

## K. TOWN SURVEY RESULTS

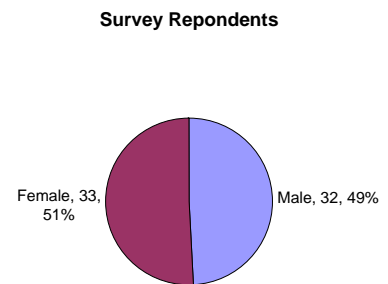
The survey that was mailed to town residents (including renters) and non-residents in January-February of 2009 is reproduced in Appendix A. There were 236 surveys mailed to all resident households and non-resident property owners. Surveys were mailed back to the town Comprehensive Plan Committee or respondents could complete the survey on-line. A total of 28 surveys were completed on-line and an additional 40 surveys were returned through the mail for a total of 70 surveys, a 29.6% response rate. The survey included an incentive of the chance to win \$100 worth of fuel oil for all completely filled out survey forms with a winner announced at the Annual Town Meeting on March 31.

There were many responses to the four open ended questions at the end of the survey as well as other written comments throughout the survey. All of these written responses are reproduced in Appendix A. Summaries of the written comments are noted with the charted data here and throughout the document as the issues they address are raised. The raw data is available at the town office and graphical summaries of the responses are provided here.

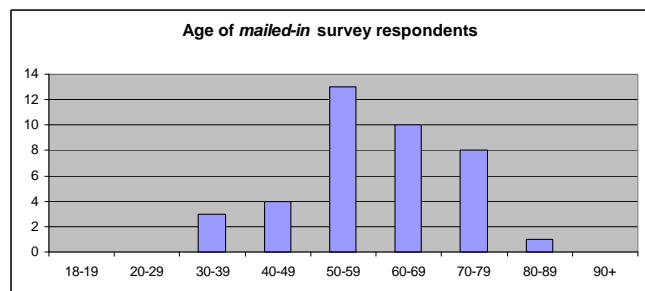
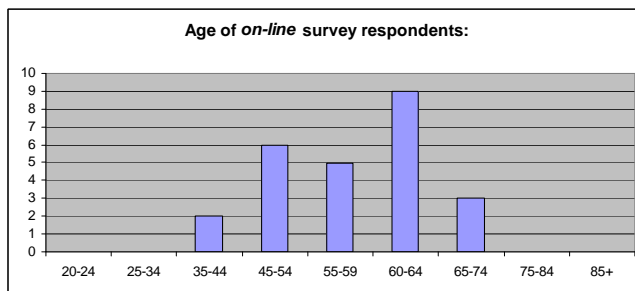
### SURVEY RESULTS

#### A. General

The cross section of survey respondents reflects a comparable proportion of males and females as exist in the general population.

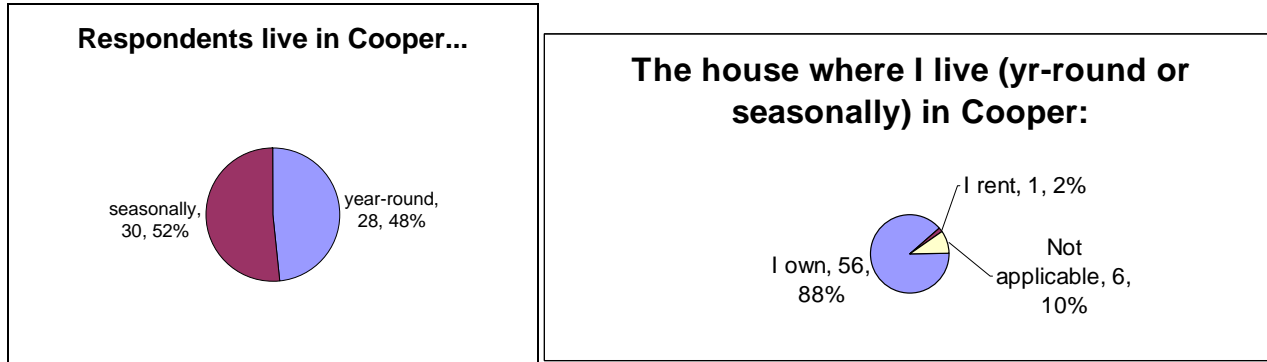


The question about the age of respondents inadvertently provided slightly different age groupings on the printed and on-line versions of the survey. The responses of each group (on-line vs. mailed-in survey respondents) are shown below. Those who responded on-line were somewhat younger overall but both charts indicate respondents are more heavily weighted to the opinions of those over 40 years of age than the age distribution of the population.



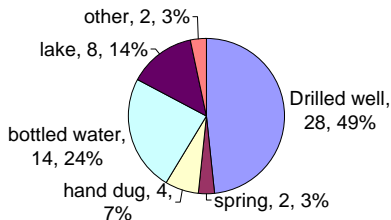
NOTE: The total number of respondents varies throughout the survey responses because not all respondents answered all of the questions.

Slightly more respondents indicated that they live in Cooper seasonally but many people did not answer this question. Actual property owners in Cooper are composed of 145 individuals year round and approximately 250 seasonal residents. The average length of time that respondents have lived in Cooper was essentially the same for year-round (25.5 years) as for seasonal (26.4 years) respondents. Of those who responded to the question the vast majority own the home in which they live.

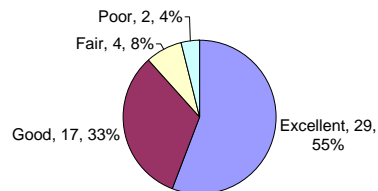


Half the respondents described their water source as a drilled well while the remainder obtain their water from the lake, a spring, a hand dug well or from bottled water. Satisfaction with water is generally very good though nearly a third of respondents filter their drinking water for such things as sand, bacteria, soil, iron and sediment (see also written comments in Appendix A).

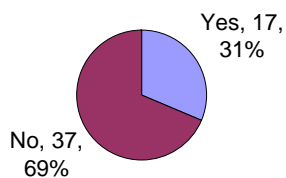
**Source of respondent's household drinking water**



**Respondent's rating of their drinking water:**



**Respondents who filter their drinking water...**

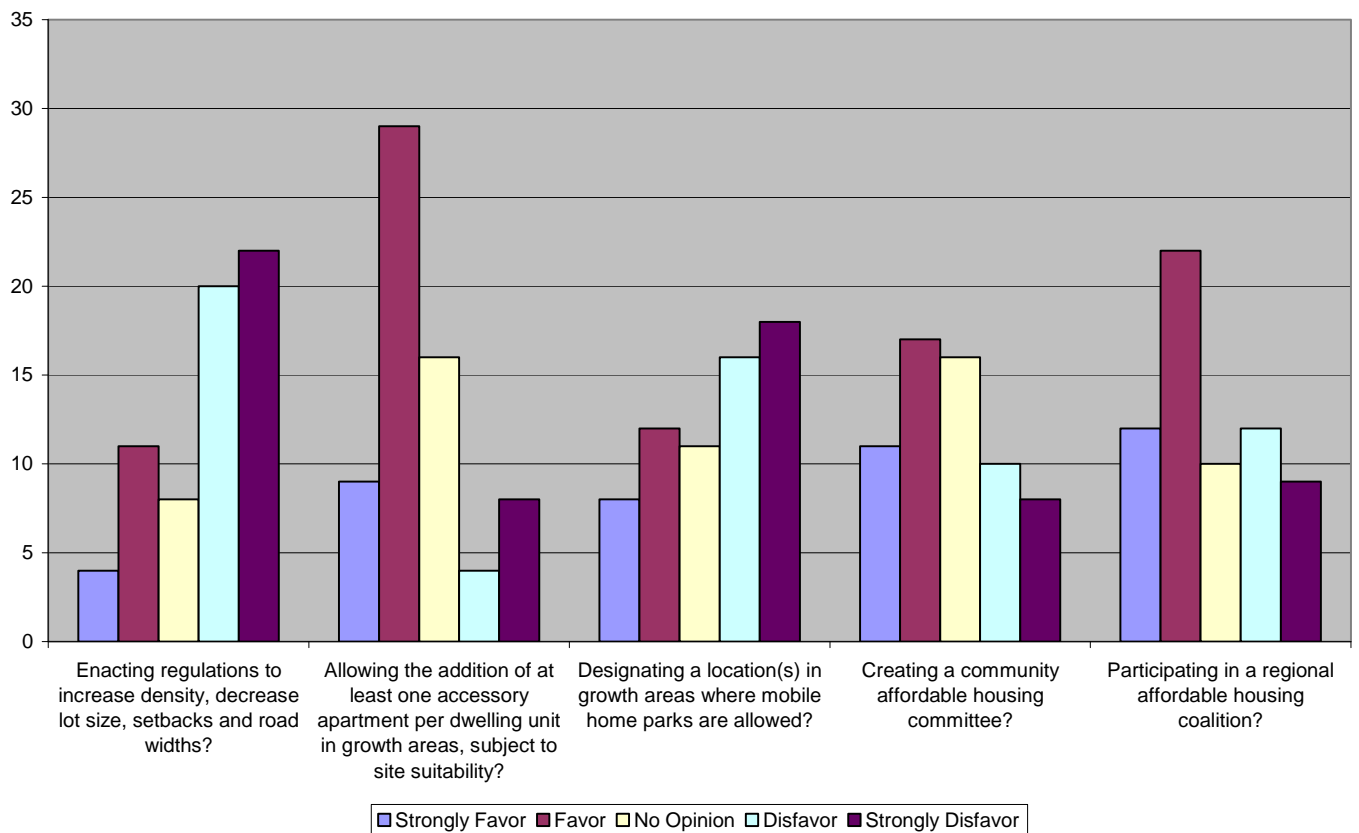


**B. Housing, Development and Preservation**

Questions on housing in the survey were focused on the types of strategies towns can implement to make housing more affordable to residents. Respondents generally did not favor dimensional regulations that allowed greater density. Neither did they favor areas in growth areas for mobile home parks though opinions were not as strong against this concept as they were against regulatory options.

