

2024 Searsmont Community Engagement Survey: Comments and Long Answer Responses

Q1:

No short answer response option

Q2: How would you prefer to learn about municipal services, meetings, and events going forward?

Emails with info would be great
Digital sign with info
Sign @ rd to announce meetings
Easy access to free content
OK
Rebuild the outdoor information signboard at drive
I think the town is doing the best it can by putting notices in the paper and website.
Free Press
I didn't realize that the town communicated with residents before this question
website needs to be kept updated and streamlined. maybe hire out a web designer to re do it?
for gods sake invest in a good pa system for town meetings that can be heard beyond the 2nd row!!
note at this time
town email or electronic message system similar to lincolnvillle's
town email/bulletin/group
I currently only see announcements at the Fraternity Village notice board
Different methods needed due to generational differences
Social media only if comments turned of or screened
town website and newsletter require adequate staffing of town office not currently present
Have someone work half a day sat in the town office
Tell the truth.
Consistency of communication
Or text message.

no response
post card was very good earlier this year. I do not go into the store much no visit webpages so I usually hear of events after they happen
If and when a transfer station exists, a beautiful board (mobile) could be be in place
Email notifications
Make sure PO Box holders get the town correspondence
Electronic communication should be the norm at this point in time.
I would like to learn of extremely important things via mail, but not everything because mailings can be unnecessarily expensive for the town. While I recognize that many are into social media, & online bulletin boards, I never use them, so if they were the primary means of communication, people like me would remain in the dark. Using all of the above would maximize the number of residents who would be informed.
The town website could be updated and include more information.
Less paper mail overall — switching to digital except for emergency notifications or during power outages. Save the paper!
Improve the town website content.
Be sure that everyone gets the communications. Not select po box people or street residences
Email monthly updates so we know what is going on in town
Got it covered
They need to be more transparent and respond to calls and emails when citizens have concerns
Send out as a text message in addition to the above options
listen to the "suggestions" presented by the Lake property owners concerning town infrastructure. IE roads.
Important data could be sent by text if the town had residents's cell numbers.
Quantabacook Lake Association President emails
Keep the website updated daily with a better front page, website is way behind the times
I think using social media will make town notices much more available.
Town board in the store?
I often learn about town events from physical postings in the Post Office. I appreciate that it takes time to post things there, but I think these are valuable and would like to see them continue. I also think that, if possible, it's important to keep postings there current (i.e., remove those that become out of date).
email blast alerting of town meeting dates and voting opportunities. Emails/newsletters or updates on maintained town website that summarize town meeting agenda's and outcomes.
It would be great to receive communications by email.
Increase the amount of communication. Currently, the communication is extremely limited to what is included in the library newsletter.

Improve the mode of communication. In this social media and electronic delivery age, Searsmont needs to come up to speed on using these types of delivery methods.

Maintain two way communication with town residents. Develop a mechanism to receive feedback on an ongoing basis about Searsmont issues.

The town website is underutilized--could a timely comprehensive clearinghouse for all town activities--hope that happens.

The town needs an active Facebook page and needs to do better posting current events, meetings on the home page of the website.

The website doesn't have a lot of information. Social Media could be used to communicate more. People who are new to the town don't have any idea what is going on...

Updated website

Leverage the general store sign space

I find the Lincolnville Bulletin Board very helpful on Google Groups. Not sure if Searsmont has anything like this. I receive an email update on the latest postings every night.

Ensure the town website maintains up to date hours and location for town services such as the transfer station.

Text message optimization

No LED signboard – dark is good at night

Q3: What are two or three things you love about Searsmont?



Searsmont's rural character
Small town

Rural character
Beautiful small town

The least interference of rules and regulations. Live & let live.

Hometown, small town living	neighborliness, smalltown social	Quiet
The community	networks (in person!)	The landscape
The people	rural environment	The small town atmosphere.
Lake Quantabacook	size	Community
The natural beauty/environment	People	Community
Rural	Privacy, quiet	fraternity
Open rural setting	It's a small town	Lake
The Town Library	small town character	Friendliness of the residents
The people	Community minded	friendly people
Rural	Community	sense of community
Peaceful	St. George River	The quiet
Beautiful river	Life in slow lane	The lake
Feel of rural area	It is rural.	Lake quantabaycook
The library	Still a quiet village	The people -how quickly the
The peaceful setting, the quiet	Friendly	community comes together in
and ability for nature to remain.	Still has the small town feel	support of each other
Library	Quantabacook	peace and quiet
farmland and old barns - both the	The lake	Long family history
look & feel and the local	Rural setting	Small town
agricultural access	Quaint rural village vibe	Quiet Quantabacook Lake
Prople	simplicity	The people
central location to the midcoast	Library, town office, historical	The lake
many of the people i've met in	museum	Broad community commitment
town	Rural setting	The Lake
small town feel	the friendly people	The lake
people/sense of community	library	rural setting
it being a small close knit village	Being somewhat low level of	Community spirit
gathering places- church, library	traffic noise	Proximity to the beach, belfast,
location	The preserved land	and snowbowl.
open space+trails	No chain businesses	the rural character
open space for outdoor	Quiet	No campgrounds
recreation	Rural, bur close enough to Belfast	Our property and neighbors
The general store	Small town feel	rural living
The people	The library, post office, fire	Landscape
nature!	department, Town Hall &	Location
Fire department	Fraternity Village	Tight knit community
Peace full	Welcoming, friendly neighbors	Neighbors
small town freedom	Small population	Rural
Freedom	location	the residents
Friendly neighbors	quiet	natural beauty
People	Quiet rural surrounds	Community
the community (friendly, caring)	It's beautiful here! The st george	Land
Rural area	river trails	Community Spirit
rural setting, woods, town store	Quantabacook	The sense of community and
Good people, including many	neighbors	good will among residents
creative people	rural living	Rural space that allows for
St. George River, walking trails,	The Library	farming, outdoor recreation
general rural nature of town	Ames School	Abundant undeveloped natural
	Quantabacook Lake	environment

Country Life with few people and no traffic	The people are so nice.	Maine
Location	Simple small town	Cohesive
Small Community	natural resources & access to water	Everyone knows each other and helps each other
Unpretentious	Library	Gravel Roads
Small town community-Sense of community	how quiet it is	The library
sense of community, neighbors are friendly, town library	the fact that so many people in town care about the town and its future	Modest downtown
How quiet and underdeveloped it is.	natural beauty	country living
Location	still feels rural/small town despite mid coast "boom"	General proximity to Belfast, Bangor, Augusta
Quiet, peaceful and Rural	friendliness pf town staff and residents	rural setting
Quanny	people in the community	town meeting
Small town feel	friendly and helpful town staff and selectmen	good neighbors there when you need them
Nature	town library+ library programs	The small community
Quiet	Always slightly nicer than Camden, weather wise	Not too many rich people
The quiet	Harlan Drinkwater	People - it would be nice to see event like in video
Its rural attitude / atmosphere.	The rural nature location	Friendly people
Quiet	St. Georges River	friendliness of people in town
Searsmont is incredibly beautiful!	Out in the country	Quantabacook Pond
The surrounding woods and nature	country living	Rural landscape
Location	Small size country living	Friendly people environment
The people	Natural beauty	rural
Peaceful	Country living	Hiking trails
Quiet	the library	Fraternity Village - good access to groceries and homemade food
Searsmont's sense of community, including diversity	The town office is easy to deal with	Fraternity Village Store
The people	no commercialism	woods
Georges river	Beautiful scenery	great neighbors
The wildlife	Caring staff at the school	My neighborhood People
The Mainers / People or lack of	neature, the river, the mountain & hills, woods & fields	The lake
Caring community	Home Town Feel	The people
Peacefulness	quietness	size/accessibility
The library and the activities it provides/contributes	Fraternity Brothers	The people
Quiet, peaceful, calm	methodist church	The open spaces.
The people	People are friendly	Lake Quantabacook
Open space	availability to what Maine coast has to offer	The people
Hiking-walking trails - land preservation	Small town	lake
The peacefulness for the most part	Beautiful Area	Small town
Remote	Library	Taking care of the environment
Trails	friendly people	Quiet
General agreement between citizens	It is fairly quiet.	residents hold officers on the board accountable
The land and waters		Fraternity village store
		Small town
		The library
		Quantabaycook Lake

friendly locals	The post office staff and how they	Quiet
Lake Quantbacook	know who you are because it's so	Library
Transfer station employees are	small to pass packages to	the fire department and its
outstanding	Proximity to water	commitment to the safety of the
Fraternity store	Close to Belfast	town
The rural lifestyle	The trees	Brewery gone!
The woods	It is in a beautiful area in Maine	Library
Ever-improving services...library,	with lots of outdoor activities.	Library & library programming
schools, etc.	Good people	community bldg w/ LIBRARY <3!
The Lake House	Many members of our community	Friends & neighbors helping each
The residents	are kind, hard working, and would	other
friendly compassionate	do anything to help their	access to nature
population	neighbors.	Ecology
Neighbors help out neighbors	The people at the town office are	the people
The library and music offerings!	very pleasant	Hunting & fishing
the relatively progressive and	The roads are in good shap	access to Belfast and Augusta
involved people	The nature	post office
Town hall usage	Outdoor adventures	Good neighbors.
Closeness to Belfast and Camden	Fraternity general store	Civil civic culture
community support for those in	Safe & friendly	Fraternity General
need	Acres of woods and streams	Fraternity Village
Community	Quaintness of town	Quiet roads
The people	Not a large population	beautiful scenery
Our General Store	Caring community	community building
Town Meeting	Fraternity Village Store	The efficiency of the road crew &
River access	Small population	town employees
the location	Lack of marijuana shops selling	Lots of woods
the library and community	any pot.	Intimate
building	Being able to call the town office	Public dinners at the firehouse &
Access to the outdoors	and get info when asking a	Memorial Day Parades
people	question.	The forested areas, wildlife
Open space and views	People	Town library and all the events
Nature and the natural	location & proximity to other	they put on
environment	Midcoast areas	Village vibe
Small school/class sizes	Quiet	library
Rural lifestyle	the topography	community spirit
Residents are very helpful	sense of community	Community spirit
Friends/locals	beauty	Proximity to Belfast
Great Location	involvement in town committees	wildlife
Excellent, skilled people	library and town store	fraternity village store
Safe/Low Crime	fraternity village store/ accessible	The transfer station attendants
rural & village	town leaders	Fraternity General
character/landscape	Far enough away from Camden	Fraternity Village Store
Being able to safely walk on roads	and Belfast, but close enough as	The possibilities
and access to many hiking trail	well	The friendly people.
Town Size	Proximity to service areas, but far	People
People are helpful	enough to remain rural	Feeling welcome
It's small	local produce!	neighborliness
	Store	Fraternity Village Country Store

been - a safe, secure place not destroyed by big money moving in to make changes.
Road maintenance
Emigrants
Highest taxes
Ability to keep taxes affordable
Population growth
Keeping taxes from getting too high for us older folks.
Taxes
rising property values and the development pressure this creates
Grown
increasing storms effect on infrastructure
keeping taxes low for all those who have lived here forever and the rest of us
growth vs maintaining rural character
maintaining the small town/ruralness amid growth
growth
affordable housing
town governance= need pt time admin + selectman advisor
as towns grow they embrace growth and create more organized infrastructure or they can ignore that for teh sake of low taxes and just have greater quantity and cost of homes and less community
Property taxes
Sand/salt building location
affordable and safe housing
Education
We need more help for the elder
keeping spending in control
Lowering property taxes
Preserving nature
Road maintenance
no more little businesses in town!
Growth of services to meet population growth
Poor management
little housing for middle & low income? youth & seniors...
Population growth

keeping commercial growth at a minimum
Roads! Maintenance and plowing
property taxes
The roads
Limit on number of housing units
Climate
the transfer station
Housing costs. Ridiculously high prices for housing.
Population growth
Maintaining services
tax increases out running what is affordable
Internet connection
Road infrastructure
Economic development of a town center
upgrade ALL town roads
Land conservation
Infrastructure ie sand/salt shed
population growth
roads and bridges and infrastructure related to climate change and stress on taxpayers
traffic
Encouraging cultural diversity (BIPOC)
Fiber Optic Internet access
Broadband
Keeping taxes affordable, especially in light of inflation
Keeping Searsmont affordable
Maintaining 1-3 above
affordable housing
rural sprawl
Controlling sprawl
energy resiliency in the face of rising oil/gas prices
Waste collection and recycling
keeping the store going
infrastructure
Transparency with the town residents
A proper site for sand/salt and trash
Terrible conditions on Pond Road
getting high speed internet
The sand and salt shed
Increasing traffic.
Keeping Pace With Technology
Expectations (Internet)

