



SHELTER ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Survey #1 Report

May 12, 2021

INTRODUCTION

In early 2021, Shelter Island conducted the first of several surveys designed to inform development of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The purpose of the survey was to identify key issues that the Comprehensive Plan Update should focus on, to gather information and ideas about the Island's defining strengths and weaknesses, and to get a general sense of what is important to Shelter Islanders. It was not meant to be a vote or referendum on issues, but rather to clearly identify the range of issues that people care about so that nothing is overlooked as the planning process moves forward. The final plan will be based upon multiple forms of input and community discussions in a wide variety of formats.

The survey was open between February 22 and March 12, 2021, online and in paper versions that were available at Town Hall, Shelter Island Public Library, Bliss Supply Store, Eagle Deli, Elli's Country Store, IGA, Maria's Mexican Restaurant, Slice Pizza, Stars Café, and The Islander. The survey was heavily publicized through the town website, local social media, print media, email distribution using a variety of email lists maintained by local organizations, and a direct mailing to every mailbox in the Town of Shelter Island.

The 1,013 people who completed the survey included all age groups, income and education levels, housing tenures (rent, live with family or friends, own), short- and long-term residents, and various connections to the Island (visitors, people who live here a few months of the year, people who live here most of the year). About half of the survey respondents are part-time residents or visitors to Shelter Island. The other half of respondents are year-round residents. For the former, there is no available census or other data set describing their demographics. For the latter, we have attempted to benchmark the survey respondents for representativeness against credible statistics reflecting the island's demographics. Recognizing the limitations of the available data (including that the 2020 census results are as yet unavailable), we can say that the demographics were broadly representative, given the split between year-round and part-time residents, and given the number of respondents versus the size of the population. We will await census results to confirm if additional demographic factors are also representative.

The survey, which used a "convenience sample" approach, was open to all who wanted to respond. Although one can check a convenience sample for general representativeness by comparing the self-reported demographics of survey respondents with demographic data about the target population, without input from the 2020 census (not yet released) there is no adequate baseline of demographic data for comparison. This suggests that we be cautious in using the survey data to draw conclusions about the opinions of Shelter Islanders overall.¹

Overall, the survey provides a rich tapestry of information about the opinions of survey respondents, what they value about the island, what their concerns are, and which topics may be worthwhile focus areas for the Comprehensive Plan. This report presents information about the demographics of survey respondents, and the results from closed-ended questions. Information about open-ended responses was incorporated into the SWOTCI Report and will continue to be a rich resource for informing the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

¹ While the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau is the best source of information about permanent residents of Shelter Island, the ACS sample size for Shelter Island is so small that its data has a large margin of error. For this reason, the Comprehensive Plan Update project team previously decided to limit use of ACS data for the Comprehensive Plan Update. More accurate data from the 2020 Decennial Census will be incorporated when it becomes available.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

As described earlier, the survey responses represent a wide range of people with an interest in Shelter Island. About half (500 respondents) are “year-round residents,” about half (506 respondents) are part-time residents or visitors.² People who live on Shelter Island 3-9 months of the year make up the majority of the latter category (397 respondents; 39% of respondents).

