

# SHORT TERM RENTALS IN THE CITY OF KAWARTHA LAKES

## Background

Short-term rentals (STRs), facilitated by platforms such as Airbnb and Vrbo, have expanded rapidly in many tourist destinations. While STRs can support local economies by increasing accommodation options and visitor spending, they also raise concerns about housing availability, neighbourhood change, and regulation.

In the City of Kawartha Lakes (CKL), a popular seasonal destination in Ontario, the growth of STRs has intensified debates about balancing tourism development with the needs of permanent residents. This study examines the effects of short-term rentals on housing availability, community well-being, and tourism in CKL to inform evidence-based municipal policy and planning.

## Methods

This study used a community-based research approach to examine STRs in CKL. Data was collected through:

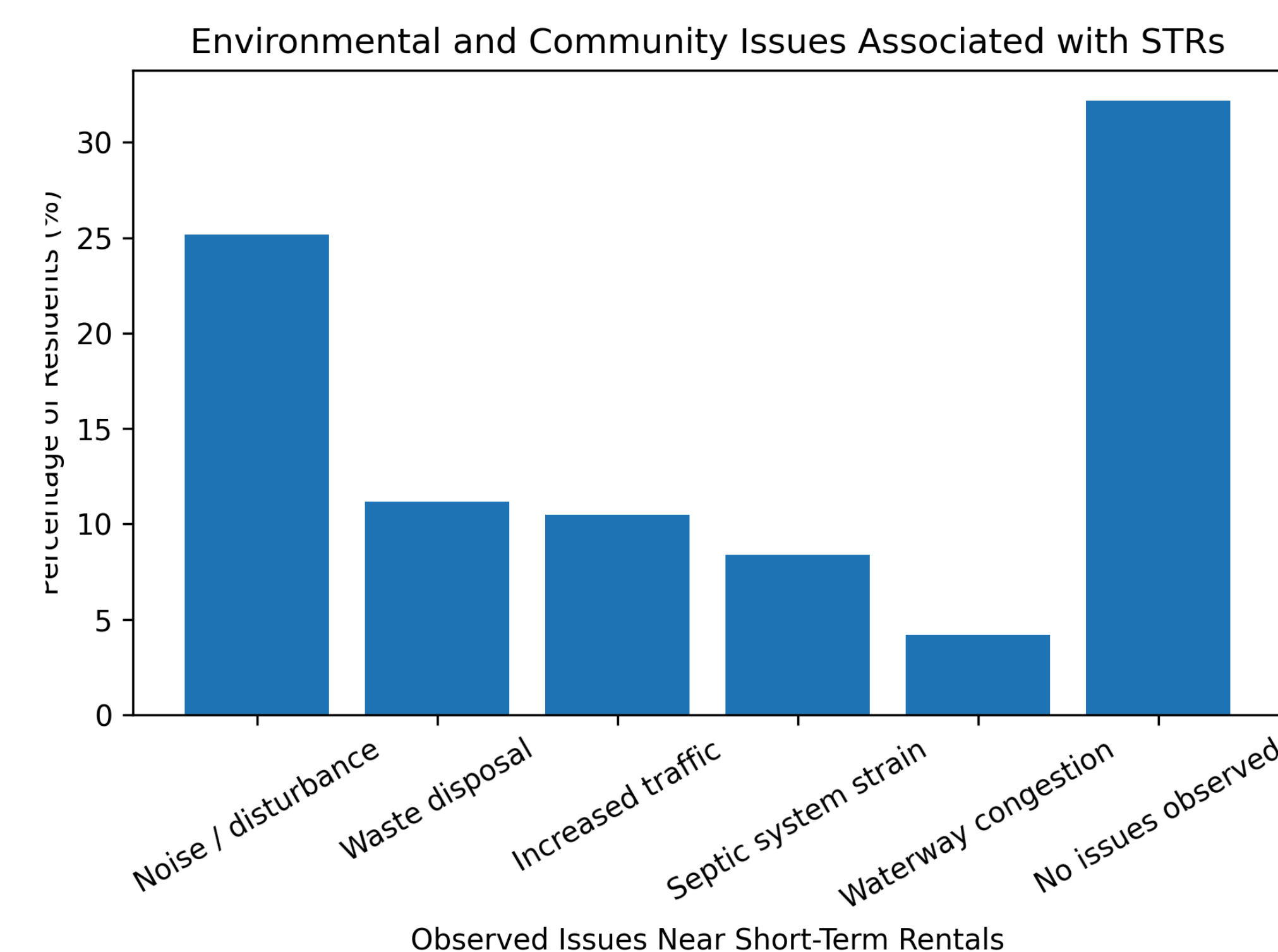
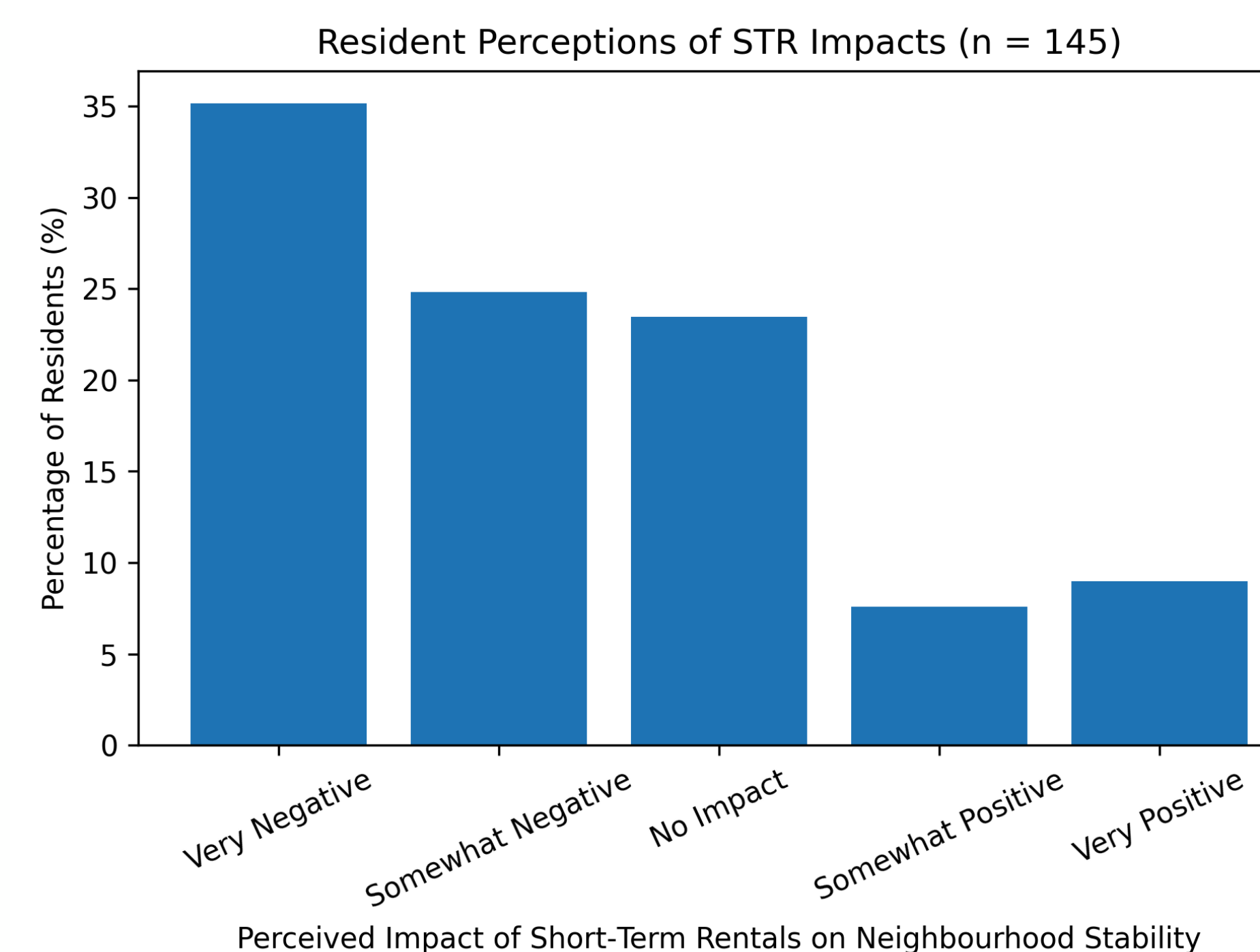
- Interviews with municipal staff, tourism officials, housing representatives, and STR owners
- An online survey of CKL residents
- An online survey of visitors who stayed in STRs

The data was analyzed to identify key themes, concerns, and perceived benefits related to STR activity.

## Key Findings

83% of surveyed residents reported having a short-term rental located near their residence, indicating that STRs are a common feature of many neighbourhoods.

60% of residents reported negative neighbourhood impacts such as noise, parking congestion, and large gatherings, while nearly 40% reported neutral or positive experiences.



