

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

After the November Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee meeting, the public was invited to participate in an exercise called a S.W.O.T analysis. A S.W.O.T analysis is a method for describing a community in terms of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Essentially, the participants discussed and listed those factors that have the most impact on the community. The Strengths are characteristics of the community that allow it to take advantage of opportunities or reduce the impact of barriers. Weaknesses are characteristics that could stand in the way of the community's taking advantage of opportunities. Opportunities are factors that allow the community to take action or encourage something to be done. Threats are factors that stand in the way of a community's efforts to get something done.

A S.W.O.T analysis is an easy, understandable way of identifying the key issues and communicating them to others. The aim of a S.W.O.T analysis is to identify the critical issues in any situation and to organize them in a way that enables a community to come up with a sound strategic approach. The approach should enable you to do the following:

- Build on **Strengths**
- Minimize **Weaknesses**
- Seize **Opportunities**
- Counter **Threats**

To identify strengths of the community the group facilitator could ask a series of questions. What does your community do well? What distinct advantages does your community offer? Why do residents enjoy living in the community?

To identify weaknesses of the community the group facilitator might ask: What could be improved about the community? What stumbling blocks does the community continue to encounter? What do other communities do better than yours?

To identify opportunities the group facilitator might ask: What needs are not being met by the community that are being met by other municipalities. How can the community meet these needs and improve the community?

To identify threats to the community, the group facilitator might ask: What are the obvious obstacles in your way, both potential and actual? What are neighboring communities doing that might cause negative impacts on your community?

The participants at the S.W.O.T public meeting were given a blank form in which to list Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The participants broke into three groups and worked together to fill in the blanks, discussing issues relating to land use, physical and environmental resources, community and municipal resources, historical and cultural resources, and recreational and educational resources.

After about one hour, the three separate groups joined to discuss their results. A speaker for each group reported what they had listed as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The following is the results of the S.W.O.T analysis with all of the responses given. The top three issues/items are ranked from 1-3 in order of importance:

S.W.O.T Analysis Final Results

STRENGTHS

1. Historic Context of the Community including the Saratoga Battlefield Monument and Victory Woods
2. Infrastructure (Water and Sewer Public Utilities)
3. School Systems
 - Hudson River and Fish Creek
 - Closeness to Capital District
 - Closeness to Adirondacks
 - Closeness to shopping opportunities
 - Closeness to I-87
 - Route 32
 - Cultural opportunities in Saratoga Springs
 - Corporate Status of the Village
 - Established community (Small town atmosphere, long term residents and closeness to your neighbors)
 - Village Hall

Inventory & Analysis

- Fire Department/Auxiliary
- Rescue Squad
- The Mill
- Good Leash Law
- Ability for expansion

WEAKNESSES

1. Lack of small businesses (A low business tax base means higher taxes for residents)
2. Vacant Properties (including the Mill)
3. Poor appearance of the Village (including sidewalks)
 - Lack of land use controls, no zoning
 - Not enough law enforcement
 - Complacency
 - No youth activities
 - Lack of parking areas/spaces
 - Lack of child care
 - Lack of public spaces/parks
 - Absentee landlords
 - Quality/quantity water problems
 - Broken storm drains
 - Lack of natural gas
 - Unpaved Post Office parking lot
 - Too close to Schuylerville (identity)
 - Poor intergovernmental communication

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Development of the Mill property
2. Develop tourism opportunities by marketing historic resources and Victory Woods
3. Citizen involvement in beautification opportunities
 - Vacant land available for development – on Fish Creek and Route 4, "The Point" on Rt. 32
 - Take advantage of Village density – efficient land use
 - Apply for grants

- Possibility of municipal center for Town of Saratoga (as mentioned in their Comprehensive Plan)
- New water facility

THREATS

1. The empty Mill will stay empty
 2. Lack of financial support for new businesses
 3. The high cost of the new water system
- Population decrease
 - Lack of action – general malaise
 - Threat of removal of the Town Hall from the Villages
 - Threat of dissolution of the Village Government

