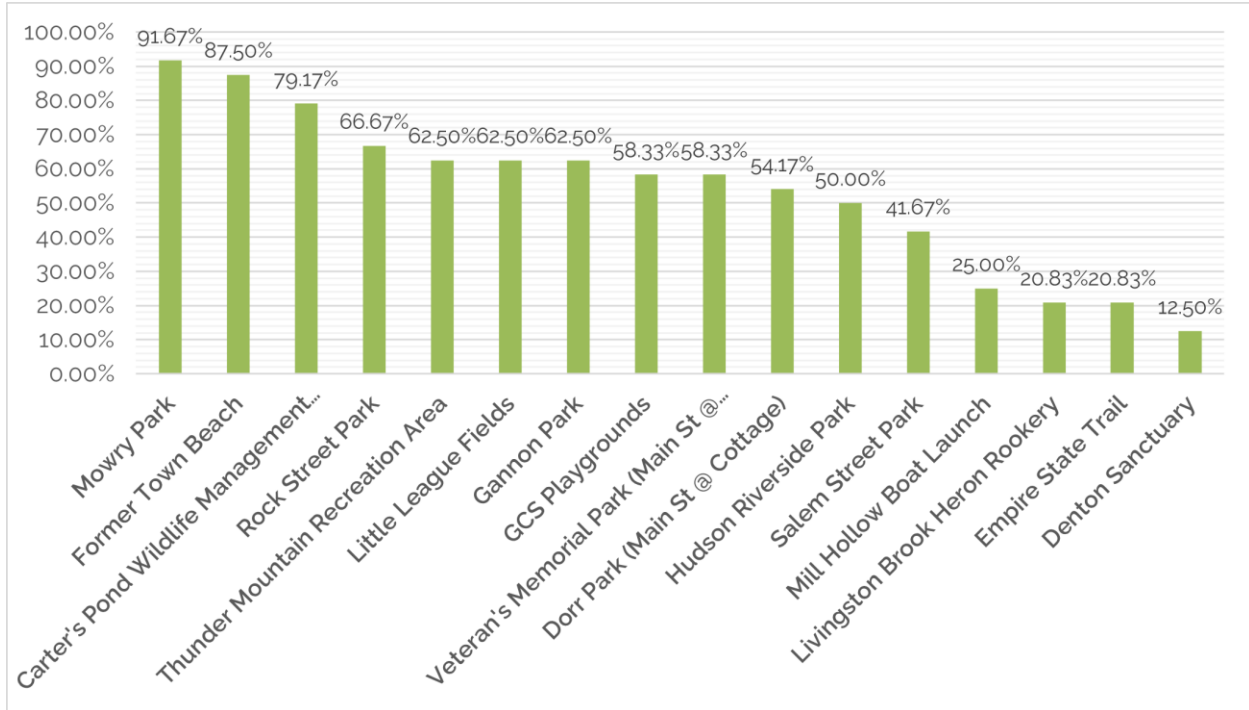


# NOVEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> PUBLIC MEETING: SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY **PARKS AND RECREATION**

## **Question 1. Which parks, recreation, and trail facilities in the Town and Village have you visited?**

The first question in the recreation survey was intended to gauge utilization levels at Greenwich's various parks and open spaces.



Utilization levels followed no obvious spatial pattern; the most well-utilized recreational resources included smaller pocket parks within the Village such as Mowry Park as well as more expansive open spaces in the Town such as Carter's Pond Wildlife Area, which nearly 80% of respondents say they've visited. The most underutilized resources, which fewer than ¼ of respondents claim to have visited, include Mill Hollow Boat Launch, Livingston Brook Heron Rookery, the Empire State Trail along the Town's western border, and the Denton Sanctuary at only 12.5%.

## **Question 2. What activities do you and your household typically engage in when visiting parks, trails, and recreation facilities in Greenwich?**

The second recreation question asked survey respondents to describe how they typically use the Town and Village's recreational resources and their preferred activities. Most common responses included hiking, running, walking, dog walking, biking, and picnicking. Less common responses included kayaking, paddle boarding, horseback riding, birding, and attending sporting events/music and cultural events at Town and Village parks.

