



Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Report, 2019

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Executive Summary

In early October 2019, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls mailed surveys to all 1,145 Town of Wheaton households and non-resident property owners for which mailing addresses were available. The initial mailing contained a cover letter describing the purpose of the survey, a questionnaire, and a postage-paid return envelope. The response was so strong that the SRC in consultation with Patrick Beilfuss of the Cedar Corporation and Town representatives decided to forego the postcard reminder. In late October, a second set of questionnaires were sent to non-respondents with a stated deadline of November 8, but the survey end date was extended to November 13 to allow for late responses to be collected.

The target response for accuracy of estimates to within +/-5% with 95 percent confidence for the Town of Wheaton population was 288 surveys or a 25% response rate. **Out of 1,145 surveys distributed, the SRC received 590 completed surveys.** With a total of 16 survey packets being returned as non-deliverable, the response rate was 52%. With 590 completed surveys, the results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 2.8 percent with 95 percent confidence. Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in **Appendix A**, the Survey Research Center concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a significant concern for this survey.

The questionnaire contained nine topical sections related to the update of the Town's comprehensive plan: quality of life, community facilities and services, recreation, natural and cultural resources, housing, transportation, agriculture and land use, economic development, and communication.

The following are key observations from the survey results:

Quality of Life

- The top four reasons Town of Wheaton respondents give for choosing to live in the Town are rural character, home lot size, natural beauty, and to be near family/friends.

Community Facilities and Services

- All community services and facilities listed on the survey are rated highly (good or excellent) by a majority of respondents (fire protection, recycling programs, law enforcement services, signage, ambulance service, cemetery services, and storm water management).

Recreation

- Substantial percentages of survey respondents have no opinion about the recreational facilities and trails asked about in the survey. Of those with an opinion, snowmobile trails received the highest rating. A strong majority would not be willing to pay more taxes to fund park and recreational opportunities and facilities.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Most Wheaton respondents place a very high level of importance on the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resource base of the Town. Groundwater, rivers and streams, air quality, and forested lands are supported particularly strongly (99% rated these resources as essential, very important, or important).

Housing

- When asked what types of housing are needed in the Town, a strong majority say there is a need for more single family housing. Respondents support the use of cluster design for the layout of rural housing lots. At the same time, written comments revealed a pattern of concern that the rural atmosphere of the Town will be lost due to residential development.

Transportation

- Wheaton respondents are largely satisfied with the condition of its roads. Although more than one-half strongly agree or agree that walking and biking are important modes of transportation, they are less enthusiastic about the need for more walking/biking trails along public roadways in the Town. Respondents are generally satisfied with overall road conditions and snow removal in the Town, and they are less willing to pay more taxes for snow removal or road maintenance in the Town.

Agriculture and Land Use

- Wheaton respondents almost unanimously agree that agricultural land should be used for agricultural purposes. However, they disagree that large-scale farms (500+ animals) should be allowed to expand. Nearly all respondents agree or strongly agree that driveways should be required to meet emergency service standards. Most respondents also feel that it is important to consider visual impacts when evaluating development proposals. A majority (91%) of Wheaton respondents feel there should be a minimum lot size for rural residential development. Sixty-eight percent (68%) believe that it should be the current 5-acre minimum and 23% believe it should be less than five acres.

Economic Development

- Agricultural related businesses received the highest level of support as an appropriate type of business in the Town, although smaller majorities find numerous other types of businesses to be appropriate as well. A majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that the Town should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry. Respondents indicate that they are in favor of wind and solar energy as forms of economic development. They are not as supportive of using ethanol for this purpose.

Communication

- The most effective methods of receiving information from the Town regarding comprehensive planning for this group of respondents are direct mailings and newsletters.

Survey Purpose

The purpose for this study was to gather opinions of residents and non-resident property owners about land use and other planning issues as the Town of Wheaton updates its Comprehensive Plan. Public opinion surveys are used to gain input from the community in order to inform the comprehensive planning process. Questions on these surveys generally reflect the different sections of a Comprehensive Plan, including, but not necessarily limited to information on housing, transportation, natural resources, community services, agriculture and land use, and economic development. Patrick Beilfuss of Cedar Corporation in Menomonie, Wisconsin in collaboration with representatives from the Town of Wheaton chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls to survey residents and non-resident property owners of the Town of Wheaton about vital planning issues as the Town updates its Comprehensive Plan.

Survey Methods

In early October 2019, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls mailed surveys to all 1,145 Town of Wheaton households and non-resident property owners for which mailing addresses were available.¹ The response to this mailing was so strong that the SRC in consultation with Patrick Beilfuss and Town representatives decided to forego the postcard reminder that is normally sent to non-respondents. In late October, a second set of questionnaires were sent to non-respondents with a stated deadline of November 8. The survey end date was extended to November 13 to allow for late responses to be collected.²

The target response for estimates expected to be accurate to within +/-5% with 95 percent confidence for the Town of Wheaton population was 288 surveys or a 25% response rate. Out of 1,145 surveys distributed, the SRC received 590 completed surveys. With a total of 16 survey packets being returned as non-deliverable, the response rate was an exceptional 52%.³ With 590 completed surveys, the results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 2.8 percent with 95 percent confidence.

¹ The Town requested that surveys be made available to non-survey panel members as well. A notation was made in the survey that stated that if any recipient knows of a resident or property owner that had not received a survey, for them to contact the SRC to obtain one. Only one resident, not included in the survey panel, contacted the SRC asking for surveys for themselves and other family members.

² The surveys were completed by participants in printed form. The surveys were mailed back to the SRC and scanned into a database by SRC staff. The closing date was agreed upon by Patrick Beilfuss, Town representatives, and the SRC.

³ On September 28, 2019 a tornado hit the Town of Wheaton. The Town decided not to postpone the survey (first mailing scheduled for early October). Based on a very high response, it appears that participation was not hindered by the tornado.

Report and Analysis

In the analysis to follow, the SRC will summarize the 2019 Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey results and note any statistically significant results among different demographic groups.

To facilitate the analysis, the SRC compared the following demographic groupings:

- those under 45 versus those 45 and above
- those identifying themselves as male versus female
- those reporting annual household incomes of \$75,000 or more versus those with annual household incomes of less than \$75,000⁴
- those who've resided in the Town of Wheaton for 25 years or more versus those with less than 25 years residency
- those identifying themselves as residents versus non-residents
- those with children (<18) in their household versus those without children in their household

The testing methodology used to look at statistically significant differences is discussed below.

*The SRC used statistical tests to identify questions with statistically significant differences across demographic groups. In statistics, a result is **statistically significant** if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Statistical significance is expressed as a probability that the observed difference between two groups' averages is not real. A commonly used probability standard is .05 (5%). Statistical significance at the .05 level indicates there is only a 5 in 100 probability that the average values for the two groups are actually equal. Such a result does not mean the difference is necessarily large, important, or significant in the common meaning of the word. If there are a sufficiently large number of observations, even small differences of opinion can be statistically significant. **Response patterns that vary at statistically significant levels ($p < .05$) are noted in the report.***

⁴ The median household income in the Town of Wheaton, Wisconsin is \$80,868, in 2017 dollars, according to the U.S. Census. In this analysis, comparisons will be made between respondents from households with annual incomes of \$75,000 and above (generally close to the median household income level) to respondents from households with less than \$75,000 annual household income (those below median household income level).

Methodology: Survey Design, Analysis, & Presentation of Results

The Town of Wheaton's survey instrument is almost entirely made up of matrix questions consisting of Likert-type scales (examples: an agreement scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree or a quality scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor). Due to the design of most of the survey's questions, the presentation of results in this report are shown mostly in table format.

For most questions in the survey, a "no opinion" option was available. In the case of the Town of Wheaton survey responses, there are areas where substantial percentages of respondents have no opinion (examples include rating cemetery services or stormwater management, rating railroads or shared ride van services, rating snowmobile trails, etc.).

In order to aid in the analysis, the no opinion responses were dropped from the analysis and the percentages were recalculated for the remaining response categories.

However, the SRC believes it is important to report the "no opinion" responses, especially when they constitute a substantial portion of the responses. For data visualization purposes, "no opinion" responses are included in the report's tables and figures because such responses are both a measure of unfamiliarity or indifference and a measure of potential impact for education/outreach.

Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in **Appendix A**, the Survey Research Center concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a significant concern for this survey. In addition to numeric data, respondents provided additional written answers.

Appendix B contains the written responses. **Appendix C** contains a copy of the survey questionnaire with a complete quantitative summary of responses by question.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of respondents to the 2019 Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey.⁵ Where comparable data was available from the Census, they were included to indicate the degree to which the sample represents the underlying adult population in the Town of Wheaton.⁶ The data in Table 1 show that, the proportion of males in the sample was higher than the percentage of males in the total population, and the sample includes lower proportions of younger respondents and higher proportions of older ones than in the Census data. The household income data from the sample closely aligns with Census data. Among the respondents who reported being residents of the Town, nearly all respondents own their residence, and nearly three in four have lived in the Town of Wheaton for ten years or more, while one in ten have been Town residents for less than five years.

| Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents, 2019 Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Gender | Count | Male | Female | Other | | | |
| Sample | 545 | 64% | 36% | | | | |
| Census (18 ⁺) | 2,039 | 53% | 47% | | | | |
| Age 18+ | Count | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ |
| Sample | 562 | 0% | 6% | 11% | 20% | 27% | 36% |
| Census (18 ⁺) | 2,039 | 12% | 12% | 15% | 28% | 17% | 16% |
| Household Size | Count | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5+ |
| Number Adults | 553 | | 17% | 71% | 9% | 3% | 1% |
| Number Children (<18) | 510 | 73% | 10% | 11% | 4% | 2% | 1% |
| Place of Residence | Count | Own | Rent | Other | | | |
| Sample | 563 | 98% | 1% | 1% | | | |
| Household Income Range⁷ | Count | <\$15,000 | <\$15- \$24,999 | \$25- \$49,999 | \$50- \$74,999 | \$75- \$99,999 | \$100,000+ |
| Sample | 417 | 2% | 5% | 15% | 23% | 21% | 33% |
| Census (Total Households) | 917 | 3% | 2% | 15% | 23% | 25% | 33% |
| Length of Residency | Count | Non- Resident | <1 Year | 1 – 4 Years | 5 – 9 Years | 10 – 24 Years | 25+ Years |
| Sample | 566 | 4% | 1% | 9% | 9% | 30% | 47% |

⁵ Basic demographic questions 31 through 37, shown in Table 1, were placed at the end of the survey, with more engaging questions placed first, to minimize survey fatigue and optimize response rates. Demographic questions were asked in order to see how respondents reflected the general population of the Town of Wheaton.

