

# VILLAGE OF SPECULATOR MASTER PLAN DRAFT

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Purpose of the Master Plan*

In 2005, the Trustees of the Village of Speculator directed the Planning Board of the Village to update the current Comprehensive Master Plan which was written in 1971.



It was felt by the Village Board that a Plan independent of the Town's and a plan developed in accordance with our current land use code (which was adopted and updated in March 2001) would best address the concerns of Village residents. An ad hoc committee of the Planning Board was thus established. Members of the committee include: Bobbi Lynn Hoover, David Hughes, Paul Venier, Richard Marks, Beverly Hoffman, Cheryl Paestella and Karen McComb. A mix of full and part time residents as well as members of the Planning Board and Village Board were included. Kenneth Morrison, a member of the business community, also provided initial input to the Plan.

The intent of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide residents of Speculator with a means to successfully control future change in the Village. By following the objectives, goals and planning recommendations presented in this Plan, growth and change will be effectively managed while ensuring a high quality of our environment. Our current land use code is one of the tools used for implementing the goals and objectives of the Master Plan.

This community is a summer and winter resort area in the central Adirondacks where there is a small year-round and large summer population. Environmental factors are a critical factor in the Plan because of the necessity of preserving the natural resources of the area while providing appropriate recreational areas and facilities to accommodate full-time and seasonal residents as well as tourists. The intent of the Plan is to balance this with preservation of a historically traditional lifestyle and chosen way of life for residents.

While under New York State law, municipalities are granted the responsibility to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans, it is important to recognize the fact that the actions described are not requirements. They are recommendations to provide a direction and focus to Village leaders to help ensure that the community's needs will be met in the future.

## ***The Planning Process***

The direction for the Village of Speculator's comprehensive planning effort came from resident input received in a community survey conducted in March 2006 as well as subsequent public meetings.

A total of 482 surveys were mailed consisting of 422 property owners and 60 renters. The list of property owners was obtained from the Town of Lake Pleasant Tax rolls and a list of renters obtained from personal knowledge of those on the committee. From the 482 mailed, nine were returned as "undeliverable", resulting in 473 surveys being delivered. 185 returned surveys were included in the tabulation of results, a 39.2% response rate. (Appendix A)

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS**

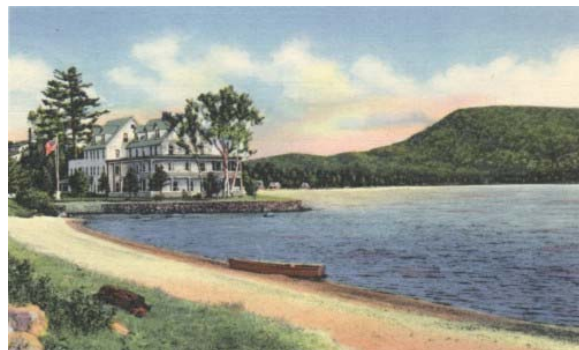
### ***A historical perspective***

The first settlers came to this central area of the Adirondacks in 1795. Inexpensive land was offered by New York City landowners to induce settlement. Settlers were lured by the heavily forested majestic mountains, abundant game for food and furs and the numerous lakes and streams which promised power to run saw mills and gristmills. A few hardy pioneers came to clear the wilderness land and build small self-sufficient farms.

Numerous obstacles faced the early settlers. Short, cool growing seasons meant adapting their farming to crops that would survive to feed themselves and their livestock. Settlers also faced the challenge of dealing with wild animals such as wolves, coyotes, bobcats and mountain lions. Since sheep did well on the rocky hillsides, cloth was manufactured in many homes. Apple orchards were planted with some success. A few small mills to craft woodenwares and tools were built. Some found income from shingle making and small dairies supplied butter, cheese and milk to local residents. In spite of their efforts, settlers found that development was slow and deprivations numerous. Many left to return to the Mohawk and Hudson Valley where jobs could be found that offered a steady income.

The several small settlements that existed at this time were separated by distance and lack of passable roads. Separate large townships were established. In 1812 the Town of Lake Pleasant was established with about 200 residents. It extended to the North indefinitely and the West to the Herkimer County line. Hamilton County, named in honor of Alexander Hamilton, became a "provisional" county in 1816, but its independent organization from Montgomery County was not completed until it achieved its mandated population of 1288 taxable inhabitants qualified to vote. It was not fully organized and detached from Montgomery County until 1837.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Town of Lake Pleasant, along with other neighboring townships, gave up land to form other townships, such as Morehouse (1835),



Osborne Inn on Lake Pleasant  
...early 1900's

Arietta (1836), Long Lake (1837), Indian Lake (1858), Inlet (1902) and Gilman (1839). The Town of Gilman stretched over 40 miles from Wells to Long Lake and soon was recognized as impractical and the land was annexed to neighboring towns and was abolished in 1860.

Gradually, settlement continued and two small communities developed separately (about 4 miles apart) near the lake known as "Lake Pleasant". One settlement was at the "head" of the lake and one was at the "foot". They were reached by different roads from the community of Wells to the South.

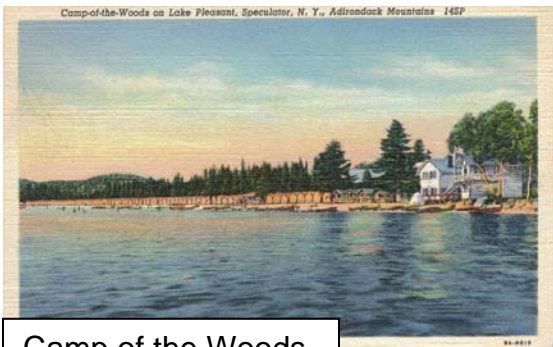
In 1844, Hezekiah Sage sought to develop a town at the "head" of the lake which he called "Sageville". The newly erected county buildings were located here as were a hotel (Lake Pleasant Inn), store and a few houses. The small settlement at the "foot" of the lake remained "Lake Pleasant" until 1864 when Joel Newton built a small store / hotel in the center of town and secured a Post Office with the name of "Newton's Corners". The Sturgess House, built around 1858, was located at the site of our current Post Office. Across the street was the "Annex".



Sturgess House

During this time, Page Hill and Page Street were included in "Newton's Corners". Joel Newton's structure burned about 1870 and the Post Office was discontinued for awhile. In 1882 Henry Dunning built a hotel (Lake Pleasant House) where Newton's had been. This later became the Brook's Hotel. In 1889 Henry B. Slack built a store on the Southeast corner (of the 4 corners) and took over the Post Office. Other prominent hotels of this area included The Wilbur House, The Speculator House, Orrin Dunning's Hotel, The Satterlee House, the Lewey Lake House, the Perkins House, Graham's Hotel and the Osborne Inn and Hotel. Many of these were eventually destroyed by fire and not rebuilt as the economy was changing.

In 1896, the community received a new name – "Speculator", after the prominent mountain seen across the lake. In 1897, the name of "Sageville" was changed to Lake Pleasant.



Camp of the Woods

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, more stores were established to meet the needs of tourists and the growing local population. Henry B. Slacks General Store, George Fuller's Meat Market and Schoonmaker's Drug Store were staples of the community. John Buyce's General Store was next to his blacksmith shop where he and his brother Alvah built the famous Buyce Boats. Lee Fountain made rustic furniture, a design which remains duplicated to this day. The movie theater was built in 1914 by Isaiah Perkins and the Grace United Methodist Church was finished in 1909.

In 1914, George Tibbitts bought land on Lake Pleasant and in 1915, Camp of the Woods opened with tents on the beach and the mission "to glorify Jesus Christ". Tents were used for housing until the 1950's but under the subsequent leadership of Gordon Purdy until 1986, tremendous growth and improvements occurred. In 1958, COTW bought the island on Lake Pleasant and in 1959 created Camp Tapawingo as a summer girl's camp. In addition to providing the ministry for which it was intended, Camp of the Woods continues to make improvements and expansions, provide work for local contractors, and an increased population for local businesses. As of 2005, COTW employs 35 full time staff members and over 250 summer staff members who help to accommodate the over 10,000 guests and campers who come to the facility. With over 500 Associate members, many have bought primary or secondary homes in the Speculator and Lake Pleasant area.

From 1930 to 1932, followers of the Christian ministry stayed at Cal Wilber's camp at "Oregon", an area at the end of the present Elm Lake Road. In 1933, this camp moved to the present location on Whitaker Lake and is known as "Deerfoot Lodge", a Christian camp for boys.

The Village is also home to the Grace United Methodist Church and North Country Bible Fellowship.

As the fame of the area for hunting and fishing became established, sportsmen from New York City and other urban areas came to Hamilton County and the Adirondacks in increasing numbers. They hired local men who knew the area to be their guides. Most guides listed their occupation as "farmers" on the 1905 census and by 1918 they were required to be licensed by New York State. Among the famous guides were the Sturges brothers, Silas Call, John Peltier, Edward Courtney, Marius Lawrence, George Perkins, David Satterlee, Silas Page, the Arnolds, Elmer and Edson Osgood, Cal Wilber, George Aird, several members of the Slack family and "Pants" Lawrence. Some of these family names still remain with local residents.

As growth escalated during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so did the lumbering operations. In the beginning, small sawmills provided lumber for local use. After the Civil War, an increased need for lumber led to the building of larger lumber mills near the Glens Falls area. At first, logging was prevalent along the upper Hudson River as rivers were used to float the logs to the mills. Later, the logging operations moved into the Speculator area and the Sacandaga River was used. The State designated rivers as "public highways" for moving the logs. Later, they were transported by trucks and better roads were built. There were a few small local logging operations who sold their logs to the larger companies and some of the local farmers found winter employment in the woods. They also supplied the meat, potatoes, and dairy products for the lumber camps as well as hay and feed for the horses.

