



Town of Oak Grove Comprehensive Plan Public Opinion Survey, 2008

David Trechter
Shelly Hadley

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Study Purpose	6
Survey Methods	6
Profile of Respondents.....	7
Quality of Life	8
Programs and Services	13
Natural and Cultural Resources.....	14
Communication.....	15
Housing.....	16
Agriculture and Land Use.....	17
Transportation.....	21
Economic Development	21
Conclusions	23
Appendix A – Validating the Sample	24
Appendix B – Written Comments	27
Appendix C: TOWN OF OAK GROVE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ..	36

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the results of a comprehensive planning survey of property owners in the Town of Oak Grove. A high response rate (258 of 431 surveys were returned = 60%) and a number of statistical tests indicate that the results should accurately reflect public opinion about the issues addressed in the survey.

One impression that SRC analysts have of the Town of Oak Grove, based on our analysis of these data, is of a remarkably cohesive population. Throughout the survey, we check to see if different demographic groups have different opinions about the issues being considered. For example, are the opinions about land use issues held by women statistically different than those of men, do younger residents view things differently than older residents, do people who have lived in the Town for longer periods have different ideas than those more newly arrived, and so on. In this report, there are remarkably few instances in which there are deep demographic divides on a particular issue. There are also few systematic differences of opinion across the topics covered in this survey. It may look different on the ground during meetings of the Plan Commission, but relative to the many communities with which we have worked on comprehensive planning surveys, there appears to be relatively few significant differences of opinion about land use issues in this community.

Most people in Oak Grove feel that the quality of life in the Town is good or excellent, only 12 percent said the overall quality of life is only fair and less than 1 percent said it is poor. The rating people give to the quality of life in the Town is strongly correlated with their view of the quality of public services (e.g. roads, public safety) available to them and with what they deem sensible land use decisions (e.g. development designs that consider visual impacts and preserve open space and agricultural opportunities). The link between public policy decisions and people's perception of the quality of life in Oak Grove is also apparent when the reasons they give for living in the Town are examined. People live in Oak Grove because of historic connections with the Town (to be near family and friends, being born and raised in the area), the outdoor amenities (e.g. beauty of the Town's natural features, access to outdoor recreation), and socio-economic conditions (e.g. small town atmosphere, agricultural opportunities, proximity to employment, and low crime rates). Public policy may not influence historic connections to the town but do have profound impacts on the Town's outdoor amenities and socio-economic conditions. People like living in Oak Grove.

Generally, property owners in Oak Grove are satisfied with the public services they receive (road maintenance, fire protection, and public safety) but there is substantial scope for improvement in some areas (zoning regulations and parks and recreation). They agree that the current road network meets their needs and that alternative forms of transportation (e.g. ATVs, bikes, walking) are important in the Town.

Large majorities feel it is important or essential to protect all of the natural and cultural resources in the Town. Given the reasons people give for living in the Town, it isn't surprising that they want their surface and ground water, forest and farm land, wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing resources, and so on, preserved.

Contentment with the status quo in the Town is also evident in responses to questions about housing and economic development. With respect to housing, residents were asked about the need for additional starter homes, housing for the elderly, and multifamily units. None of these options had a majority of residents that agreed that more of such units are needed in Oak Grove. In terms of economic development, residents are evenly split between those who agree that the Town should recruit new business/industry (41%) and those who disagree (46%). If additional economic opportunities are sought, there is strong support for alternative energy development (solar, wind, and (to a lesser extent) biomass), agriculturally-related businesses, home-based businesses and tourism/recreation businesses.

With respect to land use issues, Oak Grove landowners strongly agree that prime agricultural land should be allowed to continue to be used in agriculture but majorities feel such land should not be converted to residential or commercial uses. Support for agriculture in the Town is quite strong but there is also concern about expansion of large livestock operations. Residents don't support prohibiting their expansion in Oak Grove, but none of the options offered regarding where they should be allowed to expand (anywhere in the town, outside of a 1 mile radius from incorporated areas, or outside a 2 mile radius) attracted majority support. Residents don't support the proposition that landowners should be able to develop their land in anyway they see fit, they want visual impacts to be considered when evaluating development proposals, and they favor cluster development designs that would preserve more open space. On the other hand, they don't favor the use of PDRs as a means of preserving open space and agricultural opportunities – at least at the moment.

In short, the picture of the Town Oak Grove painted by these data is of a relatively cohesive population that likes their rural, agriculturally-influenced lifestyle, is satisfied with most of the services they receive, and want to use land use policies to preserve the natural amenities and agricultural resources that they value.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this survey was to understand public opinions about a range of land use issues facing the Town of Oak Grove. The results of this survey will provide input into the comprehensive plan that the Town is developing. A survey of all the property owners in the Town is important in developing a comprehensive plan because it is much more likely to capture the overall opinions of residents. Experience suggests that it is increasingly difficult to get people to attend public meetings. The people who do attend public meetings may or may not be representative of the overall population. As we will show, statistical tests suggest the results of this survey should accurately reflect the opinions of property owners in Oak Grove.

Because many of the questions in the questionnaire used for Barron County's comprehensive plan are the same as those used in the Town's survey instrument, as appropriate Town and County responses will be compared.

Survey Methods

From late October through early December, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls mailed surveys to 431 property owners in the Town. The SRC received 258 completed surveys, which is a high 60% percent response rate. Based on this population and 258 responses, the estimates contained in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.9 percent.

Surveys have to 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, Question 2 of the Town of Oak Grove survey asked residents to rate the overall quality of life in the Town on a scale from “excellent” (= 1) to “poor” (= 4). In this survey, residents rated the overall quality of life a 1.9, which means that, on average, people feel that the Town of Oak has a “good” quality of life. Suppose only people who were relatively happy with the quality of life in the Town responded to the survey. If this were the case, the overall quality of life rating in the report would overstate the true level of satisfaction of the overall population and we would have non-response bias.

The SRC tested nearly 90 variables included in the questionnaire and found 17 instances in which responses from the first mailing and those from the second were statistically different. These differences don't materially change the interpretation of results. Further, there is no clear pattern in the differences observed. **Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in Appendix A, the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for the Town of Oak Grove survey.** The SRC also tested for sample bias because it contains a disproportionate number of males and older people. We found some evidence that sample bias may be present but, again, the magnitude of the differences in response patterns would not change the interpretation of the results of this survey. **The SRC concludes that the results summarized in this report should accurately reflect the opinions of property owners in Oak Grove.**

In addition to the numeric responses, respondents provided additional written comments that were compiled by the SRC from the surveys. As appropriate, selected quotes will be used in some sections of this report to illustrate these comments. **Appendix B to this report contains the complete compilation of comments.**

Appendix C contains the survey questionnaire with a quantitative summary of responses by question.

Profile of Respondents

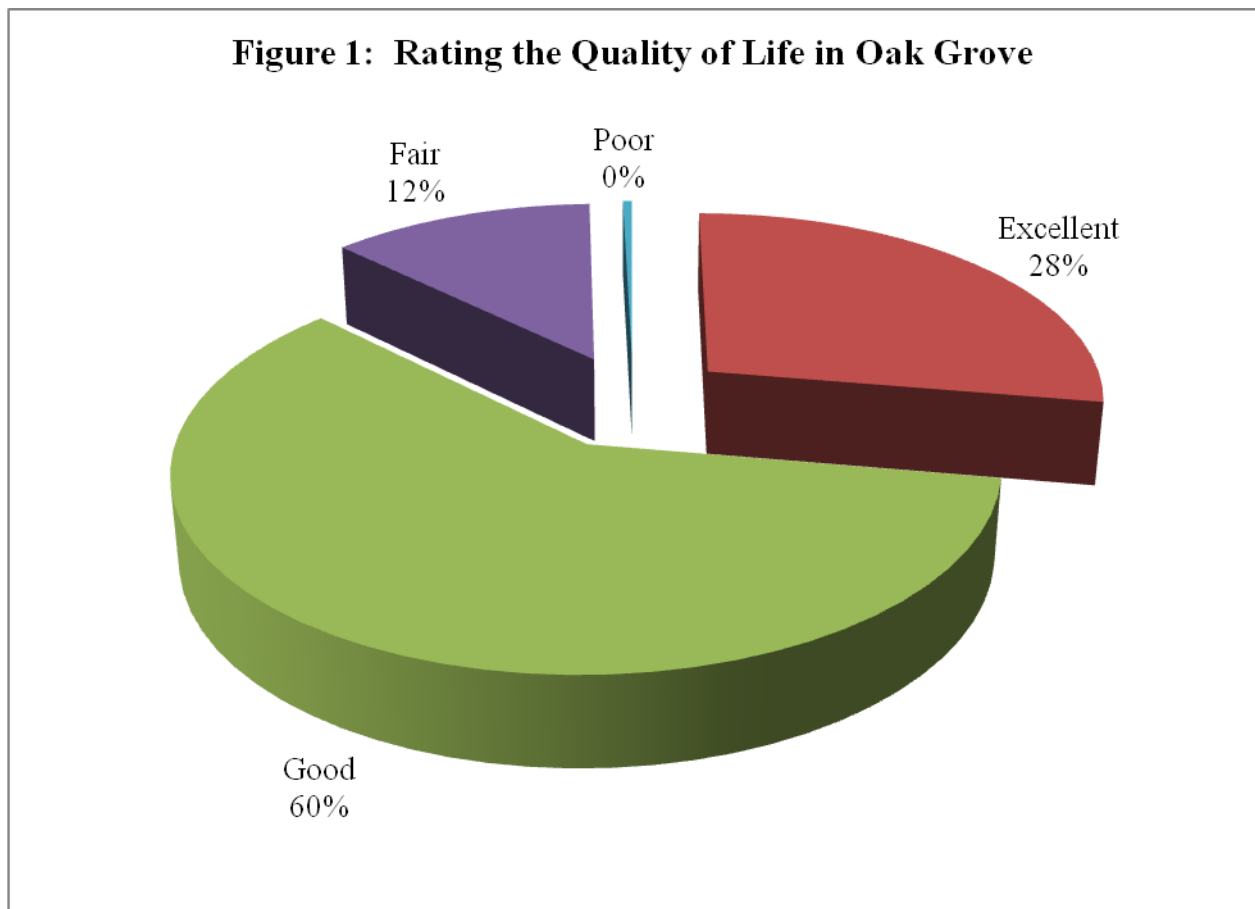
Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of respondents to the Town of Oak Grove Comprehensive Plan survey. Where comparable data were available from the 2000 Census of Population and Housing, they were included to indicate the degree to which the sample reflects the underlying adult population in the Town.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents							
Gender	Count	Male	Female				
Sample	235	60%	40%				
Census	646	52%	48%				
Age	Count	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65+
Sample	242	0%	7%	15%	26%	25%	26%
Census	646	12%	17%	25%	20%	11%	15%
Employment	Count	Full-Time	Part-Time	Self-Emp	Unemp	Retired	Other
Sample	234	42%	6%	19%	2%	29%	3%
Census		68%			1%	31%	
Housing	Count	Own	Rent	Other			
Sample	243	98%	0%	2%			
Census	313	89%	12%				
Within 300ft of Water	Count	Yes	No	NA			
Sample	246	25%	69%	6%			
Household	Count	0	1	2	3+		
Adults	242		14%	75%	10%		
Children	224	70%	11%	8%	11%		
Length Residence	Count	<1	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 24	25+	Seasonal
Sample	234	2%	14%	11%	26%	42%	5%

There are more men in the final sample than we would have expected. There are, in addition, fewer young people (under 45 years of age) or renters than the Census suggests should have been included in the sample. Because the mailing list for the survey was drawn from the property tax list, a shortage of renters is to be expected. In Appendix A, we report on some analysis done to see if the somewhat unrepresentativeness of the sample with respect to gender and age is likely to make a difference in the conclusions reached in this report. We conclude that age and gender bias are unlikely to be serious problems in this sample.

Quality of Life

Property owners in Oak Grove were asked to rate the overall quality of life in the Town. Their responses are summarized in Figure 1 and show that nearly 90 percent rated the overall quality of life as “good” (60%) or “excellent” (28%). A similar survey was conducted for Barron County as a whole and the proportion of County residents rating the quality of life as “good” (70%) or “excellent” (11%) was slightly lower than Oak Grove’s ratings.

