

# 2006 Community Needs Survey Report

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*Prepared by Vincent Cocca for the Gowanda Village board and Gowanda Village Planning Board*

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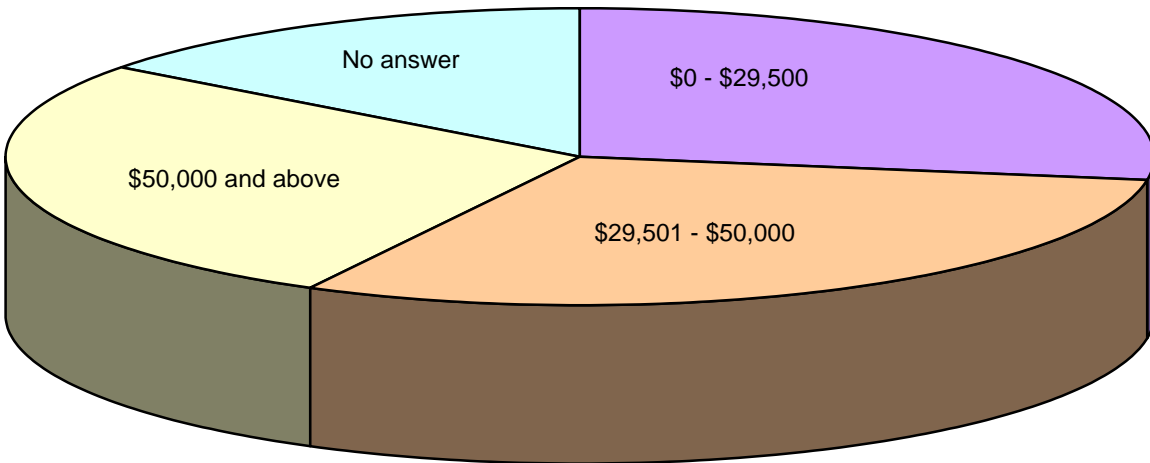
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## **Introduction of survey**

The “2006 Community Needs Survey” was distributed on every street in the Village of Gowanda. Over 500 surveys were hand delivered to Village residents and Storeowners. 175 surveys were returned to the Village Hall within a week after the December 18<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Residents and Storeowners received a survey with a brief cover letter. The hand delivering process was meant to encourage a high response to the survey. Ideally the resident would be home to accept the survey and have any questions answered. Encounters were kept brief due to time limitations. If the resident was not home than the survey was left in a conspicuous place near any visibly used entrance. Some homes had no visibly used entrance or safe place to leave a survey. For that reason, not every home in the Village received a survey.

A postage paid envelope was included to encourage a higher response than the 1997 survey. Residents could either send the completed survey right back to the Village Hall or drop it off themselves. While mail service could have been avoided altogether, this was a less expensive than sending surveys out with a return envelope.



### **Profile based on survey sample**

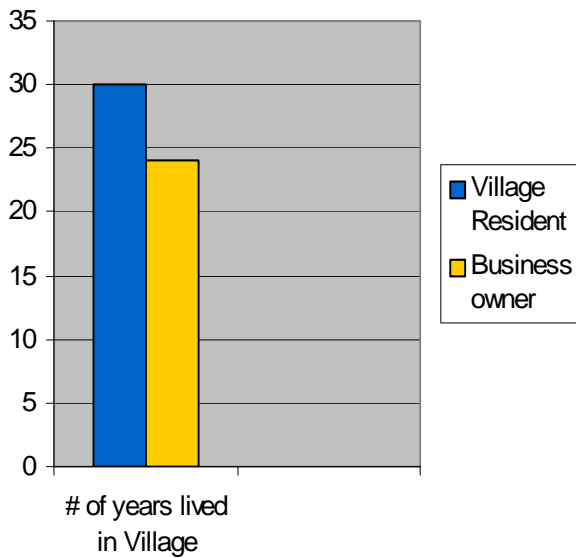
A profile survey example is seen in **Appendix B**. This profile assumes the most popular responses in all categories to create an image of the average resident. On average a village resident has lived here for 30 years on property that they own. The range was from 0 to 90 years of residence. People who live in the village normally don't own a business; but if they do, then they own the property.

The average Village resident works in the Village and their income falls between \$29,501 and \$50,000. While the survey sample was small it does reflect Cattaraugus County records. From the Cattaraugus County 2000 Self-portrait, Gowanda's median income was \$29,565. The Cattaraugus County Self-portrait is an in depth summary of census data from the 2000 census.

