

Ashby Economic Development Survey

Spring/Summer 2011

Question 1: What do you think Ashby’s strengths are? Please choose all that apply.

1. What do you think Ashby's strengths are? Please choose all that apply. Create Chart Download			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Small town feeling		71.4%	30
Affordable place to live		54.8%	23
Natural environment		64.3%	27
Low density		61.9%	26
Plentiful open space		66.7%	28
Lively town common		31.0%	13
Classic New England town center		69.0%	29
Farms and orchards		69.0%	29
Close to urban centers		19.0%	8
Close to universities		21.4%	9
Historical society		19.0%	8
Land Trust		31.0%	13
Squannacook River		23.8%	10
Fitchburg Reservoir		16.7%	7
Scenic roads and vistas		45.2%	19
Historic homes and buildings		47.6%	20
Equestrian centers		33.3%	14
Many home-based businesses		33.3%	14
Summer camps		28.6%	12
Nature-based recreation		61.9%	26
Independent, self-sufficient spirit of residents		35.7%	15
Other (please specify) Show Responses		4.8%	2
answered question			42
skipped question			3

The most prevalent response was that residents want to retain a small-town feeling followed closely by a classic New England town center and the presence of farms and orchards. The

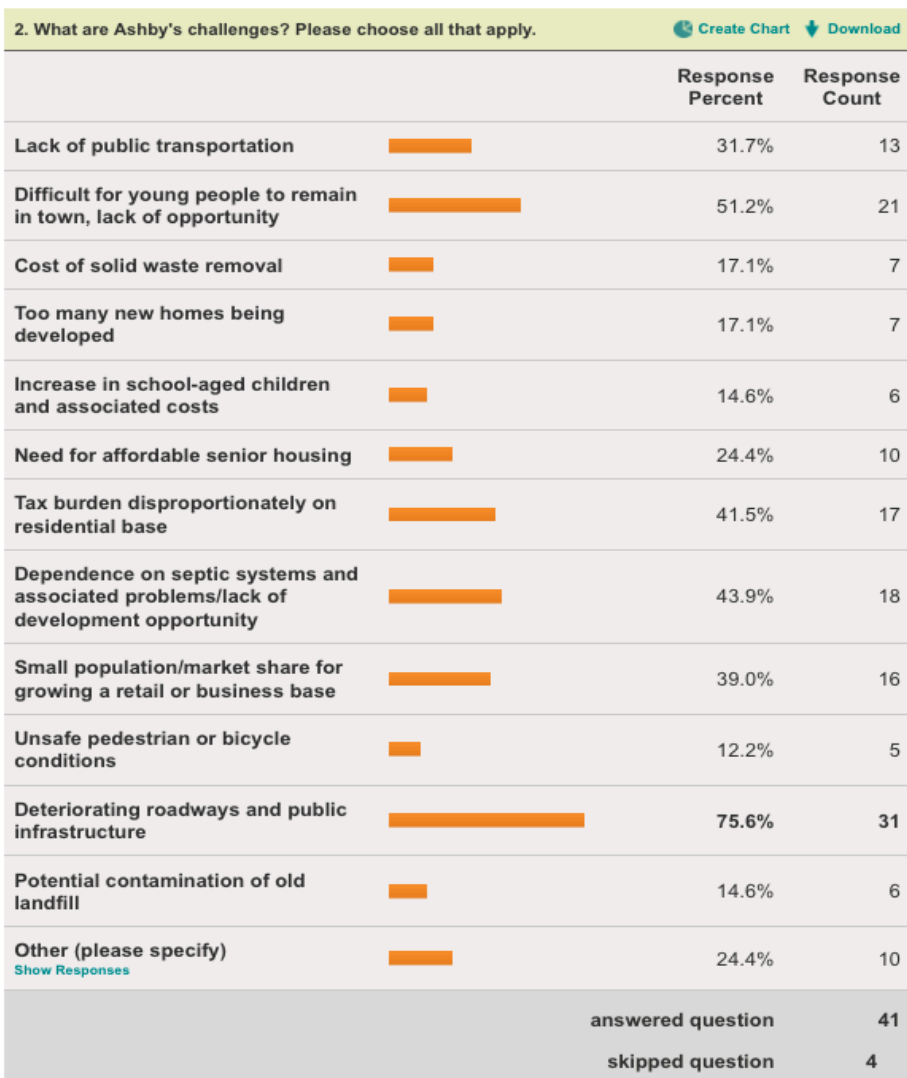
presence of natural assets was also a popular response with 28 respondents choosing plentiful open space, natural environment (27), nature-based recreation (26), low density (26), and scenic roads and vistas (19).

Other common responses include a low cost of living (23), historic homes and buildings (20), and independent, self-sufficient spirit of residents.

Other

1. lower property taxes (see surrounding towns)
2. Many activities and programs for children, sports scouts

Question 2: What are Ashby's challenges? Please choose all that apply.



Clearly, deteriorating roads and infrastructure was cited as the primary challenge. Other notable responses include local employment opportunity for young residents and the sanitary facility situation.

Other

1. Not enough new homes to increase our tax base.
2. Lack of direction
3. We need to build on community interactivity.
4. Dependence on non-renewable resources for home heating. Increasing crime (Home Break-ins).
5. Lack of concern for open space and environment and wetlands. Too much focus on developing businesses and becoming just like all the other towns in MA and NH
6. Hours at the 'dump' needs to be extended, maybe one evening per week!!!!
7. A group of town selectman that vote down town growth opportunities!
8. Maintaining it's rural charm while trying to grow
9. No in town retail businesses; Almost no commercial tax base; Town government not very effective, every decision becomes a several month long "study" and then no decision is made; Town hall hours; Town government listens only to the very vocal minority;
10. Public apathy toward town government

Question 3: How should Ashby's challenges/problems be addressed?