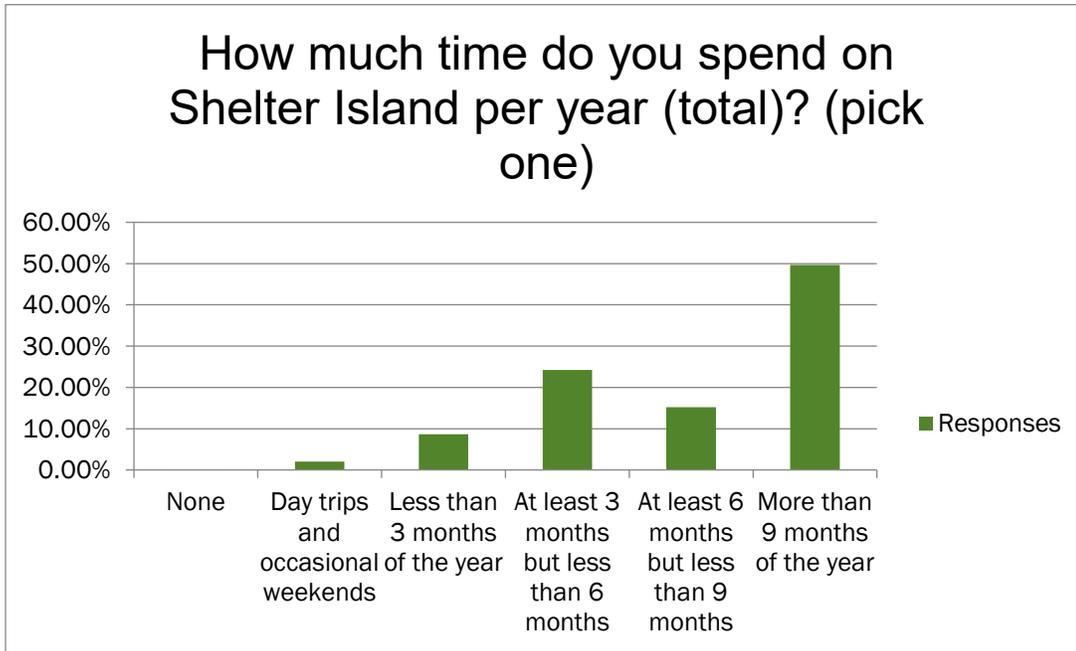


Table 1, How much time do you spend on Shelter Island per year (total)? (pick one)

Answer Choices	Responses	
None	0.20%	2
Day trips and occasional weekends	1.99%	20
Less than 3 months of the year	8.65%	87
At least 3 months but less than 6 months	24.25%	244
At least 6 months but less than 9 months	15.21%	153
More than 9 months of the year	49.70%	500
	Answered	1006
	Skipped	7

Based estimates of Shelter Island’s 2020 year-round population³ (2,745) and part time and seasonal population (7,300) of Shelter Island, it appears that the respondents comprise 18% of year-round residents and 7% of part-time and seasonal residents.

Self-reported demographic information for survey respondents was tabulated separately for all survey responses, year-round residents, and part-time and seasonal residents. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

² For the purpose of this report, respondents who reported that they live on Shelter Island more than nine months per year are considered “year-round residents.” Those who live on Shelter Island less than nine months per year are considered part-time residents or visitors.

³ From the Shelter Island 2020 Profile

Table 2, Demographics of Survey Responses

How are you connected to Shelter Island? (check all that apply)

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
I live there for some or all of the year	89%	901	84%	425	94%	471
I work there (including part-time work, seasonal work, self-employment, and remote-work)	17%	170	7%	33	27%	136
I visit there	5%	52	10%	52	0%	0
Other (please describe)	9%	94	10%	51	9%	43

How long have you been connected to Shelter Island (For example, how long have you lived on, worked on, or visited Shelter Island?)

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
5 or fewer years	6%	61	6%	29	6%	32
6 to 20 years	26%	267	30%	149	23%	115
More than 20 years	67%	680	65%	326	71%	352

How much time do you spend on Shelter Island per year (total)? (pick one)

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
None	0%	2	0%	2	0%	0
Day trips and occasional weekends	2%	20	4%	20	0%	0
Less than 3 months of the year	9%	87	17%	87	0%	0
At least 3 months but less than 6 months	24%	244	48%	244	0%	0
At least 6 months but less than 9 months	15%	153	30%	153	0%	0
More than 9 months of the year	50%	500	0%	0	100%	500

Do you rent or own a home on Shelter Island?

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Rent	9%	88	4%	21	14%	67
Own	81%	815	82%	412	81%	398
Live with family or friends	6%	63	8%	40	5%	23
I do not live on Shelter Island	4%	37	6%	32	1%	5

What is your current employment status? (Select one)

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Full-time Employment (employed at least 30 hours per week. This includes self-employment).	52%	523	48%	240	56%	277
Part-time employment (employed less than 30 hours per week)	10%	98	8%	38	12%	60
Temporary employment/ day labor (includes seasonal employment)	1%	8	1%	7	0%	1
Full-time Student	2%	21	2%	11	2%	10
Maintaining household and/or parenting	4%	39	4%	21	4%	18
Unemployed and looking for work	1%	9	1%	5	1%	4
Retired or not looking for work	30%	303	36%	180	25%	123

Do you work multiple jobs?

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Yes	19%	189	9%	46	29%	143
No	81%	794	91%	446	71%	342

Where do you work? (Select all that apply)⁴

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
I work on Shelter Island	33%	278	8%	33	57%	244
I work on the North Fork	5%	38	2%	7	7%	31
I work on the South Fork	7%	59	2%	10	12%	49
I work west of Riverhead or in the NYC area	17%	138	28%	113	6%	25
I am working remotely during COVID-19	28%	231	38%	153	18%	75
Other (please elaborate)	32%	264	41%	165	23%	99

What is your age?

