

Old Bennington Village Plan Community Engagement Findings

February 9, 2026



Project Goals



Outline strategies to protect and maintain historic character of the Village



Address updated state laws regarding housing and density requirements



Prioritize pedestrian-scaled, climate resilient developments to protect natural and historical resources



Shift from fossil fuel-based energy sources to renewable energy sources

Old Bennington Village Plan Engagement Strategies

Community Engagement Strategies & Important Dates to Note

		August	September	October	November	December
Kickoff Meeting	Public meeting to introduce PC and community to the project		Sept. 8th			
Village Walking Tour	Public walking tour of the village to highlight important attributes and encourage place-based visioning			Oct. 25th		
Community Visioning Meeting	Engage community members on questions of how they envision Bennington in the future through idea boards, dot voting, other interactive activities				TBD	
Survey	Specific questions about a variety of topics					
Activity Cards	"Postcards" that ask people about their likes and dislikes regarding the Village					
Student Engagement Activity	Modified postcards for students to write/draw what they like about Old Bennington					

Engagement by the Numbers...



OLD BENNINGTON VILLAGE PLAN

ENGAGEMENT NUMBERS



96

STUDENT POSTCARDS

From Monument Elementary School Students

64

SURVEY RESPONSES

60

HISTORIC WALKING TOUR PARTICIPANTS

13

VISIONING MEETING PARTICIPANTS

3

HISTORIC WALKING TOURS

With the Bennington Historical Society

1

NEW PLAN FOR OLD BENNINGTON

Student Engagement Activity with Monument Elementary School

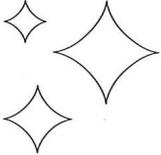


My wish for Old Bennington is...

for Waulloomsoc Inn to be repaired and a gate to be where old bennington.

wel come to Old Bennington

Sincerely, Y. Colton



My wish for Old Bennington is...

Monument Elementary could plant apple trees and the whole school can have a apple harvest day at school. Also the lunch people can make apple pie!

