Rivers Land Committee Survey

Analysis and Insights

Background

- After nearly 30 years, UJFD wishes to divest itself of 125 acres of land bequeathed by Alice Rivers in 1987
- Jericho formed a Land Development Corporation to negotiate terms to purchase the land from UJFD's Land Committee
- The two groups agreed to Guiding Principles but townspeople raised concerns
- Town voted to continue pursuing a deal

Background – New Committee

- The original committee for Jericho has withdrawn from the process and a new committee has been formed to continue negotiations
  - New group wished to obtain public input before beginning negotiations
  - Developed survey based around terms of the fall 2014 agreement to gauge areas of support.

The Survey

- Responses collected on paper forms and via SurveyMonkey
- Focused on the terms of the Fall 2014 agreement
  - What did people agree with?
  - What did they find problematic?
  - What suggestions do they have for the committee?
- Nearly 400 responses in total representing diverse points of view

Responses / Duplicates

- Not all responders registered with names and/or email addresses, so potential exists for duplicate entries
- Obvious duplications were removed, and most responses originated from different locations on the Internet
- We identified 48 computers that had multiple responses
  - An average of 2.2 per location
  - Many attributable to spouses or other family members responding from same home
  - Questionable surveys were deleted

Survey Questions

1. Should the town have a direct role in determining the future of the Rivers Property?
2. Do you support the town acquiring all or portions of the Rivers Property land?
3. What would respondents like to see done with five identified portions of the land?
4. How much of an increase in taxes would you tolerate to have the town acquire the land?

Survey Questions

5. What portions of the Fall 2014 proposal did you support or object to?
6. Please explain why you support or do not support aspects of the proposal.
7. To what extent do you support different options for acquiring the land?
8. What deal would you offer to the UJFD?
9. What reasons do you have to oppose the purchase of the land?
10. What issues or concerns would you like the committee to keep in mind?

Survey Questions

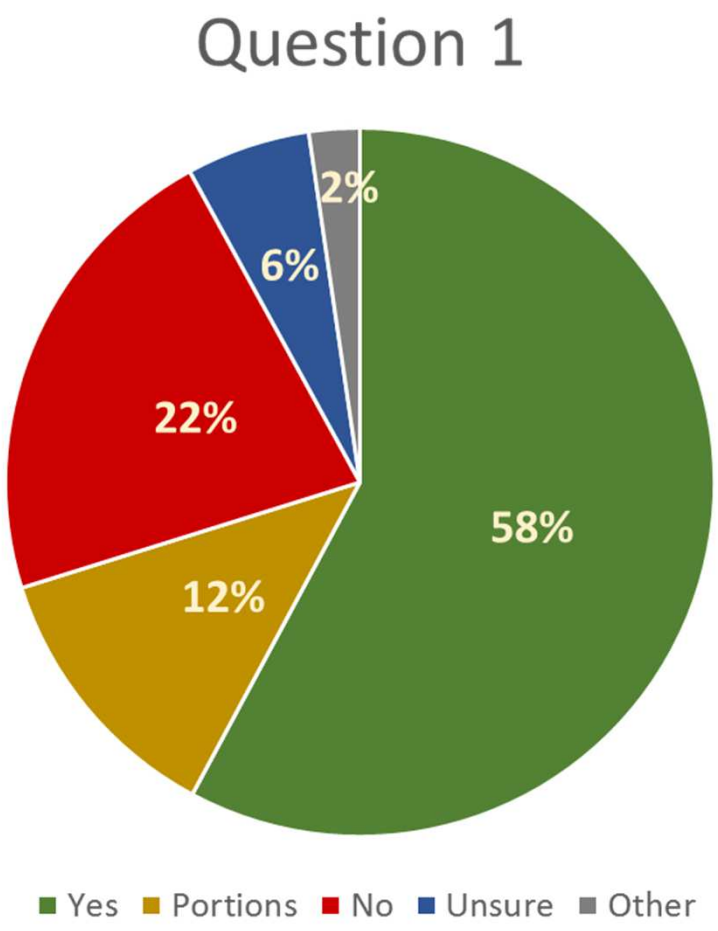
11. Please provide any other input to share with the committee.
12. Please identify where you live in or near Jericho.
13. Please identify where you are registered to vote
14. What have been your sources of information when keeping abreast of this issue?
15. Please provide contact information.
16. Will you participate in future surveys?