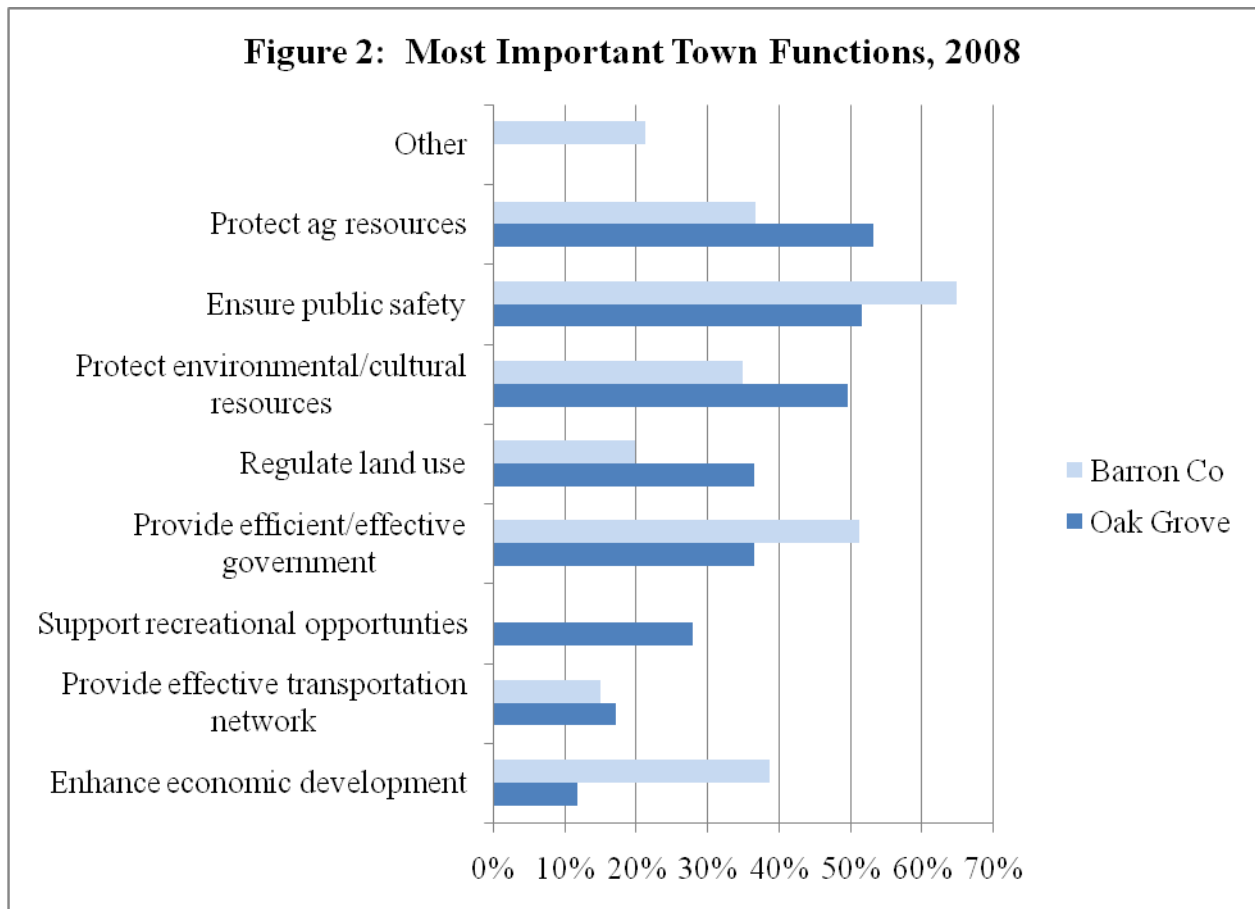


There were no statistically significant differences in how different demographic groups (e.g. men vs. women, young vs. older, etc.) rated the quality of life in the Town.

There are, however, very strong correlations between how well respondents felt that the Town is delivering services and how they rated the quality of life in the Town. Generally, the more

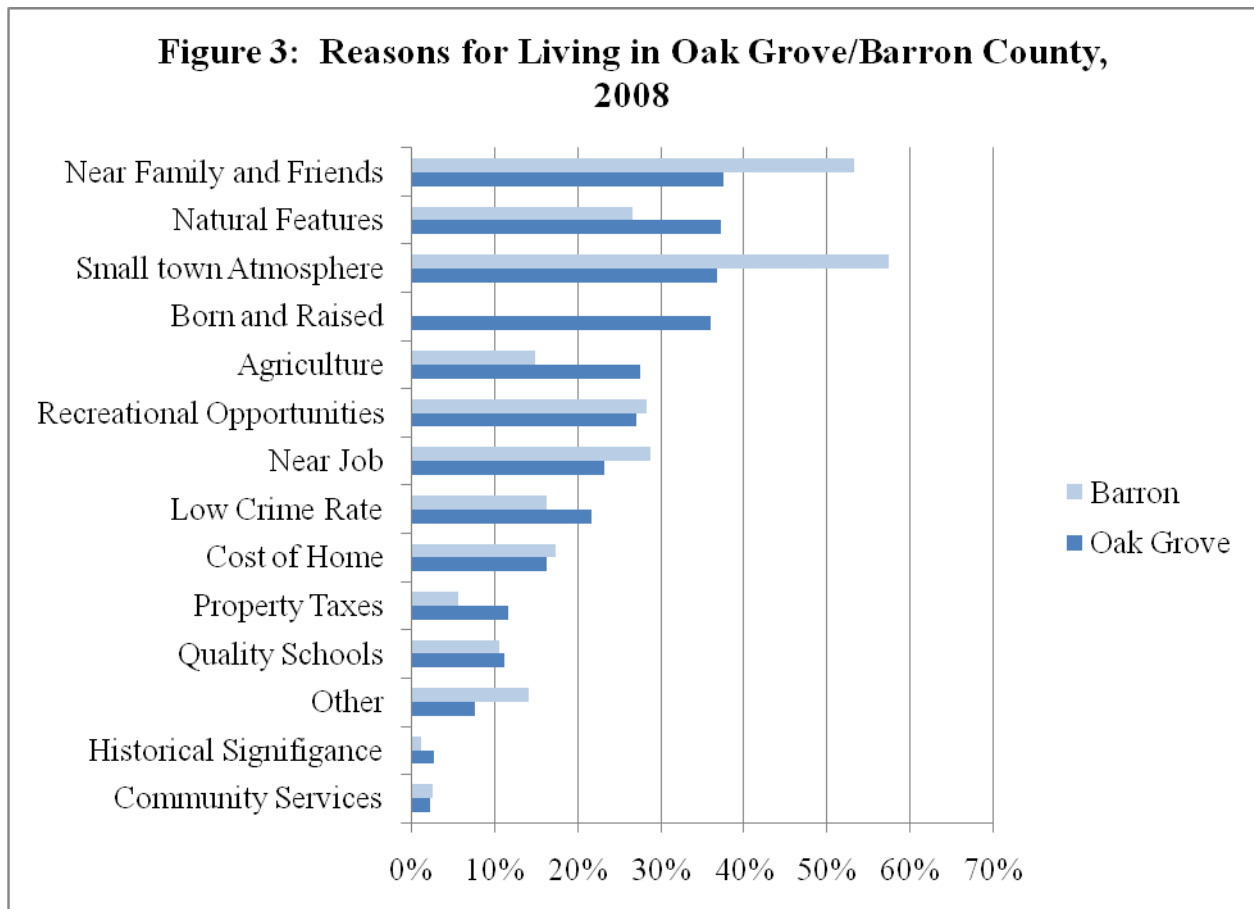
satisfied they were with fire protection, emergency services, street and road maintenance, parks and recreation, and zoning regulations, the higher they rated the overall quality of life in Oak Grove. Other public policy variables were also statistically associated with perceptions of quality of life. The more strongly opposed to allowing landowners to develop their property in any way they see fit, the more favorably they view cluster development designs, and the more satisfied they are with the overall road network, the higher respondents tend to rate the quality of life in Oak Grove. In short, so long as Town residents perceive that the Town is delivering high quality public services and making reasonable land use decisions, they will likely feel that life in Oak Grove is good.

The conclusion that residents expect Town government to deliver high quality public services and make reasonable land use decisions is supported, to a degree, by the data in Figure 2. Figure 2 summarizes the results of question that asked respondents to identify the three most important functions for the Town of Oak Grove. It indicates that the top priorities for the Town are to protect agricultural resources, ensure public safety, and protect environmental and cultural resources. (The bottom, darker bars in Figure 2 = Oak Grove responses and the lighter bar shows the comparable Barron County responses). As we will see below, many residents say they live in Oak Grove because they like the fact that it is a farming community, has good outdoor recreation amenities and a small town atmosphere (a cultural resource). So, seeing these as top Town priorities is not surprising. The one surprise in Figure 2 is that providing an effective transportation network rated so low.



It is also clear from Figure 2 that the citizens' expectations for the County government are somewhat different than their expectations for the Town government. Barron County residents have substantially higher expectations with respect to ensuring public safety, providing effective and efficient government and enhancing economic development compared to the Town.

The preceding discussion indicates that people generally feel good about the quality of life in Oak Grove. Figure 3 looks at why people have chosen to live in Oak Grove. The bottom, darker bars in Figure 3 show the percentage of Oak Grove residents who selected a particular item as one of the top three reasons they live in the Town. The lighter bar shows the comparable percentage for Barron County residents as a whole.



Several things about Figure 3 are notable. First, the four most important reasons given for living in Oak Grove are to be near family and friends, the natural features of the Town, its small town atmosphere, and if they were born and raised in the area.

Second, the reasons given for living in Oak Grove are much more evenly distributed than is typically the case. The SRC has asked questions similar to this on many surveys throughout the state. For Barron County, the small town atmosphere (57%) and being near family and friends (53%) dominate the other reasons for living in the County. Barron County is typical of what we

usually see – a couple of reasons given by a majority of respondents. In contrast, only a bit more than one-third of Oak Grove property owners selected the top 4 items in Figure 3.

Third, compared to the County, agricultural opportunities and the natural beauty (natural features) of the area are much more important to Town residents.

The number of years a person has lived in Oak Grove and whether or not they are a seasonal resident influences the reasons they've chosen to live in the Town. Compared to some towns in Barron County, there appears to be relatively few seasonal residents in the Oak Grove. Yet, they seem to have quite different motivations for choosing to live in Oak Grove than do permanent residents. Agricultural opportunities, the proximity of friends and family, and an historic association with the Town are reasons that increase with the number of years lived in Oak Grove. These reasons are much less important for seasonal residents. Similarly, if your residence is more than 300 feet from a body of water, you are more likely to say that agricultural opportunities, being born in the Town, and the quality of the schools attracted you to the Town. In contrast, recreational opportunities are a more significant factor for people living within 300 feet of a body of water. Finally, women are more likely to say they live in Oak Grove because of the cost of housing in the Town; men cite the low crime rate and agricultural opportunities at higher rates.

In addition to the numeric data summarized above, the two open-ended questions included in the questionnaire relate to the quality of life in Oak Grove. The first open-ended question asked, "What do you like about living in the Town of Oak Grove?" A total of 185 comments were received in response to this question (see Question 25 in Appendix B) and the majority focused on various dimensions of the Town's rural atmosphere. The following are typical of these comments:

Looking out my windows and seeing nothing but trees and fields. We like the peace and quiet. Being able to ride my horse down a quiet country road to the Tuscobia Trail.

Small town atmosphere, safety-children are able to play safely outside. Love the wildlife! Most neighbors are friendly. I like the slow casual atmosphere of living here.

Beautiful farmlands, clean air, neighborhood churches and bars, close to good lakes and recreation.

The rural atmosphere, friendly people, good roads and their up keep, and its natural beauty. It has been a great place to raise our children.

Another prominent theme in responses to the question about what they like about the Town was location. In particular, many noted the proximity of Rice Lake and its commercial and other services. For example:

We live within 4 miles of Rice Lake which is convenient. This is important for the convenience of shopping, health services, etc.

Secluded, country living within 5 miles of city.

The second open-ended question asked, “What would you like the Town of Oak Grove to look like 25 years from now?” A total of 185 responses were received and there was a bit more diversity apparent in these comments. A bit more than 40 percent of the responses focused on maintaining the status quo.

At my age, I doubt I'll be here that long, but if I am here, I'd like to see no changes at all.

Much the same with low property taxes.

The next most common type of comment (16% of those received) focused on desire to see varying amounts of economic development in the Town over the next 25 years.

