

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## REDEVELOPMENT BOARD / PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Planning Implementation

Last year the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) developed a vision of Arlington based on interviews and surveys conducted as part of our planning dialog. It is worth presenting the vision again, as it provides the direction for planning activities:

### Vision of Arlington

*“Arlington’s business centers will provide many opportunities for professional employment, for shopping, and for entertainment; streetscape and storefronts will be attractive and inviting; travel through town will be quick and safe; more and varied housing types will meet the needs of all residents, particularly first-time and moderate income home buyers, and seniors living on fixed incomes; and recreational and open spaces will be evenly dispersed throughout the town, and will be well-maintained. The vibrant commercial nodes in Arlington Heights, in the Town Center, and in East Arlington will underpin improvements throughout the community. In the three nodes parking will be configured to serve commercial development and enhanced transit service, and buildings will host a mix of commercial and residential uses. Modeled on regional and national examples of concentrated “smart” growth, the three nodes of development will support public and private investment, and will incorporate “green” technologies that promote aesthetically pleasing surroundings.*

Even with all Arlington residents, organizations, and businesses working toward the vision, it will not be realized overnight. The first part of the vision reflects people’s desire for vibrant commercial areas that serve the community, with ease in getting to and through these areas. In response, the ARB has continued its focus on the commercial areas, recognizing their unique and important contribution to Arlington life. In cooperation with the Town Manager, the ARB and the Planning department issued a request for proposals to conduct an economic development plan. It is intended that a consultant team of specialists in retail, real estate, economic development, and parking will develop a plan to preserve and enhance Arlington’s commercial areas. A committee composed of representatives of Town Boards and the Chamber of Commerce will guide the study. A consultant team was selected the end of 2008, and it is expected that the plan will be completed in mid-2009.

Partly in response to the year’s visioning and planning process, the ARB proposed, and Town Meeting adopted, two Zoning Bylaw changes that will help promote environmentally sound development in Arlington. The first change adds a new review criterion to the Town’s Environmental Design Review that requires a developer

to report on efforts to promote sustainable development practices. The second change promotes shared parking in commercial districts, allowing reduced overall area for parking lots.

The visioning process was also translated into action through the creation of the Commercial Revitalization Initiative by the ARB. Elements of this initiative include a public space improvement program, focusing on streetscape, public space design and way finding; signage design guidance; a storefront improvement program; and parking management improvement. The Massachusetts Avenue Corridor Project (see below) is an ongoing part of the public space improvement program, while the ARB obtained \$10,000 of CDBG funds to establish the storefront improvement program, which, together with special loan programs offered by several banks to implement designs, provided free architectural design services to six store owners for the re-design of their storefronts. The ARB and the Department have also updated the Sign Sense design guidebook for republication in 2009 as part of the revitalization initiative.

### Massachusetts Avenue Corridor

The beginning of the public process regarding the re-design of the Massachusetts Avenue Corridor Project is now underway, following delays due to funding problems at the state and federal level. The design is funded entirely with state and federal funds and is intended to eventually reconstruct the street and streetscape along Massachusetts Avenue from Cambridge to Pond Lane, just east of Arlington Center.

In late spring, the Department was successful at shepherding the project through the complicated State Transportation Improvement Program, gaining funding for the design and construction of the project. The design work was therefore started in the summer. Faye, Spofford & Thorndike and the Waterfield Design Group are the design engineers. A committee including the Planning Department and ARB, the Selectmen, the Town Manager, the Transportation Advisory Committee, the Department of Public Works, as well as citizens and a business owner from East Arlington, will review and provide input to the design work.

Several public meetings were held in the fall, and a preliminary design will be presented for public comment in February of 2009. It is expected that construction will begin in the fall of 2010 or spring of 2011.

In other transportation-related issues, the Department continues to participate on the Transportation Advisory Committee and the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee, and on an advisory committee for the project that may extend the MBTA Green Line to Medford, near Arlington.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## Affordable Housing

The Department continued to increase the number of affordable units in Arlington. During 2008, an additional two-family house was purchased and renovated, and is now rented by two income-qualified families. The renovation was done with an eye toward energy efficiency and using environmentally friendly products. An additional 10 units of housing are now under agreement and expected to be renovated and occupied by the end of 2009.

The Department completed documents to regulate the affordable housing at the Symmes site, which includes housing for people making 120% of median income, as well as the more usual affordable housing for people making 80% of median income. An application to place the 80% units on the state inventory of Arlington's affordable housing was approved by the Selectmen and by the state.

A lottery for four affordable condos at Minuteman Village on Brattle Street was conducted, and the units were sold before the end of the year. Income-qualified families now occupy all four units.

During the past year, the Department noted a growing number of foreclosures of single and two-family properties in Town. In response, a program was developed to refer homeowners facing possible foreclosure to a foreclosure and credit counseling program.

## Symmes Project

The demolition of the Symmes Hospital and former nursing residence was underway as the year began. Following the demolition, Symmes Redevelopment Associates (SRA), which now owns the property, began preparing the site for the residential development. Preparation for development involved extensive blasting and crushing of the rock that was blasted free. The blasting and rock crushing extended through the summer. New underground utility conduits were installed, extending from Summer Street to the top of the hill, and Hospital Road (renamed Old Hospital Road) was repaved.

SRA lost its construction financing when the country's major banks encountered trouble because of the sub-prime mortgage schemes and other risky financial ventures that came to light in the late spring. SRA immediately sought financing from banks it thought were unaffected by the credit crisis. However, SRA encountered unwillingness on the part of the banks to commit to large loans as the country slipped into the nationwide credit crisis. In September, SRA shut down the construction at the site.

In light of the SRA's inability to continue the project, the Redevelopment Board extended the deadlines that were included in our land disposition agreement. All agreed that it was in the best interest of the Town to have SRA continue the development as planned, and extending the deadlines makes it possible to do so.

One of the deadlines was the date by which building permits must be obtained. Delaying this had a direct affect on the Town, in that the cost of the permits, and the revenue to the Town, is over \$600,000. Though temporarily foregoing the revenue, the Town is being paid interest on this outstanding balance.

At year's end, the credit market had not improved, and SRA still had not obtained financing to continue the construction, although it is continuing to seek financing. The project is still considered viable and the developer and the ARB continue to pursue the development as originally conceived.

## Community Development Block Grant

During fiscal year 2007-2008, the Town received \$1.3 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, which were distributed to six public facility projects, thirteen public service activities, housing programs, and several planning studies. CDBG funds helped purchase an additional two units of housing for affordable rentals, bringing the current total to 48 units. The Arlington Home Rehabilitation Program issued 18 new loans to rehabilitate 21 owner occupied units. Of these units, five are occupied by very low-income households and sixteen are occupied by low-income households. The public services programs brought a variety of services to 3,672 persons, 73% of whom were low-income; just under 25% were extremely low-income. The block grant program continues to serve less fortunate Arlington residents and to add to the quality of life in Arlington.

## Redevelopment Board Properties

The ARB manages seven buildings with over 180,000 gross square feet of commercial space valued over \$20 million. The seven buildings consist of four former schools, one former library, and two historic houses. Calendar year 2008 witnessed a variety of building improvements and other building activities. The Central School building behind Town Hall had extensive work done to repair and replace most of the gutters and soffits on the hundred-year-old structure. At year's end, negotiations to fill vacant space and to retain two state tenants were nearing completion. The Dallin Library building received roof repairs, new air conditioning compressors, and concrete work to correct drainage problems. The Gibbs School building had steam traps replaced and a new energy management system installed, significantly reducing energy consumption. Additional work had walkways and exterior stairs replaced; added a safety feature to the elevator, and replaced; two exterior doors, one being the handicap door. Twenty Three Maple Street, a former schools administration building located in an historic district, is being rehabilitated. It received a new roof and gutters, new electrical system, and reconstructed chimneys. In addition, the

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

aluminum siding was removed in preparation for the installation of historically consistent clapboard siding.

These capital improvements were completed in addition to regular maintenance of the seven buildings that are under the jurisdiction of the ARB. The Town's facilities maintenance staff supports the single staff member dedicated to building maintenance.

The Town Manager and the School Committee have discussed the possibility of selling two ARB properties, the Parmenter and Crosby school buildings. It is the School Committee's responsibility to declare the buildings surplus from time to time. In the summer of 2008 the School Committee decided to declare the two buildings surplus for three years only, during which time the Town Manager promised to conduct an analysis to determine the values of the buildings if sold, as opposed to their values if the Town continued to own and maintain them. This analysis will help the Town decide the best course of action with respect to the two buildings. Accordingly, the Department issued a request for proposals to hire a consultant to conduct the analysis. The analysis is expected to be finished before the 2009 Town Meeting.

## Support for Town Activities

The Planning Department provides staff support for, or otherwise participates in, many Town committees, such that Department staff participated in over 200 evening meetings. Among its many support activities, staff assisted the Bicycle Advisory Committee with the installation of eleven new bike racks on Town property and supported the efforts to develop a pilot Bike-to-School program. Staff helped develop, as well as record, collate, and review, responses to the Vision 20/20 annual census questionnaire. Staff also played an important role in the updating of the Open Space and Recreation Plan 2007-2012. Provided a member for both the Cemetery Expansion Study and Fire Station Study Committees. Staff also worked with the Affordable Housing Task Force, the Commission on Disabilities, the Spy Pond Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Transportation Advisory Committee on a wide variety of activities and projects.

