



SURVEY RESULTS

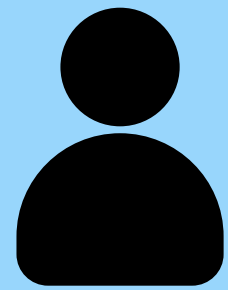
Middletown & Port Jervis

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Orange County

Program Generously Funded by:  **Orange & Rockland**

Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County provides equal employment and program opportunities.

OVERVIEW



Total Respondents

214

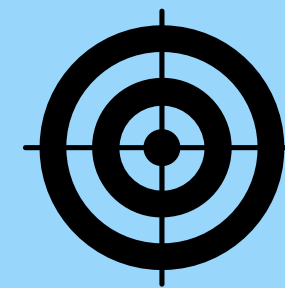


73% of participants
have lived or worked in the
community for over 10 years



Location

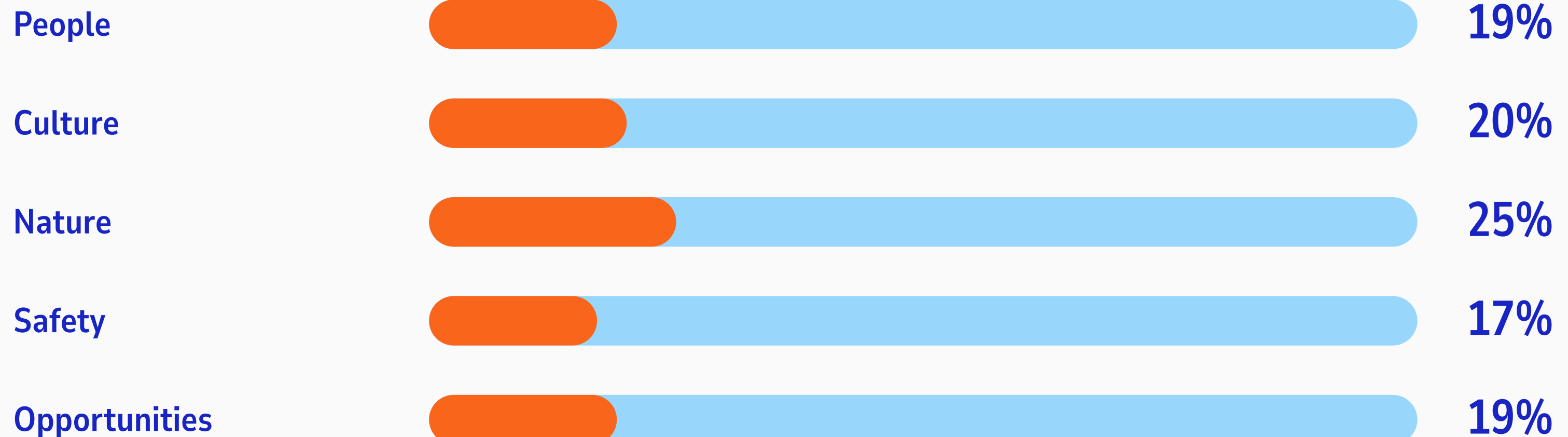
Middletown
& Port Jervis



53% of community
members feel closely
connected to their community

COMMUNITY VALUES

Survey responses highlight nature as the most dominant theme, with 25% of responses centering on green spaces, the outdoors, and the natural landscape. The community is also strongly defined by its people and culture, reflecting the warmth, diversity, and shared traditions residents prize. Safety and opportunity round out the picture, showing that residents value a place that feels secure while still offering room to grow.

