

2024 Petaluma Airport Survey



**Petaluma Municipal Airport
City of Petaluma
September 2024**



BACKGROUND

The Petaluma Airport Commission, in an effort to understand and meet the needs of the local aviation community, periodically requests an airport user and tenant survey from airport staff.

The following survey received 38 submissions. Any identifying information has been removed to protect the privacy of the participants.

Name of the town in which you reside?

Petaluma	22
Novato	2
Ross	2
Sonoma	2
Cotati	1
Mill Valley	1
Penngrove	1
San Carlos	1
San Rafael	1
No Response	3

Do you own or are you a partner of one or more aircraft at Petaluma Airport?

Yes	36	94.7%
No	2	5.3%
No Response	0	

If you own an aircraft based in Petaluma, is it hangered or on a tie-down?

Hangared	36	97.3%
Tie-Down	12	32.4%
No Response	1	

If you own or are a partner in aircraft at another airport, where is it or where are they located?

San Carlos (KSQJ)	1
N/A or No Response	37

Do you rent aircraft at Petaluma Airport?

No	37	97.4%
Yes	1	2.6%
No Response	0	

Are you renting a hangar at Petaluma to build or restore an aircraft?

No	37	97.4%
Yes	1	2.6%
No Response	0	

What type of aircraft do you fly?

Single-Engine Fixed Wing	31	81.6%
Experimental	7	18.4%
Multi-Engine Fixed Wing	4	10.5%
Light Sport	4	10.5%
Turbine	2	5.3%
Helicopter	1	2.6%
Other	1	2.6%
AutoGyro	0	
No Response	0	

Do you anticipate purchasing and/or upgrading your aircraft within the next five (5) years?

No	21	55.3%
Yes	7	18.4%
Unsure at this time	10	26.3%
No Response	0	

Which ratings do you have?

IFR	22	57.9%
VFR	13	34.2%
Student	1	2.6%
Other	9	23.7
No Response	0	

Other	
ATP	4
A&P	1
CFII	4
CFI	3
MEI	2
Commercial	1

Annual Percentage of flight time in VFR and IFR?

	Reponses	Average Flight Time
VFR	35	81.3%
On an IFR Flight Plan	20	32.6%
No Response	3	

Approximately how many operations (takeoffs or landings) at 069 did you conduct in the following years?

2023	2860
2024 (to date)	1539
No Response	0

(Surveys were collected from 05/29/24 – 08/16/24)