1. Need to make town business-friendly, would be nice to have town water and sewer system, esp. on Main St. Wish town had at least one restaurant.
2. Encourage not discourage economic development along 119 and 31
3. Open space (cluster) zoning needed. Some sort of decision process on the fate of the Lyman Building
4. Strategic promotion of small to medium business including light industrial. The establishment of suitable zones for business growth. Promotion of Limited strategic services business including all aspects of HRTA Strong promotion of self sustaining energy for residence and business...investigation of potential town promoted infrastructure advancements including avant garde methods of rebuilding our deteriorating roads, and public buildings
5. By qualified people, not the ones running the town either in committees or town hall, who are self-serving (or serving their friends and family), and stuck in a 'no development' mentality.
6. Pedestrian friendly downtown area with shops, including a cafe-type shop
7. Better promotion of assets. Use grants to help address infrastructure issues
8. The closer to the people any government is, I believe, increases the possibility for good decision making. The town meeting format we now have addresses issues directly with those who are paying the freight is, in my opinion, the best method for a town our size.
9. I'm pleased to hear about the Economic Development Committee because I think the town can create a wonderful future for itself if it seeks growth that is compatible with it's vision. Having a rehab center move into one of the largest properties in town could define Ashby for years to come as just another small town in the drug corridor. Your committee could actively advertise that property and seek buyers who could use the property for purposes that would enhance property values and Ashby's image:

meditation retreat, spa, school, holistic health center. There are lots of these types of business springing up and that property would be an ideal location for them.

10. Perhaps a newsletter would help.
11. Attract more business development
12. You can't get services without paying for them. Increase taxes judiciously. Give critical services (police) a proper home and a decent wage.
13. Need to create an open discussion of the problems and stop trying to solve them with consultants' views of what we should do
14. Grants, State Aid, Louder representative in the state/federal level
15. By keeping low costs--taxes etc. for persons on limited income
16. Transportation: look at what the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative does (see <http://www.nashuarpc.org/>). Great way for (seniors and others) residents to get non-emergency medical transportation (and other destinations) within surrounding communities. www.RideBigBlue.com This has been a great success for the past few years in southern NH.
17. Support for new businesses to address the deficits
18. Allow more commercial interests
19. Find other people to run the town. Who actually care about the town and the peoples needs instead of putting money where it is not needed like their own pockets
20. Strong leadership interested in Ashby growing and becoming a place young people can raise a family, need banks, places to eat and socialize
21. Open minds to new things.
22. Combination of town officials and townspeople coming together to decide what zoning rules need changing.
23. With an emphasis on sustainability and value for the town.
24. The town government needs to actually function and make decisions. Governing requires a willingness to make decisions that, though unpopular with some, will be better for the town in the long term. Businesses must be allowed to enter town and grow without being barricaded.
25. Pursue water/sewer options for downtown - utilize federal grants etc better sidewalks, fix roads
26. Community education

Question 4: How do you feel about growth and change in Ashby? This could be growth in size/population, growth in commercial activity, growth in government, traffic or any way you want to define growth.

For example, if you choose "Very Positive," then you might feel that Ashby should grow aggressively by adding a lot more commercial developments and more housing subdivisions.

4. How do you feel about growth and change in Ashby? This could be growth in size/population, growth in commercial activity, growth in government, traffic or any way you want to define growth. For example, if you choose "Very Positive," then you might feel that Ashby should grow aggressively by adding a lot more commercial developments and more housing subdivisions.

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	Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Neutral	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative	Response Count
General feelings about growth	20.0% (8)	32.5% (13)	27.5% (11)	10.0% (4)	10.0% (4)	40
Commercial growth (e.g. more land zoned commercial, more commercial businesses, etc.)	21.4% (9)	23.8% (10)	21.4% (9)	28.6% (12)	4.8% (2)	42
Residential growth (e.g. more housing built, more population)	12.2% (5)	19.5% (8)	26.8% (11)	29.3% (12)	12.2% (5)	41
Industrial growth (e.g. more industrially zoned property, more warehouses, factories)	17.1% (7)	17.1% (7)	26.8% (11)	14.6% (6)	24.4% (10)	41
				Other (please specify) Show Responses		4
				answered question		42
				skipped question		3

Other

1. Through Town, State, Federal regulation we've backed ourselves into a corner and our Town is slowing dying by degrees
2. I'm for more commercial growth in districts already zoned commercial. I'm concerned about zoning new tracts of land as commercial and would want close scrutiny over those decisions.
3. Would like to see the growth of a more positive, Main St., shops and activities.
4. Zoning is fine the way it is

Question 5: What would you like to preserve in the town? This could be the general feel of a rural New England village or more specific such as the buildings on the common or the Country Store.

1. The historic buildings in the town center are wonderful and more preservation should be encouraged. But the modernist Library addition is an outrage... it should never have been allowed.
2. It's History, Culture, rural character
3. Grange, churches and common in general, keep as much open space as possible
4. Continued support of the rural environment Protection of land resources, but within reason...not all land as exists now is of the quality required to maintain the towns

"countryside" integrity Keep the 2 acre minimum for residential development...also enforce this bylaw more strictly, not allowing contractors to come up with clever ploys to get around the rule

5. The town center.
6. Historic buildings, much farm land
7. Farms, village center
8. The rural identity is what brought my wife and me to Ashby twenty years ago. We had lived over twenty years in a small rural town, Westford MA. It was Westford's uncontrolled growth that brought us to Ashby. I would not want to see the rural N.E. charm of Ashby be smothered by the uncontrolled construction that devoured charming Westford turning it into an over populated bedroom community burdened with large commercial development and rush hour traffic problems that cause longer commute times and endanger children waiting for school buses.
9. The rural feeling with a careful eye towards avoiding sprawl. This is accomplished by careful zoning.
10. Have a historical district, and implement that any changes in that area must be similar to the appearance of structures around it
11. Love the look of the library and post office wish all houses on main street had that "clean New England" look
12. It's a 19th century town. That's what lends such character to Main Street and other areas of town where old buildings are preserved and new ones are built with a sensitivity to fitting in. I'd prefer businesses to be agricultural in nature or at least based on the nature of the land as opposed to industrial in nature - displacing or insulting the nature of the land. Alternative energy research and experimentation I would welcome
13. All of the above
14. Ashby is not the buildings; it's the people. We need to preserve the diversity that made Ashby independent.
15. The rural country feel and scenery
16. Preserve the character and history and feel of a New England Village but allow for modern commerce that appreciates the rural nature of the town. More opportunity for small businesses and farms to sell their product on a scale that fits them and Ashby.
17. All existing buildings with very limited growth--water and sewer extremely limited
18. Maintain municipal and other old/historical buildings!!! Keep the small, rural character of the town while developing small-scale businesses and retail stores.
19. New business w/o the large logo signage.
20. The Common is pretty.
21. Small town feeling, if developed must retain look and feel
22. The farm land and open areas
23. Keep small town feel like the common and band concerts in the summertime. Preserve nature; don't destroy forest areas if it is not needed.
24. The School
25. The rural atmosphere, the low density, the town center, the look of the main street.
26. Sanity.
27. Historical Buildings in town
28. Preserve town common but allow small businesses to enhance utilization of downtown. Worry about road traffic

29. Village atmosphere







Question 6: What would you like to change in the town?

