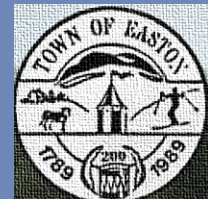


# *envision*Easton

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Town of Easton, Washington County, New York  
May 2023



Laberge  
ENGINEERING  
ARCHITECTURE



Group  
SURVEYING  
PLANNING



Hudson River  
Valley Greenway

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The “Envision Easton” Visioning Report was made possible through funding provided by the Hudson River Valley Greenway. The Report is the result of the Comprehensive Plan Committee’s and town residents’ commitment to the preservation of Easton’s quality of life and agricultural landscape, and their realization that an update to their original comprehensive plan was the first step in that process. The Comprehensive Plan Committee worked collaboratively and through their leadership, energy, and enthusiasm made “Envision Easton” possible.

### Comprehensive Plan Committee

Dan Shaw, Supervisor  
 Scott Brownell, Town Board  
 Justin Sievers, Planning Board  
 Michelle Skiff, Planning Board  
 Margaret Brand, Planning Board



Job #2022066



Partial funding for the Town of  
 Easton Vision Report has been  
 provided by the NYS Hudson  
 River Valley Greenway  
 Contract No. T004653

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## ENVISION EASTON

The Town of Easton has been well guided by its original 1970 Comprehensive Plan along with subsequent amendments in 1977, 1984, and 1990. In light of the many changes that have affected the community, Town officials recognized that the community was in need of a new plan to better understand current conditions and guide its future. The Town formed a Comprehensive Plan Committee made up of local residents, community leaders, and local business owners to oversee the planning process and guide the development of the new “Envision Easton” Comprehensive Plan.

### Update Needed!

The Easton community requires an evaluation of its social, economic, and environmental conditions in order to reflect the current needs and realities of its population and landscape.

### Action Plan

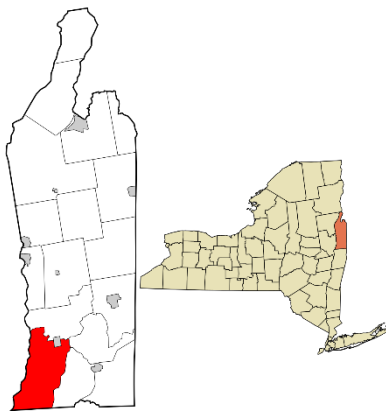


Figure 1: Location of the Town of Easton within Washington County

The “Envision Easton” planning process consists of two phases that lead toward the overall development of the Comprehensive Plan. Phase 1 is the development of a Vision Report. Phase 2 includes the compilation of the Inventory and Goals for the Plan, including a series of recommendations to realize the Town’s vision for its future. This document serves as the Comprehensive Plan Vision Report and is resultant of a highly engaged community through an in-person and virtual visioning process. The community engagement process was designed to encourage public involvement in order to collectively establish a vision for Easton’s future. The initiative achieved diverse input and utilized a variety of outreach methods to solicit participation. These included open committee meetings, stakeholder discussions, a public surveying, and a public workshop,

whereas the community could form the Vision for sustainability and maintenance within Easton. The “Envision Easton” Comprehensive Plan Vision Report presents a desired vision for Easton, reflective of its community and economic development needs for the next 10 years.

The Town of Easton will use this Vision Report to further advance the comprehensive planning process to encourage local investment that is compatible with the protection, preservation, and enhancement of natural and cultural resources, tourism, and community development, reinforcing the Town’s high-quality of life. Further, the Comprehensive Plan will be used to balance the preservation of Easton’s unique mixture of forests and farmlands, with that of needed economic sustainability in a challenging fiscal climate, carefully considering changing factors that will continue to impact the Town into the future.



Figure 2: Grandma Moses Home Site on Co. Rt. 74A

## Why is This Plan Necessary?

The Envision Easton Comprehensive Plan is a collection of information and analysis designed to guide future development and provide Easton with a firm foundation for policies and legislation to foster a more certain future. While comprehensive plans help guide policy, they are not law. Rather, they provide a framework and context within which to



Figure 3: Looking West from Willard Mountain

make decisions relating to future land use and development. Plans are subject to change and revision with the passage of time and events and their adequacy and appropriateness should always be considered when contemplating future community changes.

New York State Town Law gives towns the power to create a comprehensive plan, should they so desire. Town Law describes the legal requirements for approval and what elements may be included within a comprehensive plan but does not firmly require every comprehensive plan to include each element. Therefore, comprehensive plans vary from community to community, and many focus on the most important elements and issues of the local municipality at the time of creation and adoption. Each comprehensive plan in New York State is unique and tailored to their individual community, and this document shall prove instrumental to the Town moving forward. The Comprehensive Plan Vision Report echoes the character of the current community as it *envision*s the future of Easton.

To better understand the Town's history and future, it is vital to understand the Town's trends and values. With a population of roughly 2,397 according to the 2020 US Census, the Easton community most values its agrarian lifestyle, scenic landscape, and small-town character. Easton continues to be a predominantly rural, agricultural community. The Town is a Right-to-Farm community with a law setting forth a process to mediate complaints by non-farm neighbors about farming operations and practices. The Town is currently experiencing a gradual shift in its industry to non-agricultural home-based businesses and large-scale solar energy facilities; however, the prevalence of farming remains. The Easton Town Board determined the Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Plan provides a framework and context within which to make decisions relating to future land use and development.



Provide a balance between the preservation of Easton's quality of life and natural resources while accommodating for future development.

Allow the town to better protect the public health, safety, and welfare of its citizens by protecting its lands from adverse development.



Reevaluate the Town's: Natural Resource, Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Public Access, Regional Planning, Historic Heritage, Environmental Management.

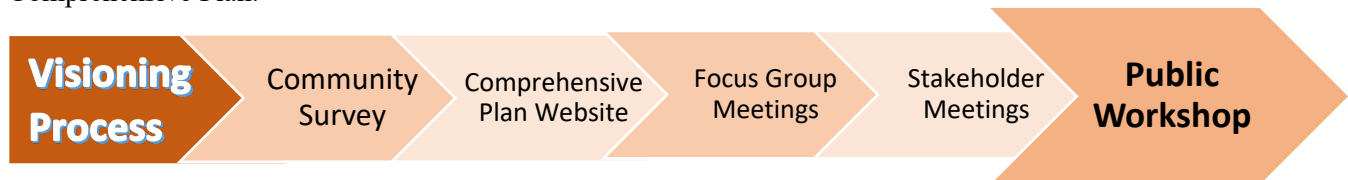
Update was the appropriate means to address the needs of its residents and to protect its current landscape.

Through New York State’s Hudson River Grant Greenway Program, the Town received Community Planning Grant funding to develop the Comprehensive Plan Vision Report. As a Greenway community, the Town of Easton will use comprehensive planning to encourage future development that is compatible with the protection, preservation, and enhancement of its natural resources, landscape, and economy, in order to reinforce the Town’s high quality of life. This Plan is essential for achieving desired preservation throughout this rural community.

A Comprehensive Plan is a working document that outlines a vision of the Town of Easton’s future and should be consulted just as the town might consult the public, legal counsel, or others when making policy decisions and allocating resources.

## Town of Easton Planning Process

The Town formed a Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) in January of 2022. The Committee was tasked with reviewing the Comprehensive Plan and Subdivision Law as well as participating in the committee, stakeholder, and public meetings. During this review, the Committee identified recommendations that have been successfully implemented, recommendations that are no longer relevant, and others that are still applicable. The Committee is essential in conveying the interests, concerns, and needs of Easton residents that will guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan.



Laberge Group, a local firm specializing in Comprehensive Planning, public participation and outreach, and Smart Growth principles was hired by the Town in May of 2022. The Town and Laberge Group designed a two (2) phase planning process to leverage local and state resources to assist with funding the plan. Phase 1 was completed in the first half of 2023. The Town was awarded additional funds from the New York State Department of State Smart Growth Grant for Phase 2, which is anticipated to be completed before the end of 2023.

Community Visioning is the initial phase (Phase 1) of the comprehensive planning process which resulted in the development of this Vision Report. The Vision Report provides a broad overview of community goals and objectives based on preliminary findings from initial actions taken during the planning process. This Phase was intended to build community outreach, participation, and support. Additionally, Phase 1 assisted with establishing relationships with key local and regional stakeholders. The purpose of the Vision Report is to create the community vision, which is intended to identify weaknesses, highlight strengths, and improve the overall quality



Figure 4: Burton Hall (Town Offices)

of life. This report sets the foundation for Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Plan process, which will involve the creation of policy and project recommendations.

## Public Input Results

There has been wide project publicity in order to provide community awareness and garner input for the vision and goals of the update to the Easton Comprehensive Plan. There was a substantial amount of feedback obtained during the robust public participation process as a result of the community survey, the county fair information booth, the stakeholder roundtables, and the public workshop. The Vision Report is a culmination of all outreach efforts and public input and is intended to advance the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The following is an overview of the key summary insights received during the outreach efforts.

### Public Information Booth

The Comprehensive Plan Committee set up an information booth at the Washington County Fair in August of 2022 throughout the week. This was the first public effort at educating the community and garnering public input on the Vision and Goals for the Town of Easton. It was also a tool to steer residents towards greater participation through a community survey and comment box. These outreach resources continued to be available at Town Hall for one month following the County Fair.

### Community Survey

A Community Survey was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee. The Survey consisted of a mix of eleven (11) multiple-choice and short-response questions. The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding of the community's priorities to help inform the Vision Report. All responses were anonymous for confidentiality and to help cultivate more honest results. The survey was held open for four (4) months and attracted a total of 114 respondents. Those questions that lent themselves to graphic analysis are shown below, while those that were written responses aided in the formation of Easton's Vision and Goals through respondents' common needs, desires, and concerns.

The Word Cloud below shows the most common words used to describe Easton by survey respondents. By far the most common word used was RURAL. The word TOWN was the second most common, most likely due to its pairing with other words in the cloud such as RURAL, QUIET, and BEAUTIFUL. Other pertinent words included COMMUNITY, FARMLAND, NEIGHBORS, LANDSCAPE, SETTING, and VIEWS.