Sincerely, Molly B. 5th Grade



Old Bennington Walking Tours



Thanks to:
Susan Wright &

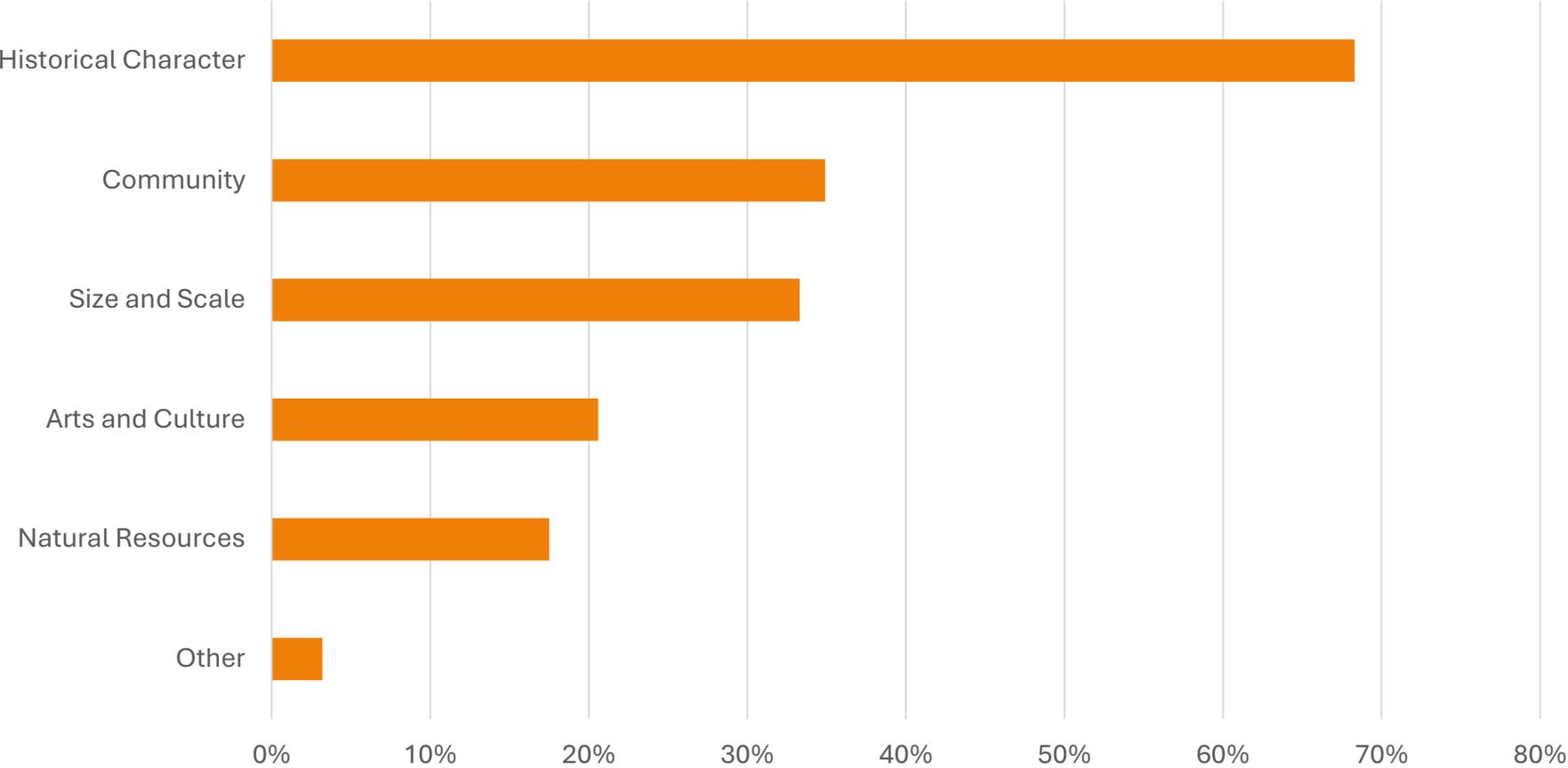


Community Visioning Meeting

1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority	4th Priority		
Rehire police presence for traffic enforcement	Speeding + traffic enforcement	Redo the whole intersection at West Rd and Main St. It is incredibly dangerous! No crosswalk!	Lot size vs. HOME Act		Transportation
Traffic enforcement and speed enforcement, weight restriction on trucks	3-way stop sign at corner of Bank & Monume	Traffic calming, more sidewalks	Limit commercial development, Airbnb/short-term rental regulations		Community Connections
Speed control	Cars speeding through the village with no law enforcement - dangerous	Encourage private capital investment and commercial enterprise! Expand the tax base! If someone wants a small business, don't automatically say no	Wind farms		Land Use
Sidewalks in general; traffic speeding and crosswalks by the Walloomsac Inn	Need to enforce speed limits + think about hiring police	Zoning explained	Solar on non street sides of roofs		Historic Character
Enforce speed limits	Maintain historic integrity with any new housing development	How to address HOME Act	Historic designation is a huge advantage. Preserve & protect them in terms of streets & bylaws		
Speeding/traffic enforcement	Ban short-term rentals, commercial use	Historic looking ADUs over garages or barns	Regular newsletters (frequency TBD)		
More crosswalks and speed control	Walloosac Inn development - allow without unchecked expansion of commercial properties	Preserve historic character and communicate rules to the community	Update website to get people involved. Do 3 newlsetters a year		
Keep current rural zoning - limit commercial development	Pay attention to bylaws/ordinance to preserve village character	Educate/communicate on bylaws + enforce infractions	Improve online communication beyond the current execution of oldbennington.org & Next Door		
Village should keep rural, residential zone to keep commercial entities limited	Keep houses painted white	Preserve existing buildings as they are	More residents at Village meetings		
Change the Walloomsac to commercial zoning	Figure out how to get people more interested in governance	If our bylaws require certain features, there should also be requirements for upkeep	Get more villagers to attend village meetings		
Preserve historic character	Community action on black spot disease in the trees - deal with it for all the old growth trees	Better communication from trustees on regular basis - website & print newsletter 3x year			
Preserve historic character		Regular communication with residents			
		Regular newsletter to residents			
		Action item - annual potluck meeting			
		I think it's okay as it			

