



2008 Master Plan Update

Residential Survey Summary

Prepared by

Bellingham Planning Board

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Contents

- Section 1: Introduction 2
- Section 2: Executive Summary 3
- Section 3: Demographic Analysis..... 4
- Section 4: Question #2 Analysis..... 5
- Section 5: Questions #3 - 6 Analysis..... 8
 - Question #3 Analysis 8
 - Question #4 Analysis 11
 - Question #5 Analysis 13
 - Question #6 Analysis 14
- Section 6: Question #7 Analysis..... 16
- Section 7: Question #8 Analysis..... 17
- Section 8: Written Comments..... 21

- Appendix A: Survey
- Appendix B: Survey Results Raw Data

Introduction

The Master Plan Task Force (MPTF) created a short two-page poll for the residents of Bellingham. The goal of the survey was to gain an overall perspective of life in Bellingham from a maximum number of citizens. In January 2009, the survey was distributed to every household with the 2009 census (approximately 6,000± surveys). Since the census required a response and was mailed with a pre-stamped envelope, the hope was that people would take a few additional moments to complete the survey and mail it back with the census. In addition, the survey was also made available on the Town website. The final tally of surveys, both by mail and online, was 3,334.

The questions targeted a variety of issues that may or may not have been applicable to all residents. The questions can be broken down into four groups: questions which target basic demographic information; questions which address the overall quality of life issues in Bellingham (“How do you feel about living in Bellingham...”); questions that deal with the level of satisfaction with the services offered in the town; and finally questions that focus on possible future conditions.

Although 3,334 surveys were completed, no question had all 3,334 people respond. Therefore, the analysis will primarily look at the data in terms of the number of respondents and the total percentage of respondent per each question, not in comparison to the total number of surveys returned. Many respondents included written responses, which will also be categorized and summarized as part of this report. A blank survey and the raw data survey results are included in the appendices.

Executive Summary

3,334 surveys were completed either online or returned by mail with the 2009 census. Below is a highlight of some of the data collected:

- More people in South Bellingham completed the survey than in the North and Center of the Town.
- Question #2 which asked 10 sub questions relative to “How do you feel about living in Bellingham?” had the largest response rate, averaging 3,130 responses per sub question.
- About 74% of respondents were either mostly satisfied or completely satisfied with Bellingham as a place to live.
- Question #3, which asked people to indicate their level of satisfaction with various municipal services, had the most number of positive responses per sub question. Six out of eight sub questions had a mostly or completely satisfied rating of over 70%.
- Question #3E, which asked residents to rate their level of satisfaction with road maintenance, had the second highest number of responses in the entire survey-- 3,249, just 40 responses short of the number for Question 2A which asked about people’s satisfaction with Bellingham as a place to live.
- Question #6, which asked people to rate their level of satisfaction with traffic and transportation issues, was the only question in which all of the sub questions received higher negative (mostly or completely dissatisfied) and neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) ratings than a positive rating.
- Question #6D, which asked about resident’s level of satisfaction with access to public transportation, had the highest negative response of any question and sub question. About 57% of respondents were either mostly or completely dissatisfied with the Town’s access to public transportation.
- Bellingham’s shopping areas and public transportation were the most requested stops for potential future shuttle service.
- Less than 10% of respondents for seven out eight sub questions of the third part of Question 8 would want less had less open space, cultural resources and recreation. 60% or more of respondents wanted more of things like bike paths, public access to open space, protection for agricultural land, preservation of historical buildings and sites and land acquisition for both organized recreation and conservation.

Demographic Analysis

The first three questions of the survey were basic demographic questions to gauge what portion of the population completed the survey.

The first question, “Years lived in Town,” was left open-ended and did not allow for easy compilation of the data. However, the general length of time people have lived in Bellingham varied from just a few months to 80+ years to their whole lives, which is to be expected given the development patterns of Bellingham going from rural to suburban over a span of about 15-20 years.

The next question was to circle a “District”, either North, Center or South. More people in South Bellingham (1,041) completed the survey than in either North Bellingham (816) or Bellingham Center (497). Interestingly, a little less than a third (980) of all respondents skipped this question, which may have a number of different reasons: respondents did not notice the question on the survey form, did not know how the town is informally, but often divided by residents, did not know what district to classify themselves as in or did not care about these informal divisions.

The final question of this section was **Question #1 “How old are you?”** The largest population age group to complete the survey was between 41-55 years old (1,209 people). The next largest group represented was the 25-40 range, with 750 respondents (about 23%). The age groups between 56-64 and 70+ had a similar number of respondents of 522 and 511 respectively. About 7% of the remaining respondents were between 65 and 69. About half of one percent (.49% or 16 respondents) were under 25.

Question 2 Analysis

Question #2: How do you feel about living in Bellingham?

The sub-questions in Question #2 address the quality of life issues for residents in Bellingham with 1 being completely dissatisfied, 2 being mostly dissatisfied, 3 being neutral as neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 being mostly satisfied and 5 being completely satisfied. For the ease of interpretation, responses 1 - 2 and 4 - 5 are generally grouped together.

The average number of respondents for the questions in this section was 3,195—none of them had the full 3,334 respondents. Seven out of the ten questions received a higher percentage of positive (satisfied or completely satisfied) responses. The remaining three questions received a higher percentage of neutral responses (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). None of the 10 questions had a predominately negative (dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied) response.

Sub-questions A, B and C had similar results, although less people answered B and C, which were specific to children and businesses.

A. “... as a place to live.” Out of 3,288 respondents, 74% were either mostly satisfied (1,388 people) or completely satisfied (1,057). Less than 5% of the respondents (141) were either mostly dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with living in Bellingham. About 21% or 702 respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

B. “...as a place to raise children.” Out of 3,040 respondents, 70% were either mostly satisfied (1,245) or completely satisfied (885). A little less than 6% of respondents (179) were either mostly dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied. About 24% or 731 respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

C. “...as a place to do business.” Out of 3,006 respondents, about 57% were either mostly satisfied (1,090) or completely satisfied (625). A little less than 10% of respondents (294) were either mostly dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with Bellingham as a place to do business. About 33% or 997 of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

D. “Buildings / places of historical character.” Out of 3,128 respondents or about 40% (1,257 people) were neutral. About 36% or 1,136 people were

either mostly satisfied or completely satisfied. 735 people or 24% of respondents were either mostly dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with the buildings and places of historical character in Bellingham.

