

Imagine Meredith
A 10-Year Community Plan
Outreach and Engagement Report



December 18, 2024

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*Prepared By Resilience
Planning and Design*

Introduction

A public-informed Community Plan and compelling future vision for Meredith requires an inclusive public engagement process to ensure a diversity of voices are heard. Public outreach to residents and community members is crucial to this community planning because their feedback will directly shape the path forward for the town. Learning about the priorities, desires, and opinions of community members on key issues will help the Planning Board and consulting team create a Community Plan that is aligned with public values and sentiment. This input and the resulting Community Plan will then be used as a tool to help guide Meredith to achieve what community members and residents hope to see in the future. The following outreach techniques were used to share information about Imagine Meredith and to solicit public input:

- One in-person, evening community forum event at the Meredith Community Center on November 7th, 2024
- An alternative online tool option that included all the questions and materials from the forum event and was live between November 7th and December 7th, 2024
- A physical display at the Library of the discussion questions and materials from the forum event from November 8th to December 7th, 2024
- Development of a project website to promote the project and keep the public informed on the planning process.
- Advertising of the community forum, the alternative online tool, and the physical display through mechanisms like:
 - A town-wide mailer, which was distributed to all residents and businesses in Meredith
 - Town of Meredith Website
 - Email letter and flyer to Meredith municipal staff, boards, and committees with an invitation to attend
 - Five-minute announcements at the start of board meetings
 - Flyers hung up at physical locations in town.
 - A follow-up email to all community forum attendees who signed up to be part of the project email subscriber list
 - Invitations to non-profit partners directly, such as the Greater Meredith Program
 - Published a press release in the Laconia Daily Sun

Summary of Results by Outreach Activity

Community Forum Event

On November 7th, 2024, the Town of Meredith held an evening community forum event to inform community members of current information and data on Meredith. This event also provided an opportunity to learn what community member's perspectives, thoughts, and feedback are on the future of Meredith over the next ten to twenty years. Over 100 people attended this event. A brief presentation on the background of the project was given and participants were then encouraged to visit stations by topic to provide their feedback. These topics included:

- Demographics
- Visioning for the Future
- Transportation
- Town Facilities and Services
- Economy, Housing, and Development
- Arts, Culture, and Heritage
- Recreation
- Natural Resources and Community Resilience

Alternative Online Tool

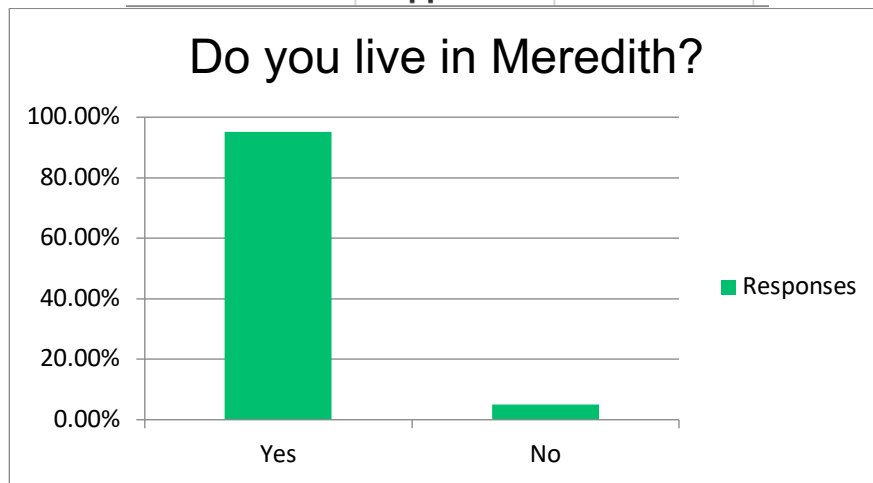
To further engage community members who were not able to attend the in-person community forum event, an alternative online tool was presented to the wider community to increase participation. Approximately 100 responses were collected through the online tool.

The following section provides a summary of who participated and a summary of results by question from both the in-person forums and the alternative online tool. They are broken out by topic and the responses are summarized for each question the public was asked to consider. It should be noted that these findings per question were summarized based on raw feedback that was received and are not ordered by level of importance. It should also be noted that AI software was used to help identify major themes for each question. A complete Survey Monkey report of raw comments and feedback provided by the public is included in the Appendix.

Who Attended the Forum and/or Completed the Online Tool?

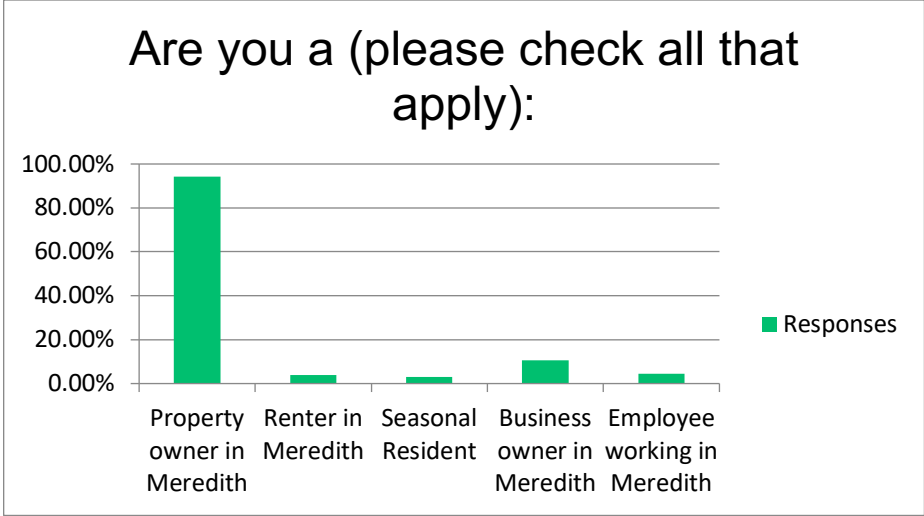
- Most people who attended the forum or completed the online tool currently live in Meredith.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	95.06%	154
No	4.94%	8
	Answered	162
	Skipped	34



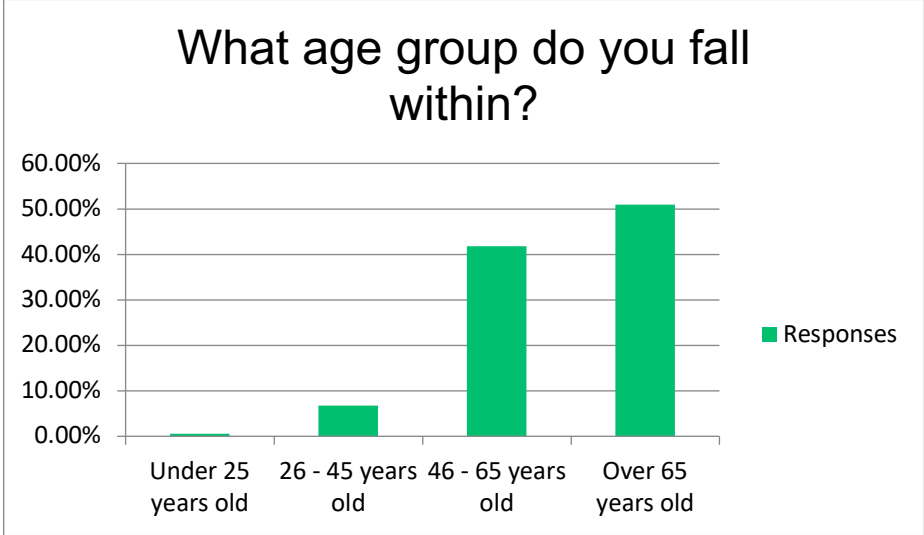
- Most people who attended the forum/completed the online tool were property owners. There were 17 business owners and 7 employees that participated. There were also 6 renters and 5 seasonal residents.