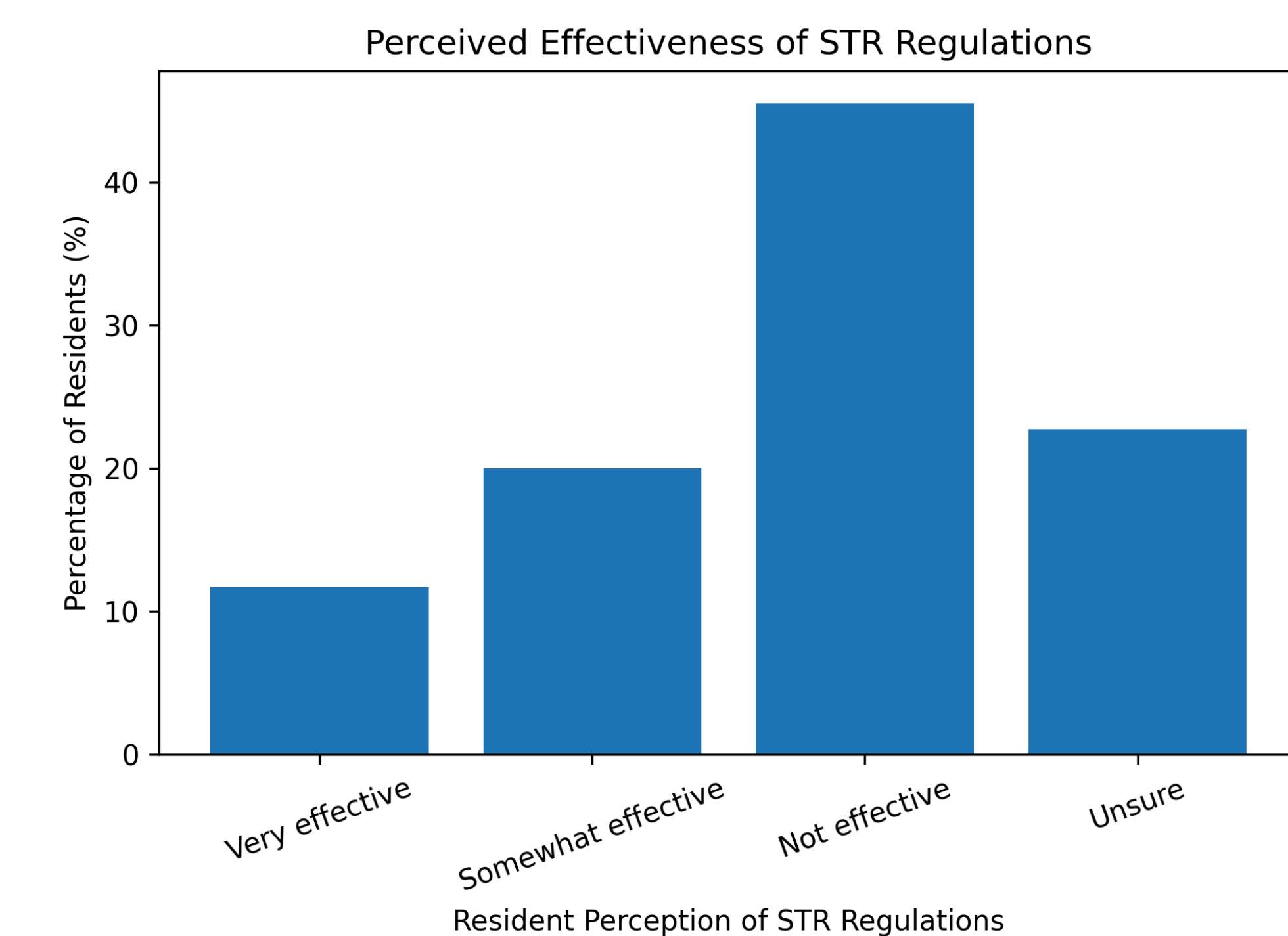
Residents and municipal stakeholders noted that concerns typically arise from high-activity or poorly managed properties rather than all short-term rentals.

Stakeholders indicated that short-term rentals and hotels generally attract different types of visitors.

STRs often appeal to visitors seeking private cottage-style stays, while hotels and resorts serve other travel needs, allowing the two accommodation types to largely coexist rather than directly compete.

Licensing improves safety but enforcement remains challenging.

Municipal staff noted that the licensing system helps ensure compliance with building, fire, and environmental safety standards, though enforcement challenges remain with unlicensed rentals and occupancy violations.



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ADMN-4820Y (2025-26)

REB #30058