

## SURVEY RESULTS

Total respondents: 186 (Note: Some respondents skipped some questions.)  
 Surveys were collected in February, March and April 2016.  
 Percent (and number) who responded to each question are shown in the tables below.  
 Shaded boxes indicate the majority or plurality of responses to each question.

### A. General

1	I live in Union:	Year-Round 95.00% (171)	Seasonally 1.67% (3)	Non-Resident Taxpayer 3.33% (6)	
2	How many years has Union been your home:	Average 25 years	Median 22 years	Minimum 0.5 year	Maximum 79 years
3	Home Type:	Single-Family House 94.44% (170)	Multi-Family Unit/Condo/Apt 1.67% (3)	Mobile 3.33% (6)	Other 0.56% (1)
4	If you are not a resident, do you plan to become a full-time resident in the future:	Yes 50.00% (3)	No 16.67% (1)	Maybe 33.33% (2)	
5	Employer:	Self-Employed 24.31% (44)	Retired 43.65% (79)	Private employer 21.55% (39)	Public Sector 10.50% (19)
6	Home Ownership or Rental:	Own 98.32% (176)		Rent 1.68% (3)	
7	Work:	Part time 9.44% (17)	Full time 48.89% (88)	Seasonally 2.78% (5)	Retired 37.78% (68)
		Seeking work 0% (0)		Not Applicable 1.11% (2)	

Most of the survey respondents live in Union year-round (95%) in single-family houses (94.44%). A plurality of respondents is retired (43.65%). Of those who work, a plurality works full time (48.89%).

### B. Housing, Development, Planning and Preservation

<b>Housing:</b> Do you favor, oppose or are unsure of the development of the following in the Town:		<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
8	Single-Family Homes:	91.76% (167)	1.65% (3)	6.59% (12)
9	Multi-Family Homes:	64.37% (112)	20.11% (35)	15.52% (27)
10	Rental Housing:	59.55% (106)	20.79% (37)	19.66% (35)
11	Subsidized Housing Projects:	28.81% (51)	47.46% (84)	23.73% (42)
12	Housing Projects for Elderly:	85.96% (153)	5.06% (9)	8.99% (16)
13	Mobile Home Parks:	12.43% (22)	67.80% (120)	19.77% (35)

Most respondents favored the development of single-family homes (91.76%) and housing projects for the elderly (85.96%). Smaller majorities favored multi-family (64.37%) and rental housing (59.55%). A majority (67.8%) oppose the development of mobile home parks. A plurality (47.46%) opposes subsidized housing projects.

Written comments were received from 39 respondents. Support was expressed from some for senior/elderly housing developments and for clustered housing, but it was generally suggested that the scale of such projects should be small, in keeping with the rural character of the Town, and that attractive design was important. Opinion on subsidized housing was divided, with some supporting only privately funded projects. Several supported efforts by Habitat for Humanity and others suggested co-housing projects, as well as housing for veterans. Some thought that all housing should be left entirely to the free market and that new development would increase the tax base. Others said that more development would increase the demand for more public services from local government. Opinion on mobile home parks was split. Several noted a need, but most said they would have to be limited in size and location, designed attractively and regulated to avoid problems.

<b>Development:</b> Should the Town encourage the following?		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
14	Light Industry (Non-polluting):	90.91% (160)	4.55% (8)	4.55% (8)
15	Retail Stores (small scale up to 5,000 square feet):	89.89% (160)	3.93% (7)	6.18% (11)
16	Retail Stores (mid-scale up to 20,000 square feet):	50.00% (82)	36.59% (60)	13.41% (22)
17	Retail Stores (large scale over 20,000 square feet):	16.46% (27)	70.12% (115)	13.41% (22)
18	Pharmacies:	76.40% (123)	14.91% (24)	8.70% (14)
19	Medical Health Care Center:	73.01% (119)	13.50% (22)	13.50% (22)
20	Business/Professional Buildings:	78.41% (138)	10.23% (18)	11.36% (20)
21	Home-Based Businesses:	92.22% (166)	1.67% (3)	6.11% (11)
22	Nursing / Assisted Living Homes:	80.79% (143)	2.82% (5)	16.38% (29)
23	Group Homes for Special Needs:	51.41% (91)	17.51% (31)	31.07% (55)
24	Seasonal Campgrounds/RV Parks:	55.43% (97)	26.86% (47)	17.71% (31)

