

A Summary of the
Community Vision Survey

Conducted in August, 2010

Little Falls, New York

August 31, 2010

Main Street First

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Introduction

In August of 2010, Main Street First conducted a survey of residents of the City of Little Falls, in order to obtain community input on a wide range of issues pertaining to quality of life and economic revitalization. Owing to the means by which the survey was distributed, we also accepted surveys from visitors to the City, but these responses were tabulated separately and the results are not included in this report. The results of the present survey were intended to be of use to public officials, urban planners, and private citizens interested in updating the City Comprehensive Plan, as well as to citizens groups that seek to advance the economic, social and cultural life of the community.

The survey asked potential respondents a range of questions that addressed community perceptions of the state of our civic and cultural assets, our economic development priorities, our community needs, and some basic demographic information that illuminates the question of why people choose to live in Little Falls. In an effort to avoid obvious selection bias, Main Street First distributed surveys via the local newspaper (*The Evening Times*), made the survey available on its websites, and passed surveys out to a wide range of participants in the annual Canal Days celebration; in this regard we especially thank Mayor Robert Peters for kindly distributing surveys personally during the Canal Days parade. As of the date of this report, 252 surveys had been completed and returned. By way of comparison to communities in Central New York that have recently conducted similar community surveys, the City of Oneonta (population 13,292) received 257 responses in a 2006 survey, and the Town of Brewerton (population 3,453) received 168 responses in a 2008 survey. We are thus satisfied with our return rate.

We should note at this point that our survey may be skewed toward the opinion of homeowners, and additionally to the opinion of people who moved to Little Falls as opposed to being born and raised here. Of the responses we received, a full 79% came from homeowners, and only 21% came from renters. This figure varies markedly from the overall profile of the population of Little Falls, in which slightly over 40% of housing units are occupied by renters. Similarly, 50% of our survey responses came from people who reported to moving to Little Falls, where as 60% of our population has lived in the same house in the city since 1995, and 65% of us have lived in Little Falls for over 5 years.

This study summarizes and provides basic statistical analysis of the results of the Community Vision Survey in Little Falls. Although a majority of the surveys returned were fully completed, some were partially completed, or several answers were left blank. For this reason, the number of responses may vary for some of the questions; any impact of this variance on the confidence levels in our data will be noted as necessary.

Note that the process of analyzing and interpreting raw statistical data is predicated on asking the right questions of the data. For this reason, we strongly encourage any interested member of the community to contact us with questions or concerns about this survey and what it reveals about Little Falls!

A copy of the Little Falls Community Vision Survey is appended, as Appendix A.

Summary of Major Findings

In the pages that follow, we detail the manner in which community members responded to the Little Falls Community Vision Survey, and offer some basic statistical analyses of that data. For the convenience of the reader, here is a summary of some of the most salient findings we discovered:

I. Little Falls is an optimistic community. When we tallied up all the responses to the questions about the state of our community assets in Little Falls, we found that in the aggregate respondents spoke with satisfaction about Little Falls 67% of the time, and spoke negatively of the community only 18% of the time. Among other things, this analysis suggests that the citizens of Little Falls themselves may be one of the City's most valuable resources for marketing the community to outsiders.

II. Little Falls residents want to improve their community. Despite their optimism, apparently the residents of Little Falls feel more can be done to improve their quality of life in the community. In the aggregate, when answering the survey questions about our community needs, respondents indicated that we need to do more in Little Falls a full 72% of the time, and that we are doing enough only 11% of the time. We feel this shows that the residents of Little Falls are eager to roll up their sleeves and get to work on building for the future.

III. Little Falls residents value traditional, small-town living. We asked the respondents who are residents of Little Falls to rate the three top reasons they choose to live in this community. The responses indicate that residents overwhelmingly value the attributes of the community that are indicative of pursuing a particular lifestyle over other factors, such as services, economics and transportation. The two most commonly given reasons for living in Little Falls were: "traditional small community lifestyle" (69%), and "quality of life" (51%).

IV. Little Falls residents value a walkable community. When asked their reasons for living in Little Falls, 46% of residents indicated their "desire to live in a walkable community" as one of their top three choices. The value of a walkable community to residents is further emphasized by the question of whether or not residents felt that "Little Falls is a safe and convenient community for walking", to which 88% responded in the affirmative, and 5% responded in the negative. Not only does this suggest a potentially potent theme for marketing our community, it also bears important implications for future planning of zoning, traffic and development priorities.

V. Little Falls residents show little interest in infrastructure. In our survey of reasons that residents choose to live in Little Falls, several themes related to the infrastructural features of the community are noticeable because of the ***infrequency*** with which they were selected. In particular, Little Falls residents exhibited little enthusiasm for these choices: "municipal services" (2%), "quality of the housing stock" (4%), "access to the thruway" (5%), and "recreational activities" (9%). While this does not mean that our community does not value these infrastructural advantages, it is quite possible that we take them for granted. In any case, this lack of enthusiasm for the infrastructural benefits of living in Little Falls may have some serious implications for how we target our future community marketing efforts. It also suggests that we may need to do some work to educate our citizens about the value of the infrastructural features that we seem to take for granted.

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VI. Many residents commute to work in order to live in Little Falls. While the median distance that survey respondents indicate they travel to work is just 7 miles, the mean distance is 16.42 miles and the standard deviation of the responses is 33.17 miles. What this means in plain English is that for everyone who lives within a short radius of their work in Little Falls, another likely commutes a significant distance. We feel that this indicates that Little Falls is, to some extent at least, taking on some of the characteristics of a bedroom community.

VII. There are several areas of broad consensus regarding potential future directions. When reviewing the results of this survey, it becomes immediately clear that there is broad consensus in the community on the need to revitalize the downtown commercial district (95% favorable consensus), cultivate more locally owned businesses (93% favorable consensus), attract more industrial development (86% favorable consensus), and develop more tourism-related businesses (82% favorable consensus). Additionally, only 29% of respondents think we have enough residential parking and only 64% think we have enough commercial parking. Finally, only 43% of respondents think we have attractive commercial buildings and only 57% think our road networks are adequate.

VIII. There are several areas of dissent regarding potential future directions. Our survey indicates that there is deep division in the community over including so-called “big-box” retail operations to Little Falls, with 45% of respondents expressing support and 45% expressing opposition. Also, only 49% of respondents expressed support for developing more upper-story residential units in the downtown, although opposition was not particularly strong at 15%; rather, 36% of respondents expressed no opinion, suggesting that this issue needs more discussion as a community. Other areas with relatively tepid favorable consensus include: more hiking/biking trails (57%), more arts and cultural opportunities (60%), and more recreational access to the river (68%).

