
MDP Public Input - Survey Results

Summer Village of Waiparous - October, 2018

Birch Consulting



Introduction

In September and October 2018, Summer Village of Waiparous residents and landowners were asked to complete an online survey to assist in preparation of the Summer Village's new Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The survey was prepared by Birch Consulting following discussion with the MDP Steering Committee about the types of land use planning issues that were relevant to the community. Some of the survey questions were selected with the intention of updating previously assessed community positions, addressing such things as trails and transportation. Other questions were asked in order to discover the position and interests of community members on newly evolving issues, such as short term vacation rentals. Still others were more open ended, intended to determine community sentiment regarding the desired future for the community.

The survey was vetted by the Steering Committee prior to being posted on line. It was also offered in paper format for those who might not have been comfortable or able to use the online survey tool.

The input received from the survey is summarized below. The MDP Steering Committee has reviewed the detailed survey results and will use that community input to prepare the MDP but decided that the detailed results of the survey should not be made public. The Steering Committee members felt it likely that, given the small size of the community, some of the people who responded to the survey could be identified by their comments even though the survey results were anonymous. The detailed survey results are being provided to Council given the perceived value of those detailed comments to future decision-making beyond the scope of the MDP.

Question 1: Are you a full-time or part-time resident of the Summer Village of Waiparous?

There were 77 responses as follows:

- Full-time Residents - 49.35%
- Part-time or Seasonal Residents - 50.65%

Question 2: Do you rent or own the property you use in the Summer Village of Waiparous?

There were again 77 responses. The results were:

- Rent - 1.30%
- Own - 98.70%

Question 3: What two (2) characteristics of the Summer Village of Waiparous do you like the most and want to preserve into the future?

There were 66 suggestions received regarding the first characteristic and 62 suggestions for the second characteristic. Characteristics that were mentioned at least three times are provided below. They are listed in order of frequency of mention by survey respondents, with the number of mentions listed in brackets after each characteristic. In this regard note that the words used below to categorize the comments have been developed by the consultant for grouping purposes based on the wording used by the survey respondents.

Characteristic #1:

- The natural environment, woodlands, forest, plants and wildlife (19)
- Privacy, solitude, seclusion and remoteness (10)
- The cottage-country feel, rustic charm and small village atmosphere (9)
- Peace and quiet, and lack of noise (8)
- No commercial development or facilities (5)
- Small size and population (4)
- Community spirit and helpful neighbours (3)

Characteristic #2:

- The natural environment, woodlands, forest, plants and wildlife (9)
- Privacy, solitude, seclusion and remoteness (9)
- Peace and quiet, and lack of noise (8)
- Trails and walking paths (6)
- Community spirit and helpful neighbours (4)
- No commercial development or facilities (4)
- The cottage-country feel, rustic charm and small village atmosphere (4)
- Rivers and waterways (4)
- Small size and population (3)

Question 4: If you could change two (2) things in the Summer Village of Waiparous, what would they be and how would you change them?

This question elicited 59 responses and 49 responses respectively in terms of suggestions for the first and second things people would change. Suggestions for change that were mentioned at least three times are listed below. Again, the description of each characteristic has been developed by the consultant for grouping purposes based on wording used by the survey respondents. The number of mentions is listed in brackets after each characteristic.

Things To Change #1:

- Reduce traffic through the Summer Village; relocate Highway 40 so that it goes around the Summer Village (8)
- Create more connectivity between the east and west sides; build a pedestrian bridge over Waiparous Creek, potentially as part of the Highway 40 bridge (6)
- Reduce speeding on Highway 40, through enforcement or possibly using speed bumps (5)
- Obtain access to the MD of Bighorn waste transfer and recycling site; access to Pears Road recycling bins (5)
- Improve Highway 40 safety, specifically at pedestrian crossings and school bus stops; undertake a traffic safety audit (4)
- No change; good as is (3)

Things To Change #2:

- No change; good as is (5)

Additional Things To Change:

