

CHAPTER XI

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive planning is a community event. The final plan document sets the policy agenda, not only for the future allocation of community resources, but also the future social fabric and aesthetic character of the Town. As such, every citizen has a stake in the comprehensive planning process, and should exercise their right to contribute ideas and opinions to the plan's formulation.

In order to solicit participation in the planning process, the Waterboro Comprehensive Plan Committee employed a variety of public participatory techniques:

1. Committee meetings open to the public
2. Advertised public hearings
3. Distribution of a Town-wide Community Attitudes Survey
4. Conducted a series of Focus Group Discussions with representative members of the community.

This chapter is intended to document and analyze those citizen concerns and expectations gleaned from the Community Attitudes Survey and the Focus Group Discussions.

1.0 COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY

Experience has proven that the administration of a Community Attitudes Survey or questionnaire is one of the comprehensive and cost-effective methods for determining a Town's opinions on growth and planning issues. Consequently, the Committee developed and administered such a questionnaire in November 1989. Approximately 1500 questionnaires were produced and distributed to every household in Waterboro via postal patron mail. Respondents were instructed to drop off the completed questionnaires at one of seven different survey collection boxes located in local food and convenience stores. Two hundred and forty-three (243) completed questionnaires were retrieved, yielding a return rate of 16.2%. All survey responses were digitized into a Lotus 1-2-3 program for tabulation and statistical analysis.

Using a combination of Likkert rating scales, rank order scales, closed and open-ended questions, the survey addressed seven principle planning issues:

1. Demographic Background
2. Assessment of Public and Private Services
3. Traffic Issues
4. Recreation Needs
5. Land Use Policy Issues
6. Natural Resource Protection
7. Town Character and Aesthetics
8. Taxes

1.1 SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

A copy of the survey form, complete with frequency calculations for each question, has been included in the appendix of this Comprehensive Plan. All conclusions are based on the entire sample (N=243).

1.1.1 Demographic Data

The intent of securing demographic data from survey respondents was to provide: a) an interim data base for planning purposes in the vacuum of recent and reliable census data; and b) as a control to determine if any one economic/ demographic group was under-represented in the survey results.

- All sections of Town were adequately represented in the sample of survey respondents
- 93% of all survey respondents are full-time residents of Waterboro
- 88% owned their own home, while 3% rent
- 93% of the respondents live in single-family homes, 5% in mobile homes, and less than 1% in apartments
- 65% live on house lots between $\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 acres, 12% on lots less than $\frac{1}{2}$ acre, and 23% live on lots greater than 5 acres in size
- Most respondents (53%) live on a paved Town road, 10% on an unpaved Town road, 12% off either Route 5 or 4/202, and 24% live off of private access roads, primarily located in Lake Arrowhead.

As shown in Table XI-1 below, almost half of the survey respondents were "newcomers" who have resided in Waterboro for less than four years. In a Town which has experienced rapid growth in the past six years, the high percentage of recent citizens in the sample is not surprising.

Table XI-1

**YEARS OF PERMANENT RESIDENCY
IN WATERBORO**

YEARS OF RESIDENCY	#	%
0 - 4	119	49%
5 - 9	41	17%
10 - 14	39	16%
15 - 19	12	5%
20+	25	10%
Missing Values	7	3%

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

A third (34%) of the survey sample ranged in age from 35-44 years, while 18% of the respondents were within the 25-34 and the 45-54 age brackets, respectively. The retired population represented 17.5% of the sample. Comparing survey data with 1980 Census results, it is apparent that a disparity exists between the age distribution in Town in 1980 and the age profile of survey respondents as of 1989. Assuming there is no correlation between age and participation in the survey, Table XI-2 supports the projection (Chapter I - Population Characteristics) that Waterboro's population is aging even in the face of in-migration of younger families.

Table XI-2

**AGE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS
vs. 1980 CENSUS**

AGE	# SURVEY RESPONDENTS	% SURVEY RESPONDENTS	1980 CENSUS % BY AGE GROUP
20-24	7	1.6%	9.4%
25-34	82	18.0%	33.2%
35-44	151	34.0%	20.3%
45-54	80	18.0%	12.0%
55-64	49	11.0%	13.0%
65-74	78	17.5%	12.2%

The survey sample also reveals itself to be fairly well educated. Only 5% of the sample never completed high school, while the remaining 95% of those who responded had received their high school diploma. Fifty percent of the sample pursued higher education, with 18% receiving technical school training, or associates degrees; 26% receiving bachelor's degrees; and 6% earning their master's degrees.

Table XI-3

EDUCATION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

<u>EDUCATION LEVEL</u>	<u># RESPONDENTS</u>	<u>% RESPONDENTS</u>
Some High School	21	5%
High School Diploma	201	45%
Associates Degree/ Technical School	82	18%
Bachelor's Degree	116	26%
Master's Degree	26	6%

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

Over half the sample households are currently raising children. Table XI-4 reveals that the most populous age group of these children are those of elementary school age (35%), followed by pre-schoolers (26%). The numerical disparity between the older and the younger children supports the observation in Chapter I that families with older parents and young children have been moving into Town over the past 10 years.

Table XI-4

NUMBER AND AGE OF CHILDREN IN RESPONDENT HOUSEHOLDS

<u>AGE CATEGORY</u>	<u># CHILDREN</u>	<u>% CHILDREN</u>
Pre-School	54	26%
Elementary School	73	35%
Junior High School	17	8%
High School	38	18%
18+ Years	27	13%
TOTAL	209	100%

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

No single socioeconomic group dominated the survey sample. As illustrated in Table XI-4, survey representation was distributed across all categories; however, 44% of the sample respondents earned in excess of \$30,000.00 per year. Approximately 10% of the sample earned less than \$15,000.00 per year, also indicating that the number of households at or before poverty level may be increasing in Waterboro.