Respondents do favor allowing accessory apartments and participating in a regional affordable housing coalition. Opinions were mixed on creating a community affordable housing committee.

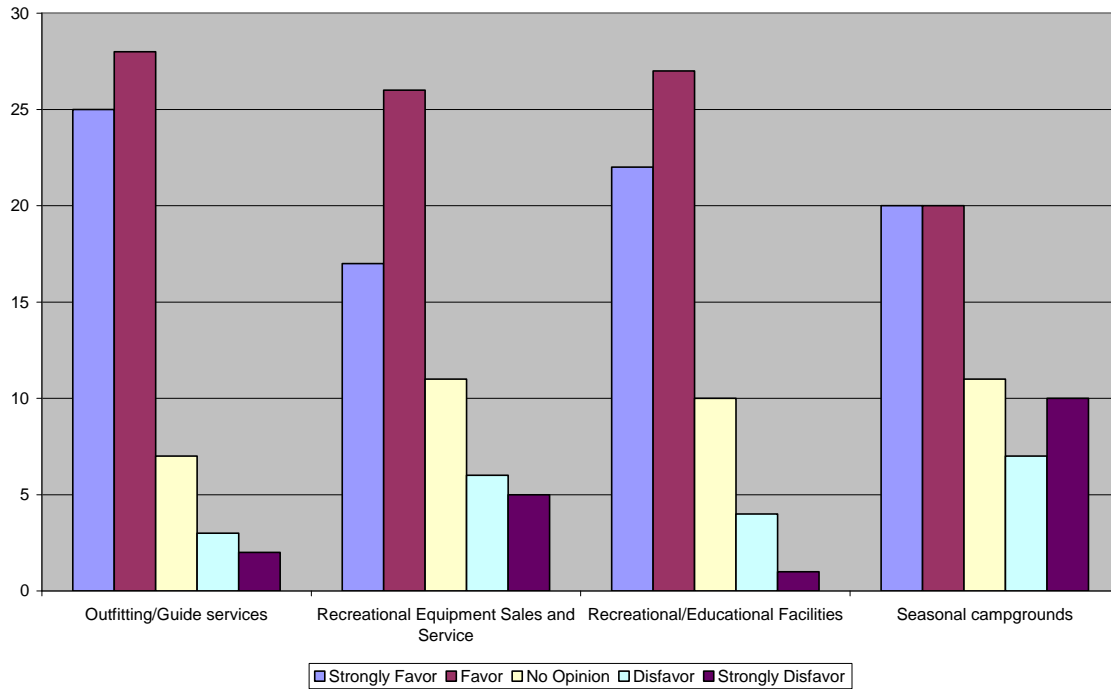
**To make housing less expensive do you favor...?**



**Development**

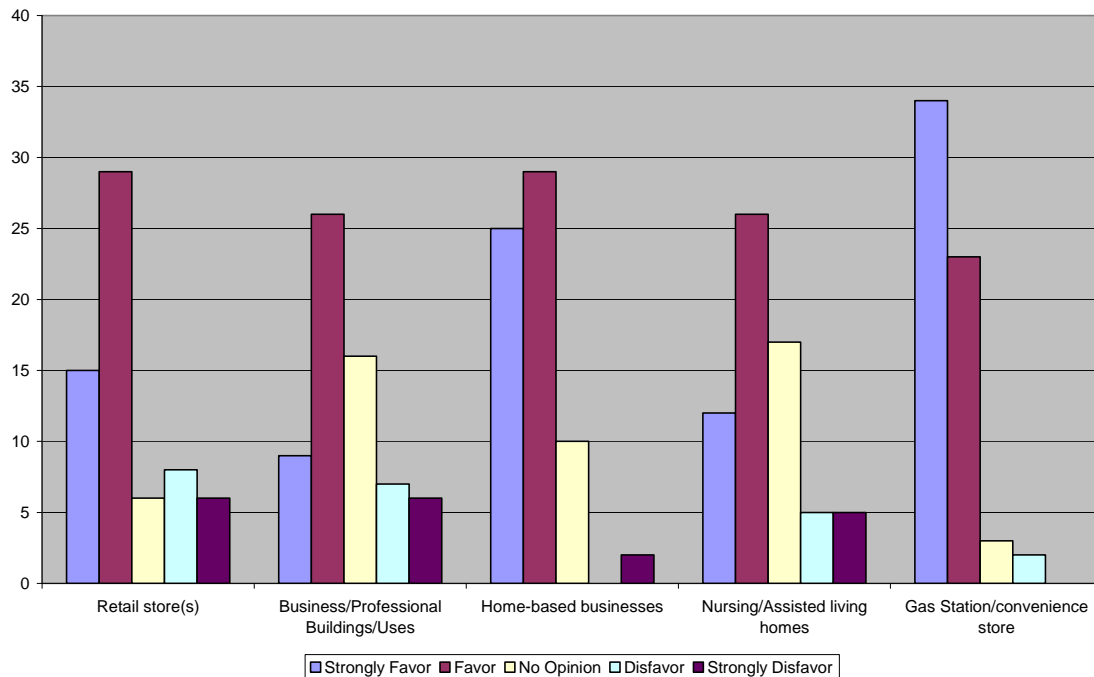
A wide variety of questions sought input on development types and opportunities. The following charts lump similar activities together to describe the range of opinion – from strongly favoring to strongly disfavoring – expressed by respondents. There were also some written comments provided on the surveys which are reproduced in Appendix A. All of the development associated with recreational facilities, recreational equipment sales and services, guiding and seasonal camping were strongly favored.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



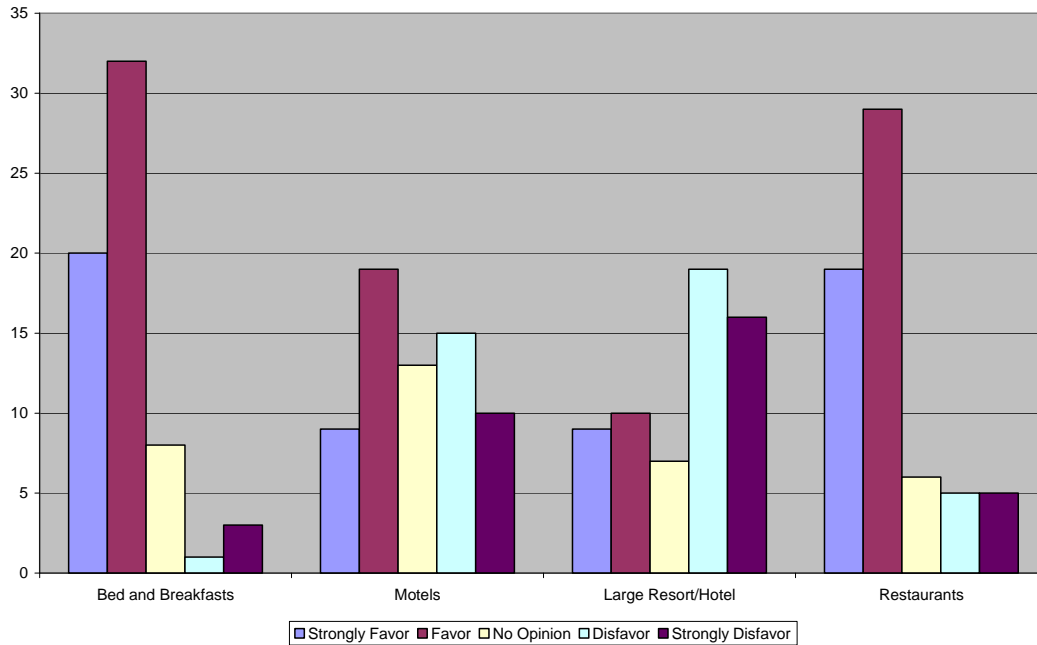
Home based businesses were especially supported as were providing an opportunity for professional business and some retail uses. Particularly supported was a gas station and convenience store.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



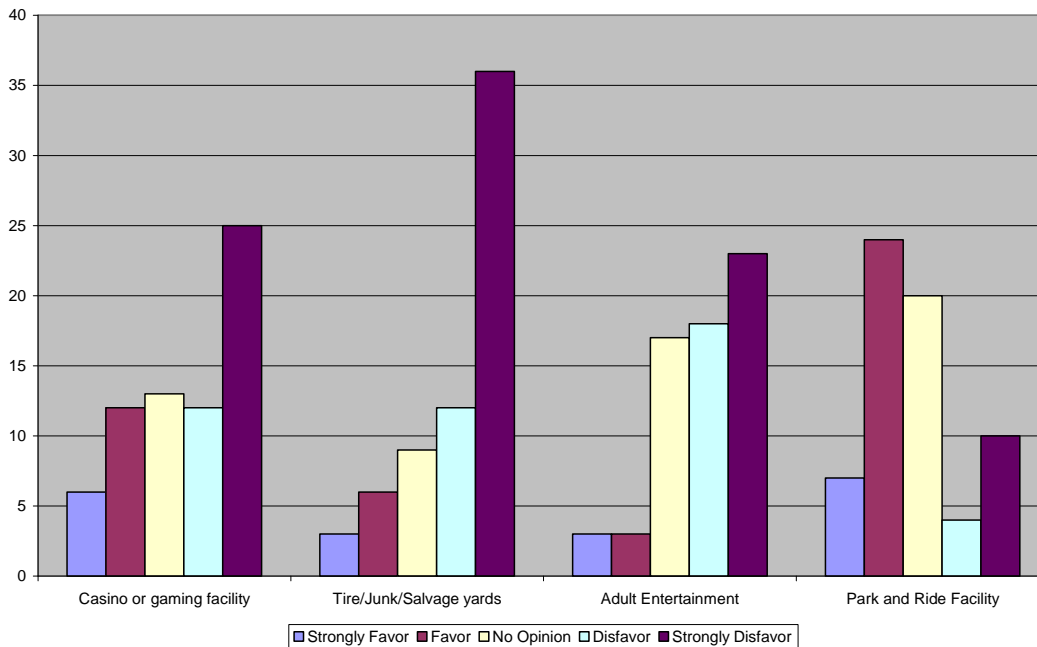
Respondents favor low scale tourism developments rather than large operations like resorts.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