Road care
Taxes
Economic demands on caring for the town
Overdevelopment
Internet
Keep taxes low
Population decreases
Keeping the taxes down for lake community property owners.
Regardless of what goes on with the township taxes, the lake resident owners continue to far outpace raises.
Internet
Pond Road needs to be paved as do other roads.
Reliable internet
High taxes
Climate change
Development
Muddy, dirt Pond Road
land being developed at unprecedented pace
Climate change
Making town meetings accessible to families with small children
Housing for seniors and young families
Better Internet access
Maintaining Roads
Development
Roads and bridges
Internet
Keeping dialogue open and respectful between citizens
Changing demographics
competent selectpersons
staffing the fire department
Keeping its rural roots
land
Remaining a small town with modern systems
Growth & preserving the current quality of life
Affordable housing (not to be mistaken as "subsidized housing")
Remaining a small town where we know each other

Outdated Town Government of Selectmen	rising property values and the access/affordability pressure this creates	Lack of sense of community
Liberals		Better internet connectivity (high speed internet)
Robbins Lumber Growth	I	siting of landfull (recycling facility)
Taxes	continued housing crisis in state	influx of climate refugees
Navigating changing times	taking care of seniors and childcare	town roads
Taxes	affordable housing/housing stock	Road maintenance with emerging weather weirdness
rapid increase of land value/sales prices & effect on property tax increases	heavier traffic- trucks on local roads	Village Improvements
Internet access to all homes	high real estate taxes driven up by valuation of sales to outer staters	Broadband
Affordable Property taxes	retain ag land and aquifers	Garnering state support for Searmont's plan
Keeping the small town friendliness	The fact that the central road through town is a hwy and that most of the towns central area is quasi abandoned	Providing permanent housing availability
keeping real estate taxes in check	Overdevelopment	Not growing too quickly
Making decisions that will impact the majority of the town in a positive way.	Transfer station location and recycling economic opportunity	town leadership
Keeping property taxes low	Housing taxes	environmental/ energy issues
Too much growth	lower property taxes	Encouraging business development that is sustainable and enviromental friendly
New salt and sand shed	Keeping town gov small	transitioning to solar energy infrastructure for residential commercial and government buildings
Broadband	preserving small town atmosphere (traffic, etc)	Firefighting
Funding for the city.	employment (jobs)	attracting other businesses
Keeping up with technology like internet & satellite services	playground/park/walking area?	Real Estate Taxes and Assessments being reasonable so that people can afford to live here
The cost of living in Searsmont has far exceeded local wages available.	Broadband access, high speed	Needs at the Ames School Fire Department
Lack of affordable high speed broadband	Misuse of assets; ie selling useable property & paying a premium for new buildings	Finding a balance between agriculture, small/big business and residential growth
Internet speed	regulating growth to preserve natural resources & spaces	Rising taxes.
Budget	Limited commercial taxpayers	Options for Grabbing some Food Dump
Navigating land use ordinance	Perceived value for high property taxes	Internet
Maintaining quality of public education	Crime	Responsible care of the environment deal with climate changing problems
Over weighted trucks on our roads going way too fast!	Increases in taxes for seniors/retired/management?	Road conditions
Staff EMTs	Climate	Keep pond road passable
Senior housing	boat launch on Quantabacook	Hopefully a viable internet option soon
Localized health care	Influx of people from away that want to change the town to be more like where they came from.	More Communication: An electric sign near the road by the Community Building to announce events/meetings
Helping neighbors in need	Increased public safety	Keeping our young people here
Trash recycling.	Housing opportunities for young families	
Zoning & growth that preserves beauty and character.	hoe to stop excessive growth	
Property tax stability	Affordable Housing	
To difficult to start business in this town	Commercial zoning	
Ability to have qualified people willing to perform town jobs.		
Climate change		
Internet options.		
Overdevelopment		

Internet and cable need to be made available.	Solar possibilities	Wi-Fi
Lake flooding	Everyone needs to start paying their fair share of taxes.	fire station staff (volunteers or paid)
Preserving the environment	Local job opportunities/affordable housing for workers	Processional town manager
Water quality	Roads in winter	Open space, water access
Maintaining modern electronic services	Road maintenance	regulating commercial interests. NO "stripmall." junk stores, eateries, etc
Taxes	Road upkeep especially during and after roads are posted	Water quality
tax burden on homeowners	Staff town staff	Keeping the town small
Public transportation	Roads & bridges	Help for small wood lot owners
Addressing the increased weather threats from climate change	Job opportunities	Climate
Trash disposal	Environmental management - garbage water	maintenance of Pond Rd
Trash	Need for Town Administrator - relieve some of the burden of Selectmen & provide leadership.	More locals cannot find adequate housing at reasonable prices.
Welcoming people who have not lived in Searsmont their whole life.	Litter on sides of road - tired of picking it up	Managing growth and preserving rural character
Budget	Ability to manage growth.	stay modern without losing small town style
School (building)	loss of large tracts of land due to development	Getting a gas pump back
Keeping taxes down while addressing infrastructure needs	Maintaining peace and quiet as area expands.	Minimizing fossil fuel consumption
Taxes, poor boat access to lake	protecting and supporting current agricultural lands	Pollution
aging workforce in key positions	I	rising taxes
a permanent transfer station	keeping the town and its residents working together for the better good of all	access to lakes & ponds
Keeping its small town feel	tax stability so lifelong/old residents can remain	More rich people coming to live here
people	increasing taxes	Road Maintenance
Preserving the sense of community & goodwill; avoiding the polarization and divisiveness that's increasing throughout America	difficult needs of administering town by 3 selectmen only	Broadband
Affordability of property taxes	future plan for k-5 ed, keep local school	Maintaining what we have, especially in light of inflation
Over-population	sporadic development without community planning and foresight	Keeping Searsmont's rural feel
Roads	Robbin's Lumber	Keeping taxes low
Taxes	Local road repair/maintenance (Not band aids, true repair)	infrastructure investment
Taxes Increasing	natural disaster readiness	business growth with environmental responsibility
Climate change	Taxes	Keeping our air and water clean
Roads	inflation	climate change's impact on ecosystems, forests, and water health
development pressures on open land	reduce extraneous rules. keep it simple	Climate change and vegetation change (e.g. Beech die off)
Maintenance of infrastructure and homes due to rising cost of materials	Reducing red tape, rules etc	improving roads (Pond Road can be nearly impassable in mud season)
Lack of businesses	Rcycling	Size of Fire Department/Ambulance crew
Rules kept to a minimum but simple and effective.		Accessible internet for all in town
Money		Highway repairs
Keeping the small town feel		Affordable housing, retirement/senior housing
Pollution in the St. George River		Increased building.
Real estate prices		Up to date Ambulance and EMR
Property taxes		Services
Agreement across a diverse group of residents		Communication

Good emergency procedures in place	Housing	future proposals for mining,
preserve what space there is now	Road maintenance	commercial retail (big box), overuse
Bad code officer	Encouraging new leaders to be	of town aquifers & waterbodies
Financial constraints	involved	Increased cost of property taxes
A deeper blacktop base for the roads	Poor roads, Lack of housing	Traffic increase
in Searsmont. They do not last for	privacy	High tax rates
more than two years	increasing population (impact on	We are outspending the tax base that
Infrastructure Maintenance	infrastructure and services)	locals can afford.
Wise land use, including recycling	Losing natural and rural land from	Expanding community
Generational acceptance of its role as	over-development	spaces/additional amenities
stewards	Communication with residents	Allowing the younger generation to
Poor Internet connection	Community Land being sold	have a voice in our town choices
high speed internet access	Infrastructure Failures	People from larger towns /cities that
Being a viable small community	Balancing old and new - community	want to bring their lifestyle with
Having accessible walking paths to	cohesion	them. Rather than embrace our
increase community engagement	Politics	culture/structure

Q5: Please provide your opinion of the quality of these Town services, facilities, and aspects of community life in Searsmont.

Would like to see the transfer station moved to the town office location permanently.
Not sure where sidewalks are relevant.
Recycle more. I'm hoping for better recycling options.
New location for transfer station is uncertain today.
Snow plows need to stop hitting mail boxes!
Traffic through town center too fast.
Few jobs available in town.
Searsmont needs ordinance for noise. A noise ordinance from cars racing up & down the roads burning tires, gun fire, and fireworks, screaming roosters and barking dogs!!! It's free. Cost no money! Suprised to learn no noise ordinance!
Community gatherings need more advertisement.
Water needs more testing.
Town road maintenance needs more input from all residents & work with them esp the ones it impacts the most.
Other towns have been snow plowing and apply more sand.
Town officials should be kind & friendly & courteous to the residents! Start properly informing us of expenditures beyond normal business practice. Church! Cemetary map improvements. Thank you. Public restrooms.
Improve road quality
More speed limit enforcement.
It would be nice to have access to Quantabacook.
Trash recycling (Note: This is a bigger issue than just Searsmont)
- Better signage at entrance to Town Hall/Library complex.
- Resolve sand shed-transfer station needs.