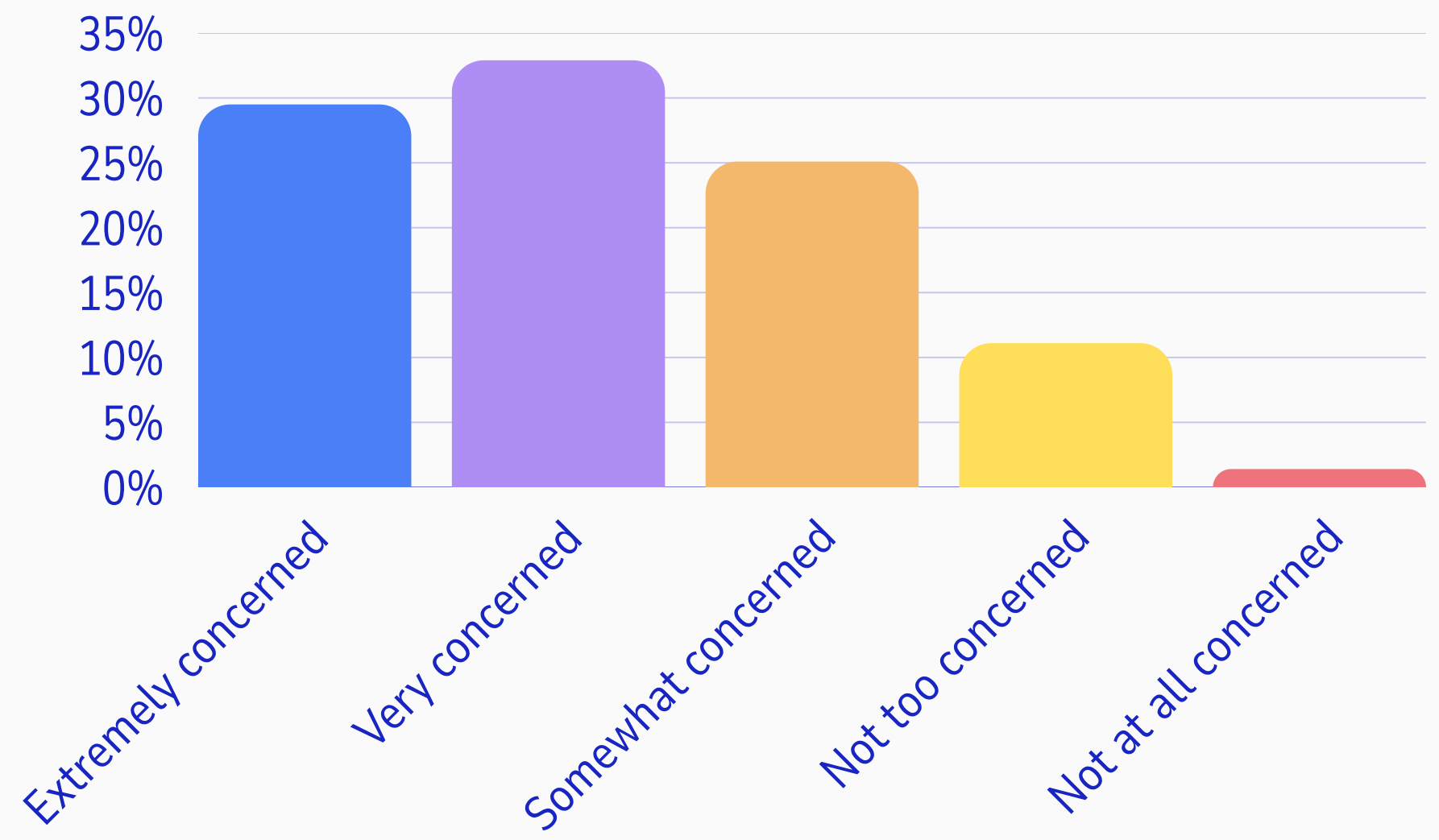


HEAT WAVE CONCERN

Heat waves are the top concern, with 87.5% of participants expressing worry. Residents in Middletown and Port Jervis should plan for cooling options, check on neighbors, and know where to find local cooling centers during extended heat.

87.5%

of Middletown and Port Jervis residents report being at least somewhat concerned about rising temperatures, with 29.5% being extremely concerned and 32.9% being very concerned.

