

## Introduction

In 1991 Antrim County surveyed its population in an effort to better understand the needs and desires of its citizens. It attempted to get a feel for the character of the county and what characteristics should be promoted and protected.

In 2001, Antrim County performed a similar survey. The purpose of this survey is similar to the 1991 survey; however, it also attempts to compare the attitudes of separate groups within the county, such as, seasonal residents vs. year round and zoned townships vs. unzoned. An added benefit to this survey is that it allows the county to track any changes in attitude and concerns within the population from 1991 to 2001.

It was determined that, in order to have a 95% confidence level, 378 questionnaires needed to be returned for a population of 23,110 residents.

A random sample was taken from the Master Street Address Guide used by 911 and supplemented using the tax rolls from the county Treasurer's Office. The tax rolls were used to obtain P.O. Box numbers for residents who have their mail delivered at the Post Office.

1,196 questionnaires were sent with 72 being returned in their envelopes as undeliverable. 420 questionnaires were eventually returned for a 37% return rate. This number, being greater than the minimum 378 questionnaires required for a 95% confidence level, assures the desired accuracy.

This report has been separated into five main sections as follows:

1. Demographics of Respondents
2. Community Services
3. Economy
4. Environment and Land Use
5. Vision

Each section has also been analyzed by comparing the responses of various groups such as Zoned vs. Unzoned, part-time residents vs. full-time residents.

# Demographics

## County Wide

The three biggest differences between the 1991 survey and the 2001 survey are large increases in part-time residences, age and income. The increase in age and income may be related to the increase in part-time residents in that part-time residents generally have enough income to afford a second or third home. Also, virtually all of the part-time residents are over 40 years old with almost half of those being over 60 years old, suggesting a large number of retirees moving to Antrim County. This should be compared to the latest census data to make sure this is a true reflection of the county and not a result of the sampling.

### Part-time vs. full-time Residents

There are other significant differences between part-time residents and full-time residents besides age.

Part-time residents tend to have a much higher level of education than do full-time residents and tend to have a much higher income as well.

This makes sense in that people with higher education tend also to have higher incomes. This allows them to own second homes. Part-time residents also are more likely to be professional people or own their own business than are full time residents, who are more likely to be skilled laborers.

The only other great difference between part-time and full-time residents are the number of children attending an Antrim County school where almost no part-time residence has children attending school in Antrim county (only one part-time respondent said they did).

### Zoned Townships vs. Unzoned Townships

There were virtually no differences between either zoned townships or unzoned townships and the overall county in demographics.

# Community Services

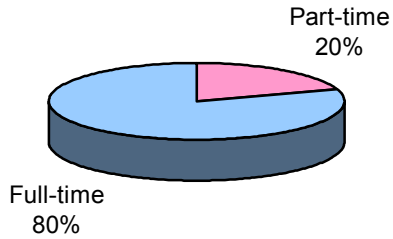
## County wide

There appear to be very few significant differences between the 1991 survey and the 2001 survey. Fire protection, the sheriff's dept., and the post office all rank highly in quality of service. The category that ranked lowest was "Youth Employment Training". However, very few respondents in both 1991 and 2001 would most like to see an improvement in this area (7% in 1991 and 3% in 2001).

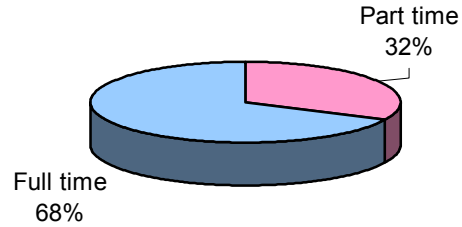
Although 50% of all respondents feel the quality of road maintenance is good or excellent, 25% would most like to see improvement in this area. Other areas that

# Demographics

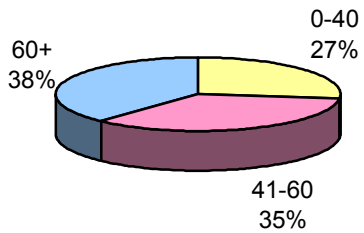
**Part-time vs Full-time Residents 1991**



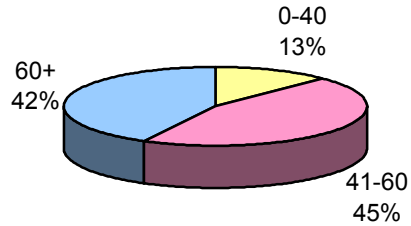
**Part-time vs Full-time Residents 2001**



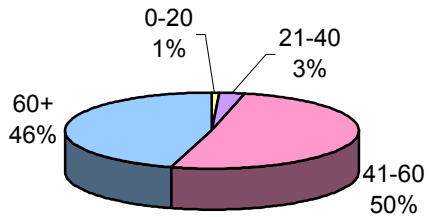
**County Wide Ages 1991**



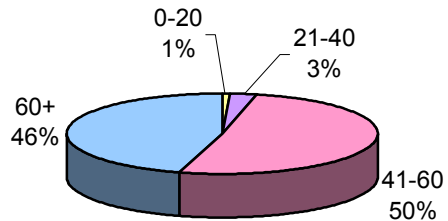
**County Wide Ages 2001**



**Part-time Resident Age Distribution**

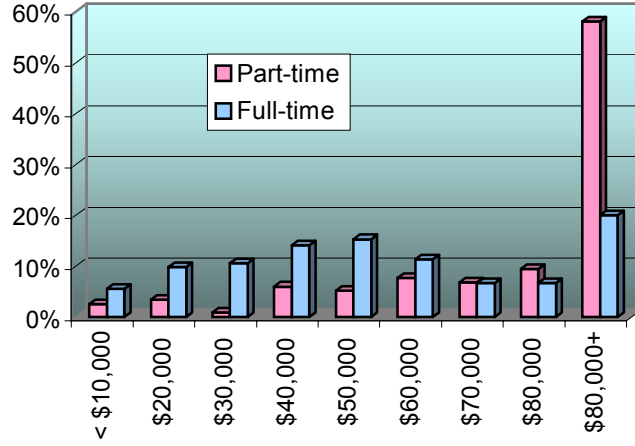


**Part-time Resident Age Distribution**

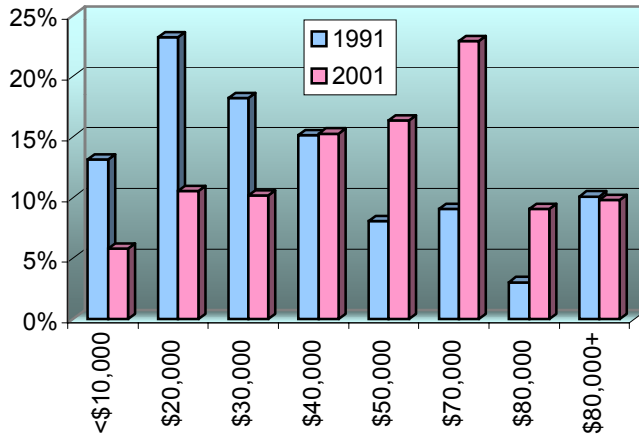


# Demographics

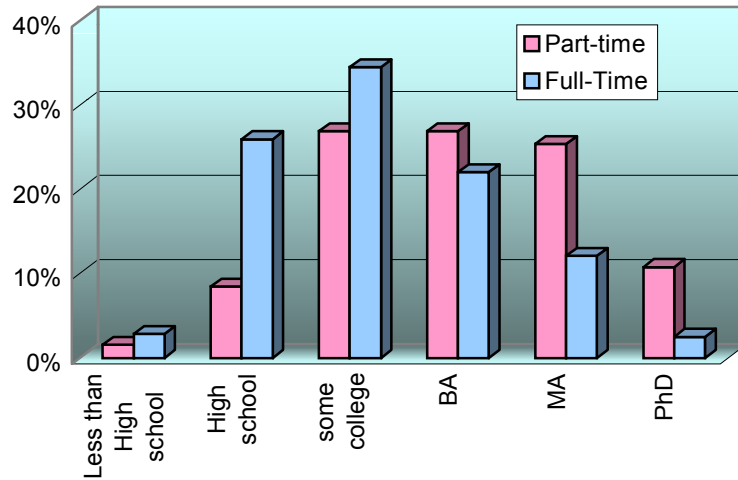
## Income Part-time vs Full-time



## Income 1991 vs 2001



## Education Level



respondents would most like to see improvement are “Property tax assessment – 17%”, “Planning and zoning – 10%” and “Medical services – 10%”.