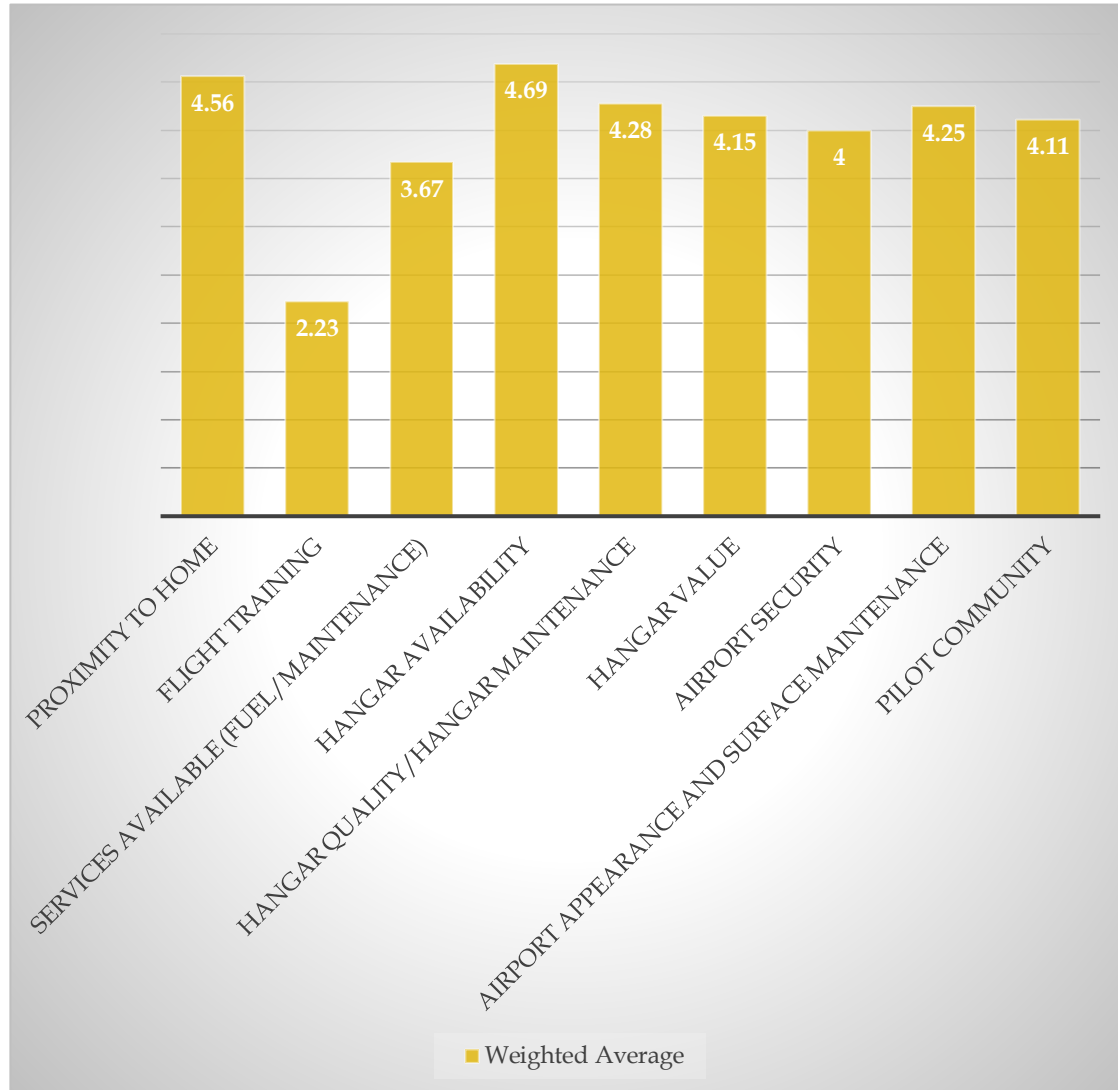
What was the purpose of these flights?

Recreational	2762
Training	603
Business	335

In the future (2024-2027), do you anticipate your number of annual aircraft operations to increase, decrease or remain about the same?

Remain about the same	23	60.5%
Increase	15	39.5%
Decrease	0	
No Response	0	

Why do you choose to fly out of 069 ?



(Reasons rated 1-5)

In your opinion, are the following costs at Petaluma competitive with other local airports?

	Competitive		Not Competitive		N/A		Total
Hangar Rental	60.53%	23	34.21%	13	5.26%	2	38
Tiedown Rental	41.67%	15	8.33%	3	50.00%	18	36
Fuel Prices	63.16%	24	31.58%	12	5.26%	2	38

Do you have any comments about costs at 069?

18 Responses Received	
Respondent #4	"Fuel in particular has not been competitive recently and I fuel elsewhere when able. I believe cheaper fuel would generate more traffic and fuel sales."
Respondent #5	"High costs and low service."
Respondent #6	"Fuel - somewhat reasonably priced Hangers - ditto Restaurant - ditto."
Respondent #11	"I would say they are average/borderline. It's cheaper than most airports close to SF, but much more expensive than most semi-rural airports in California."
Respondent #13	"I would like rent to stabilize for the future."
Respondent #18	"More hangar options are needed. Privately owned hangars are desired. More options for services would bring better options and prices."
Respondent #19	"Everything is more expensive. Keep up the effort to decouple increases from the Bay Area CPI. We have to be competitive with area airports and be sure to cover our expenses and debt obligations."
Respondent #20	"Because Petaluma has relatively low costs and competitive fuel prices, and a restaurant, people from other airports like to come to Petaluma."
Respondent #22	"The fuel is too high."
Respondent #27	"I only just started renting and I think the hangar rental prices are out of control. Rent and fuel should not be the only source of revenue for balancing the airport budget. The city should be supporting the airport out of with the general fund."
Respondent #29	"On par for the SF bay area, but higher than the national average."
Respondent #30	"Flying costs are rising. Fixed costs (HANGAR, insurance, annual) and variable (FUEL, non-annual maintenance). You control two of the largest (Bold). If you want to keep GA available to the average citizen of Petaluma and Sonoma County, it is important to do what the City of Petaluma can to minimize costs."
Respondent #31	"I wish there were maintenance options that had a better reputation. This adds to my costs."
Respondent #33	"Hangers are too much money and there's no lighting inside them."
Respondent #34	"Would like to see prices competitive with Nut Tree or Davis."
Respondent #35	"Fuel here is above average compared to similar local airports with similar amenities. I would buy more here if it were less expensive."
Respondent #36	"Generally good. Would love lower price on fuel."
Respondent #37	"Upkeep of the airport grounds and runway is outstanding. Thank you!"

