



Saint Croix Falls Planning Public Opinion Survey Report

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Executive Summary

In early January 2007, the City of Saint Croix Falls mailed surveys to 689 residents seeking their input on the future development of the city. The Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls followed up with post cards and a second mailing to non-respondents. The overall response rate was a very robust 56 percent (385 completed questionnaires). With this strong response rate, the estimates provided in this report should be accurate to within plus or minus 3.3 percent. Further, non-response bias (concern that non-respondents hold consistently different views than those who completed the questionnaire) does not appear to be a problem with this survey. Finally, the demographic profile of survey respondents closely aligns with the 2000 Census. In short, we expect the sample to accurately represent the opinions of the population of Saint Croix Falls.

The following are key observations from the survey results:

1. Residents of Saint Croix Falls appear to be receptive to pursuing policies consistent with sustainable community development practices. Support is strongest with respect to landscaping practices (e.g. minimizing the use of chemical inputs to maintain city landscaping) and weakest with respect to a long-term commitment to minimizing the size of the City's geographic footprint (minimizing annexation of land into the city) and promoting mixed use (residential and commercial) development.
2. People like living in Saint Croix Falls, and they feel this way for a number of reasons that have some clear public policy implications. In particular, the list of things that people value about Saint Croix Falls aligns quite well with sustainable community development principles. There are economic factors that are important to residents (the availability of nearby jobs, proximity to the Twin Cities), there are ecologic factors that are important (the beauty of the area, recreational opportunities), and there are sociologic factors (small town atmosphere, the nearness of family and friends, affordable housing, low crime rate, quality schools).
3. Citizens' opinions about growth revealed some striking ambiguities. On the one hand, there was very little support for halting growth in the city and quite substantial support for increasing the population by 25 percent or more over the next decade. On the other hand, there was quite strong support for maintaining the cultural (small town atmosphere) and environmental (natural beauty, environmental quality) assets that make Saint Croix Falls an attractive place to live and strong opposition to expanding the water and sewer infrastructure that would be needed if the population expands significantly.
4. In terms of how they receive information from the City, the citizens of Saint Croix Falls have somewhat eclectic tastes that are heavily influenced by where they are in life. For example, households with children are more reliant on electronic communications while retirees prefer public meetings. To reach the variety of people living in the City, leaders should continue to use a "buffet" approach to communications that includes newsletters, articles in the local paper, electronic communications, and public meetings. Each of these communication vehicles reach specific audiences.

Survey Purpose

The motivation for this study was to gather opinions of residents about the future direction of development in St. Croix Falls. One specific area of interest of the elected and administrative leaders of the City was to determine the receptivity of the population to sustainable community development principles. The City chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls to survey residents of St. Croix Falls about these important issues.

Survey Methods

In January 2007, the City of Saint Croix Falls included a questionnaire developed by the SRC in the water bill they sent to 689 households of the city. A survey cover letter asked the adult in the household who would be having the next birthday to complete the survey and return it in a postage paid envelope to the SRC at UW-River Falls. After two weeks, the SRC mailed postcards to those from whom we had not received a completed questionnaire. A second questionnaire was sent to remaining non-respondents in early February. The SRC received a total of 385 completed questionnaires from residents for an astonishingly good 56 percent response rate. Based on the initial mailing to 689 households, the estimates provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.3 percent with 95 percent confidence.

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias”. Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who don’t return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. **Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in Appendix A, the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that non-response bias is not a concern for this sample, with one possible exception.**

In addition to the numeric responses, respondents provided additional written comments which were compiled by the SRC from the surveys. As appropriate, selected quotes will be used in some sections of this report to illustrate these comments. **Appendix B to this report contains the complete compilation of comments.**

Appendix C contains a copy of the survey questionnaire with a quantitative summary of responses by question.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of respondents to the survey. Where comparable data was available from the 2000 Census, they were included to indicate the degree to which the sample represents the underlying adult population in Saint Croix Falls. The data in Table 1 show that, in general, the sample matches the underlying population quite well. The sample contains slightly more males and home-owners and fewer low-income households than we might have expected. The use of the water bill mailing list probably accounts for both the preponderance of homeowners and the scarcity of low-income households (who are probably less likely to be

homeowners). In short, however, the demographic profile of respondents aligns well with the Census data.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents							
Gender	Count	Male	Female				
Sample	291	53%	47%				
Census (18+)	1,545	46%	54%				
Age 18+	Count	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Sample	376	2%	10%	14%	23%	19%	32%
Census	1545	9%	14%	20%	18%	11%	27%
Household Size	Count	0	1	2	3	4	5+
Number Adults	372		28%	63%	6%	1%	1%
Number Children (<18)	352	72%	9%	15%	3%	1%	0.3%
Housing	Count	Own	Rent	Other			
Sample	364	94%	5%	1%			
Census	817	82%	17%				
Work Status	Count	Full-Time	Part-Time	Self	Unemp	Retired	
Sample	372	46%	8%	9%	3%	34%	
Census	1622		60%		2%	38%	
Income Range	Count	<\$15,000	\$15-\$24,999	\$25-\$49,999	\$50-\$74,999	\$75-\$99,999	\$100,000+
Sample	348	3%	11%	31%	28%	16%	11%
Census	881	20%	15%	28%	21%	8%	8%
Length Residency	Count	<5 years	5-10 years	11-20 years	21-30 years	31+ years	
Sample	377	32%	15%	20%	11%	22%	

Sustainable Community Development

One particular area of interest of city leaders was the degree to which the citizens of Saint Croix Falls are supportive of basing city decisions on sustainable community development principles. The American Planning Association (APA) has identified a number of policy recommendations for communities pursuing a sustainable community development strategy (<http://www.planning.org/policyguides/sustainability.htm>). For example, their fifth policy recommendation is to encourage landscape designs that reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides,

herbicides and synthetic fertilizers. Using the APA recommendations and working with Dr. Kelly Cain, a Professor in the Plant and Earth Science Department at UW-River Falls, the SRC developed eight questions for the survey that were focused on sustainable community development concepts. Responses to these questions are summarized in Table 2

Table 2: Summary of Sustainable Community Development Questions, Saint Croix Falls, 2007					
	Very Important	Important	Un-important	Very Un-important	No Opinion
1. How important is it that planning decisions be guided by sustainable community development principles, which stress that public policy decisions explicitly consider impacts on the local economy, the local social structure, and the local environment?	47%	42%	4%	1%	6%
2. How important is it for <u>local</u> planning and zoning regulations to encourage landscape designs, maintenance of parks and open spaces that don't use irrigation, pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilizers, and require limited mowing	37%	40%	17%	5%	2%
				Yes	No
3. Do you support the city reducing the mowing of grass on some city owned land, such as water well locations, as a means to reduce expenses?				59%	41%
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
4. The City should not annex any additional lands for residential development until 80% of existing residentially zoned lots and land are developed.	43%	35%	10%	6%	6%
5. Planning and zoning regulations should be enacted that minimize expansion of City boundaries into the townships.	11%	37%	24%	9%	19%
6. Planning and zoning regulations should emphasize mixed-use (e.g. mixed residential and commercial) developments.	6%	37%	29%	12%	17%
7. Saint Croix Falls should enact new housing design standards with stricter environmental standards and building practices (e.g. using renewable energy resources and minimizing chemical compounds in building materials).	20%	43%	14%	10%	13%
8. The City should require new development to provide sidewalks or hiking trails.	20%	45%	18%	7%	9%

The first item in Table 2 measures the level of support for the overall concept of using sustainable community development principles to guide city decisions. As the data in Table 2 indicate, nearly 90 percent of the citizens of Saint Croix Falls said it was important or very

important to base planning decisions on sustainability principles. The SRC tested the data to see if particular demographic groups (men versus women, high versus low-income households, etc.) had significantly different perspectives on this question. We found that none did, which indicates that sustainable community development principles enjoy widespread support among the residents of Saint Croix Falls as guides to public policy decisions.

Support for landscape designs that minimize chemical applications and mowing was also quite strong, 77 percent said this was important or very important. Women were particularly supportive of this strategy. Interestingly, item three in Table 2, which asked about reducing mowing of grass on city-owned land, is closely related to the second item but received substantially less support (only 59 percent in favor). Support for this strategy for implementing sustainable community development principles was significantly less for older residents, retirees, those without children living at home, and people who have lived in Saint Croix Falls for more than 30 years. In fact, a majority of each of these groups disagreed with the proposition that mowing should be minimized on some city-owned land to minimize expenses.

Items 4 and 5 are sustainable community development strategies aimed at creating somewhat denser settlement patterns and minimizing urban sprawl. Item 4 focuses on “in-fill” development; making sure that most of the lots currently platted within the city are developed before considering annexation. Item 5 is a somewhat stronger statement that additional annexations in general should be minimized. Support for in-fill development was quite strong, 78% agree or strongly agree that such a strategy should be followed. Interestingly, people who reported being self-employed were substantially less supportive of the in-fill strategy. Support for minimizing City expansions into the surrounding Towns more generally was considerably weaker; only 48 percent agreed or strongly agreed with this strategy and one-third disagreed or strongly disagreed with this strategy. Nearly one in five respondents had not yet formed an opinion about minimizing annexations of Town lands, which suggests the need for additional educational efforts on this topic.

Item 6, promoting mixed-use development, is intended to create more opportunities for residents to do at least some of their shopping without having to get into their automobiles. There was a statistical tie with respect to this strategy (43 percent agree or strongly agree with this idea and 41 percent disagree or strongly disagree). Of all the sustainable community development questions included, the idea of encouraging mixed-use development had, by far, the greatest degree of opposition. Support for mixed-used development tended to decline with age - older citizens of Saint Croix Falls were less supportive of mixed-use development than were younger ones.

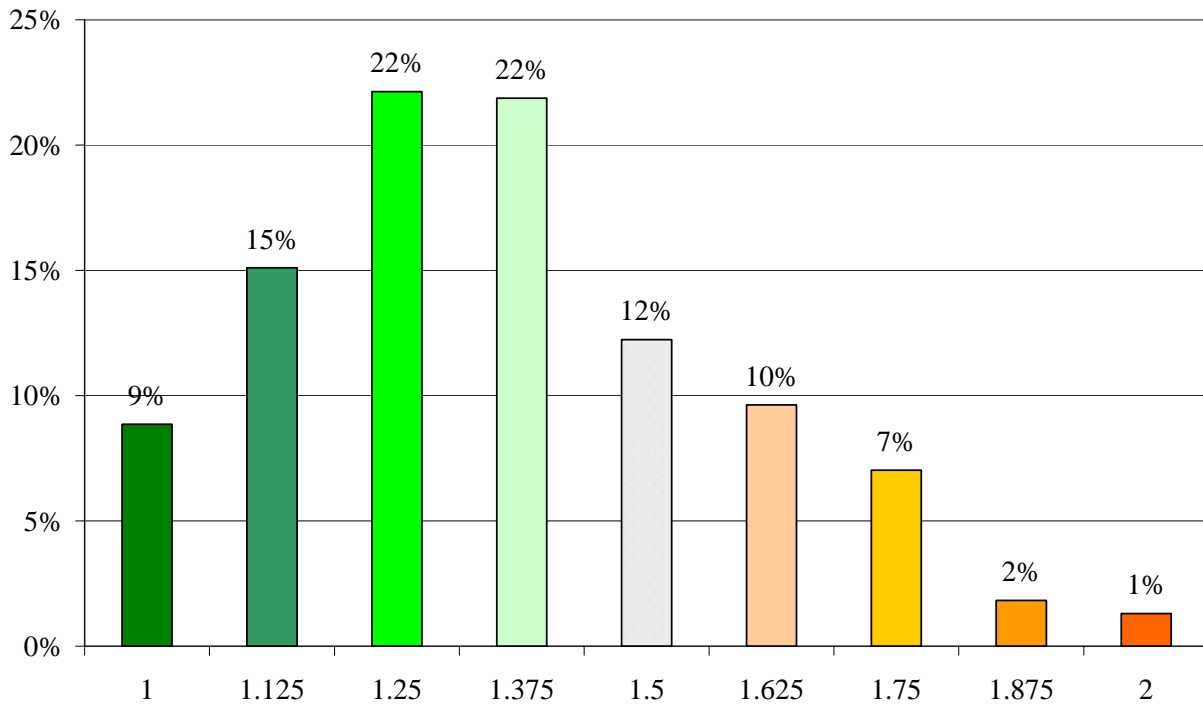
Nearly two-thirds of all respondents (63 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that the City should enact new housing design standards focused on using renewable energy resources and minimizing chemical compounds in building materials. Approximately one-quarter of the population was opposed to this idea. Women were significantly more supportive of this policy strategy than were men.

