

Summary of Local Government Survey Results on State Land Use Survey

**Prepared by the Great Lakes Commission for the
September 18, 2007 Upstate New York Roundtable**

Introduction

The survey is designed to inform locals about state programs; get their feedback on how they are being served by programs and their desire to be better served. In doing so, the survey will help meet the following roundtable objectives from a local community perspective:

- Provide a forum for representatives from pertinent stakeholder organizations and government to network and discuss their experiences and needs in a collegial atmosphere.
- Improve information sharing by employing various communication techniques and technologies.
- Identify opportunities to enhance the benefits of regional and statewide programs, resources and strategies as they may apply within the Great Lakes basin portion of New York State.

Survey Methods

A four-page survey listing 24 state programs was developed by a subgroup of the Great Lakes Commission's Steering Committee. Survey participants were asked four questions pertaining to each program: "Which of the following programs: 1.)...are you aware of? 2.) ...has your community been involved in? 3.) ...do you plan to use in the future? 4.)...do you want more information on?" Refer to survey in the appendix.

The survey, along with a fact sheet containing short descriptions of each program, was distributed to members of the New York Conference of Mayors and the Association of Towns of the State of New York via email and in hardcopy during annual associations meetings. Survey recipients were given a month to complete the survey and to fax it to the office of the Great Lakes Commission.

Because of a tight project budget, randomized selection and aggressive follow-up procedures to obtain a representative response sample could not be pursued. Nonetheless, the survey still serves its original purpose of obtaining feedback from local communities on how well the state is meeting their needs. The survey is not intended for in-depth policy research. Rather, it is designed to provide initial information regarding the local government perceptions of state programs and to identify areas where further investigation could be pursued.

Characteristics of Respondents¹

Respondents were not selected using scientific randomization procedures intended to produce results likely to be representative of all towns and villages in the watershed. The figures below illustrate how the towns, villages and cities that responded are different from the average.

Table 1: Responses by Municipal Type

Village	30
Town	49
City	6
Total Number	85
Grand Total Number of Responses	88

Note that four responses were received from a single municipality.

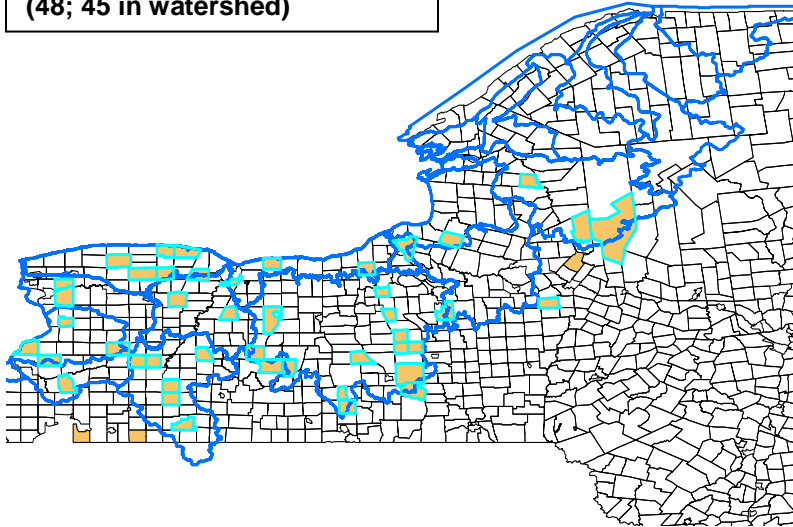
Respondents are from towns that are *smaller in population and area*, and *slower growing* than for the state as a whole. Respondents in the watershed represent towns that are *larger in population and smaller in area*, and *slower growing* than for the watershed towns as a whole. They are from towns with 14 percent of the population of all towns in the watershed.