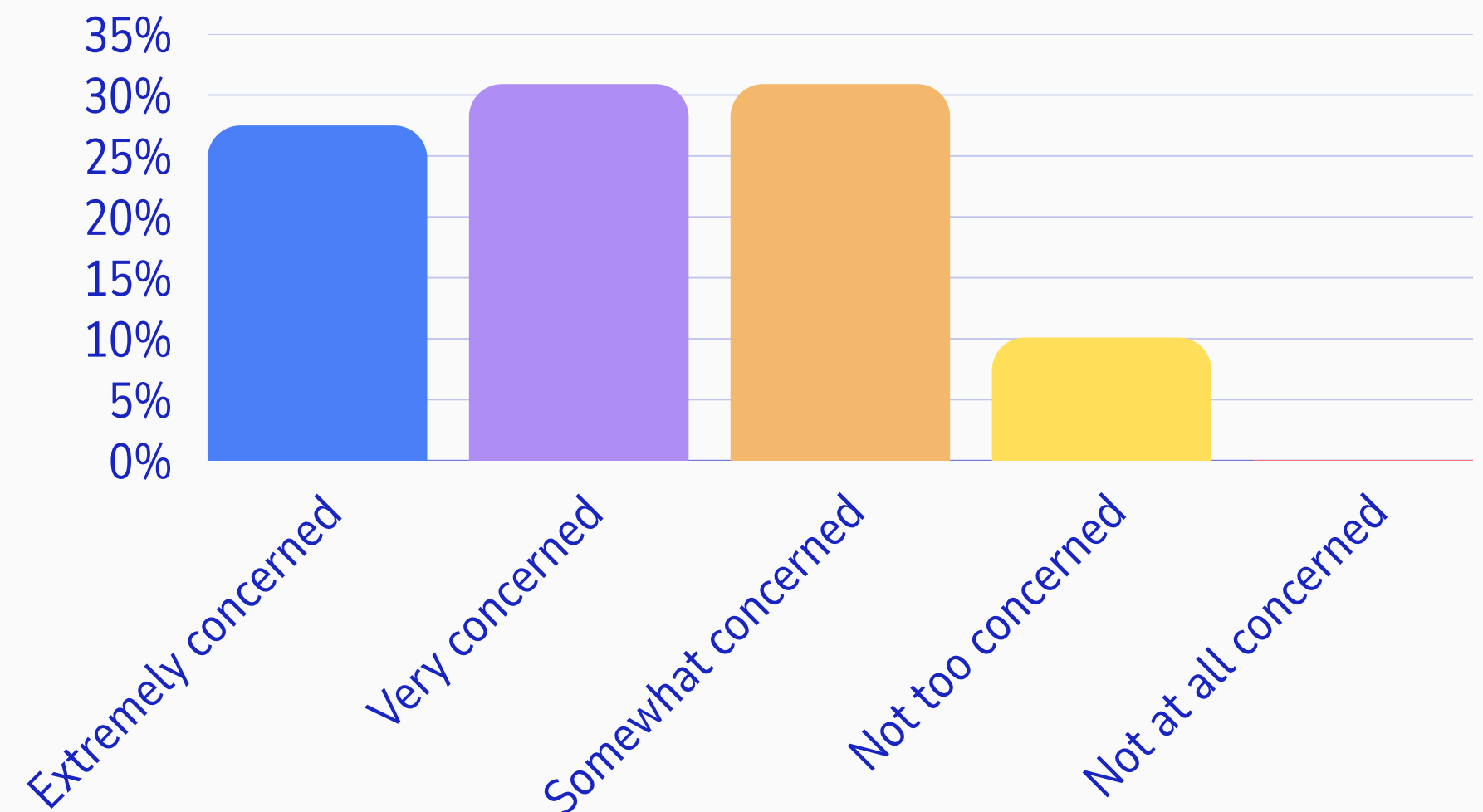


STRONG WINDS

Strong winds are a major concern, with 89.4% of participants expressing worry. Residents in Middletown and Port Jervis should secure loose outdoor items, watch for falling limbs and trees, and keep phones charged ahead of storms.

89.4%

of Middletown and Port Jervis residents report being at least somewhat concerned about strong winds, with 27.5% being extremely concerned and 30.9% being very concerned.

