



Executive Summary

of the
2008 Residents Survey
for the
Citizen Action Committee

prepared by

The Tower Lakes Plan Commission
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Introduction

In 2008, the Tower Lakes Planning Commission was charged by the Village Board to re-write and update the Village of Tower Lakes Comprehensive Plan. It was obvious and vitally important from the beginning that the Plan Commission needed to get the Community involved in the research and planning process. Thus the CAC (Citizen Action Committee) was born. Residents of Tower Lakes were recruited and volunteered to serve on this committee and the Plan Commission is indebted to them for their help and service. The CAC meetings and visioning sessions were informative, insightful and contributed greatly to the research process.

The next step was to gather the CAC research and create the 2008 Tower Lakes Residents Survey. The survey allowed the entire community the opportunity to contribute to the assessment and awareness of village issues. Residents were polled on their thoughts of how to improve our community as well as issue awareness and willingness to rank issue importance. Through this survey, the Plan Commission was able to judge not only awareness and issue importance but also review residents willingness to support potential revenue management opportunities

As a follow up to the research, this report presents an Executive Summary of the Survey. It by no means includes all our research but capsulizes and summarizes the meat of the information. All of this research and information is currently under review and analyses. It will be further refined and digested as content for the New Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Tower Lakes.

The Tower Lakes Plan Commission wishes to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the CAC for its contribution to this effort. This is the first public dissemination of this research and information. It is a window of insight into our community and the deep involvement the residents have in the future of Tower Lakes.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary summarizes the results and general comments and feelings of the community as found in the 2008 Residents Survey.

An outstanding priority response rate of 40% was received for the 2008 Survey. The survey was divided by the different areas of responsibilities within the Village such as Budget & Finance, Utilities, Storm Water Management, Police, Urban Forestry, Building and Zoning and Roads & Right-of-Way. Within each section, the survey asked the residents level of importance for a given set of questions as well as the level of satisfaction for the same set of questions. Action item questions were then presented in order to rate the level of support for funding on action area.

Budget & Finance:

The highest priority within the Budget and Finance Section was placed on the water system. 82% of respondents rated the water system as a highest priority for the allocation of Village funds. General repair and maintenance services for Village roads, snow, ice, garbage collection and mosquito spray followed the water system repairs with significant support from respondents. Medium support priority was placed on maintaining village property, waste pick up services and the tree program. The lowest support response was given to general village office hours and technology upgrades and street aesthetics such as lighting and street signs.

Utilities:

Residents believe all the water and utility services are important. Many residents are generally satisfied with the services but there is much room for improvement based upon the percentages of not satisfied. 79% of residents were satisfied with their water pressure and 66% with the system overall. Residents were particularly not satisfied with cost of water (a negative 55%), presence of utility poles in the Village, and the lengths of power outages. When it came to support for additional funding, 62% supported the possibility of bonds or assessments if necessary.

Storm Water Management

Residents were asked about their level of importance of collections and diversion of storm water, operation of swales, catch basins and other receiving structures. A majority of residents felt these issues and procedures ranked as important. They also favored (61% positive) a restriction of lot coverage ordinance to minimize drainage. Residents generally do not support new development ordinances that are less restrictive. (54%) However there is opportunity for improvement and education based on the percentage of not satisfied responses in these areas (as much as 20% respond "do not know" and this percentage could represent a lack of understanding of the issues of storm water management.

Police & Public Safety

Respondents were asked about satisfaction with police services, crime prevention, security patrol, emergency response and Reliability. When rating the level of importance for these services, all were rated high in the 90's led by emergency response at 98% important and reliability at 97% important. This is one section in the survey where there is clear consensus by residents that the Tower Lakes Police Department is very valued. The level of importance for police services is ranked high and there are few "don't know" responses for this category with the exception of responses to the level of importance of the reverse 911. This may be a good educational opportunity to explain its importance to residents.

Urban Forestry

Residents are satisfied with the urban forestry services and feel the services are important. However there are opportunities for awareness and education including for insect control and buckthorn. When asked about Leaf burning in the Village, respondents (70%) believe it should continue and 72% believe it should not be banned. However, the survey reflects a willingness by residents to consider alternatives to leaf burning but there is little interest in resident involvement to explore alternatives to leaf burning with the village.

Building Permits and Processes

Questions were asked about the current permit process for building within the village as well as importance of maintaining the current look and character of the village. A Majority of respondents rated the process of permits as “satisfied”, however, many responded “don’t know”. This may reflect the number of people who have not experienced the process or sought changes requiring permits. The majority of respondents thought that the current building codes, access to the codes and use of the codes and zoning for the purpose of maintaining the look and character of the Village are important. There is an opportunity for improvement or additional education to the process given various higher than typical percentages of not satisfied responses.

Zoning Regulations

In the zoning questions there is also a higher than typical “don’t know” response which indicates that many residents either have not needed to use the process or do not understand it. The satisfaction rate is very low across the board with exception for resident satisfaction with new construction.

Residents support annexation, open space and additional residential development (single family homes) if it adds to the revenue stream for the Village. There is some support for commercial land use however it is not a priority. 70% favor open space and 60% support 2 acre residential zoning for any new land acquisitions. Residents do not support cell towers, light industrial, multi-family residential or affordable housing in the priority mix for new land acquisitions.

Roads and Right-of-Way

Resident’s levels of importance and satisfaction were questioned in this area and a majority (75%) rate satisfied with the Village roads. Maintenance and repair of roads also scored high. The level of importance of these areas ranked among the highest responses with a 98% positive score for their importance.

The majority of residents (72%) prefer to maintain status quo for expenditures for road replacement, 25% prefer a reduction in this expense while only 3% believe it should be increased. Residents agree we should maintain current levels regarding expenditures for curbs, street lights and pedestrian walkways while 30% would like to see an increase. 25% of residents feel we should reduce expenditures for road replacement and 41% feel we should reduce expenditure for road maintenance.