

**TOWN OF WILTON
21ST CENTURY COMMISSION
SURVEY SUMMARY**

This is a summary of the final tallies for the Comprehensive Plan Survey. Of the approximately 6900 surveys distributed to Town residents, a total of 1631 surveys (24% of the total) were returned. This is an excellent response, especially since a return rate of 5% is considered statistically valid. Of the 1631 surveys returned, it was necessary to tally 291 records by hand due to the poor physical condition of the survey forms. The remaining surveys were scanned. All the survey results have been incorporated in the Summary Results sheet. It should be noted however that when the correlation portion of the program is used only the surveys that were scanned are included.

1. Best things about Wilton

Rural atmosphere is a big winner! Over 75% of the respondents strongly agree and agree that rural atmosphere is one of the best things about living in Wilton. People also felt strongly about closeness to Saratoga Springs (75%), access to the I-87 (76%), quality of life (74%), Recreation and Cultural opportunities (56%), stores, service... (64%). Good schools (66 %) and low taxes (56%) were also identified as a positive about Wilton. Fewer people indicated that the balance of development and open space (41%) and availability of area employment (34%), as one of the best things about Wilton.

2. Areas of concern

A large number of individuals are worried about too much growth and development (+/- 67%), depletion of resources (67%), roads & traffic (69%), taxes and governmental spending (51%). A smaller but still significant number are worried about safety and security (34%), overcrowded schools (43%), lack of trails (43%), lack of design standards (36%), and retail signs (39% & 35% respectively). Please note that responses to questions 2d through 2i also included a large number of people who were undecided on these issues (+/-20%).

3. Changes

About 37% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Town should develop a "main street". Slightly more (37%) supported the idea of neighborhood centers or gathering places. Over 20% of the respondents indicated that they were undecided and about 20% did not answer these questions.

Support for an open space plan is strong (59%) with only 4% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement. Nearly 20% of returned surveys did not answer this question.

56% supported the idea of a post office and zip code. The idea of an I-87 interchange at Jones Road received support from 35% and no support from 32% with the remaining 31% almost evenly split between undecided and those that did not answer the question. This appears to be a controversial issue!

The issue of affordable housing also could also be difficult to address with about 34% supporting (agree and strongly agree) and 28% not supporting (disagree and strongly disagree). Again approximately 20% of respondents were undecided and over 17% did not answer this question.

4. Quality of Life

Good jobs and good schools are very important to the quality of life! 72% of respondents agree that good jobs are important while 69% feel that good schools are also important. This supports responses in question 1 regarding quality of life and education.

77% of respondents indicated that environmental quality is also important to overall quality of life. Public open spaces, parks with recreational fields, nature observation all received strong support (over 50% indicated important or very important). Protection of scenic views and cultural and historic resources also received strong support (+/- 50%). Shopping received support (46%). Importance of neighborhood centers had the lowest score; 31% with a large number not answering or indicating undecided. Almost 30% do not support the idea.

5. Satisfaction with services

The results from this section vary. Some questions had a high incidence of "no answer" which could be attributed to questions that target a portion of the population (senior citizen services, water service, code enforcement). For example, if you don't have sewer or water you may not bother to complete that question. There seems to be general satisfaction with parks and recreation, snowplowing and emergency services (about 60%). There appeared to be less satisfaction with some other services such as leaf and organic pick-up, public water and sewer, senior citizen services, building code enforcement and animal control (generally around 30% indicated satisfied or very satisfied). Again some of this is may be related to the high % of no response and undecided.

6. Use of amenities

People seem most inclined to use trails or paths for non-motorized use (46%). There seems to be limited demand for trails for motorized use (13%). Art, drama and music activities received the most support; i.e. if they were available people would utilize them (40%). The remaining activities listed are currently available in some form in Wilton, which may or may not have impacted the responses. However, about 1/3 of respondents to each of the other questions indicated they would use the specific amenity if it were available. Respondents also indicted that they would not use or would use infrequently these same activities often at a rate of 40% or higher.

7. Preserve & protect

Preserving and protecting the wide variety of resources received strong support all around. This supports specific responses to questions 2, 3, and 4. 79% of respondents feel that preserving wildlife habitat, forests, meadows and wetlands are very important and important. There is also strong support to protect agricultural resources, historic structures, scenic views, groundwater, roadside appearance, and visibility of the night sky.