## **Question 3. How can Greenwich's parks and recreation offerings be improved?**

The most common suggestion respondents offered on improving Greenwich's recreational offerings centered on improving the visibility of its parks and trails. Many respondents expressed the view that the system currently lacks legibility, with some ambiguity regarding what is public space and many altogether ignorant of the full extent of the Town and Village's recreational offerings. Many

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expressed the view that an improved wayfinding system, complete with visually consistent directive signage and maps would add coherence to Greenwich's recreational inventory and possibly boost utilization.

On the topic of increasing usage, one respondent suggested listing the Town and Village's various park addresses in the business directories might help, with Thunder Mountain in particular standing to gain. Multiple respondents suggested that park utilization would improve with expanded event programming, as well as fostering a year-round recreational culture. Another respondent noted that safer crossings would facilitate increased usage of Village parks. The small-format triangular parks found in the Village were singled out by one respondent as being under-programmed and lacking any clear signage.

Recommended physical improvements to Greenwich's recreational inventory included expanding the trail network, with an emphasis on connective trails between existing segments. Some responses suggested rail trail conversions along disused rail track as a means for expanding the existing trail network while maintaining the right-of-way. Multiple respondents expressed a desire for increased connections with the Battenkill and improved access through riverside trails. One of the primary existing access points to the Battenkill at the Greenwich Recreation Park was commonly cited as an area of possible improvements. In addition to expanded amenities at the Recreation Park, two respondents stated they would like to see recreational swimming permitted at this site, and another creative suggestion was a kayak "shack" functioning as both a rental facility and a launch.

Isolated ideas for improvement included a dog run, a bandshell/pavilion at Rock Street Park, and geese population control initiatives.

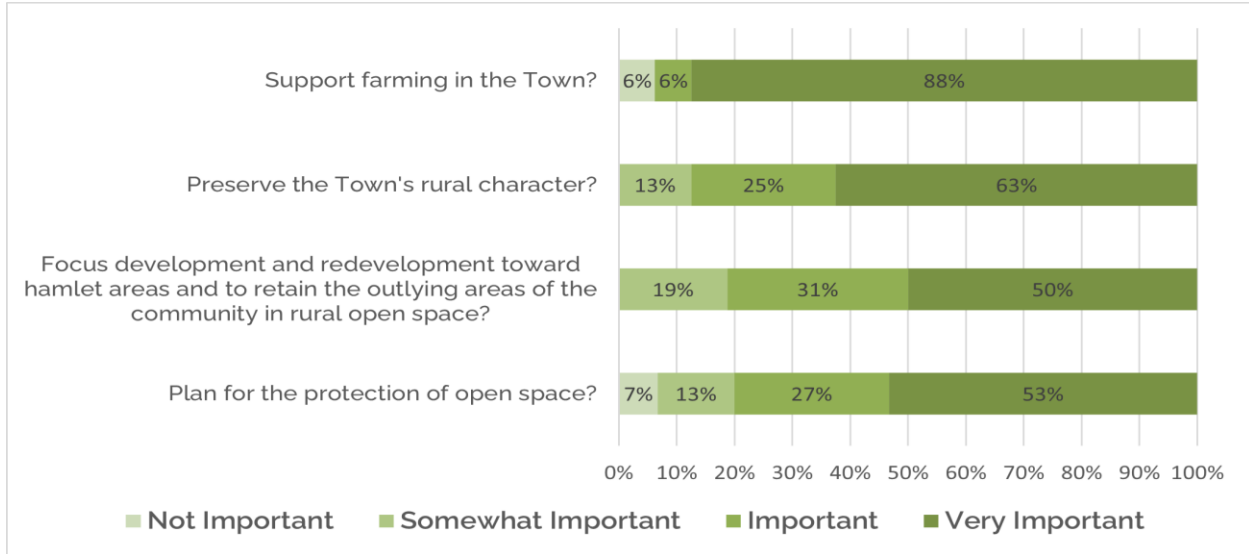
## **AGRICULTURE & OPEN SPACE**

### **Question 1.**

Respondents were asked how important they deemed several topic areas related to agriculture and open space. Responses were assigned a weighted average based on how many respondents deemed the issue "very important," "important," "somewhat important," and "not important," with corresponding numeric value assignments ranging from 4 to 1. The topic areas followed the below prioritization:

