

Section III: Citizen Participation



**Citizen
Participation**

III



The *Mineral Springs Character* category was designed for residents to select one picture out of three that best represented the identity of Mineral Springs. Over 47 percent of the CVS participants chose a rural scene to describe the community identity.

Mineral Springs' Character



(47.6%) Fig. 24 Horse farms and open land portraying the character of the town.

The *Public Space* category included all areas that could be utilized by the public, especially community parks and recreation areas. Almost 62% of Mineral Springs respondents found that they prefer Public Space to be areas of undeveloped open space that resembles a greenway system. Residents prefer a place to walk or run over a park with playground equipment.

Public Space



(61.9%) Fig. 25 Public park as a greenway trail





The *Commercial Development* category was designed to provide insight into the types of commercial designs would be acceptable to residents. Again, over 50% of responses were in favor of smaller-scale commercial development centered around a dense core that includes a variety of public uses. Survey slides included retail, office, and institutional buildings and layouts. Like the residential component, residents generally supported less-intrusive development that does not conform to conventional suburban models (Fig. 30 -32).

Commercial Development



(50%) Fig. 30 Small localized development where necessary to preserve environmental beauty and open space.



(50%) Fig. 31 Small localized development where necessary to preserve environmental beauty and open space.



(66.7%) Fig. 32 Keep commercial development to a small scale, with a pedestrian-friendly Main St. rather than large parking lots.





The *Streetscape and Design* category consisted of rural, neighborhood, and downtown options. The preferred rural roads did not have curb or gutter and preserved the rural heritage of the town (Fig. 36). The preferred residential roads included sidewalks, on-street parking and a buffer between pedestrians and the street (Fig. 37). No clear cut downtown option was chosen, with a small majority preferring the character of the existing central area (Fig. 38) to a more “urban” Main Street such as Davidson, NC.

Streetscape & Design



(42.9%) Fig. 36 Viewsheds of open space and countryside should be preserved along the roads.



(95.2%) Fig. 37 Sidewalks should be incorporated in residential neighborhoods/town center/other high pedestrian traffic areas.



(40.5%) Fig. 38 Development should comply with the small town atmosphere, with small local shops and buildings.



Mineral Springs Resident Survey

In September of 2005, a community survey was mailed out to residents of Mineral Springs. The survey was identical to a survey administered in 2000. The purpose of the survey was to determine how attitudes about community, growth and development had changed since re-incorporation in 1999. Questions from the survey focused on quality of life issues, availability of services and infrastructure, local taxes and future goals. Most questions used a "Likert scale" to judge the degree of disagreement or agreement to a particular statement (see Appendix for a copy of the full Mineral Springs Resident Survey) A Likert scale is a measure of intensity and respondents had the following options; strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Some questions were open-ended, allowing survey respondents to fully explain their concerns. Land use issues were divided into sub-sections covering housing characteristics, commercial/mixed-use development, infrastructure, recreation and industry.

About 800 surveys were mailed out and over 320 responses were returned and analyzed. The response rate is especially high. To put it into perspective, a similar survey in Mecklenburg County would require over 93,000 respondents to match the proportion of residents responding. The response indicates strong community interest in the future of Mineral Springs. The reliability of the survey is likely very high.

Results

Almost 39 percent of respondents were over age 50 compared to 28 percent in 2000, and over 54 percent reported having lived in Mineral Springs for over 10 years. The concerns expressed represent a broad cross-section of residents but also show the deep concern long-time residents have over the future of their town.

Five dominant themes emerged from the survey. The same themes were reflected in the original 2000 survey. Overall, Mineral Springs' residents want the following:

- Limit Residential Growth
- Maintain Large Lot Standards
- Keep Taxes Low
- Preserve Rural Heritage and Environment
- Explore Sewer and Water Service

The themes reinforce one another, for the most part, and reflect a strong demand to grow slowly and carefully. In the context of Union County's development, none of these concerns are being adequately addressed by planning. The desire of Mineral Springs' residents seems clear: protect our community from large-scale, poorly planned development.

In terms of current conditions, 71 percent rate Mineral Springs as a very good or good place to live, compared to 75 percent in 2000. The most important development issues facing Mineral Springs are as follows:

- Maintaining low taxes (83%)
- Managing growth rate (76%)
- Preservation of rural, small town atmosphere (76%)
- Preservation of the environment (72%)

Again, a strong preference for the status quo exists. Residents like Mineral Springs and its natural amenities. They are not overly concerned about the provision of urban amenities and services. They recognize the natural beauty around them and want to preserve it.