



2005 Community Survey: Report to Residents

DRAFT

**North Hampton Planning Board
Long-Range Planning Committee
9 November 2005**

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SUMMARY

During September of 2005, the Long-Range Planning Committee of the North Hampton Planning Board conducted the “2005 Community Survey.” The purpose of the Survey was to gather residents’ opinions in order to write a Vision Section of the Master Plan, to update the Community Services and Facilities Section of the Master Plan, and to update the Capital Improvements Program.

Approximately 2,600 copies of the Survey were distributed in the Community Newsletter, and 315 were returned on or before the 26 September deadline. The number of responses – representing 16-18% of households in Town – was sufficient to provide valid information about opinions of residents for the purposes of the Survey.

Vision Section: Responses to relevant survey questions indicated that residents strongly want to maintain the rural New England seacoast character and heritage of North Hampton, and they want to preserve important features of the Town that define “rural character.” They want to preserve more open space, and they want to see development that enhances their ability to enjoy characteristics of the Town that they most appreciate – the ocean and other natural features and the rural atmosphere. They do not want to see more development that tends to detract from the rural character – fast-food restaurants, hotels, motels, and inns, apartments and mobile / manufactured homes. They look more favorably on single-family homes, but overwhelmingly would prefer to see new subdivisions that are “conservation subdivisions,” as defined in question 15, and that preserve open space while being developed.

Community Services and Facilities Section: Residents indicated satisfaction with all but two community services “Tax Assessment” and “Zoning Enforcement.” They also expressed the need to take steps to protect and preserve aspects of the Town that are consistent with their strong desire to maintain the rural character and heritage of the Town. They expressed continuing support of public safety services to the extent of ensuring that Police and Fire/EMS Departments have up-to-date vehicles and equipment, but not to the extent of providing expanded facilities. They did not indicate support for initiatives to build new facilities, with the possible exception of a new highway department facility.

Capital Improvements Program: Respondents strongly indicated that they do not support capital investments that will increase taxes, even to improve Town services or facilities. This consensus of opinion was consistent with overall satisfaction with current quality levels of municipal services and facilities. The will of residents, who are also taxpayers, therefore, must be balanced against requests of department heads for expansion, improvement, or new construction of facilities that they believe are needed to deliver services at levels department heads desire.

I. Introduction

Survey Purpose

The Long-Range Planning Committee of the North Hampton Planning Board conducted the “2005 Community Survey” during September of 2005 to gather residents’ opinions for sections of the Master Plan and Capital Improvements Program (“CIP”) that need to be developed or updated.

Since the last community survey was conducted in 1998, the State of New Hampshire has added a requirement that Master Plans include a “vision section” that “shall contain a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan” and “shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision” (RSA 674:2.II(a)). Perhaps, the most important purpose of the 2005 community Survey was to gather information about desires or North Hampton’s citizens for the future of the Town.

North Hampton’s current Master Plan also contains a section on “Community Services and Facilities” (“CSF”) that is optional under state law. However, because many important questions about new or expanded community services and facilities now face residents of the Town, the Long-Range Planning Committee recognized that the 2005 Community Survey offered a good opportunity to gather residents’ opinions about development of the municipal complex. Important issues we face as a community include, among others, the specifications and location for a new highway department facility; renovation, expansion, or replacement of the library building; expansion of the fire department/EMS and police department facilities; addition of recreation and meeting facilities; and the disposition the Town Hall. The Committee believed that these issues could best be addressed in an updated CSF section of the Master Plan with information about residents’ perceptions of the current quality and level of services and facilities, their future expectations about those services and facilities, and their willingness to support funding for any proposed changes.

Municipal-facilities issues involve questions about capital expenditures that may affect future tax rates. In undertaking its responsibility for proposing updates to the CIP, the Long-Range Planning Committee recognized that the 2005 Community Survey provided an excellent opportunity to gather citizens’ opinions about current municipal services and facilities, about services and facilities for which residents would support capital investments, and how residents would want Town government – that is, the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee -- to prioritize investments in expanding or improving services and facilities. With information from the 2005 Community Survey and information provided by heads of Town departments, the Long-Rang Planning Committee could more effectively update the CIP. The Committee could update the CIP in a way that balances the expressed needs of department heads with the willingness of citizens to provide tax revenue to meet those needs, and the Committee can recommend an updated CIP that does as much as possible to keep the tax rate from “spiking” to meet those needs.

Thus, the three most important purposes of the 2005 Community Survey were to gather citizens' opinions about:

1. Their vision for the future of North Hampton and ways to implement that vision.
2. The current and desired future level and quality of community services and facilities.
3. Potential investments in expanding or improving community services and facilities.

Survey Process

Members of the Long-Range Planning Committee developed the survey instrument. The 1998 Citizen's Survey was used as a starting point. As the committee developed the 2005 Survey, however, it became clear that many aspects of the Town had changed since 1998 and many issues that were important to explore now were not issues then. Consequently, the 2005 Community Survey took on a life of its own.

The Committee wanted to test the survey before distributing it to the Town. North Hampton School was approached about the possibility of asking eighth graders to complete the survey, but Principal Peter Sweet suggested that the Committee should consult experts at the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension for advice about designing and properly testing the survey. Consequently, the Committee began consulting Mr. Charlie French at UNH about the survey and received many helpful suggestions from him as the survey instrument evolved.

The first version of the 2005 Survey was tested at Old Home Day. The 59 responses that the Committee received helped clarify questions, eliminate ambiguities, and identify items to add or delete. The Committee revised and improved the survey instrument on the basis of feedback provided by those who took the time to complete surveys on Old Home Day.

Approximately 2600 copies of the final version of the survey were distributed with the September-October 2005 *North Hampton Community Newsletter*. The *Newsletter* also contained a lead article that explained the survey. The aim of the Committee was to receive one survey per household from a sufficient number of households in North Hampton to make results statistically significant. The deadline for receipt of completed surveys was 26 September, and boxes were placed in the Library, Town Clerk's Office, and Town Administrative Office to receive completed surveys. Respondents were also offered the option of mailing their surveys to the Town Administrative Office.

A total of 318 surveys were returned. The 2000 US Census reported 1660 households in North Hampton. A reasonable estimate of the number of North Hampton households in 2005 would be 1800-1900. Therefore, returned surveys represent 16.6% to 17.5% of all households, which provides a good sample of citizens' opinions.

Responses were tabulated by Phil Wilson, Planning Board Chair and Long-Range Planning Committee member, using spreadsheets that were provided by Mr. Thane

Harrison, a graduate student at UNH. Completed surveys were compiled in numerical order and placed in a three-ring binder that will be available for inspection in the Town Administrative Office along with this report, a spreadsheet of tabulated responses to the survey, and comments on the surveys that were transcribed as the responses were tabulated. Messrs. Wilson and Harrison analyzed the data and prepared relevant charts. A catalogue of transcribed comments is available in the Town Administrative Office.

At a “Vision Forum” on Wednesday, 9 November, at North Hampton School, results of the survey will be presented to the public, and participants will be given the opportunity to provide further input into the process of developing a Vision Section and Community Services and Facilities Section for the Master Plan and updated information for the Capital Improvements Program. A second Forum will be held on Wednesday, 16 November, to report back to participants the results of the first Forum and if appropriate, to present for comment a first draft of a Vision Section, as well as more explicit information for the Community Services and Facilities section of the Master Plan and information to help in updating the Capital Improvements Program.

Acknowledgements

The Long-Range Planning Committee received, and is very grateful for, the assistance of Dr. Jill Robinson, Circuit Rider from the Rockingham Planning Commission; Mr. Charlie French, Extension Specialist, Cooperative Extension, University of New Hampshire, and Mr. Thane Harrison, a graduate student who works with Mr. French at UNH. The Committee is also grateful for the quick and effective work of Mr. Tim Harned, whose facility with Microsoft Excel macros saved hours of work in the process of transcribing respondents’ comments from Excel to MS Word. Finally, the Committee thanks Ms. Lisa Wilson for compiling the completed surveys in a manner that makes them readily accessible to anyone who is interested in reviewing them.

II. Results & Conclusions

Master Plan Vision Section

Questions 2, 8, 13, 14 and 15 aimed at soliciting information from respondents that would be especially valuable in formulating “a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan” and “a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision,” as required by RSA 674:2.II(a).

Question 14 asked respondents to give their opinion of the following statement: “As the state and region develop in the future, North Hampton should maintain its rural New England seacoast character and heritage.” The Committee decided that this question was a reasonable way to seek an overarching statement of a vision for North Hampton. Over 70% of voters at Town Meeting in 2001 had voted favorably on a \$4.0 million bond issue that was described as aiming to achieve the goal of maintaining the Town’s rural character and heritage. Results to question 14 in the 2005 Community Survey are shown in the following table:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	9	13	72	210

These results clearly indicate that North Hampton residents want to maintain the “rural New England seacoast character and heritage” of the Town. While a small number of respondents in their comments questioned whether North Hampton could be described as “rural,” an overwhelming number of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Responses to question 13 indicated residents’ opinions about features that are important to the rural New England seacoast character of the Town. Results are shown in the following table:

Question 13: In your opinion how important is each of the following features of North Hampton to the character of a rural, New England Seacoast town?	No Opinion	Not Important	Important	Very Important
Dark night-time sky	24	47	130	97
Locally owned businesses	15	31	163	98
In-home/home-based businesses	45	92	129	35
Traditional New England-style architecture for businesses	18	57	136	98
Signs for businesses with traditional New England-style designs	21	58	129	101
Commercial development restricted to sites along Route 1	8	38	115	147
Working farms	23	41	122	120
Open fields, pastures, meadows	7	21	105	175
Forested areas	4	11	110	182
Land suitable for wildlife habitat	5	11	108	182
Healthy wetlands, streams, ponds	2	11	99	195
Drinkable water from private wells	11	19	69	207
Antique houses and barns	21	35	117	133
Historic public buildings	19	41	122	127
Bandstand and common	9	26	122	152
Old stone walls	20	45	113	129

Responses suggest that residents consider virtually all features listed as important to the Town’s rural character and heritage. Exceptionally strong responses (“Very Important” or “Important”) to the following features indicate that, in trying to maintain rural characteristics, they should be given priority for preservation:

- Restricting commercial development to sites along Route 1
- Open fields, pastures, meadows

- Forested areas
- Land suitable for wildlife habitat
- Healthy wetlands, streams, ponds
- Drinkable water from private wells
- Bandstand and common
- Locally owned businesses.

Responses to question 2 -- “What do you like most about living in North Hampton?” – reinforce the conclusion that residents want to preserve the Town’s rural, seacoast character. Of 315 respondents, 274 indicated that “Near ocean / natural features” was a reason they liked living in Town, and 205 indicated that “Rural atmosphere” was a reason that they liked living in North Hampton.

Similarly, responses to question 15 – “Should the Town allow ‘conservation subdivisions’ in some areas of the Town?” – strongly suggest that preserving open space and forested areas, as well as designing subdivisions to conserve a rural, undeveloped appearance is a desire of residents. The table below shows overwhelming support for using conservation subdivision design techniques as the Town grows:

Yes	197
No	93
No Opinion	23

Responses to question 8, reflect a diversity of opinion about other types of development that the Town should encourage, as the following table shows:

Question 8: The Town should PURSUE MORE of the following?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fast-food restaurants	195	63	36	12	3
Full-service restaurants	53	32	84	105	35
Retail Stores	60	47	105	73	21
Hotels/motels/inns	84	79	100	30	10
Office buildings/office parks	60	54	97	76	17
Light manufacturing businesses	64	57	86	77	15
Protected open space	1	12	25	79	193
Single family homes	25	52	86	93	42
Elderly housing	14	25	94	104	71
Apartments	98	63	80	43	18
Mobile/manufactured homes	131	87	60	22	6
Recreation facilities	15	22	94	114	62
Crosswalks at traffic signals	3	32	89	92	85
Resident parking at the beach	2	12	49	103	139
Public transportation (bus, rail, etc.)	28	35	78	99	65
Sidewalks	22	42	77	88	74
Bicycle paths along roads	16	30	45	125	98
Bicycle paths off roads	11	29	78	101	78
Community meeting facilities	20	39	131	66	42

Question 8: The Town should PURSUE MORE of the following?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Other: _____	8	0	0	5	9

Residents strongly agree that the Town should take steps to protect more open space, which is consistent with their strongly held desire to maintain North Hampton’s rural character and heritage. To a lesser degree, but still strongly, residents agree that the Town should pursue more parking at the beach for residents, which is consistent with the most commonly selected reason for their liking to live in North Hampton – that is, because of the proximity to the ocean and other natural features. Residents would also like to see more bicycle paths, especially along roads; more crosswalks at traffic signals; more recreation facilities; more elderly housing; more sidewalks; and more public transportation.

Interests in more public transportation and elderly housing are consistent with demographics of respondents, 117 (36.7%) of whom indicated that they are “Retired” in response to question 4.

Interests in bike paths, crosswalks, sidewalks, and recreation facilities are consistent with the most commonly selected reason that residents like living in North Hampton – that is, “Near ocean / natural features” – they want to be able better to enjoy the environment that they value without having to use their automobiles.

Residents clearly do not want more “Fast-food restaurants” or “Mobile / manufactured homes.” They are somewhat less strongly opposed to more “Hotels / motels / inns” and more “Apartments.” Their opposition to apartments and mobile / manufactured homes appears inconsistent with their somewhat strong dissatisfaction with the “Affordability of housing,” as expressed in their responses to item A in question 9. However, comments about the affordability of housing suggest that respondents may be more concerned about escalating property taxes that make their current houses less affordable, than they are about the affordability of housing for others trying to move into North Hampton. The one exception may be with respect to children of residents who cannot afford to rent or purchase housing in Town.

Residents tend not to want more light manufacturing businesses, office buildings/office parks, or retail stores.

In summary, responses to relevant survey questions indicate that residents strongly want to maintain the rural New England seacoast character and heritage of North Hampton. They want to preserve important features of the Town that they believe define “rural character.” They want to preserve more open space, and they want to see development that enhances their ability to enjoy characteristics of the Town that they most appreciate – the ocean and other natural features and the rural atmosphere. They do not want to see more development that tends to detract from the rural character – fast-food restaurants, hotels, motels, and inns, apartments and mobile / manufactured homes. They look more favorably on single-family homes, but overwhelmingly would prefer to see new

subdivisions that are “conservation subdivisions,” as defined in question 15, and that preserve open space while being developed.

Community Services & Facilities Section (“CSF”)

The chief purpose of questions 9, 10, and 11 was to gather residents’ attitudes toward community services and facilities. Question 10 asked about respondents’ level of satisfaction with various Town services; question 9 asked about their level of satisfaction with several aspects of the Town that may be seen as consequences of Town services; and question 11 asked about their perception of the need for a wide range of possible changes in Town services, facilities, or regulations. Collectively, responses to these questions give good insight into how residents would like to see community services and facilities evolve over time to provide for their needs.

