

Results of Citizen Survey – 2012

Distribution: 1700 surveys were distributed: 644 (37.9%) returned; median age of the responders is 51-60 years; 48% of responders had lived in Paxton for more than 20 years, whereas 24% resided in Paxton for 10-20 years. 77% were married.

Most frequent recreational activities in Paxton (maximum possible score = 1932):

398	Jogging/Walking	141	Bird Watching	64	Ice Skating
218	Use of Playground	139	Picnic	37	Cross country Sking
203	Visit Historical Site	73	Trail Biking	36	Boating
203	Bicycling	72	Fishing	33	Hunting
163	Use of Ball Field	68	Tennis	26	Street Hockey

Recreational Facilities Needed (maximum possible score = 644):

234	Hiking Trails	173	Jogging Track	98	Public Access for Boating
209	Swimming Pool	130	Picnic Areas	95	Cross Country Ski Trails
204	Conservation Areas	127	Town Beach	71	Tennis Courts
189	Bike Trails	101	Soccer Fields	68	Playgrounds

Opinion on Residential Growth Policy:

215	No growth	199	Less growth	177	More growth
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Opinion on Business and Industrial Growth Policy:

177	No growth	54	Less growth	378	More growth
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Most Critical Problems Facing the Town:

457	Local tax burden	159	Loss of agricultural land	119	Not enough conserve. land
248	More commercial devel.	144	Absence of local job opportunities	116	Failure of septic systems
243	Absence of town sewerage	142	Too much housing development	111	Lack of senior housing
225	Absence of sidewalks	134	Loss of rural character	94	Lack of rec. facilities

Importance of Preserving: (5.0 Highest Score)

4.23	Land for watershed protection	4.05	Land for conservation & passive recreation
3.92	Architectural, archeological, & historical interest	3.78	Land for active recreation

Favored Means of Preserving:

Yes	No	Means
424	142	Use town zoning to guide growth in most appropriate areas
366	196	Town appropriation for acquisition of conservation areas
351	200	Easements, conservation restrictions, purchase of agricultural development rights
345	209	Town appropriation for acquisition or construction of recreation facilities
168	352	Sell or contribute conservation restrictions on your land
164	355	Sell land to the town at fair market price
152	407	Donate money to purchase land
88	456	Rewrite your deed to limit future use of your land
55	492	Contribute some land to the town
52	485	Sell land to the town at a bargain price

Community Preservation Act:

Yes	No	Means
225	357	Support a 1-3% tax on property valuation assuming the first \$100,000 of the evaluation was exempted: to be eligible to receive grant funds or to leverage additional state funds for historic preservation, open space preservation, and affordable housing..
143	447	Support a 1-3% tax on property valuation to be eligible to receive grant funds or to leverage additional state funds for historic preservation, open space preservation, and affordable housing.

Major changes from survey administered in 2003 and a limited interpretation:

- Considerably fewer survey respondents indicated that they participated in the listed recreational activities. For example, jogging/walking, while still the highest engaged activity, was found to elicit a score reduced from 682 to 398.
- Based on ranking, use of the playground has increased greatly, most likely in response to its replacement after the 2003 survey as a result of private fundraising efforts.
- Boating, hunting and street hockey now make an appearance in the top 15 of the activities listed at the expense of rollerblading, skateboarding and the town pool which no longer exists.
- Fishing increased in ranking. This together with boating and the second ranking of swimming pool as a recreational facility needed indicates a desire for water sports to be available to the residents in town.
- In 2003, 24% of respondents desired no further residential growth. This value has increased to 36%. However, the total of those wanting no and reduced residential growth fell from 79% to 70%.
- The percentage of respondents wanting increase business and industrial growth remained constant at 62%.
- Support for the Community Preservation Act (CPA) continued to slip. Although the percentage of respondents who didn't support the CPA remained at 25%, those who supported the CPA exempting the first \$100,000 of evaluation fell from 45% to 39%. This decrease in support for conservation measures is reflected in values associated with favored means of preserving land. This fall in support for conservation may reflect the economic condition of the general population that has deteriorated since the last survey.
- While this conclusion based on the economy receives support when considering the most critical problems facing the town, there appears to be a conflict that residents are facing. Local tax burden remains at top ranking, the absence of local job opportunities and the desire for more commercial development gained in importance, and the concern about too much housing development fell. However the loss of agricultural land and rural character increased in importance. Meanwhile the importance of preserving watershed, land for conservation and recreation, and cultural interests remained strong.