Figure 5: Advertisement for County Fair Booth



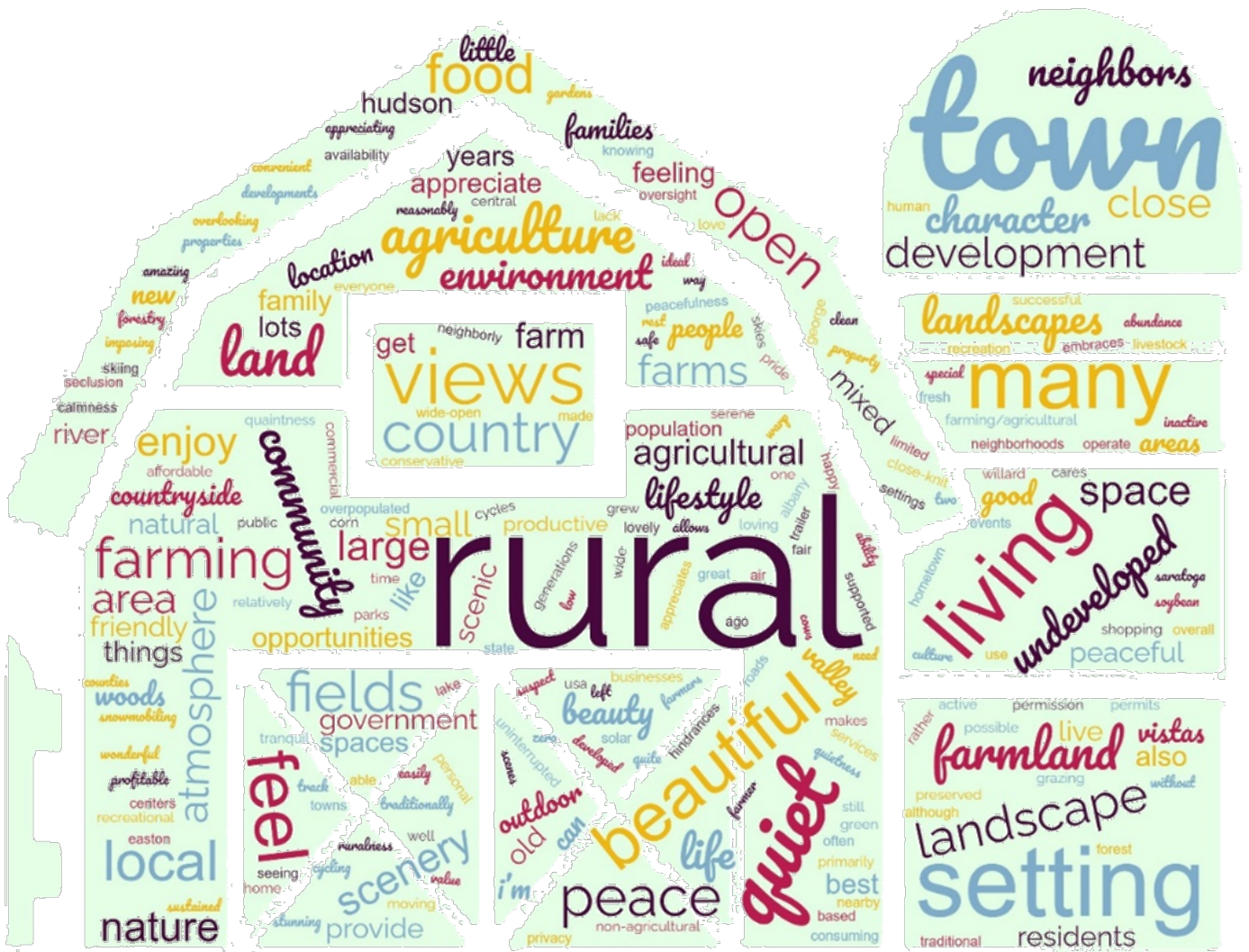


Figure 6: Most Common Words Used to Describe Survey Respondent's Vision for Easton

Understanding a community's demands for public services informs its public officials as to where future investment should be allocated. Responses to Question 9 below demonstrates overwhelming support for Road Repairs, with over 50% of respondents choosing it as the largest infrastructure need. Broadband was the next most popular response with 23% selecting other and filling in this choice, while the need for Public Parks was the third most popular response with 11% selecting this as their top choice. Public Parking was not chosen as an infrastructure need by any of the respondents, while public sewer and lighting were each only chosen by a single respondent. These results primarily show there is little support for additional services within Easton, but rather expansion and improvement of existing infrastructure is the priority amongst respondents.



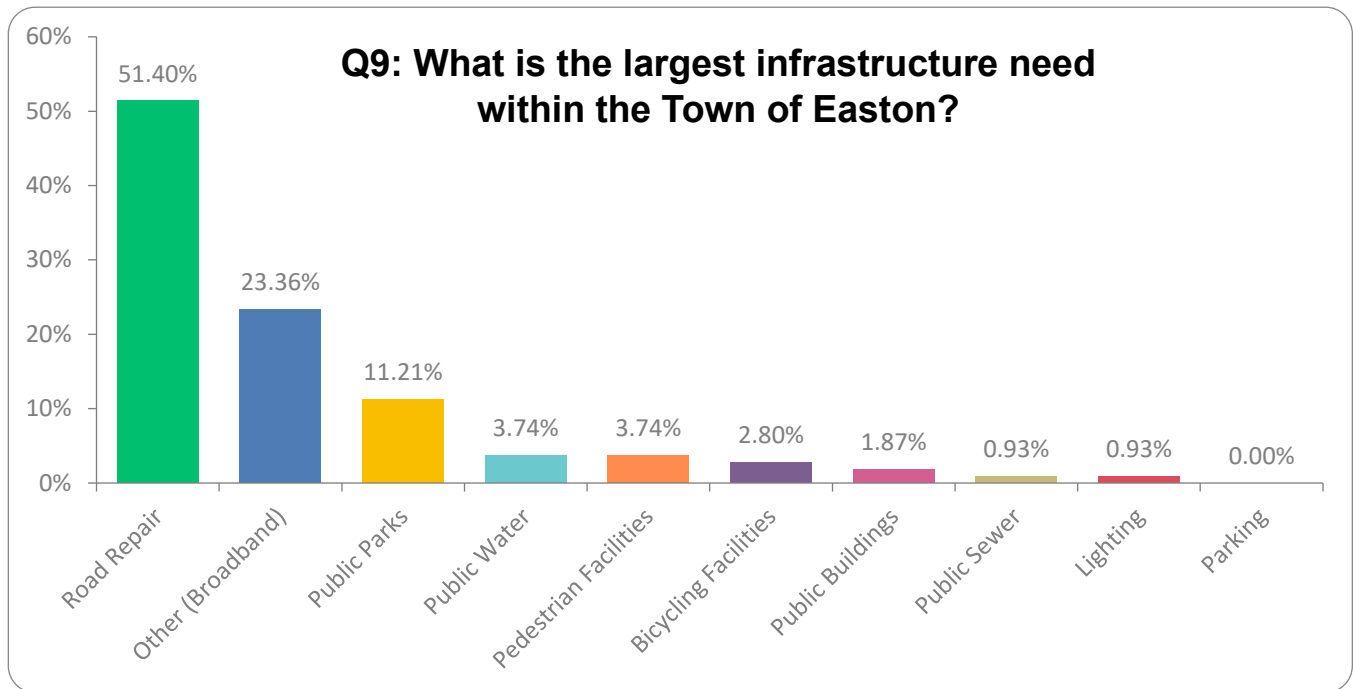


Figure 7: Question 9 Responses from the Community Survey

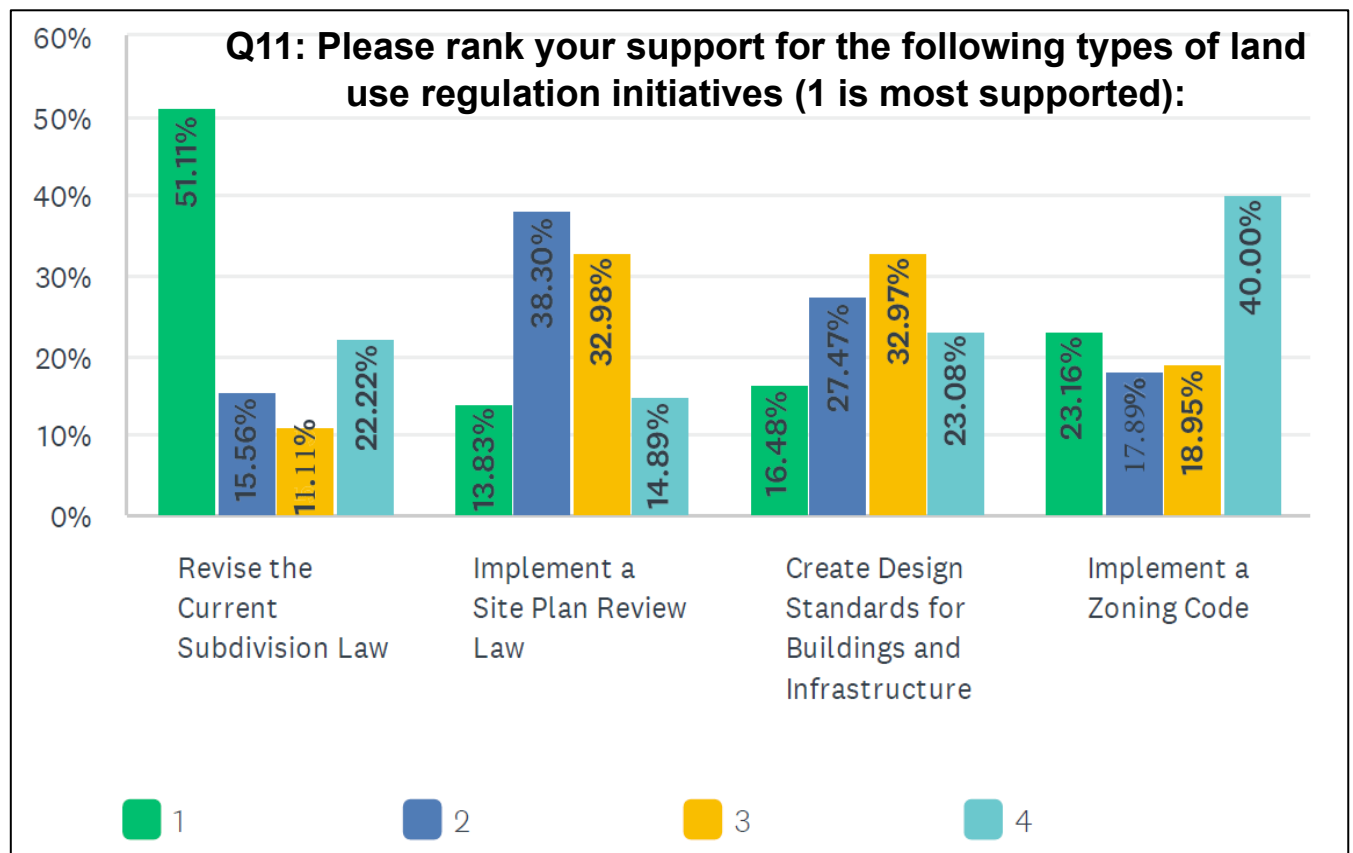


Figure 8: Question 11 Responses from the Community Survey

The types of and lack of land use regulations within the Town of Easton has been topic of much discussion throughout the community. Question 10 above demonstrates that respondent's number one regulatory priority is to revise the current Subdivision Law which is highly limiting of any new subdivision of land, with over 50% choosing it as their most supported initiative. Respondent's least supported regulatory priority is the implementation of a zoning code with 40% listing it last. It is worth noting that 22% of respondents chose Revising the Current Subdivision Law as their least supported initiative, while 23% of respondents chose Implementing a Zoning Code as their most supported initiative.

The regulatory initiative that was ranked as second most supported by respondents was Implementing a Site Plan Review Law. This was also the initiative least chosen as a last choice amongst all respondents at just under 15%. Creating Design Standards had little support as a first or second choice and therefore defaulted to third choice being its highest, however, it was tied with Implementing a Site Plan Review Law for third.

## Stakeholder Roundtable

Two Easton Community Stakeholder Roundtable Discussions were held on Wednesday January 11th and Saturday 21st, 2023 at Burton Hall. The Committee defined a Community Stakeholder as any party who is a large land owner or business owner in Easton and any community leader who has invested significant time and/or resources within Easton. Thirteen (13) stakeholders attended the first meeting while ten (10) stakeholders attended the second meeting. The discussion ranged in topics from the Community Survey results, economic development, change and development of agriculture, recreational opportunities, short-term rental permits, shared services, workforce development, renewable energy development, and funding opportunities.



