

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

# Worthington Deer Opinion Survey

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## Why was the survey necessary?

### Worthington Deer Taskforce

- The City Council formed a Deer Task Force to address complaints about the deer population in Worthington.
- Our team was asked to develop a survey to ascertain residents' attitudes about the deer and potential management strategies.

## Data collection

### Development of the Survey

- Modeled after previous city wildlife opinion surveys.
- Questions finalized at a Worthington Deer Task Force meeting.



Figure I. Map of zones in Worthington city limits<sup>4</sup> used for reference on survey.

## Dissemination of the Survey

- Facebook ad and mailer card with information and link to the survey.
- Team attendance at the Farmer's Market and Family Nights.
- Physical surveys at the Griswold Center, the Community Center, and the Municipal Building.

## Who were our respondents?

- 3,895 responses, 80.8% are current Worthington residents.

## Demographic data compared to 2022 Worthington Census

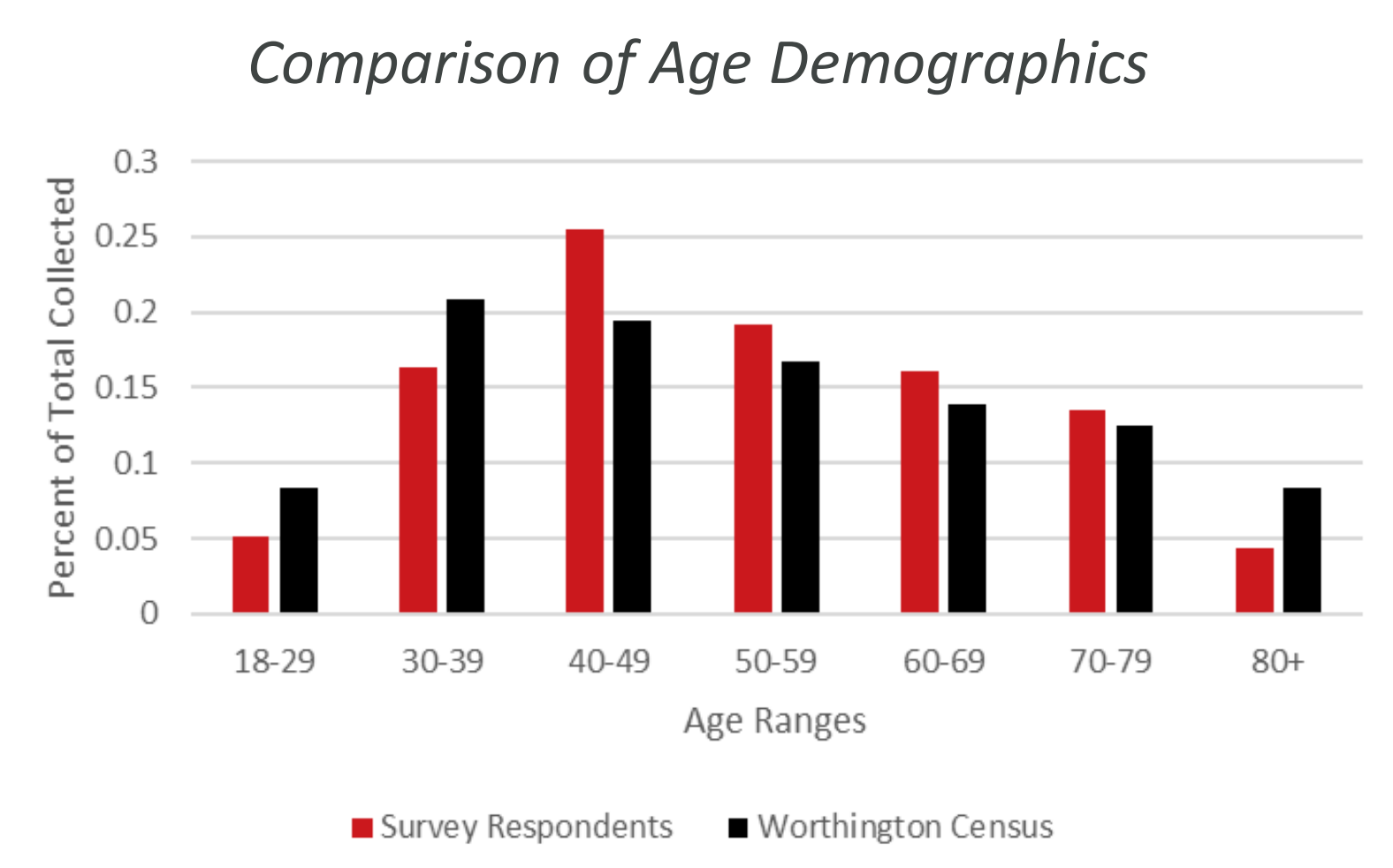


Figure II. Graph displaying a comparison of age distribution in survey respondents compared with 2022 Worthington census data. A sample was collected from at least 10% of the total count from each listed age range. Many respondents neglected to provide their age.

