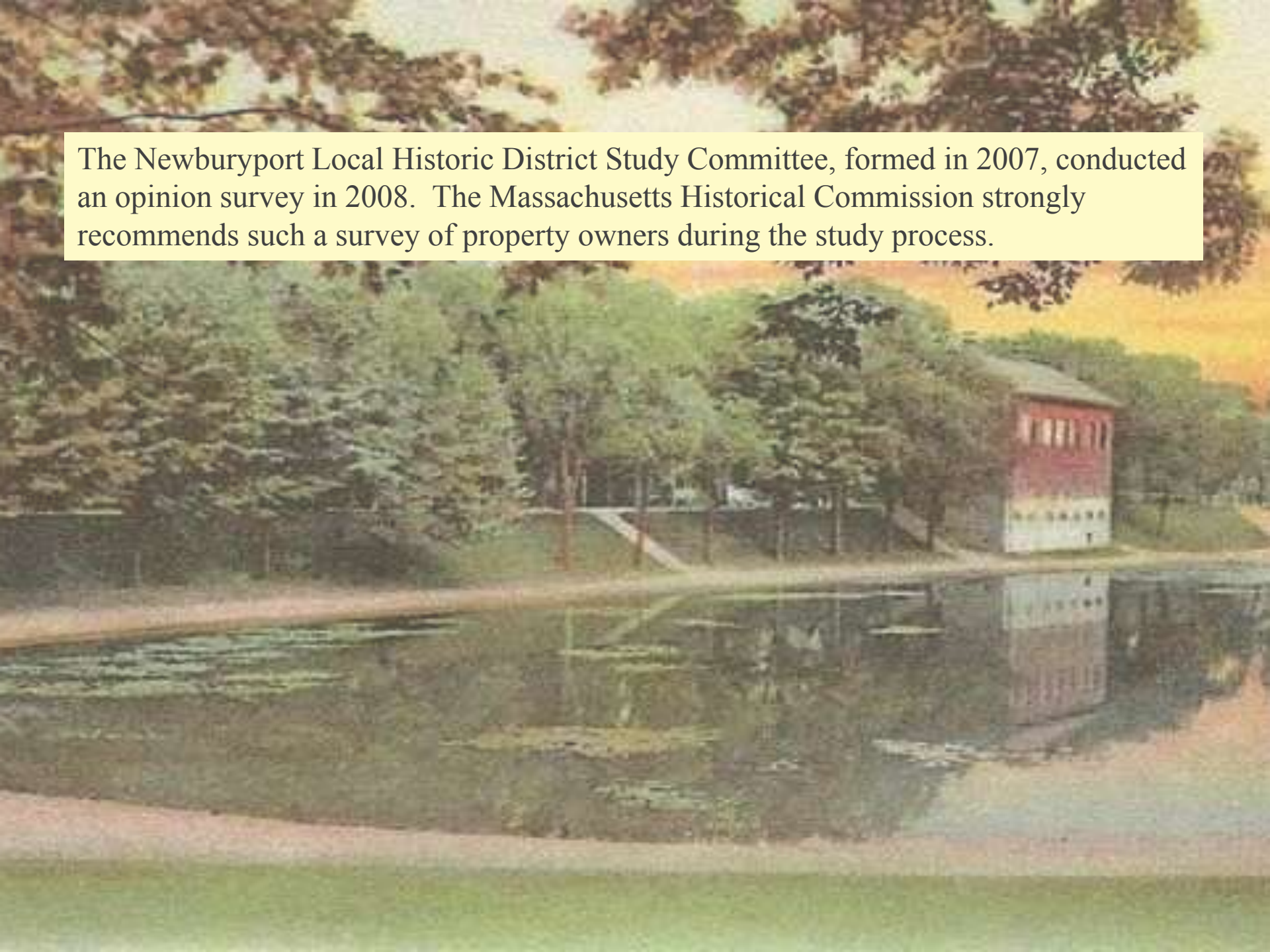