Figure 9: February 4th, 2023 Public Workshop at Burton Hall

## Public Workshop

A community-wide public workshop was held on February 4th, 2023 at Burton Hall. The goal of the workshop was to gather community input on Easton's strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats. A group of 25 participants braved the sub-30-degree windchills to provide ideas to establish an updated vision for the Town by providing recommendations for community and economic development opportunities while maintaining the historic character of Easton. The majority of the workshop consisted of a presentation and question-and-answer session with all participants on the survey results, needs and opportunities, and next steps. This meeting helped the Comprehensive Plan Committee prioritize its Goals and Objectives in order to better reflect the residents needs and desires.



# Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan Update

Saturday Feb 4, 2023

Public Workshop : 10am to 1pm

Burton Hall (Easton Town Hall), 1071 NY-40, Greenwich, NY 12834

Provide your input on future land use and town development at the public workshop event. We would like your ideas to establish an updated vision for the Town. Participants will be asked to contribute their recommendations on opportunities and how to improve and maintain the beauty of Easton.

LEARN MORE  
JOIN US!

**Dan Shaw**  
Supervisor  
Town of Easton  
(518) 695-4677  
eastonsuper1@hotmail.com

**Kevin Schwenzfeier**  
Senior Planner  
Laberge Group  
(518) 458-7112 Ext. 134  
kschwenzfeier@labergegroup.com




**Hudson River  
Valley Greenway**

Laberge  
ENGINEERING  
ARCHITECTURE



**Group**  
SURVEYING  
PLANNING

**Visit Our Website for More Information!**  
<https://labergegroup.com/Easton/>

Figure 10: Community Flyer Announcing Public Workshop



## Easton Vision Statement

The Vision for the Town of Easton was determined through the results of the community survey along with the information gathered through the stakeholder meetings and public workshop. This Vision was created with the intent of protecting its agricultural-based community, economy, and landscape. Easton is unique in the sense that it offers a remote lifestyle yet is surrounded by modern conveniences. The town's quality of life enhances the small-town character that is embraced by those who live, work, and visit Easton.

*Envision Easton* epitomizes the fundamentals of rural planning and preservation. Protecting the agricultural landscape and industry, enhancing tourism amenities, and capitalizing on regional relationships will promote a higher quality of life while projecting the Town forward. The community's rural character offers ample opportunity for recreational activities throughout the Town, which connect residents with nature as well as one another.

The Town of Easton's high quality of life has been maintained through the preservation of its strong tradition as a working rural landscape while providing for multi-generational housing options and economic growth that strengthens the tax base while enhancing community character.

Easton protects and bolsters its scenic, quiet, friendly, affordable, and sustainable small-town character through the continued preservation of farmland and open space, the promotion of infill development, and the enactment of stronger land use regulations.



Figure 11: Aerial View Looking South along the Western Edge of Easton

## Envision Easton's Goals and Objectives

1. **Preserve the Town's rural character and scenic beauty.** The landscape is a large incentive for those that choose to reside, work, and visit Easton. Maintaining the agrarian character of open spaces, working farms, and forested hillsides is of the utmost importance to community members.
2. **Encourage recreational activities to connect people and places.** Recreation, both active and passive, is an attraction to residents of all ages and the Town offers ample opportunity for a variety of recreational activities.
3. **Increase retail services within the Town.** Residents strongly support the notion of more retail services: a market, a post office, and restaurants were strongly supported.
4. **Support and embrace the agricultural industry and the Right-to-Farm.** Easton has historically been an agricultural community. The Town shall continue to encourage the preservation and diversification of agricultural activities to support this industry.
5. **Ensure the Town's natural and environmental resources are protected.** Residents expressed concerns about overdevelopment and the protection of resources and viewsheds. Therefore, it is a priority to improve the protection of fertile soils, steep slopes, fresh water, forest lands, and wetlands.
6. **Support residents and businesses to receive broadband internet.** Connectivity through broadband, cable, and other infrastructure is a necessity, as it is critical for both economic stability and education.
7. **Improve the local land use review process.**
  - a. **Implement a Renewable Energy Law.** Without zoning or site plan review, the Town is not involved in the siting or permitting of large-scale renewable energy projects, in particular photovoltaic arrays which require large amounts of open land to operate, unless a subdivision or easement is necessary.
  - b. **Consider a Site Plan Review Law.** Over 52% of respondents support the creation of a Site Plan Review Law to assist the town with preventing the overdevelopment of properties and the loss of its agricultural character.
  - c. **Revise the Subdivision Regulations.** Over 66% of respondents support the revision of the current Subdivision Law. This is needed to allow for economic growth and provide multigenerational options for property ownership.
8. **Business retention and economic diversification.** Retain the Town's economic base while continuing to diversify and grow the economy to bolster the tax base and enhance the community's quality of life.
9. **Enhance regionalism through shared services, amenities, and identity.** Easton has a long history of working with and utilizing the resources of its neighboring communities. Many services are provided for its residents outside of the municipal boundaries. Enhance regional relationships in order to strengthen the town's identity, economy, and current and future services.

10. **Create a plan for roadway improvement.** A large portion of the Town’s budget is earmarked for highway maintenance due to the vast length of public road in a town of just 2,300 people. A plan is needed for improvements in maintenance scheduling and to keep tax increases in check.
11. **Improving and diversifying the economy through increased agritourism.** The existing relationship between local wineries should be utilized as a model to attract other wineries and small-scale agritourism in order to add to the diversity of the agricultural economy while also maintaining lands as active farms into the future.

## Next Steps

The Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan (Phase 2) will prioritize and address the findings from the Vision Report. In addition to the findings from Phase 1, the Planning Team will create a Community Profile that will serve as an overview of the Town’s existing conditions. The Community Profile will provide a better understanding of trends and areas of concern and include the following components:

1. Summary of Regional and Community Plans
2. Demographics and Growth Trends Analysis
3. Current and Future Land Uses
4. Municipal Services and Infrastructure
5. Local and Regional Economic Development
6. Rural and Environmental Resources
7. Parks, Recreation, Open Spaces, and Historic Resources
8. Agricultural Resources
9. Community Sustainability



Figure 12: Looking East from Willard Mountain

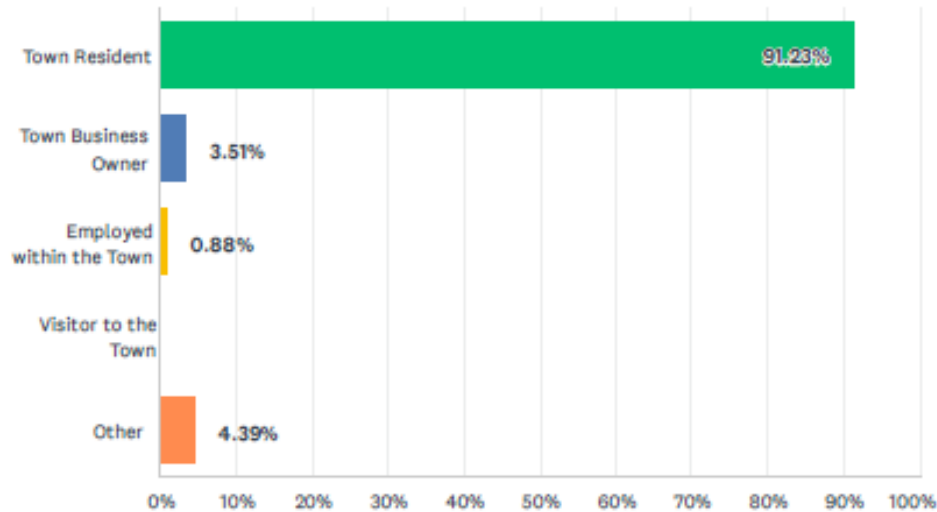
Specific recommendations will be formulated based on the objectives of the Vision Report and the results of the Community Profile, which will aid in Town-wide improvements and future investments. This information will be captured in an Implementation Matrix to guide the prioritization of initiatives, the projected timeline for initiatives, and funding opportunities which match those initiatives.



## APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

## Q1 What is your relationship to the Town of Easton?

Answered: 114 Skipped: 0

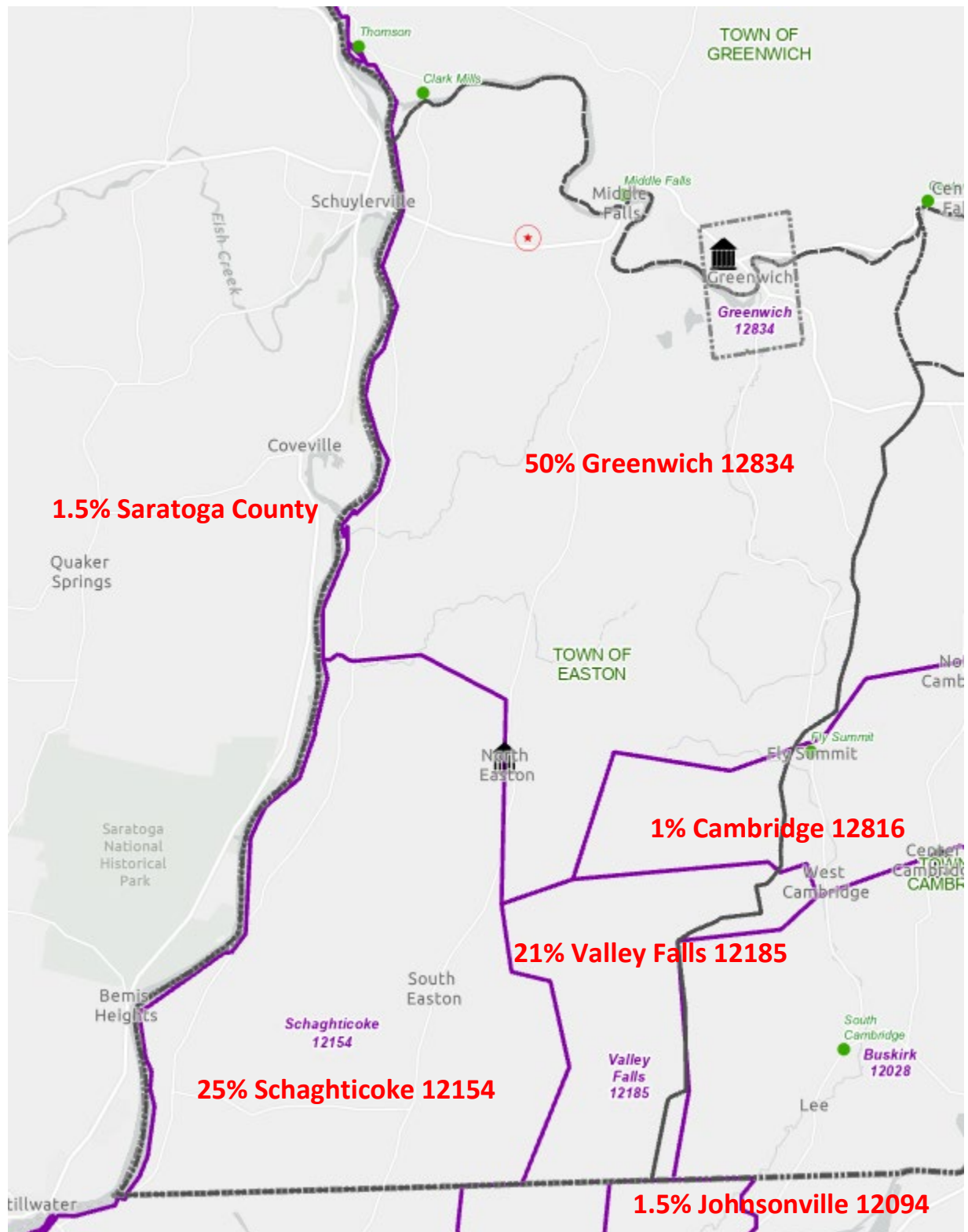


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Town Resident	91.23% 104
Town Business Owner	3.51% 4
Employed within the Town	0.88% 1
Visitor to the Town	0.00% 0
Other	4.39% 5
TOTAL	114

