

Summary of 2006 Pomfret Survey Results

903 surveys mailed
309 responses returned and tabulated – 34% response rate

Town Character

1. What makes Pomfret a special place?

Rural character (90%), scenic beauty (88%) and open fields (79%)

2. What would make Pomfret a better place?

Preserve productive agricultural and forest land (72%) and lower taxes (69%).

3. The greatest challenges facing Pomfret?

Top issues ranked as very important:

Tax burden (79%)

Development pressures on ag land (71%)

Development pressures on open land (68%)

Maintain elementary school population (45% very important + 38% somewhat important)

Top issues ranked as not important:

Additional daycare facilities (58%)

Establishing/growing village center (57%)

4. Important natural resources:

Open fields and meadows (86%)

Forest land (82%)

Agricultural land (81%)

Scenic views (80%)

Streams (80%)

In sum, Pomfret's natural resources are the main interest of people who responded to the survey.

Growth

5. Change in Pomfret:

95% want the town to remain primarily residential and agricultural in character

6. Level of growth for Pomfret:

56% want controlled growth using zoning and subdivision bylaws

31% want as little growth as possible

7. Support for a pattern of compact settlements surrounded by rural countryside:

56% in favor

33% opposed

8. Support for increased building density in Pomfret's villages and hamlets:

48% in favor

43% opposed

9. Support for lot sizes larger than 2 acres outside of villages and hamlets:

- 34% favor current 2 acre zoning outside villages and hamlets
- 26% favor 5 acre zoning
- 23% favor 10 acre zoning
- 8% favor 20 acre zoning

10. Support for restrictions on building in open fields in Pomfret:

77% in favor

Respondents clearly would like to see no changes to the Town's residential and agricultural character. They favor as little growth as possible and controlled growth using zoning and subdivision bylaws. All of these findings are mutually supportive.

Economic Development

11. Aspects of non-residential land use respondents are concerned about:

- Visual impact (70%)
- Noise (65%)
- Building size and scale (64%)
- Traffic (64%)

Housing

12. Support for private development of housing affordable to working families:

66% in favor

12a. Support for an initiative to develop this kind of housing:

50% in favor

13. Opinions on various types of housing in Pomfret

Strongly favor + favor:

- Single family houses on individual lots (88%)
- Housing affordable to working families (79%)
- Assisted living for elderly people (62%)

Strongly against + against:

- Mega houses (84%)
- Apartments or town houses (64%)
- Multi-family homes on individual lots (57%)

Respondents are interested in and supportive of ensuring that working families can afford to live in Town. There is an apparent discrepancy in the responses, however, with how this might be accomplished.

14. Aspects of residential land use respondents are concerned about:

- Visual impact (71%)
- Building size and scale (69%)
- Noise (51%)
- Outdoor light (50%)
- Placement of houses on lots (49%)

Roads and Transportation

15. Support for paying higher taxes to improve the quality of roads:

77% opposed

Education

16. Support for options to address educational funding problems in Pomfret:

- 48% Scholarship fund to attract more tuition students and/or endowment fund to reduce per pupil spending
- 47% Merge with neighboring towns in Pomfret
- 36% Explore Pomfret's membership in supervisory union and WUMHS

Municipal Services and Regulations

17. Opinions on municipal services:

Excellent:

School (50%)

Good:

Roads (64%)

Town Administration (54%)

Planning & Zoning (52%)

Survey respondents are generally satisfied with municipal services.

18. Should the town adopt an ordinance to regulate cell towers – their location, types, and height?

80% in favor

19. Should the town do more to promote energy conservation and/or development of private renewable resource systems?

69% in favor

20. Do you favor development of commercial wind power resources in Pomfret?

49% in favor

34% opposed

21. Do you favor development of private/residential wind power resources in Pomfret?

59% in favor

Survey respondents are generally supportive of private energy conservation and renewable resource development.

Demographics of respondents

22. Residency status of respondents:

- 75% Resident homeowner
- 4% Renter
- 6% Resident business owner
- 16% Non resident homeowner
- 7% Non resident landowner
- <1% Non resident business owner

23. Age of respondents:

- <1% under 25 years
- 7% 25-40 years
- 38% 41-55 years
- 34% 56-70 years
- 22% over 70 years

24. Number of years resident or property owner in Pomfret

- 3% less than one year
- 11% one to five years
- 11% five to ten years
- 36% ten to 25 years
- 39% longer than 25 years

25. Place of residence

- 26% in/near village or hamlet
- 74% outside village or hamlet

26. Local newspapers read

- 82% Vermont Standard
- 77% Valley News

27. Support for receiving information regarding town issues and events via email or a website

- 55% in favor
- 32% opposed