1. Stubborn mindset of people that think industry or restaurants shouldn't be allowed in this town.
2. Constant opposition to change
3. Green community, explore possibilities for Lyman building sale or renovation (not written by Bob Higgins-Steele)
4. Small business. Open minded attitudes towards good idea's that promote responsible growth. Protect and promote home owners rights to use their own property as long as it is responsible and does no harm to the town
5. More commercial sharing of the tax burden. Also, would like see contracts offered and awarded to folks outside the community, instead of almost entirely within the community in the corrupt manner that it is currently doled out.
6. Better town center with area to walk in, cafe to sit and eat at, better way to connect to Route 2 and public transportation, own middle school
7. Better roads
8. Public sewer in village center. Improve quality of schools
9. I know it's a problem for Bill Davis but the rural roads are in trouble. I don't have any suggestions as to how to pay for them with our current tax base but they are in deep trouble and a potential danger to kids traveling to and from school in winter.
10. The condition of the roads.
11. I would like to see Main ST more of a central area to come to and more of a gathering place.
12. Add more commercial growth downtown
13. I would welcome alternative energy research and experimentation. Ashby's water mills made it a thriving community a hundred years ago. Water still flows.
14. Sense of responsibility of tax payers to pay for the services we need
15. The prevailing attitude that somehow things will get done without people getting involved. Need to have more people get out of themselves and become part of the town.
16. More small business. More community events...
17. Better communication and coordination of what is happening and what can happen. Decisions need to be made on the status of failing infrastructure - police station, school roof, grange hall, maja hall and citizens need to be informed of status of projects and how they can help.
18. Would like to have more self sufficient persons in town government
19. The Town Hall is a MESS!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Makes you feel like that the town is close to bankruptcy! And please, the PD trailer has to go!!!! Look for grants / funding maybe. Do something such as the Post Office!!!!
20. Library hours, road repairs, property tax credit for volunteer hours, utility company (Unitil)
21. The Ashby Market is an eyesore.
22. Some kind of commercial interest
23. The negative attitude towards business in general

- 24. I would like to see the town adopt more energy efficient options such as solar or wind power there's plenty of open space for such things. I'd like to change the fact that people running the town have way to much power or think they do and they will not allow change they just want to keep raising taxes that people cant afford
- 25. Would like a coffee shop, bank, You shouldn't have to go out of town for everything you need
- 26. Better maintenance of town buildings, better maintenance of town roads, a little livelier town center with a few more shops.
- 27. I want what our neighbors have but don't want to pay for it, and N.I.M.B.Y. mentality.
- 28. More business, this will provide better access to services and create jobs within the town. New Police Station. Lower residential taxes by promoting commercial development and commercial tax base.
- 29. Fix old town owned buildings or sell them..
- 30. Positive community involvement in the town and its government

Question 7: What kinds of assets are missing now that you would like to have here? This could be anything from sewers and another elementary school to specific types of businesses, populations, buildings, services, etc.

Provide as many choices as you wish up to eight (8) and if more, please note in comments section at the end of the survey.

7. What kinds of assets are missing now that you would like to have here? This could be anything from sewers and another elementary school to specific types of businesses, populations, buildings, services, etc. Provide as many choices as you wish up to eight (8) and if more, please note in comments section at the end of the survey. Download			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Asset 1 Show Responses		100.0%	28
Asset 2 Show Responses		89.3%	25
Asset 3 Show Responses		75.0%	21
Asset 4 Show Responses		50.0%	14
Asset 5 Show Responses		25.0%	7
Asset 6 Show Responses		17.9%	5
		answered question	28
		skipped question	17

Asset 1 (x 6)

Need adequate Police Station (1)
Town Water (2)
Green Roofs on public buildings (3)
Services (4)
Bank, not just ATM (5)
Bike & pedestrian paths (6)
Sewers (7)
New police station (1) and added commercial (8)
Restaurant (9)
Coffee shop, restaurants (9)
Diner, coffee shop (9)
An appropriate police station (1)
Active citizen groups (10)
Small business (11)
Farmers market (12)
Should stay small, smallness (13)
Town Hall - please fix it! Does not offer a good image of the Town (14)
Town water (2)
Restaurant (9)
Restaurant (9)
I'd like to see a senior home something like low income condos just for seniors that can provide transportation needs and simple home care needs (home cleaning snow plowing, etc.) - (15)
Bank (5)
Guarantee of 24 hour police coverage – (16)
Coffee shop, restaurant (9)
Suitable Police station (1)
Commercial tax base (8)
Affordable grocery store (17)
Police station (1)

Asset 2 (x 5)

Need sewer system (7)
Town sewer (7)
Alternate energy on public buildings (18)
Small business to create local employment (11)
More restaurants (9) and small businesses (11)
More businesses (11), esp. places to eat & gather (9)
Restaurant (9)
I'm happy with Ashby as is (19)
Bank (5)
New police station (1)
Community activities (20)
Underground utilities (i.e. water sewer) – (21)
Commercial kitchen (22)

Increase in bldg. would increase taxes (19)
Police department (1)
Town sewer (7)
Farmers market (12)
Pizza shop something where people can order out (23)
Restaurant (9)
New police station (1)
Gift shop (24)
Better management of town resources (25)
New police station (1)
Upscale store/coffee (26)
Town hall repairs (14)

Asset 3 (x 4)

Need some more business (8) and industry (27)
Upgrade Utilities (28)
Well insulated public buildings (18)
A defined plan which is future minded (28)
We don't need sewers, but a BOH that allows newer septic designs without owner burden (29)
Cell phone service (30)
Information booth at entrance to town, maybe at the Willard Brook park station (31)
Drug store (32)
More appealing Town Hall (painted it at least) – (14)
Coffee shop (9)
Regionalize many town services (33)
Elementary School - instead of a new one, fix it! and redo the outside to give it a new/fresh look (34)
A helpful, welcoming attitude (35)
A real general store (36)
A better police station (1)
Dunkin Donuts (37)
More businesses (8)
Bank (5)
Guarantee of 24 hour police coverage (16)
After school programs for 8 -14 year olds non existent (38)
Positive public attitude (35)

Asset 4 (x 3)