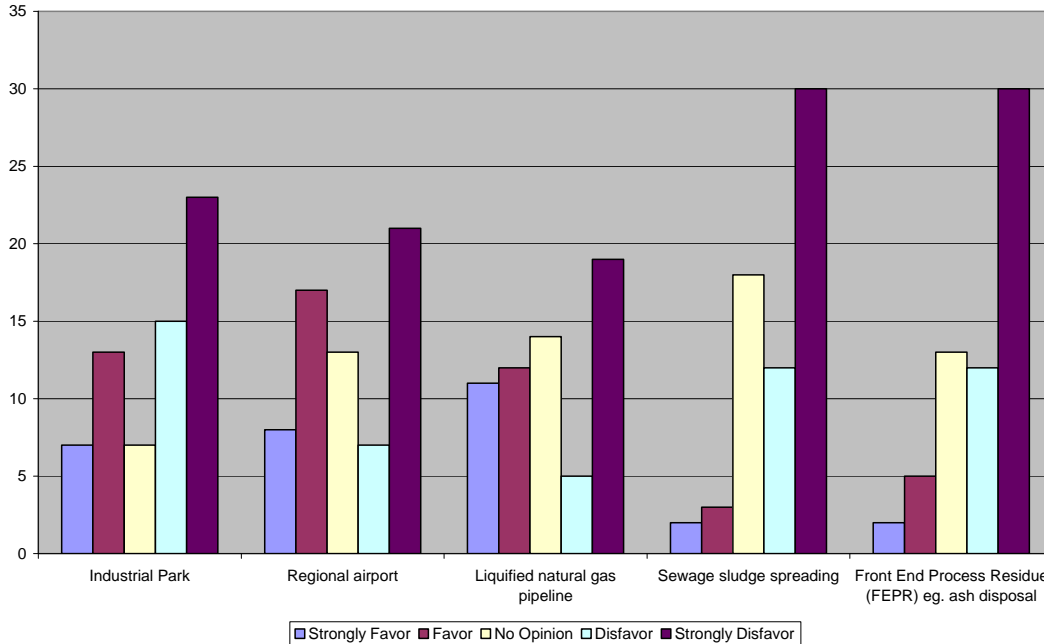
Casino and gaming facilities were not favored, nor were adult entertainment facilities. One of the most strongly disfavored activities was salvage and junk facilities.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



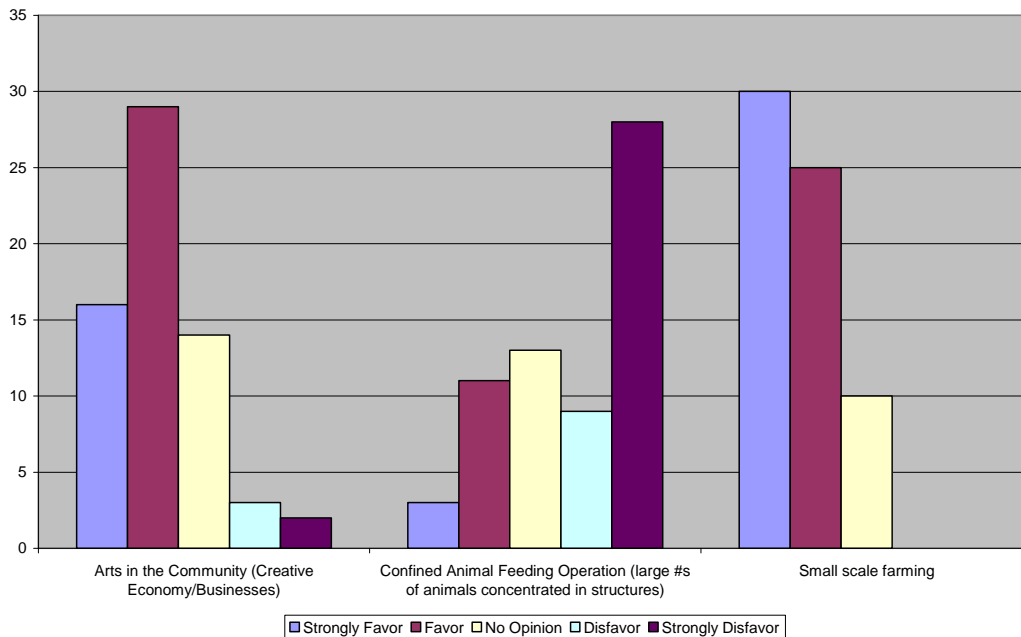
A park and ride facility was generally favored. Several of the types of activities proposed in recent years in the region, or often in rural areas in particular, were generally not favored. See also written comments in Appendix A.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



The written comments speak to a desire for small scale operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of the town as did the responses to different types of agriculture.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?

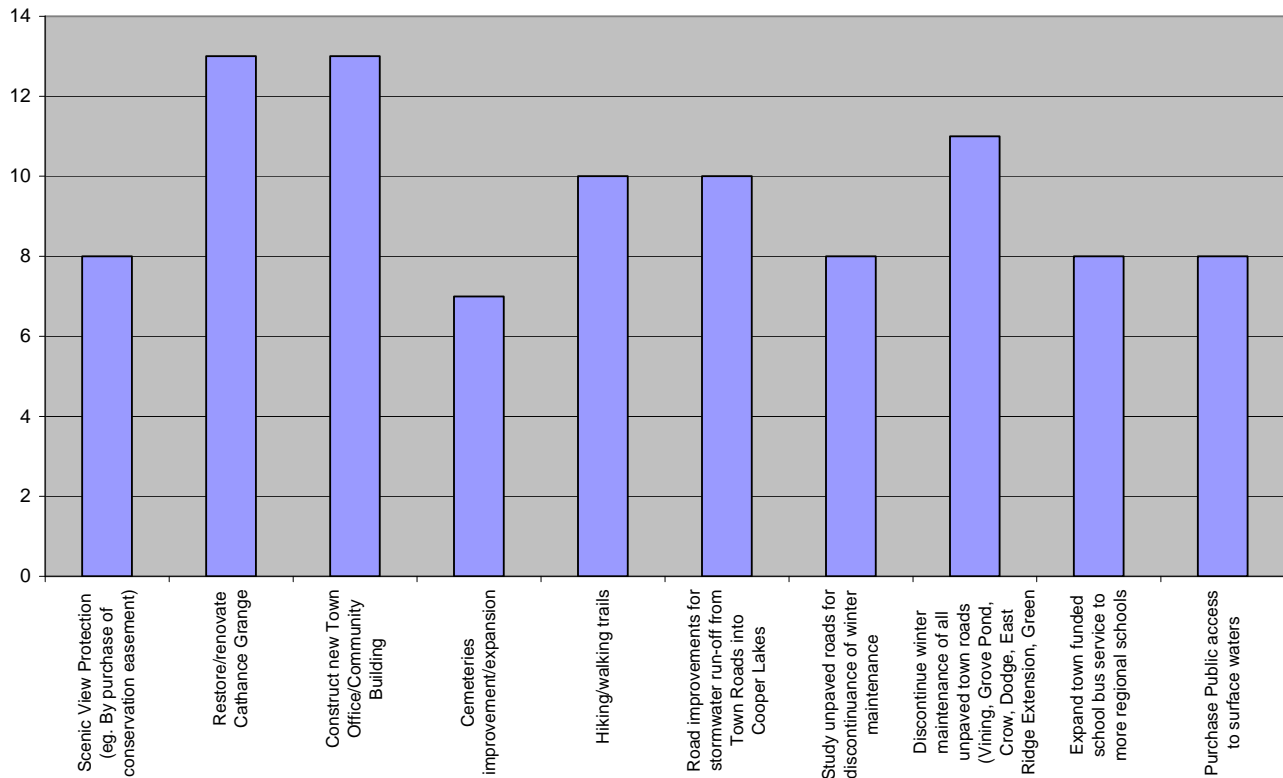


**Public Investments**

The next set of survey questions sought to understand how much taxpayers are prepared to spend or invest in their preservation priorities and in community services.

Respondents were asked how much they favored/disfavored investment in each item and then to choose 3 of their highest priorities. Priorities are presented first and then the relative importance of each investment is charted.