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
19 years or younger	2%	15	2%	9	1%	6
20-34 years	9%	92	6%	30	12%	61
35-49 years	18%	182	17%	86	20%	96
50-64 years	35%	348	35%	177	34%	168
65-79 years	32%	314	34%	172	29%	141
80 years or over	4%	42	5%	25	3%	17

⁴ Totals for this table are greater than 100% because respondents could select more than one option. The “Other” choice was predominantly used by respondents to indicate that they are retired or to elaborate on complex work situations, for example that they work in multiple locations, or where they usually work when not impacted by COVID_19.

Including all household members, which of the following ranges includes your total annual household income?

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Less than \$49,999	5%	45	2%	9	8%	36
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8%	74	4%	16	13%	58
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11%	97	6%	28	15%	69
\$100,000 to \$149,999	17%	153	12%	53	22%	99
\$150,000 to \$199,999	13%	115	9%	43	16%	71
\$200,000 or more	47%	424	67%	304	26%	118

What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

	All Responses		Respondents who live on Shelter Island less than 9 months per year		Respondents who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months per year	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
High school graduate or less (includes equivalency)	5%	46	2%	12	6%	27
Some college or associate's degree	12%	117	6%	32	17%	83
Bachelor's degree	32%	322	31%	153	35%	166
Graduate or professional degree	51%	507	60%	298	43%	204

Key Takeaways from the Survey

1. The issues identified during preliminary work for the Comprehensive Plan Update are important to survey respondents

Preliminary work on the Shelter Island Comprehensive Plan Update identified a set of key issues facing the Island. One aim of the survey was to confirm whether survey respondents agreed that these issues are important. Respondents were asked to evaluate how important each issue is “to you and your family,” along the rating scale: Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Sure, and Not Important. (Please note that the results might be different if the question were asked: “how important is each issue to people on the island.”)

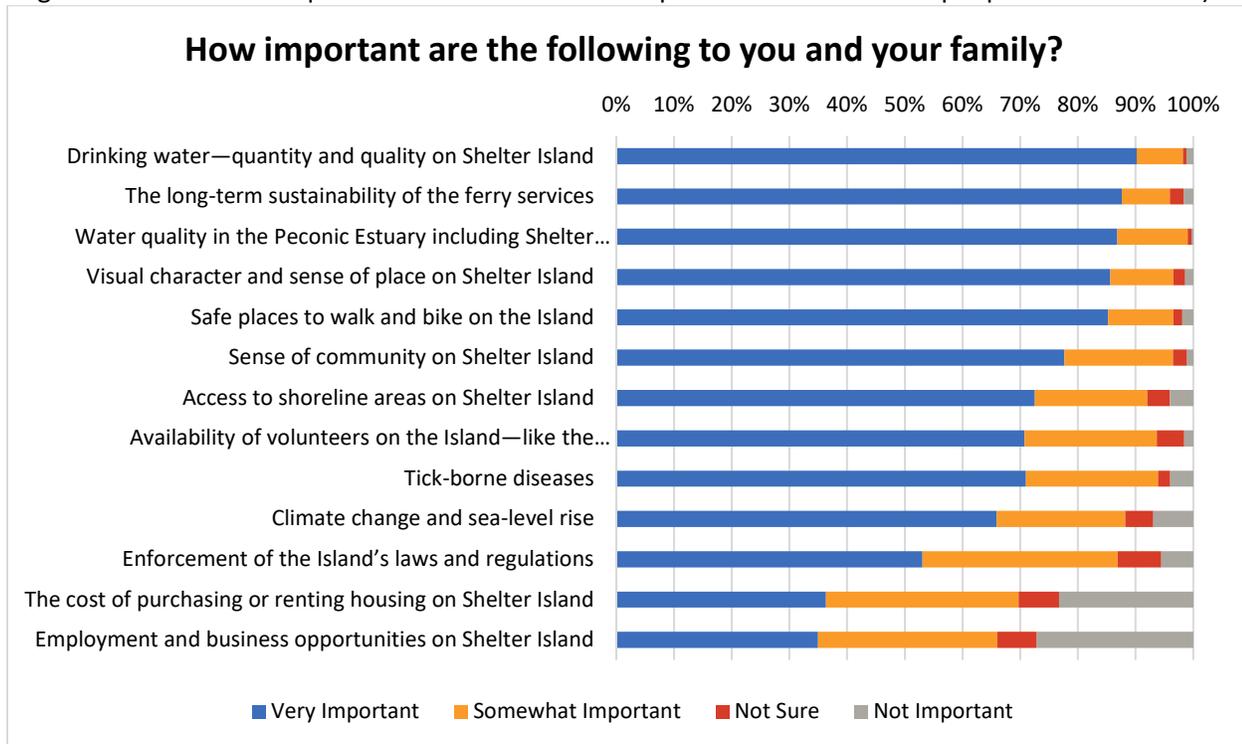


Table 3, How important are the following to you and your family?

