Priorities and Concerns Survey Results

May 2020

Resilient Watertown is the Town of Watertown's climate action and resilience effort. The planning process, which began in September 2019, is part of the MVP Planning Grant funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. *Resilient Watertown* will enable the Town to reduce its contribution to climate change and increase community resilience.

Feedback was collected from the MVP Core Team, which included those from Planning, Department of Public Works, Police Department, and Fire Department, and from public input, core to the development of *Resilient Watertown*. Hearing the priorities of the public will help ensure that the results effectively serve all Watertown residents. To achieve this goal, the project team launched an online survey to gather feedback on priorities and concerns around climate change and resilience. This report details the results of that survey.

INTRODUCTION | 2 **PRIORITY RANKING** | 3 **YOUR THOUGHTS** | 4 **BUDGET ALLOCATION** | 5 **THANK YOU**

✔ Welcome

Watertown is working to become more resilient!
The Town of Watertown wants your input on how we should take action to achieve a more sustainable and resilient future. With your help, we can create a vision and a plan to get there together.

→ Begin

Since 2010, Watertown has reduced its municipal energy usage—and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions—by over 14%.

This survey was open for eight weeks—from March 9 to May 4, 2020 and had 358 participants. Below are the top-rated concerns from the Watertown community. More detailed results are on the following pages.

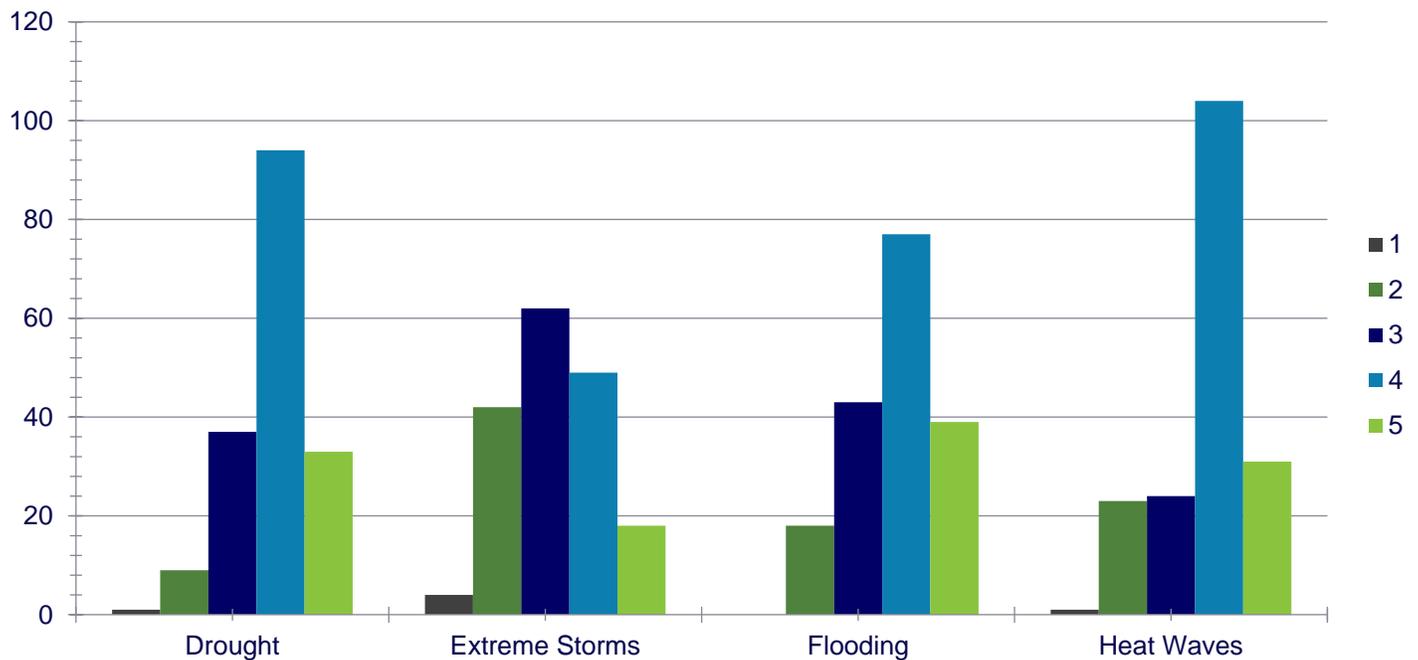## Average Rating (1 is highest; 5 is lowest)
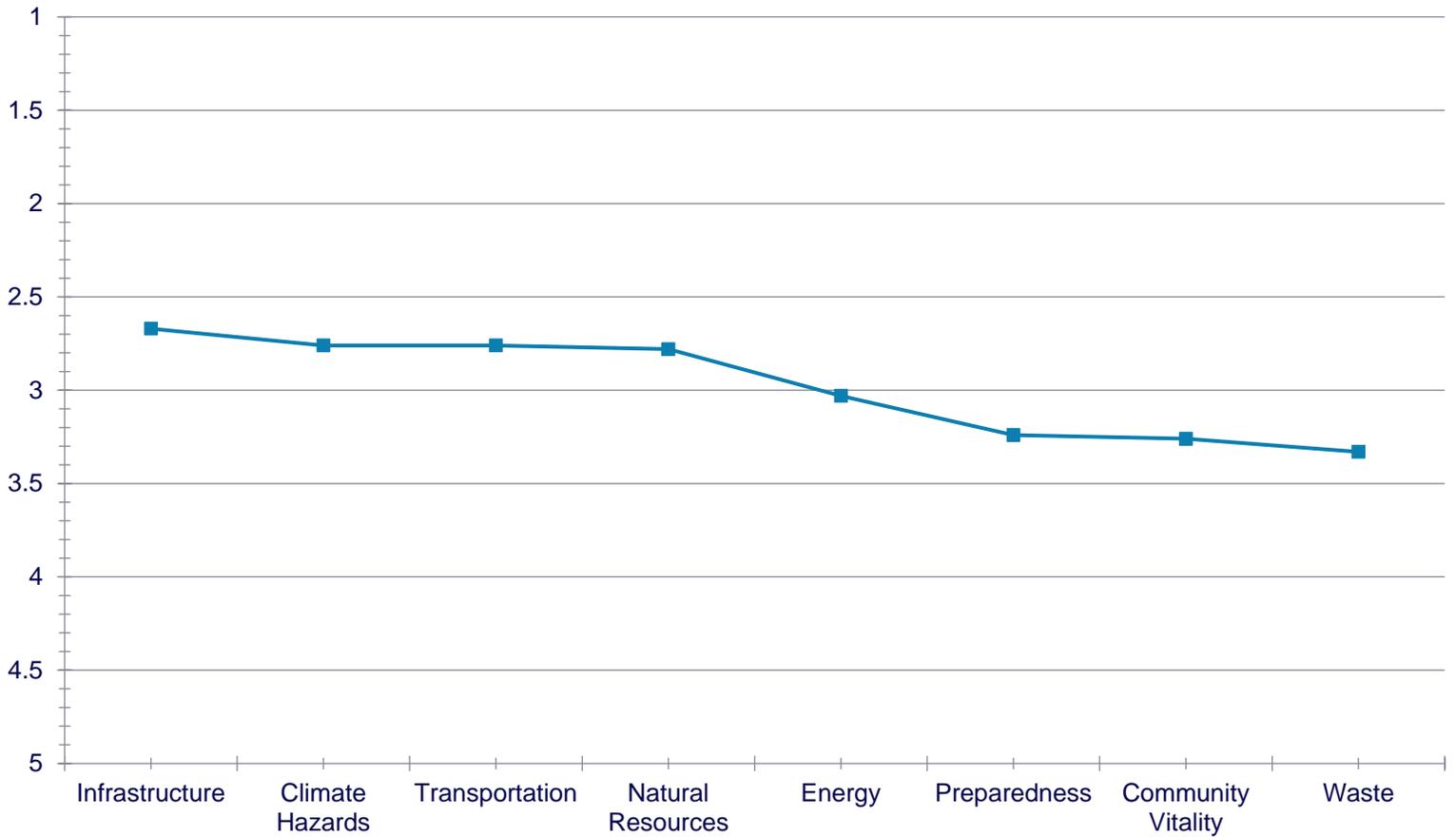
Top 3 Concerns