## Comparison of Geographic Distribution

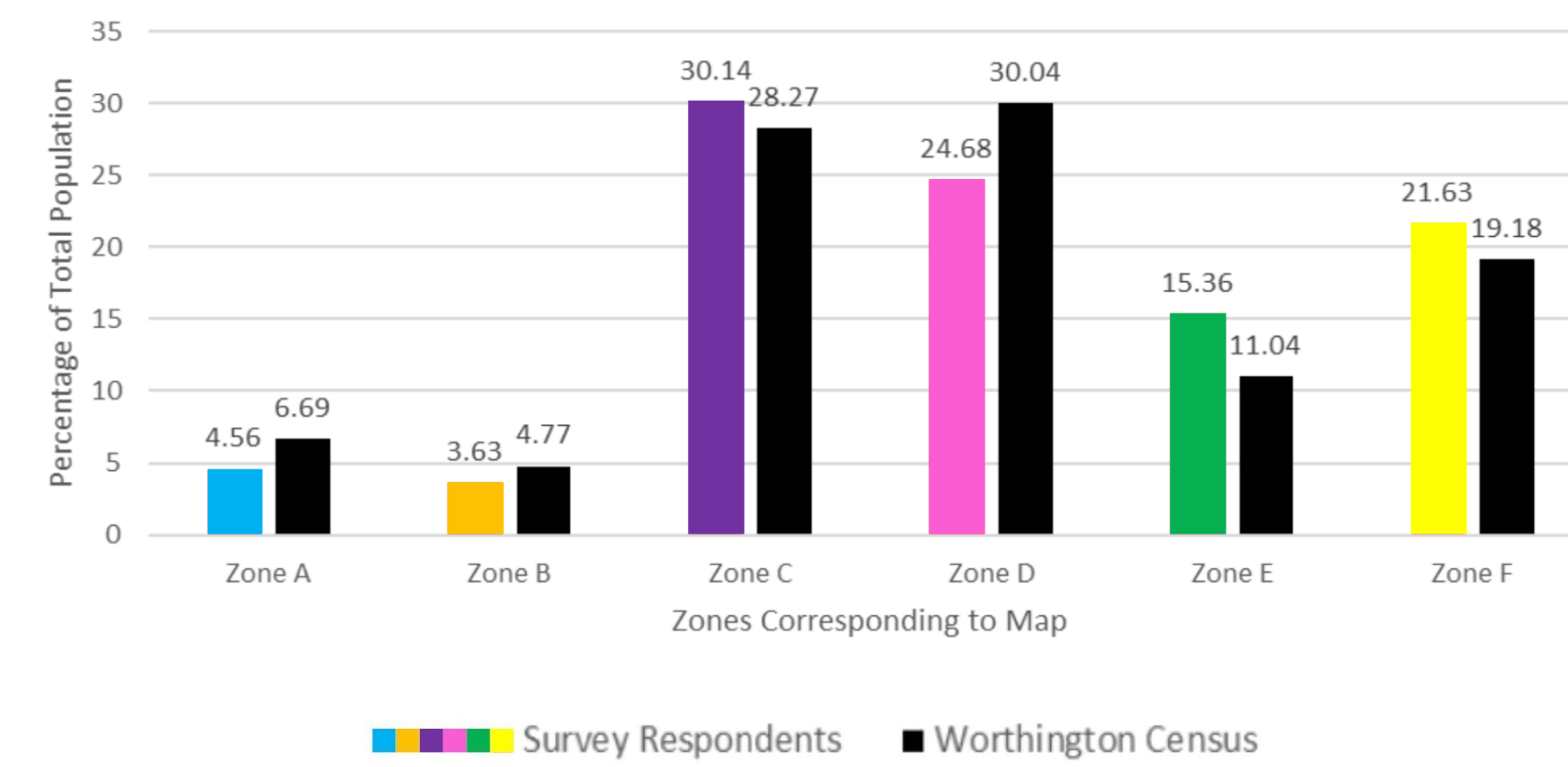


Figure III. Graph displaying a comparison of geographic distribution in survey respondents compared with 2022 Worthington census, corresponding with Zones outlined in Figure I.