Are you a (please check all that apply):		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Property owner in Meredith	94.38%	151
Renter in Meredith	3.75%	6
Seasonal Resident	3.13%	5
Business owner in Meredith	10.63%	17
Employee working in Meredith	4.38%	7
	Answered	160
	Skipped	36



- Most participants were either 46 years or older.

What age group do you fall within?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 25 years old	0.61%	1
26 - 45 years old	6.75%	11
46 - 65 years old	41.72%	68
Over 65 years old	50.92%	83
	Answered	163
	Skipped	33



Key Findings from Community Forum/Alternative Online Tool

This section provides an overview of the major key findings from the community forum and alternative online tool synthesized across all topics. Key findings were generated by identifying notable and reoccurring themes and topics reported by community members during public outreach. Community members identified the following as priorities for planning for Meredith's future. Please note that these findings are not listed by order of importance.

Based on the feedback provided by Meredith community members, here are the **top 10 key findings**:

Community Composition

- Meredith's aging population requires a need for senior services including transportation, a variety of housing options, and social services.
- Attracting and retaining Meredith's workforce and families is crucial for the long-term viability of the town. Access to affordable housing options should be a key component of this strategy.

Natural Beauty and Community Atmosphere Attract Residents

- Respondents consistently cited natural beauty, lakes, and outdoor recreation opportunities as the primary reasons they live in Meredith.
- The small-town feel and community spirit were also crucial in maintaining Meredith's identity.

Affordable Housing is a Critical Need

- There is a strong need for affordable housing for year-round residents, young families, and the local workforce.
- Short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb) and rising property values (among other issues) are reducing available long-term housing options.

Infrastructure and Traffic Management Challenges

- Congestion around Route 3, Route 25, and Main Street was frequently mentioned as an issue.
- Respondents suggested implementing bypasses, roundabouts, and better traffic flow solutions.

Preservation of Natural Resources

- Protecting Lake Winnepesaukee, Lake Waukegan, wetlands, and shorelines was a high priority.

- Concerns included cyanobacteria blooms, fertilizer runoff, and development pressures affecting water quality.

Recreation Facility Improvements

- Respondents highlighted the need for more pickleball courts, better trail connectivity (e.g., WOW Trail extension), and upgrades to Prescott Park.
- Improved accessibility for mobility-limited individuals and better parking facilities were also noted.

Balancing Development with Community Character

- Residents want to preserve Meredith's historic character and small-town feel while managing growth.
- There were calls to avoid overdevelopment and maintain open spaces and green areas.

Environmental Protection and Sustainability

- There is strong support for making public facilities energy efficient and sustainable through renewable energy and conservation efforts.
- Respondents emphasized the need for lake health, watershed protection, and sustainable growth.

Community Resilience and Hazard Preparedness

- Suggested steps included burying power lines, improving stormwater management, and enhancing flood protection.
- Community education on natural hazards and emergency planning were also prioritized.

Supporting Local Businesses and Diversifying the Economy

- Respondents expressed the need to support small businesses, maintain a vibrant downtown, support the tourism sector, and diversify the local economy beyond tourism.
- Suggestions included promoting year-round economic opportunities and developing light manufacturing and remote work hubs.

Enhanced Public Transportation and Accessibility

- While views on public transportation were mixed, there was support for senior-focused and seasonal transport services.
- Expanding bike paths, sidewalks, and pedestrian infrastructure to improve accessibility and connectivity was widely recommended.

These key findings reflect a collective desire to balance growth, sustainability, and community well-being while addressing critical needs like affordable housing, infrastructure, and environmental preservation.

Demographics

In 3-5 words, why do you choose to live in Meredith?

Answered: 118

Skipped: 78

Based on respondents' feedback, the **top five reasons** people live in Meredith are:

1. Natural Beauty and Lakes:

- The scenic beauty, particularly Lake Winnepesaukee, proximity to mountains, and available outdoor recreation opportunities (hiking, boating, and skiing).

2. Small-Town Feel and Community Atmosphere:

- A sense of community, friendly neighbors, and the quaint, close-knit environment of a small New England town.

3. Quality of Life:

- Safe, peaceful surroundings, a slower pace of life, and a good balance between rural atmosphere and accessibility to Interstate 93.

4. Family and Roots:

- Many respondents cited the desire to live near family, return to their hometown, or having long family histories in Meredith.

5. Convenient Location:

- Proximity to outdoor activities, nearby towns, and access to services like healthcare, shopping, and schools makes Meredith desirable for residents.

Meredith has a variety of people who live in our community from older adults to working individuals to youth. What do you think has the most influence on the community composition in Meredith?

Answered: 112

Skipped: 84

The **top five themes that influence community composition in Meredith** based on respondents' feedback are:

- **Older Adults and Retirees:**
 - A large segment of the population consists of older adults and retirees, influencing the pace of life, services, and community priorities.
 - There are concerns about the need for more senior services and infrastructure to support this demographic.
- **Cost of Living and Housing Affordability:**
 - Rising housing prices make it challenging for young families and working-class individuals to live in Meredith.
 - The high cost of living is leading to a community increasingly dominated by wealthier individuals and retirees.
- **Tourism and Seasonal Residents:**
 - The influx of tourists and wealthy second-home owners significantly shapes Meredith's economy and demographics.
- **Job Availability and Economic Opportunities:**
 - Employment opportunities, particularly those tied to tourism and local businesses, influence who can afford to live and work in Meredith.
 - Limited job options and lack of affordable housing impact younger working individuals and families.
- **Natural Beauty and the Lakes:**
 - The natural environment, particularly Lake Winnepesaukee, plays a major role in attracting residents, tourists, and second-home owners.
 - The preservation of the lake and surrounding landscapes is central to Meredith's identity.

Visioning for the Future

What should remain the same in Meredith 10 years from now?