1. Infrastructure
2. Climate Hazards
3. Transportation

The graphs below show the distribution of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The top ranked result based on total averages (in parentheses) for **Climate Hazards** was **Drought**. The graph below shows the distribution of votes.

Climate Hazards

Drought (3.86) : I take all the steps I can to reduce my water consumption during times of drought.

Extreme storms (3.20): I have been personally impacted by extreme storms.

Flooding (3.78): I am concerned about the effects of flooding on transportation, infrastructure and/or my personal property.

Heat waves (3.77): I have the resources I need to stay cool on hot days.

Participant Comments

"We have a low-flow shower head. We limit use of the garden hose and we keep shower length to a minimum. We also have a low water use washing machine and dishwasher."

"Huge branches breaking; flooding on my street and backed up sewers; blown transformers"

The graphs below show the distribution of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The top ranked result based on total averages (in parentheses) for **Community Vitality** was **Green Industries**. The graph below shows the distribution of votes.

Community Vitality
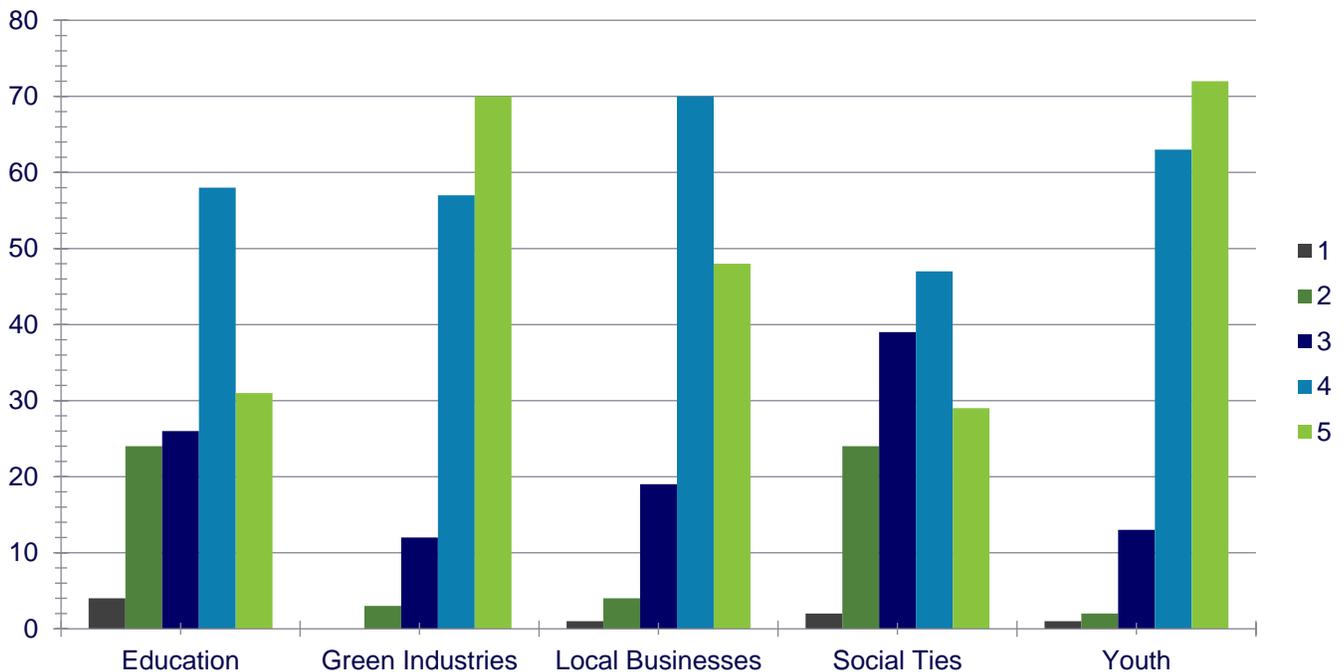
- **Education (3.62):** I know where to look for reliable information about climate change and sustainability.
- **Green Industries (4.37):** I would favor the Town using economic development incentives to encourage more green industries to come to Watertown.
- **Local Businesses (4.13):** I frequently shop at local businesses.
- **Social Ties (3.55):** I feel connected to my neighbors and feel I could ask them for help if needed.
- **Youth (4.34):** We need to increase the opportunities for Watertown youth to learn about sustainability and energy.