Finally, nearly two-thirds of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed (65 percent) that new developments should be required to have sidewalks or hiking trails. This strategy, too, is aimed

at inducing City residents to leave their cars parked a bit more often rather than driving everywhere they go. Again, one-quarter of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this strategy. Residents were also asked if, during the past year, they or a member of their family had hiked or biked on any of the City’s current trails. Seventy-one percent reported that they had used City trails in the preceding year.

The SRC created an index of support for sustainable community development based on the responses of individuals to the eight items shown in Table 2. If a person answered “important/very important,” “yes.” or “agree/strongly” agree to all 8 questions, their index value =1, if they answered 1 to 7 of 8 they would have an index value of 1.125, if 1 to 6 of 8 a 1.25 and so on up to a value of 2.0 if they disagreed with all 8 questions. A value of 1.5 means they are, basically, neutral with respect to sustainable community development (they disagreed with 4 of the items in Table 4 and supported the other 4). As Figure 1 indicates, there is fairly broad support for sustainable community concepts in the overall population in St. Croix Falls; 68 percent are on the “green” side of neutral.

Figure 1: Sustainability Opinion Index



In sum, residents of Saint Croix Falls appear to be receptive to pursuing policies consistent with sustainable community develop practices. Support is strongest with respect to landscaping practices (e.g. minimizing the use of chemical inputs to maintain city landscaping) and weakest with respect to a long-term commitment to minimizing the size of the City’s geographic footprint (minimizing annexation of land into the city) and promoting mixed use (residential and commercial) development.

Quality of Life

Respondents were asked to identify the three most important reasons they chose to live in Saint Croix Falls and their answers are summarized in Table 3. Seventy percent of the respondents said that the most important reason for their choosing Saint Croix Falls as their hometown was “being near family and friends,” “the availability of affordable housing,” or “being near their job”. Interestingly, if we consider the percentage that a given item was identified as one of the top three reasons for living in Saint Croix Falls, the natural beauty of the area and the City’s small town atmosphere float to the top.

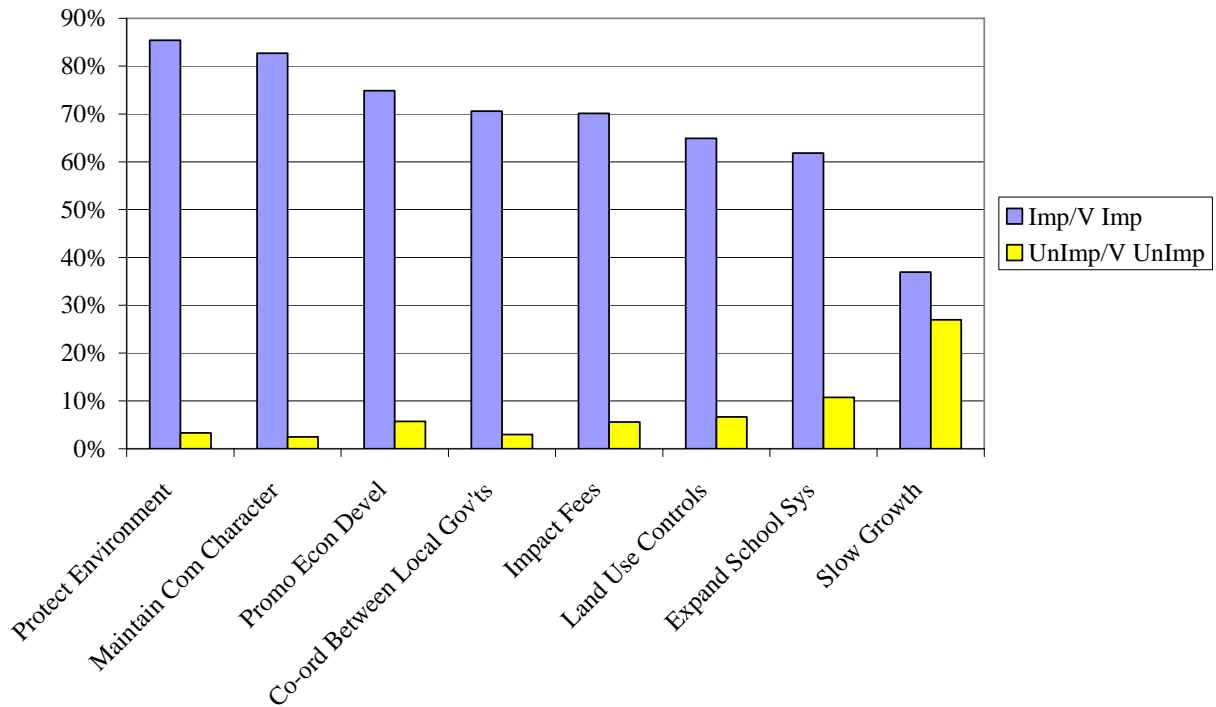
Table 3: Top Three Reasons for Choosing to Live in Saint Croix Falls				
	Most	Second	Third	Total Top 3
Count	376	366	358	
Natural Beauty of Area	8%	31%	23%	62%
Small Town Atmosphere	0%	3%	51%	54%
Near Family/Friends	33%	11%	1%	44%
Near Job	16%	17%	3%	35%
Proximity to Twin Cities	7%	14%	6%	27%
Affordable Housing	20%	0%	0%	20%
Low Crime Rate	5%	8%	3%	16%
Quality Schools	2%	5%	4%	11%
Recreational Opportunities	2%	6%	3%	10%
City Services	3%	2%	1%	5%
Historical Significance	1%	2%	0%	3%
Appearance of Homes	1%	1%	0%	2%
Cultural/Community Events	1%	1%	0%	2%
Property Taxes	0%	0%	0%	1%

Table 3 suggests that Saint Croix Falls has a nicely diversified “portfolio” of assets. At least 10 percent of respondents said that the natural beauty of the area, the small town atmosphere of the City, being near friends and family, the availability of employment opportunities, the proximity to the Twin Cities, the affordability of the housing stock, low crime rates, quality schools and the recreational opportunities available nearby, ranked in their top three reasons for living where they do. This diversity of assets suggests a number of marketing opportunities for the City and probably provides a very solid foundation upon which to build your community.

People like living in Saint Croix Falls, and they feel this way for a number of reasons that have some clear public policy implications. In particular, the list of attributes that people value about Saint Croix Falls aligns quite well with sustainable community development principles. There are economic factors that are important to residents (the availability of nearby jobs, proximity to the Twin Cities), there are ecologic factors that are important (the beauty of the area, recreational

opportunities) and there are sociologic factors (small town atmosphere, the nearness of family and friends, affordable housing, low crime rate, quality schools).

Figure 2: Opinions About Growth Management Strategies



The SRC asked about 8 potential strategies the City might pursue as it deals with growth issues and Figure 2 summarizes the opinions of residents of Saint Croix Falls. More than 60 percent of all residents said that it was important or very important for the City to protect the environment (85 percent), maintain the City’s character (83 percent), promote economic development (75 percent), increase coordination between local governments in the region (71 percent), secure impact fees from developers (70 percent), enact stronger land use controls (65 percent) and expand the local school system (62 percent). The only option for which there was less than majority support and substantial opposition was policies to slow growth and development.

There are relatively few significant differences of opinion between demographic groups with respect to the growth management options included in Figure 2:

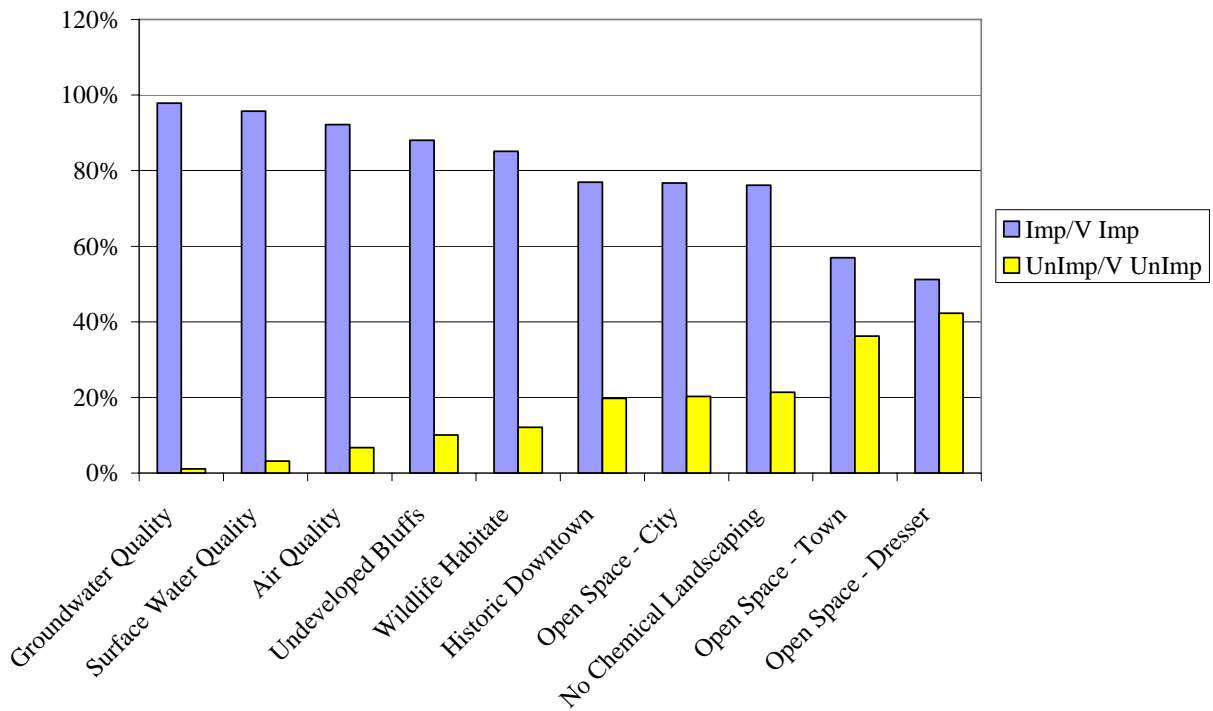
- Homeowners and longer-term residents are more neutral in their views of the importance of coordination between local governments than their counterparts
- Younger respondents are more neutral with respect to the importance of promoting economic development
- Households without children and very short-term and very long-term residents are more neutral with respect to the need for stricter land use controls
- Older residents and homeowners feel that assessing impact fees on developers is more important

- Women and households with children, not surprisingly, are more supportive of expanding the local school system
- Those who are self employed and households with children are more negative about slowing growth

Natural and Cultural Resources

A majority of respondents said that it was important or very important to protect all of the natural and cultural resources about which we asked. The level of support, however, as illustrated in Figure 3, was far from uniform. Support for protecting the quality of groundwater, surface water, and the air all exceed 90 percent. More than 80 percent of all respondents said it was important or very important to preserve scenic views and undeveloped hills/bluffs and wildlife habitat and biodiversity. More than 3 of every 4 respondents supported local planning and zoning rules to preserve the historic downtown, open space in Saint Croix Falls, and to limit irrigation, chemical, and mowing in city landscaping (see sustainable community development above).

Figure 3: Importance for Local Planning and Zoning



The importance of preserving open space in the Town of Saint Croix Falls and between the City and Dresser, while supported by more than half of the respondents, also generated much more opposition. Thirty-six percent said that it was unimportant or very unimportant to preserve open space between the City and Town of St. Croix Falls and 42 percent felt this way about preserving open space between the City and Dresser.

The self-employed and older residents tended to express slightly less support for some of the environmental issues illustrated in Figure 3. The self-employed, for example, were more likely to say that preserving open space between the City and Dresser or the Town of St. Croix falls is unimportant. Older residents tended to be statistically more likely to say that it is unimportant to maintain the historic nature of downtown, scenic views and undeveloped bluffs, and be less enthusiastic about protecting surface water quality.

In addition to the more general environmental issues, residents were asked to weigh in on two issues specific to Saint Croix Falls:

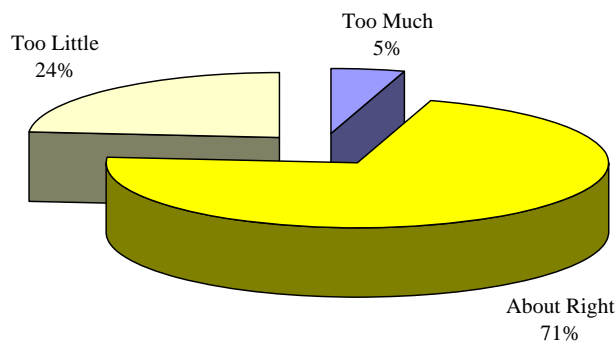
- should the city continue to try to preserve bluff and other lands and
- should bow hunting of deer be allowed in city parks and open lands.