#	OTHER	DATE
1	Town resident , town business owner, Employed within the Town	2/6/2023 1:06 PM
2	Town resident , Employed within the Town	2/6/2023 12:00 PM
3	Resident and Business Owner	9/14/2022 2:34 PM
4	friend of residents	9/8/2022 9:55 AM
5	Resident and business owner	8/30/2022 1:58 PM

## Q2 Please provide your Zip Code:

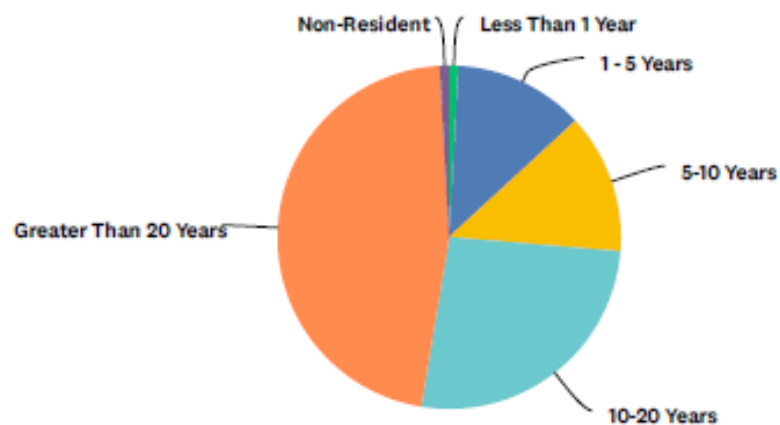
Answered: 114 Skipped: 0





### Q3 How long have you been a resident of the Town of Easton?

Answered: 114 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less Than 1 Year	0.88%	1
1 - 5 Years	12.28%	14
5-10 Years	13.16%	15
10-20 Years	26.32%	30
Greater Than 20 Years	46.49%	53
Non-Resident	0.88%	1
TOTAL		114

## Q4 In your opinion, what is the best part about living in or visiting the Town of Easton?

Answered: 110

Skipped: 4

- |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|
| 1  | scenic, rural life style, knowing your neighbors   | 27 | agriculture  |
| 2  | Quiet  | 28 | rural lifestyle, views, preserved agriculture  |
| 3  | quiet, open skies, low human population  | 29 | small and quiet  |
| 4  | Living in a country setting while being close to Albany, Saratoga, Lake George areas.  | 30 | rural living   |
| 5  | Quiet country life, stunning views, lovely neighbors   | 31 | rural, agricultural community with little development  |
| 6  | The rural feel, living in one of the best agricultural counties in the state.  | 32 | quietness  |
| 7  | The quiet nature of cycles of farming and forestry mixed with the rural landscape with outdoor recreation opportunities while still being reasonably close to population centers and the services and culture they provide | 33 | the fair   |
| 8  | Calmness. Location makes it convenient to get to events and shopping. COWS!!   | 34 | its agricultural environment and country living  |
| 9  | The beautiful scenic views, the friendly people, and the overall quaintness of the town  | 35 | peace and quiet  |
| 10 | Beautiful, safe, agriculture   | 36 | quiet, beautiful, serene   |
| 11 | Agricultural based community   | 37 | The wonderful community of people  |
| 12 | Agriculture, rural area  | 38 | The beauty, agriculture, and peacefulness  |
| 13 | I love living in the country!  | 39 | Quiet and rural community  |
| 14 | No developments, no trailer parks.   | 40 | Its beautiful landscape.   |
| 15 | The landscapes! The farmland mixed with woods overlooking the Hudson River valley.   | 41 | All the farmland and open landscape.   |
| 16 | Country living, not overpopulated. Small town USA  | 42 | The peace and quiet of the area.   |
| 17 | Having it be an agricultural town that is not over developed   | 43 | I enjoy the small town feeling as well as the ability to live in the country and enjoy the land and beautiful views  |
| 18 | Rural community, quiet, agriculture  | 44 | Although I'm 50 years old, I'm a relatively new farmer and was very happy moving my farm here two years ago that land is affordable and that I did not need the towns permission through special use permits to farm here. |
| 19 | Scenery and farming  | 45 | The ruralness  |
| 20 | Beautiful open agricultural spaces.  | 46 | Quiet neighborhoods where everyone is like family  |
| 21 | To many things   | 47 | Rural, country, beautiful farms and zero development   |
| 22 | Beautiful countryside, our family is local   | 48 | Rural nature, agriculture, neighborly feel   |
| 23 | Quiet country living   | 49 | Beautiful scenery, quiet community   |
| 24 | Quiet community that appreciates the farming/agricultural way of life and embraces the country living lifestyle  | 50 | Views, pride in property, residents  |
| 25 | Beautiful landscapes Quiet community living  | 51 | Small, rural, hometown feel  |
| 26 | peaceful, woods  | 52 | Beautiful vistas   |
|    |  | 53 | Peace and quiet  |
|    |  | 54 | The rural setting, and wide-open spaces.   |
|    |  | 55 | I value being able to live in a tranquil rural setting.  |
|    |  | 56 | The agricultural, rural atmosphere   |
|    |  | 57 | Rural setting  |
|    |  | 58 | Clean air and conservative people  |
|    |  | 59 | Country living but also close to many things to do.  |
|    |  | 60 | Beautiful rural area. Best views of the farm community   |
|    |  | 61 | The beautiful farmland   |
|    |  | 62 | Natural beauty, undeveloped, farmland, country feel  |
|    |  | 63 | Quiet and beautiful views.   |
|    |  | 64 | Rural quiet, farmers, farming, local food availability and home gardens  |
|    |  | 65 | The beautiful fields and country roads   |

66	The views of the land	84	Rural, farming , beautiful views, Country
67	The beauty of the landscape	life	
68	It is the town I grew up in. The rural setting is ideal for privacy.	85	Quiet country living
69	Loving and appreciating the natural beauty of the farms and landscape.	86	Productive farms and beautiful landscapes.
70	We enjoy the traditional agricultural setting. The lack of large track development. We like seeing farm land rather large imposing solar farms. The corn fields, soy bean fields and livestock grazing in the fields.	87	Beauty of the landscape and the people
71	Beautiful country scenes	88	Farming community and lots of green space left undeveloped.
72	Easton is primarily an agricultural town that has traditionally supported productive, commercial agricultural that has sustained many families in this town, often for generations. Those of us inactive farming appreciate the wide-open, uninterrupted farmland that allows us to operate successful farm businesses without the hinderances of a large non-agricultural population so we can provide for our families and for the rest of the food consuming public. I suspect there are many other residents, new and old to the town, that also appreciate the rural character of the town, which is only made possible by productive, profitable farms.	89	Rural atmosphere. Limited government.
73	Quiet rural environment	90	Agricultural town, rural and quiet
74	Country setting	91	Peaceful. Quiet. Lots of space. Good outdoor recreational opportunities: cycling, skiing at Willard, snowmobiling. Local fresh food.
75	The seclusion and the rural life style	92	Rural character, farming community
76	The peace and quiet and beautiful countryside.	93	Rural lifestyle.
77	The small town feel	94	Farm scenery
78	The close-knit community feeling	95	rural landscape
79	Rural nature.	96	Friendly community that cares for each other.
80	Rural quit atmosphere	97	The abundance of undeveloped forest space.
81	Rural settings in a time warp. Great views, farm land	98	Vistas of the Hudson River and active farming of the land
82	Rural character	99	Rural environment Good neighbors
83	central location can easily get to many other nearby areas; beautiful rural valley; many local-farms and food businesses	100	Rural living with amazing views and little government oversight as to what I do on my personal properties.
		101	The rural agrarian nature
		102	The community, the rural feel
		103	Community feel
		104	Ag and Farm feel
		105	Peaceful, quiet
		106	Rural Nature
		107	Community Values, Room to breathe
		108	Its a quiet and beautiful town, and I really felt welcomed by the community. Its got that smalltown charm.
		109	Rural farm community. Farm field views.
		110	Rural farming community surroundings



## Q5 Provide up to five (5) key words that describe your Vision for Easton:

Answered: 104 Skipped: 10

### Answer #1

- |   |  |                    |
|---|--|--------------------|
| 1. Community                            | 40. quiet  | 77. Community      |
| 2. Family                               | 41. quiet  | 78. Agricultural   |
| 3. Community                            | 42. agriculture  | 79. Family         |
| 4. Farm                                 | 43. maintain   | 80. Country        |
| 5. Quiet                                | 44. eco friendly   | 81. Rural          |
| 6. Commercial                           | 45. inclusive  | 82. Traditional    |
| 7. Residential                          | 46. economical   | 83. Local          |
| 8. Family                               | 47. Non-commercial   | 84. Community      |
| 9. Stable                               | 48. Preservation of land<br>from commercial<br>development | 85. Rural          |
| 10. Rural                               | 49. Post office  | 86. Farms          |
| 11. Rural                               | 50. Agricultural   | 87. Farms          |
| 12. variety of housing<br>opportunities | 51. Green  | 88. diversity      |
| 13. Safe                                | 52. Agriculture  | 89. Farming        |
| 14. sustainable                         | 53. Agriculture  | 90. Community      |
| 15. country feel                        | 54. Rural  | 91. Agricultural   |
| 16. Rural                               | 55. Rural  | 92. Protect        |
| 17. nature                              | 56. Roots  | 93. Farming        |
| 18. historic                            | 57. Keep in mostly ag, at<br>least in at district          | 94. Rural          |
| 19. Small business                      | 58. small scale growth to<br>help make the town<br>better  | 95. Agricultural   |
| 20. Fiscally responsible                | 59. Sustainable  | 96. Family         |
| 21. Agriculture                         | 60. Broadband  | 97. Farming        |
| 22. good roads                          | 61. Agriculture  | 98. Rural          |
| 23. Maintaining rural<br>landscapes     | 62. Rural  | 99. Farming        |
| 24. Open space                          | 63. Agrarian   | 100. rural         |
| 25. Agriculture                         | 64. Freedom to subdivide<br>private property               | 101. Farm friendly |
| 26. Agriculture                         | 65. Promote Growth   | 102. Hunting       |
| 27. Remain agriculture<br>focus         | 66. moderate change  | 103. Status quo    |
| 28. Agriculture                         | 67. More farming   | 104. Tourism       |
| 29. Agriculture                         | 68. Affordability  |                    |
| 30. Growth                              | 69. Family oriented<br>communities                         |                    |
| 31. Affordable                          | 70. Forever farms  |                    |
| 32. Simple                              | 71. Peaceful   |                    |
| 33. Agricultural                        | 72. Farm   |                    |
| 34. No commercialization                | 73. Beauty   |                    |
| 35. cows                                | 74. Less   |                    |
| 36. rural                               | 75. Rural  |                    |
| 37. scenic views                        | 76. traditional farms                                      |                    |
| 38. small                               |  |                    |
| 39. agricultural                        |  |                    |