⁶ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 – 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

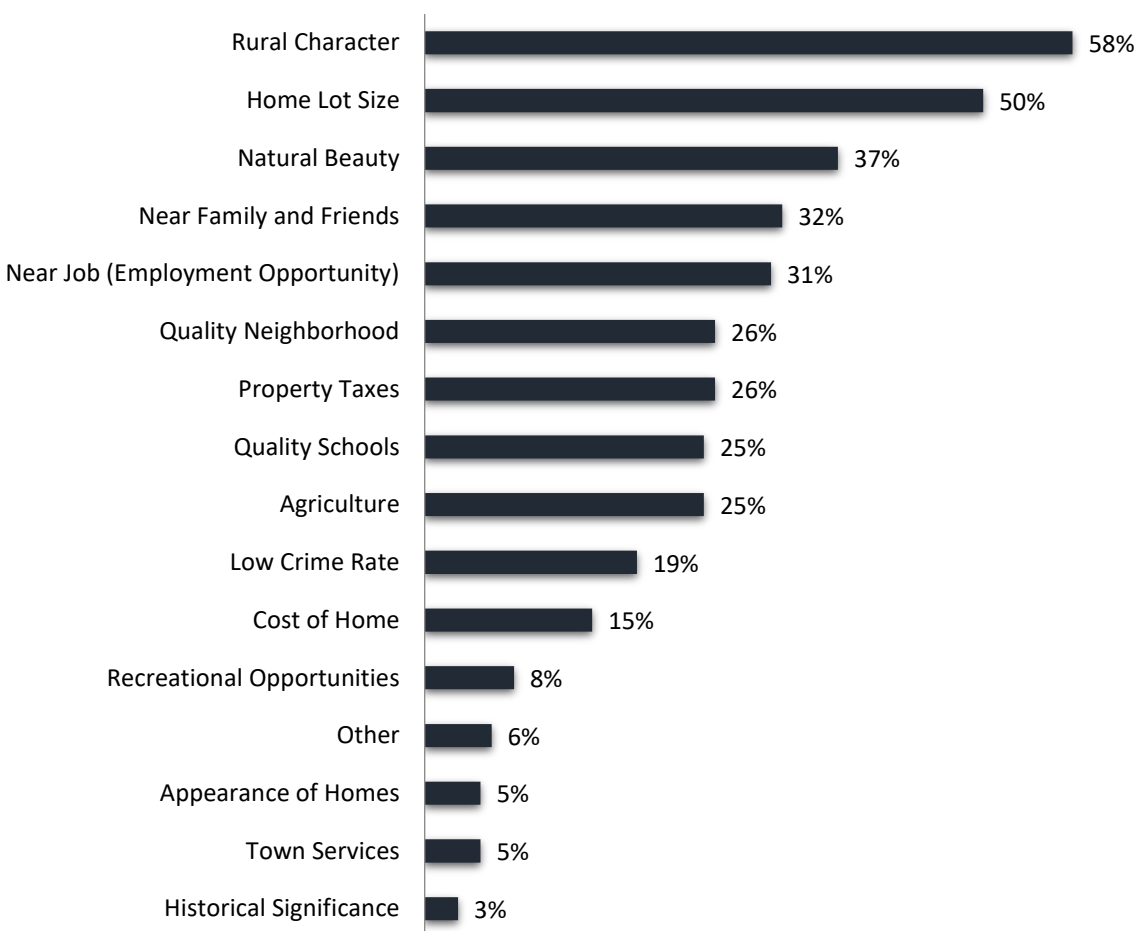
⁷ “Prefer not to answer” responses (25% of respondents) were not included in Table 1 for household income range.

Quality of Life

Respondents were asked to identify the four most important reasons they chose to live in the Town of Wheaton. As shown in Figure 1, at least one-half of the respondents included the rural character and home lot size in their top four reasons, while the natural beauty, being near family and friends, and being near jobs were in the top four for nearly one-third of the respondents. About a fourth of respondents said that property taxes, quality neighborhood, agriculture, and quality schools were among their top reasons to live in the Town. At the other end of the spectrum, fewer than ten percent indicated that recreational opportunities, town services, appearance of homes, and historical significance were among the most important reasons to live in the Town. “Other” responses included growing up in Wheaton and peace and quiet. Appendix B, Question 1 contains the complete list of “other” reasons residents choose to live in the Town.

Figure 1: Most Important Reasons Residents Choose to Live in the Town of Wheaton

Asked to Choose Four Most Important Reasons



Statistically significant differences of opinion among demographic groups with respect to the reasons for choosing to live in the Town of Wheaton:

- Respondents age 45 and above were more likely to include low crime rate and agriculture in their top choices for living in the Town. Respondents under the age of 45 were more likely to include property taxes and home lot size in their top reasons to live in the Town.
- Respondents living in the Town of Wheaton for less than 25 years were more likely to include natural beauty, property taxes, and home lot size as their top reasons to live in the Town. Longer-term residents (25+ years) were more likely to include being near family/friends and agriculture as their top reasons for living in the Town.
- Respondents from households with less than \$75,000 annual income were more likely to include being near family/friends as a top reason for living in the Town. Respondents with at least \$75,000 annual income were more likely to include home lot size as a top reason to live in the Town.
- Respondents with children in their household were more likely to include quality schools, property taxes, and home lot size as their top reasons for living in the Town. Respondents without children in their households were more likely to include agriculture as a top reason to live in the Town.

Community Facilities and Services

Substantial numbers of respondents said they had no opinion about the community services asked about in the survey, particularly cemetery services (68%), and storm water management (51%). This is not surprising since many respondents are not likely to have had occasion to use such services. **As noted earlier in the report, in order to aid in the analysis, the no opinion responses were dropped from the commentary/analysis and the percentages were recalculated for the remaining response categories.** Town of Wheaton respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with the community facilities and services listed on the survey. Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), substantial majorities said all of the facilities and services in Table 2 are good or excellent: 90% for fire protection, 88% for ambulance, 81% for signage, 81% for recycling programs, 79% for law enforcement, and 64% for stormwater management.

| Table 2: Opinions About Community Facilities and Services in the Town of Wheaton | | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| Facilities and Services | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Fire Protection | 22% | 454 | 42% | 48% | 9% | 1% |
| Recycling program | 13% | 503 | 32% | 49% | 15% | 5% |
| Law Enforcement | 24% | 439 | 22% | 57% | 18% | 3% |
| Signage | 24% | 430 | 17% | 64% | 16% | 3% |
| Cemetery Service | 68% | 185 | 15% | 57% | 24% | 4% |
| Ambulance Service | 24% | 436 | 14% | 74% | 11% | 2% |
| Storm Water management | 51% | 275 | 8% | 56% | 25% | 11% |

Although there were statistically significant differences among the ratings from the various demographic groups, the most frequent difference was in the percentage who said they had no opinion about a particular service on the list. For example, those under age 45 were more likely to have no opinion about law enforcement and fire protection. Female respondents were more likely to have no opinion about ambulance service, cemetery services, storm water management, and law enforcement.

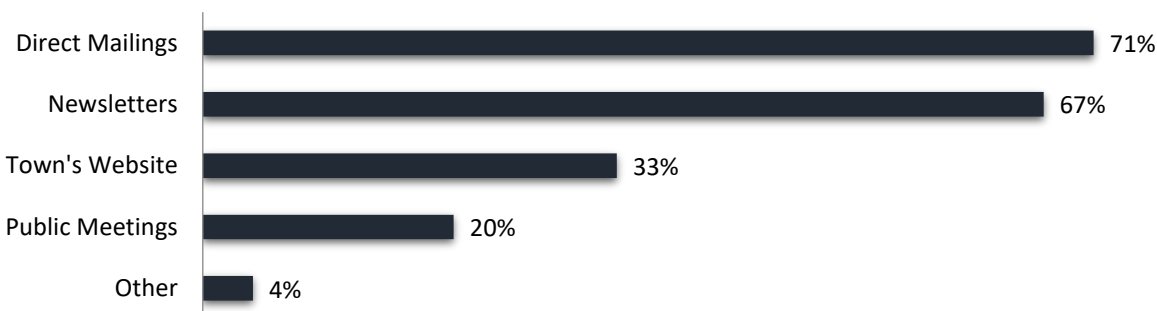
Of those with an opinion,

- Respondents from households without children gave higher ratings to recycling programs (84% excellent + good ratings vs. 69% of respondents with children in their homes).
- Respondents 45 and older gave higher ratings to recycling programs (83% excellent + good ratings vs. 72% of those under the age of 45).