<p>- Continued support of broadband services.</p> <p>- Sorry at loss of Threshers as community gathering place - how could town encourage/enable facilities for another version of this.</p> <p>- Affordable housing.</p>
Plowing and maintenance of dirt roads
Big box store
Transportation
Bring back recycling of papers/plastic
The code officer is a tough position to fill. Once the new officer learns the job, he should be fine. The town website historically has been slow to update. This shouldn't be too hard to improve.
Would like recycling
More experiential education
Building codes for a sustainable future
I am a senior and would (and have asked) for the possibility of lists or volunteers for help with yard work/handyman to help me find help since my husband died. I think if we had a local services list at the town office, it would be really helpful. I have seen "senior services" advertised here. As for snowplowing, again, lists for volunteer help would be nice but las year or so, they have seemed to really attack mailboxes and driveways. Water - I would love to know of help to get the orange out of my water - again, a list of local services would be awesome. Without my husband, I am sunk in alot of this stuff.
Need recycling
The hours for the transfer station are so limited. And don't get me started on the post office - I have a job, how am I ever supposed to collect mail with those hours? Who has ever heard of a post office that locks its lobby so people can't access their mailboxes? It's insane.
town management needs improvement and better training. for awhile the selectboard is not based on having the proper skills of management personality needed to run a municipality.
public beach and boat launch at lake, childcare for working parents. sand and salt shed w/ land for fture town needs
fast reliable internet service
gas availability
housing affordability is changing rapidly. need more speed limit enforcement. updated list of local businesses (this is very helpful site)
boat launch is great as is. don't make it bigger. we don't have any sidewalks or need any, although the bridge by come spring is way to narrow.. Hire someone part-time to manage+update town website and communications
keep boat launch as is. there are no sidewalks. I think the current select men are just great, best town admin we've had in a long time, but it's a huge job and needs at 1 full time or pt person to do either finances or roads. more recycling
Downtown is not safe for walking, there is little knowable access to public land. Periodic Police presence will not slow the traffic down nor make roads safer.
Challenge for communications to reach all
Local roads need to be upgraded to avoid recurrent storm damage problems
Organization and user friendliness of website
Frequent speeding on Rt 131 south of village
Transfer station--more centralized location and recycling needed
Recycling for plastic cardboard glass and metal at transfer station

Cable TV
Roads
1/2 day work in the town office
No new services!! Taxed too much already. Small town shouldn't have a big gov... Just leave us alone. We aren't Boston or Camden and don't want to be.
For almost all of the above, we don't need anything more. If anything we are spending too much on some of these things. And even if we didn't have something (for instance side walks) we don't need them, so our current set up is excellent. Don't need to spend money and raise taxes to get better than we have. There are too many rules/restrictions and the building permit fee is now excessive.
While some people may say they want more fun stuff, I doubt they would want it if they knew how it impacts taxes and fees. People don't think that far.
We need better speed control in the village area (all of it not just) down by the store
I would like to see more law enforcement re: vehicles driving too fast through the village. As one turns the corner onto 173 (woodmans mill rd) the speed is 45mph. Spoke to state a couple of years ago. Based on no accidents resulting in death, they will not lower speed. Feel it should be 30mph slowly moving to 35mph after church.
Fix the pot holes
Increase library hours
Professionalize fire department & rescue/ambulance
Increase annual paving/repaving miles
Improve snowplowing/sanding
Update/expand offerings on town website
Town office hours are ok. Transfer station should be at town office permanently and have expanded recycling. Better public water access & boat launch. Wish we had not spent so much for a fire station & could prioritize school & education. Would like to see swing set and EV charger at town office. Would like to see town facilities be more energy efficient; energy audits, etc.
Expand transfer station services - Recycling more and free goods "swap shop"
need more speed control - village, moody mtn rd
better boat launch of quantabacook
would like to see more opportunity for recycling
re: boat launch facilities - where are they? what has public access?
The bridge near post office. Sidewalk is dangerous as cars often hit it or one this causes vehicle to be airborne. (Personally, have witness two car last 6 months coming down into town be airborne with incoming traffic (narrow)
I live on Crie Rd. We have been treated poorly - road is still dirt!!! Plow barley cares about sand, salt, plowing. But!! We pay same taxes as all. Remember: cost to fix will NEVER go down.
More availability of services like the CEO and the transfer station.
Road improvements
Quantabacook needs a better boat launch that the public can use. The town office should be open on fridays.
community solar
I would like to see improvements to what we already have in place as to go in debt for more of a tax base for our village families
I would like to see recycling reinstated
The appearance of the Village area is very unimpressive and is in urgent need of some TLC/Curb appeal/Landscaping. The area is small enough that it could be easily improved with some basic landscaping such

as the plating of flowering bushes, perennial flower gardens & some general tidying up of the businesses, starting at the general store, including the boat launch area & Post Office.
The transfer station situation is lacking. I end up taking my trash to other stations because they have not only better recycling, but easier access.
I very much think the plowing and sanding that is done for the town needs improvement. It seems to be known in the surrounding area that Searsmont does not get on the snow and ice like other towns.
We definitely are having more and bigger rain events nowadays and I think our culverts and often barely adequate or not adequate. Maybe a dedicated road commissioner would be a good investment.
high speed internet ASAP
Hoping for high speed internet shortly
The town website does not have easy to understand information about the transfer station location moving to the town office. It was difficult for me to find the info, and I ended up going to the old location and so did a local resident. We were both quite confused.
More sidewalks in the village to be able to walk to the town office, etc.
Create a walking/biking/horse trail next to Pond road and get the walkers off the road.
It wouldn't hurt to improve the Dump Road so the dump could be used later in the Fall and earlier in the Spring.
Communications with the residents needs to improve - via mail or town website.
Drinking water quality - Is there anyone in town without a well? Do we have public water and sewer anywhere in Searsmont? If so, why is it here? if the quality is poor and everyone has wells it would be due to geological composition which I doubt the town would be able to fix.
Town roads that are dirt need to be improved with current weather patterns.
Pond Road really needs to be improved!!!
town office hours ok but library hours very limited
Better public access to quantibacook and Lawry pond. Snow removal/sanding needs to be done in real time for the safety of commuters/school children and emergency vehicles
Maintaining good conditions of township roads especially potholes and damage problems from drainage runoff.
Trash collection. Better internet. Replace the code officer as it is too hard to fix or replace things. Better road conditions
internet access & better cell phone service
I would like to see Pond Road and all roads around lake with residential areas to be paved.
Pond Road is rutty and tough to drive on many times of the year. It needs a better crown graded. Possibly pave?
More rigorous attempt at recycling and encouragement of not using single use plastic
Pond Road South is poorly maintained. High tax dollars are derived from this area, and the road should be resurfaced a few times during the summer. This is also important for emergency vehicle access. It was only done once after the spring last year. Totally insufficient! Poor service that requires improvement.
Neal and Austin do a great job at the transfer station but it would be nice to have more recycling options like Belfast.
Renovation instead of new housing starts. moratorium on clearing land to build houses, instead encourage + give tax breaks to folks for rehabilitating all the run down older houses, trailers, lots filled with structures and debris first. Clearing woodlands and putting in structures on every vacant lot should be deterred in order to keep Searsmont rural, meanwhile dozens of structures on lots sit in distress.
Increasing walkability would be incredible. Either developing a sidewalk or making the atv trails accessible to walking/running would be a big deal for more community interaction, health and wellbeing
I think it is criminal Searsmont doesn't offer recycling.
Traffic speeding through the village proper and reasonable radius around village center
It would be nice if the transfer station was open more often. I didn't see IT on this list, but the availability of broadband is really lacking in town.

We need access to better internet and better clearing of our roads during inclement weather out to Route 3
Need a better boat launch for the lake, the roads should be paved to state standards or not at all
Plowing and sanding was much better this year but previously it's been terrible.
Also appreciate road work but seems like it takes way longer to complete a project then anywhere else.
Walk ability. (Sidewalk, paths to town) Recycle / "still good shed" at the transfer station, or agreement with Union or Belfast (or Camden)
I realize that we are dependent upon others for law enforcement here, but I wish we could have more frequent traffic enforcement. Speeding on our roads (Rt 131 past the Post Office, Moody Mountain Rd past my house) is epidemic. I see a County sheriff on Moody Mountain Rd maybe about twice a year, always in the middle of the day -- ridiculous. There's a very real weekday rush hour on Moody Mountain Rd; if they would come from 7am-9am and/or from 4:30-6:30pm, once every month or two, they could write a year's worth of tickets! (and make the roads safer and increase County revenue...)
Housing affordability is exacerbated by high taxes - we are a small town without extensive social services, I think we can be better at controlling costs in order to keep our properties and to plan on our children being able to afford to stay in this area.
Better advertisement of all public access to lakes/rivers would be great!
Town office hours could be improved. Being closed every Friday (and also closing early on Thursdays) makes many things difficult at times. I now think we have enough town employees to spread the coverage and be open 5 days per week (or at least late Thursday if it is really necessary to have Fridays off).
I would love to see the sand salt shed and transfer station combined and moved close to the town office. Maybe sell off or trade some unused town property to purchase a parcel that is better suited for the new transfer station/sand salt shed.
As an individual. I am away most weekends. That makes its hard to get to the transfer station. I wish there was another day or two to drop of trash.
--Public lake access to Quantibecook needs vast improvement.
--Transfer station could add "swap shop"/"free" exchange for good quality items.
--Town needs more accessible walking/hiking trails on town-owned land
The transfer station needs to be open more regularly. Sanding/plowing could most definitely be improved!
I wish the library was open more hours, it's never opened when I can go there :(
The town could improve communications via Social Media or their website. It wouldn't hurt to make the town area more walkable. The snow plowing is not adequate, often only one side of the road is cleared. Traffic to Robbins Lumber is all hours of the day and if you live off 131 the noise pollution from trucks going to Robbins is awful. Speeding is a huge problem on 131.
The transfer station should be permanently at the town office or Crie Rd should be paved.
The Crie Road (dump rd) MUST become a priority for access to the transfer station and for residents living on the road.
Additional recycling at the transfer station, up to date info on town website, better walking/biking access on main roads
I would answer these but in the mobile version you can only select each answer once and there are more than 4 questions in the table
Code enforcement: less is better Education: keep small schools operational Town road and culvert maintenance: share the work Snow plowing/sanding: N. Searsmont excellent Town office services and hours: missing the experience past
Keep taxes low – let people be responsible for themselves to a reasonable degree. I.e. don't move on dirt road with 2wd vehicle, and then belly ache about road conditions.

Q6. Does more than 30% of your household's income go towards your housing?

If you include utilities then it absolutely does in winter by alot
no response
depends on my taxes
Close, counting utilities, oil, phone, driveway maintenance, incidentals
25%

Q7. To the best of your knowledge, do you think Searsmont's housing adequately accommodates people of all ages, living arrangements, and income levels?

Taxes are too high
Glad we bought when we did!
Not enough housing for middle income, working class people.
N/A
More senior housing availability. Veteran housing.
Concerned about the most needy
What housing? Only private
Need senior housing
We own - but with taxes so expensive, I wish I'd looked at Liberty, Freedom, Monroe, Belmont, etc.
It takes a lot of saving, planning and hard work to be able to afford housing. People want a quick fix which there is none. A lot of hard work and sacrifice is the only way I know.
I am so afraid of my taxes going up, it causes me to stress year round.
while more affordable than many of our neighboring towns it can still be quite expensive
the rural poor are invisible to many in town and their situation and housing is only getting worse, multi unit housing would be helpful
development of both low income and mid income units
not enough housing for all ages (young/elderly), high rents beyond range of "average wage earners"
need for increased housing for affordable housing for working people who still have school loans to pay hard for working families to afford land or to build + very few houses for sale.
current old stock is limited and way over priced due to "coastal creep" + investors from out of state.
I am not aware of all the issues, and certainly do not think Searsmont is alone in its house issues.
needs improvement
Housing is expensive everywhere. Not a town problem.
Senior housing would be good affordable housing this may make land and existing housing available
Housing for seniors, in my opinion is nil. I would like to see tiny houses (2 bedroom or a park like the trailer park in Belmont for well maintained trailers and ground..
Please don't build big housing/rental facilities
Zoning goes out of its way to prevent apartment buildings
need some more nice moderate and low income rentals for young working families and seniors...& disabled
more affordable but private dwellings
There is a lot of variety in structures, but I don't know how that equates to adequate housing.

