy Community” (meet official criteria: e.g., Bozeman)
  3. Assist existing prevention programs and organizations.

## Goal 7: Polson is proactive in ensuring health and well-being for all citizens.



# Goal 7: Action Item Results





## **Goal 7: Health and Well-Being**

### **Summary of Open End Comments**

- **Support for the Aquatic Center and walking paths/boardwalk were most often cited as important health-promoting measures for Polson area citizens.**



## Goal Eight

Polson is a community that values and takes pride in the successful development of its children.

***Quote from Survey : “There seems to be too much time in our schools spent on conflict between teachers, administration, and the parents. Not enough money spent on programs for the students who don’t participate in team sports.”***



## Summary of Goal Eight: Acceptance & Top Three Action Items Selected

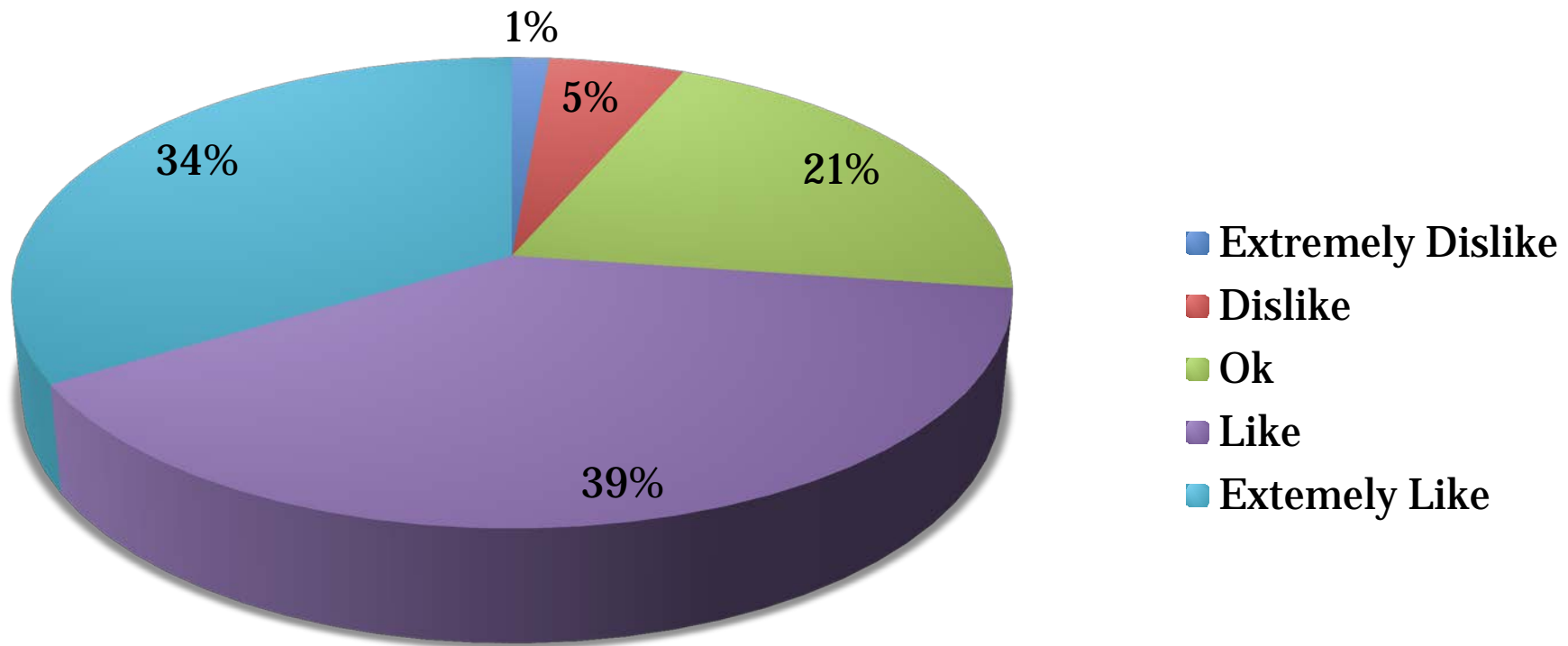
- **Goal Acceptance**

- 72.8% of the respondents liked or extremely liked this goal statement.
- 6.5% of the respondents did not like or extremely disliked this goal statement.
- 20.7% were okay with the goal statement.