**Answer #2**

- |  |   |                  |
|--|---|------------------|
| 1. Rural   | 42. preserve                                | 87. country      |
| 2. Rural   | 43. diverse                                 | 88. Fair         |
| 3. Community   | 44. family-oriented                         | 89. Beautiful    |
| 4. Beautiful   | 45. agricultural                            | 90. Community    |
| 5. Agrarian  | 46. rural                                   | 91. Rural        |
| 6. Sub division  | 47. Stewardship of existing farmland        | 92. Farm         |
| 7. Agriculture (Specifically small family holdings)                  | 48. Grocery store                           | 93. Rural        |
| 8. Thriving  | 49. Historical                              | 94. Recreation   |
| 9. Dirt roads  | 50. Open space                              | 95. Agricultural |
| 10. Farming  | 51. Rural                                   | 96. Safe         |
| 11. strong technology infrastructure                                 | 52. Community                               | 97. Beauty       |
| 12. Quiet  | 53. Farm land                               | 98. quiet        |
| 13. neighborly   | 54. Low taxes                               | 99. Agricultural |
| 14. Stunning views   | 55. Community                               | 100. Fishing     |
| 15. uncluttered  | 56. realize that new housing will be needed | 101. Rural       |
| 16. small farms  | 57. Lower taxes for property and school     | 102. Agriculture |
| 17. family farms   | 58. Recreational                            |                  |
| 18. Eco friendly   | 59. Rural                                   |                  |
| 19. Affordable for families  | 60. Agricultural                            |                  |
| 20. Fiberoptic High Speed Internet avail to ALL (not just satellite) | 61. Undeveloped                             |                  |
| 21. lower taxes  | 62. Family friendly                         |                  |
| 22. Limit solar farms  | 63. Less Restrictions on Sub-divisions      |                  |
| 23. Agriculture  | 64. farmland                                |                  |
| 24. Mom and Pop businesses   | 65. No commercial development               |                  |
| 25. Residential  | 66. Community                               |                  |
| 26. Love seeing the family farm stores pop up upping up.             | 67. Clean land                              |                  |
| 27. Views  | 68. Nature                                  |                  |
| 28. Community  | 69. Picturesque                             |                  |
| 29. Community  | 70. Landscape                               |                  |
| 30. Pavement   | 71. Farms                                   |                  |
| 31. Noncommercial  | 72. government                              |                  |
| 32. Friendly   | 73. Beautiful                               |                  |
| 33. Peaceful   | 74. Rural                                   |                  |
| 34. corn   | 75. Farming                                 |                  |
| 35. unpopulated  | 76. Rural                                   |                  |
| 36. agriculture  | 77. Safety                                  |                  |
| 37. clean  | 78. Agriculture                             |                  |
| 38. quiet  | 79. Preservation yet growth                 |                  |
| 39. small  | 80. Rural                                   |                  |
| 40. peaceful   | 81. Rural                                   |                  |
| 41. welcoming  | 82. Rural                                   |                  |
|  | 83. Small business                          |                  |
|  | 84. Homestead                               |                  |
|  | 85. Pocketed development                    |                  |
|  | 86. culture                                 |                  |

**Answer #3**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Natural                                     | 33. family   | 67. Property                                       |
| 2. Community                                   | 34. undeveloped  | 68. Skiing   |
| 3. Ag  | 35. rural lifestyle                                      | 69. Interference                                   |
| 4. Family                                      | 36. community  | 70. Wholesome                                      |
| 5. Quiet                                       | 37. safe   | 71. community                                      |
| 6. Farming                                     | 38. farms  | 72. Agriculture                                    |
| 7. Recreation                                  | 39. picturesque  | 73. Farming  |
| 8. Supportive                                  | 40. market   | 74. Affordable                                     |
| 9. Farming                                     | 41. farm friendly  | 75. Scenic   |
| 10. Community                                  | 42. community driven                                     | 76. More housing                                   |
| 11. scenic                                     | 43. country  | 77. Family Friendly                                |
| 12. Natural                                    | 44. undeveloped  | 78. Farm   |
| 13. farm friendly                              | 45. Welcoming  | 79. Quiet  |
| 14. Improved road<br>maintenance               | 46. Paved roads  | 80. Quality of life                                |
| 15. Agricultural                               | 47. Community  | 81. Culture  |
| 16. quiet                                      | 48. Modern   | 82. walkability                                    |
| 17. rural                                      | 49. Quite  | 83. rural  |
| 18. Green                                      | 50. Recreation   | 84. Equality                                       |
| 19. Affordable for farms to<br>pay their taxes | 51. No development                                       | 85. Community                                      |
| 20. Preservation                               | 52. Safe   | 86. Friendly                                       |
| 21. fair assessments                           | 53. Sustainable  | 87. Green space                                    |
| 22. Diversity on town board                    | 54. monitor for weather<br>changes on land               | 88. Open spaces                                    |
| 23. Strong Community                           | 55. updated local laws to<br>support governing<br>boards | 89. Open space                                     |
| 24. Family Traditions                          | 56. Environmental  | 90. Infrastructure<br>Investments                  |
| 25. Countryside                                | 57. Views  | 91. Rural  |
| 26. Continued offerings to<br>the youth        | 58. Community  | 92. Low population                                 |
| 27. Farming                                    | 59. Clean  | 93. Space  |
| 28. Family oriented                            | 60. Small Business Growth                                | 94. unchanging                                     |
| 29. Family                                     | 61. low commercial<br>development                        | 95. More child care options<br>for working parents |
| 30. Farmland                                   | 62. Close community                                      | 96. Trapping                                       |
| 31. Honest                                     | 63. Integrity  | 97. Clean up vampire<br>houses                     |
| 32. Clen junkyard<br>properties!               | 64. Small town businesses                                | 98. Attracting commerce                            |
|  | 65. Clean environment                                    |  |
|  | 66. Green  |  |

**Answer #4**

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Agricultural                      | 49. Small business friendly         |
| 2. Culture                           | 50. scenic                          |
| 3. Peaceful                          | 51. No solar farms in the fields    |
| 4. Internet                          | 52. Sustainability                  |
| 5. Community                         | 53. Healthy                         |
| 6. Successful                        | 54. Lush                            |
| 7. Clean                             | 55. Views                           |
| 8. Open Space                        | 56. Comfort                         |
| 9. rural                             | 57. Community                       |
| 10. Services                         | 58. quiet                           |
| 11. orderly                          | 59. Small business                  |
| 12. Community gatherings             | 60. Wide-open                       |
| 13. safe                             | 61. Peace                           |
| 14. neighbors                        | 62. Zoning                          |
| 15. animals                          | 63. Agrarian                        |
| 16. Equality                         | 64. Increasing land values          |
| 17. People first, profits second     | 65. Post office                     |
| 18. more business in the community   | 66. destination                     |
| 19. Transparency                     | 67. close net                       |
| 20. Business friendly                | 68. Respect                         |
| 21. Old school                       | 69. Rural                           |
| 22. Small business                   | 70. Academics                       |
| 23. Support for the fire departments | 71. Family                          |
| 24. Community                        | 72. Value the Land                  |
| 25. Natural                          | 73. Agriculture                     |
| 26. Farm                             | 74. Open spaces                     |
| 27. Quaint                           | 75. Community                       |
| 28. views                            | 76. scenic                          |
| 29. agriculture                      | 77. Self sufficiency                |
| 30. no solar farms or cell towers    | 78. Skiing                          |
| 31. quiet                            | 79. Promoting business & job market |
| 32. non-commercial                   |                                     |
| 33. tractors                         |                                     |
| 34. openness                         |                                     |
| 35. farm                             |                                     |
| 36. quiet                            |                                     |
| 37. Rural                            |                                     |
| 38. Quiet                            |                                     |
| 39. Quiet                            |                                     |
| 40. Green                            |                                     |
| 41. Family friendly                  |                                     |
| 42. Country                          |                                     |
| 43. Peaceful                         |                                     |
| 44. Prosperous                       |                                     |
| 45. flexibility for landowners       |                                     |
| 46. Agricultural                     |                                     |
| 47. Privacy                          |                                     |
| 48. Peaceful                         |                                     |