People can not find rents
Seems like large businesses or mills can provide housing for some. Why not all to come required to provide some housing.
Same as all of Waldo County
no senior housing
Not enough affordable housing for locals and seniors who would like to stay in their hometown area.
We need more housing for workers
lack of affordable housing throughout the state
It seems generally unaffordable for most Americans to live anywhere in this country. Searsmont is in this country.
We have a lot of seniors in the community and I assume a lot want to age in place but often their homes are not set up for mobility issues or the house maintenance has been neglected and it can be unsafe or unhealthy to live there.
Not enough long term rentals, makes it challenging for young people to stay in Searsmont long term if they want to. More housing with heat pumps and aging out oil heat. Buying a house is challenging for young people (20s-30s)
I doubt that there are many apartments for rent, but I don't know.
Housing is limited and not affordable for most people who need it
Senior Citizen housing doesn't exist in Searsmont
more affordable housing means more housing starts - the problem is too many houses, soon Searsmont will look like Lincolnville. Once the forests are cleared, they don't grow back
It is hard for elderly people who have mobility challenges to remain in town - no accessible housing and hard to get services needed. Also, affordable housing for young families is lacking.
Like the rest of Maine housing prices are out of reach for most locals as are rents.. so it's incredibly hard for young people to live here.
Senior housing - many people mention they would like to stay in Searsmont as they age. Low income housing is non-existent
I would guess that lower income folks might have trouble finding housing here. But looking ahead, I think we need to be very careful in addressing the need for more affordable housing to be sure we don't damage or destroy Searsmont's current character (for example, by building commercial developments that clash with our New England farmhouse-style built environment).
Searsmont already houses individuals of all ages, living arrangements, and income levels. We are not ideal for senior housing/subsidized housing complexes - as this will require us to also add public transportation options to our community. With already high taxes and cost of living, this tax-burden would be large for the average income earner in the area.
as with everywhere. housing/rentals are very high vs income available.
Difficult for young people, low-income people in minimum wage jobs, and elders on limited income.
Prices increased too rapidly
I hope the property taxes stay affordable
Housing is mostly for those who already have a lot of money or generational wealth.
Housing is very expensive, there are no rentals, taxes are high, and internet speeds are low
Needs more secondary dwelling units and short term rental

Q8. Do you think Searsmont should regulate the use of ADUs for short-term rentals?

If and when it becomes an issue.
I know at some point, in order to stay in my home, and die in my home, since I can't get nursing home insurance because of my chronic medical conditions, having someone live on my property and take care of me would be a Godsend.

I think short term rentals can be life saving for people who lose jobs and need another source of income or for so many people in Maine who rely on multiple sources of income and cobble together a bunch of job revenue streams. I think it is important to regulate short term housing if it is causing a problem but it's also important to find a way for people to do it so that it helps them when they need it.
not necessarily to regulate, but at least assess the situation- how many are here?
need to know how many short term rentals currently. 1/4 of housing in ME owned by investors, but how much in Searsmont?
Short term rentals erode all sense of community and only incentivize short term profit at the expense of long term town cohesion.
Only if we also regulate campgrounds and other short term rentals.
No, we need to stop regulating everything
Less rules, more freedom. Let us have country living.
Only if ADU short-term rental exceeds 8% of units
The idea has pros and cons. Could be extra income for the property owner. Could help with the shortage of affordable housing. Depends on how the accessory dwelling is going to be used. Neighborhood concerns.
I feel undecided about this issue. I want residents to have the ability to earn additional income from their home. But I see short-term rentals as a clear enemy to permanent housing availability. You can certainly make more money renting short term to vacationers so where's the incentive to provide permanent housing? Maybe there could be town/tax incentives?
Short term rentals should not be allowed. If the Town decides to allow, then they should be regulated.
short term rentals hurt local communities and hinder young people from being able to stay in rural Maine long term. They take housing opportunities away from local people/renters and prioritize tourists. We need long term ADU rentals, not short term ADU rentals.
Let people rent out these homes. It will bring income to the area.
Regulate / develop guidelines now before there is a problem.
ADU's can add tiny houses or apartment additions for rental use. Ideal for this real estate market where inventory is not only low, but prices for first time buyers (and most everyone) has increased to an almost unattainable level.
I think Searsmont should not be concerned with Short term rentals. It would just add another "fee" to those who might be finding ways to subsidize and cover the cost of their housing. I do believe Searsmont SHOULD be concerned and regulate use of Campers, RV's, yurts, tents. Maybe add in some language that allows only one (camper, RV, yurt, tent, etc) per property - to avoid encampment situations from developing.
With so much theft in the area lately, I think any rentals should have a year lease with first and last month rent as a deposit.
Rather than a firm regulation, we would like to see a tax incentive for ADUs that are used for year-round rentals or other long term housing.
There is a great need especially during tourist season for people to stay. No regulation would be preferred
Self governance, within boundaries

Q9. What transportation issues, if any, do you think need to be improved in Searsmont?

Traffic speeds through town center.
Can't walk safely in town.
More sand in winter.
Add rock to unpaved/dirt roads.

Slow down traffic and trucks on New England Road.
Enforce speed through the village on 131 (from Post Office to 173)
With growing elderly population, some public transportation is needed.
No answer
Consistent road maintenance
Road maintenance snow removal could be improved.
Snow plowing has been bad for a long time.
The town should inventory all roads and come up with a spreadsheet of culvert locations, maintenance issues, bridge issues, ditching, tree cutting, etc.
I can drive now, but would prefer to not drive to doctor appointments in bad weather and would really love doctor transport rides. At some point, when I can't drive w/o transportation assistance, I have no idea what I will do.
pot holes and mud season
being on a main rd, traffic and speed have greatly increased since covid. no attention paid to 50mph limit and lack of traffic enforcement is noticeable
state does not seem to do regular maintenance on shoulder& surface of 131
The town was not designed or organized to have any sense of cohesion. It is a highway through a collection or poorly organized private structures that are in various states of decay. Speeding is rampant and has effectively isolated the residents of what is supposed to be a 'small town'. The Town is trapped by its historical configuration and only major changes would be able to alter this layout for the better.
Moody mountain road speeding is out of hand.
what about a local volunteer transport service
Local roads need significant work to prevent recurrent storm damage
Infrequent grading of minor gravel roads resulting in deterioration; too much focus on the problem roads
Would be great to have a multi-town bike path to the village and Belfast
We don't need or want sidewalks, paths etc ... We can walk in the country or on the road if you just leave us alone. We don't need a nanny to babysit us.
Pot holes, etc
I've lived here a year and have never seen any speed/traffic enforcement. Large-haul trucks speeding = unsafe and noisy
large trucks using Jake Brakes in village area
I don't live on the Pond Road, but visit residents that do. Its either a "washboard," knee-deep in mud, or icy.
Smaller roads rarely affected by speeding/lack of enforcement
Just about impossible to get speed enforcement outside of village. Lot of dangerous speeders
Lower speed limits & enforcement
Good gravel sidewalk/bike lanes? No more pavement!
40 MPH on Magog Rd? Too fast. Should be 35MPH like Ghent Rd. I know DOT decides, but we should challenge that. Moody MTN Rd is like RTE 3!!
The existing roads need adequate maintenance before addressing bike lanes. Are there sidewalks in Searsmont? I've never seen one.
Magog road is pretty bad when it thaws. Not sure of any other dirt road in town with similar issues.
Pond Rd South is getting busier and needs to be paved. It would save the town some maintenance costs, I suspect.
Speeding and traffic road noise anywhere near Route 131 is terrible and makes me want to move away! Road noise from loud trucks and speeding trucks can be heard from the lake and any open field etc. One of Searsmont's worst qualities for many.
roads not crowned in center leading to rivulets in center of roadway
Crie road being improved and maintained & making a more permanent station is something I would see as an asset

Enforcement of 25 mph thru the village area. We need an electronic sign that shows drivers their current speed entering the slower village speed limit area.
Speeding has been a clear issue since moving to Searsmont. The roads are narrow and windy and people fly down them sometimes like it's I-95. It's also a reason I don't dare bicycle on the roads.
Winter snow and ice removal could also be improved. They are often not clear early in the morning or during the night when people are still coming and going to work.
Sidewalks are needed, safer awareness of bicycling (adding more 'share the road' signs); a bus from the village to belfast would help disabled people and people without cars,. and just provide another option for folks to not have to drive as much!
Creation of walking trails and sidewalks.
Create a Farmers market or other open sellers area
It wouldn't hurt to enforce speed laws on #131/173 between Moody Mountain Road intersection and the New England Road/Liberty Road intersections.
Ty 3 and New England rd sign needs to be bigger and placed so you can read it
Since moving here in 2016 the winter plowing is Awful!!.
I drive to rockport everyday for work and the surrounding towns lincolnville and belmont have roads plowed better. The snow plows aren't out enough at each storm. I have almost gone off road several times
Pond road is horrific. It needs to be properly graded and resurfaced, and not by the lowest bidder who continues to do a terrible job, not even grading below the level of the current pot holes. It's only a matter of time before emergency services won't be able to get down the road, and I hope that the town's negligence will be held accountable.
The dirt roads are always in bad condition. It is costing me thousands in repairs for shocks
Dirt road maintenance: hire a competent contractor with a good road grader who knows how to properly dig pot holes out of dirt roads and regrade, other than just adding/wasting materials by surface application only.
Poor road maintenance on unpaved roads. More frequent resurfacing is required.
Robbins lumber traffic destroys 131 annually. Should be tax on this business to help fund road rebuild. Unfair to rest of us driving normal vehicles as their exclusive use of this route under heavy loads leads to disproportion of damage to road,
I think having trails that are more accessible (atv trails) for walking and biking would increase community engagement with each other and foster increased wellbeing
I live on a gravel road where the mud in the spring is actually dangerous - sometimes it's impossible to steer through it. The "dump road" (Crie Rd) is also bad. The Town needs to bite the bullet and upgrade these roads.
Lower speed limit on New England Rd. from village center to Ames school
We had a culvert fail on our road and had to wait quite a while to have it fixed.
Town roads are adequate. Knowledge of the State's plans would be nice. (HA!)
We are a rural, beautiful town. Maybe consider widening some roads to include a "shoulder", rather than considering hardscaped, very expensive sidewalks! It would be great to collaborate and consider types of gravel all-use trails (if anything at all). How wonderful would it be to have a path that is open to walkers, cyclists, ATV's, snow-mobiles, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, etc. If you try to take a walk or ride your bike on most roads in Searsmont, you are taking your life into your hands! No shoulders exist, and the width of most roads narrow in areas, barely allowing a bus and car to pass travelling in opposite directions!
People on 131 take the brunt of traffic noise.
Road side ditches not flowing correctly causing canyons where driveways meet roads.
The other thing that most likely is not transportation related is the amount of trash thrown out of vehicles! Does not seem to be any enforcement of littering any longer. For traffic noise there are some large commercial trucks that do not seem to have any mufflers any longer. How about noise enforcement?
Enforcement of vehicle decibel limits

Q10. Community Enhancement and Recreation: How often do you use the following in Searsmont:

We often hike on our own land
Library's not open much.
Town Office - Somewhat
I will use the pond/lake more now that I know I can
Quantabacook is almost completely inaccessible except as a boat launch on RT. Fishing on the river is taking your life in your hands. Levenseller pond is nice but littered with trash most of the time. 3
I just moved here last year and plan on using more (all other except ballfield)
Community building
No access to QBC, No decent access to Levenseller
Ruff. Meadow: not wonderful access
I use St. George Lake/park and Stephen's Pond. Would use local resources if more available.
Fraternity General
Pond Road woodlands we own: frequently, in season
Fraternity Village Country Store provides a place for communicating with neighbors and information about town events.
Hiking trails
Public access to Quanty would be nice... canoeing....

Q11. What barriers, if any, prevent you from using the internet?