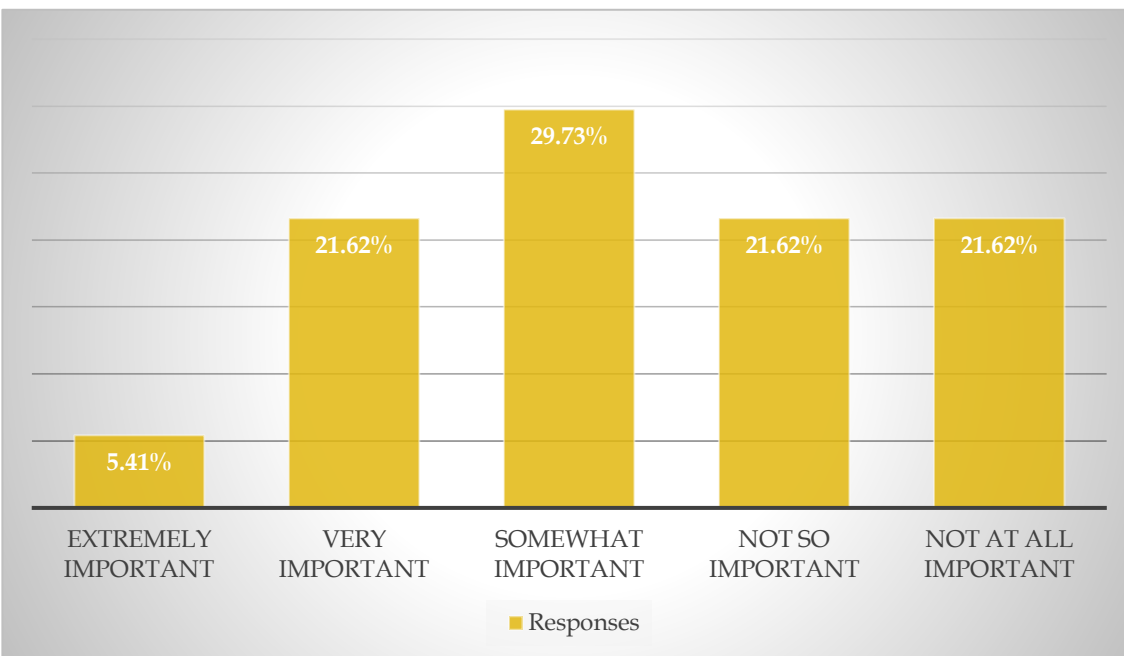
Are the existing runways and taxiways adequate for your needs?

Yes	37	97.4%
No	1	2.6%
No Response	0	

Is the GPS instrument approach to runway 29 adequate?