IX. Little Falls residents value their environment and heritage. An overwhelming majority of residents responded affirmatively when asked if Little Falls has a rich and interesting history (93%) and a special identity that makes it unique in Central New York (88%). Interestingly, just 58% of respondents think we do enough to protect our historical assets, while 26% thought we do enough. However, when asked this question another way, 80% conceded that “we need to more to protect our historic features and buildings” and just 8% disagreed. This discordant pattern suggests that there may be some discomfort in the community over current methods, organizations or perhaps issues in the preservation effort rather than any broad disagreement with the goal of historical preservation. As for environmental concerns, 75% of respondents wanted to do more to protect the green spaces and natural features in our community, with only 6% wanting to do less.

X. People who have adopted Little Falls as home are disproportionately interested in the community vision process. As we mentioned in the Introduction, nearly half of the respondents to our survey represent people who moved to Little Falls, and thus consciously chose to live here. Again, this must be regarded as a potential source of volunteer bias in analyzing the results of the survey. On the other hand, these volitional members of the community also represent a valuable potential pool of energetic volunteers for the process of community planning.

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Tabulated Results

In the following several pages, we offer a convenient recapitulation of the statistical data that we gathered as a result of the Little Falls Community Vision Survey. We will offer a discussion and analysis of that data further along in this report.

Part One. The State of Our Community Assets

Part One of the Little Falls Community Vision Survey asked respondents how they felt about the state of various community assets in Little Falls. The following table recapitulates the questions we asked, and enumerates the responses we received.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
1	Little Falls has a special identity that makes it unique to Central NY.	48%	41%	5%	5%	1%
2	Our commercial buildings create an attractive business environment.	13%	30%	20%	28%	9%
3	Our residential homes / buildings create an attractive place to live.	28%	50%	10%	10%	1%
4	Our road system makes entering and leaving Little Falls easy and inviting.	15%	42%	9%	23%	11%
5	Our downtown has attractive trees and lighting, and safe crossings.	30%	47%	8%	13%	3%
6	Little Falls has a rich and interesting history.	65%	29%	4%	1%	1%
7	Little Falls is a good place to raise a family.	47%	41%	9%	3%	1%
8	We do enough to highlight and protect our historical assets in Little Falls.	16%	42%	16%	21%	5%
9	Little Falls is a safe and convenient community for driving.	24%	50%	12%	14%	0%
10	Little Falls is a safe and convenient community for walking.	38%	49%	7%	4%	0%
11	We have adequate parking in the Little Falls commercial district.	18%	47%	10%	15%	11%
12	We have adequate overnight parking in the Little Falls residential areas.	9%	20%	18%	33%	20%
13	We have adequate housing for people of all income levels in Little Falls.	15%	39%	26%	15%	6%
14	We have adequate housing for retired people in Little Falls.	16%	39%	26%	13%	5%
15	We have adequate housing for handicapped people in Little Falls.	10%	20%	52%	14%	4%
16	We have adequate health care facilities in Little Falls.	25%	45%	14%	13%	3%
17	We have adequate recreational and park programs for children / youth.	26%	48%	11%	10%	4%
18	Our parks are convenient, clean and safe in Little Falls.	44%	49%	5%	2%	0%
19	Overall, I'm satisfied with our public school system in Little Falls.	26%	41%	23%	7%	3%

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Part Two. Our Economic Development Priorities

Part Two of the Little Falls Community Vision Survey asked respondents to discuss their perception of our needs, challenges and opportunities in the matter of economic development. Most of the questions solicited free-form, fill-in-the-blank style responses, which are recorded in Appendix B.

Question 2.1, however, produced numerical data about how the respondents might rank the usefulness to Little Falls of pursuing certain widely-discussed courses of economic revitalization. The following table summarizes how relatively optimistically the residents of Little Falls view those economic sectors as engines of local growth:

Potential Economic Development Opportunity:	Overall Rank:
New Industries (e.g., High Tech)	1
Traditional Manufacturing	2
Tourism / Travel Industry	3
Outdoor Recreational Activities	4
Office Service Industries	5
Arts and Cultural Activities	6
Traditional Agriculture	7
Organic and Natural Foods Production	8

These rankings probably reflect local traditions and history as much, if not more, than a keen understanding of the outlines of tomorrow's economy. Not surprisingly, Little Falls residents share in the hope, widespread throughout Central New York, that a coming regional high tech boom may lift the area out of its economic doldrums. So too, our historic local dependence on traditional manufacturing may reflect the stubborn faith in that sector, even as the economic advantages in this field continue to favor other locales out of state and even out of country. Somewhat surprisingly, despite the success of some market-savvy local farmers and distributors in the area of organic and natural foods production, this sector is apparently off the radar-screen of most local residents.

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Part Three. Our Community Needs

Part Three of the Little Falls Community Vision Survey asked respondents about their view of the potential needs of Little Falls. The following table recapitulates the questions we asked, and enumerates the responses we received.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
1	We need stricter property maintenance standards in Little Falls.	42%	32%	15%	9%	2%
2	We need stricter codes enforcement procedures in Little Falls.	45%	27%	15%	9%	5%
3	We need to develop more upper story residential units in our downtown.	21%	28%	35%	11%	5%
4	We need to encourage more industrial development in Little Falls.	54%	33%	7%	4%	3%
5	We need to encourage more locally-owned and operated businesses.	60%	33%	5%	0%	1%
6	We need to encourage "big-box" retail stores to locate in Little Falls.	26%	18%	10%	18%	27%
7	We need to do more to protect our natural features and green spaces.	41%	34%	19%	5%	1%
8	We need to do more to preserve our historic features and buildings.	43%	37%	12%	6%	1%
9	We need better foot access between our downtown and Canal Place.	36%	32%	20%	9%	3%
10	We need to develop more recreational opportunities in Little Falls.	31%	43%	18%	8%	0%
11	We need to improve recreational access to the Mohawk River / Canal.	32%	36%	26%	6%	0%
12	We need more hiking, running and biking trails in Little Falls.	24%	33%	31%	12%	0%
13	We need to encourage retail development in downtown Little Falls.	62%	33%	5%	0%	0%
14	We need to encourage retail development in the canal district.	36%	38%	17%	9%	1%
15	We need more arts and cultural opportunities in Little Falls.	23%	37%	26%	12%	1%
16	We need to do more to encourage tourism and tourism-related businesses.	38%	43%	14%	3%	1%
17	We need to develop more office and light-industrial space in Little Falls.	32%	42%	20%	6%	0%

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Part Four. Respondent Demographic Information

Finally, in Part Four of the Little Falls Community Vision Survey, we asked respondents for some basic demographic data. Our purpose in seeking this information was primarily to allow for some demographically specific correlations of responses to the survey questions (e.g., did life-long residents view some issues differently than new residents?), as well to gauge the extent to which we were suffering from skewing of our data towards one or another type of respondent. Here, we summarize the only the broad outlines of the demographic information we collected.