N/A
No answer
Need hi speed internet
We use a wireless device through Verizon. No land line is available.
We are in favor of the new broadband service agreement.
Question not answered
we get internet through phone line, would like to get alternative so i could get rid of landline, as consolidated communications keeps upping the bill
The internet is frequently very slow
paying for 7 mb, getting 2 if we're lucky
I have satellite internet, so I pay for all data used, so there's a limit on my monthly use. I can't stream (too much data used).
I have starlink because that has been THE ONLY viable internet service
I provided my own service in the form of Starlink.
Consolidated Comm. is a joke! Terrible service. Had to go to Starlink for connectivity.
Only one option for internet. Internet isn't slow when it works, but is unreliable
Service is slow
The only internet we use is hot spot from cell phone
I want to live and work in Searsmont but I work online. Unless I can get internet that is faster, I will not be able to work there.
We have wireless internet
spectrum does not service our area (magog road) consolidated communications is slow and has poor customer service.
T-Mobile 5G wireless service covers the entire town with high speed internet. This is a non-issue.
no access unless it's satellite or over the airwaves

the traditional internet services available at my house are sub-par
We have only found Starlink works. All other options are too slow or unreliable.
Again, broadband would benefit everyone.
We have 2 wireless routers in our home just to be able to use the internet when more than one person is home
DSL is not adequate.
We've had completely unreliable internet service for 14 years. Eventually had to buy satellite service (Starlink) to be able to complete work and school requirements (during the pandemic)
would be great to have a couple internet service provider options for wired internet
Not worth getting internet based on the quality
Our fingers are crossed about the incredible effort to bring high speed broadband to the town (thanks to dedicated town volunteers)--hoping to see beginning of implementation this spring!
We had to connect to satellite internet because the one provided by the local infrastructure wasn't good enough
DSL is a bad best option
We use satellite internet, but only because local options were too slow and expensive
Only option is starlink would love a cable option

Q12. TOWN PRIORITIES: As a community, what level of priority should the Town place on the following actions over the next 10 years?

- I think of aging "in place" as aging in one's own home.
- I'm not sure where the transfer station could be moved to.
- What improvements exactly for the village are being considered?
- Water and sewer services for the village would increase the number of inhabitants in the village area. -
- How much of that would we like to see??
- "More people" means more taxes for more schools, more police, more services.
Trash is expensive and no recycle. More expensive \$2 a bag for small bags.
Veterans, seniors
Public restroom
Explore fiber internet
Disengage from school district!
Equates to more than half of property tax.
Decreasing student enrollment.
Decreasing student test scores.
Decreasing quality of student education.
Increasing costs each year.
Accounts for more than 50% of property tax.
Road maintenance is critical in a rural community.
I think that the town way overspends already on huge fire station/ the huge pole barn built next to the town office to house old farm equipment that was outside for 100 years. That barn was over 1/2 million dollars.

The items that were lowest priority basically the town government has no control over.
I live alone, and am a senior, which may explain some of the answers.
I think it would be cool to have more businesses/services and higher density housing in downtown Searsmont - for example a multiuse brewery complex would be great - but there is also farmland located practically in the village core. Development plans should be done in concert with conservation plans.
what would curbside trash cost? could we get rid of the transfer station and focus on the sand shed? the town should consider future of volunteer services and discuss the cost of hiring.
As far as improvement on boat launch state says will turn over ownership to town with stipulation town can do nothing to improve it. Town rejected. Then state proposed plans to improve parking but not the launch itself or the road. Town rejected. then state dropped out because most lake owners didn't want that. town should look for alternative launch site it can control. this one need late night policing badly.
this area is growing, and controlled growing is needed. Searsmont is a lovely place with a distinctive downtown. It is a vibrant community with a wonderful varied population with many talents.
- acquire come spring, at least pay the part time emergency workers or provide health care, don't expand boat launch
property in village core is privately owned. too bad town can't buy and use for housing or salt/sand shed. keep carry in boat launch as is. can't afford professional emergency services
These are all very laudable goals. I understand that taxes may go up as a result.
I do want to add that I do not understand the increased tax burden for living in 'The Village' area. There are no services or incentives to live there and the area's only distinction is that the speed limit is lower, a fact that is ignored by 90 percent of drivers. If there were sidewalks and access for pedestrians, sewer, water, events, businesses, trash pick up etc, then this 'privilege' would be understandable. As it stands right now, the town is taxing its citizens at a higher rate for an inadequate product and this distinction should be addressed, as it was not mentioned in the survey questions.
Many of these things, boat launch/water access, protect water body resources, climate change, sidewalks and cycle lanes on state roads, are outside of the control of local government. Don't block business or tourism, but don't create rules to encourage.
We support "Encourage business attraction/commercial development as a means to lower property taxes and create local jobs" with caveats - no box stores, no companies that do not respect natural local resources, no commercial development that disregards the impact to the natural environment.
1st priority should be to have a nice honor roll for our veterans we had one but it disappeared. Very sad.
We are a small town with residents that are not rich. We don't need all the fluff. Belfast can supply housing and programs. We are small. It seems we think we are a bigger city and we're just not. We need to work within our means and these suggestions are too big and to expensive for a town like us.
It looks like you're thinking this is turning into a city soon. Our property taxes are too high. We continually decide to NOT build anything because of the high permit fees and high property taxes.
Reduce spending. We live in the country and you make us pay a fee and file to put a tiny shed on our property 100' feet!! We need freedom to live on our own land without Big Brother overseeing and charging us for minutia. Change building permit to 300' feet or maybe get rid of it if the shed or outbuilding wouldn't be seen from the road... Or 100' back etc.
Improve entire village area. Just look outside the town office.
Improve transfer station not move it
Adding more people doesn't mean better. Hire and elect better people
Reduce noise pollution then light pollution
Road maintenance of dirt roads was better when there were Road Commissioner located in the areas they served.
Searsmont is a bedroom, not a commercial, community

Environment needs greater than commercial or societal needs
Infrastructure too expensive/too jarring for town
Add a playground, lack of employees not jobs. We don't need streetlights outside of village. Already a lot of industry (Robbins, Industrial park); need to use tax dollar more efficiently rather than attract more industry. Sidewalks and bike infrastructure just don't seem practical, but would have a small playground by town office.
It is very important to consider what we have and not regret big irreversible "improvements" for "progress" and \$. DO NOT "pave paradise and put up a parking lot" (Joni Mitchell). Preserve natural beauty
Fix issues with what currently exists, or new development will degrade, or not provide desired result. Fix the roof on the town office/community building before that building is damaged. Fix the roads.
All benefiteres should provide why their priority is #1.
Stop dancing with transfer station. Do it right. Fix the road. Provide better facility for transfer employee.
Pond Road is a disaster especially this time of year!!!
increase in tourist causes most of the issue you ask about above.
One word. Internet.
These are all wonderful priorities, in an ideal world we could tackle them all. Building community, addressing road noise, cracking down on shoreland development/destruction along Quantabacook Lake are some great priorities to promote our town's charming character.
We're a small town with some big ideas and I'm happy to see this initiative as it's a big undertaking and transparency is key.
Improve downtown village area: where and how?; Re: hiring a separate road commissioner: have one less selectman
no developers, community-building and community events good as it is
Getting our share of the school system budget under control ours and all other towns
Curbside trash pickup for elderly residents or residents with disabilities. Improve existing transfer station
Landscaping & cleaning/maintenance of the village area.
I would love if Searsmont were more walkable/bikable but I also recognize that we live in a rural landscape in the US in the age of cars. The existing infrastructure has been built to accommodate cars and cars alone. It would be a massive undertaking to widen roads or build bicycle/walking paths along roads.
I would love to see better access to Quantabacook Lake for the public - maybe from the south end?
As I've said, the trash/recycling situation should remain a priority.
In our experience, commercial development never lowers property taxes. Trash pick up, emergency services with full time staff and other services increase property taxes because they cost money and aren't needed in what will remain a small community even if it doubles in size over the next ten years. Recycling options should be explored, but many towns throughout the country are finding that recycling costs more money than it brings in. A separate road commissioner will cost money but will give the selectmen a "break" since this is an time consuming unpaid task for them.
Make investments in Maine Community Solar, which lowers customers' CMP bills by 15% by incorporating solar into the local energy grid. Supporting homeowners and landlord to get solar through state and federal subsidies.
I think the brewery was an asset. How can it be revived?
There seem to be enough people in the town office right now that we wouldn't need a town administrator. Staffing would need to be cut to afford one. Same thought with the road commissioner.
Improved or new access to major recreational water ways for public use and emergency vehicles
Local place(s) to grab a quick meal.
Road maintenance is highly lacking

Since I'm a summer resident, I don't have the experience to comment on all aspects of village life. I'd like to see the "downtown" area have a facelift. I wish there was a much nicer place than Threshers for a meal or drink and if something practical and appealing could move into the old firehouse. Fraternity Village looks very run down and unappealing.

Living in Searsmont has a wonderful rural experience. However, the downside is the lack of community engagement and needing to drive anywhere to get outside. If there were more walking accessible trails through and around town, the community could engage more outside, and also increase health benefits of being outside and walking/biking/running.

Recycling - Volunteer town citizens (including me!) started a recycling program probably 20 years ago and now all our trash goes to landfill again! I know we joined a group of municipalities who were to send trash to a new recycling facility which has not materialized yet. There must be some better way. For a while we collected recyclables in a "single sort" system at the transfer station. Maybe they went to Ecomaine? Why can't we go back to that?

Chicken or egg as far as to "better housing" Is it better housing or affordable wages? That is a tough one.

We all like Searsmont because of the way it is. I fear development will fundamentally change the community.

Economic development should always go hand in hand with locally owned/operated and environmentally sustainable. Small to medium-size businesses are the lifeblood of rural communities. The money stays in town and recirculates many times. And local businesses don't pollute or destroy the place they also live and raise their families.

The town should not develop laws and regulations which are stricter than the existing state regulations

Retain its charm as a small close knit community.

If people want to live in a town that is more developed there are plenty of other options around. Let's not ruin Searsmont

Encourage... development... to make the village center grow as a village center where people mingle. Threshers is missed as a local gathering place. Anything that makes getting to the village easier would be good... walking or biking, not cars.

Improvements to "town/village center" are a hard sell. How many Searsmont residents does the "village center" impact? The area is so small that raising tax money to consider water/sewer systems, sidewalks, business development, parking...seems strange. What about the "rest" of Searsmont?

Businesses. We need to continue to be willing to accommodate local, small businesses in our town - ensuring that we are not unfriendly to those trying to be innovative. No franchises, no "big box", no family dollar types. But also - no big tax cuts or promises to attract new businesses.

Housing. We should limit (or at least question) foreign investment/cash sales of Searsmont land and housing. We should investigate subsidized housing only if we are considering single-family or two-family dwelling development on lot sizes that are in-line with current minimum lot requirements. The integrity and appeal of our rural town could be lost if we decide upon housing developments and large scale housing facilities. We need to get creative with ways to keep housing affordable and unsubsidized in as many cases as possible.

--Highly recommend a shift to have town manager/administrator to lead the town's municipal programs. Running this town is no longer a part-time job; current selectpeople are overworked, underpaid, and carrying out tasks on top of other work and responsibilities.

While I want to support our local small business (as few as there are) I also don't want our small quaint town to turn into another tourist area. I like that I feel like part of a small town. I've only lived here since 6/2022 but we love the small town feel. The woods and the fact it's "out in the sticks" away from lots of people.

I think there should be an emphasis on addressing climate change and what that means for a town that prides on their natural resources.

Do what you can to reduce our overall costs long term. There might need to be some initial spending required to achieve some long-term savings, we should do it.

Improving the town village by encouraging small businesses/local entrepreneurs, town services, community spaces, and historical preservation, while avoiding large commercial "box stores" and other businesses that mainly fund corporations instead of local people.

