

# Barriers to Housing



## Results of Stakeholder Survey

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development – July 2019

# Survey Results

**212** Responses

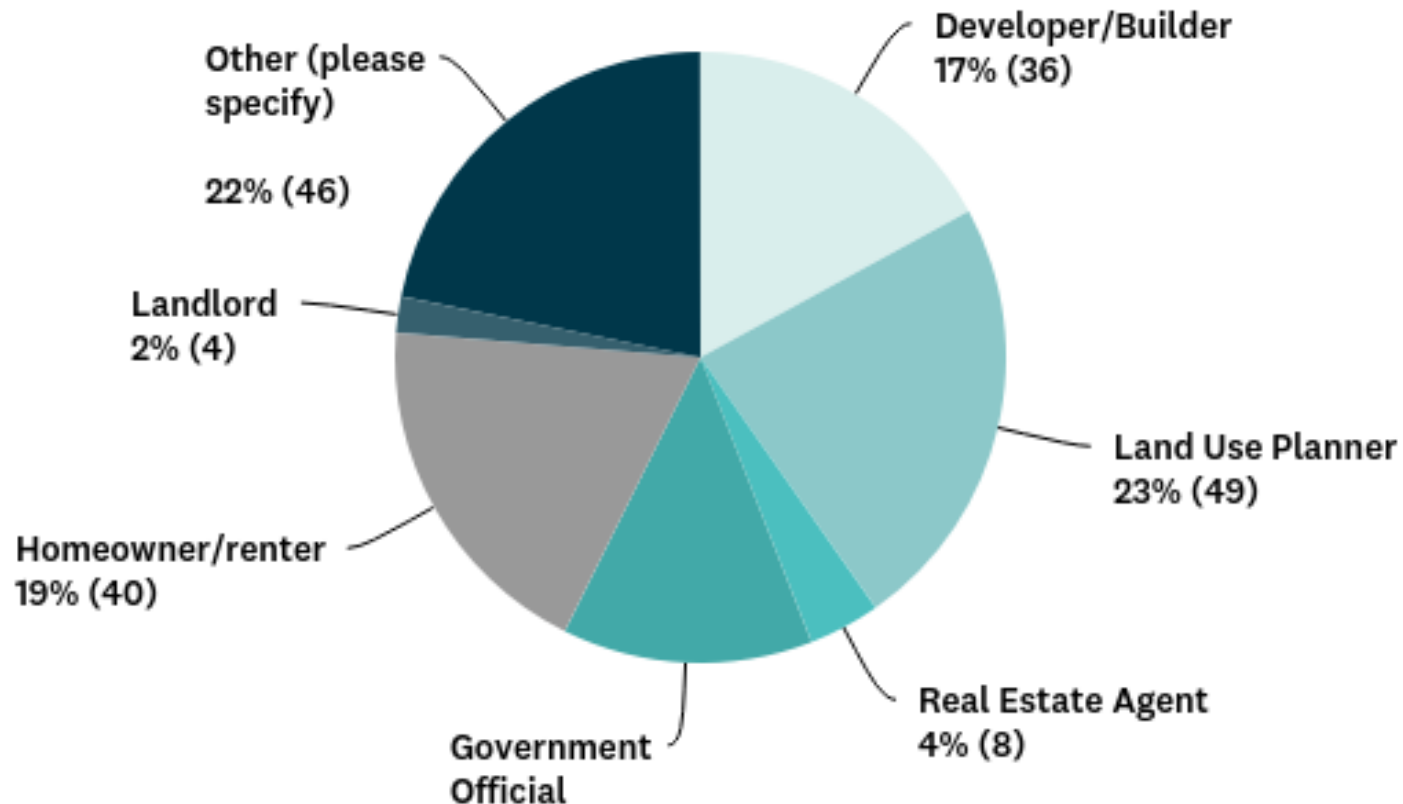
**87** Optional Comments

*Survey received an enthusiastic response considering it was issued during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July week.*

# Who Responded

# Survey Results

What is your primary role? (The role that informed your responses)  
Choose one.