	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Sure		Not Important		Total
Drinking water—quantity and quality on Shelter Island	90.19%	910	8.03%	81	0.59%	6	1.19%	12	1009
The long-term sustainability of the ferry services	87.64%	886	8.31%	84	2.37%	24	1.68%	17	1011
Water quality in the Peconic Estuary including Shelter Island’s creeks, ponds, and inlets	86.84%	878	12.17%	123	0.69%	7	0.30%	3	1011
Visual character and sense of place on Shelter Island	85.60%	862	10.92%	110	2.09%	21	1.39%	14	1007
Safe places to walk and bike on the Island	85.25%	861	11.29%	114	1.58%	16	1.88%	19	1010
Sense of community on Shelter Island	77.69%	780	18.82%	189	2.39%	24	1.10%	11	1004
Access to shoreline areas on Shelter Island	72.56%	730	19.48%	196	3.88%	39	4.08%	41	1006
Availability of volunteers on the Island—like the volunteer fire department	70.79%	715	22.87%	231	4.75%	48	1.58%	16	1010
Tick-borne diseases	71.00%	710	22.90%	229	2.10%	21	4.00%	40	1000
Climate change and sea-level rise	65.91%	665	22.30%	225	4.86%	49	6.94%	70	1009
Enforcement of the Island’s laws and regulations	53.08%	535	33.83%	341	7.54%	76	5.56%	56	1008
The cost of purchasing or renting housing on Shelter Island	36.34%	367	33.37%	337	7.03%	71	23.27%	235	1010
Employment and business opportunities on Shelter Island	34.95%	353	31.09%	314	6.83%	69	27.13%	274	1010
								Answered	1012

The survey results show that almost all the issues have a high level of importance to most survey respondents.

Over three quarters of survey respondents say that the following issues are very important to them: drinking water—quantity and quality on Shelter Island (90%); the long-term sustainability of the ferry services (88%); water quality in the Peconic Estuary including Shelter Island’s creeks, ponds, and inlets (87%); visual character and sense of place on Shelter Island (86%); safe places to walk and bike on the Island (85%); sense of community on Shelter Island (78%), access to shoreline areas on Shelter Island (73%).

Over half of respondents say that the following issues are very important to them: availability of volunteers on the Island—like the volunteer fire department (71%); tick-borne diseases (71%); climate change and sea-level rise (66%); and enforcement of the Island’s laws and regulations (53%).

The flip side of the large percentage of respondents who rate these issues as very important, is that a relatively small percentage rates them as not important, ranging from less than 1% for “water quality in the Peconic Estuary...” to 4% for “Access to Shoreline Areas or Tick-borne diseases.”

The remaining two issues, housing and employment/business, evoked responses that were more evenly divided between “very important” and “not important.” When asked about the importance of “The cost of purchasing or renting housing on Shelter Island” and “Employment and business opportunities on Shelter Island,” about a third of respondents said they were very important (36% for housing, 35% for employment and business), a third said they were somewhat important (33% for housing, 31% for employment and business), about 7% were

not sure, and about a quarter said they were not important (23% for housing, 27% for employment and business).

This question also had the option for respondents to add an “Other” issue. Over 300 respondents added comments covering a wide variety of topics. Many reiterated the importance of issues covered in the question, like the need for a stronger local economy with jobs and a wider range of goods and services, or the need for attainable housing. Other frequently mentioned issues include the need for greater civility and acceptance of others; the importance of limiting development, especially of very large houses; the need to protect natural resources, open spaces, and the environment; the importance of quality education and daycare; quality of life issues like minimizing noise and maintaining dark skies; and a range of opinions about whether Shelter Island needs more or fewer regulations.

2. There are mixed opinions about whether quality of life on Shelter Island is improving, staying the same, or declining

The survey asked respondents, “Over the last 5-10 years, has quality of life on Shelter Island improved, stayed the same, or declined? (Please try not to focus on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic).” 42% of respondents said that quality of life has declined. 37% said it has stayed the same. 21% said it has improved.