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The graphs below show the distribution of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The top ranked result based on total averages (in parentheses) for **Energy** was **New Construction**. The graph below shows the distribution of votes.
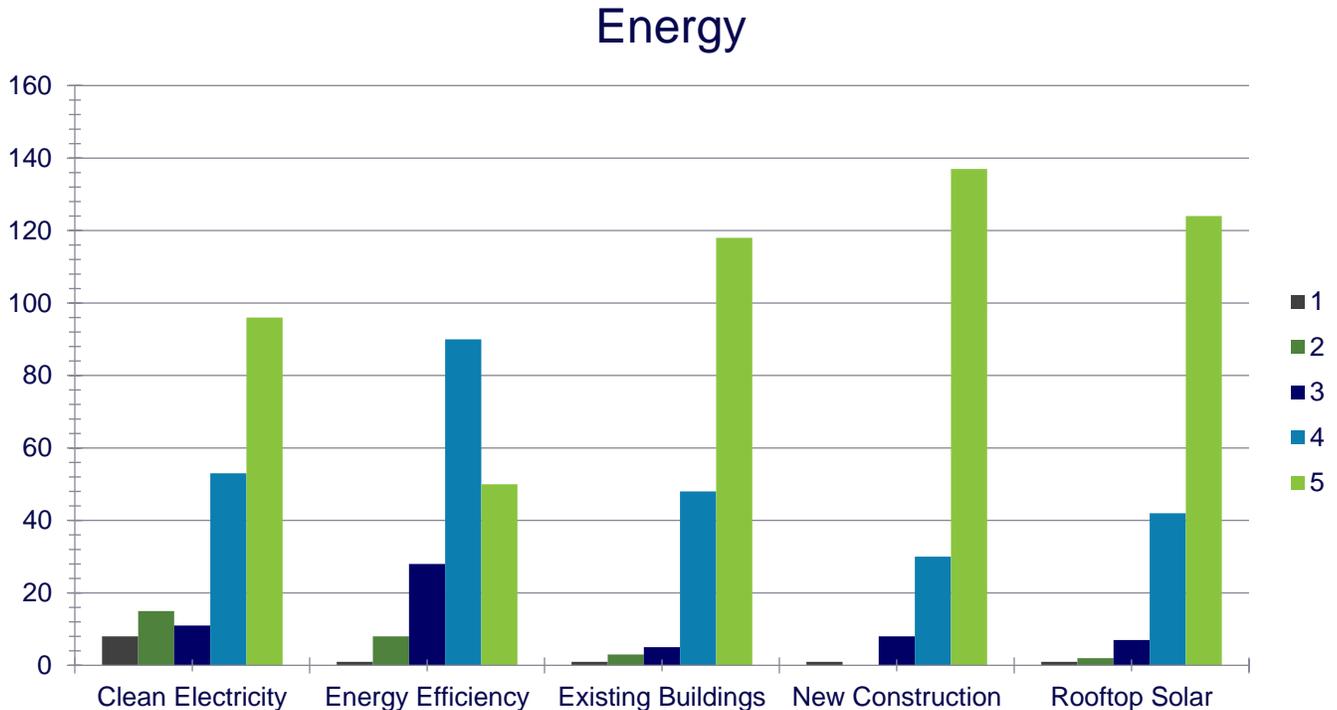
Energy

- **Clean Electricity (4.17):** I am aware of the Watertown Electricity Choice program that allows residents to opt in for a 100% renewable energy supply.
- **Energy Efficiency (4.02) :** I have taken all the steps I know to in my home to reduce my energy use.
- **Existing Building Upgrades (4.60):** Watertown should encourage building renovations to include energy efficiency upgrades with small business grants or no-interest loans.
- **New Construction (4.72):** I would support a policy for new construction in Watertown to be more energy efficient.
- **Rooftop Solar (4.63):** I support the installation of solar panels on Watertown homes.

Participant Comments

"We installed heavy duty curtains which keep out the cold in winter. We turn down our thermostat at night. We use cold water with the washing machine, where possible."

"As a renter, I feel like there is not too much that I can do. However, I have made sure all light-bulbs are energy efficient, and have hooked up as many outlets as possible to a smart home device - that helps remembering to shut things off. I also have our heat/AC set on a timer so that it automatically turn-off at certain times. "

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The graphs below show the distribution of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The top ranked result based on total averages (in parentheses) for **Infrastructure** was **Green Infrastructure**. The graph below shows the distribution of votes.