The profile is also a good tool for comparison. Some things have not changed between the 1997 and this 2006 survey. Residents are still interested in having more shopping choices. A great desire for more grocery choices was expressed specifically in the new survey. The need for housing supply hasn't budged. Residents were unsure of the need for new housing and disagreed

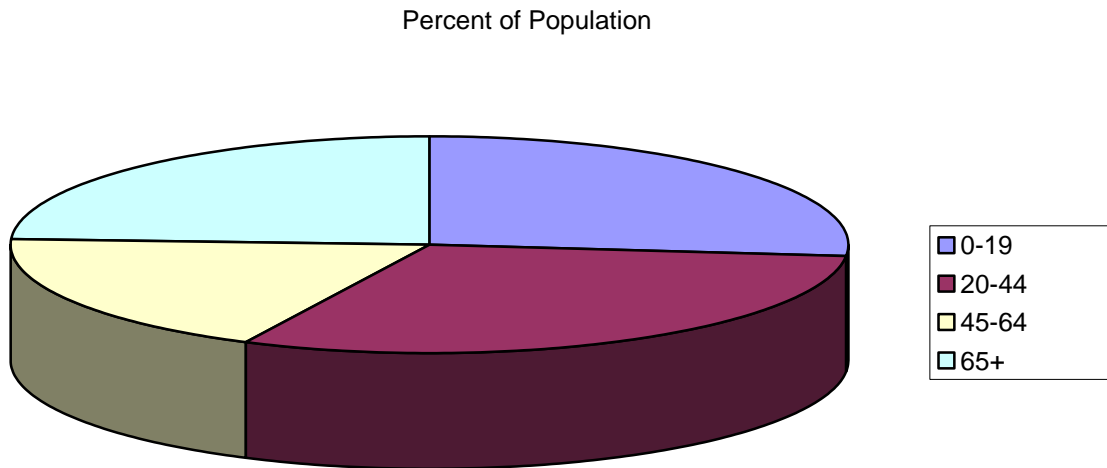
with more apartment supply in the last survey. In this current survey residents expressed that the Village isn't crowded and there is adequate apartment availability.

Demand for the Hollywood theater has increased since the last survey. This is evident in the higher percentage of responses from a similar question. The importance of industry is also clear in the new survey compared to the 1997 response.



This profile was put together using all returned surveys from residents and businesses. If a separate profile were done for businesses in the village, it would be very similar to the village profile. The biggest difference between business owner and resident profiles is the average number of years in the Village. Most residents have been around for 30 years and most business owners have been around for 24 years.

One set of data that the survey did not collect was actual age of residents. However, the Cattaraugus County self-portrait gathered this information for the 2000 census.



### **Explanations of under represented, yet interesting, answers**

**Appendix A** summarizes all of the responses from the survey. Mostly this summary only shines light on popular responses. **Appendix C** lists all of the responses to questions in the survey that did not show up in the summary. The following are examples of important responses that were not expressed in large numbers:

Zoar valley is a local attraction.

Reuse of old buildings

Out of town sources of contamination

These, as well as the other responses in the lists are great topics for group discussion or forums.

### **Conclusions**

It seems that Village residents have a disloyalty to local business. The variety and lower prices of commodities that people want are found outside of Gowanda. While the stores in the Village cater to most every need, people still want bargains over convenience. It is very clear that housing is not an issue. Everyone has plenty of elbowroom and nobody lives on an empty block. The need for a community center rises above most other things. Many comments were made about the need for a place where kids can be active. Public transportation is not a major issue in the village. Even though the profile respondent makes between \$29,501-\$50,000, income in the village is much more diverse than that. The spread of income is actually evenly divided between the three answer choices. People seem to want a stable environment in which to live and play.

## Appendix A

*List three things that you do for entertainment in the Village of Gowanda.  
(top three answers by percentage)*

Dining Out	11%
Events and Festivals	8%
Fitness	8%
No answer	41%

*List three things that you leave the Village of Gowanda to buy.  
(top three answers by percentage)*

Clothing	25%
Groceries	6%
House supplies and appliances	20%
No answer	22%

*List one thing you would like to improve to make our community a better place to live.  
(Top answer by percentage)*

More shopping choices	15%
No answer	35%

*List one attraction that would bring people to Gowanda*

Finish the Hollywood theater	35%
No answer	27%

Please circle 'yes' or 'no' for the following questions.

*Is the Village too crowded?*

Yes	8%
No	90%
No answer	2%

*Does the Village have adequate apartment availability?*

Yes	51%
No	32%
No answer	17%

*Does the Village offer an adequate and enjoyable shopping experience?*

Yes	21%
No	74%
No answer	5%

*Is industry important to the future of the Village?*

Yes	87%
No	9%
No answer	4%

*Do you have extended family that live in the Village?*

Yes	55%
No	44%
No answer	1%

Please rate (from '1' to '3') the following community services and facilities.