Table XI-5

INCOME BRACKETS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

<u>INCOME BRACKETS</u>	<u># RESPONDENTS</u>	<u>% RESPONDENTS</u>
0 - \$ 5,000	2	0.8%
\$ 5,001 - \$10,000	8	3%
\$10,001 - \$15,000	14	6%
\$15,001 - \$20,000	21	9%
\$20,001 - \$25,000	28	11.5%
\$25,001 - \$30,000	30	12%
\$30,001 - \$30,000	40	16.5%
\$40,001 - \$50,000	36	14%
\$50,000 +	33	13.5%

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

The 1980 Census fails to provide detailed commuting patterns for the Waterboro work force. However, the results from the survey in Table XI-6 provide insight into the primary job magnets that employ local citizens.

Table XI-6

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT - SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Portland/South Portland	65
Saco/Biddeford/OOB	38
Sanford	37
Waterboro	37
Kittery/Portsmouth, NH	17
Portland Suburbs *	16
Towns to East & South **	13
Kennebunk/Arundel	13
The Berwicks	12
Massachusetts/NH	12
Alfred	8
Towns to North & West ***	4
Retired	47
Other	2

- * Gorham, Scarborough, Westbrook, Falmouth
- ** Hollis, Lyman, Springvale, Buxton
- *** Porter, Shapleigh, Lebanon

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

1.1.2 Assessment of Public & Private Services

In order to plan for the future provision of services, it is essential that an assessment be made of the quality and efficiency of existing services. Consequently, survey respondents were asked to rate both municipal and private services on a sliding scale ranging from "Very Good" to "Very Poor." Numerical results of the sample ratings are available in the appendix.

In general, most public services received reasonable grades, ranging from "Good" to "Fair" across the board. There were no service categories that received resounding poor ratings, indicating that the majority of Waterboro citizens consider the existing level of Town services to meet minimum requirements. Important highlights of the questionnaire ratings include the following:

- The Ambulance Service remained the only public service category to receive a substantial "Very Good" scoring from local citizens.
- Town road conditions were rated the highest in the "Good" category. Ironically, however, poor road conditions were the problem most often cited by respondents identifying the top three deficiencies in public and private services. The implication may be that there is an inconsistency in road maintenance. Since maintenance responsibilities are sub-contracted out to private firms, there may be quality differences in the performance of these firms.
- Educational quality at SAD #57 schools was rated "Good" by 40% of the sample, "Fair" by 18%, "Poor" and "Very Poor" by 65% of the respondents, and "Very Good" by 8%. Thirty percent (30%) of the sample claimed they did not know about educational quality at SAD #57, reflecting the large proportion of respondents who do not have school-age children.
- Since Waterboro does not support a local police force, it is not surprising that police protection received lower marks than other public safety services. Only 30% of the sample ranked protection provided by the York County Sheriffs and State Police as being "Good" or better.
- Fire and ambulance protection received consistently high marks which indicates a general satisfaction among the majority of the community.
- The quality of existing Town recreational facilities was rated as between "Fair" and "Good"; however, the availability of recreational facilities in Town was ranked slightly lower. The implication of this data is that recreational facilities are adequate but could use significant improvement.

- The transfer waste station/stump dump operation was also given a good evaluation by the majority of respondents.
- The Town Library was generally rated in the fair category, reflecting the need for improved facilities and an expanded collection. (See Chapter VII - Public Facilities.)
- The quality of municipal government was also ranked as being "Fair".
- Respondents also indicated clearly that property tax levels are at the threshold of being commensurate with services provided. This is not surprising, considering that the property tax burden in all Maine communities is under attack at this time.
- Despite less than stellar ratings for some municipal services, respondents value the overall quality of life in Waterboro and remain optimistic about the Town's future.

Privately or commercially-provided services were also rated by questionnaire respondents in an effort to determine if land use policies should be changed to respond to growing community needs. In general, private services ranked lower than municipal/public services. Highlights of the questionnaire results include the following:

- It was assumed that respondents considered the Health Clinic in the Lions Club Building and local private medical offices to constitute local health services. The sample generally ranked these services between "Good" and "Fair".
- Availability of shopping opportunities averaged slightly below "Fair". Cross-tabulating this data with marked information gleaned from Question #15, it is obvious that Waterboro offers little diversity or availability of retail goods, prompting citizens to travel to other towns and cities for most shopping items. A more detailed analysis of survey respondents' shopping patterns and the Town's market capture is presented in Chapter IV - Economic Characteristics.
- The availability of job opportunities was ranked the lowest of all public and private services in the questionnaire. Waterboro has developed as a bedroom community without a commensurate growth in the commercial sector. The result is that most townspeople must commute, often long distances, for employment. Clearly, among a substantial number of the respondents, this is a situation that is undesirable.

When asked to identify the three most significant problems with Town and private services, the sample rank-ordered the following deficiencies:

1. Absence of adequate social services (primarily for the elderly populace).
2. Poor road conditions AND an unresponsive, politicized local government.
3. High taxes for inadequate services.
4. Inadequate growth management practices.

It should be noted that approximately 60% of all respondents indicated some specific dissatisfaction with a Town, commercial service, or land use policy. Only 239 answers out of a possible 729 responses were received. A complete accounting of deficiency categories is contained in the appendix.

1.1.3 Traffic Issues

As a historical recreational destination, Waterboro experiences seasonal fluctuations in traffic levels on its roads and State highways. Townspeople were asked to rate the degree of traffic congestion on highway corridors during both the summertime and during the off-season months. Table XI-7 illustrates the response to this issue:

Table XI-7

RATINGS OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION ON LOCAL HIGHWAYS WATERBORO, MAINE

Level of Congestion	Summer Months		Off-Season	
	#	%	#	%
Very Congested	36	15	3	1
Congested	50	20.5	10	4
Moderate	85	35	75	31
Light	17	7	53	22
Negligible (No Problem)	45	18.5	96	39.5
Missing Value	10	4	6	2.5

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

Survey respondents confirm the existence of summertime increases in traffic loads; however, for a majority of the respondents (64.5%), seasonal traffic does not appear to be a pressing problem. Off-season traffic loads clearly are not considered to be excessive by the majority of the sample.

