

Appendix B: 2006 Pleasant Valley Community Survey Results

The Pleasant Valley Comprehensive Plan Committee mailed out the 2006 Community Survey in the fall, with a total of 4,251 surveys sent to homeowners, renters, and local business owners. The response rate of 21.6% was on the higher end of what was expected, representing 920 responses.

Growth, Development, and Open Space

For the most part, survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated a preference for retaining the rural character of Pleasant Valley (93.3%), as well as protecting aquifers (85.7%), water quality (92.9%), scenic vistas (83.7%), and open spaces (88%).

A majority (64.5%) agreed that new commercial development should be located in the hamlets, compared to 3.4% who disagreed. However, many respondents indicated via handwritten comments that they were disagreeing with the statement because they don't want to see any more new commercial development anywhere, instead of responding to the question of whether or not to direct new growth toward Pleasant Valley's hamlets.

The idea of setting up a Town fund for conservation of important lands was supported by 72% of respondents who said they would be willing to pay some amount of money towards a fund. Those who didn't support the fund were 19%, and another 9% did not provide an answer.

Hamlets of Pleasant Valley, Salt Point and Washington Hollow

There was a lot of support for improving the look of the hamlets using design standards (74.7%), and support for sensitive re-use of historic buildings (86.2%), as well as designing new buildings to fit the historic character of the hamlets (81.2%). In addition, many people were interested in making the hamlets more safe and pedestrian-friendly (69.5%). Two- and three-story mixed-use buildings in the hamlets were supported by 51.6% of respondents, with some of those who disagreed (32.6%) indicating that they would support 2-story but not 3-story buildings.

While 69.5% agreed that central water and/or sewer in the hamlets is important for business growth, only 46.8% agreed that smaller, village-style residential lots should be encouraged in the hamlets. Part of the reason for this lower number is that many respondents indicated that they would prefer to see no new housing anywhere in the town, regardless of size or location.

The following buildings were voted most important for their aesthetic, historic, or other value:

1. All Churches	211 votes
2. Mill Building/Park	192 votes
3. All Historic Buildings/Houses	154 votes
4. Library	128 votes
5. Potash House (law office by bridge)	88 votes
6. PV Department Store	41 votes
7. Masten Feed	41 votes
8. Farms/Barns/Silos	36 votes
9. Town Hall	35 votes
10. None Left	31 votes

Traffic and Parking

A majority of respondents (76.7%) supported the idea of reducing traffic congestion in the town center by making more rear lot connections and reducing the number of driveways accessing Route 44. In addition, 74.9% felt that availability of parking in the town center is adequate.

While only 53.7% supported making new commercial development provide parking behind the building rather than in front along the road, 23.3% disagreed and almost as many, 23%, had no opinion.

The idea of expanding the town center by building a new bridge connection from Maggiacomo Lane to South Avenue was supported by 42.4% and not supported by 35.5%, with 22.1% indicating no opinion.

Regarding public transportation, 28.9% said it is adequate, 27.7% said it is not adequate, and 43.4% had no opinion.

Housing

In order to boost the amount of housing that is more affordable to younger people and those working in the service industries (such as law enforcement, nursing, and schoolteachers), communities can work with developers to trade incentives, such as extra units, for the gain of some affordable housing units. A majority of survey respondents (45%) did not support the idea, while 32.1% did support offering incentives and 22.9% had no opinion.

Respondents indicated more support for moderately-priced single family homes as well as senior residences, and were less supportive of almost all other housing types, including mobile homes, high-priced single family, and multi-family options. The eight types of housing possibilities ranked as highest priority or lowest priority, as follows:

	Highest Priority	Lowest Priority
• Moderately-Priced Single Family Homes	43%	6%
• High-Priced Single Family Homes	12%	26%
• Single Family Homes w/Accessory Apts.	7%	12%
• Two-Family Homes	3%	13%
• Apartments	6%	16%
• Senior Residences	25%	5%
• Condos/Townhomes	5%	15%
• Mobile Homes	1%	63%

Economy and Business

A large majority of respondents (77%) supported the establishment of architectural design guidelines for all new or renovated commercial buildings. Expansion of employment opportunities and the tax base, via more non-retail jobs, was supported by 65%, while an equal number did not support it or had no opinion (17.5% each).

Only 55% said the Town should support and regulate agricultural businesses and 25.5% disagreed. Approximately half of respondents (50.9%) agreed that small home-based businesses should be supported and regulated by the Town.

There were many ideas for what additional types of retail and service businesses are desired in Pleasant Valley. The top choices were as follows:

1. Retail/Specialty Stores (includes clothing, books, cards/gifts, and crafts)	173 votes
2. Restaurants (includes coffee shops and ice cream stores)	150 votes
3. Movie Theater	56 votes
4. Bakery	55 votes
5. Brand Name Department Store	42 votes
6. Medical Services	40 votes
7. Laundromat	29 votes
8. Different Supermarket	5 votes
9. Shoe Store/Repair	4 votes
10. None Needed	11 votes

Many people responded with more than one town for where they work, shop, etcetera, in order to reflect their overall household patterns. Regarding work location, almost 300 people work in Poughkeepsie, 118 in Pleasant Valley, 190 elsewhere in Dutchess County, 31 in Westchester, 26 in New York City, and 59 in all other out-of-county locations.