Question 10: How satisfied are you with the QUALITY of each of the following Town services?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Town Administration	9	21	101	144	26
Building Inspection	13	12	123	129	21
Zoning Enforcement	32	53	100	102	10
Tax Assessment	45	85	82	80	5
Tax Collection	11	11	105	146	23
Police Department	2	12	38	192	67
Fire Department/EMS	5	10	38	164	91
Highway Department	4	20	74	163	46
Clerk's Office	4	6	41	151	108
Public Library	2	13	46	132	117
North Hampton School	8	18	89	106	83
Winnacunnet High School	15	31	139	90	25
Recreation Department	3	16	136	122	25
Recycling Center	3	14	107	116	65
Brush Dump	2	17	124	109	52
Welfare Administration	2	5	232	40	4

In their responses to question 10 residents make clear that they are generally quite satisfied with Town services, with the exceptions of “Tax Assessment” and, to a lesser degree, “Zoning Enforcement.”

The Police Department, Fire Department/EMS, Highway Department, Clerk’s Office, and Public Library are services or facilities with which respondents are particularly satisfied.

Responses to question 9 offer some insight into reasons for both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with Town services. The “Quality of road maintenance” prompted high numbers of responses of “Satisfied” and “Very Satisfied,” which accounts for the high degree of satisfaction with the Highway Department in question 10.

Respondents were in large numbers “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with “Police response time” in question 9, which accounts for the high level of satisfaction with the Police Department in question 10. However, among the aspects of the Town with which respondents expressed greatest dissatisfaction was “Control of motorcycle noise.” Apparently, respondents recognize that because of state laws, the Police Department is not in a position effectively to mitigate this nuisance to many people in Town. Furthermore, respondents expressed a relatively high level of dissatisfaction with “Traffic speed” (9.J) over which the Police Department should have some control.

In responses to “Appearance of Route 1” (9.K) residents indicated a high level of dissatisfaction. Their level of dissatisfaction likely explains their high level of dissatisfaction with “Zoning Enforcement” in question 10 relative to other Town services, although many respondents were also “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with “Zoning Enforcement.” Comments on surveys indicated that many residents are especially concerned about the appearance of the Route 1 and Route 111 intersection, which they described with various colorful, negative epithets.

Question 9: How satisfied are you with each of the following ASPECTS of the Town?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Affordability of housing	43	87	89	77	12
Adequacy of street lighting	32	57	79	115	27
Off-road vehicle use	3	20	170	62	27
Quality of road maintenance	7	25	59	175	43
Traffic on town roads	27	62	72	141	8
Traffic on state roads	33	83	90	93	6
Property Taxes	118	85	57	43	6
Cost of public education	55	76	97	61	12
Cost of town services	31	66	118	83	6
Traffic speed	53	63	90	98	6
Appearance of	32	81	102	85	5

Question 9: How satisfied are you with each of the following ASPECTS of the Town?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
business signs					
Appearance of Rte. 1	65	113	69	54	7
Police response time	3	12	84	155	51
Control of motorcycle noise	108	74	73	47	8
Removal of roadside litter	15	66	88	126	11
Curbside recycling service	17	22	90	128	48

By far the highest level of dissatisfaction in question 9 was with “Property taxes” (9.G). While the “Cost of public education” (9.H) prompted a lower level of dissatisfaction among respondents, the level was, not surprisingly, high relative to most other aspects of the Town listed in question 9. Comments that many respondents made on their surveys about property taxes and school costs made clear that the escalation of property taxes, in part the result of rising education costs, are driving some people out of their homes and placing a burden on others that they perceive as onerous.

Responses to question 11 indicate Town facilities, services, and regulations with respect to which residents would support change, potentially at some cost to themselves as taxpayers. Their responses also indicated changes that residents would not consider needed.

Question 11: Please indicate your opinion of each of the following facilities, services or regulations.	No Opinion	Not Needed	Might Be Needed	Definitely Needed
Expanding water lines/fire hydrants	71	91	106	29
Adding parking at Town complex	29	132	94	40
Constructing a townwide sewer system	24	159	64	52
Improve cable/telecommunications services	22	65	98	116
Expanding the existing library facility	22	94	113	71
Building a new library	20	157	77	47
Creating museum space for town artifacts	29	141	95	37
Building a new highway department facility	48	94	77	78
Purchasing land for a new facility	55	128	83	29
Purchasing equipment/vehicles as needed	36	36	180	47
Purchasing cruisers on a schedule	34	57	143	64
Purchasing police equipment	38	39	167	50
Expanding police department facility	46	148	84	21
Purchasing fire department/EMS vehicles	39	50	163	40
Purchasing fire department/EMS equipment	38	42	169	44

Question 11: Please indicate your opinion of each of the following facilities, services or regulations.	No Opinion	Not Needed	Might Be Needed	Definitely Needed
Expanding fire department/EMS facilities	45	132	90	31
Locating police, fire, EMS in one new facility	38	172	70	20
Expanding administrative offices	41	195	59	3
Consolidating offices in one location	38	143	93	26
Building a recreation center	28	150	86	38
Expanding existing facility	45	161	71	16
Protecting aquifers	18	12	94	177
Preserving forests and open space	7	20	71	206
Preserving wetlands	8	29	73	194
Preserving stone walls	22	36	92	155
Preserving mature trees along roads	11	25	111	155
Creating a capital reserve fund to preserve or replace roadside trees	19	79	118	83
Preserving historic public buildings	16	40	123	126
Limiting the number of similar businesses	27	67	103	106
Limiting the number of national franchise stores	19	67	90	128
Promoting businesses that contribute more in taxes than they cost in services	16	14	86	185

Town Infrastructure

- Most respondents felt internet/telecommunications improvements might be needed or were definitely needed.
- Respondents were split on the need for expanding water lines.
- Parking at the town complex and a townwide sewer system were mostly considered not needed.

Public Library

- More than half of respondents thought expansion of the existing facility might be needed or was definitely needed. However, nearly a third of respondents felt it was not needed.
- Though expansion might be favored, over half of respondents felt a new facility was not needed and almost half felt that a space for town artifacts was not needed.

Highway Department

- The most popular response to building a new highway department facility was that it was not needed; however, a majority of respondents thought it might be needed or was definitely needed. It appears that most people would accept the expense, but they may take some convincing.

- Purchasing land for the facility was less popular, with over 40% responding that it was not needed (if the town already owns the land for the expansion the convincing mentioned above could be easier than if they have to purchase land).
- Respondents were comfortable with the possibility that purchasing new equipment might be needed—over 75% responded “might be” or “definitely” needed.

Public Safety

- Respondents were favorably disposed towards purchases of new equipment/vehicles for all departments, but were less convinced that new facilities, or consolidation of current facilities would be needed.

Town Administration

- More than half, or very close to half, of the respondents thought that expanding the offices, consolidating the offices, and building a recreation center were not needed.

Public School

- The majority of respondents did not think the existing facility needed to be expanded, a quarter though it might be needed, and very few felt it was definitely needed.

Land Use, Conservation, Planning and Zoning

- North Hampton residents, again, seem to have a strong affinity for the natural environment: almost 90% of respondents felt that protecting aquifers; and preserving forests, wetlands, and mature trees along roads either might be needed or were definitely needed.
- A slightly lower 80% of respondents think preserving stone walls and historic public buildings might be needed or is definitely needed.
- When presented with the idea of creating a capital reserve fund to pay for the preservation of roadside trees, the majority still indicated that this might be, or is definitely needed, but a significant portion (27%) thought that it was not needed.
- About 70% of respondents felt that limits on the number of similar stores and the number of national franchise stores might be or definitely were needed. This implies that residents prefer a more diverse, locally-owned commercial sector.
- Over 60% of respondents thought that businesses that bring in more taxes than they cost in services should be promoted (this rather clearly meshes with earlier responses that showed dissatisfaction with taxes).

In summary, residents expressed the need to take steps to protect and preserve aspects of the Town that are consistent with their strong desire to maintain the rural character of the Town. They expressed continuing support of public safety services to the extent of ensuring that Police and Fire/EMS Departments have up-to-date vehicles and equipment, but not to the extent of providing expanded facilities. They did not indicate support for initiatives to build new facilities, with the possible exception of a new highway

department facility (11.H), which received numbers of responses of “Might Be Needed” and “Definitely Needed” that were larger than many other items.

Capital Improvements Program (“CIP”)

As question 14 may be taken as providing a general principle for shaping the Vision Section of the Master Plan, question 12 may be taken as providing a general principle for updating the CIP in a manner that is consistent with the desires of residents.

Responses to question 12 – “To limit tax increases, how willing are you to accept current levels of Town services and facilities?” – are shown in the table below:

Very Unwilling	Unwilling	Neutral	Willing	Very Willing
6	16	32	105	146

Respondents clearly do not want to make capital investments that will necessarily increase their taxes in order to enhance levels of Town services or to improve Town facilities. This strong consensus of opinion is not surprising in view of the fact that responses to question 10, as noted above, indicated that respondents are by and large satisfied with current quality levels of municipal services and facilities.

In summary, this point of view of respondents, who are also taxpayers, must be balanced against requests of department heads for expansion, improvement, or new construction of facilities that they believe are needed to deliver services at levels department heads desire.

III. Recommendations

Vision Section of the Master Plan

The Long-Range Planning Committee, after conducting the two Vision Forums that are planned for 9 and 16 November, should draft a Vision Section for the Master Plan that captures strong views of residents that the Town should maintain its rural New England seacoast character and heritage. The Vision Section should also provide principles for implementing this vision that preserve and, if possible, enhance those features of the Town that residents identified as important to its rural character and heritage. The Vision Forums should be used to gather residents’ ideas about how to develop implementation principles.

The Vision Section should also incorporate desires of residents to provide access and enhanced recreational and aesthetic enjoyment of the ocean and the Town’s other natural features with bike paths, sidewalks, and crosswalks at traffic signals.

Finally, the Vision Section should be based on respect for residents’ feelings that taxes and expenditures are already sufficiently high to provide satisfactory or better community

services and facilities. Future development of services and facilities should, therefore, be driven by necessity.

Community Services and Facilities Section of the Master Plan

In view of residents' satisfaction with current levels of quality in Town services and facilities and their strong willingness to accept current quality levels of services and facilities, the CSF Section should emphasize good maintenance practices of all existing facilities, expansion of facilities only where necessary to sustain current service levels – e.g., the library – and new construction only where there is no reasonable alternative – e.g., the highway department garage.

Public safety and highway departments should continue to be supplied with equipment and vehicles necessary to maintain their current levels of service as the Town develops over time. Outside sources of funding – private, state, or federal -- should be sought to provide recreational services and facilities that residents have indicated they would like to enjoy at the same time that they have indicated a desire to avoid tax increases to underwrite increases in current service levels.

The updated CSF Section, therefore, must balance the reluctance of residents to support tax increases against the requests for department heads for expenditures on new or expanded facilities, while ensuring that adequate provisions are made to maintain levels of service in which residents have expressed satisfaction.

Capital Improvements Program Update

Consistently with the Community Services and Facilities Section of the Master Plan, the update of the Capital Improvements Program should focus on providing for the maintenance of plant and equipment that is necessary to provide services. Because residents are reluctant to appropriate tax revenues for new facilities, providing for regular, routine maintenance of existing plant and equipment is essential. Residents may support capital expenditures from tax revenues for a new highway department garage (but not for purchasing land for the facility) and for expanding the existing public library.

Any capital expenditures from tax revenues for expanded or new facilities should be planned in the CIP if and only if they are necessary to maintain current levels of services and facilities and only if there is no reasonable, satisfactory alternative that affects taxes to a lesser degree. Further, capital expenditures should be prioritized and timed in a manner that minimizes large fluctuations in capital expenditures from year to year and, therefore, that minimizes fluctuations in tax rates from year to year.

IV. Appendices

Appendix A: Respondents & Demographic Information

1. How many years have you lived in North Hampton?

Mean	19.7
Median	15
Mode	5
Std. Dev.	16.3
Min	0
Max	76

2. What do you like MOST about living in North Hampton?

		Total
A	Rural Atmosphere	211
B	Quality of public schools	96
C	Near main highways	82
D	Near Boston	72
E	Near Employer	38
F	Economy of living	19
G	Near ocean/natural features	281
H	Near medical services	57
I	Hometown	43
J	Friendly Atmosphere	113
K	Cultural Amenities	21
L	Other	20

3. Which of these three categories best describes your living situation?

		Total
A	Homeowner	295
B	Renter	6
C	Live with family/significant other	12
D	Other	3

4. Which of the following categories best describes your employment situation?

		Total
A	Employed full-time	153
B	Employed part-time	29
C	Homemaker	18
D	Unemployed	2
E	Retired	117

5. How many miles does the primary income-earner in your household travel to work (one way)?

		Total
A	Does not travel	84
B	Less than 5 miles	51
C	6-15 miles	59
D	16-35 miles	20
E	More than 35 miles	54
Total		268

6. What roads do members of your household who are employed outside the home take to work?

		Total
A	Route 1	124
B	Route 111	117
C	Interstate 95	76
D	Mill Road	42
E	Route 151 (Post Road)	82
F	Woodland Road	24
G	Route 1A	23
H	Work at Home	20
I	Other	24