Very solid majorities of respondents were in favor of both of these propositions. Seventy-four percent of respondents said, “Yes, the city should continue to seek partnerships to preserve bluff and other properties without tax dollars even if this removes land from the property tax roll.” Sixty-eight percent said that bow hunting of deer should be allowed in city parks and open lands.

Housing and Development

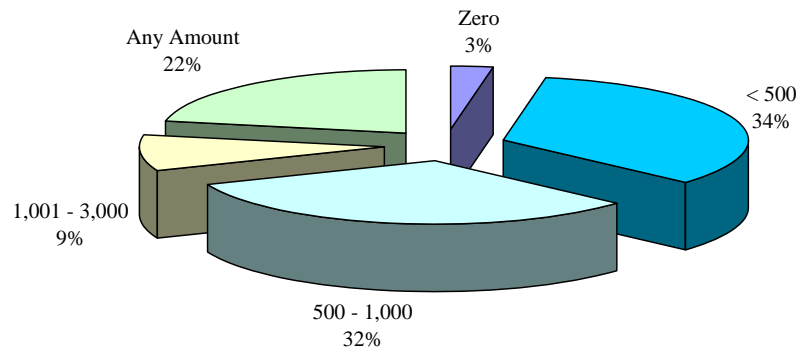
Residents were asked if the 5 percent (approximately 100 people) growth rate experienced by Saint Croix Falls between 2000 and 2005 was too much, about right or too little growth. As Figure 4 indicates, very few people felt that this rate of growth was too rapid. Roughly one-quarter would like to have seen a more rapid pace of growth and the vast majority (71 percent) was comfortable with the growth that occurred over the past half decade. Those who said they are self employed, in particular, felt that growth was too little between 2000 and 2005.

Figure 4: Opinions about Population Growth from 2000 to 2005



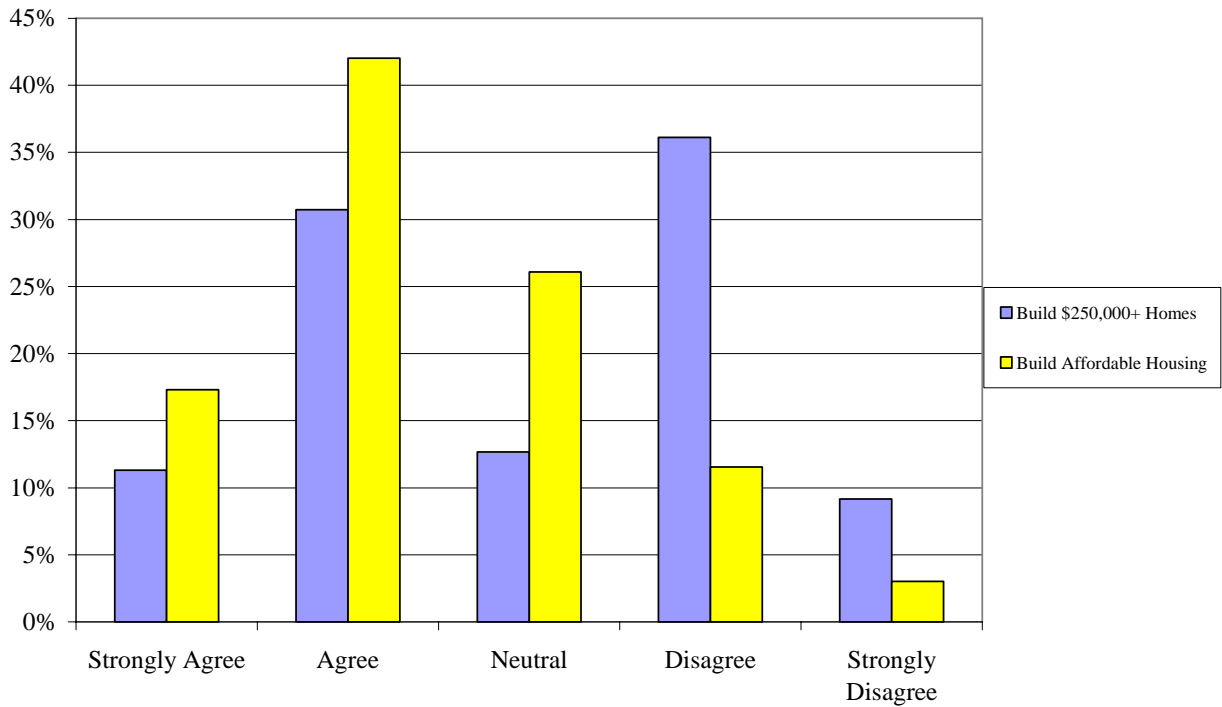
Residents were also asked to indicate by how much they would like to see the City grow over the next decade given a current population of about 2,200. Figure 5 summarizes their responses and it is clear that most were willing to embrace a substantially more rapid rate of population increase than they have experienced over the past 5 years. While 37 percent would like to see an increase of fewer than 500 people, nearly one-third would like to see an additional 500 to 1,000 people (between 2.5 and 5 times the current growth rate) and more than one in five would welcome any number of additional people to town. Older citizens were significantly more likely to opt for one of the lower population growth categories in Figure 5 and the self-employed for one of the higher categories.

Figure 5: Desired Population Growth in Next Decade



Most of the rest of the questions in this segment of the questionnaire focused on housing issues. Figure 6 summarizes the opinions of Saint Croix Falls' residents with respect to a pair of contrasting housing options: higher end housing and affordable housing. Residents were asked if the City should encourage the construction of houses worth more than \$250,000 as a means of boosting its tax base. The darker bars in Figure 6 suggest that residents were quite ambivalent about this sort of higher end housing; slightly more (45 percent) disapproved of this suggestion than were in favor (43 percent). Affordable housing was defined, in accordance with federal standards, as housing that costs no more than 30 percent of monthly income. The lighter colored bars in Figure 6 indicate that residents were substantially more supportive of this strategy. Nearly 60 percent agreed or strongly agreed that new housing should be affordable and most of the rest (26 percent) were neutral on this issue. It is probably not surprising that younger respondents were particularly strong supporters of increasing the stock of affordable housing in the City.

Figure 6: Preferences for Housing

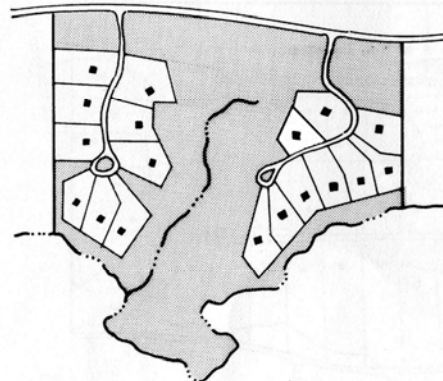
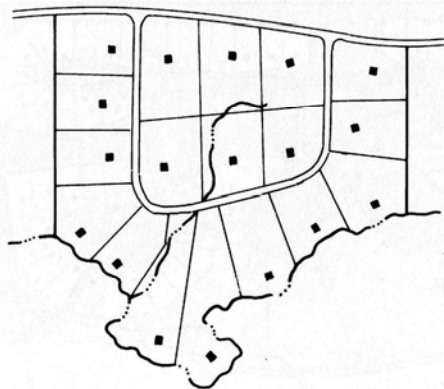


If the population is to grow as much as the residents said they would be willing to see (Figure 5), larger scale developments are likely to be needed. Residents were asked if these new developments should reflect a traditional design with larger lots (Option A) or a conservation design that permanently preserves open space (Option B). By a two to one margin, the citizens of Saint Croix Falls opted for the conservation design that preserves open space.

Figure 7: Preferences for Development Designs

33% **OPTION A**

67% **OPTION B**



Another set of questions dealt with housing issues in downtown Saint Croix Falls:

- should the city allow condominium development downtown
- should new downtown construction be allowed if it can be seen from the river
- if new downtown construction that can be seen from the river is allowed, should it be limited by aesthetics and design standards

Fifty-four percent of the 369 people who answered the question agreed or strongly agreed that the city should allow condominium development downtown. Only 24 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this idea. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) said the City should allow new construction downtown even if it could be seen from the river, but an even stronger majority (81 percent) said that such construction should conform to aesthetic and design standards.

Finally, residents were asked if they support annexation of land on US Highway 8 in order to develop additional “big box” retail stores comparable to the existing Wal-Mart and Menard stores. Nearly 3 out of 4 respondents (72 percent) responded affirmatively.

Land Use

In addition to the land use issues discussed in the sustainable community development section of this report (mixed use development and minimizing urban sprawl), citizens were asked about the three issues included in Table 4.

Table 4: Citizen Opinions about Land Use in Saint Croix Falls						
	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Community Gardens	374	22%	48%	11%	14%	5%
Unregulated Development	374	10%	16%	4%	51%	20%
Development on River Bluffs	374	7%	28%	7%	37%	22%

Seventy percent of respondents were in favor of using City-owned land for community gardens. There was relatively strong opposition to the other two land issues covered in Table 4. **Seventy-one percent disagreed or strongly disagreed** with the statement, “Landowners should be allowed to develop their land without any City regulations.” **Nearly 60 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed** with the statement, “I would support development on river-facing bluffs and slopes.”

It is also interesting to note that relatively few people are neutral on these questions. Given these somewhat polarized positions, we expected to see a number of statistically significant differences of opinions across different socioeconomic groups. This was, however, not the case. The only significant difference we found was that people identifying themselves as self employed were more likely to agree with the proposition that development on river-facing bluffs and slopes should be allowed (66 percent of the self-employed agreed or strongly agreed with this versus only 35 percent for the overall average).

Transportation

The people of Saint Croix Falls generally felt that the current road network in the City meets their needs; 69 percent agreed or strongly agreed with this sentiment. Their endorsement of the current condition of those roads was much less ringing. Only 53 percent agreed or strongly agreed that road conditions are acceptable for present usage, while 46 percent disagreed with this assessment. Similarly, people were somewhat conflicted over whether the City should patch rather than reconstruct streets as a means of reducing property taxes; 53 percent agreed or strongly agreed with this strategy, and 40 percent disagreed.

Table 5: Citizen Opinions about Roads						
	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Road Network Adequate	375	7%	62%	2%	20%	8%
Road Conditions Acceptable	376	4%	49%	1%	32%	14%
Patch Streets to Reduce Taxes	370	10%	43%	7%	30%	10%

Satisfaction with the current condition of roads falls with the respondents length of residency in Saint Croix Falls – longer term residents are significantly less satisfied than those more newly arrived in town. Likewise, longer term residents are less likely to agree with the strategy of patching rather than reconstructing roads as a means of reducing property taxes.

Communications

Somewhat surprisingly, the citizens of Saint Croix Falls reported that direct mailings (newsletters, flyers, etc) were the most effective way for the City to provide them with information. More than 3 out of 4 (76 percent) selected direct mailings as their first choice for receiving information from the City.

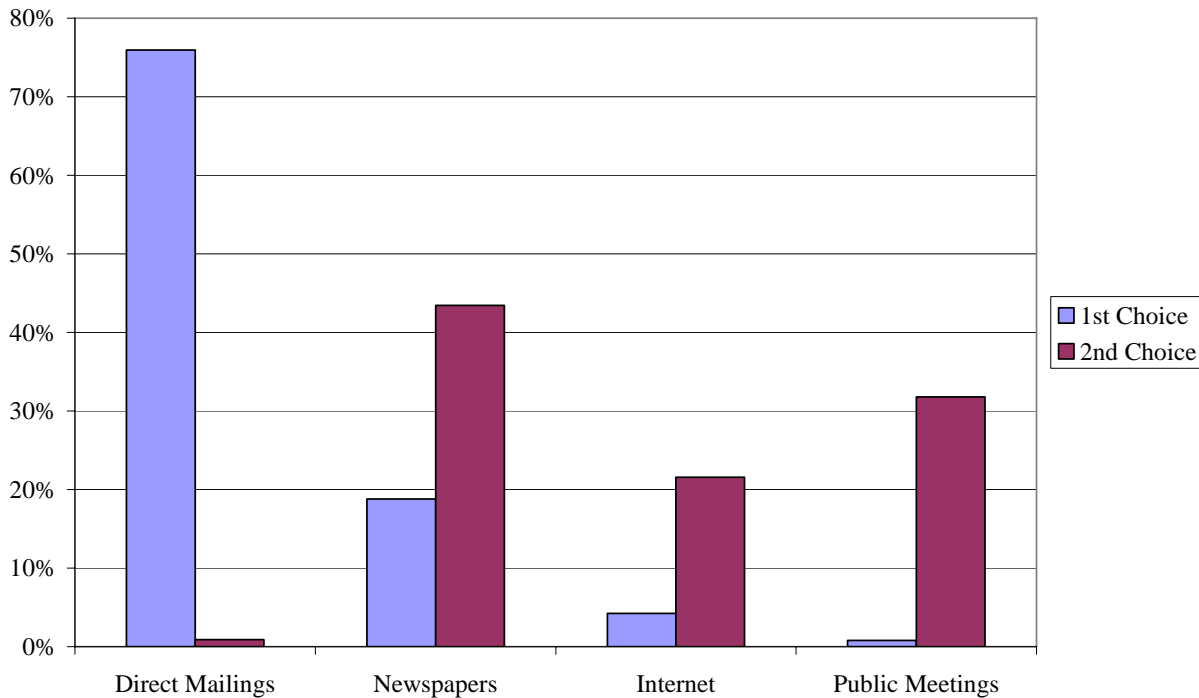
There is much greater diversity when it comes to what they say is the second most effective way for the City to communicate with them.