Answered: 106

Skipped: 90

Based on respondents' feedback, the **top five aspects of Meredith respondents want to remain the same** include:

- **Small-Town Feel and Community Spirit:**

- A tight-knit community where people know each other.
- Support for local businesses and a commitment to volunteerism and neighborliness.
- **Lake Quality and Natural Beauty:**
 - Preservation of the clean water quality of Lake Winnepesaukee.
 - Maintaining the natural beauty, parks, green spaces, and scenic waterfront.
- **Historic Character and Village Atmosphere:**
 - Retaining the charm of historic buildings, Main Street, and the village's traditional New England architecture.
 - Avoiding overdevelopment and large chain stores in the downtown area.
- **Balanced Development and Open Spaces:**
 - Protecting conserved land, limiting new large developments, and maintaining green spaces.
 - Ensuring development respects Meredith's character and does not lead to overbuilding.
- **Downtown and Local Businesses:**
 - Keeping a vibrant, walkable downtown with small, independent businesses.
 - Supporting local shops, restaurants, and services while maintaining free parking and accessible community amenities.

What would you like to see change in Meredith within 10 years?

Answered: 104

Skipped: 92

Based on the responses, here are the **top five things** people want to see changed in Meredith over the next ten years:

- **Traffic Management and Infrastructure Improvements:**
 - Address congestion, especially around Route 3, Route 25, and Main Street.
 - Implement bypasses, roundabouts, or alternate routes to alleviate traffic, particularly during peak tourist seasons.

- Improve school traffic flow and intersection management (e.g., Pleasant Street and Route 25).
- **More Affordable Housing:**
 - Increase the availability of affordable housing for year-round residents, young families, and the workforce.
 - Support policies to limit luxury development (e.g., "McMansions") and encourage diverse housing options like accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- **Enhanced Pedestrian and Bike Infrastructure:**
 - Develop more sidewalks, bike paths, and multi-use trails (e.g., extending the WOW Trail).
 - Improve walkability in downtown and residential areas, making Meredith safer for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Focus on Local Community Over Tourism:**
 - Shift attention from tourism to supporting local year-round businesses and year-round residents.
 - Address concerns about short-term rentals (STRs) and encourage businesses that cater to locals.
 - Improve the balance of development to protect the character of the community.
- **Environmental Protection and Sustainability:**
 - Prioritize lake and watershed health through regulations on land care, fertilizers, and waterfront development.
 - Promote sustainable growth and conservation of open spaces.
 - Enhance environmental initiatives, including recycling and water quality protection.

What is your vision of the future?

Answered: 84

Skipped: 112

Based on the responses, the **top five themes** that emerged are:

- **Affordable Housing and Housing Diversity**
 - A strong need for affordable housing options for young families, workers, and year-round residents, along with a desire to balance tourism-related development with local needs.
- **Preservation of Natural Resources**
 - Emphasis on protecting Lake Winnepesaukee, the surrounding natural environment, and limiting overdevelopment to maintain water quality and scenic beauty.
- **Traffic Management and Infrastructure Improvements**
 - Solutions needed to address traffic congestion and parking issues, and the need for pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, bike paths, and improved traffic flow, especially during peak seasons.
- **Community Balance and Inclusivity**
 - Desire to balance the needs of full-time residents with those of tourists, fostering a year-round community with support for families, seniors, and diverse demographics.
- **Support for Local Businesses and Downtown Vitality**
 - Focus on supporting small businesses, maintaining a vibrant Main Street, and promoting economic opportunities that benefit residents beyond the tourism industry.

Transportation

Recognizing the seasonal shift in traffic volumes, are there locations in the community that need infrastructure changes to accommodate the increase in travelers?

Answered: 107

Skipped: 89

Based on the responses, the **top five locations** noted by respondents that need infrastructure changes include:

- **Intersection of Route 3 and Route 25:**
 - This is consistently cited as a major bottleneck for traffic.

- Suggestions include a roundabout, bypass, or improved traffic light coordination.
- **Main Street:**
 - Issues with congestion, pedestrian safety, and difficult access points, especially around Pleasant Street.
 - Suggestions for making Main Street one-way during busy seasons, improving crosswalks, and increasing parking options.
- **Pleasant Street and Route 25 Intersection:**
 - Frequently noted for traffic backups and difficulty turning.
 - Suggestions for adding a traffic light or improving traffic flow.
- **Route 25 near the High School:**
 - Heavy congestion during drop-off and pick-up times.
 - Suggestions include an alternate access route to the school and improved traffic management.
- **Hannaford/Dunkin Donuts Area:**
 - Noted for traffic congestion and confusion around the traffic lights.
 - Recommendations for better traffic coordination and pedestrian safety improvements.

What improvements or changes would you like to see in Meredith's transportation infrastructure to better meet the needs of residents and visitors?

Answered: 96

Skipped: 100

Here are the **top five improvements** respondents would like to see in Meredith based on the feedback:

- **Enhanced Public Transportation Options:**
 - Expand bus, shuttle, and trolley services to nearby towns (Laconia, Concord, Boston).
 - Introduce seasonal and elderly-focused transport options to improve accessibility.
- **Improved Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure:**
 - Develop more bike paths, sidewalks, and walking trails.

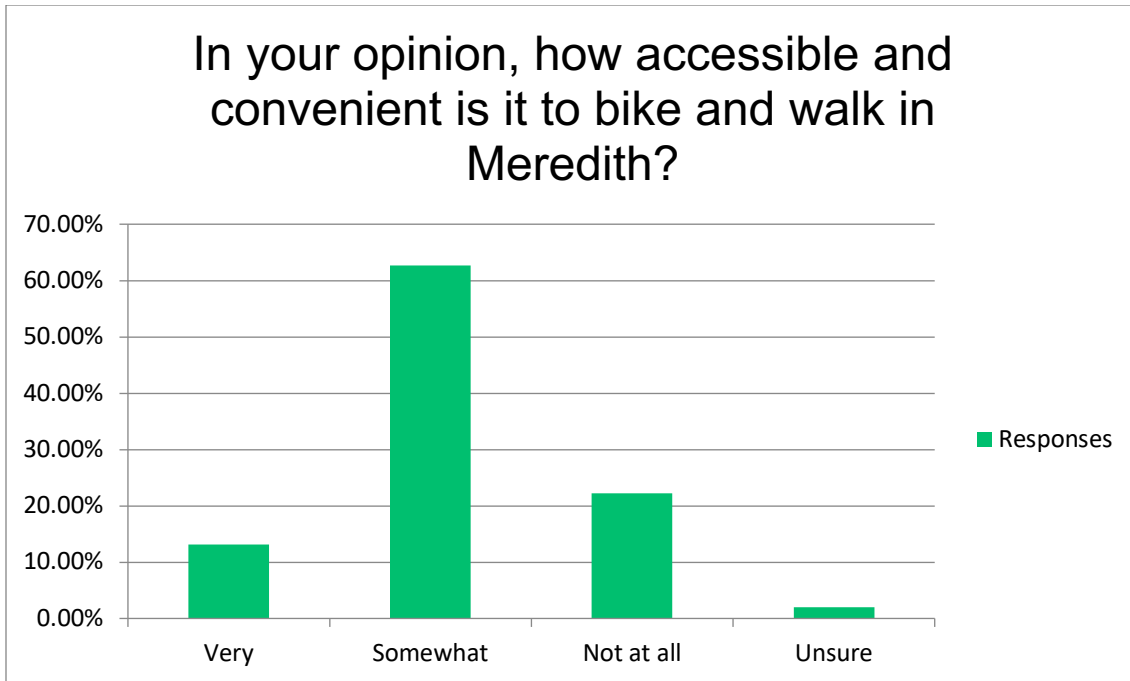
- Enhance pedestrian safety with better crosswalks, ADA-compliant sidewalks, and designated bike lanes.
- **Traffic Flow and Congestion Solutions:**
 - Address traffic congestion on Route 25 and key downtown intersections.
 - Implement solutions such as bypasses, roundabouts, overpasses, and alternate routes for school traffic.
- **Expanded Parking Facilities and Management:**
 - Increase parking availability in busy areas like downtown.
 - Improve signage and consider remote parking options with shuttles or trolleys to reduce congestion.
- **Safety Enhancements:**
 - Ensure safer routes for children, especially near schools.
 - Improve traffic light coordination, enforce speed limits, and implement seasonal speed control measures.
 - These improvements reflect a collective desire to make Meredith's transportation network more efficient, accessible, and safe for residents and visitors.