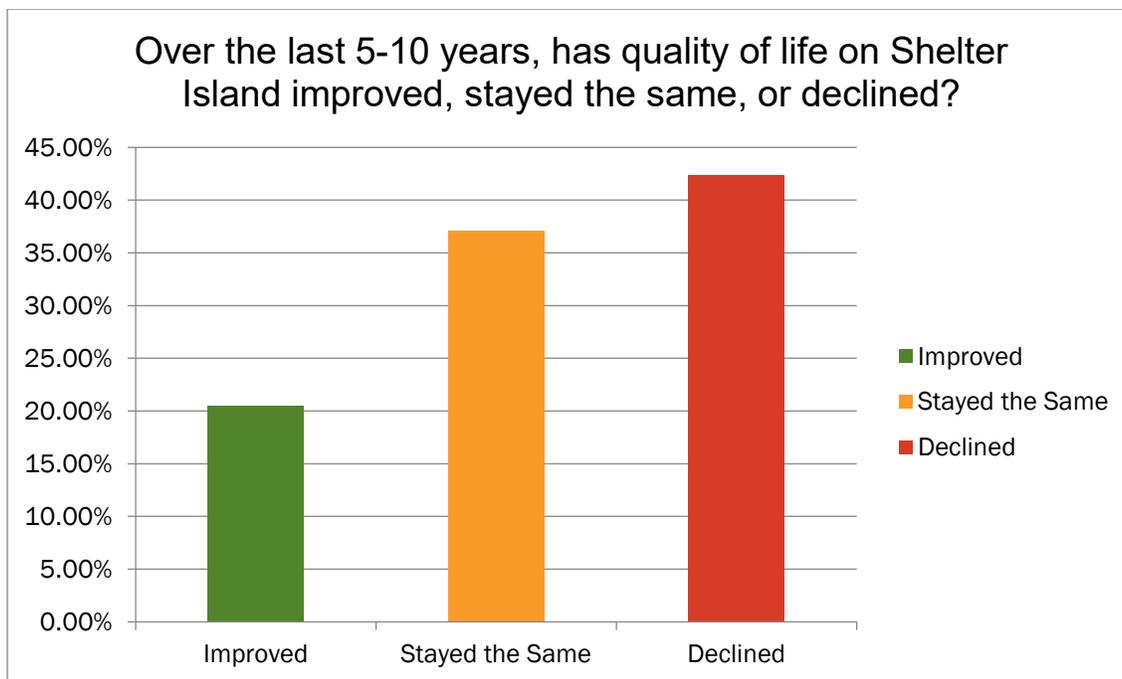


Table 4, Over the last 5-10 years, has quality of life on Shelter Island improved, stayed the same, or declined?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Improved	20.54%	204
Stayed the Same	37.06%	368
Declined	42.40%	421
Please explain why		786
	Answered	993

3. Over 60% of survey respondents do not see a need for additional Town services or facilities.

When asked, “Are there services or facilities that the Town government does not currently provide that you think it should provide?”, 62% of respondents said “No.”

