

## **Mason 2005 Master Plan Questionnaire**

Mason residents agree it is time to update their master plan. The 2005 Master Plan Questionnaire clearly shows why and how this update should occur. There are several overarching topics that many of the respondents strongly agree on.

Under the section of Commercial Growth, the majority of respondents disagree that business should be relocated to a commercial district. This indicates that the people of Mason do want to support home businesses. They do not want to set up a commercial district as this would be detrimental to home businesses.

Respondents show overwhelming support for both open space preservation and wetland protection. In addition to this, a large percentage of respondents say that they would like to know more about the conservation land that Mason already owns. All of this clearly shows that Mason residents do care about their town's land and they want to see this land and the ecosystems within it protected from development.

Respondents have a lot to say about the quality of life in Mason. A large portion of respondents say that Mason's taxes were too high and that the Mason school system was less than satisfactory. Surveys say that the town clerk needs to have more available hours. In general, Mason residents want better town resources and they don't want to pay as much as they are for these resources. Another very important resource that residents responded to was Mason's rural character. A vast number of respondents say that rural character is vital to Mason, and many respondents say that Mason doesn't need anymore streetlights. This is also closely related to town character as too many streetlights make it difficult to view the night sky.

Under the section of Residential Development, respondents generally agree that Mason does not need to accommodate back lots or low income housing. An overwhelming number of respondents also say that Mason should not encourage mobile homes or mobile home parks. In addition to this, surveyed residents strongly agree that Mason should not put more houses in per acre or develop policies that allow for cluster housing. Respondents also say that Mason is doing a good job of maintaining their dirt roads.

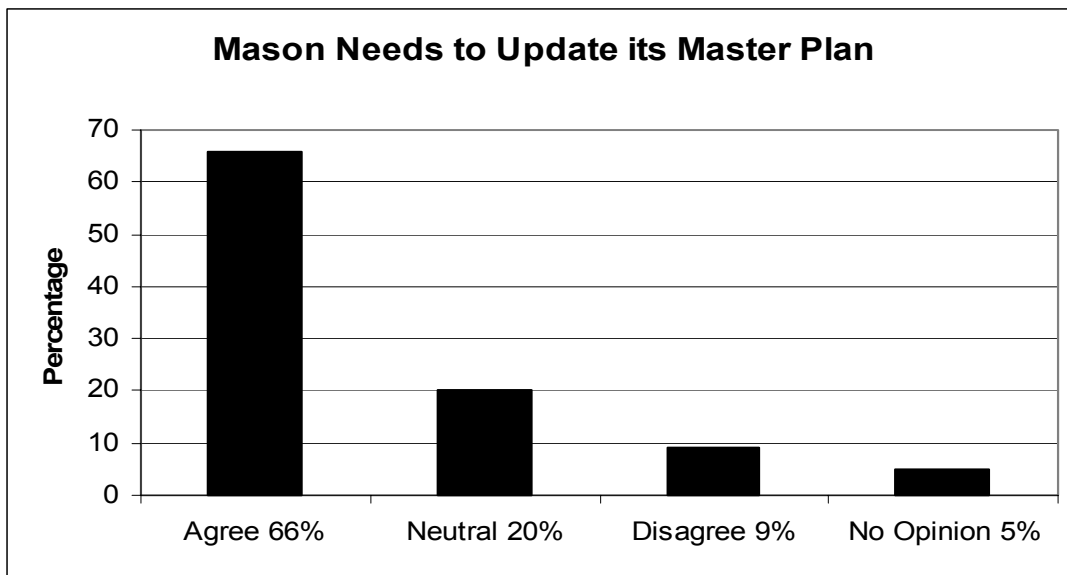
In terms of Town Services, there are several services that respondents agree are doing a particularly good job. Respondents express strong support for the Fire Department, the Highway Department, the Library, the Police Department, and the Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

These are only the outstanding trends within the data. All of these issues have more than the majority of respondents' support. There is much more that is found within this data, and it is explained in more depth in the following sections.

**Introduction:**

The following graphs and tables are results from the 2005 Master Plan Questionnaire designed by the Mason Planning Board. The survey was created to gather input from the citizens of Mason in regards to the town’s resources, land uses, and development. This feedback will help Mason’s Planning Board revise their Master Plan. The surveys were made up of 60 questions split up into five major categories: Commercial Development, Conservation, Quality of Life, Residential Development, and Town Services.

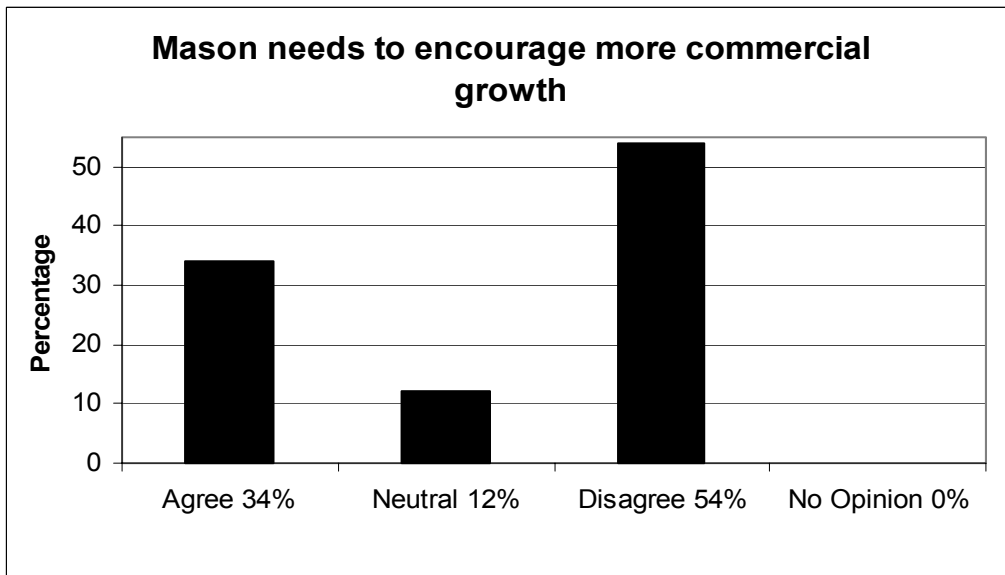
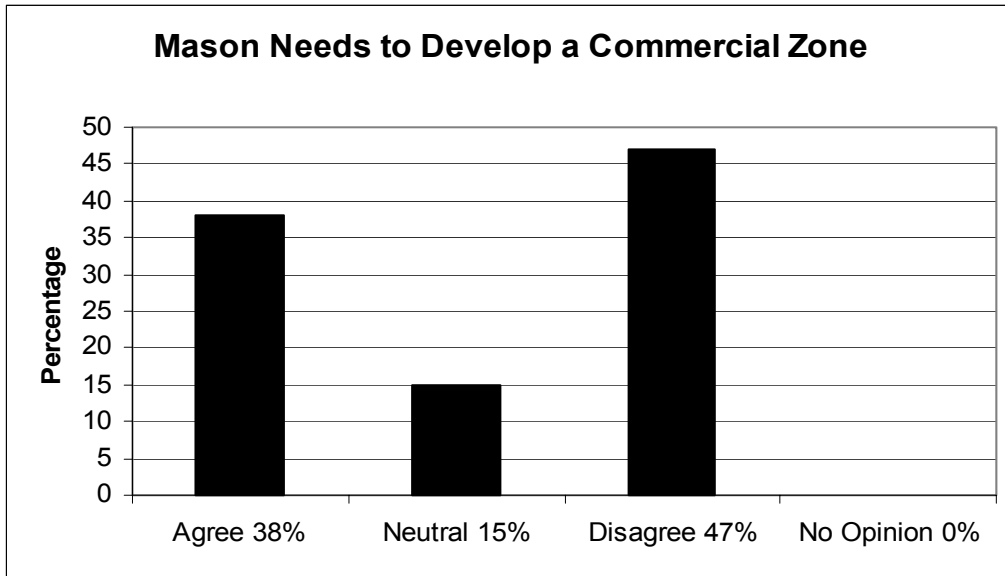
In May of 2005, surveys were sent out to all 450 households in Mason, and they were to be returned by June. Of those 450 surveys, about 100 were returned. They represented about 22% of Mason’s households. This is a good return. It shows that Mason’s residents truly care about the future of their town, and they want to contribute their thoughts as to where the town should be heading.



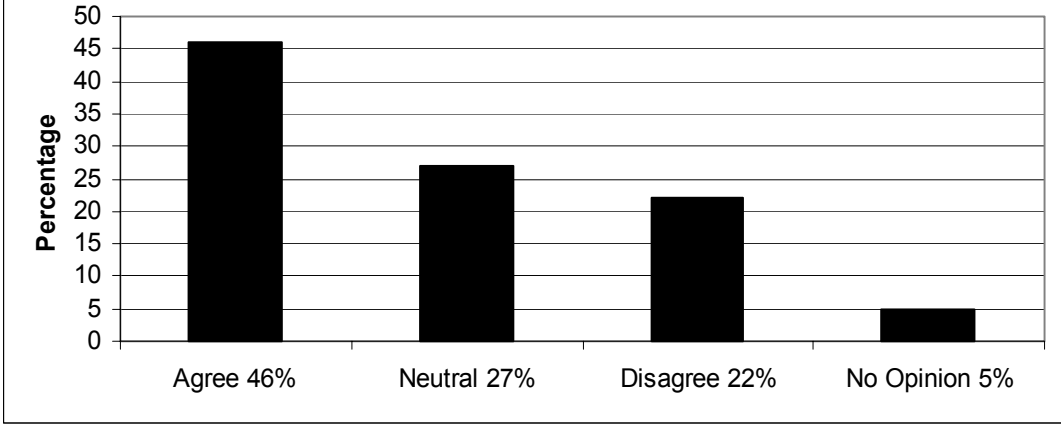
Two thirds of the residents who returned a survey think that Mason’s Master Plan needs to be updated. Mason’s Master Plan has not been revised since 1981.

**Commercial Development:**

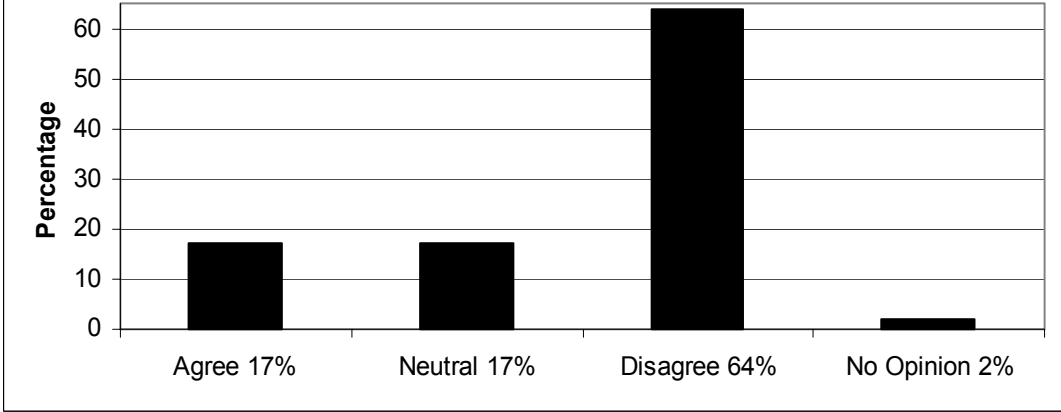
The majority of Mason residents filling out this survey believe that commercial growth should not be encouraged in Mason. Almost half of these residents believe that Mason should not develop a commercial zone, and more than half say that commercial business should not be relocated to a commercial district. This shows indirect support for small-scale home business within Mason. While almost half of the surveys say that Mason residents believe that Mason has done a good job of limiting commercial growth within the town's borders, the same amount are either neutral or disagree.



**Mason does a good job of limiting commercial growth within borders**



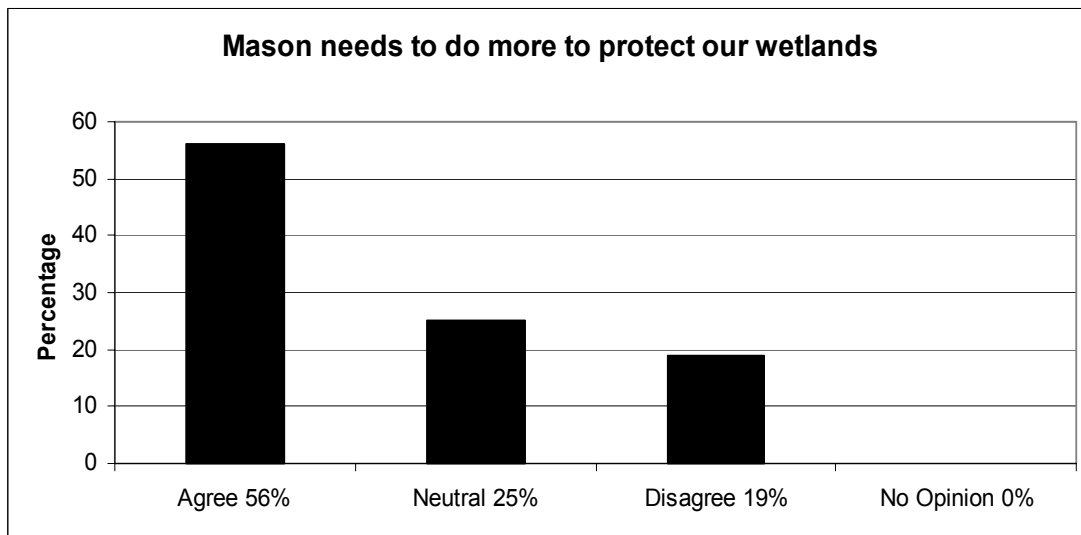
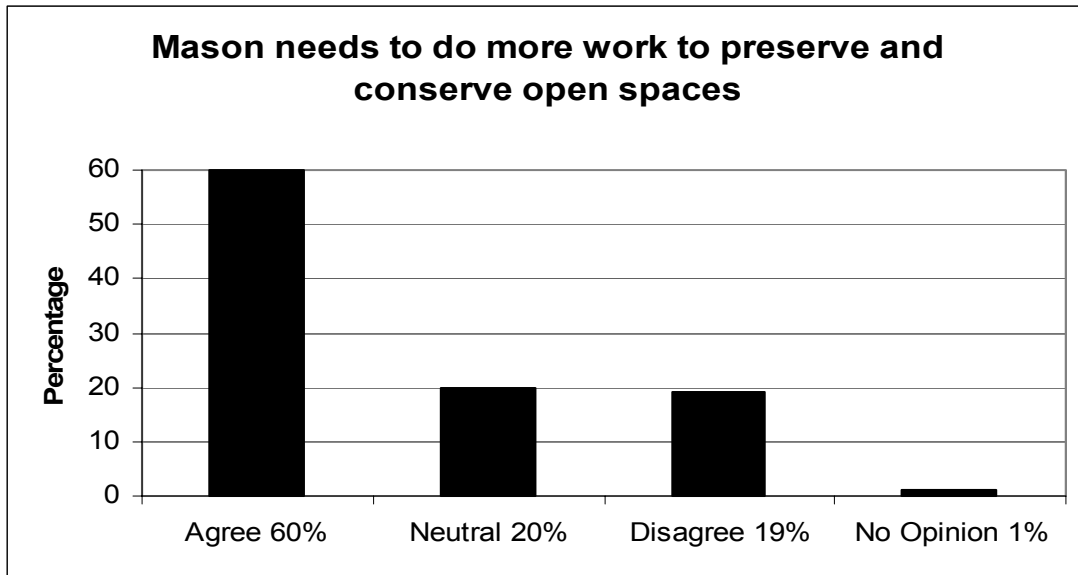
**All commercial business should be relocated to a commercial district**

