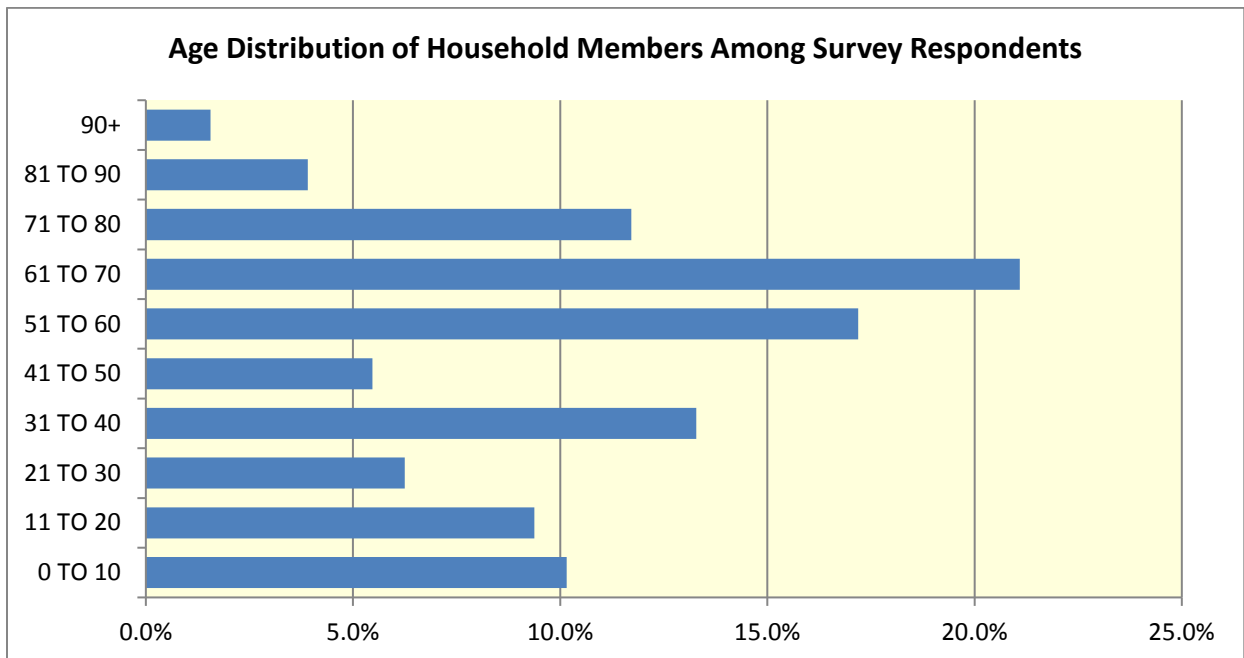


Summary of Brookline Town Survey – 2016

Prepared for the Brookline Selectboard by the Brookline Planning Commission

The below bullets, charts and tables summarize the results of the Town survey sent out around Town Meeting earlier this year, in which 70 responses were received, representing families totaling 128 persons. Although this is only about half as many survey responses as were received from the 2012 Town survey (130), it still represents about 25% of Brookline’s 2015 estimated total population.

- On average, survey respondents have lived in Brookline about 21 years, indicating significant experience with Town life and issues over an extended period of time.
- About 75% of the respondents were primary residence owners, while the remaining 25% owned second homes or land only in Brookline.
- Almost all (95%) of the respondents owned single family homes in Brookline.
- The age distribution of household members among respondents (including the respondent) is depicted in the below chart. This reflects an aging population, with the highest shares among those 51-80 years old.



- The gender of the respondents was 53% male and 47% female.
- About half of all respondents are employed (53%), with most of those not employed indicating that they are retired (46%).
- Of those who are employed, about 84% work in Vermont, 67% work in Windham County and 23% work in Brookline. Thus, even though there is relatively little commercial activity in the Town, home-based work provides employment for a substantial percentage of the respondents.