Increased agriculture (39)
Defined image (we think we are a certain way?) - (40)
Sewers would nearly bankrupt people, due to the low population.
Craft shops, etc. (41)
More town events (42)
Ice-cream shop (43)

Low impact commercial business (44)
Hours at the dump are less than convenient! Open more often to encourage people to recycle!
What about a town-run facility!!! (45)
Active outreach to businesses who might employ our citizens (46)
A coffee shop/doughnut shop (37)
Pizza Place / Sub Shop (23)
Fix current town buildings (14)
Summer park /rec programs (46)
Need for a town administrator (47)

Asset 5 (x 2)

Combine elementary school with Townsend (48)
Natural store (49), horse related - tack shop, etc. (50)
Community space where people can meet (51)
Offer more flexibility / incentive in order to attract more small businesses (mixed use zoning overlay district?) – (51)
Current residents (52)
Wind or solar power (18)
Police station (1)

Asset 6 (x 1)

A Health Stop or doctor in town, or other health care providers (53)
Plant nursery (54) artist studios or galleries (55)
Transportation. Discuss transportation collaborative with other surrounding towns! (56)
Some form of a factory type business to provide jobs for the area (27)
Exterior repairs on town owned buildings (14)

Summary of Town Assets

Note that responses to this question were confused and thought it pertained to what assets were needed rather than what was needed. Since they overwhelmingly answered with suggestions for needs hierarchically, this report will take the opportunity to score these responses in descending order of preference.

Also, a number of responses only had marginal economic development applicability and some had none at all. As such, the answers will be retained but grouped by these characteristics.

Economic Development-Related

1. Town Water System – $6+6+5=17$
2. Improve Public Services – $6=6$
3. Bank, Full-Service – $6+6+4=14$
4. Town Sewer – $6+5+5+5+5=26$
5. More commercial uses in town – $6+6+5+4+4=25$

6. Restaurant – 6+6+6+6+6+6+5+5+5=51
7. More small businesses – 6+5=11
8. Farmers Market – 6+5=11
9. Grocery Store, Affordable – 6=6
10. Need gathering places – 5=5
11. Commercial Kitchen – 5=5
12. More Building Activity (Tax Revenue) – 5=5
13. Take-Out Food (i.e. pizza,) – 5+3=8
14. Gift Shop – 5=5
15. Upscale Store 5=5
16. Coffee Shop – 6+6+5+4+3=24
17. Need industry – 4+1=5
18. Upgrade utilities – 4=4
19. A defined plan for the future – 4=4
20. Greater septic tank flexibility/creativity – 4=4
21. Better Cell Phone Service – 4=4
22. Information Booths – 4=4
23. Drug Store – 4=4
24. Helpful, welcoming attitude, positive public attitude – 4+4=8
25. A Real General Store – 4=4
26. Donut Shop (i.e. Dunkin Donuts) – 4+3=7
27. Increased Agriculture – 3=3
28. A defined community image – 3=3
29. No Sewers Due to Fiscal Impact – 3=3
30. Craft Shops – 3=3
31. Need community activities , events– 5+3=8
32. Ice Cream Shop – 3=3
33. Low-Impact Commercial Business – 3=3
34. Active outreach to businesses who might employ locally – 3=3
35. Natural Store (Foods?) – 2=2
36. Horse or Tack Shop – 2=2
37. Need more flexible zoning for business – 2=2
38. More health care providers -1=1
39. Plant Nursery – 1=1
40. Artist Studios or Galleries – 1=1
41. Focus on local transportation. Seek collaboration with other towns – 1=1

Eating Places

Responses in the primary category of assets needed directly to serve economic development were clear in advocating for a local restaurant or eating place. Nine people want to see a restaurant generally while others are looking for take-out food, a coffee shop, ice cream shop, or donut shop. The response by one who indicated a need for gathering places fit into this category also

Water & Sewer

Eight respondents directly noted the need for water and sewer facilities while another noted that underground infrastructure needed to be addressed. These responses directly or indirectly connect to the desire for new businesses like restaurants that would need such utilities in order to be sited and begin operations.

Specific Businesses

Other businesses seen as needed other than eating places included a plant nursery, drug store, gift shop, physicians office, artist studios or galleries, a tack shop, commercial kitchen, a general store, and agriculture. A number of respondents specifically noted the need for small business, low-impact business, industry, and more commercial uses in general.

Some ED Applicability

1. Bicycle & Pedestrian Paths – 6=6
2. Wind/Solar Power, Alt. Energy – 2=2
3. Public Buildings, Green Roofs/Alt. Energy/Insulation – 6+5+4=15
4. Public Buildings Need Repair and Upkeep – 6+5+4+3+1=19
5. Need active Citizens Groups – 6=6
6. Community should stay small, stay as it is – 6+5=11
7. Regionalize Town Services – 4=4
8. Need Town Administrator – 3=3
9. Need community meeting space – 2=2
10. Current residents are an asset – 2=2

Five people felt that the Town should rehabilitate or repair public buildings such as the Town Hall. Speculatively, this could be based on wanting to project a more professional, stable, or work ethic-based appearance that could better attract investment, tourism, or other funds. Alternative energy, including retrofitting public buildings, was also a high scorer on this question. As with other questions, there was support for keeping Ashby small and intimate.

Not Applicable to ED

1. New Police Facility – 6+6+6+6+6+5+5+5+5+2=52
2. Senior citizens home with services – 6=6
3. 24 Hour Police Coverage – 6+4=10
4. Better Management of Town Resources – 5=5
5. Rehabilitate Elementary School – 4=4
6. Combine elementary school with Townsend – 2=2
7. After School Programs for 8-14 Year Olds – 4=4
8. Expand hours at town dump – 3=3
9. Need summer park and recreation programs – 3=3

While the above nine responses had little if any applicability to the issue of economic development, they are concerns of citizens and should be passed along to the Board of Selectmen for consideration.

Question 8: What makes Ashby a good place to do business?