Infrastructure
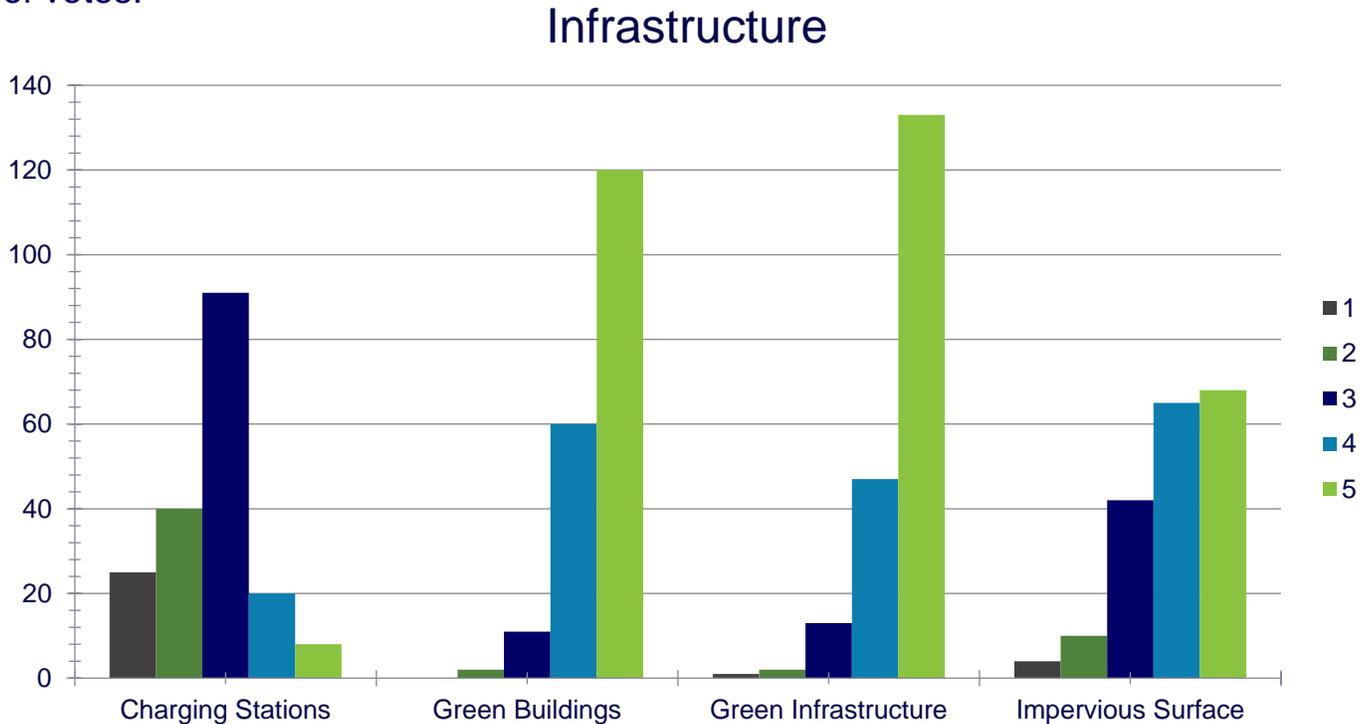
- **Electric Charging Stations (2.71):** There are enough electric vehicle charging stations around town for people with an electric vehicle or for those who wish to buy one.
- **Green Buildings (4.54):** Watertown should promote the development of green buildings to reduce community wide energy and water use, and promote sustainable, healthy materials.
- **Green Infrastructure (4.58):** I support the use of green infrastructure practices, like porous pavers, bioswales, and rain gardens that help with a resilient habitat, flood protection, and cleaner air and water.
- **Impervious Surfaces (3.97):** I would be willing to reduce the amount of impervious surface around my home to help reduce the urban heat island effect.

The graphs below show the distribution of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The top ranked result based on total averages (in parentheses) for **Natural Resources** was **Water Quality**. The graph below shows the distribution of votes.