Large parcels of land were bought by the lumber companies for their timber. Some of this land was later abandoned and became State land and this was the beginning of the "Adirondack Park" (designated in 1892). Some of this land is still owned by large lumber companies. Within the limits of the Village of Speculator, International Paper Co. had owned 13,185 acres of land. In 2005, International Paper entered into an agreement with the State of New York granting recreational easements on this land while retaining logging rights. In 2006, Lyme Timber Co. bought most of this land with transfer of the recreational easements. The

presence of this large landowner is an economic asset to our tax base, as are the 10,121 acres of land within the Village owned by New York State

In 1925, with support of voters, the Village of Speculator was incorporated with a mayor and two trustees.

Seeing the need to update and modernize the area, the Village purchased the small water system that Dexter Slack had in operation and expanded it. The Village had a generating plant and waterwheel installed at Christine Falls and by 1926 electricity was provided.

The Village purchased the ballfield and beach area in 1928 for \$12,000 from William B. and Annabelle Ronald. Efforts continued to attract tourists to the area. Starting in 1927, a toboggan slide was constructed of blocks of ice cut from the lake and hauled to Sturgess Mountain. Later, the County added a ski jump next to it as a "war memorial" project. The toboggan slide was abandoned in the early 1940's and ski slopes were combined into one effort on Oak Mountain in 1947. This continues to be a popular area for local and tourist skiing enthusiasts.

Shortly after World War I, famous boxers, such as Gene Tunney, Max Schmeling and Max Baer came to the area to train.

The Lake Pleasant Central School was built on East Road (presently Elm Lake Road) in 1929. It replaced all of the small one and two room schools located throughout the area, one of which was bought by the Village to become the Village Hall and garage. The original Central School existed until 2002 when it was replaced by its present structure. In 1973, the Village purchased 9.2 acres from the Town of Lake Pleasant on East Road and built a Highway Garage to house the snowplows, road equipment and garbage truck. Today, the Village disposes of waste and recyclables at the County transfer station in Lake Pleasant.

In 1929, a volunteer Village Fire Department replaced the former small company. A 1917 Model T car was remodeled with a wooden box to carry ladders, horses and other equipment. In 1936 a new fire truck was purchased. In 1970, the present fire hall was build and today has four fire trucks and 15 volunteer members.

The Depression of 1929 affected the area. The large hotels saw less patrons and the economy faltered here as it did in other areas of the country. The stability of the area was somewhat maintained by the fact that summer residents continued to come to their seasonal homes. Government work programs such as the W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration and C.C.C. (Civilian Conservation Corps) put men to work. Roads were worked on, the tennis courts in Speculator and Lake Pleasant were built, and in 1932, the State campsite on Moffit's Beach was built. The C.C.C. buildings in Lake Pleasant later became the 4-H camps.

By the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the area continued to focus on tourism. Commercial businesses within the area and the logging operations continue to this day to be the main source of income for year round residents. Municipal buildings were expanded to meet the growing needs of the Village. The Village Sewer system and treatment plant was built in 1974 and the water system was updated with wells and a storage tank in 1994. The Senior Citizens organization purchased the former Texaco station in 1978 and replaced it with a meeting and activity center.

The Speculator Volunteer Ambulance Corps continues to be an independent organization formed under the leadership of Philip Mulleedy in 1970. The current building which houses a new ambulance purchased in 2006 was built in 1981. Today, the ambulance corps has about 32 members who are highly trained and provide an indispensable asset to the community. Being a volunteer entity and operating solely on private donations, their existence is threatened by the limiting factor of new volunteers. This is a major concern in our Village as well as for the entire area that they serve.

Enrichment to the area had also been achieved by the Village building a public Pavilion (1986), playground and basketball court. Our public beach and ball field comprises about 12 acres of land located on the north shore of Lake Pleasant and ball field continue to be popular attractions. Due to the donation of Osborne's Point by Dr. David and Gloria Fant, the Village has a designated park. Cross Country ski trails were developed in the 1970's and a Mountain Bike trail in 2001. The Sacandaga River Community Park has made the diverse ecology of the area available to everyone with handicap accessibility possible. With educational markers located along its path, future plans anticipate the Pathway to extend to Kunjamuck Cave.

Escalation of community development resulted in a Health Center and new library built in 2003. Both are run under the auspice of the Town of Lake Pleasant. It is anticipated that the old library will house a future museum.

The Village of Speculator is rich in history and tradition. The creation of a Master Plan will help to preserve our historic character while building a foundation for controlled growth and development which is in keeping with this tradition.

### ***Site and land use characteristics***

The Village of Speculator is located within Hamilton County, New York and is the only incorporated Village within the County. It has a total area of 47.2 square miles. 44.7 square miles (94.7%) of it is land and 2.6 square miles (5.3%) is water. Located on the north end of scenic Lake Pleasant, the elevation of the Village is 1739 feet. Residents often refer to the Village as the "four corners" due to the fact that the middle of the business district lies at or near the intersection of NYS 8 and NYS 30 which has been designated by New York State as Scenic Byways. The Village is part of both The Southern Adirondack Trail and the Adirondack Trail.

All of the land within Hamilton County lies within the Adirondack Park, a six million acre preserves created in 1892. The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) is the New York State government agency established in 1971 which monitors any development of private land owners in the Park as well as in the Adirondack Preserve (state owned land within the Park). The main landowners within the Village are the State of New York (10,121 acres) and Lyme Timber (12,200 acres). Together, this comprises approximately 91.2% of the total land (approximately 25,362 acres) within the Village owned by New York State or Lyme Timber. The remaining 8.8% is privately owned.

Land use within the Village is regulated by the Village Land Use Code, which was updated and adopted in March 2001. Since the Village lies within the Adirondack Park, land use is also subject to the regulations of the Adirondack Park Agency. Table 1 illustrates the

APA Land Classification Acreage Statistics (calculated in March 2003 by the APA GIS system: all numbers are approximate). Based on these statistics, less than 10% of land in the Village of Speculator is available for commercial or residential development.

Table 1

Land classification	Acreage	Percent
Hamlet	1,188	4.68%
Moderate Intensity	127	0.50%
Low Intensity	687	2.71%
Rural Use	470	1.85%
Resource management	15,192	59.90%
Wilderness	3,792	14.95%
Primitive	50	0.20%
Wild Forest	2,139	8.43%
Intensive Use	11	0.04%
Open water	1,712	6.75%
Total Village	25,362	

Respondents to the Village survey (see Appendix), support the concept that development concurs with current zoning regulations and a high priority put on protection of our natural resources. The Village is divided into twelve zoning districts as listed in the Land Use Code manual.

Demographics

In order to provide a Village profile to prioritize future needs, demographic and economic statistics were compiled. This information can be useful in planning for future growth and development needs. Population, age and median income are relevant factors which subsequently impact the housing and economic market. The following information was obtained from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data. As defined by the Census Bureau, a household includes all persons who occupy a housing unit. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more persons living together, or any other group of (related or unrelated) individuals who share a living arrangement outside of an institution.

Table 2

Total population (U.S. Census Bureau)	Village of Speculator	Change 1990-2000
1990	400	
2000	348	-13%
Households		
1990	148	
2000	163	+9.2%
Housing units		

1990	474	
2000	484	+2.1%
Owner occupied housing units		
1990	113	
2000	115	+1.7%
Renter occupied		
1990	50	
2000	48	-0.4%
Seasonal units		
1990	291	
2000	309	+5.8%
Vacant units/ for rent		
1990	20	
2000	12	-40%

As seen by the preceding table, the Village's population dropped by 13% between 1990 and 2000. This is in comparison to Hamilton County population that increased 1.9% and the Town of Lake Pleasant that decreased 1.2%.

Table 3

Village age distribution (U.S. Census Bureau)	Total Population	Under 5	5-19	20-54	55+
1990	400	20	72	186	122
2000	348	13	46	148	141

In 2000, 40.5% of the Village population was over the age of 55. It is important to note that while the percentage of older residents in the Village has grown by 10% within the decade, the percentage of residents between the ages of 20-54 decreased 4% (from 46.5% in 1990 to 42.5% in 2000). Therefore, the Village's population drop is concentrated among the community's younger residents. . Goal 8 of the Plan addresses the need to foster economic development which would provide the incentive to increase economic opportunities among the younger work force population.

Correlating the decline in overall population with the increase in the number of seasonal units, it appears that there is a shift to more second homeowners within the Village who are not full time residents. An increase in the tax base within this population may have a favorable effect on economies of scale, as these residents only utilize Village services on a seasonal basis



Table 4

Economic Characteristics	Number/ Village	New York State	Hamilton Co.
Households with income	153	7,060,595	2,382
Median household income in 1999	33,393	43,393	32,287
Per capita income in 1999	25,089	23,389	18,643
% of families below poverty level	4.3	11.5	6.0

In comparison to Hamilton County and New York State, 2000 census data compiled for the year 1999 indicates that median household income within the Village was 3.3% higher than the County average but 23% below the State median household income.

### *Housing*

Planning for the future involves an assessment of the housing needs of a community. The trend in number of households has a direct impact on the demand for housing. Housing units increased by 2.1% in the Village in the decade of 1990-2000. A more recent analysis of building permits issued provides evidence that this trend is increasing. This is illustrated in the following table.

Table 5

Permits issued within The Village	New residential	New commercial
2004	6	3
2005	5	4
2006	10	3

The retention and strengthening of the character of the Village should be a central factor in determining appropriate location and design of new housing. This is outlined further in the Mission Statement and Goals.

In spite of the overall decrease in population, housing units are increasing. This mismatch parallels that seen throughout the United States as smaller households are emerging due to aging populations, increased divorce rates and increased single living.

The overall work force within Hamilton County has remained relatively stable over the years. Fluctuations occur during the summer months as the need for seasonal employees increases.