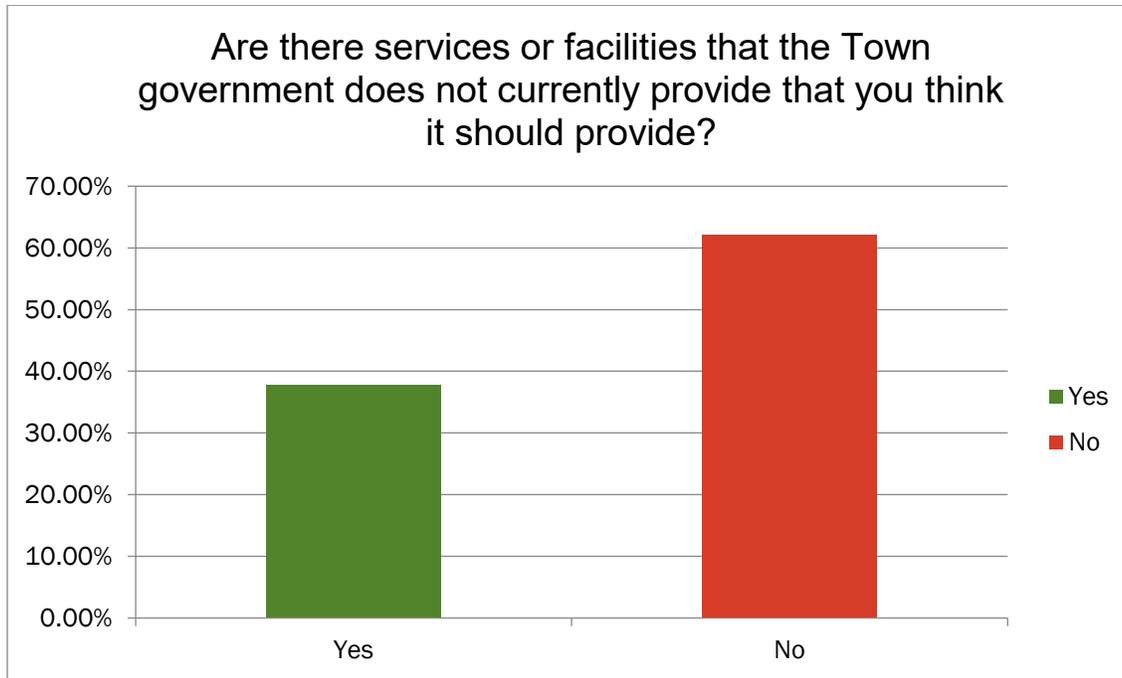


Table 5, Are there services or facilities that the Town government does not currently provide that you think it should provide?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	37.87%	362
No	62.13%	594
If you said yes, what services?		393
	Answered	956
	Skipped	57

Are There Differences Between the Opinions of Various Groups of Respondents?

Results for the answers to the survey's closed-ended questions question were cross-tabulated with answers to each of the demographic questions and variations among demographic groups' answers were tested for statistical significance.⁵ For example, we compared whether opinions about quality of life varied among renters, owners, and people who live with family or friends. The intent of this analysis was to gain insights about whether opinions varied by a respondent's position or stage in life; for example, do people at different ages rate the importance of a topic differently? The variations between demographic groups described below are statistically significant, but that does not mean that they are meaningful or important. We have included all the factors that show significant variation between groups to enable the reader to draw their own conclusions. We recommend consulting the cross-tabulation tables and paying attention to the relative sizes of groups and the magnitude of differences between the answers of various groups. Also, please note that because there were a small number of responses from some demographic groups, comparisons to those groups do not show statistical significance. For example, not enough people under age 19 responded to the survey to show statistically significant results.

Relationship Between Demographic Characteristics and Opinions about the Importance of Housing Cost & Business and Employment Opportunities

We analyzed differences between demographic groups for two of questions about the importance of topics: the cost of purchasing and renting housing, and employment and business opportunities. These topics were selected because they showed a greater difference of opinion; both a large number of people rated the issues "very important" and a large number rated them "not important."

Housing

The following demographic factors were significantly related to the importance respondents placed on housing cost:

- A higher percentage of people (49%) who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months of the year said housing cost is very important compared to people who live on the island 6-9 months (18%), 3-6 months (23%), or less than 3 months (31%). People who live on Shelter Island 3-6 months or 6-9 months were more likely to say that housing cost is somewhat important (43%, 39% respectively) than people who live here 9+ months of the year (27%).
- Renters were more likely to say that housing cost is very important (84%) compared to owners (28%), people who live with family or friend (65%), or people who do not live on Shelter Island (49%). Conversely, owners were more likely to say housing cost is somewhat important or not important than renters or people who live with family or friends.
- There were not significant variations among people with different employment statuses, except that retirees were less likely than people with several other employment statuses to say housing cost is very important. Retirees were more likely to say housing cost is somewhat or not important.
- People who work multiple jobs were more likely to say housing cost is very important than those who do not work multiple jobs (62% vs 30%), and less likely to say it is somewhat important (24% vs. 36%) or not important (9% vs. 26%).
- A greater percentage of people who work on Shelter Island (61%), the North Fork (50%), or the South Fork (61%) say housing cost is very important than people who work west of Riverhead or in the NYC area (27%) or people who are working remotely during COVID-19 (22%).

⁵ Statistical significance was calculated by Survey Monkey at a 95% confidence interval (p=.05). Data was only tested for significance if a group size was at least 30 people. For an explanation of the methodology see: https://help.surveymonkey.com/articles/en_US/kb/Significant-Differences.

- A significantly higher percentage of people 20-34 years old said housing cost is very important than older age groups. The greatest difference was between people 20-34 years old and 65-79 years old (79% very important vs 24% very important)
- The importance of housing cost varied significantly among income groups. Housing cost was very important to a higher percentage of people with a lower household income than people with a higher income. The greatest variation was between people who earn less than \$49,999 compared to those who earn \$200,000 or more. 70% of the former said housing cost is very important compared to 21% of the latter.
- There were also significant differences in responses based on education. Those with a graduate or professional degree were more likely to say that housing cost is not important and less likely to say housing cost is very important than those with other educational levels.