## Application Review

Throughout the year the Department reviews application for permits and licenses issued by other Departments. In conjunction with the ARB, the Department reviewed applications for special permits, variances, and appeals decided by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Department reviews all sign permit applications and counsels the applicants regarding the aesthetics of proposed signs. The Department annually reviews the Board of Selectmen's license requests.

## Board of Survey

The Department and the ARB working closely with the Board of Selectmen proposed a new process for the approval of roads in the Town. Currently the Board of Selectmen act as the Board of Survey and approve any new roads. The new proposal would vest the Board of Survey responsibilities in the Redevelopment Board and would specify certain powers and standards by which the approval would be effected. The creation of such a board process, which is new and different from the processes used by other communities, requires the approval of the State legislature. The Town Meeting approved petitioning the legislature to establish such a board, but at year's end we learned that the legislature adjourned without approving our request. The proposal will be brought before Town Meeting again in 2009.

## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

In 2008, the Zoning Board of Appeals has heard and rendered decisions on fifteen petitions as prescribed in Massachusetts General Laws (MGL), Chapter 40A, The Zoning Act, and, also, further clarified by the Town's Zoning Bylaw.

The Petitions heard by the Board include Variances, Special Permits and Appeals of Zoning Decisions rendered by the Inspector of Buildings as well as interpretations of Zoning Bylaws.

The Zoning Board of Appeals has three members appointed by the Board of Selectmen who also appoint two associate members to attend Hearings when a member, or members, cannot sit for a particular hearing. All hearings are open to the public and are usually held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month in the conference room located on the second floor of the Town Hall annex. All hearings are advertised in the Arlington Advocate for two consecutive weeks and posted on the Town Clerk's bulletin board at least three weeks before the hearing date. Hearings are also posted on the Town website, arlingtonma.gov. The Rules and Regulations of the Zoning Board of Appeals are on file in the Office of the Town Clerk and in the Zoning Board of Appeals' Office at 51 Grove Street.

Petitions Heard by Zoning Board of Appeals				
	Granted	Denied	Withdrawn	In Process
Petition for Variance	1			
Applications for Special Permits	11		1	
Appeal of Decisions of Inspector of Buildings	1	1		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
Total Petitions filed with Town Clerk	15			

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## VISION 2020

June 2009 will mark Vision 2020's nineteenth anniversary as a project both involving and serving the Town in planning strategically for its future while building upon its past.

### Background

Initiated in June of 1990 to address a need for broad, long-range planning, the Vision 2020 Steering Committee began a two year exploration process of formulating goals, strategies, and actions with the help of Town leadership, employees and townspeople.

Town Meeting created the Vision 2020 Standing Committee as an official committee of the Town on June 8, 1992. With the motto *A Proud Past, A Focused Future*, the committee was charged to "...ensure the long range planning process initiated by the Town in 1990, ...also to create, implement, monitor, and review methods for open, town-wide public participation in the Vision 2020 process."

Town Goals covering the areas of business, communication, community and citizen service, culture and recreation, diversity, education, environment, fiscal resources, and governance were adopted as bylaw at the 1993 Annual Town Meeting for the "Town to consider as it conducts its business." These goals are supported by individual task groups which have representatives on the Standing Committee. Three additional groups have formed since under the Environment Task Group: Spy Pond, Reservoir, and Sustainable Arlington Committees. The Standing Committee also includes Town leadership positions and a student representative from Arlington High School.

Vision 2020 continues efforts to bring the Town closer to these goals by partnering with townspeople, Town committees, Town employees, and leaders through its task groups and standing committee. These endeavors run the gamut from awareness and appreciation pieces on Town resources, planning for improvement of Town practices, research and development of Town Meeting warrant articles, forums on emerging issues, publications, and physical improvements. The Standing Committee is responsible for annual town-wide surveys.

The Standing Committee and its goal-supporting Task Group structure continue to this day.

### Notable Activities for 2008

- Employing the concept that *while you are being counted, your opinions count too*, Vision 2020, with the help of the Town Manager and all Town departments, created, tallied and analyzed responses submitted to the 2008 Vision 2020 Annual Census mailing insert survey from 13.6% of all Arlington households. It was our 18th annual survey.

This year's principal focus was on Town and school Services, their importance and residents' satisfaction with them. Residents' opinions about the importance of resource allocation for Community Service Goals were sampled as well. A summary and analysis of the 2,537 household responses received by April 1, 2008 was reported to Town Meeting, Town officials and departments in May, and is reprinted in this report. Data gleaned from this survey continues to be useful to Town departments for planning and evaluation purposes;

- Saw the acceptance of a two year warrant article and special legislation effort on Beacon Hill (with the guidance of former Senator Jim Marzilli, Governor Patrick, Representatives Garballey, Brownsberger and Kaufman) to establish a Special Account for the purpose of maintaining, treating, and providing oversight of all the Town's water bodies. This account may receive monies from the general tax, including the possibility of borrowing, gifts or grants. These monies will be expended under the direction of the Town Manager who will report to each Annual Town Meeting on the revenues and expenditures of the fund, as well as a projection for future needs;
- Sponsored by the Vision 2020 Standing Committee, the Conservation Commission, and the Spy Pond Committee, the above warrant article received a unanimous vote by Town Meeting to also provide an appropriation of \$15,000 to the new Water Bodies Account;
- Planned and implemented the Fourth Annual Spy Pond Trails Day at the pond's southern path abutting the Route 2 exit ramp, focusing on tree pruning, invasive plant, and trash removal with help from community groups and the Boston Area Appalachian Mountain Club;
- With the help of Arlington High School's Workplace students and many residents, distributed flyers to residences in the entire 748 acre Spy Pond Watershed warning of the impact of high-phosphorous fertilizers on weed growth at Spy Pond or any water body, and informing of environmentally friendly planting classes and workshop opportunities;
- Organized the Arlington Reservoir Trail Maintenance and Cleanup Day with help from the Arlington High's Girls Cross Country Track Team and Arlington Girl Scouts;
- Continued the planning for a native plantings habitat garden at the recently renovated

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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- Arlington Reservoir, which will complement that project's installation of now sufficiently established replacement shrubs and trees;
- Intent on helping Arlington become as green and sustainable a community as possible, Sustainable Arlington continued to raise climate and environmental awareness in Town with its current project - the Energy Smack-down. Designed as a competition among selected families in Arlington, Cambridge, and Medford to see which community can lower its carbon foot print the most, this 2008-9 project finds Arlington ahead so far;
  - With the Standing Committee, prepared the questions on Sustainable Practices in Arlington for the 2009 Vision 2020 Survey that accompanies the Town's Annual Census mailing;
  - Thanks to former Environment Task Group Chair Karsten Hartel, added Birds at McClenen Park to the Town's listing of resident and visiting bird populations;
  - Encouraged the Contributory Retirement Board to report to the Annual Town Meeting and to join the state's Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT);
  - Updated My Tax Dollars, an interactive spreadsheet allowing taxpayers to factor their household's contributions to each Town service by using FY2007-8 information posted on the Town's website [arlingtonma.gov](http://arlingtonma.gov);
  - With the Board of Selectmen (BOS), sponsored and organized the Annual State of the Town Address and Reception on the first night of the 2008 Annual Town Meeting. The address was given by incoming BOS Chairman, Clarissa Rowe;
  - Continued to participate on the Superintendent of School's Advisory Committee on Diversity, advocating for recruiting and employing minority staff for both school and Town positions;
  - Helped select the Community Book Read for 2008, Anne Tyler's *Digging to America*, and hosted Welcoming Massachusetts, both of which have immigration themes;
  - With the Disability Commission, continued planning for a Career Fair to take place in the Town Hall Auditorium on April 2, 2009;
  - Met with Arlington culture and recreation organizations to strategize on better promoting their group;
  - In conjunction with the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston and many committees working on diversity issues in Arlington,

sponsored Race: The Power Of An Illusion, a three part film and dialogue series exploring the concept of race and the impact of myths, policies, and practices that have surrounded it through the years; and,

- With the League of Women Voters of Arlington, co-sponsored two Candidates' Nights: the first in preparation for the Town's Annual Election, and the second before the September Primary Election.

## Recognitions

Vision 2020 appreciates all who contribute to this program.

Their skills and expertise, research, opinions, persistence, grant writing, note-taking, web posting, physical labor, planning, program creation and creative ideas, all offered generously, have truly enabled Arlington's Vision 2020 to strive to assist the Town in preparing for its current and future needs.

The Vision2020 survey results can be viewed at the end of this chapter.

## BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC) was appointed by the Board of Selectmen in 1996 to advise the Town on improving local bicycling conditions for both residents and visitors. The all-volunteer Committee promotes all forms of safe bicycling on town roadways and the Minuteman Bikeway -- from recreational riding to using the bicycle for transportation and errands.

ABAC's annual events include the ABAC Winter Social, the BIKE-Arlington Tour, and ABAC's Bicycling Information booth at Arlington Town Day in September.

ABAC meets monthly to discuss bicycle-related topics and issues in Town. Meetings are posted in advance and open to the public. ABAC's website address is [www.abac.arlington.ma.us](http://www.abac.arlington.ma.us).

In the past year, ABAC has organized a number of annual events and worked on a wide range of projects and initiatives:

- Advised on the successful program for snow-plowing the Minuteman Bikeway in Arlington. Also advised the Town of Lexington on a trial bikeway-plowing program this winter.
- Proposed installation of multiple new bicycle-parking racks throughout Town, funded by a state grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), to be installed in 2009.
- Hosted the well-attended ABAC Winter Social at the Whittemore-Robbins House in March, featuring an informative presentation on the City of Boston's bicycle program by Nicole Freedman, Boston's Director of

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## Bicycle Programs.