Communication

In this section, respondents were asked the two most effective ways the Town of Wheaton could provide comprehensive planning information to its landowners and residents. Figure 2 indicates that the most effective methods of receiving information from the Town regarding comprehensive planning for this group of respondents are direct mailings and newsletters – roughly two-thirds of the respondents identified these as the most effective communication channels. One-third of respondents believe the Town’s website is one of the most effective ways to receive comprehensive planning information from the Town and one-fifth believe public meetings are effective. “Other” responses include receiving this sort of information electronically through email or Facebook. Appendix B, Question 3 contains the complete compilation of “other” communication methods mentioned.

Figure 2: Most Effective Ways the Town Could Provide Comprehensive Planning Information to Landowners and Residents
Asked to Choose Two Most Effective Sources



Statistically significant differences based on demographic subgroups:

- Direct mailings. Female respondents were more likely to say that direct mailings are an effective way for the Town to provide comprehensive planning information to residents/landowners.

- Newsletters. Respondents 45 and above and respondents with less than \$75,000 annual household income were significantly more likely to say that newsletters are an effective way to receive comprehensive planning information from the Town.
- Public mailings. Respondents with less than \$75,000 annual household income and residents living in the town for 25+ years were more likely to say that public meetings are an effective way to provide comprehensive planning information to residents/landowners.
- Town's website. Respondents with household incomes of \$75,000+, younger respondents (<45), respondents with children in their households, and respondents living in the Town for less than 25 years were more likely to say the Town's website is an effective way for the Town to provide comprehensive planning information to residents/landowners.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Respondents were presented with a list of ten natural resource items and asked how important it is to protect and preserve each resource. In contrast to community facilities and services, most respondents had an opinion about the importance of the natural and cultural resources about which they were asked.

As shown in Table 3, of those with an opinion (excluding the "no opinion" responses), Town of Wheaton respondents gave a high level of importance to the protection of all natural resources on the list; large majorities said that it is essential, very important, or important to protect every resource listed. Groundwater, rivers and streams, air quality, and forested lands were supported particularly strongly (99% rated these resources as essential, very important, or important). This substantial level of agreement was uniform across all demographic groups. There were only minor variations in the high level of importance that each group placed on the protection of these natural resources in the Town. Female respondents were more likely to say that the protection/preservation of air quality, farmland, and forested lands are "essential."

| Table 3: Importance for Town of Wheaton to Protect and Preserve Natural Resources | | | | | | |
|---|------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Essential | Very Important | Important | Not Important |
| Groundwater | 1% | 568 | 71% | 21% | 7% | 1% |
| Rivers and Streams | 2% | 561 | 53% | 33% | 13% | 1% |
| Air Quality | 1% | 564 | 49% | 34% | 15% | 1% |
| Wildlife Habitat | 3% | 557 | 43% | 31% | 23% | 3% |
| Forested Land | 2% | 561 | 40% | 38% | 21% | 1% |
| Farmland | 2% | 564 | 38% | 36% | 21% | 4% |
| Wetlands | 3% | 562 | 37% | 27% | 29% | 8% |
| Rural Character | 3% | 555 | 35% | 36% | 25% | 3% |
| Scenic Views and Undeveloped Hills | 4% | 548 | 32% | 33% | 27% | 9% |
| Historic Resources and Cultural Sites | 9% | 518 | 12% | 26% | 49% | 13% |

Recreation

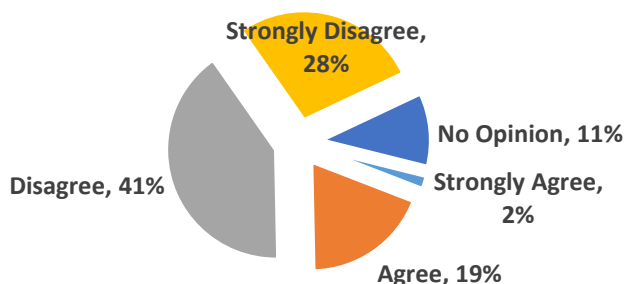
Town of Wheaton respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with local recreation facilities and trails. Substantial numbers of respondents said they had no opinion about the items on the list.

As shown in Table 4, of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), snowmobile trails received the highest rating and was rated excellent or good by 85% of respondents followed by park and recreation facilities (79%) and boating and river facilities access (63%). Ratings for bike trails were relatively low (32% good or excellent). Males were slightly more satisfied with bike trails (35% excellent/good ratings vs. 27% for female respondents). Respondents could write-in other recreation facilities and topics. “Other” responses included ATV trails and ball fields. Appendix B, Question 22 includes the complete compilation of “other” recreation topics mentioned by respondents.

| Table 4: Opinions About Recreation Facilities and Trails | | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Park and Recreation Facilities | 21% | 450 | 22% | 57% | 16% | 4% |
| Snowmobile trails | 43% | 324 | 22% | 63% | 13% | 2% |
| Boating and River Facilities Access | 39% | 348 | 6% | 57% | 30% | 7% |
| Bike trails | 56% | 254 | 4% | 28% | 34% | 34% |

The last question in the recreation section asked respondents’ opinions regarding respondents’ willingness to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities in the Town of Wheaton. Figure 3 indicates that 69% of respondents would not be willing (disagree and strongly disagree) to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities.

Figure 3: Willing to Pay More Taxes for Park and Recreation Opportunities and Facilities in the Town of Wheaton



Respondents in the following demographic groups were more likely to strongly agree/agree that they would be willing to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities in the Town of Wheaton: those under age 45, respondents with children in their household, and respondents with household incomes of \$75,000+.

Housing

Of those with an opinion, excluding the “no opinion responses, 85 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the need for more single family housing in the Town of Wheaton (Table 5). A slight majority, 53% strongly agree or agree that more elderly housing is needed. Conversely, a slight majority of respondents (52%) strongly disagree or disagree that more affordable housing is needed in the Town and strong majorities (90% and 72%, respectively) were opposed to more multiple family units (apartments and duplexes).

Table 5: Opinions About the Need for Additional Housing Types in the Town of Wheaton

| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| Single Family Housing | 15% | 485 | 38% | 47% | 11% | 5% |
| Affordable Housing | 21% | 449 | 13% | 35% | 25% | 27% |
| Elderly Housing | 24% | 431 | 11% | 42% | 28% | 19% |
| Duplexes | 13% | 488 | 3% | 25% | 34% | 38% |
| Apartments | 12% | 494 | 2% | 8% | 32% | 58% |

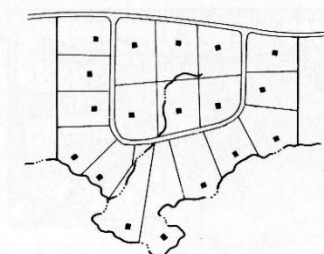
- A higher proportion of respondents 45 and above and respondents with household incomes of less than \$75,000 see a need for more elderly housing, more affordable housing, and more duplexes in the Town of Wheaton.
- Respondents with no children in their households see a higher need for more affordable housing and elderly housing in the Town of Wheaton.

Respondents were asked their preference for the layout of housing lots. They were shown diagrams of a traditional housing development with large individual lots and a “cluster” development with smaller lots and preserved common open space. As shown in Figure 4, a majority of survey respondents prefer the cluster design to the traditional design.

Figure 4: Preference for Housing Layout

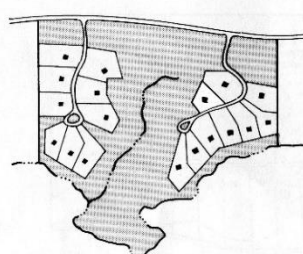
Traditional

42%



Cluster

58%



There were a number of statistically significant differences demographically, in terms of the type of residential development preferred:

- Cluster design. The cluster design, while still preferred by a majority, had significantly higher levels of support from younger (<45 years old) respondents, respondents with children in their household, and respondents living in the Town for less than 25 years.
- Traditional design. Respondents 45 and above, respondents without children in their household, and respondents living in the Town 25+ years were more likely to prefer a traditional design for housing layouts.

Transportation

A section of the survey asked respondents two groups of questions regarding transportation issues in the Town of Wheaton. The first matrix of questions asked about road conditions and maintenance (Table 6). Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), Town of Wheaton residents are largely satisfied with the overall road network in the Town (90% strongly agree/agree that the condition of local roads and streets in the Town are adequate for intended uses). Unlike some earlier questions in the survey that elicited a substantial percentage of no opinion responses, nearly every respondent had an opinion about the condition of the Town’s roads and streets.

A high percentage (87%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with snow removal on Town of Wheaton roads. While survey respondents were generally satisfied with local roads and streets and snow removal in the Town, they were much less willing to pay more taxes for such services. Approximately one-quarter strongly agreed or agreed that they would be willing to pay more taxes for snow removal and road maintenance.

Although nearly one-half of survey respondents believe that biking and walking are important modes of transportation in the Town (55% strongly agree/agree), a lower percentage (43% agree/strongly agree) see a need for more biking and walking lanes along public roadways in the Town of Wheaton.

| Table 6: Opinions About Transportation Issues | | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| Satisfied w/snow removal on Town roads | 4% | 555 | 22% | 65% | 11% | 3% |
| Condition of local roads/streets in the Town is adequate for intended uses | 1% | 564 | 16% | 74% | 7% | 2% |
| Should be more biking/walking lanes along public roadways in the Town | 15% | 486 | 16% | 27% | 40% | 17% |
| Biking/walking are important modes of transportation in the Town | 14% | 496 | 12% | 43% | 35% | 9% |
| Willing to pay more taxes for snow removal/road maintenance in the Town | 9% | 520 | 3% | 24% | 49% | 24% |

- There were no statistically significant differences in the responses regarding the condition of local roads and streets among the demographic groups.
- Females respondents were more likely to agree or strongly agree that biking and walking are important modes of transportation in the Town and that more biking and walking lanes are needed along public roadways.
- There were no statistically significant demographic differences regarding the willingness to pay more taxes for snow removal and road maintenance in the Town of Wheaton.