- When asked what the “most important issues are for Brookline today,” on a scale of 1 to 10, the most prevalent single response had to do with environmental quality, “Environment - wildlife, water quality, air quality.” This issue received the highest percentage of #1 responses and also the highest percentage of #1 and #2 responses combined. Also prominent in the responses received were, in order of general importance: telecommunications infrastructure (phone, cell and internet access), transportation infrastructure and maintenance (roads, bridges, signs, etc.), emergency services (ambulance, police and fire), and education. Of note, these were almost all mentioned as being among the top issues in the Town survey conducted 4-5 years ago.
- One way to assess the general importance of ranked responses like this is to view them by individual ranking number and combinations of rankings. In the table on the following page, the responses to the above questions are shown for the top ranking and then cumulative combinations of subsequent rankings. The colored cells show the top 4 issues for each ranking combination. To get an overall sense of the relative importance of each issue across all rankings, the cumulative ranking combinations can be divided by the number of possible ranking responses and averaged, providing a weighted total for each issue. The graph on the bottom of the next page shows the issue response incidence in this way, as a quick summary of the relative importance of each issue.
- When asked how they envisioned Brookline in the future, 71% saw it as a “bedroom community,” 45% as being “more self-sufficient with more job opportunities,” 35% as a “recreational destination,” and 23% as a “retirement community.”
- When asked, “Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years,” 71% saw themselves as residing year-round in Brookline, 17% residing part-time or seasonally in Town, and 12% as either not living in Brookline – or not living at all...(!)
- Per the below table, 77% of all survey respondents felt there should be more agricultural development in Town and 76%, more home-based businesses. But fewer than a third thought there should be more educational institutions, low income housing, residential developments, or industrial/commercial development. The strongest negative responses to these development options were associated with industrial and commercial development, residential development and affordable housing. These responses mirrored those of the prior survey, except for educational institutions, which only 13% favored in 2012 and 49% opposed (with 38% of no opinion), versus 31% who now favor this kind of development, and 29% opposed (with 40% having no opinion).

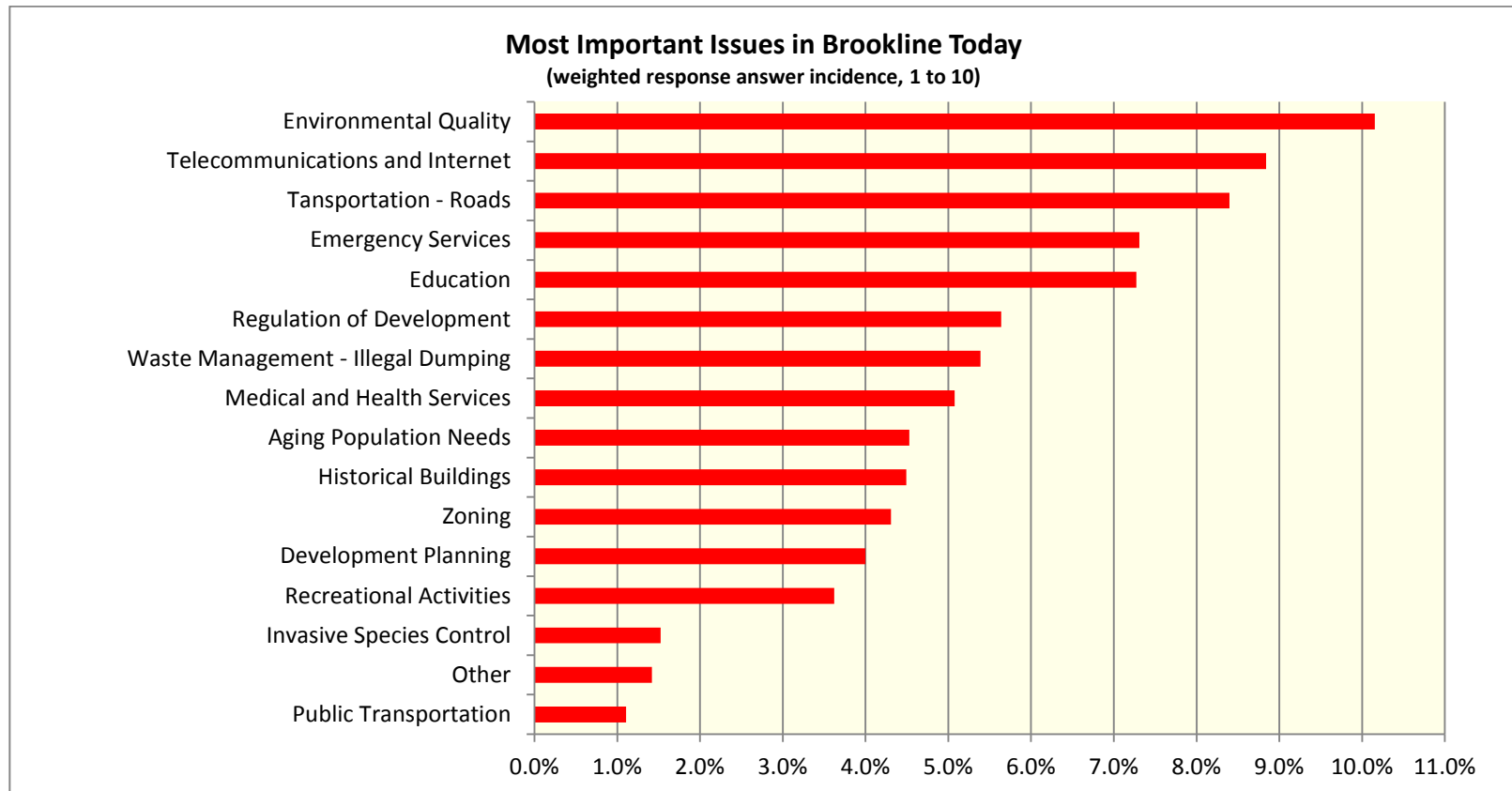
In Brookline, There Should Be More...						
	Agricultural development	Industry and commercial development	Home-based businesses	Residential housing development	Affordable low-income housing	Educational institutions
Agree	77.1%	11.4%	75.7%	17.1%	24.3%	31.4%
Disagree	1.4%	62.9%	2.9%	57.1%	40.0%	28.6%
No Opinion	21.4%	25.7%	21.4%	25.7%	35.7%	40.0%