### **Part-time vs. Full-time**

Part-time residents seem to have a more positive opinion of all county services than do full-time residents. A notable exception is the fire service where the full time residents rate the fire service higher than do part-time residents.

Full-time residents are more critical of county services than are part-time residents, especially for adult education, youth employment training and road maintenance. This may be because full-time residents have a greater stake in the local education system than do part-time residents, whose children attend school elsewhere. Also, it may be that most part-time residents return to their full time homes during the winter months so their children can go to school or simply to avoid the snow. Full-time residents live in Antrim County during the winter and spring months when most part-time residents are gone and the roads are at their worst. “Youth Employment Training” was ranked poorest by full-time residents, yet, few people seem to think it is a priority for change.

Both part-time and full-time residents agree that road maintenance, property tax assessment, planning and zoning and medical services are areas that most need to be improved.

The respondents were also asked to comment on topics relating more to the community in general, to comment on its character.

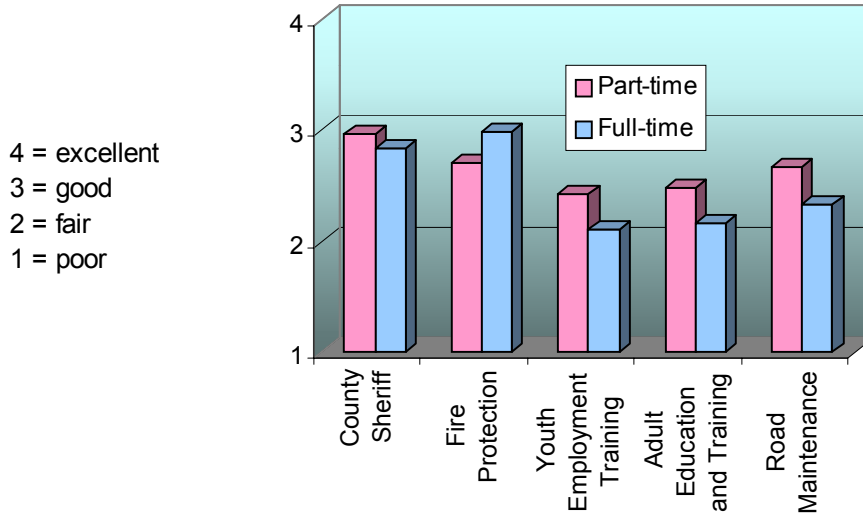
Full-time residents rate all of these categories lower than do part-time residents except for churches, where they seem more satisfied with their churches, although both groups ranked churches highly.

There are certain categories that full-time residents rated so much lower that it shows a distinct difference of opinion. For instance, part-time residents have a fairly favorable opinion of education within the county whereas full-time residents are very critical of it. Other areas where full-time and part-time residents differ are housing, shopping, arts and culture and youth programs.

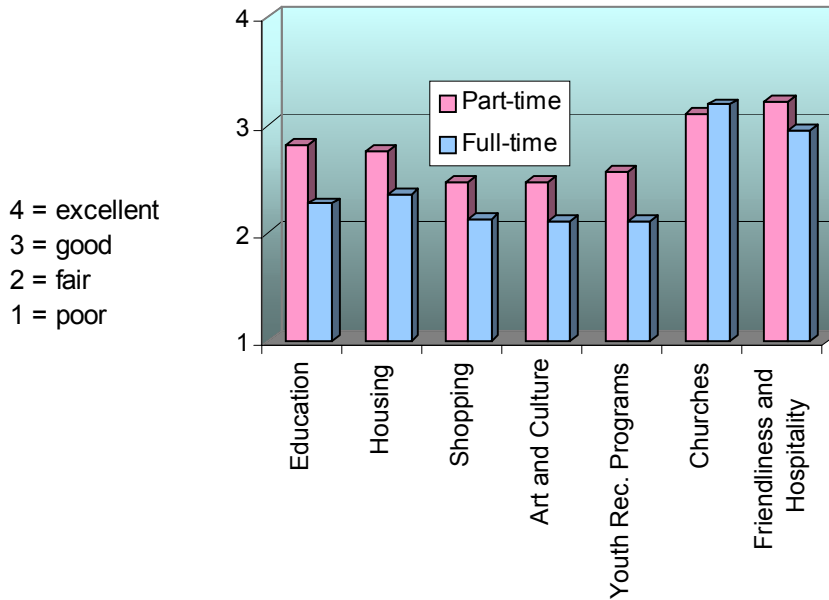
Other differences are found in their priorities for change. Both groups place property tax levels as their number one priority for change. However, part-time respondents are twice as likely to make property tax levels a priority as are full-time respondents (35% for part-time, 18% for full-time). The economy also is a point of major departure between these two groups. The fourth most important category for change to full-time residents was the economy at 8%. However, no part-time residents feels the economy is a priority.

# Community Services

## Selected County Services



## Selected Community Characteristics



## **Economy**

The economy section of the survey was extensive and included many questions addressing many diverse aspects of the economy.

There seems to be very few significant differences between the 1991 responses and those from 2001 on a countywide basis. The greater differences appear to be between part-time residents and full-time residents. Therefore, the focus of this section will be on the differences between part-time and full-time residents shopping patterns and preferences.

### **Part-time vs. Full-time**

Both part-time and full-time residents have the same priorities as to encouraging economic growth. The majority of both groups wish to see economic growth balanced. However, a full-time resident is almost twice as likely to greatly encourage economic growth.

The Antrim County economy was divided into several categories. Responses to these questions were very similar for both part-time and full-time residents. Both groups gave those areas concerning natural resources and recreation a high priority. Both groups gave heavy manufacturing a low priority.

Part-time and full-time residents have similar priorities regarding housing, however, full-time residents see a significantly greater need for affordable and retirement housing.

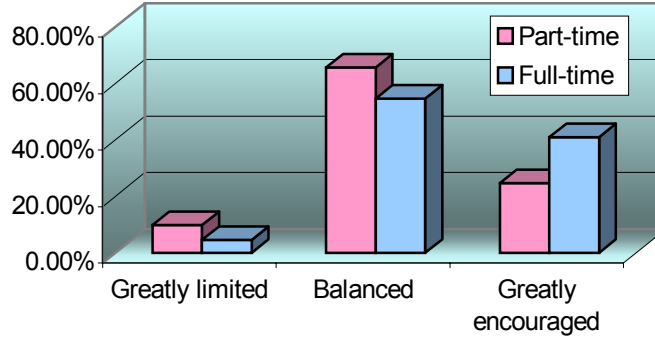
Both groups would like to see fewer condominiums, mobile homes, apartments, and manufactured homes. There appears to be a contradiction here in that, the respondents desire more affordable housing yet they would like to see less of all the usual sources of affordable housing such as mobile homes and manufactured housing.

When considering the types and numbers of jobs that should be pursued, part-time and full-time residents are in full agreement as to the priorities. Both groups wish to see more year-round jobs that have a low impact on the environment. Although both groups saw wage as important, neither group feels it is more important than maintaining the rural character of the county.

Question 12 of the survey pertains mainly to the type of development that the respondents might favor or oppose. The responses of both part-time and full-time residents mirror each other closely. Both groups strongly favor new supermarkets, medical clinics and recycling stations. Notable items that the respondents oppose include resort development, shopping malls and golf courses.