**Highest Priorities for Town \$ INVESTMENTS \$**



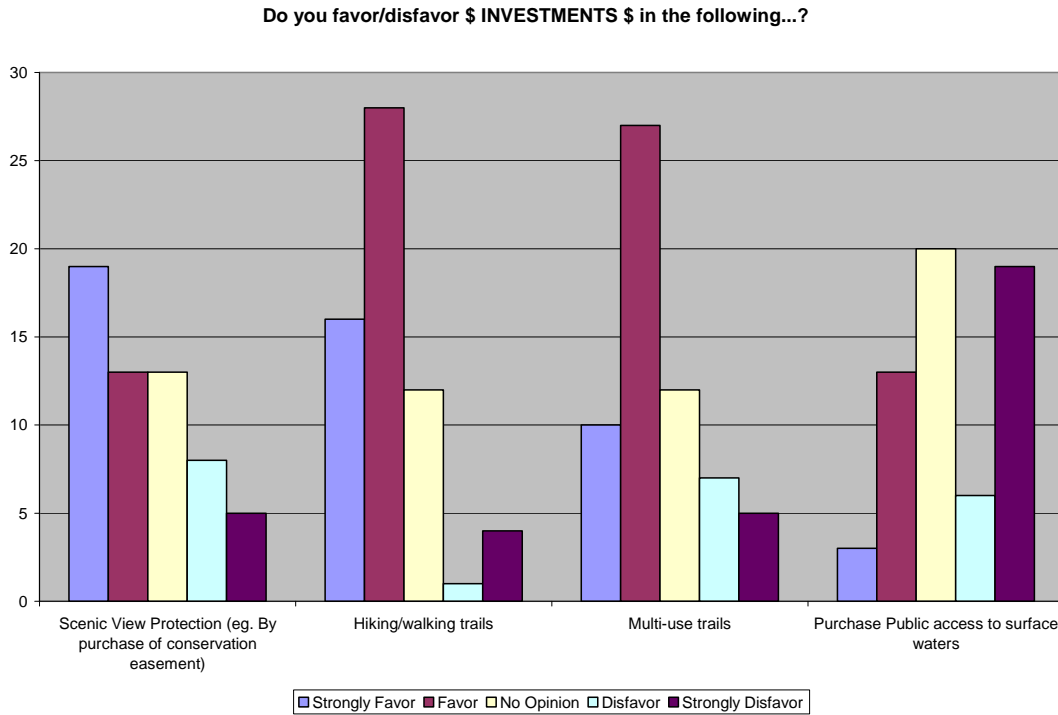
The two highest priorities to respondents (13 votes each) were restoration/renovation of the Cathance Grange and constructing a new town office/community building.

The next highest priority for town investments (11 votes) was to discontinue winter maintenance of all unpaved town roads.

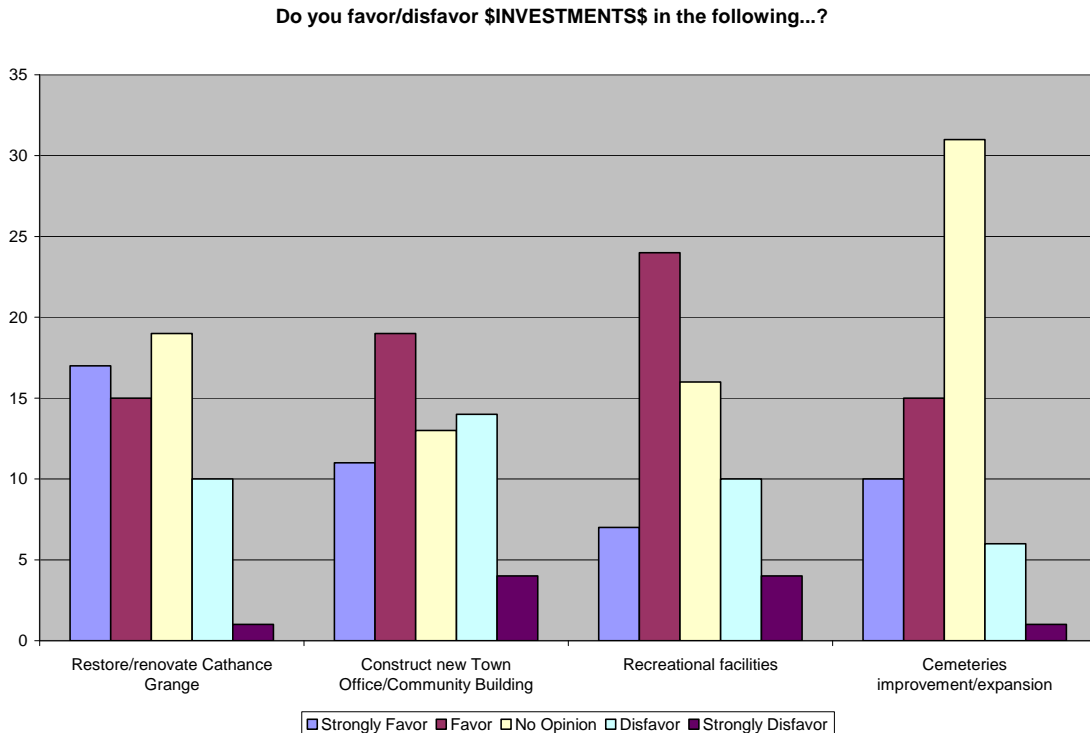
The next two highest priorities (10 votes each) for town investments were hiking/walking trails and road improvement for stormwater run-off from Town roads into Cooper Lakes.

Closely following (8 votes each) were scenic view protection, a study of unpaved roads for discontinuance of winter maintenance, expanding town funded school bus service to more regional schools and purchase of public access to surface waters.

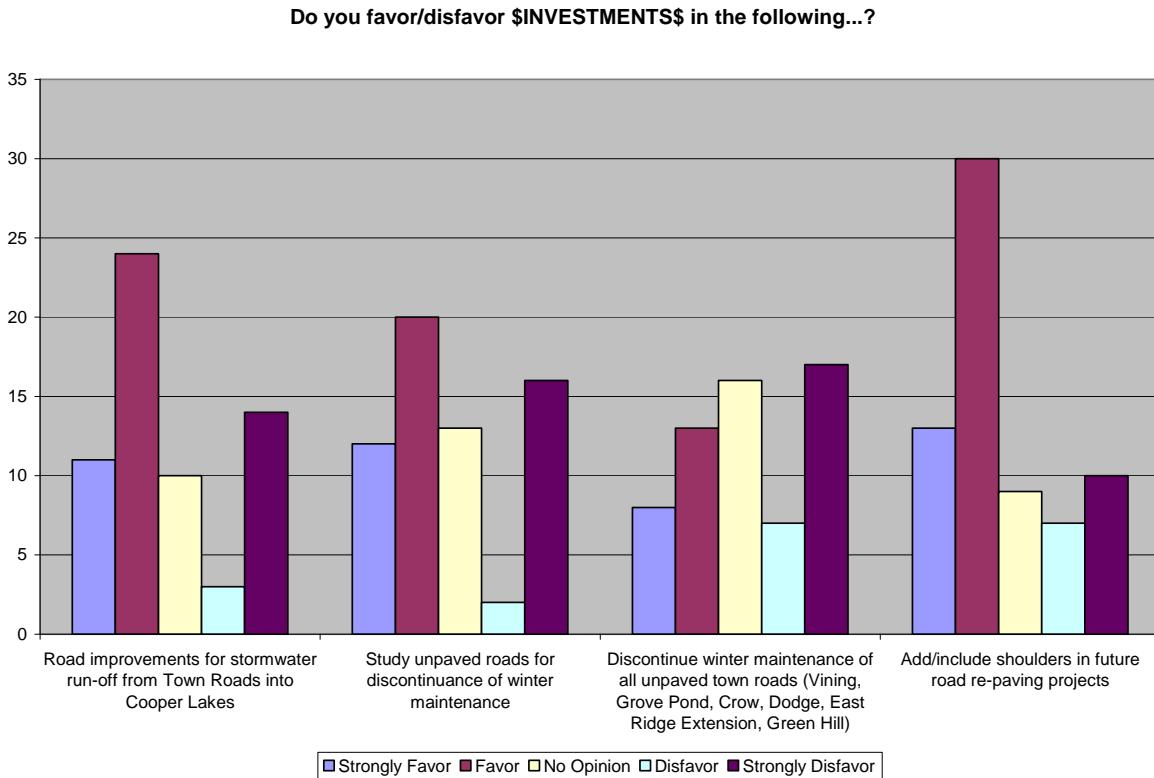
The following chart reveals the support for scenic view protection and trails. It also shows that while purchase of public access to surface waters was a high priority for many (as noted above), there were many who strongly disagreed with this kind of investment.



Support for investment in either the Cathance Grange or a new town office/community building is split. Many had no opinion on cemeteries presumably because it does not/will not affect them.



Opinions on investments for road improvements were varied. Adding shoulders was strongly supported as were improvements for stormwater run-off from town roads into Cooper Lakes. Again, while discontinuance of winter maintenance on unpaved road was supported (first as a study and secondarily as an action) there was also a fair amount of strong disagreement on this option.



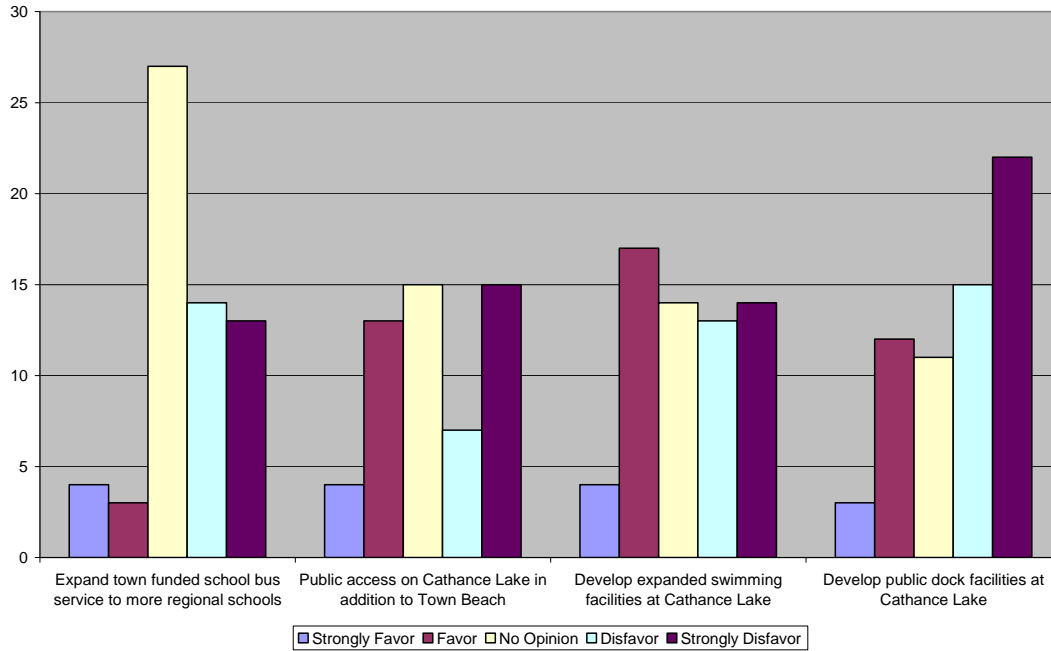
Investments in improvements on Cathance Lake were mixed. Expansion of public dock facilities are not generally supported. Additional public access is supported by some with somewhat lesser amounts of support for expanded swimming facilities on Cathance Lake.