- Organized the 11th annual BIKE-Arlington Tour, a casual-paced bicycle tour around Town in May, which concluded with refreshments at Spy Pond Park.
- Hosted a bicycling information booth at Arlington Town Day, where ABAC members distributed bicycle-related information and discussed local bicycling issues with the community.
- Organized and hosted a Minuteman Bikeway Celebration on October 5, to recognize the bikeway's induction into the national Rail-Trail Hall of Fame.
- Produced new bikeway banners installed at the bikeway entrances in Arlington center.
- Hosted instructional bicycling skills classes in Arlington to promote safer, more efficient bicycling in the area.
- Continued to discuss and plan various improvements to Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington that would benefit both pedestrians and bicyclists, related to the Mass. Ave. Corridor Project.
- Worked with the Department of Public Works to provide basic maintenance on Arlington's 3-mile stretch of the Minuteman Bikeway, including organizing a bikeway cleanup day in early May. For more information on the Minuteman Bikeway, see the website at [www.minutemanbikeway.org](http://www.minutemanbikeway.org).
- Represented Arlington at the annual National Bicycle Summit in Washington, D.C., organized by the League of American Bicyclists in March. Met with U.S. Representative Edward Markey to encourage support for federal Transportation Enhancements funding for local-area bicycling, pedestrian, and transit improvements.

## Future Plans

ABAC is planning to organize a number of community events in 2009, including the ABAC Winter Social, the BIKE-Arlington Tour, bicycling skills classes hosted in Arlington, and an informational booth at Arlington Town Day in September. ABAC is currently working to install additional bicycle-parking racks in Arlington's commercial districts, funded by a grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). We are also advising on the Mass Ave Corridor project and bike-friendly shoulder/lane markings on other streets in Town as well. ABAC is continuing to work on common bikeway issues with representatives from Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford.

If you are interested in local bicycling matters, please attend an upcoming ABAC meeting. For more

information, visit our website at [www.abac.arlington.ma.us](http://www.abac.arlington.ma.us), contact the Department of Planning and Community Development at 781-316-3090, or e-mail [jack-johnson@alum.bu.edu](mailto:jack-johnson@alum.bu.edu). ABAC usually meets on the first Monday night of the month in Town Hall.

## TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The goal of the Transportation Advisory Committee's (TAC) is to improve the quality of life in Arlington by improving the safety for all modes of transportation while balancing safety with mobility, equity, the environment, and public health. In this effort, the TAC, Arlington Police Department's Traffic Division, the Public Works Department, and the Planning Department work closely together.

The Board of Selectmen is the Traffic Authority for Arlington. The TAC was established by the Board of Selectmen in the spring of 2001 to advise the Selectmen on transportation matters.

The TAC continues to be very concerned by the limited police resources for traffic and parking enforcement. Transportation management requires the Three Es: Engineering, Education and Enforcement. All three are essential to maintain the quality of life in Arlington. Enforcement is the weakest link in the Three E's at this time.

## Arlington Schools Transportation Issues

Schools have been a major activity for the TAC in 2008. A multiyear plan led by the TAC was approved by both the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee in January 2008 to improve traffic and walking safety around schools. Phase 1 of the plan is to complete inexpensive safety improvements (paint and signs) for the public elementary schools. This effort includes designating and improving preferred walking routes and reducing conflicts between students and automobiles at drop-off and pick-up periods. Phase 2 will address expensive infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks and handicap ramps along the preferred walking routes. We are seeking state aid and funds from the Capital Plan for these items. The Dallin School was selected as one of the first five elementary schools in the state to receive infrastructure improvements as part of the state's Safe Routes to School Program. TAC has coordinated with the state and reviewed their draft recommendations. The state is scheduled to construct sidewalk and intersection improvements at the Dallin in the summer of 2009.

Safety recommendations have now been made and voted by the Board of Selectmen for the Thompson, Stratton, Dallin, Peirce, Hardy and Bishop Schools. Most installations were completed by DPW before the ground froze, and the few remaining will be completed

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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in 2009. Work for Brackett will begin in 2009, as well as a revisit to Hardy.

In concert with the individual school safety committees and Public Works, the TAC identified critical corners on the preferred routes to school for snow clearing. TAC reviewed and endorsed a pilot program, developed by parents with the assistance of TAC and Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC), to introduce bicycling to Hardy School. The TAC has also worked on safety issues at two private schools: Arlington Children's Center (ACC) and Dearborn Academy. In 2009, we will be examining traffic safety issues at other schools, including the Ottoson Middle School.

## **Massachusetts Avenue Corridor**

Phase 1 of this project is an upgrade of Massachusetts Avenue between the Cambridge city line and Pond Lane for safety and streetscape improvements. Federal and state funds were released for this work in 2008 and a contract was signed by the Town with Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, a consulting firm. Design work has started and public meetings are being held. Members of the TAC serve on the Review Committee for the project.

## **Westminster Avenue**

Following a fatal accident on Westminster in the spring of 2007, initial safety improvements were implemented on Westminster Avenue. Further improvements are being considered, including some at the Lexington end of Westminster Avenue, which will require coordination between the Board of Selectmen in Arlington and Lexington. Traffic calming improvements in Arlington are currently being finalized with the residents.

## **Downing Square**

Several alternatives for this difficult six-way intersection (Park Ave., Lowell St, Park Ave. Extension, Bow St. and Westminster Ave.) have been identified and analyzed. A public meeting was held in December to review the recommendations with the public. We expect to recommend a design to the Board of Selectmen and be ready for construction in 2009 if funds can be found.

## **Green Line Extension**

Working with the Planning Department, the TAC is an advocate for the Green Line Extension to be brought to Route 16 where it can be useful to residents of Arlington. In early 2009 the state Executive Office of Transportation recommended bringing the line to Route 16 if federal funds become available. ([www.greenlineextension.org](http://www.greenlineextension.org))

## **Thorndike Field**

The TAC has been assisting the Parks and Recreation Commission in their efforts to improve the safety of access to and around Thorndike Field.

## **Neighborhood Projects**

The TAC responded to requests from Arlington residents for transportation improvements ranging from simple situations to major safety issues.

## **Outreach**

The TAC participated in transportation meetings and events conducted by the Boston Area MPO, MBTA, Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Arlington Schools and School Committee, Arlington Redevelopment Board, Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, and the Summer Street Neighborhood Association. The Mass Ave Corridor project and schools were featured at the TAC's 2008 Town Day booth. The TAC maintains a website ([arlingtontac.com](http://arlingtontac.com)) containing all formal reports submitted to the Board of Selectmen, committee agenda and minutes, and other transportation resources for Town residents.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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## 2008 VISION 2020 SURVEY REPORT

**Based on 2537 Arlington Household Responses by April 1, 2008**

The 2008 Vision 2020 Survey was the collaborative product of Town Manager Brian Sullivan, all Town departments as well as Vision 2020. The following pages report the responses to all sections of the mailing, items 1-14 , with the exception of the new interest in joining the work of Vision 2020 Task Groups.

In this report, the general evaluation responses are grouped into chart and table pairs. Each bar chart is accompanied by a table which gives the actual data collected. The bar charts provide a summary of the response data, importance and satisfaction, on a scale of 1-4. An additional bar is provided for the “No experience” response which ranges from 0 (all respondents had experience with this department) to 4 or “all” (no respondents had experience with this department).

Questions 1 and 2 asked for demographic information describing the 2537 responding households, their precincts, ages, years in Arlington and whether they own or rent their residences.

This report then presents Town and School Service survey responses covering general service impressions for Overall Importance and Satisfaction as well as Effective and Courteous Service for each department. Next, the report records the requested assessment for the specific services provided by each department.

Questions 3-11 requested evaluations of both the importance and satisfaction of the services provided by each town department including schools.

Question 12 asked for opinions/satisfaction about Town Hall services.

Question 13 focused on service goals for the community and further judgements regarding resource allocation to accomplish these goals. This chart is based on a scale of 1 to 3.

Question 14 inquired about community involvement and decision-making as well as the Town website.