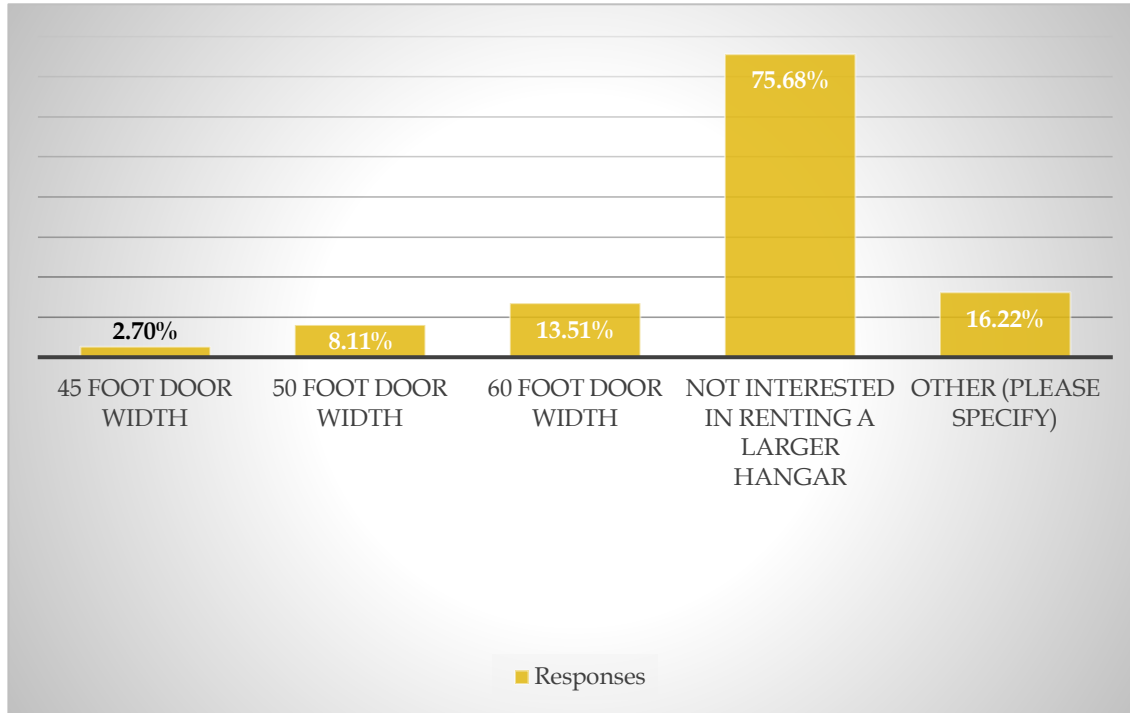
Yes	22	57.9%
No opinion/Not applicable	16	42.1%
No	0	
No Response	0	

How important to you would it be to have a GPS approach to runway 11?



(Importance rated 1-5)

If larger rental hangars were available for rent, what size would you be interested in renting?



(Interest rated 1-5)

5 'Other' Responses Received	
Respondent #11	"I would not rent one solo, but would be happy to share one if the cost per plane was lower."
Respondent #15	"Large hangars are for large aircraft like JETS not safe to operate on a 3600' landing strip. Petaluma is a general aviation airport and should be treated as that!!"
Respondent #20	"Corporate jet sizes... 75'wx70'dx20'h Or thereabouts."
Respondent #31	"Shared large might be better value."
Respondent #33	"But it would be too expensive."

If shade tie-downs were available, would you be interested in renting for your aircraft?

No	28	75.7%
Not applicable	5	13.5%
Yes	4	10.8%
No Response	1	

Is adding EV car chargers at the airport important to you?

No	27	71.1%
Yes	11	28.9%
No Response	0	

Is adding a pilot lounge and central flight planning area important to you?

Yes, I would use it	17	51.5%
No, I would not use it	16	48.5%
Other (please specify)	11	

11 'Other' Responses Received	
Respondent #12	"I(t)would be a nice addition."
Respondent #18	"I thought we had one of these?"
Respondent #20	"We have our own. But classy lounge and pilot room is very attractive to pilots, especially to corporate pilots transiting through."
Respondent #23	"Don't we kinda have one? Have not used."
Respondent #24	"I think it would be nice to have for others."
Respondent #25	"Also just a nice place to meet people."
Respondent #27	"Would be nice for others possibly, this is like basic things an airport should have."
Respondent #30	"It is important for transient aircraft. I use it another airports when I fly cross country."
Respondent #33	"Happy nice for flight training and maybe to get a beverage something to eat snack I mean."
Respondent #36	"But being able to purchase pilot supplies like oil would be help."
Respondent #37	"Nice to have for transient pilots, but I wouldn't use it."