I do not want the Town of Oak Grove to change other than seeing wind energy being utilized-I do not want industry to move in we all live close enough to Rice Lake for our jobs.

More residential development, but not at the sacrifice of farmland or agricultural uses.

Opportunity to continue the rural atmosphere and well thought out development which included industries that pay their workers a wage they can earn and can continue to live in this area.

Opportunity to continue the rural atmosphere and well thought out development which included industries that pay their workers a wage they can earn and can continue to live in this area.

The third most common cluster of comments dealt with farming and the rural character of the Town:

Very much the same with maybe more land being used for agriculture- farm and gardens.

*Not to change, or spoil the beauty of farmland, woods, forest, lakes, streams, rivers.
Industry, etc. o.k. as long as property owners get to vote on.*

These data, both the numeric and the written responses, indicate that for the most part:

- Town residents are satisfied with the quality of life in the Town
- The ability of Town officials to deliver what is perceived to be high quality services and make sensible land use decisions is associated with higher overall satisfaction
- The reasons given for living in Oak Grove are more varied than the SRC typically sees but many focus on their preferences for a rural lifestyle with access to outdoor recreation

Programs and Services

As noted above, how residents perceive the quality of public services in Oak Grove powerfully influences how they view the quality of life in the Town. Table 2 shows that large majorities feel that the following public services are good or excellent: road maintenance (73%), fire protection (66%), and emergency services (69%). The assessment of parks and recreation facilities and zoning regulations in the Town is mixed; roughly 50 percent rate these services as good or excellent but nearly as many rate zoning as only fair or poor (47%) and a substantial minority feel this way about parks and recreation (28%). Somewhat surprisingly, one-quarter of the respondents had no opinion about park and recreation services in Oak Grove.

Table 2: Quality of Public Services in Oak Grove, 2008						
	Count	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable
Road Maintenance						
Oak Grove	254	16%	57%	18%	8%	1%
Barron County	388	9%	55%	28%	5%	3%
Fire Protection						
Oak Grove	249	14%	51%	19%	7%	8%
Emergency Services						
Oak Grove	247	12%	57%	18%	4%	8%
Barron County	383	10%	55%	18%	2%	15%
Parks and Recreation						
Oak Grove	246	7%	43%	19%	9%	23%
Barron County	388	14%	57%	18%	5%	6%
Zoning Regulations						
Oak Grove	252	3%	46%	35%	12%	4%
Barron County	385	4%	36%	39%	8%	13%

A comparable, though more extensive, question was asked in the Barron County Comprehensive Plan Survey and the relevant results are summarized in Table 2. Compared to the County, Oak Grove residents appear to be:

- more satisfied with road maintenance (73% good or excellent in the Town compared to 64% in the County) and zoning regulations (49% in the Town vs. 40% in the County)
- slightly more satisfied with emergency services (69% in the Town vs. 65% in the County)
- substantially less satisfied with park and recreation services (50% in the Town vs. 71% in the County)

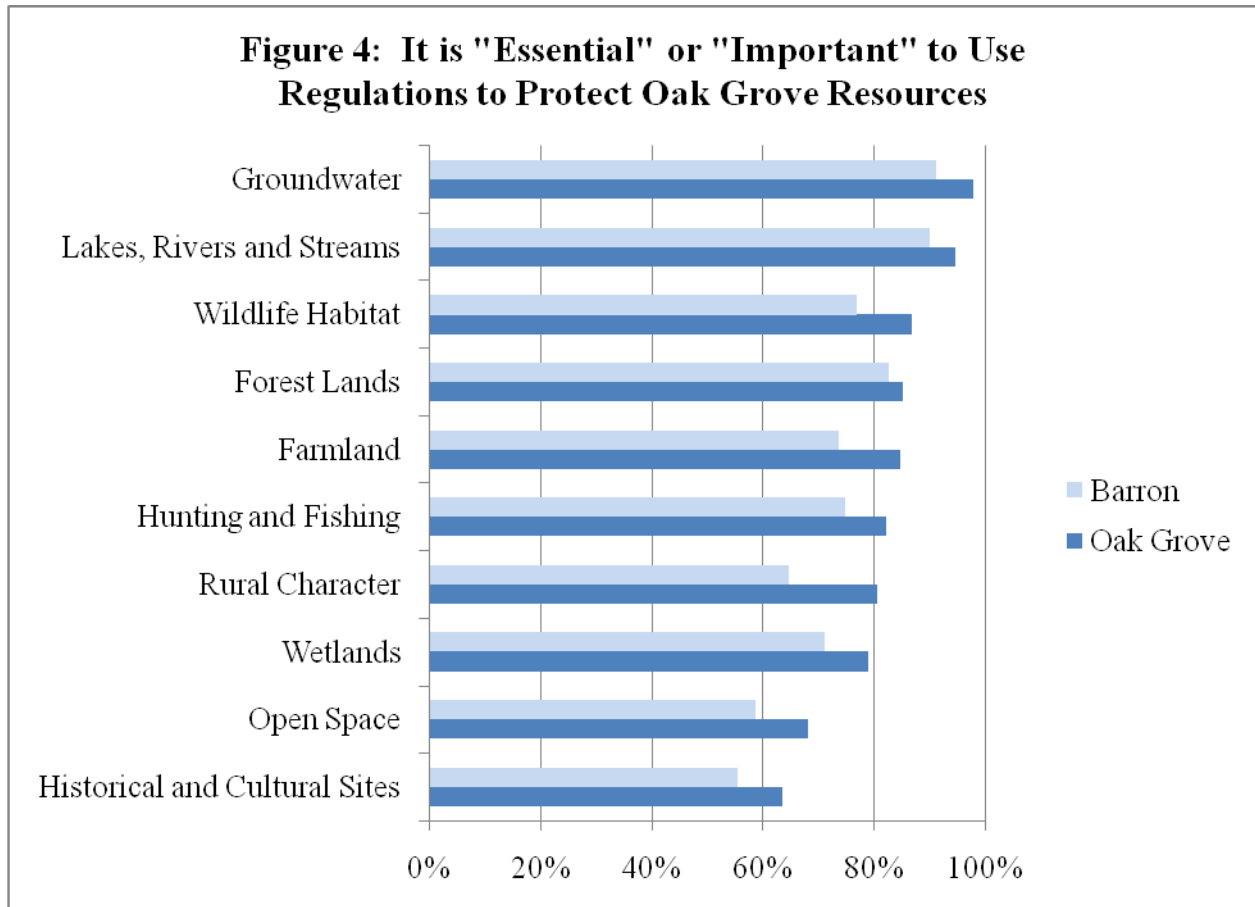
There are few differences in the way different demographic groups assess the quality of Town services. The most interesting difference involves those whose residence is within 300 feet of a body of water compared to those living further from water. Those living near the water are significantly less satisfied with emergency services, street maintenance, and zoning regulations.

If we compare these two groups in terms of the percentage who rated these services as good or excellent, we see:

- emergency services: 55 percent of waterside residents vs. 74 percent non-waterside
- street maintenance: 57 percent waterside vs. 77 percent non-waterside
- zoning: 40 percent waterside vs. 53 percent non-waterside

Natural and Cultural Resources

As is usually the case in land use surveys, large majorities of Oak Grove residents feel it is important or essential to use regulations to protect natural and cultural resources. As Figure 4 indicates, more than 90 percent of Oak Grove residents deem it important or essential to protect ground and surface water resources, approximately 80 percent or more feel this way about wildlife habitat, forest lands, farmland, hunting and fishing and rural character, and more than 60 percent feel that way about wetlands, open spaces and historical/cultural sites.



The results in Figure 4 tend to echo many of the numeric and written comments discussed in the quality of life section of this report. Since many residents said that they have chosen to live in

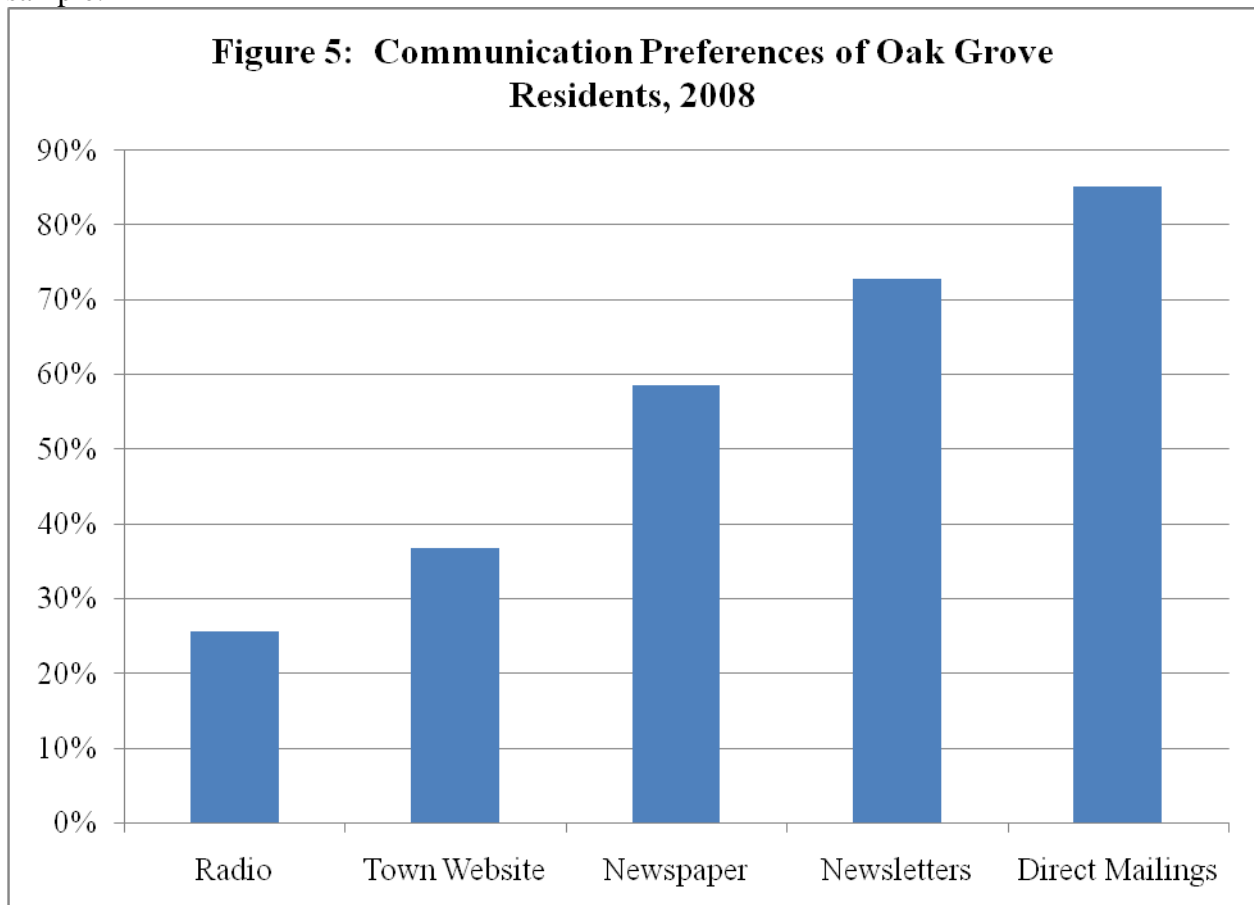
Oak Grove because of its rural character and access to outdoor recreation opportunities, it is not surprising that they want those characteristics protected.

Comparing the Oak Grove responses to an identical question asked in the Barron County survey, it is clear that Town residents place a relatively high value on the natural and cultural resources covered in Table 4. In every instance, a higher percentage of the Town's responses fell into the important or essential categories than for the County as a whole.

Older residents feel it is significantly more important to preserve farm and forest land but are slightly less concerned about preserving the rural character of the Town than are younger residents. Preserving the rural character of Oak Grove is significantly more important to those living near bodies of water. Women are significantly more focused on preserving historical and cultural sites, open spaces, and, perhaps surprisingly, hunting and fishing resources.

Communication

Residents were asked to identify the three most effective ways for the Town to communicate with them about services and programs they offer to residents. Figure 5 indicates that direct mailings figured in the top three communication vehicles for 85 percent of the respondents. Newsletters and newspaper articles were also identified as effective by more than half the sample.



