

Town of Algoma Citizen Survey 2015

5/2/2015

Town of Algoma

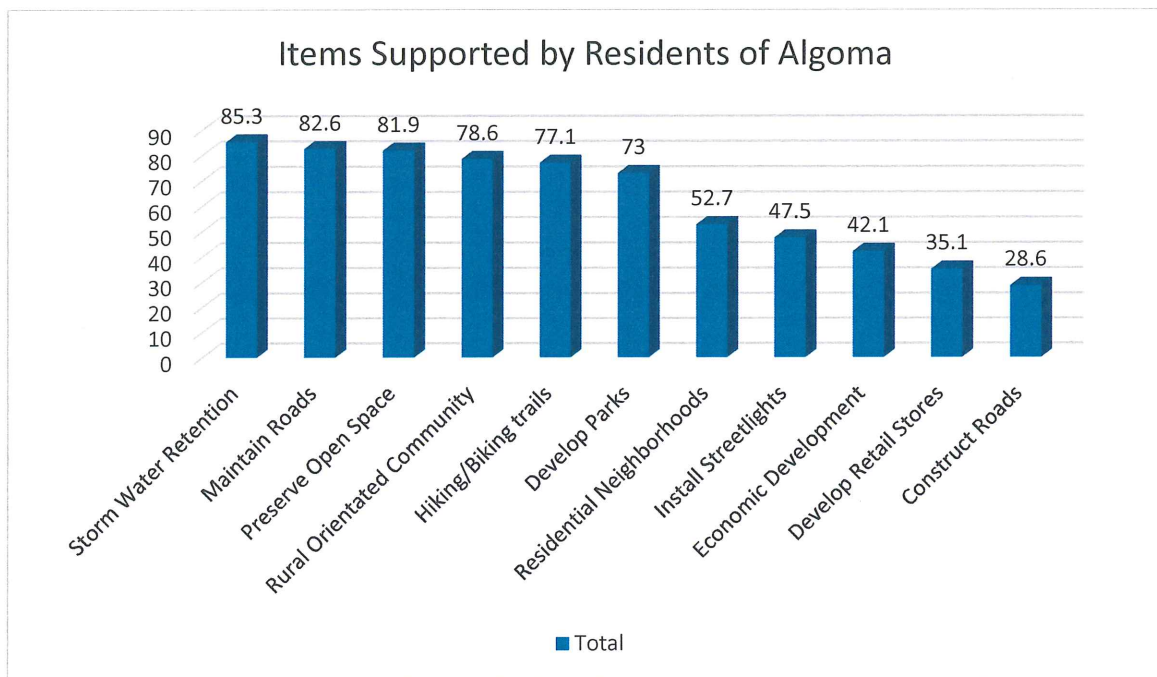
Citizen Survey 2015

A survey of citizens in Algoma was undertaken by the Public Policy Analysis class at the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh in cooperation with the Town of Algoma in the Spring of 2015. This report will analyze the results of this survey and provide insight into the perspectives of the citizens on a variety of issues. The 2015 Algoma Citizen Survey included three primary sections and multiple sub-sections, along with a question requesting general demographic data as well as an opportunity for comments from the respondents. Eight hundred and seventy-three (873)) surveys were returned and the resulting data has been entered into a statistical analysis program. An additional twenty-nine surveys were returned after the April 1st deadline used so that the data base could be completed for the analysis of the results. The survey was sent to 2,530 properties consisting of all the residential parcels in the Town as provided from a data base of customers in the City. The 873 responses constitute a 34.5 percent response rate which is higher than the norm for citizen surveys. The relationship between sample size and precision of the survey instrument at a 95 percent confidence rate frequently used in surveys is shown below. The 873 responses create a margin of error of approximately 3.5 percent. A level of 5 percent is considered acceptable for most survey results. The confidence rate is 96.5 percent.

Sample Size	Margin of Error
100	10%
300	5.5%
400	5.0%
800	3.5%

Question #1

The first item asked the citizens of the town of Algoma “What do you feel should be considered in the vision for the future of the Town of Algoma?” It then asked whether they agreed or disagreed with eleven different items to be evaluated. For the purpose of this analysis, we are going to focus on those that “agreed” with the statement as it shows support to pursue that particular activity.

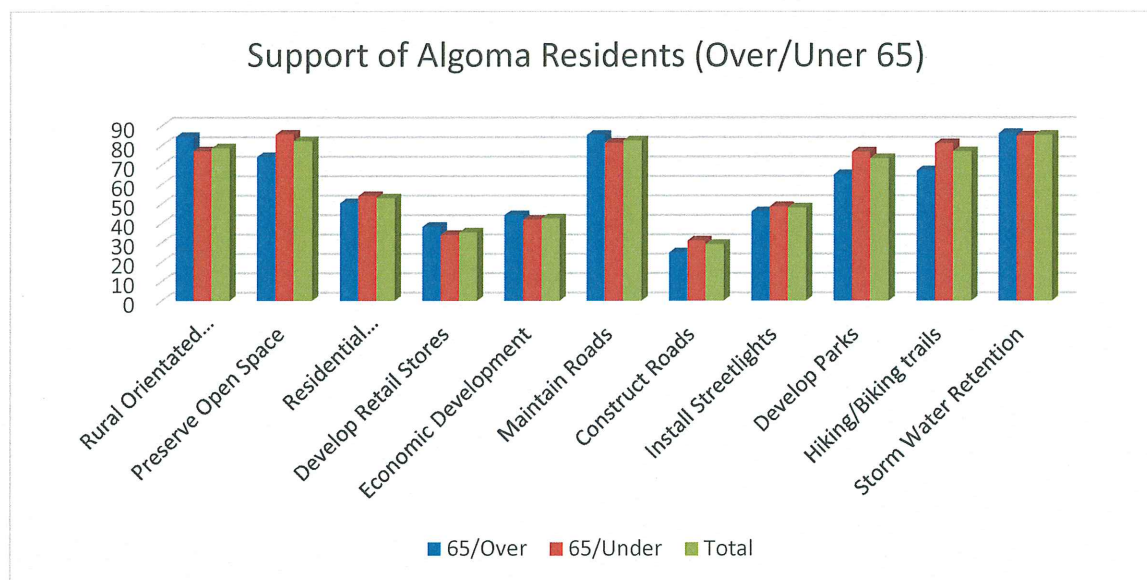


The community of Algoma agreed with developing solutions for storm water retention and flooding (85.3%), continuing to maintain or construct rural segments of roadways with ditches (82.6%), and preserving open space through the acquisition of nature preserves and parks the most (81.9%). They agreed the least with new roads should be constructed with curb and gutter and sidewalks or trails (28.6%), developing areas for retail stores and restaurants (35.1%), and stimulating economic development by attracting new businesses (42.1%).