Employment and Business Opportunities

The following demographic factors were significantly related to respondents' rating of the importance of employment and business opportunities:

- The percentage of people who said employment and business opportunities are very important was lower for those who have been connected to Shelter Island for 6-20 years (27%) compared to those who have shorter (42%) or longer (37%) connections to the Island.
- 51% of people who spend more than 9 months of the year said that employment and business opportunities are very important, compared to 17% of those who spend less than 3 months per year, 19% of those who spend 3-6 months, and 20% of those who spend 6-9 months. Conversely, a higher percentage of people who spend less than 3 months (36%), 3-6 months (37%), or 6-9 months (38%) said employment and business opportunities are not important than people who spend 9+ months on Shelter Island (17%).
- As with housing, more renters rated employment and business opportunities as very important (72%) than owners (31%), people who live with family or friend (38%), or people who do not live on the Island (30%). The latter groups were significantly more likely to say employment and business opportunities are not important than renters.
- The results for retirees showed significant differences from those of full-time employees, part-time employees, and people maintaining a household and/or parenting. Retirees were less likely than those groups to say that economic and business opportunities are very important and more likely to say they are not important.
- People with more than one job placed greater importance on employment and business opportunities than those who do not have more than one job.
- A greater percentage of people who work on Shelter Island (63%), the North Fork (58%), or the South Fork (61%) said employment and business opportunities is very important than people who work west of Riverhead or in the NYC area (22%) or who are working remotely during COVID-19 (22%), while a higher percentage of the latter two groups were more likely to say employment and business opportunities are not important (37% and 33% compared to 8%, 16%, and 7%).
- Comparing ages, saying that employment and business opportunities are very important was highest among 20-34 year olds (67%) and declined across the age spectrum to a low of 19% among those 80 or older.
- Across incomes, the percentage of people who said employment and business opportunities are very important was largest for the lowest income group (60% for less than \$49,999). The percentage declined as income rose reaching a low of (23% for those who make \$200,000 or more. Despite the linear pattern, the differences between income groups were not all statistically significant—those between people who make \$200,000 or more and all other groups were statistically significant.

- The difference between responses from those with advanced degrees and the other education groups was statistically significant (but not the differences among the other groups. 36% of people with graduate or professional degrees said business and employment opportunities are not important compared to 7% of people with a high school degree or less, 14% of people with some college or an associate's degree, and 21% of people with a Bachelor's degree.

Relationship Between Demographic Characteristics and Opinions about Changes in Quality of Life

Results for the question, "Over the last 5-10 years, has quality of life on Shelter Island improved, stayed the same, or declined?" were cross-tabulated with demographic characteristics collected in subsequent questions. It is not entirely clear what the drivers of differing opinions are. It is possible that responses are related to stage of life, economic position, and/or quality of life issues. However, these correlations may also be driven by other underlying factors. The drivers of opinions about quality of life can be explored further in future public outreach for this project. The following demographic characteristics are significantly related to variations in how respondents answered this question:

- People who have been connected to Shelter Island for 5 or fewer years, or 6 to 20 years were more likely to say that quality of life on Shelter Island improved (34% and 25%) or stayed the same (50% and 53%) than people with 20 or more years of connection to the Island (18% improved, 30% stayed the same). People who have been connected to Shelter Island for more than 20 years were more likely to say it has declined (52%) than those with 5 or fewer years of connection (16%) or 6-20 years of connection (22%).
- The amount of time a person spends per year on Shelter Island appears to be related to their assessment of changes in quality of life. People who spent less than three months or between three and six months per year on Shelter Island were more likely to say quality of life stayed the same than people who spend 6-9 months or more than 9 months on the island (46% and 46% vs 31% and 32%). People who spent six-nine months or more than 9 months per year on the Island were more likely to say quality of life declined than those who spent less than 3 months or 3-6 months on the island (48% and 49% vs. 33% and 30%). Sample sizes for day trippers and weekenders and people who spend no time on Shelter Island were too small to draw conclusions about those groups.
- There were not significant differences in answers to this question based on housing tenure.
- There were no significant differences in answers to this question based on employment status, but number of jobs and place of employment did show some significant differences. People who work more than one job said that Quality of Life declined at a higher percentage (55%) than those who do not work more than one job (39%). People who work on Shelter Island, the North Fork, or South Fork were more likely to say quality of life on Shelter Island has declined (50%, 47%, 43% respectively) than people who are working remotely during COVID-19 (27%). People who work on Shelter Island were also more likely to say quality of life has declined than people who work west of Riverhead or in the NYC area (31%)
- People aged 35-49 and 50-64 had a more positive assessment of changes in quality of life than people 65-79 years old. 40% of people 35-49 years old and 40% of people 50-64 years old said Quality of Life stayed the same compared to 31% of people 65-79 years old. 50% of people 65-79 years old said quality of life declined compared to 36% of those 35-49 and 39% of those 50-64 years old.
- Among income levels, people with a household income of \$200,000 or more were most likely to say that quality of life improved. This result was only statistically significant when compared to people with a household income between \$75,000 and \$99,999. People with a household income of \$200,000 or more were also most likely to say that quality of life stayed the same. This result was statistically significant

