

Fremont Vision
2013

During the spring of 2012, the Fremont Planning Board conducted two public visioning sessions to capture residents input regarding their desires for Fremont now and into the future. The sessions were supplemented by an online community survey that successfully captured a wide range of input from over 120 Fremont residents. Through the visioning sessions and the community survey, common interests and concerns became apparent and will serve to guide the Town’s Master Plan now and into the future.

Per RSA 674:2, master plans must at minimum contain a vision section and a land use section. Fremont developed its first vision section in 2006 after conducting public visioning sessions that were similar to those held in 2012 to develop this update. The original vision section also drew from past community surveys, public meetings and input from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. This updated chapter is divided into the following sections:

1. Results of the community visioning sessions and survey.
2. Discussion about the implications of the results on the Master Plan.
3. Fremont’s community goals.

I. Fremont Visioning Results

The Town of Fremont Planning Board held two visioning sessions in 2013, on Wednesday, May 25th at 7:00 pm and Saturday June 11th at 10:00 am. Due to low-attendance, the Planning Board then reached out to Fremont residents with an online survey that was advertised through a Town-wide postcard mailing, which received a larger response. This in itself demonstrates the importance of advertising directly to households rather than through communal avenues in Fremont. It may also demonstrate the preference for residents to give their input anonymously and at their leisure, rather than attend a scheduled public event. Regardless of speculation for the difference in response, it is recommended that future vision efforts be advertised directly to residences through a Town-wide mailing and include information on public sessions as well as an online supplement.

The following details the input received from the visioning sessions and online survey.

Who responded?

The survey respondents represent a cross-section of Fremont residents with respect to the length they have called Fremont home. Based on the response of 121 individuals, the typical Fremont resident has lived in Town for ten years. This indicates that a large portion of Fremont residents have moved to the community in the last decade.

Furthermore, almost all (94%) respondents are homeowners, with the majority (65%) being employed full time and nearly a quarter (20%) being retired. Many workers in Fremont commute more than 16 miles (56%) to work, while many others either work locally, work from home or are retired. These demographic indicators of the survey represent a mix of short and long-time residents,

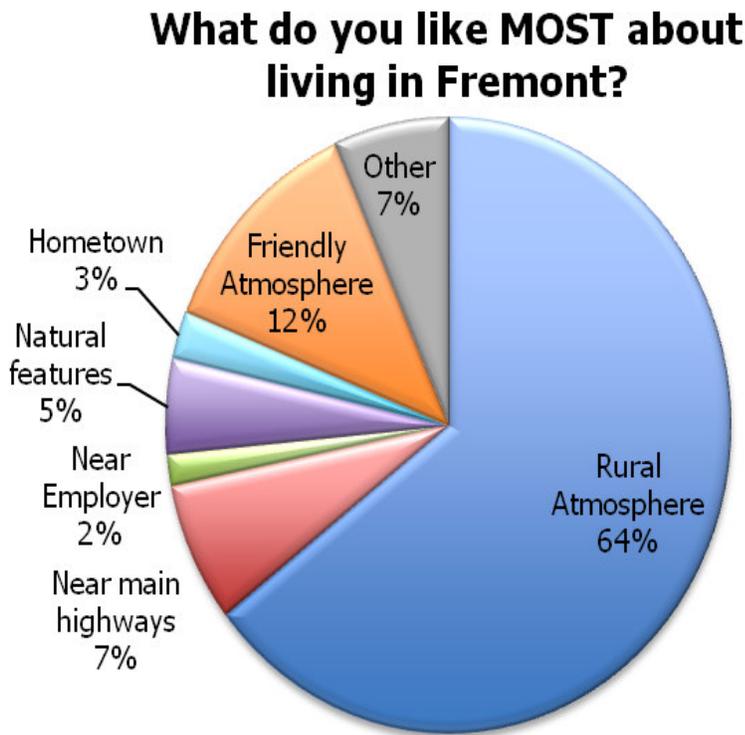
How long have you lived in Fremont?	
5 years or less	22
6-10 years	43
11-15 years	18
16-20 years	16
21-25 years	6
26-30 years	5
30+ years	4

including commuters, retirees and local businesspersons, whom for the most part are homeowners and have invested in the Town of Fremont. Although the Town is inhabited and enjoyed by a diverse group of residents, there is much agreement on Fremont’s current qualities and its future.