Appendix B: Tabulation of Responses to Question 7

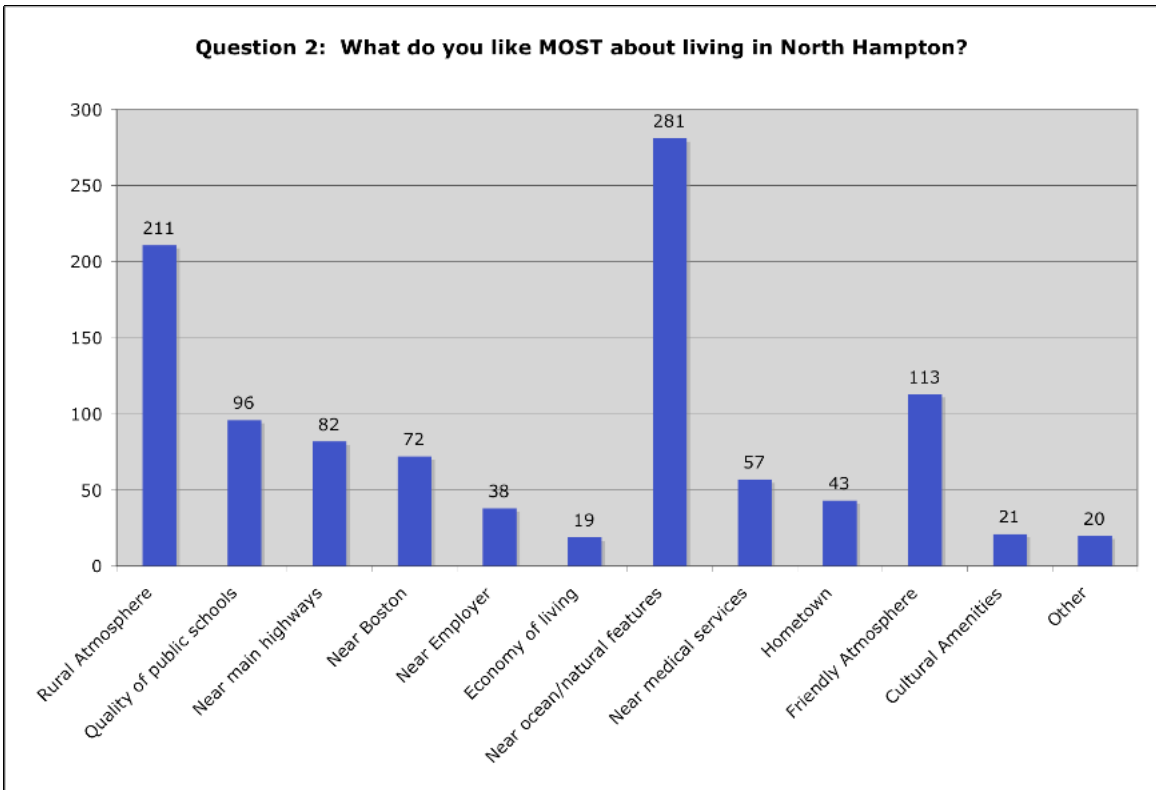
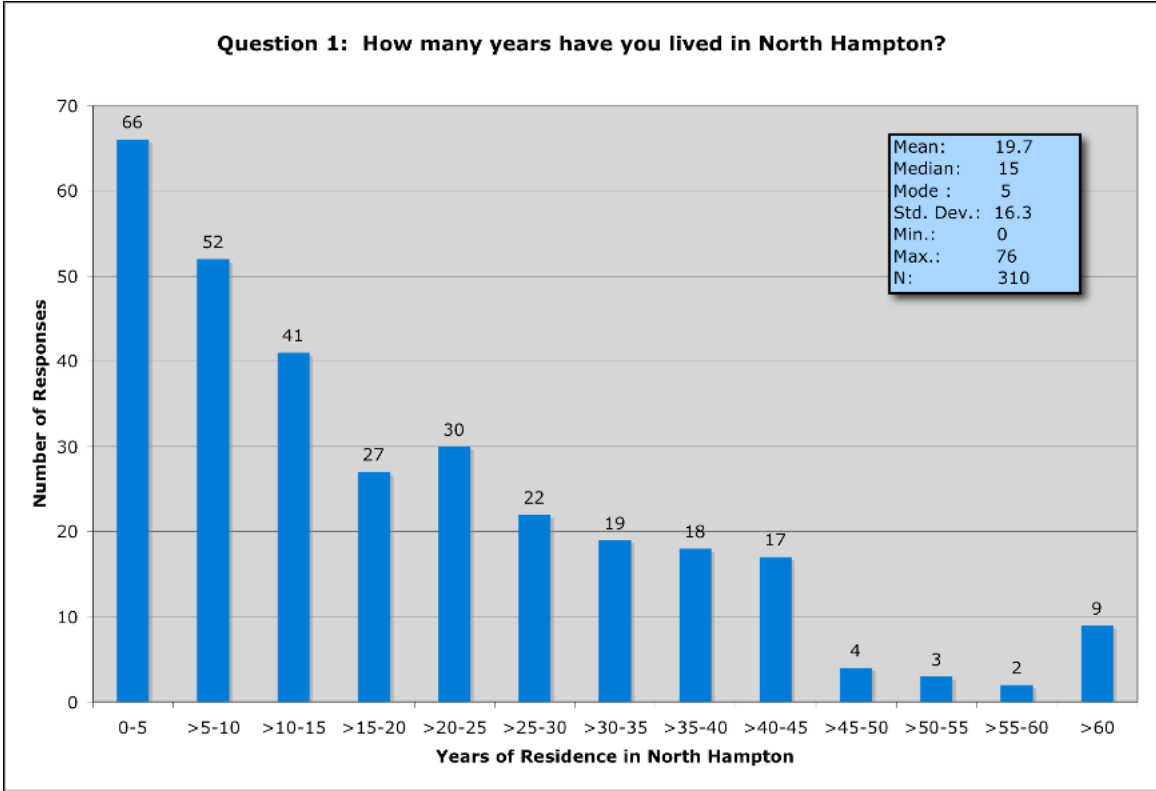
Question 7: In what town or city does the primary income-earner in your household work?

Location	Number of Responses
North Hampton	50
Portsmouth	38
Boston	17
Hampton	14
Manchester	5
Exeter	4
Newburyport, MA	4
Amesbury, MA	3
Burlington, MA	3
Kittery, ME	3
Seabrook	3
Stratham	3
Bedford	2
Cambridge, MA	2
Concord, NH	2
Greenland	2
Rye	2
Tewksbury, MA	2
Belmont	1
Brentwood	1
Concord, MA	1
Danvers, MA	1
Dover	1
Durham	1
Epping	1
Gloucester, MA	1
Littleton, MA	1
Lowell, MA	1
Lynnfield, MA	1
MA North Shore	1
Merrimac, MA	1
Merrimack, NH	1
Middleton, CT	1
New York, NY	1
Newfields	1
Newington	1
Newmarket	1
Newton, MA	1
North Conway	1
Portland, OR	1
Raymond	1
Rochester	1
Rockingham County	1
Salem, NH	1
Salisbury, MA	1
Utica, NY	1
Washington, DC	1
Wellesley, MA	1
Wilmington, MA	1
Woburn, MA	1
York, ME	1
Total Responses	192

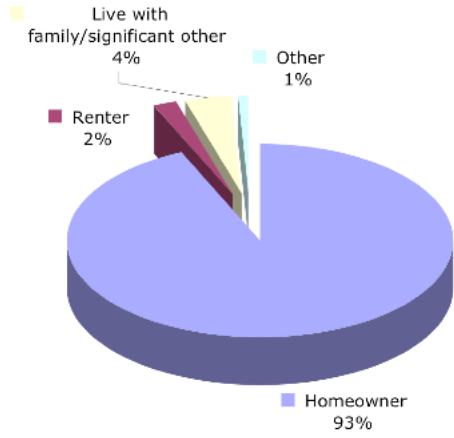
N. B. Responses that gave non-specific locations – e.g., “all over the country” – were not included in the tabulation.

Tables showing tabulations of responses to all other questions appear in the text of the report (Section II, above).

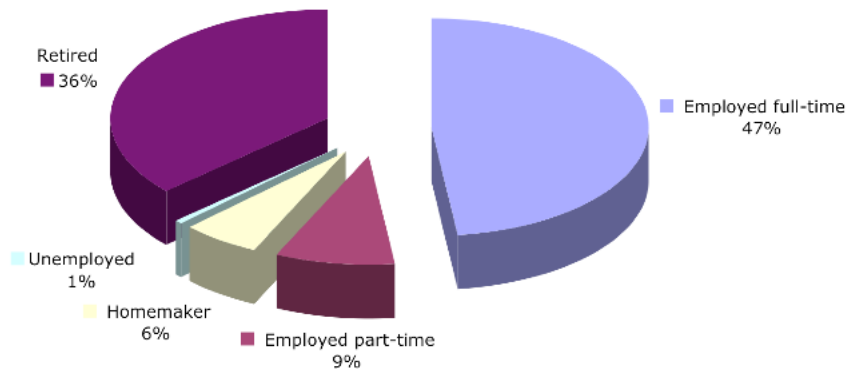
Appendix C: Charts



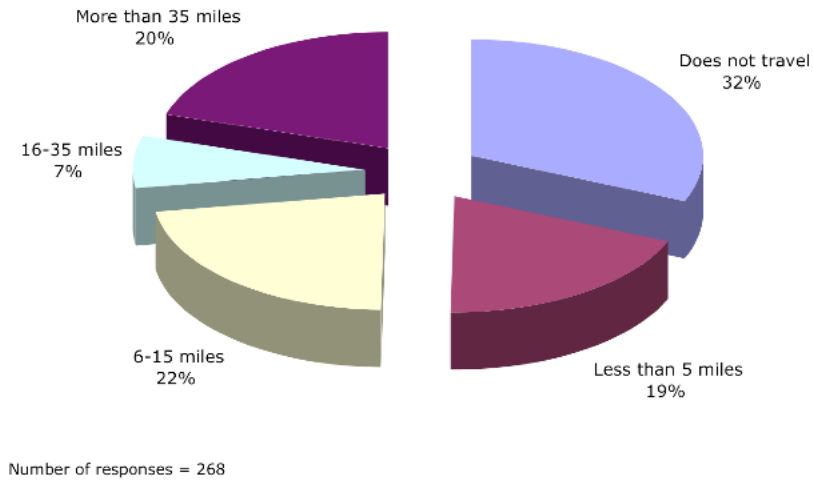
Question 3: Which of the following categories best describes your living situation?



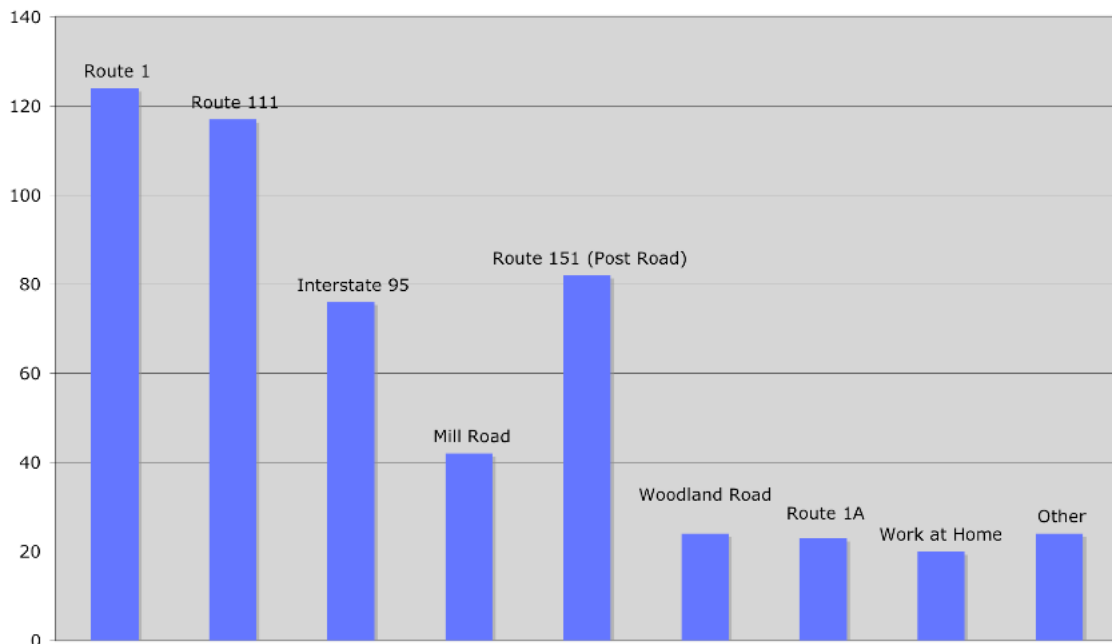
Question 4: Which of the following categories best describes your employment situation?

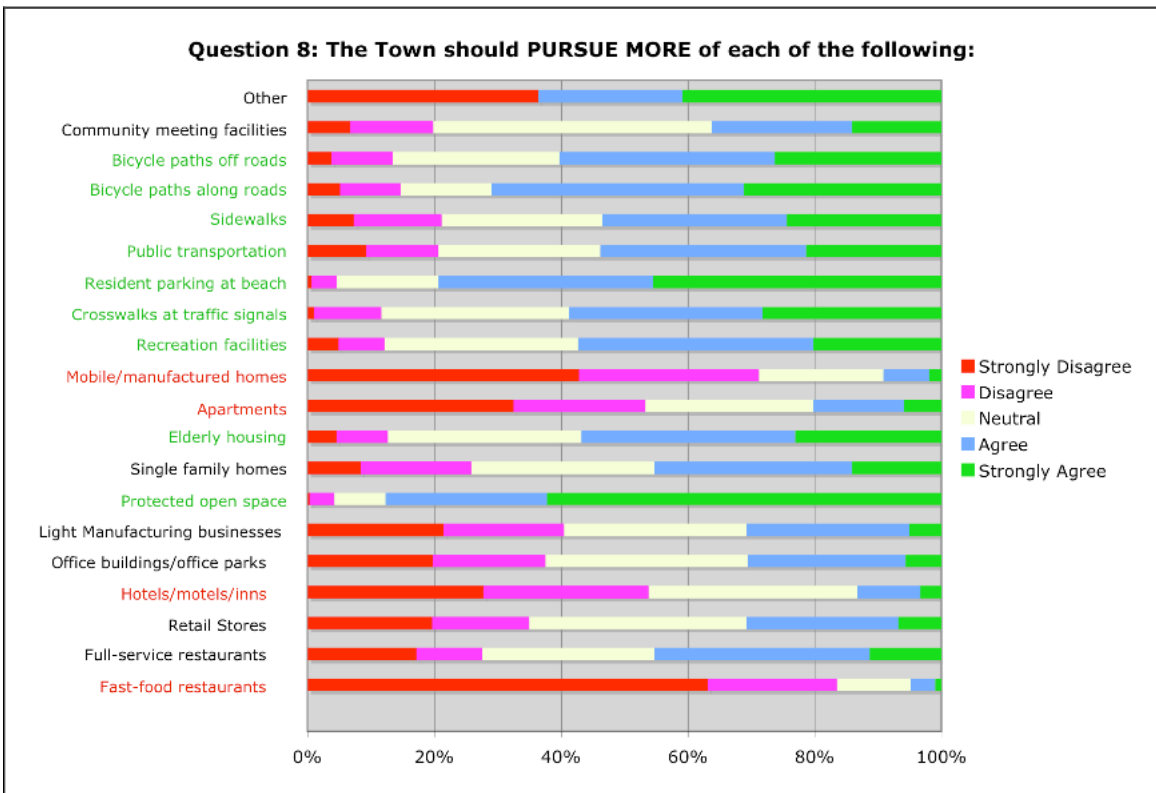
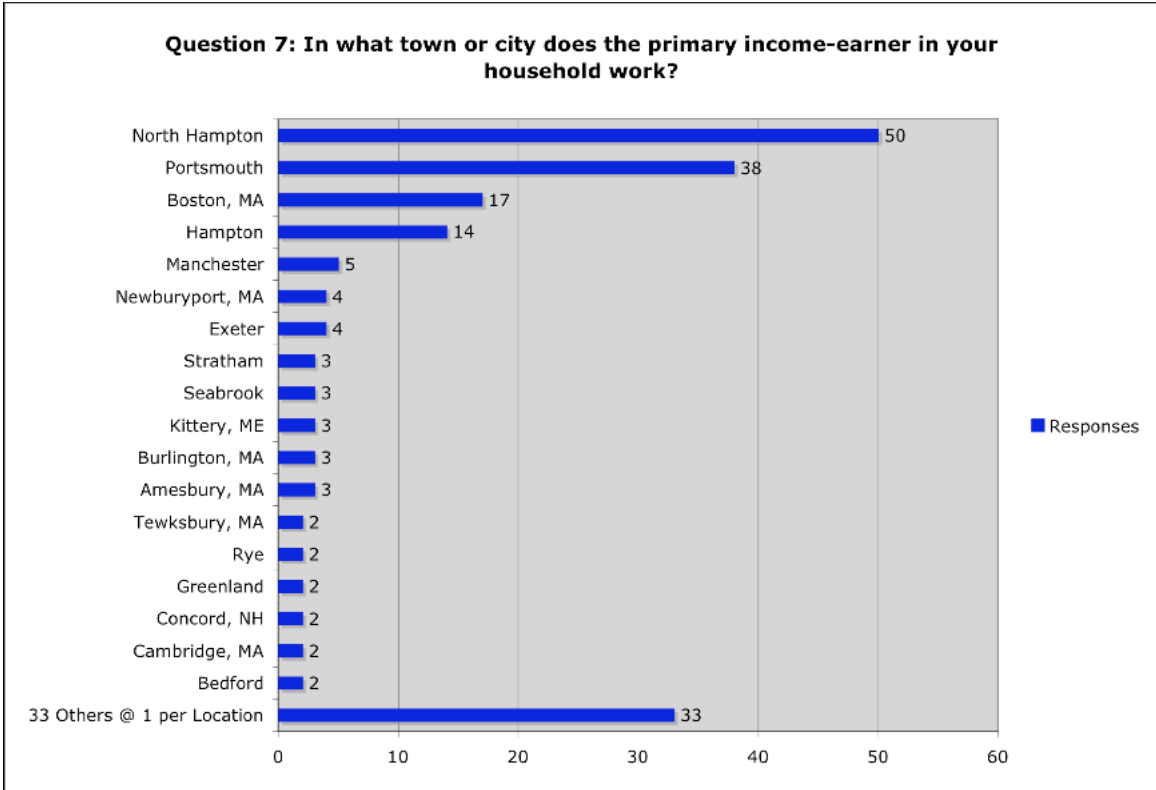