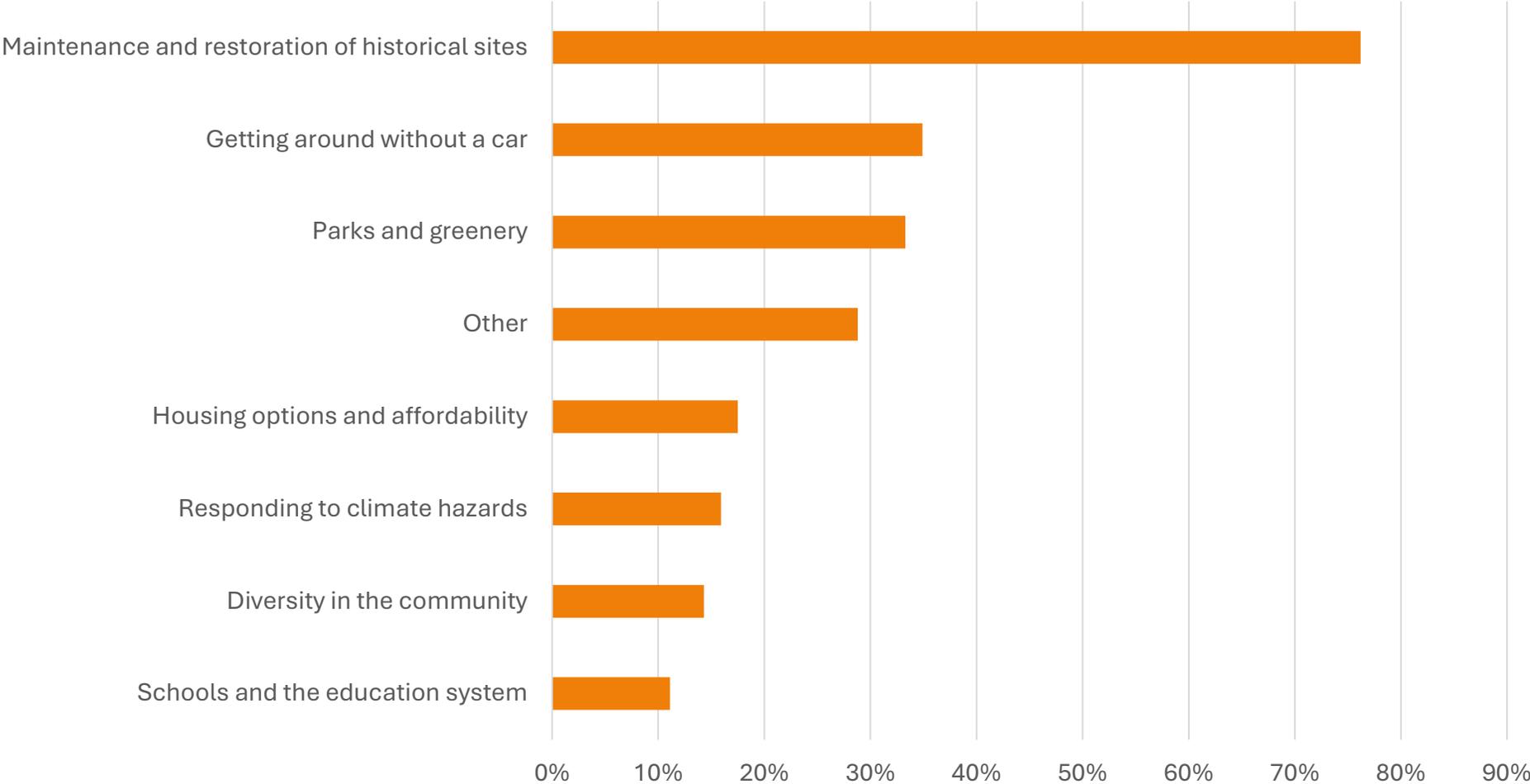
Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

What do you like most about Old Bennington?



Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

What would you most like to see improved in Old Bennington?