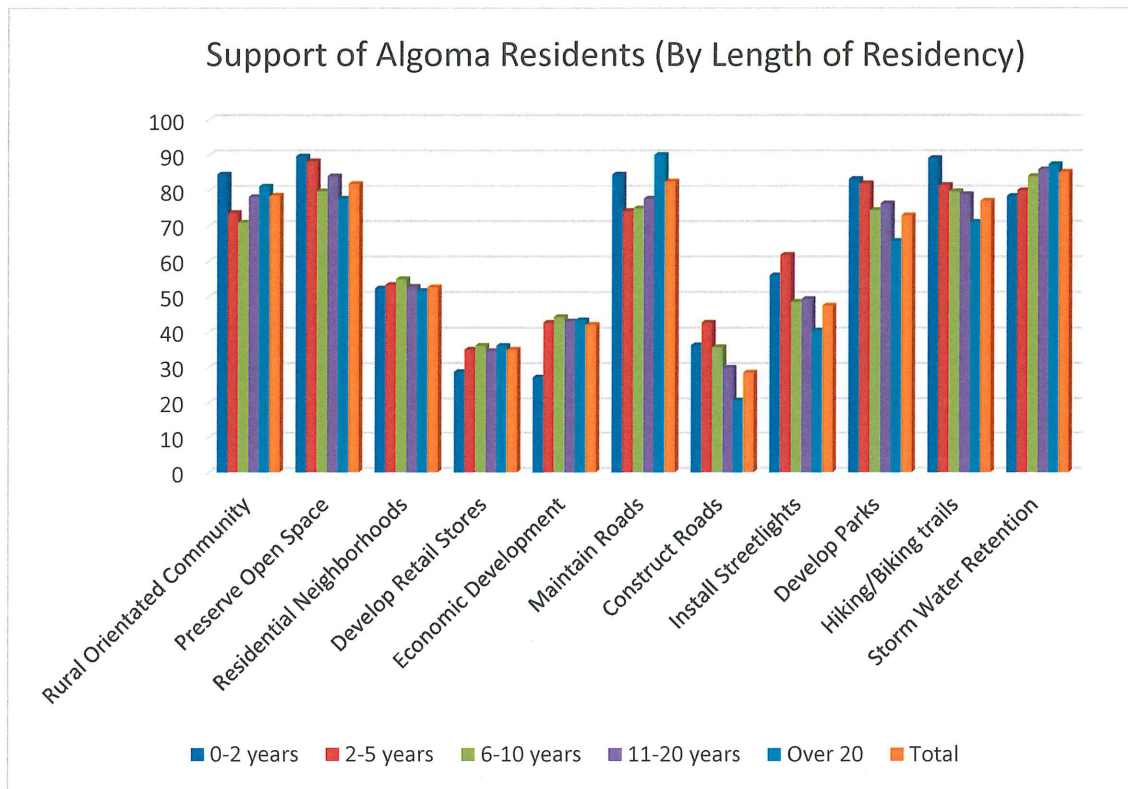
The overall consistency of support for these items would indicate that people move and continue to reside in the town of Algoma for its more rural atmosphere. The best example of this is the difference between the categories of continuing to maintain or construct rural segments of

roadways with ditches, and new roads should be constructed with curb and gutter and sidewalks or trails- an overall deviation of 54%. The lack of support for commercial development (Develop areas for retail stores and restaurants; Stimulate economic development by attracting new businesses) further supports the desire to maintain the community's rural feel.

The levels of support varied little between whether the residents were over/under 65. However, the categories with the largest variance were the development of parks for recreation (11.6%), and creating hiking and biking trails for residents (13.9%). Those under 65 supported these categories more which would be consistent with their more active lifestyles than those over 65. This would also be consistent with preserving open space through the acquisition of nature preserves and parks which also showed a similar variance (11.5%).



There was very little deviation for the results between the lengths of time people had resided in the town of Algoma. Those who resided in Algoma for over 20 years showed the least support for items such as installing streetlights and constructing roads with curb and gutter, which showed some of the greatest variances from others categories of residents.



Those who have resided in the Town of Algoma over 20 years showed the most deviance from the other groups in several categories, whether it was their support for maintaining roads (7.5% difference from the overall average), or their lack of support for developing parks (-7.2% from overall average). This should be taken into consideration seeing how this subgroup represented the largest group of participants in the survey in this category (40.2% of survey takers). In five categories they showed the least support among all groups, which may indicate their reluctance of change given the length of time they have already resided there. This group showed less support than most others for items dealing with development, but were close to or exceeded the support for items that dealt with maintaining or updating current services (90.1% of those who resided in Algoma over 20+ years supported maintaining roadways with ditches, the highest score of any category studied).

Question 2

When you pay your annual property taxes only 10% of the payment is allocated to the Town. The remaining amount goes to Winnebago County, local school districts and other taxing entities. For example; if you paid \$5,000 in property tax only \$500 of your total property tax bill of \$5,000 is retained for use by the town. As a resident of the town, are you willing to have your taxes increased to provide additional improvements for town services or amenities? If so, what amount of increase in your taxes per year would you consider acceptable for each service or amenity in the table below? Please check one box for each line.

	Construct Urban Roadways	Construct Rural Roadways	Storm water management	Oakwood, Omro, Leonard Point Road	Construct Building Complex	Trails	Parks
0	672	511	399	498	574	362	402
50	90	227	315	175	169	343	304
100	36	44	72	102	57	83	71
150	6	7	11	21	10	17	10
200	5	3	7	8	5	6	7
250	11	6	13	25	8	9	10
No Answer	53	75	56	44	50	53	69
Total	873	873	873	873	873	873	873

Table 1. Results from Question 2 of the Algoma Survey

The Algoma Citizen Survey, overall, had a total of 873 responses received. Results for Question 2 are documented in Table 1. Completed responses to Question 2 ranged from a total of 799 to 829. Of note, 5.0-8.6% of respondents did not complete this question.

Overwhelming 77% of residents did not support any increase in taxes per year to provide funding for construction of urban roadways such as curb, gutter and sidewalks. In addition, 65.8% of Algoma residents did not support any increase in taxes per year to construct a new Town building complex.

Algoma citizens expressed some interest in utilizing tax funding for construction of rural sections of roadways (ditches with no sidewalks) and reconstruction of Oakwood Road, Omro Road and Leonard Point Road. A break of results by percentage may be viewed in Table 2.

	Construct Rural Roadways	Oakwood, Omro, Leonard Point Road
0		57.0%
50	26.0%	20.0%
100	5.0%	11.7%
150	0.8%	2.4%
200	0.3%	0.9%
250	0.7%	2.9%
No Answer	8.6%	5.0%

Table 2. Breakdown by percentage for Rural Construction and Reconstruction.

As seen in Table 2, approximately 57-58% of respondents expressed no interest in providing additional tax funding for these initiatives; however, 31% of respondents did indicate minimal tax increases of \$50-100 to support these improvements.