Question 4.1 asked respondents to choose the top three reasons they choose to live in Little Falls. The following table lists the frequency with which each of the answers was selected.

Reason for Choosing Little Falls:	Percent:	Reason for Choosing Little Falls:	Percent:
Traditional small community life-style	69%	Convenient to work	14%
Quality of life	51%	Recreational activities	9%
Desire to live in a walkable community	46%	Other	8%
Born / raised in Little Falls	44%	Access to the Thruway	5%
Quality of the school system	24%	Quality of housing stock	4%
Affordable housing	23%	Municipal services	2%

Age and Employment Status. The median age of our respondents was 55 years old, with a mean of 53.06 years and a standard deviation of 18.79 years. The average respondent (44%) was employed, while 33% were retired, 16% self-employed, and 7% unemployed or other.

Commute Distance. Of those respondents who were employed or self-employed, the median commute to work is 7 miles, with a mean of 16.42 miles and a standard deviation of 33.17 miles. This indicates that while many of us live pretty much where we work, about half of us commute fairly long distances (over 30 miles) to work each day.

Home. We found that 79% of respondents own their own home, and 21% rent. A full 77% of respondents live in a single-family dwelling, while 12% live in a two-family and 8% live in an apartment. The median household size among respondents was 2 people, with a mean of 2.70, and a standard deviation of 1.69; we may account for this tight clustering in part by noting that a large number of our respondents were beyond the child-rearing years.

Time in Little Falls. Finally, we may note that 50% of our respondents were born in Little Falls, and 50% moved here. To further drill this statistic down, 33% of respondents moved to Little Falls more than five years ago, and 17% have moved here within the last five years.

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Discussion of Results

The following pages offer some tentative thematic interpretations of the data we collected in our Little Falls Community Vision Survey. None of these interpretations are intended to be authoritative; rather, they are intended to provoke community discussion and help policy makers formulate their own strategies for querying and interpreting the raw data contained in this report, as well as to suggest areas that may need further research.

Our Community Identity

Overall, survey respondents seem proud of their community, and pleased to live in Little Falls. Indeed, the questions pertaining to the sense of community identity garnered by far the most favorable responses throughout the entire survey process! We should note the overwhelming support for the following statements among respondents:

- Little Falls has a special identity that makes it unique to Central New York; 88% agree or strongly agree. Of respondents who moved to Little Falls in the last five years, this rate of agreement rises to 93%, while among self-identified “lifers” it falls to 83%.
- Little Falls has a rich and interesting history; 93% agree or strongly agree.
- Little Falls is a good place to raise a family; 87% agree or strongly agree.

But what makes Little Falls so special, and such a good place to raise a family, beside its interesting history? We may gain an insight into this by reviewing why people choose to live here. Of our respondents, 69% agree that one of the most important things that make Little Falls special is its traditional small-town lifestyle, while 51% agree that our specialness lies in our general quality of life. For a full 46% of respondents, that special quality can be further defined by the walkability of our community. Above all else, it would seem, Little Falls may profit from embracing its *de facto* situation as a small town graced with a city charter and a diverse past.

Our Downtown and Canal Place

How do Little Falls residents perceive the commercial districts in our city? Here, the message of respondents is somewhat mixed. On the one hand, most residents seem to feel that our downtown and Canal Place commercial districts must play a major role in the future of the City:

- We found that an overwhelming 95% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the community needs to take actions to encourage retail development in downtown Little Falls; residents seem to value their downtown commercial district and universally agree that it needs improvement.

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- We also found that 73% of respondents agree or strongly agree that more must be done to encourage retail development in Canal Place, whereas 17% had no opinion. In our view, the fall-off in support levels, not being accompanied by strong levels of disagreement, suggests that many people are either aware of and comfortable with the recent successes in the Canal District, or that they feel somewhat less personal attachment to the Canal Place than to the downtown; this would need to be confirmed through focus groups or further research.
- Interestingly, among the sub-group of respondents who moved here in the last 5 years, support for the need to revitalize retail in these two locales softens somewhat, with 88% advocating more retail development downtown, and 68% in Canal Place.

On the other hand, it would seem that many residents feel that our commercial districts are in shabby condition and need work:

- Only 43% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the commercial buildings in Little Falls create an attractive business environment, whereas 37% disagreed or strongly disagreed; to extrapolate, we may surmise that a full third of our residents think our commercial buildings are ugly and unappealing.
- On the other hand, the infrastructural base of the downtown commercial area is not viewed as being as shabby as the buildings themselves; 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that our downtown has attractive trees and lighting, and safe crossings, while a fairly significant 16% disagreed.

Thus, while the downtown is widely seen as one of the major keys to our future in Little Falls, the buildings there are seen as a liability. A future survey or focus group might seek to drill-down further into this data, by inquiring which of the buildings are regarded as deplorable and why.

Our Housing Stock

Reviewing the survey data regarding our housing stock and its condition, two major themes suggest themselves. First, it would seem that a comfortable majority of residents are relatively happy with the appearance of homes in Little Falls, but they feel that civic systems in place to maintain our housing stock are not fully adequate:

- 79% of respondents agree or strongly agree that our residential homes and buildings create an attractive place to live, and only 12% are opposed or strongly opposed to this statement. Among respondents who moved here in the last 5 years, 83% agree that our residential buildings and homes are attractive.
- However, only 11% of respondents feel that our property maintenance standards are adequate, while 74% agree or strongly agree that we need stricter standards.
- Similarly, only 14% of respondents feel that our codes enforcement procedures are adequate, where as 72% agree or strongly agree that we need stricter codes enforcement procedures in Little Falls.

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We should note that there were relatively significant percentages of respondents who were undecided about property maintenance and codes, in addition to the percentages opposed to stricter standards and procedures. This suggests to us that the apparent support of stricter property maintenance standards and codes procedures may actually be somewhat softer than the approval numbers suggest, and that this area certainly needs further research, and possibly internal review and improvement.

The second theme related to our housing stock touches upon the need for more units of certain types of housing. Here, let us be blunt, we encountered a statistically significant resistance to the sort of “git ‘er done” enthusiasm for change that colored so many of the responses to our survey questions:

- Let us first note that there is simply no enthusiasm whatever for developing new upper story housing units in the downtown buildings, which is a staple of the new urban thinking that is currently in vogue. Only 49% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that such housing units are needed, while we must also take note that a large 35% professed no opinion on the matter. Interestingly, 56% of the respondents who have lived in Little Falls for less than 5 years, and 55% of all residents who moved to Little Falls at some point in their lives, supported the idea of more upper story housing units. This all suggests an area for further research: what, exactly, do residents associate with such upper story, downtown housing units? Trendy apartments and condos occupied by affluent urban professionals? Or perhaps rundown slums occupied by heavy users of social services? Do these potential perceptions of the residents make a difference to their support levels?
- Similarly, 54% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we have adequate housing for all income levels, and 56% thought we have adequate housing for retired people; and only 30% agreed or strongly agreed that we have adequate housing for handicapped people. However, we must not necessarily take these figures as a call to develop more housing units. On the contrary, the low support levels are offset by very high percentages of respondents who profess no opinion on the questions: 26%, 26% and 52%, respectively. These levels of uncertainty suggest that specialized housing service providers in our community may benefit from broader public awareness efforts.