- 1) Supporting farming in the Town. (3.75)
- 2) Preserving the Town's rural character. (3.5)
- 3) Focusing development and redevelopment toward hamlet areas and to retain the outlying areas of the community in rural open space. (3.31)
- 4) Planning for the protection of open space. (3.27)

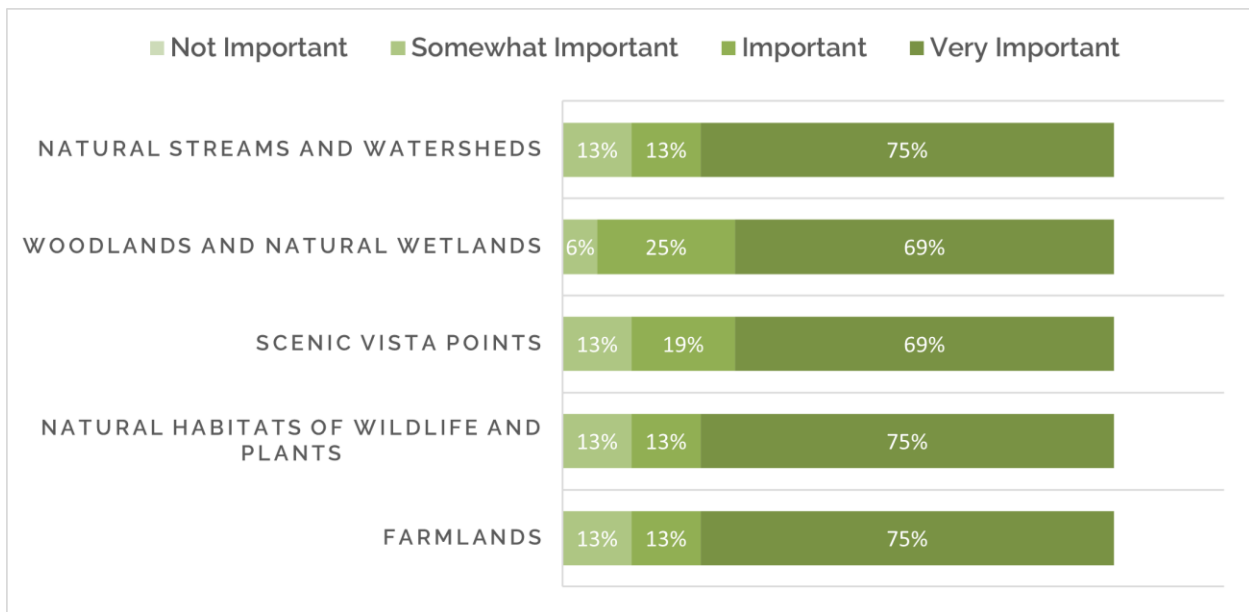
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Although the ranked value for each topic area varied slightly, all topic areas were ranked highly, with over half of all responses for each being considered “very important” by respondents. The clearest consensus emerged around the importance of supporting agriculture, followed by preserving rural character in the Town of Greenwich. While still considered by three in four respondents as being “important” or “very important,” opinions were slightly less strong regarding the question of focusing development towards built up areas and planning the protection of open space.

## Question 2.

The second question in the agriculture and open space survey listed a variety of existing scenic features throughout Greenwich and asked respondents how important they deemed the preservation of each to be.



The weighted average for all features was identical at 3.63, indicating a very strong consensus regarding the importance of preservation. The sole exception was “scenic vista points,” which ranked

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slightly lower at 3.56, but with nearly 90% of respondents deeming the preservation thereof to be important. No respondents deemed the preservation of any of the listed features to be "not at all important."

## **Question 3. In your opinion, what are the places or areas in Greenwich that are the most important to protect or preserve?**

Question 3 in the agriculture survey asked respondents to add, in an open-ended format, what other places in Greenwich are priority areas for preservation. Responses included areas with prime soils for agricultural use, the countryside in general, forested lands, and Village farmland.