- Slightly more than 40 percent said that articles in the local newspaper were their second choice (nearly 20 percent said this was their primary source of information)
- Nearly one-third said public meetings (e.g. the mayoral fora) were their second option
- Slightly more than one in five said they rely on the internet as their second option for information about the City.

The second choice for City communications also sorted out neatly by demographic slice. The importance of public meetings rose with the age of the respondent. Public meetings also appealed more to households who don't have children living at home. People who report being retired were significantly more likely to look to newspaper articles as their second most important source of City information. In contrast, those who work full time, those with children in the home, and those with higher incomes reported being more reliant on the internet as their second source of information. These results conform to our expectations, are consistent with

other research, and suggest that the City needs to use a “buffet” approach to communications.¹ The citizens of Saint Croix Falls, at least with respect to their second choice of City communications, like to select from a menu of options and they have somewhat eclectic tastes that are heavily influenced by where they are in life.

Figure 8: 1st and 2nd Choices for City Communications



Community Facilities and Services

Two-thirds or more of all respondents rated all of the public services listed in Table 6 as “good” or “very good,” which suggests a relatively high level of satisfaction with these services. Within the overall pattern of relative satisfaction with public services in Saint Croix Falls, long-time and older residents stood out as being statistically more satisfied than more newly arrived and younger citizens. Older and longer-term residents were more satisfied with ambulance services, fire protection, and the public library. Longer-term residents were also more satisfied with the public school system. Those who said they are retired were more satisfied with fire protection and snow removal. The self employed were also more satisfied with snow removal than were those who said they were fully or partially employed.

¹ “Sharpening Cooperative Communications to Build Member Commitment and to Reach Selected Member Audiences”, David Trechter and Robert P. King, USDA/RD-SC, Rural Cooperatives, v.69, no.2, March/April 2002.

Table 6: Public Opinion about the Quality of Public Services						
	Count	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion
Garbage	373	39%	55%	2%	1%	3%
Parks & Recreation	373	45%	46%	5%	0%	4%
Police	372	36%	53%	3%	1%	7%
Snow Removal	374	31%	55%	9%	2%	2%
Fire	372	39%	45%	0%	0%	15%
Sewer	373	16%	67%	6%	1%	9%
Ambulance	376	40%	39%	1%	0%	19%
Water	372	14%	65%	15%	3%	4%
Recycling	369	21%	58%	11%	2%	8%
Schools	369	25%	53%	6%	1%	14%
Library	365	21%	50%	16%	2%	10%
Storm Water Management	361	12%	55%	14%	3%	16%

There are, however, 5 services that more than 10 percent of the populous rated as “poor” or “very poor.” The services about which there is a substantial level of concern are:

- The public library
- The public water system
- Storm water management
- Recycling programs
- Snow removal

The first two items in the list have, we know, been major topics of discussion in Saint Croix Falls for the past several months. So it is not too surprising that they garnered a substantial number of negative assessments. Nineteen percent of respondents said that the public library was poor or very poor, 18 percent gave these ratings to the public water system, and 17 to storm water management.

Residents were asked if they were supportive of expanding the waste water treatment plant and municipal water wells to accommodate growth if this caused water and sewer bills to increase by an estimated \$500 per year. Two-thirds of the respondents said that they were not supportive of such an expansion under these terms. It is, perhaps, ironic to note that nearly two-thirds of the respondents were in favor of fairly aggressive population growth targets (as reported in Figure 5) that would almost certainly necessitate an expansion of the sewer and water systems. Those who were in favor of the highest growth rates in Figure 5 were, to be fair, more supportive of expanding the waste water treatment plant and municipal water wells than those who would prefer less growth. But even among those who favored the most rapid rate of population growth for the City, a majority opposed this infrastructure expansion.

Residents were asked if they were supportive of the City purchasing the old Holiday store downtown for use as a library if matching funds could be secured. Nearly two-thirds (62

percent) were in favor of this effort. Support for purchasing the Holiday store for a new library fades significantly among longer-term residents of Saint Croix Falls. We are not able to say if this is because they are opposed to a new library in general or to this particular option.

Internet Service

Slightly more than two-thirds of all respondents said that they have internet access in their home, but there are distinct “digital divides” in Saint Croix Falls. Men, those employed (full, part or self), the young, homeowners, households with children, higher income households, and newer arrivals are all significantly more likely to say they have internet access in their homes than women, retirees, the elderly, childless homes, lower income households and long-term residents.

Residents are more satisfied with the internet service they receive than with the price they pay. Nearly three out of four (72 percent) said that, overall, they were satisfied or very satisfied with their internet service provider. In contrast only 51 percent said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the cost of their internet service and 41 percent said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The self-employed and those who rent their residence were significantly less satisfied with the cost of the internet service than were those employed by others or homeowners.

Table 7: Opinions about Internet Service Options						
	Count	Very Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Speed of Connection	340	42%	36%	10%	7%	4%
City WiFi System	348	13%	26%	18%	30%	14%
City-Provided, Low-Cost Service	346	19%	24%	14%	26%	17%

The data in Table 7 indicate that residents primarily value a high-speed internet connection (78 percent said the speed of an internet connection was important or very important). Fewer than 50 percent felt this way about a City WiFi system (39 percent said this was important or very important) or a low-cost internet service provided by the city (43 percent).

Opinions about internet issues are highly correlated with a number of demographic characteristics. In particular, the speed of connection is significantly more important to younger residents, the self employed, families with children in the home, higher income and, more newly arrived citizens. Having a city-wide WiFi system is much more important to the young than the old and to families with kids than to those without children in the home. Finally a low-cost, city-provided internet connection is more important to the self-employed and younger households than to their counterparts.

General Issues

Finally, residents were asked to identify the three things that they thought were most important for the City to pursue. Their thoughts are summarized in Table 8. There is little mystery about the top priority of citizens of Saint Croix Falls; 73 percent said reducing property taxes is one of their top three priorities for the City. The next highest item, commercial development along

Highway 8, was identified by only 29 percent of all respondents as one of their top three priorities.

Table 8: Opinions about City Priorities			
Count	375	372	366
Reduce Property Taxes	59%	8%	5%
Hwy 8 Commercial Development	6%	12%	11%
Preserve Community Character	5%	9%	14%
Preserve Green Space	4%	10%	8%
Improve Downtown	5%	10%	8%
Improve Roads	3%	10%	9%
Sustainable Community Development	4%	6%	7%
Downtown Commercial Development	2%	6%	8%
Build Wastewater Plant	4%	6%	4%
Industrial Park Development	1%	7%	6%
Minimize Urban Sprawl	3%	5%	5%
Tourism Promotion	1%	2%	8%
Increase Affordable Housing	1%	7%	2%

Beyond concerns about property taxes, the next set of five items (Highway 8 commercial development, preserving community character, preserving green space, improving such downtown features as parking and store variety, and improving roads in the community) were all identified by between 22 percent and 29 percent of all respondents.

Conclusions

The SRC sees 4 key conclusions from this study:

1. Residents of Saint Croix Falls are broadly supportive of local policies that are consistent with sustainable community development principles.
2. Saint Croix Falls has a very attractive portfolio of assets upon which to build its future. The features that drew residents to the City are the very sorts of things that sustainable community development principles are designed to protect: availability of jobs (economic dimension), the natural beauty of the area (environmental dimension), affordable housing and the small town atmosphere (sociologic dimension)
3. There are some seeming contradictions in residents opinions when it comes to future population growth in the City (strongly supported) and paying for the infrastructure needed to support that larger population (strongly opposed).
4. City leaders need to continue to use multiple communication vehicles (direct mail newsletters, news paper articles, the internet, town-hall meetings) to effectively reach residents.

Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Tests

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who don’t return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. For example, suppose non-respondents feel that the 5 percent growth rate that Saint Croix Falls experienced between 2000 and 2005 (Question 16) was too much growth, whereas most of those who returned their questionnaire said this growth rate was about right. In this case, non-response bias would exist and the raw results would understate the overall public’s concern about the rate of population growth in Saint Croix Falls.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who return the first mailing of a questionnaire to those who return the second mailing. Those who return the second questionnaire are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing) and we assume that they are representative of that group. In this survey, 300 people responded to the first mailing and 85 responded to the second mailing.

We found 8 variables with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents (Table A1) out of 95 tested. With respect to dealing with growth issues (question 2), respondents to the second mailing were statistically more likely to say they were “neutral” whereas the first mailing respondents were more favorably disposed toward the options in Table A1. The second mailing respondents were more concerned about housing affordability but more neutral with respect to stricter environmental design standards, allowing landowners to develop their land without any city regulations and having city planning decisions guided by sustainable community development standards. In most cases, the differences of opinions between the first and second mailing are differences of degree (they would round to the same integer value) rather than substantive differences. Because of the relatively small differences in the magnitude of responses of first and second mailing respondents and the relatively small number of variables for which there is a statistically significant difference, **the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that non-response bias was not a concern for this sample.**

Table A1 – Statistically Significant Differences Between Responses of First and Second Mailings			
Variable	Mean First Mailing	Mean Second Mailing	Statistical Significance
Q2a City should coordinate with other local govts	2.13	2.40	.010
Q2c. City should have stronger land use controls	2.16	2.59	.004
Q2d. City should protect the environment	1.63	1.92	.016
Q2f. City should maintain community character	1.75	2.08	.005
Q9. New housing should cost <30% of monthly income	2.88	2.47	.030
Q11. City should have stricter environmental design standards	2.46	2.82	.025
Q18. Landowners should be able develop land without any city regulations	2.98	2.75	.050
Q36 City planning decisions should be guided by sustainable community development ideas	1.70	1.98	.030

Appendix B: Saint Croix Falls Written Comments

Question 1 – From the following list, check the *THREE* most important reasons you and your family choose to live in the City of Saint Croix Falls? Other Comments

- **Family and Childhood Ties (11 responses)**
 - Grew up here (3x)
 - Born and raised here (2x)
 - Both born and grew up in area (no choice)
 - Born here
 - Spouse from area
 - Remarried-husband was resident
 - Hometown
 - Family home
- **Medical Services (7 responses)**
 - Medical facilities (2x)
 - Medical services (2x)
 - Hospital and clinics
 - Hospital services
 - Needed dialysis at Good Samaritan
- **Property Taxes (4 responses)**
 - Property taxes: you're joking right!
 - To help lower taxes
 - Property taxes are a joke
 - "F: ARE YOU KIDDING"
- **Community (3 responses)**
 - Community
 - School campus- all levels together- close to housing
 - Wanted to be near good community. My husband is there.
- **Church (2 responses)**
 - Church
 - First Presbyterian church
- **Work Purposes (2 responses)**
 - Business is here
 - Reasonable commute to work
- **Other (2 responses)**
 - Close to shopping and medical services
 - Marked "m" also

Question 2 – As the City deals with growth issues, how important do you think the following strategies are? Other Comments

- **Tax Issues (12 responses)**
 - Lower taxes (7x)
 - Reduce property taxes
 - Cut property taxes

- Stop out of control property taxes
- Lowering taxes - property
- Affordable taxes
- **Development (18 responses)**
 - Discourage large retail stores
 - Attract high end non-retail employers
 - Fix the sidewalks on the hill
 - Cultivate downtown
 - Indoor hockey rink
 - Encourage change and development.
 - Planning ahead
 - Plan for Hwy. 8 growth
 - Require environmental impact review for any development.
 - Developing downtown identity
 - Want growth!
 - Growth will happen
 - Make it pretty!
 - Prevent growth along river
 - Continue growth
 - Limiting sprawl
 - Plan for future
 - Postal Service improvement
- **Community (4 responses)**
 - Continue small town atmosphere
 - Finding community identity
 - Love the bike trail
 - Formal/ Large community melting - greater community involvement
- **Police/Legal Matters (3 responses)**
 - Protection of liberty
 - Maintain low crime
 - Snowmobile enforcement
- **Other/Multiple Comments (8 responses)**
 - Better use of fees
 - No Statues
 - Too much green space
 - Helping farms and small business.
 - Higher wage jobs
 - Create viable circumstances enabling youth to remain here ie: jobs, educational institutes
 - This should have been looked into from the beginning. Why fret about it now.
 - C. enough now; d. to a point; e. reasonable fees for infrastructure; g. residents vote not city responsibility; h. need growth and development to support city; i. i.e. F just what is our character?