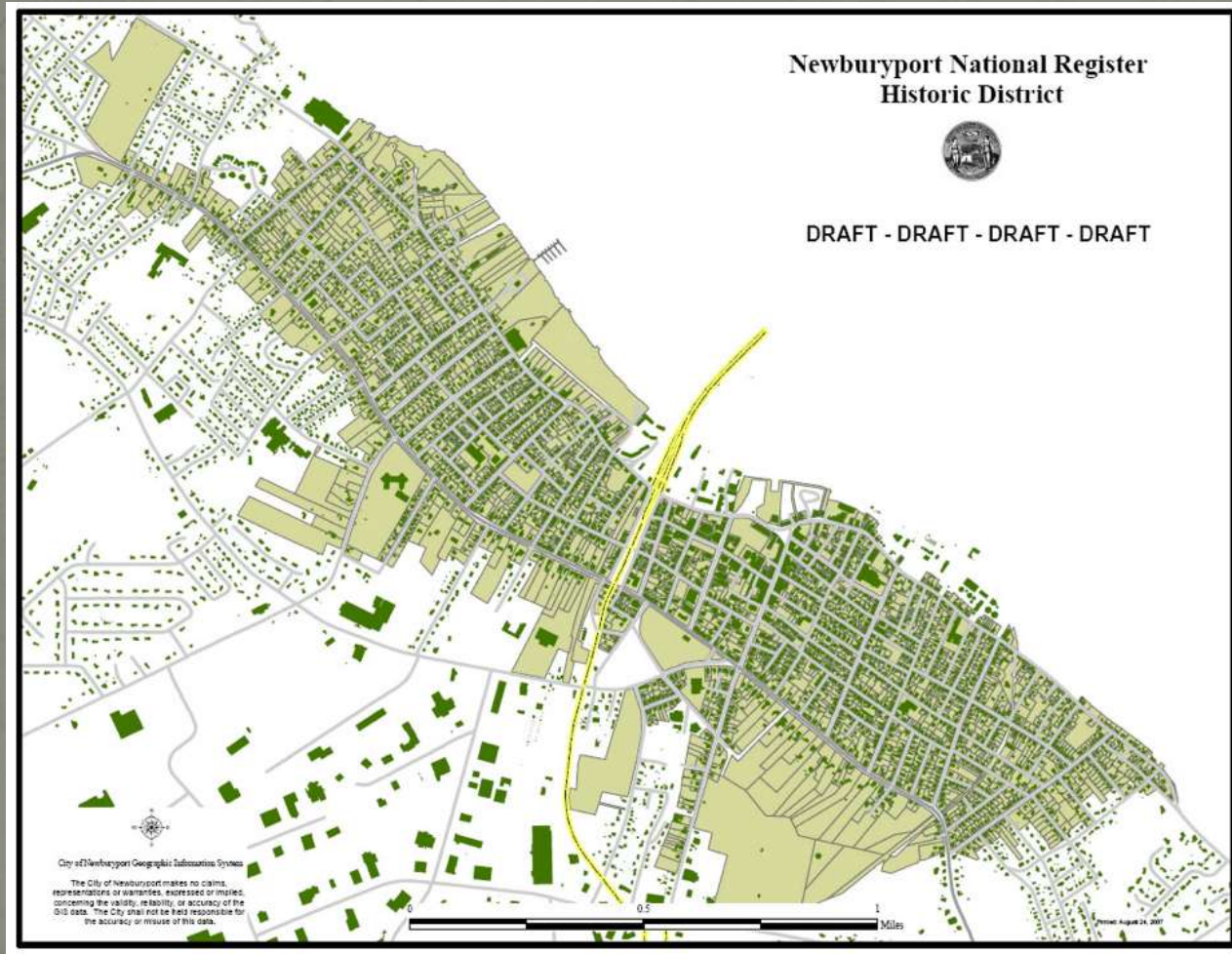