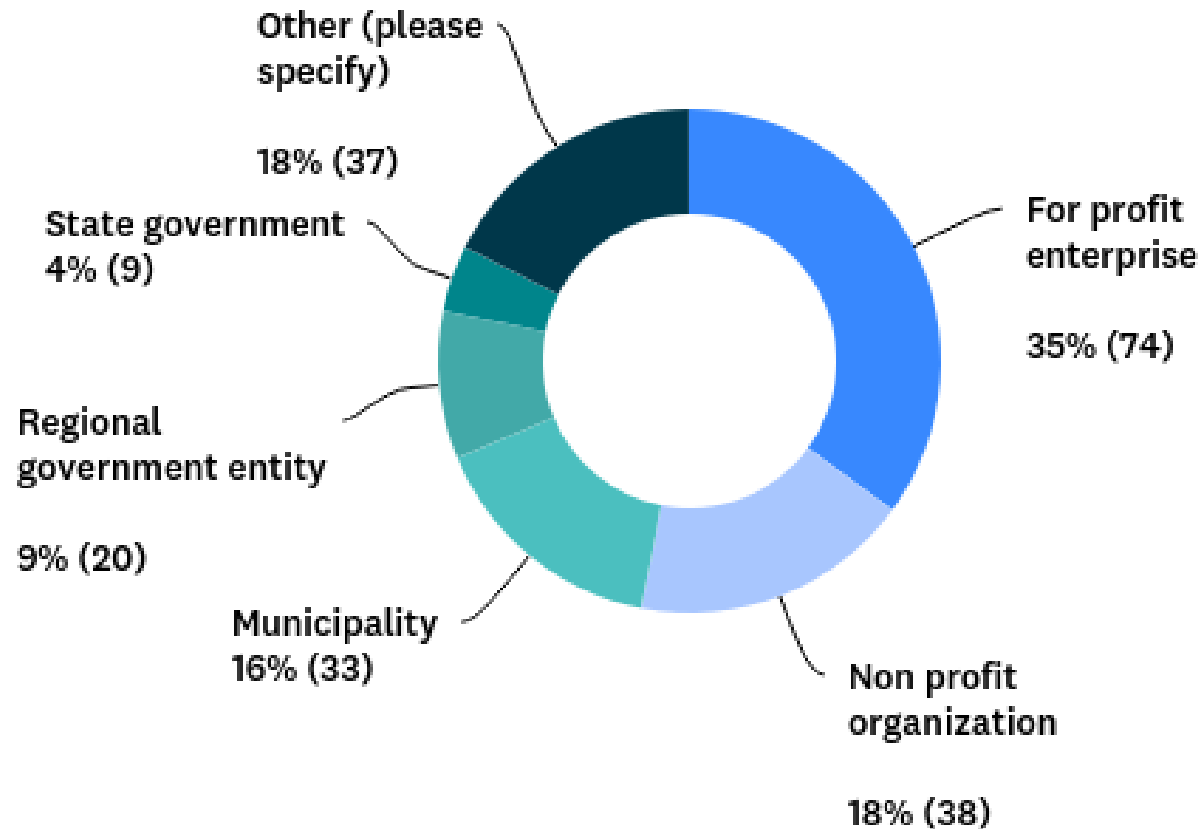


*Respondents represent a range of stakeholder groups.*

# Who Responded

# Survey Results

Which describes your work place best? Choose one.