Internet speeds.

Na

Encourage development of housing for local workers and families: will happen w/o being encouraged
Encourage development of senior housing to support local seniors aging in place: family issue / Town not needed

Place greater emphasis on building community and community events: Top down doesn't work

Improve/relocate transfer station: makes sense to invest to keep current

Explore hiring a separate road commissioner to meet maintenance needs: vote one in – not full time

Protect water body resources: already happening

Reduce light pollution: enforce current rules

Encourage business attraction/commercial development as a means to lower property taxes and create local jobs: never happens

Encourage tourism/visitors in order to support local businesses: valuable businesses attract their own

Q13. TOWN INVESTMENTS: I would like the Town to invest in:

My support for downtown area development depends on what it is. Same is true for acquiring land for municipal services. Adding management is likely at a future time. We're told we need a new sand & salt shed. The town is good at snow removal/sanding already. Remember that bigger roads bring more traffic. We already vote on charitable services at financial town meeting.

Quantabacook Lake boat launch is scary needs improvements.

Public restroom

No chain stores please!

Invest in roads

Improve dirt roads

I think we should maintain what we have.

I think the location of the current sand and salt shed is inadequate. The location of a new sand and salt shed, as well as transfer station, is difficult because of cost and siting requirements.

I think snow removal/sanding is adequate.

If it raises taxes - please no!

Where would you even put sidewalks in? I'm very pro walking but the idea of making Searsmont suburban is weird.

hire town manager and get rid of 1/3 of selectboard positions to help offset cost.

we need to be more forward thinking about infrastructure for the future

mainly making the downtown safe for pedestrians. enforcement of speed limit, perhaps a crosswalk near store.

town money management has improved in the last 3 years

selectmen are doing an terrific job or managing town's expenditures and investments

I think the town should work with local land trusts to attempt to purchase land for conservation and recreation. Before new salt sheds are built and family dollars are erected there should be a plan on how the future of Searsmont would look. There is a massive and decaying commercial property right in the heart of town, in 30 years this could either be a vibrant hub, accomadting numerous elements of the above list or a moldering ruin. plan wisely.

Lake Quanty should have public swim access

Charitable services--already do

Arts/Culture/Celebrations: support but minimal financial support from taxpayers

Again, multiple infrastructure items are state, not town control--no financial support

We are too small for Public work staffing and an administrator. Would benefit more from an additional clerk so the necessary work can get done.

Too small for housing--senior or otherwise--leave to private enterprise

Public works location will be an issue as the community grows

Would prefer grants, subsidies and town finances to go towards supporting existing community members and creating more support for them, and investing in building in infrastructures and programming, rather than seeing land expansion as a means to develop the town.

Should have sidewalks from post office to town office and to cemetery

You can increase construction and business development by easing your rules and fees--not by spending town \$. We would construct apartments etc now if it wasn't for fees and prop taxes.

There is no need to spend money to attract businesses. Reduce fees and make it attractive to do business here. Doesn't take a lot of money

Re: acquiring easements for open space - esp if includes water access. Not full time public works, but adding management. Would love to see town partner with YMCA or other to offer childcare at the school (early/late care)

Some bigger scope projects could be share with neighboring towns?? Share wealth and responsibilities?

Maintain what we have - ROADS

quiet quality of private life, preserving what we have - not putting it under costly town over management

Fix what's broken first. Bike lanes, for example, would be most usable along state roads, so the town would have limited impact. There are other examples.

Who benefits? Example: value of land leased for large solar project

Rather see improvement of transfer station rather than a new one.

no dollar stores; in response to acquiring land for future growth of municipal services: no land speculating; in response to recycling: ideally yes, unfortunately recycling is a sham; improving/relocating transfer station: fine as it is; searsmont heritage day and charitable services: sounds nice

I think the road and facility at Crie road should be improved. I think connected the aging generation with resources for aging in place (in homes) should be a focus. I think keeping our Village is important. Use of downtown building for small business including possibly additional daycare for younger generations is important.

I'm sure when we've observed more, in time, we may speak about such issues

Please invest in landscaping & maintenance to improve the appearance of the village area. Make this area something we can be proud of.

Town investments could include incentives for private entities and less red tape/paperwork to encourage private entities to take on some of the above. Town investments do not necessarily have to involve town funds/tax money.

See comment in question 12 about recycling. "Yes" for new salt/sand shed and new location for transfer station because selectmen have communicated why there is a need for these. Expanding resources and assistance for low income residents and charitable services - there are many services in Belfast that are not exclusive to Belfast residents.

Would prefer to keep the transfer station at the town office. This is an easy location with a paved access and it is only there a few days a week.

It is vital to work with tribal governments in Maine when acquiring land for open space and conservation easements. Tribes need access to hunting and fishing grounds. It is their right through the settlements act!

It would probably save the town money in the long run if unpaved roads that are inhabited year-round were properly upgraded and paved.

The options we have to select from make it very limiting to give your actual opinion. What if we are in between all of these? The numbers will be ranked and decisions made based on that, not what the comments are.

Snow removal - we already pay for that so don't see how it would change

Sand and Salt Shed - I support using the Crie Road property for that as the land is already damaged so couldn't be sold and built on. Some changes to the road might be needed but I don't believe on the scale that the town

has been proposing. Utilize what we have. If we need to buy land it should be for housing/preservation and FULLY VETTED and proposed to the town residents before any actions taken/monies spent.
It would be nice to have more recreation available for all ages such as pickleball courts, basketball court and even tennis, frisbee golf. A town gathering space like a park with the recreation facilities. Could run a day camp for local children.
The town should absolutely have an excellent grant writer who is watching for opportunities and able to respond quickly.
The town should not invest directly in businesses, but it should be flexible in its zoning waivers to facilitate appropriate businesses to get a foothold.
Use every opportunity to utilize available funding to reduce our long-term cost. Energy efficiency grants, solar energy grants, grants for climate change impacts to replace culverts, broadband grants,
"Business development/attraction (small only)" with the understanding that "small business" is defined by local ownership more so than scale. Disincentivizing corporate chain businesses or businesses that have a negative affect on the local environment.
New sand and salt shed: needs to happen Better snow removal/sanding: work with what we have/make better Road improvement: always in progress Physical disability accessibility: already rules Improving/relocating transfer station: fix road – doesn't have to cost unreasonably Town-sponsored recreation opportunities, facilities & programming: maintain what we have Charitable services: hard up as needed/ NO handouts
SMALL GOVERNMENT, providing constitutional outlined services – not stripping people of the pride of self reliance provides by doing doing doing!

Q.14 LAND USE: Please check where you feel it is most appropriate for the following land uses to occur in the future

Water and soil quality critical going forward. Small family farms to be encouraged, MOFGA certified.
No restrictions unless already set.
Fix cemetery maps
Please maintain the small village charm of Searsmont
Seems like many trees have been taken down in the downtown area. Replacement trees should be planted.
None
Be careful not to destroy what Searsmont is!
Allow people to do what they want
Several land use activities are going to be limited to where the resources are available i.e. gravel pits, agriculture, forestry. We should not try to micro manage uses that do not generate a lot of traffic or cause undo hazardous conditions.
The more than human world 'uses' the land. The town should include in the comprehensive plan support for conservation of wildlife corridors, easements and other practices that protect the health & biodiversity of the ecosystems that form Searsmont.
please no more dollar generals
I
Searsmont is lovely that we don't have chain box stores. short term rentals need to be regulated and limited to accommodate local residents renting and buying properties.
encourage more farms
no
utilize areas already designated commercial to increase business, save prime ag land.
it would be helpful to have a town recreation and parks group to make use of land town owns or has access to

I am all for multi family housing but not workforce housing, which is just another term for rental properties that house people who can never afford to buy a house. Home ownership should be the encouraged activity of town and society as whole as that is the primary generator of wealth for most Americans. This can be accomplished through typical rural single family homes or condo/style multi family homes where people 'own' portions of it.
Less regulation is better
any businesses/development should mean town-based requirements for environmental impact.
Senior housing where Sprowls mill was
Need zoning restrictions on junk in yard and industrial businesses (especially in town center, residential areas). Preserve nature as much as possible
Junk yard - private dumps - garbage piles should be fenced in
The town should oversee any development with size limitation depending on areas to be developed
Willing to see more commercial regulation willing to see regulation incentivizing housing diversity willing to see centralized municipal service site willing to see village center "left alone"
Need more public water access. Limit number (but not location) of short term rentals. Make it easier to have multi-unit affordable housing.
We all love our small town because IT IS SMALL and relative undeveloped compared with our cities and highways - that is the charm of rural Maine. Please don't ruin the land.
3 of these line items refer to agriculture, which is protected by state law.
Waiting for better sense of town ?? thoughts. Nature conservation over development of any land.
Areas designated by town implies applying LUA
Outdoor recreation (camping, hiking, mountain biking, cycling, walking, swimming, canoeing, etc) is a great way to draw people to our community. We want to celebrate and share the wonderful town of Searsmont. Our busy roads, road noise, and pollution and a barrier to outdoor recreation in Searsmont.
Encourage development and local businesses in our town center. The state is changing rapidly and we are well-suited to being a center of development in local business, arts, agriculture, and tourism. We have a beautiful and charming town with a good community.
Commercial businesses: sole proprietorship - with limitations; home occupation: apartments?
It is important to preserve large tracts of land
I think with the ever-growing population of our Country it is especially important to do our best to conserve our open spaces for wildlife and life giving trees (air)
I do not want to see a dollar store in Searsmont. Ever. Having dealt with that, I've loved living in rural communities that aren't heavily zoned. Having the freedom to farm, have a farmstand, not be told how many chickens I can have... be able to have a home business. But it's a compromise. There are houses among gravel pits and mechanic shops. Land is becoming more and more scarce. I would love to see Searsmont take a thoughtful and intentional approach to development as we go into the future. People love Searsmont because it's quiet. But I acknowledge that bedroom communities can be quite expensive without businesses to take up some tax slack.

