

Kinderhook Comprehensive Plan Update Survey Summary – What Did We Learn?

More than 200 residents participated in the survey. The results are summarized below. These survey results will be combined with other more detailed information from the survey, public input from the public workshops and the information collected during the Village-leadership focus group to help us to update vision, goals, and new strategies contained within an Updated Comprehensive Plan.

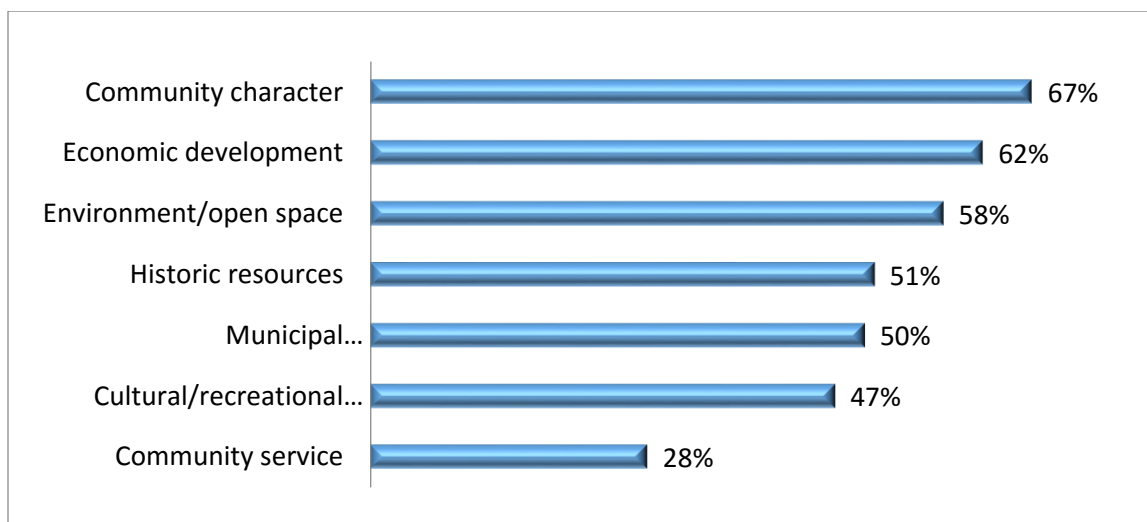
What we learned about Topics of Importance to Residents: As in the past, community character remains the most important topic that residents want addressed by the Village leadership. Economic development, the environment/open space, historic resources, and municipal resources (in order of importance) were the other topics people want the Village leadership to pay attention to.

This Means: The Plan should continue to address and offer strategies to maintain the Village’s character as a significant feature. The environment, open spaces, historic resources and municipal resources are all part of community character. In comparison to past plans, this update needs to place more emphasis on economic development. However, economic development needs to be consistent with community character.

In terms of importance, *Community Character* (67%) and *Economic Development* (62%) are most often deemed “very important” in terms of aspects of the 2009 Village Comprehensive Plan that should be preserved or enhanced.

At least half of respondents consider these areas highly important: *Environment and Open Space* (58%), *Historic Resources* and *Municipal Resources* (51%), *Infrastructure and Transportation* (50%), followed by *Cultural and Recreational Resources* (47%).

Q1. The items below were identified in the 2009 Village Comprehensive Plan as features that should be preserved or enhanced. Please rate the importance of the following topics as found in the 2009 Comprehensive



What we learned about what the Village should support: The majority of participants want the Village leadership to support local libraries, cultural events, and to enhance recreational opportunities. Specifically, expansion of biking, walking, jogging, running, and hiking as well as improving access and recreational use of the Kinderhook Creek were deemed as very important. Another action that was important to the majority of respondents, but especially to those residents over 60 years old; was to build on the public/private program of street tree planting and gardening.

This Means: The updated plan should offer action steps and policies to continue support for the library, and for cultural and recreational opportunities. Specific actions can be outlined in the plan to enhance pedestrian resources and to improve Kinderhook Creek access.

What we learned about businesses people will support: Specialty foods (butcher, bakery, fish market, produce), restaurants, and gift shops were the three highest scoring businesses that people were likely to support in the Village.