Question 3 – How important is it for local planning and zoning regulations to...? Other Comments

- **Development (12 responses)**
 - Prevent large complex development on N. main street. Limit building on river and main streets
 - Establishing Appropriate zoning for less residential vs. commercial housing
 - Think you need to upgrade the Lions park. A lot of families use this park during the year!
 - Addition/acquisition of more conserved land w/wild places focus
 - Forget main street resettle on top of hill
 - Save downtown businesses
 - Library
 - West access to Hwy 8 from Fox hills
 - No Blutt development
 - Discourage large retail stores
 - Build more parks
 - Restrict growth of snowmobile/motorized trailing limit light pollution (Menard's, Wal-Mart)
- **Taxes (4 responses)**
 - Lower taxes (2x)
 - Stop out of control property taxes
 - Lowering property taxes
- **City Character (4 responses)**
 - Keep downtown neat and clean
 - Keep natural beauty with the city.
 - No religious community
 - Festival theatre and arts
- **Other/Multiple Answers (5 responses)**
 - Protect private property rights
 - Already is because Ivan Bower owns all the land
 - Lower phone bills we hate CenturyTell
 - Why wasn't this looked into long ago before all this development was started?
 - As to stat fed regulations; e. anyone needing much open space, move to country; j. just who would oversee this?

Question 27 – Check the TWO most effective ways the City of Saint Croix Falls could provide information to residents. Other Comments

- **Internet (6 responses)**
 - E-mail (3x)
 - Internet
 - Mayor's letters (info) via email is excellent
 - Present webpage is too dated
- **Television (2 responses)**
 - Cable Station

- Community page on T.V. Cable
- **Other/Multiple Answers (5 responses)**
 - Info. Sign on HWY 8
 - Which newspaper?
 - Bulletin board postings at local businesses/post office etc.
 - Local TV. Channel 23. Better advertising of public meetings or city hire its own news reporter to write for paper.
 - With more notices

Question 35 – From the following list, please identify the *THREE* most important things you feel the City should pursue. Please place the letter of your choice next to the space allotted. Other Comments

- **Public Buildings/Recreation (5 responses)**
 - New post office parking
 - Bigger library
 - New Post Office
 - Secure land for City Ball fields and Recreation
 - Build parks
- **Environmental Issues (3 responses)**
 - Take care of fresh and waste water
 - ECO VILLAGE
 - Increase water supply
- **Planning (2 responses)**
 - Planning should be planning, not reacting!
 - Planning
- **Other (3 responses)**
 - Elderly housing
 - Better police patrols
 - Hard to choose

Question 37 – If you could change one thing about the City of Saint Croix Falls, what would it be?

- **Taxes (73 responses)**
 - Lower/Reduce taxes (17x)
 - Lower/Reduce Property Taxes (15x)
 - Taxes (10x)
 - Property Taxes (4x)
 - Lower taxes, but realize they are needed to improve our community and further growth.
 - Sell City owned lands to help taxes
 - I think that holding property taxes where they are at is important.
 - Taxes, Real estate evaluations are out of line. TOO high.
 - Owner property taxes to people here and help attract potential buyers
 - Property taxes are way too high out here! I appreciate the mill rate going down, but the bill is outrageous!

- Stop tax increases in residential homes
- Property taxes are too high! Especially for those who want to retire and stay in their homes.
- Try to reduce property taxes
- High taxes lower them.
- Lower property taxes, way to high in town!
- My increased tax burden. Another increase like last year will force us to move.
- Decrease taxes they are outrages and I don't see the benefit of paying them
- Implement tax breaks for energy efficiency homeowners
- Lower the taxes, make Wal-Mart pay more. .5 percent income surcharge
- Lower taxes. Otherwise it's great!!
- Lower property taxes. Dollar for dollar our taxes are way to high compared to MN.
- Stop giving away paying property taxed land and buildings to tax free entities.
- Substantially decrease property taxes! They are outrageous!
- Lower taxes w/o loss of quality of services
- Taxes are too high
- We love the town but property taxes are tough to take.
- Property taxes are way too high
- To have assessed values lowered to more accurately match actual values.
- Assess Wal-Mart corp. for the real value of its real estate...presently way too low
- I think we pay way too much for taxes we have a small twin home and pay almost \$3,000 a year
- Make it more affordable to live here. Property taxes are too high!!
- **Development (57 responses)**
 - **Downtown (24 responses)**
 - Update downtown to promote tourism and keep small shops operating
 - Use old falls 5 cinema building for community center/library.
 - More development downtown.
 - More inviting entrance to downtown
 - Get downtown" back to an economically feasible place to do business
 - The downtown closed shops
 - Help downtown survive and prosper I would attempt to instill a stronger attitude and effort towards the long term retention of downtown St. Croix.
 - Major usage of downtown with Eco Build up of new businesses
 - Keep downtown businesses flourishing and invite more to come
 - Don't spend any more money on Main Street. Its dead all effects focus along hwy 8 on top of hill.
 - The city would benefit from convincing businesses to enter into existing buildings that are downtown vs. building new strip malls. Example: St. Croix Computers
 - Downtown public bathrooms
 - Encourage downtown development...it is the focal point of the city

- Downtown- make the Westside condos and the eastside businesses
- See all downtown buildings occupied
- Better downtown (more stores, more eateries, entertainment, something fun for youth)
- Market brand and improve the downtown area. This is a great area with natural beauty; let's make the downtown desirable for tourism.
- Stop trying to make the downtown another condominium mess like Stillwater, MN.
- Improve downtown
- More signs for the downtown businesses for Hwy 8 access
- Renew/reinvent Washington/main street and along river. Capture this nature resource to sustain ably grow our community
- Promote downtown SFC on Hwy 8
- All businesses are moving to the top of the hill, lets get/keep businesses downtown without destroying our scenic river way.
- Downtown be the focus of our city - up on top of the hill will take of itself. More effort on downtown.
- Retail (10 responses)
 - Let other stores come like Kohl's, Target, or other restaurants like Applebee's etc. Brings in jobs for people.
 - Stop the "big box" sprawl on top of the hill. (east hwy 8.)
 - More restaurants, fast food establishments, Target
 - It would be nice to have more stores and restaurants. Currently, we do most of our clothing shopping in MN.
 - We need more places to eat!
 - We would like a wider variety of stores and family dining restaurants.
 - Need more national chain stores
 - Stop putting all the dollars on top of the hill i.e. Hwy 8 try to get empty buildings downtown sold for new construction.
 - Large supermarket - grocery - etc.
- Housing (6 responses)
 - Affordable housing
 - Control housing development
 - Stop urban sprawl
 - Do not permit any housing developments on any of maple leaf drive and court.
 - Building of more low cost senior housing. Such as town homes, assisted living, senior subsidized housing, etc.
 - Provide more affordable homes-by affordable I mean that we need to take into account what jobs in this area pay-not national averages.
- Hill (2 responses)
 - Lack of proper planning for controlled aesthetic commercial development of Highway 8 corridor was a huge short coming; and steps should be taken down to prevent it from getting worse
 - Reduce development of HWY 8
- Other/Multiple (15 responses)

- build a larger/better library (2)
- Attract business to the industrial park that provides better paying jobs. I realize that this may be hard to do in the present world economy, are we still trying?
- Stop leap-fogging commercial development on hwy 8
- Cooperation between downtown and "on the hill" businesses. They forgot both are important to our city. Each group seems only interested in their issues rather than working together.
- Move the hospital out of downtown St. Croix
- Move hospital campus to more desirable location (parking/traffic etc)
- Less residential sprawl and less commercial development in the style of that along hwy 8.
- Get rid of Wal-Mart and make main street main street again
- Since future development on "top of the hill" is inevitable, access from downtown to top of hill should be improved-not using Hwy 8
- Growth is happening - accept it.
- Eliminate large retail stores and have a healthier downtown.
- Controlled growth both downtown and hwy 8 growth of SCF is inevitable, because of its location highways leading to river etc.
- Cut down all the dead trees which are elm around the city hall and the state of Wis. information center. Plant some nice spruce or pine trees that look green and nice the year around. This is a project that would not cause a fortune and would beautify the entrance to state of Wis. Thank you.
- Avoid strip development. Forest Lake and Stillwater are developing canyons sadly. The river goes to those who can afford the condos. Local residents have lost the natural beauty of the area.
- Remove Wal-Mart and increase its tax bases. Let's promote an eco-friendly plan to enhance pollution redevelopment.
- **Government Officials (23 responses)**
 - The mayor and administrator (2x)
 - A better and faster fire department and tell the cops to be less pricks!!!
 - Availability of jobs and services in area, so trips to the cities no necessary
 - The lack of plumbing by city officials
 - Fire the City Administrator for poor performance
 - Establish a committee responsible for marketing and advertising the city.
 - Improve admin. Decisions so that we aren't always spending \$ on lawsuits. Be more professional.
 - Less politics and self interest groups
 - Make the city crew more visible.
 - Put city government back downtown (physically)
 - Administrator
 - I would fire the current city planning company. Their decision to buck the Dave Lunde type development is stupid.
 - Retire Ed Emerson
 - Search and appoint a professional city manager
 - Better management of city financial resources

- Hire a planning/design/landscape consultant(50-60% time)
- Get Lee Uhrkommner back as our mayor!!
- Encourage more people to come to City Council Meetings!
- Full time fire chief
- For city council to represent all the people, not just a few.
- All the assholes who think that they have a right to enforce their poorly conceived ideas on others. Thank you.
- Improve communications between city and the public.
- **Traffic/Parking (21 responses)**
 - Service roads along hwy 8
 - Improve Downtown Parking
 - Better parking downtown
 - The roads-I believe in patching up in this city they don't know how to do it. Even the manhole covers are too deep.
 - Straighten out parking on lower streets - Adams important one side or the other - make the same all the way through
 - Fix streets that are rough
 - A wider main street that would accommodate more parking
 - Take care of the city streets
 - Improve road conditions
 - People drive slower
 - Reduce motorcycle noise
 - Consider using part or all green space money collected on real estate sales for street improvement.
 - Reduce Traffic on Vincent St. and State St." Vehicles should use HWY 8 & 87.
 - Parking facilities
 - Enforcing the speed limit. The speed limit by my house is 35mph, but on the average 80% of the drivers are going 55 mph to 60 mph.
 - T. office location with adequate parking
 - Reduce speed on Washington to 25mph or mark crosswalks with ped xing.
 - Lower speed limit on wash. Ave
 - I strongly believe that the police dept needs to really enforce the speed limits on the 25mph roads. I live on a road that is 25mph and nobody ever goes the speed limit. It is very unsafe for children in the area.
 - More police coverage on highway8 - seems like the 45mph on highway8 is not controlled at all.
 - Reroute US hwy 8 away from the city
- **City Services (12 responses)**
 - Make the drinking water better
 - We need water. The city does not have enough water to furnish 448 more new homes. There was a water shortage in 2006.
 - Lower water and sewer cost
 - I understand the need for new water and treatment facility. I would support the construction, but cost must come down. An 80% increase is too steep.