compared to people with a household income between \$75,000 and \$99,999 or \$150,000 and \$199,999. People with a household income between \$75,000 and \$199,999 were more likely to say that quality of life declined than people with an income of over \$200,000 per year.

- The differences between education levels are complex. People with a Bachelor’s degree are most likely to say quality of life improved—a significant difference from people with a high school degree or less. The highest percentage of people saying quality of life declined was among people with some college or an associate’s degree (52%) which was significantly different from those with a Bachelor’s degree (39%) or a graduate or professional degree (42%).

Relationship Between Demographic Characteristics and Opinions About the Need for Additional Town Services or Facilities

Results for the question, “Are there services or facilities that the Town government does not currently provide that you think it should provide?” were cross-tabulated with demographic characteristics collected in subsequent questions. Overall, a majority of almost all demographic groups answered “no” to this question. There were some statistically significant variations in the strength of that majority between demographic groups:

- People who spend less than 3 months of the year, 3-6 months of the year or 6-9 months of the year were more likely to say that there is not a need for additional Town services or facilities than who live on Shelter Island more than 9 months of the year (less than 3 months-68%; 3-6 months-69%, 6-9 months-67%, 9+ months-55%).
- A larger percent of people who do not live on Shelter Island (78%) than renters (52%) do not think there should be additional Town services or facilities.
- A larger percent of retirees (68%) than full-time workers (60%) or part-time workers (55%) do not think there should be additional Town services or facilities.
- Unlike most other groups, just over half of people who work more than one job (51%) think that the Town should provide additional services or facilities, significantly higher than the percentage of people who do not have more than one job (34%).
- Among employment locations, people who work west of Riverhead or in the NYC area had the highest percentage of saying that there should be additional Town services or facilities (70%), significantly higher than people who work on Shelter Island (51%), the North Fork (51%), the South Fork (55%). Likewise, a significantly higher percentage of people who are working remotely during COVID-19 (68%) said there should not be additional Town services and facilities than people who work on Shelter Island (51%).
- Also countering the dominant opinion are people aged 20-34. 55% of them answered “yes,” significantly higher than older age groups, all of whom had a majority for “no,” ranging from 61% for 35-49 years old to 68% for 80 or over.
- People with a household income of \$200,000 or more answered “no” at the highest rate (70%), significantly higher than all other income groups. People whose income is \$50,000 to \$74,999 was the only income group that had a majority for yes (54%-yes).
- There were not any significant differences based on education level.

Conclusion

The survey showed a high degree of agreement about the importance of issues facing Shelter Island. The following issues are very important to a majority of survey respondents: drinking water—quantity and quality on Shelter Island (90%); the long-term sustainability of the ferry services (88%); water quality in the Peconic Estuary including Shelter Island’s creeks, ponds, and inlets (87%); visual character and sense of place on Shelter Island (86%); safe places to walk and bike on the Island (85%); sense of community on Shelter Island (78%), access to shoreline areas on Shelter Island (73%); availability of volunteers on the Island—like the volunteer fire department (71%); tick-borne diseases (71%); climate change and sea-level rise (66%); and enforcement of the Island’s laws and regulations (53%).

The remaining two issues—“The cost of purchasing or renting housing on Shelter Island” and “Employment and business opportunities on Shelter Island”— were more evenly divided: about a third of respondents said they were very important (36% for housing, 35% for employment and business), a third said they were somewhat important (33% for housing, 31% for employment and business), about 7% were not sure, and about a quarter said they were not important (23% for housing, 27% for employment and business).

Opinions about changes in quality of life on Shelter Island were mixed: 42% of respondents said that quality of life has declined, 37% said it has stayed the same, 21% said it has improved.

A strong majority (62%) of respondents do not think there are additional services or facilities that the Town government should provide.

There are some statistically significant differences between how demographic groups answered questions. The drivers of these differences are not always clear and can be explored further as work on the Comprehensive Plan Update progresses.