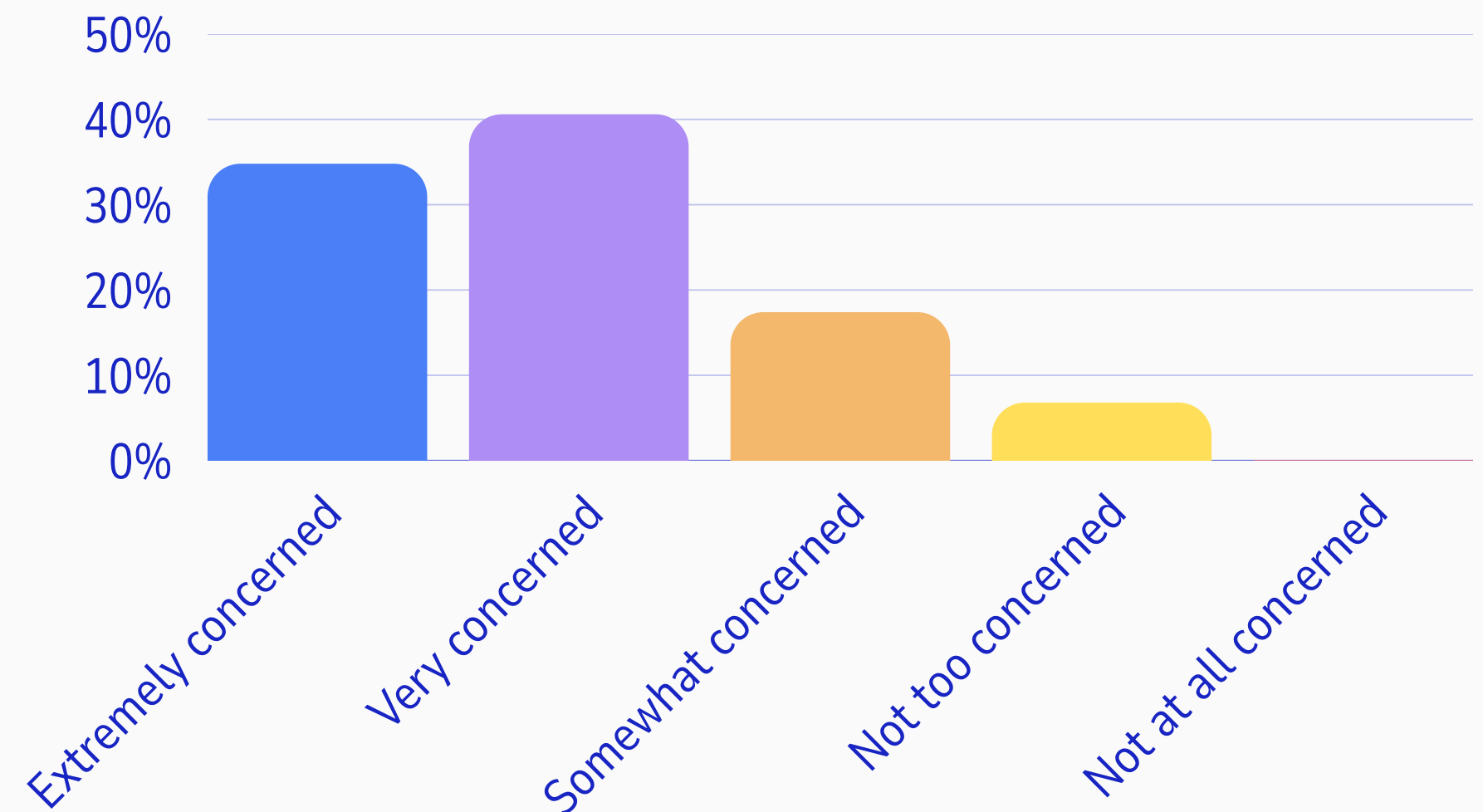


POOR AIR QUALITY

Air quality is the top concern, with 92.8% of participants expressing worry and 75.4% extremely or very concerned. Residents in Middletown and Port Jervis should monitor air quality alerts, keep windows closed on poor air quality days, and use filters or masks when smoke is present.

92.8%

of Middletown and Port Jervis residents report being at least somewhat concerned about poor air quality, with 34.8% being extremely concerned and 40.6% being very concerned.

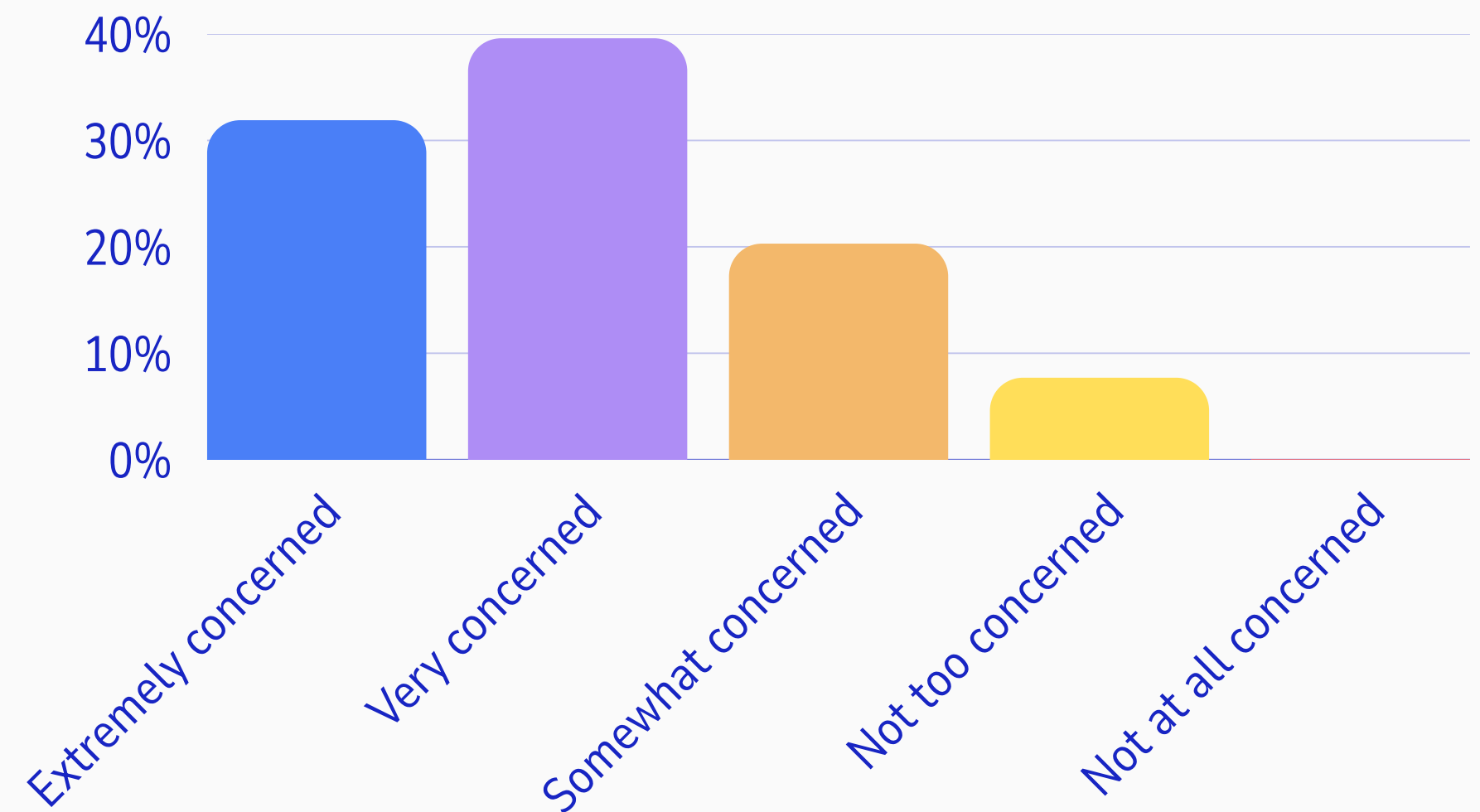


WATER SHORTAGES

Drought is a major concern, with 91.8% of participants expressing worry. Residents in Middletown and Port Jervis should conserve water, protect gardens and trees during dry spells, and stay aware of local water restrictions.