- Most survey respondents did not see the need for more Town regulation of agricultural development, single family housing and home-based businesses, however, about half believed there should be more regulation of industrial/commercial development, noise,

Percent of Respondents Ranking Issues as Important to Brookline on a Scale of 1 to 10

RANKING	Aging Population Needs	Education	Emergency Services	Zoning	Development Planning	Environmental Quality	Historical Buildings	Medical and Health Services	Recreational Activities	Regulation of Development	Telecommunications and Internet	Transportation - Roads	Public Transportation	Waste Management - Illegal Dumping	Invasive Species Control	Other
1 ONLY	5.8%	11.6%	8.7%	8.7%	1.4%	11.6%	2.9%	4.3%	1.4%	7.2%	10.1%	8.7%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	2.9%
1 AND 2	8.7%	15.9%	13.0%	13.0%	8.7%	26.1%	4.3%	11.6%	7.2%	11.6%	21.7%	18.8%	2.9%	8.7%	0.0%	4.3%
1 THRU 3	13.0%	23.2%	26.1%	15.9%	14.5%	30.4%	11.6%	14.5%	10.1%	20.3%	34.8%	27.5%	2.9%	14.5%	1.4%	5.8%
1 THRU 4	18.8%	24.6%	29.0%	15.9%	18.8%	44.9%	17.4%	21.7%	14.5%	23.2%	39.1%	37.7%	2.9%	23.2%	7.2%	5.8%
1 THRU 5	20.3%	37.7%	31.9%	17.4%	21.7%	60.9%	23.2%	30.4%	15.9%	29.0%	43.5%	42.0%	5.8%	27.5%	7.2%	5.8%
1 THRU 6	21.7%	44.9%	42.0%	18.8%	26.1%	65.2%	29.0%	31.9%	20.3%	30.4%	49.3%	50.7%	8.7%	31.9%	13.0%	5.8%
1 THRU 7	30.4%	46.4%	52.2%	21.7%	30.4%	65.2%	34.8%	34.8%	27.5%	33.3%	55.1%	56.5%	10.1%	42.0%	13.0%	7.2%
1 THRU 8	31.9%	49.3%	60.9%	23.2%	31.9%	66.7%	44.9%	36.2%	34.8%	40.6%	60.9%	63.8%	10.1%	52.2%	15.9%	7.2%
1 THRU 9	44.9%	53.6%	63.8%	26.1%	34.8%	68.1%	50.7%	42.0%	40.6%	46.4%	63.8%	66.7%	11.6%	56.5%	21.7%	7.2%
1 THRU 10	50.7%	55.1%	63.8%	30.4%	37.7%	72.5%	59.4%	47.8%	47.8%	49.3%	65.2%	69.6%	13.0%	63.8%	30.4%	8.7%