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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## 1. The number of respondents from each precinct:

Pct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Blank
#	63	116	98	80	95	111	115	140	108	131	100	141	105	115	127	118	83	114	125	100	116	236
%		5.0	4.3	3.5	4.1	4.8	5.0	6.1	4.7	5.7	4.3	6.1	4.6	5.0	5.5	5.1	3.6	5.0	5.4	4.3	5.0	

## 2. Respondent's household demographic data (3 tables):

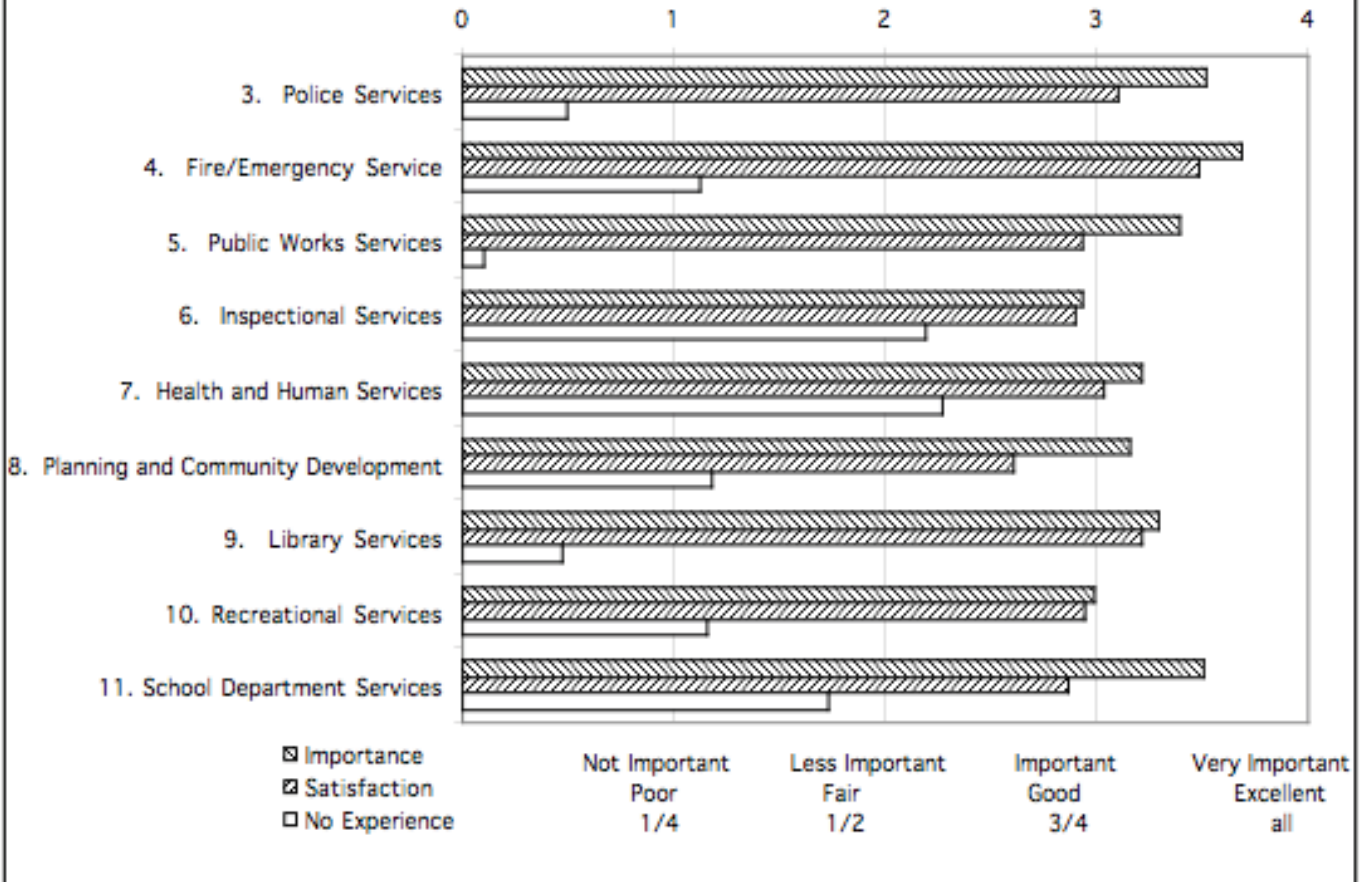
		0	1	2	3	4	>4	Blank
Adults aged 65 or older :	#	1561	404	303	9	4	2	254
	%	68.37	17.70	13.27	0.39	0.18	0.09	
Adults aged 18 to 64 :	#	360	527	1184	149	72	14	231
	%	15.61	22.85	51.34	6.46	3.12	0.61	
Children 17 and under	#	1317	333	367	75	15	5	425
	%	62.36	15.77	17.38	3.55	0.71	0.24	

Years in Arlington		< 5	5 to 15	>15	Blank
	#	543	733	1135	126
	%	22.52	30.4	47.08	5.226

Own or rent		Own	Rent	Blank
	#	1715	535	287
	%	76.22	23.78	

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## Town and School Services - Overall Importance and Satisfaction



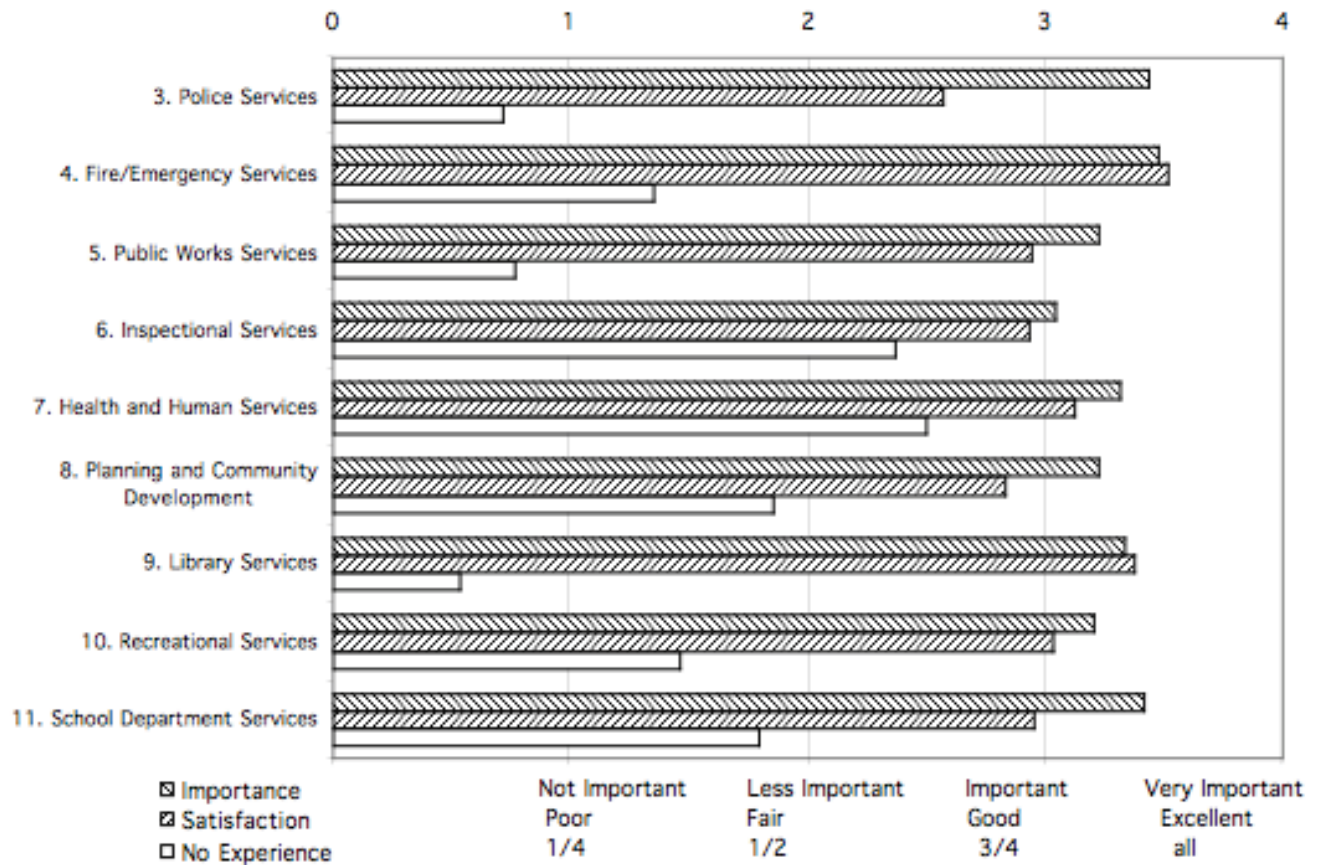
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Town and School Services

Overall	Importance					Satisfaction					
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
3. Police Services	54.9%	42.5%	2.2%	0.4%	272	25.8%	60.2%	12.1%	2.0%	12.3%	318
4. Fire/Emergency Service	69.9%	28.9%	1.0%	0.2%	237	52.2%	44.4%	3.2%	0.2%	28.0%	296
5. Public Works Services	42.8%	53.9%	3.0%	0.3%	347	16.3%	62.9%	18.6%	2.2%	2.6%	352
6. Inspectional Services	19.4%	57.7%	19.8%	3.1%	557	16.4%	61.4%	18.0%	4.1%	54.8%	437
7. Health and Human Services	34.8%	53.3%	10.5%	1.3%	444	21.1%	63.4%	13.1%	2.3%	56.7%	438
8. Planning and Community Development	29.8%	57.1%	12.3%	0.8%	417	9.8%	47.9%	35.1%	7.3%	29.5%	447
9. Library Services	40.8%	49.1%	8.2%	1.8%	315	31.4%	59.9%	7.8%	1.0%	11.7%	363
10. Recreational Services	23.9%	53.9%	19.3%	2.9%	464	17.3%	62.1%	18.3%	2.3%	29.0%	451
11. School Department Services	59.1%	34.7%	4.6%	1.7%	444	16.9%	57.2%	21.3%	4.6%	43.1%	488

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Town and School Services - Effective and Courteous Service**