The second set of questions related to transportation asked respondents to rate railroads and shared ride van services in the Town of Wheaton (Table 7). Many respondents said they had no opinion about these two services. Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), a substantial majority of respondents (74% out of 255 respondents with an opinion) rated railroads as good or excellent, and 66 percent out of 128 respondents with an opinion rated shared ride van services as fair or poor. Respondents could write-in and rate other transportation issues. “Other” responses included park n’ rides, and truck routes. Appendix B, Question 21 contains the complete compilation of “other” responses.

| Table 7: Opinions About Railroads and Shared Ride Van Services | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Railroads | 55% | 255 | 11% | 63% | 22% | 3% |
| Shared Ride Van Services | 78% | 128 | 4% | 30% | 36% | 30% |

- Among the demographic groups, respondents without children in their household were more likely to rate railroads as excellent/good and male respondents were more likely to rate shared ride van services as excellent/good.

Agriculture and Land Use

A section in the questionnaire asked a series of questions about various issues related to agriculture and land use in the Town. (Table 8, next page).

Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), Wheaton respondents were nearly unanimous (99%) in their agreement that productive agricultural land should be used for agricultural use. A slight majority agreed or strongly agreed that productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used for residential use. On the other hand, a majority (73%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that commercial uses should be allowed on productive farmland. Nearly eight of ten respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that any use should be allowed on productive farmland.

| Table 8: Opinions About Uses of Productive Agricultural Land | | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| Use productive farmland for: | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| Agriculture Use | 2% | 555 | 69% | 30% | 0% | 1% |
| Residential Use | 5% | 523 | 10% | 46% | 30% | 14% |
| Any use | 10% | 487 | 6% | 11% | 38% | 45% |
| Commercial Use | 7% | 512 | 3% | 24% | 40% | 33% |

- Males were more likely to agree or strongly agree that productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used for commercial uses (32% male vs. 16% female).

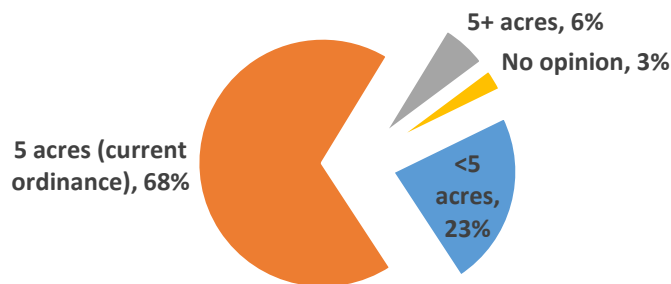
The next group of five questions focused on land use opinions. As shown in Table 9, of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), a majority of Wheaton respondents do not agree that property owners should be allowed to develop their land any way they want (66% disagree/strongly disagree), and do not agree that large scale farms should be allowed to expand (59% disagree/strongly disagree). At the same time, they believe there should be a minimum lot size on residential development in rural areas (89% agree/strongly agree), believe it is important to require that driveways meet standards for providing emergency services (95% agree/strongly agree), and that visual impacts of development are an important consideration when evaluating proposed development (92% agree/strongly agree). Based on the answers to these questions it appears that Wheaton respondents support some degree of local land use regulation.

| Table 9: Land Use Opinions | | | | | | |
|---|------------|----------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| Should be a minimum lot size on residential development in rural areas. | 4% | 552 | 51% | 38% | 7% | 5% |
| Driveways should be required to meet standards for providing emergency services. | 5% | 544 | 38% | 57% | 4% | 1% |
| Visual impacts of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development. | 5% | 537 | 33% | 59% | 7% | 2% |
| Landowners should be allowed to develop land any way they want. | 4% | 550 | 10% | 23% | 42% | 24% |
| Large scale farms (500 or more animal units) should be allowed to expand. | 9% | 520 | 8% | 32% | 33% | 26% |

- Female respondents were more likely to agree/strongly agree that visual impact of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development.

Respondents were next asked about the minimum lot size for rural residential development (Figure 5). Two-thirds of the respondents believe that the current ordinance, 5 acres, should be the minimum lot size for rural residential development. This result does not align well with the majority preference for cluster-style housing developments with smaller lots and preserved common open space (see Figure 4). A substantial minority (23%) believe the minimum lot size should be less than 5 acres, 6% said greater than 5 acres, and those with no opinion (3%).

Figure 5: Minimum Lot Size for Rural Residential Development

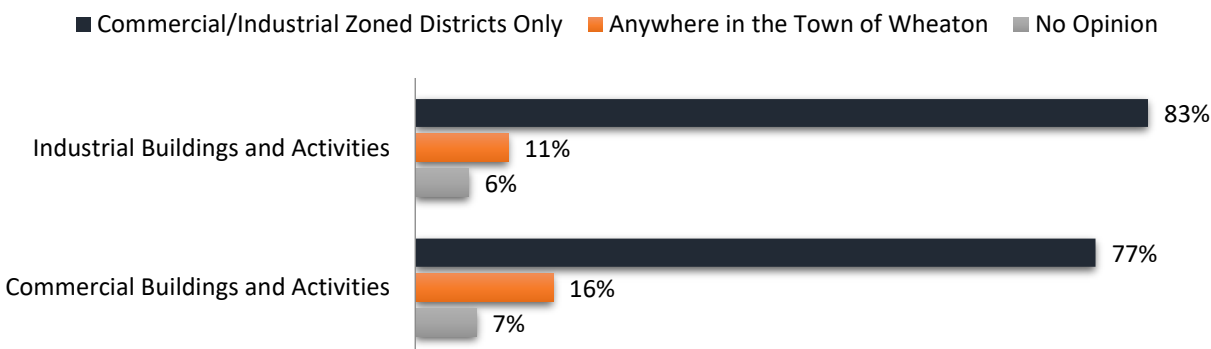


- Long-term residents (25+ years) were more likely to say the minimum lot size for rural residential development should be less than 5 acres.

Economic Development

A section of the survey contained four groups of questions focused on economic development in the Town of Wheaton. The first set of questions in this section focused specifically on commercial and industrial buildings and activities and where they should be located (Figure 6). Large majorities believe commercial buildings and activities should be located in commercial zoned districts only and industrial buildings and activities should be located in industrial zoned districts only.

Figure 6: Commercial or Industrial Buildings and Activities Should be Located in...



There were no statistically significant differences in the responses to these questions among the demographic groups.

Residents were then asked if the Town of Wheaton should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry and if the Town should provide infrastructure (water, sewer, access, etc.) for some industrial and commercial uses (Table 10). Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), 62% agree or strongly agree that the Town should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry. Conversely, 64% disagreed/strongly disagreed that the Town should provide infrastructure for some industrial and commercial uses.

| Table 10: Economic Development Opinions | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| The Town of Wheaton should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry. | 15% | 488 | 13% | 49% | 28% | 10% |
| The Town of Wheaton should provide infrastructure (water, sewer, access, etc.) for some industrial and commercial uses. | 17% | 474 | 6% | 30% | 43% | 21% |

- Respondents 45 and older were more likely to approve of Town working to coordinate efforts to recruit new business and industry.
- Female respondents were more likely to support providing infrastructure for some industrial and commercial uses.

Respondents were asked which types of energy alternatives should be supported by the Town as forms of development (Table 11). Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), a large majority (80%) agreed that the Town should support solar energy as an energy alternative. Nearly 7 in 10 respondents with an opinion said that wind energy should be supported. Less than one-quarter of respondents (24%) said that the Town should support ethanol plants as an energy alternative. Respondents could write-in “other” energy alternatives. “Other” responses included nuclear energy and bio-energy. Appendix B, Question 28 includes the complete compilation of “other” energy alternatives provided by respondents.

| Table 11: Energy Alternatives Opinions | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| Solar Energy | 10% | 520 | 27% | 53% | 9% | 11% |
| Wind Energy | 11% | 512 | 23% | 46% | 16% | 15% |
| Ethanol Plants | 18% | 468 | 4% | 20% | 44% | 33% |

- Female respondents were more likely to favor the Town supporting solar and wind energy as energy alternatives.

Wheaton respondents were asked to rate the importance of various types of businesses or industries in the Town of Wheaton using a scale of essential, very important, important, not important, and no opinion (Table 12).

Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), agricultural related businesses received the most “essential” or “very important” ratings (68%). The rest of the industries/businesses were deemed “essential” or “very important” by minorities of between 20 and 34 percent of respondents with an opinion.

| Table 12: Importance Given to Types of Businesses or Industries in the Town of Wheaton | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Essential | Very Important | Important | Not Important |
| Agriculture Related businesses | 5% | 539 | 32% | 36% | 27% | 4% |
| Home Based Businesses | 11% | 506 | 10% | 24% | 49% | 17% |
| Tourism and Recreation | 8% | 514 | 10% | 24% | 42% | 25% |
| Commercial and Retail Development | 7% | 521 | 6% | 17% | 40% | 37% |
| Industrial and Manufacturing Development | 8% | 517 | 5% | 15% | 39% | 41% |

Agricultural related businesses were the most important business or industry for survey respondents regardless of age, length of residency, etc., and there was general consensus among survey respondents of different age groups, residency lengths, etc., in regard to the importance placed on all the business-types asked about in the survey with one exception:

- Tourism and recreation were viewed more favorably as the types of businesses to be encouraged in the Town by respondents who have annual household incomes of at least \$75,000.