Algoma citizens most were most interested in paying additional tax funds towards storm water management, recreational trails and parks. Respondents supported a minimal tax increase of up to \$100 towards these developments. Close to half of Algoma residents (48.8%) supported additional taxes for recreational trails, 44.3% supported increases for storm water management (detention ponds and address flooding issues) and 42.9% for parks.

	Storm water management	Trails	Parks
0	45.7%	41.5%	46.0%
50	36.1%	39.3%	34.8%
100	8.2%	9.5%	8.1%
150	1.3%	1.9%	1.1%
200	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%
250	1.5%	1.0%	1.1%
No Answer	6.4%	6.1%	7.9%

Table 3. Breakdown by percentage for Storm Water Management, Trails and Parks.

When the responses were cross tabulated to Household Demographic Information, there was no correlation or significance identified when compared with the number of years the respondent had lived in Algoma. However, of note, households with a member 65 years or older, were more likely to approve a minimal increase of \$50 in taxes to support service improvements.

Based on the structure and framework of this question, results are potentially skewed and misleading. This is supported by the 5.0- 8.6% of residents that did not properly complete this question in the Algoma Citizen Survey. In reviewing the survey, two questions are essentially asked within the context of this one question. The first part inquires if the public would support additional taxes to address specific infrastructure problems, but does not give the public the ability to respond. The second part asks what amount of money the public would be willing to give in each category in the dividends of \$50, \$100, \$150, \$200 or \$250, which the public is able to give feedback to.

In future surveys, it would be recommend to restructure this question into two parts:

- a) Would you support an increase in taxes to provide additional improvements to these services for the Town of Algoma?

SERVICE	YES	NO
Construct Urban Roadways		
Construct Rural Roadways		
Storm water management		
Oakwood, Omro, Leonard Point Road		
Construct Building Complex		
Trails		
Parks		

- b) If the Town of Algoma had an excess of \$500, how should the funds be distributed to these service improvements?

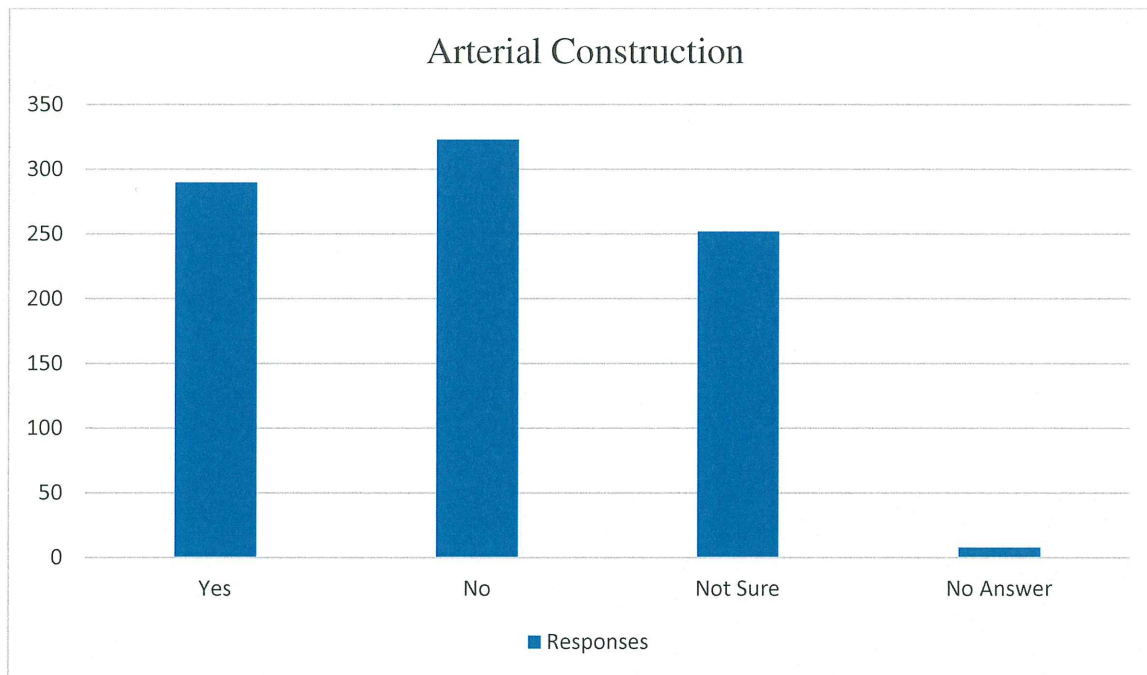
SERVICE	VALUE
Construct Urban Roadways	
Construct Rural Roadways	
Storm water management	
Oakwood, Omro, Leonard Point Road	
Construct Building Complex	
Trails	
Parks	
TOTAL	\$500

By restructuring Question 2, the Town of Algoma will be able to obtain a better understanding of citizen support for specific service improvements, as well as the value that citizens attach to each of the services.

Question 3

Question number three on the survey dealt with the proposed construction of an arterial on the west side of the Town of Algoma. While the majority of responses do show a lack of support for the construction of the arterial, the difference in opinion between those against the project and those for it is at only 4%. In addition to this, 29% of those whom responded where “Not Sure” whether they supported the project or not.

Question 3. The Town of Algoma, City of Oshkosh and Winnebago County, have been involved in planning a new four lane highway (West Side Arterial similar to County Trunk Highway CB) for a number of years. The proposed road would be constructed on the Westside of the town beginning at State Highway 21 (STH 21) west of Leonard Point Road. The new roadway may initiate new economic development within the highway corridor. Do you support the ongoing effort to design and construct a new arterial on the west side of the Town of Algoma?