Results of the resident survey indicate that 66% of respondents are in favor of multiple unit housing which fall within the guidelines of the current land use code.

In consideration of the respondents overall satisfaction of the quality of life in the Village and the need to preserve the nature of the community, any long term housing programs need to be based on a multi-faceted approach which involves smart growth principles which balance short term and long term housing needs. Economic and environmental feasibility studies are needed to ascertain the need for and consequences of the establishment of mixed income housing development.

## **Infrastructure**

A community's infrastructure has a direct impact on commercial and residential development. The availability of water and sewer, public utilities, and maintenance of roads and highways are important to Village residents and businesses. In order to maintain the existing economic base and attract new businesses to the area, a well-planned infrastructure for the future is critical.

### **Capital Improvement Plan**

The Village should consider implementing a Capital Improvement Plan. The Plan should involve components of the Highway Department, the Fire Department and the Water and Sewer Departments. All of these entities fall within the jurisdiction and responsibility of Village officials. The Plan should also include coordination with the Department of Transportation to meet the highest standards of safety along Routes 8/30 within the Village.

### **Highway Department**

The Village of Speculator Highway Department has many responsibilities. Currently employing five full time and two seasonal employees, they oversee maintenance of all Village buildings, vehicles and roads. The Village owned garbage truck picks up garbage on a weekly schedule and twice weekly to businesses. During the summer months, garbage is picked up twice weekly to residences as well. Their duties also include maintaining the ball field, cemetery, cross country ski trails and pavilion. Often their services are shared with the Town when necessitated.

### **Fire Department**

The Village fire station was built in 1969. The three bay concrete block building is located off State Routes 30 and 8 opposite the municipal beach. A helipad is adjacent to the building which serves as a landing site for air emergency apparatus. The Village owns the fire department building, grounds and apparatus. The 17 (3/07) dedicated volunteer members of the fire department are active in fund raising activities to support their cause.

Grants have been approved for much of the equipment, including the recently acquired Jaws of Life. They have also received grants for an air refill station, air packs and generators. The department diligently works to obtain high ISO ratings which directly impact homeowner's insurance premiums. Any monies received by the department in excess of grant money received are reimbursed to the Village. The department will also be involved in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in conjunction with Town and County entities.

During the past five years, the Department has been called out an average of 23 times per year.

The members of the Village of Speculator Fire Department are to be commended for their commitment to excellence and dedication. Currently there are four trucks, the oldest of which is a 1979 tanker which is in need of upgrading. As the number of buildings in the community continue to grow, planning for the future goals of the Department include:

- Upgrading the 1979 tanker and 1980 mini pumper
- The addition of more up-to-date trucks
- A two year replacement plan for other equipment
- Renovation to the outside of the firehall, and
- The addition of at least one bay to the firehall.

The highest priority should be placed on supporting the needs of the Fire Department and included in a Capital Improvement Plan.

### **Wastewater (Sewer) System**

The existing wastewater treatment facility was constructed in 1974. It was designed and is operated as an extended aeration, activated sludge treatment facility to provide secondary treatment. In addition to that our collection system involves 4 submersible pump stations and one grinder pump system. The Village maintains a land application site for its wastewater treatment plant sludge. In 1995 modifications were made to the treatment plant based on an engineering study by Lamont, VanDeValk Engineers, P.C. Guidance and financial assistance was received from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYSEFC). Many of the components of the system were upgraded at that time but a recent asset management analysis indicates that limited longevity warrants replacement costs in the near future. The Village Capital Improvement Plan would address these upgrades and plan for future expansion and upgrades of the system.

The 1995 study identified several potential collection system extensions within the Village. The Elm Lake Road extension was completed in 2007. The department, however, experienced a period of unprojected growth with the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. New homes in the Black Bear Run subdivision, on Elm Lake Road, and some along Route 8 contributed to the growth of the Village. Some are seasonal with nearly 40% of the new homes as year-round residents. Currently, the facility has a design capacity and a SPDES Permit Effluent Limit of 0.300MGD (million gallons per day) Additional growth allowances to service Route 8 West to the Village line and Route 30 North to the Village line were included in the 1995 study and it appears that our current system has the capability to meet this expansion.

Our land application site for biosolids was renewed in 2006 which involves DEC and APA. This permit is good until 2011. Our application site does provide for future expansion.

Prior to 1996, the facility employed a disinfection system for the effluent. In 1996, this was eliminated from our NYS permit because we no longer used Lake Pleasant for our water-drinking source. There is also a growing concern over chlorine byproducts. It has long been recognized that the chlorination of water results in harmful byproducts (chemicals). This has the potential for damage to our eco system and aquatic environment. Disinfection, therefore, is not a viable option. In order to disinfect, it must be part of our DEC permit and DEC does not recommend it for our system.

### **Water Department**

Currently our water system services all areas of the village except the Lewey Lake area, County Route 11 (South Shore Road) and areas south of Camp of the Woods on Routes 8/30. Our water is supplied by two deep bedrock drilled wells. Evaluation of the system has shown

we have ample reserves for expansion. The cost of expansion is limited by the economies of scale and the Village should explore any considerations for expansion.

In 2006, the NYS Dept. of Health completed a source water assessment for the system. The assessment includes an assigned susceptibility rating based on the risk posed by each possible source of contamination and how easily contaminants can move through the ground to the wells. The susceptibility rating is only a rough estimate of the potential for contamination of the source water and it does not mean that the water delivered to consumers is, or will be contaminated. While the source water assessment has rated the two wells as having an elevated susceptibility to contamination, no significant sources of contamination were identified. The wells draw from an unconfined aquifer and overlying soils are not known to provide adequate protection from contamination. The water supply is therefore disinfected to ensure that the water delivered to residents meets the New York State's drinking water standards for microbiological contamination.

Future water source protection activities will be monitored by NYS Dept. of Health and may include water quality monitoring, resource management, planning and educational programs. Initiation of a Village Capital Improvement Plan should include components of the water system which may need upgrading in the future.

The objective of the Wastewater and Water departments is to operate within the guidelines set by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYS Department of Health. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Maintaining staffing at required levels of certification
- Operation of both systems within the guidelines required by law
- Following the required preventative maintenance plans
- Adherence to a structured replacement schedule through Capital Reserve Funds and
- Adherence to an Asset Management Plan.

Goals have been set for both of these departments as the Village looks to improvement in infrastructure investment according to the goals for expansion and the limited financial resources available to satisfy these goals.

- Enhance our water and sewer systems maps with GIS capabilities
- Improve and enhance our meter reading capabilities
- Replace waterlines in areas of high traffic
- Replace waterlines in areas of older, inadequate pipelines
- Extend the water lines to provide more flexibility in areas of Route 30 and Route 8
- Extend the collection system to areas where feasible and
- Enhance our treatment capabilities at the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

All other infrastructure and utility components are under the control of private entities. The Village should work closely with these entities to be aware of advances in technology and products which would enhance service to the Village.

## **Cable and Phone Service**

Telecommunications to the Village is provided by Frontier Communications which also offers DSL internet options to most areas of the Village. The Village needs to explore options with private companies to provide enhanced technological parameters such as high-speed internet services. This is a critical component to future attraction of businesses and overall development within the Village.

Hamilton County/Gore Mountain Cable TV provides Cable television service.

## **Power Utilities**

National Grid is the sole provider of electrical service. The Village needs to work closely with this entity in order to formulate a plan for reliable power initiatives.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Economic development creates employment and a tax base for the community. The components of economic development include industrial activity, commercial establishments, professional services and recreational venues. As a predominant tourist community, the economy of the Village has historically been based on commerce focused on commercial and recreational venues.

A necessary balance between the maintenance of the character of the Village that makes it a good place to live and visit and being open to outside innovation and ideas is a challenge. Maintaining our historical character and environment should play a central role in any objectives related to commercial development and tourism promotion.

### **Business district/commercial**

The commercial center for the Lake Pleasant and Speculator community is located around the intersection of Routes 8 and 30. In order to preserve the vitality of the residential areas, and to enhance the strength of the commercial area, it is recommended that in the future, commercial uses be concentrated to the greatest extent around the center of the Village (the four corners) and residential areas be kept free of commercial encroachment.

The need for a new Village Hall and Visitor Information Center should be seriously considered located at or near the Routes 8 and 30 intersection. The building should be designed to complement the character of the Village, have ample off-street parking and access drives carefully located so as not to increase any additional congestion of the intersection.

Current signage regulations as defined in the current land use code should be strictly enforced. It would also seem desirable for the businesses along the state highways to give serious consideration to designating an architectural theme or motif which would tend to identify the character of the community. Located at a central location, signage-indicating points of interest in the community should be erected. More attractive benches, trash receptacles, etc. should be provided for the convenience of visitors in the community as well as to enhance the appearance of the entire business district.

With tourism being the main industry in the community, the future economy of the Village depends on further strengthening the Village's preeminence in this area. Village character is an economic asset that draws both businesses and residents to the area. The Village is also an attractive retail destination for customers from the surrounding regions. A primary goal of the Village must be to attract quality businesses.

## **Employment**

While the Village has been challenged in attracting new business to the area, the number of businesses and the number of persons employed remain relatively constant. Being a seasonal tourism community, the NYS Dept. of Labor lists 37 businesses (as of Sept. 2006) within the Village with an average of 305 total employees. These include seasonal businesses, non-profits and service related industry (school, banking, health care). This does not include self employed or family businesses. There are an additional number of sole proprietorships in the Village.

In order to attract new business to the area and increase the employment base, greater attention must be given to skill development and technical training. Partnerships with the local school district and community colleges is a means of addressing these training needs in the hope that the Village will remain attractive to young workers. While somewhat remote from major cities, the Village is located at the crossroads of two designated Adirondack Trails. A small regional seasonal airport is located in close proximity. The benefits of being included in a New York State Empire Zone would bring added incentives to businesses to locate here. An Economic Development Plan should be instituted with neighboring Towns and the County.