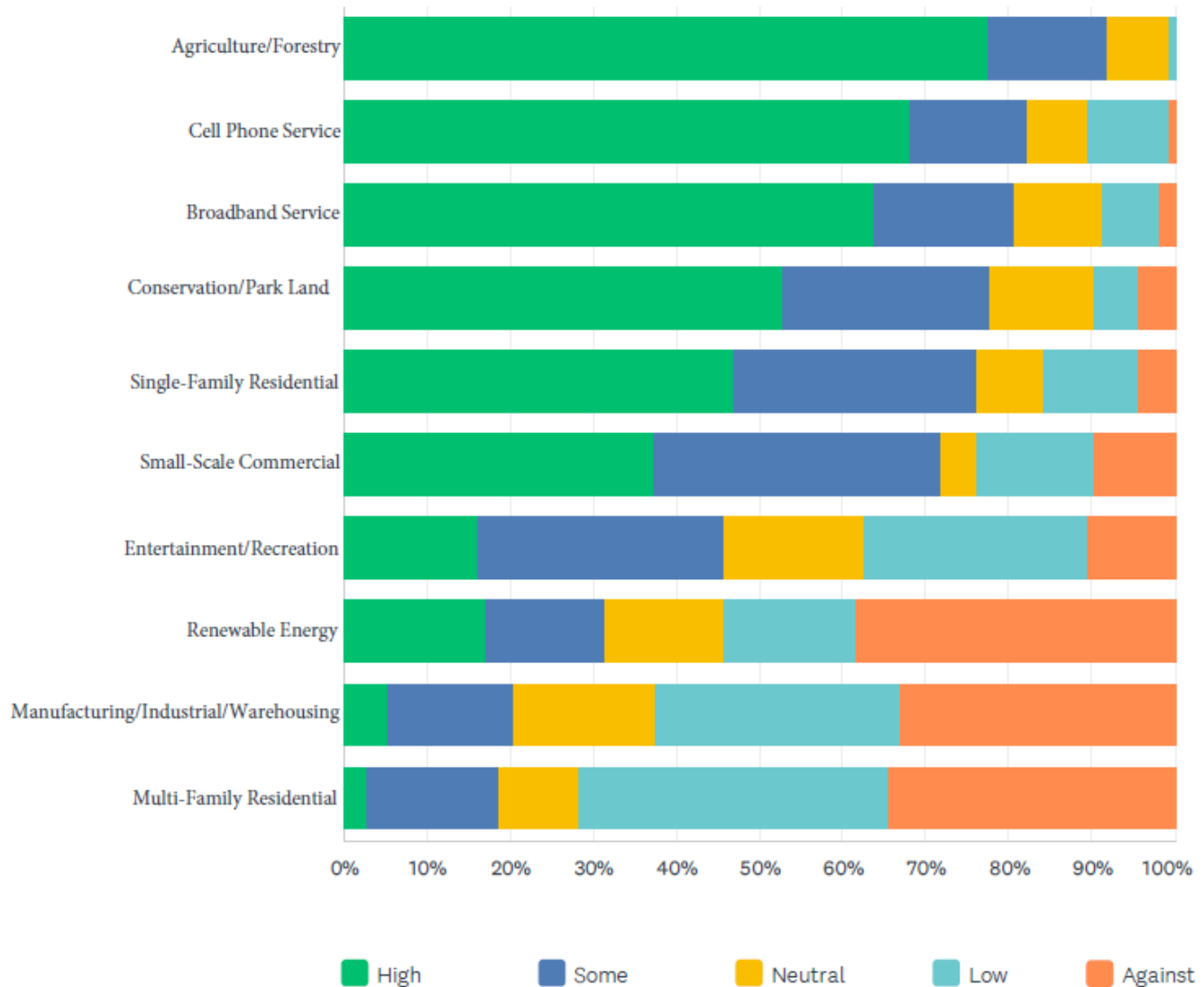


**Answer #5**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Sustainable  | 35. Clean  |
| 2. Generational   | 36. Affordable   |
| 3. Affordable   | 37. Quiet  |
| 4. Post Office  | 38. Family   |
| 5. Tradition  | 39. Growth   |
| 6. Innovative   | 40. some commercial growth for tax benefit                 |
| 7. Safe   | 41. Community  |
| 8. Land   | 42. Stable   |
| 9. light business/ stores                                     | 43. Clean  |
| 10. Cheap   | 44. Leaving nature untouched                               |
| 11. non political   | 45. Lower taxes  |
| 12. Zip code  | 46. Rural  |
| 13. respect   | 47. Open spaces  |
| 14. mellow  | 48. Cows   |
| 15. Community   | 49. Community  |
| 16. A place I can afford to stay                              | 50. Self-sustaining  |
| 17. Post office   | 51. peaceful   |
| 18. Viable for future generations                             | 52. Manufacturing  |
| 19. Rural   | 53. Freedom  |
| 20. Preserve historical sites and maybe<br>showcase them more | 54. Quiet  |
| 21. Willard mountain  | 55. Acceptance of new ideas                                |
| 22. Historic  | 56. Decentralize   |
| 23. Peace   | 57. Zoning   |
| 24. Resourceful   | 58. Post office  |
| 25. tolerance   | 59. family values  |
| 26. un-zoned  | 60. History  |
| 27. preservation  | 61. Sports   |
| 28. cows  | 62. Views  |
| 29. unique  | 63. Support Farmers  |
| 30. corn  | 64. Growth   |
| 31. peaceful  | 65. Low taxes relative to other Washington<br>County towns |
| 32. Quiet   | 66. Neighbors  |
| 33. Uncrowded   | 67. natural  |
| 34. Sustainable   | 68. Innovative education                                   |
|   | 69. Hiking   |
|   | 70. Green space  |

## Q6 Please provide your level of support for the following types of development within the Town of Easton:

Answered: 113 Skipped: 1



## Q7 If you have run into a land use issue within the Town of Easton, what measure(s) do you feel the town should take to help alleviate the issue in the future?

Answered: 82 Skipped: 32

1. Yes
2. Subdivision should be easier.
3. Easier Subdivision
4. Hearing and meetings in order to exercise judgement based on the situation.
5. Simplify process for lot line adjustments and subdivisions (2+ acres)
6. I am a huge supporter of renewable energy because it provides income to landowners/farmers and allows them to keep farms and large parcels in the family without having to subdivide and sell off to housing developers.
7. Public vote
8. Tax Increase
9. Land planning board needs new paperwork. It shouldn't take 4 months to ok a boundary line change.
10. N/A
11. Should get more organized when someone wants to subdivide a parcel especially when it is for ag use and stop changing the rules as they go. Maybe the process wouldn't take so long!
12. The question is too vague. There is a necessary balance between the rights of property owners to use and enjoy their property as they see fit, and those same owners' responsibility to the community as a whole as members of that community. The challenge is that idea balance, or lack thereof, differs between members of the community.
13. The town should eliminate flag pole properties by creating an ordinance the squares up property lines to allow current non- owners the space to become a more green and eco-friendly residence
14. Town hall meetings
15. Have not encountered any land use issues to-date.
16. I haven't had any problems.
17. The town should be consistent. A couple on the town board shouldn't be making decisions. Rules seem to be inconsistent.
18. N/A
19. N/A
20. Continued communication.
21. Industrial area
22. Open forum
23. We had to recourse when solar farm went in next door. It is still non-functioning.
24. Same as always, planning make decisions
25. Mitigate issues through discussion; preservation of property vs capital gain!
26. Let the landowners handle it
27. N/A
28. N/A
29. The planning board seems to get to big for their britches; some things are none of their business
30. 2 bright lights on the southside of the town hall
31. No Change
32. N/A

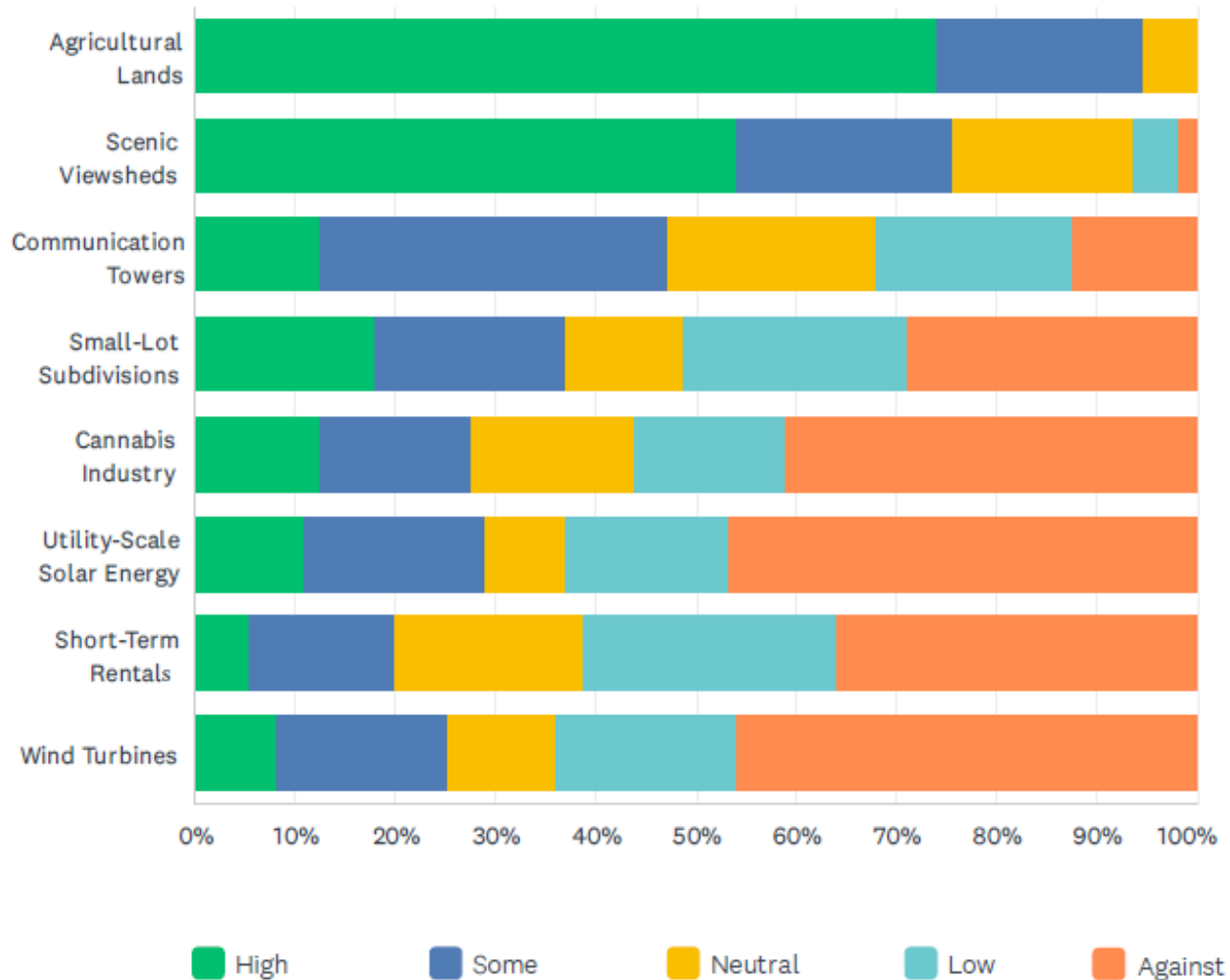
33. NA
34. ?
35. I feel the town should stay true to agriculture. I didn't move here to live in a sea of townhouses
36. N/A
37. Politics, nepotism
38. Work with the land owner to negotiate issue at hand
39. N/A
40. Minimum acreage requirements minimal impact on traffic
41. N/a
42. None
43. Have not
44. None
45. Communicate limitations to subdivide property at first planning board meeting vs, after a survey and application is completed.
46. I assume this study is an attempt to clarify exactly what land use priorities the town has. I look forward to seeing its conclusion.
47. Clear and reasonable communication
48. Less restrictions on subdivisions and lot line adjustments for people who maintain their property well.
49. Less restrictions on sub divisions as long as the land is well maintained.
50. None
51. No issues
52. N/A
53. NEVER SIDE WITH CORPORATIONS! LISTEN TO RESIDENTS! Back them first. Trust evidence when it is brought before you especially from established studies and don't follow leads by corporations to twist and dismiss!!
54. N/A
55. N/a
56. Not applicable
57. Less town board interference in resident's lives such as planning board controls and unnecessary building inspector interference. These entities are used by the town to generate more tax revenue. Planning board laws are totally outdated. Building inspector is merely a political appointee for personal benefit.
58. N/A
59. N/A
60. -Follow current guidelines and not allow agricultural land to be developed in a non-agricultural way (i.e. solar panels) -Provide some measure for current or low-income members of the community to be allowed to live here through lower cost housing options, in other words, revisiting the trailer ordinances so lower income people that already live here have an alternate option to the overpriced housing currently being sold to wealthy people relocating from other areas. -The planning board and town board needs to be more consistent in their rules so there is less ambiguity when trying to make land use decisions -Long time owners of larger tracts of land need to have more flexibility in order to meet the changing needs of modern agriculture. The number of subdivisions allowed on a parcel should more fairly reflect the size of the parcel and the size of the requested subdivision. The large landowners in active farming need to be able to realize the value in non-productive farmland without jeopardizing their ability to make business decisions in the future. If land is no good for farming and can be developed for other uses like housing, that needs to be an option going forward.
61. NA
62. Zoning