In your opinion, how accessible and convenient is it to bike and walk in Meredith?

Answered: 99
 Skipped: 97

- Most respondents, or 62%, answered “somewhat”.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Very	13.13%	13
Somewhat	62.63%	62
Not at all	22.22%	22
Unsure	2.02%	2



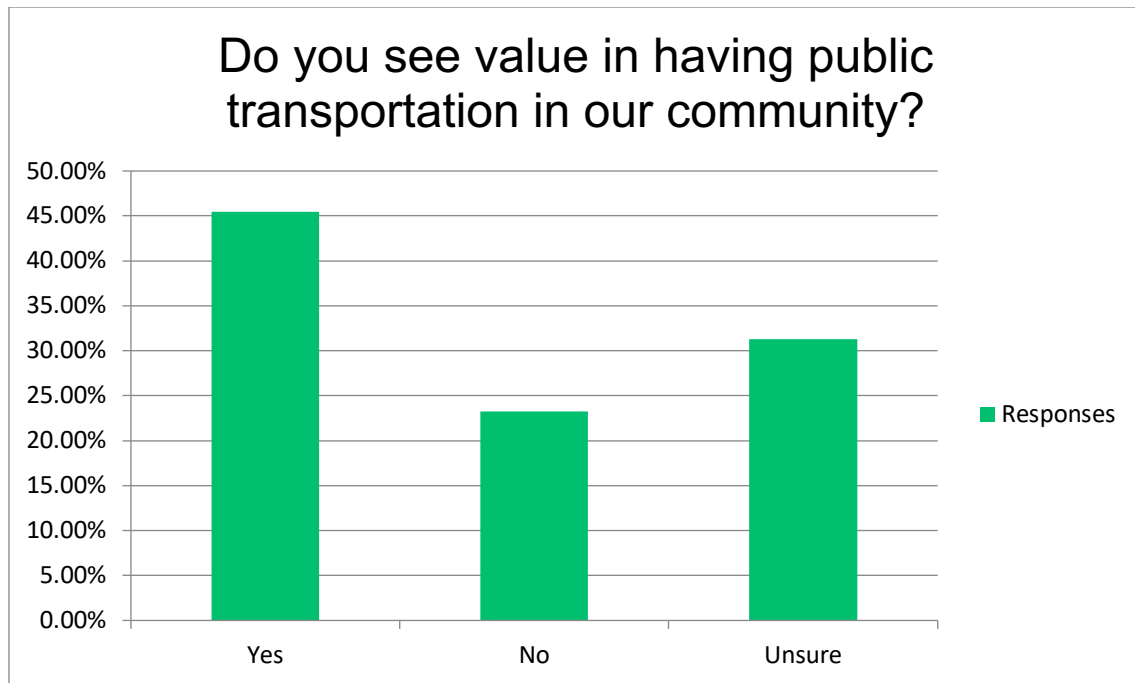
Do you see value in having public transportation in our community?

Answered: 99

Skipped: 97

- Most respondents, or ~55%, answered “No” or “Unsure”. However, 45%, answered “yes”.

Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	45.45%	45
No	23.23%	23
Unsure	31.31%	31
Please elaborate below.		77



77 respondents elaborated further. These comments discussed the following:

- **The Need for Senior and Accessibility Services:**
 - Many respondents emphasized the need for transportation options for seniors, people with disabilities, and those who cannot drive. Suggested services include shuttle buses, on-call services, or dedicated routes for essential trips like medical appointments and grocery shopping.
- **Exploration of a Shuttle or Trolley Service:**
 - Suggestions for seasonal trolleys or shuttles to serve tourists and locals, particularly during the summer. Proposals included connecting key areas like downtown, parking lots, and popular attractions.
- **Cost and Feasibility Concerns:**
 - Some respondents questioned the cost-effectiveness and demand for public transportation in a small town like Meredith. They noted that while it could benefit some residents, others might not use it enough to justify the expense.
- **Desire for Enhanced Regional Connectivity:**
 - Calls for better public transportation connections to nearby towns like Laconia, Plymouth, Concord, and Manchester (MHT) for work, medical visits, and shopping.

- **Bike and Walk Infrastructure Improvements:**
 - Respondents highlighted unsafe biking conditions due to narrow roads, lack of bike paths, and traffic. Improved bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure were frequently suggested as alternatives or supplements to public transit.

Town Facilities and Services

Which town facilities, if any, do you see as needing improvement in Meredith? And what kind of improvements, if any, are needed?

Many of the improvements referenced by respondents highlighted the need for modernizing key public facilities, enhancing recreational areas, and maintaining essential services to meet the community's needs. Based on the respondents' feedback, the **top five town facility improvements** referenced are:

- **Town Hall and Annex Renovations:**
 - Many respondents noted that Town Hall and the Annex are outdated, cramped, and need upgrades or consolidation into a single, more accessible building.
 - Some suggestions include improved parking, better accessibility for seniors, and a modernized layout.
- **Prescott Park Upgrades:**
 - Suggestions for improved parking, road paving, lighting, drainage, and updated sports fields.
 - Suggestions also included adding more walking paths and expanding park facilities to accommodate increasing demand.
- **Leavitt Beach and Waukevan Beach Improvements:**
 - Requests for restroom facility upgrades, beach sand replenishment, and addressing shoreline erosion.
 - Additional suggestions included kayak launch accessibility, better signage, and enforcing rules regarding dogs on beaches.
- **Recycling Center and Transfer Station Enhancements:**
 - Desire for expanded recycling options, improved traffic flow, and better communication regarding recyclable materials.

- Calls for more staffing to manage the facility efficiently and control usage by non-residents.
- **Community Center Enhancements:**
 - Suggestions for an indoor pool, expanded pickleball courts, and weekend hours.
 - Requests for additional facilities to accommodate a growing community and diverse recreational needs.