In contrast to the preceding sections, there are distinct differences among different demographic groups in terms of how they prefer to get information from the town. These differences largely conform to what one might expect. For example, longer-term residents were significantly more likely to include newspaper articles and the radio in their top three communication vehicles than were newer arrivals or seasonal residents. Women, in higher proportions, prefer the radio as a source of information; men would like a Town website. Those living near water were less likely to identify the radio or newspaper articles but more likely to report preferring a website. The more children in the home, the more likely the respondent was to identify a website as a preferred means of getting information about Town services and programs.

These results suggest that to communicate effectively with the various demographic groups, the Town would need to use a “smorgasbord” approach, though direct mail is, by a substantial margin, the most effective single vehicle (and one of the more expensive) for reaching Town property owners.

Housing

In keeping with the desire to see Oak Grove remain much as it is (see discussion of open-ended questions in the Quality of Life section), Table 3 indicates that none of the types of housing about which we asked were seen as being in short supply by a majority of respondents. Indeed, there would likely be strong opposition to multi-family unit housing developments given that three-quarters of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree that more such units are needed in Oak Grove.

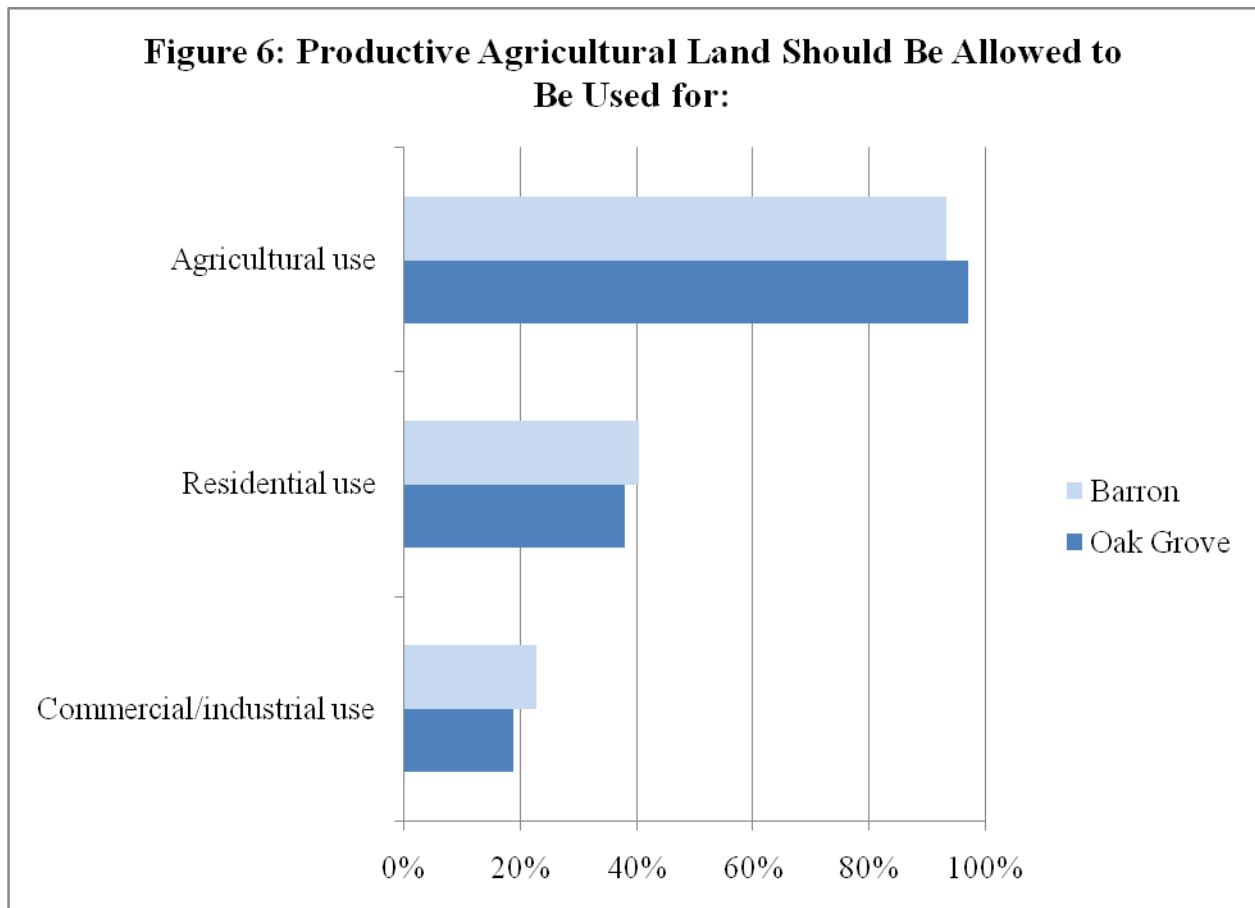
Table 3: Housing Needs in Oak Grove, 2008						
	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
More affordable housing						
Oak Grove	251	12%	35%	27%	10%	16%
Barron	393	26%	39%	14%	6%	15%
More elderly housing						
Oak Grove	249	9%	30%	33%	10%	18%
Barron	395	29%	44%	9%	3%	16%
More multi-family housing						
Oak Grove	251	4%	8%	42%	33%	13%

The results in the Town stand in marked contrast to those of Barron County as a whole. Solid majorities feel that more affordable housing (65%) and elderly housing (73%) are needed in the County. County residents were not asked about multi-family housing units.

As has been true through most of this report, there are few demographic differences of note in terms of how Oak Grove property owners view housing issues. Support for elderly housing increases, in general, the longer a person has lived in the Town.

Agriculture and Land Use

The relatively strong support voiced for agriculture in the “Quality of Life” segment of this report, also comes through in Figure 6. There is nearly unanimous accord that productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used in agriculture (97% agree or strongly agree with this). In contrast, substantially less than half of the respondents agree or strongly agree that productive agricultural land should be used for residential (38%) or commercial/industrial (19%) uses.

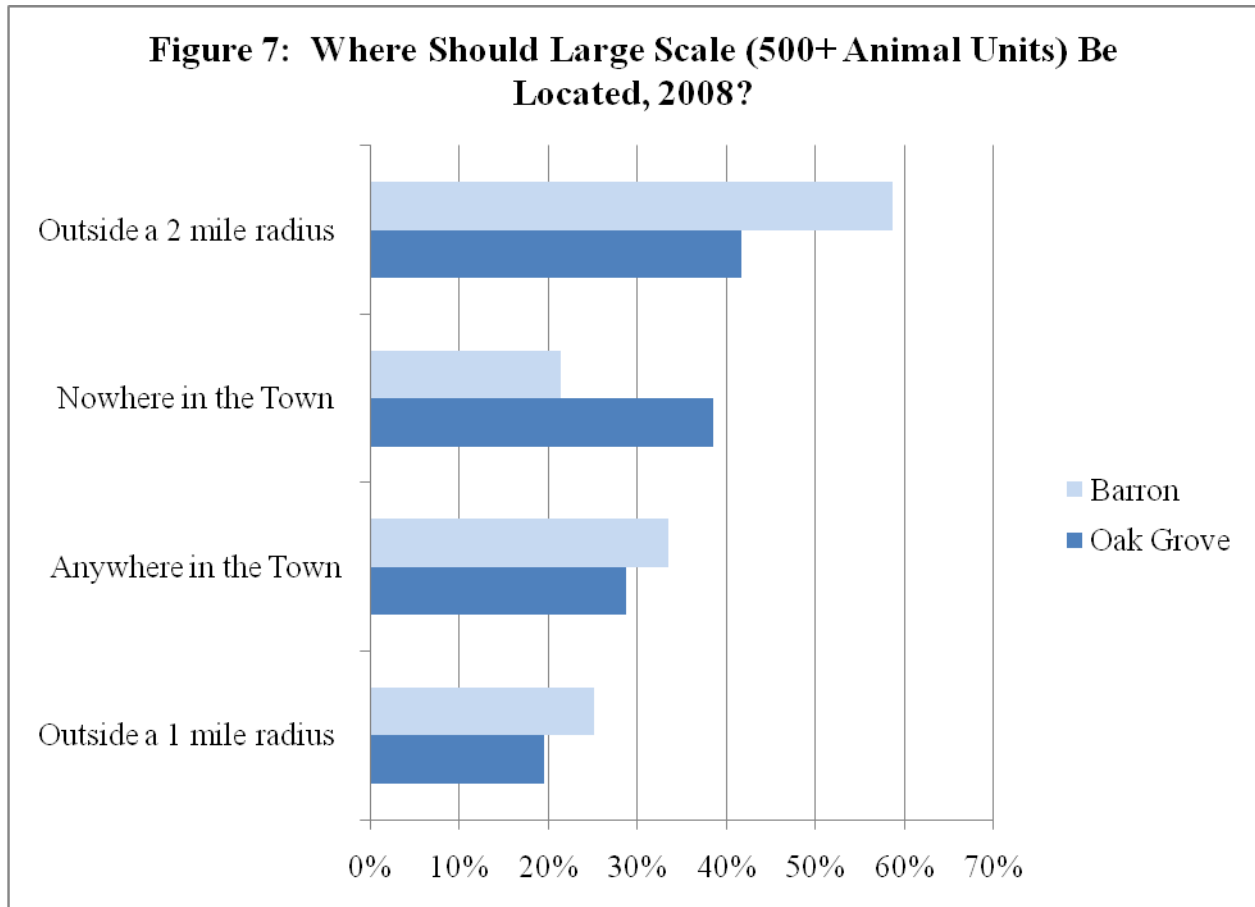


The opinions of Town residents track closely those of Barron County residents.

Older residents are particularly opposed to using productive agricultural land in commercial or industrial developments. While both waterside and non-waterside dwellers favor allowing productive agricultural land to be used in farming, support is particularly strong among those who live away from water.

While support for agriculture in Oak Grove is generally strong, Figure 7 suggests that this support is not unequivocal. When asked where the Town should allow expansions of large scale farms, defined as having 500 or more animal units, residents came down solidly on the fence! Fewer than 30 percent of the respondents would allow such farms to expand anywhere in Oak Grove but fewer than 40 percent agreed that such expansions should be allowed nowhere in the

Town. Substantially less than a majority agreed that expansions should take place more than a mile from incorporated areas (20%) or even 2 miles out (42%).



A majority of Barron County residents, who were asked a similar question would allow large scale livestock farm expansions 2 miles or further from incorporated areas. Barron residents were even less interested in banning such expansions everywhere in the County (barely 20% agreed or strongly agreed) than were Oak Grove residents. The other two options in Figure 7 indicate that Town and County residents have similar views.

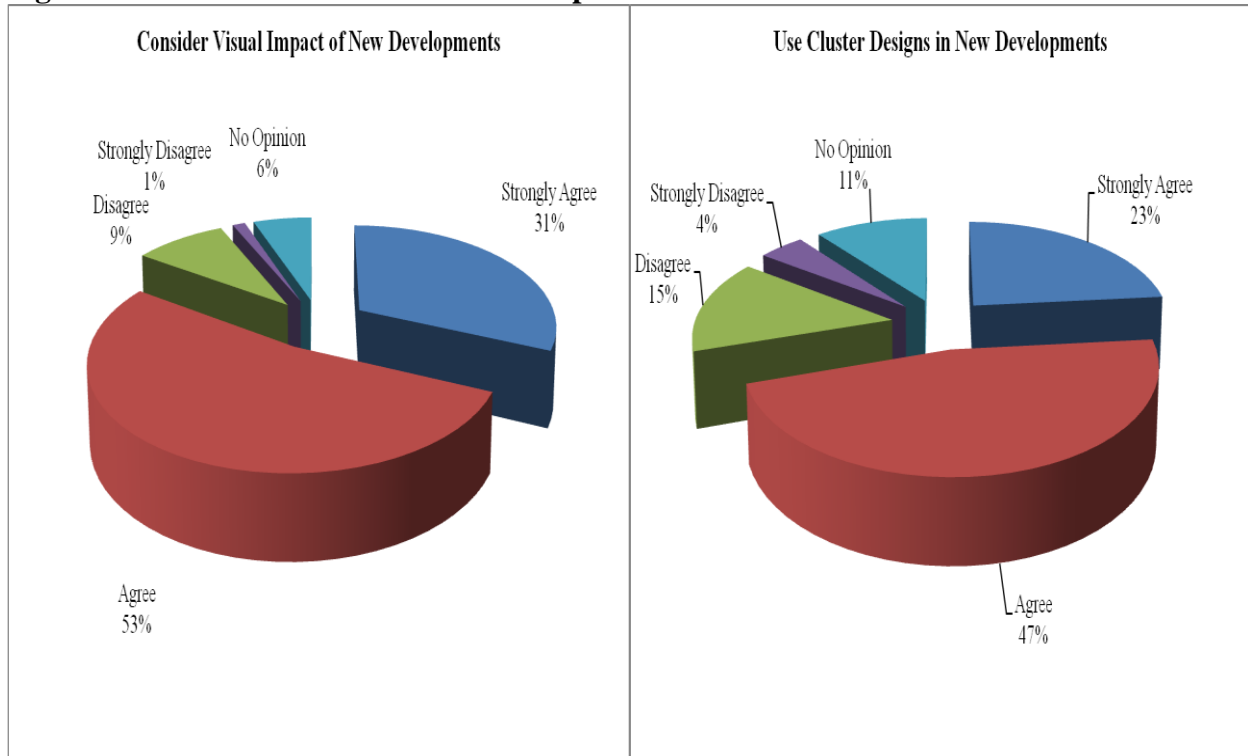
Oak Grove residents were also asked a series of questions about development in the Town. The first of these questions asked if landowners should be allowed to develop land any way they want. By more than a two to one margin, Town residents disagree with this statement (31% agree or strongly agree compared to 65% who disagree or strongly disagree). These percentages are very similar to the responses of Barron County residents to this question. The only demographic difference in Oak Grove is that older residents are significantly less supportive of allowing landowners to develop their land in any way they see fit.