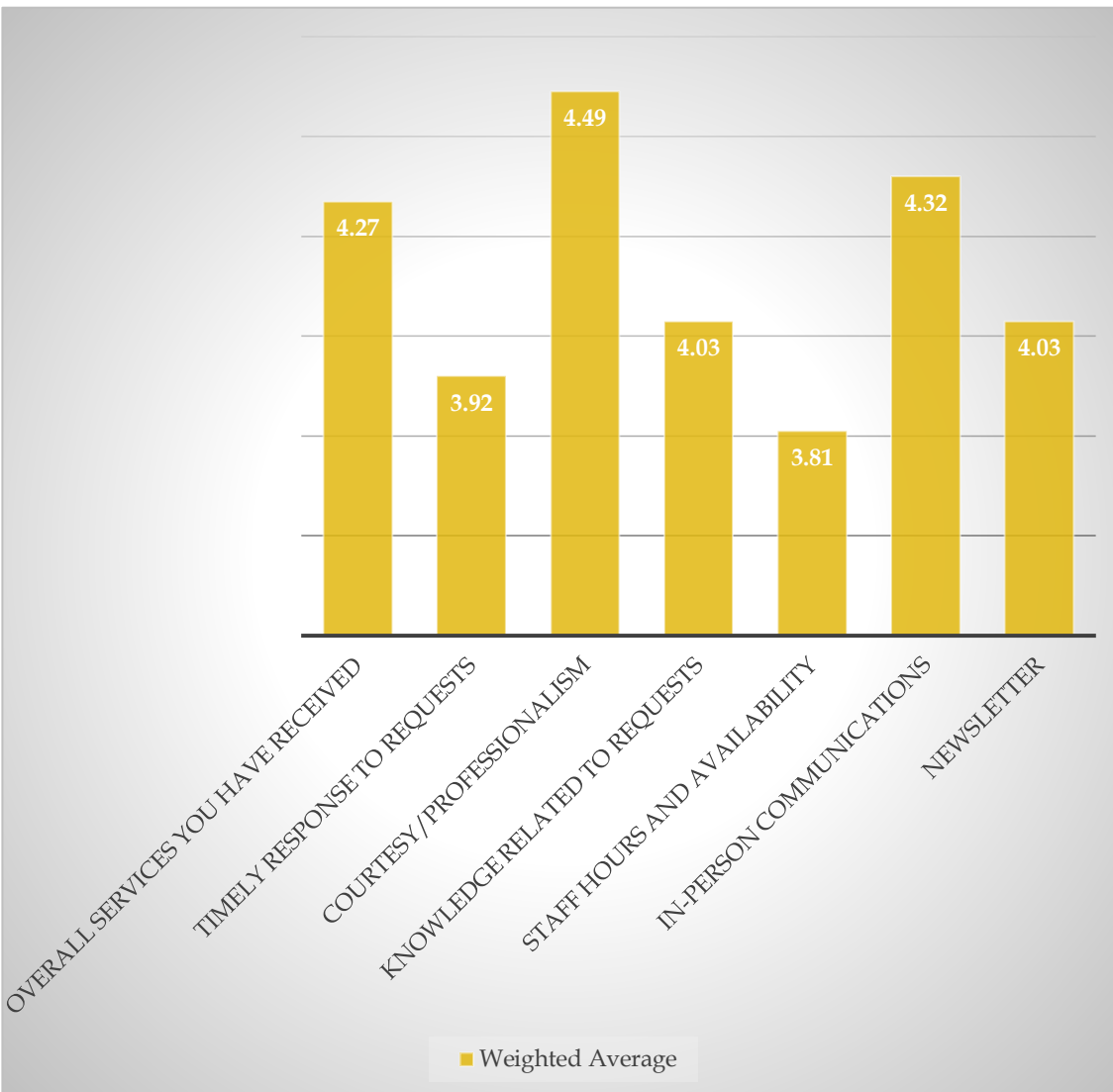
Is adding an indoor public waiting area for passengers important to you?

No	28	73.7%
Yes	10	26.3%
No Response	0	

Is adding public Wi-Fi access at the hangars important to you?