1. It is not.
2. Laissez faire attitude
3. The question should "What would make Ashby a good place to do business?"
4. Nearly nothing. The town government and committees have not been welcoming to either in-town businesses, nor out of town ones. The BOH has too much power to wreck people's home equity and businesses' ability to run. Sewers are not the problem. The unjust and out of date BOH and Conservation Commission is the problem.
5. It's not
6. Ease of home based business.
7. I don't think it is a "good place to do business" and I don't know that I want it to become that. As I mentioned before Westford became an attractive business location and lost it's small town charm. I'm not sure that a trade I'm willing to make.
8. Mostly friendly population.
9. Nothing, but maybe the traffic flow.
10. Ashby is a word of mouth community, a great business will have loyal customers
11. You must go a fair distance to shop, so small convenience stores can do well.
12. It isn't. Nor should it be.
13. Good New England customers...nothing really in town now
14. Intelligent, motivated, self-sufficient people
15. Close to larger towns/cities. Still available spaces/land to be developed for business/mixed use (Village plan). Accessibility.
16. Is it? I question this assumption.
17. It's a small town. A lot of people need to drive though to get from point A to point B if there were business people may actually stop and buy something.
18. The residents support a local business
19. Nothing right now.
20. Route 119 is well traveled. There are many recreational opportunities that could attract a lot of people that would then become customers for a shop, restaurant, etc while they were here.
21. Its proximity to larger populations and access from Rt. 31 and 119.
22. Ashby is not a good place to do business and should not even try. Spending tax dollars to attract business is a fool's errand, if there is a market, business will show up. Isn't there a stripmall already going in? Support actual businesses instead of dreaming up ways to attract imaginary ones.

Question 9: What makes Ashby a difficult place for business? What makes it difficult to run a business in Ashby and how can the Town help? What could businesses do together to help? What kind of programs could help business? What kind of group or organization could businesses collaborate on to advance their needs and interests?

1. Small in home business is OK, but larger businesses would help the tax base.
2. I attend, sat. 21st meeting at the library! It became apparent to me that a local business association would be a great entity to Create a support group for encouraging business to come to Town.
3. Currently the environment is hostile to any new business. If it is not tucked away in your home, we do not support anything more substantial. Start by opening up zoning in locations that are comfortable for the look and feel of the town. Form a business growth committee, to explore, promote and invite the kinds of business we want. Ashby not only could benefit from growing a business base...Ashby could become the preferred location for an entire genre of unique business...A model community for American business growth
4. The unjust and out of date BOH and Conservation Commission is the problem. They have laid their bodies in front of good and creative businesses and homeowners' equity for many, many years. Good development has not even been supported.
5. Public perception as being difficult to access; no places to eat or gather in the town; no really good place to have public events (inc parking, handicap accessibility)
6. Location is remote.
7. I don't want any businesses that require increased traffic to grow retailers, small or large. Look at Harbor Village Mall in Townsend. The occupancy rate runs around 50% with another location closing right now. The traffic it attracts is for the most part to the chain store and kids from the High School to McDonalds. They don't have the population required to support a large retail Mall. If they don't how would we? Our proximity to Rte 119 and Rte 2, it seems to me, would be an asset and would be attractive to small machine shops or warehouses. But with the economy the way it is right now planning for the future would be more fruitful than expecting growth now.
8. High cost of utilities and inferior telecommunication connections.
9. Too many people resistant to change, close minded, as the old saying goes " if your not born in Ashby, your not from Ashby"
10. Same as above - distance to shop.
11. Running a business on the Internet is the same wherever you are located. Businesses need to combine/share their services to widen their scope - like making Ashby a Wedding destination by combining rental of the church spaces with horse draw carriages with catering with B&B's with local food, etc.
12. No underground utilities
13. Lack of leadership, possibly lack of appropriate motivation for leadership (financial or otherwise)
14. Everyone is on their own. There are so many rules: zoning, parking, hours, that people have to deal with. Who has time to help others?
15. Zoning and water/septic issues
16. The town selectman make it difficult to have businesses here. If they don't like you they shut you down they'll find a reason and they are all friends so they back each other up. They vote town growth out they are the only ones stopping this town from growing
17. Restrictions and unfriendly boards make it hard to keep a business there was a nice shop on Route 31 that was forced to close
18. The tree hugging old time Ashby folk that don't want anything to change because they want to live in the 1800s.

19. UNITIL makes it expensive. Advertising Mt. Watatic, Willard Brook Park, Trap Falls, etc to people in the cities looking for recreation.
20. Some of the things that make the town a great place to live and for small and home based business at the same time make it slightly hostile to large business. The small town feel is a great thing to have in our town, but allowances need to be made if people really want more goods and services near them. Ashby has a fair amount of through traffic everyday on a couple major roads. These would be the logical place for starting a real business environment in the town. Most of this traffic is on its way to or from the "urban centers". If the option to fill their need is closer to home being in Ashby people will stop. So the problem to me is still which sections of town make sense to be made more attractive to certain businesses. It seems the tendency has been toward regulating out business. Both currently and over the last twenty years. It's entirely possible to maintain a small town environment and have small business districts that give more than they detract from the community. Like someone said "Location! Location! Location! Choosing the locations to balance small town and successful business should be of primary importance.
21. Ashby is difficult for business because the town government tries to micromanage every aspect of any business wanting to enter town. The permitting process needs to be made much more efficient. The town government needs to realize that just because someone has been in town for 40 years does not mean that they know everything or know what is best for the town. These people generally block any business that is interested in developing in Ashby.
22. Government should do nothing other than spend tax dollars wisely.
23. No water sewer, No population,
24. Sewer and water

Question 10: Where do you shop or get services?

Please note that the table below for question 10 is difficult to read at 100% scale. You will need to increase your magnification to 200% to properly view it. This was one reason why the survey results could not be printed in summary form from the surveymonkey.com web site. Key highlights include that most respondents get most of their good and services from Fitchburg/Leominster "metroplex" and that for automobile repair, Ashby residents stay in Ashby. The town may wish to consider some way of supporting this industry although again the key is water/wastewater.