**Local Historic District
2008
Public Opinion Survey Overview**

The Newburyport Local Historic District Study Committee, formed in 2007, conducted an opinion survey in 2008. The Massachusetts Historical Commission strongly recommends such a survey of property owners during the study process.



Survey target – the Newburyport National Register Historic District



Methodology for Survey

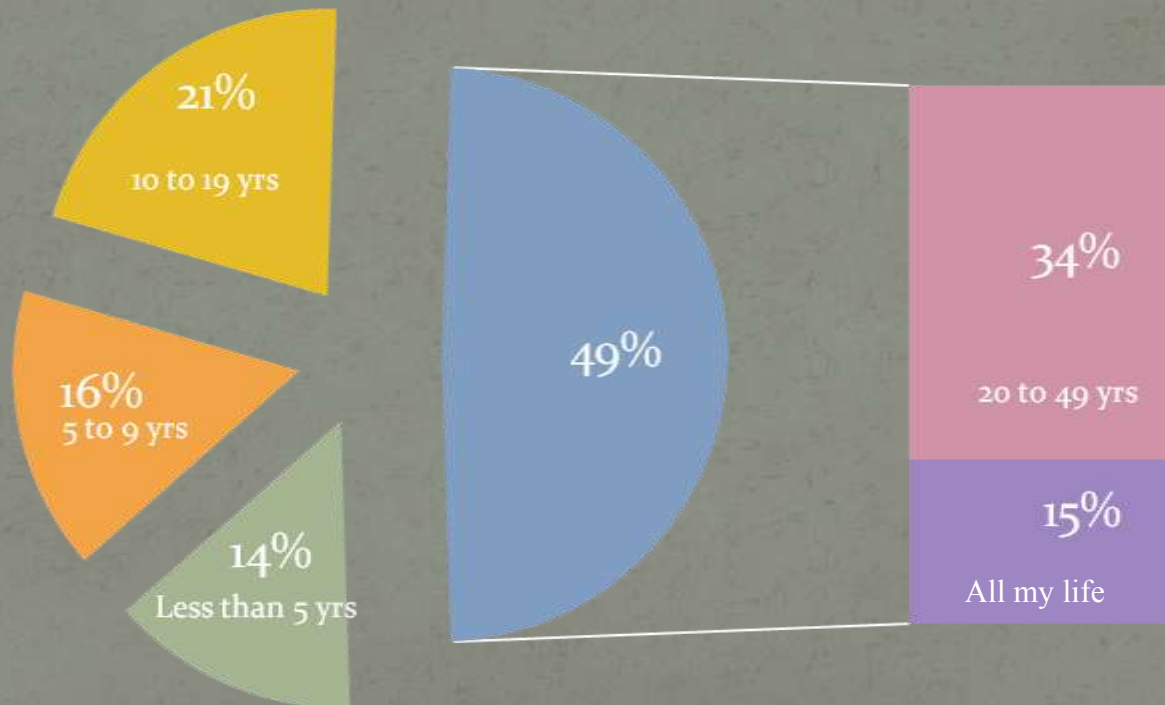
- Purpose
 - To assess the level of awareness and familiarity with current local guidelines and historic designations to identify gaps in information and/or misperceptions
 - To find out the extent to which the historic character and architecture in Newburyport is valued and whether the need exists to preserve it
 - To ascertain the level of support for the formation of a local historic district and, if supported, the guidelines that homeowners believe should be in place or exempt from review

Methodology continued

- A total of 2,445 surveys were mailed in June 2008 to property owners within or near the boundaries of the Newburyport National Register Historic District. One person per household were to complete a brief, 16-question survey either using the pre-addressed envelope provided or online through a link on the City's website. Notices were posted in the Daily News, the Current, and on the City's website.
 - Property-owners of more than one address within the boundaries were to complete a single survey – this was done in order to give equal, rather than proportionate, weight to residents' views and to make it easier for owners of multiple properties to respond
- The total number of non-duplicate surveys completed was 896 --770 via mail plus 126 online -- resulting in a response rate of 37% and an overall margin of error of +/-3%
- *Thank you, respondents!*

Half of the sample have lived locally for 20 years or more

Q6 How long have you lived in Newburyport?



Perceptions about historic character
of Newburyport and familiarity
with current protections

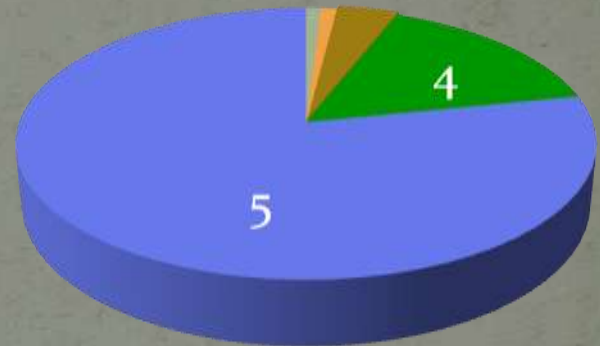
Downtown commercial district and High Street are seen as having extremely high levels of historic character

Q10 How would you rate the historic character of the following neighborhoods?
(1-5 scale where 1=low and 5-high)