<p>We come from a mid-size community in another New England state where "areas designated by the town" means "anywhere the town wants", in spite of the wishes of the neighbors. So, while we wouldn't mind, for example, restaurants, we are leery about checking "designated by the town box" and where we have checked, have used caution. Manufacturing & industrial scale businesses should be limited to what is already here and new requests should be voted on by residents. "Home occupation" - there are many home businesses in Maine and several in Searsmont. We applaud those entrepreneurs. However, there should be a process to take the neighbors into consideration. We know from personal experience that this is not always done. Also, absolutely no solar farms, wind farms or land based aquaculture because of potential negative environmental outcomes that are too numerous to enter here and loss of property value.</p>
<p>The charm of Searsmont is it's rural character, and that will attract people to want to live here. A balance between development and conservation is essential to keep the town a desirable place to live with out having it turn into Camden or Rockport.</p>
<p>Why isn't long term rental properties an option on this list? Short term rentals/seasonal rentals hurt young people's ability to stay in rural Maine long term. We need more long term rentals in Searsmont, or ADUs that can be long term rentals.</p>
<p>trails</p>
<p>Mobile-home-park size should be limited, and close to Route 3</p>
<p>The options we have to select from make it very limiting to give your actual opinion. What if we are in between all of these? The numbers will be ranked and decisions made based on that, not what the comments are.</p>
<p>Does work force housing stay workforce housing if the need changes! Are camps considered seasonal rentals or are residential homes considered seasonal as well if folks go away and rent it out</p>
<p>I think we need to preserve open space and limit growth. We don't need big boxes or chains. The Threshers area has enough room to expand for some business activity.</p>
<p>There is a lot to learn about short-term rentals. It takes resources to manage them well, and property owners should pay substantial fees to offset costs of town management. We should have a registry and fees that are commensurate with the income being made by the property. They can cause a lot of trouble between neighbors and can also create areas of town where nobody is actually a town resident.</p>
<p>Some uses like gravel pits have to be where the resource is, not by town designation</p>
<p>People should be able to do what they want with their land as long as the town infrastructure can support it- fire, ems, town office etc.</p>
<p>I don't feel like a lot of this applies to searamont. I like that Searsmont had continued to be a small tight knit rural community and not overly developed.</p>
<p>Noise pollution must be considered. (Gun ranges)</p>
<p>Register all short term rentals. Minimum rental period of 2 weeks.</p>
<p>Some cottages are historic vacation rentals. No problem of that.</p>
<p>Not in favor of buying/building properties strictly for Air B&B use. Quick turn-around is very disruptive to neighbors.</p>
<p>I think multi-family housing should still be restricted to lot size minimums (such as 1-2 acres per unit). Tiny home parks and mobile home parks = 2 different things and should be separated. There should be greater regulation on mobile homes, as quickly deteriorating mobile homes are a huge source of our inadequate housing difficulties.</p>
<p>Keeping in line with our rural community, single and 2-family dwellings would "fit" our existing community better than larger subsized housing complexes.</p>
<p>I really think a big box or chain store would be awful for traffic and the general culture of this town.</p>
<p>Short term rentals can be a huge problem if not managed properly. If the town ever considered a box store it could only be up on Rt.3 not anywhere near the town center.</p>
<p>If you own it – exist within common sense rules that ensure good relationships w/ neighbors and protect property values of abutters and other town residents. All of the things fall into this, not my job – or yours to dictate what people use personal property for.</p>

Q15. Unmet needs?

No needs unmet at present. Aren't we lucky !!?!
Walking safety Muzzy Ridge
Easy access & parking to Quantibacook.
Community center.
Senior housing
Senior housing
Veterans housing
Internet access and after school programs. Dirt road maintenance.
None
None
Not much fortunately for us. Biggest unmet needs are recycling facilities/capabilities & lack of bike lanes, or just road shoulders, on 173 & 131.
Keeping roads passable
Poor road maintenance
Affordable taxes and power bills. Robbins Lumber should produce electricity for residents in exchange for their low tax rate.
Day care is a real problem. Health care is getting more and more difficult to afford or even get service.
broadband internet
Volunteer services for seniors
I'd love to be able to access my post office box that I pay for
I
public beach and boat launch
none
none at present
no needs
luckily none right now
daily needs are good now but as we age into our 90s more elderly services, esp transportation would be helpful. for young families, i see childcare and local schools being big needs.
Road security.
Lake swim access
none
walkable town center with good local produce
Open up town office 1/2 day Sat for people to get stuff done
Too much taxes, useless permits and fees for tiny construction, and now it looks like you want to start spending \$ on programs and city stuff.
None
Walking safety speeding cars. noise pollution
Improved road maintenance for safety/responder access
Program(s) for aging in place/improvements
Small scale rural seniors assisted and independent living apartments with views of woods and stream or lake/pond Ha Ha, I dream on...
The internet was the biggest thing - but starlink fixed that
ROAD MAINTENANCE
Roads and getting help with permitted, zoned projects. Can't get straight answers, have gotten inaccurate info—and have spent money based on bad/incomplete info.

being met
none
Public transportation, recreation options, save roads for walking/biking
Maintenance of Pond Rd
Doing fine right now.
internet
Internet.
None
We choose to live in Searsmont due to the quaint village charm and the rural, agricultural vibe. However the road noise, loud trucks, trash, and pollution of Quantabacook and the Saint George River run counter to this.
It sometimes feels that we are just a dying bedroom community with busy roads with people in a rush to drive through this town.
Better access to the lake
Senior assistance
High speed Internet 300Mbps or faster. Middle income restaurants such as pizza, tacos, fast food. Road maintenance.
Broadband
None
A health care situation in the area would be good.
Long term rentals, access to renewable energy as an option for electricity, carpool services, tool shed library amongst neighbors, electric car charging stations, and less power outages over all! Diversify our energy system!
The town office hours prohibit weekend community users from accessing support. Please open town office for a few hours on Friday or Saturday.
none
better internet options
Reasonable real estate taxes and assessments. Why are we reassessing again - the town is going to drive out the folks that live here year round as they won't be able to afford to live here.
Internet and road needs
Senior citizen activities, Maintenance of Pond Road
Pedestrian-friendly roads.
None
Road care,grading
good internet access
Convenient recycling accessibility
Well maintained secondary roads
grading our dirt road more often. It is becoming more and more unworkable year after year
Better dirt roads, internet and trash collection
Need a paved road.
reliable internet service.
Well paved Pond Road
N/A
High Speed Internet
Maintenance of gravel road, specifically Pond Rd., South.
Non satellite based high speed internet. Speed enforcement on the beautiful quiet country roads. Town website that's functional.

Safe walking paths To reduce driving and increase outdoor time.
Enforcing speed limit laws
Internet.
We love Seasmont but sometimes worry about emergency response times, both for medical and fire. Everyone needs to have adequate internet.
None
nothing safe for teens in the area
Decent internet
Nothing
High-speed internet
Bicycling paths
none
Internet accessibility.
Better Internet
Better maintenance of roadsides and power lines
Prepare roads and ditches to take more storm water runoff
None
high speed broadband;
safe biking & walking roads
a good local food market
Internet
Nothing
Trash removal
None
Finding adequate, affordable housing.
Feeling safe in our homes; recycling
Fairness in taxation... it feels that some pay significantly more, than do others.
High speed internet
Internet speed s
None

Q16. Where would you like to see the town in the next 10-20 years?

Lower taxes making it easier to maintain homes and live more comfortably.
It will be difficult to balance lower income and higher income, but critical to the democracy of the place. Make sure there's a middle class here.
More diverse economically, racially
Water sports recreation
Public restroom
Keep it the same.
Keep is small and quaint!
Controlled growth. Preservation of natural beauty. Expanded services for elderly and low-income. Expansion of tax base through tourism, hospitality and small business.
More designated zoning
Looks good to us. This is a question for a younger generation!

I hope it retains its character as a rural village. What about a picnic area on the river where the St. George River race begins?
Reduced taxes and road maintenance
Improve roads
Right where it is.
Solving the sand and salt shed as well as the transfer station problems would be huge. Helping day care people however we can. Giving folks who are agriculture and forestry oriented a break (if possible) with red tape and taxes.
A plan that preserves farmland, biodiversity and the health of the water bodies in our town. Also, given the increasing divisiveness in our country and the challenges of the climate crisis, finding ways to bring community members together is a priority.
I like it the way it is - quiet and small.
developing the downtown and having greater downtown housing density so that Searsmont can support a restaurant and store or two would be great, but within its current footprint. more/better outdoor access and conservation & keeping the rural character alive. supporting more folks who need services to live here successfully. no chains & big box stores. more thriving farms.
livability and outlook depend on today's children having the proper education and job opportunities along with housing and seeing a reason to stick around Searsmont.
public beach and boat launch, sand and salt shed, land for Searsmont's future needs, a community that takes care of its elderly
we would like to see high speed internet available to the entire area
Concern about growing traffic through town and speeding vehicles. Searsmont is a beautiful village area, and would hope to try and preserve it as much as possible with careful planning.
- continue to keep small community feel
- increase opportunities for young families
- keep local elementary school
would like to see 66 acre parcel by town office developed for recreation with small portion as handicap accessible for elders and families. trails on the rest, some going down to the St. George river.
in a world where Searsmont could reimagine itself freely, I would completely flatten the old Sproul lumber mill and build a highly organized mixed residential and commercial space that could house hundreds and offer a real draw for the people of the town and surrounding areas. I would reorganize the road to redirect all traffic away from 131 and put it onto RT 3 and redo the roads so they are walkable. There would be a park on the Sproul river side and various commercial development areas outside of town for jobs etc.
focus on environmental impact for any incoming business, as the natural resources of this town are a huge draw and benefit of living here.
More businesses and less taxes, more stuff for the elderly
We want to see freedom to use our property without fees and high taxes. We will be responsible with our own choices.
Less regulations, reduced building permit fees. Controlled spending so we don't have to overtax people. We need to live within our means.
Town center has a lot of potential - would like to see more small, local businesses there, have it more walkable.
Don't grow to be a Camden or Belfast
The village proper and properties are unique and quaint. Homes are maintained. However some have become town dumps. If they want to continue with their town dump, they should be a fence to surround their dump. These properties are a deterrent to the village setting.
About the same!
Greater population density throughout
Environmental friendliness - air, water, space, lighting, recycling
Welcoming community for creative people - artists, sculptors, musicians, architects, film/video makers

More efficient use of tax dollars. Focus on education and families. Preserve access to open space, water front, hiking trails. Carbon neutral municipal buildings; reducing municipal carbon footprint.
a local farmer's market would be great & support for small local growers/farmers and their local produce
Right here - haha
Limited growth, protection of natural resources
Limited commercial (small) growth
about like it is - doing some wonderful stuff with the trail systems & keeping a lid on growth
Paving downtown village area. Supporting small business ventures to improve economy and provide vitality.
I would like to see no change
It's a small rural town. That's why live here. Don't mess too much with it.
Keep Searsmont a small town
Slow, but steady growth, centered around living, working and recreating in the area for persons who want to come here and work, and not seeking handouts. Improvements to help senior citizens to be able to stay in their homes.
slow steady growth, development of a business park to allow jobs and tax income but not a lot of impact on town expenses
Internet.
Better roads, bicycle paths and sidewalks
An agricultural and arts center, with a thriving local village and lots of outdoor recreation opportunities. A place with a reputation as a place to raise a family and not just another bedroom community. Our population is old and low-income and we want to bring new energy to this town.
road conditions; property lot limits
Searsmont is great - it needs high speed internet
build a recreational site for tennis, pickleball, basketball
Sidewalks in the village area. Improve safety for cars pedestrians, and cyclists on route 131. It is dangerous with big trucks. Real shoulders on the road would help.
a working village town
High speed Internet for all areas
Road Maintenance
Village landscaping
Variety of affordable restaurants & take-out food choices
Clean up our village area
I would love to see Searsmont remaining a quiet, rural town. I would love to see businesses thriving in the village area and all the old commercial buildings being productively used. I'd love to see a Searsmont Farmer's Market happen again being supported by the community. I'd love Searsmont be the shining example of well-plowed roads. I'd love for Searsmont to feel like home - just as it did when I first moved here.
Remain a small, friendly community that welcomes new residents but retains the village vibe and low taxes.
A largely residential area with some small businesses and recreational opportunities
Carefully managed growth and deveopement of local businesses that "give back to the community" in terms of jobs, income and taxes. Control of sprawl makes Searsmont a fabuious place to live over the next 10-20 years.
I love this town. I'm so grateful to have the opportunity to live here. howeverm, there are not many long term rentals so my ability to stay here beyond a few years feels unlikely. I would like to stay here. Please advocate for long term ADUs!
Fuel availability and electric vehicle charging. Walking trails. Areas for open congregation of people for social activities.
Searsmont needs another two or three business between Pearce's mill site and the town park where the well-house is.
A vibrant YEAR ROUND community with a government we feel we can trust