Survey respondents also identified the three most dangerous traffic intersections in Waterboro to be (in order of priority):

1. Route 5 and Townhouse Road intersection
2. Route 4/202 and West Road
3. Route 4/202 and Route 5

The most dangerous roads in terms of pavement conditions and horizontal/vertical alignment, and traffic speeds were identified as:

1. Route 5
2. West Road
3. New Dam Road

1.1.4 Recreation Issues

The immigration of families since 1980 has brought increased expectations for recreational opportunities in Waterboro. To gauge the adequacy of existing opportunities and to determine future needs, respondents were asked to identify specific recreational facilities and programs which should be developed by the Town in the 1990's.

Among those who responded to this section of the questionnaire, there was an overwhelming mandate for the Town to develop organized recreational programs for Waterboro's youth. Of the 184 responses, 76% supported development of organized youth activities ranging from water sports and winter sports instruction to tennis, football, soccer and non-team activities. Four percent (4%) of the respondents suggested that a recreation director be hired to develop such programs.

In addition to youth programs, 13% of those responding recommended that the Town develop recreational programs specifically for adults and the elderly populations. Eleven percent (11%) of the responding group stated that expansion of existing programs was unwarranted in the future.

Respondents to the question of future expansion and development of new Town recreational facilities were able to give multiple recommendations. Proposed facilities ranged from a gym/YMCA, movie theatres and golf courses to bike trails, bowling alleys and the opening of the Town ski hill. Ten percent (10%) of the respondents indicated that existing facilities were sufficient to service current and future needs.

The top four most frequently requested facility improvements included:

1. Expanded beach and picnic areas on Little Ossipee Pond exclusively for resident's use.

2. Construction of a Town indoor/outdoor pool.
3. A Town skating rink.
4. Expansion and improvement of Town parks.

An inventory of all recreational facilities suggested by survey respondents is included in the appendix.

It should be noted that 62% and 67% of the total sample responded to the questions regarding new Town recreational programs and facilities, respectively. Whether those who failed to respond to the question are in opposition to any future expansion or were reticent to respond to an open-ended format is unknown.

1.1.5 Land Use & Natural Resource Protection Issues

The future disposition of land and natural resources in Waterboro is of tantamount concern to local citizens as evidenced by the high response rate to these two sections of the survey questionnaire.

Perception of a problem is often as important as the reality of the problem. When asked how they would rate the growth rate in Waterboro over the past 5 years, local townspeople responded as indicated in Table XI-8.

Table XI-6

**SURVEY RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION:
"HOW WOULD YOU RATE WATERBORO'S GROWTH
IN THE LAST 5 YEARS?"**

<u>Rate</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Out of Control	46	19.0
Fast	114	47.0
Moderate	50	20.5
Slow	4	1.6
Very Slow	1	0.4
No Opinion	28	11.5

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

Clearly, a majority of the survey respondents believe the growth in Waterboro has been rapid in the past 5 years.

At the same time, the survey seems to indicate that the majority of respondents do not believe that the growth has reached crisis proportions or is unmanageable.

Expanding upon the growth management issue, the survey questionnaire also asked respondents to cite specific policies that the Town should adopt in controlling future development. Although most of the lay respondents struggled with this issue, rather sophisticated mechanisms were proposed, including impact fee systems, channeling development into phased growth areas, and concentrating growth into existing village centers. The top four recommendations proposed by respondents were:

1. Institute large-lot zoning
2. Restrict the sprawl of development so as to preserve open space
3. The Town was exhorted to use caution and wisdom in all land-use planning decisions
4. Strengthen and enforce environmental protection laws at the local level

Surprisingly, those favoring the adoption of a no-growth policy and growth moratoriums represented only a small minority of the sample. However, in general, Waterboro citizens want municipal government to exercise a stronger hand in controlling growth so that the essential character of the Town is preserved.

Identification of that "special character" was revealed in more specific questions contained in both the Land Use and the Natural Resources sections of the questionnaire. Natural resources and the Town's environment rank highly in townspeople's list of priorities. When asked to identify the Town's most important resources, the survey revealed townspeople ranked these resources in the following descending order of significance:

Table XI-9

**RANK ORDER OF THE TOWN'S MOST IMPORTANT
NATURAL RESOURCES
WATERBORO COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY
(N=243)**

<u>Rank Order of Importance</u>	<u>Resource</u>
#1	Groundwater
#2	Surface Waters
#3	Wildlife
#4	Forests
#5	Agricultural Lands
#6	Wetlands
#7	Other Resources

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

With the Town's exclusive reliance on private wells and fears about potential contamination, it is not surprising that groundwater reserves ranked as the highest priority resource among the sample. Surface water resources ranked closely behind, in second, reflecting the scenic and recreational importance of Waterboro's ponds and lakes to the local populace. The surprising result was that the respondents ranked wetlands as the least significant natural resource despite the nationwide attitude change regarding wetlands over the past twenty years. Waterboro has a paucity of arable lands and agricultural operations; however, these resources were more valued than its abundant wetlands systems. Wildlife and forest resources ranked third and fourth, respectively, and predictably reflect the increasing American values for wildlands and rich natural ecosystems.

In terms of specific regulatory policies aimed at protecting water quality in the Town's ponds and lakes, respondents overwhelmingly supported limiting pleasure boat sizes, restricting expansion of existing waterfront camps, and increasing building setbacks from critical wildlife habitats. However, the sample was considerably less supportive of limiting the number of boat moorings and waterfront docks on the Town's ponds and lakes. In terms of restricting dock construction, 32% wished to strongly regulate such construction, while 48% wanted regulation in varying degrees that did not appreciably increase from existing standards. Thirty seven percent (37%) of the sample wished to severely restrict the number of boat moorings, 20% wanted some regulation, 17% believed that existing standards were sufficient, and 4% stated that a slight relaxing of the regulations would be appropriate. Another 4% wish to see strong de-regulation of boat moorings on Waterboro's lakes. Eighteen percent (18%) of the sample had no opinion.

These results suggest that Waterboro citizens want a regulatory balance established between protection of water quality and wildlife resources and preservation of recreational opportunities in the Town's lakes and ponds.

When asked what types of development or future land uses should be accommodated in Town (Survey Question #21), the survey sample gave the following answers:

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- The three most desirable future land uses are: 1) More employment opportunities; 2) permanent single-family housing; and 3) Town-owned conservation lands.
- The least desirable land uses identified were: 1) condominiums; 2) trailer parks; and 3) gravel operations.