## **Question 4. What can the Town and Village do to better support local farmers?**

In an open-ended response question, respondents were asked to share their opinions on how the Town and Village can best support farmers. On the labor side, ideas offered centered on recruitment of new farmers and farm workers via partnership with trusted organizations such as the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the American Society of Agronomy. Other ideas included expanding agriculture services, included an enhanced farmers market and associated outreach efforts for the promotion of local crops and products.

## **Question 5. If you have any additional comments regarding open space and agriculture uses, please provide them below.**

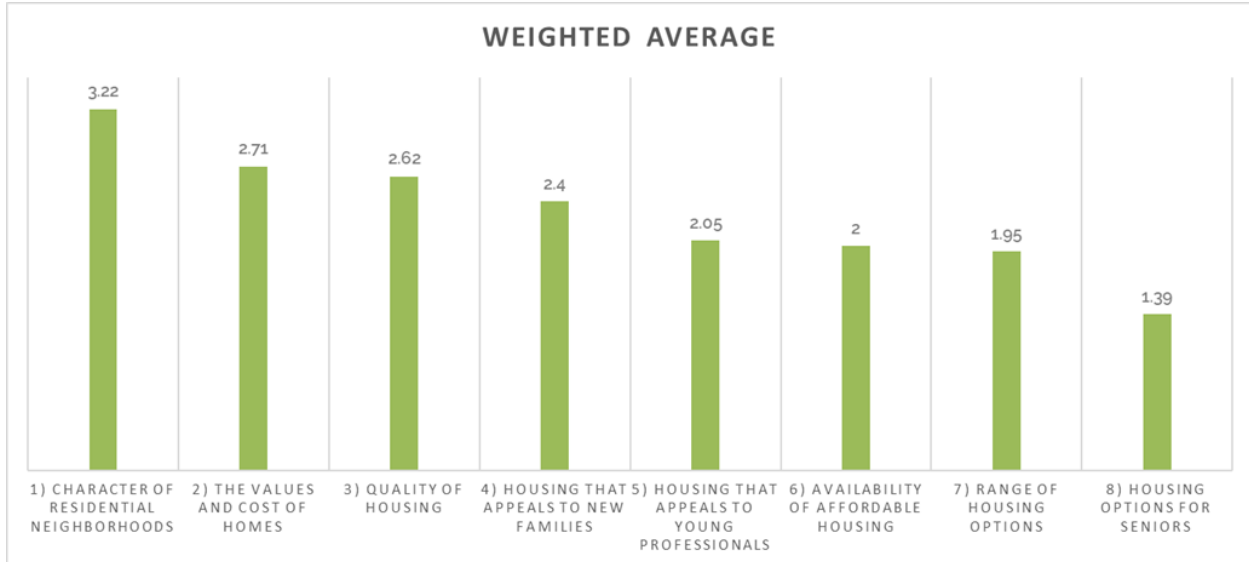
Finally, respondents were asked to share any additional thoughts they might have on topic areas that were not covered elsewhere in the survey. In addition to expressions of support for agriculture and the scenic quality with which it imbues the Town, respondents considered the challenge of balancing development pressures with open space preservation. One resident expressed the view that Town land that is exiting agricultural use is less due to development pressure than to the decline of dairying and related farm industries. Another response noted that support of sheep raising and other potential revenue streams for farmers can help offset these losses. Finally, multiple respondents noted that the bucolic character of the Town can be maintained while allowing for targeted development along strategic corridors within the Town.

## **HOUSING**

### **Question 1.**

Respondents were prompted to consider Greenwich's existing housing, and then evaluate each of the following topic areas and evaluate where they regarded it as a great strength (value of 4), a strength (3), a weakness (2), or a great weakness (1). The following topic areas are listed by their weighted average, with higher values indicating more positive sentiment associated with the topic area.

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The weighted values indicated in parentheses to the right of the topic area shed some light on whether respondents regarded any given facet of housing as a strength or as a weakness. Generally, a weighted average below 2.5 indicates mixed sentiments.