Note: Only 114 out of 121 individuals responded to this survey question.

What was said?

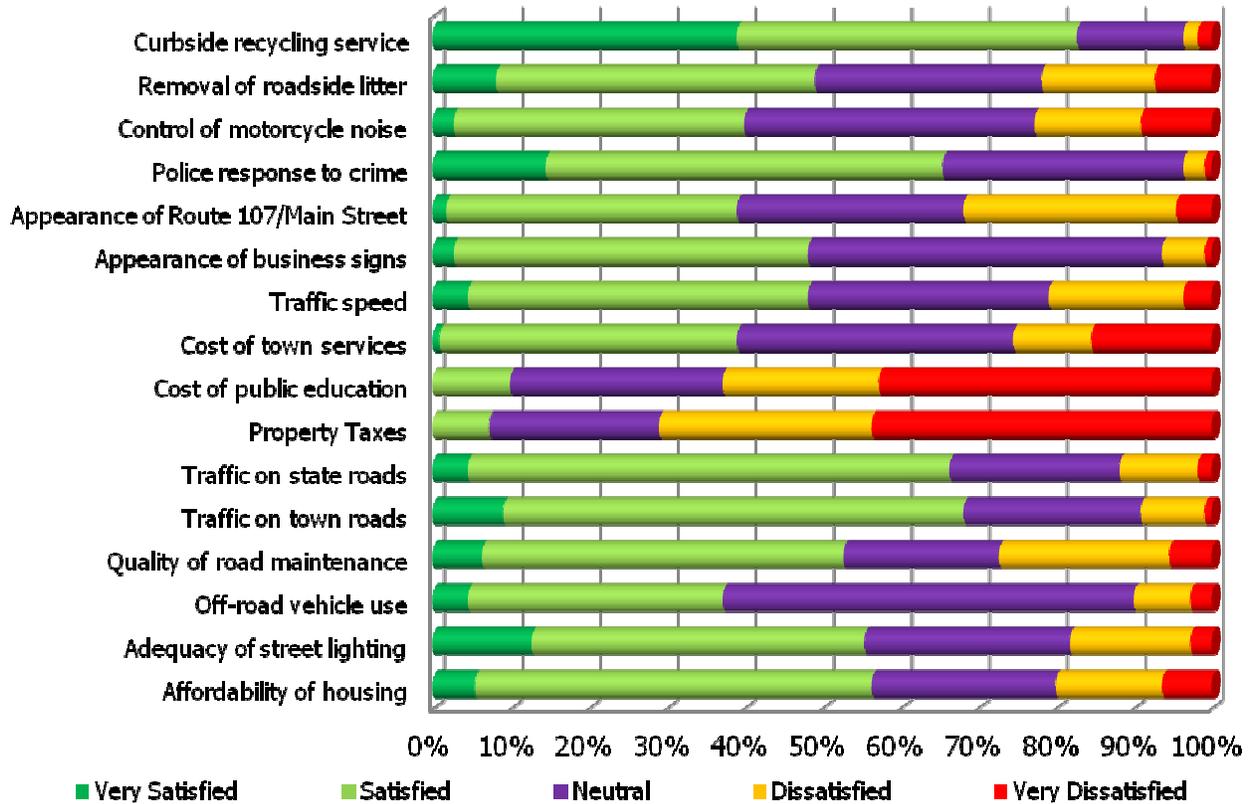
Residents were asked *what they like most about living in Fremont*. The following answers were provided:



A resounding share of residents (64%) indicated that Fremont’s rural atmosphere as its favored quality. Rural atmosphere and other aspects of living in Fremont were echoed from visioning outreach collected in 2006, such as the friendly community and proximity to major highways and cities.