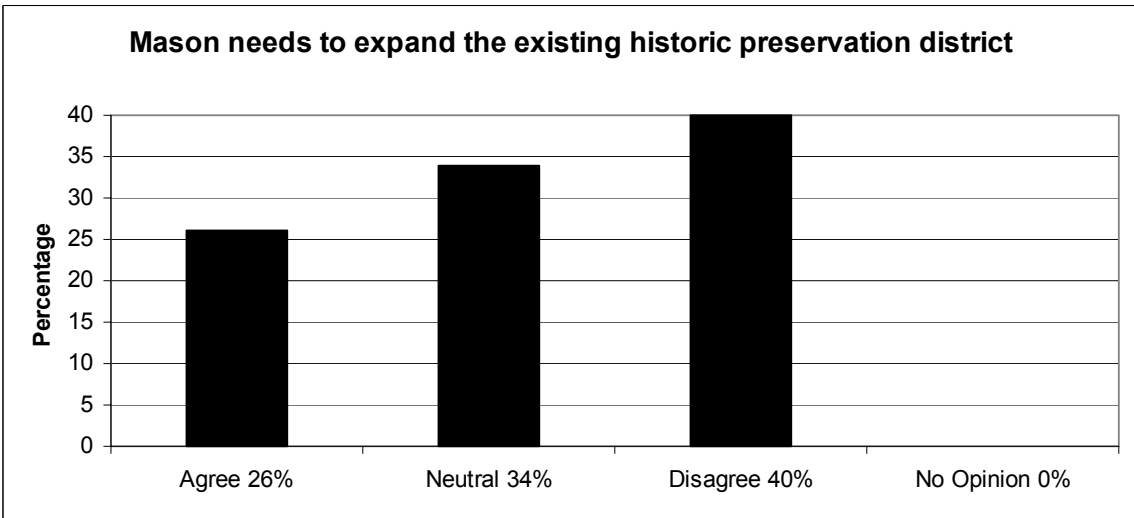
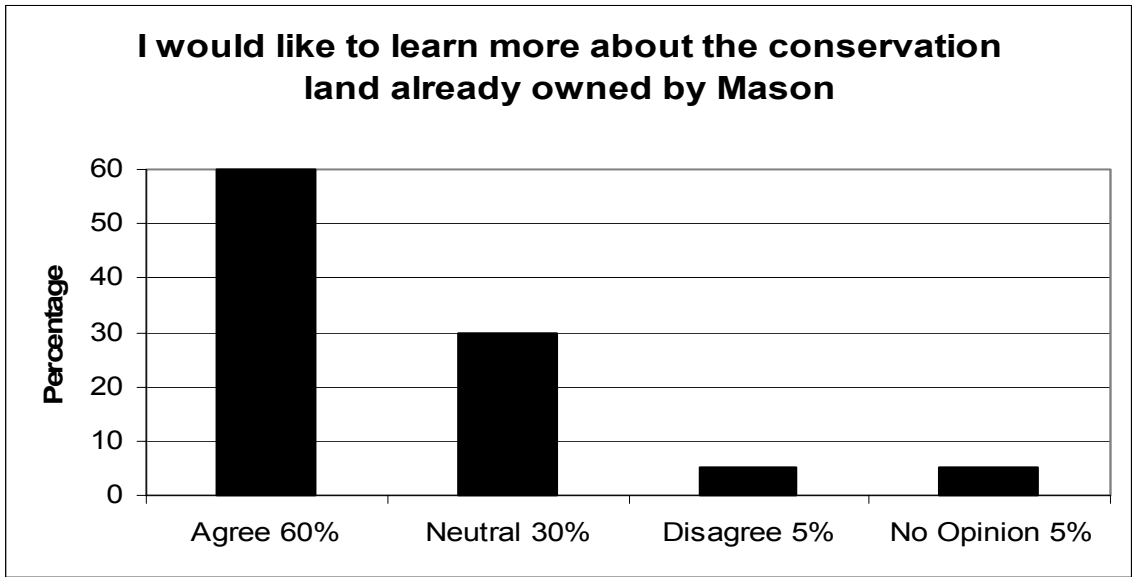
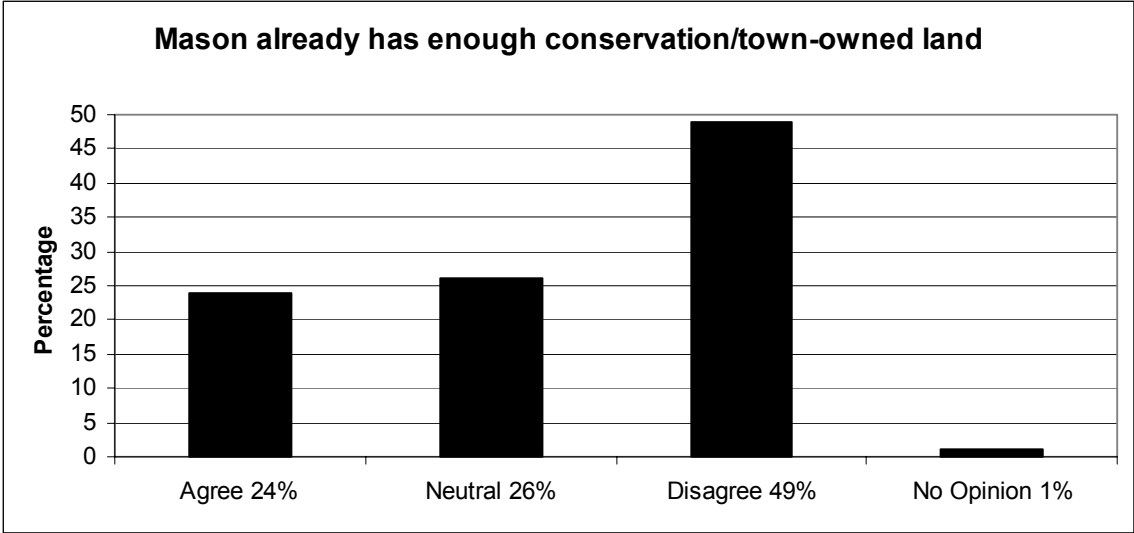


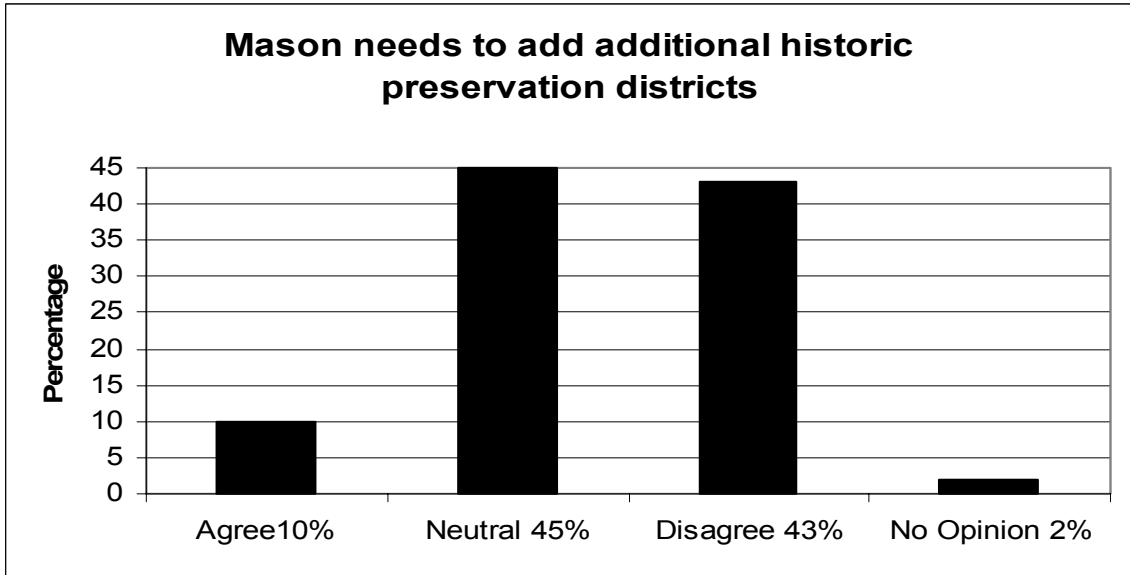
**Conservation and Historical Preservation:**

The majority of the surveys say that both open space and wetland areas were important to preserve and protect. In addition to this, more residents say that Mason does not own enough conservation land than those who say it did or were neutral on the issue. In general, there is staggering support for wetland conservation within these surveys. 60% of the respondents say that they would be interested in learning more about the conservation land already owned by Mason.

The majority of respondents did not show an interest in either adding additional historic preservations districts or expanding on the existing districts (74% are either neutral or disagree with this issue). 88% either disagree or are neutral on adding additional historic preservation districts, and 74% either disagree or are neutral on expanding the existing districts. This shows that Mason residents believe that the current efforts to preserve Mason’s town history are sufficient.



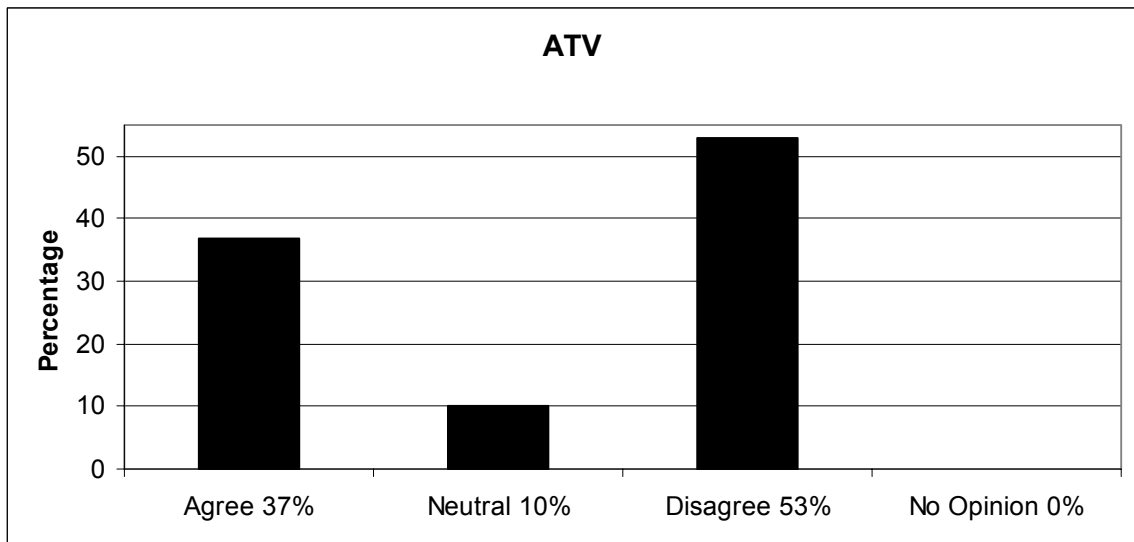




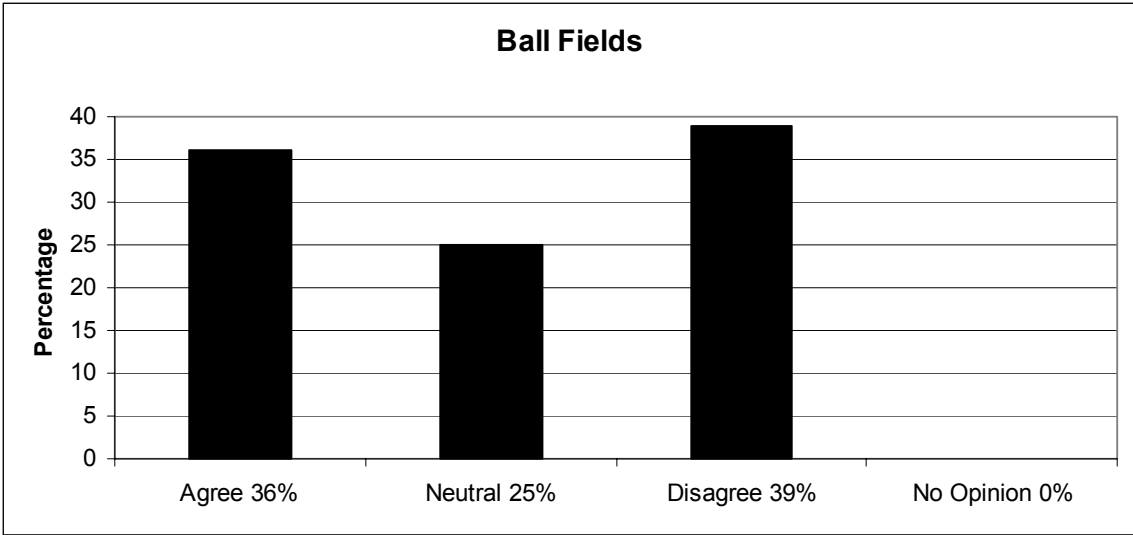
**Recreation:**

When it comes to developing land for certain recreational activities, respondents agree on some issues and are split on others. The majority of the surveys say that land should not be developed for ATV use or snowmobile use. The activities that gained the most support from residents were ones that provided either recreational space that could be kept as natural spaces or places that did not take up a lot of space but would provide much needed recreational grounds for kids. Horseback riding trails has 38% agreement, and playgrounds received 47% agreement.

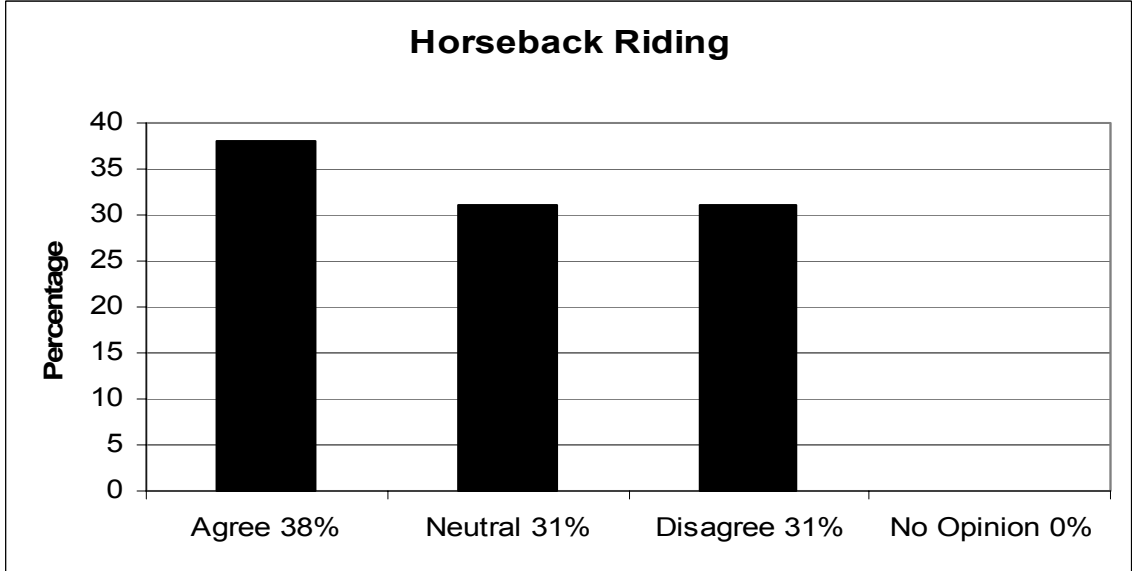
**Mason needs to develop more town land for public recreational activities such as:**



Only 37% say that land should be developed for ATV use, while 53% oppose developing land for ATV trails.