- Respondents overwhelmingly wish to preserve the status quo in Waterboro's single-family home market. However, the sample begrudgingly considers the most desirable alternative housing types to be: 1) apartments; 2) seasonal housing; 3) cluster housing; 4) trailer parks; and 5) condominiums.
- The sample reaffirmed previous complaints about the unavailability of goods and services in Waterboro. The most desirable non-residential future operations were: 1) a retail center and offices; 2) small retail operations; and 3) service operations such as dry cleaning or hair dressing establishments.
- Although expanded job opportunities ranked as the highest priority, the sample was not as receptive to non-retail commercial/ industrial operations that offer more jobs and higher wages. Among non-commercial operations, however, respondents favored: 1) light industry; 2) warehousing; and 3) industrial parks. Lodging, and especially resort development, received little support, presumably for fear such enterprises might exploit existing natural/recreational resources and undermine the rural character of Waterboro.
- Farming was ranked as the fourth (4th) most desirable land use, thereby indicating a public mandate for preservation of existing agricultural operations. Other natural resource industries, such as timber harvesting and gravel extraction, were summarily rejected. It would appear that farming operations retain a powerful bucolic image that outweighs the reality of agriculture as a natural resource industry.

Waterboro residents strongly support the concept that new development of all kinds should be infill directed around existing built-up areas in Town. When asked where new development should be located in the future, 40% stated that growth should be concentrated around existing village centers, 14% supported linear development along Town roads, 14% in remote undeveloped sections of Town, and another 11% offered specific alternative locations. Thirteen percent had no opinion, while 8% failed to answer the question.

In response to Question #26, 74% of the sample supported encouragement of denser development around village centers in order to preserve wildlife and open space lands. Obviously, a conflict exists between the response to Question #26 and earlier support given by the sample to large-lot low-density development. In the face of this dichotomy, it may be surmised that the sample's mandate is that large tracks of open space are a key ingredient in the Town's natural and physical character and that the municipal government should structure its future land use policies to preserve this critical feature. The following section addresses the question of settlement patterns and Town character in greater detail.

1.1.6 Town Character

The character of a community is defined by the physical and cultural image that residents hold of that town. Given the opportunity to define the character of Waterboro, residents responded as shown in Table XI-10.

Table XI-10

**"HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CHARACTER OF
THE TOWN OF WATERBORO"
QUESTION #27
WATERBORO COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY**

<u>Character Description</u>	<u># Responses</u>	<u>% Responses</u>
Spread out with lots of "elbow room"	83	34%
Collection of distinct villages	51	21%
Suburban bedroom community	41	17%
Nothing special	26	10.5%
Summertime vacation community	19	8%
Other	11	4.5%
Missing Values	12	5%

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

Waterboro citizens were also given the opportunity to describe the desired image of their community (Question #28). From a broad array of responses, the top five (5) descriptions of Waterboro in the year 2000 were:

1. (32%) A quiet rural community.
2. (18%) A community unchanged from today.
3. (11%) A community containing a balance of residential and economic development.
4. (6.3%) a) Slow-growing, environmentally-sensitive town.
(6.3%) b) A residential community with adequate municipal services.
5. (6%) A community with built-up village centers surrounded by tracts of open space.

The immediate inference that can be drawn from the results above is that a significant proportion of residents sampled want Waterboro to retain those special social and physical characteristics that attracted families to settle in the Town. It should also be noted that a significant sub-group in the sample echoes previous calls for more job opportunities, better municipal service, and expanded shopping conveniences. Only 6% of the responding sample (N=222) visualized physical development patterns that the Town should emulate in developing during the 1990's.

Calling for new development to consolidate around village centers or a new Town core, the preferred development pattern is the "landshaft" system that is so characteristic of historic New England villages.

To gain insight into what specific physical and/or scenic elements gave Waterboro its special character, the sample was also asked to identify critical scenic vistas, landscapes, and natural features. The five (5) most frequently cited scenic elements cited by the sample are shown in Table XI-11.

Table XI-11

SIGNIFICANT AND MEANINGFUL SCENIC PLACES IN WATERBORO
SIX MOST FREQUENT RESPONSES
WATERBORO COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY
(N=223)

<u>Feature</u>	<u># Responses</u>	<u>% Responses</u>
Ossipee Hill	99	42%
Little Ossipee Lake	61	26%
Lake Arrowhead	24	10%
Open Fields/ Wildland Tracts	20	8.5%
Fire Tower	10	4.5%
Laskey's Hill	9	4%

(Other responses in Appendix)

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

Similarly, respondents were asked to identify the most significant historic structures in Town. Results are listed in Table XI-12 below.

Table XI-12

**FIVE MOST SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC STRUCTURES
IN WATERBORO
WATERBORO COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY
(N=101)**

<u>Structure</u>	<u># Responses</u>	<u>% Responses</u>
All Historic Buildings	31	30.7%
Old Corner Church	17	16.8%
Taylor House	16	15.8%
Deering Schoolhouse	12	12.0%
Elder Gray House	10	10.0%

SOURCE: Sebago Technics, Inc., 1989

Understandably, respondents had a difficult time identifying and verbalizing those special places or buildings that are visually and culturally important to themselves and their families. In fact, 33% and 67% of the sample were unable to cite any scenic features or historic structures. Those who did identify visually important landscapes concentrated on specific landmarks. Waterboro lacks the dramatic topography that many neighboring towns have, thereby emphasizing the importance of Ossipee and Laskey's Hill. The survey also clearly illustrates the significance of the Little Ossipee Lake/Lake Arrowhead system as not only a recreational resource, but also a visual anchor for Town residents.

Waterboro citizens appear to be either unaware of the Town's reservoir of historic resources, or regard only those buildings cited in the survey to be of significant merit.

1.1.7 Taxes

Throughout the survey questionnaire, Waterboro citizens have cited numerous improvements and expansions of municipal services and facilities that the Town government should initiate during the 1990's. The final section of the Community Attitude Survey measures the sample's willingness to finance for these suggested improvements. Figure XI-1 illustrates the townspeople's general assessment of the current tax burden in Waterboro.