¹ Prepared by David Kay, Cornell Community and Rural Development Institute. Contact for comments or questions: dlk2@cornell.edu or 603-255-2123

Table 2: Comparison of Towns Surveyed to All in Watershed and the Entire New York State

Towns	Avg. Pop. (2000)	Avg. Growth (90-00)	Avg. Land Area (Sq. Mi.)
Responders	8,193	2.9%	115.3
Responders in Watershed	8,553	3.1%	116.0
Watershed (all)	6,415	5.3%	133.6
NY State	9,334	5.5%	128.5

Figure 1: Responding Towns (48; 45 in watershed)

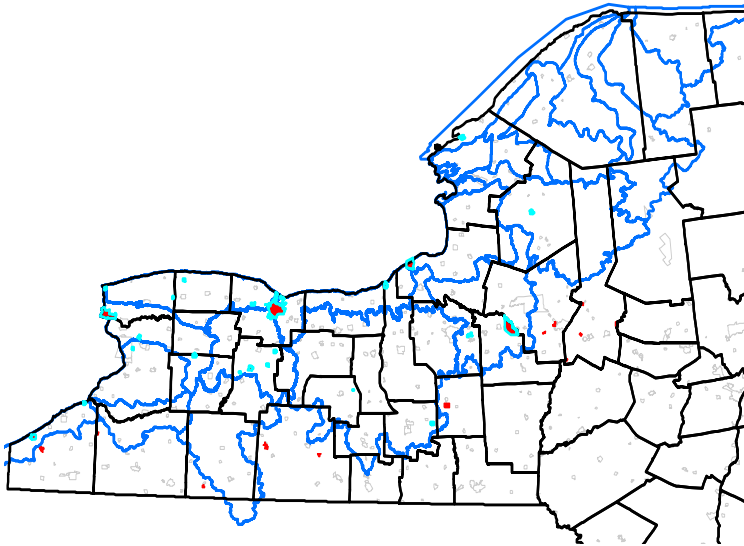


Respondents represent villages and cities that are modestly *smaller in population, larger in area, and losing population more rapidly* than the *state's* cities and villages as a whole. Respondents in the watershed represent villages and cities that are *much larger in population and area, while losing population less rapidly, than watershed* cities and villages as a whole. They are from cities and villages with 23 percent of the city and village population in the watershed.

Table 3: Comparison of Villages and Cities Surveyed to All in Watershed and the Entire New York State

Villages and Cities	Avg. Pop. (2000)	Avg. Growth (90-00)	Avg. Land Area (Sq. Mi.)
Responders	11,387	-3.0%	3.57
Responders in Watershed	15,448	-1.8%	4.67
Watershed (all)	6,895	-2.6%	2.95
NY State	18,332	-0.3%	2.46

**Figure 2: Responding Cities and Villages
(35; 23 in watershed)**



More than a quarter of respondents do not know if they are in the Great Lakes basin or not. Most, but not all of the rest assess their location in or out of the basin accurately.

Summary of Results

Overall, awareness of various state programs (ranging from about 40% to 70%) was relatively high in comparison to current use (ranging from about 10% to 40%), future use (ranging from about 15% to 40%), and information needs (ranging from about 15% to 40%).