## **Recreation**

The Village of Speculator Public recreational facilities in the Village include the public beach on Lake Pleasant, a 12-acre park across from the beach which is composed of a covered pavilion, ball field and basketball court. Immediately adjacent to the beach is a riverfront extension of the Park, formerly known as Osborne's Point. It is anticipated that a public dock will be erected adjacent to the beach funding for which was obtained by the Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association. A limited access fishing access site to the Sacandaga River provides entry to Lake Pleasant for small watercraft such as canoes, kayaks and small fishing craft.

The Sacandaga River Community Park is located adjacent to the ball field. The Pathway, as it is commonly known, includes educational displays, picnic areas and moderately handicapped accessible areas and an opportunity for residents and visitors to explore wetlands, transitional forest and upland timber ecology.

Building on the tourism trade also brings the challenge of providing accommodations for visitors. During the peak summer season, the limited number of season rentals may prevent visitors from staying here. This is somewhat offset by the presence of two New York State campsites located in close proximity (Moffit's Beach and Lewey Lake).

## **Preservation of natural resources**

Important consideration should be given to environmental protection and preservation of natural resources. Within the Village boundaries are many bodies of water, the most visible is Lake Pleasant. Other bodies include parts of Elm Lake, Pine Lakes, Lewey Lake and other rivers and streams. It is crucial to protect these bodies of water from any degradation such as milfoil infestation. Monitoring by the Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association is to be supported and encouraged by all residents. A variety of fish can be found within these waters and fishing for Rainbow trout, Brown trout, bass, pickerel, yellow perch, bullheads and Walleye is a popular attraction. Fishing is an attractive draw to the area and programs to enhance and promote this should be pursued. Boating and fishing is also very popular along the Kunjamuck and Sacandaga River. Working with local organizations and surrounding communities to preserve the integrity and purity of these waters should be a high priority of the Village.

## COMMUNITY VISION

### *Vision Statement*

*In the decades ahead, the Village of Speculator will remain a family oriented community offering a balance between controlled growth and open space, and an expanded range of recreational facilities for current residents and tourists. Sense of community will continue to be the driving force which has made this a favorable place to live. The Village will strive to maintain and enhance those entities which have brought both full time and seasonal residents to this area. A wide range of quality housing options will be provided as dictated in our land use code. The Village will continue to provide the best quality of services in so far as our water supply, sewer treatment, highway department and fire protection is concerned. Emphasis will continue to be placed on recreation, trail systems, support of youth activities and community events.*

### **GOAL 1:**

**Maintain the simple rustic character of the Village while promoting economic growth.**

- Ensure that zoning requirements are adhered to while allowing some flexibility in design of guidelines to property owners to remodel or manage their properties in a manner that is consistent with maintaining or enhancing this character.

### **Goal 2:**

**Preserve the historic nature of the community.**

- Encourage guidelines which protect this historic nature in so far as site developments being compatible with adjacent historic landmarks.

### **Goal 3:**

**Promote and preserve the nature of the Village which predominantly consists of single or double family residences while encouraging new housing for current or new residents to the area.**

- Support adherence to our land use codes in such a manner that density and lot coverage are not compromised
- Promote options for affordable multiple unit housing in areas that are compatible with our current zoning ordinances. Consider options for assisted/senior housing and development as proposed by the Village elders.
- Carefully review requests for subdivision allotments in order to monitor high density development.



#### **Goal 4:**

**Preserve the natural resources of the Village, including open space, lakes, wetlands and woodlands.**

- Maintain adherence to our current land use codes which monitor development in environmentally sensitive areas
- Develop cooperative relationships with adjacent communities, such as the Town of Lake Pleasant, to insure that development in these areas are compatible with preservation of these resources
- Ensure that any development be in harmony with the surrounding natural resources
- Monitor the quality of our lakes in regards to invasive plants and animal organisms
- Insure that enforcement and education of water safety is a priority.

#### **Goal 5:**

**Expand, where economically and physically possible, our water and sewer systems while protecting our public water supply.**

- Seek options to expand our sewer and water system to new development and existing areas in such a manner that protection of the natural pristine beauty and health of lakes and watersheds are a priority
- Coordinate with state and federal agencies to develop methodologies that will continually enhance our present system
- Carefully monitor development in areas that could jeopardize the quality of our public water
- Routinely monitor and upgrade our wellhead protection plan which was adopted in 1996

#### **Goal 6:**

**Enhance the communication infrastructure of the Village.**

- Partner with surrounding Towns, the County and New York State to explore the establishment of enhanced telecommunication and broadband networks. A strong technology infrastructure can help attract and retain business and allow our community to remain competitive in the future.

#### **Goal 7:**

**Provide for adequate facilities and services that respond to the needs of residents and the business community.**

- Insure that the local power grid can provide reliable electrical power for the present and for all future demands
- Recognizing the increased demand for a safe, appropriate pathway for pedestrians, jogging and bicycling uses in the community, coordinate with the State Department of Transportation such that any proposed upgrades on State Highways meet the design

criteria dictated by the Village Board and such upgrades mirrors the likeness of a rural Adirondack Village

- Seek options and proposals for development and improvement in our sidewalks where feasible
- Maintain strong support of Village fire protection and ambulance services
- Seek options for signage that would limit excessive noise from highway traffic

#### **Goal 8:**

##### **Foster area economic growth and enhanced employment opportunities.**

- Development a Capital Improvement Plan which would establish goals for future development.
- In concert with the Town of Lake Pleasant and Hamilton County Economic Committee champion the state to put this area on the map as an economic center for positive growth of population and job enhancement
- Working with other local entities and municipalities, develop an economic plan that would actively recruit new businesses to the area. Insure that any new development would be in harmony with our land use codes and natural resources and eminent domain would not be supported.
- Investigate through all resources of the county and state possibilities for advanced educational programs that would provide the necessary courses that would improve our work force marketability.
- Seek a job-training center, perhaps through local school districts that could provide a better-trained local work force that is able to meet employer's skill demands.

#### **Goal 9:**

##### **Promote tourism.**

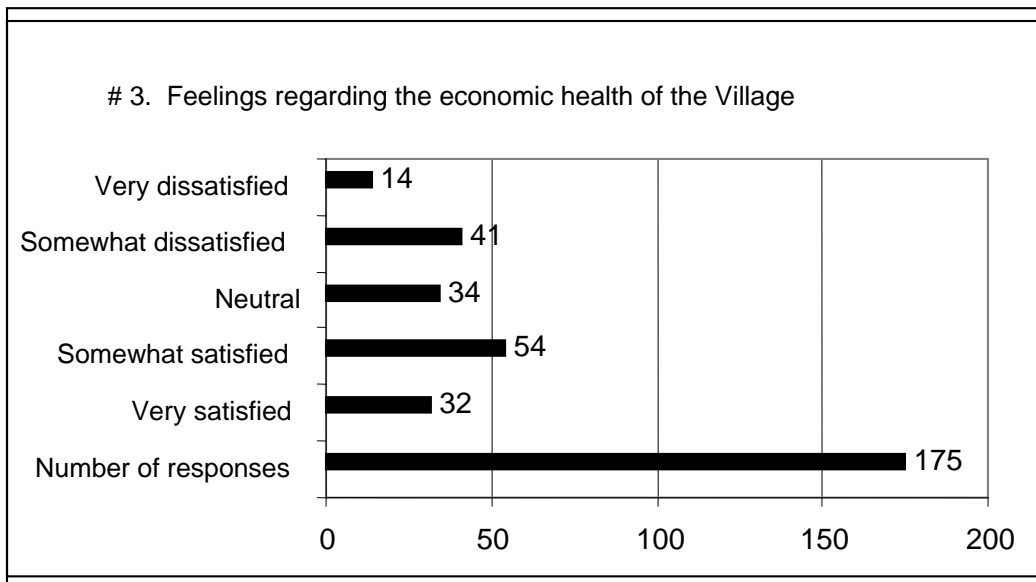
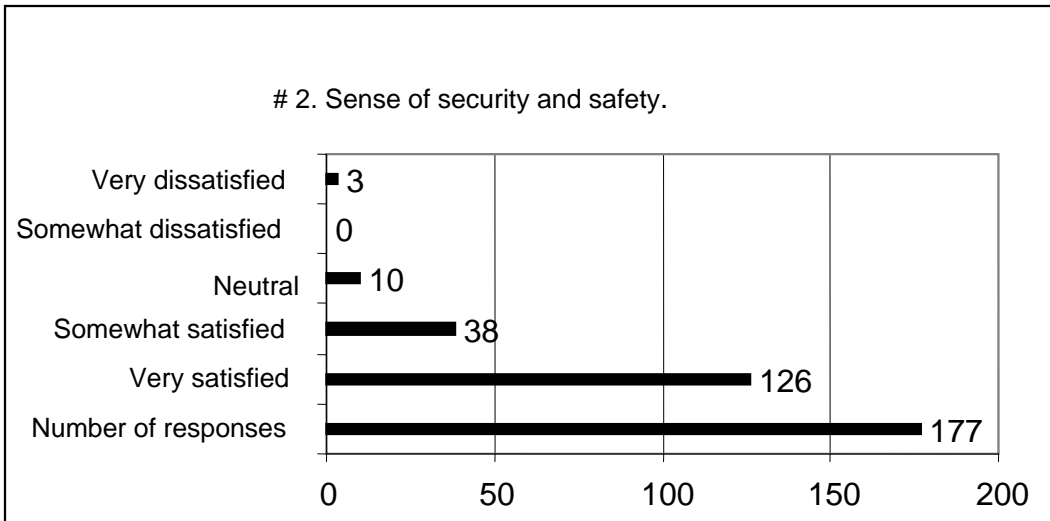
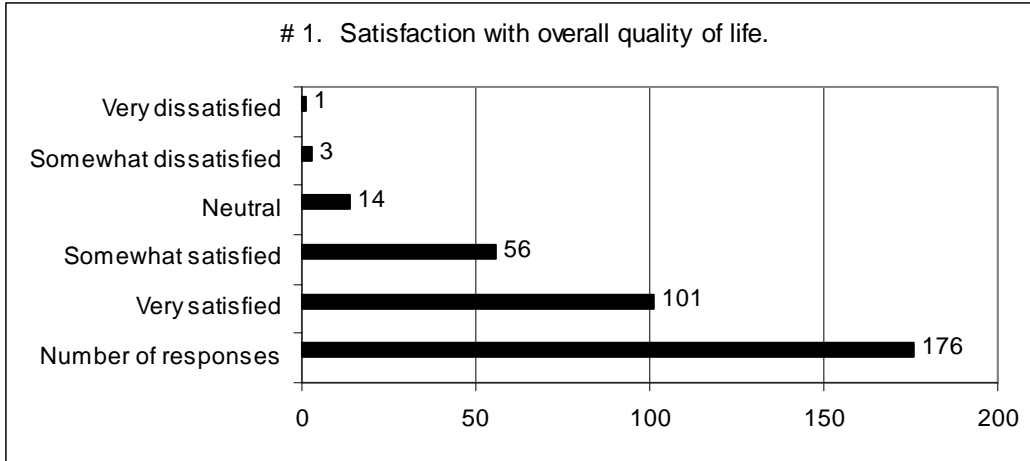
- Working with other local entities and municipalities, continue to market this area for outdoor activities which include, but not limited to water sport, skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, camping, fishing, birding, golfing, hiking, biking and tennis
- Increase awareness of the area through adequate advertising (pamphlets, internet). Expand our advertising as a designated New York State scenic byway (Adirondack Trail and Southern Adirondack Trail)
- Develop a strong bond between local businesses and local clubs to insure that all our trail systems (hiking, biking, and snowmobiling) are in peak condition. Insure that such information is readily available through our town/village/chamber of commerce website/ phone system
- Encourage infrastructure enhancements which promote our tourism industry such as development of a master signage plan which directs visitors to points of interest
- Promote the usage of an enhanced public boat launch, public beach and public docks.
- Working with Town, County and State agencies, foster development of short term rental units where allowed by Village zoning codes.