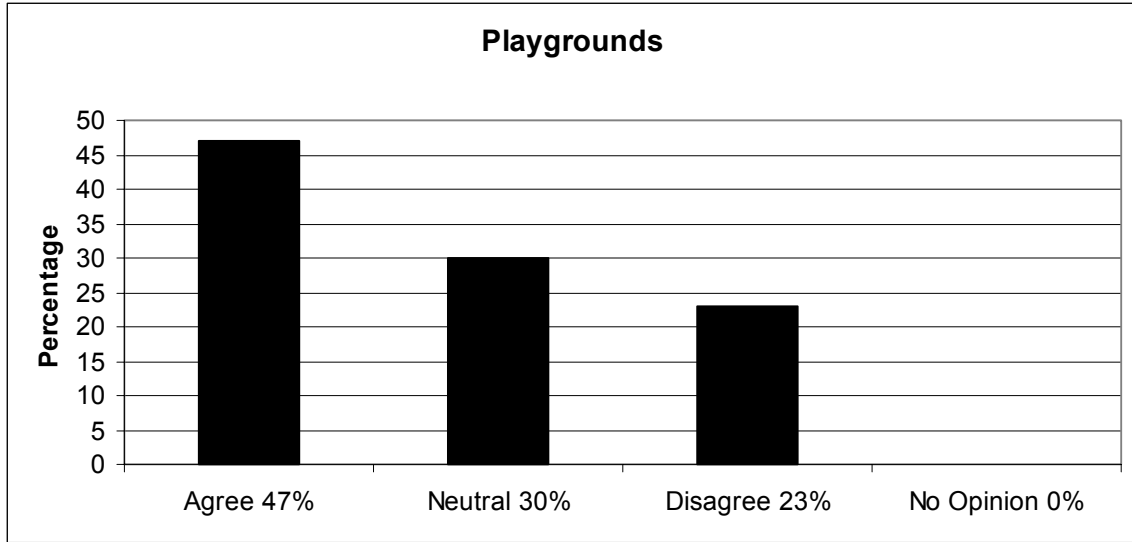


Residents are split on the issue of developing for Ball fields.

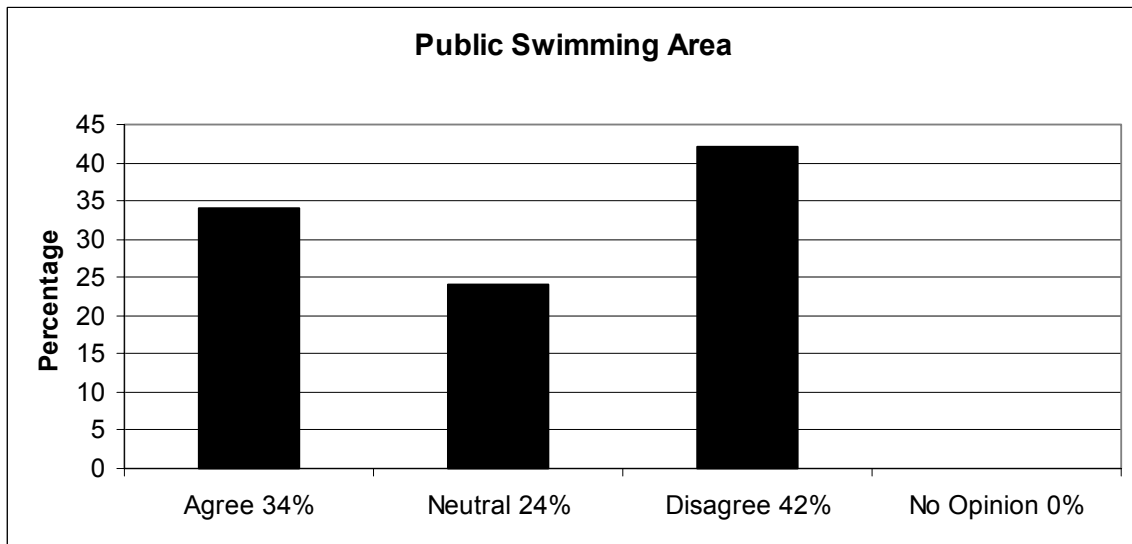


Almost 2/3 of respondents are neutral or disagree with developing land or horseback riding while 38% are in favor of it.

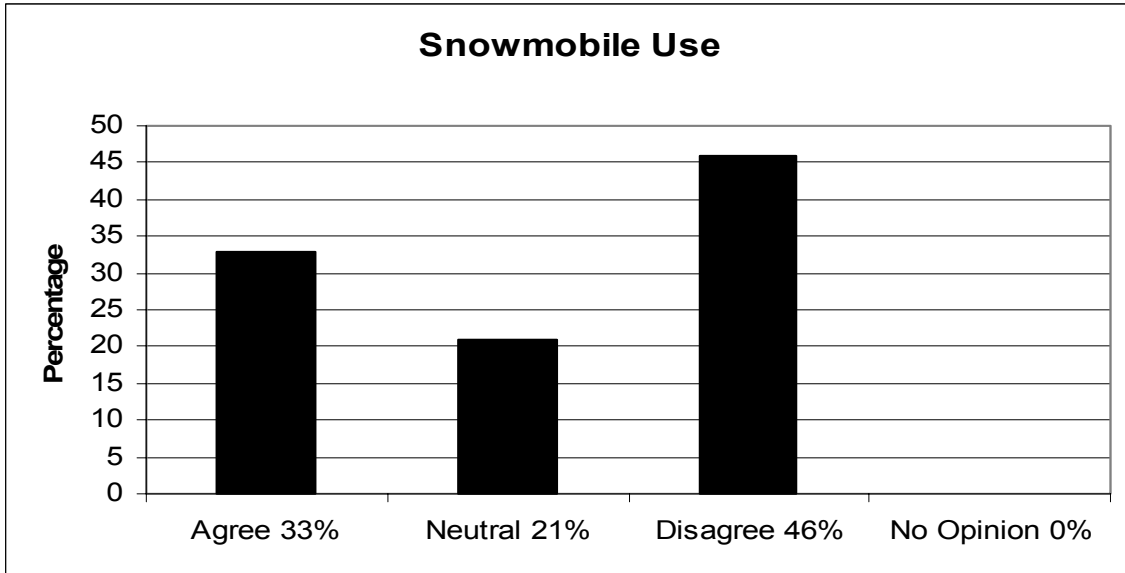




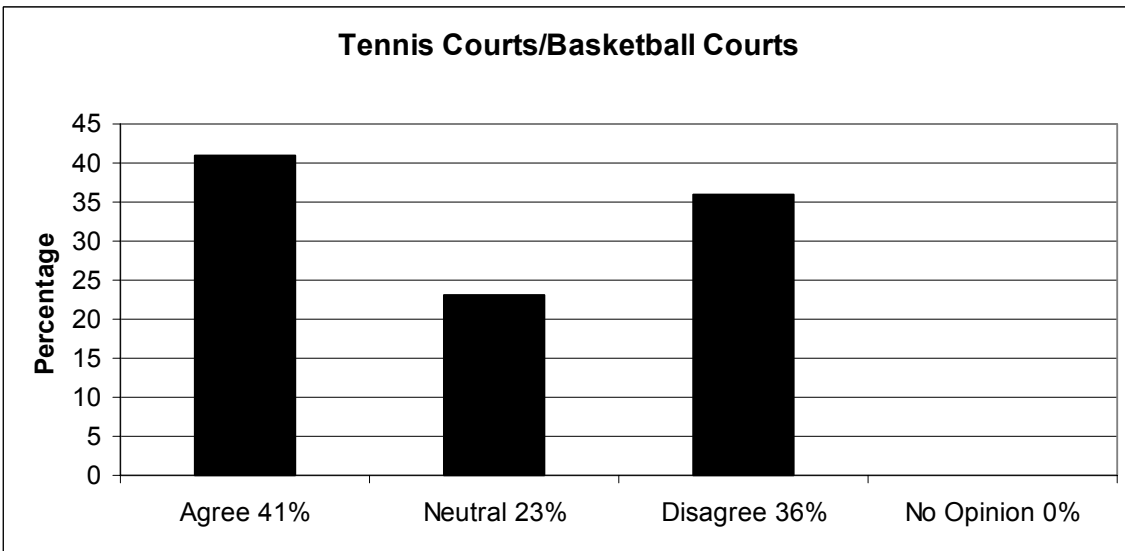
Nearly half of those surveyed ask for playgrounds, however 30% of people are neutral on this issue.



More people think that there should not be a public swimming area than those who are neutral or agree that there should be a swimming area.



Nearly half of the surveys say that no land should be developed for snowmobile use while a third of the surveys say that there should be.



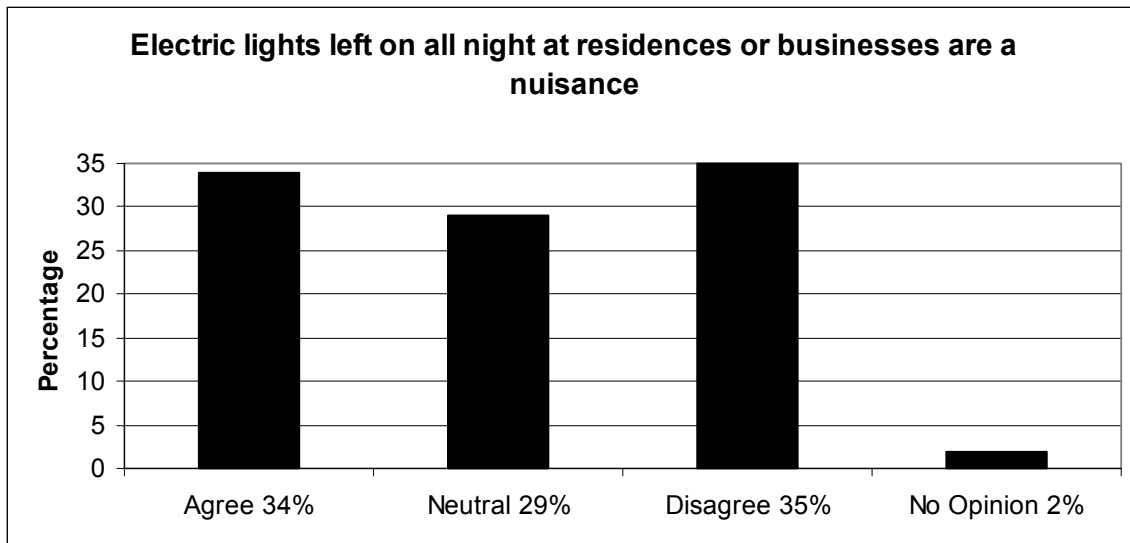
Residents are split as to whether or not land for tennis/basketball courts should be developed, but 5% more agree that there should be courts in Mason. 23% of surveyed residents remain neutral.

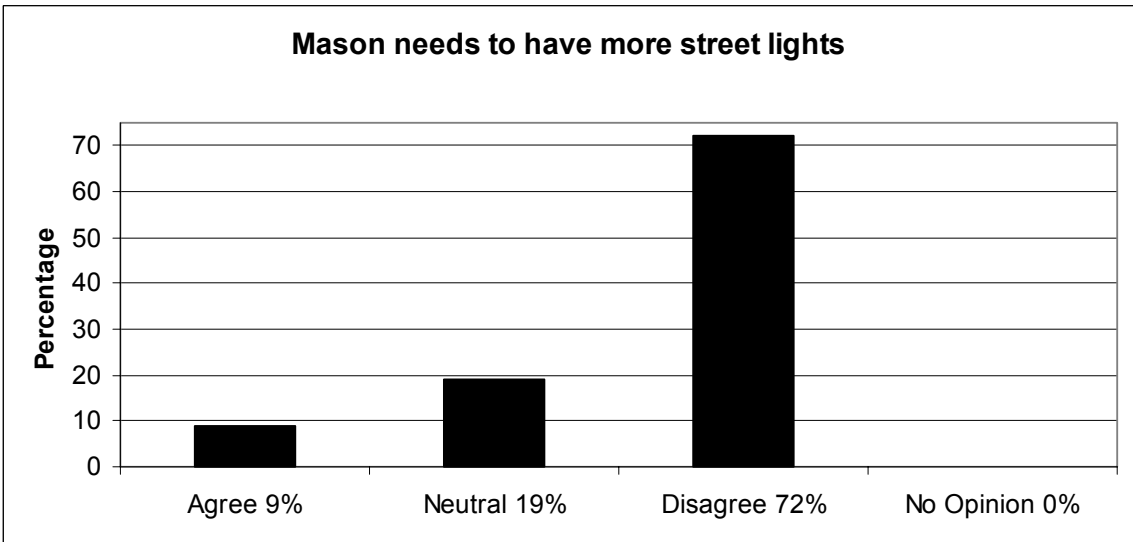
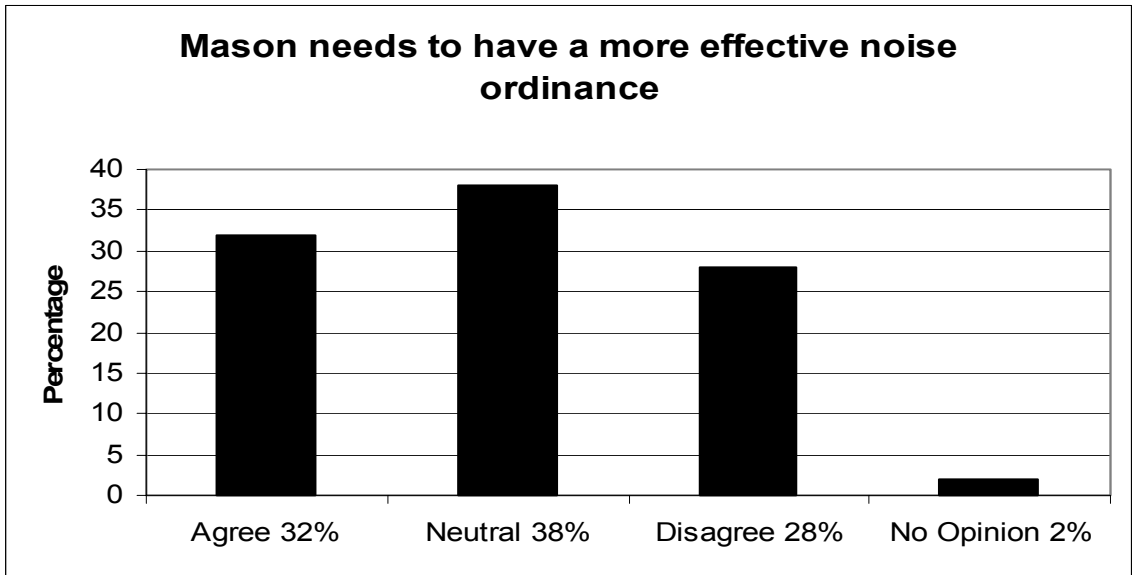
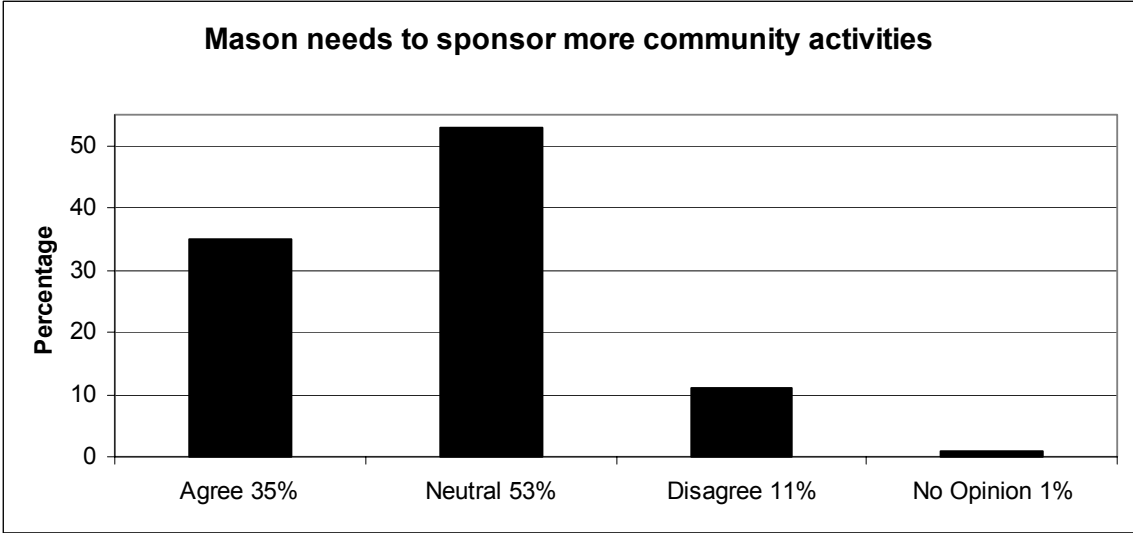
**Quality of Life:**