## How do residents feel about the deer?

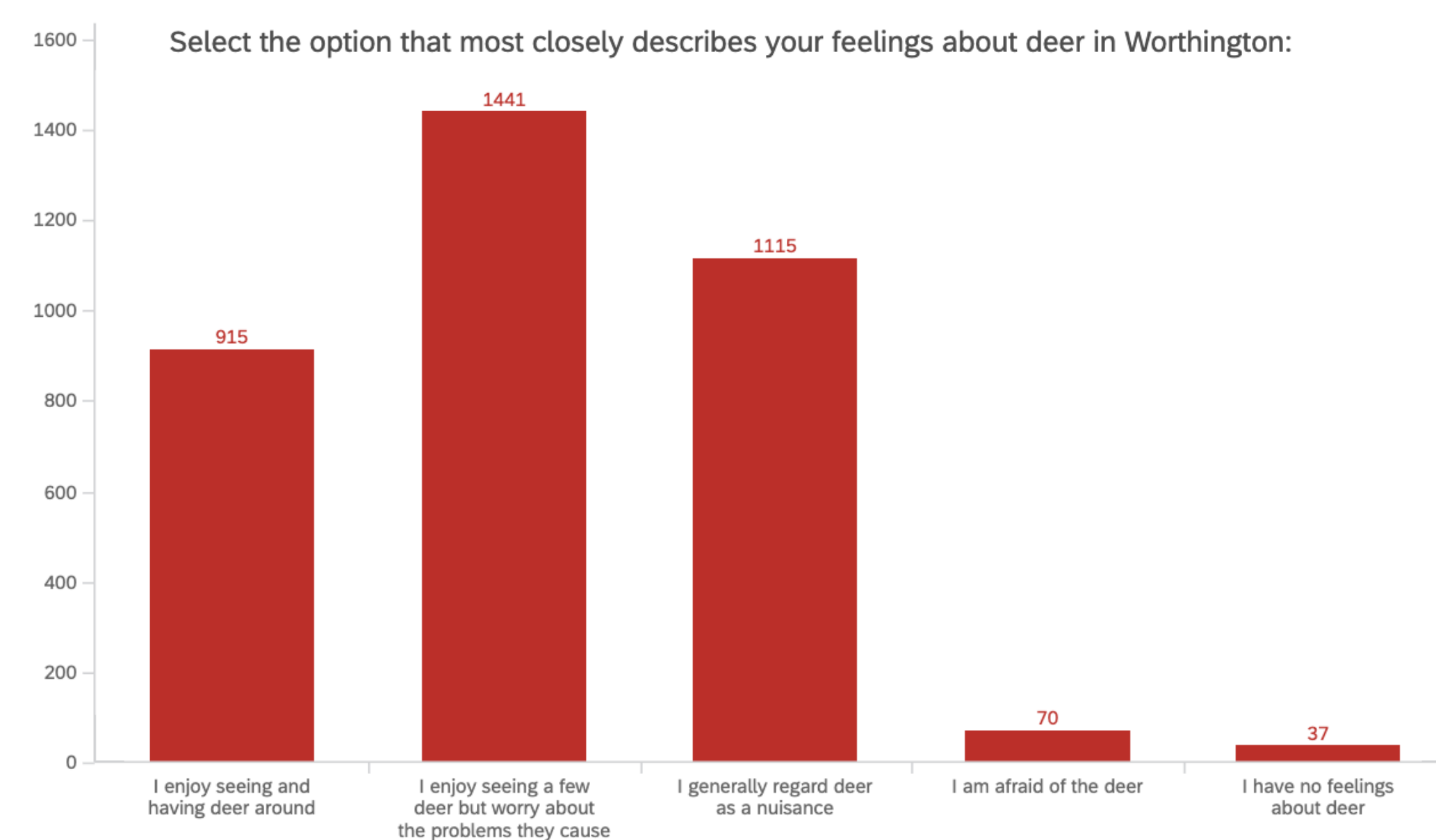


Figure IV. Graph displaying respondent feelings about deer in Worthington.