Downtown 89%



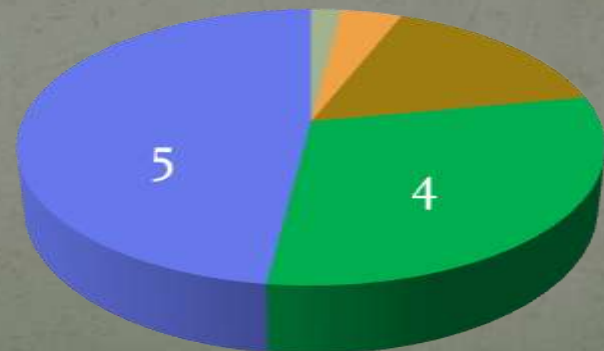
High Street 95%



North End 45%

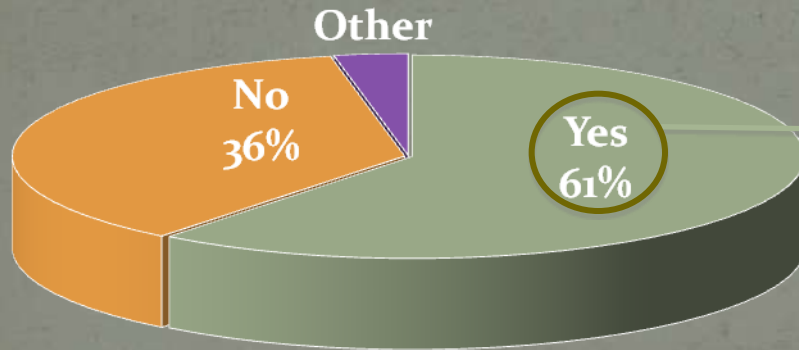


South End 77%

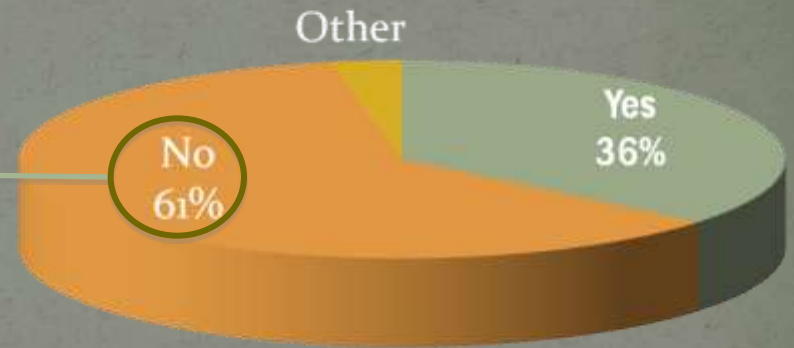


Current knowledge about regulations and protections is mixed

Q7 Prior to this survey, did you know that the City of Newburyport currently has no laws protecting historic structures throughout the City with the exception of a 1-year demolition delay and the recently designated Fruit Street Historic District?



Q8 Prior to this survey, did you know that a large area of the City was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and that this designation only protects the area from intrusive Federal projects such as highways?



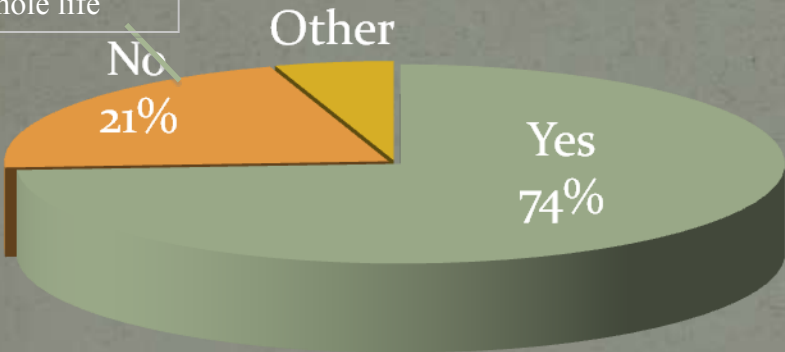
Beliefs about the need for preservation

Ubiquitous agreement that historic character and architecture is an important part of Newburyport's desirability

Q5 Were you drawn to live in Newburyport in part because of its historic character?