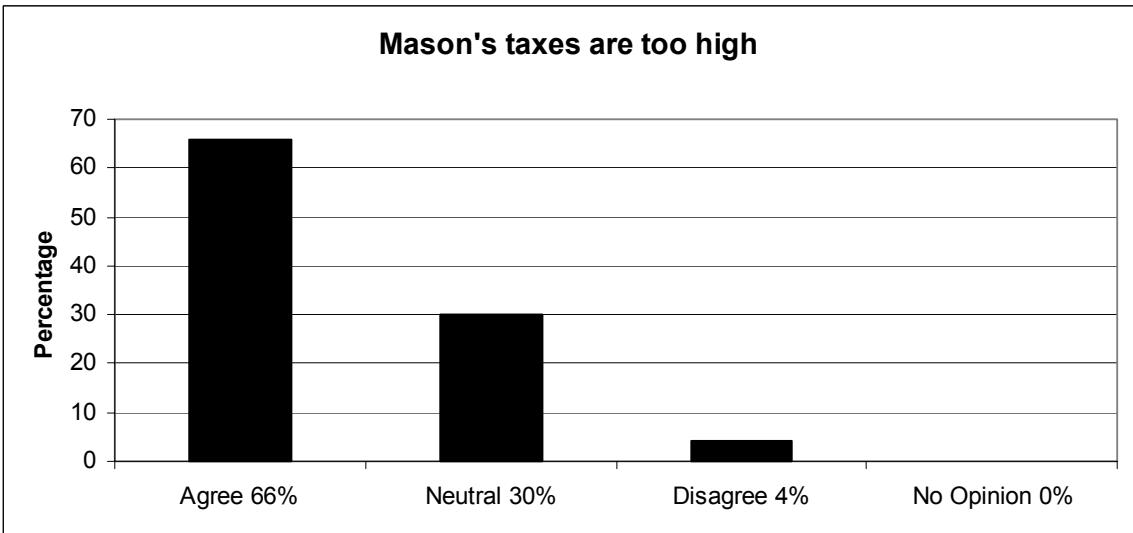
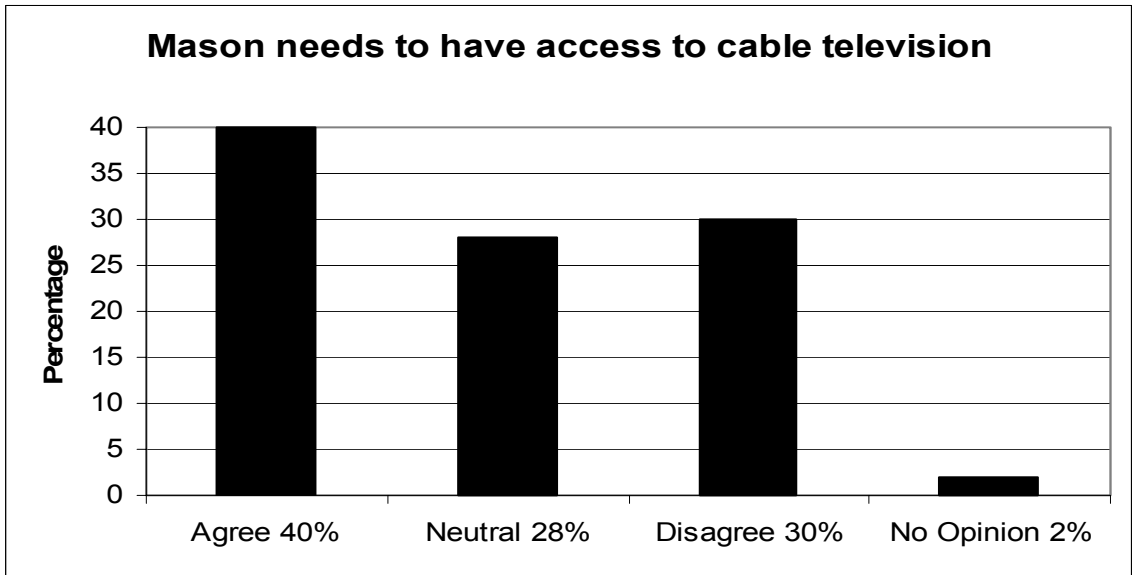
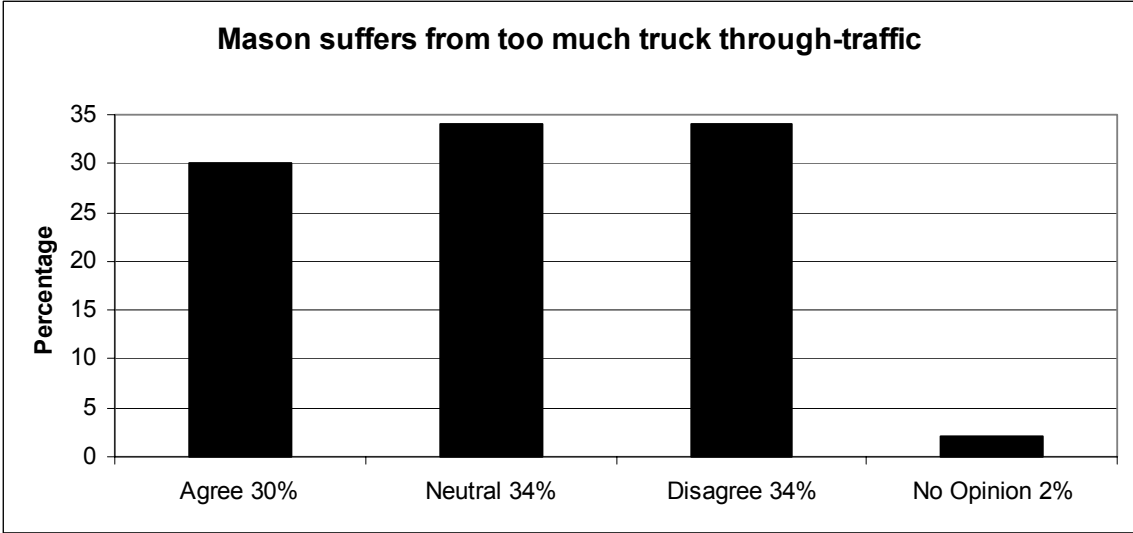
In this section the surveys came back reporting two major points: 1) The people of Mason wish to protect the rural character of their town and 2) Mason residents believe they deserve more or better resources from the town for the amount of taxes they are paying.

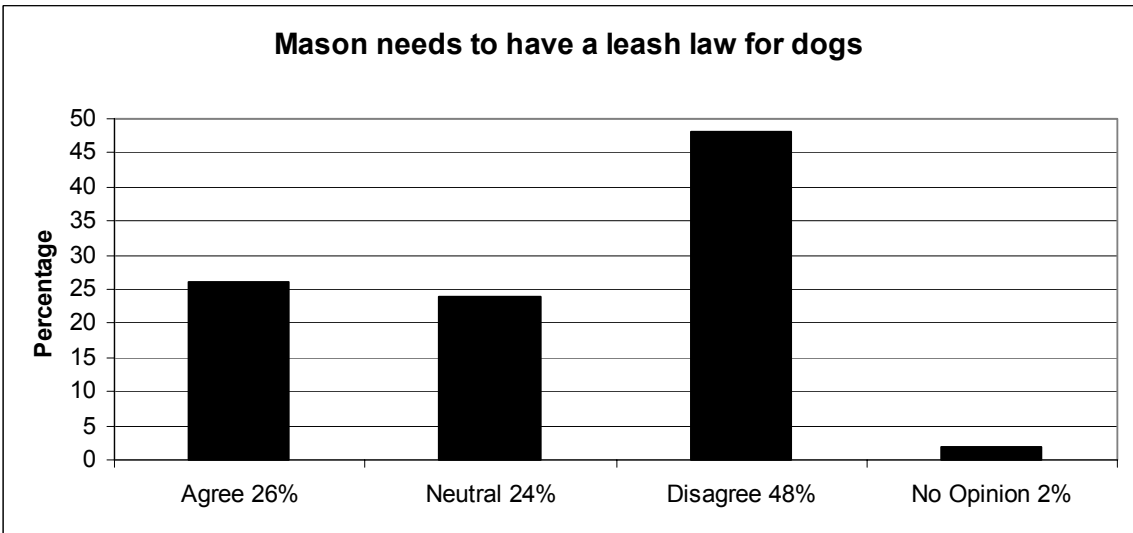
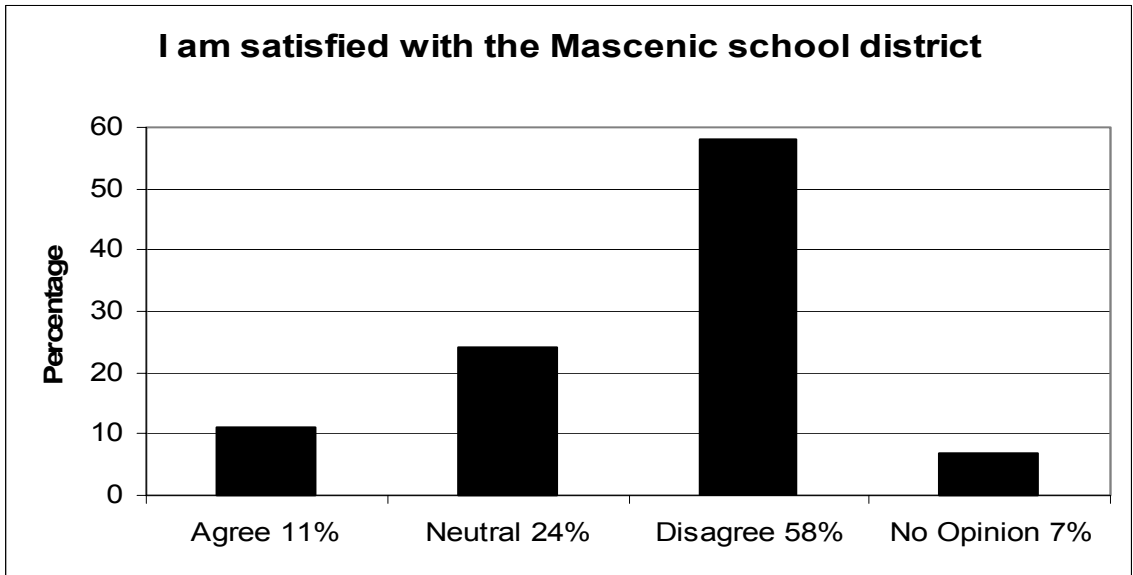
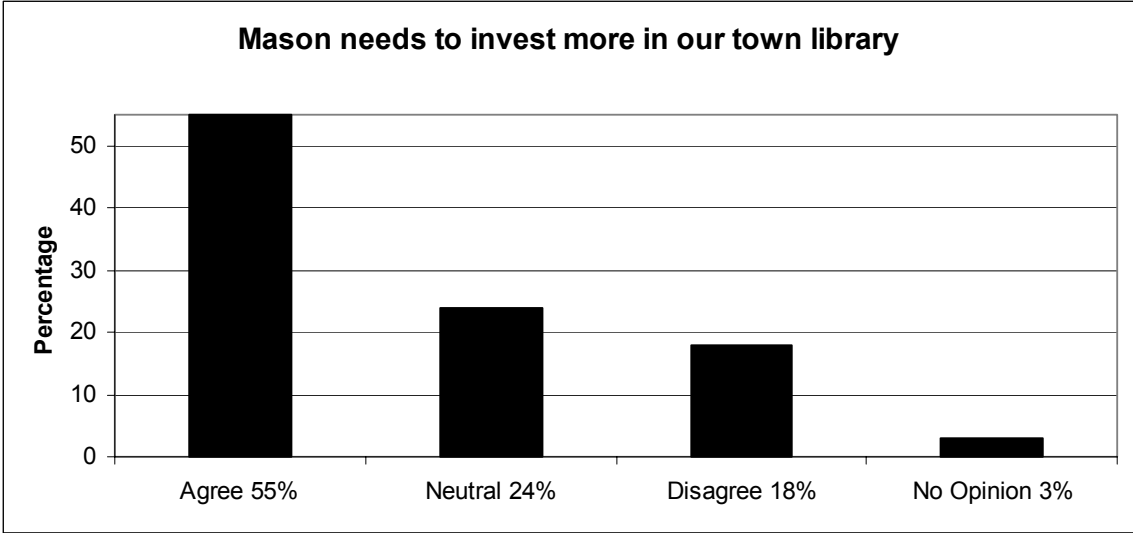
Of those residents who filled out the surveys, a strong third believe that lights left on at night by businesses are a nuisance and another third believe they were not a problem. However 72% of those respondents say that Mason did not need anymore streetlights. Another third believe that Mason needs a more effective noise ordinance, and nearly half of the surveys (47%) say that Mason needs to better control overhead aircraft noise. A large 81% of the surveys say that rural character is vital to Mason and its residents.