Most respondents agreed that Union should encourage Home-Based Businesses (92.22%), Light Industry (90.91%), and Retail Stores that are small scale up to 5,000 square feet (89.89%). There was a majority of support for all of the other development options listed, with the exception of Retail Stores that are large scale over 20,000 square feet, which was opposed by a majority (70.12%).

Written comments were received from 38 respondents. For retail development, support was expressed for small-scale, mid-scale, and locally owned stores instead of large-scale and national chain stores. Several said they travel to Augusta, Camden and Rockland to shop at larger stores. Some supported any type of development that would bring jobs. Others supported development if it was in keeping with the Town, through good design and site suitability. Several wanted more retail in the village. The need for a pharmacy was repeatedly noted. Only limited support was expressed for campgrounds. Others suggested supporting farming and agriculture, a visitor center, B&B's, and limited industry. Several stated that the government should not be involved in development, which should be left to the private sector and individual property-owners to decide upon.

<b>Planning: Should the Town?</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
25	Enhance site plan review of development proposals:	57.06% (97)	11.18% (19)	31.76% (54)
26	Adopt Building /Energy/Construction Codes:	55.49% (96)	25.43% (44)	19.08% (33)
27	Amend zoning beyond shoreland zones:	26.01% (45)	37.57% (65)	36.42% (63)
28	Charge developers impact fees to cover related public costs:	79.89% (143)	10.61% (19)	9.50% (17)
29	Cover development related public costs through property taxes:	7.39% (13)	77.84% (137)	14.77% (26)
30	Provide tax incentives to attract businesses that bring jobs:	45.76% (81)	35.59% (63)	18.64% (33)
31	Create a Recreational Trail linking the School, Village Common and Union Fairgrounds:	64.46% (107)	21.69% (36)	13.86% (23)

Most respondents supported charging developers impact fees to cover related public costs (79.89%). Likewise, a majority did not support covering development related public costs through property taxes (77.84%). A majority supported creating a Recreational Trail that links the School, Village Common and Union Fairgrounds (64.46%). Smaller majorities supported enhance site plan review of development proposals (57.06%) and adopting Building/Energy/Construction Codes (55.49%). A plurality does not support amending zoning beyond shoreland zones (37.57%).

Written comments were received from 52 respondents. Some support for a recreational trail was conditioned on the trail not negatively affecting abutting private property owners, not requiring tax dollars to build or maintain, and not using eminent domain. It was suggested to apply for grants to fund the work and have school children participate. Several also supported sidewalks in the village area, and ATV trails in rural areas. Some supported tax incentives for new development, but only if the incentives are short-term, and are provided to locally owned businesses, not national or franchise businesses. Others thought that no incentives should be provided because they are a form of corporate welfare, akin to bribes, and that Union could attract development without tax incentives. Some said that new development should pay for its own infrastructure needs. A sizable portion of respondents felt that more information was needed to answer these questions, including a description of current ordinances and codes. Several supported codes in line with state requirements but not stricter. Support was recommended for low impact development and for businesses that depend upon the creativity of residents. A few wanted no new development.

<b>Land Use:</b> Should the Town do more, less or the same, to encourage:		<b>More</b>	<b>Less</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
32	Rural Character:	39.20% (69)	6.82% (12)	46.02% (81)	7.95% (14)
33	Scenic Resources:	46.89% (83)	4.52% (8)	41.81% (74)	6.78% (12)
34	Wetlands:	32.18% (56)	8.62% (15)	44.83% (78)	14.37% (25)
35	Forests:	32.76% (57)	7.47% (13)	49.43% (86)	10.34% (18)
36	Hillsides/Ridgelines:	36.93% (65)	8.52% (15)	43.75% (77)	10.80% (19)
37	Open Space:	39.43% (69)	6.29% (11)	43.43% (76)	10.86% (19)
38	Public Access to the Shore:	44.63% (79)	5.65% (10)	41.81% (74)	7.91% (14)
39	Historic Resources:	35.80% (63)	5.68% (10)	48.86% (86)	9.66% (17)