Figure XI-1

How Would You Rate the Property Tax Burden in Waterboro ?

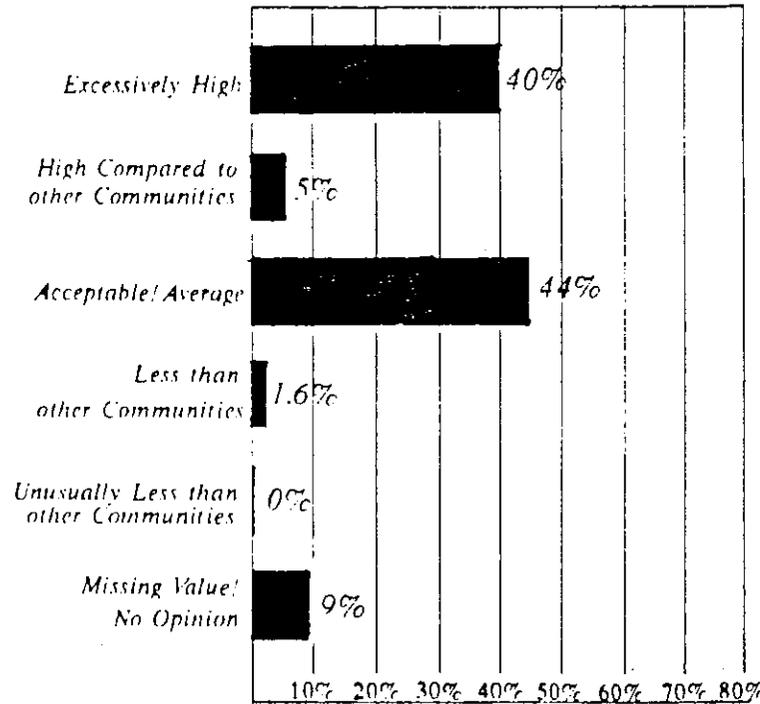


Figure XI-1 demonstrates a polarized citizen attitude in which 44% of the sample believes that the existing tax burden is acceptable, while 40% of the respondents believe that the tax rate is excessively high given the level of services provided.

Throughout the Waterboro Community Attitudes Survey, respondents were given the opportunity to evaluate municipal facilities and services, and to recommend desirable improvements. Although increased efficiency of available resources is a perpetual goal of municipal government, substantial service/facility improvements can only be attained through increased tax revenues. Therefore, as a litmus test of pressing community needs, respondents were asked to select which public service improvements they would be willing to support with increased tax dollars (Question #31).

Given the polarized response to the Town's tax performance in Question #30, it is not surprising that few of the service categories in Question #31 received a statistical majority (50.1%+). As a result, respondents remained divided on the financial status of municipal improvements suggested in Question #31. However, when examined in terms of comparative response frequencies, distinct attitudinal patterns do emerge:

1. A majority (50.1%+) of the sample stated that the following services should be maintained and improved using only existing tax revenues:

- a. Community/Social Services (59%)
- b. Road Improvements (56%)
- c. Ambulance Service (55%)
- d. Historic Presentation (52%)
- e. Fire Protection (51%)
- f. Reading Program (50.2%)

Obviously, the majority of respondents believe that these items represent basic services that every municipality should provide under its tax structure. It is ironic, however, that both the Ambulance and Fire Departments in Waterboro are volunteer organizations which rely on private donations for their operating budgets.

2. Surprisingly, respondents indicated a willingness to shoulder additional taxes in order to support three specific service/programs:

- a. **Town Purchase of Conservation Lands (46%):** In order to preserve the open space character of Waterboro that was so highly valued elsewhere in the survey, respondents will financially support a Town open space purchase program.
- b. **Improved SAD #57 Programs (42%):** Although there is little support for expanding SAD #57 facilities with increased tax dollars, a substantial proportion of the sample is in favor of improving education programs even if it means higher taxes.
- c. **Town Purchase of Waterfront Access (41%):** In Section 1.1.4 of this chapter, citizens identified waterfront/beach access as the most desirable addition to Waterboro's inventory of public recreational facilities. Tax payers are obviously willing to pay more in order to acquire such a facility.

3. Albeit, lacking the same dominant consensus as those service categories identified in item #2 above, several additional services/programs received significant support from citizens willing to pay more for them:

- a. Improved Fire Protection (41%)
- b. Improved Police Protection (39%)
- c. Expand and Improve the
Town Library (37%)

4. The sample is sharply divided on the issue of **public sewer and water service**. Thirty-six percent (36%) favor tax increases to build such facilities, while 39% are strongly opposed to such improvements. Another 21% believe that construction of municipal sewer and water lines should be accomplished only under the existing tax structure.
5. **Affordable housing** represents another hotly contested issue. While 20% of the sample are willing to finance housing programs with increased taxes, 36% are strongly opposed to any such program. Another 37.5% of the sample are willing to support such programs, but only with existing tax revenues.
6. Although 40% of the sample reported that taxes were excessively high in Question #30, only 20-30% of the respondents generally opposed most of the municipal services/programs offered in Question #31.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES: REPORT ON FOCUS GROUPS

Citizen participation is a vital ingredient in any community wide planning effort, if the resulting plan is to accurately represent local attitudes and values, and if the plan is to become the basis for future community actions. Waterboro's comprehensive planning effort is no exception, and involvement by residents has been encouraged at each stage of the planning process. To supplement information gathered from residents through the community attitude survey, and to pose questions raised by responses to the survey, a series of discussions, using focus group methodologies, were designed and conducted during the months of February and March, 1990.

Three segments of the population were targeted:

- (1) Teenagers, defined as residents between the ages of 13 and 19
- (2) Younger citizens, defined as ages 20 to 49 (with the additional criteria that 1/2 of the group be individuals who have resided in Waterboro 5 or fewer years and 1/2 for 10 or more years)
- (3) Older citizens, defined as 50 years of age and older (with the additional criteria that 1/2 of the group be individuals who have resided in Waterboro 10 or more years)

Groups, made up of 8 to 10 individuals, were convened on three separate evenings; and the following objectives were established for each group discussion:

- (1) To determine feelings, attitudes and perceptions of individual participants and group segments regarding Waterboro's current image.
- (2) To determine feelings, attitudes and perceptions of individual participants and group segments regarding Waterboro in the next decades.
- (3) To determine the current interests, habits and needs of individual participants and group segments related to recreation and leisure activities.
- (4) To determine future interests and needs related to recreation programs and facilities.