Analysis - Forward

- Aggregate results are to inform town committee as one form of input
  - The survey does not constitute an election
  - Control process was not rigorous and no guarantees there were no irregularities in participation
- Many insights to be drawn from comments and responses to open questions
  - We have identified major themes
  - Anonymized responses available for perusal

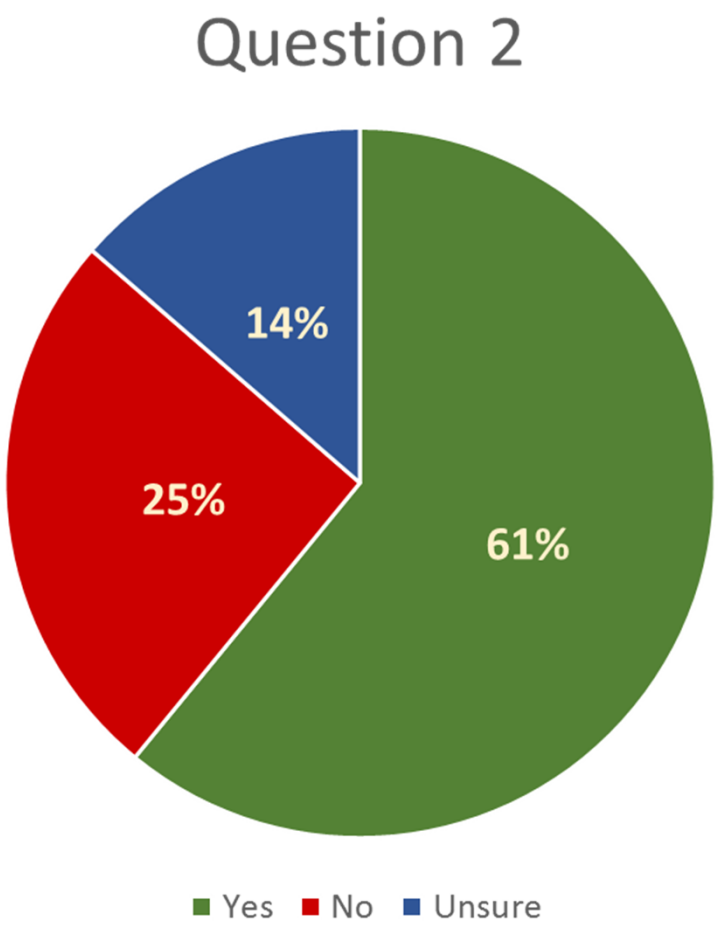
Summary of Survey Data

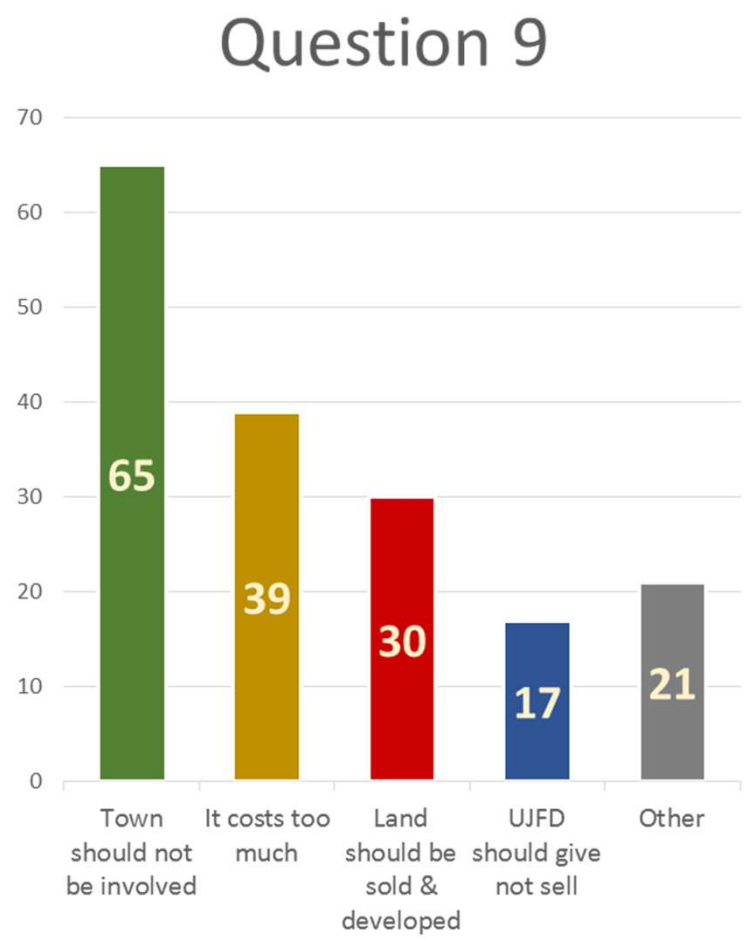
Question 1: Do you feel it is important for the town to have a direct role in determining the future of the Rivers property? (n=389)



- 70% feel it is important for the town to have a direct role in determining the future of some or all of the Rivers Property