In contrast to the responses for Question 3 above, with this question there was a more diverse array of responses and less consolidation around common themes. In order to take advantage of the wide range of responses to this question, it was decided that where a change item had an individual frequency of mention of less than three in either list #1 or list #2 but a combined frequency of mention of three or more when the two lists were combined, these suggestions should also be provided in this survey summary. These additional suggestions for change are:

- Improve public access to the Ghost River on both the east and west sides of the community (4)
- Improve internet access and/or cellular coverage (3)
- Reduce traffic noise from Highway 40 (3)
- Use the existing Highway 40 bridge location for a new, wider bridge with better approaches (3)
- Have less stringent building controls and bylaws; reduce permit fees (3)
- Increase the sense of community we seem to have lost; improve attitudes; and increase community participation (3)

Question 5: If you could determine the future, what would you like the Summer Village of Waiparous to look like in 15 years? Briefly, how would you describe that community future?

There were 58 responses to this question. Ideas of a similar nature that were mentioned at least three times are listed below. The actual number of mentions is listed in brackets after each suggestion. Again, the description of each characteristic has been developed by the consultant for grouping purposes based on wording used by the survey respondents.

Note that the first and by far the most frequently mentioned description of the future Waiparous (keep it as it is today) was often accompanied with a suggestion for one change. In these instances, the suggested change was recorded separately.

- Keep Waiparous as it is today, close to nature and with no commercial development (33)
- The paths in the Summer Village and adjacent Crown land would be well maintained or improved (8)
- There would be less traffic through the Summer Village, or it would be at slower speeds with better enforcement (7)
- Waiparous would be a strong and close knit community with active involvement of its members, host multiple community events, and have more volunteers (6)
- Highway 40 would be safer and there would be a resolution to the bridge issue (4)
- There would be a new bridge, and Highway 40 would bypass the community (4)
- There would be a new bridge on Highway 40 in its current location (3)
- There would be a better connection for movement between the Summer Village's east and west sides (3)
- We would have better internet and cellular service (3)
- The community would be more resistant to wildfire because of vegetation control and building construction techniques (3)
- Waiparous would be more environmentally independent and sustainable, integrated into the landscape, and have high social capital (3)

Question 6: A new issue facing many municipalities is short term vacation rentals (e.g., Airbnb and VRBO). While the long-term rental of a house is legal and falls under provincial legislation, the short-term (generally thought of as less than 30 days, and often lasting only a few days to a week) rental of a property is a municipal land use issue. Are you in favour of people in the Summer Village of Waiparous renting out their house for short-term vacation rental purposes?

There were 61 responses to this question, with the following result:

- Yes, in favour of short term vacation rentals - 52.46%
- No, not in favour of short term vacation rentals - 47.54%

As with the responses to the previous questions, the consultant has grouped the comments based on similarities, paraphrasing the actual response wording for this purpose. Where there were three or more similar comments they are listed below, with the actual number of mentions recorded in brackets.

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- Short term vacation rentals are acceptable as long as there is oversight, rules and bylaws are followed, permits are required, fees are collected from the property owners to cover the increased cost of enforcement and service provision, and the privilege of having such rentals can be revoked (10)
 - Short term vacation rentals should not be allowed due to concerns about the potential for increased traffic in the community, parking problems, campfires, noise, partying, property destruction, damage to the trails, crime, and use of ATVs and motorcycles in the community or on the trails (10)
 - The Summer Village should be a place for residents, and allowing short term vacation rentals will result in the loss of a sense of community due to the presence of unknown and transient visitors (9)
 - We do not need tourism in Waiparous; we do not want to be a tourism resort community (5)
 - Short term visitors will not have the same interest in care-taking and respect for the community as will property owners or residents (3)
 - No, it will be too hard to enforce the bylaws (3)
 - Only if the property owners live on site, as with bed and breakfasts (3)

Question 7: The term “Home Occupation” covers a lot of possibilities, from a carpentry business operating out of a garage to an internet-based business operating out of an office in a house. Do you have any comments or suggestions about the regulation of Home Occupations in the Summer Village of Waiparous?

There were 58 responses to this question. Where there were at least three responses of a similar nature they are listed below in order of frequency of mention by survey respondents. The number of mentions is listed in brackets after each comment. Note that the description for each grouping has been developed by the consultant but is based on wording used by the survey respondents.