- Roughly 25% of survey respondents enjoy seeing the deer.
- Oppositely, about 31% of respondents regard the deer as a nuisance.
- At about 40%, the most common response was that residents enjoy seeing a few deer but worry about the problems they cause.

## Primary concerns expressed by respondents?

Themes	Frequency
Express support for reducing the deer population (use of words like cull, reduce, and control).	335
Express having experienced garden/landscape destruction.	233
Express personal experience and concern that deer in Worthington have become aggressive and/or are not scared of humans.	195
Utilize wording such as "that city must do something", "do something", "something must be done", and/or "the city has put this off for far too long".	188
Express feelings that "there are too many deer" and/or that "the deer population is out of control".	187

Table I. Top 5 themes mentioned by respondents in open ended question "Do you have any other thoughts or concerns you would like to share?" listed by frequency of mentions.

## Nature of deer-related damage suffered

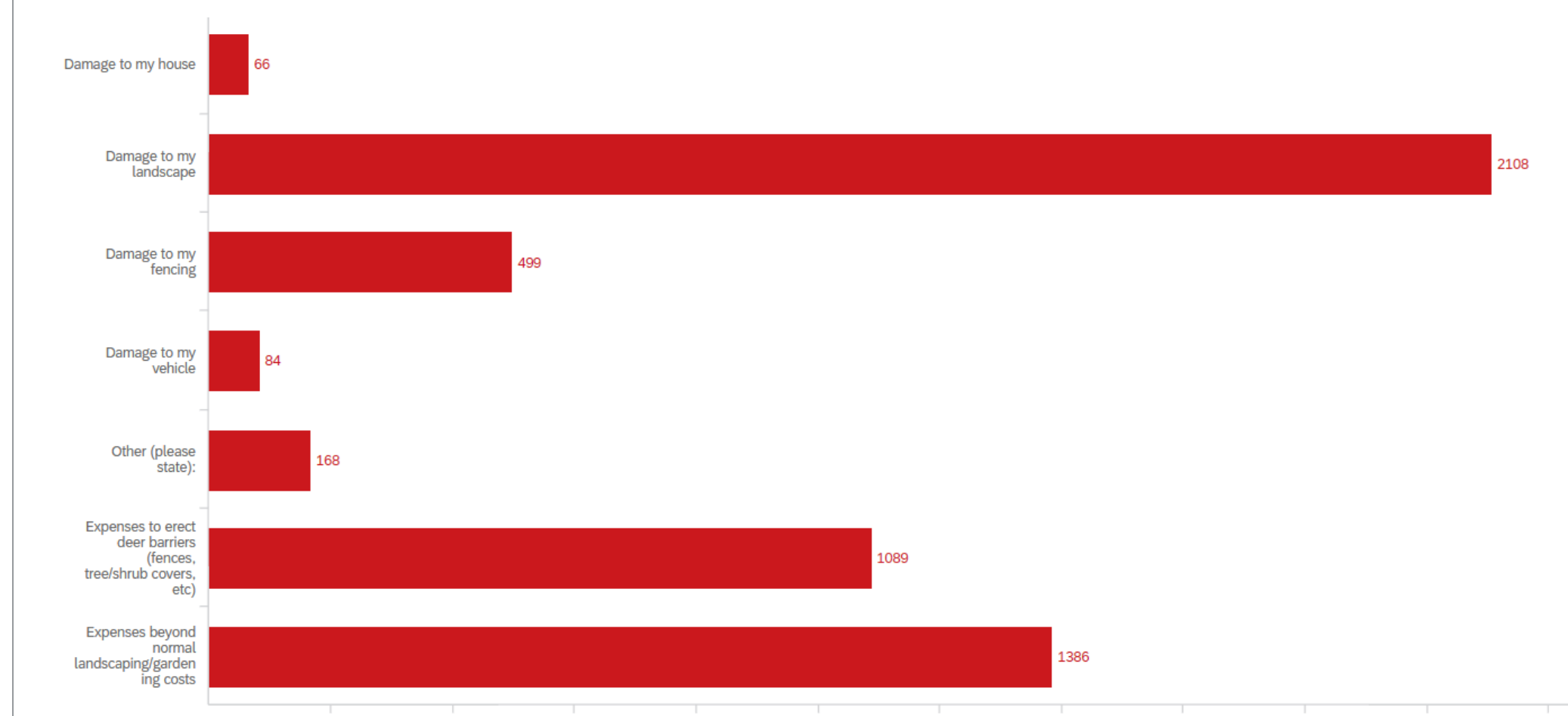


Figure V. Graph displaying the nature of deer-related damage suffered.