- Comments reveal two perspectives:
  - Control through acquisition
  - Control through zoning and development review

Question 2: Do you support the town acquiring all or portions of the Rivers Property land? (n=389)
Question 9: I don't support purchase of the land because (choose all that apply) (n=98)



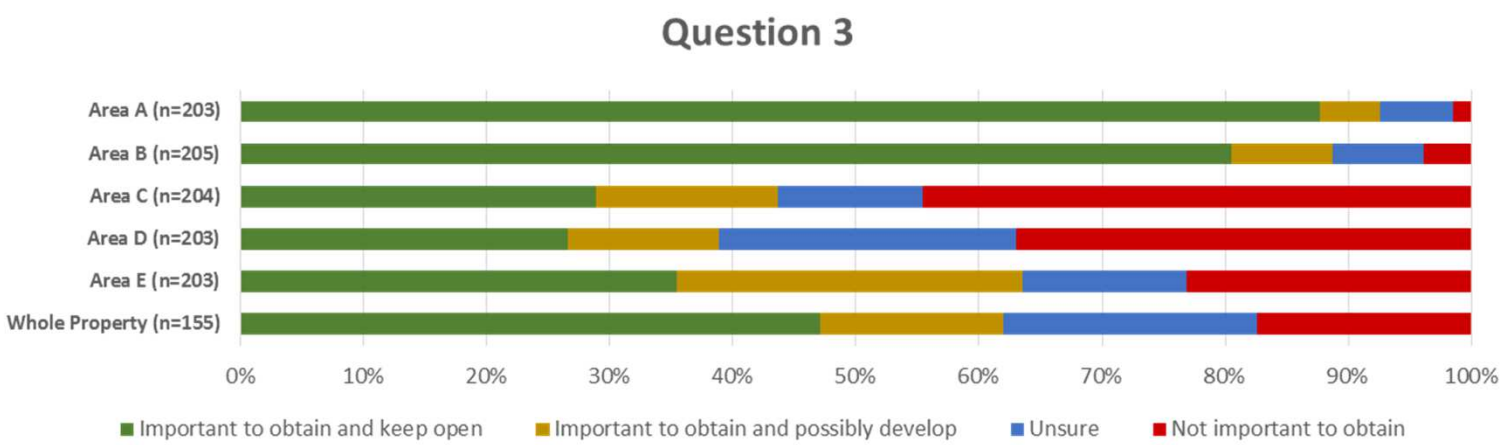


Question 1 & 2 Comparison

Question 1: Town should have a direct role in determining the future of the Rivers property	Question 2: I support the town acquiring all or portions of the Rivers property		
	Yes	No	Unsure
Yes	194	6	25
Portions of the Property but not all of it	32	9	7
No	4	73	8
Unsure	5	5	12
Other (please specify)	2	6	1

