

Townsend Housing Authority

Townsend Housing Authority Affordable Housing Survey

Conducted September November 2004

Methodology

The survey was formulated by the Townsend Housing Authority, printed by the Town Clerk's office, and distributed in a variety of ways:

- Included in the September quarterly tax bill.
- Given condo/apartment complex landlords who distributed it to their tenants.
- Given to the site manager at Atwood Acres elderly housing, who distributed it to tenants.
- Copies of the survey were available from a local real estate agent and at the office of Land Use Coordinator in Town Hall.
- The survey was advertised on channel 8, the local community channel, and local newspapers (Townsend Times and Sentinel and Enterprise) provided excellent coverage.
- Collection boxes for residents to return their completed surveys were set up at a variety of locations (Town Hall, churches, local eateries, and a pharmacy).

According to the Townsend Town Clerk, the 2004 town census showed the population of the town as 9,314. According to the Assessor's office, as of January 2005 Townsend residents live in the following types and numbers of households:

- 2,698 single family homes
- 259 condominiums
- 48 2-family homes
- 8 3-family homes
- 8 apartment buildings with 4-12 units per building

The number of units for apartment buildings with more than 4 units is reported as 8 structures with 4-12 units, resulting in a range rather than a specific number. The range is from 32 (if all 8 buildings are counted as 4-unit structures) to 96 (if all 8 buildings are counted as 8-unit structures). For the purposes of this survey, a number in the middle of this range was selected: 64.

Thus, the total number of households in Townsend (the universe of our survey) is 3,141. 386 households (12.3%) completed a survey and returned it to the Housing Authority.

Results

386 of 3141 (12.3%) of households responded

Note that questions that allow multiple answers add up to more than 100%

Question 1 Tell us about yourself and your household:

- Own home 89%
- Rent home 9%
- No response 2%
- Head of household 51%
- Joint/dual 9%
- Male 42%
- Female 29%
- Single parent 15%
- Member of household with an impairment, disability or special need 12%

Question 2 Please rate the importance of developing housing that is affordable for Townsend residents of all incomes:

- Very important 55%
- Somewhat important 32%
- Not important 11%
- No response 2%
- 2a. Do you work in Townsend?
- Part-time 9%
- Full-time 14%
- Retired 11%
- Don't work in Townsend 62%
- No response 4%

Question 3 What do you think "affordable housing" means? (Choose all that apply)

- Housing for young families who grew up in Townsend 41%
- Housing for people not living and working in Townsend 14%
- Housing for people living in Townsend 48%
- Housing for people living in Townsend and not living in Townsend 39%
- Housing for seniors on fixed incomes 76%
- Other 2%

Question 4 What should Townsend do to help build more affordable housing? (Check all that apply):

- Leave it to private developers 6%
- The Town should develop its own affordable housing 29%
- The Town should work with private developers to build housing 54%
- Require all new development to include affordable housing 48%
- Other 46%
- No response 9%

Question 5 Do you have parents or children who would like to live in Townsend, but can't afford to?

- Yes 27%
- No 68%
- Possibly 3%
- No response 2%

Question 6 What do you think is an affordable price for a single-family home in Townsend?

- Over \$300,000 2%
- \$250,000-\$299,000 7%
- \$200,000 - \$249,000 14%
- \$150,000 - \$199,000 29%
- \$100,000 - \$149,000 14%
- Below \$100,000 2%
- Don't know 9%
- No response 21%

6 respondents (1.5%) gave their answer in terms of monthly rent. The average of the 6 responses was \$625.00 per month.

Question 7 What kind of growth would you like to see in Townsend? (Choose only one.)

- No Growth 15%
- Regulated growth according to the Master Plan 65%
- Unregulated growth 3%
- No opinion 7%
- Other 6%
- No response 2%
- Voided (multiple answers) 2%

Question 8 Would you welcome any of these affordable developments in your neighborhood? (Check all that you would consider):

- Elderly housing 76%
- Disabled housing 46%
- 2 unit development 43%
- 4 unit development 17%
- 6 unit development 12%
- No response 10%

Question 9 How long have you lived in Townsend?

- Less than 5 years 12%
- 5 to 10 years, 12%

- 11- 20 years 17%
- More than 20 years 57%
- No response 2%

Question 10 Do you know of former residents who would like to move back to Townsend? If yes, how many?:

- Yes 18%
- No 75.5%
- No response 6.5%

The 70 (18%) respondents who answered "Yes" were aware of a total of 110 individuals or families who would like to move back to Townsend.

Question 11 How many are in your household in each of the following age groups?

- Under 12 years 12%
- 12-17 years 9%
- 18-30 years 15%
- 31-60 years 44%
- Over 60 years 20%

Question 12a Please describe your family income (the total income of everyone living in your household)?

- Less than \$10,000 0.5%
- \$10,000 - \$19,999 4%
- \$20,000 - \$29,999 5.5%
- \$30,000 - \$39,999 5.5%
- \$40,000 - \$49,999 5%
- \$50,000 - \$59,999 7%
- \$60,000 - \$69,999 6.5%
- \$70,000 - \$79,999 5%
- \$80,000 - \$89,999 8%
- \$90,000 - \$99,999 4%
- \$100,000 - \$149,999 13%
- Over \$150,000 2%
- Retired 3%
- No response 31%

Question 12b The number of people in living in our household is:

- 1 12%
- 2 38%
- 3 16%
- 4 16%

- 5 or more 10%
- No response 8%

Question 12c Is your current living situation dependent upon two or more incomes?:

- Yes 51%
- No 41%
- No response 8%

Question 13 What do you like BEST about living in Townsend?

The responses to this open ended question fell into general themes.

The top 10 themes were:

- Rural setting, small town ambiance, open space, access to nature 53%
- Sense of community 14%
- Good quality of the schools 12%
- Amenities and activities (Common, Sr. Center, band concerts) 9%
- Town services (plowing, recycling, fire, police) 8%
- Low crime rate 7%
- Family living close by 4%
- Shopping where the storekeepers know their customers 2%
- Historic flavor of the town 3%
- Affordability of buying a home 2%
- Little traffic or congestion in the neighborhoods 4%

Question 14 What do you like LEAST about living in Townsend?

The responses to this open ended question fell into general themes.

The top 10 themes were:

- Road conditions (South St bridge closure, no sidewalks or bike path) 26%
- Political infighting at Town Hall, unprofessional leadership 18%
- Taxes too high 11%
- No active business development or public transportation 10%
- Loss of open space/growing too much or too fast 6%
- Inadequate public library 9%
- Lack of affordable homes or apartments 8%
- No programs or amenities for young people 8%
- Lack of choice in shopping and restaurants 7%
- Loss of open space/growing too much or too fast 6%
- Poor quality of the schools 3%