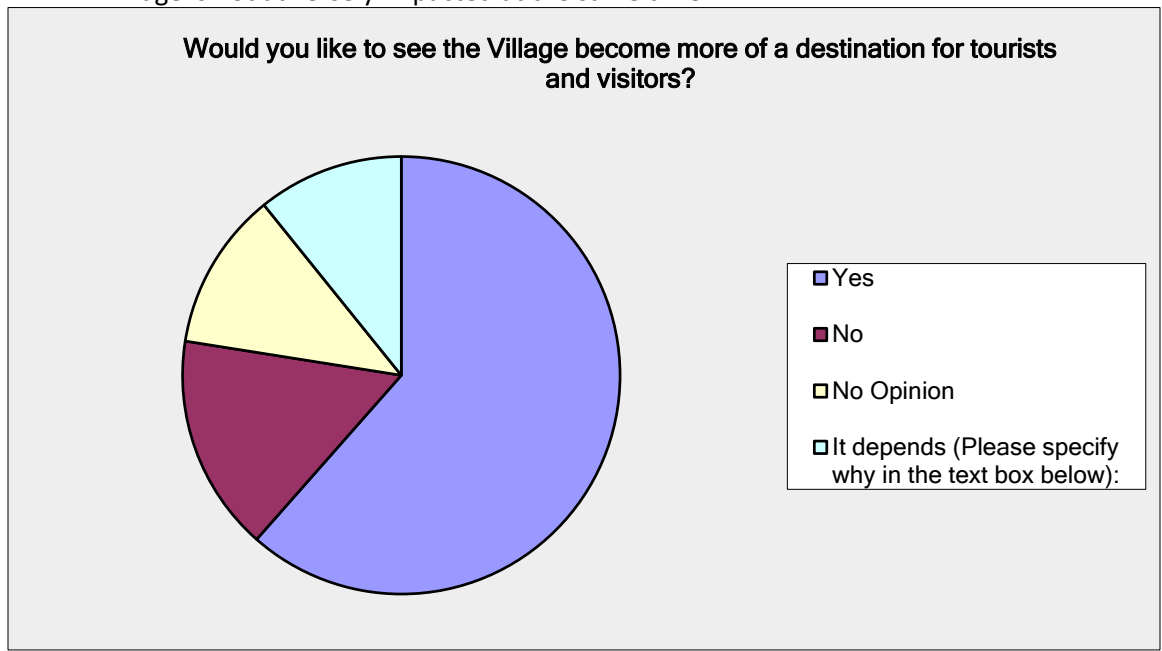
This Means: Economic development programs should pay particular attention to attracting the kinds of businesses that will garner support among village residents.

What types of businesses are you likely to support if they were to come to the Village? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Restaurants	83.6%	178
Retail Clothing	33.8%	72
Gift Shops	58.2%	124
Specialty Foods (Butcher, Bakery, Fish Market, Produce)	86.4%	184
Entertainment	38.5%	82
None of the above	1.9%	4
Other (Please specify what in the text box below):	16.9%	36

What we learned about Kinderhook as a tourist destination: 61.5% of participants said they would like to see the Village become more of a destination for tourists and visitors.

This Means: Economic development programs supported in the plan should encourage projects and programs that further develop tourism, but that the Village needs to ensure that the character of the Village is not adversely impacted at the same time.



What we learned about use of tax incentives for economic development: When asked if tax incentives should be made available to encourage additional or expanded business development, 40% said yes, and 29% said no. The remainder said 'it depends' upon the type of business, whether the business is in harmony with the character of the Village, and how long the support would last. So there is a level of cautious support for tax incentives.

This Means: There is moderate support for tax incentives, and the plan can suggest that the Village further explore types of tax incentives that could be compatible with Village goals, cost and benefits. Tax incentives could be part, but not the whole thrust of an enhanced economic development initiative.

What we learned about use of tax incentives if it results in a moderate property tax increase: Over all participants, there is also some, but not a majority level of support for a moderate property tax increase to support those tax incentives. For those who support the use of tax incentives, a substantial majority (67%) is willing to support this action through moderate increases in their local property taxes.