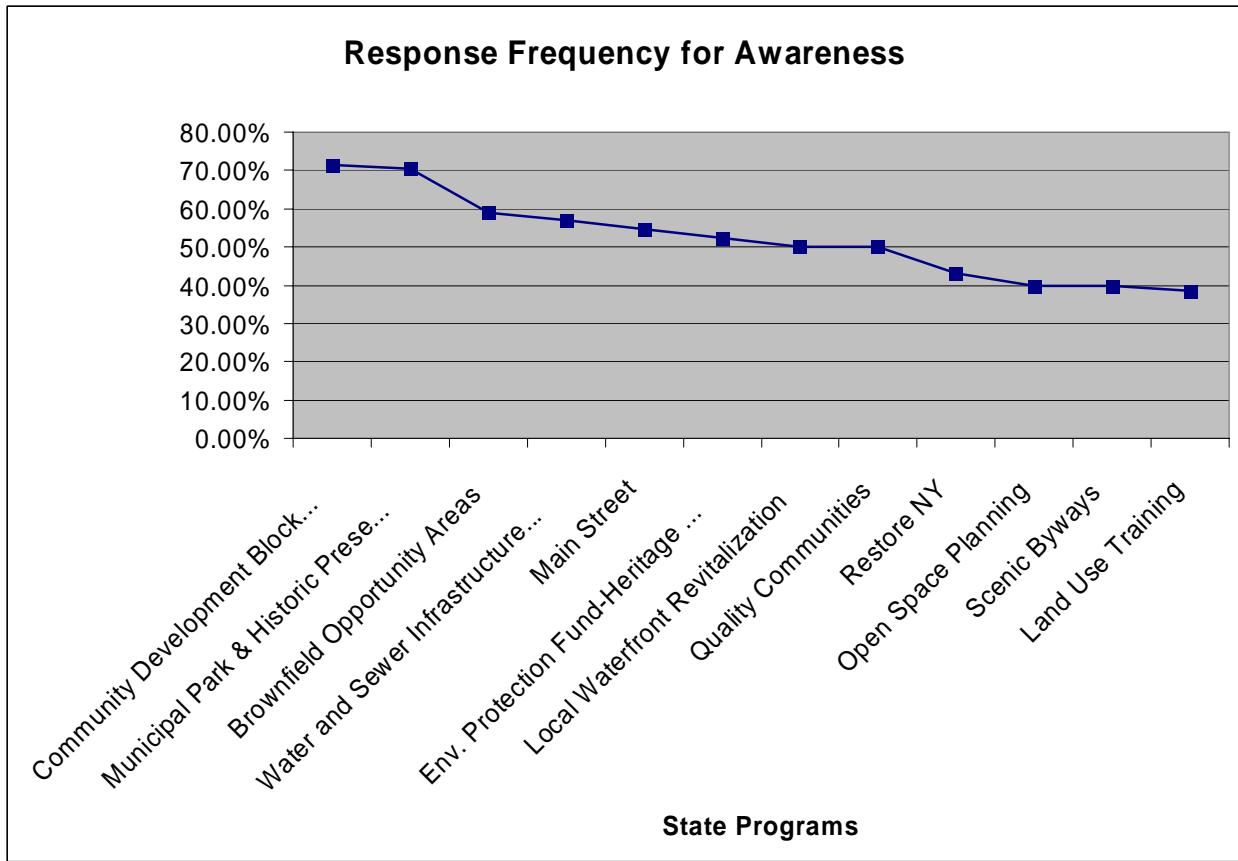
The Community Development Blocks Grant program (GOSC) rates the first in awareness, but much lower in future plans. Municipal Park and Historic Preservation Grants (OPRHP) ranks second in awareness and involvement and third in future plans.

Brownfield Opportunity Areas (DOS&DEC) ranks third in awareness, but much lower in involvement and future plans. Water and Sewer Infrastructure Co-funding (GOSC) ranks fourth in awareness and sixth in involvement, first in future plans. Environmental Protection Fund Heritage Areas, Historic Preservation and Parks Areas (OPRHP) are sixth in awareness, seventh in future plans, but third in involvement. Land use training is at the bottom in awareness despite recent legislation mandating training, but fourth in involvement and in future plans.

It would be helpful in interpreting the numbers if some sense of program eligibility were also included. Land use training doesn't apply to places without planning and zoning boards; Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans are not relevant for municipalities without waterfronts; and mainstreet programs may be more relevant for villages than towns. These nuances among the survey population should be assessed in follow-up surveys.