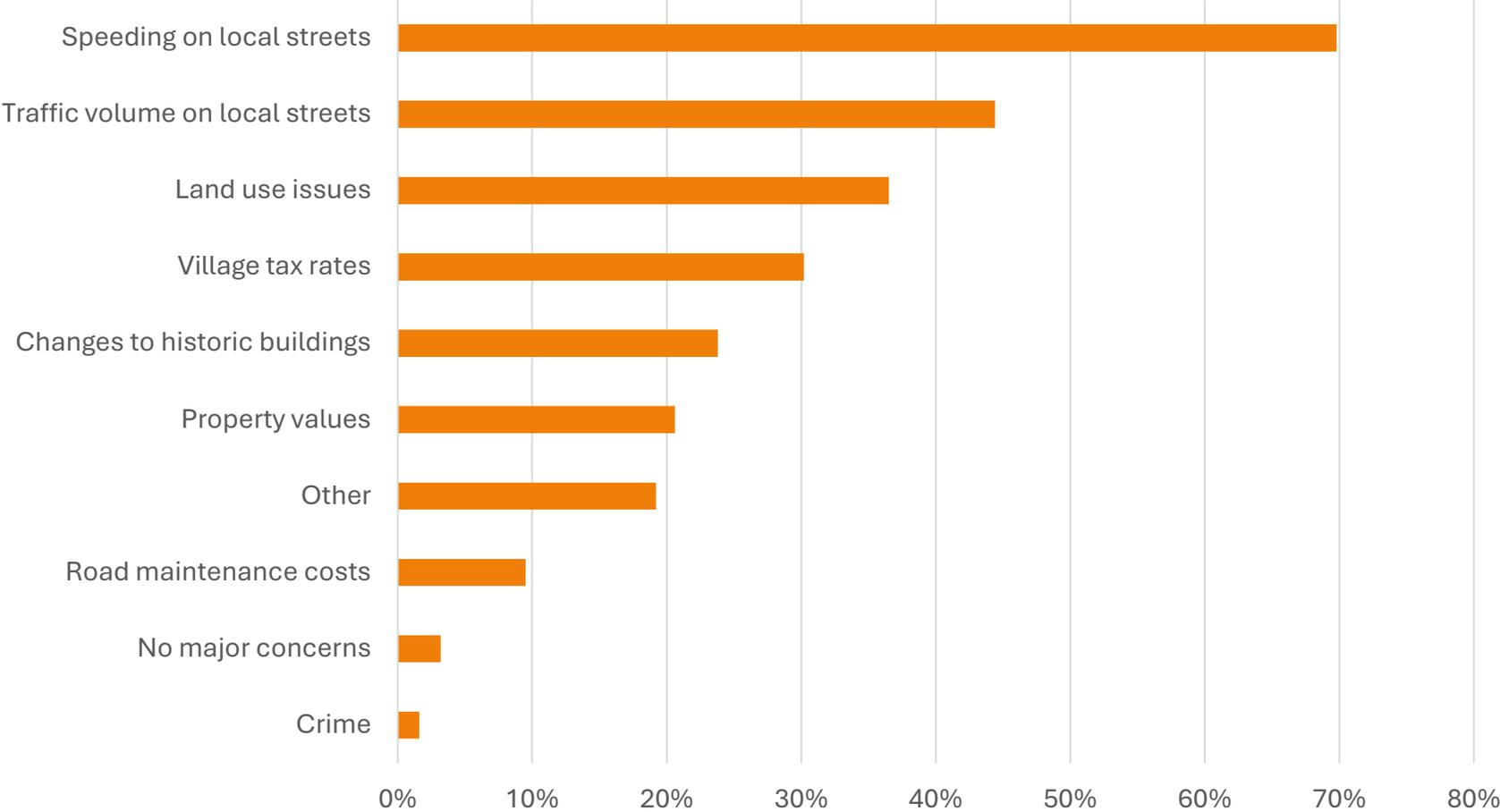


Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

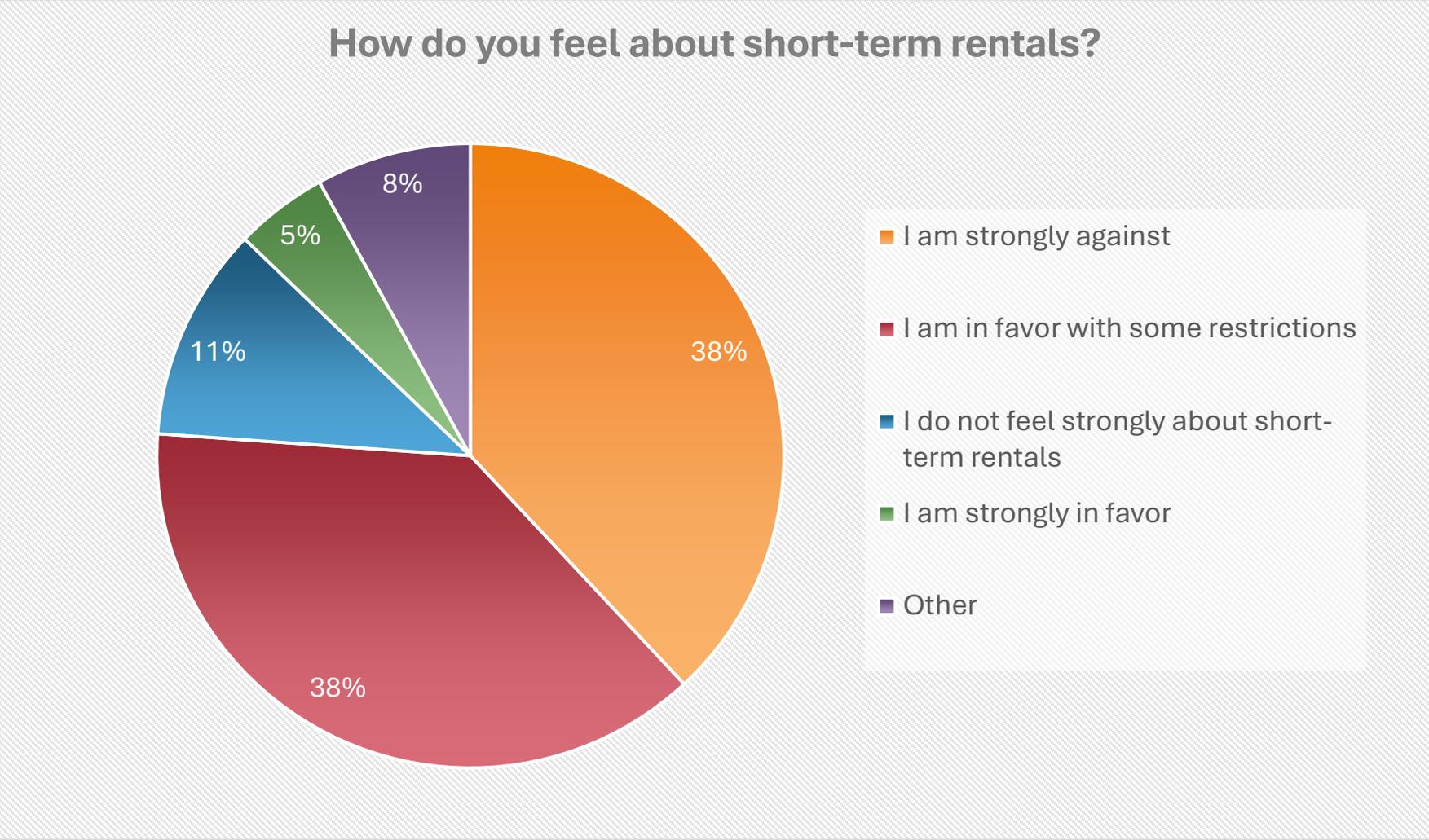


Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

What are your biggest concerns for Old Bennington in the next 5 years?



Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview



Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

What defines Old Bennington?

1. History & Architecture
2. Iconic Landmarks
3. Quiet, residential character
4. Community & neighbor connections
5. Natural beauty & walkability
6. Variety of opinions regarding change and the future of Old Bennington



Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

Have the benefits of living in Old Bennington changed in the last four years?

1. Traffic and speeding have worsened
2. Loss of police presence
3. Population/demographic shifts since the pandemic
4. General stability



Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

Hopes for the future of Old Bennington

1. Preserve historic character
2. Restore major landmarks
3. Improved traffic calming and safety
4. Balanced reuse of historic buildings
5. Limited small businesses
6. Community vitality & inclusion
7. Carefully managed tourism



Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

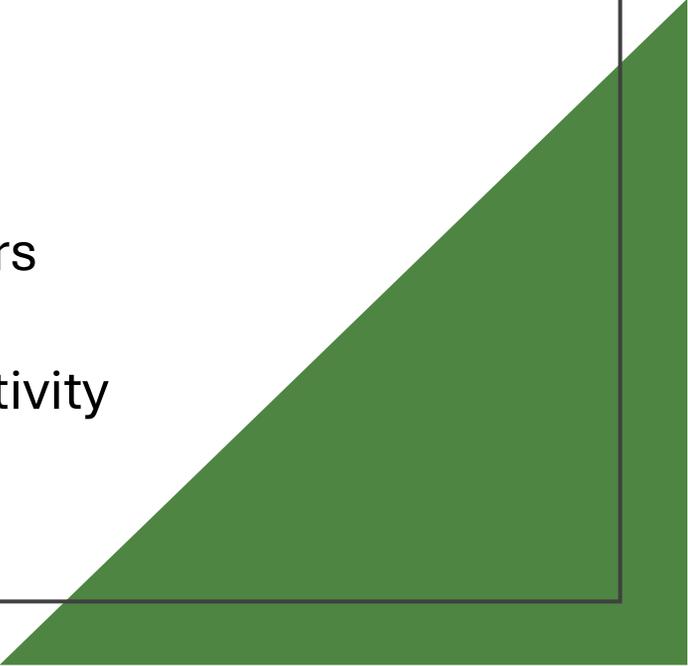
Biggest concerns about Old Bennington

1. Speeding & traffic safety
2. Lack of police presence
3. Fear of losing residential and historic character
4. Infrastructure & maintenance issues
5. Lack of zoning clarity, consistent enforcement
6. High property taxes



Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

Perceptions of safety in Old Bennington

1. People generally feel safe from crime, but not from speeding vehicles
 2. Loss of police presence
 3. People appreciate community vigilance, i.e. neighbors looking out for each other
 4. Some concerns about minor crime and late-night activity especially at the Monument
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Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

Attitudes about commercial development

1. General opposition to most commercial development with the exception of the Walloomsac Inn
2. Any development should be small-scale, local, and preserve historic character
3. Concerns about traffic and parking pressures that commercial development would bring.



Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

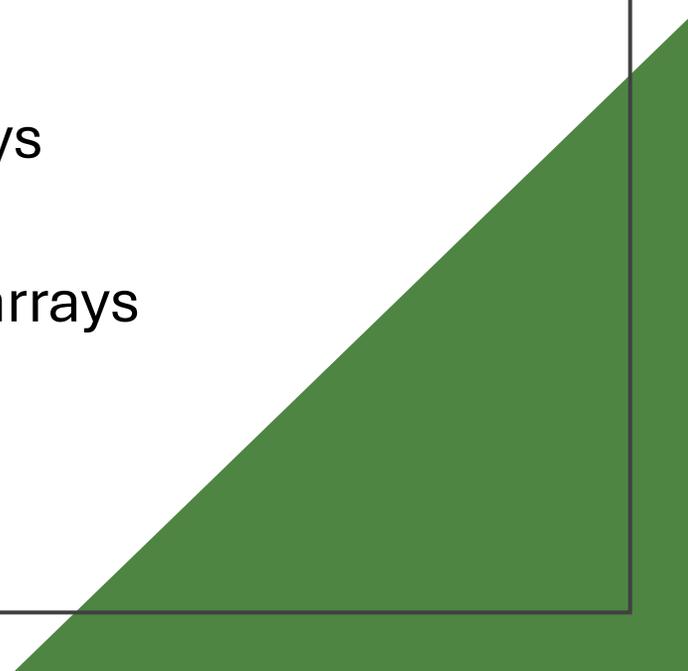
Improving effectiveness of the Planning Commission

1. Consistent enforcement of land use regulations
2. Balance preservation with practicality
3. Land use regulations should be clear, easy to understand, and actively communicated
4. Historic expertise on Village boards/commissions
5. Support restoration



Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

Solar panels in Old Bennington

1. Proper screening is essential
 2. Preference for rooftop vs. ground-mounted arrays
 3. General support for renewable energy
 4. Some frustration with existing poorly screened arrays
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Old Bennington Survey – Results Overview

Overall survey response themes

1. Historic preservation is a core value
2. Traffic & speeding are the most urgent problems
3. Desire for quiet, residential character
4. Restoration favored over new development
5. Strong community pride paired with fear of erosion



Visions for Old Bennington

- Historic sites and resources that are well maintained and preserved for all to learn from
- Quiet, close-knit residential neighborhoods
- Safe, beautiful, and comfortably walkable streets
- A community that is evolving with state standards while maintaining historical character



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 - • We've Engaged,
Now What?



Proposed Plan Outline

1. Introduction
2. Historic & Natural Resources
3. Land Use Plan & Map
4. Housing Element
5. Transportation Plan & Map
6. Utility Plan & Maps

7. Enhanced Energy Plan
8. Economic Development Element
9. Climate Resilience Plan
10. Compatibility Statement
11. Implementation Program



Thank you!