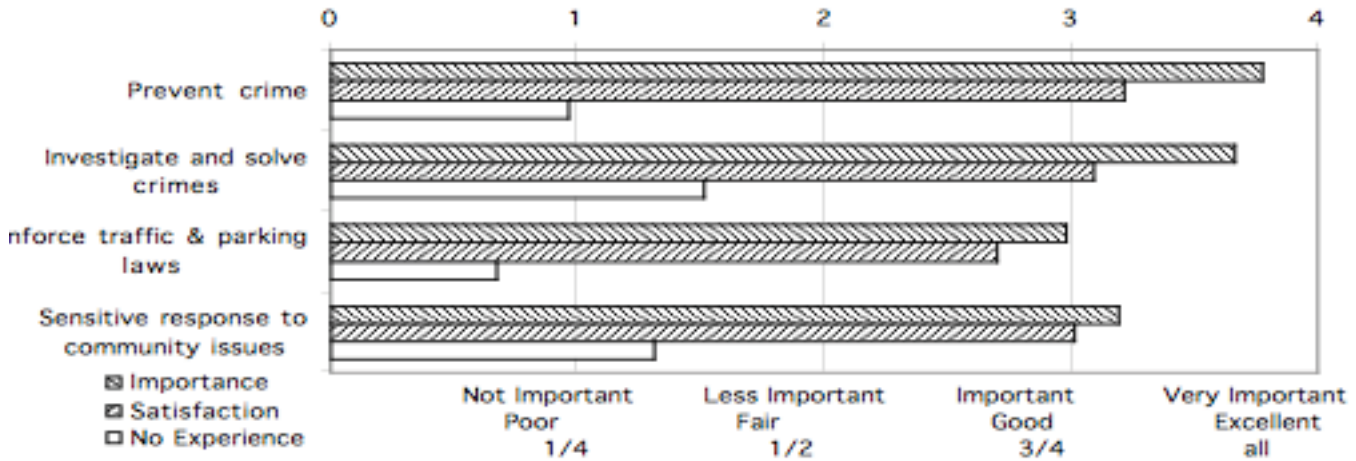


COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Effective & Courteous	Importance					Satisfaction					
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
3. Police Services	50.0%	43.8%	5.5%	0.7%	100	26.5%	42.0%	11.2%	2.4%	17.9%	280
4. Fire/Emergency Service	54.8%	38.4%	6.4%	0.4%	131	37.3%	26.3%	2.2%	0.3%	33.8%	291
5. Public Works Services	37.8%	47.7%	13.3%	1.2%	151	15.8%	47.5%	14.5%	3.1%	19.2%	342
6. Inspectional Services	27.9%	52.3%	16.1%	3.7%	461	8.0%	24.1%	6.6%	2.1%	59.1%	443
7. Health and Human Services	42.1%	48.8%	7.8%	1.3%	300	10.2%	22.7%	3.8%	0.9%	62.4%	433
8. Planning and Community Development	37.5%	48.8%	12.1%	1.6%	301	8.2%	30.9%	11.7%	2.8%	46.4%	461
9. Library Services	43.5%	47.9%	6.7%	1.9%	196	39.2%	41.9%	4.5%	1.1%	13.3%	361
10. Recreational Services	36.8%	49.5%	11.0%	2.7%	312	14.0%	39.1%	9.0%	1.4%	36.5%	465
11. School Department Services	50.8%	41.7%	5.7%	1.8%	344	10.9%	32.9%	9.1%	2.2%	44.9%	488

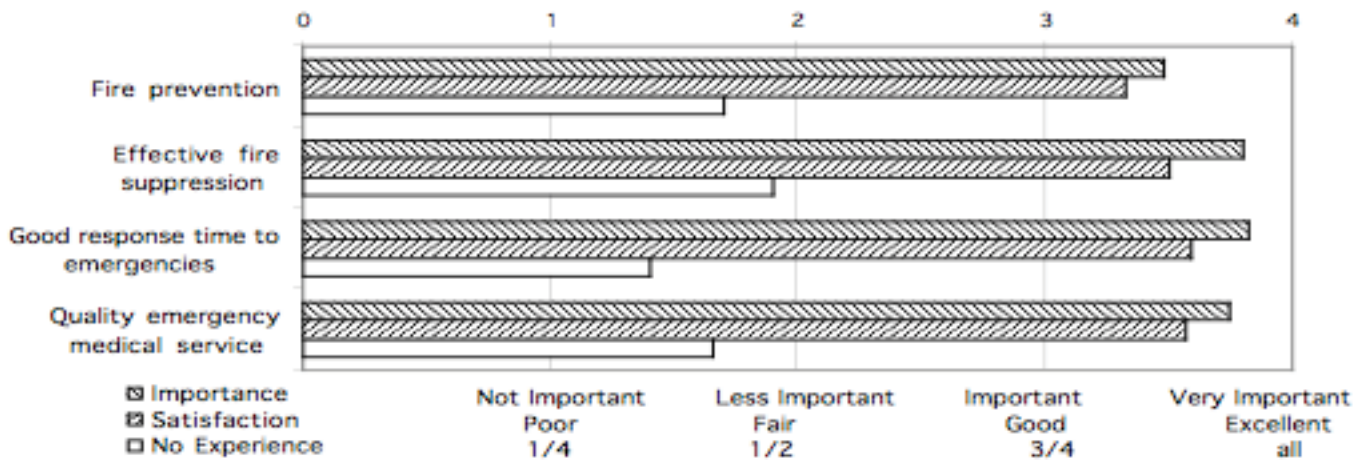
# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## 3. Specific Police Services



3. Police Services	Importance					Satisfaction					
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
Prevent crime	80.4%	17.7%	1.4%	0.5%	77	24.4%	44.7%	5.8%	1.0%	24.1%	257
Investigate and solve crimes	69.4%	27.5%	2.7%	0.4%	110	17.0%	35.5%	7.7%	1.9%	37.9%	275
Enforce traffic & parking laws	30.0%	41.2%	25.2%	3.5%	101	11.9%	42.4%	20.7%	8.1%	16.9%	272
Sensitive response to community issues	37.6%	46.8%	13.3%	2.2%	129	16.0%	38.4%	10.6%	2.3%	32.7%	287

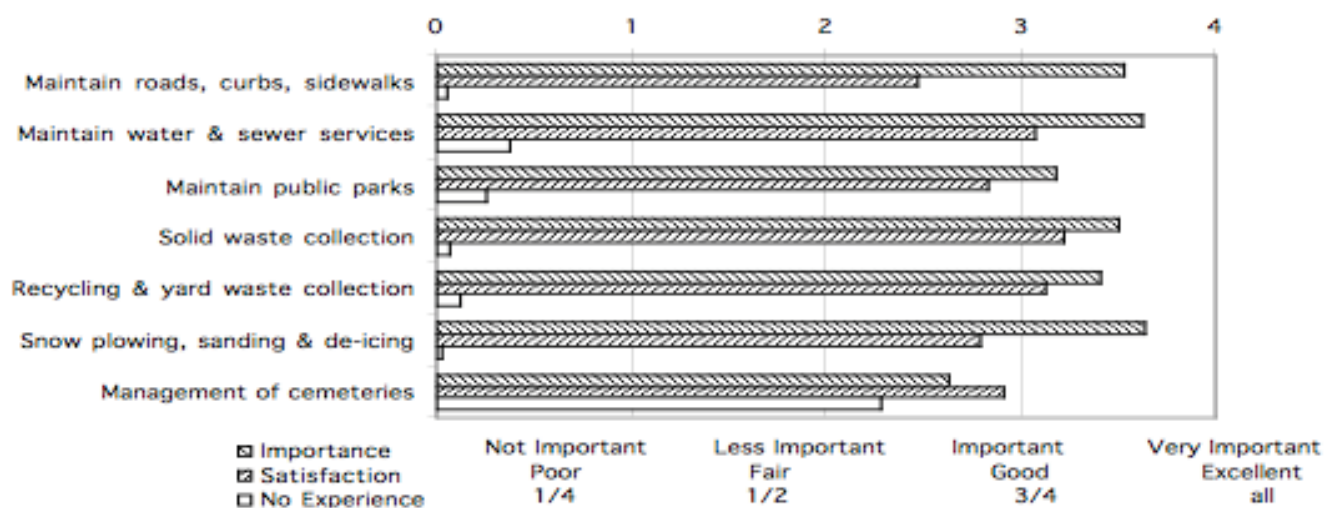
## 4. Specific Fire and Emergency Services



4. Fire/Emergency Medical Services	Importance					Satisfaction					
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
Fire prevention	55.5%	37.8%	6.4%	0.3%	110	23.2%	30.2%	3.8%	0.2%	42.6%	295
Effective fire suppression	81.7%	17.1%	0.9%	0.3%	111	27.9%	23.2%	1.4%	0.1%	47.4%	286
Good response time to emergencies	83.8%	15.2%	0.8%	0.2%	102	39.9%	23.1%	1.7%	0.1%	35.2%	274
Quality emergency medical service	77.8%	19.3%	2.4%	0.6%	112	35.6%	20.9%	1.6%	0.3%	41.6%	280

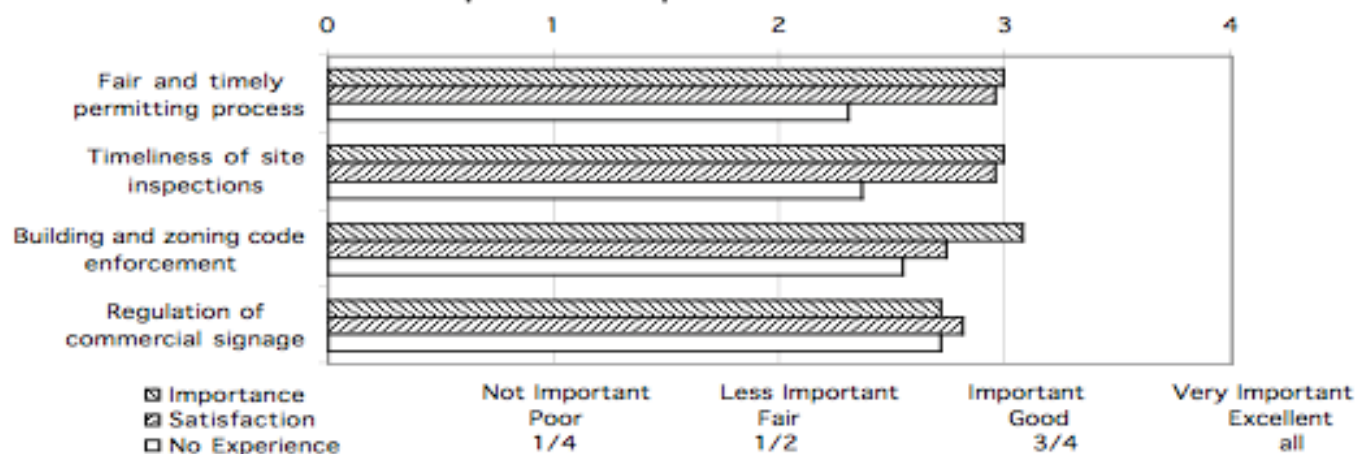
# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## 5. Specific Public Works Services