- Home occupations are okay provided there are no adverse external impacts on neighbours or the community (e.g., parking problems, increased traffic, outside storage, unsightly yards, noise, signage, adverse impact on the environment) (31)
- No comments or suggestion; the existing bylaws are fine (10)
- They should definitely be allowed; there should be a broad range of possibilities for residents; there is too much government interference; it is none of my business (8)
- Home occupations are acceptable if there is no external impact but they need to be licensed, monitored, and regulated through bylaws that are real and enforced (6)

Question 8: Each property in the Summer Village of Waiparous currently has its own private water system and sewage treatment system. Are you aware of any problems with these systems that should be addressed?

There were 62 responses to this question. The results were:

- Yes - 11.29%
- No - 88.71%

Although 62 responded answered the yes/no question, there were only 11 written comments received, suggesting that there are not many concerns. They can be summarized as follows:

- It is likely that some of the sewage systems in Waiparous are not operating properly because they are not properly maintained, some people do not know how to maintain them, and maintenance can be expensive.
- Some sewage systems are old and problematic but it is very expensive to upgrade an existing sewage treatment system.
- Pump-out style sewage systems are expensive.
- There should be some common standard of maintenance and enforcement for sewage systems.
- The new Plumbing Code requirements make installation of new sewer systems more expensive than before.
- There were some frozen septic fields last year.
- Some water wells do not meet the Plumbing Code because they are too close to septic fields or not properly sealed (e.g., pit wells).
- E. coli has been found in some well water.
- Some well water levels are low on occasion.
- It would be nice to have the Plumbing Code changed to allow grey water separation and to make it easier to have composting toilets.
- The level of use (full-time versus part-time resident) has an effect on whether or not existing wells and septic systems function properly.

Question 9: Municipal Development Plans must address transportation matters in the municipality (roads, pedestrian and bicycle trails, etc.). Besides the Highway 40 realignment issue, which is well know and being addressed by the community on an on-going basis, are there any transportation issues of concern to you in the Summer Village? If so, what solutions might address your concerns?

There were 46 responses to this question. Where there were at least three responses of a similar nature they are listed below in order of frequency of mention by survey respondents. The number of mentions is listed in brackets after each comment. Note that the description

for each grouping has been developed by the consultant but is based on wording used by the survey respondents.

- We need to make it easier for people to move between the two sides of the community, suggested solutions being to: reduce speeds on Highway 40; create a safe crossing space, such as a separated sidewalk, for pedestrians and bicyclists across Waiparous Creek; build a trail system parallel to Highway 40 through the community to allow people to stay off the Highway; build a separate pedestrian bridge across Waiparous Creek (13)
- Traffic speeds through the Summer Village are too high; the posted speed limit is ignored; we need traffic calming devices such as speed bumps (12)
- None; no concerns (11)
- There were also several individual, trail-specific comments made by the survey respondents, and both the MDP Steering Committee and Council have been advised of those comments.

Question 10: Is there an issue not covered above that you would like addressed in the Summer Village of Waiparous' MDP? (It is a future-focused, long range planning document.) If so, what is the issue and how should it be addressed?

There were only 36 comments in response to this question. As might be expected given the nature of the question, the range of responses was broad. Consequently, for this question summary only, where there were at least two responses of a similar nature they are listed below. The number of mentions is noted in brackets. Again, the description for each grouping has been developed by the consultant based on wording used by the survey respondents.

- None; no issues; not at this time (7)
- Obtain high speed internet (3)
- Increased dog control for: barking, off-leash dogs, poop (3)
- Address the Highway 40 issues and safety (3)
- FireSmarting activities in the Back 40 and in general have been too extreme and that money could have been spent to better advantage (2)
- Include FireSmart requirements in the MDP, such as no wooden roof shingles (2)
- Maintain the Summer Village in its natural state, with no services and no additional development (2)
- There should be a central, community postal kiosk (2)
- Develop the picnic area, possible additions being a shelter with fire place, a skating rink, more open area for soccer, horse shoe pits, a basketball court (2)

End of Survey Summary