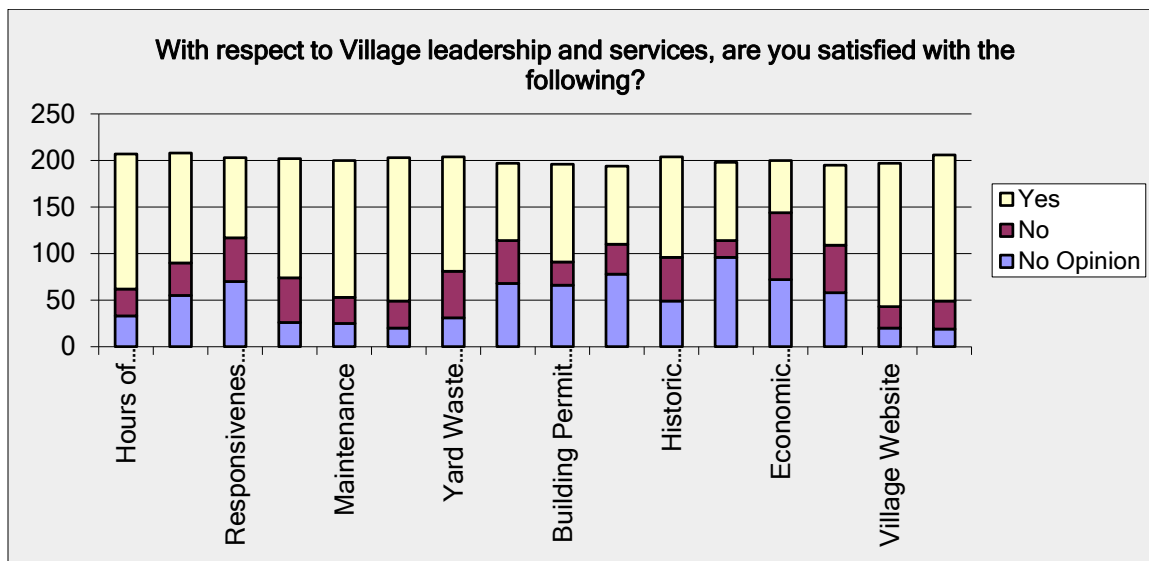
This Means: As part of the feasibility of offering tax incentives, the Plan can suggest that the Village identify the real costs and benefits to program actions and create a dialogue with village residents about it.

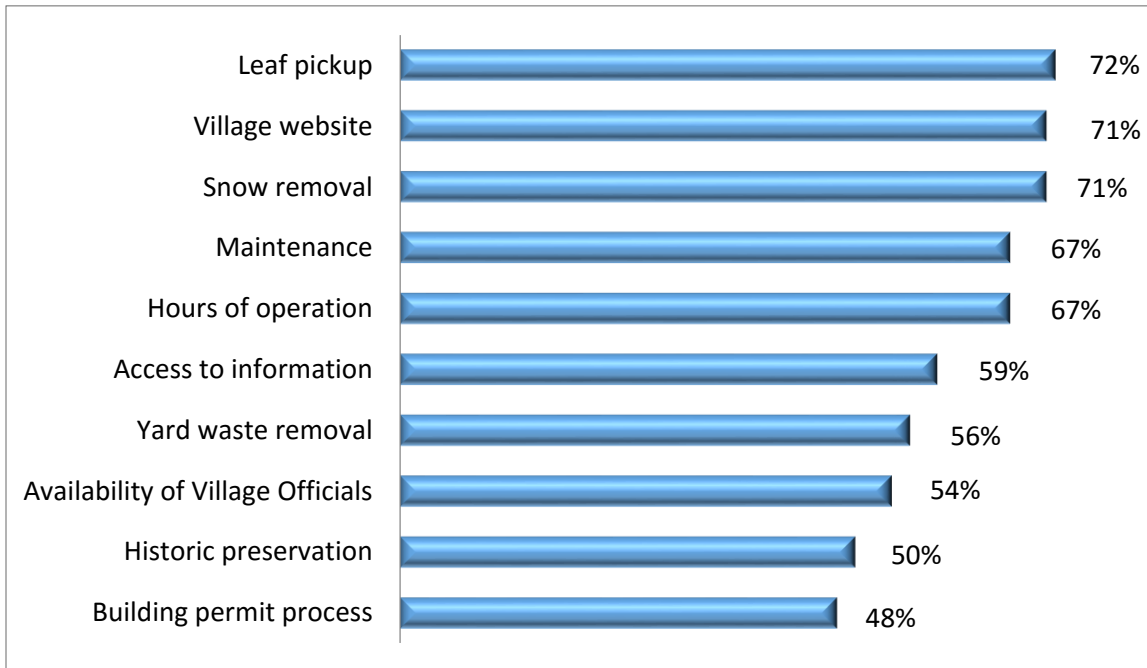
What we learned about desired actions to support economic development: If additional funding were available for economic development programs, about half of the participants said they would support use of those funds to encourage landlords to improve building facades and improve lighting. Slightly less than half (48%) said they would want to see funds used to develop streetscape concept plans to establish an aesthetic vision for the Village.

This Means: The Plan should include actions that would promote building façade and lighting improvement programs. It could also suggest that if funds were available, there would be support for a streetscape improvement plan.

What we learned about satisfaction with Village services: Overall, participants were satisfied or very satisfied with village leadership and services. The highest scoring services were leaf pickup, village website, snow removal, maintenance, and hours of operation of the Village. The only item that more people were not satisfied with was the economic development in the Village.