Additional Comments

Respondents were asked to provide additional comments about living in the Town of Wheaton. The response for this open-ended question was relatively low when compared to the overall survey response, with 162 written comments and 428 left unanswered. The response rate for the qualitative question could have been due to survey fatigue and/or question format. Comments were sorted into 14 categories summarized in Table 13. Comments relating to country/rural living elicited the greatest proportion of the total, with 23 percent. Generally, there were only a few percentage points separating the other categories.

Based on the comments from survey respondents who answered this question, Town of Wheaton residents/property owners enjoy the rural, country living in the Town and do not want it to see its character change. Survey respondents also expressed a wish for less truck traffic and road improvements, specifically the need to have more road markings/lines printed on roads. Respondents also commented on taxation and preserving agricultural land for farming.

Comments include:

"I moved to the country to enjoy country living and I'd like to keep it that way! If people want to live close to each other, move to town!"

"We love the simple lifestyle. Jobs, work, industry somewhere else, and Wheaton is for living."

"We definitely need center or outside lines on roads!!! Please."

"Maintaining the sense of community is important."

"Enjoy living here- but in the 20 years I have been here my taxes have tripled- our pay does not keep up- limits what we would like to do and want to do to our homes and property because of fear of how much our taxes will go up."

"Keep farm land farm. We are not making any more land."

The complete list of comments is included in Appendix B, Question 30.

| Table 13: Additional Comments About Living in the Town of Wheaton | | |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| | Count | % |
| Country/Rural Living | 37 | 23% |
| Roads/Traffic | 21 | 13% |
| Positive Sentiments | 16 | 10% |
| Taxes | 16 | 10% |
| Farming | 12 | 7% |
| Multiple Topics | 11 | 7% |
| Recreation | 9 | 6% |
| Pollution | 7 | 4% |
| Other Concerns/Suggestions | 7 | 4% |
| Emergency Services | 5 | 3% |
| Town Board | 5 | 3% |
| Tornado Clean-up | 4 | 2% |
| Internet Service | 3 | 2% |
| County Board | 1 | 1% |
| Miscellaneous | 8 | 5% |
| TOTAL | 162 | 100% |

Differences Based on Residency

In the Town of Wheaton survey dataset, there were four out of 83 variables with statistically significant differences between residents and non-resident property owners. The following bullets indicate areas with a statistically significant relationship ($p < .05$) between survey respondents who are Town of Wheaton residents (96% of the survey sample) vs. non-resident property owners (4% of the survey sample). Because of the small number of responses from non-resident property owners (22), opinions may or may not be accurate reflections of opinions of all non-resident property owners in the Town of Wheaton.

- Non-residents were more likely to have no opinion about snow removal or recycling programs in the Town.
- Residents were more likely than non-residents to say that 5 acres (current ordinance) should be the minimum lot size for rural residential development than non-residents (69% vs. 46%), while non-residents were more likely than residents to say that the minimum lot size for rural residential development should be less than 5 acres (46% vs. 22%).
- Tourism and recreation were viewed more favorably as essential or very important types of businesses in the Town by non-residents than residents (48% vs. 33%).

Conclusions

It is important to note that right before this survey was conducted, a tornado touched down in the Town of Wheaton. Although there may be no “best” time to survey residents and landowners, it is clear that during periods of uncertainty, results are more difficult to interpret. However, based on an exceptionally strong survey response, it appears that the tornado did not hinder survey participation.

The overwhelming theme from the results of this survey is the desire to preserve Wheaton’s rural character. The appeal of the rural atmosphere of Wheaton and its natural surroundings is expressed in various ways in the responses to questions throughout the survey. Wheaton respondents value living in Wheaton because its rural atmosphere, its natural beauty, and to be near their family and friends. Wheaton respondents expressed a strong desire to protect the natural resources of the Town that are the basis for the natural beauty that is so important to them; however, they are not willing to use public funds for additional park and recreational opportunities and facilities in the Town. The written responses by residents and property owners also emphasized the desire to preserve the Town’s rural character.

For housing developments, Wheaton respondents prefer cluster designs that preserve more open space. There was consensus among survey respondents that single-family homes are the highest priority and apartment and duplexes are a low priority for housing needs in Wheaton. At the same time, written comments revealed a pattern of concern that the rural atmosphere of the Town will be lost due to residential development. When asked about minimum lot sizes a majority of respondents reported that they would prefer having a minimum lot size in place and that it should be 5 acres. A minimum lot size that would not be compatible with cluster-style developments.

Wheaton respondents were satisfied with most community services and facilities. Very few services or facilities received poor ratings. Fire protection was rated the highest among the community services listed on the survey. Town of Wheaton respondents are largely satisfied with the condition of the road network in the Town and snow removal; however, they are generally not willing to pay more taxes for snow removal or road maintenance.

Agricultural related businesses received the highest level of support as an appropriate type of business in the Town, although smaller majorities find numerous other types of businesses to be important as well.

The most effective ways the Town could provide comprehensive planning information to its landowners and residents are through direct mailings and newsletters.

Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Test

Any survey must be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. For example, one of the sections in the survey asked respondents to rate local facilities and services in the Town of Wheaton. If those who failed to return their survey were more dissatisfied with such services, the estimates included in this report would overstate the satisfaction of residents regarding Town facilities/services. Non-response bias concerns decline when, as in this study, the response rate is strong.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who return the first mailing of a questionnaire to those who return the second mailing. Those who return the second questionnaire are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing), and we assume that they are representative of that group.

In the Town of Wheaton dataset, there were six of 83 variables tested with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of mail 1 and mail 2 respondents. Early responders were slightly more likely to rate ambulance service and signage higher. Early responders were also more likely to place higher importance on protecting and preserving groundwater. Late responders had higher levels of disagreement with using productive agricultural land for commercial use and were less likely to agree that the Town should support solar energy development.

| Table A: Mail 1/Mail 2 Statistically Significant Differences, Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey, 2019 | | | | |
|---|-------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Variable | Sig. | Mail 1 | Mail 2 | Meaning |
| Q2a. Rate: ambulance service | .000 | 2.61 | 3.18 | Mail 1 higher ratings |
| Q2f. Rate: signage | .018 | 2.68 | 3.01 | Mail 1 higher ratings |
| Q4d. Importance of protecting/preserving groundwater | .004 | 1.37 | 1.59 | Mail 1 higher importance |
| Q9a. Productive ag land should be used for: Ag | .009 | 1.34 | 1.53 | Mail 1 higher agreement |
| Q9c. Productive ag land should be used for: Commercial use | .042 | 3.11 | 3.31 | Mail 2 higher disagreement |
| Q28b. Town should support solar energy development | .042 | 2.26 | 2.50 | Mail 2 higher disagreement |

Based on the small number of variables with statistically significant differences, the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for the Town of Wheaton survey sample.

Appendix B – Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Survey, 2019 - Written Comments

Written comments from survey respondents were transcribed verbatim. In some instances, the SRC corrected misspelled words, but have generally not modified comments for grammar or clarity. There were instances where survey respondents wrote “N/A” as a written response. The SRC has excluded N/A comments from the compilations shown below.

Q1: What are the four most important reasons you and your family choose to live in the Town of Wheaton? “Other” Comments (46 Responses)

- Born and raised here (x4)
- Grew up here (x3)
- Country living suggests peace and quiet (x2)
- No subdivisions or industrial development (x2)
- A woman
- Across to 94/Highway 24
- Bought grandfather's farm.
- Brother
- Business friendly
- Close to Chippewa Falls
- Close to Eau Claire
- Close to work
- Convenient location - near stores, church, schools
- Cost of the land 110 acres
- Excellent fire department!
- Fire department and EMS is near by
- Hunting
- I just own farm land
- Land for sale
- Large land parcel
- Maintain family property
- Near Menards
- No close neighbors
- Not seeing other houses is the primary reason full privacy
- Not very many neighbors
- Only have a storage barn on property other lot in city
- Own property
- Owned the land
- Prominent to Interstate Hwy, Eau Claire and Twin Cities
- Quiet
- Quieter neighborhood
- Raised here

- Sought to buy rural lot 1985 to build home.
- To have horses where we lived
- We are a business
- We are a church that's been here over 100 years
- We are free from multi-housing units
- We got our 6 acres cheap and our taxes was cheap. Not now.
- *The following comment was written by a respondent in blank space available around Question 1 of the survey:* But then 4 months after we moved in, they upped \$400! Not happy. My neighbors and I all have school age children and open enroll to Elk Mound. We want to and need bus on 34th Street to Elk Mound.

Q3: Fill the circles of the two most effective ways the Town of Wheaton could provide Comprehensive Planning information to its landowners and residents. "Other" Comments (25 Responses)

- Email (x16)
- Facebook (x3)
- Direct email
- Don't
- Phone
- Referendums
- School
- Website

Q21: Rate the following in the Town of Wheaton: "Other" Comments (19 Responses)

- Park n' Ride (x2)
- Better enforcement of speed limits and "truck route" use on what have become short-cuts on what were residential country roads
- Board members
- Business from large trucks
- Farm truck traffic/speeding
- Garbage service
- Keeping road right of way cleaned
- Lines on road need paint up keep
- Local government
- Motorcycle
- Need better rail services
- Packs
- Power lines (too many, too large)
- Road maintenance, shoulders corners - gravel
- Snowmobile trails
- Truck routes
- We have no share rides
- We live in the country...