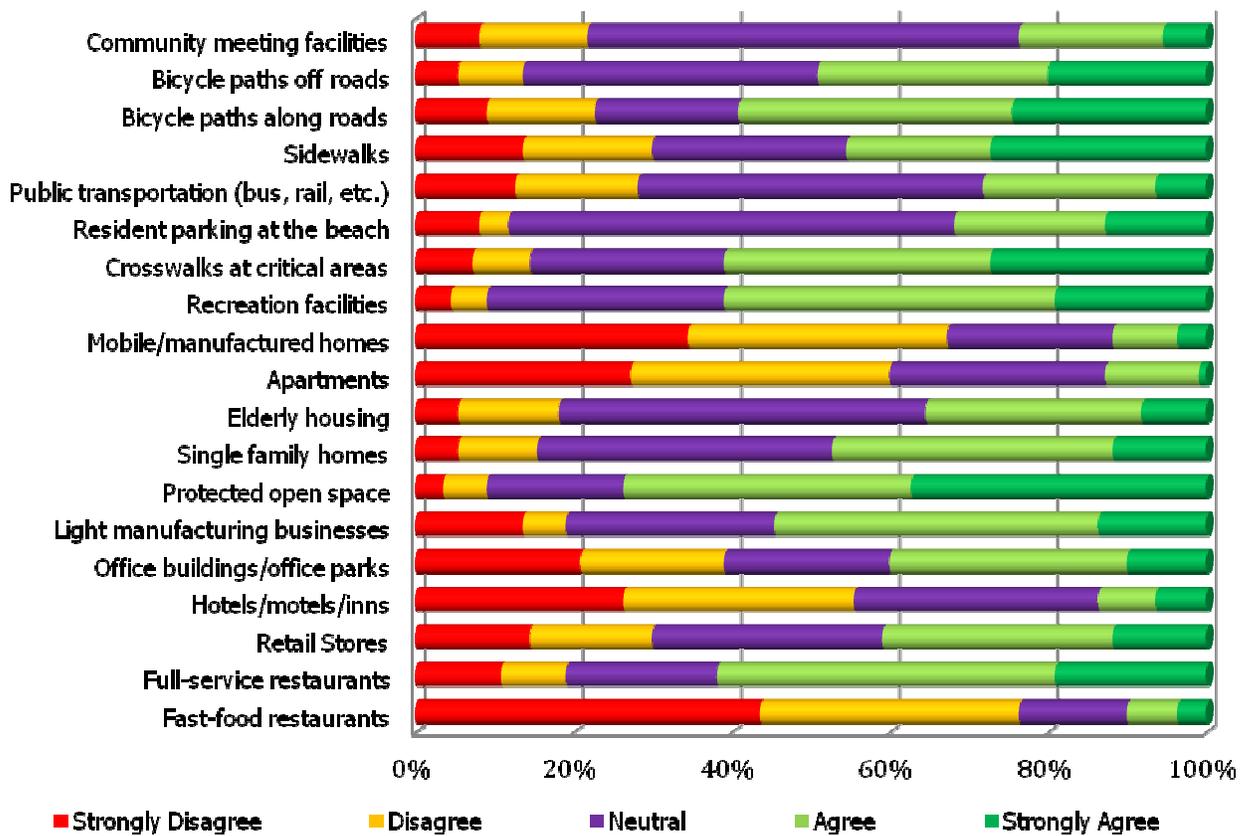
When asked about their *satisfaction with different aspects of Fremont* characteristics and Town services, residents expressed a desire to maintain the rural look of Fremont, along with particular Town services. However, the cost of property taxes and education are of concern.

How satisfied are you with each aspect of Fremont?