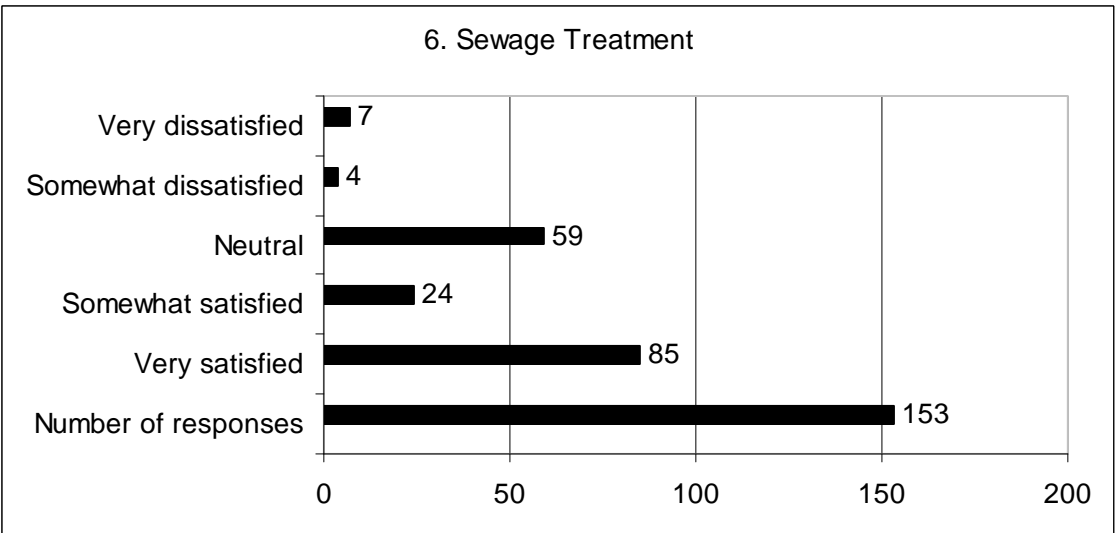
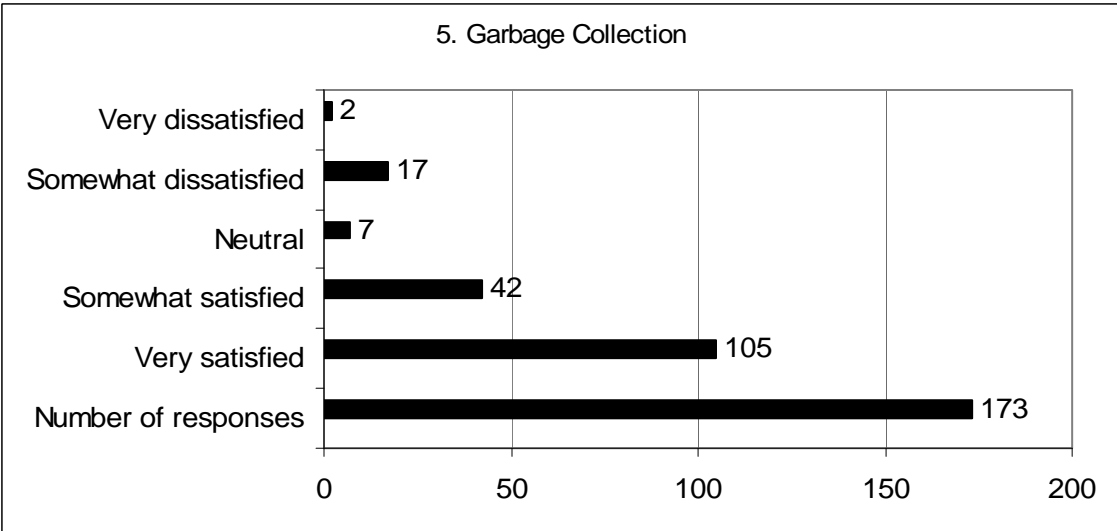
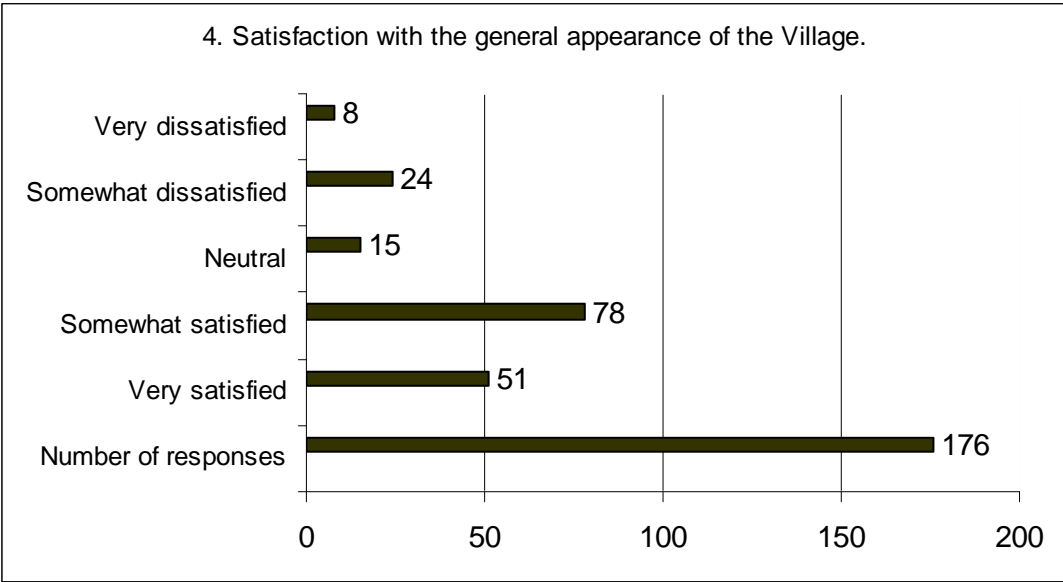
## **Summary**