Based on the responses, **a handful of respondents** indicated that they do not wish to see any town facility improvements or are satisfied with the facilities as they currently exist. These responses included comments such as:

- "No improvements I can see need to be made."
- "None needed."
- "I don't think any town facilities need improvement."
- "Our town facilities are in good shape."

How well do you feel the town's public services (e.g., waste management, water supply, road maintenance) meet the needs of residents and businesses? And what specific changes, if any, would you suggest?

Answered: 88

Skipped: 108

Overall, most respondents believe the town's public services are doing well, particularly in core areas like **road maintenance, snow removal, and waste management**, while offering specific suggestions for further enhancements. Based on the respondents' feedback regarding how well the town's public services meet the needs of residents and businesses, the majority of respondents indicated:

- **Positive Feedback:**
 - Many respondents expressed satisfaction with the current public services.
 - Common praise for road maintenance, snow removal, waste management, and the library.

- Comments included phrases like "great job," "excellent," and "very well managed."
- **Suggestions for Improvement:**
 - Some respondents suggested improvements in recycling efforts, sidewalk maintenance, and expanded hours for the transfer station.
 - Concerns about the impact of road salt on water quality and requests for more public restrooms.
- **Adequate or Sufficient:**
 - A notable number of respondents described public services as "adequate" or meeting their needs with no major changes required.

Based on respondents' feedback, the **top three public service changes** recommended are:

- **Recycling Program Improvements:**
 - Calls for expanding the types of recyclable materials accepted.
 - Suggestions for better communication and education on what can be recycled.
 - Requests to modernize the transfer station's recycling process and improve efficiency.
- **Sidewalk and Road Maintenance:**
 - Requests for repairing and maintaining sidewalks, especially those leading to schools and beaches.
 - Concerns about specific road sections needing repairs, particularly during winter.
 - Suggestions for reducing road salt use to protect water quality.
- **Expanded Hours for the Transfer Station:**
 - Requests to extend transfer station hours, especially on weekends and evenings.
 - Calls for more accessible hours to accommodate residents' schedules, particularly during peak seasons.

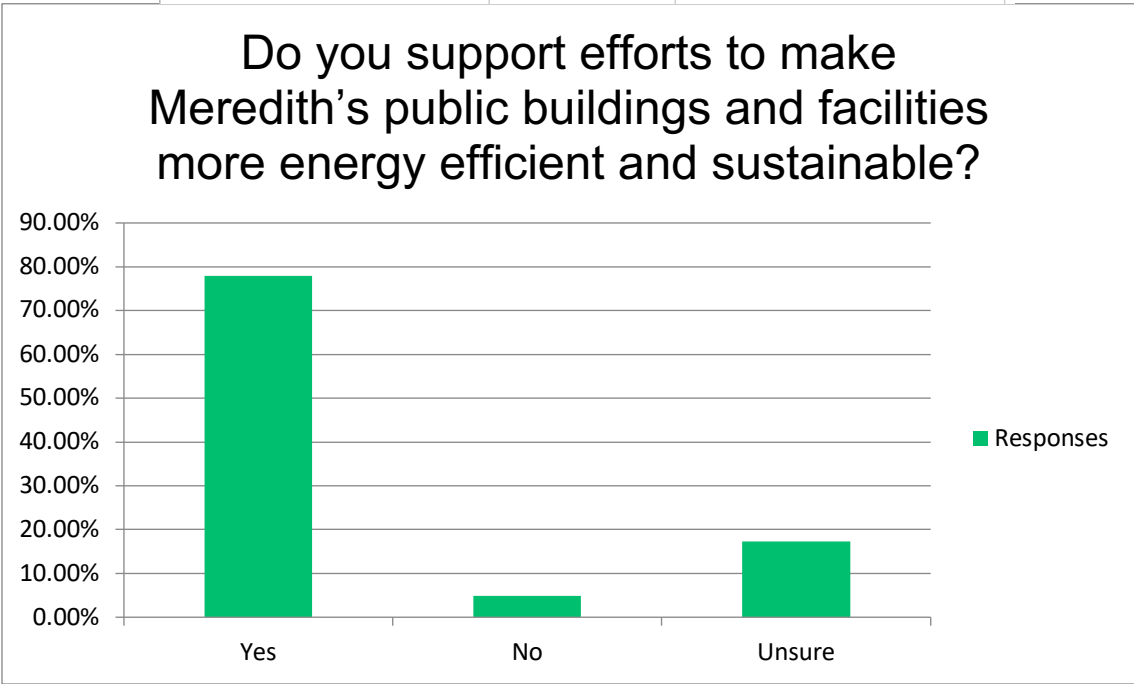
Do you support efforts to make Meredith’s public buildings and facilities more energy efficient and sustainable?

Answered: 104

Skipped: 92

- An overwhelming ~78% of respondents indicated that they would support efforts to make Meredith’s public buildings and facilities more energy efficient and sustainable.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	77.88%	81
No	4.81%	5
Unsure	17.31%	18
Please elaborate below.		50



50 respondents elaborated further. These comments discussed the following:

- **The Need for Cost-Benefit Analysis and Financial Responsibility:**
 - Many respondents emphasized the importance of conducting a cost-benefit analysis to ensure energy efficiency projects are economically viable.

- Concerns about high taxes led to calls for financially prudent investments, with suggestions to seek grants or funding sources beyond taxpayers.
- Immediate or short-term return on investment (ROI) was highlighted as a key factor for supporting energy improvements.
- **Enthusiasm and Support for Renewable Energy (Solar, Wind, Geothermal):**
 - There was strong support for integrating renewable energy sources such as solar panels, wind generation, and geothermal energy.
 - Suggestions included expanding solar panel use, conducting energy audits, and considering community energy programs or grids.
 - Some respondents saw Meredith as a potential leader for sustainable energy use.
- **Long-Term Environmental and Community Benefits:**
 - Respondents highlighted the moral and environmental responsibility to preserve the town's natural resources, including lakes and air quality, for future generations.
 - Energy efficiency was viewed as a way to reduce carbon footprints, conserve energy, and enhance community sustainability.
 - There was a call for simple, practical measures like switching to LED lighting and installing automatic lights.

In your opinion, what new facilities or public services should Meredith consider to enhance the quality of life for its residents in the future?

Answered: 75

Skipped: 121

Based on respondents' feedback, the **top five new facilities and services** they indicated are:

1. Pickleball Courts:

- Requests for dedicated pickleball courts, separate from tennis courts.
- Indoor and outdoor facilities to accommodate growing demand for the sport.

2. Senior Services and Transportation:

- Expanded senior services such as food programs, transportation to medical facilities, and dedicated programming.

- Suggestions for a dedicated senior center.
- 3. Bike and Walking Trails:**
 - More biking and walking paths to improve connectivity and recreation.
 - Ideas included extending the WOW Trail and creating a “rail with trail” system.
- 4. Indoor Recreation Facilities:**
 - Calls for indoor sporting facilities, such as a lap pool, gym, and multi-sport areas for year-round use.
 - Facilities for teens and families, including skating rinks and indoor activity spaces.
- 5. Public Restrooms and Docking Facilities:**
 - Requests for additional public restrooms, particularly near town docks.
 - Suggestions to expand docking facilities and improve access for boaters.