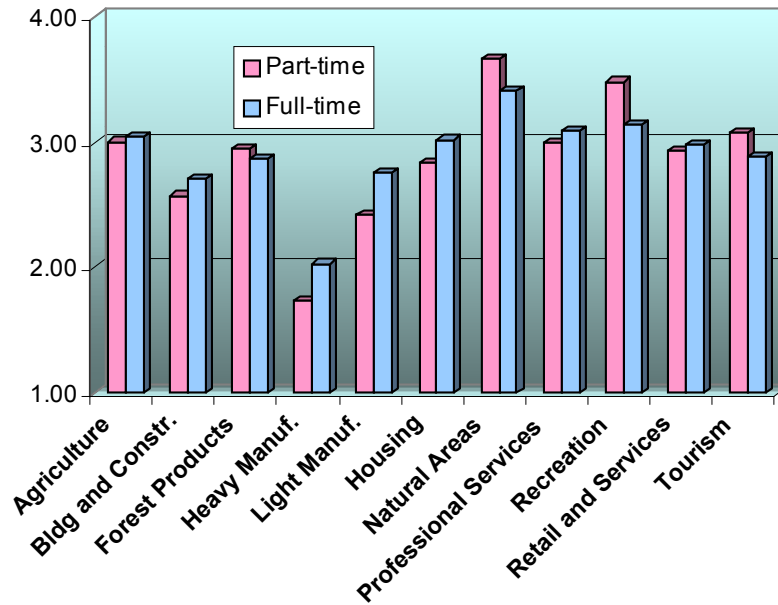
# Economy

**Economic Growth Should Be:**



**Economic Priorities**

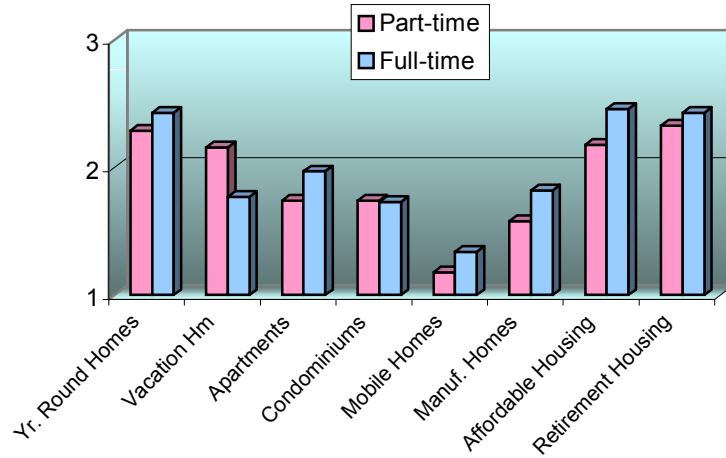
4 = High Priority  
 3 = Med. Priority  
 2 = Low Priority  
 1 = Not a Priority