Question 3: Please provide feedback on each of these areas so we can gather information to direct discussions on obtaining all or portions of the property.

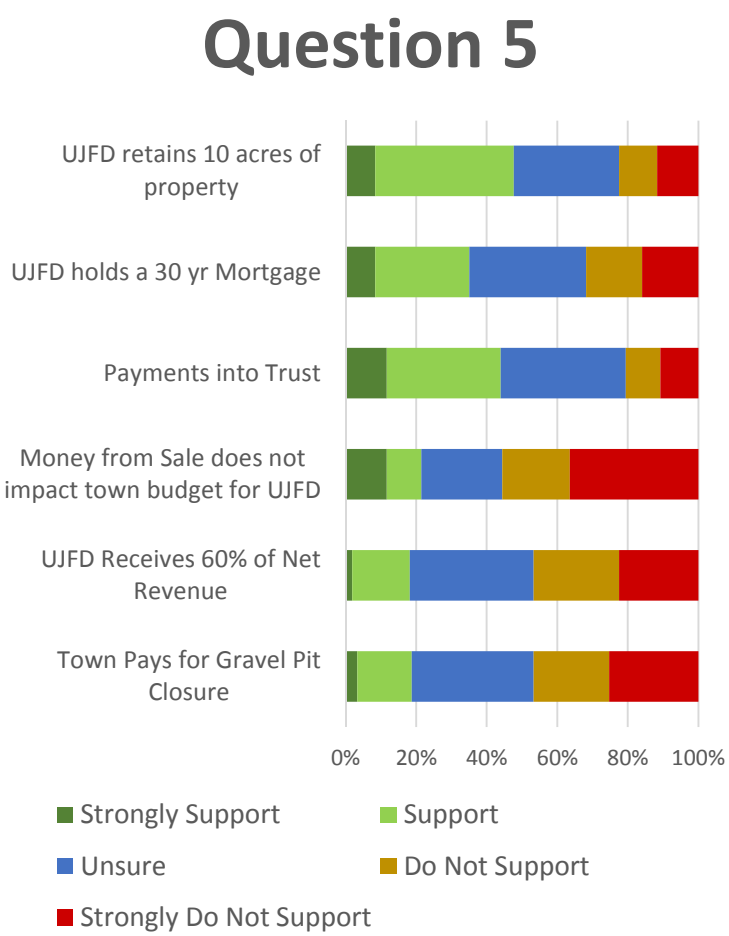
- A&B Perceived as valuable to majority
- C&D Least Popular
- Most interest in Developing E, of any



Question 4: How much would you be willing to pay (per year, per 100K of assessed home value) to purchase the property?