A plurality of residents stated that the Town should do more to preserve Scenic Resources (46.89%) and Public Access to the Shore (44.63%). For all of the other categories, pluralities of respondents indicated that the Town should do the same, rather than more or less, to encourage the preservation of these natural resources: Rural Character, Wetlands, Forests, Hillsides/Ridgelines, Open Space, and Historic Resources.

Written comments were received from 29 respondents. Some stated that rural character, natural beauty and small town charm are Union’s identity, and that those qualities should be preserved, including for example, through voluntary efforts with land trusts. Others noted that rural character attracts new residents and development, which should be done carefully to preserve rural assets. It was suggested that if natural resources are in jeopardy, they should be protected. Several noted that access to natural resources like ponds and lakes was limited and additional access should be sought. Some stated that such access should be with the permission of private property owners, not taken from them. Several thought the Union Fairgrounds should be better used. A good number needed more information and context to answer these questions, wanting clarification and more information on current standards and ordinances. Some said that nothing needed to be done, and that people should not be told what to do with their property. It was suggested to hire local youth to take care of parkland.

**C.    Public Facilities and Services**

	<b>Service</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>
40	Adult Education	0% (0)	23.08% (3)	69.23% (9)	7.69% (1)	0% (0)
41	Ambulance	30.68% (54)	39.77% (70)	22.73% (40)	4.55% (8)	2.27% (4)
42	Cemeteries	21.02% (37)	47.16% (83)	26.70% (47)	3.98% (7)	1.14% (2)
43	County Police	14.77% (26)	53.98% (95)	22.73% (40)	7.95% (14)	0.57% (1)
44	Fire Protection	33.52% (60)	53.63% (96)	10.61% (19)	1.68% (3)	0.56% (1)
45	Property Tax level	6.18% (11)	44.38% (79)	12.92% (23)	27.53% (49)	8.99% (16)
46	Public School	9.04% (16)	41.24% (73)	33.33% (59)	14.69% (26)	1.69% (3)
47	Recreation Facilities	2.86% (5)	45.71% (80)	21.71% (38)	26.86% (47)	2.86% (5)
48	Road Plowing	35.36% (64)	49.72% (90)	4.97% (9)	7.73% (14)	2.21% (4)
49	Road Repair	17.88% (32)	53.63% (96)	6.15% (11)	16.20% (29)	6.15% (11)
50	Town Office Services	30.73% (55)	51.40% (92)	7.82% (14)	8.94% (16)	1.12% (2)
51	Town Office Hours	23.60% (42)	60.11% (107)	8.99% (16)	7.30% (13)	0% (0)
52	Transportation Services	0% (0)	7.69% (1)	53.85% (7)	38.46% (5)	0% (0)
53	Vocational Education	0% (0)	15.38% (2)	84.62% (11)	0% (0)	0% (0)

These services received the highest amount of the Very Satisfied ratings: Road Plowing (35.36%), Fire Protection (33.52%), and Town Office Services (30.73%). A majority of respondents stated that they were Satisfied with these services: Town Office Hours (60.11%), County Police (53.98%), Fire Protection (53.63%), Road Repair (53.63%), and Town Office Services (51.40%). A plurality of respondents stated that they were Satisfied with these services: Road Plowing (49.72%), Cemeteries (47.16%), Recreation Facilities (45.71%), Property Tax level (44.38%), Public School (41.24%), and Ambulance (39.77%). These services received the largest number of Dissatisfied ratings: Transportation Services (38.46%), Property Tax level (27.53%) and Recreation Facilities (26.86%). These services received the largest number of Very Dissatisfied ratings: Property Tax level (8.99%) and Road Repair (6.15%).