Regardless of whether these results reflect resistance or simply a lack of knowledge and involvement in the issues, it would seem that the residents of Little Falls do not feel that investing in the development of new housing units in our community represents a priority need.

Our Roads, Walkways and Parking

On the whole, residents seem essentially if unspectacularly content with our roadways and walkways, but dissatisfied with the status of our parking facilities in Little Falls. We asked two questions that addressed satisfaction with roads in Little Falls:

- While 57% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that our road system makes entering and leaving Little Falls easy and inviting, a full 33% opposed or strongly opposed this statement. The comparatively low levels of support for this statement indicate a need for further research on this topic, as it may suggest a fruitful consensus topic to address in planning for urban revitalization.

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- 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Little Falls is a safe and convenient community for driving, while 14% opposed or strongly opposed this statement.

Our questions related to parking facilities elicited somewhat more striking results, which confirm that a shortage of parking, particularly in residential neighborhoods, is a pressing concern of many residents of Little Falls:

- When asked if we had adequate overnight parking in the Little Falls residential areas, only 29% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while a majority 53% either opposed or strongly opposed this statement.
- Downtown parking is somewhat less of an issue with residents. Of our respondents, 64% agreed or strongly agreed that we have adequate parking in the Little Falls commercial district, while 25% opposed or strongly opposed this statement.

These results both suggest that residents of Little Falls would give our parking facilities and capacity a failing grade, and that residential parking is a particularly acute problem for a majority of community members.

Finally, we should note that Community members are extremely satisfied with the walkability of Little Falls. Indeed, we have already noted that when asked to rank the reasons they chose to live in Little Falls, a full 46% indicated their desire to live in a walkable community. This sentiment finds ample confirmation in the survey queries regarding the suitability of pedestrian access in the community:

- When asked if Little Falls is a safe and convenient community for walking, 88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while only 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

One of the survey questions queried respondents as to their potential support of improving one of the weaker links in the overall walkability of the community:

- Our survey asked respondents if they felt that one of our community needs is better foot access between the downtown and Canal Place, to which 68% agreed or strongly agreed, while 12% expressed opposition.

On the surface, this data seems to suggest comparatively lukewarm reception of the idea that we might need to improve pedestrian access between the City's commercial areas. However, the fact that people with no opinion outnumbered opponents of the idea by a factor of over two-to-one indicates simply that most residents simply have not given the idea much thought. Planners and proponents of any such project will likely need to educate the public about the need.

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Our Parks and Recreation

The questions in our survey that elicited feedback on the status and future of our parks, recreation and youths assets and programs suggest that, generally speaking, the community is satisfied with the overall quality of those assets:

- 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we have adequate recreational and park programs for children and youth, while only 14% were opposed or strongly opposed to this statement.
- A vast majority of respondents, fully 93%, agreed or strongly agreed that our parks are clean, convenient and safe in Little Falls, and a statistically negligible 3% opposed or strongly opposed this statement.

However, while a majority of residents support doing more to improve our parks and recreational assets and programs, this is not an area of the broadest consensus:

- 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we need to develop more recreational opportunities in Little Falls, while 18% expressed no opinion.
- 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we need to improve recreational access to the Mohawk Rover and the Canal, while 26% expressed no opinion.
- 57% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we need more hiking, biking and running trails in Little Falls, while 31% expressed no opinion.

Although these responses provide some indication of the community's general support for expanding and improving recreational assets in Little Falls, they also do not definitively outline the sorts of projects people would support. These are areas that will no doubt require further fleshing out through research and focus groups of recreational users.

Our Economy

Our survey asked several questions about the needs and priorities for economic development in Little Falls. Our primary underlying goal in posing these questions was to elicit emotive information about how residents view the economic character of the community, and the sort of anxieties they feel for the future. Not surprisingly, we found that anxiety levels about the economy and the future of Little Falls are fairly high, and that by and large residents are most open to easy answers. Interestingly, however, we also detected a strong impulse to protect the quality of life in Little Falls from what some might perceive to be economic forces that would cause major change or disruption in the character of the community. To begin, nearly everyone seems to agree that more industrial development is essential to the future of Little Falls:

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- 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we to do more to encourage industrial development, while opposition in the aggregate at 7%.
- 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we need to develop more office or light industrial space in Little Falls, while 20% expressed no opinion.
- So too, we should note that the number one- and two-ranked priorities for economic development in Part Two of the survey were new industries such as high tech, and traditional industry, and that office and light industrial development ranked fifth.

However, as we drill-down to other types of development, we find some very strong tendencies toward protecting small town values in the face of economic change. In particular:

- 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we need to encourage more locally owned and operated businesses in Little Falls, and a mere 2% in the aggregate opposed this statement.
- 45% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we need to encourage “big-box” retail stores to locate in Little Falls, while 45% of respondents opposed or strongly opposed this statement.

These data suggest that a significant percentage of residents are unwilling to pursue some opportunities in economic development that may adversely impact on what they perceive to be key features of our “small town” quality of life, such as small, locally owned shops and a traditional downtown commercial district.

Finally, we should note that there is strong support for pursuing economic development opportunities related to the tourism and travel industries:

- 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we need to do more to develop tourism and tourism-related businesses, while only 4% in the aggregate expressed opposition.
- Tourism and travel-related industrial development was ranked third overall among economic development priorities in Part Two of the survey, while outdoor recreational activities was ranked fourth.

Services

Owing to limited space, this survey did not tackle the opinions of residents about the adequacy of our public and private services in any comprehensive manner. Nonetheless, we did feel it important to gain a sample of data about three particular services topics that are often discussed in the context of the quality of life in Little Falls and the marketability of our community. Those three topics are our health care facilities, our schools, and our arts and cultural opportunities:

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- 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we have adequate health care facilities in Little Falls, while 16% were opposed or strongly opposed to this statement.
- 67% of residents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the public school system in Little Falls, while 10% expressed opposition or strong opposition.
- 60% felt that we need more arts and cultural opportunities in Little Falls, while 14% expressed opposition or strong opposition. To add a bit of color to the negative responses, we received several narrative comments to the effect that we need to better support such cultural resources as we have before developing new resources; and that we don't have the population base to support more cultural resources.