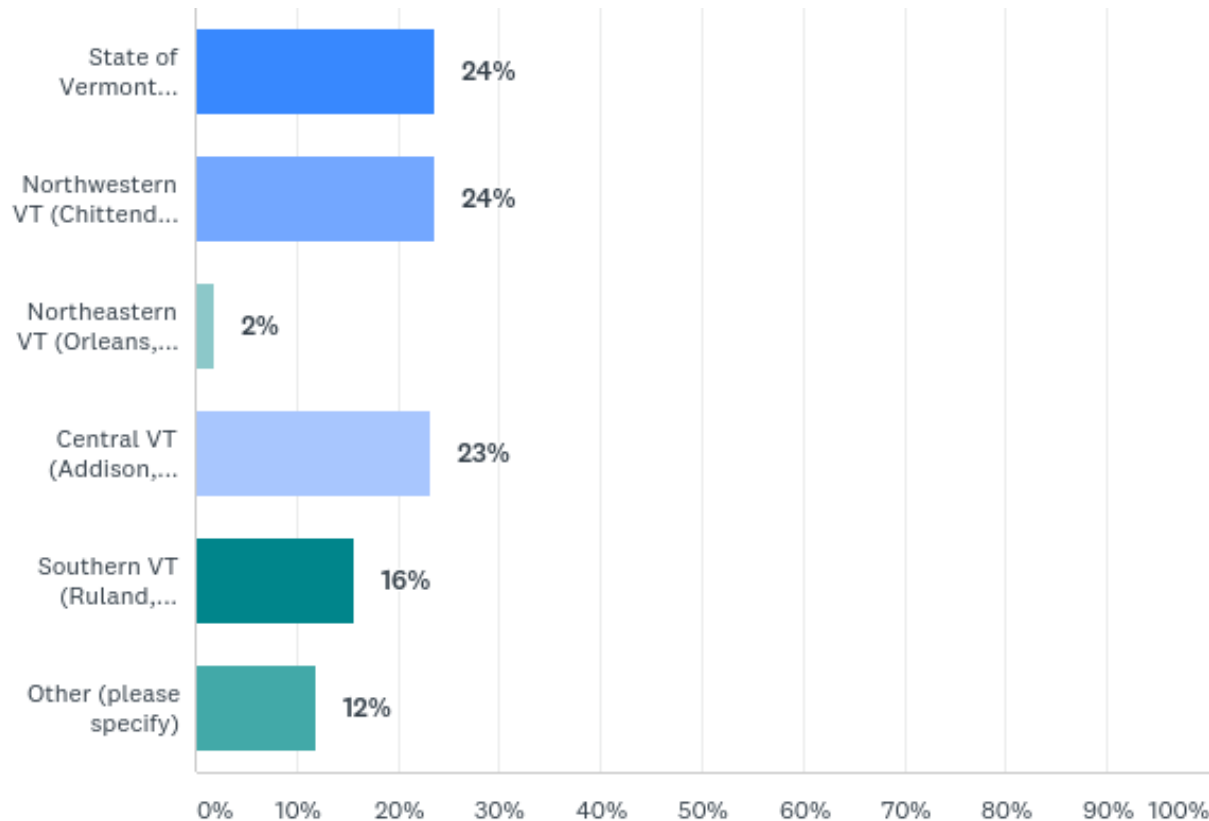


*Roughly equal distribution between public and private interests.*

# Who Responded

# Survey Results

Experience with what geographic area informs your responses? Choose one.