- Flat charge for sewer not tied to water usage
- Resident would not be assessed for repair to curb, walls, when city has not maintained road or fixed water shed issues.
- Improve water drainage in certain areas that need curb and gutter
- Sewer /water change based on size of lateral, not on just usage. Larger lateral should not pay way more just because they require a longer and hence wider lateral.
- Better salting and plowing
- Better snowplowing of side streets and downtown
- The new garage set back rules the high cost sewer charges and fire charges.
- Water and sewer rates are plenty high as it is and when did this \$35.00 fire hydrant fee start?!
- **Recreation (12 responses)**
 - Build more parks
 - Greater visibility and protection of the river
 - More sidewalks, preserve character, and utilize the river fronts
 - Establish sidewalks for walking Would stop proposed Olmstead (Riverfront) Project. Much too big and close to the river. Should have been a referendum.
 - Elimination of snowmobile trails links by Day/Moody Roads and Blanding Woods Roads ~ often interior links - they are abused by hot-riding/ keep the city- hall. Gandy Dancer Trail as is
 - Stop buying green space for parks we have enough safe fed-state parks
 - Need planned trapping and killing of the deer herd - other cities do it - manned by citizens
 - Incorporate the river with the city - can't walk down to it
 - More city parks or Central Park, hiking trails are nice, Make Pine Park a large gathering area with park
 - Increase in fall and summer tourism and more protection for our beautiful river valley and environment!
 - More tourism promotion
 - Be more "attached" to the River - for example -> Taylor's Falls - more connected with its charming aspects
- **School/Youth (8 responses)**
 - School system
 - Reduce school taxes
 - Provide broader use facility options at the schools. I.e.: Swimming pool, larger homes, shop spaces, interactive areas, program areas for areas for a larger variety of school and community programs (4 year olds, cooking ed. Comm. Volleyball, etc)
 - Improve our water supply to support continued growth
 - Build the school outside of the city so that the campus would be easier to develop and the area it takes up now could be taxed.
 - More activities for youth
 - More activities for youth to keep them off the streets

- I would like to see the school shed its rigidity and open itself to education methods and schedules that better address children's learning style and abilities. I would emphasize the needs your gifted and talented children and give more opportunities to college preparation. right now they stagnate in our school.
- **Jobs (7 responses)**
 - More employment ops. With competitive salaries
 - Have my job here. I must work in the twin cities to have a high enough wage to support my family. We need jobs within 20 miles of here that pay well.
 - We need to attract businesses that will keep our citizens working (afford to) here instead of commuting to Twin Cities
 - More good jobs
 - Continue creating jobs for residents and not service "low pay" positions- attract tech companies
 - Entice companies that create innovative products. Companies with higher pay scales. Factories and big box stores only pay workers so much. We need higher paying jobs.
 - More jobs that provide adequate income
- **Post Office (7 responses)**
 - Need new post office and parking
 - Change post office location with better access and parking
 - Larger and cleaner post office with expanded hours on Saturday and with convenient parking.
 - The location of the post office? Why not share the Holiday building w/ the library? Access to both is horrible!
 - Better location for the post office
 - More parking spaces at the post office or else move it to the old Holiday grocery store. It's more convenient and you don't have problems getting back on Main St. Can't see if a car is coming or not until you get out in the middle of the road.
 - Our post office building is dirty and the parking is impossible - lets do something about that!
- **Small Town Character (7 responses)**
 - Emphasize preservation of SCF inherent character
 - Remove small town character
 - Become a more friendly, welcoming place to live or visit.
 - Foster a proud and intelligent identity
 - Friendly people
 - Keep it small and unique
 - Small town thinking! Bring tourists in; we have the beauty of the environment! What's wrong here (we have the river, 2 ski areas, golfing, lakes, beauty...)
- **City Cleanliness (6 responses)**
 - Make people clean up their lawns

- Clean up the 'scavenger's place. People coming into our town for funerals must pass this location on the way to the cemetery what a terrible mess for all to see!! Remove black plastic (and posts) that are put up for erosion control during building projects, connect road that goes from fire hall and legion club area to go east and join Golf Course Rd.
- Have everyone keep their lawns mowed
- Restore eyesore properties or tear down!
- Improvements at the Cemetery (remove dead trees; remove trash along roads that border the woods, remove layers of pine needles from ground, etc.)
- I would clean up the North end of St. Croix Falls. Its getting very dumpy. Main St. and River St. Motivate more pride in one's property.
- Working with our neighbors to clean up the alley behind our house because it looks trashy.
- **Law Enforcement (5 responses)**
 - Better law enforcement on cutting out the drugs in our neighborhood
 - We had many "issues" with our neighbor regarding sanitation disturbance, and public safety issues and the police/city NEVER took an active stand against them.
 - More police to keep bad out of SCF
 - Less rules and regulations and more respect for private property rights
 - The Police Department you have some policemen who think they know the answers before the facts and that's scary. I'm not someone who is in trouble with the law, but because of other's disputes, I've been involved. And I know many others who feel the same. I still have respect for them. I know they have a hard job.
 - Put the phrase "to serve and protect" back on police cars
- **Satisfied (3 responses)**
 - Not a darn Thing. We Love it!
 - like it as it is
 - I like living in SCF, it's a beautiful place to live. Please don't obstruct our scenic views of the valley!!
- **Other/Multiple Answers (37 responses)**
 - Lower taxes and utility charges
 - Promote Industry - Forget tree hugging and lower our taxes.
 - Have businesses downtown stay open during the X-Mass rush so people can shop till 10:00p.m.
 - Less importance on parks. People need to find work in the town they live in. Encourage growth of jobs here in community.
 - Eliminate TID - Responsible for high taxes
 - That everyone living and visiting here, whether for business or recreational pleasure would realize what a beautiful place it is and treat it as such
 - Enforced zoning ordinances
 - Too much input from residents

- I don't like the hills, especially when icy, but I know that can't be changed. I like it here.
- Clean up river area/reduce property taxes/
- Hwy 8 development taking business out of downtown. Taxes too high.
- More retail chains and improve the road maintenance (snow removed, road repairs etc)
- We are new residents so not sure this point in time
- Welcome committee for new residents so residents can be more informed about city activities
- Infrastructure improvements downtown-parking, signage, shop locally campaign-create "niche" downtown to co-exist with Rig Box stores uptown
- Other than property taxes, that our city government wasn't such a circus.
- Residents need to be better informed re: the status and future direction of the city
- Lower property taxes and Fire boy's basketball coach.
- Get a reliable newspaper that does not misreport facts and misspell names
- Outlaw the gossip
- The inflated property values, and unbelievable property taxes
- Surveys designed to promote industrial and mega-retail development and encroachment into townships through inauthentic loaded questions
- The amount of burden carried by residents to support public programs. We need to attract commercial / industry to minimize this burden and no tax abatements for Menard's / Wal-Mart and future growth in these markets.
- No opinion
- Increased awareness of the unique characteristics of St. Croix Falls: The natural beauty, the involvement in city government, the managed growth and development, and the willingness by many (not all) to pay higher taxes to improve the quality of life here.
- More concern about future
- Get better telephone service. We have CenTel. It's a big rip off! Get rid of drunks
- Forget the tourist thing - concentrate on the people that live here, and have to pay the high taxes!!!
- Would have no surveys
- Less taxes and government meddling
- The community has pursued Industrial development as a means to keep taxes affordable; however the low income housing and expanded infrastructure has created a tax bureau
- More info/involvement of residents.
- Fewer vacant building and streets need improving
- lower taxes - make commercial higher
- I feel the city is right on track. Keep downtown beautiful and let industry grow on hwy 8.

- Post office parking problem-dangerous intersection. There should be a dead end sign on River St. or a sign to divert traffic away from fish hatchery. Many tourists looking for route to the river or the park. Dangerous traffic level.
- Encourage sustainability from community gardens to energy like that of the local wind mill.

Question 38 – *Other Comments*

- **Development (18 responses)**

- The city should try to fill the industrial park with businesses that pay a livable wage.
- Retail businesses.
- Don't create rigid development restrictions that would stifle small scale innovative projects.
- We are enjoying the improvements and hope that the city continues to care for the character that continues to develop.
- The city is becoming a commuter town from the twin cities. Sheboygan, WI, much larger city, turned into a large get away town for Milwaukee, and Chicago residents and drove out a lot of local businesses in favor of big department stores.
- Let the city grow; guide it but don't slow the growth too much. Have much to gain.
- The city places an unbalanced amount of time and money on development of parks, and preserving bluffs. It needs to consider that people do not have time to use these facilities because they work so far away. Only people out of town employ them.
- I would like to see a good restaurant that serves a good variety of different foods.
- City should approach businesses. Do more marketing to attract high-end businesses. Do more advertising of our attractions (arts, artists, ALL businesses on and off Main Street, National park service building, fish hatchery, etc.)
- Lets not turn HWY 8 into a gigantic strip mall. Its ugly and ruins local small business. SCF is a beautiful place - we need to protect it.
- Dislike the emphasis and expansion on HWY 8. Wish that expansion would proceed more cautiously. Why is rapid growth to be such a good thing?
- Encourage commercial development in industrial parks such as bio-med, hi-tech, stem cell- maybe a college research center
- The city can not figure future growth on the last 10 years. The growth on HWY 8 will automatically accelerate the growth. The present water and sewage disposal is not sufficient. The city plans to fix the existing sewage disposal plant, which should only be temporary and cost much more in future.
- Increase commercially, residentially and sink more funds into education to increase the quality of the expanding suburban community.

- We don't think that SCF should be so restrictive in development policies so we become a town like Frederic or Milton.
- Mixed use developments are a rather catch-all phrase. Unable to identify if we support it or not in this survey.
- I think the old buildings downtown should be renovated into housing before building new housing. Plus there are so many houses for sale, why build more?
- Embrace a 5-10 year plan to revitalize downtown environment.
- **Taxes (15 responses)**
 - Lower taxes, hold tax rate where the house was bought out. Only increase property tax when it is sold to a new owner. Long-term residents are being taxed out of their homes.
 - Lots of people moving on driven out by high property taxes and tired of political follies over the years.
 - My taxes are higher than a comparable home to larger lot in Roseville - I think that is wrong. I don't think that my home has been properly assessed.
 - Taxes are way too high.
 - Taxes crazy high!
 - Lower taxes.
 - Because of taxes, we are thinking of moving as we reach retirement. We will not be able to afford to live here.
 - Lower taxes! Unless the city lowers taxes, how can people be expected to live here!
 - Taxes are so high I won't be able to live here much longer.
 - Assessed values are way higher than actual values! Too much catering to speculation called developers.
 - This city needs to look seriously at decreasing property taxes. It makes a person consider moving elsewhere- especially those nearing retirement can't afford them!
 - There is no way somebody's taxes should have taken a 23-25% jump in one year. Something is very wrong with our assessing.
 - Keep the lower part of town (along HWY 87) with established business at a low tax rate. Bring more larger businesses to the upper part of the city and have them pay the higher taxes so then it would relieve the tax stress on people.
 - People can't sell their houses because of high property taxes. Developers aren't paying their fair share.
 - We have family member in several neighboring towns where similar housing has a lower tax base. We are fine paying what we do and know taxes are important for the betterment of our community and schools, however; we would like to continue to see wise choices made in regards to large tax jumps.
- **City Services (12 responses)**
 - Don't make us pay for new development water supplies. Make developer pay for them. We are already paying for our own.
 - New post office needed.

- Save sufficient sewer and water facilities to accommodate growth with affordable rates.
- A library behind Clayton Hardware would not work - older people couldn't walk to it - can't use a stroller down these hills.
- Fix streets curbs and drainage problems that have been a problem in town for at least 10 years.
- Have public school teachers work year round! (not 4 months free income).
- I get personally upset to see how filthy and incompetent our post office is.
- The city has known about the sewer and water problems for years-The funds should be available from the city it is the Mayor and Administrators job to fix this problem.
- Storm water should not be allowed to directly run into the St. Croix River, not should stockpiled snow be allowed to directly melt into the river.
- I would like the library to be at the old Holiday site, but in a new building. Tare down the old building.
- More police coverage on illegal turns on HWY 8 between Marketplace and the Riverbank.
- The city needs a 24 hour 6 person Police department. We need a better post office.
- **Government (12 responses)**
 - Ordinances with "teeth" - recycling of derelict vehicles - elimination of outdoor storage buildings within the city- improvement of alleyways and river frontage rear of building - restoration of "Pride of Place".
 - The best way to improve our school system is to hire a top notch administrator that is here for the long haul and will improve our "system" through better faculty.
 - Require environmental review processes for developers to determine the impact of commercial, residential and transportation projects.
 - Do we have first class professional planning consultants available to advise and assist the city and the township (and other local governments in the region.) in planning for current and long term growth in St. Croix Falls and the surrounding area? Involvement, communication and coordination among the local government in the region seem to be one of the key elements in the overall planning progress.
 - For a town 2,000 people we spend like a town of 30,000! Ex. New library, fire trucks, new water treatment... There are more cop cars here than in Minneapolis! Per capita property taxes have gotten so bad; I've considered moving my business and family elsewhere! We need to do away with T.I.F and get some money from the multimillion dollar retailers!
 - In any town to city now days it seems to be the same-politics of greed outlay the politics of need.
 - Mayor Foss is doing a GREAT job!!
 - Develop specific rules for granting "conditional use permits" and "variances".
 - Better auditing of unnecessary overtime and better all over control of city expenditures.