# Economy

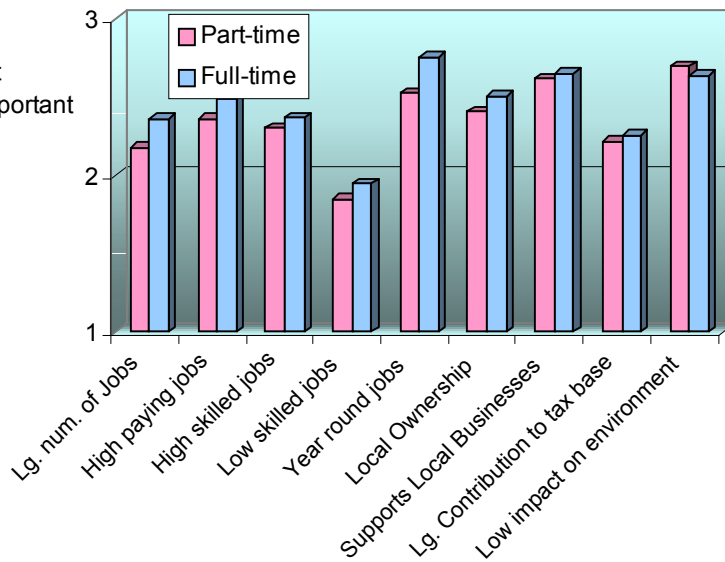
3 = More  
 2 = Same  
 1 = Less

### Preferred Housing



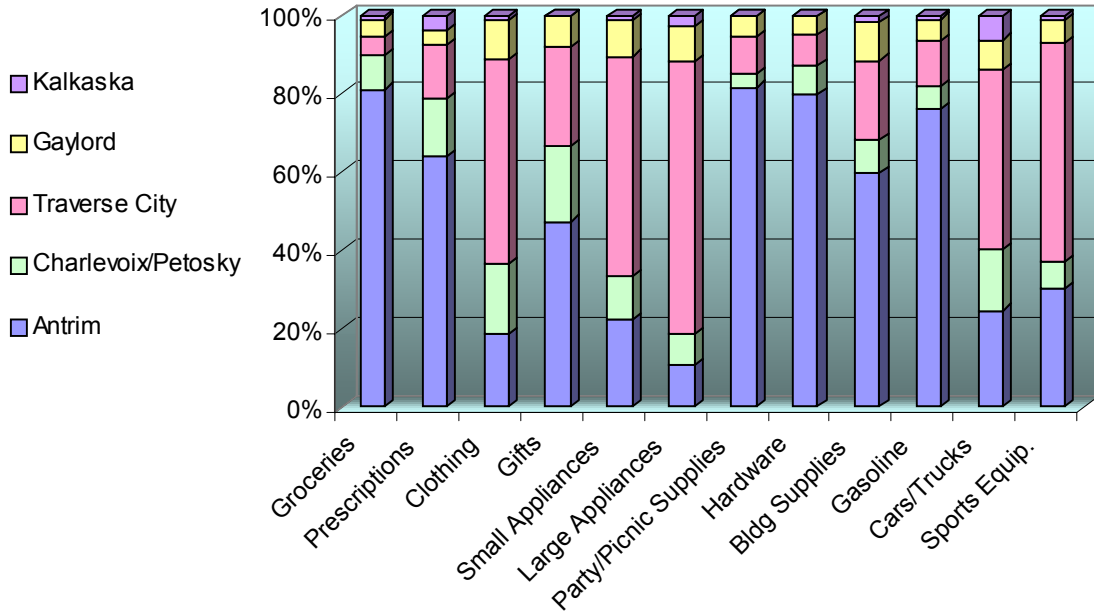
### Types of Employment

3 = Very Important  
 2 = Somewhat Important  
 1 = Not Important

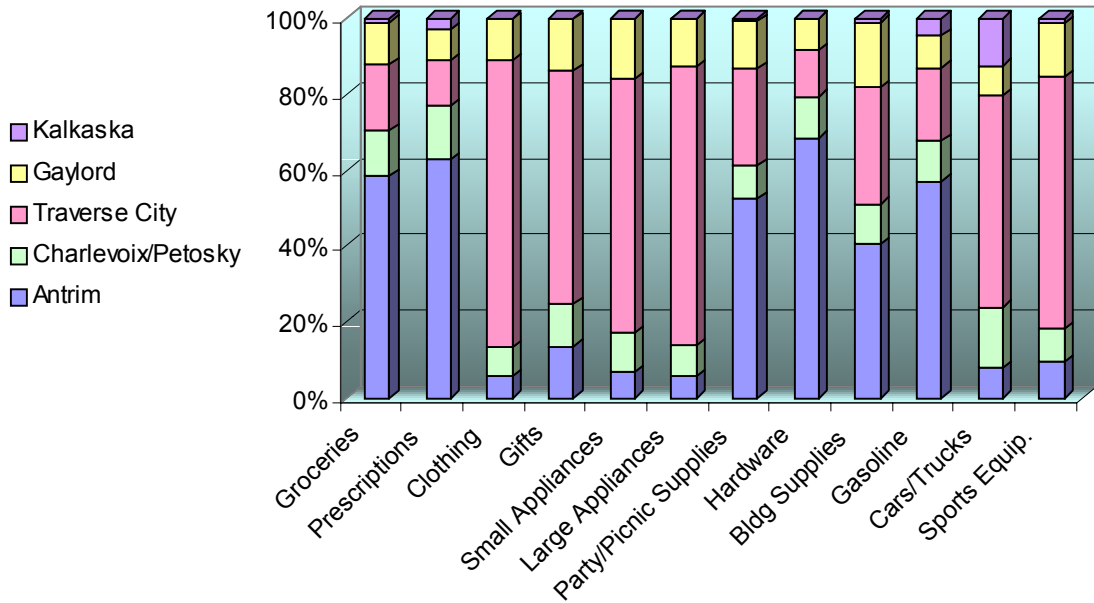


# Economy

## Part-Time Resident Shopping Pattern

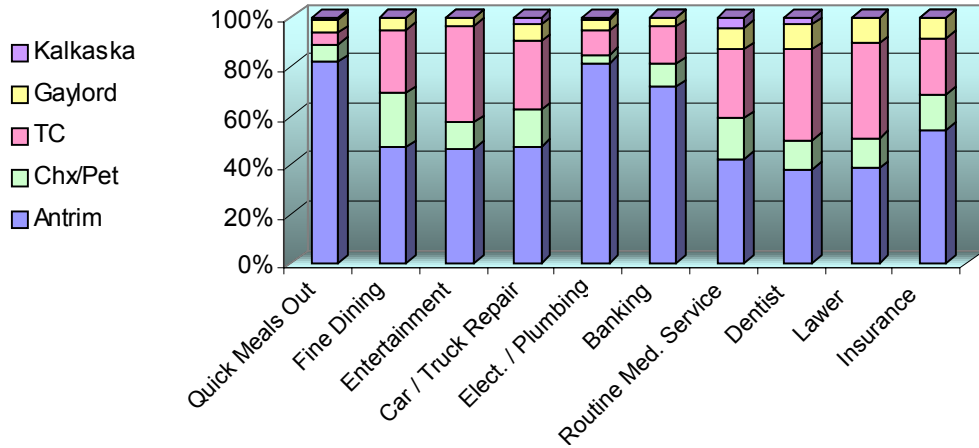


## Full-Time Resident Shopping Pattern

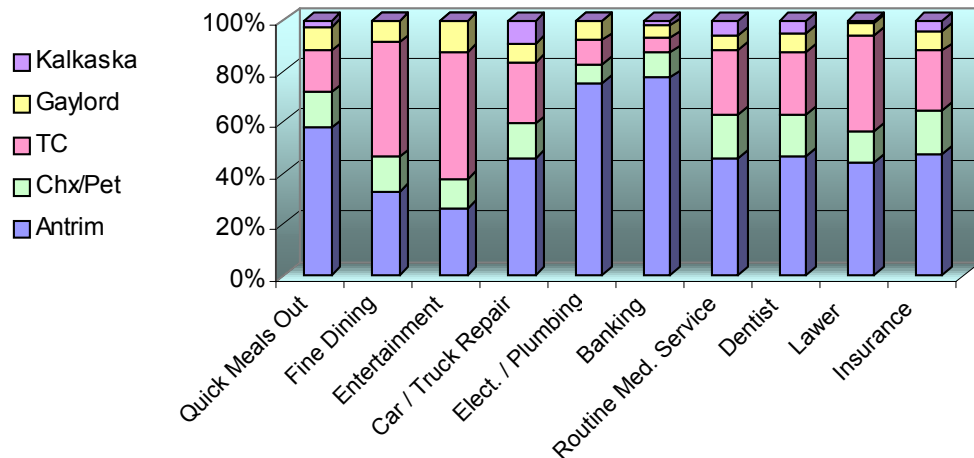


# Economy

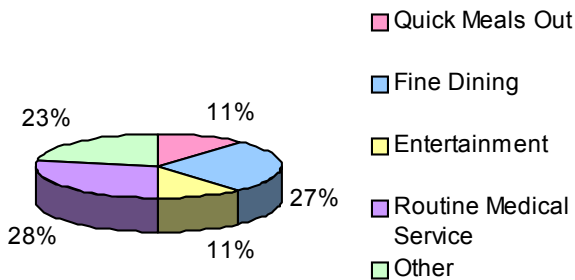
## Part-Time Resident Source For Services



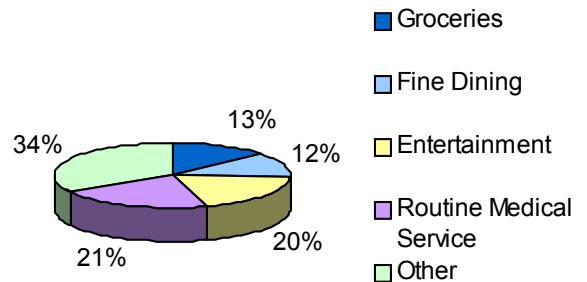
## Full-Time Resident Source For Services



## Items Most Desired in Antrim Co. By Part-Time Residents



## Items Most Desired in Antrim Co. By Full-Time Residents



The types of development opposed by the respondents reinforce the desire to maintain a rural character. It also seems that both part-time and full-time residents prefer a year-round / vacation home community to a resort type community with marinas and hotel/resorts.

Question 13 of the survey pertains to where Antrim County residents purchase different types of goods and services. Antrim County and Traverse City are by far the primary places that Antrim County residents do their shopping. However, it is interesting that part-time residents purchase more in Antrim County in almost every category than do full-time residents. If an item is not purchased within Antrim County it is most likely to be purchased in Traverse City. Clothing and large, expensive items such as cars, and major appliances are generally purchased in Traverse City.

When asked which of these items the respondents would like to have more available within Antrim County, the part-time residents had a somewhat different set of priorities than the full-time residents. Both groups rank Routine medical services, Entertainment, and Fine dining among the top four items they would most like to see more available in Antrim County. However the full-time residents place groceries in the top four categories whereas part-time residents place quick meals out among the top four.

## **Environment and Land Use**

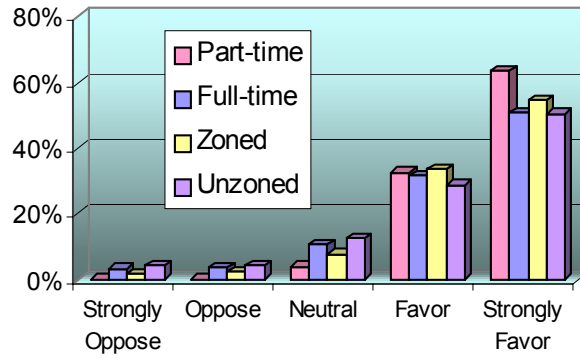
There is considerable agreement countywide and between differing groups regarding environment and land use issues. Even from 1991 to 2001 there are few substantial differences of opinion. The most important Environment and Land Use issues remain old cars and trash on yards, rapid population growth and lake and stream pollution. The only significant change from 1991 to 2001 is a greater concern about loss of public lake and stream access, which now ranks as the fourth most important land use issue.

Question 16 of the survey addresses different actions that can be used to improve land use and protect the environment. No action was opposed by any group and most were favored or strongly favored. The respondents strongly favor controls on junkyards and dumping and desire more recycling. They also desire actions that would protect and improve drinking water and water quality in general.

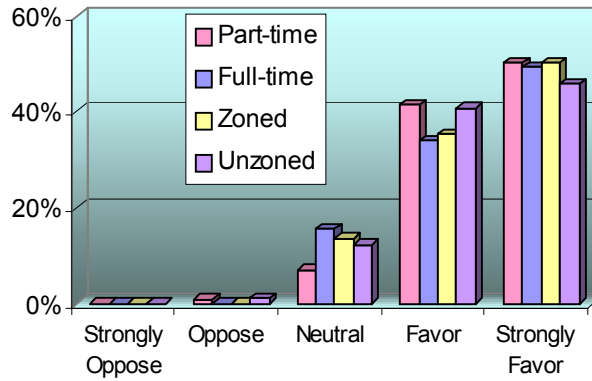
Question 17 focuses on water usage within the county. Most respondents feel that the environmental quality is the same or worse in every category. All groups were in very close agreement. The category that most respondents felt had degraded the most in the last three years is noise and speeding on lakes. There are also large percentages that feel fishing quality has degraded as well.