Natural Resources
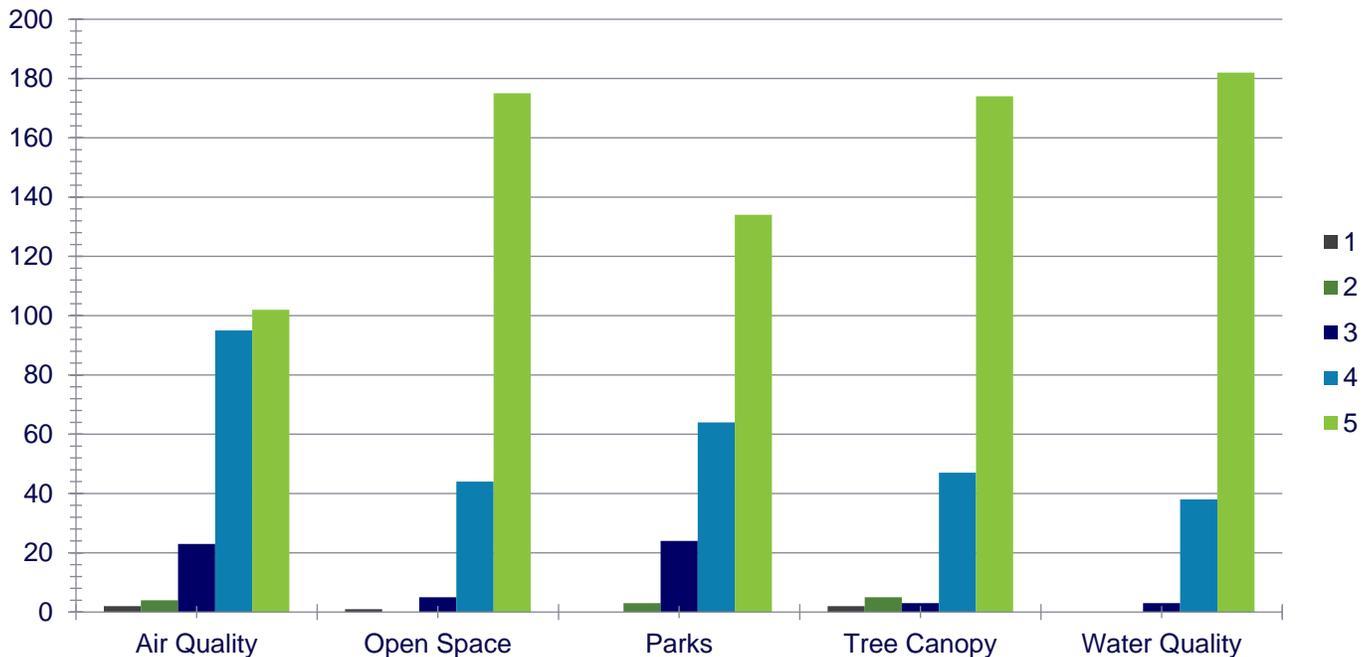
- **Air Quality (4.29):** Air quality and public health motivates me to reduce my carbon footprint.
- **Open Space (4.74):** I support Watertown acquiring and protecting land for open space.
- **Parks (4.46):** I actively use Watertown's parks and trails.
- **Tree Canopy (4.67):** I believe there is a need to protect and expand Watertown's tree canopy.
- **Water Quality (4.80):** I support the Town protecting our wetlands and buffer zones to enhance our ecology and resilience to extreme weather.

The graphs below show the distribution of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The top ranked result based on total averages (in parentheses) for **Preparedness** was **Emergency Notifications**. The graph below shows the distribution of votes.

Preparedness
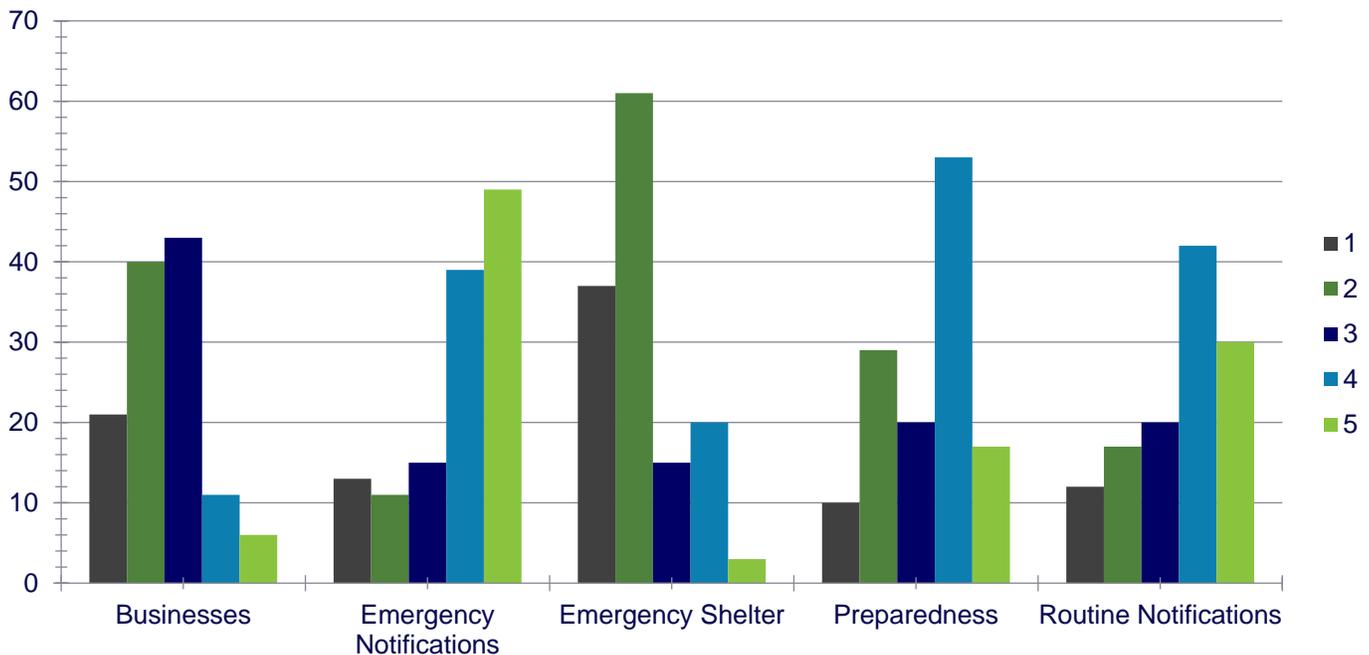
- **Businesses (2.51):** I know of Watertown businesses that have been affected by extreme weather events.
- **Emergency Notifications (3.79):** I am signed up for WatertownALERT, the Town's emergency notification system.
- **Emergency Shelter (2.20):** I know where I can go for shelter in case of an emergency.
- **Preparedness (3.30):** I have what I need to survive 72 hours without power in my home.
- **Routine Notifications (3.50):** I receive helpful information through the Town's Notify Me communication system.

The graphs below show the distribution of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The top ranked result based on total averages (in parentheses) for **Transportation** was **Electric Vehicles**. The graph below shows the distribution of votes.