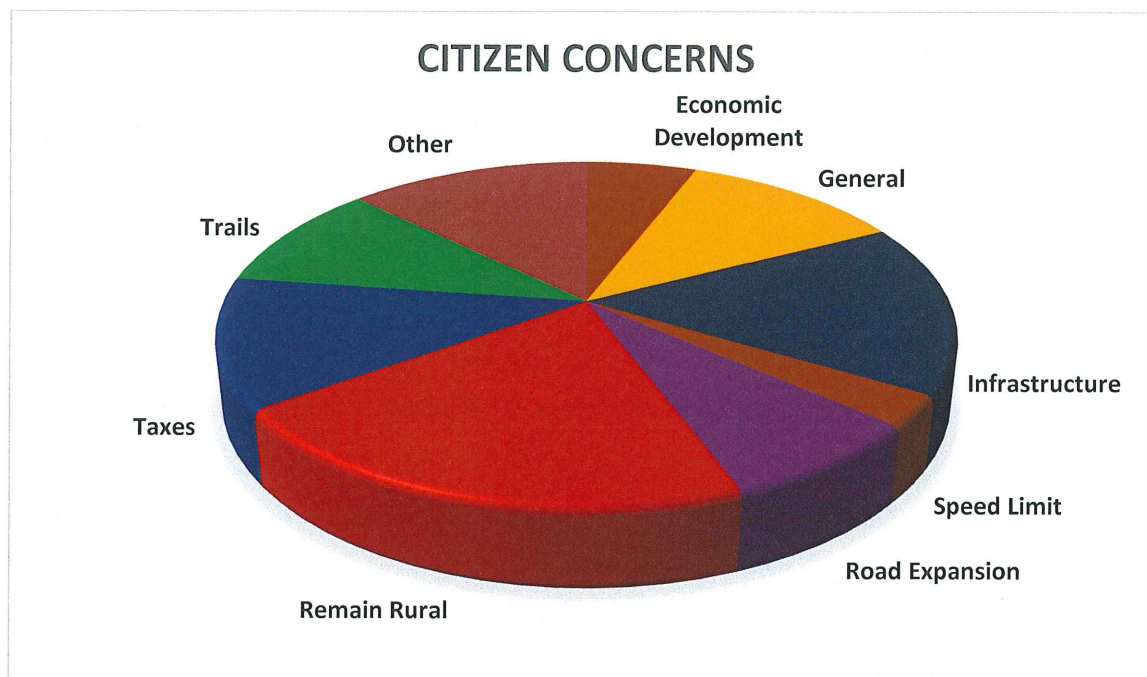


Due to the small variance amongst opinions toward the construction, the 29% of responders whom are unsure become quite significant. A sound conclusion on citizen support for the construction of the arterial cannot be made based on these statistics. To ensure that an accurate assessment of citizen opinion is made, it would be beneficial for the Town of Algoma to offer multiple forms of citizen education. The Town could post information online, hold open forums,

or mail out documents to provide citizens with extensive project details. By offering citizens this information, they will likely feel more comfortable in their ability to make an educated decision. It would be valuable to ask this question of citizens in the future, after providing this additional education, to obtain a more definite answer on the overall citizen opinion regarding the construction of the arterial.

Question 4

The intent of this survey was to gather input from the citizens on their thoughts about the future of the Town of Algoma. The survey, among other things, included a catch-all question which asked the participants to add any additional comments that they wish to make for questions not included within the survey. Three hundred and five written responses were received.¹ These responses were analyzed and grouped into nine different categories, these categories are as follows: Economic Development, General, Infrastructure, Speed Limit, Road Expansion, Remain Rural, Taxes, Trails and Other. This portion of the study examines the concerns of the Town of Algoma's citizens that were not addressed in the Citizen Survey.



*Categories
Concerns*

When analyzing the comments received from the Citizen Survey, it was discovered that the majority of the responses could be divided into nine different categories. Of the nine different categories, 21% would like to see the Town of Algoma remain rural while 16% felt that infrastructure was an important issue. Road Expansion, Taxes and Trails issues had comparable amounts of concern while less concern was given to economic development and reducing speed

¹ Some responses pertained to one or more categories, while 305 comments were received, 346 responses were incorporated into the identified categories.

limits. The chart below shows a breakdown of the categories and how much concern is given to each topic.

Out of the nine identified categories, Reduce Speed Limit, Remain Rural and Other were one part categories; in other words, these categories only resulted in one response and were not broken down any further. The remaining categories: Road Expansion, Tax Increase, Trails and Economic Development were broken down into two subcategories which include support and opposed. In addition, the General category was broken down into two subcategories, they are positive and negative. The portion of this analysis will explain what each category is and illustrate the number of responses pertaining to the category as well as identify appropriate subcategories.

Reduce Speed Limit

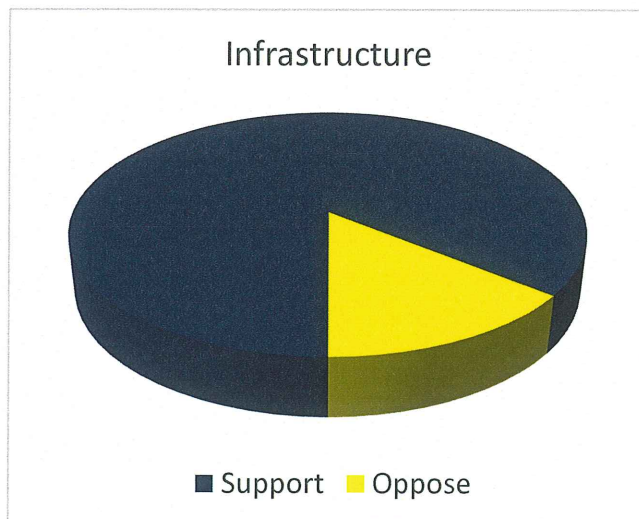
Ten comments or 3% of the total received comments were concerned with reducing speed limits in the Town of Algoma. This issued received the least amount of responses, meaning that speed limits in the Town of Algoma are not a major concern amongst the citizens.

Remain Rural

The majority or 21% of the total comments received wanted the Town of Algoma to remain rural. Of the 305 responses, 72 wanted the Town to stay as it is. A number of responses said the reason why they live in the Town of Algoma is because it is rural and that is what they prefer. Other responses said that if they wanted to live in a city then they would move to a city. This topic received the highest number of responses.

Other

The “Other” category contains responses that did not fit into the other identified categories but did not have enough similar comments to warrant a new category. These comments ranged from asking for clarification and requesting more information to wanting to keep the newsletter. Forty-four comments or 13% of all comments are placed in the “Other” category.



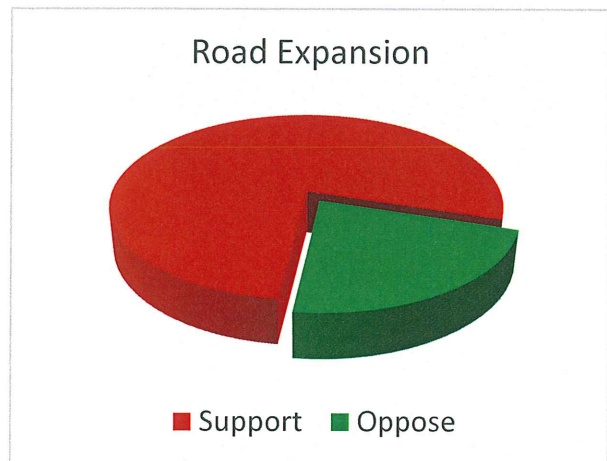
Infrastructure

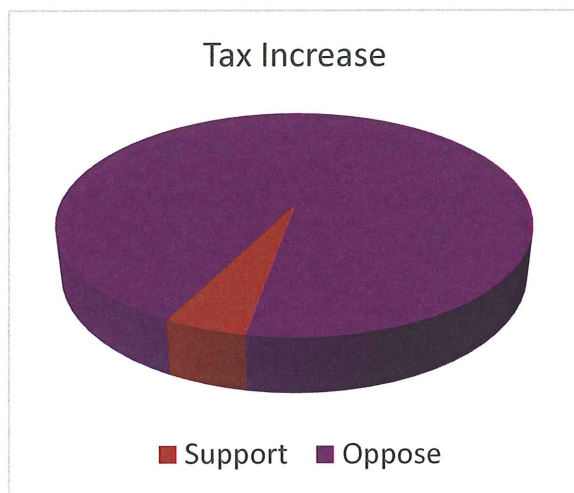
This category pertains to adding, maintaining and improving infrastructures such as curbs, sidewalks, drainage, stop lights, walk ways, bridges and street lights. Of the 56 comments received pertaining to infrastructure, 48 responses supported adding, maintaining and improving infrastructure, while 8 responses were opposed to increased or improved infrastructure. This category received

approximately 16% of the total comments and 14% of the total comments received favor adding or improving infrastructure.