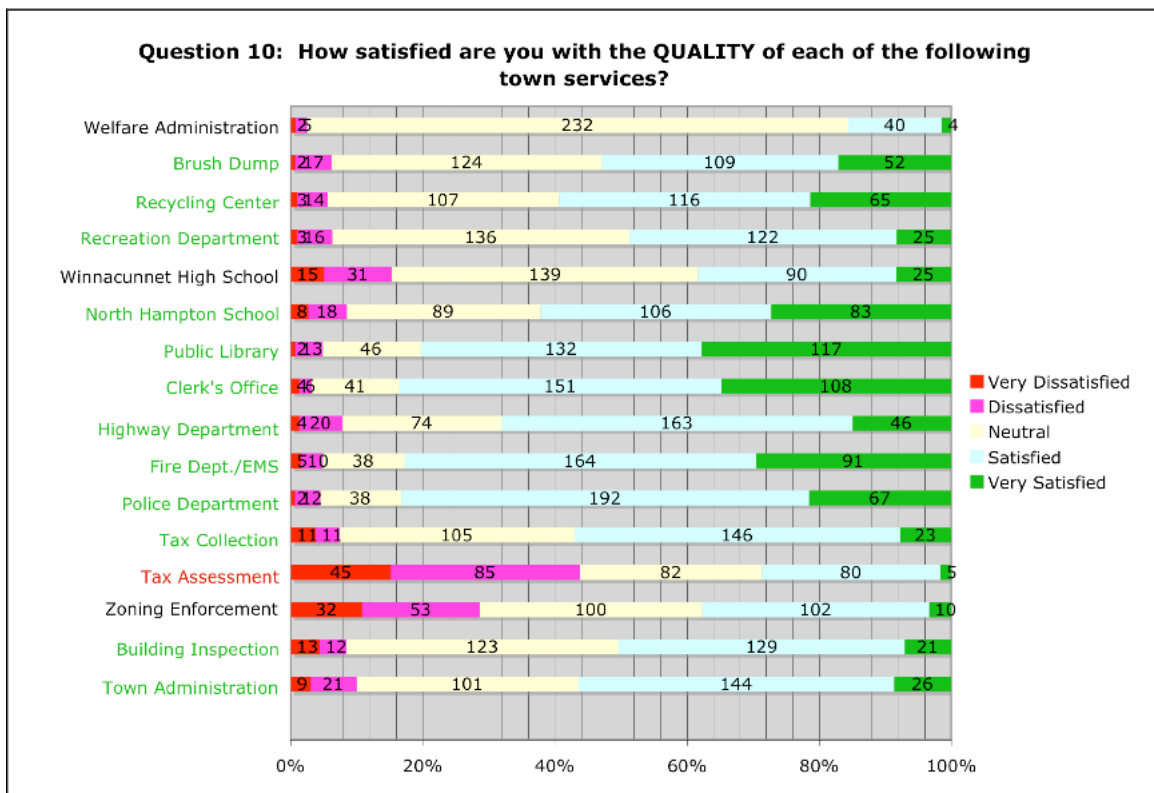
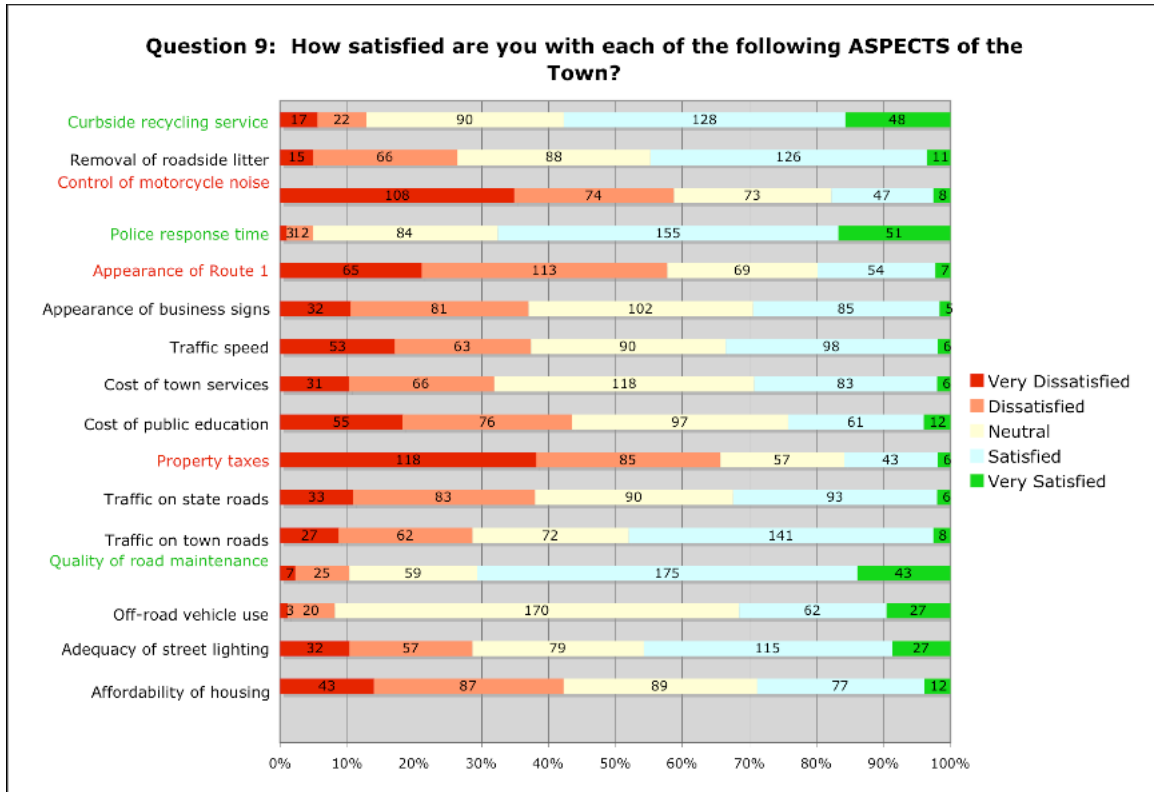
Question 5: How many miles does the primary income-earner in your household travel to work (one way)?

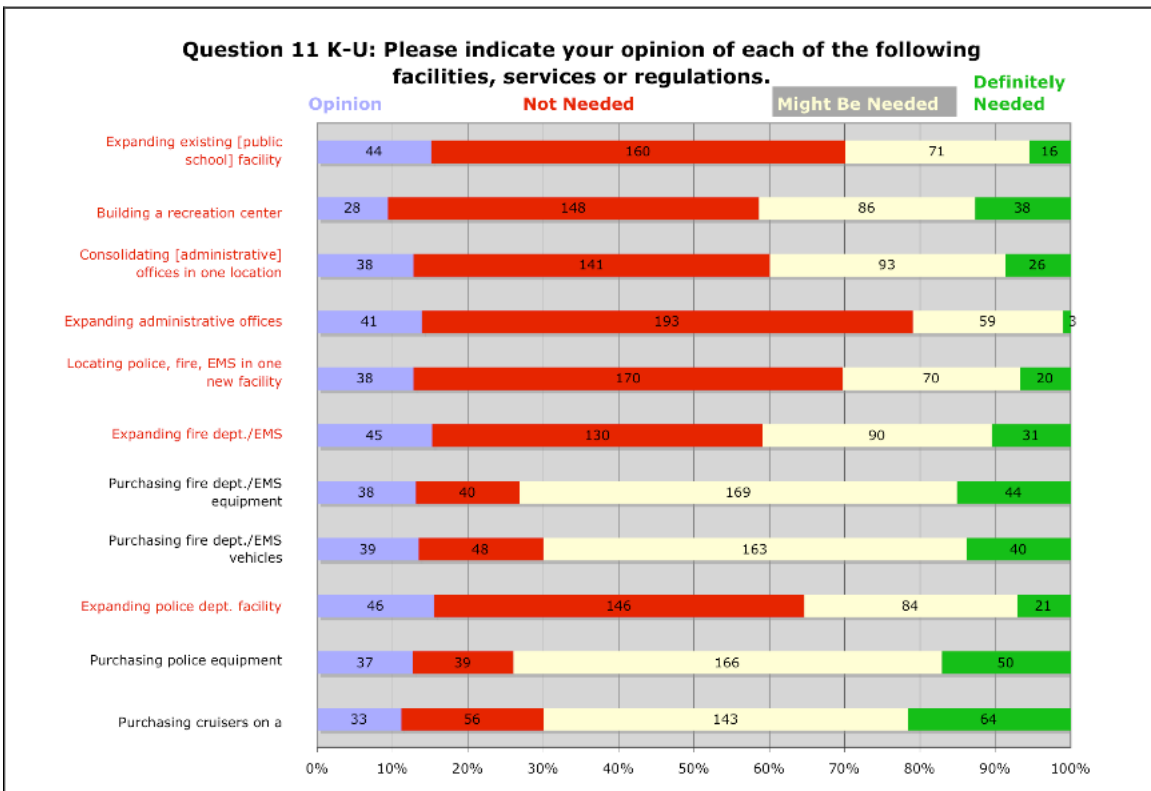
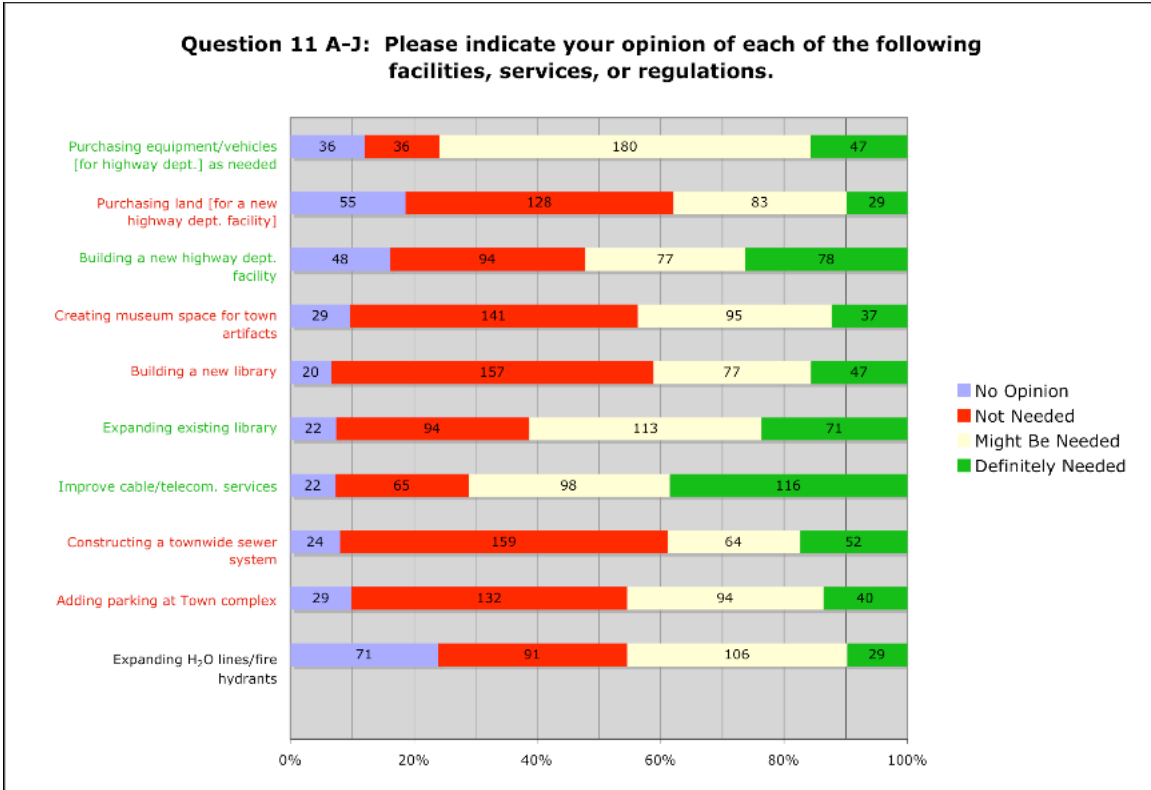