Figure 8 indicates that large majorities of property owners want visual impacts to be considered when evaluating new developments and that they would like those developments to use cluster designs. More than 80 percent agree or strongly agree that visual impacts should be part of the evaluation process and only about one in ten respondents disagree. Seventy percent agree or

strongly agree (19% disagree) that cluster designs should be used in new developments as a means of preserving open space.

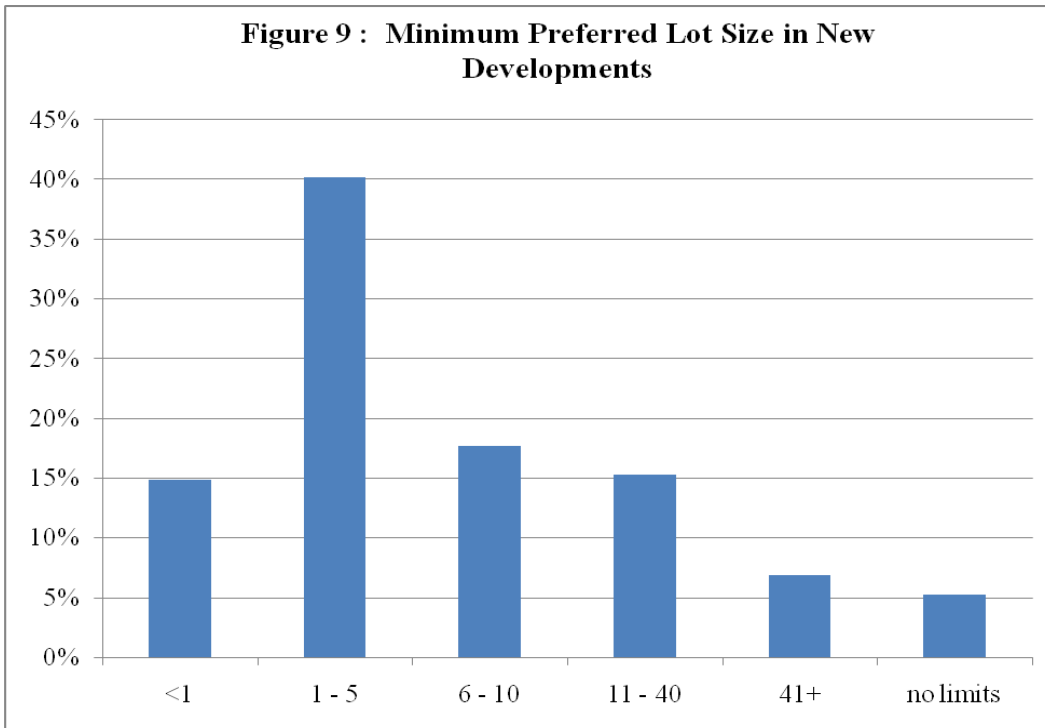
Generally the older the respondent, the more they want visual impacts considered and the more support there is for clustered development.

Figure 8: Considerations for New Developments

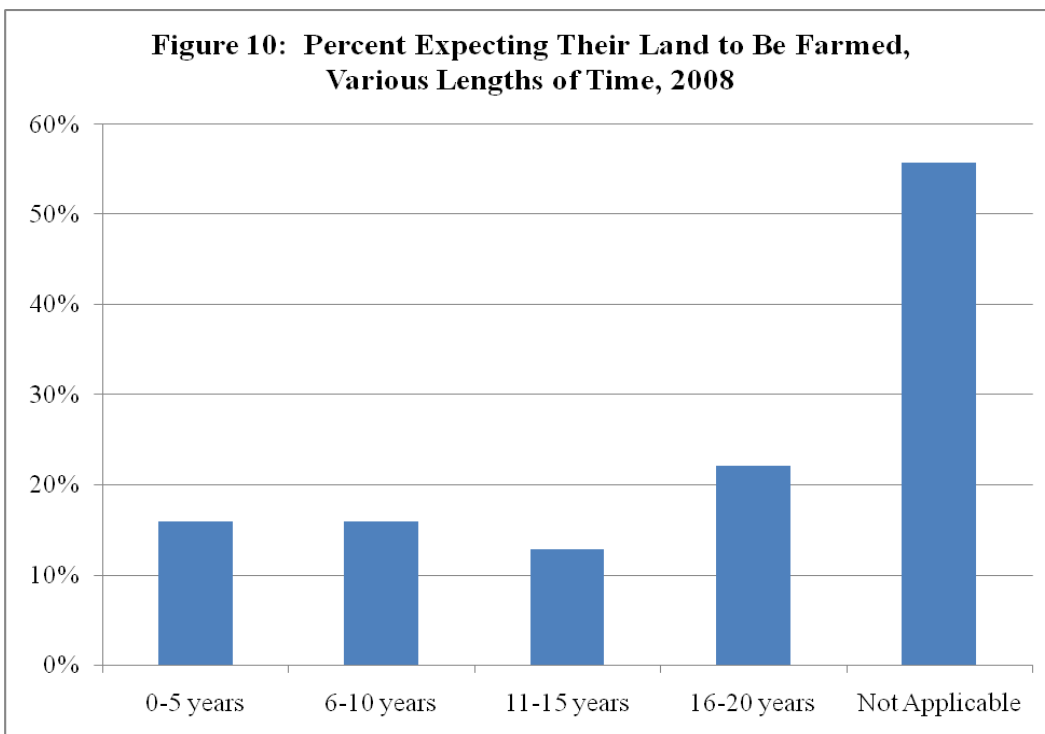


One policy option for preserving open space and farmland is the purchase of development rights (PDRs) from landowners (in exchange for an agreed upon amount of money, the landowner gives up the right to subdivide or otherwise develop their land – thus it would remain in agriculture or open space in perpetuity). Exactly half of the respondents in Oak Grove said they were opposed to using tax dollars to purchase PDRs to preserve prime farmland or open space. The other half of the sample was in favor (16%) or didn't know (33%) what their opinion is. This split is very similar to opinions in Barron County as a whole. At a minimum, if the Town wants to use PDRs for these purposes, additional educational efforts will likely be needed. Women, in significantly higher percentages, said they didn't know if the Town should use tax dollars to purchase PDRs.

Roughly two-thirds of the respondents in Oak Grove feel that the minimum preferred lot size should be five acres or less (Figure 9). People who own more acres tend to feel that minimum lot sizes should be larger. The self employed (e.g. farmers), older residents, those living more than 300 feet from bodies of water, and longer-term residents are more likely to own larger acreages than are their counterparts.



Forty-one percent of the Oak Grove respondents said that either they farmed their land themselves (15%) or that it was farmed by someone else under a lease agreement (26%). Figure 10 indicates that about half this proportion (22%) expect their land will be farmed 16 – 20 years in the future.



Transportation

A very high proportion of respondents (87%) felt that the overall road network in Oak Grove meets the needs of its citizens. There are no statistical differences by demographic group in their assessment of the road network. The percentage of Barron County residents who felt the County’s road network meets their needs (88%) was very similar to the result for Oak Grove.

Residents were also asked if they agree that alternative modes of transportation (ATVs, snowmobilies, bicycles, and walking) are important. More than 80 percent agreed or strongly agreed that these alternatives are important. Again, no demographic group stood out as different in their assessment of the importance of alternative modes of transportation.

Economic Development

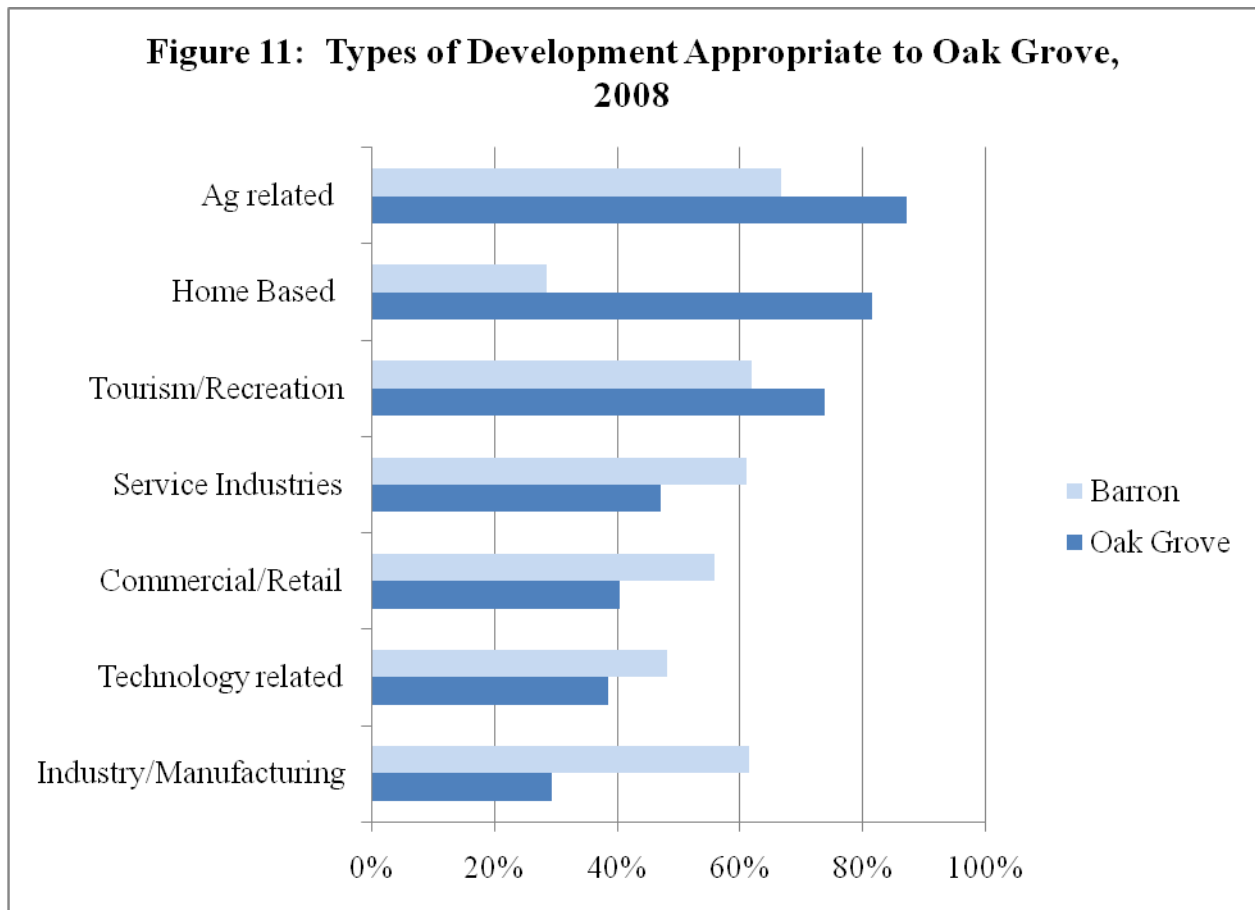
Property owners in Oak Grove are very evenly divided on the question, “Should the Town recruit or promote new business and industry?” Forty-one percent agreed (31%) or strongly agreed (10%), 46 percent disagreed (36%) or strongly disagreed (9%), and 14 percent had no opinion. This tension is also apparent in the open-ended comments where the prevailing sentiment seems to be, ‘We like things the way they are but wouldn’t mind a few more job or shopping opportunities in the Town.’