# Environment and Land Use

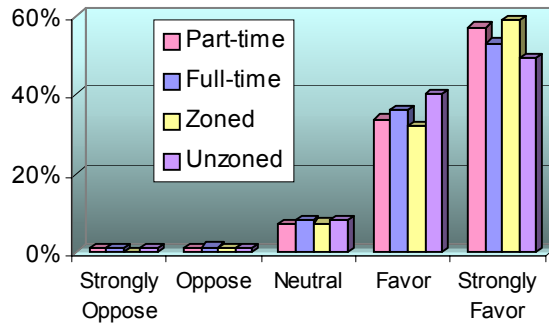
## Ordinance to Control Junkyards and Dumping



## More Recycling



## Protect / Improve Water Quality



Question 18 concerns possible planning and zoning strategies that could help guide land use and protect the environment. The respondents favored action in every category.

There appears to be particularly strong support for strict control of billboards and building restrictions with the aim of protecting views and scenery.

The respondents also strongly support setbacks for waterfront property and special zoning and easements for the protection of farmland. There was virtually no difference between part-time and full-time residents or between zoned and unzoned townships.

The responses to these questions indicate a very strong concern for the environment and for maintaining a rural atmosphere.

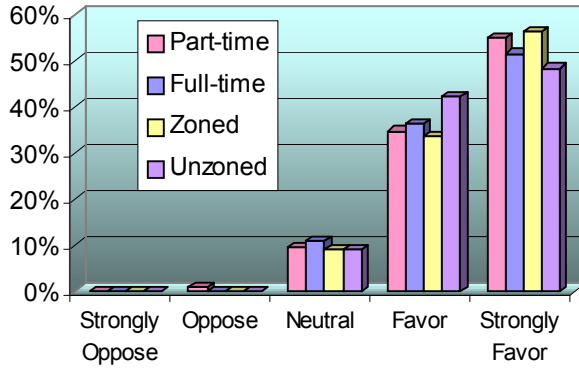
Question 19 concentrates on recreation activities and facilities located across Antrim County. As before, there are very few differences between 1991 and 2001 or between different groups. Areas that were given the highest priorities were beaches and swimming, environmental education, fishing and picnic areas. The areas the respondents wanted to see improved were the same. However, it is interesting to note that motorized trails were given a very low priority by the respondents, yet it ranked fifth by respondents as something they would most like to see improved or added. The top four areas that respondents most wanted to see improved include beaches, environmental education, fishing, and non-motorized trails, in that order.

Antrim County has several township, county, and state parks located within the county. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they used each park. Comparing the frequency of use for each park between 1991 and 2001 is difficult. The 2001 survey defined "Seldom Used" as 1-5 times a year. However, no definition was given in the 1991 survey; therefore, three or four times could have been considered "Occasional or Often" by the respondent in 1991. Also, there was an "Unaware of this Park" category added in 2001 which would affect the responses given for "Seldom and Often".

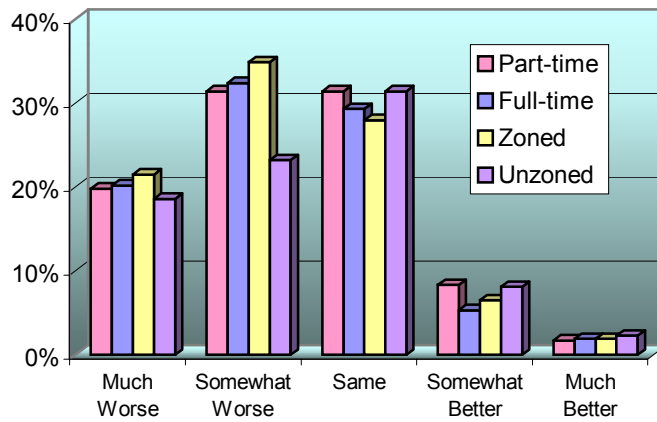
The results are inconclusive regarding whether there is an increase or decrease in park usage. There are a slightly lower percentage of "Never Used" responses for each individual park in 2001, suggesting more people use the parks. Yet, when you look at the responses for groups of parks, such as local township parks in general or County or State Forest lands in general, slightly more respondents say they never used these parks than in 1991. Simply because a large percentage of respondents say they never use a park is not a good indication of its use. It is not uncommon for residents from one part of a county to rarely use a park located on the opposite side of the county.

# Environment and Land Use

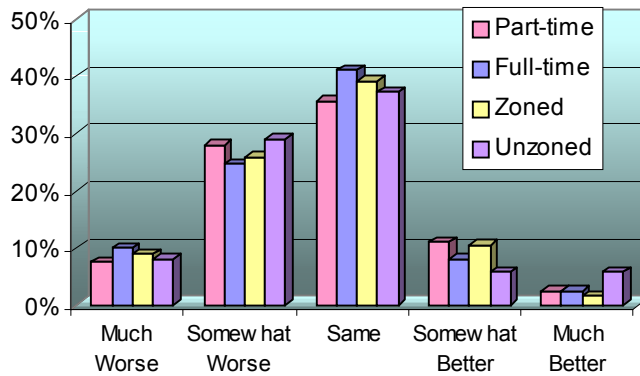
## Protect / Improve Drinking Water



## Noise and Speed on Lakes

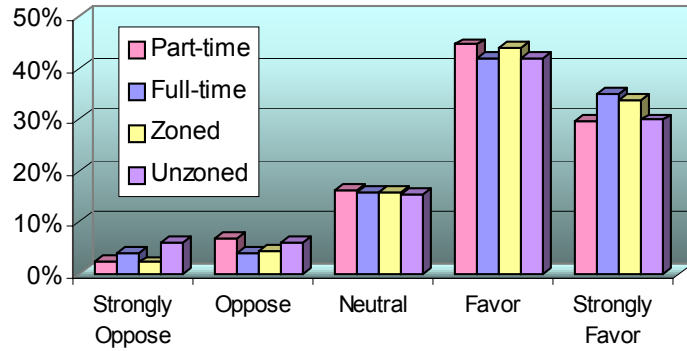


## Quality of Fishing

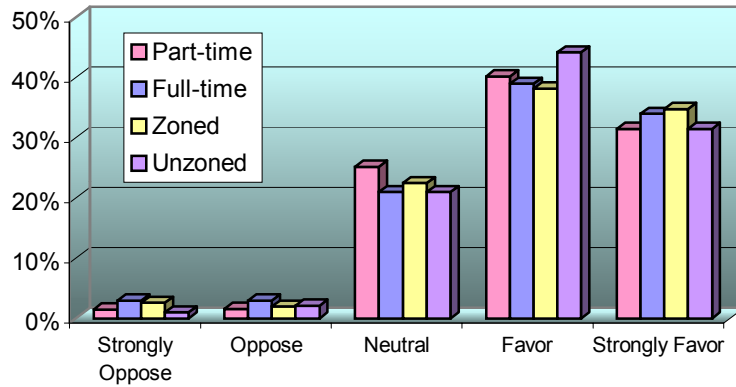


# Environment and Land Use

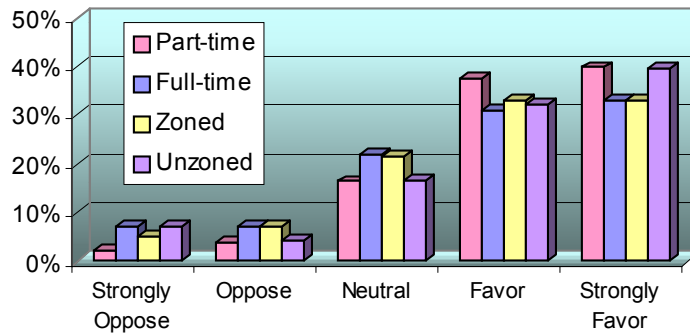
## Setbacks for Building near Lakes and Streams