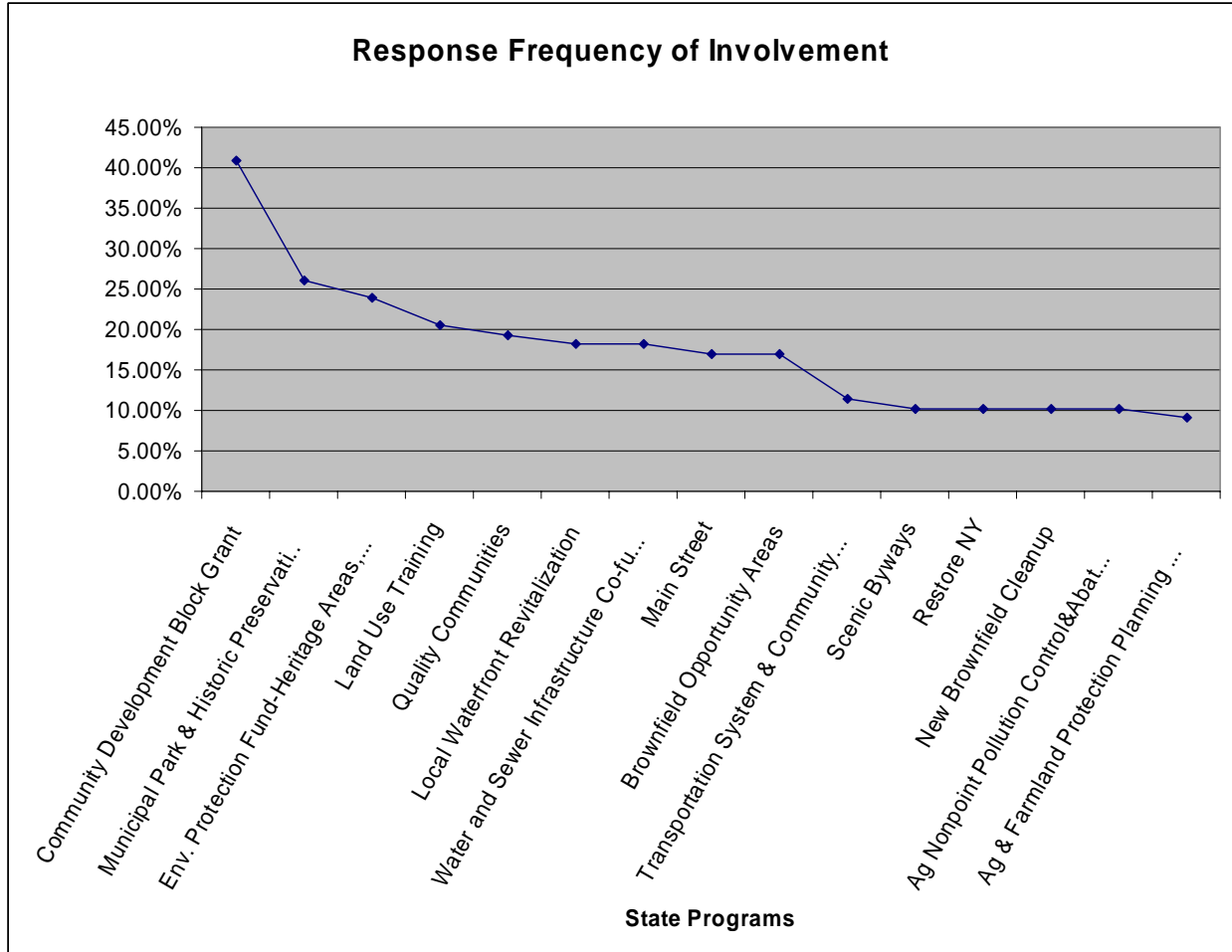
Top Five Programs that Respondents are Aware of

1. Community Development Block Grant (GOSC)	71.59%
2. Municipal Park & Historic Preservation Grants (OPRHP)	70.45%
3. Brownfield Opportunity Areas (DOS&DEC)	59.09%
4. Water and Sewer Infrastructure Co-funding (GOSC)	56.82%
5. Main Street (DHCR)	54.55%