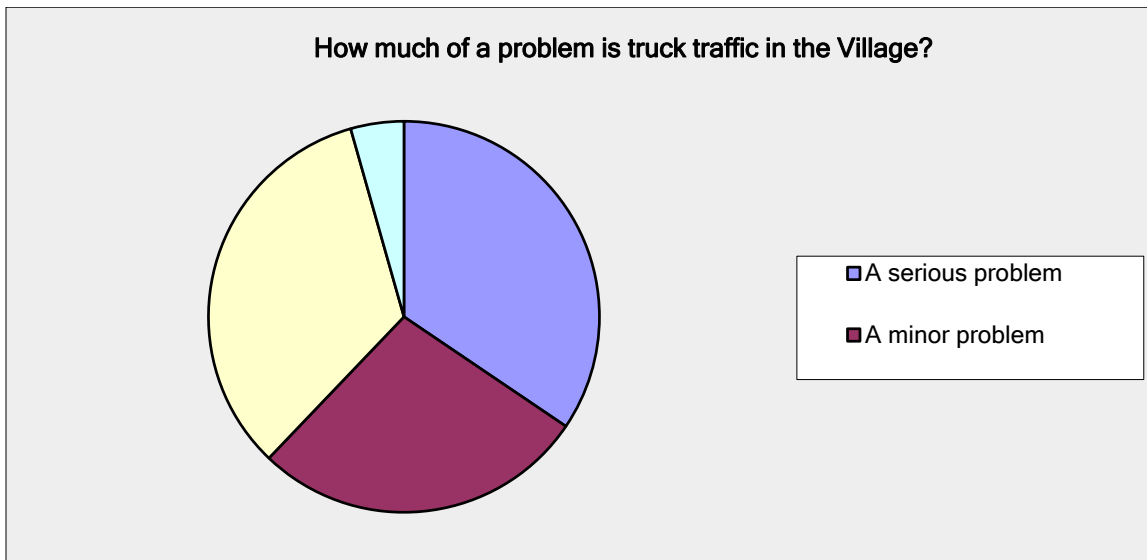
This Means: More emphasis should be placed on economic development, but the Plan should include maintenance of other existing services and programs.





What we learned about truck traffic: There are mixed opinions as to whether truck traffic is a problem in the Village. 34.5% said it's a serious problem, 27.7% a minor problem, and 33.5% not a problem.

This Means: Truck traffic is a problem to be addressed, but it is not a priority. Because it is more important to those living on or near Route 9 and that are directly affected, the Plan could recommend actions to enhance enforcement of speeding, and work with DOT to find other solutions.



What we learned about funding infrastructure improvements: The survey asked about the level of agreement with several actions to assist the Village with allocating funding and prioritization of infrastructure improvements. A vast majority (89.4%) agreed that the Village should solicit additional funding from State/Federal Government or from other sources. The majority however disagreed that the Village should stretch out or phase projects and delay upgrades, expansion and maintenance.

This Means: The Plan could include a recommendation that the Village be aggressive about finding grant funding for needed infrastructure improvements. Further, the Plan can continue the recommended action

to develop a capital improvement plan that would help the Village figure out costs, time frames, and planning for these improvements.

What we learned about parking: Parking was not considered a major problem in the Village. Almost 49% said parking is never a problem. 17% said it is occasionally a problem with 4% saying it is often a problem.

This Means: Addressing parking is not a high priority to be addressed in the Plan.

What we learned about use of the Village Hall upstairs: There was a lot of support (62%) for the Village to make improvements to the upstairs space of the Village Hall in order to broaden and enhance the use of the building for the community. Some people wanted to be sure the Village considered cost, and whatever is done is handicapped/disabled accessible, keeps historic character, and remains open to community events.

This Means: The Plan could recommend strategies to help the Village enhance the upstairs of the Village Hall provided the cost can be accommodated, and that the improvements ensure accessibility preserves the historic character of the building and the facility is open to community use.

What we learned about the best features of the Village: The best features of the village concentrated on Kinderhook's beauty and aesthetics, its walkability, its historic character, its small town feel, and the people of the community. Other common positive features mentioned include the Village's architecture, its amenities (library, farmers market, and events), and the location of the Village, its friendliness, and its charm, sense of community, safety, and well-maintained nature.

This Means: The Plan's vision and goal statements should be amended to ensure that these highly valued features are preserved and that they form the underlying values of the community.