The reticence of Town residents to embrace economic development is less clear when we consider specific economic development alternatives. Table 4 indicates that a majority agree that generating alternative energy should be pursued as an economic development strategy. The level of support varies from a low of 55 percent for biofuels to about 80 percent for both solar and wind power. The only demographic differences are that men and those living more than 300 feet from a body of water are more favorably disposed to biofuels as an economic development strategy.

Table 4: Alternative Energy Should Be Pursued as a Form of Economic Development					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Biofuels					
Oak Grove	20%	35%	18%	8%	19%
Barron	21%	45%	17%	6%	11%
Solar					
Oak Grove	33%	49%	7%	1%	11%
Barron	34%	49%	7%	2%	9%
Wind					
Oak Grove	33%	45%	7%	2%	13%
Barron	39%	45%	5%	2%	9%

Finally, residents were asked to indicate the types of economic development they feel are appropriate for Oak Grove. The same question was asked of Barron County residents and their responses are also included in Figure 11. The uncertainty residents feel toward economic development in the Town is apparent in Figure 11. Only three types of businesses are seen as

appropriate for Oak Grove by a majority of the respondents: agricultural-related businesses (87% agree or strongly agree), home-based businesses (81%), and tourism and recreation (74%). These choices appear to be consistent with the resources in Oak Grove that residents hold dear.



The County as a whole is substantially less supportive than Oak Grove of home-based businesses, agriculturally-related businesses, and tourism businesses. County residents are more supportive of industry and manufacturing, commercial and retail, and service development.

Within Oak Grove, older residents are more supportive than younger ones of developing commercial/retail, industrial/manufacturing, tourism, and service businesses. Men are more favorably disposed than women toward agricultural-related businesses, commercial/retail and industrial/manufacturing developments.

Conclusions

As noted in the Executive Summary, the data gathered from this survey suggests a relatively cohesive population that values the outdoor amenities and rural lifestyle offered by the Town of Oak Grove. Their contentment with life in Oak Grove is correlated with their perception of the quality of public services they receive and what they seem to feel are sensible land use decisions.

Residents have chosen to live in the Town because of historic connections with the area (the proximity of friends and family, being born in the area), it offers a lifestyle that they find appealing (natural beauty, access to outdoor recreational opportunities, farming), and good socio-economic conditions (small town atmosphere, access to employment).

For the most part, they are satisfied with the quality of public services available to them. Given their fairly strong views about land use (they want visual impacts considered in development proposals; are unwilling to give landowners unfettered control over how they develop their land; have a desire to preserve open space, farmland, and environmental resources), the relatively low rating given the Town's zoning regulations (49% rated them as good or excellent, compared to 65% or more who rated the roads, fire protection and emergency services at this level) is somewhat concerning.

There is relatively low support for building additional specialty housing units (multi-family, elderly, starter homes) and uncertainty about recruiting additional businesses to the Town. This, again, speaks to the satisfaction that the majority of the Town's population has with the status quo. If businesses are to be recruited, the preferred types seem to conform to the goal of preserving the lifestyle residents currently enjoy (e.g. agriculturally related, alternative energy development, home-based businesses and businesses focused on tourism and/or recreational opportunities).

Our conclusion to the Executive Summary bears repeating. From an external perspective and based on these data, Oak Grove is cohesive; it's residents like their rural-agricultural-outdoor recreation centered lifestyle and want land use policies that will help preserve that lifestyle.

Appendix A – Validating the Sample

Non-Response Bias. Surveys have to 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, Question 2 of the Town of Oak Grove survey asked residents to rate the overall quality of life in the Town on a scale from “excellent” (= 1) to “poor” (= 4). In this survey, residents rated the overall quality of life a 1.9, which means that, on average, people feel that the Town of Oak Grove has a “good” quality of life. Suppose only people who were relatively happy with the quality of life in the Town responded to the survey. If this were the case, the overall quality of life rating in the report would overstate the true level of satisfaction of the overall population and we would have non-response bias.

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 this survey, 177 people responded to the first mailing and 81 responded to the second mailing.

We found 17 variables with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents (Table A1) out of nearly 90 tested. The differences between the first and second mailings are relatively numerous. One-third of the differences are associated with why people have chosen to live in Oak Grove (Question 1). These motivations provide insights into land use policy decisions but, while statistically different, the responses to the first and second mailings tend to lead to similar conclusions. For example, respondents to the second mailing were statistically significantly more likely to say they live in the town because of its agricultural opportunities (0.41 = average) than were the respondents to the first mailing (0.21 = average). Both of these results indicated that agricultural opportunities are a moderately

Variable	Mean First Mailing	Mean Second Mailing	Statistical Significance
Q1 Live in Oak Grove, agriculture	0.21	0.41	.00
Q1 Live in Oak Grove, historical sig.	0.01	0.06	.02
Q1 Live in Oak Grove, properly tax	0.08	0.19	.02
Q1 Live in Oak Grove, low crime	0.18	0.31	.02
Q1 Live in Oak Grove, quality schools	0.07	0.21	.00
Q1 Live in Oak Grove, small town atmos	0.42	0.25	.01
Q3 Rate fire protection	2.32	2.63	.03
Q4 Use regs to protect, groundwater	1.26	1.41	.03
Q4 Use regs to protect, open space	2.04	2.30	.03
Q22b Pursue solar for economic development	1.96	2.34	.02
Q24a Pursue ag rel for econ devel	1.93	2.30	.01
Q24d Pursue industry/man. for econ devel	2.98	3.28	.04
Q27b Key town function effective government	1.85	2.09	.04
Q27e Town support rec opportunities	0.23	0.40	.01
Q27h Town support effective trans network	0.20	0.10	.04
Q28 Attend planning meeting in future	2.51	2.75	.01
Q33 House within 300 feet of water	1.76	1.92	.03

important reason for living in Oak Grove. Virtually all the differences summarized in Table A1 fall into this category – significantly different but similar implications. One exception to this conclusion is with respect to fire protection (Question 3) where respondents to the first mailing rated this Town service an average of “good” and respondents to the second gave it an average rating of “fair.”

Further, there is not an obvious pattern in the statistically significant differences. Compared to respondents to the second mailing, respondents to the first mailing were statistically significantly more likely:

- to say they live in Oak Grove because of its small town atmosphere
- to rate the quality of fire protection more highly
- to say that it is more important to use tax dollars and/or regulations to preserve groundwater and open space
- are more likely to support an array of business development options (developing solar energy, recruiting agriculturally-related businesses and recruit industrial or manufacturing businesses)
- say that providing effective and efficient government and an effective transportation network are important Town functions

In contrast, compared to the first mailing, respondents to the second mailing were more likely to:

- to say they live in Oak Grove because of their agricultural opportunities, the historical significance of the town, property taxes, low crime rates, and quality schools
- to say that the Town government should focus on providing recreational opportunities

Because of the relatively small absolute differences and the lack of a clear pattern of significant differences, the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this sample.

Sample Bias. Sample bias occurs when the sample contains a substantially higher percentage of some group than would be expected. There are three demographic groups that are over-represented in this sample.

The first over-represented group is homeowners and there is little we can do about this. Because the mailing list for Oak Grove was drawn from the property tax list, renters were unlikely to be represented in this data and, it turns out, they were not. So, the results summarized in the report represent the views of property owners only.

Table A2 - Gender Reweight			
	Raw Value	Reweight Value	Difference
Q1 Ag Opportunities	0.28	0.27	(0.01)
Q1 Cost of Home	0.16	0.19	0.02
Q1 Low Crime	0.22	0.21	(0.01)
Q3e Zoning Regs	2.66	2.61	(0.05)
Q4d Hist/Cult Sites	2.26	2.25	(0.01)
Q4g Rural Character	1.87	1.85	(0.02)
Q4h Hunting/Fishing	1.82	1.80	(0.02)
Q4j Wildlife Habitat	1.70	1.69	(0.01)
Q5 Radio	0.26	0.27	0.02
Q5 Web	0.37	0.36	(0.00)
Q15 PDR	2.17	2.21	0.03
Q19 6-10 Years	0.16	0.19	0.04
Q22a Biofuels	2.71	2.75	0.04
Q22b Solar Energy	2.09	2.09	0.01
Q23 Recruit Business	2.86	2.90	0.04
Q24a Ag Business	2.05	2.12	0.06
Q24b Retail/Commercial	2.85	2.90	0.05
Q24d Ind/Manufacture	3.08	3.13	0.05
Q24f High Tech	3.12	3.20	0.08
Q27b Effective Gov't	0.36	0.36	(0.00)
Q27h Transport Network	0.17	0.17	(0.00)

The second demographic group of concern is gender; a substantially higher percentage of men responded to this survey (60%) than they represent of the total adult population in Oak Grove (52%), which raises some concerns about sample bias. The SRC tested to see if men and women have different views about the land use issues raised in the questionnaire. Table A2 indicates that men and women do have different perspectives on about 15% of the questions in the survey. Table A2 also indicates that the differences are in all cases relatively small and that adjusting for the over-representation of men generates very little difference in the results.

Table A3 – Age Reweight			
Age Reweight	Raw Value	Reweight	Difference
Q1 Cost of home	0.16	0.22	(0.06)
Q5 Direct Mail	0.85	0.91	(0.06)
Q5 Radio	0.26	0.19	0.07
Q5 Web	0.37	0.44	(0.07)
Q8 Multi-Family Units	3.44	3.62	(0.18)
Q11b Nowhere	2.76	3.02	(0.26)
Q11c 2+ miles out	3.05	3.31	(0.25)
Q13 Visual impacts	1.96	2.15	(0.19)
Q14 Cluster	2.32	2.60	(0.28)
Q15 PDR	2.17	2.31	(0.14)
Q17 Acres owned	2.35	2.24	0.11
Q 19 Farmed 0 - 5 years	0.16	0.21	(0.05)
Q24g Services	2.88	3.09	(0.22)
Q27b Effective Gov't	0.36	0.32	0.04
Q27e Recreation	0.28	0.38	(0.10)

The final area of concern is with respect to the over-representation of older respondents (45 years of age or older) in the sample. Table A3 shows that there are fewer significant differences based on age but that reweighting the answers results in somewhat larger differences than was true for gender. For 6 of the 15 items listed (Q8, Q11b, Q11c, Q13, Q14, Q15, and Q24g) the primary reason for the statistical difference is that a higher percentage of the under 45 group responded with a “don’t know.”

The SRC concludes that sample bias may be an issue for this sample but that the practical impact is negligible. Throughout the report, we will note when different demographic groups have differences of opinion

Appendix B – Written Comments

Question 1: What are the three most important reasons you and your family choose to live in the Town of Oak Grove?

Other (21 responses)

- Summer house (2x)
- Cabin on lower Devils Lake
- Cheese factory
- Cheese factory/cheese maker
- Country life
- Country living
- Don't live in Oak Grove
- Happened to buy land here
- In the country
- Like country location
- Major health care near by.
- Peace and quiet
- Privacy
- Privacy of home
- Rural Area
- Rural atmosphere
- To take care of mother
- We don't live there, just own land there.
- We own a lake home- not our primary residence.
- Work

Question 5: What are the three most effective ways that the Town of Oak Grove could provide information regarding its services and programs to residents?

Other (8 responses)

- E-mail (4x)
- Newsletters and direct mail
- Post 3 places
- Public Posting Place
- Sunday afternoon social, or open meeting

Question 22: The Town of Oak Grove should encourage the following energy alternatives as a form of economic development.

Other (16 responses)

- Geothermal (3x)
- Anything green
- Biomass
- Geothermal heating
- Hydro
- Laws that require houses to provide 25% or more energy from green sources
- Manure for electricity
- Net metering program for electricity
- Nuclear, geothermal
- Organic farmers market
- Promote industrial park for new technology-incubator companies.
- River Turbines
- Water
- Wood energy

Question 25: What do you like about living in the Town of Oak Grove?