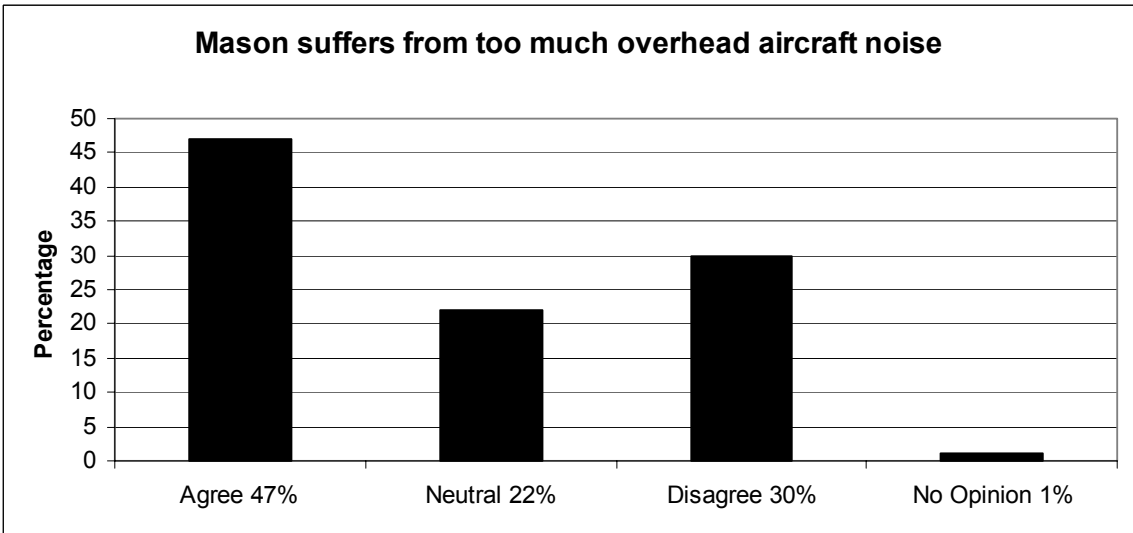
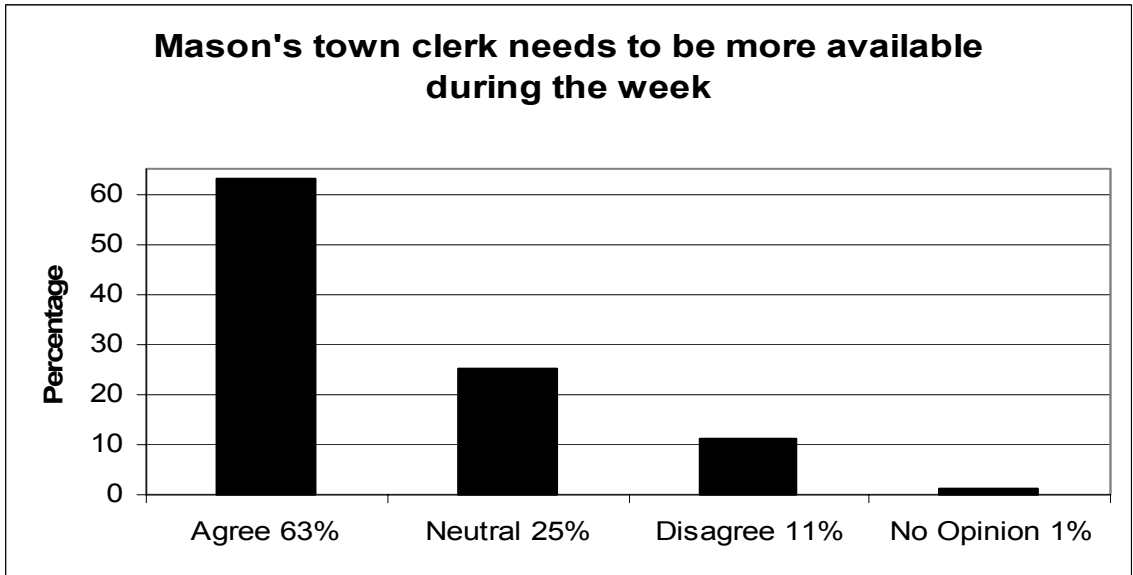
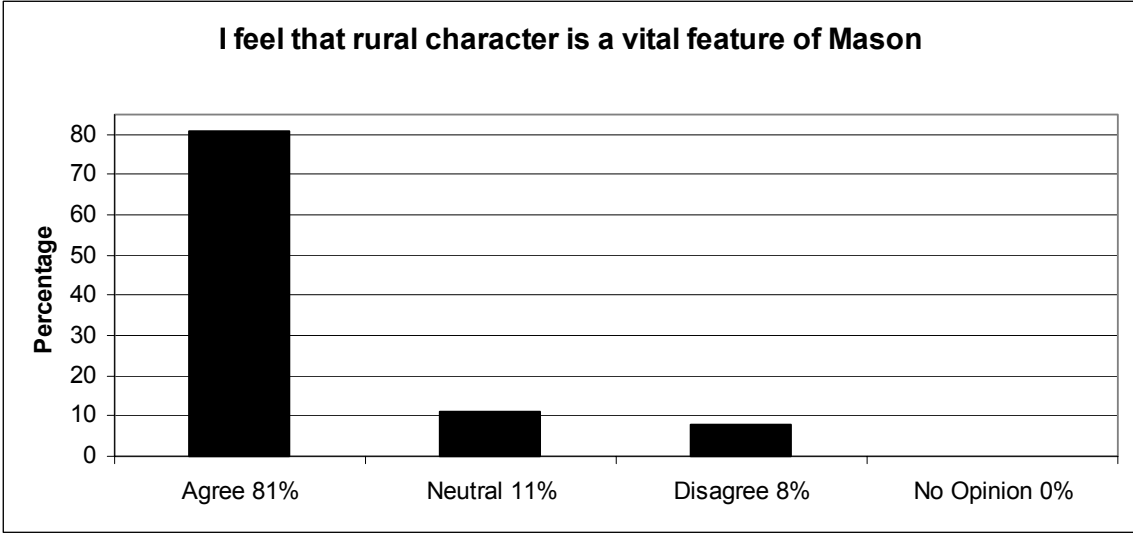
There is a general dissatisfaction for the town’s high taxes and lack of town resources being paid for by those taxes. 35% of the surveys say that Mason needs to sponsor more town community activities, 53% are neutral on this issue. 40% of respondents say that they want cable tv. Over half of the surveys say that Mason needs to invest more in their public library. This shows that Mason residents are in strong support of their public library. Nearly 2/3 of residents say that they are dissatisfied with the Mason school district. 82% of respondents are either neutral or disagree that the Mascenic school district is satisfactory. 2/3 of residents say that the town clerk needs to be more available throughout the week. 66% of surveys say that taxes in Mason are too high.











**Residential Development:**

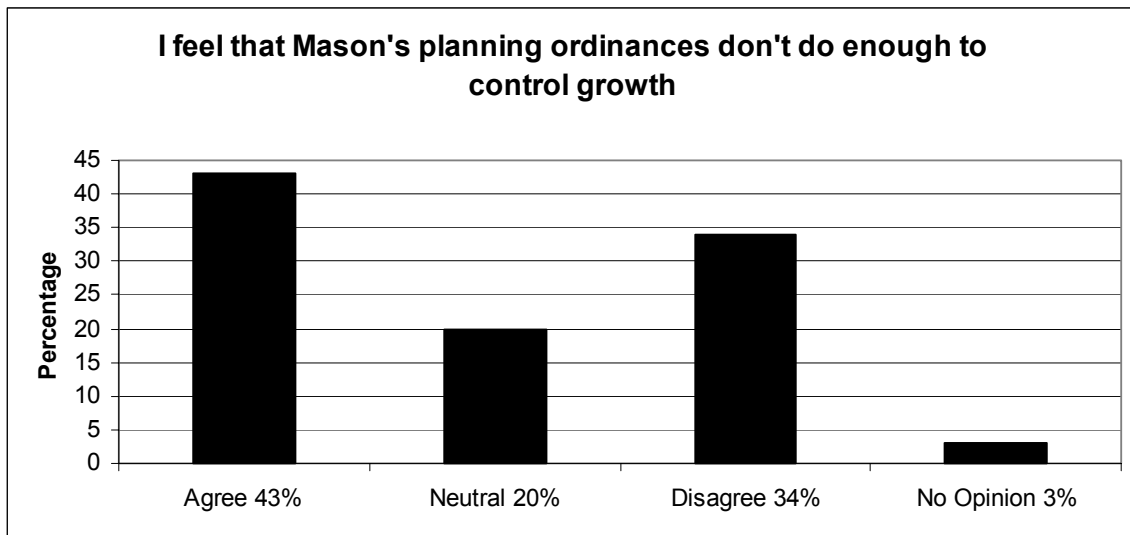
In this section, Mason residents comment on four main aspects of development in Mason’s residential areas: 1) Town Growth 2) Town Roads 3) Housing and Development and 4) Zoning

In terms of town growth, 43% of the surveys say that Mason planning ordinances don’t do enough to control growth. 34% say that they do. When asked whether or not Mason’s planning ordinances effectively control growth, over half of the surveys said that they did not. However, 54% of surveys say that Mason’s ordinances did not inappropriately limit town growth.

From these surveys, it is clear to see that Mason residents care a lot about their unpaved, dirt roads. Nearly half of the surveys say that Mason should not pave any more of its dirt roads, while only 30% say the town should. At the same time, nearly 2/3 of surveyed residents say that Mason is doing a good job of maintaining the town’s dirt roads, and 54% say that the town does a good job of maintaining paved roads. The surveys are just about split three ways between agree (29%), neutral (32%), and disagree (34%) on whether or not the town should abandon class VI roads.

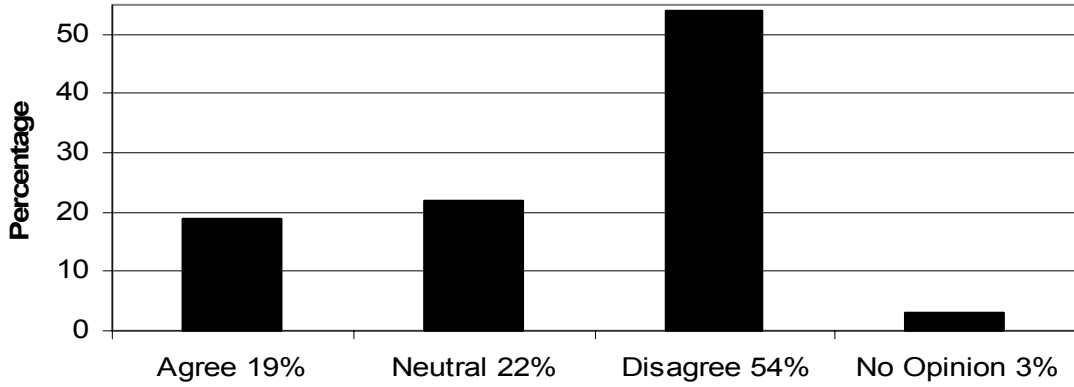
Many of Mason’s residents do not want to see a lot of development for specific needs housing in the town. For instance, a solid 40% of the surveys say that Mason should provide more opportunities for elderly housing. 57% say that Mason should not provide more opportunities for low income housing, and a staggering 85% of surveyed residents say that Mason should not encourage mobile home parks. Nearly 2/3 of residents say that Mason does not need better ways to accommodate back lots. 45% say that Mason should work on improving existing town buildings, but only 38% think the police department needs to be improved. A good 41% say that it doesn’t need improvement.

In terms of zoning, Mason residents do not seem to want high density housing, but they do want some way to control growth. Half of the surveys say that residents want to consider rezoning to include fewer houses per acre, and 72% say that Mason should not consider rezoning for a greater number of houses per acre. In addition, 70% of surveyed residents are opposed to cluster style housing. 41% of surveys say that Mason’s building inspection is effective.

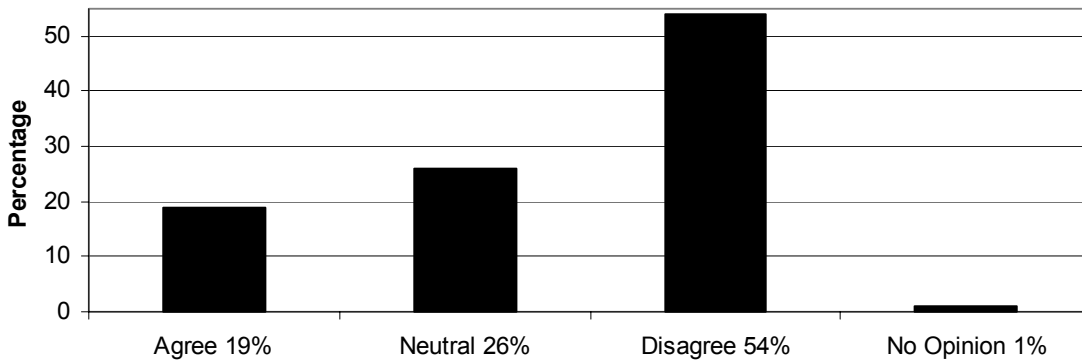




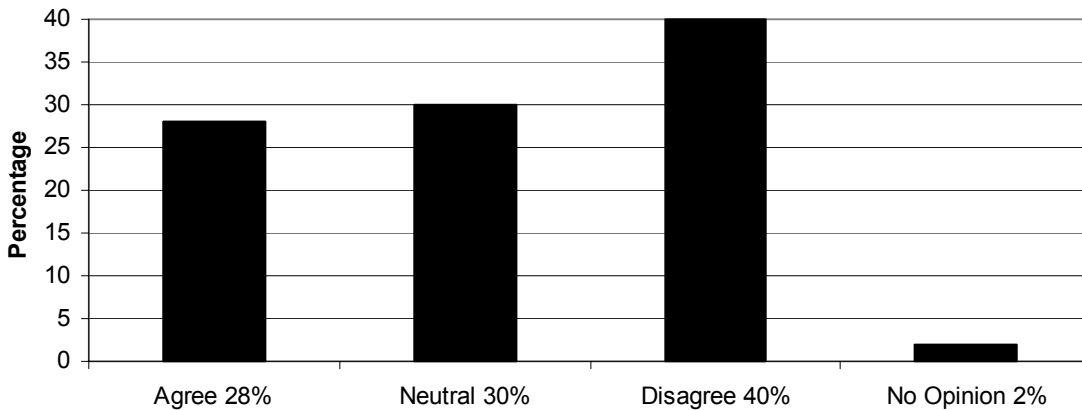
**I feel that Mason's planning ordinances effectively control growth**