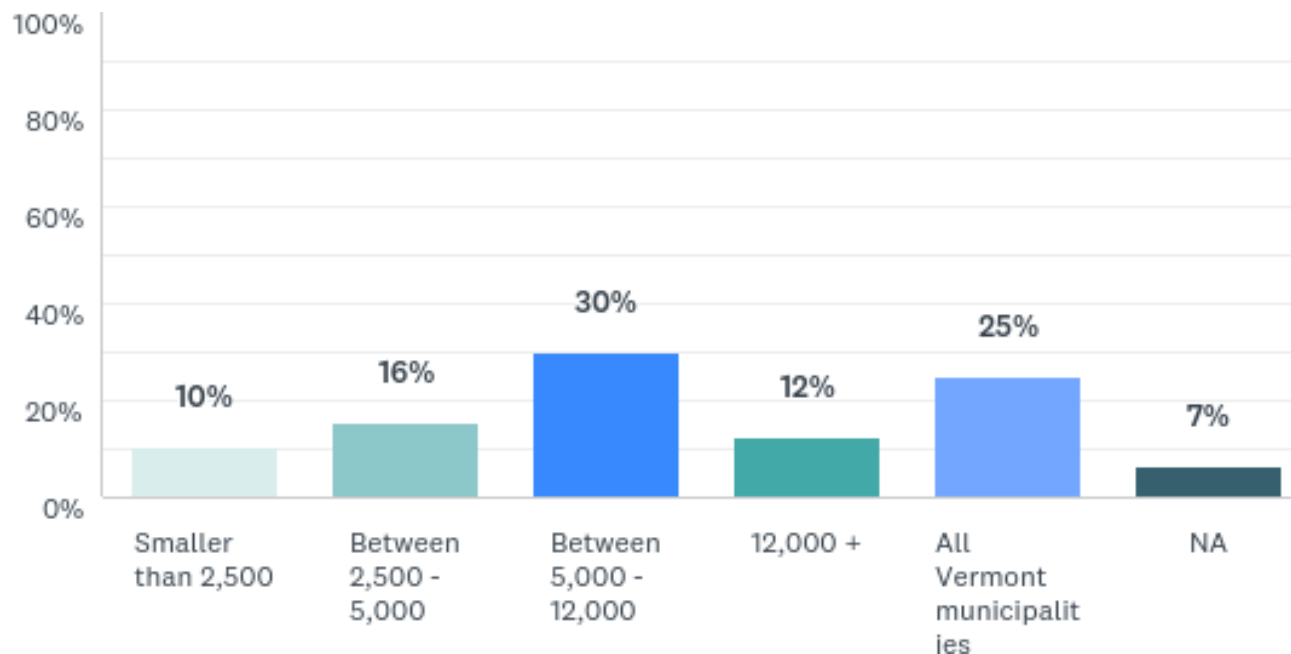


*More responses from areas in Vermont with high housing demand (e.g. greater Burlington and Montpelier areas).*

# Who Responded

# Survey Results

**How large are the municipalities you normally work in or with? (Numbers = residential population) Choose one.**



*Responses mostly reflect conditions in the municipalities with over 5,000 people.*

# Survey Results

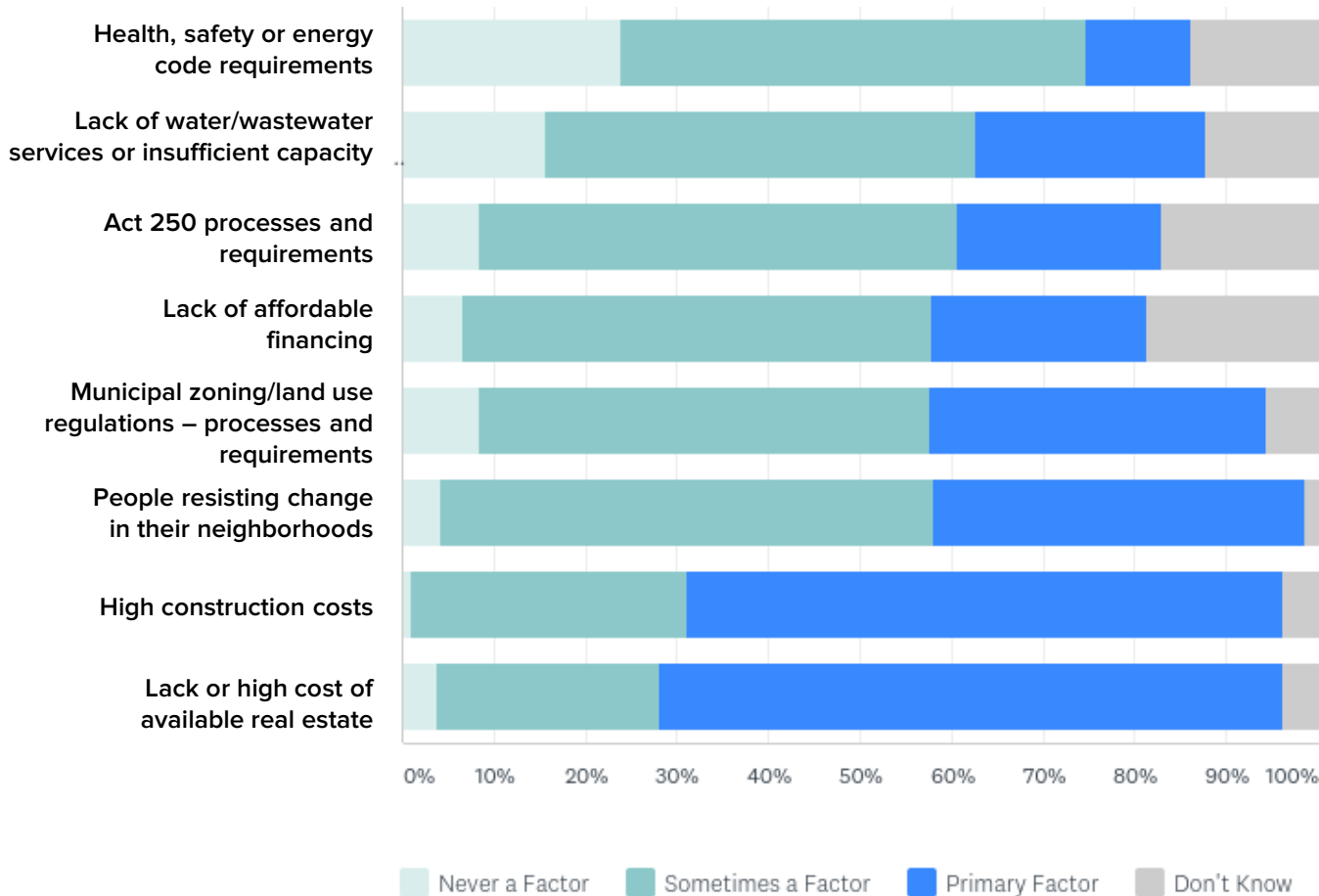
**Q1. List the housing types you believe are most needed in Vermont. (These can range from building, unit, ownership or resident types, locations where homes are most needed, etc.)**