What we learned about challenges in the Village: By far the area that needs the most improvement related to lack of businesses. The number one response to what needs improvement is lack of business and empty storefronts. The need to fix or add to sidewalks were other common responses. Better access to the Kinderhook Creek, term limits for board members, parking and handicapped access, road repairs, truck traffic, speeding, drainage issues and need for improved signage and street crossings were also mentioned as a need to be addressed. Most of the responses revolved around the lack of business development within the village.

This Means: The Plan should include more economic development initiatives as a primary focus.

What we learned about how to address challenges in the Village: The survey asked what actions the Village leadership could take to address the challenges and features that need improvement. 129 written answers were submitted (almost half of the survey participants). A wide variety of comments were received. The majority related to economic development – many asked for the Village to attract new businesses, be more business-friendly, more open and welcoming to new businesses, and ensure that zoning does not place barriers to businesses that are in harmony with the other goals and character of Kinderhook.

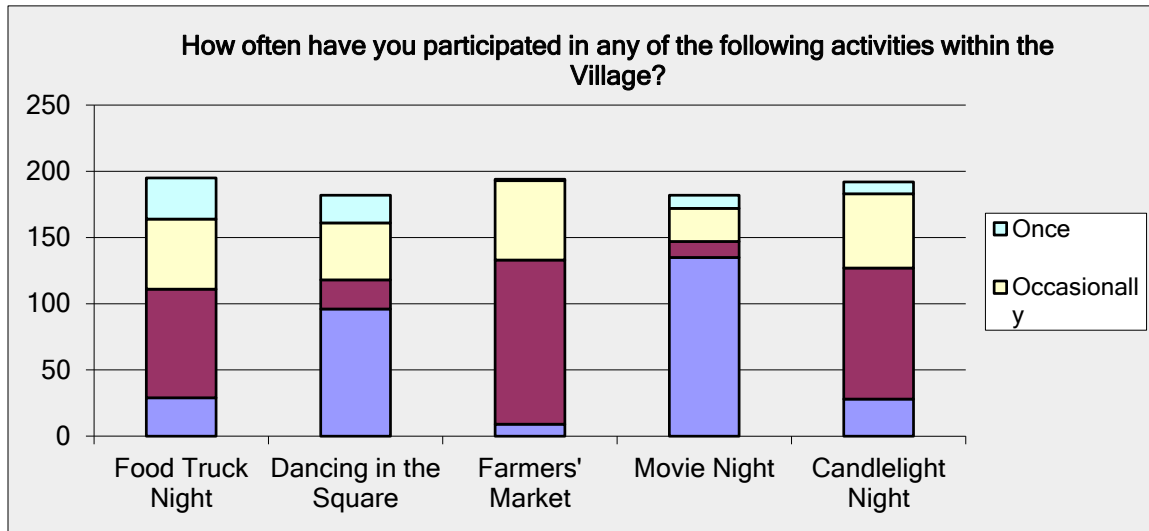
This Means: As part of the economic development actions included in the Plan update, business attraction, review of zoning to ensure it does not place undue challenges to opening a business in Kinderhook, and developing business-friendly programs should be important actions for the Village to undertake.

What we learned about future vision for the Village: Many common themes were conveyed in these comments about what the Village of Kinderhook residents want for their community in the future. Having a thriving, bustling, and vibrant business environment relates to the desired economic health of Kinderhook and are common elements of the vision. This is coupled with maintaining a beautiful, charming, quaint historic character. People's vision for the Village also include having sidewalks for walking, being a civil and friendly place, having cultural diversity, a peaceful and safe environment, and plenty of activities for all ages to make Kinderhook a great place to live.

This Means: These themes should become part of the Village's vision and goal statements in the Plan.

What we learned about participation in various Village events: The farmers market and Candlelight Night were the events that were most frequented by survey participants. The least frequently attended events are Movie Night and Dancing in the Square.

This Means: Organizers of the events that do not get as much participation may be able to identify ways to improve participation among village residents. The farmers market and Candlelight Night are events that should be continued.



What we learned about volunteering in the Village: When asked about whether they would be interested in volunteering in the Village, the most interest was in economic development programming (20%) and with the Planning/Zoning Board (20%). 43 people left their names and contact information and were willing to volunteer. Many other people however, were not able to volunteer at this time, primarily due to lack of time.

This Means: The Village has a list of people interested in becoming involved in the community and they should take advantage of that to contact these residents and invite them to volunteer. Given this high level of willingness to participate, the Plan can suggest actions to increase dialogue and participation by members of the community.

What we learned about people who filled out the survey: The survey asked several demographic questions to identify the characteristics of people who filled out the survey. These were:

Median age 58
 Mean Household Size 2.5