- #1 Priority
- #2 Priority
- #3 Priority
- #4 Priority



and multi-family housing. As shown on the bottom line of the below table, a relatively high percentage of respondents (more than 25% in all cases) had “no opinion” on the need for more regulation. These responses were consistent with those reported in the 2012 survey. Based on “write-in” comments in the 2012 survey, regulation of noise was included in the current survey and was supported by more than half of all respondents.

In Brookline, There Should Be More Regulation of...							
	Agricultural development	Industry and commercial ventures	Home-based businesses	Multi-family housing development	Single-family housing	Noise	
Agree	17.1%	57.1%	12.9%	50.0%	12.9%	51.4%	
Disagree	48.6%	17.1%	50.0%	21.4%	45.7%	20.0%	
No Opinion	34.3%	25.7%	37.1%	28.6%	41.4%	28.6%	

- Survey respondents heavily favored use of Brookline’s exceptional natural resources for recreational activities and wildlife/plant habitat preservation (see below table). Timber harvesting and tourism were also desired by nearly half of all respondents and outweighed those who did not favor these uses by more than 2 to 1. More than a third of all respondents had no opinion when it came to commercial uses (tourism and timber harvesting) of the Town’s natural resources, whereas only 13% had no opinion regarding local recreational uses and environmental preservation. These responses were similar to those in the 2012 survey, except that in the current survey, only about half as many disagreed with timber harvesting and tourism uses of the Town’s natural resources.

Brookline's Natural Resources Should Be Used for...				
	Recreation (hiking, hunting, skiing, snowmobiling, etc.)	Wildlife/Plant Habitat	Timber Harvesting	Tourism
Agree	85.7%	87.1%	48.6%	45.7%
Disagree	1.4%	0.0%	17.1%	20.0%
No Opinion	12.9%	12.9%	34.3%	34.3%

- Consistent with responses to similar lines of inquiry elsewhere in the survey, respondents placed a very high value on managing and protecting natural and environmental resources in Brookline. Protection of water resources, wildlife habitats, forested areas, and prime agricultural lands were all favored by more than three-quarters of all respondents and protection of scenic vistas and ridgelines were each favored by more than 60%. Only a very small percentage of respondents opposed Town efforts to protect and manage these natural resources: only 2 of 70 respondents (2.9%) for wildlife, forest and water resources, 3 of 70 (4.3%) for scenic vistas and prime agricultural land, and 6 of 70 (8.6%) for ridgelines. As shown in the table at the top of the following page, a relatively high share of those surveyed (between 17 and 31 percent) had no opinion on these questions. These responses were virtually identical to those received in the 2012 Town survey.

Brookline Should Make a Special Effort to Manage and Protect...

	Wildlife Habitats	Ridgelines	Forested Areas	Scenic Vistas	Water Resources	Prime Agricultural Lands
Agree	77.1%	61.4%	77.1%	64.3%	80.0%	75.7%
Disagree	2.9%	8.6%	2.9%	4.3%	2.9%	4.3%
No Opinion	20.0%	30.0%	20.0%	31.4%	17.1%	20.0%

- When given various options for what the Town should “encourage and promote,” the strongest positive responses were for preservation and reuse of historic resources (83%) and social and agricultural events (70%). Educational initiatives, such as after-school programs (63%) and continuing education programs for adults (66%) were also viewed favorably, with very few in disagreement (1.4% and 5.7%, respectively). Respondents opposed development of low income housing by a 36% to 23% margin, with most (41%) having no opinion on the issue. These opinions were in line with those expressed in the 2012 Town survey.

Brookline Should Encourage and Promote...