'1' satisfied '2' unaffected '3' unsatisfied

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>No answer</b>
School	65%	21%	13%	1%
Fire Protection	95%	2%	3%	0%
Village Hall	71%	15%	13%	1%
Community Centers	16%	31%	43%	9%
Hospitals	66%	8%	22%	4%
Medical Services	62%	10%	25%	3%
Ambulance	83%	11%	3%	2%
Public Transportation	17%	52%	22%	9%
Garbage Collection	80%	6%	13%	1%
Highway Department	78%	9%	10%	2%
Libraries	75%	13%	9%	3%
Churches	85%	11%	2%	2%
Parks	70%	10%	15%	5%
Dentists	58%	25%	14%	3%
Doctors	59%	17%	21%	3%
Police	82%	5%	10%	2%
Sewer	86%	4%	7%	2%

Water	85%	4%	8%	3%
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How many years have you lived in the Village of Gowanda?

30
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Do you own the property where you reside?

Yes	79%
No	15%
No answer	6%

Do you operate a business in Gowanda?

Yes	18%
No	77%
No answer	6%

(If you answered 'yes') Do you own the property?

Yes	11%
No	7%
No answer	82%

Where do you work?

In the Village	11%
Commuter	7%
Retired	82%

What income bracket do you fall under?

0-29,500	32%
29,501-50,000	27%
50,001 and above	28%

Please list any environmental concerns you might have about the Village of Gowanda.

Contaminated land	27%
Flooding	30%
Creek contamination	27%
No answer	15%

Please list any active membership in local community organizations.

American Legion	4%
Moose	4%

## Appendix C – Other responses

*List three things that you do for entertainment in the Village of Gowanda.*

School Plays  
Bowling  
Library  
Social Clubs  
Church  
Concerts  
Eating  
Fitness  
Festivals  
Fishing  
Renting movies  
Swimming at the school  
Partying  
Gardening  
Coffee  
Television  
Visiting Bars  
School Sports  
Staying home  
Zoar Valley  
Home repair  
Nature observation  
Shopping  
Visit Group home  
Visit parks

*List three things that you leave the Village of Gowanda to buy.*

Clothes  
Car  
House supplies/ appliances  
Food  
Office supplies  
Movies  
Gas  
Furniture  
Car supplies  
Eyeglasses  
Sporting goods  
Books  
Pet supplies  
Gifts  
Shoes/ boots  
Electronics  
Entertainment/ toys  
Medical care  
Water  
Jewelry  
Craft supplies  
Nursery stock  
Hair cuts  
Liquor

*List one thing you would like to improve to make our community a better place to live.*

Shopping  
Youth activities  
Village growth  
Bike paths  
Crime fighting  
Use of parks and natural resources  
Fitness facilities  
Movie theater or live theater  
Removing blight and reusing old buildings  
Jobs  
More activities downtown  
Sidewalks and cross walks  
Housing  
Parking  
Taxes  
Population control  
Trash  
Hotels  
Already a nice place  
Environmental cleanup  
Visual improvements  
Police force  
Drinking water

*List one attraction that would bring people to Gowanda*

Hollywood theater  
Taxes  
Access to nature  
Fitness club  
Community/ youth center  
Event advertised on TV  
Big box retail  
Walking/ bike path  
Roller rink/ skate park  
Grocery store  
Shopping  
Accommodations for events  
Public pool  
Environmental clean up  
New restaurant  
Golf course  
Regional partnership  
Holding on development  
Industry/ business  
School system  
Eliminating drug unit/ removing psyche patients  
Housing

*Please list any environmental concerns you might have about the Village of Gowanda.*

Poison ivy in parks  
Creek contamination  
Flooding/ standing water  
Location/ quantity/ maintenance of trees  
Dilapidated buildings  
Truck traffic  
Brownfield sites  
Potable water  
Debris removal  
Bugs  
Stray animals

Snow removal  
Landfills  
Development  
Out of town sources of contamination  
Preservation  
Landscaping

## Appendix D – Comments

These comments were pulled verbatim from the end of the survey where a space was left for comments. Personal information was omitted.