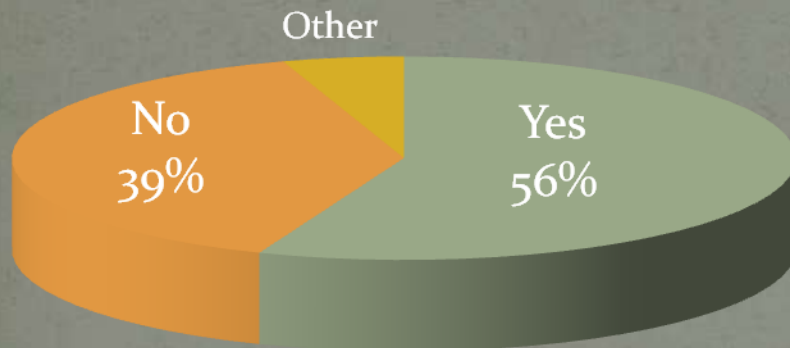
Q9 Do you think that the historic architecture that exists in our city is an important contributor to the character and desirability of Newburyport?

Majority of these have lived in Newburyport their whole life

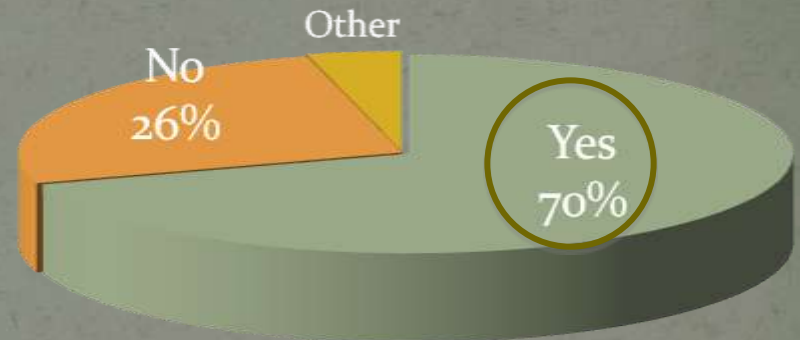


Widespread belief that neighborhoods should be preserved

Q2 Do you believe your home or building is historically significant?

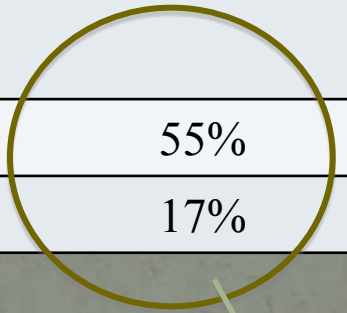


Q3 Do you believe your neighborhood is historically significant and should be preserved?



Most believe neighborhoods should be preserved whether or not their home in particular is historically significant