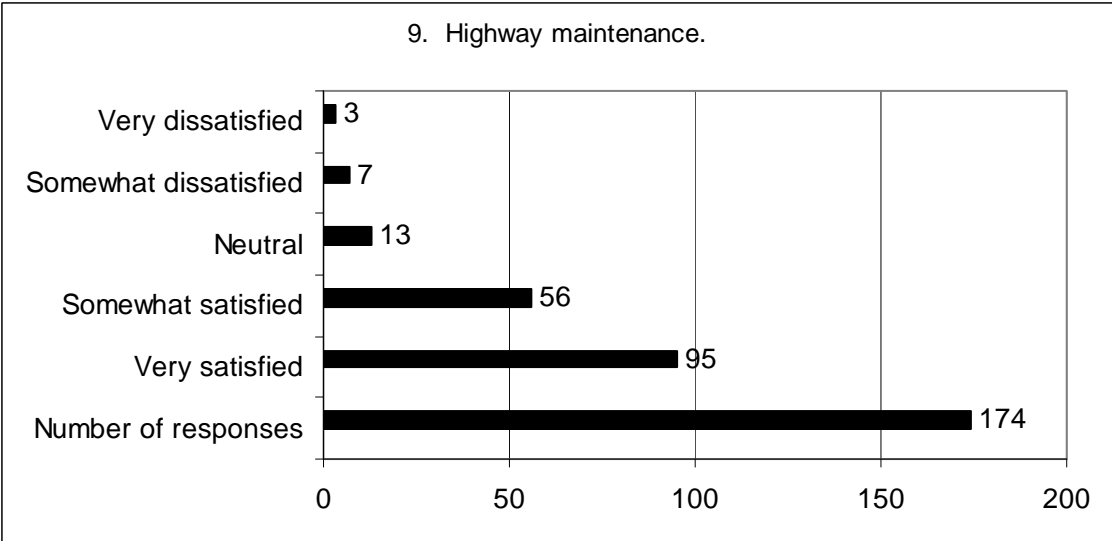
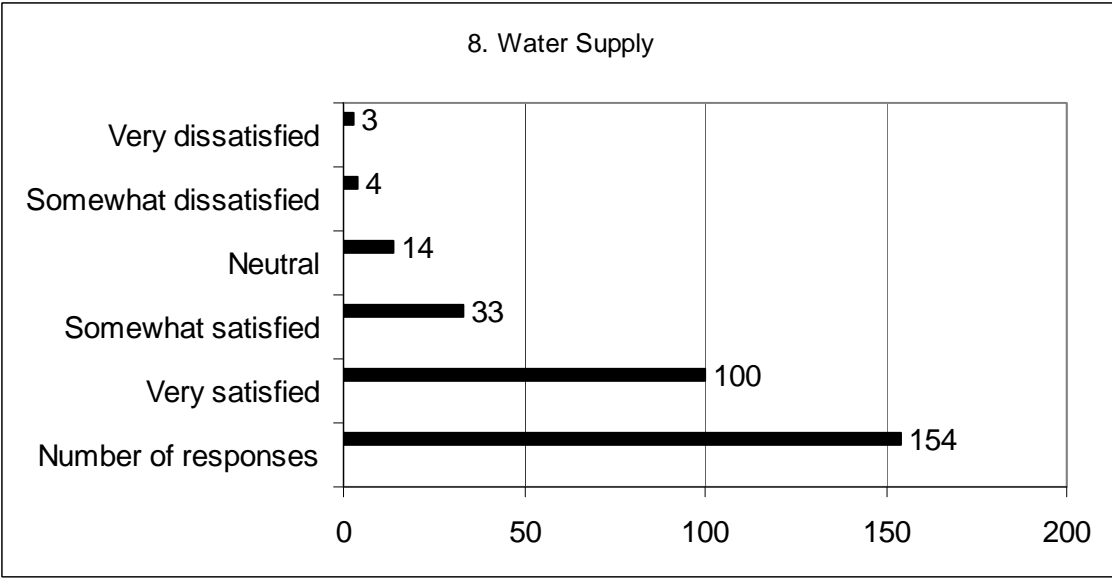
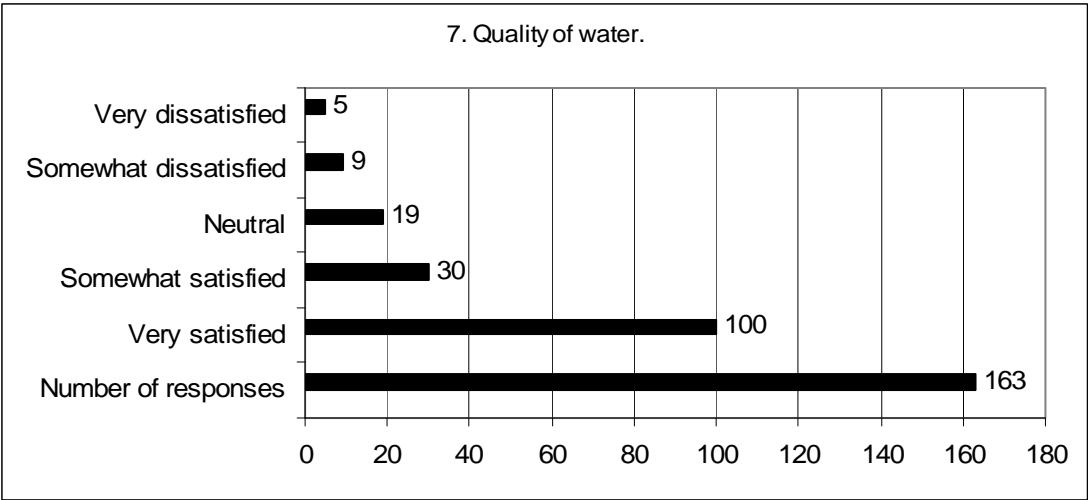
The Village of Speculator Master Plan is the culmination of meetings held by a volunteer committee comprised of full and part time Village residents. The direction for the Village of Speculator's comprehensive planning effort came from resident input received in a community survey conducted in March 2006 as well as subsequent public meetings.

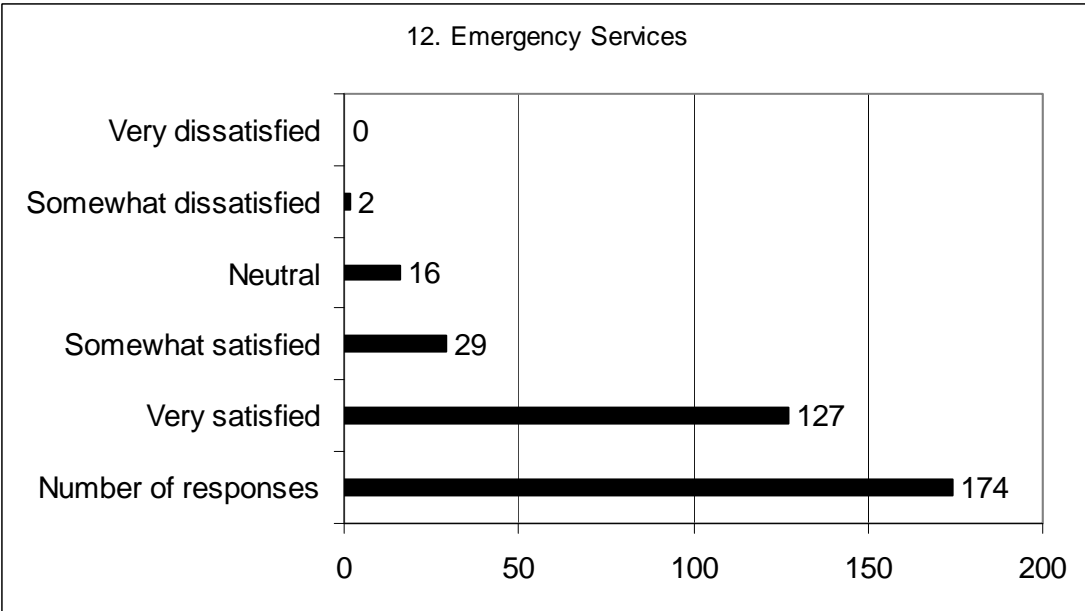
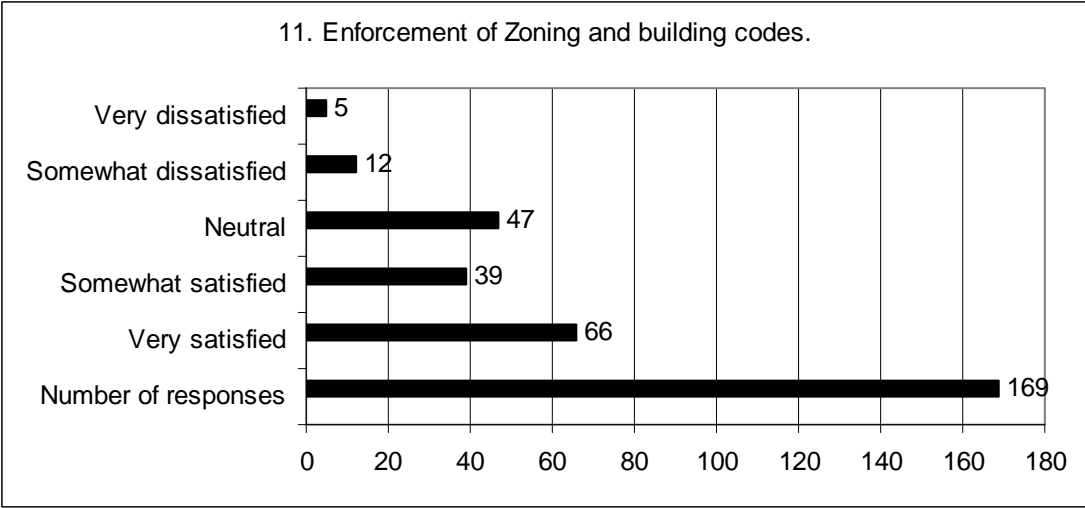
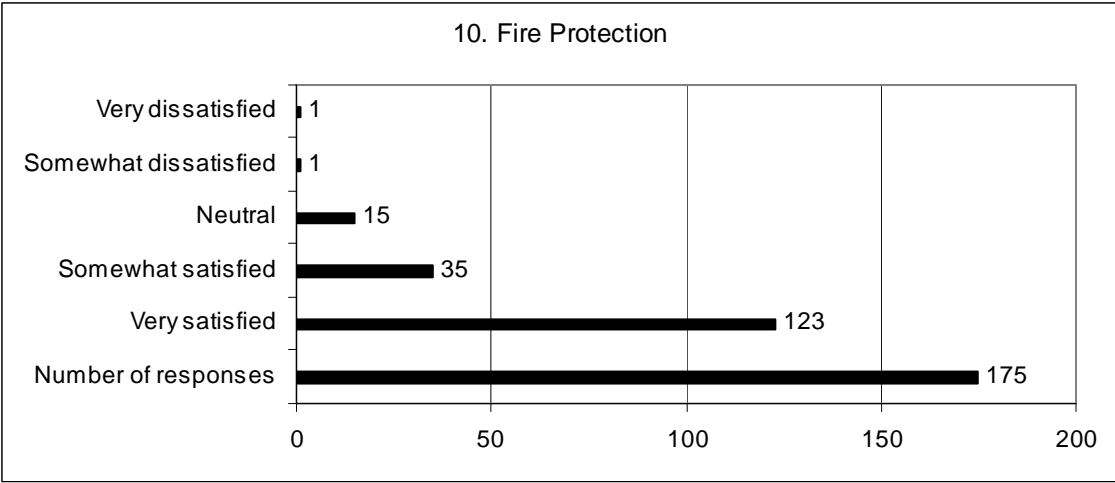
The Plan recognizes that the Village is the economic hub of the community. The goals which have been recommended will, when implemented, promote the preservation of the Village's historic and environmental resources while promoting economic growth.