(see table next page)

10. Where do you shop or get services?											Create Chart	Download
	Ashby	Ashburnham	Winchendon	Townsend	Gardner	Westminster	Lunenburg	Fitchburg/Leominster	New Hampshire	Other	Response Count	
Banking	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	35.7% (15)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.8% (2)	71.4% (30)	7.1% (3)	14.3% (6)	42	
Lawyer	5.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (1)	31.4% (11)	5.7% (2)	51.4% (18)	35	
Insurance	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.3% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	29.3% (12)	0.0% (0)	63.4% (26)	41	
Doctor	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.5% (3)	5.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (5)	45.0% (18)	7.5% (3)	35.0% (14)	40	
Dentist	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17.9% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	10.3% (4)	38.5% (15)	7.7% (3)	30.8% (12)	39	
Pharmacy	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	28.2% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	10.3% (4)	56.4% (22)	5.1% (2)	15.4% (6)	39	
Automotive Repair	63.4% (26)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	29.3% (12)	9.8% (4)	12.2% (5)	41	
Business Services (e.g. copying, parts/repair)	5.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	8.6% (3)	2.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (1)	60.0% (21)	14.3% (5)	22.9% (8)	35	
Office or School Supplies	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.4% (2)	2.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.7% (1)	75.7% (28)	16.2% (6)	16.2% (6)	37	
Photography or Film Development	3.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.4% (1)	44.8% (13)	10.3% (3)	48.3% (14)	29	
Gas Station	29.3% (12)	2.4% (1)	2.4% (1)	19.5% (8)	2.4% (1)	2.4% (1)	12.2% (5)	65.9% (27)	14.6% (6)	12.2% (5)	41	
Tailors/Dry Cleaners	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.9% (2)	67.6% (23)	0.0% (0)	17.6% (6)	34	
Package Shipment (UPS, FEDEX)	27.0% (10)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.7% (1)	56.8% (21)	2.7% (1)	21.6% (8)	37	
Salon/Beauty	22.6% (7)	3.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	16.1% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.7% (3)	19.4% (6)	6.5% (2)	29.0% (9)	31	
Child Care	33.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	22.2% (4)	0.0% (0)	44.4% (8)	18	
Clothing Stores	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	8.1% (3)	59.5% (22)	24.3% (9)	37.8% (14)	37	
Hardware/General Store	22.0% (9)	4.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	34.1% (14)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	12.2% (5)	65.9% (27)	17.1% (7)	9.8% (4)	41	
Department Store	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (5)	70.0% (28)	30.0% (12)	22.5% (9)	40	
Small Crafts/Artisan Gallery	11.5% (3)	3.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	11.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.8% (1)	26.9% (7)	19.2% (5)	57.7% (15)	26	
Florist	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	27.6% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.4% (1)	34.5% (10)	6.9% (2)	34.5% (10)	29	
Farm Stand	34.4% (11)	6.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	37.5% (12)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.4% (3)	21.9% (7)	15.6% (5)	28.1% (9)	32	
Liquor Store	5.7% (2)	2.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	8.6% (3)	42.9% (15)	54.3% (19)	17.1% (6)	35	
Restaurant	0.0% (0)	18.2% (6)	0.0% (0)	30.3% (10)	9.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	12.1% (4)	72.7% (24)	30.3% (10)	36.4% (12)	33	
Breakfast	0.0% (0)	16.1% (5)	0.0% (0)	22.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	19.4% (6)	38.7% (12)	25.8% (8)	19.4% (6)	31	
Sandwich Shop or Lunch	16.1% (5)	29.0% (9)	0.0% (0)	32.3% (10)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	19.4% (6)	61.3% (19)	12.9% (4)	29.0% (9)	31	
Coffee Shop	7.4% (2)	22.2% (6)	0.0% (0)	40.7% (11)	3.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	14.8% (4)	44.4% (12)	14.8% (4)	40.7% (11)	27	
answered question											42	
skipped question											3	

Other

1. Small manufacturing
2. Any green business that needs some land.
3. We don't have the population or location to attract more retail type businesses.
4. Ice cream / soda fountain
5. Small scale grocery store - such as Harvest Market in Hollis or Bedford NH - Bed and Breakfast - Gourmet store/restaurant
6. Newspaper
7. A real food co-op with a real physical place to be.
8. Equipment rental,
9. Affordable groceries

Question 12: Are there other businesses or industries that you would like to see in Ashby?

1. Tourism Based Business
2. Skateboard park, motocross track, dragstrip
3. Any green business that needs some land.
4. Coffee or bake shop, artisan craft gallery/co-op
5. Small mfg, warehousing, small Eng/Development, professional office space.
6. I would like to see Ashby prosper through cultivating its rural / farm images and capitalize on the popularity of small farms and real food.
7. Any that improve revenue
8. Home businesses
9. Commercial for employment purposes and tax base without the burden.
10. Farmers Market!!! Artisan/craft/art expositions!!!!!!! Facilities to promote tourism (nice motel, B&B, nice small restaurants, etc.)
11. Newspaper
12. A call center or other kind of low environmental impact industry.
13. Pizza place
14. A big office park.
15. Private School,
16. Restaurants, Dunkin Donuts, organized recreational activities, Arts and Crafts, Farmers Market that sells locally grown items
17. A place to hold a farmers market would be nice, perhaps on town owned land. Cross-country ski area with connections to the local trails system.
18. Restaurant type places - pickety place types, Farmer Market

Question 13: Are there types of businesses that you would like to keep out of Ashby? For example, a industrial scale chicken farm or a tar production plant.

1. The above examples would be hard to take due to the awful smells (I know from experience).
2. Large Industry, Hazmat, prisons

3. Industrial scale chicken farm, tar production plant, heavy water using industries, polluting industries
4. Industry that produces hazardous byproducts for their processes. Business that promotes an unwholesome environment (Bars / Clubs etc.) Large industrial housed in unsightly poorly designed building(s)
5. Pollutants and meat processing.
6. Industrial-sized businesses
7. Anything that smells, creates pollution
8. Any large mfg plant or processing plant. Waste disposal etc.
9. Ack! By all means keep out those examples.
10. Anything that would take away from the rural character of the town.
11. Fertilizer processing, waste management
12. No strip malls, no factories
13. Anything that generates traffic noise or waste
14. Industrial of any kind. Large scale farming or feed lots. Slaughter houses. Gambling parlors.
15. Rehab centers. Industrial sites.
16. Industrial scale anything
17. Anything that would have an impact on the environment such as industries that uses a lot of water. NO Junkyard!!!! No storage of petroleum related products - NO fast food / drive through restaurant!
18. Environmentally dangerous businesses
19. Rehab
20. Anything stinky or polluting.
21. anything that would cause a great amount of pollution.
22. None
23. Franchise restaurants, large scale offensive operations (smelly, smoky, etc.) We should be careful that Ashby does not start to look like just any other town. One of our strengths is that this is an unusual place because it is still small and rural and it's main street does not look like every other main street...with fast food and franchise stores lining it.
24. That's a lot of tar and feathers. Think of the festival we could have!
25. The Town should explore ANY opportunity to have businesses in town.
26. Nuclear power
27. No

Question 14: What do you see are the roadblocks or obstacles that stop the types of businesses that you want from coming to Ashby?