Q22: Rate the following in the Town of Wheaton: “Other” Comments (28 Responses)

- ATV Trails (x17)
- Ball Fields (x3)
- Are there bike trails???
- Country- country leave it
- Horse trails
- Road corners
- Sledding hills
- Taxes
- Walking trails
- We are close to these, Wheaton does not need their own

Q28: The Town of Wheaton should support the following energy alternatives as a form of development: “Other” Comments (13 Responses)

- Nuclear (x3)
- Natural Gas (x2)
- B & C after thorough study and unbiased impact report
- Bio energy
- Bio-mass energy
- High voltage lines
- NOT monetarily
- Please don't!! Both are so ugly
- Site a nuclear power plant (could dramatically reduce property taxes)
- Wind energy is a waste of money and supplies.

Q30: Is there anything else you would like to say about living in the Town of Wheaton? (162 Responses)

The SRC grouped most open-ended comments into topical categories based on the overall theme of the comment. However, there were some responses in which a respondent wrote comments touching on a wide range of topics which were challenging to categorize without losing the overall tone and meaning of the commentary. These comments were placed in a “multiple topics” category.

Country/Rural Living (37 Responses)

- As the world becomes crowded, rural land will be more desirable to all.
- Do not like housing development with less than 5 acres. Water and sewer issues will come into place soon. Need to retain our RURAL area not city living. Groundwater is in jeopardy because of all the irrigation. Running when it is raining?!
- I bought my home in the town of Wheaton to be in a rural setting, not a business dept. No more building! Keep Ind. and Com business out!
- I don't like being a zoned township
- I enjoy the space between properties <illegible> areas. If I wanted to live in with more industry/business or closer housing I would live in town.

- I have the feel of living in the township- don't be in a hurry to change it.
- I like the peace and quiet the wild animals coming out to roam the beautiful view I have from my front door, with spring and fall colors. You can't see this in a crowded residential area.
- I live on the county line and have land in Wheaton and Elk Mound. My house and family boarding stable are in Elk Mound. My pastures are in Wheaton.
- I moved to the country to be in the country, leave it country living
- I moved to the country to enjoy country living and I'd like to keep it that way! If people want to live close to each other, move to town!
- It's important that this area stays rural.
- Keep it quiet
- Keep rural, not industrial
- Keep the 5-acre minimum!!!
- Lot sizes do not need to be 5 acres. 1/2 acre minimum would be enough if #1 perk.
- Love our neighbors! Lot sizes are great and keep it from feeling too cramped.
- Love the rural setting
- Nice to have peace and quiet
- People move to Wheaton for the way it is now. STOP trying to add more housing, lessen the lot size and not allow commercial business to expand off Hwy 29. Nobody moves here wanting 100 more neighbors! Net responsibility!
- Removal of abandoned buildings and unpainted properties
- Seems to be taken over by big business that include noise, air, water pollution. Cement companies, gravel companies, and other eyes sores. Expansion prevent of these will drive away resident. NOT enough regs regarding development. We need LESS commercial development. Ugly looking!
- Space, open country, sunsets
- The town of Wheaton is a great place to be because of its rural atmosphere. It is close enough to other larger cities that there is not a need for more industrial or commercial businesses. People live here because they want to be in the country.
- The unique and pleasing appeal to live in the town of Wheaton is the convenience of close to town living with a rural feel. Adding industry large number of homes will take away from that feel.
- We enjoy living in the Town of Wheaton because of its mostly rural, undeveloped character. Alternatives such as commercial, retail, industrial, manufacturing, and more family development are best suited for incorporates municipalities that can provide better infrastructure like water, sewer, curb, gutters, sidewalks, and things of that nature
- We enjoy our rural setting that is near city amenities.
- We enjoy the quiet country living. We like having our privacy without many neighbors and traffic.
- We enjoy the rural life and like it the way it is!
- We like rural living. We don't want to see clusters of houses or people walking on our roads where there is hills these people are hard to see!
- We live here because it's a rural community. Our home is on 2-acres and this is plenty for most homes - but we did purchase an adjacent 2-acre lot to raise some animals. Give people options -

please don't tell us what we can and cannot do - as long as we do not interfere with our neighbors. Let common sense prevail!

- We live in a rural/farm community for a reason. We would like it to stay that way.
- We love living in the country. Love the farm life, deer, turkey. Don't want land bought and rental townhouses by us.
- We love living in the country. Our roads are not taken care of in winter. I expect that to get worse based on all the money that was spent on tornado cleanup.
- We love the simple lifestyle. Jobs, work, industry somewhere else, and Wheaton is for living.
- We love the small-town rural atmosphere - that's why we've lived here 30+ years.
- We primarily moved here for "the country" atmosphere landscape (trees, hills) and no neighbors across the road need to keep lots no smaller than 5 acres. Please!!
- Would like it to remain a rural, country setting. Do not want to see subdivisions and multifamily housing.

Roads/Traffic (21 Responses)

- Cty T - needs right turn lanes or a center left turn lane. There is such an increase of traffic that the through people are inhibited.
- Ditches need to be mowed more often. Finish a job before you start another one. (example) 50th Street heats 2 layers of black top has not been finished yet the road is *<expletive>* in places
- Get rid of SA ordinance. There would be more residents to support roads, etc.
- I despise garbage days with excessive noise and rolling cans, despise obnoxious, loud noises after 9:00 p.m. and before 8:00a.m. speeding traffic is a nuisance on town roads
- I love living here. I do NOT love the amount of large truck traffic on my road. There is no speed limit sign and all vehicles go too fast! My dog was hit and killed. Not safe for walkers/ children.
- Line painting on some of the high use roads should be considered. Especially roads like 20th, 40th, and 50th streets between Hwy 29 and the north crossing. We had lines on 40th street at one time which were excellent. There was a grant from the state that the town of Wheaton received for this.
- Mark center lines on roads after repaving
- More road maintenance
- Please keep Menards truck traffic to 10th St. By adding stop like at "T" and 10th
- Please open town roads to ATV traffic
- Plows need to be more cognate of mailboxes and garbage cans. Speed limit signs, hidden driveway signs, and or shaving at the hills on 30th Ave. Tickle Belly Hill area. Kids and adults are notorious for trying to jump those hills at high speeds. As the area has become more developed - it has become a more dangerous situation.
- The speed limit on HWY F should be careful from 30th Ave. into EX county
- Too much truck traffic from farms that do not respect the speed limits near residential areas with small children, dogs, horses, etc. (Jenson farms) Nobody ever around to enforce the speed limit.
- Too much truck traffic on county road X/ Business 29- Re: Shipping containers from rail terminal across from sewage plant.

- Very happy here, nice place to raise a family, very happy that the town replaced our culvert when the road was re-plowed. Industry is good as long as the impacts becoming of the community is assessed.
- We definitely need center or outside lines on roads!!! Please
- We drive on N. Town Hall Road to get to our home, and the truck (and railroad) traffic between the North crossing and county line road is absolutely terrible. I hope this never happens to Wheaton, but we also hope to make a decent amount of money when we eventually sell our property. Apparently, I am a hypocrite! Thanks for this survey.
- We moved here from Eau Claire in June 2019, so I don't really know about the arm yet. Have not spent a winter hear yet so I can't evaluate the plowing.
- We need yellow and white lines put on our roads! "Safety first in Wheaton"
- Whoever did the roadwork on 50th street did a lousy job. Shoulder such a mess you cannot mow it and weeds grow rampant. Drain pipe installers wrecked several feet of my cement driveway. (Cracked)
- Would like ATV and UTV access on local roadways

Positive Sentiments (16 Responses)

- Great place to live and raise a family (x4)
- Love it! (x2)
- Friendly!!
- Good bunch of people and friends to be around near and know.
- Good community
- Great schools!
- It's fairly nice and safe
- It's great!
- Maintaining the sense of community is important
- We like it just the way it is
- Wheaton is a great place to live. You cannot please everyone or central everything. Remember that people need the freedom to prosper and do not always need to have every convenience given to them.
- When I lived there it was great. Now I only own land

Taxes (16 Responses)

- Taxes are too high (x6)
- Enjoy living here- but in the 20 years I have been here my taxes have tripled- our pay does not keep up- limits what we would like to do and want to do to our homes and property because of fear of how much our taxes will go up.
- Enjoy living in a community that is free of commercial developmental mass housing complexes, we do not need the added taxes, road congestion, and influx of people do to development. Tired of land developers lining their pockets with cash and raising our taxes.
- If it's not broke don't fix it (I don't live in the city of Eau Claire I don't need another confluence project) As for us the question about more tax money for snow plowing if we have a bad snow year and need a little more to cover cost that's ok but only as needed.
- Outrageous home assessments/taxes

- Property taxes too high. Going through Chippewa County zoning for permits sucks. They are rude/arrogant, and it costs too much.
- Residential lot size of 5 acres is too big, makes buying a lot too expensive, decreases new development and tax base
- Schools great! The 5-acre minimum at current prices stops many from home ownership. *<illegible>*
- Taxes in the town of Wheaton use a to be very reasonable. It is one of the reasons that we purchased land and built in Wheaton. New taxes are as much or more than living on Lake Wissota
- The township is taxing people out of this township. I pay \$350.00 per month in property taxes. Enough is Enough!
- We vote and pay taxes. I have yet to see what service one provided by the town. The maintenance of our road-65th Ave. is nonexistent.