Economy, Housing, and Development

Do you think the existing inventory of homes for sale and rent in Meredith meets the needs of current or potential residents? Why or why not?

Answered: 96

Skipped: 100

Based on these responses, **most people believe Meredith's existing inventory of homes does *not* meet the needs of current and potential residents.** The **top five reasons** given were:

- 1. Lack of Affordable Housing:**
 - Respondents consistently noted that housing prices are too high for average working families and the local workforce to afford.
 - Many mentioned that homes are only affordable for wealthier individuals or second-home buyers.
- 2. Short-Term Rentals Impact Meredith’s Housing Supply:**

- The rise of short-term rentals like Airbnb and VRBO reduces the availability of long-term rental housing, making it harder for year-round residents to find places to live.
3. **Limited Workforce Housing:**
 - There is a severe lack of housing options for workers in service, retail, and tourism industries, which impacts the ability to attract and retain employees.
 4. **Rising Property Taxes and Home Values:**
 - Increasing property values and taxes make it difficult for long-time residents to stay and for new families to settle in Meredith.
 5. **Housing Market Favoring Second Homes and Out-of-State Buyers:**
 - A significant portion of the housing market caters to vacation homes and wealthy out-of-state buyers, which limits housing opportunities for locals.

A small number of respondents believe Meredith’s existing inventory of homes DOES meet the needs of current or potential residents, but the vast majority do not. Some reasons respondents believe housing needs are met include:

1. **Adequate Supply for Wealthier Buyers:**
A few respondents noted that if someone has a higher income or is looking for second homes, Meredith's inventory is sufficient.
2. **Vacation-Oriented Community:**
Some acknowledged that the town’s inventory caters well to retirees, vacationers, and those looking for seasonal or high-end properties.
3. **Existing Housing for Established Residents:**
A handful of people suggested that for long-time residents or those already established, housing needs are adequately met.

What do you believe are the most significant economic opportunities and challenges facing Meredith?

Answered: 84

Skipped: 112

The **top three economic opportunities** respondents indicated include:

- **Tourism Expansion and Sustainable Management:** Many emphasized balancing tourism growth with preserving natural beauty, environmental quality, and community character.
 - **Specific opportunities** include expanding tourism-related businesses (such as more specialty stores for outdoor recreation), enhancing recreational infrastructure (such as developing the WOW trail), promoting eco-tourism, and promoting Meredith as a destination for outdoor activities (hiking, biking, boating).
- **Diversifying the Local Economy:** Many indicated that a broader economic base would provide more stable, higher-paying jobs and reduce reliance on seasonal tourism.
 - **Specific opportunities** include attracting industries beyond tourism and service sectors (such as manufacturing, remote work hubs, and professional services), encouraging entrepreneurship, supporting new small businesses, and creating an industrial park similar to neighboring towns.
- **Affordable Workforce Housing Development:** Affordable housing is seen as essential to sustaining local businesses and supporting economic growth.
 - **Specific opportunities:** Encouraging the construction of more affordable housing to attract and retain younger workers, families, and year-round employees; creating incentives for workforce housing, managing short-term rentals to free up long-term housing, and adopting zoning changes to allow for more diverse housing options.

The **top three economic challenges** facing Meredith mentioned by respondents include:

- **Lack of Affordable Housing:**
 - Housing costs have risen significantly, making it difficult for the local workforce, younger families, and seasonal employees to live in Meredith.
 - This shortage of affordable housing limits the town's ability to attract and retain workers, affecting local businesses and contributing to an aging population.

- Causes of this trend that were referenced included short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb), second-home buyers, and high real estate prices driven by out-of-state purchasers.
- **Dependence on Tourism and Service-Based Economy:**
 - The local economy heavily relies on tourism, which primarily supports lower-wage service jobs in hotels, restaurants, and retail.
 - This economic structure leads to income inequality and a lack of higher-paying, year-round employment opportunities.
 - The seasonality of tourism creates economic instability and limits career options for younger residents and families.
- **Rising Costs of Living and Property Taxes:**
 - Inflation, increasing property taxes, and the rising cost of goods and services strain residents' budgets.
 - Long-term residents and retirees struggle to keep up with these costs, potentially forcing them to leave the community.
 - Contributing factors that were referenced included limited diversification of the tax base, reliance on residential property taxes, and growing infrastructure needs.

What types of housing and economic development projects would you like to see prioritized to meet the needs of the community?

Answered: 77

Skipped: 119

Based on the responses, the top five housing and economic development projects indicated by respondents include:

- **Affordable Housing**
 - Development of housing options that are affordable for local workers and young families.
 - Some examples that were referenced include subsidized housing, affordable single-family homes, duplexes, and rental units.
- **Workforce Housing**
 - Housing specifically designed to support the needs of local employees, including service workers and seasonal staff.
 - Some examples that were referenced include multi-family housing developments, cluster housing, and cottage-style homes.

- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Smaller Homes**
 - Encouraging the development of smaller units and accessory dwelling units to provide lower-cost living options.
 - Some examples that were referenced include the conversion of barns and garages, smaller one-level cottages for seniors, and tiny home communities.
- **Mixed-Use Developments**
 - Projects that combine residential and commercial spaces to enhance walkability and provide housing near essential services.
 - Some examples that were referenced include condos or apartments above businesses, mixed-use village communities, and developments along Route 3.
- **Zoning Changes and Incentives for Affordable Housing**
 - Revising zoning regulations to allow higher-density, affordable housing and offering incentives to developers.
 - Some examples that were referenced include rezoning for high-density housing, cluster subdivisions, and measures to limit short-term rentals.

Do you think the town should consider expanding public infrastructure to support housing and economic development?

Answered: 81

Skipped: 115

Based on the responses, **a majority of people believe the town should consider expanding public infrastructure to support housing and economic development.** The top reasons and themes for why they supported it include:

- **Supporting the Development of Affordable Housing**
 - Expanding infrastructure like water and sewer lines could enable the development of more affordable housing options.
- **Creating New Economic Development Opportunities:**
 - Public infrastructure expansion can support business growth, tourism, and attract new employers.
- **Managing Growth Responsibly:**

- Respondents emphasized the need for controlled and strategic growth, with infrastructure improvements planned thoughtfully.
- Balancing infrastructure expansion with environmental sustainability and community character was a key concern.

Some respondents did NOT think the town should consider expanding public infrastructure to support housing and economic development. These reasons include:

- **Cost Concerns:**
 - Some respondents were worried about the financial burden on taxpayers and preferred private development solutions.
- **Traffic and Overdevelopment:**
 - There were concerns that expanding infrastructure might lead to increased traffic or turn Meredith into a larger, less desirable town.
- **Focus on Existing Infrastructure:**
 - A few respondents suggested optimizing current infrastructure rather than expanding it.
- **Focus on Managing Existing Growth:**
 - Some respondents felt that growth is already occurring naturally and simply needs to be managed better rather than encouraged through new infrastructure.