## Zoning and Easements to Preserve Farmland

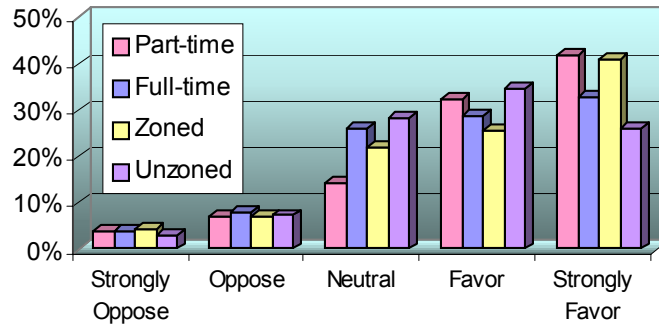


## Regulations to Preserve Forests on Private Land

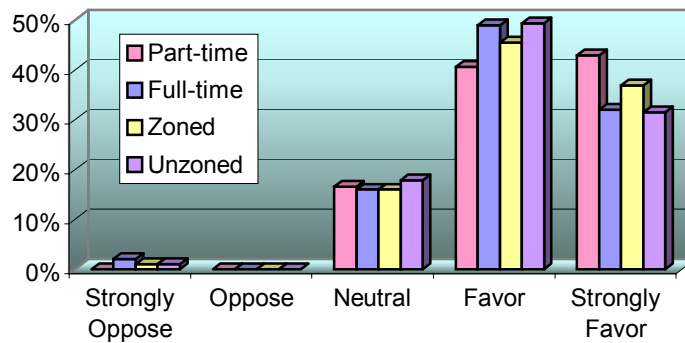


## Environment and Land Use

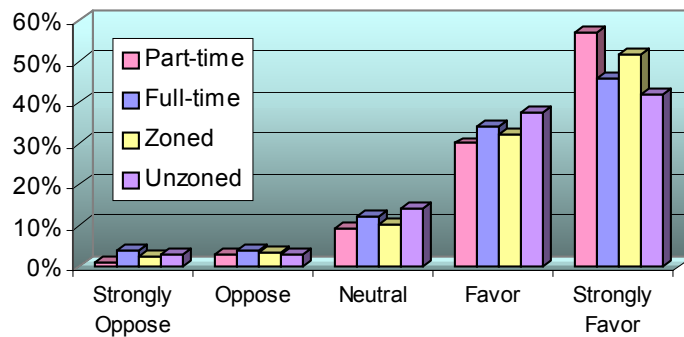
### Limit Dwellings That Share Access to Lake Through Single Lake Parcel



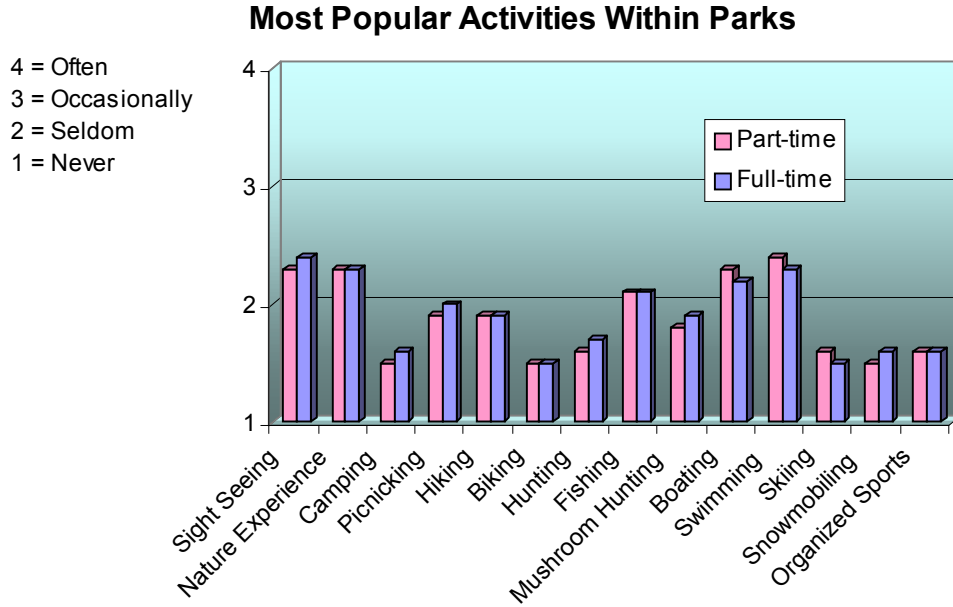
### Protect Sites of Local Historical or Cultural Interest



### Limits on Billboards and Buildings to Protect Views



# Environment and Land Use



Question 22 asks the respondents how they use the parks. The most popular activities remain swimming, boating, sight seeing, nature experiences and fishing, in that order. The least popular activities are camping, hunting, and snowmobiling. One must be careful not to make the assumption that because an activity is not popular within a park that it is not a popular activity. Some outdoor activities, such as snowmobiling, may be very popular outside of park boundaries, while other activities, such as hunting, may be illegal in most parks. The parks seem to be used almost identically by both part-time and full-time residents, although, full-time residents seem slightly more likely to use the parks.

All groups within the county would like to see additional parks established or existing parks improved. However, part-time residents are slightly more likely to desire these changes than are full-time residents.

## **Future Vision for Antrim County**

The questions in this section attempt to paint a picture of the kind of Antrim County the residents would like to live in, in the future.

Question 24 of the survey presents several characteristics that may be of importance for the resident to continue living in the area. Every category was at least somewhat important to living in Antrim County. However, most categories were moderately to very important to the respondents, especially public safety and environmental quality. Other important factors include having friendly neighbors, a small town atmosphere and lake access.

Question 25 attempts to get a feel for how the community feels about differing methods of dealing with planning and zoning issues. All groups favored requiring developers to help pay for public improvements, local controls on how subdivisions are developed and limiting strip development along roadways. All groups favored creation of a countywide master plan, with township ordinances, except, full-time residents and unzoned residents, who tend to be neutral on the subject. All groups favor zoning by the townships except unzoned townships, which were neutral on the subject. All groups were neutral on zoning by the county.

For question 27 of the survey respondents were asked to indicate to what degree they agreed or disagreed to a statement pertaining to community issues.

All groups within the county were in close agreement on all issues. The only departure was between full-time residents and part-time residents regarding the statement "Tourism and seasonal homes make Antrim County a better place". Full-time residents tend to be neutral on the subject whereas part-time residents tend to agree with the statement.

The only statement that the majority of the respondents disagreed with was "With the whole region growing as it is, Antrim County really can't control its own future". Every sub group disagreed with this statement.

The respondents either agreed with or were neutral on most statements. The two statements that the respondents most strongly agreed with were “Home owners should replace septic systems if they are damaging the environment” and “Antrim County is a good place to live”.

Question 28 attempts to find out for what services the community is willing to pay extra taxes. The response to all the services was generally negative. However, respondents were generally evenly split regarding recycling and preservation of open space.

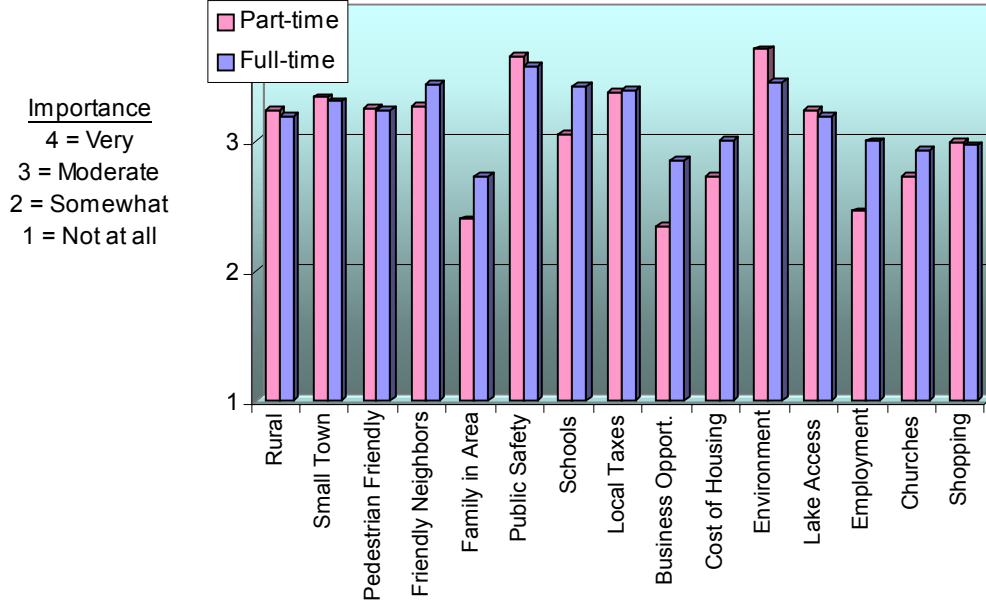
	NO Not worth a tax increase	YES Worth a tax increase
Acquire and Maintain Additional Park Lands	74.00%	26.00%
Support Planning and zoning in twps. that cannot afford it.	71.00%	29.00%
Countywide Recycling	45.00%	55.00%
A Youth Center or Centers	60.00%	40.00%
Additional Senior Housing and Services	60.00%	40.00%
Trails to link Communities With Each Other as well with Natural Resources	69.00%	31.00%
Preservation of Open Space and Prime Agricultural Land	52.00%	48.00%

Question 29 pertains mainly to community and governmental participation.