*Vermont needs a variety of efficient housing types, affordable at a range of income levels in downtowns, village centers and other walkable places.*

# Survey Results

## Q2. What factors make it difficult to achieve those housing needs in walkable places (downtowns, village and surrounding neighborhoods)?



*High costs, lack of available land and community resistance to change, along with municipal land use regulations are the primary factors affecting housing starts.*

# Survey Results

**Q2. What factors make it difficult to achieve those housing needs in walkable places (downtowns, village and surrounding neighborhoods)?**

Ranking			
	All Responses	Developers	Planners
Lack or high cost of available real estate	1	3	1
High construction costs	2	1	2
People resisting change in their neighborhoods	3	4	3
Municipal zoning/land use regulations – processes and requirements	4	2	7
Act 250 processes and requirements	5	4	6
Lack of water/wastewater services or insufficient capacity	6	5	5
Lack of affordable financing	7	7	4
Health, safety or energy code requirements	8	8	8

*Developers consider municipal regulations to be a primary factor affecting housing opportunity while planners consider it to be less of a factor.*

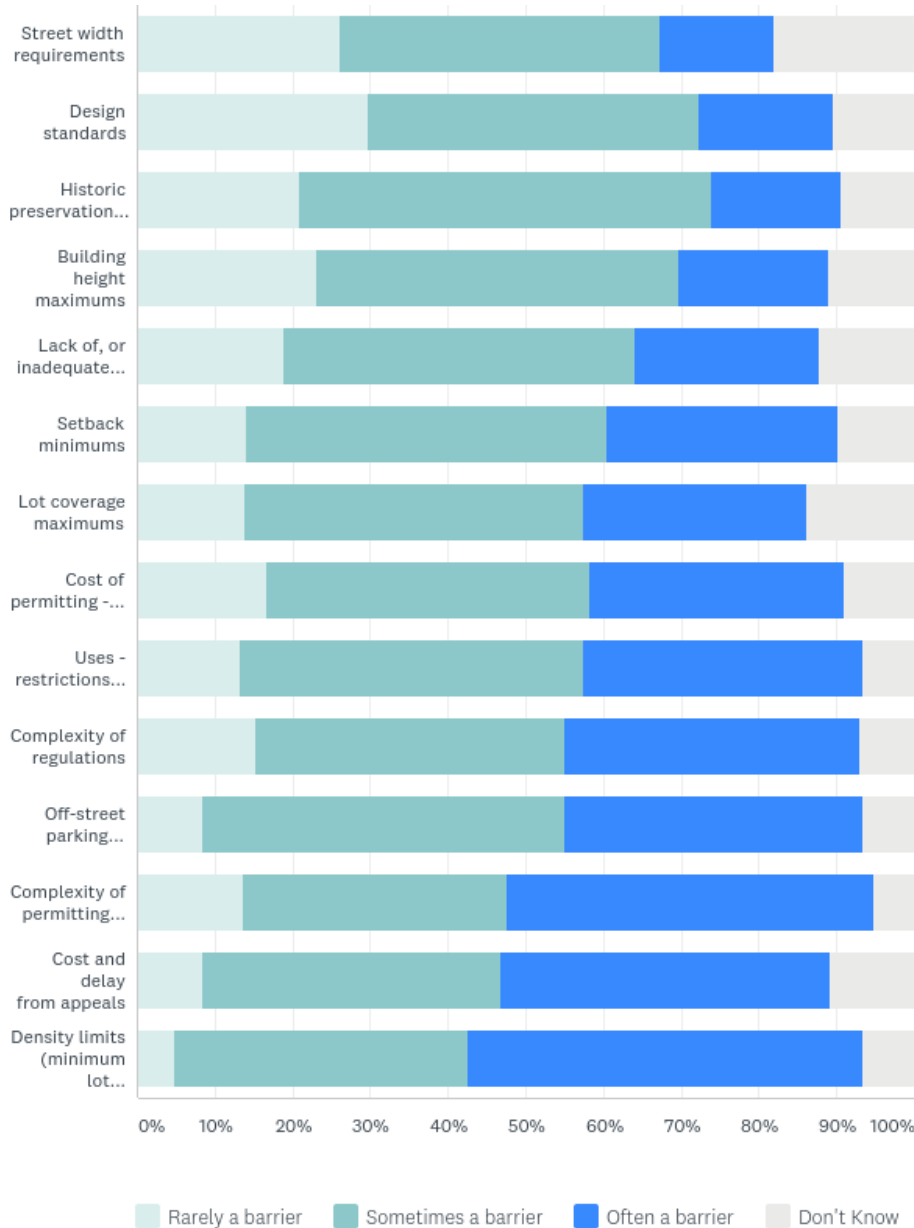
# Survey Results

## Q2 Comments - Other Factors

- *Empty nesters aren't downsizing*
- *Labor costs – lack of tradespeople*
- *Layers of regulation stack up to restrict developable land*
- *Developable areas limited*
- *Lack of capital for non-profits*
- *Too much competition from non-profits*
- *Path of least resistance leads to construction outside walkable places*
- *Public transit insufficient to stop owning a car*
- *Cost of brownfield remediation*
- *High construction costs and low median wage*

# Survey Results

**Q3: Indicate the degree to which the following items are a barrier to creating the housing in walkable places (downtowns, villages and surrounding neighborhoods)?**



*Density limits, appeals, complexity of permitting and regulations, and parking requirements create barriers to housing in walkable places.*

**Q3: Indicate the degree to which the following items are a barrier to creating the housing in walkable places (downtowns, villages and surrounding neighborhoods)?**

## Ranking

*All responders consider the complexity of regulations to be more of a barrier than the planners.*

*Developers consider fees and other permitting costs to be a significant barrier, as well as lot coverage limits.*