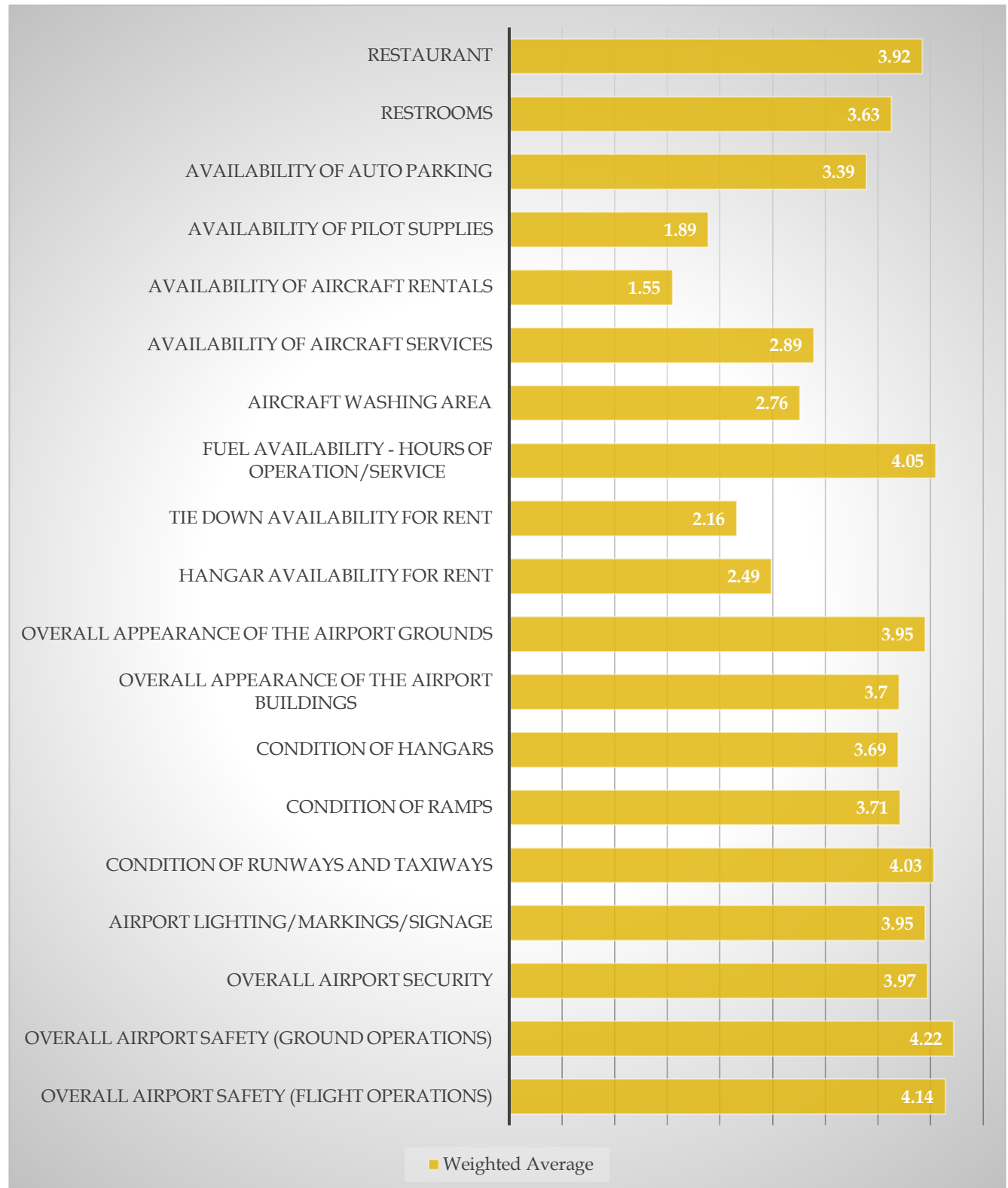
Yes	26	68.4%
No	12	31.6%
No Response	0	

How would you rate City Airport Operations/Staff?



(Satisfaction rated 1-5)

How would you rate Airport Operations/Facilities?



(Satisfaction rated 1-5)

Are there additional services, facilities, and communications the Airport should provide to better serve you or others?

