

**TOWN OF ONALASKA**  
SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

The Town mailed 1,855 surveys to every household and 740 surveys were returned for an outstanding 40 percent response rate.

**General Statements**

- 94 percent of the Town of Onalaska residents are satisfied or very satisfied with the Town as a place to live.

**Rural Character (Agricultural and Natural Resources)**

- About 73 percent of residents believe the Town should be mostly rural. A small segment of the survey respondents do not believe rural character is important; for example, 17.5 percent of survey respondents do not believe the Town should be mostly rural, 5.5 percent do not believe the Town should seek to retain its rural character, and 1.3 percent said “rural character does not matter to me.”
- In 20 years, 36 percent of the residents believe the Town should look about the same as it does now but with some more businesses and residences; and nearly 25 percent believe it should look the same as it does now.
- Nearly 76 percent of residents agree or strongly agree that farmland should be preserved.
- 88.5 percent of the survey respondents agree or strongly agree that natural resources should be a high priority for the Town.
- 88 percent of survey respondents said the Town should encourage the preservation of open space lands, such as woodlands, floodplains, and wetlands.
- 76.5 percent of the residents said the Town should participate in environmental improvement projects to manage stormwater.
- The top three categories residents said should be maintained to protect rural character include:
  - Water (19.8 percent);
  - Quietness (16.8 percent); and
  - Wooded areas (16.1 percent).
- The steps receiving the most support for the Town to take to keep rural character include:
  1. Encourage large lot sizes (31.4 percent);
  2. Have Town purchase green space for preservation (25 percent)
  3. Encourage cluster development (21.1 percent).

4. Stop development (10.1 percent); and
5. The Town should not seek to retain its rural character (5.5 percent).

## **Growth and Development**

- Approximately 50 percent of survey respondents said the Town's development review process should be streamlined.
- 70.5 percent of Onalaska residents agree or strongly agree there are land use conflicts in the Town.

### Rate of Growth

- About 44 percent of Town's residents believe the current rate, which is about 2.5 percent, of growth is about right, while 36 percent think it is too fast.

### Location of Growth and Development

- 68 percent of survey respondents said most new developments should occur adjacent to areas which area already mostly developed.
- Residents are split over whether development should mostly occur in cities and villages and not in the Town. 48 percent agree or strongly agree that development should occur in cities and villages while 37 percent disagree that it should mostly occur in cities and villages and not in the Town.
- 43 percent of the residents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that housing subdivisions should be allowed in rural areas, and 41 percent disagreed with this statement.
- On the issue regarding whether mixed use development should be allowed in rural areas, nearly 43 percent of the residents supported this concept and 34 percent disagreed.

## **Housing**

- 42 percent of respondents do not believe housing affordability is an issue in the Town, while 37 percent did not express an opinion on this issue; just 21 percent agree with the statement that it is an issue.
- Residents generally believe single family residential and elderly housing is needed; and apartments and mobile home parks are not needed.

## **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

- 82 percent of survey respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that the Town should coordinate its future plans with surrounding towns, cities and villages.

## Community Services and Facilities

- Residents are satisfied or very satisfied with all public services and facilities in the Town with each category receiving approximately 60 percent “satisfied” or “very satisfied” responses, with the exception of County Government which received 50 percent in these categories and 29 percent expressing “no opinion.”

## Transportation

- Over half of the respondents, 54.1 percent, said traffic is not a problem in the Town, while 36.4 percent believe traffic is a problem. (Steering Committee recommended breaking this down by area.)
- Residents are split over whether additional road access is needed to Brice Prairie. About 44 percent of survey respondents agree or strongly agree additional road access is needed while 37 percent disagree or strongly disagree such a road is needed. 19 percent did not have an opinion on this issue.

## Economic Development

- Residents generally support commercial development in the Town with 60 percent of survey respondents expressing support for commercial business development, and 27 percent said it should not be supported.
- Residents are evenly split over whether the Town should support industrial development. About 45 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the Town should support industrial development; and about 42 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.
- The types of new businesses that garnered support from over 50 percent of the survey respondents included:
  - Tourism (62.2 percent);
  - Restaurant/tavern/bar (50.7 percent); and
  - Other, which is a compilation of various businesses.

Heavy industrial was the only business to receive a majority of responses that residents do not want to see in the Town (68 percent).

- Other business categories receiving support over 45 percent included:
  - Grocery store;
  - Arts and entertainment; and
  - Lodging.
- Some of the businesses receiving nearly equal support and opposition include: (1) retail sales; (2) gas station; (3) light industrial; (4) wholesale trade; and (5) manufacturing.

- Residents believe all factors listed in the survey are important to consider as new commercial or industrial development is considered. The factors receiving the highest “very important” responses included:
  - Traffic (66.9 percent);
  - Odor (63.9 percent);
  - Environmental impacts (62.7 percent);
  - Noise (59 percent);
  - Fiscal impact to the Town; and
  - Location (51.4 percent).

## **Recreation**

- Residents were split on whether additional public boat access is need to Lake Onalaska and the Black River Area; 40 percent agree it is needed and about 29 percent said it is not needed.
- Survey respondents also believe:
  - More public shoreline fishing access is needed;
  - New hiking/biking trails to connect to the lakefront and existing trails are needed; and
  - Picnic areas/playgrounds should be added.
  - Other categories within this question receive mixed support with high percentages of “no opinions.” For example, 39.2 percent of residents said a campground complete with parking pads should be developed and 39.6 percent disagree such a campground should be developed. Similarly, 33.6 percent said more hunting access is needed and 37.4 said it is not needed.