



2008 SURVEY REPORT

The goal of this survey is to provide residents with some insights about their town government and to ask what they would like to see happen in the town in the future.

Some 840 questionnaires were sent out; 10 were undeliverable and 166 (an even 20%) filled out and returned by town residents.

Some questions have a numerical rating:

(4) very satisfied (3) somewhat satisfied (2) not at all satisfied (1) not applicable or “ it doesn’t matter to me.”

1. How long have you lived in the town of Nelson?

Average (years)	27
Total responses	162

2. How satisfied are you about the quality of life in Nelson?

4. very satisfied	58.0%
3. somewhat satisfied	39.0
2. not at all satisfied	1.8
1. not applicable	1.2
Total responses	164

(There was no correlation between overall satisfaction and years of residence.)

3. How do you typically learn about issues affecting the town of Nelson?

.1 Friends and neighbors	75.3%
.2 The Republican	27.1
.3 the Hi Neighbor	54.8
.4 other newspapers	16.3
.5 Organized citizen’s groups	7.8
.6 Flyers in grocery stores/public places	6.6
.7 Town Board meetings	7.2
.8 Town website	3.6
.9 Other	6.0
Total responses	166

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4. Are you satisfied with the services provided by the Town?

4. very satisfied	35.2%
3. somewhat satisfied	61.1
2. not at all satisfied	2.5
1. not applicable	1.2
Total responses	162

(96.3% are very or somewhat satisfied with the services provided by the town.)

5. Is the office of the Town Clerk made available at times that are convenient for you?

4. very satisfied	40.8%
3. somewhat satisfied	36.4
2. not at all satisfied	14.8
1. not applicable	8.0
Total responses	162

6. Are you able to see the Codes Enforcement Officer (Zoning) when necessary?

4. very satisfied	29.3%
3. somewhat satisfied	29.3
2. not at all satisfied	8.3
1. not applicable	33.1
Total responses	157

7. Are you able to get in touch with the Town Highway Superintendent when necessary?

4. very satisfied	35.7%
3. somewhat satisfied	27.3
2. not at all satisfied	7.1
1. not applicable	29.9
Total responses	154

8. Are you able to get in touch with the Town Supervisor when necessary?

4. very satisfied	37.2%
3. somewhat satisfied	21.8
2. not at all satisfied	5.1
1. not applicable	35.9
Total responses	156

9. Are you able to get in touch with the Town Assessor when necessary?

4. very satisfied	31.8%
3. somewhat satisfied	35.1
2. not at all satisfied	10.4
1. not applicable	22.7
Total responses	154

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10. Is the maintenance of the roads sufficient in the Town?

4. very satisfied	29.4%
3. somewhat satisfied	45.4
2. not at all satisfied	22.1
1. not applicable	3.1
Total responses	163

11. Do you agree or disagree with the vision regarding the future of the Town as it is expressed in the new Comprehensive Plan? ?

4. very much	9.6%
3. somewhat	13.4
2. not at all	5.7
1. I am not familiar with the plan	71.3
Total responses	157

12. Should the Town of Nelson zoning laws:

1. encourage new development and businesses.	33.5%
2. balance new development and businesses with resource protection.	53.8
3. discourage new development to preserve current community character.	12.7
Total responses	158

13. Approximately 75% (\$750,000) of the Town Budget is spent for labor, equipment and materials to maintain and re-construct the 52 miles of roads in the Town of Nelson. Would you consider paying higher taxes to have certain roads that now have oil and stone surfaces be upgraded to blacktop, or more roads able to be rebuilt in the course of a year? As it stands now only about one mile of road can be resurfaced in a road building season.

1. I would be willing to pay more taxes	23.4%
2. I would not support additional taxes	76.6
Total responses	154

How important are each of the following to you?

14. Town taxes/fees.

4. very	66.1%
3. somewhat	24.7
2. not at all	4.9
1. It doesn't matter to me	4.3
Total responses	162

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15. Shopping/retail growth.	
4. very	28.0%
3. somewhat	27.3
2. not at all	26.7
1. It doesn't matter to me	18.0
Total responses	161
16. Farming/agriculture.	
4. very	65.3%
3. somewhat	24.8
2. not at all	5.6
1. It doesn't matter to me	4.3
Total responses	161
(The longer the time of residence the more important this is to them.)	
17. Assisted living facility and/or group homes.	
4. very	16.1%
3. somewhat	32.9
2. not at all	28.0
1. It doesn't matter to me	23.0
Total responses	161
18. Maintaining a small town character.	
4. very	59.7%
3. somewhat	30.4
2. not at all	6.8
1. It doesn't matter to me	3.1
Total responses	161
19. Maintaining Open Space.	
4. very	66.0%
3. somewhat	23.9
2. not at all	8.2
1. It doesn't matter to me	1.9
Total responses	159
20. Erieville Reservoir.	
4. very	66.1%
3. somewhat	21.6
2. not at all	7.4
1. It doesn't matter to me	4.9
Total responses	162

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21. Eatonbrook Reservoir.