5. Public Works Services	Importance					Satisfaction					
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
Maintain roads, curbs, sidewalks	55.8%	41.5%	2.5%	0.2%	86	8.6%	41.2%	37.1%	11.9%	1.2%	256
Maintain water & sewer services	64.6%	33.8%	1.3%	0.2%	102	21.3%	56.5%	11.2%	1.7%	9.3%	270
Maintain public parks	34.6%	50.1%	14.4%	0.9%	123	14.0%	54.8%	20.6%	4.4%	6.2%	291
Solid waste collection	54.1%	42.0%	3.5%	0.4%	111	33.7%	53.9%	9.4%	1.5%	1.6%	265
Recycling & yard waste collection	50.0%	42.0%	7.2%	0.7%	119	31.1%	50.3%	12.6%	3.0%	3.0%	273
Snow plowing, sanding & de-icing	65.8%	31.6%	2.4%	0.2%	85	20.1%	46.7%	24.5%	8.0%	0.7%	259
Management of cemeteries	17.3%	35.6%	40.0%	7.1%	159	7.7%	25.4%	7.6%	2.1%	57.2%	297

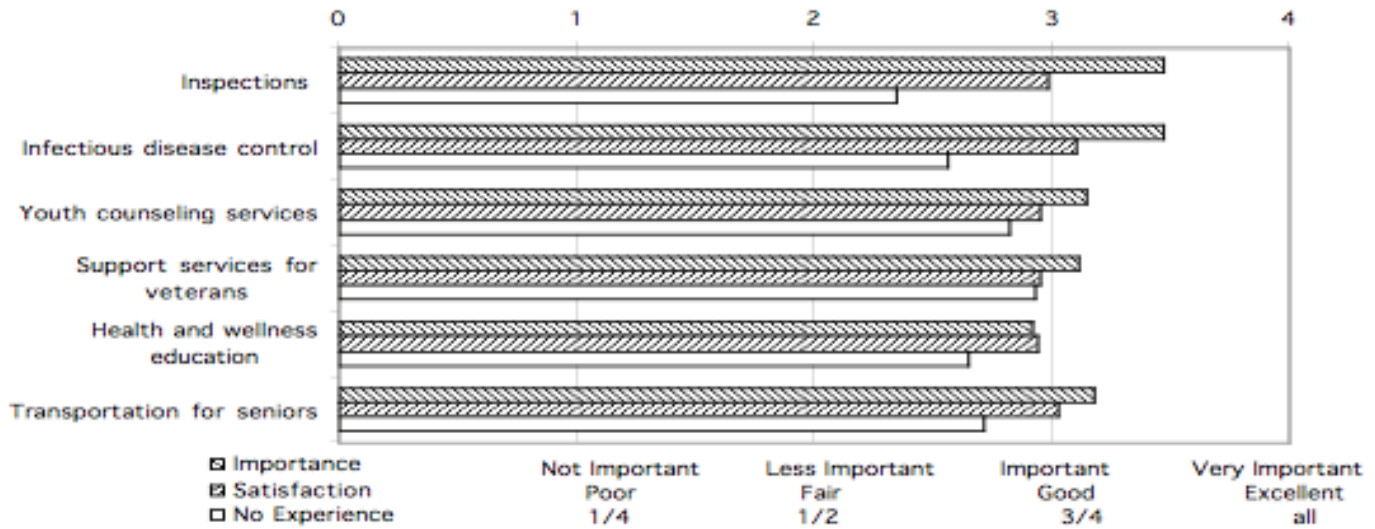
## 6. Specific Inspectional Services



6. Inspectional Services	Importance					Satisfaction					
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
Fair and timely permitting process	23.0%	56.2%	17.5%	3.3%	435	8.2%	25.9%	6.2%	2.0%	57.6%	415
Timeliness of site inspections	23.3%	55.1%	18.3%	3.4%	451	7.8%	25.0%	6.7%	1.4%	59.2%	417
Building and zoning code enforcement	30.3%	50.2%	16.0%	3.5%	438	5.5%	19.3%	8.3%	3.3%	63.5%	415
Regulation of commercial signage	17.8%	42.7%	32.2%	7.3%	442	4.5%	18.8%	6.9%	2.0%	67.8%	423

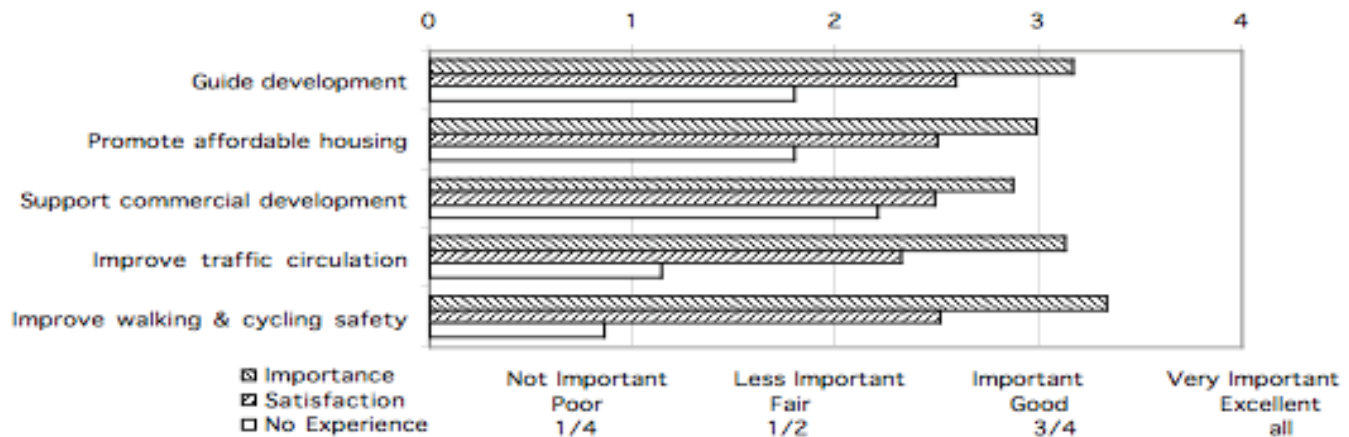
# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## 7. Specific Health and Human Services



7. Health and Human Services	Importance					Satisfaction					
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
Inspections	54.7%	39.1%	4.9%	1.3%	255	8.9%	24.6%	6.3%	1.5%	58.6%	398
Infectious disease control	58.2%	32.4%	7.7%	1.7%	261	9.4%	21.5%	4.4%	0.7%	64.1%	400
Youth counseling services	37.1%	43.7%	15.6%	3.6%	275	6.2%	16.6%	5.6%	1.0%	70.6%	419
Support services for veterans	35.5%	43.9%	16.7%	3.9%	264	5.6%	15.6%	4.4%	1.3%	73.2%	402
Health and wellness education	27.9%	40.9%	26.7%	4.5%	268	6.3%	20.5%	5.8%	1.3%	66.1%	411
Transportation for seniors	36.2%	47.9%	13.6%	2.3%	239	8.0%	18.0%	4.8%	1.2%	68.0%	387

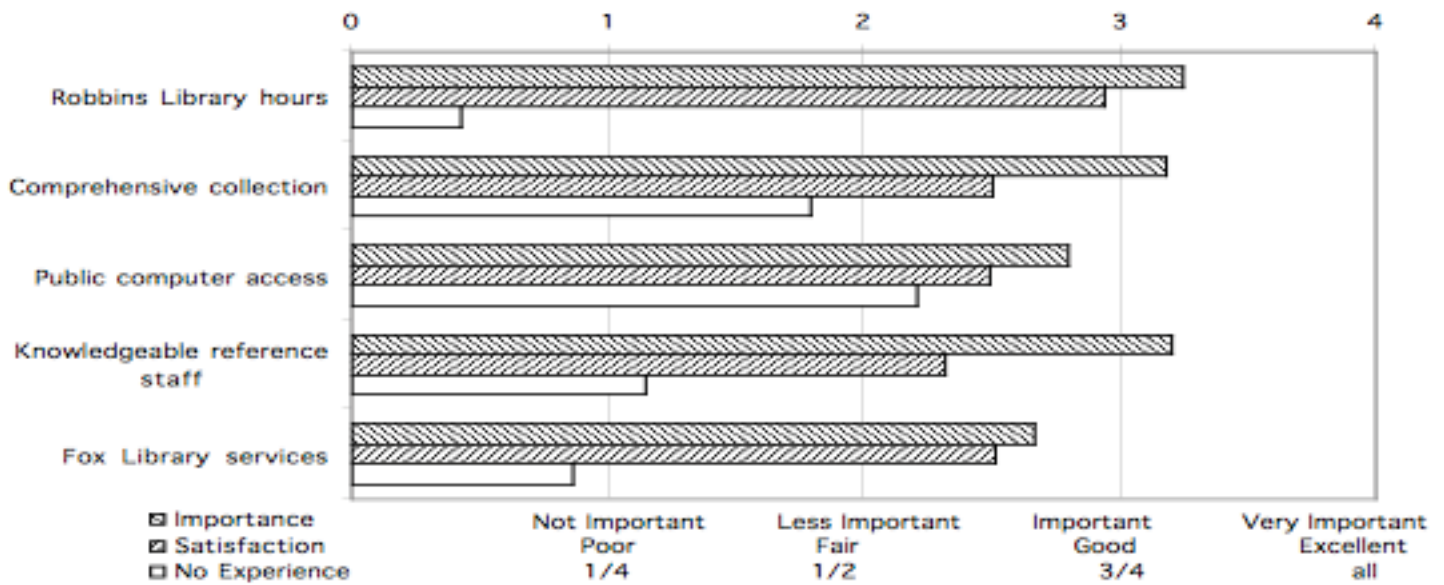
## Specific Planning and Community Development Services