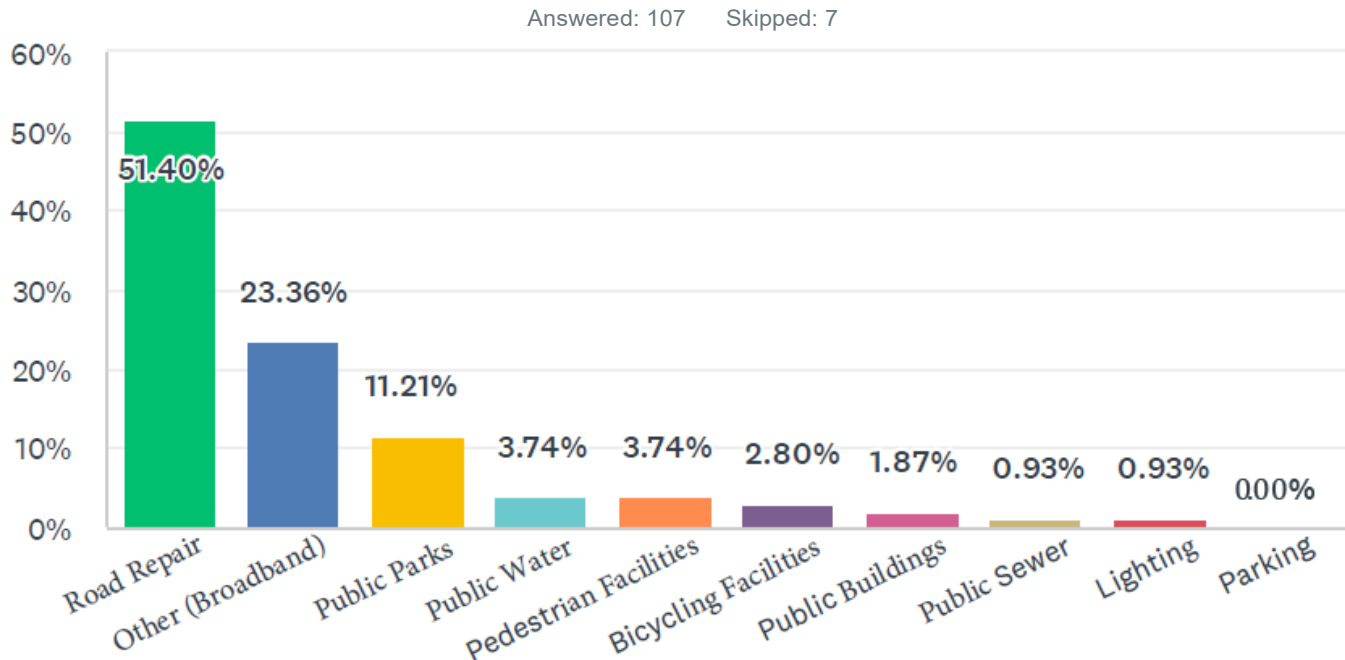
63. There should be reasonable opportunities for subdivisions.
64. Have a clearly defined set of rules/process
65. Understand that controlled development is going to happen and major and minor subdivision is going to happen maybe in sight of your own back yard.
66. NA
67. Buyer beware, just because you bought it doesn't give you a right to disrupt the neighborhood
68. Liquified farm waste pumped very near resident property. Modern liquid manure is much more smelly than traditional manure was when right to farm law was established. Pumped/spread down wind of non-farmer residents when possible. Or digest plants used on farm to reduce smells and produce power for farm. Large solar farm in Easton will it benefit Easton residents by reducing electric costs?
69. Easton has done a very good job of planning and ensuring that it can continue to flourish as an agricultural community. It's existing comprehensive plans and subdivision regulations provide a great framework for ensuring that any development is consistent with the agricultural operations that are the backbone of Easton.
70. Unknown
71. No.
72. Exception may need to be made to 3 subdivisions per farm for some families to deed off houses as long as they keep farmland together
73. I've not run into a land use issue myself.
74. Solar farms are not farms they are power plants and are very speculative and should be agonized over with Bond acts and taxes based on commercial production
75. NA
76. NA
77. Resist large corporate developers. support small scale projects
78. I have had no issues.
79. Unsure of the nature of this vague question, but I have not run into an issue personally.
80. Be flexible on setback lines
81. NA
82. N/A

## Q8 Please provide your level of support for the following:

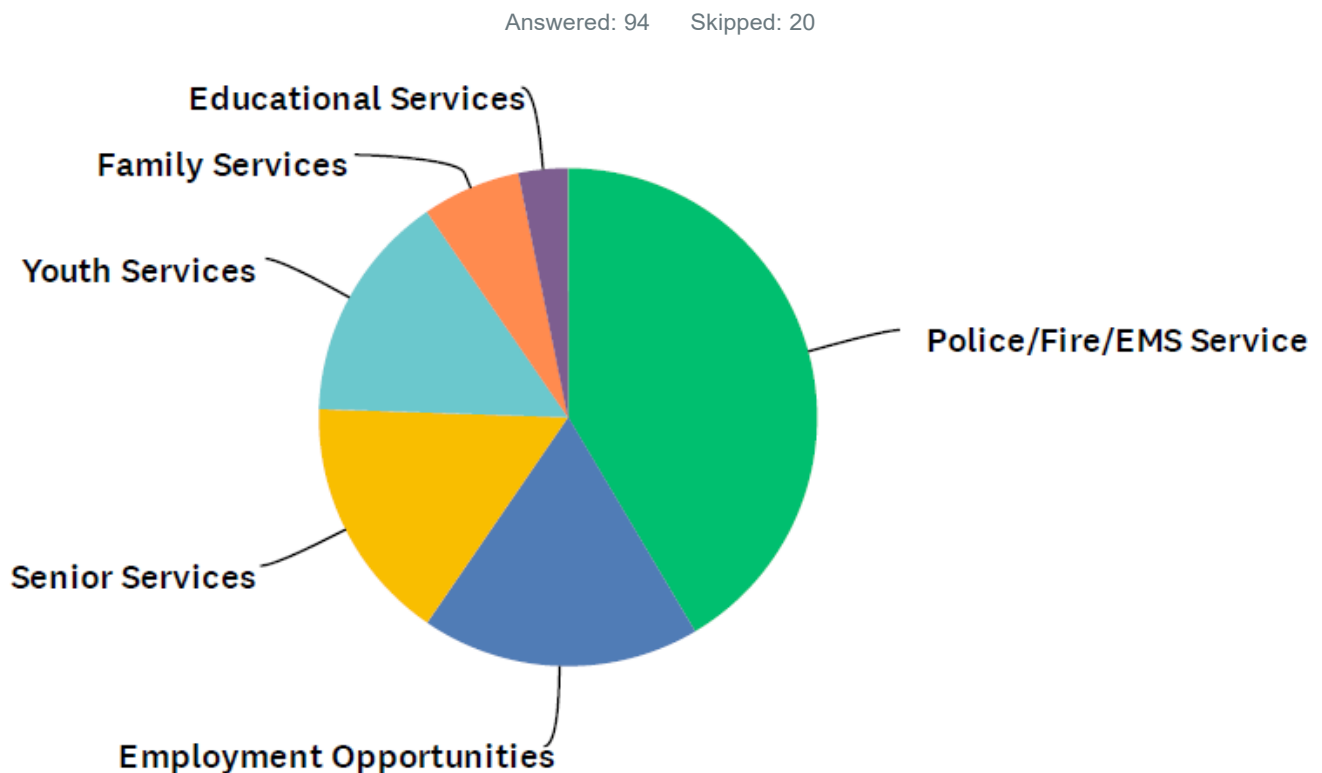
Answered: 112 Skipped: 2



## Q9 What is the largest infrastructure need within the Town of Easton?

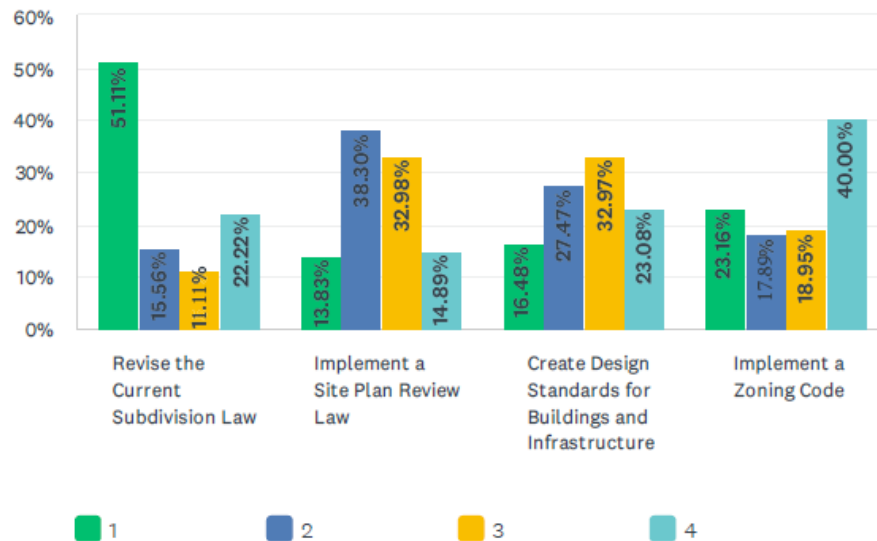


## Q10 Which services are most needed within the Town of Easton?



## Q11 Please rank your support for the following types of land use regulation initiatives (1 is most supported):

Answered: 101 Skipped: 13



	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Revise the Current Subdivision Law	51.11% 46	15.56% 14	11.11% 10	22.22% 20	90	2.96
Implement a Site Plan Review Law	13.83% 13	38.30% 36	32.98% 31	14.89% 14	94	2.51
Create Design Standards for Buildings and Infrastructure	16.48% 15	27.47% 25	32.97% 30	23.08% 21	91	2.37
Implement a Zoning Code	23.16% 22	17.89% 17	18.95% 18	40.00% 38	95	2.24



## APPENDIX B: STAKEHOLDERS MEETING SUMMARIES

## **Stakeholders Meeting 1 Summary** **Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan Update**

**Burton Hall, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 6:00-8:00 pm**

**Comprehensive Plan Committee:** Dan Shaw, Supervisor; Justin Sievers, Planning Board; Margaret Brand, Planning Board; Scott Brownell, Town Board; Michelle Skiff, Planning Board; Kevin Schwenzfeier, Senior Planner, Laberge Group; Snehal Chavan, Junior Planner, Laberge Group

**Attendees:** Mike & Lisa Borden – O A Borden Farm; Andrew Weber – Northern Cross Vineyard; Jessica Ziehm – Farmstore at Tiashoke; Frank Ziehm – Tiashoke Farm; Elizabeth & Sean Quinn – K A Sunset View Farm; George & Ethan Allen – Allenwaite Farm; Doc Rymph – Kernel Acres; Karen Kehn – Windy Hill Golf Course; Aaron Strasswimmer – Aubuchon Hardware; Erika Colson – Washington County Fair

### **Discussion:**

- Agriculture easements are present in the Town of Easton to protect farmlands. Should be included on maps.
- Current development environment: high land rents, need incentivization to maintain farming community, easy to purchase and redevelop business properties, lack of food stores, benefit from strict siting laws in Greenwich Town.
- Addresses with the wrong Zip Codes need to be fixed; want people to know where they are located.
- How much money will come from grants for the Comprehensive Plan? Currently \$55,000.
- In the past Easton has been an agricultural hub – supporting surrounding towns and counties: Washington, Saratoga, and Warren. Want to continue that trend.
- Development is not limited. The atomic facility described in the previous comp plan could not be built, due to the small bridge on the south and north.
- Economic Development Grants received by the county also help Easton. There is a big push for industries to come into the area. ARPA money is to be distributed eventually for Broadband throughout the county. A free gap assessment was completed.
- For businesses that have been through thick and thin, the town should work on how to support and retain them.
- Business and farmers are interrelated, not two separate groups or uses.
- Easton's strength is that it's close to many places: Albany, Saratoga, Clifton Park, & Glens Falls.

