

Freedom 2005 Survey statements

Conclusion

- Freedom experienced a significant percent population increase between 1990 and 2000, compared to the other municipalities in the Lakes Region. The survey results indicated that the year-round residents and the non-resident property owners do not see the population growth as not extremely serious, but want regulations and zoning applied uniformly and consistently. In addition, there is a desire to see Freedom's population to either stay the same or grow slightly over the next five years.
- There was no indication that there is a great need to change current zoning. Lot sizes in the Village District, the Commercial Districts, the Rural Districts and in General Residential District were all considered to be appropriate. Regardless of the district, however, conformity to the lot size regulations is important.
- Attracting light commercial activity, home businesses and retail/service businesses is important to the future of Freedom. While Freedom has an increasing population of people over 65 years old, it has a decreasing population of people between 20-34 years old. To keep younger people in Freedom, local job opportunities need to be fostered.
- The results of the survey clearly points to a sizable interest in preserving the natural and historical resources. Preservation of rivers' and lakes' shorelines, wildlife habitat, and historical sites and buildings are very important. Encouraging development that respects these resources and promotes "green-space" are directions the town and its planners may want to promote and support more in the future. Since other results from the survey did not indicate the public's desire for zoning changes, "green-space" development concept may require a great deal of public communication and education.
- Many of Freedom's community facilities were rated high. Most notably were the library, the school system, the emergency rescue and ambulance and police and fire protection. Recreational opportunities for seniors, adults and children received some of the lowest ratings.
- Communication about programs and activities by the town and town boards received the lowest rating and as one of the comments stated, the development of a web page for town information is a welcome addition.

Population

- As reported by the U.S. Census, as compared to the 30 municipalities in the Lakes Region, Freedom had the second largest percent increase in population between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, there were 935 people living in Freedom. In 2000, the population increased 39.4% to 1,303. The New Hampshire Office of Energy & Planning estimates that the 2004 population in Freedom increased to 1,413 or an 8% increase since 2000.
- A majority (52%) of the year-round residents felt that more controls are needed. Approximately one-third (34.8%), however, thought that the population growth is being managed properly. The respondents who were not year-round residents did not see growth as a problem that needed more controls, rather they tended to view growth in Freedom as being managed properly. Overall, 44.1% felt that more controls were needed, vs. 40.2% thought growth is being managed properly
- However, The overwhelming majority (91.7%) would like to see the population either stay the same or grow slightly regardless of residency status.

Freedom's Housing

- Over 75% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that land should be protected from housing development

	Majority Agree	Divided opinion	Majority Disagree
The Town is managing housing development well.	63%		
Land should be protected from housing development.	76.1%		
It is important to provide affordable housing.	63%		
Encouraging housing growth will stimulate the economy.			67.3%
There is excessive housing development.		48.3% vs 51.7%	
There are not enough affordable rental units in Freedom.		47.4% vs 52.6%	
There are not enough affordable single-family homes in Freedom			60.6%
There are not enough affordable housing for seniors in Freedom		47.4% vs 52.6%	
Duplexes should be encouraged.			72.1
Rental units in an owner-occupied home should be allowed	67%		
Conversion of large homes into apartments should be encouraged.			66.2%

- A majority of respondents said that the minimum lot size in every district is right. there is a desire for conformity to lot size regulations and that seasonal camps are an economic benefit for the town. On the other hand, there is a divide between agree and disagree concerning the amount of strain seasonal camps put on the town's infrastructure and if seasonal home conversions should be encouraged.

	Majority Agree	Divided opinion	Majority Disagree
Seasonal campgrounds that are converted to condominiums should conform to lot size regulations	82.1%		
Seasonal camps benefit the town economically	73.8%		
Seasonal camps put a strain on the town's infrastructure (e.g., transfer station, police, fire)		50.9% vs 49.1%	
The conversion of seasonal homes into year-round dwellings should be encouraged		45% vs 55%	

Land Use Policy

- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the respondents support strict enforcement of zoning and code regulation.
- There is also a strong interest (71%) to restrict the number of building permits issued annually for new homes.
- Respondents also agreed that condensed development that promotes green-space should be encouraged.
- While in a minority, 43% believe change to the zoning ordinances is necessary. Put another way, a slight majority (57%) thought changes were not necessary.

Town's Economy

- The survey results indicate that the respondents would support efforts to attract light commercial activity, home business opportunities, and retail/service businesses.
- Interestingly, support for increasing the size of the commercial district was mixed, with a slight majority (53%) believing the current size is not too small.

Roads/Transportation

- There was very little support for public transportation in Freedom. Only 16% of the respondents agreed that Freedom needs public transportation.
- Almost 95% of the respondents thought the town is doing a good job maintaining the roads in the winter
- 69% disagree that the town needs to do a better job planning and managing traffic.

Transfer Station

- Respondents overwhelmingly felt that the winter and summer hours at the Transfer Station met their needs
- Less than 30% thought Freedom should have a septic lagoon for property owners.

Local Natural and Historic Resources

- Respondents to the community survey indicated considerable (overwhelming) support for the protection and conservation of local, natural (to include wetlands, forests, rivers, lakes and shorelines) and historic resources.
- Over 68% thought that there is currently adequate protection of the town's drinking water supply.

Community Facilities

- The highest rated facilities were the Library, the School System, the Emergency Rescue and Ambulance, and the Fire and Police protection (average between "good" and "very good"). The Library was rated highest (3.8 out of 5.0 highest possible score)
- Community Recreation, Town/School Programs, and communication by the Town were rated the lower (between "fair" and "good"). Communications about town programs and activities were rated lowest (2.4)