Rural Atmosphere (106 responses)

- Quiet (6x)
- Privacy (3x)
- Rural atmosphere (3x)
- Country living (2x)
- Quiet and peaceful (2x)
- Rural setting (2x)
- Small town atmosphere (2x)
- After living in a city for 20 years - we enjoy the peace and quiet and the trees and nature.
- Atmosphere rural setting
- Beautiful countryside, good neighbors, people care about each other.
- Beautiful farmlands, clean air, neighborhood churches and bars, close to good lakes and recreation
- Clean, not packed
- Country living is awesome.
- Country setting. Close to trails. Helping neighbors. Fresh air. Wild life around close to village and cities, close to hospitals and churches.
- Country side, rural area, farmland, quiet, peaceful
- Country way of life.
- Easy living atmosphere, friendly people, good roads, and service on road.
- Good roads, rural life
- Great place to raise children. Quiet with a touch of nature.
- I like living in a rural area with wide open fields, the wildlife, friendly neighbors where everyone knows each other.
- It is quiet and friendly
- It is quiet and peaceful here.
- It truly is rural Wisconsin and represents good clean living.
- It was nice and quiet compared to Rice Lake.
- It's a small town
- It's in the country!
- It's in the country. We have our privacy. We also have good neighbors and good people around us.
- It's not over populated
- It's quiet and in the country.
- It's rural
- Living in the country
- Living in the country away from city traffic with easy access to good roads-I do not think that differs from any other townships. Our town chairman has always been helpful and understanding of country life.
- Living in the country, good neighbors, wildlife, snowmobile trails good care of roads, ditches, snow removal etc. (By the way V&M would be a strategic and very welcoming spot for some additional retail development. A restaurant perhaps.) (Or some specialty shops.)
- Looking out my windows and seeing nothing but trees and fields. We like the peace and quiet. Being able to ride my horse down a quiet country road to the Tuscobin Trail.
- Low crime, nice people, slow pace, open space and rural.
- Low population density
- Low taxes, low traffic, low crime, open space.
- Natural beauty, great neighbors
- Natural resources. (i.e.) Lakes, trails, rivers, forest land.
- Nature, clean, safe air and water, wildlife and plant life. Neighbors live far enough away to not be able to see into our windows from inside theirs, but close enough to be friends peaceful and safe.

- Nice country living and still close to conveniences.
- Nice place for our cabin. Close to Rice Lake.
- No one bothers me
- Not a lot of people, no busy traffic, good country living.
- Out of town
- Peace and quiet - close to lakes and woods.
- Peace and quiet and none city atmosphere.
- Peace and quiet and recreation
- Peace and quiet. Friendly People
- Peace and quiet. Privacy, road maintenance
- Peace and quietness
- Peace, Quiet, No neighbor
- Peaceful
- Peaceful, good people, safe
- Peaceful, natural surroundings
- Peaceful, quiet, rural atmosphere
- Population density.
- Positively rural, but close to urban. Don't become urban.
- Privacy, rural atmosphere especially wildlife
- privacy, rural setting.
- Private, peaceful, sense of community"
- Quiet country atmosphere yet close to the highway and town.
- Quiet, country living
- Quiet, country, no hustle and bustle.
- Quiet, rural atmosphere, open space
- Residents, close to good health care, recreation, rural character
- Rural and convenient to rice lake.
- Rural atmosphere and recreational activities
- Rural atmosphere, great neighbors
- Rural atmosphere, wide open spaces, no development, community feel
- Rural character
- Rural living.
- Rural nature--few people
- Rural/ Keep it that way.
- Sense of community with the church-(Bible grace Lutheran) and the Wagon Wheel. Nice people and excellent location to the clinics in Rice lake.
- Small town atmosphere, neighborliness, beautiful scenery, good community services
- Small town atmosphere, safety-children are able to play safely outside. Love the wildlife! Most neighbors are friendly. I like the slow casual atmosphere of living here.
- Small town, private and open country safe to raise my 3 year old
- Small town/ lack of small town as most business/ its are in Rice Lake
- So far, the reasonable lack of crime.
- The country and trails.
- The quiet country living
- The rural atmosphere, friendly people, good roads and their up keep, and its natural beauty. It has been a great place to raise our children.
- The rural character and varied landscape and water resources
- The rural community.
- The setting
- The small town feel, good neighbors, the quiet.
- Town of Grove is not over crowded
- Tranquility
- Trees, nature, peacefulness, beauty, close proximity to Rice Lake
- Very quiet and comfortable, I am a seasonal resident
- We have a lake home so we do not live here full time. We like the lakes, woods and rural character.
- Wildlife

Location (26 responses)

- Close enough to town, but still country living
- Close friends and family, fishing, hunting. Not too far from town.
- Close to Rice Lake
- Close to rice lake and good schools. Affordability
- close to Rice Lake, not over regulated.
- Close to Rice Lake. Why don't you ask what a don't like about living in the Town of Oak Grove?
- Close to town, fresh air
- Fairly close to Rice Lake
- Good roads and we are close to the largest city (Rice Lake) in the county.
- In the country but close to town.
- It is very quiet, yet close to Rice Lake.
- Located near recreational areas
- Location
- Near friends
- Out in the country but still close to a larger city.
- Proximity to Rice Lake and other cities/towns.
- Proximity to shopping
- Proximity to town with rural setting maintained.
- Quiet , yet close enough to town
- Secluded, country living within 5 miles of city
- That we are not in city limits
- The close proximity to town but still the open spaces. A feeling of living in the country.
- The lakes, the wilderness- yet close enough to towns to get supplies, groceries, etc.
- The park and close to the river.
- The quality of life and prime location
- We live within 4 miles of Rice Lake which is convenient. This is important for the

convenience of shopping, health services, etc.

Agriculture/Open Space (15 responses)

- Agriculture
- Agriculture- hunting and fishing
- Beautiful, hunting, farming
- Great benefits of farmland and forest open space.
- I like the farming community. It is just what we wanted. Open spaces, less people and homes"
- I like the friendly people--the neat looking farms-the location-close to things I need. The road maintenance is excellent, especially in winter when the snow is removed at proper time. Lot of good stuff here! We are lucky!
- It's a rural farming area.
- Less houses, more open land
- Lot of open space
- Lots of room to move around.
- Open farmland
- Open land, protected, good maintenance roads, good service in rural area, feel safe
- Open space and no tourists
- Open space-privacy-woods and lakes nearby or around our property
- The prime farmland.

Miscellaneous (11 responses)

- It's O.K.(2x)
- Good quality of life.
- High Taxes
- High taxes, unfair tax compared to others
- I have no opinion about living in Oak Grove. I live here - I don't have any idea what the committee leaders do. I feel disconnected and uninformed. What I don't like - we have a child molester living in a small zoning area.

- I stay because I own my home- we lost the town and school, gas station, cheese factory so there is nothing here. We have to go to Rice Lake to shop We lost our post office so we lost our zip code. Had to go to rural route and have Rice Lake zip. Brill, WI at one time was a nice place to live and do business, now there is nothing.
- It is home to me - lived here over 30 years
- Not sure only been here for 77 years.
- Peacefulness, but we'll be forced to move if they keep jacking up our taxes every year. Raised \$900.00 in 2yrs.
- Taxes are too high.

People (8 responses)

- Family - neighborhood friendly and helpful, small area community
- Friendly neighbors, elbow room, the creek, forestry and wildlife
- Friendly neighbors, near Tuscobia Trails.
- Friendly people
- Good people, rural setting
- I like the neighbors--don't like changes.
- Neighbors, people who visit, great outdoors.
- People

Recreation (8 responses)

- Lakes to fish, places to hunt
- Love the lakes
- Recreation
- Recreation activities, golf, curling, natural feature, lake, small town character.
- Recreation, close proximity to city, schools
- Recreation-small town-not a lot of people
- The recreation opportunities, rural living, and being close to family and friends.
- We own land on Lower Devil's Lake and we enjoy the recreational value and beauty/nature of our lot

- Do not live in Oak Grove
- Don't live there
- I do not live in the town of Oak Grove. I live in the town of Rice Lake. It seems to me that Oak Grove values its farmland more than the town of Rice Lake.
- I don't live here, but do have a business (49yrs). Oak Grove in itself is fine. It's the holier than thou people who have lived here since the year one. When I moved here to take over the business I purchased, I was totally discriminated against in many ways. I was never able to buy land to put a house on because I was told "we don't want houses all over because this is Farmland." So I was forced to acquire a house in Rice Lake where I've had to commute for 49yrs. I now have a few good friends who agree that I got a rough deal. It was their town and I was an outsider which explains it all, I therefore have no love for whatever they propose to do. I also had my share of discrimination in Rice Lake also.
- I don't live in the Town of Oak Grove, I just have my name on some land there.
- I don't live there

Nothing (3 responses)

- I don't like anything
- Not much. Taxes way too high!! Can't even get a snowplow or graded to come down our road!
- When we moved here in 1954 Brill was a nice little town now there is nothing left but the old house is paid for so we'll stay as long as my health holds out.

Everything (2 responses)

- Everything (2x)

Do Not Live There (6 responses)

Question 26: What would you like the Town of Oak Grove to look like 25 years from now?

The Same (78 responses)

- Same (9x)
- The same as it does now (8x)
- The same (8x)
- Like it does now (5x)
- The same (5x)
- The same as now (3x)
- A good place to live - a lot like now.
- About the same
- About the same. Keep small housing tracts out. Even though we have 10 acres, we didn't have a choice- the acreage was already divided.
- As close to the present as possible.
- At my age I doubt I'll be here that long, but if I am here, I'd like to see no changes at all.
- Close to the same as it is today.
- Doesn't need to change for me
- Don't change.
- Essentially unchanged
- Hopefully the same
- I like the way it is now
- It should look the same or less crowded
- Just the same, but its not true.
- Just the way it is.
- Much as it is now
- Not much change
- Not much different than it does now
- Pretty much the same as now.
- Pretty much the way it is right now.
- Same as it is today.
- Same as now with clean lakes and rivers, streams
- Same as now would be fine.
- Same as now, leave 17 alone.
- Same as today
- Same as today, no changes needed
- Same, better roads

- Stay the same
- Stay the same: quiet, rural area
- The same as it does today- rural.
- The same as it is now, except develop low-cost, senior housing in concentrated area.
- The same as it is now; no small acreage lot building.
- The same as now, including the above--the little villages could expand their retail and restaurants
- The same- rural setting.
- The same. Not built up with housing developments
- The same-but-would like to see residential yards cleaned up a bit in my area.
- The way it does now
- Very much the same
- Very similar...NOT over developed

Development (29 Responses)

- A few more retail developments
- Clustered living system, close to employment, keeping space open, developing an energy plan.
- Fewer houses and more land used for farming
- I do not want the Town of Oak Grove to change other then seeing wind energy being utilized-I do not want industry to move in we all live close enough to Rice Lake for our jobs.
- I realize that progress is a part of our future, but I would like to see "planned" progress so the rural atmosphere is still a big part of living here.
- I would rather see rural homes be on 1 - 5 acres. Not take larger areas out of farming just to build homes.
- Less businesses

- Less developed than now.
- Minor changes, just maintain buildings, streets, infrastructure.
- Mixture of economic/ business development/retirement homes/ etc.
- More private economic development - increased tax base.
- More residential development, but not at the sacrifice of farmland or agricultural uses.
- More residential housing on less than 1 acre. This would increase the tax base
- Neat, kept-up farms with good roads, no big conglomerate farms, peaceful countryside with smaller homes.
- Newer, cleaner, safe, easy going area to live with easy access to services a person may need.
- Opportunity to continue the rural atmosphere and well thought out development which included industries that pay their workers a wage they can earn and can continue to live in this area.
- Several clusters of housing development linked by multipurpose (paved) trails and parks with athletic courts and services located by each. A community pool would be nice.
- Similar to present-any development controlled and kept visually attractive with green space for wildlife.
- Similar to what it is now, however that doesn't mean not letting any change happen. I'm not a believer in minimum this or maximum that or rule this regulate that. I strongly believe in good reasonable judgment calls based solely on reason and logic not on emotion or with partiality. In some cases, for example, it may be reasonable to allow someone to build on 1 acre as it may be a perfect setting for a home as opposed to someone building a home in the middle of a 40A field. Similar ideas could apply to commercial operations-maybe even manufacturing (clean)
- Similar to how it looks now. Hold onto itself as a small town.
- Since we are elderly, what Oak Grove will be like in 25 years probably will be up to the younger people. However, for the sake of the younger generation we would hope that it stays a pleasant place to live. I'm not sure large scale farms are a good thing. There are environmental issues that are difficult to control such as groundwater contamination and air pollution.
- Small clusters of business that supply the public with active, dependable job opportunities, keeping the natural, nature feeling.
- Small town, 8-10 thousand people. Adequate services - medical- financial
- Some industry. Clean air. All roads paved. No pollution- water and air.
- Stay rural but improve roads- some roads are blacktopped in consecutive manner. Keep homes clustered or with 1 acre or less- so that farmland is not used up/ keeps open space.
- The same, maybe more clustered housing developments, wind power
- Thriving community with a town center, shops, clinic, fall park an industrial park which will employ people. Solar power community access and reduce power costs. nice families and elementary school.
- V and 53 interchange commercial area developed, more homes in zoned areas to add to the tax base. Roads in areas of high traffic paved.
- Windmills atop every hill generating electricity. Solar panels atop every house and barn-Several parks off of Tuscobia Trail. A positive balance in checkbook. Roads with speed limits rather than the unlimited we have now.