## Summed costs of deer-related damage

Respondents report that there has been at least

# \$1.5 million

worth of deer-related property damages in the City of Worthington to date.

## Financial Cost of Damages Breakdown

Financial Cost of Deer-Related Property Damage Incurred	Number of Responses
Less than \$100	328
\$100 - \$499	903
\$500 - \$999	442
\$1,000 - \$2,999	310
\$3,000 - \$4,999	110
\$5,000 - \$9,999	49
Greater than \$10,000	28

Table II. Financial Cost of Deer-Related Property Damage Incurred breakdown by number of responses.

## Do residents support the use of public funds?

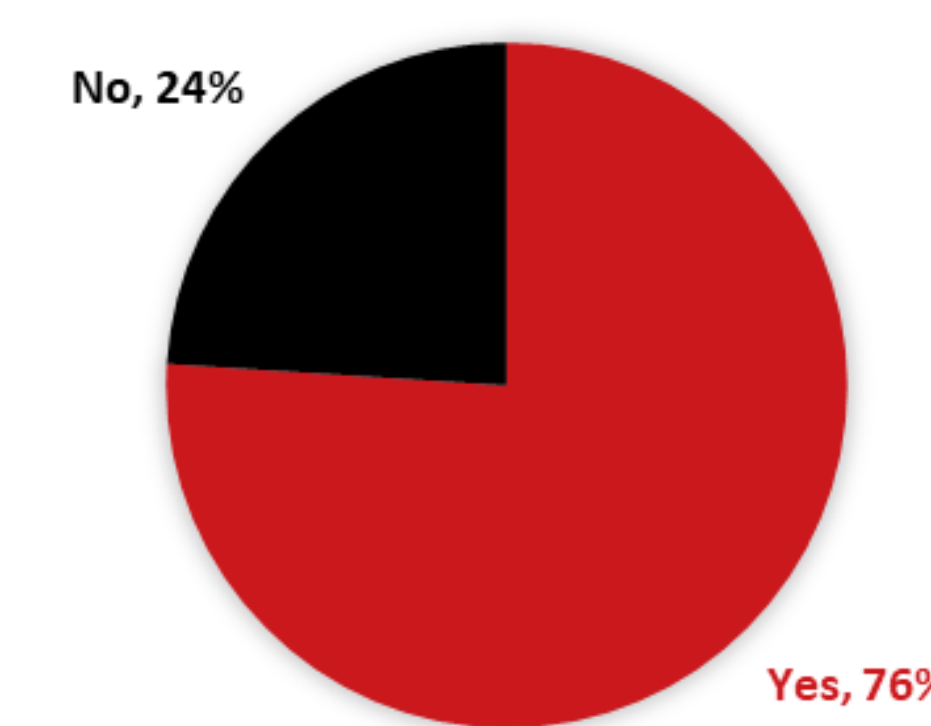


Figure VI. Graph displaying respondent feelings about the use of public funds to address the deer presence in Worthington. No information was collected on the quantity of funding respondents felt should be used.

## Are lethal measures supported by the community?

As the City of Worthington explores potential deer management options, what is your opinion about use of lethal methods for reducing the local deer population in Worthington, assuming regulations are established for safety?