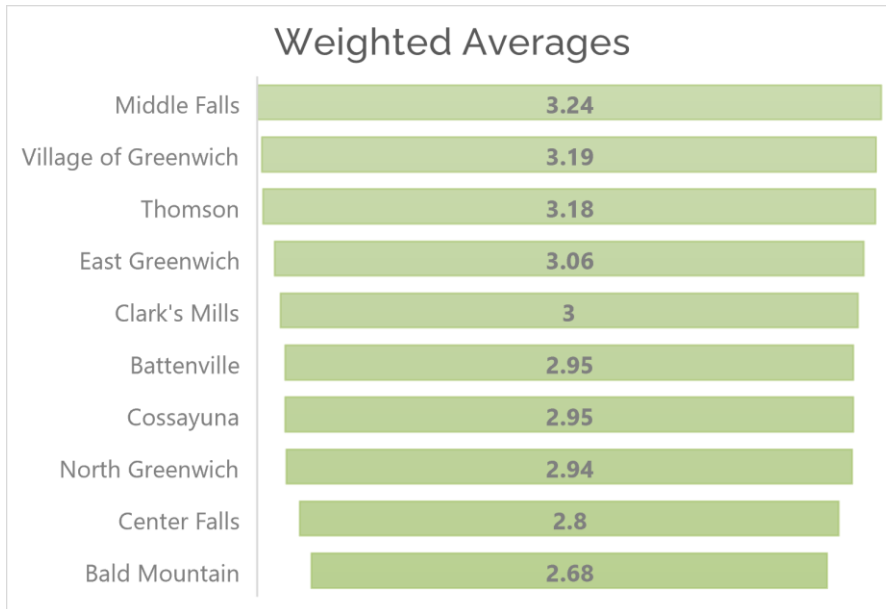
- 1) **Character of residential neighborhoods (3.22):** Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that they regarded the character of Greenwich's neighborhood as a strength, with nearly four in five respondents categorizing neighborhood quality as a strength and the balance citing it as a great strength. No respondents stated this area to be a weakness.
- 2) **The value and cost of homes (2.72):** While no other housing-related topic area approached the high valuation respondents placed on the character of Greenwich's neighborhoods, most respondents – roughly 70% - stated that the value and cost of homes in Greenwich was an area of strength.
- 3) **Quality of housing (2.62):** The quality of Greenwich's housing, with its robust inventory of historic homes, was largely determined to be a strength in the Town and Village by most respondents (67%), although no respondents designated housing quality as a great strength.
- 4) **Housing that appeals to new families (2.40):** Responses to whether Greenwich's existing houses is appealing to new families garnered an even divide of opinions with half considering Greenwich's housing to be a strength in this regard and the other half categorizing it as a weakness, with 10% of respondents citing it as a "great weakness."
- 5) **Housing that appeals to young professionals (2.05):** Overall, survey respondents tended to regard Greenwich's housing stock as generally being unappealing to young professionals, with almost two in three respondents classifying it as a weakness or great weakness.
- 6) **Availability of affordable housing (2.00):** Nearly four in five residents considered the availability of affordable housing in Greenwich to be a weakness, with 20% of respondents considering it a great weakness. Roughly 20% of residents cited affordable housing as a strength. No respondents considered affordability of housing to be a great strength.
- 7) **Range of housing options (1.95):** Respondents tended to negatively regard the range of housing options in Greenwich, with four in five regarding the existing mix of housing typologies as a weakness (with a quarter of all respondents citing this as a great weakness) and one-fifth of respondents classifying Greenwich's housing options as a strength.
- 8) **Housing options for seniors (1.39):** Of all the questions posed to community members regarding housing in Greenwich, the topic area most resoundingly classified as a weakness

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was housing options for seniors. Nearly 70% of survey respondents stated this to be a great weakness and less than 10% of respondents stated this topic area is a strength for Greenwich.

## Question 2. Housing Development

Respondents were asked to consider their views on how new residential development might impact in Greenwich's hamlets and neighborhoods. Responses were structured along "very positive," "positive," "negative," and "very negative" options criteria with corresponding numeric value assignments ranging from 4 for very positive to 1 for very negative. The resulting weighted average for each community gives us a sense of where community support is strongest for new residential development.



Significantly, unlike responses to question one, responses to question one only exhibited modest variation in the value of weighted averages, with responses for most all communities skewing positive towards new residential development.

The area with the highest weighted average was Middle Falls with 3.24 average and fully 90% of survey respondents stating that new residential development would produce positive impact.