FOCUS GROUP #1: WATERBORO TEENAGERS

Introduction

The first group discussion was held on a Monday evening, February 12. Participants had been recruited at Massabesic High School by the use of a sign-up sheet. Eight teens signed up; five actually came to the focus group discussion, as did an additional two who had not signed up but heard about it.

The teens ranged in age from 14 to 18. Five were female, three were male. All were currently students at Massabesic High School. Seven of the eight had resided in Waterboro all or most of their lives; one had lived in Waterboro three years. The teens lived in all areas of Waterboro, with the exception of Lake Arrowhead and the area around Ross Corner. Parent occupation varied, with the majority skilled or professional (teaching, nursing, etc.). The session lasted approximately one hour and a half.

Summary of Data

1. Cognitive mapping exercise

Each teen was provided with a blank map of the town of Waterboro, containing only major roads and Little Ossipee Lake. They were instructed, working alone, to label existing landmarks (e.g. ponds, roads, hills, lakes), buildings or facilities of personal importance, and what they would like to see in the town.

The results of this exercise were compiled on a flip chart as follows:

LANDMARKS

Ossipee Hill and Ossipee Fire Tower (4)
Waterboro Memorial (3)
Route 5 recreation area on lake (3)
Laskey's Hill (2)
Power lines (1)
Cemetery across from High School (1)
Old East Waterboro School (1)

PLACES OF IMPORTANCE

Massabesic High School (4)	Milk Room (1)
IGA (3) and Economy Drug	Jim's Getty (1)
Post Offices (3)	Heath's Variety (1)
Churches (3)	Waterboro Elementary School (1)
Town Hall (3)	Applewood (1)
Graves Store (2)	Library (1)
Dennis Johnson Sawmill (2)	Lake Ossipee (1)
Lions Health Center (1)	Kasprzak Inc. (1)
Fire Departments (1)	Cemetery across from HS (1)
Baseball Field, Old Alfred Road (1)	Brunetti's (1)

FACILITIES WOULD LIKE TO ADD

Recreational Facility (6)
Ski tow or lift on Ossipee Mountain (5)
Historical building or museum (2)
Record store, bank (1)
Stoplight at Milk Room corner (1)
Athletic Field lights, HS (1)

2. Focus group questions/discussion

A series of questions was used to generate discussion about the town's image and about recreation interests and habits. The following is a summary of responses:

Regarding perceptions about Waterboro

- * Five of the participants used the word "quiet" to describe the town; four used the word "friendly"; some used words such as "small", "remote", "clean", and "not much happening". A good summary of the responses would be the following: "quiet, cozy, and boring on weekends". Responses were strikingly similar, and reflected both an appreciation of what small town rural life has to offer and a frustration with the lack of "things to do" on weekends and in the summer.
- * Most of the participants expressed a desire to experience life in other environments, urban perhaps, but could clearly see themselves returning at some point either to Waterboro or to a town "just like it". They noted however the other factors involved in such decisions. One teen said, "It'll depend on my job - where it takes me"; another said, "I want to experience more before I decide".
- * Several teens expressed concern about "deterioration"; they wanted to see Waterboro made "prettier", but did not wish to be specific about areas.
- * Most participants expressed strong feelings about businesses which they thought would change the character or "feel" of Waterboro, for example, fast food restaurants, bars, or "industry". When asked more specifically about what they meant by "industry", responses varied. To one teen, industry meant nuclear power plants, to another, "small businesses are OK - but not polluters". Though their concept of industry was vague, they were consistent in their concern for preserving the "small town feel" of Waterboro, and the clean air and water which they perceive to be one of Waterboro's important assets.

Regarding recreational interests and activities

- * High school activities, the teens noted, are a big thing; and they saw themselves as fortunate to live close enough to make use of what the school has to offer afternoons and evenings. They commented that the distance for SAD #57 students who live outside Waterboro is probably a barrier.
- * Because there is so little to do in Waterboro, in the opinion of these teens, they and their friends are apt to go elsewhere, out of town, to find things to do -Portland, Sanford, or Biddeford.
- * Within Waterboro, they noted a number of local places where kids are apt to "just hang out" - the Milk Room, the cemetery across from the High School, the old pole lines, and the lake.
- * They also noted a number of places which they thought were personally important enough to show a visitor to Waterboro - Ossipee Lake, old bicycle trails, power lines on Old Alfred Road, the High School, the playground built by town residents at the elementary School, the field across from Lee's Dairy Curl ("used to be mud football games there"), and "places important to my family's history".

Conclusions

The atmosphere of the discussion was lively and positive. The teens viewed themselves as fairly representative of their peers, a group which would include other teens at Massabesic High School. It should be noted, however, that 7 of the 8 participants have grown up in Waterboro, and therefore never lived anywhere else. Their responses were strikingly similar, even those drawn from individually done exercises, and their view of Waterboro perhaps best summed up by one teenager's description: "a quiet, cozy, friendly place and BORING on weekends". They were very aware of, and able to articulate, what it is about Waterboro that they value and wish to preserve. They referred specifically to qualities of rural, small town life which many adults value as well, and viewed Waterboro as a quiet, friendly, clean and small town in which to live - "the kind of place where you can leave your keys in your car while you run into the store".