Road Expansion

The Road Expansion category includes road repair, road construction, developing roundabouts, relieve local roads, improve intersections, expanding roads and resurfacing. Of the 27 comments received on Road Expansion, 21 supported road expansion while six opposed road expansion. This category makes of up 8% of the total comments received and of all the responses, 6% favor road expansion.





Tax Increase

An overwhelming number of responses oppose tax increases. Of the 42 comments that deal with tax, 40 responses oppose a tax increase. Only two responses favor a tax increase. Of the total comments received 11.5% do no favor tax increases.



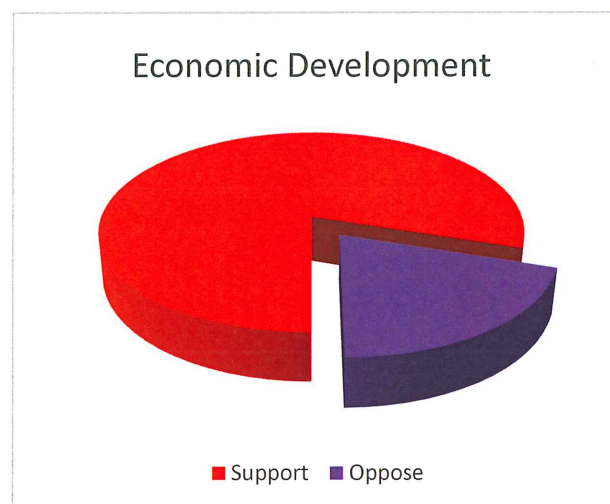
Trails

This category incorporates responses that have concerns on walking/biking trails, pedestrian safety and trail expansion. Thirty-five comments were received that discussed trails and of those comments, 30 responses support increasing trails in the Town of Algoma. Only five responses opposed expanding trails. The Trails category received 10% of the total comments received, and 9% of all responses favor expanding and/or improving trails in the Town of

Algoma.

Economic Development

This category pertains to issues that deal with economic development. These issues include new businesses, attracting small business owners, increasing revenue by having new business, new restaurants, more options for dining, be proactive in commercial and industrial growth, more shopping and strip malls. Twenty comments were received that deal with economic development, of those comments, 16 support economic development while four oppose new businesses. This category



Economic Development

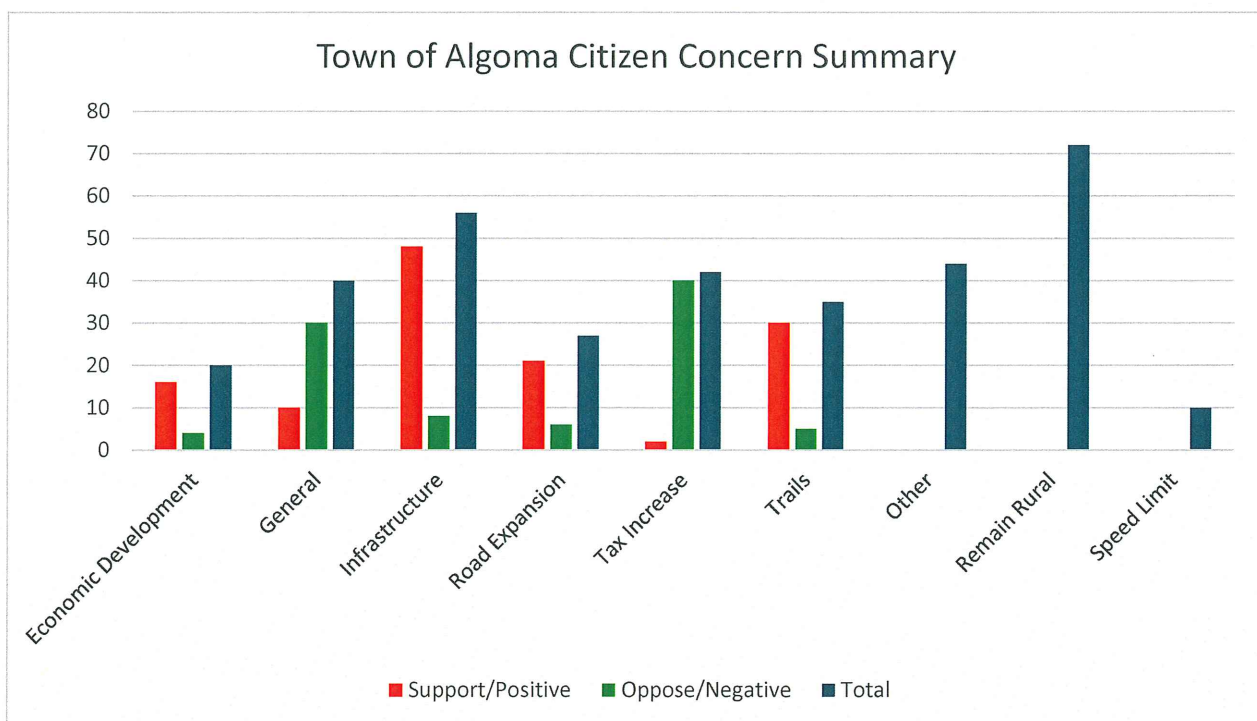
received 6% of the total comments received and 5% of the total responses favor economic development.

General

A number of responses, 11.5% of the total comments received were grouped into the “General” category. These comments did not identify any particular area instead provided opinions of the Town of Algoma or a critique of Algoma’s government. Of the 40 responses received, 30 were considered negative while 10 were more positive.