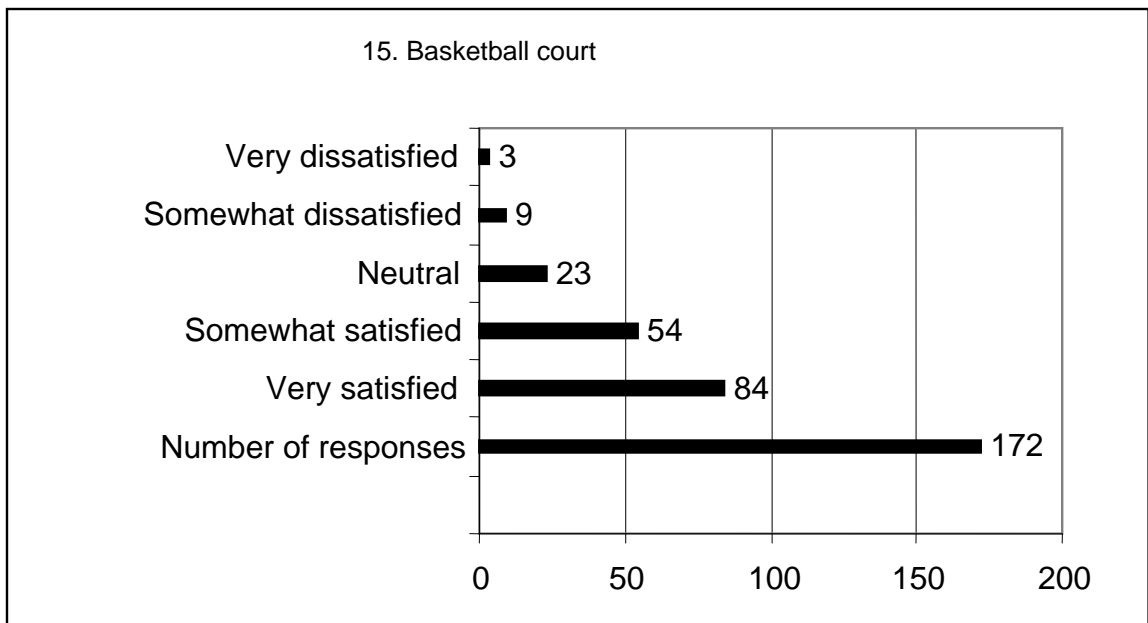
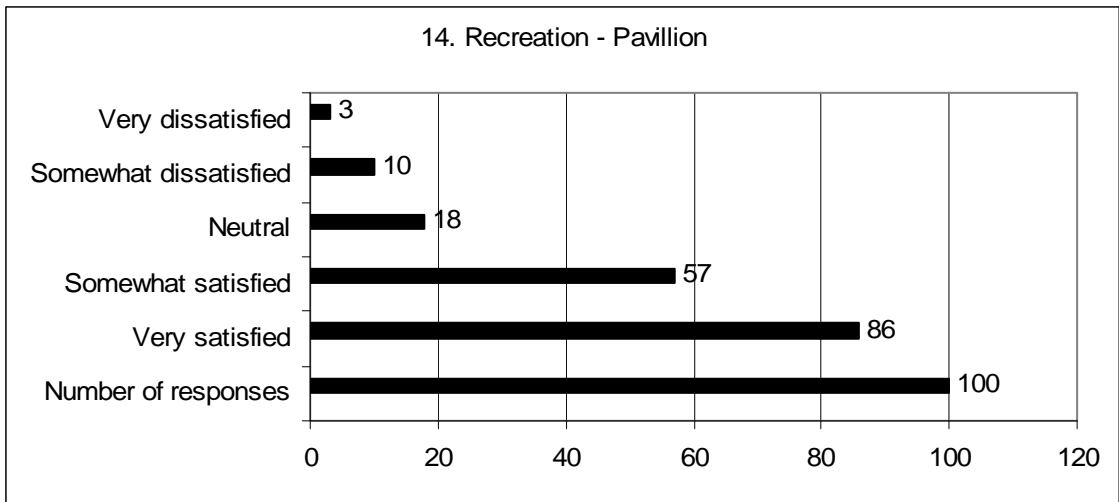
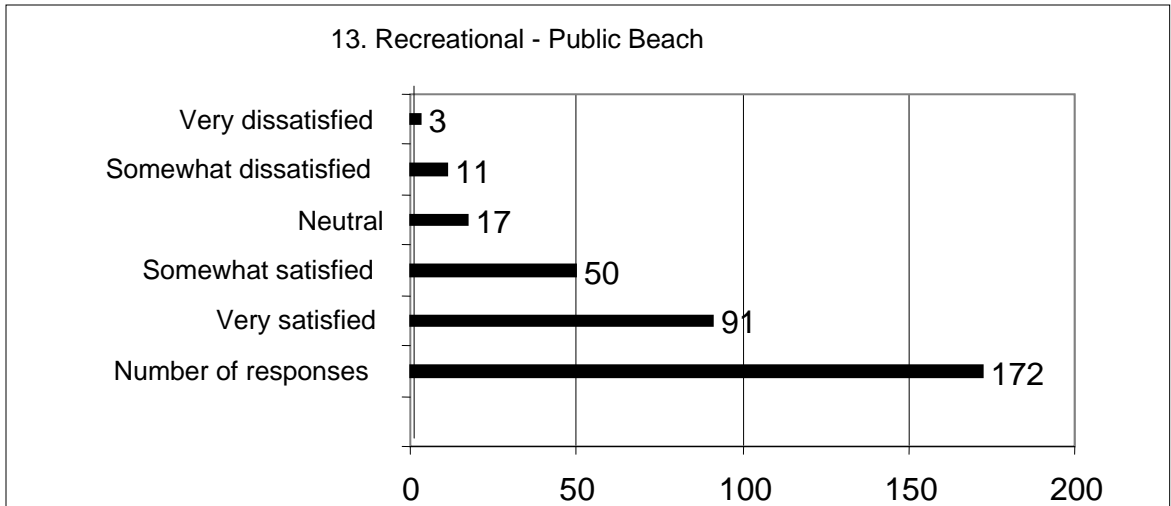
**APPENDIX A  
SUMMARY OF TOTAL RESPONSES  
188 SURVEYS TABULATED**



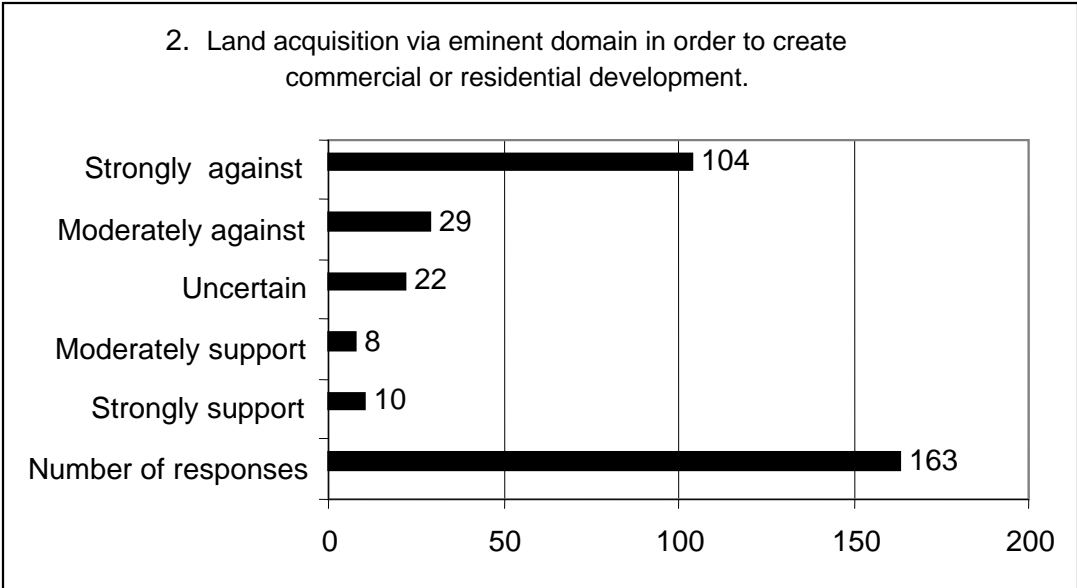
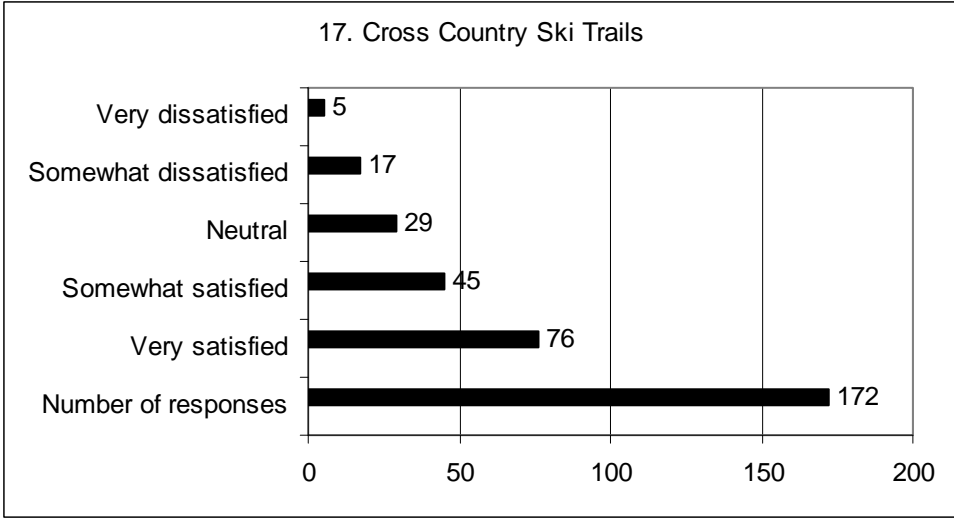
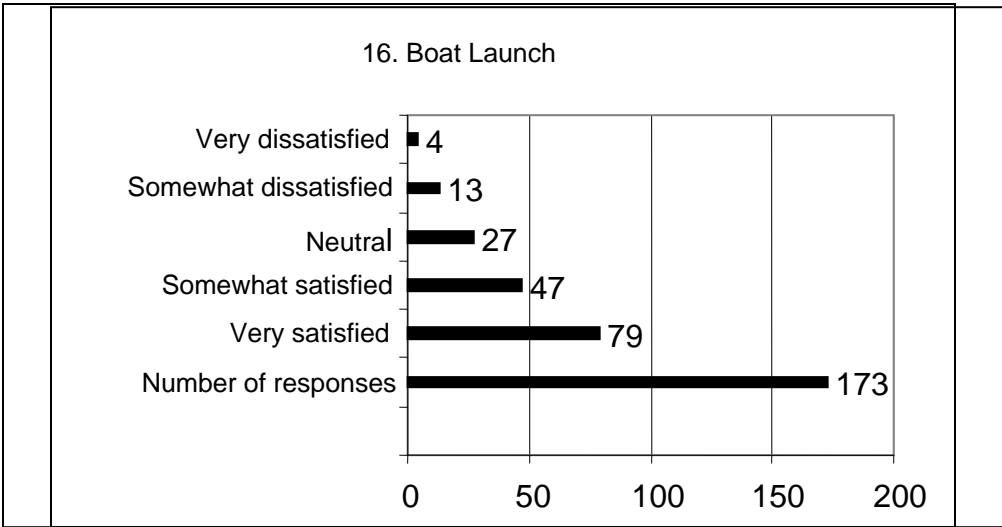