- I like how the mayor holds meetings and is trying to get more people involved in the future of the city and the fact that he does try to get thought on a variety of options.
 - I very much appreciate the governing bodies being so indecisive of the residence.
 - I like the mayor and his ideas.
- **Recreation (7 responses)**
 - ATV trails.
 - More walking and hiking trails and public land use.
 - St. Croix River, bluffs and nature resources are a unique resource that we cherish and believe the city and its residents should cherish; and their conservation and protection should be a highest priority for the city as a huge contribution to quality of life in SCF.
 - Our city does not have recreation facilities such as ball fields. We are one of the only cities to not have baseball/softball fields (other than those on school property).
 - Please, please, please keep the ice age trail in town. My husband and I walk our dogs on it daily and live near the hospital. It broke our hearts to lose part of the trail for their parking lot the first time. Please don't do it again.
 - Take advantage of riverfront and parks.
 - Leave the river just the way it is.
- **See Other Questions for More Clarification (7 responses)**
 - Question 30 is old news. Also, what other options do we have to question 29? This questionnaire seems slanted to the environmentalists. (i.e. who wouldn't agree with some of the statements?) It will be interesting to see how the city uses this information.
 - #5 if city doesn't mow it cannot penalize residents for not mowing. #6 agree assuming controlled hunting #36 We hesitate because the question is who or what entity develops the standards?
 - Q 29: I'm in favor of building new walls and treatment facilities, but not paying for it with rate increases. I feel water and sewer bills are way too high now. Q 12: Not in favor of retail developers that are going to pay substandard, low wages. You can't afford a \$250,000 house on a \$10/hr wage. Housing section: why approve construction of 400+ new homes when I can see over a dozen for sale in a two block radius from my house. Sell what we have first and then build more. Not against new development, but we don't need it. Q 28: Feel the school system is run by close-minded people. Not enough athletic and academic diversity. Q 35J: Parking for hospital employees overflows to the city parking. Trying to find a place to park to go to the barber or rent a movie can take 15 minutes.
 - Q29: These costs can be paid by new homes and business- not existing ones. Q16: Whatever growth in the tax burden far increase in sheds, water, sewer etc. should be paid for by the new comers.

- Q14 depends on the area of building - we could have both options for new development.
- regarding Q13 and Q13a I would approve development on the back sides of old commercial buildings in downtown but not riverfront property.
- Q14 this question depends on the topography of the land if this is wetlands or hilly option #2 if open land option #1.
- **Traffic/Streets (6 responses)**
 - Continue the Washington Street sidewalk and retaining wall improvements north of the Laundromat/car wash - If you are going to fix main street - fix all of main street.
 - Would not like for HWY 35 to become 4 lanes all the way north.
 - A stop sign at the bottom of Louisiana St. and HWY 87 (by old movie theater).
 - Fix the roads.
 - Otherwise, the speed limit should be changed to the speed limit of 55 mph.
 - Streets in our city are in disrepair.
- **City Image (4 responses)**
 - Make SCF homeowners clean their yards (grass cut, snow removal, etc.) the appearance of SCF is a concern for us and our neighborhood -North Hamilton Street.
 - Improve appearance and maintenance of are one and only city cemetery.
 - Encourage zoning to demand compliance with the houses where "junk" is the focus of their landscapes.
 - Make people clean up property. Junk Cars etc. Looks Terrible. Do it for the look of the city and higher property valuation.
- **Other/Multiple Answers (52 responses)**
 - Will comments be considered? Original survey sent back to our older man because of being out of town. It would not be received by original date of 1/19. #4 city should not be in the real-estate business. #5 many more logical ways to save! #8 not affordable to many. #9 city not loaning money, no city concern. #11 builders and owners responsibility, not city's. #13a only complies with codes. #14 who would maintain option b? would owners want to live that close? aren't there lot size restrictions now? #16 why should "we" decide? #17-21 we should not be telling them! #23 some need fixing. #24 city maintenance should decide. #29 doesn't the new owners pay? #30 makes more sense than a new building. #34 our DSL costs less now.
 - Commercial and residential growth seems inevitable and could improve the quality of life for locals. Allow development to occur along hwy 8 corridor and disallow development along the river. We have a "wild rivers act" why not enforce it? One condo right on the river is more than enough. let's stop with that!
 - Very conflicting questions and survey very leading questions with poor options for answers.
 - You do not and have not encouraged individual freedom, creativity, or intellectual endeavor. For instance you do not have a planning committee.

You have a planning committee; it is either your plan or no plan at all. Your schools, at most, are geared to mediocrity. You shun the better than average and permit the rest to beat up the former. A better plan for the future is to examine your past, if you could, but you can't, and you won't.

- Pet law enforcement is bad. People allowing their pets to poop on public and school grounds and not picking it up. #29 is that the only way?
- In general we love living here! There's always room for improvements. Nothing is ever perfect, however with each new group of council/administration, new energies come forth and new ideas and new efforts etc. That is all good! Kudos to park and recreation efforts especially! #29 find another money source.
- This is the 2nd time I've had to fill this out. I filled out the first one immediately and returned it at once.
- This isn't just St. Croix its Wisconsin. I don't know what can be done; but I was just stunned when I overheard that a waitress only get \$2.60 an hour, how can anybody live on that? You can't count on tips. And you wonder why some people need government assistance. That is so degrading. That is not even minimum wage.
- Stop wasting money hiring firms to tell the city how to revitalize downtown- residents can tell you more for free. The Olmsted's have a great plan and a winter carnival with parades would bring more people.
- The speed on HWY 8 needs to be controlled - they drive like its a freeway and access in the summer is nearly impossible. Put in stoplights and slow it down! Also, the sad thing about living here for 15 years is that we still feel like we are new! Not everyone is very welcoming.
- The taxes we pay are too high; we need to find ways to bring people to our community. This is one reason we are thinking about relocating. The downtown looks like HELL; the only things that thrive are the bars. I would not have a business downtown the way it looks. Every small business either leaves or closes. Q5: There are other means to reduce expenses, this is minor! Q9: based on who's monthly income? The state? National? City? Q12: would rather develop than have unkempt wasted property. It looks terrible! Q16: For business to grow and community, we need growth - many towns die due to lack of want to attract growth. Q19: Depends on what kind of shops it is...Q18: Could get out of hand, some regulations or oversight is needed. Q22: Some streets are terrible for the taxes that are paid. Q24: There are other means to reduce taxes. Q26: The Ice Age trail north of Day Road! Q29: Be looking at this. Growth brings money; we should be able to support this Federal money program. Q30: I think a library attached to high school would be better. A library exists at schools already making them super libraries= all the internet access and interfacing with state colleges. Nowadays people have a pc to access what they want. A city owned library I do not think would be used. Super size the high school library. Q34: As people, we look for services satellite services are available everywhere. Leave this to individuals.

Q46: We are thinking of relocating. We go other places for our entertainment and shopping needs.

- Could have asked better questions.
- Continue to invest in Downtown. Trails and parks are great!
- Forget the tourists all they do is drive through and wave goodbye!!! Please concentrate on the good old fashioned living. We don't need any more building. Too many vacant homes for sale now!!! Forget it!!! Forget downtown. The city is now up top of the hill!!! Who can see downtown from the river?? that's where the damn is. Who can sit on the damn and gaze at the old St. Croix. St. Croix falls is on top of the hill!! #30 NO it's great where it is right now. Don't spend money you don't have!!! All this development, water, roads act. Should have been looked into before! All you're doing now is trying to spend everyones hard earned money. forget tourists. concentrate on the people that live here.
- Why do people get DWI's 5 times? Why, please tell me why. What's wrong here?
- You stress parks in this town for kids I never see anyone using these. If you would spend more on the lion's park for new equipment. On hot summer days fall and spring I see more people using this park more than any other park. There is just not enough play equipment for the kids to play on!! #39. I don't think this is information you need to know especially what a person makes in a year!!
- I love my new home and the beautiful wooded setting in Croix woods. I'm new to the area. Moved here in Sept. 2006 after looking for a beautiful area on both sides of the river.
- If possible consolidate with Osceola for a new hospital instead each one alone. The cost will be too high both now and in the future to operate.
- St. Croix Falls is overall a very good place to live
- We have plenty of non-tax rolling land. Interstate park, fairgrounds proper, and the parks. Focus on economic growth with low cost to current taxpayers.
- I would like our town home reassessed. Also not to build the town up too fast. We moved here for a small town life and don't want to move again.
- Get a new council. Q30. It could also house a new post office!! Our post office is terrible.
- Keep hospital in town, we do not need a new library, we have way too much "green space" The "conservation" of the 450 acres north of town will land lock future developments - for quality housing in SCF can't go South (interstate) can't go west river row can't go north.
- Oppose strongly the Olmsted project!
- City government needs to allow growth. Be progressive, improve the school system. More academic emphasis. Need a new city manager. Manage growth on HWY 8 so it's responsible. Move festival theatre to former movie theater location.
- Reduce deer population. Curb and gutter Semonson road.

- I am single. It takes me to work 3 jobs to live here. Mostly taxed to death!
- Put reminder each week in newspaper of upcoming regular meetings of council. Put minutes on internet and in timely fashion for those who could not attend. The water coming out of our faucet reeks! Our clothes smell from washing them - like musty smell. Can we chlorinate the water or something?
- Answers contained in this reflect my personal financial condition and what I know about the city, not what I'd consider ideal. Also some answers do not leave room for yes but...
- Also important: more jobs and improving / helping downtown
- I am selling my home in St. Croix Falls because I can not afford to live in St. Croix Falls between property taxes, water and sewer and fire protection cost, St. Croix Falls is just too expensive a city to try to raise a family.
- My property taxes are VERY high. My road is not well maintained. The city failed to issue a performance bond in the mid-70's with the developer. These homes have been bought and sold many times since then. When will the city take responsibility for this mistake? "Red Fox Trail" FIX IT!!
- What could be done with the old Holiday store and parking areas? This has deteriorated and is a blight on the city. The old fire hall needs consideration. Also, from our observations we feel there needs to be an evaluation of the area along the river bottom land extending south for the power dam area to the state-owned land area (debris).
- Was this survey supposed to be neutral? The questions sounded biased towards NO growth, questions encouraged participants to answer toward environment. Reduce progress. Example 3 who is going to say these things aren't important, they are protected by law, progress doesn't ensure we are going to pollute the environment and destroy our Earth.
- Very poorly managed school system - local politics are too combative (need more civility in politics).
- No condos 6 stories high!! Is there any way to stop the semi trucks that come down HWY 8 from "Jake braking?" VERY noisy.
- Thank you for conducting survey.
- We feel that some questions aren't answerable because the headings don't fill the bill- or we aren't sorry enough about them. (i.e.: potential growth items, but- Nice try!)
- This survey seems biased-directs surveyed to take a side: pro-development vs. eco-community-does not provide context in which to base decisions on , poor survey design- one cannot help but suspect a hidden agenda by survey designers.
- Love it here!
- We like our beauty and privacy. Please keep it as is. Thank you!
- I think this is a good means of determining the needs and desires of residents.

- Lower our taxes! Need a grocery store downtown. Especially for elderly who don't drive. Less politics- rather people working together to make our own city the best it can be. If we're not careful, Osceola will take over!
- This is a great place to live.
- When I moved to SCF, I found a house that had affordable mortgage. In one year it increased over \$300.00 per monthly payment. This is probably why so many homes are for sale. Limited incomes!
- Basic freedoms erode as we allow one or two people to control change when the change isn't detrimental for the community.
- Thank you for the opportunity for expression.
- I love the parks, the river and the small town feel of the place.
- I strongly disagree with the LARGE amounts of fees obtained from Menard's when they came to town; then what are we doing to get them open?
- We can accommodate some growth in the shopping areas/ housing, but we must protect the green areas, develop a multi-age community center with swimming, gymnasium, health! Our health/cardio is poor in this community. Tourism: let's take a look at HWY 8 as a place to direct people to Interstate Park, Downtown and National Scenic River Way. We don't need to grow so much as use on current strength. Keep it historic! Keep it green! By the way seniors need shuttle access.
- Take a serious look at Lake Placid New York before you close your survey!
- More and more elderly will need care and assistance. Make available a network of resources in St. Croix to address the needs of the increasing # of elderly and their needs.