1. Lack of infrastructure.
2. Board of Health, State Regulations
3. Small town thinking!!!
4. The town wants to keep the land open space, instead of wisely developing some green uses for it that would share some of the tax burden.
5. Septic & water issues, lack of willingness for the town to change
6. Low population and location

7. We are viewed as being "way out there". Not so. We share a border with the City of Fitchburg and close proximity to rte 2 and Manchester Airport. With e-mail ordering Ashby would be an inexpensive mail order location for many retail/service companies.
8. Ashby needs to promote itself as a rural or eco-tourist destination to give these businesses a better chance of achieving profitability
9. Among the things already mentioned, lack of a better regional advertisement for what is in this area.
10. The people, the treatment of outsiders, lack of any incentive to move in ashby due to failure for the town reps to agree or act in a timely manner
11. Investors wanting huge profits from small businesses
12. No utilities, poor road condition
13. Not enough people or enough money to support the business long term
14. No water/sewer BUT, see what has been done in Townsend! lack of sewers did not stop Sterelite. Maybe looking into "tax break" / incentives for businesses ready to move to town!
15. Road system
16. Red tape
17. Room
18. Anti-business attitude, no town sewer and water, no one in the town to be the "go-to" person/helper. No town manager.
19. Board of health
20. Lets go there again the only people blocking this are the people running the town.
21. Boards that think they are protecting us and we are too dumb to know what is best for our town
22. Old time Ashby folk that think that they have the town's best interest in mind and block every little business.
23. Some of it is board of health regulations and zoning. Some of it is a lack of using our natural resources to attract tourists.
24. The prime real estate is taken or regulated out of use.
25. Very vocal minority routinely blocks new commercial ventures from entering town. Little barriers the town puts in the way add up to very big reasons businesses don't come to town (ex. cannot have illuminated signs near downtown, need to have a town vote just to have drive-thru, etc) The permitting and approval process takes extremely long. The town government has reputation of being incredibly unfriendly to any business because the old-time Ashby folks are able to manipulate and block development.
26. Low population. If there are no customers, there is no reason to open a business.
27. Population - commercial property available - costs?
28. Sewer and water, public sentiment

Question 15: How do you feel about having festivals and events in the Town to increase tourism?

15. How do you feel about having festivals and events in the Town to increase tourism?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Very Positive		48.8%	20
Somewhat Positive		26.8%	11
Neutral		14.6%	6
Somewhat Negative		7.3%	3
Very Negative		2.4%	1
		answered question	41
		skipped question	4

Question 16: What is your employment status?

16. What is your employment status?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Full-Time Wage or Salary Employee		42.9%	18
Part-Time Wage or Salary Employee		7.1%	3
Self-Employed		28.6%	12
Unemployed (Drawing Unemployment)		0.0%	0
Unemployed (Not Drawing Unemployment)		2.4%	1
Retired		19.0%	8
Student		0.0%	0
		answered question	42
		skipped question	3

Question 17: If employed, where do you work?

17. If employed, Where do you work?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Ashby		31.3%	10
Ashburnham		0.0%	0
Winchendon		0.0%	0
Townsend		6.3%	2
Gardner		0.0%	0
Westminster		0.0%	0
Lunenburg		0.0%	0
Fitchburg/Leominster		18.8%	6
New Hampshire		9.4%	3
Other		34.4%	11
answered question			32
skipped question			13

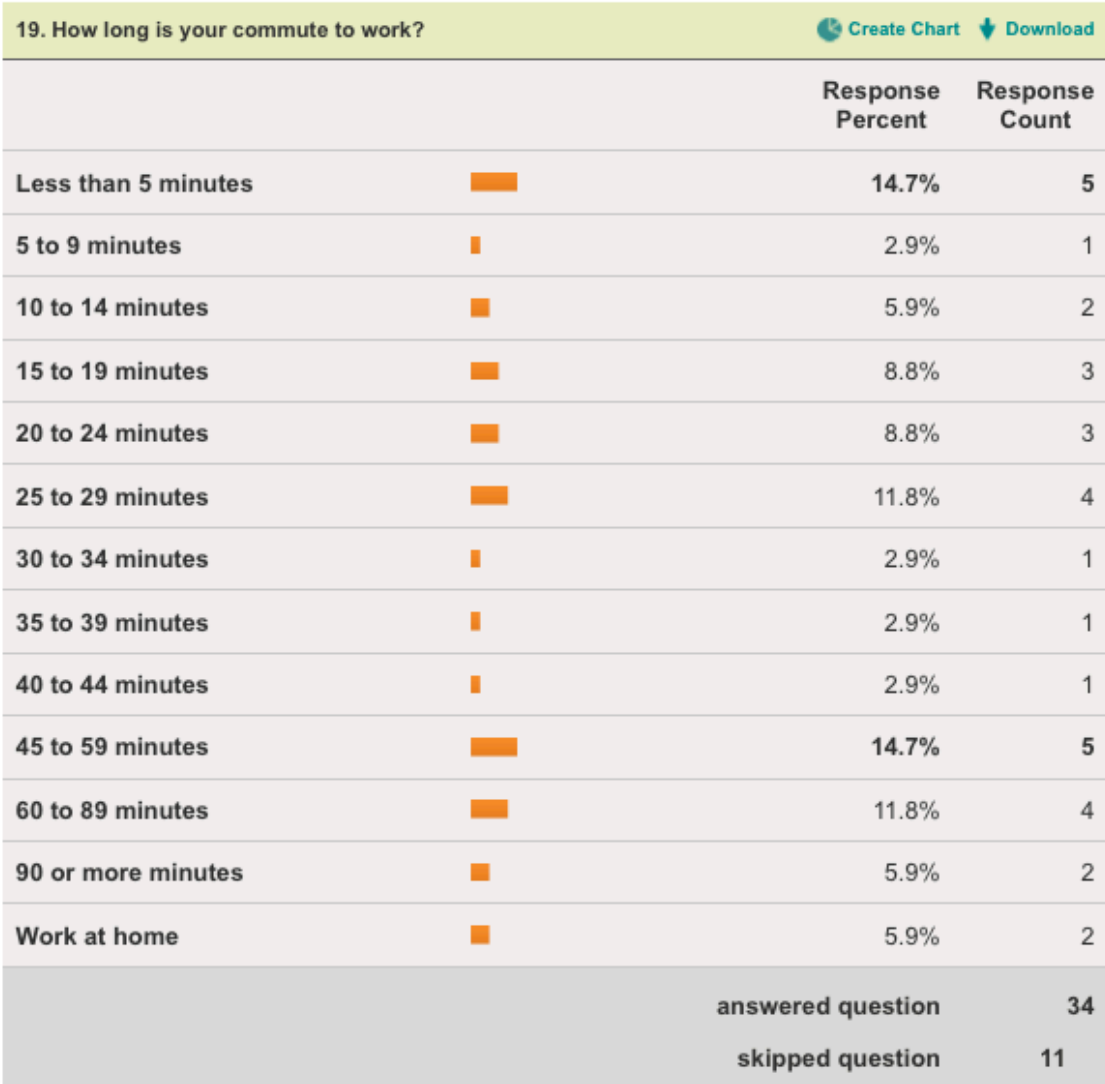
Question 18: How do you commute to work most of the time?