Opinions on the expansion of town funded school bus service to more regional schools were primarily unfavorable. This appears to reveal a problem with the survey. The intent of the final column in the table on how the town should make investments was to identify priorities for expenditures.

However, it appears that some respondents marked those investments in the final column of the table not if they supported the investment but rather because they opposed the investment.

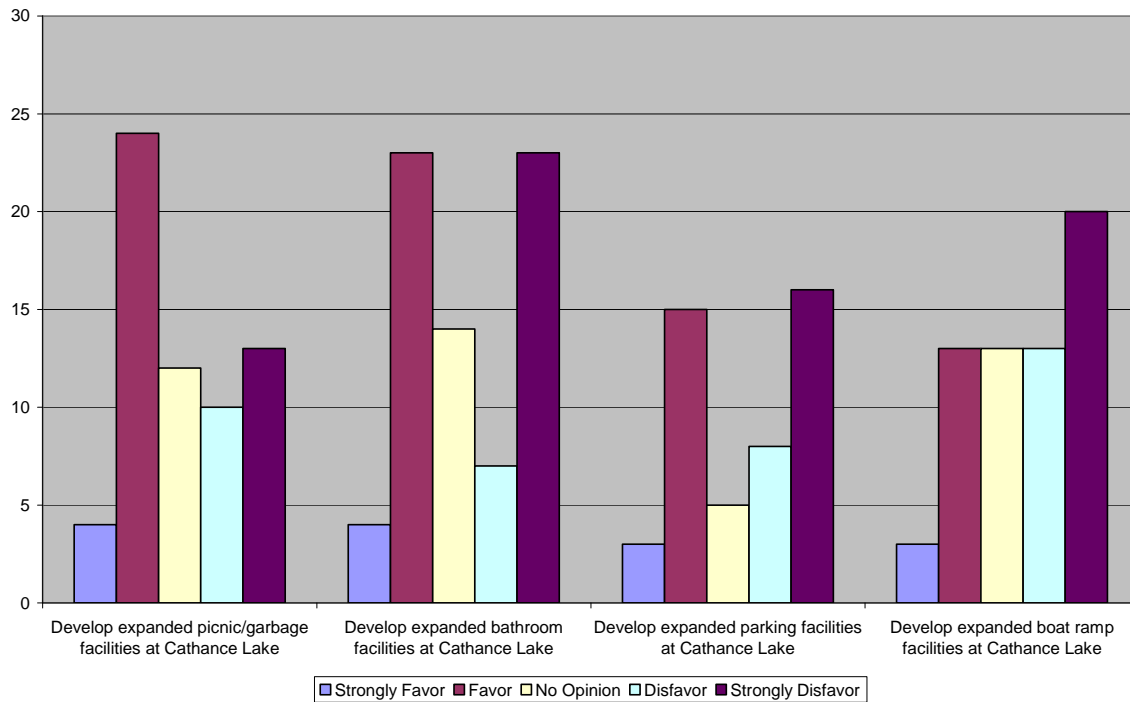
This disconnect between an investment that is not favored by some but is a priority investment overall appears to be repeated in the support (or lack of support for) discontinuing winter maintenance on all unpaved roads and purchase of public access to surface waters.

Do you favor/disfavor \$ INVESTMENTS \$ in the following...?



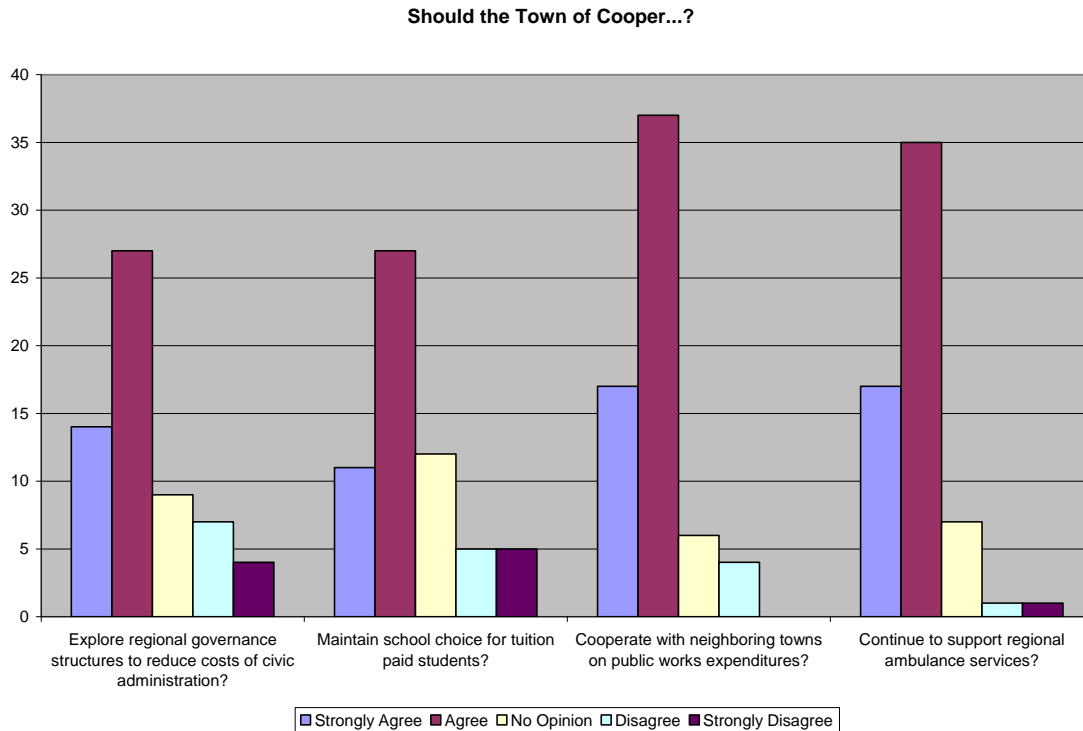
Opinions on expanding the facilities at Cathance Lake were very polarized. The strongest support exists for expanded picnic and garbage facilities.

Do you favor/disfavor \$ INVESTMENTS \$ in the following..?