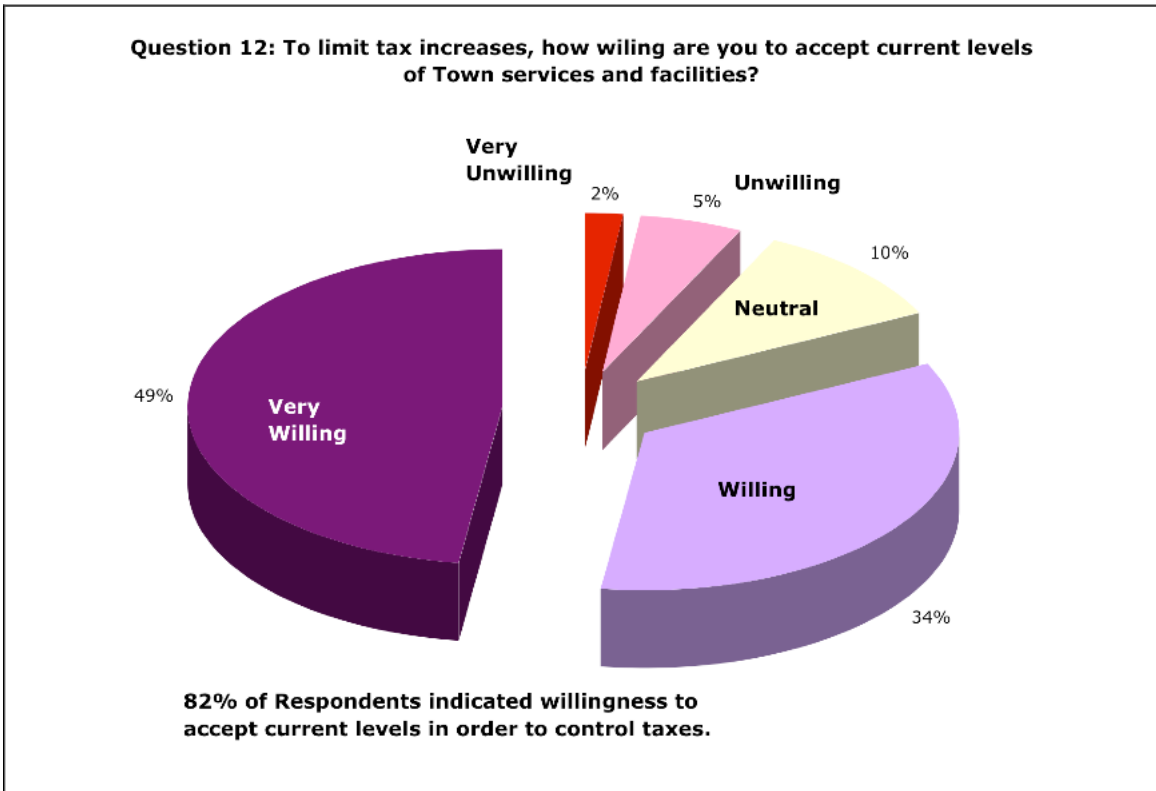
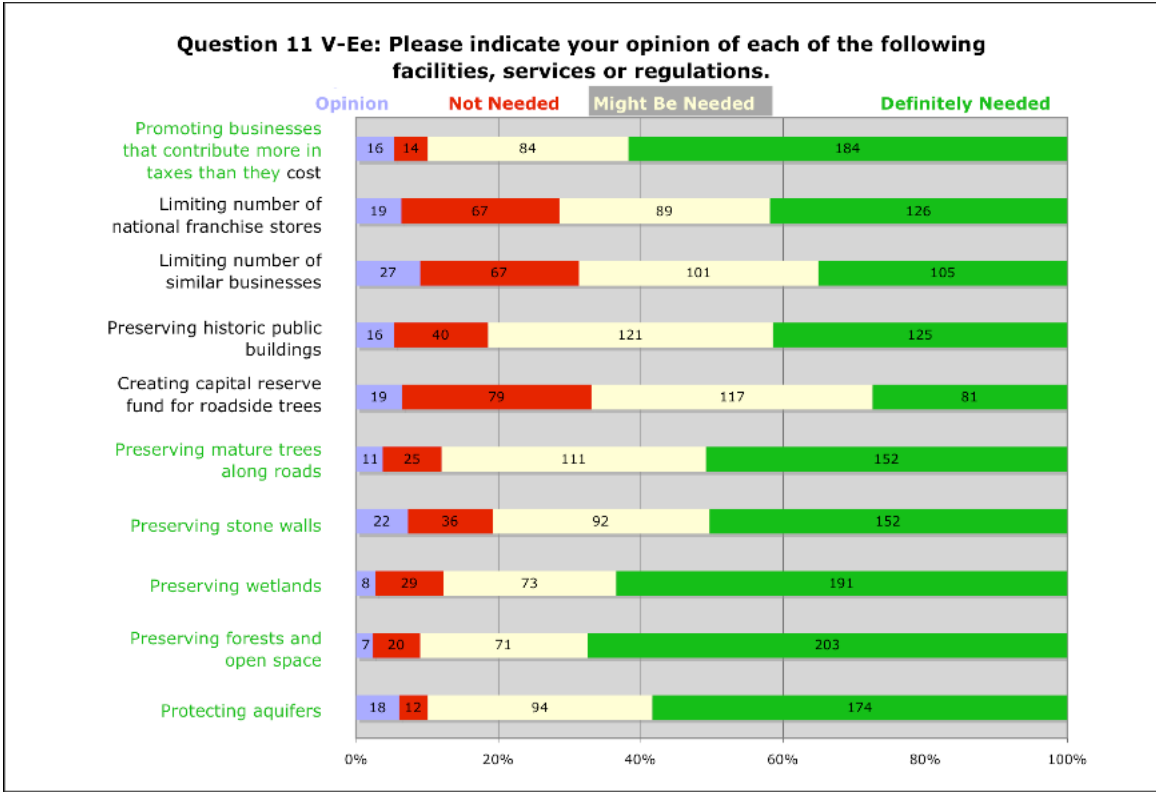
Question 6: What roads do members of your household who are employed outside the home take to work?

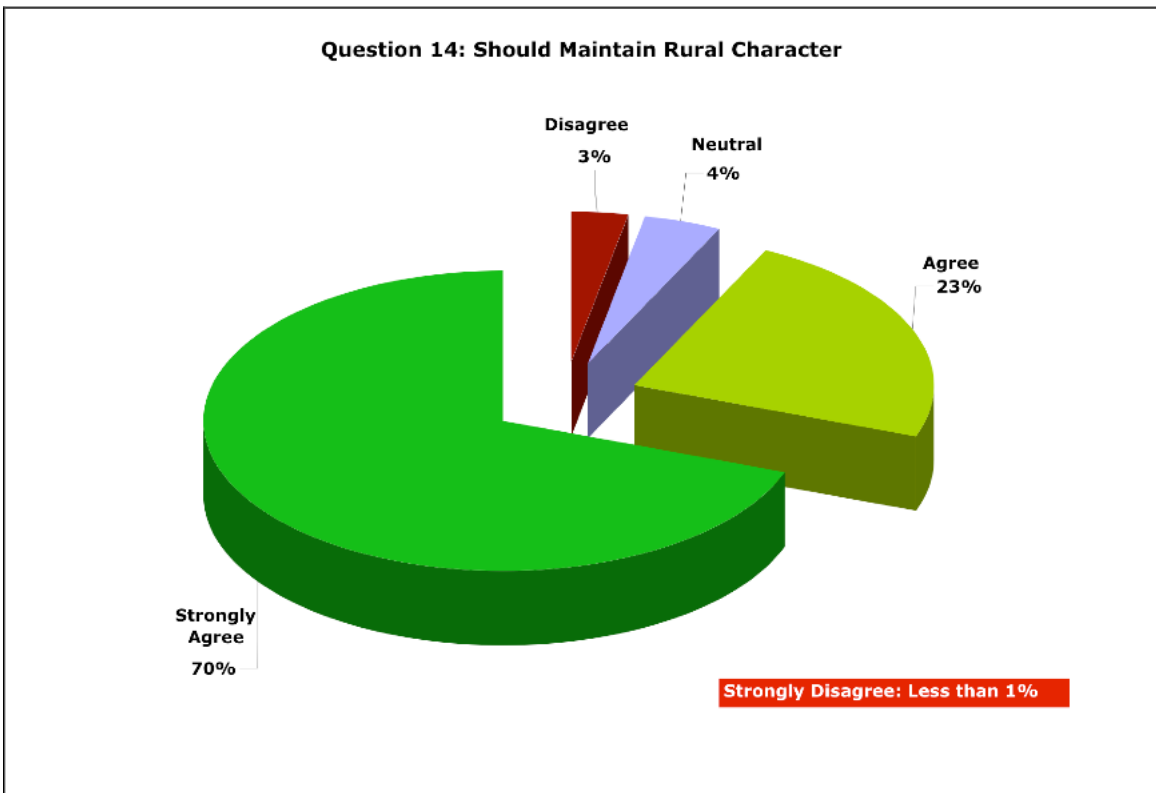
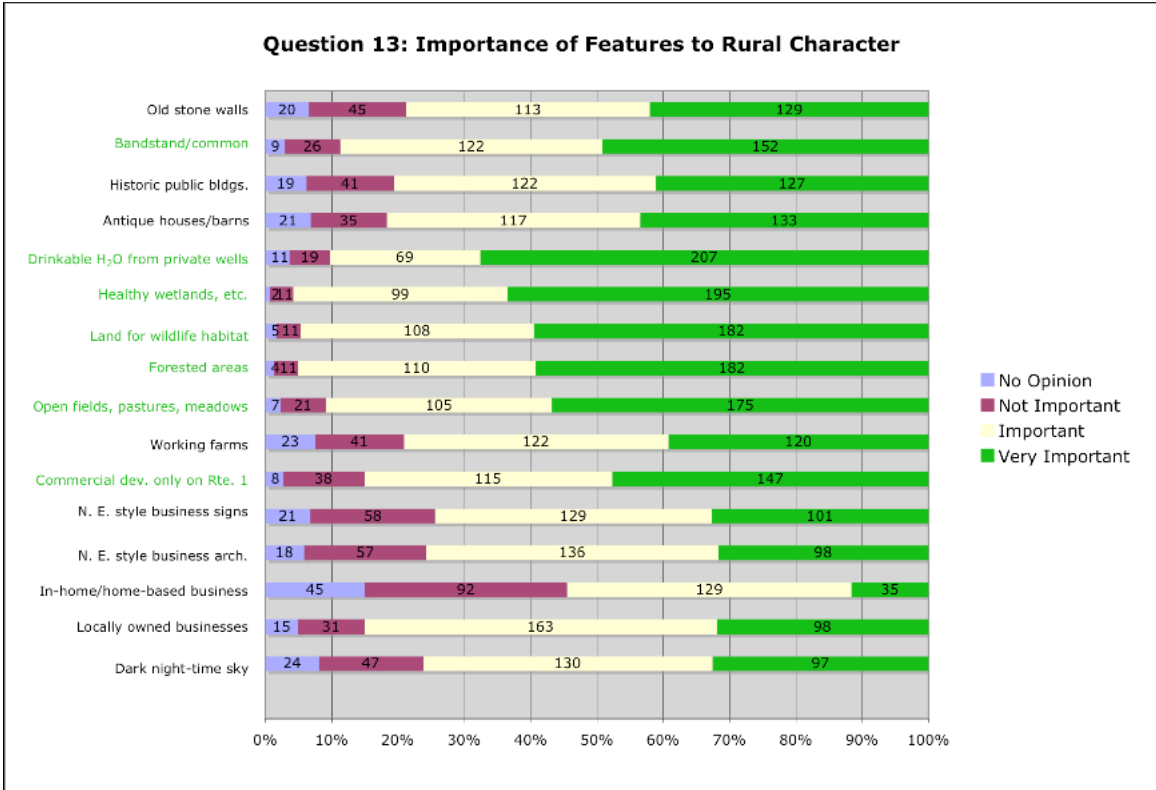