Transportation
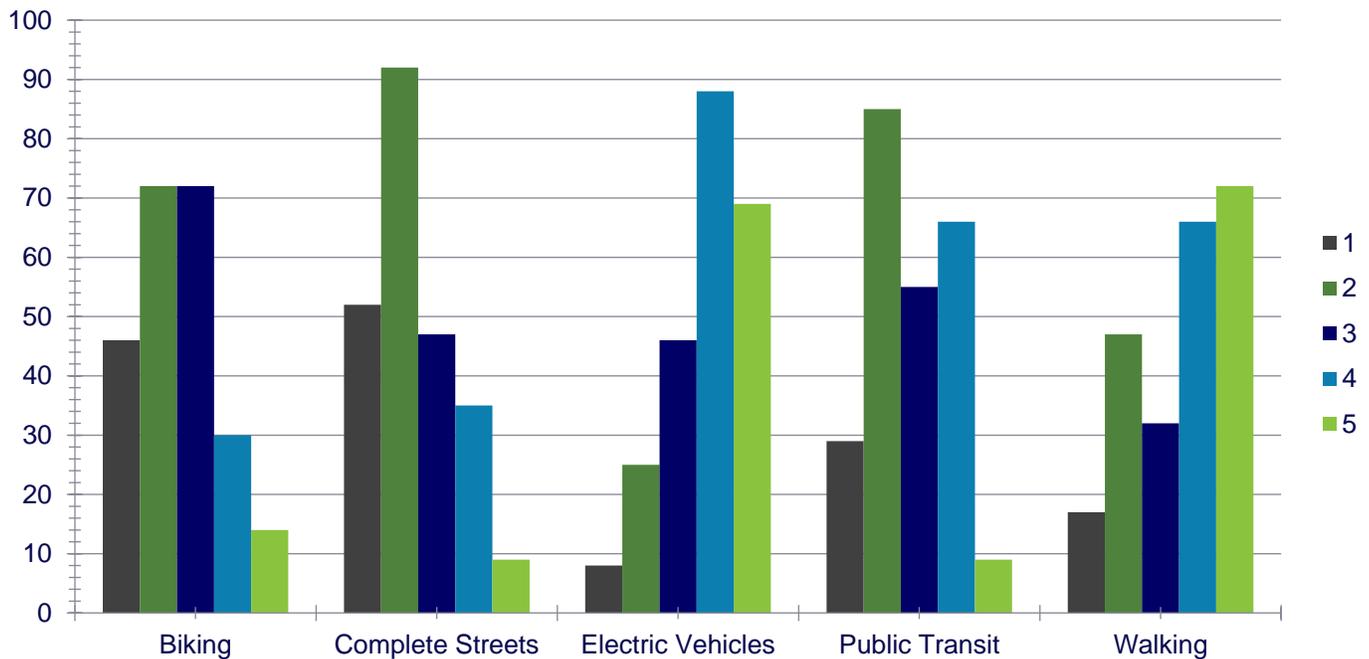
- **Biking (2.55):** The existing biking infrastructure (lanes, paths, etc.) in Watertown makes me feel I can get around safely by bike.
- **Complete Streets (2.39):** Roads in Watertown are safe and well-designed for pedestrians, bikers, and other multimodal forms of transportation.
- **Electric Vehicles (3.78):** I would consider buying or leasing an electric vehicle as my next car.
- **Public Transit (2.76):** The local public transit options meet my needs.
- **Walking (3.55)**: I walk to work or to do an errand at least three times a week.

The graphs below show the distribution of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The top ranked result based on total averages (in parentheses) for **Waste** was **Plastics**. The graph below shows the distribution of votes.