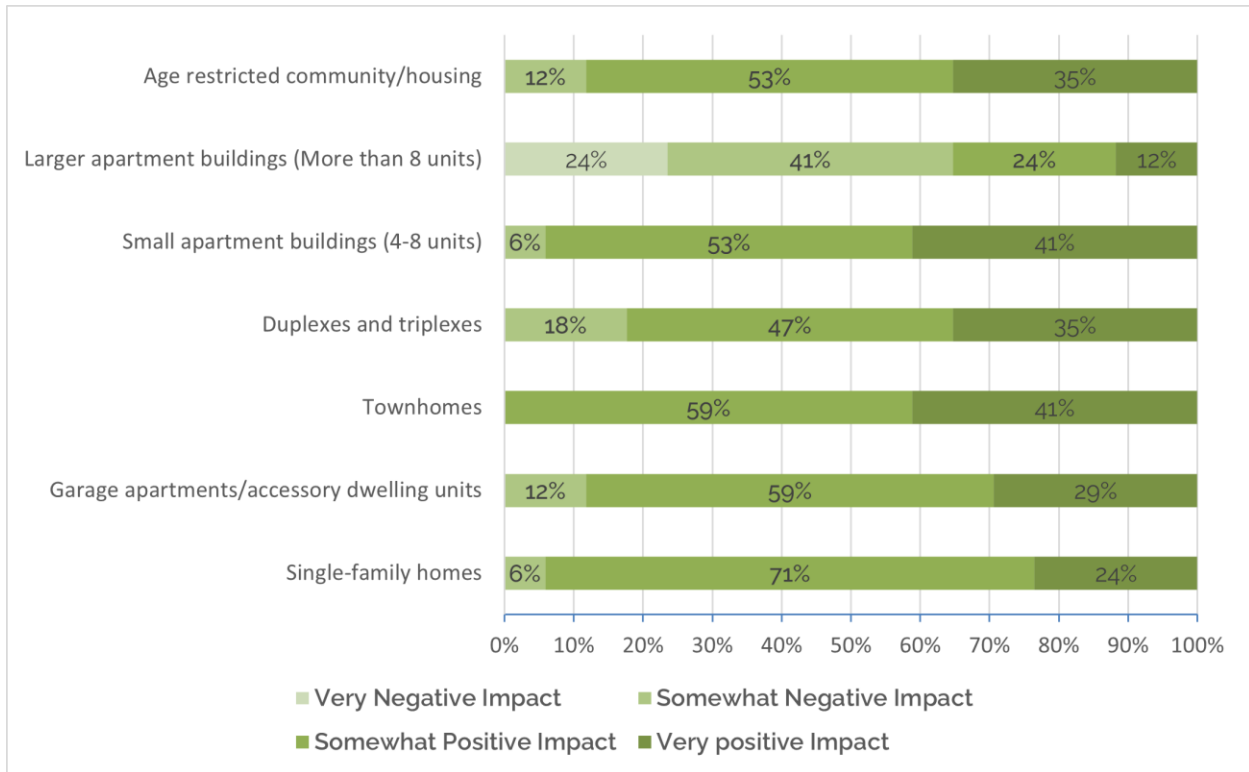
The area with the second-highest weighted average, at 3.19, was the Village proper. The Village of Greenwich also has the highest share of respondents voicing the opinion that new residential development would have an extremely positive impact (38%).

In all the ten areas in Greenwich listed, a majority of at least two-thirds of respondents stated new residential development would produce a positive impact. Even in Bald Mountain, which at 2.68 had the lowest weighted average, 67% of respondents responded positively.

## Question 3. What kind of impact would each of the following types of new residential development have on the community?

The next housing survey question asked residents to consider several housing typologies and how they would characterize the potential impact each might have on Greenwich using the same positive-negative response options.

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Townhomes proved to be the least controversial building typology with no respondents stating the production of new townhomes would have an adverse effect on the community. At 3.41, this typology also had the highest weighted value of any option.