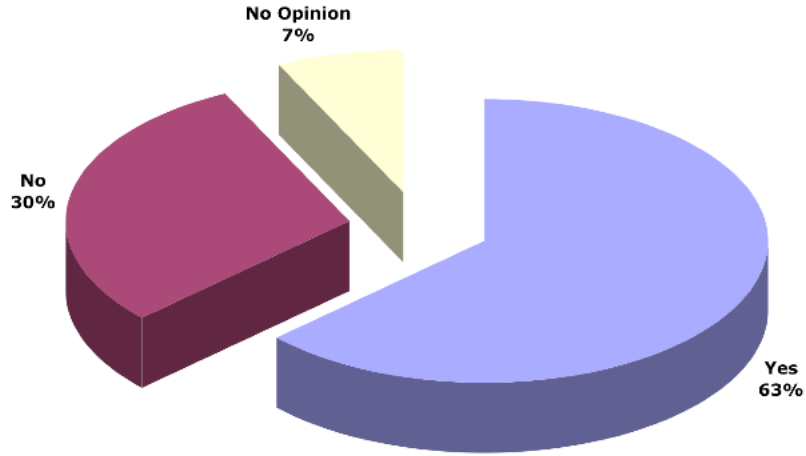




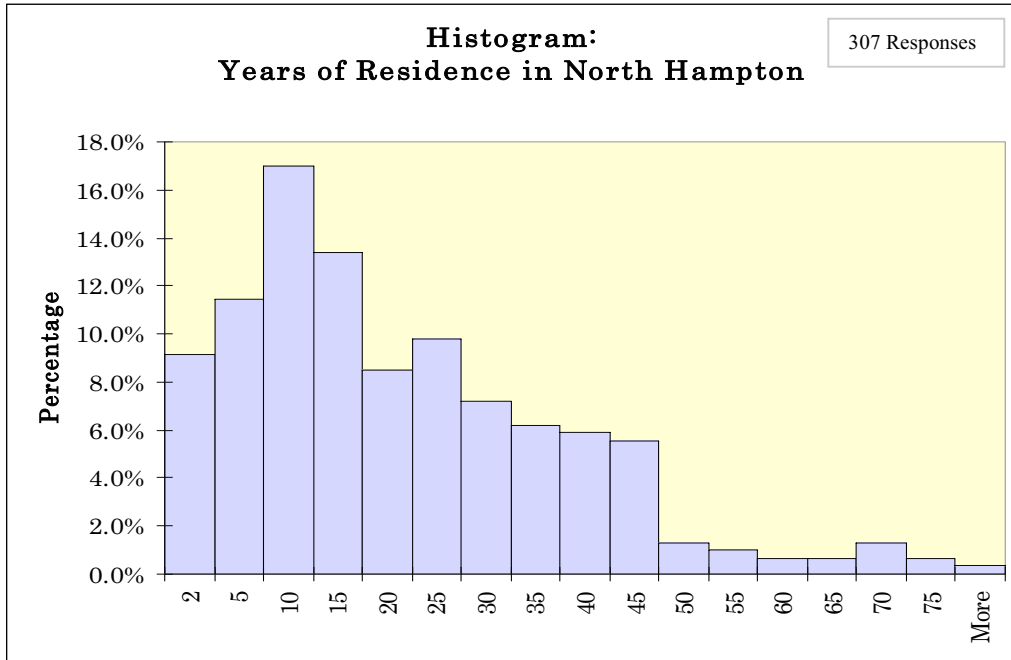




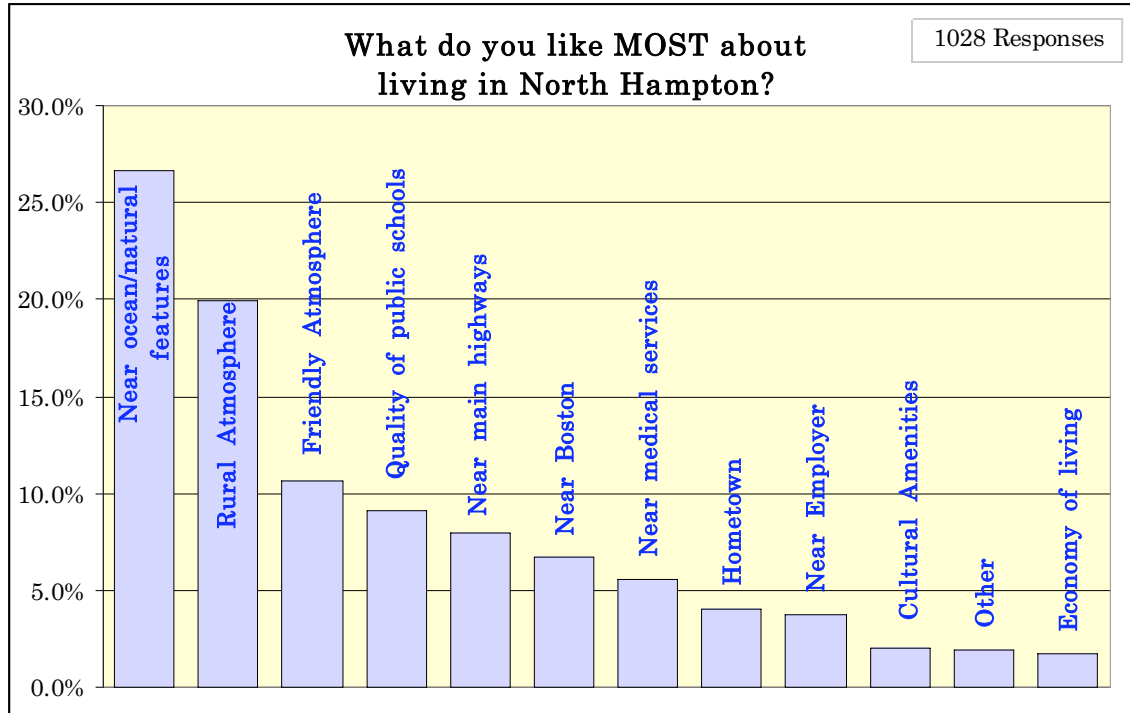
Question 15: Should Town allow "Conservation Subdivisions"?



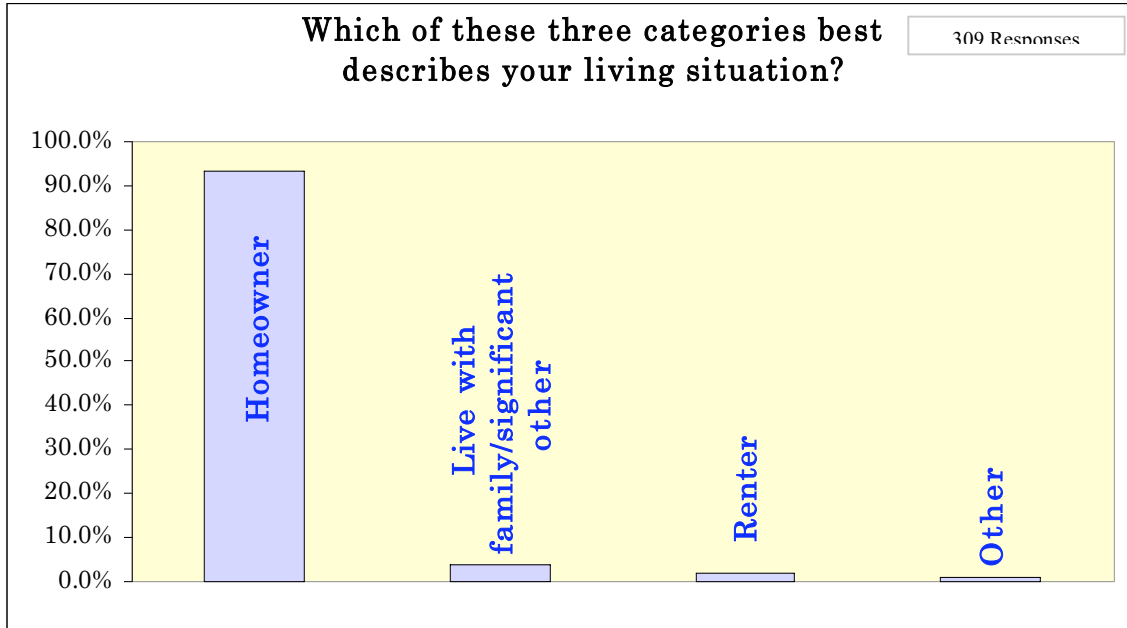
Appendix D: Charts & Analysis by Mr. Thane Harrison



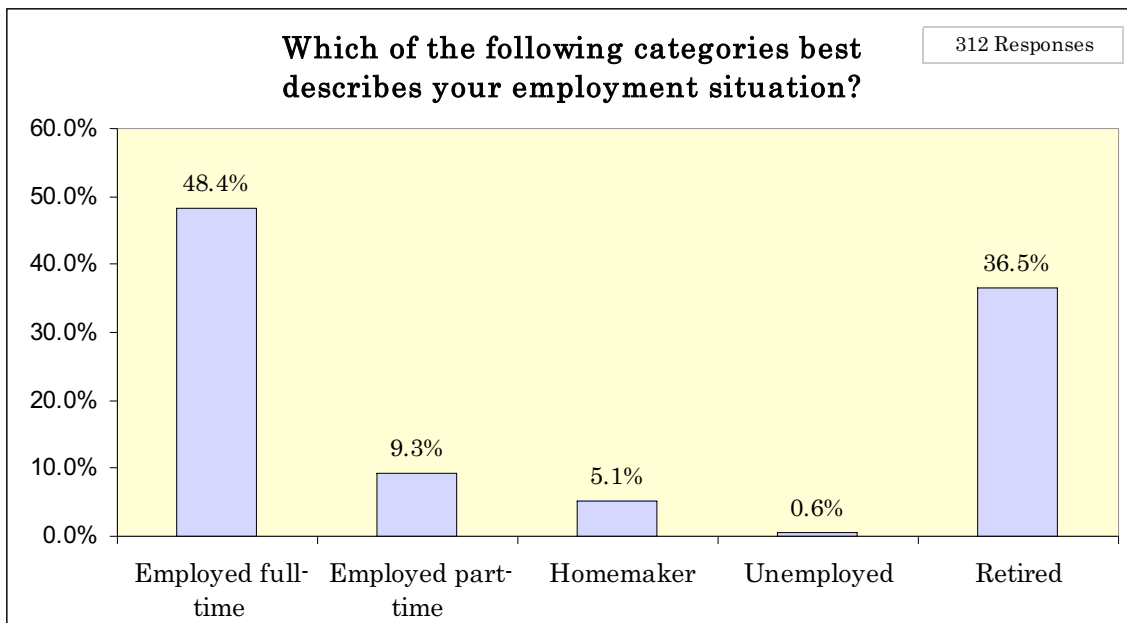
- The average North Hampton respondent to the survey has lived in the town for slightly over 19 years.
- Half of the respondents have lived there for less than 15 years and slightly.
- More than one-fifth of the respondents have lived there for less than 5 years.

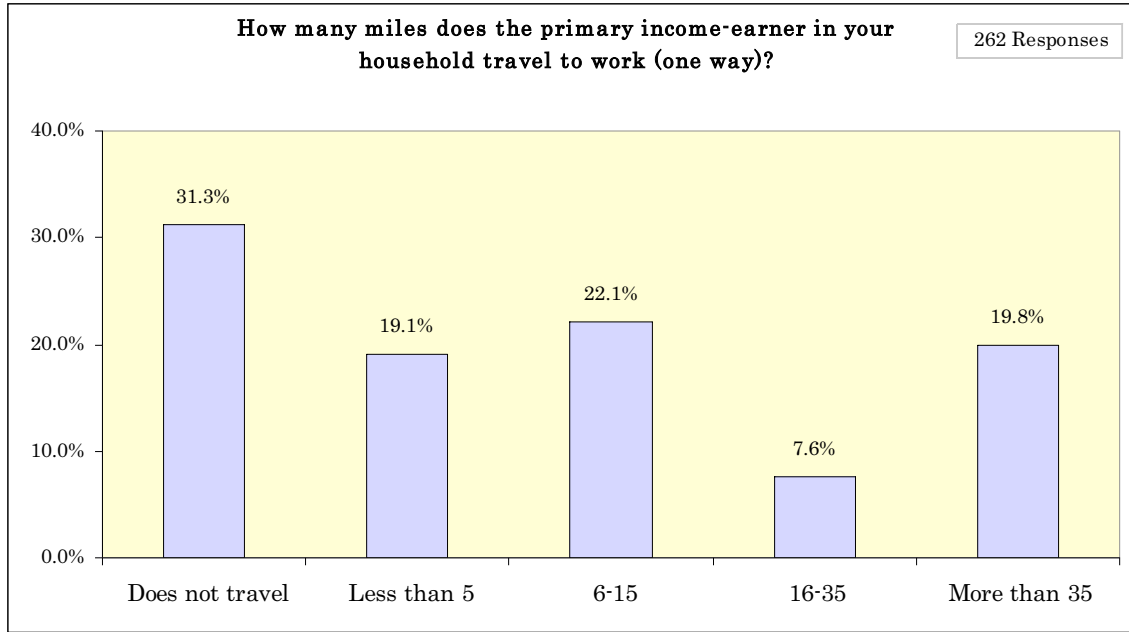


Characteristics related to the natural environment to be the most liked among survey respondents—with “near ocean/natural features” and “rural atmosphere” being chosen as 26.7% and 19.9% of respondents’ answers. “Friendly atmosphere” and “quality of public schools” form the second tier of the higher end of the most liked characteristics. Proximity amenities like “near Boston,” “near medical services,” and “near employer,” ranked in the middle of responses. “Cultural amenities” and “economy of living” were of the least importance to respondents.



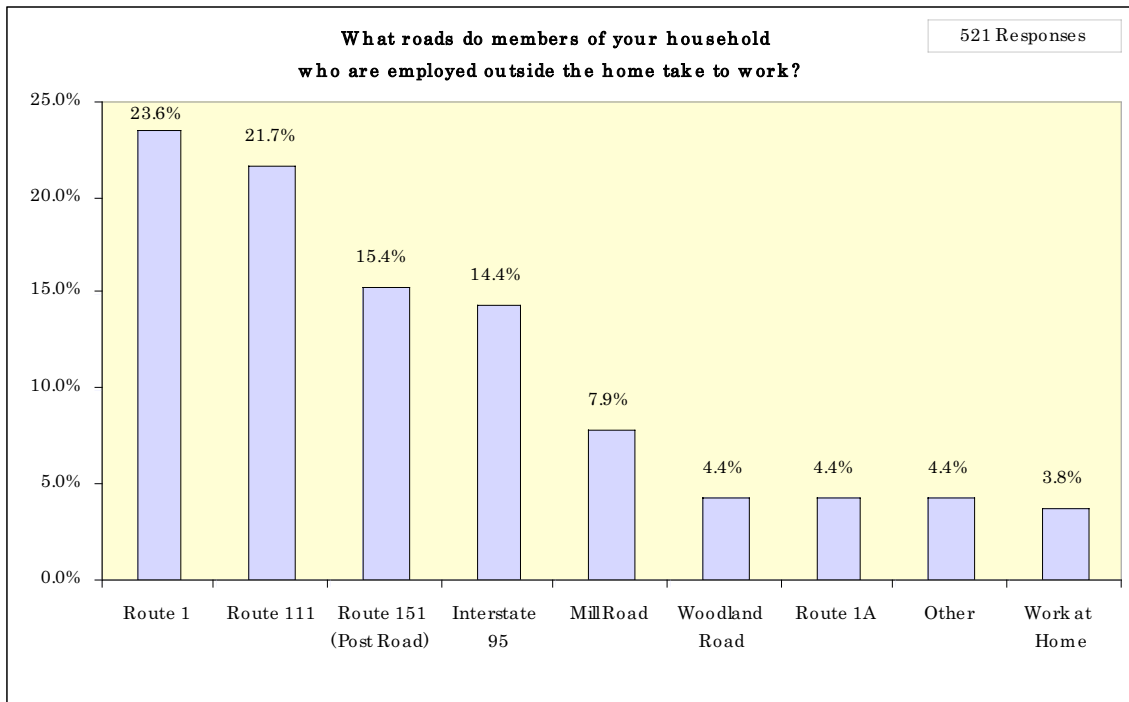
- The vast majority of respondents owned their own homes.
- Respondents were primarily employed full-time or retired.





The commuting patterns for survey respondents were varied. Almost a third did not travel for work, while approximately a fifth of them travel a short distance (less than 5 miles), a modest distance (6-15 miles) or a long distance (more than 35 miles). Relatively few people traveled an intermediate distance of 16 to 35 miles.

Route 1 and Route 111 are the most often used roads for these commutes. Post Road and I-95 are also used relatively frequently.