E. “Community pride and friendliness.” 3,194 people responded to this question. Approximately 57% of those that responded were either mostly satisfied (1,165) or completely satisfied (657). 1,043 or about 33% of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A little less than 10% were either mostly dissatisfied (247 people) or completely dissatisfied (82) with community pride and friendliness in Bellingham.

The next four questions (F, G, H, I) fall more evenly across the spectrum rather than to one side or the other of neutral. There are stronger neutral and dissatisfied answers than seen in the previous questions.

F. “Passive recreational facilities.” Out of 3,121 respondents, about 35% or 1,096 people were neutral. About 34% of respondents were either mostly satisfied (707) or completely satisfied (345) and 31% were either mostly dissatisfied (697) or completely dissatisfied (276) with the passive recreational facilities in Bellingham.

G. “Protected open space.” Out of 3,061 respondents, about 38% or 1175 people were neutral. About 36% of respondents were either mostly satisfied (741) or completely satisfied (358) and 26% were either mostly dissatisfied (536) or completely dissatisfied (251) with the protected open space in Bellingham.

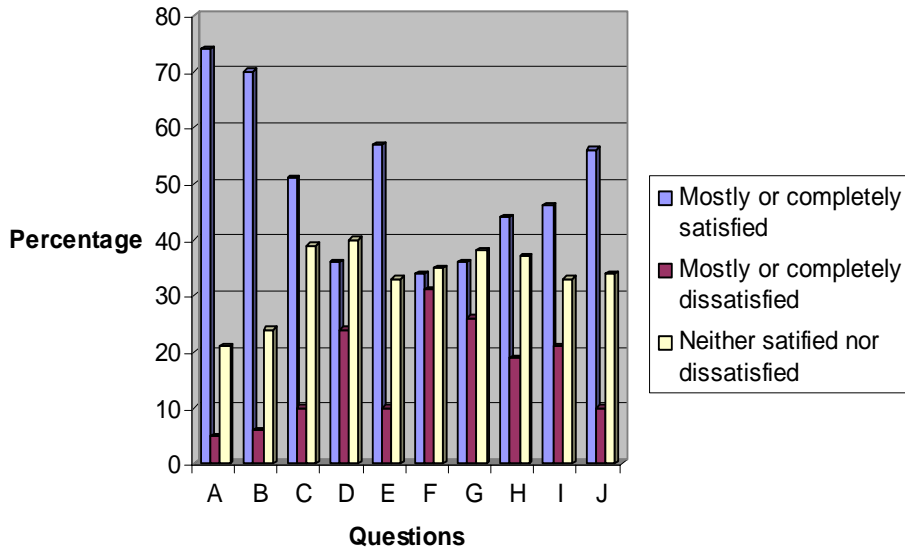
H. “Reputation of public schools.” Out of 3,087 respondents, about 37% or 1,138 people were neutral. About 44% of respondents were either mostly satisfied (934) or completely satisfied (422) and 19% were either mostly dissatisfied (408) or completely dissatisfied (185) with the reputation of the public schools.

I. “Small town rural New England character.” Out of 3,190 respondents, about 33% or 1,035 people were neutral. About 46% of respondents were either mostly satisfied (978) or completely satisfied (500) and 21% were either mostly dissatisfied (496) or completely dissatisfied (181) with Bellingham’s small town rural New England character.

The final question in this section follows similar patterns as the first three questions, with more positive or satisfied responses than dissatisfied responses.

J. “Overall appeal of the community.” Out of 3,185 respondents, about 56% were either mostly satisfied (1,220 people) or completely satisfied (553). About 10% of the respondents were either mostly dissatisfied (255) or completely dissatisfied (81) with living in Bellingham. 1,076 respondents (34%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Level of satisfaction with living in Bellingham



Question #2: How do you feel about living in Bellingham?

- A. ...as a place to live
- B. ...as a place to raise children
- C. ...as a place to do business
- D. Buildings / places of historical character
- E. Community pride and friendliness
- F. Passive recreational facilities (walking / running trails, picnic areas)
- G. Protected open space
- H. Reputation of public schools
- I. Small town rural New England character
- J. Overall appeal of the community

Questions 3 - 6 Analysis

Question #3: Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following municipal services in Bellingham.

Question #3 relates to the level of satisfaction in the existing services offered by the Town of Bellingham with 1 being completely dissatisfied, 2 being mostly dissatisfied, 3 being neutral as neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 being mostly satisfied and 5 being completely satisfied. For the ease of interpretation, responses 1 - 2 and 4 - 5 are generally grouped together.

Out of the eight questions, four had a majority of respondents in the completely satisfied category (fire, ambulance, library and waste removal). Questions D (street lighting) and E (road maintenance) had the most even distribution across all levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Once again, none of the questions had a predominately negative response.

A. “Law enforcement.” Out of 3,241 respondents, 76% were either mostly (1,271) or completely satisfied (1,194) with the service. About 17% (564 people) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A little less than 7% of the respondents were mostly (121) or completely (91) dissatisfied with the police service.