In summary, while most respondents supported infrastructure expansion, they favored a **careful, strategic approach** that prioritizes **affordability, sustainability, and responsible growth**.

Are there areas of Meredith where the town should focus future economic development activities? If so, where and what types of activities/sectors?

Answered: 58

Skipped: 138

Based on the responses, the **top three areas referenced for economic development** are:

1. Route 104 Corridor:

- Frequently mentioned as having potential for housing, light manufacturing, and commercial development.
- Example: *“Route 104 has potential to develop next... Out on 104. Light manufacturing or high tech.”*

2. Route 3 and Route 25:

- Highlighted for opportunities to develop businesses, retail, and expand infrastructure.
- Example: *“Route 3 north of downtown and south of the Route 3/106 traffic circle.”*

3. Main Street/Downtown Meredith:

- Suggested for enhancing its appeal, supporting local businesses, and making improvements to accessibility and visual charm.
- Example: *“Enhancing our Main Street holds significant economic potential. Any efforts to make it more visually appealing and accessible, while preserving its historic charm, are vital to our town’s future.”*

Arts, Culture, and Heritage

What aspects of Meredith's arts, culture, and heritage do you most value, and how do you think they contribute to the community's identity?

Answered: 78

Skipped: 118

Based on these responses, the **top three aspects of Meredith's culture, arts, and heritage** that respondents value in Meredith include:

1. Sculpture Walk:

- Frequently mentioned as a unique and beloved feature that attracts tourists and enriches the community.
- Example: *“The sculpture walk is BRILLIANT! I once bumped into someone from Australia who mentioned Meredith as the 'city with a sculpture walk!’”*

2. Meredith Public Library:

- Recognized for its resources, events, and contribution to the town's cultural identity.
- Example: *"The library is the best!!! Goes above and beyond what you would expect in a town this size."*

3. Historical Society and Preservation:

- Appreciated for preserving Meredith's history, buildings, and heritage.
- Example: *"Meredith Historical Society is state of the art... People really care about their community and volunteer to help preserve it."*

Based on these responses, the **top three reasons why respondents think arts, culture, and heritage contribute to Meredith's community identity** include:

1. Fostering Community Pride and Connection:

- The arts, culture, and heritage activities promote a sense of pride, connection, and volunteerism among residents.
- Example: *"Volunteerism is strong here, which contributes to the town's identity and attracts visitors."*

2. Enhancing Tourism and Attracting Visitors:

- Features like the Sculpture Walk, local theaters, and historical sites attract tourists and contribute to Meredith's economy.
- Example: *"Art and culture bring tourists to our town."*

3. Preserving Meredith's Unique Character and History:

- Historical preservation, public art, and cultural programs help maintain the town's unique New England character and charm.
- Example: *"Preservation of historic buildings... The historical society does a good job promoting the town's history."*

In what ways do you believe Meredith could enhance its support for local artists, cultural events, and historic preservation?

Answered: 65

Skipped: 131

Based on these responses, the **top ways respondents suggested Meredith could enhance its support for local artists, cultural events, or historic preservation** include:

- **Increased Publicity and Marketing:**
 - Enhance promotion through social media, marketing campaigns, and better communication about existing events.
 - Example: *“More social media to market the events. Hire a marketing guru!”*
 - Example: *“Do a better job of publicizing what is going on here already.”*
- **More Events and Festivals:**
 - Expand year-round events such as art festivals, music festivals, and farmers’ markets to boost community engagement and tourism.
 - Example: *“More music festivals would be fabulous.”*
 - Example: *“Concerts in the park during summer that is an open mic event.”*
- **Preservation and Support for Historic Spaces:**
 - Protect and promote historic buildings, designate historic districts, and provide incentives for preservation and renovation.
 - Example: *“Find ways to encourage preservation and renovation of antique/historic homes.”*
 - Example: *“Create a historic district?”*

Are you aware of cultural or historic resources or issues in Meredith that are not adequately recognized or protected?

Answered: 50

Skipped: 146

Many respondents were **unaware** of historic and cultural resources in Meredith that were not adequately protected. However, there were some respondents that identified **some resources** they thought warranted further protection. These include:

- **Native American History:**
 - Several respondents noted that Meredith does not sufficiently recognize or promote its Native American heritage.

- Example: *“We currently don't have much available on the rich Native American history of our town.”*
- Example: *“I don't think we do a great job of recognizing the Native Americans that lived around Lake Winnepesaukee.”*
- **Meredith Village:**
 - There was a call to designate Meredith Village as a historic district to ensure better recognition and protection.
 - Example: *“Meredith Village should be designated as an historic district to bring higher recognition and interest in it.”*
- **Historic Buildings and Properties:**
 - Concerns about older buildings deteriorating and the need for preservation incentives.
 - Example: *“Many of our older buildings face an increasing risk of deterioration. We need to find ways to encourage citizens to maintain and enhance our historic properties.”*

Recreation

How welcoming and accessible are the open space lands and recreational offerings in Meredith (including programs, sports, trails, fields, parks, etc.) for all community members?

Answered: 86

Skipped: 110

According to respondents, Meredith's open spaces and recreational offerings are largely considered welcoming and accessible, but improvements in **accessibility, infrastructure, parking, and promotion** are needed to better serve all community members.

Based on the responses, the **general consensus on Meredith's open space and recreation offerings** is:

Overall Accessibility and Welcoming Nature:

- **Positive Feedback:**
 - Many respondents felt Meredith's open spaces, parks, and trails are *welcoming and accessible* to the community.
- **Inclusive Offerings:**

- There were mentions of a *variety of offerings* that cater to different community members, including youth programs, trails, and community events.
- Example: *“I think we offer a little something for everyone.”*
- **Well-Maintained Spaces:**
 - The trail systems and parks received praise for being well-maintained and enjoyable.
 - Example: *“The trail networks are extensive, varied, and very well maintained.”*

Areas for Improvement:

1. **Accessibility for Mobility-Limited Individuals:**
 - Several respondents noted a *lack of accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges*.
 - Example: *“Excellent for the able-bodied, poor for all which includes the mobility-limited.”*
 - Example: *“Accessibility is an issue that has caught up with us. More should be done on other lands.”*
2. **Parking and Infrastructure:**
 - Issues with parking availability and infrastructure at recreational sites were mentioned frequently.
 - Example: *“Prescott Park lower parking lot is a mess, floods, mud... Upper field parking is not adequate.”*
 - Example: *“Need more parking for your current offerings.”*
3. **Better Marketing and Awareness:**
 - Respondents suggested that **more outreach, signage, and marketing** would help increase awareness of the town’s open space offerings.
 - Example: *“We can do more to raise awareness of these areas through improved marketing, signage, and enhanced accessibility.”*
4. **Additional Amenities:**
 - Suggestions included *more bike trails, better walkability, and expanded facilities* like pickleball courts and community programs.
 - Example: *“Need more bike trails for pedal bikers as there are no safe places to bike.”*
 - Example: *“More use of town parks for music and art exhibitions.”*

What do you think are the most important improvements or additions needed for the current recreation facilities in Meredith?