91.8%

of Middletown and Port Jervis residents report being at least somewhat concerned about drought or water shortages, with 31.9% being extremely concerned and 39.6% being very concerned.

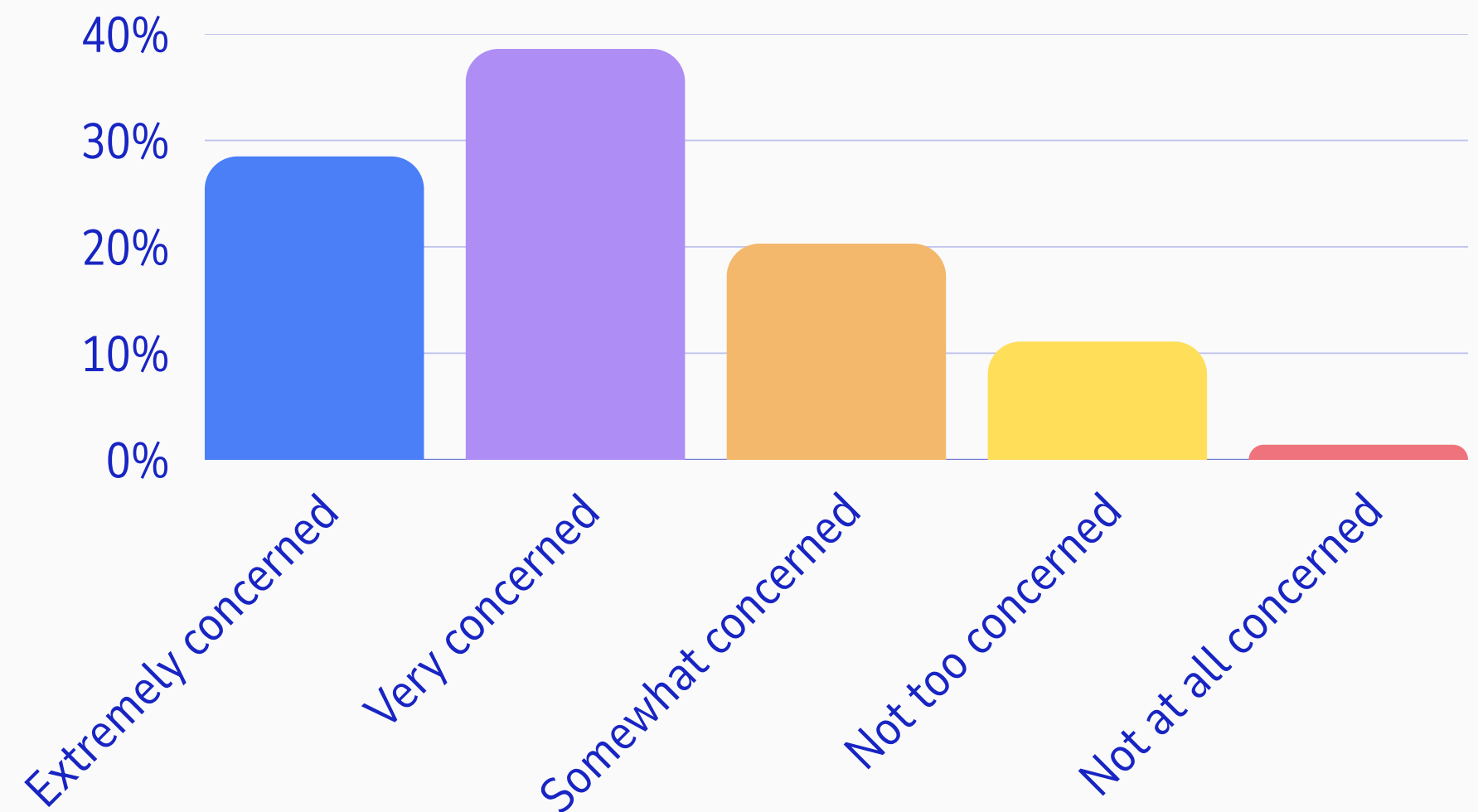


POWER OUTAGES

Power outages are a major concern, with 87.4% of participants expressing worry. Residents in Middletown and Port Jervis should prepare emergency kits and stay informed about outage risks.

87.4%

of Middletown and Port Jervis residents report being at least somewhat concerned about power outages, with 28.5% being extremely concerned and 38.6% being very concerned.



KEY FINDINGS



Flooding

In the last 5 years, 29% of residents have experienced flooding in their homes and 26.6% have dealt with flooding in their streets.



Extreme Weather

In the last 5 years, 55.6% of residents have experienced extreme heat that made it difficult to stay safe or comfortable, while 36.2% have experienced extreme damage from strong winds or storms.