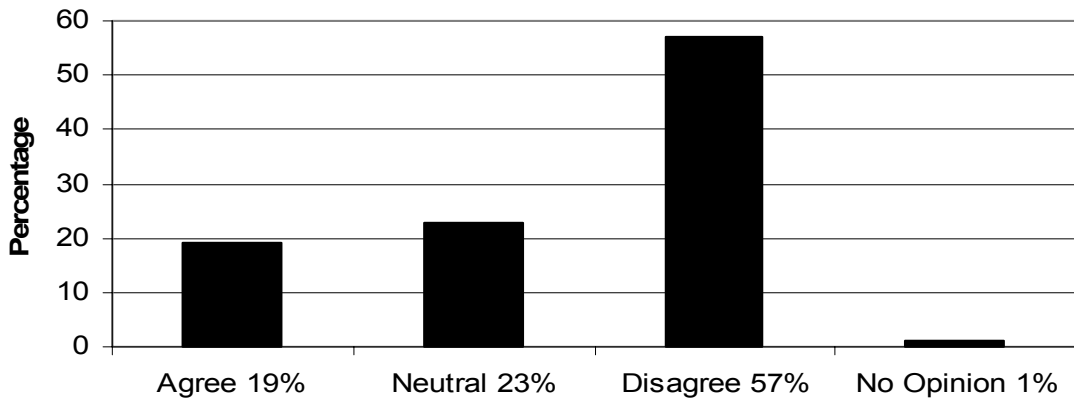
**I feel that Mason's planning ordinances inappropriately limit growth**



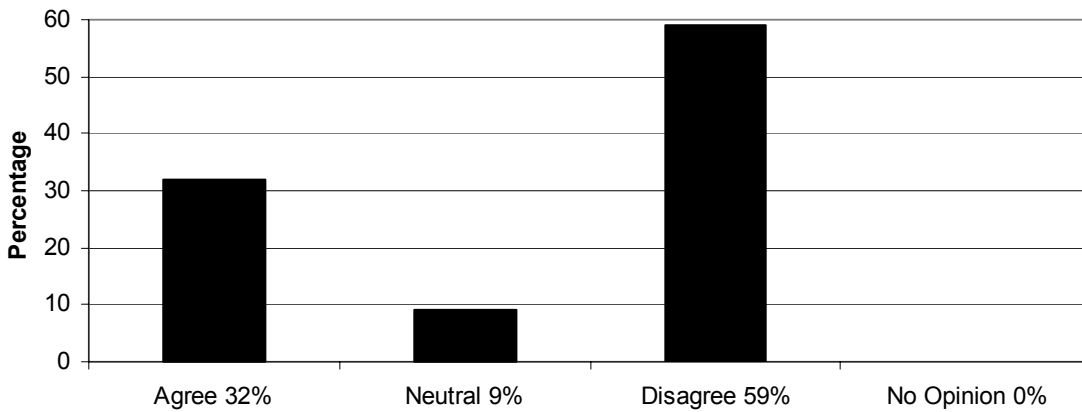
**Mason needs to provide more opportunities for elderly housing**



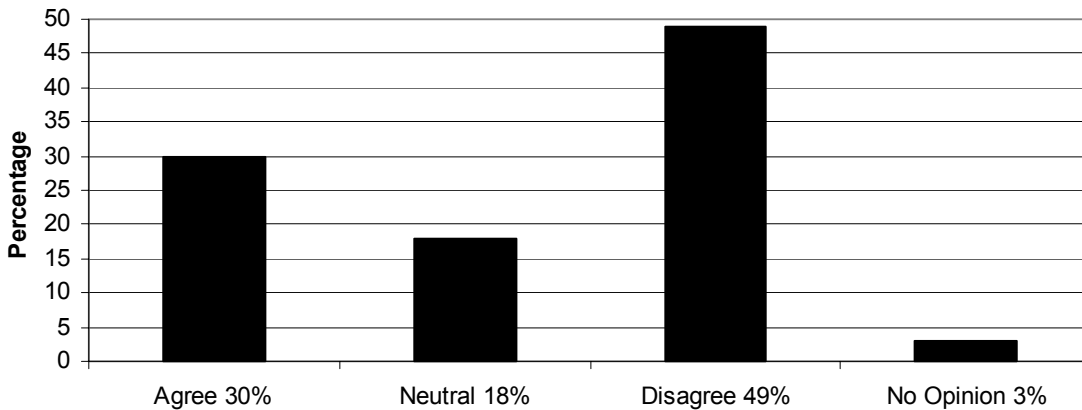
### Mason needs to provide more opportunities for low income housing

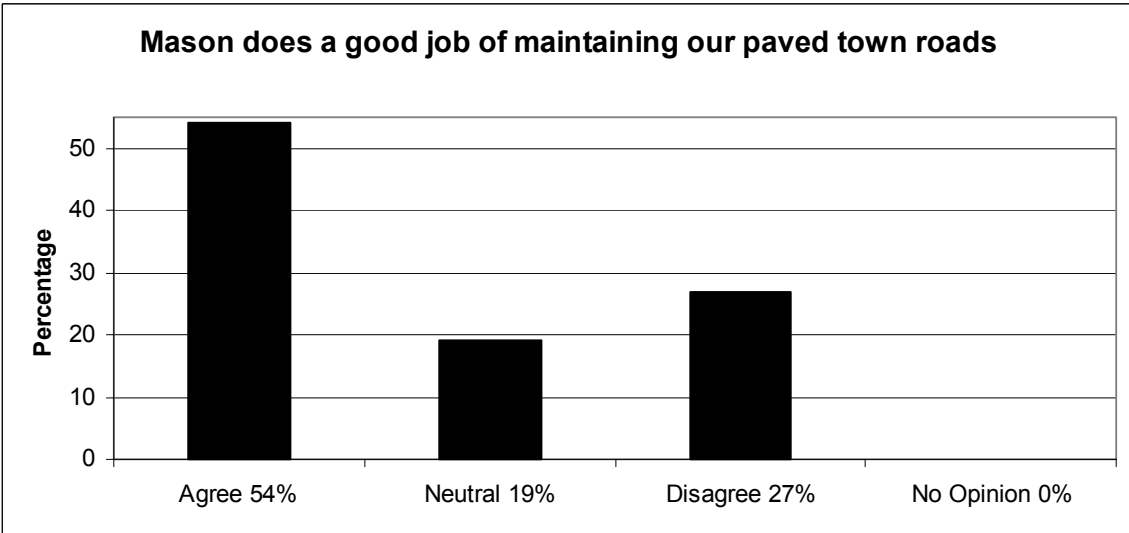
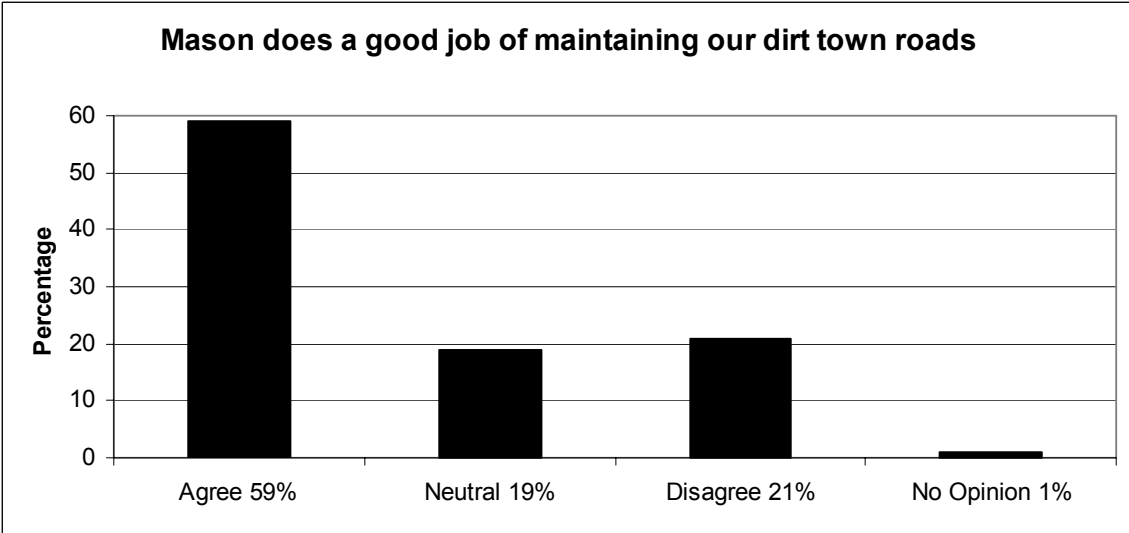
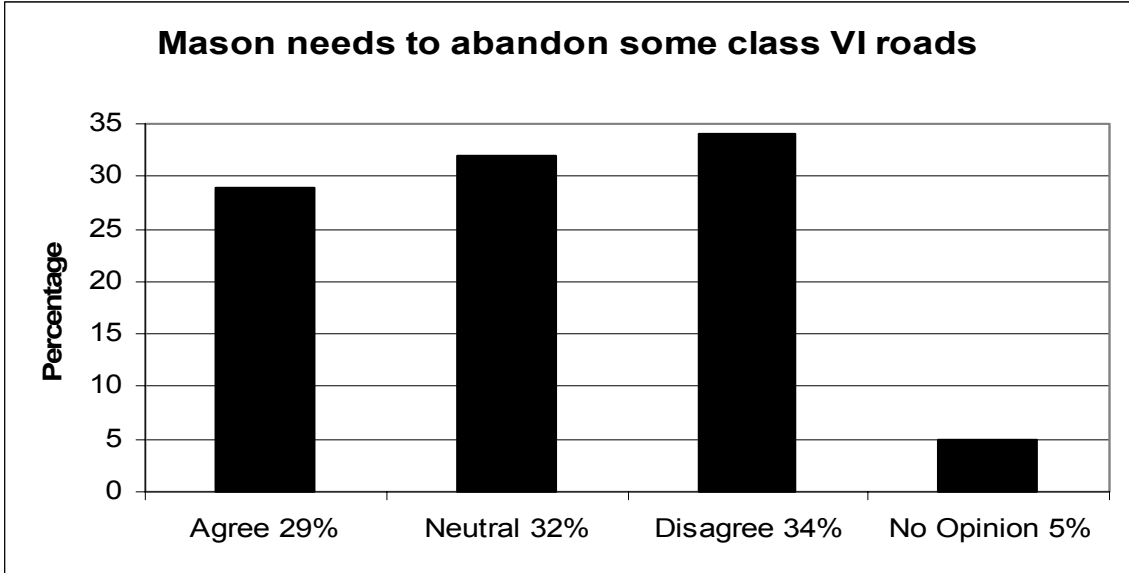


### Mason needs to provide better ways to accommodate back lots

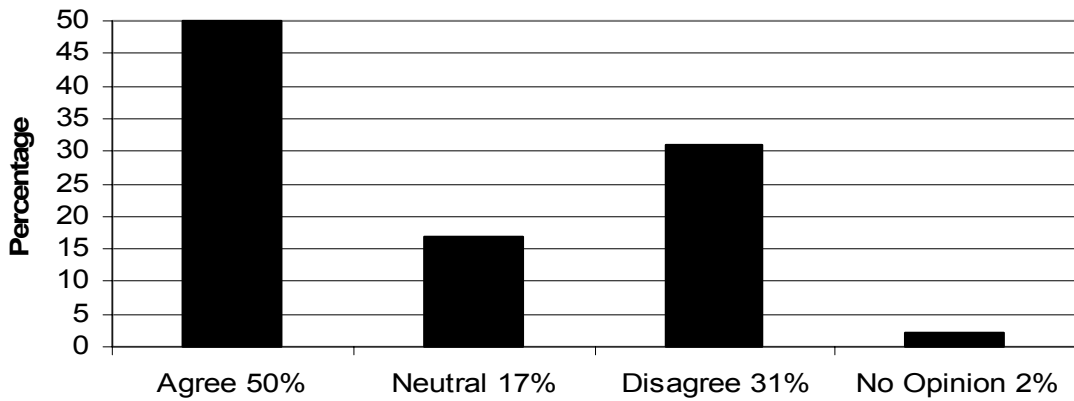


### Mason needs to pave more of its dirt roads

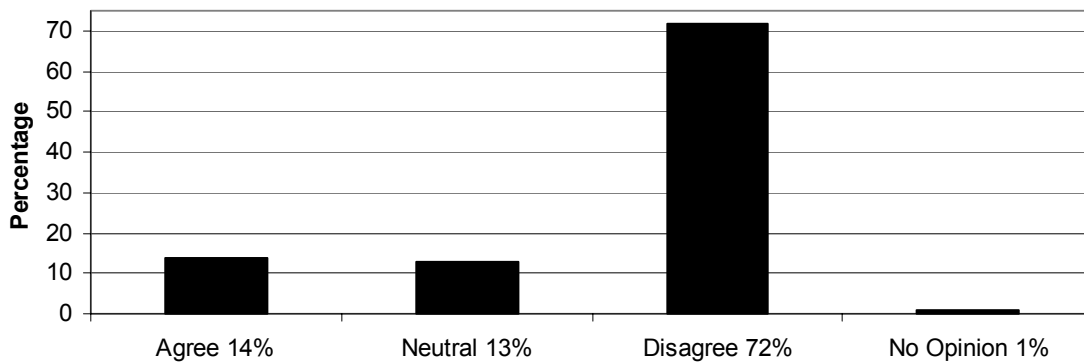




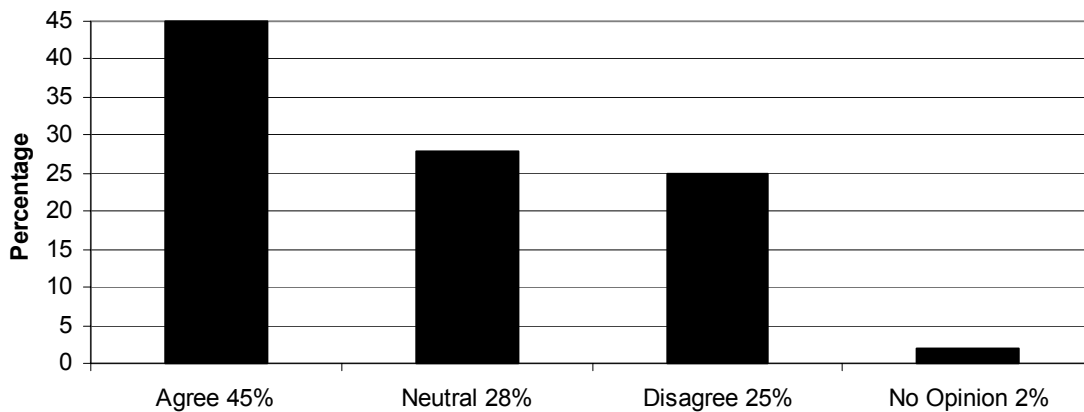
**Mason should consider re-zoning areas of town for fewer houses per acre**