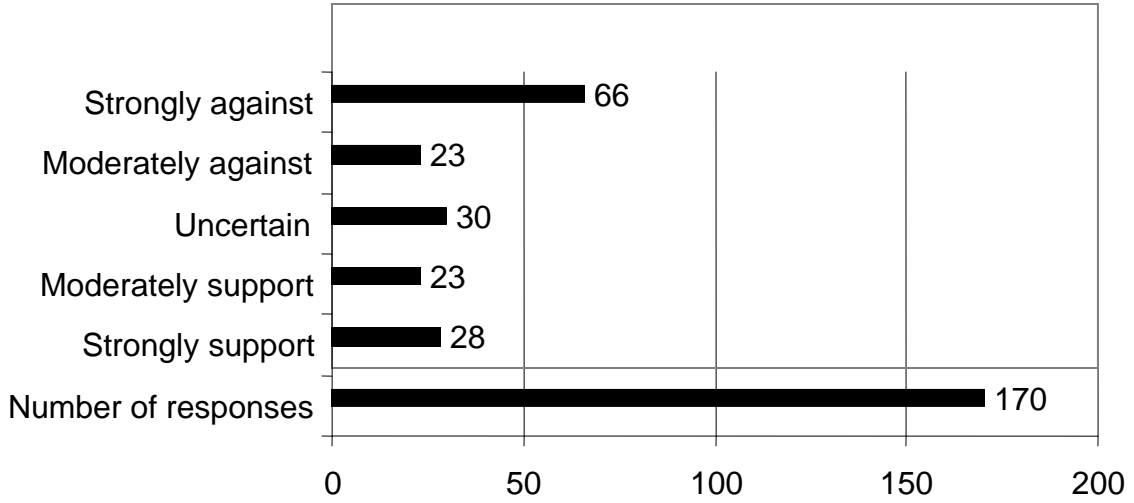




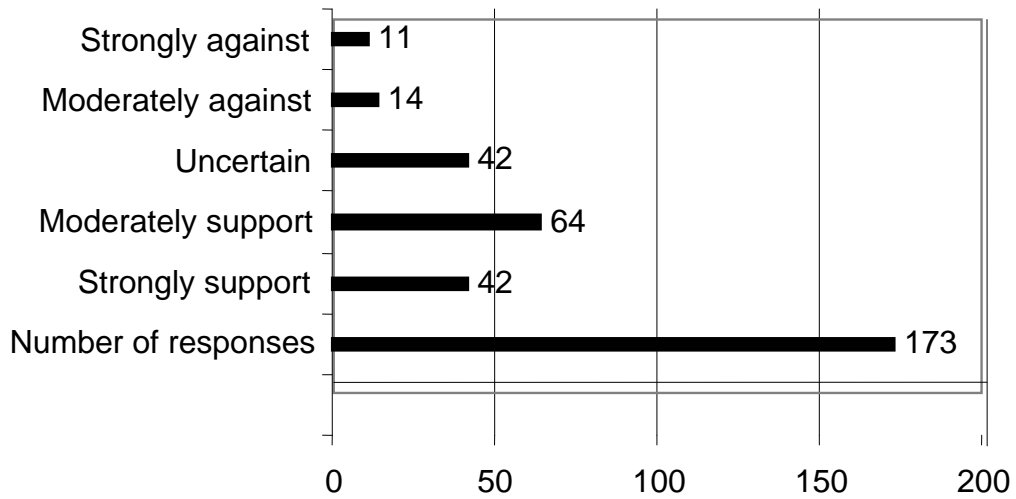




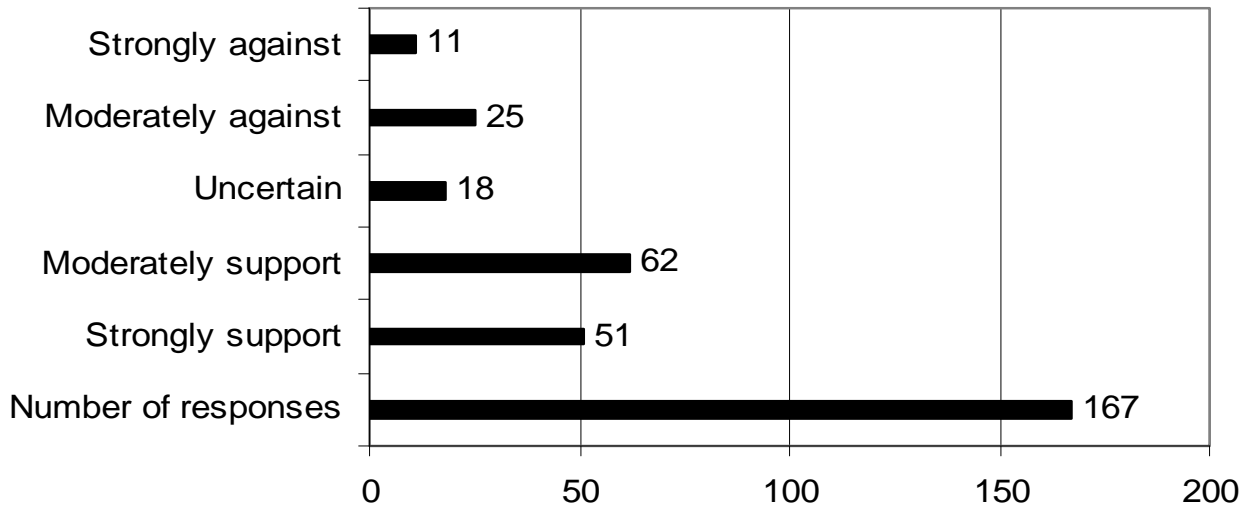
3. Changes in current zoning which would allow for multiple housing outside of our existing land use codes.



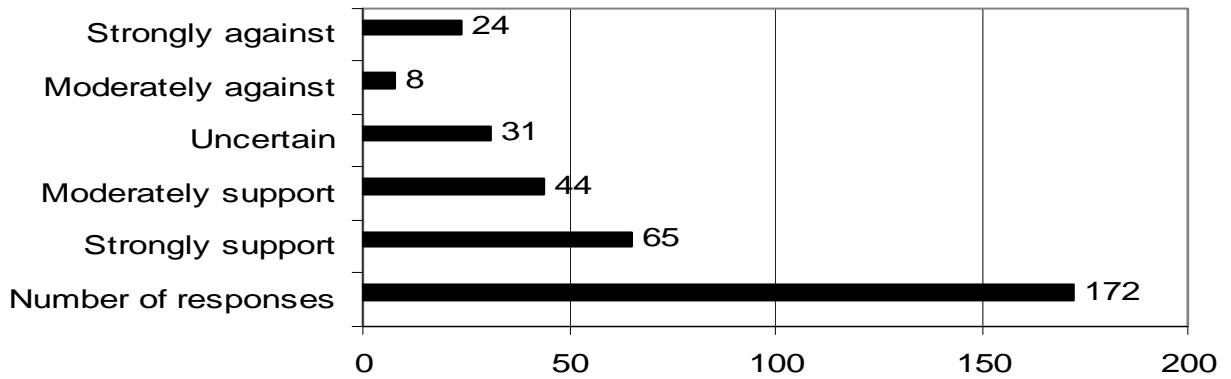
4. Construction or renovation of public buildings.



5. Construction of sidewalks, bikeways, pedestrian lights.



7. Development of affordable housing when in compliance with our current land use code.



8. Maintaining and/or updating land use codes aimed at protection of our natural resources.