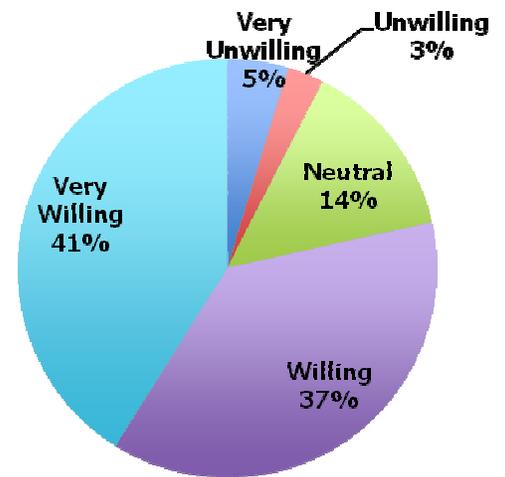
When asked *what the Town of Fremont should be pursuing more of*, the majority of responders indicated a desire for more open spaces and recreation opportunities. There was also some desire for certain types of non-residential development such as light manufacturing, retail stores and full service restaurants.

The Town should PURSUE MORE of each of the following?



Due to the concern regarding property taxes, residents were also asked about the *level of Town services and facilities* they were willing to accept in order to limit tax increases. The majority of Fremont residents seem willing to keep the current level of amenities provided by the Town.

To limit tax increases, how willing are you to accept current levels of Town services and facilities?



II. Master Plan Implications

The residents of Fremont continue to voice a strong desire to maintain Fremont's rural character. Through previous iterations of the Master Plan, community surveys and at Town meetings, residents have expressed a desire to maintain Fremont's open spaces, natural areas and historic resources. Many of these rural characteristics are what drew many long-term residents and those more recently calling Fremont home. These rural characteristics are same features that are fueling Fremont's current wave of new growth. Therein lays the problem facing Fremont today. The very features that make Fremont a prized community to live in are endangered by the sheer number of people who desire to live in a Town like Fremont.

Balancing growth, maintaining Town services and keeping Fremont an affordable community for new and long-term residents is an increasingly difficult challenge. Pursuing certain types of non-residential development was supported by many in the community survey. The support for this type of development is likely for multiple reasons; however, the potential impact on tax revenue is presumably among them.

Fremont is unique in that no major transport routes exist within its boundaries; however, Routes 101 and 125 service the areas immediately north and east of the Town. The Town's geographical removal from these transportation routes has in part helped maintain it rural character. This also limits the potential of drawing low-impact businesses and industry to Fremont. Nevertheless, in 2006 Fremont residents voted to create distinct commercial and industrial zones near the Route 101 exit and along Route 107. Adopting this zoning and related regulation will help promote commercial and industrial development that is compatible with Fremont's rural characteristics in the locations best suited for such development.

As referenced previously, the tax rate and rising costs associated with Town services and the school district concern to many residents. Many residents expressed a willingness to maintain the existing level of Town services to help mitigate these costs. An additional benefit of protecting existing open spaces in Fremont is that open spaces require relatively little Town services (primarily occasional fire or police services) and therefore can help keep costs lower. Maintaining rural character, protecting open spaces and minimizing additional costs associated with developments are all feasible through thoughtful and careful planning.

Fremont's goal for the coming years is to balance its small Town charm with the inevitable growth throughout the region. One does not need to look far to find communities that have sacrificed their small Town lifestyle for the sake of development. At the same time, it would be foolhardy (and illegal) to simply restrict all new development in Town. It is the goal of Fremont's citizens to follow a path that has proven elusive to so many; to preserve the rural character of the Town so enjoyed by all of us and, at the same time, find a way to share these prized features with those who wish to settle here today and in the future.

III. Fremont Community Goals

- 1) **The Planning Board encourages the establishment of conservation areas and the protection of open space and natural resources (ponds, wetlands, woodlands, prime agricultural land and unique and fragile areas). Specifically, encouragement to preserve.**

This goal is based upon the results of the recent and past visioning sessions and community surveys which showed that maintenance of open spaces and preservation of wetlands should be a Town priority. By coordinating open space preservation concerns with the need to protect water resource areas (see #8 below), land can be protected for a variety of reasons and uses. In conjunction with this effort, the Town should carefully review existing Town owned properties for any notable natural resource value and provide for their conservation and protection as open spaces. Open space, wildlife corridors, and buffers also decrease impending tax impacts, preserve rural character, protect visual resources, establish and protect wildlife habitat, and provide numerous and unquantifiable intangible benefits to the citizens of the surrounding neighborhood and the Town as a whole.