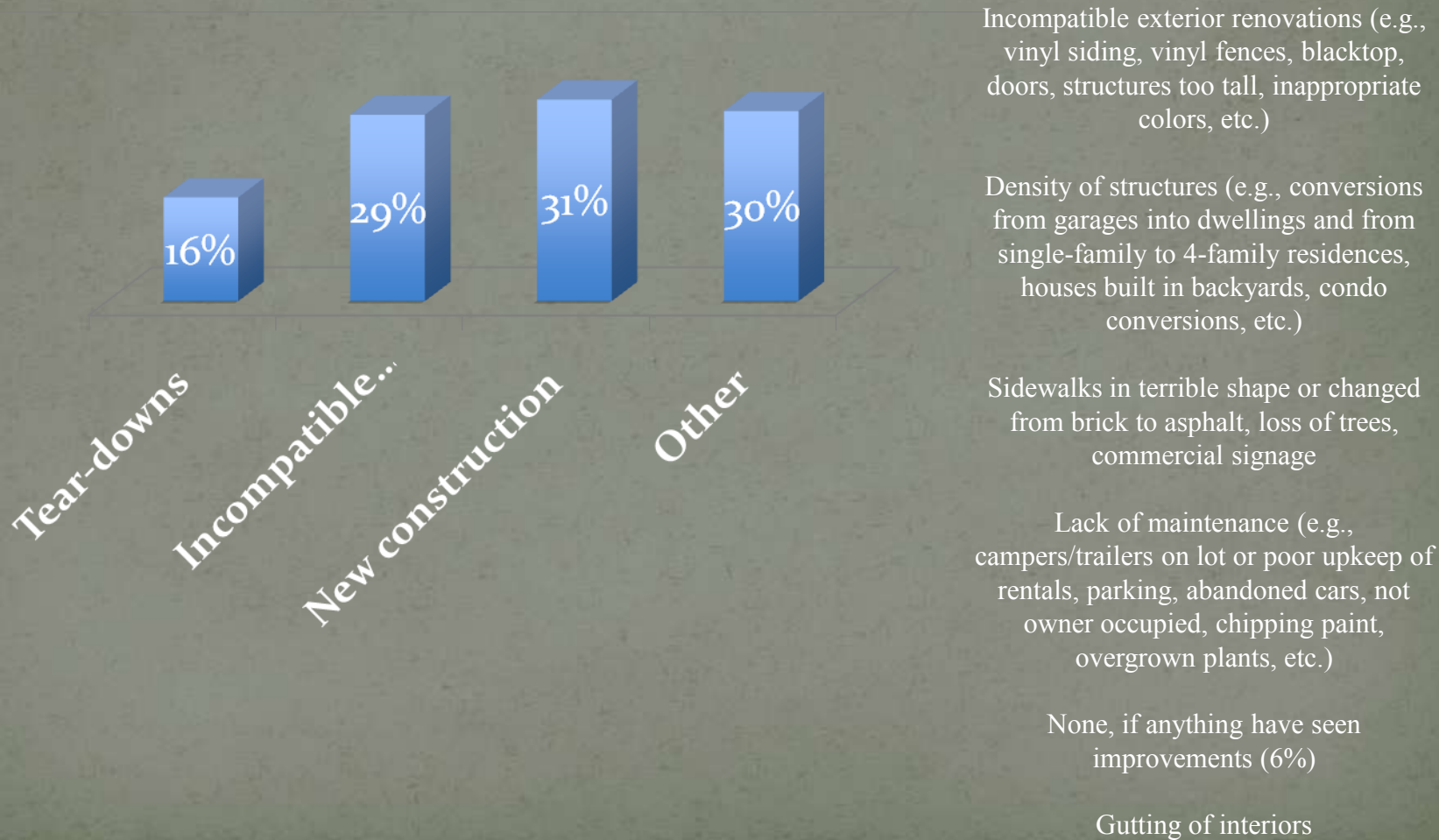
	Do you believe your neighborhood is historically significant and should be preserved?	
	Yes	No
Do you believe your home or building is historically significant?		
Yes	55%	3%
No	17%	24%



72%

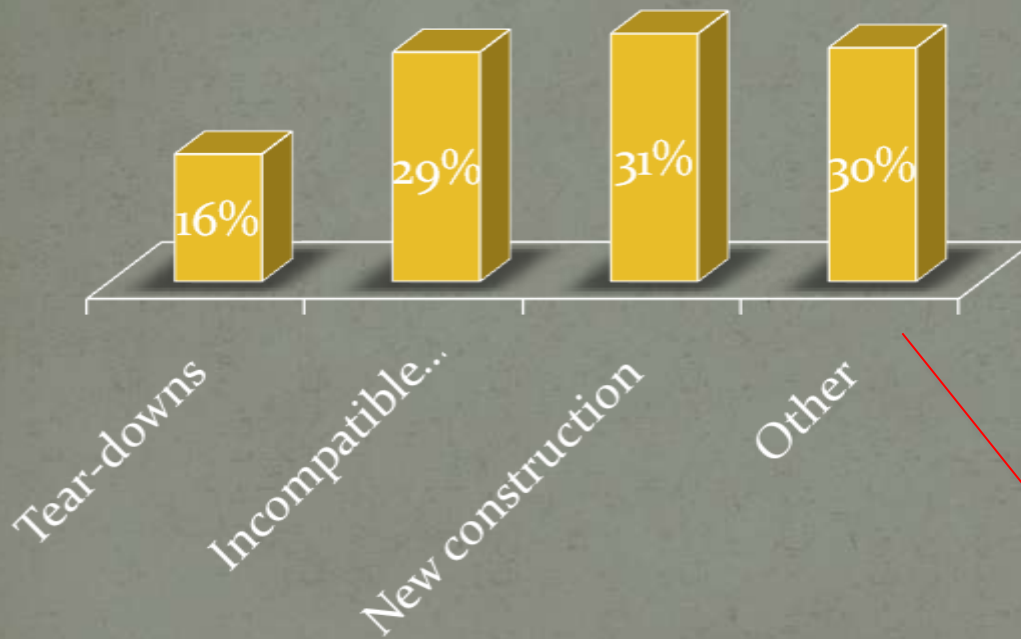
The things that upset homeowners the most are things the Historical Commission presently has little or no control over

Q4 Have any of the following diminished the historic character of your neighborhood?