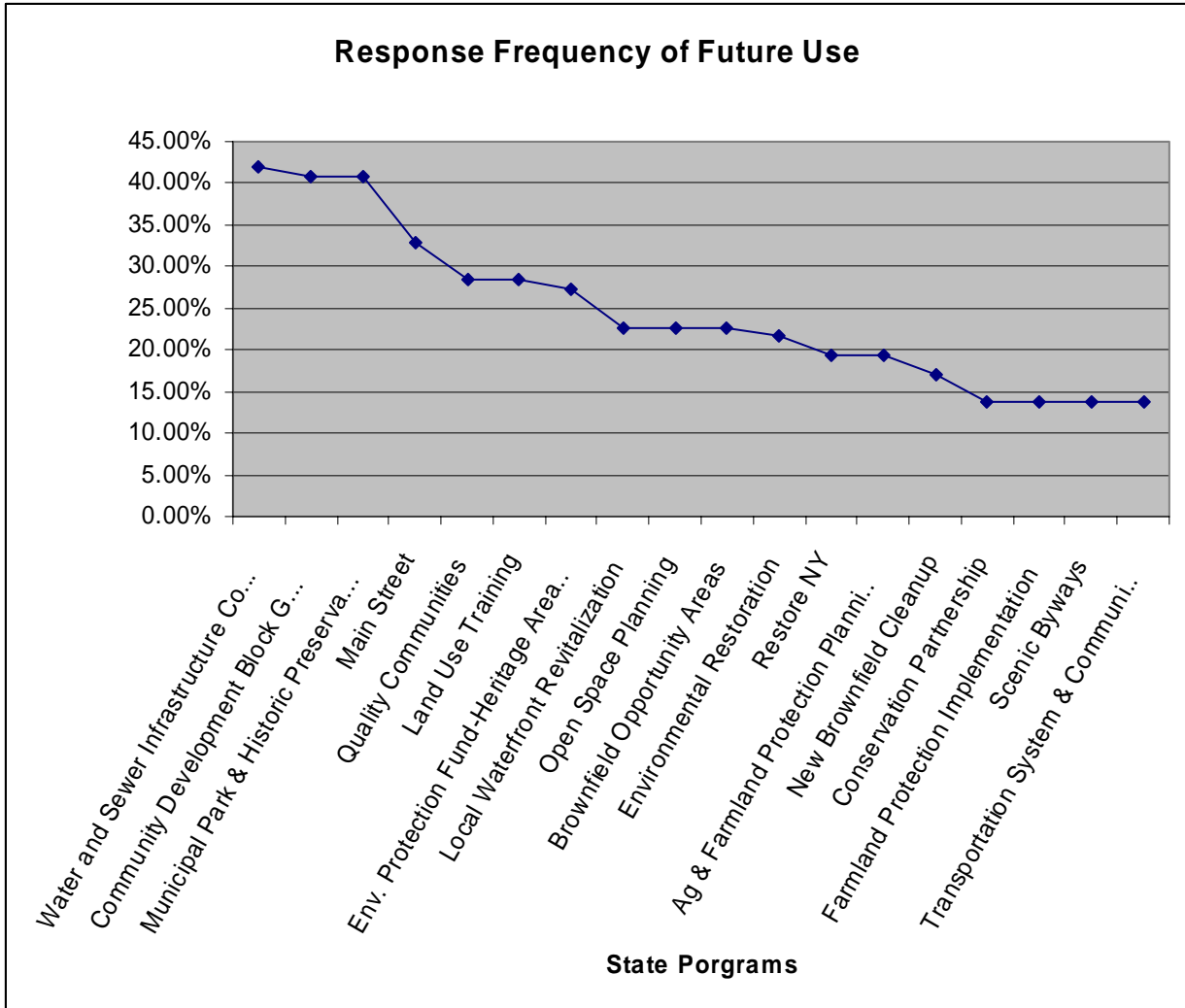
Top Five Program that Respondents are Involved in

1. Community Development Block Grant (GOSC)	40.91%
2. Municipal Park & Historic Preservation Grants (OPRHP)	26.14%
3. Env. Protection Fund-Heritage Areas, Historic Preserv.&Park Areas (OPRHP)	23.86%
4. Land Use Training (DOS)	20.45%
5. Quality Communities (DOS)	19.32%