<p>Accessible internet for all.</p> <p>Town roads in better condition, especially Pond Road South</p> <p>New locations for salt/sand/plow trucks and transfer station.</p>
<p>Searsmont is a laid back rural community and that is what is so nice about it..we should resist big development</p> <p>We would like for Searsmont to attract visitors. A brewery, restaurant, and a gas station would go a long way. We love the general store.</p>
<p>The rural small town feel is why we're here and why folks come to stay, we need to be committed as a community to build, preserve and provide spaces for our elders to stay with their communities and provide affordable housing to our young families to live and work in the area and to provide services/housing for our struggling families to get on their feet.</p>
<p>I would like things to stay the way they are.</p>
<p>Keep "small town " feel. Internet a must for schools and work. Make sure no child goes hungry and can achieve adequate education. Support healthy mental health care for all.</p>
<p>haven't thought about it.</p>
<p>I would like to see Searsmont continue to be a well maintained rural town with emphasis on farming, historic landmarks preserved and environmental issues always addressed.</p>
<p>preserve what we have</p>
<p>Not enough knowledge to address this question.</p>
<p>More business in the town or tourism</p>
<p>reliable internet</p>
<p>recreation facilities</p>
<p>make sure the school is competitive</p>
<p>Please see above comments</p>
<p>A Village Center that is a destination for travelers/tourists with warm, welcoming proprietors.</p>
<p>High Speed Internet</p>
<p>Would like to see Searsmont retain rural character vs becoming overrun with new structures where woods and fields currently are. Plenty of lots to house folks (the old, the workforce, all the other populations discussed in this survey). Be bold and moratorium new clearings until all the old housing stock and run down lots are revitalized.</p>
<p>Interconnected trail system</p>
<p>I would like to see Searsmont remain a relatively progressive town (compared to other small towns around), with an involved population who cooperate to get things done (like building the Community Building).</p>
<p>Roads that a bus and emergency vehicles could get to if there was ever an emergency year round.</p>
<p>Small scale eateries and stores</p>
<p>I'd like to see Searsmont look much the same twenty years for now. With better internet access.</p>
<p>It would be great to have a more inviting downtown area with a few more small businesses. We could attract some innovative start-ups or incubator businesses, something other than just "more stuff".</p>
<p>More agriculture, Forestry and business.</p>
<p>I would like for Searsmont to remain a small town. We do not need to grow beyond our capabilities.</p>
<p>Figure out what to do with the old fire station. Encourage development of the industrial park. Find a permanent home for the transfer station. Repurpose the old building next to the post office.</p>
<p>I'd like to see the ability for young people to stay and support their families and for the town to look no different. Keep areas for hunting. Keep access to water and outdoor spaces.</p>
<p>Bring back a bar. That was awesome.</p>

Desire the town to have a strong community identity with a... profile... of being thoughtful, prudent, safe, smart and accepting. Essential is to have a community / village center. The Community building is FABULOUS, but it is only the start.
Remain having a "small town" flavor.
Given that growth is inevitable, I would like to see us preserve the rural, small-town attributes we now have: lots of nature, undeveloped and small farm land, traditional New England architecture. I hope we can manage growth and development to prevent big chains, commercial buildings, and box stores from coming here and destroying the rural small town character we enjoy. To do that, we need to guide and channel growth and development with a strong and thoughtful Comp Plan. I know from personal experience that once a town loses its character to unregulated development, that character is gone forever -- it can NEVER be brought back.
improved internet access would help households and businesses across the board. Protection of lot minimum sizes, encouragement/protection of farming and rural living practices.
Keeping Searsmont the same as it is today would be the best outlook of all. I love it just the way it is and don't want it to be any bigger. I think taking measures to preserve our small town and its beautiful natural/rural environment would make it the most livable going into the future.
Internet accessibility.
Modern town government.
We really love Searsmont as it is. A quiet, not too busy, local resident most people know each other kind of town. I'm afraid of an influx of new residents.
Would love to see the Industrial Park full of businesses and cleaned up
A town solar field on a piece of town property that is unusable for anything else
Lower taxes
I would like to see Searsmont have a thriving village center that offers more small businesses and places for people to gather informally - the business park in the village center is a huge missed opportunity that could be doing a lot more for the town. The community building and library are fantastic resources, but the community needs more places where it can come together to create a greater sense of cohesion and to offer more opportunities for discussion. There are a lot of great and very busy people in Searsmont - let's do more to get them together! I would also like to see the town place an emphasis on making the town more attractive to younger people including young families and workers, yet in a way that offers locally affordable housing. I think young people want to drive less, while having access to in town stores to meet their needs and nearby recreational opportunities. Look for opportunities to making getting around by walking and biking more possible, despite being rural! How can we work with nearby towns to keep costs down and achieve a better future for all especially in terms of climate change? How do we improve communications between the town and residents? This seems like a major problem that is getting in the way of the town being able to act on major town issues and has brought up a lot of suspicion, which is often toxic to the functioning of a town.
strategies to help elders age in place in their homes (including a cap on property taxes); strategies to encourage working families to settle here; better public transportation to nearby towns for those without cars/licenses
An improvement in the appearance of the village with more local businesses, a restaurant and a park with playground.
Provide more walkable and bicycle area.
Efficient housing
Small business
Farming for local use
quiet sleepy town that lets its citizens care for themselves and others.
Trash removal, keeping Searsmont a small town.
More sidewalks, better trash situations, more town activities
I'd like to see the nature preserved and climate change addressed. I'd also like to make it almost impossible for big box or chain stores to be allowed in Searsmont.

It would be great to get some businesses back in the industrial park area to reduce the tax base and provide employment opportunities.
Sustainable living with solar.
I love our small-town feel! I'd love to see young families able to join our community and bring their skills and energy to Searsmont... but not change the 'feel' of our neighborhoods.
Investment in community spaces and events
Internet speed
Bikeability/walkability a destination for a quiet hidden gem

Q17. What are we missing? Additional comments.

Need more clean up days for items that cannot go into the regular trash.
I would like to see plastic packaging phased out over the next few years. Plastic packaging is choking the planet. We have plastic spherules in our food, in our water and in our blood. Enough already!
I don't think we can emphasize water quality and soil quality enough! Ditto our forests! Challenge is to maintain resources and still allow for some growth.
Cemetery maps need to be fixed.
Find the old veterans memorial and locate/designate area of placement.
Our families deserve to be heard
Consider modest, ongoing support of culture and arts programs.
More productive approach to K-12 education initiative.
Retain the small town flavor. If people want greater density of people/housing, they should move to that location i.e. Belfast, Rockland, Bangor, Augusta
None
You did not ask about the need for community connections/conversations. Fraternity Village Store satisfies this a bit, but an evening spot is needed that fosters connections among Searsmonters. I understand Threshers was in a spot/building not conducive to someone else stepping in to continue its operations.
Everyone taxed the same
Find a way to lower taxes - maybe by not spending so much on unneeded stuff.
I would hate to see a marijuana dispensary (medical or otherwise) in this town. To me, this leads to a nonproductive workforce. I appreciate the thoughtful nature of this survey.
If I remember correctly, we did not implement much of the what we agreed on in our last comprehensive plan. The planning board only has the time to work on current projects. What is the plan, or better yet, where will the resources come from to put this plan into action?
thank you
I
thank you for all your hard work on this committee!
elections of selectmen needs to start well before town meeting so we can judge candidates
when planning for the future consider the values from the past you could lose.
You have also not brought up much about the school, which in the coming years will most likely be closed down for the sake of a larger consolidated school in Belfast. This will lead to an opportunity to utilize that space but also cause increased dissolution of town/place identity as we get consumed by the ever increasing chain stores of Belfast.
Keep it simple, keep it real. There were items on the previous comp plan that seemed unrealistic or were not implemented, so what's the point?
grants for local people hoping to start businesses here, and grants for homeowners
Hopefully I've made my point. We are small town, we pay too much in taxes and certainly can't afford programs etc that will only increase taxes. Stop making so many rules

LOWER SPEEDLIMITS. I live on 173 - 45MPH posted = people drive 50, 55, 60 = unsafe and noisy, esp big trucks. Too much litter on roads - more enforcement needed. Thank you for your work on this survey and for our community!!!
I actually think things are pretty great as they are! If people want cities, towns of bigger size - move there :)
Goals/objectives/action need to acknowledge financial (property tax) constraints. Plan needs to be achievable in 10 years - 20 years, not just be a feel-good wish list. Action recommendations need to be prioritized to address achievable goals
Given salaries of town officials, they should be elected rather than selected at town meeting - not fair to people who work weekends. More of the town should have an opportunity to choose officials
Thanks for your participation
Better access to Quantabacook
Please continue to keep growth at a minimum - I recognize you can't stem the tide....
ROAD MAINTENANCE not big ideas for change that cost money - use money to support the infrastructure we already have.
Our town hall is wonderful. roads and that should be the focus - care and upkeep
Stop zoning properties based on frontage length.
we are doing well
Why can't the town office be open on Friday and at new time?
Make sure all decisions made at select persons level are transparent.
I think plans should be kept to benefit the community, in the village area, roads, emergency services, helping people with disabilities, etc. People should not be restricted from what they want to do on their property, within reason. ie small businesses, short term rentals, small farms, etc.
None
BROWNTAIL MOTH! The browntail moth caterpillar situation needs a comprehensive town plan. This problem is huge and can't be resolved on the individual level. These moths spread and we need a town-wide initiative to address this. Perhaps we hire arborists in the early Spring to cut the nests out of the trees in Searsmont?
Preserve small town feel of our community.
town activities
I would like to see more community activities and celebrations
We relocated from another state to Searsmont four years ago because of its small size, location, responsible finances and low taxes. We didn't bring a desire for services that were available in our former town. Unfortunately, that is not the case with many new residents. They want the same services as they had at their former abodes but don't understand or care that these services cost money and result in higher taxes. Also, increasing population too quickly also results in a necessity for new schools, senior programs, more town staffing. We hope that Searsmont continues its careful, thoughtful management.
fuel stations, electric vehicle charging
Finding ways to bring our community together:)
all covered
Searsmont is a great town! We are proud to be part of it.
I would like the town to remain a small town. However, I realize that things are always changing and everything has a financial impact.
Is there a mental health component in the coreclum at the grade school
The residents of Searsmont are the most valuable part of the community and should always be considered as priority for all decisions made by the Comprehensive Plan Committee.
Not enough knowledge to address this question.
Get rid of the town code enforcer. People cannot improve their properties with him around. The two. Will deteriorate and become a wasteland with him still in office
High Speed Internet
Is there a public beach where Searsmont residents can swim?

Community Garden/greenhouse at the school. Community composting integrated with the transfer station. Protect our aquifers! A building for housing free swap items, furniture, games, books, vegetables, seeds, outerwear and boots.
Get rid of Arlo and set term limits for the selectmen.
Try to keep control over the property tax increases
Searamont is great and any change should be really well thought out.
I think this is a really thoughtful and well-designed survey. I'm grateful to the committee for taking this initiative, for thinking ahead to the future, and for all the hours and hard work that all of you put into this. I suspect that much of the time it can seem like people don't appreciate all that you do (and unfortunately some probably don't). But many of us do, and we thank you!
I think the comprehensive plan should be more about plans to ensure Searsmont does not change. That would be the best improvement of all. And it would be a gift to those who come after us.
Open town office on Fridays
Thank you to this Committee for engaging townspeople and putting in the time on this important project.
Let young people have opinions on the town!
It also would be good to have a long-term energy and cost savings plan for the community.
It is possible to balance old perspectives and new insights...
Internet speeds
Na
People want to come here, often to get away from something where they already were – (high taxes, burdensome regulation)
Don't come and then want/demand what you had in the place you left. Like it or move on.