Protecting Our Heritage

Finally, the majority of respondents deeply value our historical and environmental assets in Little Falls, and they agreed that we need to actively protect these assets no matter what else the future may hold in store for us:

- 58% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we do enough to highlight and protect our historical assets in Little Falls, while a full 26% opposed or strongly opposed this statement.
- 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we need to do more to preserve our historic feature and buildings, while only 8% in the aggregate expressed opposition.
- 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that we need to do more to protect our natural features and green spaces, while a mere 6% in the aggregate expressed opposition.

Again, given that quality of life issues rank highly among nearly all of the categories of this study, it should come as no surprise to find that the residents of Little Falls are attuned to and supportive of preservationist and environmental issues. The above three questions suggest that future planning efforts in the City should take such concerns to heart and address them early on in the process.

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Methodological Notes:

The need for a survey of community perceptions and sentiments became clear over the course of the vigorous, community-wide debate about a proposed commercial development within the City limits (the so-called Quarry Project). Despite its genesis in a political debate, however, this survey did NOT directly address the issue of the controversial development project. While this survey queries public opinion on a wide range of general economic needs, it deliberately eschews seeking to influence any particular debate over specific potential projects or plans.

This survey was intended to be a tool to encourage and promote community participation in formulating a common civic vision, and to gather a scientifically valid overview of community sentiment and opinion on some key issues that may influence the future of Little Falls. However, because this was an “opt-in” survey, it is in no way a substitute for a referendum on any of those issues, mainly because it was not strictly controlled in regards to the jurisdiction of the respondents. While we can say with reasonable certainty that a significant majority of the respondents are residents of the City of Little Falls, we did not establish methods to definitively screen out responses from residents of nearby jurisdictions that overlap the City in regards to shared services and identity to some degree, and in particular the Town of Little Falls. In order to drill down the results to such a finer level of resolution, if necessary, a future survey sent by mail to a controlled but suitably random sample of known residents of the City would be indicated. Nonetheless, given the commonality of interests, and even civic self-identification, on the part of the residents of these two jurisdictions, we feel that the results of this present survey will be of some great use in the planning process.

The raw margin of error at the 95% confidence level for this survey is 6.17%. Applying a finite population correction for households in Little Falls brings this margin down slightly, to 5.83%.

This survey is skewed by an obvious volunteer bias, in that it is populated by a proportionally high number of responses from people who have moved to Little Falls as opposed to people who were born here. Notwithstanding this bias, we would also note that this same volunteer bias represents an opportunity for the civic groups to tap into a potential pool of people who are unusually committed to improving the community in which they *chose* to live.

Of our responses, 21% were generated by a survey inserted in the local newspaper, the Evening Times, 75% were generated from surveys passed out at the Canal Days celebration, and 4% were generated from surveys downloaded from the Main Street First blog.

We also collected surveys from self-identified non-residents of Little Falls, such as former residents who returned for Canal Days or visitors to the city. Those results, while very interesting, are NOT included in this survey, and will be published at a later date under a separate cover.

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About Main Street First:

Main Street First is an *ad hoc* organization of residents of Little Falls, as well as other stakeholders in the cultural and commercial life of our city. The mission of Main Street First is threefold:

- To encourage and promote economic growth that is both “smart growth” and fiscally-responsible growth, while preserving the unique character of Little Falls and diligently protecting our tax base,
- To oppose the development of a second commercial center on the outskirts of Little Falls, which would lead to the unintended consequence of economic devastation in the city center,
- To function as a citizen watchdog group that ensures that the City of Little Falls plans for the economic revitalization of Little Falls in a fully open and transparent manner.

About the Authors:

David C. Van Meter. David holds a BA in History from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and a PhD from Boston University. David works as a financial advisor and registered securities representative with Choice Investments, LLC, of Little Falls, and he is the owner of Van Meter Tax Services, where he works as a business and tax consultant. David’s experience includes urban community advocacy and infrastructure development with Catholic Charities, VISTA and the Corporation for National Service.

Christine M. Van Meter. Christine holds BA in Economics from SUNY Potsdam, and a MBA from Boston University. Christine is a partner in Choice Investments, LLC, of Little Falls, where she works as a financial advisor, registered securities representative and registered principal. Christine’s experience includes over twenty years of retail and commercial banking and financial consulting.

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Appendix A. Little Falls Community Vision Survey

Community Survey – City of Little Falls, New York

What lies ahead for Little Falls? What changes will we see in the near future? Here's YOUR chance to make your voice heard about the direction Little Falls will take in the future! Please take a moment to complete this survey about our community and its needs. Main Street First is conducting this survey, and will provide the results to City officials, urban planners and developers. Please join us in making our community a better place to live and work!



1. The State of Our Community Assets

Please circle the number that rates how you strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about Little Falls:	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Little Falls has a special identity that makes it unique to Central NY.	1	2	3	4	5
Our commercial buildings create an attractive business environment.	1	2	3	4	5
Our residential buildings / homes create an attractive place to live.	1	2	3	4	5
Our road system makes entering and leaving Little Falls easy and inviting.	1	2	3	4	5
Our downtown has attractive trees and lighting, and safe crossings.	1	2	3	4	5
Little Falls has a rich and interesting history.	1	2	3	4	5
Little Falls is a good place to raise a family.	1	2	3	4	5
We do enough to highlight and protect our historical assets in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
Little Falls is a safe and convenient community for driving.	1	2	3	4	5
Little Falls is a safe and convenient community for walking.	1	2	3	4	5
We have adequate parking in the Little Falls commercial district.	1	2	3	4	5
We have adequate overnight parking in the Little Falls residential areas.	1	2	3	4	5
We have adequate housing for people of all income levels in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We have adequate housing for retired people in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We have adequate housing for handicapped people in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We have adequate health care facilities in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We have adequate recreational and park programs for children / youth.	1	2	3	4	5
Our parks are clean, convenient and safe in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I am satisfied with our public school system in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5

2. Our Economic Development Priorities

A. To which of the following economic development opportunities should we devote the most time, effort and resources? Rank them from 1 (our highest priority) to 8 (our lowest priority).