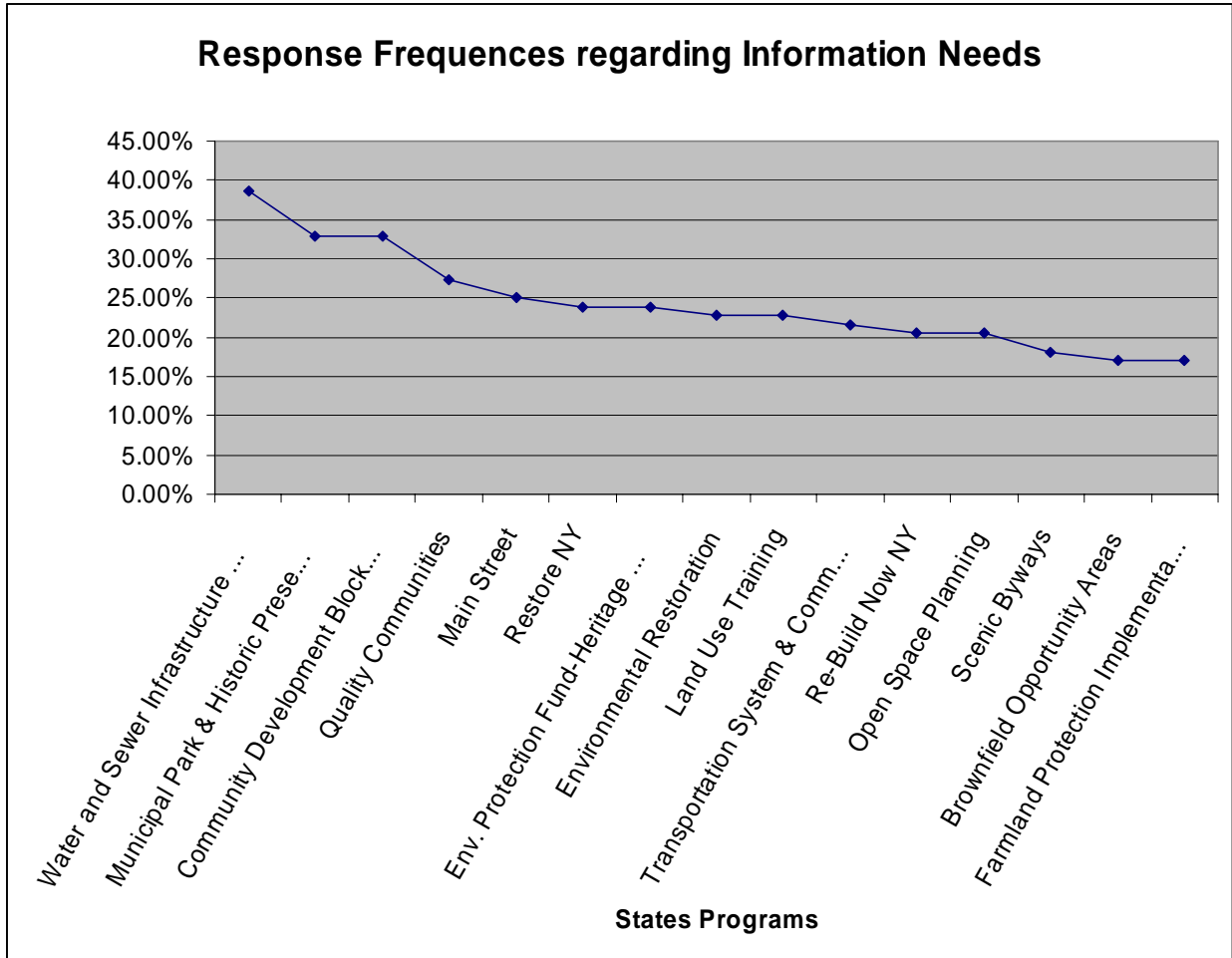
Top Five Programs that Respondents Plan to Use in the Future

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|--|--------|
| 1. Water and Sewer Infrastructure Co-funding (GOSC) | 42.05% |
| 2. Community Development Block Grant (GOSC) | 40.91% |
| 2. Municipal Park & Historic Preservation Grants (OPRHP) | 40.91% |
| 3. Main Street (DHCR) | 32.95% |
| 4. Quality Communities (DOS) | 28.41% |
| 4. Land Use Training (DOS) | 28.41% |
| 5. Env. Protection Fund-Heritage Areas, Historic Preserv.&Park Areas (OPRHP) | 27.27% |



Top Five Program that Respondents would like More Information About

1. Water and Sewer Infrastructure Co-funding (GOSC)	38.64%
2. Municipal Park & Historic Preservation Grants (OPRHP)	32.95%
2. Community Development Block Grant (GOSC)	32.95%
3. Quality Communities (DOS)	27.27%
4. Main Street (DHCR)	25.00%
5. Restore NY (ESD)	23.86%
5. Env. Protection Fund-Heritage Areas, Historic Preserv.&Park Areas (OPRHP)	23.86%



Summary of Comments

Question 3 Comments: If you are planning to use selected programs in the future, describe how.