Summary

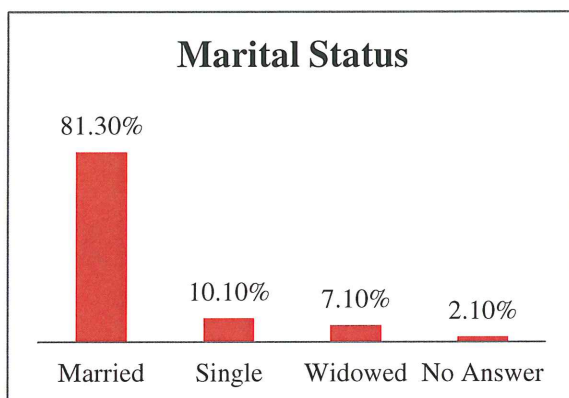
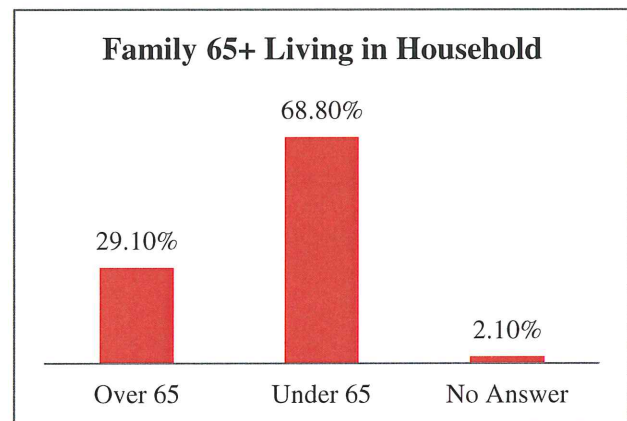
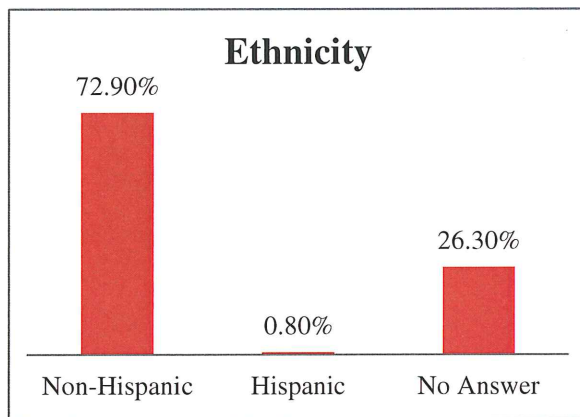
Of the all the responses that were received, the majority of Algoma citizens would like to remain rural. Many of the citizens would also support infrastructure; however a good number of responses do not support tax increases. The Trails, General and Other categories make up the middle part of the responses while road expansion, economic development and reducing speed limits are less of concern of the citizens. In conclusion, participants in the survey are more concerned with remaining rural and less concerned with speed limits. The following chart summarizes the comments received:



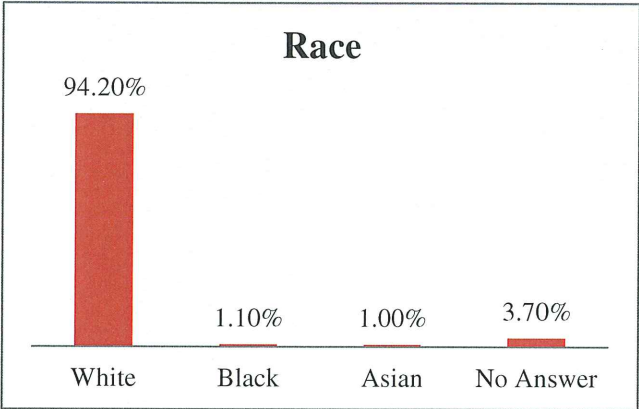
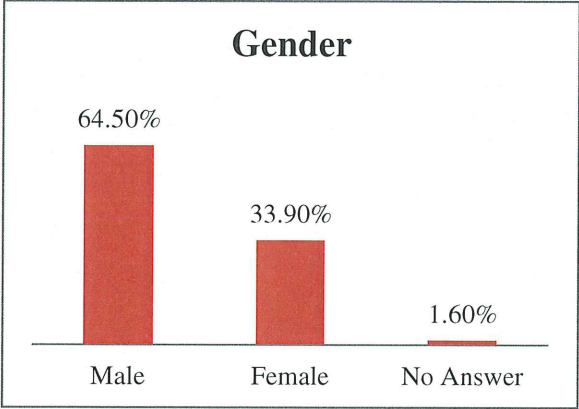
Question 5

Algoma question five is the section of the survey that asks for the demographic information.

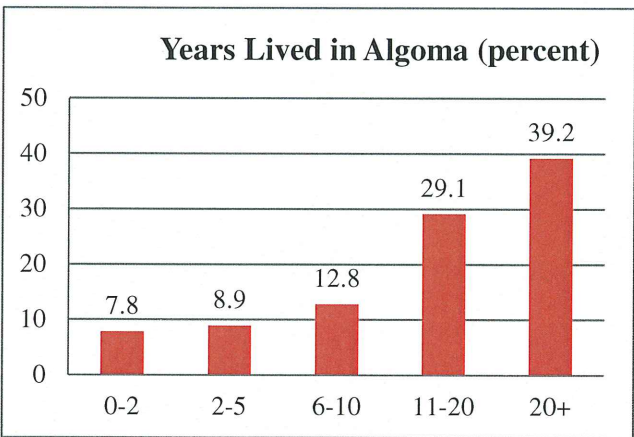
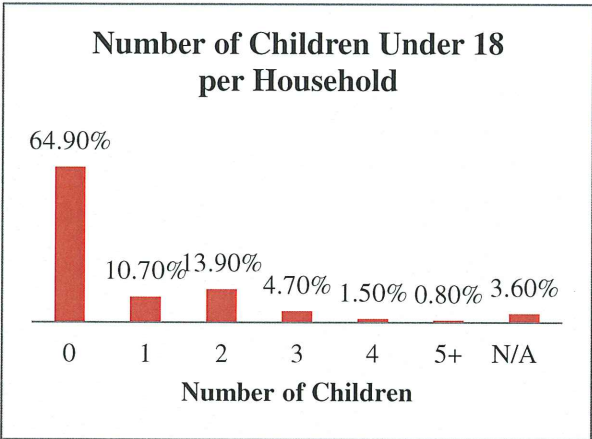
There were a total of 873 responses to the survey. The demographic questions ask respondents about their date of birth, ethnicity, race, marital status, whether they vote, how many children under the age of 18 they have, family 65 or older in their home, their income, and employment status. The respondents were primarily male (64.5%), white (94.2%), non-Hispanic (72.9%), and married (81.3%).