- Gowanda is a great place to live in but the police department is working very hard. I fear the amount of drugs will destroy this community if people aren't being responsible.
- This is a great way to hear some ideas, to which to use as a tool, for information
- You cover everything except church attendance or any interest there of-
- We need a center for our young people to participate in example Boys/ Girls club- Dances/ Skating/ Skateboard ramps
- I think that everyone involved in Gowanda from the flowers/ trees/ benches/ lights/ playground/ school programs/ special events for the holidays etc. etc. are doing a great job...The economy has affected our small town's business districts- but landlords should be made responsible to keep storefronts- clean-painted-fix broken glass...to contribute to the look of our town- for us...and those who pass through.
- No room to comment why an 'unsatisfactory' would be given to the community services
- Well done
- Too narrow- for what purpose
- I don't know why it matters how much income I make. I think it would bring more people in and closer if we expanded some parks or things the community would participate in and enjoy. "But I don't want it to come out of my pocket through higher takes!!!"
- The empty Ames in Collins would be a perfect location for better retail choices (grocery or department store)

- I am not aware of other membership opportunities for community organizations other than the moose, legion etc. and they are not directed at a younger generation.
- Too general. Too black and white. No room for comments. No questions on regionalism, consolidation or shared services. Fail to see master plan relevance and meaningful application non-comprehensive and shortsighted in total. Missing an opportunity!
- The police and fire department are doing a great job. Keep up the good work. If tri-county hospital closes Gowanda will slowly go downhill and that will be too bad. It provides an important service to our community that everyone needs. Overall I think Gowanda is a good place to bring up a family and more important to live in for life. Thank you for sending me a survey. Have a merry Christmas and a safe New Year.
- The Village needs some things for teens to get involved in except hanging around the streets!
- Property owners need to be held accountable for the looks of their property. You try to have a decent looking home and its among the looks of slum looking homes. Take a drive on Chestnut St ! Why are landlords not held accountable!
- You missed how boring the downtown stores and restaurants look. Lighting, decorations, facades- we still look dowdy
- Concerned about the hospital closing.
- Good survey
- Better parking places esp. on Jamestown St.
- Questions are ambiguous and do not relate to many senior citizens.
- Please fight to keep hospital the way it is. Keep the bus service more stops in village one closer to Gowanda meadows for seniors
- Retired 20 years. Was active first years after retirement, Camber, Torch Fund, Nursing Home volunteer, belonged to Moose, Aux. Library, etc. Now health limited, Village meets all my needs and wants. Blanks [in survey] mean I have no knowledge or experience currently.
- Not complete enough
- Why do you need to know everyone's income bracket??
- Community involvement in saving tri-county should be a priority, not a renovation of a theater to be used as an opera house, which will probably not become a reality in my life

time- nor will it do anything to provide entertainment for families. It is actually a useless endeavor

- We feel that Gowanda is in desperate need of a place that the children can go to in their spare time. Gowanda needs to put some time and understanding in to the future and stop thinking about trees so much.
- Add a better, cleaner and enjoyable hotel. A better grocery store
- Planning board putting too many extra regulations forcing business to go elsewhere. State's resolution. Bad enough. Help new business move into Gowanda.
- You need work or should I say industry
- What's the purpose what's going to change
- The tree committee should improve older trees (located on private property) many are located on front lawns and people either can't afford to hire it done or many people just don't care about their property improvements. Call attention to absentee owners.
- We keep sidewalks shoveled nicely-I think in heavy snow times passages from sidewalk to street should be provided by village.
- The remediation of the tannery site needs to be completed and plans implemented to make this valuable site available to the public.
- Gowanda should make a big effort to keep our hospital active
- Survey should be reviewed publicly when completed
- Please try to repair and improve the living and shopping centers, the roads, sidewalks, and drainage of roads. Clean up Gowanda, thank you.
- The Police chief should live in the community and know the people who live in the community. The Dale covert episode at palm gardens should never have happened the way it did. It needlessly endangered many lives. My other contacts with the police department have left me questioning the competence and professionalism of the department. Gowanda has the most intelligent trash and recycling system I have seen. People that recycle and minimize their trash generation pay far less than those who do not.
- We have a beautiful village, however there is little to offer by way of choice in shopping. Nothing is available to offer "safe", positive entertainment for teens.
- Not enough opportunity to tell you what I'd like to see here, see improved, added services etc.