Question 41 – *Employment Status - Other Comments*

- *At Home(3 responses)*
 - homemaker (2x)
 - stay at home mom
- *Student (1 response)*
 - full time student (2x)

42. Other Housing

- *Other (2 responses)*
 - Included in compensation
 - parsonage

Appendix C: Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question

QUALITY OF LIFE

1. Percent identifying item in the **THREE** most imp. reasons people choose to live in the City of Saint Croix Falls.

	1st	2nd	3 rd		1st	2nd	3rd
a. Affordable housing	20%	0%	0%	b. Near family and friends	33%	11%	1%
c. Appearance of homes	1%	1%	0%	d. Near job (employment opportunity)	16%	17%	3%
e. City services	3%	2%	1%	f. Property taxes	0%	0%	0%
g. Cultural/Community events	1%	1%	0%	h. Proximity to Twin Cities	7%	14%	6%
i. Historical significance	1%	2%	0%	j. Quality schools	2%	5%	4%
k. Low crime rate	5%	8%	3%	l. Recreational opportunities	2%	6%	3%
m. Natural beauty/ Surroundings (bluffs, creek)	8%	31%	23%	n. Small town atmosphere/Rural lifestyle	0%	3%	51%
2. As the City deals with growth issues, (e.g. traffic, housing, open space) how important do you think the following strategies are?							
		Very Important	Important	Neutral	Un-important	Very Un-important	No Opinion
a. More coordination between local governments in the region		24%	46%	23%	2%	1%	3%
b. Promote economic development		30%	45%	18%	4%	2%	1%
c. Stronger land use controls		27%	38%	26%	3%	3%	2%
d. Protecting the environment		54%	32%	10%	2%	1%	1%
e. Securing impact fees from developers		41%	29%	21%	3%	2%	3%
f. Maintaining community character		42%	41%	14%	2%	1%	1%
g. Support expansion of local school system		29%	33%	25%	6%	4%	2%
h. Slowing growth and development		17%	20%	34%	14%	13%	2%

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES Opinions about natural and cultural resources in St Croix Falls area.

3. How important is it for local planning and zoning regulations to:	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Un-important	No Opinion
a. protect air quality	52%	40%	6%	0%	1%
b. protect groundwater quality	70%	28%	1%	0%	1%
c. protect surface water quality (St. Croix River and tributaries, wetlands, etc.)	63%	33%	3%	0%	1%
d. protect wildlife habitat/biodiversity	44%	42%	11%	1%	3%
e. preserve open space within Saint Croix Falls	35%	41%	17%	3%	3%
f. preserve open space between the city of Saint Croix Falls and Saint Croix Falls Township	24%	33%	29%	7%	7%
g. preserve open space between Saint Croix Falls and Dresser	21%	30%	34%	8%	7%
h. preserve the historic downtown character	38%	39%	16%	4%	3%
i. preserve scenic views and undeveloped hills/bluffs	52%	36%	8%	2%	2%
j. encourage landscape designs, maintenance of parks and open spaces that don't use irrigation, pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilizers, and require limited mowing	37%	40%	17%	5%	2%

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES Cont.

	Yes	No
4. The City has been able to secure 100 acres of land from the Ice-Age Trail Foundation at the north end of Day Road. These lands contain portions of the Ice-Age Trail and are held in preserve. The lands were obtained without City of Saint Croix Falls tax dollars but did remove land from the property tax roll. Should the City continue similar partnerships to preserve bluff and other lands?	74%	26%
5. Do you support the city reducing the mowing of grass on some city owned land, such as water well locations, as a means to reduce expenses?	59%	41%
6. Do you support allowing bow hunting of deer in city parks and open lands?	68%	32%

HOUSING/DEVELOPMENT We would like your opinion about housing development in the City of Saint Croix Falls.

The City of Saint Croix Falls has recently seen an increase in the number of approved residential subdivisions. For the previous 15 years the City has averaged 14 new housing starts each year. Currently the City has 448 approved residential lots available for the building of new homes, and over 100 acres of residentially zoned land. This residential supply is sufficient to accommodate 50 years of historical growth.

The City may not have enough water and waste-water capacity to accommodate any more residential units beyond those mentioned above without significant capital investment. Given the above information, please answer the following questions.

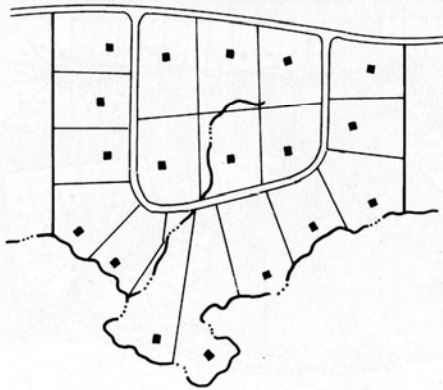
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
7. The City should not annex any additional lands for residential development until 80% of existing residentially zoned lots and land are developed.	43%	35%	10%	6%	6%
8. Based on current assessed values, approximately 11% of homes in Saint Croix Falls are worth more than \$250,000. To increase its tax base the City should encourage the construction of more such homes	11%	31%	36%	9%	13%
9. New housing should cost no more than 30% of monthly income.	17%	42%	12%	3%	26%
10. The City should allow for condominium development downtown.	14%	40%	23%	17%	7%
11. Saint Croix Falls should enact new housing design standards with stricter environmental standards and building practices (e.g. using renewable energy resources and minimizing chemical compounds in building materials).	20%	43%	14%	10%	13%
12. Do you support annexation of lands on US Hwy 8 for the development of additional large retail stores like the Wal-Mart and Menard's stores?	Yes		No		
	72%		28%		
13. Should the City allow new construction downtown if it can be seen from the River?	64%		36%		
13a. If yes to Q13, should new construction be limited by aesthetics/design standards?	Yes		No		
	81%		19%		

HOUSING/DEVELOPMENT Cont.

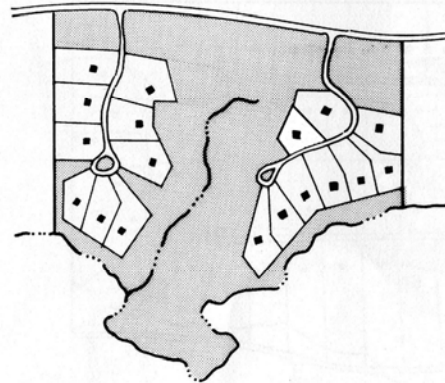
14. Would you prefer new housing built in the City to reflect a traditional design with larger lot sizes (Option A) or a cluster design permanently preserving open space (Option B)?

Please check either Option A or Option B (not both) below to indicate your preference.

33% **OPTION A**



67% **OPTION B**



15. The current population of the city is about 2,200. Over the next 10 years this should increase by:	Zero 3%	Less than 500 34%	500-1,000 32%	1,001-3,000 9%	Any amount 22%
16. The population of the City of Saint Croix Falls grew by about 100 people or 5% between 2000 and 2005. How do you feel about this amount of growth?			Too much growth 5%	About right amount of growth 71%	Too little growth 24%

AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE The following questions are asking for your opinion about agriculture and land use in the area around Saint Croix Falls.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
17. The City should allow use of City-owned land for community gardens.	22%	48%	14%	5%	11%
18. Landowners should be allowed to develop their land without any city regulations.	10%	16%	51%	20%	4%
19. I would support development on river-facing bluffs and slopes.	7%	28%	37%	22%	7%
20. Planning and zoning regulations should emphasize mixed-use (e.g. mixed residential and commercial) developments.	6%	37%	29%	12%	17%
21. Planning and zoning regulations should be enacted that minimize expansion of City boundaries into the townships.	11%	37%	24%	9%	19%

TRANSPORTATION These questions ask your opinion about transportation issues in the City of Saint Croix Falls.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
22. The overall road network (roads, streets, highways) in Saint Croix Falls meets the needs of its citizens.	7%	62%	20%	8%	2%
23. Road and street conditions in Saint Croix Falls are acceptable for present usage.	4%	49%	32%	14%	1%
24. I would support patching City streets instead of overall reconstruction as a means of reducing property taxes.	10%	43%	30%	10%	7%
25. The City should require new development to provide sidewalks or hiking trails.	20%	45%	18%	7%	9%
26. In the past year, have you or a member of your family hiked or biked any of the City's trails?	Yes			No	
	71%			29%	

COMMUNICATION

27. Percent identifying this as one of the **TWO** most effective ways the City of Saint Croix Falls could provide information to its residents.

	1st	2nd		1st	2nd
a. Direct Mailings (newsletters, flyers, etc.)	76%	1%	b. Newspaper Articles	19%	43%
c. Internet	4%	22%	d. Public Meetings	1%	32%

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

These questions are asking for your opinion about the community facilities and services in St Croix Falls.

28. Rate the quality of the following local services:	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion
a. Ambulance service	40%	39%	1%	0%	19%
b. Fire protection	39%	45%	0%	0%	15%
c. Garbage collection	39%	55%	2%	1%	3%
d. Park and recreation facilities	45%	46%	5%	0%	4%
e. Police protection	36%	53%	3%	1%	7%
f. Public library	21%	50%	16%	2%	10%
g. Public school system	25%	53%	6%	1%	14%
h. Public water system	14%	65%	15%	3%	4%
i. Recycling programs	21%	58%	11%	2%	8%
j. Sanitary sewer service	16%	67%	6%	1%	9%
k. Snow removal	31%	55%	9%	2%	2%
l. Storm water management	12%	55%	14%	3%	16%
29. To accommodate future growth and development, the City would need to construct a new waste-water treatment plant and water wells. The City estimates that water and sewer bills for City residents would need to increase by 80 percent (or an approximate rate increase of \$500.00/year) to pay for these facilities. Do you support building these facilities?	Yes			No	
	34%			66%	
30. The City is considering a new library to be funded by grants, community donations, and tax dollars. Do you support the City purchasing the old Holiday store downtown for use as a library if matching funds can be secured?	62%			38%	

The following questions ask about wireless communication and internet service providers and services.

31. Do you have Internet access at home?		Yes		No		
		68%		32%		
31a. Overall, how satisfied are you with your internet service provider?	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	No Opinion	
	17%	55%	16%	5%	7%	
31b. Rate your satisfaction with <u>the cost</u> of your internet service.		9%	42%	30%	11%	8%

Rate the importance of the following:	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	No Opinion
32. Speed of internet connection	42%	36%	7%	4%	10%
33. Having the City invest in wireless internet communication (WiFi) services for homes and businesses	13%	26%	30%	14%	18%
34. The City providing a low cost (approx. \$30.00/month) internet service	19%	24%	26%	17%	14%

GENERAL ISSUES The following questions ask how you view select general issues facing the City of Saint Croix Falls.

35. From the following list, please identify the **THREE** most important things you feel the City should pursue. Please choose your top three choices only.

	1st	2nd	3rd		1st	2nd	3rd
a. Reduce property taxes	59%	8%	5%	b. Increase affordable housing supply	1%	7%	2%
c. Preserve green space	4%	10%	8%	d. Improve roads	3%	10%	9%
e. Minimize urban sprawl	3%	5%	5%	f. Tourist promotion	1%	2%	8%
g. Increase downtown commercial development	2%	6%	8%	h. Sustainable community development	4%	6%	7%
i. Increase US Hwy 8 commercial development	6%	12%	11%	j. Improve downtown (improve parking, store variety, etc.)	5%	10%	8%
k. Increase industrial park commercial development	1%	7%	6%	l. Preserve small town character	5%	9%	14%
m. Build new waste-water treatment plant	4%	6%	4%				

	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	No Opinion
36. How important is it that planning decisions be guided by sustainable community development principles, which stress that public policy decisions explicitly consider impacts on the local economy, the local social structure, and the local environment?	47%	42%	4%	1%	6%

40. If you could change one thing about the City of Saint Croix Falls, what would it be? (See Comments)

41. Other comments: (See Comments)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please tell us some things about you: **Please choose only one answer per question.**

42. Gender:	53% Male	47% Female				
43. Age:	2% 18-24	10% 25-34	14% 35-44	23% 45-54	19% 55-64	32% 65 and older
44. Employment status:	46% Employed full time		8% Employed part time		3% Unemployed	
	9% Self employed		34% Retired		1% Other: (see comments)	
45. Housing:	94% Own		5% Rent		1% Other: (see comments)	
46. Number of adults (over 18) in household:	28% 1	63% 2	6% 3	1% 4	0% 5	0% 6 or more
47. Number of children (under 18) in household:	72% 0	9% 1	15% 2	3% 3	1% 4	0% 5 or more
48. What is your approximate annual family income?	3% Less than \$15,000		11% \$15,000 – \$24,999		31% \$25,000 – \$49,999	
	28% \$50,000 – \$74,999		16% \$75,000 – \$99,999		11% \$100,000 or more	
49. How long have you lived in the City of Saint Croix Falls?	6% Less than 1 year		27% 1 to 5 years		15% 5.1 – 10 years	
	12% 10.1 – 15 years		8% 15.1 – 20 years		11% 20.1 to 30 years	
	22% Over 30 years					

Thanks for completing the survey!

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