	Social and Agricultural Events (community activities, concerts, garden tours, etc.)	Preservation and Reuse of its Historic Resources	Development of After-School Programs	Continuing Education Programs for Adults	Development of Accessible, Affordable, Low Income Housing
Agree	70.0%	82.9%	62.9%	65.7%	22.9%
Disagree	2.9%	1.4%	1.4%	5.7%	35.7%
No Opinion	27.1%	15.7%	35.7%	28.6%	41.4%

- When asked about Town government and the public services provided, survey responses were generally positive, however, the most prevalent response to most questions in the below table was “no opinion.” While half of all respondents feel they “get a good value for [local] taxes they pay,” and only 20% disagree, 30% had no opinion. The survey showed 30% believe they are not paying too much for services received vs. 20% who did, and 50% with no opinion. There was little willingness, however, to pay more in taxes for expanded services (36% against vs. 19% for). In 2012, respondents were more opinionated (with only about half as many expressing “no opinion”) and agreed with most of the current sentiment, except that 48% felt they were “paying too much” for Town services, with 37% disagreeing.

Brookline Taxpayers...

	Are paying too much for the services they receive	Would pay less if there were more business and industry in Brookline	Would (you) be willing to pay for more expanded services and programs?	Get a good value for taxes they pay
Agree	20.0%	20.0%	18.6%	50.0%
Disagree	30.0%	32.9%	35.7%	20.0%
No Opinion	50.0%	47.1%	45.7%	30.0%

- When rating Town services, fire and rescue services ranked highest, with more than 55% giving it an “excellent” grade. “Excellent” marks for road maintenance, Town government and schools clustered between 27% and 30% of all responses. Nearly two-thirds of all respondents, however, rated every Town service as either “excellent” or “good.” The lowest ratings went to the recycling bins, with 23% rating this service as “fair” and 7% as “poor.” Despite this, a substantial majority (64%) rated the bins as either “excellent” or “good.” Virtually every area of Town government services reviewed in the current survey improved relative to 2012. The share of respondents who rated services as “good” or better was up close to 10 percentage points in every category.

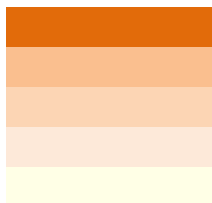
How Do You Rate the Quality of Town Services?						
	School	Town Government	Road Maintenance	Fire/Rescue	Recycling Bins	
Excellent	27.1%	28.6%	30.0%	55.7%	24.3%	
Good	38.6%	42.9%	50.0%	35.7%	40.0%	
Fair	12.9%	17.1%	12.9%	1.4%	22.9%	
Poor	0.0%	1.4%	2.9%	1.4%	7.1%	
No Opinion	21.4%	10.0%	4.3%	5.7%	5.7%	

- The table and chart on the next page summarize responses to the question, “If Brookline could achieve FIVE of the following objectives in the next five years, which five would you choose?” By a wide margin, the highest rated objective was maintenance of the rural character of the Town and its associated quality of life. This objective received the highest percentage of #1 rankings (at 33%) and had the highest percentage of #1 and #2 rankings (51%) and every cumulative combination of rankings from 1 to 5. As was done with the prior question involving ranked responses, we again calculated a weighted average of the various response groups so as to simplify the overall rankings of the objectives presented and their relative importance to the respondents. The chart at the bottom of the page is based on these weighted overall rankings.
- Following the top rated objective to maintain “the rural character of the town,” the next most important objectives were, (2) the management and protection of the Town’s natural resources, (3) the encouragement of improved Town telecommunications infrastructure (telephone, internet and cell phone access), (4) improvement of Town roads and bridges, and (5) the encouragement of energy efficiency. These objectives were identically ranked in the 2012 Town survey.
- On the last two pages of this summary, we have listed comments provided by respondents to two questions asked regarding possible uses of the old church and round schoolhouse, and directives to the Planning Commission for future work.
- Of note, 56% of all respondents (39 out of 70) provided e-mail addresses. Development and maintenance of a Town e-mail list would be of value in minimizing future survey and other Town communications expenses.
- All original survey responses received are filed with the Planning Commission. The Excel spreadsheet used to compile results is available upon request.