	Importance					Satisfaction					
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
Guide development	36.6%	46.7%	14.1%	2.6%	299	5.6%	27.2%	16.2%	6.0%	45.0%	424
Promote affordable housing	34.1%	37.8%	21.5%	6.6%	230	6.3%	22.8%	18.0%	7.9%	44.9%	389
Support commercial development	23.3%	45.7%	26.1%	4.9%	272	3.9%	19.9%	15.1%	5.8%	55.3%	432
Improve traffic circulation	36.2%	42.6%	19.1%	2.0%	235	4.4%	25.6%	29.2%	12.0%	28.6%	400
Improve walking & cycling safety	48.5%	38.3%	11.2%	2.0%	202	7.5%	34.9%	26.6%	9.4%	21.6%	385

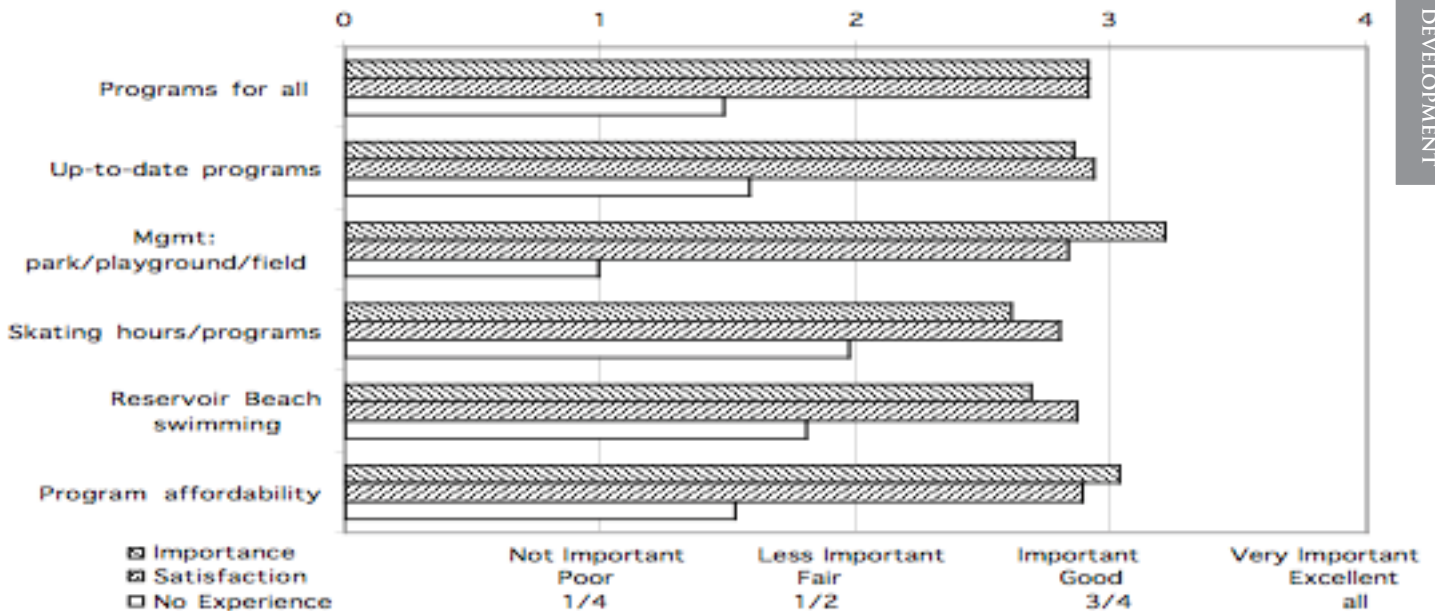
# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## 9. Specific Library Services



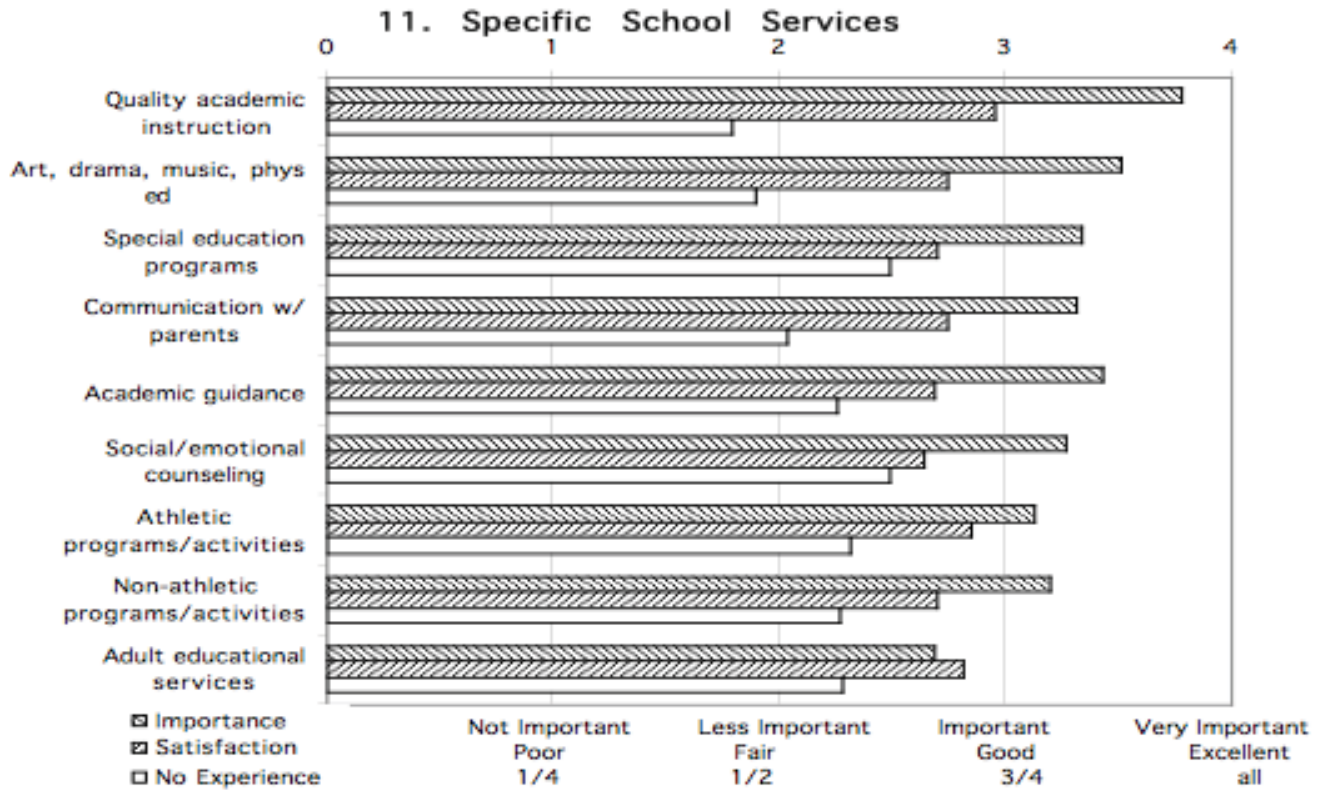
9. Library Services	Importance					Satisfaction						
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank	
Robbins Library hours	40.3%	46.2%	11.1%	2.4%	119	18.0%	51.4%	16.9%	3.2%	10.6%	291	
Comprehensive collection	37.0%	47.1%	13.4%	2.5%	160	6.3%	22.8%	18.0%	7.9%	44.9%	389	
Public computer access	25.1%	38.3%	28.1%	8.5%	174	3.9%	19.9%	15.1%	5.8%	55.3%	432	
Knowledgeable reference staff	36.8%	49.1%	11.7%	2.4%	165	4.4%	25.6%	29.2%	12.0%	28.6%	400	
Fox Library services	20.7%	37.7%	29.0%	12.6%	253	7.5%	34.9%	26.6%	9.4%	21.6%	385	