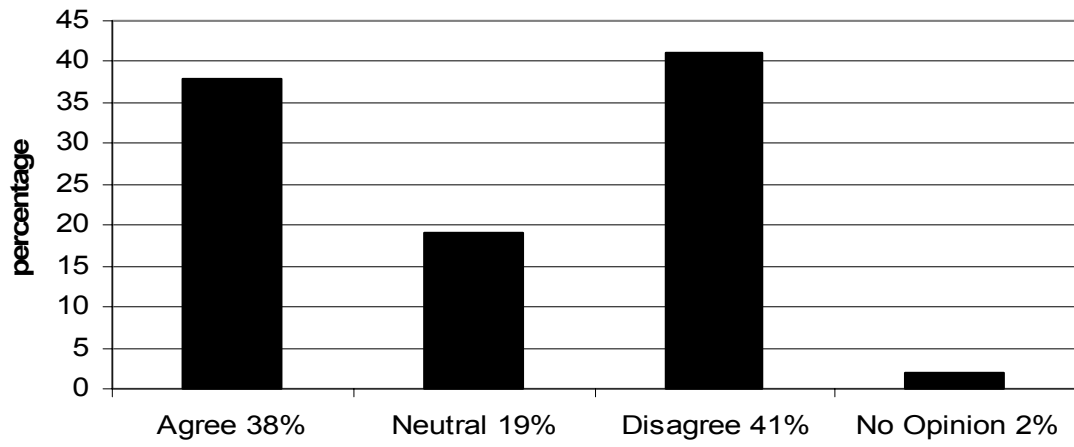
**Mason should consider re-zoning areas of town for a greater number of houses per acre**



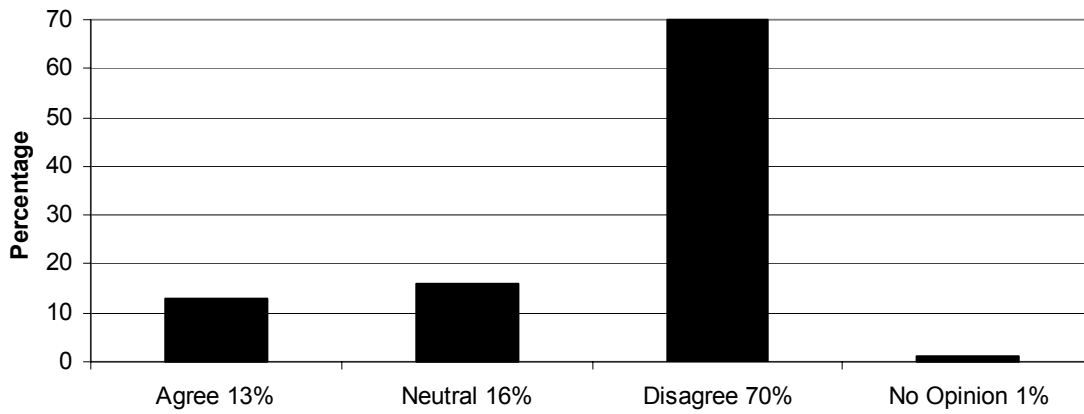
**Mason needs to improve our town buildings**

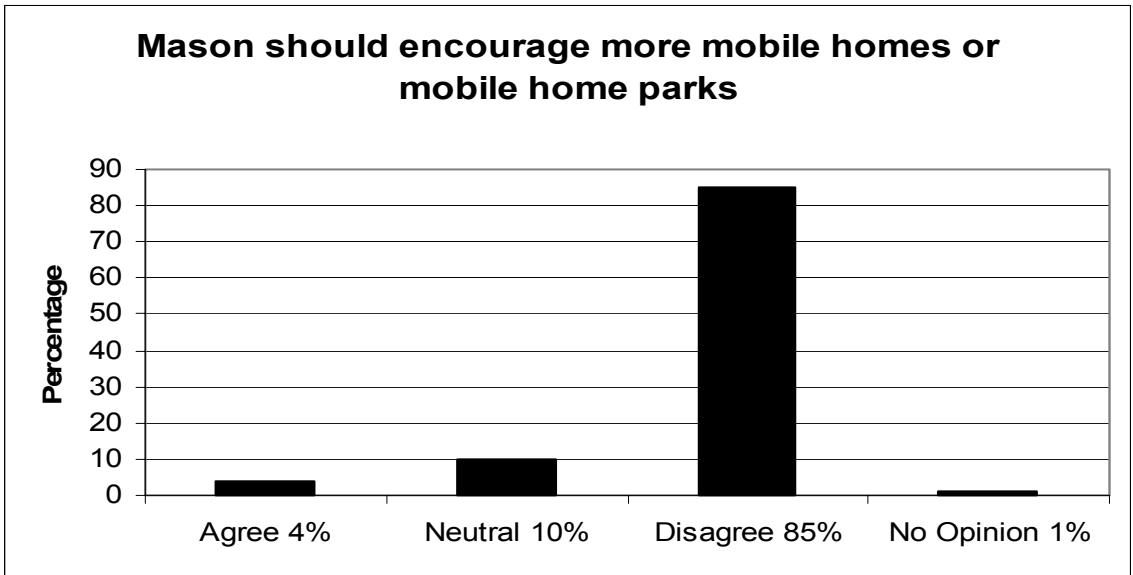
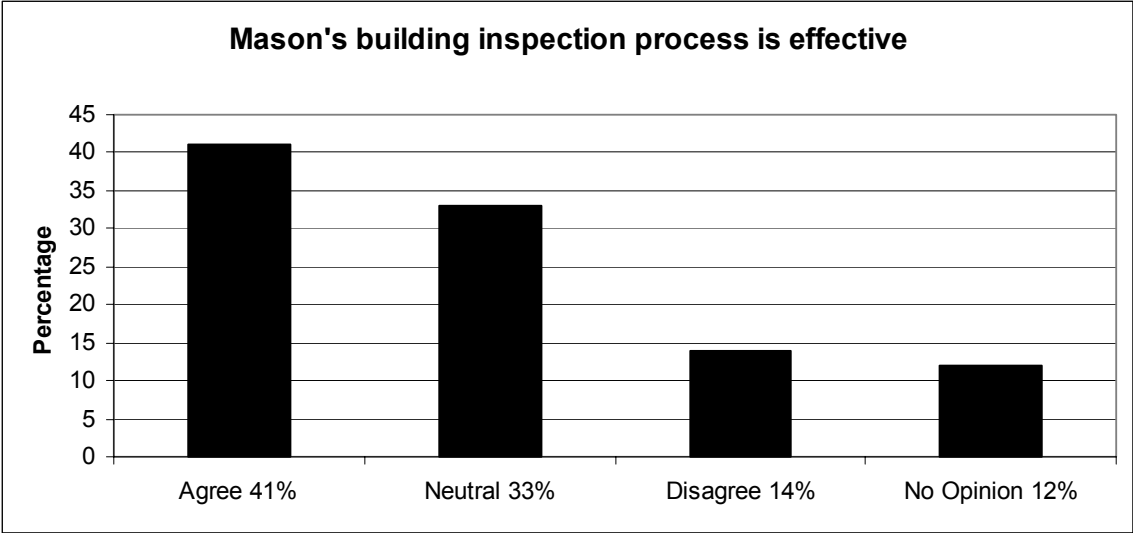


### Mason needs to improve our police department



### Mason needs to develop policies that allow "cluster" housing

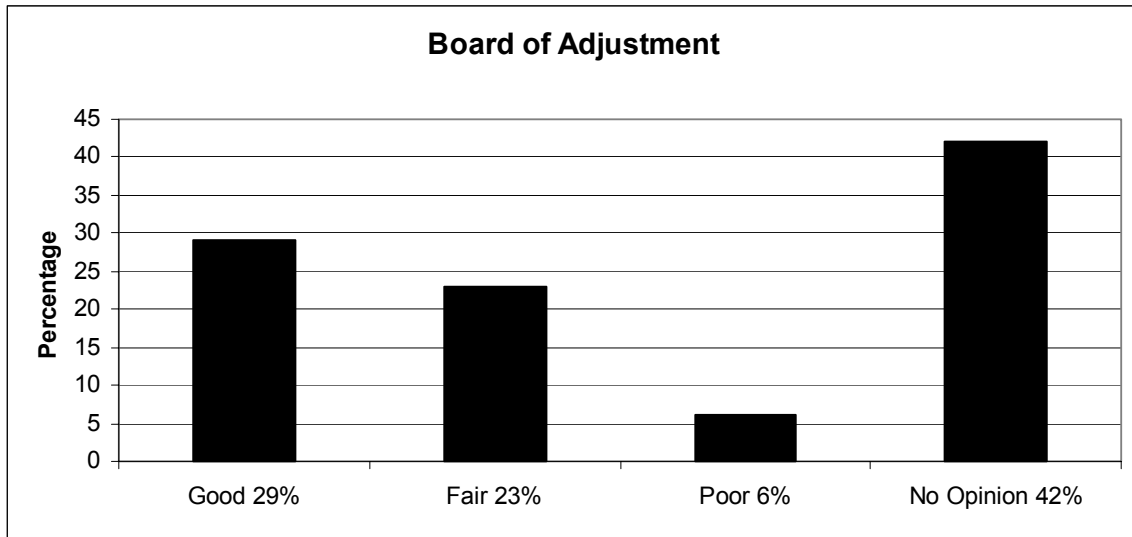




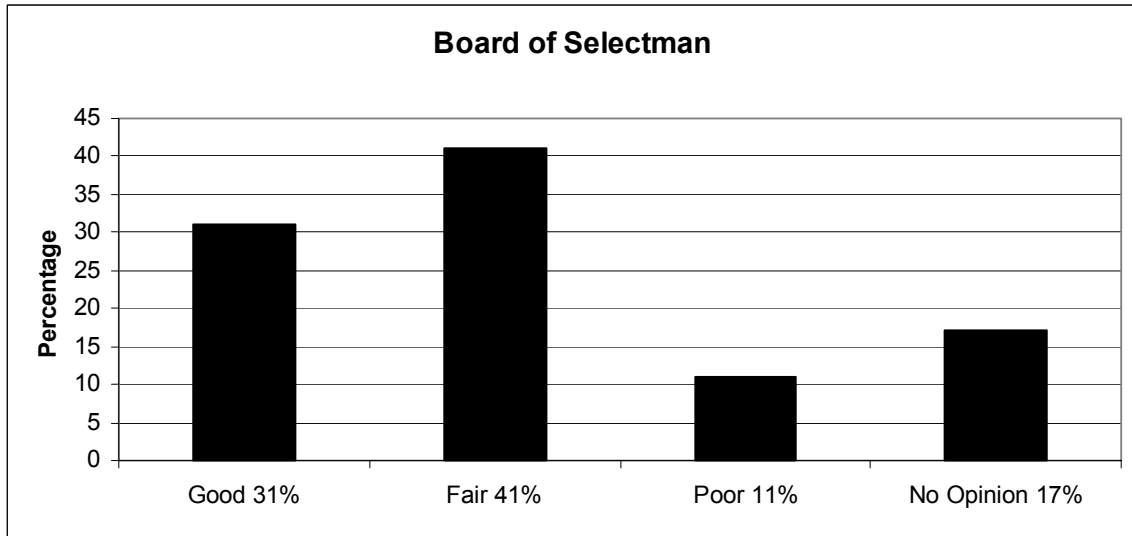
**Town Services:**

With the exception of the Mason school district and the board of selectman, Mason residents seem generally satisfied with their town services. The exceptions lie mainly in the categories of board and adjustment and the historic commission. It can be assumed that there is not enough known about both the board of adjustment and the historic commission. This is because both of these came back with a significantly higher percentage of “no opinion” than any other rating. The town services that came back with the most support from respondents were the fire department (83% rate as “good”), the highway department (77%), the police department (67%), the town clerk (54%), and the town’s public library (51%).

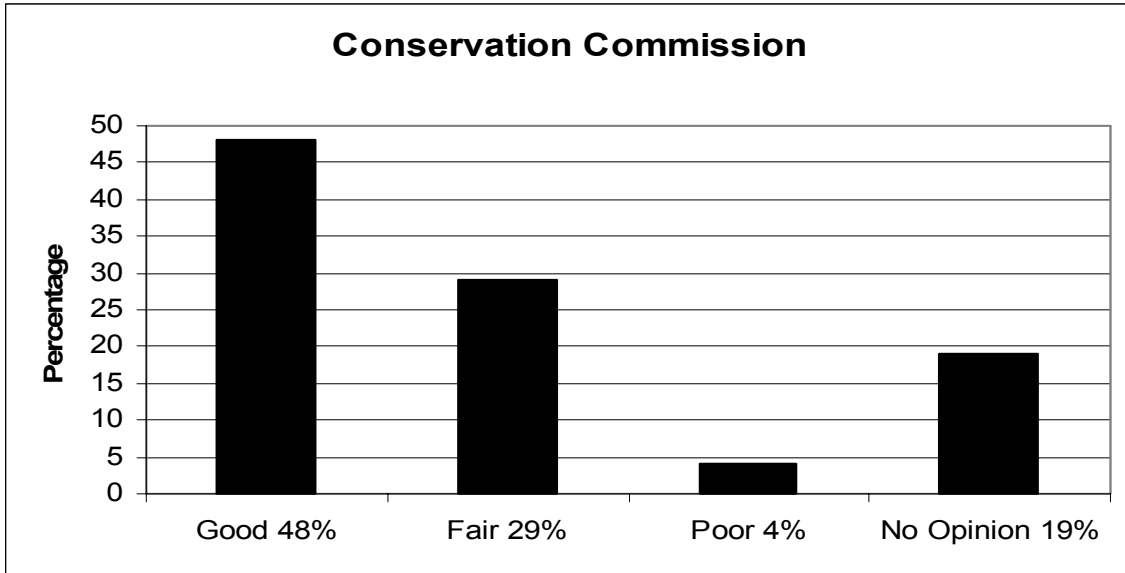
Please rate the town’s services:



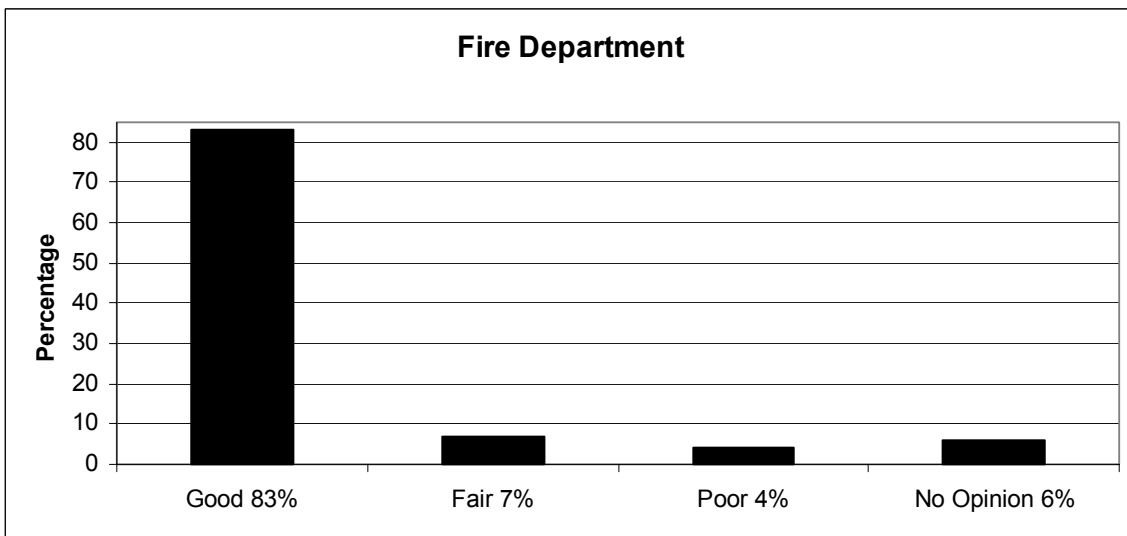
Very few residents have an opinion on the Board of Adjustment. Of those who do, the majority would rate it as “good”.