- 2) **The Planning Board seeks to protect Fremont's rural residential character.**

The protection of the quality of the Town's residential areas is a central theme of multiple community surveys and visioning sessions for over the last two decades, and will continue to be a central feature of the Master Plan. The quality of life in Fremont's residential areas should be protected from incompatible uses on adjoining land. The Master Plan and associated regulations will be directed toward maintaining Fremont's character as a residential Town with a rural atmosphere, balanced by limited commercial and industrial land uses.

- 3) The Planning Board seeks to encourage appropriate commercial and industrial land uses within allowed zoning areas that are compatible with Fremont's rural character.

Visioning sessions and survey results indicate a real interest in controlling commercial development. It is the Planning Board's recommendation that such control be applied to industrial uses as well. Such a goal suggests that the Town take a variety of steps including improved zoning for these particular uses, site plan review regulations, and sign control.

- 4) **Fremont's population growth should be commensurate with its ability to service new residents while continuing to effectively serve existing residents.**

Support for growth control was reflected in the results of the visioning sessions and the community survey. It is the role of the Planning Board to create and update the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP allows Fremont to prioritize capital expenditures from all Town departments over a six year period. A CIP is required to be updated every five years, and enables the Town to collect impact fees from potential

developers (with the proper ordinance in place). It is the goal of the Planning Board to take a proactive approach to the CIP by updating the document annually. This will allow the Town to affect changes to their impact fees in a timely manner to adapt to changes in the rate of growth and development with the recognition that it is Fremont's responsibility to provide such services to its residents.

- 5) **In order to assist in the preservation of Fremont's rural character, the Planning Board seeks to protect its historic resources.**

Maintenance of Fremont's rural character, so strongly supported by residents, can be in part accomplished by a vigorous program aimed at protecting the Town's historic resources and associated scenic vistas. Interested citizens and organizations can play a vital role in maintaining Fremont's historic amenities. Much of the initial work is presented in the Historic Resources chapter. Fremont is fortunate to have a very active Historical Society. The Planning Board supports the recommendation that more Fremont roads be designated as "Scenic Roads" to encourage maintaining the rural, scenic character of the Town. (Currently, only North Road in Fremont is designated as a scenic road per state statute RSA 231:157.)

- 6) **The Planning Board seeks to secure a safe, well-designed, maintained and policed local street network suited to Fremont's character.**

The visioning sessions revealed several issues with Fremont's road network. Issues that the Planning Board should review include traffic mitigation on NH Route 107, the safety of pedestrians with an emphasis on school children, and the possibility of sidewalks within the Village District.

- 7) **The Planning Board continues to encourage the establishment of new public recreational facilities, and the expansion of existing public recreational facilities, located and designed to meet the changing needs of Fremont's residents.**

As with streets, the survey suggests considerable interest among Townspeople in public recreational opportunities. Further steps here would be continued analysis of existing Town lands and the potential for their use as sites for public recreation and an analysis of existing recreational facilities

- 8) **The Planning Board supports the goal of avoiding the necessity for developing a municipal water and sewer system, through the proper management of sustainable growth.**

The Planning Board supports the goal of sustaining growth without the necessity of developing a public water and sewer system, through prudent planning and careful management.

- 9) **The Planning Board seeks to provide for its fair share of the regional housing demand for current and future residents.**

The Planning Board should examine strategies for encouraging the provision of fair and equitable housing opportunities. The Rockingham Planning Commission routinely updates a regional housing needs assessment which provides information for the Town of Fremont regarding its housing opportunities as well as those of surrounding communities. The Planning Board should continue to review the regulations or ordinance changes should be adopted to provide more diverse housing stock.