4. very	61.1%
3. somewhat	23.2
2. not at all	9.4
1. It doesn't matter to me	6.3
Total responses.	159

(Looking at each of the previous 8 items listed in declining order of “very important”)

Erieville Reservoir	66.1%
Town taxes/fees	66.1
Maintaining Open Space	66.0
Farming/agriculture	65.3
Eatonbrook Reservoir	61.1
Maintaining a small town character	59.7
Shopping/retail growth	28.0
Assisted living facility and/or group homes	16.1

22. Each Town in the Cazenovia school district contributes money to the Cazenovia Area Joint Youth Recreation summer program based on their population. Are you satisfied with this program?

4. very	20.0%
3. somewhat	28.4
2. not at all	11.6
1. not applicable or it doesn't matter to me	40.0
Total responses	155

23. We pay a small tax in January on our Town/County bill to support CAVAC. Is medical emergency protection for the town sufficient?.

4. very	52.5%
3. somewhat	38.2
2. not at all	2.5
1. not applicable or it doesn't matter to me	6.8
Total responses	162

24. We pay a tax to one of several fire departments depending where you live in the town. Is fire protection for the town sufficient?

4. very	57.6%
3. somewhat	32.9
2. not at all	5.7
1. It doesn't matter to me	3.8
Total responses	158

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25. The town will be revising the Zoning, Land Use and Subdivision laws in the next year. Do you think the current laws, as administered by the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and the Codes Enforcement Officer:

1. Are too restrictive	20.4%
2. Provide adequate property and resource protection	34.4
3. Are not restrictive enough	12.7
4. I am not familiar with zoning	32.5
Total responses	157

Function Transfer or Consolidation: The state of New York officials are encouraging municipalities to consolidate local services and eliminate redundancy and multiple government layers in an effort to reduce taxes. A recent example of this consolidation initiative was the transfer of the Town of Clay police department to the Onondaga County Sheriffs Dept..

Madison County has been awarded a state grant to study how property tax assessment and tax collection may be modified to reduce costs and improve service quality.

No local analysis has been done to show whether a consolidation or transfer of services would be more effective nor better than the present system.

Do you prefer that the following functions be modified or do you prefer the present system?

26. Property assessment:

3. Keep Town Assessor	51.2%
2. Utilize a group of Madison County Assessors	23.8
1. Undecided	25.0
Total responses	160

27. Tax collection:

3. Keep Town Tax Collector	52.8%
2. Have Madison County oversees collection of property taxes	32.1
1. Undecided	15.1
Total responses	159

These areas are currently not being studied by the County but please provide your opinion:

28. Code enforcement:

3. Keep control local	63.7%
2. Madison County takeover this function	19.4
1. Undecided	16.9
Total responses	160

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29. The local court system:

4. Keep control local	2.5%
3. Share common court with another town	47.5
2. Madison County takeover this function	27.2
1. Undecided	22.8

Total responses 158

(Unexpected response!)

31. Consolidation of Highway Services:

3. Develop shared services agreement with neighboring town highway departments	31.9%
2. Develop shared services agreement with Madison County Highway Dept.	26.1
1. Don't change, maintain current Town Highway Dept. system	42.0

Total responses 157

32. The Town of Cazenovia recently decided to make the Town Highway Superintendent an appointed position. The NYS Commission on Local Government Efficiency also believes that Town Clerks and Highway Superintendents should be appointed so the most trained and competent candidates can be hired for the position and be provided with job security. Please indicate your preference:

a. Highway Superintendent:

3. Elected	50.0%
2. Appointed	36.9
1. No opinion	13.1

Total responses 160

b. Town Clerk

3. Elected	54.4%
2. Appointed	34.2
1. No Opinion	11.4

Total responses 158

(The only correlation with length of residency was question 16.)