Respondents' comments focused on four areas.

1. Main Street improvements to enhance residential and commercial development (11 respondents)
State Program(s): Main Street (DHCR) and Restore NY (ESD)
2. Waterfront revitalization, brownfield cleanup and redevelopment (8 respondents)
State Program(s): Local Waterfront Revitalization (DOS), Environmental Restoration (DEC), Brownfield Cleanup (DEC) and Brownfield Opportunity Areas (DOS & DEC)
3. Open Space Preservation such as the development of green infrastructure, open space planning, park development and enhancement, trail development, wetland restoration and waterway preservation. (25 respondents)
State Program(s): Open Space Planning (DEC & DOS), DEC grants, DOT TEP, OPRHP grants
4. Water and Sewer Management, Infrastructure, Improvement and Expansion (22 respondents)
State Program(s): Community Block Grants (GOSC) and Water and Sewer Infrastructure Co-Funding

Listed below are some comments that are worth noting:

- Survey didn't emphasize local comprehensive planning, nor did it mention the Shared Municipal Services Initiative Grant Program and the grant programs of New York State Office of Court Administration.
- New York State Tug Hill Commission provides invaluable information and assistance to municipalities.
- State services such as training, administration, coordination and grant review need to take place closer to Western New York than in Albany.

Comments listed below provide recommendations in improve state services:

- Streamline the application process and final reports for grants.
- Coordinate regulations and rules among state agencies. For example, DOH and DEC regulations are not coordinated regarding on-site septic.
- Consolidate information for and provide coordination/assistance to small municipalities regarding state programs.
- Require state supported institutions of higher learning to provide planning, zoning, community development and training opportunities, for a fee, to local board commissioners and other residence.
- Make available grants for revitalization downtown areas to every community with less criteria and qualification requirements. Matching costs by business owners should be enough requirement.

Question 4 Comments: In what areas do you think your community could benefit from additional training?

Issues areas that communities thought they could benefit from additional training are:

1. Land use planning and zoning (22 respondents)
2. Open space and watershed protection including urban forestry and farmland preservation (10 respondents)
3. Brownfield redevelopment (4 respondents)
4. Community revitalization (10 respondents)

Some comments that are interesting:

- A major challenge is educating the public and part-time staff/members on land use issues.
- Training needs to take place outside of Albany

Question 5 Comments: Describe your experience with any of the programs listed. Comment on programs that the community highly values and such improvements.

Comments listed below provide recommendations to improve state services:

- Given the economic challenges in Central New York, it would be extremely helpful if the state could increase funding levels.
- It would be helpful if some of these assistance programs were better advertised to local communities.
- Agencies should be allowed to work with municipalities as you establish statewide goals or goals of regional significance where projects are developed jointly and fast tracked for implementation.
- Land use and storm water training needs to continue and be made more accessible to working board members
- Consider revision of the NYS Parks Grant guidelines/requirements for trail development. It appears that many of the regulations are applicable to a park and not a long trail.
- *Community Development Block Grants* need to have refresher courses available to local governments. Training and technical assistance is needed.

- A guide book for all recipients is needed to describe the step-by-step process for reimbursements under the *Environmental Protection Fund Grants*
- *Land Use Training* should emphasize planning and zoning.
- *Main Streets* need to be more widely promoted.

Accolades about state programs:

- GOSC, Block Grants, NY Main Street, Build Now NY, Quality Communities and Restore NY have made a huge attitude change in our city.
- We have had good experience with all programs. The key has been regular communication about expectation
- Local DEC as well as state assistance has been extremely helpful in meeting reforestation needs.

Criticisms of state programs:

- Most state programs take too long to execute from application to approval.
- State programs are too complicated.
- Application process is too cumbersome.
- In terms of our park development and salt storage, we have spent numerous hours in applying for grants only to be turned down. There needs to be a preliminary method of rating the viability of an application before all the hours are spent in making the application.

Question 6 Comments: Further Comments, Suggestions, Ideas, Etc.