25 Responses Received	
Respondent #3	"it would be really great if there were more mechanical service options."
Respondent #5	"maintain hangers."
Respondent #6	"Radio shop, car rental onsite."
Respondent #8	"Need convenient Oil recycling. Would benefit from friendlier public facing image for aspiring pilots or visitors needing maintenance."
Respondent #13	"Bus/Smart transportation link to airport."
Respondent #14	"100ll truck service."
Respondent #16	"Maybe a webcam."
Respondent #17	"Repair damaged hangars in timely manner."
Respondent #18	"Supplies shop Electronics repair shop (Garmin/ Avidyne)."
Respondent #19	"I think we're doing a pretty good job."
Respondent #20	"The emergency access road next to the stand-alone hanger off the Executive Dr cul-de-sac is a pos. We need a WAAS approach to RWY11 really bad. Why haven't you built out the West end of the airport? All that land could be put to good use with hangers and corporate hangers. Generate some revenue. The Private sector can figure out how to do it, why can't the public sector get off their [expletive] and figure it out...Maybe you should partner up with some key private sector folks and figure out a way to get it done. I think you folks are afraid of some of the public folks and cower down to them and not get things done. Your job is to cut gov red tape, lower taxes, knock this Green [expletive] off, get private sector projects pushed through and move forward. The airport is a revenue generator, but not as good as it could be."
Respondent #23	"An electronic sign at the main gate depicting pertinent flight information."
Respondent #24	"The hangar that was damaged years ago needs fixing NOW."
Respondent #25	"Maybe improve gate security. I've seen cars go through but not wait till gate closed , then saw some awaiting teenagers on bikes pop through."
Respondent #26	"Oakland center radio reception from the ground. Departure procedure to the north that does not interfere with STS and APC approaches."
Respondent #27	"Summarize airport commission meetings in the newsletter if it isn't already being done."
Respondent #29	"Convert one of the fuel tanks to G100UL (even if it's a higher cost/ gallon than 100LL)."
Respondent #30	"Oil recycling site for owner oil changes."

Are there additional services, facilities, and communications the Airport should provide to better serve you or others? – cont.

Respondent #31	"More aircraft maintenance options. A Rotax dealer who is willing to consistently sell parts would be an improvement."
Respondent #33	"Wi-Fi"
Respondent #34	"Crew car for visitors."
Respondent #35	"No"
Respondent #36	"You're doing well! If appearance improves with painting, the place will be even better. Good, consistent signage from the road would also be great and contribute to the overall appearance and function of the airport."
Respondent #38	"Oil recycling needed. Taxiway gravel vacuuming needed."

Please describe how Petaluma Municipal Airport contributes to your personal and/or business life and benefit other area residents and the community at large.

24 Responses Received	
Respondent #1	"Allows for Disaster Response One of the most popular non-tower airports in the Bay Area for pilot training."
Respondent #2	"Friends and family can enjoy the airport."
Respondent #5	"Keeps an idling car off local highways most days."
Respondent #6	"Allows recreational flying within the confines of "a non towered airport"! Easy access n less congestion."
Respondent #13	"Just a fun place to fly out of!"
Respondent #14	"Love the airport, my Hangar is a dream and I love bringing friends to the airport for a flight and do lunch at the restaurant."
Respondent #15	"A TOWN THE SIZE OF PETALUMA THAT DOESN'T HAVE AN AIRPORT IS HANDICAPPED, OUT OF DATE."
Respondent #16	"The airport provides an alternative to driving on busy roads to get anywhere. Its so much nicer getting places by air. Its quicker and less intense than driving (weather permitting)."
Respondent #18	"It allows easy access for an enjoyable way for me to travel to client locations in the western USA."
Respondent #19	"Convenient for travel and the airport generates significant economic impact on the community."
Respondent #20	"I love the aviation industry. The company I work for has benefited from this airport and so has the public and people it serves and employed."
Respondent #23	"Thee airport is a place for me to exercise the use of my pilot license."

Please describe how Petaluma Municipal Airport contributes to your personal and/or business life and benefit other area residents and the community at large. – cont.