Percent of Respondents Choosing Top 5 Objectives for Brookline to Achieve Within the Next 5 Years

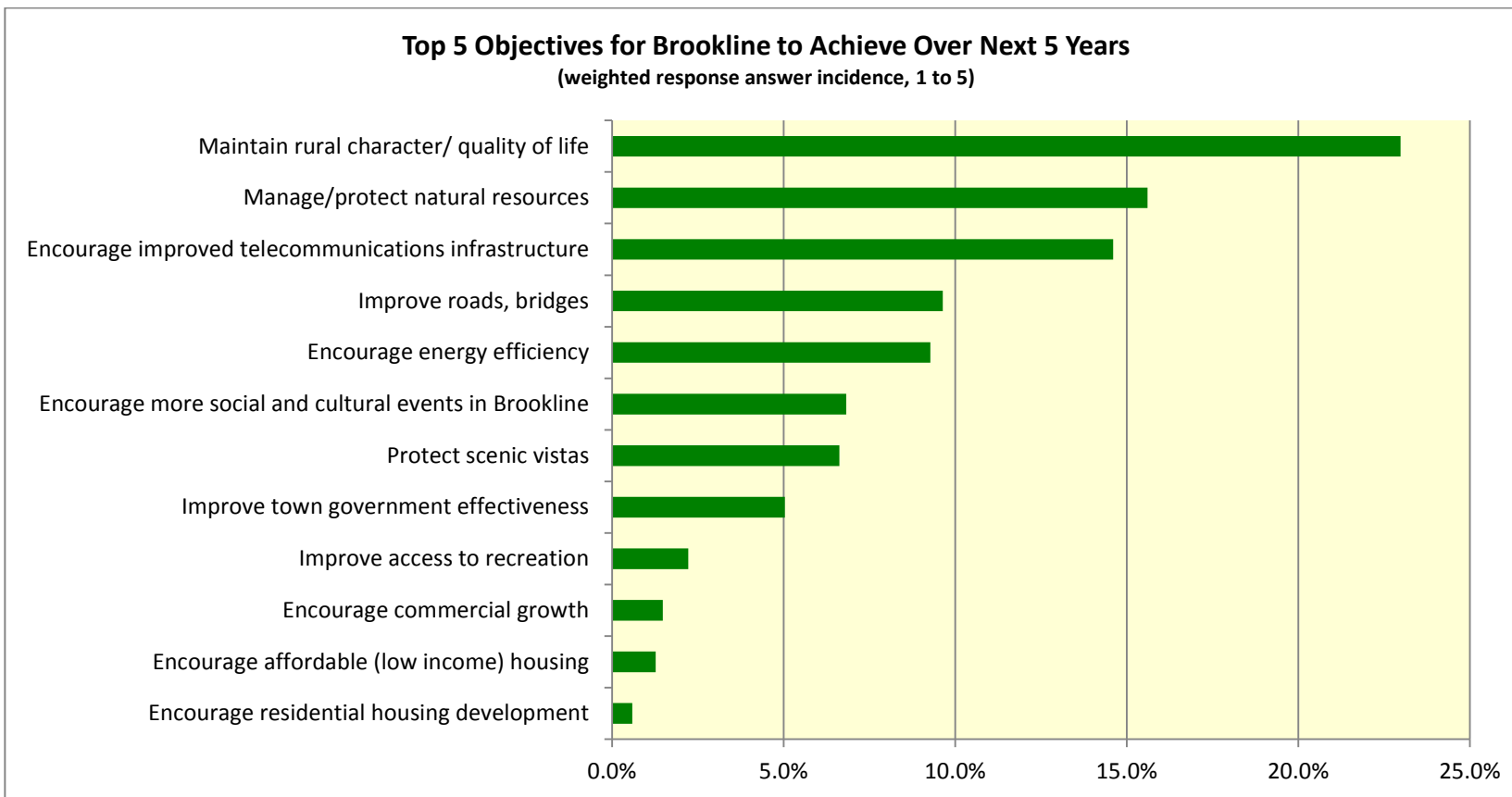
RANKING	Manage/Protect Natural Resources	Maintain Rural Character - Quality of Life	Protect Scenic Vistas	Encourage Commercial Growth	Improve Access to Recreation	Improve Town Government Effectiveness	Improve Roads, Bridges	Encourage Energy Efficiency	Encourage Residential Housing Development	Encourage Affordable, Low Income, Housing	Encourage Improved Telecommunications Infrastructure	Encourage More Social and Cultural Events in Town
1 ONLY	13.0%	33.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	7.2%	11.6%	5.8%	0.0%	1.4%	17.4%	5.8%
1 AND 2	33.3%	50.7%	5.8%	2.9%	5.8%	8.7%	20.3%	18.8%	0.0%	1.4%	31.9%	13.0%
1 THRU 3	44.9%	63.8%	30.4%	4.3%	7.2%	11.6%	26.1%	30.4%	2.9%	2.9%	42.0%	23.2%
1 THRU 4	69.6%	72.5%	36.2%	8.7%	11.6%	20.3%	36.2%	43.5%	4.3%	5.8%	49.3%	26.1%
1 THRU 5	79.7%	84.1%	47.8%	11.6%	14.5%	23.2%	43.5%	50.7%	4.3%	8.7%	66.7%	37.7%