- Simplify the application process.
- Focus on improving infrastructure such as water and sewer to attract commercial development.

Appendix I – Survey

Background Information

Circle which municipal type you represent: Town Village City County

Name of local government: _____

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ County: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Is your jurisdiction within the Great Lakes basin? (**circle one**) Yes No Don't Know

(Even if you answer no, please continue the survey)

I am interested in participating in the New York Roundtable: (**circle one**) Yes No

I would like more information about the New York Roundtable: (**circle one**) Yes No

State Programs

Think about the State programs that support your jurisdiction's work in land use planning, community revitalization and open space protection, and answer the questions listed below. To assist you in completing this survey, descriptive information for many of the major State programs is provided in the attached 1-page fact sheet. Please note, the list of programs is not all-encompassing. If your community has had experiences with State programs not listed, please provide comment in the boxes on page 3. You may **check multiple responses**. (The administering State agency for a given program is noted in parenthesis. A legend of state agency acronyms is provided on the back of the fact sheet)

1. Which of the following programs (grants and technical assistance) ...

Programs (grants and technical assistance)	A.) ...are you aware of?	B.)...has your community been involved* in?
1. Ag & Farmland Protection Planning Grants (Ag&Mrkts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ag Nonpoint Pollution Control & Abatement (Ag&Mrkts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Brownfield Opportunity Areas (DOS & DEC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Community Development Block Grant (GOSC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Conservation Partnership (DEC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Environmental Restoration (DEC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Farmland Protection Implementation (Ag&Mrkts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Farmland Viability (Ag&Mrkts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Env. Protection Fund – Heritage Areas, Historic Preserv. & Parks Areas (OPRHP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Land Use Training (DOS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Local Waterfront Revitalization (DOS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Main Street (DHCR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Municipal Park & Historic Preservation Grants (OPRHP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. New Brownfield Cleanup (DEC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. NYS Canal Revitalization (Thruway Authority)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Open Space Planning (DEC & DOS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Pride of NY Grant (Ag&Mrkt)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Purchase of Development Rights (Ag&Mrkt)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Quality Communities (DOS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Re-Build Now NY (GORR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Restore NY (ESD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Scenic Byways (DOT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Transportation System & Community Preservation (DOT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Water and Sewer Infrastructure Co-funding (GOSC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Involvement includes receiving a grant, applying for a grant and/or receiving technical assistance.

2. Which of the following programs (grants and technical assistance) ...

Programs (grants and technical assistance)	A.)...do you plan to use in the future?	B.)...do you want more information on?
Ag & Farmland Protection Planning Grants (Ag&Mrkts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ag Nonpoint Pollution Control & Abatement (Ag&Mrkts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brownfield Opportunity Areas (DOS & DEC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Development Block Grant (GOSC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation Partnership (DEC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Restoration (DEC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farmland Protection Implementation (Ag&Mrkts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farmland Viability (Ag&Mrkts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Env. Protection Fund – Heritage Areas, Historic Preserv. & Parks Areas (OPRHP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land Use Training (DOS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Waterfront Revitalization (DOS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Main Street (DHCR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Municipal Park & Historic Preservation Grants (OPRHP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Brownfield Cleanup (DEC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NYS Canal Revitalization (Thruway Authority)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open Space Planning (DEC & DOS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pride of NY Grant (Ag&Mrkt)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchase of Development Rights (Ag&Mrkt)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality Communities (DOS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Re-Build Now NY (GORR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restore NY (ESD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scenic Byways (DOT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation System & Community Preservation (DOT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water and Sewer Infrastructure Co-funding (GOSC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. If you are planning to use selected program in the future, please describe how.
Provide your comments in the space below.

4. New York State offers a variety of training services to local communities for land use planning, community revitalization, and open space and watershed protection. In what areas do you think your community could benefit from additional training? *Provide your comments in the space below.*

Your Experience with State Programs

In the space below please describe your experience with any of the programs listed above. Include comments on State programs that your community highly values and suggestions for improving programs.

Further Comments, Suggestions, Ideas, Etc. Please provide any further comments in the space below.

Thank you for completing this survey!