Most of the people completing the survey were under the age of 65 (69.1%), have lived in Algoma for more than 20 years (40.0%), and own their homes (96.9%). Based on the various responses, the date of birth varied over a span of 70 years, which ranged from 1921 to 1991. This does suggest there is a varied generational gap in the town. Additionally, 29.1% of the respondents reported the respondents of their family are under the age of 65 years old. In 2013, the US Census estimated this number to be 14.1%. Furthermore, the majority of residents in Algoma have lived in the town for more than 20 years (39.2%). Almost 97% of Algoma residents own their homes. Finally, most Algoma households do not have any children under the

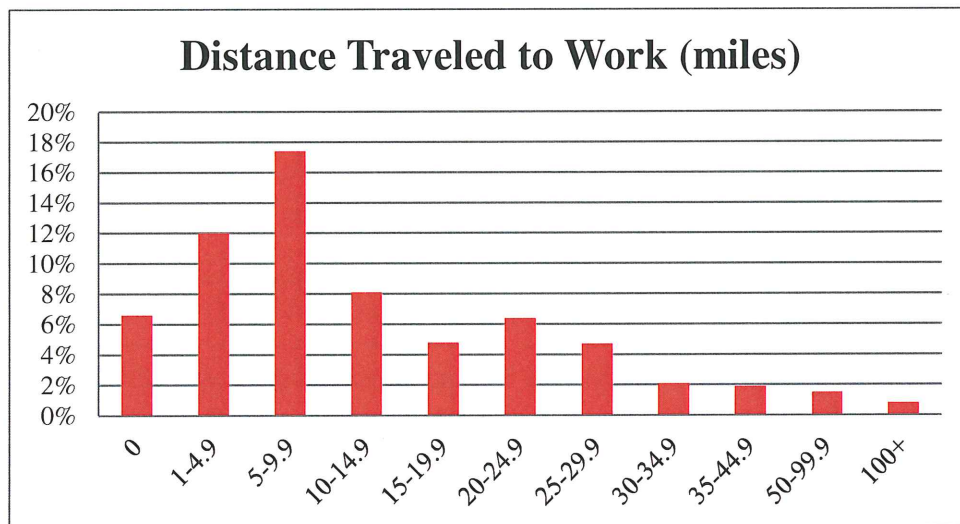


age of 18 (64.9%) which seems in line with when the housing boom took place and many young couples began their families.



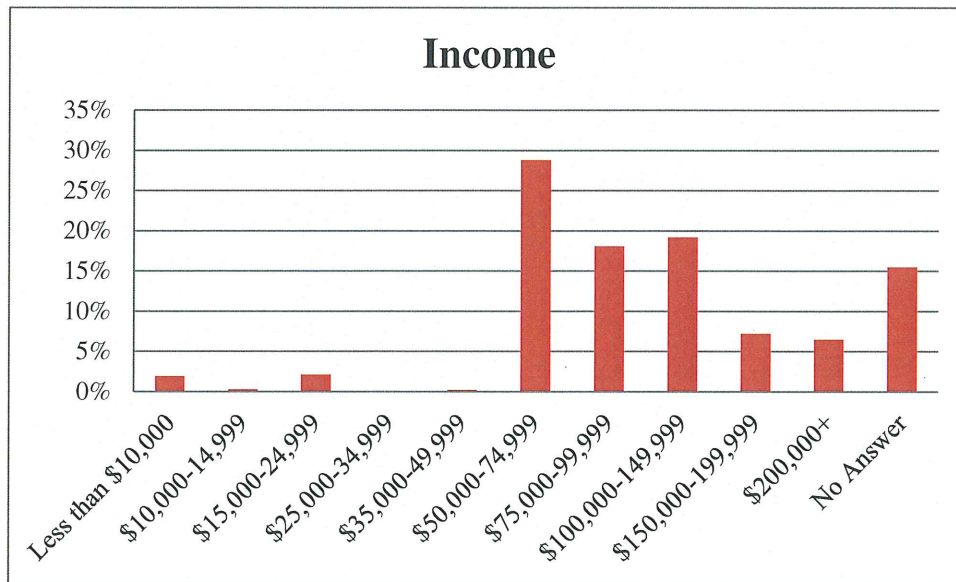
When asked about whether they voted in the jurisdiction, 94.6% (n=826) of Algoma's residents reported they vote within the jurisdiction. Additionally, 1.3% reported they did not vote, 0.2% reported they were ineligible to vote, 1.5% didn't know if they voted in the jurisdiction, and 2.4% chose not to answer this question. This is not surprising since many times, citizens who choose to respond to citizen surveys are also the ones who are most likely going to vote.

According to the U.S. Census, the average distance traveled to work in Algoma is about 19.5 miles. The results collected from the survey are slightly lower than this number, yet consistent. However, this question had a relatively high no response rate of 33.1% (could be related to the age of the respondent).

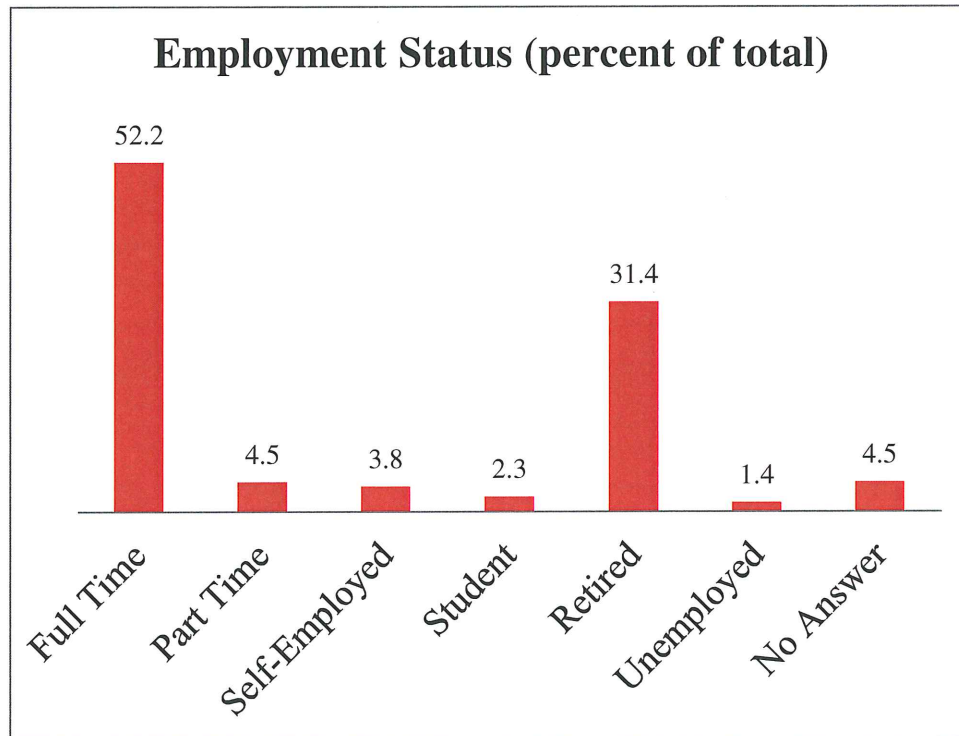


28.8% of the citizens who reported their household income fell within the area's median income of \$50 – 74,999. A relatively low number of citizens (4.6%) reported that their household income was below the area's median income of \$49,999. A fair number of households fell into the upper middle class category (37.3%) with an income range between \$75 – 149,999. 13.7%

rounded out the upper class at \$150 – 200,000+ household income. 4.5% of residents chose not to answer the question.