Some have a different view – they consider the changes an improvement

Q4 Have any of the following diminished the historic character of your neighborhood?



Incompatible exterior renovations (e.g., vinyl siding, vinyl fences, blacktop, doors, structures too tall, inappropriate colors, etc.)

Density of structures (e.g., conversions from garages into dwellings and from single-family to 4-family residences, houses built in backyards, condo conversions, etc.)

Sidewalks in terrible shape or changed from brick to asphalt, loss of trees, commercial signage

Lack of maintenance (e.g., campers/trailers on lot or poor upkeep of rentals, parking, abandoned cars, not owner occupied, chipping paint, overgrown plants, etc.)

None, if anything have seen improvements (6%)

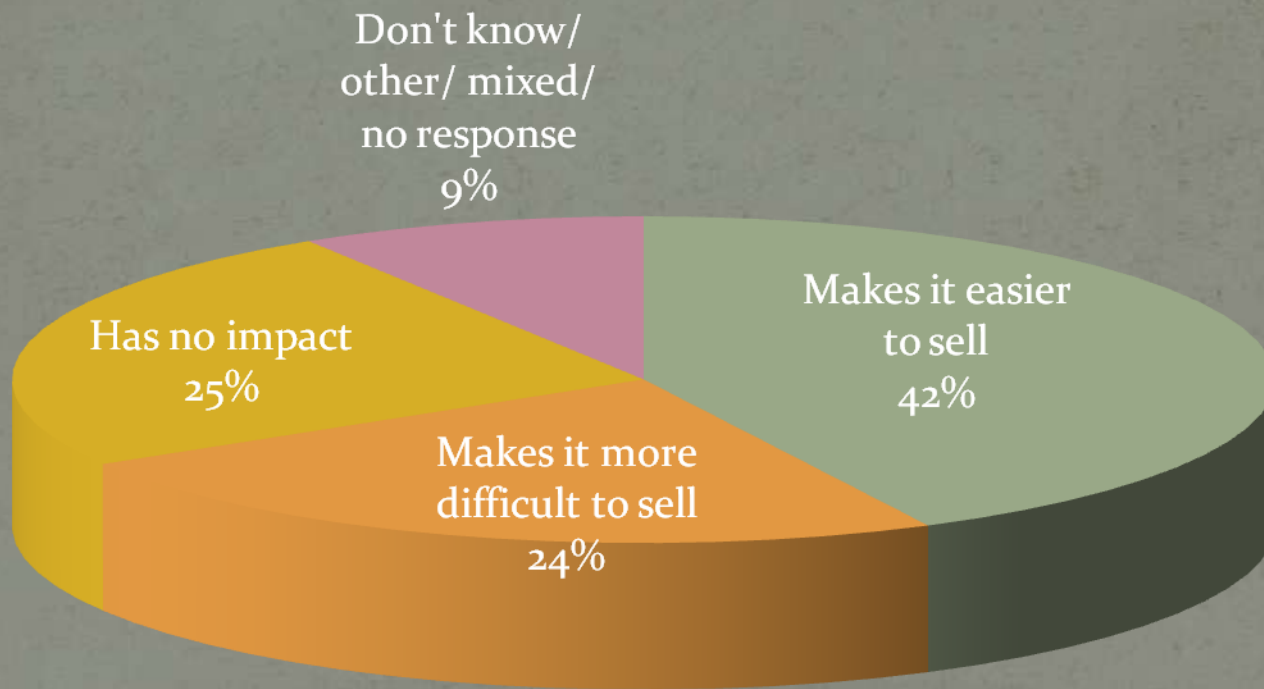
Gutting of interiors

Note: 38% of respondents didn't check any of boxes, the implication being they have not seen their neighborhood diminished as a result of these things.

Level of support for formation of
LHD's and preferred communication
channels

Historic district designation is seen by most to have neutral-positive impact on ability to sell real estate

Q12 In your view, what kind of impact does a historic district have on the ability to sell real estate?



Mixed homeowner opinions on burden of guidelines and receptivity to LHD reviews

Q13 Would protection provided under historic district guidelines be considered a burden for you as a homeowner?

Q14 Would you agree to others such as a Local Historic District (LHD) commission reviewing plans for a new addition or new structure on your property or your neighbors' properties if the review focused on retaining historic character of the property and the neighborhood?