41% of respondents rate the board of selectman as “fair” while only 31% rate it as “good” and 11% as “poor”.

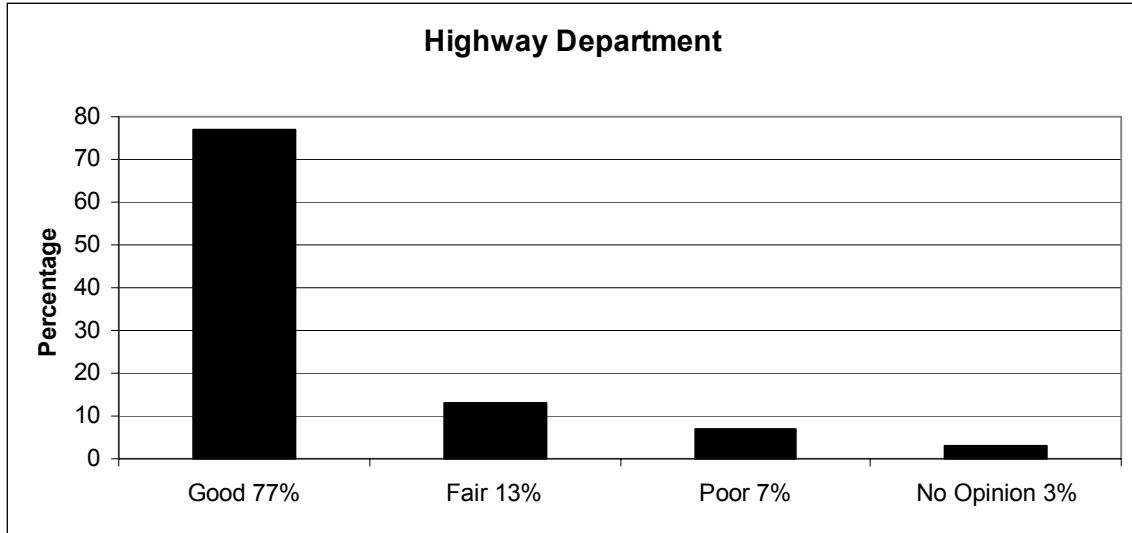


Nearly half of surveyed residents are satisfied with the Conservation Commission, and only a small percentage give it a poor rating.

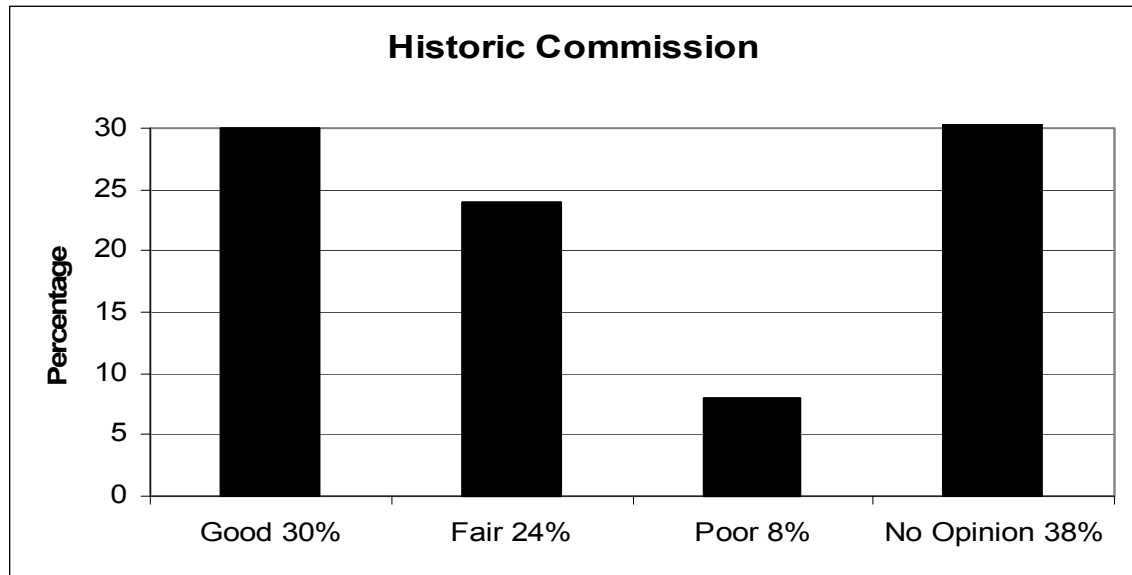


More than 4/5 of surveys say that the fire department is doing a good job.

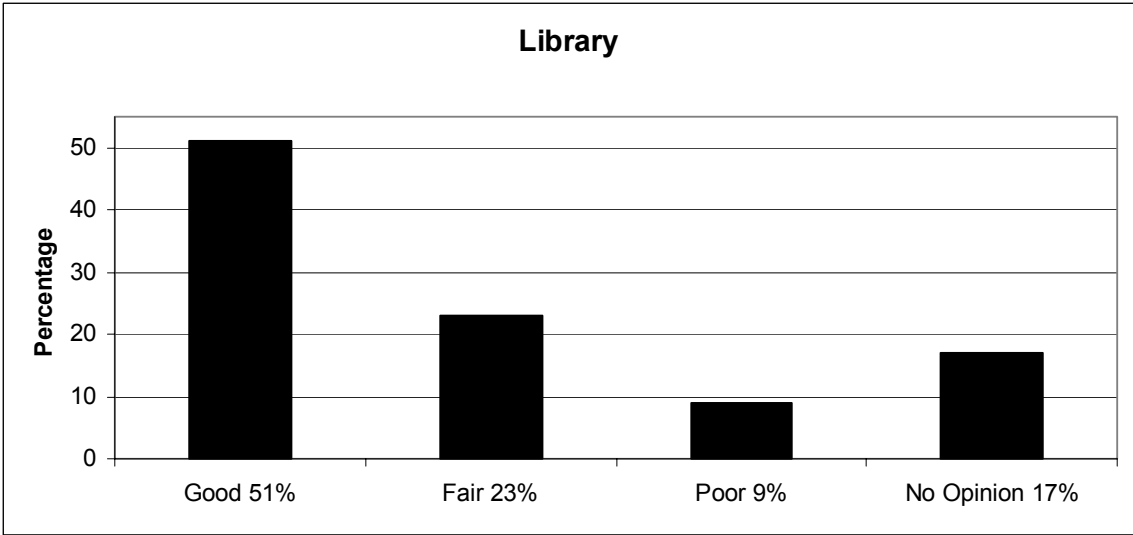




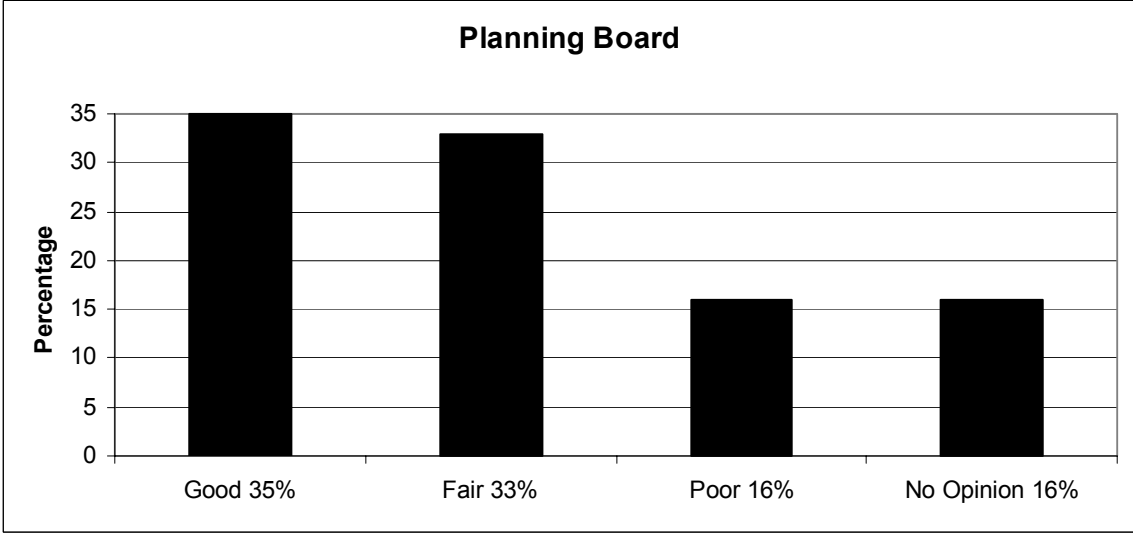
Nearly 4/5 of residents rate the Highway Department as “good”.



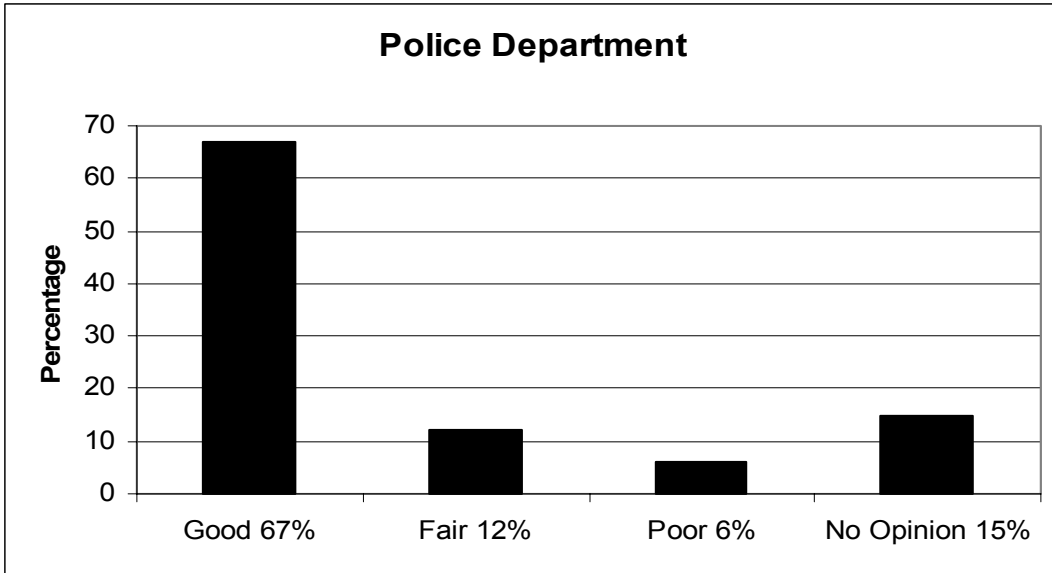
The majority (38%) of surveyed residents do not have an opinion on the historic commission, but of those who do, nearly 1/3 are satisfied with it.



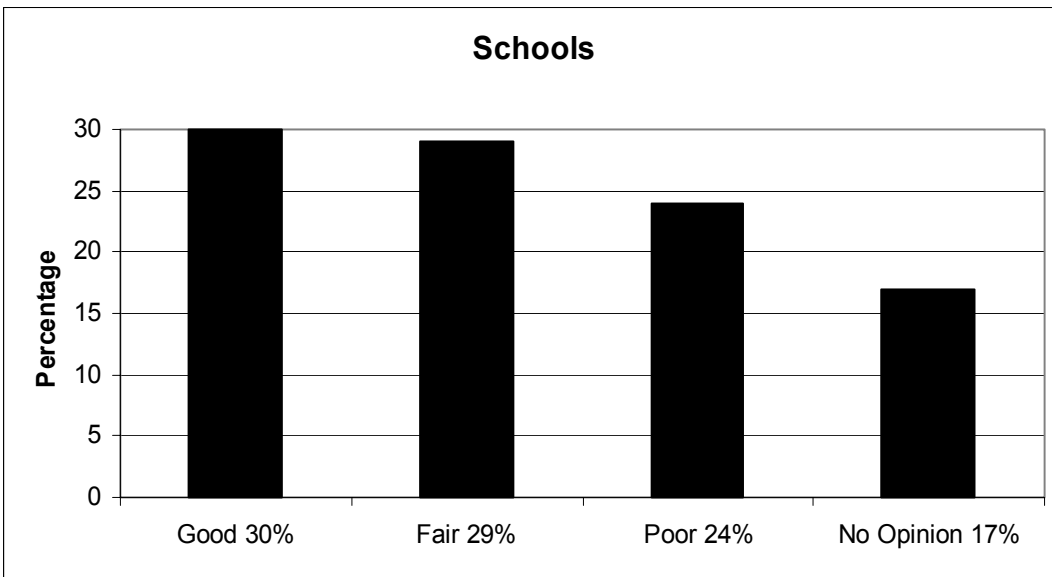
Half of the surveys say that residents are satisfied with the library. Only 9% would rate it as “poor”.



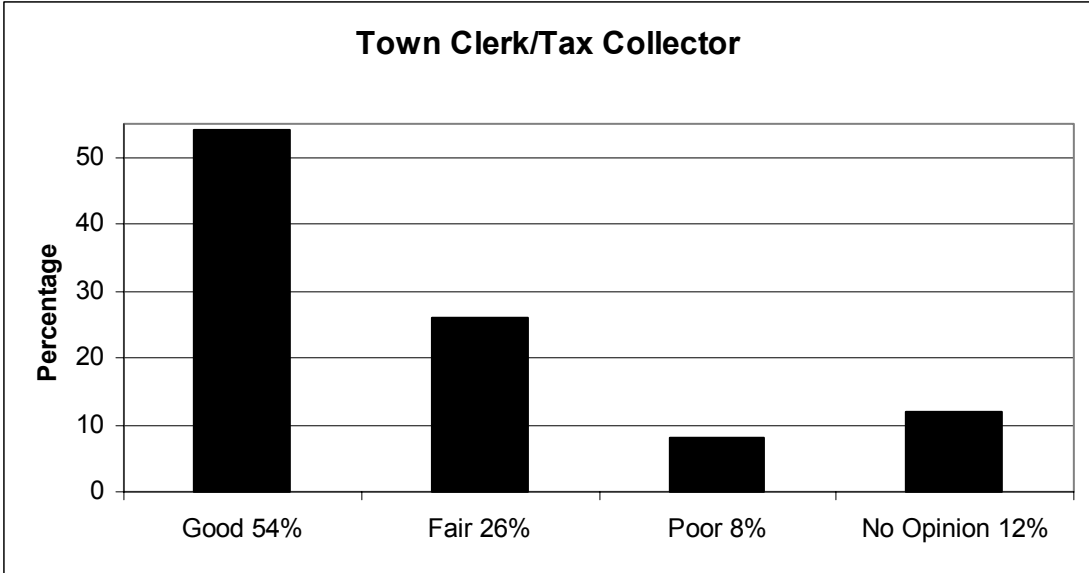
35% rate the planning board as “good” and 33% as “fair”. Only 16% of those surveyed are dissatisfied with it.



2/3 of surveyed residents rate the police department as “good”. Only 6% rate it as “poor”.



There seems to be quite a discrepancy among the opinion of the quality of Mason’s schools. 30% rate them as “good”, but 29% only rate them as “fair” while 24% rate them as “poor”. This is the town service that has the most disagreement between ratings.



More than half of the surveys say that the town clerk/tax collector is doing a good job.