Respondent #24	"The restaurant, and flight school contribute alot to the community."
Respondent #25	"Friends enjoy flying in and meeting at the restaurant. Seems like it is a vital link to Petaluma's overall transportation system. Having FedEx utilizing the airport, every day is a true indication of the business link the airport serves."
Respondent #27	"The airport to me is a benefit obviously as a aircraft owner/operator and as a resident of Petaluma."
Respondent #29	"Having a great airport 10 minutes from where I live is amazing. We share the joy of flying with everyone who visits by giving them a unique view of Petaluma and the surrounding areas (Bay tours, Pt. Reyes, Mendocino coast, etc.) We also use our aircraft for Pilots-N-Paws, transporting animals from kill-shelters to foster groups and their fur-ever homes."
Respondent #30	"Flying is a long ingrained part of our life. Having a GA airport with hangar and fuel 5 miles from our home helps us keep it in our lives."
Respondent #31	"My friends and I visit Petaluma and use the retail establishments there almost exclusively because of the airport."
Respondent #33	"Love having the airport and now with a restaurant open again, makes it even better how am able to spend my money locally? Very nice as the airplanes come in and out some days I could just stand out there and watch."
Respondent #34	"Huge. Flying is now critical to my nonprofit as well as other businesses and personal needs."
Respondent #35	"Huge. Flying is now critical to my nonprofit as well as other businesses and personal needs."
Respondent #36	"I'm happy to base my plane so close to home. It makes Petaluma an attractive place to live and was a factor in my choosing to move here. Flying allows me easy connections to friends and family in distant places with airports. It's a great resource!"
Respondent #37	"I'm very involved with informing the public of aviation opportunities for young people in our community."

What other thoughts or concerns would you like to share regarding Petaluma Municipal Airport?

21 Responses Received	
Respondent #5	"a cash cow for city."
Respondent #6	"That despite FAA laws not requiring a 2 way aircraft comm radio the every pilot have an "operating 2 way radio" in their aircraft to enhance safety in all air operations!"
Respondent #13	"None."
Respondent #15	"Golf course has water holes small lakes that attract Geese during the winter months, birds fly perpendicularly over our runway this is a danger to aircraft and a major liability."
Respondent #16	"Would like more maintenance choices. Mechanics should be allowed to come and work in our hangers."
Respondent #18	"How about creating a small 'economic development' committee that is focused on development efforts that bring more activity and revenue to the airport ecosystem. Count me in for that."
Respondent #19	"Let's continue to examine possible development in the unused airport property along Sky Ranch Dr.."
Respondent #20	"The airport needs another 1,000 feet of runway, but I don't think you're willing to fight for it. It's a great small airport but its potential earning power has not been maximized."
Respondent #21	"I think the Airport Manager is wrong for the Airport. There have never been more employees with fewer tenants. It makes no financial sense. Dan never show his face outside the office and is not a steward or ambassador of the airport as he should be. It does not create a friendly welcoming airport environment like we have had up to his employment."
Respondent #22	"No flying of other flags than the US."
Respondent #24	"The AWOS needs to work at all times."
Respondent #25	"It's a fantastic operated and well managed airport."
Respondent #29	"One concern is pedestrian/bicycle traffic on the actual access road (not on the sidewalks). There have been numerous instances where I've had to slow to a crawl in my car because pedestrians/bike riders seem to think that the road is not trafficked by vehicles. Frustrating and a potential safety issue."
Respondent #30	"Please ask Petaluma police to educate local folks that the road to the airport is not a sidewalk (there is a large one adjacent) and strolling infants or teaching children to ride their bicycle on a road with auto traffic is not safe."
Respondent #31	"If the airport management could identify and partner with the thought-leaders, the community might grow stronger (or at least not implode as much)."

What other thoughts or concerns would you like to share regarding Petaluma Municipal Airport? – cont.

Respondent #33	“Allowing better services for Airplane repair is a monopoly right now and if we have people we know that are able to help us and we’re able to maybe get a discounted or trade services you won’t let that happen not good The main things I hear people do not want to get it to aviation too expensive for maintenance, but I find if you know the right people or learn the right people are willing to help you but not the company that is on the grounds now. I asked for some anti-seize one time and they just looked at me with attitude they did give it to me, but was not a comfortable feeling.”
Respondent #34	“Bird nesting inside hangar leaves droppings on my plane, causing some paint damage.”
Respondent #35	“Too many hangers that have no airplane in them and are used as personal storage facilities instead of for flying aircraft.”
Respondent #36	“The runway alignment and approach make Petaluma superior to Novoto and where I was previously based.”
Respondent #37	“Keep up the good work!”