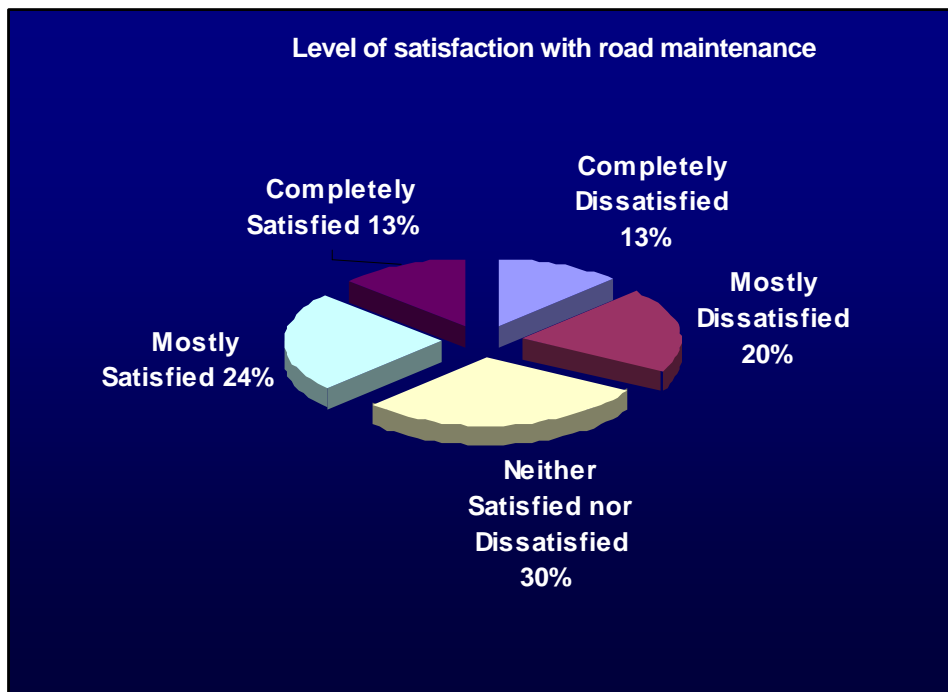
B. “Fire protection and prevention.” Out of 3,210 respondents, 83% were either mostly (1,232 people) or completely (1,433) satisfied. About 14% or 434 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with fire service in Bellingham. About 3% of the respondents were either mostly (55) or completely (56) dissatisfied.

C. “Ambulance.” Out of 3,117 respondents, about 82% were either mostly (1,145) or completely satisfied (1,404). About 15% or 471 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. About 3% of the respondents were mostly (46) or completely (51) dissatisfied with ambulance service in Bellingham.

D. “Street lighting.” Out of 3,219 respondents, 51% were either mostly (1,030) or completely (618) satisfied. About 32% or 1,039 respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Approximately 17% of respondents were mostly (369) or completely (163) dissatisfied by the availability of street lighting in Bellingham.

E. “Road maintenance.” Out of 3,249 respondents, about 37% were mostly (773) or completely (436) satisfied. Approximately 30% or 936 respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with road maintenance. About 33% were either mostly (650) or completely (414) dissatisfied with road maintenance service.

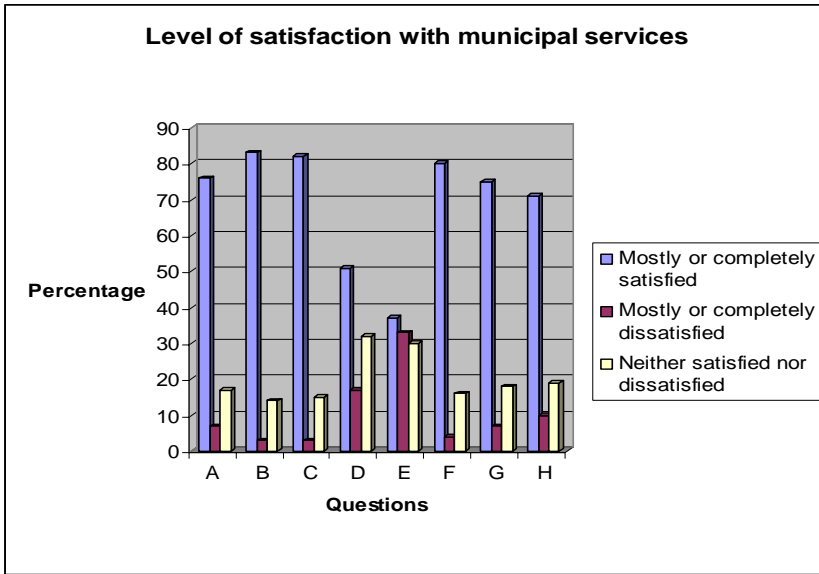
This question received the second highest response rate overall, just 40 responses short of Question #2A “How do you feel about Bellingham as a place to live.” The responses were the most even distributed across the scale with almost matching percentages for dissatisfied and satisfied.



F. “Library.” Out of 3,181 respondents, approximately 80% were either mostly (1,232) or completely (1,304) satisfied. About 16% or 508 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. About 4% were either mostly (85) or completely (52) dissatisfied with library service.

G. “Waste removal.” Out of 3,194, 75% of respondents were mostly (1,171) or completely (1,226) satisfied. 18% or 559 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. About 7% of respondents were either mostly (136) or completely (102) dissatisfied by waste removal service in Bellingham. Note: There were quite a number of written comments about waste removal and recycling (see below) that will be summarized in Section 8.

H. “Recycling.” Out of 3,156 respondents, 71% were either mostly (1,125) or completely (1,117) satisfied. About 19% or 614 respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with recycling services in Bellingham. A little less than 10% of respondents were mostly (188) or completely (112) dissatisfied with recycling service in Bellingham.



Question #3: Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following municipal services:

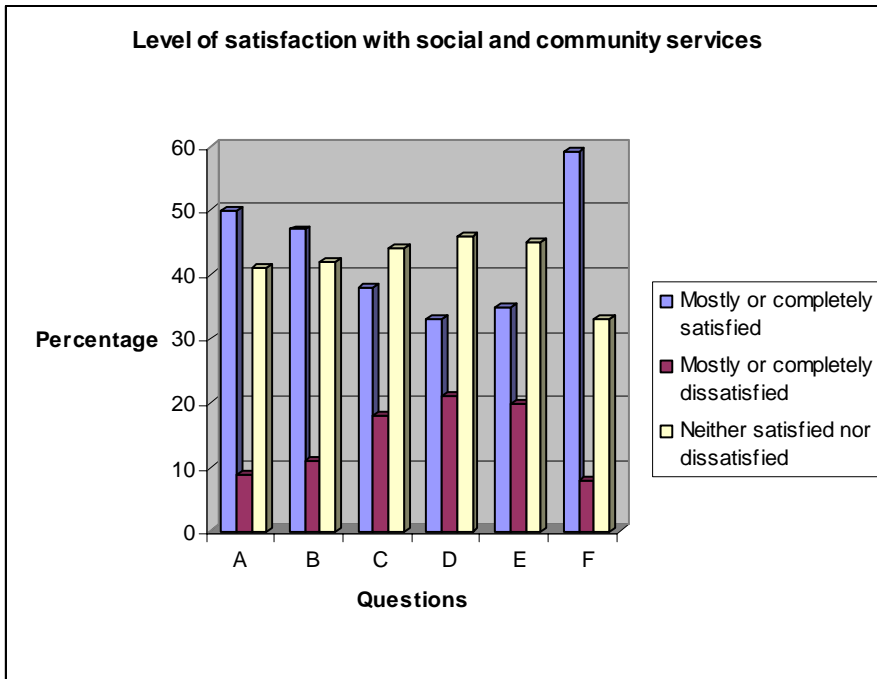
- A. Law enforcement
- B. Fire protection and prevention
- C. Ambulance
- D. Street lighting
- E. Road maintenance
- F. Library
- G. Waste removal
- H. Recycling

Question #4: Please indicate your level of satisfaction with social and community services in Bellingham.

Questions #4 (regarding child-related service) and Question #5 (regarding senior-related services) had the least number of respondents because the questions targeted specific demographic populations. As with the other questions in this section, the answers are rated as 1 being completely dissatisfied, 2 being mostly dissatisfied, 3 being neutral as neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 being mostly satisfied and 5 being completely satisfied. For the ease of interpretation, responses 1 - 2 and 4 - 5 are generally grouped together.

- A. “Social services as a whole.”** Out of 2,646 respondents, almost 41% or 1,082 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with social services as a whole in Bellingham. About 50% of respondents were either mostly (875 people) or completely (452) satisfied. Almost 9% of respondents were either mostly (167) or completely (70) dissatisfied with the level of social services in Bellingham.
- B. “Services for children (0-12 years).”** Out of 2,387, about 42% of respondents or 998 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with services for children between 0 and 12 years. About 47% of respondents were either mostly (742) or completely (382) satisfied. About 11% were either mostly (190 people) or completely (75) dissatisfied with services for children between 0-12 years old.
- C. “Services for youth (12-21 years).”** Out of 2,282 respondents, about 44% or 997 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. About 38% or respondents were either mostly (584 people) or completely (283) satisfied with services for children from 12-21 years. About 18% or respondents were either mostly (303) or completely (115) dissatisfied with services for children between 12 and 21 years old.
- D. “After school programs for teens.”** Out of 2,215 respondents, about 46% or 1,014 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Approximately 33% were either mostly (491 people) or completely (240) satisfied with after school programs for teens. About 21% of respondents were either mostly (314) or completely (156) dissatisfied with after school programs for teens.
- E. “Arts and cultural programs.”** Out of 2,505 respondents, about 45% or 1,117 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. About 35% were either mostly (601) or completely (284) satisfied with arts and cultural programs in Bellingham. About 20% of respondents were either mostly (388) or completely (115) dissatisfied with the arts and cultural programs in Bellingham.

F. “Community sports programs.” Out of 2,532 respondents, 33% or 823 respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the community sports programs in Bellingham. About 59% were either mostly (951 people) or completely (555) satisfied. About 8% were either mostly (139) or completely (64) dissatisfied with the community sports programs in Bellingham.



Question #4: Please indicate your level of satisfaction with social and community services in Bellingham.

- A. Social services as a whole
- B. Services for children (0-12 years)
- C. Services for youth (12-21 years)
- D. After school programs for teens
- E. Arts and cultural programs
- F. Community sports programs

Question #5: Please indicate your level of satisfaction with senior services in Bellingham.

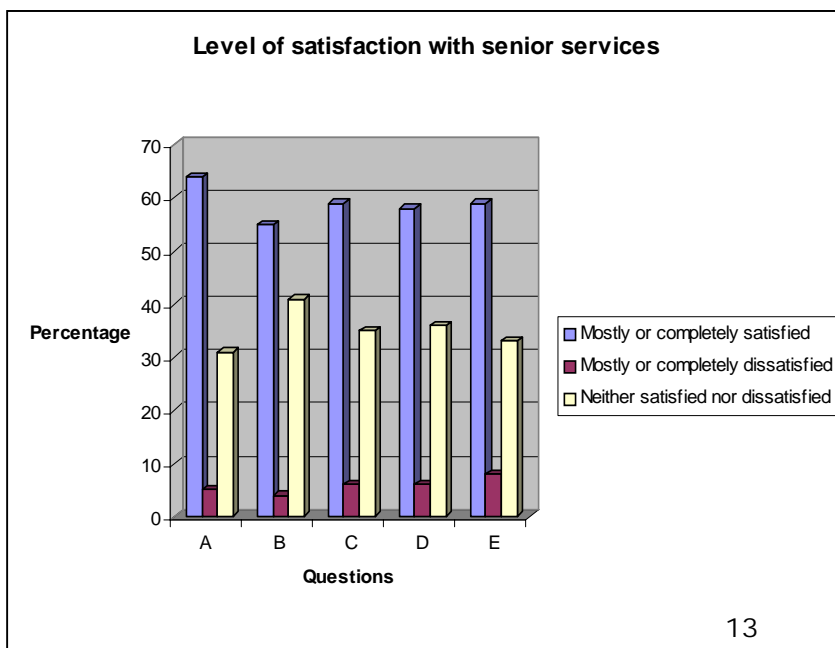
A. “Availability of services.” Out of 2,090 respondents, about 31% or 639 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the availability of services for seniors. About 64% were either mostly (687 people) or completely (647) satisfied. About 5% were either mostly (65 people) or completely (52) dissatisfied with the availability of services for seniors.

B. “The senior center.” Out of 2,096 respondents, about 41% or 864 people were completely satisfied with the senior center. Another 30% or 627 were mostly satisfied. About 25% (515 people) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the senior center. About 4% were mostly (39) or completely (51) dissatisfied with the senior center.

C. “The senior work-off program.” Out of 1,893 respondents, 35% or 658 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the senior work-off program. About 59% were either mostly (552 people) or completely (573) satisfied. A little less than 6% were mostly (53) or completely (57) dissatisfied with the senior work-off program.

D. “Senior health clinic.” Out of 1,853 respondents, 36% or 662 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the senior health clinic. 58% were either mostly (560) or completely (516) satisfied. About 6% were either mostly (64) or completely (51) dissatisfied with the senior health clinic.

E. “Transportation.” Out of 1,910 respondents, 33% or 627 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with transpiration for seniors. 59% were either mostly (565) or completely (563) satisfied. About 8% were either mostly (93) or completely (62) dissatisfied with transpiration for seniors.



Question #5: Please indicate your level of satisfaction with senior services in Bellingham.

- A. Availability of services
- B. The senior center
- C. The senior work-off program
- D. Senior health clinic
- E. Transportation

Question #6: How do you feel about the following traffic and transportation issues?

Question #6 relates to the level of satisfaction with traffic and transportation with 1 being completely dissatisfied, 2 being mostly dissatisfied, 3 being neutral as neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 being mostly satisfied and 5 being completely satisfied. For the ease of interpretation, responses 1 - 2 and 4 - 5 are generally grouped together.

Question #6 is the only question of this section (Questions #3 - #6) in which each sub-question generated a higher percentage of negative responses (mostly and completely dissatisfied) than positive (mostly or completely satisfied) responses. Sub-question D generated the most “completely dissatisfied” responses of all the questions / sub-questions in this grouping of Questions #3 - #6.

A. “Ease of travel by cars – traffic flow in town.” Out of 3,158 responses, 33% or 1,036 people responded that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the traffic flow in town. About 47% of respondents were either mostly (887) or completely (583 people) dissatisfied. About 20% were either mostly (484 people) or completely (168) satisfied with traffic flow in town.

B. “Ease of travel by bicycles.” Out of 2,766 responses, about 34% or 955 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the ease of travel by bicycles. Approximately 46% were either mostly (729 people) or completely (541) dissatisfied. About 20% were either mostly (395) or completely (146) satisfied by the ease of travel by bicycles in town.

C. “Ease of travel by pedestrians.” Out of 2,963 respondents, about 33 % or 977 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the ease of travel by pedestrians. About 43% were either mostly (789 people) or completely (497) dissatisfied. About 24% of respondents were either mostly (529) or completely (171) satisfied with the ease of travel by pedestrians.

D. “Access to public transportation.” Out of 2,850 respondents, 23% or 670 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with access to public transportation. Approximately 57% were either mostly (687) or completely (930) dissatisfied with access to public transportation. About 20% were either mostly (370) or completely (193) satisfied with access to public transportation.

E. “Sidewalk access / availability.” Out of 3,035 respondents, 31% or 944 people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with sidewalk access and accessibility. About 48% were either mostly (853) or completely (588) dissatisfied with sidewalk access and accessibility. Approximately 21% were either mostly (465) or completely (185) satisfied with sidewalk access and availability.



Question #6: How do you feel about the following traffic and transportation issues?

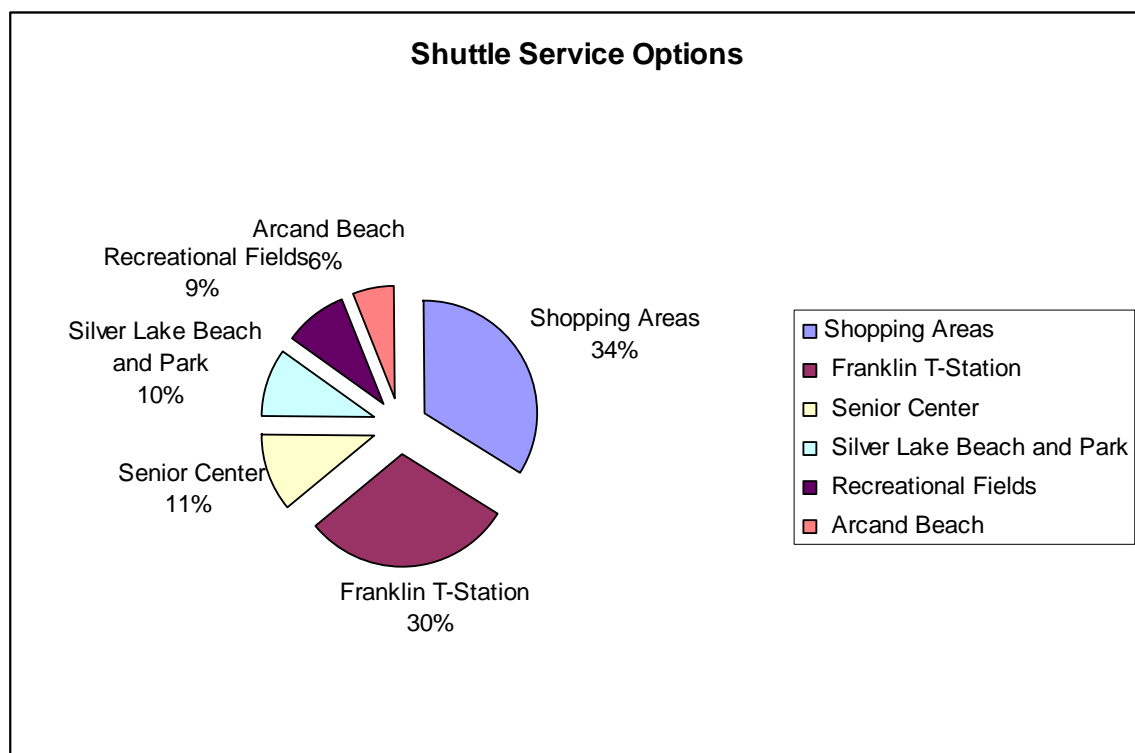
- A. Ease of travel by cars – traffic flow in town
- B. Ease of travel by bicycles
- C. Ease of travel by pedestrians
- D. Access to public transportation
- E. Sidewalk access / availability

Question 7 Analysis

Question #7: If a public shuttle service were available in Bellingham, would you use it and where would you take it to and from? Would you be willing to pay a small fee for such services?

About 900 people or 27% of respondents skipped the first part of Question #7. However, this question allowed for multiple answers, so there were 4,234 responses. Almost 34% of the responses would like a shuttle to go to and from the shopping areas in town and 30% would like to go to the Franklin T station (Forge Park). The remaining responses were fairly evenly distributed between the Senior Center (11%), recreational fields (10%), Silver Lake beach and park (9%) and Arcand beach (6%).

Almost the same number of people skipped the second half of the question, about 27% or 890 people. About 68% or 1,659 people responded favorably that they would be willing to pay a small fee for the shuttle service and 32% or 785 said that they would not pay for such service.



Question 8 Analysis

Question #8, the final question of the survey, had three sub-questions aimed at identifying respondents' feelings toward the future direction of development of Bellingham. Respondents were asked to rate possible future conditions as either 1 (less), 2 (somewhat less), 3 (same), 4 (somewhat more), and 5 (more). For interpretation purposes, responses 1 – 2 and 4 – 5 are generally grouped together.

Housing:

A. “Affordable (moderate).” Out of 2,961 respondents, 36% or 1,077 people would like the same level of moderate affordable housing. About 47% would like somewhat more (772) or more (603) of this type of housing. Approximately 17% would like somewhat less (254 respondents) or less (255) of moderate affordable housing.

B. “Affordable (low-income).” Out of 2,946 respondents, about 29% or 848 would like the same level of low-income housing. About 48% would like somewhat less (537 respondents) or less (868) low-income housing in the future. Approximately 23% would like somewhat more (319) or more (374) low-income affordable housing.

C. “Ease of obtaining reduced cost housing.” Out of 2,892 respondents, about 34% or 971 people would like the same ease of obtaining reduced cost housing. Approximately 36% would like somewhat less (478) or less (546), while about 30% would like somewhat more (442) or more (392) ease in obtaining reduced cost housing.

D. “Single and duplex family residences.” Out of 2,865 people, about 39% or 1,103 people felt they wanted the same level of single and duplex family residences. Approximately 32% of respondents wanted either somewhat more (593) or more (338), while about 29% wanted either somewhat less (393) or less (438) single and duplex family residences.

E. “Amount of apartments available.” Out of 2,866 people, about 32% or 926 people wanted the same level of apartments available in the future. Approximately 48% of respondents wanted either somewhat less (635) or less (735) apartments available. About 20% wanted either somewhat more (334) or more (236) apartments available.

F. “Amount of condos available.” Out of 2,855 respondents, 38% or 1085 people wanted the same level of condominiums available in the future. About 41% of respondents wanted either somewhat less (546) or less (623), while 21% wanted either somewhat more (401) or more (200) condos available in the future.

Business / Zoning:

A. “Commercial development.” Out of 2,926 people, 30% or 894 felt they would like the same level of commercial development in the town. About 45% stated that they would want either somewhat less (490) or less (824) commercial development. Approximately 25% wanted either somewhat more (457) or more (261) commercial development in the town.

B. “Industrial development.” Out of 2,919 respondents, about 27% or 803 people wanted the same level of industrial development in the town. About 51% wanted either somewhat less (559) or less (926) industrial development, while only 22% wanted somewhat more (384) or more (247) industrial development in the town.

C. “National chain stores.” Out of 2,949 respondents, 28% or 821 people felt that they wanted the same level of national chain stores in the town. About 46% of respondents wanted either somewhat less (465) or less (890) of these types of stores. About 26% of respondents felt that they wanted either somewhat more (457) or more (316) national chain stores.

D. “Local business.” Out of 2,941 respondents, about 26% or 774 people felt that they wanted the same level of local businesses within the town. An overwhelming 61% wanted either somewhat more (1011) or more (769) local businesses, while only 13% wanted either somewhat less (168) or less (219) local business.

E. “Slowing the pace of development.” Out of 2,948 respondents, 29% or 841 people wanted the same level of development in the future. Approximately 50% wanted to either somewhat slow (501) or slow (972) the pace of development in the town. About 21% wanted to either somewhat increase (268) or increase (366) the pace of development in the town.

Open Space / Cultural Resources / Recreation:

A. “Bike paths (on and off street).” Out of 2,939 respondents, 17% or 513 felt they wanted the same level of bike paths in the town. About 75% or

respondents wanted either somewhat more (743) or more (1,453) bike paths. About 8% wanted somewhat less (127) or less (103) bike paths in the town.

B. “Public access to open space.” Out of 2,905 respondents, about 20% or 587 people felt that they wanted the same level of public access to open space in the future. About 74% wanted either somewhat more (854) or more (1,279) access to open space, while only about 6% wanted somewhat less (110 people) or less (75) access to open space.

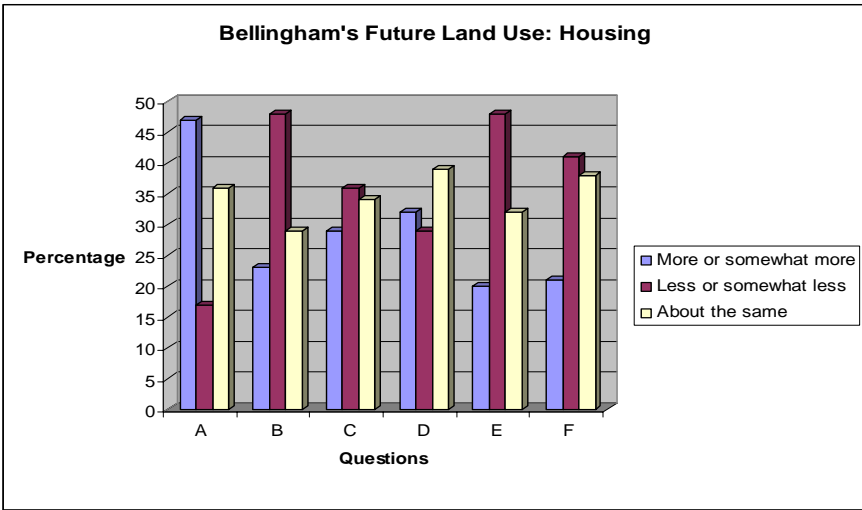
C. “Walking paths in public open space.” Out of 2,944 respondents, about 17% or 494 people wanted the same level of walking paths in public open space. About 51% or 1,493 people wanted more and 26% or 778 want somewhat more walking paths in public open space. Only about 6% wanted somewhat less (101 people) or less (78) walking paths in public open space.

D. “Protection of farms / agricultural lands.” Out of 2,939 people, about 20% or 596 people wanted the same level of protection for farms and agricultural land. About 73% wanted either somewhat more (747 people) or more (1,405) protection for farms and agricultural land. Only 7% wanted either somewhat less (110) or less (81) protection for farms and agricultural lands.

E. “Preservation of historical sites / buildings.” Out of 2,957 respondents, about 22% or 659 people wanted the same level of preservation for historic buildings and sites. About 71% wanted either somewhat more (773 people) or more (1,331) preservation. About 7% wanted either somewhat less (119) or less (75) preservation of historical sites and buildings.

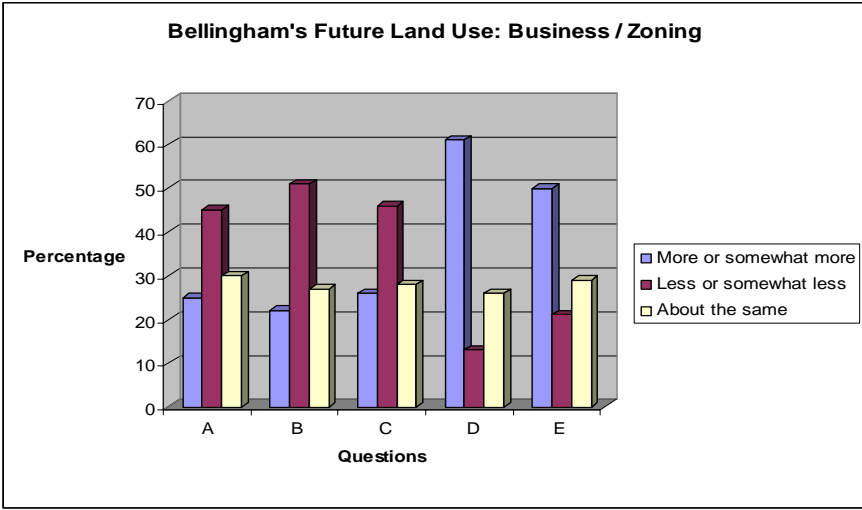
F. “Land acquisition for organized recreation.” Out of 2,896 respondents, 25% or 733 people wanted the same level of land acquisition for organized recreation. Approximately 65% of respondents wanted either somewhat more (835) or more (1,049) land for organized recreation. Slightly less than 10% want somewhat less (153 people) or less (126) land acquisition for organized recreation.

G. “Land acquisition for conservation land.” Out of 2,883 respondents, 24% or 696 people wanted the same level of land acquisition for conservation. About 66% wanted either somewhat more (721) or more (1,174) for land acquisition for conservation land. About 10% wanted either somewhat less (159) or less (133) land acquisition for conservation land.



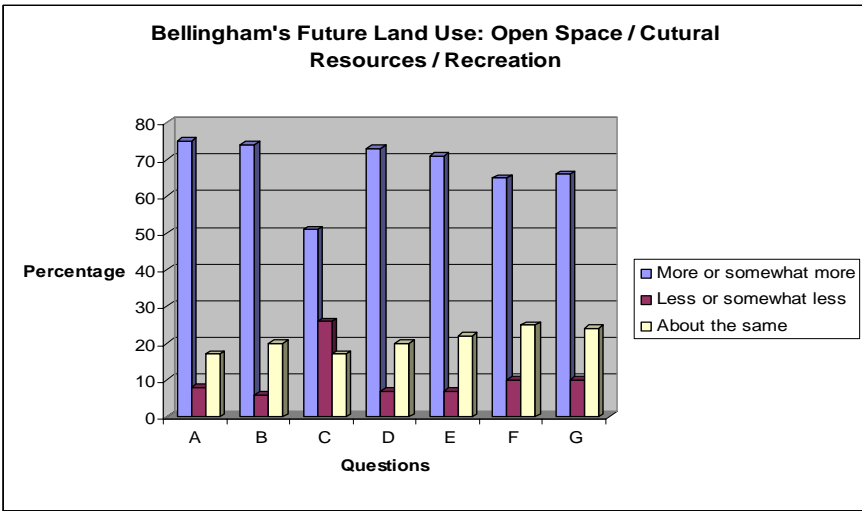
Housing:

- A. Affordable (moderate)
- B. Affordable (low-income)
- C. Ease of obtaining reduced cost housing
- D. Single and duplex family residences
- E. Amount of apartments available
- F. Amount of condos available



Business / Zoning:

- A. Commercial development
- B. Industrial development
- C. National chain stores
- D. Local businesses
- E. Slowing the pace of development



Open Space / Cultural Resources / Recreation:

- A. Bike paths (on and off street)
- B. Public access to open space
- C. Walking paths in public open space
- D. Protection of farms / agricultural land
- E. Preservation of historical sites / buildings
- F. Land acquisition for organized recreation
- G. Land acquisition for conservation land

Written Comments

There were approximately 270 handwritten comments. These comments varied from short phrases to typed attached sheets. A random sampling of comments separated by general topics is presented below. Comments have been edited for basic spelling, grammar and coherence. An asterisk (*) is placed next to those comments in which more than one survey expresses the same or similar thought.

Development:

- “Absolutely no more development. This is not Framingham.”
- “In the 7 years I have lived here, many beautiful meadows and woodlands have disappeared. It is so sad to see buildings replacing them.”
- “Please no more commercial and industrial building in our town.” *
- “[Protection of farms, agricultural lands and historical sites and buildings] a must for Bellingham.”
- “Don’t like spot zoning with homes next to commercial development.”
- “I enjoy the small town feel of Bellingham, personally it would be great if we stopped the growth right now. Fill spaces already available.” *
- “Everything is great [as to Business / Zoning]. Keep as many open fields, woods, etc. as possible.”
- “All of these [Open Space / Cultural Resources / Recreation] add value to our town and I am willing to pay target taxes in these areas.”
- “[Development] in moderation in existing commercial and industrial areas only.

Development in north Bellingham:

- “Residential areas being overrun with commercial business all over north end of Town.”
- “Too much [commercial and industrial development] in the area of North Bellingham near Rte. 495.” *

Development in south Bellingham:

- “South Bellingham is becoming more and more commercial.” *
- “Please clean up the area of Crooks Corner to Stop and Shop. Too built up—perhaps some trees lining the street would be appealing.” *
- “Pulaski Boulevard close to Woonsocket is a disgrace. Clean up shabby businesses; attract more family-friendly oriented establishments, which include quality restaurants to that area.” *

Development in the town center or downtown area of Bellingham:

- “One thing I miss and wish Bellingham had was a nice, NE, local business downtown area.” *
- “Bellingham needs a more pedestrian friendly ‘downtown’ area. Walk to park, restaurants, shops without driving from one place to another.” *

Housing:

- “Would like more info on obtaining reduced cost housing.”
- “ [More condos available] for baby boomers.”
- “Don’t want more apartments or condos.”
- “Too much housing in town already. Infrastructure needs to be upgraded first.”
- “Need more colonial style housing. Lack of means many families do not move to Bellingham or outgrow its housing options and move to towns like Franklin.”

Signs:

- “We would like to see the ‘home made’ business signs removed off of Main Street.”
- “There should be a zoning bylaw that imposes some restrictions on signs and advertising devises. Even though it may not be retro active, it would help over the long run.”

Dog park or dog friendly areas:

- “Or even fence in a part of an existing park...have people obtain a pass for its use and proof of shots.”
- “Bellingham is not very pet friendly right now. Would like to see commons / parks etc for dog walking and playing.” *
- “Would like more recreational areas where we can walk with our dog.” *

Police, Fire and ambulance:

- “No PD presence even when called.” *
- “Doesn’t seem to be interested in patrolling trouble areas reported.”
- “We need more police.” *
- “Please man the station on Paine Street. Takes too long for rescue to reach this part of town.”
- “The ambulance personnel were the best... but the choice to come over 495 from Blackstone Street [to north Bellingham] was not a good choice—it took 15+ minutes of valuable time to arrive.”
- “I am extremely satisfied wit the fire department. I had to call 911 twice for my son.... and the EMT’s and firemen were fast, calming and took excellent care of my son”

Sewer:

- “Westminster Ave is finally looking good—but we really do need sewers here in south Bellingham.”
- All our town residents should have public sewer access.” *
- “Town sewer throughout the town without a huge cost to the home owner.”

Library:

- “Need more computers adult oriented.”
- “They’ve created a real problem at the library after school. Patrons there after 2 PM have complained.”
- “Should be open on Sundays.”

Open space and parks:

- “I’d go [to Silver Lake Beach / Park], but there are too many geese.”
- “Would like to see this [to Silver Lake Beach / Park] usable to Bellingham residents only.”
- “Town park is wonderful. We wish it was plowed in winter and more activities available= craft weekend, country fair, garden day, etc.”
- “Would like to see more enforcement at Arcand Park. My sister recently discovered a hypodermic needle on the beach during beach clean-up day with the cub scouts. The sign says ‘residents only’ yet every car parked there on a hot summer’s day has Rhode Island plates.”

Bike and walking trails:

- “Bike trail would be great.” *
- “Need more woody trails and picnic areas.”
- “I think it would be wonderful to have outdoor recreational facilities available such as bicycle paths and interesting walking and running areas that would help us all to be more healthy. Presently, this seems to be of great need in Bellingham.” *

Youth sports and activities:

- “...some place for our teenagers to hang out and play games—video, pool, ping pong, hockey.” *
- “Something for them to do if they did not make the high school sports teams.”
- “Would like youth lacrosse.”
- “Would like to see more softball / flag football.”
- “I would love to see a recreation department. Norfolk has a wonderful [one] with many classes and things for children and adults.”

Historical resources:

- “I love them but they are fading fast.”
- “Lack of town’s concern [for historical buildings], we’re gradually losing them all.”
- “Like to see more preserved. Old North School preservation was a good job.”

- “The old town hall looks really nice.” *

Schools:

- “Improving.”
- “Awful.”

Snow plowing:

- “Snow removal very good.” *
- “The DPW does a phenomenal job on a day to day basis with snow removal.” *
- “I applaud the DPW for snow plowing and sanding. The best town around. Very safe streets during poor weather.” *
- “Why is it we have to climb over snow banks to get to the plowed sidewalks? Why aren’t both sides plowed?”
- “Snow removal is a joke on my street.”

Recycling and Trash:

- “Increase curbside recycling pick up to include plastics 1-7 and more types of paper.” *
- “Need to recycle more than 1 and 2.” *
- “Should get a reduction in trash for recycling, like RI does.”
- “Charge trash collection by bagful instead of semi-annual bills.”
- “Need weekly [recycling].”
- “Alternate trash and water bills so they don’t come at the same time.”
- “Should not be charged [for trash].” *
- “[Waste removal] too expensive.” *
- “Rather have pay per bag.” *

Sidewalks:

- “Need more sidewalks and street upkeep.” *
- “No sidewalks on what should be main drags of road.” *
- “Need more sidewalks for safer travel.” *
- “Need to improve crosswalk.” *
- “Crosswalks around town need repaint[ing] too.” *
- “Sidewalks are terrible— Main Street not handicap accessible or strollers.”
- “Missing sections of sidewalks on South Main Street.” *
- “Sidewalks in neighborhoods poor and dangerous.” *
- “Need owner responsibility in keeping sidewalks clear or need sidewalks plowed and improved for walking.”

Public shuttle service:

- “Shuttle to Framingham area.”
- “I think it would be great if Bellingham could get some type of public transportation. It is very difficult living in this town with no driver’s license.” *
- “Bellingham desperately needs public transportation.” *

- “User fee only.” *
- “Not tax or fee assessment.” *
- “[To] work areas (technology parks etc).”

Street lights:

- “We need more street lights.” *
- “There are at least 10 street lights that are not properly operating on Route 126 between the 495 bridge and North Main Street.” *
- “Very dark at night on Hartford Avenue.”

Road maintenance:

- “Blackstone Street is a disgrace.” *
- “Please stop using the liquid black tar to fill in the cracks in the roads. I ride a motorcycle and in the summer it melts and gets soft... and pulls the bike from my straight path.”
- “Terrible.” *

Traffic:

- “Center much better, Walmart area a mess.” *
- “Lights at intersections are awful.” *
- “Traffic in the center and south is terrible. Rotaries should be investigated in order to keep traffic flowing in both areas.”
- “Travel flow on Rte 126 on weekends is horrendous.” *
- “Home Depot, Walmart and Walgreen’s areas are horrible traffic areas.” *
- “Too much traffic.” *