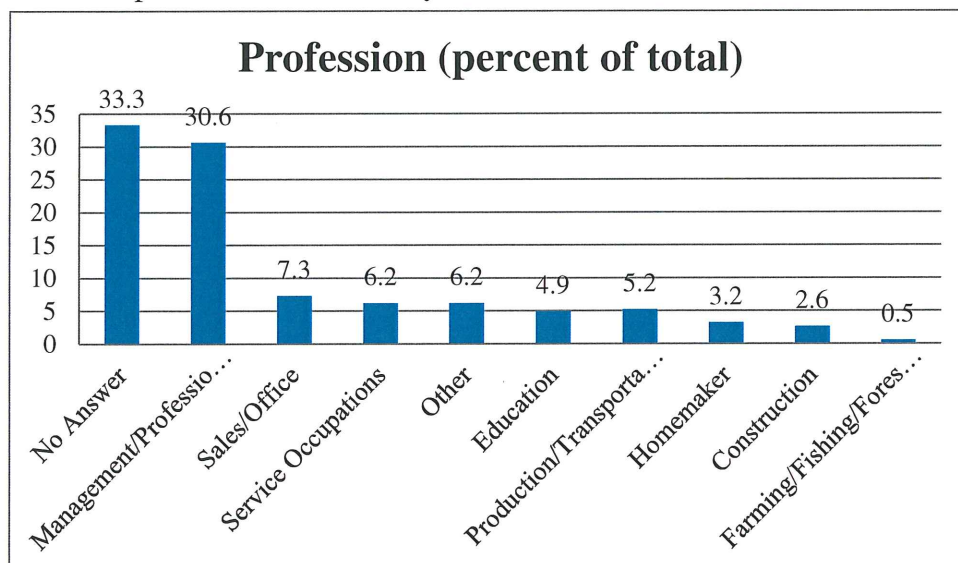


Of the 873 citizens that responded to the employment status question; over half of them stated that they are employed full time 52.2% (456) while a relatively large number of citizens are retired 31.4% (274). About the same amount of people are employed part-time (4.5%) or are self-employed (3.8%). The remainder of the population reported that they are students (2.3%) or unemployed (1.4%).

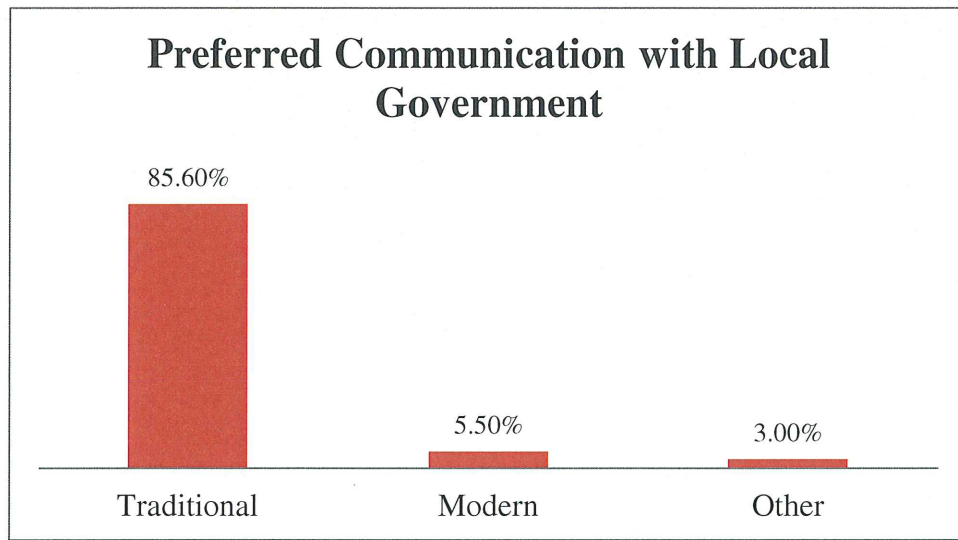


A total of 480 citizens replied to one of the following options pertaining to their profession: management, professional and related 31% (n=222); sales and office occupation 7.1% (n=51); service occupations 6.4% (n=46); education 5.2% (n=37); production, transportation, and material moving 5% (n=36); homemaker 2.9% (n=21); construction 2.8% (n=20); farming, fishing, and forestry 0.6% (n=4); and other 6% (n=43).

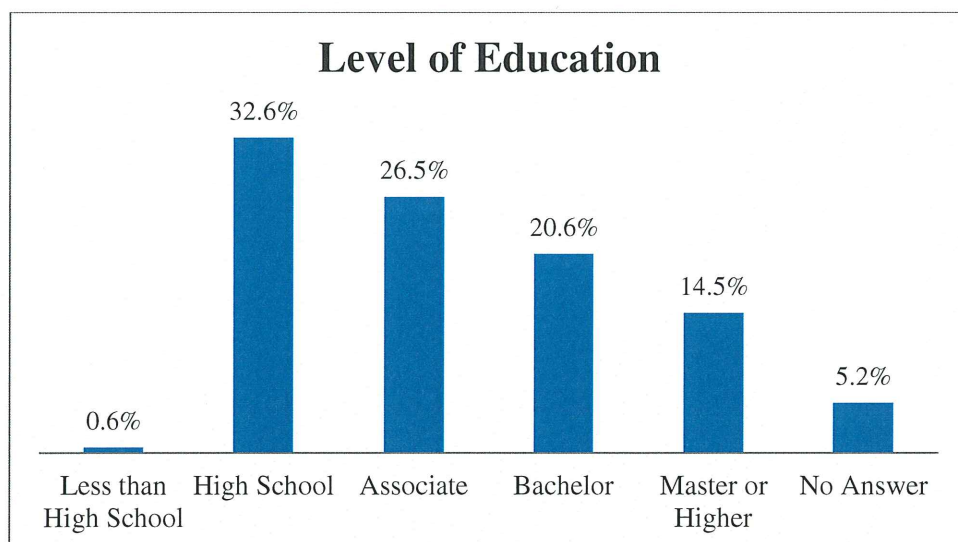
90.7% of respondents indicated they had a computer in their home. About the same amount, 91.0 % of respondents indicated they had internet access.



Citizens were asked “Which opportunities do you utilize to participate and stay informed with local government?” 85.6% said that they used traditional mediums to participate using mailed newsletters (77.8%), attend meetings (7.2%), write letters (0.6%), and make phone calls (0.6%). 5.5% choose the internet for their ability to stay informed: 3.8% use digital newsletters, 1.1% use email, 0.6% use social media (Facebook and Twitter). 5.3% chose not answer and 3.0% replied to other.



Algoma citizens were asked what their highest level of education was and 61.6% said that they had a degree of higher education. 14.5% have a master degree or higher, 20.6% have a bachelor degree, and 26.5% had an associate degree. 5.2% did not answer. 32.6% said that their highest level of education was high school while only 0.6% had less than a high school degree.



References - United States Census Bureau. (2010-2014). *QuickFacts Beta*.