8. Benefits of undeveloped land

The benefits of undeveloped land listed in question 8 (recreation, groundwater protection, wildlife habitat, scenic views, agriculture and limiting development density) were all supported

with the exception of "as potential development." This was fairly evenly split with 30%, supporting that statement and 30% not supporting.

9. More taxes/fees for services?

There was not overwhelming support for additional taxes for more services. Often the response of those willing to pay additional taxes/fees for a specific service was nearly evenly offset by those that would not be willing to pay increased fees/taxes for additional services. Dog parks seem to be a concern for a specific audience. The responses to this question indicate that the Town should proceed with caution when considering new/expanded services. Giving people the specifics of what they would get for their \$ appears critical.

10. Development patterns

People don't want mixed use or traditional neighborhoods and they want separate residential, commercial zones. They agree that light industrial belongs at exit 16 (48%). Apartments and mobile homes are not popular. There is support for senior housing (59%).

11. Desired growth levels

There is minimal support for faster rates of development. Over 40% of people think housing activity should slow. 32% feel retail growth should slow but there is some support for locally owned retail operations. About 1/3 of respondents think that light industrial and office professional should stay about the same while about 20% feel this rate of development is too fast.

12. Traffic & transportation

About 50% of people support an expanded non-motorized trail system and pedestrian friendly street design. People would like to see reduced speed in residential areas. There is minimal support for the truck bypass in Wilton. Support for and against an I-87 interchange is about 30% with many responding undecided or skipping the question. Public transportation options received support (43%), while only 12% felt it was only slightly important or not important at all.

13. Economic development ideas

There is support for professional office etc. (56%). Surprisingly with the many comments regarding big box and strip malls, 36% of respondents support this type of economic development. It should be noted that about 36% did not complete this question or were undecided.

14. Strategies to address rising costs of services

Managing the pace of development has a lot of support (63%) as a way of addressing rising costs. Protecting undeveloped land and planning for capital expenditures also was received favorably. There is minimal support for retail or higher taxes. People feel developers should pay for their impacts (67%).

15. Town communication/decision making

Positive responses to the various components to this question hovered around 30%, while negative responses 8 to 20%. Large numbers of people either did not respond or were undecided.

16. Vision

People support planned growth, and not surprisingly, an economically sound Town (73%) as well as good jobs in Town (63%). Paths and linking neighborhoods are also supported (+40%).

17. Age categories

The survey was missing a category (35-44 age group) therefore the results most likely show duplicate responses. For comparison purposes, 2000 census info is included below.

Those that completed the survey

Under 18	18-24	25-34	Left out	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
378	129	325		519	312	175	80

Census 2000 Data

Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
3616	789	1588	2344	2115	1066	606	387

18. Length of residency in Wilton

Newcomers (fewer than 5 years) -27%, 5-10 years -20%, 11-20 years- 25%, 21-40 years- 13%, over 40 years- 4%

42% of the population have lived in the town 10 years or more and 47% have lived in the town for less than 10 years.

19. Plan to stay in Wilton?

60% of people plan to continue to live in Wilton indefinitely! This is an excellent indication that people do care about the future of the town.

20. Location of residence in Wilton

- South end near Exit 15- 20%
- North end near Exit 16- 20%
- West of Northway between Exits 15 and 16- 35%
- East of Northway between Exits 15 and 16- 19%

21. School District

Saratoga Springs -68%, South Glens Falls- 12%, Schuylerville 1%

The majority of respondents have a strong connection with the Saratoga Springs school system. This plays a part in community identity, personality and character.

22. Zip code

The majority (51%), live in the 12831 zip code, 30% in 12866, less than 1% in 12833

23. Own or rent

82% own, 5%rent

24. Yearly income

Less than 15,000- 3%

15,001-34,999- 12%

35,000- 74,999- 33%

75,000-149,999- 31%

150,000+ - 7%

25. Education

Below Grade 12 - 1%

High school- 16%

Vocational Graduate- 3%

2-year- 13%

4-year- 26%

Graduate - 25%