*Planners consider lack of adequate staffing to be more of a barrier than others.*

# Survey Results

	All Responses	Developers	Planners
Density limits (min lot size, max units/acre, etc.	1	1	1
Cost and delay from appeals	2	2	2
Complexity of permitting process	3	6	4
Off-street parking minimums	4	7	3
Complexity of regulations	5	5	10
Uses – restrictions on dwelling types	6	8	5
Cost of permitting (fees, impact fees, etc.)	7	3	9
Lot coverage maximums	8	4	6
Setback minimums	9	9	7
Lack of, or inadequate professional staff support	10	13	8
Building height maximums	11	10	11
Historic preservation requirements	12	14	12
Design standards	13	11	13
Street width requirements	14	12	14

# Survey Results

## Q3 Comments on Barriers

- *State regulation: Act 250, wetlands, stormwater, wastewater, stream erosion, etc.*
- *Conflicts and lack of coordination between state and local regulation*
- *If you know the regulations, or if there is well educated and professional support, zoning and regs. shouldn't be a barrier.*
- *Need clearer permit process for different types of congregate housing, such as seasonal worker housing, dorm-style nano housing for young professionals or creative economy workers.*
- *Lack of understanding in municipal offices about what constitutes barriers - and then the resolve to make changes.*
- *Reliance on zoning -- lack of other housing, building codes*

# Survey Results

## Optional Comments

### **Need to Change Attitudes**

*Municipalities need to **LEAD** on this, not just reduce barriers.*

### **Why Homeowners Don't Create Units**

*Even with a large home in ideal location, we lack the money and experience to create small units for rent.*

# Survey Results

## Optional Comments

### **Water/Wastewater Stormwater**

*Costs of development are prohibitive, especially to meet various state regulations for stormwater, contaminated soils, etc.*

### **Rural Vermont**

*In areas not growing, changing zoning may do nothing. Much of Vermont isn't growing. Other incentives are needed too.*

# Survey Results

## Optional Comments

### **When Regulations Help**

*In some cases, LACK of design standards is part of the problem, as neighbors have concerns that new housing added to a historic downtown will wreck the feel of the existing settlement.*

### **Broadening Idea of Centers**

*Ski resorts and college campuses should also be considered walkable places. We should look at how to transform the resorts and closed college campuses into new neighborhoods.*