Answered: 74

Skipped: 122

The **top five improvements or additions** respondents suggested for Meredith's recreation facilities are:

- **Pickleball Facilities:**
 - **Indoor and Outdoor Courts:** Many respondents requested more dedicated pickleball courts, including indoor options and permanent outdoor courts.
- **Trail Expansion and Connections:**
 - **WOW Trail and Rail Trail Extensions:** Expanding and connecting trails to the WOW Trail and Weirs Beach was a common theme.
- **Prescott Park Upgrades:**
 - **Parking and Accessibility Improvements:** Respondents noted the need for better parking, paving, and general improvements to Prescott Park.
- **Biking and Walking Paths:**
 - **More Bike and Pedestrian Trails:** Expanding biking and walking infrastructure was highlighted for safety and accessibility.
- **Community Center and Aquatic Facilities:**
 - **Enhanced Community Center Offerings:** Suggestions included expanded hours, more fitness classes, and new facilities like an indoor pool.

Are you aware of recreational uses, facilities, or program offerings that should be planned for?

Answered: 63

Skipped: 133

Some respondents were unaware of recreation uses, facilities, or program offerings that should be planned for. Others indicated had comments around themes that emphasize a community desire for **enhanced sports infrastructure**,

expanded trail networks, and park improvements to accommodate Meredith's growing recreational needs. The top themes from respondents include:

- **Pickleball Facilities:**
 - There were numerous mentions of adding **permanent outdoor pickleball courts** and increasing **indoor pickleball opportunities**.
- **WOW Trail Expansion:**
 - Many respondents advocated for extending the **WOW Trail to connect Meredith with Weirs Beach and other towns** for walking, biking, and recreational use.
- **Prescott Park Renovation:**
 - Respondents highlighted the need to **update and improve Prescott Park**, especially parking and facilities.

Are there other issues or opportunities related to open space and recreation that we should be aware of?

Answered: 51

Skipped: 145

The **top recreation issues and opportunities** respondents were aware of include:

- **Preservation of Open Space and Natural Resources:**
 - Many highlighted the importance of **protecting wetlands, forests, and lakes** through land conservation, compliance with regulations, and preventing overdevelopment.
- **Expansion and Maintenance of Recreational Facilities:**
 - Respondents emphasized the need to improve or expand **pickleball courts, multi-use trails, and adaptive recreation facilities**.
- **Support for Multi-Use Trails (WOW Trail):**
 - There was significant discussion around the proposed **WOW Trail extension** to connect Meredith with other areas for biking, walking, and recreation.

Natural Resources and Community Resilience

Which natural resources in Meredith need further protection (i.e., Lake Waukewan, other lakes, wetlands, riparian buffers, rivers, farmland, etc.)?

Answered: 89

Skipped: 107

Responses indicated a strong community emphasis on protecting **water resources**, preserving **natural ecosystems**, and **managing development** to ensure long-term environmental health in Meredith. The **top five natural resources** respondents identified as needing further protection are:

- **Lakes** (especially **Lake Winnepesaukee** and **Lake Waukewan**):
 - Many respondents emphasized the importance of protecting lake water quality, reducing fertilizer runoff, preventing cyanobacteria blooms, and enforcing septic system regulations.
- **Wetlands**:
 - Concerns were raised about the impact of development on wetlands and the need for wetland buffers to protect water quality and ecosystems.
- **Water Quality**:
 - Respondents highlighted the need to improve drinking water quality, address shoreline degradation, and prevent pollution from runoff.
- **Shorelines**:
 - There was strong support for shoreline protection to prevent erosion, manage development, and reduce environmental impacts.
- **Forests and Conserved Lands**:
 - Concerns about clear-cutting, overdevelopment, and the need for long-term conservation funding were frequently mentioned.

What natural hazards (e.g., flooding, wind events, drought, fire) have you observed in Meredith, and how have they impacted the community?

Answered: 51
Skipped: 145

The **top three natural hazards** observed by respondents in Meredith and their impacts are:

1. Flooding and Stormwater Runoff

- **Impacts:**

- **Road and property damage:** Severe rain events caused washed-out roads, basements flooding, and damaged culverts.
- **Sediment and nutrient runoff:** Runoff introduced sediments and pollutants into lakes, impacting water quality.

2. Wind Events and Ice Storms

- **Impacts:**

- **Tree damage:** High winds and ice storms caused trees to fall on roads and power lines.
- **Power outages:** Prolonged outages due to downed lines and damaged infrastructure.

3. Drought

- **Impacts:**

- **Lower lake levels:** Affected boating, recreation, and wetlands.
- **Increased fire hazards:** Dry conditions heightened the risk of wildfires, particularly on islands.

In your opinion, what steps could the community take to enhance community resilience and better prepare for future natural hazards?

Answered: 42
Skipped: 154

The **top steps** respondents recommended for improving **community resilience and natural hazard preparedness** in Meredith that the town should consider include:

- **Infrastructure Improvements**

- Burying power lines to reduce power outages during wind and ice storms.

- Enhancing stormwater drainage systems to handle increased rainfall and mitigate flooding.
- Flood protection measures in low-lying areas along rivers and lakes.
- **Environmental Protection and Planning**
 - Protecting wetlands, forests, and open spaces to improve flood resilience and water quality.
 - Restricting new development in wetlands and along lakefronts to preserve natural buffers.
 - Controlling cyanobacteria blooms through proactive measures and public awareness.
- **Community Education and Preparedness**
 - Public education on self-sufficiency during weather events and natural hazards.
 - Developing community response groups like CERT (Community Emergency Response Team).
 - Creating emergency communication systems, such as town-wide text alerts.

Are there specific municipal facilities or services that you think need improvement in the coming years? If so, what kinds of improvements?

Answered: 58

Skipped: 138

Respondents suggested the following top strategies for how the town should engage residents in natural resource protection:

- **Education and Public Awareness Campaigns**
 - Conduct educational outreach through public events, workshops, newsletters, and school curricula.
 - Provide informational signage on natural resources, especially near lakes, wetlands, and public lands.
- **Enforcement and Regulation**
 - Strengthen enforcement of zoning, building, and environmental regulations (e.g., septic codes, shoreline protections).
 - Discourage or ban fertilizers and pesticides near lakes and streams.
- **Community Involvement and Volunteerism**

- Organize community clean-up days and volunteer programs.
- Create or enhance a natural resource committee to engage residents directly.
- **Tourist and Visitor Education**
 - Educate visitors about respecting natural resources, including litter prevention and water protection.
- **Communication and Outreach**
 - Improve town communication channels through social media, newsletters, and local news.
 - Provide regular updates on water quality and environmental issues.

Appendix A: Survey Monkey Report – Community Forum/Online Tool