Supporters	No (46%)	Yes (48%)
Detractors	Yes (19%)	No (17%)
Fence-sitters	Not sure (35%)	Possibly (35%)

Fewer than 20% are against the idea of LHD review, nearly half support the idea, fully one-third are on the fence

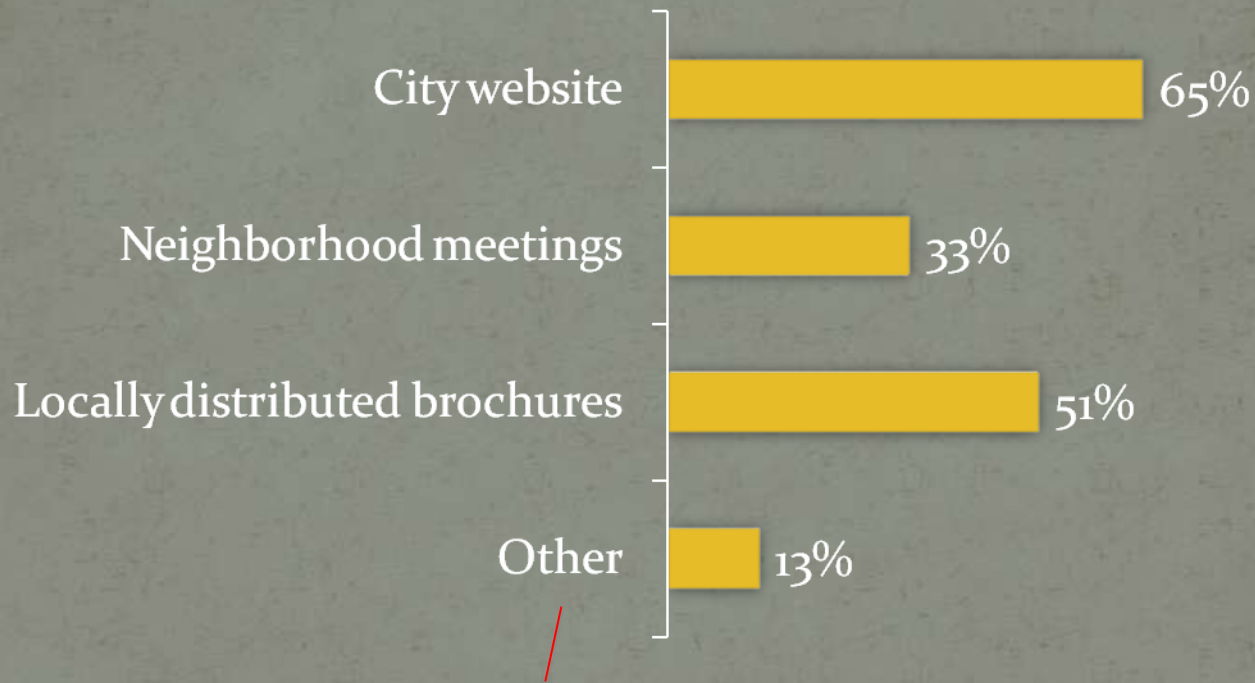
Level of Support Segments Defined

		Q14 Would you agree to others such as a Local Historic District (LHD) commission reviewing plans for a new addition or new structure on your property or your neighbors' properties if the review focused on retaining historic character of the property and the neighborhood?		
		Yes	No	Possibly
Q13 Would protection provided under historic district guidelines be considered a burden for you as a homeowner?				
Yes		2%	12%	5%
No		36%	2%	8%
Not sure		10%	4%	21%

	Detractors (18%)
	Fence-sitters (37%)
	Supporters (46%)

Multiple methods desired to keep folks informed

Q15 How would you like to find more information about the potential local historic districts?



Newspaper, e-mails, blogs, links to see what other communities are doing, meetings at City Hall, mailings

What Next?

With 37% of respondents “fence sitters” who commented that they wished to learn more about Local Historic Districts, the Study Committee will:

- Place more content on the LHD Website available through the Planning Department page.
- Conduct neighbourhood meetings in the South and North Ends, High Street, and downtown commercial district
- Develop Preliminary Study, conduct formal Public Hearing, bring Ordinance to City Council

Pleasant Street, Newburyport, Mass.

Our thanks to Rebecca Lucy for conducting the survey and compiling the above results