Farming (12 Responses)

- Driving farm machinery on road is difficult because vehicles are not courteous
- Eliminate or cut back on large animal farms! They are polluting the ground water with this waste and animal drugs. Even if they were in the area first, they have no right to pollute the groundwater.
- Farming is changing and we need to change with it. We need to expand our scope and not just focus on farming. We still need maintain the natural beauty of our township but invite other industries to be part of the fabric of our township.
- I was born and raised in the Town of Wheaton. It makes me frustrated to see people build expensive homes and then not be able to afford them. We need to keep our small-town farms alive.
- It's rural (with access to 3 cities) and we would like to keep it that way. Taxes are high and we are ok with that but keep roads paved and plowed. A BIG no to large scale farms!!!
- Keep farm land in farming. We are not making any more land.
- Keep it rural! Farmland and farms are disappearing. When land is gone it will never return to farmland, forest, parries, stop the CAFO's, too many cattle in one place. Issues with proper manure disposal and runoff into waterways!
- Love to see agriculture keep its place in our township. The "farmers" take care of more than their own families. Let's not lose sight of this!! I feel commercial business can use land that's not "quality" for farming and agriculture.
- No factory farms.
- Should have more enforcement of regulations on farms of more than 300 head of cattle to protect the ground water it is getting worse every year.
- The 5-acre minimum is resulting in a huge loss of usable agriculture land. Residential needs to be 1 1/2 acres!
- This is a largely rural/agricultural township. Let it stay that way. If areas become built up, then they should be done in a way the protects streams/rivers and groundwater

Multiple Topics (11 Responses)

- 1. Let tax payers and not the chairman or board decide 2. More use of ball field and pavilion for adults. Possibly evening travel movies and use of concession stands. How did we lose "Wheaton

Friend Updates" great community event for people to get together? Another great decision by the chairman and board.

- A great place to live. But the tax man is determined to tax us to death. We've seen plenty of housing and commercial development over the years which gives them more tax to use but the services stay the same and our taxes keep rising.
- Business should be along the Hwy 29 corridor not just T and 29. Property taxes too high. Board members and planning committee should be different people. Shouldn't be able to be on both boards.
- Great place for our family. Farmers here first- don't make it more difficult for them. we notice a lot more bikes on the road
- I don't want to see too much overdevelopment, also like low taxes (property) good roads
- It used to be good living here. But it is getting bad. After you took us out of Hallie fire dept. Without finding how the tax payees feel about it! Also, how come our town worker don't do any work? Every time I see them, they are riding around in the trucks burning up gas on roads that are not Wheaton!
- Need more housing and more businesses= jobs. The farmers are not paying a fair share of the taxes, so tax burden falls on homeowners and the five-acre ordinance limits homes in the township. Need more jobs- currenting NONE in the township
- The town is changing from agriculture to more resident Co "T" should be four lanes to 29 from Clairmont
- Town of Wheaton should support commercial and business development as a priority. Town of Wheaton is a family friendly place to live. We are fortunate to have two very good town crew members and currently an excellent town board.
- We bike a lot- where are there any in township? Keep any Commercial/ Industrial development south of Highway 29. Keep lot size @ 5Ac. Keep large commercial dairies to a minimum and protect our ground water!
- With housing development, especially on F; traffic has increased significantly. Speed limit change from 35 to 55 should be moved North on F beyond 20th Ave. Large capacity well development and ag chemical/pesticide/herbicides use has contaminated many wells. Report from Chippewa Land use/zoning?

Recreation (9 Responses)

- We need ATV trails (x3)
- Maybe put in hiking trails
- We need more bike trails!
- We need more bike trails/ lanes. Finish the one that goes over the Chippewa river adjacent to Hwy 29. Make a bike lane down old 29
- We need smaller lots and more homes ASAP!
- We would love horse trails and walking trails that allow dogs.
- We would love more bike/run trails and parks. We love the rural/country feel of Wheaton and the 5-acre ordinance is essential to keeping that.

Pollution (7 Responses)

- Ground water is contaminated with e coli and nitrates
- Having a dump/recycling place is very much appreciated! We have garbage collection service but still use the dump. It is important to avoid trash clutter and provide access to proper disposal. Also, we appreciate the rural and city atmosphere.
- Lifelong resident. Increased runoff through our property as time passes - concerned about potential flooding in the future as climate change continues to occur.
- Need to pay attention to air, surface, and ground water pollution when making comprehensive planning decisions
- Need to regulate liquid manure and application on field and smell. Also monitor mess on roads
- Protect our drinking water. Preserve farmland. I do not understand your new way of plowing our roads.
- Protect water!

Other Concerns/Suggestions (7 Responses)

- Crime rate higher than I like: speeding, poaching, break ins, police response- slow, more trespassers, bullying
- GOOD PLACE TO RAISE FAMILY. Need to stay ahead of drug related crimes and burglaries. Far side of county lack some police. A neighborhood water program would help
- Great township! With that said not all areas of Wheaton fit the questions in this survey. Certain land along Hwy 29 make great commercial opportunities for tax base. Many others along 29 and other lands more suitable for Housing developments.
- I love Wheaton- very good town board- volunteer fire, patrol men- ball field, etc. I do think that the town hall needs a sound system (loud speaker) for us older hard of hearing guys and girls.
- Make commercial signage backlit only
- Mow ditches and cutting brush
- Need daycares, Kwik Trip and bus service to Elk Mound Schools on 34th street. ~10 kids on street are open enrolled there and parents are finding transportation difficult.

Emergency Services (5 Responses)

- Ambulance services comes from Hallie. Which is quite far for some places. Also share rides would be great. No busing for disabled or elderly.
- Emergency services should be dispatched from closer towns, depending on where you live in Wheaton. I am 3.5 miles away from Luther and yet wait for someone to come from Chippewa. We love living here! P.S. more traffic patrol needed on busy roads!
- I get no services, as I live on a county Rd. I would just toss injured people in my car, as I could be @ the Hospital 20 min before any ambulance could get there.
- I would like to commend our Street Dept. for their excellent job removing snow from our road during the very difficult winter last year.
- Moved to Wheaton because of the 5-acre requirement. Response time for ambulance service will probably be better after 2020. With CF and EC both so close, I feel Wheaton doesn't need a lot of separate recreational activities - both cities are close.

Town Board (5 Responses)

- 24 & 25 show objectively and support the ignorance of Plan Com. chair and other members of the Plan Com & town board. This/Wheaton was a good and progressive team pair to current govt.
- XXXXX (town board) is unhelpful, hurtful, and disrespectful. It's one thing to do your job, but it's another to deny help and advice when asked for. We love town of Wheaton and plan to live our lives here for many years to come.
- Our town board and planning committee is made up of people who are very concerned about their own well-being and those who are their relatives or friends. Too many rolling quorum meetings are held outside scheduled legal meetings
- Town board has been receptive and listens to citizens. During the cleanup of the tornado and found help extensively
- Town Representatives are more concerned with personal agenda and less about resident concerns

Tornado Clean-Up (4 Responses)

- Great job with the tornado help! Excellent!!!!
- I appreciate the organized and coordinated response and clean up from the tornado damage.
- Nice little township- were looking forward to living there prior to the tornado taking out all our trees and pole shed.
- The township did a remarkable job assisting residents in recovering from the recent tornado. So proud of everyone who helped with coordination and boots on the ground efforts.

Internet Service (3 Responses)

- Internet services for residential develops! Still waiting after living here 16 years!
- The lack of internet accessibility is sad. There should be no dead zones in this day and age. The internet has been around for 20 years. Businesses cannot survive if there is no access.
- We need affordable TV and internet services that work. We are only 1 1/2 miles from the Eau Claire line and can't get affordable service.

County Board (1 Response)

- I wish we had better representation on the county board.

Miscellaneous (8 Responses)

- I have lived in Wheaton since 1978. It was much more quiet and slow- paced then. My children rode their bikes to friends' houses. Now I do not take my great-grandchildren for a ride in the stroller on my road (20th ST.) The neighborhood is still very scenic with plenty of wildlife and trees. Elk Mound has top notch schools and bus service! "New" Hwy 29 was much needed and is quite loud; win some and lose some! All in all, still a great place to live.
- I have lived in Wheaton since 1988 and am still here
- I only own a Wheaton town lot with a storage unit on it. It cannot have a residence or business that require water and sewer service due to its size.
- In item #8 I selected option B because in theory it better protects our natural resources. However, this is only the case if a formal management plan and protections are developed for the conservancy land. If those plans and protections are in place and followed, then I would be

in favor of the smaller lots with conservancy land. (I am not in favor of smaller lots without conservancy land)

- Not built our house yet. Reside in neighborhood right know
- Our house flooded in March largely due to Chippewa County opening a culvert on the corner of County Road F with no safe route for the water to go. I called the town of Wheaton for assistance to open the culverts and ditches on 80th street and no help was given. I lost half my house due to poor decisions by the town of Wheaton and Chippewa County. I have asked for help to look at how the corner can be modified to prevent this from happening again.
- Question 3, 14, and 15 are related in our minds. The issue for us isn't lot size- rather it is what kind of land the lot sits on. Questions 26 and 17 should be in limited areas.
- Refer to Question #8, I had to select option A traditional design even though I prefer the concept of Option B. Based on town meetings, there is no guarantee that the set aside land will be preserved, and its fate will be up to the discretion of the developer.

Q33: Place of Residence: "Other" Comments (7 Responses)

- Land (x4)
- Family
- Not in Wheaton anymore
- Own farm land

Appendix C – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question

2019 Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey

Sample, n = 590

QUALITY OF LIFE

The following questions ask your opinion on the quality of life in the Town of Wheaton.