Rural/Farming (25 responses)

- Rural setting (2x)
- A productive farming community.
- A rural farming area.
- Agriculture
- A lot more small farms again like it used to be and more small businesses.
- Country
- Country way of life, not farms turned into housing development.
- Farms, woods still quiet country.
- I don't think there is nothing that can be done. We had a lot of farmers who milked cows. Now we have mostly growing crops to sell.
- I like the fact that it remains an agricultural area this is part of the reason we live here.
- Maintain rural type living close in our area low crime rate
- Maintain its rural footprint, opportunities for employment for young adults
- No change - keep the country and farms operating and few enough homes to keep privacy.
- Not a lot of people, no busy traffic, good country living.
- Not developed into economic/business industry. Continue to be small, rural area.
- Not like the City.
- Not to change, or spoil the beauty of farmland, woods, forest, lakes, streams, rivers. Industry, etc. o.k. as long as property owners get to vote on.
- Quiet and peaceful
- Retain agricultural
- Rural and peaceful.
- Rural with low impact lake shore development.
- Rural-Agricultural and recreation area.
- Still country life

- Very much the same with maybe more land being used for agriculture- farm and gardens.

Miscellaneous (16 responses)

- Birchwood, WI
- Different
- Don't make much difference I will be long dead.
- Free of weeds
- I couldn't care less as I'm 83 yrs. old and won't be around. All I can say is whatever they get they deserve. Over 50 years ago I saw this same greed for "development" in New Jersey where I was born. We lost our homes, farmland, open country and above all, freedom. My family I left behind would give anything to get away from that hell, but they're too old to fight it. I warned people here when I came that the same would happen here and I was right. Farmers who couldn't pay a repair bill are now millionaires or close to it.
- I don't think I will be here!
- I don't think it matters it goes with the times.
- Like the small town. Sorry we lost our school. The town will change and grow.
- N/A
- Nicer
- No opinion
- Not sure-perhaps how to keep it's natural beauty healthy and thriving.
- Please make the houses in Brill Clean their yards!
- The lakes filled with water!!
- To keep up with times without drastic.
- Won't be here, don't care.

Roads-Transportation (11 responses)

- 29 7/4 Ave. paved
- All dirt roads paved (residential ones)
- Everything blacktopped
- Hwy 53 intersection issues resolved

- Just like it is now except every road paved - they should be now
- More blacktop roads
- More nice country homes, and paved roads.
- More paved roads.
- The same, maybe paved roads- 118 3/4 ave. and 29 3/4 ave.
- The way it looks now with exception: All dirt roads should be paved.
- To be fair with everyone. Take care of roads.

Environment (7 responses)

- As a model of good ecology - water, land, woods, air, wildlife.
- Cleaner lake
- Existing homes may be slightly enlarged but mostly just made more energy efficient or include small business.
- I would hope the young folks would take good care of the land and there'd be some good stands of trees left in the area.
- Keep the quality of life with emphasis for clean family healthy living
- More trees and woodland
- More trees, less wind

Question 32

Employment Status

Other (7 responses)

- Disabled (3x)
- Student (2x)
- Full time student
- Homemaker

Question 33

Place of residence

Other (5 responses)

- Cabin
- Family owned
- Life estate
- Rented out
- With son

Recreation (5 responses)

- ATV use on all roads.
- It would have a ATV trail on the Tuscobia Trail
- More ATV access to trails
- Nice parks
- Open all trails in township to ATV's. (I do not own one, but we are losing tourism because of it.) No large scale farms.

Taxes (5 responses)

- Lower property taxes
- Hopefully high class, higher taxes are ok to support this agenda specific to our Township.
- Lower property taxes, our taxes in Minnesota were 1/2 of yours.
- Taxes are too high
- The property taxes are excessive on our small cabin, no garage, no basement, 2 bedrooms. We plan to list it for sale in the spring. We cannot afford to retire at this property.

Appendix C: TOWN OF OAK GROVE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

QUALITY OF LIFE

1. What are the **three** most important reasons you and your family choose to live in the Town of Oak Grove?

28%	Agriculture	22%	Low Crime Rate	11%	Quality Schools
2%	Community Services	37%	Natural Features	27%	Recreational Opportunities
16%	Cost of Home	38%	Near Family and Friends	37%	Small Town Atmosphere
3%	Historical Significance	23%	Near Job (Employment Opportunity)	8%	Other: (Please Identify)
12%	Property Taxes	36%	Born and Raised Here	_____	

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
2. Rate the overall quality of life in the Town of Oak Grove.	28%	60%	12%	0%

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

3. Rate the following <u>Programs and Services</u>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable
a. Fire protection	14%	51%	19%	7%	8%
b. Emergency Services (e.g., EMT, ambulance)	12%	57%	18%	4%	8%
c. Street and Road Maintenance	16%	57%	18%	8%	1%
d. Parks and Recreation	7%	43%	19%	9%	23%
e. Town/County Zoning Regulations	3%	46%	35%	12%	4%

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

4. How important is it for the Town of Oak Grove to use regulations to protect the following:	Essential	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a. Farmland	46%	38%	10%	5%
b. Forested Lands	43%	42%	11%	4%
c. Groundwater	72%	25%	2%	0%
d. Historic and Cultural Sites	17%	46%	30%	7%
e. Open Space	26%	42%	26%	6%
f. Lakes, Rivers and Streams	62%	33%	5%	0%
g. Rural Character	35%	45%	16%	3%
h. Hunting and Fishing	40%	42%	13%	5%
i. Wetlands	40%	39%	18%	3%
j. Wildlife Habitat	46%	41%	11%	3%

COMMUNICATION

5. Fill the circles of the **three** most effective ways that the Town of Oak Grove could provide information regarding its services and programs to residents.

Direct Mailings	Radio	Newspaper Articles	Newsletters	Town Website	Other: (Specify)
85%	26%	59%	73%	37%	3%

HOUSING

The following questions ask your opinion about the development of housing in the Town of Oak Grove.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
6. Affordable housing is needed in the Town of Oak Grove (affordable housing = rent/mortgage that is no more than 30% of a household's gross income).	12%	35%	27%	10%	16%
7. Elderly housing is needed in the Town of Oak Grove (elderly housing = housing for those 65+ that accommodates special needs such as wheelchairs).	9%	30%	33%	10%	18%
8. Multi-family or apartment homes are needed in the Town of Oak Grove.	4%	8%	42%	33%	13%
9. I am concerned that future development may impact the value of my home and property.	28%	41%	16%	2%	14%

AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

10. Productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used for:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Agricultural Use	65%	32%	1%	0%	2%
b. Residential Use	9%	29%	34%	23%	5%
c. Commercial/Industrial Use	5%	14%	37%	39%	5%
11. Large scale farms (500 or more animal units) should be allowed to expand:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Anywhere in the Town of Oak Grove	7%	22%	43%	22%	6%
b. Nowhere in the Town of Oak Grove	18%	20%	39%	13%	10%
c. Outside a 2 mile radius of incorporated areas	7%	34%	24%	13%	20%
d. Outside a 1 mile radius of incorporated areas	4%	15%	42%	17%	21%
12. Landowners should be allowed to develop land any way they want.	10%	20%	41%	24%	4%
13. The visual impacts (view of the landscape) of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development.	31%	53%	9%	1%	6%
14. New residential development should be clustered or designed in a manner which preserves open space.	24%	47%	15%	4%	11%

	Yes	No	Don't Know
15. Should the Town of Oak Grove use tax dollars to purchase development rights to preserve prime farmland or open space? (Under such a program, the landowner is paid money in exchange for his/her "right" to develop their land.)	16%	50%	33%

16. In your opinion, what should the minimum lot size be for new residential development? **Fill one circle only.**

Less than 1 acre	1 to 5 acres	6 to 10 acres	11 to 40 acres	41 or more acres	No Limitation
15%	40%	18%	15%	7%	5%

17. How many acres of land do you own in the Town of Oak Grove?	Less than 10	10 - 20	21 -40	40 plus
	43%	11%	13%	32%

18. Is the land you own actively farmed?	Yes, by myself	Yes, by lease or other agreement	No	Not Applicable
	15%	26%	52%	7%

19. Do you think your land will be actively farmed (by you or someone else) in the next (fill all circles that apply):

0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	Not Applicable
16%	16%	13%	22%	56%

TRANSPORTATION

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
20. The overall road network (roads, streets, and highways) in the Town of Oak Grove meets the needs of its citizens.	23%	64%	6%	5%	2%
21. Alternative modes of transportation, such as ATV, snowmobile, bicycle, and walking are important.	32%	49%	10%	2%	6%

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

22. The Town of Oak Grove should encourage the following energy alternatives as a form of economic development:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Bio Fuels (e.g. ethanol, biodiesel)	20%	35%	18%	8%	19%
b. Solar Energy	33%	49%	7%	1%	11%
c. Wind Energy	33%	45%	7%	2%	13%
d. Other _____	14%	13%	4%	3%	66%

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
23. The Town of Oak Grove should recruit or promote new business and industry	10%	31%	36%	9%	14%

24. The following types of economic/business development are appropriate in the Town of Oak Grove.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Agricultural Related Businesses	27%	60%	2%	1%	9%
b. Commercial and Retail Development	5%	35%	40%	10%	10%
c. Home Based Businesses	12%	69%	7%	2%	10%
d. Industrial and Manufacturing Development	4%	25%	42%	16%	13%
e. Tourism and Recreation	15%	58%	14%	1%	11%
f. Technology related (e.g. biotechnology, computers, etc.)	7%	32%	28%	9%	24%
g. Service industries (e.g. financial services, health services, etc.)	7%	40%	29%	5%	18%

25. What do you like about living in the Town of Oak Grove?

See Appendix B

26. What would you like the Town of Oak Grove to look like 25 years from now?

See Appendix B

27. Which **THREE** of the following Town of Oak Grove functions do you think are **most important (Only select top 3)**?

a. Ensure public safety	52%	b. Provide efficient/effective government	36%
c. Protect environmental/cultural resources	50%	d. Protect agricultural resources	53%
e. Support recreational opportunities	28%	f. Regulate land use	36%
g. Enhance economic development	12%	h. Provide effective transportation network	17%

	Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
28. How likely are you to attend meetings or other public participation events as related to planning in the Town of Oak Grove?	5%	40%	47%	8%

	Saturday mornings	Monday evenings	Tuesday evenings	Wed. evenings	Thursday evenings
29. What two times would be most convenient for you to attend a Town planning meeting? (Only select top 2)	29%	41%	34%	25%	18%

DEMOGRAPHICS: Please tell us some things about you:

30. Gender:	Male	Female
	60%	40%

31. Age:	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and older
	0%	7%	15%	26%	25%	26%

32. Employment Status:	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Self Employed	Unemployed	Retired	Other:
	42%	6%	19%	2%	29%	3%

33. Place of Residence:	Own	Rent	Other:
	98%	0%	2%

34. My Town of Oak Grove home is located within 300 feet of a lake or river?	Yes	No	Not Applicable
	25%	69%	6%

	0	1	2	3	4	5+
35. Number of Adults (18 or older) in Household:		14%	75%	7%	3%	1%
36. Number of Children (under 18) in Household:	70%	11%	8%	7%	3%	1%

37. How many years have you lived in Town of Oak Grove?	Less than 1	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 24	25+	Seasonal Only
	2%	14%	11%	26%	42%	5%

38. In what zip code do you live? _____

Thank You for Completing the Survey!

Your survey responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

Please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by November 14, 2008 to:

Survey Research Center
 University of Wisconsin - River Falls
 410 S. Third St.
 River Falls, WI 54022-5001