Written comments were received from 24 respondents. Some recommended that the Town office should offer vehicle license plates, complete vehicle registration services for residents. Road repair, paving dirt roads, plowing, and roadside trimming of vegetation near intersections were suggested, as well as enforcement of speed limits on state roads and in the village area. Criticism was made of Knox County Emergency Dispatch as being too slow to respond, and that direct local response from Union should occur. Several suggested support for the Thompson Community Center financially and for recreational activities. One recommended using that facility for elderly or veteran housing. It was noted that the East Union Cemetery needed to be maintained better. One suggested that public transportation should be offered to service centers and shopping areas. Several said no additional town services were needed, and that government should be kept small. One suggested that town employees should be friendlier and that private investors could provide some services.

**D. Likes, Dislikes and Your Vision**

54. What do you like most about the Town:

Written comments were received from 150 respondents. Many had more than one aspect of the community that they liked. Forty-five liked the rural character of the community, its open spaces, hillsides and natural resources. Similarly, 25 liked Union's scenic beauty. The small town, quiet character was liked by 36 respondents, and the friendliness of townspeople was liked by 30 respondents. The Village Common and local businesses were liked by 29 respondents. Farming and related activities were liked by 14 respondents. Eleven liked the Vose Library. Nine liked the history of the area, their connection to that history and the historical society. Six liked town governance and town office staff. Five liked the safety of the area. Several respondents noted individual businesses, town cleanliness, road plowing, conservative laissez-faire values, and clean water.

55. What do you dislike most about the Town:

Written comments were received from 134 respondents. Some had more than one aspect of the community that they disliked. Twenty disliked the level of property taxes, with some stating that they were not getting adequate services for the amount that they were paying in taxes. Others said they could not afford to remain, and that the area was unaffordable to young families and the elderly. Eleven wrote that they had no dislikes for Union. Town governance was disliked by 11 respondents, with some criticizing how they have been treated at the town office. The lack of businesses and jobs, which requires residents to drive elsewhere to shop and work was disliked by 10 respondents. Nine respondents disliked those seeking to change the town, including those wanting more development, more services or more regulations. Nine disliked road conditions, including plowing and maintenance, while eight disliked speeding, traffic and unsafe roadways. Eight respondents disliked small-town politics and political ideological extremism. A similar number disliked the lack of recreational activities and programs for youth and elderly. Five specifically disliked the lack of a pharmacy. Four disliked the lack of growth. Several disliked the condition of the Thompson Community Center. A few disliked the following: the schools, dilapidated businesses, litter/junk, lack of code enforcement, inadequate ordinances, negative attitudes toward small businesses, and the E911/ambulance service.

56. What would you like to see in the future for the Town, what is your vision for the Town over the next 10 years:

Written comments were received from 139 respondents. Some had several suggestions for Union's future. Twenty-six respondents recommended improving and increasing small-scale, locally owned businesses and stores, especially within the village area around the Common. Similarly, seven recommended a revitalization of the village including improvements to storefronts and beautification. Twenty-four recommended maintaining the rural character, small town qualities, with controlled growth and natural resource preservation. Fifteen wanted farming to be sustained and enhanced. Thirteen wanted lower property taxes, reduce town government spending, and/or implement fairer property tax assessments, with assistance to those in need.

Twelve suggested more recreational activities and improved recreational facilities in general and for youth and the elderly. Related to this, eight wanted more hiking and walking trails, while seven recommended improvements to the Thompson Community Center, which is seen as dilapidated by some. Ten would like more development, including on Route 17, with suggestions for retail and manufacturing and industry. Six wanted a pharmacy, and four recommended a medical/urgent care facility. Seven wanted improvements to town governance including cost savings, and better outreach to involve residents with decision making, like ordinances. Six recommended to not allow large-scale development. Six would like no changes in general to the Town. In smaller numbers, respondents suggested the following: better road repair and maintenance, paving, elderly housing, multifamily housing, energy efficient housing, more housing, fast-food restaurants, small malls, car wash, public transportation, sidewalks, bike lanes, more parking around the Common, improved use of Fairgrounds/community events, fill the quarries, reduced regulations, historic preservation, scenic preservation, East Union Village district, more access to lakes and ponds.