#1 Rank
#2 Rank
#3 Rank
#4 Rank
#5 Rank



Top 5 Objectives for Brookline to Achieve Over Next 5 Years

(weighted response answer incidence, 1 to 5)



SURVEY COMMENTS: There are three unique buildings the Town now owns: The Church, the former Elementary School and the Round Schoolhouse. In order to maximize public benefit from these buildings and minimize Town expenses, do you have any ideas for uses of these structures that could generate income?

* Continue to provide daycare at the school.
* Should have a yearly round schoolhouse day. Give information on the schoolhouse when leafpeepers are here.
* Elementary school should be used as school or education office.
* Elementary School rental or sale.
* The church could be rented for weddings etc. The school could be used to host educational programs or as a DayCare. The round school house could be marketed as a historic destination.
* Again, due to the short amount of time I have lived here I do not feel qualified to answer. But ;-) perhaps local movies and showings. Also people might be interested in lecture series.
* IF generating income is the primary objective the town should develop a set of long-term options for future utilization of the elementary school. It isn't immediately clear that utilizing the facility as a day care yields the highest return on investment, especially at current rental rates.
* The school should remain as is, the round schoolhouse is delapidated but should be minimally maintained since it is historically significant. The church should be used as a place for a cell tower. It's not worth preserving.
* A lot of historical material has been collected- why not an exhibit in the Round Schoolhouse and open the School house Tuesdays and Thursdays when the town office is open.
* Senior housing
* Rent out for party/events Use for cultural events like pop up galleries. Use for adult education.
* Tours, volunteer led
* the church is for concerts, plays, etc.
* Use the church for meetings, cultural events etc. Also elementary school could be used in a similar way.
* Church could be become a local theatre, community space for monthly potlucks, Round Schoolhouse story telling for children, contra dances and movies.
* The school is being used as a daycare center. The round school house could be a museum with fees. The church could be a community center, arts venue or event venue.
* I am glad that the daycare Sunny lane is there. It provides a necessary service for many. Eventually renting out church as Newfane does with their two granges.
* Restore and rent out as a vacation residence and for rent space to organizations for retreats, workshops, classes etc.
* Concerts, lectures, tours, flower shows, house tours, garden tours.
* A summer art or music camps.
* Church- rental for events, community events by donation. School- keep preschool/daycare. Round Schoolhouse- charge for tours and make more accessible to tourists.
* Day Care center Have concerts at church.
* Church- weddings, sm receptions, arts & craft fair & auctions. School- if not used as daycare, incubator space for start up arts, folk art, etc.
* Plays or concerts in the church, tours of the round schoolhouse and have a historian explain, school can be used for a number of things- adult education, inside tag sale, charge a fee.
* Is there an overlay map showing the history of Brookline at its peak and what it is now?
* NOW THAT WE ARE SPENDING MONEY TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE THE CHURCH, WE SHOULD CONSIDER SELLING THE ELEMETARY SCHOOL TO SUNNY LANE DAYCARE
* CHURCH RENT FOR EVENTS, COMMUNITY EVENTS BY DONATION; SCHOOL - KEEP PRESCHOOL/DAYCARE; ROUND SCHOOLHOUSE: CHARGE FOR TOURS - MAKE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO TOURISTS
* Elementary is a perfect fit for pre-school. It could be used as a weekend community center while the church gets repaired
* Church- community center, weddings, parties, fund-raisers, community gatherings, emergency shelter, Town meetings. School - Keep as long as it breaks even or sell it to Tina at fair market value. Round School House - Keep as historic building, open house, not many uses for income.
* Just lease former elementary school. No Round School House. Make former church year round and use for the desires of Brookline.
* Make the church a year-round community center. Lease the elementary school.
* CONTINUE USE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOR PRE-SCHOOL/AFTER-SCHOOL.
* USE CHURCH FOR ARTISTS AND CRAFTERS TO SELL WORK. USE CHURCH FOR WEDDINGS
* USE THEM TO CREATE MORE COMMUNITY IN BROOKLINE AND AS ACTIVITY CENTERS FOR THE AREA. LET THE COMMUNITY BE CREATIVE.
* PROMOTE AND MARKET RENTAL USE FOR GATHERINGS, PRIVATE FUNCTIONS, MEETINGS, CONCERTS AND RELATED EVENTS
* RENT THEM OUT
* THINNKING ABOUT IT, THE CHURCH HAS SOME GREAT POSSIBILITIES FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS
* IT APPEARS THAT THE RENT FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS WAY TOO LOW. BY RAISING THE RENT, IT WOULD START A FUND TO MAINTAIN THE BUILDING.
* TOWN FESTIVALS - LIKE SUNFLOWER FESTIVAL