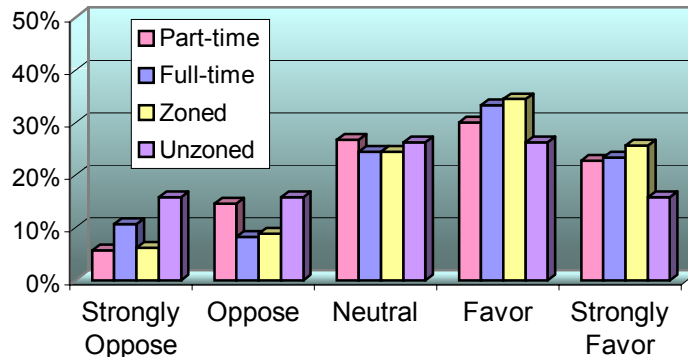
Nearly 90% of full-time respondents have voted in a local or county election. Predictably less than 15% of part-time residents have voted in a local or county election. Full-time residents are more likely to have run for local office, received help from the law enforcement agency or fire department, attended a local government meeting, or otherwise had worked with their local government than a part-time resident. Full-time residents are also much more likely to be active in local or civic organizations.

# Future Vision

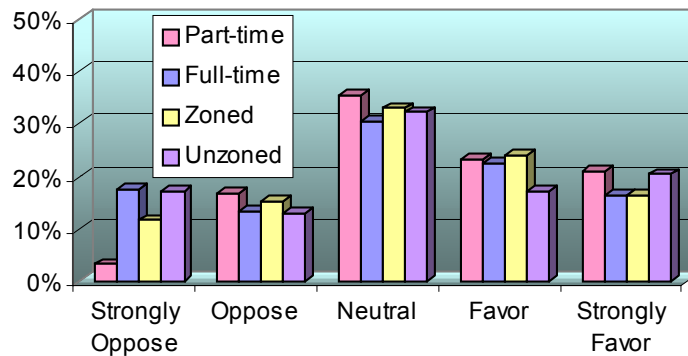
## Important Characteristics for Living in Antrim County



## Zoning By Townships

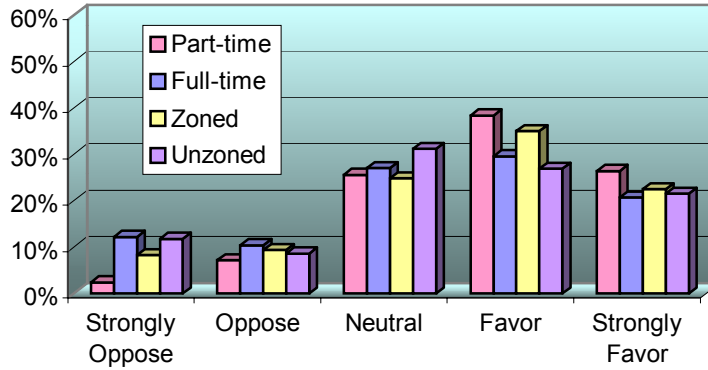


## Zoning By County

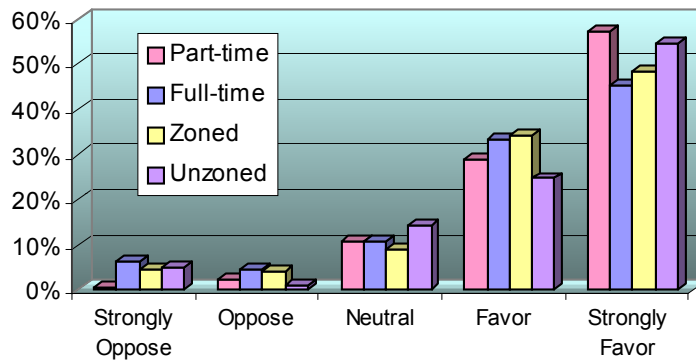


**Future Vision**

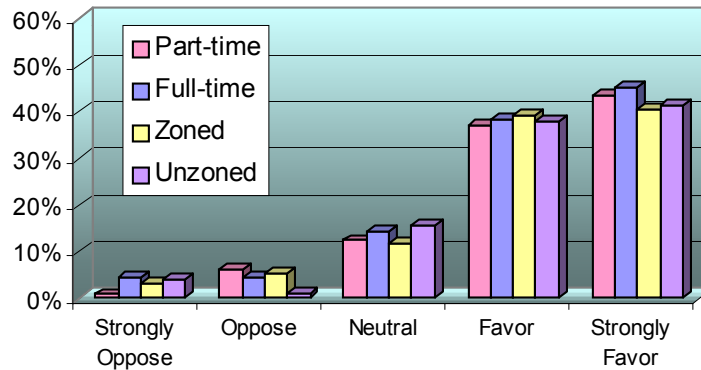
**Creation of Countywide Master Plan With  
Twp. Ordinances**