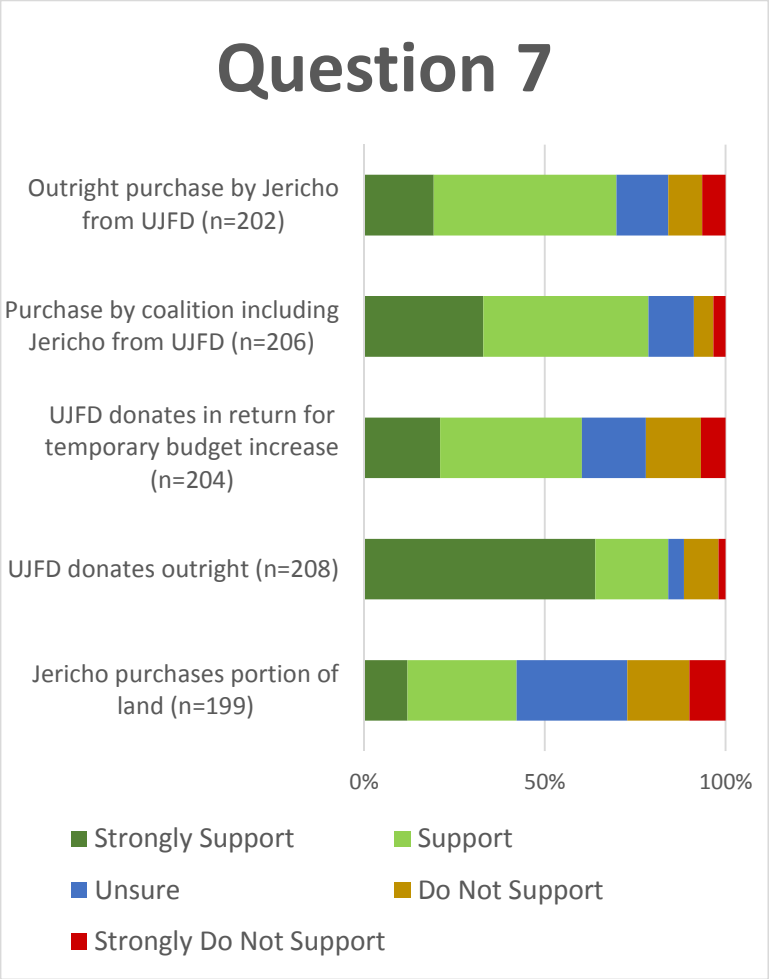
- Over 50% of those who answered were willing to pay up to $15 per year per $100K assessed value
- Those who answered 'Unsure' to Question 2 (Do you support acquiring…) were less willing to commit tax dollars

Question 5: Please rate your support for each of these items [from the proposal developed in the fall of 2014]. (n=214)



- Considerable uncertainty (23% - 36%) concerning all six provisions
- The most popular provisions are the UJFD retaining a portion of the property and placing the payments in trust
- The least popular provision is not using proceeds to offset taxes

Question 7: Can you rate your support for different options for acquiring the land?



- Strong support for all options
- Support is strongest where UJFD donates the land outright
- Support is weakest where the land must be subdivided before executing the transaction
- Support for a Jericho-led coalition is stronger that the town going alone

Themes from Open-ended Responses

See handout for complete transcript of responses

Land

- Many expressed the desire to ensure Mrs Rivers wishes to keep the land open should be carried out
- Some expressed willingness from some limited development on area near Plains Road to support purchase of the land
- Several expressed support for zoning regulations to control development
- Many wish to have the property kept as it is.
- Questions about what development means
- A few respondents felt the town should not be involved in any land transactions

Purchasing Options

- Many felt the UJFD should donate the land to the town
- Some felt that a fair price should be paid, concerns that 1.24-1.5 million is too high a price
- Some felt that the UJFD should be left alone and sell to a private entity
- Many felt that any amount paid (either by the town or another buyer) to the UJFD should be subtracted from their annual budget
- Many expresses concerns about the impact on taxes
- Questions about how much dollars would need to paid and for how long
- Willingness to pay predicated on what is done with the property

UJFD Relationship

- Concerns about UJFD relationship
- Lack of trust in UJFD
- Questions about why UJFD needs this money
- Eliminate any financial gain to UJFD via the budget process
- Concerns that the UJFD cannot be trusted to act in the town's best interest
- Requests to address financial management and oversight of the UJFD, especially if money is provided to them for the land

Next Steps

- Committee to review results
- Committee will continue to take input
- Develop draft proposals for Selectboard review and acceptance
- Present to UJFD RLC committee

Thank You!!!

The committee thanks all those who participated in this effort. Town feedback is important to help move the process forward.