SURVEY COMMENTS: Are there any specific issues that you would like to see addressed by the Brookline Planning Commission?

* Thank you for your hard work.
* Local zoning.
* 1 Bringing in industry that would compliment the rural character/quality of life that has brought most people here. 2 The increased traffic vs road quality.
* A strategy for improving/acquiring cell service
* Limiting business development in Brookline. Supporting higher taxes for correct businesses and those in various trades which are (construction, logging, property management, etc.) to better fund protecting resources and energy efficient technology.
* Many in town don't want zoning but this option should be seriously considered. The principle threat is not what people in town might do, it's what an outside developer might do.
* Do not turn our town into NY NJ or CT. That's why you moved out of there. Respect the freedom we have left and respect the old way of doing things.
* pave the remainder of grassy brook road
* Thank you for all your faithful work.
* Investigation of zoning/development plan of some sort.
* Illegal trash dumping at end of Holland Hill road and Old Bennet Road.
* Review/lower speed limits and encourage enforcement. Cell service is a necessity, not a luxury, especially for emergency services.
* Zoning
* none that I know of
* Hang in there
* REVIEW/LOWER SPEED LIMITS - ENCOURAGE ENFORCEMENT; CELL SERVICE IS A NECESSITY, NOT A LUXURY ESPECIALLY FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES.
* FORBID COMMERCIAL USE OF LAND RESOURCES - GRAVEL PIT
* I'm happy to feel included. Valuable work, I'm grateful. I see myself more involved in the future.
* Control poison ivy and that bamboo looking plant next to the road. Encourage landowners to clean up storm blow down. Add walking or biking lane to GBR
* Yes...pursuing reasons why not and how we can get more Town people interested in Brookline. Specifically...more town events and more attendance at Town meetings. Also cell phone service.
* Cell phone service
* MAINTAINING RURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE. AVOIDING LARGE CONCENTRATED DEVELOPMENT OR OTHER ENTERPRSES CREATING INCREASED IMPACT ON ROADS, TRAFFIC, SERVICES, POLLUTION, NOISE.
* NOISE IS A PROBLEM LIVING NEXT TO A SAWMILL
* MORE INVOLVEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY BEYOND THIS SURVEY. FORUM, OPEN HOUSES, EXAMPLES OF BEST-PRACTICES.
* WE MOVED HERE BECAUSE OF THE RURAL NATURE OF THE TOWN AND WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED TO SEE COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT. This is not Vernon - this is Vermont.
* THANK YOU!