Air Quality

In the last 5 years, 72.5% of residents have experienced poor air quality from a variety of sources.



Infrastructure

In the last 5 years, 32.9% of residents lived through extended power outages.

IMPACTS



Responses say flooding has caused property damage requiring upgrades like sump pumps, financial strain from repairs and lost food, emotional stress over fears of future damage, and ongoing inconvenience from cleanup and repairs.



Responses say the extreme heat has caused health risks like difficulty sleeping and exhaustion, a financial burden from higher electricity bills, and forced lifestyle adjustments such as limiting outdoor activities and relying on portable cooling for pets.



Responses say poor air quality has led to health issues like itchy eyes, headaches, and breathing difficulties; forced behavioral changes such as staying indoors and wearing masks; added financial costs for air purifiers; and emotional strain from anxiety over long-term effects and frustrations.



Responses say infrastructure failures like extended power outages have led to food waste, hygiene challenges, and daily disruptions, while strong winds and storms have caused property damage, financial strain from fallen trees, and lingering safety concerns for homes and families.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighbors are the backbone of community spirit, and understanding how well we know them, and how comfortable we feel asking for help, can reveal a lot about the strength of local connections. Here’s a snapshot of how people in this community view their relationships with those living closest:

How well do you know the neighbors closest to you?



How comfortable are you going to those neighbors for help?



”

There are only a handful of homes on my road on one grid! We are usually the last to get power back.

”

Most people are not taking the increasing potential for extreme weather seriously enough, and as a result, our actions are too short-sighted.

”

It shouldn't take over a week to get someone's power back on in a storm.

”

I'm very concerned about the CPV plant in Middletown. Droughts and extreme weather worry me about my vegetable garden production.

”

There is never enough community outreach. It always seems to overlook working-class households that are struggling.

”

We need to coexist with nature and its patterns.

”

Our infrastructure is aging. Water main breaks happen when there are weather extremes.

”

For people without social media, it's hard to know what's happening.

”

A French drain was put in years ago, but it doesn't seem to help. We have one sump pump, and a generator to keep it running during outages.

”

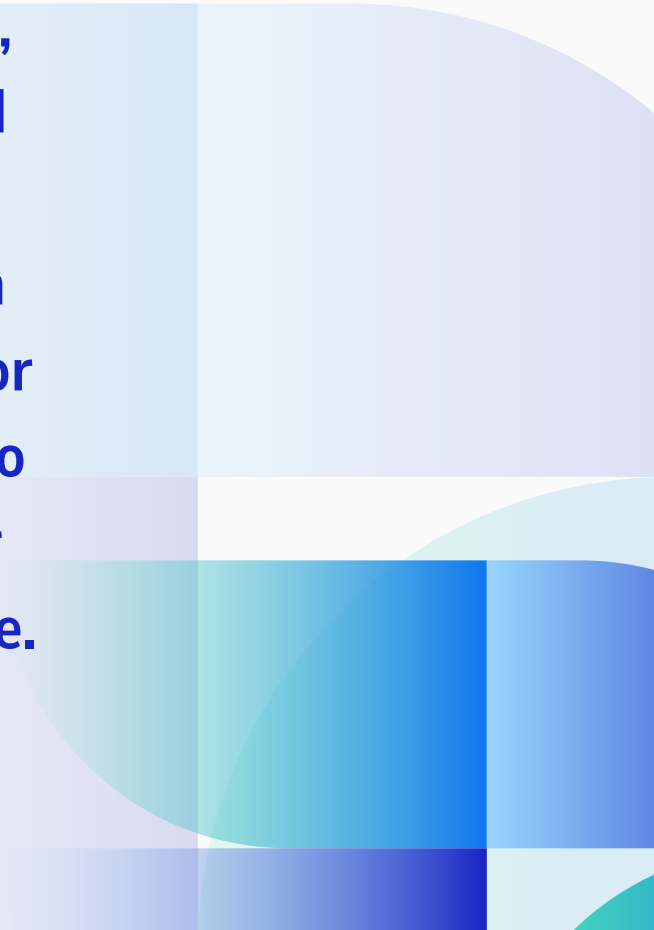
You can forget about making repairs to make your home more energy efficient. Food costs, gas, and repairs eat up everything.

VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY



VALUABLE ASSETS

The community's greatest strengths lie in its people and shared spirit, with residents frequently praising the warmth, unity, and neighborly support that define daily life. Diversity is celebrated as a cornerstone, bringing together people from all walks of life while fostering a multicultural vibrancy that enriches local culture, food, and events. Local institutions—including schools that go above and beyond, libraries as vital community hubs, senior centers like Mulberry House, and responsive emergency services—play a pivotal role in creating a sense of safety, accessibility, and belonging. Residents also highlight the abundance of green spaces, farms, and trails, which provide not only recreational opportunities but also a connection to nature amid a landscape that balances suburban comfort with open, unspoiled spaces. Small businesses and downtown areas thrive as anchors of community life, hosting farmers' markets, concerts, and festivals that bring people together. Infrastructure like repaved streets, sidewalks, and well-maintained public spaces reflects a commitment to quality of life, while organizations such as Cornell Cooperative Extension further strengthen ties among seniors, veterans, and families. Though some note challenges, the overwhelming sentiment is one of pride in a place where people look out for one another, where culture and nature coexist, and where local government and organizations work to preserve what makes the area special. For many, the tight-knit relationships, walkability, and slower pace, paired with the proximity to urban amenities, make this community a unique and cherished home.