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. What are the four most important reasons you and your family choose to live in <u>the Town of Wheaton</u> ? Choose up to four only. | | |
| 25% Agriculture | 37% Natural Beauty | 8% Recreational Opportunities |
| 5% Appearance of Homes | 32% Near Family and Friends | 58% Rural Character |
| 15% Cost of Home | 31% Near Job (Employment Opportunity) | 5% Town Services |
| 3% Historical Significance | 26% Property Taxes | 6% Other: (Please specify): See Appendix B |
| 50% Home Lot Size | 26% Quality Neighborhood | |
| 19% Low Crime Rate | 25% Quality Schools | |

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

These questions ask your opinion about the community facilities and services in the Town of Wheaton.

| 2. Rate the following <u>local services</u> . | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | No Opinion |
|---|-----------|------|------|------|------------|
| a. Ambulance Service | 10% | 56% | 8% | 2% | 24% |
| b. Cemetery Services | 5% | 19% | 8% | 1% | 68% |
| c. Fire Protection | 33% | 37% | 7% | 1% | 22% |
| d. Law Enforcement Services | 17% | 43% | 13% | 3% | 24% |
| e. Recycling Programs | 28% | 42% | 13% | 4% | 13% |
| f. Signage | 13% | 49% | 12% | 2% | 24% |
| g. Storm Water Management | 4% | 27% | 12% | 5% | 51% |

COMMUNICATION

3. Fill the circles of the **two** most effective ways the Town of Wheaton could provide Comprehensive Planning information to its landowners and residents. Choose **two** only.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| Direct Mailings | Newsletters | Public Meetings | Town's Website | Other: (Please specify): See Appendix B |
| 70% | 67% | 20% | 33% | 4% |

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following questions ask your opinion about the importance of natural and cultural resources **in the Town of Wheaton**.

| 4. How important is it to protect and preserve the following in the Town of Wheaton: | Essential | Very Important | Important | Not Important | No Opinion |
|--|-----------|----------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| a. Air Quality | 48% | 34% | 15% | 1% | 1% |
| b. Farmland | 37% | 35% | 21% | 4% | 2% |
| c. Forested Lands | 39% | 37% | 21% | 1% | 2% |
| d. Groundwater | 70% | 21% | 7% | 1% | 1% |
| e. Historic Resources and Cultural Sites | 11% | 24% | 45% | 12% | 9% |
| f. Rivers and Streams | 52% | 32% | 13% | 1% | 2% |
| g. Rural Character | 34% | 35% | 24% | 3% | 3% |
| h. Scenic Views and Undeveloped Hills | 30% | 31% | 26% | 8% | 4% |
| i. Wetlands | 36% | 26% | 28% | 7% | 3% |
| j. Wildlife Habitat | 42% | 30% | 23% | 3% | 3% |

HOUSING

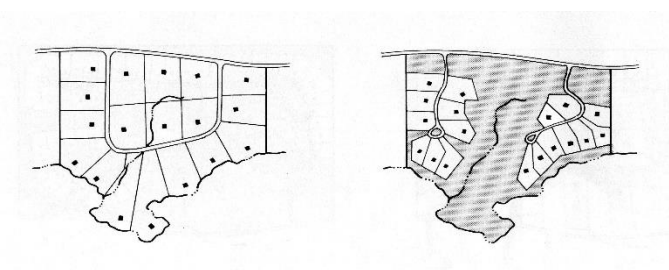
The following questions ask your opinion about the development of housing **in the Town of Wheaton**.

| 5. The following types of housing are needed: | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| a. Single Family Housing | 32% | 40% | 9% | 4% | 15% |
| b. Duplexes (2 units) | 2% | 21% | 30% | 33% | 13% |
| c. Apartments (3 or more units) | 2% | 7% | 28% | 51% | 12% |
| 6. Affordable housing is needed in the Town of Wheaton. | 10% | 27% | 20% | 21% | 21% |
| 7. Elderly housing is needed in the Town of Wheaton. | 9% | 32% | 21% | 14% | 24% |

8. Would you prefer housing built in a traditional design (Option A) or a cluster design (Option B)? Please fill the circle for either Option A or Option B below to indicate your preference.

42% OPTION A

58% OPTION B



AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

The following questions ask your opinion about agriculture and land use **in the Town of Wheaton**.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| 9. Productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used for: | | | | | |
| a. Agricultural Use | 68% | 30% | 0% | 1% | 2% |
| b. Residential Use | 9% | 44% | 28% | 14% | 5% |
| c. Commercial Use | 3% | 22% | 37% | 31% | 7% |
| d. Any Use | 6% | 10% | 34% | 40% | 10% |
| 10. Large scale farms (500 or more animal units) should be allowed to expand. | 8% | 30% | 30% | 24% | 9% |
| 11. Landowners should be allowed to develop land any way they want. | 10% | 23% | 41% | 24% | 4% |
| 12. The visual impacts (view of the landscape) of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development. | 31% | 55% | 6% | 2% | 5% |
| 13. It is important to require that driveways will meet standards for providing emergency services. | 36% | 54% | 4% | 1% | 5% |
| 14. There should be a minimum lot size on residential development in rural areas. | 49% | 36% | 7% | 4% | 4% |

15. In your opinion, what should the minimum lot size be for rural residential development? Choose **one** only.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------|
| Less than 5 acres 23% | 5 acres (<i>Current Ordinance</i>) 68% | Greater than 5 acres 6% | No Opinion 3% |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------|

TRANSPORTATION

This series of questions asks your opinion about transportation issues.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| 16. The condition of local roads and streets in the <u>Town of Wheaton</u> is adequate for intended uses. | 16% | 74% | 7% | 2% | 1% |
| 17. I am satisfied with snow removal on <u>Town of Wheaton</u> roads. | 21% | 62% | 11% | 3% | 4% |
| 18. Biking and walking are important modes of transportation in the <u>Town of Wheaton</u> . | 11% | 37% | 30% | 8% | 14% |
| 19. There should be more biking and walking lanes along public roadways in the <u>Town of Wheaton</u> . | 14% | 23% | 34% | 14% | 15% |
| 20. I would be willing to pay more taxes for snow removal and road maintenance in the <u>Town of Wheaton</u> . | 3% | 22% | 44% | 22% | 9% |

| 21. Rate the following in the Town of Wheaton : | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | No Opinion |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|------------|
| a. Railroads | 5% | 28% | 10% | 1% | 55% |
| b. Shared Ride Van Services | 1% | 7% | 8% | 7% | 78% |
| c. Other: See Appendix B | 1% | 1% | 3% | 7% | 89% |

RECREATION

This series of questions asks your opinion about recreation issues.

| 22. Rate the following in the Town of Wheaton : | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | No Opinion |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|------------|
| a. Bike Trails | 2% | 12% | 15% | 15% | 56% |
| b. Boating and River Facilities Access | 4% | 35% | 18% | 4% | 39% |
| c. Park and Recreation Facilities | 17% | 45% | 13% | 3% | 21% |
| d. Snowmobile Trails | 12% | 36% | 8% | 1% | 43% |
| e. Other: See Appendix B | 2% | 2% | 1% | 13% | 83% |

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| 23. I would be willing to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities in the Town of Wheaton . | 2% | 19% | 41% | 28% | 11% |

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The following questions ask how you view economic development **in the Town of Wheaton**.

24. Commercial buildings and activities, which may include truck traffic should be located in...? Choose **one** only.

| | | |
|--|--|------------------|
| Commercial zoned districts only 77% | Anywhere in the Town of Wheaton 16% | No Opinion 7% |
|--|--|------------------|

25. Industrial buildings and activities, which may include truck traffic should be located in...? Choose **one** only.

| | | |
|--|--|------------------|
| Industrial zoned districts only 83% | Anywhere in the Town of Wheaton 11% | No Opinion 6% |
|--|--|------------------|

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| 26. The Town of Wheaton should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry. | 11% | 42% | 24% | 8% | 15% |
| 27. The Town of Wheaton should provide infrastructure (water, sewer, access, etc.) for some industrial and commercial uses. | 5% | 25% | 36% | 18% | 17% |

| 28. The Town of Wheaton should support the following energy alternatives as a form of development: | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| a. Ethanol Plants | 3% | 16% | 36% | 27% | 18% |
| b. Solar Energy | 25% | 48% | 8% | 10% | 10% |
| c. Wind Energy | 20% | 41% | 14% | 14% | 11% |
| d. Other: See Appendix B | 5% | 4% | 2% | 4% | 84% |

| 29. Rate the importance of the following <u>in the Town of Wheaton:</u> | Essential | Very Important | Important | Not Important | No Opinion |
|--|-----------|----------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| a. Agricultural Related Businesses | 31% | 34% | 26% | 4% | 5% |
| b. Commercial and Retail Development | 6% | 16% | 37% | 34% | 7% |
| c. Home Based Businesses | 9% | 22% | 43% | 15% | 11% |
| d. Industrial and Manufacturing Development | 5% | 13% | 36% | 37% | 8% |
| e. Tourism and Recreation | 9% | 22% | 38% | 23% | 8% |

30. Is there anything else you would like to say about **living in the Town of Wheaton?** See Appendix B

DEMOGRAPHICS: Please tell us some things about you:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----|
| 31. Gender: | Male 64% | Female 36% | Other 0% | | | | | |
| 32. Age: | 18-24 0% | 25-34 6% | 35-44 11% | 45-54 20% | 55-64 27% | 65 and older 36% | | |
| 33. Place of Residence: | | Own 98% | | Rent 1% | | Other: See Appendix B 1% | | |
| | | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5+ |
| 34. Number of Adults (18 or older) in Household: | | | X | 17% | 71% | 9% | 3% | 1% |
| 35. Number of Children (under 18) in Household: | | | 73% | 10% | 11% | 4% | 2% | 1% |
| 36. Household Income Range: | Prefer Not to Answer 25% | Less than 15,000 2% | 15,000 – 24,999 4% | 25,000 – 49,999 12% | 50,000 – 74,999 17% | 75,000 – 99,999 16% | 100,000 or More 25% | |
| 37. How long have you lived in the Town of Wheaton? | Non-resident 4% | Less than 1 year 1% | 1 – 4 years 9% | 5 – 9 years 9% | 10 – 24 years 30% | 25+ years 47% | | |