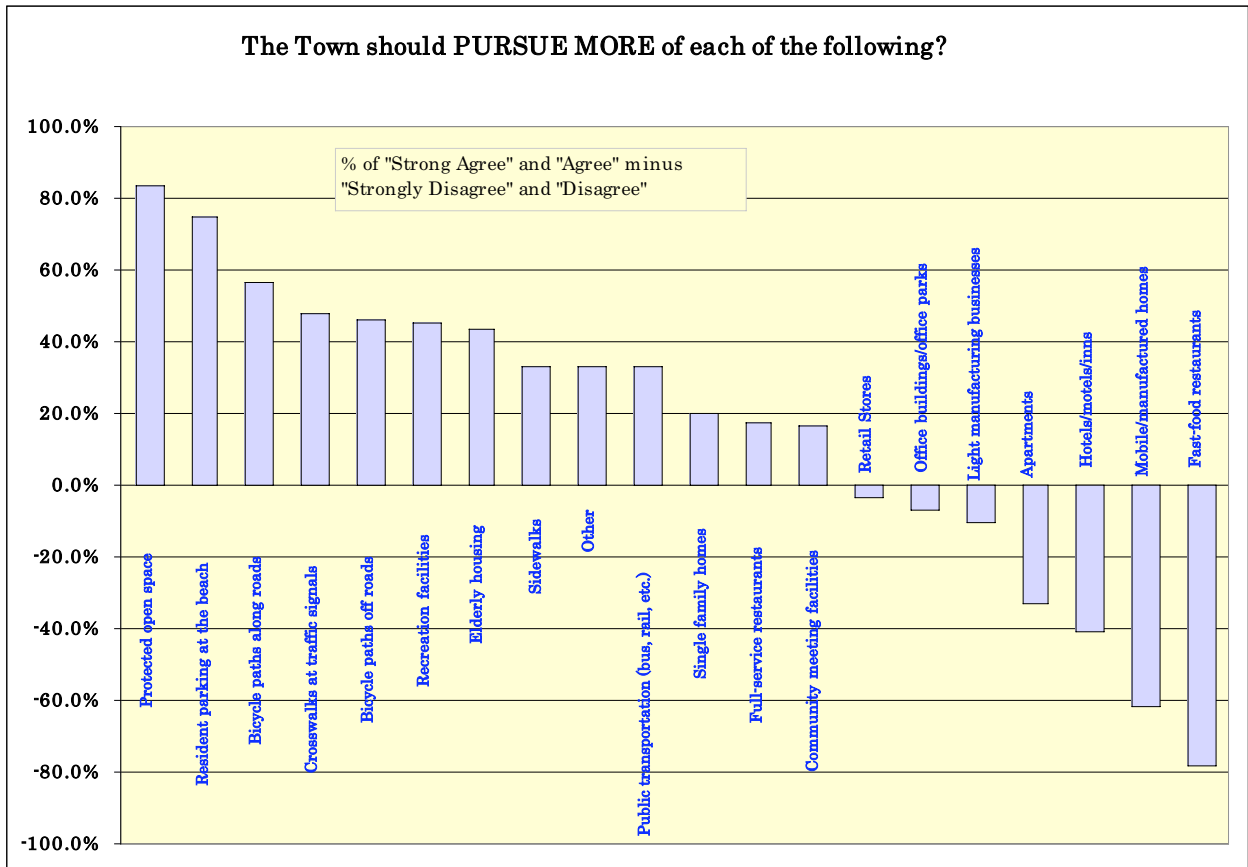


The table below lists the top four responses as to where do primary-income earners work.

- In-town workers were most common, followed by commuters to Portsmouth.
- Neighboring Hampton gets almost as many commuters (15) as the regional employment hub, Boston (17).
- No other community received more than 5 responses.
- There were 197 responses in all, and 56 different locations.
- 44 respondents commute to Massachusetts.

7. In what town or city does the primary income-earner in your household work?

Location	# of Responses
North Hampton	50
Portsmouth	36
Boston, MA	17
Hampton	15

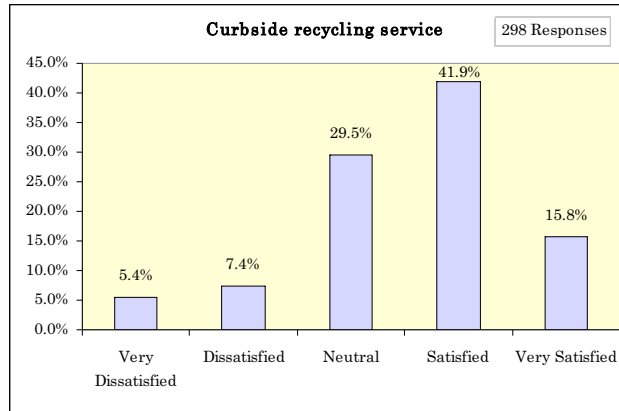
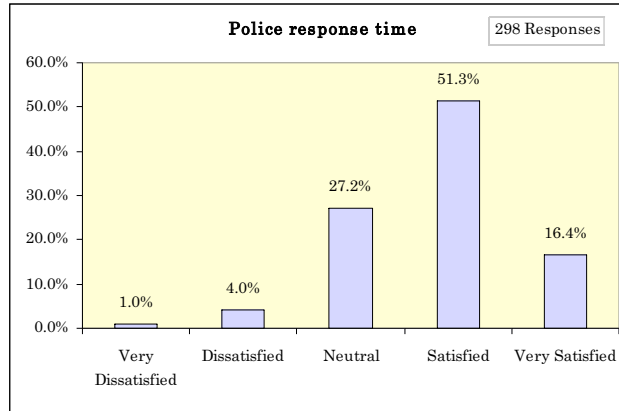
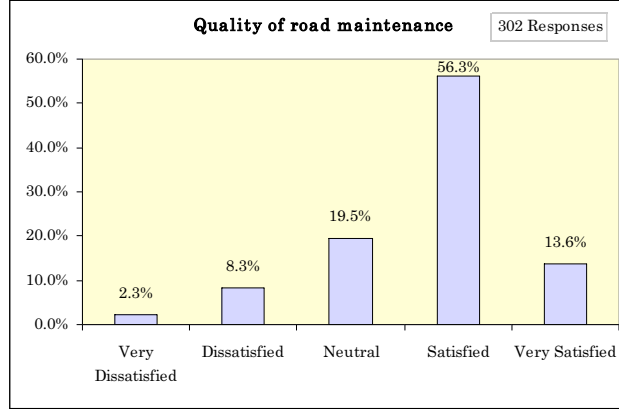


A preference for natural amenities was revealed again in the residents’ responses regarding what projects they were most in favor of pursuing more of as “protect open space” and “resident parking at the beach” were the top two categories measured in the % of “Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” minus “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree.”

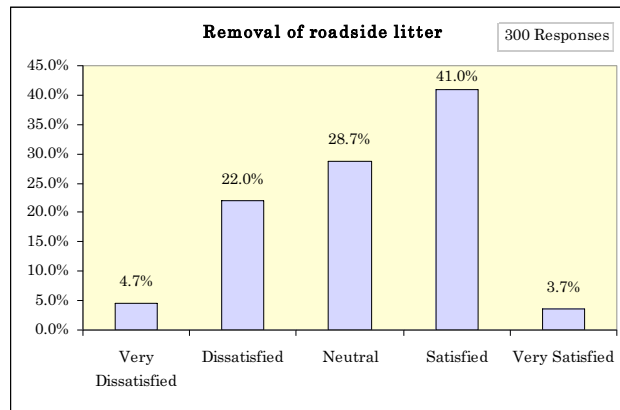
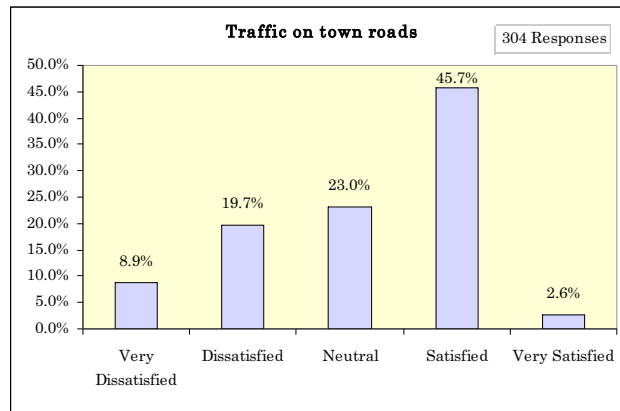
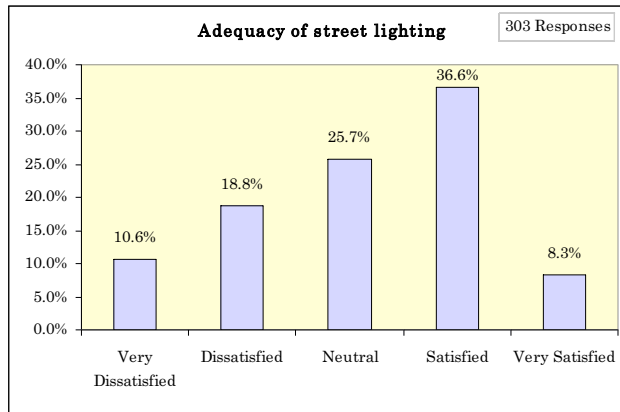
- Respondents also clearly favored more bicycle paths (along roads and off roads), crosswalks at traffic signals, recreation facilities, and elderly housing.
- Projects that respondents were somewhat favored were sidewalks, single family homes, full-service restaurants, and community meeting facilities.
- Respondents were slightly in disagreement with pursuing retail stores, office buildings or parks, and light manufacturing businesses.
- Projects that respondents were opposed to the pursuit of were, in order of least favored: fast-food restaurants, mobile/manufactured housing, hotels/motels/inns, and apartments.

Satisfaction with Aspects of the Town

High Satisfaction

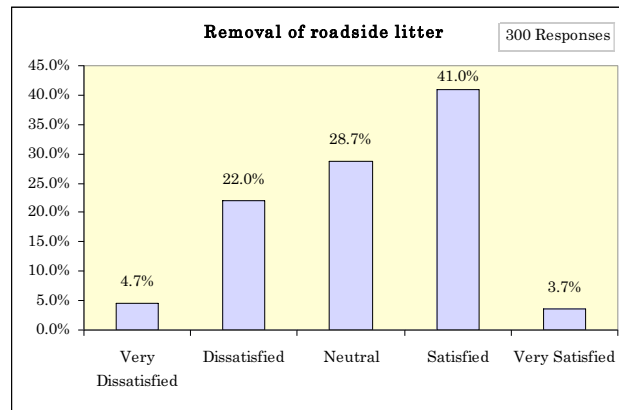
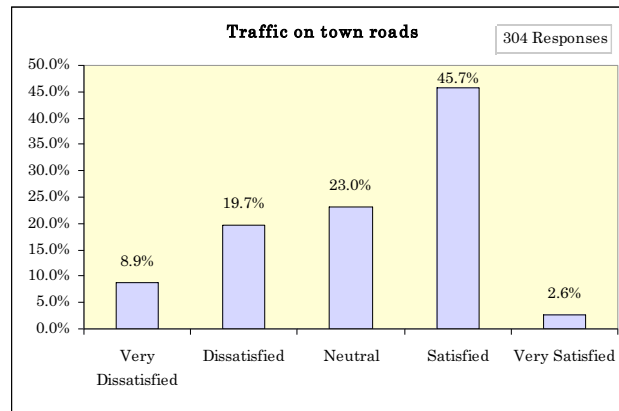
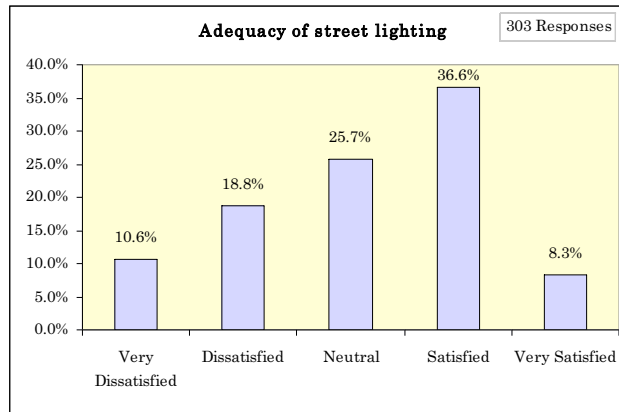


High Satisfaction



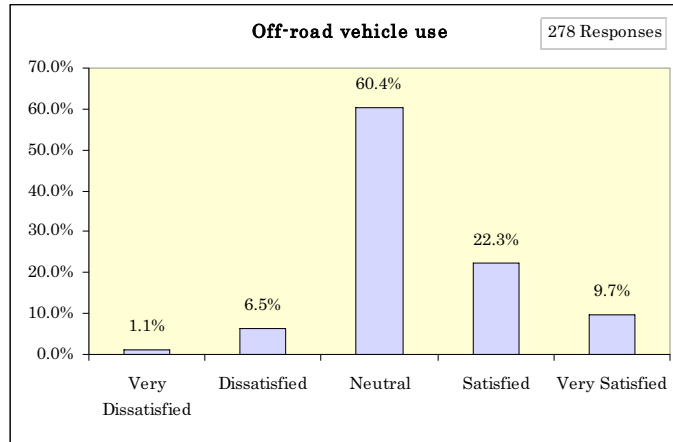
Municipal services and road-related aspects seem to be well regarded by survey respondents—road maintenance, litter removal, police response.

High Satisfaction



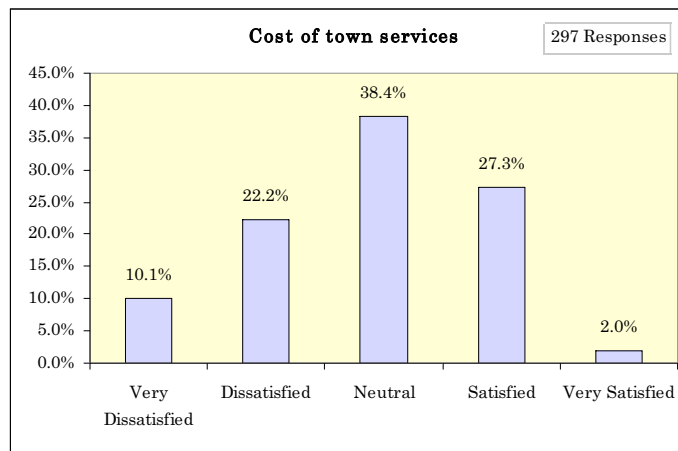
Municipal services and road-related aspects seem to be well regarded by survey respondents—road maintenance, litter removal, police response.