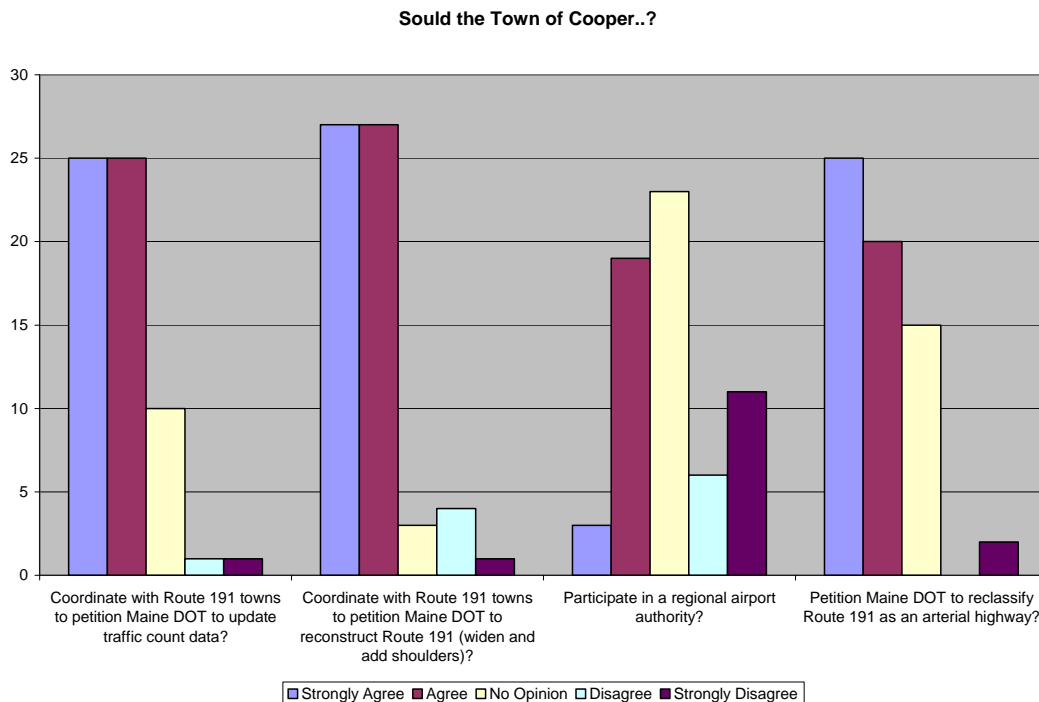


### Regionalization of Services

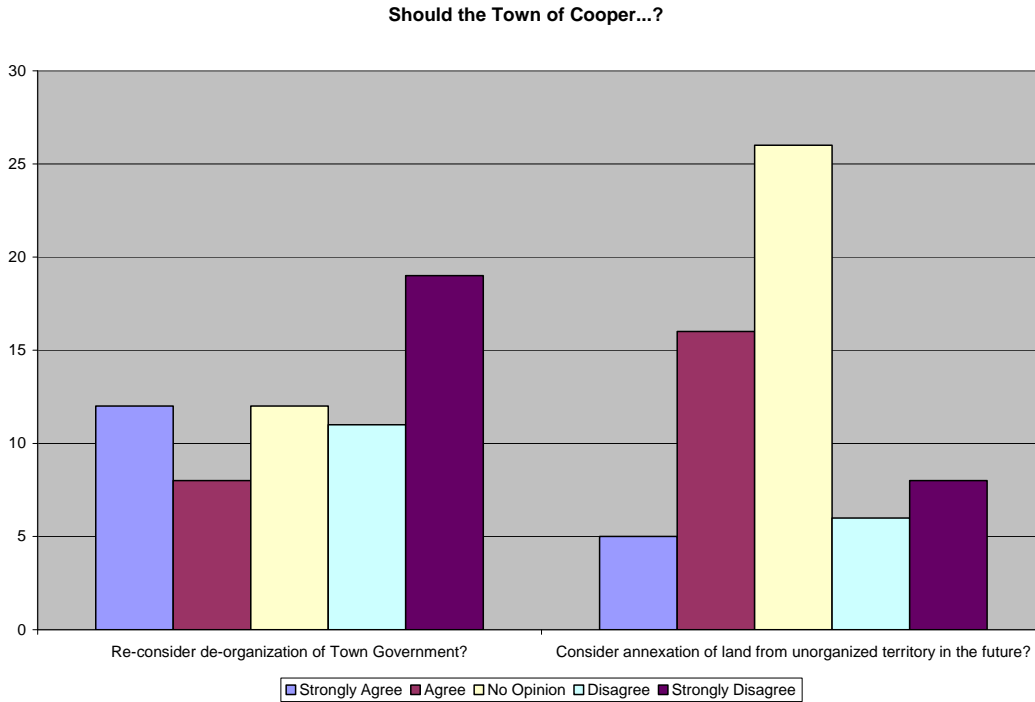
Opinions on regionalization were generally positive particularly for regional ambulance services.



Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant. Participation in a regional airport authority was polarized with many expressing no opinion perhaps because they did not understand what it means for the town.

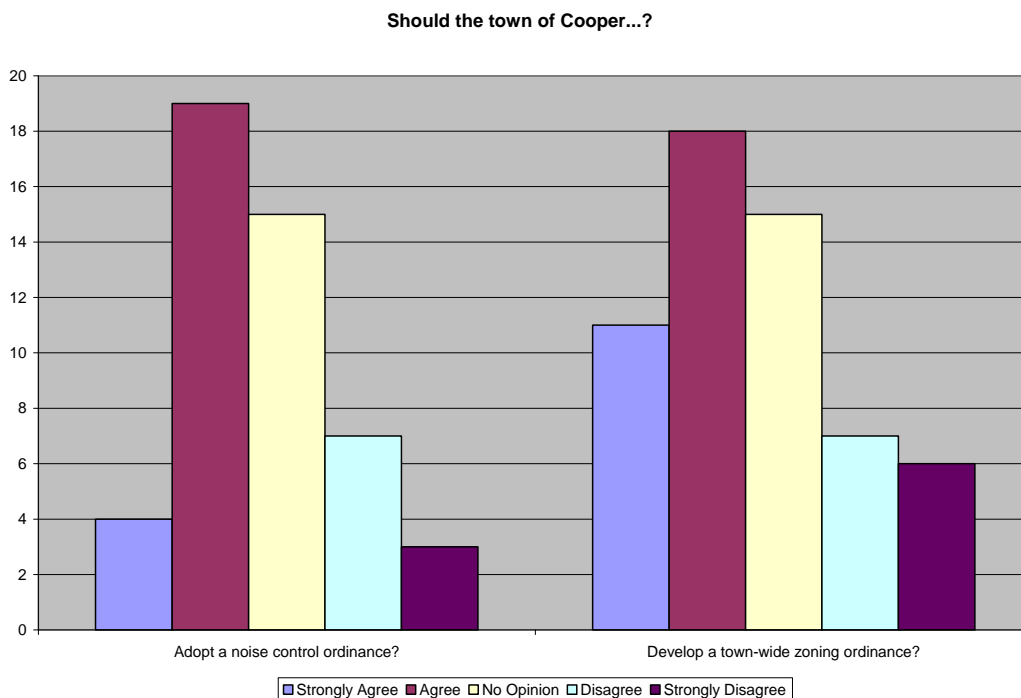


Re-consideration of the de-organization of town government did not have a majority of support though some still think it deserves consideration. Future annexation of land from unorganized territory received very mixed opinions with many expressing no opinion at all. Again, this may result from a lack of understanding of what such annexation would look like or mean for the town.



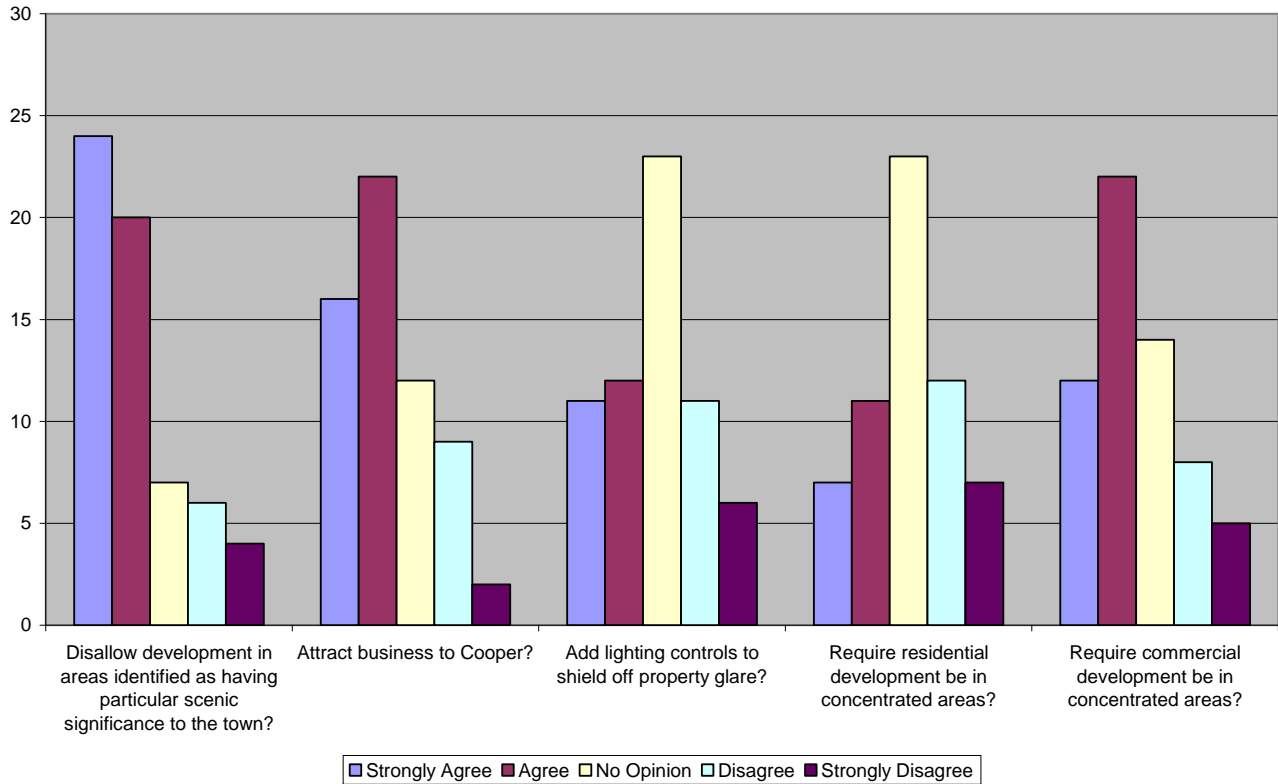
**Preservation, Planning and Land Use.**

Support for the development of both a zoning and a noise control ordinance was strong.



Specific provisions in a future zoning ordinance generated a range of opinions. Disallowing development in areas identified as having particular scenic significance was strongly supported. Including provisions that could attract business to Cooper was supported as was requiring that commercial development be in concentrated areas. Requiring residential development to be in concentrated areas was not supported nearly as much and many had no opinion on the idea. Many also had no opinion on adding lighting controls to shield off property glare.

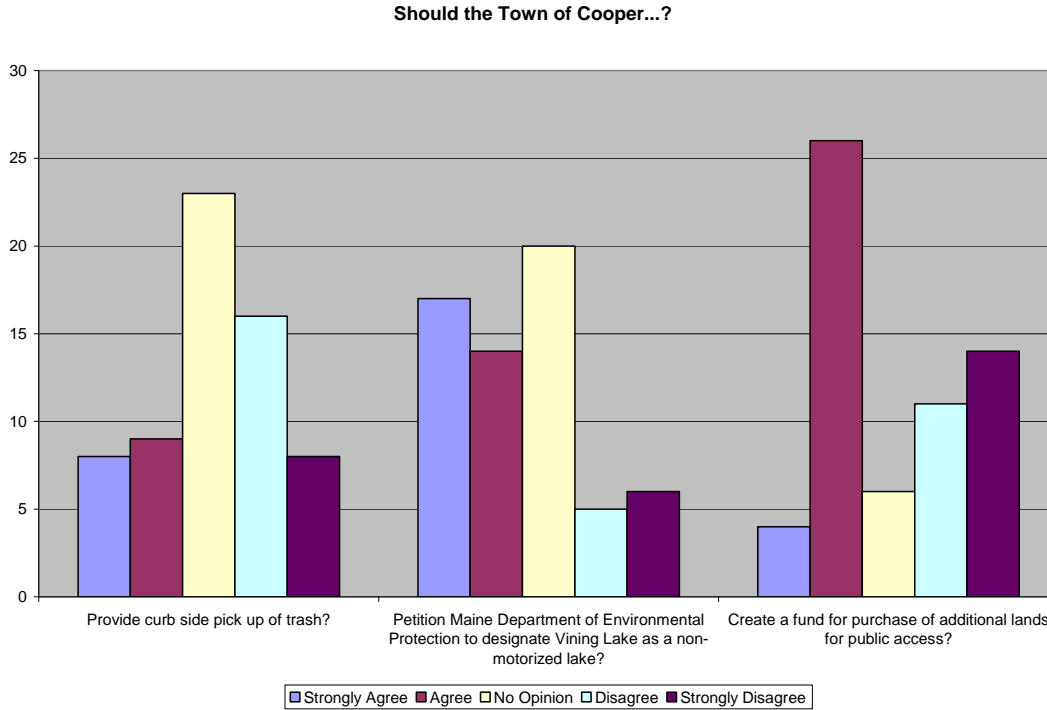
Should any future zoning ordinance include specific strategies to...?