The vast majority of people buy groceries in Pleasant Valley (612) and Poughkeepsie (420). Those communities were also cited as popular locations for shopping in general (Pleasant Valley 672 and Poughkeepsie 166) as well as Wappingers Falls with 113 votes and Kingston with 80.

As for dining and entertainment, 497 people indicated they visit the Poughkeepsie/Route 9 area, 239 stay in Pleasant Valley, 132 go to Hyde Park, 116 to Millbrook, 109 to Rhinebeck, 118 go elsewhere in the County, and 56 go out-of-county.

Poughkeepsie receives the most visits for medical services (514), with 213 staying in Pleasant Valley, 76 in Hyde Park, 49 in Fishkill, 44 in East Fishkill, 43 in Millbrook, 101 go elsewhere in the County, and 32 go out-of-county.

Community Services

The idea of preserving and enhancing public access to the Wappinger Creek was supported by 71.7% of respondents, with 8.9% disagreeing and 19.3% no opinion.

Adequacy of community services were voted for as follows:

	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
Library	65.7%	21.3%	13.0%
Police (non-Town)	62.9%	16.2%	20.9%
Fire/Rescue Squad	86.7%	3.8%	9.5%
Parks & Recreation	47.1%	37.6%	15.3%
Hiking/Biking/Walking Trails	21.3%	58.0%	20.7%
Recycling	71.2%	13.3%	15.5%
Senior Services	23.4%	27.3%	49.3%
Youth Services	27.2%	31.7%	41.1%

Many of those who indicated that the Library is not adequate said that it needs more room for books and programming. Although a majority of people said that Parks and Recreation is adequate, almost as many said that it's not, asking for more programs to enhance the offerings to Town residents. Both Senior and Youth Services received the highest "No Opinion" votes, with some people indicating that they didn't know enough about what was offered to comment.

Of the recreation choices listed on the survey, respondents indicated that they are most interested in seeing more Trails (30%), Picnicking areas (20%), Swimming (18%) and Fishing (15%), with Kayaking receiving 9% and Ball Fields 8%. Many offered suggestions of other types of needed facilities, such as Playgrounds/Parks (30 votes), Bike Trails (29 votes), Skateboard Park (22 votes), Ice Skating (18 votes) and a Community Center (11 votes).

Additional Comments

The Top 10 written responses for Strengths of the Community were:

1. Rural Areas, Farms, and Open Space 210 votes
2. Friendly People and Community Spirit 181 votes
3. Small Town Atmosphere 135 votes
4. Central Location and Transportation Routes 104 votes
5. Local Businesses 80 votes
6. Schools 56 votes
7. Fire/Rescue Department 54 votes
8. Government and Services 42 votes
9. Peace, Quiet, and Safety 38 votes
10. Churches 35 votes

The Top 3 Priorities for what the Town should focus on were:

1. Preserve Environment (26%)
2. Relieve Traffic Congestion (24%)
3. Development of Hamlets as Centers (23%)

Enhancing Town Recreation Facilities received 16% and Enforcement of Planning/Zoning received 11%.

Children under the age of 18 would like a Teen Center/Indoor Recreation Area (46 votes), more Playgrounds and better Recreation Facilities (44 votes), and a Swimming Facility (18 votes).

Respondents included a wide array of Additional Comments at the end of the survey. Some of the more frequent comments were:

- Town center needs to be enhanced (21 votes).
- Fix traffic congestion in the town center, partially by considering right turn lanes from Route 44 to some of the main roads (21 votes).
- Stop development altogether (15 votes).
- Property/school taxes are too high (8 votes).
- The Town should develop architectural guidelines (7 votes).

Personal Data

Of those who included their information in the Personal Data section of the survey, the cross-section of respondents is as follows:

- 52% live outside of the hamlets, 48% live in a hamlet
- 74% of hamlet respondents live in the hamlet Pleasant Valley, 25% in Salt Point, and 1% in Washington Hollow
- 92% own, 8% rent (compared to 2000 Census numbers showing 70% own and 26% rent, town-wide)
- 56% have lived here for 16 or more years, 26% for 6–15 years, and 18% for 0–5 years
- The breakdown of all people in households, by age, was:
 - 23% under 18
 - 9% between the ages of 18–24
 - 18% between the ages of 25–44
 - 37% between the ages of 45–64
 - 13% aged 65 and over
- 48% volunteer occasionally, 30% never volunteer, and 22% volunteer often
- The breakdown of annual household income ranges was:
 - 11% less than \$35,000 (versus the 2000 Census with 28% in this bracket)
 - 20% between \$35,000–59,999 (consistent with 2000 Census)
 - 33% between \$60,000–99,999 (consistent with 2000 Census)
 - 36% at \$100,000+ (versus the 2000 Census with only 18% in this bracket)