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Cultural Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Industries (e.g., High Tech) | <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional Agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Recreational Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Organic and Natural Foods Production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism / Travel Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Office / Service Industries |

B. What NEW industrial development do YOU think would best benefit the Little Falls community? _____

C. What types of NEW retail stores or retail services would you like to see in Little Falls? _____

D. What types of NEW arts or cultural activities would you like to see in Little Falls? _____

E. What types of NEW tourist or recreational activities would you like to see in Little Falls? _____

F. Please list TWO goods or services that you travel to Syracuse or Albany (or more than 60 miles) to obtain?
 1. _____ 2. _____

3. Our Community Needs

Please circle the number that rates how you strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about Little Falls:	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
We need stricter property maintenance standards in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We need stricter codes enforcement procedures in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to develop more upper story residential units in our downtown.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to encourage more industrial development in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to encourage more locally-owned and operated businesses.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to encourage "big-box" retail stores to locate in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to do more to protect our natural features and green spaces.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to do more to preserve our historic features and buildings.	1	2	3	4	5
We need better foot access between our downtown and Canal Place.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to develop more recreational opportunities in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to improve recreational access to the Mohawk River / Canal.	1	2	3	4	5
We need more hiking, running and biking trails in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to encourage retail development in downtown Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to encourage retail development in the canal district.	1	2	3	4	5
We need more arts and cultural opportunities in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to do more to develop tourism and tourism-related businesses.	1	2	3	4	5
We need to develop more office and light industrial space in Little Falls.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Please Tell Us About Yourself

A. If you are a resident, why do you live in Little Falls? Please CIRCLE the THREE most influential factors in your decision:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Born / raised in Little Falls | 6. Desire to live in a walkable community | 10. Traditional small community lifestyle |
| 2. Affordable housing | 7. Convenient to work | 11. Recreational activities |
| 3. Quality of school system | 8. Quality of housing stock | 12. Other: _____ |
| 4. Municipal services | 9. Access to the Thruway | |
| 5. Quality of life | | |

B. How old are you? _____

C. Are you (circle one): Retired? Employed? Self-employed? Unemployed?

D. If employed or self-employed, what is your occupation? _____

E. About how many miles do you live from where you work? _____

F. Do you (circle one): OWN your residence? RENT/LEASE your residence?

G. Describe your home (circle one): Single-family Two-Family Apartment Other

H. Including YOU, how many people live in your household? _____

I. Please circle the description that best fits you:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Little Falls native | 3. Moved to Little Falls over 5 years ago |
| 2. Moved to Little Falls in the last 5 years | 4. Other: _____ |

J. What would YOU like to see change in Little Falls? (Please attach a separate sheet if needed!) _____

K. If you would like further opportunities to voice your opinion on the community needs assessment process, please give us your name and contact information:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone/E-Mail: _____

Please return this survey by mail to Main Street First, PO Box 65, Little Falls, NY 13365, or drop it off in person at our Canal Days Booth or at Choice Investments, LLC, 536 E. Main Street, Little Falls.

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Appendix B. Respondent Comments and Feedback

We received literally hundreds of narrative responses to our survey questions. In order to make the presentation of this valuable community input manageable, we have eliminated duplicates from the following lists of replies.

Question 2.B. What NEW industrial development do YOU think would best benefit the Little Falls community?

- Any industry which brings jobs and is environmentally responsible
- Any industry which provides a decent living
- Any kind of full time jobs
- Assisted living facility
- Better home improvement grant programs
- Beverage industry because of LF water supply
- Bottled water
- Brewery
- Business in industrial park
- Business incubator center
- Car dealers
- Car shops
- Chip fab plant
- City-owned Hydro electric plant on the river
- Clothing store
- Companies vertical to current manufacturers
- Computers
- Consulting
- Cottage industries or small businesses
- Coupon redemption center
- Development of a major American musical or summer theater on Loomis Island
- Development of a major hotel at Redco site with water docking when Redco vacates.
- Digital mfg
- Electronics peripherals
- Firearms
- Fully utilize industrial park
- Green technology manufacturing
- Health Services
- High tech firms
- High-tech jobs that will bring growth
- Hotel
- In-sourcing jobs
- Level industrial park and start over
- Locally grown agricultural businesses
- Manufacturing
- Manufacturing and high tech jobs paying more than min wage
- Medical jobs
- Nano tech
- Experimental high tech start -ups, vertically integrated
- Not retail – major corporations
- Opening unused mills for machinery
- Organic and natural foods
- Packaging and trans-shipping
- Pet store
- Pharmaceutical
- Power generation
- Recycling computers
- Scrap yard
- Shoe store
- Silicon Valley type firms
- Small businesses
- Small store on south side
- Solar
- Spa
- Technical
- Technology
- Train station
- Updated grocery
- Vehide manufacturing
- Water park
- Whatever the national direction supports

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- Windmills
- Work done on computers

Question 2.C. What types of NEW retail stores or retail services would you like to see in Little Falls?

- A “hang out” for youth
- A better supermarket downtown
- Adult café/bistro bar
- Agricultural feed store
- AJ Wrights
- American food restaurants
- Anything which is interesting attractive unusual, friendly
- Baby clothes
- Book store
- Candy shop
- Car sales
- Clothing store
- Cracker Barrel
- Craft and fabric
- Curtain shop
- Cyber café
- Department store
- Dry goods
- Electronics stores
- Ethnic foods
- Fast food chains
- Firearms
- Fruit and vegetable stand
- Full-serve gas station
- Furniture stores
- Good clothing store like JC Penny's
- Hardware
- Herb Philipsons
- House wares
- Ice cream stands
- Info stand for tourists
- Jewelry stores
- K Mart
- Linen and Bath
- Mid-priced quality clothing and underwear.
- Mini mall near 5s
- Mom & pop shops
- More competitive grocery store
- Music store
- National chain restaurant
- News stand / magazines
- Novelty stores
- Olive Garden
- Organic and natural food shops
- Outdoor equipment
- Panera Bread
- PC & Tech services
- Price Chopper
- Prom dress shop
- Shoe repair
- Shoe store
- Small outlet stores
- Small, locally-owned shops
- Specialty shops
- Sporting goods
- Target
- Textile shops
- Toy and book stores
- Travel boutique
- Unique shops
- Updated grocery store
- Wegmans
- Women’s clothing

Question 2.D. What types of NEW arts or cultural activities would you like to see in Little Falls?

- A museum
- Adult nightclub entertainment
- Amateur nights
- Amphitheater
- Antique shows
- Art & Music Center for youth
- Arts & Crafts fair
- Bass tournaments
- Better movie theater
- Better promotion of our assets
- Blue grass concerts
- Book readings

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- Christmas festival
- Christmas walk
- Circus
- City Christmas caroling
- City Christmas tree
- Coffee house meet ups
- College classes for adults
- Community orchestra
- Concerts
- Copy Cooperstown ambiance
- Dance lessons
- Dinner theater
- Educational seminars
- Enhance historical areas
- Ethnic and folk music
- Exercise park
- Four season music events
- Gallery hops
- Garden tours
- Gardening type festivals
- Guided tours of LF
- Historic displays
- Historic tours of LF
- Historical related activities
- Hold higher education classes locally
- House tours
- Ice rink
- IDC
- Karaoke nights
- Knitting classes
- Live stage shows
- Live theater
- Local art street vendors
- Meditation classes
- Monthly art auctions
- Monthly opera or ballet
- More art galleries
- More nightlife
- Music
- Music and art lessons for youth
- Music school for talented youth
- Musical summer theater on Loomis Island
- New art like in NYC
- Outdoor concert site
- Outdoor concerts
- Outdoor movies in the park
- Philharmonic center
- Plays
- Primary documents and archives
- Promote / use black box theater
- Promote what we have better
- Quiet, upscale bistro
- Regional arts / antique festivals
- Restore the theater
- Riverside/Canal-side concerts
- Sidewalk sales and fairs
- Skating rink
- Street fairs
- Street level theater
- Stripper bar
- Summer theater
- Support art center financially
- Symphony orchestra
- Tai Chi at the park
- Talent shows
- Walking tours
- Weekend band concerts
- Wine tasting
- Yoga
- Youth center
- Youth evening activities

Question 2.E. What types of NEW tourist or recreational activities would you like to see in Little Falls?