- This survey does not even touch on the REAL problems in this village.
- The Village seems to be going in the right direction- beautification, economic growth, etc.
- The Village should have to put your lawn back after the sidewalk plow digs up your lawn. I called Highway dept. and nothing happened.
- There has been too much franchise America allowed in to the village. Lets support “mom and Pop” business instead of corporate America.
- Not enough or bright enough street lights on side streets. Stores in Gowanda are nice and a pleasure to shop. But many items, i.e. crafts-fabric-clothing are not available here.
- This survey is excellent and very much appreciated.
- Need more street lighting on secondary streets. Not safe to walk in street. More sidewalks and repair to existing ones.
- I love the parks as does my grandson. I’d like more benches to rest- I love small town living and would like to open a small business here when I retire a bakery or breakfast/ lunch spot.
- This is a good idea to get different ideas
- Like many small towns in WNY Gowanda businesses have an aging population and struggle to survive against the big box stores. Only service regulated businesses have a strong customer base
- I’ve partaken in several surveys in our village-and nothing has come of them. I hope citizen comments from this survey will have a mild impact. At least, on the “hoped for” direction our village is going in.
- Is the town prepared if we get a massive power outage like buffalo got? (Do we have generators?) I would also like main sreet access to Creekside Park and some flowers planted there. Keep up the good work!
- Old Forbush property should utilize possibly new fire hall this is right in the middle of the village.
- Need affordable senior apartments. Creekside park totally neglected. All attention focused on Chang-Hu park. Remember, Gowanda also exists on Erie co. side of bridge!!
- Need more and better paying jobs in the village more local recreation/ exercise for adults

- I hope to see some results of this survey.
- I feel real need to keep Tri-county hospital available for emergency, lab, and x-ray. Would like to see accounting to the public for money raised to improve the Hollywood theater.
- Not enough room to address the questions properly.
- I believe the Village could benefit from a comprehensive marketing plan- promoted through the chamber of commerce- to capitalize on our natural resources; retail shopping.
- A mayor that has more interest in Gowanda Don't need a public works supt. Tell highway workers not to get mad at suggestions
- Number one Priority is to revitalize downtown business district. Too many vacancies and under utilized storefronts. Also I would like to see a supervised skateboard park. Give youngsters a safe place to skate! Then enforce a ban on skateboards on the sidewalks/ parking lots.
- Very disturbed with only one grocery store in town. What would happen if jubilee burned down or the building collapsed! Hamburg, Springville or Dunkirk 13 miles away in each of those directions.
- No attention is spent on creekside park, better lighting patrol, chained waste receptacles at entrances.
- Fight to save our hospital! I was born here and left at age 20. after 54 years I came back because I love Gowanda, always consider it home and I hope to spend the rest of my life here!
- Need a question on why there is no job available that pays \$15 per hour or above
- Would love to see any grocery store provide competition to lower Jubilee's prices!!!! Their prices are outrageous for people who cannot drive out of the area to shop.
- This is an excellent idea, hopefully input will be heard and changes will be made
- Would like to have a major grocery store chain. Senior Citizen housing
- Get a recreation program that is for everyone get the youth group back!!
- We need businesses that will bring people in from outside Gowanda to spend their dollars in the Village. Zoar valley is also an asset to this Village.
- Vacant Storefronts are a detriment

- It would be nice to get the peter cooper building up and running for something. Our kids need something to do in our village to keep them out of trouble.
- You have a beautiful creekside park-what do you do with it???? Nothing!!-People traveling thru town do not know it is there for a picnic or a rest stop. What a shame! We travel a lot by motor home and stop a a lot of town parks for lunch or a break to walk the dog- does any one traveling thru know its there for their enjoyment.
- When decorating why only from bridge to the village? We feel like outsiders
- It is ok
- They [questions] aren't relevant to older people who don't get involved
- Crosswalks not adequate, not properly marked Intersection street lighting is inadequate
- I think if you put more grocery stores, shops, restaurants and maybe a movie theater that you can go to not this joke of a theater that nothing goes on at and we still keep putting money in to.
- The only way we will keep our children in the area is if they can find decent work!
- Would love to see creekside park developed (replace gazebo, gardens) and used for community events similar to chang-hu park. Perhaps use part as Dog Park. We urgently need something for our teenage population to do/ be part of.
- Clean up the trashy apartment houses; make the Village safer- vandalism etc. etc. etc. is out of control; don't offer so much low income housing and benefits to low-life so they need to return to the city where they belong!!!
- As for shopping experience: the people are nice but we don't have choices ex: food, clothing, shoes...that's it!! We have to go 20 miles either direction (Dunkirk/ Springville/ Hamburg) wee need Growth. In Village we pay 3 libraries high school Gowanda and for Collins... Too many we don't need any more parks either
- I am happy to see the direction the village is going. The village board and other are doing a good job. (just don't raise taxes too much)
- There is and always was preferential treatment to certain individuals and business. Condemned buildings ok for some business owners to move in to and other business owners made to tow the mark. Creates a bad spirit the community
- I am very concerned about the proposed hospital closing. I am a sr, citizen and need these services nearby.