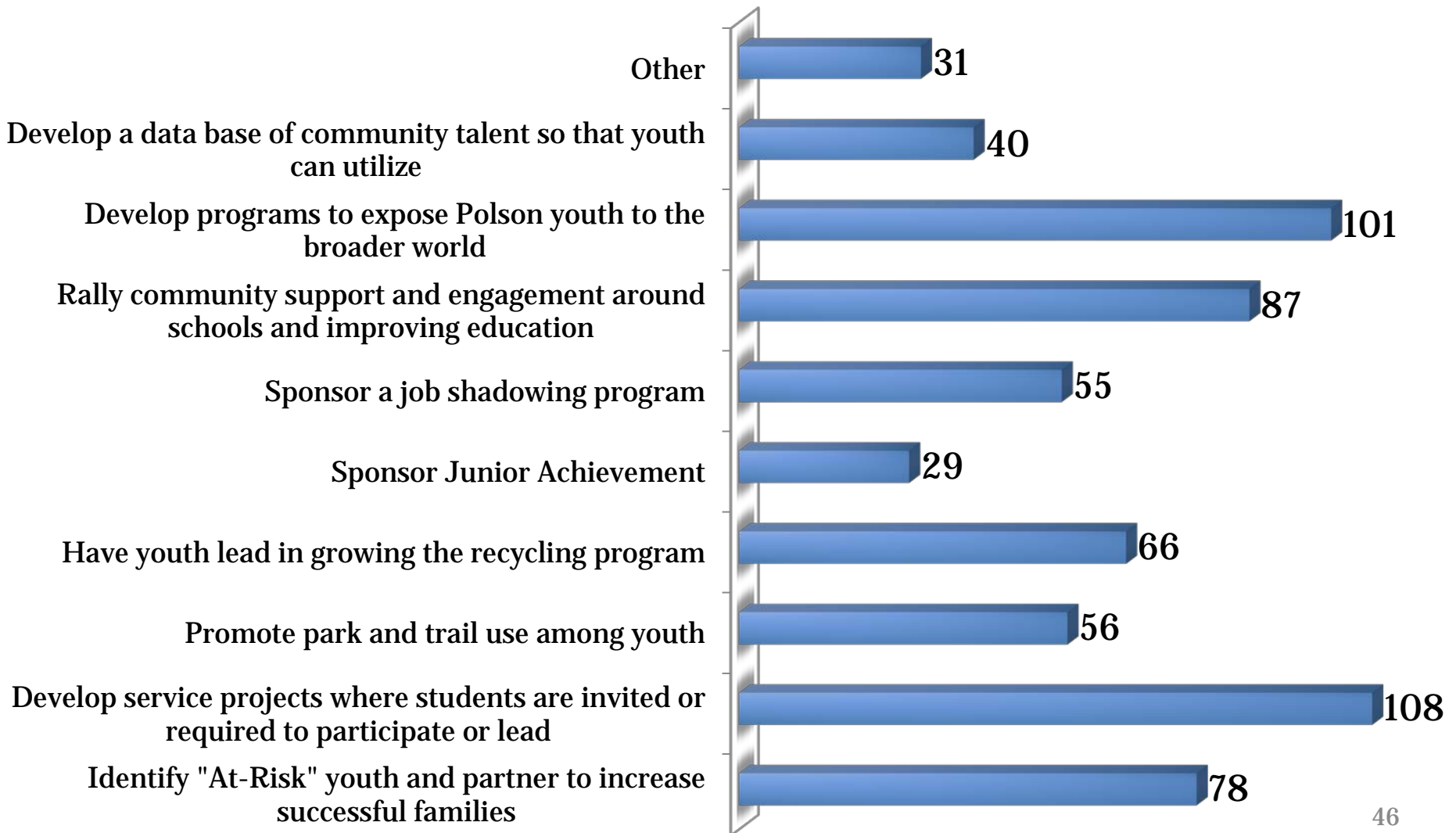
- **Top Three Actions**

1. Develop service projects where students are invited or required to participate or lead.
2. Develop programs to expose Polson youth to the broader world.
3. Rally community support and engagement around schools and improving education.

## Goal 8: Polson is a community that values and takes pride in the successful development of its children.



# Goal 8: Action Item Results





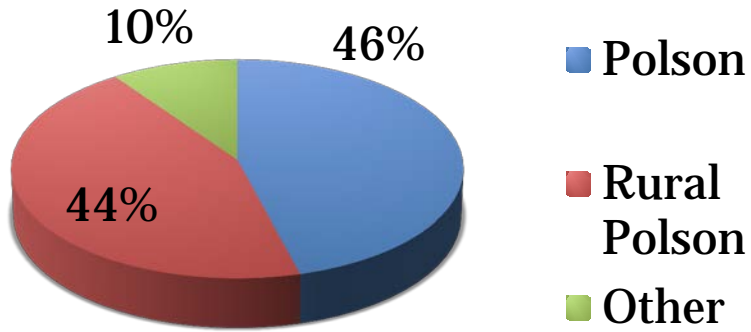
## Goal 8: Youth

### Summary of Open End Comments

- The outlook regarding Polson's youth was not negative by any means, but there was a general feeling that there are many ways we as a community can be doing more, particularly in regard to our schools and youth involvement in community volunteerism.

# Demographics

## Current Residence



## Age Group