The other side of quiet country life, however, is just that - the QUIET. Not surprisingly, the major complaint voiced by the teens centered on the lack of things to do i town, and the resulting perceived necessity to go elsewhere for recreation. The teens had several ideas about how remedy this:

- * If there was one area of very strong agreement, it was that Waterboro needs a place for youth to use for recreational purposes. The teens viewed such a facility as a place to "relax and get together", to "meet friends", a "social club". They envisioned it as located on Route 202/4 between Route 5 and the Old Alfred Road in order to be most accessible, and they thought it might have a pool table, a gym open to the public, space for entertainment like dances or music, or cultural events like plays. They were all willing to pay either a membership fee or usage fee, somewhere in the vicinity of \$5 per use. They thought parents would like the idea as it would keep teens closer to home and reduce driving. "They would know where we are"; "they're always saying we don't want you traveling all over Southern Maine."
- * According to these teens, Massabesic High School is a major source of activities for many. Kids who live a distance from the school "have it tough". "I'm always going to the school, then home for dinner, then back to school. I don't know what kids from other towns in SAD #57 do". One recommendation by all participants was to provide lights for the athletic field for night activities. This is of course a fiscal policy decision appropriate for the administration of SAD #57.
- * The teens also noted that other communities have summer sports clinics or sports coaches in the summertime, and that often these activities begin at the elementary school level. They said that there used to be softball in Waterboro; but as it stands now, kids have to wait until Junior High School or High School to learn certain sports. It's difficult, they said, to be competitive under these circumstances.
- * Both independently, in the mapping exercise, and as a group, during discussions, participants mentioned the idea of a ski tow on Little Ossipee Mountain. They thought that at one time there was one. They noted that it is too far and too expensive to ski at major ski areas, and thought that it would be a great after school and weekend activity.

In sum, the moderator and observer were impressed by the extent of appreciation of rural life articulated by this group, having assumed (incorrectly it turns out) that the slow pace and boredom would overshadow the more aesthetic qualities of life in the country for this teenaged group. These values may be a reflection of parental values, and the strongly articulated concern for "keeping Waterboro the way it is" is probably reflected beyond this group. They are asking, however, that the community offer more activities and opportunities for the young people who reside here.

FOCUS GROUP #2: WATERBORO RESIDENTS (20-49)

Introduction

The second focus group, scheduled March 12, was made up of Waterboro residents between the ages of 20 and 49. Participants were selected from voter registration lists; two brought spouses with the. Six of the participants were female; four were male. Eight were parents, with children ranging in age from 14 months to 30 years; and participants represented most sections of Waterboro, including Lake Arrowhead. Occupations varied, with the majority skilled or professional (teacher etc.). The session lasted approximately one hour and a half.

Summary of Data

1. Mapping exercise

As a group, participants filled in a large map of Waterboro with features of the town which participants considered important to the town's identity:

Belval House	Funtime Video Store
Taylor House	Abbott's General Store
Old Corner Church	Heath's Variety
Millwork Specialties	Woodsome's Feeds and Needs
IGA	Milk Room
Peppercorn Restaurant	Post Offices
Beach, Ossipee Lake	Dump
Campground	Ossipee Lake
Fire Stations	Dam on the flowage
Town Offices	Ossipee Mt. Fire Tower
Elementary School	
Lion's Medical Building	
High School, Junior High	

2. Focus group questions/discussion

A series of questions was used to generate discussion about the town's image, growth issues, and recreational interests and habits. The following is a summary of responses:

Regarding perceptions about Waterboro

- * The majority of positive words and phrases used by participants reflected an appreciation of Waterboro's small-town, rural character - "quiet", "quaint", "friendly", "peaceful", "safe feeling".
- * Several participants also noted the positive features of living in a "country setting" which is close to an urban area. Waterboro is "great for cross-country skiing, boating, fishing, hunting", and yet within 15 miles of Sanford and within 30 miles of the city of Portland.

- * An important feature for this group was the perception of the town as a "safe place to raise a family" and as a community with good schools.
- * Most individuals in this group perceived the town as decentralized, as having "small distinct neighborhoods" or "disconnected village centers".
- * The major concern expressed by all the individuals in this group was Waterboro's recent growth spurt, though participants acknowledged that more industry is needed to offset rising taxes.

Regarding recreational interests and activities

- * Several people thought that there already was an adequate level of activities - educational and recreational - available in the community.
- * There was a high level of interest in the idea of a community center, for both young and older. The concept of the center varied, from a town-sponsored Y to the renovation of a town-owned building where residents could go to take part in activities such as craft courses. Participants thought that their children needed a place to get together.
- * There was little interest in paying for such a facility through local taxes. Participants suggested that the community would need to do special fund-raising, or enlist volunteer labor; and that the facility would need to charge fees to cover maintenance costs.
- * Several participants suggested that the town needed a year-round recreational director, to co-ordinate and publicize what is already available (only 2 people had heard of Ossipee Pines Picnic Area), and to develop new activities.
- * Interest was expressed in a ski tow on Ossipee Mountain and in more public access to the lake (too crowded at present).
- * Participants wanted to see more restaurants in the town - varied, not just pizza places.

Regarding growth and growth management

- * There was general agreement that Waterboro needs more industry to offset taxes, but participants had definite ideas about the type of business or industry they wanted to see in Waterboro: light manufacturing, service-related businesses (perhaps a professional office park), retail facilities (bookstore, bank, etc.). Participants also expressed a preference for non-polluting industry and for those which pay decent ("not the bottom of the pay scale") wages.
- * Several people thought that the town should try to plan development around a town center, where elderly citizens could go to get mail, shop, etc., and should try to develop business along corridors.
- * Everyone expressed concern in one way or another about the rapid growth in the Lake Arrowhead area and the future impact on sewerage systems, water, etc. Arrowhead is viewed, said these individuals, "almost as a separate town", and several people wondered if the town could assume responsibility for it.
- * Most participants saw an imminent need for more municipal services, for example, a police department and a paid fire department. They also perceived a need for more organized town government as the growth continues. Several participants favored the idea of a town manager, who could in their view provide more consistent responsibility for town affairs.

Conclusions

This group of Waterboro residents, no doubt because of their age, focused largely on family; most had a perception of Waterboro as a peaceful and safe place to raise children.

This group also viewed the school system as one of Waterboro's biggest assets, and they thought that the location of the High School and Junior High here was a big advantage.