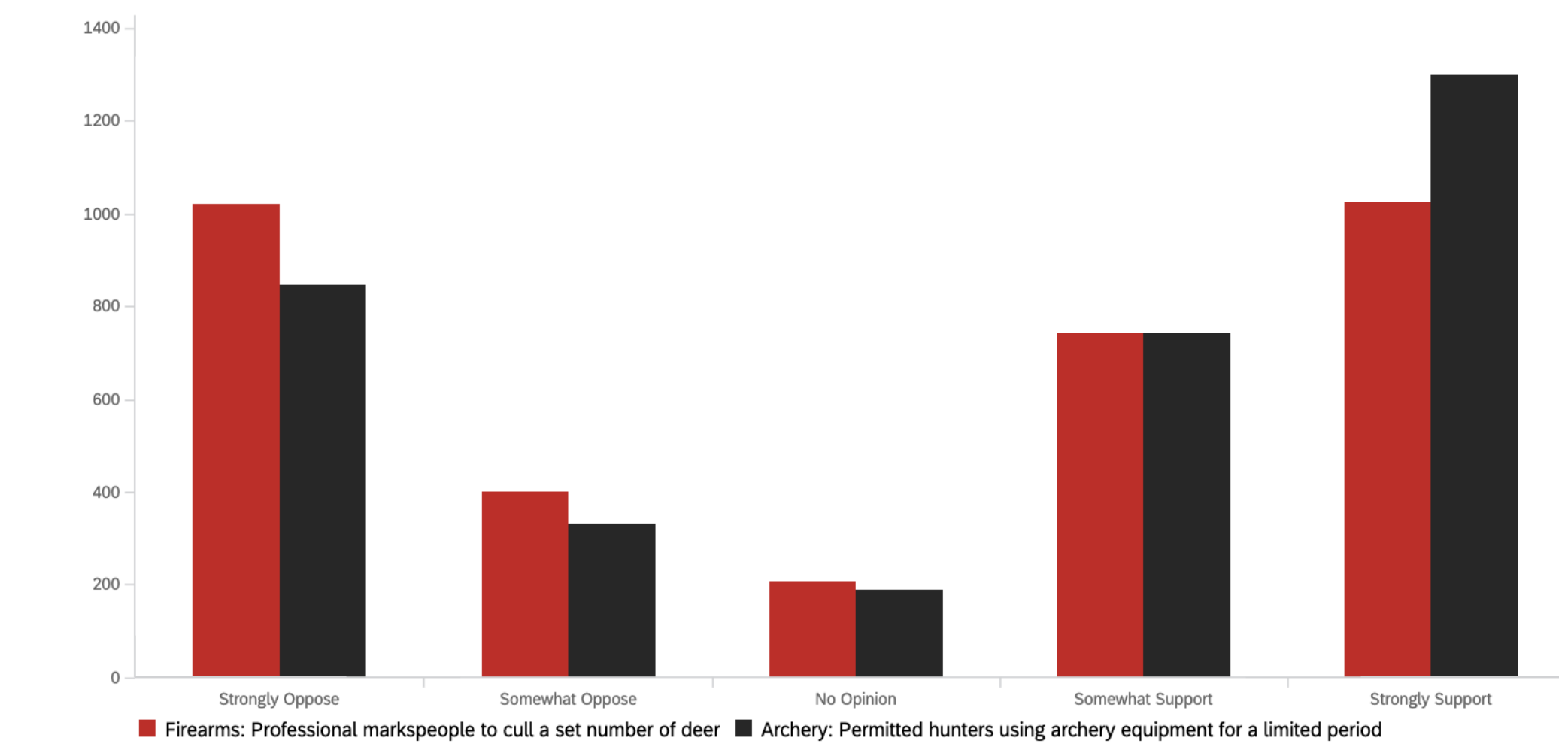


Figure VII. Graph displaying respondent opinions on the use of lethal methods, both firearms and archery, for reducing the deer population in Worthington.

## Primary concerns for lethal measures

Table III. Count of concerns regarding lethal measures for deer management rated most concerned (5) on scale of 1-5. 'Other:' refers to the top three themes of open-text option.

Issue of Most Concern	Response Frequency
Public Safety	1038
Deer welfare	678
Cost of removal programs	347
Other: support for non-lethal measures only	45
Other: effectiveness/efficiency	30
Other: what will be done with carcasses?	29

## What does this mean for Worthington?

- Majority of respondents assert that the deer presence in Worthington is an issue.
- Respondents who reside within the city limits of Worthington tend to feel that the city should take action using public funds.
- Results suggest that avenues for lethal management would be polarizing within the community; the Deer Task Force is likely best served by a two-pronged plan moving forward:
  - Working with other capstone groups to identify potentially effective, less-polarizing management options.
  - Further analyze data to identify regional differences in opinion, to be used in concert with herd population data to develop more specialized plans of address.

## References

- Environment, Economy, Development Sustainability– Business Sustainability Specialization
- Environment, Economy, Development, Sustainability– Community Development Specialization
- Sustainable Agriculture, kim.7862@buckeyemail.osu.edu
- Myers, Kimberley. 2024. Map.

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