Small apartment buildings consisting of 4-8 units also proved to be a very popular option, with the same share of respondents (41%) stating the expansion of this housing type would have a “very positive” impact on Greenwich as townhomes. With the second-highest weighted average of any typology (3.35), survey respondents appeared broadly supportive of higher-density housing within Greenwich, but only up to a point. Conversely, large apartment buildings consisting of eight or more units proved the least popular choice, with more than half of survey respondents indicating that they would have a negative impact on the Town.

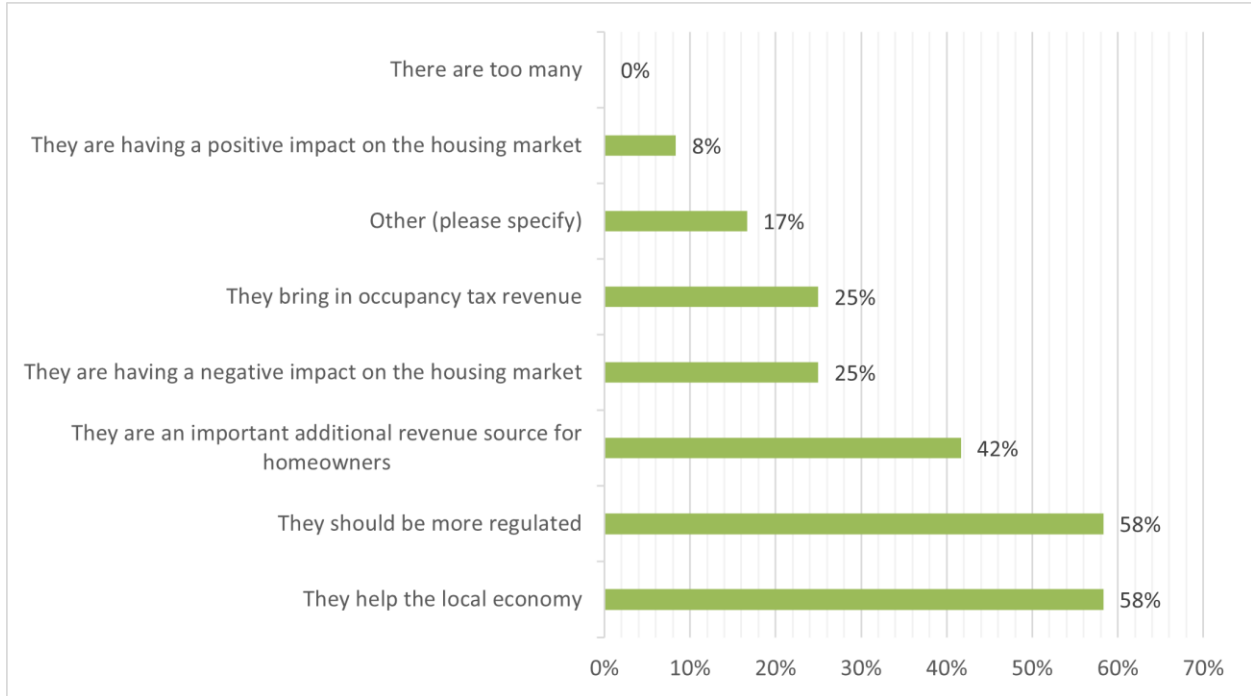
All other typologies, however, including duplexes and triplexes, single-family homes, and age-restricted housing proved popular and largely uncontroversial among survey respondents, with responses stating each would likely have a positive impact more than 80% of the time.

#### **Question 4, What are your thoughts on AirBnBs/VBRos (“Short term rentals”) in Greenwich?**

Finally, survey respondents were asked to express their thoughts on the short-term rental industry within Greenwich. Responses encompassed a variety of perspectives. The two most frequently chosen responses, both selected by 58% of respondents, were somewhat contradictory, stating that STRs support the local economy while suggesting a need for greater regulation.

Overall, more commonly selected options were generally in favor of STRs in the benefits they bring to Greenwich in the form of local spending and as an extra source of revenue for homeowners.

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## Additional comments

Survey respondents were invited to add any additional thoughts related to housing in Greenwich that were not covered by the survey questions. Additional comments included the need for a hotel, the expansion of affordable rental housing (for any renters, but with an emphasis on seniors), and the possible of a mutual aid home renovation system where residents can borrow tools and supplies from a shared pool of donated resources.