Waste
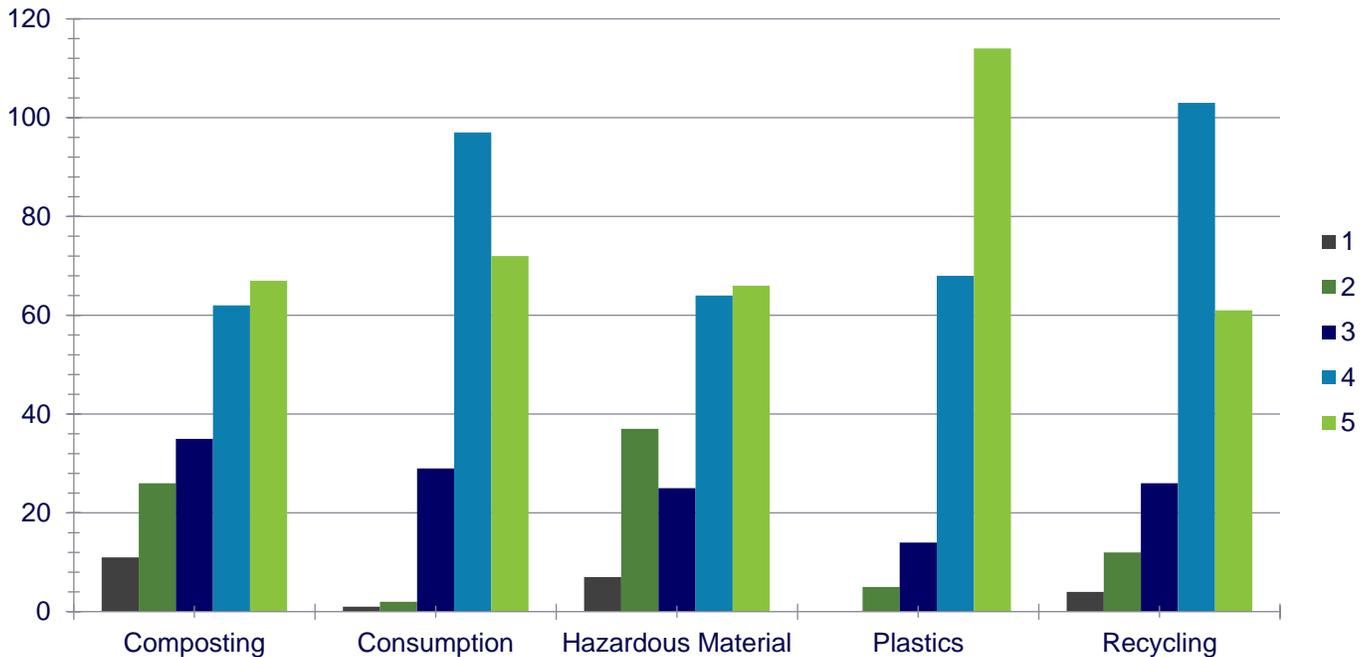
- **Composting (3.74):** I would be willing to pay for curbside pickup of food waste for composting.
- **Consumption (4.18):** I actively seek to reduce my consumption and purchasing of non-essential items.
- **Hazardous Material (3.73):** I am aware that I can bring hazardous household products to the Regional Minuteman Facility for disposal.
- **Plastics (4.45):** I actively strive to reduce my use of single-use plastics, like straws and plastic cling wrap.
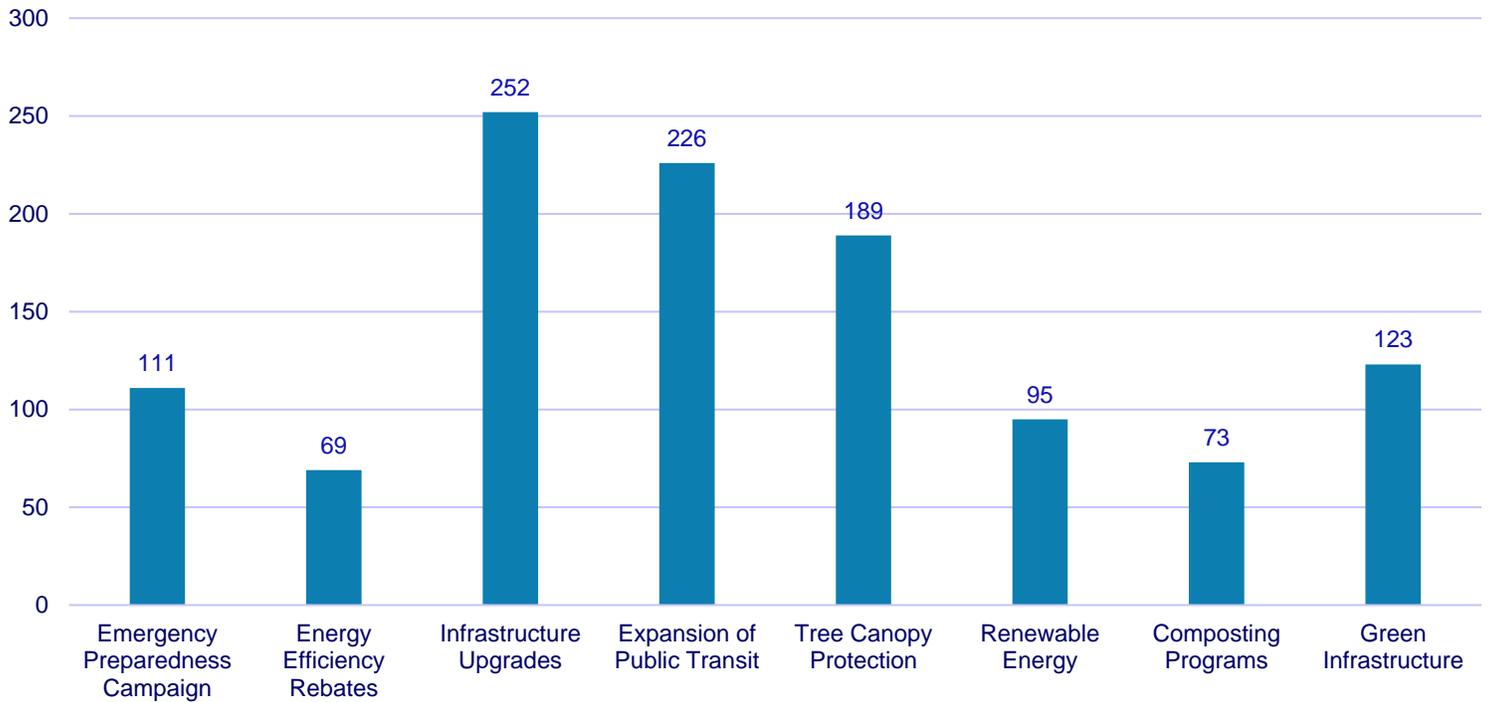- **Recycling 4.00:** I know what can and cannot be recycled in Watertown.

Participant Comments

"I'm a member of our local Buy Nothing group and have gotten some items there that I would have otherwise needed to buy."

"I'm not sure what I'm not sure about, but I do know that not being sure generally can create either less recycling or causes things to clog up the stream. Clear guidelines in every household would probably streamline the recycling process and encourage people to expand recycling when they've been reticent."