- 18 hole golf course
- ATV trails
- Better connection from canal to downtown
- Better ice rink
- Better marina
- Better marina and boat launch
- Bike trail, finish it
- Boat rentals
- Bus tour pick-up
- Camp ground with pool
- Camping services along bike trail
- Canal activities
- Casino
- Christmas parade

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- Complete Erie Canalway Trail
- Connect to the state-wide bike trail
- Curling
- Develop Main Street
- Diamond mining
- Elderhostel classes
- Emphasize waterfront
- Enlarge Canal Corridor trails
- Exercise paths
- Fall apple festival
- Fitness / Wellness center
- Floating dock at Benton's Landing
- Funky hotels and restaurants
- Geology center / tours
- Golf course; 9 more holes
- Historical and canal related
- Historical tourism
- Historical tours
- History-themed tourism
- Horseback riding
- Hostel for bike trail
- Ice skating rink
- Indoor water park
- Jazz bar
- Kayak tours
- Kayaking
- Kids bike park
- Knitting classes
- Local canal tours by boat
- Local golf vacations for families
- Medieval festival
- More entertainment in the parks
- More lodging
- More nightlife
- More on Lock 17 / Moss Island
- More tours
- Nightclubs downtown
- Open ski slope
- Paddle boat rentals
- Promote our white water
- Promote what we have
- Publish pamphlet promoting Little Falls
- Re-open Ski Lift
- Rock climbing
- Rock climbing school
- RV parking and camping
- Seasonal boat docks
- Seasonal RV park
- Skate park
- Skating rink
- Snowmobile trail into downtown
- Snowmobile trails
- Snowmobile trails accessed from within city limits
- Soccer
- Spa by the canal
- Sponsored Canal Days bike races
- Sports for people over 40
- Supervised youth recreation areas
- Tennis
- Tourism for the aged
- Tourist-friendly Main Street
- Tours of Moss Island
- Trolley cars
- Unique winter events
- Updated movie theater
- Water sports
- Waterpark
- White water rafting on river
- Winter festival in park with vendors
- Zip Line across gorge

Question 2.F. What are some Goods or Services You Travel over 60 Miles to Obtain?

Note: many respondents indicated that they primarily use the internet or catalogs to buy specialty items.

- Airlines / Air Travel
- Amusement parks / Waterparks
- Apple products
- Art venues
- Automotive
- Baby furniture
- Barbeque
- Better service
- Big-ticket items

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- Books
- Bookstores
- Bread
- Cars
- Chain restaurants
- Cheese
- Christmas decorations
- Christmas Tree Shop
- Clothing
- College
- Comics
- Concerts
- Crafts
- Cultural events
- Department stores
- Dinosaur ribs
- Discounts
- Division I sports (SU)
- Education
- Electronics
- Electronics
- Entertainment, major
- Eye doctor
- Fabric
- Farmers market
- Fine dining
- Floor / Wall tile
- Football gear
- Formal wear
- Fresh fish
- Furniture
- Gifts
- Good shopping
- Groceries
- Grossmans
- Hair care
- Hi tech
- Home furniture
- Household furnishings
- IMAX Theater
- Imported food
- Live entertainment
- Malls
- Medical care
- Men's clothing
- Metaphysical bookstore
- Museums
- Music
- Music festivals
- Musical supplies
- NCAA
- Nightclubs
- Olive Garden
- Oncological care
- Optical
- Outdoor recreation goods
- Outlet stores
- Performing arts
- Pet supplies
- Pitching lessons
- Prom dresses
- Research library
- Restaurants
- Shoes
- Shopping malls
- Singles organization
- Special art exhibitions
- Specialized construction goods
- Specialized medical care
- Specialty dental care
- Specialty eye care
- Specialty vet care (e.g., hip checks)
- Sporting events
- Sporting goods
- Train service
- Upholstery fabric
- Upholstery material
- Urgent care
- VA Hospital
- Video games (Gamestop)
- Walking shoes
- Wedding / Shower Gifts
- Wegman's groceries
- Women's clothing
- Zoo

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Question 4.J. What would YOU like to see change in Little Falls?

- More hiking trails.
- City administration with management skills, vision of what we could be, and ability to get us there. Courage, vision, ability, persistence.
- More transparency in local government.
- Retail clothing stores.
- Lower our cost of living thru municipal power and consolidation of services.
- More parks and gardens.
- The mall.
- More transparent city government, readable budget and operating report, meetings after 7PM.
- Aldermen out walking and visiting small businesses.
- Discourage people needing social services from living here.
- Remove Shoppers Square.
- Grow and improve existing businesses, encourage new business opportunities.
- Revitalize industry and Mani Street. Tear down Shoppers Square.
- Control of absentee landlords.
- Take focus off quarry project, it's polarizing the community.
- Grow back to 10,000 people.
- Scale back non-essential services if we can't grow.
- Look at annexing surrounding townships, but seek buy-in. Nenefits include better marketing to developers, water district, affordable services.
- Develop best-in-State farming industry.
- Develop West Main Street, it's an eye-sore on entering city.
- Promote the DVD that Rocco Scarano produced, in Syracuse, Albany, NYC.
- Develop dog-park, maybe on South Side.
- Assess user fee for pool.
- Maximize talents of alumni network.
- Make sure grants make sound financial sense.
- Fine tune mayor / business manager position in city.
- Develop neighborhood associations.
- Encourage or mandate volunteer service – goal 8 hours per year each.
- Reduce number of non-profits in the city.
- Get the merchants organized into an association with good leader.
- Make school and government employees productive and accountable as in a business.
- Seek shared services with nearby communities / school districts.
- Restrict for-sale signs on properties.
- Decorate vacant store fronts.
- Revive First Night.
- Look to preserve our churches as they dose; restrictions on sale or use?
- Restrict location of low-income housing.
- Hold landlords and tenants accountable.
- Better training for city employees and police.
- Do not develop retail space outside the city. Improve Shoppers Square instead.
- More places to work and shop.
- Clean up South Side like Casler Park and old homes.
- We can't afford the police and fire department, use volunteers.
- More jobs and more shopping choices.
- See use of the industrial area west of Little Falls.