**Require Developers to Help Pay for Public  
Improvements**

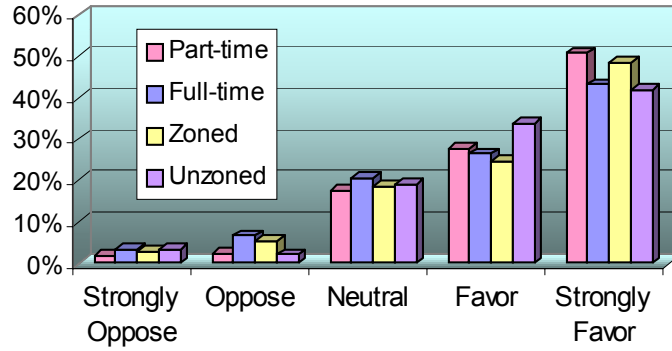


**Local Controls on How Subdivisions are  
Developed**

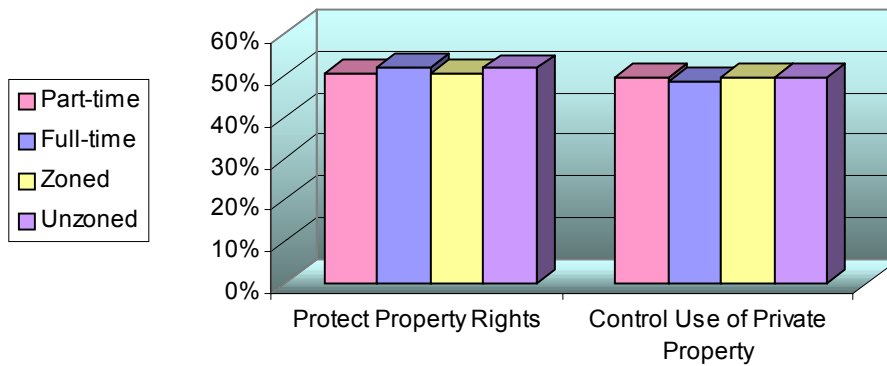


## Future Vision

### Limit Strip Development Along Roadways

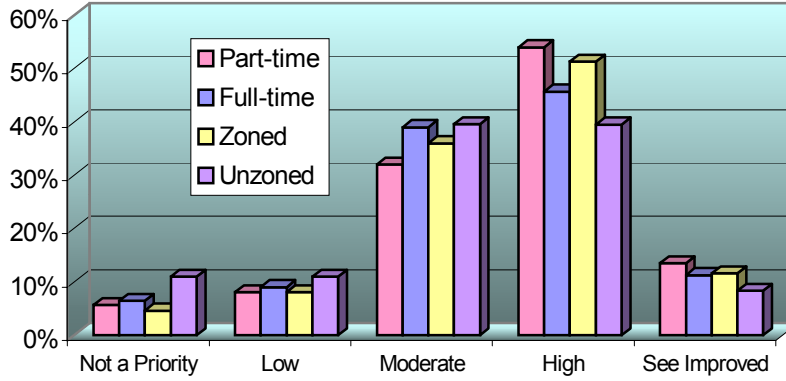


### Zoning is used Primarily to:

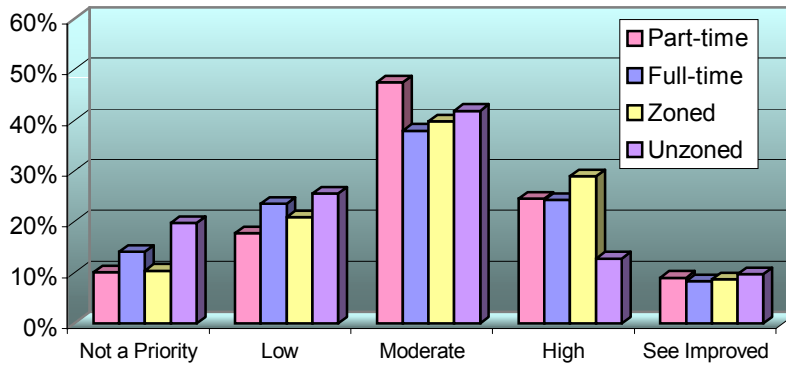


# Future Vision

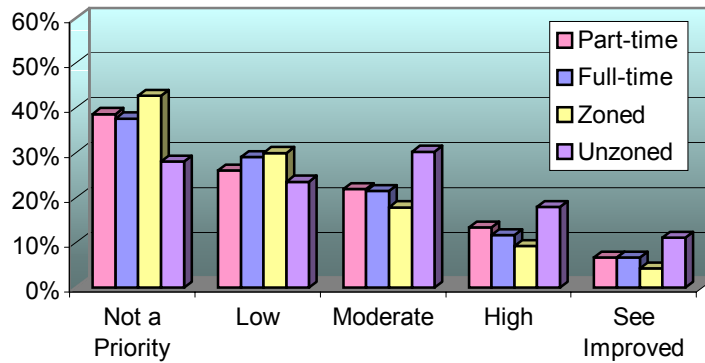
## Beaches and Swimming



## Non-Motorized Trails

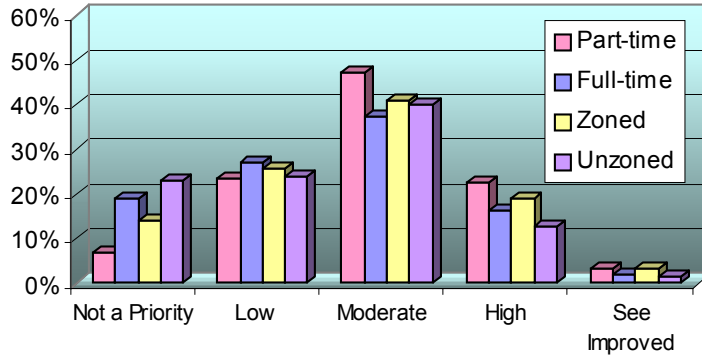


## Motorized Trails

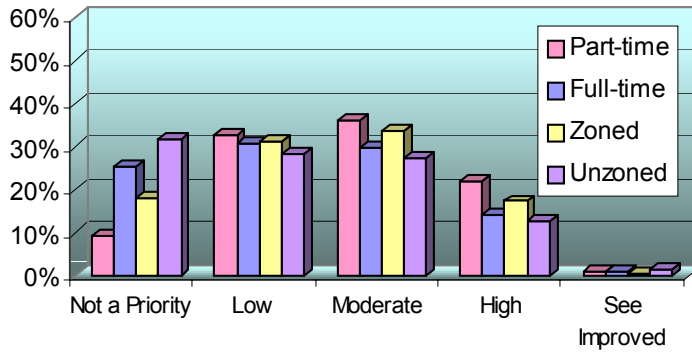


# Future Vision

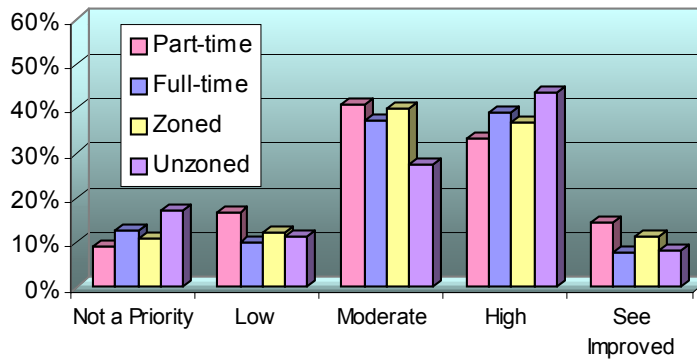
## Cross Country Ski Areas



## Downhill Ski Areas



## Fishing



**Which of These Things Have You Done  
in the Last Three Years in Antrim  
County?**

	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	
	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time
Voted in County or Local Election	14%	89%	45%	7%
Called or Visited a Village or Township Hall on Business	65%	75%	24%	22%
Called or Visited Antrim County Offices on Business	63%	78%	31%	20%
Attended a Village Council or Village Board Meeting	15%	39%	70%	57%
Attend a County Board of Commissioners Meeting	4%	13%	82%	84%
Had Assistance From a Local Law Enforcement Agency	19%	38%	70%	60%
Had Assistance from a Fire/Rescue Department	10%	19%	79%	79%
Have Run For a County or Local Office	2%	5%	79%	91%
Served on a County or Local Board of Commission	2%	10%	78%	86%
Volunteered For a County or Local Community Project	10%	36%	72%	61%

**Limitations of the Survey**

As with all surveys, there are limitations and possible bias.

A limitation of this survey has to do with the number of respondents for each subgroup questioned. There is a 95% confidence level for the county as a whole. However, when looking at a subgroup, such as unzoned townships (less than 100 respondents), the number of respondents become so small that one cannot be sure the response truly represents that population. This problem is even more severe when looking at the responses of individual townships and villages. Some townships had as few as two respondents, which can hardly be considered representative of the population.

Care should be taken to consider the number of respondents when analyzing a particular response.

One should also compare the responses of different questions when analyzing the response of a particular question. For instance, countywide, less than half of the respondents say they have children younger than 18 years old living at home. There is no indication from the questionnaire how many of those children would be of an age where day care would be necessary but it is probably much smaller than the 48% of respondents who have children living at home. Not all of those who have children of the age appropriate for day care will need it. The number of respondents that use day care is probably quite small, yet, 60% of all respondents gave an opinion regarding the quality of day care in the county. Clearly, many respondents who do not have children attending day care answered that question.

There may also be an age bias to the survey. Those most likely to complete an extensive questionnaire are those who have ample time to do so, those that have the most time are those that are retired, which may account for the high percentage of retired respondents (over 40%).

The skew of the responses is also important to consider. Simply because the respondents, as a whole, are neutral on a subject does not mean they are neutral. It may be that very few are neutral but many strongly oppose an action and many strongly favor it. This is a very different picture. This is why bar graphs, indicating the percentages of all possible responses, were used, in most cases, instead of means. This type of graph also gives a clearer picture of differences between groups within the county and visually shows the skew.

When comparing the responses of a series of questions, strong, consistent responses can paint a fairly accurate picture of what is important to the population.

Despite the possible biases within the survey, it is a useful tool for planning purposes provided it is used while keeping these limitations in mind.