This group liked the balance between country and city. They felt that they could go about the business of raising their children in relative tranquillity; yet Sanford, Biddeford and Portland were readily accessible for services and entertainment. One person mentioned in addition the proximity to the New Hampshire seacoast and to Boston. Most people felt that there was already an adequate level of activities for themselves, but thought that there needed to be more for their children. Though ideas and concepts varied considerably, there was some general agreement on the desirability of a centrally located facility for activities. This group, however, was not eager to increase taxes, and thought that such a facility would have to be a volunteer effort, or be self-sustaining.

Several participants noted that many of the recreation ideas suggested were already available in some fashion (for example, adult education courses at Massabesic High School) and a practical approach might be to hire a full-time recreation director whose initial task would be to coordinate and publicize what is already available (perhaps through a newsletter).

Though participants of this group shared concerns about Waterboro's growth, they also noted the positive aspects such as a broader tax base and additional local goods and services. In general, they were willing to tolerate growth in Waterboro as long as it was planned and controlled growth. This applied to housing as well as to business and industry; one person noted the possible adverse effect of unrestrained growth on individual property investments. There was a large concern on the part of this group about the rapid growth in recent years in the Lake Arrowhead area.

This group also expressed a concern for Waterboro's environment, and there was strong agreement on the need to preserve open spaces as well as protect the town's ponds, lakes and other natural resources. One member suggested that the town begin to plan for placement of power lines underground. Several members pointed out that at the same time it would be important for the town to consider landowner rights as well, and to take care not to over-regulate.

FOCUS GROUP #3: WATERBORO RESIDENTS (50+)

Introduction

The third focus group, scheduled March 19, was made up of eight Waterboro residents, age 50 and over. Participants were selected from voter registration lists. Five were female; two were male. Four had lived in Waterboro at least twenty-five years; three had been residents for three years (one a seasonal resident for considerably longer). Two lived in Applewood, Waterboro's housing for the elderly; the other five lived in East or North Waterboro. all but one is now retired. The session lasted approximately one hour and a half.

Summary of Data

1. Mapping exercise

As a group, participants filled in a large map of Waterboro with features of the town which participants considered important to the town's identity:

Elder Grey Meeting House	Lake Ossipee
Taylor House	Ossipee Hill
Old Corner Church	Deering Ridge Farm
Commercial build-up on Routes 5 and 202/4	
Country road (general statement about rural character)	

2. Focus group questions/discussion

A series of questions was used to generate discussion about the town's image, growth, and about recreation interests and habits. The following is a summary of responses:

Regarding perceptions about Waterboro

- * Not surprisingly, these participants were as a group very aware of Waterboro's history and quite verbal about the importance of preserving old buildings and utilizing them. Several expressed great pleasure about the recent acquisition by the town of the Taylor House, and about the decision to move the library into the old elementary school.
- * Participants of this group spoke appreciatively about what they perceived to be Waterboro's major assets and qualities - "grateful for lake", "beautiful pace to live and bring up children", "glad for good schools", "love living in Waterboro". In addition, most group members commented on Waterboro's rural character describing the town as peaceful, clean, friendly, with nice wooded areas. Two people commented on the town's "tourist attractability".
- * The major concerns of this group boiled down to increased population. Comments were made about "fast-traveled roads", certain areas needing better clean-up, and the present and potential problems created by the heavy usage of the lake.

Regarding recreation

- * Several participants pointed out that transportation for Waterboro's elderly is very limited, and that were it not for the Lioness Club, few activities would be available for senior citizens.
- * Most participants expressed interest in a community building, with, they stressed, kitchen facilities. They were willing to use tax dollars to pay for this, but they also thought that such a facility could be just a section of an already existing building. "Better to start small", they suggested.
- * Several participants expressed a desire for more local cultural and educational activities, for example, a concert series, movies, a theater group, lectures. One person suggested that the Waterboro Library become part of the State's borrowing network.

Regarding growth and growth management

- * Though this group as a whole felt that development is needed to expand the commercial base for taxation and to bring services closer to residents, there were noticeable differences in opinion about the types and the extent of acceptable growth. Some thought development should be concentrated in village districts; some thought industrial corridors should be developed. All agreed that growth and development are inevitable and should be planned and managed. All agreed on the importance of preserving open spaces and Waterboro's rural character.
- * Several participants expressed interest in a town manager position, and felt that the time was fast approaching (if not already here) when such a position would be necessary to ensure smooth and efficient town government.

Conclusions

After lengthy discussion, members of this group did agree that there are tradeoffs to be considered - one being increased commercial growth needed to offset rising taxes versus the preservation of Waterboro's rural character, another being the availability of town-sponsored services for residents versus increases in local property taxes. Most participants expressed willingness to make limited tradeoffs, with an assurance of careful planning and management of the growth. They were all very realistic about the fact that Waterboro will never be as it was ten, twenty, thirty years ago; but it was important to them to protect Waterboro's natural resources and to develop open spaces and conservation areas. Most individuals preferred to see centralized industrial planning, for example an industrial park.

In terms of recreation, members of this group were more interested in services and their co-ordination than in new facilities. Several individuals pointed out the importance of ensuring that activities or services are not duplicated (for example adult education courses are already offered at the High School) and of ensuring awareness of what already exists in the town. Much of this could be accomplished by a recreation director or similar position, as some suggestions were simple, for example inquiring whether a representative from the Social Security Administration could be present at the Town Hall for a few hours every month.

This group also placed a great deal of emphasis on the preservation and use of old building and the upkeep of Waterboro in general. A few members thought that there should be more little parks in the town where residents could walk, picnic, etc. The group as a whole was supportive of recycling and wanted the town to do more in this area.

General Conclusions of Report

All three of the focus groups had similar perceptions of the town of Waterboro and expressed a desire to conserve the town's quiet and rural character. Consequently each group thought that the control and management of growth is critical, since everyone agreed that some growth is inevitable.

Almost everyone wanted more activities and services available locally - but most did not wish to give up the rural nature of the town to secure them.

Younger adults and teens focused more on the idea of a central facility, with activities emanating from it, while older residents tended to focus on utilization of what is already available and on expansion of services.

Finally, though opinions and views varied throughout the discussions, all three groups expressed strong and positive feelings for the town of Waterboro. In the years ahead, this positive spirit may well be Waterboro's most important asset of all.

Deborah Downs
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April 5, 1990