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- Get rid of entrenched politicians who don't have a clue.
- More businesses on Main Street like there used to be.
- Good stores downtown; empty ones and tattoo parlors like Herkimer give a bad impression.
- Improve and maintain what we have. I love the plan for Shoppers Square!
- We need convenient high speed rail to Albany and Syracuse.
- Lower taxes, better managed budget.
- I would like to see Redco shut down.
- For me the city is a safe place to walk. We need to improve some streets and keep drugs out.
- There are a lot of speeders on Main Street.
- Keep adult businesses zoned out of the city.
- Buy the two farms in the watershed. Protect our water. Do not sell a lot of our water.
- Maybe a small market on South Side, for older people.
- We need to be bigger.
- Repave the streets a little better.
- The constant way people get in others business.
- I'd like to see a more attractive, more vibrant Main Street.
- More job opportunities
- Need more industrial business.
- More jobs and community based programs.
- More industrial and retail opportunities.
- More shopping.
- More food stores, clothing.
- More residential parking.
- A more vital Main Street.
- More jobs for college grads, more activities for people aged 21-to-35.
- More commercial.
- More focus on downtown, heritage assets, canal corridor, and pedestrian green spaces.
- Parents need to be held accountable for kids' actions.
- Lower taxes.
- Need more jobs and business. Need more family outdoor activities.
- More jobs, better codes enforcement.
- One way streets are awful.
- Need grocery.
- The mayor.
- More concerts.
- Little Falls looks old and boring. Should look more urban.
- More stuff for us to do.
- Need condominium lodging for retirees.
- Clean!
- More things to play at.
- Better opportunities for children and teens (places to hang out, stores, etc.).
- One more major employer, 50+ jobs.
- Diversify and downsize; center on community and history; places to hang out and eat.
- We need passenger train service.
- Main Street facelift.
- Develop long range vision to avoid repeat of the quarry; long range planning is key.
- Traditional manufacturing is gone for good, and while tourism can help it is not the answer. We need to look to high tech as our future.
- We need elected officials with foresight and vision to see high tech as an investment in our future.
- We need formal training for people willing to stand as candidates for elected office. Future leaders need to focus on vision and creation of new ideas and build consensus. Party affiliation is meaningless at local level.
- Pay the mayor at least \$20,000 per year. Have one less police slot to offset mayoral salary.

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- Create a fire and police district and a garbage district. Make non-profits share in the cost.
- Re-val property.
- Place a moratorium on state-purchased homes; keep them on the tax rolls.
- Implement new ideas for Canal Days.
- Gear the city to attract retired people to move here.
- We need to make a more positive public space for discussion of issues.
- The Newcomers Picnic was a great idea. Expand on this. Promote it aggressively.
- Re-evaluation of all property.
- Outdoor eating café on Main Street.
- Clean store fronts on Main Street; clean windows, remove posters and tape.
- Store signage on Main Street should be hung perpendicular; it's not visible while driving.
- Entering the city from the west is depressing.
- We have enough homes for HARC.
- More business and recreational opportunities and more retail.
- Keep crime and drugs away.
- Lower taxes, and equalized taxes.
- More focus on Middle School math.
- More open government.
- Transparent government and citizen involvement in creating opportunities.
- Change city government.
- Fewer political power centers in our economic institutions.
- More adequate parking, more local-owned businesses, stricter codes enforcement.
- More street parking.
- Commit to being a sustainable community in every aspect.
- More services for youth.
- More women on the City Council.
- More info on mental health and better access.
- Two way streets, and parking restrictions modified.
- A small waterpark.
- Redevelop Shoppers Square area to revitalize the downtown commercial district.
- Better property maintenance standards and fewer absentee landlords. End blacktopping residence lawns.
- More healthy food options and accessibility.
- More: well-paying jobs, shopping choices, and cultural and sporting events.
- Replace Shoppers Square with a new and modern facility with underground parking.
- Hide the dumpsters at Big M.
- Replace Shoppers Square with a new one.
- Good old boys club ousted, real codes enforcement, and politics that really involve the people.
- More public input.
- Replacement of Shoppers Square.
- Facelift downtown.
- More jobs and retail stores.
- Keep stores open later.
- More police patrols around senior housing and facilities, because young people intimidate them.
- Prevent skateboarders from vandalizing property.
- More opportunities for business employment.
- There are too many vacant or dilapidated houses.
- Demolish Shoppers Square.
- More stores, lower taxes for developers, upkeep of properties.
- Change Shoppers Square.
- Make city boards and committees more progressive, more receptive to the people.
- More individual businesses.
- The strength of a community is based on the character of its residents.

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- We need industrial businesses and retail stores.
- More tourism in LF, Moss Island and the lock. Make a canal park. Advertise better. Get a sign on the Thruway.
- End favoritism of family and friend in government (city and school).
- Need an apartment style retirement complex with meals served.
- Groups like Main Street First have been around too long, in the form of former politicians and wealthy, influential people. It has always stopped LF from going forward,
- Road improvement, grocery store.
- More industry, less welfare.
- A clean, affordable grocery store. A place to buy clothes. A park for kids age 10 and under; a lot of older kids hang out in parks and are not appropriate.
- Work on the historical aspect of our beautiful community. The new mall would take away from that! I like the Shoppers Square renovation idea. West Main St. needs attention; first impressions are important!
- More stores, no pizza stores.
- We need jobs for young people so they don't leave.
- Make absentee landlords maintain their property. Bill them for repairs if necessary.
- More restaurants, wine bars, things to do at night ... it's too quiet.
- Let the younger people suggest the changes. I won't be here long (age 90).
- More workplaces. New grocery store.
- To become vibrant again.
- Improve effectiveness of city government and codes department.
- Yard waste needs to be picked up twice a month not once. Clean up residential properties. More industry and business.
- More enforcement of codes, noise ordinances, dog-laws, clean up crummy properties. Tear down Shoppers Square.
- More employment opportunities.
- Jobs for people sitting on the street at 2 in the afternoon.
- Stricter codes for absentee landlords.
- Less resistance to change, embrace more opportunity, concentrate on preserving the past and future.
- Better access to the South Side than the urine-smelling underground pass.
- One quality supermarket (Price Chopper, Wegman's, etc.).
- Development of downtown. Attracting major corporations to invest in our community.
- I would like to see Main Street developed.
- More/better enforcement of traffic laws: delivery trucks, parking at post office, no parking in intersections.
- Clean junk and scrap paper from yards and porches.
- Get rid of Shoppers Square.
- Change the City Council.
- We need careers, not jobs, a reason to stay here.
- Change name of Main Street First to Little Falls First.
- We need retail, commercial and industrial development but not just on Main Street and Canal Place ... anywhere in the city. We need to work together not promote our own agendas.
- Less good old boys political decision making.