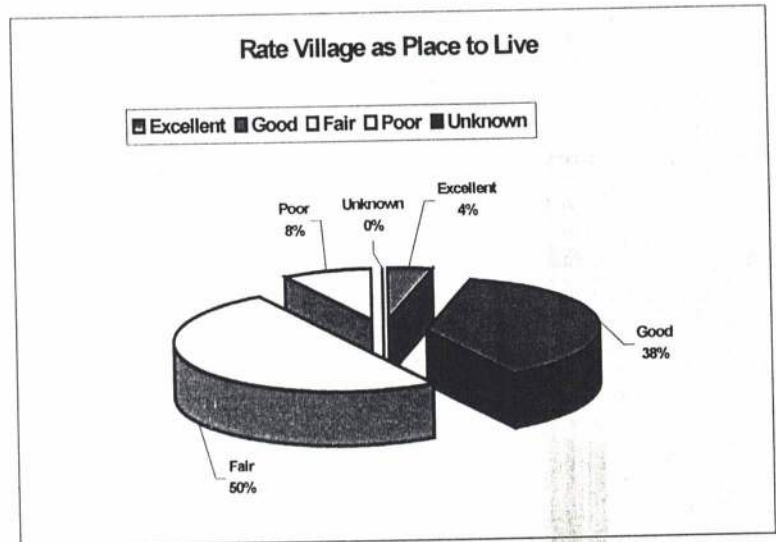
RESIDENTIAL SURVEY

A community survey was distributed to every household in the Village (188 mailings). The purpose of the broad distribution was to afford the majority of people in the Village the opportunity to participate in the planning process. It was also a means of informing everyone about the planning process, a process that relies upon community input in order to be successful.

Approximately 48 written surveys were returned to the Village, resulting in a return rate of 25.5%. Responses were tabulated and presented to the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee for inclusion in this report as Appendix C. The following provides the highlights of the community survey.

The overall quality of life in the Village was rated fair to good. When asked to rate the Village as a place to live (Figure VI), 38% of the respondents stated that the Village is a good place to live, and 50% of the respondents felt that it was a fair place to live. The friendly small-town atmosphere was the most mentioned positive feature of the Village. In addition, 78% of the respondents felt that the Village was a very affordable or somewhat affordable place to live, and 50% thought that the Village is a safe place to live. An astounding 65% of the respondents have lived in the Village for over 15 years.

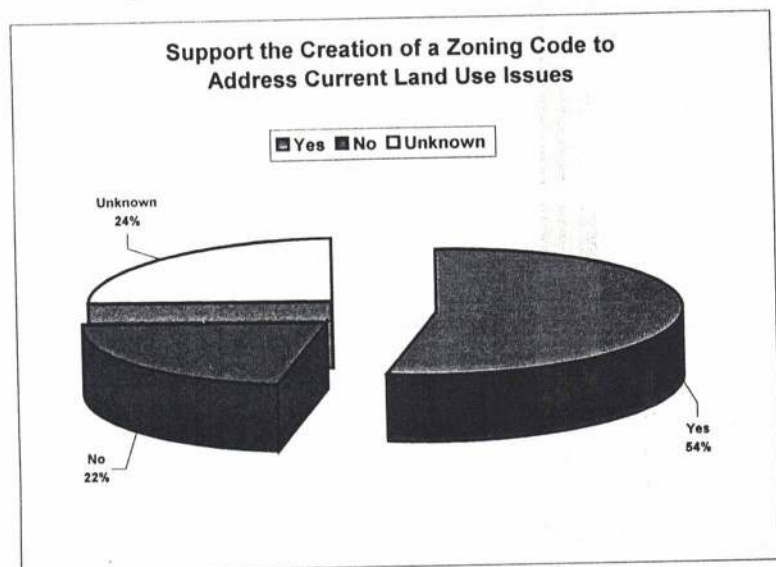
Figure VII – Rate Village as Place to Live



Source: 2002 Residential Survey

The survey questioned residents' attitudes towards growth. 56% of the respondents feel that the ideal population for the Village should be somewhat greater than it is now. In terms of land use, about 54% of the respondents support the creation of a Zoning Code, while 22% are opposed as shown in the figure below.