- Driving to get to things is a normal way of life.
- Neighboring towns have various facilities that Easton residents can use thus Easton does not need to have every facility.
- Need to better compete with neighboring communities.
- Easton has remained the same over the years, want to keep it that way and not turn into Malta or Schaghticoke.
- Waterfront is extremely important, so keep it open to the community.
- Protect Easton's open spaces; they are an asset to the community.
- Park or playground is a nice idea but it requires maintenance and can become a liability to the town.
- All stakeholders were in support of tourists coming to Easton for day trips and utilizing the town's businesses: winery, brewery, farm, orchards, stores, and restaurants.
- COVID has been a boon to the town, as the residents of surrounding municipalities had time and money to visit Easton and get out into the countryside.
- A sum of money through Washington county is utilized for the advertisement of parks and recreation.
- Easton needs a variety of restaurants in town.
- Currently, farmers are trying to reinvent and diversify their farms.
- Easton needs a post office and postal address.
- Need continued support from the town for the growing businesses and not fighting them.
- New businesses are welcomed; if non-agricultural businesses come, then that could be a concern.
- Incentive agriculture owner when someone wants to exit, incentives for Easton farmers.
- Hardware store owner: mentioned many accidents took place on a cross-section near the store at NY 29 and NY 40.
- Subdivisions should be allowed sometimes in order to draw more people to the town.
- Do not want the Greenwich issue: people cannot afford to stay, empty stores, and no parking.
- Amenities needed in Easton: Food, Restaurants, Stores.
- Laws for electric lines needed to prevent expansion and upgrades.
- Need for Green renewable energy law: restrict volume and location, such as the solar, battery, and cell tower.
- Need some restrictions in place to help with the ongoing solar pressure; this is a Stakeholder PRIORITY.

- Every month the stakeholders receive letters from businesses like timber industries, solar, and housing. Solar is the most pressing issue.
- Cell phone service and broadband lines are laid in some areas but not yet connected to households.
- Utilize the County Tourism Department to a greater extent.
- Work closer with trade organizations.

### **Conclusions**

1. The Stakeholders present were mostly content with how the community has controlled development over time. They support the continuation of protection over their way of life and scenic/natural assets, but not through strong government means or increased spending of taxpayer dollars.
2. Solar is a threat to their values, however, it's also a means to retire and people should have the right to do what they want with their lands. Strong support was demonstrated for some level of regulation over the siting and development of solar throughout the town as well as for other large-scale development pressures.
3. Would like to be able to subdivide their lands when necessary, but are not in favor of large multi-lot subdivisions. Allow for more business locations and large-lot single-family home locations for relatives to stay in the community.
4. Town is working with the county on broadband expansion through federal funding; prioritized in order to allow for both economic growth and household access.
5. Not in favor of increasing taxes for greater community services. The residents of Easton help to support the surrounding villages. Greenwich is the hub for the area, most amenities are found there, but don't want to be like Greenwich.



## **Stakeholders Meeting 2 Summary** **Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan Update**

**Burton Hall, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 10:00-12:00 am**

**Comprehensive Plan Committee:** Justin Sievers, Planning Board; Scott Brownell, Town Board; Michelle Skiff, Planning Board; Kevin Schwenzfeier, Senior Planner, Laberge Group; Snehal Chavan, Junior Planner, Laberge Group (Not In Attendance: Dan Shaw, Town Supervisor; Margaret Brand, Planning Board)

**Attendees:** Shawn and Vance Bateman – South Dominion Vineyard; Liz Gordan – The Alleged Farm; Harry Booth – Booth’s Blend Compost; Ethan Allen – Allenwaite Farm; Meegan Keenan – Christ the King Center; Jordan Fruchter – Resident; Christian Morris – Washington County DA’s Office; Gerald Barnheart – Victory View Vineyard; Tom Borden – O A Borden Orchard

### **Discussion**

#### **South Dominion Vineyard, Cambridge (near border of Easton) – The Batemans:**

- The previous Comprehensive plan did not speak about businesses.
- Dairy industry is very important and needs efforts toward sustaining dairy in Easton.
- Comprehensive plan should be structured in a positive way, for instance:  
*It is okay to do this if we do .... Rather than This isn’t allowed ...*
- Easton has an opportunity by being a part of the Upper Hudson AVA (American Viticultural Area).
  - Reinvent and encourage Wine trails.
  - Possibility to build on the existing facilities and strengths.
- Farm-to-table has been an emerging concept, that is liked by many, thus having an Easton market where farmers directly can sell to the consumers.
- Easton has a fair every year that is located at one location, instead of having a Geographical fair that is spread throughout the town and covers various agriculture destinations.
- Structuring the plan to foster business goals.
- If most residents agree upon a certain farming category is imported for the town, make it advantageous.

#### **Booth’s Blend Compost – Harry Booth:**

- Owns a 100-year business; dairy farm till the 2000s, now a compost and beef business.
- Born and raised in Easton; former Town Supervisor.
- Mr. Booth strongly agreed with the survey summary.
- Economic development should be referred to as “ Economic Preservation “ according to the Easton context where preserving what is existing is important.
- Industry that exist for years that are major taxpayers, need to be protected.
- Mr. Booth believed the concept of keeping about 50 Acres of land for parks and recreation as waterfront revitalization in the previous Comprehensive plan was extremely ambitious and difficult to manage.
- Mr. Booth is willing to share their boat launch with the neighbors and the community.
- Solar farms are welcomed if they allow livestock to graze beneath the solar panels, which is currently restricted for common array layout.

#### **The Ledged Farm – Liz Gordon:**

- Came to Easton 28 years ago to create a farming business and wants Easton to stay as is.
- Ms. Gordon agreed with many of the points discussed above and the summary of the survey.
- She was a part of the Comprehensive Plan update in the 1980s, helped to draft the revised Subdivision Regulations and served as Planning Board Chair.
- Ms. Gordon emphasized the fact that the previous Comp Plan was far ahead of its time, and the new Comp Plan should be an addition to the building of the old plan.
- Affordable housing is a need for Easton for the employers in Easton, furthermore people who visit for events at Easton, need to stay in nearby towns/cities like Saratoga thus short-term rentals are needed in Easton.

#### **Victory View Vineyard – Gerald Barnhart:**

- Mr. Barnhart worked for DEC and likes the way Easton was about 2 decades ago, Easton reminded them of the town where they grew up, and wanted the same for their children. Mr. Barnhart bought the land adjacent to their property when it came up for sale and finally decided upon growing grapes and creating a winery.
- There has been tremendous change in agriculture and diversity in farms. Recognizing that businesses are interrelated, diversity in farming should be encouraged.

- Presently many products are prepared directly for consumers: for example, cheese, wine, cider, and vegetables. Easton should continue welcoming people to experience these products.
- Encourages a Chamber of Commerce for Easton, Cambridge, and Greenwich.
- Supports giving incentives to large property/land owners to share a part of their land for recreational opportunities, such as trails.

**Christ the King – Meegan Keenan:**

- The facility has 600 acres of land.
- They have walking trails, lakes, ponds, disk golf, boys scout activities, lodging, and much more.
- People visit to walk on trails with dogs.
- They want to create awareness that the site is open for free to all and not only for the church members.
- They genuinely want to support the community as much as possible.

**O A Borden's Orchard – Tom Borden:**

- Grow apples and cherries; 6<sup>th</sup> generation in the business.
- He supports keeping Easton as is.
- New businesses coming into Easton should be compatible with existing businesses.
- Can there be a right to small business law similar to the right to farm law?

**Christian Morris, Washington County DA's Office:**

- Encouraged ongoing discussions.
- Easton is a nice place to stay as the crime rates are very low.
- Businesses invite certain kinds and the nature of character of the people.

**Jordon Fruchter – 15-Year Resident:**

- Mr. Fruchter echoes to keep Easton a rural and natural town.
- Provide the ability for measured growth in Easton to have a healthy economy.
- Population is not growing since 2000, there is negative population growth.

**Other Discussion Points:**

- Multiple towns (Cambridge, Easton, and Greenwich) can come together to build up the wine trail.
- Grant applications can be more competitive when considering multi-town participation.

- Groups-focused tiger teams will work for a particular project and dissolve eventually when the goals are complete.
- Suggestions to have the solar field on the former landfill area.
- Similar to the concept of the historic barn, the revitalization of small hamlets in Easton could be possible to increase housing.
- Outposts located on large farmers can be turned into housing for workers that work seasonally in these industries, the major issue is that the owner has to give a higher property tax on them, thus they do not use the outposts as short-term housing.
- The difference between zoning law, solar law, and site plan review law was discussed during the meeting.
- Easton needs a Post Office.

## APPENDIX B: PUBLIC WORKSHOP SUMMARY



## **Workshop Summary**

### **Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan Update Burton Hall, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 10:00-12:00 am**

**Comprehensive Plan Committee:** Justin Sievers, Planning Board; Scott Brownell, Town Board; Michelle Skiff, Planning Board; Kevin Schwenzfeier, Senior Planner, Laberge Group; Snehal Chavan, Planner, Laberge Group; Dan Shaw, Town Supervisor; Margaret Brand, Planning Board

**Attendees:** 25-30 community members

#### **Discussion**

- Bulson Road near Fort Miller and other small roads need to have restricted traffic in the town.
- If there is an increase in development near Route 29 which will negatively affect Fort Miller, speed limits restriction may be required.
- Discussion on new housing residents who feel the nuisance of trucks.
- Increased residential through upper-floor apartments in mixed-use buildings has come across as an issue to the town.
- Discussion on how the comprehensive plan process could lead to standalone regulations such as a solar law which will assist to find better suitability, and limitations on tree clearing.
- Pamela Landi (from the county) added that there has been a meeting with Airbnb that people could attend. There is a Cornell University collaboration series of webinars scheduled in February on Agrivoltaics, which refers to the hybrid use of farmland for agriculture and solar-energy collection; it is a relatively new concept that aims to mitigate the spatial impact of solar energy development.
- Discussion on avoiding the term “Solar Farm” and calling them power plants. Town restrictions on such power plants are required. When writing a law on renewable energy, it is important that the town creates stricter definitions for solar. The residents are okay if the solar farm comes to a landfill.
- The number of solar projects has been restricted to get on the state’s allocation list each year, so now they try to rush to get the funding.
- Michelle Skiff confirms that the town does not have any laws yet to restrict any large development or solar/renewable energy.
- There is a collective opinion that Easton does not need Zoning, but needs regulation for site plan review.
- The last plan is a good foundation to work on, but updates are very much required. For example, the old plan states no more roads need to be paved, which is outdated.
- Discussion on how in the future, all single-family houses are to be electrically heated, the attendees wanted a law for burning wood or freedom to heat however they wish. The committee explained that the town law can be stricter than the state, but not weaker.

- Airbnb is not a nuisance now but could become one in the future. Airbnb can become a nuisance with trash and noise, therefore increased building inspections and code enforcement could be required. In Saratoga County, a wedding venue is situated within 100 feet of a residential property. The residents of this property have issues with high noise and constant people. Easton did have some complaints regarding Airbnb, but not many.
- Site plan review was explained to the attendees. For instance, a site plan review gives direction on the percent of impervious surface allowed per site, but not restricting uses, structures are sited to best work with the existing site. Some site plans are as small as 3 pages, with just a checklist, while others are hundreds of pages.
- Once the visioning report is prepared, solar regulation and subdivision law can be written side by side.
- Under the section on recreation, the comprehensive plan can discuss widening the lanes on Route 40 where many cyclists ride and sometimes can get dangerous.
- Attendees discussed the use of the existing private boat launch to be opened to the public of Easton.
- The comprehensive plan is funded by greenway and smart growth grants; therefore, it is crucial to talk about and plan for parks and recreation amenities in the plan.

### **Summary**

There is cohesive support from the town's stakeholders and residents that the town needs to focus on developing three types of land use regulations:

- Renewable Energy
- Site Plan Review
- Subdivision Revisions