VISION FOR THE FUTURE

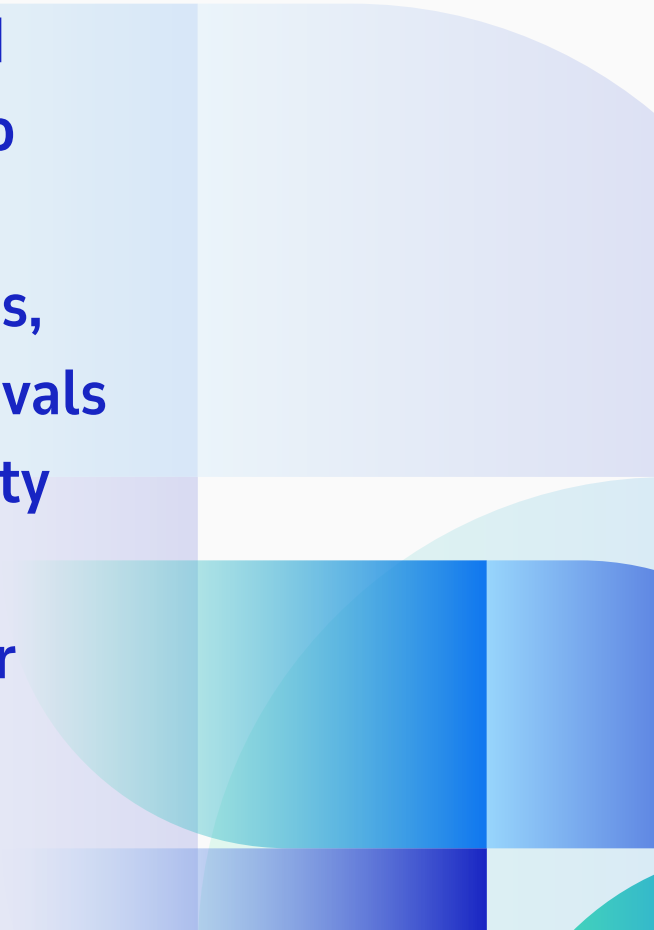
The community's vision for the future is rooted in green spaces, active living, and shared resources, with residents calling for more parks, gardens, and walking trails to preserve nature and biodiversity, as well as protected river access for swimming and community gardens to support local food and sustainability. They're also asking for expanded bike paths, safer sidewalks, and better public transit to make getting around easier for everyone. Residents want free or low-cost social spaces like youth centers, libraries, and cultural venues, along with more food banks, after-school programs, and resources for unhoused neighbors to strengthen community support. Priorities also include better lighting, clearer signage, and cooling centers to address safety and extreme heat. At its heart, the feedback reflects a desire to balance growth with sustainability, accessibility with vibrancy, and tradition with innovation, ensuring Middletown and Port Jervis remain places where everyone feels welcome, connected, and cared for.





COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

The strengths of the community are centered around its people and their spirit, with residents frequently highlighting the friendliness, compassion, and willingness to help one another as core pillars. The sense of togetherness and unity shines during challenges, and the diversity and multiculturalism bring people together, creating a tapestry of cultures, traditions, and shared experiences. Local organizations, churches, clubs, and community groups play a vital role in supporting residents, while neighbors supporting neighbors fosters a strong, interconnected network. The safety and cleanliness of neighborhoods, along with well-maintained infrastructure like repaved streets and new sidewalks, contribute to a high quality of life. Education is another strength, with schools like William A. Carter and Twin Towers going above and beyond, and libraries serving as invaluable hubs of information. Green spaces, parks, trails, and access to nature, including farms, farmers' markets, and the Hudson River, provide opportunities for recreation and connection. Local businesses and the economy thrive through small businesses, farmers' markets, and downtown activities, while community events, parades, and cultural festivals foster engagement and celebration. The local government is praised for prioritizing community needs, and emergency alert systems ensure residents stay informed. Transportation and accessibility are also valued, with walkability and some modes of transit making it easier for people to navigate the area.





COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Survey respondents in Middletown and Port Jervis demonstrate growing awareness of severe weather and an emerging inclination toward preparedness; however, adaptation remains gradual, constrained by political factors, financial limitations, and limited understanding of how newer energy technologies function. The predominant concerns are extreme heat, flooding, wind damage, wildfire smoke, and poor air quality, which produce material consequences including flooded basements, fallen trees, food spoilage, elevated utility costs, and repairs beyond many households' means, alongside health effects from heat and smoke exposure, disrupted sleep in inadequately cooled homes, prolonged power outages, and anxiety regarding air quality alerts. Beneath these environmental concerns lies a pronounced sense of social disconnection: respondents report feeling isolated, observe that working households are frequently overlooked by income-based outreach, and identify individualism and capitalism as barriers to community cohesion, prompting calls for accessible public gathering spaces, improved public transit, walking and bicycle infrastructure, and expanded programming, particularly on weekends, for youth, and in Port Jervis, which some perceive as underserved. Schools received mixed assessments, and some residents express concern that rapid development may erode the community's character; nonetheless, respondents consistently value people, nature, culture, and walkability. The central finding is that resilience in these communities extends beyond weather preparedness to encompass social connection and affordability, and ensuring that no resident faces future events in isolation.

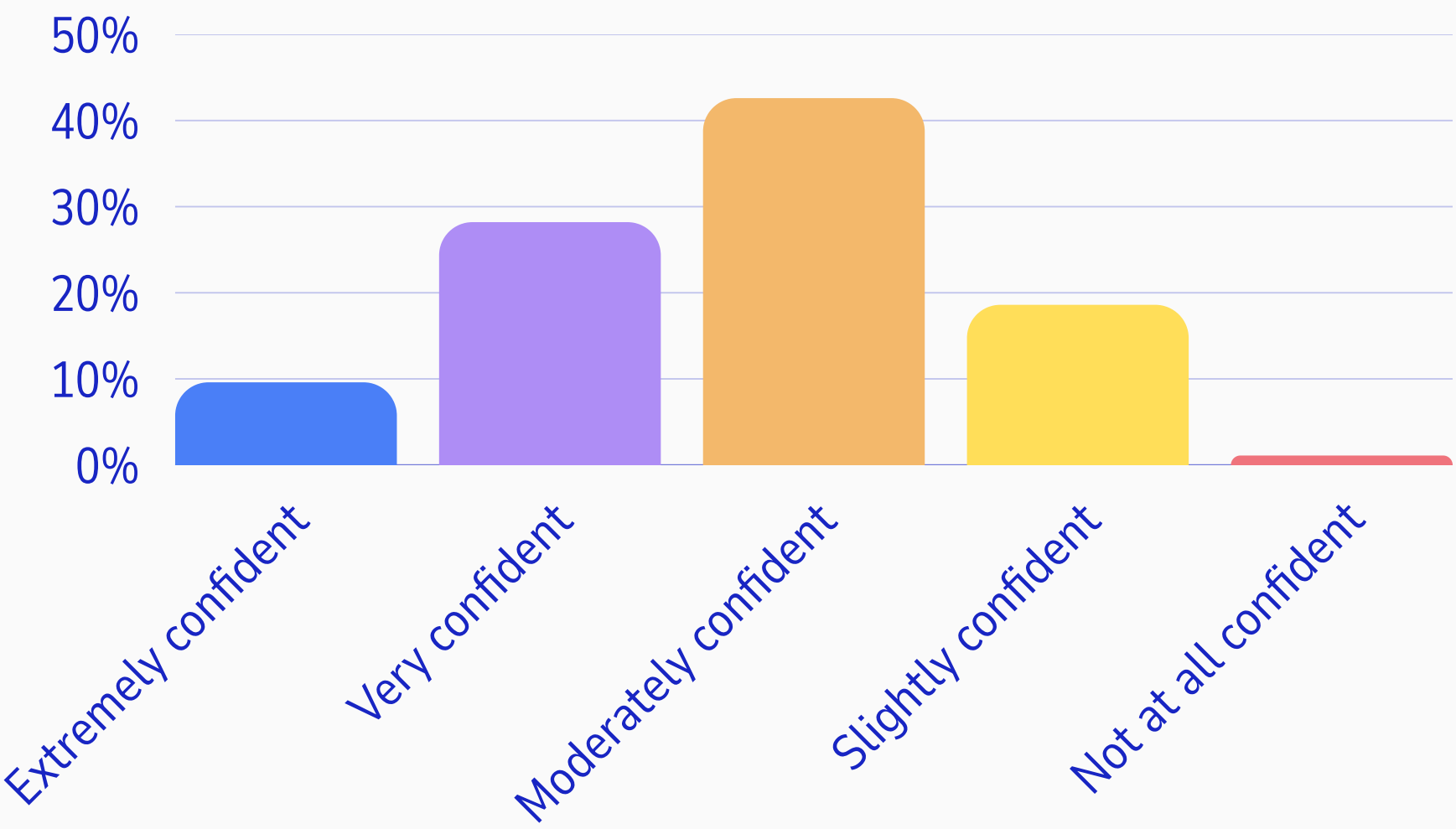


COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE

Nearly all residents—98.9%—express at least some confidence that their community can work together to prepare for or recover from extreme weather events, reflecting a shared belief in local resilience and collaboration.

80.3%

of Middletown and Port Jervis residents report being at least moderately confident in their community's ability to handle extreme weather.





THANK YOU

Stay Connected!

Presented by Aislyn Lewis
aal244@cornell.edu