18. How do you commute to work most of the time?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Private car, single passenger		82.8%	24
Private car, multiple passenger or car pool		0.0%	0
Taxicab		0.0%	0
Bicycle		0.0%	0
Walking		10.3%	3
Telecommute (work from home)		0.0%	0
In-Home Occupation (work from home)		6.9%	2
Other (please specify)			4
		Show Responses	
answered question			29
skipped question			16

Other

1. Combination private car, rail bicycle, work at home
2. My work is predominantly off-site so I travel out of town often
3. Chelmsford
4. Truck

Question 19: How long is your commute to work?



Question 20: How many years have you lived in Ashby? Please use a whole number

While the mean length of residence was 21.61, there were a good mix of long-time residents and newcomers in this survey.

13

15


29
20
12
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10
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65
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21
8
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12
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38
37
23
6
3
5
60
2
3
36
36
24
1
1
55
24
25
16
26
37
12
30
16
75

High: 75

Low: 0

Mean: 21.61



Question 21: Where do you live?

21. Where do you live?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Own private home		100.0%	41
Rent private home		0.0%	0
Rent apartment or two-family		0.0%	0
Mobile home		0.0%	0
	Other (please specify)		0
		answered question	41
		skipped question	4

Question 22: How many people are in your household? How many children?

22. How many people live in your household? How many children?				Create Chart	Download
		Response Average	Response Total	Response Count	
Number of people in residence:	Show Responses	2.38	95	40	
Number of children in residence:	Show Responses	0.84	21	25	
				answered question	40
				skipped question	5

Question 23: Are you a business owner in Ashby?

23. Are you a business owner in Ashby?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		37.8%	17
No		62.2%	28
		answered question	45
		skipped question	0

Business Owner Questions

Question 1: What type of business do you have?

1. Clock repair
2. Cabinetmaking and contracting
3. Technical Consulting
4. Custom Audio / Home Theater / Loudspeaker manufacturing
5. dance studio
6. crafts
7. manufacturing
8. general contractor
9. web design
10. General Household repairs
11. Counseling
12. construction

Question 2: What is your rating of the business climate in Ashby?

2. What is your rating of the business climate in Ashby? Create Chart Download									
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Moderate	Poor	Very Poor	Extremely Bad	Rating Average	Response Count
Overall business climate	0.0% (0)	15.4% (2)	30.8% (4)	30.8% (4)	7.7% (1)	7.7% (1)	7.7% (1)	3.85	13
Regulatory environment	0.0% (0)	15.4% (2)	7.7% (1)	46.2% (6)	23.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	7.7% (1)	4.08	13
Mix of other businesses	0.0% (0)	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	33.3% (4)	25.0% (3)	8.3% (1)	4.75	12
Market for products and services	0.0% (0)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	25.0% (3)	41.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	16.7% (2)	4.67	12
							Other (please specify) Show Responses		1
							answered question		13
							skipped question		32

Question 3: Is there anything in Ashby that you need to run your business that is missing in town? (For example, other businesses such as a shipping service)

1. No
2. Building supplier
3. Too much to list. What we do have is a post office
4. No.
5. A network of business owners
6. Advertising forum
7. Not for me

- I use many services to run my business, but would not necessarily want all of them in Ashby. It is more important to me that Ashby retain its character and I will go out of town to a city for some of the things I need rather than turn Ashby into a city.

Question 4: Are there any barriers or obstacles to expanding your business (i.e., tax, regulatory, utilities, etc.)? Please be as detailed as you wish.

- No
- No 3 phase power
- Regulatory; If I ever expand as the business is designed...the current environment would almost certainly force me to move the business out of town
- People perceive Ashby as being "podunk". I routinely get asked, "Why would I want to go to Ashby" from prospective clients
- Zoning
- No.
- Money
- Not for me
- No.

Question 5: Is there anything that would help you run, expand or make your business more viable?

5. Is there anything that would help you run, expand, or make your business more viable? Create Chart Download			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Technical Assistance		0.0%	0
Business Assistance	<div style="width: 18.2%;"></div>	18.2%	2
Energy Audit/Assistance	<div style="width: 9.1%;"></div>	9.1%	1
Government Grants	<div style="width: 9.1%;"></div>	9.1%	1
Government Loans	<div style="width: 9.1%;"></div>	9.1%	1
Tax Abatement		0.0%	0
Infrastructure Assistance	<div style="width: 9.1%;"></div>	9.1%	1
Trained Labor Force	<div style="width: 9.1%;"></div>	9.1%	1
Local Business Association	<div style="width: 45.5%;"></div>	45.5%	5
Local Educational Programs	<div style="width: 9.1%;"></div>	9.1%	1
Marketing/Advertising	<div style="width: 72.7%;"></div>	72.7%	8
Expedited or Simpler Permitting	<div style="width: 36.4%;"></div>	36.4%	4
Other (please specify)			1
		Show Responses	
answered question			11
skipped question			34

Other

1. Cheaper internet service provider

Question 6: Where do your customers come from?

6. Where do your customers come from? Write approximate percentage (%) Create Chart Download of where your customers come from (Please make sure you insert whole number as the percentage and that all percentages add up to 100)			
	Response Average	Response Total	Response Count
Ashby Show Responses	14.50	145	10
Ashburnham Show Responses	7.63	61	8
Winchendon Show Responses	4.33	26	6
Townsend Show Responses	12.63	101	8
Lunenburg Show Responses	6.75	27	4
Fitchburg/Leominster Show Responses	7.57	53	7
Gardner Show Responses	3.60	18	5
New Hampshire Show Responses	21.38	171	8
Other Show Responses	49.83	598	12
	answered question		12
	skipped question		33

END OF SURVEY