## 10. Specific Recreation Services



10. Recreational Services	Importance					Satisfaction						
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank	
Programs for all	25.6%	45.9%	22.7%	5.8%	257	12.0%	35.7%	13.0%	2.3%	37.0%	414	
Up-to-date programs	21.3%	48.1%	24.8%	5.7%	160	10.7%	36.3%	11.8%	1.5%	39.7%	434	
Mgmt: park/playground/field	36.6%	49.9%	10.9%	2.6%	255	11.9%	42.6%	16.9%	3.9%	24.8%	411	
Skating hours/programs	16.3%	38.2%	35.9%	9.6%	289	7.5%	28.1%	12.2%	2.7%	49.4%	426	
Reservoir Beach swimming	18.2%	40.7%	32.4%	8.6%	277	8.6%	31.9%	12.4%	1.9%	45.1%	426	
Program affordability	31.2%	46.7%	16.3%	5.8%	276	10.8%	34.8%	14.4%	1.7%	38.3%	426	

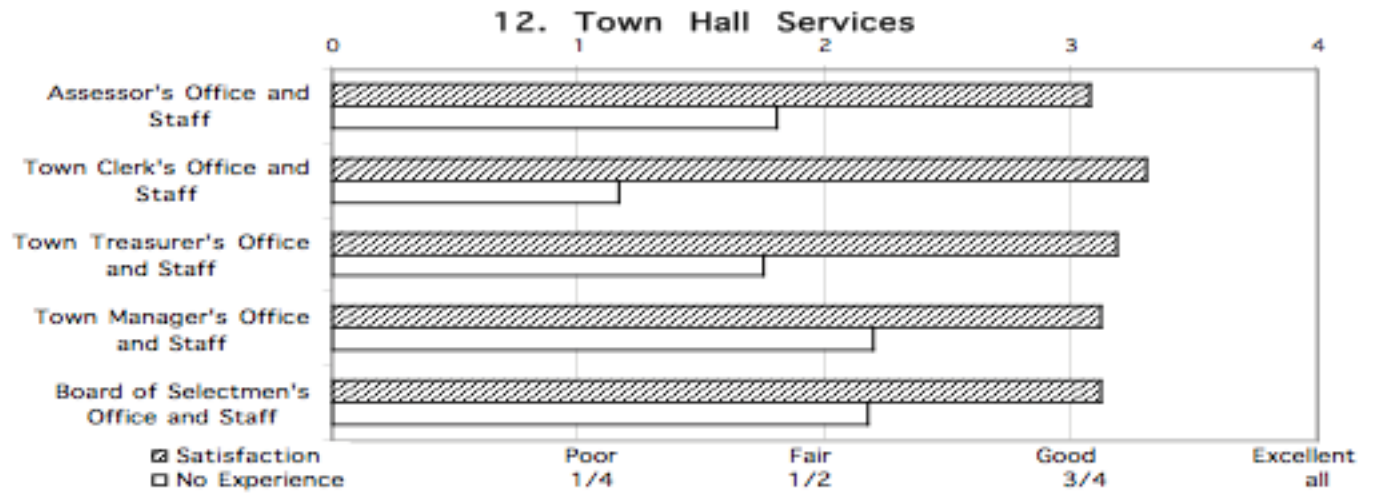
# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



11. School Department Services	Importance					Satisfaction					
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Blank	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
Quality academic instruction	82.4%	14.5%	1.6%	1.6%	285	10.5%	33.3%	9.8%	1.6%	44.8%	418
Art, drama, music, phys ed	62.6%	28.4%	6.4%	2.6%	288	8.8%	25.6%	14.3%	3.9%	47.4%	428
Special education programs	51.7%	33.8%	10.8%	3.8%	308	6.2%	17.9%	10.0%	3.7%	62.2%	447
Communication w/ parents	48.3%	38.3%	10.1%	3.3%	309	7.0%	26.1%	12.8%	3.3%	50.9%	440
Academic guidance	54.4%	36.3%	6.7%	2.7%	312	5.9%	21.6%	12.8%	3.3%	56.5%	454
Social/emotional counseling	47.3%	36.8%	11.8%	4.1%	315	4.6%	18.2%	11.3%	3.5%	62.3%	447
Athletic programs/activities	38.0%	41.4%	15.8%	4.9%	322	6.7%	24.4%	9.3%	1.8%	57.9%	453
Non-athletic programs/activities	40.3%	43.0%	12.9%	3.8%	336	5.7%	22.1%	12.5%	3.0%	56.7%	465
Adult educational services	21.3%	34.7%	35.5%	8.4%	292	6.6%	23.9%	10.4%	2.1%	57.0%	453

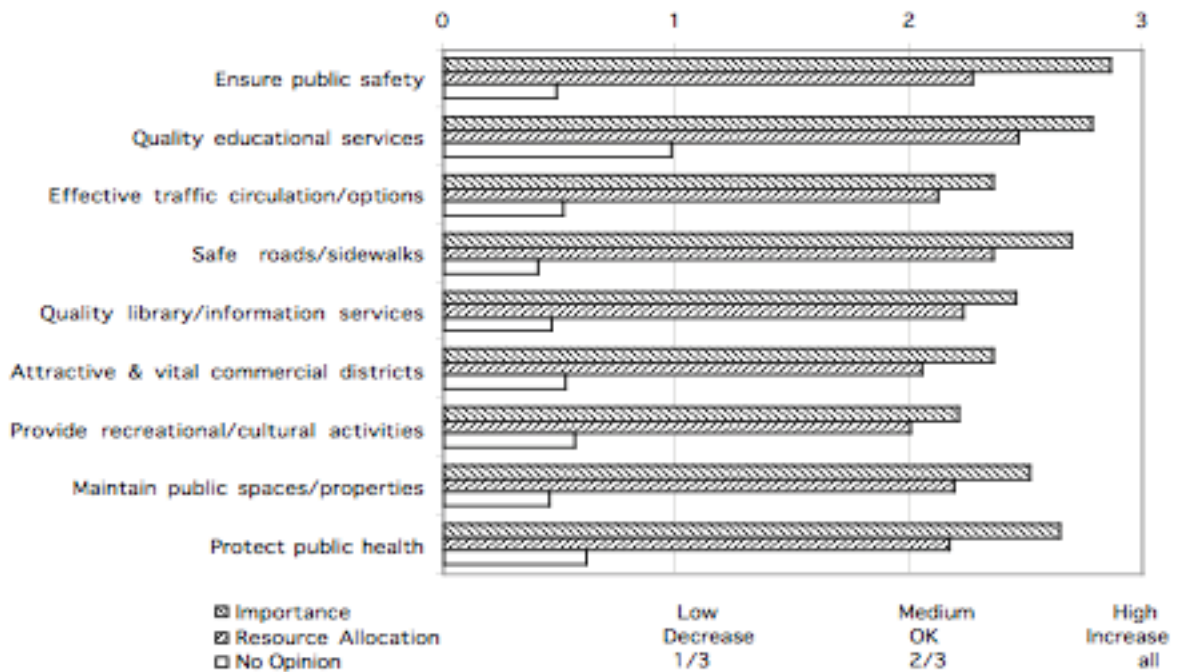


# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



12. Town Hall Services	Satisfaction					
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience	Blank
Assessor's Office and Staff	16.9%	28.1%	7.2%	2.6%	45.2%	225
Town Clerk's Office and Staff	30.0%	33.6%	6.3%	1.1%	29.1%	204
Town Treasurer's Office and Staff	20.2%	27.7%	6.5%	1.7%	43.8%	233
Town Manager's Office and Staff	15.0%	22.4%	6.1%	1.7%	54.8%	243
Board of Selectmen's Office and Staff	15.6%	21.6%	6.6%	1.7%	54.4%	236

### 13. Community Goals



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

13. Community Goals	Importance				Resource Allocation				
	High	Medium	Low	Blank	Increase	Okay as is	Decrease	No Experience	Blank
Ensure public safety	87.0%	11.9%	1.1%	400	25.6%	60.3%	2.2%	12.0%	567
Quality educational services	81.2%	16.0%	2.8%	409	39.0%	33.1%	3.4%	24.5%	428
Effective traffic circulation/options	44.1%	47.6%	8.2%	435	19.0%	59.4%	8.7%	12.9%	575
Safe roads/sidewalks	71.3%	26.6%	2.1%	407	35.3%	51.5%	3.2%	10.0%	556
Quality library/information services	54.1%	38.0%	8.0%	419	25.6%	57.3%	5.5%	11.6%	554
Attractive & vital commercial districts	45.5%	45.3%	9.2%	432	16.1%	59.9%	11.1%	13.0%	561
Provide recreational/cultural activities	35.7%	49.5%	14.9%	426	13.5%	59.4%	13.2%	14.0%	566
Maintain public spaces/properties	55.3%	40.6%	4.1%	405	20.9%	63.5%	4.3%	11.3%	546
Protect public health	69.3%	25.5%	5.2%	403	19.4%	59.9%	5.3%	15.3%	556

## 14. Community Involvement

### Rate the Town's outreach efforts

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	Blank
262	783	281	64	464	683
14%	42%	15%	3%	25%	

### Has respondent participated in outreach efforts?

Yes	No	Blank
758	1361	418
36%	64%	

### Has respondent visited Town website within last 6 mo?

Yes	No	Blank
1325	809	403
62%	38%	

### Rate the Town website

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	Blank
Site content	161	894	249	18	309	906
Site presentation	139	758	377	40	311	912
Site user friendliness	139	700	411	73	303	911

There are three sources for the totality of Vision 2020's Report to Town Meeting: the Town of Arlington's 2007 Annual Report contained in the Planning and Community Development section, the Vision 2020 Report found earlier in this section, and the information on Warrant Articles 65, 75, and 76 found in the reports of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee.

For further information: please contact the Planning Department at 781-316 3090 or Jane Howard at 781-648-1936.