Support for curb side pick up of trash was mixed though leaned toward unfavorable.

Many support a petition to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to designate Vining Lake as a non-motorized lake.

Creation of a fund for purchase of additional land for public access was highly polarized.

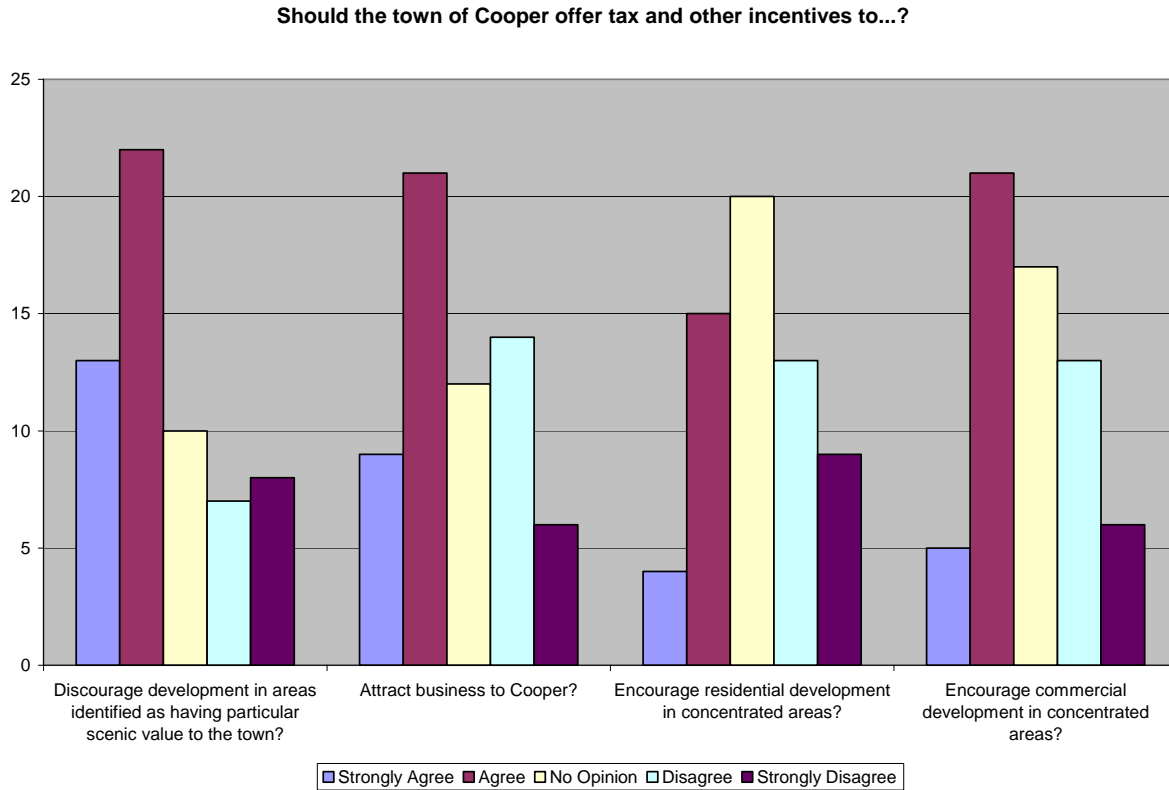


A similar set of questions were asked about whether incentives (vs. provisions of a future zoning ordinance) should be used to achieve the same ends.

Opinions were very similar for two of the provisions. Encouraging commercial development to be in concentrated areas through the use of incentives was generally favored but encouraging concentration of residential development was not with many expressing no opinion.

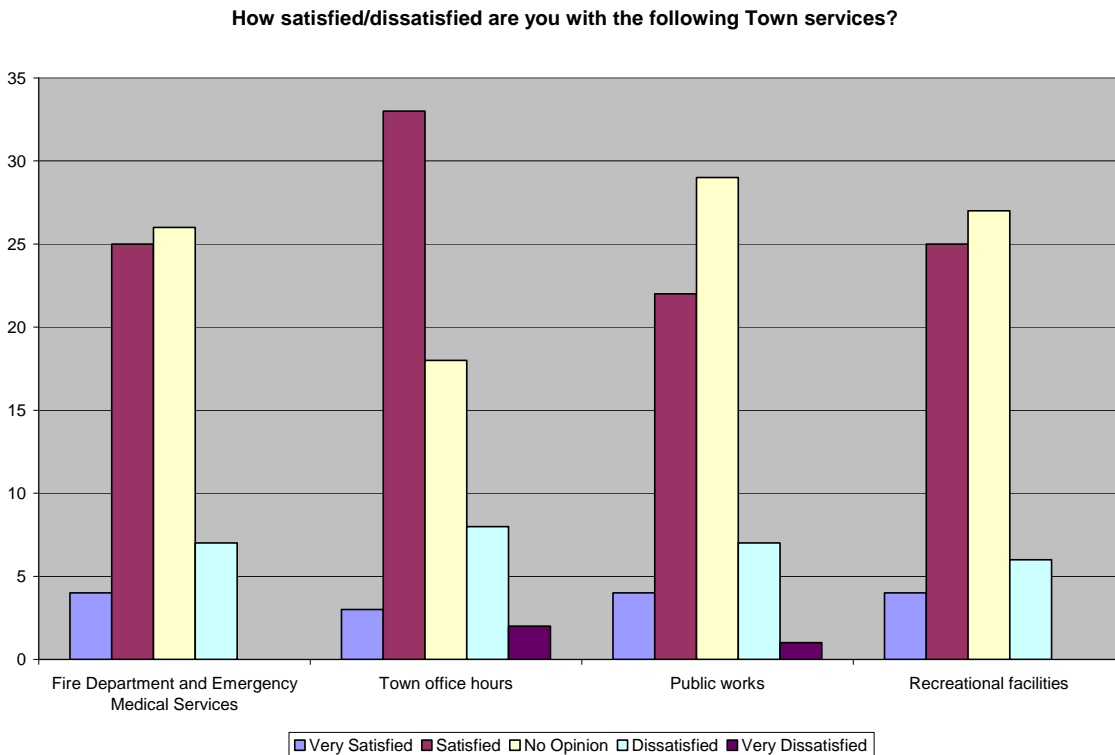
Opinions on the use of incentives to protect scenic areas were favorable but not as strongly favorable as using regulation to achieve this result.

Finally opinions on the use of incentives to attract business to Cooper were favorable (as with the use of zoning provisions to achieve the same end) but with many more expressing disfavor with the idea than through the use of regulation.



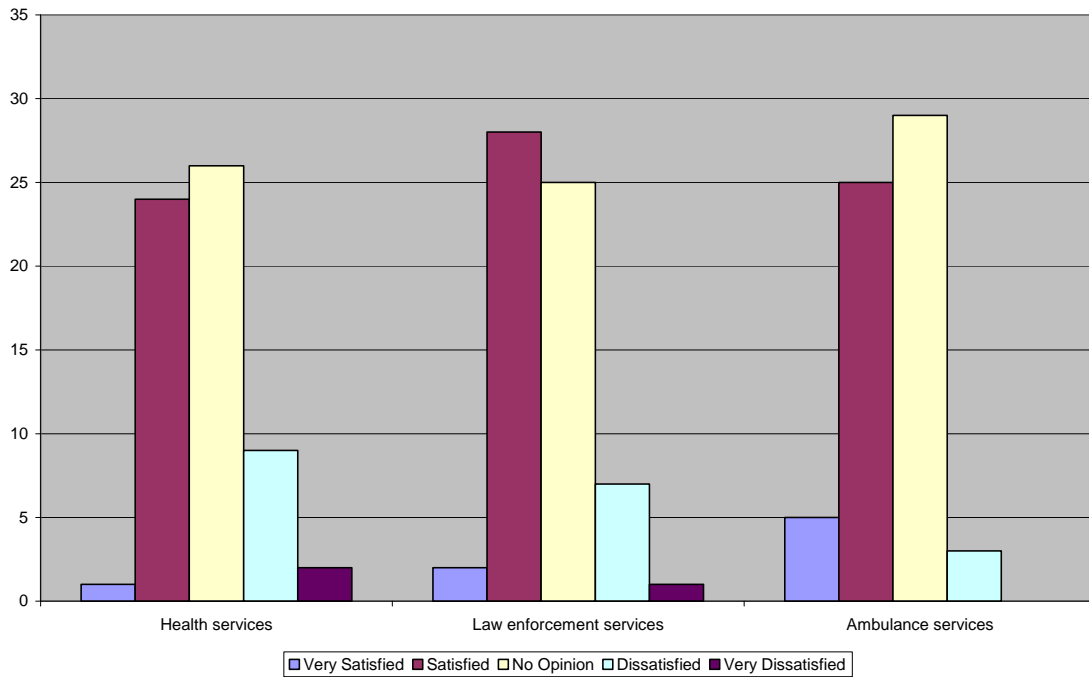
### C. Facilities and Services

Respondents were generally satisfied with town services or had no opinion about them.