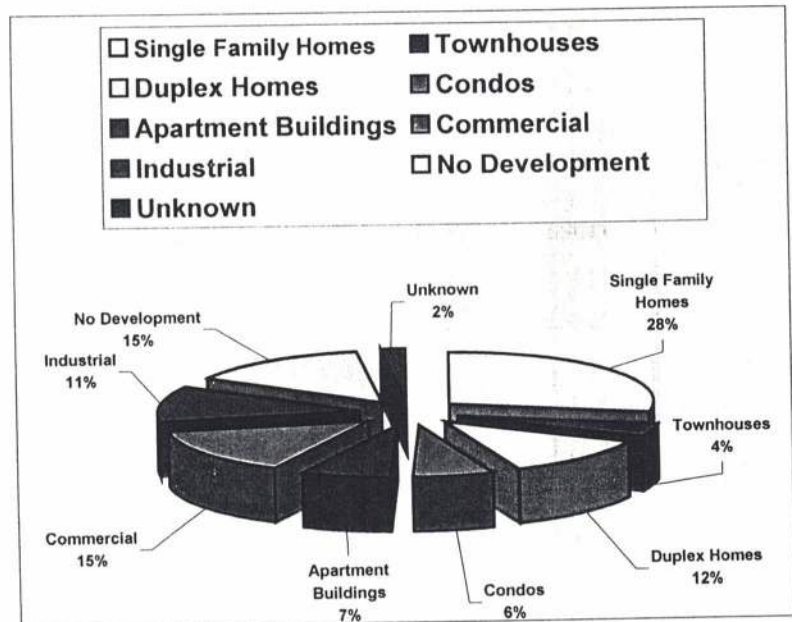
Figure VIII Residents Support of Zoning Code



Source: 2002 Residential Survey

When asked about the type of development that should be permitted on the undeveloped lands in the Village, the most favored type of development was single family homes, followed by an assortment of other types of uses as shown in the figure below.

Figure IX.
Favored types of Future Development



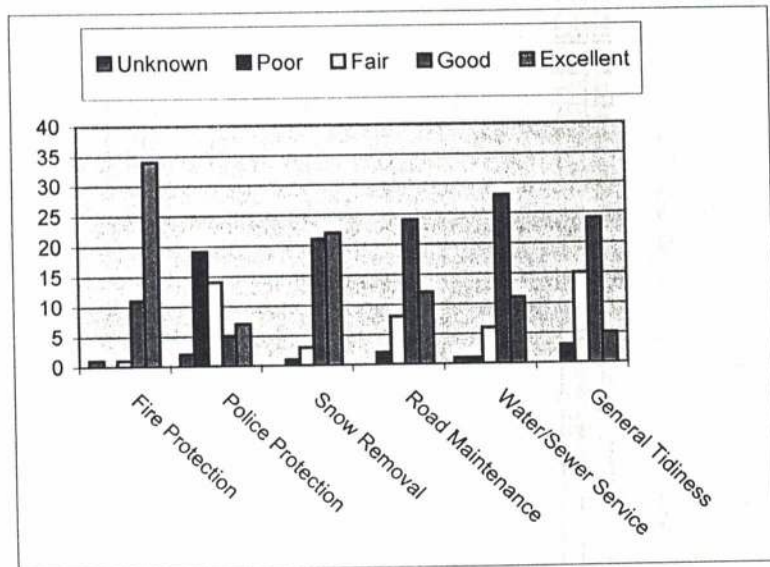
Source: 2002 Residential Survey

Residential attitudes towards business development were sought based on the current and future needs of the community. Not surprisingly, 65% of the respondents felt that the current level of business activity is inadequate. The types of businesses that residents wanted most in the Village are a convenience store, a grocery store, a general store and industries, followed by an assortment of other retail stores and services. A resounding 72% of residents felt that the Village should attract more tourists.

Recreational resources are valued amenities in most communities. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the respondents stated that they would like to see more public trails and greenways throughout the Village, and fifty-two (52%) felt that current recreational programs for youth were unsatisfactory – write-in comments targeted teen behavior as a problem.

When asked about Village services, the respondents were very positive as indicated in the figure below. Fire protection, snow removal, road maintenance and water/sewer service were rated good or excellent by the majority of the respondents. Police protection, which is provided by other governmental entities, was rated poor.

Figure X – Services Provided in the Village of Victory



Source: 2002 Residential Survey

SUMMARY

Public participation is integral to reach goals and objectives that satisfy the majority of the community. The Village of Victory, in recognizing that consensus is key not only to the development of a Comprehensive Plan, but also to the future implementation of the goals and recommendations, went to great lengths to offer the opportunity for citizens to provide input into this plan. To this end, Village officials are confident that the goals, actions and recommendations set forth in this document effectively represent the ideals and vision of the entire community.

The goals for the future development of the Village were based on the information provided by Committee Members and Stakeholders, the analysis of current conditions, including information from the residential survey, and the S.W.O.T analysis. The next section presents those goals, along with the recommended activities for implementation.