

2002 Survey Summary

About the Participants

½ were from outside the villages; ½ were from villages and hamlet: Slightly more Margaretville residents participated than other village residents

Wide range of longevity of residents: 18% were < 5 years and 34% > 5 years. 35% listed themselves as second homeowners

People moved here primarily for the rural atmosphere, followed by affordable housing, low crime rate, low taxes, and close proximity to friends and family. Schools and public services quality was not a large factor in that choice. People continue to stay here primarily for rural atmosphere, followed by low crime rate, close proximity to friends and family and affordable housing. About 20% of participants stay for other reasons.

About ½ of the second homeowners plan on making Middletown their primary residence in the future.

40% of participants were aged 45-59; about 35% were senior citizens and the ages ranged from 25 years to > 84 years old.

25% of participants were retired. The majority of workers were in professional occupations as well as executive/administrative and managerial positions.

50% use their property as a personal residence, 29% as a seasonal home, and 28% for recreation.

Thoughts about the Town

29% of participants feel that the town has not changed in its desirability as a place to live while 21% felt it has improved. 18% feel it is a less desirable place. For those who feel it has become a less desirable place, the reasons are that there are no activities for young people, New York City influences, junkyards, not enough stores and businesses, lack of jobs, conflicts, less open land, run down communities, second homeowners, less services, and increased taxes. For those that feel the area is the same or increased in desirability, reasons given were that the area is still rural, there is a diversity of residences, ski center, there is improving aesthetic character, more stores and services, some renovation and improvements have taken place, the ambience, better than other places, and better conditions in Margaretville.

Some of the negative features of town mentioned include a lack of cultural and recreational options (34%), cost of services are high, there are transportation difficulties, and low quality of services. The written comments were varied,

but seemed to concentrate around lack of shopping and jobs, high taxes, New York City regulations, conflicts between primary and secondary home owners, lack of cultural events, shabby appearance, lack of community center, and new development that will change the community character.

Drinking water and air, and stream quality were those features that were most important environmental aspects. Wildlife habitats, scenic views, mature forests, rural character, farmlands, wetlands, river access, open space/recreation and historic buildings were all important, in that order. All environmental features explored in the survey were felt to have importance however.

Participants were interested in having a variety of development aspects reviewed. 13 different features were explored and all were listed as being very important or important. The most important aspect to review was a development's impact on streams.

There was support for requiring logging permits and to regulate junk, mobile homes, and large public gatherings. At the same time, the majority supported preserving the right to mine and timber.

Farmers were most interested in reducing property taxes, getting help with environmental compliance, right to farm laws, agricultural district development and purchase of development rights (in that order).

The survey explored specific uses and asked if they were compatible or incompatible. Most people felt that trucking terminals were incompatible everywhere. Farm stands, beauty/barber shops, car wash, auto repair, wood products, hotel/motel, office space, retail shops, single family homes and single family homes on large lots were all favored as compatible in some places. There were mixed opinions related to mobile home parks, townhouse/apartments, conservation subdivisions, and mini-storage warehouses. For these uses, about equal numbers of participants felt they were incompatible everywhere as those who felt they were compatible some places.

Participants did not feel there was much need for fast food restaurants, and auto repair shops. There was a strong need expressed for supermarket, department store, and medical/dental office. There was some level of need expressed for all the other uses explored in the survey.

Participants felt that highways and utilities were of high quality. Health care, code enforcement, and the school had more people express that these were fair quality public services. Few participants gave any of the public services a rating of poor quality.

There was a majority of participants that supported spending tax dollars for items especially fire, police, school and library services.

A majority of participants felt that recreational and job opportunities were needed for teenagers. Overall, participants felt that there was a strong need for more recreation and job options for all ages.

More people felt that zoning in the Town is effective than those that did not. More people felt that junkyards, mobile homes, minimum lot sizes, specified areas for residences and businesses, and signs were topics that should be addressed in local zoning. There was less support (about 30% of participants) who felt that other areas needed guidance in local zoning.

Participants were asked to identify what is most important for the future of the town. There was a clear desire for economic development (including more local shopping opportunities, growth of existing businesses, development of tourism industry, new agricultural businesses, and more small scale industrial jobs), preservation of existing rural character, a clean and green environment, preservation of historic heritage, profitable farms and farmland preservation, and improved recreational facilities and trails. A secondary list of important features included having high quality residential and commercial development, a thriving timber industry, and more second home development.