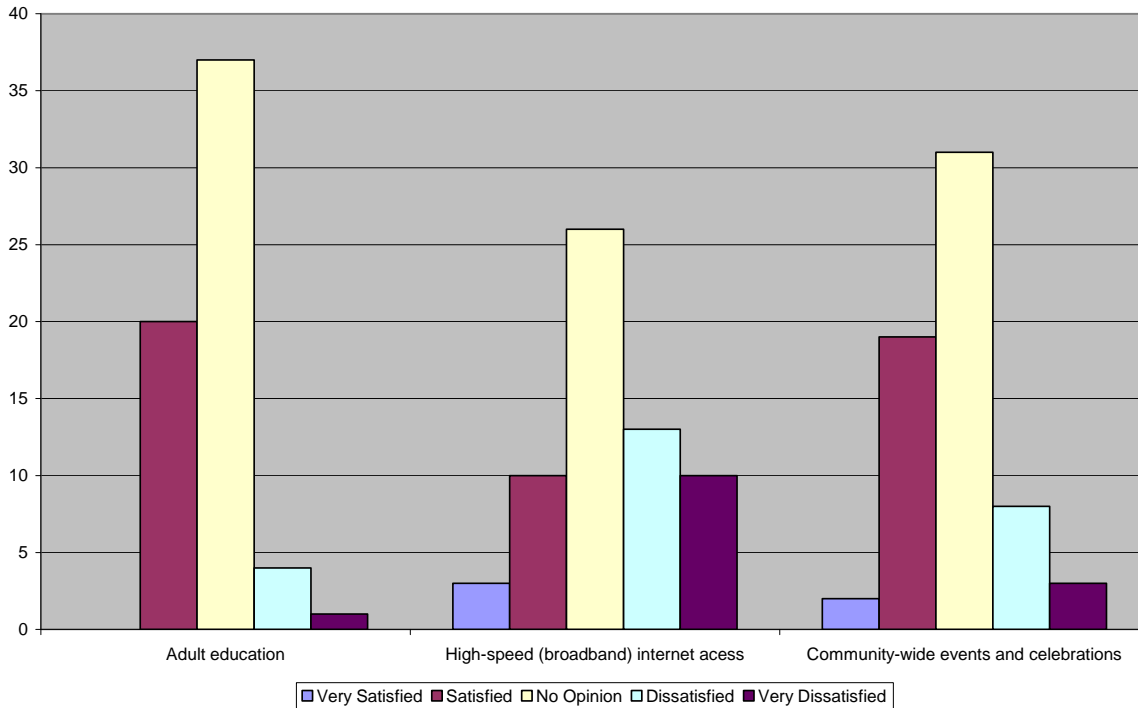
Respondents are also generally satisfied with community services or had no opinion.

How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the following community/regional services?



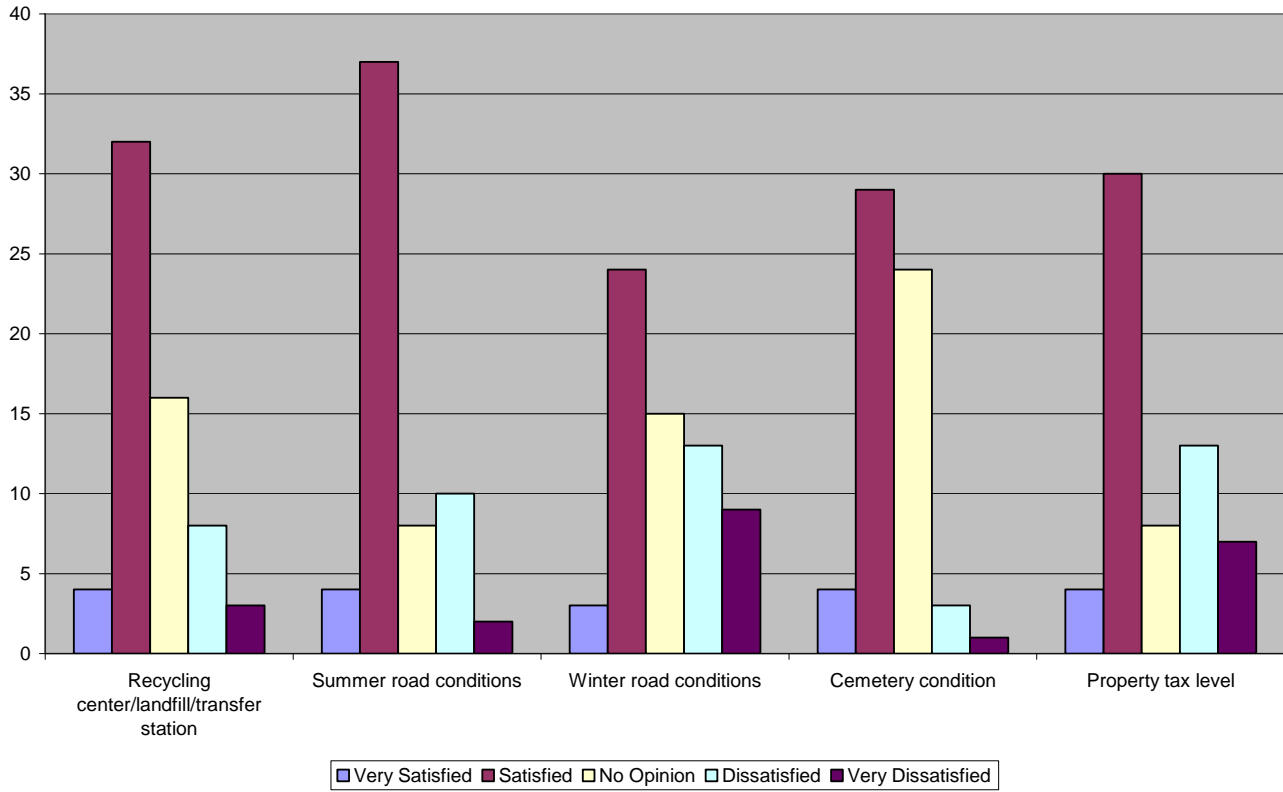
Respondents are also generally satisfied with other services while many are dissatisfied with the availability of high speed (broadband) internet access.

How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the following community/regional services?



Finally, respondents are generally satisfied with summer road conditions though they are less satisfied with winter road conditions. The condition of the cemeteries was found satisfactory by most as was the recycling center/landfill/transfer station though there were some who are strongly dissatisfied with it. Additional written comments are also included in Appendix A. Most are satisfied with the property tax level though there were many who were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied.

How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the following...?



**SUMMARY**

In early 2009 Cooper residents completed a survey to give their views on important aspects of the town’s future. The participation rate was high (29.6% response rate) for surveys of this type and included a great deal of written input.

Questions on housing in the survey were focused on the types of strategies towns can implement to make housing more affordable to residents. Respondents generally did not favor dimensional regulations that allowed greater density. Neither did they favor areas in growth areas for mobile home parks though opinions were not as strong against this concept as they were against regulatory options. Respondents do favor allowing accessory apartments and participating in a regional affordable housing coalition. Opinions were mixed on creating a community affordable housing committee.

On questions about desired types of economic activity respondents strongly supported home based businesses. Also supported were professional business and some retail uses. All of the development

associated with recreational facilities, recreational equipment sales and services, guiding and seasonal camping were strongly favored. Casino and gaming facilities were not favored, nor were adult entertainment facilities. Consistent with this sentiment, respondents favor low scale tourism developments rather than large operations like resorts. One of the most strongly disfavored activities was salvage and junk facilities. Particularly supported was a gas station and convenience store. The written comments speak to a desire for small scale operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of the town as did the responses to different types of agriculture.

Several questions asked about local roads and transportation. Respondents are generally satisfied with summer road conditions though they are less satisfied with winter road conditions. Opinions on investments for road improvements were varied. Adding shoulders was strongly supported as were improvements for stormwater run-off from town roads into Cooper Lakes. Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant.

Respondents were asked how much they favored/disfavored investment in their preservation priorities and in community services and then to choose 3 of their highest priorities. In summary the two highest were restoration/renovation of the Cathance Grange and constructing a new town office/community building. The next highest priority for town investments was to discontinue winter maintenance of all unpaved town roads.

Respondents were generally satisfied with town and regional/community services or had no opinion about them. Respondents are also generally satisfied with other services while many are dissatisfied with the availability of high speed (broadband) internet access. The condition of the cemeteries was found satisfactory by most as was the recycling center/landfill/transfer station though there were some who are strongly dissatisfied with it. Most are satisfied with the property tax level though there were many who were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied.

Respondents to the survey expressed support for the town to prevent uncontrolled development through development of a zoning ordinance and a noise control ordinance. Specific provisions in a future zoning ordinance generated a range of opinions. Disallowing development in areas identified as having particular scenic significance was strongly supported. Including provisions that could attract business to Cooper was supported as was requiring that commercial development be in concentrated areas. Requiring residential development to be in concentrated areas was not supported nearly as much and many had no opinion on the idea. Many also had no opinion on adding lighting controls to shield off property glare.

Opinions on regionalization were generally positive particularly for regional ambulance services. Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant. Participation in a regional airport authority was polarized with many expressing no opinion perhaps because they did not understand what it means for the town. Re-consideration of the de-organization of town government did not have a majority of support though some still think it deserves consideration. Future annexation of land from unorganized territory received very mixed opinions with many expressing no opinion at all. Again, this may result from a lack of understanding of what such annexation would look like or mean for the town.