High/Neutral Satisfaction



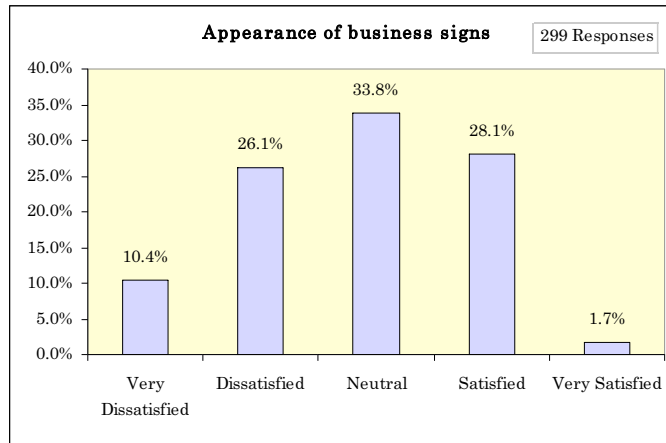
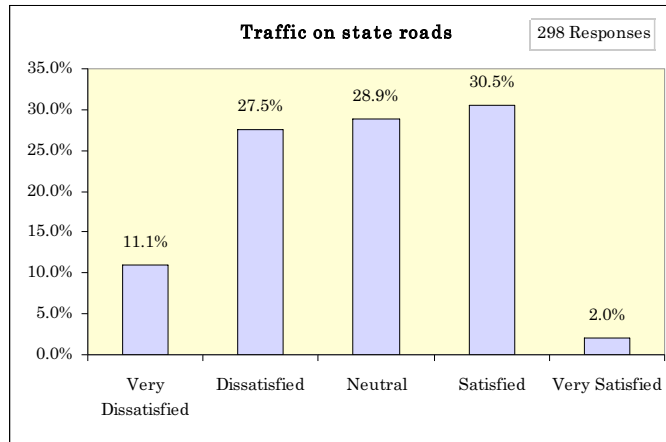
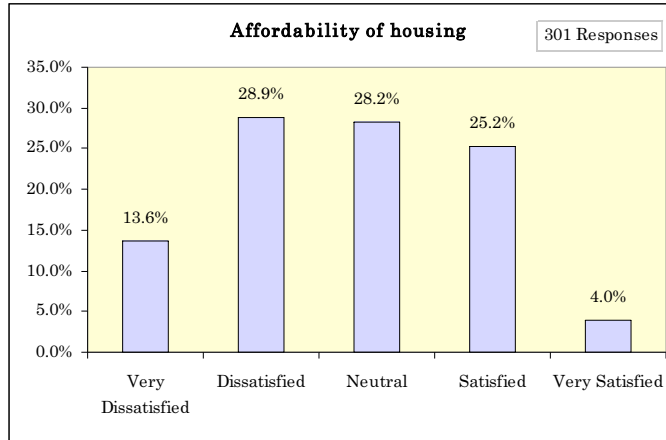
This could have been classified as high satisfaction, especially considering that there are very few people dissatisfied, but I’ve put it in the “High/Neutral” group because of the overwhelming neutral response.

Neutral Satisfaction

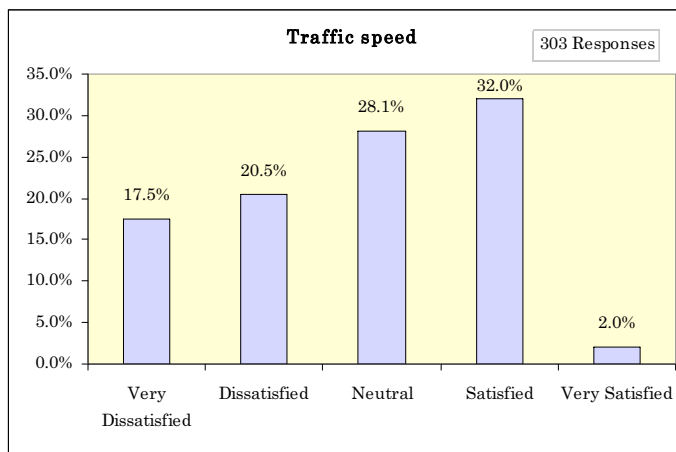
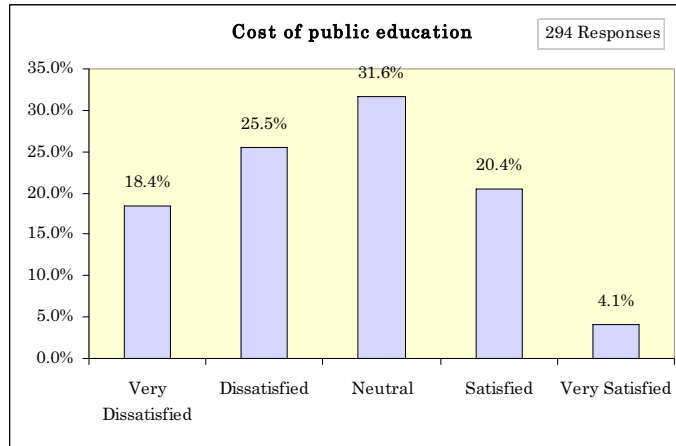


This seems in line with the higher satisfaction with many of the town services—not everybody is happy with the costs, but if people are mostly satisfied by the services, they probably feel the costs are appropriate.

Neutral/Low Satisfaction

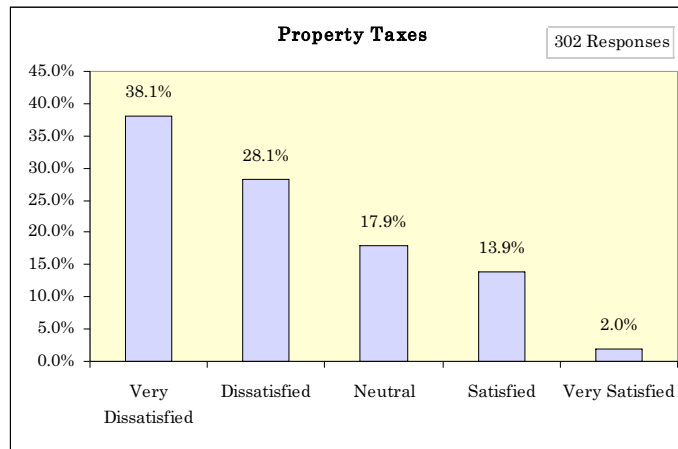
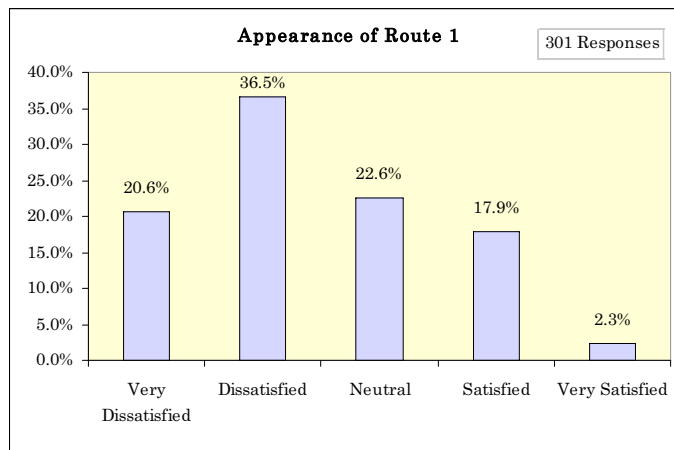
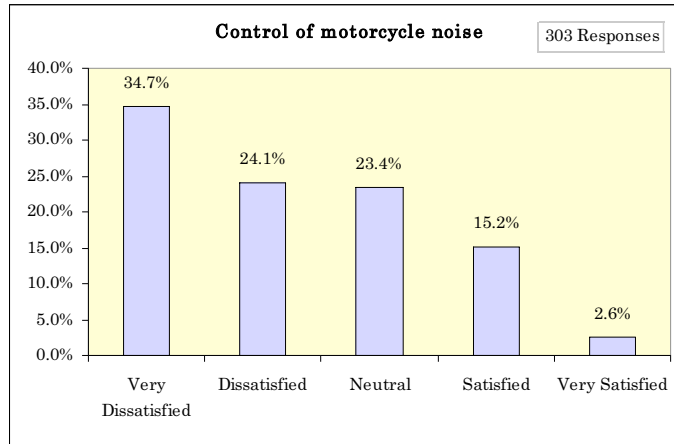


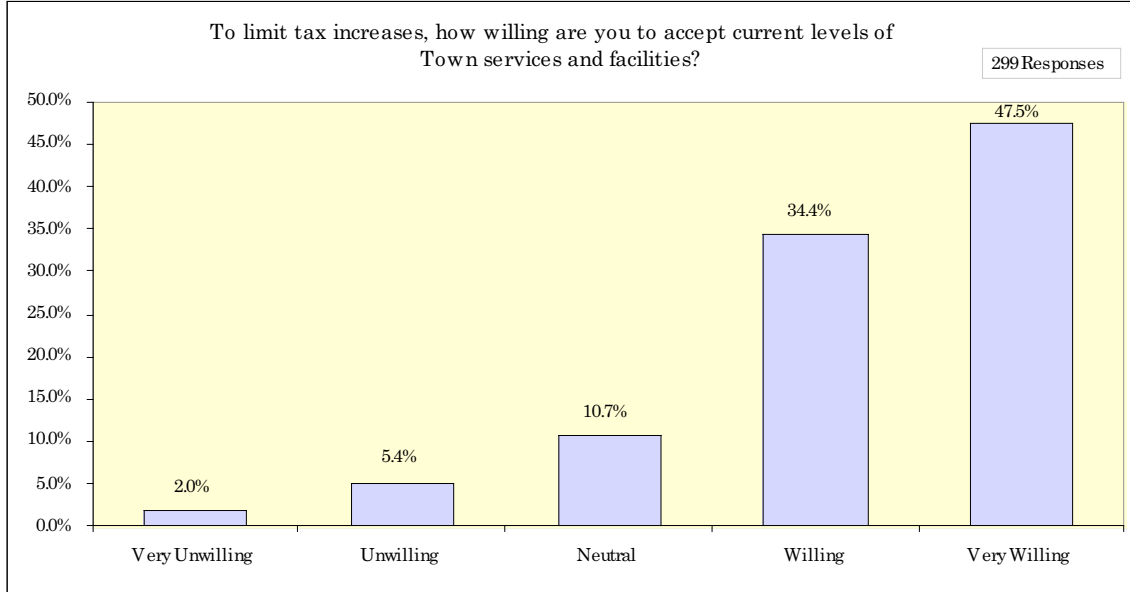
Neutral/Low Satisfaction



Housing and education costs, and traffic issues that are mostly related to the larger roads do produce responses with some dissatisfaction, but for most of these issues the majority falls in the neutral, satisfied, or very satisfied group.

Low Satisfaction





This is the result from question 12, but I'm putting it right after the results for question 9, because I think, in conjunction with the "Low Satisfaction" results—of which property taxes were had the lowest satisfaction—this chart makes is clear that respondents are not thrilled about taxes, but satisfied with current levels of services.

Regarding the other two "Low Satisfaction" results, they could both be seen as connected to traffic on some of the town's bigger roads. Traffic/development issues seem to garner negative responses (in addition to everybody's favorite: taxes).

Satisfaction with Town Services

Overall, town services receive very high rates of satisfaction, especially the library, the Clerk’s Office, North Hampton School, and the Police and Fire Departments.

Only two town services receive a significant degree of dissatisfaction: Zoning Enforcement and Tax Assessment. These two are probably the most likely to be seen as “taking” from or “regulating” residents, so this result is not terribly surprising. Winnacunnet High also receives a slightly higher percentage of “dissatisfied” responses than most of the other services.

How satisfied are you with the QUALITY of each of the following town services?					
	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Town Administration	3.1%	7.1%	33.0%	48.0%	8.8%
Building Inspection	4.5%	4.1%	41.1%	43.2%	7.2%
Zoning Enforcement	11.0%	17.9%	32.4%	35.2%	3.4%
Tax Assessment	15.5%	29.0%	27.2%	26.6%	1.7%
Tax Collection	3.8%	3.8%	36.0%	48.8%	7.6%
Police Department	0.7%	3.9%	11.5%	62.5%	21.4%
Fire Department/EMS	1.7%	3.3%	11.6%	54.0%	29.5%
Highway Department	1.3%	6.7%	23.7%	53.3%	15.0%
Clerk's Office	1.3%	2.0%	13.2%	49.5%	34.0%
Public Library	0.7%	4.3%	15.1%	43.4%	36.5%
North Hampton School	2.7%	6.0%	28.9%	35.6%	26.8%
Winnacunnet H.S.	5.1%	10.5%	45.8%	30.2%	8.5%
Recreation Department	1.0%	5.4%	44.6%	40.5%	8.4%
Recycling Center	1.0%	4.7%	34.9%	38.6%	20.8%
Brush Dump	0.7%	5.7%	40.4%	36.0%	17.2%
Welfare Administration	0.7%	1.4%	81.9%	14.4%	1.4%
Average for all Services	3.4%	7.2%	32.2%	41.4%	15.7%

Facilities, Services, and Regulations

WARNING: The results for this section may say more about human psychology than they do about what people really want in North Hampton. Items that used words like “expand,” “build,” “create,” or “construct” received “not needed” as the highest response. Items using words like “maintenance” or “purchase” had “might be needed” as their most common response. Meanwhile the most common responses to items using words like “protect,” “preserve,” “improve,” or “promote” were “definitely needed.”

Town Infrastructure

- Most respondents felt internet/telecommunications improvements might be needed or were definitely needed.
- Respondents were split on the need for expanding water lines.
- Parking at the town complex and a townwide sewer system were mostly considered not needed.

Public Library

- More than half of respondents thought expansion of the existing facility might be needed or was definitely needed. However, nearly third of respondents felt it was not needed.
- Though expansion might be favorable, over half of respondents felt a new facility was not needed and almost half felt that a space for town artifacts was not needed.

Highway Department

- The most popular response to building a new highway dept. facility was that it was not needed; however, a majority of respondents thought it might be needed or was definitely needed. It looks like most people would accept the expense, but they may take some convincing.
- Purchasing land for the facility was less popular, with over 40% responding that it was not needed (if the town already owns the land for the expansion the convincing I mentioned above could be easier than if they have to purchase land).
- Respondents were comfortable with the possibility that purchasing new equipment might be needed—over 75% responded “might be” or “definitely” needed.

Public Safety

- Respondents were favorable towards purchases on new equipment/vehicles for all departments, but were less convinced that new facilities, or consolidation of current facilities would be needed.

Town Administration

- More than half, or very close to half, of the respondents thought that expanding the offices, consolidating the offices, and building a recreation center were not needed.

Public School

- The majority of respondents did not think the existing facility needed to be expanded, a quarter though it might be needed, and very few felt it was definitely needed.

Land Use, Conservation, Planning and Zoning

- North Hampton residents, again, seem to have a strong affinity for the natural environment: almost 90% of respondents felt that protecting aquifers; and preserving forests, wetlands, and mature trees along roads either might be needed or were definitely needed.
- A slightly lower 80% of respondents think preserving stone walls and historic public buildings might be needed or is definitely needed.
- When presented with the idea of creating a capital fund to pay for the preservation of roadside trees, the majority still think this might be, or is definitely needed, but a significant portion (27%) thought that was not needed.
- About 70% of respondents felt that limits on the number of similar stores and the number of national franchise stores might be or definitely were needed. This implies that the residents prefer a more diverse, locally-owned commercial sector.
- Over 60% of respondents thought that businesses that bring in more taxes than they cost in services should be promoted (this rather clearly meshes with the earlier responses that showed dissatisfaction with taxes).

Importance of Features to the Character of a Rural NH Seacoast Town

- Every characteristic listed for this question received 74% or higher responses of “important” or “very important”—except for in-home/home-based businesses, which only received 58% in those two categories.
- Characteristics with the highest percentage of “very important” responses were: Drinkable water from private wells; healthy wetlands, streams, and ponds; land suitable for wildlife habitat; and forested areas.
- Besides in-home businesses, the remaining categories were all considered important, but there aren’t great variations in the degree to which they were considered so.