In your opinion, how should Watertown distribute sustainability and resiliency funds? (number of coins/chips dropped into a category)

Age of Participants

Under 18
1%

18-24
1%

75 or older
7%

25-34
12%

65-74
23%

35-44
18%

55-64
22%

45-54
16%

Based on 287 reporting respondents

Race/Ethnicity

AsianPacific Islander
3%

Black or African American
1%

Hispanic
1%

OtherMultiple Ethnicities
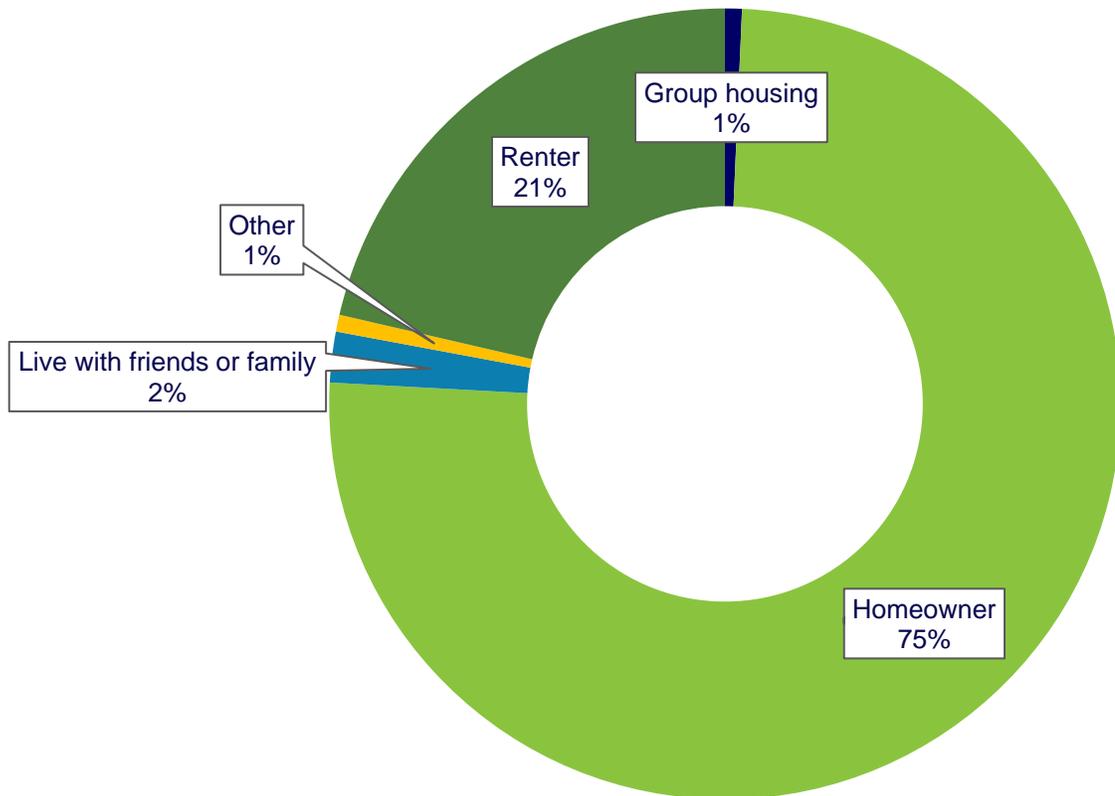6%

White or Caucasian
89%
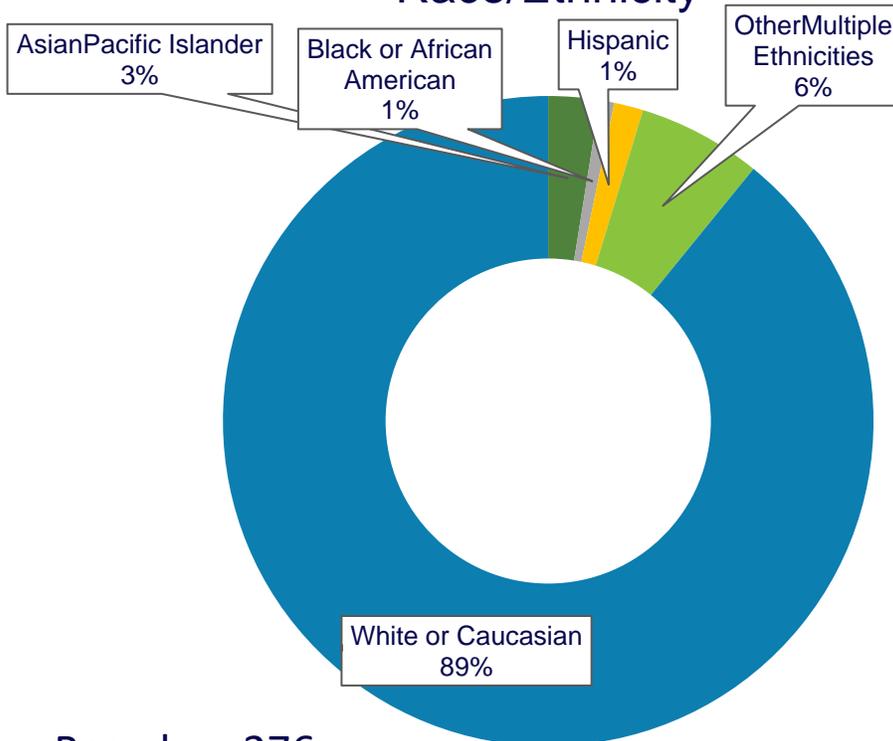
Based on 276 reporting respondents

Watertown Community Profile
- White – 78%
- Asian – 8.1%
- Hispanic or Latino – 9.4%
- Black/African American- 2.0%
- Other – 1.0%
- Multiple Ethnicities- 1.4%

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

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Housing Status

Based on 290 reporting respondents

Watertown Housing Tenure
- Owner-Occupied Housing- 52.2%
- Renter-Occupied Housing- 47.8%

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates