

Town of Summit Schoharie County, NY 2024 Comprehensive Plan

Adopted December 19, 2024



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*Town of Summit Comprehensive Plan Committee
Town of Summit Town Board*

With assistance from:

The Schoharie County Office of Community Development

Town of Summit - Schoharie County, NY

2024 Comprehensive Plan

Foreword

The members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee would like to thank the many residents and property owners in the Town of Summit who took the time to complete and return the survey distributed as part of this effort. We would also like to thank the Summit Town Supervisor, Town Board, Highway Department, Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Town Historian, Town Assessor, members of the Summit and Charlotteville Fire Departments, members of the Summit Rescue Squad, and the Schoharie County Office of Planning and Community Development Services for their thoughts in offering ideas and input during the development of this plan and for their service to the Town of Summit.

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Town of Summit - Schoharie County, NY

2024 Comprehensive Plan

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Section 1.0 – Introduction, Overview, and Vision

Introduction - Comprehensive plans represent the expressed strategy for a town to outline a road map for future growth. As described in New York State Town Law, the comprehensive plan's purpose is to provide "general statements of goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long-range enhancement, growth, and development of the town are based." Accordingly, this comprehensive plan for the Town of Summit builds on the work of previous plans issued in 1986 and 2007, providing updated goals and objectives for our future needs in Summit, Charlotteville, and the surrounding rural community. An integral component of this plan is the Comprehensive Plan Development Survey, which was distributed in May of 2022 to all residents and property owners. A total of 1,104 surveys were mailed out with 356 responses received for an overall return rate of 32.2%. This is an excellent return rate and is consistent with results from similar sized neighboring communities. The survey posed questions regarding general demographics, perceptions on how we see our town, why we live in this area, what is important to us as residents and property owners, and other similar questions relating to community development and growth. Results from the survey were tabulated and are presented in the Appendix of this plan.

Overview - For those surveys returned, 52.3% of respondents were full-time property-owning residents in the Town of Summit. An additional 36.4% responded as part-time/seasonal property owners, 10.7% as non-resident property owners, and 0.6% as renting residents. The responses received indicated quite a bit about who we are, why we live here, and what we would like to see for the growth of our community:

- For most respondents, the initial decision to live here was strongly influenced by the natural beauty of the area (68.6%) and by the rural/farmland atmosphere of the town (64.3%). This is also consistent with past survey results from the 1986 and 2007 comprehensive plans. The primary attraction for living and/or owning property in the town of Summit is its rural character and our objectives for future planning should be consistent with this priority.
- In addition to our rural environment, water resources contribute much to the character of the town and are another factor in the choice to live or own property here. Major lakes, such as Summit Lake and Bear Gulch Pond, are a draw for seasonal residents with densely populated camps located along the lake front areas. Numerous other small ponds and streams are found throughout the town with the headwaters of Charlotte Creek and Panther Creek found here. In addition to contributing to the character of a specific land parcel, our water resources and their use can also represent economic opportunity for the town.
- Based on the survey response, the town population appears to be growing older. Principal householders responding as 66 years of age or older totaled 51%, with only 2.3% responding in the 21-35 year old age group. Retirees represent 55.2% of this survey group. Somewhat related to this observation, 50.3% of respondents have lived here for more than 25 years. It is important to note that the comprehensive plan survey may incorporate more respondents from an older age bracket, which can influence the survey

numbers. However, the overall trend is clearly reinforced by comparing the comprehensive plan survey and the census data with both sources clearly showing an increasingly older population for the town. The 1980 census listed a total town population of 905 with 126 people aged 65 and older (13.9%). In the recent 2020 census, the 65+ age group percentage has more than doubled since 1980 to 32.0% of the town's population. Future planning should reflect the need to accommodate and anticipate an aging population while also looking to draw younger families to the area to reverse this trend.

- While 56.5% of respondents felt that the town has not changed noticeably since moving here, 34.3% felt that the town has become less desirable. For those who answered this question in the 2007 plan survey, only 15.4% viewed the town as less desirable. Specific comments included with survey responses noted concern about the loss of stores/restaurants and rundown or poorly maintained properties as among some of the reasons for this viewpoint. While somewhat obvious as a general goal, it should be the objective of future planning to make the town a more desirable place to live.
- Survey responses regarding the quality of locally provided town services awarded high marks. The Fire Department, Ambulance Squad, and Town Highway department all received a rating of either high or good quality by 75% or more of those responding, with the Fire Department leading the way at 88.5%. Local code enforcement was rated by 62.3% of the respondents as either high quality or good quality. The survey also indicated very strong support for spending tax money to add, expand, or improve these public services. Town fiscal support for these areas should be continued at present or expanded levels with additional attention paid towards improving code enforcement and legal remedies available for code enforcement.
- Within the general confines of the hamlet areas, there are several abandoned and decaying structures which represent an eyesore and potential public health hazard. It is significant to note that 65.8% of survey respondents would be willing to use taxpayer funds to acquire and dispose of these structures. Addressing this issue should be a priority in future planning.
- In areas consistent with the value placed on a rural town character and farming environment, there was strong support expressed for land use regulations. As an example, 73.8% of respondents considered such regulations to be very important for preserving the natural environment. Approximately 70% listed protection of farmlands or impact on lakes/streams to be very important. A significant majority (approximately 80%) of survey respondents viewed new or updated land use laws or zoning favorably to ensure that areas are set aside for agricultural or forest use with similar, but slightly less, support for residential use (62.4%). In comparison, regulations associated with business signs, landscaping, or site design/layout were assigned a much lower level of importance.
- Land use laws for the town of Summit, both current (Town Law 1-2013) and past (the Homesite Local Law), established a minimum lot size of five (5) acres for any proposed building construction. Survey respondents who felt that this was an adequate size totaled 78.5%, while 13.0% viewed this as too large and 8.5% felt that it was too small.
- Major threats to the quality of life in the town are seen as loss of stores/restaurants (70.5%), loss of farms (50.5%), landfills/dump sites (32.0%), and mobile home parks

(30.8%). While some of these concerns, such as mobile home parks or landfills/dump sites, can be addressed by improved land use planning, addressing the loss of stores, restaurants, or farms is a more complex concern that requires creative solutions that would likely involve support from multiple entities. When asked in a related survey question about revitalizing “town centers” in Summit and Charlotteville, 88.7% of those responding felt that we should be more focused on this issue.

- The addition and/or improvement of recreational opportunities and gathering places was viewed very positively. Respondents either supporting or strongly supporting walking/biking trails provided by the town totaled 85.9%. This high level of support was continued for youth programs (86.6%), a community activities center (82.7%), playground facilities (81.6%), picnic facilities (80.9%), and children’s swim lessons (80.2%).

1.1 2024 Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

As noted in our introduction, a comprehensive plan should include a statement of goals and objectives which will further the growth and development of the town. To clearly identify these goals and objectives, it is helpful to establish a clearly expressed vision for the future of the town. The vision statement for the 2024 Town of Summit Comprehensive Plan includes the following priorities.

- To focus on efforts that enhance the quality of life as a small-town residential community, maintaining our current rural atmosphere and natural open space while encouraging the growth of compatible small businesses and community organizations. To reiterate the vision described in 2007, we want to preserve a place where people want to live. But it is important to recognize that this is not only an effort of preservation, but of fostering and supporting new ideas and opportunities which will enhance the quality of life in our community.
- To ensure that preservation of air and water quality will remain a priority for our town.
- To welcome and encourage the restoration of local shopping and dining opportunities.
- To welcome and encourage the restoration of small agricultural and farm-based business.
- To welcome and encourage the growth of small businesses, home-based employment, and opportunities for those who may work from home on a full or part-time basis.
- To promote and encourage the development of recreational opportunities, walking/biking trails, youth programs, and community programs. The value of a community center or meeting place conveniently located near these activities would be substantial.
- To continue support and funding for valued community services such as town highway maintenance, fire department, and emergency medical services, while also focusing on more rigorous code enforcement to address problems with blighted structures and accumulated junk.
- To review and update land use laws consistent with the vision expressed in this plan.

1.2 2024 Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives

To further the progress of this vision, the following basic goals and objectives are presented. It is the intent of this plan to use these as a starting point for more specific recommendations further in this report.

1. Economic and community development in the hamlets of Summit and Charlotteville, consistent with maintaining a “small town” environment, should be a top priority. This effort should not only be focused on restoring local shopping and dining opportunities, but also at revitalizing a sense of community which is shared by full-time residents, seasonal residents, and visitors. Lacking community “identity”, we risk becoming a suburb to surrounding larger towns.
2. Additional small business enterprises related to agriculture, recreation, and tourism should be encouraged. These not only provide for economic growth and income base for residents but are also consistent with maintaining the rural character and scenic nature of the town.
3. Preserving and improving the environmental quality of the town has always been and should continue to remain as a goal for the comprehensive plan. Protection of air and water quality, lakes and streams, wildlife habitats, scenic views, and the general quality of the physical environment in the town should be considered as integral components in any future planning for the town.
4. Consistent with the goals and objectives expressed above, land use regulations should be reviewed and updated as needed to preserve the quality of life and property while also prioritizing the rights of property owners and the opportunity for affordable housing. Consistent and effective enforcement of these regulations should also be a priority.
5. Efforts to make our community secure from hazards are valued by our residents and landowners and should continue at present or improved capabilities, including funding and support for local highway maintenance and emergency services.

Section 2.0 – Background Information

2.1 Background Information - Regional Location and History

Regional Location - The town of Summit is located at the western edge of Schoharie County, approximately 42.6° north latitude and 74.6° west longitude and occupying a total area of 37.48 square miles. It is bordered by the Schoharie County towns of Richmondville, Fulton, Blenheim, and Jefferson. The western edge of the town is also bordered by the town of Worcester (Otsego County) and the town of Harpersfield (Delaware County). At 2,471 feet, Caskey Mountain is the highest point in the town and much of the town is located above 2,000 feet in elevation. As expected, this contributes to a colder local climate as compared to neighboring towns and increased difficulty in commuting and transportation due to relatively steep roads in many areas. The town consists primarily of two major hamlets located at Summit and Charlotteville.

NYS Route 10 provides primary transportation access to Summit with the towns of Richmondville to the north and Jefferson to the south. Charlotteville is located on County Route 6 in the southwestern section of the town.

History - Originally settled in the 1790s, Summit was created from parts of Cobleskill and Jefferson on April 13, 1819. Summit also encompasses the hamlet of Charlotteville which had a larger population than Summit during the mid-1850s. Similar to many of the small farming communities in New York State at this time, the town consisted of several small hamlets which provided the nearby residents with convenient access to churches and schools. In addition to Summit and Charlotteville, these hamlets included Beards Hollow, Lutheranville, and Eminence; these names are still familiar to us today. Less well known are the additional hamlets of Dugway, Enid, and Proper. Many of these were thriving small business communities with hotels, stores, gristmills, sawmills, blacksmith shops, cooper shops, etc. All of the necessities for rural farm life were available locally.

Schools- In 1839, Summit peaked at 21 one-room schoolhouse districts that were spaced out about two or three miles from each other. Schools that were operating into the early 1900s were Summit village, Eminence, Dugway, Sawyer Hollow, Enid, Wharton Hollow, Beards Hollow, Lutheranville, Baptist Church, Oliver, and Charlotteville. Of these schools the first three are gone, the next six were transformed into residences, and the last two are restored to their original beauty. Oliver is at the Old Stone Fort Museum Complex and Charlotteville, the last operating one-room (actually it is a two-roomer) in Summit 1894-1951, is in its original setting and used as a community building. There was also a New York Methodist Conference Seminary (college) established in Charlotteville in 1850 with as many as 1,000+ students. Two seminaries were built and then burned down, the first in 1850-1854 and the second in 1855-1867. The seminary continued operating in a hotel on a smaller scale until closing in 1875.

Hotels- During the mid-1800s through the early 1900s Summit was a mecca for summer travelers and boarders. Robinson's Hotel/Summit House/Dingman's was built in 1853 and was intended for travelers on the Charlotteville-Albany Plank Road (Route 10). It was last used as a boarding house in the 1940s then torn down in 1984. Ryders/Summit Rest Hotel was built about 1850 and burned down in 1965. The barn on the Summit Rest Hotel property became a bar and grill, "The Red Barn," following the fire, then it too burned down in 2012. Both Robinson and Ryder were on the corners of Charlotteville/Charlotte Valley Rd. and Rte. 10. The Crowes Nest opened 1880 and took in summer boarders (as many as 150) until about the late 1940s then it burned in 1959. The first Lakeview House started taking summer boarders in 1881 until it burned in 1904. They rebuilt in 1905 and continued operating as a boarding house or restaurant/bar until about 2009, then it burned down in 2020. The Crowes Nest was right across the street from Lakeview on Sawyer Hollow Rd. A latecomer to the Summit resort scene, Johnsons Motel & Restaurant, thrived from 1962 until it burned down in 1989.

Churches- The first Baptist Church in Summit was situated in Charlotteville and built in 1830-1832, The Methodist Church in Summit was first built in 1837 with the second and current Methodist Church built in 1870, The Reformed/Methodist/Presbyterian Church in Eminence was built in 1831, the Methodist Episcopal Church in Charlotteville was built in 1830-1832, The second Baptist Church in Summit was built in 1839 and closed in 1878, The Christian Church at the Dugway organized in 1819 then fell apart by 1913, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in

Lutheranville was built in 1836, The Lutheran Church (shared with Baptists at times) of Beards Hollow was built in 1865 (weekly services ended in 1928 but services in August started up shortly afterwards, continuing into the present), The Free Methodist Church of Charlotteville was built in 1878 then became inactive in the 1960s. St. Anna's Catholic Church in Summit was active from 1948 to 2009 with the physical building still in existence and presently serving as the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The Summit Methodist and First Baptist Churches continue to hold services year-round.

Cemeteries - There are 24 cemeteries, some big and some tiny. The bigger ones are Old Summit, Charlotteville (active), Snook, Eminence, Lutheranville, Ploss, and New Summit (active) which opened in 1905 on Route 10.

Organizations- The Cobleskill Masonic Lodge #394 was formed in Summit in 1856. Both Charlotteville and Summit had bands; Summits was organized in 1887.

The Summit and Charlotteville Nine teams were playing baseball from as early as 1866 until about the 1950s. A home field for the Summit Nine was in the stone quarry also known as Mt. Wharton (approximately across from Beards Hollow Road) and the Charlotteville team played at "Buck's Hole." Summit Grange #1536 organized on August 17, 1934 with 29 charter members and closed in June of 2005. Charlotteville Fire Department began in 1947, Summit Fire Department in 1948, and Summit Rescue Squad in 1972.

Telephone-Summit Telephone Company incorporated in 1909. It was the smallest and the last magneto switchboard telephone company in New York State when it concluded operations in 1972. They serviced 155 telephones at the time of their merger with the Middleburgh Telephone Co. A Summit customer in 1972 would have had a monthly bill of \$1.45; under Middleburgh Telephone Co. the bill was \$2.05. Charlotte Valley Telephone Company (main office in Richmondville) was incorporated on August 22, 1902 and sold to Otsego and Delaware Telephone Company in 1923.

Post Offices- Summit and Charlotteville Post Offices have moved around to different houses all through the years but are now in operation in their own buildings. The Lutheranville Post Office, thought to be the smallest in New York State (and some say the U.S.), was in operation from 1853 to 1949, Eminence from 1849 to 1938, Beards Hollow from 1888 to 1905, and Proper from approximately 1900 to 1910.

2.2 Background Information - Natural Features

The terrain in Summit is characterized by rolling hills, deep valleys, and elevations which often exceed 2,000 feet above sea level with the highest points in the town found at Caskey Mountain (2,471 feet), Mount Wharton (2,443 feet), the Woodbeck benchmark (2,438 feet), and the Cobble (2,332 feet). Major valleys and their corresponding creeks which deserve mention include Charlotte Valley, Beards Hollow, Sawyer Hollow, and Wharton Hollow. These creeks contribute to different watershed areas with the Charlotte Valley Creek running into the Susquehanna River watershed, while the others eventually lead to the Mohawk River watershed via the Schoharie Creek. Larger lakes or ponds would include Summit Lake, Bear Gulch Pond, Fly Pond (Spruce

Lake), Mud Lake, and Rossman Pond. A significant portion of the town is forested, although a considerable quantity of acreage is cleared for agricultural and residential purposes. Although there are fewer active farms in the town, much of the land remains in use for farming and hay crops.

The native vegetation of the town includes both hardwood and softwood forests. Prevalent species include beech, oak, maple, poplar, ash, hickory, pine, and hemlock. Several New York state forests are found within the town, including Lutheranville State Forest, Burnt-Rossman Hills State Forest, and Mallet Pond State Forest. These are managed by NYS DEC for timber production, watershed protection, wildlife habitats, and public recreation. Public parking, primitive camping sites, and snowmobile trails are among the recreational opportunities listed on DEC websites. As many of these forested areas extend into the adjacent towns of Fulton, Blenheim, and Jefferson, the availability of these public lands extends beyond the town boundaries.

The township is part of the glaciated Allegheny Plateau and consists of a high plateau at an average elevation of 2,000 feet. The north-central escarpment of the Catskill Mountains extends into the area in the form of steep hills that are approximately 600 feet above the general level of the high plateau. The area is underlain by sedimentary rocks that dip southward at 100 to 135 feet per mile. These rocks range from Middle Ordovician to Upper Devonian in age, consisting of sandstone, siltstone, limestone, and shale. Because the bedrock strata dip gently southward, edges of resistant formations are exposed as steep, north-facing escarpments with long, gentle slopes to the south. Surface soils are underlain by red and gray, medium and fine-grained sandstone, and red and green shale of the Onteora formation.

2.3 Background Information - Existing Land Use

The following table outlines the land use data for the Town of Summit as recorded in the Schoharie County real property tax records. There currently are a total of 1,434 recorded parcels as compared to 1,376 parcels in 2003 for an increase of 4.2% over the past twenty years. It is important to note that the land use description categories listed here are useful as a general description of the property but may not completely reflect the nature of the town's land use. For example, a land parcel consisting of a single-family home situated on 100 acres would be classified as residential while the overall nature of the property would be primarily vacant land. A more detailed description of each of these would include:

- **Residential:** Residential property accounts for the majority of both land parcels and acreage in the Town of Summit, with 59.5% of the land parcels classified as residential land use accounting for 51.2% of the total acreage in the town. Residential uses include single-family homes, multi-family homes, manufactured housing, seasonal dwellings, and residences with commercial use. Seasonal residences on small parcels are common on Summit Lake and the Bear Gulch. Summit Lake has approximately 47 lakefront parcels with only four of these at five acres or more and most of the remaining parcels typically at one acre or smaller. A review of tax record property data would indicate that about 80% of these parcels are seasonal residences. The Bear Gulch has approximately 84 lakefront parcels with 90% of these less than two acres in size; most probably ranging from 0.1 to 0.5 acres in size and primarily consisting of seasonal residences.

- Vacant land parcels account for 33.9% of the recorded parcels and 33.7% of the acreage, making this the second largest land use category in the town.
- Wild, forested, conservation land use accounts for the next largest total acreage with 9.1% of the town's land listed in this category, which would include state or county owned forest lands, private forest lands, private hunting and fishing clubs, and similar forested recreation areas. This category includes 21 parcels designated as state owned forest preserves with a total of 2,105.2 acres. Major areas of state-owned forest lands would be found in the Mud Lake/Caskey Mountain/Gott/Sisson Road area, adjacent to the Summit Conservation Club property near the Bear Gulch, in Eminence between Yankee Street and Rossman Hill Road, and adjacent to Rossman Fly Road. Many of these areas also border additional state-owned forest land in adjacent towns.
- Agricultural land represents only 0.7% of the total land use parcels and 5.5% of the total acreage in the town with only 10 parcels recorded as agricultural.
- Commercial uses in the Town of Summit are a relatively minor presence. The commercial use category definition includes general stores, dining establishments, inns and/or tourist homes, bars, service stations, lumber yards, retail services, among others; there are only four land parcels in the Town of Summit designated as commercial use.
- Community Services includes churches, fire district property, cemeteries and cemetery associations, highway garages, and other similar land uses.
- Industrial use would include various manufacturing operations including light industrial uses.
- Public Services would include cell towers, telephone, television, electric and gas transmission, and other similar land uses.
- Note that there are no Category 500 land uses recorded in the Town of Summit, which would include recreation and entertainment establishments, social organizations, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, riding stables, camps and camping facilities, parks, picnic grounds, and playgrounds.

Town of Summit – Land Use Parcel Data				
Class Code	Land Use Description	Parcel Count	Acreage	% of Acreage
100	Agricultural	10	1,292.23	5.47%
200	Residential	853	12,094.05	51.23%
300	Vacant Land	486	7,947.01	33.66%
400	Commercial	4	1.51	0.01%
600	Community Services	28	75.10	0.32%
700	Industrial	1	25.70	0.11%
800	Public Service	28	22.21	0.10%
900	Public Parks and Conservation	24	2,151.01	9.11%
	Totals:	1,434	23,608.82	100.00%
<i>as of 12/05/2023</i>				

2.4 Background Information - Population and Demographic Data

Population Trends - Based on the Census Bureau data for 2020, the population of Summit Town is 1,072, revealing losses from the 2000 count of 1,123 and the 2010 report of 1,143. Since the 2010 Census, the Summit Town population has lost 71 residents (6.3%) and Schoharie County experienced population loss of 2,800 (8.5%) while New York State gained 458,000 (2.4%). Of historical note, there was a population of 2,009 as recorded in 1845.

Population Trends:

Population	2000	2010	2020	% change
Summit Town	1,123	1,143	1,072	-6.3
Schoharie County	31,582	32,749	29,936	-8.5
New York State	18,976,457	19,378,102	19,835,913	+2.4

A major portion of the 2020 Schoharie County population losses reported here can be attributed to the 2011 flooding of Schoharie Valley due to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. While unaffected by the floods, population losses in the Town of Summit might be attributed to the 2008 economic crash, increasing non-resident property purchases, the loss of several hospitality enterprises in the hamlet of Summit in recent decades, and the decline in rural job opportunities for the working population.

Population Demographics - The 2020 Census data indicates that the median age of Summit Town residents is 47 years, 20% higher than that of New York State (39.2 years). However, the following population age table provides a more complete account of Summit Town population age trends. Notable trends are the significant reduction of young residents (0-19 years) and the large increase in the over-65 cohort. This trend is reinforced by similar results from our comprehensive plan survey. These changes deserve our attention because differing demographics are an important factor in the decisions of our local government.

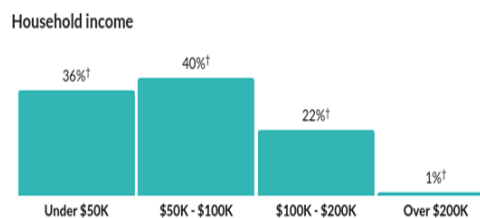
Summit Town population age trends:

Population Age	2000	2010	2020
0-19 years	24.5%	26.2%	20.1%
20-44 years	28.0%	16.9%	24.7%
45-64 years	31.7%	36.5%	23.1%
65 + years	15.8%	20.6%	32.0%

Education Levels - The 2020 Census indicates that of the Summit Town population 25 years and over, 97.6% were high school graduates or higher. This statistic is approximately 10 percent higher than both Schoharie County (90.6%) and New York State (87.4%) populations. 30.7% of Summit residents were reported as having bachelor's degrees or higher. This is more than seven points higher than reported for Schoharie County (23.2%) but below the statistics for New York State (38.1%).

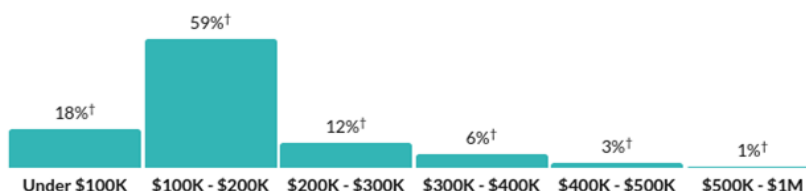
Education	High School or Above	Bachelor's Degree or Above
Summit Town	97.6%	30.7%
Schoharie County	90.6%	23.2%
New York State	87.4%	38.1%

Household Income - the 2020 Census records the median household income for Summit as \$77,596, 20% higher than that reported for Schoharie County (\$64,220) and just \$2,400 higher than that for New York State (\$75,157). This data may reflect the larger over 65 cohort, many of which are presumed to be recipients of both Social Security and retirement benefits. The household income graph at the right depicts the distribution as recorded for the 2020 Census.



2.5 Background Information - Housing Units and Households

The 2020 Census recorded 972 housing units with an occupancy rate of 48%. Of the occupied units 88% were owner occupied while 12% were renter occupied. This data correlates closely to the comprehensive plan survey results, which reported 52.3% full-time property-owning residents. The approximately 50% vacancy rate reflects the predominance of seasonal housing units with a significant number of lakefront cottages and summer home properties located throughout the town. The census recorded 466 households with an average 2.2 persons per household, a little less than the Schoharie County rate of 2.4 and about 90% of the New York State rate of 2.6. Again, this lower number of persons per household is consistent with the older “retirement age” population of the town. The median value of owner-occupied housing units is recorded as \$134,700 which is approximately 90% of the Schoharie County value. The following graph depicts the distribution of housing unit values.



To attract younger working families, the town needs to increase moderate-income housing opportunities. Land use regulations should be reviewed to ensure that they recognize the varying needs of different segments of the population and that they do not increase the cost of moderate-income housing unnecessarily. Additionally, rigorous enforcement of the building codes for residential construction will promote improved housing quality in future years.

2.6 Background Information - Economic Base

The Town of Summit’s economic base and potential for commerce has suffered a significant decline since the previous comprehensive plan reported on these issues in 2007. Although the town has always been predominately residential in its recent history, prospects for significant commercial development have become even more elusive than in 2007. While not wholly responsible for the present conditions, the 2008 economic downturn and the added stress of the COVID pandemic have also contributed to the current unfortunate economic conditions. In the process of assembling information regarding the town’s economic base, the following observations were quite clear:

- For most of the 20th century, the Town of Summit hosted a modest resort and recreational industry with a hotel, campground, recreational lake access, restaurants, and general stores in both hamlets. Today, that is all but gone. The last vestige of Summit's hospitality industry, the Summit Cafe, closed its doors in 2022. The hamlet of Charlotteville is slightly better off from an economic standpoint with the Charlotteville General Store, Charlotteville Real Estate, Kymar Farm Distillery, and Sauvage Beverages existing as local retail enterprises.
- In the past, agriculture and related industries formed a greater part of the town's economic base. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan lamented the loss of family farms, reporting them as almost extinct. Today there exists just one dairy farm in Charlotteville, a beef/meat-raising farm in Summit, and a few smaller "hobby" or part-time farms. While farming may not be as relevant to the local economy as in the past, the potential remains strong.
- The New York State Summit Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility closed in 2011. While technically located in the adjacent Town of Fulton, the facility employed over 100 people who contributed to the local economy. The closure of this facility represents the loss of the last major employer in the area.
- Historically, Summit has not attracted, nor is it likely to attract, large businesses or industries. The reasons for this are predominantly due to the remote nature of the town and its distance from larger populations, major highways, and markets. Our higher elevation and challenging winter weather might also be a disincentive for such enterprises to locate here.

There remain many home-based businesses in the town, some of which operate in various construction industry fields, and others which provide a variety of services such as lawn maintenance, excavation, wood cutting, animal boarding, residential spray-foam insulation, home maintenance, snow removal, calligraphy and graphic arts, proofreading/copyediting, and security services. In addition, there are similar home-based businesses related to vacation rentals (Airbnb, Vrbo) and event venues where property and/or services are provided for weddings, celebrations, and similar hospitality events. There are also a few new small business enterprises recently established, such as the Sauvage Distillery in Charlotteville which employs a half-dozen residents of the town.

Since the decline of farming and related industries and the loss of major hospitality enterprises, many of the remaining economic assets are related to outdoor pursuits, such as tourism and seasonal attraction of lakes, woodlands, open spaces, and wildlife habitats. A major factor for this is the proximity of the town to state woodlands. However, the nature of these pursuits is also shifting. Visitors still come to hunt both small and large game, but at greatly reduced numbers. Due to reduced snowfall in recent years, coupled with the expense of maintaining snowmobiles, snowmobiling visitors are also well below what was enjoyed in the past. This has an impact on the viability of local shopping and restaurants; where a business in the past might expect a steady flow of seasonal support from hunters in the fall, snowmobilers in the winter, and seasonal property owners in the spring and summer, these steady numbers have diminished.

Despite the changing nature of our economic climate, opportunities remain. The number of seasonal and full-time residential homes continues to grow. This means that economic opportunity for local shopping, dining, and similar enterprises would be expected to grow also.

The natural beauty and attractive environment that exists in the town remains and can be a positive economic factor. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan emphasized that “Summit’s real treasure is its natural beauty, rural character and quality of life” and recommended “encouragement of home-based businesses that fit in with the community and do not alter its rural character.” Our current comprehensive plan also supports this vision. In part due to shifting trends generated from the COVID pandemic and as an expected result of communication technology advances, it is likely that more people will be able to work from home in a variety of industries. Recent legislative support and funding for expansion of broadband access, critical to the success of working from home, might facilitate this result and should be supported.

Reflecting what is probably the most significant current economic concern, a large majority of survey respondents (88%) said they want the town to focus on revitalization of the Summit and Charlotteville town centers. Local shopping and dining opportunities have all but disappeared, with the Charlotteville General Store as the only remaining shopping destination. Over 80% of respondents indicated specific support for a gas station, general store, and a restaurant. These are critical to the vitality of any small town and the restoration of suitable businesses in the town centers should be a priority.

The economic development strategy plan *Shaping the Way Forward* commissioned by the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors, recognized the importance of quality-of-life issues such as “a livable and pleasant community” and policies and institutions which encourage “positive identification with the community.” Probably each of us have had the experience of traveling through some other distant village and being impressed with the pleasant and neat appearance of the homes, roads, sidewalks, parks, and other outward-facing attributes of the community. That attraction is what could affect a family’s decision to relocate to such a community, or a business to decide where they want to be. That result, as well as the healthy and safe life experience enjoyed by residents, could be engendered by our cooperation in a Complete Streets Program. The focus of a Complete Streets policy is to consider how roadways, pedestrian walkways, hiking trails, and/or bicycle paths, can be best incorporated into an overall plan for future development. As we envision the need for revitalization in our hamlet areas, a Complete Streets policy represents another aspect of this revitalization.

The ebb and flow of economic changes within a town is inevitable. One hundred years ago, the automobile was a recent innovation and almost all shopping and business happened locally. At present, we are in somewhat of a transition and there is much work to be done to revitalize the local economy of our beautiful home place. This is not an effort solely for town government but will require the cooperation of an involved citizenry, forward-thinking entrepreneurs, and town government.

Specific detailed goals and objectives will be outlined in Section 4 of this comprehensive plan. A short summary of goals related to economic growth and revitalization would include:

- Support the growth of home-based businesses, independent contractors, and those who are allowed to work from home. Supporting broad-band internet and adequate cell phone services is an example of positive local government input.
- Support the growth of bed and breakfast type facilities, Airbnb, Vrbo, and other home-based hospitality venues that are well-suited to rural locations while also regulating these sufficiently to avoid negative impacts on the town and its residents. Increasing the

opportunity for access to recreational and similar activities would be a key part of this area of economic development.

- Explore how we might best capitalize on our existing resources, such as lakes, woodlands, New York State forest lands, snowmobile trails and how we might also expand access to these resources for new recreational opportunities.
- Place a strong focus on how we might restore shopping, dining, and other retail opportunities in our hamlet town centers. This should include efforts to make the hamlet areas of the town attractive to both residents and businesses in the town through efforts such as improved land use regulations, visual quality improvements, safer streets and walkways, and better enforcement regarding accumulated junk and decaying structures.
- Recognizing the complexity of attracting small businesses such as restaurants and stores to return to the hamlet areas and fostering other areas of economic development, our plan recommends the creation of a cooperative town-sponsored economic development committee. This would be a long-term standing committee tasked with the organization of suitable events, reaching out to business establishments, and/or the pursuit of grants and other resources for economic development.

2.7 Background Information - County/Town Services and Community Infrastructure

General Administration – Oversight and administration of town services is provided primarily by the elected positions of town supervisor, town clerk/tax collector, highway superintendent, town justice, and four (4) town council positions. The town supervisor is the chief elected official of the town, chairs town board meetings, and represents the town on the County Board of Supervisors. Town board meetings are held monthly on the third Thursday of each month at the Town Hall Meeting Room. In addition to the elected offices, the town also employs part-time positions for assessor, code enforcement officer, dog control officer, and an assistant to the town clerk. Office hours for town supervisor, town clerk, town assessor, and code enforcement officer are available as posted on the town website and in the quarterly newsletter. Additional appointed positions include the town historian, youth program coordinator, planning board, and board of appeals. Except for the highway superintendent, daily administration of town functions is achieved by part-time positions and full-time roles for these positions is neither likely nor necessary. However, it could easily be said that the availability required for many of these positions extends beyond the financial compensation and the dedication of the elected town officials holding these positions should be recognized.

Town Hall & Meeting Room – Located at 1580 Charlotte Valley Road, the Town Hall and Meeting Room is adjacent to the Highway Department building complex and provides office space for the town supervisor, town clerk, assessor, and code enforcement officer. The space provided for these town offices is limited but adequate for the present need, however expansion would be difficult due to constraints posed by adjacent Highway Department buildings, roadways, and neighboring properties. The common meeting room provides for regular meetings of the town board, town planning board, and other town offices/committees. The meeting room is also used as the location of the town court with a section of the room reserved for the judge's bench. The construction of a 10' x 20' addition to the meeting room in 2023 will allow for a separate judge's chamber and additional means of egress from the meeting room.

Town Communications – As part of a larger Schoharie County website, information regarding local town government, office hours, meeting notices, meeting minutes, laws, and so on are available at www4.schohariecounty-ny.gov/government/town-of-summit. The town also provides a newsletter which is mailed out twice each year to property owners based on tax role information.

Town Budget – The annual town budget is prepared and approved by the town council in the fall and outlines the anticipated costs for next year. Total appropriations for the 2023 town budget are listed at \$1,332,948 and include the following anticipated costs:

- The General Fund – This includes the salaries and expenses for elected and appointed town officials, contractual expenses such as the town attorney, employee benefits, printing & mailing expenses, building expenses, youth programs, and other minor expenses. Total appropriations for the general fund represent approximately 23.5% of the total budget.
- The Highway Fund – This includes Highway Department employee salaries and benefits, contractual expenses, equipment and machinery purchases, maintenance costs, oil & stone for road conditioning, and winter road maintenance expenses for sand & salt. Total appropriations for the highway fund represent approximately 58.4% of the total budget. It should be noted that about 38.4% of the highway appropriations are funded from state aid and other sources which reduces the cost to taxpayers.
- Fire District Funds – Funding of Summit and Charlotteville Fire Districts is used for operating, equipment, and maintenance costs as directed by the elected district fire commissioners. Fire district funding represents approximately 18.1% of the total budget.

Town Roads and Highways – Due to the rural nature of the town and the low volume of pedestrian traffic, most non-recreational transportation is accomplished by motor vehicles. The lack of shopping and entertainment opportunities within the hamlet areas results in limited transportation by other means such as walking or cycling. New York State Route 10 represents the primary highway for general commuting via Interstate 88, for local shopping in Cobleskill, and as access for travel to other destinations. With an elevation change of 800 feet in the five-mile trip from Summit to the I-88/Route 10/Route 7 intersection in Richmondville, this major access road to/from the town would be characterized as relatively steep and contributes to commuting and transportation difficulty. In addition to NYS Route 10, Charlotte Valley Road (County Route 6) also provides similar convenient access for commuting between the hamlets of Summit and Charlotteville, also extending conveniently to the Oneonta area for Charlotteville residents.

NYS Route 10 is the only state-maintained highway in the Town of Summit with an overall length of 5.6 miles running in a general north-south direction from Richmondville to Jefferson. There are also 8 paved county roads accounting for approximately 22 miles of centerline highway, with most of these connecting to relatively rural destinations in adjacent towns. The primary exception to this would be Charlotte Valley Road, which connects to the State Route 23 corridor in the Davenport/Oneonta area. Maintenance and snow removal for county roads is the responsibility of the county, however cooperative agreements exist between the town and county highway departments to allow for more efficient winter operations. In addition to the county

roads, there are 45 locally maintained town roads with approximately 40 miles of these accessible year-round and 10 miles that are seasonal roads. Approximately 70% of year-round accessible town roads are surfaced with oil & stone with the remainder consisting of dirt/gravel construction. The Highway Department has a long-term plan to renew oil & stone roads on a five-to-eight-year cycle based on the price of required materials. In the event of lower material costs, more roads can be renewed and the overall maintenance cycle time reduced.

While the road system in the Town of Summit is primarily rural in nature, it would be considered adequate to serve the current needs of the town and residents.

Town Highway Department – The Town Highway Department is the largest and most visible component of municipal services provided by the town and is tasked with maintaining our local roads, providing for snow removal and safe road conditions in the winter, clearing brush along the roadways, and maintaining the equipment required to complete these tasks. The Highway Department currently has five full-time employees including the position of elected Highway Superintendent. Especially in the winter months, the challenges of maintaining town roads in an environment characterized by both frequent snow and mountainous rural roads can be unpredictable. Expenditures for both labor hours and materials (fuel, sand, and salt) can vary significantly from year to year. The target equipment inventory consists of two small trucks used for light plowing and general use, five large trucks for plowing and heavier road maintenance, loader, backhoe, mowing tractor, grader, and wood-chipper. Availability of ARPA funds allowed for the recent purchase of a 38 kW generator which powers the entire Town Office/Highway Department Building, ensuring that heat and highway activities can continue in the event of a long term power loss.

As noted earlier, the Town Highway Department has been engaged in the long-term effort of improving locally maintained roads by renewing oil and stone surfaces on a regular basis. Similar plans are in place for equipment replacement based on the balance between maintenance costs, warranty periods, and the cost of new equipment. The current plan envisions replacing small trucks on a 5-year cycle, loaders and backhoes on a 10-year cycle, and larger trucks/plows on a 15-year cycle. During the early stages of equipment ownership, costs are relatively low and warranty periods would typically cover major failures. As equipment approaches the end of lifetime cycle, increasingly high maintenance costs justify replacement. The current replacement plan seeks to avoid expensive repairs on equipment which is already approaching the end of a reasonable lifetime cycle.

For the purposes of this comprehensive plan, consideration should be given to planning for future Department Building upgrades and maintenance. The current building is 50 years old and normal wear, such as concrete damage from the weight of larger equipment in use today, will need to be addressed.

Fire Department – The Town of Summit consists of two separate fire districts for Summit and Charlotteville with both fire departments dispatched by the Schoharie County Emergency Operations Center. Founded in 1948, the Summit Fire Department presently consists of 30 active members and maintains two engines/pumpers, one tanker truck, one brush truck, and an SUV response vehicle. Due to the likelihood of responding to remote emergencies on state land or

snowmobile trails, the department also maintains a utility terrain vehicle (UTV) and trailer. In 2022, the department responded to a total of 59 calls consisting of structure fires, mutual aid responses to neighboring departments, brush fires, motor vehicle accidents, and assisting with EMS calls. The current firehouse was built in 1984 as a four-bay facility with a major upgrade in 2010 for the addition of a three-bay garage, meeting hall, kitchen facilities, offices, and a radio room.

The Charlotteville Fire Department was established by the Summit Town Board on September 2, 1947. The first fire station was constructed in 1949, currently serving as the Charlotteville Post Office. The present fire station was completed in 1975. In 1977 women were allowed to serve as volunteer firefighters. Currently there are 14 volunteer firefighters. A major department milestone was the acquisition of their first brand-new apparatus purchased in 1996. The current inventory consists of two pumper/tankers, a rescue truck, and a brush truck. There were 22 calls in 2022, consisting of brush fires, motor vehicle accidents, wires down, smoke alarm activations, and mutual aid to structure fires.

Both fire departments face similar challenges. Membership is growing older and attracting younger members is more challenging than in the past. A recent review of membership records in the Summit Fire Department determined that the average member's age was 63 years. Training demands for new members are substantial and compliance with state mandated training requirements is necessary for first responders, however budget cutbacks and staffing limitations provide for fewer conveniently scheduled training classes than needed to meet these requirements. Recruiting new membership may be improved by providing incentives, such as tax breaks, but also by attracting younger and more active families to the town and increasing their sense of engagement with the community. Another problem facing the departments is the cost of replacing equipment which continues to increase with some costs for equipment nearly doubling in the past five years. Increased grant funding and more support for the pursuit and development of grant applications would help in reducing the cost to the town. It is important to note that both departments have fund-raising activities which contribute to reducing the tax burden for local property owners.

Both fire departments and our EMS responders (see next section) also play a key role in community engagement. In this age of dwindling community organizations, this role may be more important than ever. Some examples of events and activities which engage the community include:

- Allowing the use of fire department meeting rooms for public meetings, department member family celebrations, and events organized by non-profit organizations.
- Providing a fund which helps with food for families in need at Christmas.
- Hosting Halloween and Christmas parties for local children.
- Hosting a Christmas Tree Lighting event that is open to the community.
- Open house events to inform the community of the role of the emergency service providers.

EMS & Ambulance – The Summit Fire District Rescue Squad was formed in 1972. At that time there were around 20 members that received approximately 36 hours of training. The squad covered the Towns of Summit, Richmondville and West Fulton. The equipment was very basic, and the ambulance was a used funeral home limousine.

In 2023, the rescue squad has a 2010 Ford E-450 box style ambulance with up-to-date equipment and modern capabilities. However, there are presently only eight members and only three Emergency Medical Technicians (an EMT is necessary for all calls). As is the case across the county, declining membership means that there is insufficient staffing for response to all the calls that are received. Per NYS EMS service guidelines, if an ambulance is not adequately staffed, it cannot respond. Because of this response issue, the county presently maintains two ambulances and additional staffing that can respond when local rescue squads cannot. While this county support does fill the void, the response time is significantly longer as compared to an adequately staffed local squad.

The rescue squad is an all-volunteer service and the most significant problem facing this organization is the struggle to recruit new members. There are many factors that contribute to low volunteer membership; foremost among them is the significant training requirement. The state now requires 180 hours of training to become an Emergency Medical Technician. Unless the staffing problem is addressed, it is likely that maintaining a viable volunteer ambulance service will not be possible in the future.

Law Enforcement – As in most of Schoharie County, law enforcement for the town is provided through a combination of resources from the New York State Police and Schoharie County Sheriff's Office. Emergency dispatch and 911 response for all county police departments and first responders is managed by the communications division of the Sheriff's Office. In addition to responding to 911 calls, the Sheriff's Office is also responsible for civil actions, pistol permit management, county court security, road patrols, and snowmobile trail patrols. As an element of law enforcement, the town justice plays a role in the arraignment of misdemeanor and felony arrests, prosecution of misdemeanors within town boundaries, vehicle and traffic law infractions, and civil/small claims proceedings.

Public Transportation – Public transportation options for residents in Summit and Charlotteville are extremely limited. While there is a Schoharie County Public Transportation group with posted routes generally available for more populated areas of the county, the outlying areas have only limited service. For a resident of Summit, transportation is available on Thursday only and would need to be requested the day prior to the needed ride. The bus schedule departs Cobleskill at 12:00 PM, which means that all business and/or appointments would need to be handled quickly in the morning hours. In addition to appointments and shopping in Cobleskill, there are also public transportation options for commuters who might wish to use the bus for daily commutes from Schoharie County locations to downtown Albany. These services are provided for a fee; for a round trip from Summit to Cobleskill, the cash fare would be \$10. The Schoharie County Office for the Aging supplements the cost of public transportation for those aged 60 and over. In addition, senior citizens and Medicaid recipients may qualify for rides to medical appointments through various other programs.

Utilities (Electricity, Telephone, Television, and Internet) – An overview of utilities and providers for the Town of Summit includes:

- Electricity – National Grid
- Natural Gas – Not Available
- Phone (Landline) – Middleburgh Telephone Company
- Phone (Cell Service) – Numerous providers are available; while coverage has improved greatly in the past few years, there are still dead spots in many locations.
- Cable Television – Middleburgh Telephone Company, Spectrum
- Internet – Middleburgh Telephone Company, Spectrum; availability of high-speed internet (DSL, Fiber Optic) has been expanded significantly in many areas of the town but there are still locations with limited or no options for internet other than satellite provided services.

Sewage and Water – As rural hamlets, both Summit and Charlotteville continue to use on-lot sewage disposal systems and drilled wells that are the responsibility of individual property owners for design, installation, and maintenance. Requirements are included in the local land use laws for approved sewage disposal plans to be in place prior to any building permit issuance. This requirement is supplemented by professional service providers who are knowledgeable in sewage disposal system design for small business and residential on-lot systems. Because of these requirements already in place, continued reliance on individual on-lot sewage disposal systems and on-site drilled wells should continue. However, recognizing the long-term limitations of this approach in the more densely populated hamlet areas, a limited feasibility study should be considered to explore the costs and benefits of town water and sewer. An additional consideration of sewage and water is the dense concentration of mostly seasonal residences along waterfront areas for both Summit Lake and Bear Gulch Pond. Poor-quality septic systems in these areas can have both a health-and-lake-water-quality impact, but it also would be costly for the town to address this issue using solutions financed by the tax base.

Healthcare Services – Located in Cobleskill, the Cobleskill Regional Hospital would be considered the primary source for inpatient and overnight care in Schoharie County and the most convenient source of hospital care for the Town of Summit, with additional hospitals located further away in Oneonta, Cooperstown, Schenectady, and Albany. Operated as part of Bassett Healthcare Network, Cobleskill Regional Hospital services include a staffed 24/7 emergency room and the nearby Health Center Building, which provides outpatient health services. In addition to the hospital, there is also a WellNow Urgent Care facility also located in Cobleskill for the care of non-life-threatening injuries. The county is also served by many other smaller private practices and network-based healthcare providers.

School Districts – The Town of Summit is primarily served by two (2) separate school districts with most students in the town attending either the Cobleskill-Richmondville or Charlotte Valley school system depending on their residence location. There are also some residences within the town that are part of the Jefferson or Middleburgh school districts.

Parks and Recreational Facilities – Although there is presently an active interest in creating a community center, there are no established parks or recreational facilities in the town or hamlet areas. In terms of recreational resources, the lakes and state forest areas located within the town boundaries represent opportunity but are lacking in any significant improvements for general use by the public. There are no defined public access points for any of the major lakes or streams, and no established hiking trails or parks for any of the state-owned land in the town. During the winter months, snowmobile trails are maintained and supervised by the Summit Sno-Riders. Given the general interest expressed in the survey responses, this is an area where improvements in public access and/or usability for parks and recreational opportunity would be a desired goal.

Youth Program – The youth program or Summit Summer Program is sponsored by town government and provides regular weekly events during July and August. These events might provide an opportunity to learn more about nature (birds of prey, healing plants, native wildlife, etc.) or simply offer a chance to listen to music or watch other acts performed by local artists. While directed at engaging the youth of our community, the events scheduled are entertaining for all age groups. The town newsletter and website provide schedule and contact information for this summer program.

Community Organizations – In addition to community support provided by the fire department, rescue squad, and other quasi-governmental agencies, there are several other associations, churches, organizations, and so forth that engage in community involvement. The town newsletter is an excellent source of information for contact names, phone numbers, and email addresses for local community groups and non-profit organizations. A partial list of these additional community organizations would include:

- Summit Seniors
- Summit Neighbors
- Summit Conservation Club
- Summit Sno-Riders
- Beard's Hollow Society
- Summit Methodist Church
- Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Summit Lake Association
- Summit Community Center
- Summit Revitalization Initiative
- Bear Gulch Lake Association
- Charlotteville Schoolhouse Restoration Committee
- Museum of History of Charlotteville

3.0 Land Use Planning

3.1 Recent Updates to the Town of Summit Land Use Law

A major concern expressed in past comprehensive plans and associated surveys was that the rural nature of the town would be compromised by excessive subdivisions and accelerating housing construction without sufficient local guidance. In response to the 1986 Comprehensive Plan, the town adopted the Town of Summit Home Site Local Law which established basic building site requirements including the five-acre minimum lot size for the construction of any new structure. This local law was updated in 2002 and further revised in 2013 in response to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. Consistent with the goals of preserving the rural nature of the town and the quality of life for residents and property owners, some of the 2013 land use law updates are summarized as follows.

- Establishing prohibited uses – this restriction addresses land use that would be noxious or offensive and generally inconsistent with the rural nature of the town. Examples of prohibited uses would include chemical manufacturing, large scale mining, stockyards, slaughterhouses, handling of hazardous materials, among others. The guidance on prohibited use also notes processes involving potential groundwater contamination, excessive truck traffic, toxic/noxious fumes, or similar characteristics that would be inconsistent with a long-term goal of maintaining the rural character of the town. As listed prohibited uses, these activities would not be allowed under any circumstance in the Town of Summit.
- While the updated land use law prohibits many offensive and undesirable uses, it includes additional provisions to ensure that small-scale business and agricultural activities consistent with our rural character would be permitted. For example, while the manufacturing of chemical compounds such as turpentine or shellac in large volumes would not be permitted, a wood-working shop in which these compounds are used would be allowed by the land use law.
- Establishing junkyards as prohibited use while also providing definitions for what constitutes “junk” and/or “junkyards.” As adopted in 2013, our current land use law does not allow for outside storage of large numbers of abandoned junk vehicles, appliances, and/or accumulations of discarded materials.
- Restricting construction of larger multi-family dwellings in excess of three households, such as apartment buildings, condominium complexes, and so forth.
- Making provisions per NYS Town Law for the creation of a Board of Appeals to consider use and area variance requests, ensuring that land use law regulations do not create an unnecessary burden on residents and property owners.

Since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan was issued, additional local laws related to land use and/or the general welfare of the town have been adopted which provide more specific regulations directed at the right to farm, road preservation, solar energy systems, and short-term rental properties.

While not inclusive of all existing local laws, the following list includes many of the local laws relevant to land use:

- Flood Damage Prevention (1992)
- Regulating Telecommunication Towers and Antennas (2010)
- NYS Uniform Fire Prevention & Building Code (2006)
- Road Preservation Law (2010)
- Land Use Law (2013)
- Regulate Solar Energy Systems (2016)
- Right to Farm (2018)
- Short Term Rental Regulations (Pending)

3.2 Summary of Primary Land Use Law Provisions

As currently provided for in local laws previously summarized, the primary land use planning tools already in existence for the Town of Summit would include:

- The requirement for a five-acre parcel as the minimum lot size for any structure. Established in 1988, this creates a preference for construction of single family or similar residential buildings on sites which would be very rural in character. In conjunction with the restriction on multi-family dwellings, this moves the land use planning direction heavily toward residential and small business. This also ensures that medium-sized land parcels of 5 to 10 acres would not be subdivided into multiple small lots of an acre or less.
- Related to the five-acre parcel requirement, there is an allowance that construction would be permitted on smaller parcels of less than five acres if the parcel was in existence prior to October 10, 1988. This is important in allowing continued development and/or improvements in the hamlet and lake front areas of the town, as many of these lots are generally quite small and would be less than five acres in size. In evaluating land use for these parcels, it is important to be able to research property records to determine when the parcel was created.
- The requirement that only one (1) principal structure be allowed per building site. This provision of the land use law does not allow multiple family dwellings such as apartment buildings or condominiums, and/or businesses such as strip malls, to be constructed on a single land parcel.
- Providing limited site use restrictions for setback requirements from roadways and adjacent property lines. As compared to other rural towns of similar size and character, land use laws in the Town of Summit pose no limitations on building height, lot coverage, lot size ratio (depth/width), the number of non-principal structures allowed, or the size of yards and green space allocated around structures.
- Prohibiting land uses that would be inconsistent with the rural character of the town while also providing protection for land uses related to agriculture and small business.

3.3 Recommended Land Use Law Changes

Based on public input from the Comprehensive Plan Survey, additional input from town officials, and on further discussions within the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, several areas have been identified for further focus regarding updates to our current land use laws. The following list represents a summary of these areas:

1. There should be better definition of the role of the planning board in reviewing major construction or land use projects such as housing developments, campgrounds, retail establishments, manufacturing enterprises, or more complex projects which are allowed by the current land use law. These areas of development require more consideration than simple road and property setback requirements.
2. The land use law should be amended for better regulation of campgrounds, camp sites, and temporary structures. This is currently an area of weakness in definitions and application of the regulations which makes for difficult enforcement. For example, current definitions could be interpreted to allow an unlimited number of campers and/or recreational vehicles to be permanently situated on a small lot if they are not “inhabited” for more than four (4) months per year. While well-situated and attractive campgrounds would be a suitable business enterprise consistent with the rural character that is desired in our town, a large and unregulated collection of campers and recreational vehicles on a two-acre parcel would be inconsistent with the direction and vision anticipated by both past and present comprehensive plans. Land use law updates, improved definitions, and site plan review would be very positive elements in this effort.
3. In addition to providing for households, a principal structure is also defined in the current land use law as allowing one (1) commercial enterprise, however the term “commercial enterprise” is not included in the definitions section of the law. Would a building which provides office space for more than one business be in violation? How about a collection of two or more small stores in a single structure? Would a strip mall with a single owner renting to several businesses be considered a single commercial enterprise with the landlord engaging in leasing space to others, or would it be considered several commercial enterprises? One use would be permitted, while the other use would not. This is an area of weakness in our definitions that should be clarified.
4. As currently defined in the local land use law, setbacks from roadways and adjacent property lines are applicable to any structure, regardless of whether a building permit is required. Even though a small shed or agricultural building may not require a building permit, it is still considered a non-principal structure and subject to setback requirements. However, many small structures (less than 144 square feet) which do not require building permits are being placed close to roadways, likely due to incorrect interpretation of the land use law. It is recommended that clarifications be incorporated into the current law to state more clearly that setback provisions are applicable to all structures. It should be noted that Section III.C of the town’s land use law places responsibility for determining if a building permit is required on the Code Enforcement Officer, not the landowner. As written in the land use law, the CEO should be consulted for any building project. At present, this is not being done and programs for increased public awareness in this area might be useful.

5. The five-acre minimum lot size and the accompanying setback restrictions in the current land use law were designed to limit excessive subdivisions and development. In this regard, the minimum lot size requirement has been very successful. Since this requirement was adopted, new areas of densely populated residential development of a non-rural nature are virtually non-existent in the town. However, this minimum lot size requirement also establishes a “one size fits all” set of regulations which might be less successful at providing for growth in the hamlet areas of Summit and Charlotteville. Consideration should be given to the benefits of using zoning to create “hamlet” areas which might provide some relief, such as less restrictive setbacks or the use of sub-sized parcels, for those areas which are by nature more densely populated and closer to existing roads and highways. Well-crafted hamlet regulations might also benefit the town in providing more desirable growth in these areas, more affordable housing for younger families, and more attractive business opportunity. Revitalization of the town centers and increased shopping/dining opportunity are both key areas of concern reflected in survey responses; growth in these areas may be better supported by land use regulations which expand beyond the five-acre minimum lot size requirement.
6. Demographics in both the Comprehensive Plan Survey and the 2020 Census results clearly point towards an aging population. Consistent with this trend is the need for greater access to senior housing. One means of accomplishing this is to allow for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) which are independent housing units created within single-family homes or as separate structures on residential lots. An accessory dwelling unit created as an extension of a residential home would allow for older family members to retain their independence while having the support and assistance of someone living nearby. While our current land use laws permit such units to be added as part of an existing multi-family residential *principal* structure, a separate and detached dwelling unit would be considered as second principal structure which is not allowed by Section VI.C of the local land use law. However, there are procedures that have been adopted by many municipalities to allow for accessory dwelling units to be allowed as temporary and/or special use structures with specific conditions that must be met. As an example, amending our local land use law to allow special use permits to be approved on a temporary basis for accessory senior housing would be one possible course. However, such amendments must be crafted carefully to ensure that the objectives and requirements are clearly defined. Can such senior housing be allowed for the purpose of renting to a non-family member? Or would such a housing unit be approved for a special needs family member who would not otherwise be considered as a senior citizen? Carefully crafted land use amendments should consider these questions and more.
7. Due to the large number of lakefront homes and other residential properties within the town that are attractive to vacationers and tourists, there is significant opportunity for property owners to generate income from short term rentals through Airbnb, Vrbo, and similar online marketplaces. Luxury camping or “glamping” is another growing trend for overnight stays in glamorous canvas cabin tents, yurts, or other attractive camping type structures. These are also examples of the types of business enterprises that are highly suitable for the desired rural character of the town. Short-term rental regulations are designed to provide for the general welfare of those who rent such properties and those

who maintain residences adjacent to short term rental properties, while also ensuring that property owners can take advantage of the economic benefits that such rental properties offer. During the drafting of this comprehensive plan report, efforts are already underway to create and adopt short-term rental regulations. Such regulations would be considered a positive step and consistent with the objectives of this plan.

8. Enforcement of land use regulations continues to be a challenging role assigned to our local code enforcement officer. In addition to the primary role of administering building permits and monitoring the construction process, the CEO is also responsible for identifying and correcting land use law violations. Consideration should be given to increased CEO training opportunities, increasing clarity of land use regulations and definitions in problematic areas, additional staffing and/or hours available for supporting CEO activities, and streamlining procedures by which penalties are imposed.
9. Cluster housing development was included in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan and is also recommended as part of this current plan. Cluster development is a land use planning tool that is designed to balance growth with the preservation of community character and environment. It provides an attractive alternative to traditional developments in which residential subdivisions consist of houses occupying a large land parcel; for the Town of Summit, this would be a five-acre parcel required for each residence. A cluster development usually places new houses on smaller parcels of land than would be normally required for a home site (i.e., less than five acres), while the additional land that would have been allocated to the individual lots is instead dedicated to a common open space for the subdivision residents. The actual size and layout of the individual sites, as well as the open space, is usually worked out by the project developer and the town's planning board. As a land use planning tool, this can provide an option for developers to create more affordable, efficient, and attractive housing while still maintaining the open space and rural character that is the goal of our current land use law and planning tools.

Cluster development is universally viewed as a win/win proposition. It allows developers to build the same number of units (or more) than they could with a traditional subdivision, but at a lower cost per unit, particularly since clustering homes reduces the cost associated with highway access, driveways, utilities (power, phone, internet), and general construction. Home buyers gain a rural home with the assurance that the dedicated open space in the immediate surrounding area will remain natural and accessible to them as part of the cluster development. The town gains the benefit of more open space (the common space consists of vacant land without structures), while accommodating housing growth, increased tax base, and more affordable housing.

Based on the areas of focus outlined above, Section 4.4 and Appendix B of this comprehensive plan will continue this review in providing more specific goals for land use planning and amendments to the land use laws.

4.0 Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives are offered for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan:

4.1 Economic & Community Development in the Hamlets of Summit and Charlotteville

As clearly expressed in the survey response, economic and community development in the hamlets of Summit and Charlotteville, consistent with maintaining a “small town” environment, should be a top priority. This effort should not only be focused on restoring local shopping and dining opportunities, but also at revitalizing a sense of community which is shared by full-time residents, seasonal residents, and visitors. Lacking a sense of community “identity” or center, we become little more than a suburb to surrounding larger towns. Increasing the year-round population represents one component of this effort in making our community more attractive to business; this would be facilitated by more affordable housing, increased recreational opportunities, and the availability of a community gathering place. We also need to attract younger families to our community while balancing this goal with the recognition that our senior population is expanding, creating an increased need for senior services, availability of health services, and improved public transportation. Specific recommendations include:

1. Ensure that all existing and/or proposed land use regulations are consistent with the needs of a small “mom and pop” business such as a general store, restaurant, diner, and so forth, that might consider locating in the hamlet areas of Summit or Charlotteville.
2. Consider a limited feasibility study to explore the costs and benefits of town water and sewer. This effort, while likely to be moderately expensive, may be critical to encouraging small businesses to return to the town “centers” or hamlet districts and will also represent an important component if sewer and water were considered as part of a grant application directed toward larger scale community revitalization. If such a study were to be initiated, a related question might be the cost/benefit of town water/sewer for the water-front or water-shed areas on Summit Lake and Bear Gulch Pond.
3. Support and encourage current efforts for the creation of a community center and additional community events. This can take many forms and could benefit from the collaboration of community groups currently advocating for a community center with local organizations, such as the fire departments and/or churches in the town. As a community center will be a longer-term effort, access to suitable short-term venues for hosting town events should also be improved. As an example of this, there are exercise programs presently being conducted in the Town Meeting Room on a regular weekly basis and with good attendance. Expanding access with more activities such as this requires suitable hosting locations.
4. Increase support for and access to additional recreational facilities such as a town park/playground, walking/hiking trails, and improved lake access with beach space and safer parking. This recommendation is connected to both economic and recreational benefit and will be explored further in Section 4.2.

5. Investigate the benefit of a Complete Streets Policy. This is a nationwide effort which represents an approach toward developing safer streets for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Recent survey responses indicate that our residents desire some of those community attributes which would be provided by a Complete Streets Program. For example, over 85% of survey respondents supported walking and biking trails. Accordingly, for both the aesthetic and health benefits which would accrue, we recommend that the Town of Summit research this further. There have been other towns in our area (Jefferson, Richmondville, Blenheim, and others) which participated in the Complete Streets Program.
6. Assemble a town-sponsored economic development committee with membership from both the local town government and involved citizenry. This group would be tasked with pursuing economic opportunities ranging from small efforts, such as bringing back the farmer's market, to larger scale efforts such as pursuing state funding and economic grant opportunities. This would present a more unified town commitment which is needed for a long-term sustained effort at realizing much needed economic growth. There is already momentum in place on similar efforts for joint town/citizenry cooperation efforts. For example, a working group consisting of town government members and local interested residents has been established to seek New York State NY Forward economic development funding for revitalization of the town centers. The suggestion here is to make this a more formal and sanctioned effort for coordinating development grants, setting up community events, promoting tourism, encouraging recreational visitors, and engaging in similar activities. The adage "many hands make light work" would be appropriate in fostering a plan to use the proposed economic development committee in pursuing a wide-ranging collaborative effort which can be sustained for the long term.
7. Aggressively pursue grants which are available to town governments for the purpose of community revitalization and economic development for those areas in need. Sources of grant money are available and have benefited communities similar in size to the Town of Summit. Examples of current grant programs that are available would include:
 - a. NY Forward – Grants awarded for revitalizing small rural communities.
 - b. NYS Office of Community Renewal – Community Development Block Grant Program
 - c. NYS Farmers' Market Resiliency Grant Program
 - d. NYS DEC Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program
8. Foster municipal cooperation with community focused non-profit organizations to assist with the pursuit of grants that are not available to municipalities but offer cultural and other benefits to the community. This might also be a role for an economic development committee. Examples of grants that would fall in this category could include:
 - a. NYSCA Small and Midsized Capital Improvement for Arts and Culture
 - b. Joseph Robert Foundation Grant Program
 - c. Humanities New York Action Grants

9. Create a means in the hamlets of Summit and Charlotteville for more integrated advertisement of town events and activities. An example of this might include sign boards at locations in the center of both hamlets for advertising community events, fund-raising efforts, and social group meetings. Requests for posting events could be coordinated by the economic development committee noted earlier or by other means. This effort could be expanded by a similar web presence with the same goal of providing a clearing house for events taking place in the town.

4.2 Encouragement of Small Business Enterprises for Agriculture, Recreation, and Tourism

Additional small business enterprises related to agriculture, recreation, and tourism should be encouraged. These not only provide for economic growth and income base for residents but are also consistent with maintaining the rural character and scenic nature of the town. Specific recommendations include:

1. Ensure that all existing and/or proposed land use regulations are consistent with the needs of business enterprises related to agriculture, recreation, and tourism while also providing sufficient regulation to avoid negative impacts on the town and residents. Positive examples of this would include recent passage in the Town of Summit for short term rental and right to farm regulations.
2. Encourage participation from small business owners associated with agriculture, recreation, and tourism to serve as members of the town economic development committee.
3. As previously noted in our economic and community development goals, there are many grants available for agriculture, cultural events, environmental improvements, recreation, and so forth. While an economic development committee might not always be able to apply for small business grants directly, it could aid private individuals in this effort.
4. Utilize the resources and support of the Schoharie County Office of Agricultural Development and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County to foster growth of agricultural enterprises in our town.
5. Support and encourage a farmer's market program. The vendors which attend farmer's markets would be the small-scale agricultural entrepreneurs and artisans that represent the type of small business enterprises that we need to attract. Establishing a local farmer's market is an easy first step in this direction.
6. Support and encourage cultural, historical, and/or municipal events. In the past, the Town of Summit has hosted music festivals, Summit Mountain Days, ice racing events, among others. Events that can be sustained from year to year bring a sense of community belonging and promote our town and local businesses. As an example, the Woolly Worm Festival in Banner Elk, North Carolina brings in 20,000 people and 170 vendors to, among other things, watch Woolly Bear caterpillars race each other for the honor of predicting the pending winter weather. Proceeds from this festival are used for the benefit of a small-town community of approximately 1,350 people.

7. Improving the accessibility to and awareness of our local lakes, walking/hiking trails, and other recreational pursuits should be explored and encouraged. Increased recreational opportunities mean more visitors, more short-term rentals, and more local shopping revenue. As noted throughout this plan and previous plans, “Summit’s real treasure is its natural beauty, rural character and quality of life” as it relates to enjoyment of the outdoors. This point has been discussed in several sections of our plan and for good reason; there is significant unrealized opportunity presented by our natural resources, lakes, ponds, and state forests. If accessibility to these resources can be improved, it could offer significant economic and quality of life benefits to those who live and visit here. Specific suggestions would include:
 - a. Researching how public access to Summit Lake and/or Bear Gulch Pond could be improved without negatively impacting those landowners with waterfront lake property who already enjoy these lakes. Ideally, establishing well-maintained public access areas that could be used for swimming, boating, youth programs, family events, and other activities will benefit our image as a recreational destination.
 - b. Researching how hiking/walking trails could be established to provide recreational benefit for residents and visitors using state lands and/or approved private land access. Where suitable, these trails might be expanded to include other users, such as equestrian, cross-country skiing or snowshoeing, ATV, or snowmobiles. For example, NYS-owned land in the general vicinity of Mud Lake Road includes over 1,000 acres with some of this already used for snowmobiling. Working with NYS DEC, could the use of this land be expanded for hiking trails?
 - c. As noted earlier, implementation of a Complete Streets Program could incorporate aspects of lake access, hiking/walking trails, and so forth, using a more comprehensive approach.

4.3 Preservation and Improvement of Environmental Quality

Preserving and improving the environmental quality of the town has been and should remain a goal for the comprehensive plan. Protection of air and water quality, lakes and streams, wildlife habitats, scenic views, and the general quality of the physical environment in the town should be considered as integral components in any future planning for the town. Specific recommendations include:

1. Land use laws should continue to be periodically reviewed and updated as needed to address environmental quality issues.
2. As will be discussed further in Section 4.4, regulations should be adopted which outline procedures and guidelines for site plan review. While the current land use law specifies lot size and road frontage, it is not specifically focused on environmental quality issues. This could be especially important if considering larger and more complex projects than simple residential construction.
3. The town should promote more options for property cleanup and removal of accumulated junk. This includes more aggressive enforcement, but also being able to

- present options for owners regarding junk removal. This could include identifying and promoting junk hauling services, identifying disposal locations, or sponsoring cleanup days.
4. Coordinate with the property owners' associations for both Summit Lake and Bear Gulch Pond to establish a sensible and balanced approach for town and property owner participation in improving and maintaining lake quality; encouraging sewer and water quality studies; improving recreational access for residents, recreational visitors, and lakefront property owners; and enhancing the quality of the lakes in our town as a resource.

4.4 Improve Land Use Regulations

Consistent with the goals and objectives expressed in this report and explored further in Section 3.0, land use regulations should be reviewed and updated as needed to preserve the quality of life and property while respecting the rights of property owners. In addition to improvements in the regulations, consistent and effective enforcement of these regulations should also be a priority. Specific recommendations include:

1. Better definition of the role of the planning board in reviewing more complex construction or land use projects such as housing developments, campgrounds, retail establishments, manufacturing enterprises, or more extensive projects which are allowed by the current land use law. It is recommended that the Town of Summit adopt a set of regulations which outline procedures and guidelines for site plan review. While this effort started in 2011 with a nearly complete set of site plan review regulations developed, it was not completed or adopted by the Town Board. While the current Land Use Law Section XI recognizes the mechanism for site plan review, there are no regulations currently in effect. It is recommended that the draft regulations created several years ago should be reviewed, updated, and adopted.
2. Recognizing the value of open space preservation, it is recommended that the current Town of Summit land use law be amended to allow the construction of cluster housing as approved by the Planning Board and consistent with the vision of this comprehensive plan. For example, a well-planned and approved cluster housing project could provide ten residential structures, each located on a two-acre parcel, with thirty acres of dedicated common space. The total land required for such a project would be fifty acres, consistent with the current land use law requiring five acres, but with savings realized from implementation of a more efficient construction project.
3. It is recommended that land use regulations and definitions for temporary structures should be reviewed and updated. Temporary structures (camping trailers, recreational vehicles, or tents) and land use limitations for these structures are defined in such a way as to make enforcement difficult. In many municipalities, a "campground" is defined as one or more recreational vehicles, camping trailers, or tents; this distinction does not exist in the current regulations. Earlier land use law definitions for the Town of Summit required that "all camping trailers, tents, or other recreational

or temporary living quarters allowed ... must be removed from the premises at the end of the three (3) month period, except that legally registered recreational vehicles may be stored upon the premises.” The current land use law requires that temporary structures may not be “inhabited” for more than four (4) months in a year.

Enforcement of this element of the land use law as written is extremely difficult.

Land use law definitions and associated regulations should be more clearly defined and enforceable for the following terms:

- a. Campgrounds – would consist of more than one temporary structure (tent, camper, etc.).
 - b. Campsite – a location for a single temporary structure situated in a campground.
 - c. “Inhabited” – definitions and/or use of this term should be changed.
 - d. It is recommended that the Land Use Law be amended to include provisions for Special Use Permits that would be required for a campground (i.e., more than one temporary structure). Additional details regarding special use permits are noted below.
4. There are no definitions in the current land use law for mobile homes and mobile home parks. As a mobile home park would consist of multiple principal residences on a single land parcel, it *would be clearly prohibited* by the existing land use law. While no changes to the land use law are recommended here, including clear definitions for mobile homes and mobile home parks would help to ensure clarity on this issue.
5. Short-term rentals (Airbnb, Vrbo, etc.) represent a viable small business that should be encouraged; the primary town land use law does not adequately address this. Recent passage of supplemental short term rental regulations will provide oversight for this type of business. The risk is that “supplemental” regulations can lead to inconsistency in the overall land use planning tools as compared to a tightly integrated single land use law document. Both short term and overall land use regulations should be reviewed and updated as needed. Consideration might be given to requiring a Special Use Permit for short-term rentals.
6. An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) created as an extension of a residential home would allow for older family members to retain their independence while having the support and assistance of someone living nearby.
 - a. It is recommended that the land use law be amended to include provisions for Special Use Permits that would be required for the *temporary* use of an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) to provide senior housing on the same parcel as a principal structure.
7. Improve the relevance of our land use laws for small parcels (less than five acres) which are already in existence in the hamlet and lake front areas. Consideration should be given to the benefits of using zoning to create “hamlet” areas which might provide some relief, such as less restrictive setbacks, for those areas which are by their nature more densely populated and closer to existing roads and highways.
8. Improve public awareness of existing land use laws. Structures are currently being placed without building permits as required by town law and/or construction is often initiated without consulting the code enforcement officer on what is required for

- setbacks and other site building requirements. The town newsletter would be a possible forum for explaining that all building projects, regardless of size, should be reviewed by the CEO prior to construction even if a building permit is not required. A well-written “Before You Build” handout available from the town clerk could outline basic land use law details, building construction requirements, and the building permit process.
9. Similar to the “Before You Build” handout, questions on campers, campsite requirements, and other issues related to temporary structures are often fielded by the town clerk. Having a handout available to explain land use law requirements would ensure a consistent response and relieve the clerk’s office from having to provide interpretations on land use law.
 10. It is recommended that steps be taken to provide for more aggressive code enforcement. The existing land use law provides penalties for continued violations, yet this has proven insufficient to deter some offenses. Consideration should be given to establishing further dialog with the town attorney and town justice as needed to provide consequences for unaddressed land use law offenses, to specific training for the code enforcement officer in this area, and to reviewing the viability of law enforcement support in more contentious instances.

4.5 Supporting Highway Maintenance and Local Emergency Services

Efforts to make our community secure from hazards are valued by our residents and landowners and should continue at present or improved capabilities, including funding and support for local highway maintenance and emergency services. Specific recommendations include:

1. Funding and support for local highway maintenance and emergency services should remain a priority in the town budget.
2. Due to normal “wear and tear” over the facility lifetime, a long-term plan should be established for highway department building upgrades and maintenance.
3. Incentives, such as property tax breaks, should be considered for volunteer firefighters and EMS responders who meet the necessary criteria for dedicated service to the community.

5.0 2024 Comprehensive Plan – Summary and Conclusion

Much has changed in the Town of Summit, in the hamlet areas of Summit and Charlotteville, and in the outlying rural areas since the first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1986. The community centers, business establishments, major employers, active farms, recreational uses, and so forth – these entities have all seen significant change. But, as stated in past comprehensive plans, “Summit’s real treasure is its natural beauty, rural character and quality of life” and this remains a constant. Many of the recommendations in this current comprehensive plan are intended to build on this treasure of rural life to foster an economic renewal which draws from both the past and the future. While the recommendations in this report might appear in the form of a “list” of separate items, there is a synergy among them that we hope will create a strong and lasting structure from these building blocks. We ask the reader to picture a vibrant community center hosting a farmers market populated both by local vendors and residents, while other families are parking at the center on a Saturday morning to embark on a short hike, a swim in the lake, or to enjoy an adjacent playground facility. We hope that this plan can serve as a starting point.

Recalling the vision expressed in our plan introduction, we hope that this plan provides a focus on efforts that enhance the quality of life as a small-town residential community, maintaining our current rural atmosphere and natural open space while encouraging the growth of compatible small businesses and community organizations. Our goal is to preserve a place where people want to live. But it is important to recognize that this is an effort not only of preservation, but of fostering and supporting new ideas and opportunities which will enhance the quality of life in our community.

Appendix A

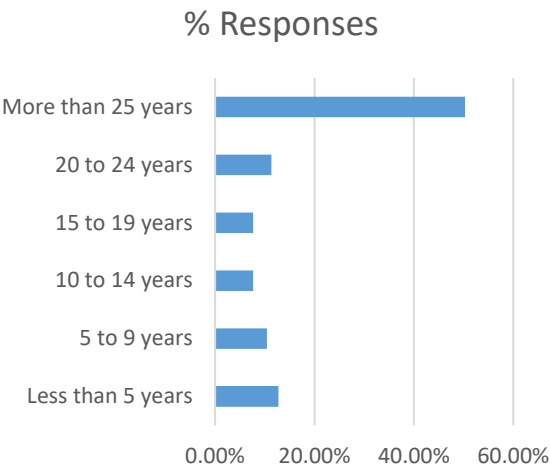
Community Survey Results

Town of Summit - Comprehensive Plan Community Survey Results

Based on the response to our survey questions, the results are tabulated below in both a data table and a graph presentation format.

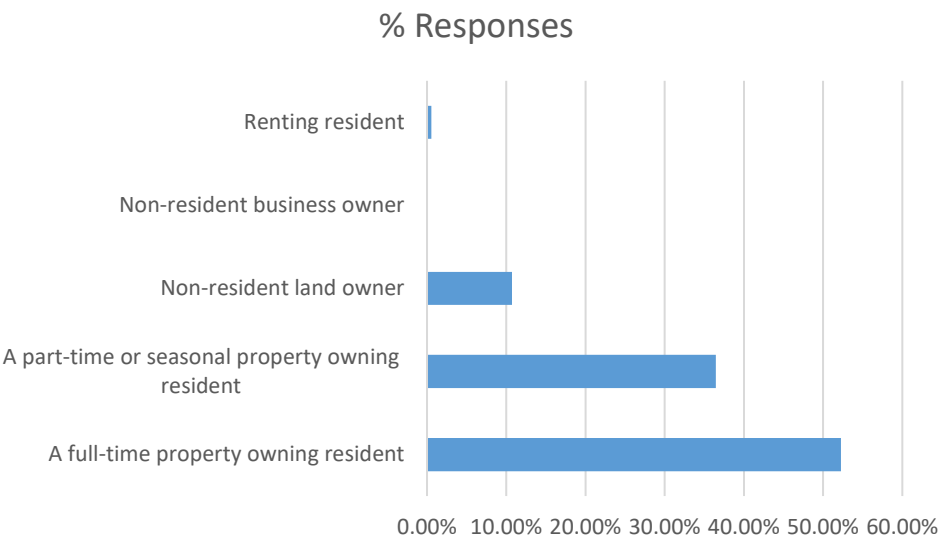
1. How many years have you lived in or owned property in the Town of Summit?

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Less than 5 years	12.71%	45
5 to 9 years	10.45%	37
10 to 14 years	7.63%	27
15 to 19 years	7.63%	27
20 to 24 years	11.30%	40
More than 25 years	50.28%	178



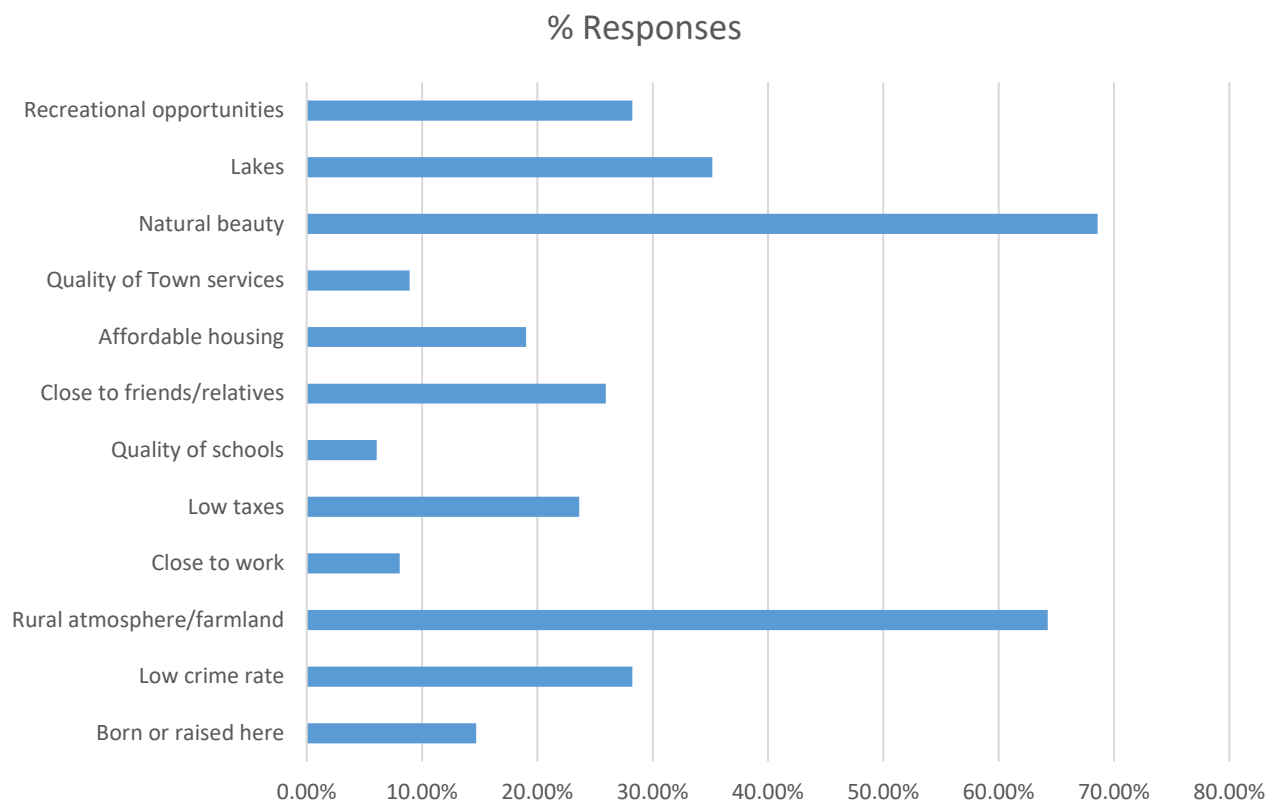
2. I am presently:

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
A full-time property owning resident	52.26%	185
A part-time or seasonal property owning resident	36.44%	129
Non-resident land owner	10.73%	38
Non-resident business owner	0.00%	0
Renting resident	0.56%	2



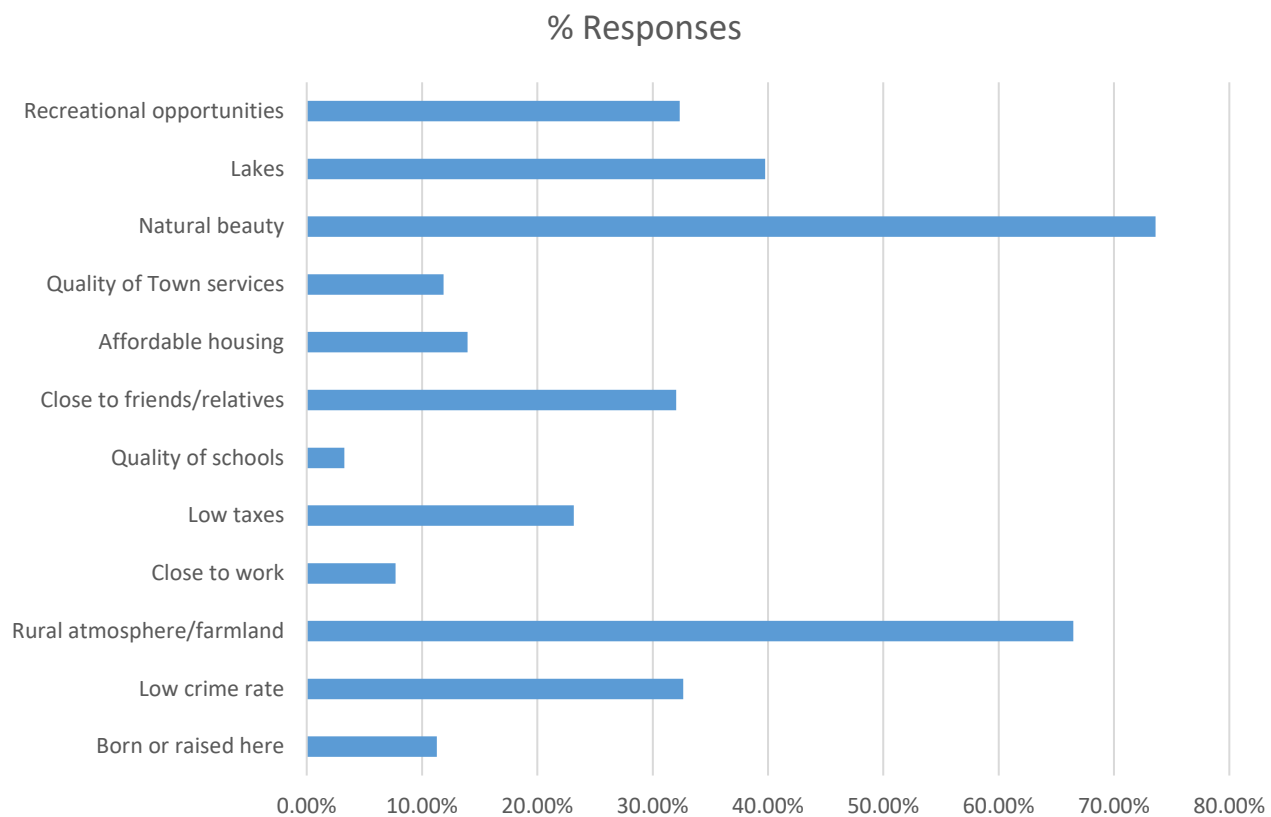
3. What *MOST* influenced your *ORIGINAL* decision to live here (Check all that apply)?

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Born or raised here	14.70%	51
Low crime rate	28.24%	98
Rural atmosphere/farmland	64.27%	223
Close to work	8.07%	28
Low taxes	23.63%	82
Quality of schools	6.05%	21
Close to friends/relatives	25.94%	90
Affordable housing	19.02%	66
Quality of Town services	8.93%	31
Natural beauty	68.59%	238
Lakes	35.16%	122
Recreational opportunities	28.24%	98



4. Why do you continue to live in the Town of Summit (Check all that apply)?

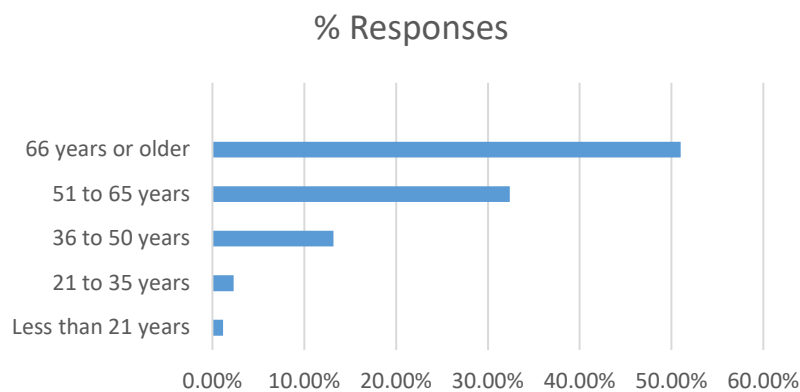
Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Born or raised here	11.28%	38
Low crime rate	32.64%	110
Rural atmosphere/farmland	66.47%	224
Close to work	7.72%	26
Low taxes	23.15%	78
Quality of schools	3.26%	11
Close to friends/relatives	32.05%	108
Affordable housing	13.95%	47
Quality of Town services	11.87%	40
Natural beauty	73.59%	248
Lakes	39.76%	134
Recreational opportunities	32.34%	109



5. Please indicate your age bracket:

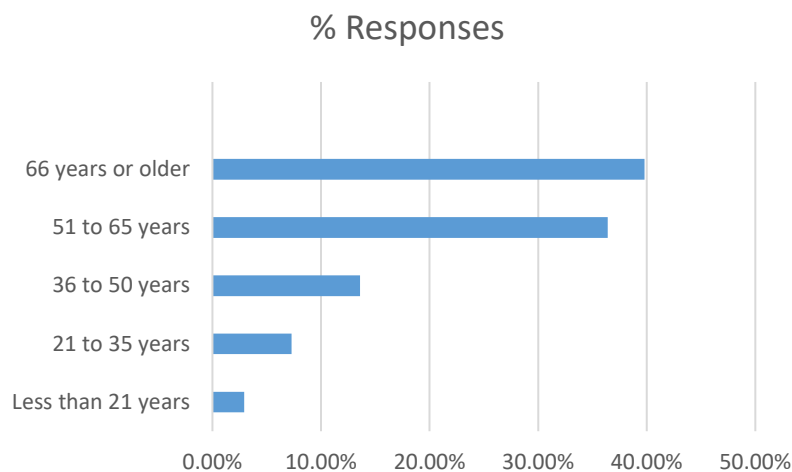
A. Principal Householder:

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Less than 21 years	1.15%	4
21 to 35 years	2.29%	8
36 to 50 years	13.18%	46
51 to 65 years	32.38%	113
66 years or older	51.00%	178



B. Secondary Householder:

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Less than 21 years	2.91%	6
21 to 35 years	7.28%	15
36 to 50 years	13.59%	28
51 to 65 years	36.41%	75
66 years or older	39.81%	82

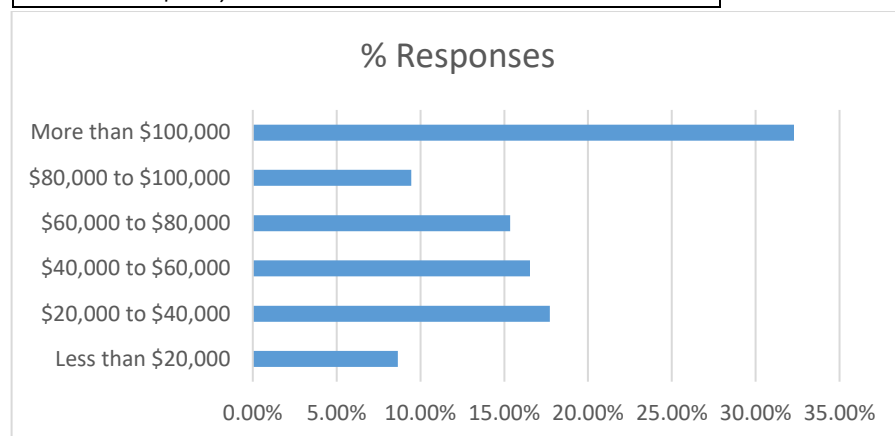


6. How many children under the age of 18 years are living at home with you?

Based on the responses received, 12.34% of households responding have one or more children living at home.

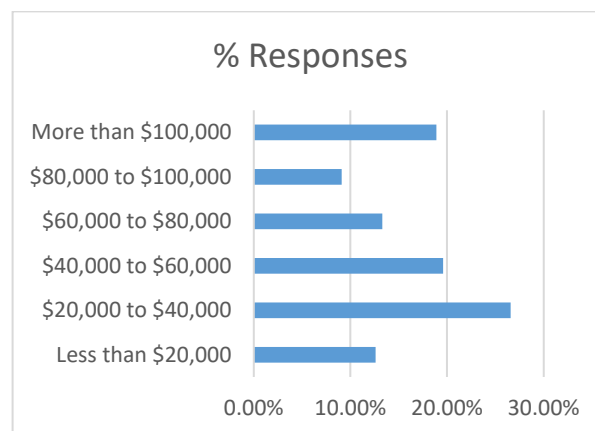
7. Please indicate your household income (optional).

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Less than \$20,000	8.66%	22
\$20,000 to \$40,000	17.72%	45
\$40,000 to \$60,000	16.54%	42
\$60,000 to \$80,000	15.35%	39
\$80,000 to \$100,000	9.45%	24
More than \$100,000	32.28%	82



Note – as part of our data review, the response to this question was also analyzed for only those respondents which reported as full-time residents. Based on the survey responses received, the following would be indicative of household income ranges for the limited group of full-time residents of the town.

Responses For Full Time Residents Only		
Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Less than \$20,000	12.59%	18
\$20,000 to \$40,000	26.57%	38
\$40,000 to \$60,000	19.58%	28
\$60,000 to \$80,000	13.29%	19
\$80,000 to \$100,000	9.09%	13
More than \$100,000	18.88%	27

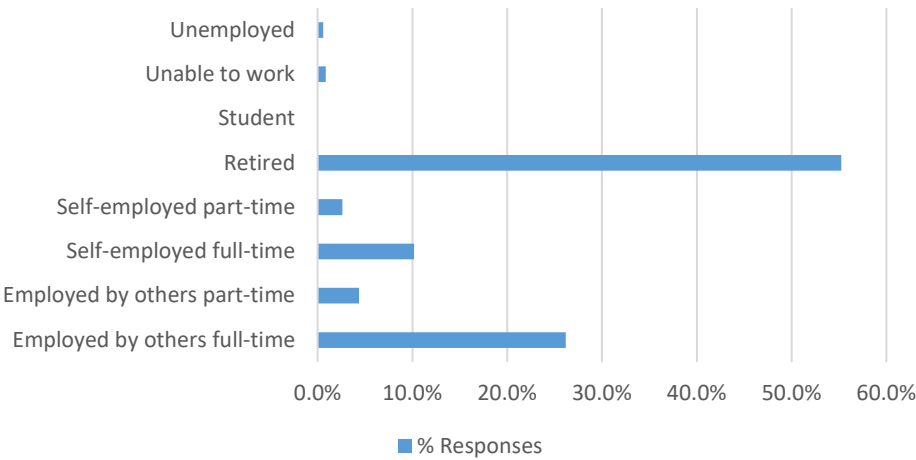


8. Which of the following best describes your employment status (note that this question was answered separately for both the principle and secondary householder)?

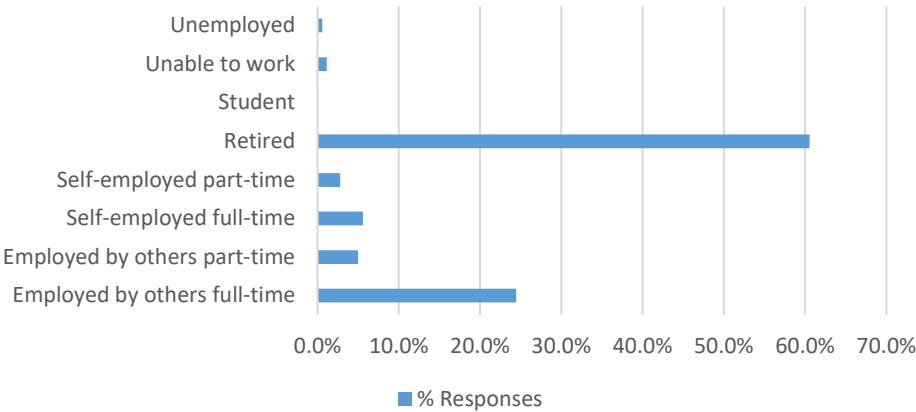
Responses as noted below for Principal Householder:

Answer Choices (Principal Householder)	% Responses	# Responses
Employed by others full-time	26.2%	90
Employed by others part-time	4.4%	15
Self-employed full-time	10.2%	35
Self-employed part-time	2.6%	9
Retired	55.2%	190
Student	0.0%	0
Unable to work	0.9%	3
Unemployed	0.6%	2

% Responses (Principal Householder)



% Responses (Principal Householder - Full Time Residents Only)

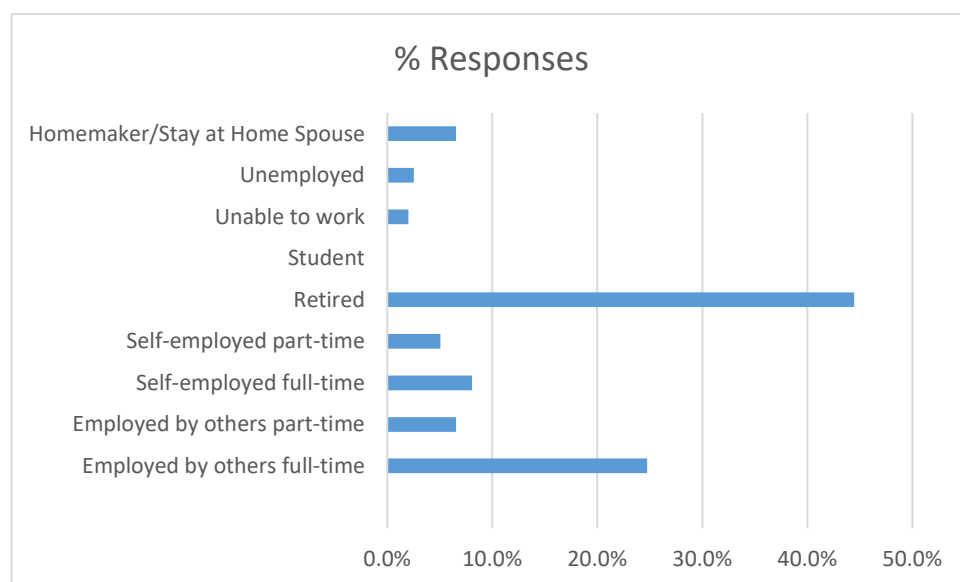


8. (Continued from previous page) Which of the following best describes your employment status (note that this question was answered separately for both the principal and secondary householder)?

Note on the data presented in the tables below – A total of 264 responses were received for this question, however 66 responses were “not applicable” indicating that there is no secondary householder. To correlate the data correctly, the “not applicable” responses were removed from the percentage calculations shown.

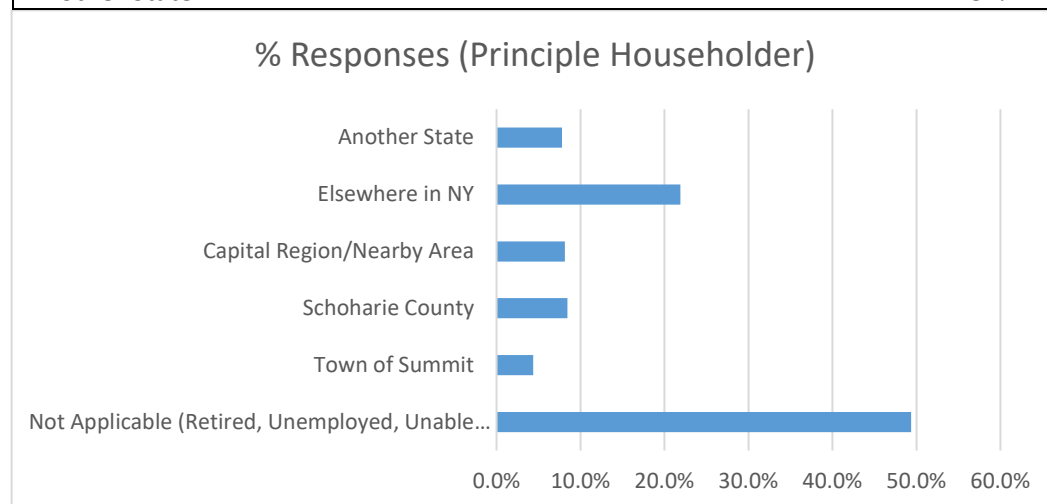
Responses as noted below for Secondary Householder:

Answer Choices (Secondary Householder)	% Responses	# Responses
Not Applicable – No Secondary Householder	-----	66
Employed by others full-time	24.7%	49
Employed by others part-time	6.6%	13
Self-employed full-time	8.1%	16
Self-employed part-time	5.1%	10
Retired	44.4%	88
Student	0.0%	0
Unable to work	2.0%	4
Unemployed	2.5%	5
Homemaker/Stay at Home Spouse	6.6%	13

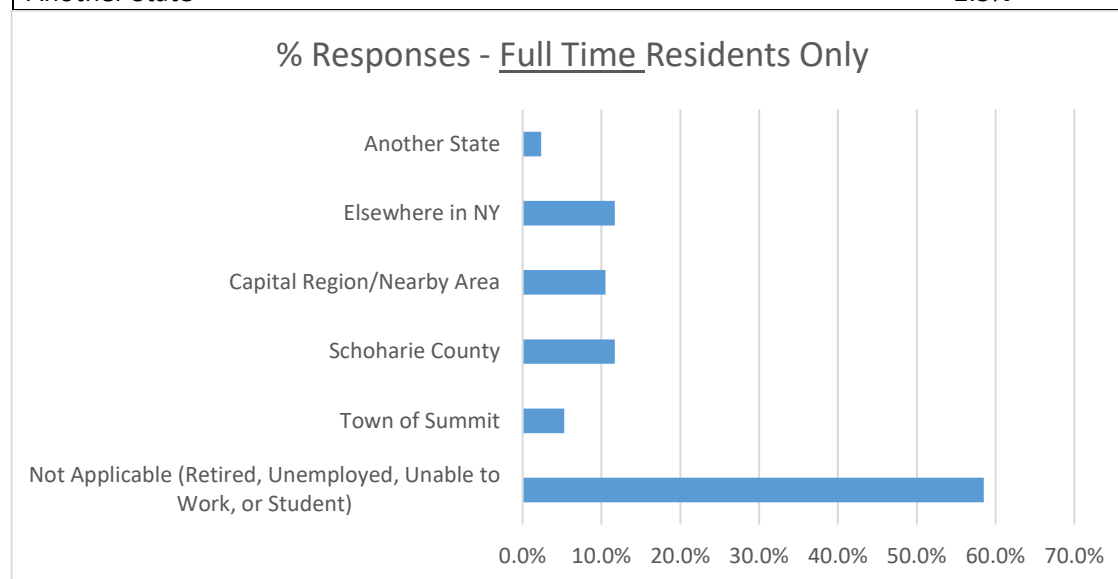


9. Please indicate where you work:

Answer Choices (Principal Householder)	% Responses	# Responses
Not Applicable (Retired, Unemployed, Unable to Work, or Student)	49.38%	158
Town of Summit	4.38%	14
Schoharie County	8.44%	27
Capital Region/Nearby Area	8.13%	26
Elsewhere in NY	21.88%	70
Another State	7.81%	25

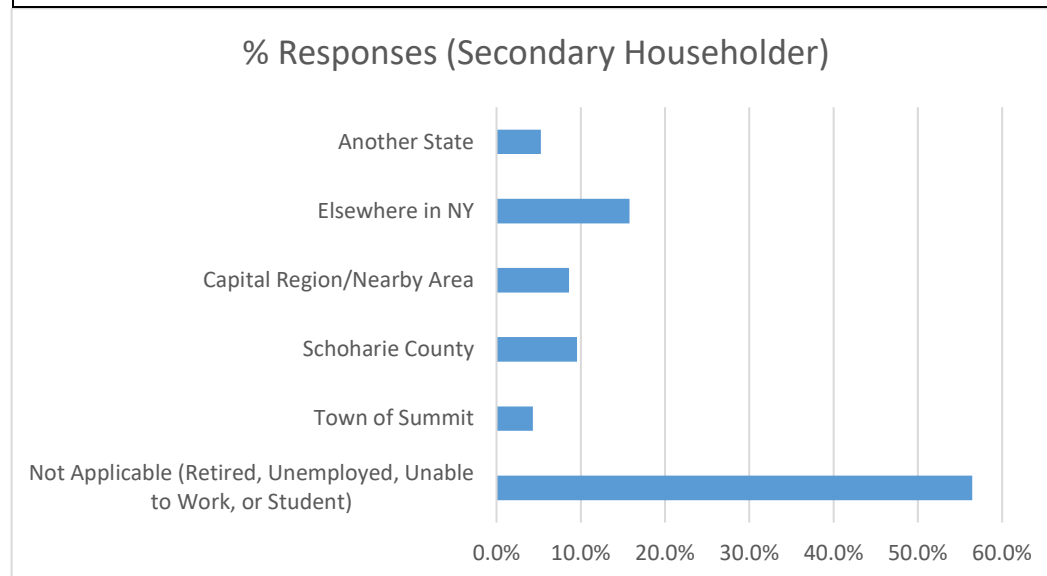


Answer Choices (Principal Householder) - For Full Time Residents Only		
Answer Choices (Principal Householder)	% Responses	# Responses
Not Applicable (Retired, Unemployed, Unable to Work, or Student)	58.5%	100
Town of Summit	5.3%	9
Schoharie County	11.7%	20
Capital Region/Nearby Area	10.5%	18
Elsewhere in NY	11.7%	20
Another State	2.3%	4

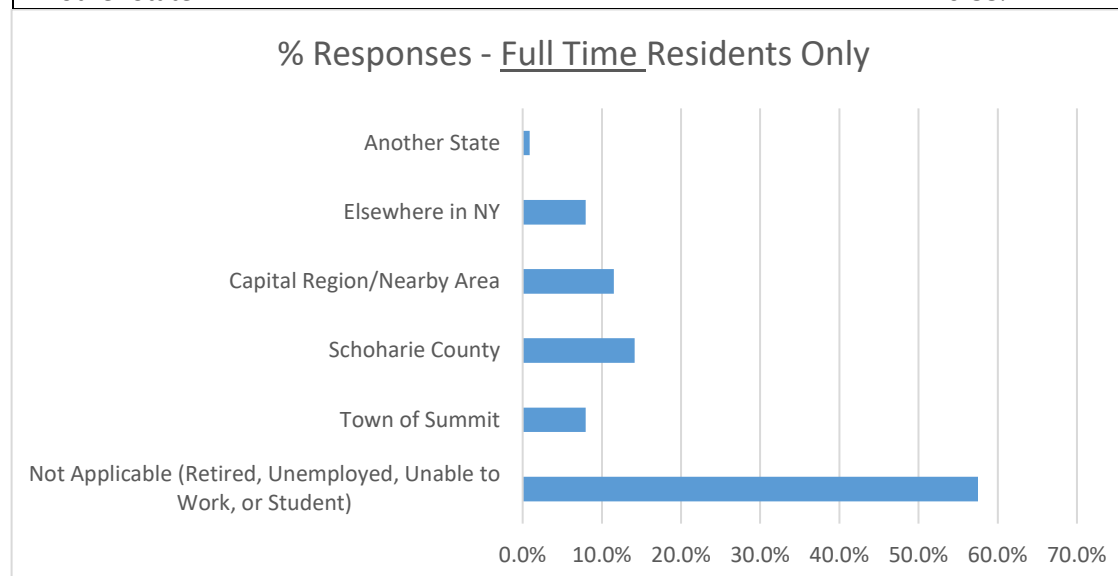


9. (Continued from previous page) *Please indicate where you work:*

Answer Choices (Secondary Householder)	% Responses	# Responses
Not Applicable (Retired, Unemployed, Unable to Work, or Student)	56.46%	118
Town of Summit	4.31%	9
Schoharie County	9.57%	20
Capital Region/Nearby Area	8.61%	18
Elsewhere in NY	15.79%	33
Another State	5.26%	11

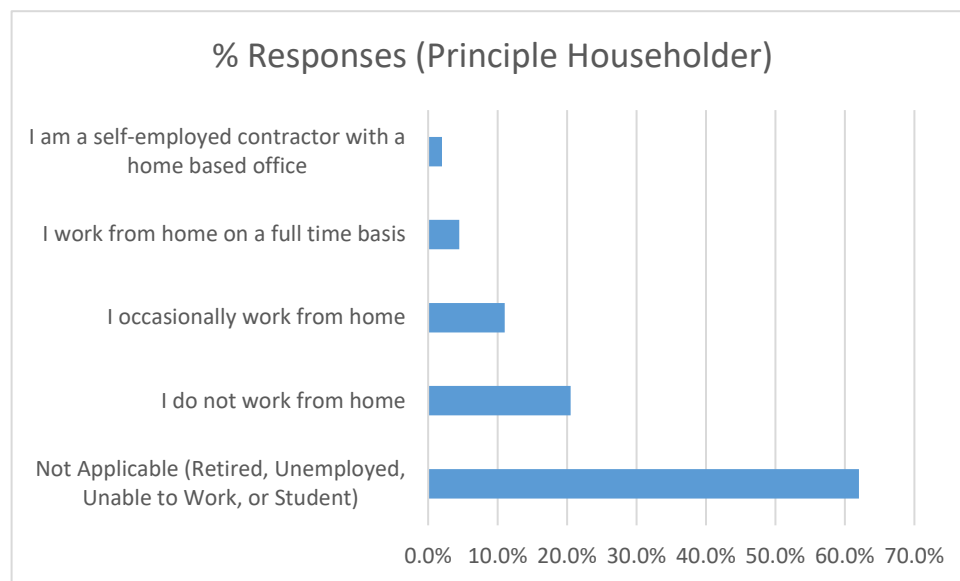


Answer Choices (Secondary Householder) - For Full Time Residents Only		
Answer Choices (Secondary Householder)	% Responses	# Responses
Not Applicable (Retired, Unemployed, Unable to Work, or Student)	57.52%	65
Town of Summit	7.96%	9
Schoharie County	14.16%	16
Capital Region/Nearby Area	11.50%	13
Elsewhere in NY	7.96%	9
Another State	0.88%	1

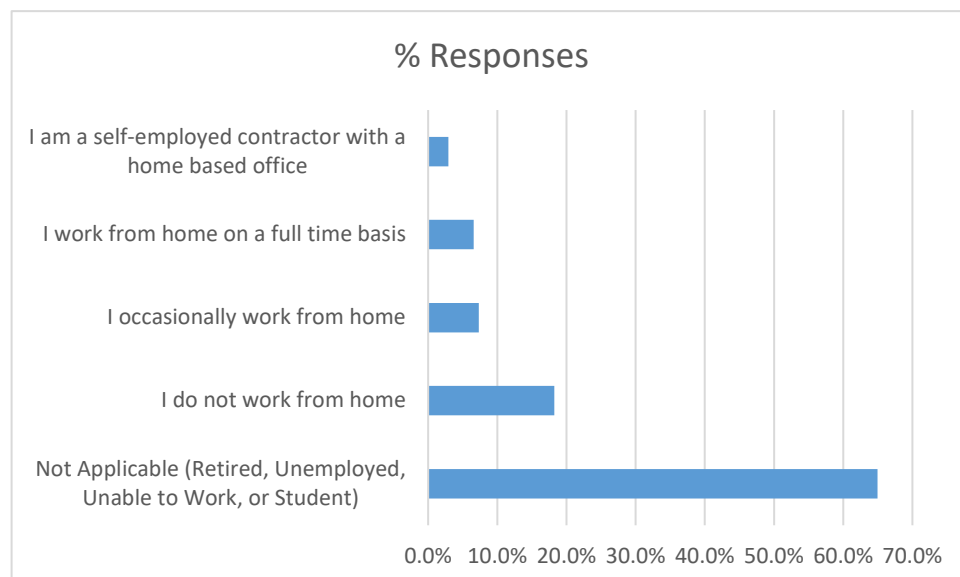


10. If you are a full-time resident in the Town of Summit, please indicate if you work from home:

Answer Choices (Principle Householder)	% Responses	# Responses
Not Applicable (Retired, Unemployed, Unable to Work, or Student)	62.0%	124
I do not work from home	20.5%	41
I occasionally work from home	11.0%	22
I work from home on a full time basis	4.5%	9
I am a self-employed contractor with a home based office	2.0%	4

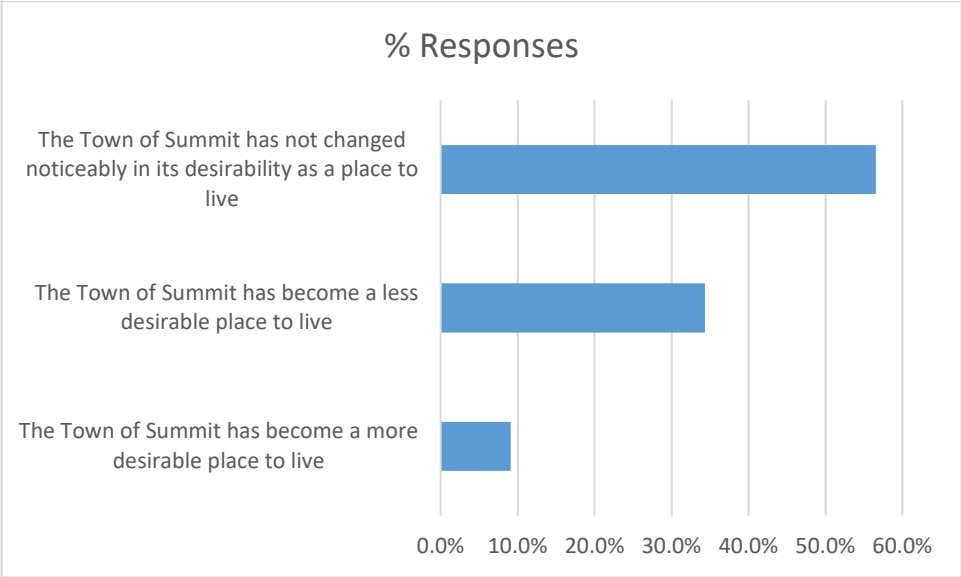


Answer Choices (Secondary Householder)	% Responses	# Responses
Not Applicable (Retired, Unemployed, Unable to Work, or Student)	65.0%	89
I do not work from home	18.2%	25
I occasionally work from home	7.3%	10
I work from home on a full time basis	6.6%	9
I am a self-employed contractor with a home based office	2.9%	4



11. What best describes how Summit has changed since you moved here?

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
The Town of Summit has become a more desirable place to live	9.1%	30
The Town of Summit has become a less desirable place to live	34.3%	113
The Town of Summit has not changed noticeably in its desirability as a place to live	56.5%	186

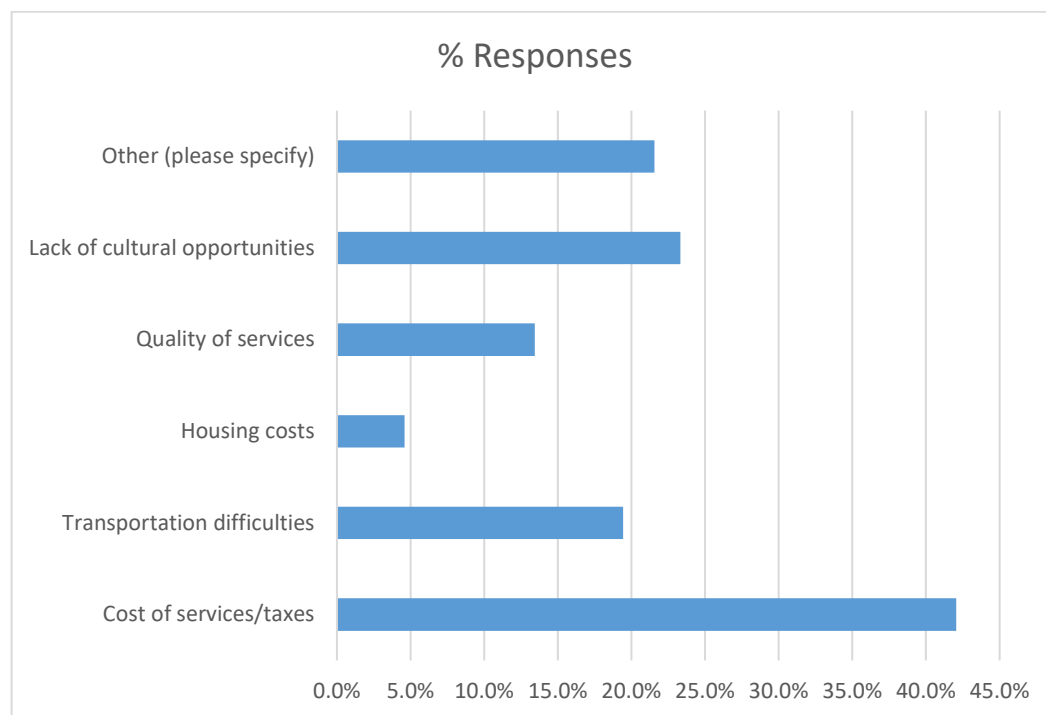


12. What do you like the LEAST about the Town of Summit?

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Cost of services/taxes	42.0%	119
Transportation difficulties	19.4%	55
Housing costs	4.6%	13
Quality of services	13.4%	38
Lack of cultural opportunities	23.3%	66
Other (please specify)	21.6%	61

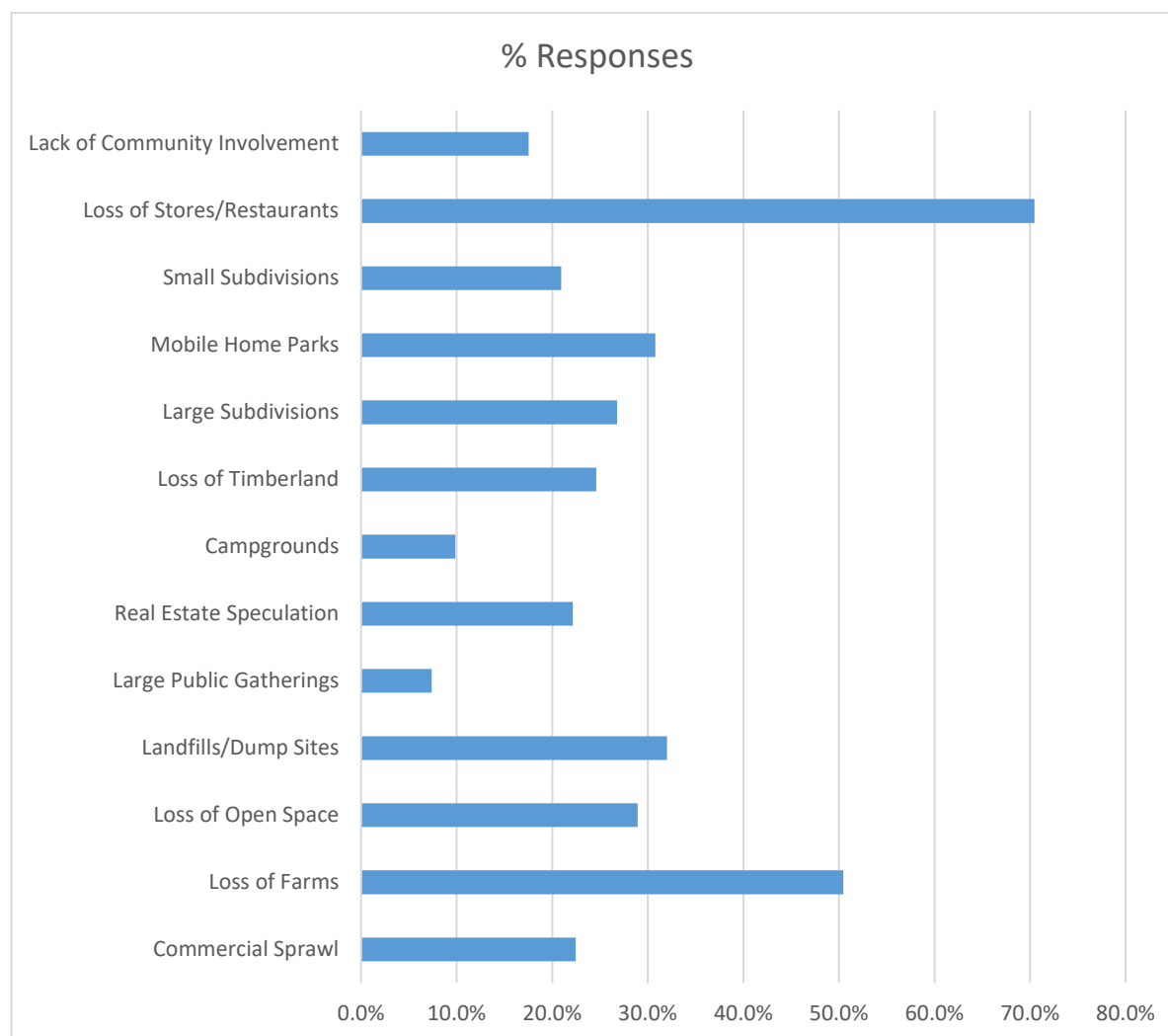
Note: The survey allowed for specific responses to be included with the “other” answer selected. In general, these were as follows:

- Concern regarding the lack of stores, restaurants, or shopping available in the town. This was indicated by 25 of the answers written in, representing about 8.8% of the total response.
- Rundown and/or dilapidated houses in the town (6 answers) was about 2.1% of the total response.
- Winter is too long/summer is too short (3 answers).
- Traffic/Speeding (2 answers).
- All other responses were relatively singular, i.e. would not fall into any particular category.



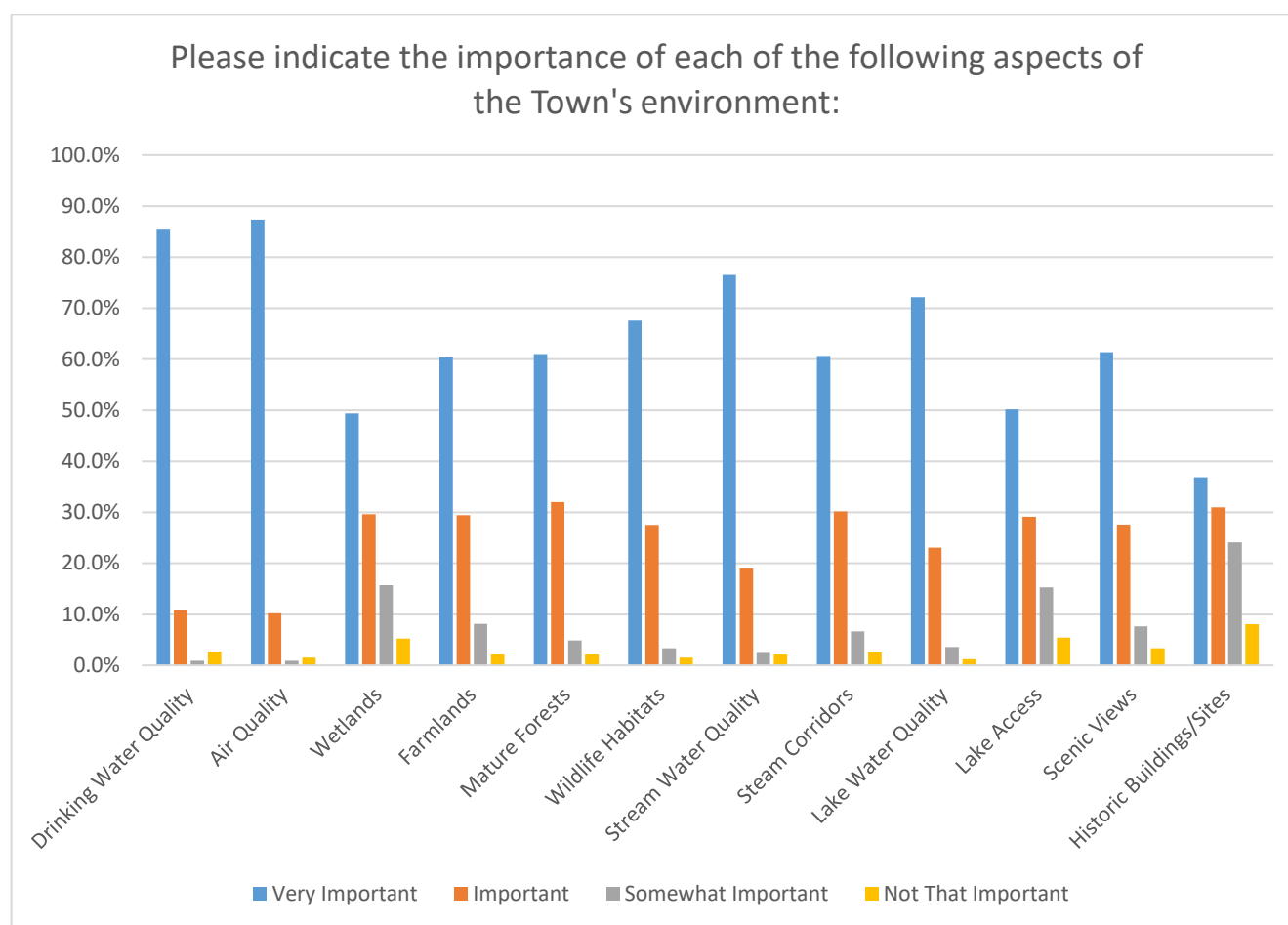
13. Do you consider any of the following to be a threat to the quality of life in the Town of Summit?

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Commercial Sprawl	22.5%	73
Loss of Farms	50.5%	164
Loss of Open Space	28.9%	94
Landfills/Dump Sites	32.0%	104
Large Public Gatherings	7.4%	24
Real Estate Speculation	22.2%	72
Campgrounds	9.8%	32
Loss of Timberland	24.6%	80
Large Subdivisions	26.8%	87
Mobile Home Parks	30.8%	100
Small Subdivisions	20.9%	68
Loss of Stores/Restaurants	70.5%	229
Lack of Community Involvement	17.5%	57



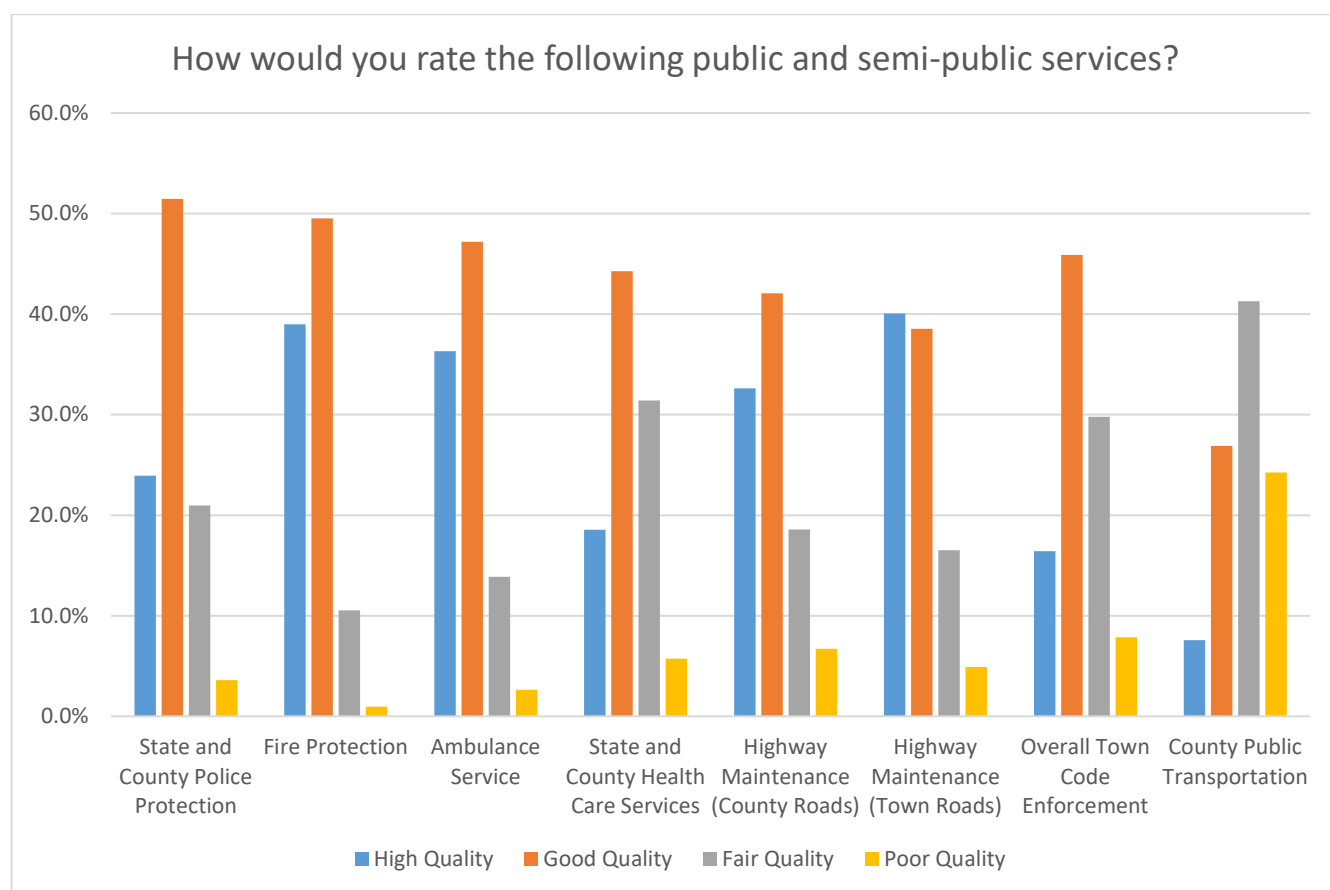
14. Please indicate the importance of EACH of the following aspects of the Town's environment:

Category	Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not That Important		Total Answers
Drinking Water Quality	285	85.6%	36	10.8%	3	0.9%	9	2.7%	333
Air Quality	290	87.3%	34	10.2%	3	0.9%	5	1.5%	332
Wetlands	160	49.4%	96	29.6%	51	15.7%	17	5.2%	324
Farmlands	201	60.4%	98	29.4%	27	8.1%	7	2.1%	333
Mature Forests	200	61.0%	105	32.0%	16	4.9%	7	2.1%	328
Wildlife Habitats	223	67.6%	91	27.6%	11	3.3%	5	1.5%	330
Stream water quality	254	76.5%	63	19.0%	8	2.4%	7	2.1%	332
Stream Corridors	191	60.6%	95	30.2%	21	6.7%	8	2.5%	315
Lake water quality	241	72.2%	77	23.1%	12	3.6%	4	1.2%	334
Lake Access	167	50.2%	97	29.1%	51	15.3%	18	5.4%	333
Scenic Views	200	61.3%	90	27.6%	25	7.7%	11	3.4%	326
Historic buildings/sites	119	36.8%	100	31.0%	78	24.1%	26	8.0%	323



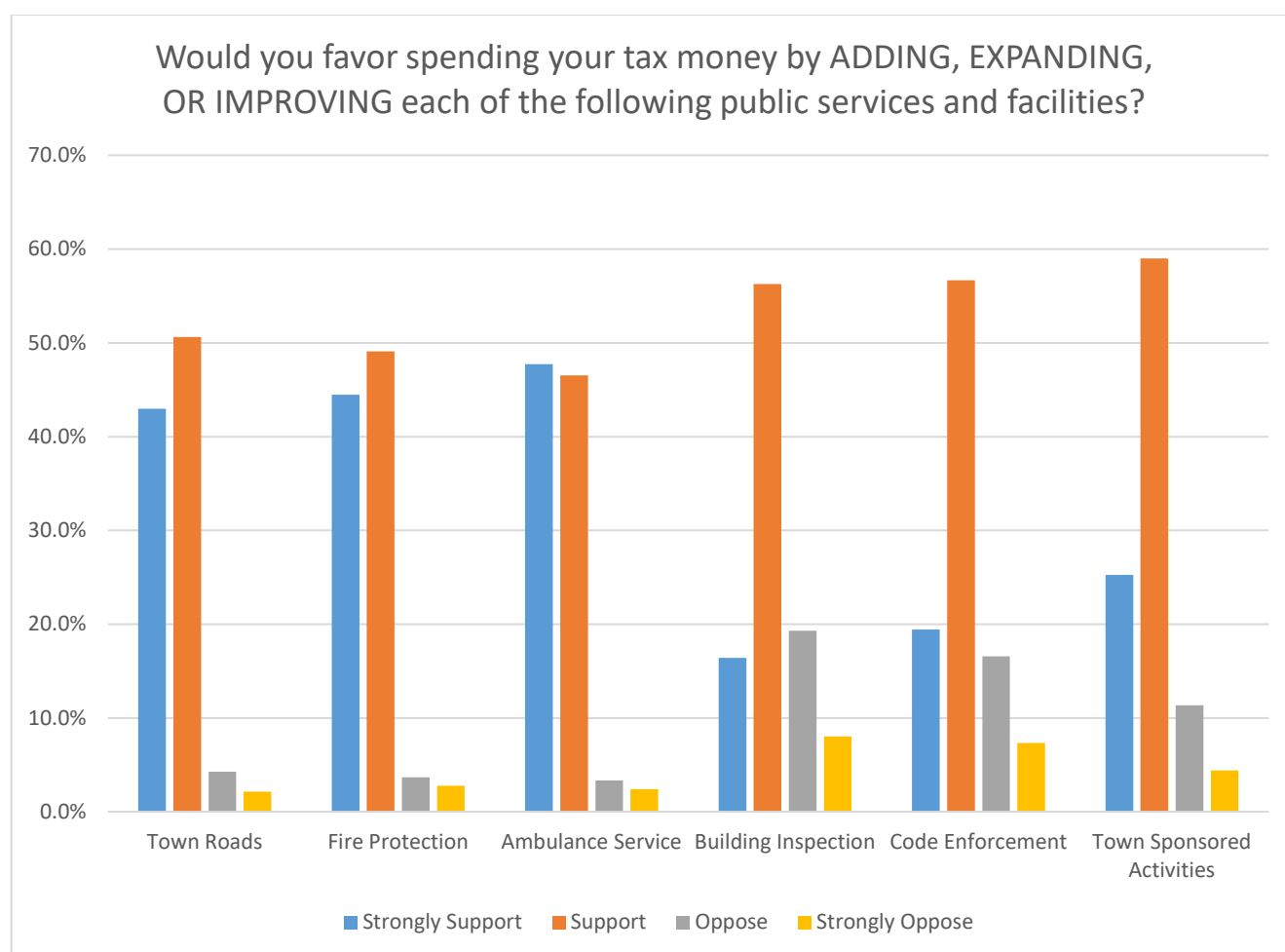
15. How would you rate the following public and semi-public services?

Category	High Quality		Good Quality		Fair Quality		Poor Quality		Total Answers
State and County Police Protection	73	23.9%	157	51.5%	64	21.0%	11	3.6%	305
Fire Protection	122	39.0%	155	49.5%	33	10.5%	3	1.0%	313
Ambulance Service	110	36.3%	143	47.2%	42	13.9%	8	2.6%	303
State and County Health Care Services	52	18.6%	124	44.3%	88	31.4%	16	5.7%	280
Highway Maintenance (County Roads)	107	32.6%	138	42.1%	61	18.6%	22	6.7%	328
Highway Maintenance (Town Roads)	131	40.1%	126	38.5%	54	16.5%	16	4.9%	327
Overall Town Code Enforcement	48	16.4%	134	45.9%	87	29.8%	23	7.9%	292
County Public Transportation	20	7.6%	71	26.9%	109	41.3%	64	24.2%	264



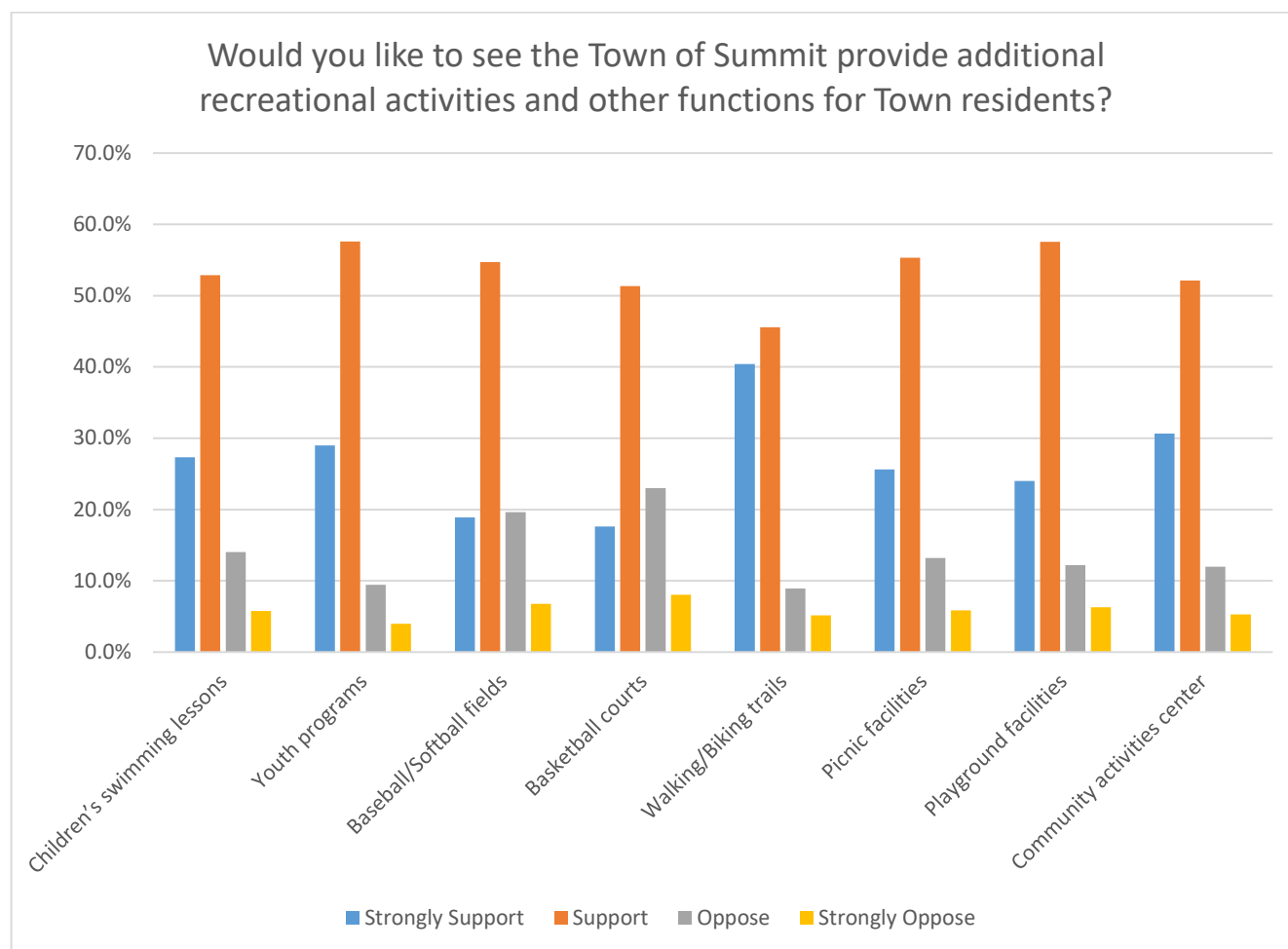
16. Would you favor spending your tax money by *ADDING, EXPANDING, OR IMPROVING* each of the following public services and facilities (check all that apply)?

Category	Strongly Support		Support		Oppose		Strongly Oppose		Total Answers
Town Roads	141	43.0%	166	50.6%	14	4.3%	7	2.1%	328
Fire Protection	145	44.5%	160	49.1%	12	3.7%	9	2.8%	326
Ambulance Service	158	47.7%	154	46.5%	11	3.3%	8	2.4%	331
Building Inspection	51	16.4%	175	56.3%	60	19.3%	25	8.0%	311
Code Enforcement	61	19.4%	178	56.7%	52	16.6%	23	7.3%	314
Town Sponsored Activities	80	25.2%	187	59.0%	36	11.4%	14	4.4%	317



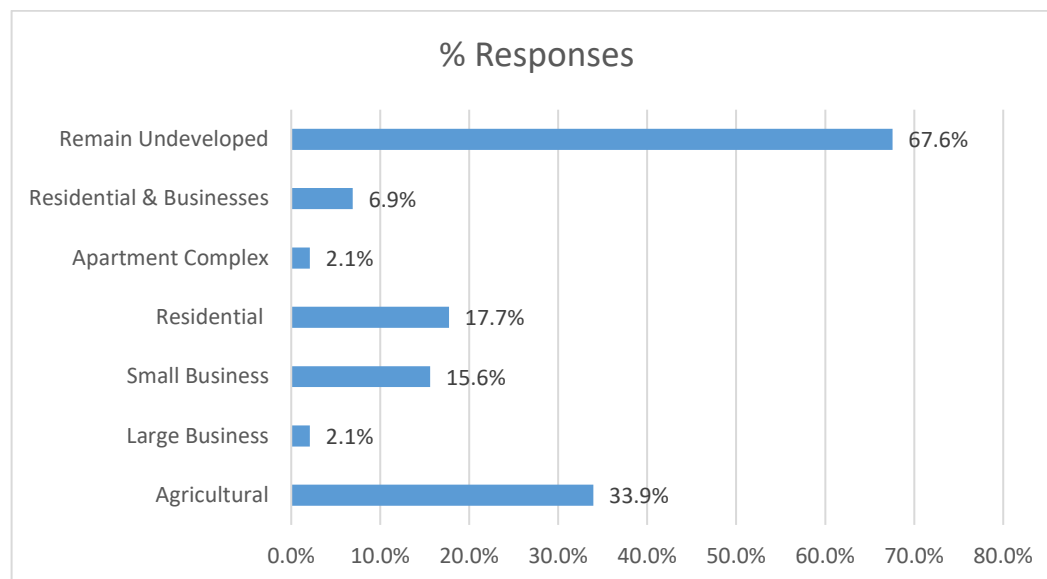
17. Would you like to see the Town of Summit provide additional recreational activities and other functions for Town residents? Indicate below what you believe that the Town should provide (check all that apply).

Category	Strongly Support		Support		Oppose		Strongly Oppose		Total Answers
Children's swimming lessons	76	27.3%	147	52.9%	39	14.0%	16	5.8%	278
Youth programs	80	29.0%	159	57.6%	26	9.4%	11	4.0%	276
Baseball/Softball fields	50	18.9%	145	54.7%	52	19.6%	18	6.8%	265
Basketball courts	46	17.6%	134	51.3%	60	23.0%	21	8.0%	261
Walking/Biking trails	118	40.4%	133	45.5%	26	8.9%	15	5.1%	292
Picnic facilities	70	25.6%	151	55.3%	36	13.2%	16	5.9%	273
Playground facilities	65	24.0%	156	57.6%	33	12.2%	17	6.3%	271
Community activities center	87	30.6%	148	52.1%	34	12.0%	15	5.3%	284



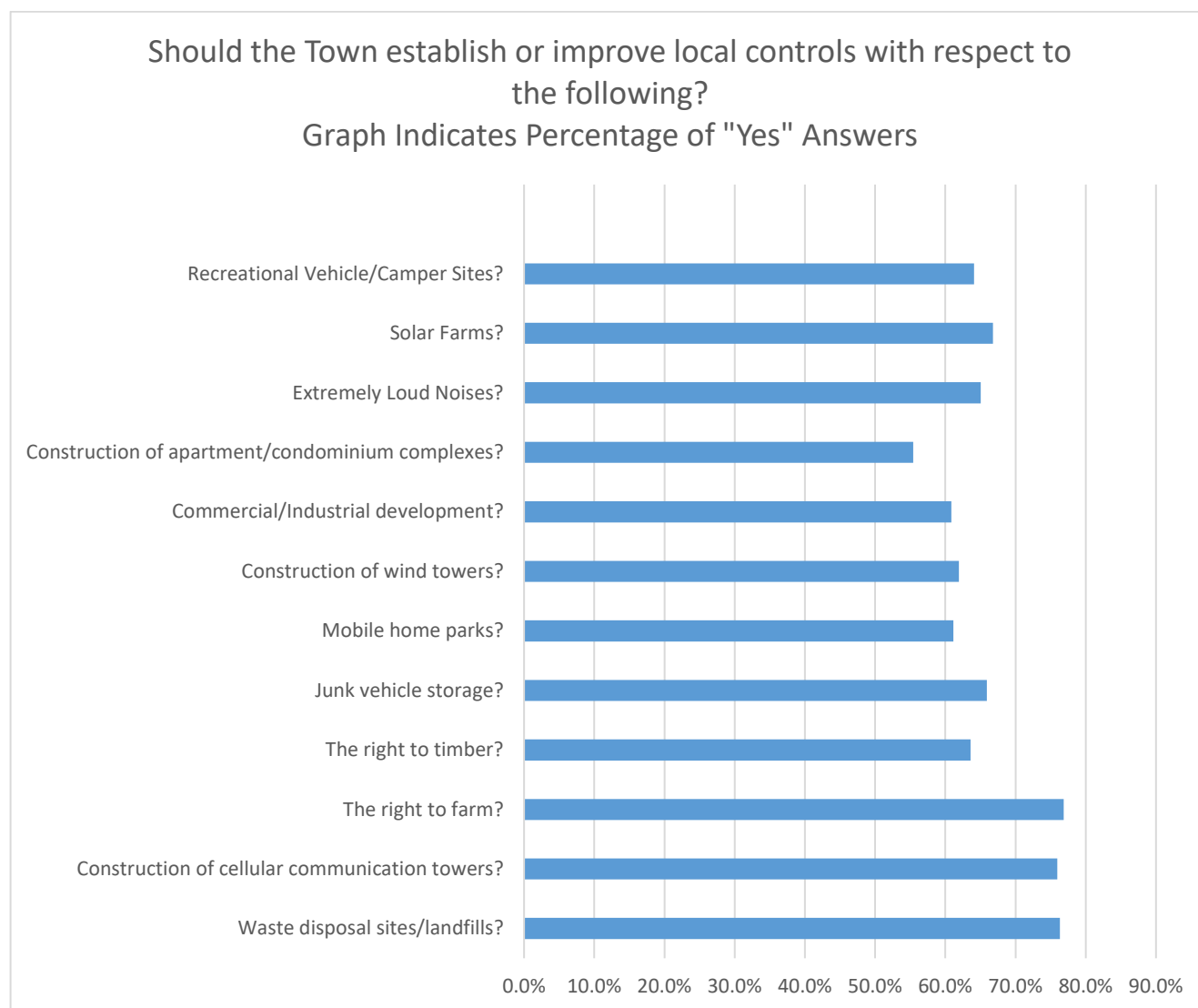
18. I would like to see the other properties near my property develop as:

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Agricultural	33.9%	113
Large Business	2.1%	7
Small Business	15.6%	52
Residential	17.7%	59
Apartment Complex	2.1%	7
Residential & Businesses	6.9%	23
Remain Undeveloped	67.6%	225



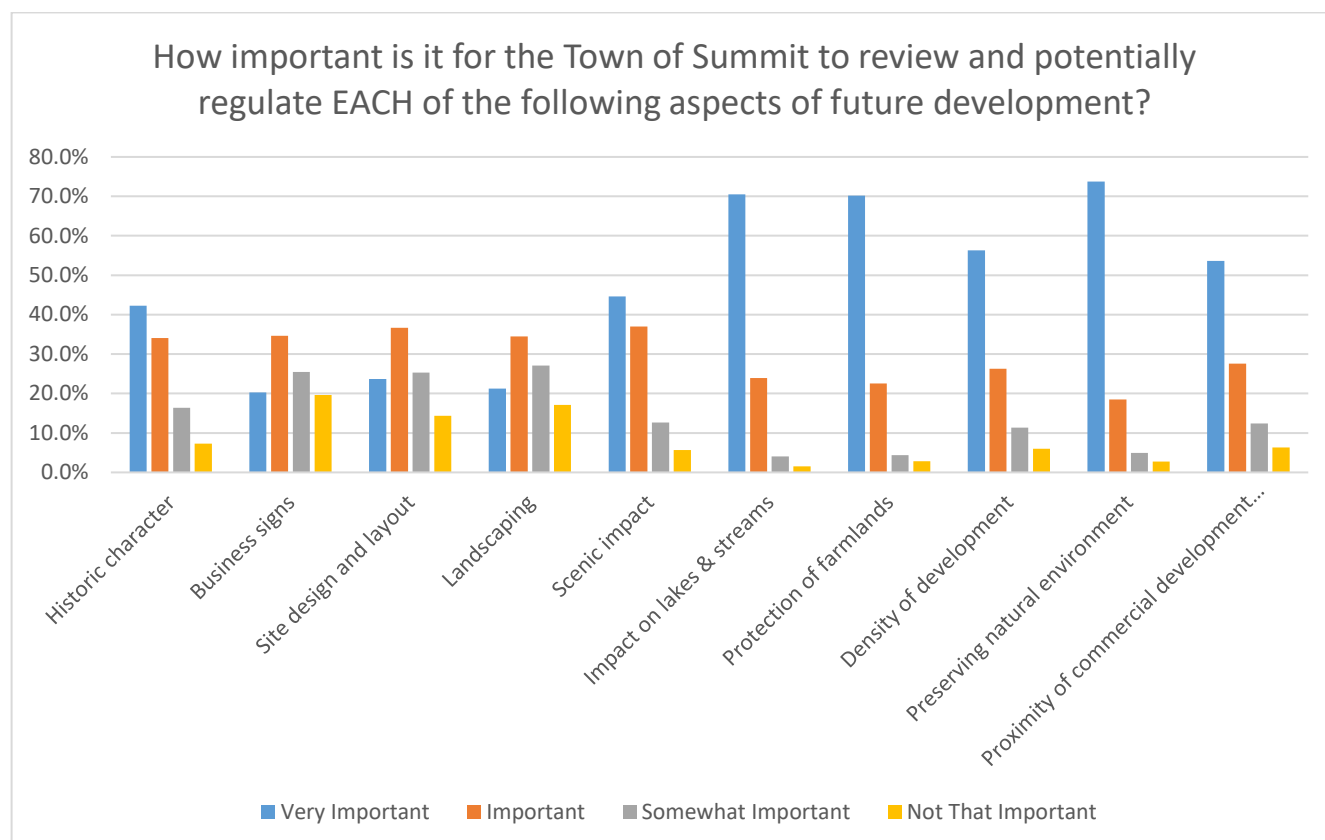
19. Should the Town establish or improve local controls with respect to the following?

Answer Choices	% Yes	# Responses	Yes	No
Waste disposal sites/landfills?	76.3%	308	235	73
Construction of cellular communication towers?	76.0%	312	237	75
The right to farm?	76.9%	307	236	71
The right to timber?	63.6%	291	185	106
Junk vehicle storage?	65.9%	311	205	106
Mobile home parks?	61.1%	301	184	117
Construction of wind towers?	61.9%	302	187	115
Commercial/Industrial development?	60.9%	299	182	117
Construction of apartment/condominium complexes?	55.4%	305	169	136
Extremely Loud Noises?	65.0%	306	199	107
Solar Farms?	66.8%	301	201	100
Recreational Vehicle/Camper Sites?	64.1%	295	189	106



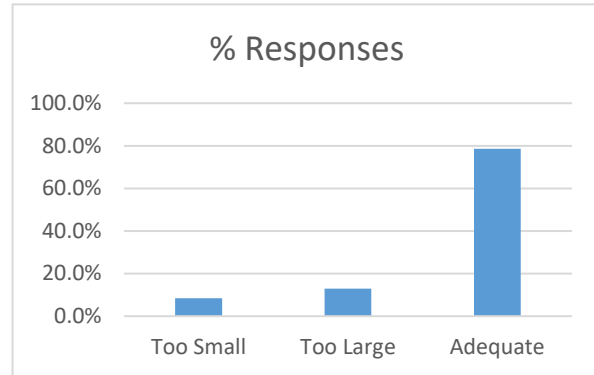
20. How important is it for the Town of Summit to review and potentially regulate EACH of the following aspects of future development?

Category	Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not That Important		Total Answers
Historic character	134	42.3%	108	34.1%	52	16.4%	23	7.3%	317
Business signs	62	20.3%	106	34.6%	78	25.5%	60	19.6%	306
Site design and layout	71	23.7%	110	36.7%	76	25.3%	43	14.3%	300
Landscaping	66	21.3%	107	34.5%	84	27.1%	53	17.1%	310
Scenic impact	141	44.6%	117	37.0%	40	12.7%	18	5.7%	316
Impact on lakes & streams	227	70.5%	77	23.9%	13	4.0%	5	1.6%	322
Protection of farmlands	224	70.2%	72	22.6%	14	4.4%	9	2.8%	319
Density of development	178	56.3%	83	26.3%	36	11.4%	19	6.0%	316
Preserving natural environment	239	73.8%	60	18.5%	16	4.9%	9	2.8%	324
Proximity of commercial development to residences	169	53.7%	87	27.6%	39	12.4%	20	6.3%	315



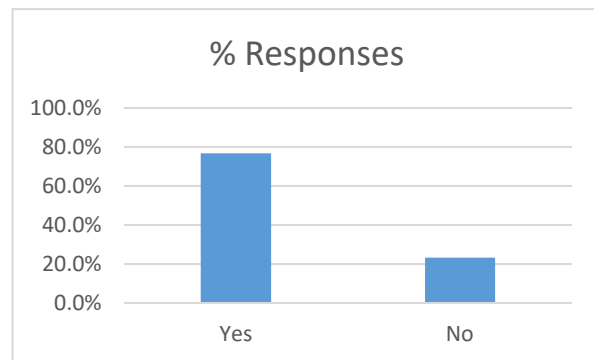
21. A majority of the land in the Town of Summit has a required minimum lot size of 5 acres. Do you consider this size as:

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Too Small	8.5%	28
Too Large	13.0%	43
Adequate	78.5%	260



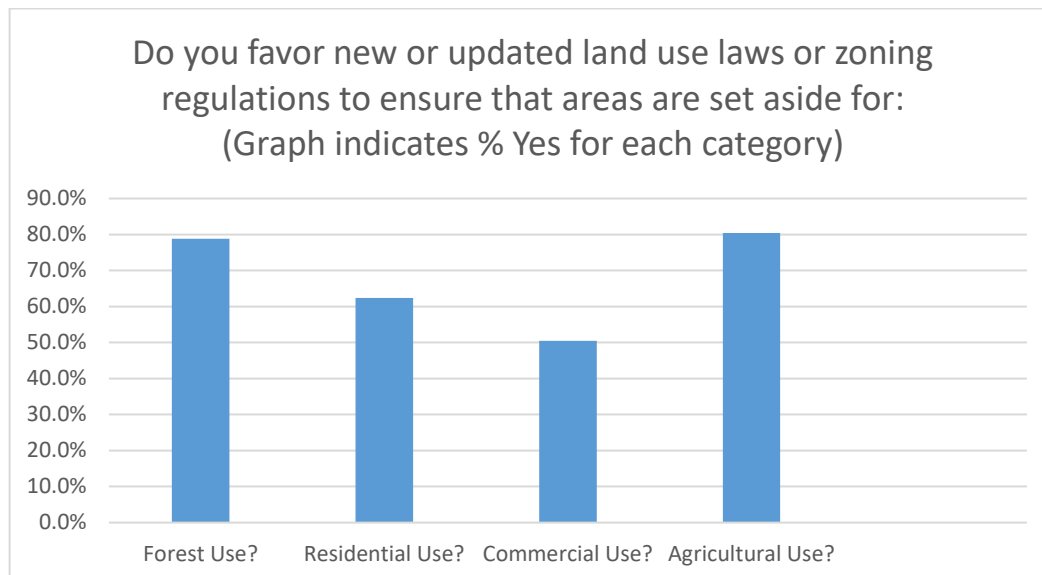
22. At present, Summit's primary land use planning tool is a 5-acre minimum for principal residence. Should Summit have more options to preserve its farmlands, woodlands, and recreational opportunities?

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Yes	76.8%	228
No	23.2%	69



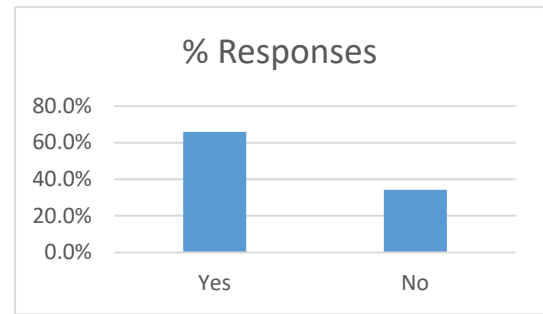
23. Do you favor new or updated land use laws or zoning regulations to ensure that areas are set aside for:

Answer Choices	% Yes	# Responses	Yes	No
Forest Use?	78.8%	307	242	65
Residential Use?	62.4%	298	186	112
Commercial Use?	50.5%	291	147	144
Agricultural Use?	80.5%	307	247	60



24. Our current town land use law allows only one (1) principle residence on a land parcel. Would you be in favor of allowing a second temporary residence, such as a mobile home, to be permitted under special and limited conditions for a brief period of time to create housing for a senior parent or relative?

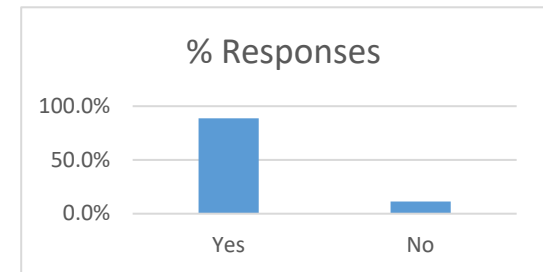
Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Yes	65.8%	214
No	34.2%	111



25. In the past 10-15 years, our town has lost many business establishments such as restaurants, stores, etc.

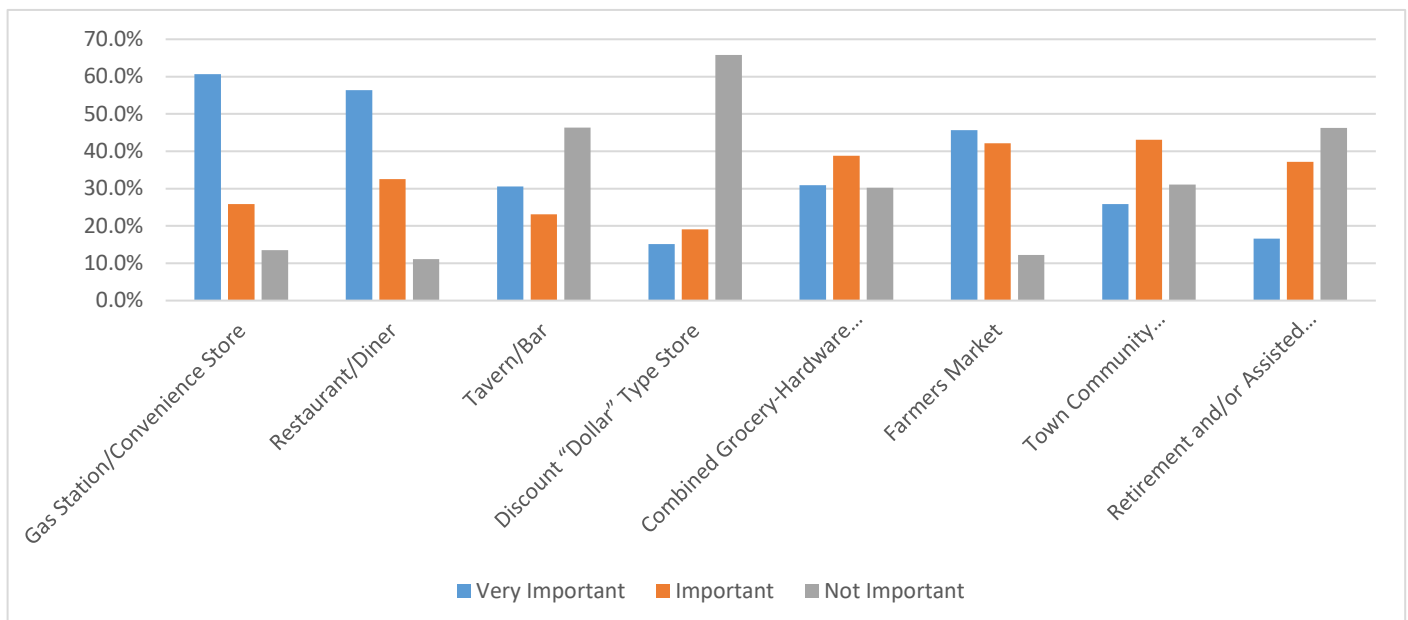
A. Should the Town of Summit be more focused on revitalizing the town center(s) in Summit and Charlotteville?

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Yes	88.7%	283
No	11.3%	36



B. Which of the following would you like to see developed in the town center(s) (check all that apply)?

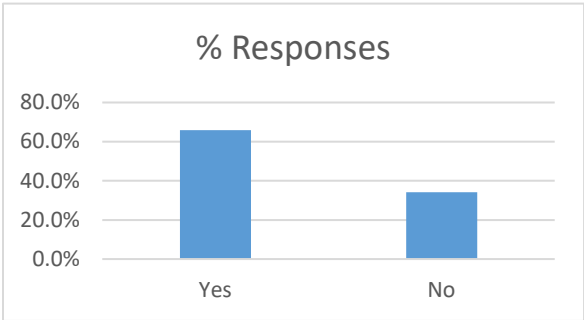
Category	Very Important		Important		Not Important		Total Answers
Gas Station/Convenience Store	197	60.6%	84	25.8%	44	13.5%	325
Restaurant/Diner	182	56.3%	105	32.5%	36	11.1%	323
Tavern/Bar	95	30.5%	72	23.2%	144	46.3%	311
Discount “Dollar” Type Store	46	15.1%	58	19.1%	200	65.8%	304
Combined Grocery-Hardware Store	94	30.9%	118	38.8%	92	30.3%	304
Farmers Market	142	45.7%	131	42.1%	38	12.2%	311
Town Community Center/Lending Library	80	25.9%	133	43.0%	96	31.1%	309
Retirement and/or Assisted Living Housing	51	16.6%	114	37.1%	142	46.3%	307



26. There is an increase in the number of abandoned and decaying “blighted property” structures in the areas that might be consider “town centers”.

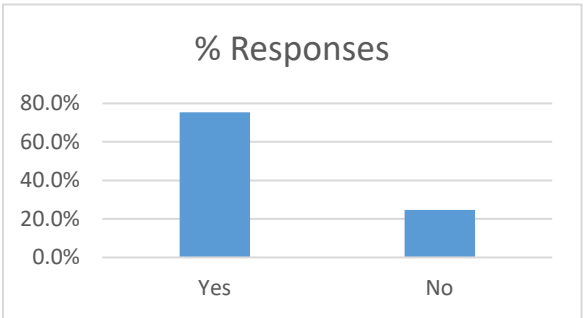
A. Would you be in favor of spending your tax money to allow the Town of Summit to acquire and properly dispose of these buildings?

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Yes	65.8%	214
No	34.2%	111



B. Should the Town of Summit pursue more rigorous land use laws and/or code enforcement to address structures which are not being adequately maintained?

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Yes	75.3%	247
No	24.7%	81



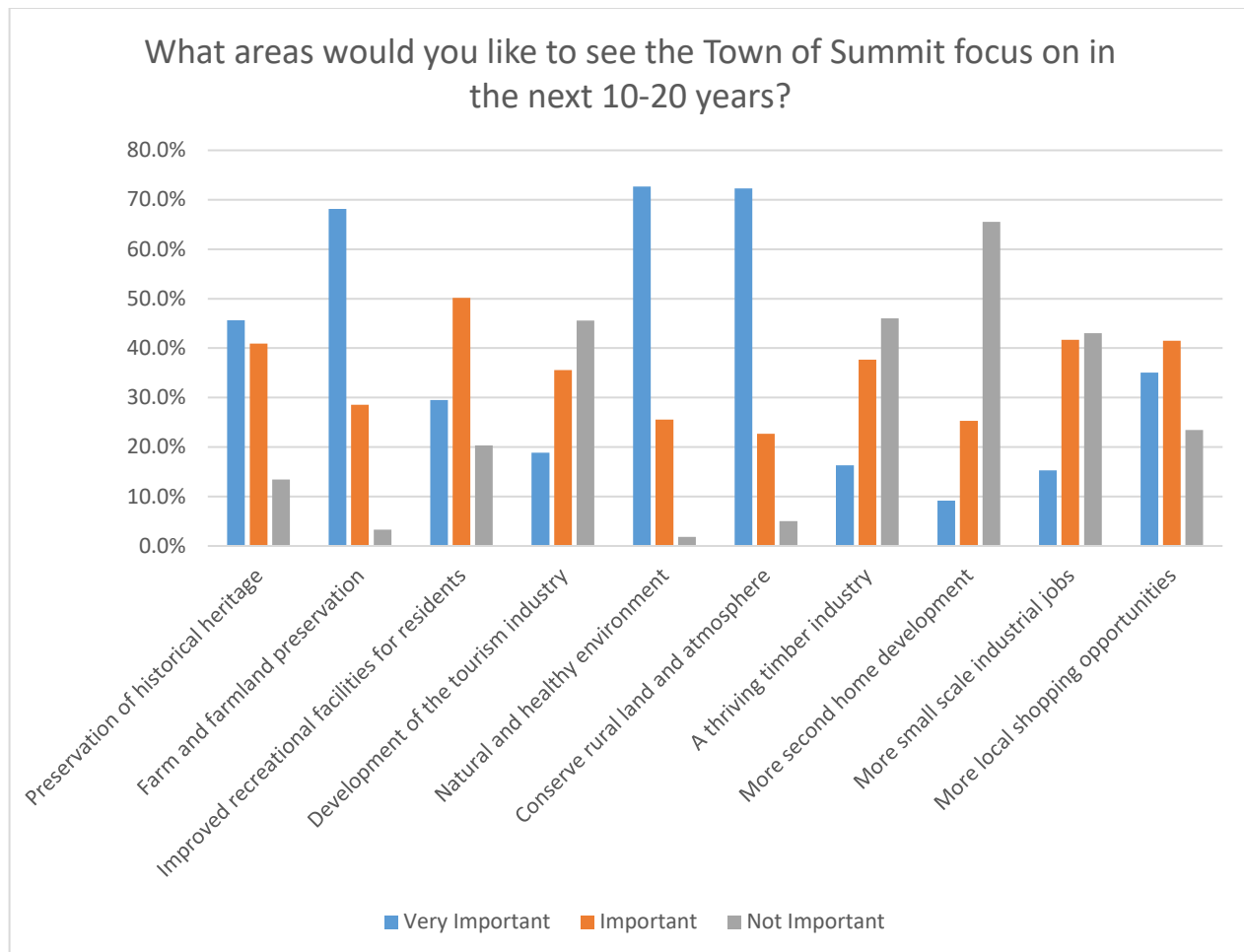
27. Community involvement takes on many forms. We have volunteer response organizations in Summit and Charlotteville, such as the fire department or rescue squad; community service organizations such as Summit Neighbors or Charlotteville Schoolhouse; and other social organizations (social clubs, church groups, school activities, etc.). We would like to gauge your interest and/or support for such organizations.

Answer Choices	% Yes	Yes	No
Do you presently belong to any community organization?	22.3%	75	261
Would you be willing to join or volunteer in a community organization?	47.3%	150	167
Would you be willing to donate in other forms (money, contributions, etc.)?	72.8%	233	87
Do you feel that such organizations and groups are vital for a strong community?	90.1%	301	33



28. What areas would you like to see the Town of Summit focus on in the next 10-20 years?

Category	Very Important		Important		Not Important		Total Answers
Preservation of historical heritage	146	45.6%	131	40.9%	43	13.4%	320
Farm and farmland preservation	227	68.2%	95	28.5%	11	3.3%	333
Improved recreational facilities for residents	93	29.5%	158	50.2%	64	20.3%	315
Development of the tourism industry	60	18.9%	113	35.5%	145	45.6%	318
Natural and healthy environment	242	72.7%	85	25.5%	6	1.8%	333
Conserve rural land and atmosphere	245	72.3%	77	22.7%	17	5.0%	339
A thriving timber industry	51	16.3%	118	37.7%	144	46.0%	313
More second home development	29	9.2%	80	25.3%	207	65.5%	316
More small scale industrial jobs	47	15.3%	128	41.7%	132	43.0%	307
More local shopping opportunities	115	35.1%	136	41.5%	77	23.5%	328



Appendix B

Recommended Land Use Law Updates

Appendix B – Recommended Land Use Law Updates

The following section is intended to provide further comprehensive plan input regarding key land use issues identified in Section 4.4 of this plan including a summary of those areas of concern, general suggestions regarding possible updates, and thoughts on which sections of the current Town of Summit Land Use Law might be appropriate for the updates. In many of these areas, our committee discussions explored apparent deficiencies in the current land use law that are either inconsistent with the balance of the law, unable to be effectively enforced, or not compatible with the desired rural character of the town. In other areas, certain land use law activities were identified that would be considered as desirable but are currently lacking any definition and/or clarity in our present land use law.

The intent of Appendix B is to provide somewhat of a roadmap for follow-up by a land use law review committee appointed by the town board and tasked with updating the current land use law(s) in the Town of Summit. The notes and comments below are intended to provide a reasonable starting point for this future committee to explore updates to the current land use law. These comments and suggested updates should not be viewed as a completed effort for land use law updates but merely a starting point for work by others to continue.

Site Plan Review – General Description (See also Section 4.4.1)

Updates to the current land use law should provide better definition of the role of the planning board in reviewing more complex construction or land use projects such as housing developments, campgrounds, retail establishments, manufacturing enterprises, or more extensive projects which are allowed by the current land use law. An example of this type of project might include a cluster housing development project, also recommended by this comprehensive plan as valuable in creating more affordable housing while maintaining the open space needed for a rural environment. At present, site plan review is only briefly mentioned in Section XI of the current land use law and site plan review procedures/regulations are lacking in detail. This comprehensive plan supports amending our local land use law with more detail regarding what projects might trigger site plan review and supports adopting a specific and separate set of regulations for the Town of Summit which outline procedures and guidelines for site plan review (note that these have already been created but not adopted as part of past efforts).

Specific suggestions in this area include:

- Updating Section XI of the current land use law to recognize the Planning Board as the governing body for site plan review.
- Updating Section XI of the current land use law to identify land use projects which would require site plan review, such as a cluster housing development project.
- Adopting Site Plan Review Regulations with appropriate procedures established for the review of more complex land use projects.

Cluster Housing – General Description (See also Section 4.4.2)

Construction of cluster housing is consistent with the vision of this comprehensive plan. A well-planned cluster housing project could provide ten residential structures, each located on a two-acre parcel, with thirty acres of dedicated common space. The total land required for such a project would be fifty acres, consistent with the intent of the current land use law, but with savings realized from implementation of a more efficient construction project. There is substantial benefit to the town and local tax base, to the realization of more affordable housing, and to the preservation of open space. However, the current land use law does not easily accommodate a cluster housing project due to Section VI.A requirements for a five-acre site on the construction of any new principal structure(s). Updates to the law could provide further definition of an acceptable cluster housing project with site plan review procedures in place to ensure implementation which is consistent with the goals of this comprehensive plan and the updated land use law. Appendix C includes additional information and reference material on cluster housing development. Specific cluster housing suggestions include:

- Updating Section XI of the current land use law to establish definitions and minimum requirements for cluster housing development projects while maintaining the intent of the current five-acre building site requirement in preservation of open space.
- Updating Section XI of the current land use law to require site plan review and approval for any cluster housing development project.

Temporary Structures – General Description (See also Section 4.4.3)

A temporary structure is defined as “a camping trailer, other recreational vehicle or tent, but excluding a mobile home/manufactured home.” Per Section IX of the Land Use Law, temporary structures “may not be inhabited more than four (4) months in a year.” The difficulty here is in enforcement; how does the CEO determine if the four (4) month occupancy limit has been exceeded? An additional problem is that no limitation is placed on the number of temporary structures that can be sited on a single land parcel. As an example, the current law would allow an unlimited number of campers to be placed on a vacant or residential parcel in the middle of the hamlet of Charlotteville. While the land use law requires a minimum of five (5) acres for a residential structure, the lack of any restriction on campers and recreational vehicles appears to be inconsistent with thoughtful regulation of land use. There should be a balance regarding the rights of a landowner to enjoy the privilege of camping on their property while also providing for reasonable restrictions on the use of temporary structures.

Prior to the current Town of Summit Land Use Law, earlier regulations read as follows – “Camping trailers, tents or other recreational or temporary living quarters will be allowed for the purposes of camping for temporary periods, not to exceed three (3) months per calendar year. All camping trailers, tents, or other recreational or temporary living quarters allowed under this section must be removed from the premises at the end of the three (3) month period, except that legally registered recreational vehicles may be stored upon the premises”. While this provision would be easier to enforce, it seems overly restrictive when considering that many people enjoy parking a camping trailer, tent, and/or recreational vehicle on a vacant land parcel for the extended summer season.

An additional consideration is the economic and/or commercial nature of camping in various forms, especially given the suitability of the Town of Summit for hosting a commercial campground or short-term rental of luxury “glamping” tent sites. Campgrounds are a viable commercial enterprise for the Town of Summit that should be encouraged, but the lack of any regulations and oversight can discourage entrepreneurs from pursuing this while also creating potential problems in the event of a poorly implemented and completely unregulated campground. This comprehensive plan supports amending our local land use law to allow town permitting to be used for limited oversight based on sensible campground regulations for multiple campers and recreational vehicles, while allowing “small scale” personal use camping for family enjoyment to remain unregulated.

The existing section on temporary structures as outlined in Section IX of the current land use law is inadequate in scope and definition for many of the issues outlined here and certainly inadequate for regulating commercial camping activity.

Specific suggestions relevant to temporary structures and/or camping in general include:

- Updating Section IX and/or Section XVI of the current land use law to establish better definitions for temporary structures, campsites, campgrounds, etc.
- Updating Section IX of the current land use law to provide better regulation of some of the issues noted in this comprehensive plan including density of recreational vehicles on small land parcels.
- Review the need for further regulations, potential permitting, and/or site plan review for commercial campgrounds, luxury tent sites, and similar business enterprises. Are these short-term rentals per recent local law 1-2023? If not, should they be similarly regulated?
- Review any proposed regulations to ensure that the rights of property owners are respected and maintained for family camping, parking of recreational vehicles, etc.

Mobile Home Parks – General Description (See also Section 4.4.4)

Mobile home parks are inconsistent with Section VI.A of the current land use law which requires that a principal structure (a structure used for living quarters) be placed upon a site having five acres. As a mobile home would be a principal structure, this requirement effectively precludes a conventional mobile home park from being situated in the Town of Summit. While this comprehensive plan does not recommend any changes to the current land use law regarding mobile homes, the addition of definitions for mobile homes and mobile home parks is

recommended. Also, any proposed cluster housing regulations should be carefully worded as to whether mobile homes would be suitable or not suitable for cluster housing development.

Short Term Rentals – General Description (See also Section 4.4.5)

Regulation of short-term rentals (Local Law 1-2023) has already been recently enacted. As updates to the current land use law are considered, consistency between short-term rental regulations and any proposed land use law updates should be reviewed. This is especially true for temporary structures, camp sites, and campgrounds; these all represent the potential for short-term rental opportunity.

Accessory Dwelling Units – General Description (See also Section 4.4.6)

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are independent housing units created within single-family homes or as separate structures on residential lots. An accessory dwelling unit created as an extension of a residential home would allow for older family members to retain their independence while having the support and assistance of someone living nearby. Current Town of Summit land use law permits an accessory dwelling unit to be added within an existing residential principal structure; i.e., an apartment created within the principal structure which provides separate living quarters is allowed providing that the multi-family limit of three (3) households is not exceeded. However, a separate and detached dwelling unit would be considered as second principal structure which is not allowed by Section VI.C of the local land use law. As guidance in this area, there are procedures that have been adopted by many municipalities for accessory dwelling units to be allowed as temporary and/or special use structures with specific conditions that must be met. Appendix C includes additional information and reference material on updating land use laws to accommodate an ADU. This comprehensive plan supports amending our local land use law to allow special use permits to be approved on a temporary basis for accessory senior housing consisting of a separate and unattached structure in addition to the principal structure.

Specific suggestions relevant to accessory dwelling units would include:

- Updating Section XI and/or Section XVI of the current land use law to establish better definitions for accessory dwelling units which could be attached (i.e., part of a principal structure) or unattached in a separate structure.
- Updating Section XI to establish specific procedures for “special use” permits. Pertinent to our discussion here, a special use permit could be used to allow for the temporary location of an ADU adjacent to a principal structure for the purpose of the care and well-being of an elderly relative. However, special use permits could also be used for other land use purposes, such as regulation of campgrounds. Including a section in the land use law regarding the purpose and acquisition of a special use permit would allow for these permits to be used for more than one purpose.
- Updating Section XI to allow for a detached ADU to be temporarily located on the site of and adjacent to a principal structure for well-defined purposes, such as the care of an elderly parent.

- Any land use law update for ADU use should be specific in terms of nature of use, siting, size, and other considerations. If the intent expressed here is to allow for the care of an elderly parent, should the ADU also be allowed for a child returning home after college, or a sibling needing rehabilitative care for several months? After an elderly parent has moved out, could the ADU remain in place and then be rented for profit? When does it need to be removed from the premises? All of these are questions that land use law provisions should address.

As noted at the beginning of this appendix, the intent of this section is to provide a roadmap for follow-up by a land use law review committee which would be tasked with updating the current land use law(s) in the Town of Summit. While this commentary provides a starting point for subsequent efforts, there remains substantial work still to be done for any updates.

Appendix C

Additional Resources

Appendix C – Additional Recommended Resources

The following section is intended to provide additional linked resources offering a more detailed examination of key issues discussed in this comprehensive plan.

Local Economic Policy

Shaping the Way Forward - An Economic Development Strategy for Schoharie County (Final Report, November 2018)

Land Use Planning

New York Land Use Tools – A 2008 Survey of Land Use Planning & Regulations in NYS; NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources

Guide to Planning and Zoning Laws of New York State, James A. Coon Local Government Technical Series published by the New York Department of State.

Cluster Housing Development

Rural Cluster Development Guide; Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Cluster Development; website link to Planning Tank information on cluster development.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

Accessory Dwelling Units – Model State Act and Local Ordinance; created for State and Local Leaders by AARP Government Affairs

Accessory Dwelling Units: Case Study; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research

Tiny Homes

Tiny House, Big Questions: Regulating Tiny Homes in Your Jurisdiction; Presentation Slides by Katie Hodgdon, Counsel for NYS Association of Towns. (Note – This link provides for a file download of the slide presentation material).

Complete Streets

The Complete Streets Policy Framework, Smart Growth America